

June 2010

Speaking Up

By Rick Nelson, General Manager

I attended our national organization's legislative rally in Washington in May. We had some interesting briefings and discussions with our elected officials.

We met with Senators Johanns and Nelson to discuss including carbon legislation, railroad reform, EPA, energy efficiency and the Rural Utility Service (RUS is the old REA).

A major topic was the Environmental Protection Agency's move to begin regulating power plant carbon emissions under authority written into the Clean Air Act and recently affirmed (at least as regards to transportation emissions) by the Supreme Court.

The EPA's push to use the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon output is complicated by the matter of what are the allowable concentrations of carbon in the atmosphere from each source. The Clean Air Act says that the levels of pollutants that affect health and the environment must be held below 250 tons per year.

If that's the case, then every small business and even some households would be required to obtain clean air permits. Since that is obviously unworkable, the EPA wants to write a "tailoring" rule that limits regulation to affect only the businesses or industry sectors they want to control.

Since it is the duty of every PPD manager and director to hold the line on costs and bring power to you as inexpensively as possible, our message to Nebraska's Congressional delegation was to slow or stop the EPA from using its authority under the Clean Air Act to control carbon.

Shortly after our meeting, Senate leaders unveiled their proposal for a climate bill.



It looks a lot like something called cap & trade, which, at least in theory, proposes to use marketplace incentives -- rather than EPA "command and control" regulation, to reduce carbon emissions at power plants.

Essentially, each power plant would be capped as to how much carbon it is allowed to emit. Those caps would decrease in later years. Companies who are able to produce electricity without using their full allowance

would be able to sell credits to companies whose production would put them over their cap.

This creates a financial incentive to make your power plants cleaner and imposes a financial penalty on those who don't, therefore allowing the marketplace and its system of incentives to spur innovation and the move to cleaner technologies to produce power.

While this approach might possibly be better than arbitrary EPA regulation, which is all stick and no carrot, there are billions of dollars of ratepayer money riding on the details. How will the initial credits be distributed? Will future caps on emissions be reasonable? Will the goals be attainable with affordable proven technology, or will they be aiming for pie in the sky?

The decisions they'll be making in Washington will have a multi-billion dollar impact on monthly bills of rural consumers throughout the U.S. There is no substitute for sitting down face to face with our elected leaders once in a while to remind them of what is at stake and what will be required to meet the unique challenges that we face here in Nebraska. I appreciate the time that Senators Johanns and Nelson and Representatives Smith, Terry, and Fortenberry spent with us, and we are grateful also for their understanding of the importance of the decisions that lie ahead.

No Cost Low Cost Cooling Tips

No Cost

- Check the settings on the room air conditioner. Make sure the “fresh air” vent on the air conditioner is closed so you are not cooling outside air.
- Close drapes, blinds and shades to keep sun’s rays out of the home during the warmer months, particularly for south-facing windows.
- Move the room air conditioner. If possible, put the air conditioner in a north-facing or shaded window; direct sunlight reduces efficiency. Remove and store the air conditioner during the winter rather than keeping it in the window.
- On hot days, avoid using the oven; cook on the stove, use a microwave oven, or grill outside.
- Open windows at night. If you live in a climate where it cools off at night, turn off your cooling system and open your windows while sleeping. When you wake in the morning, shut the windows and blinds to capture the cool air.
- Turn off fans when you leave the room. Remember that fans cool people, not rooms, by creating a wind chill effect.
- When you shower or take a bath, use the bathroom fan to remove the heat and humidity from your home. Your laundry room might also benefit from spot ventilation. Make sure bathroom and kitchen fans are vented to the outside (not just to the attic).

Low Cost

- Remove and clean room air conditioner filters monthly. Dirty filters reduce the efficiency of the air conditioner.
- Seal any holes with caulk or spray foam where TV/cable wires, pipes, bathroom plumbing, ductwork, or vents enter or exit your home.
- Use ceiling fans or other circulating fans, (such as table and floor fans) to improve your comfort level and reduce air conditioning costs.

**\$30 EnergyWise
incentive available
for cooling system
tune-ups.**



When is the last time your home’s cooling system had a tune up? A heating & cooling contractor can inspect, service and clean it and may help improve the energy efficiency.

Custer PPD is offering a **\$30 incentive for your cooling system tune-up.** Contact your heating & cooling contractor to set up an appointment and request your incentive. Window air conditioners are not eligible. Other restrictions do apply.

For more information contact Custer PPD for a form.

Power Drive 2010 Competition Comes to a Close

Excitement and expectations ran high as the Litchfield Power Drive Team took their standard and advanced electric cars to competition in Hastings, Columbus, Kearney and Pacific Junction, Iowa. Mr. Eggers, Industrial Technology Instructor, did not expect to enter the state Power Drive Championships held in Iowa as he had nine seniors on the team and the competition was held the same day as graduation. However, junior Jade Janssen really wanted to take the car to state, so the two took off for the Mid-America Motorplex in Pacific Junction, Iowa.



Driver Gordon Needs demonstrates there is no room for claustrophobia in the one-person electric car.



Stapleton Team pictured from left to right are: Gordon Needs and Taylor Frey, with instructor Bud Harvey.

Mr. Eggers quickly figured out that if just the two of them were going, and Jade was driving, he would be the “pit crew”. Fortunately the car made it with no repairs needed.

The Stapleton Team consisted of two members; Gordon Needs and Taylor Frey. They participated in the Kearney rally and did well. As their instructor Bud Harvey said, “We were very pleased not to have any breakdowns and run the entire time.”

Each team is scored in the following categories: 1. Design and Engineering; 2. Braking; 3. Maneuverability; 4. Documentation of their work; and 5. Endurance race of one hour.

Certificates were awarded to all of the participating team members. Both instructors and their students have been invited to the June board meeting to visit with the Directors about their experiences.



Litchfield Team pictured from left front row are: Chase Nilsen, Wesley Pickering, Cody Siegel, and Cole Lewandowski. Back row: Jason Lichtenberger, David Brandt, Jacob Gaspari, Jade Janssen, Joe Thomas, Michael Seery and Tyler Snow. – Courtesy photo

Treat Your Dad to a 500 Calorie Meal

INGREDIENTS

2 tablespoons canola oil, divided
2 large onions, sliced (about 4 cups)
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1/2 cup reduced-sodium beef broth
1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 pound beef tenderloin, (filet mignon) or sirloin steak, 1-1 1/4 inches thick, trimmed and cut into 4 steaks
1/4 cup crumbled Gorgonzola, or blue cheese



PREPARATION

1. Heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium heat in a large skillet. Add onions and brown sugar and cook, stirring often, until the onions are very tender and golden brown, about 15 minutes. Add broth, vinegar and 1/4 teaspoon salt and cook, stirring, until the liquid has almost evaporated, 3 to 4 minutes more. Transfer the onions to a bowl; cover to keep warm. Clean and dry the pan.

2. Sprinkle the remaining 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper on both sides of each steak. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in the pan over medium-high heat. Add the steaks and cook until browned, 3 to 5 minutes. Turn them over and top with cheese. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover and cook until the cheese is melted and the steaks are cooked to desired doneness, 3 to 5 minutes for medium-rare. Serve the steaks with the caramelized onions.

NUTRITION

Per serving: 338 calories; 16 g fat (5 g sat, 7 g mono); 69 mg cholesterol; 11 g carbohydrates; 36 g protein; 2 g fiber; 468 mg sodium; 565 mg potassium.

Nutrition Bonus: Zinc (40% daily value), Potassium (16% dv), Iron (15% dv).

To round out your 500-calorie meal, serve with:

- Crushed Red Potatoes with Buttermilk 85 calories
- Asparagus drizzled with 1 tsp. olive oil (1 cup) 80 calories

CUSTER CURRENTS

Newsletter of the CUSTER PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

Broken Bow, NE - Phone 872-2451
www.custerpower.com

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Board Meetings

The regular monthly meeting of the Custer Public Power District Board of Directors is on the last Thursday of each month, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the main office in Broken Bow on Hwy. 2.

An agenda for each regular meeting of the board is available for public inspection during business hours.

In the event of matters of an emergency nature or conflicts with other meeting dates, the Board of Directors will set changes. Any change in the monthly meeting date will be posted in the legal notice at the main headquarters building at Broken Bow and at each of the District's area service centers located in Callaway, Sargent, Stapleton and Thedford, Nebraska.