

Congratulations to Elizabeth Higgins - 6th Grade Student at Leyton School Grand Champion of the 2021 Wheat Belt Drawing Contest



THANK You to everyone who participated! A movie party will be held for the entire class of the winning entries. We are grateful to Cindi Egging for judging our contest. KEEP DRAWING!

P.O. BOX 177, 11306 RD 32, SIDNEY, NE 69162 P 308.254.5871 | T 800.261.7114 | wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com | www.wheatbelt.com

Holiday Décor Tips for an Energy-Wise Home

By Abby Berry



Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.

If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs

consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking—and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased through online retailers like Amazon or at big box stores *Continued on 12-E*





Editor - Yolanda Hruska

Drawing Contest	Page 12-D, E, F
Chrysler Pacifica	Page 12-C, G
Holiday Décor Tips cont'd	Page 12-E
Energy Explorers	Page 12-H



LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Julie Mekelburg, our October "Lucky Winner"!

The Mekelburg's have been our customer since 1999 when they found their "home away from home" at Lake McConaughy. Julie and Greg have a 14 year old daughter, Lydia, who is involved in several activities that they enjoy following. Julie, a substitute teacher, is also a gardener and a chicken keeper. Greg, owner/operator of Reliable Trenching, is an avid walleye fisherman and also enjoys hunting big game and upland birds.

If you would like to be included in our next \$50 drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 16th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several payment options. Please contact us, 308-254-5871, or visit wheatbelt.com and select the Customer Engagement page for information.



Nebraska Magazine

CHRYSLER PACIFICA RESEARCH PROJECT

PART TWO OF A TWO-PART SERIES

By Jason Weigle - Business Support Analyst

So do electric vehicles make sense in our area? The answer is 'it depends'.

The key driver is the cost of electricity – the rate you pay for each kilowatt hour - compared to the cost of gasoline. If you recall, the US Environmental Protection Agency uses a conversion factor of 33.7 kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity providing the same power as 1 gallon of gas in determining the MPGe. You can use this to calculate and compare the price of gas against the price of electricity. If you divide the price of gas at the pump (at the time of writing about \$3.01/gallon) by 33.7, you will get the equivalent price of electricity (in this case \$.08932/kWh). If you know your electric rate, you can multiply it by 33.7 to get the equivalent price of gas (e.g. Wheat Belt's A-1 small residential mid-tier usage rate of \$0.0962 equates to \$3.24/gallon of gas). Thus, the closer these are to each other, the more the 'it depends' moves from economic factors to vehicle usage.

Electric co-ops and public power districts across the nation have been working on how best to serve customers using electric vehicles. One option that is increasingly popular for EV charging, and which many of our irrigators are familiar with, is a time of use (TOU) rate. A time of use rate divides energy usage into on-peak usage (when energy use is highest, which for Wheat Belt is noon through 10pm) and off-peak (when energy use drops off, 10pm through noon). Customers who use energy (such as charging their vehicles) during 'off-peak' hours are given a rate discount versus using energy 'on-peak' (typically paying the standard rate for the service). For EVs, the rate discount can drop the



price of electricity below the price of gas – improving the economics of charging.

For the purpose of comparison, we used 148 kWh one month to charge the Pacifica. If our charging occurred at the A-1 residential mid-tier usage rate of \$0.0962, the cost of electricity would be \$14.24. If we used the same amount of energy but paid an example off-peak rate of \$0.0836, the same energy would cost \$12.37 – a savings of \$1.87 for the month. At higher usage the gap increases. Our highest monthly recharging use was 217 kWh, which equates to \$20.88 (A-1) and \$18.14 (example off-peak rate), or a difference of \$2.74 that month.

While these are examples and there are a lot of other factors which need to be considered, you can see using a TOU rate could be cost effective. From a generation and transmission perspective, shifting to and increasing load in off-peak hours can help provide stability in the system as it helps keep power plants running consistently rather than having to ramp them up and down throughout the day in response to demand.

From a driving perspective, if your trips are primarily short distances with the occasional long-distance trip, and if you would enroll in a TOU charging program, our experience is that an electric vehicle may make economic sense for you. Shorter trips generally allow you to run on battery power. These trips also allow you to charge your vehicle at home, decreasing the variability of your expenses due to differences across fast charging stations and other recharge points. The rate of electricity is your key decision point, and if the price point of electricity is below that of gasoline, you can recoup some of your energy costs with your vehicle as described above.

If your driving includes numerous long-distance trips, Continued on 12-G



December 2021 Wheat Belt PPD





We wish you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Photo by Christy Schumacher

12-D Wheat Belt PPD



2021 HONORABLE MENTION: JULIA BASA - 4TH GRADE STUDENT AT BRIDGEPORT SCHOOL

Holiday Décor Tips cont'd from 12-C



like Lowe's or Wal-Mart. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're

using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

If Clark Griswold's décor style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach. Many Christmas tree farms, and even retailers

December 2021 Wheat Belt PPD

like Lowe's and Home Depot, give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over your front door or windows. To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free!) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30—and because they run on natural energy from the sun, there's no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season.



Drawing by Waylon Dean



Drawing by Natalie Tucker

SHARING A FEW MORE DRAWINGS

Wheat Belt believes it is important to be a vital part of the communities we serve. Whether it be safety awareness or electricity in general, we try to start with the young students in our service area. We hope you enjoy the art work!



Drawing by Kanoa Leivas



Drawing by Auvi Cranmore

Chrysler Pacifica cont'd from 12-C



an electric vehicle may not be economically effective for you. While new battery types and increasing numbers of charging stations are reducing range issues, longer trips require recharging on the road (or in the case of HPEVs, use of the gas engine). This can add time to trips and force you to 'plan ahead' for charging stations and add the cost of gasoline into the cost effectiveness equation. While the charging you do at home is wrapped into your electric bill (TOU or not), the other part of charging is left to the market and what charging station operators will ask for using their equipment.

Given our experience, an HPEV could be a viable option for our area if you so choose to purchase one. The ability to use both gasoline and electricity to power your vehicle can assist the economics by using electricity for your shorter trips and gasoline for your longer trips (with the battery helping to shave off some of the energy for your longer trip). New technologies and chargers, such as the charging system included with Ford's F-150 Lightning pickup truck, can turn your truck into a back-up generator for your house or a portable power source in the field.

The world of EVs is continuing to evolve and Wheat Belt is continuing to follow and adapt to these trends. Leasing the Pacifica is part of this, as is following national trends and working with organizations such as NREA and NRECA to figure out the best options for supporting our customers. Our goal is to provide electrical service that is safe, reliable, and cost effective, and to be a trusted resource about the ins and outs of EV usage to help you understand your options in this area.

Information about electric vehicles can be found on our website, wheatbelt.com. Select "Choose EV" under the Modern Energy menu.



Update Your Contact Information

Wheat Belt uses an auto-call notification sytem for courtesy calls due to planned outages and other important customer related events. To verify we have your current information, please give us a call, include a note on your payment stub, or e-mail us at wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com. This information is strictly confidential.

Thank you for keeping your information up-to-date. Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC



Don't add stress to your holiday season. Knowing how to properly use and hang lights could prevent injury or fire.

Make sure your

home's electrical system can handle the load.

Do not use cords or

damaged, frayed or

plugs that are

Unplug lights or decorations before

changing a bulb or other parts.

Only use lights certified by a reputable testing lab.



cracked.

In addition, consider LED lights when replacing old light strands. LEDs use 80 to 90% less energy than incandescent bulbs.

Learn more:

-Safe -Electricity.org

December 2021 Wheat Belt PPD



- Do not overload electrical outlets with too many decorations or appliances.
- Make sure your Christmas tree is watered daily.
- Turn off all electrical
- decorations before leaving home or going to sleep.
- Never leave a candle burning if you're not in the room.
 Extension cords used for holiday decorations should always be inspected for damage or exposed wires.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holiday season? Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets like TVs, phone chargers, gaming consoles and toothbrush chargers use energy when plugged into an outlet—even when they're not in use. Source: energy.gov



Located on the East side of US HWY 385 **308-377-2333**

VISIT US IN DALTON!

Made to Order Deli Sandwiches In-House Ground/Hand Cut Meats Groceries & Supplies Nebraska Products & Gifts Convenience Items

OPEN 6 DAYS A WEEK! Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Closed Sunday

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT Brian Zimmerman, *Big Springs*

> VICE PRESIDENT Stuart Morgan, Dalton

SECRETARY Brian "Moe" Moffat, *Oshkosh*

TREASURER Marcus Milanuk, Oshkosh

ASSISTANT SECRETARY Toni Blomenkamp, *Broadwater*

DIRECTOR Sean Blackburn, *Sidney*

DIRECTOR Jennifer Eckhardt, Dalton



GENERAL MANAGER / CEO Lacey Gulbranson

CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER Kelli Chaon

OPERATIONS MANAGER / SAFETY DIRECTOR Earl Reilly

MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES / CFO Sharrell Keane

STAKING / CONSTRUCTION MANAGER Ryan Borges

> MANAGER OF TECHNOLOGIES Jim Weeda

> > **OFFICE HOURS:** 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

P 308.254.5871 | T 800.261.7114 | F 308.254.2384 wheatbelt@wheatbelt.com



this The Moose & The Goose Gallery	
Clip and save	Custom Framing & Antiques
ad. Prese for	1017 Illinois Street
time of framing.	Sidney NE 69162
10% Chartiques.	308-254-0500 or 249-0338
We Buy fac	ebook.com/mooseandthegoose

12-H Wheat Belt PPD

Nebraska Magazine