



MARCH 2021

## THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION



### THREE ELECTRIFYING KITCHEN APPLIANCES TO SAVE TIME AND ENERGY

By Abby Berry - NRECA's Straight Talk

Whether your oven and stove top are powered by gas or electricity, it's no secret that they consume more energy than smaller countertop appliances, like slow cookers and toaster ovens. In addition to efficiency, smaller kitchen appliances can provide faster cooking times and less hassle with cleanup.

If you're looking for convenient cooking methods with the added bonus of energy efficiency, here are three electrifying appliances for your kitchen:

1. **Air fryers** are becoming increasingly popular, and consumers have a lot of good things to say about these handy little appliances. Air fryers use convection to circulate hot air and cook the food—this means little to no oil is required, resulting in healthier meals than those from traditional fryers. Air fryers are fairly small, so they won't take up much of your counter space, and with everything cooked in the fryer, cleanup will be a breeze. Air fryers are available in a variety of sizes, and prices range from \$40 to \$200+.
2. **Electric griddles** have certainly been around for a while, and they offer several benefits for any home chef (beyond bacon and eggs!). Griddles are convenient because you can cook everything at once—like a “one-pan” meal, and

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### LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Kerry Gross, our January “Lucky Winner”!

Kerry, a plumber for Local 3 Union with 43 years in the trade, is looking forward to retirement in 2023. Colorado natives, he and wife Teri have twin boys, Ryan and James, and five grandchildren. They love spending time at the lake and three years ago found a place, their own “piece of paradise!” They enjoy fishing, golfing, and being a part of the local community.

For Kerry's prompt payment, \$50.00 has been credited to his account. If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 15th of the month.

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## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Jason Weigle Joins Wheat Belt as Business Support Analyst

Jason's work at Wheat Belt includes data analytics and process documentation, board administration and education, and supporting Wheat Belt's Broadband and Modern Energy strategic initiatives. Jason joins Wheat Belt from UNL Extension in Sidney, where his main area of work was entrepreneurship, community, and leadership development.

Originally from Pennsylvania, Jason brings a wide range of work, teaching, and research experience to Wheat Belt. He served as a Watershed Specialist with the Tioga County Conservation District in north-central Pennsylvania, where he provided educational programming, research, and monitoring related to water quality and quantity, stream stability, and nutrient management.

He then worked for the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, where he permitted and inspected landfills before becoming ADEC's project manager for the former Adak Naval Air Station in the Aleutian Islands and statewide Military Munitions Response Program coordinator.

Life led him back to Pennsylvania and graduate school, where both his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation work at Penn State focused on community and the challenges facing rural areas due to competing interests in natural resource use.

Following graduate school, Jason taught online courses for Penn State's World Campus and

worked as a consultant in Pennsylvania's booming unconventional natural gas development region before joining Royal Dutch Shell's Appalachia asset as Community Liaison Officer. He led Shell Appalachia's Community Feedback Program and as well as supported social performance and corporate social responsibility projects in Canada, Iraq, Mexico, Ireland, New Zealand, and Brazil.

He left Shell to follow his interest in making, starting a woodworking and handcraft business with his wife. He also worked for a short time as an Agricultural Entrepreneurship educator with Penn State Extension before joining UNL Extension in Thayer County in 2018.

Jason, his wife Chandra, and their son Silas live in Sidney.

**Favorite food:** Jalapeno poppers

**Where is the best place you have traveled to and why:** Calgary, Alberta. Beautiful city, diverse cultures, the Plus 15 Skyway network, and a short drive to Banff National Park and Lake Louise (plus tons of fantastic food!).

*Continued on 12-D*




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Tim Lindahl  
General Manager / CEO

## GOODBYE

I was given an opportunity to join Wheat Belt and this community on March 1, 2005. I quickly grew fond of both and found that the mission of serving you with at cost electricity, working towards improving the economic viability of the area, and supporting agriculture was the most rewarding thing a person could do. We have moved forward, weathered a lot of storms, and have gotten Wheat Belt and the community on a solid footing for the future.

We have made great strides in aligning our rates, reducing costs, increasing efficiency, and building a very capable team. In fact, more than anytime in our history, I am confident that your board and team are well positioned to be your long term energy partner, with a trajectory of keeping our rates down, improving our reliability, and providing innovative solutions to your energy needs.

Since I started my career, I have always had the opinion that the top leader of an organization should not stay for life and should rotate every so often. This allows for bringing in new ideas and setting new directions to provide for the most successful organization possible.

It is a great time to step aside and allow someone

else the opportunity to continue taking Wheat Belt and this community forward. I will be joining Butler Electric Cooperative and Velocity Broadband in El Dorado Kansas as their CEO. I want to thank all of you for your support, both personally and for Wheat Belt. I will always have fond memories of Wheat Belt and the Western Nebraska community. I wish you all the best in your endeavors and I will follow your progress from afar. Your board of directors will be soon starting the search process for my replacement.

### *Kitchen Appliances continued from 12-A*

the possibilities are endless. From fajitas to sandwiches to French toast, griddles can help satisfy any taste buds. They consume small amounts of energy and provide quick cooking times, so your energy bill will thank you. Prices and sizes for griddles vary, but you can typically find one for about \$30 at your local retail stores.

3. Pizza brings people together, so why not consider a **pizza maker** for your kitchen? These compact, countertop machines are an inexpensive alternative to a costly brick oven, and they use less energy than your traditional oven. Choose your own fresh ingredients to whip up a faster, healthier pizza at home. Plus, most pizza makers are multifunctional and can be used to cook flatbreads, frittatas, quesadillas and more. You can purchase a pizza maker for about \$30 to \$150+ online or at your local retailer.

These are just a few electrifying appliance options for your kitchen. Remember, when you're cooking a smaller meal, countertop appliances can save time and energy.



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Jason Weigle continued from 12-B



**Hobbies:** Woodworking, video games, fly fishing, photography

**Favorite quote:** There are many ways of thinking about the community. To most of us the word conjures up an image of a place where people live. Big places, little places, cluttered and clean, streets and houses, stores, churches, factories, and farms. If we think about it for a minute, though, it's not the place or even the things there that count. It's the people, as they live and move and have their being. – Ken Wilkinson

 *Happy St. Patrick's Day!*

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY

### Tip of the Month

#### Don't keep your refrigerator too cold.

The Department of Energy recommends a temperature setting of 35 to 38 degrees for the fresh food compartment and zero degrees for the freezer. Make sure the refrigerator doors are sealed airtight to maximize efficiency.

Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)



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