



Editor's note: Sept. 15 to Oct. 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month, and, in honor of the month, our featured employee is Customer Care Supervisor Matthew Garcia. We're proud of our diverse workforce here at NorthWestern Energy.

A passion and commitment for the development in others is a rare, yet valuable trait in a leadership role.

This passion and commitment is what has driven Matthew Garcia throughout his career in customer service. In all roles he has held in the workforce, Matthew has been a natural leader and mentor to his peers, providing insight and guidance to help others give the best possible customer service to customers. Starting at the front lines of customer service, Matthew worked his way up to management roles leading customer service teams, and eventually found his way to NorthWestern Energy's customer care department as a supervisor in April 2023.

"My favorite part of my job is helping my team grow," Matthew said. "I take great pride in their career development and being a part of their success stories."

After a bit of experimenting with different recipes that were not only quick and easy, but that his young picky eater would happily eat, Matthew landed on this creamy sausage pasta recipe that he found online. This one pan meal is simple, with few ingredients, but is packed with flavor.

Creamy sausage pasta has become a regular meal at Matthew's house, saying, "It is now a dish that my kid requests the most. I love how it brings my family together at the dinner table."



Creamy sausage pasta

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground sausage
- 1 packet dry onion soup mix
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- 4 cups beef broth
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 12-ounce bag of egg noodles
- ½ cup sour cream

DIRECTIONS

- 1 In a large saucepan, brown ground sausage over medium-high heat.
- 2 Add dry soup mix and spices. Stir to coat.
- 3 Add broth and scrape the bottom of the pan to deglaze.
- 4 Add cream cheese and stir until it starts to melt.
- 5 Add egg noodles to the pan and stir to coat. Reduce heat to low and cover.
- 6 Simmer 10-12 minutes or until noodles are done. Stir occasionally.
- 7 Stir in sour cream and serve. (Top with parmesan and parsley if desired.)

CONTACT US

MONTANA

Customer Contact Center 888-467-2669
 7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F
 Emergency 24/7 Service
 Call Before You Dig 811
 Energy Efficiency 800-823-5995

NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center 800-245-6977
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CONSTRUCTION CENTER

1-83-FOR-BUILD (1-833-672-8453)

NorthWesternEnergy.com



We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic.

Estamos orgullosos de la diversidad en las comunidades que servimos. Para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de algunos de nuestros clientes, traducimos información importante del cliente a dos idiomas: español y karenic.

ပညာတော်အသုံးအဆောင်များကို ကျင့်သုံးရန်အတွက် အထူးအားပေးဆောင်ရွက်ပေးမည်။
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Energy Connections

Customer Bill Insert
Montana/South Dakota | October 2024

In this issue: Hunting safety | Natural gas pipeline safety
 How to read your bill | Creamy sausage pasta recipe



Bright ideas to save

Furnace Inspection

Maintaining your heating equipment helps prevent future problems and unwanted costs.

Please don't shoot at power equipment

Unfortunately, every year during hunting season, some of our infrastructure is damaged by gun shots.

Vandalism to electric and natural gas equipment creates risk for our customers and crews. It threatens our service reliability and the safety of our personnel. It is also costly. Replacing a damaged transmission pole cost nearly \$10,000, including equipment and labor. These avoidable costs divert funds away from other projects and cost all of us money on our utility bills.

We want to remind all customers not to shoot at power lines, insulators, signs or any above-ground natural gas equipment – and to report any damage they might spot. Please call 911 to report illegal activity to law enforcement. Call NorthWestern Energy immediately if you spot damaged electrical or natural gas equipment.



Natural gas pipelines are safe and reliable

Pipelines are the safest way to transport energy products, including natural gas, crude oil and other fuels. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Pipeline & Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) regulates pipelines with the help of state partners.

According to government and industry statistics, the most common cause of pipeline incidents is improper or unauthorized digging near a pipeline, which is why it's important to call 811 before you dig. Pipeline operators carefully build, maintain and monitor the integrity and security of their pipelines.

Understanding gas pipeline markers

Markers, placed at all public road and railroad crossings, show the approximate location of pipelines and identify the companies that operate them. These markers indicate the pipeline content, the name of the pipeline

operator and the operator's emergency phone number.

Even if the pipeline is marked, you must call 811 to have utility lines marked before digging. The pipeline may not follow a straight course between markers.

How to recognize a gas pipeline leak

A gas leak is often recognized by smell, sight, or sound:

- **Smell** — A distinctive sulfur-like or rotten-egg odor is added to natural gas, so you'll recognize it quickly. This odor may fade or be difficult to distinguish, and not all natural gas transmission lines are odorized. Do not rely on your sense of smell alone to detect a natural gas leak.
- **Look** — You may see dirt blowing into the air from a hole in the ground; continuous bubbling in water; dead or dying vegetation (in an otherwise moist

area) over or near a pipeline; a damaged connection to a gas appliance; or an exposed pipeline after an earthquake, fire, flood, or other disaster.

- **Listen** — You may hear a hissing, whistling, or roaring sound as natural gas escapes from a pipe.

If you suspect a natural gas leak, warn others and immediately leave the area. From a safe location at least 300 feet from the suspected leak, call 911 and NorthWestern Energy, any time, day or night.

How to read your bill



When we get our energy bill every month, many of us only look at the amount due. However, your NorthWestern Energy bill contains much more information, and the more you know about your energy use, the better you'll be able to manage it. Here are a few things to pay special attention to on your bill:

- The 13-month graph allows you to see how your energy use this billing cycle compares to recent months and to the same month one year ago.
- Look at the information under the graph to compare days of service, as this can fluctuate between cycles and can sometimes explain why a bill is higher or lower than normal.
- You can also compare average daily temperatures listed below the bar graph. These can also help explain fluctuations in your bill.
- Delivery charges vs. supply service:
 - Energy delivery charges can be thought of as the cost to use the highways (pipes and wires) that deliver the energy from the generation source to the user. These charges are subject to regulation by state utility commissions and, where appropriate, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.
 - Supply service is the charge for the amount of electricity or natural gas you use. The supply may come from a variety of sources, some owned by NorthWestern Energy and others owned by third-party suppliers. This is a pass-through cost, meaning whatever we pay for the energy is what our customers pay.
- Read the information in the Message Board area of the bill. It includes important information about rates and updates. We also have a page on our website dedicated to explaining every item on your bill, everything from where to find your account number to how we calculate therms. For more information, visit NorthWesternEnergy.com/ReadYourBill.