



It was a sunny afternoon in March, and Vegetation Management Coordinator Kevin D. had just wrapped up a helicopter flight to survey NorthWestern Energy’s transmission lines.

“I’ve been doing these helicopter rides for 16 years, and I still look forward to it,” he said. “Seeing how our system all connects together from an aerial view is really, really cool.”

As a vegetation management coordinator, Kevin makes sure trees, bushes, weeds and other vegetation don’t interfere with the safety or reliability of our gas or electric lines. He manages our contract tree crews and negotiates access with the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, city and state government, and customers.

Kevin was hired in 1997 by NorthWestern through the Job Service as a right of way technician to do weed control along gas and electric lines. In 2006, he moved into his current position. Kevin’s favorite thing about his job is working with the tree crews.

“It’s like a football team mentality,” said Kevin, who grew up playing sports. “You’re the coach and you’re getting everyone pepped up to work safely and productively.”

Creamy garlic mushrooms with bacon is a favorite recipe for Kevin and his girlfriend.

“It’s phenomenal as a combo with a good steak,” he said.

The sauce is also good on chicken or just about anything.

“The sauce is amazing,” Kevin said. “I would literally put it on everything.”



Creamy Garlic Mushrooms with Bacon

INGREDIENTS

4 slices bacon, chopped	1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika, or to taste
3 tablespoons butter	1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
1 tablespoon olive oil	Salt and fresh ground pepper, to taste
4 garlic cloves, minced	1/4 cup low sodium chicken broth
1 pound small button mushrooms, rinsed and patted dry with paper towels	1/2 cup heavy cream
1/2 teaspoon chili powder, or to taste	

DIRECTIONS

- 1 Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add in the chopped bacon. Cook until crispy and remove from skillet. Set aside.
- 2 Add butter and olive oil to the skillet; once melted, lower heat to medium and stir in the garlic. Continue to cook for 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Do not burn the garlic.
- 3 Add mushrooms to the skillet and coat them all around with the butter sauce.
- 4 Season with chili powder, garlic powder, salt and pepper.
- 5 Continue to cook over medium-high heat for 5 to 7 minutes, or until tender and nicely browned.
- 6 Add chicken broth and cook for 10 seconds.
- 7 Stir in the heavy cream and continue to cook for 3 to 4 minutes, or until sauce starts to thicken.
- 8 Remove from heat, stir in bacon and serve.

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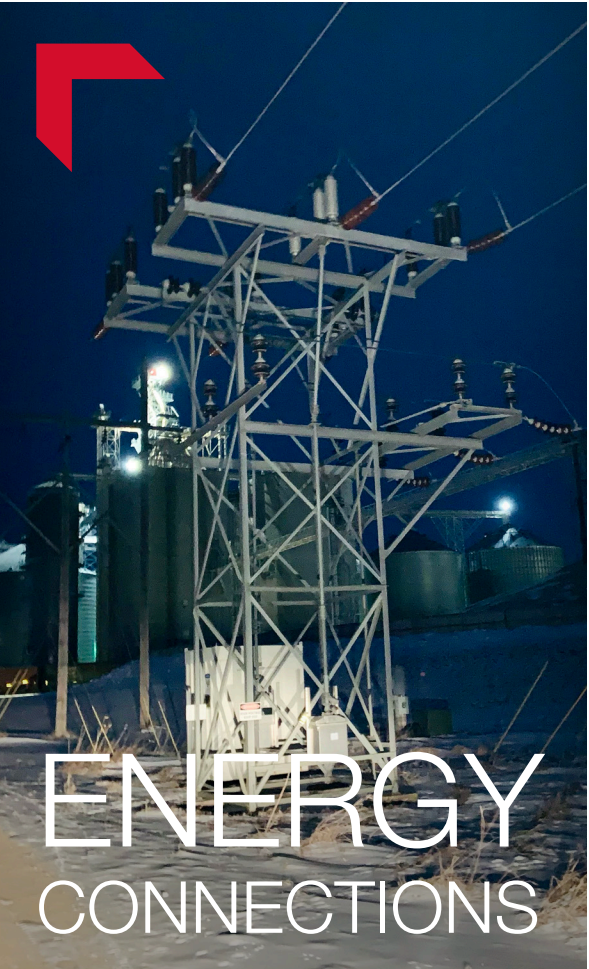
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We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic.

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.

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LOOK INSIDE FOR INFORMATION ON:

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Energy emergency

In mid-February, we asked our South Dakota Customers to conserve energy to mitigate the risk of widespread and long-lasting outages during the extreme cold that gripped the entire Midwest from Canada to Texas. Energy reserves were constrained at the time and there was a risk that there would not be enough supply to meet demand. In the end, we did have some rolling blackouts in South Dakota, mandated by the Southwest Power Pool, which manages the energy grid in South Dakota and much of the Midwest. We greatly appreciate all of our customers who helped by reducing their energy use.

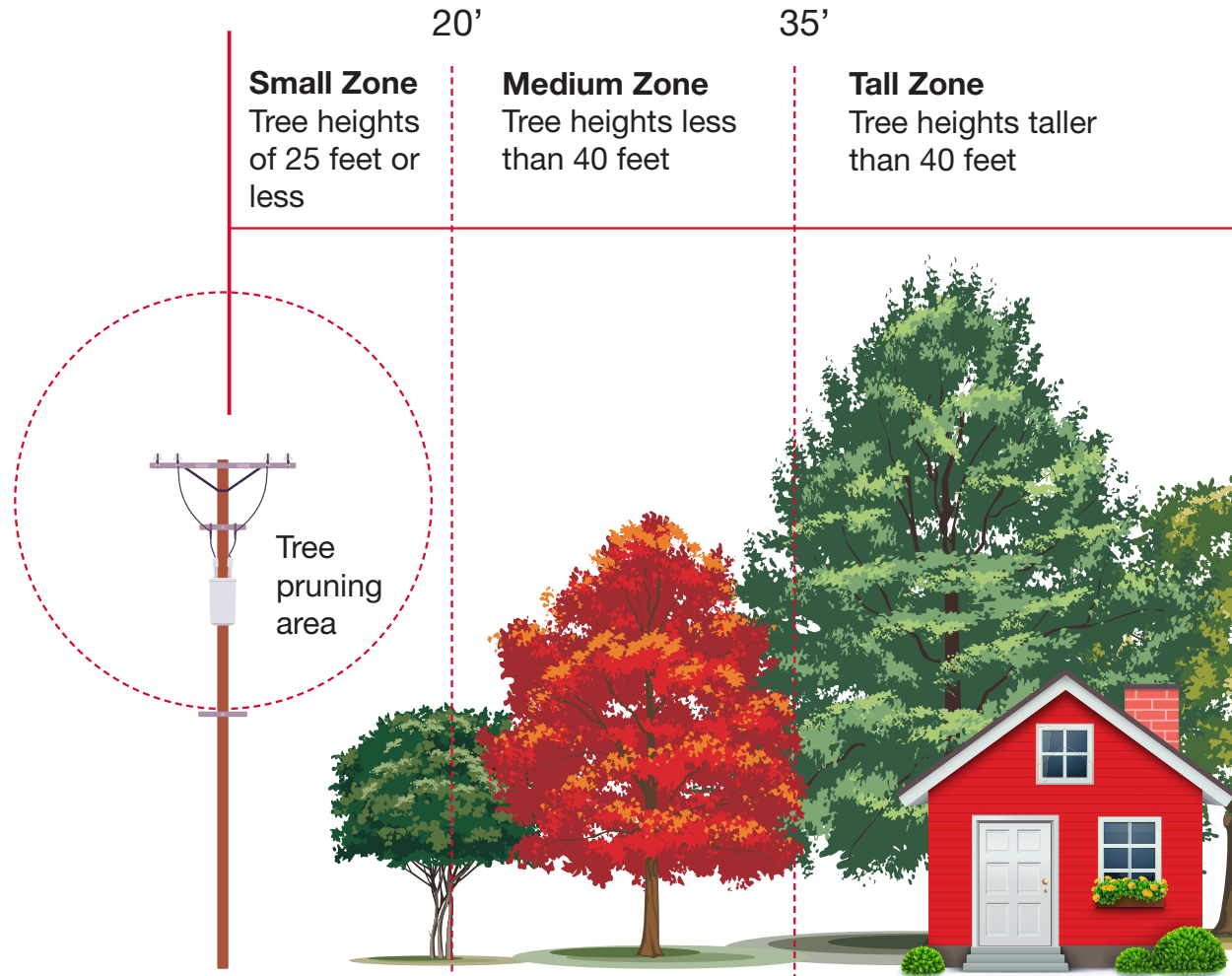
This winter storm severely impacted our country's oil and natural gas production and distribution. At the same time, extremely cold temperatures across the Midwest increased the demand for natural gas dramatically, forcing many utilities to buy additional supply to meet the needs of customers who rely on natural gas.

We know many of you are concerned about your energy bills. NorthWestern Energy has worked with the South Dakota Public Utilities Commission on a plan to address the impact of higher natural gas prices on customers' bills. The increase in gas prices will be collected over the next 12 months. This increase will be reflected within the Purchase Gas Commodity (PGC) beginning with customers' March bills. The PGC is found on monthly statements under the Natural Gas Services portion of the bill. NorthWestern Energy's rate to deliver natural gas to customers is unchanged.

We are currently working with the Nebraska Public Service Commission to determine the bill impact for our Nebraska customers. We will share details as they become available in upcoming communications.

For more information, please visit NorthWesternEnergy.com/SupportSD. We encourage anyone concerned about their ability to pay a higher energy bill to contact NorthWestern Energy's customer service department.

Plan before you plant



Planting the right tree in the right place

Overhead power lines - Before you plant a tree, know where overhead power lines are located and plant at least 20 feet away. Trees that grow taller than 40 feet should be planted more than 35 feet away.

Transformers - If your yard has a ground-level transformer (a large, green, metal box), be sure to leave room for our crews to access the transformer. Plant your shrubs at least 10 feet away from the front, and 2 feet away from the sides and back.

Stay safe around power lines - You should always keep people, equipment and objects at least 10 feet away from power lines. If you're using a ladder to trim a tree, be sure you're keeping yourself and your ladder away from overhead lines. Never attempt to remove a fallen tree or branch from a power line. You could be seriously injured or killed. If a tree or branch does come in contact with a power line, keep yourself and others away from the tree and call 911.



Sign up for Budget Billing

Budget Billing takes the mystery out of what your monthly energy payment will be. With Budget Billing, your NorthWestern Energy bill is the same every month. The amount is calculated using your average annual bill amount based on your past 12 months of usage and current rates.

Use our online Budget Billing Payment Calculator to get an estimate of what your monthly budget bill would be – NorthWesternEnergy.com/BudgetBilling.

Sign up online or give us a call at 800-245-6977.

*We'll review your account at least twice a year and your payment amount may fluctuate based on your usage patterns and/or rates currently in effect.



Call before you dig

Before planting a tree, call 811 or visit call811.com to have underground utilities located. This service is free and calling before you dig is required by law. Call at least two full business days before you start any digging project. Even

on your property and in your yard, damages caused by hitting an underground utility can be expensive and even deadly. Once utilities are marked, be sure to hand excavate within 18 inches on each side of markings.

If you ever hit a gas line, call 911 immediately. Even minor damage to a pipeline can result in future leaks.



Know what's below. Tap, Click, or Call 811 Before you dig.