

THE UTE LETTER

243 Edition of the Nebraska City Utilities News

March 2019

FROM THE DESK OF JEFF KOHRS:

We've all been hoping for some warmer weather and we're finally starting to see some improvement. However, with the warmup, we're experiencing some challenges now due to the rain and melting snow. Flooding has begun to impact us, but hopefully the flood will subside quickly.

A note of thanks to all of our employees especially during this cold winter. We've had a number of water main breaks, power outages, and flooding issues affecting the Waste Water Treatment Plant and the well field. Thanks to all of you that have helped us get through these challenging times. Your help and hard work is very much appreciated, whether it was being out in the cold helping to restore power, getting in the mud and dealing with a water main break, running generation to help restore power, answering phones, working and doing your best in your respective department or simply offering to help out and maybe helping in an area you normally don't work in. This kind of teamwork is what makes Nebraska City Utilities a great place to work. Thank you everyone.

March 18th is Natural Gas Utility Worker's Appreciation Day. The Mayor will be reading a proclamation at the City Council meeting that night. The 18th of March is the anniversary of the gas explosion in New London TX school in 1937. This explosion led to the widespread odorization of natural gas and an increased emphasis on safety.

Please remember to work safe and let's be careful out there.

GAS & WATER DEPT.

Bryan Turner

Well hopefully spring is here so we can get rid of the snow and ice, although now here comes the rain. We have been keeping busy here in the Gas and Water Department. We have repaired 8 water main breaks since the first of the year, we have been doing our Operator Qualifications, and doing a lot of maintenance.

I want to thank everyone for their hard work and all of the assistance I have received since my surgery, everything is proceeding well.

We have quite a list of projects for this year along with all the repairs to yards and streets from the water leaks. I want to remind everyone to be careful, safety first, the conditions are changing and that will present a whole new set of challenges. I hope everyone gets a chance to enjoy some of the warmer weather and shake off the winter blues.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS:

Kevin Grundman	4-15-56
David Hoyle	4-23-60
Jerry Osborn	4-27-60
James Palmer	4-20-48

APRIL WORK ANNIVERSARIES:

Shane Bassinger	4-09-18
Mark Lant	4-14-03
Howard Orndorff	4-23-90
Teresa Runkles	4-06-98

ELECTRIC DEPT:

Carl Abbott

I do not know if this statement applies to everyone, "I will be glad when we can get outside and do something" (in nice weather of course) but, I think we all are tired of winter.

Construction time is quickly coming and even if the weather cooperates the drying conditions will have to catch up. The crews have been busy working on all sorts of projects. NCU has recently installed temporary lighting on Jade Road past the new Holiday Inn Express. The New 904 Sub-Station west of Syracuse, that was recently updated due to the catastrophic fire last year has been energized and put back on line. This is a very important part of our electrical grid that gives us dependability and electrical service to the Bennet community. We did experience some challenges along the way with some settings on the new equipment, but it appears those have been corrected.

We recently had a 3 Phase 13,800 Volt underground circuit that failed at sub 903 west of the Lied Center that was installed in 1983. The crews are working on replacing it. We also had an equipment failure in the same sub that resulted in some damages where we had to replace the equipment. OPPD crews were called in to assist in the connections while NCU crews installed the conductors. We also experienced some problems at sub 902 by Crown Line Plastics that required some warranty work on the T-1 transformer and some breakers in the control rooms. Kind of felt like what could happen next.

We are so privileged to have the dedicated employees and support staff that we have here at NCU. Some of our employees were going on almost 30 hours work time, and on very little sleep. Kudos to the Diesel Plant team, the office staff, Gary, and whoever put up with us. These times are always difficult and challenging to our employees and their families. I also believe this is when our light shines brighter.

Most people are grateful for what we do. Thanks to everyone for your help during the past month on our unexpected outages, and urgent need to correct the problems. We will keep working to get back to normal. Keep safety first!

STORES DEPT:

Sharon Smulling

Spring begins today, we made it!!!!

Thank you all for all your help during inventory. We have new inventory software, so we were learning as we went along. We did learn a lot, so next time should be even better. ☺

American Recycling, the e recycling company will be in the area the last week of March. If anyone needs disposal of old or broken electronic items, please let us know. They do not except lightbulbs or alkaline batteries.

Free: computers, lcd monitors, cell phones, tablets, laptops, networking equipment, switches, servers, etc...

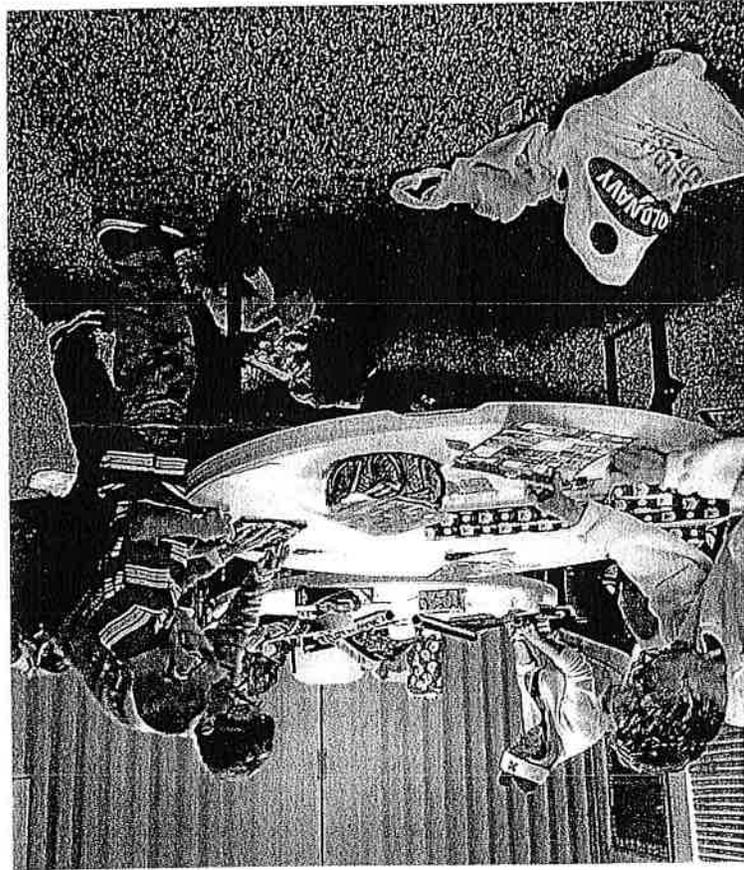
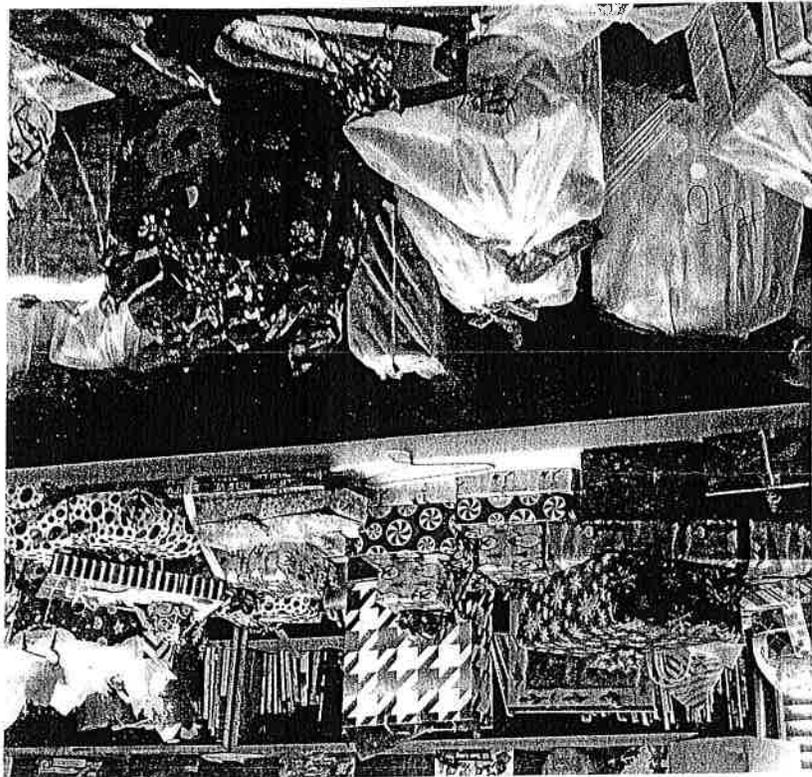
They do charge for the following:

TV's \$1.00 per inch

Large appliances \$50.00 ie: fridges, standalone copiers, dishwashers, ac units, and smartboards

Small Appliances \$15.00 ie: microwaves and grills

Printers \$.16 per pound



Thank you so much for your
 contribution to the Angel Tree program!
 We were able to help out 90 families
 (over 250 children) have a Merry Christmas!
 Your donation of gifts and cash was
 greatly appreciated!
 We've enclosed a couple pictures for
 you that show the support we've received.
 Thanks Again!
 with gratitude
 Jolene
 Sandra Neubauer and Sara Vesely

3. January 1, 2020
 - a. Those employees and spouses that scored a 2 or less – or – eliminated at least one metabolic risk factor since June but prior to December 1st, receive the incentive for 2020.
 - b. Those employees and/or spouses that did not score a 2 or less and did not eliminate at least one metabolic risk factor since June but prior to December 1st do not receive the incentive in 2020.
4. Repeat 1-3 perpetually until program terminated by the City Council.
5. New employees who come on after the screening will be grandfathered in, given the incentive, and will start the screening program the next year.
6. This program only applies to those employees and their spouses that are on the City's Health Insurance Plan.

Please note, the City wellness program is voluntary and confidential. It seeks to improve employee health and prevent disease and is fully compliant with the ADA, GINA, ACA, HIPAA, and EEOC. If you are unable to participate in any of the health-related activities or if it is medically inadvisable due to a medical condition for you to attempt to achieve any of the health outcomes required to earn an incentive, you may be entitled to an alternative standard. Contact your Human Resources department.

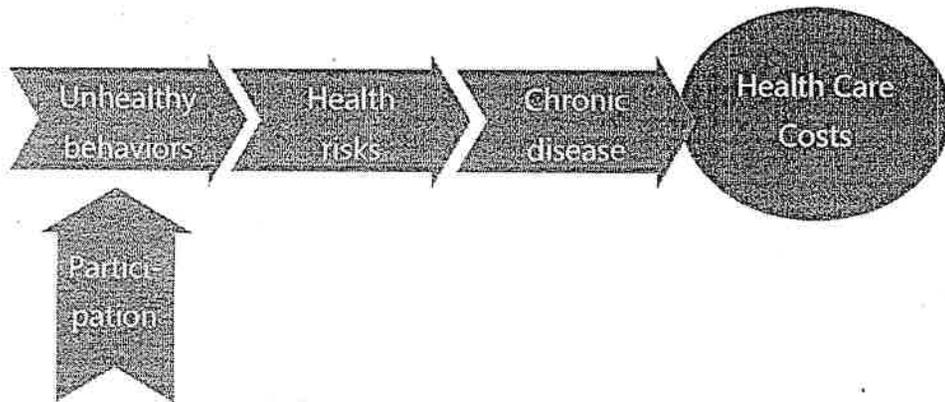
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REDUCING RISK & CONTAINING COST



**CITY OF NEBRASKA
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Wellness Program Initiative

The City of Nebraska City and Nebraska City Utilities ("the City") have been moving towards a Wellness Program over the last few years. There are many factors for this trend, more specifically, Cumulative Increases in Health Insurance Premiums, U.S. Health Trends, as well as our own Worksite Wellness Trends. The rise in premiums are partially based off of how many claims are filed within a calendar year. As a group, it is our goal to decrease the number of claims filed by all being cognizant of our own health risks, identifying those risks, and reducing those risks through targeted lifestyle management. As a City we strive to be a supportive partner in this endeavor.

To that end, in September 2017, as a 1st Step, the City instituted a "participation based" plan where the employees who participated in the Biometric Screening received \$30/month incentive on their health insurance premium.

Biometric Screening consists of 5 separate tests.

1. HDL Cholesterol
2. Triglycerides
3. Fasting Glucose
4. Waist Circumference
5. Blood Pressure

If 3 or more risks are present from these tests, you are considered to have Metabolic Syndrome and are 7x more likely to get diabetes; 3x more likely to get heart disease; 2x more likely to have a stroke; 4x higher medication costs; and 2x more work days lost.

The 2nd step in the Wellness Program was an Employee/Spouse "participation based" plan. With this, we implemented the Biometric Screening for employee and spouse. The screening took place late September 2018.

WHAT DID THIS MEAN TO YOU AS AN EMPLOYEE?

If Employee and/or Spouse did not participate in the 2018 screening, or they did not provide

results from a screening with their doctor, or they did not provide an appropriate medical waiver, then they did NOT receive the incentive and therefore paid more in 2019.

What are the Incentives?

- \$30/month Employee-Only plan
- \$30/month Employee-Child plan
- \$60/month Employee-Spouse plan (\$30 for Employee + \$30 for Spouse)
- \$60/month on Family Plan (\$30 for Employee + \$30 for Spouse).

In 2019: the 3rd Step will be to move Employees and Spouse to an "Outcome Based" Plan.

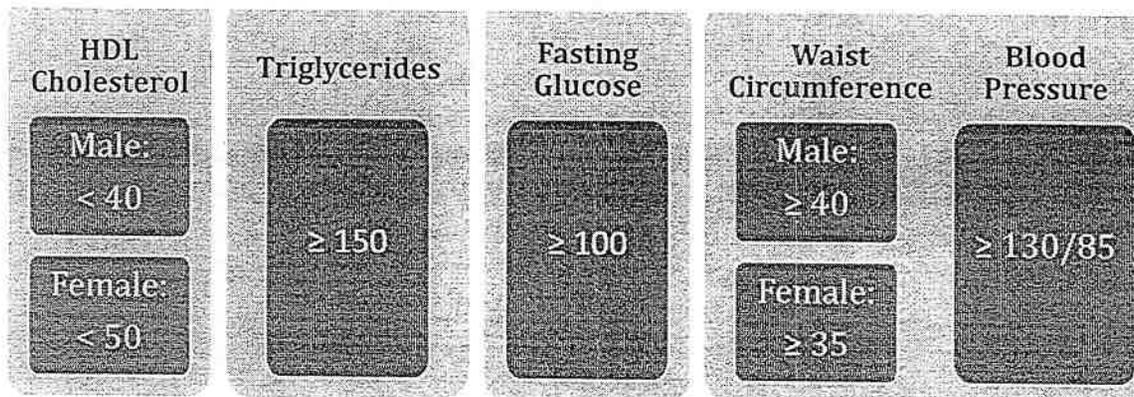
Timeline for Outcome Based:

1. Screening June 2019
 - a. Outcome Based stage
 - b. Those employees and/or spouses that score a 3 or more on their biometric screening are offered an employer paid health Resource.
 - Naturally Slim
 - Other sources as determined.
2. June 2019 – December 1, 2019.
 - a. These employees and/or spouses may take the Health Resource course, take another screening with their healthcare provider, and if the results show they eliminated at least one metabolic risk factor, they receive the incentive for 2020.

Example:

 - 5 to a 4; 4 to a 3; or 3 to a 2

METABOLIC SYNDROME – A risk factor exists if:



FrontLineEmployee

WELLNESS, PRODUCTIVITY AND YOU!

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March 2019

STAYING FIT: Find moments for movement

Research has shown that sitting at a desk most of the day can take a toll on your health. For this reason, some health experts call long-term sitting "the new smoking."

Stand-up desks and even expensive treadmill-desks have been introduced to mitigate this health crisis. There may be an easier way to mitigate all the risk: **Move when you get the chance.**

Walk in the morning, walk at lunch, take the stairs, get up and talk to your co-worker instead of sending an email, pace while on the phone, do some stretches every 30 minutes, try a few sit-ups, and/or do some lunges. Put a reminder sticker near your desk that says "Move!" and fight the impact of sedentary work.

Source: www.cuimc.columbia.edu [Search: "sedentary sitting"]



MAINTAIN a positive attitude

Having a positive attitude does not mean you are dismissive of problems and concerns, while others who are pessimistic or downbeat are more mature and realistic in the face of undesirable circumstances.

A positive attitude is driven by a belief that successful outcomes and solutions to problems are often influenced by optimism. A person with a positive attitude can still feel the tug to be negative. He or she just succumbs to it less often. Maintaining a positive attitude is a learned skill, valued by employers, and often mentioned in performance reviews. If your attitude is easily affected by circumstances, try practicing "conscious positivity."

When you don't quite feel like being positive, be excited for others' achievements. Have fun playing cards when you are losing. Be friendly to others you don't know. Motivate others by saying something positive. Avoid letting others' negativity bring you down. And, ditch the "yeah, but..." With practice, you'll get the hang of it fast.

TALKING TO SOMEONE about getting counseling

Is there a "right way" or "best approach" for convincing a troubled friend or loved one to get professional counseling? Any approach will include unease, but don't let the adage "no one accepts help until they're ready" stop you from giving it a try.

Contrary to popular belief, it's not fear or stigma that keeps people from accepting help for personal problems...

Resistance to assistance is usually founded on denial bolstered by brief wins at curtailing symptoms following negative events or incidents. These are also missed opportunities for change. They represent your best time to convince your friend or loved one to accept help, because they are accompanied by regret or remorse.

Urgency for change is less likely when a person is feeling well, in control, and in a positive frame of mind. They may be easier to approach, but their positivity is usually helpful only at convincing you that all is well. Instead, make your approach after the next incidental crisis. Each one is your cue to make a move.

Don't give up. With a supportive style, have the source of predetermined help at the ready as well as a way to access it. Make your time available to be supportive, encouraging and facilitative until your friend is connected to help. Consider getting guidance from a Continuum EAP professional to boost your capability and the likelihood that you will be successful in helping your friend.

FEEDBACK THAT STICKS

Advice about giving feedback often centers on reducing the recipient's defensiveness, not whether feedback will create change. However, there is a science-based approach for the latter. It's called "Situation – Behavior – Impact (SBI.)"

You can download a free tool that explains how to use it, developed by the Center for Creative Leadership, an international training and research

institute. You'll enjoy its usefulness for improving workplace relationships.

Three carefully coordinated elements comprise SBI:

- 1 Identifying the situation needing feedback.
- 2 Describing the behavior needing change.
- 3 Explaining the impact of the behavior in a way that prompts the recipient to make changes.

Download: <https://www.mindtools.com/blog> [search: "feedback tool"]

Gratitude & science

The benefits of practicing gratitude have real science behind it. This principle recognizes that how we think, and condition ourselves to think, produces expectations and plays a significant role in our self-esteem, perception, decisions and ability to manage stress.

Research supports the benefits of practicing gratitude. In one study, those who wrote about gratitude ten minutes a day were more optimistic and felt better about their lives, exercised more, and had fewer visits to physicians than those who did not.

Practicing gratitude is a simple process: You simply reflect regularly on the people and things you are grateful for.

Source: www.health.harvard.edu [Search: "thanks, happier"]

