



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

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 Energy Efficiency 800-823-5995

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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 အရေးကြီးသော အချက်အလက်များကို အသေးစိတ် ဖော်ပြပါရှိပါသည်။ အချို့သော အချက်အလက်များကို အသေးစိတ် ဖော်ပြပါရှိပါသည်။

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Energy Connections

Customer Bill Insert
Nebraska | October 2024

In this issue: Rate increase notification | We're here to help | Winter heating | Creamy sausage pasta recipe



Bright ideas to save

Furnace Inspection

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



Customer notice of natural gas rate increase

NorthWestern Energy will implement new interim rates beginning Oct. 1. In June, NorthWestern Energy submitted an application to the Nebraska Public Service Commission, the cities of North Platte, Kearney, and Grand Island, and the village of Alda for a regulatory rate review of our natural gas rates.

Under the new interim rates, typical natural gas residential customers using 100 therms per month will see an increase of 4.07% or \$5.29 per month on their natural gas bill.

NorthWestern Energy asked for the regulatory rate review to ensure that our customers will continue to be served by a financially sound company with access to low-cost capital to continue efficient investments that ensure reliable, safe energy service for customers. Final rates will be determined in negotiations between NorthWestern Energy and the cities of North Platte, Kearney, and Grand Island and the village of Alda, with final approval from the Nebraska Public Service Commission. A final decision is expected later this year or in early 2025.

We recognize that our rate request will impact our customers during a period when other prices are also increasing. NorthWestern Energy is committed to helping customers who may be struggling with their bills. Customers concerned about their ability to pay their energy bill can contact NorthWestern Energy for information about energy assistance programs and to arrange flexible payment options.

We're here to help

If you are concerned about your ability to pay your energy bills, reach out to us right away. We have billing and payment options that may help.

- **Payment assistance** – Payment assistance programs are available through NorthWestern Energy, state governments and nonprofit organizations. Learn more at NorthWesternEnergy.com/help or call us at 800-245-6977.
- **Payment arrangements** – If you're having trouble paying your NorthWestern Energy bill, we may be able to work with you to set up payment arrangements that can help you avoid service disconnection. Log in to My Energy Account or call our Customer Service Team.
- **Budget Billing** – With Budget Billing, your NorthWestern Energy bill is the same amount each month, year-round. Learn more at NorthWesternEnergy.com/BudgetBilling.
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP)** – LIHEAP provides heating assistance, cooling assistance, year round crisis assistance, emergency furnace repair and replacement, fan program and weatherization services for eligible Nebraska citizens/households. To learn more, call 800-383-4278 or visit dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/EnergyAssistance.aspx.
- **Weatherization assistance** – Weatherization enables low income families in Nebraska to reduce their energy bills by making their homes more energy efficient. To learn more, call 877-253-2603 or visit neo.ne.gov/programs/wx/wx.html.



Are you prepared for winter heating season?

The winter heating season is just around the corner, so here is some important information to help you prepare:

Is your furnace ready for winter?

When was the last time you had your furnace inspected? Can't recall? That means it is time for an inspection. A well-maintained furnace is more efficient and safe. You should have all natural gas appliances, furnaces, vents, flues, chimneys and gas lines in your home or business inspected every year or two by a qualified industry professional.

Also, be sure you replace or clean your air filter monthly, or as recommended. A dirty air filter makes your furnace work harder, and a clean air filter can lower your furnace's energy consumption by 15%.

When it's cold outside, these are the best ways to conserve energy inside.

- **Evaluate your insulation levels** – Adding insulation will help keep your home warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Note: In the winter, cold floors and walls are signs of a poorly insulated home.

- **Check your heating equipment** – Make sure your furnace or other heating equipment is working properly by having it regularly checked and serviced.
- **Inspect your windows and doors for air leaks** – You have air leaks if you can see daylight peeking around your door or window frame. Simply seal up the leaks by caulking, adding weather stripping or installing a door sweep.
- **Adjust your thermostat** – When you are home and awake, set the thermostat as low as is comfortable. When you are asleep or out of the house, turn the thermostat back to save as much as 10% a year on your heating bills.
- **Reduce heat loss from your fireplace** – Keep the fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning. Keeping the damper open is like keeping a window wide open during the winter.
- **Take advantage of heat from the sun** – Open curtains on the south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.