



Angie Rans joined NorthWestern Energy 13 years ago as a Customer Service Representative. She spent five years in that position, before becoming a Credit Specialist, and then two years ago, she moved into the role of Customer Care Advocate. As the Customer Care Advocate, Angie is the first point of contact for all Public Service Commission/Public Utilities Commission inquiries received for our three-state service territory. She serves as a liaison between the company, the commissions and our customers.

“My position is resolution focused on understanding and resolving complex customer issues,” Angie said. “I look at things from a holistic perspective, by putting myself in the customer’s shoes, to determine if there is opportunity to improve our customer’s experience.”

Angie’s day-to-day work involves researching, responding to and determining the root cause of customer issues. Her focus is on how we can ultimately resolve the issue and change processes to avoid the same inquiry being received again.

As part of this process, Angie works with coworkers from every part of the company to help understand the process from different points of view so she can suggest process improvements and/or changes to improve the customer experience.

“The most rewarding part of my job is when we can take an opportunity and turn it into a success,” Angie said. “I love knowing that I am helping to make a difference by being the advocate for our customers.”

Angie’s recipe comes from her mom, who recently passed away from Lewy Body Dementia. Better known as “Gramma Jackie,” Angie’s mom always had homemade sweet treats on hand.

“If there wasn’t anything there when you got there, by the time you left, she had something special whipped up for all her loved ones,” Angie said.



## Gramma Jackie’s Carmel Puff Corn

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup butter (real butter, not margarine)
- 1 1/4 cups brown sugar (This can be dark or light)
- 2/3 cup light corn syrup
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 8 ounces butter-flavored puff corn (such as Old Dutch or Chester’s brands)

### DIRECTIONS

- 1 Preheat oven to 250° F. Combine the butter, brown sugar, and light corn syrup in a 2-quart saucepan.
- 2 Cook on medium heat until the mixture has melted, stirring constantly until the mixture is boiling. Then stop stirring, reduce heat and let the caramel mixture boil 3 minutes. Turn off the heat and add the baking soda and stir to incorporate. (The caramel sauce will have a foamy appearance when you add the baking soda, this is normal.)
- 3 Spray your spoon and a large pan or a large stainless-steel bowl with a light coating of spray oil to reduce sticking. (Something that can be placed in the oven and will allow the puff corn to be stirred). Pour puff corn into the roasting pan/ bowl.
- 4 Pour the caramel sauce over the puff corn and stir to incorporate.
- 5 Place in the oven at 250° F and bake for 45 minutes uncovered. Stir every 10-15 minutes. Baking helps even out the caramel coating.
- 6 Remove from the oven and divide between two large cookie sheets or two half sheet pans lined with waxed paper and let cool. Once cooled, break apart and enjoy!

## CONTACT US

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[NorthWesternEnergy.com](http://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  
**October 2023**

In this issue: Winter heating season tips | We’re here to help | Gramma Jackie’s Carmel Puff Corn



**Bright ideas to save**  
**Lower your thermostat**

Turn down your thermostat by 7 to 10 degrees when you are asleep or away. This can save about 10% per year on your heating bills.



## Are you prepared for winter heating season? Here are some tips:

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%.

### Why is my energy bill higher in the winter?

Winter heating can lead to higher energy bills. Several factors can impact your monthly energy bill.

- **Colder weather** – Cold temperatures can have a major impact on your bill. Even if you don't adjust your thermostat, your heater is working harder to maintain the same indoor temperature when it's cold outside.

- **Shorter days** – The short days of winter mean we spend more time with our lights on.
- **Holidays** – Energy use often increases around the holidays due to holiday lights and decorations, doing more cooking than usual and hosting gatherings.
- **Wintertime appliances** – Some items we use only in the winter can increase energy use, including engine block heaters, space heaters, heat lamps for animals or heated water troughs, hot tubs, holiday decorations and heated garages.

### How can I save energy in the wintertime?

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. And change your furnace filter often to keep it clean!

- **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.
- **Lower holiday light costs** – Use light-emitting diode, or "LED," holiday light strings to reduce the cost of decorating your home for the winter holidays.
- **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.



## We're here to help

If you are concerned about your ability to pay your energy bills this winter, 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](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/help) or call us at (888) 467-2669 in Montana or (800) 245-6977 in South Dakota or Nebraska.
- **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](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com/BudgetBilling).
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Programs (LIHEAP)** – the federally funded LIHEAP is an energy assistance program that is available to customers who may not otherwise be able to afford to heat their homes or apartments during the winter. Each year, Oct. 1 through April 30, customers may apply for LIHEAP through their local Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) office.