



February 2009

City Happenings

An eNewsletter from the City of Lexington, Nebraska



What's going on at the CED Addition? (southwest Lexington)

ABLE Houses

The first single-family house built by students last year has been sold and is now occupied. A second house is well under way, with the exterior mostly done so the students can work on finishing the interior over the winter and spring months.

The student-built houses give youth experience, school credit, and a chance to see if they want to further pursue construction as a career. The project is spearheaded by ABLE (Advocating for Business Labor Education), a program under the umbrella of Dawson Area Development, in cooperation with Lexington High School.

Funding for the first home was obtained through the City's housing re-use fund. Proceeds from the first home sales are being used to help finance the current



the ABLE house building success include the City, local banks, local businesses, building contractors of all specialties, realtors and building supply companies.

CROWN Houses

Travel through the new CED Addition and you will also see the beginnings of five more homes on the west side of Reagan Drive. They are homes built under the State of Nebraska's CROWN program, which stands for CRedits to OWN.

The high quality homes are being built thanks to low-income housing tax credits, and home funds from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and private resources. Upon completion, the CROWN homes will be made



project, hopefully becoming a regular class offering. The house under construction is expected to have a sale value in the low \$100,000's.

Several organizations are involved in ensuring

available to individuals or families in low to moderate income ranges. A portion of the rent goes into escrow, which is saved as a down payment to purchase a home at a later date.

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What's going on at the CED Addition? (continued)

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The homes will be three-bedroom, two-bath and be approximately 1,330 square feet and include a two-car garage. Fifteen CROWN homes will be built in Dawson County: five each in Lexington, Cozad and Gothenburg.

Renters will be required to take courses in home maintenance, and receive home buyer education and counseling through Dawson Area Development officials, according to DAD Executive Director Jen Wolf.

Although would-be renters have to qualify by income, they aren't penalized if their income increases over time.

"It is a great opportunity for individuals and families currently in lower income brackets to achieve home ownership over time," said City Manager Joe Peplitsch.

Our Water . . . Our Responsibility

Lexington has joined 9 other Nebraska Cities in a coalition of communities working to reduce water pollution caused by toxic chemical runoff into storm sewers. This runoff eventually ends up in our water supply.

NEBRASKA
H₂O

To find out more and discover ways you can help preserve our precious clean water, visit Nebraska H₂O online at www.NebraskaH2O.org.

What's going on at . . . ?

Cattlemen Drive Drainage Ditch



While construction on Lexington's Hike & Bike Trail Phase 1 is on winter shutdown, crews are mostly finished with a pedestrian bridge on Dawson County Drainage Ditch #1, just north of Cattlemen Drive. There is some finish work left on the culvert, including fencing and side railings. The 2.4-mile

trail has been under construction since summer 2008. It will stretch from Frontier Street to the pedestrian overpass that spans the UPRR railroad tracks at Madison Street. This phase of the trail system will be completed by summer 2009.



Refrigerator / freezer recycling program

Don't dump that old, inefficient fridge or freezer yet. From March through October we'll take qualifying units off your hands and pay you up to \$35.

"We," meaning the City of Lexington, in cooperation with Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and a recycling company.

The purpose of the refrigerator recycling program is three-fold:

- to reduce electricity usage by removing inefficient and excess operable refrigerators and freezers from the electrical distribution system;
- to recycle metals, plastics, and other usable materials; and
- to destroy environmentally toxic materials, such as mercury from thermostats and PCBs from older capacitors, in an environmentally responsible manner.

The Refrigerator Recycling Program is designed to provide an incentive to customers who want to discard an operating secondary refrigerator or freezer. Incentives for doing so include:

- convenience of in-home pick up of the refrigerator or freezer;
- an incentive payment up to \$35 per appliance recycled; and
- satisfaction of environmentally responsible appliance disposal.

The program is for secondary refrigerators and freezers only – not for replacing your main refrigerator.

Application and Project Implementation Process

- Customer will apply for the program by calling a toll free number or applying online.
- The Contractor will qualify customer, schedule, and arrange pick up of the appliance.



- The Contractor will issue an incentive check to customer with EnergyWise logo and letter if desired.
- The Contractor will disassemble and recycle or destroy refrigerator components as appropriate and document component flow.

Watch for advertisements starting in March. For more information contact Lexington Utilities System, 308-324-2343.



Subscribe

To subscribe to Lexington City Happenings, fill out the online form at www.ci.lexington.ne.us/aboutus.asp. If you have comments or suggestions, contact Dennis Burnside, dburnside@cityoflex.com, 308-324-2341. You are encouraged to forward this to others you think may be interested.

Archives available online at www.cityoflex.com.



EnergyWise Tip: Programmable Thermostats



Lexington Utilities System is providing regular "EnergyWise" tips to help electric consumers use energy efficiently.

February's EnergyWise tip is one of the easiest ways to save energy — install a programmable thermostat. Standard thermostats only save energy if the occupant remembers to turn them up or down. However, a programmable thermostat does the thinking for you — adjusting the performance of the heating and cooling system to maximize comfort, while saving money when possible.

With a programmable thermostat, the occupant programs the unit to control the

temperature throughout the day. During the winter, it is prudent to set back the temperature five to 10 degrees when your home is unoccupied and while sleeping. Likewise, during the summer, the temperature should be set five to 10 degrees higher during unoccupied and sleeping hours. This helps save energy, and money, since the heating or cooling system runs less.

A programmable thermostat costs \$30 and up, but saves about the same amount each year for the life of your heating/cooling equipment. Get the most value for your money, each and every time you flip a switch. Caution: it is essential to correctly install and program the thermostat, or it may expend more energy than a non-programmable unit.

For more information, contact Lexington Utilities System, 308-324-2343.



Meet Officer Lance Blythe

Lexington Police Department's newest officer is **Lance Blythe**. A native of Lexington, the 26-year-old joined the LPD in July 2008, after six years in the United States Marine Corps. Most of his tour of duty occurred in San Diego.

There he began his course toward a law enforcement career, having gained experience and training in the USMC Military Police.



Lance married Jocelyn Bowen of Bertrand in December.



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February/March Library News

Lexington Public Library
907 North Washington St.
by Kathy Thomsen
Library Director

The Lexington Public Library continues to provide a variety of programs that are sponsored by the Lexington Community Foundation Library Initiative.

Eighty-one people braved the cold temperatures on January 22 to listen as Bobby Norfolk told stories and folktales with rhythm, sound effects, and lively animation.



Grandma of Grandma's Quilts (You can check out her website at grandmasquilts.com.) will be presenting an inspiring program entitled *Every Woman Has a Story* on February 26 at 7:00 pm.



Grandma is Gloria Hall of Palmyra, Neb. The program is a reverse chronology trunk show and lecture that travels through nearly 200 years of quilting beginning with Gloria's own story in 1990 and concluding with the quilt and story of an eleven-year-old girl in the early 1800s. Each story guides the audience to

appreciate the life of the woman who created the quilt. Gloria who enthusiastically describes her love of quilting, has her own quilt showroom. She lectures on antique quilts, aprons, and feed sacks both nationally and internationally.



Be ready for an evening of laughs and fun and for the opportunity to simplify your life when Cyndy Salzman of Omaha presents her program *Putting a Clamp on Clutter* on Thursday,

March 5 at 7:00 pm. Her presentation is filled with easy and practical solutions. Her warmth and humor have made her one of the most popular speakers at events across the country. One program attendee commented, "I laughed so hard my jaws hurt." So if you are among the domestically challenged or if you just want an entertaining evening, don't miss *Putting a Clamp on Clutter*!

Pippa White will be returning on Thursday, March 19, for two programs. *ChatterHats*, a program for children pre-K through second grade, will be performed at 4:30 pm. *Far as the Eye Can See* will be performed at 7:00 pm that evening.



ChatterHats is a program that consists of poems, songs and HATS that tell stories.



Far as the Eye Can See is the story of the prairie and its people - The pioneers who crossed it, the later pioneers who settled it, the brave people of the Dust Bowl, and the Native American people who struggled to keep the prairies that once belonged to them.





Home Safety Checklist

Check your home emergency preparedness level

You can't predict when you and your family will be faced with an emergency. Help protect your loved ones by developing a home emergency response plan. The following checklist can help you develop a plan. If you answer "Yes" to the majority of the questions on the checklist, you are well on your way toward developing a comprehensive plan. If you answer "no" to many of the questions, you should develop a plan using the questions as a guide.

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you have a home emergency plan? Does it cover all emergencies, including fire, weather, etc.? Does your family practice the plan? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does your family understand that once they are outside, they should stay outside? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does your plan include smoke, gas and carbon monoxide detectors? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you have a fully stocked first aid kit? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you have a weather radio? Do all family members know what the signals mean? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you have a fire extinguisher, and is it serviced regularly? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Can each member of your family tell you two ways out of your home? If your second way out of a two-story home is a window, do you need a safety ladder? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you encourage family members to take first aid and CPR classes? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Can all members of your family operate all locks, windows and doors to aid escape? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | If needed, do members of your family know how to shut off your home's water, gas and electricity? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does your family understand to leave or seek shelter when an alarm sounds? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does your plan cover who should be called in case of a utility problem? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does each member of your family know where to go after evacuating your home? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you maintain a supply of tarps of plywood to cover openings created by a storm or fire? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Does each member of your family know who to call for help? Are the telephone numbers posted? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you have flashlights, radios and batteries located in a central area known to all family members? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | In a weather-related emergency, does your family know where to seek shelter? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Do you have a written inventory and photographs of all valuable items in your home? Do you have more than one copy located outside of your home? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | Are batteries in smoke detectors routinely replaced? | <input type="checkbox"/> YES
<input type="checkbox"/> NO | If you have pets, have you provided for them in your home emergency plan? |