



Community & Home Living

Neighborhoods as Communities of Interest

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Neighborhoods today are very different from the typical neighborhoods of the past. Neighborhoods used to be characterized by people with similar background and interests, neighbors knowing each other, sharing similar interests and having a high level of interaction. In a growing urban environment, this picture is different. Neighborhoods are characterized by people from different races, cultures,

interests, ages, educational backgrounds, sex, marital status, etc. Many people do not know their next door neighbor and the level of interaction is very low.

Neighborhoods are becoming only a community of place instead of a community of interest. The community-shared sense of identity is often limited to the address where people live. Today our communities of interests are spread throughout the city. They are our work, school, sports club, church, volunteer organization and ethnic association. Most of these are not located in our neighborhood. These communities are an important part of our lives and have to be preserved. However, participation in the neighborhood in which we live is essential for our quality of life.

Interactions are the basis for all communities. The way we

interact with each other in our neighborhood builds or decreases our neighborhood attributes and resources. If we want to preserve health and security in our neighborhoods, we need to strengthen our social capital. Social capital is described as features of social organization, such as networks, norms and trust that facilitate

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coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit. Communities can build social capital by strengthening relationships and communication, and encouraging community initiative, responsibility and adaptability. When a high level of social capital is established, instead of community residents and leaders saying, "If only someone would..." communities are much more likely to say, "We can..."

Social capital can be divided into two elements: *bonding social capital* and *bridging social capital*. Bonding social capital is the connections among homogenous individuals and groups. Homogeneity may be based principally on class, ethnicity, gender or other social characteristics. Bridging social capital connects diverse groups within the community to one another and to groups outside the community. It can set the stage for change to a better neighborhood.

This article will continue in the next issue with a discussion on social capital and diversity.

Recycling and Pollution Prevention Show Oct. 30

WasteCap of Lincoln is hosting a "Nebraska Recycling and Pollution Prevention Training and Vendor Show" showcasing pollution prevention resources as well as local environmental and recycling service providers. The training session and vendor show is planned for Wednesday, Oct. 30, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. at the Cornhusker Hotel in Lincoln.

This event will assist businesses in Lincoln, the State of Nebraska and the region in identifying resources for pollution prevention assistance and will aid in identifying the service providers that can help businesses to be in compliance with regulations or become better environmental stewards through improved environmental practices. Over 30 vendors will be displaying

their environmental products and services including recycling, the use of less toxic chemicals, environmentally preferable products, technical assistance and more. The agenda will include seven speakers discussing the various pollution prevention resources that their organizations provide to businesses.

The vendor show is offered for free to those with advance tickets, \$5 at the door. The cost of the training session is \$69 per person for non-members and \$49 per person for WasteCap of Lincoln members. The training fee includes lunch, parking validation and a ticket to the Vendors Networking Reception. For more information, call WasteCap of Lincoln at 472-0888 or visit their Web site at www.wastecaplnk.org. (LB)

Timely Tips to Get Home Ready for Winter

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Winter is just around the corner and it is time to prepare for its ravages. Winterizing the home can save money and energy. Start by taking a walk around your house and yard to do a quick check for the following:

- Check the heating system to ensure it will operate safely and efficiently. Make sure the area around the furnace is clear. Check air filters, change them regularly and consider keeping a supply on-hand.
- Inspect the chimney to make sure it is unobstructed and safe to use.
- Check smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. If you do not have them now would be a good time to install them. Test smoke alarms monthly and change batteries at least once a year.
- Check the weatherstripping and caulking around the home. Caulking is used to seal cracks and joints

in the shell of the home. Weatherstripping reduces air infiltration around moving parts of the home. Caulk around window and door frames; between the sill plate and foundation; along the sole plate of exterior walls; around faucets, pipes, wiring, outlets or vents in exterior walls and joints between wallboard or paneling and the floor or ceiling on exterior walls. Use weatherstripping around doors and windows.

- Clean and repair gutters. Remove leaves, sticks and other debris. Make sure all drain spouts are in place. Clean roof valleys so water from rain or snow melting doesn't stand and cause deterioration of the

- Check for chipped or peeling paint. Fall is a good time to do painting.
 - Clean windows and screens. If you use storm windows, remove screens, clean windows and put on storm windows. Repair screens before storing for the winter.
 - Repair cracks in sidewalks and driveways.
 - Before storing away your garden hoses water trees and shrubs one last time. Make sure your outside water lines are free from water so they will not freeze during the winter months.
 - Check the snow blower and make sure it is running order. Replace the spark plug and have the right gas or gas mixture on hand. Locate the snow shovels and be sure they are in good condition, smooth edges and secure handles.
 - After the final mowing of the season, prepare your lawn mower for winter storage.
- Now is the time to do a winter check of your home and be prepared for winter weather.



Winter Travel Preparedness

Over the years, Nebraska has had many pleasant, sunny days turn into formidable ice storms and blinding blizzards. These violent storms and the accompanying freezing weather have, unfortunately, claimed too many victims. With plummeting temperatures and violent winds, stranded motorists have also endured agonizing discomfort and life-threatening experiences.

Today's highly reliable vehicles, four-wheel drive capability and cell phone technology make winter travel more safe than ever before. Still, the boosted confidence level provided by modern vehicles and technology can set many people up for some dangerous situations. Adequate preparation and knowing what to do in emergency situations is key to safe winter travel.

Winter Travel Kit

Whether you are traveling short or long distances, a "Winter Travel Kit" should be packed into your vehicle as a sound safety precaution.

Suggestions for a "Winter Travel Kit" include:

- windshield scraper/snow brush
- shovel/other useful tools
- flashlight/portable radio and extra batteries
- tow rope or chain
- booster cables
- bright colored cloth for the antenna
- blanket/sleeping bag
- extra warm clothing,

- boots, gloves
- candles and a two or three pound coffee can for a candle heat stove*
- matches in a waterproof container
- a cellular phone
- emergency food supply (granola bars, raisins, canned nuts, dried fruit, candy bars)

* A candle heat stove is made by placing the candle in the bottom of a coffee can and using the heat from a burning candle as a source of warmth. When used, make sure adequate ventilation is maintained.

Keep Your Vehicle in "Winter Ready" Condition . . .

Check List:

- maintain safe/reliable vehicle condition (tune-up, fuel filters, fluid levels, lights, horn)
- exhaust system (avoid deadly carbon monoxide)
- strong battery (maintain clean cable connections)
- winter tires (also check the spare tire)
- antifreeze (strength and condition)

- windshield wiper condition and washer fluid level
- fuel (maintain fuel supply above the half full level)
- belts and hoses (good condition)

Vehicle Stuck! What to Do ... ?

In blizzard conditions, stay with your vehicle. It will provide you with a known shelter. Leaving your vehicle to seek help or even attempting to walk to a house on the horizon can be a fatal mistake. Sub-zero temperatures, high winds and poor visibility can quickly cause disorientation and exhaustion. In most cases, a snowplow or the highway patrol will be along within a short time after the blizzard storm has subsided.

Remember to refrain from panic. Stay calm, use common sense and utilize the "winter travel kit" that you have prepared.

Avoid Overexertion — Every winter unnecessary deaths occur because of overexertion in cold weather. Young and old alike can engage in more strenuous physical activity than their bodies can endure. Cold weather itself, without any physical exertion, puts an extra strain on your heart. Adding physical exercise, especially exercise not accustomed to — such as shoveling snow, pushing an automobile or walking in snow — risks a heart attack, stroke or damage to your body. (GB)

