

Growing up in Carroll. Nebraska. dinners at Michelle A.'s grandmother's house were a regular occurrence. and in the summer. rhubarb cobbler was usually on the menu.

"From the time rhubarb was readv until peach season started, every time we went to her place, she would cook us a dinner

and this was always dessert," Michelle said.

Rhubarb cobbler is still one of her favorites, and Michelle is happy to share her grandmother's recipe. Michelle likes to serve the cobbler with ice cream or cool whip.

Michelle now lives in Yankton, South Dakota, and works for NorthWestern Energy as a Customer Service Representative. Michelle started with NorthWestern in February. She answers customers' phone calls and helps them establish service, make payments and answers questions they have.

"I'm taking back-to-back phone calls," Michelle said. "There's never a boring day."

Michelle is one of the first CSRs hired under our new home-based agent program. Previously all of our CSRs worked in our two call centers in Butte, Montana, and Huron, South Dakota. With the new program, we're able to hire CSRs who live anywhere in our service territory.

Michelle was a little leery about working from home when she first accepted the position. She's a people person and was concerned she'd feel isolated at home all day. However, she has found she spends much of her day talking to customers and colleagues.

" I love all the interactions I get to have with people!

-Michelle A., Customer Service Representative



### Michelle's Rhubarb Cobbler

#### **INGREDIENTS**

4 to 5 cups of rhubarb, cut up 1 <sup>3</sup>⁄<sub>4</sub> cup sugar, divided 1/2 cup butter 1 cup flour  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon salt 1 teaspoon baking powder 1/2 c milk 1 Tablespoon cornstarch

Pinch of salt

#### DIRECTIONS

 $2^{\rm Mix}$  together  $^{\rm 34}$  cup sugar, butter, flour, salt, baking powder and milk. Spoon this batter over the rhubarb.

OMix together 1 cup sugar, cornstarch and salt. Sprinkle Oover the batter.

 $4^{\rm Then}$  pour 1 cup of boiling water over the top and bake at 375 degrees for 1 hour.

Serve with cool whip or ice cream

### CONTACT US

#### MONTANA

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1-83-FOR-BUILD (1-833-672-8453)

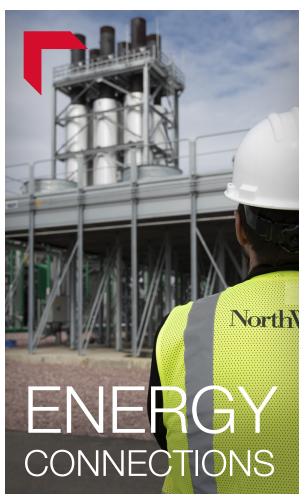
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We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic.

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 karen

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> **Energy Connections Editor** 11 E Park St, Butte, MT 59701 news2@northwestern.com



We recently celebrated the commissioning of our new 58-megawatt natural gas-fired electric generating station near Huron, South Dakota. The Bob Glanzer Generating Station provides flexible, on-demand energy generation to reliably serve our South Dakota customers with affordable energy when they need it the most. Read more at NorthWesternEnergy.com/BGGS.

#### LOOK INSIDE FOR INFORMATION ON:

- Call center expands jobs
- Latest issue of Bright Magazine
- Online service improvements coming
- Rhubarb cobbler recipe



## NorthWestern Energy expands our Contact Center to offer employment opportunities throughout our three-state service territory

Prior to the pandemic in March 2020, all calls to NorthWestern Energy's Contact Centers were answered in one of our two Contact Centers: Butte, Montana or Huron, South Dakota. When the pandemic hit, employee health and safety was our top priority, and we had to quickly find a way to move our Customer Service Representatives (CSRs) to work remotely.

A remote workforce was something NorthWestern Energy had talked about in passing for years. However, with the pandemic upon us, we had to figure out a way to successfully transition an onsite workforce to a remote workforce in a timely manner, while ensuring a safe and secure remote work environment.

"As the pandemic continued, we became more comfortable considering a permanent remote workforce," said Tricia D., Manager of Customer Interactions. "Midyear 2020, discussions began on creating a Home Based Agent (HBA) program, a hybrid model that would allow CSRs the ability to work remotely."

Initially, we pulled together a small group of CSRs and management to begin discussions of the pros and cons of working remotely. Feedback from CSRs ranged from their ability to quickly respond to emergency call outs by working remotely to having the ability to work when not feeling 100%, giving them the ability to reserve their paid time off banks.

During these small group meetings, we considered the employee experience, the organizational benefits and the impact to budgets. In the end, the decision was made to pursue the hybrid model.

Our hiring processes continued throughout the

pandemic and in November of 2021, postings for CSRs expanded to candidates outside the traditional Contact Center locations of Butte and Huron to hiring throughout our service territories of Montana, Nebraska and South Dakota. We currently have remote CSRs in Aberdeen, Yankton, Sioux Falls, Grand Island, Missoula and Great Falls Divisions.

"Being able to hire from a larger geographic area has been extremely beneficial," Tricia said.

"Over the past year, the company has invested in technology," she added. "Remote agents have a dedicated NorthWestern Energy ISP line brought to their home and a complete workstation setup to include softphone technology. The model has been developed and tested and we are now in the process of a phased rollout."



# Read the latest issue of Bright magazine

The Innovation issue of Bright magazine is now available. Energy companies have a long history of improving the quality of life for our communities, and our latest issue of Bright focuses on the innovations taking place at NorthWestern Energy.

Read about our plan to reach Net Zero Emissions, how we're preparing for more Electric Vehicles and the energy they'll need, and more.

Read online or subscribe at NorthWesternEnergy.com/ Bright.



Online service improvements coming soon!

We're making changes to My Energy Account. The new design will offer the same services but will be easier to navigate. Look for the new version of My Energy Account coming later this summer.