

Phone apps shine light on home-delivered meal preparation

BY LINDA GOSTAS
SHERIDAN SENIOR CENTER

SHERIDAN — Where were you when the lights went out on April 24? The Sheridan area was affected by a power outage last Tuesday morning.

Mornings are peak meal preparation time for the Sheridan Senior Center, which serves lunches 365 days of the year. The center serves meals not only at its dining room at 211 Smith St. but also prepares meals for transport to Heritage Towers, Tongue River Valley, and, on Thursdays, to the Big Horn Woman's Club in Big Horn. The center also prepares 150-180 home-delivered meals during this time for service throughout Sheridan County communities.

When the power outage occurred, the Sheridan Senior Center engaged its risk management procedures — assessing the situation, checking on staff and clients on site and determining the response based on the length of time for the outage.

Development associate Nick Munford utilized his smartphone to access the Montana-Dakota Utilities outages website and kept staff apprised of the utility provider's estimates for down time. This was especially critical information for the meal preparation, which had begun earlier that morning.

"We needed to know if power was up by 10 a.m. or we would have to cancel meal service," said meals manager Ronda Paavilainen. "The food would hold only until then."

If meal service was canceled, it would have been the second time in its 43 years of meal service that the Senior Center would have done so. The Senior Center had to close services — including meals — during a power outage in October 2014. The center has been serving meals 365 days since it began its meal program over four decades ago.

But concern was especially for vulnerable individuals receiving home-delivered meals. A number of these individuals rely solely on the Senior Center's home-delivered meals. Paavilainen had the answer.

"We were able to package and deliver home-delivered meals," she said.

But the challenge was continuing to do so in the dark. The Senior Center's emergency lights throughout the center had not yet been installed in the kitchen, which is scheduled to undergo major construction and renovation in four weeks.

The Senior Center staff rallied with a solution. Staff members with smartphones grabbed them and powered on their flashlight apps. Others grabbed traditional flash-



COURTESY PHOTO

When power went out in the Sheridan area April 25, Sheridan Senior Center staff rallied in the kitchen with low-tech and high-tech lighting to supplement emergency lights. Staff used flashlight apps from cellphones and flashlights from the center's emergency bags to shine light on the team's preparation to get home-delivered meals out on schedule despite the power outage.

lights from bags located throughout the center. The staff provided light for the kitchen team, which continued packing meals for home delivery.

The kitchen team used plastic wrap for the meals when the electrically-powered Oliver heat-wrap machine went down.

Community volunteers stopped by the center to see if they could help deliver meals and the home-delivered meals were out the door.

Diners trickled into the dining room throughout the out-

age and determined dominoes players gathered by one of the dining room windows to play by the natural light.

By 10:30 a.m., the power was restored. The center was able to provide a lunch to 40 diners who came to the center through the snow storm.

"Thanks to everyone for your help and awesome attitude this morning," Executive Director Carmen Rideout said in an email to staff. "I appreciate you all immensely."

Power stayed on the remainder of the day and activities at the Senior Center resumed as scheduled.

CENTER STAGE

Enjoy the benefits of plant power

Despite the late April snow storm, planting season is about to arrive. We will soon have the opportunity to enjoy blooming flowers, budding trees and fresh veggies.

Beyond their aesthetic value and nourishment qualities, plants have other powers to help bring balance in other areas of life. When you start your potted plants and gardening goods this spring and summer, try a few of these greens to help you support a healthy lifestyle.

Anti-inflammatory power: If you struggle with inflammation, try adding basil to your diet. Basil is also thought to act as a de-stressor due to its inviting scent.

Cancer fighting agents: Rosemary is thought to help fight carcinogens due to its antioxidant powers. Rosemary is

a low-maintenance, easy-to-grow herb that can be utilized inside the home. It's pleasing scent and bright flavor makes it a great compliment to baked dishes, pork, chicken and whole grain breads.

Much like rosemary, garlic and scallions are also considered cancer-fighting greens. Both garlic and scallions are part of the allium family of vegetables, which has been associated with fighting free radical damage and reducing cancer risk. Both of these plants are easy to grow and yield delicious results.

Digestive health: Mint is believed to soothe the digestive issues and relieve indigestion symptoms. Mint plants are easy to grow in a barrel and require little maintenance. When they are ready to harvest, take the leaves and add them to tea — iced or cold. For a twist, try planting hybrid versions such as strawberry-mint, chocolate mint (yum) and orange-mint.

Great greens: Finding fresh lettuce in rural areas is a challenge during certain times of the year. This year, try planting spinach, green leaf lettuce or other varieties of greens to take advantage of this natural source of folate, vitamin A, C and K.

Sleep soundly: If you struggle to catch enough winks of quality sleep

at night, try placing a Jasmine plant in your bedroom. Jasmine's fragrant blossoms and exotic scent promote a calming sensation and can do wonders to support better sleep. For other benefits, such as immune system support, try Jasmine tea.

Take some time to think about what healthy benefits you feel you are missing and research a natural plant source of relief. Bonus — gardening is a form of activity, so you'll burn some calories while you plant and harvest the fruits of your labor. There's nothing quite as satisfying (and cost effective) as shopping for dinner in your own backyard.

Please note, if you are taking medications, please remember to consult your primary care physician before making any changes to your diet. Certain plants and herbs can interact with medications rendering them ineffective.

DR. ERIN NITSCHKE is a health and human performance educator, NSCA Certified Personal Trainer, and ACE Health Coach & Fitness Nutrition Specialist. To contact Nitschke, email erinmd03@gmail.com. Center Stage is written by friends of the Senior Center for the Sheridan Community. It is a collection of insights and stories related to living well at every age.

SENIOR CENTER HAPPENINGS

- The Senior Center's SheridanAires Spring Follies is set for Thursday and Friday matinée performances both days at 1:30 p.m. on the dining room stage at the Sheridan Senior Center, 211 Smith St. A \$2 suggested contribution per person is payable at the door. No need to call ahead.
- Interested in traveling with the Sheridan Senior Center to see the beautiful fall colors of New England, Acadia National Park (the oldest national park east of the Mississippi), Montreal, Quebec and much, much more? Call 672-2240 for details on

total price and itinerary. The deadline for the \$750 deposit is May 15 with final payment by June 19. Trip cost includes round-trip airfare from Billings, hotels, ground transportation, a tour guide, three train rides and more.

- Mother's Day Week at the Senior Center May 8-12. Share your mother's photos and recipes! Call Jean Harm, fun department assistant, for specifics, 672-2240.
- Wear a hat in honor of mom to the Senior Center on Thursday, May 11. Show off those chapeaus!

- The DIY card workshop with Heidi Roesler has been rescheduled to Saturday, May 20. Time and location are unchanged: 12:30-3 p.m. at First Congregational Church, 100 West Works St. Make beautiful handmade cards. All supplies provided or you may bring your own project to work on. Sign up by calling 672-2240. Space is limited. There is a suggested contribution of \$5 for those registered with the Senior Center and it is a \$7 fee for those not registered. Cash and checks to the Senior Center are accepted at the workshop.

Sheridan Senior Center
"Celebrating 40 Years of Service!"
www.sheridanseniorcenter.org

Age Out Loud!
May is Older
Americans Month

Fun and Food
BUILD YOUR OWN SALAD Mondays - Fridays
Entrees and kiosk include sides, dessert and drink.

Entrée Choice*	or	Soup Kiosk
Tue - Chicken Ranch Pizza		Creamy Chicken Soup
Wed - Meatloaf		Potato Soup
Thu - Chicken Parmesan		Italian Bean Soup
Fri - French Dip/au jus		Tomato Florentine Soup
Sat - Turkey Pot Pie		No Kiosk on Saturday
Sun - Beef Skillet over Wild Rice		No Kiosk on Sunday
Mon - Italian Pasta Bake		Cream of Asparagus

*entrée only offered for Home Delivered Meals

MAY is Older Americans Month.... Age Out Loud!

Tue - TEAM FIT Groups Start	Indoor & Outdoor Exercise	Senior Center
Wed - Gentle Yoga	10:30 to 11:30 a.m.	★ First Methodist Church
Thu - SheridanAires Spring Follies	1:30 p.m.	Dining Room Stage
Fri - SheridanAires Spring Follies	1:30 p.m.	Dining Room Stage
Sat - Texas Hold 'em Poker	1:00 to 3:00 p.m.	Dining Room

Call for changes to activities due to construction at the Senior Center.

Lunch Service Hours: 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m., 365 days a year at 211 Smith Street
Building hours: 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mondays - Fridays
9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Weekends and Holidays
211 Smith Street Sheridan, WY 82801
Home Delivered Meals (307) 672-6079
Senior Center Main Phone: (307) 672-2240 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Mon - Fri

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