

New Year's Resolutions

AGRI-VIEWS

by Chuck Otte, Geary County Extension Agent

New Year's resolutions. Does anybody really keep them? Does anybody really try? Sure we do. Well, I know I do and I think I know two other people, but anyway, the intent is good. So is the process of going through and identifying some resolutions to consider each and every year. So being the good community citizen that I am, and knowing how some folks tend to procrastinate, let me toss out a couple of resolutions that you can adopt and use yourself!

I resolve to use less energy. It doesn't matter whether it's gasoline, diesel fuel or electricity, there's lots of ways that we all could be decreasing our energy consumption! There seems to be an ongoing push to find or generate more energy. But what ever happened to energy conservation. Those of us who came of age in the 1970s remember those conservation days well. Finding ways to use less energy not only decreases the impact on the environment, it ultimately saves us dollars and cents in our household budgets.

When you buy a new car, look for one that gets better gas mileage. When you drive, drive less aggressively. Take longer to get up to speed and start slowing down sooner. Let gravity and your car's engine do the braking instead of jamming on the brakes at the last minute. Speed limits are maximums, not minimums. Drive a few miles per hour below that and you will save fuel, especially on long trips. And driving a few mph's below the speed limit ultimately won't take you that much longer even on long trips!

Around the house shut off equipment or lights when not in use. Replace traditional incandescent lights with compact fluorescent lights (CFL) or even look into the new LED options. Sure, the up front cost is more, but you replace these less often and the amount of energy that they use is so much less you will be amazed. Home appliances that are more than 10 years old can probably justify being replaced with newer higher efficiency models. Sure, you will have the initial expense, but the savings in energy bills in the long run can be stunning!

I resolve to be more tolerant. The trends that I see in our country concern me. This whole notions that different is wrong or bad needs to be squelched. The concept that if you don't agree with me, you are wrong and an enemy is ultimately self destructive. The globe is getting smaller daily and the many peoples of this planet are interacting more and more and in new and different ways.

We have to adapt to these changes because we aren't going to change them. In spite of the many efforts to institute laws and policies to prevent change, change is going to happen. The planet/country/state/community we live in today is different than the one we lived in yesterday and the one we'll live in tomorrow. We may not like the changes, but change is going to happen regardless!

Finally, resolve to tell your friends and family what they mean to you and do it often! Someone can be gone in the wink of an eye and then it is too late. Don't ever let a minute go by so that you want find yourself thinking, "I wish I'd..." Most days I feel like the luckiest man alive. I get to work with the greatest people in the world in a truly awesome part of the world. A short term break from college become a life long job. No, I'm not retiring anytime soon, stop that rumor right now. But I just wanted to take a minute to let you all know how much it means that I get to work with you all, every single day! Happy New Year everyone!