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FALL HOME & CAR CARE SPECIAL

**Home Maintenance
Car Care Tips
Area Businesses**

Moving to a skilled trade

New owner for Russ Nelson Electric - Page 2

New technology for the kitchen

Induction cooking takes over - Page 5

Food industry exec migrates to 'skilled trades'

Geoff Murphy looks for his own business, buys Russ Nelson Electric

By **KATHY PAULSEN**
Staff Writer

"Great oaks from little acorns grow."

Russ Nelson knows that and he has been living "in the oaks" for some time now – long enough that he feels he can take a break and enjoy the shade of retirement.

Russ decided it was time for him to retire, or at least downsize his work load, so he put his business up for sale. After a number of weeks had gone by, he found a buyer who was interested in eventually helping the business grow.

Russ sold his business to Geoff Murphy of Maple Grove, and Murphy officially took over on August 1, 2016.

Russ Nelson

Russ, the son of Melvin and Violet Nelson, graduated from St. James High School in 1959. Following graduation he furthered his education at the Mankato Vocational Technical School, learning the trade of electrician. His first job was with Gordon Electric in Albert Lea, and he continued to learn about the electrical field on the job.

Russ met Cynthia Holmes while he was going to school in Mankato. Cynthia grew up on a dairy farm north of Ellendale. Russ married Cynthia, and they purchased the Keith Rasmussen farm west of Ellendale. They currently live in the home located on the site.

Russ started Russ Nelson Electric in 1974 and converted the barn into his business site. Current plans are for Russ to continue working for the company, doing job estimating and repairing electric motors.

Russ and Cynthia were blessed with two children, Todd and Matthew. Todd is a successful electrical contractor in Faribault. He received his electrical training at Dunwoody and worked for his father for about 15 years. He later decided to go out on his own, and is now the owner of Dynamic Electric in Faribault. He also owns commercial property and leases out 80 apartment units.

Todd and his wife Mary are the parents of three children: Zac, 26, who lives in Waseca, Matthew, 12, and Lucas, 11, who attend school in Faribault.



NEW OWNER – Geoff Murphy stands ready by one of the Russ Nelson Electric company vans. Murphy is the former CEO of Old Home Foods.

Star Eagle photo by Kathy Paulsen

After graduation Russ and Cynthia's son Matthew attended Albert Lea Technical College and he, too, received electrical training. Matt tragically died in a snowmobile accident in 1997.

Geoff Murphy

Geoff Murphy went to work full time when he was just 14 years old and living in Boston. He graduated from high school in 1984 and went on to a degree in Food Science.

After college, Geoff worked for General Mills for 13 years and then went to work for Old Home foods for 17 years, the last 12 as CEO.

Geoff claims that only six percent of high school students currently plan to seek a career in the skilled trades. The average age of a skilled tradesman in the United States is 55 years. Hopefully people coming out of high school

will consider a noble and well compensated career in the skilled trades.

Geoff is currently 50 years old and has had a successful career in the food industry. About a year and a half ago Geoff decided that he wanted to change careers. He wanted to buy a business of his own and looked into a lot of different companies. He was aware that the area of electrical service has been predicted to grow substantially and Geoff saw this as an opportunity for him to become involved in this industry. He believes there will be 1,500 new jobs available in this industry by the year 2020.

He discovered that Russ Nelson Electric, of Ellendale, Minnesota was up for sale so he

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Star Eagle Fall Home & Car Care Special

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Reed Waller, Editor • **Tracie Rosacker**, Advertising Manager

■ Electric

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researched the business and learned that it had been established in 1974. The fact that the business had grown from a small electrical company into one that now deals with very large business projects encouraged him to purchase the company.

Russ Nelson Electric focuses on new commercial construction but providing local service is very important to the company. They continue to work setting up large corn dryer operations and are proud to be available, day or night, to keep farmers going especially this time of year.

Currently Russ Nelson Electric is working on a very large, 2 year project in Shakopee. It is an \$80 million expansion project for the Shakopee School District. Russ feels honored that his company was awarded the \$8 million electrical contract. Geoff noted that this is the largest project that Russ Nelson

Electric has ever undertaken.

In addition to that large project the company is finishing up a project at Mankato State, another at the National Guard Army in Owatonna, as well as are working on a small 17 unit apartment complex in the area. The electrical company also plans to start a new project in Mitchel County Iowa next week at a governmental health center.

Typically Russ Nelson Electric has been hired for projects from Rochester to Mankato, and from the Twin Cities area down into Northern Iowa. They hope to be able to do more work further into Iowa as well.

In talking with Geoff he plans to keep the present employees and said that the employees are excited to learn about some new skills that Geoff would like them to adopt. Several of the 13 employees are from our immediate area.

Gene Helland, a master electrician, is the project manager in the office. Teresa Wangen is the office

manager and Roger Swearingen helps out the company running heavy equipment.

Electricians Winfred Bergdale and Kevin Knudson are also from the Ellendale area. Other electricians from the area include Dustin Jacobson of Austin, Greg Van Ryswyk and Steve Dulas of Albert Lea, Daren Ignaszewski of Wells, and Sam Olson of Gordonsville.

Geoff said he hopes more people will realize that the electrical and plumbing professions offer good paying jobs and that more people will start pursuing those professions.

Wisely, Geoff plans to spend the next year learning about the business so he will be able to see what he can do to help the business continue to grow. He feels that there will be plenty of work to do in Minnesota and Iowa and is making plans to be prepared for it.

He later hopes to retire and spend more time with his family.

Geoff and his wife Alison live in Maple Grove and they are the parents of three children, Sam, John

and Grace. At the current time, he plans to continue to live in Maple Grove, which is about 100 miles from Ellendale.

We have the utmost pride for both of these businessmen. Russ has done well over the years, proof that good work has its rewards.

From all indications, Geoff, too, is an interesting, hard working individual and we welcome him to our local business community. The reputation Russ has built over the years will remain in good hands.

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Home ideas for cozy fall living

(StatePoint) With autumn comes crisp falling leaves, fresh brisk air and pumpkin spice aromas. It's time to prepare your home to spend more time indoors, decorating it with warm, cozy accents to set the tone for the season.

Make your home fall-ready with the following cozy ideas.

1. Freshen Up with Soothing Aromas.

A little "me time" is good for the soul, and sometimes you need to pamper yourself after a long day. Whether the scent is apple cinnamon, pumpkin pie or maple leaf, lighting a candle with your favorite fall fragrance creates a warm and welcoming atmosphere, enhancing your sense of calm.

2. Create a Living Room Sanctuary.

Transform your living room into an at-home getaway by displaying seasonal throw pillows and blankets, and adorning the space with elements from nature, like a vase filled with leaf stems and crab apple branches. Crank up the cozy factor with homemade hot cider and a crackling fireplace.

3. Refresh Interiors with Paint.

Give rooms a refreshing update, add color and create contrast in a space with accent walls. Deep colors like navy blue help create a relaxing retreat. Or, take a cue from the changing leaves and opt for warm colors, like mustard yellow or burnt orange. To ensure a top-notch paint job, use a premium brand



YOUR LIVING ROOM can be a seasonal showplace with thee right accents.

painter's tape that will deliver sharp paint lines, like FrogTape. It's the only painter's tape that features patented PaintBlock Technology, which reacts with the water in latex paint and instantly gels to form a micro-barrier that seals the edges of the tape to help prevent paint bleed.

4. Innovate with Multi-Functional Appeal.

Since you'll be spending more time inside, transform an empty space like a basement or attic into a useful area for the entire family. With a little imagination and a few tools, you can create a vibrant and playful craft room, as did FrogTape Paintover Challenge winner KariAnne Wood from the blog "Thistlewood Farms." Wood transformed an unused upstairs space in her home into a room for her chil-

dren to craft, study and hang out with friends. An exciting, multi-functional space is a great way to avoid cabin fever in the months ahead.

5. Give Guests a Warm Greeting.

Celebrity designer Taniya Nayak correctly predicted home design elements that incorporate typographic elements would be a key design trend in 2016. This trend is all about setting the tone for a space with inspirational quotes, personalization and warm greetings. Welcome guests by playing up the autumnal theme with phrases like, "Hello Fall" or "Give Thanks" on decorative wooden planks or burlap-textured fabric. Consider using various font types and sizes to achieve a different feel for each block of text.

6. Deck Out Curb Appeal

Nothing sets a good impression like an attractive entry way and front door. Greet guests with a festive hello by decking out the porch with pumpkins and planting seasonal floral arrangements along the pathway, or creating a fall-inspired wreath to hang on the door. You can even collect a handful of colorful leaves outside to string together and post along your porch fence for extra curb appeal.

For more seasonal inspiration, visit frogtape.com.

Get started on your projects now, so you can kick-back, relax and fully enjoy all that the season has to offer.

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How hot technologies can improve your kitchen

(StatePoint) Modern technology is improving every facet of our lives and the kitchen is no exception. By carefully outfitting your kitchen, your appliances can be safer, more efficient and give you versatility and precision as a home chef.

One technology, which has been popular in Europe for years but is still relatively new to the US, is induction cooking which uses electromagnetic energy to heat foods quickly and precisely.

Like a gas burner, an induction cooktop or range-top surface can handle the rapid shifts in heat settings required in a busy kitchen. And because the burner does not heat unless cookware is detected, ventilation can operate more efficiently.

Other efficiencies in induction cooking are exemplified in such appliances as the new 36" Induction 5-Zone Cooktop from Verona, which includes a fast boil setting for rapid cooking as well as a low power setting for delicate meals. A pan detection system saves energy by sensing the size and shape of cook-



INDUCTION COOKING is becoming the modern standard for kitchens today.

ware and intelligently heating only the needed cooking area. Features like a residual heat indicator and an automatic shut-off in case of spillage make cooking with this induction

cooktop safer, too. The brand also makes a 30" induction cooktop and 30" induction range. More information can be found at VeronaAppliances.com.

"Because induction cooking offers the most direct heat transfer of any cooking surface and features unprecedented safety benefits, it become the modern standard for kitchens today," says Melissa Haber, director of sales and marketing for EuroChef USA.

Consumers looking to upgrade their kitchens in the future will enjoy even more choices, as new induction ranges are introduced, such as 36" and 40" ILVE ranges, which offer a wealth of features like a rotisserie, warming drawer, power boost burners and a multifunction convection oven. To learn more about the brand and its current 30" induction range visit ilveappliances.com.

If you are still cooking with old school appliances in your kitchen, you may be working harder than you need to be. When making an upgrade, consider the latest cooking technologies.



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Shopping for the handyman

(StatePoint) Gift-giving special occasions are the perfect opportunity to beef up your recipient's garage -- and high-quality tools are a must for anyone -- from DIY novices to professional handymen.

"A quality tool goes a long way toward getting a job done quickly and efficiently," says Jon DeArment, president and COO, Channellock, Inc., a leading manufacturer of tools.

Here are a few gifts to consider:

Everyone needs a good set of screwdrivers designed to withstand the rigors of daily use. This is a great gift idea for different budgets, since screwdrivers can typically be purchased individually or in sets. A good-quality option should feature a tube and bits that pull out and reverse easily to configure the driver needed for each job.

No home should be without a versatile plier. Consider one durable enough to be passed on to the next generation.

Replace a clunky old wrench with something better. Look for a thinner wrench that can get into hard to reach areas, while also featuring greater jaw capacity to support larger nuts and bolts.

Looking to go big? Consider a comprehensive set of go-to tools that are useful for different tasks. Take the guesswork out of the equation with a great gift set, such as the Tool Roll-3 PC Professional Plier Set with Tool Roll. Put together by Channellock, this set includes all the most popular tools -- a lap joint cutting plier, two different sizes of their iconic Straight Jaw Tongue and Groove Pliers, a slip joint plier and a long nose plier. These gifts are available at local retail stores and online at www.channellock.com.

Whatever tools you choose, the biggest joy will be hanging out and completing a project together with your gift.

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How to get more for less when shopping for kids

(StatePoint) Running a household can be stressful and expensive, especially when you have little ones afoot.

The discount experts at Dollar General are sharing tips to help you save time and money when shopping for kids.

Stock Up On School Supplies

There are plenty of ways to dwindle down your spending on school supplies. Periodically sort through all of the supplies you currently have and determine what is usable and what needs to be replaced.

Shopping online may also provide you with better deals. Access your favorite coupons sites, like Dollar General Digital Coupons, for additional savings.

Save on Snack Time

Simplify lunch preparation by stocking up on essential food items that are easy to grab on-the-go. One

way to limit busy mornings before school is to set aside one afternoon each week to cook food in bulk that can be used during the week. That way, you don't have to worry about cooking from scratch each day, and can provide your children with balanced meal options.

Take Inventory and Re-use

Kids grow quickly and buying new clothes may be one of the largest shopping expenses you have. Taking inventory of what items still fit, which can become hand-me-downs or items to sell at consignment sales, and what needs replacing, can help you stay on budget. For the clothes that do need replacing, considering shopping out-of-season to take advantage of clearance sales.

Make shopping easy. Planning ahead can help you save. Your wallet will surely thank you.

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Is your money going up the chimney?

How to make your home's fireplace more energy efficient

(StatePoint) Nothing beats gathering around the fire in winter. Unfortunately, a wood-burning fireplace could be a major source of energy loss in your home, sending your utility bills sky high.

However, you don't need to sacrifice the fire to improve your home's energy efficiency and reduce your heating bills; in fact, it's possible to convert your wood fireplace into an efficient heat source with the following tips.

Upgrade Your Fireplace

Consider a gas fireplace insert. They generate more radiant heat and are cleaner to maintain than traditional masonry style wood-burning fireplaces, which are a leading source of indoor air loss.

"Traditional wood fireplaces add a lot of charm to a home, but they are inefficient -- even when they aren't in use," says Andy Tesch, brand director of Heat & Glo, the leading manufacturer of innovative gas fireplaces, stoves and inserts. "A gas fireplace

insert is a great alternative to maintain the ambiance a fire creates while enhancing efficiency."

A gas fireplace insert is cleaner, too, creating no ash, soot, or smoke. Models like the Escape from Heat & Glo use energy-saving FireBrick technology to increase efficiency and are low maintenance, turning on and off with the flip of a switch. Learn more about the benefits of a gas fireplace insert at heatnglo.com/insertawareness.

If you can't part with the aroma, crackle and act of building a real fire, consider pellet and EPA-certified wood inserts, which can be an easy, clean and efficient alternative as well.

Best Practices

If making the upgrade to an insert is not possible, a few simple steps can drastically improve the energy efficiency of your fireplace. Number one, when the fireplace is not in use, close the chimney damper. You'll prevent warm air and your money from going



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up and out the chimney. A flue sealer is an affordable, inflatable stopper that fits below the damper to further seal off the chimney and is a worthwhile purchase.


Proper maintenance can also go far to improve your fireplace's efficiency. Have it inspected, maintained and cleaned annually. Even if you love DIY, you may want to hire a contractor to ensure the job is done safely and thoroughly.

Considering adding doors or a cover to the front of your fireplace to help reduce the draft and improve the look. There are many styles available to enhance your interior design.




This winter, bring together both traditional charm and modern energy efficiency. A few upgrades and habits will allow you to enjoy your fireplace all winter long, while keeping heating bills low.





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