



Extension News Column

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To: Mary Beth Smetzer, community news editor, News-Miner, 459-7546 (wk), 452-7917 (fax), msmetzer@newsminer.com, and people@newsminer.com
From: Roxie Dinstel
Re: Pinching Pennies to run Mondays on page A-3
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As the weather is cooling off, you might be surveying your closet to see what might keep you warm come those 40-below days. Winter clothing is necessary here, but it doesn't have to break the bank. Making smart choices in clothing is essential to staying warm this winter.

Make no mistake, cold can hurt and clothing protects you from it. Clothing guards against hypothermia and frostbite. Either of these can result in disability or death.

So, what do you really need? A good coat, warm cap, and gloves or mittens are the minimum items you need. The coat should be of a good insulating fabric, have a storm flap over (or under) the zipper to stop leaking, and have tight cuffs to keep the cold from leaking in at the wrists. Drawstrings at the waist and hood also help keep warm air in and cold air out.

When it comes to hats, fleece, knit or insulated fabric can do the trick. Caps should be long enough to cover the top of the ears, which are particularly vulnerable to cold. If you want to stay extra warm, layer a hat under an insulated hood on your jacket.

Mittens are warmer than gloves, but not nearly as easy to manipulate in the cold. You might want to consider layering a pair of mittens over the top of thinner gloves.

If you are new here, or maybe your kids have recently outgrown everything, where are the bargains when it comes to winter clothing?

There are several consignment stores here in Fairbanks as well as the thrift stores that we have come to depend on. All these have great clothing at reasonable prices. But the selection is spotty. Sometimes they have a size and sometimes not, so start shopping early and keep checking regularly.

Garage sales are another alternative, but these are definitely spotty. Check out the ads in the newspaper or on Craig's list to see what others are offering before you waste gasoline running all over town.

When selecting secondhand clothes, watch for durability and cleanliness, and check for rips or tears. As clothing is worn, the insulation packs down, reducing the insulating value. Fluffy is better in this case. Sometimes a good washing and drying (with a tennis ball in the dryer) is all it takes to re-fluff it, but be sure to check clothing carefully before purchasing.

Our local stores are also a great place to purchase warm winter clothing. I always purchase locally because I can evaluate the warmth and durability of clothing on the rack in front of me. Money spent on warm clothes is an investment in your health, so make smart choices.

Now, if you are a UAF student, have I got a deal for you! In the tradition of the Really Free Market that is held each spring, UAF is having a Winter Warm-up on Saturday, Oct. 1. People can donate coats, boots, hats, gloves and mittens between 9 and 11 a.m. Then from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., UAF students can pick up warm clothing and sporting goods — for free.

Remember C-O-L-D as you are choosing clothing. Keep it Clean, avoid Overheating, wear it loose in Layers, and keep it Dry.

Clean clothing will keep you warmer as it traps air in between the fibers. So, make sure that you wash or dry clean your coat throughout the winter when it needs it.

Overheating makes you sweat. Clothing absorbs the moisture and it gets cold. In fact, if you are active outside, plan for removing layers or choose a jacket with those handy zippers under the arms that allow moisture to escape instead of being absorbed into your clothes.

Layers are the ticket. Trapping layers of air is a great insulating tip. Insulated underwear, shirt, sweater or sweatshirt — combined with an outside coat — will keep you warm, but also allow for removing layers if you get too hot. So, what can you do if that jacket you have is just a little too light? Wear a sweatshirt or fleece jacket under it to increase warmth.

Dry clothes are much warmer than wet ones. So, keep clothing dry for maximum warmth.

Warm winter clothing is an investment in your safety. Choose carefully and make sure you wear it faithfully. Those great gloves do you no good if they are in the car, or worse yet, in the closet at home.

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