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MARCH 2024



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COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

Cassi Gloe, CCC, Publisher | cgloe@coloradocountrylife.org
 Kylee Coleman, Editor | kcoleman@coloradocountrylife.org
 Melinda Taylor, Assistant | mtaylor@coloradocountrylife.org

ADVERTISING

advertising@coloradocountrylife.org | 720-407-0712

National Advertising Representative:

American MainStreet Publications, 611 S. Congress Street, Suite 504, Austin, TX 78704 | 800-626-1181

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Denver Corporate Office:

5400 Washington Street, Denver, CO 80216
 info@coloradocountrylife.org | 303-455-4111

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A Reluctant Photographer

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR



KYLEE COLEMAN

In 2011, my husband, Chris, was hired to photograph his first wedding. The talented creative that he is, he knocked it out of the park and was promptly hired to shoot more weddings and events. But weddings are tough for only one person to photograph. His solution to this dilemma? He put a camera in my hands and said, “You’ll be my second shooter.”

Now, please note: I had zero experience with taking photos besides the snapshots I eked out of a point and shoot camera — on film throughout high school and college and then a newly released digital version in 2002.

You might imagine, then, that having a pro, state-of-the-art digital camera hanging from my neck was intimidating. And I was reluctant to embrace it. However, by 2013, I was shooting photos for people. On my own. And get this: They were paying me! I booked photo gigs for family sessions and high school senior photos.



Chris Coleman behind the camera.

This issue is the big reveal of our annual photo contest winners. For decades, Colorado Country Life has given Colorado photographers an opportunity to enter their best work for a cash prize and to be published in the magazine. Each year, we are amazed at the number of talented people who can capture Colorado perfectly. I sort of lucked into the role of “photographer,” and I’m so glad I did. I’ve taken hundreds of thousands of photos since 2013, mostly of people. But this year’s photo contest winners have inspired me to get out to capture more of Colorado.

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MONTHLY GIVEAWAY

Enter to win a copy of one of the books featured on page 30



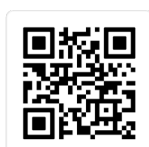
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Colorado's Electric Co-op CEOs Plate spinners extraordinaire

A Statewide Viewpoint

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



KENT SINGER

One of CREA's most important functions is to provide opportunities for electric co-op staff to meet — either in person or virtually — to share success stories as well as challenges facing their co-ops. Among the many peer groups we convene for these discussions, the one that meets most frequently is our group of chief executive officers, sometimes called general managers, of Colorado's electric co-ops.

Whenever I think about the job of being an electric co-op CEO, I immediately think of Erich Brenn, the plate spinner who appeared occasionally on the old Ed Sullivan television show. (If you don't remember either Ed Sullivan or Erich Brenn, sorry, you probably have a lot less gray hair than I do.) As a reminder, Mr. Brenn is the guy who would dazzle live studio audiences with his ability to spin bowls or plates on long sticks while simultaneously sprinting around the stage, performing other tricks with cutlery and drinking glasses.

Now, I'll grant you, Mr. Brenn's act was not as impressive as Usher performing at this year's Super Bowl halftime, but it passed for solid entertainment in the 1960s. If you Google Erich Brenn and watch his performances, you just might agree. But it occurred to me recently during a virtual meeting of our co-op CEOs that Mr. Brenn's plate-spinning performances are a pretty good analogy to the life of an electric co-op CEO in Colorado.

First, think of the responsibility that lies on the shoulders of these people. They

and their teams are literally charged with providing you one of the commodities that is essential to your life: electricity. Can you imagine your life without electricity? No lights. No cold beers. No computer. No power to run your water and sewer service. No ability to charge your phone so that you can watch TikTok and cat videos. (I realize you also watch videos of your grandkids.) In other words, a much-diminished life.

Given how reliable electric service is in rural Colorado, and how much we take it for granted, you may think it's just not that tough to run an electric utility. With all due respect, you have no idea how difficult it is to keep all the plates spinning.

First, every distribution co-op, like the one you belong to, must partner with one or more power suppliers that will provide the bulk electricity the co-op needs to serve its members. While that decision used to be relatively straightforward, in today's world there are options that didn't exist a few years ago. In some cases, co-ops desire to provide more of their power from local sources like community solar and rely less on just one supplier. In other cases, a co-op may decide it's a better decision to rely on the resources of an established utility.

And the choice of power supply options, that is, the power plants that generate electricity, is also changing quickly in Colorado. The Colorado legislature's mandate for reductions in the emission of greenhouse gases from the power sector means that by the end of this decade all coal-fired power plants will be retired.

Going forward, utilities will have to depend on wind, solar, and batteries that are backed up by natural gas plants. This dynamic requires co-ops to rethink their approach to keeping the lights on.

Second, Mother Nature does her best to try to topple the spinning plates from time to time. Whether it's ice storms, wildfires, hail, or wind, electric co-ops are always battling these elements to keep their systems energized and the electrons flowing. These events are unpredictable and require lots of advance planning and rapid response times by co-op staff, particularly linecrews. This job has become more complicated in recent years given the proliferation of rooftop solar arrays that produce energy and must be accounted for when restoring power.

And last, but certainly not least, in many co-op service territories the cost of living, particularly housing, has skyrocketed in the last decade or so. This makes it extremely difficult for many co-ops to hire and retain qualified personnel to do all the important work that has to be done to operate the co-op. In many cases this results in one person doing two or more jobs. You won't hear co-op folks complaining about this, but it's a reality.

So, the next time you flip a switch in your home or watch another cat video, remember that it's your local co-op CEO, working with their board and staff, who keeps the electricity on and those plates in the air.

THERAPY, SAFETY AND INDEPENDENCE

How a Safe Step Walk-In Tub can change your life

Remember when...

Think about the things you loved to do that are difficult today — going for a walk or just sitting comfortably while reading a book. And remember the last time you got a great night's sleep?

As we get older, health issues or even everyday aches, pains and stress can prevent us from enjoying life.

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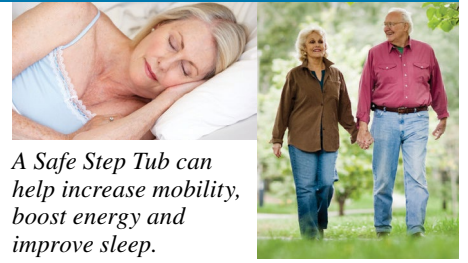
Personal Checklist:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis | <input type="checkbox"/> Dry Skin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insomnia | <input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobility Issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lower Back Pain | <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Circulation |

Then read on to learn how a Safe Step Walk-In Tub can help.

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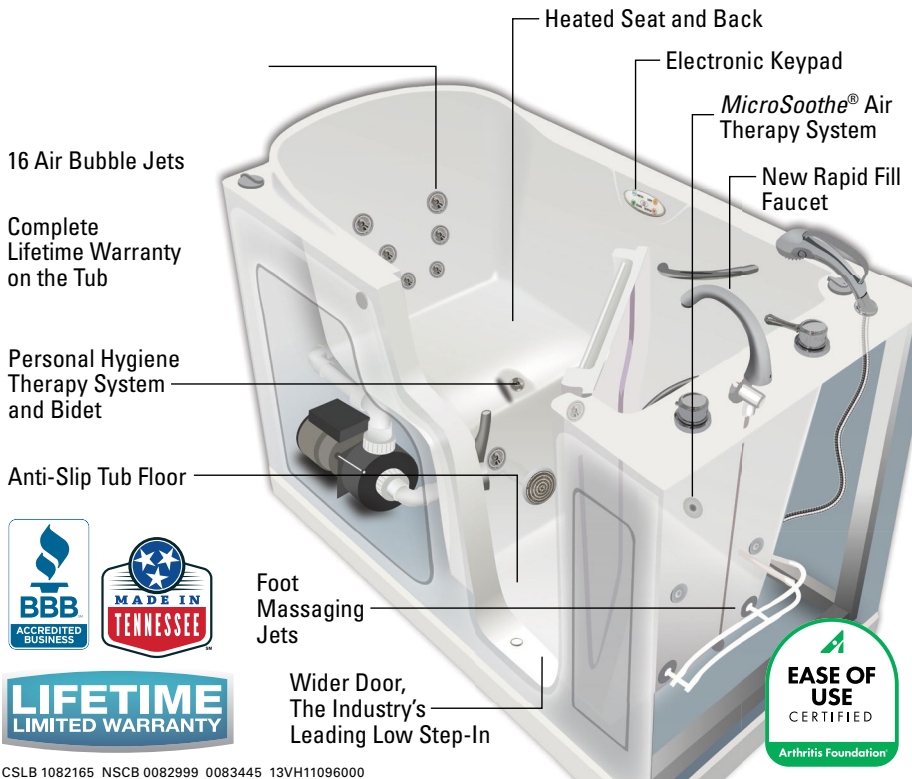
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SPRING-CLEANING TIPS TO MAXIMIZE EFFICIENCY

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: What are some tasks I can add to my spring-cleaning list that will increase energy efficiency?

A: Spring is a great time to refresh, clean, and enhance energy efficiency at home. By adding simple yet effective energy-saving strategies to our spring-cleaning routines, we can create an efficient living environment that may also lower our utility bills and extend the life of our heavily used appliances.

Even though it's out of sight, don't leave it out of mind: Check the filter in your HVAC system. Your furnace worked hard to heat your home during the winter. Ensuring your system has a clean filter is a low-cost and easy way to protect your equipment and maximize efficiency. A dirty furnace filter can cause your system to work harder than necessary, decreasing efficiency and shortening the system's life.

While the filter is easy to replace yourself, you should have your air conditioning unit serviced and professionally cleaned. HVAC contractors get busy responding to calls for repairs during the summer heat. Scheduling cleaning services for your air conditioning unit in the spring — before the heat of the summer — can ensure the work gets done before the rush and even save you money. Some HVAC contractors offer special discounts for cleaning services in the milder months, which helps fill their schedules and keep their technicians working.

Indoor and outdoor HVAC equipment should be cleaned. Dirty refrigerant coils reduce efficiency. This also applies to heat pumps and ductless heat pumps, also known as mini-split systems. HVAC technicians can check refrigerant levels



▲ If cleaning windows is on your spring-cleaning list, take the time to also check seals and sash locks. You may even want to caulk or recaulk around windows to reduce drafts and air leaks.

and refill or repair if necessary. Window air conditioning units can get dirty too. Check manufacturer instructions to learn how to clean these; you can also find tutorials online. Typically, they can be cleaned with the proper tools, cleaning agents, and know-how. Always unplug the unit before cleaning, and wait until it's completely dry to plug it back in again. Take the time to clean it properly in the spring before you need it in the summer.

Cleaning light fixtures and their covers can brighten your space by removing the dust and grime that collected during the winter. While you are at it, be sure to check the type of bulbs in the fixtures and replace any incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs with energy-saving LED bulbs. Although they tend to cost a little more when purchasing, LEDs last longer and use less energy. Good-quality LED bulbs are expected to last 30,000 to 50,000 hours, according to the Department of Energy. A

typical incandescent lamp lasts about 1,000 hours, and a comparable CFL lasts 8,000 to 10,000 hours. To put this into everyday use, if you have an LED light on for 10 hours per day, it can last 13 years compared to only about three months for incandescent bulbs and about 2 1/2 years for CFLs.

If cleaning windows is on your spring-cleaning list, check the seals and sash locks to ensure they close tightly. Inspect any areas that may need caulking or sealing to reduce drafts and air leaks. Sealing around windows contributes to year-round comfort in your home. Clean windows allow more light into the home, potentially reducing the need to turn on lamps and overhead fixtures.

Spring is the ideal time to declutter, deep clean, and implement practices that not only tidy our homes but also help reduce energy consumption, saving money on energy use.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company.

Colorado Receives DOT, DOE Funding to Repair Charging Ports



The U.S. Departments of Transportation and Energy recently announced that the federal government will provide \$150 million to 24 grant recipients in 20 states to repair or replace nearly 4,500 existing electric vehicle charging ports.

The funds are part of the \$5 billion National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure program funded under the 2021 infrastructure law that is intended to bring at least 500,000 public EV chargers online by 2030. To be eligible for funding, states need to operate the charging ports for at least five years, and they must work 97% of the time. The Colorado Department of Transportation received \$8 million to fix 363 charging ports.

Gas-Fired Capacity Will Grow Through 2050

According to a recent report by the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, even though overall carbon emissions will be greatly reduced, gas-fired electric generating capacity in the United States will grow by some 200 gigawatts by 2050. NREL modeling predicts that solar capacity will exceed 1,000 GW and wind capacity more than 770 GW by 2050, or about 10 times and five times more than existing capacity, respectively. Power sector carbon emissions will also fall between 71% and 86% under the so-called mid-case scenario.

22 Million Acres in Western States Proposed for Solar Development

In January, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management released an updated solar road map that proposes opening 22 million acres for developing utility-scale solar on public lands in 11 western states including Colorado. The BLM used funding from the Inflation Reduction Act to work with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory to develop the proposed road map. NREL determined that 700,000 acres of public lands will be needed to meet national goals for renewable energy development. The agency's road map restricts development to areas that are within 10 miles of existing or planned transmission lines but includes lands that were previously deemed unsuitable for solar development.



Women in Co-ops

International Women's Day is March 8. It's a great occasion to celebrate the accomplishments of the many women who are transforming electric co-ops and how they serve their local communities.

"The competition for talent and skill shortages has highlighted the need to expand recruitment strategies to get a more diverse range of candidates," explains Desiree Dunham, workforce programs manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "The diverse experiences and perspectives of women contribute to more creative and effective problem-solving, which can be especially beneficial in navigating complex challenges and finding innovative solutions that cater to a broad range of consumer needs."

Historically, it's been a male-dominated industry, though NRECA recently reported that nearly 90 electric co-ops are headed by female CEOs. Strengths such as teamwork, problem-solving, and communication that women often bring to leadership are particularly important to the industry's future. "When you think about it, 50% of the typical cooperative's membership is made up of females. Having women in the workforce at the cooperative is a direct reflection on the demographics of the membership that the cooperative serves," says Ruth Marks, CEO of Mountain View Electric Association.

Co-ops across the U.S. are actively working to build awareness among young women about the opportunities available to them. Without that exposure, future co-op leaders probably wouldn't know those jobs exist.



WORKFORCE HOUSING IN COLORADO'S MOUNTAIN TOWNS

“The cost of housing is astronomical in some of these ski towns, so the ability to house important workers is critical.”

– Phil Zimmer, SMPA member and Energy Services Supervisor

Communities like Crested Butte, Buena Vista, Telluride and Ouray are among the most sought-after destinations in the United States. As a result, property values and monthly rentals in these areas have soared, making housing particularly difficult for essential workers like teachers, healthcare professionals, firefighters, and service industry employees.

After experiencing that problem in their service territory firsthand, San Miguel Power Association decided to take action.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Tri-State is a not-for-profit power supplier to cooperatives and public power districts in Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico and Wyoming.



Tri-State, SMPA, SDCEA and Fading West have worked together to bring affordable housing to the mountain communities we serve.

BENEFITS OF COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Tri-State and San Miguel Power along with funding from multiple organizations, piloted a housing program to assist their end-consumers with more affordable, energy efficient housing solutions. This program integrates donated land, all-electric manufactured home designs and low-cost financing.

Affordable housing stabilizes the local workforce and economy, fosters diverse and inclusive communities and enhances quality of life by reducing the burden of housing costs. Local utilities, partnering with their community and wholesale power supplier Tri-State, make homeownership a reality. That's the cooperative difference.

Read the full story at

www.tristate.coop/rethinking-american-dream-colorados-mountain-towns





There's No Science Like Sourdough

Photo by Rita-Lyn Sanders

BY RITA-LYN SANDERS

There's something romantic about a freshly baked, crispy golden boule or batard. Not only are spongy slices of sourdough the perfect toasted vessel for creamy butter, but they are the best accompaniment for a countless number of entrees. I always wanted to try my hand at sourdough bread baking. The lack of a starter and the time factor — 24 hours to make a loaf — kept the task at bay.

But when my son nursed a sourdough starter in high school chemistry (which masqueraded as a food science course), I named the jar of bubbly goo “Harold” and studied what to do next. Conveniently, I had also found myself stuck at home during a pandemic with extra time on my hands. My studies landed me on the internet, where there are more videos and articles on sourdough than I could review in a lifetime. I read through a few recipes, joined a sourdough Facebook group, and jumped into the process.

While making sourdough is science, it

is by no means perfect. Sourdough relies on wild yeast and lactic acid bacteria — rather than baker's yeast — to leaven the dough; but many variables play into the development of a loaf. One of the most impactful variables is the temperature of your kitchen. Dough will rise faster in a warm kitchen and slower in a cool one. This is particularly important because underproofed bread results in a dense, gummy texture (a.k.a. “crumb”) and overproofed bread results in a flattened loaf (bread without spring). And that's just the beginning. Hydration, the type of flour, and even the microbes in your kitchen can impact crumb.

No preservatives. One of the things I love about sourdough is that it has only three ingredients: Flour, water, and salt. What about the starter? It's just fermented flour and water.

Hydration. Most sourdough recipes are written as a baker's percentage. This is where some basic math skills and a baking scale will come in handy. Baker's percentage expresses

a ratio in percentages of each ingredient's weight to the total flour weight. Hydration typically varies from 65% to 75%. The higher the hydration, the more open (bigger holes) the crumb. Dough with higher hydration is also more difficult to work.

Flour. Flour is another impactful variable. I started with white bread flour. It is the easiest when it's time to work the dough. The high protein content of bread flour helps your dough develop a strong gluten structure that gives it shape.

There is so much more to the science of sourdough, but it's time to get baking. My best advice is just do it! Find video examples of techniques (e.g., stretch and folds) on the internet. I recommend watching *The Bread Code* channel on YouTube. Join a sourdough group on Facebook and ask questions. Read recipes. Don't let anxiety, the metric system, or time stop you from creating one of life's most tasty treasures!

Make Your Own Sourdough Starter

How long will it take?

Once established, maintaining a starter isn't as intensive as you might expect. In its infancy (the first four to six weeks of life), the starter requires daily feeding. However, once your starter has matured, it is possible to leave it in the back of the refrigerator for weeks at a time without offering it sustenance until a day or two before you need it.

Is it difficult to make?

Once I got the hang of it, I realized the process can be as simple or as complex as I want to make it. Don't overthink it.

When will it be ready to use?

If you make your starter now, it should be ready to use in about a month.

What will I need?

The key to making a starter is to start with simple ingredients that are as pure as possible.

Ingredients

- Use unbleached, all-purpose flour (at least in the beginning)
- Use filtered water (such as from a refrigerator)

Supplies

- Have two to three glass quart jars and a wide rubber band
- Use a baking scale, although you can make bread without one



DID YOU KNOW?

Wild yeast in the starter produces carbon dioxide, creating bubbles in the dough that make it rise. A homemade loaf is richer in nutrients than a store-bought loaf containing preservatives, and it is generally easier to digest. Consume or freeze homemade sourdough within 5 days of baking — it doesn't have preservatives to prevent spoiling.

To make/maintain your starter:

Days 1 – 2: Make the Starter

Combine unbleached, all-purpose flour and filtered water at a ratio of 1:1 in a quart jar. I suggest using 20 grams of flour and 20 grams of water. In my kitchen, this is about 2 tablespoons of flour and 3 teaspoons of water. Stir it with a scraper, scrape down the mixture off the inside of the jar, and place a rubber band around the outside of the jar to mark the top of the starter. Put a lid on the jar, and let it sit at room temperature for 48 hours.



Day 3: Feed Your Starter

Grab your second jar. Following a 1:1:1 ratio, combine 10 grams of starter; 10 grams of unbleached, all-purpose flour; and 10 grams of filtered water in the clean jar. Stir, scrape, screw on the lid, and mark the top of the starter with a rubber band.

Day 4 – 42: Keep on Feeding

Repeat every day. Each day, you will have 10 to 20 grams of leftover starter called “discard” from the previous jar. Throw away the discard from the first two weeks, as it might have an abundance of bad bacteria and isn't mature. Otherwise, the reason to discard the leftover starter is so that you don't unnecessarily waste a large amount of flour during this process. With the 1:1:1 ratio, the amount of flour needed could add up if you don't discard some starter. After the first two weeks, you can save the discard in a separate jar and keep adding discard to it until you have enough (1 cup) to make a discard recipe — you can find several online, just search “sourdough starter discard recipes.”

Each day, your starter should become more mature in both sour flavor and vigor until it doubles a few hours after you feed it. While you can use it for baking sourdough bread just two weeks after its birth, it might not be mature enough to do its proper job of leavening until after four to six weeks of daily feeding.

Maintenance:

After four weeks, I switched from using unbleached, all-purpose flour to organic dark rye flour for my starter. It makes a denser starter, but it also tends to be more vigorous, and I like the whole grain. I also add a little extra water so that it isn't so thick. This is definitely one aspect where it's less “science” and more “art.” I did a daily feeding using rye for two weeks. At week six, I began storing my starter in the refrigerator. I now feed it every one or two weeks and let it sit at room temperature for 2 to 4 hours to rise before putting it into the refrigerator for the week.

What's next? Time to make bread.



Find Rita's sourdough bread recipe online at coloradocountrylife.coop/recipes.



Heart of COLORADO

2024 PHOTO CONTEST
WINNERS



ON THE COVER



BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR

This year's photo contest theme was **Heart of Colorado**. We asked you to share — in photos — what you love about Colorado. When we announced the categories, we hoped to see photos that captured Colorado's **lovely** landscapes, activities you **adore**, people and animals you are **fond** of, and the four seasons with which we can all become quite **smitten**.

Well, we got all that and more.

Nearly 900 photos were submitted to the contest, and 19 of CREA's 21 member co-ops were represented in the entries. These winners not only captured the heart of Colorado, but they also captured the judges' hearts. Whittling down the entries to the 12 final images was no easy task.

We hope you enjoy these photos and find inspiration in these pages and in our beloved and beautiful state.

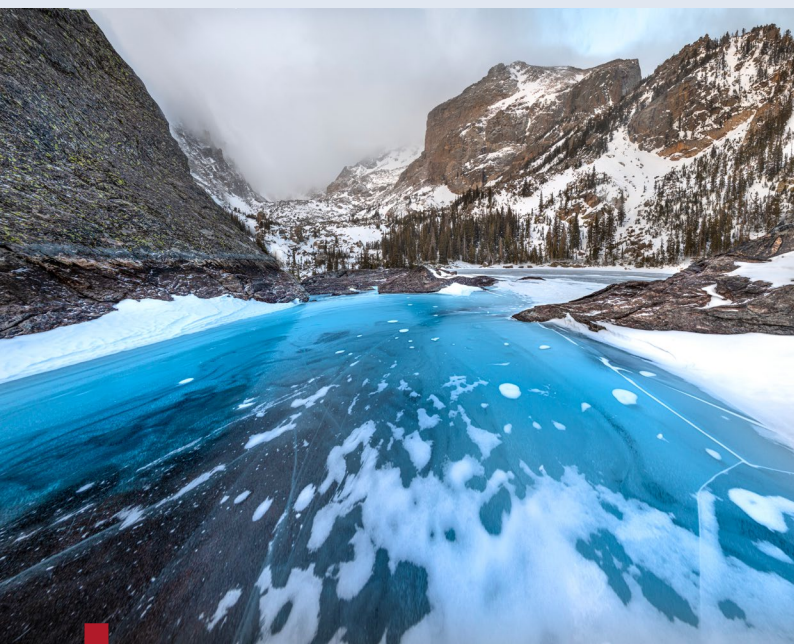
Watch for the 2025 photo contest, which will open for entries this summer.

ON THE COVER: *Daybreak*
by Natalie Heller,
San Miguel Power Association member

LOVELY LANDSCAPES



FIRST PLACE: *Wildflowers in American Basin* by Rodney Martinez, Grand Valley Power member



SECOND PLACE: *Frozen* by Jamison Paul, Poudre Valley REA member



THIRD PLACE: *Sunrise and Morning Mist* by John Boland, SDCEA member



ACTIVITIES YOU ADORE



FIRST PLACE: *Kit Carson County Fair and Rodeo* by Travis Gaddy, K.C. Electric Association member



SECOND PLACE: *Boarding with Sadie* by Sue Batzel, Mountain View Electric Association member



THIRD PLACE: *What a View* by Marcy Gruber, Mountain Parks Electric member



A FONDNESS FOR PEOPLE & ANIMALS



FIRST PLACE: *Great Catch* by Jennifer Coombes,
Poudre Valley REA member



SECOND PLACE: *Kids Playdate* by George Turner,
SDCEA member



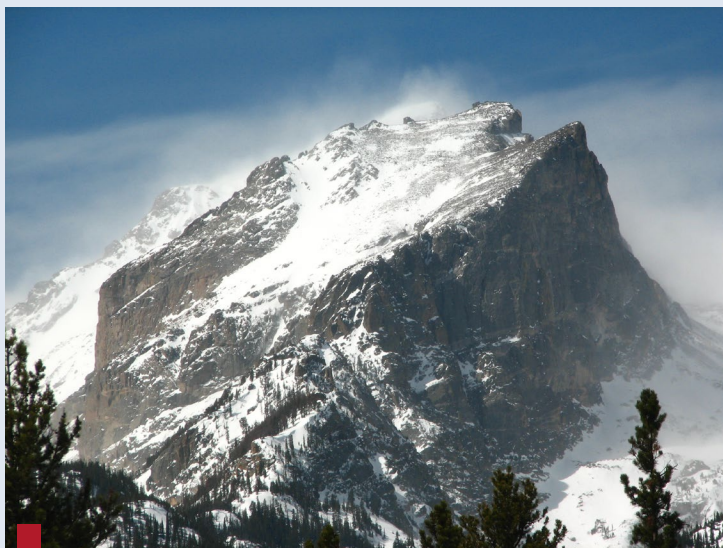
THIRD PLACE: *Midsummer Reverie* by Liz With,
GCEA member



SMITTEN WITH THE SEASONS



FIRST PLACE: *Autumn Gold* by Donnell Allen, Mountain View Electric Association member



SECOND PLACE: *Winter Beauty as Only Winter Can Provide* by Ron Stoll, Poudre Valley REA member



THIRD PLACE: *Spring Storms* by Scott Burnworth, Poudre Valley REA member



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	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
30	8.94	7.73	9.77	8.61	13.03	10.87	18	16	58	28.33	21.98	50.43	36.04	88.64	61.59	169	117
36	9.12	8.12	10.32	9.44	14.04	12.34	22	18	59	31.07	23.51	55.50	38.76	97.94	67.13	188	129
37	9.21	8.37	10.52	9.81	14.80	12.99	22	20	60	34.14	24.28	59.98	41.71	108.51	72.34	207	140
38	9.21	8.48	11.69	10.16	15.63	13.80	24	21	61	37.41	25.65	66.43	47.11	121.89	83.65	236	156
39	9.46	8.61	12.35	10.56	16.47	14.31	25	22	62	41.07	27.91	73.90	51.33	135.77	92.10	265	171
40	9.63	8.83	12.94	11.01	17.32	15.16	27	24	63	44.58	34.39	85.55	59.61	151.36	101.40	287	187
41	10.05	9.05	13.66	11.61	19.38	16.77	30	26	64	48.23	38.53	93.16	64.39	168.32	111.96	323	206
42	10.47	9.26	14.21	12.46	21.07	18.19	33	29	65	53.18	41.15	100.34	70.37	187.54	124.63	356	229
43	10.98	9.39	14.72	13.25	23.23	19.77	38	31	66	59.15	44.62	115.74	75.41	208.45	134.77	392	248
44	11.58	9.73	15.68	14.10	25.26	21.41	41	34	67	65.66	49.09	130.13	83.65	230.15	147.28	436	272
45	12.25	10.15	16.86	15.16	27.90	23.58	46	38	68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	261.19	173.71	491	322
46	12.84	10.65	17.85	15.87	29.57	24.92	49	41	69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	292.32	187.50	548	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.14	16.84	32.11	26.60	54	44	70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	329.12	203.80	615	387
48	13.48	11.89	20.45	17.77	34.21	28.42	58	48	71	102.45	82.71	204.38	159.34	373.07	234.59	702	443
49	13.71	12.33	21.77	18.77	37.13	30.30	63	52	72	113.68	94.13	232.46	172.23	426.44	271.99	807	512
50	14.37	12.99	23.41	20.00	39.68	33.31	69	57	73	127.55	108.24	267.15	188.15	492.36	318.18	937	596
51	15.38	13.75	25.38	21.18	44.27	34.98	78	62	74	142.08	123.01	303.50	204.84	561.42	366.57	1074	685
52	16.37	14.88	28.02	22.76	49.00	37.94	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	643.04	423.76	1235	789
53	17.46	15.88	30.96	24.81	54.33	43.09	101	77	76	200.03	174.92	418.29	276.67	784.08	529.52	1489	982
54	18.69	16.72	34.00	26.21	59.70	45.15	112	83	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	955.35	657.94	1797	1215
55	20.64	17.51	37.14	27.86	66.68	49.42	122	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1166.92	816.58	2179	1504
56	22.69	19.48	41.67	31.07	73.22	52.92	140	97	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1388.55	982.78	2578	1807
57	24.69	20.63	45.59	33.43	80.39	57.15	154	107	80	450.51	386.48	859.57	596.78	1650.49	1179.18	3050	2164

* \$1,000,000 monthly rates are rounded up to the nearest dollar. Therefore, actual monthly rates at \$1,000,000 may be slightly less.

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It's Not Just a Drop in the Bucket

Collect rainwater and potentially decrease your water bill

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Why have rain barrels become popular when we don't get that much rain in Colorado? What's the point?

It's hard not to notice summers are getting hotter and dryer. Just ask a long-time resident — like me. In my youth, temperatures rarely hit the 90s, and 100 was unheard of. We always counted on afternoon thunderstorms to cool things down. Not so much anymore.

Warnings of drought conditions have become more frequent, and rain patterns seem more erratic. Can rain barrels really have much impact in the larger scheme of things? One barrel is almost a token gesture. But imagine the possibilities if everyone had one for their garden.

As rainwater hits your roof, it flows into the gutter and through the downspout where it's collected over time in a 40- to 60-gallon barrel. Stored rainwater can be applied later to lawns and gardens or used for other purposes during dry spells.

A sealed lid keeps mosquitoes out. Planting mosquito-repelling citronella, peppermint, and eucalyptus nearby may act as an additional deterrent. An overflow valve keeps the barrel from overflowing and directs water away from your home's foundation. A garden hose can be attached to a spigot at the bottom of the barrel for drip irrigation or for filling water cans.

Rainwater shouldn't be used for drinking, cooking, or bathing because it collects bacteria and other contaminants as it falls.

Every gallon of water you collect is one less gallon you need to buy. Conserving water pays off during droughts when water usage and water bills typically increase. During periods of heavy rain, it's a good idea to empty barrels between storms. Water in barrels can freeze, so always empty them when temperatures drop below freezing, and disconnect them for the winter to avoid damage.

Although rain barrels are legal in Colorado, your HOA, city, or county may impose restrictions or prohibit them. It's a good idea to check local ordinances before making the investment.

Master Gardener Vicki Spencer has an eclectic background in conservation, water, natural resources, and more.

“
Conserving water pays off during droughts when water usage and water bills typically increase.”



LEARN MORE ONLINE

Read previous gardening columns at www.coloradocountrylife.coop. Click on Gardening under Living in Colorado.

Popular CoQ10 Pills Leave Millions Suffering

Could this newly-discovered brain fuel solve America's worsening memory crisis?

PALM BEACH, FLORIDA — Millions of Americans take the supplement known as CoQ10. It's the coenzyme that supercharges the "energy factories" in your cells known as *mitochondria*. But there's a serious flaw that's leaving millions unsatisfied.

As you age, your mitochondria break down and fail to produce energy. In a revealing study, a team of researchers showed that 95 percent of the mitochondria in a 90-year-old man were damaged, compared to almost no damage in the mitochondria of a 5-year-old.

Taking CoQ10 alone is not enough to solve this problem. Because as powerful as CoQ10 is, there's one critical thing it fails to do: it can't create new mitochondria to replace the ones you lost.

And that's bad news for Americans all over the country. The loss of cellular energy is a problem for the memory concerns people face as they get older.

"We had no way of replacing lost mitochondria until a recent discovery changed everything," says Dr. Al Sears, founder and medical director of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida. "Researchers discovered the only nutrient known to modern science that has the power to trigger the growth of new mitochondria."

Why Taking CoQ10 is Not Enough

Dr. Sears explains, "This new discovery is so powerful, it can multiply your mitochondria by 55 percent in just a few weeks. That's the equivalent of restoring decades of lost brain power."

This exciting nutrient — called PQQ (*pyrroloquinoline quinone*) — is the driving force behind a revolution in aging. When paired with CoQ10, this dynamic duo has the power to reverse the age-related memory losses you may have thought were beyond your control.

Dr. Sears pioneered a new formula — called **Ultra Accel II** — that combines both CoQ10 and PQQ to support maximum cellular energy and the normal growth of new mitochondria. **Ultra Accel II** is the first of its kind to address both problems and is already creating huge demand.

Over 47 million doses have been shipped to men and women across the country and sales continue to climb for this much sought-after brain fuel. In fact, demand has been so overwhelming that inventories repeatedly sell out. But a closer look at **Ultra Accel II** reveals there are good reasons why sales are booming.

Science Confirms the Many Benefits of PQQ

The medical journal *Biochemical*

Pharmacology reports that PQQ is up to 5,000 times more efficient in sustaining energy production than common antioxidants. With the ability to keep every cell in your body operating at full strength, **Ultra Accel II** delivers more than just added brain power and a faster memory.

People feel more energetic, more alert, and don't need naps in the afternoon. The boost in cellular energy generates more power to your heart, lungs, muscles, and more.

"With the PQQ in Ultra Accel, I have energy I never thought possible at my age," says Colleen R., one of Dr. Sears's patients. "I'm in my 70s but feel 40 again. I think clearly, move with real energy and sleep like a baby."

The response has been overwhelmingly positive, and Dr. Sears receives countless emails from his patients and readers. "My patients tell me they feel better than they have in years. This is ideal for people who are feeling old and run down, or for those who feel more forgetful. It surprises many that you can add healthy and productive years to your life simply by taking **Ultra Accel II** every day."

You may have seen Dr. Sears on television or read one of his 12 best-selling books. Or you may have seen him speak at the 2016 WPBF 25 Health and Wellness Festival in South Florida, featuring Dr. Oz and special guest Suzanne Somers. Thousands of people attended Dr. Sears's lecture on anti-aging breakthroughs and waited in line for hours during his book signing at the event.

Will Ultra Accel II Multiply Your Energy?

Ultra Accel II is turning everything we thought we knew about youthful energy on its head. Especially for people over age 50. In less than 30 seconds every morning, you can harness the power of this breakthrough discovery to restore peak energy and your "spark for life."

So, if you've noticed less energy as you've gotten older, and you want an easy way to reclaim your youthful edge, this new opportunity will feel like blessed relief.

The secret is the "energy multiplying" molecule that activates a dormant gene in your body that declines with age, which then instructs your cells to pump out fresh energy from the inside-out. This growth of new "energy factories" in your cells is called mitochondrial biogenesis.

Instead of falling victim to that afternoon slump, you enjoy sharp-as-a-tack focus, memory, and concentration from sunup to sundown. And you get more done in a day than most do in a week. Regardless of how



MEMORY-BUILDING SENSATION: Top doctors are now recommending new Ultra Accel II because it restores decades of lost brain power without a doctor's visit.

exhausting the world is now.

Dr. Sears reports, "The most rewarding aspect of practicing medicine is watching my patients get the joy back in their lives. **Ultra Accel II** sends a wake-up call to every cell in their bodies... And they actually feel young again."

And his patients agree. "I noticed a difference within a few days," says Jerry from Ft. Pierce, Florida. "My endurance has almost doubled, and I feel it mentally, too. There's a clarity and sense of well-being in my life that I've never experienced before."

How To Get Ultra Accel II

This is the official nationwide release of **Ultra Accel II** in the United States. And so, the company is offering a special discount supply to anyone who calls during the official launch.

An Order Hotline has been set up for local readers to call. This gives everyone an equal chance to try **Ultra Accel II**. And your order is backed up by a no-hassle, 90-day money back guarantee. No questions asked.

All you have to do is call TOLL FREE 1-877-509-0917 right now and use promo code **COUA324** to secure your own supply.

Important: Due to **Ultra Accel II** recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back.

Call and find out if you qualify for a **FREE BOTTLE** of Ultra D3 Plus - with **FREE SHIPPING** too!



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Electric Co-ops and First Responders:

A crucial partnership for safety

BY SHARON SULLIVAN

An arc of electricity flashes through the air and captures the attention of first responders as they gather to watch a power line safety demonstration put on by Morgan County Rural Electric Association linemen.

Mounted on a flatbed trailer, the 7,200-volt “Hotline” demonstration was designed and built by MCREA linemen to show what happens when someone comes in contact with a power line, said Maddie Pollart, MCREA communications and public relations coordinator. The co-op also has a tabletop version — useful for demonstrations in schools and other venues. “We can give [the training] to anybody — classrooms, neighboring businesses, the Rotary Club, for example — but we especially enjoy presenting to our local first responders,” Pollart said.

The Fort Morgan-based co-op’s demo uses hot dogs and oranges to simulate what happens to a person’s inner organs after coming in contact with a live, energized line. “Typically, people are amazed,” Morgan County REA Line Superintendent Travis Varelman said. “They don’t understand the potential damage of an electrical contact. Aside from immediate consequences, an electrical contact can have long-term effects. It can take years for symptoms to arise.”

Mountain View Electric Association, with offices in Falcon and Limon, also has two high-voltage demo trailers that its linemen use to replicate different power line safety scenarios. The co-op also holds a live-wire and first responder event every few years at its Falcon office to show potential consequences of electrocution on the human body and heart. Using a dummy prop attached to the top of a power pole, linemen demonstrate how to rescue in just minutes

▲ Mountain View Electric Association linemen present a high-voltage demonstration to show potential consequences of electrocution on the human body. Photo courtesy of Mountain View Electric Association.

a fellow lineworker who has come in contact with electricity, said Sara Muirheid, MVEA communications supervisor.

“Safety is our top priority,” Muirheid said. “We want our first responders to know what to do in the first few seconds at the scene of an accident that involves electricity; it could make the difference between life or death for both victims and for first responders.”

At Poudre Valley REA in Fort Collins, Working Foreman Kelly Streeb conducts four-hour safety demonstrations for both law enforcement and firefighters. The trainings are hands-on and include a PowerPoint presentation, tabletop demos, and opportunities to learn how to operate high-voltage detective tools to mitigate hazards before other emergency responders arrive, said Streeb. They practice what to do in emergency situations.

“We set aside a budget each year to cover emergency responder training needs,” Streeb said. “We want to do our part to keep emergency responders and the public safe. Departments can get a hold of our safety director to schedule a class.

“We have spent a week at departments doing trainings,” Streeb continued. “Some have several stations and crews. PVREA provides trainings for approximately 20 different departments. We do advanced training and continual education with our lineworkers as well.”



◀ Morgan County REA trains first responders in Washington County with virtual reality headsets that simulate downed power lines and other emergency situations. *Photo courtesy of Morgan County REA.*

TECHNOLOGY AND TRAINING

In addition to tabletop demos and hotline trailers, MCREA uses virtual reality headsets for an immersive training experience that simulates various emergency situations. MCREA learned about the high-tech headsets from an Oregon electric co-op’s success with the tool. After borrowing one of their VR headsets to see how it worked, the co-op purchased three of its own.

One of the VR training experiences is geared toward first responders, while a second video simulates a farm or ranch scene where users see the dangerous implications of stacking hay under power lines and to check clearances when moving long pieces of irrigation pipe. “It’s very real,” Pollart said. “VR demonstrations have a significantly higher retention rate when compared to reading or lectures. They drive home the point; they’re easy to remember.”

WORKING TOGETHER

Durango-based La Plata Electric Association tries to meet with emergency management officers monthly to discuss emergency action plans and hazard mitigation techniques, said Jerry Sutherlin, LPEA vice president of operations. “We have worked together to perform tabletop demonstrations, going over different scenarios, weather conditions, and testing of our local radio systems — which is how we can all work together,” he said.

LPEA also has a newly constructed high-voltage demo trailer that it uses for first responder training. “Many policemen and firemen don’t realize the hazards associated with electricity,” Sutherlin said. “A lot of times, if there’s been a car accident, they will be the first on the scene. We educate about the hazards if there are power lines involved. Everybody’s lives are important. They offer trainings for us, as well,” he said, regarding fire extinguishers, or dealing with active shooters.

“The biggest safety issue we see regularly is inclement weather — trees and branches that fall through power lines,” Sutherlin said. “We live in such a forested area — those events are not uncommon. We don’t want first responders to assume a line is de-energized,” Sutherlin continued. “If they want to move a line to free up traffic, our message is ‘stay away’ until we get there.”

Sharon Sullivan is a freelance journalist based in Grand Junction. She writes for a variety of magazines, newspapers, and nonprofit organizations. When not working she’s likely to be out hiking the public lands surrounding the Grand Valley.

✔ Mountain View Electric Association linemen use a dummy prop to demonstrate a power pole rescue scenario with local first responder teams. *Photos courtesy of Mountain View Electric Association.*



Explore the Backcountry SAFELY

BY TIM COLEMAN



TIM COLEMAN

WHAT TO BRING

1. Avalanche beacon, probe, and shovel
2. Water bottles
3. Helmet
4. First-aid kit
5. Emergency blanket
6. Equipment repair kit

ALWAYS IN THE PACK

- Snacks
- Extra layers
- Extra gloves
- Sunscreen
- Headlamp
- Walkie-talkies
- Map, GPS, or route info

For many avid skiers and snowboarders, the backcountry is the final frontier of their snow sports progression. The backcountry is a place of solitude, excitement, and exercise. You will often hear the phrase “earn your turns,” when hiking up a valley before slashing down the mountain back to the car. While backcountry enthusiasts will often share snow reports, terrain to explore, and many high-fives, the backcountry can be dangerous to beginners and experts alike.

Colorado has no shortage of amazing backcountry terrain to explore. However, the state also has an extremely variable snowpack, which results in a heightened risk of avalanche danger. If you are traveling in the backcountry, make sure that you are always being mindful of the terrain you’re traveling in, any sudden change of weather, or instability in the snowpack; these are all factors that can lead to a risk of avalanche. Luckily, there are many resources for individuals seeking to explore the backcountry safely.

AVALANCHE RESCUE ESSENTIALS

The beacon, shovel, and probe set is the cornerstone of avalanche safety. Every person entering the backcountry should have these three pieces of equipment and know how to use them.

Beacon: Allows you to search for a missing person if an avalanche occurs. **Probe:** After locating the beacon signal of the person involved in an avalanche, the probe is used to locate the individual under the snowpack. **Shovel:** The shovel is used to dig an individual out of snow after an avalanche.



RESOURCES Know before you go:

- Take an American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education (AIARE) course through a local guide shop in Colorado.
- Educate yourself on the terrain you plan to explore.
- Take an avalanche safety refresher course regularly and practice

- avalanche rescue scenarios with your group.
- Find more-experienced individuals to learn from.
- Always check the Colorado Avalanche Information Center for up-to-date avalanche conditions across the state.

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Congratulations
February Giveaway Winners

Mountain View Electric Association member Aimee Crespin, Peyton, was randomly selected as the winner of *Treat Yourself!* and San Isabel Electric member Vicki Henderson, Colorado City, was selected as the winner of *Images of Grand County*.

Visit Reader Engagement at www.coloradocountrylife.coop for more ways to win.



CALLING ALL SERVICE DOG HANDLERS

September is National Service Dog Month — A month-long recognition that honors the dogs that have a career helping humans.

Join us in celebrating the extraordinary bond between you and your service dog. We invite you to participate in an upcoming story for CCL by sharing your unique stories of the loyal service dog in your life. Tell us how your four-legged hero plays a pivotal role in your life, provides support, love, and life-saving assistance.

Do you have a touching tale of how your service dog has helped you overcome challenges?

Or maybe you want to share a touching message of gratitude to your amazing dog.

We want to hear from you.

Share your inspiring story for a chance to see it published in the September issue of *Colorado Country Life*.



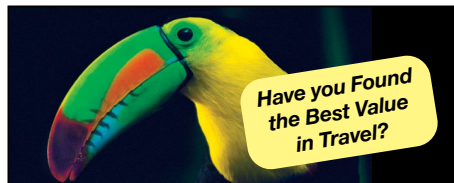
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   READERS' PHOTOS

 FUNNY STORIES



WINNER: Janet Ladowski from Monument takes her copy of CCL to the Antarctic Peninsula in November while on an amazing Viking Expedition cruise. She notes how she was impressed with the tourism industry that has come together to protect all aspects of this delicate ecosystem.



GCEA member **Rebecca Wilkins** from Crested Butte brings the magazine to Giza, Egypt, to see the great pyramids.



Joseph and Michelle Buczkowski's kids (left to right) **Brendan, Bianca, and David** pause their adventures in Cartagena, Colombia, to take a photo with their magazine. The Buczkowskis are members of Mountain View Electric Association.



Highline Electric members **Tanya, Aubrey, Isaac, and Jeff Poe** go on a family mission trip to Guatemala with Child Beyond International. The Poes say they were inspired to bring their magazine after seeing "Postcards from Guatemala" in the January issue about the electrification project in Guatemala.



Morgan County REA members **Kevin and Melanie Fergus** celebrate their 30th anniversary along with CCL in San Pedro, Belize, on the Ambergris Caye.



Joe and Winnie Vasquez, Mountain View Electric members, bring their copy of the magazine to Ball Arena to watch the home team Nuggets play.



I was going to have my 5-year-old son help mix up some bread dough. As he put his hands in butter, I asked him if he washed his hands. He replied, "No, because I thought I might leave soap on the dough." I wasn't sure what I would rather have in my bread: soap or what was on his hands from being outside.

Shayla King
Grand Valley Power member

We were planning a trip to Illinois to visit relatives. We stopped in Saint Louis to meet up with some friends for a cruise on the Mississippi River. We had the bottom half of a cargo box placed on top of the minivan and hadn't yet filled it or placed the top half on. When my 4-year-old daughter saw it, she exclaimed, "Is that the boat for our cruise?"

Michelle Stevens
Mountain View Electric Association member

My 6-year-old granddaughter was visiting, and we were getting ready for bed. I told her we would set the alarm for 7 a.m. I mentioned that it was early for her, as it would only be 6 a.m. at her house. She asked what I meant by that. I explained that we were going to bed in the Central time zone, but that she lived in the Mountain time zone, which was an hour behind us. She said, "I don't live in the mountains. I don't know why they don't call it 'country time' because I live in the country."

Lynda Goodrich
Southeast Colorado Power Association member

We pay \$15 to each person who submits a funny story that is printed in the magazine. At the end of the year, we draw one name from the published stories, and that person will receive \$200. Send your stories to Colorado Country Life, 5400 Washington Street, Denver, CO 80216, or email funnystories@coloradocountrylife.org. Remember to include your mailing address, so we can send you a check!

Don't forget to pack a copy of CCL for your next trip!

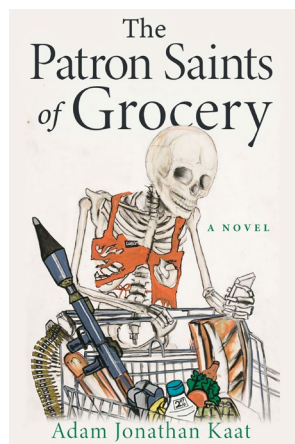
Show us where you enjoy CCL for a chance to win! Simply take a photo of someone (or a selfie!) with the magazine and share it with us on the Reader Engagement page at www.coloradocountrylife.coop. Each month we'll draw one photo to win \$25. The next deadline is Monday, March 18.

Stories of Adventures in the Wild and the Frozen Food Section

Do you have a selection of books all set for spring break?

These three books — all of which have a Colorado connection — are great to pack in your suitcase if you're headed out of town or to stash by your favorite chair if you're snowed in.

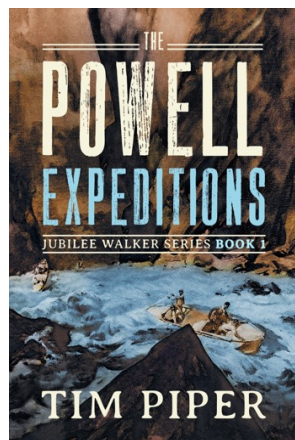
Colorado authors are welcome to share their books with us for a potential feature in the magazine. Send a copy to 5400 Washington Street, Denver, CO 80216, or email information to editor@coloradocountrylife.org.



The Patron Saints of Grocery by Adam Jonathan Kaat

Daniel is feeling the numbness stemming from an underappreciated life. New pressures from climbing the corporate ladder, protocols and regulations from the government, and the increasingly restless public all impose their will on Daniel's dreams. Working hard to climb the ranks feels meaningless without any recognition, and the slow grind of retail life begins to take its toll. Will he finally get the push he needs to prioritize a secret alternative life or will he just fade away into the retail abyss?

Adam Kaat's real-world, extraordinary experiences as a cashier at the onset of the pandemic prompted him to write *Life on the Grocery Line* (Inspired Forever Books, 2023), a book that captures the global angst and uncertainty of the time. *The Patron Saints of Grocery* (Inspired Forever Books, 2023), continues the saga, giving readers a look at how life plays out for the forgotten "heroes" working the front lines of essential stores after the novelty and initial shock of the crisis wears off.



The Powell Expeditions by Tim Piper

After his mother's death, 17-year-old Jubilee Walker asks to join a scientific expedition led by a family friend: Major John Wesley Powell. Powell initially refuses, but Jubil's persistence and resourcefulness eventually win him a place on Powell's crew. However, Jubil's plans for a life of adventure are complicated by his deepening feelings for his best friend, Nelly Boswell, who is reluctant to spend her life with a man who insists on such a dangerous lifestyle. How will Jubil navigate the hardships and lawlessness of the American West? And will he be forced to choose between a life of adventure and the girl he loves?

Author Tim Piper's *The Powell Expeditions* (Sunshine Parade Publishing, January 2024) follows Jubilee on a westward trek during the late 1860s, where he encounters Indigenous people, survives harsh winters, learns valuable life skills, makes new friends, and discovers his journey is not just physical, but a quest to find a sense of belonging and purpose.

Jubil's story draws on the real-life adventures of naturalist, college professor, and Civil War veteran Major John Wesley Powell during his Colorado River exploring expeditions. Powell became the first explorer to summit Longs Peak in the Colorado Rockies and navigate the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon, fixing his place in history as one of the United States' great explorers.



False Summit by Cam Torrens

Chaffee County Search & Rescue is known for finding lost people in the Rocky Mountain backcountry.

But they've never lost one of their own before.

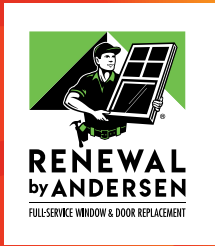
Cam Torrens, author of *Stable*, has pumped out another psychological thriller that will have readers racing to answer the question what happened to Kristee Li?

Just as veteran pilot Tyler Zahn finally feels as if he's recovering from the tragedies that drove him from the Air Force and his injuries sustained after his daughter's kidnapping last year, his best friend, Kristee Li, disappears on a remote search mission. A massive effort to find her fails. No clues. No body. Kristee is presumed dead.

A fellow team member claims the disappearance is no accident, and Zahn begins to question what really happened in the mountains. Who would have wanted Kristee dead? More importantly, why? Plagued with grief, Zahn starts asking questions while slowly slipping into the same depression he's worked so hard to escape.

Told in the alternating perspectives of Zahn's investigation and Kristee's last weeks leading up to her disappearance, *False Summit* proves that when it comes to money, sexuality, and cultural norms, the truth is in short supply.

Cam is a 30-year Air Force veteran and father of six. He and his wife live outside of Buena Vista, Colorado, where he volunteers with Chaffee County Search & Rescue-North, the Buena Vista Public Library, and Central Colorado Writers.



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