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APRIL 2023



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EDITORIAL

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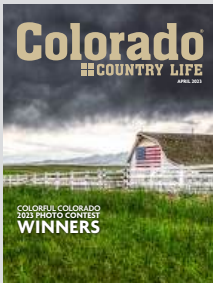
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On the  
Cover

"American Barn," the cover  
contest winning photo  
by Poudre Valley REA  
consumer-member  
J.R. Schnelzer of Milliken.



"Mount Princeton Sunset," by William Helms, an SDCEA consumer-member.

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### Monthly Contests

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WIN



Enter for your chance to win a bottle of garlic-infused olive oil from Elevated Olive. Read more about it on page 12. For official rules and to enter, visit Monthly Contests at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop).



### LINKEDIN CONNECTIONS

**Colorado Rural Electric Assn. posted:** Tim Coleman (left), CREA manager of legislative affairs, is pictured with Rep. Lindsay (D-Aurora) after testifying in support of HB23-1123-Move Over or Slow Down Stationary Vehicle. CREA was able to secure an amendment to ensure that utility contractors receive the same protections under the law that co-op employees do. Also in the picture: Skyler McKinley (AAA), Captain Hahn (Colorado State Patrol) and Dan Hodges (Colorado Springs Utilities).



### FACEBOOK CHATTER

**Colorado Rural Electric Association posted:** Thanks to Representative Julie McCluskie for taking time to talk with directors and managers from Colorado's electric co-ops and CREA. And thanks for the shout out for the co-op magazine *Colorado Country Life*!

# CO-OPS NOT AT FAULT

## for “Rising Utility Rates”

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In recent months, thousands of Coloradans have been hit with much higher home heating bills compared to past winters. I know, because the heating bill at our house in Denver (I’m an Xcel Energy customer) was significantly higher this winter. At a recent informational meeting of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, the commission’s chief economist reported that “For a typical Xcel customer, the (2022) electric bills are up ... 20-25%, as opposed to gas bills, which have increased ... 75%.”

These increased costs to keep the lights on and our homes warm, particularly during this colder-than-average winter, have created a serious financial burden for thousands of Colorado residents. At a public hearing hosted by the CPUC, dozens of residents expressed their frustrations with the higher costs of home heating and how difficult it will be for them to pay their bills.

The utility companies that provide home heating services have largely blamed the high costs on the price of natural gas, the commodity that is used to heat most homes in Colorado. Natural gas prices are subject to significant volatility since the commodity is traded in national and international markets and is subject to many different variables that impact the cost.

The Colorado State Legislature and the Governor both have recognized the extraordinary costs of heating homes and businesses and they have initiated investigations into the cause of the recent rate increases. The legislature has established a “Joint Select Committee on Rising Utility Rates” that will meet in the coming months to investigate the causes

and possible solutions for the current problem. Governor Polis has established an “Energy Bill Relief Working Group” that will engage in a similar analysis.

During these investigations, CREA intends to make it clear to the legislature and the Governor that Colorado’s electric co-ops are NOT part of the problem when it comes to high heating costs. For the most part, electric co-ops provide electricity and are not involved in the home heating business (one electric co-op provides propane heat to a few hundred residents). So, while the legislature and Governor tend to lump together all utility services when they talk about “rising utility costs,” the focus should really be on the increased rates of those utilities that use natural gas for heating homes and businesses.

This is not to say that Colorado’s electric co-ops have not been impacted by increased natural gas costs. Two years ago, during Winter Storm Uri, the electric co-ops that purchase their wholesale electricity from Xcel Energy were hit with multi-million dollar “fuel adjustment clause” surcharges that those co-ops had to pass on to their retail consumer-members. These surcharges were the result of increased wholesale power costs that, according to Xcel, were caused by a runup in the cost of natural gas used to fuel their power plants. Long after Winter Storm Uri, some of the electric co-ops that purchase wholesale power from Xcel have been subjected to continuing wholesale power cost increases that have resulted in rate increases to their retail, end-use consumers.



KENT SINGER

And while some electric co-ops have had modest rate increases over the last several years to pay for the costs of upgrading their facilities and the costs of inflation, the power supplier to 17 of the co-ops (Tri-State G&T) has not had a rate increase since 2017. The bottom line is that electric co-op consumer-members have not experienced anywhere near the magnitude of rate increases that have impacted so many Coloradans recently. Simply put, electric co-ops are not part of the problem that our legislature and Governor are investigating.

Under Colorado law, electric co-ops are not-for-profit companies that exist for the sole purpose of serving their members; they do not exist to make a profit for out-of-state hedge funds and insurance companies. Colorado’s electric co-ops have a straightforward mission: to provide electricity to families and businesses that reside in co-op service territory (70% of the state’s land mass) in the most reliable and affordable way possible.

Colorado’s electric co-ops continue to live up to that mission every day, and we look forward to helping policymakers find solutions to the home heating emergency that impacted so many Coloradans this winter.

Kent Singer is the executive director of CREA and offers a statewide perspective on issues affecting electric cooperatives. CREA is the trade association for 21 Colorado electric distribution co-ops and one power supply co-op.

# FROM THE EDITOR

## A Season of Change

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR



KYLEE COLEMAN

Spring arrived a couple weeks ago, and it serves as a reminder on the matter of change. Saying goodbye to winter also says “hello” to the green blades of grass beginning their slow poke through a dormant, brown landscape. And the earlier sunrise gently guides how the morning light sweeps across your kitchen, seemingly inch-by-inch each day.

*Colorado Country Life* is entering a new season, too. We said goodbye to longtime editor Mona Neeley last month, marked by her retirement. Mona oversaw countless issues of this magazine for nearly three decades. She witnessed the change from a 100% analog production process to the birth and adolescence of computer technology and the completely digitized way we create this magazine today. Despite the various iterations of production processes over the years, Mona’s commitment to telling the electric co-op story remained strong during her tenure as editor. Our team has an abundance of gratitude to Mona for her dedicated work to make *CCL* the thriving magazine it is today.

Hi. My name is Kylee. I served as the editorial assistant here at *CCL* for the past six years. And even 40-some-odd years into my Colorado residency, I can say with full sincerity that I continue to learn something new about our beautiful state every single day that I’ve been a part of creating this publication.

My first memories of really learning about my home state are from the fourth grade at Mesa Elementary when we did our social studies unit on state history — just like fourth graders still do today. Within weeks of beginning that unit, I could identify our state bird (lark bunting), draw our state flower (Rocky Mountain Columbine), sing songs about Colorado (ask me sometime and I’ll happily sing you the few I remember) and recite random, fun facts about the Centennial State.

By the fourth grade, I had already spent 10 years getting to know Colorado — in the best, most experiential way possible. I am a proud, born-and-raised Coloradan. I grew up challenging my older brother to see who could hold their breath the longest as we drove through the Eisenhower Tunnel on our way to ski at Copper Mountain each Saturday (spoiler alert: I never won; but I think he cheated, breathing through his nose). We road-tripped with our pop-up camper in tow to the Great Sand Dunes, Mesa Verde and Rocky Mountain National Park. I spent summers laying in the backyard, my imagination turning a fluffy, summer day cloud into a bear climbing a tree, until the daily afternoon thunderstorm rolled in over the foothills around 3 p.m.

As my team and I take the reins of *CCL*, I want to assure you, reader, that we have three goals in mind. As the official publication of your local electric cooperative, we are dedicated to sharing the electric co-op story, telling your stories and the stories of Colorado. I invite you to join us on this journey during a season of change. I guarantee we’ll all learn something new about Colorado ... together.

Kylee Coleman is the editor of *Colorado Country Life* magazine, which is published in conjunction with your local electric cooperative.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### Advantages of EVs

I continuously see letters talking about EVs being unsuitable and not practical, or the grid not being able to handle their load. I have been driving electric cars for seven years. We have driven through 45 states in our Tesla and have never had a problem charging it. We charge at home, after hours, in the evening when rates are at their lowest and the grid is at a very low usage. Our average cost to charge our EV at home is between \$20 and \$30 per month. That is a savings of over \$110 per month compared to driving a gasoline-powered car. The average vehicle sits about 20 hours per day at home or work, so taking two or three hours to charge is NOT an issue. On cross-country trips, it only takes 15 to 20 minutes to charge at a Tesla Supercharger Station, which is perfect for a lunch break. We often drive 500 miles in a day and have never had a problem in over 250,000 miles. No oil changes and no tuneups, and 120 mpg-e (electrical equivalent) means our Tesla Model 3 is cheaper to own than a Toyota Corolla or Honda Accord.

**W. Frank Horn**, Agate

Mountain View Electric Association consumer-member

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SHARE WITH US

What was the last thing you learned about Colorado?  
Share by emailing [editor@coloradocountrylife.org](mailto:editor@coloradocountrylife.org).

# EASY BEHAVIOR CHANGES TO SAVE ENERGY

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

**Q: I want to lower my energy use, but I don't know where to start. How can I find out how much energy I use? How can I save energy?**

**A:** You can change your energy use by changing your behavior. When looking at electric bills, many people focus on the total dollar amount of the bill. When trying to manage your energy costs, I suggest changing your focus to energy use.

While you don't have control over the cost of the energy, you can control how much energy you use.

**SET GOALS.**

Instead of thinking about your electric bills in terms of dollars, think about them in terms of kilowatt-hours. A kilowatt-hour is the unit of energy used for most electric bills. Review your monthly kWh use to get an idea of how much you use every month.

After you review your energy use, set a goal for the next month. Try to use fewer kWh than the month before and check your results on your next electric bill.

**POWER OFF FOR ENERGY SAVINGS.**

When looking for energy savings, remember that "off" is the most efficient setting. Turning off lights is a classic strategy, especially if your lighting is incandescent.

Computers and gaming systems use energy even when in sleep mode. The higher the wattage and the more hours the device is on, the more energy is used. Lower your energy use even more and plug devices into smart power strips, which cut power to devices that are not in use. Many electronics continue to draw power even when they are turned off. This could add 5% to 10% to your monthly bill, according to the Department of Energy.

**ADJUST THE TEMP.**

When it comes to lowering your energy use, the settings on your thermostat are another great place for change. The closer you can



▲ If you can turn the temperature down a few degrees in winter and up a few in summer, you will save on energy costs. Photo by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources.

keep the indoor temperature to the outdoor temperature, the more you can save. Make sure to protect your home from damage in extreme heat and cold — but turning the temperature down a few degrees in winter and up in summer will save on energy costs.

Understanding your energy use and making small adjustments to your routine will help you reach your energy use goals.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon; she writes on energy efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

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# Celebrate National Garlic Day with Us!



Did you know that, on average, most people eat two pounds of garlic per year? That is roughly 300 cloves. That's a lot of garlic. It's no surprise that there is an entire day dedicated to this popular and aromatic magic ingredient — April 19 is National Garlic Day.

Closely related to the onion family, this pungent bulb is either loved or hated. It is often used medicinally to reduce cold symptoms and sick days during flu season. Some studies show garlic can also help reduce blood pressure, improve cholesterol levels and benefit bone health.

And of course, it is an amazing addition to almost any meal. If served raw, the plant packs a punch to your taste buds. But when roasted, the flavor mellows and turns sweet. Let's not forget garlic can also be sautéed, pickled and powdered.

What's not to love about garlic? It's versatile, flavorful and simply wonderful. On April 19, celebrate this amazing bulb with recipes from our sister publication, *The Tennessee Magazine*.

## Garlic Chicken

**Yield: 4 servings**

- 1 large sweet onion, peeled and chopped
- 2 celery stalks, chopped
- 1 (4-pound) chicken
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 20 garlic cloves, peeled
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup dry white wine or stock
- 1/3 cup mixed fresh herbs (thyme, rosemary, parsley, tarragon)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Put the onions and celery in the bottom of a large Dutch oven and place the chicken on top. Sprinkle with the salt and pepper. Scatter the garlic around the chicken and add the oil and wine or stock. Place half of the fresh herbs inside the chicken and the remaining on top of the garlic. Cover and roast 1 1/2 hours or until the chicken is done. Serve with the garlic and pan juices.

**NOTES:** This chicken is rich with garlicky flavor. To get even more flavor, CCL's test kitchen recommends sprinkling more salt, up to 2 more teaspoons, on the chicken. Also, consider doubling the herb quantities and placing more herbs and garlic inside the chicken for maximum flavor from the inside out.



### DID YOU KNOW?

On average, most people eat two pounds of garlic per year. That is roughly 300 cloves.

ENTER TO WIN



Enter to win a 200 mL bottle of garlic-infused olive oil from Elevated Olive of Steamboat Springs. To enter visit [coloradocountrylife.coop/monthly-contests](http://coloradocountrylife.coop/monthly-contests).

To read more about Elevated Olive, visit [elevatedolive.com/store/olives/products/olive-oils/fused-infused-olive-oils/garlic-detail](http://elevatedolive.com/store/olives/products/olive-oils/fused-infused-olive-oils/garlic-detail).





## Puffed Garlic Muffins

**Yield: 8 servings**

- 2 eggs, room temperature
- 1/2 cup milk, room temperature
- 6 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 – 1/2 teaspoon crushed dried thyme
- 1/8 teaspoon baking powder

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Generously grease 8 muffin cups with bacon grease and place in oven until the fat pops. Meanwhile, beat the eggs and add the milk. Add the garlic. In a separate bowl, stir together the flour, salt, thyme and baking powder. Add to the milk mixture and beat until thoroughly blended. Remove the muffin pan from the oven and quickly divide the batter among the greased cups. Fill about half full and immediately return to the oven. Bake 20 minutes without opening the oven. Serve warm.



## Rocky Mountain Garlic's Passive Solar Greenhouse

Tiffany and Mike Collette own Rocky Mountain Garlic where they are “continually on the hunt” for new varieties of garlic to grow. For the past 13 years, they have been growing 22,000 heads of garlic on a quarter acre in Chaffee County.

Rocky Mountain Garlic is in electric co-op territory, but the greenhouse on the farm doesn't use any electricity — it's a passive solar greenhouse.

Typical greenhouses need a supplemental heat source, which can be from an electric forced-air heater, infrared heaters, kerosene heaters or natural gas heaters.

A passive solar greenhouse is an innovative structure that is heated entirely by stored radiant energy from the sun. It's a perfect solution for year-round growing and growing in high-altitude locations.

“We grow spinach, lettuce and arugula in the winter. In the summer we put heat-loving crops in it such as ginger, peppers, tomatoes and cucumbers,” Tiffany says about the greenhouse. “This is also where we grow our vegetable starts that get transplanted into the field. It has been a wonderful addition to the farm.”

The greenhouse Rocky Mountain Garlic built in 2021 was designed by Smart Greenhouses LLC, a Westcliffe company owned by Cord and Penn Parmenter. Cord, who has built greenhouses for 20 years, says the top three benefits of a passive solar greenhouse are: 1. They heat themselves; 2. They cool themselves; and 3. They don't require any energy input other than the sun. “They perform well over a variety of climates and elevations,” Cord explains. “The trick is to create a balance between gathering sunlight and holding in the heat. Most greenhouses take in too much heat and have no way to hold it, so they cook or freeze. I balance the light coming in with insulated areas that help hold the heat and use water barrels to store the extra heat for later — to be used in the greenhouse or vented away at night.” The vents are operated by openers that use the temperature inside the greenhouse to open or close using beeswax and springs.

Visit [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop) for a Garlic Scape Pesto recipe from Rocky Mountain Garlic.

## Colorado products for garlic lovers



### Rocky Mountain Cannery

Delicious! Large, plump green olives stuffed with a garlic clove and seasoned just right. Rocky Mountain Cannery's **Garlic Stuffed Olives** are terrific on relish trays, in a good Bloody Mary or our favorite ... straight out of the jar.



### Colorado Cellars

Cassi Gloe, *CCL's* publisher, loves Colorado Cellars' **Zinfandel Garlic XXXtra Hot Salsa** so much that she orders it by the case from the Palisade-based winery. “I like the salsa because it is full of garlic flavor and isn't too spicy,” she says, adding, “Don't let the XXXtra hot on the label scare you.”



### Anita's Pantry

Anita's Pantry **Habanero Garlic** is a great addition to a lot of foods that call for garlic. This product adds a nice habanero heat on top of a delicious garlic flavor. If you are looking to add some intense flavor to your dishes, be sure to add this to your collection of garlics.



DO YOU HAVE A GREAT RECIPE?

If you have a recipe you want us to try, send it our way to [recipes@coloradocountrylife.org](mailto:recipes@coloradocountrylife.org).

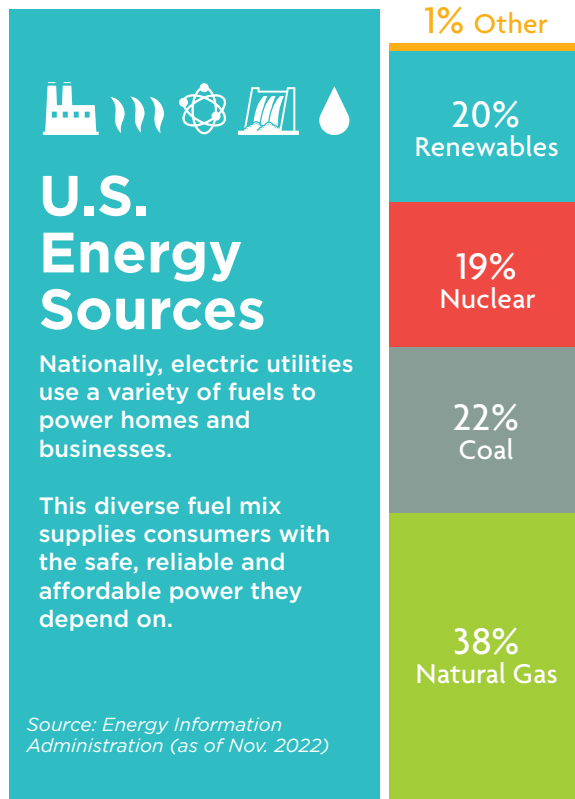
## TURBINE RECYCLING ADVANCEMENTS



The wind industry is facing the growing challenge of finding ways to dispose of turbine parts. Nearly 85% of turbine components — steel, copper wire, electronics — can be reused and repurposed, according to Bloomberg Green, but there’s always been the dilemma about what to do with the difficult-to-transport and tough-to-recycle fiberglass blades. Wind turbines are built to last between 20 and 25 years, and an estimated 10,000 to 20,000 blades annually are expected to reach the end of their life span between 2025 and 2040, according to NREL.

In response to long-standing concerns about turbine blades ending up buried in landfills, an Iowa business created an innovative, patent-pending and eco-friendly recycling process that converts decommissioned turbine blades into reusable materials.

REGEN Fiber’s end product is a reinforcement fiber that increases the strength and durability of concrete and mortar applications, such as pavement and precast products. According to a recent press release, once commercial-scale recycling operations reach full production (expected to happen in the last half of 2023), REGEN Fiber anticipates recycling more than 30,000 tons of shredded blade materials per year.



## COBANK RENEWS NO BARRIERS PROGRAM IN 2023

CoBank, a cooperative bank serving agribusinesses, rural infrastructure providers and Farm Credit associations throughout the United States, renewed its No Barriers Warriors program for rural veterans with disabilities.

In partnership with Colorado-based nonprofit No Barriers USA, CoBank sponsors a series of four expeditions each year, covering the full cost of participation for up to 50 veterans. Over the years, approximately 300 veterans have participated in CoBank-sponsored No Barriers expeditions or have taken part in an online curriculum.

“A disproportionate number of men and women in the U.S. armed services come from rural communities,” Thomas Halverson, president and chief executive officer of CoBank said in a recent press release. “In recognition of their service, CoBank and our customers are again partnering with No Barriers to offer meaningful and life-changing experiences for veterans with disabilities. It is one way we can give back to those who have sacrificed for their

country through military service.”

Each CoBank-sponsored participant will have the opportunity to experience online learning modules and meetups, followed by an expedition in the Colorado wilderness at the mountain campus in Red Feather Lakes. A No Barriers Warriors expedition is an engaging experience designed to help veterans tackle personal challenges and create a catalyst for positive change. Expedition leaders guide participants through a series of physically and mentally challenging experiences that can include rafting, rock climbing, hiking and more. Throughout the experience, veterans are asked to reflect on their past, recognize their present situation and explore future possibilities.

No Barriers is dedicated to helping people of all abilities find hope, optimism and resiliency for the future. “The 2023 Warriors program is designed to help veterans with disabilities achieve belonging, identity and purpose,” said Andrea Delorey, No Barriers Chief Operating Officer. “No

Barriers is thrilled to once again partner with CoBank as we work collaboratively to provide transformative experiences to veterans with disabilities.”

The program is open to veterans from all eras and branches of U.S. military service, both combat wounded and training injured, with visible and invisible injuries. CoBank customers may nominate an unlimited number of veterans from their communities to participate in the No Barriers Warriors program. Expeditions for veterans will take place in July, August and September. **Applications will be accepted through July 1.** Additional information and program requirements are available on CoBank.com.



**NO BARRIERS**  
for rural veterans with disabilities.



Nomination form for  
CoBank customers



Application form  
for veterans



 **ELECTRIFY AND SAVE**

# IS AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) RIGHT FOR YOU?

As EVs become more accessible, you may be considering adding an electric vehicle to save money on fuel and maintenance while reducing emissions. To save even more, check for federal and state incentives and ask your local electric utility when it's cheapest to charge.

**+ IS YOUR DAILY COMMUTE UNDER 330 MILES?**

Most of today's electric vehicles have a driving range-per-charge between 50 to 330 miles. If your daily commute is under 250 miles per day, there is likely an EV model that will fit your needs.

**+ DOES YOUR HOUSEHOLD HAVE MORE THAN ONE CAR?**

If you live in a household with more than one car, an EV likely represents a big opportunity for your family to use an EV for commuting. Use your current gas-powered vehicle when it is not convenient to use an EV.

**+ DO YOU HAVE OFF-STREET PARKING AT YOUR HOME?**

All plug-in electric vehicles require charging. Charging can be done with a standard 120V outlet or you can have a 240V charger installed in your garage or driveway.

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# Colorful Colorado

## 2023 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

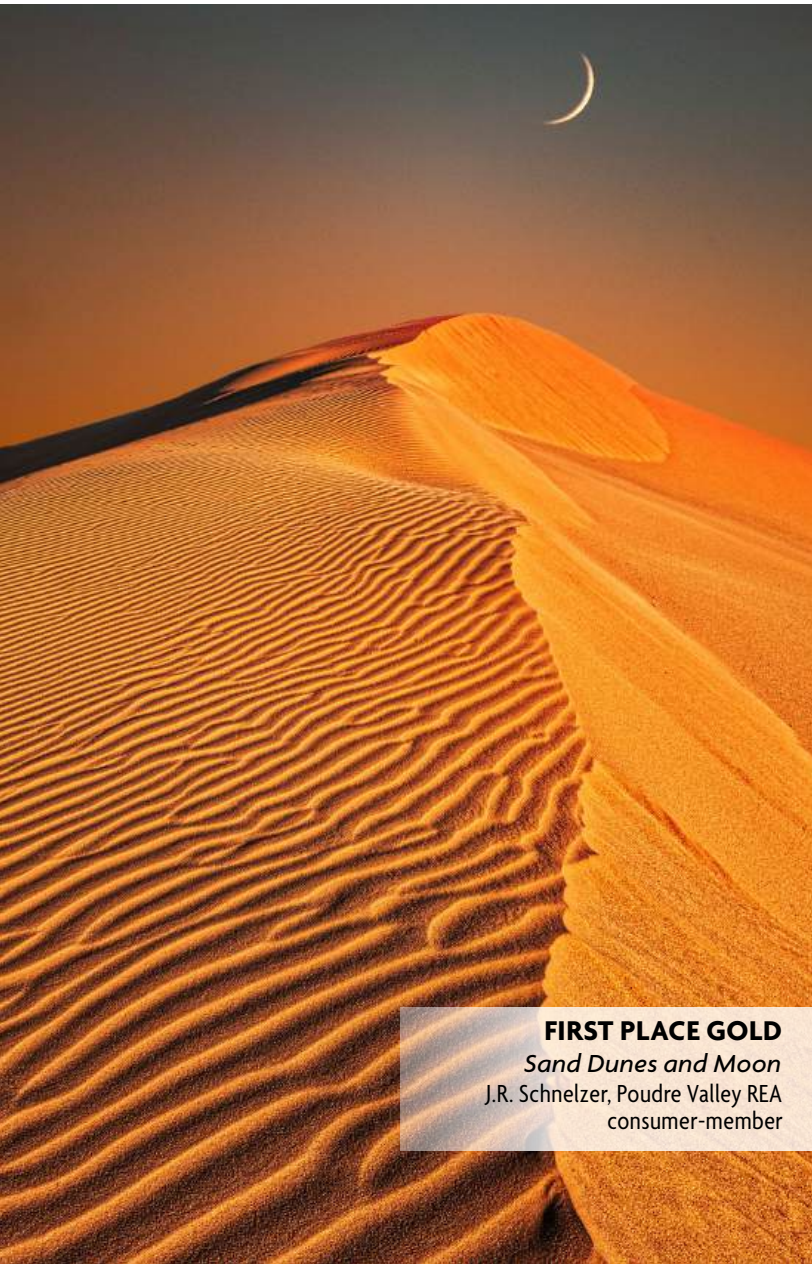
In its basic simplicity, the four colors of our state flag come together to represent everything that makes Colorado ... well ... Colorado. When flying high, our flag invokes the feeling and experience of our endless blue skies; the 300-plus days of sunshine we enjoy; the white bands of snow along the Rockies; and the always impressive and inspiring red-toned sunsets.

For this year's photo contest, *Colorado Country Life* tasked readers to capture the four colors of our state flag in photos.

The more than 500 entries we received this year included all the following scenes and so much more. See for yourself in the following pages how the winning photos come together to make a great collage of Colorado and the colors of its flag.

Congratulations to this year's winners, including Poudre Valley REA consumer-member J.R. Schnelzer of Milliken for the winning cover shot "American Barn."

Find *Colorado Country Life* on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube to see these photos, runners up and other entries we received. Be sure to keep current with *CCL* and watch for more information about next year's contest, which will open late summer.



### FIRST PLACE GOLD

*Sand Dunes and Moon*  
J.R. Schnelzer, Poudre Valley REA  
consumer-member

### FIRST PLACE BLUE

#### *Sunrise Blues*

Donnell Allen, Mountain View Electric  
Association consumer-member





**FIRST PLACE WHITE**

*Frolicking Fox Kits*

Connie Chamberlain, Mountain Parks  
Electric consumer-member

**FIRST PLACE RED**

*Talking Turkey*

Emilie Gunderson, Poudre Valley REA  
consumer-member





**SECOND PLACE BLUE**

*Blue Hour*

Jennifer Coombes, Poudre Valley REA  
consumer-member



**SECOND PLACE GOLD**

*Happiness Is*

Natalie Heller, San Miguel Power  
Association consumer-member



This was CCL's eighth annual photo contest. The categories change each year, but the mission is the same: To show the beauty of our state in photos captured by our readers' camera lenses. Over the years, we've realized that our readers have a unique eye for all Colorado has to offer and the talent to capture it perfectly in photographs.

The 2024 photo contest opens for entries late summer. We encourage all members of Colorado's electric cooperatives to enter the contest for a chance to win a cash prize and to see their photo published in the magazine. Watch for announcements about next year's contest in the magazine, on social media, and in future editions of *CCL Extra*, our bi-monthly email newsletter.

Get a video featuring all of the 2023 Photo Contest winners delivered directly to your email inbox. Scan this QR code with your smartphone and sign up for *CCL Extra* today!

**SCAN ME**





**COLORADO STATE FLAG FACTS**

- The Colorado state flag was first adopted on June 5, 1911, by an act of the General Assembly.
- The flag was designed by Andrew Carlisle Carson.
- Our state flag was last revised March 31, 1964.
- The flag consists of a “fess” design of three horizontal stripes of equal measure.
- All elements of our iconic flag contain countless symbolic aspects related to the state.



**THIRD PLACE BLUE**

*Curious Scrub Jay*  
Leslie Larson, Poudre Valley  
REA consumer-member



**SECOND PLACE WHITE**

*Mountain Goat Kids*  
David Dahms, Poudre Valley REA  
consumer-member



**SECOND PLACE RED**

*Flower on Grand Mesa*  
Rod Martinez, Grand Valley  
Power consumer-member

**THIRD PLACE GOLD**

*Sunset by the Fence*  
Kerry Clegg, Mountain  
View Electric Association  
consumer-member



**THIRD PLACE WHITE**

*Frozen Wonderland*  
Gary Geisick, Morgan County  
REA consumer-member



**THIRD PLACE RED**

*Distant Sun*  
Izic Arnold, Grand Valley  
Power consumer-member







# Catch & Sauté

Overpopulation can equal a tasty supper

BY DENNIS SMITH | OUTDOORS@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

I think it's safe to say that, barring the inevitable random poacher, most anglers today almost automatically practice catch-and-release fishing wherever the law requires and, in some places, even where it doesn't. If they didn't, there wouldn't be many fish left in our lakes and streams.

I'll never forget the first time I'd ever heard of catch-and-release. Back in the 1950s, I was barely a teenager and killing a limit of trout (or bass, or whatever) was standard operating procedure, if not an outright badge of honor in most circles. Anyway, my father and I had just pulled into a turnout on one of our favorite trout streams and there, in big, black, bold letters, was a freshly posted sign that read "FISHING FOR FUN ONLY. ALL FISH CAUGHT MUST BE RETURNED TO THE WATER IMMEDIATELY!" It was signed by no less an authority than the New York State Conservation Department (known today as the Department of Environmental Conservation). I don't remember if fishing was restricted to flies and lures only as it is in most cases today; I just recall being dumbstruck. I thought it was crazy.

Catch and release and size-specific restrictions are designed to protect critical fisheries and certain species from depletion by overfishing, and for the most part have been wildly successful. Highly sought-after game fish species like bass, trout, walleye and sometimes Northern Pike generally benefit most from such regulations, but other species like sunfish, yellow perch, crappies and white bass are usually best managed by generous limits and aggressive harvesting. These feisty devils are notorious for their ability to overpopulate a fishery to the point where they become self-destructive, literally eating themselves and any resident gamefish out of house and home. Instead of releasing them, anglers are encouraged to keep as many as the law allows. It's good conservation and, to that end, state wildlife agencies typically place liberal limits on them — up to as many as 20 per day on some species.

Interestingly, many anglers have become so indoctrinated by the modern day C&R ethic they can't bring themselves to kill a fish while others have an aversion to keeping small ones, suffering from the illusion that if they let them go today, they'll grow up to become big ones tomorrow. That's not necessarily true; once a fishery becomes overrun by a population of, say, little yellow perch or sunfish, those fish are likely to remain stunted until their numbers are brought into balance with their environment. Worse, they can degrade or jeopardize the entire fishery.

It just so happens that panfish have delicate, sweet, white meat and are excellent pan fare. So, if you're hesitant to kill a fish, think of those perch fillets sautéing in your skillet as a symbol of your civic duty. The first bite will convince you that you've done the right thing.

Dennis Smith is a freelance outdoors writer and photographer whose work appears nationally. He lives in Loveland.

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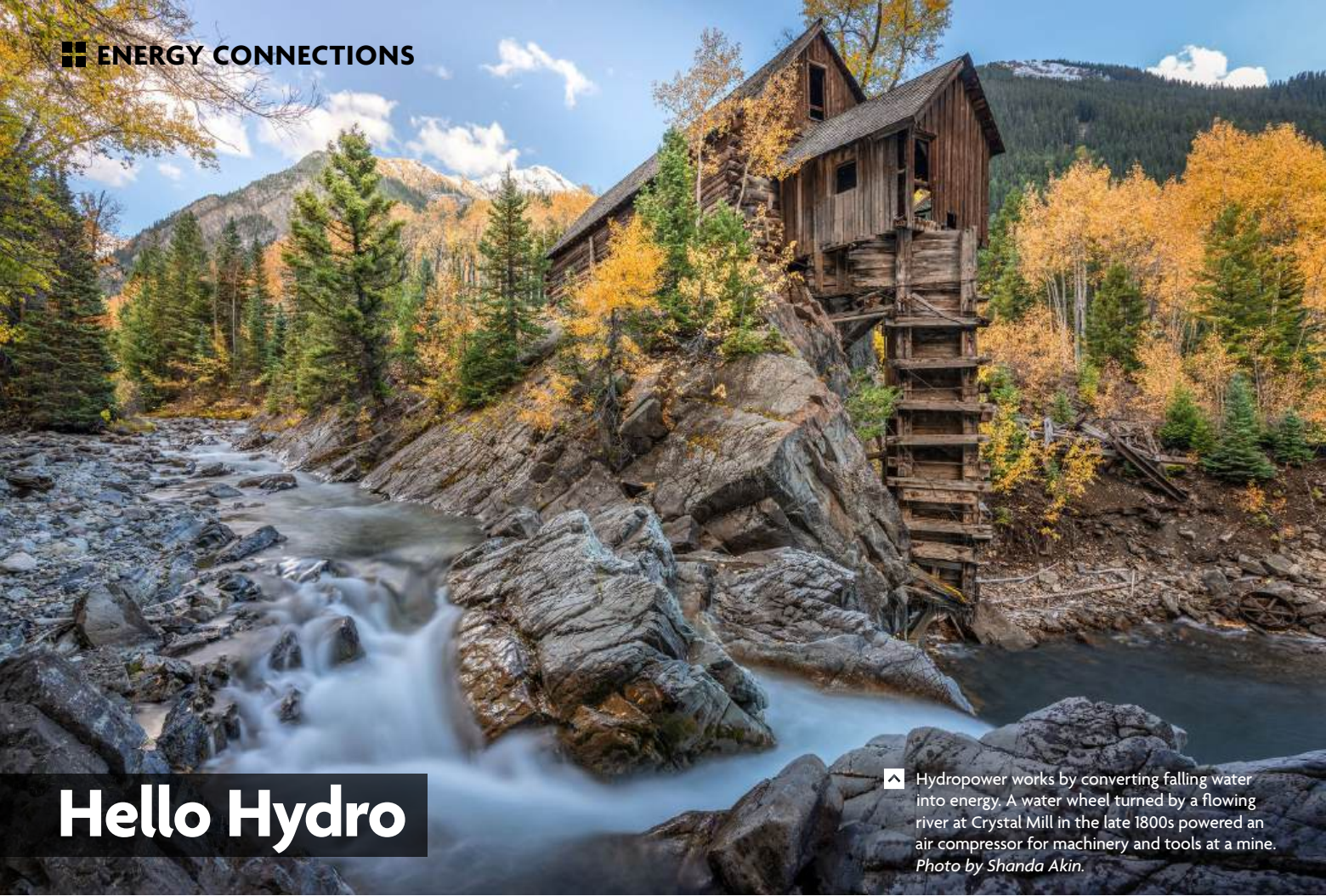
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# Hello Hydro

▲ Hydropower works by converting falling water into energy. A water wheel turned by a flowing river at Crystal Mill in the late 1800s powered an air compressor for machinery and tools at a mine. *Photo by Shanda Akin.*

BY KYLEE COLEMAN | KCOLEMAN@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Electricity generated from hydropower tells an interesting story about today's energy trends that's deeper than just water flowing over a dam.

It's a story about a renewable resource that once generated nearly a third of the nation's electricity — a share that has declined dramatically over the decades with the rise of nuclear power, natural gas, wind and solar.

Although hydropower is less a part of our energy picture than it used to be, it's still an important part of today's energy mix. Hydropower projects from Tri-State G&T and Western Area Power Association, small hydro projects and even micro-hydro projects all work together to help power homes, farms, ranches and businesses in Colorado.

Hydropower works by converting falling water into energy. Historically, Colorado has seen this played out in different applications,

such as Crystal Mill, which used a horizontal water turbine to power an air compressor for miners operating machinery and tools in nearby silver mines in the late 1800s. It has also come in the form of large dams built on a river both for flood control as well as to channel the water through large turbines that generate electricity.

According to the United States Department of Energy, hydropower generates roughly 7% of the nation's electricity — and all but two states receive at least some of their electricity from hydropower.

## HYDROPOWER & THE ENVIRONMENT

While flowing water might seem to be an endless energy source, hydropower has a complicated relationship with the environment.


Some question hydro's claims as a provider of clean energy since the larger projects involve building a huge dam that

floods a river valley to create a reservoir. But the Environmental Protection Agency classifies hydro as a renewable resource, and the DOE lists hydroelectricity as the source of 31% of the nation's renewable electricity.

Recent weather patterns also seem to be redefining what renewable energy means. Hydroelectric generation fell 9% during 2021 because of drought conditions across the country and the West.

## HYDRO IS COST-EFFECTIVE

Still, hydro has a lot going for it. It's one of the cheapest forms of energy, especially after the initial investment costs. Its day-to-day operations don't produce greenhouse gases. Utility grid operators appreciate its flexibility as a source of electricity that can be turned on and off relatively easily, especially compared with fuels like coal, nuclear, solar and wind.

A small hydro facility at Taylor Dam is slated to operate at 500 kilowatt nameplate capacity. 

Those assets have raised interest in adding new hydro projects. Nearly \$8 billion has been invested over the past 15 years to add enough capacity to power 1 million homes. While many hydro dams have been around a long time and are ready to be retired, new projects are planned, including modernizing older hydro facilities. DOE reports proposed projects that could generate enough electricity to power yet another 1 million homes.

In addition to upgrading existing sites, the DOE projects that at least 200 “non-powered dams” could have generators added. Out of about 90,000 dams in the U.S., only about 2,200 generate electric power.

Those efforts will be getting a boost from the federal infrastructure law passed in 2021. That measure includes more than \$2 billion in hydropower incentives for river restoration and dam rehabilitation.

#### **SMALL HYDRO OFFERS BIG OUTCOMES**

“Small hydro” is developed on a scale meant for local communities and industries and mostly contributes to a regional grid. Small hydro projects are defined by the DOE as plants that generate between 100 kilowatts and 10 megawatts.

In Colorado, small hydro can have a large effect on powering communities. Gunnison-based electric co-op GCEA has been working in partnership with the Uncompaghre Valley Water Users Association to install a 500 kW small hydro project at the base of Taylor Park Dam. Taylor River Hydro, LLC has been pursued as an opportunity to provide cost-effective, locally-generated, carbon-free electricity from an existing resource (the Taylor Park Dam) to the co-op’s consumer-members. “All energy produced at the new hydroelectric facility will be consumed by GCEA members within the co-op’s distribution system,” GCEA Strategy Execution Specialist Matt Feier said.



Taylor River Hydro is designed to operate at or near the 500kW nameplate capacity 24 hours every day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year (minus downtimes for potential repairs and maintenance). Specific fluctuations in power production will be determined by the height of the reservoir at any given time. “The facility should generate 3,812,733 kWh of electricity per year, on average,” Feier noted. “This is enough energy to power approximately 475 average GCEA-served homes each year.”

Feier explained that the Taylor Park Dam and Taylor Park Reservoir were originally constructed in 1937 for the purposes of agricultural water storage and flood control. The Taylor Park Dam has never incorporated a hydroelectric generation facility, though the dam structure was originally designed to accommodate one. The dam is owned by the United States Bureau of Reclamation and is operated by the Uncompaghre Valley Water Users Association. UVWUA retains first-fill water rights to water within the Taylor Park Reservoir, and GCEA maintains and operates the electric distribution system that serves the Taylor Park Dam and surrounding areas.

Taylor River Hydro has been working to

see the new facility completed and commissioned by December 31, 2023. But the lead time required for a highly specialized, precision valve that needs to be individually manufactured and installed has pushed the completion date to mid-February 2024.

Drought conditions are not expected to impact the generation capacity or function of Taylor River Hydro. “It is designed as a 500 kWh facility, and the Taylor River and Taylor Park Dam/Reservoir can accommodate up to 4 MW of electricity generation during high flows. As such, the new facility is expected to operate at or near full capacity year-round, even in drought conditions,” Feier said.

Hydropower doesn’t always get the attention of flashier advancements like wind and solar technologies, but it’s been around for 2,000 years, since the Greeks used it to turn wheels that ground wheat into flour.

Only the future will tell how much of a role hydro will play, but its time-tested techniques and green energy benefits promise it will still be providing some level of power 2,000 years from now.

Kylee Coleman, editor of *Colorado Country Life*, writes about issues affecting Colorado’s electric cooperatives and innovations in the electric industry.



# Beyond Books: Check Out Seed Libraries

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

While serving on Gunnison County Library’s Board of Directors, I participated in plans to build a new, modern facility to replace the overcrowded house we had been renting just off Main Street. It was a monumental effort that included engaging the community, assessing needs, soliciting architectural designs as well as financial planning, budgeting, staffing and fundraising. For nearly a decade, we were inspired by information-gathering trips to libraries throughout Colorado. Although it was indisputable that our library needed more space, we were impressed by the extent to which a community’s sense of place and demand for various types of media and programming influence design. Now, Gunnison, like other Colorado communities, boasts a new type of library — one which my children and grandchildren would say “is not our grandparents’ library.”

Libraries are not simply book depositories, nor are they just places to access the internet or rent videos. They are centers of creativity and innovation. One such innovation is the seed library. These are collections held within libraries that allow patrons to “borrow” seeds for planting home gardens. Of course, the original seeds

can’t be returned to the libraries. Instead, at harvest time, borrowers are asked to leave some plants in the ground to go to seed. These seeds are then collected and returned to libraries for someone to borrow the following season.

Although returning seeds is not a condition for borrowing, it’s a way to help the libraries grow their collection, and most people want to help. Not surprisingly, many patrons often return more seeds than they borrowed.

One benefit of local seed sharing is the development of seeds that have adapted to local conditions. Seed libraries across the state have helped gardeners, both novice and experienced, supplement diets with fresh-grown vegetables. In rural communities, libraries are major centers of activity. They strengthen communities by offering places to socialize and forums for sharing knowledge and experiences with others. Libraries that host seed libraries provide a wealth of information about growing seeds and developing sustainable food systems within the community.

If you are interested in learning more and your library doesn’t offer a seed library yet, you can get information from Seeds in Common at [seedsincommon.org/start-a-seed-library](http://seedsincommon.org/start-a-seed-library).

Become a leader in sharing or distributing seeds through your local library and you can help seed libraries blossom throughout the state.

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

## CORRECTION — CSU Soil Tests

In the March gardening column, “Early Season Vegetable Gardening,” we published that soil tests are free through the CSU Extension Office. This information is incorrect and we apologize for the error.

The CSU Soil Test Lab offers soil tests at a cost to the consumer. The routine test includes tests for soil pH, salinity (electrical conductivity), texture, fertility and lime. Additional tests are available for additional costs.

Gardeners should contact their local extension offices for guidance regarding which soil test would be best for their situation. Instructions for taking samples, forms and pricing can be found at [agsci.colostate.edu/soiltestinglab/](http://agsci.colostate.edu/soiltestinglab/)

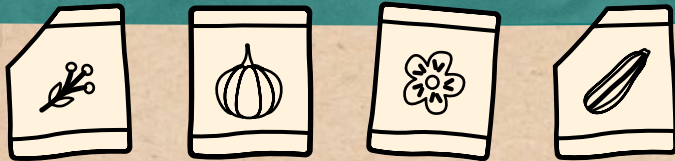


## LEARN MORE ONLINE

Read previous gardening columns at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop). Click on Gardening under Living in Colorado.

## Is there a SEED LIBRARY near me?

Along the Front Range, southern Colorado and Western Slope, you can likely find a seed library near your community.



Here are several websites to get you started on your search:

- PUEBLO**  
allpueblogrows.org
- BASALT**  
crmpi.org/CRMPI/Basalt\_Seed\_Library.html
- MANITOU SPRINGS**  
ppld.org/manitou-springs-library
- DELTA COUNTY** (Hotchkiss, Paonia, Crawford, Delta)  
deltalibraries.org/delta-county-seed-library/
- BROOMFIELD**  
broomfield.extension.colostate.edu/local-programs/gardening-horticulture/seed-library/
- PEYTON**  
ppld.org/high-prairie-seed-library
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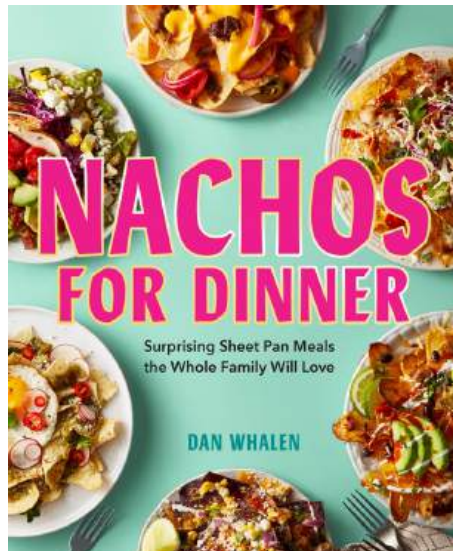
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**CONGRATS WINNER**

**Bert Raley** of Loma won the *Nachos for Dinner* cookbook in last month's contest. Bert is a consumer-member of Grand Valley Power.

**We love to hear from our readers!**

**Colorado**  
COUNTRY LIFE



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Scan the QR code with your smartphone or visit [coloradocountrylife.coop/reader-engagement](http://coloradocountrylife.coop/reader-engagement).



“Columbine in White,” by Donnell Allen, an Mountain View Electric Association consumer-member.

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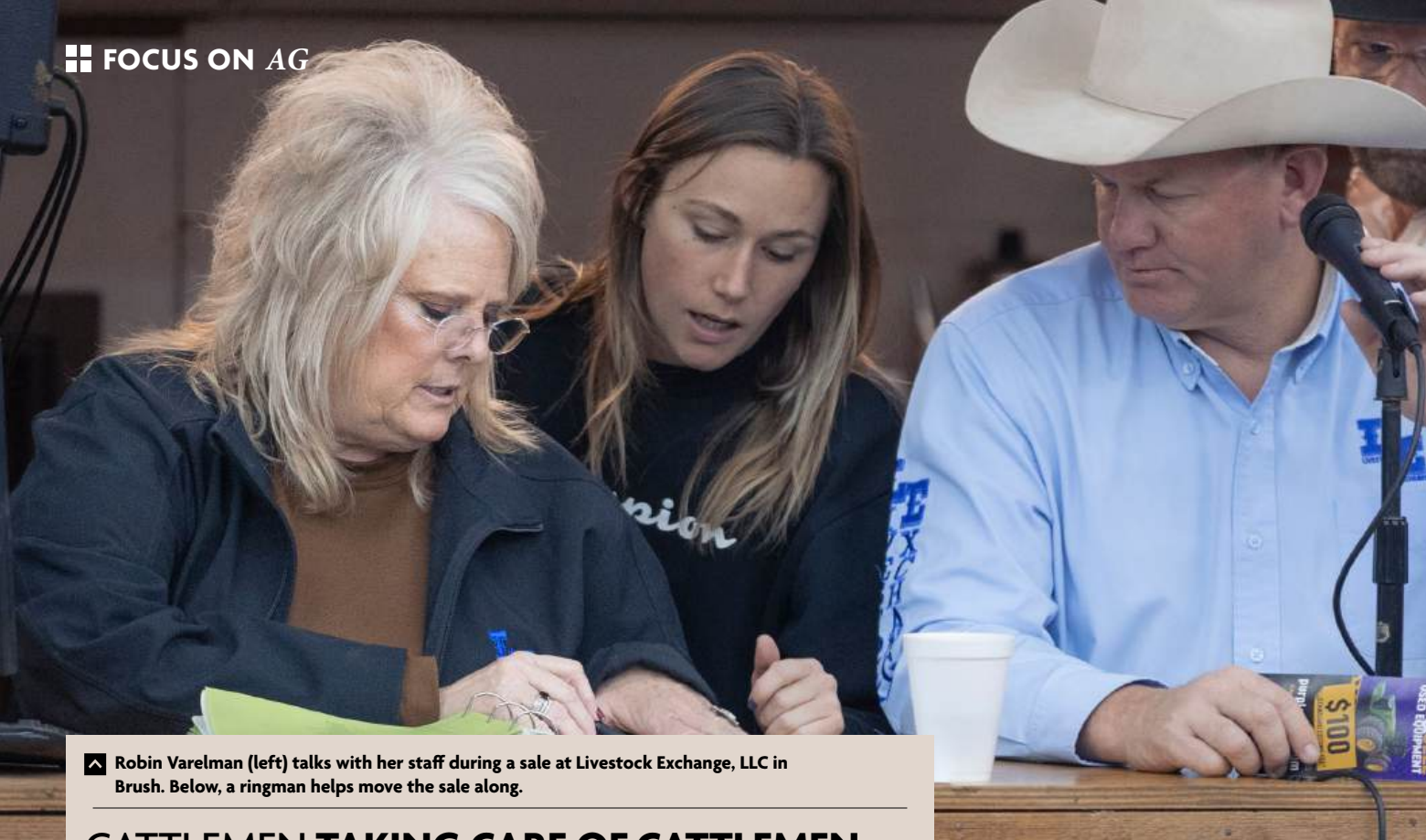
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▲ Robin Varelman (left) talks with her staff during a sale at Livestock Exchange, LLC in Brush. Below, a ring man helps move the sale along.

## CATTLEMEN TAKING CARE OF CATTLEMEN

When Robin Varelman bought the Livestock Exchange, LLC in 2014, she had one goal in mind: to make it a place like home for farmers and ranchers — a place where they can sell their cattle with confidence and for the highest dollar. A regional sale barn in Brush, just east of Fort Morgan, LE is a thriving auction business, a community supporter and advocate, and a connection for cattle producers across Colorado and beyond. LE brings 500 people to Morgan County each sale day. “This much foot traffic means people are in the community, doing business locally,” Robin explained. “This is why it’s important to me to have a live auction.”

“I am a firm believer in giving back,” she said, when asked about her community. LE has a scholarship program for anyone who wants to get schooling in an ag education program. “It can be a mom who wants to go back to school, a high schooler going off to college, or a college kid who wants to change their focus and get into ag,” Robin said.

### Award-winning work

When it comes to taking care of the livestock that come through the sale barn, Robin said, “We work them easy and try to handle them with the best care possible.” She runs the facility and educates her staff about the proper handling and marketing of the cattle — and in 2021, she received the Beef Quality Assurance award. This national award recognizes people in the cattle industry who keep the welfare of the animals as a priority in their work.

### People minded

Robin employs 40 people who run sale day: auctioneers, ring men, office staff and check-in crews. “It’s a wide spectrum of talent and I have the best person for that job in the best spot.”

Her cellphone is on 24/7 and she’s always available for her customers when they want to know what the cattle markets are doing, even if it’s Sunday morning after church. “Everyone has a piece of the puzzle. If I don’t get mine in the right spot, then I’m not doing my part and my best.”

### Feeding America

“On the eastern plains, we do the best we can do — we are the best stewards of the land; it’s how we make our living. We’re the best stewards of the animals; we are feeding America and Colorado. We are preserving everything we can, so we can feed America.”



For more information about the Beef Quality Assurance award, visit [cobqa.org/national-bqa-award-winners.html](http://cobqa.org/national-bqa-award-winners.html)



 READERS' PHOTOS

 FUNNY STORIES



**WINNER:** SDCEA consumer-members **Venus and Erik Phillips** bring their CCL along to the Maker's Mark distillery in Loretto, Kentucky, on a recent trip to visit their daughter.



Grand Valley Power consumer-member **Karen Ellison** brings her copy of CCL along on a recent hiking trip to colorful Moab, Utah.



**Our son was playing on a baseball team** of 9-year-olds when his team played a game against another team of 9-year-olds. The first batter got in the batter's box and the first pitch came in at eye level. The umpire yelled, "High!" The batter stepped out of the box, turned to the umpire and said, "Hi to you, too. I am doing fine." All the coaches and fans just about died of laughter.

**Randy Campbell**, Colorado Springs  
Mountain View Electric Association consumer-member



**Teresa and Dave Dower** had a great, sunny adventure in San Diego, California. Here they are with their copy of CCL in front of the Cabrillo National Monument statue on Point Loma. The Dowers are consumer-members of Mountain View Electric Association.



Mountain View Electric Association consumer-member **Cathy Carrol** visits Plains, Georgia, with her copy of CCL. Looks like a fun and nutty trip!

**My 4-year-old grandson Tom was** in the kitchen with his older sister. My daughter and I were in the living room when, suddenly, we hear Tom say, "Ok, that's it, I've had it. I'm throwing this in the trash!" I asked my daughter what he was throwing away. She said she didn't know and then asked Tom, "What are you throwing in the trash?" He came storming into the living room very upset and said, "My apple, I can't eat it. It has too many nuts in it!" He thought the apple seeds were nuts. We had a good laugh!

**Evelyn Campbell**, Colorado City  
San Isabel Electric Association consumer-member

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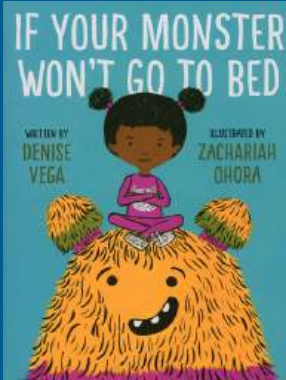
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**Mike and Jeanette Cannon** of Fowler bring CCL on a recent trip to Jerusalem. The Cannons are consumer-members of Southeast Colorado Power Association.

**We pay \$15** to each person who submits a funny story that's printed in the magazine. At the end of the year, we will draw one name from the published funny stories, and that person will receive \$200. Go to our Reader Engagement page at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop) to submit your funny story.

# Kids' Corner Books



## ▲ *If Your Monster Won't Go to Bed*

A funny twist on the parent-getting-the-kid-to-bed story, this cute retelling guides kids through ways to get their unruly monster under the bed to go to sleep. Slime balls, monster dance-offs, sheep eating and bug juice smoothies will have kids giggling about all the gross, noisy, icky things monsters like to do before they sleep.



## ▲ *Snoozapalooza*

A mouse finds the perfect naptime spot and initiates a slumber mountain of 10 animal friends. Kids will count to 10 while reveling over the sweet story and delightful illustrations.



# Colorado Stores for Colorado Kids

Photo by Csilla Leonard Fine Arts Portraits

## ▲ Baby Love

Options are endless at Colorado Baby. Not only can you purchase clothing, gear, toys and cloth diapers, but the **Grand Junction-based** store offers in-person and online classes, product expert shopping sessions and gift-wrapping services. Find out more at [coloradobabyonline.com](http://coloradobabyonline.com).



## ◀ No Kidding Around

Select from new and gently used baby clothing, accessories and toy options at an affordable price at **Gunnison-based** Monkey Goats. The MG team is selective with their inventory, so shoppers can have confidence about their purchases. More information at [monkeygoats.com](http://monkeygoats.com).

## ▼ Spot for Tots

In **Fort Collins**, shoppers can peruse a vast assortment of baby clothes, accessories, books, art, games and more at Clothes Pony & Dandelion Toys. The sister-owned business has just one request of the little ones: "Make a mess and have fun!" View the selection and find out more at [clothespony.com](http://clothespony.com).



 **DISCOVER  
MORE ONLINE**

Look for more curated collections of Colorado finds at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop). Click on Discoveries under Living in Colorado.

# April is **FREE WINDOWS MONTH** at Renewal by Andersen.<sup>2</sup>



## Why is April one of the best times to replace your windows?

Because if you call us now, you can get your more energy-efficient windows installed and enjoy a **more comfortable home right away.**

Our exclusive High-Performance™ Low-E4® SmartSun™ glass is **70% more energy efficient in the summer as compared to ordinary dual-pane glass.**<sup>3</sup> It's engineered to help make your home cooler.

**Call before April 30!**



## Why have our customers chosen us over another window company?

### 1. Fibrex® Material

Andersen **researched for over 30 years** before perfecting our exclusive Fibrex material, and it's twice as strong as vinyl.

### 2. Unique Look

Our window has the elegant look and strength of a wood window, but our Fibrex material **doesn't demand the same maintenance of wood.**<sup>4</sup>

### 3. Accountability

There's no frustrating "middleman" to deal with. **We manage the entire process—from the consultation and manufacturing to the installation and the warranty.**

It's like getting **FREE WINDOWS** for 1 year<sup>2</sup>

**NO** MONEY DOWN

**NO** PAYMENTS

**NO** INTEREST

**FOR 1 YEAR<sup>2</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup>Subject to availability, on a total purchase of 4 or more. Buy 2 windows or doors and get the second 2 windows or doors, of equal or lesser value, 40% off – applied to lowest priced window and/or door products in purchase. To qualify for discount offer, initial contact for an appointment must be made and documented on or before 4/30/23 with the purchase then occurring on or before 5/10/23. <sup>2</sup>No payments and deferred interest for 12 months available from third-party lenders to well qualified buyers on approved credit only. No Finance Charges will be assessed if promo balance is paid in full in 12 months. Products are marketed, sold and installed (but not manufactured) by Renewal by Andersen retailers, which are independently owned and operated under Window Warmth, LLC d/b/a Renewal by Andersen of Colorado. See complete information and entity identification at [www.rbaguidelines.com](http://www.rbaguidelines.com). ©2023 Andersen Corporation. ©2023 Lead Surge LLC. All rights reserved. <sup>3</sup>Values are based on comparison of Renewal by Andersen® double-hung window U-Factor to the U-Factor for clear dual pane glass non-metal frame default values from the 2006, 2009, 2012, 2015 and 2018 International Energy Conservation Code "Glazed Fenestration" Default Tables. <sup>4</sup>See limited warranty for details at <https://www.renewalbyandersen.com/homeowner-help/warranty>.

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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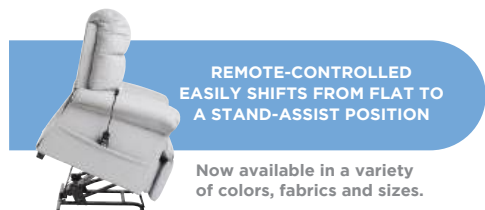
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