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JUNE 2023

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COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

Cassi Gloe, CCC, Publisher  
cgloe@coloradocountrylife.org

Kylee Coleman, Editor  
kcoleman@coloradocountrylife.org

Ashley Taylor, Editorial Assistant  
ataylor@coloradocountrylife.org

ADVERTISING

advertising@coloradocountrylife.org | 720-407-0711

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

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EDITORIAL

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

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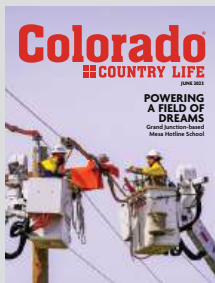
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On the  
Cover

Linemen practice skills at Mesa Hotline School in Grand Junction.

Photo by Joshua Scott  
Smith@joshuascott\_llc  
www.joshuascottllc.com



"Wildflower Blues" by Connie Chamberlain, a Mountain Parks Electric consumer-member.

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## Monthly Contest



We're giving away a \$25 Headsweats digital gift card!

Enter for your chance to win!  
See page 30 for more information about Headsweats.

For official rules and to enter, visit Monthly Contests at coloradocountrylife.coop.



### INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE MONTH

cocountrylife posted:

Colorado Country Life partnered with Morgan County REA this month to gift a selection of books to East Morgan County Library.

MCREA Manager of Member Services Rob Baranowski presents the donated books to East Morgan County Library Director Laura McConnell. The box of books contained a mix of fiction and nonfiction books that have a Colorado connection.



### FACEBOOK CHATTER

COCountryLife posted: CCL staff visited the Colorado Gator Farm in Mosca [early April] for magazine research. Jay, his crew and the animals were so welcoming, excited to show us the facility and share their important work.

We were saddened to hear about the fire that happened there. Our thoughts are with them.

#coopprinciples #ConcernforCommunity

# 2023 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

## “Once more unto the breach...”

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If you are familiar with Shakespeare’s Henry V, you may recall King Henry’s exhortation to his troops at the siege of Harfleur during the Hundred Years’ War. The city walls have been weakened by a long assault and the English troops are sick and exhausted, but Henry urges them to muster all their strength and fortitude for a final, victorious charge.

Okay, I admit it’s a little melodramatic to compare CREA’s lobbying efforts with the Hundred Years’ War. However, as we look back at the recently concluded 2023 session of the Colorado General Assembly, you should know that the CREA government relations team once again “entered the breach” (in this case, the doors to the State Capitol) to protect the interests of Colorado’s electric co-ops.

As compared with past sessions, energy policy played a secondary role in 2023 while the legislature focused on social issues such as gun control, abortion, tenant’s rights, and healthcare costs. There were bills intended to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to renewable sources of power, but much of the policy movement on that front had already been decided during the 2019 legislative session.

When the session adjourned on May 8, legislators had introduced 610 bills. Of that number, CREA staff actively “engaged” on 42 bills. This means we either worked to support, oppose, or amend the legislation based on our evaluation of the impacts on electric co-ops and ultimately the vote of the CREA Board of Directors.

On the energy policy front during the 2023 session, the General Assembly convened a “Joint Select Committee on Rising Utility Rates” to investigate the cause of the high heating bills that many

Coloradans were hit with in late 2022 and early 2023. Although the Committee’s focus was to explore why customers of Colorado’s investor-owned utilities were impacted by these charges, we made sure the Committee understood this was not a co-op problem. We made it clear to the legislators that, for the most part, electric co-ops do not provide home heating services and that our rates have remained stable. As a result, a bill that was introduced by the Committee to further regulate investor-owned electric utilities did not affect electric co-ops.

We also were successful in pushing back on a bill (HB23-1282) that we believe would have resulted in frivolous lawsuits against electric co-ops. Electric co-op consumer-members are already protected from unfair or unjust rates under Colorado law, and there was no reason to call them out under the Colorado Consumer Protection Act. We garnered bipartisan support to defeat this bill, and we’re thankful to the many legislators who supported our position.

Another bill that we worked on for months was SB23-292, a bill that establishes new requirements for energy sector construction projects. SB23-292 requires that, when certain types of energy projects such as generating plants and transmission lines are constructed, contractors must pay prevailing wages and have apprenticeship programs. While these requirements may be appropriate for larger projects, we successfully argued that they should not apply to most projects undertaken by distribution co-ops. We worked with the proponents of the bill and the bill sponsors to narrow the application of the bill in a way that benefits CREA member co-ops.

We also initiated a Senate Resolution (SR23-007) recognizing Colorado Electrical



KENT SINGER

Lineworker Appreciation Day. The resolution establishes April 18 each year as the day to recognize all of Colorado’s electric lineworkers and the great work they do to keep the lights on for Colorado citizens. About a dozen electric co-op lineworkers were present on the Senate floor as the resolution was read and they had a chance to meet with many of the Senators after the resolution was unanimously approved. These folks are often the unsung heroes of the electric industry and we’re grateful to the Colorado State Senate for recognizing their important service to the state.

CREA has a tremendous legislative team led by Director of Government Relations and General Counsel Craig Johnson and Manager of Legislative Affairs Tim Coleman who, along with our contract lobbying firm Brandeberry McKenna, worked long hours during the session to monitor the legislative process 24 hours a day for 120 days (the length of the session). We’re also thankful for our dedicated legislative committee headed up by Debbie Rose of San Isabel Electric Association, and the CREA Board of Directors; the board spends many hours helping us develop our legislative positions.

So, while the 2023 legislative session was not exactly the “blast of war” described in Henry V, we nevertheless summoned “every spirit” to defend the interests of Colorado’s electric co-ops.

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

## June Morning Memories

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR

Many of my childhood June mornings were spent watching Bob Barker host *The Price is Right* with his skinny microphone. I watched with Grammy in their house on Dean Street in Mount Hope, Kansas; we road-tripped there each summer after school got out. On those lazy mornings, I'd sit in Grampy's brown leather recliner (the one that rocked and spun and where the leather was hardened and cracked right where he'd lay his head after his long day on the John Deere — did the Vitalis hair tonic do that?). And around 10 a.m. when the Showcase Showdown winner was determined, Grammy shooed me outside into the heat and humidity to find something else to do.

So, I'd walk the three blocks to my dad's folks' house to make strawberry milk from Nesquik powder or to see what Grandma Mac was cooking up for lunch. Or I'd wander around my parents' small hometown (the whole 1.5 square miles of it), most often ending up at the library. The library was near the tall, white structure that had "CO-OP" stenciled in black at the top.

It wasn't until many years later that I learned what "CO-OP" actually meant and realized that it's not just that tall building in Mount Hope. A co-op is, in its simplicity, a group of people who come together to meet a common need. Your local electric co-op is no different. Upwards of 85 years ago, people banded together to electrify their homes and farms. And as a co-op member, you benefit from those collaborative efforts still today. You belong to a unique organization. Try to get involved with your electric co-op this month — I can't guarantee they'll serve strawberry milk, but I know you'll have a good time.

Kylee Coleman is the editor of *Colorado Country Life* magazine.



KYLEE COLEMAN

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

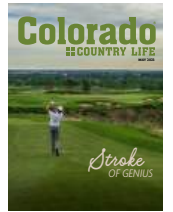
#### Climate Change and Carbon

Some of your readers seem very distressed by the theory of man-caused climate change. Let me add my perspective. NOAA has recently declared that there has been no global warming for 8.5 years. Carbon dioxide (call it what it is, not "carbon") is necessary for life. Plants require it for photosynthesis. We exhale it. Global plant life is increasing due to rising CO2 levels in the atmosphere; we are literally getting greener. CO2 levels in the age of dinosaurs had been 5 to 10 times higher than today, and life was thriving. Climate alarmists have been consistently and badly wrong for going on 50 years now. We should take some comfort from these facts.

**Robert Larkin**, Colorado Springs  
Mountain View Electric consumer-member

#### Water Resource Stewardship

I would like to offer a different perspective on the article about this new Windsor golf course [May 2023]. I am a golfer myself and Raindance National sounds like a beautiful course in a unique setting.



However, I have to question the wisdom of building any new golf course given this era of ongoing drought, scarce water resources, and continued rapid population growth on the front range. Like it or not, that is our reality.

The article goes on to identify further development planned in addition to the golf course — swimming pool(s), water park, large grass lawns, etc. This, at a time when many of us are doing what we can to reduce the water and energy we use. Is this development a responsible use of the increasingly scarce water resources this state and region has to work with? I think not.

**Doug Finnman**, Bellvue  
Poudre Valley REA consumer-member



#### SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Send your letter to the editor to share your thoughts about *CCL*.

To share, visit our Reader Engagement page at [coloradocountrylife.coop/reader-engagement](http://coloradocountrylife.coop/reader-engagement).

Mail your letter to Editor, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216 or email [kcoleman@coloradocountrylife.org](mailto:kcoleman@coloradocountrylife.org). Include name and address. Letters may be edited for length.

NJC Young Farmers Present:

# High Plains Truck & Tractor Pull

Saturday, June 17, 2023, 6pm




Logan County  
Fairgrounds

Sterling, Colorado



for add'l information, call **Dave Lieber 970-580-1278**

# EFFICIENCY TIPS FOR RESIDENTIAL WELL PUMPS

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

**Q: I get my water supply from my own well. How can I use less electricity with my well?**

**A:** The energy a residential well system uses depends on the equipment and water use. The homeowner is responsible for maintaining the well, ensuring drinking water is safe and paying for the electricity needed to run the well pump. Here are steps to improve and maintain your residential well and use less electricity.

## GET YOUR WELL SYSTEM INSPECTED

If you're concerned about how much you pay to pump water from your well, start with an inspection.

Similar to heating and cooling systems, well pumps are put to work daily, and parts will wear over time. Regular maintenance can improve efficiency and may increase the lifespan of the system.

The proper system design and sizing can save energy. Oversizing equipment wastes energy. Ask a professional if your well equipment is properly sized for your needs. In some cases, adding a variable-speed drive can save energy. Keep in mind, well systems don't last forever. Consider design and sizing before your existing system fails.

Things can go wrong with your well that are hard to spot. The water system may even act normally with good water pressure and flow while using more energy and causing higher bills.

One of the most common causes of increased energy use is underground water line leakage between the pump and the home. Water lines can freeze and break or be damaged by digging or by a vehicle driving over underground lines. Other issues can include waterlogged pressure tanks and malfunctioning equipment.

## SAVE MONEY BY LOWERING YOUR WATER USE

Once you determine your well is in proper working order, the next place to look for savings is your water use. The less water you use, the less your well has to work, and the less electricity it uses. Conserve water and electricity with your home systems and appliances with the following tips:

**Toilets.** Check your toilet for leaks by putting a few drops of food coloring in the tank. If the color appears in the bowl without flushing, your toilet has a leak. This is likely caused by a worn flapper, which is an inexpensive and easy do-it-yourself fix.

If your toilets were installed before 1994, they are likely using more than 4 gallons of water per flush, which is well above new energy standards of 1.6 gallons. The average family can save nearly 13,000 gallons per year by replacing old, inefficient toilets with WaterSense-labeled models.

**Dishwasher.** Did you know new Energy Star-certified dishwashers use less water and less than half the energy it takes to wash dishes by hand? If you wash dishes by hand, start using your dishwasher instead. According to the Department of Energy, this simple change in habit can save more than 8,000 gallons of water each year.

**Washing machine.** Running full loads will save water and energy. You may also consider upgrading to an Energy Star-certified washing machine, which uses about 20% less energy and about 30% less water than regular washers. For extra savings, run loads with cold water and avoid water heating costs.

**Showerheads and faucets.** Get leaky showerheads and faucets fixed. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, a leaky faucet that drips at the rate of one drip per second can waste more than 3,000 gallons of water per year.

Faucet and shower aerators are inexpensive devices that reduce the amount of water flow. For maximum water efficiency, look for faucet aerators with no more than 1 gallon per minute flow rates and low-flow showerhead flow rates of less than 2 GPM.



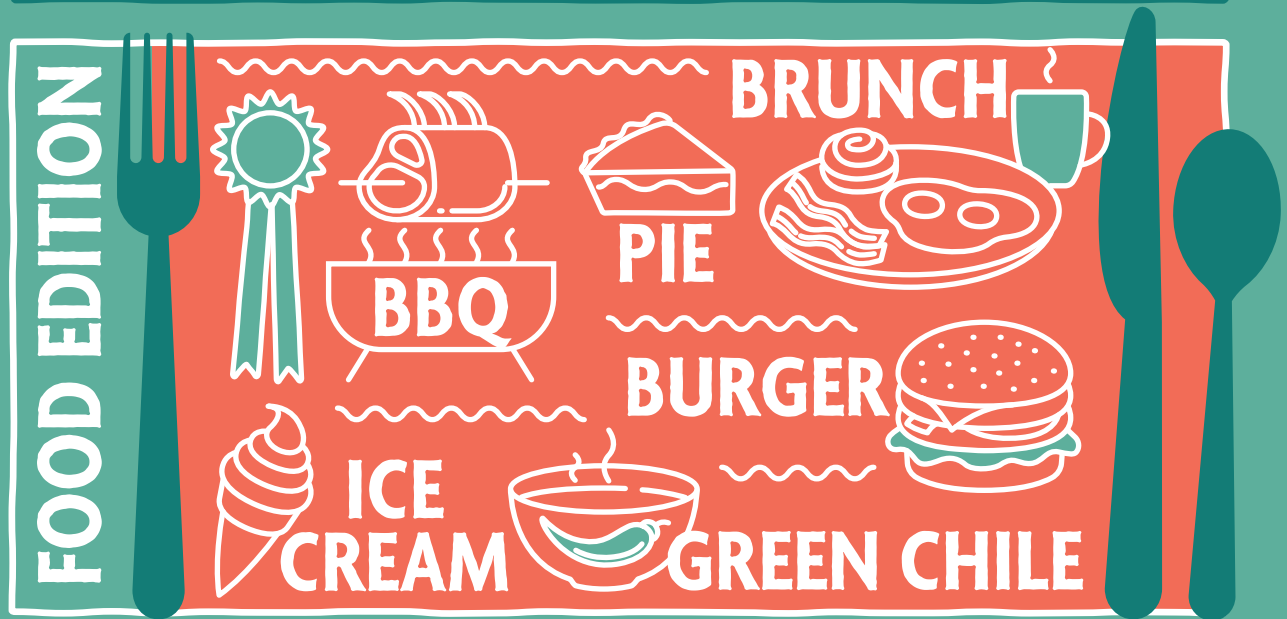
Instead of hand-washing, use your dishwasher to conserve water and energy. Eco mode on dishwashers is automatically programmed to optimum settings for reducing water and energy use. Photo by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources.



Only run your washing machine with full loads to save water and energy. Photo by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources.

Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She writes on energy efficiency topics for NRECA, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

# 2023 READERS' CHOICE BEST OF Colorado



HELP US FIND THE BEST OF COLORADO!  
WE'RE LOOKING FOR THE BEST:

- Burger
- Brunch
- BBQ
- Ice Cream
- Pie
- Green Chile



## NOMINATE TODAY!

Submit your nominations by September 15.

Participants will be entered to win one of three \$100 gift cards, if they nominate in at least three categories.

Share your favorites at [coloradocountrylife.coop/bestof2023](https://coloradocountrylife.coop/bestof2023)





# UPGRADE TO ELECTRICITY AND SAVE IN YOUR HOME

Make the switch to electricity and keep money in your pocket with more efficient household appliances and systems. From heat pumps to electric vehicles, these proven technologies have the potential to run your home and life more simply, efficiently and cost-effectively.

**LEARN MORE AT [WWW.TRISTATE.COOP/ELECTRIFY-AND-SAVE](http://WWW.TRISTATE.COOP/ELECTRIFY-AND-SAVE)**

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



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 





# YOUR HOME, ELECTRIFIED

## HEATING & COOLING WITH HEAT PUMPS

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, when paired with proper insulation, an electric heat pump can save over 30 percent on your heating and cooling bills compared to conventional HVAC systems. Here are some advantages of a heat pump:

- One system to heat your home (even in sub-zero temperatures) and cool during warmer months
- Eliminate potential carbon monoxide exposure from combustion byproducts
- Costs substantially less to heat your home than propane or electric baseboard heat

## POWER UP YOUR GARDENING TOOLS

Electric garden tools can last longer and are emissions-free, meaning you'll smell the scents of summer, not the smell of exhaust. Plus, with modern technology, they are just as effective as gas-powered alternatives. Just charge the battery and go!

- Low maintenance – no oil changes or need to treat fuel, change spark plugs or filters.
- No need to purchase and store gasoline
- Electric models are lightweight and easy to handle

## SAVE WITH AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV)

Sales of light-duty electric vehicles rose by 43% in 2020. On average, EVs have a lower cost of operation over their lifespan, and buyers are taking notice.

- Less maintenance
- Increased savings compared to gasoline
- Fun to drive because of torque

## REBATES FOR YOUR HOME

Contact your local electric co-op or public power district to find out more on available rebates and incentives



# Beef Up Your Cookouts

## Endless options for great grilling

BY AMY HIGGINS | RECIPES@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

It's grilling season! If you're like us, every season is grilling season when weather allows, but there's something glorious about the summertime grilling experience that's unrivaled. Grilling with family, friends and neighbors is perfect when the sun is shining, the garden is blooming and the sounds of nature echo in the air. **Beef. It's What's For Dinner** has a huge catalog of Grilling Favorites that will keep the crowds coming to your backyard barbecue gatherings time and again. Give this recipe a whirl and then check out the rest of the collection for your next go at the grill at [beefitswhatsfordinner.com](http://beefitswhatsfordinner.com).

*Photos and recipes provided by BeefItsWhatsForDinner.com*



### STAY IN BALANCE

To ensure even cooking, cut steak pieces to similar sizes. When the pieces are uneven, it's difficult to decipher if the steak is cooked to your desired doneness.



### Grilled Sirloin Steak Kabobs with Garlic Rosemary Butter

- 8 ounces red-skinned potatoes
- 1 pound beef top sirloin steak, boneless, cut 1-inch thick
- 4 ounces portobello mushrooms
- 4 ounces cherry tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon steak seasoning blend

#### For basting sauce:

- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 teaspoons fresh parsley
- 1 1/2 teaspoons garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary

#### Garnish options:

- 1 teaspoon fresh parsley
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary



Cut potatoes into 1 1/2-inch pieces. Place in microwave-safe dish; cover with vented plastic wrap. Microwave on high for 6–8 minutes or until just tender, stirring once. Cool slightly.

Cut beef top sirloin steak into 1 1/4-inch pieces. Combine potatoes, beef, mushrooms, tomatoes, olive oil, and steak seasoning in a large bowl and toss. Thread beef and vegetables onto metal skewers.

In a small saucepot, combine butter, parsley, garlic and rosemary. Melt butter mixture over low heat either on the stovetop or on your grill until melted; stir occasionally until incorporated.

Place kabobs on grill grid. Grill over ash coals for 9–12 minutes (or 8–10 minutes over medium heat on preheated gas grill) for medium-rare (145 degrees) to medium (160 degrees) doneness, turning once and brushing with basting sauce during last 5 minutes. Remove from grill and brush with remaining sauce. Garnish with rosemary and parsley.



### ELEVATE YOUR BURGER!

Get the recipe for a **Mushroom Swiss Burger with Jalapeño Aioli** at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop).





## FEELING REJUVINATED WITH CBD

Everyone feels the hurt as you age, but CBD can help you deal with it.

BY BETH GILES

Life really does fly by. Before I knew it, my 70s had arrived, and with them came some new gifts from dear ol' Mother Nature—frequent knee pain, stress, low energy and sleeplessness. Now, I'm a realist about these things, I knew I wasn't going to be young and springy forever. But still, with “golden years” nearly on my doorstep, I couldn't help but feel a little cheated. That is until I found my own secret weapon. Another gift from Mother Nature.

It began a few months back when I was complaining about my aches and pains to my marathon-running granddaughter, Jen. She casually mentioned how she uses CBD oil to help with her joint pain. She said that CBD gave her more focus and clarity throughout the day and that her lingering muscle and joint discomfort no longer bothered her. She even felt comfortable signing up for back-to-back marathons two weekends in a row this year. That made even this self-proclaimed skeptic take notice.

But I still had some concerns. According to one study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 70% of CBD products didn't contain the amount of CBD stated on their labels. And, as a consumer, that's terrifying!

If I was going to try CBD, I needed to trust the source through and through. My two-fold research process naturally led me to Zebra CBD.

First, I started calling my family and friends. Call me old fashioned but I wanted to know if there were people whom I trusted (more than anonymous testimonials) who've had success using CBD

besides my granddaughter.

Secondly, I wanted cold hard facts. Diving deep into the world of CBD research and clinical studies, I came across Emily Gray M.D., a physician at the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) Medical School and medical advisor to Zebra CBD who is researching the effects of CBD. Dr. Gray wrote “early results with CBD have been promising and we have a lot of research underway now. I've had several patients using CBD with good success. It's important that you know your source of CBD and how to use it properly.”

After hearing it from the doctor's mouth, I returned to my research, asking more people and was amazed by the number of close friends and family who were already on the CBD train. Apparently, I was the only one without a clue! And funny enough, a couple of friends who commented were using the same brand as my granddaughter—Zebra CBD. There was no consensus as to why they were using CBD, but the top reasons given were for muscle & joint discomfort, mood support, sleep support, stress and headaches, as well as supporting overall health & wellness.

Eventually, even the most skeptical of the bunch can be won over. With a trusted CBD source in mind, I decided to give it a go.

When I viewed Zebra CBD's selection online, I was impressed by its array of products, including CBD oils called tinctures, topicals, chewable tablets, mints and gummies. After reading on their website that all their products are made with organically-grown hemp, I ordered... and it arrived within 2 days!

The first product I tried was the Rub. Now this stuff was strong. Immediately after rubbing it on my knee, the soothing effects kicked in. It had that familiar menthol cooling effect, which I personally find very relieving. And the best part is, after two weeks of using it, my knee pain no longer affected my daily mobility.

The Zebra Mint Oil, on the other hand, had a different but equally positive effect on my body. To take it, the instructions suggest holding the oil in your mouth for about 30 seconds. This was simple enough, and the mint taste was, well, minty. After about 15 minutes, a sense of calm came over my body. It's hard to describe exactly. It's more like an overall sense of relaxation—as if I just walked out of a spa, and now I'm ready to seize the day. Needless to say, I've really enjoyed the oil.

While it hasn't been a catch-all fix to every one of my health issues, it has eased the level and frequency of my aches. And it sure doesn't seem like a coincidence how much calmer and more focused I am.

All-in-all, CBD is one of those things that you have to try for yourself. Although I was skeptical at first, I can safely say that I'm now a Zebra CBD fan and that I highly recommend their products.

Also, I managed to speak with a Zebra CBD spokesperson willing to provide an exclusive offer. If you order this month, you'll receive \$10 off your first order by using promo code “CCM10” at checkout. Plus, the company offers a 100% No-Hassle, Money-Back Guarantee. You can try it yourself and order Zebra CBD at [ZebraCBD.com/Colorado](http://ZebraCBD.com/Colorado) or at 1-888-762-2699.





## BICYCLING: Get Out and Explore

BY MELINDA SCHNYDER

Photo by Melinda Snyder 

The pandemic visual etched in my memory is riding bicycles with my husband 6 miles from our home in east Wichita, Kansas, to the core of the city. Once there, we would ride to the tops of parking garages for an aerial view of the mostly deserted downtown district, then take a bridge across the Arkansas River to peek through the gate of the newly-constructed-but-quarantined minor league ballpark and ride around blocks we'd never taken the time to explore.

On the return trip to our house, we'd cruise down the middle of the main thoroughfare just because we could. A few times, we even did this at 5 p.m. on a Friday when the streets would have typically been crowded with commuters heading home in their cars and others driving downtown for happy hour. With a metropolitan statistical area population close to 800,000 people (and their cars), this is not a route I normally felt comfortable riding.

I felt guilty that — for at least a couple of hours — I was able to ignore the reason we had the roads nearly to ourselves and enjoy seeing this city I'd lived in for 25 years from a new perspective: on two wheels and not worried about getting run over by traffic.

We were not alone. Though we rarely encountered other cyclists on these routes, we would see riders in our neighborhood and on the rail trail near our house. Stores couldn't keep bikes in stock, and service departments were overwhelmed with demand. According to data gathered by bicycling advocacy group People For Bikes, cycling established itself as one of the pandemic's most popular forms of recreation and exercise by May 2020 after remaining static since 2009.

Bicycling has been around for more than 200 years and most of us rode as kids, but it took a global pandemic to remind some of us of the benefits of riding a bicycle. I realized that, while biking was something I did regularly when traveling for work or vacation,

I didn't always take advantage of the cycling resources in my own backyard.

### A CYCLING REVIVAL

Some folks needed an alternate workout when their gyms closed. Others just needed an escape from the house during stay-at-home orders, especially if they were working from home and had children attending school virtually. A few likely rediscovered bicycles they forgot were in the garage until they used the shutdown to clean and declutter.

The cycling renaissance that started in spring 2020 across all demographics continues for numerous reasons, industry groups say. Year-end data compiled by the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy, the nation's largest trails advocacy organization, shows nationwide trail use in 2022 was 45% higher than in 2019. While demand dipped 1.5% compared to 2020, the most significant year for trail use on record, it still grew 9.5% from 2021.



“When trail use spiked during the pandemic, people were flocking to the outdoors to find safe spaces to connect with each other, to find respite and to be active. It was hard to predict the long-term implications of surging trail use in 2020,” Torsha Bhattacharya, research director at the RTC, said in a 2022 release that shared the most recent data. “Now, after several years of sustained demand for trails, it’s clear that this is a trend, and that this infrastructure is essential to people across the U.S. These consistently high levels of trail use reinforce how critical this infrastructure is to our physical and mental health — as well as the well-being of our communities.”

Beyond trail counters for the numerical data, the RTC conducted an online survey about the perceptions of trails and active transportation. Respondents cited exercise, enjoying a bike ride or walk, spending time in nature, recreation and managing stress as the top reasons for using trails. Other explanations given by the bicycling community for the continued growth in interest include rising fuel prices, a focus on self-care and more bicycling opportunities at destinations and attractions, including bike-share programs and guided tours.

Other organizations including Bicycle Colorado work to make bicycling accessible and safe for everyone who rides a bike or could ride a bike in Colorado. “Bicycling is a way to experience the world and our bodies more intimately and to build greater connections than we do when we’re all in our individual cars,” Bicycle Colorado’s Communications Director Aishwarya Krishnamoorthy says. “When more people are riding bikes for transportation or for pleasure, they’re polluting the air less, they’re getting exercise and sharing joy together; they are seeing other community members and interacting with them.”

## COUNTLESS RIDING OPTIONS

Every state has thousands of miles of roads and trails for bicyclists of every skill level. Colorado boasts 6,821 miles of mountain biking trails, 24,906 miles of motorized trails and unpaved roads and 1,746 miles of paved bike trails. These impressive statistics prove there are countless cycling opportunities for every type of rider and all styles of riding in the Centennial State. Whether you consider yourself a hobbyist, an enthusiast, a competitor or a commuter, you can find events and routes that feature paved roads and paths, rugged trails just wide enough for a single tire, and gravel roads offering unspoiled scenery in remote areas.

**Road cycling:** Cycling on paved roadways is one of the most accessible ways to ride, possibly beginning right outside your front door. Serious road riders use lightweight bikes and are committed to long, sustained rides, whether it’s on flat urban and rural roads or mountain road climbs. Many bike races happen on pavement, and commuting and recreational riding can be considered road cycling, too.

My most recent ambitious road ride wasn’t as easy as I expected when I heard “drive up, bike down” at Pikes Peak. Adventures Out West led the trip that they call the highest bike tour in the U.S. The ride starts early in the day to avoid the busiest traffic on the 19.5-mile summit road, so keep that in mind and wear layers for the day. They loan you a parka and gift you a neck gator — accept these and use them because the drive up in an open-air jeep is chilly and the temperature during the first portion of the descent from 14,115 feet is near freezing.

Surprisingly, the ride is not completely downhill; there are a few spots that require some work and with the thin air, I was very winded during the first part of the descent. Fortunately, the guide stops along the way to keep the group together, take breaks and offer tips for the next section. A support vehicle follows the group to help manage vehicle traffic coming down the mountain. The ride was exhilarating, and the sweeping views of the Colorado Rockies made the effort worthwhile.



An Adventures Out West “Jeep Up, Bike Down” group takes a break on their Pikes Peak ride. Photo by Melinda Schnyder.

**Mountain biking:** MTB is one of the styles that intimidates me, more so after trying out a few trails that required technical skill I didn't have. That means I limit myself to hiking when visiting Utah, Arizona, Vermont and other destinations with worthy MTB trails. While I'd love to cover more ground by riding, I first need to get more confidence. My plan is to find a place to learn closer to home, and fortunately that means I don't have to miss out on an area that is making national lists as an MTB destination.

For seasoned mountain bikers, there is no shortage of trails in Colorado. World-class mountain biking can be found across the state. Visit [cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/Biking.aspx](http://cpw.state.co.us/thingstodo/Pages/Biking.aspx) to find trails.

## FOLLOW THE RULES OF THE ROAD

The League of American Bicyclists' five *Rules of the Road* prepare you for safe and fun bicycling no matter where you're riding.

**Follow the law.** You have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers. Obey traffic signals and stop signs. Ride with traffic; use the rightmost lane headed in the direction you are going.

**Be predictable.** Make your intentions clear to everyone on the road. Ride in a straight line and don't swerve between parked cars. Signal turns, and check behind you well before turning or changing lanes.

**Be conspicuous.** Ride where people can see you and wear bright clothing. Use a front white light, red rear light and reflectors when visibility is poor. Make eye contact with others and don't ride on sidewalks.

**Think ahead.** Anticipate what drivers, pedestrians and other people on bikes will do next. Watch for turning vehicles and ride outside the door zone of parked cars. Look out for debris, potholes and other road hazards. Cross railroad tracks at right angles.

**Ride ready.** Check that your tires are sufficiently inflated, brakes are working, chain runs smoothly and quick release levers are closed. Carry tools and supplies that are appropriate for your ride. Wear a helmet.

Source: *The League of American Bicyclists*



**Gravel grinding:** There's an easy explanation for why gravel biking is the fastest growing style of riding: There are more than 2 million miles of unpaved roads across the country, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

In Colorado, where every sport seems to tend toward the extreme, gravel riding can seem intimidating to cyclists who are used to riding on pavement. But it doesn't have to be, according to Gravel Bike Adventures founders Laura and Rose, two road cycling enthusiasts in Denver with a sense of adventure and a desire to be inclusive. "Gravel riding is all about getting off the beaten path, exploring quiet areas and enjoying nature with fewer cars." Their advice to combat the intimidation factor? "Start small. There are wonderful, crushed gravel trails such as the High Line Canal Trail that are non-technical and accessible to just about everyone including families. Find a group or grab a biking buddy for safety and support if you want to explore a new or more remote area."

Laura and Rose offer three tips for a beginner gravel rider:

- Use vetted routes that are specifically recommended for beginner gravel riders until you start to feel comfortable on all the various types of gravel terrain such as loose rocks, sand, small obstacles or single track. A typical route you might find on a mapping service like Strava or Ride with GPS will show you only a map

and elevation gain, but tells you nothing about the types and conditions of road surfaces. A route on paper can be very different than the reality of riding it. Do your research at [gravelbikeadventures.com](http://gravelbikeadventures.com) to learn what you are getting into before heading out on the trails.

- Lower your tire pressure, especially if you are used to road biking. A typical tire pressure for smooth gravel is 40–45, and lower for chunkier conditions.
- Plan for more time to complete a gravel ride. Gravel biking requires a different kind of endurance, and because of surface resistance, your speed will be slower. You might compare it to running on sand versus running on a paved road; it can feel a lot more tiring.

Gravel grinding is the norm for riders who live on dirt roads and have access to a path right outside their front door. It also contributes to the larger conversation of bicycle tourism. According to Krishnamoorthy, the growth of gravel riding and bike tourism in Colorado helps contribute to the economies of rural Colorado by bringing in visitors who support local businesses and spread the word about the bounties of great trails and routes in these areas. "Communities such as Trinidad and Craig are pursuing bike tourism as a way to develop their economies. [Bicycle Colorado has] a strong relationship with the Colorado Tourism Office and are currently partnering with it to curate and publish resources that promote bike tourism across the state, especially in lesser-visited rural communities," she explains.

### ADAPTIVE CYCLING

In 2021, Bicycle Colorado consulted with several disability experts and advocates to create [bicyclecolorado.org/adaptive](http://bicyclecolorado.org/adaptive), a webpage that's full of resources, equipment suggestions and programs for adaptive cycling. "Adaptive bicycling is great because it opens the door for creativity and being



understanding of other people's needs, no matter what kind of bike they are riding or where they are going," Krishnamoorthy says. "There are many modifications one can make to enjoy bicycling. All modifications can help people to get started or continue riding, which gives people opportunities to exercise, socialize, move around independently or with a support person, and bike for transportation or for pleasure."

People with many different needs can modify the traditional, two-wheeled, leg-powered bicycling experience to make biking possible or easier for them. Adaptive riding is for anyone who has such a need, whether because of a disability (physical, learning, psychiatric, neurological and/or sensory); because of a short- or long-term injury; "or even because they are getting older and their knees aren't working like they used to," Krishnamoorthy explains.

There is a great variety of trikes, e-trikes, e-bikes and tandem bikes with various upright, recumbent, or prone seating positions, plus bikes with some other specific modifications, for riders of all ages and needs. "There are also programs, several of which are listed on our adaptive riding page, that can provide funding or grant opportunities to access these adaptive bikes, since they can be more expensive than the traditional bicycle (especially if they have an electric motor)," Krishnamoorthy says. Sometimes, your local parks and recreation department or rec center might have adaptive bicycling programs you can participate in without needing your own bike, or they may at least know of other programs and resources that you can take advantage of.

There are also a few parks around Colorado with adaptive bike or track chair programs for people to enjoy the trails using adaptive devices. People ride on- and off-road, on trails and on the streets, and many people who are riding adaptive bikes can and do bike with their family members.

## BIKING IN RURAL COLORADO

Biking to school or work isn't just for city dwellers. "Smaller towns across Colorado benefit for the same reasons as larger communities from more people being on bikes," Krishnamoorthy says. "Bicycle Colorado is especially seeing the promise of e-bikes as tools for transportation in communities where everyday destinations may not be very close, but people can't or don't want to drive between them." Bicycle Colorado does advocacy work and has partnered with a number of Colorado communities to create e-bike access programs, such as rebates or bike libraries. Krishnamoorthy reports that seven applicants received a combined total of \$908,700 in funding this year, including organizations and communities in Cortez, Garfield County and Routt County. Bicycle Colorado is also helping the Colorado Energy Office roll out a statewide e-bike rebate program for lower- and middle-income Coloradans that should launch later this year. Several Colorado electric cooperatives offer rebates on e-bikes, so be sure to check with your local co-op before you buy an e-bike to see what opportunities are available.

If you missed out on the bicycling surge, it's not too late to hop on. Get out and explore by bike, whether staying close to home or traveling afield.



MeLinda Schnyder is a freelance journalist. She grew up in Columbia, Missouri, where her first grown-up bike was a used, yellow Schwinn 10-speed that would now be considered vintage and cool.



## STAY INCLUSIVE OF ADAPTIVE RIDERS

### TIPS FROM BICYCLE COLORADO

These tips for other bicyclists sharing paths, trails and bike lanes come from the experts and disabled riders Bicycle Colorado consulted with to create its adaptive cycling webpage.

1. **Treat adaptive or disabled riders as equals who have the same right to use the trail as you.** There can be some tension especially on mountain trails regarding powered devices like e-bikes and e-trikes on the trails. However, other power-driven mobility devices can go places a regular bike is not allowed. These devices include power chairs and adaptive electric-assist devices.
2. **Be aware that some adaptive riders might take more time.** For example, when going up hills, an adaptive bike can be less responsive than a classic two-wheeled bike, so account for that when predicting people's reaction times.
3. **Some adaptive bikes, such as those where riders are reclined or lying on their fronts, may have lower profiles.** Be cognizant of others around you and give plenty of warning before passing.
4. **Advocate for bike facilities that are inclusive for people riding larger adaptive bikes and trikes.** For example, gated access points to a trail make it very challenging for people riding an adaptive bike to get onto the trail.



# Powering a Field of Dreams

“Expert training, experienced instructors, powerful education”

BY AMY HIGGINS

All photos by Joshua Scott Smith

On May 1, lineworkers from across America gathered in Grand Junction at Mesa Hotline School to strengthen their skills and network with industry professionals. This was the first of two weeklong training sessions at the esteemed electrical lineworker school and where its latest asset was introduced: a new 26-acre field outfitted with a legion of power poles, underground and above-ground lines, and all the necessary components to create a powerful learning experience.

Mesa Hotline School personnel put in countless hours amending the field design plans before coming up with a blueprint of the finished product.

“We built a complete new field between multiple companies,” said Mesa Hotline School Board Assistant Secretary/Treasurer

and Holy Cross Energy Glenwood Line Operation Manager James Ray. Several businesses generously donated equipment and manpower to ready the field for the students’ arrival. Essentially, a forest of power poles readied for climbing, testing and inspecting was firmly planted as the centerpiece of this massive real estate.

“I was delighted to see so much of it completed in a short period of time after we began construction,” said Holy Cross Energy President and CEO Bryan Hannegan. “Everyone appreciated the thoughtful and realistic design of the field, which made class instruction efficient and effective.”

## THE RIGHT STUFF

Founded in 1966, Mesa Hotline School is a highly accredited lineworker school led by industry experts who teach lineworkers

of all aptitudes ways to sharpen their skills and learn the more difficult tasks involved their craft.

Approximately 80 top-notch linework experts from CREA, America’s electric cooperatives and other energy entities donated their time and expertise during the two weeklong programs, and without financial incentive. These partnerships personify the cooperative principle “Cooperation Among Cooperatives,” a characteristic that noticeably branches beyond the cooperative network and toward the entire linework profession.

“That’s really how our trade works,” explained David Williams, Mesa Hotline School Board President and Operations Superintendent at Mountain View Electric Association’s Limon office. “We depend



◀ GCEA employees Brent Boyce and Andy Holsteen teach the Hot Sticking I class to Mesa Hotline School students in May.

on each other to bring [students] to the same level that the other guys got to; you're getting the best of what those companies have to offer."

Students at Mesa Hotline School can register for hot sticking, aerial gloving, hot tension stringing, installations, switching and troubleshooting, or cable testing and fault locating courses. As they learn new techniques, a field safety committee ensures students are employing best practices to secure their wellbeing and the wellbeing of others.

The course involves two days of in-class instruction, two days in the field, and a banquet where students are lauded for their hard work.

"That's the biggest thing about hotline school: the relationships that you're able to afford," CREA Job Training and Safety Instructor Curt Graham said. "You always meet new people and learn different ways of doing things, so the network of people and things that you can put together over there is just beyond — it's just incomprehensible — what you can do."

While the new field currently offers immense amenities for its students, transmission and an additional substation are in the works to enrich the site.

"I think by the time we're done it'll probably be, if not the best, one of the best hotline schools in the nation," Ray said.

#### A CLASS OF THEIR OWN

This year, around 600 lineworkers from consumer-owned and publicly-traded utilities and their contractors attended Mesa Hotline School. They advanced their skills learning new techniques and putting those skills into action, such as handling, maneuvering and working on energized

The Aerial Gloving, Hot Tension Stringing and Hot Sticking II classes are taught at the new 26-acre field at Mesa Hotline School in Grand Junction. ▶

conductors; stringing and pulling in new conductor to retire old conductor; troubleshooting cables and circuits; and learning how to locate an underground fault with different types of equipment.

"Nothing is live in the training. We simulate it but we treat it and talk about it just as if it was [energized]," Williams explained.

America's electric cooperatives know it takes grit to commit to the electrical line-work profession and are keenly aware of the sacrifices that come with the job. "If the weather's ugly and there's lightning in the

air and snow blowing sideways at 50 miles an hour, we're out there, and I think it does take a special someone to want to do that," Williams said.

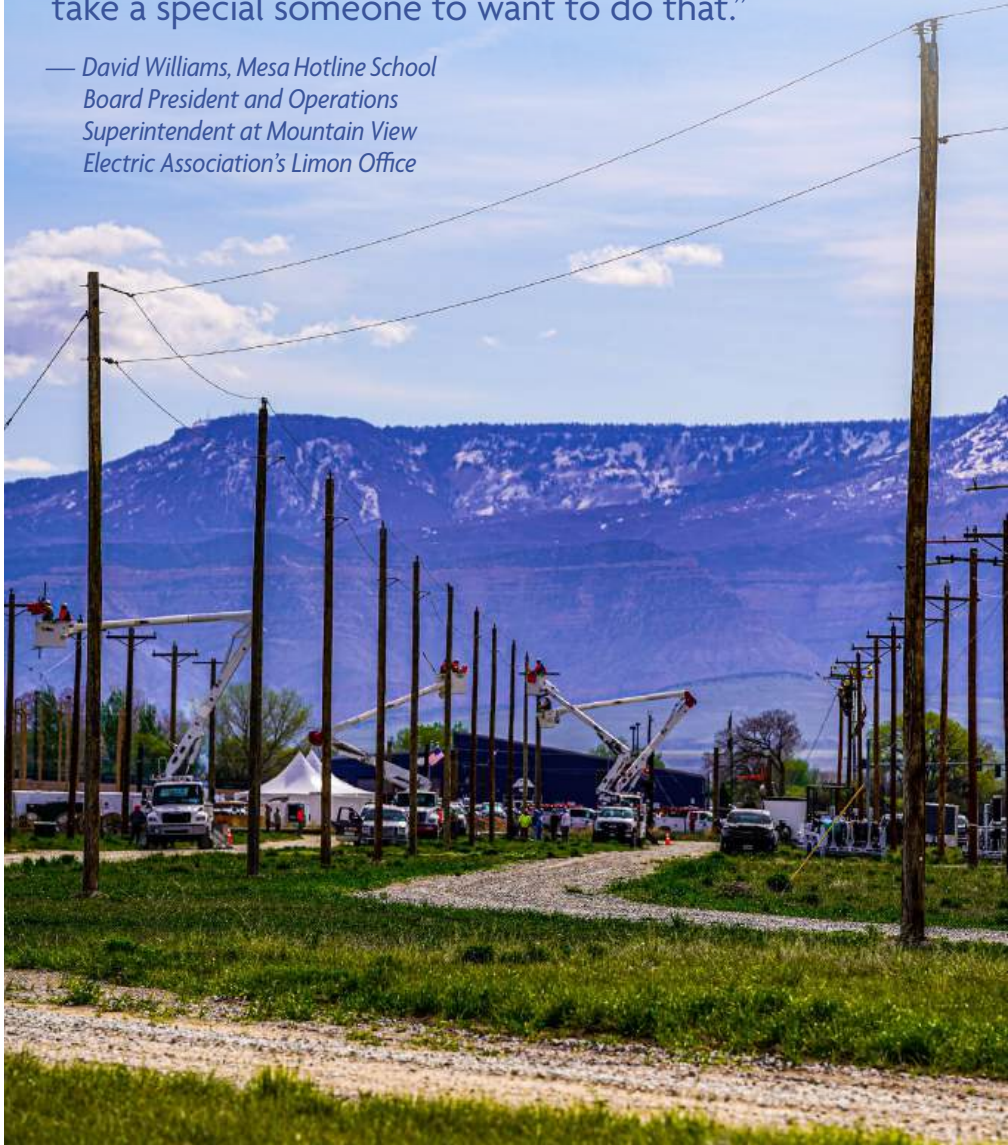
Electrical lineworkers are in demand and the compensation it provides is substantial and continues to increase as their skills grow.

Mesa Hotline School, its partner companies and various vendors offer tuition assistance for lineworker training. There are approximately 10 \$1,500 student scholarships and a \$3,000 Mike Dean Memorial



If the weather's ugly and there's lightning in the air and snow blowing sideways at 50 miles an hour, we're out there, and I think it does take a special someone to want to do that."

— David Williams, Mesa Hotline School  
Board President and Operations  
Superintendent at Mountain View  
Electric Association's Limon Office





post-graduate scholarship. People who want to enter the lineworker profession can apply for these scholarships to attend any accredited lineworker program.

Whether it's intimidation, uncertainty or time constraints, many people miss out on these financing opportunities simply because they don't apply. "It always surprises me how few applicants we really

get," Williams said. "I would think we would get hundreds, but we don't."

Colorado's electric cooperatives understand the significance of education and desire lineworkers who commit to furthering their skills and staying on top of the latest techniques and practices throughout their career.

"To me, that is the biggest thing that hotline school is about," Graham shared. "You can always learn something new no matter how long you've been in this business."

Amy Higgins is a freelance writer who has reported on electric industry topics for more than a decade.



▲ Clockwise from upper left: Mesa Hotline School Board President David Williams inspects the transformer training station; a metal statue created by a local artist sits in front of the student training facility; Erik Dahl teaches digger derrick best practices in the classroom portion of hotline school; City of San Marco linemen AJ Longoria and Sammy Clark teach students how to change out a dead end insulator during the Hotsticking I class.

# Will This Strange Antarctic Squid Solve America's Memory Crisis?

*New Deep Sea Discovery Proven to Be The #1 Natural Enhancer of Memory and Focus*

Half a mile beneath the icy waters off the coast of Argentina lives one of the most remarkable creatures in the world.

Fully grown, they're less than 2 feet long and weigh under 10 pounds...

But despite their small size, this strange little squid can have a bigger positive impact on your brain health than any other species on the planet.

They are the single richest source of a vital "brain food" that 250 million Americans are starving for, according to a study published in the British Medical Journal.

It's a safe, natural compound called DHA – one of the building blocks of your brain. It helps children grow their brains significantly bigger during development. And in adults, it protects brain cells from dying as they get older.

Because DHA is so important, lacking enough of it is not only dangerous to your overall health but could be directly related to your brain shrinking with age.

With more than 16 million Americans suffering from age-associated cognitive impairment, it's clear to a top US doctor that's where the problem lies.

Regenerative medicine specialist Dr. Al Sears, says thankfully, "there's still hope for seniors. Getting more of this vital brain food can make a life changing difference for your mental clarity, focus, and memory."

Dr. Sears, a highly-acclaimed, board-certified doctor—who has published more than 500 studies and written 4 bestselling books — says we should be able to get enough DHA in our diets... but we don't anymore.

"For thousands of years, fish were a great natural source of DHA. But due to industrial fish farming practices, the fish we eat and the fish oils you see at the store are no longer as nutrient-dense as they once were," he explains.

DHA is backed by hundreds of studies for supporting razor sharp focus, extraordinary mental clarity, and a lightning quick memory... especially in seniors.

So, if you're struggling with focus, mental clarity, or memory as you get older...

Dr. Sears recommends a different approach.

## THE SECRET TO A LASTING MEMORY

Research has shown that our paleo ancestors were able to grow bigger and smarter brains by eating foods rich in one ingredient — DHA.

"Our hippocampus thrives off DHA and grows because of it," explains Dr. Sears. "Without DHA, our brains would shrink, and our memories would quickly fade."

A groundbreaking study from the University of Alberta confirmed this. Animals given a diet rich in DHA saw a 29% boost in their hippocampus — the part of the brain responsible for learning and memory. As a result, these animals became smarter.

Another study on more than 1,500 seniors found that those whose brains were deficient in DHA had significantly smaller brains — a characteristic of accelerated aging and weakened memory.

## PEOPLE'S BRAINS ARE SHRINKING AND THEY DON'T EVEN KNOW IT

Dr. Sears uncovered that sometime during the 1990s, fish farmers stopped giving their animals a natural, DHA-rich diet and began feeding them a diet that was 70% vegetarian.

"It became expensive for farmers to feed fish what they'd eat in the wild," explains Dr. Sears. "But in order to produce DHA, fish need to eat a natural, marine diet, like the one they'd eat in the wild."

"Since fish farmers are depriving these animals of their natural diet, DHA is almost nonexistent in the oils they produce."

"And since more than 80% of fish oil comes from farms, it's no wonder the country is experiencing a memory crisis. Most people's brains are shrinking and they don't even know it."

So, what can people do to improve their memory and brain function in the most effective way possible?



**MEMORY-RESTORING SENSATION:** The memory-saving oil in this Antarctic squid restores decades of lost brain power starting in just 24 hours.

Dr. Sears says, "Find a quality DHA supplement that doesn't come from a farmed source. That will protect your brain cells and the functions they serve well into old age."

Dr. Sears and his team worked tirelessly for over 2 years developing a unique brain-boosting formula called **Omega Rejuvenol**.

It's made from the most powerful source of DHA in the ocean, squid and krill — two species that cannot be farmed.

According to Dr. Sears, these are the purest and most potent sources of DHA in the world, because they haven't been tampered with. "**Omega Rejuvenol** is sourced from the most sustainable fishery in Antarctica. You won't find this oil in any stores."

## MORE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Already, the formula has sold more than 850,000 bottles. And for a good reason, too. Satisfied customers can't stop raving about the memory-boosting benefits of quality-sourced DHA oil.

"The first time I took it, I was amazed. The brain fog I struggled with for years was gone within 24 hours. The next day, I woke up with the energy and mental clarity of a new man," says Owen R.

"I remember what it was like before I started taking **Omega Rejuvenol**... the lack of focus... the dull moods... the slippery memory... but now my mind is as clear as it's ever been," says Estelle H.

"My mood and focus are at an all-time high. I've always had trouble concentrating, and now I think I know why," raves Bernice J. "The difference that **Omega Rejuvenol** makes couldn't be more noticeable."

And 70-year-old Mark K. says, "My focus and memory are back to age-30 levels."

These are just a handful of the thousands of reviews Dr. Sears regularly receives thanks to his breakthrough memory formula, **Omega Rejuvenol**.

## WHERE TO FIND OMEGA REJUVENOL

To secure bottles of this brain-booster, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-966-5916**. "It takes time to manufacture these bottles," says Dr. Sears. "The Hotline allows us to ship the product directly to customers who need it most."

Dr. Sears feels so strongly about this product, he is offering a 100%, money-back guarantee on every order. "Send back any used or unused bottles within 90 days and I'll rush you a refund," says Dr. Sears.

The Hotline is taking orders for the next 48 hours. After that, the phone number may be shut down to allow for inventory restocking.

Call **1-800-966-5916** to secure your limited supply of **Omega Rejuvenol**. Readers of this publication immediately qualify for a steep discount, but supplies are limited. To take advantage of this great offer use Promo Code **OMCO623** when you call.





## Beware of Plants Toxic to Pets

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | [GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG](mailto:GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG)

It's a good thing I don't have pets. Just about every plant inside my house is on the Animal Poison Control Center list of plants toxic to pets. Even though I don't have to worry about toxicity now, that wasn't always the case.

As a child, I constantly adopted strays dumped in the open fields surrounding our house. My mother was patient with my menagerie until my pet turtle escaped its bowl. Mom went on a cleaning rampage, but it was a month before she found my turtle in the back of my junk drawer. The escape was fatal to my turtle and convinced my mother it would be better to buy me a fully vaccinated puppy in exchange for a promise to stop bringing strays home.

We kept Frosty the puppy outside and, unaware of the dangers of toxic plants, we worried more about cold winters. My father built a luxurious doghouse complete with heat, lights and windows. Fortunately, Frosty lived a long life frolicking in the grass and steering clear of thorny rosebush gardens.

Years later, my daughter also enjoyed adopting strays. That's when I became more aware of toxic plants. With an estimated 67% of families who have cats and dogs in their households, veterinarians have become vigilant to warn people about

plants that could cause serious health problems in their pets.

If you want to learn more about which plants are safe to keep in your house and garden and which to avoid, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals publishes an extensive list of nontoxic and toxic plants. My potentially toxic plants include several African violets, dieffenbachia, kalanchoe, peace lilies and philodendron. The peace lilies contain oxalate crystals that could cause mouth irritation and excessive drooling. The leaves and petals of Easter lilies could cause kidney failure and be fatal to cats. Kalanchoe, when ingested, could cause mouth and throat irritation, vomiting, diarrhea and heart arrhythmias.

My outdoor garden could pose an even greater hazard to animals. It includes American holly, azalea, bachelor buttons, bleeding heart, boxwood, burning bush, calla lily, cardinal flower, carnations, chrysanthemum, crocus, cyclamen, larkspur, lily of the valley, rhododendron, rhubarb and tulips. Tulip bulbs are especially toxic to dogs — you'll want to keep them from digging in garden beds.

Interestingly, some herbs and vegetables also have the potential to be toxic to pets.

Thankfully, my basil and beets are grown in raised beds elevated above the level of most dogs. Screens intended to keep rabbits and squirrels out also keep cats away.

Ingesting any plant could cause pets to vomit or experience gastrointestinal upset, but if your pet ingests a poisonous plant, contact your veterinarian or the Animal Poison Control Center's 24-hour emergency poison hotline at 1-888-426-4435.

Knowing of the potential dangers, I've decided to take precautions. If someone visits with a pet, I'll place toxic plants on shelves out of their pet's reach or move plants behind closed doors.

For an extensive list of toxic and non-toxic plants, visit [aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants](https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/toxic-and-non-toxic-plants).



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



**LEARN MORE ONLINE**

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



**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.

So what's keeping you from having a better quality of life?

Check all the conditions that apply to you.

### Personal Checklist:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
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| <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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A Safe Step Walk-In Tub lets you indulge in a warm, relaxing bath that can help relieve life's aches, pains and worries.



*A Safe Step Tub can help increase mobility, boost energy and improve sleep.*

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- Pain-relieving therapy – Hydro massage jets target sore muscles and joints.
- Safety features – Low step-in, grab bars and more can help you bathe safely and maintain your independence.
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# A Short Ride in Co-op Country

BY CRAIG JOHNSON

Coloradans have been riding bicycles in the mountains since the 1800s, but it wasn't until the mid-1970s that the modern-day sport of mountain biking was born. The cradle of the sport was Crested Butte. In 1976, hobbyists on modified cruiser bikes called “klunkers” began racing to Aspen over the 12,705-foot Pearl Pass. Without the benefit of hand brakes, the rear brakes of these heavy steel contraptions would frequently get so hot that all of the axle grease would be seared away on the steep descent. The “Pearl Pass Tour,” as it is now known, is the longest continuously running mountain biking event in the world, drawing a diverse international crowd of visitors seeking extreme competition.

Mountain bikes have evolved into highly specialized equipment designed to handle the rigors of extreme terrain, and the sport of mountain biking, no longer a niche activity, has spread to nearly every town within the four corners of Colorado. Today, mountain biking is the third most popular outdoor activity in the U.S., after running and fishing. Thankfully, some things remain unchanged: Crested Butte continues to offer some of the most diverse mountain biking trails in the world, from steep technical routes that will test the nerves of the most extreme adrenaline junkies, to gentle tracks through

mountain valleys of endless wildflowers. In short, there's something for everyone.

While I am not the thrill seeker I once was (some say with age comes wisdom, but I think it has more to do with an increasing awareness of my own mortality), I still enjoy the varied terrain and unparalleled mountain vistas of Crested Butte's trails. More often than not, my visits to the area are tied to work these days, but I find time to fit in a ride around other commitments.

One of my favorite rides on those occasions when my time is limited is the Lower Loop Trail, a scenic 8-mile “lollipop loop” — a short out-and-back ride with a loop at the end where you reverse course. The trail begins on an improved road just outside of town at an elevation of 9,000 feet, and on a calm day you can see Gothic Mountain reflected in the waters of Peanut Lake along the way. At the fork in the road, the Loop Trail continues as a single track as you pass through open meadows and aspen groves. What the Loop Trail lacks in technical challenge is more than made up for by the stunning mountain and meadow views. This is a popular trail for both hikers and mountain bikers, so expect company, especially on summer weekends.

The best time to ride is just after sunrise when the air is fresh and the morning dew is

heavy on the ground. In addition to beating the midday sun (which can be intense in the summer at this altitude), the early morning hours are the best time to observe wildlife. The area surrounding Crested Butte is home to bighorn sheep, mountain goats, deer, elk, moose, prairie-chickens, cranes, and occasionally bears and mountain lions. Be alert and remember to keep a safe distance if you have a chance encounter with a furry friend on your ride.

The Loop Trail features a modest elevation gain of 650 feet and can be completed in one to two hours, depending on how much time you want to spend taking photos and contemplating the amazing surroundings. Once you finish your ride, you can find a variety of pubs and restaurants close by in downtown Crested Butte to quench your thirst — one of the more positive changes since the Pearl Pass Tours of the 1970s. It makes the perfect end to another day in Colorado's co-op country.

Craig Johnson is CREA's Director of Government Relations and General Counsel, and an avid fly fisherman and outdoorsman in his spare time.



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# Making Miles Count

On May 20, University of Texas students embarked on a 70-day, 4,000-mile bike ride from Austin, Texas, to Anchorage, Alaska, to raise funds for and support the fight against cancer. Beginning 18 months prior to the ride, called the **Texas 4000**, each student trains for the race, raises \$4,500, completes 50 volunteer hours, and maps out each element of their approaching adventure.

## Meet Elena Walch

Elena Walch, niece of Grand Valley Power CEO Tom Walch, rides the Texas 4000 this summer in honor of her Oma (grandmother), as well as several other family members and close friends whose lives are affected by cancer.

Elena's training began Spring 2022, and team workouts followed soon after. Things ramped up in the fall when team members received their official bikes and began participating in skills clinics and safety training. By January 2023, the team started tracking mileage to reach the required 2,000 training miles.

The all-student team is responsible for planning the route; finding hosts; arranging provisions; ordering gear and bike parts; planning programs for community engagement; organizing volunteer events; and tracking financials, Elena explained. "My team is incredibly mission driven — everyone is super passionate about a future without cancer," Elena said. "I ride because cancer is a tragedy, but the lives it affects are not tragedies — lives are still worth living, even in the face of death."

## Waves of Encouragement

Elena's Texas 4000 team is traveling through a number of Colorado towns, including a handful of electric cooperative communities. Elena connected with several people who are hosting Texas 4000 team members as they pass through and camp overnight in their communities. "It will be super fun to see the people who have been so willing to help us out," she said before the ride.

The team will cover some difficult terrain as they pass through electric cooperative service territories such as Durango (La Plata Electric Association), Telluride (San Miguel Power Association), Great Sand Dunes National Park (San Luis Valley REC), Buena Vista (SDCEA), Colorado Springs (MVEA), Granby (Mountain Parks Electric) and Steamboat Springs (Yampa Valley Electric Association). "It's a bunch of flatlanders from Texas and the altitude is going to be an impact on top of everything else, but they're young," Tom Walch said with a laugh.

The team isn't riding through Grand Junction, but GVP and the community will support them with snacks and drinks for the road, and hot food when they arrive at Dinosaur National Monument, where the riders are camping for the night on June 13. Tom and his wife Theresa also enlisted the help of White River Electric Association CEO Alan Michalewicz and his wife Karolyn, and Delta-Montrose Electric Association CEO Jack Johnston and his wife Bernice to help with the cooking.

"We are really proud of Elena's dedication to this ride, and it is a cause that is dear to so many," Theresa said. She hopes to spread the word about the Texas 4000 mission and garner local support, "even if it's just a wave of encouragement."

Elena said, "I think the only other thing I could hope to gain from this [experience] is just memories with my teammates and the connections we make with communities on the ride."



Elena Walch  
Photo by Angelica Montes



Photos courtesy of Texas 4000 For Cancer



## MORE INFORMATION

Show your support for this young group with a friendly greeting as they ride through Colorado on their way to Alaska. See the map for specific dates at [texas4000.org/route/rockies/map/](https://texas4000.org/route/rockies/map/)



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## READER POETRY

### Utility Police

My father is the chief  
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“Turn it on, turn it off, pick it up, keep it clean,  
keep the warm in and keep the cold out.”

**Theresa Bloom**, Grand Junction  
From her book, *Seasons of Fun!*  
Grand Valley Power

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 READERS' PHOTOS


**WINNER:** SDCEA consumer-member **Connie Hatfield** takes her copy of *CCL* on a trip to America's National Churchill Museum at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri. The group was on a scenic bus trip through the Smoky Mountains. Pictured left to right: Eleanor Ludwig, Bill and Donna Watson, Billie Branch, Lorraine Marquiz, Connie Hatfield, Judy Tankow, Rita Haines, Betty Brooks and Kathy Hanratty.



**Kerry and Dave Comer** brought their copy of *CCL* to Maui for their 10th anniversary trip. What a beautiful place to celebrate. The Comers are consumer-members of SDCEA.



**Ray Stegner** and his wife take *CCL* on a river cruise in Mississippi to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The Stegners are consumer-members of Poudre Valley REA.

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

**Show us where you enjoy reading *CCL* for a chance to win!** Simply take a photo of someone (or a selfie!) with the magazine and submit it on our Reader Engagement page at [coloradocountrylife.coop](http://coloradocountrylife.coop). We'll draw one photo to win \$25 each month. The next deadline is Thursday, June 15. Name, address and co-op must accompany photo. See all of the submitted photos on Facebook at [facebook.com/COCountryLife](https://facebook.com/COCountryLife).



**Laverne Perkins** brings her copy of *CCL* to Portugal on a trip abroad with some friends. A wonderful spot for an afternoon of reading. Laverne is a consumer-member of San Isabel Electric Association.



**Charee and Greg Voelz**, consumer-members of Poudre Valley REA, bring along their copy of *CCL* while island hopping in Greece. Here they are with the windmills of Mykonos.



**Teresa Bruecken** enjoys a relaxing getaway to the Bahamas with her copy of *CCL*.


 FUNNY STORIES


**When 4-year-old Lina was over for a visit**, she heard my husband come in the house from mowing the lawn, and she went to say hi. He sat down, took off his hat and sunglasses, and then pulled the bright orange earplugs out of his ears. Lina watched him intently. "Why did you put carrots in your ears?" she asked in a very serious voice. (They did look just like baby carrots!)

**Alicia Riley**, Grand Junction  
Grand Valley Power consumer-member

**Years ago, a friend of mine was telling me about a fishing trip he and his partner made.** They had been out on the lake all day without having any luck. They were just about to call it a day when one of them got a bite on his line. He could tell it was a monster because of the way it fought. He struggled until nearly dark before he finally got it up to the boat. It was too large for the net and too big for the boat, so they took a picture of it and turned it loose. The photo weighed 7 pounds.

**Robert Uncapher**, Kremmling  
Mountain Parks Electric consumer-member

**As my father got older, he started losing some of his senses.** His hearing was failing, as was his eyesight and even his sense of smell. He was in the backyard walking with my 6-year-old son and my son could smell the honeysuckle. He said, "Doesn't that smell good, Grandpa?" My dad said, "I don't smell anymore." My son said, "Yes you do, Grandpa!" My dad started laughing and told him he was taking him out of his will!

**Matthew T. Tenny**, Severance  
Poudre Valley REA consumer-member

**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. Send your stories to *Colorado Country Life*, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216 or visit the Reader Engagement page on our website at [www.coloradocountrylife.coop](http://www.coloradocountrylife.coop) to submit your funny story.





Photo courtesy of Bedrock Bags

## The Goods to Get in Gear

### Sweat Stoppers >

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Before you head out on a summer adventure, make sure you're outfitted with performance headwear. **Enter to win a \$25 Headsweats digital gift card!** Scan the QR code with your smartphone camera to enter or navigate to [www.coloradocountrylife.coop/monthly-contests](http://www.coloradocountrylife.coop/monthly-contests) to enter.



Photo courtesy of QuikrStuff / Eric Cook - Big Ship Media

### > Cycle Support

When your lift needs a lift, give QuikrStuff's no-tools bike rack a shot. Made in Grand Junction, a Quik Rack Mach2 bike rack will lug the load whether you pedal a road bike, mountain bike, fat tire bike or e-bike. Find details at [quikrstuff.com](https://quikrstuff.com).



Photo courtesy of Bedrock Bags

### > A Carryall to Carry All

The folks at Durango-based Bedrock Bags put their attention to detail into action to manufacture robust "bikepacking" bags. Just fasten a bag to your frame, seat or handlebars and enjoy the ride. Available in a variety of colors and sizes. For more information, visit [bedrockbags.com](https://bedrockbags.com).



Photo courtesy of San Util Design / David Britnell Photography

### < Keeping the "Fun" in Functional

San Util Design's Furtif Hip Packs are excellent for storing essentials for your everyday bike-riding outings. The Winter Park manufacturer offers this fun hip bag that is custom-made with your choice of colors, webbing, zipper pull and main buckle. Design your custom bag at [sanutildesign.com](https://sanutildesign.com).



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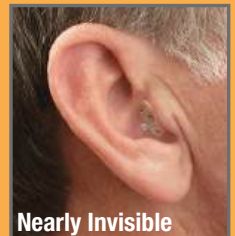
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