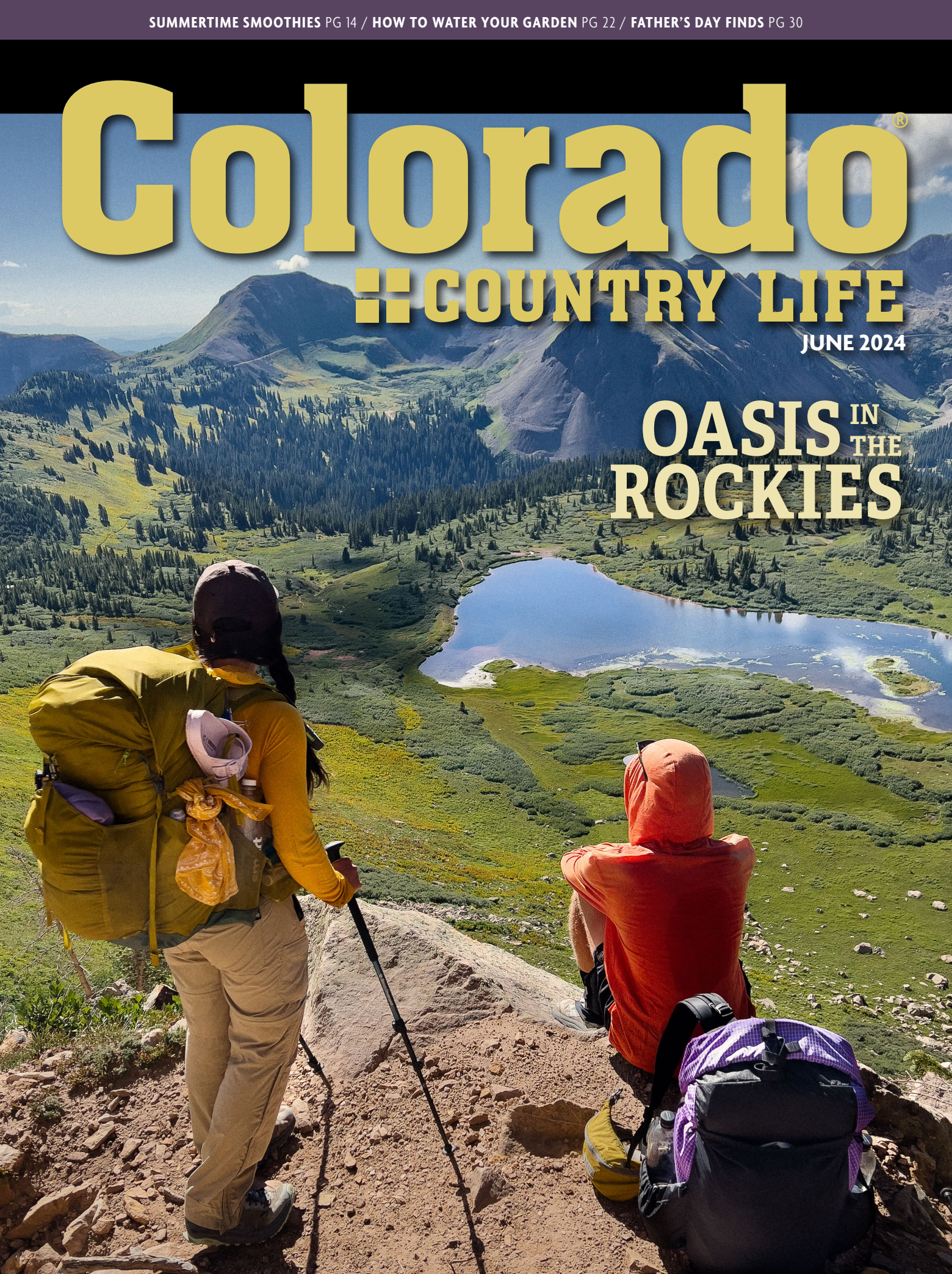


Colorado[®]

COUNTRY LIFE

JUNE 2024

OASIS IN THE ROCKIES



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:

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

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

Feel better, sleep better, live better

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.

It's got everything you should look for in a walk-in tub:

- Heated Seat – Providing soothing warmth from start to finish.
- *MicroSoothe*® Air Therapy System – helps oxygenate and soften skin while offering therapeutic benefits.
- 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.
- Free Shower Package – shower while seated or standing.

Safe Step includes more standard therapeutic and safety features than any other tub on the market, plus the best warranty in the industry:

Hydro-Jet Water Therapy – 10 Built-In Variable-Speed Massaging Water Jets

16 Air Bubble Jets

Complete Lifetime Warranty on the Tub

Personal Hygiene Therapy System and Bidet

Anti-Slip Tub Floor

Foot Massaging Jets

Wider Door, The Industry's Leading Low Step-In

Heated Seat and Back

Electronic Keypad

MicroSoothe® Air Therapy System

New Rapid Fill Faucet

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LIFETIME LIMITED WARRANTY

EASE OF USE CERTIFIED

Arthritis Foundation

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for more information and for our Senior Discounts.
Financing available with approved credit.

FREE SHOWER PACKAGE

PLUS 15% OFF

FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY

Call Toll-Free 1-800-631-3015

With purchase of a new Safe Step Walk-In Tub. Not applicable with any previous walk-in tub purchase. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase.

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www.BuySafeStep.com



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COMMUNICATIONS STAFF

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

ADVERTISING

advertising@coloradocountrylife.org | 720-407-0712

National Advertising Representative:

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

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Denver Corporate Office:

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

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Summer Hiking

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR



KYLEE COLEMAN

Like many Coloradans, I love to hike.

Fresh air. Warm sunshine. Movement.

It's a self-care trifecta; a great mood-boosting reset.

Add in the sights and sounds of nature, the piney fragrance of the woods, and the company of my favorite people ... well, there's simply no other way I'd rather spend a summer morning.

A couple summers ago, my two younger teenagers and I drove to Vail before the sun came up. We had our hiking boots, water bottles, and day packs; we were ready to hit the trail.

We took the local shuttle to the Eagle's Nest Wilderness trailhead and set out for Booth Falls. The morning sun was slowly evaporating the dew from leaves and grass. The green fields surrounding the dirt path were full of wildflowers.

It was a strenuous hike, and it was stunning.

We took our time on the trail that morning, soaking up the time with each other and time with our beloved home state.

On page 16 of this issue, you'll learn about the hike of all hikes: The Colorado Trail. I am inspired by people who have thru-hiked the nearly 500 miles from Denver to Durango. What an outstanding accomplishment.

Whether you embark on an epic trek or complete a 45 minute out-and-back, I hope your summer days are filled with time on the trails. Happy summer!



Ready to hit the trail on a summer morning.

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | | | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|--------------------|----|--------------|
| 4 | Viewpoint | 15 | Poetry | 28 | Marketplace |
| 6 | Ask the Energy Expert | 16 | Feature Story | 29 | Your Stories |
| 7 | Your Co-op News | 22 | Gardening | 30 | Discoveries |
| 11 | News Clips | 24 | Energy Connections | | |
| 14 | Recipes | 26 | Outdoors | | |

MONTHLY GIVEAWAY ENTER TO WIN

You could win a copy of *Kid Smoothies: A Healthy Kids' Cookbook* by Erin Fletter (see Recipes on page 14) or this Akinz Five Star View hat (see Discoveries on page 30). Visit the Reader Engagement page at www.coloradocountrylife.coop and enter to win.

Do you need a different way to enter our contests? Mail a letter with your name, full mailing address, phone number, and the name of your electric co-op, and we'll include you in the drawing. Send it to CONTESTS c/o Colorado Country Life, 5400 Washington Street, Denver, CO 80216.



Scan this QR code with your smartphone to enter!

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- YouTube.com/COCountryLife
- coloradocountrylife.coop

2024 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

A statewide viewpoint

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Another session of the Colorado General Assembly wrapped up on May 8, so it's a good time to reflect on how electric co-ops fared. As always, the Colorado Rural Electric Association was busy watching out for the interests of our electric co-op members.

What does that mean?

It means reviewing each of the 704 bills introduced this year to determine if the proposed changes in Colorado law will have any impact on co-ops. It means countless meetings with legislators, legislative staff, and other stakeholders to express the views of Colorado's electric co-ops. And, of course, it means being in constant communication with our board, our legislative committee, and our co-op CEOs to discuss proposed legislation and stake out our positions.

Over the course of the 2024 legislative session, the bills that were introduced dealt with a wide variety of issues. As an association of electric co-ops, we are primarily concerned with legislation that involves Colorado energy policy and how those policies can impact your co-op's ability to provide the electricity that you rely on every day. However, we also follow bills that impact businesses more generally in areas including consumer protection, employment law, trucking regulations, and local government regulations, to name a few.

With respect to energy policy, there were three significant areas of discussion this session. First, there was a lot of debate about whether to accelerate the carbon reduction goals established in bills passed by the legislature in 2019. The proposed "Clean Energy Plan" bill would have accelerated the target for 100% clean energy from 2050 to 2040 and created interim goals. CREA participated in many discussions related to this bill to clarify how it would impact electric

co-ops. Our position was that the bill was unnecessary since utilities are already going to reach those goals in the coming years with or without the legislation. Ultimately, the bill was not introduced.

Second, a bill was introduced that created new distribution system planning requirements for Xcel Energy. The basic premise of the bill is to require Xcel to upgrade its distribution system to accommodate more distributed energy resources and thereby accelerate the clean energy transition. CREA co-ops serve vast areas of Colorado and have the largest distribution network of all utilities in the state. We also have the fewest customers per mile of distribution line from whom to recover the costs of system upgrades. Colorado's electric co-ops are very sensitive to any new requirements from the state to upgrade our distribution networks because those requirements result in higher rates for our co-op members. We advocated for an amendment to the bill to make sure it did not apply to electric co-ops. We were successful in those efforts and thank the legislature for recognizing the co-op difference.

Third, another bill was introduced that was intended to expedite the siting of renewable energy facilities in Colorado. We are in favor of steps to expedite the construction and siting of new renewable generation and transmission projects, but we also understand that local governments diligently guard their rights to develop appropriate permitting rules. This bill, SB24-212, directs the Colorado Energy Office to create a repository of model permitting ordinances for renewable energy projects, which may lead to a more uniform statewide siting framework.

In addition to the energy policy issues, we lobbied several bills that we determined would negatively impact co-op operations.



KENT SINGER

One of those bills, HB24-1014, would have lowered the bar for lawsuits to be brought under the Colorado Consumer Protection Act. While we certainly support the right of consumers to bring lawsuits when they have suffered damages, that right already exists outside the CCPA, which is intended to add remedies where the public interest is impacted. We concluded that HB24-1014's deletion of the public interest requirement in the CCPA was not good public policy, and we were gratified that the bill did not pass.

We also asked for an amendment to HB24-1341 relating to the authority of local governments to adopt rules for idling vehicles in Colorado. While it may make sense for state or local governments to discourage folks from letting their passenger and commercial vehicles idle and therefore reduce pollution, in many cases the trucks used by electric co-ops and other utilities need to idle, while work is being performed. Again, we appreciate the consideration of the Colorado legislature in supporting this commonsense exemption to the idling law.

The members of the Colorado General Assembly have a demanding and often thankless job; we appreciate their dedication and commitment to serving the people of Colorado. We also appreciate their willingness to listen to the concerns of Colorado's electric co-ops and their willingness to act in response to those concerns.

If you are interested in learning more about CREA's legislative work, please visit our website at www.crea.coop.

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.

Are You READY!

How would we see at night without power?

Electricity lights up our world!

Think of all the ways we rely on electricity: keeping food fresh, cooking meals, and getting information through the internet or TV. It keeps us warm in the winter, cool in the summer, and connected with each other year round. Oftentimes, we use electricity to play and have fun! Are you and your family ready if disaster strikes and your home is without power?



Help your family build an emergency kit! Collect these items and keep them together in a safe place that you can find easily. Make sure you have enough supplies to last for at least **three days**.

Emergency Supplies List

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3-day supply of non-perishable food (dried fruit, canned tuna fish, peanut butter, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Water – at least a gallon per person, per day |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Can opener | <input type="checkbox"/> Battery-powered or hand-cranked radio with extra batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> First aid kit | <input type="checkbox"/> Flashlights with extra batteries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping bag or warm blanket for everyone in your family | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone with charger, extra battery and solar charger |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Change of clothes to last 3 days, including sturdy shoes; consider the weather where you live | <input type="checkbox"/> Whistle to signal for help |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Matches in a waterproof container (let a grown up handle these) | <input type="checkbox"/> Local maps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush, toothpaste, soap | <input type="checkbox"/> Pet supplies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper plates, plastic cups and utensils, paper towels | <input type="checkbox"/> Baby supplies |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Books, games or puzzles |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> A favorite stuffed animal or blanket |

Remember, traffic lights will not work!

Go on a quest with your family!
Create a scavenger hunt!
Make planning fun!



<http://www.ready.gov/kids>

SET YOUR HOME TO VACAY MODE

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: How can I lower my electric bill when I'm gone on vacation?

A: Just like you, the equipment in your home is hard at work getting through the daily grind. While you are off enjoying a new adventure or time away this summer, give your home's equipment a vacation, too. Doing so can reduce unnecessary energy waste and unneeded wear and tear on your heating and cooling system, appliances, and more. Here's how to set your home to vacay mode.

Your heating and cooling system keeps you comfortable. If you aren't there, it doesn't need to be quite so comfortable in your home. Setting the thermostat closer to the outdoor temperature can save energy and money. I don't recommend completely turning off the heating or cooling system. In extreme weather, your heating and cooling system also helps protect your home from freezing pipes or damage from excessive heat.



▲ Set your thermostat 5 to 10 degrees closer to the outdoor temperature when you aren't home. You can also consider upgrading to a smart thermostat, which gives you control over the temperature from anywhere. *Photo by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources.*



▲ Before you leave for vacation, reduce unnecessary energy waste and unneeded wear and tear on your home's equipment by planning ahead. *Photo by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources.*

As a rule, you can typically set your thermostat 5 to 10 degrees closer to the outdoor temperature when you aren't home. Each home is different, and the weather varies depending on where you live. Consider the right temperature balance for your home.

Installing a smart thermostat gives you the ability to control your settings remotely from your smartphone. This allows you to adjust the temperature after you leave home and right before you return.

Most modern water heaters include a vacation mode. This setting drops the temperature to reduce wasted energy when you're away. A storage water heater is like an insulated tea kettle, standing by and ready for you to have hot water whenever you need it. Give that water heater a vacation, too. Changing the setting to vacation mode keeps it on at a lower setting, saving energy. Leave yourself a note with a reminder to turn it back on when you get home, so you don't wind up with a disappointing shower before the first day back at work.

Closing the curtains can provide two benefits. It can keep heat from the sun at bay. This reduces the load on your heating and cooling system, which saves energy. It

also has the benefit of blocking visibility into your home when you're away.

For security, some people use timers or leave on exterior lights. Make sure any lights left on are LEDs, instead of incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs. LEDs use less energy and have less impact on your electric use when left on all night. You can also consider adding smart LEDs to your home. Smart LEDs can be controlled remotely through an app on your smartphone.

Did you know there are devices in your home that continue to draw power from your electrical outlets even when turned off or on standby? Before you leave, walk through your home and unplug devices and small appliances. Make sure gaming consoles and computers are fully powered down. Unplugging any devices that have lights, clocks, or standby mode can also reduce wasted energy.

Having peace of mind that your home is powered down and secure can help you enjoy your vacation. After all, we all need an occasional break.

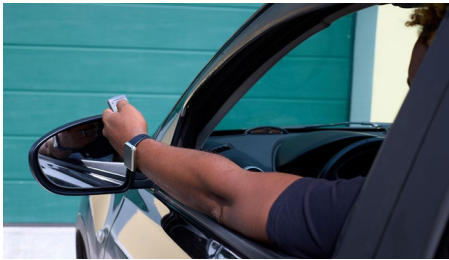
Miranda Boutelle is the chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company. She has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy at home.

Clean Energy Industry Reports Strong Growth

A May press release from the American Clean Power Association reported that the U.S. utility-scale clean energy sector added a combined 5,585 megawatts of new capacity in the first quarter of 2024. This is an increase of 28%, compared to installations in the same period one year ago. The new additions are enough to power 1 million homes with clean energy.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration expects electricity generation will grow by about 3% this year and 1% in 2025, with renewable sources — primarily solar — supplying most of that growth. “In 2025, we expect generation from solar to exceed the contribution from hydroelectricity for the first year in history,” EIA Administrator Joe DeCarolis said.

ACP’s *Clean Power Quarterly Market Report — Q1 2024* also highlights a “significant milestone” that utility-scale solar surpassed 100 gigawatts of installed capacity. According to the report, it took 18 years to build the first 50 GW of U.S. solar, but just four years to double to 100 GW. U.S. clean power capacity now stands at 269,878 MW, which is enough to power more than 68 million U.S. homes.



GARAGE DOOR NEED TO KNOW

If your power is out during an emergency evacuation, your garage door motor will not work, and the button or remote will not open the door. You will have to open it manually to get your vehicle out to evacuate.

Learn how to do this and practice when there is not a power outage and when it's not an emergency. When the garage door is in the down/closed position, pull the emergency release — typically a red cord hanging down from the electric motor. Then lift the door by hand.

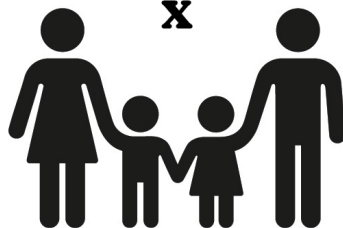
Review your garage door owner’s manual or find an online video with exact instructions for your garage door model to learn how to open it without power.

How much water do you need in your emergency kit?



1 gallon

x



Number of people

x

3 days

Source: Ready.gov

CO-OP CREWS ELECTRIFY NAVAJO NATION

Beginning this month, volunteer linecrews from seven Colorado electric co-ops will participate in Light Up Navajo V. Each four-person co-op crew will spend a week in Navajo Nation setting power poles, running power lines, and preparing homes to receive electric service. An initiative of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority in coordination with the American Public Power Association, Light Up Navajo brings electricity to families living in Navajo Nation.

Spanning an area larger than the entire state of West Virginia, Navajo Nation is home to approximately 186,500 Navajo citizens. There are currently more than 13,000 Navajo families living without basic access to electricity. Bringing power to homes will provide these families with modern conveniences such as electric lighting, refrigeration for food, and access to electric heat and air-conditioning.

A crew from Delta-Montrose Electric Association participated in Light Up Navajo IV last year. “We wanted to come here and be part of the solution,” Jack Johnston, DMEA CEO shared. “And now that we understand the solution and the magnitude of that, it’s really meant a lot for us to be able to come be just a small part and make that contribution to the Navajo Nation.” In 2023, 159 homes were connected to the grid.

Light Up Navajo V launched April 7 with 42 utility companies from 16 states scheduled to participate. More than 250 electric lineworkers are working together toward the goal to connect at least 200 homes to the grid by July 20.

Since 2018, CREA has participated in several philanthropic electrification projects in Guatemala. The association and its member co-ops are thrilled to work closer to home to bring the life-changing benefits of power to neighbors in need.

Watch CREA’s social media for updates on these electrification trips.



HELPING YOU DO MORE WITH POWER

Electricity is a reliable, affordable and responsible way to power the rural West. With electrification and energy efficiency programs offered by your electric cooperative with support from Tri-State, together we are helping consumers, farms, ranches and businesses get the most value from power and save money.

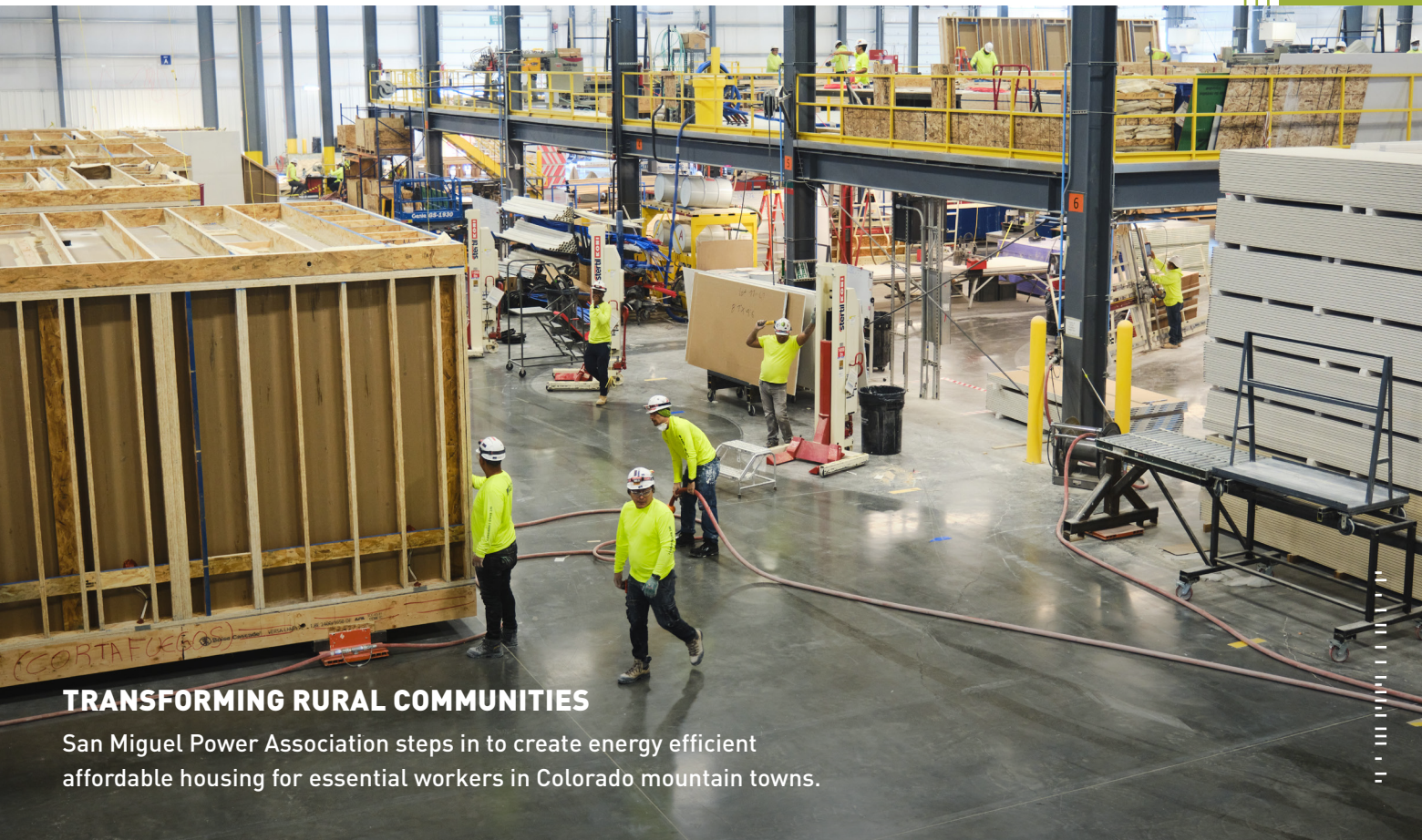
Learn more at www.tristate.coop/electrify-and-save



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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TRANSFORMING RURAL COMMUNITIES

San Miguel Power Association steps in to create energy efficient affordable housing for essential workers in Colorado mountain towns.



PROPELLING ECONOMIC GROWTH WITH REBATES

Energy efficient upgrades reinvigorate business owners serviced by Big Horn Rural Electric Company in Wyoming.



EMPOWERING FARMERS WITH IRRIGATION ELECTRIFICATION

New technology powered by Wheat Belt Public Power District increases operational reliability for third generation potato farmers in Nebraska.



IMPROVING ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN OIL AND GAS

A pioneering electrification project brings renewed power capabilities thanks to Central New Mexico Electric Cooperative.



Learn more at www.tristate.coop/features



SUMMERTIME SMOOTHIES

Denver-based Sticky Fingers Cooking® founder and “mompreneur” Erin Fletter writes in her cookbook, “Smoothies are fun, fast, and easy to make.” Spend time this summer teaching your kids how to use a blender and how to make their own smoothies. Before you know it, they will be creating new flavor combos and serving them to you. Try this “smooth” take on a pineapple upside-down cake and enjoy.



Enter our contest to win a copy. Visit Contests at www.coloradocountrylife.coop for details on how to enter.



Downside-Up Pineapple Smoothie

Prep time: 15 minutes | Yield: 1-2 servings

Ingredients

- ½ c pineapple chunks (canned, fresh, or frozen)
- 1 c milk
- ½ tsp vanilla extract
- 1 banana
- ½ c ice cubes
- Honey to taste (optional)
- 1–2 maraschino cherries (optional)

Instructions

Toss + peel + add Toss the pineapple into your blender. Add the milk and vanilla. Peel the banana and add it to the blender. Add the ice.

Blend + taste + adjust Put the lid on the blender and blend until smooth. Taste it. Does it taste too sour? If so, blend in a little honey.

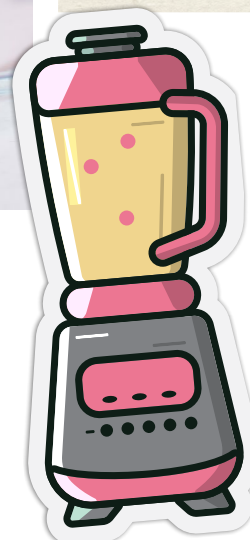
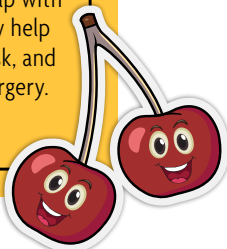
Pour + top Pour the smoothie into glasses, and top off with maraschino cherries — YUM!



Did you know?

Pineapples contain vitamin C, manganese, and enzymes that help with digestion. Eating pineapples may help boost immunity, lower cancer risk, and improve recovery time after surgery.


Source: Healthline



Blending Safety Tips

- **Put a lid on it** (the blender, that is).
- **Start slow to go fast** to ensure a smooth blend.
- **Play keep-away** (when blender is on, keep everything away from it). Always turn blender off and unplug before removing the lid.
- **Keep the base dry** – water and electricity don't mix.
- **Don't force it** – if the blender isn't working, turn it off and call an adult.

Recipe and tips from *Kid Smoothies: A Healthy Kids' Cookbook* by Erin Fletter. Photography by Clare Barboza. Book available on Amazon at www.amazon.com/dp/0593690265/.



2024

READERS' CHOICE

BEST OF Colorado

KIDS EDITION

Help us find the Best of Colorado!
We're looking for the best:

- Museum
- Amusement Park
- Putt-Putt Golf
- Kid-friendly Hotel
- Animal Experience (zoo, wild animal sanctuary, gator farm, aquarium, etc.)

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/bestof2024

Springtime

Many awakenings coming alive
Ready to burst, ready to take flight.
Feelings, emotions unexpectedly thrive
Like many fuses ready to ignite.
The sun tracing its path across the sky
Gliding upon time; equaling day to night
Ever moving; shining above on high
Wanes as the day reaches its longest light.
Nature strokes her winter white canvas
Dripping droplets from the heavens above
Dabbing the blades of the fresh green grasses
Splashing color into the flowers we love.
In the midst of the landscape not always seen
A symphony of creatures for every scene
From the mountain tops to the lowest ravine
Nature's concertos; harmonies unforeseen.
How do you cast yourself in springtime play?
Do you plunge in and flounder and flail about
Or gracefully dive and swim a medley relay?
No doubt, a part of both is in each new tryout.

Linda Morrow, Bellvue
Poudre Valley REA member



KIDS' POETRY

The Wolf

The wolf prowls in the night
Beneath the moon's dim light
Leaving footprints in the white
He comes to bring a fright.

Sylvia Rose Murdoch, age 8
Mountain Parks Electric member

The Wind

The wind is endless
and life never ends.
Wherever you come from
is where you will end.
And when you are there
you will feel loved
in many different ways.

Lauralei Grondahl, age 7
Mountain View Electric member

Poem About Flowers

Petals grasping at the sun
Reaching for a little fun.
Sprawling 'cross the wild fields or
slumped up in a crystal vase
Altogether they cheer the globe
with a pleasant grace.
Each one has a meaning to define
Crab blossoms are ill-natured,
unable for one to refine.
Hollyhock is ambition
While Heliotrope is devotion.
Radiant as a star shining in the
universe
Each one brings a blessing or a curse.
Elegant in their own way
Are the flowers we take for granted
every single day.

Daelyn Dubisky-Seiler, age 15
Granddaughter of YVEA member
Cathy Dubisky

ARE YOU A POET? DO YOU WRITE POETRY?

Click on Reader Engagement at www.coloradocountrylife.coop or email poetry@coloradocountrylife.org.



IT TAKES A VILLAGE

BY BECKY JENSEN

How Hikers and Mountain Towns Help Each Other on the Colorado Trail

The treads of my trail runners had worn down to the nub after only a few weeks of backpacking. It was the summer of 2016, and I was thru-hiking the 500-mile Colorado Trail, a remote path through the Rockies between Denver and Durango.

Touted as “mile for mile, the most beautiful trail in America,” the CT traverses five major river systems, six national forests, six wilderness areas, and eight mountain ranges, climbing roughly 90,000 feet in total elevation.

By the time I reached mile 175, I was wiped out mentally and physically. It had been a long day of strenuous hiking. I flipped through *The Colorado Trail Databook* — the definitive pocket guide for hikers, bikers, and horseback riders — to find a fabled shortcut to Twin Lakes, a mountain village of less than 30 residents. My hiker hunger had turned into an obsessive craving for bananas and chocolate. A cold beer sounded amazing, too. Word on the trail was you could find these goodies and more at the Twin Lakes General Store.

I lost my footing on the steep shortcut trail and took a digger. Dust coated every inch of my body, sticking to sweat, sunscreen, and my newly scraped elbow. The spur trail eventually spit me out at Highway 82. Hugging the road’s shoulder, I walked down fence rows and past a string of log cabins when a thing of beauty appeared — Twin Lakes General Store, its front doors propped open, wide and welcoming.

Dirty and stinking, I stepped into the mercantile. With a filthy hand, I reached for one perfectly yellow banana, placed it on the counter, and paid the friendly cashier. Like an animal, I ripped through the peel and devoured the fruit in a few bites. I

nearly cried it tasted so good.

The old store was an oasis. I pulled a favorite beer from the cooler and pressed the ice-cold can against my temple. The shelves were stocked with everything a hiker could need — stove fuel, wet wipes, dehydrated meals, essential gear. I bought potato chips and a Hershey’s chocolate bar, and took my loot to the outdoor seating area where I joined fellow hikers. Unshouldering our heavy packs, we sat at an actual table, on sturdy chairs with back support. Hallelujah. We shared stories and sipped beers, blissed out and deeply grateful for trail town fare and community.

Twin Lakes General Store. Photo by Bob Mathes.



◀ The author, Becky Jensen, at mile 482.4 of the Colorado Trail near Durango.

WHY HIKERS GO →

A thru-hike can be a time of introspection, a quest for purpose, a test of endurance, a celebration of nature. For some, it marks a rite of passage. Back in 1981, David Fanning and his wife, Carol, had recently graduated from Colorado State University. “Let’s put all our stuff in storage for the summer and go for a hike,” David had said to his young bride, suggesting an epic outdoor adventure before they headed east to graduate school. “Let’s do the length of Colorado.”

Years before the Colorado Trail existed, David had pieced together his own route that followed the Continental Divide from the Wyoming border to New Mexico. He admitted they were lost most of the time. David’s backpack weighed a staggering 75 pounds, Carol’s weighed 55, and it rained 34 of the 40 days it took the couple to hike across Colorado. “We decided that if we could survive that hike, we could make our marriage work,” David said, and they were right. The experience not only deepened their commitment to each other, it cemented their love of the mountains, and they returned after grad school to make Colorado their home.

Then 10 years ago, Carol faced a potentially life-threatening illness.

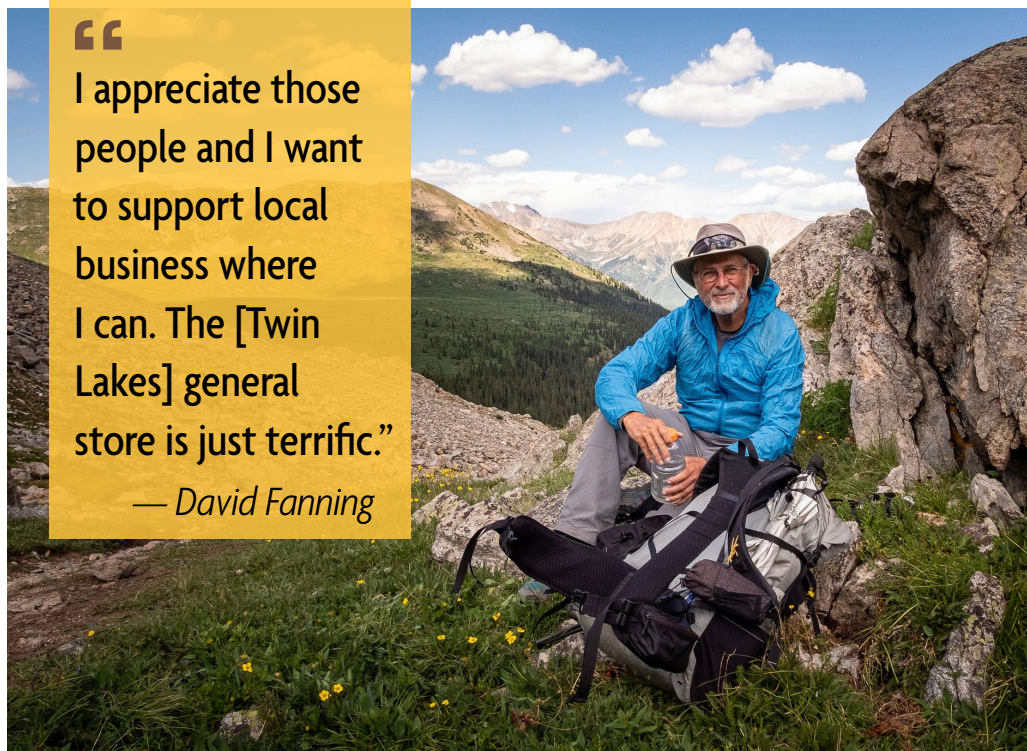
“We talked about what we had left undone, what we wanted to do still,” David remembered, eyes welling with emotion. His list included backpacking again through Colorado’s high country. “I always felt like we had more time.”

Fortunately, they did. Carol’s condition was treatable. And today, David has successfully thru-hiked the Colorado Trail seven times since his wife’s health scare. “I’ve been walking in gratitude ever since.”

Compared to his 1981 trek, David now

“ I appreciate those people and I want to support local business where I can. The [Twin Lakes] general store is just terrific.”

— David Fanning



▲ David Fanning takes a break on the Colorado Trail. Photo by David Fanning.

carries a substantially lighter pack on a well-marked and maintained route, and it takes him about 33 days to hike the CT’s 500 miles.

“Taking one month out of my life to have a spiritual experience in the San Juans is worth doing every year,” David said. He feels that hiking the CT not only benefits his own mental health, it improves his relationships with others. “I come back a better husband, a better father, a better person because I’ve had that time alone to think about how grateful I am for my life.”

David described his first CT thru-hike in 2014 as a remarkable experience where he forged deep connections with unlikely friends. To answer the question, “What draws people to hike the CT?” he wrote the book *Voices of the Colorado Trail*.

“I’ve interviewed about 200 people, and I don’t think I’ve heard the same story twice,” David said.

“I keep going because I can go,” he added. “There will be a time when that’s not possible. So, I’ll keep hiking the Colorado Trail until I can’t anymore.”

THE VALUE OF TRAIL TOWNS TO THRU-HIKERS

In order for David and other thru-hikers to complete the CT, they rely on mountain towns to resupply them along the way. Some of the most popular support towns on the Colorado Trail include Bailey, Breckenridge, Leadville, Twin Lakes, Buena Vista, Salida, Creede, Lake City, Silverton, and Durango at the official trail’s end. These small towns allow thru-hikers to do more than restock their packs and replace broken or lost gear. Trail towns let them shower. Do laundry. Buy a slice of pizza. Check the weather forecast. Sleep in a bed at a hotel or hostel.

David tries to spend money when he gets to a trail town. “I appreciate those people,” he said, “and I want to support local business where I can.” Every year, he eats an ice cream sandwich in Lake City, and stops in Salida to enjoy a few relaxing days with Carol on the town’s riverwalk. A pit stop in Twin Lakes is always a must. “The general store is just terrific.”

**BOB LIKES
BACKPACKERS BEST**

Twin Lakes General Store — a staple of Lake County for more than 145 years — is open Memorial Day through the first week of November. Last summer, a record 80,000 tourists descended on the tiny historic village. Most were not thru-hikers.

Yet the store’s website proclaims, “Welcome Backpackers! You are our favorite customers ... and we hope you feel at home when you arrive in Twin Lakes along your journey.”

“Hikers aren’t my favorite because they spend the most,” owner Bob Mathes clarified. “Hikers are my favorite because I relate to them. I respect them. I get why they’re on the trail.”

In his younger days, Bob hiked segments of the Colorado Trail, Appalachian Trail, Pacific Crest Trail, and Continental Divide Trail. He also bicycled across the U.S. from the Atlantic to the Pacific. He eventually settled down, started

a family, and spent decades building his career as an international marketing consultant for the tourism industry.

Longing for a simpler life in the mountains, Bob built a cabin in Twin Lakes as a second home in the 1990s. After a divorce and personal health crisis, he quit his job, sold everything, and moved to Twin Lakes full time, buying the general store in 2018. Today, Bob is an official trail adopter who maintains local sections of the CT, and his employees have hiked all or parts of the Colorado Trail.

When a hiker walks into Twin Lakes General Store, “we know who you are,” Bob said. He and his staff admire all thru-hikers, smelly or not. The 3,100-mile Continental Divide Trail joins the Colorado Trail for 300 miles near Twin Lakes, and Bob and his team pride themselves on providing the best trail intel possible. “Twin Lakes is a junction where thru-hikers have to make a choice about which route to take next,” he said. “We stock the latest guidebooks and spend a lot of time helping hikers make informed decisions.”

In the six years Bob has owned the general store, he said the number of visitors to Twin Lakes has easily doubled. He feels protective of thru-hikers and trail towns alike.

“Thru-hikers are walking through history on the Colorado Trail,” he added. “They’re walking through mining towns from the Wild West. And hopefully, when they walk into a trail town like ours, they still feel that inspiration. The exploration. The adventure. Because that’s really what it’s all about — you want them to feel the Old West. Mountain towns are trying to preserve that character despite tremendous pressure to grow.”

**THE VALUE OF THRU-
HIKERS TO LEADVILLE**

Adam Ducharme, tourism director for Lake County, which includes Twin Lakes and Leadville, agreed with Bob.

“We’re a mining community, not a resort community. We have rough edges, yet a deep appreciation for the outdoors,” he said. “Protecting that identity is a big focus of my job.”

Adam, who completed the Colorado Trail in 2016, described thru-hikers as critically important to Leadville’s culture and summer economy. One thru-hiker, he said, will spend an average of \$200 a night in Leadville on things like meals, laundry, lodging, and resupply. According to his office, 70% of Leadville’s sales tax revenue comes from commercial business, and many of these local companies — such as Melanzana outdoor apparel, Nunatak ultralight gear, Inn the Clouds Hostel, Leadville Outdoors and Mountain Market, Mountain Laundry, and Zero Day Coffee and Gear (founded by thru-hikers) — were built to support trail culture.


◀ Zero Day Coffee and Gear is a Leadville business that honors and supports thru-hiker culture. Photo by Zero Day Coffee & Gear. Follow @zerodayleadville on Instagram.




“Thru-hikers are walking through history on the Colorado Trail. They’re walking through mining towns from the Wild West. And hopefully, when they walk into a trail town like ours, they still feel that inspiration.”

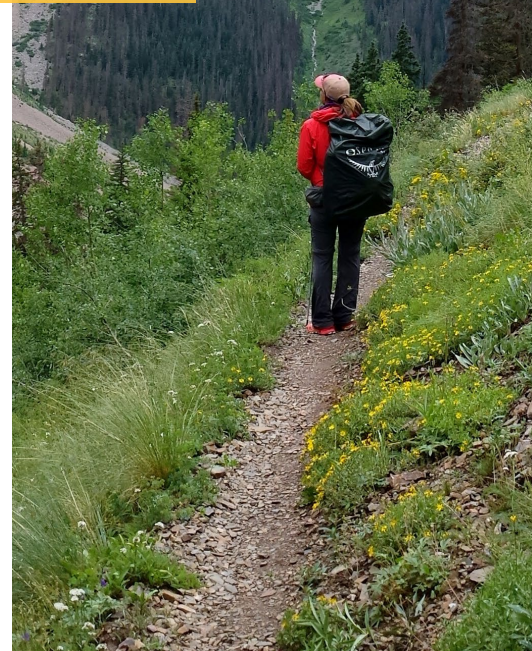
— Bob Mathes, owner of Twin Lakes General Store



 Collegiate Range. Photo by David Fanning.



 Remnants of historic Colorado can be seen while hiking the CT. Photo by Matthew Craft.



 Segment 24 of the CT. Photo by Becky Jensen.

But it’s not about the money. Lake County residents, including Adam, often gift thru-hikers free food and coffee at Zero Day and shuttle them to and from nearby Tennessee Pass trailhead with no strings attached.

“More than dollars and cents, Leadville’s gritty history informs our deep respect for thru-hikers,” Adam explained. “Because we push ourselves to do hard things every day at an elevation above 10,000 feet, our community has a massive amount of respect for thru-hikers who do the same.”

MANY HAPPY RETURNS

Although the number of David’s repeat thru-hikes is exceptional, his desire to revisit the Colorado Trail is not unique. According to Bob, thru-hikers often return to his village with friends and families in tow. Bob also

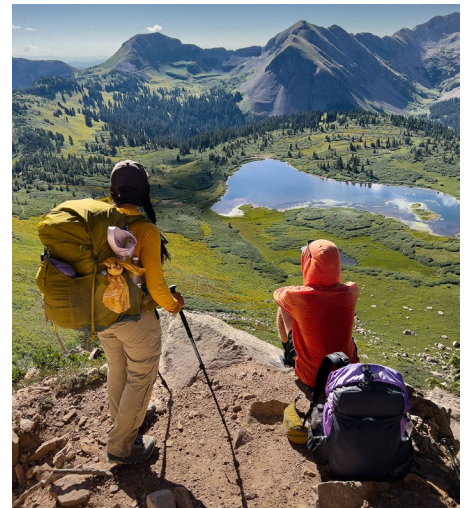
sees more and more thru-hikers come back to get engaged or married on the Colorado Trail. “It’s happened in Twin Lakes more than a dozen times in the last few years.”


The phenomenon makes sense to Bob. “If you’re a business or community that caters to hikers and tries to help them, you become a small part of this huge life adventure, and they remember you. You’re part of an important chapter in their Colorado Trail story.”

David, as an author, relishes those chapters. Every year, he continues to forge new relationships and document his experiences on the Colorado Trail. “Sometimes I think I should get a life,” David said about hiking the CT for the eighth time at age 72. “But this is the life,” he reflected. “I can’t imagine not being on the Colorado Trail this summer.”

Becky Jensen is a writer and podcast contributor who lives and works in a little cabin on a big river in Northern Colorado. She’s finishing her memoir about thru-hiking the Colorado Trail and plans to hike it again this summer with her son, Jake. You can find her at beckyjensenwrites.com.

Find more information about the Colorado Trail, including official guidebooks and *Voices of the Colorado Trail* by David Fanning at coloradotrail.org.



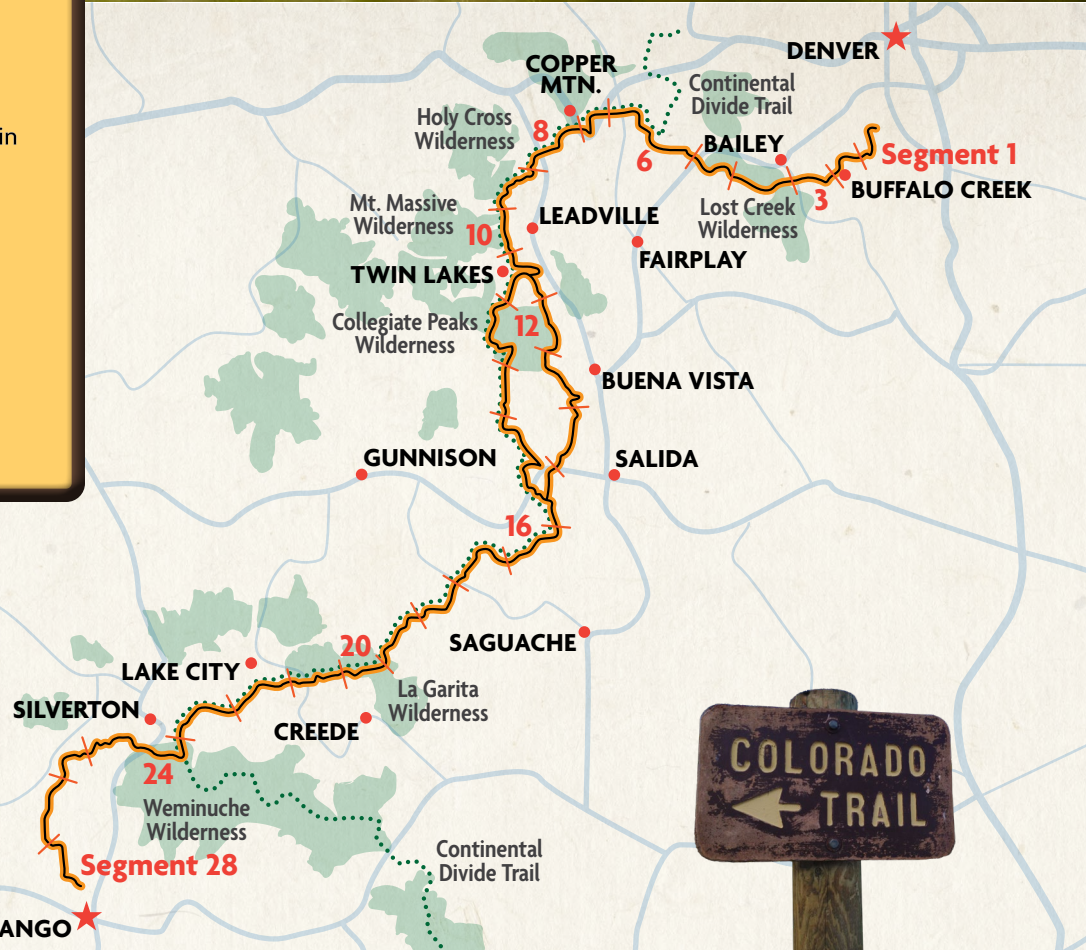
 Colorado Trail hikers take in the beautiful views of Taylor Lake. Photo by David Fanning.

TOWNS ALONG THE COLORADO TRAIL

MILES FROM DENVER

- 26.6 mi. • Buffalo Creek
- 40.7 • Bailey
- 71.7 • Fairplay
- 104 • Breckenridge
- 119.3 • Copper Mountain
- 142.8 • Leadville
- 175.8 • Twin Lakes
- 216.6 • Buena Vista
- 253.2 • Salida
- 343.1 • Creede
- 357.8 • Lake City
- 412.1 • Silverton
- 486.4 • Durango

Sunset over Mount Massive, from Segment 10 of the Colorado Trail. Photo by Ned Warner.



SEGMENT 6: COLUMBINES AT A CAMPSITE



SEGMENT 20: SADDLE BELOW SAN LUIS PEAK



SEGMENT 24: SWITCHBACKS INTO ELK CREEK DRAINAGE

Photos by Becky Jensen

The “Little Pink Miracle” That’s Revolutionizing CoQ10

Pioneering Anti-Aging MD combined this pink power-generator with the world’s most absorbable CoQ10 – revitalizing millions of Americans suffering from occasional fatigue and other symptoms of aging.

Millions of Americans rely on caffeine and sugar to get through their to-do lists. Yet a “little pink miracle” is helping adults over 50 to regain the youthful energy of a 20-something.

The Surprising Link Between Flamingos and Endless Energy

South Florida doctor and anti-aging pioneer, Dr. Al Sears reveals the secret to all-day energy and vitality. He says it lies within one of nature’s most beautiful and iconic creatures – the flamingo.

Combining this energizing pink nutrient with the unique and well-established powers of CoQ10 might solve people’s feelings of fatigue and many common aging symptoms.

Nature’s Most Potent Energy-Boosting Nutrient

“Most people don’t realize that flamingos are born gray. But their diet is made up almost entirely of one incredible pink nutrient. And that’s what turns their feathers bright pink,” says Dr. Sears, “But what’s more remarkable is that while small birds live 2-5 years, and hawks and eagles can live up to 25 years. Flamingos often live up to 50 years – and the record is 83.”

Astaxanthin (asta-zan-thin) is a revitalizing pink nutrient. It’s a special type of antioxidant carotenoid with 6,000 times the free radical scavenging power of vitamin C.

Researchers have shown it helps promote a healthy immune system. It also supports healthy blood sugar and focused eyesight. It also helps boost endurance and athletic performance.

In fact, experts agree, astaxanthin is the single most powerful antioxidant in the world.

Astaxanthin may explain the flamingo’s incredible lifespan. It also gives salmon their similar pink color. And, more importantly, the strength and endurance they need to swim upstream against powerful currents during their spawning season.

The Most Powerful Source of Lasting Natural Energy – No Caffeine Jitters, Sugar Crashes, Or Artificial Anything

Dr. Sears added astaxanthin to Ultra Accel Q, his already groundbreaking supplement. This is the product’s fourth generation. It leads

the industry in quality and efficacy. It has already sold over 725,000.

Ultra Accel Q combines the highest-potency astaxanthin available today with a vitamin-like nutrient called PQQ. It also includes the most absorbable CoQ10 form available – ubiquinol.

Creating the purest, cleanest source of lasting natural energy available anywhere.

PQQ and CoQ10: The Dynamic Duo for Cellular Energy Production

Pyrroloquinoline Quinone or PQQ earned the nickname “Mitochondrial Fertilizer” because it promotes the growth of new mitochondria within your cells.

Your mitochondria are the “power plants” that generate your body’s energy. Mitochondria are crucial for producing energy. More power plants are the first step to igniting energy and stamina throughout the day.

The next step is fueling all those new “power plants”. And that’s where the 4th generation of CoQ10 comes in.

CoQ10 is the high-octane fuel that powers all our activities, like thinking, breathing, walking, and running. It also acts as a potent antioxidant that protects your mitochondria from damage and helps them function at peak efficiency.

“We used to need tremendous doses to even come close to meeting the CoQ10 needs of adults over 40.” But Dr. Sears says he has identified the world’s most absorbable form – a way to not only meet but exceed the needs.

Dr. Sears insists on Ubiquinol – it is by far the most absorbable form of CoQ10. Dr. Sears was the first to offer this energizing nutrient to American health enthusiasts like you.

PQQ and CoQ10 enhance energy production at the cellular level. And when combined with astaxanthin, the results are truly remarkable.

Real People, Real Results: Ultra Accel Q is Changing Lives

Early reviews of Ultra Accel Q have been nothing short of incredible. Men and women wake up feeling refreshed, energized, and ready to take on their day.

William M. from Jupiter, Florida writes, “At 64 years old, I cannot remember feeling this good, even



Energize your life with Ultra Accel Q – Now with three of nature’s most potent rejuvenators!

as a kid. I’m exercising again, yoga, push-ups, jumping jacks... I feel so good it’s almost beyond description.”

“I have girlfriends 10 years younger than myself, and when we go out, people think I’m the youngest... Even though I am 67, I feel 40.” That is from Dianne M., Victoria, Australia

And Mark H. says, “I’m 60 years old and work physically every day. And basically, I never get tired. I have three granddaughters that live with me. They are 2, 4, and 7 years old... I feel like I’m one of them!”

Now It’s Your Turn to Feel True Lasting Natural Energy

You could be just days away from experiencing the rejuvenating spark that comes with fueling real cellular energy. And as the days and weeks pass, that spark will grow into the kind of boundless energy and vitality typically reserved for people years, even decades younger.

You’ll start every day feeling confident, vibrant, focused, and optimistic. I’m talking about the kind of vitality that people can’t help but notice. So, get ready for the admiring comments about how great you look and how much energy you have. Because that’s the power of Ultra Accel Q.

It’s Not Surprising That Ultra Accel Q Is Quickly Gaining Popularity

It’s making waves in the industry and creating a buzz among people

who are fed up with feeling tired, sluggish, and mentally foggy.

And because Ultra Accel Q is only available through Dr. Al Sears’ company Primal Force, demand is high, and stocks are running out faster than they can be replenished.

That’s probably because Dr. Sears is currently offering readers a risk-free trial of Ultra Accel Q.

Get Ultra Accel Q Before It’s Gone!

“It’s not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. The reason? Dr. Sears doesn’t want profit-driven third-party retailers raising the price of a unique, revolutionary product that has the power to truly transform people’s lives.

“We want to keep Ultra Accel Q affordable for anyone who wants to try it. And not only can we ship directly to the customer, but we’re able to get orders in the mail within 24 hours.”

And for anyone who still feels skeptical, Dr. Sears is backing every order with a risk-free, 100% money-back guarantee.

To take advantage of this special offer, simply call the Sears Toll-Free Health Hotline at **1-800-225-0326** now. Use Promo Code **COUAQ624** when you call.

Due to recent media exposure for Ultra Accel Q, Primal Force is experiencing unprecedented demand. If the phone line is busy when you call, please try again to avoid missing this exclusive one-time-only offer.



Water Wisdom

Keep your garden hydrated this summer

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Colorado’s explosive growth, accompanied by years of drought, has kept water conservation high on everyone’s radar. It’s no wonder we want to learn how to water more efficiently. But conservation isn’t the only reason why it’s important to learn best practices. How we water plants also impacts their health and survival.

Since precipitation varies from month to month and place to place, there isn’t one single formula for keeping plants properly hydrated throughout the year. But there are some recommended techniques for watering effectively no matter whether you live in the mountains or on the plains. These recommendations include adjusting the amount of water applied according to current weather conditions.

Generally, most grass, flowers, and shrubs thrive with 1 inch of water per week — far short of Colorado’s average 18-inch annual precipitation, which mostly consists of snowfall. Even after a wet winter, when it seemed like it would never stop snowing, we need to prepare for hot, dry days ahead.

Although it may be tempting to spray plants during the day when you notice leaves drooping, it’s better to apply water during cool mornings when less moisture will be lost to evaporation. Wet leaves are more vulnerable to mold and fungal development, and this danger is magnified when plants are sprayed at night.

The best approach is to apply water slowly and low to the ground. Therefore, drip, trickle, and soaker systems (or hoses set to flow slowly near the base of plants) are ideal. These systems reduce runoff, prevent soil from washing away, and encourage plant roots to grow deeper into the soil where water is stored. However, this doesn’t mean you can’t continue to use sprinklers to water the lawn.

There are formulas for determining how long it takes to apply the recommended inch. For sprinkler systems, place an empty tuna can 1–2 feet away from the sprinkler head and another can 1 foot from the outer edge of the spray. After 15 minutes, combine the water collected into one can, then

divide the sum by two to get the average. If you collected 1/2 inch in 15 minutes, it will take 30 minutes to apply 1 inch per week. Preferably you should divide watering into 15-minute intervals twice per week. If it rains, deduct the amount of rainfall — measured with a rain gauge — from water you apply with sprinklers.

Remember, trees and shrubs also need watering when it’s dry. Soak new trees and shrubs thoroughly two or three times per week the first month, then water weekly the rest of the growing season. After trees are established, water once weekly.

With experience you’ll learn how often to water, but if you’re unsure, remove mulch from the soil surface and check moisture by sticking your finger a few inches into the ground. If dry, it’s time to water.

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

 **LEARN MORE ONLINE**

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

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 **1-800-440-5481**. "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 **1-800-440-5481** 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 **COOM624** when you call.

LEADING THE WAY

Electric co-ops help develop the leaders of tomorrow

BY MARY PECK

The benefits of co-op membership flow to members of all ages, and for the youth of Colorado's electric cooperatives, those benefits include exclusive leadership and educational opportunities.

Remaining true to the cooperative principle of Concern for Community, the state's local electric co-ops deliver on their commitment to youth through scholarships, leadership experiences, and community grants worth hundreds of thousands of dollars annually.

Read on to learn more about the high-value awards and experiences available specifically to co-op youth across Colorado.

NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC YOUTH TOUR

Students who've been awarded the opportunity to attend the annual National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., say it's the experience of a lifetime. The weeklong program is open to high school students ages 16 years and older who live in an electric co-op service area. With roots dating to the 1950s, the tour brings together more than 1,500 high schoolers

from smaller and rural communities across the U.S. every June.

Students join in educational seminars, explore Washington, D.C.'s, famous monuments and museums, and spend a full day on Capitol Hill meeting with their state's congressional delegation. They learn how electric co-ops operate and about issues affecting electric co-ops at the state and national level.

"Our students say it's very moving to go to a big place like Washington, D.C., and see all the memorials and monuments," said Maddie Pollart, communications and public relations coordinator at Fort Morgan-based Morgan County REA. "They learn how electric co-ops work, and we increase the number of MCREA advocates."

The tour is valued at more than \$2,500 and all expenses, including transportation, lodging, meals, and admission fees are paid by the student's local co-op.

COLORADO'S LEADING SUMMER CAMP

High schoolers who live in electric co-op service areas throughout Colorado, Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Kansas can

apply to attend one of the best youth leadership camps in the Rocky Mountains. The Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp has been helping develop tomorrow's leaders for nearly 30 years.

"One of the things I like most about our youth leadership programs is how they engage people in learning what a cooperative is, what it means, and how people benefit from it," said Rita Sanders, director of marketing and communications at Grand Valley Power, based in Grand Junction.

The leadership camp takes place over six days every July near Steamboat Springs and is free to the 100 students selected to attend. During the one-of-a-kind camp, the young leaders work together to create their own functioning cooperative while learning about electric safety, studying state and federal legislative processes, and honing their communication and leadership skills. Hiking, rafting, tours, and social activities round out the memorable Colorado camp experience.

SUPPORTING STUDENTS' FUTURES

A diverse offering of scholarships may be open to high school seniors who live within electric co-op service boundaries and plan to attend college or trade school following graduation. Some co-ops offer more than a dozen scholarships with varying criteria, and many also offer awards for returning postsecondary students already attending college or trade school.

Lineworker scholarships are another way electric co-ops support members of their communities by helping prepare them for a solid career while supporting the needs of the electric utility industry.



High school students from electric co-op communities travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the National Rural Electric Youth Tour each June.



◀ Cooperative Youth Leadership campers from Colorado, Wyoming, Kansas, and Oklahoma, enjoy a week near Steamboat Springs each July thanks to their electric co-op.

“With retirements happening and not as many students going into the trades, it’s really important,” Sanders said. “We want to contribute to educating the next generation of lineworkers.”

Supporting the education of future lineworkers is a win-win. Sangre de Cristo Electric Association in Buena Vista, Grand Valley Power, and Morgan County REA are among those state co-ops that have hired previous lineworker scholarship recipients who have chosen to apply to their operations.

SUPPORTING LOCAL SCHOOLS

Colorado electric co-ops’ support of community youth is on display inside local school classrooms statewide. For example, Fort Collins-based Poudre Valley REA grants annual awards for K-12 classroom projects to support educational projects that focus on science, technology, engineering, arts, and math. And San Isabel Electric in Pueblo West prioritizes youth causes when considering donation requests from the community.

When it comes to teaching students about electricity and safety, local electric co-ops have been a long-standing, valuable resource for educators. White River Electric Association participates in its local elementary school’s safety demo day every spring, and co-op staff help judge the middle school’s annual renewable energy science projects.

Mountain View Electric Association is among the many co-ops statewide that deliver the Story Behind the Switch program to local elementary schools and clubs, teaching children about electricity and safety through fun hands-on activities. This spring alone, eight schools in MVEA’s co-op community booked the program for multiple presentations.

“It’s very popular with teachers,” said Erica Meyer, community relations specialist at MVEA in Falcon. “For us, it’s twofold with the kids: educating them about electrical safety, and as they get older, creating future leaders who live in our co-op community.”



DON'T MISS OUT!

Colorado’s local electric co-ops are eager to help develop the next generation of leaders in their communities, and they provide generous support to do so.

“Concern for Community is a pillar of cooperatives, and we especially want to invest in the youth of our community because they are our future,” Pollart said.

A wealth of opportunities are available to electric co-op youth of all ages, and members are encouraged to check co-op websites, get support from teachers and guidance counselors, and submit a strong application. It could result in a life-changing experience!

Mary Peck lives in Northern Colorado and is a lifelong champion of electric cooperatives. She enjoys sharing stories about life in rural communities with broad audiences.



- ▶ A student experiences the wonders of static electricity with a Van de Graaff electrostatic generator demonstration during the Story Behind the Switch educational program. *Photo courtesy MVEA.*
- ◀ Mountain View Electric Association Community Relationship Specialist Erica Meyer teaches a Girl Scout troop about electrical safety with the Story Behind the Switch. *Photo courtesy MVEA.*



Moody River

Fast changes on the Big Thompson

BY DENNIS E. SMITH

It never fails to amaze me how quickly conditions can change on a trout stream. It's ancient knowledge that rivers never sleep, that they're in a never-ending state of flux, always rising or falling, changing color, clarity, or course. Rivers — and the fish in them — can be as moody and unpredictable as a troop of drunken monkeys. And just because a river is timeless and enduring doesn't mean you can count on it to be kind or compassionate.

As if to prove the point, three of us had been fishing the Big Thompson for a whole week, and no two days were even remotely alike, except that they were all fun — and maybe a little too hot. Some days we'd catch fish on fluffy little dry flies, while on others only weighted nymphs or deeply drifted wet flies would turn a trout's eye. One evening, a tiny tan caddis fly accounted for half a dozen fat browns and two rainbows in less than an hour. The next day that fly proved utterly useless.

Each day the river brought new surprises. One morning we were on the water early enough that dawn's chill still lingered in the canyon. The first rays of sun filtered through the trees along the far bank, painting the cobbled bottom in rippling streaks of amber, green, gold, and a thousand unnamed shades of brown. A lazy mist hung over the surface while midges, mayflies, and other winged critters danced through it all in a kind of wild outdoor bug ballet. Deerflies and mosquitoes circled about. Dragonflies chased after all of them as the sun warmed their wings. We stood there, our mouths agape, staring in wonder at the beauty of it. My cousin Al finally came to his senses, peeled some line from his reel, floated a cast into the shadows and immediately hooked a good fish.

"Uh-oh," I said (an allusion to the angler's curse that says a fish on the first cast is often the kiss of death, meaning you won't get so much as a bite for the rest of the day). But

the river surprised us. Seconds later I had a fish on, and then so did Patrick. It went on like that for the next two hours — one or the other of us always into a fish, sometimes all three of us at the same time. It didn't seem to matter what fly we used or how we fished it, the trout would eat it.

But then, as suddenly as it had all started, it stopped, and there wasn't a fish or a bug to be seen. It simply went dead. Because that's what rivers do.

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



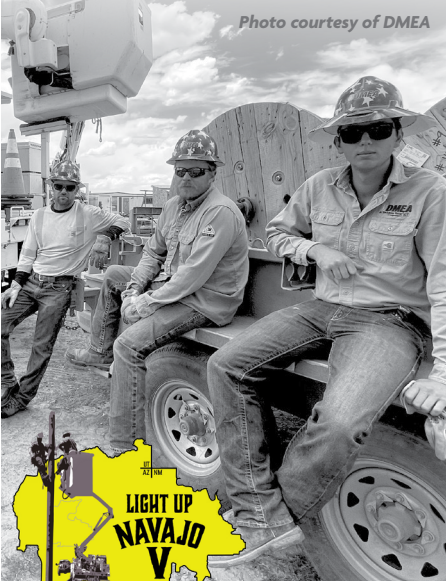
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LIGHT UP NAVAJO NATION

Linemen Bring
Electricity to
Neighbors in Need

Photo courtesy of DMEA



Volunteer linecrews from seven Colorado electric co-ops will participate in Light Up Navajo V this summer. Each four-person co-op crew will spend a week in Navajo Nation setting power poles, running power lines, and preparing homes to receive electric service. An initiative of the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority in coordination with the American Public Power Association, Light Up Navajo brings electricity to families in Navajo Nation.

For more information and to donate to this project, visit www.crea.coop/current-causes or scan this QR code with your smartphone camera.



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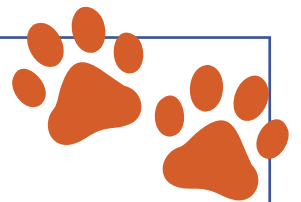
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Last call for SERVICE DOG stories!



September marks National Service Dog Month — a monthlong recognition to honor the dogs that have a career helping humans. CCL wants to show appreciation to our four-legged friends that play a big role in the lives of Coloradans.

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

Do you have a touching tale of how your service dog has helped you overcome challenges? We want to hear from you. Share your story for a chance for it to be published in the September 2024 issue of *Colorado Country Life*.

Let's shine a spotlight on the remarkable service dogs across Colorado and the impact they have on your life.

Deadline to submit your story is June 15.



**WRITERS OF ALL
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Share your story online at www.coloradocountrylife.coop/reader-engagement/dogherostories. Or mail it to 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216. Please include your name, phone number, and a photo if you have one.

Congratulations

MAY COOKBOOK GIVEAWAY

Sangre de Cristo Electric Association member Troy Baker from Buena Vista won *Milk Street Simple*.

Find our June giveaway and more ways to engage with *Colorado Country Life* on the Reader Engagement page at www.coloradocountrylife.coop.



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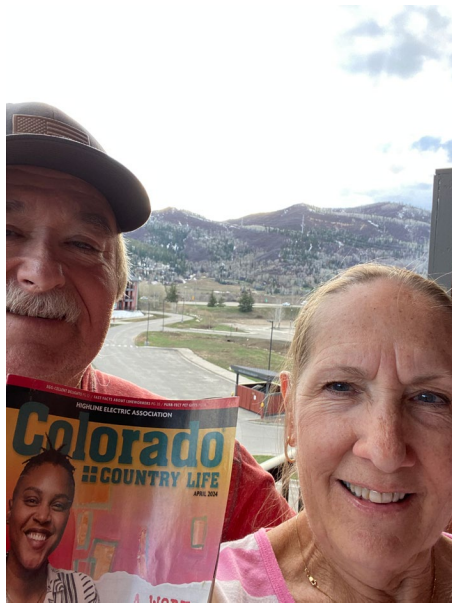



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READERS' PHOTOS

FUNNY STORIES



WINNER: Highline Electric Association members **Ramona and Kenny Phipps** bring their copy of CCL on a recent vacation to Steamboat Springs.



Natasha Whittemore takes CCL to Waco, Texas, to view the total eclipse of the sun in April. Natasha is a Southeast Colorado Power member.

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

Show us where you enjoy CCL for a chance to win! Simply take a photo of someone (or a selfie!) with the magazine, and share it with us on the Reader Engagement page at www.coloradocountrylife.coop. Each month we'll draw one photo to win \$25. The next deadline is June 14. See all the submitted photos on our Facebook page, COCountryLife.



CCL travels with Mountain View Electric members **Jasmine and Michael Ivey** and their sons, **Ezra and Evan**, to visit the Palace of Hernan Cortes in Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico.



Alex Herrick, an Empire Electric Association member, poses with his copy of CCL during a deployment to McMurdo Station, Antarctica, as part of a large construction project.



Mountain View Electric Association member **Brad Curtis** catches up with CCL before the 128th Boston Marathon in April.



Our daughter speaks Russian and has taught her daughter a few Russian words. But when our daughter speaks full Russian sentences to three-year-old Odessa, Odessa has no idea what is being said.

One day while we were feeding our chickens with Odessa, one chicken kept squawking right in her face. My husband said, "Wow! That chicken is sure talking! What do you think she's saying?"

Odessa replied matter-of-factly: "She's speaking Russian."

Alicia Riley, Grand Junction
Grand Valley Power member

My grandson, Grayson, has a job every day at preschool. Last month he told his mom he was the "pledge leader." He said he got to hold the flag, put his other hand over his heart, and count down to recite the pledge. When his mom started reciting it with him, he said, "Oh wow, you know my school pledge?"

Dave Munns, Colorado Springs
Mountain View Electric Association member

My two granddaughters were spending a week with me during their spring break. I thought it would be fun for them to see the Navy Band performance at Colorado Mesa University in Grand Junction, so I got tickets for the three of us to go to the show. While we were waiting in line for the doors to open, my six-year-old granddaughter shouted, "There sure are a lot of grandmas here!" Another grandma in front of us turned around and said, "Honey, that's because the tickets were free!"

Charlotte Boylan, Grand Junction
Grand Valley Power member

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



FATHER'S DAY FINDS

Timeless gifts the dad in your life will love

The second Sunday in June is always dedicated to Dad. We've gathered a list of things he will enjoy all year long, not just this month. Save this list for his birthday and holiday gift giving, too!

A Creative Way to Stand Out



Based in the Santa Fe Arts District near downtown Denver, **Knotty Tie Co.** specializes in customizable neckties, bow ties, pocket squares, and other printed goods such as scarves, robes, and even suspenders — all made with high-quality sustainable fabrics. All products are printed, cut, and sewn at the Denver manufacturing facility. Knotty Tie offers hundreds of creative and unique designs, patterns, and themes. Father's Day favorites include a space-themed collection, national parks collection, and dogs collection. Colors can be customized online to create a unique, memorable, and special gift. Visit www.knottytie.com to shop.

Spice it Up in the Kitchen

Flatiron Pepper Co. flakes are the secret to making ordinary food into spicy masterpieces. Flatiron chooses the absolute best and most flavorful chile peppers from around the world, ensuring that each blend delivers plenty of heat and a burst of fresh flavor in every shake of the bottle. The Arvada-based company's products come in a variety of heat levels with no added salt or fillers. Owners Matt and Mike make sure flavor comes first and heat second. Perfect for pizza, stir-fry, pasta, steak, or any other dish that needs to make an impression. Shop at www.flatironpepper.com.



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Enter to win Akinz's Five Star View hat and have Dad's gift taken care of for Father's Day on June 16.

Visit the Reader Engagement page at www.coloradocountrylife.coop and enter to win. This contest closes June 11 — enter today!

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