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Starting School, Navigating Change

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR



KYLEE COLEMAN

For many families, back-to-school time can trigger the excitement of a fresh start. Well, maybe not for the kids who, by this point in the summer, have grown accustomed to sleeping in and love the freedom of long summer days.

Our youngest son is getting ready to start his senior year of high school. His first day of school in a couple of weeks will also mark the beginning of some “lasts.” We will take his last First Day of School photo on our front porch. He’ll go to his last homecoming dance in September. He’ll perform in his last high school marching band competition in October. And in nine short months, he’ll take his last high school final exam. He’s excited to soak in all the school year is bound to offer.

We are thrilled to cheer him on throughout his senior year and as the next chapter of his life unfolds. And I’m realizing that my husband and I might need some cheering on, too. Some days when I’m looking up into the eyes of my 6-foot-tall man-child, I still see a little 5-year-old on his first day of kindergarten, and I realize 12 years went by too fast. My heart swells with pride for my grown kids, and it aches a little bit knowing that my role as mom is shifting toward the proverbial empty nest.

Seeing kids grow up is bittersweet. If your kids are entering kindergarten or if they graduated years ago, I hope you can find time for reflection during this season of fresh starts and maybe some “lasts.”



Our First Day of School tradition: a photo on the porch. Photo by Kylee Coleman.

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STRONGER TOGETHER

A statewide viewpoint

BY CRAIG JOHNSON DIRECTOR OF POLICY AND STRATEGY/GENERAL COUNSEL



CRAIG JOHNSON

You may not know it, but your electric co-op is a member of CREA, the statewide association for Colorado's electric cooperatives. CREA works behind the scenes with its member co-ops to help them provide the best possible service to their customers.

In the 1930s, Franklin Roosevelt championed the Rural Electrification Act, a New Deal-era law that provided funding and expertise to help citizens in rural areas create their own utilities to bring electric service to the heartland. These utilities, which were built and owned by the people they serve, are today's electric co-ops.

These co-ops had fewer customers to share costs and were often unable to afford many of the same programs and services as the larger, investor-owned utilities serving more populous metropolitan areas. Just as members of the community gathered together to create their own utilities, electric co-ops united to form statewide associations — including CREA — that could provide services across the co-op community, allowing them to share expenses and keep the cost of service low. These associations also provided a collective voice for co-ops in state government, giving them more political clout than if they were to act as individual utilities.

The co-op world has grown substantially since its humble beginnings nearly 90 years ago, and today's co-ops are thoroughly modern, innovative utilities providing the highest level of service to their members. However, although co-ops currently serve approximately 70% of the state's land mass and nearly 1.5 million residents, each of Colorado's 22 electric co-ops serves only a limited area, and costs are still spread

among fewer customers than larger utilities. On average, co-ops have eight customers per mile of electric line, while an investor-owned utility typically has more than 30 customers per mile.

The rationale for having a statewide association to serve the collective interests of the co-op community remains as valid today as it was when CREA was first formed.

We at CREA work with your electric co-op to provide job training and safety services for lineworkers and co-op staff; educational services and youth programs that link co-ops with the communities they serve; and award-winning communications (including this magazine you are enjoying). It would not be cost effective for co-ops to purchase or develop these industry-leading programs on their own. Through CREA, each co-op benefits from these programs while keeping costs to consumers among the lowest in the state.

Just as important, CREA continues to provide a collective voice for its member co-ops before the state Legislature and regulatory agencies. Colorado is facing numerous challenges that impact electric co-ops and the communities they serve, including transitioning to clean energy resources and ensuring there is an adequate supply of electricity to serve the state's growing needs. As legislators and policymakers wrestle with these issues, CREA is working to make sure that your electric co-op can continue to provide reliable service at affordable rates.

CREA has a team of full-time professionals dedicated to advocating for the interests of co-ops. We seek to maintain the independence of Colorado's co-ops and to ensure they have the flexibility to serve

their members and communities in ways that are suited to their unique needs.

Over the past few years, we have helped to secure several significant pieces of legislation that benefit electric co-ops, including a bill that created a microgrid grant program that adds generation resources in communities at risk of natural disasters. These microgrids can operate independent of the power grid in an emergency. We have also successfully amended proposed legislation to avoid one-size-fits-all solutions that might be appropriate for large investor-owned utilities but would create undue financial and administrative burdens for co-ops. And we secured annual recognition for the contributions of electric lineworkers who put their lives on the line to keep the power on, often in challenging circumstances.

Although Colorado's electric co-ops serve almost 20% of the state's population, the largest individual co-ops serve only a fraction of that number. If the co-op voice is divided, the ability of each co-op to influence policy in the state is diminished. Only through collective action do we have the ability to make a positive impact at the Capitol.

Collectively, we can do things we cannot achieve individually. We are truly stronger together. It is the cooperative way, and CREA is here to help.

Craig Johnson is the director of policy and strategy and general counsel for CREA and offers a statewide perspective on issues affecting electric cooperatives.

A Cowboy and His Castle

BY POLLY OBEROSLER

Alonzo Hartman — or Lon as they called him — came to Los Pinos Agency south of what is now the town of Gunnison on Christmas Day 1872. He worked the remote cow camp around the area.

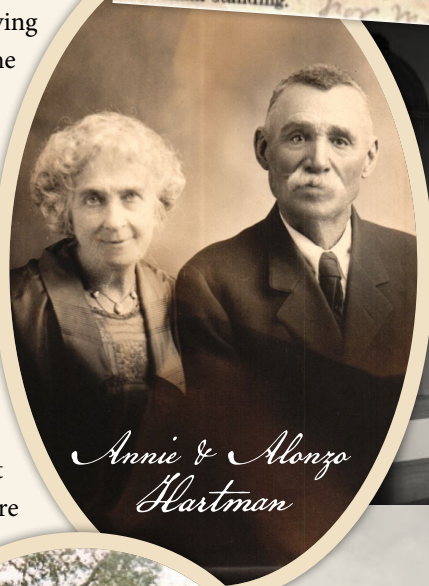
A strong and dashing young man, he fell in love with that remote campsite in the Gunnison Valley. In due course, he started the Dos Rios Ranch. He also began to think big. It did not take him long to determine the time was right for an established town. In 1873, he applied for the first post office in the area and built the building for it. It was next to his and business partner Jim Kelley's small log cabin store at the confluence of Tomichi Creek and the Gunnison River.

Hartman, Kelley, and others began to lay out a town. Lon built several houses and a courthouse where his future bride worked in the clerk's office. Many locals wonder why the town was named Gunnison and not Hartman. John Gunnison's expedition passed through the area in 1853, leaving no trace of their passing, save for naming the river from which the town gets its name.

With the gumption of Hartman and others, the town became a supply community in the lush Gunnison Valley. As more ranches began to spring up, miners flocked to the area. It's likely Hartman coaxed the railroads here just as he had the postal department. This bustling area saw the building of a real town by several individuals who once rallied for it to become the Colorado state capital.

Hartman married in 1882, and he and his bride, Annie Haigler, lived in a stone house in Gunnison before moving to his 2,000-acre ranch roughly where the airport is today. Hartman had built the first lumber-constructed home in Gunnison, and they lived there for a time. In 1892 he built a Queen Anne-style castle for his wife. It was complete with five fireplaces, stained glass windows, and a turret where Annie could paint while overlooking the Gunnison Valley. The castle, as it came to be called, was decorated with intricate woodwork, sweeping banisters, and beautiful floors throughout.

The Hartman castle was a symbol of the prosperity the West had become and, indeed, what Hartman helped create in the Gunnison community. There is an endeavor to save this 130-year-old castle for a community building, but first it must be purchased from the current owner. The group has seen some rather large donations to get to the fundraising goal, but has limited time to raise more funds. The Hartman castle is solid but in need of a new roof, up-to-code plumbing and electricity, and interior work. For further information or to donate to this nonprofit, visit www.hartmancastle.org.



Photos top to bottom: Sign from the original 1870s post office, an old news clipping, the Hartmans in their later years, a beautiful staircase to the turret, the castle in the 1970s, the castle circa 1890s. ▲

TYPES OF HEAT PUMPS

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: My heating system is more than 10 years old, and I want to switch to a heat pump. Can you help me choose the best option for my home?

A: Heat pumps have been around for decades, and in that time, the technology has come a long way. In my opinion, they could use a rebrand.

The name “heat pump” does not highlight the benefit of air conditioning that comes with the technology. Heat pumps are highly efficient because they don’t use energy to create heat. Instead, they use energy to move heat — into the home in the winter and out of it in the summer. They typically produce about three times more energy than they use.

The most common types of heat pumps are air source and ground source. Air-source heat pumps transfer heat from the outside air, even if it isn’t particularly warm outside. Ground-source, or geothermal heat pumps, transfer heat between your home and the ground. With a lower upfront price tag, air-source heat pumps are more common.

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, air-source heat pumps can reduce heating use by about 65% compared to an electric furnace. They come in a variety of styles and configurations to fit different homes. Air-source heat pump technology has been popular in warmer climates for decades. There are now cold climate versions available, too.

HERE’S AN EXPLANATION OF HOW EACH TYPE OPERATES

Ducted air-source heat pumps are ideal for homes with existing ductwork or homes where ductwork can be feasibly added. Replacing an aging central air conditioning system with a heat pump can significantly reduce energy costs.

Ductless heat pumps, or mini-split heat pumps, also draw heat from the outside air. They are a great solution for homes that do not have existing ductwork.

There are many configurations to suit different home layouts. New options on the market allow for coupling with gas or propane backup heat, which might be a good fit for your home. Ductless heat pumps can be a great option for homes with woodstoves. This can help home air quality, heat the home without gathering wood, and provide air conditioning in warmer months.

Geothermal heat pumps transfer heat from the ground to your home. They are even more efficient than air-source heat pumps, reducing energy use by 70% to 80%, according to the DOE. They can also heat water for use in the home, which saves on water-heating costs.

From a user-experience perspective, heat pumps are a little different because the heat from the register doesn’t feel quite as warm as oil, electric, natural gas, or propane heat. That can take a little getting used to, but the efficiency gains and energy savings make the investment worthwhile.

Before buying a heat pump, compare equipment ratings. The higher the rating, the more efficient the equipment. If it is time to replace your heating system, I recommend making the switch to a heat pump to conserve energy and potentially save on your electric bills.

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



▲ Geothermal heat pumps transfer heat from the ground to your home and can reduce home energy use by 70% to 80%. Photo courtesy of WaterFurnace International.



▲ Ductless heat pumps have increased in popularity significantly over the past 10 years. They are a great solution for homes that do not have existing ductwork. Photo courtesy of Bonneville Power Administration.

UNDERSTANDING THE BACKUP HEAT FEATURE

Most heat pump systems are installed with a backup or auxiliary heat for cold weather. This auxiliary heat can be electric coils, gas, propane, or oil, which is usually more expensive to operate. This helps keep your home warm on cold days, but you don’t want to use it if you don’t need it.

For some heat pumps, turning up the thermostat too quickly or too high can trigger the backup heat. Typically, your thermostat will display emergency or auxiliary heat when using this feature. Speak to your HVAC technician to ensure your thermostat is set to maximize efficiency.



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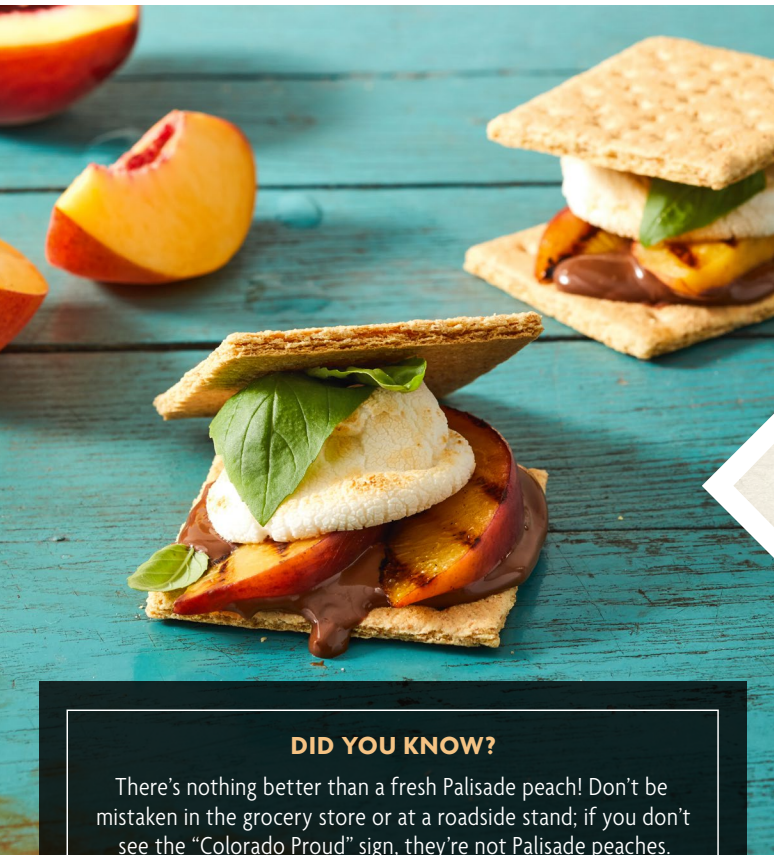
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PEACHY KEEN

Juicy Palisade peaches are a true summer delight. If you don't live close to Palisade, then you look forward to seeing the roadside stands pop up across Colorado this time of year. Growers keep busy selling crates of the flavorful and delicious fruit grown on the Western Slope. And fruit enthusiasts keep busy buying and — more importantly — biting and slurping their way through boxes of the Colorado gems.

Are you looking for something different to make with your precious pile of Palisade peaches this year? Start your day with a delicious reader-submitted recipe for Baked Peach Oatmeal. The Peach Cobbler recipe from the Palisade United Methodist Church women's group will be a hit at your end of summer potluck. Are you lucky enough to have a surplus of fruit? Get extra peachy, and host a cookout made complete with Dan Whalen's recipe for Grilled Peach and Basil S'mores.



DID YOU KNOW?

There's nothing better than a fresh Palisade peach! Don't be mistaken in the grocery store or at a roadside stand; if you don't see the "Colorado Proud" sign, they're not Palisade peaches.

Source: www.coloradoinfo.com

Grilled Peach and Basil S'mores

Makes 12 s'mores

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 peaches, halved and pitted
- 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. kosher salt
- 12 whole graham crackers, broken in half to form 24 squares
- 2 bars (1.55 oz each) milk chocolate, broken into individual pips
- 12 regular marshmallows
- 12 fresh basil leaves

Instructions

- Heat a grill to high or place a grill pan on the stove over high heat. Place a rack in the upper third of the oven and turn the broiler to its highest setting. Preheat for 5 to 10 minutes. Spray a baking sheet with cooking spray.
- Place the peach halves in a medium bowl with the olive oil and salt and toss to coat. Grill them until they're brown and charred with grill marks, about 5 minutes. Flip and grill the other side, 5 minutes more. Transfer the peaches to a plate. When they're cool, slice each peach half into six wedges.
- Place 12 graham cracker squares on the prepared baking sheet. Top each square with two chocolate pips and then two peach wedges. Squish each marshmallow a bit with your hands and place one marshmallow on each s'more. Broil until the marshmallows are golden brown on top, about 3 minutes. Keep a close eye on them. Transfer the s'mores to a serving dish. Top each marshmallow with 1 basil leaf and another graham cracker square. Serve immediately.

Excerpted from *S'MORES!* by Dan Whalen (Workman) ©2019.





Peach Cobbler

Servings: 10-12

Ingredients

- 1 c. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon
- 3 Tbsp. flour
- 8 c. fresh sliced peaches

Topping

- 1 c. sugar
- 1 c. flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/3 c. butter, softened
- 1 egg, beaten

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

In a large bowl, combine first three ingredients, and stir in peaches. Mix well and pour into a 9"x13" baking dish.

Mix together the dry topping ingredients and then add the butter and egg. Stir together with a fork. The mixture will be crumbly.

Sprinkle the topping over the peaches, and bake 45-60 minutes. Serve warm.

Recipe courtesy of Palisade United Methodist Church.



Baked Peach Oatmeal

Servings: 6 for breakfast, 8 for snacking

Ingredients

- 2 c. old fashioned oats (organic preferred)
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. nutmeg (or cloves, if you prefer)
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 Tbsp. flax seed meal or hemp seed hearts (optional)
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 1/2 c. coconut milk or dairy milk
- 2 eggs
- 2 Tbsp. maple syrup or honey (double if you prefer more sweetness)
- 2 Tbsp. melted unsalted butter or coconut oil
- 2 c. diced fresh or slightly thawed frozen peaches
- 1/4 c. sliced almonds

Instructions

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In an 8"x8" inch, 9"x9" inch, or similar size baking dish, combine dry ingredients. In a small bowl, whisk together the vanilla, milk, eggs, sweetener, and butter/oil. Stir the wet ingredients into the dry, then gently stir in the peaches and almonds. Bake 35-40 minutes. Serve warm with a splash of milk for breakfast, or chill and cut into bars for snacking.

Recipe courtesy of Lisa Padgett, Crawford, DMEA member.

CULTIVATING FUTURE LEADERS THROUGH EDUCATION

BY SONI BROWN STAFF WRITER, CSU PUEBLO

EDITOR'S NOTE: Your local electric co-op operates on the same set of values and core principles as other cooperatives worldwide. These principles are foundational to the way your electric co-op conducts business; they're what set it apart from other utilities. A key cooperative principle is *Education, Training, and Information*. Co-ops believe that education helps everyone effectively contribute to the development of the local community and cooperative. Read below to learn how a Colorado education program promotes this cooperative principle in rural areas of the state.

The embrace between [Teagan Joseph and her guide dog Astro](#) said it all. After years of leadership, countless miles traveled around the state, and a stop at Colorado State University Pueblo, this was it — their final Colorado FFA Convention.

Excited teens wearing the iconic navy-blue corduroy jackets embroidered with the names of Colorado towns descended on the CSU Pueblo campus in early June; but a bittersweet farewell lingered in the air.

For Joseph, this year's gathering marked the culmination of a five-year journey. She started as an Eaton chapter member, then became an officer, then assumed statewide leadership, culminating in a year living at CSU's Spur Campus with nine fellow FFA Colorado officers. There, they accessed personal and professional development training in partnership with faculty from CSU's College of Agricultural Sciences.

EMPOWERING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGRICULTURAL LEADERS

Since her diagnosis of a rare, progressive eye disease called Leber congenital amaurosis, Joseph refused to let her circumstances define her. Instead, she poured energy into a burgeoning country music career while cultivating motivational speaking skills and a passion for agriculture. With her constant companion Astro, she navigated conferences, chapter visits, and farms.

As the former FFA Colorado president, Joseph closed the conference by encouraging attendees to be kind and fair in all their dealings. Later, in a small hospitality room, Joseph teared up as former FFA Colorado Executive Director and State Advisor Kenton Ochsner addressed her and the other young leaders. He said Teagan's spirit and grit embody what it means to be an FFA member and true farmer.

As Joseph prepared to hand over the reins of leadership, setting aside the blue jacket, she knew the impact of her journey would reverberate for years to come.



▲ Former FFA Colorado State President Teagan Joseph and her guide dog Astro.

“It’s the most bittersweet thing ever,” she said. “I’m going to miss putting this on,” indicating her navy-blue jacket. “But now I get to put on a blazer that is only for alumni.”

CSU PUEBLO TAILORS EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

For the past five years, CSU Pueblo has hosted the Colorado FFA Convention. The university is under contract to host the event for another four years, leading up to the conference’s 100th anniversary celebration.

“We love having it here on the CSU Pueblo campus,” said Jacob Walter, associate director of statewide initiatives. “We get to see small schools compete against larger schools for state titles, which is



CSU Pueblo hosts the Colorado FFA Convention in June.
Photo by Julianna Cervi.

unheard of in high school competitions. Plus, this is a terrific opportunity to celebrate young leadership from around the state. This is CSU Pueblo's opportunity to engage, give back, highlight our campus, and support our rural students and FFA programs in urban schools."

More than 1,000 student farmers and their supporters converge every June on the Massari Arena on the CSU Pueblo campus. This year, they were filled with happiness and excitement — the way teenagers are when they are away from home and with friends. In between opening remarks, members of the outgoing state executive team performed Disney-inspired segue sketches, giving way to *Hunger Games* jokes (though the subtext of teenagers battling to the death for survival was lost on the excited crowd). Amid the frivolity, guest speakers amplified messages taken from the FFA creed and reminded attendees that the U.S. needs more farmers. The audience applauded and chanted impromptu cheers, excited to hear that message.

Hawley Young, rural outreach coordinator at CSU Pueblo, understands the university's role in supporting rural communities extends far beyond the conference. "We are really about increasing access to rural communities, particularly in southeastern Colorado, as that is our backyard and somewhat of a higher education desert."

She works with various stakeholders to assess workforce needs in the area and helps tailor the educational offerings to the workforce using CSU Pueblo's extended studies programs.

THE FUTURE OF FARMING: INSPIRATION AND OPPORTUNITY

FFA teenagers at CSU Pueblo seemed optimistic about their agricultural pursuits knowing they can rely on the university and FFA for ongoing professional development classes.

For first-time attendee Alene Ford, a tenth grader from Eaton High School and an aspiring large-animal veterinarian, the confer-



FFA Colorado members in their iconic blue blazers make new friends during the summer convention. Photo by Julianna Cervi.

ence represented a pivotal moment in her journey. While access to land and capital can be challenging for young farmers, groups like FFA give Ford invaluable networking opportunities and inspiration — both of which can be hard to find in small towns.

Hallie Beck, another first-timer with aspirations of becoming a florist, echoed the sentiment. "FFA has allowed me to explore my passion for horticulture and entrepreneurship in ways I never imagined," she said. "The support and resources available through this organization are remarkable."

Braedyn Green, a former FFA officer and aspiring rancher from Fruita, sees the FFA conference as a straightforward way to shore up leadership skills while gaining industry knowledge. Green comes from a family of ranchers and knows he'll need to be equipped to tackle the challenges of rural life. Green added that while all that is important, the conference is also fun.

"I've been an officer a few times, and I really enjoy it," said Green. "I feel it gives you a lot of leadership training, and it's nice to meet so many people in Pueblo."

As the conference ended, the seeds of inspiration and leadership were firmly planted in the minds of the next generation of farmers. This FFA Colorado gathering stood as a testament to the need for agricultural education and the cooperative partnership between CSU Pueblo and the rural communities it serves.



[Hosting the Colorado FFA Convention] is CSU Pueblo's opportunity to engage, give back, highlight our campus, and support our rural students and FFA programs in urban schools."

—Jacob Walter, CSU Pueblo



I've always loved what I do, restoring power to people's homes. But to build a power line to someone who has never had power at their home is something special."

— Mountain Parks Electric
Apprentice Lineman Isiah Herod



Building a Brighter Future

Volunteer Linecrews Light Up Navajo Nation

BY KYLEE COLEMAN

Rock formations dot the beautiful landscape on the remote drive to Chinle, Arizona, along Highway 191. Mesas, buttes, and red chimney-shaped pillars stand tall and provide landmarks across Navajo Nation.

Spanning more than 27,000 square miles across the southwestern United States, Navajo Nation covers land in Arizona, New Mexico, and Utah. The elevation ranges from 6,000 to 7,000 feet above sea level, and the area can experience heavy winters from November to April.

Out of approximately 400,000 Navajo citizens, about 186,500 live on Navajo Nation. More than 13,000 families living

on Navajo Nation do not have basic access to electricity at home. Refrigeration of fresh food is a constant challenge. Thousands of families haul water at least three times each week — often driving more than 20 miles one way. And thousands more rely on chopped wood and coal for heating and cooking.

Light Up Navajo is an initiative to change those statistics and to change people's lives. It was started by the Navajo Tribal Utility Authority and is a partnership with the American Public Power Association. Since 2008, NTUA has connected 7,778 families' homes to receive electricity. And as of June 20, 2024, the homes of 125 more Navajo families have

been connected to the grid for the first time. The goal of 2024's Light Up Navajo V is to connect at least 150 homes. To achieve this, 250 electric lineworkers from more than 40 utilities across 16 states volunteered to help connect homes to the grid.

In June and July, seven Colorado electric co-ops were invited to Navajo Nation areas including Chinle, Fort Defiance, Kayenta, Dilkon, Tuba City, and Shiprock. The volunteer crews traveled to assist Navajo Tribal Utility Authority crews to set poles, string power lines, and install electric meters at homes.

◀ Large photo: The beautiful landscape on the drive to Chinle, Arizona. Small photos left to right: Mountain Parks Electric Apprentice Lineman Isiah Herod installs a brand-new electric meter and flips the breaker to electrify a home. A Colorado linecrew uses a digger derrick to dig a hole for a power pole. Isiah greets a family whose home is newly electrified. *Photos by Kylee Coleman*

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

NTUA's Chinle district is in central Navajo Nation and has the second-largest NTUA customer base.

Janice Harvey leads the project team at the Chinle district office. She explained that the biggest impact of the LUN initiative is that kids are getting access to charge their laptops for school. At the start of the pandemic, she continued, NTUA's motivation was helping schoolkids switch to remote learning. "Some kids didn't have electricity in the home, and they had a bigger challenge in learning," Janice said. "They didn't have Wi-Fi that they could connect to for virtual learning. It set our kids back, and there was a lot of learning lost during that time." Early in the pandemic, NTUA set up hot spots at district offices for schoolkids, so they could come sit outside and use the Wi-Fi for school.

Some NTUA applicants have been waiting years for electricity. Challenges in getting electricity to these homes and families include infrastructure limitations, supply chain issues, and siting and permitting with archaeological and environmental considerations.

"The process to get electric not only involves NTUA," Janice said. "When customers come in to apply, they've done a lot of prep work obtaining their home-site lease and building their structures. We don't have the resources of archaeologists, we don't have the resources of environmentalists or biologists, so we have to find those contractors outside of Navajo Nation."

After a customer applies, Janice said NTUA has to acquire a service line agreement, which is an approval from the Navajo Nation Land Department to build infrastructure.

This legwork can be extremely time consuming. But the positive impact when people finally get electricity is immeasurable. They gain food refrigeration, light at night, electric cooking, and home heating and cooling. Janice, who has been with NTUA for eight years, explained that when families get electricity at their homes, it also opens the door to getting access to other utilities, including water and broadband.

MELISSA'S HOUSE

Melissa bought her home one year ago and has waited that long to get it connected to the grid. For the past year, she and her kids — Carter and Malia — have lived with Melissa's parents.

Back in Chinle in June, a linecrew from Granby-based Mountain Parks Electric got to work early one morning to set a power pole. Working like a game of connect-the-dots, by midmorning they had set a second pole about 100 yards down the red dirt road to connect the power line to the pole that was already placed next to the home.

After a lunch break — and as temperatures reached 90 degrees — the crew returned to connect the new poles and power lines to the transmission lines running along the highway at the end of the driveway.

Around 4 p.m., Mountain Parks Electric Apprentice Lineman Isiah Herod installed the home's electric meter and flipped the breaker. NTUA Crew Foreman Julius Yazzie knocked on the door of the home and went inside to make sure everything was in working order and that electricity was flowing to outlets and appliances.

The family came outside with bright smiles on their faces.

Melissa invited the crew to cool off with Popsicles, cold drinks, and fruit from the cooler in the back of her truck. Carter talked about his recent baseball game, and Malia took it all in. Melissa, a single mom who works at a Head Start preschool one hour away, said she was excited to start moving into the newly electrified house that weekend.

The crew from Mountain Parks Electric served six families during their volunteer



▶ Malia hands out Popsicles to the Colorado linecrew who helped bring electricity to her family's home.



“

This was four and a half years in the making, and I'm really glad that you guys took time away from your family and home to come help us and to be with us for a while. From my family, my home, my husband, my grandma, my grandpa, I really thank each and every one of you guys for doing this for me, for my community, my people.

— Elaine

▲ A Colorado linecrew prepares a power pole before it is set into the ground in Chinle, Arizona, in June.

week and brought the gift of electricity. The crew benefited from the experience, too. “It was really humbling,” Isiah said. “I’ve always loved what I do, restoring power to people’s homes. But to build a power line to someone who has never had power at their home is something special.”

GATHERING IN APPRECIATION

The evening Melissa’s house was connected, she and the other NTUA customers whose homes were also connected to the grid that week gathered for fellowship and a steak dinner cooked and served by NTUA’s Chinle district staff.

Janice facilitated the dinner and was proud to announce that during the first five weeks of LUN V, crews in Chinle completed 26,259 feet of electric line, which equates to 4.97 miles. “We’re glad that we got help from volunteers to work alongside our own crews to help extend

lines to our customers,” Janice said.

MPE Crew Foreman Chase Gaines reflected on his time working in Chinle. “We often take for granted the amenities that we have living where we do,” he said. Chase grew up near Navajo Nation in New Mexico and noticed all the towns close to the highway had power. But traveling to Chinle, he was surprised to learn how many people are still without power. “I guess I never paid attention to how many homes there could be close to town that didn’t have power lines built to them — not to mention all the people who live off the beaten path.”

MPE Apprentice Lineman Bryce Poppe said, “The Light Up Navajo experience was very rewarding. I hope I get the opportunity to go back again.”

At the dinner, the new NTUA customers each had an opportunity to thank the crews

in person. There were tears of joy and gratitude all around the room as people explained what getting electricity at their home means to them.

ELAINE

“I’m originally from Window Rock. I was raised without electricity, without running water. It made me who I am today. I had to do homework and beat the sun to get things done. I was fine with that. I was happy with that. It made me a strong, tough woman and kept me out of a lot of trouble.

But once I had my kids, it was tough. We got our home — a single-wide trailer — when I was pregnant with our son. The home was delivered during COVID time, and so there was no one working on anything. Everything came to a halt — our entire world came to a halt.



Elaine and her kids, Reon Jr., Kelsey, and Jaxson, celebrate getting electricity.



Emma, a new NTUA customer.

We learned how to deal with it. The hard part for me was watching my kids endure the summer heat and layering them up with clothes during winter because we didn't have electricity. We had a woodstove, and I am really appreciative of the lifestyle that we lived for a while. It's a beautiful home, but we couldn't enjoy the luxuries of watching TV or having a refrigerator.

We could have gone elsewhere. We could have chosen somewhere else to live, like in the city or closer to town. But I really wanted to preserve our culture, our way of life, by raising our kids next to the sheep corral, the horse corral. I wanted them to experience living on Navajo Nation, and I didn't want to leave. It's a beautiful place.

Once I saw you coming through our gates earlier this week, my heart was really, really pounding. I was really happy putting up the

welcome signs for you to let you know you were in the right place.

This was four and a half years in the making, and I'm really glad that you guys took time away from your family and home to come help us and to be with us for a while. From my family, my home, my husband, my grandma, my grandpa, I thank each and every one of you guys for doing this for me, for my community, my people. If it wasn't for your help, we would have had to wait a little bit longer.

After the crew left, my kids were so excited and freaking out over the refrigerator. They were turning off the lights all over the home.

My relatives came up right after you guys left to come celebrate with us. My sister went to the grocery store, and she packed our refrigerator with meat and food that we

can finally have and keep cold — things that a lot of people take for granted.

You really helped our dreams come true, and I really appreciate that. Thank you for everything, for bringing us together and giving us a reason to celebrate."

EMMA

"I was so glad that you guys came. It was a long time coming. I feel so sad for my parents, that they didn't get to experience this, especially during the harsh wintertime. Sometimes the snow was up to 3 feet. We always had sheep, and that was the livelihood of my grandparents and parents. My dad was a hard worker. I remember snow frozen to his eyelashes, and I don't know how he could see coming back home from taking care of the cattle and horses. I remember my mom trying to finish a rug in the wee hours of the morning, weaving with



Left to right: Linemen Isiah Herod, Daylon Frentress, Bryce Poppe, and Chase Gains with Melissa and her kids, Carter and Malia.

kerosene lamps on both sides. Their life was hard.

They never complained. But my mom would always say, ‘This kind of life is hard, so you, my children, I want you to go to school. Get an education. Don’t just stop at high school. Go on to college.’ My mom wanted us to become somebody: teachers, doctors, administrators. I was a longtime educator. I taught for 37 years, and I retired three years ago. We live in these teachers’ houses all these years, and then when it comes to retire, we don’t have a place. But I wanted to come back, even though my mom discouraged us from living that hard life. If she could do it, I can do it.

I’m so thankful for the volunteers and NTUA workers who are behind all of this. Thank you.”

MELISSA

“I’m a single parent; it’s just us three. Thank you guys, the Colorado crew. Thank you, thank you. Thanks for taking time to come down.

Growing up, my grandparents always taught me and my siblings — if you can get a house, stand on your own two feet, light up your own fire, then you’ve done something for you and your family.

It’s really happening for us. We’re going to be forever grateful.

I purchased my house last year and was trying to take care of my family. Now my kids have electricity. We are planning to move in this weekend.

This is the highlight of my year. We have a working stove and a refrigerator. As soon as everyone left this afternoon, my kids went to the freezer to open it and to stick their heads in. They were amazed that it was still cold.”

A GCEA linecrew travels to Chinle, Arizona, near the end of June to help electrify homes as part of the Light Up Navajo V initiative. Left to right: Kevin Fox, Justin Hulick, Mike Pendency, Zach Bever, and Larry (homeowner). Photo by Benthall Begay, Navajo Tribal Utility Authority.



Left to right: NTUA linemen Leroy and Robert, Mountain View Electric Association CEO Ruth Marks, and MVEA linecrew members Levi Suarez, Jon Weitz, John Webb, and Nathan Ortiz.

“ In early July, I traveled with the Mountain View Electric Association linecrew to Navajo Nation where we spent the better part of two days bringing power to one family. What a meaningful experience for the MVEA employees and myself to be a part of. It was incredibly fulfilling to see the impact that providing a life-changing service such as electricity can have on a family. We’ve enjoyed lighting, refrigeration, heating/cooling, and entertainment options our whole lives and MVEA is proud to have played a small role in bringing these opportunities to others. We’ve been able to share this experience with the MVEA team back home in Colorado as an example of why the work we do matters in our community. Light Up Navajo is definitely a great example of the cooperative spirit at work.

- MVEA CEO Ruth Marks





Volunteer linecrews from seven Colorado electric cooperatives traveled to Arizona to participate in **Light Up Navajo V**.

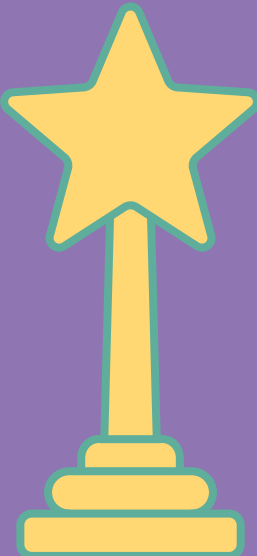
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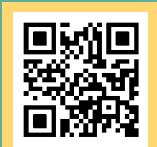
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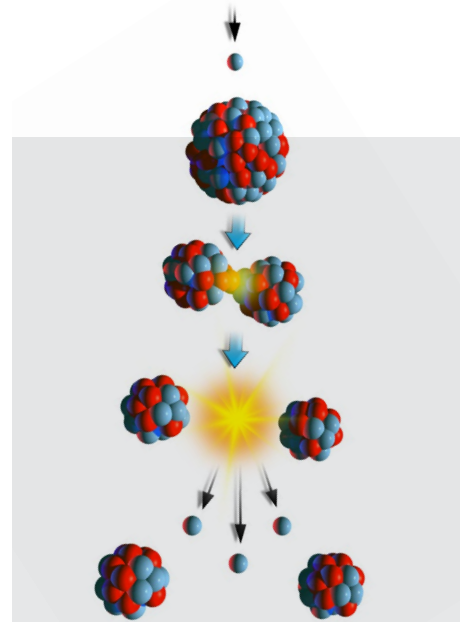
The United States Department of Energy's Geothermal Technologies Office announced a funding opportunity to support geothermal energy studies and advancements. The mid-June announcement stated the GTO will provide up to \$7 million to develop regional grid models that will assess how geothermal power can support the energy transition.

The work developed through the funding opportunity will also address the challenge of grid stability. The GTO funding will support studies on how geothermal power can support and stabilize the grid as it incorporates higher amounts of variable renewable energy sources.

Geothermal energy has the potential to provide firm, flexible, renewable power to more than 65 million homes across the U.S.

The Colorado Energy Office also announced \$7.7 million in grant awards to advance the use of geothermal energy across Colorado. According to a CEO press release, geothermal energy has applications across sectors, providing extremely efficient, zero-emissions building heating and cooling and reliable clean electricity, regardless of weather conditions. Colorado's Geothermal Energy Grant Program, authorized by [House Bill 22-1381 Colorado Energy Office Geothermal Energy Grant Program](#), creates grants that support the use of zero-emission geothermal energy for electricity generation and space/water heating and cooling in homes, businesses, and communities. Projects in rural communities will explore thermal energy networks to enhance community resilience, support affordable housing development, upgrade snowmelt systems, and electrify a regional airport.

CEO Executive Director Will Toor said, "We couldn't be more excited to get these projects off the ground and continue leading the nation in geothermal technology advancement, while also supporting good-paying jobs for Colorado's energy workforce."



SIGNED BIPARTISAN ACT ADVANCES NUCLEAR ENERGY

On July 9, the Accelerating Deployment of Versatile, Advanced Nuclear for Clean Energy Act was signed into law. This bipartisan legislation will advance the future of nuclear energy in the United States. The Senate voted to pass Bill S.870 in June.

Nuclear energy is created in a process of fission when uranium atoms are split. Fission releases heat, which creates steam, which is then used to turn a steam turbine that's connected to an electric generator. According to the EPA, nuclear reactors currently generate approximately 20% of all the electricity used in the United States.

The ADVANCE Act aims to preserve existing nuclear energy through modernizing outdated rules that restrict international investment. It will also support development and deployment of new nuclear energy technologies with a multistep process, including reducing regulatory costs; strengthening the country's nuclear energy fuel cycle and supply chain infrastructure; and improving the Nuclear Regulatory Commission's resources and efficiency.

There are currently no operating nuclear reactors or NRC-licensed fuel cycle facilities located in Colorado.

Safety Tip

Interested in buying a Level 2 charger for your electric vehicle? Have the charger installed by a qualified licensed contractor. Charging stations that draw more power than your home can handle or those that are not wired correctly can overheat and cause a fire.



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ELECTRIFIED AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT

BY JENNAH DENNEY

The electrification trend in agricultural equipment has gained momentum in recent years as farmers increasingly embrace electric vehicles and machinery. This shift offers numerous advantages, including reduced carbon emissions, lower operating costs, improved energy efficiency, and quieter operation.

Smaller electric equipment, such as irrigation systems and utility vehicles, are becoming increasingly popular. Many farmers are now using electric motors in place of older, inefficient diesel irrigation motors for farm irrigation.

Larger agricultural equipment can be difficult to replace with electric alternatives due to their weight. In response, manufacturers are developing tractors that are more compact and lower in weight that feature battery-powered options. The compact and lighter design of these tractors allow for better maneuverability in smaller farming spaces, improving efficiency and productivity in the field. For example, a farmer who owns an orchard in Palisade may opt for a compact electric tractor or vehicle instead of a larger traditional one. The smaller size and electric power allow the farmer to easily navigate between rows of trees without causing damage to the delicate fruit or soil, ultimately increasing the yield and reducing maintenance costs.

In addition to smaller equipment, drones equipped with electric agricultural technology are proving to be valuable in many cases. Electric drones provide farmers with the ability to monitor crops, perform precision spraying, and even participate in crop pollination. Equipped with specialized sensors and cameras, these drones capture high-resolution imagery to help farmers make informed decisions about crop management. The versatility and cost-effectiveness of electric drones make them a valuable tool for optimizing crop health, detecting pests, and enhancing irrigation practices.

Electric agricultural equipment can be used in various types of farming operations

Here are some common types of farming operations that benefit from electrified agricultural equipment.

Crop farming: Electric equipment such as tractors, sprayers, and harvesters are used in crop farming operations for tasks like plowing, planting, spraying pesticides, drying, and harvesting crops.

Livestock farming: Electric equipment can be used in livestock farming for tasks such as feeding, milking, and waste management.

Vineyards and orchards: Electric pruning equipment can be used in vineyards and orchards for precision pruning of grapevines, fruit trees, and bushes.

Greenhouses and nursery operations: Electric equipment such as tillers, seeders, and potting machines are often used in greenhouse and nursery operations for efficient soil preparation, seeding, and transplanting.

Organic farming: Electrified agricultural equipment is also used in organic farming operations, with a focus on sustainability and environmentally friendly practices. Electric tools and equipment help minimize the use of fossil fuels and reduce emissions.

Benefits of electrified ag equipment

Electrified agricultural equipment offers several benefits beyond reducing carbon emissions.

Electric drivetrains are simpler and easier to maintain compared to traditional tractors, resulting in lower maintenance costs. Additionally, electric equipment is more energy efficient, converting a higher percentage of electrical energy into usable work.

Electricity flowing through batteries and electric motors is more efficient than diesel being delivered to farms, moved into tanks, and burned in diesel engines. As battery technology continues to advance, further improvements in electric farming equipment are expected.

This efficiency leads to reduced energy consumption and lower operating costs for farmers. Additionally, the quieter operation of electric equipment minimizes disruptions to nearby communities, livestock, and wildlife, making it ideal for residential areas or sensitive environments.

Many farmers are now using electric motors in place of older, inefficient diesel irrigation motors for farm irrigation. *Photo courtesy of Pixabay.*



In 2017, John Deere showcased the first, fully battery-powered tractor. *Photo courtesy of John Deere.*

Considerations for farmers

When considering electrified equipment, farmers should evaluate their specific needs, including power requirements and operational tasks. Farmers should work with their local electric cooperative to assess the farm's power supply capacity to ensure it can handle the additional load without causing issues. By conducting a thorough analysis of their unique needs and goals, farmers can determine if adopting electrified agricultural equipment is a suitable and advantageous option.

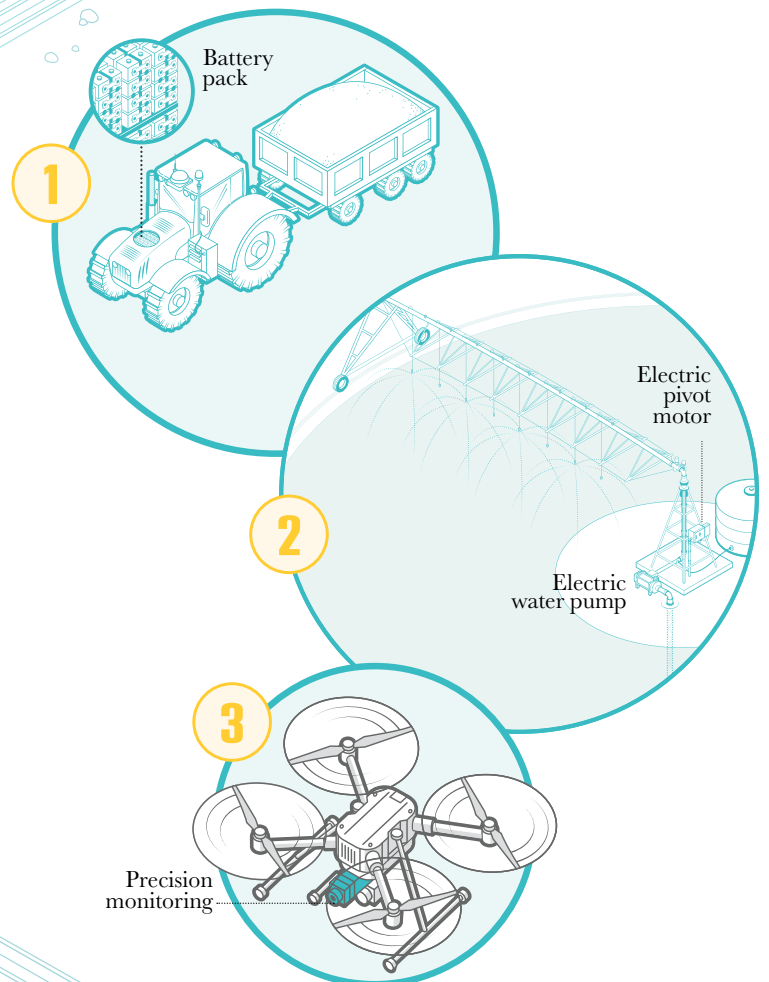
The electrification of agricultural equipment presents a promising future for farmers. By embracing electric vehicles, machinery, and drones, farmers can improve operational efficiency and benefit from cost savings in the long run.

Jannah Denney writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

THE FUTURE OF ELECTRIFIED AG

Many farmers are making the transition from gas-powered equipment to electric models. Electric-powered farming equipment offers lower operating costs, improved efficiency and quieter operation. Here are a few ways the electrification trend is gaining momentum on the farm.

- 1 **Electric tractors** show promise for increased efficiency and reduced maintenance.
- 2 **Electric motors for irrigation** are more efficient than diesel motors and result in greater cost savings for farmers.
- 3 **Drones equipped with electric agricultural technology** make them a valuable tool for optimizing crop health, detecting pests and enhancing irrigation practices.





Palisade Peaches

and Planting Your Own Fruit Trees

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

I learned at a young age that the best peaches in the world are grown in Palisade. Every August our family hit the road to continue our exploration of the West. Every time we'd pass through Palisade, we would load the car with bushels of fresh peaches.

After a brief hiatus, Palisade is bringing back an old tradition by hosting the 56th Annual Peach Festival at Riverbend Park. The festival kicks off 10 days of fun with an ice cream social and street dance August 6. Peach themed activities include a parade, 5k fun run, and orchard tours. The celebration culminates August 16–17 with live music, historical talks, vendors, live chef demos, and assorted family activities.

Second only to peaches from Palisade, were peaches from my grandmother's trees in Denver. I don't know what varieties she grew (though I suspect they included Elberta seedlings from Palisade) or when they were planted, but the trees were big enough to climb and they bore abundant fruit. Other varieties recommended for Colorado include Haven, Polly, Reliance, Hale Haven, and Ranger. Today, most peach varieties are self-pollinating, but planting a different variety within 100 feet can

improve the fruit set.

Although the Western Slope's climate may be more amenable to growing peaches, growers across the state can claim success. Their biggest challenges include spring snowstorms (which always seem to happen when trees are loaded with blossoms), summer hailstorms (which seem to happen when trees are loaded with fruit), and strong winds. Solutions include planting trees in sunny, but sheltered, areas with well-drained, nitrogen-rich soil with a pH of 6.5 to 7.0. Make sure to watch for pests and prune regularly to encourage larger, sweeter fruit.

Peach trees are relatively easy to maintain. You can plant them any time, although fall plantings are most successful. As trees enter dormancy, they focus energy on roots rather than foliage and fruit, which allows them to overcome transplant shock.

The sun is intense during Colorado's dry winters. Wrapping newly planted tree trunks protects bark from burning and splitting. Prevent roots from freeze-drying with one to two monthly waterings.

Pruning provides adequate sunlight, air circulation, and a stable structure to prevent branches from breaking under the heavy

load of ripened fruit. Trees need energy to produce fruit, so apply a root stimulator the first two years, then switch to regular low-nitrogen fertilizer.

It's especially important to watch for pests the first few years. Borers usually attack recent transplants and trees weakened by drought, injury, or poor soil and root systems. Immature borer larvae chew beneath bark of the lower trunk and roots. Their presence is revealed mid- to late-spring by wet spots or sap oozing out of the bark. You can apply insecticides, such as permethrin, to the lower trunk when eggs are being laid. Pesticides should not be applied fewer than 20 days before harvest.

Good tree management is the best way to prevent pests. With good care, you'll find the only thing better than a Palisade peach is one you pluck from a tree growing in your yard.


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

Find Palisade peach recipes on Pages 12-13!



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Dennis E. Smith
NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY

Right Place, Right Time

BY DENNIS E. SMITH | OUTDOORS@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

More years ago than I care to remember, I signed up for an outdoor photography class sponsored by the then Colorado Division of Wildlife. Two well-known Colorado wildlife/conservation photographers conducted three nights of classroom instruction covering fundamental camera operations — exposure, composition, lighting basics, and so on. That was followed by a daylong field trip to the Denver Zoo to photograph live animals, then an overnight expedition to Rocky Mountain National Park to address landscape, wildflower, and macro photography.

The instructors stressed the fact that great photographs are made, not taken, and while good equipment, skill, and technique are obviously necessary, the difference between a ho-hum wildlife shot and a great one often relies more on preparation, timing, and attention to detail than all the others combined. Okay, and sometimes pure luck.

Surprisingly perhaps, fancy equipment may be the least important. After all, some amazing photographs are made with cellphones and inexpensive point-and-shoot

cameras. Make no mistake, high-quality lenses and camera bodies can make things easier, but they can be pricey and carry learning curves of their own.

Preparation, timing, and attention to detail can be much more critical than you think. Intentionally finding a specific animal to photograph requires specialized knowledge of their individual habits, habitat, food sources, seasonal behavior traits, migration routes, and how all of those elements change through the year and even from day to day. The same goes for songbirds, shorebirds, waterfowl, game birds, or birds of prey. Research and scouting are crucial if you want to find, let's say, a wood duck drake in mating plumage, a buck deer in velvet, a cow elk with a calf, or a bull in rut. When do the pasqueflowers bloom in Rocky Mountain National Park — and where? What time do you have to be there to catch the best light? What kind of lens are you going to use to shoot it?

And timing is everything. Herbert Keppler, the world-famous photo magazine publisher once remarked: “f8, and be there.” Being there at precisely the right time with

your camera ready is essential and requires planning. Here's a case in point: I'd been shooting photographs of a certain bull elk in Rocky Mountain National Park for more than five years, but despite hundreds of shots of him, I'd never gotten quite the one I had envisioned. He sometimes frequented an alder stand that framed a small patch of green grass surrounded by a larger circle of gold grasses that kind of fluoresced when struck by the late day sun. I'd run up there every September afternoon whenever I had the chance hoping that one day he'd walk into that Winner's Circle, as I came to call it. Then, late one afternoon, September 23, 2020, he did exactly that, and I was there with my camera at the ready. Adding a further stroke of luck, he bugled, and I had my shot.

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



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   READERS' PHOTOS

 FUNNY STORIES



WINNER: Dearle Ricker and friends — all Empire Electric Association members — bring the magazine on a day hike on the Colorado Trail near Rico.



The Martinez family — Poudre Valley REA members — takes a break from sightseeing at the Connecticut State Capitol to snap a photo with the magazine.



Lan Nguyen, a Mountain View Electric Association member, brings CCL to Portland, Maine, near Acadia National Park.



San Isabel Electric member **Carrie Washington** takes a photo of her fiance, **Cesar**, holding the magazine at Ohme Gardens overlooking Wenatchee, Washington.



Betty Donahoo moved to southern Colorado in her early 20s and has been an Empire Electric Association customer for many years. She will be 100 years old in October and still enjoys reading the magazine.



When my grandchildren, 6-year-old Ella and 5-year-old twins Matthew and Evie, fall or trip on a toy and complain about it to their mom and dad, they're told they shouldn't leave their toys where they can trip and fall on them.

While on a road trip to Kansas, the family stopped for lunch. Matthew exited the van and promptly stumbled into the car parked next to them. He proclaimed, "They shouldn't have left that there!"

Marilee Bennett, Hugo
K.C. Electric Association member

My mother-in-law and I were shopping on a weekend, driving between department stores with my two sons, ages 2 and 10. We pulled into a parking space, and as the car stopped, my recently potty-trained 2-year-old piped up, "Mom, I have to go to the bathroom!" As an automatic response, I replied that he would have to hold it for a little while. His immediate reply was, "No handles." I found out with him, he definitely took my words literally!

Genevieve Blecha, Grand Junction
Grand Valley Power member

My almost 7-year-old grandson Aiden recently took a trip to New York.

When I asked how his vacation went, he said, "It was great! I went to the Statue of Liberty, Freedom Towers, Central Park, and the Empire State Building. Then I got to ride a really big roller coaster at Cedar Point."

I said, "Wow, that sounds awesome! What was your favorite part?"

Aiden replied, "There was a tour bus with a bathroom in it, and I got to pee while it was driving down the road!"

Gail Decker, Pueblo
San Isabel Electric member

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

Don't forget to pack 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. See all the submitted photos on our Facebook page @COCountryLife.

FRESH AND FAST FAMILY DINNERS

BY GAYLENE GARCIA GRANGER

“Back to school” oftentimes means back to stress when it comes to regular meal planning for your family. Even if your kitchen is fully stocked with the latest and greatest handy gadgets — *I see you*, *Instant Pot* — we are often left with that ubiquitous nagging question of “What’s for dinner tonight?” Well, your choices in locally produced options, some delivered right to your doorstep, have gotten a lot better.



Prefare Gourmet Meal Kits — Denver Metro corridor, Fort Collins to Castle Rock, Evergreen, and Golden

Prefare Gourmet Meal Kits will be your budget-friendly go-to service if time is also of the essence. Yes, they offer amazing choices of chef-prepped meat, fish, and vegetarian options, including deluxe chicken ranch burgers with Parmesan fries and smothered chili rellenos for as little as \$10 per serving. But what really sets Prefare apart is just how quick they are to prepare — how does less than 15 minutes sound? When you’re carpooling kids from practice and coming home late, the time between walking in the door and feeding a hungry family can feel incredibly harried and stressful. Having a quick and delicious dinner plan is key. The subscription is so simple. Just sign up, order one week ahead from its expansive menu, and your box is delivered the next week. So simple! And you can cancel anytime. Find delicious options and the delivery area at prefaremeals.com.



RollinGreens plant-based on-the-go meals — your local supermarket

For super busy vegans who don’t have the time to cook, Boulder-based RollinGreens has introduced innovative plant-based on-the-go meals that you can keep stocked in your pantry. As seen on *Shark Tank*, the plant-based protein is primarily made from peas and shiitake mushrooms, making it free from soy, nut, wheat, and gluten. In fact, RollinGreens boasts that its products completely lack “ingredients you can’t pronounce.” RollinGreens is a grassroots, family-owned company that began as a simple food truck. The husband and wife team of Ryan and Lindsey Cunningham pioneered the acclaimed School of Natural Cookery and have since received numerous accolades and national recognition.

Now, you can find RollinGreens online at rollinggreens.com and at most local King Soopers stores or at Walmart. They come in popular varieties like chic’ken fajita, me’eat Mexican chili bowls, and chic’ken teriyaki.

The best part of this clean and easy-to-pack time-saver is its simplicity: If you can boil water, you can make these meals.



Spade and Spoon fresh meal kits — Denver and Front Range

Spade and Spoon offers fresh meals of locally sourced meats and produce. Unlike other subscription meal boxes that are shipped across country, these are literally packed the day they are sent. No more worrying that your meal is sitting somewhere in transit for days at a time. At Spade and Spoon, you can order amazing varieties of family-sized meals, including pollo asado burritos that feed up to four people, produce-only boxes when you just need to replenish your fresh ingredients, or even overnight waffles with strawberries and cream if you’re craving a decadent breakfast.

We love that Spade and Spoon caters to any type of diet you may have. One peek at their menu on spadespoon.com and you’ll see traditional options along with vegan, gluten-free, and dairy-free meals. If you’ve got a dietary restrictive eater in the house, this is the meal subscription for you.





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Photo by Rosita Moglia, a Grand Valley Power member.



It's time to share your best photos for the annual *Colorado Country Life* photo contest.

This year's photo contest theme is Home Sweet Home Colorado. We're asking you to share your photos of what makes Colorado "home." Is it the beautiful views? Is it the people or pets in your life? Maybe it's your favorite diner on Main Street, or something that makes your house your home.

2025 Categories

- Hometown Views
- My Home
- Nature's Homes
- The Homestead

Cash prizes

- \$150 first place
- \$75 second place
- \$50 third place

Winning tips

1. Use the highest-resolution setting on your digital camera.
2. Capture scenes full of vivid color.
3. Make us feel something with your photo (awe, laughter).



Things to keep in mind

- Each person may submit up to two photos per category.
- Digital JPEG photos only.
- Photos must be at least 300 ppi at 8" x 10".
- All vertical photos will be considered for the cover photo. If you have a photo you think will make the perfect cover of *CCL*, it must be at least 300 ppi at 9" wide x 13" tall.
- Winners will be announced and published early 2025.
- The contest is open for entries through Saturday, Nov. 30.

Visit www.coloradocountrylife.coop/2025photocontest for full rules and to enter. Or scan the QR code with your smartphone to go directly to the entry form on our website.