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Out With the Old ...

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR

As we near the end of 2024, I think it's timely to mention that *Colorado Country Life* magazine celebrates the completion of its 55th year of production. After spending a couple decades as a newspaper — *Colorado Rural Electric News* — this publication by your electric co-op took on a new look, new format, and an updated presentation as a magazine in 1970. Since then, *CCL* has been through many, many changes.

Regardless of its name and appearance, the goals remain the same: to share the electric co-op story, the stories of co-op members, electric industry news, electrical safety, energy efficiency information, and engaging and unique Colorado lifestyle content.

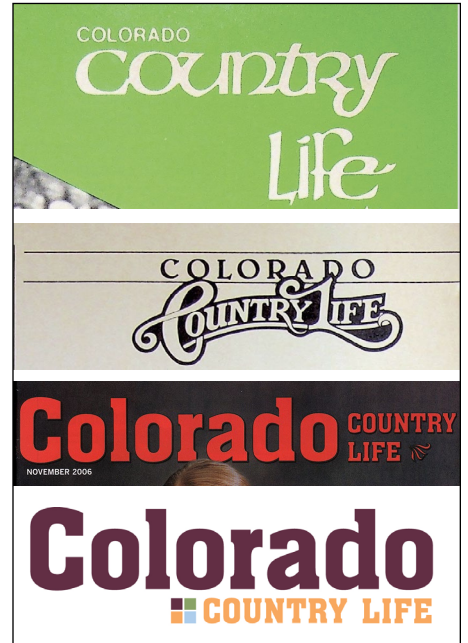
I'm excited to share that *CCL* will take on a new look and feel in 2025. You will still get the same quality of content you have come to trust and enjoy each month. Some of the current sections are going away, some will simply look different, and some will be brand new.

We don't take your readership for granted. Every month we work to build on the strong foundation we've established with you over the years. That will not change.

My team and I look forward to bringing *Colorado Country Life* into its next era of telling your electric co-op's story and stories from around the state. Stay tuned!



KYLEE COLEMAN



CCL nameplate changes throughout the years from the 1970s to 2011.

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MONTHLY GIVEAWAY

Enter to win a \$25 VISA gift card!

Do you need a different way to engage with us? 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 or visit www.coloradocountrylife.coop to enter.





VOTING — It's a Privilege and a Responsibility

A statewide viewpoint

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

realize that by the time most of you read this, you will likely already have voted in this year's election. With the advent of mail and early voting in Colorado, the number of people who wait until Election Day to vote continues to decline.

If for some reason you haven't voted, and you read this on or before November 5, I hope you will make the effort to cast your ballot. I understand that there are many reasons why you might have decided not to vote; I don't like the often-nasty nature of our political system any more than you do. But voting is a sacred privilege, one of our fundamental rights that many people have fought and died to protect. You should not take it for granted.

Mind you, I'm not suggesting who you should vote for or against or what ballot questions you should support or oppose. While CREA works in politics and our affiliated political action committee supports various candidates, I'm not advocating for anyone or any issue. What I am advocating for is your constructive participation and engagement in our political process.

I emphasize the word "constructive" because, as I noted earlier, there is far too

much destructive rhetoric in our current politics. Both major political parties are guilty of the tendency to waste time degrading their opponents instead of focusing on solutions and engaging in substantive policy debates. This is nothing new, but with the ability of social media to amplify these negative images and messages, it's harder for the old-fashioned tools of persuasion and logic to cut through the muck.

I remember very clearly the first time I voted for a candidate for president of the United States. It was 1980, and the two major party candidates were Democrat (and incumbent) Jimmy Carter and Republican Ronald Reagan. I wasn't enthralled with either candidate, so I voted for the Independent candidate, John Anderson. Of course, Reagan won in a landslide and my candidate, Anderson, received 6.6% of the votes.

I have voted in every presidential election since 1980, and I frankly can't imagine not doing so. I know it often seems like your vote is not that significant, but if you look at the last presidential election, a few thousand votes in several states made a difference in the outcome. And it's not



KENT SINGER

at all unusual for state or local races to be determined by a handful of votes or less; your vote matters!

But while the outcome of elections is of course important, the mere act of voting is equally important. The right to vote is absolutely one of the cornerstones of our representative democracy, and we should not forget that at least half the people on this planet do not have the right to vote in free and fair elections.

So, if you have already voted, congratulations on exercising the franchise, and good luck to your chosen candidate or ballot question. If you have not voted, and there's time, please study up on the candidates and issues and cast your vote. It's your civic duty.

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.

FINAL CALL!

*"Canyon of the Ancients" by
Frank d'Antignac, Empire
Electric Association 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).



Enter today!

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.

BEST SMART-HOME TECH ON A BUDGET

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: How can smart-home technology help me lower my power bill?

A: Smart technology can make it easier to save energy by simplifying or automating tasks. It can also optimize energy use to reduce waste and improve efficiency.

When upgrading to smart technology at home, consider the purchase cost as well as long-term savings. For example, you may pay a little more for a product with the latest technology, but it could result in significant savings each year and over the lifetime of the appliance.

Here are some smart devices that will take the work out of saving energy.

Smart thermostats save energy by automatically adjusting your heating or cooling system. For example, you can save as much as 10% each year on heating and cooling costs by adjusting your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting for eight hours a day, according to the Department of Energy.

You can program a smart thermostat to change the temperature when you are asleep or away or use a smartphone app to adjust your thermostat settings. Some models use artificial intelligence to maximize efficiency by learning your patterns and preferences. Prices range from \$80 to \$250, depending on features. Smart thermostats do not work with all heating and cooling systems, so check compatibility before you buy.

Your water heater can also be controlled for energy savings. Installing a timer on your electric water heater can save 5% to 12% of the energy it uses by turning it off at night and when you don't need to use hot water, according to the DOE.

If you are already planning to replace your electric storage water heater with a heat-pump water heater, consider a model



Smart thermostat apps let you adjust your thermostat settings remotely. Photo by: Ecobee.

equipped with smart technology features — Wi-Fi capabilities for controlling it remotely or during peak-demand times, viewing the amount of hot water available, and tracking energy use. There are a variety of modes, including vacation, efficiency, and high demand, which produces more hot water. Some models can notify you or shut off if a leak is detected. Depending on the manufacturer and size of the unit, a smart heat-pump water heater may only cost a few hundred dollars more than a standard heat-pump water heater.

Smart lighting gives you the power to control lights in your home remotely or set a lighting schedule that fits your lifestyle. This can be beneficial for energy savings and provide home security benefits. If you or other members of your household are notorious for leaving lights on, smart lighting can help. Numerous features are available, including dimmable bulbs and color-changing effects.

Smart light switches are another budget-friendly way to control lighting. They're priced from about \$10 to \$50. Smart switches with dimmable options are available and can also control ceiling fans. Some have occupancy sensors that turn lights off when no movement is detected in a room.

A smart plug fits into any outlet to control whatever is plugged into it. Set them to automatically turn off and on, or control them using a smartphone app. Prices range from \$8 to \$25.

A wide variety of smart shades, curtains, and blinds are available, including styles with integrated controls. You can also add smart controls to your existing blinds or curtains. Both options allow you to adjust the tilt of blinds and open or close curtains. Set a schedule, control them remotely, or use a voice command paired with a voice assistant, such as Alexa or Google Home. This allows you to reduce cooling needs in the summer and heating needs in the winter. Smart controls start at around \$70. To save the most energy, prioritize windows with the most incoming light.

These smart devices can be purchased at your local hardware store or online.

Upgrading to smart-home technologies can make it easy to use less energy at home. Choose options that make the most sense for your lifestyle to optimize savings.

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

EMPIRE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

Echoes of the Empire

NOVEMBER 2024

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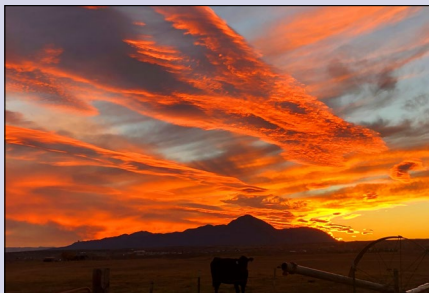
Monthly Calendar & Co-op Photo Contest Winner


November 5 – Election Day

November 8 – EEA's board meeting begins at 8:30 a.m. at its headquarters in Cortez. The agenda is posted 10 days in advance of the meeting at eea.coop. Members may attend in person or remotely. Instructions to attend remotely are included on the agenda.

November 11 – Veterans Day

November 28 – Thanksgiving Day. EEA's office will be closed November 28 and 29 for the holiday.



 Sunset Over the Ute by Jina Langin.

'Tis the Season for Safety

BY ANDY CARTER MEMBER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER



ANDY CARTER

Shorter days and colder weather are a few of the signs that winter is coming. Along with remembering to grab a coat when you head out the door, it's also time to think about changing your safety mindset from warm weather hazards to those we experience in winter. Before hitting the road, make sure your car is in good working order and your tires have enough tread to provide good traction. It's also a good idea to check your vehicle to make sure you have the necessary cold weather gear including an ice scraper, snow brush, shovel, traction assistance, first aid kit, flashlight, a blanket, water, and nonperishable food.

Once you are on the road, remember that slick roads require more distance for stopping. The Colorado Driver Handbook states it takes about 200 feet to stop a passenger vehicle traveling at 55 miles per hour on dry roads. This can increase to over 300 feet on wet roads and makes it even more important to increase spacing behind the vehicle in front of you and to look ahead to anticipate trouble.

Back at home there are also cold weather safety considerations to keep in mind. It's important to have your heating system inspected annually to make sure it will heat your home and not be a safety hazard. If your home heating system generates heat by burning fuel, it is especially important to verify that the system is sealed and not allowing carbon monoxide and other combustion byproducts to enter your home. According to the Center for Disease Control, carbon monoxide poisoning not related to fires kills more than 400 Americans and hospitalizes another 14,000 each year.

Carbon monoxide is a colorless and odorless gas. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, upset stomach, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms are often described as "flu-like." In addition to having your heating system inspected, you can reduce your risk of CO poisoning by installing CO detectors in your home to warn you of its presence.

One last thing to consider is checking areas where you use supplemental heat. If you use heat tape to keep pipes or gutters from freezing, a heat lamp to keep animals warm, or a stock tank heater, take the time to inspect the wiring and the equipment itself to make sure it is in good working order. Signs that there is something wrong include damaged insulation on wiring; chips, cracks, or discoloration from heat on the heating element or socket; or tripping the circuit breaker that powers the heater. If you are not comfortable replacing or repairing the equipment, we recommend you hire an electrician to make the necessary repairs.

Winter weather does bring challenges, but with a little planning and the knowledge of what to look for, you can be prepared to safely enjoy the good things the change in seasons brings. For more information on electrical safety and preparing for winter outages please visit eea.coop.

Horses Gallop and So Can Power Lines

What causes a galloping power line and how can it impact power transmission and distribution?

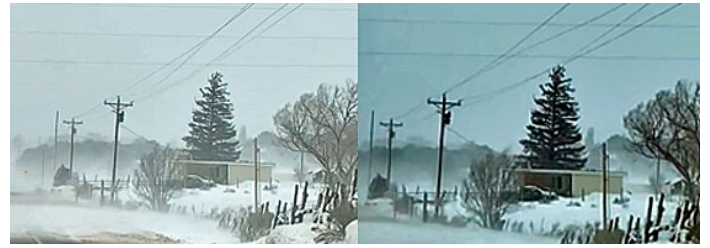
Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Some winter precipitation conditions create icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce.

Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damaging themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground.

There is not much Empire Electric Association can do to alleviate galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature. To help prevent this, EEA has installed special mechanisms on lines in areas where galloping lines have been an issue. While they can help, sometimes they are no match for severe ice and whipping wind.

Downed power lines are not just a result of winter storms. Any storm with high winds can knock down power lines and blow trees and limbs onto power lines. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- If you see power lines on the ground, stay at least 50 feet away, warn others to stay away, and contact EEA at 970-565-4444 or call 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live.
- Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines that are sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. Do not try to guess the types of lines — stay away from all lines and report any utility line you think is dangerous.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.
- If you are in a car that has contacted or is near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and de-energized the line and tells you it is safe to exit. Warn others not to approach the car.
- Only exit a vehicle near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away at least 50 feet or more while continuing to keep both feet together. For more electrical safety information, visit SafeElectricity.org.



These are photos from video clips of lines galloping in EEA service territory. The photos are less than half a second apart. You can see the conductors near the top of the photo have moved from overlapping to being several feet apart. Photos courtesy of Matt Larsen.



Snow or ice accumulation on power lines combined with strong winds can be a recipe for an outage. Photo courtesy of SafeElectricity.org.

We're Grateful for Your Membership.

Our offices will be closed **Thursday, November 28,** and **Friday, November 29,** in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday. We are incredibly grateful for your membership as our team spends this special time with loved ones.

From our co-op family to yours, we hope you have a wonderful Thanksgiving!





Millions take to the highways over the holidays, making it one of the busiest travel times of the year.

If you're traveling by car this season, **follow these safety tips:**

1. Prepare Your Home

Cancel mail, pause deliveries and have someone check on your home. In snowy areas, arrange for snow removal.

2. Reduce Fire Risks

Unplug nonessential electrical devices and check smoke detectors.

3. Don't Overshare

Avoid posting travel plans on social media to prevent potential break-ins.

4. Inspect Your Car

Ensure tires are inflated and carry jumper cables, as cold weather can drain batteries.

5. Pack an Emergency Kit

Include a car phone charger, blankets, food and water, coats and a flashlight with batteries.

6. Check the Weather

Check the weather before and during your trip to avoid storms.

7. Buckle Up & Slow Down

Increase your following distance to safely navigate slick roads and allow extra time to get to your destination.

8. Take Frequent Breaks

Winter driving challenges can be tiring. Stop every few hours to stay alert and stay hydrated to avoid fatigue.

9. Share Your Itinerary

Let family or friends know your travel plans, whether you're on your way out or heading back home.

10. Put That Phone Away

Avoid distractions—winter driving requires your full attention.

Learn more at:

 **Safe
Electricity.org**[®]



 Kooper Long

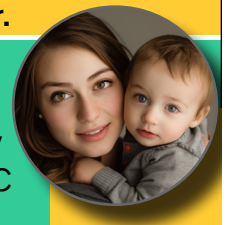
My Co-op Employees

Kooper Long accepted the Warehouse Specialist position at Empire Electric Association and started on September 10. Kooper will be responsible for material accounting, receiving, storing, and issuing of materials to EEA crews as they work to keep our distribution system reliable.

He grew up in Cortez and is a graduate of Montezuma Cortez High School. In his spare time, Kooper enjoys hunting and being outdoors. Please join us in welcoming Kooper to the EEA team. We are excited to have him on board!

You can help keep Colorado homes warm, healthy and safe this winter.

EEA members can sign up to make a monthly donation to EOC on their bill and EEA will match your monthly donation. You can also make a one time donation at eea.coop or at energyoutreach.org/donate-energy/



**ENERGY
OUTREACH
COLORADO**
Together We Power Stability

Is a Ductless Mini-Split System Right for Your Home?

How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different than the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house? This flexibility and customization are precisely why mini-split systems — also known as ductless air-source heat pumps — and their energy-efficiency aspects are so popular.

A mini-split system is HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Like central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components — an outdoor compressor and one or more indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor units to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than to the whole home.

IS A MINI-SPLIT SYSTEM RIGHT FOR YOU?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions, or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be farthest away from the main living area, such as a finished attic or basement. In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems. In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install; they require a small hole for the conduit to connect the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit. Each of the zones can be customized since each includes a thermostat that enables you to heat or cool the space as needed, saving energy and money over time.

COOL SOLUTIONS

Mini-split systems bring additional benefits. They are quiet, improve indoor air quality, and are typically easy to install. Many come with remotes to make temperature control even easier. Because of their smaller size, mini-split systems have many placement options for indoor and outdoor units.

One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is that they typically have a higher Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are some downsides to mini-splits. According to the Department of Energy, "mini-splits cost about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per ton of cooling capacity. That's about 30% more than central systems (not including ductwork) and may cost twice as much as window units of similar capacity."

While the technology is improving and evolving, homes in particularly cold climates may need a fuel backup to run a mini-split system. Aesthetics are another factor to consider, as some homeowners don't like the appearance of the indoor units, which are more visible than central air conditioning vents.

If you're considering an upgrade or additional heating and cooling equipment, talk to a qualified technician to find out if a ductless mini-split system could work for your home. If you decide to have a mini-split installed, Empire Electric Association offers financial incentives to help offset the cost. Incentives include units with dual fuel capability using propane for backup heat. EEA incentive information can be found at eea.coop/electrify-save-program. You may also qualify for federal or state tax incentives. Ask your tax advisor about what is available or visit energysmartcolorado.org/tax-credits-incentives/ for more information.





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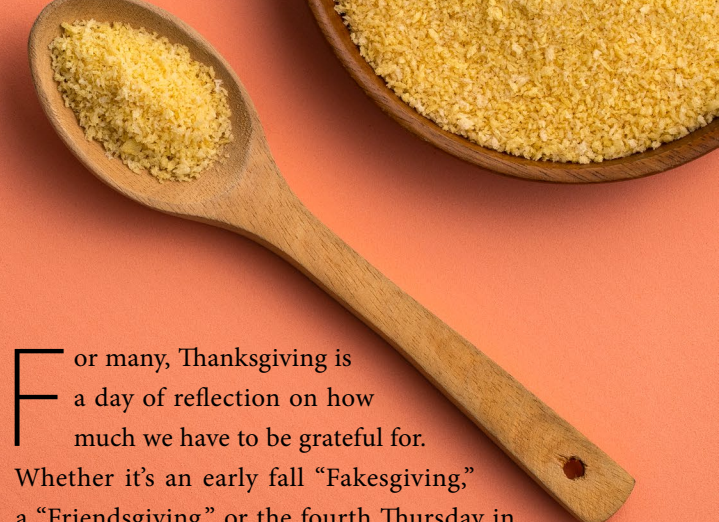
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A FLAVORFUL TWIST ON A CLASSIC



For many, Thanksgiving is a day of reflection on how much we have to be grateful for. Whether it's an early fall "Fakesgiving," a "Friendsgiving," or the fourth Thursday in November, this month is also the beginning of a season to enjoy time with friends and family around a table of delicious food.

We all have our favorite food traditions this time of year — turkey, gravy, and stuffing are usually the star of the show. And this cornbread casserole inspired by reader Peggy Haynes will likely become a favorite to include on your table each November. Happy Thanksgiving!

GOLDEN CORNBREAD CASSEROLE

By Peggy Haynes, Mountain View Electric Association member

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 1 can (15 oz) whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 can (14 oz) creamed corn
- 1/2 cup butter, melted, plus more for spreading
- 1 package (8 1/2 oz) corn muffin mix
- 1-2 jalapenos, depending on size and taste, diced
- 1/4 tsp paprika

Instructions

In a large bowl, combine the first five ingredients. Add the cornbread mix, stirring just until blended. Fold in diced jalapenos. Pour into a greased 9" x 13" baking dish. Sprinkle with paprika.

Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 45-50 minutes.

Lightly butter the top, cut into squares, and serve warm.

DID YOU KNOW?

Corn can be considered either a grain or a vegetable, based on when it is harvested. Fully mature, dry corn is considered a grain. Fresh corn is considered a starchy vegetable.

Source: www.ask.usda.gov



DO YOU HAVE A RECIPE TO SHARE?

We love reader recipes! Send yours to Recipes c/o *Colorado Country Life*, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216. Or you can email recipes@coloradocountrylife.org, or submit it online through the Reader Engagement page on our website at www.coloradocountrylife.coop.

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- Alarm clock
- Stop watch
- Calculator
- Timer
- Game
- Sleep monitor



"Love this fitness watch! Not only does it gives me lots of good information, it looks great! Much nicer looking than most fitness watches" -John Walters

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Winter Heating Costs Expected to Be Similar to Last Year

Most U.S. households, on average, can expect to pay about the same to heat their homes as they did last winter, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

“There’s a lot of uncertainty about the weather over an entire season — not to mention uncertainty over commodity prices,” EIA Administrator Joe DeCarolis said in a recent press release.

In its 2024 *Winter Fuels Outlook*, EIA forecasts a colder winter, which may lead to people using more energy to heat their homes. With energy prices similar to or slightly lower than last winter, EIA expects utility spending for many households will be about the same as last winter.

EV Battery Production Creates New Colorado Jobs

A Colorado electric vehicle battery manufacturer was awarded a \$50 million grant to help support the nation’s EV battery supply chain.

Solid Power Operating, Inc.’s Thornton manufacturing facility is expected to create 40 new operations jobs and more than 100 construction positions. The all-solid-state batteries are becoming a leading candidate for EV manufacturers to replace conventional lithium-ion batteries. ASSBs technology also has the potential for improved safety, increased EV range (mileage), and lower cost.

As part of the U.S. Department of Energy’s Battery Materials Processing and Battery Manufacturing and Recycling Program, \$16 billion total is being invested to bolster and strengthen the domestic supply chain.

Funding for Clean Energy Careers

The U.S. Department of Energy announced a program to fund the development of a clean energy workforce. The initiative, announced at the end of September, will target a wide variety of groups within science, technology, engineering, and math fields. The Clean Energy Careers for All program will award nearly \$3 million to nonprofit educational organizations that promote interest and awareness in clean energy careers.

The program is targeted toward K-12 and university students, alumni, academic professionals, and Veterans. CEC4A will award programs that provide career coaching and mentorship; facilitate internships and apprenticeships with industry partners; and provide career exposure to stakeholder groups in the clean energy industry.



▲ As new technologies have been developed to address key industry issues, they’ve led to significant increases in new energy careers. Engineers, technicians, and others are working to implement giant battery-like devices that can store excess solar energy so it’s available when the sun’s out of sight. *Photo courtesy of Poudre Valley REA.*

ENERGY INNOVATION CREATES NEW CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

Electric utility industry jobs including energy storage specialists or smart-grid engineers are all about making your electricity even more reliable and affordable — and they are careers that didn’t exist a decade or two ago.

The energy industry has gone through profound changes in the last decade as organizations like your local electric cooperative rush to meet growing needs for power while addressing concerns about sustainability and climate. As new technologies have been developed to address key issues, they’ve led to significant increases in new careers.

Many electric co-op employees are playing important behind-the-scenes roles in shaping tomorrow’s energy landscape. Engineers, technicians, and others are close to creating giant battery-like devices that can store excess solar energy so it’s available when the sun’s out of sight.

Renewable energy engineers are behind many of the advancements you’ve seen in recent years. Another group of engineers focuses on improving the smart grid, the nationwide network that connects power producers and users.

More environmental scientists are needed to help energy producers better understand how to meet the demands of consumers while protecting local and global ecosystems. It also takes skilled energy policy analysts to analyze data, evaluate the impacts of proposed policies, and advise governments and organizations on energy-related issues.

Many of these new positions require extensive education, but others provide entry-level opportunities. For example, as more homeowners want to use new technologies like solar panels, they need trained technicians to install them. Another growing opportunity is for energy advisors, who have the skills to examine homes and businesses to identify changes that could lead to lower energy bills.

Whether you’re a student getting ready to graduate or an individual who feels ready for a career change, the energy industry is worth exploring. It offers both stability and growth — and various opportunities including member services, engineering, construction, science, and financial management.

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Space to Breathe

BY JOANNE PALMER

PHOTOS BY JOSHUA SCOTT SMITH



Content Warning

This story contains descriptions of attempted suicide and depression. If you or someone you love is struggling or is experiencing a mental health crisis, call or text 988 or chat with someone at www.988lifeline.org.



“

There is something about the outside of a horse that is good for the inside of a man.”

— Winston Churchill

After a night of heavy drinking that culminated in an argument with his wife, Calvin Cage put a bullet in the chamber of his revolver and started to play Russian roulette. Click. Nothing. Click. Nothing. Click. Nothing. “After the third time I told my wife to call the hospital to come and get me.”

A click instead of a bang was the difference between life and death for United States Air Force Veteran Calvin Cage.

Grand Junction is the home to the largest and only Veterans’ hospital on the Western Slope. Set against the staggeringly beautiful backdrop of the Colorado Monument, the white structure is visible from miles away — a stark contrast to the desert landscape that surrounds it.

The VA Medical Center looks like a spaceship that somehow missed its mark. Nevertheless, it was here, on the fifth floor that Cage, then 34, found himself after his

◀ A path to healing starts at Harmony Acres.

attempted suicide. While serving in the Air Force, Cage was part of a team that flew inside a C-130 — a bulky, blimp-like aircraft designed to transport equipment and supplies into hostile territory.

Dying didn’t scare him. He’d thought a lot about his mortality while sleeping in a tent in Iraq. Listening to mortars explode in the night air all around him, he hoped if the end came, it would be quick. “I hoped for a direct hit,” Cage recalled. But he didn’t die in Iraq; he survived. And luckily, he didn’t die at home either. He survived and found help and hope with the equine therapy program at Harmony Acres in Loma, Colorado.

It’s not easy being tough. It’s not easy being brave. And it’s certainly not easy being a Veteran, especially during the month of November when people routinely say, “Thank you for your service,” with little to no idea of what that actually means. While the military may be good at preparing soldiers for combat, there is little training for returning home to civilian life.

As Calvin Cage knows all too well.

“When you get out, you’re hypervigilant. It’s hard on your body to be in constant fight-or-flight mode. It drains you. I was isolating myself. Drinking and dwelling. I

▲ Veteran and Harmony Acres volunteer Calvin Cage, who credits Harmony Acres for helping save his life, takes in the spectacular view at the stables.

didn’t want to be out in public or do much of anything,” Cage said. Struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety, he tried volunteering at the VFW. While he enjoyed the camaraderie of the other Veterans, the easy access to the bar became a problem.

A horse named Geronimo turned the tide.

Equine therapy is a partnership between a horse and a human. Under the supervision of a trained professional, humans



▲ Cage connects with a favorite horse, Geronimo.

and horses form a connection that helps Veterans process their emotions, regain their confidence, and find new ways of coping with stress and anxiety. Although a dusty arena and a 1,000-pound horse may seem an unlikely therapeutic setting, there's no one-size-fits-all solution for trauma; but Veterans will tell you the six-week program works, that sometimes a sympathetic four-legged friend is exactly what they need. The nonjudgmental nature of animals makes it easy to feel understood, safe, and accepted. And studies have shown that interacting with animals triggers the feel-good hormones of serotonin and dopamine, which calm and relax.

Horses thrive on the connection with humans and are adept at mirroring their behavior. As prey animals, they, too, are hypervigilant and know what it's like to be on the lookout for danger at all times. A horse understands what it's like to carry a burden. They know what it's like to be kicked by an insensitive rider or mistreated by an owner. And maybe, with their highly intuitive nature and big hearts, they even understand that forming a bond with another can be the first step to healing.

There are so many reasons to visit Harmony Acres, chief among them the 40 animals that live there. Besides horses, there are mischievous ponies, alpacas, three-legged goats, one mule, a few cats, a collection of cuddly bunnies, and Huey — the cutest sheep ever. As the soundtrack of nickers, whinnies, and the occasional bleat of a playful goat fills the air, one of the founders, Morgan Kareus, a bustling ball of positive energy, guides a group of Veterans around the facility, introducing them to the cast of characters that call Harmony home. She emphasizes they are a sanctuary, not a rescue. All animals receive lifelong care.

It only takes a minute for the sound of “aw” to fill the air as Veterans smile and reach out to stroke the necks of the animals or touch the velvety nose of a horse. The

stories of the animals are as touching and heartbreaking as many of the participants'. Take Maylay, a horse rescued from a kill pen where her life was about to end. “She was completely wild and had no handling at all,” Executive Director Christy Burke recalled. “It took months to build up her confidence and trust before we could even touch her. Now, she has such a depth of soul to her, when you're working with her, you feel like you're at a deep level of communication, almost like she can hear your thoughts. It's

with the horses. Trust is the cornerstone of any good relationship, and to build it, staff uses the Parelli method of Natural Horsemanship which forms a true partnership between horse and rider. Participants begin with a check-in. “Let [the horse] know how you're doing. The more aware you are, the better they do,” Kareus said. Then there's grooming — a simple task that quickly becomes meditative. The slow strokes of the brush and the circular motion of the curry comb lulls both horse and human.



During the Harmony Acres tour, you see love in action and care. You see animals who were destined for the kill pen, and maybe some Vets feel that way, too. Harmony Acres is a sanctuary for people who are hurting, who are outcasts.”

— Wayne Feigal, volunteer and Air Force Veteran



▲ Calvin Cage and Geronimo enjoy the meditative and trust-building task of grooming.

kind of a magical experience.” Maylay has now become a complete ham that loves to deliver a big toothy grin for any camera.

Volunteer and Air Force Veteran Wayne Feigal explained it like this: “During the Harmony Acres tour, you see love in action and care. You see animals who were destined for the kill pen, and maybe some vets feel that way, too. Harmony Acres is a sanctuary for people who are hurting, who are outcasts.”

There is no Wild West, “yeehaw” rodeo style of interaction using whips and spurs

Participants learn how to set an intention of what they expect from the horse and use only a gentle touch or a voice command to guide the horse to walk, back up, or come toward them. As Feigal explained, “You can go with the flow and not get anywhere with horses. But when you set an intention, things happen.”

Cage elaborated: “You're asking and receiving; not dragging a horse around by the halter.” Breath work forms the foundation for many of the exercises. As participants sit in a circle outside the arena

“

I've never *not* seen a change in people. We've had guys come out here and stand around, looking at the ground, mumble out their name, and not engage at all. At the end of six weeks, they're laughing and joking.”

— Melissa Gates, volunteer and Army Veteran



Calvin Cage, Veteran and Harmony Acres volunteer, and Morgan Kareus, Programs Director and PATH Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor lead our tour.



Above: Kareus and Cotton enjoy a moment of connection. Below: Harmony staff member Karen McKinney handles horses for veteran groups.



Navy Veteran Ed Conway connects with 18-year-old Doc, a 2,000-pound Percheron. Ed says, “At first, I was intimidated by the sheer size of him, his sheer bulk. But when I touched his nose and looked into his eyes, it was like he looked into my soul.” Photo courtesy of Ed Conway.

on plastic chairs, Kareus leads them in breathing exercises to connect with themselves — “What do you feel in your body? Is it something obvious, something subtle, is it serving you?”

““ She had me put my hand on the horse and breathe in rhythm with it. Before I knew it, I could feel myself calming down, and that’s when it dawned on me: It does work.”

— Michele Mummert, retired Army Veteran and Vet Center counselor

Michele Mummert, a retired Army Veteran and now a counselor at the Vet Center explained it like this: “The first time I came out here I was upset, and the horse picked up on it immediately. I kept denying anything was wrong, but Morgan could tell by the way the horse was reacting to me something was wrong. She had me put my hand on the horse and breathe in rhythm with it. Before I knew it, I could feel myself calming down, and that’s when it dawned on me: It does work.”

Volunteer and Army Veteran Melissa Gates agreed. “I’ve never *not* seen a change in people. We’ve had guys come out here and stand around, looking at the ground, mumble out their name, and not engage at all. At the end of six weeks, they’re laughing and joking.”

Founded in 2014 by Morgan Kareus and Christy Burke, Harmony Acres started with a dream, determination, and the courage to knock on a stranger’s door. Driving around Fruita one day, looking for a place to house their operation, Burke spotted what looked like vacant horse property. With one brave knock on the door and a handshake, the property became their first home. Now headquartered in Loma on 24 acres, their mission has remained the same for 10 years: “To create a place where people and animals

come together for the purpose of healing.” Through a combination of grants, donations, and fundraising, there is no cost to participants for the Veterans equine therapy program that is available to both men and women; other programs for adults and children are very affordable or offered on a sliding scale.

In 2023, Navy Veteran Ed Conway, 61, arrived at Harmony Acres while struggling with the physical and mental aspects of Meniere’s disease, an incurable disorder that destroys the vestibular system, which causes him to fall frequently. As if that wasn’t enough, he also suffers from headaches and ringing in his ears. He immediately connected with 18-year-old Doc, a 2,000-pound Percheron, a breed almost the size of a small school bus. Nevertheless, when Doc first came to Harmony, he was so frightened, he shivered whenever he was touched. “At first, I was intimidated by the sheer size of him, his sheer bulk,” Conway recalled. “But when I touched his nose and looked into his eyes, it was like he looked into my soul.” At 6 feet tall, Conway is a big teddy bear of a man himself whose once successful career as a petty officer in the U.S. Navy and afterward as a safety engineer on big projects like the World Trade Center in New York City had been turned upside down by his disease. “I don’t want to be disabled. I don’t want people to see me as disabled. When

I’m standing next to Doc, I don’t have the fear of falling and I don’t have headaches. Equine therapy gave me back my self-respect.” His wife, Heather, agreed: “From a caregiver and wife’s viewpoint, it made a gigantic world of difference. It made him feel he could enjoy life and interact again.”

During the last and final session, a small obstacle course is set up in the arena for horse and rider to navigate. As they weave through the cones, it’s clear how far they’ve come and how lessons learned in the arena can translate into real-life situations. “When there’s a goal, there will be obstacles,” Kareus instructs participants. “You’ll have to pivot; be intentional and small steps will get you there. You have to look ahead, look where you’re going.”

As for Cage, now 41, he volunteers weekly at Harmony as a force for good. After serving his country in the Air Force for six years, he continues his commitment to service by helping other Veterans through the equine therapy program that helped him. “Since I’ve been coming to Harmony, I haven’t had any big mental health problems. Ultimately, Harmony Acres saved my life.”

Visit www.harmonyacresec.org, if you’d like more information about Harmony Acres.

Joanne Palmer lives with her partner and rescue dog on Colorado’s Western Slope. Follow her at *Laugh Lines* found at joanepalmer.substack.com.

Harmony Acres, founded in 2014 by Morgan Kareus and Christy Burke, is headquartered on 24 acres in Loma, Colorado. Their mission has remained the same for 10 years: “To create a place where people and animals come together for the purpose of healing.”



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Parts and Pieces of a Utility Pole

Overhead equipment keeps you electrified.

BY PAUL WESSLUND

Have you ever wondered what's on an electric utility pole? Let's go over the basics.

First and most importantly, utility poles are packed with electrical devices, so stay away from them.

The equipment and devices up there vary from pole to pole, but think of a utility pole as a layer cake, with the electric equipment at the top. Most noticeable of course are the wires, supported by the crossarms and/or insulators. At the highest levels, they could be high-voltage transmission wires carrying power long distances. More often what you're looking at are medium-voltage distribution lines carrying power into neighborhoods. Beneath those may be service wires with stepped-down power ready to be used in a home or business.

It's important to remember that those are bare wires, which is why you hear regular warnings to stay away if a storm knocks power lines to the ground. That's also why the wires are attached to insulators that keep them from being in contact with the wood, steel, or other supporting materials.

Just below the electric lines hangs a variety of electric equipment. The big metal cans are transformers that convert high voltages to low voltages. Devices that look like stacks of big gray donuts could be protective lightning arrestors (or "reclosers") that act like a fuse or circuit breaker, shutting down the line when they detect a problem. Collections of what look like metal cereal boxes are "capacitors" that help improve the efficiency of power flow and regulate voltage. Other switches and regulators monitor and adjust the flow of electricity as energy use changes throughout the day.

Some of the lines you see might be ground wires that carry static electricity (such as lightning) into the earth or balance the flow of power and help ensure safe operation of the system, or they could be guy wires to keep the pole straight.

The lowest layer carries non-electric lines: cable TV, telephone, internet, and traffic light controllers. There's one more layer—any of those lines might go under the ground to get to a house or meet up with other underground lines.

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



SAFETY FIRST

Signs, balloons, decorations, and other materials on utility poles are more than just an unpleasant eyesore. These items can be dangerous and even life threatening to the professionals who maintain our vital lines of electricity, communication, and other services.

The clamped safety boots used by lineworkers to climb poles are vulnerable to becoming snagged on staples and nails embedded in posts. Foreign objects can also tear utility workers' protective clothing. They can also injure workers despite the safety gear they wear to avoid contact with rough surfaces.

Posting items to power poles can also be a public safety hazard. The materials posted on the poles not only distract people as they drive, but they also degrade the quality, effectiveness, and stability of the wood. Posting items to utility poles is usually a violation of local ordinances as well.

It is also just as important to avoid tampering with or disrupting the guy wires that surround utility poles. Please inform children not to play or swing on them, and maintain your distance when performing yard work. If you see the poles or guy wires are disrupted in some way, please call your local electric co-op.

WHAT'S ON THAT POLE?

This illustration shows the basic equipment found on electric utility poles. The equipment varies according to the location and the service they provide.

PRIMARY WIRES

Primary wires carry 7,200 volts of electricity from a substation. That voltage is 60 times higher than the voltage that runs through your home's electrical outlets!

SURGE ARRESTORS

These protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

NEUTRAL WIRE

The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to the ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

SECONDARY SERVICE DROP

Carries 120/240-volts of electricity to consumers' homes. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer and a bare "neutral" wire that's connected to the ground wire on the pole.

GROUND WIRE

The ground wire connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

TELEPHONE, CABLE TV, AND FIBER WIRES

These are typically the lowest wires on the pole.

INSULATORS

Insulators prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.



NEVER NAIL POSTERS OR OTHER ITEMS TO UTILITY POLES. THESE CREATE A SAFETY HAZARD FOR LINEWORKERS.



Hydroponics: Bring Water to Life

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Ask anyone familiar with hydroponic gardening and they are likely to tell you it's the wave of the future. As the world's population increases and pressure on Earth's resources is pushed toward the extreme, hydroponics offers a sustainable alternative.

Hydroponic production does not require acres of premier farmland for growing plants. Since it relies upon water-based nutrient solutions rather than soil, it can be located inside buildings or greenhouses. By recirculating the nutrient solution, systems use 80% to 95% less water than traditional farming. By controlling the indoor environment, crops are not subject to the unpredictability of weather, they require little pesticide control, and produce virtually no fertilizer runoff.

Other advantages include extending the growing season to year-round production and producing food in areas with limited water sources. Home gardeners can create rolling harvests in which small quantities are harvested consistently throughout the year. The most popular short-season crops are lettuce, celery, cucumbers, peppers, tomatoes, strawberries, and herbs, although almost any crop can be grown hydroponically.

Since you control growing conditions, the growth rate is usually faster than in typical outdoor gardens. However, the warm environment combined with standing water can facilitate the spread of bacteria and viruses. You should maintain the system with food safety measures in mind. This means washing your hands thoroughly before interacting with the system, cleaning it regularly, and sanitizing tools.

Maintenance includes monitoring water levels because the plants take up water and release it through their leaves and roots could dry out. The ratio of water to nutrients also needs to be monitored as it changes over time. Keeping the right balance may be the most challenging aspect of hydroponic growing, but there are fertilizers formulated specifically for hydroponics that make it easier.

Air circulation is important since photosynthesis can slow down when plants grown in tight spaces lack sufficient carbon dioxide. It is also important to provide oxygen to the plant roots. This can be accomplished with aeration, which dissolves air in the water.

Like any indoor plant, the ones grown in hydroponic systems need light. Lighting

changes with seasonal conditions, and optimal lighting depends on the time of year and what you are growing. You can purchase a hydroponic system with adjustable florescent or LED lights to meet lighting requirements.

In addition to lighting, when selecting a hydroponic system, consider the crops you want to grow, space requirements, growing time, system cost (ranging from \$100 to several thousand dollars), and maintenance. The simplest home-use system, called "deep water culture," suspends plants above a tank of nutrient-rich water with roots extending into the liquid. It is so simple that many DIY gardeners choose to make their own systems by following video instructions on YouTube.

Although there is a small learning curve when growing hydroponically, it is like learning any other skill. Practice makes perfect, and the journey is half the fun.

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

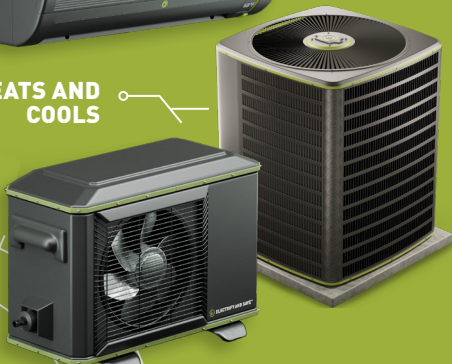


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Exotic Turkey Recipes and Mixed Bag Musings

Dennis E. Smith
PHOTOGRAPHY

BY DENNIS E. SMITH

I was assigned the honor of roasting the holiday turkey for our multifamily Thanksgiving dinner this year, so I've been surfing the net and watching the cooking channels for a clever new recipe to try out on the relatives. Talk about information overload. On my first search, I counted 20-some ways to cook a turkey: grilled, smoked, barbecued, deep-fried maple glazed I even saw a recipe for "black lacquered" turkey, if you can imagine such a thing. I actually thought about that one for a minute but then figured that's probably not the sort of thing you'd want the in-laws to remember you for.

I'm a traditionalist anyway, so I decided to just roast the bird the way I always have, except that I'll brine it first and drape it with cheesecloth drenched in white wine and melted butter a la Martha Stewart. That's about as exotic as I care to get with a turkey.

Besides, I have other things on my mind. Shortly after Thanksgiving, my sons are taking me on a weeklong hunting trip out east where we plan to hunt deer, pheasants,

and quail. We'll concentrate on deer first and, if we're lucky enough to fill our tags early, spend the rest of our time chasing pheasants and quail.

This will be the first time we've attempted a mixed bag hunt, though we've toyed with the idea before. First of all, there aren't many places in Colorado where upland birds keep company with big game. With the exception of dusky (blue) grouse and the occasional Merriam's turkey, you won't find game birds in typical elk and mule deer country. You will, however, find both whitetail and mule deer in the bottomlands in eastern Colorado where the bulk of the state's pheasants and quail are concentrated.

We never seriously considered hunting deer in the river bottoms instead of the mountains until we found ourselves jumping them out of the cattail sloughs and cornfields while hunting pheasants along the Platte. We applied for plains deer tags the following year and started flushing roosters and quail coveys while trying to sneak up on the deer.

At some point, the light finally came on.

It seemed obvious, but there were still a few details to work out. Small-game hunting is prohibited during the deer season on certain state wildlife areas and, since you can't realistically carry a rifle for deer and a shotgun for birds at the same time anyway, you'd have to choose to hunt one or the other on any given day. We decided we'd concentrate on the deer first and, if successful, switch to small game in those areas where the restrictions didn't apply. It might seem a little confusing, but it's a lot less overwhelming than that recipe for black lacquered turkey.

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



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Jay Moore, artist
Roxborough State Park



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Chopping Wood with Gerrit

Frost covered this one years ago
And Collins dug in a similar vein.
We are chopping wood on a cool spring day.
The tree surgeons felled a few ashes
And left a pile of strewn cylinders.

Gerrit and I take turns splitting
Their bodies into stove-length
Sticks and it feels so good —
This smack and snap; the easy way
The metal heft splits the blond sinews.

Through some pines
The neighbors are doing the same thing.
But their chain saw snarls
And their backhoe pinches and growls.

Yes, the wall divides us.
They are all power tools and efficiency
While we are axe and maul; thwack and growl.
Their ear protection muffles them in muted
Crash and chaos while we swap a story
And quaff an ale.

Yes, today, we are brothers in arms
As we turn the trees into heat
To take away the chill of some
Future November day.

David C. Reynolds, Colorado Springs
Mountain View Electric member

Sounds Before the Sun

Between first light and rise of sun,
A pair of strangers speak to me.
While stretching for my morning run,
I'm startled and look up to see.

Companions winging close above,
Between first light and rise of sun.
No one can tell me – hawks or doves,
With just me there, this day begun.

Suspected mates – a chase for fun!
This pair of birds oblivious,
Between first light and rise of sun,
Bring forth a mood delirious.

In rhythm their wings WHOOSH the air,
And render joy before my run.
Exhilaration! – I declare,
Between first light and rise of sun.

Ben Wiley, Walsenburg
San Isabel Electric member

   READERS' PHOTOS



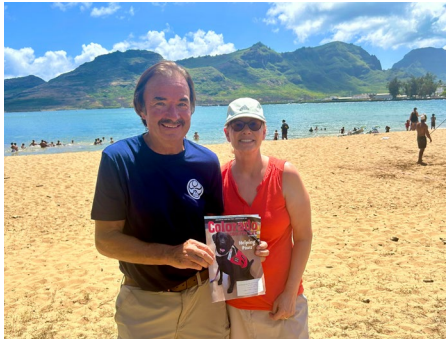
WINNER: Mountain View Electric Association member **Haley Bennett** takes CCL to Tokyo, Japan. Haley's husband **Matt** takes her picture at the Senso-ji Temple.



Paul and Bonnie Palma, San Isabel Electric members, take CCL on a 2,100-mile summer RV tour. They traveled from Pueblo to Rialto, California and to the San Fernando Valley. What an adventure!



Raymond and Velda Dobler visit Alaska for the 18th annual weighing of the state's largest pumpkin at the 2024 state fair. This blue-ribbon pumpkin weighs in at 2,035 pounds. The Doblens are members of K.C. Electric Association.



MVEA members **Dan and Tracy Cuvala** celebrate their wedding anniversary on Kalapaki Bay, Kauai, Hawaii, in September.



Morgan County REA member **Judy Parker** takes a break from sightseeing in Washington, D.C., to pose for a photo with her copy of CCL at the U.S. Capitol.



Six members of San Isabel Electric hold three different copies of *Colorado County Life* in Creede, Colorado. Terry Wise was an interpretive ranger for the USFS in Creede this summer, and her friends traveled from Colorado City to visit. Left to Right: **Fran Holliday** (kneeling), **Blanca Garcia**, **Connie Resewehr**, **Carol Logan**, **Terry Wise**, **DeDe Downs** (kneeling).



Sangre de Cristo Electric Association members **Bill and Chris Power** take CCL to the Nevada Northern Railway.



Angie Curry, a Mountain View Electric member, takes a "surprisingly sunny and warm" reading break with CCL at the Bridge of Orchy in Scotland, while hiking the West Highland Way in late September.

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.



Photo courtesy of Mortensen Meat Co

COLORADO MEAT

BY GAYLENE GARCIA GRANGER

Do you know what's what and how fresh the meat is at the meat department in the grocery store? If you're unsure, it may be time to purchase straight from the source. This month, we offer some recommendations to help you go from farm to table with homegrown Colorado meat.



1. Parker Pastures – Gunnison

Parker Pastures in Gunnison offers grass-fed and finished beef, lamb, organic chicken, and pastured pork that are all hormone- and antibiotic-free. And their pastures are Audubon certified — meaning they promote biodiversity and are regenerative and environmentally sustainable.

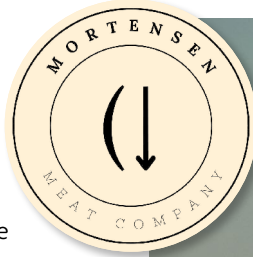
When Cloe Parker began working her parents' farm at just 5 years old, she learned everything there was to know about moving cows, raising chickens and pigs, and marketing. But as a young adult, it's her health-conscious practices and ethically raised meat that have really made a mark on her business. She tells us that it's all about "clean meat and clean living." Get tips on storage and cooking and order from Parker Pastures at www.parkerpastures.com.



2. Mortensen Meat Company – Brush

Mortensen Meat Company is a new branch of a century-old business homesteaded and founded in 1915 in Brush. Over the years, the original Mortensen farm has expanded and the family now grows multiple crops including corn, wheat, millet, alfalfa, and more, while also running a calf-cow operation. Mortensen Meat Company primarily raises Angus beef that's grass fed and grain finished from crops grown on the farm. The farm and ranch are a regenerative operation that integrates crop and livestock production, crop rotation, minimal tillage, and more.

Visit Mortensen Meat on Instagram @mortensenmeatco; find their products at Sagebrush Market in Fort Morgan.



3. Eagles Wing Ranch – Coalmont

There is nothing more iconically Western than the American Plains bison, and you can still see them roam at this family-owned bison ranch in

Coalmont, 25 miles southwest of Walden. Eagles Wing Ranch grass-fed and -finished bison is raised naturally without growth hormones or antibiotics. Co-owner Claudia Beauprez tells us that their bison have many times the levels of omega-3 and vitamins as bison that are grain fed. They are also allowed to live with dignity and graze the way their ancestors have for thousands of years.

Order bison from Eagles Wing Ranch by visiting their website at www.eagleswingnaturalbison.com.

4. Mountain View Meats – Virginia Dale & Fort Collins

Mountain View Meats located in Virginia Dale in north-central Colorado offers bulk and small beef boxes delivered straight from the source. The ranching family of Vicky and Roger Uthmann have not only been in the ranching business for 20 years, but Vicky's family also homesteaded the property as far back as 1903. In addition to home delivery, individual packages are available at markets, on-site, and at the farm store in Fort Collins three days a week. Nicole Uthmann, marketing director and co-owner, says the family also takes pride in having been ranked nationally in the top four of the Best Beef in the West Award for four years and awarded No. 1 in 2021 and 2024. Mountain View Meats also offers pork products and farm-fresh eggs.

To shop their various-sized packages and for guidance on cold storage, visit www.mvmeatsfc.com.





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