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Colorado[®]

COUNTRY LIFE

DECEMBER 2024

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Round and Round

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR



KYLEE COLEMAN

It's tough to believe that it's December; the end of the year really snuck up on me. But if I'm being honest, some days still feel like it's 2022 because these last couple of years have just flown by.

One of my favorite songs is "The Circle Game," by Joni Mitchell. She sings a simple and beautiful story of a young boy who grows up. The chorus goes: "And the seasons, they go round and round/And the painted ponies go up and down/We're captive on the carousel of time/We can't return, we can only look behind from where we came/And go round and round and round in the circle game."

Do you feel like that carousel is speeding up? Although seemingly consistent, time is actually not. It depends on our frame of reference.

I read an article recently that explained this phenomenon of the accelerating passing of time. The writer said that seeking novelty can be helpful when we want to press the pause button and make things we love about our life last a little longer.

Do you remember the first time you ate cotton candy? Or the first time you did a real dive into the swimming pool? These firsts were new and exciting! But as a kid, some days would slog along while, for whatever reason, we wished away our childhoods, wanting to grow up. Another poignant line from the song: "Words like, 'when you're older,' must appease him /And promises of someday make his dreams."

For many, novelty is a thing of our past. We take the same roads to work each morning. We make tacos for dinner every Tuesday.

I encourage you to switch it up a little bit. Turn off the radio news and listen to a podcast during your commute. Learn a new board game with your kids. Or break from Taco Tuesday and make some pasta instead. (Tortellini Tuesday has a nice ring to it, right?)

No matter what we decide to do to create novelty in the day to day, I hope life slows down enough for us to savor the sweet moments with those we love this holiday season.

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Enter to win a \$40 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 St., Denver, CO 80216.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone or visit us online at coloradocountrylife.coop to enter.



Contest closes December 16.

COLORADO CO-OP COUNTRY

A statewide viewpoint



KENT SINGER

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As Executive Director of the Colorado Rural Electric Association, I have the privilege of traveling around the state to meet with our member co-ops, board directors, CEOs, and lots of other people who are instrumental in keeping the lights on in rural Colorado. That’s always been a part of my job, and this year I traveled to every co-op in every corner of the state to make sure our trade association knows what issues are important to Colorado’s electric co-ops. And while most of my “windshield time” was in the service of supporting CREA’s member co-ops, it also resulted in the opportunity to see so much of our great state; here are some highlights.

I’ve attended meetings all over the state, but I had never been to a co-op meeting in Walden, Colorado, until this summer. Normally, the Mountain Parks Electric Board of Directors meets at the company headquarters in Granby, Colorado. But this past August, the board met in Walden so that members of the co-op in North Park would have an opportunity to see the board in action and provide questions and comments.

In addition to being spectacularly beautiful, North Park is renowned as the moose watching capital of Colorado. I have seen moose all over the state, but I was hoping to see one or two in the official MWC. I guess I thought they would be walking down main street, sort of like in the intro to that old TV show *Northern Exposure*. Alas, I did not see a moose in Walden, but I did get a kick out of the marquee on the Park Theater that announced: “Please Enjoy Our Six Weeks of Summer.”

Another co-op board meeting took me to Meeker, Colorado. In addition to being spectacularly beautiful, Meeker is the very definition of small-town USA. Folks are friendly, kids run free, and the community square is the perfect setting for all sorts of events, including the summer customer appreciation picnic hosted by White River Electric Association. As with many Colorado small towns, the electric co-op provides not only reliable and affordable electric service, but it also hangs lights at Christmastime, offers scholarships to local high school kids, and supports many other community events.

Meeker also hosts the world-famous Meeker Classic every September, the sheepdog herding competition that attracts dogs and

“Colorado Winter” by Jim Bommarito, a La Plata Electric Association member.

trainers from across the U.S. The communication that takes place between dog and trainer is something to behold. As the owner of a border collie who is, shall we say, less well trained, it’s amazing to see the intensity displayed by authentic working dogs. If you ever need a pick-me-up, put this event on your calendar.

I also made a couple of trips down to southwest Colorado to attend co-op board meetings in Cortez, Durango, Ridgway, Montrose, and Gunnison. In addition to being spectacularly beautiful (maybe you’re noticing a trend in how I describe our fair state?), these co-op territories maintain some of the vestiges of the Old West that Colorado is known for. Sure, there are plenty of multimillion-dollar ranches and high-end retail stores in this part of the state, but you can still have a lot of fun at chuckwagon dinners, bluegrass concerts, dude ranches, and trail rides.

The co-ops in southwest Colorado — Empire Electric Association, La Plata Electric Association, San Miguel Power Association, Delta-Montrose Electric Association, and Gunnison County Electric — all have a proud history of providing electricity to their members in some of the toughest terrain and most difficult weather conditions imaginable. It was a hearty bunch of folks who built the original poles and wires over mountain passes and deep ravines, and that work continues today.

Space does not allow me to recap all the co-op trips I took this year, but it was also my privilege to visit the co-ops that serve the urban-suburban areas as well as Colorado’s Eastern Plains. In addition to being spectacularly beautiful (here I go again), the Eastern Plains co-op service territories are home to much of Colorado’s agricultural products that feed the Front Range and are exported around the world. From La Junta to Hugo and from Akron to Holyoke, the co-ops that serve the farms and ranches of Colorado’s Eastern Plains support thousands of producers who literally feed and clothe all of us.

So, it’s been a great year for Colorado’s electric co-ops, and I am blessed to have visited all of them this year. Our best to everyone this holiday season; we hope you get out and enjoy this spectacularly beautiful home we call Colorado!

'TIS THE SEASON FOR GIVING

Help your local electric co-op serve your community

Concern for Community: It's exhibited in real, tangible ways by your local electric co-op. Designated as the seventh cooperative principle, Concern for Community helps guide your co-op to support the communities it serves. And whether it is through sponsoring youth trips or by buying a pig at the 4-H junior livestock sale at your county fair, your co-op embraces this important work.

CREA, the statewide association representing your local electric cooperative, also practices concern for a community — the Colorado community.

The 501(c)(3) philanthropic arm of CREA, the Colorado Electric Educational Institute, puts into action the seventh cooperative principle. Run by a dedicated board of directors, CEEI focuses on cultivating a broad community of lifelong learners who understand the critical role electric co-ops play in powering Colorado.

STUDENT PROGRAMS

In close collaboration with Colorado's electric co-ops, CEEI offers unique educational opportunities — such as the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp — to equip students to become informed and inspired leaders who can use their emerging skills to impact their schools and beyond.

PHILANTHROPIC ELECTRIFICATION PROJECTS

Committed to the belief that access to electricity is a fundamental need, CEEI illuminates the path to a brighter future. Through partnerships with cooperative organizations and various nonprofit entities, CEEI plans and helps fund philanthropic electrification initiatives that bring energy solutions to underserved communities, both close to home — including on Navajo Nation — and around the world.

“Donations to CEEI directly fuel Colorado's many rural communities' efforts, making meaningful impacts in education, leadership, and opportunities for youth,” CEEI Board President Beth Martin said. “By contributing to CEEI, supporters can feel proud that they are helping enrich and strengthen our many diverse, rural communities.”

Donate to CEEI and make a positive difference in your community, Colorado, and beyond: crea.coop/current-causes.



▲ Cooperative Youth Leadership Camp teaches students about electric co-ops and leadership. *Photos courtesy of CREA.*



▲ CEEI brings energy solutions to underserved communities. *Photos courtesy of CREA.*



▲ Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. *Photo courtesy of CREA.*



SIMPLE WAYS TO SAVE IN THE KITCHEN

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: How can I save in the kitchen during the most expensive time of the year?

A: The holiday season brings opportunities to enjoy meals with friends and family, leading to spending more time in the kitchen. Whether hosting a few or a crowd, consider making new energy efficiency traditions this year with these tips to manage your energy use.

Let's start with cooking your meal. Your electric oven is typically the highest-wattage appliance in the kitchen. Yet, people usually don't turn their ovens on for long periods of time. Assuming an average oven wattage of 3,000 and an average cost of 16 cents per kilowatt-hour, according to the United States Energy Information Administration, operating your oven costs 48 cents per hour. Let's say you use your oven for four hours to make a special meal. That's less than \$2 of electricity. While that may not seem like a big deal now, operating your oven for four hours every day is \$700 a year.

Using smaller appliances instead of your oven can help you save. A slow cooker uses between 100 and 450 watts, which is significantly less than an electric oven at 2,000 to 5,000W. That means you can use a slow cooker for a longer period and still use less energy.

Opt for your microwave or toaster oven to reheat or cook smaller items. The microwave uses significantly less energy than the oven. A toaster oven uses about half the energy of a conventional oven, according to Energy Star.

You also want to avoid turning on your oven and leaving the door open to heat your home. This can break your oven and be a safety hazard, especially with gas ovens that can cause carbon monoxide buildup.



▲ Slow cookers use less energy than an oven. You can use slow cookers for a longer period and still use less energy.

When cooking on the stovetop, match the pot or pan size to the burner. Lids help your pots retain heat, which cooks food faster and wastes less heat. Keep your stovetop clean to ensure the appliance heats evenly.

If you're looking to upgrade your stovetop, consider switching to an induction cooktop. It uses an electromagnetic field below the surface to heat pots and pans directly. This provides more precise heat, faster cook times, and higher efficiency. It can also improve the air quality in your home when compared to a gas cooktop.

In my experience, people gather in the kitchen during parties. To avoid overheating your guests in a room that has a hot oven, turn your thermostat down a few degrees before guests arrive.

Next, let's look for refrigerator savings. The gaskets on your refrigerator doors should make a tight seal to keep in cold air. Make sure you clean and maintain them or replace them if necessary. Don't let frost build up in the freezer — this can decrease efficiency and make your freezer work harder to maintain a balanced temperature.

Wait until food cools before putting leftovers in the fridge. Putting hot food in the refrigerator results in more energy used to cool it down. Aim for about 30 minutes of cooling time. Perishable food should be refrigerated within two hours after it is cooked, according to the United States Department of Agriculture.

Setting your refrigerator temperature colder than needed wastes energy. The U.S. Department of Energy recommends 37 degrees for the refrigerator and 0 degrees for the freezer. Use an appliance thermometer to monitor the temperature.

When it comes to cleanup, run full loads of dishes in the dishwasher — be careful not to block any moving parts. Use "eco mode" if your dishwasher has that setting. If you are in the market for new appliances, select Energy Star models.

Whatever you choose to cook and however you cook it, keep in mind these simple tips to make your kitchen more efficient and save energy this holiday season.

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

THE COOPERATIVE ADVANTAGE

MVEA Programs to Save Energy & Money

BY RUTH MARKS CEO | RUTH.M@MVEA.COOP

On behalf of the Mountain View Electric Association family, we wish you a very merry Christmas and a prosperous New Year! With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season it might seem like an odd time to take a closer look at your energy use, but it really is the perfect time to plan for ways to save energy and money all year long. This month, I want to highlight a few of MVEA's energy-saving programs. These programs exemplify our commitment to the cooperative principle of "concern for community"—programs created to better the quality of life of MVEA members—and our mission of providing safe, reliable, affordable, and responsible electricity to the communities that we serve.

Energy Efficiency & Beneficial Electrification Rebates

Energy efficiency rebates help offset the cost of upgrading your home lighting, heating, cooling, and more. This program, made possible through a partnership with our power supplier, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State), offers rebates to fit the needs of nearly every member who wants to save energy and money. Combining holiday sales with MVEA's rebate program is a great way to offset the cost of the purchase of select energy-efficient products, electric outdoor power equipment, and electric vehicle

chargers. Please make sure to contact us or visit www.mvea.coop/rebates as there are rebate requirements you may want to consider before making a purchase.

On-Bill Repayment Program

MVEA, through partnerships with Tri-State, and the Collective Clean Energy Fund, is now offering an on-bill repayment (OBR) program to members to install certain energy efficient upgrades to their property at no upfront cost. The OBR program allows members to make these upgrades and pay them off over time on their MVEA bill. What is the best part? In addition to the benefits of OBR, members can stack the benefits of our rebate program with state and federal incentives to maximize their buying power. Learn more and apply at www.mvea.coop/electrify-and-save.

Time-of-Day Rate

Can you shift your electric use away from MVEA's peak demand time of 5-9 p.m.? MVEA's Time-of-Day Rate offers a cost-saving solution to members who can shift their electric use to off-peak hours of the day. Learn more about this cost-saving rate at www.mvea.coop/rates.

SmartHub® Account Management

Your digital meter, paired with online account management through SmartHub, is a powerful tool to help you take control of your electric use. With daily and hourly



RUTH MARKS

energy reads available, your digital meter and SmartHub account will help pinpoint high energy use spikes so you can avoid them in the future. Visit www.mvea.coop/payment-options to learn more about SmartHub.

While not a co-op program, members may also qualify for discounts and tax credits for energy-efficiency upgrades through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). IRA home energy offerings include up-front discounts, tax credits, and low-cost financing that together provide a substantial pot of money for every household to electrify. Learn more at www.mvea.coop/ira.

As a not-for-profit business we are always looking for ways to help MVEA members manage their electric use. While there are a lot of great programs available to help co-op members save energy and money, if you have questions about your energy use, the best resource is MVEA's team of Member Services Representatives. If you have energy use questions, we are here to help.

MERRY CHRISTMAS
& Happy New Year!
FROM MOUNTAIN VIEW ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION

MVEA's offices will be closed on Wednesday, December 25, 2024, and Wednesday, January 1, 2025.

Photo Credit: Keith Desposito, MVEA Member, 2025 MVEA Photo Calendar Contest Featured Winner.

THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL! IT PAYS TO BE A CO-OP MEMBER.

MVEA Retires More Than \$1.5 Million in Capital Credits

You are both a member and an owner of Mountain View Electric Association. It is a business model unique to cooperatives. Your investment in the cooperative helps ensure the financial health and stability of the co-op, and is returned to you through the allocation and retirement of capital credits. Capital credits represent your investment in MVEA — your piece of the co-op pie.

In October, the Mountain View Electric Association Board of Directors voted to retire (which means “pay”) more than \$1.5 million in capital credits back to members for portions of margins from the years 2004, 2005, 2006, and 2022. If you were a member during those years — or any combination of those years — and have a capital credits retirement payment of \$10 or more, you should receive a check mid-December. For those with a capital credits retirement under \$10, the amount is held until the total cash value of the retirement is greater than

\$10 or until the final payment will close the account. This year, MVEA will issue more than 27,150 capital credits retirement checks to active and inactive members.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues — called “net margins” — are allocated to members in the form of capital credits. MVEA members receive a capital credits allocation every year after the cooperative’s audit of the previous year is complete. An allocation is your share of the net margins MVEA sets aside into a separate account with your name on it. Capital credits allocation notices are provided on your billing statement every November.

While all electric co-ops allocate capital credits, not all co-ops retire capital credits. The allocation and retirement of capital credits is one of the most unique and rewarding benefits of being an electric co-op member.

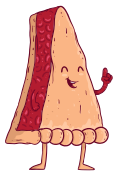
When the Board deems the co-op financially capable of doing so, capital

credits are paid to members. Dedication to fiscally responsible business practices and planning has enabled MVEA to retire more than \$83.5 million in capital credits back to members since MVEA’s first retirement.

The MVEA Board of Directors is firmly committed to retiring capital credits. When financial conditions permit, MVEA’s Board of Directors applies a hybrid first-in, first-out (FIFO) 80% with a last-in, first-out (LIFO) 20% capital credits retirement system to increase the number of checks issued to members.

Don’t miss out on your share of the cooperative! If you move out of MVEA’s service territory, please provide us with your new mailing address every time you move.

If you have any questions about your capital credits allocation or retirement, please call 800-388-9881. To learn more about capital credits, please visit MVEA’s website at www.mvea.coop/capital-credits.



Capital Credits Quick Facts

In a Co-op, Every Member Gets a Piece of the Pie!

Electric co-ops operate at cost. Any excess revenues are returned to members in the form of capital credits.

Check your November bill every year for your annual capital credits allocation. Learn more about the capital credits process at www.mvea.coop/capital-credits.

Including the 2024 retirement, MVEA has retired over **\$83.5 million** in capital credits back to members!



ELECTRIFYING DREAMS. EMPOWERING MINDS.

Need Cash For College? Win a Scholarship!

If you are continuing your education next year, apply for a scholarship with MVEA today. Whether you plan to attend a traditional college, a technical school, or are interested in pursuing a career in engineering or as a lineworker, MVEA is here for you!

For the 2025 school year, MVEA will be awarding scholarships with opportunities for both traditional and nontraditional students.

Application Deadline: February 28, 2025 • For more details, visit www.mvea.coop/scholarships.





STAY AWAY

from sagging or downed

POWER LINES

Downed trees can create power outages for you and your neighbors. Let's work together to keep the lights on and be safe this winter.

- When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away, and contact MVEA or 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 them dangerous. Be safe and stay away from all lines. To learn more about storm and outage safety, visit www.mvea.coop/outage-center.
- Downed trees and power lines do not mix well. Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. A downed power line can energize objects around it, such as chain link fences and metal culverts. Keep your property storm ready. Look for possible problem trees close to utility lines and contact MVEA. Visit www.mvea.coop/tree-trimming to learn more about MVEA's tree trimming services.



This Winter, Take Control of Your Electric Use With SmartHub®

Keeping your home warm in the winter can increase your electric use in a big way! Take a look at what you plug in or turn up when temperatures drop. SmartHub is a powerful tool to help MVEA members monitor and manage their electric use.

Get started with SmartHub → www.mvea.coop

For additional ways to save energy and money, visit www.mvea.coop/save-energy-money.



Don't Trash Your Christmas Tree. Mulch It!



MVEA members are invited to bring their personal natural tree (or wreath) to the Falcon office to be turned into free landscaping mulch. Trees will be accepted and mulched through January.

- Make sure to remove all decorations and metal from your tree or wreath to prevent damage to the wood chipper.
- Then, bring it to MVEA's office at 11140 E. Woodmen Rd. Take the delivery entrance into the side parking lot and look for the sign to recycle your tree. Questions? Call (800) 388-9881.



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MISSION STATEMENT

To provide our members safe, reliable, affordable, and responsible electric service and access to broadband services.

This Association is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Making the Switch to an Electric Vehicle? MVEA Can Help.

The appeal of electric vehicles is gaining speed. While an EV is not currently for every driver, the electric car industry does not seem to be slowing down anytime soon. EV technology paired with the benefits of reduced vehicle emissions and savings on fuel and maintenance has pushed EVs from being a novelty on the road to an important offering of vehicle manufacturers. According to Kelley Blue Book, EVs accounted for 7.6% of all vehicle sales in 2023.

EV drivers give a variety of reasons for owning and driving EVs, including:

- + Lower cost of operation
- + Less noise and quiet to drive
- + Convenience of charging at home
- + Electricity is a domestic energy source
- + Environmental benefits including no tailpipe emissions
- + Electric motors deliver high torque at low speeds which makes them fun to drive.

EV Charging & Driving Range

Electric vehicles can be charged at home with a standard 120-volt outlet; a 240V Level 2 charger can be installed for faster, more efficient charging. EV range is typically around 80 to more than 330 miles on a full charge. The average American's daily round-trip commute is less than 30 miles. Fully recharging the battery pack can take four to eight hours. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, a "fast charge" to 80% capacity can take as little as 30 minutes.

MVEA's EV Resources

Currently, MVEA offers rebates and on-bill repayment financing options for EV charging equipment. We also offer a special rate for EV charging at night during off-peak hours to help you save on your electric bill. If you're considering making the switch to an EV, visit www.mvea.coop/electric-vehicles and contact MVEA for more information about charging options and requirements.

Plug In & Power Up With MVEA EV Chargers Available at Falcon Office

MVEA has installed three Level 2 chargers, conveniently located in the front parking lot of its Falcon office. The chargers are the first public EV chargers in Falcon and offer a hassle-free charging solution for members, employees, and pass-through travelers. They are listed on the Alternative Fuel Station Locator and the PlugShare app, a comprehensive EV charging station map and trip planner. The charging rate is offered competitively at \$0.29 per kilowatt-hour. The EV charging stations were made possible with the generous support of two grants: the Tri-State G&T Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program, providing \$45,000, and the Colorado Energy Office ChargeAhead grant, contributing \$18,750. MVEA's chargers represent a major step forward in expanding community EV access.



Members of the Eastern Plains Chamber of Commerce, Colorado Energy Office, MVEA's Board of Directors, Executive Leadership Team and staff gather for a ribbon cutting event to celebrate the first public EV chargers in Falcon.



GIVE THE GIFT OF CONNECTION THIS CHRISTMAS SEASON.

**Check high-speed internet off the list this year
with Connect, powered by Mountain View Electric Association.**

CHECK YOUR AVAILABILITY!

Visit ConexonConnect.com, scan the QR code or call us at 844-542-6663 to sign up today.





**Locally Focused,
High-Speed Internet.**

THEN AND NOW

Colorado Country Life through the years

BY KYLEE COLEMAN EDITOR

I shared in my November Letter From the Editor on page 3 that *Colorado Country Life* is going through some changes that will be revealed in the coming months.

This month, we're dedicating some space to show you what *CCL* has looked like throughout the years, including from when it was called *Colorado Rural Electric News*.

We hope you enjoy this look back, and we hope you enjoy what's to come.

COLORADO
COUNTRY
Life

Colorado Rural Electric NEWS



Remnants of power lines in Middle and North Park in the 1960s. Photo by the author. Photo of the author by the author.

COOKING with Electricity

Christmas is cookie time and the best possible recipe for gift cookies is sweet, simple and delicious. Here are two recipes that should fill the bill for gift cooking.

Butterscotch Cookies

- 2 cups white sugar
- 2 cups brown sugar
- 1 cup shortening
- 4 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cream of tartar
- 6 cups flour

Mix well (using hands) and mold into long rolls and wrap in waxed paper and let set overnight. Slice with knife. Bake at 350 degrees until brown.

By Mrs. Darrel Stroup, Eskyle, Colorado

Sugar Cookies

- 3 cups sifted flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 scant teaspoon soda
- 1/2 teaspoon soda
- 2/3 cup lard
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 tablespoons milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- Sift flour, baking powder, soda and salt. Cut in shortening as for pie crust.

Best sugar cookies are vanilla. Combine with dry ingredients. Make dough in a ball, wrap in waxed paper, and chill in refrigerator. Roll thin and bake at 300 degrees until brown. These can be iced after baking.

By Mrs. L. H. Freese, Route 3, Calfish, Colorado

Colorado Rural Electric News

1960s

A Colorado Rural Electric News cover, Viewpoint page, and a cookie recipe.

The magazine has always featured Colorado electric co-op leaders writing about important legislative issues at the state and national levels. In 1966, Con Blomberg posited about a new law regarding wholesale power costs and its effect on rural electric co-op members.

1970s

The Colorado Country Life holiday cover (notice the groovy type treatment background), table of contents, and casserole recipes.

CCL has published amazing recipes for decades, many from co-op members.

Country Life
COLORADO RURAL ELECTRIC NEWS

DECEMBER 1976
VOLUME 24, NUMBER 6

THE COVER

Your next electric cooperative board election, reorganization and staff jobs will be on the cutting edge of energy history. See the new Energy History Series, "Changes in America" - a new look at the energy industry as it changes in America. As you write your resolutions for the next year, you'll find a new look at energy history as it changes in America. See the new Energy History Series, "Changes in America" - a new look at the energy industry as it changes in America. As you write your resolutions for the next year, you'll find a new look at energy history as it changes in America.

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ALLISON'S CORNER

OUR WISH FOR YOU THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

SEASON'S GREETINGS

CRABBY CRUST MEXICAN SUPPER

STUFFING & DRESSING

COOKING SUGGESTIONS

MASSAGE SPECIAL

COLORADO COUNTRY LIFE

December 1988

THE NEW What Why How Series: How to Make a Christmas Tree, How to Make a Christmas Tree, How to Make a Christmas Tree

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Colorado's Lightning Lab

By Kenneth Jessen

A handsome man stood on the rolling prairie. He wore a dark suit and a white shirt. He was Nikola Tesla, the inventor of the alternating current electric power system. He was standing in the town of Colorado Springs, Colorado, where a new power transmission project was being planned. The project was to bring high voltage power to the town of Colorado Springs. Tesla was the man who had the idea. He had the idea to use high voltage power to transmit electricity over long distances. He had the idea to use high voltage power to transmit electricity over long distances. He had the idea to use high voltage power to transmit electricity over long distances.

Colorado Country Life

1980s

Colorado Country Life cover, table of contents, and an article by Kenneth Jessen about Nikola Tesla and his lightning lab near Colorado Springs.

Colorado Country Life cover, table of contents, and an article by Kenneth Jessen about Nikola Tesla and his lightning lab near Colorado Springs.

A SAVORY WAY TO START HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS



These Savory Cheese Balls are not only simple to make but perfect for any holiday gathering or celebration. They're colorful, flavorful, fun to create, and even more enjoyable to dive in to. Texture and color are the name of the game with this recipe. The result is a beautiful array of red, gold, and green, all on one plate.

Display the array of cheese balls on a festive plate for something equally cheery. Serve the plate with crackers or cut, raw vegetables.



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 coloradocountrylife.coop.

Savory Cheese Balls

Servings: 6–12

Ingredients

- 2 packages** (8 oz each) cream cheese
- 2 tbsp** caraway seeds
- 1 tsp** poppy seeds
- 2 cloves** garlic, minced, divided
- 1/4 cup** parsley, chopped
- 2 tsp** thyme leaves, chopped
- 1 tsp** rosemary, chopped
- 1/4 cup** dried cranberries, chopped
- 2 tbsp** pecans, chopped
- Assorted crackers
- Assorted cut raw vegetables

Instructions

- Cut each cream cheese block into three squares. Roll each square into a ball.
- In a small bowl, combine caraway seeds, poppy seeds, and half the garlic.
- In a second small bowl, combine parsley, thyme, rosemary, and remaining garlic.
- In a third small bowl, combine cranberries and pecans.
- Roll two cheese balls in seed mixture, two in herb mixture, and two in cranberry mixture.
- Cut each ball in half and serve with crackers or vegetables.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Culinary.net.

DID YOU KNOW?

Legend has it that a Massachusetts farmer created the first cheese ball in recorded history in 1801 and presented it to President Jefferson at the White House. It is said to have weighed 1,235 pounds. The appetizer-sized version of this dish became popular in the late 1940s after a recipe was published in a well-read cookbook.

Source: wisconsincheese.com



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ELECTRIFY AND SAVE®

SAFER, BETTER, FASTER: POWER UP YOUR LIFE WITH ELECTRICITY

HEAT & COOL WITH A HEAT PUMP

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

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

SAVE WITH AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE (EV) CHARGER

A study from Consumer Reports showed that EV drivers spend close to 60 percent less on fuel (aka charging) costs compared to drivers of gas-powered cars.

The biggest savings come when drivers charge overnight during off-peak hours.

Other benefits include:

- No oil changes and less maintenance required
- Increased savings compared to gasoline
- Fun to drive because of torque
- A federal EV tax credit offers up to \$7,500 for new cars and \$4,000 for first-time used buyers
- More responsive, fun to drive and no lag

MEMBER-EXCLUSIVE REBATES MAKE THE SWITCH EASIER

Our energy efficiency program is over 40 years old, and we've provided 10,000+ electrification and efficiency rebates as a part of our Electrify and Save program.

Together with our members, we're extending the benefits of electrification for schools, homeowners, businesses, agricultural producers, nonprofits and more.

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

LEARN MORE AT

WWW.TRISTATE.COOP/ELECTRIFY-AND-SAVE

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



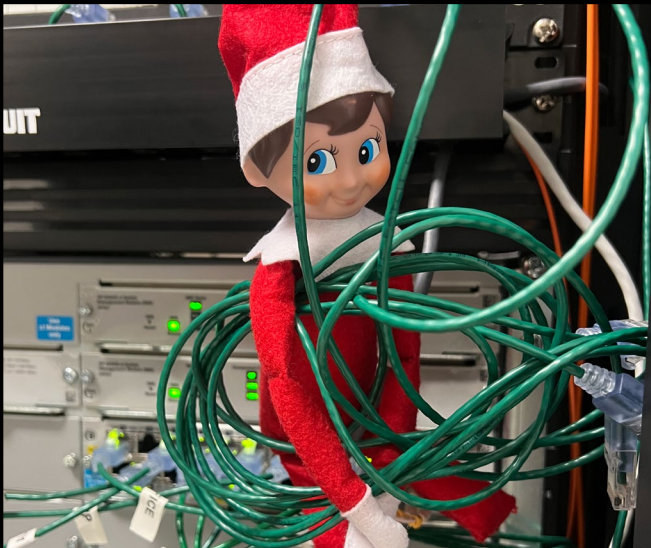
CO-OP SECURITY CAM



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HIGHLINE ELECTRIC CAM 2: 2024-01-25 18:14:57 MST



SANGRE DE CRISTO ELECTRIC CAM 4: 2024-09-11 02:35:27 MDT



TRI-STATE G&T CAM 6: 2024-09-04 22:20:39 MDT



MOUNTAIN VIEW ELECTRIC CAM 5: 2024-03-25 13:43:01 MDT

SPARKY

The Adventure of the Colorado Electric Co-op Elf on the Shelf

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse.
Except for dear Sparky, our Elf on the Shelf —
He was sneaking and spying, outdoing himself.

See, Sparky was given a task for the year
To visit the co-ops and bring silly cheer.
He flew all around, making friends as he went
Across Colorado, from Meeker to Bent.

The linemen were home with their families one night
While Sparky planned antics and tricks to delight.
He went to a co-op and plotted his trip
And decided to turn off the switch with a flip.

When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter,
Sparky zoomed out to see what was the matter.
Away to the window he flew in a dash,
And lit up the night with a bright, awesome flash.

The moon on the snow gave a bright winter glow,
As Sparky zipped out to the yard far below,
When what to his curious eyes did appear,
But a shiny, white bucket truck, drawing so near.

With linemen so jolly in safety gear snug,
Donning hard hats and gloves to check all the plugs.
Sparky hopped in the bucket for a magical ride,
With a safety clip fastened on to his left side.

When the linemen were done, Sparky flew with great speed,
To the next co-op's office, where he'd help out, indeed.
He landed on desks, then on printers and phones,
Leaving behind chaos and mischievous tones.

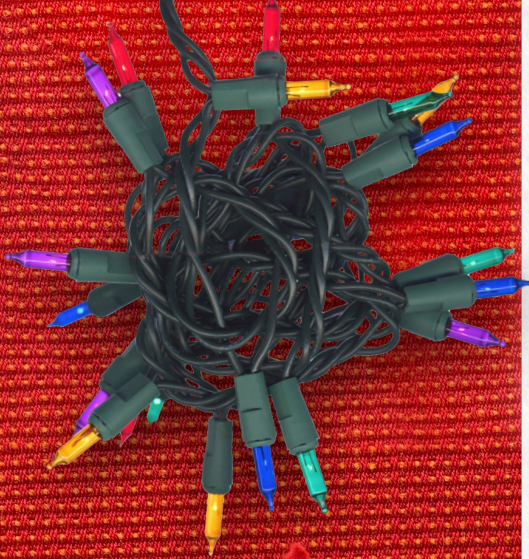
He stacked all the papers, then rearranged chairs,
And peeked through the files and spreadsheets with care.
From billing to mapping, he glanced with delight,
Helping the co-op stay running bright.

Next, he went to the warehouse out back,
Where tools and supplies were all neatly stacked.
He zipped through the aisles, from ladders to wire,
And climbed on the shelves just a little bit higher.

He spotted transformers, new meters, and more,
Then sat on a forklift to drive and explore.
The hard hats were hung, the gloves in a row,
As Sparky admired how it all helps power flow.

From the office to trucks, to each warehouse and crew,
Sparky left magic wherever he flew.
But soon it was time for his journey to end,
As the lineman appeared — his old, trusted friend.

[continued on next page]



“Come on now, Sparky, we’ve got power to restore,
For the children and families who need electricity more.”

With a wink and a nod, Sparky hopped in the truck,
And off to the substation they drove, wishing for the best luck.

But he left one last message
Going into the night:

**“Thank you to the co-ops,
who give us bright light!”**



SEE SPARKY ON HIS COLORADO ADVENTURES



Sparky takes a hot cocoa break at Poudre Valley REA.



Sparky tries to repair his antics at Grand Valley Power.

The sweet elf helps the Gunnison County Electric office staff keep an eye on the candy bowl.



Sparky stands watch at Empire Electric in Cortez.

SAN LUIS VALLEY
A Power

ci

USD



Sparky hangs out to watch the lineworkers in Morgan County REA's warehouse.



Highline Electric Association staff finds the silly elf in their drive-thru tube one morning.



Sparky tries to help with the heavy equipment at Sangre de Cristo Electric in Buena Vista.



Keeping an eye on Mountain View Electric's fleet, Sparky takes a break from mischief to plot his next move.



A Southeast Colorado Power crew gets sassy supervision during pole repair work in La Junta.



Sparky finds a friend his size in Monte Vista at San Luis Valley REC.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM COLORADO'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

MANY GIVING A LITTLE HELPS A LOT

BY SUZIE ROMIG

Many people giving a little to help a lot is key to the philanthropic efforts of electric cooperatives across Colorado.

Each of the 22 electric co-ops in Colorado has some type of charitable giving program that best matches the geographic area and membership needs, co-op communication managers said.

The founding mission of electric cooperatives was to provide electrical service where electricity was lacking, so giving back to serve unmet needs in the community is bedrock for not-for-profit electric co-ops. Concern for Community is one of the seven principles of co-ops.

“We were formed because people in rural areas needed electricity,” noted Paris Daugherty, communications manager at San Isabel Electric Association. “Our co-op community donation programs are following that original co-op mission. We are bringing services, programs, and events to rural areas that wouldn’t be possible without the help of our community donation program.”

Much of co-op charitable giving is funded from small donations from consumer-members who choose to give pennies a month through a program called Operation RoundUp®. Some co-ops donate using funds remaining in unclaimed capital credits.

The variety of projects, events, or nonprofit organizations supported through the combined charitable giving efforts are as broad as Colorado is wide. At San Isabel Electric alone, during 2023, the co-op donated \$83,711 to 63 community



Assistance with a turkey collection drive to support a local food pantry at Thanksgiving is just one example of the many co-op giving programs, in this case at Mountain View Electric Association. Photo courtesy of Mountain View Electric.

projects or groups. Some of the charitable projects included parks or art restoration, town or county fairs, volunteer fire department fundraisers, Santa gift tree programs, rodeos, library programs, school supplies, baseball team uniforms, a community center oyster fry, and a youth fishing derby.

Co-ops not only help with money; employees also donate work hours at community events — including helping at school special events, hosting a BBQ for neighbors at a mobile home park, or reading to elementary school kids in local schools’ classrooms.

Multiple co-ops have unique programs tailored to their communities. The Empower Grant Program in its fourth

year at Poudre Valley REA, for example, supports education in science, technology, engineering, arts, and math for K-12 classrooms across the co-op’s Northern Colorado service territory.

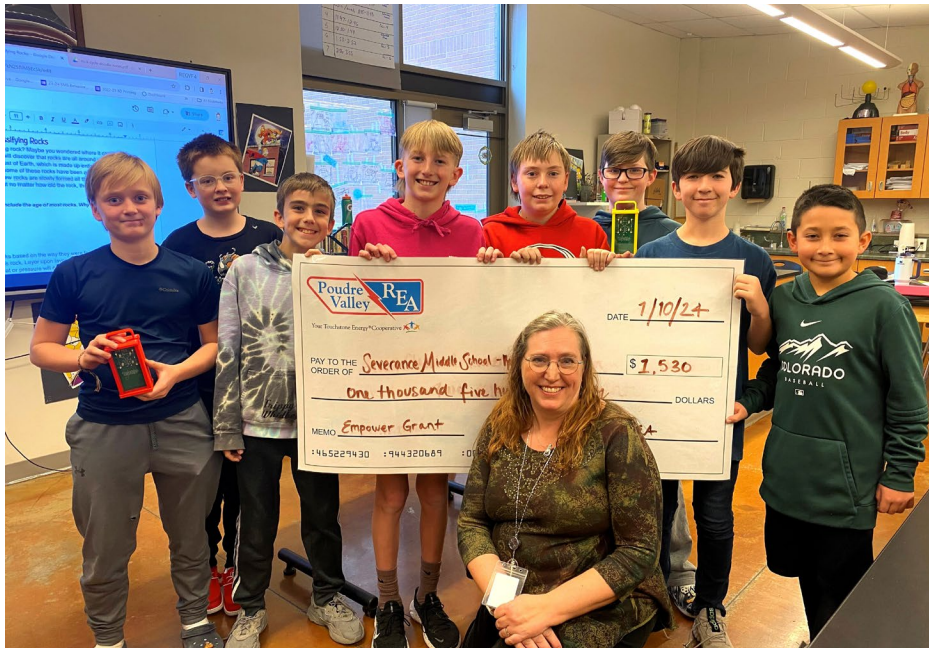
Grand Junction-based Grand Valley Power employees select a local nonprofit to help through a community impact project, and currently that supports Go Baby Go, a collaborative effort between Colorado Mesa University engineering students and Family Health West. Go Baby Go provides mobility solutions for children with disabilities by modifying small electric cars the youngsters can drive.

Other co-ops donate turkeys to a local food pantry at Thanksgiving, collect for the Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots drive,

or pack bags of oatmeal for hungry families through Spark the Change.

“All of these programs combine to illustrate our concern for our members

while being a positive impact for our service territory,” said Erica Meyer, community relations specialist at Mountain View Electric Association near Colorado Springs.



▶ Co-ops have unique programs tailored to their communities. Poudre Valley REA awards Empower Grants to support science, technology, engineering, arts, and math education in classrooms across its service territory. *Photo courtesy of Poudre Valley REA.*



▶ Grand Valley Power employees select a nonprofit to help through a community impact project, which currently supports Go Baby Go, a collaborative effort between Colorado Mesa University engineering students and Family Health West. Go Baby Go provides mobility solutions for children with disabilities by modifying small electric cars the children can drive. *Photo courtesy of GVP.*

Operation RoundUp allows co-op members to voluntarily opt in to round up their bill to the next highest dollar amount to support co-op charitable giving. The average Operation RoundUp amount is \$6 per member per year; yet combined, the program supports hundreds of projects.

“You might not think that’s a lot, but truly when everyone comes together, you really see the ability to bring a bigger force of good to support the community,” said Grant Winger, executive director at grant-recipient Fresh Start Center that helps with hunger and poverty in Colorado Springs.

A longstanding Operation RoundUp facilitator, Mountain View Electric has raised more than \$3.3 million through the program since 1999; almost 50% of the co-op’s 56,000 members choose to round up, Meyer said. Mountain View members who have suffered from loss, personal disaster, or medical emergencies may apply directly for assistance through Operation RoundUp.

“It just makes a huge impact in our service territory both for members and nonprofits servicing our territory,” Meyer said.

Jessica Quintana, community and member relations administrator at Poudre Valley REA, said Colorado co-ops enjoy spreading love and support to the communities.

“We have a great focus on supporting organizations that make a big impact on our community to benefit our members,” Quintana said. “Each co-op gives in our own ways that are beneficial for the areas we serve, and we take pride in supporting our members.”

Suzie Romig is a degreed, award-winning journalist who lives near Steamboat Springs and has lived, worked, and explored in Colorado since 1990.



LEARN MORE ONLINE

Read previous Energy Connections columns at coloradocountrylife.coop. Click on Energy Connections under Energy.

Doctor urges seniors to carry medical alert device

Seniors snap up new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills

People don't always do what their doctor says, but when seasoned veteran emergency room physician, Dr. Philip B. Howren, says every senior should have a medical alert device, you better listen up.

"Seniors are just one fall away from being put in a nursing home," Dr. Howren said. "With a medical alert device, seniors are never alone. So it keeps them living independently in their own home. That's why seniors and their family members are snapping up a sleek new medical alert device that comes with no monthly bills ever," he said.

Many seniors refuse to wear old style help buttons because they make them look old. But even worse, those medical alert systems come

with monthly bills.

To solve these problems Universal Physicians, a U.S. company went to work to develop a new, modern, state-of-the-art medical alert device. It's called "FastHelp™" and it instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"This slick new little device is designed to look like the pagers doctors wear every day. Seniors love them because it actually makes them look important, not old," Dr. Howren said.

FastHelp is expected to hit store shelves later this year. But special newspaper promotional giveaways are slated for seniors in select areas. ■



■ **NO MONTHLY BILLS:** "My wife had an old style help button that came with hefty bills every month and she was embarrassed to wear it because it made her look old," said Frank McDonald, Canton, Ohio. "Now, we both have FastHelp™, the sleek new medical alert device that our grandkids say makes us look 'cool' not old," he said. With FastHelp, seniors never have to worry about being alone and the best part is there are no monthly bills ever.

Seniors born before 1961 get new medical alert device with no monthly bills ever

It's just what seniors have been waiting for; a sleek new medical alert device with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help with just the push of a button for a one-time \$149 price tag that's a real steal after today's instant rebate

The phone lines are ringing off the hook.

That's because for seniors born before 1961, it's a deal too good to pass up.

Starting at precisely 8:30am this morning the Pre-Store Release begins for the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp™ One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

"It's not like old style monitored help buttons that make you talk to a call center and only work when you're at home and come with hefty bills every month. FastHelp comes with state-of-the-art cellular embedded technology. That means it works at home or anywhere, anytime cell service is available



■ **FLYING OUT THE DOOR:** Trucks are being loaded with the new medical alert devices called FastHelp. They are now being delivered to lucky seniors who call the National Rebate Center Hotline at 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8386 today. Everyone is calling to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device because it instantly connects you to unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

(Continued on next page)

(Continued from previous page)

whether you're out watering the garden, driving in a car, at church or even hundreds of miles away on a tour or at a casino. You are never alone. With just a single push of the One-Touch E Button you instantly get connected to free unlimited help nationwide with no monthly bills ever," said Jack Lawrence, Executive Director of Product Development for U.S. based Universal Physicians.

"We've never seen anything like it. Consumers absolutely love the sleek new modern design and most of all, the instant rebate that practically pays for it and no monthly bills ever," Lawrence said.

FastHelp is the sleek new medical alert device with the best of combinations: a quality, high-tech engineered device that's also an extremely great value because there are no monthly bills ever.

Better still, it comes with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever – which makes FastHelp a great choice for seniors, students and professionals because it connects to one of the largest nationwide networks everywhere cell service is available for free.

And here's the best part. All those who already have an old style monitored medical alert button can immediately eliminate those monthly bills, which is why Universal Physicians is widely advertising this announcement nationwide.

"So if you've ever felt a medical alert device was too complicated or expensive, you'll want to get FastHelp, the sleek new medical alert device with no monthly bills," said Lawrence.

The medical alert device slugfest was dominated by two main combatants who both offer old style monitored help buttons that come with a hefty bill every month. But now Universal Physicians, the U.S. based heavyweight, just delivered a knockout blow sending the top rated contenders to the mat with the unveiling of FastHelp. It's the sleek new cellular embedded medical alert device that cuts out

the middleman by instantly connecting you directly to highly trained 911 operators all across the U.S. There's absolutely nothing to hook-up or install. You don't need a land line and you don't need a cell phone. Everything is done for you.

"FastHelp is a state of the art medical alert device designed to make you look important, not old. Old style monitored help buttons you

wear around your neck, or require expensive base station equipment or a landline are the equivalent of a horse and buggy," Lawrence says. "It's just outdated."

Millions of seniors fall every year and spend hours lying on the floor helpless and all alone with no help.

But seniors who fall and get immediate help are much more likely to avoid getting sent to a nursing

home and get to STAY living in their own home independently.

Yet millions of seniors are still risking their safety by not having a medical alert device. That's because seniors just can't afford to pay the monthly bills that come with old style medical alert devices.

That's why seniors born before 1961 are rushing to cash in the whopping \$150

instant rebate before the 21 day deadline ends.

So there's no need to wait for FastHelp to hit store shelves later this year because seniors born before 1961 can get it now just by using the \$150 instant rebate coupon printed in today's newspaper before the 21 day deadline ends. If lines are busy keep trying, all calls will be answered. ■

HOW TO GET IT:

► **IF BORN BEFORE 1961:** Use the rebate coupon below and call this Toll-Free Hotline: 1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8386

► **IF BORN AFTER 1961:** You cannot use the rebate coupon below and must pay \$299 Call: 1-800-330-9423 DEPT. HELP8386

THE BOTTOM LINE: You don't need to shop around. We've done all the leg work, this deal is too good to pass up. FastHelp with the instant rebate is a real steal at just \$149 and shipping and there are no monthly bills ever.

PROS: It's the sleek new medical alert device that comes with the exclusive FastHelp One-Touch E 911 Button that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts or deposits. It connects you to the vast available network of cellular towers for free and saves seniors a ton of money because there are no monthly bills ever making this deal irresistible. Plus it's the only medical alert device that makes seniors look important, not old.

CONS: Consumers can't get FastHelp in stores until later this year. That's why it's so important for seniors born before 1961 to call the National Rebate Center Hotline within the next 21 days. For those who miss that deadline, the sleek little medical alert device will set you back over \$300 bucks.



P7366 OF23661R-1

REBATE COUPON

EXPIRES 21 Days from Today's Publication Date

After Coupon Expires: The FastHelp is \$299.00 plus shipping & handling

\$150 Off

HELP8386

FastHelp™

One-touch help. Anytime. Anywhere.
With no monthly bills ever.



FastHelp, the new medical alert device that instantly connects you to free unlimited nationwide help everywhere cell service is available with no contracts, no deposits and no monthly bills ever.

USE THIS COUPON: To get \$150 off FastHelp you must be born before 1961 and call the National Rebate Center Hotline at **1-800-330-4294 DEPT. HELP8386** before the 21 day rebate deadline ends.

FASTHELP IS COVERED BY A 30-DAY MONEY BACK GUARANTEE LESS SHIPPING AND A 1 YEAR LIMITED WARRANTY. FASTHELP IS A 4G CELLULAR DEVICE. FASTHELP WILL NOT BE ABLE TO MAKE 911 CALLS WHEN CELLULAR SERVICE IS NOT AVAILABLE SUCH AS IN REMOTE OR HIGH DENSITY AREAS. WE SUGGEST TESTING CELLULAR CONNECTION BEFORE USE. SEE OWNERS MANUAL. FASTHELP USES GPS TRIANGULATIONS TO APPROXIMATE YOUR LOCATION WHEN YOUR DEVICE IS TURNED ON. DR. HOWREN IS A COMPENSATED MEDICAL ADVISOR AND FRANK MCDONALD IS AN ACTUAL USER AND COMPENSATED FOR HIS PARTICIPATION. OH RESIDENTS ADD 6.5% SALES TAX. UNIVERSAL PHYSICIANS 7747 SUPREME AVE, NORTH CANTON, OH 44720.



Variegated Plants

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Variegated plants are hard to resist with their strikingly colorful leaves. Patterns are created in stripes, speckles, dots, and delicately trimmed edges. There are so many different colors and patterns, it's hard to choose among them. There's no limit to how many designs you might select for houseplants, but you will need to be more strategic when selecting ones for your garden. Mixing too many different patterns can be distracting. Limiting choices to single plants or small groupings will be more pleasing.

Some variegated plants are so dramatic they clearly become your garden's focal point. Larger, more strongly variegated patterns are especially striking when placed in front of dark backgrounds at the back of garden beds where they can be seen from a distance.

Other variegated plants have more subtle patterns, but won't fail to attract attention. Add them to patio planters to make it easier to see delicate features. Plant them in clusters near contrasting plants to

make them stand out. Or plant variegated shrubs between solid-leaved shrubs for a bold contrast.

A popular design strategy is to pair two different variegated plants featuring similar colors. If one has leaves that are mostly green with a little yellow, its companion would be mostly yellow with a little green. You can also complement the colors of variegated plant leaves with similarly colored flowers. For instance, a variegated plant with cream-colored edges would look pleasant planted among peach- or pink-colored flower blossoms.

Intermingling light-leaved variegated plants with solid green ground cover in shady areas creates an interesting dynamic. 'Touch of Class' Jacobs Ladder is a woodland plant that prefers moist, humus soil. Its dark pink buds open into pale lavender flowers in late spring. 'Stairway to Heaven' Jacobs Ladder is more tolerant of partial sun. Its green leaves are splashed with creamy white and have pink edges. Both contrast well with dark green ground cover.

Some variegated houseplants you might want to try are Monstera Thai Constellation and Philodendron Ring of Fire. The monstera has creamy white speckles that resemble stars on its huge fenestrated leaves. By contrast, the smaller philodendron has speckles of variegation varying from cream to flaming red and orange on its narrow leaves.

Perhaps the biggest challenge in growing variegated plants is finding the best site. You will want to find the right level of light for the plant's specific needs. Typically, the more white or yellow variation in a leaf, the more sun it will need. But too much sunlight can scorch leaves, so you will want to avoid full sun. Fortunately, many variegated plants are bred to adapt to various conditions. It will be easier to find the right spot for houseplants or outdoor container plants, but it will take careful planning for gardens.

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



Keep Your Pets Safe This Holiday Season

Regardless of what time of year your pet first called your home its home, the holiday season presents a plethora of hazards way beyond too much catnip or too many gourmet doggie treats.

Christmas lights, decorations, and presents under the tree all create opportunities for your furry friend to get hurt. Your dog or cat could start with the gift of chocolates under the tree (a big no-no for pets) or get tangled up in light strands and make a run for it, causing holiday chaos. And your puppy could be in for a shock if she decides cords or light strands are meant for her gnawing pleasure.

Electronics are popular gifts during the holidays, but they could be a hazard for your pets. When using laptops, tablets, phones, or other electronics that are charging and plugged into an outlet, make sure your pet does not chew on the cord, which could cause electrical shock.

Chewing on an electrical cord is the most common cause of electric shock in puppies. They can chew a light strand or any type of live electrical cord and the owner may not realize it until a couple of hours later when the pup has trouble breathing. Electric shock can cause ulcers in the mouth and lesions on the tongue and gums. Furthermore, contact with a live wire sends a surge of electricity through the heart and lungs, which eventually causes fluid to accumulate in the lungs.

Puppies are the most likely culprits to get into electrical mishaps. If you have a puppy, petproof your home much like you would for babies and toddlers. Enclose cords in long plastic or rubber cord protectors that snap shut to protect cords and keep them out of gnawing or chewing sight. Felines (and other pets) may be more selective about what they chew on and are less likely to chew on an electrical cord, although it could happen.

Colorado Country Life and Safe Electricity remind pet owners to take these additional precautions not just during the holidays, but year-round:

- Charging cords left plugged in but not in use may be tempting for pets. Unplug and put away cords while not in use. If you believe your pet has chewed on a cord or made contact with another electrical source, look for evidence of burns, increased drooling, coughing, breathing difficulties, mouth irritation, or signs of pain or distress. If you detect any of these, seek veterinary care for your pet immediately.
- Do not let your pets nap by or behind warm computer equipment or any other electrical devices. While it might make a cozy spot, it could cause trouble for your pet.
- Don't leave your pets unattended around burn hazards, such as a hair straightener or portable heater. Pets can easily

burn themselves. And remember: Any heating appliance, but especially a space heater, should never be left unattended.

- If you find your furry friend has swallowed a gadget such as a chewed-up cellphone (it has happened!) or other electronic parts, call your vet or pet hospital right away. It could cause a digestive blockage. In addition, the contents of many electronic devices are toxic.
- Check to be sure night-lights and appliances are completely plugged into wall outlets. Small paws or tongues can easily find partially exposed prongs, which are a hazard for curious puppies and kittens.
- Look around your home for dangling cords that pets could get entangled in; they could pull down lamps, small appliances, or devices.
- All appliances near sinks or bathtubs should be plugged into an outlet equipped with a ground fault circuit interrupter. Never keep small appliances or electrical devices such as curling irons, hair dryers, or plugged-in cellphones near water. Playful pets can knock them into the water, creating a dangerous and possibly deadly situation. GFCIs stop the flow of electricity if there is a problem and, when properly used, can save lives. Check GFCIs monthly to make sure they are working.

For more information on electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).



Hut Trips with Kids

BY EUGENE BUCHANAN

Like many new parents, when our friend clan started procreating, we kept right on doing what we did before being saddled with children. Foremost come winter: going on hut trips, where the whole family skis into a cozy cabin with all the creature comforts. Luckily, Colorado is blessed with a bounty of such abodes. Their beauty is that, unlike backpacking, you don't need to carry shelter, stoves, cooking gear, or ground pads. That's all provided at the cabin. Of course, you do have to get your entire brood in there, which means bringing mountains of gear — clothes, food, sleeping bags, ski equipment, and more. But while it's a lot of work, and makes you question your sanity, it's well worth the effort for a wintertime getaway. Following are a few pointers we learned along the way.

Shrink your distance. Don't set out for Everest. Depending on your youngsters' ages, pick huts that are closer to a trailhead; 1 to 3 miles without much elevation gain works best. Favorites include Vance's, a 10th Mountain hut near Ski Cooper on Tennessee Pass (3 miles with a 556-foot elevation gain, huts.org), and 20-bed Francie's near Breckenridge (2.2 miles with 1,000-foot elevation gain, summithuts.org).

Kids' ski gear. You have a choice between snowshoes, cross-country skis, telemark gear, or an Alpine touring setup. Snowshoes are simple but considerably slower. Cross-country gear is lighter for the up but offers less control on the down. AT and telemark gear offers the most control for skiing but is heavier and more expensive. Full-on Alpine gear provides uber-control for the ski out, but you'll have to pack it in.

Bring other families. Misery (and memories) loves company. And so do your kids. The key for our trips was bringing other families along — meaning the kids had friends and so did the parents. It makes the ski in easier, the hut games and igloo building more fun, and pajama time that much cozier. (Yes, you can still bring pajamas.)

Sleds vs. packs. For getting in with your gear, you have two options: sleds or backpacks. (In the early years, sometimes a poor parent had both.) Sleds let the ground shoulder the load and can carry more gear but require more fussing as they can list to the side. Packs put the weight on your back, which is less efficient. They also can't fit as much, often meaning strapping gear to the outside.

Watch your pack weight. From kids' equipment to snacks, meals, clothes,

sleeping bags, blankies, and that favorite stuffed animal, you'll be packing a lot of gear. Trim where you can to avoid taking multiple trips. In other words, don't bring the kitchen sink — the cabins have them, anyway. Ski clothes and one comfy change for inside, and one lightweight pair of shoes or slippers will do. Save the T-bones for home and go light with your meals. Until your kids can carry some of the load, you're the beast of burden.

Cabin time. Embrace the time indoors: play card and board games in front of the fire. A few hut trip faves include charades, salad bowl, Pictionary variations, limbo, and the ol' grab-the-bag-with-your-teeth game.

It's not all about the skiing. Sure, skiing is great. But don't force it. Kids will have just as much fun, or even more, sledding and building snow forts, igloos, and snowmen as they will schussing. And believe it or not, you will, too.

A former ski patrol and raft and kayak guide, Eugene Buchanan has written about the outdoors for more than 25 years. He lives in Steamboat Springs.

NOTE ABOUT HUT TRIPS

There is high demand for winter hut use. If you are interested, visit huts.org/how-to-plan-a-hut-trip. The reservation lottery for 2026 trips opens in January.

SACRED STONE OF THE SOUTHWEST IS ON THE BRINK OF EXTINCTION



Centuries ago, Persians, Tibetans and Mayans considered turquoise a gemstone of the heavens, believing the striking blue stones were sacred pieces of sky. Today, the rarest and most valuable turquoise is found in the American Southwest— but the future of the blue beauty is unclear.

On a recent trip to Tucson, we spoke with fourth generation turquoise traders who explained that less than five percent of turquoise mined worldwide can be set into jewelry and only about twenty mines in the Southwest supply gem-quality turquoise. Once a thriving industry, many Southwest mines have run dry and are now closed.

We found a limited supply of turquoise from Arizona and purchased it for our *Sedona Turquoise Collection*. Inspired by the work of those ancient craftsmen and designed to showcase the exceptional blue stone, each stabilized vibrant cabochon features



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Funny Stories Update

Many readers have written us to say that they have not seen Funny Stories in several months. We're no longer collecting Funny Stories going forward. We still drew a winner from all of the published Funny Story writers to win the \$200 year-end prize.

Watch for more ways to win and engage with *Colorado Country Life* in 2025.

Congratulations to **Charlotte Boylan**, a Grand Valley Power member, whose Funny Story appeared in the June issue. She won the \$200 drawing.

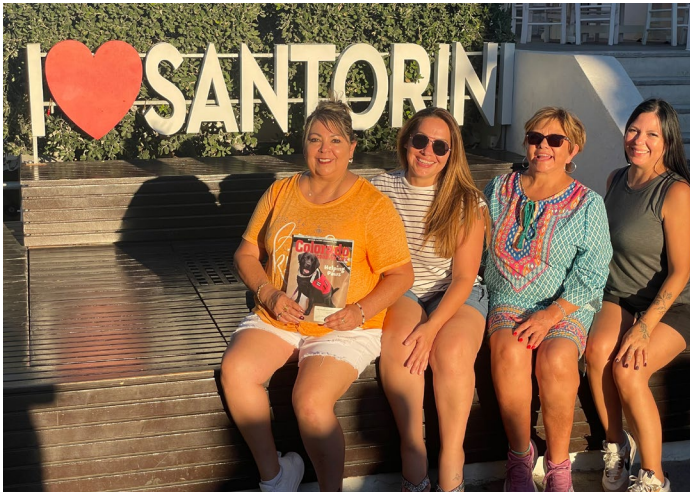
CCL Extra

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   READERS' PHOTOS



WINNER: Denise Gonzales takes CCL to beautiful Santorini, Greece, with her family to celebrate cousin Melanie's birthday. Denise is a member of San Isabel Electric.



Art and Linda Wilson take a break from wine tasting to snap a photo with CCL at Quinta da Pacheco in Portugal. They are Sangre de Cristo Electric members.



Mary Varoglu, a GCEA member, brings her copy of the magazine to St. Charles's Church (Karlskirche), a Baroque church located in Vienna, Austria.



Mountain View Electric Association members **Mark Nelson** and **Fred Baxter** take CCL to new heights at the summit of Kilimanjaro in Tanzania, Africa.



Cliff Healey and **Donna Nichols** stop for a photo with CCL on the boardwalk in Juneau, Alaska. These Grand Valley Power members say, "The day we booked this trip, we saved the magazines!"



Rod and Debbie Zwirn, Highline Electric Association members, get ready to enjoy CCL on a glass bottom boat in Waikiki, Hawaii.



Retired Y-W Electric Association employees **George Reese** and **John Horn** with their wives **Sybil** and **Vicki** stop at the Pula Arena, a Roman amphitheater in Pula, Croatia, to enjoy their October issue of CCL.

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](https://www.facebook.com/COCountryLife).

ALL THINGS COLD

BY GAYLENE GARCIA GRANGER

Hoedown Hill, Windsor

Nothing says snow fun and makes you feel like a carefree kid like a great day of tubing. At 1,200 feet long, Windsor claims to have the longest tubing hill in the United States. Hoedown Hill has 10 tubing lanes and two levels of fun for any age. There's the thrilling Bushwhacker for a frost-your-hair-back kind of ride and the Greenhorn for little ones under 42" tall or those seeking a more leisurely ride. Hoedown Hill also has multiple groomed runs for skiing and snowboarding as well as three terrain parks with jibs, rails, and jumps. For information, visit hoedownhill.com.



Photo courtesy of Hoedown Hill.

Ice Castles, Cripple Creek and Eagle

An awe-inspiring winter phenomenon, Ice Castles brings fairy tales to life.

Created in 2011 by lead ice artist Brent Christensen, the experience is built entirely by hand using hundreds of thousands of icicles. The immersive structures include towers, frozen thrones, ice-carved tunnels, slides, and fountains — and LEDs frozen inside the ice light up the sculptures and change color at night. It's magical, whimsical, and a must-do activity this winter.

Opening dates for Cripple Creek and Eagle Ice Castles are weather dependent. Visit icecastles.com for tickets and information.



Photo by A.J. Mellor, courtesy of Ice Castles.

Ice Fishing at the Ice Addiction Tournament

If you're a hard-core fishing fanatic, you know that a frozen lake isn't stopping anything. Even if you've never ice-fished, Nate Zelinski and his Tightlines company can show you all you need to know.

Unlike other ice fishing events where there is little engagement, Ice Addiction is super social and high energy. It's all prepped before you arrive: games for kids, and predrilled holes surrounding fire pits for gathering. All you need to do is set up your gear and have a good time. In the middle of it all is the live weigh-in where everyone gets a great view of the prize-winning fish. For dates and more information, visit tightlineoutdoors.com.



Photo courtesy of Nate Zelinski.

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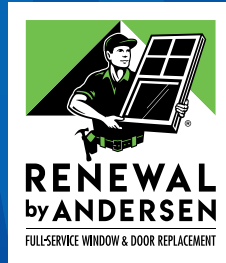
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