

The Voice of New Mexico's
Rural Electric Cooperatives

enchantment

**FARMERS' ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE**

FEBRUARY 2023

The Ol' Ball Game

The country's craze for baseball reached base
in New Mexico in the early 1900s **Page 14**

Belen was one of many New Mexico cities that
sprouted a baseball team and built a fanbase.
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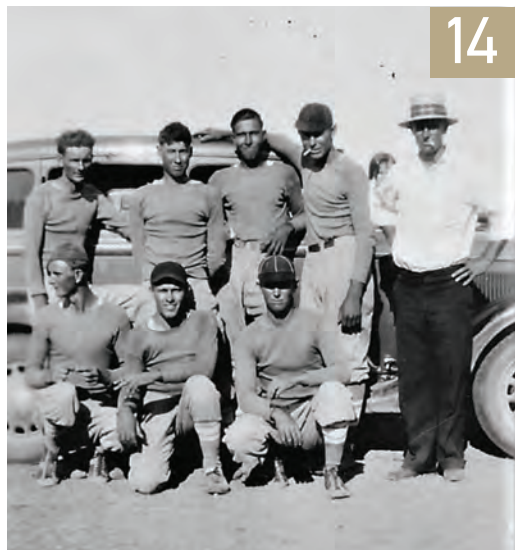
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February 2023

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Congratulations to Deanna Walker, with October's enchantment!

This freshman New Mexico history class studied the feature on Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid in its class.

Deanna Walker wins \$20!





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Board Meeting

The Board of Trustees meets at 9 a.m. the fourth Tuesday of the month in the Clovis cooperative boardroom.

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You Can Help Make a Lineworker's Job Safer

A lineworker's job of providing you with electricity is one of the toughest in the business. Climbing poles and stringing wire in all kinds of weather and dealing with electrical hazards are serious matters. You can help make a lineworker's job safer by following these simple suggestions:

- Don't hang birdhouses or basketball hoops on utility/electric poles. Lineworkers will have a hard time climbing around them if they must climb that pole.
- Don't landscape around poles or pad-mounted transformers with flower boxes or flower beds. Keep this area free of all obstacles.
- Don't hang or post signs on utility poles. These could cause lineworkers to slip while climbing. Even staples or nails left behind are



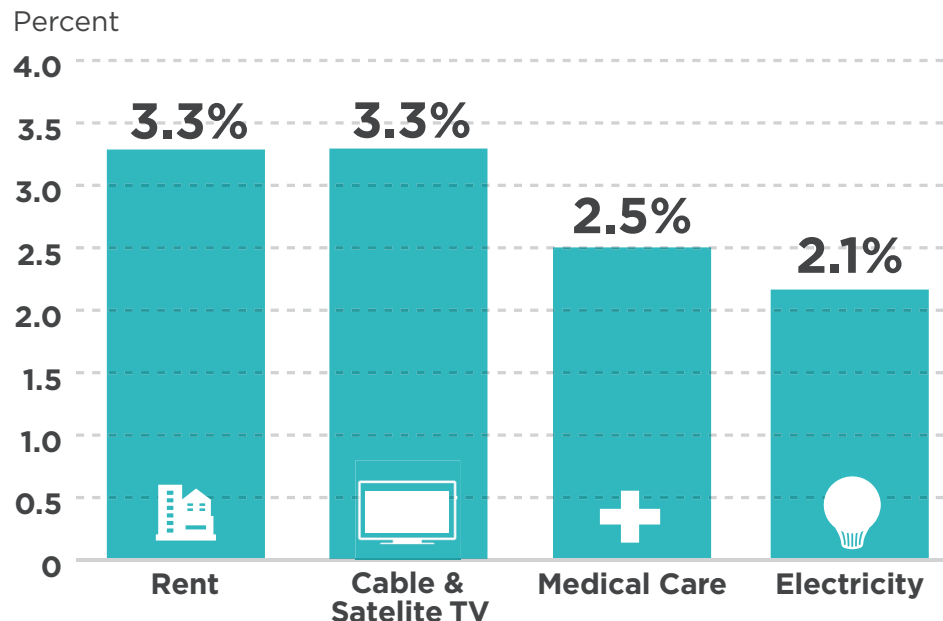
a climbing hazard and can damage insulated gloves that protect lineworkers from electricity.

- Don't use electrical equipment for your target practice. This could not only harm you, but it could cause an outage affecting hundreds of your neighbors.

ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2016-2021



SOURCES: U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS; CONSUMER PRICE INDEX



Save the Date!

Farmers' Electric Cooperative's 85th annual meeting will be Saturday, May 13 at the San Jon High School gym in San Jon, New Mexico. More details will follow. We hope to see you there!

Seal Up Your Home and Save Money

Staying comfortable in your home often means turning up the heat or the air conditioning, but that can be costly if your home is not properly sealed from the elements.

Roughly half of the energy a home uses goes to heating and cooling. Detecting and sealing leaks can save you money.

Cold air seeps into homes through small openings. To find those spots, take an incense stick or a lighted match and move it around the edge of windows and doors. This works best on a windy day. Air infiltration will be obvious. There are several remedies for fixing problems:

- Add weatherstripping to the edges of windows and doors.
- If your home has single-pane windows, consider adding storm windows to the exterior as an added barrier. If you are on the fence about replacing your old windows or adding storm windows, you might be surprised at how much new window installation has come down in the last few years. If you use a local handyman or contractor, you can install new windows for around \$250 to \$300 per window. Not only will your home be more aesthetically pleasing, you will be more comfortable and save on your utility bills. It adds value to your home as well.
- Add window film kits, which are effective in keeping cold air out.
- Remove old, cracked caulking and replace with new caulking designed for the application. Clear silicone caulking works best.



Detecting and sealing energy leaks inside and outside your home can save you money during cold—and warm—weather conditions.

- Use insulated curtains to prevent further heat loss.
- Remove window air conditioners when summer is over.

A quick walk around the outside of your home will reveal prime area candidates for quick and easy repairs. Any time a hole is drilled into a home, it creates an opportunity for energy loss. Start by checking pipe and wire penetrations. They should be sealed on the exterior and interior walls. This not only helps prevent energy loss, but also will keep critters from making their home inside yours.

The ductwork of a forced-air furnace, central air conditioning unit or heat pump can be another source of energy loss. According to Energy Star, sealing and insulating those ducts can improve the efficiency

of your system by as much as 20%.

Once ducts are sealed, check the connections at bends and registers, making sure connections are tight.

Next, wrap the ducts in insulation. Many homeowners will turn to an HVAC company or professional for this work.

Sealing your home doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. You can even turn it into a fun activity. Have each family member explore the house and write down how many problem areas they find.

Whoever finds the most areas to fix gets to be the foreman while the rest of the family is assigned to fixing the problems. It is a creative and simple way to get the entire family involved while taking some of the boredom out of an otherwise unexciting chore.

Comet ZTF on January 4, 2023, as imaged by a remotely-controlled telescope of the Las Cumbres Observatory network at Teide Observatory in the Canary Islands. PHOTO COURTESY OF LAS CUMBRES OBSERVATORY AND EARTHRISE INSTITUTE.

A Bright Comet Flashing By

In February, Venus continues its climb into the western evening sky that it began late last year. By the beginning of February, it sets almost half an hour after the end of dusk, staying visible longer during the next two months until it is visible for more than two hours by the middle of spring. Venus remains a brilliant evening-sky beacon until midyear, after which it begins a rapid descent into evening twilight as it passes between Earth and the sun during August.

Venus is not the only planet visible in our evening sky this month. While Saturn has vanished into the twilight, Jupiter remains visible in our southwestern sky after dusk. It gradually sinks lower to the horizon during February as it and Venus approach each other, with the two worlds having a close conjunction with each other in early March.

Mars, meanwhile, remains high in our western sky during the evening and sets during midmorning. It isn't as bright as it was late last year when it was closer to Earth, but it is still a rather prominent object cruising through the constellation of Taurus.

Our sole morning-sky planet this month is Mercury. At the beginning of February, our solar system's innermost world is visible low in the southeast near the beginning of dawn, but during the next one to two weeks, it sinks rapidly toward the horizon and is soon lost in twilight.

The comet mentioned in last month's column—Comet ZTF—was bright enough to see with ordinary binoculars by the end of December. It passed closest to the sun in mid-January and is nearest Earth—just 26 million miles away—in early February. The comet is near the bright star Capellain the constellation Auriga on the evening of Sunday, February 5. It travels southward, passing slightly east of Mars five nights later and a similar distance east of the Hyades star cluster in Taurus four nights after that.

It may be bright enough to detect with the unaided eye—at least, from dark rural sites—early in the month when nearest Earth (although the full moon on the fifth will make viewing difficult) but will likely fade rapidly as it pulls away from our planet afterward. 📸

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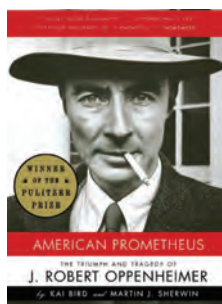
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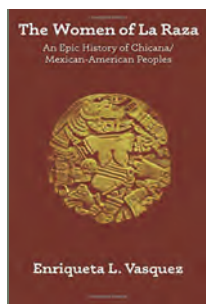
American Prometheus: The Triumph and Tragedy of J. Robert Oppenheimer

J. Robert Oppenheimer, whose life and legacy will forever

loom over New Mexico, had long held an abiding affection for the high desert of New Mexico. But it wasn't until the fall of 1942 that he would have his chance to blend his affection with this other love: physics.

Ahead of this summer's highly anticipated film "Oppenheimer," consider revisiting the Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, and source document for the film. The tome, which took 25 years for the authors to complete, masterfully illuminates the complicated and iconic life of the father of the atomic bomb.

By Kai Bird and Martin J. Sherwin
Random House
Available at Amazon.com



The Women of La Raza: An Epic History of Chicana / Mexican-American Peoples

While the whole of Europe lived under the spell of a male

god figure, the belief and spiritual basis of Indigenous peoples in the Americas was that of the woman, Mother Earth, natural laws, and life forces. Enriqueta L. Vasquez—a celebrated force of nature herself—has committed her talents here to the comprehensive telling of the contributions of women throughout Mexican and Mexican American history.

By Enriqueta L. Vasquez
El Grito del Norte Publication
Available at Amazon.com



Wild Life

The old adage, "You can't judge a book by its cover," can be traced to a George Eliot novel, "The Mill on the Floss," written in 1860. I haven't read Eliot's book, but the

internet tells me the overarching theme is the importance of sympathy. This is fitting, because I would like your kindness as I admit I sometimes do choose books by their cover. "Wild Life" is only the latest such book.

This light-hearted but oddly heavy) book's appeal lies in its texture, color, font, optimism and aspirational imagery—the sum of which rendered me powerless. This happens to me, and possibly to you too, on occasion. I didn't know I was in the market for "50 projects to rewild your life from the home to outdoors," yet there I was leaving my local haunt with this book tucked under my arm. Now, will I go on to build a bug hotel, forage for edible weeds or align my circadian rhythm? Unlikely, but I'm not compelled to judge every book by its utility either.

By Anna Carlile
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Irrigation equipment can be upgraded to use less water, which means less pumping—reducing the amount of water and energy consumed.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BONNEVILLE POWER ADMINISTRATION

Efficient Farming Equipment

The importance of farms cannot be understated. Farmers feed our families and keep the country running.

Farming is a business with many challenges, including risk and uncertainty. Finding ways to use less energy can reduce costs and result in energy savings for years to come.

When looking to improve farm efficiency, consider the following areas.

Motors and Pumps

Because motors and pumps account for a significant amount of energy use on a farm, replacing inefficient motors with efficient models can save energy and reduce cost.

Adding variable frequency drives allows you to adjust the frequency and voltage supplied to the motor or pump to change the motor's speed. This saves kilowatt-hours and reduces load by only operating at the needed capacity.

A VFD can be used in place of a phase converter, which allows use of three-phase power equipment where there is only access to single-phase power.

Irrigation

Upgrade irrigation equipment to use less water, which means less pumping—reducing the amount of water and energy consumed.

The goal is to get the right amount of water where it is needed. This can be accomplished by reducing evaporation through system design and fixing leaks in the system. GPS and geographic information system technologies allow for more specific irrigation targeting.

Monitor and test systems regularly to ensure maximum efficiency.

Heater Controls

In climates where engine block heaters are used to keep vehicle engines warm enough to start, adding engine block heater controls with temperature sensors and timers will reduce electricity use.

To keep water from freezing on farms with livestock, save energy by using stock tank heaters with thermostatic controls, which operate only

when needed instead of running constantly.

Insulated stock tanks may eliminate the need to heat water.

Lights

The longer lights are on, the higher the potential for savings. Prioritize replacing incandescent or fluorescent exterior lighting on photocells or lights that stay on all night.

LED lights last two to four times longer than fluorescents and 25 to 35 times longer than incandescents. That means less frequent replacement, which saves on materials and labor costs.


Emerging Technology

New farming technologies offering efficiency possibilities include electric tractors, space heating and water heating.

Equipment with information technology capabilities can aid efficiency by monitoring conditions and automating farming tasks. As with home efficiency practices, consider the equipment used most and the savings potential from upgrading or modifying existing equipment.

Rebates

About 80% of U.S. farms are in counties served by electric cooperatives. Your electric co-op or public utility district may offer rebates on farming equipment and energy-efficiency projects that help reduce energy use.

Improving efficiency on the farm can result in less energy use, lower bills and improved farming success during challenging financial times. 



Miranda Boutelle has more than 20 years of experience helping people save energy. She has worked on energy-efficiency projects from the Midwest to the West Coast. Today, Miranda is chief operating officer at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy-efficiency company.

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Throw Yourself a Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature.

If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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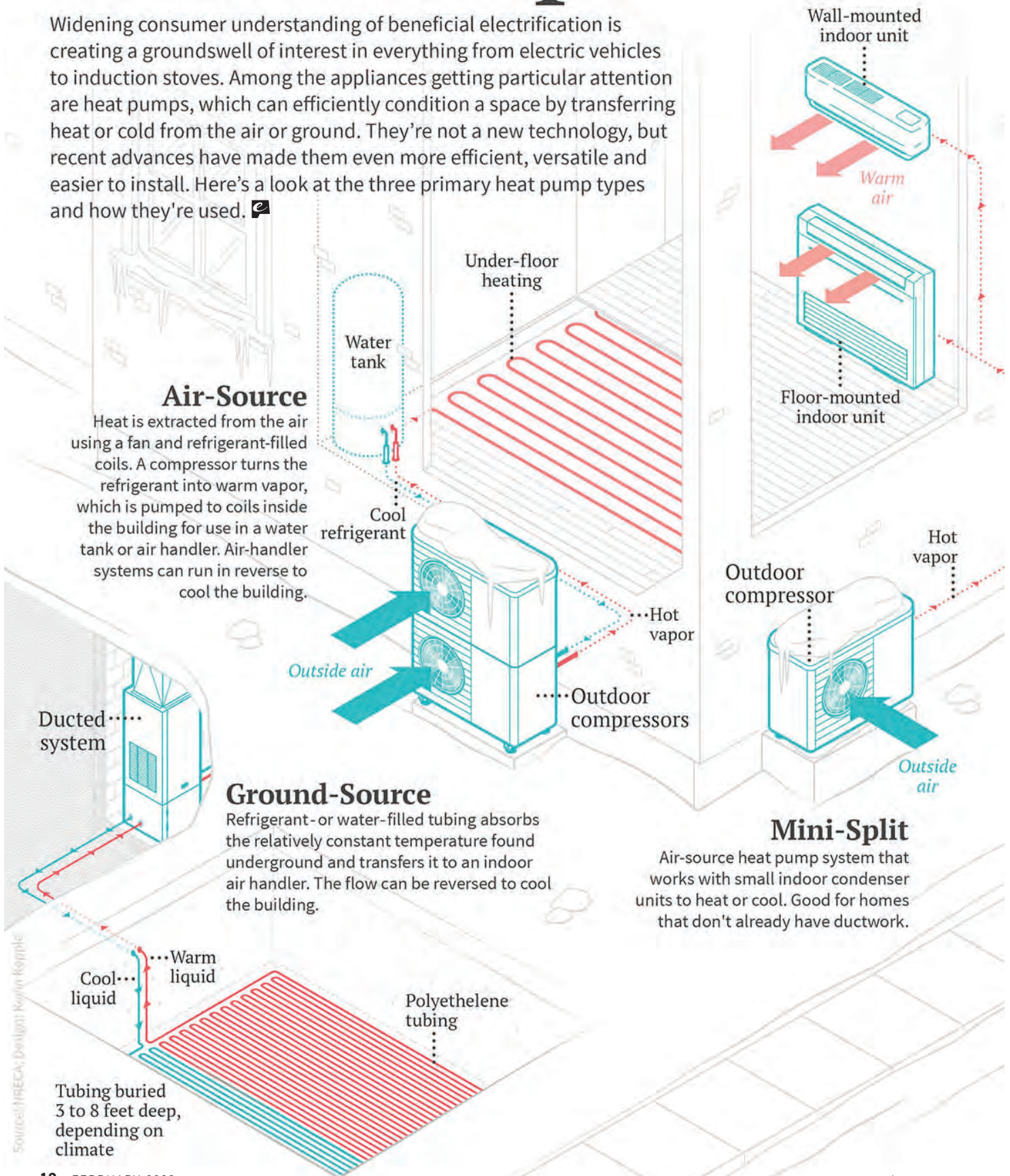
"The feel of this knife is unbelievable...this is an incredibly fine instrument."

— H., Arvada, CO



Heat Pumps

Widening consumer understanding of beneficial electrification is creating a groundswell of interest in everything from electric vehicles to induction stoves. Among the appliances getting particular attention are heat pumps, which can efficiently condition a space by transferring heat or cold from the air or ground. They're not a new technology, but recent advances have made them even more efficient, versatile and easier to install. Here's a look at the three primary heat pump types and how they're used. 📖



Air-Source

Heat is extracted from the air using a fan and refrigerant-filled coils. A compressor turns the refrigerant into warm vapor, which is pumped to coils inside the building for use in a water tank or air handler. Air-handler systems can run in reverse to cool the building.

Ground-Source

Refrigerant- or water-filled tubing absorbs the relatively constant temperature found underground and transfers it to an indoor air handler. The flow can be reversed to cool the building.

Mini-Split

Air-source heat pump system that works with small indoor condenser units to heat or cool. Good for homes that don't already have ductwork.

Source: NRECA; Design: Kevin Koppke

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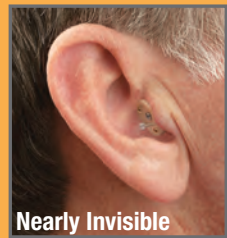
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Belen was one of many New Mexico cities that sprouted a baseball team in the early 1900s. PHOTO COURTESY OF BELEN HARVEY HOUSE MUSEUM

The Ol' Ball Game

The country's craze for baseball reached base in New Mexico in the early 1900s

By Dixie Boyle

A craze for baseball swept the country in the early 1900s. Towns—no matter their size—organized baseball clubs. Initially, playing fields were not much more than hastily cleared plots on the edge of town. Competitions between the local teams were the main events at county fairs and town celebrations.

Baseball clubs first began to appear on the East Coast in the 1840s. As settlers moved west, so did the game of baseball, and by the 1920s most small towns had at least one team. New Mexico was no exception when it came to the baseball

craze, and every section of the state had organized baseball clubs by the early 1900s.

Often, all the stores in town closed and the entire population attended the baseball game when one was scheduled. Some towns were lucky enough to have multiple teams.

From around 1910 through the 1930s, one of the best baseball teams in New Mexico was the Mountainair Bean Busters. Teams from the smaller towns were no match for the Mountainair team as described in newspaper articles. Mountainair was proud of its winning

team and often traveled with the club to away games.

One article in the Mountainair Independent tells of a game against Estancia in June 1920.

“The Bean Busters crossed bats with the Estancia baseball club at Estancia and wound up with a score of 10 to 1 in favor of the Bean Busters from Pinto Land.”

Ira Chisum managed the team through the 1930s. Under his guidance, Bean Busters often came out on top. In that era, managers not only made on-field decisions, but needed to lead off the field as well. Managers often were in charge of scheduling games and travel.

Estancia’s baseball team at first was uncertain if the town even wanted a team and issued the following challenge in the local newspaper: “All lovers of the national game are urged to attend and root for the home team. The attendance at the game Sunday will indicate whether the fans want baseball in Estancia or not—admission 25 cents.”

The Estancia club was one of the first teams in the state to go on tour, scheduling games with Belen, Carrizozo, Clovis and Roswell. The Estancia team often had a good pitcher. An article in the Albuquerque Journal in August 1917 reported that “in a pitcher’s battle Sunday afternoon, the Estancia Baseball Club defeated the Santa Fe team by striking out 17 men and allowing only three hits.”

In this early era of baseball, rivalries and fights occurred between the teams—especially when games ended in a close score. From the beginning, a strong rivalry developed between the small towns of Manzano and Punta de Agua. In 1940, the Punta team was scheduled to play its first game of the season against Manzano one afternoon and arrived at the playing field on horseback with most of the players riding double. The game was tense from the start, but the two teams managed to play a few innings before the game erupted into a fistfight.

Before long, the Punta players realized they were outnumbered and tried



Madrid’s ball park had stands with covered seating. PHOTO COURTESY OF DIXIE BOYLE

mounting their horses to leave town, but the Manzano fans held them back. Eventually, they were able to escape by jumping on their horses and riding straight through the crowd. A cloud of dust followed them as they raced back to Punta.

Fans were often prepared for fights to break out after a game, and many left early to not to be involved while others waited to join the fray.

In contrast, the Belen Club was known for its sportsmanship and a fast brand of baseball. John Becker, co-founder of the town, provided uniforms for the first Belen team. The town was extremely loyal and proud of its team from the beginning. Fans traveled in a caravan to out-of-town games.

When Belen won the league championship in 1925, an elaborate banquet was sponsored by the local Harvey House. A series of after-dinner speeches made up the agenda and were enjoyed by those in attendance.

In 1919, Madrid’s town Superintendent

Oscar Huber organized the Madrid Miners baseball club. Huber felt his workers needed something to do after hours instead of spending their money in the local bars. At the same time, he began building on one of the country’s premiere baseball fields and first lighted baseball park west of the Mississippi River. Baseball was the most attended event in town.

Madrid was becoming an important baseball center when the coal mines stopped producing and the town started to die. For a time, the town served as a minor league farm club of the Brooklyn Dodgers. But as Major League Baseball consolidated its control of the sport, most of the baseball teams were gone by the late 1950s.

Today, baseball survives in New Mexico through Albuquerque Isotopes, the AAA affiliate of the Colorado Rockies, and the Roswell Invaders and Santa Fe Fuego of the Pecos League. 📺



Keeping Power Flowing

New report reveals grid reliability increasing despite new challenges

Stories by Paul Wesslund

The North American Electric Reliability Corp. recently graded the nation's electric grid, determining it is highly reliable and continues to improve despite challenges that may stress it in the coming years.

According to NERC's "2022 State of Reliability," the network of power plants, transmission lines and associated equipment—often referred to as the bulk power system—repeatedly improved its performance the past six years.

That trend comes despite adding more energy generated from renewable sources and increasingly extreme weather patterns.

Spurred by federal policies and market conditions, a drastic decline in available power generation resources has made complex electric systems more difficult to balance. As the nation's energy mix evolves and flexible generation decreases from sources that are fuel-assured, weatherized and dispatchable, the risk of energy

shortfalls is more likely.

Despite the challenges ahead—notably weather and cybersecurity threats—improvement in grid reliability was noted in 2021 in both year-over-year and five-year averages.

The process of electricity delivery is often described as the most complex machine in the world. The U.S. bulk power system is comprised of more than 7,300 power plants and nearly 160,000 miles of high-voltage power lines. They deliver most of the electricity to local utilities and millions of miles of lower-voltage lines that ultimately connect homes, businesses and other energy consumers to the electric grid.

The electricity the power system carries to you must be generated at the exact time you flip the switch to use it. It is a mind-boggling job of high-tech coordination—and the national grid does it every second of every day.

NERC's report underscores the success, and highlights recommendations for challenges facing the energy industry.

Coping With Extreme Weather

Given the frequency and intensity of severe weather that affects electric operations,

NERC recommends shifting focus from just ensuring there is ample energy supply to putting measures in place to withstand, adapt to, protect against and recover from the impacts of extreme weather events.

Much of the NERC assessment focuses on the February 2021 event in Texas when six days of below-freezing temperatures left some people without power for as many as four days. NERC advises steps to provide more transmission connections across the country so power can be more easily shared. NERC also suggests better preparing equipment for cold weather, noting many generating units failed in the freezing temperatures.

Beefing Up Cybersecurity

Electric utilities repelled threats from what NERC called "increasingly bold cybercriminals." NERC referred to a relatively new term for using the internet for political and social protest: "hactivism."

NERC has established the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center that gathers information about the latest cyberthreats and advises utilities about safeguards to supplement existing cybersecurity programs.



A complex web of high-voltage power lines and power plants deliver electricity across millions of miles of lower-voltage lines connected to energy consumers. PHOTO BY JAMIE FOWLER, HIGH WEST ENERGY INC.

Across the United States, electric cooperatives are working with national and local partners to fight cyberthreats and add resiliency to establish relationships, provide tools, and share resources and training information to continuously improve cyberprotection.

Increased Renewable Energy

Renewable fuels such as wind and solar are clean energy choices, but they come with drawbacks for a smooth-running grid at any hour of the day. A major downside is they depend on the sun shining or the wind blowing. They are what NERC calls “variable energy resources.”

A long-term solution may be large-scale batteries that can store renewable energy so it can be available whenever it is needed. Although battery technology is rapidly improving, NERC notes utilities should continue to rely on natural gas-fired power plants to produce additional electricity when renewable options are not available.

Today’s energy landscape is wide-ranging and rapidly changing, yet the U.S. electric grid continues to keep power flowing, providing the dependable electricity you rely on every minute of every day. 📧

Utilities Building Resiliency Into the Electric Power Grid

Extreme weather and increased use of renewable energy are affecting the electric utility industry so much there is a new term used to talk about it: resiliency.

A few years ago, reliability was the term of choice. That meant trimming trees near power lines and keeping squirrels from chewing up electrical equipment. Attention to those priorities worked. The average American’s electricity stayed on more than 99.9% of the time. That reliability record is still holding up, but it’s under pressure.

Resiliency is about actionable steps electric utilities take to keep power flowing—the ability to predict, adapt to, withstand and recover from sudden large-scale disruptive events, and ensure consumers have the reliable power they need.

A less-formal explanation from the Future Electric Utility Regulation Advisory Group compares electric service to a boxing match: “Reliability is when you can take a punch. Resiliency is how fast you get up off the canvas after you’ve been hit hard.”

Electricity is more important than ever to our daily lives, but weather events can suddenly take away that essential electricity. Utilities need to be ready to get back up off the canvas quickly—and that is what they are doing.

Last year, Congress passed and the White House signed a law that includes a \$10.5 billion Grid Resiliency and Innovation Partnership Program.

Electric utilities are building resiliency through:

Coordinated, local planning. Government and utilities are sharing information to protect against the latest cyber threats. But resiliency also means paying attention to regional and local differences. Raising substations higher off the ground might make sense in flood-prone areas. Wrapping utility poles with fire-resistant coverings could be considered where wildfires are a threat.

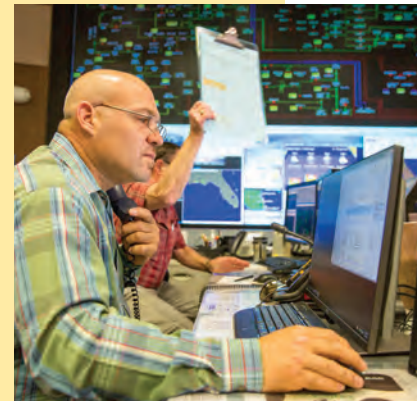
Microgrids. One idea being tried is to create small areas that can supply their own electricity during a widespread outage, using a combination of wind and solar power, large-scale storage batteries and diesel generators.

Continued modernization. Electric utilities are building power lines that connect to new sources of renewable energy, and investing in digital equipment and sensors that can more quickly detect and resolve power outages or other problems.

Decentralized electricity. Rooftop solar arrays allow homeowners to sell excess power back to the utility. It’s called distributed energy resources, which describes home generators, batteries and other energy sources. The challenge for utilities is to integrate power sources that can be variable and intermittent into the smooth flow of electricity on the grid.

There are opportunities as well as challenges. The growing numbers of electric vehicles plugged in overnight could be seen as a huge energy drain on the grid when the batteries in the electric cars are charging, or those same batteries—when fully charged—could be a source of reserve power to supply the home in case of a large, unplanned outage.

As the ways we generate and consume energy change, utilities are turning to innovative solutions to serve local communities. That’s called resiliency. 📧

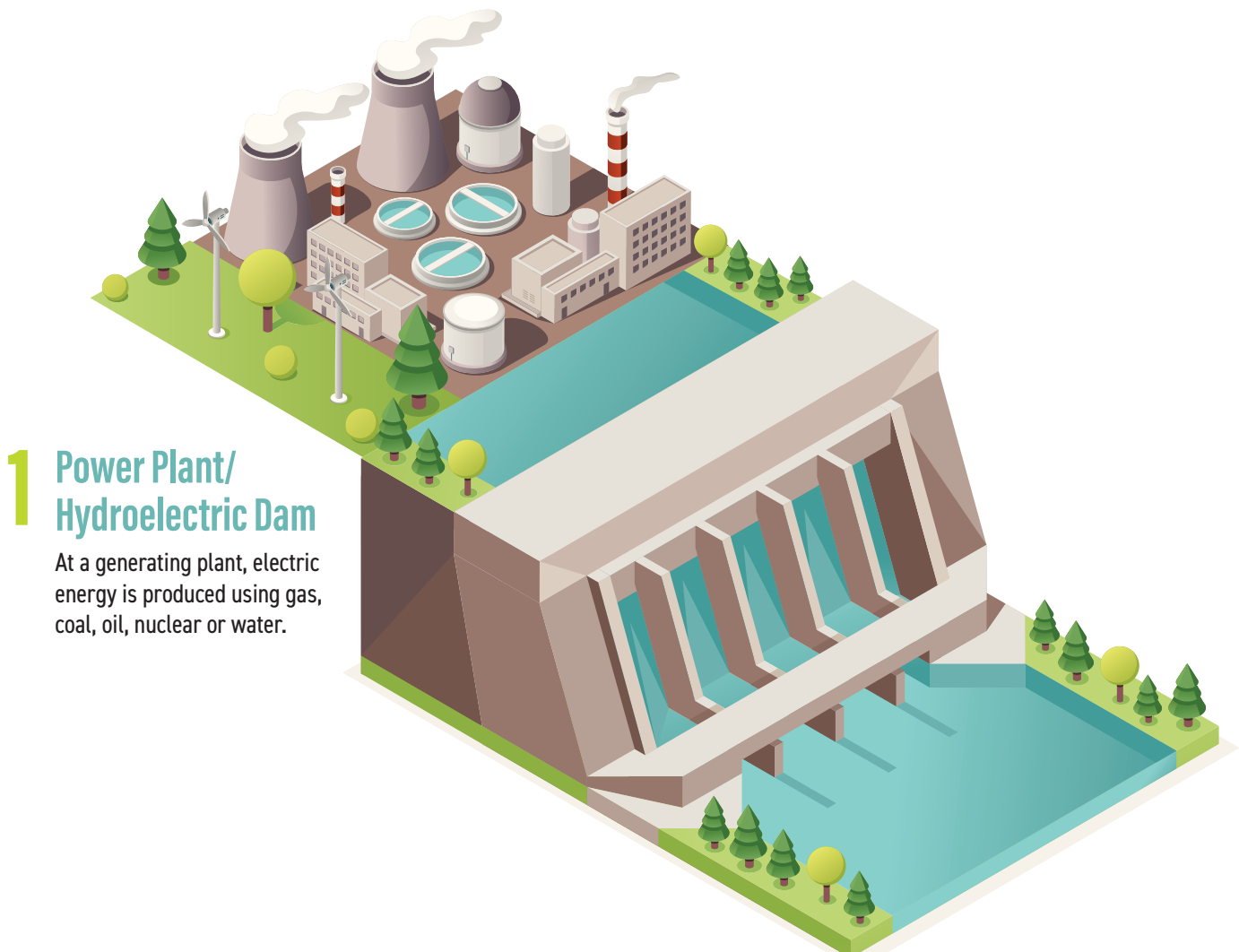


Electric utilities work together to improve the cyber landscape. PHOTO BY GARRETT HUBBARD

The Path of Electricity

Most of us take reliable electric power for granted.

Do you know what it takes to get power to you?

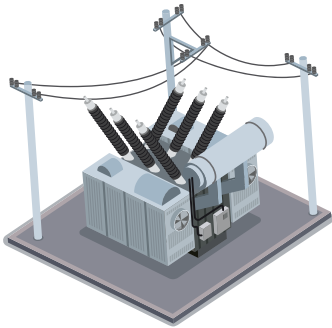


1 Power Plant/ Hydroelectric Dam

At a generating plant, electric energy is produced using gas, coal, oil, nuclear or water.

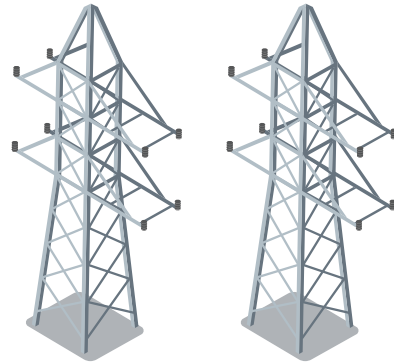
2 Step-Up Substation

Transformers at generating plants increase the voltage up to 345,000 volts so it can travel long distances over high-voltage transmission lines.



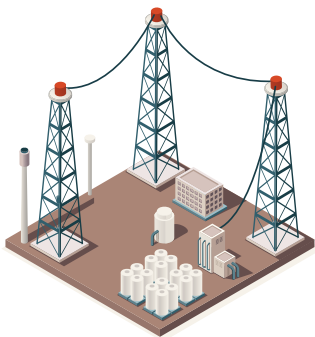
3 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

These lines carry electricity across long distances.



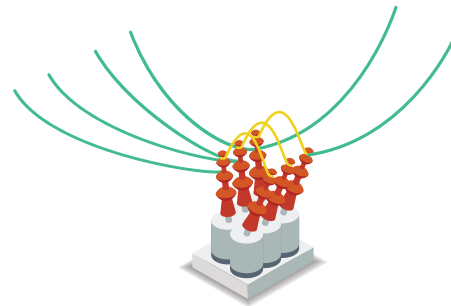
4 Transmission Substation

These transformers reduce electricity to 69,000 volts, making it suitable for short-distance delivery.



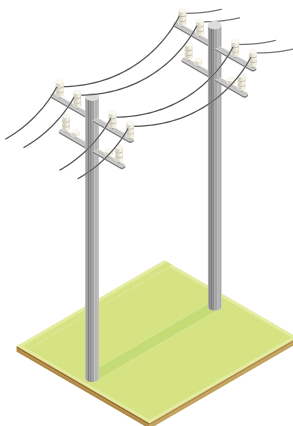
5 Local Distribution Substation

Local electric utilities operate these smaller substations to reduce electricity to 7,200 to 14,000 volts for distribution to users.



6 Distribution Lines

Utility-owned lines carry power to transformers that reduce power to 120/240 or 120/208 volts for consumers. They also may transmit any consumer-owned generation—such as from solar panels—onto the grid.



7 Consumer-Owned Renewable Generation

Solar panels, geothermal collection, a methane digester or a wind turbine is interconnected to the utility's lines. A cutoff switch is installed that disconnects the device from the line to protect personnel working during an outage or maintenance.



Love From the Kitchen

Nothing quite communicates love as well as home-cooked goodness. Many of us look disapprovingly at those holiday pounds that stubbornly stuck around into the new year, but February recipes are comfort food surprisingly low in calories.

Making healthy choices while utilizing warm and cozy meal options can provide a great outlook on shedding those remaining unwanted pounds.

For people who are watching gluten as well as dairy, fat-free tomato basil soup is filled with delicious tastes without any of

those pesky problems.

While fried orange chicken is a favorite, light orange chicken satisfies the palate without the high calories.

Why not prepare a low-calorie, healthy dessert for Valentine's Day? Our baked pear pecan crumble is loaded with necessary nutrients and is a wonderful alternative to the usual chocolate or candy eaten during the holiday.

Show those you love how much you care and get busy in the kitchen.



Sue Hutchison was born and raised a block from the freeway in Southern California. She had an early start with industrial, large-scale cooking before age 20. She's always been both a beach bum and at home in the kitchen, where she enjoys making new creations.

Fat-Free Tomato Basil Soup

5 cups cherry tomatoes, fresh or frozen ½ teaspoon salt
2 cloves garlic, minced ½ teaspoon pepper
2 teaspoons dried basil

In a large saucepan, combine all ingredients. Add just enough water to cover the bottom of your pan.

Bring to a simmer, cover and simmer on low heat until tomatoes are soft.

With an immersion blender, pulse until smooth or until soup reaches the desired texture.

Ladle soup into serving bowls. Sprinkle with additional dried basil and serve.



Light Orange Chicken

4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts	Salt/pepper to taste
2 teaspoons soy sauce	2 mandarin or cutie oranges, peeled and sectioned
2 teaspoons honey	

Rinse chicken and slice each breast into quarters.

In a nonstick skillet, brown chicken on one side on medium heat.

While browning your chicken, whisk together soy sauce and honey in a small bowl. Add salt and pepper.

Turn chicken, and drizzle sauce over top, stirring to completely coat the chicken.

Sprinkle orange slices on top. Cover, and finish cooking the chicken. Serve immediately.



Baked Pear Pecan Crumble

3 fresh pears, cored and halved	½ teaspoon ground ginger
1 cup old-fashioned oats	4 tablespoons butter, cold
½ cup brown sugar	¼ cup pecans, chopped
¼ teaspoon nutmeg	

In a grill pan, grill pear halves, flesh side down, until slightly soft and grill marks appear.

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

In a mixing bowl, mix oats, sugar, ginger and nutmeg.

With a box grater, grate butter into your spices. Using a fork, blend in the butter until the mixture forms large crumbs. Stir in pecans.

On a rimmed baking sheet sprayed with butter-flavored cooking spray, place your pears, flesh side up.

Spoon the topping on individual pears.

Bake for 30-40 minutes until pears are soft and the topping is lightly browned.

Remove pears from oven and let stand for 5-10 minutes. Serve warm.



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Untangling the Kinks in the Electricity Supply Chain

Electric utilities saw warning signs even before the pandemic

By Paul Wesslund



Electric utilities are experiencing longer-than-normal wait times for essential equipment, such as utility poles. PHOTO BY JENNIFER PATON

Most of us first heard about supply chain issues three years ago when the COVID-19 pandemic left us looking at empty store shelves.

Shortages also affected electric utilities. But their attention to supply chains started years before the pandemic, and it continues. For electric utilities, the pandemic amped up the job of keeping the lights on in an industry already adjusting to the rapid rise in renewable energy sources and power lines battered by severe weather.

Publicly owned utilities are among those taking steps to manage both immediate and long-term supply chain constraints, says Stephanie Crawford, regulatory affairs director with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

“This didn’t happen overnight,” she says. “Many of these dynamics started before the pandemic.”

Creating a Supply Chain Task Force

Those dynamics include the fact there’s only one U.S.-based manufacturer of the steel used to make transformers, vital pieces of equipment that help regulate power levels so electricity is safe to use.

That constraint, coupled with a workforce shortage, means transformer manufacturers have not been able to keep pace with a significant increase in demand coming out of the pandemic. Lead times for ordering transformers jumped from one or two months to as long as two years.

Those delays threaten to slow progress on essential work, such as restoring power after a storm or connecting service for new consumers.

It hasn’t been just transformers in short supply, Stephanie says. Utilities also faced delays “for meters, conductors, utility poles, bucket trucks—essentially all the things needed to keep the system running efficiently, including restoration needs and serving new load,” she says.

To reduce those backlogs, last summer the utility industry created a task force to work with the federal government on resolving supply chain slowdowns.

Incentives for U.S. Manufacturing

The task force recommended several



Transformers are a hot commodity for electric utilities. Steel shortages, coupled with a lack of manufacturing workers, mean transformer manufacturers are unable to keep pace with a significant increase in demand. ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY CHII CHOBITS

actions the federal government could take to help get utilities what they need. Among its suggestions was to provide incentives to encourage domestic manufacturing of steel for transformers.

The task force also identified national trends and policies that could conflict with the utility supply chain:

Worker shortages. The same lack of people to fill jobs in many parts of the economy, from restaurants to hospitals, also affects the making of materials needed by utilities.

Competition for workers. Any community wants its economic development efforts to attract major new employers. But a large new business could take workers away from companies that supply essential utility equipment. The industry task force recommended the government support incentives for utility-related work.

Renewable energy and infrastructure initiatives. Electric vehicles, solar energy and even efforts to expand broadband service can use some of the same materials needed by utilities. The task force recommended the government avoid disadvantaging utility work by favoring other projects.

All these supply chain issues are causing utilities to rethink traditional business practices. Stephanie says the logistics and procurement functions of electric utilities are getting increased attention.

“New strategies are going to be needed to meet the utilities’ needs,” she says. “They’ve not needed to project the demand for transformers five years in the future because you could get a transformer in 60 days. Now, when it’s taking more than a year for the equipment to be available, they’re going to have to look at it through a different lens.”

Utilities have been adapting to dramatic changes, Stephanie says, from weather patterns to sustainable energy. Supply chain management is one of the latest twists.

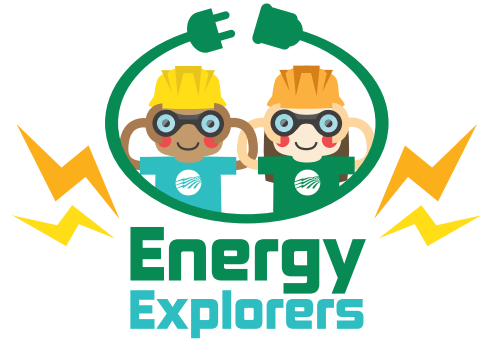
“Publicly owned utilities are really good at keeping the lights on,” she says. “But these supply chain issues have made that job more difficult. Real investment needs to be made in domestic manufacturing and supply capabilities to make sure all utilities can get the equipment they need.

“This is critical infrastructure, especially as we rely on the electric grid to power everything from transportation to working at home.”

ELECTRICAL SAFETY WORD SCRAMBLE

Electricity is essential for our daily lives, but it can also be dangerous if you don't play it safe!

Read the safety tips below and unscramble the bolded text to complete the phrase. Use the answer key to double check your work.



1. Never place extension **rdsoc** under rugs or carpet.

2. Make sure electrical cords are not **yrafde** or broken.

3. Smoke **maalsr** should be tested every month.

4. Place electrical cords in areas where you won't **itpr** on them.

5. Keep flammable items at least 3 feet away from space **shetear**.

6. Electricity and **rwtea** never mix.

Answer Key: 1) cords 2) frayed 3) alarms 4) trip 5) heaters 6) water

The Importance of a Whole-House Backup Generator

Having a backup generator in the house ensures a reliable energy source in case of power loss, allowing lights, appliances and other gadgets to continue operating.

Whole-house generators—also known as backup generators—are larger and more expensive than portable generators, but they provide the biggest advantages when you need them the most.

Standby versus Portable Generators

Unlike a portable generator, a whole-house backup generator can power all key appliances, including the HVAC system, refrigerator/freezer, alarm system, garage door opener, sump pump and water heater. Mobile phones and computers can be charged if you have power during an outage.

While the purpose of a standby generator is to supply power to the entire home in the event of power loss, the generator can be customized to power select items based on your preferences.

Whole-house backup generators offer

advantages portable generators do not:

- **Security and safety.** Because you can't see your surroundings during a blackout, the chance of stumbling or tripping is higher. A whole-house generator helps keep the lights on, ensuring better visibility.

- **Ongoing Power Source.** Whole-house generators provide as much electricity as needed for as long as required powering everything in the home—all without having to add fuel. They will keep the sump pump operating and the home's alarm system operational if you are away from home during an outage.

- **Convenience at its finest.** During a power outage, the whole-house generator will supply complete home functionality with the flip of a switch. When the power goes out, flip on the generator's power switch and electricity is restored in a matter of seconds. Standby generators ensure use of only essential appliances and critical household functions.

- **Save money in the long run.** Although

more expensive to buy and install, a backup generator saves money in the long run by avoiding appliance repairs and pipe replacements. You may save on unexpected expenditures and difficulties by using whole-house generators to prevent ruined food in the refrigerator or frozen pipes. If you had multiple power outages over the course of 10 years, for example, the savings from a standby generator would pile up, giving a good return on your investment.

The takeaway

A whole-house generator will provide the same comfort traditional electricity does in a warm climate. While portable generators may offer minimal relief, they don't supply life-essential necessities such as water and being able stay cool during Florida summers with ease all day without interruption.

The next major power outage could be just around the corner, so install the whole-house generator. 🗨️

Enchanted Journeys

Until February 4

gallupARTS presents Reflect & Refract: Diné Photography & Visual Sovereignty

Gallup
Art123 Gallery

The last of five guest-curated shows at ART 123 Gallery, Reflect & Refract was curated by Diné visual storyteller Rapheal Begay. The show celebrates select artists' relationships to and perspectives of Diné'tah, the Navajo homeland.

For more information about GallupARTS and ART123 Gallery, visit www.galluparts.org. ART123 Gallery is on Facebook @ART123Gallery. GallupARTS is on Facebook @gallupARTS and Instagram @_gallupARTS.

Thursday, February 16

Community Forum: Preventing Childhood Trauma

Alamogordo
Willie Estrada Civic Center. 800 East 1st Street.

This 100% Otero Summit runs from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.—split into a morning and afternoon session—and is free to participants.

Register by February 10 at www.100nm.org/otero/summit.

For more information, call 575-551-1726 or email weavingitaltogether.org.

youth art

March Topic:

Your favorite music! Draw you and your family rocking out to your favorite tunes.

April Topic:

Draw your family pet!

Send Your Drawing

By mail: Youth Editor
614 Don Gaspar Ave.
Santa Fe, NM 87505

By email:
enchantment@nmelectric.coop

Deadline: Submit by the ninth, one month prior to publication.

Hooray!

Winners will receive a \$15 gift card.

Have a Youth Art Topic?

Email or mail to the addresses above, or call 505-982-4671.

5 items to include on the back of your drawing, otherwise YOU ARE DISQUALIFIED:

1. Name
2. Age
3. Mailing Address
4. Phone Number
5. Electric Co-op

DON'T FORGET THESE ITEMS!

*Accepted artwork up to age 13.

Happy Valentine's Day! Congratulations to the Winners!



Jaxon Rivera • Age 6 • Otero County Electric Cooperative



Sofia Campos • Age 7 • Lea County Electric Cooperative



Jaeda Davis • Age 7 • Sierra Electric Cooperative



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