

# enchantment

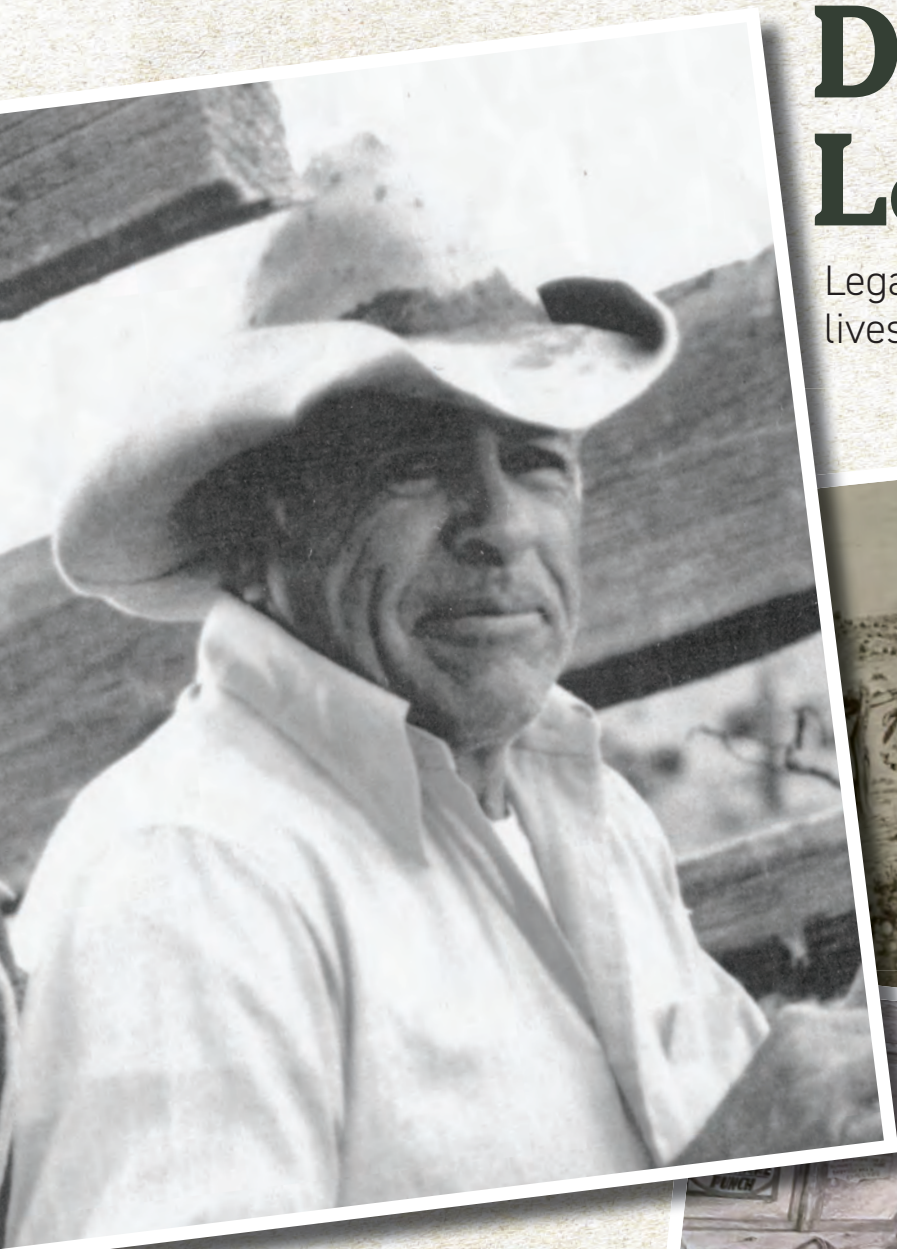
The Voice of New Mexico's  
Rural Electric Cooperatives

**FARMERS' ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE**

JANUARY 2024

## Drawing Local History

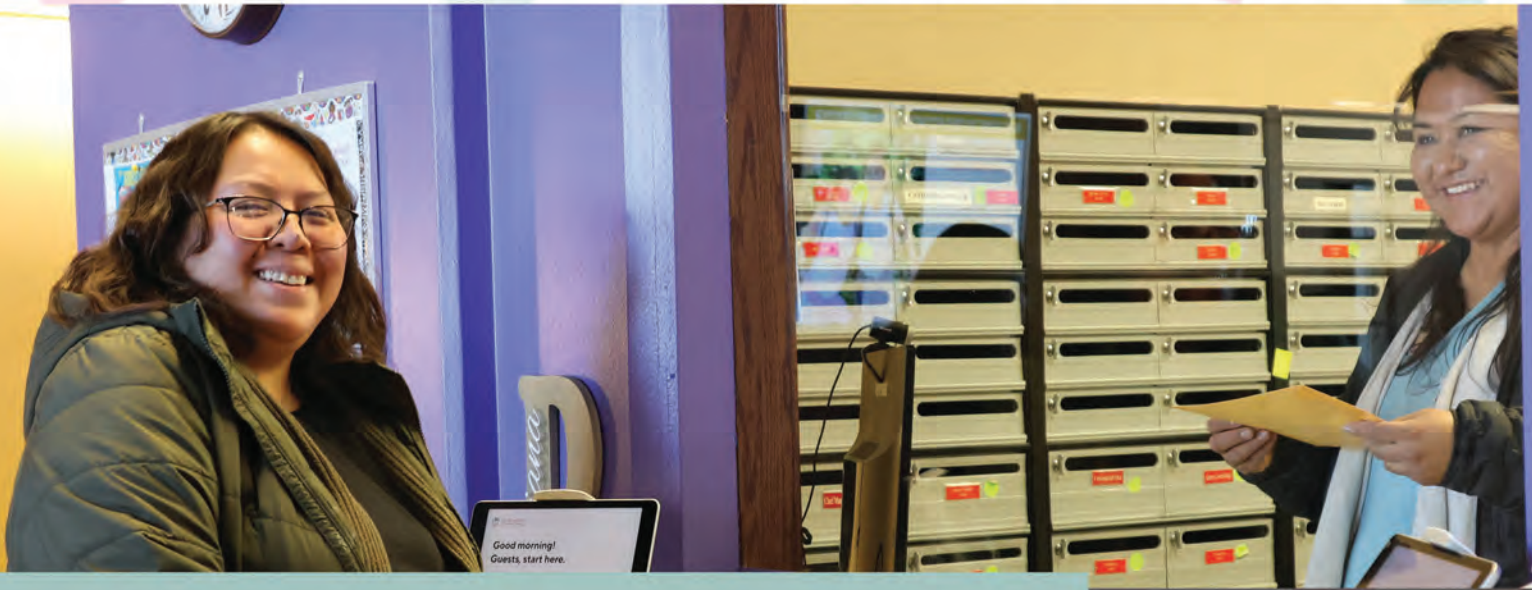
Legacy of cowboy artist Joe J. Brazil  
lives on **Page 14**



**CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE:** Jose Joaquin Brazil, known as Joe J., drew scenes from around his town of Scholle. His work "Goodbye Bloomers" shows a cow running through a laundry line. "Lunch at Scholle" depicts four people having lunch. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIXIE BOYLE



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enchantment (ISSN 0046-1946) is published 10 times a year—every month except June and December—by the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperatives, 614 Don Gaspar Ave., Santa Fe, NM 87505. enchantment provides reliable, helpful information on rural living and energy use to electric cooperative members and customers.

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**THE NEW MEXICO RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES** provide legislative and educational services to the cooperatives that are members of the association and deliver electric power to New Mexico's rural areas and small communities. The mission of the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperatives is to strengthen, support, unify and represent cooperative member interests at the local, state and national levels. Each cooperative has a representative on the association's board of directors, which controls the editorial content and advertising policy of enchantment through its Publications Committee.

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**Congratulations** to Pat McNabb, a Lea County Electric Cooperative member, whose mule, Rawhide, and donkey, Sadie, read her November 2023 enchantment.

**Pat McNabb wins \$20!**





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Insulating your home is a key part to saving energy throughout all seasons.

## Make Energy Efficiency Part of Your New Year's Resolutions

Whether you live in an apartment or a house, there are always several steps you can take to make your home more energy efficient. Doing so can reduce your energy use and improve your comfort.

Getting the job started isn't always easy, especially if you're not entirely sure where to begin. To help you build up your resolve, we put together a list of New Year's Resolutions for energy efficiency in the home.

### Switch Out Incandescent Bulbs and CFL Bulbs for LED Bulbs

A 60-watt incandescent bulb that puts out about 800 lumens (brightness) will cost about \$7.50 a year using the bulb three hours a day.

A 14-watt CFL that puts out the same amount of lumens, meanwhile, will cost about \$1.75 over the same amount of time.

A comparable 8-watt LED bulb with superior light quality will cost only about \$1 over the same period.

If you have CFL bulbs, start learning more about LED bulbs and color temperature so you'll

know the best ones to buy when your CFL bulbs burn out. Cheap CFL bulbs have a lifespan of about two to five years, while Energy Star LED bulbs last up to 20,000 hours or 18 years when burning three hours per day. Become familiar with the product's energy label on the box. The label will help you determine brightness, wattage, color and the bulb's rated life expectancy.

### Seal Drafts and Cold Spots

Check entry doors for signs of drafts where cold air can leak into your home. This includes tightening loose door hinge screws and replacing worn, loose or missing weatherstripping. Weatherstripping kits for doors and windows are inexpensive, and blocking drafts will help make your home feel more comfortable and keep it warmer.

Another helpful addition is an inexpensive infrared thermometer, which can be used to detect temperature differences that indicate where drafts might be getting in, such as outlets, light switches or window frames. Additionally, at most hardware stores or the internet, you can



find a smoke pencil or similar hand-held device that will help detect air leaks in the home.

### Install Thermal-Backed Drapes and Curtains

In a typical single-family home, 25% to 35% of the heat is lost through windows at night. Insulated drapes can cut this loss by 25%. Opening your drapes during the day lets in the warming sunshine. In summer, close the curtains on west-facing windows to keep out the sun's heat.

### Kill the Energy Vampires and Zombies

An energy vampire is anything like a power brick for a game console, battery charger or any other kind of wall wart. These are inexpensive AC adapters that use transformers (induction coils) to convert wall current into low voltage DC. Even if you turn off the device or gadget, these power supplies stay on.

An energy zombie is any appliance that continues to draw power, even when it is turned off. Such devices linger in standby mode, waiting for you to push a button to bring them to life. Any remote-controlled device must use a tiny bit of electricity to power its receiver circuit so it can pick up a signal to turn on at your merest whim. The vampire horde includes TVs, cable boxes, home theater systems, game consoles, Blu-ray players, wireless printers and scanners, and more.

How do you beat back these ravenous energy monsters? Simply control them by using timers, smart power strips that turn off when levels fall to standby levels or smart outlets you can control with your smartphone. You can also just turn off the power to those that are plugged into a multi-outlet strip/surge arrestor.

### Air Seal Your Attic

Air sealing means sealing electrical and plumbing holes in walls, between floors and even in the lighting fixtures and wiring in your attic. This stops air from leaking out of your home's conditioned living space, which can save an average of 11% or more in energy costs. In particular, seal around the soil stack and lighting junction boxes and install insulated covers for recessed lighting fixtures.

### Add More Insulation to Your Attic

By increasing the insulation amount from R-12 (about 4 inches) to R-48 (15 inches of cellulose or fiberglass batts), homeowners can save about \$300 a year on their heating and cooling bills.

How you prepare for the job is important—

make sure your attic has been thoroughly air sealed before you begin. The job can be completed in stages. Begin by insulating over an area that gets the most use, and then build out from there.

### Seal Your Duct Work

Unsealed or uninsulated ductwork loses up to 20% of the energy from your heating, ventilation and air conditioner system. Worse still, if you have unsealed return ductwork passing through crawl spaces, your furnace may be blowing mold, mildew and fungus spores throughout your home.

Sealing your ductwork with aluminum duct tape or duct sealing mastic ensures your HVAC system will blow the conditioned air where it's supposed to go. Sealing the return ductwork as well means the system will pull air more efficiently from all the rooms of your home. Keep in mind that working with duct mastic can be very messy.

### Stop Warm Air from Going Up the Flue

Fireplaces in winter might add warmth and charm to a room, but when they're not in use, you could be sending heated air out of your house. This is especially true on windy days, even if you have closed the flue. Install a chimney-top damper that fully seals your chimney. It looks much like a hatch and uses a heat-resistant gasket.

### Inspect Your Windows

Repair worn or cracked window glazing on older wood sash windows. Look for signs of moisture damage and rotten wood. If you discover a window that can't close properly or has damage to the window frame or sill holding the window in place, then it's time to replace it with one that's Energy Star qualified.

Energy Star windows block solar heat gain in the summer, reflect radiant heat indoors during winter and are designed to resist condensation problems. Powder-coated aluminum, high-quality storm windows are a cheaper alternative to new windows.

### Fix That Dripping Faucet

A leaky faucet that drips even one drop per second will waste more than 27,000 gallons of water in a single year. You probably wouldn't let a leak remain unaddressed for a full year, but it puts that dripping noise into perspective. You can save water and preserve your sanity by fixing leaky faucets in your house when first noticed.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills.

Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is required.

Source: [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov)







## THE ENCHANTED CEO

By Charise Swanson

New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperatives

# New Year, New Design, New Features

Over the past year, the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperatives staff have been thinking about how we can redesign enchantment magazine to fully engage our readers. It was last redesigned in 2013, and much has happened during the past 10 years. We conducted a communications survey over a two-month period in 2023 to better understand our readers' perceptions of the magazine. The results indicated the time was right to refresh our content.

Through the survey, our readers indicated three types of content they would like to see. "Energy-related articles" that discuss how cooperative members can save energy and money through home improvements, ranked highest on the list. "Living in New Mexico" and "local community information and event calendars" were close behind.

We are excited to put this feedback in motion. Look for the addition of these enchantment features throughout 2024. They include Plugged In, Energy Matters, Adventure Awaits, Around New Mexico, Up Close & Personal, In The Kitchen, Legislative Review, Picture Frame, Reader Exchange, Safety Spotlight, an updated Marketplace and several dynamic features still in development. You will start seeing these changes a few at a time with each monthly edition. We will still have 10 issues this year, with no issues in June or December 2024.

While we are excited about the new features, enchantment will miss Book Chat by B.A. Kelly. She is retiring her column and returning her books to the bookshelf. The NMREC staff would like to acknowledge Ms. Kelly for her contributions to the enchantment and sharing her book reviews with our readers in New Mexico and beyond. Thank you, B.A. Kelly!


The first feature, Plugged In, debuting in this issue, focuses on New Year's energy resolutions. This enchantment monthly feature will focus on ways our readers can save energy and money, beneficial electrification and new energy efficiency technologies.

The second feature, Energy Matters, highlights smart breaker boxes with integrating smart home technology. In the future, you will have a behind-the-scenes look at the generation and transmission of electricity, current renewable energy projects, future energy generation and storage technologies, the cooperative business model and careers, to name a few of the enchantment topics we are working on for you.

In February, we will introduce Adventure Awaits, identifying those out-of-the-way locations that should be on

everyone's list of places to visit. Another feature premiering in February is In The Kitchen, which is designed to serve as the new home for our recipe coverage—a true celebration, as it contains some of your favorite chef's recipes. It is sure to continue to be a favorite among our readers. Around New Mexico will provide enchantment readers with a monthly calendar of local events from the different regions of New Mexico. March, April and May will see several new features added each month to engage our print and digital audience.

Though we are making some changes, we have not changed our commitment to a dynamic mix of remarkable stories, informative equipment reviews, educational energy-efficiency articles, stunning photography and more.

Thank you to those who participated in our recent survey. Your perspectives helped shape our vision of enchantment magazine. 



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# Keep Warm and Save Energy in the Winter

By Miranda Boutelle

**Q:** How do I lower my winter energy bills?

**A:** Winter and cold weather can increase energy use and bills. Heating accounts for the highest wintertime energy consumption in most homes. The amount of energy used to heat your home depends on your equipment, how you use it and the efficiency of your home's shell—the building components that separate the indoors from the outdoors.

It's important to know how your home is heated so you can make informed decisions on your energy use. A forced-air furnace is the most common type of heating system and is fueled by natural gas, propane, oil or electricity. Heat pumps are growing in popularity and are available for forced-air systems. If you have a forced-air system, check the filter regularly and replace it when it's dirty. Ductless heat pumps—also known as mini-splits—boilers, radiant heat, baseboard heaters and electric resistance heaters are other common heating system types.

If you don't know what type of system you have, find the model number of your equipment and look it up online.

You'll find information about the kind of system, how efficiently it operates and recommendations for servicing it, which can improve system efficiency.

We use energy to make our homes comfortable. The easiest and lowest-cost way to save money on heating is to keep your thermostat as low as your comfort allows. The closer your home's temperature is to the outdoor temperature, the less energy is used.

The U.S. Department of Energy recommends a thermostat setting of 68 degrees in the winter while you are awake and lower when you are asleep or away from home. Keep in mind that setting the temperature too low can cause pipes to freeze or create moisture issues in some geographic locations.

Wearing an additional layer, slippers or a hat can keep you comfortable.

Do you use electric resistance space heaters to heat a room or section of a home? If so, you may see an increase on your electric bill. For example, let's say you use a 1,500-watt electric space heater to warm your living room while you watch TV or read a book. Operating that space heater for two hours a day at the U.S.

**The easiest and lowest-cost way to save money on heating is to keep your thermostat as low as your comfort allows. Adding an extra layer, slippers or a lap dog can keep**

average electricity rate of about 16 cents per kilowatt-hour costs about \$15 a month. Operating that same space heater for 12 hours a day costs you about \$90 a month.

If you choose to use space heaters, use them safely. Keep them at least 3 feet from anything flammable, do not leave them unattended, and plug them directly into the outlet, not an extension cord or power strip.

Just as we put on a windbreaker to keep cold wind from blowing through a sweater, your home also benefits from blocking air movement. Air sealing can make a big improvement in the comfort of your home as well as provide energy savings. A common air-sealing practice is applying weatherstripping to exterior doors and windows. You can also seal around plumbing penetrations to help eliminate drafts. A gap often exists between the drywall or wood and the plumbing pipes and drains. Filling these gaps with expanding foam can reduce drafts in bathrooms and kitchens.

Cold, windy winter days are the perfect time to find opportunities for air sealing. Rattling doors or moving curtains can indicate air leakage. Air leakage can occur where two different materials come together, like drywall and trim work. Cracked plaster and gaps in drywall can also cause drafts. Sealing the gaps saves energy and improves comfort.

As the temperature outside dips, take steps to maintain comfort in your home and keep your energy bill in check. 🐾



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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# A New Year of Stargazing

**2024 will approach the maximum of the current sunspot cycle, making auroras more visible from New Mexico.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF NASA/GSFC/SDO

The new year opens with our solar system's two largest worlds shining brightly in our evening sky. Saturn is in the southwestern sky and sets one to two hours after the end of dusk. Jupiter is almost overhead as darkness falls and gleams in our western sky until it sets one to two hours after midnight.

After being a brilliant beacon in our morning sky during the late summer and autumn months of 2023, Venus is now sinking rapidly toward the eastern horizon. By the end of January, it rises around the beginning of dawn. Somewhat lower is Mercury, visible low in the east for the first couple of weeks of 2024 before beginning a rapid descent into twilight. On the morning of Saturday, January 27, it passes close to Mars, which is now climbing out of the dawn to be well-placed for viewing during the latter months of this year.

The Quadrantid meteor shower—named after the no-longer-recognized constellation of Quadrans Muralis (the Mural Quadrant) located east of the Big Dipper's handle—reaches its peak on the morning of Thursday, January 4. Under good conditions the

Quadrantids can produce up to 100 or more meteors per hour, although their display is fairly brief, normally lasting only a few hours at most. This year, the moon will be just past its third-quarter phase and may interfere slightly, but probably not overwhelmingly.

Looking ahead to the rest of 2024, a couple of expected returning comets may reach dim naked-eye brightness during the spring and summer months, and one potentially very bright comet may appear during the late summer or early fall.

One of the top astronomical events will be the solar eclipse on Monday, April 8. The path of the total eclipse will include northern Mexico, east-central Texas and the northeastern U.S., and will be a deep partial eclipse in New Mexico. There are also two partial lunar eclipses during 2024, on the morning of March 25 and the evening of September 17.

We are now approaching the maximum of the current sunspot cycle, which should take place this year or early next year. Among other things, this could mean an increased possibility of aurora displays that might be visible from New Mexico. 🌌



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30	8.94	7.73	9.77	8.61	14	11	18	16	58	28.33	21.98	50.43	36.04	89	62	169	117
36	9.12	8.12	10.32	9.44	15	13	22	18	59	31.07	23.51	55.50	38.76	98	68	188	129
37	9.21	8.37	10.52	9.81	15	13	22	20	60	34.14	24.28	59.98	41.71	109	73	207	140
38	9.21	8.48	11.69	10.16	16	14	24	21	61	37.41	25.65	66.43	47.11	122	84	236	156
39	9.46	8.61	12.35	10.56	17	15	25	22	62	41.07	27.91	73.90	51.33	136	93	265	171
40	9.63	8.83	12.94	11.01	18	16	27	24	63	44.58	34.39	85.55	59.61	152	102	287	187
41	10.05	9.05	13.66	11.61	20	17	30	26	64	48.23	38.53	93.16	64.39	169	112	323	206
42	10.47	9.26	14.21	12.46	22	19	33	29	65	53.18	41.15	100.34	70.37	188	125	356	229
43	10.98	9.39	14.72	13.25	24	20	38	31	66	59.15	44.62	115.74	75.41	209	135	392	248
44	11.58	9.73	15.68	14.10	26	22	41	34	67	65.66	49.09	130.13	83.65	231	148	436	272
45	12.25	10.15	16.86	15.16	28	24	46	38	68	74.33	59.65	145.11	112.92	262	174	491	322
46	12.84	10.65	17.85	15.87	30	25	49	41	69	82.98	65.91	161.68	129.33	293	188	548	352
47	13.43	11.16	19.14	16.84	33	27	54	44	70	93.20	73.30	181.25	148.72	330	204	615	387
48	13.48	11.89	20.45	17.77	35	29	58	48	71	102.45	82.71	204.38	159.34	374	235	702	443
49	13.71	12.33	21.77	18.77	38	31	63	52	72	113.68	94.13	232.46	172.23	427	272	807	512
50	14.37	12.99	23.41	20.00	40	34	69	57	73	127.55	108.24	267.15	188.15	493	319	937	596
51	15.38	13.75	25.38	21.18	45	35	78	62	74	142.08	123.01	303.50	204.84	562	367	1074	685
52	16.37	14.88	28.02	22.76	49	38	87	67	75	159.25	140.48	346.45	224.56	644	424	1235	789
53	17.46	15.88	30.96	24.81	55	44	101	77	76	200.03	174.92	418.29	276.67	785	530	1489	982
54	18.69	16.72	34.00	26.21	60	46	112	83	77	249.54	216.74	505.52	339.94	956	658	1797	1215
55	20.64	17.51	37.14	27.86	67	50	122	90	78	310.70	268.40	613.27	418.11	1167	817	2179	1504
56	22.69	19.48	41.67	31.07	74	53	140	97	79	374.78	322.52	726.16	500.00	1389	983	2578	1807
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# New Year's Energy Resolut

Resolve to take on a major household efficiency project this year and save big on your energy bills

By David Herder

We can all think of improvements we would like to make in the new year, whether it is eating healthier, volunteering more or lowering our expenses. One way to spend less in the new year and for many more to come is to make household energy efficiency a goal.

Making small changes to your routine can add up to significant savings. But do you know what adds up faster than small things?

Big things.

If you're willing to make the initial investment, resolve to go big by taking on one of these projects.

## Insulate and Air Seal

For most houses, heating and cooling air makes up the largest chunk of energy use. If you're paying to heat or cool the air, you want to keep it inside your house.

Common spots to insulate are attics, walls, floors and anywhere your house contacts the outside. Just like you want a jacket between you and a snowstorm, you want insulation between your home and the outdoors.

Insulation is rated in R-values. Suggested insulation R-values are between R-30 and R-60, depending on your region and climate. In many cases, it is a good idea to get professional insulation help.

Air sealing is another step to prevent drafts by physically closing gaps and cracks. In some cases, this can be as simple as adding caulking or weatherstripping to places where you notice drafts. Contractors and some utilities can do a home blower test to find and seal leaks.

If you're considering doing some air sealing on your own, the Department of Energy offers tips at [www.energy.gov/energysaver/air-sealing-your-home](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/air-sealing-your-home).

## Windows

What are windows but walls you can see through? Like outer walls, they touch the outdoors, and unlike many walls, they aren't filled with thick insulation. Heat gain and loss through windows account for 25% to 30% of residential heating and cooling costs, according to the Department of Energy.



ADOBE STOCK IMAGE BY BERIT KESSLER



# ions

Energy Star windows typically have high U-factors, a measurement of how well they insulate. Get multiple quotes for any home improvement project, including windows, and be on the lookout for rebates from utilities, state programs and the federal government.

If you aren't buying new windows right away, consider steppingstones such as adding weatherstripping, caulking gaps and using thermal drapes.

## Seal Ducts

Just like you don't want your heated and cooled air to leak outdoors, you don't want your air leaking into parts of the house where you never go.

If you have ductwork in an attic, crawlspace or other unairconditioned or heated area, the ducts could have leaks that increase your energy bill. According to the Department of Energy, 20% to 30% of the air moved through ducts is lost to leakage.

Hire a professional to seal your ducts, or seal them yourself with metal tape or duct mastic specifically designed for the job. Do not use duct tape, which will dry out and lose adhesion.

## Heat Pump

So far, we've covered three ways to keep your heated and cooled air where you want it. It turns out, how you heat or cool the air is also important.

If you're willing to replace your furnace, or the unit is 10-plus years old, a heat pump is an efficient home heating and cooling upgrade. It can reduce heating costs by as much as 50% compared to electric resistance heating, according to the Department of Energy.

A heat pump works similarly to an air conditioner in reverse. It uses a refrigerant to pull heat energy out of the air outdoors, then moves it indoors and blows the heat into your living areas.

Also consider a heat pump water heater, which has all the same advantages but heats water rather than air.

## Programmable Thermostat

If a heater turns on, but nobody is there to hear it, does it make a noise? One thing we know is that it would impact your energy bill.



## Not sure where to start?


### Schedule a home energy assessment

Before starting a project, it is important to take a step back and consider, "What will make the biggest impact?" This means knowing how efficient your house is and where the energy use is going.

A home energy assessment looks for air leaks, insufficient insulation, energy-hog appliances or other issues, and evaluates your total energy use. Conducting a home energy assessment lets you know where any inefficiencies in your house are, giving you a blueprint for fixing them.

Many utilities offer assessment programs, and the Department of Energy offers guides on assessments—including tips for a do-it-yourself assessment—at [www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-assessments](http://www.energy.gov/energysaver/home-energy-assessments).

Both programmable and smart thermostats help people save energy by changing the temperature throughout the day. You can save 10% on energy bills by turning back the thermostat 10% to 15% for eight hours a day, according to the Department of Energy.

Whether that means heating or cooling less during the day while you're at work or turning things down while you're sleeping, a programmable thermostat ensures you're only heating and cooling the air you feel. 



# Drawing Local History

Legacy of cowboy artist  
Joe J. Brazil lives on

By Dixie Boyle

Cowboy artist Jose Joaquin Brazil—better known as Joe J.—was a prolific artist of ranch life and a great storyteller and historian. His work, drawn almost a century ago, captured snapshots of real-life events and well-known characters from the past.

Joe J. doodled on napkins while having

lunch with friends and gave the drawings to those who wanted them. He painted murals on the walls of the homes he renovated, created delightful images for Christmas cards each holiday season and made his own postcards with short messages for special friends. He often gave away his artwork.

The artist, known for his cowboy scenes, was born and raised on a ranch near the ghost town of Scholle—west of Mountainair—along Highway 60. Joe J. became an accomplished and well-known artist of Western history.

Joe J. drew images that related stories about his neighbors, friends and acquaintances. “Incident in Magdalena” tells the story of his neighbor, Wade Steele, who served as the local brand inspector. He traveled to Magdalena one afternoon to give a rancher a brand inspection slip so he could sell a cow at an auction in Albuquerque.

The two met at the Golden Spur Saloon and, after the transaction, decided to share a beer. The beer drinking continued longer than planned, and because it was too late to make it to the auction in Albuquerque, the two decided to hold the auction right in the saloon.

Another drawing, “Goodbye Bloomers,” is about an unruly bovine near Scholle in 1939. A rancher named JoBob ran a cow straight through his wife’s fresh laundry one morning. The old cow had not calved in four years, and JoBob was determined to get rid of her. The cow was just as determined to stay on the ranch.

Joe J. composed many drawings about his hometown of Scholle. The town began





as a railroad town and shipping point for livestock. When Joe J. was younger, Scholle had a post office, railroad depot, grocery stores and one of the most frequented dance halls in the region. People came from as far away as Socorro to dance on a Saturday night. Scholle's population began to dwindle in the 1940s.

The artist's best-known drawing of the town is named "Lunch at Scholle." The illustration shows a cowgirl named Trixie Tolliver, who had ridden her horse into town one morning to check the mail. She encountered two acquaintances named JoBob and Leon. They were in town to trail 12 registered Hereford bulls waiting in the nearby shipping pens back to the ranch. They decide to share lunch on the post office steps while Troy Twain looks on.

Joe J. served in the Army Air Corps in the South Pacific during World War II. He made enough money drawing portraits of his companions and painting images on B-24 bomber planes to start his first cattle herd after the war when he returned home to Scholle.

In addition to ranching and his artwork, he was an excellent carpenter and built many homes in Mountainair. In 1949, Joe J. married Marjorie Price, and they raised four children.

By the 1980s, Mountainair's Shaffer Hotel had become rundown and desperately needed restoration work. Joe J. and his friend, Harding Kayser, completed the first significant renovation of the hotel since its construction. The two started on the first floor and sought grants and donations to cover the restoration work. They were able to slowly put life back into the old hotel that was part of the town's boom years.

Joe J. was active on the Torrance County Fair Board for years and served as its president. He was a charter member of the Mountainair Heritage Foundation and was awarded a Heritage Preservation Award from the state of New Mexico for inspiring the cowboy way of life.

Joe J. died at 82 in 2006 at his home in Scholle. Hundreds of his images live in museums, courthouses, grocery stores, bars, government offices and homes throughout the state. 📷



**OPPOSITE:** Jose Joaquin Brazil, known as Joe J., drew scenes from around his town of Scholle. **ABOVE:** The piece "An Incident at Magdalena" shows a cow auction inside a saloon. **TOP:** "Lunch at Scholle" depicts four people having lunch. PHOTOS COURTESY OF DIXIE BOYLE





# Smart Breaker Boxes

Improve reliability, safety and lower costs at home with an upgraded electrical panel

By Jennah Denney

Every home has an electrical panel, otherwise known as a breaker box. The design hasn't changed much over the years, but the smart technology-enabled electrical panel is innovating this household appliance.

Smart breaker boxes—which can operate on their own or in conjunction with a standard electrical panel—are an alternative for households looking to save energy.

Upgrading to smart breaker boxes can make people's home electrical systems safer and more reliable. It's recommended to hire a qualified electrician to install the smart panel, which can be done using a home's existing electrical wiring and infrastructure.

Many smart breaker boxes are designed to easily connect to other smart devices in your home. With the capacity to remotely monitor and adjust energy consumption, these devices provide several advantages that make them a worthwhile investment

for anyone looking to consume less energy.

### Monitor Energy Use

One advantage smart breaker boxes provide is convenience for homeowners to monitor and control how much energy they use.

With smart circuit breakers, you can receive real-time data that allows you to pinpoint appliances or devices that consume excessive energy. This real-time tracking allows consumers to adjust their energy use where needed, which ultimately saves money on monthly energy bills, reduces energy waste and is good for the electric grid.

### Manage Electric Load

Smart breaker boxes are all about managing your electric load. While the technology to track how much energy a home uses has been available for years, the ability to control how that energy is used is new. A smart breaker box can reveal how much power each circuit is using and turn each

one on or off.

Some smart breaker boxes allow you to establish schedules based on importance, such as refrigeration and heat to be on 24/7, but less important loads like Wi-Fi or the television to turn off during scheduled times when no one is home.

### Home Appliance Integration

Smart breaker boxes offer additional benefits for those with home solar systems. Smart breaker boxes help solar energy systems run more efficiently by determining how much energy is being used and how it can be stored. Through intelligent load management, they can provide longer battery backup life for those with energy storage.

Additionally, integration with other smart home devices, like thermostats and virtual assistants, further enhances the connected-home ecosystem.

### Enhanced Safety Features

Safety in electrical devices is highly important to consumers, and smart breaker boxes provide enhanced safety features that consumers appreciate. Smart breaker




With smart breaker boxes, like the SPAN Panel shown here, you can control and monitor every circuit in your home from a smartphone or tablet. PHOTO COURTESY OF SPAN

boxes can identify abnormalities and other potential electrical problems, then quickly shut off power supply if a circuit shorts or becomes overloaded, avoiding electrical fires and other dangers. Many smart breaker boxes include surge protection to help protect against power spikes and other issues.

### Electric Utility Benefits

Smart breaker boxes aren't just for consumers—electric utilities are using them, too. A primary advantage of these devices is that they allow for more efficient and reliable energy distribution. With the ability to detect faults within the system, electric utilities can quickly respond to issues and minimize outage times for consumers—ultimately managing the grid more efficiently.

There's no denying smart home technologies have changed how we manage homes, and smart breaker boxes are no exception. Smart breaker boxes help electric consumers and utilities in multiple ways.

With advanced safety features, real-time energy tracking and control, and the ability to use energy more efficiently, these devices are a smart investment for anyone who wants to make their home's system more reliable, safer and cost-effective. 



When adding new smart devices to your home, replace the default usernames and passwords with strong unique versions, and keep software up to date. PHOTO BY DAN NELSON/UNSPLASH



## Three Tips for Integrating Smart Home Tech

By Michael Leitman

Once pursued by only the most tech savvy of consumers, smart home technologies are becoming increasingly common to enhance home convenience, comfort and safety.

Smart technologies have proliferated as the “internet of things” have grown to include home security and safety systems, lighting, entertainment, HVAC systems and appliances.

Consumers are interested in a variety of technology combinations and uses for their homes. Regardless of the applications, here are three key tips to keep in mind when integrating smart technologies into your home.

► Ensure devices can communicate with each other. This might seem like a no-brainer, but compatibility is vital to ensuring convenience is not overcome by annoyance. One way of ensuring compatibility is choosing a single brand for as many applications as possible. Another option is a central hub to coordinate and control various devices. Many of the hubs available today offer additional features as well, including speakers, routers or displays.

*One major consideration for all these technologies is a fast and reliable internet and Wi-Fi connection.*

► Enable all security measures to prevent hacking. Adding smart devices to your home can increase the surface area that bad actors can use to hack equipment, increasing the importance of cybersecurity measures. Reduce risks by choosing smart devices with built-in security features and ensuring these features are all turned on. It is also important to replace default usernames and passwords with strong unique versions, enabling dual and/or biometric authentication, and running software updates when available.

*If you are controlling your home devices from your phone, tablet or laptop, do not do so while using unsecured public Wi-Fi networks.*

► Look for technologies to help control and manage home energy use. Smart home technologies can be a great way to control and manage home energy use. If you are looking into home automation, devices like smart thermostats, grid controllable water heaters, and schedulable or motion-controlled indoor and outdoor lighting can be smart ways to save money on your electric bill.

When used wisely and efficiently, smart home technologies can add great convenience to everyday life. Keep these tips in mind as you integrate smart devices into your home.



# Avoid the Big Green Boxes

Have you ever wondered what those big green boxes are near your home or around the community? They are probably pad-mounted transformers and part of the electrical infrastructure that powers your home. They take high-voltage electricity and reduces the voltage to serve your home's electrical needs.

These boxes protect your home from high voltage and should never be taken for granted. Large quantities of electricity flow into them, so they should be treated with respect and caution.

While it may be tempting to “camouflage” transformers with landscaping and fencing, cooperative crews need safe access for repairs and maintenance. Barriers should be kept clear of electrical equipment.

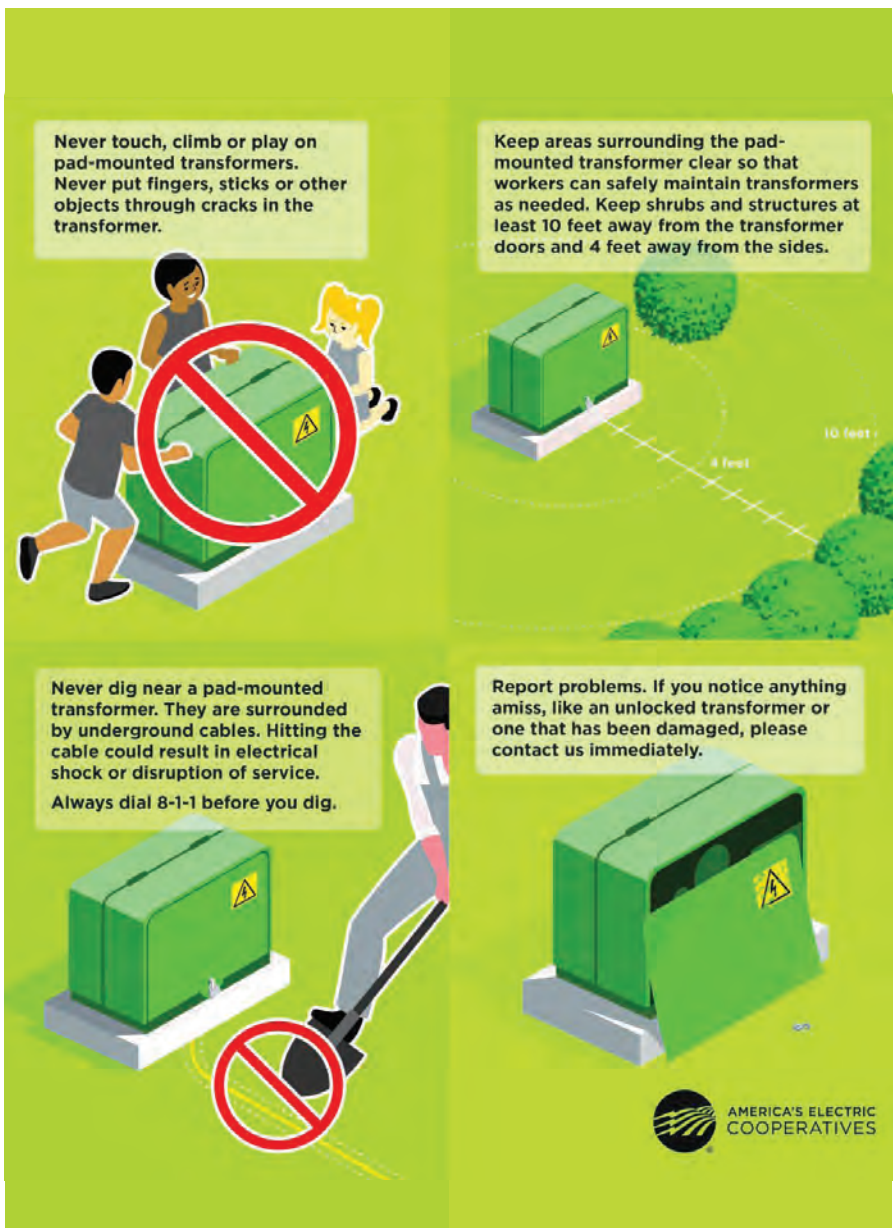
Lineworkers need at least 10 feet of clearance at the opening of a pad-mounted transformer and 4 feet on the rear and sides of the housing. The distance allows crews to safely use tools required to work with energized equipment. It also ensures they can move about safely if problems arise.

Pad-mounted transformers are more common than overhead power lines in newer subdivisions and residential developments. In many cases, they are located on members' properties.

These transformers are connected to primary high-voltage lines. Secondary lines can extend from the transformers in several directions underground.

Remember this before planting shrubs or trees, setting fence posts, installing sprinkler systems or digging anywhere near a transformer.

Always dial 811 before you dig to ensure lines are located so your project doesn't disrupt utility service or cause serious injury. 📞



**Please stay away from pad-mounted transformers—those big green boxes. While safe, they carry high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities. They are not meant to be climbed or played on.**





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In the blockbuster film, when a strapping Australian crocodile hunter and a lovely American journalist were getting robbed at knife point by a couple of young thugs in New York, the tough Aussie pulls out his dagger and says "That's not a knife, THIS is a knife!" Of course, the thugs scattered and he continued on to win the reporter's heart.

Our Aussie friend would approve of our rendition of his "knife." Forged of high grade 420 surgical stainless steel, this knife is an impressive 16" from pommel to point. And, the blade is full tang, meaning it runs the entirety of the knife, even though part of it is under wraps in the natural bone and wood handle.

Secured in a tooled leather sheath, this is one impressive knife, with an equally impressive price.

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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# Time-Honored, Southern Classics

With best wishes and good luck to all, January's recipes provide cooks with time-honored recipes provided by a dear friend whose early Deep South years formed a wide variety of traditions.

Hoppin' John—also known as Carolina peas to folks further north—is thought to bring a prosperous year filled with good luck. One common tradition is each person at the meal should leave three peas on their plates to ensure good luck follows throughout the new year. Hoe cake gets its name from the original method of preparation—cooking the flat cornmeal cakes on a type of iron pan called a hoe. The term was first attested in 1745 by American writers, such as Washington Irving and Joel Barlow, and hoe cakes were a staple for Civil War soldiers. Whether the claims of good luck are true or not, Hoppin' John and hoe cakes provide a warm and welcome meal at the end of a cold day.

Need a boost during the short daylight hours? Try our coffee cookies to deliver an extra punch of caffeine. Stay warm and enjoy the kitchen moments of the new year.



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.

## Alabama Hoppin' John

- |                                       |                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 12-oz bag frozen Black-Eyed Peas    | 2 tablespoons sugar                   |
| 4 cups water                          | ½ teaspoon salt                       |
| 1 medium-sized ham hock               | ½ cup plain bread crumbs              |
| 1 14- to 15-ounce can stewed tomatoes | 2 cups cooked rice of choice          |
| 2 tablespoons butter                  | ½ cup chopped green onions to garnish |

In a slow cooker, place frozen peas and ham hock. Add water and cover. Cook for six to eight hours on high or until the meat easily flakes off ham bone. Fork meat off bones, stir into peas and set aside.

Cook rice as directed.

In a skillet, place tomatoes, butter, sugar and salt. Cook on medium heat until butter and sugar are well incorporated. Stir in bread crumbs and reduce heat to a simmer. Cook until tomato mixture is thickened.

To plate, spoon rice onto a one-third section of a flat serving dish. Add the pea mixture into the second third and finish off with the tomato mixture. Sprinkle with green onions.





## Deep South Hoe Cake

1 cup cornmeal	1 egg
½ cup flour	Water to incorporate
1 teaspoon baking soda	½ cup chopped green onions
½ teaspoon salt	

Mix cornmeal, flour, baking soda and salt in a medium bowl. Add egg and enough water to make a stiff dough. Stir in green onions.

Form dough into flat pancake-like patties in your hand. Cook on a hot griddle until both sides are golden. Serve hot with butter, honey or your choice of jam.



## Coffee Cookies

¼ cup shortening	1 tablespoon baking cocoa
¼ cup butter, softened	1 teaspoon vanilla
1 egg	¾ cup flour
3 tablespoons instant coffee powder	½ teaspoon baking soda
⅓ cup sugar	¼ teaspoon salt
⅓ cup brown sugar	⅔ cup white baking chips

Preheat oven to 350 F.

Prepare a baking sheet with parchment paper lightly sprayed with cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, mix shortening, butter, sugars, cocoa, egg, vanilla and coffee until well blended. Mix in the flour, baking soda and salt. Blend until all ingredients are incorporated. Stir in baking chips.

Mound by heaping teaspoonfuls onto a baking sheet. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes.

Let cool on baking sheet. The cookies can be stored in an airtight container for a week at room temperature.





# THE MARKET PLACE

## Animals

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## Real Estate

**DATIL, 0000 2 HERRINGTON CANYON ROAD, SOLD** - 40 acres vacant land, \$24,000. **0000 3 HERRINGTON CANYON ROAD,** \$24,000. Hiking, hunting and off grid living potential. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**PIE TOWN, SOUTH OF WILD HORSE SUBDIVISION, 0000 1 GOAT RANCH ROAD,** 20 acres, \$12,000. and **0000 2 GOAT RANCH ROAD,** 40 acres, \$24,000. Vacant land with hiking, hunting and off grid living potential. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**CURRY, ROOSEVELT, QUAY, HARDING, UNION, LEA AND CHAVES COUNTIES.** Seeking large acreage working farm and ranch listings. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**NEWKIRK, 0000 OLD CABIN ROAD, TRACT 9, BULL CANYON RANCHES DEVELOPMENT, PRICE REDUCED,** 140 acres with scenic views of the Llano Estacado escarpment and surrounding mesalands. \$90,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)



**CANADIAN RIVER - WEST OF UTE LAKE, EAST OF QUAY ROAD A1**, six 40 acre (more or less) parcels available (**LOT 9J, SOLD**) with lake and mesalands views. One of the lots is west of Quay Road A1 fronting Ute Lake. Call for appointment to show and pricing. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**SANTA ROSA, 0000 WILL ROGERS DRIVE**, 26 acres close to I-40 and old Route 66. Commercial potential. \$399,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**SAN ANTONIO/SAN MARCIAL, 27 WINCHESTER ROAD, LOTS 27 AND 27A, WILLOW SPRINGS RANCH SUBDIVISION**, 702.8 acres in the foothills of the Chupadera Mountains with beautiful Southwestern style home, well, electricity. Close to I-25. \$1,249,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**CONCHAS, 631 CONCHAS DRIVE, PRICE REDUCED!** 3-bedroom, 2-bath home with detached garage and 30 x 40 boat storage. All electric. \$180,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**CUERVO, 0000 1 AND 2 MESITA PASS ROAD, MESITA RANCH SUBDIVISION, TRACT 9, SOLD** (143.36 acres, \$64,500.) and **TRACT 10 SOLD** (140.02 acres, \$63,000.). Opportunity for homesite, horses, cattle. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**ADOBE HOME AND CASITA IN TORREON, NM** - gorgeous adobe stucco wall, great BNB opportunity. Huge horse barn with three stalls, 1.5 acres of land, 4-bedroom, 2.75-bath, 2,542 approximate sq. ft. Contact Nick Ceccacci at 505-206-4119 or visit MLS#1041671 for more information.

**GLADSTONE, 4386 SPRINGER HIGHWAY (US 56-412), PRICE REDUCED!** 3-bedroom, 2-bath home with 36 x 45 barn and two open livestock sheds/lean-tos. Two wells (one is solar). \$260,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**TUCUMCARI, 10445 STATE ROAD 104**, 10.53 acres (total of two tracts) **PRICE REDUCED** - one with septic and well. Close to electricity and community water. \$60,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**MOUNTAINAIR, 0000 CLIFFORD TRAIL ROAD (CR B022)**, 132 acres, fenced, view of Manzano Mountains. \$105,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**SOUTH OF ALAMOGORDO, NM** - two 20 acre parcels south of Dog Canyon Road on Southland Road and School Road (southwest corner). Asking \$2,000. per acre. Negotiable. Owner will carry with 10% down. Contact Steven at 602-432-4141 for more information.

**TUCUMCARI, 0000 QUAY ROAD, PRICED REDUCED!** 63.4, two one acre lots sold together, \$10,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**THINKING OF BUYING OR SELLING IN DEMING?** Call Heather Wood at Lamplight Realty, LLC 575-936-4100 or cell 575-494-6331, e-mail [heather@lamplightrealty.com](mailto:heather@lamplightrealty.com) or visit the website at [www.lamplightrealty.com](http://www.lamplightrealty.com)

**TEXICO, 2436 STATE ROAD 108**, 7.2 acres with two story home and three car detached garage. Carpet and flooring upgrades. \$210,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000. Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**SANTA ROSA, 1070 BAR Y ROAD, HOLLYWOOD RANCH SUBDIVISION.** Three parcels (18, 19, 20) totaling just over 41 acres. Perimeter fencing and road. Water and electricity, \$125,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**MILAGRO, 0000 PECOS SPUR, PORTRILLO CREEK RANCH SUBDIVISION**, 164 acres. Wide open space for livestock and/or home site. Close to I-40. \$84,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**CLOVIS, 809 S. PRINCE**, 4.98 acres along US 70 south of Brady Street. Commercial potential. \$150,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

**TUCUMCARI, 1120 S. SARATOGA**, just over one acre along US 54 (Mountain Road). \$20,000. Big Mesa Realty, 575-456-2000, Paul Stout, broker, NMREL 17843, 575-760-5461. [www.bigmesarealty.com](http://www.bigmesarealty.com)

## Vehicles

**CLASSIC VEHICLES FOR SALE** - 1954 Ford F-100, original except changed to 12 volts, new custom paint and upholstery. 1969 Ford F-100 step-side, rebuilt end to end, new custom paint. 1990 Chevy Camaro I-ROC, clean inside and out. Call 505-753-4271 for more information.

**CLASSIC VEHICLE PROJECTS AND ENGINES** - 1953 Ford F-100 with flathead V8 complete but needs restoration; 1956 Ford F-100 cab and front end, has rebuilt 296 Y-block and automatic transmission, good for parts or can be restored; 1979 Chevy cab and front end, clean frame; 1977 Chevy 250, 6 cylinder, engine complete with 3-speed transmission; 1957 Ford 296 Y-block, needs to be rebuilt; 1972 TransAm hood. Call Andy at 505-753-4271 for more information.

**FOR SALE** - 2002 F-350 Power Stroke, cab/chassis, steel bed, gin poles, two 4,000 lb. electric winches, tool boxes, one owner. 1981 F-350 cab/chassis, steel welding bed, PTO winch, gin poles with 1979 SA 200 Lincoln welder, approximately 400' leads, big Victor torch, gauges, hoses, one owner. Call 575-403-8444 for more information.

**25 FT. GOOSENECK TRAILER** - has been sandblasted, primed and painted, new LED lights, eight new 12 ply tires, deck has been sealed. Also, 2006 Chevy C5500 Duramax with Allison transmission, new paint, new leather interior, new flat bed and new rims. Call 575-420-8738 for more information.

**2006 - 31 FT. SUNSEEKER MOTOR HOME BY FOREST RIVER**, has 35,000 miles on it, a generator, slide out, two TV's and everything works. \$19,900. Call 575-626-7138 for more information.

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4. Write ad on another sheet of paper.
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1. **Due the 7th, one month prior.** Ex: Ads due January 7 for the February issue.

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2. We reserve the right to reject any ad.
4. Advertisements in enchantment are paid solicitations and are not endorsed by the publisher or the electric cooperatives of New Mexico.
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6. Enchantment prints monthly, except for June and December.

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# The Cost of Convenience

Always-on devices are ready at a moment's notice, but at what price?

By Brandon Pomrenke

It has fear-inspiring names—vampire power, vampire draw, ghost load, phantom power and phantom load—and it affects many common household electrical devices.

Standby power, often referred to as phantom load, is just that: power standing by to make life a bit easier. It is caused by devices plugged into an outlet that use electricity even when turned off.

“It’s energy used by electronics when they are not being actively used,” says Mark Gosvenor, Senior Vice President at Efficiency Services Group. “In other words, when a TV is on but not being watched, it’s the energy it uses to run everything in the background. It’s how you get that instant-on with instant brightness.”

The U.S. Department of Energy says on average, between 5% and 8% of the average home’s total electric use comes from phantom loads.

Consumers must answer: Is the convenience worth the cost?

Most homes have at least a few devices that continuously draw electricity. These include electronics that use a remote control, such as TVs, stereos and game consoles; programmable thermostats; motion and light sensors; computers, monitors, printers, modems and surge protectors; and electric devices with timers, such as coffee makers.

Those cellphone chargers plugged in by the nightstand or the charging station in the living room? Absolutely.

For everyday convenience and to protect your devices, modems and surge protectors may need to remain plugged in. It is up to consumers to determine what other devices need constant power.

Mark says you can eliminate instant-on features by plugging the TV into a power strip that allows you to turn off items plugged in. The TV still works, but you may need to wait a few extra seconds while it warms up.

Options are available to consumers that include more

than unplugging.

Power strips allow you to turn off multiple outlets simultaneously, saving the inconvenience of reaching for several hard-to-reach outlets. A smart power strip can sense how long a device has been on without being used.


“When you turn off electronics, the smart power strip senses the reduction in current and shuts off power to the socket, which eliminates any power drawn by that device when it’s off,” Mark explains.

Smart power strips have outlets for items that must always be on, such as clocks and cable boxes. The controlled plugs sense the increase or decrease in current and act accordingly.

Tier 2 advanced smart strips have an infrared sensor that monitors remote control activity.

“In addition to eliminating phantom power, it reduces the amount of active energy being used by sensing when a TV is running, but not being watched,” Mark says. “The Tier 2 power strips will reduce the total energy used by a TV by about 50%.”

He says taking advantage of the always-on features is a value proposition for consumers, and it is up to them to make an educated decision.

Advanced smart power strips are available at most electronic retailers. 



ADOBE STOCK PHOTO  
BY TOMISPIN



# WINTER SAFETY WORD SEARCH

Did you know most home fires happen during colder months? Play it safe this winter season.

Read the safety tips below, then find and circle the bolded words in the puzzle.



A	P	I	R	P	A	J	G	F	W	D	C	Q	T	W
U	L	B	S	G	W	N	N	P	T	S	A	T	A	T
R	L	A	Y	P	J	I	U	Q	P	Q	N	G	E	O
C	T	W	R	Y	J	D	X	A	R	X	D	B	L	Z
J	F	T	P	M	K	G	C	I	B	T	L	T	C	F
X	B	K	Y	Z	S	E	M	B	Q	G	E	B	D	B
G	B	W	B	Z	H	K	T	Z	H	J	H	R	M	X
C	V	X	J	E	B	X	S	X	B	Q	C	K	V	A
V	I	M	A	B	O	K	A	T	C	S	I	K	F	E
X	Y	T	Q	Y	K	J	S	F	N	Q	V	T	J	W
L	E	V	J	A	N	V	U	W	C	B	A	P	A	W
R	T	R	E	L	E	C	T	R	O	N	I	C	S	O
W	Z	B	K	R	Y	X	S	B	V	A	Q	O	U	E
S	D	R	O	C	N	O	I	S	N	E	T	X	E	P
I	F	J	R	W	K	J	B	Q	P	U	B	D	T	Z

Never overload electrical outlets with too many **electronics**.

Test smoke and carbon monoxide **alarms** every month.

Never leave a **candle** burning in an empty room.

Keep flammable items at least three feet away from a **space heater**.

**Extension cords** should only be used temporarily. Damaged or frayed cords should be thrown away.



# AI and the Grid

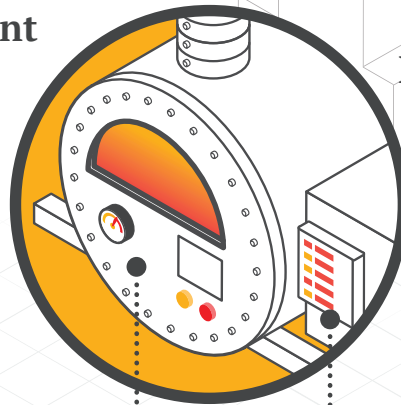
The electric power industry is already using artificial intelligence and machine learning for some key functions, including customer service, maintenance and cybersecurity. But most experts agree that the influence of AI in power generation, transmission and distribution is set to expand exponentially, bringing new data analysis and forecasting tools that will have major impacts on grid efficiency, reliability and resilience.



## Grid Management

Real-time insights and predictive analytics will make regional grids more efficient, secure and adaptable.

- Energy trading
- System data analysis
- Cybersecurity
- Supply/demand forecasting



## Power Plant

Algorithms that analyze sensor data will improve efficiency, extend lifespans and reduce failures at generation plants.

Proactive maintenance

Performance monitoring and analysis

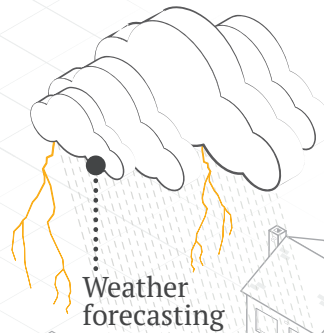
Renewables integration



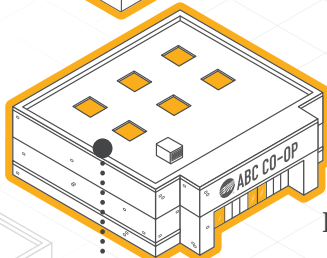
## Distribution Operations

Use of real-time system data will enable better grid insights and control and more efficient integration of distributed energy resources.

- Microgrids
- Virtual power plants



Weather forecasting



- Chatbots
- IOT management
- Analyze energy use and member metrics

Power theft detection

Load forecasting

Asset management

Drone inspection

Fault detection



## Member Services

AI tools can make member interactions more efficient and allow co-ops to tailor services based on usage data.

Source: NRECA; Design: Kevin Keppie





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# A Beginner's Guide to the Electric Grid

By Maura Giles

Electricity plays an essential role in everyday life.

It powers our homes, offices, hospitals and schools. We depend on it to keep us warm in the winter (and cool in the summer), charge our phones and binge our favorite TV shows. If the power goes out, even briefly, our lives can be disrupted.

The system that delivers your electricity is often described as the most complex machine in the world, and it's known as the electric grid.

What makes it so complex? We all use different amounts of electricity throughout the day, so the supply and demand for electricity constantly changes. We typically use more electricity in the mornings when we start our days, and in the evenings when we cook dinner and use appliances. Severe weather and other factors also impact how much electricity we need.

The challenge for electric providers is to plan for, produce and purchase enough electricity so it's available exactly when we need it. Too much or too little electricity in one place can cause problems. To make sure the whole system stays balanced, the electric grid must adjust in real time to changes and unforeseen events.

At its core, the electric grid is a network of power lines, transformers, substations and other infrastructure that spans the country. But it's not just a singular system. It's divided into three major interconnected grids: the Eastern Interconnection, the Western Interconnection and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas. These grids operate independently but are linked to allow electricity to be transferred between regions when backup support is required.

Within the three regions are seven balancing authorities, known as independent system operators

or regional transmission organizations. They monitor the grid, signaling to power plants when more electricity is needed to maintain a balanced electrical flow. ISOs and RTOs are like traffic controllers for electricity.

The journey of electricity begins at power plants. Power plants can be thought of as factories that make electricity using various energy sources, such as natural gas, solar, wind and nuclear energy. Across the U.S., more than 11,000 power plants deliver electricity to the grid.


To get the electricity from power plants to you, we need a transportation system.

High-voltage transmission lines act as the highways for electricity, transporting power across long distances. These lines are supported by massive towers and travel through vast landscapes, connecting power plants to electric substations.

Substations are like pit stops along the highway, where the voltage of electricity is adjusted. They play a crucial role in managing power flow and ensuring electricity is safe for use in homes and businesses.

Once the electricity is reduced to the correct voltage, it travels through distribution power lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road. Distribution lines carry electricity from substations to homes, schools and businesses. Distribution transformers, which look like metal buckets on the tops of power poles or large green boxes on the ground, further reduce the voltage to levels suitable for household appliances and electronic devices.

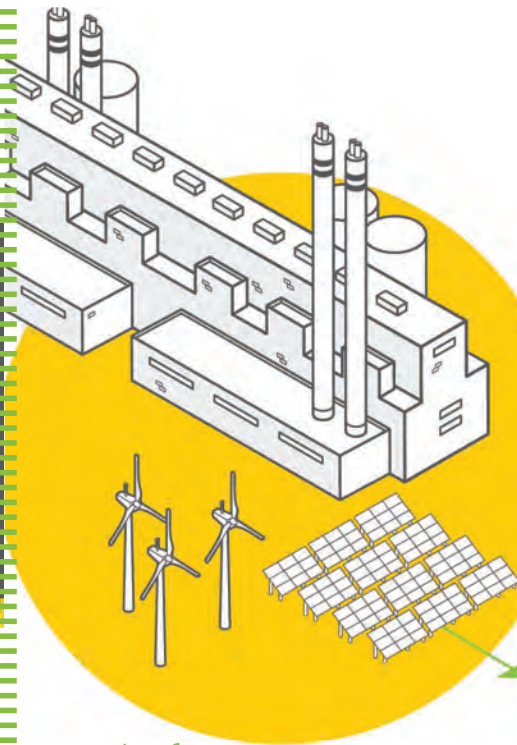
After traveling through transformers, electricity reaches you—to power everyday life.

We're proud to be your local, trusted energy provider. From the time it's created to the time it's used, electricity travels great distances to be available at the flip of a switch. That's what makes the electric grid our nation's most complex machine—and one of our nation's greatest achievements. 



# CRITICAL CONNECTIONS: HOW ELECTRICITY GETS TO YOU

The electric grid is considered one of the most complex machines in the world, delivering the electricity we need for everyday life.

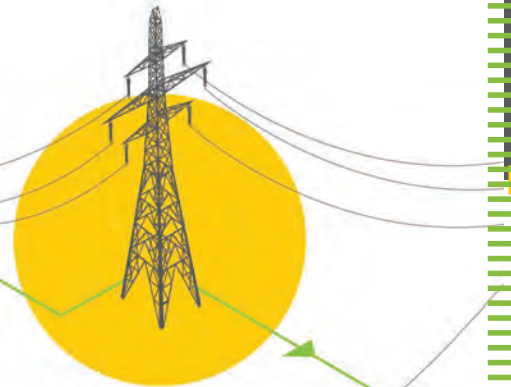


**step 1**  
**GENERATION**

Power plants generate electricity using a variety of energy sources, such as solar, natural gas, nuclear and wind energy.

**step 2**  
**STEP-UP  
TRANSFORMER**

A step-up transformer increases the voltage to push the electricity over long distances.



**step 3**  
**TRANSMISSION LINES**

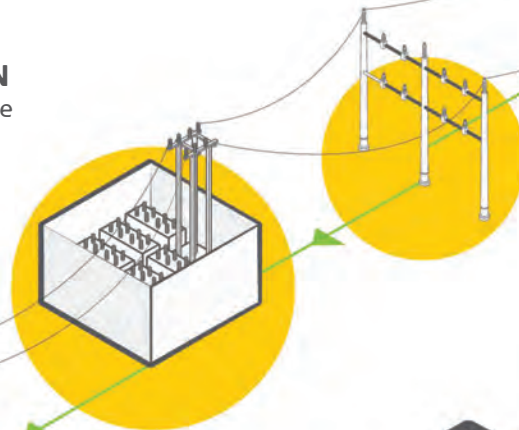
High-voltage electricity travels over long distances through these lines.

**step 5**  
**DISTRIBUTION SUBSTATION**

These substations lower the voltage again so the electricity is ready to travel on distribution lines.

**step 6**  
**DISTRIBUTION LINES**

Lower-voltage electricity travels through distribution lines, like the ones you typically see on the side of the road.

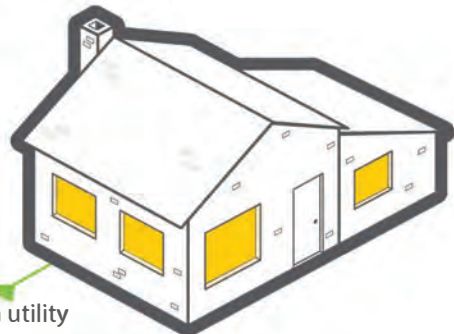


**step 4**  
**TRANSMISSION  
SUBSTATION**

Voltage is lowered at a transmission substation so electricity can travel across the local distribution system.

**step 7**  
**FINAL STOP**

A transformer located on the ground or a utility pole reduces the voltage a final time, then electricity is sent inside your home, school or business.





# youth art

## February Topic:

### Happy Valentine's Day!

Draw a picture of you and your family.

## March Topic:

### Happy Women's History Month!

Draw a picture of a woman who inspires you.

## Send Your Drawing

By mail: Youth Editor  
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Santa Fe, NM 87505

By email:  
tcondit@nmelectric.coop

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

## Hooray!

Winners 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

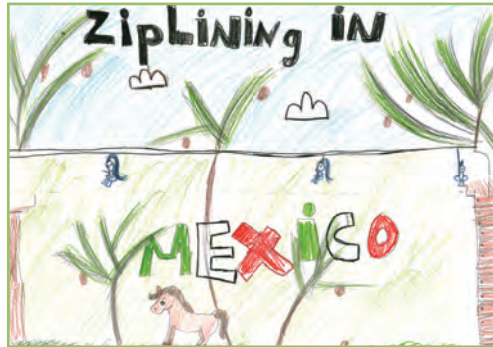
**DON'T FORGET THESE ITEMS!**

Artwork accepted up to age 13.

# Happy New Year!

Congratulations to the winning artists who drew something they want to do in 2024!

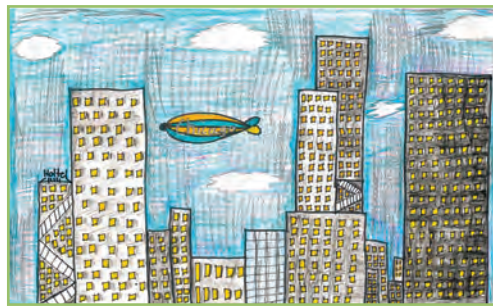
**Thalia Acosta • Age 10**  
Central New Mexico Electric Cooperative



**Kynsleigh Schlamann • Age 11**  
Socorro Electric Cooperative



**Madison Dodson • Age 12**  
Lea County Electric Cooperative



**Peyton Wear • Age 10**  
Sierra Electric Cooperative



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**Claire Welssgarber • Age 8**  
Otero County Electric Cooperative





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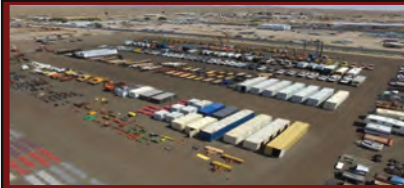
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2024!**



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