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EDITORIAL

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On the Cover

Students Landon Knight and Sun Richardson and Professor Cindy Clements pose with robotics projects. Photo by Michelle, A Lock in Time Photography.



"The Most Wonderful Time of the Year" by Jamison Paul, a consumer-member of Poudre Valley REA.

- 4 VIEWPOINT
- 5 LETTERS
- 6 ASK THE ENERGY EXPERT
- 7 YOUR CO-OP NEWS
- 11 RECIPES
- 14 NEWS CLIPS

16 COVER STORY THE LITTLE COLLEGE THAT COULD

- 20 ENERGY CONNECTIONS
- 22 GARDENING
- 24 OUTDOORS
- 26 FOCUS ON
- 28 MARKETPLACE
- 29 YOUR STORIES
- 30 DISCOVERIES

Monthly Contest



We are cleaning our bookshelves! Enter for your chance to win one of five cookbooks. To see the list of book titles and the official rules, and to enter, visit our Monthly Contests page at coloradocountrylife.coop.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE MONTH

cocountrylife posted: Wildflowers in Eagles Nest Wilderness on full, colorful display the last Saturday in July.



FACEBOOK CHATTER

Colorado Rural Electric Association posted: Colorado's electric co-ops took 29 students to Washington, D.C., for the electric cooperative Youth Tour June 12-16. During that time, students saw the sights and learned about the governmental process with other students from cooperatives across the country. #ChargeOnYT22



LINKEDIN CONNECTIONS

Colorado Rural Electric Assoc. posted: Did you know that #advancedmeters make up more than half the electric meters in the country, and #electriccooperatives are leading the way? In Colorado, 100% of the state's 22 electric distribution co-ops utilize advanced meters and have for years.

Exploring Colorful Colorado

Electric co-ops serve amazing parts of the state

BY KENT SINGER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



KENT SINGER

I hope you'll excuse me.

I started to write a column about how, by the time you read this, the U.S. Congress will have passed the "Inflation Reduction Act of 2022" (IRA). This is a piece of federal legislation that contains many provisions that potentially benefit Colorado's electric cooperatives.

After all, as the executive director of CREA, part of my job is to support state and federal legislation that will help our electric co-ops. It looks like the IRA will provide funding for programs such as direct payments to co-ops working to transition away from fossil fuels, tax credits for electric vehicles and even funding for the National Renewable Energy Lab in Golden.

But as I was trying my best to summarize this 755-page bill and, frankly, questioning whether it would indeed reduce inflation, my mind started to wander. You see, earlier this summer I completed one of the items high on my Colorado bucket list: the hike from Crested Butte to Aspen on the West Maroon Trail during wildflower season. (While technically the trail starts at the West Maroon Trailhead and ends in the Maroon Bells trail parking lot, in general, the hike is from Crested Butte to Aspen.)

I would not normally use this space as a travelogue, but in the 38 years I have lived in Colorado, this 10.5-mile hike is the most "Colorado" thing I've ever done. I've hiked lots of fourteeners and fished many mountain rivers and streams, but when you think of Colorado scenery, what do you think of? Wildflowers? Forests primeval? (Thank you, Dan Fogelberg.) Crystalline lakes and

streams? Snowbanks? Dogs? This hike has them all (assuming you bring your dog, as I did).

Ella the border collie and I caught a 6 a.m. shuttle van from a B&B in Crested Butte to the West Maroon trailhead north of Gothic. (My dear wife would make the long drive around and pick us up at Aspen Highlands later in the day.) Ella the border collie, being an antisocial sort, was glad to exit the van filled with other hikers, even in a steady downpour. Hoping that the rain would let up and starting out fast to get ahead of the other trekkers, we charged up the trail that leads to the summit at West Maroon Pass.

The rain quickly subsided and, after a half-mile or so of uphill hiking, the scene that unfolded in those mountain meadows was simply breathtaking. If you've seen the many iconic John Fielder photographs of the Colorado backcountry, you get the idea.

There were wildflowers blanketing the foothills from one horizon to the other: Colorado blue columbine, red Indian paintbrush, purple bluebells, silvery blue lupine, Rocky Mountain bee plants, subalpine larkspur, yellow black-eyed Susans, Maximilian sunflowers and dozens of additional varieties I could not identify. All these wildflowers were framed against a backdrop of snow-capped mountain peaks, rushing mountain streams and pine forests, with not another human in sight. Paradise for man and, especially, beast.

We continued up the trail to the summit of West Maroon Pass (12,386 feet) where we "pawed" for a snack. (Sorry.) I had one of

those delicious trail bars that taste slightly better than the cardboard container they're packed in, and Ella had a beef tenderstick (which cost considerably more than my trail bar and looked a lot more appetizing).

By this time, a lot of hikers were coming from the other direction, so I put Ella back on the leash since she is an incorrigible herder, meaning she likes to gently nip people on the backs of their ankles.

We headed downhill to complete the last 6 miles of the hike, stopping periodically to let Ella roll around on snowbanks and cool off in mountain streams. Along the way, we noticed something very peculiar: In our world of generally grumpy, stressed-out people, every hiker or group of hikers we approached was either laughing or smiling. Colorado still has that magic.

We finished the hike at the base of the spectacular Maroon Bells and caught a shuttle bus back to Aspen Highlands.

While there are no electric co-op facilities in the Maroon Bell-Snowmass Wilderness, electric co-ops serve the communities at both ends: Crested Butte and Aspen. I can therefore say with a straight face that, while this hike may have seemed like just a vacation, I was hard at work exploring co-op service territory. Hope you can too!

Kent Singer is the executive director of CREA and offers a statewide perspective on issues affecting electric cooperatives. CREA is the trade association for all of Colorado's 21 electric distribution co-ops and one power supply co-op.

FROM THE EDITOR

Memories — both fair and foul

BY MONA NEELEY EDITOR



MONA NEELEY

The Colorado State Fair just ended — did you make it to Pueblo? Colorado's electric co-ops were there, sponsoring the Junior Livestock Sale. As a former 4-H'er, I know what kind of effort the kids selling their award-winning animals put in to raise them and get them ready for fair season.

The state fair offers so much with its displays, rodeos, music, exhibits and more.

However, there was a time when I dreaded the state fair; this one was in Minnesota. I had a friend who sold western boots at the fair and she roped her friends into helping at the booth. We were there all 12 days of the fair from 10 a.m. when the booths opened until 10 p.m. when they closed.

Then we would drag ourselves to the midway before heading to the noisy campground where we would try to catch a few hours of sleep. I was drained by the end of the fair.

I didn't go back to the fair for years. It made me tired to think about it.

Then, one year, friends were going to the fair and I went along. It was a Saturday; I'd been lazy all day. And, wouldn't you know it, the fair was fun when you're not bone-tired.

Mona Neeley is the statewide editor of *Colorado Country Life*, which is published in coordination with your local electric cooperative. Its goal is to provide information from your local electric co-op to you, its consumer-members.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Focused on Weekend Fun

Thanks for sharing the story of Florence, the Antique Capital of Colorado (April '22). After reading the story, my friend and I loaded up the 1964 T-Bird and spent the weekend in this beautiful little town.

The shops, the junktiques, the crafts and the cars! But it was the kind, fun and friendly people we met who made this a definite must for future adventures.

M Wykoff

Poudre Valley REA consumer-member

Learning Some History

Thank you for the recent article about Fannie May Duncan (June '22). Her story was both fascinating and inspiring. I looked up more information about her and found she was both an amazing businesswoman and a wonderful philanthropist. I have lived in Colorado all my life and never heard of her. Thanks for bringing her to my attention.

Kim Taylor via email

Pro Nuclear Power

I have been a proponent of nuclear generation since the 1980s after reading *The Health Hazards of NOT Going Nuclear* by Petr Beckmann. An objective evaluation of the Three Mile Island incident shows that the containment measures taken were sufficient even in the face of massive operator error. The more recent incident in Japan shows that further threats from local environmental factors need to be considered in siting and planning for nuclear power plants. I recently read *Apocalypse Never: Why Environmental Alarmism Hurts Us All* by Michael Shellenberger and would recommend it. He also makes a good case for nuclear power.

David H. Durgee, Colorado Springs
Mountain View Electric consumer-member



COLORADO IN COLOR

2023 PHOTO CONTEST



Enter for the chance to WIN prize money and have your photo featured in a 2023 issue of *Colorado Country Life*.

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+ **CONTEST**

Our 2023 photo contest highlights the colors of Colorado's beloved state flag: blue, red, gold and white. Do you have an amazing photo that undeniably focuses on the golden hue of autumn's wafting leaves? Maybe a shot of wolves frolicking through an expansive, white, snow-filled meadow? Send us your entries! Just be sure your entry "speaks" blue, red, gold or white.

+ **WINNERS**

Judges will select three winners from each category (blue, red, gold and white) along with a cover winner. Winners will receive prize money and their photo featured in a 2023 issue of *Colorado Country Life*.

+ **TO ENTER**

Go to ColoradoCountryLife.coop for the entry form, official rules and entry samples.

SEND US YOUR LETTERS

Send your letter to the editor to share your thoughts about *CCL*. To share, visit our Reader Engagement page at coloradocountrylife.coop/reader-engagement. Mail your letter to Editor Mona Neeley, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216 or email mneeley@coloradocountrylife.org. Include name and address. Letters may be edited for length.

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■ ASK THE ENERGY EXPERT



Easy Ways to Help a Neighbor Save Energy

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

On National Good Neighbor Day, which is September 28 — or any day this month — join in the cooperative spirit and help your neighbors, friends and family save at home by sharing these do-it-yourself energy-saving tips. *(Tips range in physicality and cost, providing options based on your ability.)*

Change lightbulbs

Prioritize changing lights that are used the most, such as incandescent porch lights left on all night. LEDs use about 75% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Some neighbors can't climb step stools or ladders, so help them out if you are able. Be sure to avoid overhead power lines when using ladders outside.

Swap the filter

Furnace filters should be checked regularly and replaced when they are dirty. Simply writing down the dimensions of the furnace filter can help your neighbor, who can pick up a pack of new ones in the store or order online.

Open the dampers

Register dampers allow heated and cooled air to properly circulate throughout the home. If you have a central air heating or cooling system, dampers should be left open. The idea that closing registers saves energy is a common misconception. If furniture is on top of dampers, move it to a new permanent spot so it does not block airflow.

Keep outdoor units clear

Clean brush and debris from around the air conditioner or heat pump. If leaves or brush pile up around the outdoor unit of a heat pump or air-conditioning system, it can reduce the airflow, making the system work harder than it should. That uses more energy and can reduce the life of the unit.

Remove the window AC

By removing the unit before wintertime, you'll be able to close the window properly. This prevents heat from escaping and wasting energy, and keeps the room more comfortable. Window AC units are heavy and awkward, so this project is best done with a buddy. Get that person to commit to helping put the unit back next spring.

Share energy-saving programs

Information is a great way to help and it's free. Look into programs your co-op offers and share that information with your neighbor. Don't forget to check the U.S. Department of Energy for federal tax credits for upgrades.

Miranda Boutelle is the director of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy-efficiency company. She also writes on energy-efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

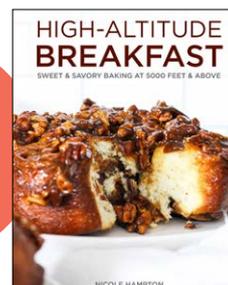
Breakfast Expectations Elevated

New cookbook makes high-altitude cooking a piece of cake

BY AMY HIGGINS | RECIPES@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

It's Time
to Elevate
Your Culinary
Endeavors

At one time or another, scads of Colorado cooks have forsaken their whisks due to concave cakes and dry batter — that is, until they identify the problem: altitude. With an average elevation of around 6,800 feet, according to CSU's Colorado Climate Center, the Centennial State's sky-high setting is majestic, but cooks can feel they hit rock bottom when their cakes constantly crumble. But blogger (doughyed.com) and author Nicole Hampton knows how to navigate elevation. Her latest cookbook, *High-Altitude Breakfast: Sweet & Savory Baking at 5,000 Feet & Above*, was created in her Colorado home — just like *Sugar High*, featured in the February 2019 issue of *Colorado Country Life* — and the recipes within will no doubt elevate your culinary endeavors. The best part: These recipes can be enjoyed in altitudes of all sizes and during all times of the day.



Enter our contest to win a copy of *High-Altitude Breakfast*. Visit Monthly Contests at coloradocountrylife.coop for details on how to enter.



Blueberry Cheesecake Pancakes

Makes 8 to 10 pancakes

FOR THE BLUEBERRY TOPPING: FOR THE CHEESECAKE FILLING:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 pint fresh blueberries | 8 ounces cream cheese, softened |
| 1/4 cup sugar | 1/2 cup sugar |
| 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| 1 tablespoon cornstarch | 1 batch basic buttermilk pancakes |
| 1/8 teaspoon salt | Butter for cooking |
| 2 to 3 tablespoons water | |

To make the blueberry topping, in a small saucepan stir together the blueberries, sugar, lemon juice, cornstarch and salt. Cook the mixture over medium heat, stirring often, until the mixture becomes bubbly and thick, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in 2 tablespoons water. If the mixture is too thick to drizzle, add another tablespoon of water. Keep warm.

To make the cheesecake filling, in a bowl, whisk together the cream cheese, sugar and vanilla until smooth. Cover and set aside.

Prepare the pancake batter as directed. (Visit coloradocountrylife.coop/recipes for Basic Buttermilk Pancakes or use your favorite recipe.)

Preheat the oven to its lowest setting (that's 170 degrees for me), if desired. Heat a large skillet over medium heat, and melt a small pat of butter in the pan. In batches, add about 1/3 cup batter per pancake to the hot pan, spacing them evenly. Cook until golden brown, 1 to 2 minutes on each side. Transfer the cooked pancakes to a plate and keep warm in the oven while you cook the rest of the batter.

To serve, divide the pancakes among serving plates. Layer each pancake with the cheesecake filling and then top the with the warm blueberry topping.



FIND MORE ONLINE

If you're looking for another great crowd-pleasing breakfast dish, try Nicole Hampton's **Carrot Cake Waffles**. Get the recipe at coloradocountrylife.coop.



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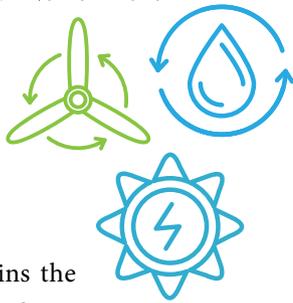
Solar, Wind Supply Record Amount of U.S. Energy in 2021

More and more of everyone's electricity is coming from solar and wind. According to a recent report compiled by the Americas for Bloomberg New Energy Finance, a record 13% of the country's power generation now comes from solar and wind power.

Renewable energy production, predominantly from hydroelectric dams, solar arrays and wind turbines, grew more than 4% from 2020 to 2021. When nuclear energy is included in the mix, carbon-neutral energy sources accounted for 40% of U.S. demand in 2021.

Natural gas remains the largest single source of U.S. electricity generation at 38%. Power from coal-fired power plants nationwide rose slightly in 2021, to 22%. However, coal's portion of the U.S. energy market is down 40% from 2011.

Power generation is becoming cleaner and more of it is coming from renewable sources. In 2021, power sector carbon emissions were 35% below 2005 levels.



Electric Co-ops Help 4-H Take Energy Education on the Road

Colorado's state 4-H office is rolling out four mobile STEM labs available for local 4-H agents to use throughout the year. These labs, housed in customized cargo trailers converted to educational units, offer students hands-on educational experiences in science, technology, engineering and math, all the STEM categories.

Colorado's electric cooperatives sponsors the 4-H Mobile Energy Lab through their member services group. This lab focuses on energy production and conservation, energy conversions and energy use. It includes several hands-on activities to help students understand electricity, how it is generated and how it can be used.

The other three mobile labs include a STEM career pathway lab, a STEM maker lab focused on activities such as woodcraft and an environmental sciences lab.

The labs were featured at the summer 4-H conference, and the Mobile Energy Lab was displayed at the recent Colorado State Fair. Designs for the interactive elements of each lab are being finalized. The trailers will be distributed to four regions of the state in September and begin a rotation through each region in October. The Energy Lab will begin on the western side of the state.



JOIN THE JOURNEY

Give the gift of clean water or a backpack to Guatemalan families and children!

The Colorado-Oklahoma Energy Trails team is currently in Guatemala to bring power to the village of La Montanita de la Virgen. Show your support and help the local families by making a donation today.

To give online: Visit crea.coop/community-outreach/current-causes.

To send a check: Make it payable to Colorado Electric Educational Institute with School Supplies on the memo line and mail it to CREA/Guatemala, 5400 Washington St., Denver, CO 80216.

CREA established the 501(c)(3) not-for-profit, CEEI, to support causes like this. All contributions are tax-deductible. This project was made possible by NRECA International, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization, whose mission is to increase individual and community access to electricity in all parts of the world.

International Team Working in Guatemala

Colorado and Oklahoma lineworkers are on the ground in La Montanita de la Virgen, Guatemala, stringing power lines that will bring electricity to the homes, church and school in that small community.

The electric co-op team was originally scheduled to leave for Guatemala at the end of July, but supply chain issues meant the trip was postponed about a month. The team didn't leave the United States for the village northeast of Guatemala City until August 29. They will return September 16.

Colorado's team members include Zeb Birch, Grand Valley Power; Nathaniel Pennell, Mountain View Electric; Clayton Shonk, White River Electric; and Trenton Jole, Holy Cross Energy.

This is the first international trip in two years for NRECA International, the philanthropic arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The team will extend electric distribution service along a 7-mile stretch of mountainous terrain to 76 adobe homes, an elementary school, a small church and a health care center. The villagers dug the holes and erected the necessary power poles before the volunteers arrived. They are anxious to receive electricity.

Soon they will no longer have to haul water from a spring outside the village nor grind their corn for tortillas by hand every day.



Clayton Shonk
White River Electric Association



Nathaniel Pennell
Mountain View Electric Association



Trenton Jole
Holy Cross Energy



Zeb Birch
Grand Valley Power



House Passes Direct-Pay Incentives Renewable Energy & Co-ops Benefit

The Inflation Reduction Act passed by Congress August 12 will provide federal direct-pay credits to electric co-ops when they develop new energy technologies, including carbon capture, nuclear, energy storage, renewables and more.

The bill was signed into law by President Joe Biden Tuesday, August 16.

Direct-pay incentives to co-ops has been one of the top legislative goals for the nation's electric cooperatives.

Until now, co-ops, which do not pay federal income taxes, have not been eligible for tax credits that bring down the cost of renewable resource projects. Instead, they have had to partner with for-profit businesses that are eligible for tax credits.

"Because co-ops had to deal with for-profit entities to develop renewable energy projects, the costs were higher," explained CREA Executive Director Kent Singer. "The for-profit companies did not pass the full savings from the tax credits on to the co-ops, and instead retained a portion as their profit margin. Now, co-ops can realize the same benefit as for-profit entities.

"Electric cooperatives are leading the charge to reliably meet America's future energy needs amid an energy transition that increasingly depends on electricity to power the U.S. economy," said NRECA CEO Jim Matheson.

"As co-ops continue to innovate, access to tax incentives and funding for investments in new energy technologies are crucial new tools that will help reduce costs and keep electricity affordable for consumers."

The legislation also creates a voluntary \$9.7 billion grant and loan program designed specifically for electric co-ops that buy or build new clean energy systems. It will be administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The program will provide funding for a wide range of projects, including renewable energy, carbon capture, battery storage, nuclear power and improvements to generation and transmission efficiency. Interested co-ops will be eligible to receive an award for up to 25% of their project costs, with a maximum of \$970 million going to any one co-op.



BY JOANNE PALMER

Everyone loves an underdog — the long-shot horse that wins the Kentucky Derby by a nose; the rookie quarterback who throws the winning touchdown in the final seconds of the game; or the middle-aged Olympian who, against all odds, racks up more medals than competitors half his age.

But not all underdog stories revolve around sporting events and athletic achievements. This is a story about an academic underdog, a heartwarming account of a two-year community college, Trinidad State College, that is home to a robotics team that competes against bigger, mostly four-year colleges and not only holds its own but consistently defies expectations.

It's the story of the little college that could and the mathematics professor, Cindy Clements, who started it all.

Trinidad is not what you'd expect. One of the main streets of this southern Colorado

town in San Isabel Electric's service territory is paved with bricks. And while many Colorado towns boast about their sweeping panoramic views and towering mountain peaks, for roughly 40 years Trinidad's claim to fame was as a destination for people seeking sex reassignment surgery.

Equidistant between Denver and Santa Fe, New Mexico, with a population hovering around 8,000, it's surprising that Trinidad has a college at all. And yet, founded in 1925, TSC was the first community college in Colorado. The college is widely regarded as having the best gunsmithing school in the United States. Students can also pursue a vocational, arts or science track at either the Trinidad or Alamosa campus.

Many high school students take advantage of the unique opportunity to earn college credits and pursue concurrent enrollment. In fact, this past school year, the seven-member robotics team included

▲ Trinidad State College mathematics professor Cindy Clements stands with Robotics Landon Knight and Sun Richardson.

two high school students. The college is so small, with only about 1,000 students on the Trinidad campus, the robotics team is considered an athletic team and the athletic director publicizes most of their events.

"No one expects Trinidad to have this kind of program," Clements says wryly.

Robotics team member Kayla Gardiner agrees: "Cindy is incredibly dedicated to the robotics program. The region would not have anything like it without her."



LOOKING BACK

According to the TSC website, "The Trinidad State Robotics Team got its start in 2009 when the school was invited to join the Colorado Space Grant Consortium. The program

has evolved gradually and each team has improved on the previous year's design."

This past spring, students again competed in COSGC's Robotics Challenge at the Great Sand Dunes National Park. As part of the event, students submitted a research paper and presented their research at COSGC's symposium.

The first paper from a TSC team was accepted in 2011 and, since then, the team has won best robot in its weight division every year it has been entered. It has also won the People's Choice Award five times, and its paper/presentation has won a session award four times. In 2022, TSC robotics again took the best paper/presentation session award.

Clements' efforts do not go unnoticed. According to Bernadette Garcia Galvez, interim director of the Colorado Space Grant Consortium, "Clements is an exceptional educator. She has developed an approach in which she is able to engage beginning students and develop their skills to a point that her teams are consistently the only team able to demonstrate advanced autonomy at the annual event. She gives her all to keep the program going."

Her students, who refer to her as "Ms. C," appreciate her ability to connect. Co-captain of the robotics team, Ruth Edwards, comments, "I love the way she teaches, especially math. In the past, my math teachers would largely dismiss my questions because I was deeply concerned about the minutiae of how things work and fit together. She does not dismiss these questions; she understands why I want to know."



A CHANCE CONVERSATION

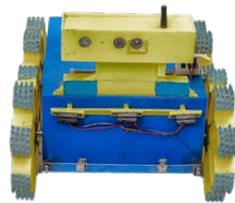
Clements was in the middle of teaching a math class when she overheard a conversation in the hallway between a physics professor

and another colleague about robotics. On impulse, she called out, "I want to do robotics."

Impulsive is not really Clements' jam. She leans more toward the practical — she's the type of person who started thinking about her retirement while she was in her 20s, which led her to buy acreage outside of Trinidad in 1998 even though she had a teaching job in Oklahoma. Fast forward eight years and Clements landed a job at TSC.

After that chance conversation, Clements took a crash course on building robots from a person on the Colorado Space Grant Consortium and went to work.

"In 2010, we made our first robot completely out of recycled pieces and parts and were thrilled it moved in the sand and went in the right direction. It was a simple goal and we achieved it. Not only did we achieve it, but there were only two out of 30 robots that moved at all," recalls Clements.



THE S.W.A.R.M.

When you think of robots, you might think of Rosie the Robot in the cartoon sitcom "The Jetsons"; R2-D2 in "Star Wars"; or the adorable little trash compactor, WALL-E, in a 2008 film. The Trinidad robots are just as lovable as their Hollywood counterparts and, while they don't talk, they are cute. Yes, cute.

The wheels look like large LEGO® pieces, and some sport bright pink duct tape. The bodies are bright primary colors that house little cameras and a gaggle of electronic whosie-whatsits.

But building a robot is a painstaking process, and it doesn't happen overnight — start to finish is about six months. "I take students and teach them everything and anything they need to know, literally nuts and bolts, from electronics to 3-D design and testing." In 2022, the seven-member

robotics team built five robots known as the S.W.A.R.M.: Scorpion, WASP, ANT, Roly-Poly and Mantis.

Robots are about the size of a tissue box, but, unlike a box, they can perform incredible achievements. They whirl, spin and pivot. But most importantly, they're autonomous — they think for themselves.

Clements explains, "Currently, the robots on Mars are dependent on a person giving them further instructions back at NASA. This year, our goal was [to learn] how interconnected robots can work together to communicate with each other and create accurate maps on planets such as Mars."



THE PROCESS

Work begins in December each year, at the latest. There are classes in programming, electronics, 3-D design and building. Then the fun begins. The students meet and divide into groups; next, they program, build, test. Repeat. Program, build, test. Fine tune. Test runs down the hallway. Revise. Tweak. More programming. Collaborate. More test runs. Tweak, tweak, tweak. Finally, months later: the sand pit. Which brings us to the story of Clements and the sand pit.

Clements will stop at nothing to help her students succeed, even if it means importing sand from Alamosa. Say what? The sand at the Great Sand Dunes is very similar to the terrain on Mars. Since all robots compete and are tested at the Sand Dunes in April, Clements simulates a mini Sand Dunes on campus.

"We have actual Sand Dunes sand. The farmers around the Sand Dunes don't want the sand that blows onto their farms, so I hired someone to go around and pick up the sand and bring it to Trinidad," she says.

It's just one more reason what was once a long-shot team in Colorado robotics is now the team to beat.



“

Clements is an exceptional educator. She has developed an approach in which she is able to engage beginning students and develop their skills to a point that her teams are consistently the only team able to demonstrate advanced autonomy at the annual event. She gives her all to keep the program going.”

— Bernadette Garcia Galvez,
interim director of the Colorado
Space Grant Consortium

Landon Knight and Sun Richardson with the five robots known as the S.W.A.R.M. 

Test driving a robot in sand imported from Alamosa. The sand originated from the Great Sand Dunes. 

The Trinidad State College robots are just as cute as their Hollywood counterparts. 





MEET THE TEAM

EVERETT ALLEN, 21, CAPTAIN

Allen grew up surrounded by the beauty of the Grand Canyon and attended the only K-12 school there. As a child, he loved Legos.

“There’s a joke that every great architect, engineer or civil engineer played with Legos as a kid,” he says. A few years before high school graduation, his family moved to Trinidad where he took advantage of the concurrent program between the high school and the college. Not surprisingly, he sees some similarity between robotics and Legos.

With an easy smile, he remembers launching the team’s robot at the Great Sand Dunes. “It is a Lego project, but it will take six months of your time and it will still break when you deploy it,” he says.

RUTH EDWARDS, 18, CO-CAPTAIN AND LEAD PROGRAMMER

Edwards is upfront about her reasons for joining the robotics team: “Initially, what attracted me to the team was boredom. What made me stay was the discovery that I truly have an aptitude for programming.”

Edwards has a passion for problem solving and troubleshooting. “I appreciate the systematic approach that is required for these situations, and I love watching as the culmination of all the debugging turns into a real product,” she says. After two years on the robotics team, Edwards credits it with opening her eyes to how “vast and invigorating the engineering field is.”

LANDON KNIGHT, 17, BUILDING TEAM LEAD

Knight discovered his passion for robotics when he was 10. “In 8th and 9th grades, I was a part of the robotics team for Branson High School, and it was there that I learned to build things and to use building equipment,” he says. “I had heard of the robotics program at TSC, and in the 10th grade I began taking concurrent enrollment and joined the robotics team.”

He credits Clements for “keeping me inspired and helping me find my strengths.”

SUN RICHARDSON, 16, 3D DESIGN TEAM

While most 16-year-olds dream of getting their driver’s license, Richardson was looking for something else, an intellectual challenge. “I have more intellectual curiosity than my peers.”

Already fluent in Mandarin, Richardson’s intellect met its match on the robotics team. As the youngest student on the team, she found the intellectual challenge she was after. “I joined with zero background knowledge and no experience in building electronics or programming,” she says. “I was put on 3D design and had to learn how to use modeling software.”

DALLAS ABBOT, 20, BUILDING TEAM

Abbot is a self-described lone wolf. As an only child, he “speaks in numbers better

▲ From left to right: Dallas Abbott, Landon Knight, Ruth Edwards, Josh Bressan, Everett Allen, Kayla Gardiner, seated Sun Richardson (not pictured: Diego Dominguez). Photo by Cindy Clements.

than words.” At 15, he moved to Trinidad from South Carolina and initially started in an online school. Recognizing the need for more of a challenge, he moved to concurrent enrollment at TSC.

Friends recommended the robotics team, so he joined. “It helped me make a lot of friends and learn to work in a team. It brought me out of my shell,” he says. He plans to attend Eastern New Mexico University for a bachelor’s in math with a minor in biology.

JOSHUA BRESSAN, 21, ELECTRONICS TEAM

Initially, Bressan had no interest in being part of the robotics team. “I’m busy,” Bressan remembers telling Clements, his professor in calculus. Nevertheless, Clements convinced him to stop by and take a look. Once he saw all the wiring, coding and testing going on, “I was sold on it.”

Bressan graduated with an associate degree in mathematics and says, “I gained a lot of knowledge in team dynamics and gained friendships and connections that could springboard me forward career-wise.”

KAYLA GARDINER, 38, 3D DESIGN TEAM LEAD

Before moving to Trinidad in 2019, Gardiner worked at Lockheed Martin in Littleton building wiring harnesses. The robotics team allowed her to “find something technical to work on in Trinidad and to learn to use 3D printers and Fusion 360 CAD software.”

Her hopes for the future include getting a job with SpaceX to “help them build out the Moon and Mars program.”

Joanne Palmer is a freelance writer from Colorado’s Western Slope.



GOING BEYOND

Co-ops ready for utility drones to expand their reach

BY REED KARAIM AND MONA NEELEY

Imagine a drone flight at an electric cooperative in the not-too-distant future.

No longer limited to staying within the line of sight of its on-the-ground operator, it travels much, much farther down the power lines, using an array of visual, thermal and LIDAR sensors, which use lasers, to accomplish miles of inspection in a single flight.

Flying higher than today's drones with an optical sensor on board, this future drone scans the sky for dangers, busily feeding data to an onboard artificial-intelligence-powered computer, which is linked to the flight computer. Sensing a private plane in its airspace, the drone automatically executes an avoidance maneuver, dropping rapidly in altitude and banking to avoid any chance of collision.

Miles away, at a control station, the co-op's drone pilot sees the maneuver and could take control if necessary. But knowing the drone is designed to adjust its flight path more quickly than humanly possible, the pilot decides to allow the unmanned vehicle to fly itself to safety.

Danger averted, the drone resumes its mission down 50 miles of line or more, saving the cooperative untold hours of physical inspection by ground or helicopter.

"There is no question that that (beyond-line-of-sight rules) will have a huge impact on how we're able to use and grow this technology," said Bill Havonec, GIS lead for Sangre de Cristo Electric in Buena Vista, in an interview with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's *RE Magazine*.

This future is already here for a small number of electric utilities

that have received Federal Aviation Administration waivers allowing beyond-visual-line-of-sight (BVLOS) flights. But it's coming for more co-ops as the FAA moves toward issuing regulations that could make BVLOS operations typical for those that meet the requirements.

An FAA advisory committee published recommendations in April establishing a roadmap to meet that goal, which could arrive within the next couple of years. The proposed changes also would give expanded right-of-way access and airspace rights to BVLOS drones that meet standards for avoidance and control capabilities.

"This is a huge deal," said Stan McHann, senior research engineer and chief drone pilot for NRECA. "You're going to see a massive improvement in what you can get done in a day."

Josh Dellinger, general manager of Empire Electric Association in Cortez, agrees. The additional distance that drones will be able to fly will be especially valuable in hard-to-reach places. "We have quite a bit of that where lines go through areas adjacent to the road or forest service or BLM land," he says.

"You're going to see a massive improvement in what you can get done in a day."

— Stan McHann, NRECA

“A trainload of data”

BVLOS is a key part of an evolution in drone capabilities that could transform inspection and maintenance for electric utilities in the coming years. McHann also foresees smaller drones strategically placed throughout a distribution system, able to respond to a SCADA event by taking to the air and quickly checking a trouble spot, sending images and other data back to operations, and giving the co-op a clearer idea of what is going on and what response is needed before sending a crew.

As drones become commonplace in co-op fleets, other innovative uses are likely to surface. Even with today’s limitations on flight range, drones are being used by co-ops for regular inspections, vegetation management, placing bird diverters on lines and pulling lead lines across rugged terrain to run new transmission lines.

“At SDCEA, we’re discovering a variety of uses for drone technology. It started with inspections and getting data into the GIS/mapping and work order systems,” said Havonec.

“In addition to our routine maintenance inspections, we’re prioritizing flight plans with historical outage data and using that as a tool for system improvement,” he said. “Additionally, we’re inspecting new construction rights-of-way and vegetation management areas for inventory, monitoring and quality assurance.”

“Colorado’s co-ops each have between 1,000 and 10,000 miles of line to cover,” said Curt Graham, a job training and safety instructor with CREA who visits many of those co-ops regularly. “When you can get an uncrewed aircraft doing line inspection for you looking at things on a schedule, and reliable enough where you don’t need to have an operator actively supervising it all the time — that’s got real potential,” he said. “And it’s coming.”

Advanced sensors will provide a new level of granular detail on the condition of system hardware. Infrared sensors, for example, can look for hot or arcing connections, transformers and other components, spotting current or future problems hidden from the human eye.



Expanded use of drones will help co-ops inspect power lines in hard to reach places.

Taking full advantage of these capabilities will require the ability to effectively manage the data they can provide.

“Software is key here,” McHann noted. “One flight will create a trainload of data, and it’s essential that you be able to process it and see that it’s integrated into your system in ways that get the information where you need it.”

NRECA is already working with local electric co-ops on flight management and data analysis software integration.

Training and certification

BVLOS will require a new level of training and certification for drone operators. Today, a Level 107 certification from the FAA, which entails passing a written test, is all that is necessary for basic, within-visual-line-of-sight drone operations at a co-op or other electric utility.

The FAA advisory committee’s recommendations include a new pilot certification for BVLOS flight, although physical piloting skills combined with aviation safety best practices will remain important.

The human factor

Operating today with a drone and operator out in the field, McHann said, a co-op can cover to 80 to 120 assets a day, maybe only 70 to 80 in rougher terrain. Taking advantage of the longer range, flying time and speed at which BVLOS drones can operate, a greater-than-ten-fold increase becomes possible, with a drone able to cover nearly 1,400 assets in a day.

“Your SAIDI-CAIDI (outage measurement) numbers are going to come down. That’s real money,” McHann noted.

“And as the price of the cameras and sensors and other equipment come down as well, it will effectively bring everyone into this space,” said Havonec.

While the newest hardware often gets the most attention, the unmanned vehicle technology is just a piece of the program. The parts that really tie everything together will be the training and regulatory requirements necessary to fly the drone.

Meeting those standards to take full advantage of BVLOS and other advancements down the road will be essential to economically meeting the demands of maintaining the grid, according to co-op managers.

The rewards will be increased efficiency, system reliability and personnel safety through reducing hazardous tasks such as pole climbing, and these can outweigh the costs.

Reed Karaim writes on rural cooperative news for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Mona Neeley is editor of *Colorado Country Life* magazine.



Color Your Garden

Dig in now for glorious spring blooms

BY VICKI SPENCER MASTER GARDENER | GARDENING@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

Watching our gardens change throughout the season is one of the greatest joys of gardening. Who hasn't been thrilled when germinated shoots push through the soil? Excitement continues as leaves grow, buds develop and flowers blossom to form fruits and seeds. As plants die or go into dormancy, we wonder how to fill empty spaces and create an award-winning garden.

One way to add color to garden beds and expand the flower season is to plant spring-blooming bulbs. But don't wait until spring. In Colorado's dry climate, these bulbs must be planted in the fall before the ground freezes. During the cooler months, they develop roots and absorb nutrients in preparation for those spring blooms.

Snowdrop flowers can be among the first spring bulbs to make an appearance. Keep a watchful eye or you might not notice their delicate white flowers poking through winter snow. Crocuses are the next early bloomers. They will certainly catch your attention as lovely pastel petals emerge in an otherwise bare garden bed. Then, just as you begin to enjoy these harbingers of spring, Colorado's inevitable spring snow arrives. You feel certain they will die, but crocuses are amazingly resilient and will continue blooming after the snow melts.

Plant crocuses along borders, in rock gardens or among low-growing ground cover where their thin green leaves blend in after the petals drop. You can even plant them in your lawn for a natural meadow look. Just don't mow until the foliage begins to wither. Since crocuses naturalize, they become crowded over time and produce fewer flowers. You can dig some up after the flowers fade and divide them into smaller clusters. You don't have to wait until fall to replant them.

Another early- to mid-spring bloomer is the tiny bell-shaped clusters of hyacinths. Their highly fragrant flowers come in rich colors that span the spectrum. Hyacinths are most appreciated when planted along a walkway or patio where their striking floral display and lovely scent bring great joy during a long blooming cycle.

Other spring-blooming bulbs to consider are alliums, daffodils and tulips, all of which perform better when planted in the fall and allowed to winter over.

Alliums are in the onion family and come in a variety of sizes. Globemaster and Purple Sensation have huge, globular blooms. More subdued varieties display bursts of tiny flowering clusters. Regardless of size, alliums add a unique dimension.

Emperor tulips are known for their

huge flowers in different colors. Fiery Red Emperors are particularly eye-catching. Purple Prince is preferred for its long-lasting, rich purple blooms with slightly scalloped edges. Later-blooming Queen of the Night tulips are deep, rich purple with tones of burgundy. Some almost appear black and create a dramatic contrast when planted with White Emperors.

Daffodils, or jonquils, are a favorite because they adapt easily to various climatic conditions and require little care but produce an abundance of flowers. They will proliferate year after year and are easily transplanted anywhere needing a splash of color. Since deer don't like daffodils, they help protect the tastier tulip when planted together.

So, as you enjoy your fall flowers, start thinking spring and get some bulbs in the ground. And remember, regardless of which bulbs you choose, they will have the most dramatic effect when planted in clusters.

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



LEARN MORE ONLINE

Read previous gardening columns at coloradocountrylife.coop. Click on Gardening under Living in Colorado.

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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The Right Stuff

Glitz and glamour really don't matter in fly fishing

BY DENNIS SMITH | OUTDOORS@COLORADOCOUNTRYLIFE.ORG

It's been widely held, particularly among newcomers to the sport, that expensive, high-tech fly rods are vital to success in fly fishing. And no wonder: Fly tackle manufacturers continually bombard us with ads telling us that if we want to catch more fish, we need the blistering line speed and unheard-of casting performance only their revolutionary, state-of-the-art angling instruments are capable of delivering. Yada, yada, yada. The problem is that their razzle-dazzle rods often cost twice the going price of an arm and a leg.

All of which is fine and good if you're extremely well-heeled and your goal is to hit the far bank of the Columbia River with a seven-inch streamer in a 60-mile-an-hour gale. Usually, though, what we really need is a rod that will drop a little dry fly neatly under that bush over there about 15 or 20 feet away, or flip a weighted nymph rig upriver about the same distance.

In truth, the majority of so-called revolutionary advances in rod performance are merely evolutionary enhancements to the same old equipment we've been using for a hundred years. Some are purely cosmetic: highly-figured reel seats of exotic hardwoods, nickel-silver fittings, titanium line guides — that sort of thing. Your

fishing buddies may go gah-gah over that stuff, but the trout don't actually give a hoot. And none of it is essential to catching fish. Regardless of whether they're made from vertically-aligned, titanium-damped carbon fibers or spiral-wound space-age micro glass filaments, fly rods are still just fishing poles, right? Long, skinny sticks with wire guides and cork handles.

While it's true that some high-modulus graphite rods are capable of slinging a fly line 100 feet or more, the average fly fisherman plainly is not. Nor does he need to be. Most fly fishing — for trout, anyway — is conducted on mountain streams where a 40-foot cast is an extremely long one, and a rarity at that. And most of our fish are caught at considerably shorter distances. Sometimes right at our feet.

In the end, fly fishing is a game of stealth, observation and a bit of finesse, not brute force. And performance is determined by the skill of the angler, not the price of the rod he happens to be carrying. Or to put it another way: It ain't the arrow; it's the Indian.

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

 **MISS AN ISSUE?** Catch up at coloradocountrylife.coop. Click on Outdoors under Living in Colorado.

Always looking for the nearest rest stop?

New Prostate Discovery Helps Men Avoid “Extreme Bathroom Planning”

Men across the U.S. are praising a revolutionary prostate pill that's 1000% more absorbable. Now the visionary MD who designed it is pulling out all the stops to keep up with surging demand...

Among the all-too-familiar, occasional problems like sleepless nights, frequent urination, late-night wake ups, a bladder that's never quite empty, and constant, extreme planning for rest stops and bathroom breaks.

These are the common signs of inconvenient urinary issues. But men nationwide are now reporting they've found help these occasional problems thanks to a major breakthrough in nutrient technology.

Prosta-Vive LS is the new prostate pill sweeping the nation. Men say they feel they're now having strong, complete, effortless urine flow they enjoyed in their 20s and 30s.

The key to its success is a new nutrient technology that makes the key ingredient 1000% more absorbable, according to a study by endocrinologists at Washington University in St. Louis.

Nick Summers is the spokesman for Primal Force Inc., the firm in Royal Palm Beach, Fla. that makes **Prosta-Vive LS**. He reports demand is surging due to word-of-mouth and social-media.

“We knew **Prosta-Vive** really worked to ‘support healthy, stronger urine flow,’ Summers stated. “But no one could have predicted the tens of thousands of men looking for a truly supportive prostate pill.”

NEW PROSTATE FORMULA DRAWS 5-STAR REVIEWS

It's not the first time Dr. Al Sears, the Florida-based MD who designed the breakthrough formula, has shaken up the status quo in men's health.

A nationally recognized men's health pioneer and the founder of the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Royal Palm Beach, Fla., Dr. Sears has been featured on ABC, CNN, and ESPN.

He's authored more than 500 books, reports, and scientific articles, many focusing on prostate issues that may affect virtually all men sooner or later.

“By age 60, I find about half of my male patients feel the need for

prostate support,” Dr. Sears explains. “By the time they reach age 80, it's over 90 percent.”

Prosta-Vive LS has reportedly made a life-changing difference for these men. One appreciative thank-you letter came from Jim R, a patient.

“I had immediate results,” Jim R. wrote in his thank-you note. “I slept through the night without going to the bathroom.

“Last night was the most amazing of all,” he added. “I slept for 10 hours without going to the toilet.”

Results like these explain the flood of phone calls the company's customer service department is handling from men who want to know how the new formula works...

PROSTATE PILL BACKED BY CLINICAL RESULTS

Prosta-Vive LS's extraordinary success is being attributed to advanced innovations in nutrient technology.

Most prostate pills rely on either outdated saw palmetto ... or the prostate-soothing compound Beta-Sitosterol.

But Dr. Sears cites growing evidence that saw palmetto and Beta-Sitosterol work much better together than either does on its own.

In fact, a recent clinical trial involving 66 men taking a combination of saw palmetto and Beta-Sitosterol reported “significant” improvement across the board.

Among the results: Fewer of those occasional late-night wake ups, a stronger stream, less starting and stopping, and complete emptying of the bladder.

That's why **Prosta-Vive LS** includes both saw palmetto and Beta-Sitosterol, to ensure men get the extra prostate support they need. Frustrated men say it's giving them tremendous support.

But there's another key reason **Prosta-Vive LS** is helping men get back control in the bathroom.

YOUR PROSTATE IS HUNGRY FOR HEALTHY FAT

The other key innovation in



NO more extra “pit stops”, NO more interrupted meetings - Men are free of bathroom woes and feel RELIEF.

Prosta-Vive LS is its addition of healthy omega-3 fatty acids.

“It turns out what's good for your heart is also good for your prostate,” says Dr. Sears. “That's why I put heart-healthy omega-3s in a prostate pill.”

Researchers have long known Beta-Sitosterol has a great potential to support healthy prostate function.

But Beta-Sitosterols are “hydro-phobic” -- they don't mix well with water. And that can make them much harder for the body to absorb.

That's where long-chain omega-3s come in. The latest research shows they boost Beta-Sitosterol absorption by 1000%.

Dr. Sears explains, “Most people only get trace amounts of Beta-Sitosterol because it can be hard to absorb. In this respect, the long-chain fatty acids in **Prosta-Vive LS** are a real game-changer. They supercharge the absorption.”

This improved absorption is proving to be a revolutionary advance. **Prosta-Vive LS** is changing men's lives, quickly becoming the No. 1 support supplement for supporting men's prostate health nationwide.

Now, grateful men are calling almost every day to thank **Prosta-Vive LS** for supporting a renewed sense of empowerment over their own lives.

One patient, Ari L., wrote, “I used

to get up on occasion at night to go to the bathroom. Now I only get up once... and I feel it has supported my prostate, keeping my PSA levels in the normal range.”

Patients report they have more energy, sleep better, and no longer feel embarrassed by that occasional sudden need to use the restroom.

Thanks to **Prosta-Vive LS**, thousands of men feel more confident about their urinary health and are no longer being held hostage to pee problems and feel more confident about their urinary health.

They say they're getting great sleep and finally feel back in charge of their own lives.

HOW TO GET PROSTA-VIVE LS

To secure the hot, new **Prosta-Vive** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-347-4985** TODAY. “It's not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. “The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer.” Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Prosta-Vive**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back.”

Call NOW at **1-800-347-4985** to secure your supply of **Prosta-Vive**. Use Promo Code **COPV0922** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!

REACHING THE EDGE OF SPACE

Balloons Carry Research

While traveling along a rural county road, have you come across a long line of trucks and cars? Often, the vehicles have a bunch of antennas attached to their tops. And perhaps there is a group of folks standing outside the vehicles, staring at the sky. What are they looking at?

These could be volunteers and students in the process of tracking high-altitude balloons.

Part of NASA's Colorado Space Grant Consortium (COSGC) the launch, flight and tracking of these research balloons is also supported by the nonprofit organization, Edge of Space Sciences or EOSS, a group of ham radio enthusiasts who volunteer in support of science education.



Taking flight

High-altitude balloons are launched in rural parts of Colorado to avoid Denver International Airport airspace during flight, according to COSGC Interim Director Bernadette Garcia Galvez. The balloons travel where the wind takes them, but EOSS teams accurately predict the landing site by using radio frequency transmissions and weather modeling to track the balloons. In addition to including high-tech tracking from EOSS, balloons contain automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast beacons “to add an extra layer of safety to the flights,” Garcia Galvez says. This helps balloons be “seen” by pilots and air traffic control, even if they aren’t visible to the eye.

Flying high

Balloons reach about 100,000 feet above ground, taking student payloads into the stratosphere — literally to the edge of space. At this altitude, temperatures can be as low as minus 80 degrees. Leaving the ground at about 6 feet in diameter, the balloons

expand to up to 50 feet in diameter as they gain altitude. They eventually burst and fall back to earth, reaching speeds of 200 feet per second. When the apparatus falls to altitudes where there’s more atmosphere to fill a parachute, it slows down, eventually landing on Earth at about 2 miles per hour. Teams tracking the balloon retrieve it and its apparatus.

What is COSGC?

Headquartered at the University of Colorado Boulder, COSGC is a statewide program providing students real-world experiences as they prepare for scientific, technical careers. Since 1989, over 6,000 students have been directly involved in authentic, NASA-aligned, hands-on projects through COSGC. Students have designed and flown three sounding rockets; three space shuttle payloads; five orbiting satellites; 19 sounding rocket payloads; 12 long-duration, high-altitude balloon payloads; and more than 550 short-duration, high-altitude balloon payloads.

“ THANK YOU TO NORTHEASTERN COLORADO

“We’d like to share our gratitude with the farmers, ranchers and landowners in the rural areas of our state. Without them, our program would not be possible.” — COSGC Interim Director Bernadette Garcia Galvez



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Lounging Longhorn

Photo by Teresa Dower, a Mountain View Electric Association consumer-member.

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ATTENTION CCL READERS

DO YOU HAVE A GREAT STORY IDEA?

Submit your story ideas to our Reader Engagement page at coloradocountrylife.coop or send via email to info@coloradocountrylife.org.

READERS' PHOTOS

FUNNY STORIES



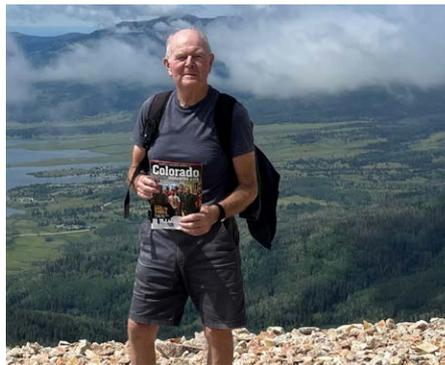
WINNER: Bonnie and Paul Brownell (left) and **Dave and Luann Koester** take CCL along on their trip to Ireland and Scotland in June. Both couples are consumer-members of Highline Electric Association.



Fun in the sun! **Richard Lewis**, a Grand Valley Power consumer-member, brings CCL to Mexico on a recent vacation.



Gary and Stacy Merrifield, consumer-members of Empire Electric Association, visit Crater Lake National Park with their copy of CCL.



Poudre Valley REA consumer-member **Ian Rainford** hikes with his CCL to the top of Hahns Peak. What a view!



Mike, Ginny, Mike Jr., and Talia Schuster meet the Talbotts. They visited Talbott Farms after being inspired by CCL's August issue featuring the multi-generational peach growers in Palisade. The Talbotts welcomed the Poudre Valley REA consumer-members and the Schusters report that Talbott Farms peaches are "out of this world!"

Take Your Photo with Your Magazine and Win!

It's easy to win with Colorado Country Life. Simply take a photo of someone (or a selfie!) with the magazine and submit it on our Reader Engagement page at coloradocountrylife.coop. We'll draw one photo to win \$25 each month. The next deadline is Thursday, September 15. Name, address and co-op must accompany photo. See all of the submitted photos on Facebook at facebook.com/COCountryLife.



I was babysitting my 3-year-old

granddaughter and we needed a few things from the store. As I was putting her in her car seat, she looked at me and pointed: Munchkin: "Pompo..." (she calls me Pompo) Me: "Yeah, Munchkin?" (I call her Munchkin) Munchkin, looking at me intently: "You got a pider in your nose!" Me: "Where?" Munchkin: "Right dare!" Me, brushing my nose: "Right there?" Munchkin: "It's still dare! It's a big one!" Me, brushing my nose again: "Here?" Munchkin: "Eeeeww! It jump on me!" Me, a little shook up: "Where?" Munchkin, flapping her coat and then her legs: "Aaaaah!" Me, stomping on the floor of the pickup: "I got it!" Munchkin: "Did you kill it?" Me, just realizing she thought my nose hair was a spider: "Yeah..." Munchkin, wiping her forehead: "Whew!" Me, trying not to laugh, I tell myself: "Time to cut the nose hair!"

Joseph Vigil, Pueblo West San Isabel Electric consumer-member

My niece was bold and outspoken

as a toddler. Our family prayed a blessing before mealtime, and she knew prayers end with "Amen." As the family sat in church one Sunday, a visiting minister was waxing eloquent in a long prayer. Loudly and assertively, my niece hollered, "Amen! OK?"

Mike Coen, Berthoud Poudre Valley REA consumer-member

We pay \$15 to each person who submits a funny story that's printed in the magazine. At the end of the year, we will draw one name from the published funny stories, and that person will receive \$200. Go to our Reader Engagement page at coloradocountrylife.coop to submit your funny story.



Snack on Something Sensational

Take a bite out of Colorado-made concoctions



^ A Jarring Dessert

Eighteen years ago, self-described “Cheesecake Savant” Lee Mathis had his “aha!” moment: The head of his culinary school suggested Mathis put his esteemed cheesecake in a jar. Voila! Cheesecake in a Jar® was born. Today, his Grand Junction company, Decadence Gourmet, currently offers 27 flavors of Cheesecake in a Jar (try The Irish Dream or Sticky Bun varieties), as well as fermented pepper sauces, Colorado-style southern chow chow, savory craft spreads and more. For information, call 970-208-8808 or visit decadencecheesecakes.com.



DISCOUNT AVAILABLE

Decadence Gourmet’s Lee Mathis is offering a discount for CCL readers — use the code “CCL” at checkout for 15% off your purchase.

^ Hit the Sweet Spot

Savor the sweetness of delicious honey from Boulder-based Björn’s Colorado Honey. Try traditional or get it infused with flavorings such as lemon, vanilla bean or cinnamon, to name a few. Better yet, snag a jar of Lavender Honey before it sells out. Blending honey with lavender blossoms from Sage Creations, an organic farm in Palisade, this seasonal honey is a Björn’s bestseller you can blend into your baked goods, beverages and more. For information, call 303-981-7168 or visit bjornscoloradohoney.com.



> A Cut Above

Sink your teeth into a Centennial Cuts beef stick, jerky or summer sausage. You’ll savor a sensational snack, but you may not realize that you are also supporting an all-Colorado product. From the cows to the food they eat and the packaging the finished product is delivered in, everything from Centennial Cuts is made in Colorado. The snacks are handmade in Sterling and have been said to be better than versions by big-name brands. For information, visit centennialcuts.com.



^ Get Your Kicks

Crank up the gusto in your favorite dishes with Pueblo-based Jojo’s Sriracha. Owner and founder Jolene “Jojo” Collins picks local Pueblo chilies at the peak of freshness and then ferments them for several months before creating and canning her sriracha for market. Flavors include Bourbon Barrel, Good Food Award-winning OG (the original blend), Green Chili, Unicorn (a blend of red and green chilies), a variety of Superhots, and OGX (extra hot). For more information, call 303-909-2808 or visit jojossriracha.com.



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