



# POWERGRAM

A monthly newsletter for OCEC Members

## OPERATION ROUND UP® SUPPORTS OUR COMMUNITIES

Since launching in 2012, Otero County Electric's Operation Round Up® program has made a meaningful difference across Otero and Lincoln Counties—distributing more than one million dollars to local organizations, groups, and individuals.

Operation Round Up® is a voluntary program that allows members to round their monthly electric bill up to the nearest dollar. That small difference—an average of about \$6 per member per year—is donated to support area nonprofit organizations, schools, fire departments, senior citizen groups, and individuals in need.

While each individual contribution may seem modest, the collective impact is powerful. When combined, these donations provide significant assistance and help strengthen the communities we serve.

We're proud to share that participation in Operation Round Up® is strong, with more than 81% of OCEC members choosing to take part each month. Their generosity makes it possible to fund many worthwhile local projects and organizations, including numerous recipients in 2025.

Thank you to all our members who participate in this outstanding community-focused program. For more information about Operation Round Up® or to learn how to apply for funding, please visit [www.ocec-inc.com](http://www.ocec-inc.com).

## ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVING OPERATION ROUND UP® FUNDING IN 2025

- Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Otero County
- Capitan Culinary Arts
- Carrizozo Parent Advisory Council
- Otero STEM
- Sacramento Mountain Senior Services
- St. Francis de Paula Church
- Pinon Extension Club
- Food 4 Kids Backpack Program
- Friends of Historic Lincoln
- Weed Community Center
- The Counseling Center
- Carrizozo Grizzlies Volleyball
- Lincoln County Junior Rodeo Club
- Carrizozo Works
- Kid's, Inc.
- Sacramento School of Engineering
- Otero County Fair
- Cloudcroft Volleyball
- Tularosa Youth Boosters
- Tularosa FFA
- Otero Arts, Inc.
- Nourishing Nation
- Cloudcroft HS Technology Student Association
- Timberon Development Council
- SSES Phenoms Robotics Team

### TIPS TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS

Beware of “winter bill relief” energy scams. Scammers often exploit high winter bills by offering fake discount or relief programs. They may ask for upfront payments or personal details to lower your rate. Legitimate utilities never demand gift cards, wire transfers or payment through apps like PayPal or Venmo. Always verify offers directly by calling your utility's phone number located on your energy bill—do not call any phone numbers provided in a suspicious email or text. Remember to take time to confirm before you pay; real savings programs won't pressure you for immediate action.



JANUARY CALENDAR PHOTO  
submitted by Savanah Rushing

## JANUARY 2026

**CLOUDCROFT**  
575-682-2521

**ALTO**  
575-336-4550

**CARRIZOZO**  
575-648-2352

**LOBBY HOURS**  
8 AM - 4 PM  
MONDAY - FRIDAY

**TO REPORT AN  
OUTAGE, CALL**  
1-800-548-4660

**FOR BALANCE  
INFORMATION OR TO  
PAY YOUR BILL, CALL**  
1-855-940-3957

**WWW.OCEC-INC.COM**

## VEGETATION MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Crews working to trim trees and vegetation in rights-of-way are currently in the following areas and are expected to remain there for the next few weeks.

- Mescalero along Hwy. 70
- Haynes Canyon - High Rolls
- Waterfall West
- Cox Canyon
- Ruidoso Downs

We'd like to ask for your cooperation when you see crews working to keep these areas clear. This task plays a vital role in reducing fire hazards and ensuring consistent power delivery to members.

Please be aware that vegetation crews do not chip or remove dead limbs or brush after they are cut. They will make sure that it is not in a driveway, pathway, or creating any additional hazard. OCEC's main concern in vegetation management is powerline reliability and safety.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP

Winter weather can cause your home heating system to work overtime. Check for air leaks and drafts around doors and windows, then seal them with weatherstripping or caulk. Close fireplace dampers when not in use, and consider installing insulating curtains to help keep warm air inside. You can also save energy by lowering your thermostat a few degrees. Even small adjustments like these can reduce heating costs and improve comfort during the coldest months.

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

## POLE DAMAGED BY GUNFIRE WILL BE REPLACED SUMMER OF 2026

You may recall a previous article about a utility pole that was damaged by gunfire in June 2025. Otero County Electric (OCEC) initially scheduled an outage to replace the structure; however, the work had to be postponed multiple times due to inclement weather and challenging access conditions once seasonal rains began.

After several adjustments to the outage schedule, OCEC determined that a full replacement would be deferred until the summer of 2026. In the meantime, leaving the damaged pole in place posed a potential risk to electrical reliability for members in and around Cloudcroft—particularly during winter snowstorms and spring wind events.

To address this concern, OCEC crews implemented a temporary solution. Storm anchors were replaced, and a new 35-foot pole was installed alongside the damaged structure. The two poles were securely bolted together to stabilize the area and prevent the original pole from failing until permanent replacement can be completed.

The photos below show the original image of the damaged pole alongside a current photo of the temporary repair. You'll also notice the improved right-of-way clearance in the second photo compared to the first. Right-of-way maintenance will be highlighted in an upcoming PowerGram newsletter.

