

The Voice of New Mexico's  
Rural Electric Cooperatives

# enchantment

**OTERO COUNTY  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

APRIL 2025




# Lighting the Way

Honoring the  
dedication of New Mexico  
Rural Electric Cooperative  
lineworkers **Page 14**

Lineworkers from Continental Divide Electric Cooperative worked with the Grants Rodeo Association to install a utility pole on the area's rodeo grounds. This enables the co-op's lineworkers to present the colors at local events. PHOTO COURTESY OF CONTINENTAL DIVIDE ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Chief Executive Officer

Mario Romero

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## Office Hours

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (M-F)

## Board of Trustees

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## Board Meeting

The board of trustees meets at 8:30 a.m. the third Friday of the month at the cooperative.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Efficiency Upgrades Help You Save

Spring and summer are opportune times for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you are planning to make improvements to your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

Installing a smart thermostat is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone.

You can buy an Energy Star-certified smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs—about \$50 per year.

Other devices, such as smart LED bulbs, offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home. With smart lighting, you can set a schedule for when and how your lights turn on or off. The next time you leave the house and realize you left the lights on, all you have to do is turn them off through your phone.

Smart lights come in a variety of shapes, colors and brightness levels, and you can buy bulbs for indoor or outdoor use. Schedule outdoor smart lights to illuminate your home at night and when you're out of town for better security.

While it's not as trendy as incorporating smart technologies, sealing air leaks around your home is an effective way to save energy and lower your bills. Applying new weatherstripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste.

Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs and sinks.

If your home feels too warm during summer even after you have sealed with weatherstripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a more expensive efficiency upgrade. However, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can make a big impact on reducing energy use and costs.

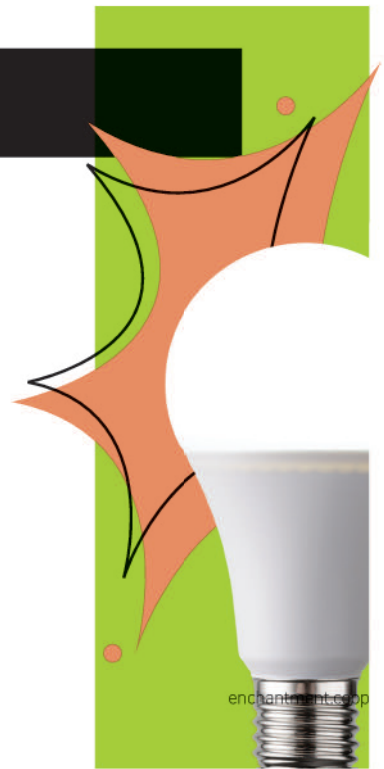
The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors, such as materials, size of the home and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years and your home immediately feels more comfortable.

Of course, there are additional efficiency upgrades that can make a big impact on energy use, such as replacing old appliances with Energy Star models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy-efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you want to make your home more energy efficient but are not sure where to start, your best bet is to enlist the help of an expert to conduct an energy audit of your home. An energy audit can easily identify areas to boost efficiency, then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first based on your budget and needs. ■

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Turn your suds into savings. Lower your energy use in the laundry room by washing clothes with cold water whenever possible, as heating water accounts for most of the energy used in a laundry cycle. Wash full loads to make the most of energy savings, and use high-efficiency detergent designed for cold washes. For drying cycles, clean the lint filter before each load to improve airflow and use dryer balls to reduce drying time.





ADOBE STOCK PHOTO BY ZINKEVYCH

# Ready to dig in?

Call 811 before breaking ground on your project—it's the law

The weather is warming up, which means it's time to start planting flowers, tilling gardens and taking on the projects around the house you've been planning all winter.

April is National Safe Digging Month, and it's a great reminder to call 811 before getting your hands dirty on any home improvement projects that require breaking ground.

Based on your location, your call will be sent to the correct 811 call center. If you do plan to do some digging on your property, notify 811 and request that underground utilities be marked with flags to avoid any incidents.

Utility lines are often located only a few inches below the ground's surface. Digging before calling 811 risks not only disrupting service for yourself and your neighbors, but also putting your own safety in danger.

Before beginning your project, check out this useful info for determining which color flags represent underground utility lines. These are used as a universal marking guide by the American Public Works Association. ■



White flag —  
Proposed excavation



Red flag —  
Power or electric



Yellow flag —  
Oil, steam or gas



Orange flag —  
Communications



Green flag —  
Sewer and drain lines



Pink flag —  
Temporary survey



Blue flag —  
Potable water



Purple flag —  
Reclaimed water

**Notify** — Call two to three days before starting to dig, or make a request online at [nm811.org](http://nm811.org), to notify your local call center about your plans. They will let you know if there are any affected utilities in your area.

