



ENCHANIMENT

THE VOICE OF NEW MEXICO'S RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

**OTERO COUNTY
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

MARCH 2026

When Reliability Means **MORE THAN ELECTRICITY**

Roosevelt County Electric Cooperative invests in long-term water security for its community **Page 14**

An RCEC lineworker checks readings on a water meter. PHOTO COURTESY OF RCEC





A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Mario Romero

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Office Hours

8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (Monday-Friday)

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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.

Apply Today for Scholarships

The deadline to apply for the Otero County Electric Cooperative scholarships is March 16.

Apply today, and let the Otero County Electric Education Foundation help light up your future. Scan the QR code to learn more and download an application.



ADOBE STOCK ILLUSTRATION BY ELOSMILEY

Be Careful Working Outdoors This Spring

As the weather warms in early spring, many of us work outdoors to beat the heat of summer. Outdoor chores require caution, especially around electricity.

Common causes of injury are faulty extension cords and metal ladders coming into contact with overhead power lines. The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission offers the following tips:

Ladders

- Use fiberglass or wooden ladders when working around overhead wires or other electrical sources. Metal conducts electricity and can kill anyone touching the ladder if it comes into contact with electricity.
- If you must use a metal ladder, carefully check the location of all overhead power lines to avoid contacting the wire or touching the ladder to something that makes contact with the electrical source, such as a tree branch.
- Lower the ladder before moving it.
 - Never work on a windy day. A gust of wind can shift the ladder into a power line.

When placing a ladder on the ground, make sure the distance to the nearest overhead power line is at least twice the length of the ladder.

- Place the ladder on solid level ground to prevent sliding.

Extension Cords and Power Tools

- Check power tools and electrical cords to make sure they are in good condition. When working outside, use power tools designed for outdoor use.
- Use extension cords designed for outdoor use. They are thicker, more durable and have features to prevent moisture damage.
- Use three-wire extension cords with three-pronged plugs.
- Check the amperage rating of the extension cord to ensure it is adequate to meet the power demand of the tool.
- Do not plug one extension cord into another. Use the proper length for the job.
- Unplug extension cords when you are finished. ■



NM811 is your local and free Call Before You Dig service. Call to locate your underground facilities before you dig by dialing 811 on your phone. Call 811 at least two business days before you dig—it's the law.

Protecting Our Power System from Wildfire

Wildfire risk is a reality of living and working in our area. Otero County Electric Cooperative takes proactive steps to protect the infrastructure that keeps power flowing to its members.

OCEC recently completed a project to install fire-retardant pole wrap—Fire Mesh by Genics—on 150 poles along the 69-kilovolt transmission line that runs from the Cloudcroft Substation to the tunnel. This critical line serves the entire mountain area around Cloudcroft, making it especially important to protect. Each pole was wrapped up to 8 feet from ground level, the area most vulnerable during a wildland fire.

This project is effective and cost-efficient. The cost of installing fire-retardant wrap is far less than replacing a pole damaged or destroyed by fire, not to mention the potential outages that could result from that damage.

Managing wildfire risk is, and will continue to be, part of life for electric utilities. Conditions that contribute to more frequent and intense wildfires aren't going away anytime soon, and there's no single solution that can eliminate risk entirely. Instead, utilities must use a combination of strategies, including careful risk assessments, infrastructure maintenance and strong vegetation management practices.

With millions of wood poles already in service, protecting the infrastructure we have makes sense. This pole-wrapping project, along with OCEC's ongoing vegetation management efforts, reflects our commitment to protecting valuable assets and maintaining reliable electric service for our members—no matter the challenges ahead. ■

Fire-retardant pole wrap was installed on 150 poles along the 69-kilovolt transmission line that runs from the Cloudcroft Substation to the tunnel. PHOTO COURTESY OF OCEC

