

A woman wearing a brown tweed vest over a white shirt and a black hat is looking at a large painting of a horse. The painting is on a wooden easel and depicts a brown horse with a white blaze on its face. The background of the painting is a mix of brown and white tones. The woman is on the left side of the frame, and the painting is on the right. The overall scene is outdoors, with a white tent and other people visible in the background.

# ENCHANTMENT

THE VOICE OF NEW MEXICO'S RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

## OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

AUGUST 2026

### *The* ART *of* Balance

Farmers' Electric Cooperative CFO  
Suzette Howard found harmony between  
numbers, horses and painting **Page 14**

PHOTO COURTESY OF  
SUZETTE HOWARD

★  
Your Co-op.  
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Your Magazine.



A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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## Office Hours

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

## 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.

# Update Gate Access Information to Aid In Outage Response

To safely maintain and operate Otero County Electric Cooperative's electric system, our crews occasionally need access to private property for routine inspections, scheduled maintenance, storm restoration, emergencies and outage response. If you have a locked gate on your property, make sure OCEC has your current gate combination or have an OCEC company lock installed on your gate.

Having reliable access to electrical equipment helps our crews respond more quickly, reducing delays during outages and emergencies. It also allows us to perform routine maintenance that

helps keep your electric service safe and reliable.

Access information and gate combinations are kept confidential and only used by authorized OCEC personnel when access to electrical facilities is necessary. This information is never shared with outside parties.

If your gate combination has changed, or if you would like to arrange for an OCEC company lock to be installed on your gate, contact our office.

Keeping your gate access information current helps us provide the prompt, dependable service you expect when it matters most. ■

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

August heat can put your air conditioner to the test, making it a great time to check your system's air filter. A dirty, clogged filter restricts airflow, forcing your cooling system to work harder than necessary to keep your home comfortable. That extra strain can reduce efficiency, increase energy use and contribute to unnecessary wear and tear on equipment. Inspect your filter monthly during periods of heavy air conditioner use and replace it if it appears dirty. A clean filter supports efficient operation and can even enhance indoor air quality—helping you stay cool and comfortable during the hottest days of summer.



# SHIFT TIMING, SHIFT SAVINGS

Deep into summer, homes naturally use more electricity. Air conditioners run longer, refrigerators work harder and daily routines—from cooking dinner to doing laundry—often overlap during the warmest parts of the day. That's also when the demand for electricity across our community is at its highest.

Otero County Electric Cooperative's priority is delivering safe, reliable and affordable power whenever you need it. However, during peak energy hours, there's added pressure on the grid as homes and businesses require larger amounts of electricity, all at the same time. On the hottest days, that strain can be significant.

The good news is that making small changes at home can make a meaningful difference.

Think of the electric grid like a highway system. During rush hour, traffic is heavy, congestion builds and everything slows down. However, when drivers adjust their schedules, even slightly, it helps ease the bottleneck. The same principle applies to energy use.

By shifting some of your high-energy activities to off-peak hours—such as doing laundry later in the evening, running the dishwasher before you go to bed or cooking meals earlier in the day—you're helping spread out demand. That reduces pressure on the grid during critical peak hours.

Here are a few simple steps you can take to lower energy use during peak hours:

- Smart technology can be a valuable partner in saving energy. A programmable or smart thermostat can automatically adjust

your home's temperature when demand is highest, helping you stay comfortable while using energy more efficiently. Even a small adjustment of a few degrees during peak hours can make a difference.

- In the kitchen, simple swaps can help. Using a slow cooker, air fryer or outdoor grill instead of the oven keeps your home more comfortable and reduces the need for additional cooling during the warmer parts of the day.

- When it comes to laundry, air-drying clothes or spacing out loads can cut down on energy use and indoor heat.

- Don't overlook the power of ceiling fans. They can help you feel several degrees cooler, allowing you to raise your thermostat setting without sacrificing comfort.

These actions may seem small on their own, but together, they add up. When many members make mindful choices about when and how they use electricity, they help reduce peak demand, ease strain on the grid and support more stable energy costs for our local communities.

That's the cooperative difference. As a member, you're not just a customer. You're part of a community working together to power our future. Every effort you make contributes to a stronger, more resilient system.

This summer, take a closer look at your daily routines. A few simple shifts can go a long way in keeping your home comfortable, your energy use efficient and the grid running smoothly—no matter how high the temperatures climb. ■

## Same Energy. Different Impact. ●

The demand for electricity is typically highest in the late afternoon during peak energy hours. You can help lower demand by shifting when energy-intensive activities happen.



### Shift appliance use to off-peak hours.

- Run the dishwasher before you go to bed.
- Use the oven earlier or later (during off-peak hours).
- Space out use of major appliances.



### Use a programmable or smart thermostat.

- Automatically adjust the temperature setting during peak hours.
- Schedule home cooling cycles for efficiency.



### Opt for low-energy alternatives during peak hours.

- Use small appliances like slow cookers or air fryers—or fire up the grill—instead of the oven.
- Air-dry clothes instead of using the dryer.
- Use ceiling fans for additional cooling.