ENCHANTMENT
THE VOICE OF NEW MEXICO'S RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026



# A Lifetime of Service

From Vietnam to his New Mexico community, Preston Stone has carried lessons of service, responsibility and gratitude through nearly six decades

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**Preston Stone, left, poses with Billy LaMay in 1966. After serving in the Vietnam War, Preston returned to New Mexico.**
PHOTO COURTESY OF PRESTON STONE

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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.




The Otero County Electric Cooperative Board of Trustees and staff wish all our members and their families a happy Thanksgiving, a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. As we celebrate this special time of year, we are grateful for the communities we serve and the members who make our cooperative strong. May your holiday season be filled with warmth, joy and cherished moments with family and friends. We look forward to continuing to serve you in the coming year.

OCEC offices are closed the following days:

- Nov. 26-27 in observance of Thanksgiving
- Dec. 24-25 in observance of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day
- Jan. 1, 2027, for New Year's Day. ■

# Winter Disconnect Moratorium

Protection from winter shutoff begins Nov. 15. To avoid potential disconnection of service, contact the Human Services Department at 800-283-4465, or the appropriate tribal or pueblo entity for eligibility information for the Low-Income Heating Energy Assistance Program, known as LIHEAP.

Your service will not be disconnected from Nov. 15 through March 15, 2027, if you meet the qualifications of LIHEAP and have no past-due amounts or remain current on any settlement or installment agreement for amounts due as of Nov. 15.

Members of New Mexico tribes or pueblos who need help with translation or other matters may contact the commission's consumer relations division at 888-427-5772, which will contact the appropriate tribal or pueblo official for assistance. ■

# Beware of Fraudulent Calls

Stay alert for fraudulent utility calls. Scammers can spoof caller ID to make a phone call appear to come from your electric utility—even when it doesn't. They may threaten disconnection, demand immediate payment or ask for personal information. Don't rely on caller ID alone to verify a caller's identity.

If you receive a suspicious call, hang up and contact Otero County Electric Cooperative using the phone number printed on your bill or listed on the official website.



ADOBE STOCK ILLUSTRATION BY PHRUETTHIPHONG





PHOTOS COURTESY OF OTERO COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

# Energy Careers on Display

Otero County Electric Cooperative employees, above, from left, Cory Meeks, Jessica Gaston and Bill Denney, recently participated in a career fair at Cloudcroft Schools where they spoke with students about careers at the cooperative, energy efficiency and how technology is used in the utility industry.

Cory, a staking engineer and drone pilot, explained how OCEC uses footage from drone flights to identify hazards and inspect infrastructure. ■

# Change Your Clocks—And Your Batteries

The first Sunday in November marks the end of daylight saving time. At 2 a.m., clocks fall back one hour, giving everyone a little extra sleep before the shorter days of winter set in.

Daylight saving time was first used in the United States during World War I to conserve energy. The idea was to make better use of daylight hours and reduce the need for artificial lighting in the evenings. Congress made the system permanent nationwide in 1966 with the Uniform Time Act, though states may opt out.

With shorter days ahead, many families will be flipping on lights earlier in the evening, which can increase energy use. Simple steps—like using LED bulbs, turning off lights in empty rooms and setting programmable thermostats—can help keep bills manageable as we head into winter.

Whether you love the extra daylight in summer or prefer the brighter mornings of standard time, the fall time change is part of the seasonal rhythm nearly all Americans still observe.

When you turn your clocks back, check other lifesaving tools in your home—your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.

Even if the batteries aren't dead, the National Fire Protection Association recommends replacing them twice a year. If you don't have detectors, your family is at risk. Smoke detectors alert you to fire in time to escape, while carbon monoxide detectors provide warning of a clear, odorless gas that can be deadly.

Carbon monoxide doesn't just come from vehicles. Gas furnaces, stoves and fireplaces are also potential sources. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommends:

- Having a qualified technician inspect and adjust gas appliances to ensure they burn fuel efficiently and safely. A properly tuned appliance will have a steady blue flame and produce less carbon monoxide.
- Using electric space heaters instead of gas-powered models.
- Installing an exhaust fan, vented outdoors, above gas stoves.
- Opening flues when using wood-burning fireplaces.
- Choosing properly sized woodstoves with tight-fitting doors that meet the Environmental Protection Agency's emission standards.
- Scheduling annual inspections for furnaces, flues and chimneys.
- Never idling your vehicle inside a garage.

Taking a few minutes this November to replace batteries, check alarms and inspect heating systems can keep your family safe. ■