SSVEC

Currents

LOCAL STORIES ABOUT LOCAL COMMUNITIES

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2022

CHILES!

HOT and HEALTHY!

Check out the amazing work of Curry Farms



Pepper Team! David Cartmel, Manuel Cervantez, Ed Curry, Katie Thompson and Keiffer VanRiel

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Sierra Vista Symphony Orchestra

CVMC earns a four-star CMS Rating

SSVEC **Currents**

NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2022
Volume 1, No. 6

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Jason Bowling, CEO
Sulphur Springs Valley
Electric Cooperative

Spend our most precious resource wisely

Time. Of all the resources we consider precious, few seem as valuable. Seldom do we have enough of it for all the important tasks, fun activities, or spending with our loved ones. This is one reason the holidays are so special.

Entering the holiday season, we take this opportunity to reflect and spend some of our time focused on appreciating those relationships and traditions we hold dear.

At Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC), the daily rigors of keeping the power safely flowing never stop, but those relationships give those rigors purpose.

Relationships within the Cooperative are also essential. Our average employee has worked at SSVEC for more than a decade, and the nature of our industry breeds a sense of interdependence that is rare in most workplaces. For example, our Linemen depend on each other when adverse weather causes outages. Our Member Service Representatives rely on our Information and Communications Systems professionals to maintain essential technology necessary to meet the needs of those we serve. Our entire mobile workforce counts on our Fleet team to keep us moving safely.

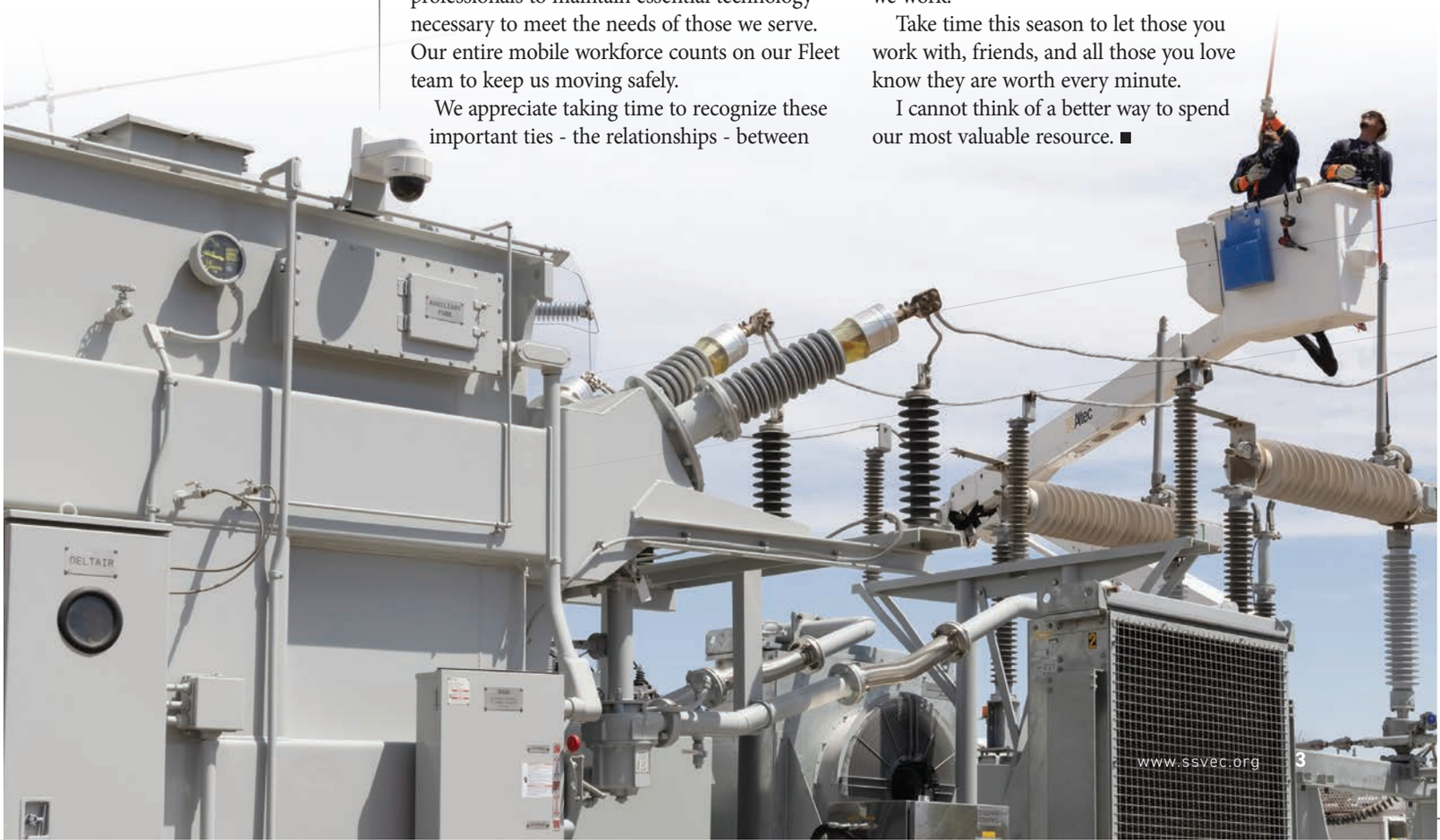
We appreciate taking time to recognize these important ties - the relationships - between our employees during the holiday season. Indeed, we are all grateful for opportunities to step away from the full-time responsibilities of our profession, and we can't deny the enjoyment of spending time with those we love.

Yet the fellowship we share in our workplace is a strong motivation toward our common goal of serving the communities where we live, work, and play. SSVEC employees volunteer thousands of hours at local nonprofit organizations, sports programs, or other service groups. The vast majority of those who work at the Cooperative live in the community where they work and, therefore, have a personal stake in improving the quality of life for themselves and their neighbors.

I deeply appreciate our employees' investment in the Cooperative and their respective communities. The tenure of commitment within our ranks benefits more than the service we provide. It also assures our members that SSVEC has a personal understanding of the vital importance of electricity to our neighbors, local businesses, our families, and those with whom we work.

Take time this season to let those you work with, friends, and all those you love know they are worth every minute.

I cannot think of a better way to spend our most valuable resource. ■



Nolan's service spans three decades


Curtis Nolan

If commitment to his family and his community are the measures of a man, Curtis Nolan is the standard bearer.

Now in his 30th year serving on the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) Board of Directors, Nolan has an impressive personal and professional history. He currently serves as President of the SSVEC board and has held prominent positions on state and national electric cooperative boards during the past three decades.

Curtis and Julie Nolan, along with Julie's brother and sister-in-law Gary and Jilene Hatch, came to Willcox from Gilbert, AZ in the early 1980s. They partnered with Orland Hatch, Nolan's father-in-law, forming Hatch Nolan Farms. They started an orchard producing apples, watermelon, and pumpkins. In 1994, Curtis and his wife Julie moved to a home on Fort Grant Road where they operated a retail apple outlet they named "The Apple Barn." There, the family of nine – parents Curtis and Julie with their seven children – learned the skills of running a business, managing a orchard operation, and working with customers.

After years of success, the family decided to get out of the business and Curtis entered into a partnership with Mark Fenn building homes. Nolan soon secured his general contractor's license and eventually started his own business, Nolan Builders, Inc., doing remodeling and building new homes.

In addition to his commitments working in church leadership and with the Boys Scouts of America, Curtis has been a tireless representative of SSVEC on influential state and national boards. He has served on the Southwest Transmission Electric Power Cooperative board, which was one part of the Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEPCO) that dealt with generation and transmission lines and issues. He has also served on the Grand Canyon State Electric Cooperative Association (GCSECA) board, which includes representatives of the six electric cooperatives serving the rural areas of the state.

In 2002, Nolan was elected to represent Arizona on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) board, which serves more than 42 million members and more than 75 percent of the land mass in the United States.

He was elected President of the national board in 2013.

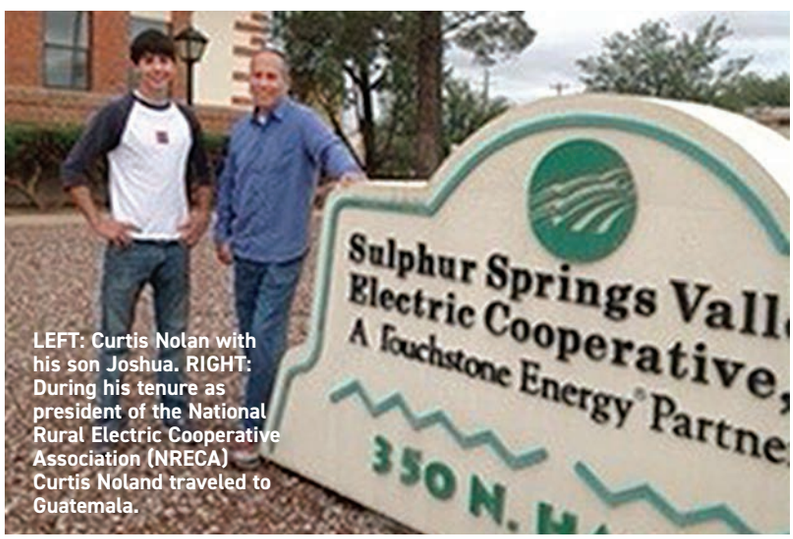
During his two year tenure in that position, Nolan traveled throughout the country addressing Cooperative members and emphasizing the importance of the seven principles that guide cooperatives.

He also traveled internationally, representing U.S. Cooperatives that came together to provide electricity to rural residents in Guatemala. The project was more than a simple success and literally changed the lives of some 450 residents in three rural villages.

During the trip, Nolan said he was struck by the pleading of a little girl who wanted the crews to connect her village to electricity.

"That village wasn't in the plans to get hooked up, but after that little girl put my face in her hands, I made sure that we got it done!" Nolan said.

Curtis Nolan represents District 2 on the SSVEC Board of Directors, which includes most of the Willcox area within the SSVEC service territory. ■





LEFT: Curtis Nolan with his son Joshua. RIGHT: During his tenure as president of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Curtis Noland traveled to Guatemala.



BELOW: Joined by Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) Chief Executive Officer Jason Bowling (left), the ten SSVEC employees who volunteered to travel to Bullhead City, AZ after a storm knocked out power to tens of thousands of residents in Mohave County. Those pictured include from left, Bowling, Corey Dannels, Efren Gallego, Cory Thompson, Jorge Garcia, Pablo Felix, Luis Montano, Tyler Rios, Adolfo Marmolejo, Blaine Thompson, and Reed Nichols.



SSVEC sends crews after major storm in Bullhead City

A powerful storm knocked out electrical power to tens of thousands of residents in Mohave County, AZ, during the Labor Day weekend, and Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) provided mutual aid to get services restored within less than one week.

Ten SSVEC employees volunteered to end their Labor Day holiday early and travel more than 400 miles to Bullhead City for the emergency repair. At the height of the storm, 36,000 member meters were without electricity. A total of 140 wood and concrete power poles were damaged, and about 19 miles of line needed replacement.

SSVEC was one of three electric Cooperatives that provided mutual aid to the Mohave Electric Cooperative, which serves the affected area. Others included Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives, Benson, AZ; and Trico Electric Cooperative, Marana, AZ. Navopache Electric Cooperative (MEC), Lakeside, AZ donated materials to the effort.

"MEC crews, and those of our sister cooperatives, worked round the clock to restore power. They are our true utility superheroes," said CEO Tyler Carlson. "Every employee, in every position in the Cooperative, helped at some level and picked up and did whatever was needed to get the job done and support our crews. Saying thank you to the employees and crews just does not seem like enough."

SSVEC employees returned to Cochise County on Saturday, September 10, after the repair was completed. Temperatures topped 100 degrees throughout the week that the repairs were made. ■

SSVEC breaks ground on solar, battery project

Just days after an effort that successfully earned state approval of a financing plan for new gas turbines for Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEPCO), officials representing the Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) celebrated a groundbreaking for a large solar array and battery station in McNeal on October 17.

SSVEC has partnered with Silicon Ranch, a nationwide renewable energy contractor, to build out the 20 megawatt solar field with an 20 megawatt (MW) battery system. The development will be constructed on an 80-acre parcel at the intersection of North Central Road and Bagby Road.

Scott Matthews, Senior Project Manager at Silicon Ranch, said grading of the property will begin within the next two weeks and the solar array is expected to be operational by May of 2023.

Jason Bowling, Chief Executive Officer at SSVEC, said approval of the gas turbines and expansion of solar energy are consistent with the Cooperative's long range plan to provide reliable service while transitioning to renewable resources.

"We certainly appreciate the strong community support demonstrated at the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) hearing on the plan for new gas turbines," Bowling said. "Members of the commission said they were impressed with the turnout."

The turbines are being installed by AEPCO at its Apache Power Station in Cochise. The facility generates most of the electricity distributed by SSVEC and serves five other electric cooperatives across the state, as well as utilities in New Mexico and California.

Bowling said the fast-ramping natural gas turbines can be turned on quickly and will generate electricity during periods of peak demand and when renewable resources drop off on cloudy days or during nighttime hours. Currently, the Apache Power Station operates four large turbines, three of which are powered by natural gas and a fourth with can operate on either natural gas or coal. Spinning up those turbines can take several days, compared to a matter of hours for the new units planned by AEPCO.

SSVEC members demonstrated strong support for AEPCO's finance petition at the ACC hearing on Wednesday, Oct. 12. More than 800 letters of support and a busload of about 30 Cochise County residents attended the hearing and urged commissioners to approve the petition.

Commissioners voted 3-2 to authorize AEPCO to proceed with financing the estimated $72 million project.

The groundbreaking for the solar field and battery system was a brief affair as officials celebrated the culmination of several years of study and planning approval for the development.

Bowling credited the work of Senior Vice President of Operations, Daniel Wilson, Wayne Flissar, Standards and Line Design Engineer IV, Megan Resor, Engineering Services Manager, and others at the local cooperative.

"This doesn't happen without the dedicated efforts of our employees," Bowling said. "Their commitment to the community and to the Cooperative are truly remarkable." ■



Celebrating the groundbreaking for a 20-megawatt solar field in McNeal on Oct. 17 were, from left, Jason Bowling, SSVEC CEO; Pat English, SSVEC Board Member; Scott Matthews, Silicon Ranch Senior Project Manager, Roger Baele, Senior Vice President Silicon Ranch, Wayne Flissar, Megan Resor, D.J. Farbo, Mike Cook, Danny Dunham, and Dan Wilson, all of SSVEC.









EDITOR'S NOTE: The photos published on this page were provided by Shawn Daniel Hendricks. Utilizing a variety of lenses, including a telephoto zoom lens, he was able to capture the work of SSVEC line crews during the major outage that occurred on September 1, 2022 at the intersection of Highway 92 and Foothills Drive.

Anatomy of an outage

Friday afternoons before a three-day weekend are usually something to celebrate. The work week is almost finished and it's time to begin looking forward to time off with friends and family.

Unless you're a lineman at Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC).

On Friday, September 1, at 2:30 p.m., line crews were called into action at one of the busiest roadways in Arizona when a semi-tractor trailer accidently pulled down two power poles and a cross-arm on a third pole on Highway 92 at the intersection of Foothills Drive in Sierra Vista.

The accident rerouted a significant volume of traffic during one of the busiest periods of the week on Highway 92, which is recognized by the state Department of Transportation on one of the busiest thoroughfares in Arizona.

Mark Roll, SSVEC Construction and Maintenance Manager at the Sierra Vista facility, said repairing the downed lines required line crews to work past 8 p.m. on that Friday, spending roughly six hours to complete the work and restoring power to about 2,000 members within two hours of the accident.

The outage shutdown signal lights at the Foothills intersection and immediately created a dangerous situation for vehicles traveling in both directions on Highway 92.

"Apparently a truck driver pulled into a lot near that intersection and thought he could turn around. He must have thought he was stuck, so he continued to pull forward and that pulled down low-hanging wires for cable and telephone service, along with two of our power poles and the cross-arm on the pole across the highway," Roll said.

Line crews initially had to handle traffic to prevent motorists and pedestrians from being injured at the scene, before law enforcement agencies arrived to reroute vehicles.

"The Sheriff's Department, the Sierra Vista Police Department, and eventually the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) all responded and that allowed our guys to focus on making the repairs," Roll said.

Roll said it took about two hours before electricity could be rerouted on the SSVEC grid to restore power to about 2,000 members in the immediate area of the accident. Crews then replaced the broken poles and the downed cross-arm. ■

Rafa's lifetime dream of working at SSVEC

By Manny Gonzales, Vice President of Tech Services

Substation/SCADA Technician Rafael R. Villegas (Rafa) was born in Sulphur Springs, Texas in 1979. At age two, Rafael's parents moved back to Guanajuato, Mexico where he resided until age 9. At the age of just 9 years old, Rafa was sent to live with his grandmother in Willcox, Arizona. Rafa faced many challenges growing up in Willcox including being away from his mother and father who remained in Mexico, meeting new friends, and learning English.

In spite of all these challenges, Rafa persevered and became fluent in English, met many new friends, and successfully graduated from Willcox High School in 1998. Upon graduating from Willcox High School, Rafa decided to pursue his dream of being employed at Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC). Unfortunately, his efforts were unsuccessful.

Rafa moved on to work several jobs and became very successful as a machinist (CNC and manual), but he never lost sight of his dream of working at SSVEC. By this time, Rafa was no stranger to challenges and chasing his dreams.

Over the next two decades, Rafa would continue to apply for positions at SSVEC. Although, he was invited to interview on a few occasions, Rafa's dream appeared to be fading away.

In 2017, approximately 20 years after first applying at SSVEC, Rafa's hopes of getting hired at SSVEC had now become a reality when he was offered an apprenticeship position at SSVEC's technical services department. Now at age 43, Rafa's next challenges would be completing a one-year pre-apprenticeship program, four-year apprenticeship program, 8,000 hours of On-the-Job and a two-year associate's degree program.

"I think most people would have given up on applying after 20 years, and some may be a little intimidated having to attend college. In my wildest dreams, I never thought I would earn a degree" Villegas said.

On May 13, 2022, Rafael and his wife flew to Bismarck, North Dakota, where Rafa attended his convocation and received his Associate's Degree in Electric Power Technology.

In December of 2022, Rafa will earn his Journeyman Certificate from the State of Arizona and the Arizona Department of Labor.

"If I could give one piece of advice, I think I would say, if you have a dream, never give up!" Villegas said.

Visit bismarckstate.edu/livestream to see Rafa's May 13 graduation. ■



Annual Community Leaders Luncheons

Members were invited to the annual Community Leaders Luncheons, held in Benson, Willcox, and Sierra Vista on October 5, 6 and 7. The gatherings offered an opportunity to update local officials on what's happening at Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC). Featured speaker Jason Bowling, Chief Executive Officer at SSVEC, provided insights on fuel costs and new technologies implemented at the Cooperative. Bowling also spoke to the importance of state approval for plans by SSVEC's primary power provider, Arizona Electric Power Cooperative (AEPCO), to increase its generation capacity with the addition of two fast-ramping natural gas generators. The Arizona Corporation Commission approved AEPCO's financing plan at its meeting on October 12.



Retirement



Dolores Ayala (second from the right) celebrated more than 21 years working for Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) at a retirement gathering in her honor on Friday, September 9, 2022 at the Willcox office. Dolores worked as a Member Services Representative at the Willcox office.

Dolores was joined by longtime friend and co-worker Char Bennett, Executive Assistant. Also celebrating at the event were Susie Prichard, Willcox Operations Clerk; Gloria Frazier, Elfrida Member Services Representative, and Lisa Tomerlin, Member Services Supervisor (see above photo).

Curtiss Peterson, Member Services Manager, presented Dolores a plaque for her many years of service with the Cooperative at the event.

Capital Credit disbursement

Beginning December 1, Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) will begin distribution of more than $5 million in Capital Credits to its members. The SSVEC Board of Directors approved the record distribution at its October 19 meeting.

"I appreciate that board members recognized the inflationary pressures that many people are experiencing, and I'm pleased that we're able to provide some relief at this time," said Jason Bowling Chief Executive Officer at SSVEC.

SSVEC members from 1996, 1997, and 2021 will receive capital credit payments from the current allocation.

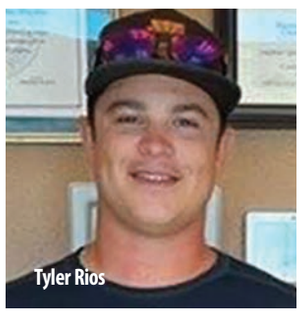


Named best of

Rebecca Buksh (left), Vice President of Human Resources at Sulphur Springs Valley Electric Cooperative (SSVEC) and Mae Lin (right), Benefits Specialist, accepted an award on behalf of SSVEC at the annual "Best Of" ceremony in Benson. The third place award recognized SSVEC as one of the best places to work.



Reed Nichols



Tyler Rios

Promotions

Effective September 1, 2022, Tyler Rios (*right*) in Benson and Reed Nichols (*left*) in Willcox were promoted to Journeymen Linemen. Earning the title Journeyman is a lengthy commitment that takes years to achieve. After several years as an apprentice, the process of earning a journeyman certification involves additional schooling and continued training.

CHILES! HOT

By Larry Scott

Green chiles, red chiles, yellow, orange, and purple. Hot, medium, mild, and everywhere between. Chiles that taste like cherries, some that taste like chocolate, apples, grapes, or apricots. The variations at Curry Farm seem endless.

My first visits to Curry Seed & Chile Company, just north of Sunsites, were memorable. The sheer complexity of operations is mind-boggling. Hundreds of Chile variations in what I understand to be a five year progression from a bucket in the greenhouse to viable field planting - or not. Adding to the challenge is the necessity for crop rotation. Other crops mixed in to keep the soil healthy.



One of the many varieties of chiles at Curry Farm

I'm still not clear on the process of selecting which seeds become part of the program, but the the organization is truly amazing. Tracking each set of plants, watching for the appearance of blooms and carefully covering them to avoid cross-pollination with neighboring varieties, sometimes just inches away. Somehow, the team makes it work - consistently.

I met Ed Curry, a third-generation farmer at the chile farm. In response to my questions,

"We've grown a lot of different crops but chiles are my passion," he says. "When I first started growing them 50 years ago, there were about 10 varieties of which I was aware."

"Now, on our farm, we have hundreds of variations under development. Through the years we've been able to nearly triple per-acre yield, by developing plants that produce more and larger chiles."

"Our primary business is producing and selling about 50 varieties of seeds. To that end, we've developed specialized processing equipment that separates the seeds from the pods, and cleans and removes excess moisture, allowing us to provide high-quality seed at reasonable cost to growers around the world."

"We also have on-site processing equipment with which we convert fresh harvested chiles into sauces and salsas which are shipped in bulk to to companies that bottle and market them."

It's been estimated that 85 to 90 percent of Mexican food and salsa in the United States can trace its 'roots' back to Curry Farms.

Most of us are aware of the wonderful chiles from Hatch, New Mexico. The seed comes from Curry farms.

While new varieties of tasty chiles definitely provide wonderful flavor enhancements and good eating, the Curry



Curry Farm irrigation

and HEALTHY!

Farms story goes much deeper.

Ed explains: "Fifty years ago, in a small greenhouse, in Florida, three researchers, Dr. Villain, Dr. Black, and Dr. Zitter began to consider the possible benefits of meeting regularly with those interested in understanding, sharing, and discussing peppers and their mutual diseases."

"The first meeting planted the seeds for what we now know as the International Pepper conference. During the ensuing years, we've seen and participated in near-unbelievable changes in the quality, varieties, and yield of Chiles."

Late this September, Curry Seed and Chile Company, with the help of The University of Arizona, New Mexico State University and others, hosted the 25th International Pepper Conference. The three-day-event began with the Curry Farms Field day at their chile operation near Sunsites.

Nearly 300 visitors arrived, from as far away as Greece, Israel, Thailand, Taiwan, Ghana, Rwanda, India, Peru, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Mexico. FFA students came from nearby communities including Pima, San Simon, Elfrida, and Tucson. Other young people from outside the U.S. were present, sponsored by the Howard Buffett foundation.

Numerous companies were represented, including (among others) Tabasco, Ortega, Fiesta Canning, Santa Cruz Chili & Spice, OFI, 505 Southwestern, and Young Guns Hatch Valley Chile.

The following day, at the Marriott University Park Hotel in Tucson. Twenty-eight scientific presentations were made, and a number of additional research papers distributed.

"We planned the field day first to give everyone a chance to meet and become friends," Ed said. "It worked! The gathering in Tucson was truly a wonderful fun event."

While food production, as always, is important, group focus has increasingly expanded to include the role of chilies in preventing and treating some of the most serious health problems of our time.

Scientists from a number of entities have teamed with Curry Farms in this work, including University of Arizona, New Mexico State University, Texas A&M, and others.

This biopharmaceutical research community focuses on preventing and treating diseases using natural plant-based methods, avoiding the harmful side effects of conventional drugs.

Increasingly, leading scientist have found that various types of chiles produce Carotenoids, molecules which show promise in a number of areas, including:

- Prevention and treatment of Alzheimers and related problems.
- Macular degeneration.
- Prevention of type 2 diabetes.
- Improved intestinal functions to prevent and heal obesity.
- Anti-inflammation.
- Cancer prevention athletic performance.
- The research and list continue.

Ed believes the Biblical principle "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain." We are truly blessed to be part of something wonderful - bigger than our own abilities and efforts.

Ed Curry, his wife Jeanette, their family and staff consistently maintain a friendly, outgoing approach. Crazy-busy - yet always there to listen and encourage. Sometimes in English, sometimes Spanish. ■



Ed and Jeanette Curry



Dr. Terry Berke, Plant Geneticist at work in his greenhouse.

ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS BY MENTHOL

KE&G celebrates 50 years

It started 50 years ago with a single backhoe and great working relationship between Karol George and his father-in-law.

The hard-working pair were installing slip form septic tanks at newly built homes and businesses in and around the Sierra Vista area. Then they expanded and began building small spec homes on the city's West End, subcontracting some of the trade work in the beginning.

By 1979, they took on their first major project, an office complex at 2700 North Fry Boulevard in Sierra Vista. The company, aptly named KE&G Construction, was also building homes in other areas within the community.

Fifty years later, KE&G is one of the largest construction companies in Arizona with six divisions and an equipment inventory in the millions of dollars. The company has a legacy of projects that are featured in communities throughout the state, including Tucson and Phoenix.

Karol George has long since retired, but not before turning the company over to his employees. KE&G is now wholly owned by the roughly 350 employees who work at offices in Sierra Vista and in Tucson.

Home building in Tucson started in the early 1980s, with a small subdivisions in Sabino Canyon and in Midvale on the city's southwest side. KE&G opened a small office in Tucson in 1984 and began taking contracts for public projects while the company continued building houses.

Two years later, KE&G bought out the paving and grading division of Sierra Redi Mix, and immediately used its new acquisition to do the work necessary at its newly-constructed subdivisions around Sierra Vista.

Projects contracted by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) started in 1991, when KE&G was picked to widen the East Gate bypass outside Fort Huachuca, from the intersection with Buffalo Soldier Trail all the way to Charleston Road in Sierra Vista.

The state also turned to KE&G in 1992, awarding the company a contract for work at Kartchner Caverns. The work included widening the highway and entrance road into the state park, along with all the site work at the property.

"KE&G won an award for the work there," said Larry Saunders, Southern Arizona Division Manager for the company. "We won the best project under $5 million from ADOT for the entire state."

Meanwhile, it's "home" city, Sierra Vista, was busting with growth at the seams. KE&G was contracted to build The Mall at Sierra Vista beginning in 1997, completing the project in 1999. The company has also built numerous local subdivisions, including Canyon del Flores, Chaparral Village, King's Ranch, Wildhorse, Huachuca Mountain Villages, and other projects.

Reminiscent of the founding of the company in 1972, Karol George sold the Sierra Vista home-building division of the business to his son-in-law's company in 2001. That company, R.L. Workman, is busy building new homes throughout the city and has developed an impressive resume all its own. ■



Concrete road paving on a mountain side placed concrete with a 950 loader because road was too steep.

NEMEAN SOLUTIONS
A startup story

By Larry Scott


Craig Mount


Simon Ortiz

Government Contractor. Military Intelligence. Whatever! Almost invisible in our community, since most of us have only a vague idea of what goes on behind those closed doors.

Nemean Solutions is one of those; a Sierra Vista based company, with supporting missions in 13 states. Now just five years old, Nemean is one of the fastest growing businesses in the United States. And I'm told there's a story.

So, I called Craig Mount.

Craig grew up in Houston Texas. He was in his his early 20's when the 9/11 attack happened and it was a shock. He enlisted in the Army, was assigned to Ft. Huachuca, and entered the Intel School. Formerly a so-so student, he quickly fell in love with military Intelligence and was soon on the Dean's List.

Then he was assigned to Ft. Hood, Texas, 1st Squadron, 7th Infantry, of 'General Custer' fame. Later, he returned to Ft. Huachuca in 2006 with his wife, Brittney.

While in the Army, he met Mel Albert who advised him to finish his education. He spent several years earning a bachelor's degree in Intelligence Operations, a master's in Business Management, and another in Public Administration.

Upon leaving the Army, he joined Mel Albert's Intelligence Communications Engineering, Inc. (ICE), where he became Program Manager and then its Vice President of Operations.

During this time he met and worked closely with Simon E. Ortiz.

In time, Craig and Simon decided to partner in starting their own operation. And they did. While Craig dealt with business development, Simon's strength was 'operations.'

Together, Simon and Craig soon assembled an awesome team of specialists, hit it hard, and proceeded to build a world-class business.

The process of starting a business can be daunting. In this case, a number of entities stepped up to help bring their dream to reality:

- Mark Schmitt of Cochise College Small Business Development Center (SBDC) - an impartial advisor and resource for helping to launch and grow small businesses. SBDC provides extensive assistance in developing business plans, finance management, and much more.
- Bob Mucci of AZPTAC, Arizona Procurement Technical Assistance Center, who helps small businesses to identify opportunities and compete successfully for government, contracts.
- Arizona Small Business Administration provided mentoring and assistance in obtaining necessary small business certifications.
- Mignonne Hollis of the Arizona Regional Economic Development Foundation helped, providing affordable office space in what turned out to be a perfect environment. There, Craig met and worked with many others who provided invaluable, assistance and encouragement.

Craig offered and continues to offer advice to any entrepreneur who requests assistance.

In short, Craig's advice is - If you are planning a business start-up, don't try to be a 'Lone Ranger.' invaluable people and resources are there for you in Sierra Vista, AZ. The SBDC team at Cochise College SV Downtown Campus is a great place to start. As you work with them, your odds of success go way up. ■



Sierra Vista Sym

The Sierra Vista Symphony Association (SVSA) follows a tradition of providing high-quality, live music performances in the Sierra Vista area. The Sierra Vista Symphony Orchestra performed its first concert in August 1995. The orchestra had 36 members and was conducted by Roger Bayes, who conducted the orchestra for the next 20 years. Toru Tagawa took the baton as conductor and music director in 2016, continuing to feature a wide-ranging repertoire from classical orchestral music to "pops" favorites.

In keeping with the SVSA's music education mission, the orchestra began to perform children's concerts early on. 5th graders throughout Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties attend the concerts at the Klein Center for the Performing Arts at Buena High School every January. Up to 1,200 students have attended the concert each year. Maestro Tagawa is very popular among the students, and has created many budding musicians. In June of 2022, the orchestra was pleased to partner with the City of Sierra Vista and perform as part of the city's Concert in the Park series. We hope to make this an annual occurrence.

The theme of this year's season is the New World. The first concert, "Pastoral" featured Bassoonist Marissa Olegario playing the Bassoon Concerto K191 in B-flat Major by Mozart and Symphony No. 6 by Beethoven. On January 7, 2023, the orchestra will perform its second concert, "Birds". Violin soloist Laura Tagawa will perform The Lark Ascending by Ralph Vaughan Williams. The orchestra will also perform la Gazza Ladra by Rossini, Moldau by Smetana, and the Swan Lake Suite by Tchaikovsky. The final regular concert, "New World", will be performed on April 1, 2023. Violinist Steven Moeckel will perform the Violin Concerto by Sibelius. The orchestra will perform To Spring by Perttu and Symphony No. 9 Op. 95 "From the New World" by Dvorak, a tape recording of which was taken by Neil Armstrong on the Apollo 11 mission.

The children's concert will be performed Friday, January 6, 2023. A portion of the music above will be performed and in keeping with tradition, the finale will be Rossini's William Tell Overture. Homeschoolers, please contact the symphony office to reserve seats at the children's concert.

All regular concert performances are at the Klein Center for the Performing Arts at Buena High School at 7:00 p.m. A pre-concert lecture is at 6:00 p.m.

Other upcoming events are the free summer concert, June 8, 2023, 6:30 p.m. at Veteran's Memorial Park and Men Who Cook on March 4, 2023 at Columbian Hall, Sierra Vista. Tickets available online at Eventbrite.com or at the symphony office, 21 E. Wilcox Dr., (520) 458-5189.

The Sierra Vista Symphony Association is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization dedicated to supporting a high-quality symphonic orchestra in order to bring live music to Sierra Vista and surrounding communities and to serve as a focal point for musical education and artistic excellence in the area.

A professional orchestra under the leadership of Toru Tagawa. ■



phony Orchestra

Upcoming events:



JANUARY 6, 2023
Children's Concerts
9:15 & 10:30, Klein Performing Center (Buena)

JANUARY 7, 2023
"Birds" featuring Laura Tagawa on violin
La Gazza Ladra by Rossini
The Lark Ascending by Ralph Vaughan Williams
Moldau by Smetana
Swan Lake Suite by Tchaikovsky
Klein Performing Center (Buena), 7pm
Pre-concert seminar at 6:00

APRIL 1, 2023
"New World" featuring Steven Moeckel on violin
To Spring by Perttu
Violin Concerto by Sibelius
Symphony No. 9 "From the New World" by Dvorak
Klein Performing Center (Buena), 7pm
Pre-concert seminar at 6:00

JUNE 8, 2023
Music in the Park
Veteran's Memorial Park, 7pm

OTHER EVENTS:
Music @ Twilight - February 4, 4:00pm at Kino Hall
(Dr. Choi, Toru Tagawa, Robert Marshall)
Men Who Cook - March 4, 2023 at Columbian Hall

Tickets are available for purchase at Dillard's, Safeway, Sierra Vista Chamber of Commerce, Eventbrite.com, and at the door on the night of the concert.

Suite. Tickets are available at Safeway, Dillard's, Ace Hardware, the Chamber of Commerce, the symphony office, online at Eventbrite.com, and at the door. For more information call the Sierra Vista Symphony office at 520-458-5189 or visit the office at 21 E. Wilcox Dr., Sierra Vista.

www.sierravistasymphony.org and facebook.com/svsymphony

Toru Tagawa, Playing Violin

ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS BY RADENMAS

Willcox AG Day

By Larry Scott

Earlier this year, I attended AG Day in Willcox for the first time. I found it a great experience, well organized, with a lot happening. A friendly small-town event where friends, neighbors, vendors, and local businesses meet, relax, visit, and learn.

That day, I met Kayla Wilson who, I learned later, serves as 'master planner and organizer' of the event, which has been part of the community for nearly 50 years.

Recently, I met with her to learn more about the event and her role. Here's her story.

AG Day was an important part of my growing-up years. When you grow up on a farm or ranch, you're kinda isolated. But you look forward to AG Day, where you meet people and extend your horizons. It's neat! The people I see there today were the kids I grew up with.

Several years ago, the people who had organized it through the years announced they were going to shut down. They were getting up in years and it was time to retire.

I couldn't bear the thought. So, in 2019, with the help of Southwest Irrigation, in Willcox, I took it over and we kept going. Our organizational team now includes Cochise College, the University of Arizona, and Riverview Dairy.

While we don't have any big sponsors, we're going strong with a focus on our young people. The event is, in fact, run by young people, giving them the opportunity to be a part of something special. FFA student volunteers set things up, keep things moving, and take it down afterward.

A local church provides tables and chairs. Rancher's wives, the Cowbelles, prepare the lunch, which they actually help to finance. Last year, they served meals to 282 people

For sure, the event is important as a trade show for farmers and ranchers, allowing them to keep up with new methods and resources, and connect with the community.

But it's more. Our primary mission is our young people. To help them move forward and find their place as members of our agricultural community. Or not. Some go on to careers outside and unrelated - and that's okay too.

In the Vendor's room, we typically see 50 to 100 vendors, showing equipment, chemicals, ag-related services, and small business services, providing plenty of opportunity to mingle and get to know one another.

Outside, in the Beef Industry tent, presentations throughout the day focus on effective ways to handle cattle, pricing, feed toxins, and other concerns.

Specific classes for the youth involve judging live animals, with a focus on conformation and soundness.

Another area is devoted to crop farming and the associated opportunities



Attendees at the annual Southeast Arizona Farm and Trade show held in the Community Center in Willcox.

PHOTOS BY KAYLA WILSON



Students listen to the opening presentation at the annual Ag Day.

and concerns. Randy Norton of the U of A Extension program, conducts Continuing Education Units (CEU) testing on crops & pesticides.

The youth program area, outside, is organized primarily for FFA kids, with speakers and classes dealing with topics involving soils, crops, dairy, and beef operations - real life skills in the AG community. There's even a tractor skills contest!

This annual event provides a practical opportunity to see what others are doing, and keep up with changing technology.

Again, there's a high priority on youth programs, and to a great extent, the event is conducted by young people, primarily FFA students. Vendor fees go to the Scholarship Program.

During the event, they function as staff, as announcers, and speakers. There are interns working toward scholarships. Vendor fees help fund the scholarships. Last year, we gave out three scholarships.

Definitely a great experience! Throughout the day, Livestock Expo kids & Willcox FFA kids provide food refreshment

Representatives from ASU, U of A, and NMSU are there to meet with young people, one on one.

In short, this is a community event organized and conducted by volunteers, to serve the local agricultural community and to fund scholarships for local kids.

We welcome you to attend our next AG Day on February 8, 2023.
For more information check www.seazfarmandranch.com. ■





The Patterson Observatory

by Ted Forte

Sierra Vista has an astronomical observatory? Wow! Who knew?

It's been described as the best kept secret in Sierra Vista. The University South Foundation, which owns the observatory, and the Huachuca Astronomy Club (HAC), that provides the volunteer operators at the facility, are trying hard to change that. Considerable progress has been made. Before the pandemic, the observatory was being visited by more than 2,000 people a year. Now that things are getting somewhat back to normal, it's on track to increase those numbers.

The Patterson Observatory, on the campus of the University of Arizona, Sierra Vista at 1140 N. Colombo Avenue, is named after David Patterson who was the principal donor toward its construction. It opened in 2004. The primary instrument is a research grade, 20-inch Ritchey Chrétien reflector. The telescope came to the observatory largely through the generosity of the late David Healy, an amateur astronomer and HAC member from Hereford.

The telescope is a sophisticated, robotic, remotely accessible instrument that has been used for scientific pursuits. Its main role, however, is public outreach. The observatory opens for public observing events at least twice each month with other themed events such as eclipse, comet, and transit watches when they occur. There are both nighttime stargazing events and daytime solar viewing events. The observatory is also available by appointment to schools, clubs, youth groups, and civic groups. The University South Foundation makes the observatory available free of charge as a public service. In fact, all the events at the Patterson Observatory are free.

The facility includes a "mini-science center" display area with a number of interesting exhibits. It was funded by a RAIN Grant awarded in 2018.

In addition to observing events, the Huachuca Astronomy Club periodically conducts telescope clinics and swap meets at the observatory. At the clinics, the public is invited to bring their telescopes that need minor repairs or adjustments and receive help from experienced amateur astronomers. Telescope owners that just need help learning how to use their telescope are also welcome. Telescope swap meets are conducted to find good homes for telescopes that have been donated to the club. Much of their sale price is then donated to the Foundation scholarship program. Members and friends are also invited to sell or swap their own telescopes.

Anyone can rent the observatory's classroom and 501c3 organizations can arrange to use it free of charge. It is equipped with an electronic conference center and a small kitchenette area. Interested parties should contact the University South Foundation during normal business hours, Monday through Thursday. Call 520-458-8278 extension 2129 or email universitysouthfoundation@gmail.com

School classes and youth groups, etc. that wish to visit the observatory (day or night visits can be arranged) should contact the astronomy club by emailing info@hacastronomy.org.

Please visit https://www.universitysouthfoundation.com/patterson-observatory

Ted Forte is an officer of the Huachuca Astronomy Club and sits on the University South Foundation's board of directors. He is the director of the Patterson Observatory and can be reached at tedforte511@gmail.com. ■



The ribbon is cut to celebrate the opening of the Patterson Observatory on the University of Arizona South campus in Sierra Vista.



A young observer gazes through the telescope at the Patterson Observatory.



Anthony Gasson and Kara Green are the successful operators of the Rock and Sand Depot in Huachuca City.

Depot owners celebrate blessings

From a fatal car accident to a successful business has been a journey that Anthony Gasson and Kara Green simply refer to as "…a blessing."

The longtime residents of Huachuca City took over the Rock and Sand Depot in January after a traumatic six months that began with a horrific crash in August 2021 on Highway 90 near the Mustang Corners intersection.

"We were coming back from the hospital in Tucson where my daughter was getting treatment when it happened," Kara related.

A driver pulled out from a side road directly into the path of the vehicle being driven by Anthony Gasson, resulting in her death and severely injuring Kara and Anthony. Their daughter had pulled on her shoulder strap while buckled in the seat belt literally seconds before the crash and walked away from the tragedy with minor injuries. Kara Green suffered a dislocated hip and Anthony Gasson, though he rushed to help the other driver at the scene, sustained injuries that prevented him from continuing his work as a handyman.

"He was thinking about starting his own business at that time, anyway," Kara said. "He had experience in a variety of jobs and was interested in doing something on his own."

Gasson took a job at the local Dollar Store after the crash, where he met Rebecca, the owner of the Linens and Things store in Huachuca City.

"Rebecca gave him the name of the owners of the strip mall where her store is located and they also owned the Rock and Sand Depot," Green said.

After several conversations with the owners, Anthony and Kara decided they could work together and take over the business, which has been a staple in the community for years.

"The Rock and Sand Depot has been here for a long time," Kara said. "It's by the grace of God that we recovered from the accident, had our own work experiences in a variety of jobs, and made the connections to do this."

Since January, the depot has flourished with an increasing number of customers and interest. Rock and Sand Depot offers colored rock, riprap stone, a variety of flagstone, driveway stone and a large selection of different sands.

"We thought business would slow down during monsoon, but it's just continued to grow and stay busy," Kara said.

Even though most customers purchase large pallets of material, Kara indicated they are willing to sell to customers who might not need a ton of stone.

"We have had customers who just need a few pieces of flagstone and we can work with them," she said.

Kara Green and Anthony Gasson grew up in Huachuca City and attended local schools.

"I've done everything from customer service to financial planning," Kara mused. "Same with Tony, he's done a lot of different jobs."

Their combined backgrounds have put them in a good position to run the business, they agreed.

"Everything we've done has led us to this," Kara said. ■



On October 12, members and directors of Arizona electric cooperatives filled the room at the Arizona Corporation Commission open meeting in Phoenix. They spoke in support of a financing application for additional gas-fired generation units at Apache Generating Station during the public comment period. Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives thanks everyone who showed their support. PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARIZONA G&T COOPERATIVES

Transforming Arizona's power portfolio

Cooperatives' most valuable resource, their people, help in the quest to diversify generation

By J.D. Wallace

As energy markets evolve and the demand for renewable power grows, Arizona Generation and Transmission Cooperatives (AEPCO) is taking innovative but responsible steps to address the changing landscape.

AEPCO, a power supplier for its member electric distribution cooperatives, is embarking on an action plan to develop new power resources to diversify its portfolio, improve reliability and flexibility, and to reduce its long-term carbon footprint. As a community-based, democratically controlled, not-for-profit provider of power, transmission, and energy services throughout rural Arizona, AEPCO's transition plan is founded on its core mission: to provide reliable power and value-added services to member electric cooperatives and public power utilities—and the communities they serve—at the lowest possible cost.

"We exist to support our members and communities with the reliable, affordable power they need to thrive, and this plan will help us ensure we're meeting their needs while also helping to enable a responsible clean energy transition in Arizona," says Patrick Ledger, AEPCO's executive vice president and CEO.

The first phase of AEPCO's action plan focuses on an initiative at its existing power plant, Apache Generating Station, which opened in 1961 in Cochise, Arizona, about 90 minutes southeast of Tucson. AEPCO will develop flexible, efficient, quick-start natural gas units to help modernize its fleet for increasing renewable integration and to meet the requirements of evolving energy markets.

"Quick-start natural gas units are able to turn on and ramp up to full power in just five minutes, which means they can supplement solar power as clouds pass over," says Christopher Jimenez, AEPCO's director of energy services and resource planning.

AEPCO will also expand its renewable resource portfolio with a large photovoltaic solar installation with battery storage. These new resources will be sited at Apache Station as well, and AEPCO's workforce will operate and maintain the new gas units and new solar and battery.

In addition to ensuring power will be available when co-op members need it, the new gas units will help reduce emissions over the long term, says Nathen Hatch, AEPCO's director of generation engineering.

"The new gas units will have significantly lower emission rates than older gas units, and they can ramp up and down quickly and also support more renewables on our system," Hatch says. "The new units will have selective catalytic reduction, or SCR, technology installed to limit the emissions while generating power during both regular operation and when we need to quickly ramp up or ramp down."

The new gas units will also be capable of using clean hydrogen, a technology that isn't ready yet for utility scale operation but shows

enough promise that AEPCO is preparing for it in the future.

AEPCO plans to bring the gas units online in 2024 and the large solar and battery system on in 2025. Recent independent studies by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council and reputable energy consulting firms have shown beginning in the summer of 2024, the Southwest region runs the risk of power shortages, in part because coal plants are retiring off the power grid and are not being replaced with other resources fast enough to keep pace with increasing demand.

Because of increasing demand from neighboring states like California as well as population growth and new business development within Arizona, competition for additional power on the market has risen and has caused market prices to do the same. Adding both renewable resources, which provide fixed-price power, and super-efficient gas generation will reduce costs over the long term, thanks to improved efficiency and the ability to avoid high-cost market power purchases.

Outreach by AEPCO and electric distribution cooperatives in Arizona has shown that consumers who live in co-op service areas across the state understand the need to diversify AEPCO's generation fleet.

Electric co-op consumers and community members have supported the effort by signing support cards and sending messages to the Arizona Corporation Commission through a special project website, ReliableEnergyArizona.com. The site educates visitors about the cooperatives' long-term energy plan and provided them a platform to communicate their position on the plan to commissioners, who regulate utilities in the state.

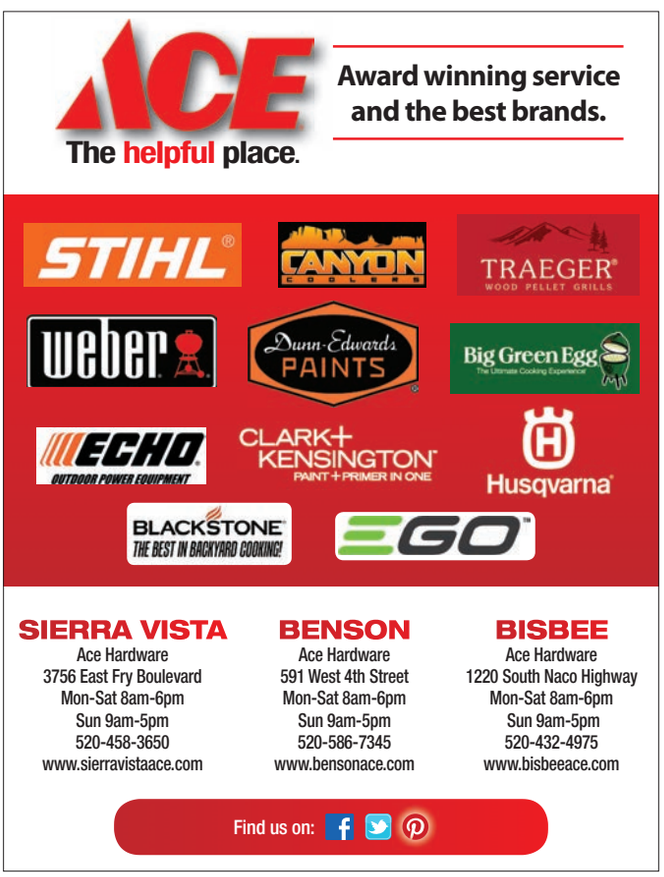
"We're grateful to all of the rural Arizonans who have taken the time to understand our energy plan and support our efforts," Ledger says. "We'll continue to engage our co-ops, which own and democratically direct AEPCO, and the consumer-members they serve as we work toward a reliable, clean, affordable energy future." ■

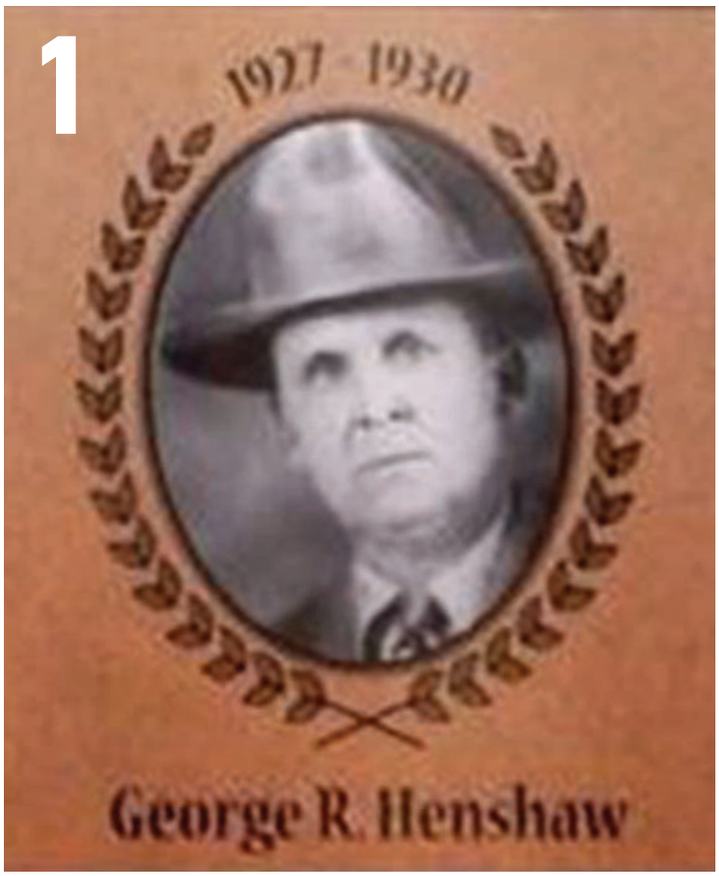
A Reliable Energy Future

Arizona Electric Power Cooperative is embarking on an action plan to develop additional resources to power rural Arizona.

- 45 MW solar and 100 MW/340 MWh of battery storage projects in development.
- New utility-scale renewable energy project expected from all-source request for proposal to be online before 2026.
- Member plans for additional utility-scale solar/battery additions by 2026.
- Member plans to implement demand response thermostat program.
- 80 MW of flexible, efficient natural gas generation in development by 2025.
- Additional flexible natural gas generation under consideration for 2026 for reliability and to increase to increase ability to integrate planned solar additions.









Historical vignettes: Elections of the Past

By Kathy Klump

1. **For this election year, we go back to 1928**, when a candidate for county sheriff filed his required report of all expenditures during his campaign. "To be elected, I lost 1,349 hours of sleep thinking about the election. Lost two front teeth and a lot of hair in a personal encounter with an opponent. Donated one beef, four shoats and five sheep to county barbecues. Gave away two pair of suspenders, four calico dresses, five dollars in cash and 15 baby rattles. Kissed 126 babies. Put up four stoves. Kindled 14 fires. Walked 4,076 miles. Shook hands with 9,508 people. Told 10,101 lies and talked enough to make in print 1,000 volumes. Attended 16 revivals and was baptized four times by immersion and twice by other ways. Contributed $50 to foreign missions and made love to nine widows – five grass and four sod. Hugged 40 old maids. Got dog bit 39 times and was elected by 353 majority." George Henshaw was Cochise County Sheriff in 1928. Perhaps he had the same experience.

2. **Three dollars a week for life** headed an advertisement in July 1893 Arizona Range News. (Perhaps the first Publisher's Clearing House sweepstakes). "In order to introduce the Canadian Agriculturist into new homes, the publishers have decided to present an unusually attractive reward for the summer of 1893. Those who become subscribers can compete free of charge. All that is necessary is to take a few sheets of paper and make all the words you can out of the letters in the three words "World's Columbian Exposition," and send them to us, enclosing $1 for six months subscription to either The Canadian Agriculturist or the Ladies Home Magazine. The sender of the largest list will receive $3 per week for life; second place, $1,000 in gold; third place, $500; fourth place, $250, fifth place, $100; sixth place, tickets to the World's Fair and ten days expenses." Over 10,000 smaller prizes would also be awarded.

3. **In March 1893**, W. H. Pomeroy stopped in Willcox for two days with "Monarch," the largest horse in the world. He was enroute to the World's Fair and would exhibit









him at all points between Willcox and Kansas City. No photograph of "Monarch" could be found, but this postcard with the horse named Dr. LeGear, circa 1911, then had the title "largest horse in the world."

4. **Sgt. John Walsh**, U.S. Army, champion long distance walker of the world, came into the Arizona Range News office in February 1920 to pay his respects. He was the official shoe tester for Uncle Sam's army and had been hiking for the last four years in that capacity. If a pair of shoes did not last for a little walk of 2600 miles, they did not come up to the standard required and then there was trouble for the manufacturer who had the contract to furnish the shoes. Sgt. Walsh was enroute to Washington, D. C. and expected to arrive there about the last of April. He was 64 years old and walked about forty miles a day on average.

5. **The first turtle race** held in Cochise County was held as part of the festivities at the Cochise County Fair in Douglas in September 1928. It was advertised as, "A real thriller will be the "Turtle Derby". Who ever heard of a turtle race? Well, a turtle race is the very latest fad –thousands of dollars are being offered in prizes on turtle races, so bring in your turtles and enter them in the races. Prizes will be awarded." These were actually our desert tortoises. Turtle races are no more, as the focus now is to protect them.

6. **Horned toad race**, Sept. 27, 1929- University of Arizona Professor John J. Thornber was in Willcox judging the annual flower show. He noticed a horned toad in Helen Ward's garden, which moved quite swiftly. He requested that the toad be sent to him for the Horned Toad Derby in Tucson. She agreed. When the time came, that particular toad could not be found. Miss Ward paid some boys one dollar to bring in a toad, which they did. They sent it to Prof. Thornber and named it "Helen of Troy." About 3,000 Tucsonans came to witness the derby. After the starting gun boomed, about a dozen toads started including #217, the City of Willcox entry. "Around the center post raced the little reptile, making a wide swing, but never hesitating a moment. Straight toward Dean Thornber it ran and never varied its pace or its direction, crossing the finish line with plenty to spare. The excitement was at white heat. Judges and officials had difficulty in keeping the crowd off the course." Lemonade, entrant of the Star, came in second. ■

Compiled by Kathy Klump, President of Sulphur Springs Valley Historical Society, from the archives of the Chiricahua Regional Museum and Research Center, 127 E. Maley, Willcox, AZ.

Canyon Vista Medical Center

earns four-sta

(Sierra Vista, AZ – October 6, 2022) – Earlier this summer Canyon Vista Medical Center (CVMC), received a four-star rating in the latest round of Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings released by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS).

This year's rating is an improvement on last year's 3-star rating and the 2-star rating the hospital owned two years ago. CVMC's growth in the CMS star rating shows consistent improvement in patient safety and quality of care.

"Our team works to constantly evaluate and improve the care and experiences we provide our patients and their families," Canyon Vista Medical Center CNO Cosette Britton said. "We are so proud to have received this recognition from CMS and look forward to continuing our efforts to enhance healthcare delivery and advance our mission of Making Communities Healthier."

CMS looks at multiple measures and quality reporting when generating the yearly star rating, some of which are healthcare associated infections (HAI), timely and effective care, comprehensive care for joint replacement (CJR) model and payment and value of care.

The Star Ratings program is designed to increase healthcare transparency and help patients and their family members make informed decisions about healthcare. CMS' Overall Hospital Quality Star Ratings measure hospitals based on their performance across five quality areas: mortality, patient experience, readmissions, safety of care, and timeliness and effectiveness of care.

"We are honored to serve the healthcare needs of our communities," Canyon Vista Medical Center CEO Shaun Phillips said. "We thank our providers, clinical teams and staff for their commitment to our patients and to one another. It is their dedication that made this five-star rating possible and that will continue to drive our quality improvement initiatives going forward."

ABOUT CANYON VISTA MEDICAL CENTER

Canyon Vista Medical Center operates a Joint Commission Accredited 100-bed acute care hospital in Sierra Vista with an outpatient surgery and imaging centers. The hospital is a Level III Trauma Center, an Arizona Cardiac Receiving Center, received The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval® for Advanced Certification for Total Hip and Knee Replacement, and is a Pink Ribbon Facility for Breast Health Excellence featuring 3D Mammography. From Behavioral Health services to complete Rehabilitation Services, our core purpose is to treat everyone like family, providing the peace of mind that comes from receiving extraordinary care, close to home. ■



ar CMS rating for Overall Hospital Quality



ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS BY PICOSTUDIO

SULPHUR SPRINGS

CALENDAR of EVENTS

Visit the many festivals, historical sites, deserts, national parks, and mountains of southeastern Arizona on a scenic hike, a road trip, or a mountain climbing expedition to test your endurance.

NOVEMBER 17
Willcox Chess Club

At the Source of Coffee at 308 S. Haskell Ave., Willcox, AZ. The Chess Club is back, this time weekly on Sundays for any and all who want to get together and play the game. A great space to meet players new and wise, and a good group of people to learn from.No fees to come and play. More information: *(520) 766-6677*

WILLCOX

NOVEMBER 19
Sunsites Community Library Holiday Bazaar

Bazaar will be held from 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. at 210 N. Ford St., Pearce, AZ. Local art, crafts, bake sale, book sale, and raffle. Come check it out!

SUNSITES

NOVEMBER 25
Bingo - Open to the Public

Presented by the Sierra Vista Elks Lodge #2065, 1 Elks Ln, Sierra Vista, AZ. Open to the Public: Friday Morning BINGO Come on down and enjoy a great game with awesome friends. Doors open at 8:00am. Sales start at 9:30am, and game starts at 10:30am. More information:

elks2065@yahoo.com

SIERRA VISTA

NOVEMBER 26
Cochise County Vendor Bazaar

10am-5pm, at 250 N Prickly Pear Ave. Benson, AZ 85602. We will have 50+ vendors set up for a day of supporting local small businesses and artisans. This is going to be a fun filled day for the whole family. The bar will be open if you want to get some ice cold refreshments. We will have Santa there for pictures for the kiddos or the whole family. Also, we will be doing a Toys for Tots toy Drive as well! There will be a raffle to support a local organization as well. Hope to see you there! More information:

CCVendorBazaar@Gmail.Com

BENSON

NOVEMBER 27
Santa on the West End

Join us as we celebrate 10 years of giving. Enjoy Santa & the Mrs. crafts, games, gifts and live entertainment with Jewlz Vanderdasson and more! More information:

santaonthewestend@gmail.com

SIERRA VISTA

DECEMBER 3
Sierra Vista Christmas Light Parade

It is time to get in the holiday season spirit! Come out to show your support and celebrate the Christmas Light Parade! The theme is "Super Heroes"! Either as a participant or a spectator, we look forward to seeing you and your loved ones at this annual event! More information:

www.svachamber.com

SIERRA VISTA

DECEMBER 3
Benson Christmas Light Parade

More information: *www.cityofbenson.com*

BENSON

DECEMBER 3
Palominas Unorganized Parade

The Christmas Parade starts at 10 AM .... so it has time to warm up a bit. We would love to have you, your family, and your group join us to celebrate the beginning of the Christmas season. Be IN the parade ... or watch the Parade from along Palominas Road. Those in the Parade are asked to be at the Fire Station on Palominas Road by 9:30. No registration is needed. Just come and get in line. Plan to stay for the free carnival and refreshments at the Church of Palominas after the Parade. Hope to see you there!

PALOMINAS

DECEMBER 3
Christmas in Elgin

Save the Date: Open to the Public, Please join us for our Annual Christmas in Elgin Saturday December 3rd, 2022 from10:00am-4:00pm at the Elgin Community Club, 475 Elgin Road, Elgin AZ. 85611. Christmas in Elgin: A fine arts and Crafts Holiday Festival at the Historic Elgin Community Club. Many local vendors will have beautiful gifts for sale. There will be a raffle, music, goodies and a roaring fire in the fireplace. Come join us for a great holiday event. 475 Elgin Rd,, Elgin AZ. Call Rebecca at 520-559-4835 for more information. From I-10 take Hwy 83 south through Sonoita, turn left on Elgin Road, go past Elgin School and follow the road to Elgin. From the Whetstone area take Elgin road south off of Highway 82 to Elgin Community Club at the top of the hill.

ELGIN

DECEMBER 3
Craft and Business Fair

Join us for our December 3 – Craft and Business Fair. Held at the Mall at Sierra Vista on December 3rd, this event will showcase amazing local crafters and businesses in Sierra Vista! Are you a Vendor? We'd love to have you! Apply today here:

https://cochisecrafters.com/

SIERRA VISTA

DECEMBER 6
Service Dog Support Group

In need of ideas/training tips/positive reinforcement to keep your service animal at the top of their game? Join Leslie with Hero PAWS Support group on first Tuesdays at 1800-1900 at the Warrior Healing Center!
More information:

http://www.warriorhealingcenter.com/

SIERRA VISTA





DECEMBER 7-9
Holiday Walk Thru

Desert Grace Church, at 2300 Las Brisas Way, Sierra Vista, will present "Walk Thru Bethlehem" from 6 to 8 p.m. This is an outdoor dramatization of the birth of Christ as visitors walk through a replica of the town of Bethlehem as it might have been. In addition to the drama, refreshments of homemade cookies, hot cocoa, and coffee will be offered as well as a hayride and a small petting zoo. Containers will be available for donations of non-perishable food for the Salvation Army food locker. No admission will be charged. If you have any questions, you may reach us at (520) 458-3280, or (520) 236-7614 or (520) 234-4902.

SIERRA VISTA

DECEMBER 7
Genie Club Meeting

Explore your ancestry and learn about genealogical resources! The Genie Club meets the first Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. in the Sierra Vista Public Library Meeting Room. Open to the Public. No registration required.

TOPICS:

- Nov. 2: The Importance of Citations
- Dec. 7: Sharing Your Family Lore & Traditions
- Jan. 4: Navigating Extensive Search Sites

SIERRA VISTA

DECEMBER 9
Kids' Hour: Yoga w/ AZ Health Zone

Come on down to the Elfrida Library for Kids' Hour outside! Do some kids' yoga with AZ Health Zone from Cochise County Cooperative Extension, and some holiday crafts! If you can, please bring your own small rugs, blankets/towels, or yoga mats you don't mind putting down on the grass. All ages are welcome and this event is free. More information:

(520) 642-1744

ELFRIDA

DECEMBER 10
Santa Fly-In

Join us for our Santa Fly-In! The kids will have the opportunity to talk to Santa, and the Coca-Cola Bear. More information: *www.svachamber.com*

SIERRA VISTA

DECEMBER 10
Sonoita Small Town Christmas

Santa, merchandise & food vendors, music, entertainment, and so much more. More information:

www.sonoitafairgrounds.com

SONOITA

DECEMBER 10
Willcox Christmas Light Parade

More information:

https://visitwillcox.az.gov/

WILLCOX

DECEMBER 13
Annual Ham Dinner

The Annual Sunizona-Ash Creek Community Association Ham Dinner will be held on Tuesday, December 13, from 5 pm to 7 pm at the Association Hall behind Mustang Mall. Adult dinners are

ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS BY GALYNA ANDRUSHKO, IBRESTER, FELIX

$6, children from 6 to 10 are $3, children 5 and under are free. The students from Ash Creek School will be performing their Christmas program for us at 7 pm. Come join us for some good food and fun entertainment. For more information contact Stella Brown at *(520)-780-1521* or Maryclare Tiuan at *(520)-429-5580*. For any questions about this ad, please call Marcella Boyer at *(520)-591-5088*.

SUNIZONA

JANUARY 6
Children's Concert

Held at the Klein Center for the Performing Arts. This concert is free and open to fifth graders in Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties. This year, the orchestra will perform selections from Star Wars, the Swan Lake Suite, the Bartered Bride, and more. For information, contact the Sierra Vista Symphony at *520-458-5189*.

SIERRA VISTA

JANUARY 7
"Birds"

The Sierra Vista Symphony Orchestra concert, "Birds", will be held at the Klein Center for the Performing Arts at Buena High School. Concert begins at 7:00 p.m. The pre-concert lecture starts at 6:00 p.m. The orchestra will perform Rossini's La Gazza Ladra, Vaughn Williams' The Lark Ascending with Laura Tagawa on violin, Smetana's Moldau, and Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake.

SIERRA VISTA

Have something for the calendar?

Events must be received by **December 9** for the **January/ February edition** of Currents. Events for the calendar must be no earlier than **January 23, 2023**.

SUBMIT TO **events**

epetermann@ssvec.com

There is no charge for contributions to the calendar.



DECEMBER 2

Sierra Vista Community Chorus presents their annual Christmas concert, "Christmas Around the World," at 7:00 P.M. at the First Baptist Church on 7th Street in Sierra Vista. Chorus Director Roger Bayes thinks you may be surprised to learn that many of the holiday songs from around the world are already quite familiar here in America, such as "Here We Come A-Caroling," an English wassail song, and "Carol of the Bells," a Ukrainian carol. This is a free concert, our gift to the community, but, in the spirit of the season, we encourage all who attend to bring a gift for a child for the fire department toy drive or some non-perishable food for a local charity. On Monday, January 9, 2023, the chorus will begin rehearsing for their gospel concert on March 3 and their spring concert in mid-May. New singers will be welcome at that time. We meet at 9:00 each Monday morning at Kino Hall at St. Andrew the Apostle Catholic Church, 800 Taylor Drive in Sierra Vista. There are no auditions and no costs to join. Singers of any age are welcome. This is an opportunity to sing wonderful music with a friendly chorus conducted by a superb director. Questions? Phone our General Manager, Martha Conklin, at 520-378-0730 or email her at mconklin3@cox.net .

SIERRA VISTA

WILLCOX THEATER & ARTS


Ryanhood




The Ocotillo Music

GUEST ARTIST SERIES

December, 7 pm

The Ocotillo Music duo of Cindy and Robert Leger features Cindy on the cello and Robert on mandolin and guitar. You'll enjoy December and Christmas holiday pieces in the rich harmony of their instruments.

January 27

Ryanhood, the Award-winning Tucson Band will play their own brand of music - somewhere between rock and folk. The stirring harmonies and world class musicianship are certain to put a spring in your step and bring a smile to your face!

SCIENCE ON SCREEN

January 21

Do you wonder about the science and tech you see in the movies? Watch the campy 1957 film "The Monolith Monsters" with "Mammoth skyscrapers of stone thundering across the earth!" – then learn as a scientist picks apart the "real" from the "reel".

RETRO REWIND

Every 2nd Friday afternoon

We bring a classic movie from the past to the big screen December 9 has the 1941 classic "Meet John Doe" with Gary Cooper and Barbara Stanwyck and admission includes baby popcorn and water.

PAINT NIGHT

December 12 and January 14, 6 pm

Come with family and friends to make memories at the Palace of Art. Your creativity, our instructor, a unique theme and a lot of fun. All supplies and instruction for you to take home your own masterpiece!

OPEN-MIC NIGHT

January 13

The Willcox Variety Show - Pick your best 15 minutes to perform - we set up the sound, music stands, get you situated with microphones, etc., and then we all sit back and enjoy your performance. FREE to perform, FREE to watch and enjoy!

JAM SESSION

First and Third Wednesday of each month, 3 pm

An informal musical activity. Also tons of fun and open to all skill levels and acoustic instruments. Bring your instrument, sing along or come and tap your toes and clap your hands. FREE - No registration required.

For a complete schedule of upcoming events, workshops, art classes, and programs for all ages, and for tickets and registration, check willcoxtheater.com, 520-766-3335 or follow us at WillcoxTheaterandArts on Facebook.

A LITTLE POP OF Purple

By Chef Chris
ClownChef@Yahoo.com

I'M A PUSHOVER FOR PURPLE, especially with food. It just makes everything else being served look extra yummy, as far as I'm concerned. Purple foods also have a good nutritional profile as an added boon.

This royal hue marries well with the colors of autumn, so I thought we could perk up our holiday tables both visually and nutritionally. Purple sweet potatoes are a favorite of mine, and more and more markets are stocking them regularly in the fall. The Sierra Vista Co-op will almost certainly have them if the other markets don't. Traditional sweet potatoes or yams can be swapped effortlessly.

Tradition is a huge part of holiday eating, so I try to not rock the boat too much, but I figure I can tweak a classic or jazz up one of the simpler dishes without wrecking havoc on expectations. Playing with color is a way to mix it up a bit and still play it safe.

Altitude can affect cooking times on potatoes, which is one reason going "sweet potato" can make a big meal easier to pull off. They cook much more quickly, easing the oven line-up for the holiday meal. When they're purple, they are even easier to love. The gratin and pie recipes may just become a new tradition for your family's holiday tables.

I'm also offering up a healthy-ish dip to help fill the gap between meals. The holidays are probably as much about snacking as the big meals, and it's nice to have something you can feel good about serving. This time of year you can almost always find purple cauliflower in the produce section, but all cauliflower is a good source of vitamin C thankfully, so swap as needed.

Once upon a time I was taught that purple signifies royalty, perhaps owing to the difficulty and expense in producing the color in textiles, but I definitely associate it with something special. I hope that these "royal recipes" bring an extra spark to your festive season, and that there is much joy and peace at your gatherings.



SWEET POTATOES AU GRATIN

This is a real show stopper for your holiday table. **NOTE:** This batch is layered orange/purple/orange with a few purple polka dot slices on top for fun. 6 servings.

- **6 tbsp. butter, plus some for the baking dish**
- **1 pound sweet potatoes or other root vegetable**
- **2-3 cloves garlic, finely chopped**
- **½ cup grated cheese, gruyere is my favorite**
- **1 cup boiling broth**
- **½ cup cream**
- **A few grates of nutmeg**

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Rub a deep pie plate with butter. Using a mandolin or good knife skills, thinly and evenly slice potatoes. You can use the slicing blade with the food processor, but they won't be even slices.

Layer half the potatoes in the bottom of the baking dish. Top with half the chopped garlic, nutmeg, half the cheese, 3 Tbsp. butter, salt, and pepper. Layer on remaining potatoes, garlic, nutmeg, cheese, butter, and salt. Pour broth over and bake for 20 minutes. Pour cream over the top and bake another 15 minutes or until golden. Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.



DREAMY PURPLE CAULIFLOWER DIP

Whenever people are gathering, there really ought to be dip. Since much of the holiday season involves food, you can feel bit better about snacking on this. I generally find purple cauliflower in the markets this time of year, and if you don't have it in you to make dip, you could use the florets as irresistible dippers.

1 head purple cauliflower
½ cup mayo or sour cream (or a combo)
½ tsp. garlic powder
2-3 tbsp. grated parmesan
Juice of ½ lemon, optional

Core cauliflower and cut into florets. Steam until tender or place in microwave for about 3 minutes.

Transfer florets to the food processor or blender, add remaining ingredients, and blend until smooth. Taste and adjust seasoning. Serve with cucumber or zucchini "chips" to amp up the nutrition.

ADOBE STOCK PHOTOS BY AKIMD

ROYAL SWEET POTATO PIE

Baking the sweet potatoes delivers extra flavor in this gorgeous violet variation on sweet potato pie. The Co-op in Sierra Vista almost always has purple sweet potatoes if the other markets don't. I have a theory that the reason people don't like pumpkin pie is the cloves. No cloves here for that reason.

1 pie crust, store bought or your own
1 lb. purple sweet potatoes
6 Tbsp. butter, softened
1 cup light brown sugar
½ cup heavy cream
2 large eggs
2 tbsp. flour
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. cinnamon
½ tsp. ground ginger
2 tbsp. brandy, optional
A few grates of nutmeg
Pinch salt
Whipped cream for serving

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

Unwrap potatoes and let cool, then remove skins.

Break the potatoes into a mixer or food processor bowl, or mash by hand. Add the remaining ingredients and mix until smooth, don't over mix. Pour into pie crust and smooth top.

Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until the center is just firm. Let cool for at least one hour before serving. Refrigerate if making the day before. ■



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