

## Councilors Approve 4% Solid Waste Rate Hike

*Increase will cost residents \$8.88 per year*

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

Bernalillo town councilors voted at the April 22 council meeting to approve a solid waste rate increase and heard just how much the town received from the Legislature.

Adam Meyer, the district manager for Road Runner Waste Services, asked the council to approve a rate increase for Bernalillo.

The council unanimously approved a 4% adjustment to the waste and recycling collection rate which will take effect July 1.

“Like many other businesses and industries, we’ve been impacted by inflationary pressures on the cost of goods and services,” Meyer said.

Residents will see the monthly cost for trash and recycling services increase by 74 cents per month, or \$8.88 annually, resulting in a new monthly rate of \$18.42.

### Park funding

The council also approved an agreement between Bernalillo and the state Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department’s State Parks Division that secures

— See **RATE HIKE** on page 3

## Haaland Visits Placitas to Commemorate Historic Public Lands Protection

*Heinrich, Stansbury applaud decision after years of advocacy*



Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland in Placitas commemorating new BLM rule. (Courtesy Secretary of the Interior)

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

The BLM announced updated regulations for the balanced management of America’s public lands, ensuring sustainability for the future on April 18.

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich, who serves on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, issued a statement Thursday celebrating an announcement from the U.S. Department of the Interior which finalized the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Public Lands Rule.

“In New Mexico, our public lands are central to our way of life. We value them for their deep history and cultural meaning, their scenic natural beauty, and the many ways

we enjoy them – from hiking and camping to hunting and fishing,” said Heinrich. “BLM oversees the largest share of our public lands, including cherished places like the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks and Rio Grande del Norte National Monuments. This new rule will help BLM better manage our public lands in the face of a changing climate, protect watersheds that provide clean drinking water, and conserve important wildlife habitat.”

According to the press release, the final Public Lands Rule directs BLM managers to utilize two established conservation tools.

The first tool the rule established, Heinrich wrote, directs BLM managers to prioritize the designation of more Areas of Critical

Environmental Concern (ACEC) in their land use planning. Currently, there are relatively few ACECs on BLM lands. These existing ACECs are pivotal in preserving sacred cultural sites, paleontological resources, and crucial wildlife habitats. Broadening the use of this effective tool is crucial to protect a wider range of at-risk natural, historical, and cultural resources across our public lands.

“As stewards of America’s public lands, the Interior Department takes seriously our role in helping bolster landscape resilience in the face of worsening climate impacts,” Interior Secretary Deb Haaland said in a press release. “Today’s final rule helps restore balance to our public lands as we continue using the best-available science to restore habitats, guide strategic and responsible development, and sustain our public lands for generations to come.”

Secondly, the rule will empower BLM managers to grant “conservation leases” to nonprofit and community organizations for landscape restoration efforts on BLM public lands. Such collaborative conservation partnerships have demonstrated success, as seen in initiatives like Restore New Mexico, which supports improved soil and rangeland conditions on BLM grasslands. These conservation leases can also serve as environmental mitigation measures, facilitating the development of wind and solar energy projects on public land.

Last June, Heinrich sent a letter to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland along with support from both chambers. They urged full support for the BLM’s Public Lands Rule and the completion of rulemaking and implementation.

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# Heinrich Reflects on Biden Land Protection Rules and Years of Work in DC to Protect Buffalo Tract

*First legislation was introduced in 2016*

By Pat Davis, Sandoval Signpost

The Biden administration's decision this week to withdraw thousands of acres of federal public lands from development came as a welcome surprise to residents of Placitas, Bernalillo and local communities who have advocated White House or congressional action to protect the historic Buffalo Tract area from mining.

The administration's announcement was important enough to earn a press event in Placitas from U.S. Department of Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, a Laguna Pueblo member and former New Mexico congresswoman. But administrative rules can be changed by future presidents and secretaries unless Congress acts to make those protections permanent.

U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich is one of Congress' strongest voices for public lands preservation. Alongside numerous local pueblos and local members of Congress including Ben Ray Luján (now a U.S. Senator),

Melanie Stansbury and Haaland, has pushed for permanent protections for the Buffalo Tract through legislation.

"For over a decade, I've fought alongside New Mexicans to protect the Buffalo Tract from mining," Heinrich said this week. "Today, our hard work has paid off. The Biden administration has listened to our calls and recognized that the Buffalo Tract is clearly the wrong place for a gravel mine."

"The Buffalo Tract is a landscape that New Mexicans treasure. The environmental impact of mining it would be irreparable — to the Pueblos of Santa Ana, the Pueblo of San Felipe, the people of Placitas, and the Merced De Comunidad De San Antonio De Las Huertas land grant, and the wildlife that depend on the Crest of Montezuma corridor between the Sandia Mountains to the south and the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the north."

"This finalized proposal by the administration will provide key protections for the Buffalo Tract for 50 years. Next, it's time for Congress

to pass my Buffalo Tract Protection Act to make these protections permanent."

This week's announcement follows years of advocacy by Heinrich to protect the Buffalo Tract permanently from mineral development, dating back to the introduction of his Buffalo Tract Protection Act in 2016, his office says. A timeline of Heinrich's work can be found below.

- September 2023: Heinrich issues statement welcoming the Biden administration's proposal that comes after his efforts with Pueblos and local community efforts to protect the Buffalo Tract.
- March 2023: Heinrich, U.S. Representative Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.) call on Interior Department to withdraw Buffalo Tract from mineral development during community event.
- February 2023: Heinrich reintroduces the Buffalo Tract Protection Act, legislation to permanently withdraw four parcels of BLM lands in southern Sandoval

County, including the Buffalo Tract and the Crest of Montezuma, from any mineral development, including gravel mining.

- This legislation advanced out of Committee on May 17, 2023.
- May 2022: Heinrich, Stansbury lead a letter requesting that the U.S. Department of Interior administratively withdraw over 4,200 acres of BLM land near Placitas from mineral development.
- November 2021: Heinrich's Buffalo Tract Protection Act passes out of committee.
- October 2021: Heinrich's Buffalo Tract Protection Act gains support of BLM in key hearing.
- February 2021: Heinrich, Senator Ben Ray Luján reintroduce Buffalo Tract Protection Act.
- February 2019: Heinrich, Senator Tom Udall reintroduce Buffalo Tract Protection Act.
- July 2016: Heinrich, Udall introduce Buffalo Tract Protection Act.

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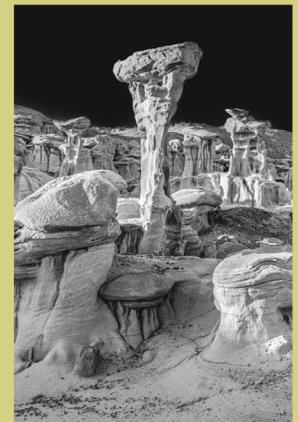


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**—RATE HIKE from page 1**

funding from The Land and Water Conservation Fund. The fund, created by Congress with zero taxpayer funding, aims to preserve natural areas and promote recreation.

The fund will help the town convert 2.5 acres of vacant property north of the senior center into a park.

The fund has matched the town's contribution of \$256,000 toward the park, bringing the total to \$512,000. The money will be used to construct an asphalt walking path that surrounds the park with a labyrinth, horseshoe and cornhole pits, sheltered benches, a gazebo, lighting, trees and xeriscaping.

**Legislative update**

Rep. Derrick Lente (D-Rio Arriba, Sandoval and San Juan) also gave a legislative update on the 2024 session. Lente is the chairman of the House Taxation and Revenue Committee and a member of the Legislative Finance Committee.

**Bernalillo**

Lente highlighted funding coming to Bernalillo.

- Bernalillo is set to receive an additional \$1.1 million for the construction of its fire station, supplementing the \$1.5 million received last year.
- Bernalillo Public Schools will receive \$100,000 for a multicultural building.
- The Coronado Monument Historic Site is slated to receive \$275,000 for site improvements.

**Sandoval County**

He also highlighted funding the county will receive.



*Bernalillo Town Council and the first responders who were honored at the meeting (Credit Jesse Jones)*

- \$300,000 for the planning and design of the Sandoval County dispatch center.
- \$2.1 million for the construction of the county animal shelter.
- \$650,000 has been allocated for a county fire engine, along with \$75,000 for a ladder truck.

**Official ceremonies**

Councilor Phillip Valverde was sworn in by Judge Christopher G. Perez of the 13th Judicial District Court. A recount determined that Valverde garnered 333 votes, compared to James S. Baca's 324 votes.

Sandoval County Deputy Fire Chief Chris Bagley honored the first responders who were instrumental in saving Brian Moore's life after he went into cardiac arrest.

"If we get somebody back, it's because a bunch of links in the chain of survival are met and in this

particular case, every single one of those links was met," Bagley said.

After calling 911, Moore's wife began administering CPR. When the police officers and firefighters arrived, they took over the CPR and were able to deliver multiple defibrillations which eventually led to the return of his pulse. They safely transported him to the hospital where he made a successful recovery.

"All of these links, (his) wife, the police, the fire department the doctors in the hospital, they all are the reasons why he's able to be here with us tonight," Bagley said, standing with Moore and the first responders who helped save his life.

**Get involved**

The next Town Council meeting at 6:30 pm on Monday, May 13, at the Bernalillo Town Hall, located at 829 Camino Del Pueblo.

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# Santa Fe Police Officer Accused of Battery in Rio Rancho

By Michael Hodock, Sandoval Signpost

A Santa Fe Police officer was arrested in Rio Rancho earlier this month for battery against a household member.

Rio Rancho Police were called to a home on 4th Ave. NE on April 9 to investigate a 911 hangup. According to a criminal complaint, a woman at the residence said that she called 911 after she and her boyfriend, 37-year-old Christopher Lamoreux, got into a verbal argument that turned physical. She told police that Lamoreux grabbed her arm, struck himself repeatedly in the face with her fists and shoved her chest while she was on the ground. The complaint says that the woman had finger marks on her arm that were “consistent with someone else applying force.”

According to the complaint, the woman told police that she hung up immediately after the 911 call because Lamoreux was a police officer and she thought that the responding officers would not believe her version of the events.

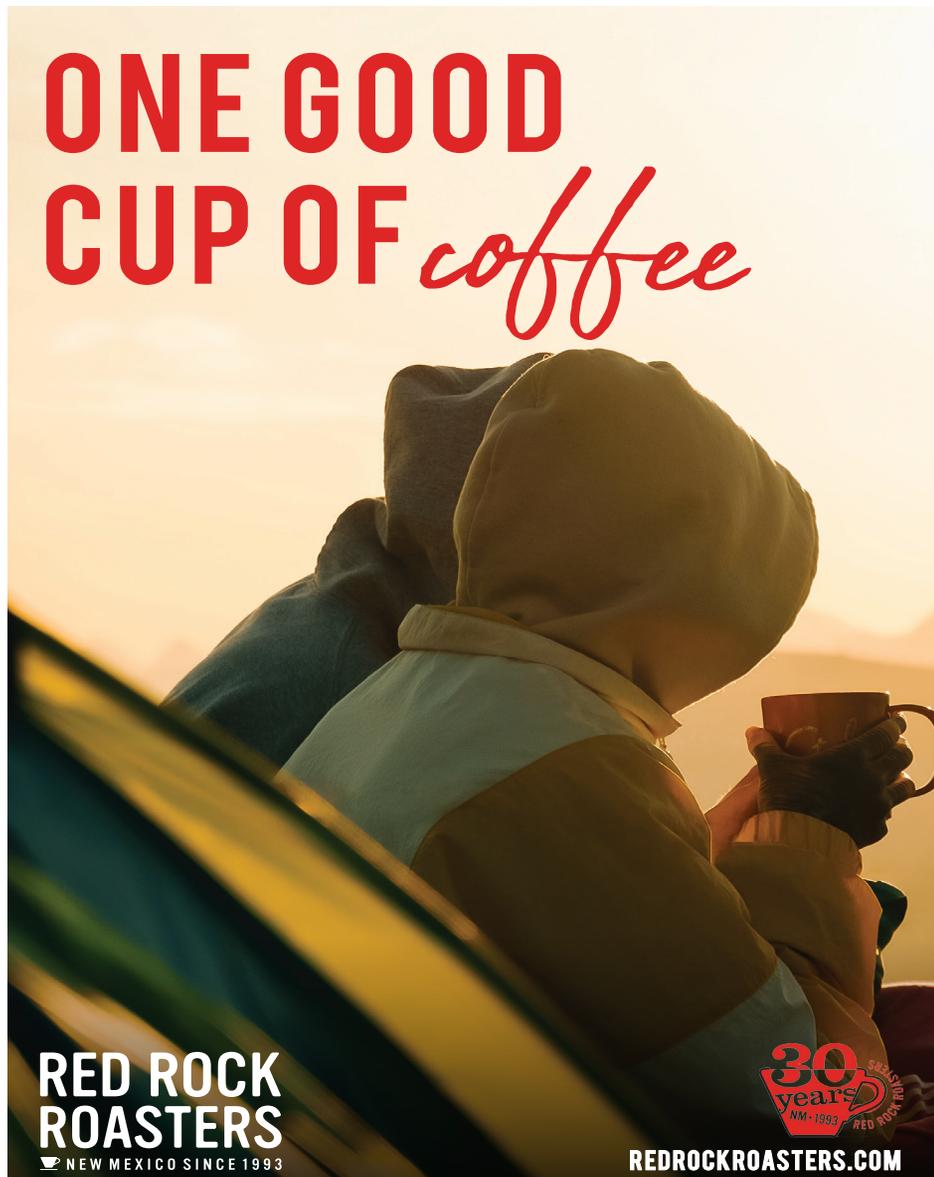
According to police, Lamoreux said that the only force he may have applied to his girlfriend was when he slid past her after she scratched him in the face. He denied putting his hands on her or applying any intentional force. Lamoreux told police he did not know how she got the marks on her arm, and that she may have gotten bruises from falling over the weekend. The police report says Lamoreux had red marks and a scratch on the side of his face.

According to court records, this isn't the first time the couple has been involved in a domestic dispute. Last April, Lamoreux's girlfriend was arrested and charged with abuse of a child, criminal damage to property, assault and battery against a household member, and interference with communications during another alleged domestic incident. Those charges were dismissed.

Lamoreux was booked into the Sandoval County Detention Center on one count of battery against a household member.

*The Signpost* reached out to Santa Fe Police for a response but did not hear back as of press time.

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# Bernalillo High Students Take Home Skilled Trades Awards

## Winners will move on to national conference

By Sandoval Signpost staff

Students from Bernalillo High School are glowing after winning awards for the second year in a row for leadership in the trades field.

Earlier this month, Bernalillo High participated in the New Mexico SkillsUSA Leadership Conference in Albuquerque, a conference built in the framework that encourages the country's future workforce through the development of personal, workplace and technical skills grounded in academics.

This year Bernalillo High School took 20 students to compete in various training programs. The training programs students competed in were Agriculture Science, Welding (individual), Welding Fabrication, Video and TV production, Automotive Service Technology, Carpentry, Culinary Arts, First Aid and CPR, and Electrical Wiring.

Four Bernalillo High School training programs received recognition: Joseph Quintana

received a bronze medal for electrical wiring, Jaden Lovato received a silver medal for carpentry, Kaylina Totalita won a silver medal for First-Aid & CPR and Agriculture Science- Gracie McCloskey, Anthony Otero, and Jenay Sias placed first in Agriculture Science. The state gold medalists will move on to represent SkillsUSA New Mexico at the National Skills and Leadership Conference.

The awards varied based on the training program they enrolled in and included tool sets and gift cards. School officials say the partnership between students, advisors, and industry partners is essential to the success of these students.

"I really enjoyed participating in SkillsUSA. It has taught me a lot about being a leader and adaptability. We were able to communicate with a lot of different people in different training programs and learned a lot about them. I'm excited to go to Nationals and gain more experience, win or lose," said Gracie McCloskey.



Bernalillo High School Agriculture Science Team Gold Medalists (Left: Anthony Otero, Jenay Sais, Gracie McCloskey, (advisor) Matricia Garcia). (Photo courtesy Bernalillo High)



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# Cuba Schools Expand Food Growing Program

By Gwynne Ann Unruh,  
Sandoval Signpost

The Cuba Independent School system has received a \$5,000 grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to purchase a “hoop house” for their horticultural program. It will add teaching space to the program offered to middle and high school students.

A hoop house is a plastic-covered greenhouse that does not have supplemental heating or cooling. Students in the horticulture program learn plant propagation, plant nutrition, floral arrangements, and greenhouse and nursery production. Initially, students grow seedlings in a controlled environment in the school’s 75x25 foot greenhouse built 3 years ago.

“We’ll be able to put a lot of our bedding plants in the unheated greenhouse hoop house and use it to harden the plants to cooler weather before transplanting into the field, or before we sell them,” Raymond Sisneros, who heads the school’s horticultural program, explained to the *Signpost*.

Vegetables grown in the class are sent to the cafeteria to feed students. “Today we took four 2x3 feet long plastic bags packed full of lettuce to the cafeteria. We’ll have another batch

ready every 10 days. So, there will be a constant supply from here on,” Sisneros said.

When it’s time to start transplanting plants outside, if they want to garden at home for their families, students can take home two trays of plants. “I had them when they were in middle school and they grew their knowledge base all through high school. These kids will graduate being able to grow their own food,” Sisneros said.

“We also raise a large variety of houseplants in the greenhouse and we sell what they grow at the farmers market once a month in Cuba. People also come to the school to see what’s growing and if there’s something for sale, a lot of them will end up buying.”

The income that comes from growing and selling the plants is put back into the greenhouse program. It’s not quite self-sustaining yet, but Sisneros hopes at some point in the future it will be.

A former U.S. history teacher, Sisneros also taught horticulture at the Independent district and on the Navajo reservation. He has been gardening with his wife Susan for the past 50 years at Vallecitos Garden Greenhouse located three miles east of Cuba utilizing traditional growing and irrigation methods he learned from his grandfather.



(Credit Pixabay, Rebecca View)

Independent Superintendent Dr. Karen Sanchez-Griego has been 100% behind developing the program, as has the school board, Sisneros said. Some of the members of the school board are also his former students.

According to Sisneros, the Jemez Valley and Jemez Mountain schools have gone to NRCS and are working to “duplicate what we’re doing in the Independent district because they were blown away by it.”

Identifying different types of trees, bushes, shrubs and wild plants is also

part of the horticulture class. “We go out and collect different kinds of grasses, seeds and plants that can be used or just identify them so the kids know what they’re looking at. We pick wild carrots and wild onions and taste them so they can see what they’re like. I also bring in other herbs that are not in the school district.”

“The focus of my whole class is on self-sufficiency. I’ve been working on it for over 15 years. I’m not quite there, but I’m getting there,” Sisneros said.

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# Remembering Grandfather

## Wild Hearts Gallery showcases Korean-inspired art of daily life

Sandoval Signpost staff

Sammie Charlie, Alan Charlie's grandfather, served in the Marines during the Korean War which lasted from 1950 to 1953. The artist's latest series is from his memory and the memory of all 800 Navajo soldiers who served in Korea and those who continue to serve. The paintings were inspired by stories from Alan's father, photos taken of his grandfather and research done. The art style was inspired by So Yun-bok's pen and ink depictions of daily life. As Alan honors Sammie Charlie, he invites you to honor those in your family who served by sharing pictures and memorabilia during the show.

Born in Gallup, NM and raised on the Navajo reservation, Alan Charlee had an early interest in art that was well expressed throughout his childhood drawings. After graduating from Crownpoint High School, he attended Central New Mexico Community College, where



(Art by Alan Charlie)

he obtained his Computer Animation and Fine Arts degrees. He joined Wild Hearts Gallery in 2020. Versed in multiple media, Alan mostly does realistic oil paintings devoted to the scenes that define the land and people who shaped his upbringing.

"My Grandfather was so excited

when he first viewed one of my paintings; he kept saying 'You did that, that's really good.' My grandfather used to paint in watercolor when he was young."

The artist's reception will be celebrated with fellowship and refreshments on Saturday, May 4, 1-3

pm. A First Sunday ARTScrawl Meet the Artist event kicks off the month on May 5, from 10 am to 2 pm. Come by for a cup of specialty coffee and visit. You can also take a visual tour of this exhibit and the gallery by visiting [wildheartsgallery.com](http://wildheartsgallery.com).

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# James Beard Semi-finalist Brings Smash-Style Burgers, Spicy Chicken to Rio Rancho

*Restaurant started as a food truck in Albuquerque*

By Jesse Jones, Sandoval Signpost

A James Beard Award semifinalist from New Mexico is expanding to Rio Rancho.

Basit Gauba, a restaurant and food truck owner from Albuquerque, is preparing to bring two of his restaurants to Rio Rancho's new indoor/outdoor retail and event space, The Block, which is set to open in June.

Gauba, owner of Tikka Spice Desi Street Food truck, Kukri Chicken Tikka Tenders and Stackers Burger Company, was the only semifinalist from New Mexico for the James Beard Award for best chef in the Southwest region in 2023.

"I'm looking forward to introducing our stuff to (Rio Rancho) and I know a lot of people are excited, I hope we're welcomed with open arms and the success of the community is top of mind for us," Gauba said.

In just five years, Gauba went from renovating a used food truck to expanding with five locations and is planning to open four new restaurants this spring, with nine more in the works for next year.

The two new restaurants he is opening at The Block are the Stackers Burger Company and Kukri Chicken Tikka Tenders. Gauba plans to expand into other food hall and retail spaces across the metro area and will open restaurants at both the Green Jeans Food Hall and the Tin Can Alley Food Hall in Albuquerque.

Gauba said he currently employs 45 team members and plans to add another 30-40 to staff the new locations.

"We're trying to figure out how we can be competitive while still making sure people have a good livable wage and quality of life," Gauba said.

Gauba, who grew up in Pakistan, said Tikka Spice originated as a creative spin on traditional Pakistani dishes. As time passed, his cuisine evolved into a fusion menu. The food trucks serve as a valuable platform for testing products and gauging market perception, helping Gauba fine-tune his food.

As the names suggest, Stackers Burger Company specializes in smash-style burgers, while Kukri Chicken Tikka Tenders offers a variety of spicy chicken tenders and sandwiches.



Credit Kukri Chicken

Besides being a semifinalist for a prestigious national culinary award, Gauba has also won local culinary accolades. At Edible New Mexico's Green Chile Cheeseburger Smackdown, he secured the Judges Award in 2023 and various awards

in 2022, including Reigning Chomp, Secret Judges Award and Peoples' Choice. He also won Albuquerque The Magazine's Best of The City Award for Best Food Truck consecutively from 2021-2023.

## Community Briefs

By Sandoval Signpost staff

### Burn Permit

The Town of Bernalillo Fire and Rescue announced burning permit changes last month to help wildfire mitigation. You will no longer need a "burn permit" to burn in the Town of Bernalillo. To burn on your property, call the burn line at 505-771-7104 to check if it is a "burn" or "no burn" day. The burn line is set to advise you on the parameters of approved burning. The burn line also is set every day by the active duty lieutenant depending on the weather.

### Community Yard Sale

Need to get rid of some things after the annual spring cleaning of your home? The Town of Bernalillo's annual community yard sales is scheduled for June 1 and 2. All yard sales will be held on your property. However, if you sign up on the Town of Bernalillo website your address is on the Community Yard Sale map. You can participate for one or both days. Once you sign up, the Town of Bernalillo will also provide you with two-yard sale signs.

### Great American Clean Up

Rio Rancho's Great American Clean-Up returns on May 4 from 8 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. and volunteers are needed. Help keep Rio Rancho clean by removing neighborhood and roadside litter. All cleaning supplies will be provided. The deadline to register is April 26 and the first 300 volunteers will receive a special thank-you gift for helping. For more information call (505)896-8729 or register online at [rrnm.gov/4627/Great-American-Cleanup](http://rrnm.gov/4627/Great-American-Cleanup).

### Spring Craft Fair

Still in need of a gift for Mother's Day? On May 3, head down to Sandoval County's Spring Craft Fair to find a wonderful gift for your mom. Items for sale include jewelry, art and handmade blankets. This is a great opportunity to get the perfect gift for your mom or a chance to treat yourself. The craft fair will take place on May 3 from 10 am to 3 pm at the Sandoval County Administration Building. For more info call (505)867-7538.

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# NM Receives \$156M to Boost Access to Solar

*Funding will increase solar access for more than 21,000 households*

Hannah Grover, NM Political Report

New Mexico will receive millions in federal money to increase access to solar power.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced recipients of the \$7 billion Solar for All competition awards on Monday. The state will receive \$156 million through the program, which is enough to increase solar access for more than 21,000 households.

The New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department will oversee the state's Solar for All program.

"The EPA's Solar for All program is an unprecedented investment in clean, affordable renewable energy for low-income communities across the country," Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham said in a press release. "It is only natural that New Mexico—a national leader in clean energy—would be among the states selected to participate. This will help ensure that all New Mexicans, regardless of income level, can benefit from our clean energy transition."

The funding was made available through the 2022 Inflation Reduction Act, which created a \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund that includes the Solar for All program.

EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan said the entities selected to receive the federal funding will use it to advance "solar energy initiatives across the country, creating hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs, saving \$8 billion in energy costs for families, delivering cleaner air, and combating climate change."

Access to solar energy for low-income communities is important because utility bills are increasing. According to the U.S. Energy Information Agency, in 2023 residential electricity rates increased at a rate of 2 percent per month. The average American pays \$138 monthly for electricity.

Rooftop solar can lead to lower electric bills, which can help households that might otherwise have to make tough decisions like



Solar Center, Santa Fe (Photo Courtesy PNM)

whether to buy groceries or pay their utility bill.

However, the initial costs to install solar panels can put these benefits out of reach for many families.

"Residential solar electricity leads to reduced monthly utility bills, reduced levels of air pollution in neighborhoods, and ultimately healthier communities, but too often low-income and disadvantaged communities have been left out," U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Acting Secretary Adrienne Todman said in a press release.

She said the Solar for All funding will "invest billions to ensure that affordable housing across the U.S. can access solar and increase energy efficiency and climate resilience."

The EPA estimates that the \$7 billion in funding will lead to \$350 million in annual savings nationwide for about 900,000 households that are struggling to pay utility bills.

"With the fires, drought and heat that New Mexico is experiencing because of the global climate crisis, there is real hope in being awarded \$156 million dollars to superpower the Community Solar Program," Camilla Feibelman, director of the Rio Grande Chapter of the Sierra Club, said in a press release. "The federal Solar for All funding will allow [the] State Energy Office to prioritize energy for unelectrified homes and families especially in our most rural and underserved

communities all while reducing our contribution to climate change."

In New Mexico, EMNRD and its partners will use the funding to expand access to arrays that can provide energy to multiple households beyond what is currently allowed in the community solar program. The focus will include bringing power to households that currently do not have access to electricity.

"Our Solar for All Program is designed to reach New Mexico's underserved communities by focusing on supporting shared solar access projects in rural and tribal communities," EMNRD Deputy Secretary Dylan Fuge said in a press release.

The state says models indicate the Solar for All program will add 21 megawatts of solar energy capacity to New Mexico's power grid and will also add 8.1 megawatt hours of stored energy that can be used when there is not enough sunlight to generate power through photovoltaic arrays.

EMNRD's Energy Conservation and Management Division plans to include storage with the Solar for All projects whenever possible.

"Our first step is forming an Environmental Justice Advisory Committee to help us ensure that the program delivers benefits most effectively for low-income residents," ECMD Division Director Rebecca "Puck" Stair said in a press release. "We want these funds to provide the highest possible value to our

residents both environmentally and economically."

A nonprofit known as GRID Alternatives' Western Indigenous Network Solar For All program will also receive funding that could benefit New Mexicans. The nonprofit received more than \$62 million that will help with energy sovereignty efforts while also addressing environmental destruction and climate change. The program operates nationwide, but prioritizes Tribal communities in Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico and Utah.

"Solar for All represents an almost literal breath of fresh air for millions of Americans. Together with our partners, GRID Alternatives is excited to work with EPA to build on our work over the last 20 years, expanding access to solar energy and its benefits, including real savings, quality jobs, and a better environment for folks," Erica Mackie, GRID Alternatives CEO and co-founder, said in a press release. "Our mission to build community-powered solutions to advance economic and environmental justice through renewable energy is supercharged by this award. Our team of leading nonprofits and partners, which includes high-profile affordable housing organizations with deep community roots and a long history of providing affordable housing, looks forward to genuinely engaging community stakeholders to tailor these game-changing resources."

# State Seeks Input on Climate Plan

*Extreme heat with less water predicted*

Sandoval Signpost staff

New Mexico faces mounting climate challenges, including extreme heat, wildfires, droughts, storms, heavy precipitation and associated health risks. To plan for such changes, the state has released a pivotal, inaugural Climate Adaptation and Resilience Plan (CARP).

The CARP was spearheaded by a dedicated project management team led by staff from the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) and other state agencies. State officials emphasize that this is the first edition of this significant document.

The document projects a 24% decrease in surface water runoff and groundwater recharge over the next 50 years, twice as many days with extreme heat, increased risk of wildfires and flash floods.

Beginning in May, EMNRD will host a series of community conversations



(Photo courtesy Tierna Unruh-Enos)

in which residents across the state will be able to provide suggestions for making the plan more responsive to their local needs.

Albuquerque-area residents will get two chances to attend. The first is set for May 22 for general input and a tribal-focused event is on June 6.

“New Mexicans have long shown resilience, devising solutions to protect our land, culture and livelihoods,” said Dylan Fuge, EMNRD’s deputy secretary. “Adapting to climate change demands understanding our present and

preparing for its impacts. The recent Calf Canyon-Hermits Peak Fire anniversary underscores this urgency and our community’s steadfastness.”

The conservation series will bring together residents, experts, local governments and stakeholders to discuss climate impacts and resilience strategies.

“The CARP embodies our state’s commitment to resilience, employing a collaborative, government-wide approach,” said Rebecca “Puck” Stair, director of the New Mexico State Energy Office. “To ensure

its effectiveness, it must address the diverse needs of all New Mexicans. Through the Community Conversation Series, EMNRD will foster dialogue among communities, local governments, Tribes, Pueblos, Nations, and stakeholders, shaping strategies for a more resilient future. Your input will guide our ongoing improvements.”

The community conversations are inclusive, with lunch or dinner provided after each in-person workshop. A virtual workshop will be scheduled for residents from all communities across New Mexico.

## HOW TO PARTICIPATE

### WHEN AND WHERE:

Attend an in-person workshop at one of seven locations across the state:

- May 20: Truth or Consequences
- May 21: Roswell
- May 22: Albuquerque
- June 3: Farmington
- June 4: Taos
- June 5: Las Vegas
- June 6: Albuquerque, Tribal-focused event

**VIRTUAL:** A virtual workshop will be announced at a later date. Visit [climateaction.nm.gov/carp/](https://climateaction.nm.gov/carp/) to view the plan.

## Paid Advertisement

# Ask the Experts: Upgrading Your Swamp Cooler to Cool A/C For Hotter Summers

Sponsored by Kidzz Mechanical

It is the time of year when many Albuquerque homeowners begin the arduous task of opening up their swamp cooler and wondering if this is the year they should finally convert to A/C.

To learn what the process really looks like, and how new financing options help homeowners manage, we asked Chad Redford, CEO at **Kidzz Mechanical**, an Albuquerque-based HVAC firm with more than 200 5-Star reviews on Google about today’s conversion process.

**Chad, a lot of homes around Albuquerque were built with swamp coolers, but those don’t seem to work as well as they used to. Why is that?**

The biggest issue with swamp coolers in our climate is that 10 or 20 years ago our monsoon season occurred in late August/early September. Now in recent years we get our monsoon season in early/mid July.

When the rains come the relative humidity increases from our usual 5-10% humidity to 25-35% relative

humidity. When the relative humidity increases to over 20% a swamp cooler only has the ability to change the temperature or air by 6-7°.

This change in climate has encouraged many people to convert to refrigerated air so that they have the ability to stay comfortable during the hottest days of the year.

And, we all know that swamp coolers can lower inside temperatures by up to 20-degrees. On our hottest days, inside temps can still be unbearable. The National Weather Service shows us that ABQ is seeing more high temperature days each year.

**How long does it take to upgrade or install a new air conditioner?**

In most cases we can install a new air conditioning system in one day.

**Many people think they can’t afford an upgrade, but you have lots of reviews online from customers who did. What financing is available now?**

At one time, homeowners had to pay the full cost before installing or upgrading to a new unit. But we’ve



(Credit Kidzz Mechanical)

made upgrading more accessible.

We have worked with Wells Fargo to provide hundreds of our customers with many different rate plans that accommodate their budget. Wells Fargo offers many different options based on your credit.

**• If I’m not ready for an upgrade yet, do you handle smaller jobs like opening my swamp cooler?**

If you’re not ready to upgrade your system yet, we have some of the best service technicians in the state. Sometimes your system just needs

a tune up and some maintenance to get it operating properly and heating or cooling your house like it should. We offer very affordable maintenance packages and repair options.

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# Polling is a Sketch, Not a Painting

In the U. S. there is something called the polling industrial complex. It's a description of how polling has changed over 50 years. It has grown and become more complex and less understandable.

Researchers define polling as the ability of organizations outside of government to gather, interpret, and publish information about voter views on issues and candidates.

People often say when a poll comes out, "No one polled me!" That holds true for most Americans. It's an indication of the skepticism people have about polls with which they don't agree.

If voters want to be able to look at polls knowledgeably there are some key things to know.

First, polling has changed dramatically over time, as have many things in the political consulting industry.

Twenty-five years ago, pollsters were calling land lines and had

**Corner to Corner**



Diane Denish

response rates upwards of 50%. Today polls are conducted online, through text messaging, and on cell phones. Today response rates have dropped to the single digits in most instances.

Polls are a snapshot in time. Voters tend to believe they are predictive of what will happen in November – a theme magnified by mainstream media. Nothing could be further from the truth.

As I write, it is 198 days until the Election Day on Nov. 5. Any poll you see today will be irrelevant as soon as tomorrow.

Different polling organizations conduct surveys differently. Methods of surveys include live interviews by telephone (CNN), on-line opt-in panels (CBS and Politico) and online polls of respondents recruited offline (Associated Press and Pew Research). Some other less dependable pollsters use a combination of robocalls and opt-in panels.

Different methods can often have an effect on data quality. According to Pew Research and the Roper Center for Opinion Research, opt-in online polls (such as Survey Monkey)

generally have a much higher error rate than live polling methods.

This brings me to what is called "margin of error." Generally, commentators and consultants have led us to believe that a narrow 3% margin-of-error rate represents an accurate poll – assuming that the random samples may only slightly differ from the population. Pew Research cautions that a more accurate margin of error rate is 6%, when you consider the possibilities of mismeasurement, skewed group of respondents, or nonresponse.

There is sometimes an assumption that exceptionally large sample sizes are better. The theory that larger sample size is a sign of quality is outdated. Nate Cohen of the New York Times pointed out recently that because of increasing costs of polling, polls with huge samples are using cheaper and problematic methods. What may be true in textbook theory is not necessarily true in reality.

Polls may actually affect the outcome of elections. Sometime less reliable methodology, poorly

weighted or designed polls, conclude a candidate is extremely likely to win – ultimately suppressing the vote. Conversely, polls showing an extremely close race might push infrequent voters to vote.

What surprises Americans most in presidential elections is that polls can accurately identify the candidate most preferred nationally and not predict the winner. That happened in 2000 when Al Gore won the national popular vote but ultimately lost the electoral vote. In 2016, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote by 2.87 million votes and lost the electoral vote. In 2020 that changed, with Biden winning the popular and the electoral votes.

What can we learn from understanding polling, methodology and results? Not as much as we would like. As Simon Rosenberg of Hopium Chronicles says, "Polls are a sketch, not a painting."

My conclusion is that albeit trite, it's true: The only poll that really counts is when we all go vote early, absentee or on Election Day.

## What Do You Stand For? What Time Is It?

So it's been a pretty exciting week in Washington. Speaker of the House Mike Johnson's legislative package for the most part passed on a bipartisan vote, with the exception of the border security piece. The Senate rejected the impeachment articles against the Secretary of Homeland Security. The howler monkey caucus wailed and gnashed their teeth but did little else, like actually fire the Speaker, as they have been threatening for some weeks now.

The first criminal trial began against former President Trump. Unsurprisingly, a stern warning has already been delivered from the judge to the defendant regarding the proceeding's gag order which is largely being ignored.

Also in executive branch news, President Biden has announced two excruciatingly regressive initiatives: Chinese steel and aluminum tariffs of 25% and yet another student loan forgiveness scheme. We can't afford either.

This week in government is chaotic on its face, but one only has to peel back one layer to see what a quixotic, inscrutable political landscape we now live in. It's making me realize

**Commentary**



Merritt Hamilton Allen

why younger voters feel unseen and disregarded and more and more voters are leaving the major parties or just want to stay home on Election Day.

Take a look at the legislative package that Johnson put together for a vote over the weekend. It included foreign aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, some sanctions against Russia and Iran, and border security. Sound familiar? It was pretty much the Senate legislation sent to the House two months ago that the House Democrats were ready to support, but got blown up because Trump directed the House GOP not to pass a border security bill.

This time, the foreign aid passed with the help of Democrat votes, but they decided to withhold their support for border security, which was a separate bill this time.

What a difference eight weeks can make! February? Democrats for border security, Republicans against. April? Reverse that position. I can provide the analysis for this outcome in another 500 words, but really, try to explain this to a first-time voter in 2024 in a way that makes any damn sense.

The Congressional lunchroom drama ("You're my best friend this week! She was my best friend *last* week.") at least shifts the focus away

from the inane policies the White House is throwing out. Tariffs on imports are a tax on everyone, and directly inflationary. 25% on Chinese steel and aluminum will hit low-income Americans especially hard through inflation, even as Biden makes claims to be the friend of the working class. Biden is also looking to block the sale of US Steel to a Japanese company in an attempt to curry favor with trade unions, an important voting bloc he has been losing to Trump.

But Candidate Trump offers no relief. He insists he will slap a 10% tariff on all Chinese imports as soon as he takes office. That is practically a 10% tax on everything we order on Amazon. This will be an extremely punitive measure for American consumers and have an immediate impact on inflation to our detriment. Moreover, Biden's proposed steel and aluminum tariffs are on top of tariffs Trump implemented during his presidency, in flagrant defiance of conservative economic policy.

Trump on the campaign trail is largely silent on Biden's other big announcement this week: the latest student loan forgiveness effort (I think this is number four). I have to give this administration credit: it is absolutely relentless on this theme. This effort, announced on April 16, involves new

Department of Education regulations that would forgive loan interest and provide relief to nearly 30 million voters. This comes on the heels of another regulation announced on the 12th. These two new policies, combined with the relief already enacted, will cost taxpayers more than \$300 billion, according to the Committee for a Responsible Budget.

Trump did forgive student loan interest during the pandemic, which Biden extended until 2023. Obviously, the cohort most in favor of student loan forgiveness are those Americans carrying student loans. According to the Federal Reserve, that's about 43 million Americans or 13% of the population. According to 2022 voter registration records, student loan debt holders are about 27% of the voter population (if they were all registered to vote, which we do not know). 43 million votes could definitely decide an election, even if it costs \$7,000 per vote (it's taxpayer money anyway, so who cares?).

Congressional caucuses are flip-flopping in turn on border security to the result that we still don't have any.

Read the full commentary at [sandovalsignpost.com](https://sandovalsignpost.com)

# Smoothing Out the Capital Outlay Process

Wesley Billingsley will soon be able to say, "I'm from the government, and I'm here to help." He will tackle one of the most stubborn problems in state government.

All She Wrote



Sherry Robinson

Billingsley is the first director of the new Infrastructure Planning and Development Division (IPDD). While that sounds boring and bureaucratic, the IPDD's proud parent, the state Department of Finance and Administration, intends for Billingsley to lead an overhaul of the capital outlay system to help small organizations, communities and tribes steer their projects through bureaucratic hurdles to completion.

Currently, no state agency is clearly responsible for riding herd on capital outlay projects, making sure the money is spent and seeing that projects reach the finish line.

In February I wrote about House Bill 232 to create the new division and called it one of the most important bills of the legislative session because it could transform the state's

dysfunctional capital outlay system. With bipartisan sponsorship, it passed both houses unanimously with little publicity and no controversy.

Communities need public works, such as senior centers or playgrounds, and their legislators secure capital outlay money to get them built. However, small entities often don't have the expertise or personnel to meet state requirements for planning, auditing or reporting, so the projects enter capital-outlay limbo, with funding committed but action suspended.

Currently, some 4,900 projects (some of them eight years old) and nearly \$5 billion are stuck in the pipeline. This year members of the Senate Finance Committee were disgruntled enough to threaten halting more funding until the backlog subsides.

Now that the bill is law, the Department of Finance and Administration will add a division, the IPDD, which will receive the Rural Equity Ombud program and some other duties of the existing Local Government Division.

DFA Secretary Wayne Propst said

he just named "the perfect person" to head the new division. Billingsley is director of the Local Government Division and chief of the Capital Outlay Bureau. He's worked in capital outlay for 12 years. "He brings a wealth of experience but more importantly a vision that is needed as the state works to improve this critical function," Propst said in a news release.

IPDD will be a one-stop shop that tracks spending more accurately, ensures projects are funded appropriately, and provides dashboards so the public can see the process, the department said. It will provide expert guidance and hand-holding to chase funding, evaluate and advise on proposed plans, and leverage state funding to obtain federal grants.

Billingsley himself recently wrote: "The new division will have staff and resources solely dedicated to the capital outlay process, creating an improved level of commitment and focus... Under the new system, users and the public will be able to see real-time data on each project, from its development and planning to the final

expenditure and project completion." In a recent op ed he wrote that he doesn't think the capital outlay process is broken or dysfunctional.

"Since 2019, we have put \$10 billion to work for New Mexico to construct or improve our roads, museums, schools, parks, water systems and public buildings. Historic revenue is helping the state put more money toward capital projects than ever before."

He said it's a common misconception that \$5 billion is sitting unspent.

"The timing for disbursing these funds depends on the type of project, funding source and if it needs to go through the bond process," he explains. "Many pending projects must be completed within four years." Capital outlay monies are never spent all at once but at an average rate of about 25% per year.

At a time when distrust of government is rampant in political rhetoric, it's encouraging that lawmakers can see a problem, agree on a solution and join the administration to make it happen.





# Meetings Schedule

## Sandoval County

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/sccmeetings/](http://sandovalcountynm.gov/commission/sccmeetings/)

### Board of Finance

May 8, 5 p.m.

Sandoval County Chambers  
1500 Idalia Rd., Building D

### Sandoval County Commission

May 8, 6 p.m.

Sandoval County Chambers  
1500 Idalia Rd., Building D

## Rio Rancho

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [rrnm.gov/2303/Watch-and-Download-City-Meetings](http://rrnm.gov/2303/Watch-and-Download-City-Meetings)

### Arts Commission

May 9, 6 p.m.

Rio Rancho City Hall

### Governing Body

May 9, 6 p.m.

Rio Rancho City Hall

### Keep Rio Rancho Beautiful

May 13, 5:30 p.m.

Rio Rancho City Hall

## Bernalillo

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [tobnm.gov/government/town\\_council/agendas\\_and\\_minutes.php](http://tobnm.gov/government/town_council/agendas_and_minutes.php)

### Town Council

May 13, 6:30 p.m.,

Bernalillo Town Hall

### Town Council

May 27, 6:30 p.m.,

Bernalillo Town Hall

## Village of Jemez Springs

To view the agendas for upcoming meetings and read past meeting minutes, visit [jemezsprings-nm.gov/meetings/](http://jemezsprings-nm.gov/meetings/)

### Lodgers' Tax Advisory Board

May 1, 9 a.m.

### Village Council

May 15, 6 p.m.

# EVENTS

## FRIDAY, APRIL 26

### Art Openings

Photography Artist Dana Patterson Roth: "Layers of Memory" All Day Wild Hearts Gallery 221 B Hwy. 165, Placitas

### Comedy

Chris Titus \$20-\$35 7-9 pm Quezada's Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

### Dance

Flamenco D'Aki 6:30-8:30 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

### Music

Kyle Martin 7-9 pm The Range Cafe 925 S Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

Silver Sky Blues Band 6-9 pm Boxing Bear Brewing Company Corrales Taproom 10200 Corrales Rd., Albuquerque

Westside Goth Night w/ DJ Fishbowl 6-11 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

### Outdoors

City Nature Challenge ABQ 2024 All Day Bernalillo, Sandoval, Valencia counties Albuquerque

## SATURDAY, APRIL 27

### Comedy

Chris Titus \$20-\$35 7-9 pm Quezada's Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

Chris Titus \$25-\$35 9:30-11:30 pm Quezada's Comedy Club at Santa Ana Star 54 Jemez Canyon Dam Road, Santa Ana Pueblo, Santa Ana Pueblo, 004

### Literature/Poetry

Back Porch Reading & Conversation with Lawrence Millman \$10 2-4 pm Jules' Poetry Playhouse 11 Homestead Ln., Placitas

### Miscellaneous

Prescription Drug Take Back Event 10 am-2 pm Bernalillo Police Department 739 Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo, Bernalillo

### Music

Greg Johns & The Semi-Large Band 7:30-9:30 pm Casa Vieja Brewery 4541 Corrales Rd, Corrales

Joe Daddy Warner & Friends 12-3 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Saturday Night Barn Dance w/ The Dust Devils 6-9 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Watermelon Mountain Jug Band 7-9 pm The Range Cafe 925 S Camino Del Pueblo, Bernalillo

## SUNDAY, APRIL 28

### Community

Viva Corrales Mystic Market 10 am-4 pm Indigo House 4436 Corrales Road, Corrales

### Discussion / Lecture

Pueblo Feast Days Lecture 2-3 pm Martha Liebert Public Library 124 Calle Malinche, Bernalillo

### Exhibit

Visions & Voices: Art and Poetry from Jemez Valley 1-3 pm Sandoval County Historical Society & Museum 161 Homestead Lane, Bernalillo

### Food

Corrales Growers Market 9 am-12 pm Corrales Parks & Recreation 500 Jones Rd., Corrales

### Health & Wellness

?Viva Corrales! Community Health & Wellness Event 9 am-4 pm Sunday Service Motor Company 2701 4th Street NW, Albuquerque

### Markets

Annual Plant Sale 9 am-12 pm Corrales Parks & Recreation 500 Jones Rd., Corrales

### Music

Kaktus Kats Blues Jam 2-5 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Kaktus Kats Presents Dave Turner 2-5 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Spring Fling Concert Brunch \$60 11:30 am-3 pm La Estrella Event Center 664 NM-165, Placitas

## MONDAY, APRIL 29

### Art

Adult Coloring Night 5-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

### Games

Singo Music Bingo 7-9 pm Brew Lab 101 3301 Southern Blvd. SE, Rio Rancho

Trivia! With Trivia Mafia 6-9 pm Ex Novo Brewing 4895 Corrales Rd, Corrales

## TUESDAY, APRIL 30

### Class / Workshop

Tuesday Tech Classes 1-3 pm Corrales Community Library 84 W. La Entrada, Corrales

### Exhibit

Charcoal, Pen & Ink and Painting Artist Alan Charlee: "Remembering Grandfather" All Day Wild Hearts Gallery 221 B Hwy. 165, Placitas

### Games

Chess Club 6-7 pm Corrales Community Library 84 W. La Entrada, Corrales

## WEDNESDAY, MAY 1

### Games

Geeks Who Drink 7-9 pm Tractor Brewing Westside 5720 McMahon Blvd NW bldg 5 ste a, Albuquerque

### Music

Kaktus Jazz Jam 6-9 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

Kaktus Kats Jazz Jam 6-9 pm Kaktus Brewing Co. 471 South Hill, Bernalillo

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# "SHE SAVED MY LIFE"

Albuquerque resident Dawn R. had been experiencing the painful side effects of Peripheral Neuropathy. **"My feet and legs were extremely painful and my doctor told me there was nothing they could do. That I would have to take Gabapentin for the rest of my life."**

Then she met Albuquerque's very own Dr. Andrea Brogdon

Peripheral Neuropathy is the pain, discomfort and numbness caused by nerve damage of the peripheral nervous system. Dawn explained that daily tasks like opening doors and using the bathroom were overwhelmingly painful. "How can you live for the next 30 years when you don't even want to get out of bed to do simple things?"

She was experiencing the burning, numbness, tingling and sharp pains that those suffering with neuropathy often describe. "The way that I would describe it, it's equivalent to walking on glass." Dawn hadn't worn socks in five years and was wearing shoes two sizes too big so that nothing would 'touch' her feet.

**Unfortunately Dawn's story is all too familiar for over 3 million people in the U.S. suffering from Peripheral Neuropathy.**

If you're unfortunate enough to be facing the same disheartening prognosis you're not sleeping at night because of the burning in your feet. You have difficulty walking, shopping or doing any activity for more than 30 minutes because of the pain. You're struggling with balance and living in fear that you might fall. Your doctor told you to 'just live with the pain' and you're taking medications that aren't working or have uncomfortable side effects.

Fortunately, four months ago Dawn read an article about Dr. Andrea Brogdon and the work she was doing to treat those suffering from

Peripheral Neuropathy, without invasive surgeries or medications.

Dr. Brogdon, founder of AAIM | Albuquerque Acupuncture & Integrative Medicine, is using the tested science of acupuncture and a technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease.

**"Now when I go to bed at night I don't have those shooting pains. I don't have that burning sensation. I don't have pain coming up my legs," Dawn enthusiastically describes life after receiving Dr. Brogdon's treatments.**

**"I can wear socks and shoes!"**

Dawn and her sister now operate a successful dog walking business, sometimes covering up to 5 miles a day.

**"It's life altering. As far as I'm concerned Dr. Brogdon saved my life!"**

Dr. Brogdon is helping the senior community using the most cutting edge and innovative integrative medicine. Specializing in chronic pain cases, specifically those that have been deemed 'hopeless' or 'untreatable', she consistently generates unparalleled results.

What was once a missing link in senior healthcare is now easily accessible to the residents of Albuquerque.

If you've missed too many tee times because of pain or you've passed on dancing because you're afraid of falling, it's time to call Dr. Brogdon and the staff at AAIM.

**It's time you let your golden years BE GOLDEN!**

Dr. Brogdon is now accepting new patients but only for a limited time. In an effort to protect her patients, both current and future, she has made the difficult decision to limit the number of patients seen in her clinic. Only 10 new neuropathy patients will be accepted before the end of June so call (505) 355-1984 now to schedule a consultation.



**PERIPHERAL NEUROPATHY? 10400 Academy Rd NE Suite 210  
Call (505) 355-1984 Albuquerque, NM 87111  
to schedule a consultation! WWW.AAIM-ABQ.COM**