

**FREE NEWSPAPER**

Volume XI Issue VII

JULY 2026

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# Questa del Rio News

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## Your Guide to Fourth of July Fun Across Northern New Mexico



Photo by E. Wilde

### Annual Red River 4th of July Parade

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Before the fireworks light up the night sky, northern New Mexico's mountain communities offer a full slate of Independence Day celebrations, from small-town parades to lakeside festivities and live music.

Red River kicks off the holiday with its annual Fourth of July Parade at 10 a.m. along Main Street, drawing thousands of visitors for one of the region's largest Independence Day events. The parade features decorated floats, classic cars, horseback riders and local organizations celebrating the holiday.

Following the parade, Brandenburg Park becomes the center of activity with live music, food vendors, family games, face painting and craft booths. The festivities continue throughout the afternoon, giving visitors plenty of opportunities to enjoy the mountain town's shops, restau-

rants and outdoor recreation.

Just 20 minutes away, Eagle Nest offers a scenic evening celebration at Eagle Nest Lake State Park. Families gather along the shoreline before dusk for one of New Mexico's premier Fourth of July fireworks displays, with colorful bursts reflecting across the lake. Visitors are encouraged to arrive early as parking fills quickly.

Those looking for live entertainment can head south to Taos, where Red Willow Park hosts the Taos Hometown Fourth of July Celebration. The event features an evening concert by The Mavericks & Friends, along with food vendors and family-friendly activities. Taos Plaza also offers shopping, galleries and local dining throughout the holiday weekend.

The three communities are connected by the scenic Enchanted Circle, making it easy for visitors to experience multiple celebrations in a single day. Travelers can begin the morning with Red River's

parade, spend the afternoon exploring Eagle Nest or Taos, and end the evening watching fireworks over Eagle Nest Lake or enjoying live music in Taos.

Visitors should plan to arrive early, expect heavy holiday traffic and bring layers, as mountain temperatures can cool significantly after sunset. Fireworks displays remain subject to weather and fire conditions, and travelers are encouraged to check with local organizers for the latest updates before heading out.

As visitors head to the mountains, officials are urging caution because Taos County remains under a burn ban and statewide fire restrictions are in effect. The restrictions prohibit fireworks, campfires, open burning and other activities that could spark a wildfire. Visitors are encouraged to leave personal fireworks at home and follow all local fire safety regulations during the holiday weekend.

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# Questa del Rio News

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Published Monthly by the  
QUESTA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND  
*Publicación mensual por*

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*Es informar, inspirar, contactar, y unir a toda la comunidad del norte del condado de Taos.*

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### OP ED: No Water, No Answers: Life in Cerro, New Mexico

By WENDY MAES VIGIL

Honestly? I posted so my kids would start helping me haul water in the mornings and afternoons.

It worked.

But somewhere between the humor and the honesty, something bigger happened. People who hadn't been heard started feeling seen. The post has now been viewed 33,600 times, shared 136 times, and sparked 57 comments from neighbors, former residents, and strangers who felt it in their bones.

Like most residents of Cerro, New Mexico, I have been hauling water, rationing water, and thinking about water every single day since May 23rd—the day our entire neighborhood lost running water and life as we knew it changed.

I found that no one was really talking about what a typical day in Cerro looks like without running water. People joke and say, "Just wash your clothes in the ditch" or "Take a bath in the river." I like jokes. But I don't think people understood what we were living with every single day.

I never posted to attack anyone. I posted because we are residents living this every day. And I'm glad people are talking now.

#### What's Happening

The Cerro Rural Municipal Domestic Water Consumer Association (CRMDW-CA) has been managing a water system that was running on borrowed time. In mid-May, the water table dropped too low to pump. By May 23rd, Cerro was dry.

Since then, association president Vilma Bailón and operator Michael Montoya

have been working around the clock. They have contacted county, state, and federal officials, coordinated with emergency management agencies, and overseen extensive testing. Thirty-eight water samples have been sent out, with results taking up to 25 days under state requirements. The current timeline for restored service is mid-July.

That's nearly two months without running water.

Most recently, testing confirmed the 2008 well is connected to the old 2-inch line. While that was progress, state requirements triggered another round of draining, approvals, and testing. The leaks affecting the system have been traced to the old 2-inch line, not the newer 6-inch line.

#### What It Really Looks Like

Numbers and timelines don't tell the whole story.

#### As I wrote in my original post:

"There is no running water. And I don't think people understand what that actually means until you break it down. It means you can't drink from your own tap. You can't cook a real meal for your family. You can't wash your dishes when dinner is done. You can't flush your toilet without hauling water first. You can't shower when you need to—you go when a facility is open, on somebody else's schedule, not yours."

One mother shared that she took her boys for a shower and had to hold back tears when they said, "Mom, that feels SO good," because a shower had become a luxury her children celebrated out loud.

It's elderly residents loading heavy water jugs into their cars in the New Mexico heat because there is no other option. It's neighbors showing up with whatever containers they have—five-gallon buckets, totes, and yes, even Halloween trick-or-treat buckets—because when there's no water, you use what you have.

#### As I wrote:

"Water is how we cook. Water is how we clean. Water is how we stay healthy. Water is how we care for our children and our elders. Water is the midnight bath that reminds you that you are a human being who deserves rest and comfort and a quiet moment."

This is not a small thing. This is not a temporary inconvenience. This has



Courtesy photo

OB ED: CERRO cont'd on page 3

OP ED: CERRO cont'd from page 2

become people's daily lives. This is their dignity.

**What the Community Is Doing**

The surrounding community has shown up in the way Northern New Mexico always does—quietly, without fanfare, because that's what neighbors do.

Sangre de Cristo grocery store donated five-gallon water jugs. Questa Credit Union made donations. Taos County provided water pallets. The Cerro and Questa fire departments have been filling totes for residents. Local churches opened their doors for showers and laundry. NMWARN brought in an 8,000-gallon tanker of clean drinking water at the Cerro Community Center.

Special thanks to Gidget and Mario, and to everyone who has volunteered, donated, and shown up for Cerro.

On behalf of my family, we are grateful for all the hard work Vilma and Michael have done and continue to do. Two people have been carrying an enormous burden for this entire community.

But a community should not have to survive on donated jugs and borrowed showers for two months. Not in 2026.

**The Bigger Picture**

Cerro is not alone. New Mexico is facing widespread drought conditions, and wells across Northern New Mexico are running dry. Communities throughout the region are facing the same challenges and the same slow-moving testing and approval processes.

Yet small towns like Cerro continue to fall through the cracks while families haul water in the New Mexico heat and wait for answers.

Community members with questions are encouraged to contact Taos County Manager Brent Jaramillo and Taos County Commissioner Miguel Romero.

**What Cerro Deserves**

Small towns in Northern New Mexico have always had to fight twice as hard for half the help. Cerro is no different.

But a post viewed 33,600 times and shared 136 times tells you something: people care.

We deserve running water. The people of Cerro deserve running water.

And if this isn't being talked about loudly enough, then let's start talking.

Cerro is not forgotten. Not if we can help it.

*Wendy Maes Vigil is a concerned citizen of the Cerro community.*

**The Fate For El Pueblito Cemetery**

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

For generations, El Pueblito Cemetery has stood as one of Questa's most sacred places, a quiet resting place where families gather to honor loved ones, remember community history, and pay tribute to veterans who served their country with honor.

Following the permanent closure of the Questa Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) post, responsibility for the cemetery property was returned to the U.S. Forest Service.

Maria Gonzalez, Executive Director of Vida del Norte Coalition and wife of veteran Jason Gonzalez, has stepped forward to lead the management and care of El Pueblito Cemetery through the nonprofit organization.

"For me, it came down to doing what was right for our community," Gonzalez said. "El Pueblito Cemetery is such an important part of Questa's history, and it deserves consistent care and stewardship. My own father is buried there, so this isn't just another project, it's deeply personal. Like so many families here, I visit loved ones there, and I know how much it means to have a place that is cared for with dignity and respect."

"Over the years, I had shared ideas with Jason about ways the cemetery



Courtesy photo

could be better maintained, and it gradually became clear that a local organization with strong community roots was in the best position to ensure it would be cared for genera-

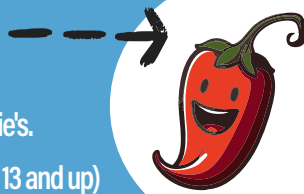
CEMETERY cont'd on page 29

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**Li'l Willie's Shenanigans - 410 W. Main Street, Red River - (575) 754-1719**

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- Minimize Harm.
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# QFM To Honor Local First Responders And Veterans on July 5



Photo by E. Wilde

By STAFF WRITERS

The Questa Farmers Market is inviting the community to gather this Sunday, July 5, for a special "Interdependence Day" event dedicated to honoring local emergency responders and military veterans.

The special market will run from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the regular market grounds located behind the Questa Visitors Center at 1 NM-38.

As a gesture of gratitude, first responders and veterans who attend wearing a district or branch shirt, hat, or uniform will receive a complimentary market token. The tokens can be spent

with any participating vendor, and several vendors will also be offering specialty menu items tailored for the occasion.

"Questa Farmers Market is a community-focused gathering hub of connection and commerce," said Lisa Pham, program director for the market. "As we move through this ever-changing time of the unknown, our community net will become more and more important. This is our way of saying thank you to those who help keep our home secure, while also supporting our local growers and makers who are the backbone of this market."

In addition to the tribute, Sunday's market features a full lineup of fam-

ily-friendly activities. Attendees can participate in a morning movement practice and enjoy live music from local musician Michael Rael. The event will also feature fresh, locally grown produce, food and drinks from regional makers, featured artisan booths, and community organization tables. A dedicated kids' corner with face painting will be available for families.

The event is being sponsored by the LOR Foundation, which provided funding to help support the community celebration.

The Questa Farmers Market is currently accepting applications for Featured Artisan Maker booths and is

seeking volunteers to help run the event. Those interested in volunteering or vending can email organizers at [growersmakers@gmail.com](mailto:growersmakers@gmail.com).

The market—which is a program of the local non-profit Localogy—operates every Sun. from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. through Oct. 4, culminating in the annual Cambalache Harvest Festival. Organizers remind shoppers that participating growers and producers accept SNAP, Double Up Food Bucks (DUFb), and Bonus Bucks.

For more information, visit [questafarmersmarket.org](http://questafarmersmarket.org) or follow @questafarmersmarket on Facebook and Instagram.

## Questa And Red River Events Receive Funding As Taos County Awards Nearly \$650,000 In Grants

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

The Questa Art Tour is among dozens of cultural, recreational and community projects receiving funding through a record-setting round of Taos County Lodger's Tax grants.

The Taos County Board of Commissioners approved 47 grant awards totaling \$649,918 for Fiscal Year 2027 during its Jun. 9 meeting, marking a nearly 59% increase from the previous spring grant cycle, when \$409,085 was awarded to 30 organizations.

Among the recipients is the Questa Creative Council, which received \$18,428 to promote the 2026 and 2027 Questa Art Tour, an annual event that showcases artists and creative spaces throughout the village and surrounding area.

County officials said the record number of applications reflects growing demand for tourism marketing funds across Taos County.

The grants are funded through the Taos County Lodger's Tax Grant Program, which supports advertising, publicity and promotion for tourist-related events,

attractions and facilities. State law limits the use of lodger's tax revenue to marketing and promotional activities intended to attract visitors.

Applications were reviewed by the Taos County Lodger's Tax Advisory Board, which evaluated proposals based on criteria including cultural preservation, community impact, innovation and the ability to attract visitors while benefiting local residents.

"These investments of Lodger's Tax funds reflect support for a broad range of activities and facilities across Taos County

that support both our residents and provide positive experiences for visitors," County Manager Brent Jaramillo said in a statement. "We are grateful to the Lodger's Tax Advisory Board and the County Commissioners for their due diligence and to the grantees for making Taos County a great place to live, work, and visit."

The funded projects represent a broad cross-section of Taos County, including museums, festivals, outdoor recreation events, music performances, cultural cele-

GRANT AWARDS cont'd on page 16



## VIDA DEL NORTE: LAW ENFORCEMENT

THIS IS A PAID AVERTORIAL BY VIDA DEL NORTE COALITION

### LAW ENFORCEMENT'S ROLE IN YOUTH PREVENTION IN NORTHERN TAOS COUNTY

By LORA ARCINIEGA

When we think about the "village" it takes to raise a child in northern Taos County, we usually think of families, neighbors, and teachers. But local law enforcement plays a huge role in keeping our kids safe, too. As the Vida Del Norte Coalition continues looking at the different groups shaping our local youth, this July the spotlight is on the Law Enforcement Sector. In modern substance use prevention, local officers are working behind the scenes to create a safe environment where our kids can grow up healthy.

Current Police Chief Esequiel Romero emphasizes the importance of education when it comes to drug and alcohol prevention for our youth. "Between the Questa Police Department and the Red River Marshal's Office, we work hand in hand to offer classes and presentations on DWI prevention tools to our youth," he notes. Chief Romero also mentions that he personally visits the Alta Vista Elementary once a day and the Questa High School 2 to 3 days a week when school is in session to check in on the teachers and students, ensuring a constant presence. The Questa police crew currently consists of Chief Romero, two officers, and two new hires, with one opening remaining.

#### The Power of Positive Presence

In rural areas like Questa, people often associate law enforcement only with flashing lights and emergencies. But a big part of local prevention is actually about building trust long before a crisis ever happens.

Whether it's a deputy high-fiving a student during a school visit, officers mentoring kids through local programs, or Chief Romero taking the time to just listen to a teenager's concerns, these simple interactions make a big difference. When young people see officers as approachable, real people who care about their future, it breaks down barriers and replaces fear with respect.

#### Why This Matters Right Now

Keeping a community safe looks a lot different today than it did a generation ago. Local officers are dealing with a tough landscape, from dangerous illicit substances to widespread underage vaping and the digital networks where these things are bought and sold.

According to data from Vida Del Norte, the solution isn't just about making arrests. Instead, the focus has shifted toward working together on proactive strategies:

- **Cutting Off Access:** Law enforcement works alongside community coalitions to run compliance checks, making sure local stores strictly enforce age limits on alcohol, tobacco, and vape products.
- **Cleaning Out the Medicine Cabinet:** By keeping permanent prescription drug drop-boxes at local stations, officers give residents a safe way to get rid of unused medications before they can fall into the wrong hands.
- **Being Mentors:** Local departments are actively stepping up to serve as positive role models and mentors for youth across the region.

#### Working Together for Our Kids

A community safety net only works when everyone pulls together. Supporting our local law enforcement sector helps reinforce the work parents are doing at home and teachers are doing in schools. When officers have the community's trust to enforce safety laws and focus on positive policing, our kids thrive in a safer environment.

This July, the Vida del Norte coalition wants to recognize the law enforcement officers across our neighborhoods who partner with us in the quiet work of substance use prevention.

To learn how to get involved with local safety initiatives or to attend the next community coalition meeting, visit [vidadelnorte.com](http://vidadelnorte.com) or follow their updates on social media.



Local officers present DWI tools to the youth at Questa High school.

Contact Maria Gonzalez @[maria.gonzalez@vidadelnorte.com](mailto:maria.gonzalez@vidadelnorte.com) or (575) 779-2260 for more information or to enroll.

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# Tree Deaths Triple Across New Mexico Amid 2026 Drought

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Tree mortality across New Mexico tripled in 2025 as drought and heat continued to stress forests statewide, according to a new forest health report released by state and federal officials.

The annual survey, conducted by the New Mexico Forestry Division and the U.S. Forest Service, examined approximately 14 million acres of state, private, Tribal and federal forests and woodlands. The report found a sharp increase in insect-related tree deaths during what was the state's second-warmest year on record.

Beetle-killed conifer forests increased by 211% compared with the previous year, with most of the damage occurring on national forest lands. Areas impacted by drought and heat rose 66%, while overall acreage showing some form of forest damage declined 6%. Defoliation, or the loss of leaves and needles that does not necessarily result in tree death, decreased 51%.

State Forester Laura McCarthy said the findings provide a snapshot of current forest conditions but also offer insight into future trends.

"It's important to contextualize that this report is a snapshot of New Mexico's forests at a specific time," McCarthy said in a statement. "However, this snapshot is a good predictor of what to expect for the next few years if such meager precipitation and warm winter temperatures persist."

Forest health experts say the increase in mortality reflects a combination of prolonged drought, rising temperatures and overcrowded forest conditions that leave trees more vulnerable to insect attacks.

"Bark beetles are a natural check on



Aerial view of the extent of beetle kill, as seen in red, in untreated piñon-juniper woodland (above) versus a landscape that has been thinned (below).

Photo courtesy Victor Lucero

forest density, but warm winter temperatures are extending their activity, and overly dense, drought-stressed forests are a buffet for these insects," said Victor Lucero, the state's forest health program manager.

Lucero noted that while widespread tree deaths can dramatically alter landscapes, surviving trees often remain within affected areas and help forests regenerate over time. Similar recovery has been observed in regions impacted by severe piñon pine mortality in the early 2000s, when some areas lost as much as 80% of their piñon trees.

Officials said mortality events can temporarily increase wildfire risk, although that risk generally declines after dead needles fall from affected trees. They also emphasized that dead trees play an important ecological role by stabilizing soils and returning nutrients to the ecosystem.

"Our forests have exceeded the land's carrying capacity," Lucero said. "No matter what, disturbance events will try to rebalance our ecosystems, whether it's through human intervention, like proactive thinning, or biological events such as pest outbreaks or wildfire."

State officials are also investing in long-term restoration efforts. Earlier this year, New Mexico and university partners broke ground on the New Mexico Reforestation Center, which is expected to expand production of climate-adapted seedlings for forest restoration projects across the state.

The report and an accompanying forest health dashboard provide a detailed overview of insect activity, disease impacts and environmental stressors affecting New Mexico forests during 2025.

## Wildfire Danger Forces Indefinite Closure of Rio Costilla Campgrounds

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Families planning summer camping trips to the Rio Costilla area will need to make other arrangements after campground managers announced an indefinite closure because of heightened wildfire danger.

The Rio Costilla Cooperative Livestock Association (RCCLA), which manages campgrounds in the area, said in a social media notice that all camping facilities would close beginning June 21 due to elevated fire risk.

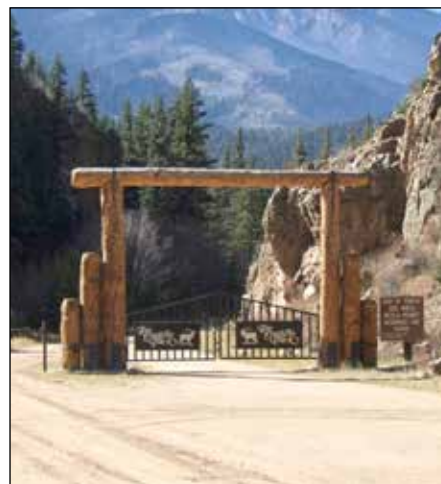
Management cited below-average winter snowfall and spring precipita-

tion, which have left vegetation unusually dry heading into the peak summer recreation season.

"This is not a decision we have made lightly," campground management said in the post. "The safety of our visitors, staff, and surrounding community is our highest priority."

The closure affects one of northern New Mexico's popular summer recreation destinations, where generations of families have spent vacations fishing, hiking and camping in the forests surrounding the Rio Costilla area.

The shutdown comes as land managers across the Southwest con-



Courtesy photo

Entrance into RCCLA

tinue monitoring drought conditions and wildfire threats that often intensify during the summer months. Dry conditions increase the risk that a small spark could quickly grow into a fast-moving wildfire, particularly in remote forested areas.

Campground management did not provide a timeline for reopening, saying facilities will remain closed until conditions improve.

Officials thanked visitors for their understanding and cooperation and said they look forward to welcoming campers back when it is safe to do so.

# Stage 2 Fire Restrictions Begin as Beehive Fire Grows Near Tres Piedras

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

Carson National Forest will enter Stage 2 fire restrictions across the forest beginning Tuesday, June 30, as officials work to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfires during heightened fire danger and as firefighters continue battling the Beehive Fire in northern New Mexico.

An overnight infrared flight mapped the Beehive Fire at 3,121 acres, with fire managers reporting no significant growth overnight. The Northern New Mexico Type 3 Incident Management Team assumed command of the fire at 6 a.m. Monday.

Fire crews remain on the scene using a direct suppression strategy, working to stop flames at the fire's edge wherever possible while prioritizing the protection of private land within the forest. Aircraft will be used as needed. The fire remains 0% contained with no evacuation orders issued as of print time.

Although no Red Flag Warning is in effect Monday, weather conditions continue to challenge firefighting efforts. Winds are forecast at 20 to 25 mph



Photo by E. Wilde

View from El Rito looking across Sunshine Valley at the Beehive Fire, Mon, June 29 at 12:32 p.m.

with gusts up to 35 mph. Temperatures are expected to reach the mid-70s while relative humidity drops to near single digits.

Under Stage 2 restrictions, the following are prohibited throughout Carson National Forest:

- Building, maintaining or using campfires
- Charcoal grills
- Coal fires

Smoking is prohibited except inside an enclosed vehicle, building or devel-

oped recreation site.

Motor vehicle use is restricted to National Forest System roads unless a vehicle is parked in an area free of vegetation within 10 feet of the roadway.

The order also bans the use of explosives, including fireworks, flares, exploding targets and other incendiary devices.

Operating chainsaws and other equipment powered by internal combustion engines is prohibited between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Welding and operating acetylene or other open-flame torches

are also prohibited.

Propane and liquid petroleum gas-fueled devices, including camp stoves and grills, remain allowed if they can be turned on and off and are used only in areas cleared of overhead and surrounding flammable materials within 3 feet of the device.

Fire managers are also urging motorists to use caution and slow down along U.S. Highways 64 and 285, where periods of heavy smoke are reducing visibility. Hikers on the Continental Divide National Scenic Trail are encouraged to avoid the section between Hopewell Lake and the Rio Grande National Forest until conditions improve.

The Beehive Fire was first reported about 1 p.m. June 26 north of U.S. Highway 64 in the Tusas Valley, about 15 miles west of Tres Piedras. The fire was spotted by the crew of a detection flight that had been dispatched to survey the forest following recent lightning activity.

For more information about fire activity in the area, follow us on Facebook/QuestaNews.

## PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES THIS 4TH OF JULY

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#### What KCEC is Doing:

**Cutting-Edge Tech:** Deploying AI Dash and Firescape for real-time satellite imagery, weather monitoring, and risk assessment.

**Field Operations:** Active tree-trimming and vegetation management are underway, with focused efforts in Questa and Peñasco.

**Grid Upgrades:** Installing advanced Oil Circuit Reclosers (OCRs) to detect faults instantly and isolate system risks.

#### Your Summer Safety Checklist:

**Know the Rules:** Strictly follow local fire restrictions and burn bans.

**Fireworks:** Only use fireworks where legally permitted.

**Campfires:** Properly and completely extinguish all outdoor fires.

**Parking:** Avoid parking hot vehicles on dry grass or vegetation.

**Emergency:** Report smoke or fire immediately by calling 911.

A Thank You to Our Heroes: KCEC extends our deepest gratitude to the first responders, firefighters, and local, tribal, and state partners working tirelessly to protect our landscapes and communities



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# Four Years On The Ground: How The Green Hydrogen Story Evolved In Questa

By LORA ARCINIEGA

For over three years, the Questa del Rio News has been tracking the evolution of the proposed green hydrogen plant from the ground up. As a reporter, my job is to take the pulse of our community, and this project is no exception. Ahead of our July issue, it's clear that residents are divided, falling into a few distinct categories. Many are firmly opposed, citing critical issues regarding water, safety, and transparency. Others are curious but feel they lack enough information to form an opinion. Proponents argue the plant is a much-needed economic engine for our post-mining town, while a final group admits they aren't tracking the issue at all.

From its origins as a conceptual federal grant study to a multi-million-dollar federal project, and finally to today's intense local debates over water, scale and safety, this newspaper has maintained its role reporting the facts and chronicling the evolution of the project.

The following chronicle details how the project evolved and how this publication has consistently provided a balanced community forum for utility leaders, local officials, and concerned citizens alike.

Following a June 2022 tour of the old MolyCorp mine area, Questa del Rio News documented a new vision for the economic future of the region and officially reported on the story with the headline, "Green Hydrogen in Questa Could be a Reality" in the Sept. 2022 issue. At that time, the U.S. Department of Energy selected Questa for its first-ever Communities LEAP program—a competitive initiative aimed at helping just 24 towns nationwide transition from old mining or industrial economies into clean energy hubs.

Early reporting established the foundational requirements of the project: land, water, and fossil-free power. In partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Sandia National Labs, Los Alamos National Labs, Chevron, and the Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC), local entities began a feasibility study at the former Questa Mine tailings site.

The initial coverage focused on a clear community goal: solving the region's nighttime energy needs. While KCEC had made strides toward 100% daytime solar energy, state law required rural co-ops to transition to entirely carbon-free electric-



Photo by E. Wilde

The Sangre de Cristo Mountains offer the backdrop to one of the most important conversations citizens are currently having

ity by 2050. Green hydrogen was introduced as the mechanism to store solar energy at scale to meet KCEC's winter peak hours when the sun is down.

By the summer of 2023, the conceptual phase shifted into community outreach. On July 29, 2023, the paper published "Community Input Sought For The Questa Green Hydrogen Project," alerting residents to public forums at the Questa VFW Hall and the Taos Community Auditorium.

On August 30, 2023, the follow-up article, "Renewable Green Energy Facility Proposed in Questa," detailed the findings presented by NREL scientists. During these early stages, the newspaper began documenting commitments from leadership regarding local resources. Notably, the report highlighted assurances from Mayor John Ortega that the Village of Questa's municipal water supply would not be utilized, as the facility intended to secure its own separate water sources and solar power.

The scale of the project changed dramatically in the October 2024 issue, when the paper reported, "\$95.6 Million Granted to Fund Green Hydrogen Project in Questa." KCEC secured the massive award from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Empowering Rural America Program. The coverage included celebratory statements from Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham and local leaders, who framed the grant as a monumental economic pivot from a historic mining economy to a modern green energy hub. At this stage, public messaging still centered on the initial proposal to utilize treated, reclaimed water directly from the closed Chevron mine reclamation site.

Recognizing the need for transparency as federal dollars flowed in, the Questa del Rio News published an exclusive Q&A with KCEC Chief Executive Officer Luis Reyes on October 29, 2024, pushing for answers regarding the core motives, safety metrics, and long-term impacts of the project.

By fall 2025, the technical specifications of the project shifted significantly. Project documents revealed a major change in the facility's design: instead of relying on treated water from the mine's reclamation operations, the project would instead pump groundwater from a Chevron tailings production well located just south of the facility, near town.

This shift sparked immediate concern regarding local aquifer depletion. On Sept. 29, 2025, the paper covered a pivotal Village Council meeting where Councilman Jason Gonzalez voiced early concerns that residents were being left in the dark as the project moved toward a tentative groundbreaking.

Following subsequent meetings where the water change became clear, Gonzalez noted that while he and many residents initially supported the project based on the original specifications, the sudden pivot to the town-level tailings well changed the stakes entirely. "You sold all of us on the water coming out of the mine reclamation site," Gonzalez later stated, channeling a growing sentiment and need for broader public information.

In early 2026, this tension culminated in the formation of the Watershed Protectors, a local grassroots advocacy group mobilized to protect the local aquifer and demand greater accountability. The Watershed Protectors began organizing

community meetings, circulating petitions, and staging visible public protests to voice their opposition to the project's scale and water usage.

By spring of this year, the green hydrogen proposal had escalated into one of the most talked about topics in the region. On March 29, 2026, the front page read, "Tension Rises as Questa Debates \$231M Green Energy Project," which described the increasing debate surrounding water, safety, and jobs.

As a neutral ground, the Questa del Rio News opened its opinion pages to the community, capturing a clear turn from early economic optimism to community concern. Commentary pieces tracked this friction, including the April 29, 2026 Op-Ed, "No Green Hydrogen in Questa," and the June 1, 2026 piece, "Dancing With Greed." These submissions raised critical questions regarding the environmental safety of constructing a massive solar array downwind from a federal Superfund site, potential corporate overreach, and the long-term threat of water depletion.

Simultaneously, the paper continued to provide KCEC leadership and Luis Reyes the platform to present counterpoints, technical data, and safety metrics to address those fears.

From a mention on a mine tour in 2022 to a \$231 million flashpoint, the Questa del Rio News has documented the evolution of the green hydrogen project. As the timeline moves forward, this newspaper remains committed to journalistic balance and ensuring that every stakeholder—from federal officials to neighboring residents—has a voice in the pages of their local paper.

## FROM TEXTBOOKS TO TRAILHEADS: SUSTAINABILITY COMES ALIVE IN THE GILA

UNM-Taos Climate Change and Sustainability class took their learning into the field during a May backpacking course in the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, where the landscape became the classroom. Over the course of the trip, students explored how climate change, fire, water, wildlife, vegetation, geology, and human history all intersect in one of New Mexico's most ecologically and culturally significant regions.

Led by UNM-Taos Natural Resources Management (NRM) Program Coordinator Dillon Alexander, the course gave students a chance to connect big sustainability concepts to direct field experience. Rather than only reading about climate impacts, watershed systems, disturbance, or public lands management, students observed these processes firsthand while hiking through canyon systems, riparian areas, forested slopes, and culturally important landscapes. Experiences like this help students understand that sustainability is not abstract; it is evident in water availability, changes in vegetation, fire effects, land-use history, recreation, and the decisions communities make about how to live with changing environments.

This type of field-based learning is central to LISTOS (a preparedness program designed to empower Spanish-speaking communities to effectively prepare for and respond to emergencies and disasters) and the NRM program at UNM-Taos. Students build confidence outdoors, practice observation skills, learn from place-based examples, and begin to see themselves as future professionals in natural resources, sustainability, conservation, public lands, forestry, wildlife, and climate resilience work.

During the Gila backpacking course, students were joined by a UNM-Taos/LISTOS alumnus from a previous cohort who recently graduated with a B.S. in Geology from NMHU after transferring from UNM-Taos. Their participation added an important layer to the field course by helping students understand how geology shapes land use, water movement, canyon formation, vegetation patterns, recreation, and long-term human relationships with the landscape.

This moment highlights one of the strengths of LISTOS: Students are not only supported while they are enrolled, but can remain connected to the program as alumni, mentors, and emerging professionals. By bringing graduates back into field experiences, current students get to see real examples of where these academic pathways can lead.

In the Gila, sustainability came to life—and so did students' visions for their future. Through hands-on learning and strong mentorship, UNM-Taos continues to empower the next generation of leaders ready to care for the land and the communities connected to it.

To learn more about the UNM-Taos Natural Resources Management Program, contact Dillon Alexander [alexanderd@unm.edu](mailto:alexanderd@unm.edu).



From L-R: Colman Lee (previous cohort, recent NMHU graduate); Katie Stolte (Pre-Science major); Marissa Weeks (Pre-Science major); Dillon Alexander; and Jacob Ovitz (Pre-Science major).



Canyon systems, such as the Gila Cliff Dwellings National Monument, provide a powerful setting for discussing how people have lived with, moved through, and depended on Southwestern landscapes across time.

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<b>1:1 Confidential Business Consulting with Anwar Kaelin</b>	Thursday, July 16th By Appointment Only Questa Library
<b>How to Write a Pitch/Elevator Speech Pitch Contest Prep (Mandatory) Marco Schmitt</b>	Thursday, July 23rd 5:30pm-7pm Questa Library

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- Wednesday, July 22: 6 PM
- Monday, July 27: 6 PM
- Wednesday, July 29: 6 PM

*Note: All sessions are at Rael's unless noted otherwise. (Reminder: No Thursday lessons this month!)*



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# Water Testing Continues as Cerro Works Toward Service Restoration

By LORA ARCINIEGA

Residents gathered June 16 at the Cerro Community Center to discuss the community's ongoing water outage and efforts to restore a reliable water supply more than three weeks after Taos County declared a local emergency involving the Cerro Regional Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association.

The county declared the emergency May 27 for approximately 80 affected households and has since worked to provide bottled water and potable water to residents impacted by the outage.

During the meeting, community members sought updates from the association's board president and board members on water testing and a timeline for restoring service. Officials explained that water testing in New Mexico can take between three and four weeks, or up



Photo courtesy of Lora Arciniega

Cerro residents gather at the Cerro Community Center on June 16 to ask questions about the ongoing water outage

to 25 days, because of the time required to incubate biological samples, conduct chemical analyses and process results through state-certified laboratories.

Officials also said additional testing requirements are necessary because the well was originally drilled as an exploratory well.

Despite the delays, officials said progress is being made toward establishing a stable water system. Residents emphasized the need for increased communication and collaboration as efforts continue to stabilize a consistent water supply for the community.

Several locations have opened shower facilities for residents affected by the outage, including the Cerro Community Center, Living Word Ministries, the Questa Fire Department building, Freedom Church and the Questa High School gym.

Residents using the facilities are encouraged to bring their own toiletries and towels and to help keep the community spaces clean.

No timeline has been announced for the full restoration of water service, but county officials said testing and infrastructure work remain underway.

Vilma Bailón has been working with county and state officials to address issues affecting the community. She has also been in contact with state senators representing the area as efforts continue to secure a long-term solution.

Follow our social media pages for continued updates on this developing story.

At press time, no updates to water testing were available. Follow us on social media to get continued updates on this story.

## Sandia Scientists Highlight Safety Measures In Proposed Questa Hydrogen Storage Project

By STAFF WRITERS

Amid growing opposition to the proposed Questa Hydrogen Project, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative on June 12 highlighted an independent safety review conducted by Sandia National Laboratories that found the project is following established safety standards and incorporates safeguards early in its design process.

The media briefing comes as a vocal group of residents and activists continues to challenge the project, raising concerns about hydrogen safety, wildfire risks, emergency preparedness and potential impacts on local groundwater supplies.

The review examined safety analyses commissioned by Kit Carson Electric Cooperative (KCEC) for the planned hydrogen energy storage facility in Questa. The project is intended to provide backup power during wildfire-related outages and other emergencies.

Dr. Chris LaFleur, research and development manager for Sandia National Laboratories' Risk and Reliability Analysis Department, said one aspect that stood out was the project's early focus on safety planning.

"One thing that we're really impressed about is the early attention to safety," LaFleur said, noting that a hazard and operability study was conducted when the



Photo courtesy of Kit Carson Electrical Cooperative

project was only about 10% designed.

LaFleur said the safety analyses evaluated potential hazards including heat release, overpressure events and sound impacts. She also praised the work performed by BakerRisk, a consulting firm hired to conduct consequence modeling for the project.

"They already know about hydrogen," LaFleur said. "Their work is good."

Brian Ehrhart, a Sandia chemical engineer who participated in the review, said the analysis considered a range of potential accident scenarios and was designed to remain relevant as engineering details are finalized.

Still, opponents have continued to question whether hydrogen can be safely stored near the community and whether emergency responders would be adequately prepared in the event of an accident.

Others have focused on water use and potential impacts to local aquifers.

Addressing those concerns, LaFleur said hydrogen is a flammable material but one that is governed by established engineering standards and safety protocols.

"We live with and work with a lot of flammable materials," she said. "We know how they behave, and we know how to keep them in a non-flammable state or prevent incidents."

LaFleur said hydrogen systems are designed with leak detection, pressure monitoring, automatic shutdown mechanisms and venting systems intended to prevent hazardous situations from escalating.

KCEC Chief Executive Officer Luis Reyes said the cooperative requested the independent review to provide additional reassurance to community members and to ensure safety remains central to the project.

"This project, since it's going to serve both the public and be manned by our employees, we wanted to ensure that it was the safest plant that we could build," Reyes said.

The facility would allow the cooperative to keep electricity flowing to parts of northern Taos County when power lines running through forested areas must be de-energized during periods of elevated

wildfire danger. Reyes said the system could provide approximately two and a half days of backup power during extended outages.

The cooperative also plans to begin first-responder training in August as project planning continues.

Questions surrounding the project's water usage remain unresolved. Reyes said the first phase of a groundwater study is expected to be completed within days, with a second phase examining groundwater flows to follow.

"We should have the entire water analysis done within four to five weeks, with the preliminary reports coming in a few days," Reyes said.

Sandia officials noted that the laboratory's review was funded through a U.S. Department of Energy technical assistance program rather than by KCEC itself.

The proposed hydrogen storage facility is part of KCEC's broader effort to expand renewable energy and energy storage resources in northern New Mexico. A related solar facility is already under construction and approximately 10% complete, according to Reyes.

A new website was released to show residents how the project would look, visit <https://kitcarson.com/see-the-questa-hydrogen-project-yourself/>.



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## Jadyn Jeantete

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

*Being raised in a community where your history connects to every part of your present, it is difficult to find the courage to leave. It is similarly difficult to forge a path and stay. Questa del Rio News is committed to highlighting different members of our community, both those who have created their paths and planted their own roots in the community that raised them, and those who have pursued lives outside of the community—through our Representando series. This series is dedicated to those who are representando northern Taos County in various facets of life.*

At 23 years old, Jadyn Jeantete is helping tell the story of New Mexico on one of the state's biggest political stages.

The daughter of Miranda Jeantete of Questa and Rico Jeantete of Taos, Jeantete was born in Taos and spent her early childhood in Questa, where generations of her family have deep roots. Later, her family relocated to the Albuquerque metropolitan area, where she attended school and graduated from Cleveland High School in 2021.

Though she built her academic and professional career in Albuquerque, Jeantete has always carried northern New Mexico with her. She credits much of her outlook on service and community to her parents, both lifelong public servants. Her mother dedicated her career to higher education, while her father worked for the federal government. Growing up, she watched both of them invest in people, institutions and communities, teaching her that everyone has a responsibility to contribute to the collective good.

Their example instilled in her the belief that while many challenges may feel beyond an individual's control, meaningful change often begins at home.

"There are always going to be things happening nationally that we can't control," Jeantete said. "But we can choose how we show up for our families, our neighbors and our communities. We can all contribute to the story and make things better where we are."

Jeantete graduated from the University of New Mexico in May 2025 with degrees in communication and political science. During her time at UNM, she was active in Kappa Delta Chi Sorority, Inc., where she found opportunities for leadership, service and sisterhood while giving back to the community. She also worked as an athletics communications intern for UNM Athletics, helping produce digital content and gaining firsthand experience in sports media and storytelling.

Outside of her professional work, Jeantete has continued to pursue photography through her freelance photography business, where she captures graduation portraits, family sessions and special



Courtesy Image

Jadyn Jeantete

events. She showcases her work on Instagram through her photography page, @jadynsjpgs, where she continues to build her creative portfolio while serving clients throughout New Mexico.

Today, she serves as the digital content and social media manager for Deb Haaland's gubernatorial campaign, a role she stepped into full time after graduation. For Jeantete, the position is more than a job. It is an opportunity to help tell the stories of New Mexicans and the communities that have shaped her own life.

As she travels the state creating content and documenting campaign events, she draws inspiration from the same Indo-Hispano-Anglo spirit that has defined

New Mexico for generations. Through photographs, videos and storytelling, she works to capture the resilience, determination and cultural pride that connect communities from the Sangre de Cristo Mountains to the southern border.

Jeantete said working for Haaland, who is seeking to become New Mexico's next governor, has deepened her appreciation for the state and the people who call it home.

"I've always loved New Mexico," Jeantete said. "But working on the campaign has made me appreciate it even more."

Having now visited all 33 counties, she has witnessed firsthand the challenges and triumphs of communities across the state. Those experiences have reinforced her belief that despite political differences, New Mexicans are united by their commitment to family, culture and perseverance.

For Jeantete, social media is not simply about posting content. It is about preserving stories and highlighting the enduring spirit of a state whose people have spent generations adapting, surviving and thriving in the face of adversity. Through her work, she seeks to elevate the voices of everyday New Mexicans and the values they share, regardless of where they live.

"People want to be able to raise their families in New Mexico," Jeantete said. "We care deeply about our culture and our communities because there's nowhere else like this."

Those conversations and experiences have shaped the way she approaches storytelling. Every post, photo and video

REPRESENTANDO cont'd on page 20

## Rio Grande Motorsports Expands With Youth-Led Rental Business

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

A family-owned powersports dealership is expanding its offerings with the help of the next generation.

Juan Cisneros, owner of Rio Grande Motorsports, said he and his wife, Ayla, have spent the past decade building the dealership into a full-service destination for powersports enthusiasts. Now, two of their children are leading the launch of a new rental division.

The new venture, Rio Grande Motorsports Rentals, will allow customers to reserve premium side-by-side vehicles online, select their trip and pay in advance before picking up their rental at the company's Taos location.

"We're excited about this new busi-

ness aspect," Cisneros said.

Rio Grande Motorsports is a dealer for Can-Am and CFMOTO vehicles and also sells TYM tractors and SSR dirt bikes. The dealership provides retail sales and service for the brands it carries, along with maintenance on a variety of other powersports vehicles.

Cisneros said business has been strong, creating an opportunity to expand into rentals.

The rental fleet will feature high-end side-by-side vehicles equipped with premium amenities, including Apple CarPlay, heating, power windows and other upgraded features. Rental prices will start at \$250 for a four-hour trip, with seven-hour and multi-day options also available.



Courtesy Photo

Juan "Boom", Alya "Lala", and baby brother Jac Cisneros

Customers will be required to present a valid driver's license and will have the option to purchase insurance coverage.

The new rental operation is being spearheaded by the couple's children,

Juan "Boom" Cisneros, 17, who will be a Questa high school senior this fall, and Alya "Lala" Cisneros, 15, who will be a sophomore.

Boom is working toward becoming a certified technician this summer, while Lala has taken the lead on developing the rental website and managing much of the business's digital presence.

"They've both been learning a lot on the back end," Cisneros said.

While their parents will continue to provide guidance, Cisneros said the teenagers have demonstrated efficiency and enthusiasm as they help grow the family's business into its next chapter. For more information on the business, visit <https://www.riograndemotorsports.com>.



## From Rural Isolation to a Remote Haven: How Fiber is Redefining Red River

For Red River Mayor Linda Calhoun, running a mountain municipality and a thriving local real estate firm means understanding exactly what keeps her community alive. In rural New Mexico, connectivity was once an uphill battle. But when Kit Carson Internet (KCI) began building its robust fiber network a decade ago, Red River was one of the first to step on board.

The shift was transformative. Before the arrival of KCI fiber, managing the town's high-profile events and basic municipal functions was a constant headache. Mayor Calhoun recalls the frustration during festivals in the park, where vendors were often unable to run credit card machines due to severe bandwidth limitations. Losing a sale because a connection stalled was a reality that hurt the success of local events. Beyond outdoor commerce, the town struggled with critical tasks like livestreaming municipal meetings—a necessity that became even more urgent during the pandemic.

Today, those connectivity bottlenecks are history. KCI fiber now serves as the backbone of the town, powering the Red River Conference Center, the public library, the wastewater treatment plant, and Town Hall. The network's capacity allows the town to seamlessly scale its service, ensuring that when they host high-stakes events like the Legislative Finance Committee, the town enjoys flawless, high-speed performance.

This impact reaches far past municipal walls. The reliability of KCI

fiber has fundamentally altered the economic landscape of the Enchanted Circle. During the pandemic, Red River saw an influx of residents who relocated permanently to work remotely—a transition that would have been impossible on old infrastructure. Because KCI deployed fiber directly to every single home and property with an electrical hookup, high-speed internet is available to everyone, including those in the historically disconnected Upper Valley.

"We go to conferences and they talk about broadband and how we need it," Calhoun notes. "We have it. It's not an initiative we have to work for because Kit Carson Internet has done the heavy lifting."

This commitment is the hallmark of a member-owned cooperative. KCI isn't just providing technology; it is investing in the long-term resilience of our region. As part of this dedication, KCI recently launched a massive network-wide upgrade. Whether you are in Red River, Questa, or the surrounding communities, you are seeing the results: higher speeds—up to 1 Gig—and lower monthly rates.

If you are ready to "Switch and Save," now is the time. When you choose KCI, you aren't just getting the state's best internet; you are investing in a provider that reinvests in your backyard. Visit [KitCarsonInternet.com](http://KitCarsonInternet.com) or call our local team today at (575) 758-4838 to explore our new packages and discover how we are building the future of Northern New Mexico, one connection at a time.



Red River Mayor  
Linda Calhoun

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## BUILDING OUR COMMUNITY: From Foundations to Front Porches

By LORA ARCINIEGA

When you think about your summer home improvement plans, Questa Lumber and Hardware is most likely part of that equation. From their vast lumber yard and new sheds of varying sizes to everything in between, you can find exactly what you need for your next build. If you've driven in or out of Questa, you've likely noticed these displays sitting adjacent to the hardware store. Maybe you've even stopped to inquire about pricing or to take a look inside the greenhouse. As the July sun hits the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, you can hear hammers and saws echoing all over our small towns and villages. In Northern New Mexico, mid-summer is the busiest time for building. Whether you're working on a weekend DIY deck project or you're part of a crew framing a new house, you can feel that momentum over at the Questa Lumber & Hardware yard.

In this second part of our "Building Our Community" series—supported by the LOR Foundation—we're stepping out of the store aisles and heading into the lumberyard to look at our lumber, framing supplies, and brand-new shed collection.

### The Backbone of Local Building

Lumber is more than just inventory; it's what keeps our homes standing. Questa Lumber & Hardware has always been the main spot for local contractors who know that building at high altitude requires tough materials. From pressure-treated posts that handle the damp mountain dirt to sturdy framing studs built for heavy winter snows, the yard is fully stocked for the specific needs of builders.



### Big News: Pre-Built Sheds are Here

The biggest update in the yard this summer is our new line of pre-built sheds. We know that as families grow and hobbies expand, storage space gets tight. These sheds are a quick, durable fix for everything from tools and tack rooms to workshops and backyard getaways. They look great, work hard, and are built to handle the heavy wind and weather we get along the Enchanted Circle.

### Supporting Our Local Pros

This month, we aren't just talking about the materials—we're celebrating the people who use them. Questa Lumber is proud to be the home base for our local contractors. These are the neighbors repairing our historic structures and building up our valley. By keeping bulk lumber and framing supplies local, we keep those dollars right here in the community, supporting the families who live and work in Questa and surrounding areas.

Whether you need a new shed on your property or you're finally starting that home addition, the team in the yard is ready to help you load up. Let's keep building.

*Established in 1953, Questa Lumber & Hardware was built on a mission to provide the tools and support necessary for our remote mountain community to thrive. For over 70 years, that mission hasn't changed: we are here to help our neighbors build, grow, and sustain the land we love.*



This 6-month series is proudly sponsored by Questa Lumber & Hardware and the LOR Foundation, working together to support the local projects and people that make our village thrive.



## Esperanza Vallejos

By LORA ARCINIEGA

While most teenagers spend their summer preparing for their next year in high school, Esperanza Vallejos is already carrying out a big plan for her future.

Entering her senior year at Questa High School this August, the Costilla teen is not just aiming for a high school diploma — she expects to graduate in May 2027 with an associate degree already in hand. Immediately after, she will head to basic training for the U.S. Air Force. “For the past couple years, I have taken college courses at UNM-Taos in order to attain my associates degree when I graduate from high school. It’s

been a goal of mine and I’ve worked hard to reach it.”

Her plans to pursue a medical degree changed when her class was visited by Air Force recruiters. “When I heard about the Air Force during a school presentation, I knew it was for me,” Vallejos said. “I have always wanted to travel and when I learned about all the benefits that come from joining I wanted to be a part of it.” A conversation with a family friend who served in the Air Force solidified her decision, turning her interest into a concrete career path.

The daughter of Vivian and Joshua Vallejos, Esperanza or “Espi” has never shied away from a demanding schedule. Her daily commute between Costilla and Questa is a challenge in itself, but one she willingly makes to participate in programs and activities she’s interested in. Some of those include volleyball, the National Honor Society community service projects, and the ProStart culinary arts program — which happens to be taught by her mother.

Described by those around her as a go-getter, Vallejos defines herself as ambitious, outgoing, and ready for any task. That drive is exactly why the idea of military boot camp does not intimidate her.



Courtesy Image

“I have always pushed myself and I like a challenge,” Vallejos said confidently.

Her work ethic and tenacity is fueled by her parents, whom she credits as her strongest allies and role models. “My dad has always supported me and encouraged me to go after what I want,” she said. “My mom has always pushed me to be the best version of myself without pushing me too hard or being overbearing. I love their personalities and the people that they are.”

When she is not focused on academics or future military career goals, Vallejos loves to create art and spend time with friends and family. For the past few summers she’s worked at a coffee shop in Red River. “I love working at Bearly Awake and I have fun preparing and

creating drinks and working with the staff,” she said.

She is also an avid artist who describes her bedroom as her canvas, with walls covered in her artwork; something she’s enjoyed doing since childhood. On weekends, she can often be found exploring the outdoors and cruising through the mountains with her friends.

Despite her aspirations with the Air Force, Vallejos remains true to her Northern New Mexico upbringing. “I love the quietness of Costilla and the solitude it provides,” Vallejos said. “I don’t see myself living in a city. I love the mountains.”

As she prepares to step into her senior year, Vallejos offers a powerful piece of advice for the younger generation of local youth: “Don’t be scared, because if you live in fear, you will go down in fear.”

It is a philosophy she lives by, grounded by her favorite Bible verse, Romans 8:18, which she eventually had tattooed.

“No matter what pain and suffering you’re going through right now, it won’t compare to the happiness that’s coming,” Vallejos said, summarizing the scripture.

Brought to you by



By LISA ANN PHAM  
& GAEA MCGAHEE

Market Season is officially in full swing, and we are learning and adjusting every week. With many small farms in the northern region struggling with this year’s drought conditions, Questa Farmers Market has continued to bring fresh produce from local growers to our community. Early seasonal booths have been filled with plant starts for the home gardener, with our local farm and youth internship program Cultivo anchoring our community with a steady supply of bright greens and youthful energy.

This month features QFM’s anchor farm and partner program, Cultivo, to highlight what to expect this season.

## Questa Farmers Market: July Market Spotlight With Cultivo

### Cultivo Farm Fresh Produce

Greetings from the Cultivo farm crew, our interns, apprentices, mentors, and teachers. We’re saying hello from Cerro Vista Farm and our weekly booth at Questa Farmers Market.

This season we had an early start thanks to several high tunnels at the farm. Beginning in late March and early April, we were able to start planting under cover and had fresh produce ready for market at the end of May. We’re still harvesting from greenhouses each week, bringing greens, turnips, radish and beets to market.

Out in the fields, we’ve been busy transplanting starts and seeds. Carrots, corn, and peas have been seeded and broccoli, lettuce, beets and more have been transplanted. While conditions have been hot and dry, the crops are coming along, and we’re grateful for the hard work of our crew and the support of drip irrigation systems.



Courtesy Image

### Greenhouse kale this season at Cerro Vista Farms

Visitors to our market booth will find leafy greens, and other early-season produce. As summer progresses, we look forward to sharing tomatoes, broccoli, squash, cucumbers, and seasonal favorites. Later in August and into the fall, we anticipate carrots, cabbage,

onions and storage crops.

We’re grateful to be part of the Questa Farmers Market community. Cultivo exists because young people are willing to learn the skills of farming in our unique high-desert environment, and because experienced mentors and teachers generously share their knowledge. Thank you for supporting local agriculture, local youth, and local food.

We look forward to sharing the season with you!

You can also find Cultivo at their Farm Stand pop-up Tues. 3 - 5:30 P.M. in front of Yoga Sala.

### QFM July Calendar:

- July 5: “Interdependence Day” Market Event with Music from Michael Rael
- July 12: Arellano Brothers
- July 19: Anam Cara
- July 26: Wilson & McKee

Sponsored by





## Honoring Questa's Past and the Stories That Shape It

This summer, the United States celebrates its 250th anniversary. Across the country, communities are marking the occasion by reflecting on the people, places, and events that have shaped them.

Here in Questa, local history lives in the experiences of longtime residents, the knowledge passed down from one generation to the next, and in the pages of community publications like the Questa Del Rio News. Preserving these records helps future generations understand where this community came from and how it became what it is today.

With support from the LOR Foundation, many locals are taking action to preserve and share that history.

One such recent project, Voices of the Northern Rio Grande, is working to safeguard the stories, traditions, and knowledge of Questa's elders. Led by Localogy and supported by the LOR Foundation, the project equipped the Questa Library with recording equipment and provided funding to host community storytelling events and conduct interviews with elders whose experiences offer a unique window into the region's past. These recordings are now preserved and available through digital archives, podcasts, CDs, and the library—ensuring that future generations can learn directly from the people who lived these stories.

Another project, undertaken in 2023 by the Questa Economic Development Fund in partnership with the Questa Del Rio News and the Questa Library, sought to preserve the written record of everyday life in Questa. Together, the project leads created an archive of past newspaper issues. With support from LOR, the project established a permanent collection to keep community stories, local achievements, and important events accessible for years to come.

These efforts remind us that history isn't found only in museums or textbooks; it's also found in commu-



Courtesy Image

nity traditions, local newspapers, and the experiences of the people who call Questa home.

As we celebrate America's 250th birthday, we invite you to reflect on the stories, traditions, landmarks, and community connections that matter most to you. Is there a piece of local history worth preserving? A tradition worth reviving? A project that could help future generations better understand the people and places that shaped Questa?

If so, we'd love to hear about it.

The LOR Foundation funds community projects designed and led by Questa

residents like you. Most eligible projects receive funding in less than 30 days—no nonprofit experience or lengthy application required. Whether your idea focuses on preserving history, celebrating culture, strengthening civic life, or bringing neighbors together, it could help write Questa's next chapter.

After all, history isn't just something we inherit; it's something we create together.

To learn more about how LOR can help, visit [lorfoundation.org](http://lorfoundation.org) or email Questa community officer Maria Gonzalez at [maria@lorfoundation.org](mailto:maria@lorfoundation.org).

# Questa Active would like a shout out for All-Star players and Coaches!

### DISTRICT TOURNAMENT TAOS LITTLE LEAGUE

#### COACHES

**Jose Ortega:**  
10-12 year old division  
Baseball

**Alyssah Duran:**  
10-12 year old division  
Softball

**Marcus Chavez:**  
8-10 year old division  
Softball

### DISTRICT TOURNAMENT TAOS LITTLE LEAGUE

#### SELECTED PLAYERS FROM QUESTA

Ayana Trujillo  
Aria Duran  
Marikah Chavez  
Jackson Ortega  
Ynoa Gallegos  
Derek Ortega  
Dakota Ortega  
Jeremiah Gallegos  
Donovan Ortega  
Drake Ortega  
Nevaeh Vigil

## SPORTS SPOTLIGHT *of the* MONTH

For more information, to make a donation, or get involved please contact Alyssah Duran at (575) 779-9426 or Jose Duran at (505) 350-5797. Follow us on Facebook.



# 2026 Questa Art Tour Preview Show At Questa Public Library

By PEGGY TRIGG  
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Welcome to the Questa Art Tour (QAT) Preview Show! The Questa Public Library is happy to host this local artist's favorite show kicking off with a public Art Opening on Jul. 18. Artists from the QAT will display a piece of their artwork which will help visitors know what to look for during the actual art tour on Aug. 8 and 9. Work will include digital imagery, painting, pottery, jewelry, printmaking, glasswork, quilting and much, much more. The show prides itself on showcasing traditional styles like wood working, pottery and painting to artworks honoring the environment or exploring abstraction or modern contemporary styles.

What can be said about the Questa Art Tour that hasn't already been said before? Is it that the tour is the first artist

tour of the season in Northern New Mexico or the uniqueness of the tour which blends traditional, modern and contemporary arts? Maybe it is the fun of finding the locations of the artists hubs? Studios are sometimes challenging to find but well worth it as most often they are full of art, charm and authenticity. QAT hubs offer the visitor small groupings of artists in personal artist's studios. The visitors can see actual places where art is created and also see multiple artists at each location offering exciting and often festive environments.

Get your first glimpse of the tour. Stop by the QAT Preview Show at the Questa Public Library! Have a cookie and meet the artists at the opening on Jul. 18 from 1 to 3 p.m. Stop in during the tour dates of Aug. 8 and 9 to find your favorite artists locations and plan your visits to their studios. Brochures and

maps will be provided. The QAT Preview Show will run through Aug. 13. See you soon at the Questa Public Library and 6 1/2 Municipal Park Road in Questa, NM. For more information on the tour, please see the Questa Creative Council website at <https://questacreative.org/questa-art-tour/>

## QAT Preview Show 2026

### Show Reception:

Saturday, July 18, 1 - 3 p.m.

### Show Dates:

July 18 - August 13  
at Questa Public Library  
61/2 Munciple Park Rd, Questa

## Questa Art Tour 2026

Saturday & Sunday  
August 8 - 9

For more information  
visit [QuestaCreative.org](https://questacreative.org)



## PREVIEW SHOW



Pottery by Carole Merriman



Stained Glass by Jake LaFore



Art by Mary Miller

## Patriotic Baby Quilt Project Honors America's 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

By STAFF WRITERS

The Taos Mountain Chapter of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution is commemorating the nation's 250th anniversary with a special baby quilt project honoring America's semiquincentennial.

The chapter has created a hand-made patriotic baby quilt that will be awarded to a qualifying newborn residing in Taos County or Mora County.

To be eligible, an infant must be the first baby born on or after July 4, 2026, and reside in either Taos County or Mora County, according to chapter officials.

The America 250 Baby Quilt Project is part of the chapter's efforts to celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary while recognizing the newest

generation of Americans.

Families with qualifying newborns are encouraged to contact chapter Regent Pat Keenan for information about eligibility and the selection process.

The National Society Daughters of the American Revolution is a non-profit service organization dedicated to historic preservation, education and patriotism. The Taos Mountain Chapter serves Northern New Mexico through community service and educational programs.

For more information, contact Keenan at [pekeenan@gmail.com](mailto:pekeenan@gmail.com) or (575) 770-5446.



*Courtesy Image*

A beautiful example of a Patriotic Baby Quilt

GRANT AWARDS cont'd from page 4

brations and educational programming.

Notable awards included \$43,541 to the Harwood Museum of Art, \$39,875 for the 2027 Taos Film Festival, \$34,580 for Wumaniti Earth Native Sanctuary's War Horse Path events and tournament, and \$29,100 for the University of New Mexico's O'TaosuCon 2027.

Other recipients include the Red River Chamber of Commerce, which received \$26,338 for Oktoberfest, and Red River Events Inc., which was awarded \$25,860 for the 8750' Festival.

County officials said the funding is intended to strengthen tourism while highlighting the region's unique culture, heritage and recreational opportunities.

The next application cycle for the Taos County Lodger's Tax Grant Program will run from Aug. 17 through Sept. 17. Eligible organizations can apply through the county's online grant portal after reviewing program guidelines and eligibility requirements.

Taos County Sheriff's Posse

# GYMKHANA

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Entries open @ 9 a.m.



Clementine Miller/Taos News



## 2026 SPRING/SUMMER SERIES

MARCH 14  
APRIL 11  
MAY 9

JUNE 13  
JULY 11

TCSP-RODEO GROUNDS • 230 Camino de la Merced, Taos

# 57<sup>th</sup> Rodeo de Taos

**Saturday, August 8, 2026**

11:00 a.m. - Youth Rodeo  
2:00 p.m. - Rodeo de Taos  
Performance

**Sunday, August 9, 2026**

9:00 a.m. - Slack Events  
11:00 a.m. - Youth Rodeo  
2:00 p.m. - Rodeo de Taos  
Performance

**Featured Events:**

- Bareback Riding
- Saddle Bronc Riding
- Bull Riding
- Mutton Busting
- Tie-Down Roping
- Calf Scramble
- Boot Scramble
- Steer Wrestling
- Barrel Racing
- Team Roping
- Breakaway

Bring the whole family and experience a weekend of rodeo tradition and entertainment in Taos.

# SAVE THE DATE!

## AUG 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> 2026


### SAT & SUN: 10:00a-5:00p

**DISCOVER THE DRAMA**  
of the upper Rio Grande Valley  
and its inspired artists;

**WORKS OF OVER 50 ARTISTS**  
from the traditional to the contemporary!

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## Questa Art Tour '26: More Local Business Participation

Our non-profit is again hosting the annual Questa Art Tour this summer, now in its 11th year. And each year we strive to respond to the community's desires and represent our local artists better and better. Though, we felt we were losing the focus on Questa itself, given that all the formal art venues are now closed in the village and our tour route had ranged further north to encompass eager talent near the border. New measures were called for.

With federal funding for the Arts being cut around the country and right here in northern New Mexico, we have

become even more dependent on local support, from the Taos Community Foundation, Chevron, LOR Foundation, the Taos County Lodgers Tax fund, and our local business sponsors.

New this year, we offered our business community an option to increase their support for our August art tour, to not only have their logos shared on our publicity materials, but also have the location and description of their enterprise noted right on the art tour map-brochure that will be in the hands of 800 or so visitors the second weekend of August.

Of our 17 event sponsors, 11 opted to donate more toward the art tour this year. All were invited to casually host local art for the weekend, if they did not already do so, and some have made plans for adding music and special foods to the creative excitement. We are thrilled that our business community answered the call to make the village itself a fitting welcome to a beautiful, historic, dramatic tour route that extends outward from Questa.

Look for weird and wonderful steam-punk art in front of JB & Co Auto Repair. Isaias Marquez creates sculptures out of discarded auto parts, plus there



Download 2026 Tour Map Online at [QuestaCreative.org](http://QuestaCreative.org)

will be metal art and stone jewelry on offer by Juan and the team. Questa Lumber, Sangre de Cristo Market, Northstar Tire & Auto, and Car Quest (newly named Q-Town) all added more support this year. Rosie's Smokehouse joined the fun to highlight the art always on display there, as did Thrift de Questa and Rael's Market, both of whom include the works of local artists in their shops, and may

add more for tour weekend.

The Village Stop 'n Go will be hosting a wine tasting of New Mexico vintages. The Wildcat's Den will host Chris Arelano's young musicians; the School of Rock on Saturday. Speaking of Questa's favorite places to eat; the Monte Carlo stepped up, so, as always, the Grill will have tasty offerings.

And by the way, a new favorite, The Fizz Lab will offer refreshing drinks at the Questa Library that will be full of artists, and goodies from Dipped by Ellie will be available at the new pop-up gallery at the Cerro VFW. The Communities of Questa Mariachi will also make an appearance there!

Save the dates, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 8-9, to support our local artists, and, appreciate the support of our local businesses. Find more information and preview the tour's map-brochure online at [QuestaCreative.org](http://QuestaCreative.org)

### Questa Art Tour 2026

Saturday & Sunday  
August 8 - 9

For more information visit [QuestaCreative.org](http://QuestaCreative.org)

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**2026-2027**

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from the Librarian's Desk...

**Sharon Nicholson**

## Summer Reading Program Inspires Young Readers

June was truly a month of reading as the community's Summer Reading Program brought young readers together for a season filled with books, discovery, and excitement. Despite an unexpected setback at the outset, the program proved that enthusiasm and creativity can overcome even the trickiest challenges.

Organizers faced an early hurdle when Amazon was unable to deliver a selection of program-related books. While the delay could have stalled



Photo by Mindi Barbee

Rigel Barbee discovering a python

plans, staff quickly pivoted, turning to the library's existing collection. Fortunately, shelves were rich with engaging materials, allowing participants to dive into fascinating topics such as dinosaurs, snakes, insects, and bees. The variety ensured that every child could find something to spark their curiosity.

The response from participants was enthusiastic. Children eagerly checked out books, immersing themselves in stories and facts about the natural



Photo by Lara Arciniaga

Summer Reading Program June 26, 2026

world. All of that reading paid off, as reading every day earned kids tickets for entry into the grand prize drawing held on June 30. By the end of the month, a flurry of entries reflected just how committed these young readers had become.

Prizes added extra excitement to this year's Library Fiesta. Among the most sought-after items were bicycles, remote-controlled sand buggies, a pink remote-controlled Camry, and a bad-

minton/volleyball set. In the end, there were prizes for all, ensuring every participant shared in the celebration.

Speaking of prizes, some of the most memorable moments weren't items at all, but experiences. Who didn't love seeing kids delightfully touching creepy crawlers, checking the library garden for bugs and insects, exploring bees up close, admiring giant trucks, marveling at blowup dinosaurs, and even wearing a python around one's neck? These hands-on moments brought learning to life and left lasting impressions.

And there's more! The excitement continues in July with an awesome lineup of programs. Families are encouraged to drop everything and head to the library for Dino Graffiti with Mark Lewis Wagner, a lively chalk art day where kids help create a giant dinosaur mural together. Additional programs include Ice Age America with Ziggy, Happy Birthday America with Wonders on Wheels Museum, and an outdoor adventure at Eagle Rock Lake with Claire Cote. Expect more surprises and delicious snacks! For more information, call the Questa Library at (575) 586-2023.

# Questa Public Library Summer Reading Program

## JULY BONUS DAYS

<p><b>TUESDAY - JULY 7</b> 9:30 - 11:30 AM</p> <p><b>DINO GRAFFITI</b> W/MARK LEWIS WAGNER</p>	<p><b>FRIDAY - JULY 10</b> 9:30 - 11:30 AM</p> <p><b>ICE AGE AMERICA</b> W/ ZIGGY PROTHO - OAS</p>	<p><b>TUESDAY - JULY 14</b> 9:30 - 11:30 AM</p> <p><b>WONDERS ON WHEELS!</b> AMERICAS 250<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY!</p>	<p><b>FRIDAY - JULY 17</b> 9:30 - 11:30 AM</p> <p><b>EAGLE ROCK LAKE</b> ADVENTURE DAY W/ CLAIRE COTE</p>
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All Children must have a parent/guardian present for the entire duration of the program

6 1/2 Municipal Park Rd, Questa, NM 87556 - [questalibrary.org](http://questalibrary.org) - (575) 586-2023

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By **CLAIRE COTÉ**  
Director of Voices of  
the Northern Rio Grande



Courtesy Photo

Ricky León, Voces featured guest July, 2026



Courtesy Photo

Joseph León, Voces featured guest July, 2026

## Joseph & Ricky León: Adventures in Cerro

HISTORIAS DE LA FAMILIA, AMOR,  
AVENTURAS, Y DESVENTURAS  
DICHAS POR LA GENTE DE  
NUESTRO PAÍS

On Saturday, Jul. 11 the Voces de Nuestro País event and podcast will feature brothers Joseph and Ricky León. The Brothers will share stories of growing up in Cerro, NM and experiences from their careers. From simpler times, the brothers grew up farming and ranching, living on the acequia, helping with León's store/bar and Texaco station, and experiencing loss at a young age. They will share antics from their youth and today, their dedication to family and contributions to the community of Cerro. Joseph will also talk about his career with his Federal Government in two National Forests (Carson and Gila), one National Monument (Gila Cliff Dwellings), DOD (White Sands Missile Range), and Bureau of Land Management (Las Cruces, Santa Fe, and Wild Rivers).

Our eleventh session featured Erica Vigil Flores and Jada Lew with "Remedios de Nuestra Tierra" - remedies from



John Collier, Jr. Photographer

"León's Store in Cerro." JC891 General Store Near Questa, NM. 1943

our land, traditional knowledge of the Earth, plants, and their power to heal. The event took place on Jun. 20, after this newspaper's submission deadline. Look for highlights from that gathering in the Aug. issue.

Voces de Nuestro País ~ Voices of Our Area are monthly story gatherings celebrating local voices and culture. Featured local guests share stories of family, community, history, love, work, adventures, and misadventures. Each event is record-

ed and released as an audio and video podcast on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon Music; search "Voces de Nuestro País." By sharing these stories virtually, we hope to extend and multiply the sense of community connection that is felt during the live gatherings. Please tell your friends and family!

Michael Rael is MC and curator for these monthly gatherings and podcast episodes, hosted in collaboration with Questa Library and Voices of the Northern

Rio Grande, a program of local nonprofit, Localogy. Audio recordings, videos, and images from "Voces de Nuestro País" events are also added to the growing digital community archive, a local repository and resource established by Voices of the Northern Rio Grande and Questa Public Library with support from the Manitos Community Memory Project. Learn more about the community archive and listen to stories from community members at [QuestaStories.org](https://QuestaStories.org).

Don't miss our twelfth Voces de Nuestro País event, "Joseph and Ricky León: Adventures in Cerro" at Questa Library on Saturday, July 11, 2 - 4pm. We hope you can join us!

*If you have stories you'd like to share, please let Michael Rael or Claire Coté know. Email Michael at [rael870@gmail.com](mailto:rael870@gmail.com) or Claire at [QuestaStories@gmail.com](mailto:QuestaStories@gmail.com) or call or text (575) 224-9066.*

### Voces de Nuestro País Saturday July 11 2 - 4 pm,

Join us at the Questa Public Library on Saturday, July 11, from 2 - 4 pm for "Joseph and Ricky León: Adventures in Cerro". Voces de Nuestro País is a monthly gathering that celebrates local voices, stories, and culture. This month brothers Joseph and Ricky León will share stories of growing up in Cerro, NM and experiences from their careers. Please join us! Hosted by MC Michael Rael, these events bring people together through stories of family, community, history, love, land and adventure. These events are a collaboration of Questa Library and Voices of the Northern Rio Grande, a program of local nonprofit, Localogy.

Can't attend in person? Episodes are also available as a podcast on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon Music.

More information at <https://questastories.org/>

REPRESENTANDO cont'd from page 12

becomes another opportunity to showcase the New Mexican spirit, one rooted in resilience, sacrifice, community and an unwavering love for home.

As she continues her work on the campaign trail, Jeantete hopes to use communications as a way to connect New Mexicans with opportunities and resources that can improve their lives. Looking ahead, she plans to continue building a career in communications at the intersection of

government and politics and hopes to one day work on a presidential campaign.

For now, however, Jeantete remains focused on the place that first shaped her: New Mexico. Whether documenting communities across the state, covering athletic events, or photographing life's milestones through her freelance business, she sees every opportunity as a chance to tell meaningful stories and honor the people behind them.

"Every day, I fall more in love with New Mexico," Jeantete said.

From her childhood roots in Questa

to communities across all 33 counties, Jeantete carries with her the lessons her parents taught her about service, responsibility and giving back. Through her work, she hopes others will recognize that while no one person can solve every challenge, everyone can play a role in strengthening their communities. In telling the stories of New Mexico, she is helping write the next chapter of a state defined by resilience, culture and an enduring belief that ordinary people can make an extraordinary difference.

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WOMAN OF THE MONTH: JUNE 2026  
**LYNN SKALL**

For exemplifying community leadership, serving with resilience, integrity and resourcefulness, inspiring others, honoring local culture, creating a lasting positive impact that keeps the community connected and thriving.



Summer Reading Program

A MASSIVE THANK YOU to our incredible Summer Reading Program sponsors! Because of your generosity, we have been able to provide amazing prizes, educational events, and snacks for all of our kids and their families.

WE APPRECIATE YOU!

*Thank You!*

- Friends of the Questa Public Library
- North Star
- Questa Lumber
- Wildcats Den
- Rael's Market
- Questa Credit Union
- JB & Company
- Salon del Sol
- Frank's Eats & Sweets
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Taos County Chamber of Commerce  
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**Mayor Linda Calhoun**  
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Maria Gonzalez

[TaosHousingPartnership.org](http://TaosHousingPartnership.org)



By Toner Mitchell

## Apache Country

Every New Mexican has at least one story to tell about someone from another state (even Colorado) describing their impression of our homeland, a sun-scorched wasteland of nothing but cactus and rattlesnakes. I am old enough to have forgotten ever being offended by such encounters. Certainly the fact that so many of our state's spectacular high mountain gifts remain secret is something to be proud of. New Mexico really is the best.

On a recent trip to Arizona, I experienced a version of the New Mexico story, only I played the role of the misinformed outsider. I have experienced a lot of our neighboring state, the Grand Canyon, Sonora, and the smell of palo verde trees

in bloom. In spite of having caught trout in Arizona, though, most of my time there has been stereotypical. It's really hot and dry there.

The White Mountains in the southeastern part of the state, however, are a lot like New Mexico. The ponderosa forests remind you of the Jemez area, the aspen groves of Midnight Meadows. It's cool up there. We actually needed the heat from our campfire to stay warm.

Aside from the surprise of such a spectacular landscape being so accessible – a few hours southwest of Grants, the White Mountains are as close as many Colorado ski areas – the best part about this corner of Arizona is its unique species of trout. The Apache trout is one of three trout species unique to the desert southwest, along with the Gila trout and Questa's own Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Indeed, it shares physical features of both of its cousins – the sparse spotting of the cutthroat and the bronze color palette of the Gila – along with the white-edged fins of their common but distant relative, the rainbow trout.

Like our diverse regional land forms, the evolution of the southwestern trouts seems almost random. Why would this



Courtesy Photo

### Thompson Meadow, AZ

particular fish be at this place and not that one? It seems that if a certain trout were native to our landscape, it should be all over the place right?

Of course, species differentiation doesn't really work that way. If an animal is isolated for a long enough period, it may become a species unto itself. Most of the time, this isolation is geographical, as in the Rio Grande cutthroat trout being confined to the Rio Grande basin. Gila trout evolved in the Gila River watershed, Apache trout in the Black and White River watersheds, and those systems are tributaries to the Salt River in Arizona. In other words, they occupied the same

watershed. So how did they become separate species?

The isolation of Gilas and Apaches from each other was enforced by the fact that there was habitat between them that was too hostile for either species to occupy. Each species was marooned on a "sky island", high mountain oases rising from and encircled on all sides by uninhabitable deserts. The Gila trout's island was the Gila Wilderness and surrounding high elevations.

The Apache's island was the White Mountains, which, now that I think about it, are as unique as the fish that swims in their creeks.

Brought to you by



By LORA ARCINIEGA

Run Around Dog Town Rescue is run by Sharon Borges and Chris Williams out of Costilla, NM, and represents a unique mix of an animal sanctuary, dog rescue, and a true labor of love.

Starting about nine years ago, Chris and Sharon, who at the time had just moved from Denver to Costilla, noticed all the stray dogs roaming around town. "Within three days, our first dog found us," says Chris. "We didn't plan to start off as an animal rescue, but the stray dogs were everywhere." That very first stray was named Rogue, who defied the odds and eventually was trained as a PTSD service dog.

To give his full time and energy over to the rescue, Chris left his job as a radio

technician. Sharon still holds a full-time position working for Ancianos, devoting every bit of her remaining free time to the animals.

Building the rescue required guidance, and Chris is quick to credit the local mentors who taught them the ropes. Specifically, he highlights Holly Howard, as well as Gayle and Joe Cisneros of the Northern New Mexico Friends of Animals out of Questa, as the mentors who taught them all they needed to know about rural rescue work.

As an animal rescue, some of their immediate equipment needs include heavy-duty kennels used to safely trap feral female dogs so they can be spayed. "We recently held a fundraiser at the Fishing Derby that has allowed us to purchase one heavy-duty kennel," Chris noted.

Currently housing several dogs at their property, they service areas north of Taos. Because of the sheer volume of local animals, many of their puppy litters are transferred to the Denver metro area to be adopted into forever homes, though Chris and Sharon capacity-wise

## Run Around Dog Town



Courtesy Image

### Chris Williams and Sharon Borges

cannot take on more adult dogs at the moment. Run Around Dog Town stays active on Facebook and has a website that will soon be up and running. Occasionally, they even help place cats.

Aside from their own rescue, Chris and Sharon want to stress the importance of the community utilizing the free Spay and Neuter clinic in Taos to help control the local population.

Their dedication to the community doesn't stop at animal welfare, either. Both Sharon and Chris are volunteer

firefighters, heavily active in local engagement, and involved with the annual Revive the Ride motorcycle rally—a project they are incredibly proud to support.

With several dogs currently in their care and operations funded largely out-of-pocket, community support is vital for the Costilla sanctuary. Here are a few ways you can help:

- **Follow & Share:** Keep up with real-time rescue stories and adoption updates on Facebook by searching for Run Around Dog Town.
- **Immediate Material Needs:** Donations of high-quality dog and puppy food, heavy-duty crates, and clean blankets are always welcome.
- **Foster or Donate:** With the facility currently at maximum capacity for adult dogs, the team is actively looking for local foster homes, as well as monetary donations to help cover emergency veterinary and medical bills.

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## New Mexico Wildlife Officials Urge OHV Riders to Prioritize Safety On Trails



Photo courtesy of NM Dept. of Wildlife

By MIKAYLA ORTEGA

As warmer weather and longer daylight hours draw more people outdoors, New Mexico wildlife officials are reminding off-highway vehicle riders to follow safety regulations while exploring the state's trails and public lands.

The New Mexico Department of Wildlife said operators and passengers of off-highway vehicles, or OHVs, should wear proper safety equipment and follow recommended operating guidelines to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries.

"Accident injuries can be greatly reduced when users follow the manufacturer's recommended guidelines, properly wear DOT-approved helmets, eye protection and use seatbelts," said Conservation Officer Desi Ortiz, the department's OHV program manager.

Ortiz also urged riders to remain aware of other trail users, check trail conditions before heading out and avoid excessive speed.

"The No. 1 cause of all accidents and fatalities is speed," Ortiz said. "Slow down and enjoy the Land of Enchantment."

State law requires all OHV operators younger than 18 to complete a certified OHV safety course and carry proof of completion, commonly known as a safety permit, while riding in New Mexico. Riders under 18 also must wear a securely fastened helmet approved by the Department of Trans-

portation or the Economic Commission for Europe, along with approved protective eyewear.

In addition, operators younger than 18 are prohibited from carrying passengers, even on vehicles designed to accommodate more than one person.

The department also reminded riders that it is illegal to operate an OHV on public lands while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or in a reckless, careless or negligent manner that endangers people or property.

Other prohibited activities include chasing or harassing wildlife or domestic animals, harming livestock, interfering with agricultural operations and operating an OHV in areas where local, state or federal laws prohibit vehicle use.

State regulations also require OHVs operated after dark to be equipped with functioning headlights and taillights. Vehicles must be registered, fitted with a spark arrester and comply with the state's maximum noise limit of 96 decibels.

OHVs generally are not allowed on paved roads unless authorized by a local ordinance or resolution and accompanied by a New Mexico paved road permit or valid out-of-state street registration.

Department officials encourage riders to review state regulations and safety requirements before heading out on New Mexico's trails. Additional information is available through the state's OHV safety resources.

## J&L Powersports Launches New UTV Rentals

By LORA ARCINIEGA

There is no doubt that summer has made its debut, bringing with it no shortage of off-road vehicles and people taking advantage of the sunny days. Just drive up Cabresto Canyon and you'll be sure to meet up with outdoor enthusiasts—some local, and some experiencing our terrain for the first time. When people look at a map of the Enchanted Circle, they usually notice the bigger resort towns like Taos or Red River first. But a local, family-owned business is showing why Questa is actually the perfect place to start your summer trips.

This July, we are highlighting J&L Powersports for the third month in a row, and they have some big news for our local economy and outdoor community: the official launch of J&L Rentals.

Operating right out of their main powersports shop, this new side-by-side rental business is here to provide visitors, hunters, campers, and local organizations with reliable UTV rentals so they can easily explore everything Northern New Mexico has to offer.

### Why Questa is a Great Choice

Instead of dealing with busy tourist hubs, J&L Rentals is showing why starting out in Questa just makes sense. Choosing Questa for your outdoor trips comes with some real advantages that bigger towns don't have.

Locals already know what visitors are starting to find out: Questa gives you quick access to miles of outdoor trails with a lot less traffic and congestion. It offers a quieter, more authentic experience while still being a short drive from Taos, Red River, and Eagle Nest.

For travelers, the logistics are simple. Instead of hauling heavy equipment from a town hours away, you can come straight to Questa, pick up a rental right near the trails, and get moving.

### A Look at the Rentals

A rental service is only as good as its equipment, and J&L Rentals is starting out with two tough, multi-passenger machines built for our rugged mountain terrain:

- **2024 Polaris Xpedition XP 5 Ultimate:** Built for long rides and comfort, this machine has plenty of room for multiple passengers and extra storage space for gear like coolers and camp chairs.
- **2023 Can-Am Defender Max DPS HD9:** A durable machine designed for hard work and tough trails. It is great for taking a group into the woods or hauling heavy materials like fencing supplies.

### More Than Just Trail Riding

While a lot of people think of UTVs just for weekend trail riding, these machines are useful for a lot of different jobs. J&L Rentals is already getting interest from local organizations that want to use the side-by-sides for community events and area projects. Locals and visitors are finding plenty of practical ways to use them, including:

- **Hunting and Camping:** Getting into remote campsites and packing gear in and out of hunting camps.
- **Ranch and Property Work:** Helping locals with property upkeep, fixing fences, and moving heavy materials.
- **Sightseeing and Events:** Getting a great view for photography, taking scenic tours, or helping run local events.

### Friendly Service from People Who Know the Area

When you rent a machine, having good equipment is only half of it. What makes this family-owned business stand out is how well they know our local mountains. The team at J&L Rentals doesn't just hand over the keys—they make sure you have the maps, safety tips, and information you need to navigate the area responsibly. Their goal is straightforward: provide clean, reliable machines and friendly service, so anyone heading out into the woods has the backing of neighbors who know the land.

### Ready to Ride

If you want to get out on the trails this summer, J&L Rentals is open and ready to help.

- **Location:** 2627 NM-522, Questa, NM 87556
- **Phone:** call or text: 575-586-2417



This ad has been partially paid for by J&L Powersports & sponsored by the LOR Foundation

**BODY  
MIND  
SPIRIT**



By BARBARA TRACY

**Repeat  
Performance**

After sitting quietly and rummaging through thoughts and ideas of what to write about this month, I was nudged over and over about an article I wrote in 2019 - "Bless Your Heart". Finally, I gave in and decided to re-inspire my readers with a reminder about the vulnerability of our human heart.

I was blessed to spend part of my growing up years on my grandmother, Clementines' farm in Missouri. She was a petite and very busy woman who

found time during her day to say "bless your heart," to many, be they human or animal, and she lovingly meant all three words. Think about these words, "bless your heart," and think about the profound importance of the human heart. As long as the heart beats, we are here. Yet, we unconsciously punish and injure our hearts with negative thoughts and attitudes.

The human heart resonates in a healthy way to minds that are focused on unconditional love, kindness, compassion, trust, and above all forgiveness, including forgiveness of ourselves. The Course In Miracles says, "Forgiveness is the key to happiness." Conversely the human heart and the human body suffer through thoughts focused on resentment, bitterness, grief, and anger.

It has been scientifically proven that there is a direct link between the nature of our thoughts and attitudes and the health of the human body. The following are some of the tendencies found to be common in cases of heart problems and "bless your heart" practices that can help.

- A tendency to exhaust themselves with situations and conflicts they cannot mediate, harmonize or resolve. They may avoid conflict by going along with whatever stronger, more defined personalities around them may want to do. Bless your heart - by sitting quietly and focusing on peaceful thoughts, we can build inner strength through inner dialogue with which we can look sincerely at both sides of any conflict and if a decision must be made, make it from a place of greater clarity.
- They have a loss of flexibility and interest in the outside world. They can be rigid in their thinking and have a tendency toward fixed ideas, they believe their way is the right way, possibly the only way. They have a resistance to change. Bless your heart - Focusing on heart and mind brings understanding and different possible ways of seeing and doing things. Have compassion and the ability to listen to others.
- Some have lost "heart" for life because

of their tendency to put money or position ahead of themselves and others. Bless your heart - by taking time to stop "doing" and be a human "being." Close your eyes and begin relaxing each part of the body beginning with the toes. Tell the body you are slowing everything down, including the mind. Cultivate compassion and patience for self and others.

- Some have hearts that have hardened to life and believe that strain and stress are a natural way of life. Bless your heart - by being more loving, patient, and compassionate to others as well as to yourself. Practice forgiveness especially for ourselves. Look deeply inside for everything we are grateful for.

Whenever you feel yourself drifting into negative thinking, stop, look at the thought and ask if it has value for your happiness and wellbeing. Then ask yourself, "What would be there if this thought isn't there?"

Bless your heart.

**SENIOR MENU: JULY 2026**

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		<b>1</b> Breakfast for Lunch! Scrambled Eggs w/Peppers & Onions, Pinto Beans, Salsa Wheat Toast Yogurt/Fruit Salad	<b>2</b> Pork Chop w/Gravy Wild Brown Rice, Broccoli Tossed Salad, Apple Slices	<b>3</b> <b>CLOSED</b>
<b>6</b> Shepherd's Pie Tossed Salad Roll Fresh Fruit Salad	<b>7</b> Orange Chicken Brown Rice Stir-Fry Veggies Fortune Cookie Pineapple Chunks	<b>8</b> Hamburger 3 Sisters Salad Baked Chips Fresh Pear	<b>9</b> Spicy Chicken Strips Coleslaw Cornbread Roasted Brussel Sprouts Spiced Peaches	<b>10</b> Taco Salad (Beef, Beans, Cheese, Lettuce & Tomato) Salsa Spinach Cantaloupe
<b>13</b> Lemon Pepper Fish Lemon Herb Orzo Carrots Tossed Salad Plums	<b>14</b> Taco Tuesday! Salsa Pinto Beans Spinach Fresh Pear	<b>15</b> Thai Chicken w/Peanut Sauce Brown Rice Oriental Veggies Pineapple Tidbits	<b>16</b> Garden Salad w/Chicken & Boiled Egg Ranch Dressing Roll Fruit Cocktail	<b>17</b> Beef Stroganoff w/Mushrooms Beets Tossed Salad Grapes
<b>20</b> Oven Fried Chicken Collard Greens w/Onions & Garlic Black Eyed Peas Cornbread Watermelon	<b>21</b> Chickpea Quinoa Taco Bowl Pico de Gallo Tropical Fruit Salad Blueberry Yogurt	<b>22</b> Red Beef Enchiladas Calabacitas Pinto Beans Orange	<b>23</b> Clam Chowder Tossed Salad Focaccia Bread Honeydew Fruit Salad	<b>24</b> Frito Pie Zucchini & Diced Tomatos Apricots
<b>27</b> Lemon Garlic Chicken Brown Rice Island Blend Veggies Tossed Salad Strawberries & Bananas	<b>28</b> Bean & Cheese Burrito Red Chile Garden Salad Watermelon	<b>29</b> Chicken Fettucine Alfredo Italian Blend Veggies Garden Salad Grapes	<b>30</b> Hot Turkey Sandwich Parsley Potatoes w/Gravy Capri Blend Veggies Vanilla Yogurt Spiced Pears	<b>31</b> Sloppy Joe Baked French Fries Three Beans Salad Tropical Fruit Salad



This Senior Lunch Menu applies to all Senior Centers in Taos County. Meals are cooked fresh at each location.

Lunch donations recommendations are \$1.50 and up. Lunches for people under 60 years old are \$7.50 a person.

To qualify call the Ancianos at (575) 586-0508. They will fill out an assessment and file an application.

Currently, exercise classes are not available.

**Donations for transportation are encouraged.**

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PLEASE NOTE THAT THE MENU IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE



**LIVE  
LOVE  
LAUGH**

by Ellen Wood  
a.k.a. Maruška

**Put Your Life on  
Cruise Control**

I was driving home from Taos last week and realized how grateful I was to have cruise control on my car. Driving is so much easier when I don't have to control the gas pedal on long rides – I just let the car do that for me.

And then I got to wondering about the mystery of life and how unexpected difficulties happen.

Unexpectedly fabulous things happen too, but we handle them just fine with a smile on our face and thrill in our heart. What if we could approach all the events of our life with that joy?

Imagine sailing along on Cruise Control, being present and doing what needs to be done – but not worrying about anything – trusting the Universe

(you can substitute the word God or Life for the Universe) to handle the whole shebang while we cruise along enjoying the fun and adventure of living.

Sounds like a good idea, but is it realistic? It might work for a day or maybe only a few hours, or minutes, but then something out of the blue hits us and we get mired in the muck and ditch the Cruise Control. Yep, we get to thinking that we can do a better job when we control the gas and brakes, and we end up jerking along through rough roads.

I've been doing that recently, even though I know that stress is the number one aging factor. So, to start turning over some of that control and stay consistently aware of my current state of being, I created some affirmations and put them on sticky notes around the house. When I see the affirmations I remember to move my focus to Cruise Control and I watch for signs that it's happening. A couple of the sticky notes say:

- I am on Cruise Control. I let the Universe drive and I enjoy the ride.
- I watch thoughts go by and I listen for promptings from the Universe.

But how do I keep myself motivated to accomplish these goals? I decided I needed a reward if I did them for the



Gemini generated image

week and a penalty if I didn't. I'm almost embarrassed to tell you my reward/penalty because it involves ice cream and political-junky TV so let's just say I'm very diligent about keeping up my checklist.

For the first two weeks I did have to endure the penalty because my meditations didn't happen five days those weeks. So, I decided to go easier on myself and changed it to meditating at least four days a week. The funny thing is, since I changed it to four days, I've been meditating seven days a week. And since "entertainment politics" no longer

amuses me, I curtailed political TV. But promptings are coming to me now so I'm writing them down. Amazing how it all works! If you'd like to put yourself on Cruise Control, try this method and feel the freedom.

*Ellen Wood of Questa, known artistically as Maruska, is an award-winning author celebrated for her transformative book series, The Secret Method for Growing Younger. Her latest release, Five Tibetan Rites – The Right Way, continues her mission to inspire youthfulness. All titles are available at [www.howtogrowyounger.com](http://www.howtogrowyounger.com). To contact Ellen, email her at [ellen@howtogrowyounger.com](mailto:ellen@howtogrowyounger.com).*

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# New Dentist Dr. Michael McCormack Arrives at Questa PMS Clinic

By LORA ARCINIEGA

Dr. Michael McCormack, DDS, has officially arrived in Questa and is ready to welcome new patients. His arrival follows the retirement of Dr. Garrett Campbell, who served the community for about two years, leaving a brief gap in care while the Presbyterian Medical Services (PMS) clinic awaited its new dentist.

Dr. McCormack brings an approachable personality and a genuine dedication to his patients. Rounding out his skilled team are dental hygienist Sue Kiermont and dental assistant Michelle Pacheco. Kiermont is a familiar and trusted face who has been proudly serving the dental needs of our area for many years. Pacheco has also been a steady presence for local patients, having worked for five years with Dr. Jameson until his retirement before joining PMS about a year ago. Together, this dedicated team of dental professionals is ready to provide high-quality care right here at home, saving residents from having to travel to Taos,

Santa Fe, or Albuquerque.

Dentistry is a second career for Dr. McCormack, who feels he has truly found his calling. Originally working in the IT field, he realized he wanted a change and felt drawn to healthcare—specifically dentistry.

“Being a patient myself in the past, I knew I wanted to make the experience an enjoyable one for my patients,” he said.

After earning his degree from the University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine, Dr. McCormack went on to practice in various locations, including Eugene, Oregon; Denver, Colorado; and Farmington, New Mexico. Now commuting from Taos, he specializes in extractions, crowns, and bridges, alongside standard routine dental care.

The clinic is open to patients of all ages, from young children to the elderly, with a strong focus on comfort.

“I never want to introduce dental trauma to our children,” Dr. McCormack emphasized. “If a child needs specialized care, we will refer them to a



Photo by Lora Arciniega

Dr. Michael McCormack, DDS

pediatric dentist.”

He and his team are eager to serve Questa and the surrounding areas, aiming to make every appointment as stress-free as possible. “I want to create a positive experience for patients,” he shared. “There might even be a bad joke thrown in there during your visit.”

Ultimately, Dr. McCormack enjoys



Photo by Lora Arciniega

Dental assistant Michelle Pacheco

the region and plans to stay for the long haul. “We’re here to get people the treatment they need,” he said.

The clinic provides a wide range of services, including comprehensive exams, preventive care, fillings, extractions, crowns, bridges, and dentures, with options for urgent care visits and is currently accepting new patients.

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# Fitness For All

By PAUL PASSINO

## 5X5 WEIGHT TRAINING PROGRAM

I've listed many programs of weight training using light or heavy weights. Most programs should involve lifting weights to failure or close to it—meaning you continue the exercise until your muscles are so completely exhausted that you physically cannot perform another repetition with good form. The reason for this is to recruit more muscle fibers to complete the total amount of repetitions.

One program that can be performed is the 5x5 program. This program is very demanding and requires heavy weight with low reps. Because of this, two body parts can be done in one day with a day of rest in between.

### The Schedule: example

**Week 1:** Mon., Wed., Fri., Sun.

**Week 2:** Tue., Thu., Sat. ...and so on.

### How to Perform the Program

- **The Warm-Up:** Always start with a light weight for a warm up set for at least 8-10 reps. If needed, do another warm up set before beginning the actual 5x5 program.
- **The Weight:** The program begins with adding as much weight as one can perform for 5 reps for the first set.
- **The Rest:** After, rest until you can breathe normally or if you can't get

5 reps on the next set, then you will need a longer rest time. Now that you have an idea of what the program consists of, I will illustrate the program breakdown.

### PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

#### CHEST/TRICEPS (Monday)

- incline bench press 5x5
- flat db bench press 5x5
- flat bench EZ bar skull crushers 5x5
- standing 1 db overhead extension 5x5

#### BACK/BICEPS (Wednesday)

- standing barbell bent over row 5x5
- close grip seated pulldown 5x5
- standing barbell curl 5x5
- incline seated db hammer curl 5x5

#### QUADS/HAMSTRINGS (Friday)

- leg press 5x5
- hack squat 5x5
- leg curl 5x5
- barbell romanian deadlift 5x5

#### SHOULDERS/ABS (Sunday)

- Seated db press 5x5
- Db upright rows 5x5
- Hanging straight leg raises 5x5
- Cable crunch 5x5

### AS ALWAYS, STAY ACTIVE AND BE IN CONTROL OF YOUR MIND, BODY & SOUL

*Paul Passino has a Bachelors of Science degree in human performance and sport with a health, education, and coaching minor, as well as 45 hours of sports administration and over 23 years of teaching P.E., weight training, and coaching.*



By J. ORTEGA

### WIDOW'S BAY

Starring: Matthew Rhys, Stephen Root, and Kate O'Flynn

Created and Directed by Katie Dippold and Hiro Murai

Streaming on Apple TV

### First Impression:

Apple TV has really hit it out of the park with their surprise hit series Widows Bay, a genre-bending comedy/thriller/horror. I have genuinely never seen anything quite like it on any streamer. The way it blends elements of comedy, horror, and mystery so seamlessly is a treasure to behold. It reminded me of the workplace comedy Parks and Recreation that got dropped into the middle of the Stephen King universe—and somehow, it works brilliantly. This is by far one of the best shows to premiere this year and I can't wait for you all to enjoy it.

When I stumbled upon the show Widows Bay, it was totally by accident. I was genuinely thinking of canceling my subscription to Apple TV due to the lack of quality original shows and movies. I kept the service because I enjoyed the shows Severance and Pluribus (filmed in and around Albuquerque), but both shows had ended their respective seasons and I thought I was ready to cancel and rejoin when they returned. Boy, was I happy I didn't cancel, because Widows Bay turned out to be just as good and, surprisingly, more watchable than both Severance and Pluribus combined. And that's kind of what frustrates me with Apple TV in

general: whenever they have an exciting new show or original movie, they never properly promote it! It's like they expect you to stumble around in the dark until you find something good. I know Apple is a multi-billion-dollar conglomerate, but still, Apple, hey—promote your shows. More people need to know about quality when quality is there.

Anyway, moving on to Widows Bay: it's set in the seaside island town off the coast of Maine where ambitious mayor Tom Loftis (Rhys) is obsessed with making Widows Bay the next Martha's Vineyard, but the island has many dark secrets that are still unraveling to this day. We are accompanied by a great group of actors, from Stephen Root as the resident curmudgeon who doesn't want tourists to invade the town—he thinks it's dangerous, and he's proven right throughout the series. We also see breakout character Patricia, played by the underrated Kate O'Flynn, who has some memorable episodes based around her quirky and intense character.

The episodes of Widows Bay are short compared to most streaming shows coming out today, with an average runtime of 35 to 40 minutes, so it's very easy to binge the whole show rather fast. And it's also very rewatchable; you pick up new things and Easter eggs that tie to other episodes that you may have missed upon first watch.

I rarely review television shows, but when I find a good one, it's worth letting you know. Widows Bay is fun and funny, scary and thrilling, and it doesn't necessarily have to sacrifice one aspect of itself to enhance the other. Hopefully, you find it just as amazing as I did.

**FINAL VERDICT: 5 OUT OF 5 STARS**



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*This ad was made possible by the Taos County Lodgers Tax Grant*



Warm summer weather is here and that means grill weather! While this recipe starts in the oven, the ribs are best finished on a grill while mopping with sauce. Serve with a summer succotash and allow the aroma of the bbq ribs to bring all the family outside.

## BBQ PORK RIBS WITH SUMMER SUCCOTASH PORK RIBS

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 racks pork spare ribs (or baby back ribs), about 5–6 lbs
- 2 tbsp kosher salt
- 2 tbsp brown sugar
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 2 tsp granulated garlic
- 2 tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp mustard powder
- 2 tsp NM red chile powder

### BBQ SAUCE

#### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup ketchup
- 1/2 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup molasses
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- Salt to taste

### SUMMER SUCCOTASH

#### INGREDIENTS

- 2 ears fresh corn, kernels cut off
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

- 1 small zucchini, diced
- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, diced
- 2 tbsp shallot, minced
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp fresh basil, sliced
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Salt and black pepper to taste

### RIBS

#### INSTRUCTIONS

##### 1. PREP THE RIBS

- Combine salt, sugar, paprika, garlic, onion powder, pepper, mustard, and cayenne.
- Rub generously over both sides.
- Let sit at least 1 hour (overnight in fridge preferred).

##### 2. SLOW COOK

- Wrap tightly in foil.
- Bake at 275°F for 2 1/2–3 hours until tender but not falling apart.

##### 3. MAKE SAUCE

- Combine all sauce ingredients in a pot.
- Simmer for 20 minutes on low until thickened.

##### 4. FINISH

- Brush ribs heavily with sauce.
- Grill for 5–8 minutes until caramelized. Rest 10 minutes before slicing.

### SUCCOTASH

#### INSTRUCTIONS

Heat butter and olive oil. Cook shallot and bell pepper until softened. Add zucchini and corn; cook 3–4 minutes. Fold in beans and tomatoes. Add herbs and lemon juice. Season with salt and pepper.

*Brendalee (Vialpando) Reiplinger is a Questa native who has worked her way up the culinary ladder and is currently executive chef at The Lodge at Bodega Bay, located off the Sonoma Coast in CA. Brendalee credits her hospitality and joy of preparing food from her upbringing in Questa.*



Gemini generated image

**OBITUARIES**



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**John Lapin**  
**d. May 25, 2026**

John Grattin Lapin was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1951. His mother was Mary Elisabeth Woodcock who worked in bridal fashion after losing her fiancé to World War II. Then she met and married Raymond Harold Lapin.

John's father Ray was a banking executive who eventually worked under the Nixon Administration. His design and structure of Fannie Mae, the financial instrument that enabled millions of Americans to buy homes, led The New York Times to call him "the father of the secondary mortgage market." He was also on Nixon's enemies list. The tumultuous life of Washington took Mary back to San Francisco; her son in tow. Happily captaining a folk boat and crew John sailed into readiness for college. He soon earned

a degree in city planning from the University of California at Santa Cruz; but later, coached by his father, worked as an investment banker in New York City, Washington D.C., Los Angeles, and London. He moved to Taos County in 1998 choosing to reside in Costilla where he raised cattle and goats; and created the restaurant Latitude 37, hiring the brilliant chef Kathy Brown and providing lots of employment. He also took a position as mayordomo and Treasurer on the Acequia Madre de Rio Costilla, a duty he loved and kept at until his death. He was generous, kind, dependable, witty and difficult, an excessively intelligent man.

He is survived by his wife, that poet Deirdra Baldwin (Lapin), and family: Calvin Nall, Anthony Baldwin Horne and wife Samantha Kim, his cousin Dave Woodcock and family, Paris Pacchione, Monica Walker, Cosmo Pacchione and Nicco Pacchione, Jeanette Learn, Cassandra Noel, Jerrod Dustin Elliot, and Kenneth Rowison.

The family of John Grattin Lapin has entrusted the care of their loved one to the caring staff of DeVargas Funeral Home of Taos.

**CEMETERY** cont'd from page 3

tions to come."

The transition represents more than a change in management. It reflects a commitment to preserving an important piece of Questa's heritage while ensuring that families continue to have a peaceful and dignified place to remember those who came before them.

"Taking on this responsibility is both an honor and a commitment that I don't take lightly," Gonzalez said. "El Pueblito Cemetery is the final resting place of generations of Questeños, including many veterans who made tremendous sacrifices for our country. My husband, Jason, is a veteran himself, so honoring those who served has always been especially meaningful to our family."

Through Vida del Norte Coalition, Gonzalez hopes to build a model of long-term stewardship that honors both the cemetery's historical significance and the families who rely on it.

"This responsibility is about much more than mowing grass or repairing fences," she said. "It's about preserving our community's history, honoring those who came before us, and ensuring that every family has a peaceful, beautiful place to remember and celebrate the lives of their loved ones. We owe that to those who rest there today, and to the generations who will visit for years to come."

Families needing to schedule an interment or arrange cemetery services may contact Maria Gonzalez at (575) 779-2260.

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# COMMUNITY CALENDAR • JULY 2026

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO EVERYONE BORN IN JULY!

**JULY 2: THUR NOON - 1 PM**  
**QBB FREE Workshop: Bridge the Digital Gap: Tech support with Monica McClelland** @ Questa Public Library. Email QBB-Coordinator@qedf.com. See ad on page 9

**JULY 4: SAT**  
**Happy Independence Day!**  
 Local events list in article on page 6

**JULY 5: SUN 10 AM - 2 PM**  
**The Questa Farmers Market** is inviting the community to gather for a special "Interdependence Day" event dedicated to honoring local emergency responders and military veterans. See article on page 4

**JULY 7: TUE 9:30 - 11:30 AM**  
**Questa Public Library Summer Reading Program BONUS DAYS!** @ Questa Public Library. Dino Grafitti with Mark Lewis Wagner. See ad on page 19

**JULY 9: THUR 5:30 PM**  
**Free/By Donation - Two Stepping Class** with Mile Hinton, for beginners (dance barefoot, socks or slippers) in person only. @ Yoga Sala - 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**5:30 - 7 PM**  
**QBB FREE Workshop: Public Speaking & Presenting (Pitch Contest Prep)** with Rachel Gift, UNM @ Questa Public Library. Email QBB-Coordinator@qedf.com. See ad on page 11

**JULY 10: FRI 9:30 - 11:30 AM**  
**Questa Public Library Summer Reading Program BONUS DAYS!** @ Questa Public Library. Ice Age America with Ziggy Prothro - OAS See ad on page 19

**JULY 11: SAT 2 - 4 PM**  
**Voces de Nuestro Pais** Pais event and podcast will feature brothers Joseph and Ricky León @ Questa Public Library. Can't attend in person? Episodes are also available as a podcast on YouTube, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, and Amazon Music. More information at <https://questastories.org/> See ad on page 20

**JULY 14: TUE 9:30 - 11:30 AM**  
**Questa Public Library Summer Reading Program BONUS DAYS!** @ Questa Public Library. Wonders on Wheels! America's 250th Birthday. See ad on page 15

**JULY 15: WED 9 AM - 5 PM**  
**FREE Tech help with setting up your Questa Credit Union App** Set up, features, snacks and door prizes. @ Questa Credit Union. See ad on page 18

**3 - 4 PM**  
**FREE Fraud Prevention Seminar** Protecting our community together. Hosted by the Questa Credit Union and the Better Business Bureau @ Questa Public Library. See ad on page 11

**JULY 16: THUR APPT ONLY**  
**QBB FREE Workshop: 1:1 Confidential Business Consulting w/ Anwar Kaelin** @ Questa Public Library. Email QBB-Coordinator@qedf.com. See ad on page 9

**JULY 17: FRI 9:30 - 11:30 AM**  
**Questa Public Library Summer Reading Program BONUS DAYS!** @ Questa Public Library. Eagle Rock Lake Adventure Day w/ Claire Côté See ad on page 19

**JULY 18: SAT 1 - 3 PM**  
**2026 Questa Art Tour Preview Show Reception** @ Questa Public Library. Show dates: July 18 - Aug 13. See article on page 16

**5:30 PM**  
**Free/By Donation - Two Stepping Class** with Mile Hinton, for beginners (dance barefoot, socks or slippers) in person only. @ Yoga Sala - 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**JULY 23: THUR 5:30 PM**  
**QBB Pitch Contest Prep Class: How to write a Pitch/Elevator Speech with Marco Schmitt (mandatory)** @ Questa Public Library. Contact LynnSkall@questaedf.com for more info. See ad on page 11

## Weekly Events

### SUNDAY

Refer to the Area Church Directory (on this page) for a list of local church and temples

**9 AM**  
**Qigong**, with Julian, in person, in person, \$10-\$15 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**10 AM - 2 PM**  
**Questa Farmers Market. Every Sunday featuring local produce, art & music Every Sunday. Join us @1 HWY 38, Questa, NM. More info visit <https://questafarmersmarket.org/>**

### MONDAY

**10 AM**  
**Community Seated Yoga Practice NO CLASS JULY 6 - Free/By Donation** with Gaea, in person only. 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**5 PM**  
**Free/By Donation Community Yoga**, gentle practice with Rae, in person only. 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. For more info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**6 - 7 PM**  
**FREE Mariachi Lessons**, with Rachel León. Beginners: In person only. Located @ Rael's Coffee Shop. Contact (575) 779-0565 or email [vozdeoro2017@gmail.com](mailto:vozdeoro2017@gmail.com) for more info. See ad on page 9.

**7-8 PM**  
**FREE Mariachi Lessons**, with Rachel León. Advanced: In person only. Located @ Rael's Coffee Shop. Contact (575) 779-0565 or email [vozdeoro2017@gmail.com](mailto:vozdeoro2017@gmail.com) for more info. See ad on page 9.

**7 PM**  
**Kickboxing**, with Reto in person only, sliding scale \$5-15 All classes free for teens. 2331 State Hwy 522, Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

### TUESDAY

Nothing Posted at time of publishing

### WEDNESDAY

**9 AM**  
**Gentle morning yoga** - with Gaea, in person and online, \$10-\$15 2331 State Hwy 522, Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**11 AM**  
**Power yoga** - with Gaea, in person only, \$10-\$15 2331 State Hwy 522, Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**2:30 - 4:45 PM**  
**BEGINS JULY 8th - Wings & Wildflowers - Dance Camp Free/By Donation w/ Monica.** Ages 5-12. Dance & Choreography, snack provided, Hosted by our nonprofit, Sala Reach, Costume making with artist Rae Lewis & Designer-seamstress Tatyana De Pavloff. 2331 State Hwy 522, Questa, NM. Register on our website [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

**6 - 7 PM**  
**FREE Mariachi Lessons**, with Rachel León. Beginners: In person only. Located @ Rael's Coffee Shop. Contact (575) 779-0565 or email [vozdeoro2017@gmail.com](mailto:vozdeoro2017@gmail.com) for more info. See ad on page 9.

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**7 PM**  
**Kickboxing**, with Reto in person only, sliding scale \$5-15 All classes FREE for teens. 2331 State Hwy 522, Questa, NM. More info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

### THURSDAY

**6 PM**  
**Thursday Night Jam Session at Rael's Market & Coffee House**, 2430 NM-522, Questa. Bring your instrument to jam or just bring yourself and enjoy. Free! Info: call (575) 779-9249

### FRIDAY

**5:30 PM**  
**Yoga, Stretch & Balance NO CLASS ON MAY 1** with Jiwanshakt, in person only, \$10-15. 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. For more info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

### SATURDAY

**10 AM**  
**Free Community Tai Chi**, with Reto, in person only, 2331 State Hwy 522 Questa, NM. For more info visit [yogasalaquesta.org](http://yogasalaquesta.org)

# CHURCH & TEMPLE DIRECTORY



River Community Church exists to glorify God and make disciples by sacrificially serving families in the Village of Questa, NM in a way that produces a culture of community.

[www.rccquesta.org](http://www.rccquesta.org)

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## QUESTA

### ST. ANTHONY DE PADUA CHURCH

Rev. Jason Pettigrew (575) 586-0470  
 Sunday 8 a.m.  
 Sunday noon mass

### MISSION CHURCHES OF ST. ANTHONY'S:

Costilla - Sagrado Corazon - Sunday 10 a.m.  
 Cerro - Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe  
 2nd & 4th Saturdays 4 p.m.  
 Amalia - Santo Niño - 1st & 3rd Saturdays 4 p.m.

### FREEDOM CENTER CHURCH

2558 Hwy 522, Questa  
 Sunday Service 11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
 (575) 770-1714  
 Visit us online: [freedomquesta.com](http://freedomquesta.com)

### LIVING WORD MINISTRIES

Pastors Peter and Gayle Martinez  
 12 Llano Road, Questa  
 Service: Sunday 10:30 a.m.  
 Nursery and Kids' Church at 10:30 a.m.  
 Wednesday Bible Study 7 p.m.  
[www.lwmsite.org](http://www.lwmsite.org) (575) 586-1587

### RIVER COMMUNITY CHURCH

Pastor Jesse Hardy, 65 S Kiowa Rd, Questa, NM  
 87556 List of events and services at [rccquesta.org/community](http://rccquesta.org/community)

### THEOSOPHY

Northern New Mexico Alice Bailey Study Group.  
 Sunday and Wednesday 10 a.m.- noon on Zoom.  
 For more info, contact Francis at [oeahoo17@gmail.com](mailto:oeahoo17@gmail.com)

### QUESTA CHURCH OF CHRIST

2 miles north of Questa on State Road 522  
 Sunday Bible Class Sunday 9:30 a.m.  
 followed by worship at 10:15 a.m.

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### KAGYU MILA GURU SANGHA

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 Chenrezig both in-person and on Zoom.  
 For more info

[www.earthjourney.org](http://www.earthjourney.org) or contact Gabrielle at [info@earthjourney.org](mailto:info@earthjourney.org) or (575) 770-1682

### PATH OF LOVE

Sunday 7:30 a.m. class and meditation in-person north of Questa or on Zoom. For more info: [gabrielle.herbertson@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielle.herbertson@gmail.com)

## AMALIA

### SANTO NIÑO MISSION CHURCH

1st & 3rd Saturdays 4 p.m. April - September  
 12 Santo Nino Rd, El Prado, NM 87529

### ABUNDANT LIFE CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.  
 Potluck & Fellowship 3rd Sunday of the month  
 Highway 196, Amalia, Pastors: Lorenzo & Arleen Lucero (575) 770-5716

## RED RIVER

### FAITH MOUNTAIN FELLOWSHIP

100 Copper King Trail, Corner of River St & Copper King Trail - Sunday 10:30 a.m.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF RED RIVER

103 High Cost Trail  
 Sundays 8:15 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.  
 Pastor Joe Phillips (575) 754-2882

### ST. EDWIN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

North end of Silver Bell Trail, Red River  
 Saturday 6 p.m. (Confession prior to Mass or by appt.) Father Pettigrew (575) 586-0470



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# DINING GUIDE

**QUESTA**



- Thursday Night Jam Session - 6pm
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# NOTICES

## Jobs

**PT Coordinator wanted for the Questa Business Bridge** for hands-on orchestration of workshops and training sessions, event promotion, attendees' coordination, more. Approx 20 hours/month, up to \$500/month. Send email with resume to [lynn@questaedf.com](mailto:lynn@questaedf.com).

**Distribution Coordinator needed for Questa del Rio News.** Work approx 2-3 days/month starting at \$300/month. Paperwork, deliver papers, coordinate volunteers. Must have own car; distribution days vary at the end of each month. Send email expressing interest to [lynn@questaedf.com](mailto:lynn@questaedf.com).

**Be an Intern, learn skills, have fun. for Internship at the Questa Farmers Market** email [growersmakers@gmail.com](mailto:growersmakers@gmail.com).

**Learn the business of local agriculture in Cerro.** For positions and more info visit [Cultivocultivoproject.org/jobs](http://Cultivocultivoproject.org/jobs).

**Free Transportation-** Free transportation for qualified seniors is available Monday through Thursday. Donations are encouraged. Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for information.

**Food Pantry-** North Central New Mexico Food Pantry: second and fourth Fridays, 10 a.m. to noon at 140 Embargo Rd. in Questa. If you need an emergency food box or other information, please call Jeannie Masters (575) 586-0486 or (575) 779-9194; or Nancy Parker (575) 586-2096 or (505) 699-7563. To make a donation, go to [ncfpquesta.com](http://ncfpquesta.com) or mail to: North Central Food Pantry, PO Box 1076, Questa, NM 87556. For more information, please email [wrmesquire2@gmail.com](mailto:wrmesquire2@gmail.com). If you would like to volunteer, please call Jeannie (numbers above).

**Spay Taos: FREE Spay & Neuter Service for all cats and dogs.** Description of Services: spay or neuter, vaccines included if needed, microchip included if needed, e-collar if appropriate, aftercare for surgery related complications. 36 Highway 522, El Prado, NM. North of the 'Old Blinking Light,' directly opposite Taos Veterinary Clinic. Call (575) 240-8549 or email [spaytaos@gmail.com](mailto:spaytaos@gmail.com) or visit [spaytaos.org](http://spaytaos.org). *If you want to volunteer, duties include: Check in 7:30-9:00, Check out 12:00-3:30, Recovery monitoring 8:45-2:30, Instrument pack cleaning and sterilization 9:00-3:00, Cleaning 1:30-3:30. Outreach on your own schedule or for events. Training provided. Contact spaytaos@gmail.com for more information.*

## Notices

**AA MEETING: Questa** Sundays 10-11 a.m., Questa Youth Center

**AA MEETING: Red River** Tuesdays 7-8 p.m., 417 E. High St. (Erik's Workshop)

**Questa Senior Center Lunches-** served from noon to 1 p.m. and the recommended donation is upward of \$1.50 each. Lunch is no longer served to-go. Questa Senior Center, 148 Embargo Rd, Questa. Call (575) 586-0508 for more information.



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