

Start Exploring: Grab Our Cludcroft Map in the LOCAL GUIDE, pg 12

February 2026

Mountain Monthly

Your Guide to Cludcroft and the Sacramento Mountains

FREE



Cloudcroft Fitness Instructors Amy Coor (L) and Audrey Menzel (R) write down wall-sit personal best times to beat.

Hard Work, Shared

At Cludcroft Fitness, the challenge is real—but you're never doing it alone

by Hannah Dean photographs by Bre Kincaid

In the basement of Cludcroft's village library, a different kind of community gathering takes place six days a week.

Here, between the rhythms boosting energetic exercisers on spinning bikes and the clink of barbells, instructors **Audrey Menzel** and **Amy Coor** have built something that transcends typical gym culture—a fitness family bound by encouragement and the shared understanding that growth happens together.

"We would not have worked that hard if we weren't together," Menzel explains after back-to-back spin and barbell classes, capturing the philosophy that drives Cludcroft Fitness.

The studio offers classes for fitness levels from beginner to advanced, led by three instructors with distinct areas of expertise. Menzel, who has taught group fitness for 20 years, focuses on spin and core classes.

Coor leads full-body barbell work and high-intensity interval training, drawing on 15 years of instruction experience.

Gail McCoy rounds out the team with classes geared to

ward seniors, beginners, and those seeking low-impact mobility work—proving that this space welcomes all capabilities.

Coor's own athletic resume reveals the endurance mindset she brings to instruction. She's won the Texas marathon mountain biking series, claimed the New Mexico off-road endurance series twice, quit counting after running over 50 half-marathons, ran several marathons, placed at her one-and-only triathlon ("not my thing"), and once completed a punishing 100-kilometer run at the Capitan 34-hour endurance race.

As the leader of Cludcroft's High Altitude Mountain Bike team and coach for the school's cross country and track programs, she understands firsthand what bodies can achieve with proper support.

"Mentality is huge because your body is so powerful," Coor says. "But you do have to train it properly."

Menzel says the most difficult competition she's ever done was the Trails and Rails run, an 8-mile deep dive into the local trail systems and straight back out with serious inclines.

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Mayor Dusty Wiley

His first interview since taking office, p. 9

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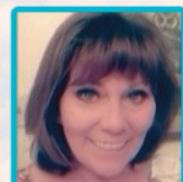


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The Cloudcroft Fitness studio's accessibility reflects its community-first approach. Classes run \$10 each, with package options of five or ten sessions or unlimited monthly access for \$60. Students receive 50 percent off.

They offer classes both in the mornings and after work, accommodating a range of schedules.

Their community extends beyond class sessions. When someone stops showing up, instructors notice. "We do always check on people," Coor notes.

This network proved especially meaningful for Menzel after her daughter Karter Ann's car wreck just over a year ago. The accident left the teen in critical condition and a long recovery—which she has made fully, now—and left Menzel struggling to return to teaching. Coor brought her back.

"We just don't let each other disappear," Menzel says.

The welcoming culture counters gym intimidation. "Zero judgment," Coor emphasizes.

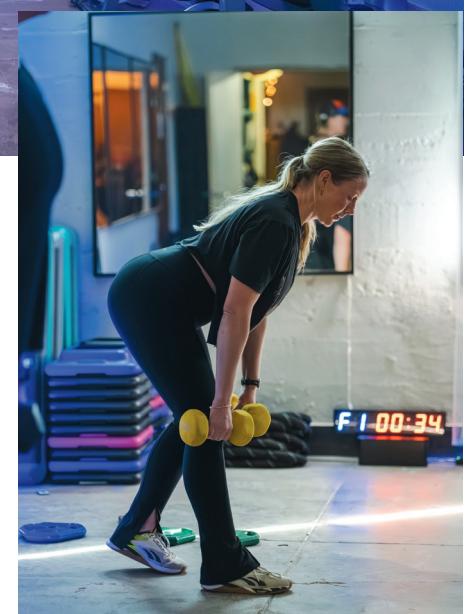
Menzel adds the leveling truth: "This is hard for you. It's hard for me. It's not easy. We're just all in it together."

Even instructors attend each other's classes specifically so they can complain about the difficulty—something they can't do while teaching.

Classes accommodate ages fourteen and up—"consult your physician," they both emphasize—Instructors show modifications for every fitness level. Beginners can take cycling classes a little bit easier while advanced athletes push harder. The space fits up to nine for barbell work, more for spinning.

They speak not of weight loss but of feeling strong, of gaining a different relationship with their bodies and food. Menzel notes that her own body changes become noticeable only when she focuses on feeling good rather than looking different. "It's about feeling," she says.

For those hesitant to enter, Coor offers her personal motto: "If it doesn't chal-



Cloudcroft Fitness offers a variety of courses in spin, lifting, cardio, mobility, and strength-training.

lenge you, it doesn't change you."

In Cloudcroft Fitness, that challenge comes wrapped in community support, making the hard work not just bearable, but something worth showing up for again and again.

Learn more and register for classes: <https://cloudcroftcycling.punchpass.com/classes>. Read a previous interview with Cloudcroft Fitness instructor and Village Trustee Gail McCoy at CloudcroftReader.com



Rachel Alm goes for her personal best time wall-sitting.





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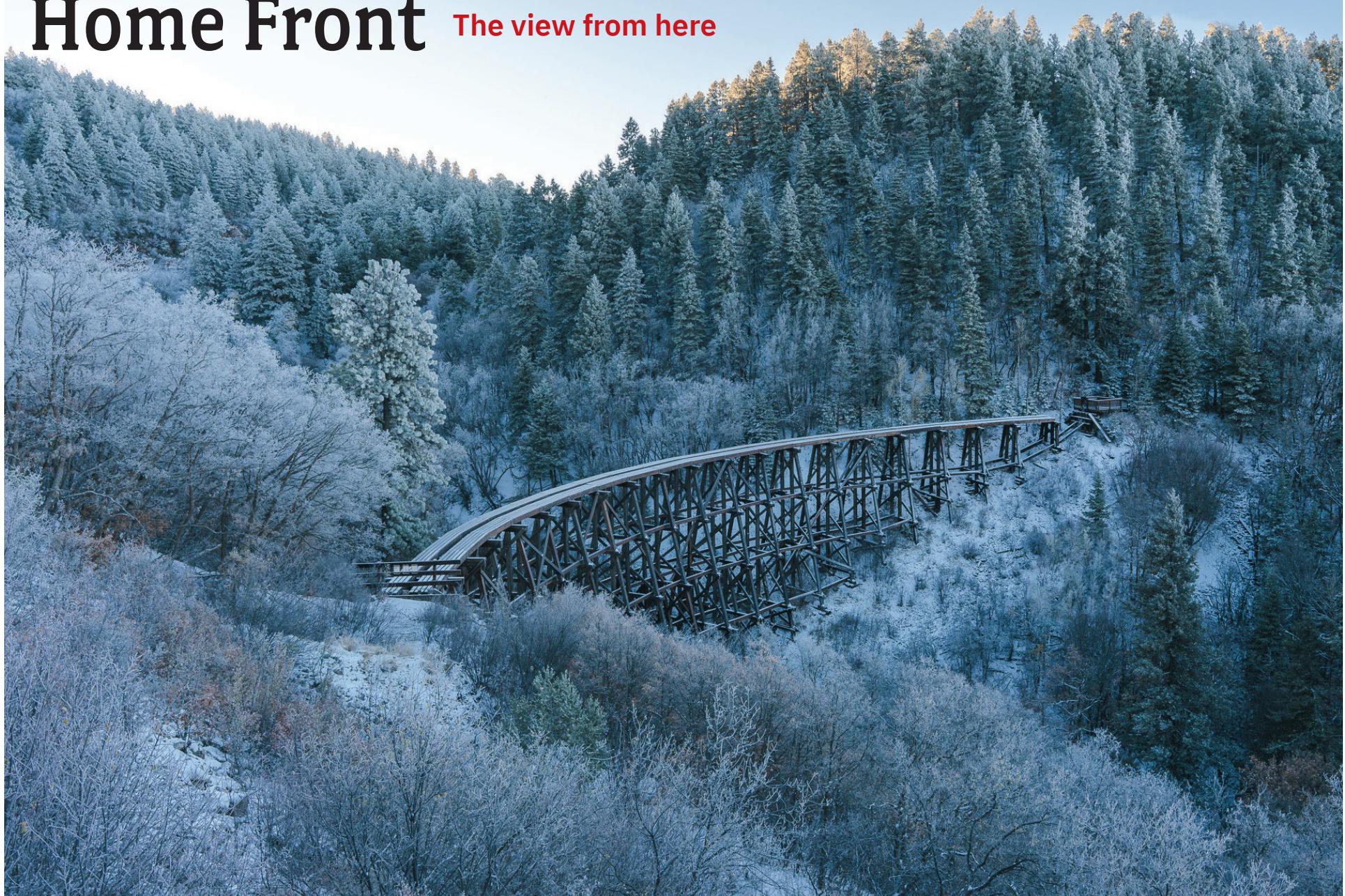
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Home Front

The view from here



The mountain finally sees some winter weather in late January. Image: Sam Seth, Trestle in Snow (Prints available for purchase at High Altitude)

Dear Readers,

This month, we're spotlighting the people in Cloudcroft who work well with others—massage therapists, salon owners, yoga instructors, strength trainers, and healthcare on the mountain.



Bodywork is intimate. It requires trust, often in moments when you need help or care. These folks create space—quiet rooms and attentive presence—designed specifically for stopping.

Running a business here requires commitment. The client base is small, the economics are tight, and you're building relationships that extend beyond appointments.

Your doctor sees you at the post office. Your trainer knows, maybe even coaches, your kids. Your salon is where you

go to feel your best. What matters is that these practitioners chose Cloudcroft—invested in equipment, training, and space—and stayed.

That's a story worth telling.

Extra, Off the Press

Last month, we focused on food and what brings us together—by getting to know the bakers, makers, and artisans on the mountain.

We debuted the village's charm in print with Rand Carlson's hand-drawn map. Rand shared his story, his art, and how he got to Cloudcroft with all of us. We get to chuckle at and think about his Switchbacks cartoons each month.

Three months into new ownership, we're refining our editorial approach. The focus is local: businesses operating in Cloudcroft, people who live and work on the mountain, and the practical and particular details of this community. Our focus is on the Sacramento Moun-

tains—the local environment, government, events, people, school, and history.

Catch up with village government decisions, the fire department, and library in Mountain News. See your neighbors in Mountain Life. Scan our pages for local photography, art, writing, and design.

We're publishing our village well and springs reports. We're reporting on the local housing market. And we're continuing to listen to the community and what information they crave.

We're expanding our distribution and printing more copies than ever—and have made these reports, village voices, and community features free to all.

We're interested in what's actually happening here, reported clearly.

Thanks for joining us as we continue to sharpen our focus.



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Switchbacks by Rand Carlson





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203	11 x 13 = 143 sq ft	\$400.00
204	10 x 15 = 150 sq ft	\$400.00
206	10 x 15 = 150 sq ft	\$400.00
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Public Works Supervisor Joe John "JJ" Carrizal and employee Kris Parks install a water pipe isolation valve in the village.

Water Emergency: The Hunt for a Million-Gallon Leak

Public Works Supervisor JJ Carrizal delivers a sobering report to the village council before they vote on emergency funding. Plus, key takeaways from the January 20 Council Meeting.

The village is bleeding roughly a million gallons of water per month from a leak that's proven nearly impossible to locate in frozen winter conditions—a crisis that has Public Works Supervisor JJ Carrizal working through the nights to monitor dangerously low tank levels.

The council unanimously approved an emergency contract with Oasis Enterprises for as-needed water hauling at \$759.17 per load—a discounted rate secured from a current Bureau of Reclamation grant contract that expires this Thursday.

The search for leaks is brutal, as the Reader witnessed on site mid-January.

Frozen ground has turned routine excavation into an endurance test for the small Public Works team. Employees work knee-deep in water, in freezing conditions, to repair leaks and replace valves.

"Today, we're digging up a potential spot that we got a hit on, and normally, it takes us an hour to dig. Because of the ground being frozen, it's taking us about three to four hours to dig just through the first foot," Carrizal told the trustees.

"Water up here does not rise. It goes down to the rocks, the bottom. That's why it's hard for us to find these leaks out here," he said.

Rural Water Association "circuit riders" joined the effort Monday and returned Tuesday to help cover additional areas. Carrizal said their equipment isn't superior to the village's—just additional hands-on-deck for the search.

"Back in the days, they didn't install isolation valves when they were supposed to. But we're trying to install them now so that we can pinpoint or narrow down the section of town where this leak is," Carrizal explained.

Last week, crews isolated the Woodlands and Sugar Pine section by effectively cutting that neighborhood out of the distribution system, narrowing the search zone. Tuesday's plan: read meters to identify homes with old meters that might harbor leaks.

The Numbers Tell the Story

According to Carrizal, the village is losing 30-40 gallons per minute—"right under a million gallons a month."

"What we're producing is reaching our tanks," Carrizal confirmed. The problem lies in the distribution system between tanks and town.

Between December 1st and the 23rd, the average gallons-per-minute (GPMs) into town were 80, totaling 92,120 gallons per day. The well was running an average of 14.8 hours a day. The high-service pumps ran an average of 3.1 hours per day.

Between December 24th and the special January 9th council meeting, the well was running 24 hours a day, at 166.2 GPMs for an average of 209,968 gallons per day. The high-service pumps ran an average of 7.2 hours per day.

The acceleration is alarming. "The numbers that I gave you guys last meeting, they just doubled," he told

trustees. "And it's day and night. At night, when normally everybody's asleep, numbers are still high."

Trustee Matt Willett said, "I'm sure that's frustrating."

Carrizal said, "It is. You're looking at the tank at 12 o'clock at night, you're at 2 foot level, and everybody's asleep, and it's on you."

The Oasis contract carries no set quantity—it's purely an emergency response when tank levels drop. "We won't be hauling except when you tell us it would have the three-foot or whatever, and we'll bring in the load," Mayor Dusty Wiley said.

The village is trying to renew its \$36,446 drought emergency grant through the Bureau of Reclamation to cover hauling costs, new Clerk Jini Turri confirmed.

Carrizal emphasized that this crisis is happening during the lowest-demand season.

"We need to really think about getting some money on the side for the future because this is winter. Summer's coming up," he warned.

Public Feedback

Resident Jaque Tanis asked during

public input why the village doesn't reuse filtered water from the treatment plant.

Carrizal explained the regulatory void: "The state of New Mexico doesn't have regulations or standards for converting the wastewater from sewer to drinking water."

A feasibility report that the village never received during the PURe project's planning phase delivered bad news when it finally arrived: "Frankly, they told us Cloudcroft cannot afford to even have a plant like that to manage it every year," he explained.

The current system treats water just enough to meet discharge requirements. "That gets treated just enough to get the nitrogen levels down to go down the canyon," Carrizal said. The village is working on new, stricter discharge permit requirements.

Please Help Us Save Water

Carrizal closed with a direct appeal to residents and visitors: "We just encourage people to please help us save water right now at this time."

The emergency contract resolution passed unanimously, authorizing water purchases for as long as needed while the search for the million-gallon leak continues.



Public Works employees dig deep on the hunt for leaks

Making it Official: Swearing Ins and Approvals

Trustee Hamilton was unanimously appointed Mayor Pro Tem on Mayor Wiley's recommendation.

Four key village positions received unanimous confirmation, with Judge Mark Tatum giving oaths of office to Clerk/Treasurer Jini Turri, Police Chief Roger Schoolcraft, Volunteer Fire Chief and Emergency Manager Erich Wuersching, and Village Attorney Zach Cook.

The Planning and Zoning Commission gained two new members: Jesse Richards and Angela P. Daniel, both approved unanimously.

Lauren Groesbeck's grants consulting contract was unanimously extended for \$2,156.43.

Chief Wuersching announced the successful launch of Cloudcroft's CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) program—"fire department light."

Eleven people completed train-the-trainer certification through New Mexico Homeland Security in 2025. First public classes begin February 5th.

"We're hoping that this might be a draw for us eventually," Wuersching said of recruiting interested residents into volunteer emergency services.

Library Director Sandra Barr had good news to report for the library—including her own continuing education on rural libraries, well-attended holiday events, teamwork with trustee and new Library Aide Gail McCoy, and community engagement and volunteerism, such as Storytime with Paige Martin at 10:30 a.m on Fridays.

The January 20 meeting wasn't live-streamed to Facebook due to technical issues, according to volunteer Grover Sterling. Mayor Wiley said residents can expect livestreaming to resume for February's meeting.

This article originally appeared in the Cloudcroft Reader, Wednesday, January 21st, 2026

Healthcare in the Sacramento Mountains

Visit your options in and around Cloudcroft.

For residents of rural New Mexico, access to consistent and comprehensive medical care has always been a challenge. Remote locations, limited providers, and a transient medical workforce have made continuity of care difficult.

Get to know your local providers.

Trestle Medical Services

Nurse Practitioner Julia Eigenmann opened Trestle Medical Services along the James Canyon Highway in Cloudcroft, offering a new option in rural Sacramento Mountain healthcare. The practice is housed in a sky-blue stucco building located next to the Cloudcroft fire station.

Trestle Medical Services is designed to fill a critical healthcare gap in the area. The practice provides preventative care, routine check-ups, and chronic disease management to patients ages two and up, with an emphasis on en-

suring folks have consistent and ongoing medical support.

"The big thing that I want for people in this area is to have preventative care services, because if you can control some of the issues that lead to problems—just kind of nip them in the bud—it can save you tens of thousands of dollars," she says.

"If you can get your cholesterol under control, if you can get your blood pressure under control, it saves you from having to spend \$80,000 at the hospital because you had a heart attack," Eigenmann elaborates.

Before opening her own practice, Eigenmann worked at Terra Rosa Family Practice in Cloudcroft before the practice closed a few years ago. Julia and her husband, Jeff Eigenmann, share two young daughters, and Jeff serves on the Cloudcroft Schools Board of Education.

Her goal is simple: to provide continuity of care for rural patients—something many in the community have struggled to find.

Presbyterian Medical Services

The Sacramento Mountain Medical Center, located on James Canyon Highway just west of Cloudcroft's busy downtown, is another on-the-mountain option—they've served the community for over 20 years.

The Medical Center accepts Medicare, Medicaid, and private insurance, and offers a sliding fee scale for the uninsured, providing a range of medical services, including check-ups, blood draws, COVID, strep, and flu tests, Pap smears, and more.

Primary Care Physician Dr. Sylvia Montoya staffs the center and is regularly joined by other Presbyterian Medical Services (PMS) nurse practitioners like John Garcia.

Mountain Grit in Mayhill

Sharlene Rogers, Nurse Practitioner, alongside daughter and R.N. Sabina McClain, recently opened Mountain Grit Wellness in downtown Mayhill next to the park.

The wellness center features a medical clinic for comprehensive assessments and consultations, as well as a spa. Specialty services include a red light bed, salt sauna, IV vitamins, and Normatec compression boots. The clinic will also offer wrinkle-reduction injections, also known as Botox. Rogers conducts insulin consults for folks with diabetes and insulin resistance.

Filling the Gap for Local Families: Cloudcroft Schools

School Nurse Mandy Ross partnered with Goodside Health, a Texas-based company, to provide basic pediatric care services on campus. This partnership allows the school to administer strep, flu, and COVID-19 tests while students virtually visit with an online provider, offering a much-needed resource for parents who otherwise struggle with access to timely medical care.

The Texas-based company provides services at no cost to the school, providing an iPad for online consultations and medical supplies like swabs, bandages, over-the-counter medicines, and tests.

Ross says that parents are able to register online and be part of the visit, and that "the provider can send prescribed medication to the local pharmacy of choice, make referrals, etc. They accept most insurance for their visits.

HOW'S THE MARKET?



YEAR OVER YEAR

CLOUDCROFT MOUNTAIN AREA

	2025	2024
HOMES SOLD	149	145
MEDIAN SALES PRICE	\$296,000	\$299,900
AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	89 Days	54 Days
ACTIVE LISTINGS	89	54
LIST PRICE TO SALES PRICE RATIO	95%	95%

RUIDOSO MOUNTAIN AREA

	2025	2024
HOMES SOLD	440	489
MEDIAN SALES PRICE	\$375,000	\$385,000
AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	111 Days	73 Days
LIST PRICE TO SALES PRICE RATIO	94.68%	95.41%

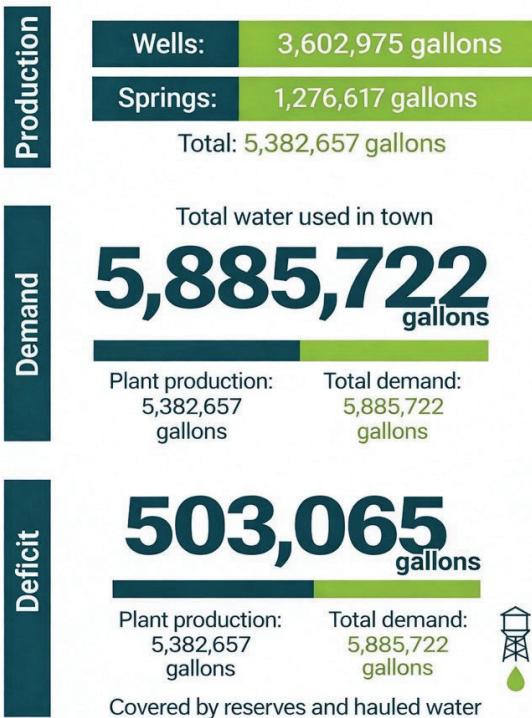
ALAMOGORDO & BASIN AREA

	2025	2024
HOMES SOLD	559	571
MEDIAN SALES PRICE	\$230,000	\$234,000
AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET	58 Days	51 Days
ACTIVE LISTINGS	58	51
LIST PRICE TO SALES PRICE RATIO	98%	99.6%

Statistics sourced from the Otero & Lincoln County Associations of Realtors MLS and provided by Future Real Estate

Village of Cloudcroft Well and Spring Reports
12.15.25 — 1.15.26

Where Our Water Came From



This will increase access to health care and help decrease absences for students."

Goodside Health services are billed to parents' health insurance.

"If the child is feverish, they can order Tylenol, which I can give at that time. Should the strap test come back positive, they will send medication orders to the local pharmacy for the child."

"It starts them off so much earlier. I think it's going to be helpful to mitigate the spread of illness," Ross says.

Sacramento Mountain Emergency Medical Services

For emergency services, local Volunteer Fire Departments (VFDs) provide EMS services, offering vital life-saving care in the absence of a full-time hospital or emergency room in Cloudcroft. The nearest emergency room is in Alamogordo, 27 minutes away from Cloudcroft and an hour away from communities like Timberon.

Emergency Medical Services and Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department Chief Erich Wuersching explains that Cloudcroft has three ambulances available and several other medical

rescue response teams.

Any life-threatening ambulance call delivers the patient to the nearest hospital. If the injury is non-life-threatening, say, an obviously broken ankle, the ambulance will take the patient to one of the three nearest hospitals: Christus Health in Alamogordo, the Lincoln County Medical Center in Ruidoso, or the Artesia General Hospital.

AMR, American Medical Rescue, which responds to the entire Otero County, is staffed by paid employees. However, Wuersching notes that all other mountain area medical rescues and ambulance responders are volunteers.

Forest Service Extends Bluff Springs Closure

The Lincoln National Forest (LNF) has issued an extended closure order for the Bluff Springs Recreation Area located on the Sacramento Ranger District.

Illegal off-highway vehicle use and damage to sensitive riparian areas led the LNF to close large sections in August of 2025. The Forest Service announced the closures would protect natural resources while crews work on restoration and maintenance projects through 2026.

The broader closure took effect August 12, 2025, shutting down Rio Penasco, Bluff Springs, Wills Canyon, and Agua Chiquita to dispersed camping, off-road motor vehicle use, and campfires. That order runs through August 31, 2026.

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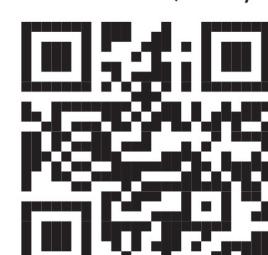


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Interview: Mayor Dusty Wiley

Dusty Wiley became Cloudcroft's fifth mayor in just over five years when he took office this January, inheriting a village losing nearly a million gallons of water monthly and, according to Wiley, one that may not see a clear budget balance sheet until June or July.

After more than 20 years in government, Wiley fell in love with Cloudcroft during his commutes between California and his Arizona ranch near the New Mexico border. The Wileys eventually relocated here.

In California, as an assistant commissioner for the Riverside County Agricultural Commissioner's Office, "I did budgets and operations, I did all kinds of things," Wiley said.

Wiley follows Mayor Tim King, who was appointed after Craig Turner's sudden resignation in 2024. Turner, elected in 2023, followed Mayor Bill Denney, who was appointed when longtime Mayor Dave Venable retired in 2020.

"I've been seeing for the last six years or so, the village has been struggling ever since Mayor Venable left," he said. "I decided I should step in and try to use some of the talents that I've learned over the years and share that with the village and hopefully get the village on the right track."

Personal Commitment to Cloudcroft

Wiley's commitment to public service comes amid profound personal loss.

His son, Roger Wiley, was killed in Alamogordo the day after the November 2023 election.

Dusty Wiley had run for mayor that year, along with five other candidates.

On that election night, Roger had called his father. "He goes, I only voted for one person. That was you, because I didn't know anybody else on the ballot, and I'm not gonna vote for somebody I don't know," Wiley recalled.

That was the last time they spoke.

This election cycle, the trial and conviction of Roger's killer coincided with Wiley's campaign.

Wiley says his wife, Vicky, is his "closest advisor." She currently stays in Hawaii with three of their grandchildren—ages three, six, and eight—now in their temporary custody.

"Vicky's wonderful. She's done a lot for me."

"My original plans were that she'd come over here and I'd go visit her, and we'd stay and go back and forth or whatever, but she couldn't stay up here too much. My wife's had a hard time living here because of all the memories of Roger."

"I know what happens. She comes back here, and she goes to the cafe. She sees Roger doing dishes. She sees Roger out there serving. He always worked here before he became a mechanic for Vision Ford. I think as time goes on, she should be able to be here."

"I do feel supported by the village."

Water Infrastructure Emergency

Cloudcroft is losing nearly a million gallons of water each month to leaks, forcing the village to enter emergency water-hauling contracts while crews

aggressively search for leaks in aging pipes.

Public Works Supervisor Joe John (JJ) Carrizal estimates significant additional leakage. "He said there's 40 gallons total (per minute). So there's still more out there, whether it be one large one or whether it be 15, 20 more small ones," Wiley said.

The village recently hired McKim & Creed for 40 hours of additional leak-detection services in hopes of narrowing down the problem.

Confronting Budget Reality

The village's financial situation is more complex than a simple balance sheet would reveal—and the village doesn't even have one.

The New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration (DFA) recently released over \$2.4 million in previously frozen capital outlay projects. The council approved grant agreement resolutions at a special Jan. 9 meeting.

"We won't be able to do all of it at once because it's [2.4 million]. We only have approximately \$4 million in the total budget," he said. "There are certain monies that have to be set aside, that you can never spend. There's also money that can't be spent because it goes to the lodgers' tax or whatever. So we have to take them one step at a time in each of

move forward."

Asked when he expects to fully understand the budget, Wiley said, "June. July."

"For the past 15 to 20 years, there haven't been very many increases in any of the programs. No matter what it is, whether it be your gross sales tax," he said. "You can't survive that way."

"We're below what the village could be charging, you know, compared to Alamogordo or Ruidoso or any other village around us," Wiley said.

Staffing as Foundation

Wiley's first action has been making hires.

"It's the department heads you have surrounding you that make the mayor," he said.

At the Jan. 20 council meeting, the village brought back Clerk Jini Turri, who served in the position from 2010 to 2019. "She's gonna do wonders for this village," Wiley said.

The council also hired Police Chief Roger Schoolcraft, who briefly served as Cloudcroft's Chief in 2024, stepping down amid administrative turnovers.

"With those two in place, it's gonna make my job a lot easier for sure," Wiley said.

other location."

"Everybody has to work together in the village to make it work. All aspects."

"The (Lodger's Tax Advisory Board) is going to be on our agenda. So coming up here next month. They have some items they want to present to the trustees for a vote, so they'll go forward with that."

"With the Planning and Zoning committee. I've been working with them. There are things that have been backed up since last March that have not been done yet. It's been backed up, thinking most of those will come up in our next trustee meeting. So we may have a large agenda at the February meeting."

Longterm Solutions

Wiley's near-term goal: "All the leaks fixed, done, completed, and start working on the next project, which is going to be more water sources."

"So first of all, the village has to be able to purchase the land. And then once you have the land, then you can get grants that drill wells or somehow contain that water and move it to the location you need it to be used."

The Wastewater Treatment Plant's repairs and the securing of the federal land upon which it sits are a top priority.

"Talking to JJ Carrizal and Scott Powell, they would have the details of what they want first to be completed. We have grants for some of those things. They'll let me know which order to go in."

"We're trying to make appointments to meet with the Forest Service about starting that," Wiley said. "They've already started the process of getting some new appraisals on the property, that type of thing."

Community and a Transparency Platform

Wiley's election campaign focused on transparency and public accountability.

"When our Facebook Live didn't work (at the Jan. 20 meeting), the next day, we got it fixed, had volunteers come back in with me, worked on it, and we did a test. You can go on Facebook and see if it worked great. The sound sounded perfect on it," Wiley said.

"There will be minutes posted here shortly, which were approved at the last meeting. So they'll be going online," Wiley said.

"I feel like I have an open-door policy. You can call me at any point in time. You know, I have a village phone, and I think my personal cell phone's out there enough on the web that anytime anybody wants to call, you know, call me about concerns, talk, they can talk to me."

"I think we're on a good track now. I think within the next two years you'll be in the next two years, I'd like to see the wastewater plant on its way to being fixed, whatever it may be. It may not be fixed by that date, but it's on its way to being there. Same thing with our water."

When asked if he'd run for office again, Wiley said, "We're just gonna take the next two years one day at a time and see where we are at as a family at that time."

This interview with Mayor Dusty Wiley is compiled from a late January sit-down interview at the Mountain Talk podcast studio with Jonny Coker and Hannah Dean, plus several follow-up conversations with Wiley. For the podcast and full written interview, visiting CloudfrofReader.com



"It's the department heads you have surrounding you that make the mayor," he said.

those grants."

At a July 2024 meeting, the village disclosed several troubling discoveries, including a laundry list of missed filings for village taxes and fees, defaulted loans, and unreconciled bank accounts: www.cloudcroftreader.com/p/cloudcroft-murky-accounting

The eve before the November 2025 election at a special village meeting, Dahlia Garcia of Beasley, Mitchell & Co. accounting presented the fiscal year 2024 independent auditor's report and audit findings, which include: a late audit submission; "significant deficiency" in bank reconciliations, accounts payable, segregation of duties, and more; a missing capital asset list; material weakness in accounting records; and other non-compliance issues with board meeting minutes and more.

"Right now, we still haven't got our finalized budget adjustment completed yet," Wiley said. "Once that's done, then we'll be able to start going into some of those grants."

"From this day forward, Jini's making sure everything's current, catching things up as we can," Wiley said. He acknowledged the dual challenge: "Remember, we're still working on stuff that hasn't been done in the past. We're still trying to catch up on that, as well as

current staff members, Finance Director Sylvia Hall and Utility Clerk Ashley White, are new; they've only been here since July," Wiley said. "Now they have somebody here to train them. And that's going to be wonderful."

For the police department, Wiley said, "I think it should have between two and a half to three and a half police officers max."

Why "a half?" Schoolcraft has proposed a plan that includes a School Resource Office, half-funded by the village, half by the school.

Balancing Tourism and Villager Needs

"Without tourism, you don't have the tax base and everything else to do. Everything that the village needs to, you know, have done, you know, within the village, whether it be maintaining the water lines, the sewer lines, on and on and on. So you do need the tourists. Without the tourists, the town would die."

"Before you go with development, though, you need to get your water and your wastewater situation corrected."

"I think I have a good working relationship with the Chamber. I know the people at the Chamber. I try to get along with everybody to begin with. It doesn't matter whether it's the Chamber or any



Police Chief Roger Schoolcraft delivers his policing plan to villagers at the Jan. 9th Council meeting

New Hires, Familiar Faces

At a January 9 special meeting, the council unanimously approved Jini Turri for hire as Village Clerk/Treasurer at \$75,000 a year.

There was a discussion about the distinction between the clerk's and the treasurer's responsibilities. Contracted financial expert Judi Staovich clarified: "State statute identifies a position of Clerk to do the clerical administrative duties and Treasurer to have oversight of the finance department."

The council also approved hiring Roger Schoolcraft as Police Chief at an annual salary of \$85,000. Schoolcraft served as Cloudcroft's Chief from July 1 to Dec. 31, 2024, when he resigned during administrative turnover.

The council raised concerns about police staffing turnover over the past few years. Since May 2024, the formerly four-officer department has experienced continual turnover, with nine officers resigning or being terminated.

Schoolcraft said he aimed to hire "seasoned officers" for Cloudcroft, and that the department "can't compete with

larger agencies."

Trustee Matt Willett raised concerns about ensuring proper planning before expanding the department: "My only issue right now is... we don't know our budget. And I'd like to see a plan of okay, we've got one officer at this rate, and then what are the next officers coming in at? What are their benefit packages? What will it cost us in total? What's the goal?"

Schoolcraft presented a comprehensive policing plan to staff the PD with 2.5 officers, including himself, another certified officer, and a School Resource Officer, with the School Resource Officer's pay shared with the school. "I'd like to see what my budget would be for the police department. So we're not hiring a bunch of people that we don't need necessarily right now or taking more out of the budget," Schoolcraft said.

Village contracted financial team Judi Starkovich and Karen Gutierrez were available for comment on the council's budget questions.

Starkovich noted that the village had budgeted funds for four police officers—funds that were not fully spent due to staffing turnover and an empty department—and that funding for a po-

lice chief at the \$85,000 salary level was already budgeted for in this fiscal year.

"Something I'm really passionate about is putting the school resource officer in the schools here," Schoolcraft said. "It's basically a 50/50 split. The school district pays 50% of that officer's salary. The village pays for the other 50% salary."

On scheduling, Schoolcraft proposed: "We did discuss a 4/10 work schedule. I like that idea. We want seven-day-a-week coverage. I want the school zones covered. Every morning I [am in] the school zone because we need to protect our children."

Schoolcraft emphasized school safety: "Chief Erich Wuersching and I have been working on the active shooter team. What we're going to do is partner with the fire department. In an active shooter situation, I can't wait for 20 minutes for the sheriff's office to show up. We're going to go to the threat, and we're going to take care of the threat. Chief Wuersching already ordered some ballistic body armor vests for select EMS people who are going to go in behind us to start triaging and getting our injured out of the school."

Schoolcraft also plans to continue and expand community policing programs, such as the Mountainbike Patrol and Neighborhood Watch, that he began in 2024. He also hopes to continue the Fifth Grade DARE program, in partnership with the Otero County Sheriff's Office and begin Coffee with the Chief, where citizens can meet with him one-on-one.

Find more of this and other village stories online: CloudcroftReader.com

Late-January Storm Batters Cloudcroft, Triggers Widespread Outages

A powerful winter storm swept through Cloudcroft and the surrounding Sacramento Mountains in late January, bringing heavy snow, downed trees, and widespread power outages across the region.

Otero County Electric Cooperative (OCEC) reported that snow load and fallen trees were the primary causes of the outages. The damage to infrastructure was significant: in initial assessments, at least 10 broken poles and 10–12 broken crossarms were identified, along with countless fallen trees complicating restoration efforts.

In brutal temperatures and icy conditions, OCEC launched a large, multi-agency response that included OCEC line personnel, vegetation crew members, additional lineworkers from A.R.C. Power Line Construction, and equipment operators from Batte Gravel and Peñasco Gravel companies.

OCEC wants to remind residents to report outages directly by phone rather than social media to ensure a timely response.



Apprentice OCEC lineman Elias Orozco works to restore power during the January 23–24 storm that hit the mountain hard.



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Cloudcroft Fire Chief and Deputy Fire Chief with new Rokons. September 2025

CVFD Strengthens Community Safety with New Equipment

The year 2026 marks a significant step forward for the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department, following a series of strategic 2025 investments that enhanced both firefighter safety and operational efficiency.

Supported through CVFD's unique funding model—powered by the New Mexico State Fire Marshal's Office, the New Mexico EMS Bureau, community donations, local fundraising, and targeted grants—the department continued to deliver top-tier emergency services without placing additional burden on taxpayers.

A major milestone of the year was the delivery of Engine 11, a modern apparatus that boosts response capability across the region. The department also added two new Zoll AutoPulse CPR devices, expanding its ability to provide high-quality, hands-free resuscitation during cardiac emergencies. These lifesaving tools were funded through state fire and EMS support grants.

CVFD strengthened its off-road response capacity with the purchase of two new Rokons—specialized vehicles designed to navigate rugged terrain during wildland fires, search and rescue missions, and remote medical calls.

The department also welcomed a new-to-CVFD Command Truck, originally a fully operational police vehicle for the Cloudcroft Police Department. Through a trade agreement with CPD, the fire department acquired the truck in exchange for four portable emergency radios, maximizing resources for both agencies.

Facility improvements continued throughout 2025. Ladder 16 received upgrades to extend its service life, and all three stations benefited from aesthetic and functional enhancements. Notably, a community member donated fresh paint for the Main Station's front bay doors, improving visibility and station pride.

The beloved Sparky Trailer—used for fire safety education—also received

a full exterior refresh, ensuring it remains an engaging tool for teaching children and families about fire prevention.

These investments reflect CVFD's on-

going dedication to readiness, safety, and community service. Every addition strengthens the department's mission to protect lives and property across the region.

Upcoming Wildfire Academy

CVFD is also proud to announce the upcoming Sacramento Mountains Wildfire Academy, scheduled for March 20–29.

Now in its 22nd year, this nationally recognized academy provides comprehensive training opportunities for firefighters from across the United States, as well as citizen classes for local residents.

The Wildfire Academy is one of only three academies advertised in the esteemed Southwest Coordination Center. The SWCC is the interagency hub and logistical support center for wildland firefighting in the Southwest. The Sacramento Mountains Wildfire Academy offers hands-on instruction in wildland fire certification and community-focused preparedness. More details and registration information will be available soon at <https://www.smwa-cloudcroft.com/>.

Growth in Emergency Management

CVFD is expanding its Emergency Management initiatives with the launch of its first-ever Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training. Classes will be held Thursdays from 6–8 PM at the Main Station beginning February 5. Additionally, one of the goals of Cloudcroft Emergency Management is to support the training needs of the new administration and local officials and aligns with a renewed emphasis on comprehensive Emergency Management planning and preparedness for the community. CVFD also remains a major supporter of the State of New Mexico Emergency Management Conference and Expo—one of the most highly regarded conferences in the nation—reinforcing its commitment to professional development and statewide collaboration.

Get Involved

For fire safety information, volunteer opportunities, or updates on CERT, contact the Cloudcroft Volunteer Fire Department at info@cloudcroftfd.com. — Hilary Kitzman

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Welcome to the Village

Let us show you around

A

- Off the Beaten Path
- 1CAT Trap & Release Program
- Sacramento Mountain Senior Services
- Black Bear Coffee Shop
- King's Treasure
- Bhair Necessities
- The Fat Rabbit
- The Little Gallery
- Aspen and Ivy Boutique
- Samantha Odom Art Gallery
- Dave's Cafe
- Higher Grounds
- Instant Karma & Chai Bar
- Base Camp 9k

B

- Western Bar and Cafe
- Western Package Store
- Hotel Cloudcroft
- Kennabelle's Kreations Bakery
- Gary Mack Real Estate
- The Bear Track
- High Altitude
- High Altitude Bike Shop
- Scotty's Propane

C

- Elevation Park and Disc Golf Course

D

- Otero County Electric Coop
- Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage
- Cloudcroft Archery
- Crystal Tompkins Photography
- Coco Blu
- Green Mountain Real Estate & Construction, Skywater
- Osha Trail Depot
- Osha Trail Lodging
- Cloudcroft Souvenirs
- Laughing Leaf Dispensary
- Eight the Cake
- Southwest Naturals CBD
- Mountain Magic
- Poke the Bear

E

- Burro St. Boarding House
- Cloudcroft Brewing Company
- The Distillery
- Sparks and Rec

F

- Ski Cloudcroft

G

- Apsen Trails Realty
- Big Daddy's Diner
- Tularosa Communications
- Cloudcroft Animal Hospital
- Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina and Motel

H

- The Lodge Resort
- The Lodge Golf Course
- 1899 and Saint Andrew's Lounge
- Seasons Boutique Gift Shop
- SugarPines RV Park

I

- Grand Cloudcroft Hotel
- Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce
- Cabins at Cloudcroft

J

- Zenith Park and Playground
- Pickleball and Tennis Courts
- Zenith Park Pavilion
- Byron Ligon Disc Golf Course
- James Sewell Ice Rink
- Family Dollar
- Brother-N-Law BBQ
- Magnum's Guns II
- Crofting Inn

K

- Village Plaza
- Homee
- Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy
- High Rollin' Coffee

L

- Mad Jack's Mountaintop BBQ
- Roots Flower Co.

M

- New Village Hardware
- Pre-School and Extended Care
- Summit Inn
- The Lodge Pavilion

N

- Presbyterian Medical Center
- Rick Roger's Auto & Equip Repair
- Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts
- Cloud 9000 Coffee
- Fernando's Burritos

O

- United States Post Office
- First National Bank
- Village Office

P

- Allsups

Q

- Future Real Estate
- The Highland

R

- Deer Park
- Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop

S

- Cloudcroft Schools

T

- Burro Street Exchange
- The Elk Shed
- Atelier Art of Hair by Anna
- Red Wall Jewelry
- Burro Street Bakery
- Tree Top Teez
- Noisy Water Winery
- Burro Street Trading Post
- Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy
- Old Barrel Tea Co.
- Turquoise Shop

U

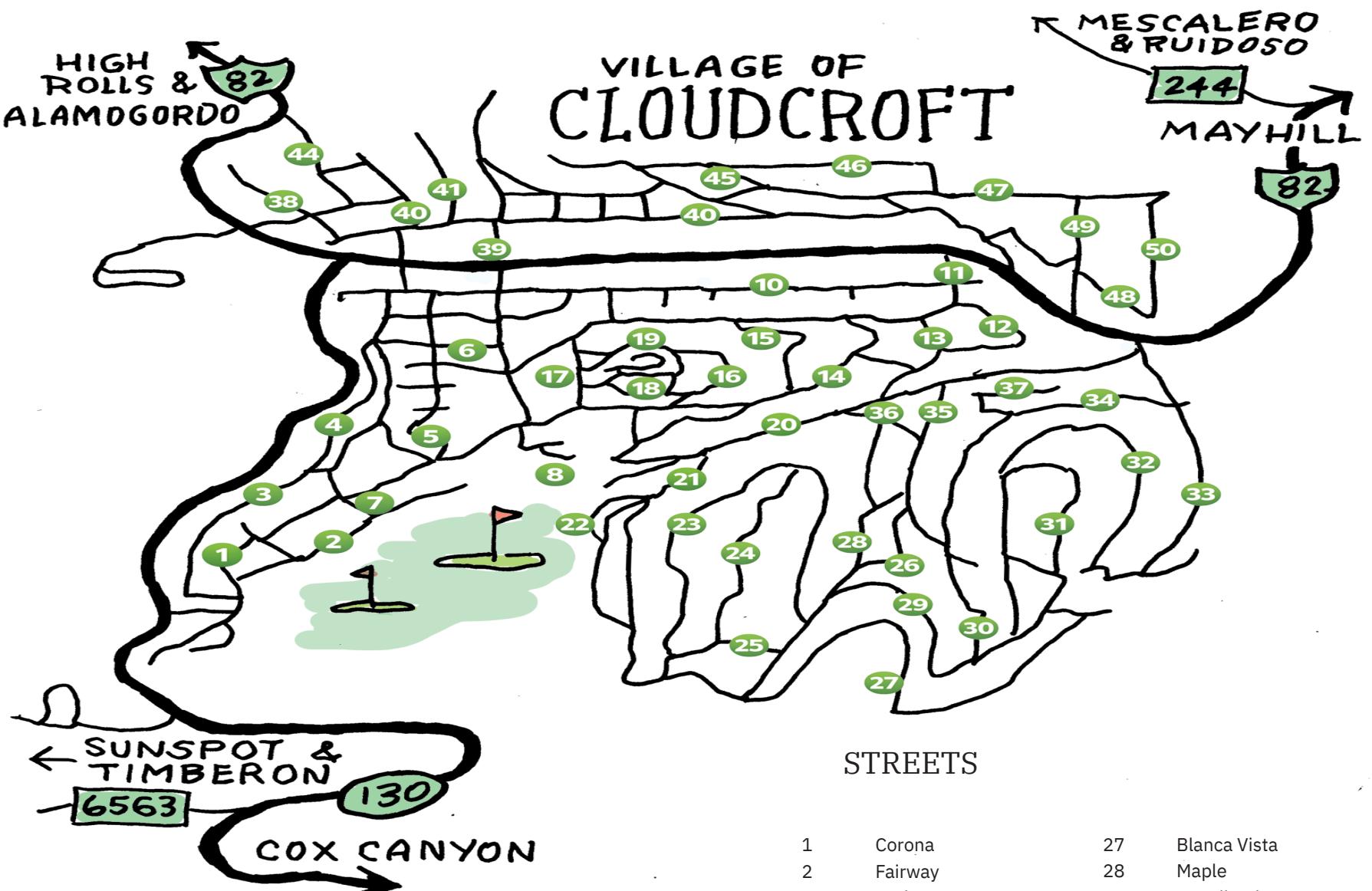
- Old Red Brick Schoolhouse
- Michael Nivison Public Library
- High Valley Weaving School
- Cloudcroft Fitness
- Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op
- Gallery

V

- Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village

W

- Cloudcroft Fire and Rescue Station
- Trestle Medical Services



STREETS

1	Corona	27	Blanca Vista
2	Fairway	28	Maple
3	Curlew	29	Woodlands Way
4	Sunset	30	Balsam
5	Wren	31	Julies
6	Coyote	32	Shells
7	Otter	33	Woodland Ways
8	The Lodge	34	Balsam
10	Burro	35	Columbia
15	Squirrel	36	Beaver
16	Fox	37	Balsam Circle
17	4th	38	Glorietta
18	Bear	39	Swallow
19	Coyote	40	Little Glorietta
20	Chautauqua Canyon	41	Mexican
21	Big Bear Ln	45	Nyuca
22	Sugar Bear Ln	46	Geronimo
23	Little Bear	47	Victoria
24	Sugar Pine	48	Paqua
25	Oak Alley	49	Skywater
26	Daisy Way	50	Rainmaker Loop



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Beth Merrell brings restorative and Thai yoga practice and massage to Cloudcroft

Local Guide

What to Know

Discover the best of Cloudcroft with our monthly local guide – a handpicked selection of favorite places to shop, eat, and play in the mountains.

Find Peace in the Mountains

In a sunlit studio tucked into the Village Plaza, **Beth Merrell** bolsters a client in blankets, gently guides them into a reclining pose, and applies a touch that makes muscles remember they're allowed to let go.

This is restorative yoga with Thai elements—one of several practices Merrell has brought to Cloudcroft since opening Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy in 2022 after relocating with her family from Saint Louis a few years before.

"I think the combination of massage therapy and yoga is kind of like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich," she laughs. "It just goes really good together."

The studio offers a range of classes designed to meet practitioners at every level. Vinyasa flow classes emphasize the connection between movement and breath, while yin yoga takes a slower approach, targeting connective tissue with deep stretches. 3-5 minute poses focus on deeper, non-muscular tissues like fascia, ligaments, and tendons.

Perhaps most unique is Merrell's restorative class with Thai yoga ele-

ments—a gentle flow where folks slowly move into soft poses while Merrell applies Thai touch. Holding the body still for extended poses allows the mind to wander, then settle down.

Merrell's personal practice of Thai yoga, which she began studying in 2014, has transformed her approach to bodywork. Unlike traditional table massage, a private Thai yoga session is practiced on the floor with clients fully dressed, combining yoga poses with applied pressure to restore balance and flow throughout the body.

"I love yoga because it helps me connect to myself, it helps me ground because I have a bit of a hummingbird mind all the time," Merrell says of her personal yoga philosophy. "It helps calm, connect to myself, breathe better, and feel better. I feel stronger practicing yoga physically and mentally."

Some clients schedule bodywork immediately after a Vinyasa flow class. The yoga practice helps clients connect with themselves and identify areas of tension or discomfort, which can then be addressed during the massage session.

Merrell says that "with practicing yoga before a massage, it helps connect you to yourself better and opens you up to relaxing and softening and receiving body work on a deeper level."

Be in the Mountains Yoga and Massage Therapy is located in the Village Plaza on James Canyon Highway. For class schedules and booking information, visit yogacloudcroft.com.

Recreation Recs: Get Moving in Cloudcroft

Instant Karma: Affordable at \$15 a class, Instant Karma on Burro offers a Preliminary Course (good for beginners, seniors, and beyond) with first-year yoga classes on Tuesdays from 10:00–11:00 a.m. and Saturdays from 9:30–10:30 a.m., along with a pre-recorded on-demand class for home practice. Seasoned yogis can take the second-year course which runs Mondays and Saturdays from 8:00–9:00 a.m.

Ski Cloudcroft: Lessons on the bunny hill and tubing are available weekends and holiday Mondays until Spring Break. Visit skicloudcroft.net for more info and updates. And—think snow!

Mountain Stretch: 30 minutes of stretching and recovery with **Amy Coor** at **Cloudcroft Fitness**. Save your spot online at cloudcroftcycling.punchpass.com

Cloudcroft Community Disc Golf Course: a free-to-play, 18-hole disc golf course with a challenging, extremely hilly layout that typically takes about 2–4 hours and ~2 miles to play. It was ranked #2 in New Mexico on UDisc.com for 2025 and offers scenic mountain views and a fun mix of technical shots for experienced players.



Alex Carilli teaches Iyengar Yoga in her Instant Karma studio

Welcome to Cloudcroft, New Mexico — a mountain village with timeless charm and plenty to do.

Whether you're looking for a cozy cabin, a good meal, or ideas for a scenic day trip, this list is here to help you make the most of your visit.

Here you'll find local restaurants, lodging, shops, and services — everything you need to explore, relax, and enjoy your time in our beautiful mountain community.

Eat/Drink

Big Daddy's Diner (1705 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-1224, bigdaddysdinernm.com) Comfort food and desserts. Try the fried chicken basket. Open daily 7:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Black Bear Coffee (200 Burro Ave., (575) 682-1239, mybbcoffee.com) Locally-roasted beans on the west end of Burro. Head upstairs for conversation nooks, enjoy the downstairs gallery wall with rotating exhibition. Wednesday-Saturday 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m., Sunday 8:00-3:00.

Brother-N-Law BBQ (209 James Canyon Hwy, (215) 858-0400) Delicious smoked meats, baked potatoes, sandwiches, and fried okra. Don't skip the sauce. Open 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. every day but Thursday.

Burro Street Bakery (505 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2777) Sit awhile at this centrally-located joint. Pies, danishes, breakfast burritos, coffee, and more. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Cloud 9000 Coffee (96 James Canyon Hwy) Quick breakfast—smoothies and handholds. Coffee, tea, and lemonade, too. Outdoor seating only. 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, closed Mondays.

Cloudcroft Brewing Company (1301 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2337, cloudcroftbrewing.com) In-house and regional brews, live music, and fantastic atmosphere. Gnosh on wood-fired pizza, soup du jour, salad, chips & guacamole. Closed Tuesdays. Open 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. the rest of the week—til 10:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

Cloudcroft Sandwich Shop (505 Burro Ave., (575) 551-0065, cloudcroftsandwich.shop) Traditional deli in the Burro Street Exchange. Mural photo op in the outdoor patio. Get any sandwich as a salad, then a monster-sized cookie—#balance. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. every day, closed Wednesdays.

Dave's Cafe (300 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2127) Classic burgers, fries, and more at a casual setting in the heart of Burro. Open 11:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. Friday-Sunday.

Dusty Boots Cafe & Taco Cantina (1317 James Canyon Hwy, 575) 601-2009) Laid back home cooking—burg-

ers, tacos, salads, and more. For breakfast, try the veggie-loaded Hiker's Boot omelette and western potatoes. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, closes at 5:00 Sunday.

Eight the Cake Bakery (506 Burro Ave., (575) 682-3088, eightthecakellc.com) Lovely custom cakes. Cupcakes, cinnamon rolls, and local art. Open Thursday-Monday from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Family Dollar (309 James Canyon Hwy, (505) 532-2697, familydollar.com) Get the essentials. Discount chain with groceries, toiletries, and home goods. Open 8:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. daily.

Fernando's Burritos (96 James Canyon Hwy) Best burrito, barbacoa, and burger in the village. Breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Outdoor seating only. Open 7:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. daily, closed Mondays.

High Rollin' Coffee (109 James Canyon Hwy) Gourmet freshies galore on a rotating weekly menu. Open Monday and Tuesday 8:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m., and Friday-Sunday 8:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.

Higher Grounds (300 Burro Ave., 575) 682-2127) Ice cream and milkshake counter next to Dave's Cafe. Hours vary.

Instant Karma Chai Bar (302 Burro Ave.) Global spice blends, ayurvedic teas, soothing cacao, and more at their countertop. Stay awhile. Open daily from 1:00-5:00 p.m.

KennaBelle's Kreations Bakery (308 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2712) Follow your nose to this pink patisserie. Custom cakes and orders. Gluten-free options. Open 7:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday. Closed Sunday.

Mad Jack's Mountaintop Barbeque (105 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-7577) Legendary barbecue in the old mercantile building. Don't let the line deter you—it's worth the wait. Open 11:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Thursday-Sunday, or until sold out.

Noisy Water Winery (505 Burro Ave., (575) 682-6610) Local wine, cheese, charcuterie, and gifts. Upscale offerings, casual boardwalk venue. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:30 p.m. daily, open until 7:00 on Friday, and until 7:30 on Sat-

urday.

Old Barrel Tea Co. (505 Burro Ave., (575) 682-7474) Fresh house-blend teas to order, plus provisions. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday.

Saint Andrew's Lounge and 1899 at the Lodge (601 Corona Pl., (575) 682-2566, 223collectionhotels.com/the-lodge) Chef Richard Lepree brings global flair and locally-sourced flavors to the plate. Reservations required on the 1899 side, open Wednesday-Saturday from 5:00-8:00 p.m. Saint Andrew's Lounge open Wednesday-Saturday from 12:00-8:00 p.m.

The Distillery (1303 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2337) Craft cocktails with New Mexico and in-house spirits for date night—adults only.

Cloudcroft Brewing Company pizza by the slice. Open M, W, TH 4:00-9:00 p.m., Friday 4:00-10:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m., and Sunday 11:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m.

Western Bar and Cafe and Package Store (304 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2445, westernbarandcafe.net) Dark and cozy dive bar with tasty food for lunch and dinner. Beer on tap, full bar. Play pool

while you wait. Closed Wednesdays, open 11:00 a.m.-10:00 p.m. the rest of the week.

Lodging

Burro St. Boarding House (608 Burro Ave., (575) 682-3601) Rustic and artful digs near downtown. burrostreetboardinghouse.com

Cabins at Cloudcroft (1006 Coyote Ave., 575-682-2396) Retro casitas by the park. cabinsatcloudcroft.com

Crofting Inn (300 Swallow Pl.) Comfy B-and-B. Book on Expedia or Hotels.com

Dusty Boots Motel (1315 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-7736) Themed rooms with a restaurant next door. thedustyboots.com

Grand Cloudcroft Hotel (1207 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 601-2202) Relax in the indoor pool and spa. All king-sized beds. grandcloudcroft.com

Osha Trail Lodging (102 Mexican Ave., (575) 937-3767) Modern, conveniently-located suites. Book on AirBnB or oshatraillodging@gmail.com

SugarPines RV Park (601 Columbine Blvd., (575) 682-3375) Easy access in the heart of the village. sugarpines-rvpark.com

Summit Inn (103 Chipmunk Ave., (575) 295-3235) Chic interiors, classic mountain exterior. summitinnnm.com

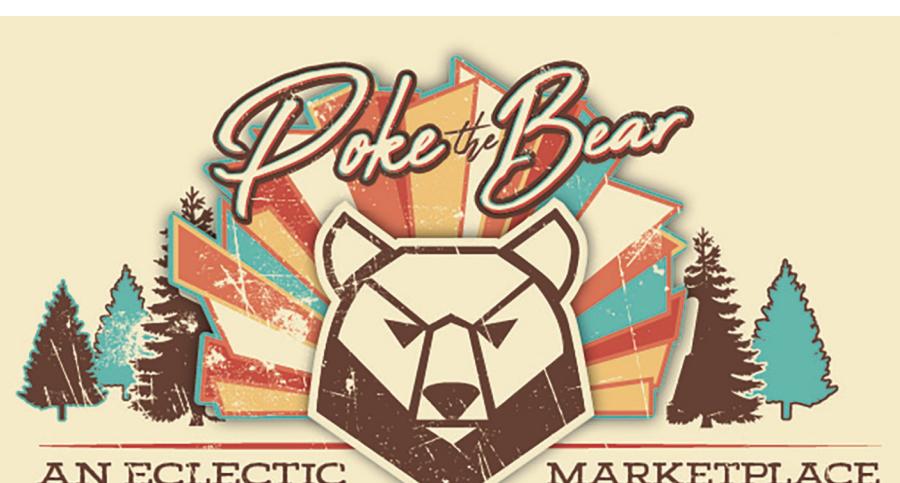
The Lodge (601 Corona Pl., (575) 682-2566) Historic beauty. Stay, eat, play. thelodgeresort.com

Shopping

Aspen and Ivy Boutique (206 Burro Ave.) Bespoke goods, candles, plants, and local art. Open Thursday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Base Camp 9K (302 Burro Ave.) Tee-ny space with quality shirts, hats, and more. Open Friday and Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

Burro Street Trading Post (505 Bur-



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**\$425,000****CLOUDCROFT**

801 Panther Avenue
Updated mountain duplex surrounded by pines with two private living spaces, vaulted ceilings, pellet stove, and great live/rent flexibility..

Blake Bingham - (830) 496-1836

**\$849,900****CLOUDCROFT**

1094 Blanca Vista
Stunning mountain retreat on over half an acre with open living, chef's kitchen, luxe primary suite, finished basement, and amazing year-round views.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$725,000****HIGH ROLLS**

36 Old Railroad Drive
Pristine 3BR/2BA home with multiple living areas, pellet + wood stoves, remodeled kitchen/baths, landscaped yard, greenhouse, workshop, and barn.

Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674
Emily Kellam - (575) 214-9479**\$130,000****CLOUDCROFT**

13 Hollywood Boulevard
As-is mountain home with 3 bedrooms, 1 bath, and kitchen area. Needs TLC but offers plenty of potential; bring your ideas and make it your own.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$650,000****CLOUDCROFT**

1084 Woodlands Way
One-year-new luxury home with open living, soaring ceilings, designer finishes, chef's kitchen, spa-like primary suite, and an oversized deck.

Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674

**\$395,000****MAYHILL**

9 Serenity Street
4 Bed/2 Bath on 2 acres in the New Mexico Skies Astronomy Enclave, backing national forest; a true stargazer's paradise.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$199,500****MAYHILL**

1846 Rio Penasco
Unrestricted 7.5 acres with Rio Penasco running through, mountain views, wildlife, and highway frontage. Ideal for a home, business, or RV getaway.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999



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Cloudcroft, and Ruidoso

**\$224,000****TIMBERON**

20 White River Lane
3 Bed/2 Bath Cavco home on 1.5+ quiet acres, providing privacy, mountain views, and relaxed living in the Sacramento Mountains.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$1,350,000****CLOUDCROFT**

102 Mexican Avenue
Osha Trail Lodging. Unique multi-family investment opportunity. Includes 6 nightly rental units, a retail space, 6 storage units, and a large finished and heated garage.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999

**\$179,000****CLOUDCROFT**

29 Mystery Path
1Bed/1 Bath cabin with rustic charm, fenced yard, covered deck, wood stove, and a bonus bunkhouse plus a spa-like soaking tub room with loft bed.

Rebekah Graham - (575) 921-5517

**\$320,000****CLOUDCROFT**

1012 Maple Drive
Updated cabin with new roof, plumbing, flooring, paint, and tankless water heater. Expanded deck and fully furnished with an acceptable offer.

Blake Bingham - (830) 496-1836

**\$270,000****HIGH ROLLS**

59 Mountain Estates Road
Over 4 acres with a mix of trees and open meadow. Year-round access and a well in place make it ideal for building your mountain home.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

**Under Contract****TIMBERON**

1855 Sacramento Drive
3 Bed/2 Bath modern retreat on 20 unrestricted acres with a large metal building, RV parking, horse-friendly setup, and a serene pond.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$759,000****MAYHILL**

2979 US Highway 82
Rustic log-sided home on 6 acres backing forest with vaulted living, loft, primary suite, basement space, horse corrals, and a large workshop.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$219,900****CLOUDCROFT**

302 Lynx Loop South
Escape to the cool mountain top in this charming, renovated cabin located in historic Camp Cloudcroft. This cozy retreat features 1 bedroom, updated bathroom and full kitchen with new appliances.

Blake Bingham - (830) 496-1836

**\$675,000****CLOUDCROFT**

11 Maple Crest
Spacious 3,000+ sq ft log-sided home with 4 bedrooms, 2 baths, 2 living areas, and drive-through garage on 1.3 acres by national forest.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$323,000****TIMBERON**

4 Timber Drive
Spacious 4BR/2.5BA home on 2+ acres with pellet stove, open kitchen, big deck, garden area, oversized heated garage, extra storage, and RV hookup.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

**\$199,000****TIMBERON**

94 Pawhuska Drive
Bright 2BR/1BA home on 0.5+ acres with open living, covered decks, RV carport with power, 2-car garage/workshop with stove, and Airbnb income potential.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$1,999,999****CLOUDCROFT**

105 James Canyon Highway
Thriving BBQ restaurant on a high-traffic corner with pro kitchen, top-tier smokers, strong local and tourist following, indoor/outdoor seating, and a spacious 2BR/1BA apartment above.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999

**\$549,900****CLOUDCROFT**

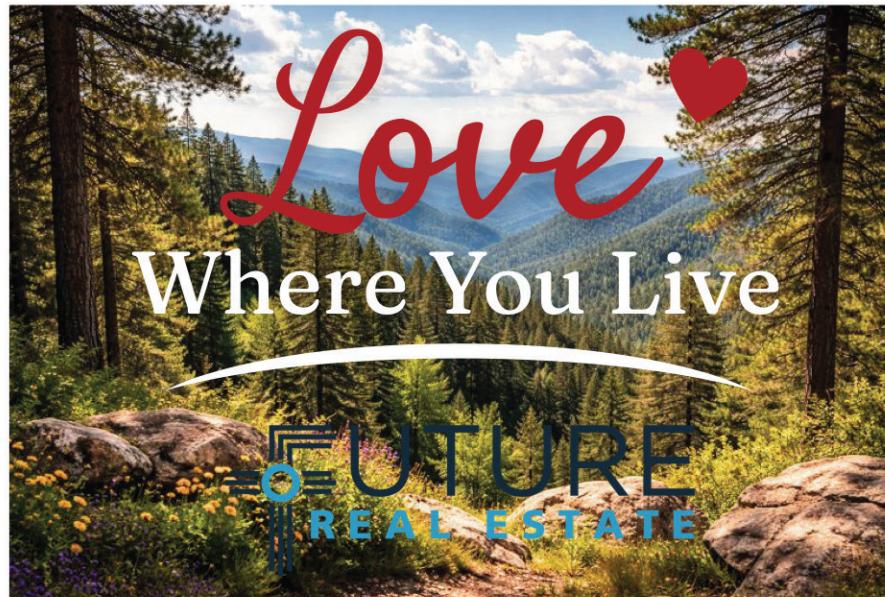
606 Fifth Street
5BR/2BA village home with open kitchen/living/dining, large loft, ground-level entry, plus a workshop and detached 1-car garage.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999

**\$525,000****HIGH ROLLS**

73 Cider Mill Farm Road
Fully fenced and gated 2.5 acres offering privacy, nature, and space for hobbies. Updated home with new flooring and a charming rustic-modern kitchen.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

**\$749,000****MAYHILL**

64 Silver Fox Trail
This incredibly well kept home is the perfect place to call your own. Sitting on just under one acre you'll have plenty of privacy on these two lots.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999

**\$600,000****CLOUDCROFT**

63 Sullivan Canyon Road
Log home on 5 private acres bordering national forest with vaulted living, loft, wood stove, hardwood floors, generator, hot tub, and stunning canyon views.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

**\$749,000****MAYHILL**

67 Silver Fox Trail
Stunning mountain retreat on 2 acres in a gated community, offering luxury, comfort, modern amenities, and beautiful mountain views.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

**\$275,000****CLOUDCROFT**

29 Trading Post Road
Cozy cabin on three lots with main-level living, two upstairs bedrooms with private decks, and multiple outdoor spaces to enjoy year-round mountain views.

Annie Daniels - (575) 442-3444

**\$829,000****MAYHILL**

48 Milky Way
Architectural mountain retreat with sweeping views, wildlife, and an integrated roll-off-roof observatory for exceptional stargazing.

Megan Corvin - (575) 551-1999

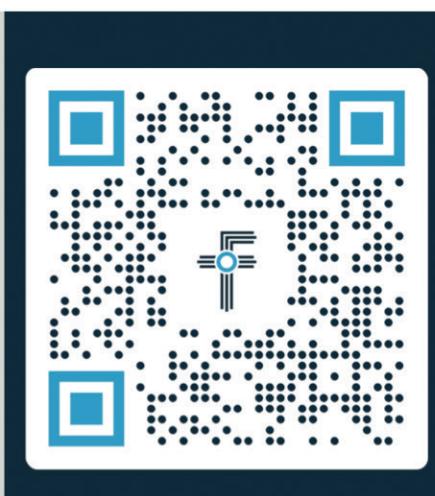
**\$204,000****CLOUDCROFT**

11 Center Road
Charming single-wide on 0.31 acres featuring open living, a primary suite, two guest rooms, and a covered deck among the tall pines.

Debbie Loper - (575) 430-7044

Scan Here!

for more listings
& property details

**\$610,000****CLOUDCROFT**

1091 Woodlands Way
Beautiful mountain retreat on nearly half an acre. Highend finishes throughout, including a designer kitchen, expansive covered deck and refined outdoor living.

Cori Abel - (816) 896-2674
Emily Kellam - (575) 214-9479

ro Ave., (225) 253-2606) Rocks, gems, and original Southwest art and wear. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. burrostreettradingpost.com

Cloudcroft Archery (100 Little Glorieta Ave., (575) 439-7918) Indoor range and bow services. 11:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Tuesday-Friday, Saturday 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m.

Cloudcroft Souvenirs (502 Burro Ave.) Southwestern tchotchkes and take-home memorabilia. Open Monday-Saturday 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sunday 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Cloudcroft Truck & Auto Parts (94 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-6002 Requisite auto supplies. Open 7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Closed Sunday.

Coco Blu (94 Little Glorieta Ave., (575) 682-3039) Ladies' boutique with head-to-toe stylish selections and name brands. Open 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, and until 5:30 p.m. on Friday and 6:00 p.m. on Saturday.

The Elk Shed (505 Burro Ave.) Southwestern goods, clothes, gourmet pantry staples, and more. Open 11:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily. theelkshed.com

The Fat Rabbit (206 Burro Ave.) Silver and turquoise, plus. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday.

The Highland (206 James Canyon Hwy, (575) 682-1041) Nambe, gifts, hunting supplies, licenses, and beyond. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. daily.

High Altitude (310 Burro Ave. (575) 682-1229) Your favorite little outdoors store, boutique, and bike shop. 10:00 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, until 6:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, until 5:00 p.m. Sunday. highaltitudenm.com

Homee (109 James Canyon Hwy) Everything for sale. Home rental services. Hours vary. inhomee.com

Instant Karma (302 Burro Ave., (575) 682-2651) Ayurvedic goods, yogi-friendly clothes, books, and yoga. Open 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily. getinstantkarma.com

King's Treasure (202 Burro Ave. (575) 682-5524) Thrift to your heart's delight without breaking the bank. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. every day except Sunday.

Magnum's Guns II (207 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-6677) Guns and ammo on James Canyon Highway. 1:00-4:00 p.m. Monday, Wednesday to Friday from 12:00-5:00 p.m., Saturday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. magnumsguns.com

Mountain Magic (506 Burro Ave. (575) 682-2348) Cloudcroft shirts, woodland toys, baby gifts, natural goods, and more. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

New Village Hardware (61 Curlew Pl. (575) 682-2849) Everything you need for your latest project. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Saturday, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday.

Osha Trail Depot (102 Mexican Ave. 575-551-2099) Local art, woodworking, and New-Mexican goods. Interested artists inquire: oshatraildepot@gmail.com. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. every day.

Poke The Bear (510 Burro Ave. 575-682-1341) Find the music playing on Burro boardwalk for fun and unique finds—lamps, upcycled furniture, outdoor goods, t-shirts, and humor gifts. Open 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Red Wall Jewelry (505 Burro Ave. 575-682-4414) Delicate and artisanal wares—great for gifts. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. daily.

Roots Flower Co. (62 Curlew Pl. (575) 295-1644) High-end flowers and affordable prices. Bouquets of all sizes, event orders. Open 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Tuesday-Saturday.

Seasons Boutique Gift Shop (601 Corona Pl. (575) 682-2566) Shop at the historic Lodge.

The Bear Track (308 Burro Ave.) Baubles, figurines, woodland critter decor, and more. Hours vary.

Tree-Riffic Toys and Candy (505 Burro Ave. (575) 682-2566) Goodies for all ages. Open M, Th, Fri, Sat 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m., W 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Sun 12:00-5:00 p.m.

Tree Top Teez (505 Burro Ave. (575) 430-5154) Custom silk-screen and embroidery shop. Open 7:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Turquoise Shop (507 Burro Ave. (575) 682-3327) Fine jewelry at every price point. Open 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. each day, closed Sunday. cloudfroft-turquoise.com

Art

Cloudcroft Art Society Co-op Gallery (90 Swallow Pl.) Artist-run rotating gallery. Open seasonal Saturdays 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and for holiday sales. ccartsociety@gmail.com

Off the Beaten Path (100 Glorieta Ave. (575) 682-7284) Regional hand-

made art selection of all media. Open 10:30 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Sunday. offthebeatenpathstuff.com

Samantha Odom Art Gallery (300 Burro Ave. (575) 649-9951) Original paintings and affordable prints by Samantha Odom. Open 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

The Little Gallery (206 Burro Ave.) Fine arts and paintings by local artists, and funky souvenirs. Open Wednesday-Sunday 11:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. or by appointment.

Healing

Be in the Mountains Yoga & Massage Therapy (109 James Canyon Hwy (575) 415-4573) Cozy space and comfortable pace in the Village Plaza. Open by appointment at yogaincloudcroft.com

Cloudcroft Animal Hospital (1403 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-2645) Critter care and adoptions. Open 8:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:30-5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Cloudcroft Therapeutic Massage (404 Burro Ave.) Relax and recover upstairs at the OCEC building. Open by appointment at cloudfroftherapeuticmassage.com

Laughing Leaf Dispensary (504 Burro Ave. (575) 682-1354) Locally-owned bud tender. Open 10:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, and 9:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Sunday.

Presbyterian Medical Center (76 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-2542) Clinic by appointment or walk-in. Open 7:00 a.m.-6:00 p.m. Monday-Friday.

Southwest Naturals CBD (506 Burro Ave. (575) 682-6022) Range of CBD products, vitamins, and supplements in store. Open Monday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Friday-Sunday 10:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

Trestle Medical Services (1200 James Canyon Hwy) Local family practitioner. Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and 12:30-4:00 p.m. trestlemedical.com

Services

Atelier Art of Hair by Anna (505 Burro Ave. (415) 230-9506) Pamper your hair, style your photoshoot. Available by appointment vagaro.com/lacnb9/services

Bhair Necessities (202 Burro Ave. (575) 518-9011) Classic color, cuts, and products. Available by appointment.

Cloudcroft Fitness (90 Swallow Pl.) Get moving with a range of class offerings and instructors. cloudfroftcycling.punchpass.com

Cloudcroft Village Office (201 Burro Ave.) Pay your water bill, attend village meetings, and more. cloudfroftvillage.com

Cloudsoft Laundry To Go (520-330-2613) Delivery service.

Crystal Tompkins Photography Family photos, headshots, business branding, soul sessions, and more. By appointment: crystaltompkinsphotography.com

First National Bank (301 Burro Ave. (575) 682-2531) Money on the mountain, outdoor ATM. Open 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Friday.

Green Mountain Construction (500 Burro Ave. (575) 551-2811) Local development. Open 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.



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Monday-Friday. greenmountainconstr.com

High Valley Weaving School (90 Swallow Pl. 575-921-1020) Modern courses in ancient fiber techniques. Class schedules: highvalleyweavingschool.com

Pre-School and Extended Care (50 Chipmunk (575) 682-1264) Local child-care.

Rick Roger's Auto & Equipment Repair (72 James Canyon Hwy (575) 682-3352) Gas and diesel mechanic services. Open Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and 1:00-5:00 p.m.

Sacramento Mountain Senior Services (212 Glorieta Ave. 575-682-3022) Cafeteria and social hub. mtnseniors.org

U.S. Post Office (20 Curlew Pl. (800) 275-8777) Mail and passport services. Open 8:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, Saturday 9:30-11:30 a.m.

1CAT Trap & Release Program (100 Glorieta Ave. 575-682-7284) Non-profit feline care. Available by appointment.

Play

Cosmic Adventures (cosmicadventuresnm.com) Snow-mobile tours and more

Deer Park Playground (30 Swallow Pl.) Behind the Burro St. Exchange. Picnic tables, easy downtown access.

Elevation Park (230 Mescalero Ave.) Disc golf, trailheads, and stargazing.

James Sewell Ice Rink (751 James Canyon Hwy) On the west end of Zenith Park. Seasonal skate rentals, snack bar, fireplace.

Pickleball Addicts of Cloudcroft (pickleballaddictsofcloudcroft.com) Join them! Regular seasonal play at Zenith Park.

Ski Cloudcroft (1920 1/2 Hwy 82) Southernmost ski area in NM—skiing, tubing, wood-fired pizza, and more.

The Lodge Golf Course (703 Corona Ave.) Scottish 9 in the clouds. Visit the pro shop for gear, snacks, and drinks.

Zenith Park (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Meadow in the middle of the village with playgrounds, ice rink, disc golf, walking path, pickleball courts, and more.

Visit Cloudcroft

Sacramento Mountains Historical Museum and Pioneer Village (1000 Hwy 82) Study the Sacramentos

Sacramento Ranger District Forest Service Ranger Station (4 Lost Lodge Rd.) Visit for maps and forest facts

The Cloudcroft Chamber of Commerce (1001 James Canyon Hwy) Stop in to learn about local businesses and events

Michael Nivison Public Library (90 Swallow Pl.) Community hub for all ages

Fill Up/EV Charge

Allsups (10 Curlew Pl) Gas, groceries, beer cave in the middle of Cloudcroft.

High Rolls General Store (845 U.S. 82) A little bit of everything.

Mayhill Country Store (3497 U.S. 82) Travel stop with souvenirs, food, and gas next door.

Otero County Electric Co-op (404 Burro Ave.) Shop Cloudcroft's downtown while your car charges.

Day Trip

Alameda Park Zoo (35 minutes) Observe critters in the Southwest's oldest zoo. Educational programs, a playground, and summer camps available. ci.alamogordo.nm.us/816/Alameda-Park-Zoo

American Armed Forces Museum (23 minutes) Archives, memorabilia, and memorial garden. Volunteers welcome. americanarmedforcesmuseum.com

Cadwallader Mountain Farms (14 minutes) High-elevation orchards with scenic views and "u-pick" seasons. Find them on Facebook for updates.

La Luz, NM (24 minutes) Tularosa Basin settlement at the base of the Sacramento Mountains.

Lincoln National Forest Scenic Byway (Varies) Winding drives past basin views, mountain meadows, wildlife, and beyond. fs.usda.gov/r03/lincoln/recreation/opportunities/scenic-drives

Mayhill, NM (23 minutes) Neighbors to the east.

Museum of Space History (30 minutes) Exhibits, education, memorials, playground, and theater. nm spacemuseum.org

Nichols Ranch and Orchards (35 minutes) Seasonal harvests and events. nicholsranchandorchards.com

Oliver Lee Memorial State Park (47 minutes) Desert camping, historic site, and hiking. emnrd.nm.gov/spd/find-a-park/oliver-lee-memorial-state-park/

Sacramento, NM (48 minutes) Mountain hamlet nestled in the Sacramentos.

Silver Lake (17 minutes) RV and tent camping, fishing, and more on the Mescalero Apache Reservation. mescaleroapachetribe.com/parks-rec/silver-lake-official/

Sunspot Solar Observatory (32 minutes) Unique solar observing facilities and telescopes, education, visitor's center, and breathtaking views. sunspot.nmsu.edu

Three Rivers Petroglyph Site (59 minutes) One of the largest and most interesting rock art sites in the Southwest. blm.gov/visit/three-rivers-petroglyph-site

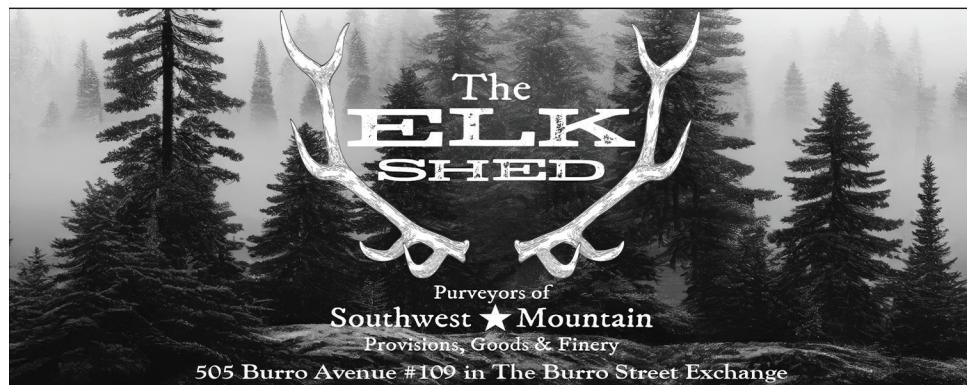
Timberon, NM (55 minutes) Mountain community surrounded by gorgeous forest—gas up on your way, no station for miles. timberon.org

Tularosa Basin Museum of History (31 minutes) Area history with a full research library, gift shop, and bookstore.

Valley of Fires (80 minutes) Lava park featuring trails, visitor center, picnic areas, and campsite hookups. blm.gov/visit/valley-fires-recreation-area

Weed, NM (41 minutes) Mountain community, home of the Weed Bluegrass Festival. weednm.org

White Sands National Park (45 minutes) Otherworldly chalky dunes—pack sunscreen and water. nps.gov/whsa/index.htm



VALENTINES MENU

STARTERS

SEARED SCALLOPS

Honey Beets, Fennel Salad

BEEF CARPACCIO

Tenderloin, Olives, Shallots,

Cardamom Pepper, Balsamic Vinegar

WARM PEAR & GORGONZOLA SALAD

Cranberries, Almonds, Raspberry Vinegar

MAIN COURSE

LOBSTER & FILLET

Mash & Asparagus

SALMON WELLINGTON

Cauliflower, Picada Sauce

BACKSTRAP OF ELK

Pancetta Succotash, Butternut Squash, Blackberry Demi

ROASTED DUCK

Celery Root Mash, Heirloom Carrots, Pomegranate Demi

DESSERT

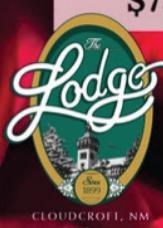
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Art in the Wild: Trevor P. Jackson

Art in Black Bear Coffee Shop features the work of Trevor P. Jackson in February

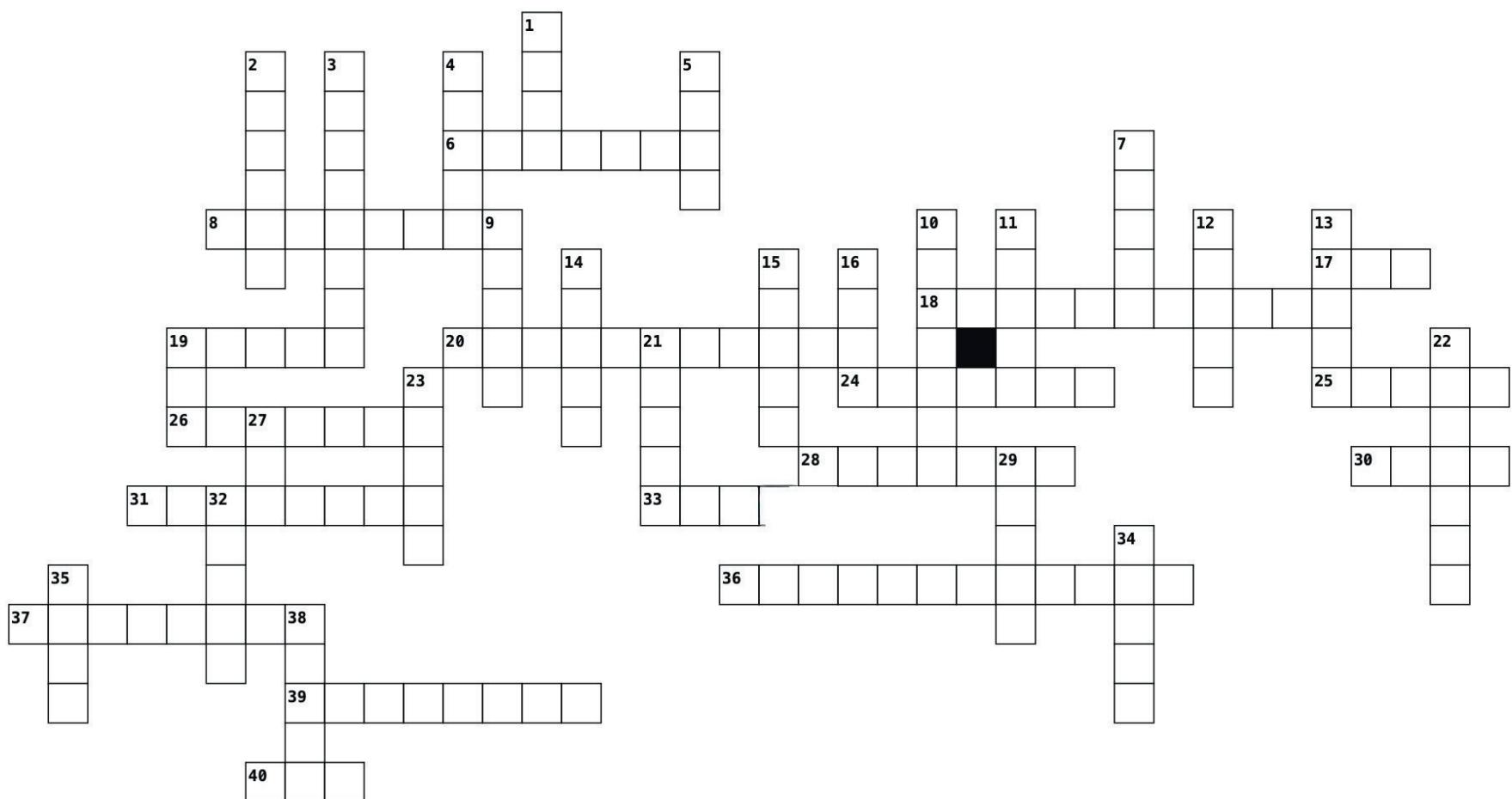
For over 20 years, Las Cruces-based Trevor P. Jackson has captured introspective compositions that reveal the stark beauty and intricate textures of natural terrains and desolate spaces. His work blends spontaneity with a striking aesthetic of contrasts, evoking awe and reverence for the planet's fragile beauty.

In 2025, he reinvented himself as a full-time artist after a 12-year career engineering optical instruments for NASA climate science satellites.

Jackson uniquely combines technical precision with artistic vision, and this fusion of science and creativity produces photographs that both inspire and educate, reaffirming the profound connection between humanity and the natural world. He has exhibited work at galleries and museums across the U.S. including New Mexico, Arizona, Texas, Virginia, and Oregon.

www.trevorpjackson.com

CloudPuzzle



Across

- 6. Forest floor covering
- 8. Wooden guide
- 17. Repeated movement in strength training
- 18. Gentle yoga style focused on relaxation
- 19. Increase in muscle size
- 20. Adds moisture to locks
- 24. Professional help
- 25. Place to get a haircut
- 26. Hands-on therapy
- 28. Professional who cuts
- 30. Stretch held for several minutes in restorative yoga
- 31. Ending relaxation in yoga class
- 33. Gear for climbing
- 36. Body alignment specialist
- 37. Act of walking long distances for recreation
- 39. Soft music or tones used in relaxation classes
- 40. State of mental calm and clarity

Down

- 1. Two-wheeled mode of trail transport
- 2. Licensed health care facility
- 3. Overall physical and mental health
- 4. Tall trees common near Cloudcroft trails
- 5. Narrow mountain road cyclists love
- 7. Hair tool

- 9. Soft blanket
- 10. Heavy metal weight lifted at the gym
- 11. Scenic overlook along a trail
- 12. Seated meditation posture
- 13. Exercise targeting the chest
- 14. Deep rest practice sometimes called yogic sleep
- 15. Flat surface used for lifting exercises
- 16. Earth
- 19. Place to work out indoors
- 21. Marked path through the forest
- 22. Yoga prop often used to support the body
- 23. Circular motion made by a cyclist's feet
- 27. Pampering place
- 29. Exercise that strengthens the legs and core
- 32. Appointment
- 34. Footwear essential for mountain hikes
- 35. Short haircut style
- 38. Elevation change hikers feel in the mountains

THE CABINS AT CLOUDCROFT

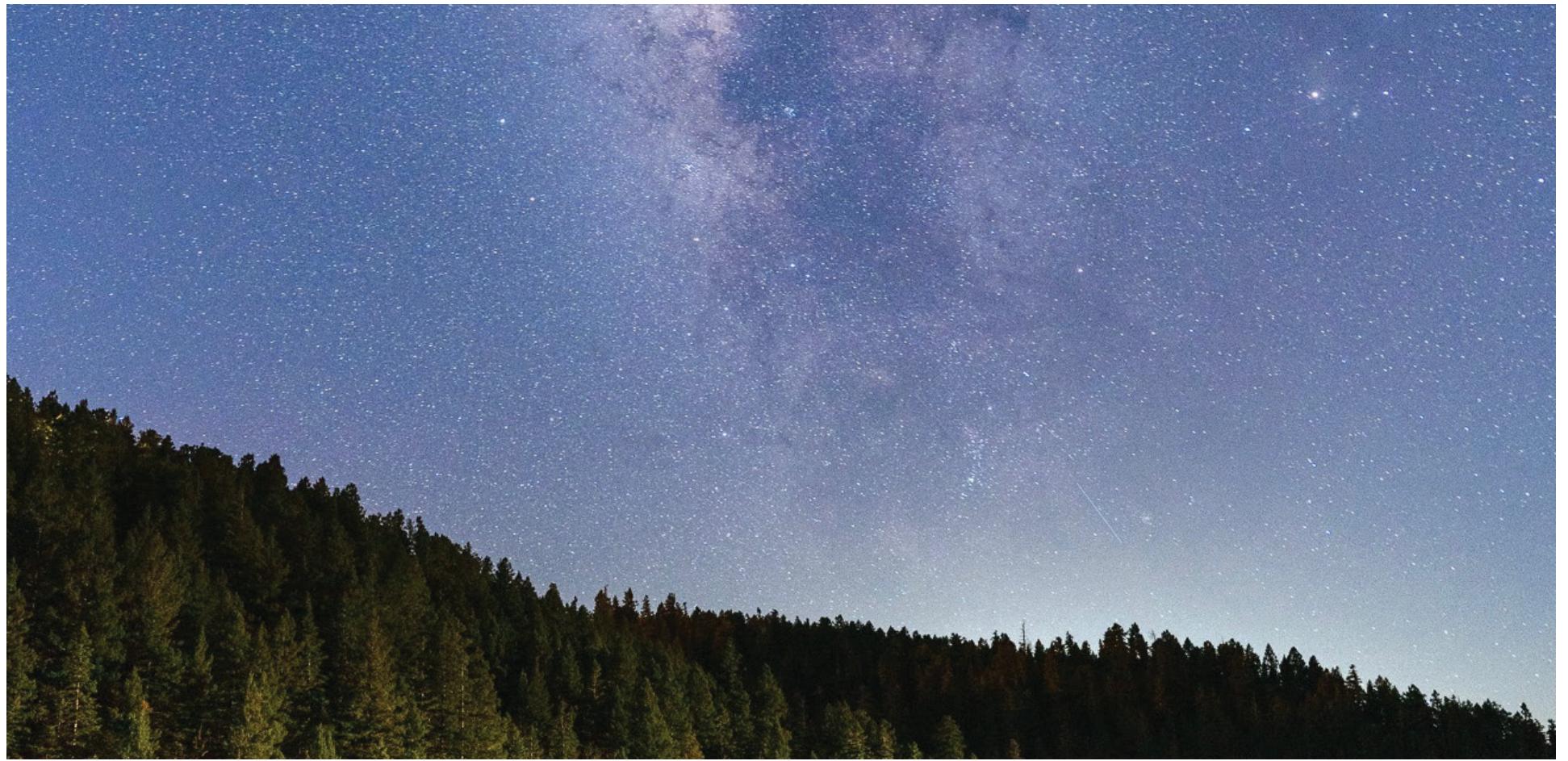
Close to everything but off the main roads.
Beautifully sited within the Village



**3, 2, 1 Bedroom Cabins
Fire Places ! Kitchen
575-682-2396**

www.cloudcroftnm.com





The Cloudcroft area, far from light pollution, is famous for its dark skies. (Image: Detail of photograph by Sam Seth. Prints available at Hight Altitude)

Events: February 2026

Get Out Your Calendar and Mark Dates. Cloudcroft is Happening

Each month, the Sacramento Mountains come alive with art, culture, and community. Here are a few highlights to help you experience the creativity and connection that make life in our mountain region so special.

Community

Join the Cloudcroft Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) starting February 5th at the CVFD 82 Station on Thursdays 6:00-8:00 p.m. Free trainings on disaster preparedness, fire safety, light search and rescue, and more. Register at info@cloudcroftvfd.com

Take a breather and gather at the Mountain Moms program at Summit Christian Fellowship on Wednesdays from 9:00-11:00 a.m.

Village of Cloudcroft Council Meeting: Tuesday, February 17th at 6:00 p.m. in the village chambers.

Cloudcroft Schools

Board of Education Meeting: Tuesday, February 17th at 6:00 p.m. in the District Boardroom, 10 Swallow Place.

Find the full Calendar of Events for Cloudcroft Schools at CMSBears.org

Get Moving

Oliver Lee Memorial State Park Sundays, February 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd from 10:00-11:00 a.m. A moderate 1-mile hike to Lawson Springs with views of Tularosa Basin and White Sands. Meet at site 36, park at the visitor center. Ages 8+, leashed pets welcome. Bring water. Fees waived. Contact: Kate German, 505-660-7381

Oliver Lee Ranch House Tour Saturdays, February 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th from 10:00-11:30 a.m. View the reconstructed house, originally built in 1893 on a walking tour. Meet at the visitor center. \$10 vehicle day use fee for non-NM residents.

The 12th Annual Super 5 Sunday in Las Cruces on February 8, 2026 is a community race at Centennial High School featuring a 1-mile, 5K, and 5-mile run with proceeds benefiting the LCRC Summer Youth Program; for info or questions, contact Bluebird Running Co LLC at (915) 861-4054

Enjoy a Sunset Stroll at White Sands National Park every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday until February 21st, 4:30 p.m. until sunset. Prep for a leisurely, ranger-guided stroll through the gypsum sand dunes, perfect for photo ops. Free, park entrance fee applies.

Tour Lake Lucero and the dunes on a guided hike for Valentine's Day—February 14th from 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. Tickets are required for this program and must be purchased through Recreation.gov or by calling (1-877-444-6777).

Dark Skies

Join the Planetary Parade on February 28th: Mercury, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune will align in the evening sky, with several visible to the naked eye.

New Moon on February 17th: This is the best time of the month to observe faint objects such as galaxies and star clusters because there is no moonlight interference.

Road Runner Food Bank

rrfb.org for dates and locations. Mobile food bank: Sacramento Mountain Senior Center, High Rolls.

Michael Nivison Public Library

Storytime and Crafts with Paige will continue Friday mornings at 10:30 a.m.

Friday Coffee Time from 1:00-3:00 p.m. in the foyer—free coffee and co-

coa, courtesy of the library.

Alamogordo

Thursdays from 6:00-8:00 p.m.: Board Game Night at the Alamogordo Recreation Center. Open to the community, all ages.

Otero Arts Space February 11th, watch an art documentary film: Caravaggio at 5:30 PM

February 14th at Otero Arts Space: Kids Workshop for Matisse cut-outs, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. with Maria; Adult Workshop for Notans/Matisse, 1:00-3:00 p.m. with Shari

Rockabilly Strangers perform live at VFW Post 7686 at the Canteen Alamogordo on Friday, February 6, from 7:00-10:00 pm, for members and bona fide guests.

The Lodge

Breakfast Buffet and omelette bar on Saturday and Sunday mornings starting at 8:00 a.m. \$18 per person.

Thirsty Thursdays: 50% off drinks from 12:00-8:00 p.m. at Saint Andrews Lounge.

Cloudcroft Brewing Co. and The Distillery

Karaoke night every Monday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. at the brewery side.

No live music in February. Friday and Saturday bands again in March.

The Western Bar

Enjoy \$1.50 tacos—only served on Tuesdays. Recently debuted seasonal drink menus.

Noisy Water Winery

Trivia Night at The Cellar takes place February 2 from 5:00-6:30 pm at The Cellar in Ruidoso—free, 21+, and open to solo players or teams for a fun evening of laughs and friendly

competition.

Sacramento Senior Center

Got talent? Show it off on from 10:30-11:15 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month.

Timberon

Senior Social night at the High Country Lounge and Grill every Tuesday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. with food, drinks, and “those classic songs that you love.” Also on Tuesdays—\$2.00 tacos all day.

Art

Blackbear Coffee Shop hosts an “artist of the month” on their gallery wall. This month you can catch the photographic works of Las Cruces-based Trevor P. Jackson. Open during regular business hours.

Near Distance, an exhibition by artist Kirsten Mauritsen inspired by the natural world, is on view January 27–February 27 at the Ocotillo Performing Arts Center in Artesia, with an artist reception on February 3, 2026, from 5-7 pm.

Mescalero

Dwight Yoakam brings his iconic honky-tonk swagger and Bakersfield sound to the Inn of the Mountain Gods on Friday, February 13 and Saturday, February 14, with doors at 6:00 pm, show at 8:00 pm, and tickets starting at \$40 (minors must be accompanied by an adult).

Ruidoso

Celebrate Valentine's Day with a cozy, creative morning at the Wingfield Heritage House Museum on Saturday, February 14, 2026, from 10 am-12 pm, featuring hands-on crafts, keepsakes, and family-friendly fun for all ages.



Texas A&M Students passed through the village on their ruck-march fundraiser to benefit Special Operations Warrior Foundation

Mountain Life

Folks Caught on Camera Living Their Best Mountain Life



Instant Karma owner Alex Carilli bends and breathes in the yoga studio on Burro



New Village officials (L-R) Trustee Danny Hardwick, Trustee Matt Willett, Mayor Dusty Wiley, and Trustee Keith Hamilton attend January training in Santa Fe



Heavy is the Head: Alyssa Singer, AKA Hotshot the Bear made her way to the Citrus Bowl in Orlando, Florida



Ellis Alcorn gets a rebound (and some air) as the Bears and Elks Cloudcroft basketball teams practice their skills



The Sac Mountains got hit with over a foot of snow at the end of January



Public Works employees Kris Parks (C) and David Hunter install a valve in the village while hunting down water leaks



Pat and Wes Gaskill enjoy a date night at the Western Bar



Former Trustee Grover Sterling gets the livestream going before a Jan council meeting



Certified Nursing Assistant students are all smiles at their pinning ceremony: Tylan Bragg, Rhiannon Eldridge, Hannah Ferdetta, Sage Greenwood, Carolina Loper Flores, Jade Merrill, Cassia Moore, Adrianna Ortega, Kaylee Pinon, and Aurora Trejo.



Steve serves up smoked delicacies at Brother-in-Law BBQ. The joint is closed for the month of February and will reopen in March.



Little J Ranch Report: Princess Toadette and Princess Rosalina came to us from a kind woman in El Paso. After their arrival, we discovered both princesses are expecting. They're settling in, enjoying fresh air, space to roam, and gentle days at the ranch. We'll be welcoming new little lives in mid-February.

Learn more on our website at littlejranch.org (<http://littlejranch.org/>)


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much more than that, it's about the pride we have for the country, the respect we show for its history, and the responsibility we have to shape the future. One way I can show that I support America is by taking the time to understand how the laws work and learning about the responsibilities of citizenship. Being educated about the government, our rights, and the issues that affect our country will prepare me to make informed decisions in the future. When I'm old enough to vote, I want to ensure that I'm making decisions based on knowledge rather than just the opinions of others, because making an educated choice is the best way to make sure I contribute to the well-being of our democracy.

Staying well-educated is important because it ensures that the people voting aren't just choosing someone because others are, but because they truly understand the ideas and values that are supported by the person they are voting for. When someone takes the time to learn what the candidates offer and what their plans for the future are, you are not making informed decisions that only benefit you, but also others in the community.

Voting is important because it gives every person a voice to shape the way our country goes. It is not only a right, but it also ensures that the government is chosen fairly and has the people's best interests and needs at heart. By voting, we hold the people elected accountable and encourage them to do what's best for the people. When people stay educated, they help protect freedoms and help create a government that's beneficial to everyone.

Being patriotic isn't just about voting; it's about how we treat others and take care of the community we are in. Supporting America could mean helping neighbors, volunteering, and finding ways to make a difference. That could mean cleaning up a park, donating food to a local food bank, or even just lending a hand to someone who needs it. Doing these things shows that you care about others and strengthens America by coming together and being one.

Another way to show patriotism is by respecting the people who serve our country, like soldiers, veterans, police officers, firefighters, and other important workers. They give their time, work hard, and sometimes even risk their lives to protect our freedom. I show my support with that by thanking them when I see someone. When I was 10, my brother enlisted in the Navy, and I learned from him the commitment and dedication they have to fight for our country. Before that, I used to think that it was just something anyone could do, but I learned that the amount of strength needed is a lot that not just everyone can accomplish. Their service reminds me that being patriotic means not only loving our country, but also honoring the people who protect it.

Patriotism is more than waving a flag or watching fireworks. It is about being educated, making responsible choices, helping others, respecting those who serve, and working for a brighter future. By staying involved, showing appreciation, and enjoying the values of freedom and fairness, I can show my support for America every day.

—by Paul Benshoof

Say hello

Reach us at hello@mountainmonthly.com

Letter from the Superintendent

Welcome to the 3rd quarter, a time of year typically marked by demanding academics, wintry weather, and a full calendar of activities. On the academic front, our dedicated staff continue to guide learners in meaningful ways and our students consistently rise to the challenge. Our 2024-2025 NM Visitas District Report Card reflects this high performance, which we will keep striving for every day. All students are receiving excellent instruction in both core and elective subjects, and having plenty of fun in the process. We have 33 high school students taking dual credit classes and earning high marks. As a staff, we provide data-driven instruction while building strong relationships and championing each students' success.

We have several noteworthy student spotlights this month. Our school mascot, Alyssa Singer, represented our district as "Hotshot" at the Citrus Bowl. FFA students Preston White, Madilynn Hare, and Avalyn Ross qualified for state - a wonderful achievement for Cloudcroft. TSA participants are preparing for CTSO Roundhouse Day and State championships with impressive innovation. Congrats to our newly-pinned CNAs Tylan Bragg, Rhianon Eldridge, Hannah Ferdetta, Sage Greenwood, Carolina Loper Flores, Jade Merrill, Cassia Moore, Adrianna Ortega, Kaylee Pinon, and Aurora Trejo. Employable skills such as Firefighting, Agriculture, Art, Computer Design, Welding, and so much more are being developed daily. The senior class is looking ahead to

Believe it or not, February 18th will be our 100th day of school, leaving 75 school days remaining in the school year. Over these upcoming days, we invite you to join us for several exciting events and opportunities to connect with other families and celebrate our students:

February 5: 9th grade to ENMU - Ruidoso Freshmen Day

February 6-7: Governor's STEM Challenge

February 7: FFA State, Albuquerque

February 11: Wellness Room Grand Opening

February 12: Kids Heart Challenge Assembly

February 13: FFA LDE, Roswell

February 17: Board of Education Regular Meeting

February 18: Quiz Bowl

February 21: FFA CDE, Carrizozo

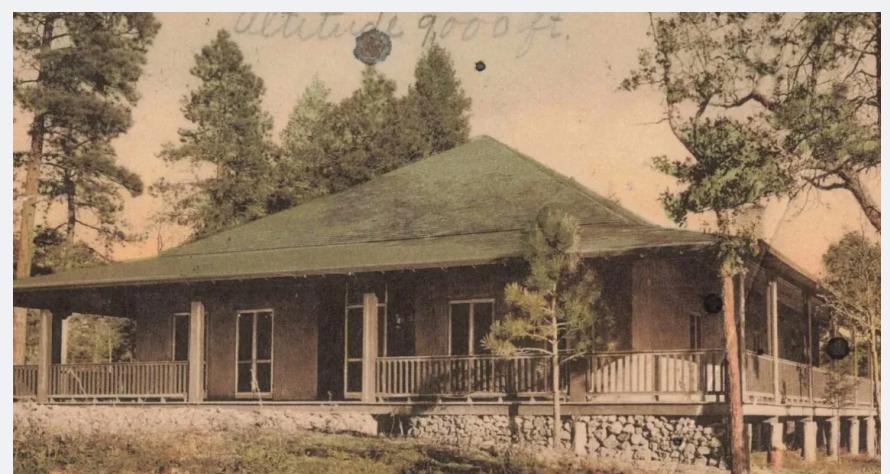
February 25-27: TSA State, Las Cruces

February 28: FFA CDE, Las Cruces

We encourage you to visit our Athletics page for up-to-date schedules, and we hope to see you out there cheering on our Bear athletes.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our schools. As always, I am available and would love to speak with you. Please reach out via email at jocelyne.gillespie@cmsbears.org or by phone at 575-601-4416. If you would like to stop by, please make an appointment with our administrative secretary, Grace White. I wish you all a rejuvenating January!

*—Go Bears!
Jocelyne Driscoll-Gillespie
Superintendent
Cloudcroft Municipal Schools*



The 'Baby San'

The Sanatorium was opened by **Dr. Herbert Stevenson** of El Paso, Texas, on June 14, 1911, to provide care and healing for infants and toddlers who were ill, dehydrated, or otherwise not thriving at home.

The Sanatorium was established in Cloudcroft to take advantage of the dry atmosphere and cooler temperatures. It was funded primarily by donations from wealthy El Paso residents.

It was intended to provide intensive, direct care to bring each child to a healthy, stable condition that would enable them to be returned to their family. It operated each summer until 1934. Initially, with only 12 cribs, "Baby San" treated over 500 children with great success during its 24 years of operation.

The effects of the Great Depression made it impossible to fund the continued operation of the "Baby San," resulting in its closure.

—Information provided by the New Mexico Rails-to-Trails Association and Damon Marez on behalf of the Sacramento Historical Society.

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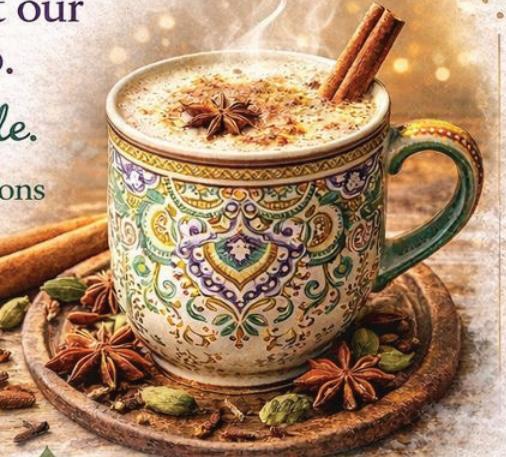
Monday February 2 Red Chile Cheese Hotdog Sweet Potatoes Green Beans Pineapple Chunks	Tuesday February 3 Crab Cakes Tartar Sauce Broccoli Normandy Wheat Roll Apple Crisp	Wednesday February 4 Tater Tot Casserole Brussel Sprouts WW Roll Fresh Pear	Thursday February 5 Sweet and Sour Pork Brown Rice Stir Fry Vegetables Mandarin Oranges	Friday February 6 Beef Fajitas Black Bean Salsa w/ Corn Zucchini Tropical Fruit
Monday February 9 Teriyaki Chicken Brown Rice Stir Fry Veg w/ Snap Peas Pineapple Chunks Mandarin Oranges Fortune Cookie	Tuesday February 10 Hot Turkey "Sandwich" Roasted Sweet Potatoes Carrot Raisin Salad Pears	Wednesday February 11 RC Pork Posole Zucchini w/ Diced Tomatoes 6 in Flour Tortilla Mixed Berries w/ Whipped Topping Peanut Butter Cookie	Thursday February 12 Spaghetti w/ Meat Sauce Italian Blend Veggies Fruit Salad	Friday February 13 Ham & Cheese Sandwich Sun Chips Vegetable Medley Banana
Monday February 16 CENTER CLOSED FOR PRESIDENTS' DAY	Tuesday February 17 Marinated Grilled Chicken Parsley Potatoes Roasted Broccoli Wheat Roll Mixed Fruit	Wednesday February 18 Cheese & Mushroom Pizza Asparagus w/ Garbanzo beans Stewed Tomatoes WW Crackers Diced Peaches Nonfat Vanilla Yogurt	Thursday February 19 Beef Stroganoff Brown Rice Spinach Roasted Cauliflower Tapioca Pudding	Friday February 20 Fish Tacos w/ Corn Tortilla Cilantro Lime Brown Rice Calabacitas Pineapple Chunks
Monday February 23 Chicken Divan Glazed Carrots Wheat Bread Banana	Tuesday February 24 Clam Chowder Wheat Roll Fruit Salad	Wednesday February 25 Egg Salad Sandwich Pickled Beets Tomato soup Apricots w/ Light nonfat vanilla Yogurt ROADRUNNER	Thursday February 26 Spinach Lasagna Broccoli Normandy Wheat Roll Nonfat Vanilla Yogurt Berries	Friday February 27 Chicken Stir Fry Stir Fry Veggies w/ Snow Peas Brown Rice Grapes Fortune Cookie

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February 2026 Events				
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Monday, February 2 Canasta 12:30 pm CC	Tuesday, February 3 Vital Signs 11:00 CC	Wednesday, February 4 Canasta 12:30 pm CC	Thursday, February 5 Dominos – 1:30 pm-3:30 pm CC	Friday, February 6 Bridge 12:30 CC Dave's Meet there 5:00 pm
Monday, February 9 Canasta 12:30 pm CC	Tuesday, February 10 Vital Signs 11:00 CC Music Talent Performances 1030-11:15 am CC	Wednesday, February 11 Canasta 12:30 pm CC	Thursday, February 12 Dominos – 1:30 pm-3:30 pm CC	Friday, February 13 Bridge 12:30 CC Joe's Italian Alamogordo Meet there 5:00 pm <i>We may take the van</i>
Monday, February 16 CENTER CLOSED FOR PRESIDENTS' DAY	Tuesday, February 17 Vital Signs 11:00 CC	Wednesday, February 18 Canasta 12:30 pm CC	Thursday, February 19 February Birthday Celebration - CC & HR Rowdy Seniors Bingo – CC & HR 12:30-1:30pm	Friday, February 20 Bridge 12:30 pm CC Dusty Boots Meet there 5:00 pm
Monday, February 23 Canasta 12:30 pm CC Board Meeting 5:00pm	Tuesday, February 24 Vital Signs 11:00 CC Music Talent Performances 1030-11:15 am CC ROADRUNNER DAY	Wednesday, February 25 Canasta 12:30 pm CC	Thursday, February 26 Bingo – CC & HR 12:00 pm Meet there 5:00 pm <i>We may take the van</i>	Friday, February 27 Bridge 12:30 CC La Rosa's Tularosa Meet there 5:00 pm <i>We may take the van</i>

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Flavor Lab

Cloudcroft High School Culinary Program students take recipes from the classroom to your table.

CHS Junior **Zurri McNeil** shares a classic recipe for

Buttermilk Biscuits

What you'll need:

- 4 cups self-rising flour
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups Buttermilk

Preheat the oven to 400. Cut butter into flour until crumbly. Add buttermilk until you have a workable dough. You want to mix it as little as possible to keep them fluffy. Flour the table and press the biscuit dough until 2 inches thick. Cut them out in a circle with a biscuit cutter or cup, press straight down, and don't twist. Put them on a cookie sheet and bake for 15 minutes. Baste with melted butter when done.

Notes:

You can add grated cheese or herbs to give your biscuits a different flavor. Make it your own.

The recipe was shared by a great baker and friend, Stefanie Koch.

Yield is based on the thickness and size of the biscuit cutter.



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Faces & Places



Problem-Solving Through Healing Touch

Robin Faux's approach to pain relief at Cludcroft Therapeutic Massage

Massage therapist Robin Faux welcomes me into a cozy room at her second-floor practice at the Otero County Electric Cooperative building in the heart of the village.

Surrounded by framed certificates and Southwestern decor, we sit in cushy consultation chairs and discuss her work. Surprisingly, Faux doesn't mention relaxation or stress relief. Instead, she speaks about healing.

She explains, "What my training is in

is very muscle-specific stuff. I think of it more as problem-solving and pain relief. Not just relaxing muscles, but helping to rehab them."

Faux says she's one of only 74 board-certified massage therapists in New Mexico, among the 2,417 active licensed practitioners statewide. "I see that not so much as an achievement but as a commitment to my clients that I'm going to continue pursuing more education, I'm going to continue expanding my skill set," she says.

The certification process tested her on advanced skills, including gait analysis—observing how someone walks to identify pain sources. The exam also covered manual lymphatic drainage. Faux uses this method to help clients with conditions ranging from chronic lymphedema to post-surgical swelling.

Her path to massage therapy began in Ohio, where she originally planned to become a physical therapist. The independence of massage therapy appealed to her—treating patients without navigating insurance restrictions and doctor referrals. When her school began offering a massage therapy degree program, she enrolled.

Since moving to Cludcroft permanently in 2011, Faux built a practice that serves everyone from athletes to people recovering from joint replacement surgery. "I see a lot of people who have chronic pain," she says.

What makes each session unique is Faux's individualized approach. "I come into the room with an idea of what I'm going to do, and it doesn't always end that way," she admits. She gathers information through conversation, observation, and touch—noticing imbalances in "tissue density, texture, even temperature changes. It's constant. It's like a constant science experiment."

Since 2016, Faux has run Cludcroft Therapeutic Massage with her partner, Jim Swaagman, who recently retired from massage. Despite providing up to seven massages a day during busy summer stretches, she's learned to use leverage rather than strength, protecting her body through careful mechanics.

"This little town of Cludcroft has been so supportive of us in our business," she says. "It's kind of fun when I'm anywhere in the community, and people say, Oh, hey, this is the person who helped with my shoulder issue. This is the person who was helping me with my knee replacement recovery. Who wouldn't appreciate that, to have that kind of career?"

"I never thought I would be so happy with a job," Faux says. "I feel fortunate that people trust me enough to let me do this."

Find care online at cludcrofttherapeutic-massage.com. Faux takes appointments Friday through Tuesday, including weekends, and recently added online booking for tourists and part-time residents who seek her services.

Texas A&M Students Pass Through Cludcroft on 1,000-Mile Ruck March

A six-man group hiked through the village on 10-day trek to benefit Special Operations Warrior Foundation

If you've noticed a group of young folks in matching ponchos hiking through town with heavy packs in early January, they were on a mission that goes beyond a winter trek.

Six Texas A&M University students were in the final stretch of a 1,000-mile ruck march across West Texas and New Mexico to raise funds for the Special Operations Warrior Foundation, which provides college scholarships and support to children of fallen special operations personnel.

The team, calling themselves Project Atlas Rucks, stepped off from Big Bend on January 2nd and carried weighted rucksacks through Fort Davis, Carlsbad, and Cludcroft as they made their way toward White Sands.

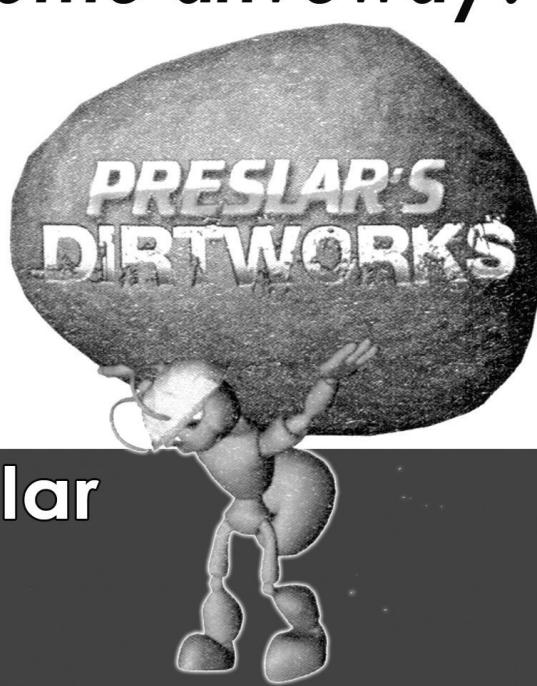
Chancy Knauth, Tyler Papp, Austin Ramos, Shane Bookbinder, Tyler Kukla, and Zach Hampton have covered nearly a combined 800 miles on foot in just over a week, according to the group.

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Current and former members of the Texas A&M Corps of Cadets, as well as civilian students make up the band.

"We are completing this challenge in 10 days to push ourselves physically and mentally in honor of those who have sacrificed far more," said Tyler Kukla.

The student-led effort is entirely self-funded, with no sponsorships or paid support. Their goal is to raise \$12,000 for the foundation, and they're currently at just over \$10,000.

"Our mission is to honor those fam-

ilies through action, not just words," Kukla said.

The Special Operations Warrior Foundation has provided full scholarships and long-term family support to Gold Star children since 1980, ensuring a pathway to education for children of fallen service members.

Find more information on Instagram at @projectatlasrucks

The team completed its march through southern New Mexico, with reported sightings of the group along Highway 244, Cloudcroft, and around Alamogordo.

PASSINGS



In Memory of Robert "Bob" McFarland

Robert "Bob" McFarland, 89, passed away on January 1, 2026.

He was a long-time resident of Cloudcroft, where he lived for over 33 years. Bob was born in Fay, New York, but raised in Texas and a devoted Dallas Cowboys fan. Most of his career was in the transportation industry. During his years in Cloudcroft, Bob worked at the Mountaintop Mercantile, the Western Café, and delivered the Alamo newspaper to mountain stores, becoming a familiar face in the community. He especially enjoyed Sundays at the Cloudcroft Brewery, where he met friends for pizza and beer.

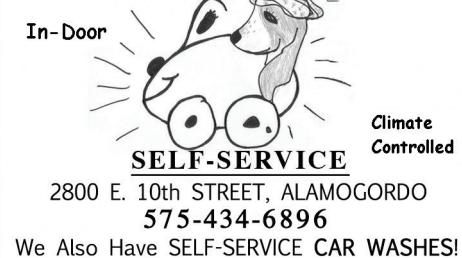
Bob is survived by his children Pat Brownfield (Shelli), Kim Pigrenet (Troy), Shelly Walker (Jeff), and Kelley Willis (Bret); his grandchildren Reagan Brownfield, Courtney Wier (Chase), Tyler Miller, Garrett Miller (Lindsay), Brian Peacock, and Paige Peacock; and four great-granddaughters, Charleigh, Collins, Cline and Campbell. He was preceded in death by his wife, Judy McFarland; his parents, Naomi Hana and Franklin Beattie; and sister, Deane Bostick Martin.

The family will gather for a celebration of life on January 31, 2026, in Texas.

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Anna Glidden delivers confidence at her Burro Ave. salon (Photo: Crystal Tompkins Photography)



Mountain Life with Anna Glidden

Cloudcroft's fashion-world hair stylist, confidence-building entrepreneur, and Jill-of-all-trades talks about her global past and local present.

by Hannah Dean

Hairstylist, foodie, musician, model, motorbiker, fashionista, artist.

Any one of these describes Cloudcroft's Anna Glidden, owner and operator of Atelier: Art of Hair by Anna, the cozy, chic salon in the west corner of Burro Street Exchange.

Anna was born in Hiroshima, Japan, and grew up in Nagasaki. She has lived in Germany, France, San Francisco, San Diego, Cloudcroft, Philadelphia, and Cloudcroft again.

Anna has worked with world-renowned fashion houses for editorial and advertising campaigns, including Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld, and Jean-Paul Gaultier. She has also arranged the famous coifs belonging to Kate Moss, Nicole Kidman, Gisele Bündchen, Adriana Lima, and Kirsten Dunst.

Now, her client base mainly comprises folks from the Sacramento Mountain area, Northern New Mexico, El Paso, and Arizona.

When asked what brought her back to the mountain, she laughs and says, "It's all boys."

She describes the allure of mountain living and the importance of connecting with her clients.

Surprising Opportunity Leads to High-Fashion Work

"I never thought I was going to be a hair stylist. But I like art. I used to play violin or do ballet. But, I didn't do anything focused for a long time so that I could be a professional artist."

"I did painting a little bit, but it was always short-term. But I wanted to be part of artistry somehow. When I was living in Germany, they had a theater culture. In the city, there's always a big theater and a ballet, a symphony connected to the theater. They always had a concert, or ballet dancers, or opera—all the time."

"I was always hanging out with that group. Like, That'd be so fun to be in that group of dancers and musicians. Okay... I cannot be a dancer. I cannot be a violinist. So what can I do? Maybe I can become a makeup artist for the theater or movies. So that's why I went to special effects makeup school in Paris, John Pierre."

"There was a fashion design hairstyling class. I was not that into it, but my best friend at the time really wanted to do it. She dragged me into this."

"After a test, the teacher approached me like, hey, we are looking for an assistant (for Odile Gilbert.) I think you're a good fit, so can you come over to the studio to meet her? And then a couple of days later, I assisted with doing hair for a French actress called Isabella Gianni."

"I never thought about doing hair. It's just I was in the right spot."

What was it like to be put into that world so quickly?

"It's not easy. That was a struggle. It's not a nurturing kind of environment."

"There are so many people who want to go into the industry. That's just the

energy. So somewhat you have to sell yourself. So that energy is there. And a lot of politics."

"I was like a baby. I didn't have a lot of space in my heart to observe because I was in survival mode. Because I had to learn everything. The cool part was that my boss was the best in France, and she got Hours of Chevalier, which you get if you're the best at what you do in the country."

"Assisting Odile Gilbert, I got to go work with the best houses in fashion, like Chanel, Hermès, Lanvin, Jean-Paul Gaultier, Botero, just name it, the top. So she was always working with the best artists. The artistry was amazing. Everybody's kind of like a translator for the piece of work. Like she's not just creating the hair, but the artist has a concept."

"Most hairstylists try to make cool hair pieces. We do that, too, but that's not the focus. Because you're creating one piece of art with every aspect of it. Hair is just one piece."

"It depends on what kind of message you want to come across or what concept it is. And then sometimes we don't do a lot, but that itself is like art. Sometimes you don't do too much."

"It's creating an atmosphere."

"I feel like beauty is imperfection also. When you try to perfect it, the coolness and beauty goes away. So it was about balance."

Happy with Mountain Living

"I love mountain living. I love the people. And then, when I moved (to Philadelphia), it was just like I could not get used to urban living. I didn't have a neighborhood, a kind of community."

"I missed that, and I missed nature. I feel like Cloudcroft definitely has something very special, very grounding, and healing. Have you heard—Native people say it is supposed to be a secret, clarifying, spiritual place up here."

"I just don't want to deal with traffic. And I'm empathetic, so when I'm surrounded by a lot of different people, I feel the energy. And it's exhausting."

"But how do you know until it's around you, right? Because Philadelphia has so many things. And some districts are like zombie districts. Don't really go through there. You get to see so many issues that humanity has. Paris is the same thing. When you enter the fashion industry, most shoots are inside five-star places. All the royalty or, like actresses, all the people go there. The front is nice, but when you go in, it's completely different. Like it's a crazy high-end place, but from outside, it's hidden, you know, to protect themselves."

"Like in San Francisco, too. Constantly seeing these huge differences daily feels weird."

"So this, Cloudcroft, is like where I grew up. In Japan, back in the day, it felt like everybody was middle class; you didn't see difficulties in your life. Here, it feels similar, like everybody's helping each other."

"I feel like I came back to where I'm comfortable. I don't feel sound when there are people who own a private jet, right? The differences are so huge [gestures with arms far apart.]"

Have you seen Cloudcroft changing when you've lived here for the past ten years?

"I don't see that the baseline has changed, but it's definitely more diverse in a good way. I enjoy the culture, like an old-school Midwest idea, but there is openness and acceptance. I think it's got a pretty good balance."

"And the village still has the community. It's a small population enough to care about people who you see in a daily routine. Because in the city, you don't know anyone. In Cloudcroft, even though you're not friends with someone, you say 'Hi.' That's a culture I like."

The Art of Connecting with Clients

"I feel good enough because I can say I'm serving people. Fashion or artistry is hard. If you love what you created and feel good about it, then I guess... but it's nothing to measure. If you accomplish your work in the way you love, you get confidence, but it's nothing concrete."

"It's very different here. I serve people, which I do love. It's not the artistic part, but I really love the part of understanding their background. It's like translating because you try to figure out who they are and what works best for them."

"You bought clothes last year, but they don't define you right now, right? And you feel funny when you wear it. It's the same thing with your hairstyle because it has to represent yourself and who you are. You're comfortable, and you feel good about yourself."

"It's like lifestyle developing— if it's too high-maintenance, that won't work for that person. When you're young, you say, I like this style. I really want to do it to this person. And I want to create this. I wanted surface beauty, and I wanted to take a good picture. But that's not my focus now."

Doing someone's hair, it's such an intimate thing.

"I feel honored to be able to share this part of them."

"Get the connection, the bond. I feel

like that's life, right? We are such social creatures that happiness comes from creating bonds with other humans. Which definitely ups my quality of life."

"I will never figure it out by myself. This is the best work for me. I feel really happy in what I do."

"Sometimes you have to take a step, like doing a different look. I don't give them a new look in the first shot, but I will do it after talking to them and if it's right for them. Because sometimes you have to try it to see."

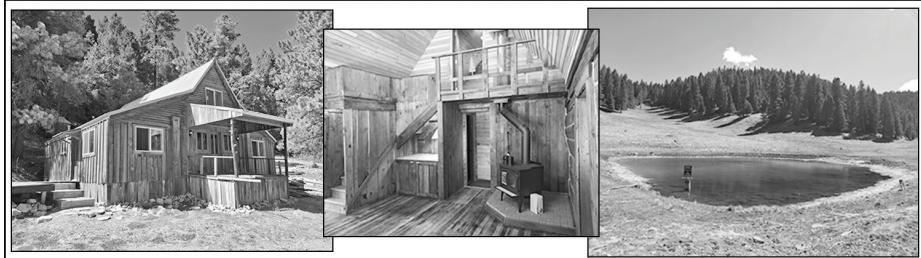
"It's an awful thing— wondering. So that's the most important thing. When you're changing your life, you'll have to try things out if it's not working for you."

"It's not only about the hair. If this works, it gives them confidence to take one step forward. I can see in their eyes the little confidence that I can do something new."

"Because we all have to evolve, right? We are never stagnant. Then, that means we are dead [laughs]."

"It's just so connected to confidence, like who they are. It's just freaking hair, but it's definitely so connected to identity. So if you don't like who you are, it's a killer. It's about really respecting that space and what will make people feel comfortable."

This article originally appeared in Cloudcroft Reader in November 2024.



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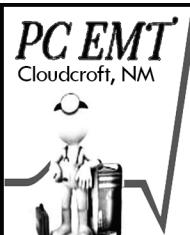
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