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Las Cruces Home Builders Association

 **40TH ANNUAL**
HOME &
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SHOW

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Spring is in the air...finally

The first official day of spring this year was March 19, however the local weather (cold & windy) that followed did not exactly match up to my idea of spring. Hopefully we will enjoy more pleasant days moving forward.

Spring is a time of renewal as well as new beginnings. I am the offspring of multigenerational agriculture producers. Our way of life carried excitement for this time of year. It was a time of planting, growing, and bringing new life into the world. For many, the season inspires spring cleaning and improvements to our indoor as well as outdoor spaces.

This April marks the 40th year that the Las Cruces Home Builder's Association (LCHBA) has provided our community with an opportunity to explore ideas and learn about resources to accomplish our spring dreams through the annual home and garden event.

The 2024 Home & Garden Show presented by Organ Mountain Solar & Electric will be free to the public April 6 and 7 at the Las Cruces Convention Center. Inside these pages you will find a list of vendors you can connect with as you peruse the aisles at this year's event.

Also, be sure and check out the coverage of the 2023 LCHBA's Casa for a Cause. Over the last 10 years, this annual initiative has raised over \$540,000 in funding for local nonprofits in our community. We at The Las Cruces Bulletin are honored to sponsor this truly special program each year.

Happy Spring to you all and I hope to see you at the show!

Sincerely,

Belinda Mills
Southwest Regional Publisher
Las Cruces Bulletin



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506 S. Main, Suite 250

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575-524-8061

www.lascrucesbulletin.com

SOUTHWEST REGIONAL GROUP PUBLISHER

Belinda Mills

MANAGING EDITOR

Algernon D'Amassa

EDITORIAL

Elva Österreich
Justin Garcia

DESIGN

Matthew Meerbott
Christy Anchondo

CIRCULATION

Becky Jimenez

ADVERTISING

Eve Holguin
Lauri Champion
Sandra Moulton

JUST FOR FUN

CAN YOU FIND ALL 20 BUNNIES HIDDEN THROUGH OUT THIS MAGAZINE

Know your bugs: Beneficial insects vs. pests

By Algernon D'Amassa
Las Cruces Bulletin

Bugs are resilient, persistent and widely varied in their habits, with many species able to survive throughout the year. They can work themselves into tiny gaps and spaces in or near your home, and they remain scarce in the cooler months only to emerge as soon as it gets warm in spring.

Moreover, some are pests while some may be beneficial insects – allies to homeowners in the fight against pernicious bugs that can cause damage to a home.

There are, of course, steps one can take to make bugs less welcome:

Don't feed unwanted guests. Wipe tables and other surfaces after meals, sweep and vacuum, mop kitchen floors and secure your garbage with a secure lid.

Watch for cracks and seal them up. Preventing egress in the first place, or catching it early, is an important yet easily overlooked step in making sure your home does not become a haven for insects.

Don't stand for standing water. Outdoor buckets, bird baths, pet dishes, toys and other objects can serve as pools for mosquito eggs and other pests after one good rain or regular lawn watering.

And, finally: **Know your allies.** Some common insects are actually good to have around. Here are a few examples:



Ladybugs. Home gardeners can attest to the ladybug's defense of plants against aphids, mites, mealy bugs and other assailants. Home gardeners even purchase them and for home delivery in bulk as part of a natural pest control regimen.

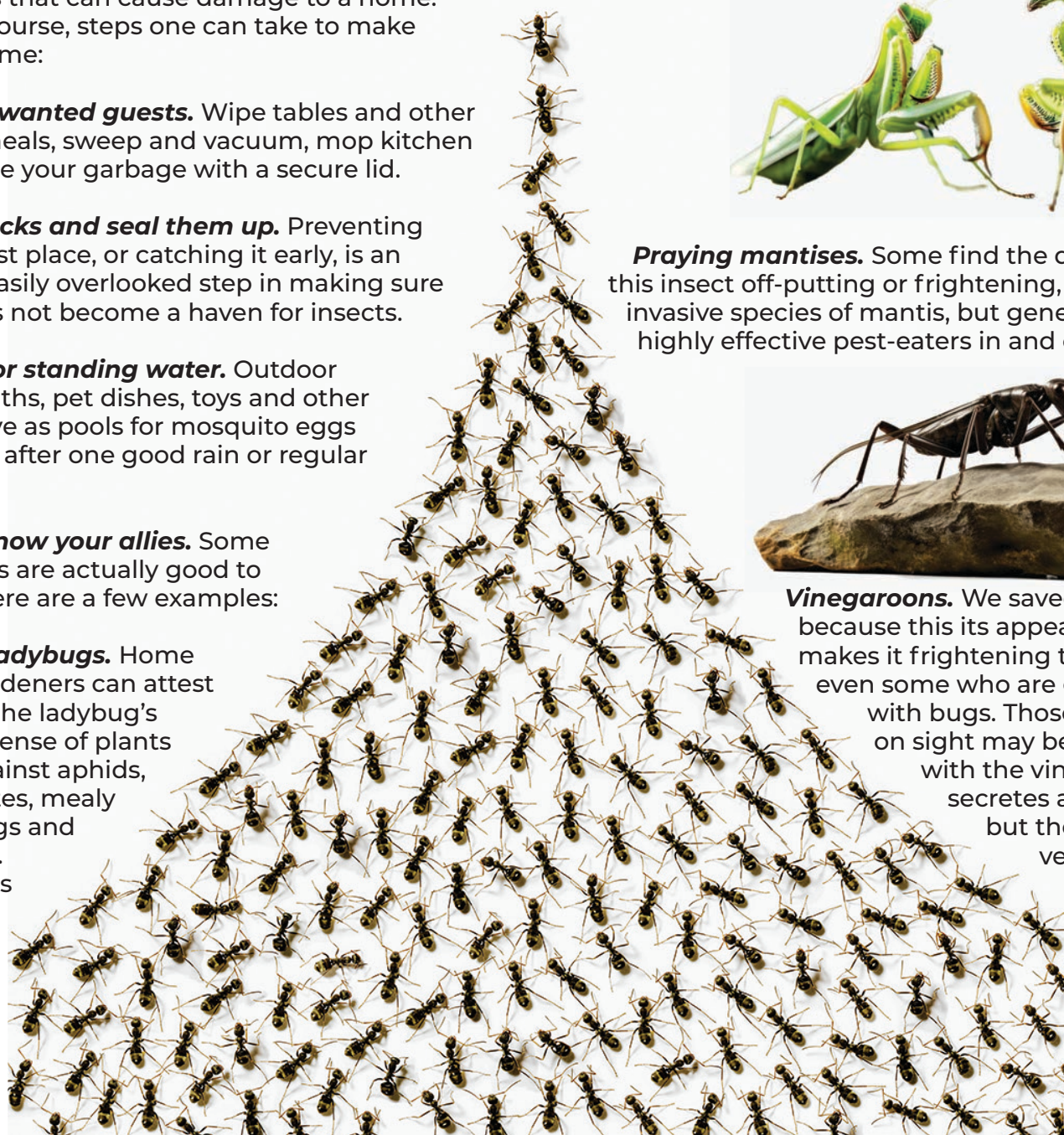
Honey bees. While they may be unwelcome as house guests, these are necessary pollinators, helping flowering plants and crops thrive and nurture other species. They tend to sting only when threatened. In the case of an infestation in the home, a beekeeper might be available to remove the bees alive; in either case, service from professionals is highly recommended.



Praying mantises. Some find the distinct look of this insect off-putting or frightening, and there are invasive species of mantis, but generally these are highly effective pest-eaters in and out of a home.



Vinegaroons. We saved this one last because its appearance likely makes it frightening to more people, even some who are generally cool with bugs. Those who kill them on sight may become familiar with the vinegary smell it secretes as a defense, but they are non-venomous, non-toxic and do not sting. They eat a wide variety of bugs including bark scorpions and cockroaches.



Feng shui, desert style

By Elva K. Österreich
Las Cruces Bulletin

Feng shui is an ancient art and science that was developed over 3,000 years ago in China. The literal translation of “feng” means wind and “shui” means water. In Chinese culture, wind and water are both associated with good health. Thus, feng shui came to mean good fortune.

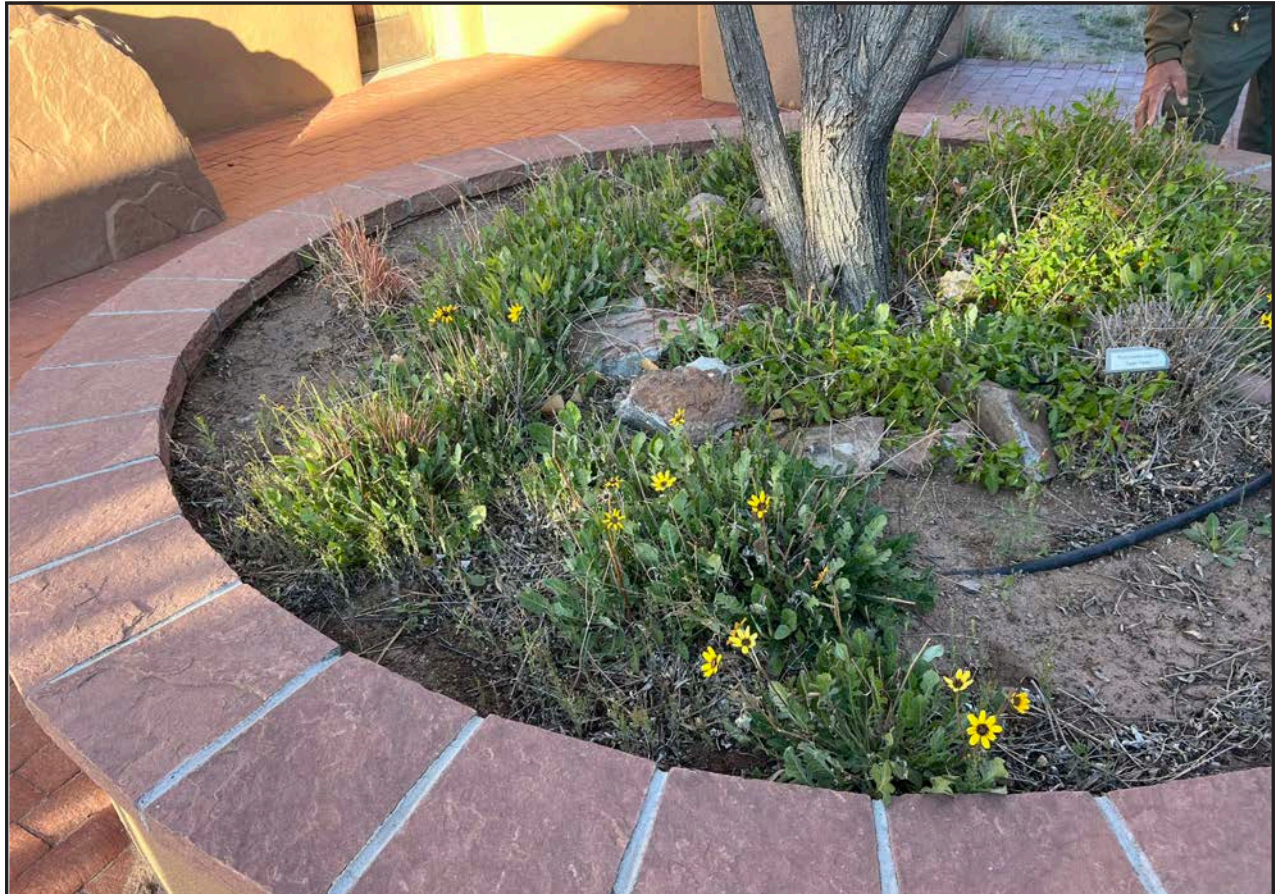
Defined as a system of laws considered to govern spatial arrangement and orientation in relation to the flow of energy (qi), feng shui looks at the favorable or unfavorable effects considered when designing spaces for living whether interior, exterior or even in gardens.

These gardens traditionally include curved walks, lots of sitting areas, plant variety and a water feature facing the front of the home to maximize feng shui.

Adding curved features is not limited to your garden paths, Amy LaCentra, certified Feng Shui practitioner, life coach and designer with Elegran, said in an article by Chiana Dickson on YSports,



Alex Mares, park ranger interpreter, at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park talks about the plants both native and other low-water use plants at the park.



Chocolate flowers are a scent and color delight that are native and easy to grow in almost any low-water garden one might want to create in the area.

“How to use garden Feng Shui – the dos and don’ts for a relaxing retreat.” Creating curved features out of your flowerbeds, waterlines and tops of fences helps to bring good, relaxing energy to your outdoor spaces.

A front yard where the earth is contoured and filled with native plants, rocks and gravel, and Yin and Yang are in balance is considered good feng shui. While a native plant environment in the desert world might not practically avoid the thorned and spined, it can be as peaceful and inviting as any traditional crafted garden.

Alex Mares, park ranger interpreter, at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park, maintains a garden at the park made up of pathways and low water use plants at the park. He feels an affiliation with the

plants of the area connecting himself to his heritage.

“I have an area in a corner of my yard at home where I try to put plants or trees or bushes that are drought tolerant and that will grow in the sand,” Mares said. “I would go to that corner, probably because subconsciously there is a more at-home feeling there. Because when I grew up, my dad was Navajo, my mom was Mexican-American, and I was raised with plants from both those areas.”

Mares said people who come from other parts of the country and even other countries sometimes want to make their environment like where they come from. But when you work within the practical confines of the place you live, you can grow a space that is both full of positive energy and gives you delight.

“Yes, some plants have been used in a negative way,” he said. “But I would say there are way more stories and uses from my cultural context that are positive or good.”

When choosing garden plants, you have to consider not only placement but also where they come from. Even non-native desert plants vary depending on their environment. For example, Mares points out two cottonwood trees near the park visitor center that are leafed out and flourishing greenly. But there are numerous other cottonwoods planted in the area that are not budding out yet in the cool spring because, as cottonwoods native to the area, they are not used to the cold and will come out when it warms up a bit more. But the green cottonwoods with smooth bark originated from the northern part

of New Mexico where the climate is colder, and they have been signaled to burst out earlier.

Some other plants, Mares pointed out, are excellent for the Las Cruces environs. Water-saving gardens may include little leaf sumac, seep willows, New Mexico olives, paper flowers, chocolate flower and little blue stem grass.

“In my mind, if you are encouraging or trying to create a space that you are thinking emotion or feeling, a place where you want to feel good, I would go with a lot of the medical plants, whether it’s penstemon, the mallows, the sages, the butterfly bushes,” Mares said. “How can you not feel good sitting next to a butterfly bush where there’s all these butterflies?”

Photos by Elva K. Österreich



Angular and curved elements meet to create peaceful environments at Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park.



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LAS CRUCES HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION MISSION STATEMENT

As the voice of the building industry, the Las Cruces Home Builders Association seeks to support the community and local businesses by providing educational opportunities, advocating for the regulations that benefit a strong housing market, and ensuring members are provided the resources they need to continue improving quality of life in Las Cruces.

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Become a Member of LCHBA

Joining the LCHBA is the key to unlocking the full potential of your business. Our association provides a platform for networking with like-minded professionals, exchanging ideas, furthering education, and contributing to the development of policies that support business growth and success. Our President, Troy Mitchell, with Envision Development & Construction, is dedicated to enhancing our members' experiences by offering free education classes and supporting partnerships with local schools to engage youth in skilled trades.

Here are some of the benefits you can expect as a member of LCHBA:

- 1. Free Education Classes:** Access valuable educational resources and classes to enhance your skills and knowledge.
- 2. Power Advocacy & Representation:** Benefit from our advocacy efforts and representation to address industry-related issues.
- 3. Access to NAHB's Team Expert Advisors:** Gain access to expert advisors through our affiliation with the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).
- 4. Critical News & Information:** Stay informed with the latest industry news, updates, and information.
- 5. Valuable Member Discounts:** Enjoy exclusive discounts and savings on various services and products.
- 6. Committee Participation:** Engage in committee activities to contribute to industry development and networking.
- 7. Quarterly Luncheons with Key Speakers:** Attend networking luncheons featuring keynote speakers and industry experts.
- 8. Awards & Community Recognition:** Gain recognition for your contributions and achievements within the community and industry.

Becoming a member of the LCHBA opens doors to unparalleled opportunities for professional growth, networking, and business development. We are committed to supporting our members' success and creating a thriving environment for the construction and home building industry in Las Cruces.

If you would like more information about joining LCHBA or have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly at 575.526.6126 or via email at nicole@lchba.com. I would be delighted to assist you and welcome you into our vibrant community of builders and industry professionals.

Thank you for considering membership with the Las Cruces Home Builders Association. We look forward to the possibility of working together and supporting your business endeavors.



Nicole Perez
Chief Executive Officer





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SCAVENGER HUNT



Participate in the LCHBA Scavenger Hunt for your chance to win

Make sure to stop by the Las Cruces Home Builders Association (LCHBA) table inside the show entrance to pick up your scavenger hunt card. Visit each sponsor's booth to receive their stamp on the back of the card. To complete your card, return to the LCHBA table for your final stamp to be entered in our daily drawings.

Saturday Prize:

EcoFlow River 2 Portable Power Station. Very kool item for both camping and small item back up powering.

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Sunday Prize:

Red Shed Metal Windmill
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*Card must be stamped by all sponsors to be eligible to win. One entry per family. Must be 18 or older to win. Limited to the first 100 attendees each day.

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Luncheon
May 9th

Open House
May 16th
Eddie's Event Hall

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AUGUST

Luncheon
August 8th
Guest Speaker
Davin Lopez - MVEDA
Economic Development

Mark Your
Calendars!

OCTOBER

Build My Future - TBD

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Calendars!

NOVEMBER

Luncheon
November 14th

**NMSU vs. UTEP
Tailgate Party**
November 30th



Message from the 2024 Home & Garden Show Chair



The 40th Annual Home & Garden is BACK and brought to you exclusively by the Las Cruces Gome Builders Association and Organ Mountain Solar & Electric. We are again in the Las Cruces Convention Center, and we have expanded to using both halls! Again, **ADMISSION IS FREE!** So its time to Get Up and Get OUT EVERYONE ...

You will find lots of Service Providers and Companies that will certainly be able to spark new ideas and upgrades to Home and Business space. The event is targeting numerous experts to be available to you to explain their capabilities and matching them to your needs.

It's that time of year again, that we decide which are the best projects to move forward

on for our loved spaces and this is precisely the event to get ideas that you can move forward on!!!

There will be some family fun characters in the halls for the kiddos. We are also having the popular Scavenger Hunt and cards will be issued to the 1st 100 visitors to the LCHBA table, located near the entrance to the event. There will be plenty going on so come on by and Meet, Shop, Compare and most importantly ... **SAVE!!!**

**Organ Mountain
Solar & Electric**

'Casa for a Cause' distributes \$145K to nonprofits

By Algernon D'Ammassa
Las Cruces Bulletin

The Las Cruces Home Builders Association's annual Casa for a Cause event distributed \$145,000 to 26 local nonprofit organizations this year.

The project, formerly known as the Anniversary House and debuting in 2014, involves local home builders who construct a house, contributing discounted or volunteer labor, equipment, materials and land. Proceeds from the sale of the house are then distributed to a couple of dozen local nonprofits.

The first of these homes was built in 2014 by Hakes Brothers and different builders have taken their turns in the ensuing years, with a pause in 2020 and 2021, the first years of the Covid-19 pandemic. Over the years, the association says sales of the homes brought in \$540,400 in funding for community nonprofits.

This year's awards were announced at a March 21 banquet at the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum gathering members of the LCHBA, sponsors and figures in the construction, lending and real estate industries.

The Las Cruces Bulletin was the presenting sponsor of the event, with publisher Belinda Mills helping distribute the ceremonial checks to each organization.

"I just absolutely love our industry," LCHBA CEO Nicole Perez said during remarks that repeatedly emphasized the close connections among area home builders and friendly competition among them in building the houses that benefit local charities.

This year's house, located on Bedford Avenue near the Red Hawk Golf Course, was built by French Brothers. As previously reported in the Bulletin, the house was designed using the builder's Caballo floor plan, measuring 2,039 square feet with four bedrooms, two baths and a two-car garage. The home also features a view of the Organ Mountains.

French Brothers is a New Mexico building company opened in Las Cruces in 2015. The company's sales and marketing director, Jason Kipker, told the Bulletin, "We want to be good stewards to the communities we're part of. What better way to be able to do what we do and give back to the community?"

Last fall, Kipker said he hoped to see the house yield up to \$140,000 to benefit community service organizations. Ultimately, the goal was exceeded, bringing the total to a record high since the program's inception, Perez said during the banquet.

"This financial support will empower them to continue their essential work, touching countless lives and making a tangible impact in our community," she said. "Our industry is often misunderstood and unfairly labeled. Yet I stand here to refute

those misconceptions. ... Every individual deserves a safe place to call home, and it is our industry that provides the foundation for these dreams to become a reality."

Mayor Eric Enriquez paid tribute to the industry in his own remarks, saying, "When you see people in this community that have the opportunity to purchase a home, it gives a sense of pride, a sense of accomplishment; and you touch so many lives, from the labor force to every industry that's involved in building homes."

Kipker, as this year's chair, said Casa for a Cause aligns with the values French Brothers was founded upon, citing the company's purpose statement, "which is to build a great company that enriches the lives of our people, our customers and our communities. And I really felt that Casa for a Cause really kind of embodied that."

The awards announced at the banquet were as follows:

- Mesilla Valley Hospice — \$15,000
- LCHBA Education Foundation — \$10,000
- Las Cruces Boys and Girls Club — \$10,000
- Tutti Bambini — \$7,500
- Turning Point of Las Cruces — \$7,500
- NM Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics — \$7,500
- ACTion Programs for Animals — \$7,500
- United Way of Southwest New Mexico — \$5,000
- Toys for Tots of Doña Ana County — \$5,000
- Organ Mountain Veterans Coffee Group — \$5,000
- Loaves and Fishes — \$5,000
- Morning Star's Lighthouse — \$5,000
- Mesilla Valley Habitat for Humanity — \$5,000
- Jardin de los Niños — \$5,000
- Honor Flight of Southern New Mexico — \$5,000
- Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 8 — \$5,000
- Children's Theatre of the Mesilla Valley — \$5,000
- El Caldito — \$5,000
- Catholic Charities of Southern New Mexico — \$5,000
- Casa de Peregrinos — \$5,000
- The Cat's Meow — \$2,500
- Doña Ana County Humane Society — \$2,500
- The Sophia — \$2,500
- St. Andrew Hospitality House — \$2,500
- Mesilla Valley Search and Rescue — \$2,500
- Order of the Eastern Star — \$2,500



The association also announced a new Aggie Builder Endowed Scholarship at New Mexico State University, to be awarded annually to a student pursuing a trade and enrolled at the university.



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Photography by Maria Aguilar.

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7 Ways to Reduce Home Energy Costs

When building your budget, utility bills – especially the electric bill – are likely one of your largest monthly expenditures. One of the biggest culprits: home heating and cooling, which account for more than half of the average American household's annual energy consumption, according to estimates from the Energy Information Administration.

In fact, 83% of homeowners are concerned about the impact of energy bills on their household budgets, according to a survey conducted by Mitsubishi Electric Trane HVAC US (METUS), with 54% saying it cost “somewhat more” or “much more” to heat their homes this winter compared to last year.

To help dial down your energy costs, consider these tips from the heating and cooling experts at METUS.

Adjust the Temperature



While you're sleeping or away from home, adjust your thermostat up 5-10 F in the summer or down 5-10 F in the winter, which can help lower annual heating and cooling costs if done consistently. A smart thermostat can monitor your energy use and behaviors then automatically adjust to make your home more energy efficient.

Look for Incentives and Rebates

Qualified homeowners may be eligible to save money on qualified home energy improvement projects. The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) offers tax credits and rebates, including a credit of 30% (up to \$2,000) for qualifying heat



pump installation, an energy-efficient option to replace fossil fuel-burning furnaces. Other incentives under the IRA include offsetting costs of electrical panel upgrades and rebates for homes with energy usage reductions of 20% or more.

Switch to a Heat Pump

Among survey respondents, 54% ranked government incentives like the IRA as one of the top reasons they would consider installing a heat pump to replace a traditional air conditioner. Options like Mitsubishi Electric's all-climate heat pumps use two units – an exterior heat pump, which replaces your existing air conditioning condenser, and an interior unit installed on your furnace – to deliver cost-effective, eco-efficient, year-round heating and cooling. These smart systems not only improve air conditioning efficiency on hot days, but

also determine the best source of heat (gas or electricity) on cold days, so your HVAC system is always running at peak efficiency and comfort.

Have HVAC Systems Serviced Regularly For best performance and efficiency, regular maintenance of your heating and cooling system is imperative. Keeping outdoor units free of debris and changing air filters are tasks most homeowners can handle on their own but bringing in a professional – usually in the spring and fall – can help ensure your HVAC system and all its components, including electrical and ductwork, are functioning properly.



Improve Your Insulation

Poorly insulated attics, walls, ceilings, floors and crawl spaces can lead to energy waste and increase costs by requiring more energy to heat or cool your home. Because air can escape through these spaces when your HVAC system pushes air through your home, adding insulation can help reduce losses and keep your home more comfortable.

Use Appliances During Non-Peak Hours

Rather than using your oven, stove or clothes dryer from noon-6 p.m., peak time for many electricity providers, consider doing so in the morning or later at night. Using these appliances outside of the peak timeframe, when conventional heating and cooling systems are often running full bore, can help lower energy costs. Some utilities may also offer plans that incentivize limiting energy use during peak hours.

Think Multi-Zone

Consider upgrading to an all-climate, multi-zone heat pump, which can seamlessly connect to multiple indoor units, revolutionizing the way you experience comfort in your home. By eliminating problematic hot and cold spots in your home, this system ensures personalized comfort tailored to individual zones and optimizes energy usage by directing it only to the areas requiring heating or cooling. Replacing an outdated HVAC system with a multi-zone solution can also help achieve cost and energy savings. By efficiently managing temperature in different zones, you can experience improved energy efficiency, resulting in a more sustainable and economical solution for heating and cooling.

Find more solutions for improving your home's efficiency and increasing energy savings at MitsubishiComfort.com.

What are the top reasons you would consider installing a heat pump?



54%

to take advantage of a government incentive



49%

to reduce energy bills



36%

to improve indoor air quality

Source: The 2023 Heat Pumps & Homeowners Index, Powered by METUS



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Mowing the lawn with human energy

By Algernon D'Amassa
Las Cruces Bulletin

It may not be the best choice for every lawn or every homeowner, but among my first purchases after we chose our home was a simple five-blade push lawn mower: The kind you push, with no motor or engine, no electric cords, no jugs of gasoline.

The manually powered mower was much cheaper than other options, but my main considerations were the size of the lawn and the topography, number of hard-to-reach spots, and above all, quality of life. We had grass, it would need cutting, so what kind of experience did I wish it to be?

The mower is light compared to its modern colleagues and designed for an easy carry in and out of storage around the yard. And while cost was not



the chief concern, the mowers require little maintenance other than cleaning, tightening bolts, applying lubricant and occasionally servicing the blades. Its fuel is me, getting some outdoor exercise when the weather is not too hot.

We live on a quiet street and I'm happy not to be pushing a combustion engine around. The mower makes a far quieter whiffling sound as the blades spin and do their thing. If I let the bolts go loose, there is an extra ka-chunk noise from the arms of the handle to encourage me to come back with a screwdriver.

I'm also happy not to be breathing exhaust, fretting about the lay of the electrical cord behind me or contributing to lower air quality and greenhouse emissions that, for cutting our grass, seems unnecessary.

I'm no professional landscaper, and the result is not a perfectly green and evenly topped lawn, but we are happy with the results and getting there is much more fun.



Tyson Brown Memorial

build
my future 2024

Construction Career Day & Industry Showcase

The LCHBA Build My Future event has partnered with the Las Cruces public Schools to give local high school students the opportunity to have a day to work in the Construction Industry through an interactive showcase. Area employers, organizations, and educational institutions are invited to participate as sponsors and exhibitors.

COMING OCTOBER 2024

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Peripheral Neuropathy Breakthrough!



"My feet feel like they're on fire." "Each step feels like I'm walking through wet paint." "I live in constant fear that I'll fall." "I can't sleep, my hands and feet tingle all night."

What do all of these people have in common? They suffer from **peripheral neuropathy**. It is estimated that more than 20 million people in the United States have peripheral neuropathy. Unfortunately this figure may be significantly higher as the disease is often mis-diagnosed because of its wide array of symptoms.

Dr. Janet Quintanilla of Sonoma Acupuncture Integrative Health in Las Cruces shares this belief. "I've been treating neuro-pathy, in all its various forms, for over a decade and so often my patients come to me because of the symptoms, not because of a diagnosis. They saw one of my television specials, or read the testimonial of another patient and say to themselves 'hey, I feel the same thing'."

Frankie M. of Mesilla testified to this. "I remember my husband driving me to my consultation and I saw a woman running just outside our neighborhood. I was so envious - I just kept thinking 'I would give anything just to walk again'. My primary care doctor told me my troubles with pain and balance were just symptoms of old age and gave me a prescription. I was so depressed."

Fortunately Frankie would eventually see Dr. Quintanilla on the local news talking about similar symptoms and how she offers a real solution at Sonoma Acupuncture. "I just knew I had to see her. She was my last hope."

"Almost all of our patients come to us with a story similar to Frankie's. They've been told there's no hope. They've been told 'it's just part of getting older'." shares Heather, a Patient Care Technician at Sonoma. "It just breaks my heart but I know how much we can help people like Frankie so I'm always so happy when they walk through our door."

Those diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy often face a very grim reality; Western medicine declares that there is no solution while most alternative therapies carry large price tags and offer little to no resolve. Which is why Dr. Quintanilla and the staff at Sonoma Acupuncture pride themselves on being 'the last resort with the best results'.

Peripheral neuropathy is a result of damage to the nerves and this damage is commonly caused by lack of blood flow in the hands and feet. Lacking nutrients; the nerves then begin to degenerate and die which causes pain ranging from discomfort to debilitating. Because neuropathy is a degenerative condition, once those nerves begin to deteriorate they will continue to do so until they are completely expired, leaving those suffering with crippling balance issues. "In this case, the absence of pain is not necessarily a good thing," shares Dr. Quintanilla. "This usually indicated that your nerves are hanging on by a fragile thread."

So how exactly is Dr. Quintanilla able to reverse the effects of this degenerative disease? "Acupuncture has been used to increase blood flow for thousands of years which helps to get the necessary nutrients to the affected nerves. But the real magic happens when I integrate ATP Resonance BioTherapy. This is tech that was originally developed by NASA to expedite recovering and healing."

"I just can't say enough about Sonoma Acupuncture," Frankie just shared through tears of joy. "My husband and I moved here 3 years ago and he's gone out for a walk almost every day. I always stayed home because of the pain and discomfort. Yesterday I walked with him! And next week we're starting dancing lessons! I am truly living life these days."

According to Frankie's test results, she has seen a 74% improvement in pain and functionality, which is on par with a majority of our patients," shares Heather.

"But more important than those test results is the joy she's expressed being there and hearing about all the amazing things she's able to do so because she feels great!"

By seamlessly blending the ancient science of acupuncture with modern medical solutions Dr. Quintanilla has achieved a 90% success rate in reversing the effects of neuropathy. She starts each patient with an initial consultation during which a sensory exam is performed.

"This not only aids in making a proper diagnosis but it helps to define just how much nerve damage has occurred" tells the doctor. "This is important because if a patient has suffered more than 95% damage, there is little that I can do to help them. I'm familiar with the medical miracle but I know my limits as a practitioner and the limits of my medicine."

When it comes to treating peripheral neuropathy, regardless of its origin, early detection greatly improves your chances of a full recovery.

If you or someone you love is suffering with chronic pain that presents as burning, tingling, or 'pins and needles' or you've recently been diagnosed with peripheral neuropathy, it's important to know that there are options. There is hope.

Call (575)618-6900 to schedule an initial consultation or visit sonoma-acupuncture.com to read more incredible success stories.



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DIY Like a Boss: 6 Tips for Your Next Project



Known for their toughness and high quality, the company's gloves can provide an added layer of protection for your hands during tasks such as priming or painting, while coveralls are recommended to protect your clothes during activities such as sanding. The heavy-duty face mask works as a barrier against liquid and dry particles while also allowing you to breathe easily while at work.

Enforce a Budget

Establish a budget that's as solid as your determination. Account for every expense, anticipate unforeseen challenges and ensure your financial strategy is as robust as your project plan. A well-planned budget encourages resourcefulness, pushing you to find cost-effective solutions and alternatives.

Knowledge is Power

If you're facing a new DIY challenge, educate yourself like your success will depend on it — because it does. Dive into online resources, tutorials, and guides. Don't hesitate to call in reinforcements — friends, family, or professionals.

Be Flexible

Sometimes plans just crumble, and unforeseen challenges emerge. Adaptability is key. Embrace flexibility; it's the hallmark of a confident DIYer. Unleash your creativity, explore alternative solutions, and turn obstacles into opportunities. Take snapshots of your mishaps — they're not just memories, they can be lessons for projects to come.

Tackle your DIY projects with the strength and resilience of Venom Steel products. They're not just tools; they're the allies you can count on to help you get a better grip on the basics of a new skill and finish your next project.



Do-it-yourself (DIY) projects are not solely reserved for seasoned professionals. With preparation, a few handy tips and tricks, and high-quality protective gear, anyone can tackle home improvement projects like a pro. So, roll up your sleeves, gather your supplies, and get to work.

Create a Plan

By taking the time to plan and define your objectives, you'll lay a solid foundation for success. Planning allows you to foresee potential challenges and devise solutions in advance, minimizing frustration and setbacks. Lay out the materials, set the timeline, and strategize every move.

Use Top-Notch Tools and Materials

In the world of DIY, only the strong survive. Borrow or invest in tools and materials that don't back down from a fight. We're talking about the heavyweights, the reliable, the durable — gear that ensures your finished product can endure once the paint dries.

Gear Up for Safety

High-quality protective gear ensures that everyone, regardless of skill level, can confidently take charge of their projects. For instance, products by Venom Steel redefine the DIY experience, making it accessible to all with their unmatched durability and performance.

SOME PROJECTS ARE NOT DIY

Face it: Not all projects are DIY. For some larger undertakings, you might do better working with professional remodeler or builder, saving money in the long run and possibly protecting your home and your personal safety.

A professional will know what parts and equipment are needed for the job and how to avoid costly, potentially damaging errors. If the project requires a permit, it's a good sign you want professional expertise through the administrative as well as the building process.

Electrical work

Rewiring lamps, replacing switches, installing ceiling fans are OK; but once you get into handling circuitry and electrical infrastructure, it's time for a licensed electrician. A shocking bill is better than a shocked homeowner.

Plumbing

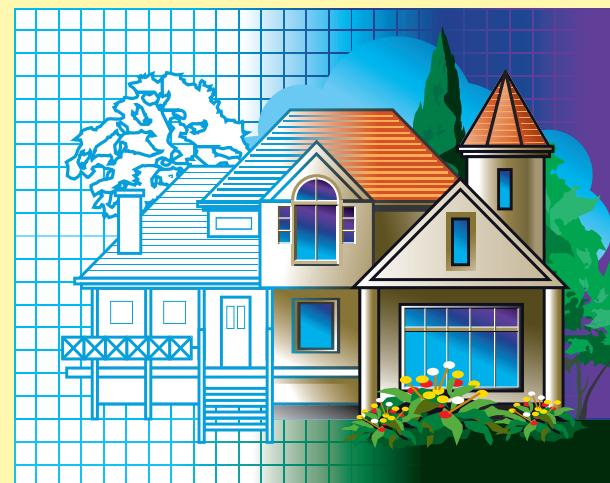
Routine repairs such as tightening a leaky faucet, replacing toilet hardware (or even the toilet) and installing shower heads require basic tools and an ability to follow directions. If you know how to turn off the water supply temporarily, you are unlikely to get into too much trouble.

But if there is water pooling around and you don't know how it got there, or if anything mysterious is going on around the water heater, or the area of interest is beneath walls or flooring, these are signs to call in an experienced and licensed plumber. The water may not go over your head, but damage and costs might.

Roofing and siding

Some DIYers can successfully replace a window sill, pieces of wood siding, maybe roof shingles.

But if a leak has been going on for a while, or if the work involves a roof's slope, drainage, or material underneath the exterior such as weather sealing material, it's time to call in a roofing or siding professional for an inspection and estimate.



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Tips to Maximize Your Outdoor Space

Spring is almost here! The rising temperatures serve as a reminder that it's time to start preparing for outdoor entertaining. Whether you are looking to completely revamp your setup or simply add a few upgrades, there are many ways to make your yard feel larger, more comfortable and more useful, no matter the time of day.

Here are eight simple upgrades to get the most out of your patio:

1. Join the Outdoors with the Indoors

Create an area that acts as a gateway between your home and the outdoors. Using similar colors, textures and themes enhances the flow of your yard and creates an inviting atmosphere. A patio provides an excellent opportunity to blend indoor and outdoor living. You don't need to limit mealtimes to your kitchen table; instead, you can explore dining alfresco no matter the time of day.

2. Make the Outdoor Dining Table Your Focal Point

The patio table is one of the most important aspects of your yard, and it should be the center of attention. You can invest in affordable furniture or make simple upgrades to your current space by purchasing paint and other accessories at Lowe's. Pair stylish tableware with cozy seating arrangements to create a warm ambiance. Whether you choose to enjoy a breakfast feast as the sun rises or host a dinner party for friends, your patio should serve as a gathering place where the whole crew is invited.

3. Invest in Pieces with Multiple Functions

Invest in versatile furniture and appliances to get the most out of outdoor entertaining without taking up too much valuable floorspace. A modular cooking system like the Charbroil® Commercial Series™ Grill & Griddle Combo can help you save space without having to settle for just one thing. You can unlock endless flavor possibilities and effortlessly swap surfaces to cook any meal, any time.

4. Create Sections to Divide Your Space

Build out different sections to divide your space and create intimate gathering spots for you and your guests. Rugs, tables and eclectic seating arrangements can help establish a flow and create designated spaces for your living and dining.



5. Go Bold with Color

Gone are the days of grays and beiges; now, you can try experimenting with bold hues. From bright furniture pieces to vibrant accessories, infusing bold colors can instantly revitalize your outdoor area, creating a dynamic and inviting atmosphere for entertaining.

6. Experiment with Organic Materials and Textures

Incorporating natural textures, such as wood and stone, into your outdoor decor not only adds a touch of authenticity but also creates a connection with nature, fostering a serene and inviting ambiance for outdoor activities and relaxation.

7. Play with Outdoor Lighting

Don't hold out on outdoor lighting! Explore different options and combinations of lighting solutions like fire pits, torches and string lights to create ambiance, light pathways and generate warmth on cooler nights.

8. Embrace Native Plants

Your garden can foster biodiversity through a diverse selection of native flowers and plants that attract pollinators. Create eye-catching and ecologically sustainable habitats that benefit both wildlife and the environment while adding pops of color to your yard.

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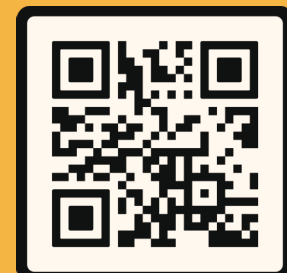


Meghan Quinones
University Branch
3065 E. University Ave.
Las Cruces, NM
MLO# 1002030
575-647-6714
mqinones@citizenslc.com



Gabe Garcia
El Paso Branch
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THE HOUSE OF THE FUTURE WILL BE RECYCLABLE: INTRODUCING THE FIRST AFFORDABLE, BIO-BASED 3D-PRINTED HOUSE



REASONS TO BE CHEERFUL TAKES A CLOSER LOOK BEHIND AN ENORMOUS 3D PRINTER TURNING NATURAL MATERIALS INTO SUSTAINABLE, CARBON-SEQUESTERING HOMES.

When you imagine a 3D-printed home, you probably picture a boxy concrete structure. As 3D printing's popularity has grown in the construction industry — thanks to its efficiency when it comes to time, energy and cost — carbon-intensive concrete has become the go-to building material.

But a project in Maine has set its sights on something different: a neighborhood of 600-square-foot, 3D-printed, bio-based houses crafted from materials like wood fibers and bioresins. The aim: a complex of 100-percent recyclable buildings that will provide homes to those experiencing houselessness.

In late 2022, an initiative between the University of Maine and local nonprofit Penquis unveiled its prototype — BioHome3D, the first 100-percent recyclable house. Now, the pioneering project is working toward completing its first livable housing complex. It will be fully bio-based, meaning all materials will be derived from living organisms such as plants and other renewable agricultural, marine and forestry materials. Reasons to Be Cheerful takes a closer look at the science and innovation behind the 3D printer creating these innovative buildings.

Bio-based materials are designed to produce homes at scale

As the materials are all 100-percent recyclable, so become the buildings. The materials are also all renewable. And thanks to its natural composition, the home acts as a carbon sink, sequestering 46 tons of

carbon dioxide per 600-square-foot unit.

The materials for this project will mainly come from wood left over by local mills. "The wood fiber material that's used in the mix is essentially waste wood here in Maine," says Jason Bird, director of housing development for Penquis. Bird is referring to what's known as wood residuals: materials that, he explains, "pulp mills or other sawmills either landfill, discard or set off to the side and rot."

According to the University of Maine, the state's sawmills produce nearly one million tons of wood residuals every year. Since each 600-square-foot unit requires approximately 10 tons of wood residuals, 100,000 housing units could theoretically be produced every year using just sawmill residuals.

The University of Maine's Advanced Structures and Composites Center received \$3.3 million in funding for this project last year, and its collaboration with Penquis has set out to build a ready-to-live neighborhood with nine 3D-printed homes for people experiencing houselessness. As the team undergoes the final regulatory hurdles, Bird anticipates that houses could be ready to live in as early as this spring.

Once this pilot project is completed and the team at the University of Maine reaches full commercial capacity, Bird says the team will be able to print a home in as little as two days.

“That would include the shell of the house — the roof, walls, floors system,” Bird explains. “Long-term [infrastructure projects] could include cabinets, countertops, bath fixtures. And what gets me so excited about this project is that the technology isn’t just solving a local problem, it could be replicated around the world.”

Dr. Habib Dagher, executive director of the Advanced Structures and Composites Center, confirms that the technology is intended to be widely replicated.

“The goal of this research is to create a system for constructing homes that alleviates strains on the supply chain and addresses labor shortages, while providing economical and sustainable housing,” says Dr. Dagher. “This technology can be used anywhere in the world that has access to bio-based raw materials. We are focused on scaling up production technology to drive down costs and increase availability.”



And after enduring a year of extreme weather in Maine, with sensors reporting temperatures ranging from 1 degree to 105 degrees Fahrenheit, BioHome3D met all sustainability, strength, and durability requirements for US building codes, as well as the design requirements of the International Code Council code.

“Doing this project in a place like Maine, which has some of the most extreme temperatures in the continental US, is vital because it can prove that this material can endure huge temperature swings,” says Sarah Goehrke, founder of Additive Integrity, a consulting service that focuses on the examination and sustainable acceleration of industrial 3D printing. “The fact that BioHome3D survived for a year is very important proof going forward.”

An answer to a global housing crisis?

Initial printing speeds of 20 pounds per hour have since ramped up to nearly 500 pounds per hour, significantly reducing construction

costs. This efficiency, combined with local materials, makes the process more sustainable and resilient to global supply chain disruptions.

The project is a timely response to an already pressing and worsening global housing crisis. UN-Habitat predicts that by 2030, three billion people will require improved housing. And with traditional construction contributing a staggering 27 percent of global greenhouse emissions, less-polluting alternatives will need to rise to the occasion. In Maine, the need is clear: the state is already experiencing a shortage of 20,000 affordable housing units.



Above: The BioHome3D prototype was printed on the world’s largest 3D polymer printer

“What’s more innovative about this project [than other 3D housing initiatives] is both that it’s bio-based, and that it’s geared fully toward addressing the housing crisis,” says Goehrke.

3D-printed houses produce significantly less waste than conventional construction, as builders are able to print exactly the amount of material they need for a given project, and minimal space is needed for storage materials. And with the ability to store all materials in the same space, the energy otherwise required to transport materials between sites is eradicated.

One forecast projects that the global 3D construction market will soar by 91 percent from 2021 to 2028.

“Building many smaller structures in a short amount of time is what the housing crisis needs to address unhoused people and help to create larger communities quite quickly,” says Goehrke.

Photos courtesy of the University of Maine Advanced Structures and Composites Center.

This story was produced by Reasons to be Cheerful and reviewed and distributed by Stacker Media.

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New film studios could affect housing prices, study shows

By Justin Garcia
Las Cruces Bulletin

It's Friday morning, and outside a Las Cruces home, a film crew calls "action" at a pop-up movie set on a neighborhood street. It's a sight Las Cruces could experience more often as officials funnel public funds toward rounding out a budding film industry.

Public investment in 828 Productions – which has been promised over \$6 million in incentives to build out a permanent film studio in Las Cruces and hire 100 people – and the Creative Media Technology building – an \$11.2 million building at New Mexico State University Arrowhead campus – signal local government's efforts to grow Las Cruces film.

However, the efforts could have unforeseen consequences on the Las Cruces housing market, particularly in neighborhoods abutting film studios.

A 2022 study by Velma Zahirovic-Herbert, a researcher at the University of Memphis, and Karen Gibler, a researcher at Georgia State University, investigated how film studios

affected housing prices in Atlanta, Ga.

In their paper, published in the academic journal *Urban Studies*, Zahirovic-Herbert and Gibler found that homes near studios tended to sell for higher rates. They also found that those neighborhoods saw more transitions as residents moved away and new people came in.

Zahirovic-Herbert told the Las Cruces Bulletin all studios increased housing prices, but larger ones had a greater effect. She also pointed out that many of the Atlanta studios – which typically fit into areas zoned for industrial use – were near neighborhoods targeted for revitalization.

In Las Cruces, the most significant potential film investment of 828 Productions is a large campus adjacent to the Alameda Depot neighborhood and the neighborhoods adjacent to North Valley Drive and West Picacho Avenue.

George Pearson, president of the Alameda Depot Neighborhood Association, said his organization welcomes the studio campus.

"We see the benefits of the movie industry

in our neighborhood. While not all movie activities are conducted by 828, we know that their presence in Las Cruces attracts and facilitates other production companies to spend money in our neighborhood and Las Cruces," Pearson said.

Steve Montañez, owner and qualifying broker at New Mexico Properties and a Las Cruces Bulletin contributor, said the growing presence of industrial film production is not yet on his radar. Since the studios – particularly 828 – remain unbuilt, Montañez said that more traditional factors dominate pricing.

Montañez said the area abutting 828's future presence, the Alameda Depot Neighborhood, is already a well-performing area.

"Those trees are very mature. ... [There are] larger backyards, they're built on larger lots, and so there's still this southwestern charm that that people really love."

Montañez said he predicts that the long-term effects will be positive for prices.

"I think a studio, especially a big studio, I see the effect being positive," Montañez said.

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