



MARK JOHNSTON

The thing about Christmas is that it almost doesn't matter what mood you're in or what kind of a year you've had — it's a fresh start.
Kelly Clarkson

PLANES, TREES AND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

BY MARK JOHNSTON GENERAL MANAGER

Flying somewhere this holiday season? According to the Guesty vacation rental platform, 2021 U.S. Christmas reservation volume has increased 469% compared to one year ago. Many, no doubt, will travel to renew holiday traditions they missed last year.

For kids, the foremost holiday traditions include shaking wrapped gift boxes and counting down the days until opening them. For me, as a child, it was the possibility of receiving my one, most hoped-for thing. I remember spending hours combing through the Sears Wish Book and creating a prioritized wish list for my parents. I recall Christmas carols playing softly on the radio in the background while I cut out the pictures and pasted them on a sheet of paper. At the age of 6, this was the highest form of arts and crafts.

As Christmases have come and gone, the tree itself, not what's under it, has become more meaningful to me: finding the right tree, decorating that tree with family, even the feeling I get at night while driving by the decorated outdoor trees, like the ones in Grand Lake and Granby.

Shakespeare captured some of that magic with words, saying, "One touch of nature makes the whole world kin." How true it is. Especially when it comes to

Christmas trees, which have an interesting history.

The origin of Christmas trees

Evergreen trees became part of holiday celebrations in the Middle Ages in Germany. Initially called "paradise trees," they were hung with apples and displayed in homes on December 24.

In the 1790s, English royalty began decorating trees, making them part of the country's holiday festivities. It took longer for the tradition to catch on in the United States. Massachusetts Bay Colony officials outlawed celebrating Christmas. It wasn't until the 1820s that Christmas gained popularity in America.

The evolution of Christmas lights

In the 16th century, Martin Luther was reportedly the first person to decorate a tree with candles. As you might expect, Thomas Edison invented the first strand of electric lights. In 1880, he strung them outside his Menlo Park Laboratory. Railroad passengers could see them at night when they traveled by. Two years later, Edison's business partner, Edward H. Johnson, assembled the first string of electric Christmas tree lights. Johnson hand-wired 80 red, white and blue lightbulbs and wound them around his Christmas tree.

U.S. presidents helped popularize Christmas tree lights. In 1895, President Grover Cleveland arranged for his family's Christmas tree to be illuminated by hundreds of multi-colored electric lights. On Christmas Eve 1923, President Calvin Coolidge lit the first National Christmas Tree with 3,000 lights.

For several decades, only the wealthy could afford Christmas tree lights. Prior to 1903, the cost of lighting an average Christmas tree was \$2,000 in today's dollars. Shortly thereafter, as with many innovations, technological improvements and mass production led to retail price reductions. Now, with LED bulbs, some people pay less than \$5 a year to illuminate their Christmas tree. What a difference a century makes!

As your consumer-owned electric utility, Mountain Parks Electric is proud to power the lights that make your holidays more enjoyable. *From our family to yours, we wish you a memorable holiday season.*

Dustyn Corcoran, ACCT 150375000

SAVE THE DATE for MPE's 2022 Annual Meeting & Director Election. May 14, 2022, 9:15 a.m. MPE Headquarters: 321 W. Agate Ave., Granby

Holiday Gift Ideas for Techies



BY JOE PALMER MPE MANAGER OF IT



Ring doorbell

Shopping for someone who doesn't like visitors? Consider getting them a Ring doorbell. With it, they can see who is at the door before they decide whether or not to answer it. They can also activate notifications, alerting them when packages arrive on their doorstep and when their teenagers arrive home safely (and hopefully on time). ring.com

< The Ring doorbell is a smart solution for seeing who comes to your front door. Set up motion alerts on your phone, tablet, computer and Amazon's Alexa devices for the ability to speak to visitors in real-time.

Furbo

With the Furbo camera, you can watch what your pet is doing when you are not home. Additional features allow you to remotely give treats and talk to your pets. shopus.furbo.com

Roomba

Not a new gadget, but still a great gift for anyone who hates vacuuming. The Roomba is tried and true and can save you time. irobot.com

Banana Phone

For the artsy, whimsical people in your life. It connects to your cellphone by Bluetooth so you can talk on a banana. bananaphone.io



Local Chef SPOTLIGHT

BUSINESS:

AMELIA BENSON

MOUNTAIN PARKS ELECTRIC
MEMBER FROM KREMMLING

SPECIALTY:

Holiday cookies and other sweets



A tray of Amelia's freshly decorated holiday cookies. When decorating, she uses royal icing and allows layers to dry before adding fine detail.



Deborah Maloch and Terry Hunter, ACCT 300288104

COOKING TIP FOR MPE READERS

Almond extract is the key ingredient in my sugar cookies. Leave out the baking powder. By doing this your cookies will keep their shape through the baking process. And always freeze cookie dough for at least 10 minutes before baking. Your cookies will bake better overall with less chance of overcooking them.

WAYS TO \$AVE

BY LINDSAY MCCANN CUSTOMER SERVICE SUPERVISOR

COST-CUTTING CHRISTMAS DECOR

Energy-Saving Tips

OUTDOORS:

- For energy-saving curb appeal, decorate with wreaths, plastic lawn decorations and snowmen. Be sure to illuminate them with LED lights.

INDOORS:

- Decorate with nutcrackers, strings of popcorn and garland. Battery-operated candles also provide ambiance while saving on lighting costs. Don't forget to replace incandescent Christmas lights with LEDs.



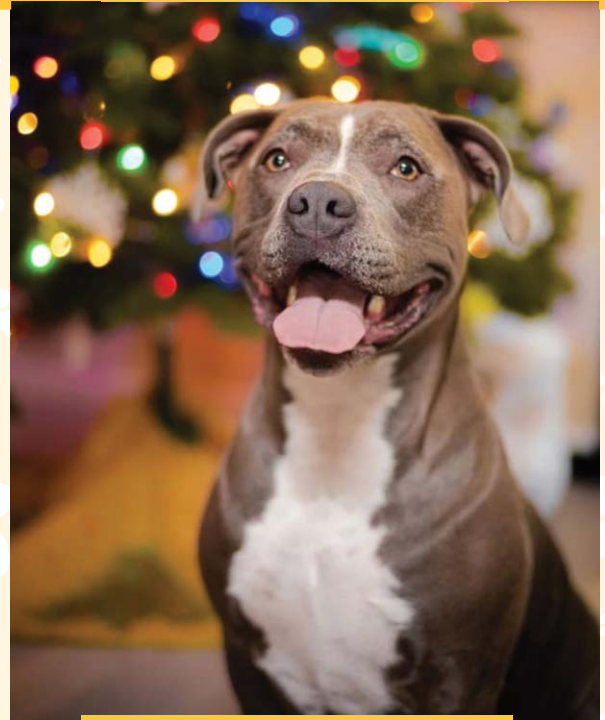
R L Jackson, ACCT 150375000



Find Your Name Win \$5

If you find your name in this magazine, contact Mountain Parks Electric to receive a \$5 credit on your power bill. Winners must contact MPE within one month of the date of issue.

PET OF THE MONTH



LUNA

Luna is 4 years old and was born and raised in Grand County.

She wants to wish everyone a warm and fuzzy holiday.

Owner: Amanda Rosenbergh

Email your pet photos and pet bio to rtaylor@mpei.com

SAFETY FIRST THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

... and last and all the time in between

BY BRIAN LEE MPE SAFETY COORDINATOR

1. PREVENT FIRE HAZARDS

Candles

- Never leave candles unattended and keep them out of reach of children and pets.

Christmas trees

- Nearly 29% of home Christmas tree fires occur in January, when natural trees dry out significantly. (Source: National Fire Protection Association.)

2. PREVENT ELECTRIC SHOCK & ELECTROCUTION HAZARDS

Electric cords

- Dispose of frayed or broken cords. Don't string more than three strands of lights per extension cord and always follow manufacturer's recommendations.
- Do not use electric lights on metallic trees.
- Aluminum, steel, copper and other metals

conduct electricity. When lights short out, they can create an electric contact hazard if touched.

3. PREVENT DECORATING HAZARDS

Outdoor décor

- Make sure decorations are designed for outdoor use. Fasten outdoor lights securely to your home or trees. When using hooks or nails outdoors, make sure they are insulated to avoid an electrocution or fire hazard.

Ladders

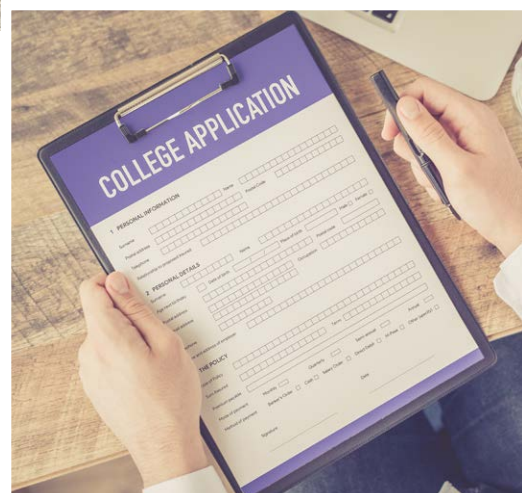
- Use stable ladder placement. Set it at a safe angle. Wear shoes with good traction. Read the ladder manufacturer's recommendations. If you misplaced your user manual, try finding it online.



ESSAY CONTEST

Attention High School Students: Boost Your College Applications

- To enter, submit an energy-related, 500-word or less essay, short video or other project to rtaylor@mpei.com by **Friday, January 7, 2022**.
- 1st place prize — all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. (much more extensive than a traditional 8th grade D.C. trip)
- 2nd place prize — all-expense-paid trip to Youth Leadership Camp in Clark, Colorado.
- MORE INFORMATION: mpei.com/scholarships-and-youth-programs
- NOTE: If the trips are canceled for public health concerns, MPE will instead award winners with a \$2,000 college/vo-tech scholarship.
- NOTE: Washington, D.C., trip attendees must provide proof of vaccination. Leadership camp attendees must provide proof of a negative COVID test three days before camp.





DETAILS:

- \$100 per unit for electric-to-induction replacement
- \$350 per unit for gas-to-induction replacement or new construction (Verification from Mountain Parks Electric required)

For more rebate information, visit mpei.com/rebates.

New Rebate
Induction Cooktops and Ranges
(30-inch or larger)