

## Welcome to the wonder of the West

□ High Plains of eastern New Mexico has rich, colorful history.

BY THE STAFF OF THE NEWS

We come from a long line of outlaws, woolly-mammoth slayers and rock-and-roll rabble rousers. But we've evolved since those early days. We like the wholesome life of slow-pitch softball and peanut butter shakes now.

OK. Truth is, we're kind of complicated and still connected to our roots, when early day promoters called this region the "wonder of the West" because of its wide-open spaces and freedom to roam.

We can be rough and rowdy, always ready for some football and the bulls and the blood and the dust and the mud that comes with the thing we call rodeo. But there's a side of us that also appreciates our majestic sunsets and the monarch butterflies that migrate north through here annually in the spring.

There's a sign that welcomes visitors to Portales, claiming 17,000 friendly people and three or four old grouches live here. That's probably a fair way to look at all the communities in eastern New Mexico. But you can decide for yourself.

Here are some stories about us:



Photo by Betty Williamson

### We've got the Kid

In addition to Fort Sumner, where he was killed and is buried, infamous outlaw Billy the Kid was a frequent visitor to the Portales area around 1880.

Portales Springs is dry now, but was once a major watering hole along the trail that connected Fort Sumner to the Texas Panhandle.

It's located a few miles south of Portales on private property.

The Kid and his friend Charlie Bowdre were known to run

horses on ranchland near the springs. Historians believe the horses were usually stolen.

To be fair, the Kid denied he was a horse thief.

In a Dec. 12, 1880, letter to New Mexico territorial Gov. Lew Wallace, he wrote that the Las Vegas Gazette newspaper had called him a "Captain of a Band of Outlaws who hold Forth at the Portales."

"There is no such organization in existence," the Kid wrote to the governor. "So the Gentlemen must have drawn very heavily on his imagination."

In a jailhouse interview with the Las Vegas newspaper on Dec. 27, 1880, the Kid offered details.

"About that Portales business," he told the reporter, "I owned the ranch with Charlie Bowdre. I took it up and was holding it because I knew that sometime a stage would run by there and I wanted to keep it for a station."

But the Kid said he had to leave Portales because "certain men ... wouldn't let me live in the country."

He told the newspaper he made his living as a gambler.



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# The EASTERN NEW MEXICO NEWS

## Quay County Sun

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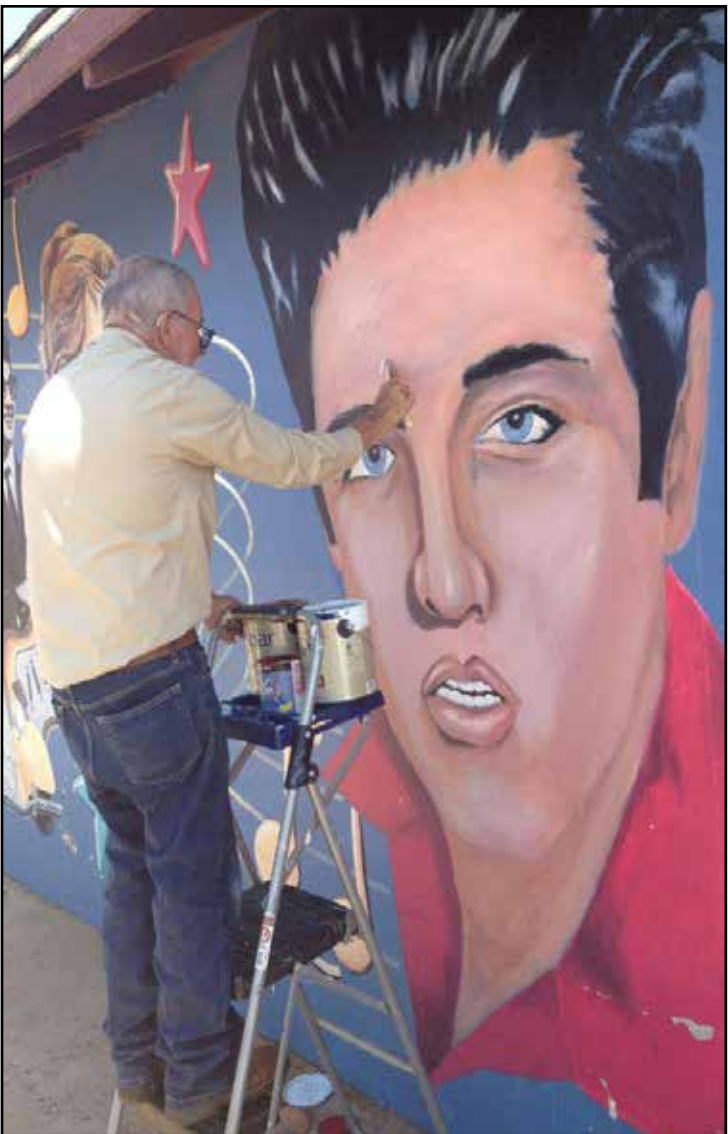


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Courtesy Photo

Bill Delk supervised Clovis' Sixth Street mural in 1995 and touched up Elvis in 2012. Jill Balkun and William Garcia IV were among Clovis Community College students who created the American Pie Mural on Main Street in 2018.

### Train town becomes 'Magic City'

The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway created Clovis from the nearly empty prairie in 1907. The city's population increased so quickly its first nickname was the "Magic City."

The town was born so the nation could go west ... easier.

About 100 trains still go through Clovis severy day.

Trains brought us Jesse Owens in 1935, the king and queen of Greece in 1948, and Actor Ronald Reagan in 1961. None of them stayed long, but Owens worked out before traveling on to Olympic Gold.

The iron horses don't haul a lot of people through here anymore, but they are carrying everything from apples to zippers.



Courtesy Photo

### Good goal: A mural for every wall

Yep, that's Elvis and Chuck Berry on the side of Steve Deleon's place at Sixth and Main in Clovis.

Our bowling alley pays homagess to The Big Lebowski.

See how many references you can find to Don McLean's "American Pie" song on the Coldwell Banker building on Clovis' Main Street.

Something touched us deep inside ...

### Put me in the zoo

We have the second-largest zoo in New Mexico.

It's been home to giraffes, tigers, even an elephant through the years.

Fire Chief R. V. Miller started acquiring exotic critters about 1928. He had a pair of monkeys — Joe and Betty — a porcupine and two small bears in those early days.

By 1931, the collection also included lions, badgers, alligators and an anteater — oh, my.

It's open daily, except Mondays, in Clovis' Hillcrest Park.

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Our version of national pastime

You know what else we do for fun around here? Our parks are full of slow-pitch softball players from early spring to late fall.

Hundreds of traveling teams come here from across the country every year, the players filling up restaurants and hotels when they're not on the diamonds. Sometimes the tournaments – featuring men's, women's and mixed teams -- last through weekend nights, wrapping up with the championship games on Sunday mornings.

And they're a great way to spend a holiday. If you haven't watched or played in the Halloween Howwwl, don't complain you've never seen a werewolf play shortstop.



Courtesy Photo  
We like to play ball.

We have some fine dining

The best place to eat around here is debatable and changes often. You can get anything from sushi to Tex-Mex. But here are two words of advice:

Drive in.

Norman Petty took dozens of his aspiring rock stars to eat at the Foxy Drive In in the 1950s and early '60s. It's moved a little closer to the studio today, but still on Seventh Street in Clovis.

When Twin-Cronnie Drive-In opened in 1952, it was the only place to eat out between Clovis and Tucumcari. Its building was hauled in from Plainview, Texas, and took its name from the most popular menu item – a twin cronnie sandwich is a split hot dog stuffed into a hamburger bun with various condiments. You can still buy one today at 709 Commerce Way.

Pat's Twin Cronnies in Portales – no place to eat inside so it's usually surrounded by cars on U.S. 70 – is home to the world's finest peanut butter shake. Who says? Just try it. Double your money back from the price of this publication if you don't agree.

Some place names to remember

We are just 50 miles from Earth. That's Earth, Texas, east of Clovis. Progress is 26 miles away.

Looking for a little Pep? That community is about 25 miles southeast of Portales.

Tucumcari – we all know a song that mentions that legendary stop on Route 66 – is 85 miles northwest of Clovis. Local songwriter Andy Mason warns us, "There's nothing to eat in Tucumcari ... for a vegetarian on the road."

According to Mason:

"I went down to the local supermarket  
"And I asked the girl for some vegetarian snacks  
"She looked at me like I was from another planet  
"And told me if I didn't leave she'd kick my ass."



Courtesy Photo  
Truth is, the old grouches are some of our favorite people.

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Did you know Clovis was among stops on the first coast-to-coast Transcontinental Air Transport route? That was in 1929.

Charles Lindbergh selected Clovis for the stopover and flew the first TAT plane from Los Angeles to Clovis. Amelia Earhart, like Lindbergh, had financial interest in TAT, and was among the first passengers on the route, which went from LA to New York and took 48 hours one way.

TAT eventually became Trans World Airlines, or TWA, before it was acquired by American Airlines in 2001.

The TAT airport site is today home to Cannon Air Force Base. Cannon is home to the 27th Special Operations Wing whose stated mission is “to fly, fight and win – specialized airpower any time, any place, anywhere.”

It sits on 3,789 acres, about 8 miles west of Clovis. About 7,800 military personnel, civilian employees and their families are actively involved with operations at Cannon.



Courtesy Photo

If you like rock and roll history, Jay Parmenter will be happy to show you around the Norman Petty Studio.

Famous people have lived here

Actor Ronny Cox – think dueling banjos in “Deliverance” and Lt. Andrew Bogomil in “Beverly Hills Cop” – went to junior high and high school in Portales before graduating from Eastern New Mexico University in 1963.

Now 84, Cox says music comes first in his life and he’s had a successful career doing that as well. In 2019, he was inducted into the New Mexico Music Hall of Fame.

Buddy Rogers was a silent film star in the 1920s. He was widely known as “America’s Boyfriend.” His movie “Wings” won the first Academy Award for Best

Picture and he has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Rogers’ connection to Clovis was brief – he lived here a couple of years as a boy – but his name remains, carved into the building at 416 Main St.

Rogers’ dad Bert built the Rogers-Awalt bank at that location in 1908.

And while we’re on the subject of famous people who lived here as children, Melrose was the birthplace of Yogi Bear and the Jetsons.

Well, actually William Hanna was born in Melrose on July 14, 1910, where his father worked as a construction superintendent for the railroad.

Hanna, along with his creative partner Joseph Barbera, created animated cultural icons that include Yogi, George Jetson, his boy Elroy, Tom and Jerry, Scooby-Doo, Fred and Wilma Flintstone and many many more legends from Saturday morning cartoons.

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### A safe place for Vaudeville stars

Clovis’ downtown has an intricate underground tunnel system that runs seven blocks. It’s three people wide and 12-feet high, originally connecting the train depot to the city’s main hotel and the theaters on Main Street. The original purpose of the tunnel was to allow Roaring 20s-era celebrities to reach their destinations without being mobbed by fans.

Gene Autry rode his horse, Champion, through the tunnel in the 1940s, singing as loud as he could about “tumbling tumbleweeds” -- partly to promote his show to residents who could hear him on the sidewalks above, and partly to warn others he was headed their way in the tunnel. It’s dark down there. (This tunnel story is actually not true. None of it. There are no tunnels beneath Clovis’ Main Street, despite rumors of their existence that won’t go away.

Historians Don McAlavy and Harold Kilmer and former City Manager Joe Thomas spent considerable amounts of time looking for these alleged tunnels. They don’t exist. Some of our old-timers will tell you their distant relatives sold boot-leg whiskey in the tunnels. They’re lying. There are no tunnels. But we’re keeping the legend alive because it keeps the kids (and the old-timers) busy looking for a secret entrance.)

### We go w-a-a-a-y back.

Most of our incorporated townsites are officially a little more than a century old. But there is evidence people have been hanging out around here for 13,000 years. In 1929, Ridge Whiteman was a 19-year-old arrowhead hunter. In February of that year, he wrote a letter to the Smithsonian Institute reporting he’d found an arrow point with elephant bones at the site northwest of Portales



Photo by Robin Nations

Our majestic sunsets wrap up most days around here.

now known as Blackwater Draw. Anthropologists and archaeologists soon realized the discovery was proof that man was living in North America much earlier than many had believed. Roughly 7,000 years before Columbus discovered America, the spring-fed lake at Blackwater Draw was a watering hole for Colombian mammoth and ancient bison, which attracted roving hunters. Radiocarbon dating of spear points place hunter-gatherers at Blackwater Draw 5,000 years before that, which was shortly after the Ice Age. The lake, which dried up about 8,000 years ago, was among a series of bodies of water that stretched to modern-day Lubbock.

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Notice it’s not Green Acres. The park downtown was established in 1964, named for C.O. Greene, who was manager of Clovis’ Southwestern Public Service Co. office.

Before Clovis Jaycees spurred the move to create the park, it was generally known as Dutchman’s lake for Alfred, Arthur, Curt, Fritz and Otto Liebelt. They were brothers who homesteaded on the property, coming to the U.S. from Bunzlau, Germany, about 1903.



Photo by Tony Bullocks

Clovis celebrates Independence Day with an annual fireworks display at Greene Acres Park.

Sometimes we go Hollywood on you

Remember “Hell or High Water?” starring Jeff Bridges?

Dozens of the scenes in that movie were shot around here in 2015.

Bill’s Jumbo Burger in Clovis – where the fictional bank robbers had lunch -- became a mini tourist

attraction after the movie came out in 2016

“(Customers) want to sit down where (actors) Chris Pine and Ben Foster were sitting at. They want to know exactly which table it was,” Bill’s owner Josh Rojas said.

The vacant building next to Portales’ Farm Bureau on the square still has a Texas Midland Bank sign on the front door. That’s one of the last banks the movie’s Howard brothers tried to rob, but discovered it was closed.

The thrill of victory

We’re home to some great athletes.

Bubba Jennings in 1985 won the Naismith Award as college basketball’s best player under 6 feet tall.

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The story goes he made 100 consecutive free throws at the end of every practice, beginning in high school. His dad, Brooks Jennings, said that’s true. “More or less.”

Hank Baskett III played pro football for five seasons. His dad, Hank Baskett II, used to inspire his son by singing “I believe I can fly ... I believe I can touch the sky.” It turned out, some say, Hank III really could do those things.

Jennings and Baskett don’t play with the best-of-the-best anymore, but Shad Mayfield is at the top of his game.

The tie-down roper has qualified for three National Finals Rodeo competitions and earned more than a half-million dollars in his young career.

Mayfield, 21, won the Wrangler NFR in 2020 and was the National High School Rodeo Association Champion Tie-Down Roper in 2018.

His dad, Sylvester Mayfield, was a two-time qualifier for the National Finals Rodeo.

Fun fact: The fictional Colby Mayfield, ranch hand on TV’s “Yellowstone,” told bunkmates he’s cousins with Clovis’ rodeoing Mayfield.

Most famous celebrity made music

Norman Petty’s recording studio churned out 19 Top-40 hits from 1957 to 1963.

Buddy Holly recorded “That’ll Be The Day” And “Peggy Sue,” in Petty’s studio on West Seventh Street in Clovis.

The studio still stands, and still looks like Holly or Buddy Knox or Roy Orbison might walk in any minute and start a party. All three



Photo by Robin Nations

Aralyn Singleterry loves her sport, as she showed at the Roosevelt County Mounted Patrol Arena in July 2021.

recorded there. We have an annual music festival honoring Petty and the Clovis Sound every June (except when pandemics hit about once a century). In recent years we’ve combined it with another 1950s-era classic: Draggin’ Main. Truth is, we drag Main, listening to Buddy Holly songs, no matter what time of year.

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Courtesy Photo

The sun shines more than 300 days of the year. But, yeah, sometimes it snows, too. That’s George Jauregui enjoying a January bike ride near Texico in 2015.

Speaking of  
the time of year ...

We have four seasons in eastern New Mexico — all of them covered in sunshine.

On average, we have 300 days of sunshine every year.

On Feb. 1, 1967, our high temperature was 82

degrees. On Christmas Day in 1919: records show 91 degrees.

Those stories you may have heard about blizzards, summer temps over 100 for weeks at a time and tornadoes? Yeah, also true.

We welcome diversity, even with our weather.



Photo by Tony Bullocks

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# DAY TRIPS IN NEW MEXICO

## Fort Sumner

### Billy the Kid Museum

The Billy the Kid Museum in Fort Sumner is just an hour away from Clovis for any Wild West connoisseurs. His alleged remains are there, plus multiple other neat outlaw and Wild West artifacts. Billy the Kid's actual rifle, chaps, spurs and other personal items are on display.

#### Drive time from Clovis:

One hour

#### Address:

1435 East Sumner Avenue,  
Fort Sumner, New Mexico  
88119

#### Information:

[www.billythekidmuseumfortsumner.com](http://www.billythekidmuseumfortsumner.com)

## International UFO Museum and Research Center

### Roswell

This Roswell museum is the Mecca of all things UFO, and it happens to be smack in the middle of UFO, USA, which is Roswell, New Mexico. The city of the nation's most famous UFO incident houses the International UFO Museum and Research Center, which was founded by two participants from the famed Roswell Incident, Walter Haut and Glenn Dennis. The museum explores the Roswell incident and other UFO findings is sure to entertain and teach simultaneously.

#### Drive time from Clovis:

Under two hours

#### Address:

114 North Main Street, Roswell,  
New Mexico 88203

#### Information:

[www.roswellufomuseum.com](http://www.roswellufomuseum.com)

## Capulin Volcano National Monument

### Capulin

Capulin Volcano National Monument is an extinct cinder cone volcano and is part of the Raton and Clayton volcanic field. Located north of Capulin, New Mexico the National Monument offers hiking trails or travel by car on a winding two mile road from the bottom of the volcano to the top.

#### Drive time from Clovis:

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#### Information:

<https://www.nps.gov/cavo/index.htm>



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# DAY TRIPS IN NEW MEXICO

## White Sands National Monument

### Alamogordo

The world's largest gypsum dune field exists right here in New Mexico at White Sands National Monument near Alamogordo. There are 275 square miles of desert featuring unique plants and animals. Sledding, backpacking, and hiking are just some of the attractions offered at the historical park.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

About four hours

**Address:**

19955 Highway 70 West  
Alamogordo, New Mexico 88310

**Information:**

[www.nps.gov/whsa](http://www.nps.gov/whsa)

## Carlsbad Caverns

### Carlsbad

There are 119 known limestone caves deep in the Carlsbad Caverns. Tours are available into the cave, and the site also features a museum. If you take a visit during the summer, make sure to go to the Bat Cave, where thousands of Mexican free-tailed bats can be seen, and Rattlesnake Springs is home to more than 300 different species of birds.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

Three and a half hours

**Address:**

3225 National Parks Highway  
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88220

**Information:**

[www.nps.gov/cave](http://www.nps.gov/cave)

## Blackwater Draw

### Roosevelt County

This day trip is less than 15 minutes from Clovis, and displays artifacts from the Blackwater Draw dig site. Also at Blackwater Draw Museum are displays about the history of the Clovis people, where man has inhabited for 13,000 years.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

15 minutes

**Address:**

1457-1461 South Ave. K,  
Portales, New Mexico 88130

**Information:**

[www.enmu.edu/services/museums/blackwater-draw](http://www.enmu.edu/services/museums/blackwater-draw)

## Oasis State Park

### Roosevelt County

Camping, fishing, picnicking, birding and hiking all less than 30 minutes from Clovis at Oasis State Park. This state park nestled on N.M. 467 between Portales and Clovis is perfect for a weekend of outdoor activities. With 23 developed campsites, a playground and mountain bike trails, there is plenty of fun awaiting.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

Under two hours

**Address:**

114 North Main Street, Roswell,  
New Mexico 88203

**Information:**

[www.roswellufomuseum.com](http://www.roswellufomuseum.com)



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# DAY TRIPS IN NEW MEXICO

## Albuquerque Zoo & Tingley Beach

Albuquerque

Snakes, elephants, crocodiles and even Tasmanian devils call the Albuquerque Zoo home. There is also a botanic garden and aquarium, or you can take a camel ride or ride the zoo train. Tingley Beach, located just minutes from downtown Albuquerque, is a relaxing area to fish, bike and hike. Central Pond is Tingley's largest body of water and is stocked with rainbow trout and channel catfish.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

Three and a half hours

**Address:**

903 Tenth SW, Albuquerque

**Information:**

[www.cabq.gov/culturalservices/biopark/zoo](http://www.cabq.gov/culturalservices/biopark/zoo)

## Ruidoso Downs Race Track & Casino

Ruidoso

Try your luck at the Billy the Kid Casino, or head over to Billy's Sports Bar and Grill. The All-American Turf Club has premier seating, a full buffet and bar, and second floor views to watch horse races. Or you can visit Billy's Race Book; and bet on national races that are simulcast from the nation's best race tracks.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

3 hours

**Address:**

26225 U.S. HWY 70,  
Ruidoso Downs

## Palo Duro Canyon State Park

Amarillo

The scenic Palo Duro Canyon, minutes away from Amarillo, Texas, is 120 miles long and more than 20 miles deep. The second largest canyon in the United States after Arizona's Grand Canyon, the canyon features on-site horse rentals, mountain bike and hiking trails, and cabin rentals. You can even park your RV, as water and electricity are available as well.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

About two hours

**Address:**

11450 State Highway Park  
Road 5 Canyon, Texas 79015

**Information:**

[www.palodurocanyon.com](http://www.palodurocanyon.com)

## Taos Ski Valley

Taos

For those snow sports enthusiasts, Taos, New Mexico is the place to be. The Taos area has four ski resorts with more than 100 trails for all levels of experience. The Enchanted Forest Cross Country Ski Area has 33 kilometers of groomed trails to ski, and also walking trails. Ice skating, sledding and snowmobiling are just some of what Taos has to offer.

**Drive time from Clovis:**

About five hours

**Address:**

116 Sutton Place Taos Ski  
Valley, New Mexico 87525

**Information:**

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

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# Your New Mexico Home

## Team Cannon | A Program for Airmen at Cannon AFB

### ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Your New Mexico Home is a program implemented by the Clovis/Curry County Chamber of Commerce's Committee of 50 (C50) to provide Airmen with an avenue to form friendships and gather support beyond the formal work environment.

#### To qualify, service members must:

- Be first-term Airmen
- Be single and living in dorms
- Comply with all military service standards
- Have approval from commander

#### Activities and events

##### participants have enjoyed

**include:** Home-cooked meals, Holiday functions, Family events, Church services, Sports events, Picnics and MORE!

### WHY THE NEED

Moving to a new place can be a challenging, lonely experience. In an attempt to alleviate some of the anxiety of being alone or far from home, the Clovis/Curry County Chamber of Commerce and the Committee of 50 created "Your New Mexico Home".

The program - modeled after Team Tinkers very successful "Home Away From Home" program, which was founded in 2013 and has made a positive difference in the lives of hundreds of airmen and Oklahoma City residents - strives to match community sponsors with young service men and women to give them a welcoming, safe and supportive place to spend time.

### HOST FAMILIES

Host families are eager to provide a home away from home during your years at Cannon Air Force Base. They serve as positive mentors, friends and advisors, while offering a caring environment for you to escape the pressures of work. To qualify, host families must sign a liability waiver and pass a background check.

*Your New Mexico Home is a program created and managed by the Clovis/Curry County Chamber of Commerce's Committee of 50. It is not a part of the Department of Defense or any of its components and it has no Governmental status.*

### SIGN UP!

To find Your New Mexico Home, contact one of the YNHM representatives below to receive a registration packet.

#### First Term Airmen Center

203 Air Commando Way  
Building 1225  
Cannon AFB, NM 88103  
P: 575-784-2973  
DSN: 681-2973

#### A&FRC

331 DL Ingram (Bldg 1433)  
Cannon AFB, NM 88103  
P: 575-784-4228  
DSN: 681-4228

#### James Burns, C50/Community Liaison

2400 N Prince St  
Clovis, NM 88101  
575-760-5023

[jburns@burnshardware.com](mailto:jburns@burnshardware.com)



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