



Action Hub

Supporting San Juan County Families – May 2026

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Federal News: Why do things look different at National Parks?

Across the country, national parks and monuments are grappling with shrinking federal budgets, frozen staff positions, and an enormous maintenance backlog. For families in San Juan County, that can mean shorter visitor-center hours, fewer ranger-led talks, and more closed bathrooms, trails, and campgrounds than in the past—even when a park is officially ‘open.’

Our nearby parks—Aztec Ruins, Chaco Culture, and Mesa Verde—remain incredible places for learning, culture, and time outdoors, but they are increasingly ‘do-it-yourself’ experiences.

These sites are usually open, but federal funding cuts and staffing shortages mean hours, tours, and services can change quickly.

Before you go, check each park’s “Alerts & Conditions” page or call ahead so you know about road conditions, closures, and tour reservations. Pack extra water, snacks, and sun protection, and plan for more of a self-guided experience than in past years.

Aztec Ruins, Chaco, and Mesa Verde also offer powerful ways to learn about Indigenous history and current debates over how we protect sacred places like Chaco. A family visit can be both a fun adventure and a chance to talk with kids and teens about stewardship, culture, ***and having a voice in national decisions.***

Aztec Ruins National Monument (NPS)

- Official website: <https://www.nps.gov/azru/>
- Hours/conditions page: <https://www.nps.gov/azru/planyourvisit/hours.htm>
- Visitor information phone: (505) 334-6174 (main line; x230 for visitor info)

Chaco Culture National Historical Park (NPS)

- Official website: <https://www.nps.gov/chcu/>
- Alerts & conditions: <https://www.nps.gov/chcu/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>
- Visitor information phone: (505) 786-7014

Mesa Verde National Park (NPS, Colorado)

- Official website: <https://www.nps.gov/meve/>
- Conditions & alerts: <https://www.nps.gov/meve/planyourvisit/conditions.htm>
- Visitor information phone: 970-529-4465

State News: Let’s Get Reading!

New Mexico's Free Summer Reading Program is a statewide opportunity for families to help their children strengthen reading skills in a fun, supportive setting. The program is open to students entering kindergarten through outgoing eighth grade and is designed especially for kids who could use an extra boost in reading before the next school year.

For four weeks in June and July, students meet in very small groups (about four students per group) with trained literacy instructors who use structured, evidence-based reading approaches. Children spend around four hours a day building skills in phonics, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, and writing, with built-in breaks and time to move and play. Many sites also partner with local schools and community organizations, so families can find a location close to home.

The program is completely free for New Mexico families and funded by the State of New Mexico. Families who enroll can expect their children to receive personalized support, close progress monitoring, and encouragement that builds both reading skills and confidence. Early feedback from participating schools and communities highlights not only academic gains, but also students' increased enjoyment of reading and readiness for school in the fall.

To participate, families visit literacy.nm.gov to learn more and register their student for a nearby site.

The main website includes a FAQ page that answers common questions about eligibility, program times, safety, and daily schedules, and it offers a phone number and email (833-550-4300, literacy.nm@state.nm.us) for additional support. Families are encouraged to sign up early, as sites across the state are filling spaces now for the 2026 New Mexico Summer Reading Program.

Local News: San Juan County Boys and Girls Clubs

"To inspire and enable all young people, especially those that need us the most, to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, caring citizens"

This is more than a mission statement for the Boys & Girls Clubs of San Juan County – it is a daily commitment to local kids and families. At Clubs in Farmington, Aztec, and Bloomfield, youth ages 6–18 find a safe, supportive space after school and in the summer, with caring adults, healthy meals, and programs that help them explore who they are and who they want to become.

Summer programs this year include:

- Smart Girls, a service-learning opportunity where young women serve their communities and learn how they fit in and can lead.
- A brand-new Theatre Camp invites kids of all ages to work together to direct, produce, and perform a play, building confidence, creativity, and teamwork.
- The Junior Lifeguarding Program, offered in partnership with the Farmington Aquatic Center, gives teens hands-on training aligned with the Club's Life and Workforce Readiness goals and can open the door to real job opportunities while also helping meet our community's need for lifeguards.

Clubs also offer virtual reality workplace training, STEM activities, beginning culinary skills, financial literacy, and second-language opportunities, including Dine Club for Navajo language and Chispitas, which introduces Spanish through food. During the school year, Club hours are 2:30–7:00 p.m., and in the summer, doors are open from 7:30 a.m.–5:45 p.m., giving working families options for consistent, affordable care. Boys & Girls Clubs of San Juan County are nonprofit and focused solely on helping kids grow into amazing people; families can contact their local Club to learn about specific summer dates, costs, and scholarship options so every child who wants to attend can take part.

Boys & Girls Club of Farmington

1925 Positive Way, Farmington, NM 87401 call 505.327.6396

Boys & Girls Club of Bloomfield

701 S. 2nd St., Bloomfield, NM 87413 call 505.632.0123

Aztec Boys & Girls Club

311 S. Ash St., Aztec, NM 87410 call 505.334.8861

Simple Recipe: May-ke It Your Way Shredded Meat

This recipe uses an affordable cut of meat, cooked low and slow until it falls apart, then turns it into several different meals: street tacos, nachos, sliders, or stuffed sweet potatoes. By using leaner cuts, trimming visible fat, loading up on vegetables, and choosing Greek yogurt instead of sour cream, this meal can fit well into a diabetes-friendly eating pattern.



Ingredients

- 1–3 lb beef chuck or pork sirloin, trimmed of visible fat
- 1–2 teaspoons salt-free taco or chili seasoning blend (such as chili powder, cumin, garlic powder, onion powder, oregano).
- 1–2 cups water or low-sodium broth, enough to come about one-third up the side of the meat.
- Optional flavor add-ins: onion, lime juice, fresh herbs

Basic Method

1. **Season and sear.** Pat the meat dry, rub with seasoning on all sides, and sear in a hot cast iron skillet until nicely browned to build flavor without added sugar.
2. **Slow cook.** Transfer the meat (and onion, if using) to:
 - A covered oven-safe pot,
 - A slow cooker, or
 - A heavy pot with a tight-fitting lid for the stovetop.Add water or low-sodium broth.
3. **Cook until tender.**
 - Oven: 300°F, covered, about 5 hours.
 - Slow cooker: Low for 7–9 hours.
 - Stovetop: Gentle simmer on low, keeping it covered and checking that there is always some liquid.
4. **Shred and season.** When the meat is fork-tender, remove and shred with two forks, discarding excess fat. Return meat to some of the cooking juices and add citrus juice and fresh herbs. Taste and adjust seasoning with more spices or a pinch of salt if needed.

The finished shredded meat can be refrigerated for several days or frozen in portions for future quick meals.

Serve “Your Way” (diabetes-friendly ideas)

Encourage participants to build their plates using the Diabetes Plate Method: half non-starchy vegetables, one quarter lean protein, and one quarter high-fiber carbohydrates. This shredded meat is the **protein** part of the plate; the “your way” options provide vegetables and carbohydrates.

- **Street tacos or sliders**

- Use corn or whole-grain tortillas or small whole-grain slider buns.
- Fill mostly with shredded meat and a big handful of shredded cabbage, lettuce, or other crunchy veggies.
- Add salsa, pico de gallo, and a small spoonful of Light Crema (see below).
- Aim for 2 small tacos with half the plate filled with extra veggies or salad.

- **Loaded nachos**

- Start with a modest handful of baked tortilla chips on a small plate.
- Top heavily with shredded meat, black beans if desired, and lots of veggies: lettuce, tomatoes, onions, bell pepper, radishes, or cabbage.
- Finish with a light drizzle of Light Crema.
- Pair with extra raw veggies on the side so chips are not the main part of the meal.

- **Stuffed baked sweet potato**

- Bake or microwave scrubbed sweet potatoes until tender.
- Split open and fill with shredded meat and vegetables (cabbage slaw, spinach, or peppers).
- Top with Light Crema and fresh herbs.
- For many adults, half of a medium sweet potato plus veggies and protein fits well into the “carbohydrate” quarter of the plate.

Light Crema (Greek Yogurt Topping)

Using plain Greek yogurt instead of sour cream adds protein and lowers saturated fat, supporting heart health and blood sugar management. Mix 1 cup plain Greek Yogurt, juice of one lime and a pinch of salt. Stir ingredients together until smooth and keep refrigerated. This can be used on tacos, nachos, sliders, and stuffed sweet potatoes in place of sour cream or higher-fat crema.

Bonus Chews: May-ke My Day Banana Mug Cake

In a mug mix together: 1 ripe banana, smushed



1 egg, beaten

2 tbsp flour (whole wheat or GF)

¼ tsp baking powder

1 tbsp raisins, 1 tbsp walnuts ((optional)

Microwave 90 seconds to 2 minutes until “set.”

Enjoy warm; this makes one portion-controlled treat!

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