



Powering New Mexico, Together

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PNM offers safety information ahead of the 2026 Balloon Fiesta

(Albuquerque, NM) – Living in New Mexico gives us the unique opportunity to enjoy balloons year-round. But the beauty of the balloons can quickly turn into a dangerous situation if one were to get caught in power lines.

Today, in preparation for the [2026 Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta](#), PNM hosted a safety demonstration for first responders, Balloon Fiesta safety officials, and local media to discuss what to do if this situation occurs. This annual demonstration covered how PNM responds and works with first responders. The event reinforced PNM's commitment to powering communities by supporting public safety, strengthening partnerships, and helping protect New Mexicans during one of the state's most iconic events.

Mike Kelly, long-time Albuquerque pilot, discussed this safety issue from the pilot's perspective. The event was hosted at the PNM Reeves Generation Station, and a balloon and gondola were draped over a de-energized power line as a visual aid.

Safety is a priority at PNM, and it's important to know that touching a balloon caught in power lines could cause a chain reaction that can injure those attempting to provide help, as well as the people inside the balloon's gondola. While it can be our natural instinct to want to run in and help others, there is no way for a casual observer to know if a power line is carrying electricity or has been de-energized by the balloon accident. It's always best to stay back and call PNM.

"Preparedness is important for an incident like this," said Landon Cheney, Area Manager for the PNM Line Department. "We always hope for an incident-free Balloon Fiesta, but should a balloon hit a power line, it's imperative that PNM and local first responder groups continue to work cohesively to respond and keep everyone safe in an effort to Power New Mexico, Together."

Below are a few tips to keep you and your family safe:

- If you see a balloon get entangled in powerlines, do not approach. Call 911 immediately, and call PNM at 888-DIAL-PNM. The safest thing to do for everyone is to stay away and call for help.
- Touching a balloon wrapped in power lines could cause a chain reaction that can injure those trying to help, and anyone inside the balloon's gondola. Even if the line is not sparking or arcing, always assume that it's energized and call 888-DIAL-PNM.
- Electricity seeks the nearest path to ground, which means an energized power line that poses no danger to a balloon hanging on one wire could become deadly if someone touches the ground and the balloon or tether at the same time. Stay away, call 911 and 888-DIAL-PNM.
- Keep your eyes on the road when driving. Every year outages affecting thousands of customers are caused by vehicles hitting power poles or other electrical equipment. As balloons fill the sky,

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Video / Pictures

[Pictures, B-roll, and interviews from this year's event can be found here.](#)

stay safe and keep your eyes on the road. Pull over in a safe location to watch & take pictures of the balloons.

How PNM prepares for Balloon Fiesta

During the length of Balloon Fiesta, PNM has Operations employees stationed on the field every morning at Balloon Fiesta Park. Each morning, they attend the pilot's meetings and stay on the field during mass ascensions to alert employees in the PNM Distribution Operations Center as to whether or not balloonists have been given a green light to take off, and relay information on the direction in which balloons are traveling once they do take off. Employees within the PNM Distribution Operations Center, who work year-round, stay in constant real-time communication with the field member(s) at the park, and with the PNM line crews who are stationed outside the park at the PNM Reeves Generating Station every morning, ready to respond in the event of a balloon accident.

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About PNM

PNM is the largest electricity provider in New Mexico serving nearly 550,000 customers. PNM is committed to transitioning its electricity to 100% carbon free while ensuring a reliable and resilient power system. Visit [PNM.com](https://www.pnm.com) for more information.