7 reasons to visit Corpus Christi any time of year

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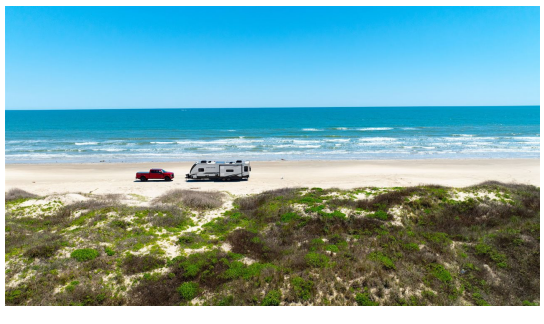
(BPT) - By Jacqueline Gonzalez, Staff Writer, Visit Corpus Christi

With abundant sunshine and a coastline that stretches from calm bay waters to the open Gulf, Corpus Christi offers a year-round coastal escape. Known for its laid-back beach culture, iconic attractions and steady lineup of festivals and outdoor experiences, this Texas Gulf Coast city invites visitors to explore at their own pace. Whether you're planning a weekend getaway or a longer stay, here are seven reasons Corpus Christi continues to stand out as a destination worth visiting any time of year.

1. With more than 80 miles of coastline, Corpus Christi offers everything from calm bay beaches to wide-open Gulf shores, including iconic stretches like Padre Island National Seashore and Mustang Island. Many of the area's beaches are drivable, a unique feature that allows visitors to cruise right onto the sand, set up for the day, and enjoy fishing, swimming, kiteboarding, windsurfing, kayaking and paddleboarding just steps from their vehicle. For those who like to linger, beach camping and Gulf-front sunsets turn a simple beach day into a full coastal experience. Whether casting a line at sunrise or watching the sky change color in the evening, the beaches here are less about crowds and more about freedom.



2. Corpus Christi's event calendar stretches far beyond a single season. Weekly farmers' markets and pop-up markets bring local flavor to neighborhoods year-round, while largescale festivals anchor the city's cultural identity. Signature events like Buc Days from April 30 through May 10, Texas Jazz Festival from Oct. 16-18, and the Día de los Muertos Street Festival on Oct. 24, highlight everything from coastal traditions and food to music and community pride. No matter when you visit, there's usually something happening that invites you to experience the city alongside locals.

3. Corpus Christi's most recognizable attractions are concentrated along the bay, creating an easy-to-explore lineup for visitors. The USS Lexington Museum offers a deep dive into naval history aboard a legendary aircraft carrier, while the Texas State Aquarium showcases Gulf marine life through immersive exhibits focused on education and conservation. Nearby cultural institutions like the Art Museum of South Texas, the Art Center of Corpus Christi and the Corpus Christi Museum of Science and History round out the experience, offering art, science and regional history with a coastal lens.

4. Known as one of Texas's top fishing destinations, Corpus Christi offers year-round access to bay, surf and offshore fishing. Anglers can fish directly from the beach, cast lines from piers or book guided charters targeting redfish, speckled trout, flounder and more. With mild weather throughout the year, fishing here isn't limited to a single season; it's a core part of the coastal lifestyle that keeps visitors coming back.

5. Corpus Christi sits along a major migratory path, making it a prime destination for birders from around the country. Coastal wetlands, bays and nearby nature preserves attract hundreds of species throughout the year, including whooping cranes, shorebirds and colorful migratory songbirds. Whether you're a seasoned birder or a casual wildlife watcher, the area offers accessible viewing opportunities that change with the seasons.

6. The city's culinary identity is shaped by its location. Fresh Gulf seafood, locally harvested oysters, Texas-style barbecue and bold Tex-Mex flavors all have a place at the table. Many restaurants, especially along Water Street, offer outdoor dining and waterfront views, making meals feel like part of the coastal experience. From dock-to-table seafood to "cook your catch" options after a day of fishing, Corpus Christi's food scene blends flavor, tradition and scenery.

7. With more than 226 days of sunshine each year, Corpus Christi's climate is one of its greatest assets. Mild winters and warm coastal breezes keep beaches, trails and outdoor attractions accessible year-round. It's the kind of weather that encourages spontaneous plans, including morning beach walks, afternoon museum visits and sunset dinners by the water, and makes every season feel like a good time to visit.

From drivable beaches and on-the-water adventures to cultural attractions, wildlife experiences and a diverse food scene, Corpus Christi offers travelers a reason to return again and again, each time discovering a new way to coast through the seasons.

Three STEM activities for young innovators on school break

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(BPT) - When school is out on break, many families look for ways to keep their children engaged while still encouraging learning. STEM - science, technology, engineering and math - activities can turn everyday moments into opportunities for discovery, helping build skills while having fun.

Research from the U.S. Department of Education suggests early exposure to STEM supports learning across subjects and helps children build important cognitive skills. Data also shows strong connections between early learning experiences and later academic and developmental outcomes. For example, a study published in the Journal of Experimental Child Psychology found that children's early experiences with play and learning activities can support the development of self-regulation and early reading and math abilities.

Programs like those offered at Kiddie Academy® Educational Child Care encourage young learners to explore STEM concepts through hands-on play and guided exploration.

"Children are naturally curious about the world around them," said Joy Turner, vice president of education at Kiddie Academy. "When parents encourage their little ones to observe, experiment and ask questions, they're helping build critical-thinking skills that support learning for years to come."

The good news for families: STEM learning doesn't require expensive supplies or complicated lessons. Many engaging activities can happen right at home, or anywhere your family travels during break.

Explore nature up close

A walk along the beach, park trail or even your own backyard can become a mini science expedition. Pack a magnifying glass and encourage your children to examine shells, rocks, leaves or insects. As they explore, ask questions like:

- How are these objects different?
- What colors do you see?
- What textures do you notice?
- Why are some objects smoother than others?

These simple comparisons encourage curiosity and observation while helping your kids practice early scientific thinking. Outdoor exploration can also support physical development through movement and play.

Make slime and explore chemistry

Slime-making is a favorite activity for many children that also introduces basic chemistry concepts. Encourage your child to test variations by adding colors or textures to the mixture. Before they mix, ask what they think will happen. Making predictions helps build reasoning skills and introduces the idea that experiments can have different outcomes.

Slime or other basic chemistry recipes often involve common household ingredients, which means adult supervision is recommended at all times. Always read labels, avoid mixing products not intended to be combined and keep ingredients out of reach of young children. Adults should ensure the activity and the materials used are age appropriate and should be used at their own discretion.

Design an egg-drop challenge

Turn engineering into a fun family challenge by asking your little one to design a way to protect an egg from breaking when dropped.

Using materials like cardboard, tape, paper or cotton balls, children experiment with cushioning, structure and problem-solving. After testing their designs, talk about what worked and what they might change for next time. Activities like this help your kids learn that trying again and improving their ideas is part of the process.

Why hands-on STEM matters

Research shows that active, hands-on learning is one of the most effective ways for young learners to engage with STEM concepts. These experiences help develop problem-solving, persistence and creativity - skills that will support your little one across any discipline.

"STEM at any age is about exploration," added Turner. "When children are encouraged to investigate how things work, they begin building the confidence to ask questions and tackle new ideas."

Whether you're traveling on vacation or spending time close to home, everyday moments can become meaningful learning opportunities. By encouraging young innovators to explore, build and experiment, parents can help nurture the curiosity that fuels lifelong learning.

The energy needed to power the AI revolution

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(BPT) - On the night of March 2, 2026, millions of workers around the world opened their laptops and found Claude - one of the world's most widely used AI assistants - was down. The outage lasted hours. It was a small but pointed reminder of how dependent modern work has become on AI, and how fragile the infrastructure behind it can be. The grid that powers that infrastructure is under more strain than most people realize - and the vulnerabilities don't stop at the data center door. They come home with us.

Today, the world is spending hundreds of billions of dollars building the energy infrastructure needed to power AI, including data centers, grid upgrades and new power plants. That scale is just beginning. Fast forward to 2030, when the International Energy Agency (IEA) projects global data center electricity consumption will nearly double.

Here's why: A single AI hyperscaler (like Google Cloud, Microsoft Azure or AWS) consumes as much electricity as 100,000 households, driving an estimated $720 billion in grid spending through the end of the decade.

The world recognizes that AI needs a massive energy infrastructure. But what do homes need in this era of AI-powered functionality? Leading provider of innovative solar generators and renewable energy solutions Jackery has been anticipating this question for 14 years.

The AI revolution comes home

While data centers power the AI infrastructure, the AI revolution is rapidly moving into homes - and with it, each home needs what data centers need: reliable, always-on, clean power.

But that power is far from guaranteed. The tension between AI's explosive energy appetite and the fragility of the grid it depends on is not a future concern - it's playing out right now. A single AI workload consumes roughly 1,000 times more electricity than a traditional web search, while geopolitical instability, supply chain disruptions and an already-strained electrical grid are exposing just how vulnerable that infrastructure is. Homes are no exception to this vulnerability.

How fast is this happening? The average U.S. home has 21 connected devices today, which will only keep increasing. The AI smart home market is growing at 21.3% annually, toward $104 billion by 2034, with the smart home penetration forecast to reach 92.5% globally by 2029.

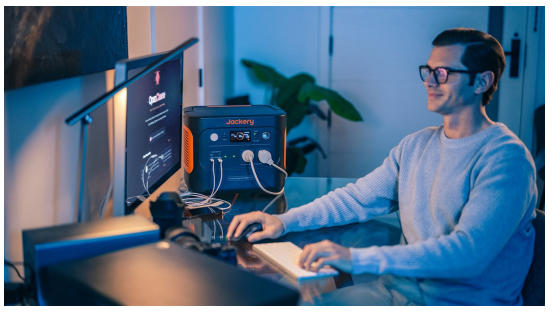
The grid powering all of it is already under pressure. According to NERC's 2025 Summer Reliability Assessment, several major U.S. regions - including Texas, the Midwest and the Southwest - face a real risk of supply shortfalls during peak demand periods. Most people can't control what happens at the grid level. But they can start building energy resilience at home.

Smart homes need reliable power for optimal functionality, and this demand will be increasingly crucial over the next several years. Fortunately, Jackery has already built solutions homes need for the AI era.

Home power solutions for the future

The Jackery company anticipated this residential convergence 14 years ago, and has been building toward it ever since. Back in 2012, Jackery built a portable battery for outdoor adventures. Building on principles of flexibility, independence and reliability, the company's strategy focused on developing products putting power safely and predictably in the hands of homeowners to meet growing energy needs.

Fourteen years later, the company has expanded its portfolio beyond solar generators, solar panels, and power stations into the Jackery Essential Home Backup Solution (EHB) - a whole-home energy category built around what homeowners actually need. It matches the output of a traditional gas generator without the noise, fumes, fuel costs or safety hazards. It reduces dependence on an increasingly strained grid, putting control back in the hands of the homeowner. It's a long-term investment that pays off through lower energy bills and lasting independence. And it runs on clean, renewable energy - silent, emissions-free and ready when the grid isn't. Products like the HomePower 3600 Plus and the Solar Generator 5000 Plus bring that vision to life in homes today.



Today, Jackery's vision includes groundbreaking energy solutions designed specifically for the AI era - including products on the horizon that will keep homes powered and connected even when the grid goes dark. That vision is already taking shape with innovations like the Solar Mars Bot, debuted at Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2026, which uses AI-enhanced computer vision to autonomously drive as it offers mobile energy, intelligently repositioning itself based on light conditions and recharging using its own retractable solar panels.

The company also seeks effective global partnerships, signing a Proactive Safety Battery Cell R&D alliance with DeSay Battery to co-develop the world's first safer and smarter DIY home energy storage solution. Jackery also founded a consortium of leading global consumer technology brands that run on its infrastructure. The Jackery Consortium shares Jackery's commitment to catalyze the next era of energy storage, management and independence. It also helps consumers maximize energy independence by ensuring consumer devices and AI systems are compatible with their power stations.

These crucial milestones highlight Jackery's roadmap to the AI revolution, which the company has been actively preparing for over the past decade.

Key technology investments

Success in times of rapid technological change depends on meeting the moment in terms of the details while also envisioning future needs. A proactive, whole-home approach anticipates energy requirements for multiple interconnected smart devices. Even better is a system that analyzes energy consumption, solar yield and live electricity prices in real time.

Anticipating problems and protecting power stations from potential safety hazards and structural damage, Jackery's exclusive AI-powered ChargeShield 2.0 technology integrates 62 protective mechanisms, ensuring comprehensive battery management and enhanced safety for the power station and any connected devices.

These technology advancements exemplify how the company invests its time and resources. Jackery sees the big picture - including the need to create a power infrastructure that other AI brands can depend on. From the R&D leadership exemplified by last year's Desay Battery Proactive Safety AI Prismatic Cell alliance from RE+2025 to the founding of the Jackery Consortium together with Rokid, Viture, XTOOL and Heybike, the company prioritizes strategic partnerships during this age of rapid tech developments.

Why energy needs to be "always on"

No longer just a convenience, today's AI-powered devices and systems require uninterrupted power to effectively respond to commands. AI relies on continuous connectivity and ongoing analysis in order to offer real-time security and integration of each home's AI-powered devices and energy management systems.

When there's a power grid failure, the Jackery Essential Home Backup (EHB) system's 0ms-20ms Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) switchover means AI-powered homes experience zero perceptible interruption, providing the safety net devices and systems need to keep running without losing data or crashing.

Jackery energy systems optimize energy usage in real time, making more efficient use of photovoltaic systems for solar yield optimization and increasing self-consumption of solar power. Additional safety features include Lithium Iron Phosphate ($LiFePO_4$) battery cells technology for enhanced stability. And for homeowners who want to stay ahead of the curve, Jackery has a new generation of AI-integrated energy systems on the way, purpose-built for a world where keeping the lights on is no longer optional.

Jackery's Solar Mars Bot was created with energy independence in mind, with AI-enhanced computer vision that lets it autonomously reposition itself for maximum solar yield.

Always-on, always-ready devices and systems ensure AI-powered homes provide homeowners with continuous safety, comfort and energy.

Homes of tomorrow

Building on today's technology, Jackery envisions the home of tomorrow as generating its own clean energy, managed with AI intelligence that's shared across connected devices - and never going dark. Jackery is already working toward that vision.

"When Jackery started 14 years ago, our mission was simple: give people reliable power wherever life takes them. Over the past decade, we've earned trust by solving real problems with portable power as the way people live, work and rely on electricity has fundamentally shifted," said Steven Wang, VP of Jackery's Americas Business Department. "Looking ahead to the next 10 years, we're expanding that original promise into a broader vision of power self-sufficiency, transforming the home into an intelligent, solar-powered ecosystem. This is the beginning of our next chapter, where energy is cleaner, smarter and firmly back in the hands of consumers."

Discover where the future of energy is headed at Jackery.com.

How appliance features can make your daily life easier

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(BPT) - Thanks to advanced technology, many chores don't have to take up so much of your time and energy anymore. By using all the smart features available to you, you'll free up space for the things you really love to do - and your chores will be a breeze.

Technologies that make life easier - and last longer

LG's smart technologies don't just make chores easier - they help your appliances last longer and perform better over time. From AI-powered cycles that learn your habits to proprietary innovations like TurboWash™ which uses stronger wash motions along with increased water temperatures to enhance and speed up the wash cycle without wash performance, inverter direct drive motors for higher efficiency without any belt or pulley, ThinQ® connectivity which allows you to remotely control, monitor, and manage smart appliances, and Smart Diagnosis™ which provides a diagnosis service, as well as offering tips & recommendations to maintain your product. LG appliances are engineered for long-lasting performance that consistently ranks among the best in the industry. These built-in technologies mean fewer maintenance issues, greater energy efficiency, and smarter, user-friendly features that keep improving through updates. LG is known for stylish, high-performance appliances - but it's what's under the hood that truly sets them apart.

Here are some ways smart appliances and connected features can help transform your life.

Laundry that practically does itself

Managing your clothes can be a lot easier if you let LG's ThinQ®-enabled washers, dryers and LG Stylers Steam Closets take over some of the work for you, with smart features that help you get your laundry done right. Thanks to the ThinQ app, you can start, stop and monitor laundry remotely, getting notifications when your clothes are ready. You can even send specialized cycles and settings to your laundry appliances over Wi-Fi, or use voice assistants like Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant to control your washer, dryer and LG Styler.* You can also pair your LG washer and dryer through ThinQ to save time and effort: Your washer can communicate with your dryer over Wi-Fi to select the appropriate setting, based on the clothes that were just washed.

Worried about running out of laundry supplies? Worry no more. Link your ThinQ app with your Alexa device so you'll know when your laundry detergent and fabric softener are running low - and even have more ordered for you, automatically!

Appliances that care for themselves, and take the guesswork out of fabric care

Doing laundry gets easier with the newest features. For example, with LG's smart dryers like the 7.4 cu. ft. Ultra Large Capacity Smart Front Load Electric Dryer with TurboSteam®, AI Sensing and Hybrid Electronic Controls with LCD Display, FLOWSENSE® will notify you via the ThinQ app when dryer vent ducts need cleaning, helping to prevent lint buildup and improving performance, safety and efficiency for lower utility bills, worry-free operation and fewer service calls. This model also offers features like self-diagnosing technology, and built-in AI sensors that detect load characteristics to select the optimal dry settings for every load.

To help you take better care of your favorite clothes, LG Styler Steam Closet uses the ThinQ app to help you monitor its progress as it refreshes, deodorizes and dries your clothes, fabrics or hard-to-wash items. You'll receive a notification when each cycle is finished, so you can wear your clean, refreshed clothes right away.

Every home chef's best friends

Storing, organizing and preparing nutritious food for your family can be a delicious expression of your culinary creativity, especially with the right smart tools to help you in the kitchen. ThinQ helps you manage your kitchen appliances, ensuring they run smoothly and keeping you connected and in control so you can enjoy what matters - from flawless family dinners and epic movie nights to cozy slumber parties and festive holiday celebrations. A ThinQ-connected kitchen means you can remotely control your fridge, oven or dishwasher from your phone. Even better, ThinQ operates in the background, ensuring that all your kitchen appliances continually work the way you need them to, while learning from your preferences and lifestyle.

When it comes to optimal food storage, LG refrigerators feature innovations like InstaView™ Door-in-Door for quick access to what's in your fridge without energy loss, Smart Diagnosis™ for troubleshooting, Smart Cooling technologies for maintaining food freshness, plus LG Mini Craft Ice™ and Craft Ice™ makers to help you level up your beverage and mixology game. With the ThinQ app, you'll receive timely alerts if your smart LG refrigerator detects temperature issues, allowing you to act fast and preserve your groceries. When life gets busy and someone forgets to close the refrigerator door, ThinQ will let you know.

Easy meals become even more effortless

To help make delicious meals happen in your kitchen, LG's ThinQ-enabled ranges, wall ovens and microwaves are all designed to make home cooking easier, so you can express your best culinary self. The ThinQ app is like a virtual kitchen assistant, continually working with your cooking appliances to help you create the perfect meal, every time. The ThinQ app can help you by accessing thousands of recipes, instantly ordering ingredients for delivery and pickup, and even sending cooking instructions to your oven.

With LG smart ranges like the 30" Elec. 6.3 cu ft. Range I Self Clean, EasyClean® & Smart, Stainless, Slide-in, you'll have ThinQ technology that can start your oven, set times or check on dinner from anywhere - or just speak to control your oven with Alexa or Google Assistant.**

Ready to make everyday tasks simpler than ever? Learn how to make all your household chores easier with smart appliances and the ThinQ app at LG.com.

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** Participating products may vary. Refer to ThinQ app for details.

Why young adults can't ignore rectal bleeding: Colorectal Cancer Awareness

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(BPT) - *By Patricia L. Turner, MD, MBA, FACS and James W. Fleshman Jr., MD, FACS, FASCRS*

Every year, thousands of people dismiss symptoms such as rectal bleeding or a change in bowel habits, chalking it up to hemorrhoids, stress or something they ate. As surgeons, we want to share a crucial message that could save your life: never ignore these symptoms, no matter your age.

For decades, colorectal cancer was considered a disease primarily affecting older adults. Today, medical understanding has shifted significantly. We have seen a concerning rise in diagnosis in people under 50, making it a leading cause of cancer deaths in this younger population. People born in 1990 now have double the risk of colon cancer and quadruple the risk of rectal cancer compared to those born in 1950. Because of their age, their symptoms are often overlooked, leading to later-stage diagnoses when the disease is harder to treat.

Research presented at the most recent American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress emphasizes this point. In patients under 50, rectal bleeding was the strongest predictor of colorectal cancer, with an 850% increase in the odds of a diagnosis. Furthermore, 70% of these young patients had no family history, and 88% scheduled their colonoscopy due to symptoms, rather than as a routine screening.

What should you do if you notice something that doesn't seem right?

- **Listen to your body.** Pay attention to persistent changes. This includes a change in bowel habits (like new constipation or diarrhea), narrow or ribbon-like stools, a feeling that your bowels don't empty completely, bloating, or rectal pain or discomfort.
- **Don't ignore blood.** If you see blood in or on your stool, on the toilet paper, or in the bowl, **do not assume it's "just" hemorrhoids** whether it is bright red or dark in color. Note how often it happens and whether it's mixed in with the stool. Bleeding is a key warning sign that warrants an immediate discussion with your doctor.
- **Note general health changes.** Unexplained weight loss, ongoing fatigue, bloating or a loss of appetite can also be signs that something is not quite right. The American College of Surgeons has a free Colon Cancer Symptom Checklist to help you track these symptoms and prepare for an informed conversation with your physician.
- **Know your screening needs.** If you are at average risk, begin regular screening at age 45. If you have a family history of colon cancer or polyps, or a condition like Crohn's or Ulcerative colitis, or certain other cancers, you may need to start even sooner.

Know the symptoms and when to act. By advocating for yourself, we can diagnose this disease early when it is most treatable.

Patricia L. Turner, MD, MBA, FACS is the Executive Director & CEO of the American College of Surgeons.

James W. Fleshman Jr., MD, FACS, FASCRS is a member of the Board of Regents of the American College of Surgeons and chief of surgery and Sparkman Endowed Professor and Chairman of the department of surgery at Texas A&M Health Science Center, Baylor University Medical Center.

The smarter home: A simple DIY shade upgrade that changes everything

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(BPT) - For homeowners looking to refresh their home without taking on a major renovation and renters who are unable to make significant changes to their living spaces, affordable do-it-yourself (DIY) upgrades can be the best way to achieve a significant transformation.

While often overlooked, today's advanced smart window treatments can be a quick and easy way to enhance comfort, convenience, energy efficiency and style in a single afternoon. DIY motorized shades that are controlled either by remote, voice or an app are becoming an increasingly popular choice for homeowners and renters.

A trusted brand that has been welcomed into American homes for more than a century is turning the heads of designers, home builders and consumers with a new smart shade that is revolutionizing the way we think about shades available at retail. GE smart shades are premium, reliable, game-changing products that deliver the sleek and modern look and feel of custom shades but can be installed by nearly anyone in five minutes or less.

One standout feature of GE smart shades is the clean design of its hardware. During installation, mounting hardware that can be secured into a wall with only three screws is tucked neatly out of sight, giving the shades a smooth, tailored finish that instantly elevates a room. Today, DIYers can choose from crisp white or modern gray fabric - available in blackout for bedrooms or translucent for soft filtered light - paired with durable aluminum trim for a premium, built-in feel.

Unlike manual shades, today's smart shades deliver value beyond the hardware by providing software-driven control. As interior design trends veer toward more responsive, efficient and automated experiences in the home, smart control has quickly risen to the top of the priority list. GE smart shades can be controlled with simple voice commands or scheduled routines. Users can automate shade movements to enhance privacy, regulate indoor temperatures or manage natural light on a custom schedule. And for households that still enjoy a tactile option, a pre-paired remote allows for instant, no-app-required control.

GE smart shades also appeal strongly to DIY enthusiasts thanks to the quiet, rechargeable motor. Smooth, low-noise operation makes them ideal for bedrooms, nurseries and media rooms - spaces where serenity matters most. Many smart shades on the market now emphasize quiet, reliable motors as a key performance metric, reinforcing this feature as a meaningful advantage for everyday living. With long-lasting battery performance and simple USB-C charging in place, upkeep stays minimal.

Lastly, craftsmanship and peace of mind are major GE smart shade selling points. Assembled by hand in Charleston, South Carolina, and rigorously tested to ensure smooth and flawless operation, GE smart shades are backed by a two-year limited warranty. This commitment to quality for which GE-branded products are known is appreciated by DIYers investing their own money, time and energy into home improvements.

GE smart shades are available now at Amazon.com and Shop.GELighting.com in sizes that are pre-cut for today's most common window sizes. With prices starting at $299.99, the shades are within reach for homeowners and renters seeking to boost both function and style without calling in a contractor.

Whether refreshing a single room or giving the whole home a modern edge, shades are quickly emerging as one of the most rewarding - and surprisingly simple - DIY upgrades. All signs point toward smart motorized shades as the future of window treatments for homeowners and renters looking to get more from their shades.

Support is Care: The case for cancer care that treats the whole person

Published at March 18th 2026, 9:01 AM EDT via Brandpoint

(BPT) - For anyone who hears the words "you have cancer," the experience for them and their loved ones can be overwhelming.

A cancer diagnosis and treatment can disrupt nearly every part of life for both the person living with cancer and their family and close friends. There is the emotional toll and side effects of the diagnosis and cancer treatment - then there are logistical and financial challenges that can accompany cancer treatment: Navigating a complicated care plan, scheduling and transportation for appointments, managing prescriptions and understanding benefits and insurance coverage.

These challenges can be daunting for both the patient and the loved ones and family members who help provide care.

The good news is that there is a growing call for expanding access to a type of cancer care called Supportive Cancer Care that bridges medical treatment with emotional, physical and practical support, putting patients and their caregivers at the center of care. However, fewer than one in five patients make use of this kind of whole-person support while going through cancer treatment.

Support is Care: Spreading the word about whole-person care

The new Support is Care campaign, powered by The Sheri and Les Biller Family Foundation, is raising awareness about Supportive Cancer Care.

Sheri and Les Biller first recognized how vital this aspect of care was after Sheri lost two of her closest friends to breast cancer.

"Watching two of my dearest friends - who were truly like sisters to me - battle cancer was devastating. We saw up close how the emotional and practical toll consumed them and their families: shock, anxiety and exhaustion around the diagnosis and prognosis, the maze of insurance, debilitating physical side effects, lost work hours and mounting bills," said Sheri Biller. "Far too many families confront the same emotional, practical and financial challenges our friends endured years ago."

Today, the mission of Support Is Care is simple: to help people living with cancer and those who love them understand Supportive Cancer Care, know that it's part of high-quality care, and that they can ask for it.

What is Supportive Cancer Care?

Supportive Cancer Care combines medical treatment for cancer - such as chemotherapy, radiation, surgery and immunotherapy - with emotional, practical and financial support. It supports the whole person while also addressing the symptoms of the disease and the side effects of treatment.

Supportive Cancer Care services can include anything from financial guidance, transportation support and help navigating insurance and billing to pain management, nutrition counseling, emotional support and counseling, plus holistic conversations about treatment options and goals. For caregivers, these services can include counseling and stress management support, as well as practical help that makes caretaking easier and brings clarity to a complicated system.

Research shows that Supportive Cancer Care improves outcomes and quality of life. For example, by proactively managing symptoms, Supportive Cancer Care helps reduce preventable emergency department visits and stays in the hospital. In fact, patients receiving supportive oncology had between 27% and 70% fewer inpatient admissions, and between 16% and 54% fewer emergency department visits compared to patients not receiving supportive oncology. Lifting some of the burden of daily stressors can help patients and their loved ones focus on what matters most: their treatment and their well-being.

"Supportive Cancer Care connects patients and caregivers to real-life support, helping people manage symptoms and side effects, find counseling, talk with their care team about goals and options, plus tackling logistical challenges like insurance, transportation or complex billing. It's no surprise that many forward-thinking employers are embracing Supportive Cancer Care as a compassionate and smart benefit for employees and their families," said Les Biller. "Crucially, this care starts early - for every diagnosis - and adapts as needs evolve during treatment, remission and even recurrence."

What you can do

If you or a loved one is undergoing cancer treatment, you can ask your health care team what Supportive Cancer Care services are available to you and your loved ones. Patients and caregivers can find guides for how to talk with your care team at SupportIsCare.org, along with other resources to provide answers to your questions about the treatment journey.

"It's time to make Supportive Cancer Care the national standard of care for everyone, no matter what stage or type of diagnosis they receive or what zip code they live in," added Sheri. "It's time to make sure everyone knows support is care. Supportive Cancer Care isn't a 'nice-to-have,' it's a 'must-have.'"

You and your loved ones don't have to go through cancer treatment alone. Learn more at SupportIsCare.org.

Start preparing for spring allergy season with these expert tips

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(BPT) - Spring is right around the corner! If you're among the one in four U.S. adults that suffers from seasonal allergies, it's time to start preparing for the influx of pollen and other allergens.

"The biggest mistake people make with spring allergies is waiting for the first sneeze to take action," said Dr. Fred Pescatore, M.D., a Manhattan-based natural physician and author of The Allergy and Asthma Cure. "If you wait for symptoms to show up, you're fighting an uphill battle. Preparing early is the difference between controlling your allergies and letting them control you."

Check out Dr. Pescatore's top tips for preparing for allergy season so you can enjoy spring with minimal symptoms.

Change your air filter

Your HVAC air filter works hard year-round to improve your indoor air quality by removing dust, pollen and other allergens from your home. Change the filter at the onset of spring so it is operating optimally before spring allergy season arrives.

Pro tip: If you have severe allergies, don't replace the filter yourself. The old filter will be full of allergens that can trigger your symptoms during the replacement. Instead, have another household member take on the chore and dispose of it immediately.

Manage inflammation

Leading up to allergy season, make an effort to manage inflammation before it starts. Inflammation is a normal immune response to allergens, triggering symptoms like sneezing, congestion, coughing and watery eyes.

A proactive approach can help reduce the intensity of seasonal symptoms. Foundational habits like limiting excess sugar, gluten and dairy, prioritizing sleep and managing stress all support a more balanced immune response. For those looking to add targeted nutritional support, Pycnogenol® French maritime pine bark extract has been clinically studied for its role in helping to modulate the body's inflammatory response when taken ahead of allergy season.

While many people rely on over-the-counter antihistamines for short-term symptom relief, some prefer a more natural approach that supports overall immune health rather than simply masking symptoms.

Dr. Pescatore adds, "When recommending Pycnogenol® to my patients, I typically suggest 50 to 100 milligrams daily starting 5-8 weeks before allergy season for best results."

Reduce pollen exposure

Pollen is one of the most common seasonal allergy triggers, so reducing your exposure is key. This is especially important now, as pollen seasons have become more intense, start earlier and last longer in recent years - largely due to climate change. Warmer weather creates the perfect environment for pollen to thrive, especially during warm days and cool nights.

Even though it's tempting to let the fresh spring air in, keep doors and windows closed to prevent pollen from entering your home and settling on surfaces. Using a high-quality air purifier with a HEPA filter can also help reduce indoor pollen levels and improve overall air quality. In addition, avoid doing yard work like mowing the lawn before noon, when pollen counts are typically highest, and try to limit outdoor activities on high pollen-count days.

Add a shower to your nighttime routine

If you don't shower at night, it's time to start. During the day, pollen settles on and clings to your hair, face and body. Rinsing off before going to bed prevents pollen from settling on your pillow and triggering allergies while you sleep. Plus, having a warm shower before bed can be incredibly relaxing, allowing you to settle into sleep and wake up refreshed to take on another day.

Don't be reactive. Be proactive.

You can't control allergens, but you can make intentional changes in your life to reduce your exposure to allergens and manage your symptoms before they start. Use these expert tips to get a jump on allergy season so you can enjoy the warmer weather to the fullest!

How to create your dream backyard space

Published at March 26th 2026, 2:01 AM EDT via Brandpoint

(BPT) - Creating your dream backyard starts with a clear plan and the right materials. A well-designed patio turns any outdoor area into a comfortable extension of your home - perfect for relaxing, entertaining and spending more time outside.

Whether you're planning a full backyard transformation or refreshing a smaller outdoor space, the most successful patio designs focus on a few key elements:

- **A strong foundation:** Durable materials like concrete pavers offer long-lasting performance and design flexibility.
- **Purposeful layout:** Creating defined zones for dining, lounging and gathering helps your outdoor space function like an extension of your home.
- **Integrated features:** Fire pits, outdoor kitchens and seating walls add comfort and usability when incorporated into the original design plan.
- **Thoughtful style choices:** Coordinated colors, textures and patterns help create a cohesive look that complements your home.

With its innovative range of flexible paver systems, integrated fire features and modular outdoor kitchen options, Belgard® helps homeowners create patios that feel cohesive, functional and tailored to their lifestyles.

Here are backyard outdoor living space ideas to help plan your next project.

Start with a smart foundation

Every great patio space begins from the ground up. A strong, well-built foundation creates the opportunity to design an outdoor patio that evolves with your needs. The surface material you choose influences not only how the space looks, but also how it performs over time. High-quality concrete pavers provide a balance of durability and design flexibility, helping homeowners create patios that stand up to weather, foot traffic and changing rhythms of everyday life.

When it comes to outdoor living, it's more than just a block of concrete. Because pavers are highly engineered and installed as individual units over a prepared base, they're easier to move or repair compared to traditional poured concrete slabs.

Pavers also inspire creative freedom. From sleek contemporary profiles to textured, stone-inspired finishes, Belgard's product collections include modular pavers in a wide range of sizes, shapes and finishes that support modern or traditional home styles. Combined with features like the Belgard Elements™ line of outdoor kitchen accessories and fire and water features, these materials help transform a simple patio into your dream backyard space.

Design with clear purpose and seamless flow

The most successful backyard patios begin with a vision of how the space will function. Larger yards benefit from clearly defined zones, much like rooms inside your home. For example, a dining area positioned near the house keeps entertaining easy and convenient, while a lounge area around a fire pit creates a natural gathering point.

To better imagine how to use your space, try visual planning tools like Belgard Rooms with Augmented Reality (AR) to help homeowners and contractors explore layout possibilities. Seeing how patios, pathways and desired features fit the overall outdoor environment makes it easier to create natural flow and proportion. For smaller backyards, a thoughtful layout matters even more.

Design decisions also impact the look and feel of any space. For example, a consistent color palette and streamlined paver selection helps compact patios feel more expansive. Larger-format pavers reduce visual clutter, while directional patterns like running bond or diagonal layouts can enhance spaciousness.

Integrate outdoor patio features from the beginning

A truly functional patio considers more than just the surface. Fire pits, fireplaces and outdoor kitchens should be incorporated into the original plan, rather than treated as afterthoughts. Designing these elements together ensures balanced proportions, seamless transitions and long-term usability.

Contractors use modular outdoor kitchen systems and coordinated wall elements to build integrated spaces efficiently, offering a polished, intentional result for homeowners. Whether you're adding a built-in grill island or seating wall around a fire feature, Belgard's Artforms™ collection helps you tie your space together in a functional, aesthetically cohesive way.

Planning for future additions is also key: A patio designed with later expansion in mind protects your investment and allows the outdoor space to adapt as your lifestyle changes.

Use pattern and color to shape experience

Once the layout is established, pattern selection is the next big decision. Herringbone patterns offer strength for high-traffic areas, while modular layouts introduce architectural interest. Circular or radial designs can anchor fire pits and create a welcoming focal point within your patio plan.

Color coordination is equally important. Warm earth tones create a cozy traditional atmosphere, while cooler grays and blended neutrals lend a more contemporary feel. Coordinating patio colors with your home's siding, brick or roofing also helps an outdoor space feel integrated rather than added on.

Texture is one design choice that's often overlooked. Belgard's Papyrus™ is a paver with a texture reminiscent of handmade textiles or dried earth. Papyrus embodies the idea of biophilic design, which uses nature-inspired elements within built environments. Papyrus blends with the surrounding landscape, offering the look and feel of hand-tooled stone.

Decorative details can further personalize design. Subtle borders, banding or custom accents introduce character without overwhelming the overall aesthetic. These enhancements allow homeowners to express their style while maintaining durability and cohesion.

Now, Papyrus Artforms blends the hand-tooled, organic Papyrus texture with Belgard's Artforms modular panel system. Artforms offers endless design flexibility for outdoor kitchens, seating walls, fire features and garden accents, adding durable functionality with lasting visual appeal. Its modularity makes outdoor spaces easy to expand or update in the future, achieving high-end results across projects, both big and small, with texture and detail.

Create an outdoor space that reflects your lifestyle

The best backyard patios are personalized. Some homeowners prioritize entertaining and open gathering spaces. Others prefer an intimate nook with layered lighting and comfortable seating. Customize your space and maintain visual harmony with carefully selected modular paver systems and coordinated hardscape elements.

Designing your dream backyard starts with thoughtful planning and premium materials. With the right foundation, layout and finishing details, your backyard patio can become the heart of your home, built for connection, comfort and everyday living.

Visit Belgard.com to get started today.

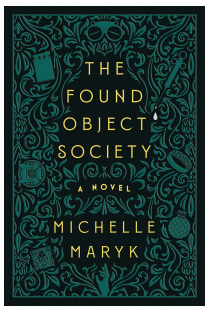
Spring Fiction for Everyone

Published at March 25th 2026, 6:01 AM EDT via **Brandpoint**

(BPT) - Love sinking your teeth into a gripping read that grabs you from page one and doesn't let you go until the final chapter ends? From mystery and thriller to romantasy and speculative fiction, these engrossing new additions to your "must-read" list will keep you turning pages all season long.

Relive someone else's death.

The Found Object Society, by Michelle Maryk

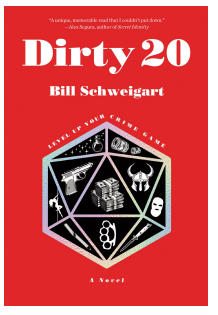


Greta Davenport has spent decades flirting with death, but nothing hits quite like the experience offered at the invite-only Found Object Society. This group's secret underground archive is a playground for the rich, for every object in their collection is a ticket into a stranger's final moments. The power is intoxicating. It's dangerous. And it's hiding answers Greta is not supposed to find.

Fans of *The Midnight Library* and *The Book of Form and Emptiness* will plunge into a time-bending, morally gray tale of grief, addiction, and obsession.

Become a nerdy criminal.

Dirty 20, by Bill Schweigart



Art school was supposed to be Tommy Fugue's escape from his crime-lord father, Big Al. But with his mother gone and tuition tied to the gangster's good graces, he's forced to help the Family figure out how to clean a dirty twenty grand online. (Is there anything worse than teaching your parents about computers?)

Scrubbing the money through a crowdfunding site seemed easy, but when the fake roleplaying game Tommy makes goes viral, Big Al smells money. Lending Tommy his killers, dealers, and pimps to make the fantasy game real and collect the pledge proves just as dangerous as life on the streets. And when fantasy and reality start to get confused? Time to level up that crime game.

Get a bachelor's in bloodlust.

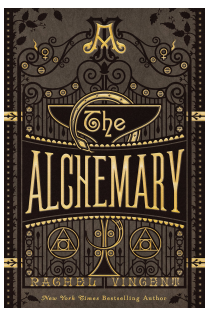
Thrall, by Rebecca Mahoney

Lucy Easting is thrilled for her new beginning at Rollins University, a cozy school buried deep in the Appalachian Mountains. But after blacking out at a party, she wakes up with a memory block ... and a bite on her neck. With the help of an eccentric campus radio host and a beguiling archery champion, she realizes she is being hunted by a vampire.

Lucy and her new friends must go up against entitled classmates and a toxic campus administration that protects the university's reputation over its students ... who are ripe for the vampire's next meal.

Forget yourself in romantasy.

The Alchemary, by Rachel Vincent

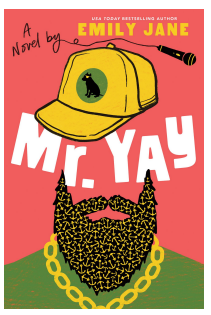


Amber Fallbrook awakes in a castle tower with no memory of who she is or why she is at the realm's premier university for alchemy magic. Then a half-naked man stirs in the bed next to her, and another man bursts through her door. It only gets more confusing for Amber from there.

But the mystery of these two brothers she's apparently known all her life is soon but a secondary worry. Because in preparing for the deadly Alchemy Trials to complete her schooling, Amber must solve the riddle not just of her amnesia but of the Alchemary itself - an institution obsessed with creating the legendary Philosopher's Stone at any cost.

Rediscover a childhood that never was.

Mr. Yay, by Emily Jane



Do you remember that television show *The Adventures of Mr. Yay*? The one that taught you to explore new things and be true to yourself? You can find it online ... oh wait, it seems to have disappeared. How strange.

Now there's only this other Mr. Yay, the rap group climbing the charts and producing the song of the summer. The adults are going crazy for it ... and maybe a little crazy in general.

The Queen of Quirk, Emily Jane, pens a hilarious, genre-blending speculative novel that's all about love and marriage, rappers and dogs, private detectives, nostalgia, and embracing your true self. In a world where the past is different than what you remember, you can either accept change or have it thrust upon you.

Once you've ordered your copies of these fantastic reads, alert your book club and clear your calendar so you'll have time to sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.

Adventure with a touch of luxury: Plan your family summer mountain escape

Published at March 24th 2026, 10:01 AM EDT via Brandpoint

(BPT) - If you think mountain resorts are just winter playgrounds, think again. When winter's snow melts and temperatures rise, these snowy peaks across the country magically transform into some of the most compelling family summer vacation destinations.

Summer mountain vacations are on the rise, and it's not hard to see why. Summer in the mountains offers a unique and sophisticated escape for families seeking something beyond the ordinary. Mountain destinations offer cooler temperatures to beat the summer heat, breathtaking natural beauty and built-in infrastructure designed for unparalleled hospitality for families seeking something beyond the ordinary.

Adventures for every generation

Modern mountain resorts are the perfect destinations for multigenerational travel. In fact, many now feature dedicated spaces and experiences for different age groups, from toddlers to grandparents.

One destination that has cracked the code on multigenerational vacationing is Beaver Creek Resort in Colorado. Nestled at 8,100 feet in Colorado's Rocky Mountains, this modern alpine retreat has perfected the art of warm-weather mountain experiences with tailored adventures for every member of the family.

For example, the newly renovated Creekside Park now features a state-of-the-art playground that seamlessly blends in with the surrounding nature, thanks to its custom playground design featuring habitat "pods" that connect children to the surrounding environment. It's at this world-class gathering spot where parents can enjoy the summer concert series while children safely explore the open lawn and play spaces.

When kids enter their tweens and teens and outgrow the playgrounds, they can head over to Hawk's Nest Cabin, a sophisticated alpine hub in the heart of the village. Unlike the typical teen centers, older kids can enjoy craft nonalcoholic beverages, a ski simulator, arcade games and Instagram-worthy lounge spots that make them feel like they're at their own exclusive club.

At Beaver Creek Resort, summer camp is anything but ordinary. Designed for curious, active kids, the program offers flexible weeklong and day options that turn the mountains into an immersive adventure playground. From dinosaur fossil hunting, rock climbing and hiking, to white water rafting, zip line tours, horseback riding, and Jeep touring and paddleboarding, campers ages 5 to 12 can explore, build confidence and discover their own mountain passion.

Wellness in the mountains

Relaxation comes naturally thanks to the special combination of fresh mountain air, lower humidity and stunning natural surroundings. As you plan your mountain retreat, look for wellness experiences like:

- Mud wraps and body treatments infused with indigenous herbs and minerals
- Massages al fresco or in rooms with stunning mountain views
- Yoga and meditation classes that connect you with nature

- Fitness classes enhanced by the altitude

Outdoor activities at 9,000 feet

Outdoor activities abound in mountain settings in winter and summer. At Beaver Creek, for example, summer means access to 50 miles of mountain bike trails and 62 miles of hiking paths that take you on a journey through wildflower meadows and towering aspens. Your family can choose their own adventure, whether that's gentle gondola rides with panoramic views or adrenaline-pumping activities at the Village Base Area like bungee trampolines, gem panning and climbing walls.

For a truly unique experience, adults can book an on-mountain wine excursion that starts with a guided scenic hike or 4x4 Adventure Jeep exploration of the Rockies. All trails lead to Beano's Cabin, one of Colorado's most famous restaurants, where you can indulge in gourmet wine and cheese pairings with artisanal charcuterie boards, all while taking in the breathtaking mountain vistas at 9,000 feet.

Shopping beyond snow gear

When you visit a resort village during the summer, you'll find that you've walked into a boutique shopping destination. The shopping scene may surprise you with its sophistication and variety. You'll find:

- Curated clothing boutiques featuring unique designs from around the world
- Local artisan shops with handcrafted jewelry, leather goods and home decor
- Art galleries showcasing regional and national artists
- Specialty stores offering everything from gourmet foods to custom outdoor gear

These carefully selected retailers reflect the mountain town's unique character.

Exceptional culinary choices in the clouds

Mountain resorts go beyond your typical food fare. Many destinations give you the opportunity to dine at Michelin Guide-recommended restaurants, experience farm-to-table concepts and taste creative dishes from talented chefs who've traded city kitchens for mountain vistas.

When it comes to dining at altitude, you'll have your pick of food that rivals the views at Beaver Creek. With over 20 exceptional culinary options, many featured in the Michelin Guide, you'll find a wide range of culinary experiences from cozy cabin eateries to fine dining establishments. With so much variety, you'll find something to satisfy even the pickiest of eaters.

Cultural sophistication at altitude

Resort towns often host music performances and festivals in the summer and are home to performing arts venues. Beaver Creek's Vilar Performing Arts Center is the first of its kind in a mountain town resort and features year-round programming. Cultural options will vary from place to place, but you may find:

- Broadway touring shows and other theatrical productions
- National touring musicians and bands
- Comedy shows and film festivals
- Dance performances and jazz concerts
- Art festivals
- Open-air galleries
- Concerts featuring both local and national artists

Plan your mountain escape

This summer, trade the ordinary for the extraordinary. A mountain escape offers your family the space, adventure, and fresh perspective that creates lasting memories. It might just become your new favorite summer tradition. Plan your summer mountain adventure at Beaver Creek.

How your tax refund can help you gain energy security

Published at March 24th 2026, 9:31 AM EDT via Brandpoint

(BPT) - Have you received your tax refund? You may find that this year's refund is about 10% higher than last year, according to CNBC, creating a rare financial cushion. How will you spend it?

In past years, you may have earmarked this refund for fun purchases, trips or other discretionary spending. However, this year's refund offers you an opportunity to invest in energy security by purchasing a backup power solution to offset long-term energy costs and provide reliable power now and for years to come.

What is energy security?

Household energy security goes beyond powering your home's appliances, communication tools, medical equipment and other essentials during a blackout. Energy security means having access to affordable and reliable power to meet your home's daily energy needs.

Affordable power is becoming harder for households to access. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports that retail electricity prices have increased faster than the rate of inflation since 2022 and are expected to continue outpacing inflation through 2026.

A household's ability to connect to reliable energy is also becoming more challenging. According to NERC's 2025 Long-Term Reliability Assessment, 13 of 23 North American assessment areas face elevated or high resource adequacy risks over the next five years, with demand growth driven by data centers and AI threatening to outpace the rate of new resource additions.

Power your home on your own

The good news is that you can generate and store essential home backup power independently off the grid. Solar generators like Jackery's line of portable, powerful and compact home backup power stations are designed for emergencies, outages and everyday energy savings.

Unlike traditional gas generators, solar generators require minimal maintenance and offer silent, fume-free operation for safe indoor use, keeping essential devices running during outages. More importantly, backup power solutions like Jackery's solar generators can help offset rising prices for home electricity by using it during peak hours to power high-cost appliances.

Models like the Solar Generator 5000 Plus and the HomePower 3600 Plus easily power all the essentials a family would need inside or out of a home, from everyday devices to heavy-duty equipment. While solar power is the main way to charge these backup power solutions, Jackery products can also be recharged using a wall outlet or 12-volt car port, giving you flexibility and reliability when it matters most.

Jackery's solar generators are also built with longevity in mind. Select models are rated for 4,000 charge cycles before reaching 70%-80% capacity, translating to roughly a decade of regular use. These solar generators also retain battery life for up to a year with minimal loss. Plus, app-controlled features like "Quiet Charging" and "Battery Saving" modes can extend the physical life of the cells, so you can rest easy knowing you'll have reliable and affordable energy for everyday use and during emergency situations.

Long-term energy security isn't a luxury. It's essential.

This year, invest your tax refund in your home's long-term energy preparedness and independence. To learn more about Jackery's backup power solutions and how you can ensure your energy security, visit Jackery.com.

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