



THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2021 • VOLUME 73 • ISSUE 12

In Memory

CO-OP MOURNS LOSS OF
DIRECTOR, COLLEAGUE &
FRIEND ALAN LIBBRA

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EVOLUTION AT ILLINOIS FARM
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A little light running.

On Account: We've hidden a member-account number in this issue (mailing label excluded). If it's yours, contact us within 30 days and we'll take \$25 off your electric bill. Good luck!



ON THE COVER

Farm Progress Show attendees explore the cabin of Southwestern's Tesla in Decatur, Ill. See our story on page 6.

Ask The CEO

Have a question for the CEO? Send it to Bobby Williams at bobby.williams@sweci.com, or write to him at Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL. Periodically, we'll print some of your questions with his replies in The Southwestern. Each member who submits a question will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 bill credit. We'll draw a name each time we run an "Ask The CEO" Q&A segment in the magazine.

FROM THE CEO



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Democratic principles run deep in members who seek to serve on a co-op's governing board. Acting as a director can be a daunting responsibility, even in the best of times, when business is thriving, prospects are strong, and the future looks bright.

And during the worst of times, when a co-op is poised to move through dark and difficult days? Stepping to the fore requires uncommon courage, character and commitment to the common good.

Enter Alan Libbra.

In the 1970s, many Illinois electric co-ops — Southwestern included — pooled their resources to be part of a promising power project. By the early '80s, that project had become plagued by exponentially escalating construction costs. Those expenses were being passed on to co-op members.

Alan joined Southwestern's board in 1982. He became president shortly thereafter. Under his leadership, the co-op navigated complex legal and legislative waters to search for a solution to the problem. Southwestern ultimately became the first Illinois electric cooperative to extricate itself from the project, and the years that followed set the stage for the co-op as we know it now.

Our cover photo — students exploring the cabin of our electric vehicle during the Farm Progress Show in Decatur — would not have been possible absent the courage, vision, hard work and faith of Alan Libbra and the directors who worked with him. They secured a future we're living today. Alan passed away in September — but his commitment to pursue the common good lives on in the cooperative he helped to build. And it always will.

We've shared more about Alan in a story on page 10. And as I was writing this column, I learned Alan's family is honoring his memory by establishing a scholarship in his name. You can read about the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship on page 9.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with Alan's friends and family.

Bobby Williams, CEO

bobby.williams@sweci.com

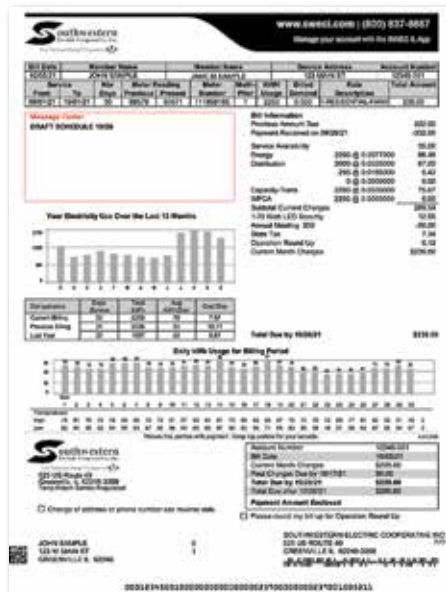


Better Bill For You in 2022

Many of the costs associated with getting energy from a power plant across the grid and to your home are bundled into a single line on your bill. That's about to change.

Beginning next month, Southwestern Electric will provide you with a more informative bill. The new bill will break out the co-op's cost of service, line by line. At a glance, you'll see how much you pay for energy, distribution, transmission, and other expenses associated with moving electricity from the grid to your home.

In the November issue of The Southwestern, we shared an example of the new bill and defined some of the terms that may be new to you. You can view the November issue by clicking



the Southwestern tab under the News & Information menu on our website at sweci.com. If you have a question about the new bill layout, please call us at 800-637-8667. We'll be happy to help you.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For the latest news and notes, follow us on facebook and twitter. You'll find us at facebook.com/SWECI and twitter.com/sweci. Search for Southwestern Electric on YouTube.



BOARD MEETING MINUTES

We've rebuilt our website! The new site is easier to navigate and displays well on a broad range of devices. It also allows us to accommodate additional material. You'll find updates and a link to the board meeting minutes on the drop-down menu under the News & Information tab at sweci.com.

Rate Adjustment and Updated Fixed Charges Effective Jan. 1

Southwestern Electric Cooperative will implement a membership-wide rate adjustment and updated fixed charges on Jan. 1, 2022. They will appear on your February 2022 bill.

Ann Schwarm, president of Southwestern Electric Cooperative, told members about the changes during the co-op's annual meeting of members in September. Schwarm said a cost-of-service study completed in 2019 examined the cooperative's rate structure and costs associated with providing energy to the homes, businesses and industries served by Southwestern. "The study made two points clear," Schwarm said. "First, our fixed charges aren't covering our investment in materials, such as poles, transformers and power lines. And second, we can fine tune our rates to more accurately reflect the costs to serve residential, commercial, and industrial members."

Schwarm pointed out that the infrastructure requirements and energy demands of residential, commercial and industrial accounts vary widely from one another. The rate adjustment and updated fixed charges will reflect those differences. She noted that the rate adjustment will be revenue neutral, meaning the cooperative is not increasing or decreasing the revenue it receives from the membership overall.

Most residential members will see a small drop in their bill after the adjustment. "Residential accounts on our standard rate using less than 887 kilowatt-hours each month will pay a little more. Residential members using more than 887 kilowatt-hours each month will pay a little less," Schwarm said. "To give that context, last year, our average residential member used 1,162 kilowatt-hours per month."

CO-OP REMINDERS

December 24 Offices close at noon for Christmas holiday.

December 27 Offices closed for Christmas holiday.

December 31 Offices close at noon for New Year's holiday.

December 31 & January 1 Southwestern's online billing center will be unavailable from noon Friday, Dec. 31, through 1 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 1, while we perform year-end system maintenance. The billing center will resume operation at 1:01 a.m. Saturday, Jan. 1.

January 3 Offices closed for New Year's holiday.



REMEMBER WHEN?

Southwestern member Jim Funkhouser recalls life before and after electricity came to his rural Wabash County farm.

By Jim Funkhouser

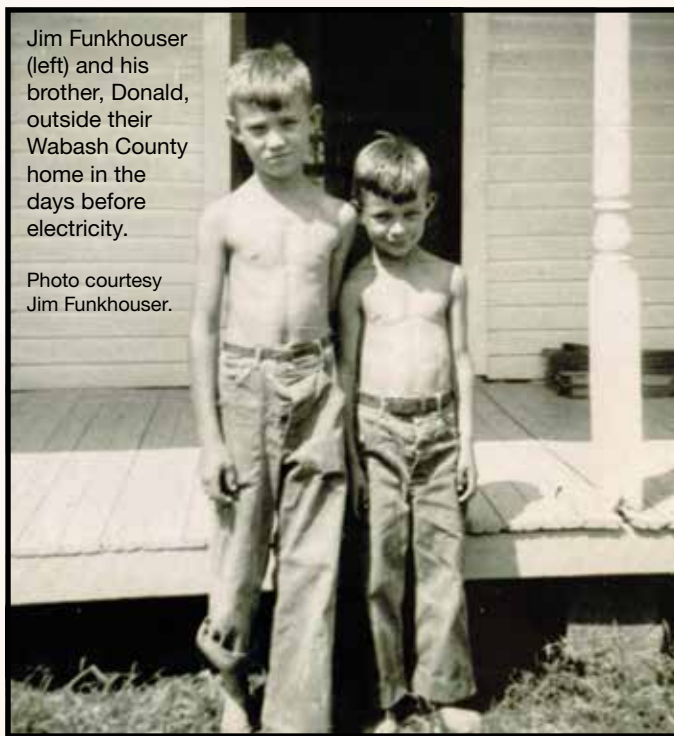
REA brought electricity to my rural Wabash County, Illinois, farm area shortly after the end of the war, 1946 or 47. I was seven years old. I still have vivid memories of life in our little farmhouse — the little chamber pot, the outhouse (with the Sears and Roebuck catalogue as toilet paper), the weekly Saturday afternoon baths in the wash tub with water heated on the wood-fired kitchen stove (I was third in the bathwater following my father and older brother). And, every Tuesday and Saturday evening we went to West Salem to buy a 20-pound block of ice for our ice box. My job was to empty the drip pan from behind the ice box. In town I had fun running around while Dad spent time at the pool hall and Mom gossiped on chairs outside the general store.

We did have a battery powered radio and we all enjoyed The Lone Ranger, Tom Mix, Fibber McGee and Molly, but Dad had total unquestioned authority on selections.

Then we got electricity! The candles and kerosine lamps disappeared immediately. Fortunately, farmers did quite well financially during the war, so there was money to buy all the electrical stuff (I found out about this much later). The ice box went to the dump, but we

Jim Funkhouser (left) and his brother, Donald, outside their Wabash County home in the days before electricity.

Photo courtesy Jim Funkhouser.



“The candles and kerosine lamps disappeared immediately.”

still called the new refrigerator the “ice box.” Hot plates almost replaced the wood fired kitchen stove until we were able to find an electric stove.

We had a smoke house where much care and detailed work went into keeping the fire making smoke for the hanging sides of beef and pork. Actually, the smoke house almost pre-dated my time. I remember butchering cows and pigs. The menfolk would draw straws

to see who got to shoot the animal. The butcher, a hired professional, would skin the hanging animal and deliver large cuts of meat to the womenfolk waiting to cut cookable sizes and wrap them in freezer paper. Then Dad took a truckload of meat to Mt. Carmel to the rented locker space. The fat was rendered into lard in a large pot over a wood fire. A fond memory is skimming “cracklins” off the boiling lard. I still consider it the best thing I have ever tasted.

Then electricity allowed us to buy (at much expense) and use a deep freezer that was larger than the locker bin. We also soon had a new indoor bathroom with hot showers from the electric water heater and a TV that replaced The Lone Ranger.

Here’s a final little electrical anecdote. Living in the country we had trouble

with animals stealing vegetables from our garden. So, Dad ran an electrical cord to the garden and constructed an electric fence all the way around it. Shortly after it was electrified my older brother bet me a dime (my weekly allowance) that I couldn’t pee directly on the electric wire. What a shock! I won the bet.

—James L. Funkhouser, Ph. D., Collinsville



SOUTHWESTERN TALKS SAFETY AND ENERGY EDUCATION AT FARM PROGRESS SHOW

Nearly a dozen electric cooperatives from Illinois partnered to share messages about electrical safety, energy efficiency, technology and the cooperative service ethic during the 2021 Annual Farm Progress Show, Aug. 31-Sept. 2, in Decatur, Ill.

The Farm Progress Show, which shifts annually between Decatur and Boone, Iowa, is the nation's largest outdoor farm event. The show equips agricultural producers with the latest information about cutting-edge ag equipment, technology, and products and services. Exhibitors and producers from around the world share technology and techniques and discuss solutions to challenges.

"Many rural families attend the Farm Progress Show as a getaway before the rush of the harvest season," noted Southwestern director Annette Hartlieb, who represented the co-op at the event. "Midwest schools and FFA groups use the show as an outdoor classroom for educational field trips," she said, noting Southwestern capitalized on the opportunity to talk about the dangers of electricity, as well as the capabilities of electric vehicles.

"The live line demonstration reminds everyone about the dangers of electricity. This is especially important when you're

loading and unloading grain and driving large equipment under power lines," she said. "It was amazing to interact with all of the up-and-coming drivers, and answer their questions about the Tesla. They're the next generation of consumers, and they're intrigued by electric cars and their potential."

The event also resonated with Hartlieb on a personal level. "Having grown up in a rural community and made the choice to raise our family in this environment, I appreciate the experiences, the rural roots, and the values we have in common with the people there," she said.

Southwestern partnered with 10 other Illinois electric cooperatives, as well as the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, Springfield, Ill., to share safety tips, offer energy efficiency information, and explain how co-ops work with their communities to build economic opportunity. "Southwestern's participation in the Farm Progress Show is an acknowledgment of our heritage," said Becky Jacobson, Southwestern's chief financial officer. "Farmers banded together in 1939 to form our cooperative, and they play a vital role in our co-op, our communities, and our economy today. Being part of the Farm Progress Show allows us to recognize their contributions and support their work."

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2



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1) Southwestern director Annette Hartlieb talks safety and energy efficiency with Farm Progress Show attendees. 2) Kids were invited to try on safety gear during a live line demonstration. 3) Young Farm Progress Show attendees pose for an Instagrammable photo op at the Illinois Electric Cooperatives exhibit. 4) Julie Lowe, energy manager, discusses the capabilities of electric vehicles with rural Illinois residents. 5) Brooke Scott, executive assistant, answers questions about the co-op's Tesla. 6) Becky Jacobson, chief financial officer, quizzes a young Farm Progress Show attendee on the topic of energy efficiency.

Opposite page: Linemen show the care and equipment required to skillfully scale a utility pole.



4



5



6

On Account: If your account number is 77956001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

SOUTHWESTERN ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR 2022



Co-op to Distribute \$11,000 in Academic Assistance

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power For Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$276,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate. The tradition continues this year with Southwestern's pledge to distribute \$11,000 in scholarship money, including the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship (see opposite page), to 11 students in spring 2022 for use in the fall 2022 semester.

Scholarship recipients can apply the funding to tuition at any accredited university, college or technical school in the U.S.

Scholarship applications may be downloaded from Southwestern Electric's website at sweci.com. You may also request an application by calling Susan File at (800) 637-8667.

Separate applications will be provided for high school seniors graduating in 2022 and students who graduated from high school in previous years.

The completed application and supplemental materials — including a cover letter, academic transcripts, attendance records and financial information — must be delivered to Southwestern Electric's headquarters (525 U.S. Route 40 in Greenville), in a single envelope, by 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, March 4, 2022**.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 1) The applicant (or the applicant's parent/legal guardian) must be an active member of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. Southwestern Electric Cooperative directors, employees, and their immediate families are not eligible.
- 2) The applicant must meet all academic requirements for admission to an accredited university, college or technical school, and be admitted to that institution as a full-time student in the fall of 2022.
- 3) The entire application must be completed in full, and received with the appropriate supplementary materials, in advance of the application deadline, March 4, 2022.



POWER FOR Progress

Southwestern
Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric has provided more than \$276,000 in scholarship funding, assisting 416 students.

For more information on the Power for Progress Scholarship Program, please contact Susan File at susan.file@sweci.com or (800) 637-8667.

Libbra Scholarship Will Support Future Leaders

The family of Southwestern Electric director Alan Libbra has established the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship in his name. The inaugural scholarship of \$1,000 will be awarded in spring 2022. All Power for Progress applicants will be considered as candidates.

“Alan believed in leadership by example. He was a passionate advocate for pursuing the common good,” said Southwestern director Jared Stine, chair of the Scholarship Committee. “Students who aspire to provide community service through leadership will be particularly strong candidates for the scholarship Alan’s family established in his name.”

A lifelong member of Southwestern Electric, Alan Libbra served as president for 30 of his 36 years on the cooperative’s board of directors. He worked throughout his life to serve the interests of farmers, rural communities and Southwestern Electric Cooperative members. His family, friends and colleagues have come together to honor his memory by creating the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship fund.

All Power for Progress eligibility requirements and criteria apply to the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship. For more information, contact Susan File at 800-637-8667 or susan.file@sweci.com.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE JUDGES

- 1) Follow the instructions carefully.
This includes selecting the appropriate application for your situation, gathering and properly assembling all of the required materials, minding the word count in the personal narrative and submitting everything in advance of the deadline.
- 2) Leave nothing blank. If any piece of required material is missing, or a single section is not completed, the application will receive a score of zero points. If a particular question is not applicable to your situation, you can mark it “N/A,” but do not skip the question entirely.
- 3) Focus the personal narrative. The topic of the personal narrative is not open-ended. Keep your narrative focused on answering the question at hand: How will you use your career/education to positively impact your community?
- 4) Leverage the cover letter. Let the judges know about your achievements, aspirations and what sets you apart from other candidates. If there’s something you want to say about yourself, and it doesn’t fit in the personal narrative, include it in the cover letter.
- 5) Allow ample time. Don’t wait until the last minute to start on your application. Each applicant will be asked to obtain several supplemental documents — including academic transcripts and attendance records — which take time to collect.



Co-op Community Mourns Loss of Friend, Colleague, Member Advocate Alan Libbra



Alan Libbra addresses the membership during Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 48th Annual Meeting of Members, in 1986, during his first term as board president.

“Whatever happiness and success you have, large or small, a lot of it comes from other people — your family, your close friends, your community. You’re not out there succeeding on your own. And you need to give something back.”

Alan Libbra

The members of Southwestern Electric Cooperative will never know a more ardent advocate than Alan Libbra. He didn't pull punches. He didn't dodge difficult conversations. He spoke with passion and conviction and made his points with logic and picture-perfect analogies. He was an admirable ally — and a formidable opponent — in any arena. He approached issues in much the same way he addressed people: with empathy, insight and understanding. For nearly 40 years, Libbra applied his stalwart service ethic and unflinching faith in the cooperative model to serve the interests of Southwestern Electric members. He passed away on Sept. 13, 2021, but his vision for what a co-op can and should be is practiced daily in Southwestern Electric Cooperative's member-focused service philosophy.

A lifelong Southwestern member, Libbra was first elected to the board in 1982. He would go on to serve 12 consecutive three-year terms and act as president for 30 of his 36 years on the board. During that time, the board of directors guided Southwestern Electric through deregulation of the power market, developed the first natural gas-fueled peaking unit constructed by a cooperative in the United States, offered free energy in November 2003 and 2004, and initiated a general retirement of capital credits.

Libbra had a head and a heart for democracy. Early memories of annual meetings, in part, initially encouraged him to run for the board and brought him back to the ballot, year after year, term after term, through good years and trying times alike. “At the meetings, I listened to friends and neighbors when

they talked about Southwestern Electric Cooperative with pride,” Libbra wrote in his 2008 report to the members. “They were proud of the fact that their cooperative could accomplish something that private industry couldn’t or wouldn’t do — bring electricity to rural families. They were also proud to play a part in improving their communities through cooperative action.”

When Southwestern’s Nominations Committee asked him to run as a District I candidate, Libbra didn’t immediately say yes. He was a father to two young children and farming with his parents. He didn’t know a lot about serving as a director — but he recognized the role as a significant commitment.

“I remembered that, as an adolescent, in school, the people who were on Southwestern’s lines saw that as a good thing. They took pride in being part of the electric cooperative. And the idea of the cooperative suited me — suited my philosophical and political leanings,”

Libbra said in a 2019 interview. “I was a consumer advocate, which I thought by definition you had to be if you were a cooperative board member.”

His early terms coincided with a turbulent era in Illinois’ energy industry. As a member of Soyland Power Cooperative, the co-op’s energy provider at the time, Southwestern Electric was part-owner of the Clinton nuclear plant — a project plagued by ever-escalating construction costs.

“When I started seeing the numbers come in as to what the Soyland project was going to do to our rates, I said, ‘What are we going to do about this? We’ve got to prepare people.’” Libbra pressed for new approaches to mitigate rising rates and was a strong proponent for clear and consistent communications with the membership.

The importance of communicating with members served as a guiding principle for Libbra from the days of his first election campaign until his retirement in

September 2018. “People want to know what’s going on. If they aren’t informed, they can’t participate.” Member engagement, Libbra said, is the foundation for any healthy cooperative. “That’s the strength of the whole system. That’s what allows you to get through the bad times to get to the good times.”

During Libbra’s tenure, Southwestern Electric’s membership changed significantly. Farm fields gave way to industrial parks, and schools, hospitals and recreational centers grew adjacent to subdivisions bearing little resemblance to the rural farmsteads of years past. Amidst the change, under Libbra’s leadership, Southwestern Electric remained a vital, progressive presence in the lives of its members and co-op communities.

When asked what he would miss most about serving on the board after his retirement, Libbra’s thoughts turned to the members, his fellow directors and the co-op’s employees. “I loved the annual

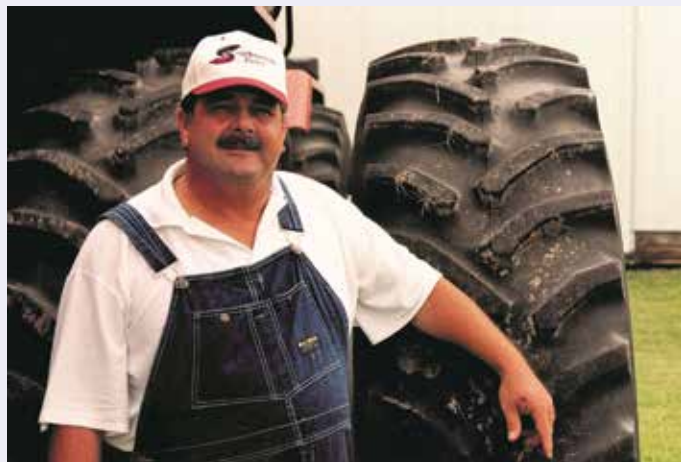
Continued on page 12 ►

Libbra and director Ron Schaufelberger (background) sign contracts in 1997 that position Southwestern to reduce member rates by nearly 20 percent over four years.



“Alan was a no-nonsense kind of guy. He wasn’t going to go along to get along if he felt that the going along was wrong. Alan didn’t really care if he rocked the boat or challenged the status quo in the rest of the cooperative world as long as our members benefitted from the actions we were taking. That was good enough for him, and it was good enough for me.”

Kerry Sloan, Southwestern CEO 1997-2017



Libbra on his Alhambra farm in 2000.

“When Alan joined the board in 1982, he brought a mindset to the cooperative: always pursue the common good. That ideal is woven into the fabric of all we do. It’s made possible the programs we offer and the projects we pursue. The future Alan and the board envisioned for this organization is the present we’re living in today.”

Southwestern Electric CEO Bobby Williams

► *Continued from page 11* meetings. Just seeing all the people,” he said. “I always enjoyed the board meetings. Some of my favorite memories are the times when we had a problem, and we just worked on it for hours and hours and hours, until we found a way to fix it. And I’ll miss the employees,” he said. “I liked working with the people there. We’ve had some really good people, and that makes a difference.”



Alan and his wife, Janice Libbra, pause for a photo at a cooperative event in 2000. Below: Libbra discusses cooperative business with a member after the annual meeting in 2013.

During the 2019 interview, while reflecting on his time as a director, he referenced his address at the 2018 annual meeting. “My parents instilled in us that whatever happiness and success you have, large or small, a lot of it comes from other people — your family, your close friends, your community. You’re not out there succeeding on your own. And you need to give something back.

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Pictured outside Southwestern Electric’s Greenville office in 2010 are (l-r): Libbra, CEO Kerry Sloan and directors Carl Barth, Ann Schwarm, Rich Gusewelle, Randy Wolf, Ted Willman, Ron Schaufelberger, Barb Tedrick and Jim Grapperhaus.



After his chair slipped from the stage in 2004, the board equipped Libbra for his 2005 annual meeting address.

“Southwestern Electric Cooperative was truly blessed to have Alan serve on its board of directors for so many years. He worked tirelessly and spent countless hours, often behind the scenes, saving the co-op millions of dollars and always with the best interests of the members at heart. I feel honored to have served with him and consider him a great friend.”

Rich Gusewelle, Southwestern Director 1984-2020

Commitment to the Common Good

An excerpt from Alan Libbra's retirement address delivered at Southwestern's 80th Annual Meeting of Members, Sept. 8, 2018

I have never been one for looking back. Like an old trail horse, I tend to concentrate on where I'm putting my foot down next while moving forward. Still, at this juncture, I found it hard not to glance back over my shoulder just a little bit. When I did — what struck me was how things had changed.

When I came here 36 years ago I was a young man, father of two small children, my hair was as black as coal, and I didn't have the foggiest notion about what it took to run an electric co-op.

The one thing I did know was that the idea of what a cooperative could and should be appealed to me.

One of my favorite quotes was from Lincoln. He said government is people doing together what they cannot do for themselves. Electric co-ops, because of their history and mission, seemed to epitomize the essence of that thought — and I loved that thought.

By the end of my first term the Clinton power plant came on line, and by the end of my second term our wholesale rates had almost tripled. Our financial situation was precarious. The board wasn't happy and you sure weren't happy. On behalf of the board, I asked you for time to fix this. As mad as you were, you granted us that time on nothing more than faith. All we had was a belief that problems created by people could be solved by people — that if we worked hard enough, if we held fast to the idea of the common good, the idea that we could do for ourselves and each other that which we could not do alone, we would find a solution. You gave us the time, we did find the solution.



Fast forward 30 years. I am an old man, grandfather of two young children, obviously my hair isn't black anymore, and I have learned a little about this business. The only thing that hasn't changed is my love affair with the idea of a cooperative.

Still, this love isn't blind. I have come to know that there is a flaw — not in the idea but in the execution. Putting this idea into action requires people, and that's the rub. You, me, all of us are only people. By definition we are all fallible. We have lapses in judgement. We fail in our analysis. We make mistakes.

Because of our own fallibility, we cannot achieve the perfection of that idea in practice. But if all of us — an engaged membership, a committed board and outstanding employees — if all of us maintain our commitment to the common good, if we believe we can help ourselves by helping each other, if we never quit trying to reach that ideal, we may never quite grab the brass ring

— but we can come awfully close.

Growing up, my parents drilled into my head and my sister's that a life well-lived carried two responsibilities. The first was to family — to provide for them, to support them, to protect them.

But they also taught us that whatever success and happiness we might achieve in life, large or small, was not by our efforts alone. A fair portion of that success and happiness was due to others — your friends, your neighbors, your community. And you owed them something of yourself — your time, your skills, your resources.

For 36 years you have allowed me to work at fulfilling that responsibility. You can never know how much that has meant to me. I have offered my time, and as limited as they are, all the skills and abilities I possess, on your behalf. In return you have given me your support, your trust and your friendship. You have overlooked my shortcomings. You have forgiven me my mistakes. If I stayed and worked for another 36 years I could never repay you.

The only sadness I felt in preparing these remarks was knowing that this would be the last time I'd get to talk to you from this platform in this venue. And I really wanted to say something profound. Something you might remember. But I'm neither a skilled enough wordsmith nor a gifted enough orator to do profound. I'm just an old farm boy from Alhambra. So if you remember anything I've ever said to you, please remember these words from me to you: thank you, thank you, thank you. Good luck, God bless, goodbye.

"If all of us maintain our commitment to the common good, if we believe we can help ourselves by helping each other, if we never quit trying to reach that ideal, we may never quite grab the brass ring — but we can come awfully close."

Alan Libbra

WINTER ENERGY SAVINGS TIPS

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

10 WAYS TO SAVE ON ENERGY COSTS THIS WINTER

Autumn is a beautiful but short-lived season in Southern Illinois. During the first week of November, temperatures can tumble from the sunny sixties to below freezing. By the time December arrives, home heating may be among the most expensive components of your electric bill. Fortunately, some simple adjustments can greatly reduce your energy usage.

Here are ten tips to reduce energy consumption and maintain a comfortable temperature in your home this winter.

1) USE THE SUNLIGHT.

Open the curtains on any south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home. Close them at night to help keep the heat inside.

2) ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT.

When you are sleeping or away from home, turn your thermostat down 7–10 degrees. According to the US Department of Energy, lowering your thermostat setting by 7–10 degrees for a period of eight hours a day can save approximately 10 percent per year on your heating bills. When you are home, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. A programmable thermostat can make it easier to adjust the temperature of your home at designated times.

3) ONLY HEAT THE ROOMS YOU ARE USING.

To be more energy efficient, close and seal off vents to rooms that you never use. Also, avoid heating areas of your home that are not insulated.

4) SERVICE YOUR SYSTEM.

Keep your furnace and vents properly maintained and replace your filters at least every two to three months.

5) USE YOUR CEILING FANS.

Switch your ceiling fan's rotation to strategically achieve better airflow and circulate heat. Hot air rises, so reverse your fan's blades to a clockwise rotation to push the warmer air back down into the room.

6) LOWER YOUR WATER HEATING COSTS.

Water heating can account for up to 20 percent of the total energy expense for many households. Lower your water heater's energy usage by wrapping it in a water heater blanket, setting your water heater to 120 degrees, and washing your clothing in cold water whenever possible.

7) SEAL AIR LEAKS AND COVER DRAFTY WINDOWS.

Seal around interior doors and baseboards with caulking and install weather-stripping around exterior doors and windows. Use heavy-duty clear plastic film to cover the inside of your windows during the winter months – doing so is almost the equivalent of adding an extra pane of glass!

8) USE SPACE HEATERS SPARINGLY.

Space heaters can be very useful but used in excess can increase your energy usage significantly. Most of the space heaters in use now are between 1,000 and 1,500 watts, which means they use 1–1.5 kilowatts per hour while they are running. That can add up quickly, increasing your electric bill significantly.

9) CHOOSE LED LIGHTS FOR YOUR HOME AND HOLIDAY DECORATIONS.

LED lights are the most energy-efficient lighting option currently available. You may have to spend a little more upfront, but they use 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs.

10) CONSIDER ADDED INSULATION.

While your home may be insulated to a certain extent, adding extra insulation in the attic, basement, and/or external walls can greatly improve the heat retention of your home.

Have a question about energy efficiency, electric vehicles or solar arrays? Call Julie Lowe at 800-637-8667 or send email to julie.lowe@sweci.com.

Energy Bill Payment Assistance Available

To apply for assistance through LIHEAP, please contact the community action agency serving your county.

County	Community Action Agency	Phone Number
Bond	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	(618) 664-3309
Clay	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(618) 662-4024
Clinton	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	(618) 526-7123
Effingham	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(217) 347-7514
Fayette	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(618) 283-2631
Macoupin	Illinois Valley Economic Development Corp.	(217) 839-4431
Madison	Madison County Community Development	(618) 296-6485
Marion	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	(618) 532-7388
Montgomery	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(217) 532-5971
Shelby	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(217) 774-4541
St. Clair	St. Clair Community Action Agency	(618) 277-6790

Income Guidelines

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application (gross income for all household members, before taxes are deducted) is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level as shown in the chart below, you may be eligible to receive assistance. If you rent, and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible to receive assistance.

Family Size	30-Day Income
1.....	\$2,147
2.....	\$2,903
3.....	\$3,660
4.....	\$4,417
5.....	\$5,173
6.....	\$5,930

*For households larger than 6 members, please contact your county agency.



For more information on this program, visit IllinoisLIHEAP.com or call the toll-free hotline, (877) 411-WARM.

The State of Illinois offers assistance to low-income families who struggle to pay their energy bills. Applications for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

Please review the income guidelines listed at left to see if you qualify. The amount of the payment is determined by income, household size, fuel type, geographic location, and the amount of funding available.

Use the listing at left to find the agency that serves the county you live in, then contact the agency and tell them you'd like to apply for assistance through LIHEAP. The customer service representative who takes your application will explain the requirements, the type of assistance available, and your rights under the program.

When you apply for assistance, please bring the following items:

- Proof of gross income from all household members for the 30-day period prior to application date.
- A copy of your heating and electric bills issued within the last 30 days (if energy paid for directly).
- A copy of your rental agreement (if your heating costs are included in the rent) showing the monthly rental amount, landlord's contact information, and proof that utilities are included in the rent.
- Proof of Social Security numbers for all household members.
- Proof that the household receives TANF or other benefits—such as Medical Eligibility or SNAP—if you are receiving assistance from the Illinois Department of Human Services.

The agency will determine your eligibility based on information you provide and will notify you within 30 days of receiving a completed application.

If your application is accepted, the local agency will make the appropriate payment to your energy provider(s) on your behalf, or in some cases, directly to you. All client and vendor payments will be made by the local agency within 15 days of the application's approval. Electric cooperative members, if approved, will receive assistance in the form of a one-time payment.

Members using Pay-As-You-Go may also qualify for LIHEAP funds. Contact your local community action agency to find out if you qualify for energy assistance.

HEATING HAZARDS

Supplemental warming products require proper attention

Using electric space heaters, blankets or heating pads to fight winter's chill? While they may provide comfort, they also introduce safety hazards into your home.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, space heaters are responsible for 32 percent of home heating fires and involved in 79 percent of home heating fire deaths.

As is the case with any electric-powered appliance, keep the space heater, blanket, or heating pad away from water and never touch the item while wet.

Only purchase products approved by an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care of the product.

Prior to use, inspect cords and connections for cracks or frayed edges, and send the item off for repair if necessary. Discontinue use and unplug the unit immediately if you see or smell smoke. Here are additional safety tips to keep in mind:

ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

- When purchasing a new space heater, look for models with guards to protect the heating elements, and sensors that automatically shut off the unit if it tips or if an object gets too close.
- Position the space heater on hard, stable, level surfaces. Don't place it on carpets, furniture or countertops. Avoid high-traffic areas where people might knock over the heater or trip over the cord.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from combustible materials, such as bedding, curtains, clothing and rugs. Space heaters also have parts that can spark, so avoid using them in areas where you store flammable liquids like kerosene and gasoline.
- Plug your space heater directly into a wall outlet. Avoid using extension cords.
- Never operate a space heater if you suspect it may be damaged.
- Don't allow children or pets to come near the space heater when it's in use.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Make sure to turn off and unplug the heater before you leave the room or go to sleep.

ELECTRIC BLANKETS & HEATING PADS

- Always place the electric blanket on top of you, not below you, and keep it flat at all times: Sitting or lying on top of the blanket may damage the internal coils, exposing the heating element to combustible material.
- Avoid covering the electric blanket or heating pad with another blanket, comforter or quilt, unless the safety instructions included in the packaging specifically state that it's safe to do so.
- Discard the electric blanket or heating pad if you notice dark or charred spots on its surface. Discoloration may indicate that the unit's heating elements are burning internally.
- Turn the electric blanket or heating pad off prior to leaving the room or when not in use.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully when attempting to clean the electric blanket or heating pad. Many models may only be washed by hand.

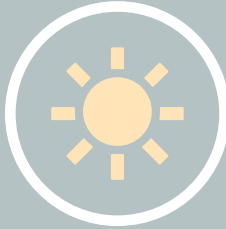


Only purchase products approved by an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care of the product.

Space Heater Safety Tips

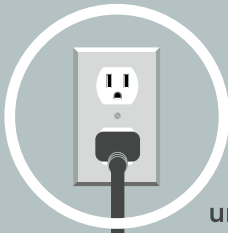
Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using a space heater doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

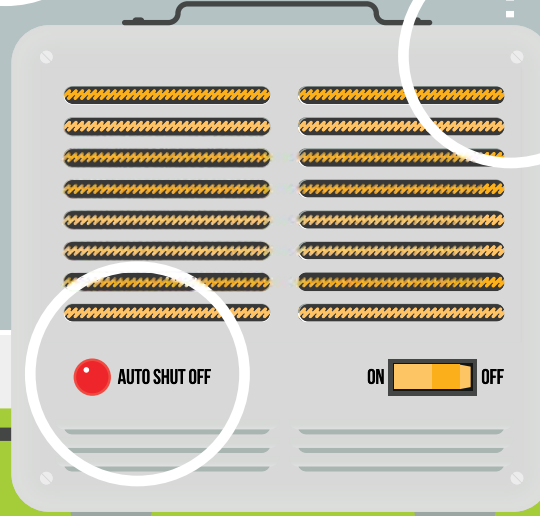


DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.



DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



CLASSIC ROCK

Illinois Coal Museum at Gillespie Preserves Area's Combustible Past

By Nathan Grimm

A roof bolt on display at the Illinois Coal Museum at Gillespie is currently on its third life. The bolt, a long steel rod designed to be inserted into the roof of an underground coal mine to provide support, was probably never used for its intended purpose, museum curator Dave Tucker guessed. Instead, it was more likely taken home by a worker; whatever the case, it then spent the better part of three decades in someone's garden, serving as a tomato stake.

Only recently did it graduate to the museum, hanging on a wall next to other artifacts, each that, like the bolt, has its own story to tell. Together, they tell a greater and more comprehensive story, one of the region's robust history as a coal mining hub.

"Our purpose here is to save the history of this community," Tucker said.

ROOM AND BOARD

Tucker, 71, was the one tasked with doing it. The idea of a museum had been floating around for years as a way to get travelers to stop in the roughly 3,500-person town, but two questions remained: where would it be located, and what was the story it would tell?

The second question was answered first. As Tucker dug into the area's past, he found few connections to ever-popular Route 66 but no shortage of information and stories about Gillespie's coal mining roots.

"I couldn't find a word on Route 66 about the four years, 1926 to 1930, that it came through town," he said. "Nothing in the papers. All I read was coal. So, if this is going to be some

way to get Route 66 and other tourists to stop, it's going to be a coal story."

The second question was answered in 2017. More than a decade earlier, United Community Bank had moved out of its digs at 121 S. Macoupin St. to build a new building a few blocks down.

The old building on the corner of South Macoupin and East Chestnut, which was actually three separate buildings that the bank had combined into one large space, sat empty, and the city was eventually able to obtain the property in an exchange that benefited both parties. By Jan. 1, 2017, the Illinois Coal Museum at Gillespie nonprofit was established, and Tucker, a former alderman for the city, took on the role of chairman of the museum's board of directors.

FROM THE GROUND UP

It was a role that came naturally to Tucker.

"I grew up, my folks took me to museums," Tucker said. "If we went on vacation and there was a museum, we stopped. We pulled over for roadside markers; now we have one on the corner here. We would have stopped at those and read that stuff. Up in Rockford where I grew up, it was a quick bike ride to the natural history museum. So, I love museums."

In preparation for the museum, Tucker said he drove down Route 66 and stopped at every museum along the way. The good ideas, he stole; others, he left by the roadside as he mapped out the way the Illinois Coal Museum would look.

It started humbly, with a few large posterboards showing Gillespie's growth from a 600-person farm town to, at one point, with the influx of coal miners, the fastest-growing



The Illinois Coal Museum at Gillespie is located at 121 S. Macoupin St. in Gillespie. For museum hours or more information, call 833-228-8608 or visit gillespiecoalmuseum.org



town in the country. “Our world changed when Superior Coal Company (arrived),” he said.

Superior Coal Company dropped four big mine shafts in the region, and Macoupin County alone has 117 mines within its borders. Statewide, there have been roughly 4,500 coal mines in Illinois alone.

Like Gillespie, the museum saw rapid growth in its early days. As more people learned of the museum, donations grew — after all, a coal mining town means attics and basements full of coal mining remnants. Soon, Tucker and the museum had hundreds of artifacts to help fill in the cracks of the town’s rich history.

One of the biggest benefactors was Jim Alderson, a retired coal union official who spent years building a personal collection of coal mining relics. Many of the old tools and photographs on display at the museum are courtesy of Alderson, who also volunteers at the museum

STORIES TO TELL

The museum was a success, drawing 975 visitors in 2019 and prompting the group to add even more features to the exhibit.

The crown jewel was a replica coal mine tunnel that takes visitors through the evolution of coal mines, from the pitch-black walls and wooden beams of the early mines to the roof bolts and rock dust that became staples of later shafts. But just as they were putting the finishing touches on the tunnel in preparation for showing it to the outside world, that outside world screeched to a stop with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We were all ready to go, and then it hit,” Tucker said. “Doing this tunnel was the last thing. We were here

working until midnight some nights getting this stuff done to open up the first of March (2020). And then we couldn’t open up.”

Only 75 people visited the museum in 2020. With a few weeks left until the new year, Tucker estimated “a couple hundred” had made the trek in 2021 but that numbers still hadn’t returned to pre-pandemic levels.

When they do return, he hopes the museum has even more to offer them. As technology advances, so, too, will the museum, with grant funding secured to move more of the museum to a digital format that will give visitors a more complete and immersive experience than they can get by simply viewing some old photographs adorning a pegboard.

“We can’t possibly get all the photos up. You’ve got all these photos, but you have no stories,” Tucker said. “You’ll be able to touch a screen and bring up all the taverns, bring up the grocery stores, the individual stories.”

Tucker said his hope is to have the project finished this winter.

In the meantime, the coal museum will remain open, with Tucker, Alderson and others ready to tell a handful of the hundreds of stories that exist within — and, most likely, hang upon — its walls.



Photographs, pickaxes, head lamps and other relics adorn the walls and fill the display cases at the Gillespie museum. There’s also a children’s area with a mini coal mine (above) that kids can explore.

WHO • WHAT • WHERE

No shortage of solutions for our October challenge, so we'll keep this brief and cut to the best part of our puzzle pages — your responses. But before we go, we'd like to close out the year with two words: thank you. We deeply appreciate the cards, letters and emails we receive from you each month. The stories you share make Who~What~Where one of the most engaging segments of the magazine.

Special thanks to everyone who brought antiques and attic finds to us in 2021. We were grateful for the opportunity to meet you and share your relics and memories. Finally, thank you for reading The Southwestern. We look forward to hearing from you in 2022.

Speaking of solutions, can you identify the machine in the photos below? We've left a strong hint in one of our shots. Meanwhile, here's what you had to say about our October challenge.



The pictured item is an Edison Blue Amberol Record box and celluloid cylinder record (probably a four-minute recording with 200 TPI). From the design of the label and the shown label type number 3509-125M-418, it would date from 1918 or later. The missing lid of the box would have been a dark blue with a round label that would have had a recording number and the title of the recording.

Years ago my father had one of the record players that sat on display in his home office. He also had a large box of the records, but I can only remember once that he played any of the cylinders. I remember it having a very tinny and scratchy sound.

Thanks for the memories.
—Steve Haynie, Maryville

The item pictured is a wax cylinder record. It's the 1890s-1910s version of the cassette or CD. The music on the cylinder can be played with a cylinder phonograph invented by Thomas Edison. (Although Alexander Graham Bell and Emile Berliner had similar inventions.).

The phonograph was the first device to record and play back music. To operate the device, you manually turn the hand crank a few times, turn the switch on to start the motor which rotates the cylinder, lower the needle onto the cylinder which reads the grooves, and hear the



Who-What-Where is a contest that challenges your knowledge of people, places and objects in and around Southwestern Electric Cooperative's service area. Here's how it works: Each month, we run a photo. Your job is to tell us who's pictured, what we've photographed, or where we shot the photo. You can email your response to joe.richardson@sweci.com or send it by mail to Joe Richardson, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please include your name, mailing address, and hometown. If you have a story about our photo topic, include that as well—we love these! The puzzle solution—possibly accompanied by a few words from you—will appear in a future issue of The Southwestern.



music amplified through a large horn opposite the needle.

My parents have a box of cylinders and a phonograph that still work. In the past I have brought them to my music classroom to show students. My junior high students are intrigued by them and enjoy talking about the changes in music technology over the years.

—Beth Lawler, Greenville

I absolutely know that it is a cylindrical phonograph record and container produced by the National Phonograph Co., Orange, N.J. Mine says, “Edison Gold Moulded Records...echo all over the world.” I picked up the container, not the record, at an estate sale in Urbana while I was in grad school at the U of I in the early 70s. I use mine as a pencil and pen holder in my man cave.

—George A. Hess, Dorsey

This month’s item is a recorded tube — much like the old phonograph records, but in a tubular shape. You placed it on a rotating sleeve, a needle was placed in the groove, and you could hear the recording. Tubular recordings were fragile

and difficult to store. Flat recording discs were favored.

—Darrell K. Cox, Edwardsville

The two pictured items represent a recording cylinder of music or a voice, etc., along with its protective cylinder. This was probably from the 1920s or 1930s prior to disk-shaped records.

Every recording came with its own protective cylinder which also contained a description of the recorded material. I believe the one displayed in the puzzle also has a photo of inventor Thomas Edison. Thanks for another great puzzle.

—Tim Bennett, Holiday Shores

It’s an Edison Blue Amberol Wax Cylinder and the cardboard container in which it’s packaged. It’s a forerunner to vinyl records, CDs, etc., for recording and playing back songs and other audio. Edison’s first recording device was made of foil which soon evolved to recording on wax. These cylinders only recorded a few minutes of audio, so the pictured one would have had just one song on it. They were produced 1912 to 1929, and were replaced by recordings on discs, at

first of shellac and later vinyl. I found lots of them on eBay, selling for about \$10 each.

Thanks for the monthly puzzles. I really enjoy this feature of your magazine.

—Jane Dapkus, Pocahontas

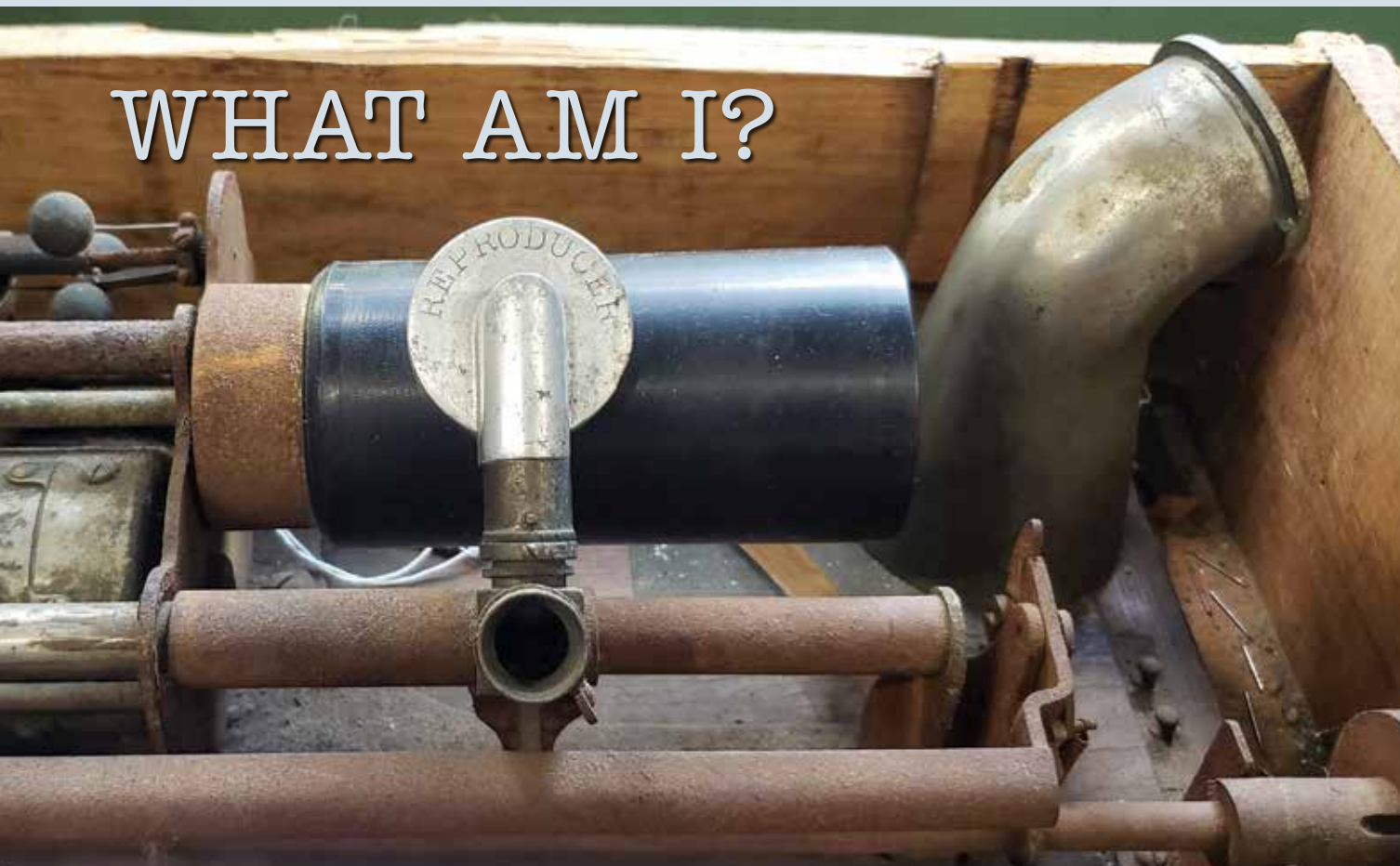
The item shown is an Edison Wax Cylinder Record that was used on Edison’s version of a record player. They were also sometimes used as early Dictaphone records. I recently saw some in an antique store. They were somewhat fragile, that is why they were kept in the container shown.

—Harry Volberg, Pocahontas

The answer to the October 2021 “What am I?” challenge comes courtesy of American inventor Thomas Edison. In early 1898 he patented the phonograph, a device that both recorded sound and played it back. Pictured is a wax phonograph cylinder and its container. The technology made the modern music business possible and ushered terms into the music lexicon like “cutting” records and “spinning wax.”

—Bill Malec, O’Fallon

WHAT AM I?





CO-OP KITCHEN

Peppermint Puffs

Christmas Treat Trio

PEPPERMINT PUFFS

Ingredients

- ¾ cup butter softened
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 egg separated
- 2 cups flour
- ½ cup peppermint stick candy crushed
- ½ cup sugar
- chocolate bits or chips

Directions

1. Cream margarine and vanilla.
2. Add sugar and cream until light.
3. Stir in egg yolk.
4. Add flour ½ cup at a time.
5. Stir in crushed peppermint.
6. Beat egg white slightly.
7. Roll dough into 1 inch balls.
8. Dip balls in egg white, roll in sugar, and place on ungreased baking sheet.
9. Place a chocolate bit or chip in center of each cookie.
10. Bake at 350° for 15 minutes.
11. Remove from sheet immediately and cool.

CHOCOLATE CRINKLES

Ingredients

- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 4 squares unsweetened chocolate melted
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 cup powdered sugar

Directions

1. Mix together oil, chocolate, and sugar.
2. Blend in 1 egg at a time.
3. Add vanilla.
4. Stir in salt, flour, and baking powder.
5. Chill several hours or overnight.
6. Drop teaspoons of chilled dough into powdered sugar, roll around, and shape into ball.
7. Place balls on greased baking sheet.
8. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes.

This month's recipes are courtesy of 4-H House Alumni Association's *Nurture the Future @ 805 4-H House Anniversary Cookbook*.

CHRISTMAS DELIGHTS

Bottom Layer Ingredients

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup flour
- 4 eggs beaten
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 16 ounces chocolate syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup walnuts chopped

Bottom Layer Directions

1. Cream butter and sugar together.
2. Add eggs, salt, syrup, vanilla, flour, and walnuts. Mix well.
3. Spread into greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
4. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.
5. Let cool.

Middle Layer Ingredients

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- ¾ cup butter
- 3 tablespoons creme de menthe

Middle Layer Directions

1. Combine sugar, butter, and creme de menthe and mix well.
2. Spread over cooled bottom layer and let cool.

Top Layer Ingredients

- 1 cup semi sweet chocolate chips
- ¼ cup milk chocolate chips
- 6 tablespoons butter

Top Layer Directions

1. Melt chips and butter together in a saucepan.
2. Let cool slightly and spread over middle layer.
3. Chill, cut into squares, and enjoy.

CURRENT EVENTS

December 1-31 CHRISTMAS LIGHT WONDERLAND, Greenville. See our unique and extensive collection of light boxes, Christmas displays, Christmas lights, and holiday scenes. 5 - 9 p.m. Donations accepted for admission to display. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Call (618) 292-4376 or visit americanfarmheritagemuseum.com.

December 1-31 WAY OF LIGHTS, Belleville. This breathtaking light display focuses on the birth of Christ, the one true light of the world. Indoor activities 5 - 9 p.m. nightly; outdoor light display 5 - 9 p.m. nightly; indoors activities closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas eve, Christmas and

New Year's day. Admission is free but donations accepted. National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, 442 South Mazenod Drive. Call (618) 397-6700 or visit snows.org.

December 1-31 WINTER WONDERLAND, Lebanon. A drive-through display of holiday lights. Sunday - Thursday 5 - 9 p.m.; Friday - Saturday 5 - 10 p.m. Donations accepted. Horner Park, 11113 Widicus Road. Visit hornerparklights.com.

December 1 - January 1 WONDERLAND IN LIGHTS, Effingham. Tune into Christmas music on 90.7 FM while you drive through the holiday light display. Sunday - Thursday 5 - 9 p.m.; Friday & Saturday 5 - 10 p.m. The tour is free, but donations are welcome. Community Park, East Temple Avenue. Call (217) 342-5310 or visit visiteffinghamil.com.

December 1 - January 9 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS IN THE PARK, Carlyle. Take a drive through the park to view the lights and tune your radio to 90.1 FM to hear the dancing trees music. 5 - 11 p.m. Admission is free. Carlyle City Park, 1090 Lake Road. Visit carlylelake.com.

December 3-5, 10-12 YES VIRGINIA THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS, Breese. A theatrical presentation by Clinton County Showcase. All performances begin at 8 p.m. except for the last Sunday showing, which is at 2 p.m. \$12 for adults; \$10 for students, senior citizens

and active military personnel (with valid identification). All seats are open seating. Your ticket purchase guarantees you a seat, but please arrive early to choose your seat. Historic Avon Theatre, 535 North 2nd Street. For reservations, call (618) 526-2866 or visit clintoncountyshowcase.com.

December 3-6, 11-12 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: CALENDAR GIRLS, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

December 4 ELSAH HOLIDAY WALK, Elsah. Due to the pandemic, private homes will not be open for touring this year, but Historic Elsah Foundation invites you to celebrate the holiday season in the village. Pick up your Elsah Walking Guide at the Village Civic Center, then begin your self-guided tour of the village. Visit four historic buildings with hosts inside sharing information, pick up cookies and treats at two bed & breakfasts, and enjoy songs of the season sung by village carolers. Masks will be required inside all buildings, whether vaccinated or not. Noon - 4 p.m. Tickets are free and may be reserved on-line or picked up in-person on the day of the Holiday Walk at the Elsah Civic Center, 51 Mill Street. Donations of any size, which will support the work of Historic Elsah Foundation,

are appreciated. For more information visit historicelsah.org/tour, call (618) 374-1059 or email historicelsah@gmail.com.

December 4 HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS FROM AROUND THE WORLD, Godfrey. Adults \$10; seniors 62 years of age and older \$5; children grades 12 and younger free; Lewis & Clark Community College faculty, staff, and students free. Alton Symphony Orchestra, Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Call (618) 792-4002 or visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

December 4 SANTA'S CHOCOLATE EXPRESS, Grafton. Hop on the shuttle and travel down Grafton's Main Street. Stop in local shops to sample chocolatey holiday treats and shop the sales. Enjoy the sounds of carolers on the street. Meet Santa Claus at The Grove Memorial Park 2 - 4 p.m. Admission includes a bag of chocolates, a holiday wine glass, free shuttle service, and a free treat at each participating business. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission \$12 in advance; \$15 day of event. Grafton Visitor Center, 950 East Main Street. For more information or to purchase tickets, visit grafftonilchamber.com.

December 4 & 5 OLDE ALTON ART & CRAFT FAIR, Alton. Craft fair featuring a variety of crafters from Illinois and surrounding states. Breakfast and lunch will be available.



December 4 & 18 MODEL RAILROAD OPEN HOUSE, Glen Carbon. The Metro East Model Railroad Club will host free holiday open houses from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at their club house. Visitors are welcome to view the club's trains running on their 18 x 27 foot HO Scale model railroad. Admission is free. The old Glen Carbon Firehouse/City Hall, 180 Summit Street. For more information, please call Bob at (618) 476-9228; or Bill at (618) 531-1589; or visit trainweb.org/memrc/openhouse.html.

Call to Confirm

Listings are provided by event organizers or taken from community websites. We recommend calling to confirm dates, times and details before you make plans. All are subject to change.

Submissions

To submit an event for consideration in our calendar, email your event information to joe.richardson@sweci.com, or mail your info to *The Southwestern*, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please use our Current Events format (as seen on these pages) to write your submission. Include a contact number or email and submit your listing at least two months prior to your event.

All proceeds benefit the Alton Band and Orchestra programs at Alton Community School District. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Alton High School, 4200 Humbert Road. Call (618) 474-6996 or visit abob.net.

December 4 & 5 THE TRAVELING SALVATION SHOW, Lebanon. An up-tempo, rock-oriented tribute to the legendary Neil Diamond. Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adult \$30; senior \$28; students and children \$10; McKendree University Students free. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

December 8 UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND OF MID-AMERICA, Lebanon. The 45 enlisted musicians and vocalists represent the professionalism and excellence found throughout the U.S. Air Force. Their diverse repertoire includes symphonic masterworks, traditional marches, modern

compositions, and jazz-inspired holiday music. Performances at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Admission is free but tickets are required. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

December 9-12 A CHRISTMAS CAROL, Lebanon. A theatrical performance by the Looking Glass Playhouse. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m., except for Sunday shows, which begin at 2 p.m. Admission is \$5. Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

December 10-12 THE NUTCRACKER, Lebanon. Co-presented by The Hett and State Street Dance Company, a semi-professional ensemble from the Dance Station School in O'Fallon, Ill. Friday and Saturday at 6:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adult \$30; senior \$28; students and children \$10; McKendree University Students free. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

December 11 PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST, Greenville. The Knights of Columbus will be serving from 7 a.m. - 2 p.m. in the hall at the St. Lawrence Catholic Church, 512 South Prairie Street Greenville. Dine in or carry-out will be available. Sausage will be available for purchase. For more information, call Joe Whalen at (618) 292-4519.

December 11 SANTA CON, Grafton. Dress up as Santa and join many other Santas as they stroll throughout Grafton. Starts at noon. Corner of Market and Main Streets. Visit graftonilchamber.com.

December 12 ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS CRAFT & VENDOR SHOW, Effingham. Enjoy a day full of all things Christmas with more than 89 vendor booths, gift card

giveaways and more. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Thelma Keller Convention Center, 1202 North Keller Drive. Call (217) 347-5115 or visit kellerconventioncenter.com.

December 18 MOONLIGHT HIKE, Godfrey. Join us on a night hike through the woods on the trails of the Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve. The terrain is light to moderate and is appropriate for families. The hike will be about 2 miles with stops along the way. 7:30 - 8:45 p.m. Meet at the Talahi Lodge and be on time, as the hike leaves promptly at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free for members; non-members \$5. Registration is required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

December 18 & 19 WINTER MARKET, Collinsville. A holiday shopping experience for the whole family. Offering fashions and foods, glitter and gifts, music, and a little bit of magic. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission and parking are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Call (800) 289-2388 or visit gatewaycenter.com.

December 19 WINTER SOLSTICE SUNRISE OBSERVANCE, Collinsville. Meet at the Woodhenge reconstruction at 6:30 a.m., for an observance of the Winter Solstice. An archaeologist will give an explanation of the importance of Woodhenge to the Mississippians and its relation to the mounds. The Woodhenge reconstruction is about 1/4 mile west on Collinsville Road, from the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, 30 Ramey Street. Call (618) 346-5160 or visit cahokiamounds.org.

January 8, 15, 22 & 29 EAGLE MEET AND GREET, Alton and Grafton (sites alternate by weekend). The World Bird Sanctuary will be bringing a live bald eagle for the public

December 19 TELESCOPE NIGHT, Godfrey. Want to look at the universe through a telescope, but don't own one? Come out to the Talahi Lodge on the night after a full moon and we will have some set up. Bring your own telescope and we can help you use it. We will talk about how telescopes work and look at the moon and other night sky objects. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Free for members; \$5 for non-members. Space is limited, registration required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.



to view up close. Be sure to bring your camera. After this personal encounter you can pick up an official All Around Alton Eagle Watcher's Guide and set off along the Great River Road to see eagles in their natural habitat. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Alton Visitor Center (Jan. 8 and 22), 200 Piasa Street. Call (800) 258-6645. Grafton Visitor Center (Jan. 15 and 29), 950 East Main Street. Call (618) 786-7000.


January 20 GATEWAY WEDDING SHOW, Collinsville. Meet vendors who can personalize and plan every aspect of a wedding. 5 - 9 p.m. Admission is free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. To pre-register, visit gatewaycenter.com.



January 7-9 LET'S GO FISHING SHOW, Collinsville. There will be a wide variety of fishing gear, boats, exhibits and seminars. Friday noon - 8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Adults \$7; children 6-15 years of age \$3.50; children 5 years of age and younger are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Call (800) 289-2388 or visit gatewaycenter.com.

► *Alan Libbra continued from page 12*
Being on the board gave me the chance to do that for 36 years — to try to lend whatever small talents I had, and apply them to make things better for the people that helped me. The membership gave me an opportunity to give back,” Libbra said. “I’ll always be grateful for that.”

Alan is survived by his wife, Janice Libbra of Alhambra; his daughter, Jennifer Ostrom and her husband, Nels, of Worden; his son, Curt Libbra and his wife, Jennifer, of Collinsville; and his grandchildren, George and Katherine Ostrom of Worden.

Alan’s family has established a scholarship in his memory. For more information about the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship, please see page 9. 

“Alan’s commitment to improving the quality of life for the people of Southwestern Illinois was a driving force behind his leadership efforts. His mission set the stage for three decades of cooperative accomplishment. It was Alan’s fire-in-the-belly commitment that moved Southwestern forward through some of the most challenging, formative and fruitful years of the co-op’s history. I don’t believe I know anyone who loved the co-op more than Alan. He leaves a legacy of accomplishments from which we all benefit.”

Ann Schwarm, President of Southwestern Electric Cooperative

► *Farm Progress Show continued from page 6*

Jacobson noted that both agricultural producers and electric cooperatives are “forever advancing in the use of technology to improve their service. As iron sharpens iron, we want to partner in that growth,” she said.

“I truly enjoy attending the show. I get to network with other cooperative employees from throughout the state and meet fantastic cooperative members from all around the Midwest. Our booth promotes electric cooperatives by personally connecting with visitors, teaching electrical safety, cooperative knowledge, energy saving tips, and advancements in our field,” she said. “Whether you farm or not, I would highly recommend attending the show. There is truly something there for everyone.”

Brooke Scott, executive assistant for Southwestern Electric, said the event “offered a great opportunity to engage with our membership and surrounding cooperatives. By teaming up with other Illinois electric cooperatives, we were able to provide safety tips and live line demonstrations, and discuss various safety devices and the skills required to become a linemen during pole climbing demonstrations,” Scott said.

“In my opinion, the biggest attraction at the Illinois electric cooperatives’ tent was our Tesla Model 3. Farm Progress Show attendees had the opportunity to sit inside, explore, and discuss electric vehicles with us.” Scott noted that Julie Lowe, energy manager for Southwestern Electric, answered many questions about range, charging, and the most noticeable differences between electric and conventional vehicles.


Lowe said the Farm Progress Show provided a unique opportunity for cooperative members and employees from throughout Illinois to exchange information and share solutions to common challenges. “The conversations that arise from just chatting with people as they stop by are beneficial to us as a cooperative, and to the members as well,” she said. “It gives us a chance to swap ideas and make contacts — people we can



Illinois electric cooperative linemen demonstrate the dangers of getting too close to power lines.

reach out to in the future and brainstorm with, to develop new ideas that will benefit cooperative members.”

Lowe drove the cooperative’s Tesla Model 3 to Decatur and stationed the car in the Illinois Electric Cooperatives exhibit area. She was surprised by the number of people who were deeply interested in Southwestern Electric’s electric vehicle. “I fielded so many good questions from people curious as to the initial cost, maintenance and charging costs,” she said, adding that the show provided her with an excellent opportunity to discuss the advantages and challenges of owning an EV.

Also representing Southwestern Electric at the Illinois Electric Cooperatives exhibit were Mike Barns, art director, Nathan Grimm, media specialist, and Joe Richardson, editor of The Southwestern. 

Holiday displays and a child's enthusiasm light the night by the old courthouse in Effingham, Ill.



THE FINAL FRAME

