

# THE *Southwestern*



A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

MARCH 2022 • VOLUME 74 • ISSUE 3

## CHARGING AHEAD

ELECTRIC VEHICLE  
INDUSTRY EYES BIG  
GAINS IN 2022

## RELIABLE RIGHTS OF WAY

LINE CLEARANCE  
PROMOTES SAFETY  
AND RELIABILITY

FROM THE CEO

OUT & ABOUT

END NOTE

POISON  
PREVENTION

PUTTING  
DOWN ROOTS

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

### 03 From the CEO

Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams answers your questions about the co-op's recent rate adjustment.

### 06 Member Mail

You express your appreciation for our American flag display and send a gracious note regarding capital credits.

### 08 Charging Ahead

Electric vehicles have enjoyed slow and steady growth in recent years, but 2022 could be the year they move into the mainstream.

### 10 Reliable Rights of Way

Right of way maintenance isn't always popular — but line clearance is a vital component of safe, reliable power.

### 12 Maintenance Map

We've got big plans for continued right of way maintenance in 2022. See whether we'll be in your neighborhood this year.

### 14 Energy & Efficiency

The most important item in your tree planting tool kit isn't a shovel or seedling — it's a plan. Let us help you make one.

### 16 Health & Safety

U.S. poison centers field a call every 15 seconds. During National Poison Prevention Week, March 20-26, poison centers spotlight practices to prevent poisonings. Read up on tips to help you avoid or respond to poison exposure.

### 18 Out & About

Enjoy sunlight, silence, wooded trails and wildlife encounters at Eldon Hazlet State Park in Carlyle.

### 20 Who-What-Where?

You identify a timely marker and we ask you to unravel a musical mystery in this month's puzzle.

### 22 Co-op Kitchen

We go bowling for soup in this month's Co-op Kitchen.

### 24 Current Events

Be a part of the audience in Lebanon, unearth rare gems in Collinsville, pick through a winter market in Edwardsville, fill up with the firemen in New Douglas and have arts and crafts time in Alton.

### 25 End Note

Casting shadows in an age of light.

### 27 Final Frame

Serenity now.

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



## FROM THE CEO



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During last year's annual meeting, Ann Schwarm, president of Southwestern Electric Cooperative, told the membership that Southwestern would be adjusting electric rates and fixed costs in 2022. In recent months, about 20 of you have reached out with questions regarding the changes we're making. I recently received a letter from Cynthia Siebert and Norma Lundak of Maryville, which clearly and concisely expressed the most common concern shared by the members who've contacted us.

In their letter, Cynthia and Norma note that, like many senior citizens, they maintain their household on a fixed income. "Because of that we are consciously and repeatedly watching the use of electricity and other utilities. And from what I understand about this new rate adjustment, if we use less kilowatts we'll be charged more. Tell me please how this makes sense." They expressed their disappointment and went on to say they've been co-op members for 25 years. "We built our home in 1997 in Maryville and have stayed here all these years and always passed on good compliments for Southwestern Electric."

First, Cynthia and Norma, I want to thank you for writing. I understand your concern and I'm grateful you've offered me an opportunity to clarify our message. If you use less than 887 kilowatt-hours per month, you won't be paying more for your power, per kilowatt-hour, than members who use more than 887 kilowatt-hours per month. But your overall bill, including the increase in fixed charges, may go up a couple dollars per month. Let me give you a little background, and then we'll take a look at how that can be the case.

When our board of directors reviewed the results of a cost-of-service study completed in 2019, they found that our fixed charges weren't covering our investment in materials, such as poles, transformers and power lines. They also saw that we could fine tune our rates to more accurately reflect the costs to serve our membership.

*Continued on page 7 ►*



### 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](https://facebook.com/SWECI) and [twitter.com/sweci.com](https://twitter.com/sweci.com). Search for Southwestern Electric on YouTube and Instagram.



### ON THE COVER

Chris Kershaw (left) and Corey West assemble a support structure for a new high voltage power line north of Troy. The line is part of Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Maple Grove Substation project. Maple Grove was designed to ensure reliable power for Madison County members in the Troy-Maryville-Edwardsville region. The substation will also provide Southwestern operations and engineering personnel with new options for restoring power during an outage. Kershaw and West are journeymen linemen for J.F. Electric, an Edwardsville-based electrical design and construction company contracted by Southwestern to build the line. You'll see more images from the project in future issues of The Southwestern.



### CO-OP REMINDERS

**March 4** Southwestern scholarship application deadline.

**March 14** Payment processing systems will be unavailable from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments at 4:01 a.m.

## RESIDENTIAL CHARGER REBATES AVAILABLE

Southwestern Electric Cooperative offers a \$200 bill credit to members who install new Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) residential chargers. All brands are eligible.

The rebate is part of the co-op's EV Pilot Program — an initiative that helps Southwestern identify energy demand and usage patterns among EV owners. "More EVs mean more power sales," said Julie Lowe, EV program coordinator. "We can use that revenue to fund additional infrastructure improvements while keeping our rates in check."

In addition to offering residential charger rebates, Southwestern Electric is partnering with local communities and businesses to develop public charging stations. The co-op has worked with the city of Troy to install charging stations at the Holiday Inn Express Troy, and with Anderson Hospital to install charging stations at the hospital's main campus in Maryville and medical office buildings on Goshen Road in Edwardsville (see related story on page 8).

For more information on Southwestern's residential EV charger rebates, visit [sweci.com](https://sweci.com) or contact Julie Lowe at (800) 637-8667 or [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).



# Co-op Offers Rebates for High Efficiency Heat Pumps, Electric Water Heaters, Smart Thermostats

Our rebate program will help you save money on the replacement or new installation of air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats.

Members are eligible for one rebate per category per year. All rebates will be applied as a bill credit upon receiving the completed rebate application and proof of purchase.

Rebate forms are available on our website at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com). You can email your completed application and proof of purchase to [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com), or mail it to: Julie Lowe, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. You're also welcome to drop off your materials at our Greenville office.

## HEATING AND COOLING

High efficiency heat pumps can significantly increase the comfort of your home while lowering your energy bills. If you're thinking of upgrading to or installing a new air source or ground source heat pump, our \$300 rebate will help you offset some of the cost.

To qualify for the rebate, your heat pump must be the primary source of heat in your home. It may be installed in a newly constructed home, or replace electric resistance heat, propane or fuel oil heat. Installed backup heat must be electric, and the condenser and coil must be replaced and/or installed as a matched set.

Requirements for air source heat pumps include:

- At least 16 SEER
- 9 HSPF

Requirements for ground source (geothermal) heat pumps include:

- For closed systems—at least 17 SEER; COP 3.6
- For open systems – at least 21.1 SEER; COP 4.1

## WATER HEATERS

Water heating accounts for about 18 percent of your home's energy use. Choosing an energy efficient water heater can help you reduce your monthly water heating bills.

To qualify for our \$250 water heater rebate, you can install an electric water heater as part of a newly constructed home, or replace an existing gas water heater with an electric model.

Your water heater must be at least 50 gallons and one rebate is allowed per home.

On-demand water heaters do not qualify for a rebate.

## SMART THERMOSTATS

A smart thermostat learns your lifestyle and adjusts the temperature of your home automatically, helping you use less energy and save money.

With a smart thermostat, you can control your home's temperature settings, even when you're at work or on the road. Connected to your Wi-Fi, your smart thermostat allows you to monitor and change your home's temperature from your smart phone, tablet or PC.

You can install a smart thermostat as part of a newly constructed home, or replace an existing manual or programmable thermostat.

To qualify for our \$50 rebate, your smart thermostat must be:

- Energy Star certified
- Internet-enabled



**Have questions? Call Julie Lowe at (800) 637-8667 or email her at [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).**

## MEMBER MAIL

A little note pertaining to the new substation on Maple Grove Road in Troy. I want to commend you and your workers on the great display of American flags flying over the transformers. As a member of the General George Rogers Clark Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, it is very pleasing to see such a grand display. Every time I go by there, I get a sense of pride that you did that. Thank you.

—*James Patterson, Troy*

You probably don't get too many thank you notes but I am thanking you very much for last month's gift and part of this month. It was really appreciated. I hope you all have a very happy new year, and thank you again. We need more companies that care.

—Joy Ryan, Maryville

[illegible]

► *Continued from page 3*

Our fixed costs — expenses for equipment and material — have been rising for years. In the past, we've absorbed that growing expense into our energy charges — what we bill for electricity. But we've reached a point where we simply can't fold those expenses into our energy charges any longer.

For the last decade, our energy sales have been stagnant. We expect that trend to continue for years to come. In order to maintain our quality of service, the board adjusted our rates and fixed charges to cover what it costs the co-op to serve our residential, commercial, and industrial members. This was a revenue neutral adjustment, meaning the cooperative didn't increase or decrease the overall revenue it receives from the membership.

During this process, the board was very conscious of how our rates impact our members — particularly members living on a fixed income. The board examined multiple rate and fixed cost scenarios, searching for one that would lessen the impact on these households while still allowing us to recover our investment in energy and materials. The rate and fixed charge model they settled on will have a minimal impact on Cynthia and Norma's household budget. Had the adjusted rates and updated fixed charges been in place last year, on average, it would have raised their costs a little over \$2 per month — or about \$25 for the entire year.

Here's the point Cynthia and Norma called to my attention, which I noted earlier but want to address again here. When we

said members who use less than 887 kilowatt-hours per month would be paying a little more on their bill, we didn't mean we'd be charging you more for your power, per kilowatt-hour of electricity. You're actually paying a little less for your power now than you were this time last year. But when you include the updated fixed charges, you're seeing your total monthly bill go up a bit. Again, in Cynthia and Norma's case, that increase will average about \$2 per month — or \$25 per year.

Thank you again, Cynthia and Norma, for reaching out with your concern regarding our adjusted rates and updated fixed charges. I hope my column sheds some light on the changes we've made, why we made them, and how they will affect you. And I sincerely hope that you're pleased to be members of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. I'm certainly proud you're part of our family.

If you have a question about Southwestern Electric, please reach out to me at [bobby.williams@sweci.com](mailto:bobby.williams@sweci.com). I look forward to hearing from you.

Bobby Williams, CEO



[bobby.williams@sweci.com](mailto:bobby.williams@sweci.com)

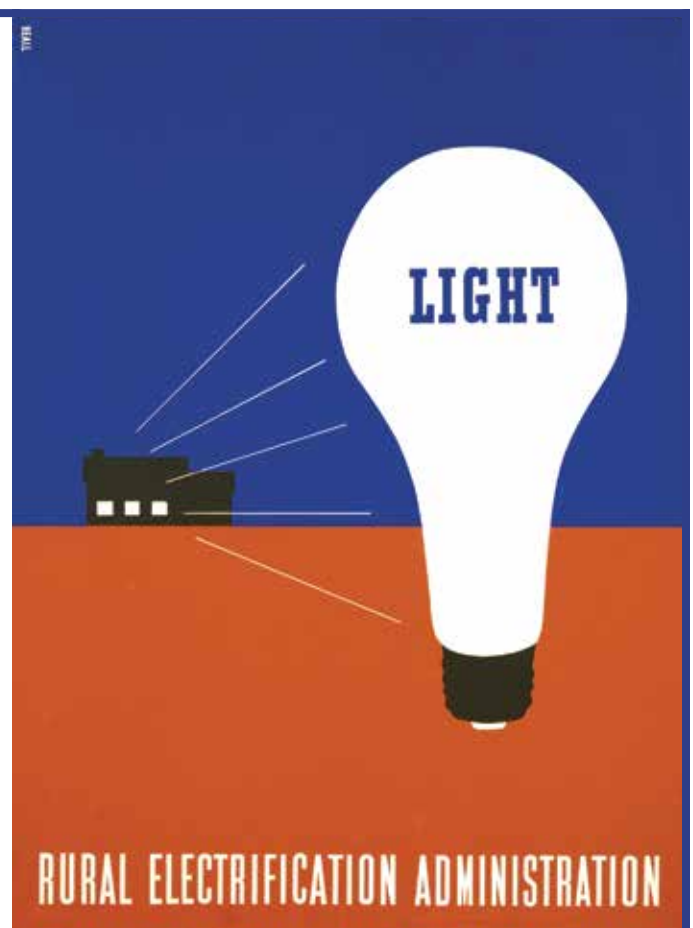
# Remember When?

**Do you remember when the lights came on?**

**When the poles went up and the lines came through?**

If you weren't there, did you hear stories from your parents or grandparents about the days before electricity lit our way? We're interested in hearing about the early days of electrification. We'd like to know how electricity changed life in your home, on your farm, or at your school.

Please send your stories to Joe Richardson at [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or via traditional mail to: 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.



# Charging Ahead

## Electric vehicle industry poised for more growth in 2022 and beyond

By Nathan Grimm

**T**he electric vehicle industry made some pretty hefty resolutions for the new year.

Popularity of EVs has grown slowly and steadily in recent years, but forecasts see 2022 as the year electric vehicles move even further into the mainstream. In a Feb. 8, 2022 piece in the New York Times, auto industry writers Jack Ewing and Neal E. Boudette said battery-powered cars are having a “breakthrough moment.”

“While electric vehicles still account for a small slice of the market — nearly 9 percent of the new cars sold last year worldwide were electric, up from 2.5 percent in 2019, according to the International Energy Agency — their rapid growth could make 2022 the year when the march of battery-powered cars became unstoppable, erasing any doubt that the internal combustion engine is lurching toward obsolescence,” they wrote.

In total, roughly 4 percent of new cars produced in the United States in 2021 were electric vehicles. That number was nearly double the approximately 2 percent figure from 2020. Those figures are only expected to go up, too, as Ford has already announced that 40 percent of its vehicles will be electric by 2030, and General Motors is aiming to offer only EVs by 2035.

### A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

For now, though, Tesla remains the leader of that march. The American electric vehicle and clean energy company, which has been at the forefront of the electric vehicle movement, produced nearly one million EVs in 2021 and is on

pace to eclipse the million-vehicle mark in 2022.

Southwestern Electric Energy Manager Julie Lowe said that while Tesla presently stands atop the EV mountain, its place could soon be challenged by the traditional powers.

“Tesla is still a frontrunner in EV sales,” Lowe said. “However, I suspect that may be changing — or at least the gap will close a bit — because a number of the big automotive manufacturers — Ford, Chevrolet, GMC, Volkswagen — are planning to offer EV options in some of their more popular models such as trucks, SUVs, and crossovers within the next year or two.”

Tesla’s answer is the Model Y, a compact crossover utility vehicle. The vehicle, unveiled in March 2019, has an Environmental Protection Agency-rated range of up to 326 miles between charges.



Source: Tesla



Source: Ford Media

One of the biggest challengers to Tesla’s dominance is expected to be Ford, which will begin selling the Lightning — an electric version of its popular F-150 pickup truck — as early as this year. Ford CEO Jim Farley said in the company’s 2021 fourth-quarter earnings report that he believes the company’s new electric pickup truck will quickly catch up to Tesla’s utility vehicle.

“For example, the F-150 Lightning, if we had full production today to meet our current demand, we would rival the Model Y as the leading BEV nameplate in the U.S. market,” Farley said.

Also entering the arena with a flourish is General Motors. The company — which lists GMC, Chevrolet and Cadillac among its subsidiaries — is set to invest \$7 billion in electric vehicle infrastructure and production, according to CEO Mary Barra. GM is aiming



Source: GM media



Source: Rivian media

to deliver 400,000 electric vehicles in North America by the end of 2023, with production to include models such as the GMC Hummer EV trucks, Cadillac SUV EVs, Chevrolet Silverado EV and the previously produced Chevrolet Bolt.

“Many people are loyal to their vehicle brands, and will possibly be more inclined to try an EV if it is offered from a name they know and trust,” Lowe said.

It’s not just the old guard making waves, either. Rivian, an American electric vehicle automaker that has a 2.6-million-square-foot manufacturing plant in Normal, Ill., is rolling out two big-body models in hopes of grabbing a share of the market. The company plans to begin delivery of both its R1T, a five-passenger pickup truck, and its R1S, a seven-passenger SUV, to customers next year.

## TIPPING THE SCALES

As more people move toward electric vehicles, the most important question remains: Is an EV right for you?

Some of the preeminent concerns with electric vehicles continue to be the upfront cost, long charging times and “range anxiety.” The average cost of an electric vehicle, according to Kelley Blue Book, is \$56,437, approximately \$10,000 more than the \$46,329 industry average for all vehicles, in which EVs are included.

Helping to offset those costs are federal tax credits and the long-term savings of EVs. An April 2021 report from the U.S. Department of Energy said that electric vehicles return a savings over combustion-engine vehicles after 15 years, citing price point, maintenance



photo by Mike Barns

Southwestern Electric Cooperative Energy Manager Julie Lowe, left, and CEO Bobby Williams stand with a ChargePoint electric vehicle charging station installed at Anderson Hospital’s main campus in Maryville last summer. “There is nothing set in stone, but we are in discussion with a few businesses in our territory, looking to partner in order to bring more charging infrastructure in for our members and communities,” Lowe said of the possibility for more partnerships between the cooperative and businesses or municipalities in the future.


and repairs, and the rising cost of gas.

With regards to charging times and availability, advances have helped alleviate both of those concerns as EVs have become more prevalent. According to the U.S. Department of Energy’s website, there are 46,992 public charging station locations in the United States — many with multiple outlets — a number that’s risen from 40,552 a year ago at this time. In Illinois, there are 1,396 station locations, up from 840 around this time last year.

Southwestern Electric has been proactive in ensuring southwestern Illinois has numerous options for locals and

travelers looking to charge their EVs in the area. The cooperative has partnered with the city of Troy to install charging stations at the Holiday Inn Express Troy, and with Anderson Hospital to install charging stations at the hospital’s main campus in Maryville and at the medical office buildings on Goshen Road in Edwardsville. Lowe, the co-op’s Energy Manager, said more partnerships may be in the works moving forward as well.

“There is nothing set in stone, but we are in discussion with a few businesses in our territory, looking to partner in order to bring more charging infrastructure in for our members and communities,” Lowe said.

That doesn’t count home chargers, which have helped ease concerns about both range and charge times. Some electric cooperatives, including Southwestern Electric, have begun incentive programs to encourage members to install chargers at their homes. For more information on Southwestern Electric’s EV charger rebate program, visit <https://sweci.com/ev-charger-rebates> or call (800) 637-8667. 

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***“Many people are loyal to their vehicle brands, and will possibly be more inclined to try an EV if it is offered from a name they know and trust.”***

—Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

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# RELIABLE RIGHTS OF WAY



## LINE CLEARANCE PROMOTES SAFETY & RELIABILITY

Every now and then, Southwestern Electric receives calls or letters from members regarding right of way maintenance work. More often than not, those members are reaching out to compliment our crews on a job well done.

But not always.

On occasion, we hear from a member who's returned home after a long day to find co-op crews have cleared right of way on their property, and the extent of the work has surprised them.

That member may have seen tree trimming — select branches being cleared from lines to eliminate blinks — but he or she wasn't familiar with the corridor clearing our crews perform when they're cutting back foliage for right of way maintenance.

Tree trimming is the work most of you are familiar with. You've probably seen our crews making small, select cuts to specific limbs that have grown near or into our lines. Our objective with tree trimming is to resolve a blink or reliability issue that's confined to a well-defined area.

On pages 12-13, you'll find a map that outlines our right of way clearance plan for 2022. The circuits we highlighted on our map are scheduled for right of way maintenance. In this work, we clear a path that spans about 20 feet on either side of the power lines.

With right of way maintenance, our objectives are to ensure and promote member safety, system integrity, and long-term power reliability.

The work demands considerable time

and resources. We currently clear right of way in an area once every seven years. So if you're new to Southwestern Electric, you may not have noticed right of way maintenance in your area.

The change in landscape is dramatic, particularly in an overgrown area. But the close-cropped look is short-lived. You'll see significant and rapid change in spring and summer, when the open corridors allow grasses to take root and the canopy reaches into the edges of the corridor we cleared.

We understand the pride and affection you have for your timber and green spaces. We feel that way ourselves. As our operations and engineering teams will tell you, while trees are a tremendous asset, they're also a leading cause of outages. Consequently, sound forestry

In addition to ensuring reliable power, right of way work supports the growth of natural grasses and provides habitat for plants and wildlife that call our corridors home.



practices are vital to keeping your family cool in the summer and warm in the winter months.

The co-op's right of way maintenance program has significantly reduced the number of outages you experience. It's also offered our crews better access to power lines, improving our power restoration times after storms.

In more remote areas, where lines travel through field and timber far from roads, it's a challenge for linemen to access our infrastructure and repair damage. So it's particularly vital that we do all we can to promote line integrity near homes in areas like this.

In the past, some members have requested we not clear right of way on their property. We simply can't honor that request without compromising the

lines that serve them, their neighbors, and in some cases, many other members.

We presently notify members by phone before we begin work on a circuit. We'd prefer to stop by and speak with each of you personally before we begin maintenance in your area. These are expensive endeavors, and we're mindful of how we use the resources you entrust to us. As we review our budget for right of way maintenance, we assess the cost and opportunities included in dedicating an employee to meeting each member before right of way work begins.

Ultimately, we hope to create conditions that support growth of natural grasses in our rights of way, and provide habitat for plants and wildlife that call these corridors home.

With right of way maintenance, our objectives are to ensure and promote member safety, system integrity, and long-term power reliability.

# MAINTENANCE MAP

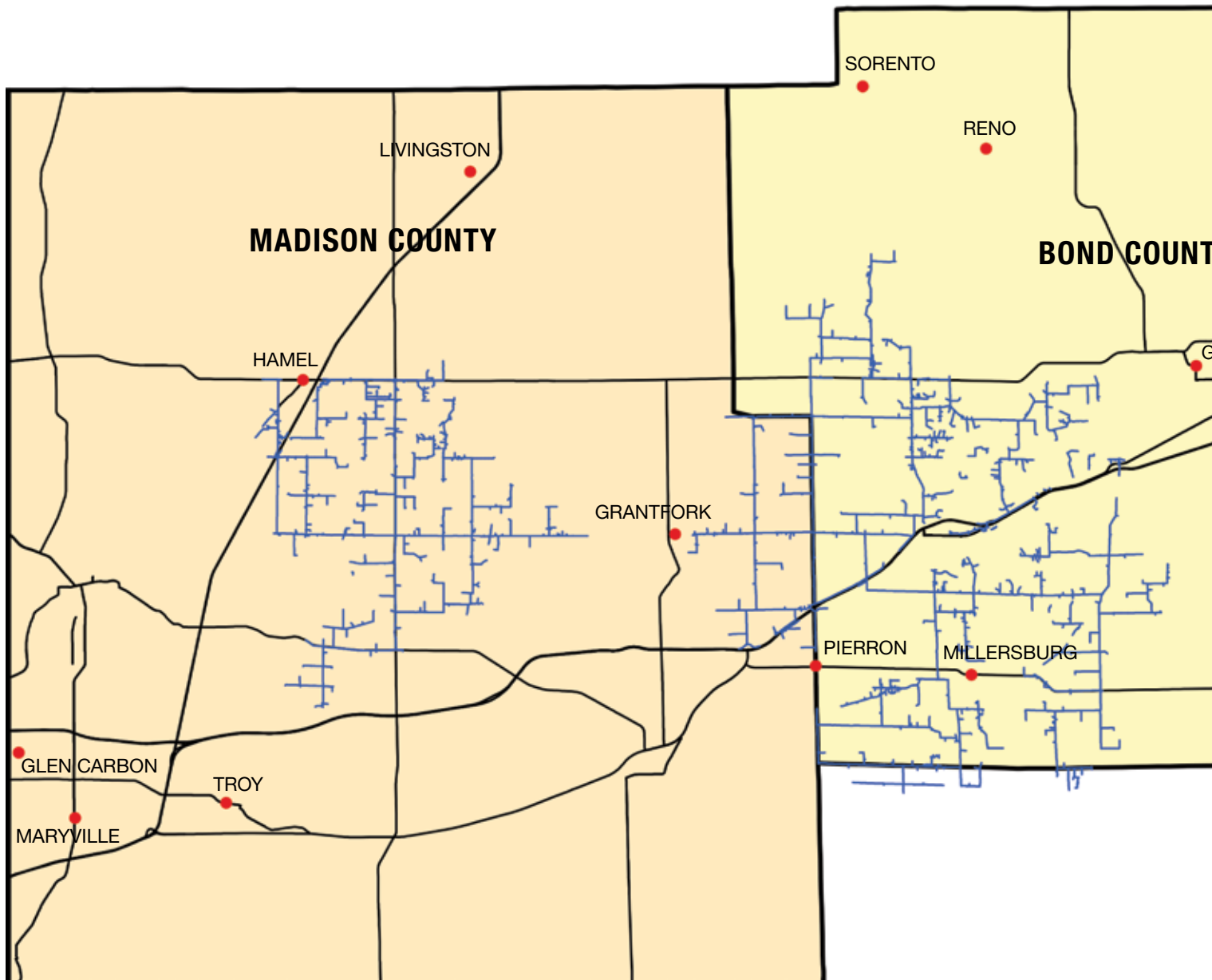
## 2022 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

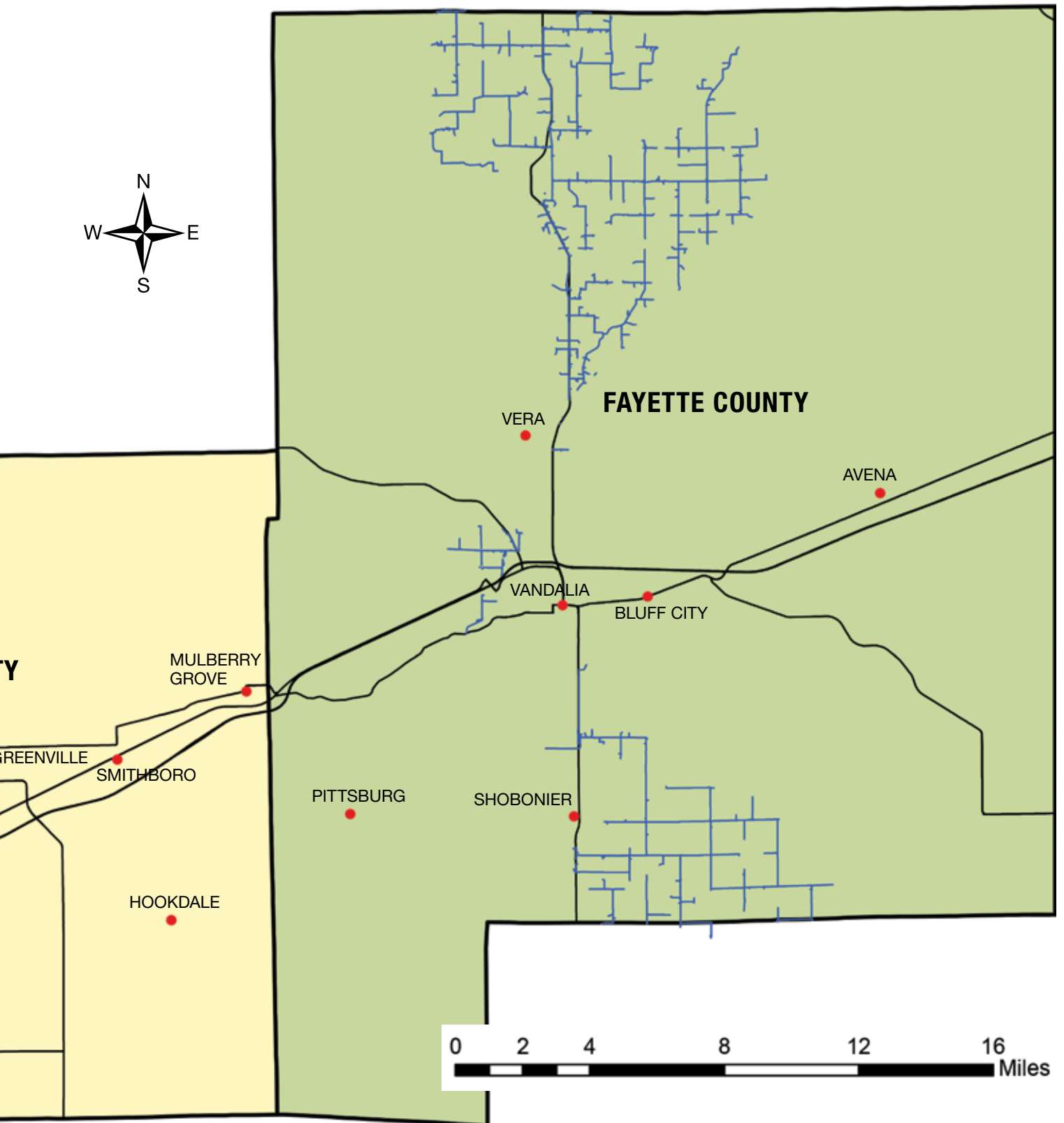
The areas highlighted in blue are scheduled for right of way maintenance in the coming months. When performing right of way maintenance, our crews clear a path that spans about 20 feet on either side of the power lines.

Southwestern's right of way maintenance program has significantly reduced the number of outages you experience. It's also offered our crews better access to power lines, improving our power restoration times after storms.

You can read more about our right of way maintenance work on page 10.

***We'll call before we begin right of way maintenance in your area.***





2022 Lines to Trim



Primary Roads



Towns



Counties



Madison County



Bond County



Fayette County

# Sowing Seeds

## THE MOST IMPORTANT ITEM IN YOUR TREE PLANTING TOOL KIT ISN'T A SHOVEL OR SEEDLING—IT'S A PLAN.

**W**ith spring in bloom, many of us are eyeing our lawns, lots and acreage, and giving serious consideration to landscaping projects that were nothing more than notions a few weeks ago. If tree planting made it to your landscaping list, take time now to prepare a plan.

A little research and forethought addressing canopy size and shape, growth rates, and your tree's position relative to overhead and underground utilities, can ensure you receive the maximum benefit from the seeds or saplings you sow. Here are 10 items you'll want to consider as

you build your planting plan.

**Climate.** The National Arbor Day Foundation offers a Hardiness Zone Map (<https://www.arborday.org/trees>) to help you select trees well suited to our area. Southwestern Electric Cooperative's service territory is located in Hardiness Zone 6. Visit the National Arbor Day Foundation's web site at [ArborDay.org](http://ArborDay.org) for a catalog of trees that typically thrive in our zone.

**Height & Canopy.** Will the tree crowd your home, outbuildings, utility lines or other trees when it's fully grown?

**Ever Green?** Is the tree deciduous or coniferous? Will it lose its leaves in the winter?

**Thick & Thin.** A columnar tree will grow in less space. Round and V-shaped species provide more shade.

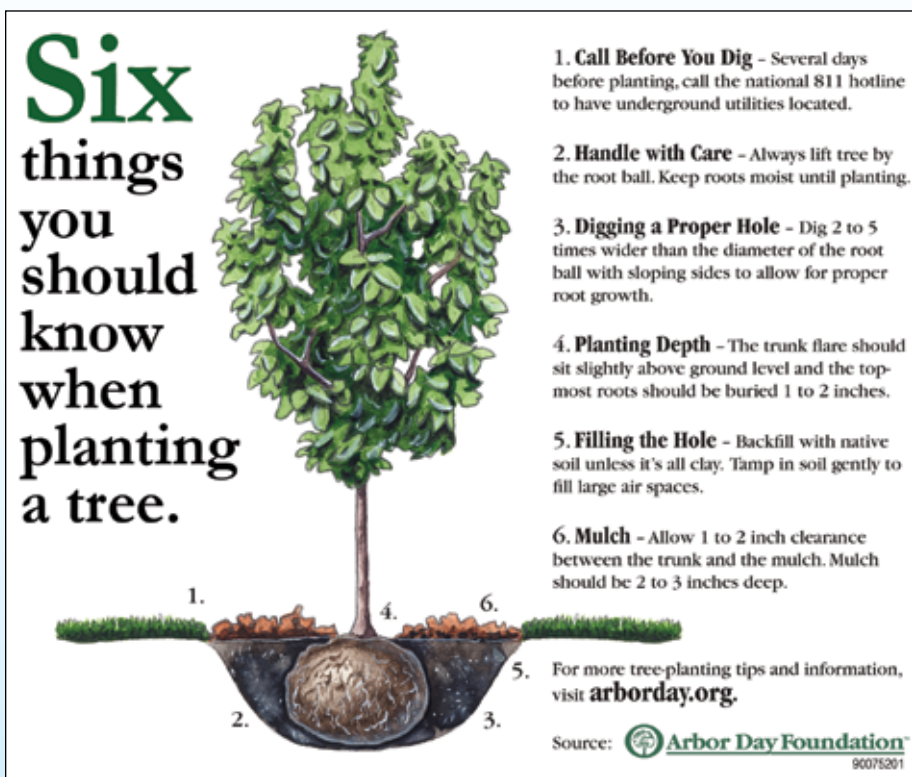
**Life Span.** How long will it take your tree to reach maturity? Slow growing species typically live longer than faster growing trees.

**Bearing Fruit.** It's satisfying to pluck an apple or pear from a tree you planted yourself. But fruit trees attract insects and can make a mess of your yard. Weigh the pros and cons of contending with bugs and lawn maintenance before you plant.

**Hot & Cold.** You can use trees and shrubs to boost your home's overall energy efficiency. A properly designed landscape can help you maximize shade in the summer, channel cool summer breezes toward your home, take advantage of the sun's warmth in winter, and minimize the cooling effect of winter winds.

**Underground...** Before you dig, contact the Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators (JULIE). JULIE will notify member utility companies. The utilities will mark their underground facilities so you can dig safely. The marking services are performed at no charge to you. To contact JULIE, call 8-1-1 or visit [www.illinois1call.com](http://www.illinois1call.com). It's simple, it saves lives, and it's the law.

**...And Overhead.** As you plant, keep right of way maintenance in mind. Avoid



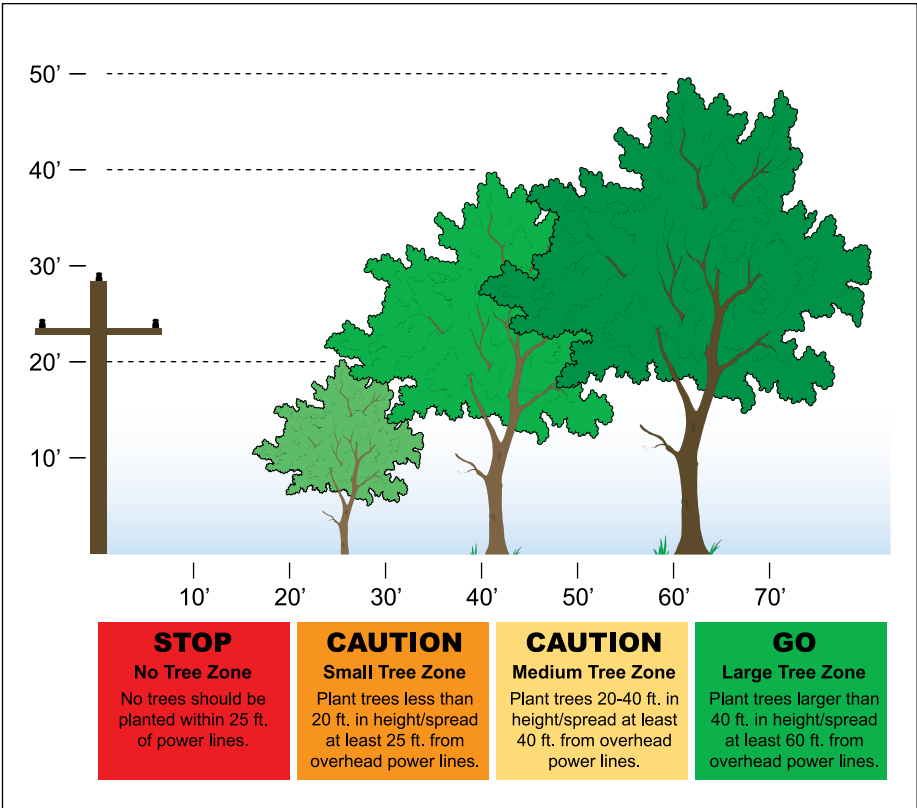
planting trees under or near power lines. Keep shrubs, hedges and other plants away from utility poles as well (see our distance guidelines diagram).

If you think you may be planting a tree too close to Southwestern Electric’s right of way, please call us at (800) 637-8667. Cooperative operations and engineering personnel will ask you about the trees you have in mind, discuss the space you’re working with, and offer suggestions.

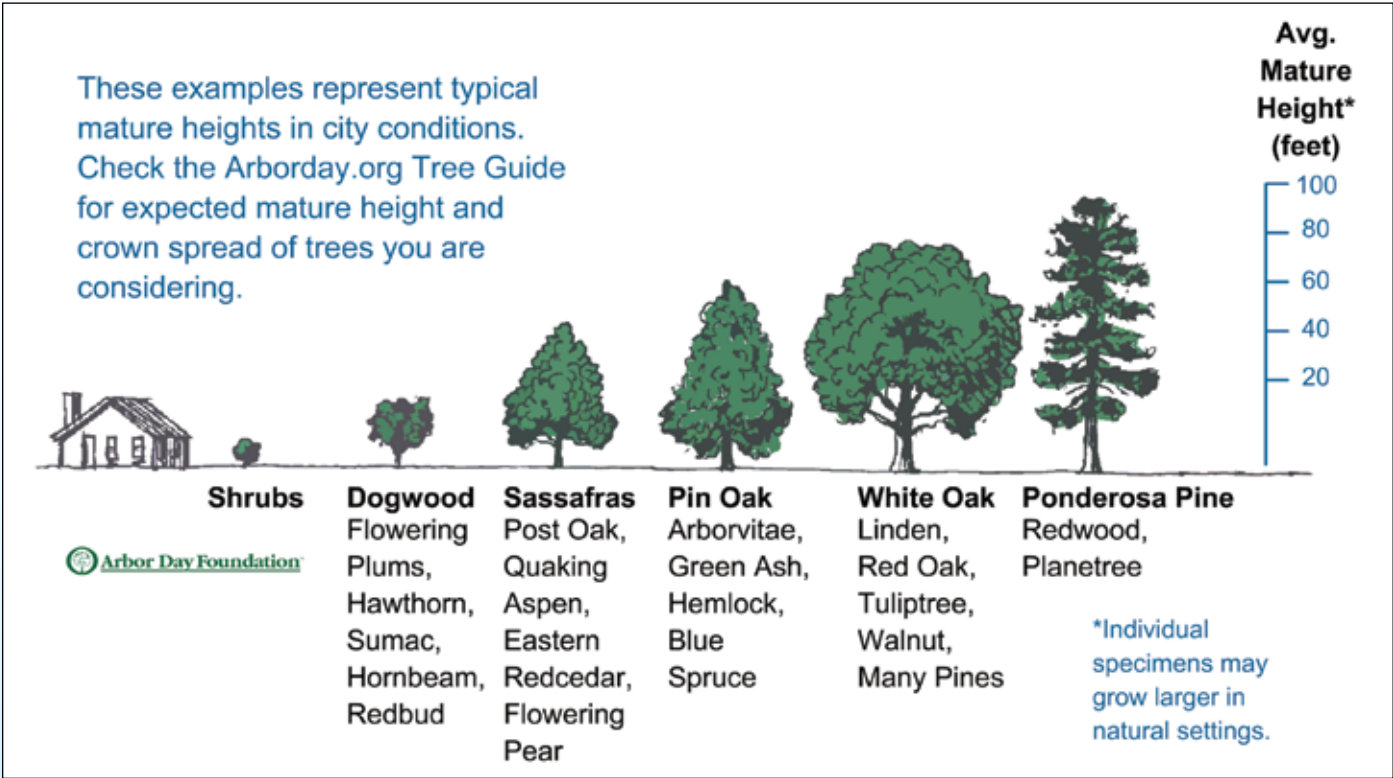
The conversation will help us ensure reliability by protecting the integrity of the co-op’s distribution system.

Co-op crews and contractors periodically clear rights of way and routinely trim trees using methods that protect power lines while preserving the health of trees. Right of way maintenance and tree trimming may change the shape of a tree. The best way to avoid clearance and maintenance is by planting in locations that aren’t near the right of way.

**Arbor Experts.** Before you plant, talk to people who are familiar with the trends and conditions unique to your area. Your community’s tree board, city forestry department, and representatives from your area’s cooperative extension office can offer insight into local soil, moisture, disease, and pest issues.



*Concerned you may be planting too close to our right of way? Call us at (800) 637-8667. We’ll be happy to talk with you and there’s no charge for the consultation.*



# NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK

**U**.S. poison centers field a call every 15 seconds. During National Poison Prevention Week (March 20-26), poison centers spotlight practices to prevent poisonings. The following tips will help you avoid or respond to poison exposure.

## BE PREPARED FOR A POISON EMERGENCY

Put the Poison Help number, (800) 222-1222, in your mobile phone and display it in your home and at work in case of emergency. You can also text POISON to 797979 to save the number in your mobile phone. Calls are free, confidential, and answered by experts, 24/7/365.

## PRACTICE SAFE STORAGE HABITS

The following items should be stored in their original containers, in secured cabinets or out of reach and out of sight of children.

- All medicines and pharmaceuticals, including vitamins and supplements.
- Alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarette products (especially liquid nicotine).
- Laundry and cleaning supplies.
- Pesticides and insect repellents.
- Button batteries.
- Any oil or lubricant, including fragrance oils, tiki torch oils, engine oil, etc.
- Personal care products, including contact lens disinfectants and hand sanitizers.

## READ AND FOLLOW LABELS AND DIRECTIONS

Make a habit of reviewing the label on any potentially hazardous substance or product prior to use (especially medicines). Follow usage directions as well as instructions for safe storage and disposal. If you have any questions about the directions, call your local poison control center at 1(800) 222-1222.

*For additional information on poison prevention, visit the American Association of Poison Control Centers at [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).*

**If someone in your home is exposed to a poison, call the Poison Help Line at (800) 222-1222.**

On Account: If your account number is 75285001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

## SAFE DISPOSAL OF OLD MEDS EASY AS 1-2-3

Ever reach into the medicine cabinet and find a bottle of medication past its expiration date? The next time it happens, before you toss that bottle in the trash, take measures to make sure the medicine doesn't end up in your sewer, water source, or in the hands of a curious toddler.

**1. MIX** the medicines with things that bind. Take a bag of coffee grounds or cat litter and dump the medication into it. The medication will bind with grounds or litter and be less likely to leak or spill out of the garbage. This method also discourages toddlers from getting into the medication.

**2. SEAL** the mixture in a container. Make sure your kitty litter/medication mixture is properly sealed in a plastic sandwich bag or a take-out food container with a lid before throwing it in the trash.

**3. THROW** the mixture away. Now you're ready to throw the medication (and binder) into the trash safely. Don't flush medications in the toilet or dump them into a body of water.



## A HEALTHY DOSE

Have liquid medication in your arsenal of symptom-fighters? Don't throw away the dosing device that came with it. Over-the-counter liquid medications come with a diverse set of measuring tools. Keeping the correct dosing device with its medication can help prevent errors from occurring.

# A Poison Proof Home is a Happy Home!

**HRSA**  
Poison Help

More than 90% of poison accidents happen in the home, but many poison risks are hidden in plain sight. Learn how to identify poison risks in your home and take simple steps to keep your family safe and healthy.

## KITCHEN

- **Never** use commercial cleaning products on food or packaging.
- **Turn off gas ranges** when not in use.
- Store food at the proper temperature.

## BATHROOM

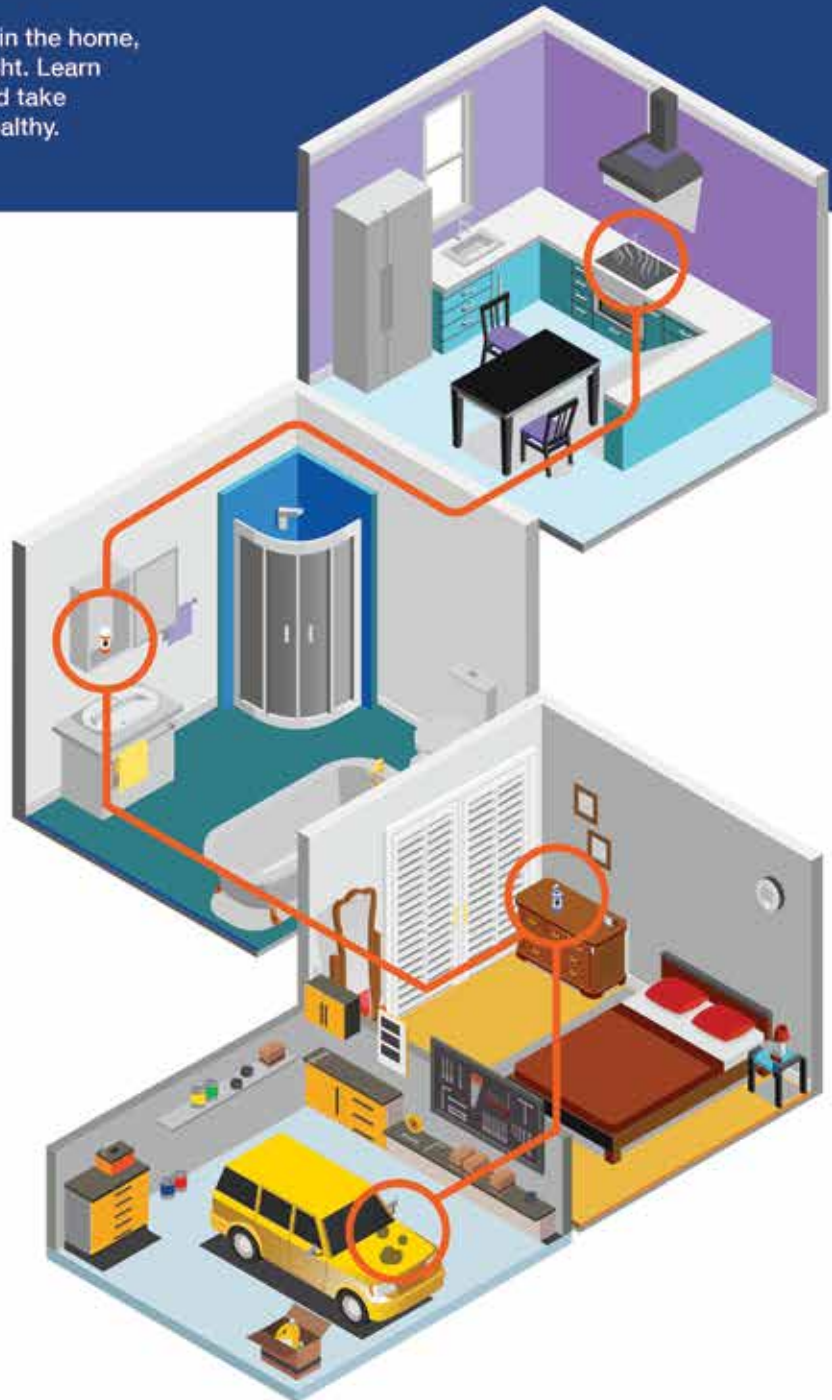
- Keep medicines **locked up and away** from children.
- Store all medicines in their original, properly labeled containers.
- Avoid using household cleaners and disinfectants **on hands or skin improperly**.

## BEDROOM

- Install carbon monoxide detectors near bedrooms and furnaces.
- Keep hand sanitizer **locked up and out** of reach of children.
- Ensure houseplants are **pet safe**.

## GARAGE

- **Do not** keep the car running in a closed garage.
- Store paint, antifreeze, gasoline, and other chemicals in **locked cabinets**.
- Keep detergents and other laundry products up, away, and out of reach of children.



For more information about potential poisons, or if you're experiencing a poison emergency...

**Don't Guess.  
Make the Call.**

- 1 Call **9-1-1** if the person is unconscious or has trouble breathing.
- 2 Call **Poison Help (1-800-222-1222)** to connect to your local poison center.
- 3 Stay calm—most poisoning emergencies can be resolved quickly.

## IMAGES OF ELDON HAZLET

by Joe Richardson

The shadows were long and the silence deep on the days I visited Eldon Hazlet State Park. I'll maintain the silence here. These shots show the park wearing winter clothes, but every season in Eldon Hazlet is equally arresting, with each being beautiful in its own way. If you go, take photos, and if you're of a mind to, share them. You can send them to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com). I'd love to see Eldon Hazlet through your eyes.

Thanks for sharing the silence.

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### GETTING THERE

Eldon Hazlet State Park is 3 miles north of Carlyle. Turn east off Highway 127, follow Hazlet State Park Road a couple miles east, and explore. There's a sign on the east side of Highway 127 that marks the turn. You'll find more information and trail maps on the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr>.





## WHO • WHAT • WHERE



**S**outhwestern member and solution sleuth Bill Malec of O’Fallon racks up another win this month by correctly identifying the marker that served as our January challenge.

“The photographed plaque in your ‘Where are we?’ January 2022 puzzler can be found at Carlyle Lake, a 26,000-acre reservoir largely located in Clinton County,” Bill wrote. “It can be found next to Shelter 2 in the Dam West Day Use Area. It marks the spot where a time capsule was buried in 1968.”

Carlyle Lake will celebrate its 55th anniversary this year — but its origins are much older. In 1933, Clinton County residents formed an organization to discuss the Kaskaskia River Valley Project, which would manage flooding along the Kaskaskia River. Their efforts resulted in the Flood Control Act of June 28, 1938, which authorized a reservoir at Carlyle.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed a plan for the project in 1957. Construction began in October 1958.

The government purchased 26,000 acres for the lake and adjacent land for flowage easement. Homes were relocated, as were roads and the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad.

The project was completed in April 1967, creating the largest man-made lake in Illinois. At normal pool, Carlyle Lake is 15 miles long and 3 1/2 miles wide.

Congratulations to Bill for identifying our mystery location.

Now it’s your turn. Can you identify this month’s mystery item? Do you own some of these? Have a memory associated with them? We’d love to hear from you. You can send your solutions to Joe Richardson at [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com). You’ll find the answer to this month’s puzzle — and a selection of your letters — in our May magazine.

**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](mailto: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.



WHAT  
IS  
THIS?



# Simmer & Stir

## FROM YOUR TABLE TO OURS

Have a recipe you'd like to share? Mail it to: Co-op Kitchen, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Or email it to [mike.barns@sweci.com](mailto:mike.barns@sweci.com). Please include your name and contact information with your submission.



## DUTCH ONION, POTATO & CHEESE SOUP

### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 3 cups onion sliced
- ¼ cup flour
- 2 (10½ ounce) cans Campbell's condensed beef broth
- 3 cups water
- 4 cups potatoes peeled and diced
- 2 cups Gouda or cheddar cheese coarsely ground
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper

### Directions

1. In a large pot stir fry onion in butter and vegetable oil until golden brown.
2. Sprinkle with flour and stir in.
3. Stir in broth and water and bring to a boil.
4. Add potatoes, bring back to boil, reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 40 minutes until potatoes are tender. Then lightly mash potatoes into broth.
5. Stir in cheese and pepper stirring constantly until cheese melts.

## CLAM CHOWDER

### Ingredients

- ½ cup butter
- ¾ cup onion chopped
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 2 quarts milk
- 1 quart potatoes diced and cooked until just tender
- 3 (6.5 ounce) cans chopped clams
- 2 (8 ounce) bottles clam juice
- 2 (13 ounce) cans evaporated milk

### Directions

1. Melt butter in pot, add onions and cook until tender.
2. Add flour all at once and cook thoroughly while stirring constantly (do not boil).
3. Stir in sugar, salt and pepper.
4. Warm milk in microwave slightly then mix in milk, potatoes with their liquid, clams with their liquid, and clam juice.
5. Stir in evaporated milk last, stirring often until heated thoroughly (do not boil).

*Top with oyster crackers, cooked chopped bacon, or fresh chives if desired.*

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

## EGG DROP SOUP

### Ingredients

- 3 cups chicken broth
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon corn starch
- 1 egg
- ½ teaspoon water
- green onion tops (optional)

### Directions

1. Simmer the chicken broth.
2. In a separate bowl mix the corn starch with ½ cup of the broth. Then add it back to the rest of the broth along with sugar and salt.
3. Beat the egg and water well but not too frothy.
4. Pour the egg mixture into the broth in a thin stream, stirring constantly so the egg forms thin shreds.
5. Ladle into bowls and sprinkle with green onion tops.

## WEST VIRGINIA SOUP

### Ingredients

- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 cup onion finely chopped
- 1 (46 ounce) can V-8 Juice
- 1 cup grated carrots
- 1 can cream of celery soup

### Directions

1. Brown hamburger and onions together and drain grease.
2. Place all ingredients in large pan and simmer for 1 hour.

Dutch Onion, Potato & Cheese Soup

## CURRENT EVENTS

**March 10** GOITSE, Lebanon. Goitse (pronounced “go-witcha”) is an informal Gaelic Irish greeting meaning “come here.” The multi-award-winning quintet was forged at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick. Its distinctive sound intersperses original compositions with traditional tunes from the Irish countryside and abroad. 7:30 p.m. Adult \$30, senior \$28, student or child \$10, McKendree University students are free. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.



**March 19** HITS OF THE RAGTIME ERA, Greenville. Cherry and Jerry of The Ragged Blade Band will present this free concert at the DeMoulin Museum at 6 p.m. Seating is first come/first serve. Pop music comes and goes, but some songs from over 100 years ago are just as fresh in the mind as the day they were written. “The Entertainer,” “Alexander’s Ragtime Band,” “St. Louis Blues,” and “Ballin’ the Jack” are still familiar, but even when they first hit the scene, these songs were recognized as having something special. The duo will take a look at some of the songs that captivated the public, why they were successful in their own time and how their popularity continued into the present. DeMoulin Museum, 205 South Prairie Street, Greenville. Call (618) 664-4115 or visit demoulin-museum.org.

**March 10-22** THE AUDIENCE, 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. \$10 on Thursday and \$12 Friday - Sunday for adults; \$9 on Thursday and \$11 Friday - Sunday for students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification). Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

**March 11-13** INTERNATIONAL GEM & JEWELRY SHOW, Collinsville. Shop from rows and rows of quality jewelry, gemstone, bead, jewelry supply and accessory dealers in a unique marketplace setting. Friday noon - 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Discounted tickets purchased online \$6; day of show \$8 cash only; admission is free to all military members (active and veterans) and their immediate family members with identification. Tickets are good for all three days. Gateway Center, 1 Gateway Drive. For more information or tickets, visit intergem.com.

**March 12 & 26; April 9 & 30** VINE STREET MICRO MARKETS, O’Fallon. Micro Markets are an abbreviated version of the regular season farmers market. 9 a.m. - noon. Indoors at the O’Fallon Station, 212 East 1st Street. Visit ofallonstation.com.

**March 18; April 16** 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. 8 - 9:15 p.m. Meet at the Talahi Lodge and be on time, as the hike leaves promptly at start time. 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.

**March 19; April 18** GOSHEN WINTER MARKET, Edwardsville. Visit the expansion parking lot downtown and shop your favorite vendors, the third Saturday of each month through April. 10 a.m. - noon. The Land of Goshen Community Market, 100 St. Louis Street. Visit goshenmarket.org.

**March 19** PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY OF BELLEVILLE: KEYBOARD FIREWORKS, Belleville. Maestro’s birthday celebration including Mozart Piano Concerto No. 23 in A major, K. 488, with Brian Woods, and Saint-Saens Organ Symphony in honor of Gail Long. 7:30 p.m. Union United Methodist Church, 721 East Main Street. For more information or tickets, visit bellevillephilharmonic.org.

**March 19** SPRING VENDOR FAIR, Cowden. Event includes vendors, food, and raffle. Funds raised from this event will go toward the class of 2024’s Junior Prom and Senior Trip. 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. Cowden-Herrick High School Gymnasium, 633

County Highway 22. Call (217) 783-2127.

**March 19** THE WEE HEAVIES, Lebanon. The Wee Heavies have won a following with its eclectic mix of Scottish, Irish, and American folk music. Dedicated to music from and influenced by the Celtic tradition, tenors Aaron Schiltz and Peter Merideth, baritone Jay Harkey, and bass Steve Neale began singing together in St. Louis’ Shaw neighborhood in 2013 after they observed a distinct lack of a cappella Celtic music at charitable events. 7:30 p.m. Adult \$25, senior \$23, student or child \$10, McKendree University students are free. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

**March 20** CHICKEN DINNER, Edwardsville. Dinner includes fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, slaw, and applesauce. Quilt/TV raffle tickets also available. Drive thru carry out only. 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. \$11 per meal. Immanuel UCC, 5838 Staunton Road, 1½ miles south of Hamel. Call (618) 633-2277 or visit iucchamel.org.

**March 20** FIREMAN’S SAUSAGE & PANCAKE BREAKFAST, New Douglas. Breakfast includes sausage, scrambled eggs, biscuits and gravy, and homemade donuts. Curbside pickup only. Lineup will begin at 1st Street and travel to East Allen Street (one way only). Serving from 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. All meals \$10; veterans past or present free. Advance link

*Continued on page 26* ►

### 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. 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.

## END NOTE

**I**t was a day of ice and shadows. On the first Wednesday of February, while utilities in the Midwest were using real-time satellite imagery and strategic ground reports to track a shifting winter storm, some 650 miles east, people were sipping hot cocoa and waiting for a groundhog to tell them about spring.

Why?

I think it's about darkness. And I think it's about light.

February's storm reminded us that power is precious. Not so long ago it was hard to come by. We were well into the 1900s before electricity lit up rural America. But a strange thing happened when the wire went up and the light dawned.

We missed the shadows.

We spent centuries cultivating legend and lore to explain what lived in the dark. In telling those stories, we built bridges between night and the unexplained, the undiscovered, the unknown, and each other.

Electricity was the yoke that domesticated darkness. We banished myth with the printed page, subjugated ignorance with evidence, and broadcast ideas and understanding with the flip of a switch.

Gone were the shadows. Extinct went the night. And with it went much of our fear and wonder.

It was a good trade, shadow for light. With the darkness went a measure of discomfort, disease, and hardships too plentiful to number.

And yet, and yet...there is some part of us that yearns for vast tracts of dark wilderness and the things that may dwell there. A part that wishes alpenglow and autumn and aurora borealis were enchantments instead of equations. A part that listens for grace notes in bird song, hears symphonies in wind and water, is stilled by movements of trees and grasses, and awed by acts of chance and circumstance so perfectly pitched, they must be orchestrated by design.

We want to believe nature knows.



by Joe Richardson

We want to believe it would share its secrets, if only we could speak the language and read the signs.

We want to believe.

But we can't.

We can't abide the darkness. We are creatures of the light. So we cast shadows.

Maybe that's why on a frozen February morning, while thousands

of people huddled on a Pennsylvania hillside reveling in ritual, here at home, in the midst of a midwinter storm, as our heat and electronics and LEDs flickered and held, flickered and died, some of us looked to the shadows and thought of a time, not so long ago, when darkness came and went as it pleased, and there were edges to the light.

► *Continued from page 24*  
and bulk sausage orders (Ron's recipe) 5 pound package \$20. To pre-order sausage, call (217) 456-6221 or email newdoug-lasfire@gmail.com. Leave message and we will call you back. Orders must be in no later than March 13 and must be picked up March 19 from 9 a.m. - noon. New Douglas Fire Department, 105 East Allen.

**March 25 & 26 BOUTIQUE BLVD, Effingham.** Shop at all of your favorite boutiques, home decor and jewelry vendors. Friday 4 - 8 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is \$5 at the door; children 10 years of age and younger are free. Thelma Keller Convention Center, 1202 North Keller Drive. Call (217) 347-5115 or visit [kellerconventioncenter.com](http://kellerconventioncenter.com).

**March 26 OLDE ALTON VENDOR & CRAFTS FAIR, Alton.** There will be many booths of crafters selling their best wares. Proceeds benefit the Alton Band & Orchestra. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. Alton High School, 4200 Humbert Road. For more information, call (618) 474-6996 or visit [abob.net](http://abob.net).



**April 2 LAKE SARA DAM RUN, Effingham.** A Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Illinois. Choose from half marathon, 8-mile run, 5K run or 5K walk, and virtual. Half marathon starts at 7 a.m.; 8-mile at 8 a.m.; 5K run and walk at 9 a.m. Lake Sara Dam Run raises money for Special Olympics. Racerooster will donate \$1 for each registrant. Lake Sara Dam, 9352 East Park Avenue. For more information or to register, visit [lakesaradamrun.com](http://lakesaradamrun.com).

**March 26 TRAIN SHOW, Glen Carbon.** Watch trains run on the Metro East Model Railroad Club's 18x27 foot HO scale model railroad. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Admission is free. The club is located in the old Glen Carbon Fire House/Village Hall at 180 Summit Street. For more information, call Jim at (618) 267-7675, or Bob at (618) 476-9228, or visit [trainweb.org/memrc](http://trainweb.org/memrc).

**April 1, May 16 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'll take a look at the moon and other night sky objects. April event 8 - 10 p.m.; May event 8:30 - 10:30 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](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**April 2 - August 7 ELSAH PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT, Elsau.** The 2022 theme is "Elsah Postcard" featuring images taken in the valley or in the surrounding area. Exhibit includes amateur, professional, and youth photographers. Submissions are due by March 7. Opening reception is April 2 from 1 to 4 p.m. Exhibit is open Saturday and Sunday 1 - 4 p.m. Elsau Village Hall, 26 La-Salle Street. For more information, visit [escapetoelsah.com](http://escapetoelsah.com).

**April 4 PILOBOLUS: BIG FIVE-OH!, Lebanon.** Pilobolus is turning fifty. To celebrate, the tour brings audiences a mix of pieces ranging from the vintage and visionary to the fresh and electrifying. And in the paradoxical Pilobolus tradition of breaking with tradition, the tour presents works dynamically reimagined for a never-before-seen Pilobolus experience. 7:30 p.m. Adult \$35; senior \$33; 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](http://thehett.com).

**April 6 & 20; May 4 & 18 HIKE FOR HEALTH, Godfrey.** Not only is hiking fun, it also has known health benefits, such as decreasing blood pressure, increasing bone density, and lowering your risk of heart disease. Hikes will be moderate intensity over uneven terrain and between 1½ - 3 miles. Free for members and non-members. 8 - 9:30 a.m. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**April 7 BRIAN WOODS CONCERT, Lebanon.** Enjoy the sounds of Classical Pianist Brian Woods. 7:30 p.m. Adult, senior, 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](http://thehett.com).

**April 23 "FROM PEN TO PERFORMANCE" CONCERT, Godfrey.** Performance by the Alton Symphony Orchestra. 7 p.m. Adults \$10; 18 years of age and younger \$5. Because ASO performs on the Lewis & Clark Community College Campus we are adhering to their masking guidelines. Currently all visitors must wear a mask regardless of vaccination status. Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. For more information or tickets, visit [altonsymphonyorchestra.org](http://altonsymphonyorchestra.org).

**April 24 WATERCOLOR WORKSHOP, Grafton.** Artist and teacher, Carolyn Owen Sommer, will guide you with ease through a 3 hour-long course. You will be painting and taking home either an 8x10 or a 9x12 watercolor scene. 10 a.m. This class is \$60 per person and open to all skill levels. Supplies will be provided. Open to a maximum of 16 people so reserve your spot early. Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference

**April 30 SPRING BABY SHOWER, Dow.** Come out to celebrate the cute native wild babies being cared for at the center. Enjoy free games, activities, and crafts throughout the day. Artisan craft and food vendors will also be on site. Bring a donation for a chance to be entered to win door prizes. Never been to a baby shower for animals? Visit our website for gift donation ideas. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Event is free and all ages are welcome. Treehouse Wildlife Center, 23956 Green Acres Road. Call (618) 466-2990 or visit [treehousewildlifecenter.com](http://treehousewildlifecenter.com).



Center, 13653 Lodge Blvd. To reserve a spot, call Arielle at (618) 786-2331, extension 338.

**April 25 COMPLETE GAMER: CELEBRATING BOB GIBSON, Lebanon.** A celebration of Cardinals legend and baseball hall of fame pitcher, Bob Gibson. This multi-media experience features original music performed by Brian Owens and musicians of Life Creative Group, a creative arts company dedicated to sharing the talent and stories of the St. Louis Region on a global level. Their single, entitled #Complete Gamer, was commissioned by the St. Louis Cardinal to reach a new generation of fans so that they know the extraordinary life story of Hall of Famer Bob Gibson. 7 p.m. Adult \$25; senior \$23; 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](http://thehett.com).

Lake Nellie provides a few moments of quiet reflection for St. Elmo residents during a December sunrise.

## THE FINAL FRAME

