

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

MAY 2025 • VOLUME 77 • ISSUE 5

## LIVING HISTORY

ANDERSON HOUSE  
IS PORTAL TO  
THE PAST

PAY AS YOU GO  
\$20 PAYMENT  
MINIMUM

BOARD  
NOMINATIONS

RECYCLING  
DRIVE

WATER  
SAFETY

SUMMER  
SALADS

## *Youth Day*

DISPATCH FROM THE  
STATE CAPITAL





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May is your month to explore the influence of women on Route 66, tune in to live music, catch a play, and run, bike, hike and swim in Southwestern Illinois.

525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.  
Phone: (800) 637-8667. Office Hours:  
Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Visit us on the Web at [www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com).

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**CEO**

Bobby Williams ..... Chief Executive Officer

**The Southwestern**

Joe Richardson ..... Editor  
email: [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com)  
Mike Barns ..... Art Director  
email: [mike.barns@sweci.com](mailto:mike.barns@sweci.com)  
Nathan Grimm ..... Media Specialist  
email: [nathan.grimm@sweci.com](mailto:nathan.grimm@sweci.com)

**Satellite Locations:**

St. Jacob Office  
10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob, IL 62281

St. Elmo Distribution Center  
2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo, IL 62458

Southwestern Electric Cooperative reserves the right to re-print member comments and correspondence in its cooperative educational and promotional materials.

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# Reader Contest

**W**e've hidden an image of a lifebuoy in your magazine. Your job is to find it. The actual image may be larger or smaller than what you see below. We may change the color or reverse or alter the image we've hidden to make the contest more challenging. If you find the lifebuoy, email us or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and the page number where you found the image. Please email us at [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or send your postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

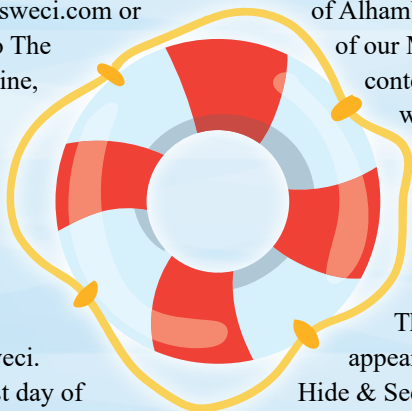
Entries must be postmarked or in our [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) inbox by the first day of

the month following the month of publication. For our May contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by June 1, 2025.

We'll choose one winner in a random drawing. Our winner will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. We'll publish the name of this month's contest winner in the July issue of The Southwestern.

## MARCH WINNER

Congratulations to Marilyn Haegele of Alhambra. As the winner of our March Hide & Seek contest drawing, Marilyn will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Thank you to everyone who participated in our March contest. This month's image appears at left. You'll find Hide & Seek rules below.



## RULES TO PLAY BY

- One entry per membership per month.
- A membership can only win once per calendar year.
- No phone calls, texts, social media posts, walk-in traffic, carrier pigeons, singing telegrams or other clever means of communication that may occur to you.
- Please respond *only* by emailing us at [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or by sending a postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.
- Entries submitted by other methods will be disqualified.
- Entries emailed to other Southwestern Electric email addresses will be disqualified, deleted, then disqualified again, just to be safe.
- Entries mailed to other departments or included with other correspondence will likely never find their way to the editor. If they do, they'll be disqualified. Also, he'll add you to his list of people who can't follow instructions. It's a long (and growing) list and not one you care to be part of.
- May contest entries must be in our inbox or postmarked by June 1.
- We'll never hide the image on the front or back cover or on the page where we list the rules.

## ON THE COVER

Student delegates representing 22 cooperatives from across the state pose for a photo at the Capitol during Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives



Youth Day. Three local students represented Southwestern Electric at this year's event, which was held Wednesday, March 5, in Springfield, Ill. See our story on page 10.

## CO-OP REMINDERS

**May 12** 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.

**May 26** Offices closed for Memorial Day.



## FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For the latest news and notes, follow us on Facebook and x (formerly Twitter). You'll find us at [facebook.com/SWECI](https://facebook.com/SWECI) and [x.com/sweci](https://x.com/sweci). Search for Southwestern Electric on YouTube and Instagram. You can listen to our podcast, Wireside Chat, on Apple Music, Spotify, Audible and anywhere podcasts are found.





## Changes Effective July 1

# *Letter to Members Who Use Our Pay As You Go Electric Service*

Dear Member,

We understand that changes to your electric service impact your household budget, which is why we wanted to let you know about an upcoming adjustment to our Pay As You Go program.

Effective July 1, 2025, Southwestern Electric will require a minimum payment of \$20 each time you add money to your Pay As You Go account. Your payment will be applied directly to your usage.

What this means for you:

- Beginning July 1, when you're adding funds to your account (online, via the SmartHub app or at a payment location), the minimum amount you can add will be \$20.
- Your existing account balance won't be affected.

The new minimum payment helps us:

- Address the rising costs of payment processing fees. Southwestern pays processing fees on a per-transaction basis. The \$20 minimum payment was implemented to reduce the frequency of Pay As You Go transactions, lowering processing costs incurred by the cooperative.
- Maintain consistent payment practices. In the past, our minimum payment amounts varied by payment method and location. A uniform \$20 minimum payment will eliminate confusion by setting a standard that applies to all payment methods and locations.

You can make your \$20 minimum payment by:

- Using the SmartHub mobile app or paying online using the SmartHub web portal at <https://sweci.smarthub.coop>.
- Phone payments through our automated system at 800-637-8667.
- Paying in person at our Greenville office.
- Using VanillaDirect at participating retail stores. There's a \$1.50 fee to use this service. Find a location near you by visiting [pay.vanilladirect.com/pages/retailers](https://pay.vanilladirect.com/pages/retailers).

### Questions & Answers

Q: Why is a minimum payment being implemented now?

A: We're continually taking steps to reduce costs and improve operational efficiency. We held off on requiring a minimum payment as long as possible, but rising payment processing fees made the adjustment necessary. A \$20 minimum payment was chosen to reduce operational costs while avoiding the more significant burden a higher minimum payment would have placed on our members.

Q: Will this affect my current account balance?

A: No. Your balance won't be affected.

Q: Can I still monitor my usage in real-time?

A: Absolutely. Your usage monitoring options remain unchanged. You have the same visibility and control over your energy use you've always had.

If you have questions or concerns about the new \$20 minimum payment, please call us at 800-637-8667. A member of our management team will be happy to speak with you!



# Sign Up For SmartHub Today!

In March, Southwestern Electric launched SmartHub, its new account management portal and easy-to-use app. SmartHub offers tools and information you can use to save time and money.

You can use SmartHub for:

**Billing & Payments.** With SmartHub, you don't have to wait for your bill to arrive in the mail. You can access your bill anytime, anywhere, and save time with easy payment options that help you avoid late fees and service interruptions.

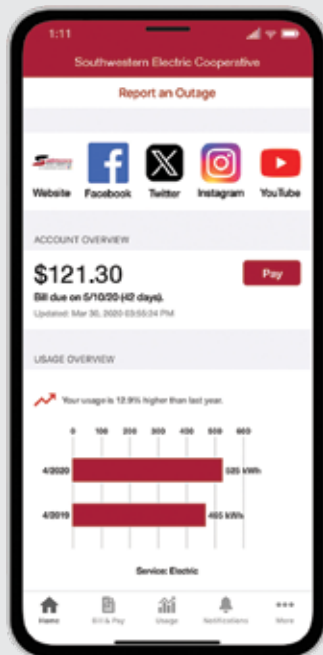
**Alerts & Notifications.** You can stay up to date on important account events via email or text messages, and receive the information you need to make informed decisions about your account.

**Paperless Billing.** Save trees and time when you activate SmartHub paperless billing, an eco-friendly way to instantly access your bill.

## ACCOUNT DASHBOARD

From the SmartHub account dashboard you'll see:

- Quick links that will lead to the features of SmartHub
- Usage Overview graphs to help you analyze and understand your energy usage trends
- The latest communications and alerts from us
- A Pay button to make quick payments right from the home screen



## AUTO PAY PROGRAM

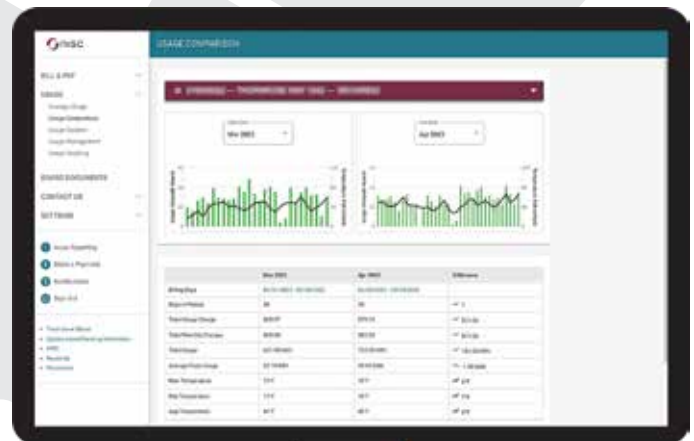
Enroll in Auto Pay and enjoy the convenience of having your bill automatically paid each month from your bank account or credit card.

You no longer have to worry about due dates or late fees since payments are automatically deducted from your account each month.

**Usage Monitoring.** Worrying about usage or surprising bill amounts can be stressful. When you know what devices are using the most energy, you can make money-saving decisions about your account.

**Outage Reporting.** Need to report a power outage? SmartHub is the fastest and easiest way to let us know when your power goes out. When widespread storms knock out power to an entire region, phone lines can become overloaded. With SmartHub, you can avoid busy signals and report outages with a few simple taps on your mobile device.

Learn more by watching or reading our tutorials at [sweci.com/smarthub](http://sweci.com/smarthub) or by downloading and exploring the SmartHub app from Google Play or the App Store.



## USAGE COMPARISON

This tool lets you compare two monthly bills side-by-side to see “this year versus last year” or “this month versus last month.”

The comparison tool illustrates how weather and temperature affect your energy bills.

The comparison tool can also help you determine how changes in your lifestyle and energy usage habits or the addition of a new appliance is impacting your bill, and may suggest energy-saving measures that will offer the best return on your investment.

**Learn more about SmartHub at [sweci.com/smarthub](http://sweci.com/smarthub) and on our social media channels.**

# Recycle with Southwestern

## WE'RE A NATION IN LOVE WITH ELECTRONICS

According to a Connected Consumer Survey conducted in 2023:

- You probably have 21 connected electronic devices in your home.
- Half the people reading this article brought a new connected device into their home last year.
- About one out of every six of you added three or more connected electronics to your home.

Given the statistics, it's likely you own an outdated TV, PC or mobile phone. We can help you find new life for your old devices through e-cycling — electronics recycling. E-cycling is the process of refurbishing, redistributing and reusing electronic devices and components, rather than discarding them. It extends the lifecycle of electronics and lowers their overall environmental impact.

Southwestern Electric will host three e-cycling drives this year. You're invited to bring your obsolete electronics to our collection sites on the dates listed at right. Your electronics will be collected and recycled by an EPA-approved recycling center. All collections begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first.

### We can help you recycle a variety of electronics, including:

- Computers, printers, cables and peripherals (keyboards, mice, etc.)
- Fax machines, scanners, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers.
- Video game consoles, digital video disc player/recorders, portable digital music players.
- Networking equipment, server, telecommunications, phones, cell phones and clocks.
- VCRs, stereos, and audio/video equipment (including cable/satellite).
- Electrical, cabling, communication machinery, and equipment.
- Home electronics, lamps, blenders, toasters, irons, etc.

#### Please Note

- Rechargeable batteries (NIMH, Li-ion and NICK) will be accepted for a fee of 50 cents per pound.
- CRT TVs, console TVs, projection TVs and monitors will be accepted for a fee ranging from \$5 - \$35 depending on their size and model. Please bring cash or check for payment.
- Light bulbs, DVDs, CDs and VHS and cassette tapes and hazardous materials will not be accepted.



## RECYCLING DRIVE DATES & LOCATIONS

- **June 28** Southwestern Electric Cooperative's headquarters, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246
- **September 27** Southwestern Electric's St. Elmo Distribution Center, 2117 East 1850 Avenue (frontage road southwest of the St. Elmo exit off Interstate 70), St. Elmo, IL 62458
- **October 25** Southwestern Electric's St. Jacob Office, 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob, IL 62281
- **Collection Times** All collections will begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first.

## QUESTIONS & CJD E-CYCLING

Have questions regarding e-cycling or recyclable items and fees? Call CJD E-Cycling at (618) 659-9006 or email them at [info@cjddecycling.com](mailto:info@cjddecycling.com). CJD E-Cycling is a family-owned recycling business with offices in East Alton and Edwardsville. You can learn more about CJD E-Cycling and the materials they recycle at [www.cjddecycling.com](http://www.cjddecycling.com).



# Board Candidate Nominations

## Filing Deadline: May 22

**A**s a not-for-profit cooperative, Southwestern Electric is both owned and governed by its members — the consumers who receive their electricity from the co-op. A board of directors, consisting of nine members democratically elected by their peers, is responsible for overseeing the general direction and financial stability of the organization.

The cooperative's service territory is divided into three voting districts. Three of the nine board seats — one per voting district — are open for election each year. District I encompasses the co-op's territory in Macoupin, Madison and St. Clair counties; District II includes Bond, Clinton and Montgomery counties; and District III covers Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion and Shelby counties. The three directors whose terms expire in 2025 are Sandy Grapperhaus in District I, Ted Willman in District II, and Ann Schwarm in District III.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the 2025 Nominations Committee are listed below. Any Southwestern Electric member interested in running for a seat on the board, or who would like to submit another

member's name for consideration, must notify a Nominations Committee member from the appropriate district prior to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 22.

If the nomination deadline is missed, members may also file for candidacy by petition. Such a petition, bearing the names, addresses and signatures of at least 15 Southwestern Electric Cooperative members, must be filed at

**Any Southwestern Electric member interested in running for a seat on the board, or who would like to submit another member's name for consideration, must notify a Nominations Committee member from the appropriate district prior to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 22.**

the co-op's headquarters by Monday, June 23. Any candidate who doesn't file by June 23, 2025 will not be eligible to run for election until 2026.

All members 18 years of age or older and in good financial standing with the co-op are eligible to serve on the board of directors, so long as they meet the qualifications set forth in Section 5(B) of the bylaws. The relevant sections of the cooperative's bylaws are reprinted on the next page for your reference.

The results of the 2025 board election will be announced at Southwestern Electric's 87th Annual Meeting of Members, which will take place on Saturday, September 6. Each director will be elected to serve a three-year term beginning on September 6 and ending on the date of the 2028 Annual Meeting.

Questions about board service and the election process should be directed to Chief Financial Officer Nathan Taylor. You can reach him at (800) 637-8667 or by email at [Nathan.Taylor@sweci.com](mailto:Nathan.Taylor@sweci.com).

## 2025 Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee will meet at the cooperative's headquarters to submit the names of qualified director candidates. Members interested in submitting a name for consideration, or who would like to run for a board seat themselves, must notify a Nominations Committee member from their district by 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 22.

<b>District I</b>	Dan Joachimsthaler	88 Timberwood Lane	Collinsville, IL 62234	(618) 979-5690
	Dennis Petry	8201 West Kirsch Road	Troy, IL 62294	(618) 667-6868
	Brad Staub	10579 Silver Creek Rd	New Douglas, 62074	(618) 560-8321
<b>District II</b>	Rick Hilliard	1316 Spring Drive	Greenville, IL 62246	(618) 882-8360
	Nick Reisner	805 Shoal Creek Road	Greenville, IL 62246	(618) 954-2987
	Clarence Zimmerman	857 RC Cardinal Lane	Greenville, IL 62246	(618) 530-5388
<b>District III</b>	Tony Koberlein	2098 N 2200 St	St. Elmo, IL 62458	(618) 292-6952
	Joe Lawson	274 E 1700 Ave	Vandalia, IL 62471	(618) 780-3731
	Kyra Willenborg	269 E 800 Ave	Vandalia, IL 62471	(618) 267-3857



# Candidates for the Board of Directors: Qualification & Nomination Guidelines

## Section 5 (B): Qualifications

To be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative, such person:

1. Shall not be a Close Relative of an incumbent Director;
2. Shall not be an employee or agent of the Cooperative;
3. Shall not be, directly or indirectly, employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to, among others, the Members of the Cooperative;
4. Shall not be, directly or indirectly, interested in any contract, permit, franchise or other similar agreement or authorization to which the Cooperative is or may be a party;
5. Shall be a Member in good standing with the Cooperative and receiving energy or service from the Cooperative at his primary place of abode;
6. Shall be a Natural Person;
7. Shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age; provided, however, that a duly elected officer or duly appointed agent of any Member which is not a Natural Person shall be exempt from the qualifications stated in Section 5(B)(6) and Section 5(B)(7) if such Member is in good standing with the Cooperative and receiving energy or service from the Cooperative.

## Section 4 (D): Election of Directors

At each annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative, Directors shall be elected by secret written ballot cast (except as otherwise provided in this section) by the Members present at such annual meeting and qualified to vote under the terms and conditions of the Bylaws. Such election shall be conducted as follows:

1. Appointment of Nominations Committee: The Board of Directors shall appoint, not less than one hundred fifteen (115) nor more than one hundred forty-five (145) days prior to the date of the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative, a Nominations Committee which shall consist of nine (9) Natural Persons, three from each Directorate District. Members of the Nominations Committee shall not be employees, agents, officers, or Directors of the Cooperative, shall not be known candidates for Director, and shall not be Close Relatives of employees, agents, officers, Directors of the Cooperative, or known candidates for Director.
2. Candidates Nominated by Nominations Committee: On or before eighty-five (85) days prior to the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative, the Nominations Committee shall:
  - a. Nominate as many Natural Persons who meet the qualifications stated in Section 5B of these Bylaws as the Nominating Committee deems desirable to be candidates for election to the Board of Directors; and,

- b. Post a list of the names of such Natural Persons so nominated by the Nominations Committee at the principal place of business of the Cooperative.

3. Candidates Nominated by Petition: In addition to those candidates named by the Nominations Committee, any fifteen (15) or more Members of the Cooperative may nominate such other Natural Persons as candidates for election to the Board of Directors by filing with the Secretary of the Cooperative not less than seventy-five (75) days prior to the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative a written petition bearing the signatures, names and addresses of at least fifteen Members of the Cooperative nominating such other Natural Persons as candidates for election to the Board of Directors and listing the candidate's name, address, age, and telephone number. The Secretary of the Cooperative shall post such petition at the principal places of business of the Cooperative where the list of nominations made by the Nominations Committee was posted.
4. Notice to Members of Nomination of Candidates: The Secretary of the Cooperative shall mail or cause to be mailed to the Members notice of the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative at least fifteen (15) days but not more than sixty (60) days before the date of said annual meeting a statement of the names, addresses, ages, and telephone numbers of all candidates nominated for election to the Board of Directors. Such statement shall identify the Directorate District to which such candidate may be elected, and such statement shall identify which candidates were nominated by the Nominations Committee and which candidates were nominated by petition filed by Members of the Cooperative.

## VOTING OPTIONS

**Absentee:** at the cooperative's headquarters (525 US Route 40, Greenville) Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., August 22 - September 5. (excluding Labor Day).

**In Person:** Members may vote for board candidates during Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 87th Annual Meeting of Members, Saturday, September 6, at The American Farm Heritage Museum in Greenville.

## CATEGORIES OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

**Individual Residential:** One name is listed on the account, and only this individual is entitled to voting rights.

**Joint Residential:** Two names are listed on the account, but only one of them may vote in a given election.

**Commercial:** The name of the business is listed on the account, and one duly appointed officer or agent may vote in a given election.

# Youth Movement

## Southwestern Electric student delegates participate in Youth Day event

Story by Brooke Scott | Photos by Mike Barns and Brooke Scott

**Y**outh Day, hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC), is an annual event that brought together 156 student delegates representing 22 cooperatives from across Illinois. The goal of this event is to inspire and empower the next generation of leaders by providing them with a unique, hands-on opportunity to learn about leadership, cooperatives, and government. Students were able to take a step beyond traditional classroom learning, engaging directly with their elected officials and gaining invaluable insights into the democratic process.

This year's Youth Day event took place in Springfield, Illinois, where delegates, including three students from Southwestern Electric Cooperative, gathered

to explore the ins and outs of government and cooperatives. The Southwestern Electric Cooperative students – Wade Stine, Ava Prusacki, and Margot Schusky – were accompanied by Brooke Scott, Executive Assistant; Nathan Grimm, Media Specialist; and Mike Barns, Art Director. Together, we embarked on a day filled with exploration, discussion, and inspiration.

The day kicked off with breakfast and a presentation from Paris Van Dyke, the 2023 NRECA Youth Leadership Council (YLC) rep from Wabash Communications Co-op in Louisville, Illinois. Van Dyke spoke to the group about Youth Tour and her experience as Illinois' YLC delegate. After breakfast, we departed for the Capitol. Despite the cold, rainy weather, the delegates showed remarkable resilience as they toured the Capitol and met with legislators. Their enthusiasm and curiosity were contagious, and it was clear that these young minds were soaking up every moment of the experience. This wasn't just a sightseeing trip – it was an introduction to the world of politics and governance, where they could see firsthand how they, too, could make a difference in their communities and beyond.

During lunch, Illinois Treasurer Michael Frerichs spoke to the group, sharing his personal journey to his elected role and offering words of encouragement to the students. He emphasized the importance of youth involvement, urging the delegates to take an active role in their communities and beyond. Frerichs spoke candidly about his career, recounting the challenges and triumphs that led him to his position as Illinois Treasurer. His message to the students was clear: growth comes from challenging oneself. He encouraged them to step outside their comfort zones, try new things, and not be afraid to fail. The students also got to learn about the "cooperative difference" and the vital role cooperatives play in the community. Students were educated on how cooperatives, including electric and telephone



Youth Day participants, front from left, Ava Prusacki, Margot Schusky and Wade Stine pose with state legislators, back from left, Sen. Jason Plummer and Reps. Charlie Meier and Blaine Wilhour in the Illinois State Capitol building. Meier later invited the students to his office for a question-and-answer session and, of course, a Ski soda from Excel Bottling Company in Breese, Ill., part of Meier's legislative district.

Continued on page 12 ➤





Paris Van Dyke, the 2023 NRECA Youth Leadership Council (YLC) representative from Wabash Communications Co-op in Louisville, Ill., speaks to the Youth Day crowd about her experience as a YLC rep. Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Member Services Manager Brooke Gross and Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs also addressed attendees throughout the day.

“Students were able to take a step beyond traditional classroom learning, engaging directly with their elected officials and gaining invaluable insights into the democratic process.”

—Brooke Scott, Executive Assistant







The day included some unstructured time to explore the Capitol building, including seeing the House of Representatives chamber (right) and hallways below the building (bottom).



Continued from page 10

cooperatives, operate differently from traditional businesses by focusing on serving their membership.

After lunch, the group ventured to the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum to learn about one of the most influential figures in American history. The museum offered a deep dive into the life and legacy of President Abraham Lincoln, from his early years in rural Illinois to his presidency during the Civil War. Students had the chance to explore interactive exhibits that brought Lincoln's life to life, offering insights into his character, leadership, and the challenges he faced as he navigated his presidency.

A particularly exciting part of Youth Day was the opportunity for delegates to interview for an all-expenses-paid trip to Washington, D.C., in June 2025. The trip allows the winners to visit the U.S. Capitol and meet with national leaders and student delegates from other states. The interviews were an excellent chance for the students to reflect on what they had learned and demonstrate their passion for making a difference. After the interviews, it was decided that all three Southwestern Electric Cooperative students – Ava, Wade, and Margot – would be sent to Washington, D.C. The decision was a testimony to their enthusiasm, commitment to learning, and potential as future leaders.

The experiences provided by Youth Day are not just for today – they are investments in the leaders of tomorrow. The students had the chance to meet with state legislators, tour the Illinois State Capitol, and explore the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum. Although 2025 Youth Day has come to a close, the journey for Ava, Wade, Margot, and the other delegates is far from over. Their trip to Washington, D.C., will be just one more step in their leadership journeys, and we look forward to seeing where their passion and commitment will take them next. **S**



Southwestern Electric Executive Assistant Brooke Scott, who chaperoned the day, grabs a quick selfie (right) with the group in the House of Representatives chamber.







State Rep. Charlie Meier graciously invited, from left, Schusky, Prusacki, Tri-County Electric Cooperative Youth Day student representatives Aubrey McCain and Gracie Schnitker, and Stine to his office to share a Ski soda and discuss state-level politics.



Illinois State Treasurer Michael Frerichs tells the Youth Day participants about his role as the state's chief investment and banking officer. Frerichs was the keynote speaker for the event.



**Ava Prusacki**  
Edwardsville, Ill.

Metro-East Lutheran  
High School Class of 2028

Grandparents: John & Paula Prusacki

**Margot Schusky**  
Collinsville, Ill.

Collinsville High School  
Class of 2026

Parents: Mark Schusky & Barbara Lindauer

**Wade Stine**  
Saint Elmo, Ill.

Saint Elmo High School  
Class of 2026

Parents: Jared & Krista Stine

PHOTO COURTESY ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

More on page 26

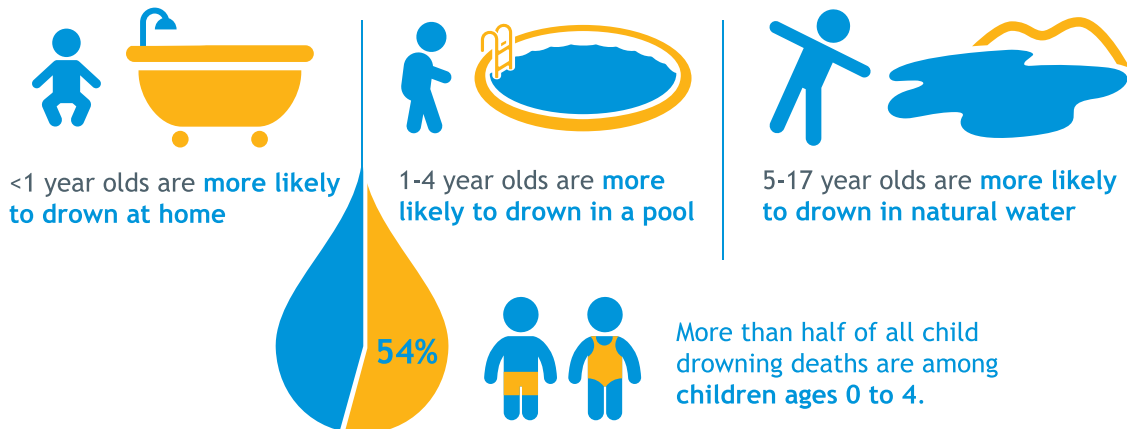
## The Facts about Kids and the Danger of Drowning

Almost 800 children drown in the U.S. every year.

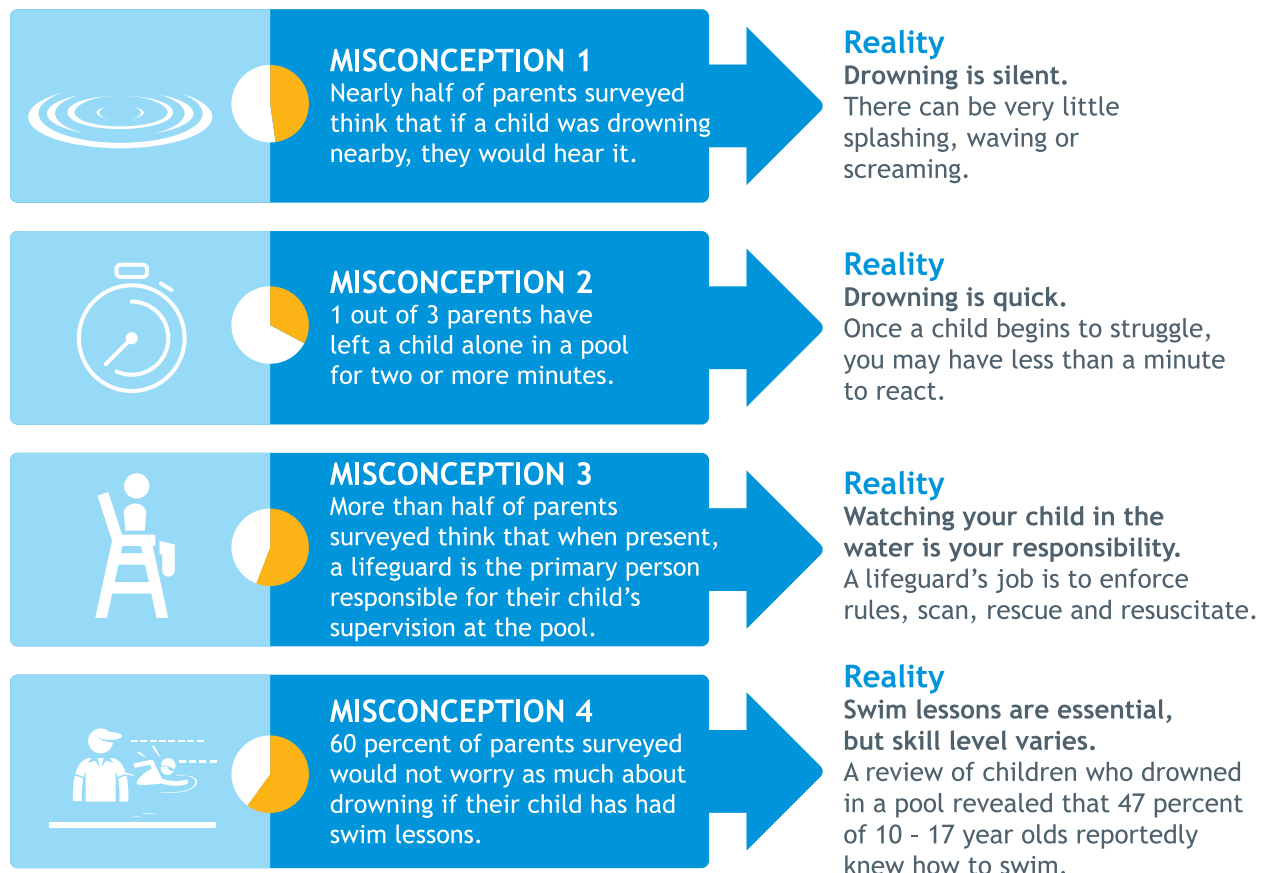


Two thirds of these deaths occur during May - August.

### Drowning Risk Varies by Age



### PARENTS' MISCONCEPTIONS





## WATER SURVIVAL SKILLS

### 5 Survival Skills That Could Save Your Life in the Water



1 Step or jump into water over your head and return to the surface.



2 Float or tread water for one minute.



3 Turn around in a full circle and find an exit from the water.



4 Swim 25 yards to the exit.



5 Exit from the water. If in a pool, be able to exit without using the ladder.

## WATER SAFETY TIPS



- Watch your kids when they are in and around water, without distraction.
- Teach children to swim and the 5 Water Survival Skills.
- Learn CPR and basic rescue skills.
- Make sure pools have four-sided fencing at least 4 feet high.

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Learn more at [safekids.org](http://safekids.org).

**SAFE**  
**KIDS**  
WORLDWIDE™

**N**  
**Nationwide®**

## SKW Promotes Layered Approach to Water Safety

The information for this month's Health & Safety segment was provided by Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW), a nonprofit organization working to help families and communities keep kids safe from injuries. A 2016 study commissioned by SKW indicates nearly 800 children will drown in the year ahead, with close to 70 percent of those drownings occurring between May and August.

"Silence and speed are characteristics of childhood drowning," the study states. "Drowning prevention takes multiple

strategies and the approach used involves ensuring overlapping layers of protection. Active supervision is one of the most important layers of protection and is absolutely necessary when children are in and around water."

SKW recommends assigning a Water Watcher in settings where it's difficult for a parent to provide constant visual supervision.

"A Water Watcher is an adult who commits to watching children in and around water, so that while they are in the role, their eyes and attention are only

on that task," the report explained. "This only ends when the children leave the water and/or they turn over the responsibility to another Water Watcher."

Using the Water Watcher system for a certain amount of time (such as 15-minute periods) prevents fatigue and lapses in supervision.

To learn more about water safety and read the complete study, *Keeping Kids Safe In and Around Water: Exploring Misconceptions that Lead to Drowning*, go to [safekids.org](http://safekids.org).



# Living History

Cross a threshold into the past at Carlinville's J.C. Anderson House

Words & Photos by Joe Richardson  
joe.richardson@sweci.com

It started life as a single-story wedding gift. In 1883, Carlinville banker Crittenden Anderson commissioned construction of a farmhouse for his son, John, and daughter-in-law Lucy. In 1892, the Andersons added a second floor for their growing family. By the time Illinois' interurban system reached Carlinville in 1904, Anderson kids Jessie, John, Martha, Rivers, Lucile, Perry, James and Mary could watch railcars trundle through town from their home's fourth-floor observation tower.

From turn-of-the-century grandeur through mid-century decline, the Anderson House stood as a sentinel at the city's edge, witnessing the emotional toll of two world wars and an influenza epidemic, the economic impact of the Depression, and the rise and fall of the region's coal and oil industries.

*Continued on page 18* ►

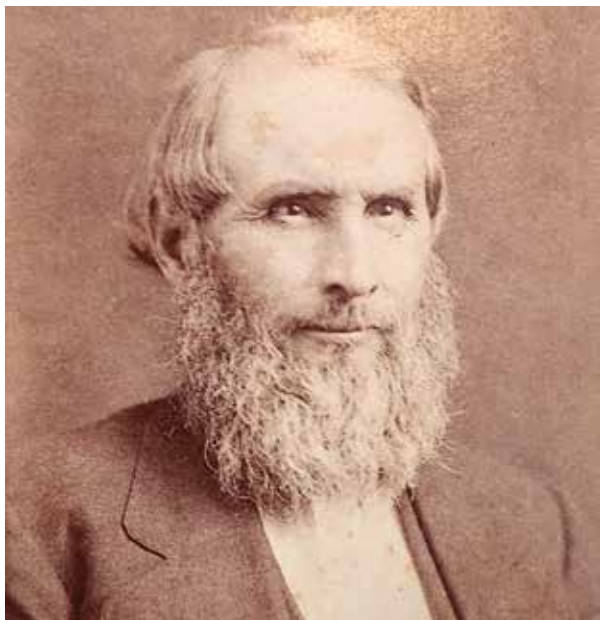


Period dress adorns a passage at the J.C. Anderson House. Opposite: Floor-to-ceiling windows light the Parlor and Music Room (top and bottom). A stained-glass window illuminates a stairway to second floor bedrooms. Servants' stairs lead to the attic and Trunk Room, with its rope bed and feather mattress. Exhibits with artifacts from area families and businesses appear on the second floor.









► *Continued from page 16*

By the late 1960s, the old mansion was a place of rumor and ruin. Stories of murders, hauntings, Underground Railroad derring-do, and a chicken that perched in the parlor to lay eggs for Lucy Anderson circulated around town, students staged unsanctioned parties on the property, and souvenir hunters, vandals and thieves piled injury on insult.

“My classmates broke into this house and had wild parties,” recalled Janell Ramey, a Macoupin County Historical Society member, J.C. Anderson House museum docent and lifelong Macoupin County resident. “At school, I heard them talking about their wild weekends at the mansion. I actually talked my parents into driving by — I’d never seen the place.”

In 1973, the Macoupin County Historical Society bought the home. They’ve been restoring, conserving and showcasing the Anderson House and Macoupin County history ever since.

In the manse you’ll find carefully curated artifacts offering insight into early 1900s life, the evolution of Macoupin County, and days long past. Rooms, closets and passages showcase period furniture, musical instruments, military uniforms, antique clocks and radios, vintage books and historic clothing — including Lucy Anderson’s wedding dress. An alabaster statue that vanished generations ago and recently reappeared, courtesy an anonymous donor, sits on the mantel of a first-floor fireplace — one of eight, no two alike, that adorn the house.

## “YOU NEED PEOPLE TO KEEP HISTORY ALIVE.”

—Docent Janell Ramey

While rich in relics, J.C. Anderson House is running short of a precious resource — volunteers.

“After World War II, when our people came back, they were into family and organizations — clubs,” Ramey said. “We had a strong sense of community then. Now our young people graduate from high school, they go off to college, and they may come back to visit, but they raise their families somewhere else.” As a result, our sense of community and connection to people who came before has eroded, Ramey said, and with it, our drive to preserve traditions, heritage and stories of the past.

“Parents get their kids involved in sports to keep them busy and to give them exposure to other good kids,” Ramey noted. “There’s no time for church and clubs and other activities.”

That may be the rule, but there are exceptions. Ramey recalls a high school freshman who became fascinated with the museum’s

You’ll find photos of key figures in Anderson House history, including Crittenden Anderson (top), who sponsored construction of the first floor as a wedding gift for his daughter-in-law, Lucy Anderson (center), pictured in her wedding dress. Docents Diane VanWinkle (left) and Janell Ramey prepare an exhibit on the second floor. Period pieces (opposite page) lend context to tours led by Anderson House docents.




military artifacts during a tour. What began as curiosity about a closet-turned-historical lockbox turned into four years of volunteer service. It's a reoccurring theme. Many Macoupin County Historical Society members have specific areas of interest that draw them to the house and campus. "For some, it's the old clothes," Ramey noted, "for others it's military history or old books."

An array of exhibits and demonstration areas call to volunteers with specialized skills. Historical society members operate a printing press and blacksmith shop on the grounds. A former Blackburn College maintenance tradesman has restored antique radiators, Victrola and Edison phonographs and a battery-operated console radio that served farmers pre-Rural Electrification Administration. Another docent has a talent for developing exhibits. "She knows exactly what's needed to tell the story and she searches until she finds it," Ramey said. "She has made a tremendous difference here."

Seated in the second-floor library, Ramey's attention shifts to an early 1900s writing desk, the ledgers stacked atop it, art and artifacts on the wall above, and floor-to-ceiling shelves packed with 19th century books. An ardent preservationist, Ramey spent the Covid years reviewing and indexing the library. In the last 10 minutes she's answered questions from docents, consulted on an exhibit, and acknowledged and approved maintenance plans. Time and again, she comments on the talent, care and commitment her colleagues bring to preserving, cataloging and displaying the home's history, and the volume of work accomplished by a small corps of dedicated docents. "I've been here 10 years and I haven't been through every closet yet," Ramey says, noting volumes she's yet to review. "I'm going to have to speed it up."

As she reflects on the museum's future, Ramey recognizes that preserving history requires an investment of time and care from generations to come. "There's no reason a house that's 140 years old has to crumble and fall. It comes down to labor. If you have volunteers, you can have fundraisers, you can apply for grants, and you can get the work done," she says. "But you need people to keep history alive."

Ramey leaves the library and joins a colleague arranging an exhibit in the next room. Down the hall, another docent is repairing a display case. Downstairs, between the Parlor and Music Room, a docent who recently retired from the Macoupin County Historical Society board is passing on what she's learned, pointing out features and exchanging stories with a new trustee. It's after hours at the museum, but Macoupin County Historical Society members show no signs of stopping. There's work to do at the J.C. Anderson House, and for Ramey and other volunteers at museums across the country, time is pressing. 

The J.C. Anderson House is open Wednesdays, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., and Sundays by appointment. Tour donations are \$5 for adults and \$1 for kids. The address is 920 W Breckenridge St., Carlinville, IL 62626. Google maps was spot-on using the street address for navigation. The home is brilliant and the docents alone make it worth the drive. To schedule a tour or request information call (217) 854-2850.

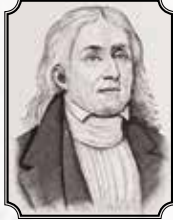




## WHO • WHAT • WHERE

Last month we challenged you to identify a local historical figure. We offered these clues:

- He founded a farm and a distillery.
- He moved to Macoupin County in 1833.
- He established two churches and worked for Illinois College.
- A seminary was named in his honor.



In the past, to allow ample time for your replies, we've waited an issue to share your responses. Truth be told, the vast majority of you answer within two weeks of the magazine's mail date. With that in mind, we've decided to print your solutions the month after we present the puzzle. It shortens your response window, yes, but when the solution appears, the puzzle will still be fresh in mind.

Your mind, I mean. In mine things are lucky to last the day.

On to your May puzzle.

Can you identify the items on the opposite page? They're of a set and were used in unison. We look forward to hearing from you. Meanwhile, here's what you had to say about our April puzzle.

The photo is of Gideon Blackburn who lived from 1772-1838. He was a Presbyterian minister and an evangelist. Blackburn served as missionary to Cherokee and Creek Indian nations. He helped establish schools for Cherokee children. I believe the building is from Blackburn College in Carlinville, Ill.

—*Dave Norris, Worden*

The man pictured is Gideon Blackburn. The building photo is an early illustration of Blackburn University (college) from the Carlinville public library! Gideon raised money to start the school.

—*Tim Trotter, Maryville*

That's Gideon Blackburn, American clergyman and evangelist. The picture is Blackburn College in Carlinville, Illinois

—*Louise Knecht, Alhambra*



GIDEON BLACKBURN ILLUSTRATION COURTESY THE "ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA", NEVIN, ALFRED, DAVID ROBERT BRUCE, 1828- JOINT ED., PHILADELPHIA, PRESBYTERIAN ENCYCLOPEDIA PUBLISHING CO., 1884. BLACKBURN COLLEGE ILLUSTRATION COURTESY THE "HISTORY OF MACOUPIN COUNTY, ILLINOIS," BRINK, MCDONOUGH & CO, PHILADELPHIA, PENN., 1879.

**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. 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.



A photograph of a wooden U-shaped object, possibly a piece of driftwood or a small boat hull, hanging from a wooden post. A thick, braided rope is also hanging from the post. Below the wooden object is a wire mesh basket. The background is a blurred view of a body of water and a distant shoreline.

*What am I?*



CO-OP KITCHEN

# Salad Days





Summer Salad prepared and photographed by Mike Barns  
mike.barns@sweci.com

## BROCCOLI SALAD

### Salad Ingredients

- 1 head broccoli
- 6-8 slices cooked bacon crumbled
- ½ cup red onion chopped
- ½ cup raisins (optional)
- 8 ounces extra sharp cheddar cheese cut into small chunks
- ½ cup cherry tomatoes halved
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- ¼ cup sugar
- salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

1. Cut broccoli into flowerets and the stem into bite sized pieces.
2. Place broccoli in large serving bowl.
3. Add bacon, onion, raisins, cheese and tomatoes. Toss together.
4. Combine remaining ingredients, pour over broccoli mixture, gently toss and serve.

## GRAPE SALAD

### Ingredients

- 2 pounds green seedless grapes
- 2 pounds red seedless grapes
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 8 ounces cream cheese softened
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup brown sugar packed
- 1 cup crushed pecans or walnuts

### Directions

1. Wash and stem grapes and let dry.
2. Quarter or halve grapes depending on size.
3. Mix together sour cream, cream cheese, sugar and vanilla.
4. In large serving bowl combine sour cream mixture with grapes.
5. Combine brown sugar and nuts.
6. Sprinkle brown sugar mixture over grape mixture to cover completely.
7. Chill overnight before serving.

*Recipe may be halved for smaller groups.*

## SUMMER SALAD

### Ingredients

- 2 heads Romaine lettuce chopped
- 1 cup carrots sliced
- 2 cups snow peas destemmed and halved
- 2 bell peppers sliced
- 1 small head cauliflower chopped
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup cranberries
- 2 cups grapes sliced
- 2 tangerines sliced
- 1 cup strawberries sliced

### Directions

1. Toss together all ingredients in serving bowl.
2. Serve topped with raspberry vinaigrette or Italian dressing.

*Recipe may be halved for smaller groups.*

## CURRENT EVENTS

**May 1-31 NOTABLE WOMEN ON ROUTE 66**, Edwardsville. Explore the influence of women on Route 66 at the Notable Women of Route 66 display. Wednesday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis Street. Visit [cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station](http://cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station).

**May 3 MARYVILLE MUSICFEST**, Maryville. Bring your chairs and blankets to spend the day enjoying live music of ten different bands. A variety of food and drinks will be available. No outside food or drinks, please. No rain date or refunds. Event is a fundraiser for a new entertainment pavilion in Firemen's Park. 1 - 10 p.m. Tickets are \$20 each; children 12 years of age and younger are free. Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Project details and ways to donate are on Collinsville Community Area Foundation (CACF) website. For questions, message (618) 223-8965 or email [parksandrec@maryville-il.us](mailto:parksandrec@maryville-il.us). For tickets, visit [tickettailor.com/events/maryvilleparksandrec](http://tickettailor.com/events/maryvilleparksandrec).

**May 8-10 SPRING YARD SALES**, Alhambra. Shop for treasures at The Village of Alhambra's annual spring yard sales. Thursday noon - 6 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Saturday 8 a.m. - noon. For details, visit [facebook.com/events/1069671935178435](https://facebook.com/events/1069671935178435). Residents call Jade Bohannon at (618) 210-0936 to sign up.

**May 8-11, 15-18 LOOKING GLASS PLAYHOUSE: A BRIGHT STAR**, 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. Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. For more information or tickets, visit [lookingglassplayhouse.com](http://lookingglassplayhouse.com).

**May 9-11, 15-18 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: WOMEN OF A CERTAIN AGE**, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. May 9, 10, 15 and 16 at 7:30 p.m.; May 11, 17 and 18 matinees at 2 p.m. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit [altonlittletheater.org](http://altonlittletheater.org).

**May 10 5K RUN/WALK FOR LIFE**, Effingham. Participants can choose the 5K run/walk or 1K prayer walk. Starts at EPC, continues through the Trek Trail (paved), and returns to the EPC. The course does have some hills and flat portions with beautiful scenery. \$25 per person or \$75 for family of 5. This run will support the free services offered at the Family Life Center. Effingham Performance Center, 1325 Outer Belt West. Register at [runsignup.com](http://runsignup.com).

**May 10 BIGFOOT FESTIVAL & SPRING MARKET**, Livingston. Event will feature guest speakers, presentations, stories, research and theories about Bigfoot and the unexplained. Enjoy family-friendly activities, Bigfoot themed games, photo ops and scavenger hunts. Plus, vendor market and youth entrepreneur market. 9:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Twistee Treat Diner, 908 Veterans Memorial Drive. For

more information, visit [pinkelphantantiquemail.com](http://pinkelphantantiquemail.com).

**May 10 MARYVILLE POLICE DONUT DASH 5K WALK/RUN**, Maryville. The course is a loop running on the streets and MCT bike trail. Take off some time by eating donuts along the course. Each donut you eat will take 30 second off your final time. Race starts at 8 a.m. and will start and finish at Drost Park, East Division Street. \$35 per runner. This event will happen rain or shine and there are no refunds. All proceeds go to the Maryville Police Association, which was established to raise money for local families in times of need. Packet pickup May 8th and 9th at Maryville Police Department, 2500 North Center Street or day of race at Drost Park. To register, visit [runsignup.com/race/il/maryville/maryvillepolicedonutdash](http://runsignup.com/race/il/maryville/maryvillepolicedonutdash).

**May 10 SIP, SAMPLE, STROLL**, Grafton. Participating restaurants and bars along Main Street will serve samples of their signature foods and beverages for participants to indulge in as you stroll the streets, shops and attractions. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Tickets are required to participate and are \$30 each. For tickets, visit [graftonilchamber.com](http://graftonilchamber.com).

**May 10 WOOFSTOCK**, Belleville. Music festival inspired event centered around dogs and dog loving people. Several live music performances, food trucks, dog-inspired events, vendors and demonstrations. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Rotary Dog Park, 110 North 6th Street. Call (618) 233-1416.

**May 10 & 11 DEPARTURE CELEBRATION**, Hartford. Celebrate the departure of Lewis & Clark as they set out on an expedition of discovery. Reenactors and historic artisans will celebrate this important date in Illinois and American history. Demonstrations will include artillery, muskets, candle making, fiber arts and cooking. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Lewis & Clark State Historic Site, One Lewis & Clark Trail. Call (618) 251-5811 or visit [campdubois.com](http://campdubois.com).

**May 16-18 ART ON THE SQUARE**, Belleville. Featuring the work of over 100 artists



**May 24 & 25 SPRING FESTIVAL**, Carlinville. Tractor club tractor parade both days at 2 p.m. Museum featuring Macoupin County and Illinois History (See our story on page 16.), print shop and country store, blacksmith shop, and original one-room schoolhouse and church. See demonstrations, antique tractors and vehicles, and a toy and craft show. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Live music noon - 3 p.m. both days. Free parking and admission to grounds. House tour for adult is \$5; children 6 - 12 years of age \$1; children 5 and younger free. Macoupin County Historical Society, 920 West Breckenridge Street. Visit [mchssociety.org](http://mchssociety.org).

### 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](mailto: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.



from over 27 states and one artist from outside the U.S., musical and stage performances, and local food and drink. The festival will include children's art activities, high school exhibits, live entertainment, art demonstrations, food and wine. Friday 4 - 9 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Admission is free. Call (800) 677-9255 or visit [artonthesquare.com](http://artonthesquare.com).

**May 17 NATIVE PLANT SALE**, Godfrey. Are you ready to plant natives in your yard this year? We will have experts on site that can help you pick the right plants for your yard and give you some practical advice for getting them to thrive. 9 a.m. - noon. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**May 17 REC FESTIVAL**, East Alton. The goal of this event is to encourage families to explore their outdoor recreational opportunities and learn how to go about them safely. From archery and hiking to weather and first aid there will be plenty for you and your family to test out and learn. Melvin Price Locks and Dam will be open for tours. Rain or shine event. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. The National Great Rivers Museum, 2 Lock and Dam Way. Call (618) 462-6979 or visit [mtrf.org](http://mtrf.org).

**May 17; June 28 CLASSIC FLICKS FOR CONSERVATION**, Godfrey. Watch a classic movie on our giant inflatable screen. 2025 will be the year of classic horror films at TNI. All movies this year will feature an episode of the 1935 movie serial "The Phantom Empire" as a pre-film short. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets, as well as your own snacks. No alcohol is permitted. No pre-registration required. Limited parking is available, so arrive early. May movie at 8:30 p.m.; June movie at 9 p.m. Event is free but donations are welcome. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit [thenatureinstitute.org](http://thenatureinstitute.org).

**May 17 & 18 POPS CONCERT: ON THE ROAD AGAIN**, Highland. The Heartland Community Chorus will take us across the USA with Broadway and jazz choral charts and solos. Saturday at 7 p.m.; Sunday at 3 p.m. Trinity Hall at St. Paul Catholic Church, 1412 Main Street. Visit [heartlandcommunitychorus.org](http://heartlandcommunitychorus.org).

**May 18 LAKE LOU YAEGER TRIATHLON**, Litchfield. With multiple race options available, athletes will kick off with a beach start, followed by a scenic bike ride through flat, picturesque country roads. The run portion takes you on a stunning tour of the lake area, winding through campsites and offering breathtaking views of the water and surrounding nature. Visit [mseracing.com/lakelouyaegetri](http://mseracing.com/lakelouyaegetri).

**May 18 STRAWBERRY FESTIVAL**, St. Jacob. A Strawberry festival hosted by St. Jacob United Church of Christ featuring crafts/vendors, musical entertainment, raffle, kids activities, bounce houses, food and strawberry desserts. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. Township Park, 239 West Main Street. Call (618) 401-8805 or visit [stjacobucc.org](http://stjacobucc.org).

**May 29 - July 28 MUSIC IN THE PARK**, Grafton. Bring your lawn chairs and coolers for a toe-tapping evening of great music along the Mississippi River. Every Thursday 7 - 9 p.m. Opening act by Grafton's Nickie Brooks starting at 6:30 p.m. Admission is free. The Grove Memorial Park, corner of Market and Main Streets. Visit [graftonilchamber.com](http://graftonilchamber.com).

**May 31 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: COMEDY & COUNTRY MUSIC**, Alton. Regional stars John Minnick and Bethany Timara will tickle your funny bones and warm your hearts. Music featuring a little cruise ship humor and a tribute to Olivia Newton John. 2 p.m. Admission is \$25. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit [altonlittletheater.org](http://altonlittletheater.org).



**May 30 - June 29 PICK YOUR OWN LAVENDER** Edwardsville. Pick your own lavender Friday - Sunday from 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. at the Stahlhut family farm, shop an old barn full of handmade lavender products, wander the wildflowers, purchase plants and enjoy the walking paths. Guided tours. Tenderloin Farms, 6368 St. James Drive. Call (618) 917-0188, follow us @Tenderloinfarms or visit [tflavender.com](http://tflavender.com).

**June 6 BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**, Edwardsville. Come celebrate the 2nd birthday of West End Service Station. This family friendly event will feature a car display, photo ops, old-fashioned soda and cupcakes for the special occasion. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis Street. Visit [cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station](http://cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station).

**June 6 & 7 INTERNATIONAL HORSERADISH FESTIVAL**, Collinsville. Summer festival featuring live music, food, a bloody Mary contest, cornhole tournament, root toss, Little Miss Horseradish pageant, 5K run, car show, crafts and kids activities. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Admission is free. Uptown at 221 West Main Collinsville. Call (618) 344-2884 or visit [internationalhorseradishfestival.com](http://internationalhorseradishfestival.com).

**June 7 ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL**, Edwardsville. Event will include live music, great food, classic car show and cruise, food vendors, history tent and local artists. 8 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. Admission is free. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Call (618) 692-7538 or visit [edwardsvillerroute66.com](http://edwardsvillerroute66.com).

**June 7 TWO RIVERS FAMILY FISHING FAIR**, Grafton. Event offers fishing, water-safety seminars, educational activities and prizes. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Pere Marquette State Park, 13112 Visitor Center Lane. Call (618) 786-3323, ext. 1.

**June 7, 27 COMMUNITY BAND PERFORMANCE**, Troy. Enjoy the sounds of the Troy Community Band. The June 7 performance will be a celebration of our 40th anniversary. 7 p.m. St Paul's Lutheran Church School, 112 North Border Street. Performances are subject to change for weather. Find us on Facebook at Troy Community Band.

**June 8 ALL-WHEELS DRIVE-IN CAR SHOW**, Alton. Come out for the cars and stay for the live music, 50-50 drawing, vendor displays, merchant sidewalk sale and great food. Event features more than 200 classic cars, hot rods and motorcycles. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Live music 1 - 3 p.m. Downtown on State and Belle Streets. Visit [downtownalton.com](http://downtownalton.com).


**June 13 BIKE RAMBLE**, Wood River. Bring your kids for a safe and exciting family night bike ride. Lineup at 7 p.m.; ride at 7:30 p.m. \$3 per person; \$6 per immediate family; child bike raffle \$1. First 175 riders receive t-shirt and bike reflector. Complete the bike ride and join us for refreshments and entertainment. The route begins and ends at the Round House, 633 North Wood River Avenue. Register at the Round House. For more information, call (618) 251-3130 or visit [wrparks.org/events/bike-ramble/](http://wrparks.org/events/bike-ramble/).





A chance to take in the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum (top) preceded the good news that Schusky, Prusacki and Stine will have the opportunity to represent Southwestern Electric on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Youth to Washington Tour this summer (left, above).





By participating in the Youth Tour experience, I hope to gain a deeper understanding of State government, and how businesses play a key part in our economy and democracy.

I want to be a part of a generation of people that want to work for a better future. I know that I can help to make a difference in my community and state if I become more involved.

- Margot Schusky

From the moment I stepped into the State Capitol to the moment I had gotten into the car to return home, I had felt as if a dream of mine was coming true. This was one of the best learning experiences I have ever had. I was given the opportunity to meet Charlie Meier, our State Rep. and even Senator Jason Plummer. I was able to tour the state Capitol building and put myself in the shoes of someone who works there. The building itself was beautiful, and everyone who worked there opened themselves up to allow us to ask questions and get a better understanding of what they do best.

I visited the Lincoln Museum with my group and it was as if we were seeing Lincoln's life laid out in front of us. It was like magic. We walked through different parts of his life, from when he was a child to his death. Being in the Lincoln Museum was like walking through the White House while Lincoln was the president and seeing what it would have been like.

Everything to do with the Springfield Youth Tour is fantastic. Meeting new friends who you get to experience new memories with or touring the state Capitol building – either way, enjoying a new thought process and a new perspective is exactly what this Youth Day is all about. This is an incredible opportunity, so believe you can do it, and try it.

- Ava Prusacki

### Youth Day Reflection

In early March, I was part of a group of students that travelled to Springfield with Southwestern Electric Cooperative for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's Youth Day. I'm not sure what expectations I had going into this, but I'm pretty sure they were surpassed!

I had never actually been to the state Capitol building before and to see the marble, murals, statues and stained glass that filled that building truly was a remarkable sight. As impressive as the Capitol was, what was equally interesting to me was the offices and tunnel system below the building. I had no idea that these even existed, so when we were given the chance to go underneath the Capitol, I was a little surprised to say the least!

We also got the opportunity to go to Representative Charles Meier's office, which was another great experience I had not been expecting. And, of course, as is Representative Meier's staple, we were given free bottled Skis.

All in all it was a great trip and I would highly recommend anyone to go, whether you even know what a cooperative is or not. In addition, the Lincoln Museum is also pretty cool, and I look forward to being able to do this again at Capitol Hill in D.C. this June.

- Wade Stine



