

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

OCTOBER 2025 • VOLUME 77 • ISSUE 10

87th Annual

RESTRUCTURED RATES,
NEW WAYS TO SAVE
HEADLINE 2025 MEETING

DIRECTORS
ELECTED

E-CYCLING DRIVE

ENERGY
ASSISTANCE

SMARTHUB

HARVEST SAFETY



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The application period for assistance for low-income families struggling to pay their energy bills is now open. Learn more.

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Thinking about building a grain bin? A little bit of foresight can prevent a lot of future health and safety issues.

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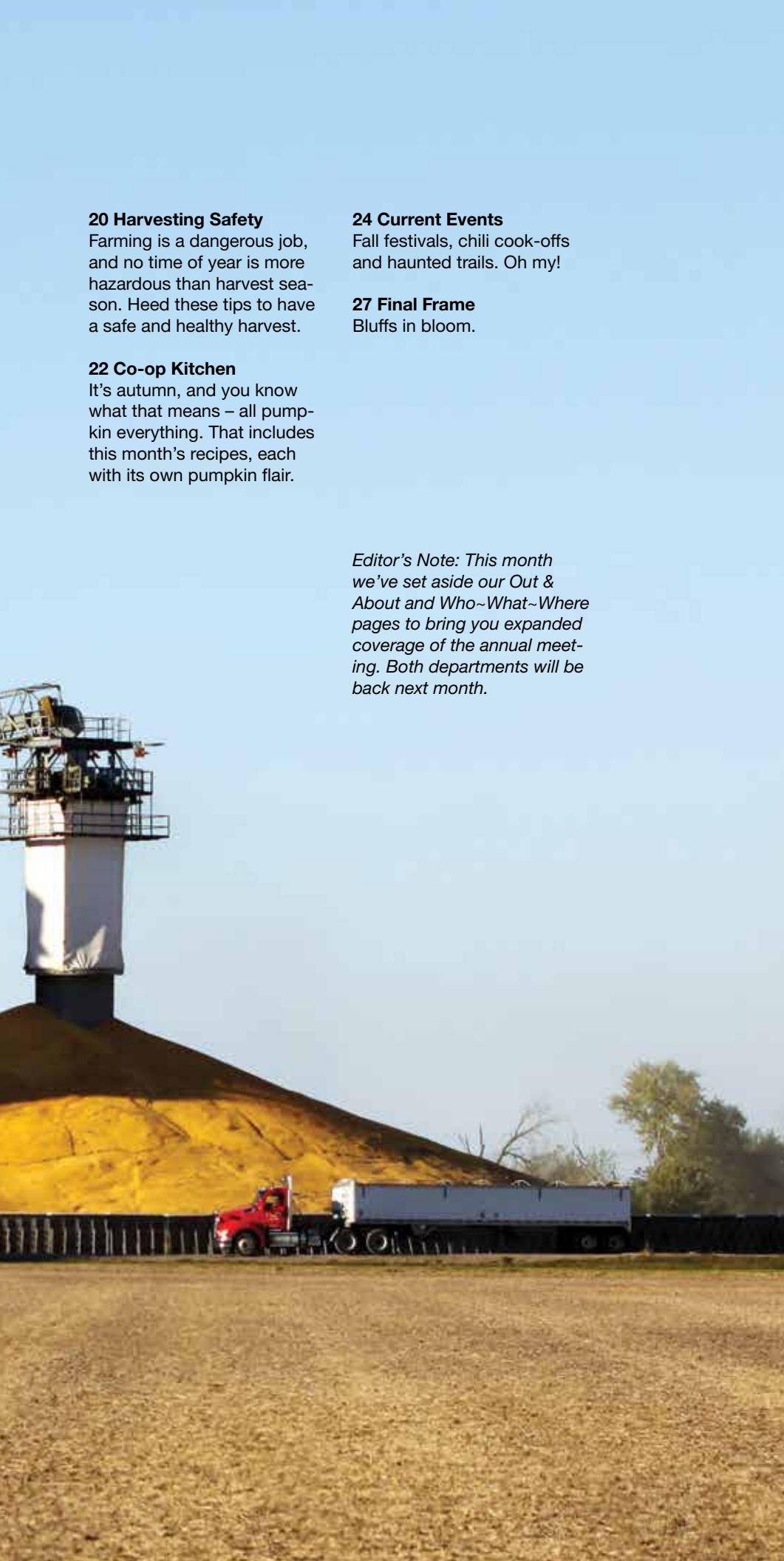
Rate restructuring and new ways for members to save on their energy bills were among the big topics at this year's 87th Annual Meeting of Members.

13 Directors Elected

Two incumbents and one newcomer were elected to three-year terms on Southwestern Electric's board of directors. Read more about them inside.

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Monsters lurk at this time of year – energy monsters, that is. Find out what they are and how to keep them at bay in this month's Energy & Efficiency column.



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20 Harvesting Safety

Farming is a dangerous job, and no time of year is more hazardous than harvest season. Heed these tips to have a safe and healthy harvest.

22 Co-op Kitchen

It's autumn, and you know what that means – all pumpkin everything. That includes this month's recipes, each with its own pumpkin flair.

24 Current Events

Fall festivals, chili cook-offs and haunted trails. Oh my!

27 Final Frame

Bluffs in bloom.

Editor's Note: This month we've set aside our Out & About and Who~What~Where pages to bring you expanded coverage of the annual meeting. Both departments will be back next month.

Reader Contest

We've hidden an image of a scarecrow 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 scarecrow, 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 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 inbox by the first day of the month following the month of publication.



For our October contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by November 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 December issue of The Southwestern.

JULY WINNER

Congratulations to Lucille McCloy of Mason. As the winner of our July Hide & Seek

contest drawing, Lucille will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric

bill. Thank you to everyone who participated in our July 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 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.
- October contest entries must be in our inbox or postmarked by November 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

From left, Josie and Nora Sautman of Pocahontas pause for a photo during Southwestern Electric Cooperative's



87th Annual Meeting of Members. Nora is the daughter of Josie and Ryan Sautman. Our annual meeting story begins on page 10.

CO-OP REMINDERS

October 13 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.



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 and 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.



YOUR SPARE CHANGE CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE THROUGH OPERATION ROUND UP

Neighbors helping neighbors. That's what a co-op is about. And that's the idea behind Operation Round Up (ORU), a charitable program governed, funded and supported by Southwestern Electric Cooperative members like you.

Here's how it works: After you sign up for ORU, Southwestern will round up the amount due on your monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar. Your donations are placed in the ORU account. The Southwestern Electric Cooperative Community Foundation board reviews ORU grant requests. ORU grants support various community projects across the co-op's service territory.

Since launching the program in 2005, **Southwestern Electric's Operation Round Up has assisted a wide variety of organizations**, including local food pantries, senior centers and fire departments.

Ready to get started? To join ORU today, just check the enrollment box on your electric bill or online, or contact Southwestern Electric Cooperative at (800) 637-8667. For more information about Operation Round Up, visit sweci.com.



Small change.
Big difference.

Cooperative hosts Oct. 25 recycling drive in St. Jacob

Southwestern Electric will host an e-cycling drive at its St. Jacob Distribution Center on Saturday, Oct. 25. Collection begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first. Electronics collected during the drive will be e-cycled by an EPA-approved recycling center.

Southwestern Electric's St. Jacob Distribution Center is located at 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob, IL 62281.

- 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 NICD) 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.

E-cycling — electronics recycling — 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.

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. You can learn more about CJD E-Cycling and the materials they recycle at www.cjddecycling.com.



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.

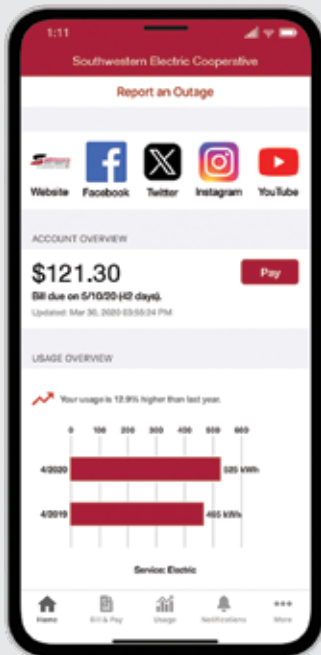
Alerts & Notifications. You can stay up to date on important account events via email or text messages, and receive the information you need to make informed decisions about your account.

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

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 or by downloading and exploring the SmartHub app from Google Play or the App Store.



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



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 new appliances impact your bill, and may suggest energy-saving measures that will offer the best return on your investment.

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.

Learn more about SmartHub at sweci.com/smarthub and on our social media channels.

LIHEAP Energy Assistance

The State of Illinois offers assistance to low-income families who struggle to pay their energy bills. Applications for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are accepted on a first-come, first-served basis until funds are exhausted. The current LIHEAP application period is Oct. 1, 2025 to Aug. 15, 2026, or until funding is exhausted.

The listings below will help you determine if you're eligible for assistance. Payment amounts are determined by income, household size, fuel type, geographic location and available funding.

Use the listing to find the agency that serves the county you live in, then contact the agency and tell them you'd like to apply for assistance through LIHEAP. The customer service representative

who takes your application will explain the requirements, the type of assistance available, and your rights under the program. When you apply for assistance, please bring the following items:

- Proof of gross income from all household members for the 30-day period prior to application date.
- A copy of your heating and electric bills issued within the last 30 days (if energy paid for directly).
- A copy of your rental agreement (if your heating costs are included in the rent) showing the monthly rental amount, landlord's contact information, and proof that utilities are included in the rent.
- Proof of Social Security numbers for all household members.

The agency will determine your

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

If your application is accepted, the agency will make the appropriate payment to your energy provider(s) on your behalf, or in some cases, directly to you. Payments will be made by the local agency within 15 days of the application's approval.

Electric co-op members, if approved, will receive assistance in the form of a one-time payment. Members using Pay-As-You-Go (see below) may qualify for LIHEAP funds. Contact your community action agency to find out if you qualify for energy assistance. For more information visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/communityservices/utilitybillassistance.html> or call 877-411-WARM.

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

County	Community Action Agency	Phone Number
Bond	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	618-532-7388
Clay	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Clinton	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	618-532-7388
Effingham	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Fayette	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Macoupin	Illinois Valley Economic Development Corp.	217-839-4431
Madison	Madison County Community Development	618-692-8940
Marion	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	618-532-7388
Montgomery	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Shelby	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
St. Clair	St. Clair Community Action Agency	618-277-6790

Income Eligibility

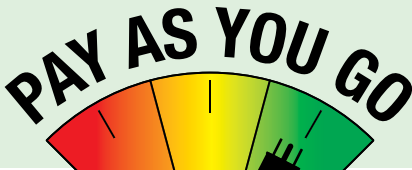
If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application (gross income, before taxes are deducted) is at or below the 60% state median income* as shown in the chart (right), you may be eligible to receive assistance. If you rent, and your heat is included in the rent, you may be eligible for a LIHEAP benefit.

**Program Year 2026 Income Guidelines are based on State Median Income and Federal Poverty Guidelines. The state reserves the right to adjust these levels based on the availability of federal appropriations.*

Family Size	30-Day Income
1	\$3,332
2	\$4,357
3	\$5,382
4	\$6,407
5	\$7,432
6	\$8,457
7	\$8,649
8	\$8,842

- Take control of your energy usage.
- No credit checks or security deposits.
- No fees for late payment or reconnection of service.
- Say goodbye to paper bills.

For more information on our Pay-As-You-Go program, visit sweci.com or call 800-637-8667 to speak to one of our member services representatives.



Building a grain bin?

Call us first!

**PLANNING TODAY
COULD SAVE LIVES
TOMORROW**

While safety is usually a matter of being in tune with your environment at any given moment, there are instances when forethought on your part can prevent accidents for years to come. Grain bin construction is

Left: Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors, or elevators, as printed on page 128 of the 2023 edition of the National Electrical Safety Code. Appears courtesy of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.

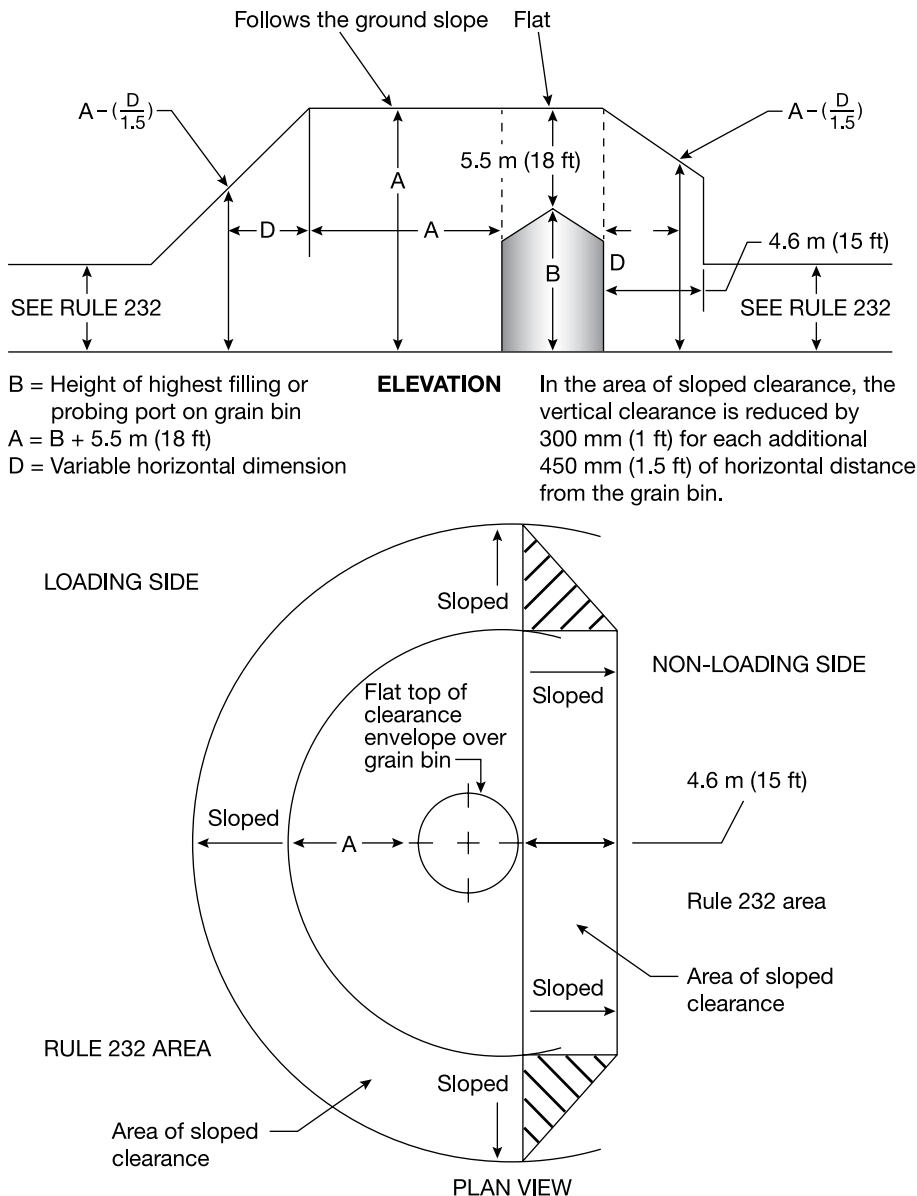
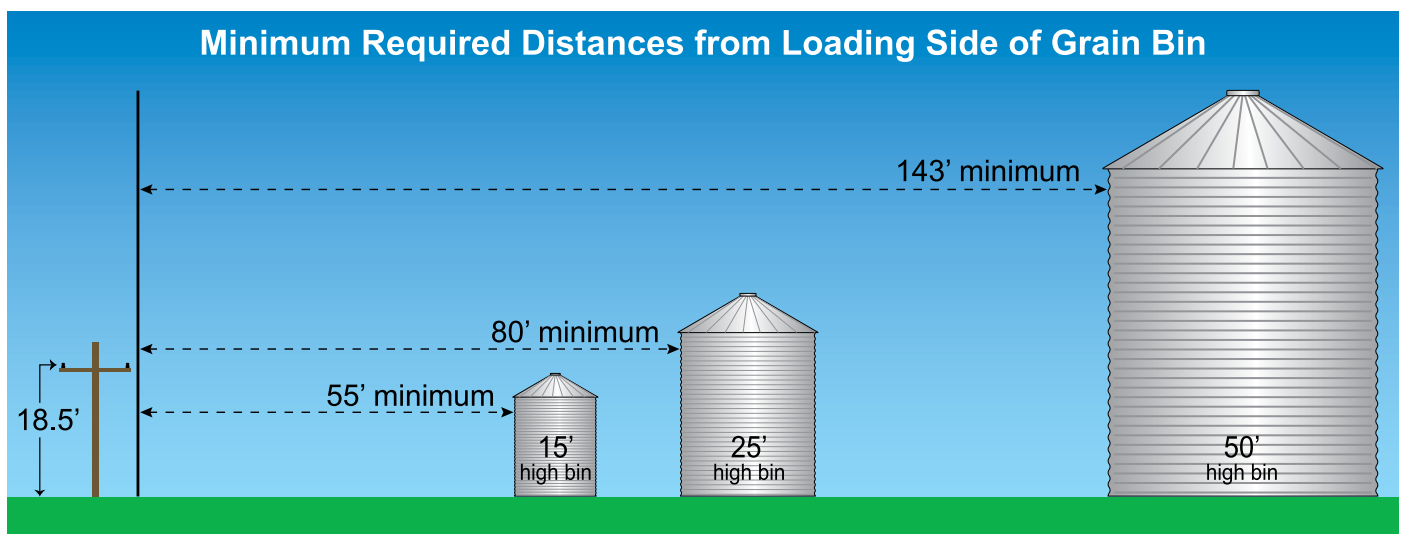


Figure 234-4(b)—Clearance envelope for grain bins filled by portable augers, conveyors, or elevators



a perfect example. Just as you’d survey a new field before planting, you should also take a minute to survey your grain bin site.

First, look up. Are there power lines nearby? They don’t have to be directly overhead to pose a problem. Plot the movement of your equipment around the field. How many times do you pass near or beneath power lines? Can you re-route traffic in ways that will keep you farther from them?

Perhaps you know precisely where the lines are and always use extreme caution when working near them. But what about the people who work with you? Are they just as diligent? Will a distraction or lapse in judgment place them in danger of electrocution?

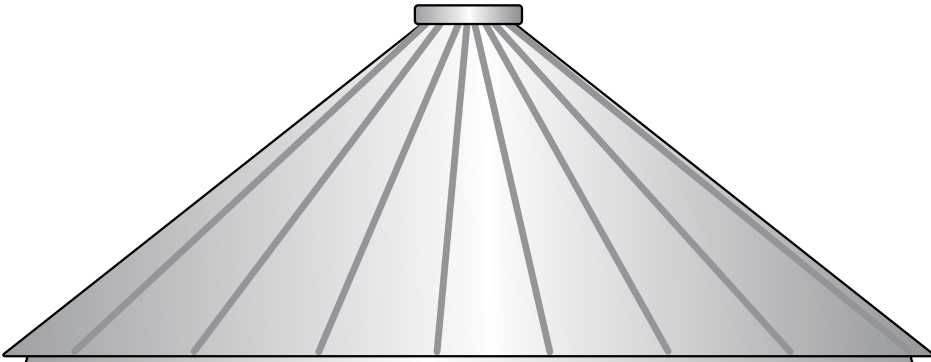
You can cut down on the danger significantly by building your bin far from power lines.

How far is far enough?

We’ve included diagrams and a table that illustrate requirements established by the National Electrical Safety Code (NESC). Keep these distances in mind when you search for a bin site, and then call Southwestern Electric Cooperative. We’ll send a staking engineer to survey your site. It’s the best way to make sure your bin will meet NESC guidelines.

While safety is certainly your first concern, there are also financial penalties for violating the NESC. If grain bins are constructed too close to power lines, Southwestern Electric is obligated to alter the path of the electrical system and bring the site into compliance. The member who violated the code by constructing the bin too close to a line is liable for the cost. In other words, if you build a bin too close to a power line, you’ll have to pay the cost of relocating our facilities.

The easiest way to avoid such a problem is to call Southwestern Electric Cooperative before building. Our staking engineers will be happy to visit your site and help you plot a safe and efficient solution. For assistance, please call (800) 637-8667 and ask for the engineering department.



Minimum Phase and Neutral Clearances from Grain Bin						
Adapted from NESC Rule 234F						
Voltages 12.47/7.2 kV through 34.5/19.9 kV						
Height of Bin (ft)	Loading Side of Bin			No-Loading Side of Bin		
	Horizontal Distance from Bin (ft)	Minimum Conductor Height (ft)	Minimum Conductor Height (ft-in)	Horizontal Distance from Bin (ft)	Minimum Conductor Height (ft)	Minimum Conductor Height (ft-in)
15	0	33.0	33' 0"	0	33.0	33' 0"
	33	33.0	33' 0"	10	26.3	26' 4"
	40	28.3	28' 4"	15	18.5	18' 6"
	50	21.7	21' 8"			
	54.75	18.5	18' 6"			
20	0	38.0	38' 0"	0	38.0	38' 0"
	38	38.0	38' 0"	10	31.3	31' 4"
	50	30.0	30' 0"	15	18.5	18' 6"
	60	23.3	23' 4"			
	67.25	18.5	18' 6"			
25	0	43.0	43' 0"	0	43.0	43' 0"
	43	43.0	43' 0"	10	36.3	36' 4"
	50	38.3	38' 4"	15	18.5	18' 6"
	60	31.7	31' 8"			
	70	25.0	25' 0"			
	79.75	18.5	18' 6"			
30	0	48.0	48' 0"	0	48.0	48' 0"
	48	48.0	48' 0"	10	41.3	41' 4"
	60	40.0	40' 0"	15	18.5	18' 6"
	70	33.3	33' 4"			
	80	26.7	26' 8"			
	90	20.0	20' 0"			
	92.25	18.5	18' 6"			
35	0	53.0	53' 0"	0	53.0	53' 0"
	53	53.0	53' 0"	10	46.3	46' 4"
	60	48.3	48' 4"	15	18.5	18' 6"
	70	41.7	41' 8"			
	80	35.0	35' 0"			
	90	28.3	28' 4"			
	100	21.7	21' 8"			
	104.75	18.5	18' 6"			
NOTE: Vertical clearances, however, must be met using the worst-case sag conditions, as described in rule 234A of the NESC.						

Co-op Restructures Rates, Offers Members New Ways to Save in 2026

Story by Joe Richardson | Photos by Mike Barns & Joe Richardson



CEO Bobby Williams explains Southwestern's Time of Use Rates to annual meeting attendees. Time of Use Rates will be implemented in 2026.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative members will see new opportunities to lower their bills after a rate restructuring discussed during the co-op's 87th Annual Meeting of Members, held Saturday, Sept. 6, at the American Farm Heritage Museum in Greenville.

Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams opened his remarks by addressing a question he'd been asked repeatedly in recent weeks: "I'm served by Southwestern Electric and my neighbor is served by an investor-owned utility. His energy bills have soared. Are mine about to do the same?" The answer is no."

Williams said last month Southwestern began fielding calls from customers of investor-owned utilities who wanted to switch providers after their energy bills

skyrocketed. Rising costs of generation, transmission and distribution are affecting utilities across the country, he explained.

"Some of our residential members will see a small increase in their bills next year. Some of you won't see your bills increase at all," Williams said. "We're still in the process of restructuring rates, so I can't offer you numbers. I can tell you by this time next year, you'll have a lot more control over your energy bill."

Southwestern recently completed a rate study to evaluate what it costs to provide service to different groups of members. The study revealed that while some groups were paying more than their fair share, others were paying less.

"We're restructuring our rates to ensure that every group — residential, farm, and commercial — contributes



fairly to the financial wellbeing of your cooperative,” Williams said. At the same time, Southwestern is simplifying its rate structure, reducing the number of rate classes from 40 to 12.

In 2026, members will notice adjustments to several line items on their bills. The distribution charge will decline, capacity and transmission costs will increase, and the wholesale power cost adjustment will reset to zero, as it reflects up-to-date expenses.

The residential cost of energy — 3.77 cents per kilowatt-hour — will not change.

Williams outlined two major changes that will give members more control over their energy bills: a Demand Charge and Time of Use Rates.

The Demand Charge is based on the single hour in the month a household uses the most power. “If you run your space heater, dryer, dishwasher, and charge your EV all at 4 p.m., your peak demand goes up, and so does your Demand Charge. Spread those out, and your Demand Charge goes down, and

Continued on next page ►

“We’re still in the process of restructuring rates, so I can’t offer you numbers. I can tell you by this time next year, you’ll have a lot more control over your energy bill.”

— CEO Bobby Williams

How Your Bill is Changing		
	2025	2026
Energy.....	@ 0.0377	@ 0.0377
Distribution.....	@ 0.0335	↓
Capacity & Transmission	@ 0.0330	↑
WPCA.....	@ 0.01501	@ 0.00000



Manager of Member Services Jennifer Gillan (top left) provides a microphone for member Mark Sargis of Greenville during the meeting’s question and answer segment. Below: Executive Assistant Brooke Scott records election results delivered by Election Committee Chairperson Steven Laesch of Greenville.



Continued from page 11 ►

so does your bill,” Williams said. “This isn’t a new cost. It’s already built into your bill. We’ve broken it out so we can reward you for lowering demand. When you lower your demand, you lower our costs, and we’ll pass that savings along to you.”

Time of Use Rates vary by when energy is used. Energy costs peak in the afternoon, drop in evenings and early mornings, and fall to their lowest prices overnight. “That means you can save money by doing laundry before bed, running your dishwasher in the morning, and charging your EV overnight,” Williams explained. “We want to give

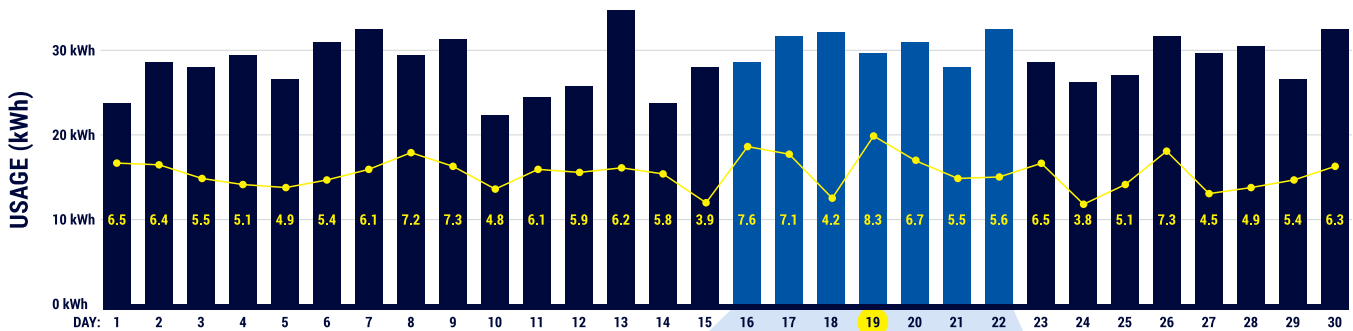
Continued on page 14 ►



Human Resources Administrator Marissa Horn (left) and Credentials and Election Committee member Brad Stein of Brownstown record votes.

Peak Hour Will Set Your Demand Charge

Your Demand Charge won’t be calculated from your total daily use.
It will be based on the single hour each month when you use the most electricity.

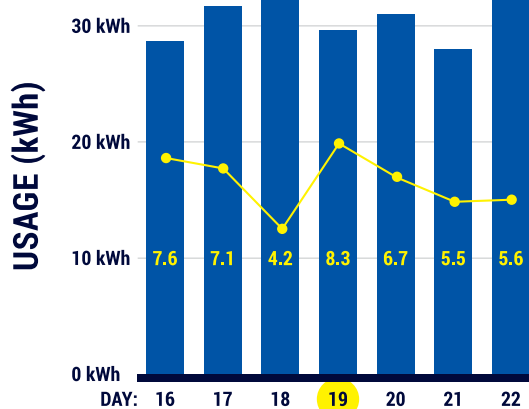


Members will gain more control over their bills in 2026 with a Demand Charge and Time of Use Rates.

The Demand Charge is based on the single hour in the month a household uses the most power. If you run your space heater, dryer, dishwasher, and charge your EV all at 4 p.m., your peak demand goes up, and so does your Demand Charge. Spread those out, and your Demand Charge goes down.

● DEMAND (kW)

The Demand Charge is based on the single hour in the month when you use the most power.



Grapperhaus, Marcoot and Schwarm Elected to Board

Three members of Southwestern Electric Cooperative were elected to the board of directors during the co-op's 87th Annual Meeting of Members, held Saturday, Sept. 6, at the American Farm Heritage Museum in Greenville. Southwestern members elected one member from each of the co-op's three voting districts to serve on the board of directors.

From District I, incumbent Sandy Grapperhaus of Collinsville defeated challenger Kevin Kirby of Edwardsville. Grapperhaus received 1,403 votes and 533 members voted for Kirby.

From District II, Amy Marcoot defeated Michael Willman. Marcoot received 1,098 votes while 833 members voted for Willman. Both candidates are from Greenville.

From District III, incumbent Ann Schwarm of Loogootee defeated challenger Heidi Schulte of Vandalia. Schwarm received 1,156 votes while 764 members voted for Schulte.

Each director will serve a three-year term on the board.

Sandy

Grapperhaus

A lifelong local resident, Sandy Grapperhaus has been a member of Southwestern Electric for 39 years. First elected to the board in 2011, she has served as vice president and secretary, and has been the cooperative's treasurer since 2022.

Grapperhaus worked with the co-op's directors and management team to guide infrastructure investment and supported the installation of new technology across Southwestern's distribution system. She



was actively involved in the development of a rate study that resulted in a more transparent, informative bill which offers a line-item listing of expenses associated with providing power.

Grapperhaus serves on the Executive Committee, Scholarship Committee and the Emerging Technologies Committee. She has earned both the Credentialed Cooperative Director designation and Board Leadership Certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Sandy Grapperhaus works as an executive assistant at Korte Construction Co. in Highland and helps her husband Dan manage their small farm between Troy and Collinsville. They have three grown children.

Amy

Marcoot

For Amy Marcoot, the cooperative model isn't just a business framework — it's a reflection of shared values

and community commitment. As CEO of Marcoot Jersey Creamery, a seventh-generation Jersey dairy farm specializing in artisan and farmstead cheeses, her connection to Southwestern Electric Cooperative reaches back to 1954, when her grandparents purchased the farm her family runs today.

After graduating from college and spending time overseas, Marcoot returned to Greenville in 2009 and purchased the family farm and creamery. She currently serves on the University of Illinois Alumni Board and works in an advisory role for that organization.

During her first term on the board, she plans to prioritize quality service, affordable energy, system reliability and being



accessible to members. She also plans to focus on forward-thinking energy policies, storm preparedness and infrastructure investment.

A third-generation cooperative member, Amy Marcoot joined Southwestern Electric in 2009 after returning to her family's farm south of Greenville.

Ann

Schwarm

First elected to the board in 1993, Ann Schwarm has dedicated more than three decades to advancing the co-

op's mission and serving its members. As board president from 2016 to 2023, Schwarm led the co-op through a period of industry transition and market volatility, helping Southwestern secure the long-term wholesale power contract that continues to serve members today.

Schwarm chairs the co-op's Emerging Technologies Committee, serves on the Policy & Bylaws Committee, and is Southwestern's liaison to the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, the co-op's statewide trade association, for which she has emceed the state leadership luncheon the last two years.

She has been recognized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, earning both Credentialed Cooperative Director designation and Director Gold Certification.

Ann Schwarm and her husband Gene live on a farm in rural Loogootee. Married for 44 years, they have two sons — Alex and Andy — and three grandchildren: Augie, Ada and Seb.



► *Continued from page 12*

members who choose to use our Time of Use Rates ample opportunity to adjust their habits before we make the rates available,” he said. “Next year, we’ll hold open houses, publish articles and post videos to walk you through ways to save.”

Williams emphasized that the co-op’s proactive approach is designed to shield members from substantial bill increases seen elsewhere.

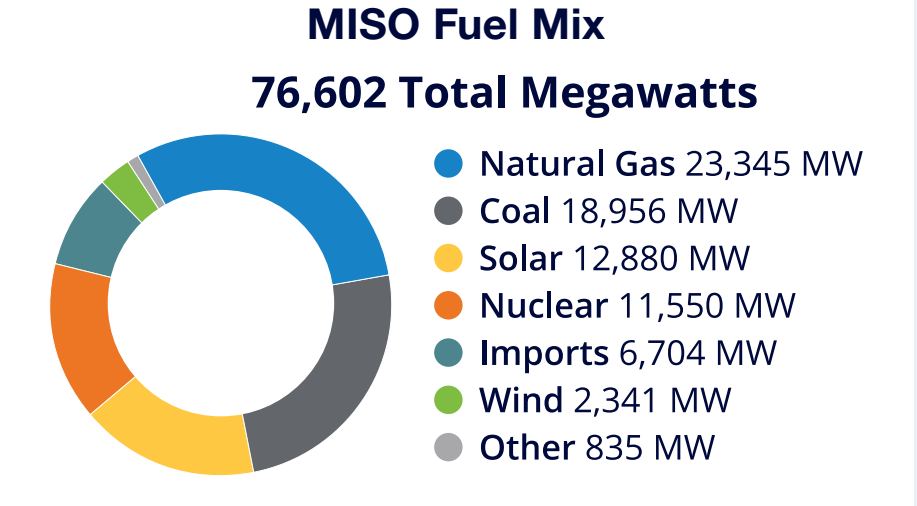
“We’ll implement our rate restructuring and introduce our Demand Charge and Time of Use Rates next year. I don’t have a date for you at this point. We’re sharing this information early because we know you’re concerned about your bill,” he said. “We’re doing everything possible to protect you from the significant increases some investor-owned utility customers are facing.”

He also highlighted broader challenges in the energy market. Capacity costs — the price utilities pay to ensure reliable supply — have risen dramatically. “Two years ago we paid \$10 a megawatt-day for capacity,” Williams said. “Last year, it was \$30. This year it was \$666.50. That added \$2 million to our costs. That’s \$2 million we couldn’t invest in substations, new lines, right-of-way maintenance, or technology. Two million dollars we couldn’t invest in you.”

Williams closed with a call for grassroots advocacy to help balance affordability, reliability, and sustainability in state energy policy.

“Today, more than half the power in

Figure 1.



our region is generated by gas and coal. In Illinois, legislators are phasing out those resources. That drives up costs and in the same stroke undermines reliability,” Williams said. “Electric cooperatives have promised to provide reliable, affordable, sustainable power to our members. We need lawmakers to recognize the value of that promise, and empower us to keep it.”

He urged members to join Voices for Cooperative Power, a grassroots network of more than one million co-op advocates nationwide. The group informs energy policy, protects cooperative interests, and amplifies the voice of rural communities.

“There’s no cost to sign up, no cost to speak out, no cost to make yourself heard,” Williams said. “But silence comes at great cost. We’re already paying the price.”

Board President Jerry Gaffner touched on the promise of new technology, citing the rising demand for artificial intelligence and opportunities associated with the data centers that make it possible. Gaffner noted that data centers typically locate outside large metro areas — places where cooperatives often provide electric service.

“Co-ops are in a unique position,” he said. “We have the power and the infrastructure that data centers require. Within our service area, we’re already seeing these opportunities and our staff is diligently vetting them.”

Fifteen years ago, ethanol plants drove high loads and revenue for rural systems. Data centers are the modern equivalent. Unlike ethanol, which peaked and faded, AI and cloud computing are projected to grow indefinitely, Gaffner said. That

Continued on page 16 ►

Figure 2.

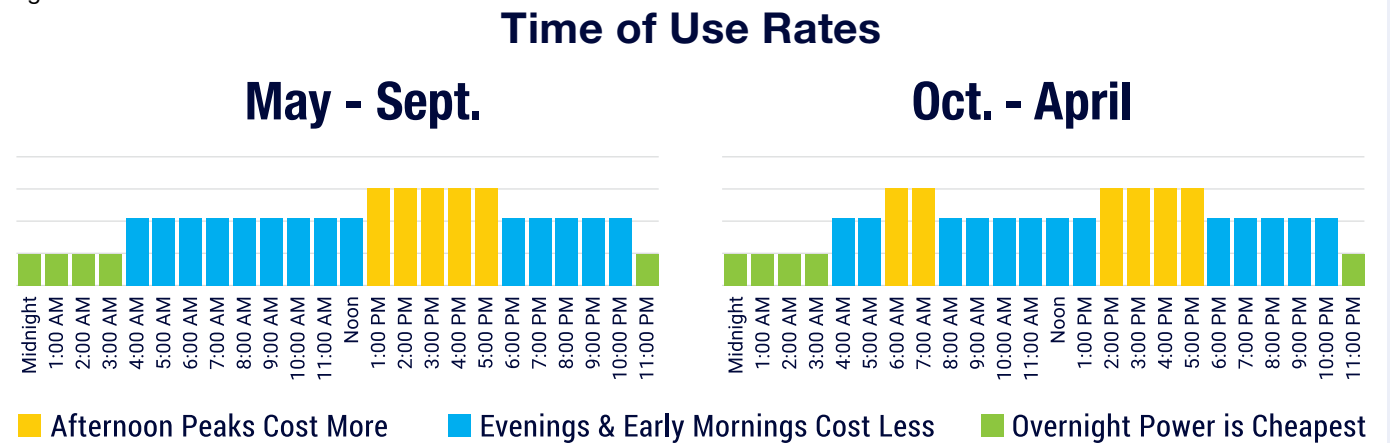


Figure 3.

MISO Summer Auction Clearing Prices shown in \$/MW-Day

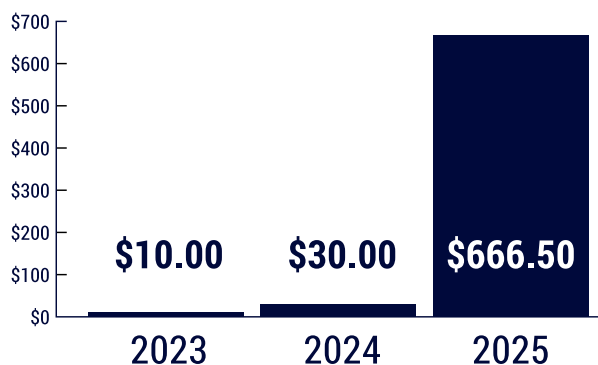


Figure 1. Totals posted by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) — the organization responsible for managing power supply and demand in our region of the grid — show more than half the energy for our region comes from gas and coal.

Figure 2. Southwestern Electric will offer Time of Use Rates in 2026. Time of Use Rates vary by when energy is used.

Figure 3. Capacity costs — the price utilities pay to ensure reliable supply — have risen dramatically. Two years ago the co-op paid \$10 per megawatt-day for capacity. Last year capacity cost \$30 per megawatt day. In 2025, capacity costs soared to \$666.50 per megawatt-day.



“When Southwestern calls about an ease-ment, please return the call. A quick response keeps costs down for you, your neighbors, and every member of this cooperative.”

— Board President Jerry Gaffner



Baylee Flowers (right), legal and government relations coordinator for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield, Ill., helps members sign up for Voices for Cooperative Power. Below: Josie Sautman of Pocahontas (in red) and her children Peyton, James, John and Nora are served breakfast by Staking Engineers Kathleen Lewey and Logan Cayce.





From top: Staking Engineer Natalie Goesten Kors talks with members Kathy and Roger Frey of Pocahontas. Dispatcher Andrea Strauch (left) and Meter Technician Jo Ellen Wharton register members to vote. Linemen stage a live line demonstration at the American Farm Heritage Museum.

► *Continued from page 14*
demand can translate into jobs, tax revenue and infrastructure improvements for co-op members, provided projects are vetted with contracts and costs secured in advance.

Gaffner also discussed the vital role easements play in infrastructure improvements. Easements — agreements that allow the cooperative to build and maintain lines on member property — are essential to keeping projects on schedule and affordable. “When members don’t grant easements or don’t return calls, we face delays and cost overruns. That costs all of us money,” he told the crowd.

Southwestern is moving from decades-old blanket easements to more precise,

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Left: Member Services Representatives Allissa Bohlen and Lindsey Lampe prepare for early voting.



Right: St. Jacob Warehouseman Shane Howes sets up a photo op.



Future members wait for reports from the podium.



From left, retiree Dave Barbey, Director Brad Lurkins and retiree Mike Curry talk shop during breakfast.



A family collects their attendance gifts after registering to vote at the American Farm Heritage Museum.



Accounting Clerk Jessica Whitehead, Cashier Receptionist Sarah McConnell and Accounting Manager Mallory David take a break after helping members of the Credentials and Election Committee count votes.



A member talks with Forestry Manager Daniel Page.

AN APPETITE FOR ENERGY

This month we identify five power-hungry household items and share ways to feed them without emptying your wallet.

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

When it comes to comfort, there's no place like home. With the help of household appliances and home environmental systems, we can dial in data and create conditions to suit our personal preferences, morning, noon and night.

But that same technology can make us uncomfortable when it's time to pay our energy bills — particularly in winter and summer months.

If you notice spikes in your electric bills as temperatures rise and fall, here are five common culprits, and ways to offset that expense without sacrificing comfort.

HEATING SYSTEMS

We couldn't weather Illinois' cold without an effective home heating system. But from December through February, the same system or appliance that takes the edge off winter is likely consuming more energy than any other system or appliance in your home. The



Use a programmable or smart thermostat to reduce your heating bills by lowering the temperature when you are away from home, and bumping it up to the temperature you're comfortable with shortly before you return home.

kilowatt-hour (kWh) range for running a heating system can be broad, with energy consumption varying widely by the type of system, size, manufacturer, and efficiency rating. Regardless of where your system lands on that scale, you can take steps to optimize its efficiency.

- Use a programmable or smart thermostat to reduce your heating bills by lowering the temperature when you are away from home, and bumping it up to the temperature you're comfortable with shortly before you return home.
- Schedule regular maintenance for your heating system to ensure that it is running at optimal efficiency.
- Consider replacing an older system with a new, high efficiency system, such as a heat pump.

SPACE HEATERS

Space heaters can be a helpful supplement to your primary heating system. They allow you to save money



Don't rely on space heaters to warm your entire home. It is never more efficient to run more than one space heater, rather than your main heating system.

by setting your household thermostat at a lower temperature, while you rely on your space heater to make a smaller, more frequently used area warmer and more comfortable.

But don't rely on space heaters to warm your entire home. It is never more efficient to run more than one space heater, rather than your main heating system. If you opt to use space heaters, be aware of how much energy they use. A 1,500-watt space heater will consume 1.5 kWh for each hour that it runs. If used frequently, that energy will add up quickly.

Additionally, keep in mind that space heaters are fire hazards. They should never be left unattended. Read the manufacturer's guide, make sure you understand the appliance's limitations, and observe the safety precautions.

WATER HEATERS

According to the Department of Energy, water heating can account for up to 18 percent of your home's energy use. The amount of energy your water heater consumes will vary by brand, size, and efficiency rating. The number of people in your home, your water temperature

preferences, and your appliances also impact water heater energy use.

You can reduce water heater energy use by:

- Running your clothes washer on the cold setting whenever possible.
- Keeping showers short.
- Setting the temperature on your water heater no higher than 120 degrees F.

COOLING SYSTEMS

We've just stepped into autumn, so the summer cooling season is months away — but these items are worth noting now as you review your 2025 energy bills and plan for 2026.

Like your heating system, the efficiency of your air conditioning unit will vary greatly by the make, model and size of the system or appliance. And just as your heating system probably consumes the lion's share of your energy budget in winter, your cooling system is probably the dominant factor in your summer electric bills. You can take simple steps to improve the efficiency of your cooling system.

- Schedule routine maintenance for your cooling system.
- Close vents in rooms that are not used frequently.



According to the Department of Energy, water heating can account for up to 18 percent of your home's energy use.

With most units ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 watts, a dehumidifier can consume a large amount of power.

- Use a programmable or smart thermostat to keep temperatures higher during hours you are away from home, and to lower the temperature shortly before you return home.
- Consider checking insulation levels in your attic. Adequate insulation will keep more of the sun's heat out of your home, so your cooling system will not have to work as hard.

DEHUMIDIFIERS

A dehumidifier can be a valuable asset for keeping your home's humidity level in check. It can prevent the growth of mildew, eliminate odors, and make your living area more comfortable. But with most units ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 watts, a dehumidifier can consume a large amount of power. Here are steps you can take to reduce the operating costs.

- Be sure your dehumidifier is sized properly for the area it's serving.
- Close off the room in which you've placed your dehumidifier, so it isn't trying to serve a larger area than it can effectively accommodate.
- Set the timer on your appliance or set it to shut off at the desired humidity level.
- Replace older models with newer, more efficient models.

Household appliances and home environmental systems bring comfort and convenience to our lives. Being aware of your home's most power-hungry appliances and systems, and how to use those items effectively, will help you save valuable energy while lowering your monthly power bills.

Have a question about energy efficiency? Contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at julie.lowe@sweci.com.

Harvesting Safety

Farming ranks among the most dangerous occupations in America. Harvest season can be especially hazardous. Long hours, lack of sleep, and mental fatigue can lead to serious injuries. Here are a few suggestions to help you make it through the season safely.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Just as you'd survey a field before planting, take a minute to look around your work site. Are there power lines nearby? They don't have to be directly overhead to pose a danger. Plot the movement of your equipment around your farm. How many times are you passing near power lines? You can avoid electrical contact accidents by rerouting traffic in ways that will keep you and other workers far from potential points of contact.



PHOTO COURTESY SCOTT FITZGERALD, FOREMAN/POLYPHASE METERMAN & TESTER

When a farmer brought down a pole in the co-op's service area, he immediately called Southwestern Electric at 800-637-8667. Crews isolated the site and safely cleared the pole and lines. At the end of the day, everyone went home safe and sound.

Additional tips to keep in mind:

- When you're moving equipment, use a spotter — someone with a broader view of the equipment and its surroundings.
- Familiarize your coworkers with the location of overhead power lines on or near your property.
- Keep in mind that non-metallic materials — lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes and hay — will conduct electricity.
- Plot your route in and out of fields, to and from bins and elevators, and down public roads to avoid power lines. If someone transports equipment for you, specify a safe route and explain why certain routes are necessary.
- Use ladders with caution.
- Be aware of power lines and cords during construction projects.

IN CASE OF CONTACT

If you're driving a tractor, combine, or other onboard machinery and it comes into contact with a power line, stay onboard. Call Southwestern Electric at (800) 637-8667. We'll dispatch a crew to de-energize the line so you can safely move your machinery.

ALERT TODAY, ALIVE TOMORROW: HEADS UP FOR FARM SAFETY



Stay safe around downed power lines. Consider all lines, equipment and conductors to be live and dangerous.



If the vehicle is on fire, or you must exit for other safety reasons, follow these steps:

1. Jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or clothes touch the ground and the machinery at the same time.
2. Land with feet together and hop away in small steps to minimize the path of electric current and avoid electric shock.
3. Keep going until you are at least 40 ft. away.
4. Call for help. Make sure no one gets within 40 ft. of the downed line.
5. Do not re-enter the area or vehicle until emergency responders and your electric co-op crews determine it is safe.

If your equipment catches on fire and forces you to abandon the vehicle, leap as far as possible from the machinery. Don't allow your body to come into contact with the equipment and the ground at the same time.

If you realize your machinery is touching a power line after you've left the vehicle, don't attempt to move it. Call Southwestern Electric Cooperative at 800-637-8667. We'll dispatch a crew to de-energize the line so you can safely move the equipment.

CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

If you're planning a project that requires digging, call JULIE (Joint Utility Locating Information for Excavators) at 811 before you dig. Tell the operator where you're planning to dig and what type of work you'll be doing. JULIE will notify the necessary utilities. The utilities will send a locator to mark the approximate location of their underground lines, pipes and cables, so you'll know what's below and be able to dig safely.



CO-OP KITCHEN

Pumpkin Batch



Spiced Pumpkin Bread prepared
& photographed by Mike Barns,
mike.barns@sweci.com

PUMPKIN DELIGHT

Ingredients

- 1½ cups flour
- 1 stick of margarine
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
- 1½ cups milk
- 2 (3 ounce) packages vanilla instant pudding
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 (8 ounce) container Cool Whip

Directions

1. Mix together flour, margarine, sugar and nuts by hand.
2. Put in 13 x 9 inch baking dish and bake at 300° for 12 - 15 minutes.
3. Crumble while still warm and reserve 1 cup of the crumbs.
4. Combine milk and pudding, and mix in pumpkin, salt and spices.
5. Fold in Cool Whip.
6. Spread mixture over crumbs, top with reserved crumbs and chill 2 hours.

PUMPKIN GOOEY BUTTER CAKE

Ingredients

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 large egg
- ½ cup butter melted
- 8 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin
- ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- 3 large eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup butter melted
- 16 ounce box powdered sugar
- pecan halves for garnish
- whipped cream for topping

Directions

1. Combine cake mix, 1 egg and melted butter and mix well.
2. Pat cake mixture into lightly greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. For the filling, beat cream cheese until smooth.
4. Beat in pumpkin, sugar, salt, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, 3 eggs and vanilla.
5. Add butter and beat until smooth.
6. Set aside 2 tablespoons powdered sugar, add remainder to the pumpkin mixture and mix well.
7. Spread remaining 2 tablespoons over pumpkin mixture.
8. Bake at 350° for 40 - 50 minutes. Don't overbake.

SPICED PUMPKIN BREAD

Ingredients

- 3½ cups all purpose flour
- 3 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons ground all spice
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon cloves
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 (15 ounce) can pumpkin
- ¾ cup water
- 4 eggs
- ¾ cup vegetable oil

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine the dry ingredients.
2. In a separate bowl, combine pumpkin, water, eggs and oil.
3. Stir pumpkin mixture into dry ingredients until just moistened.
4. Pour into 3 greased 8½ x 4½ inch loaf pans.
5. Bake at 350° for 50 - 60 minutes or until toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean.
6. Cool for 10 minutes and remove from pans to wire rack to cool completely.

CURRENT EVENTS

October 2-31 MOURNING COL. STEPHENSON, Edwardsville. Each room of Stephenson's federal style home portrays a different aspect of the days leading up to and following the Colonel's untimely death on October 10, 1822. Uncover the mysteries surrounding the Colonel's death and the aftermath for his young widow and orphaned children. Tours are Thursday - Saturday, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. and Sunday, noon - 3 p.m. Last tour of each day must begin by 2 p.m. Colonel Benjamin Stephenson House, 409 South Buchanan Street. Visit stephensohouse.org.

October 3-4, 10-11, 17-18, 24-25, 31; November 1 HALLOWEENVILLE, Greenville. Jack-O-Lantern Express will be running through Halloweenville with lots of friendly ghosts, skeletons, witches and more. All ages are welcome. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. The hamburger hotdog grill will be open with a limited menu of food, snacks and drinks until 8:30 p.m. Admission is \$5. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Visit americanfarmheritagemuseum.org.

October 3-5 LIVING HISTORY DAYS, Madison County. Three days of discovery and fun at numerous locations across Madison County. The schedule of events includes concerts, book fairs, crafts, a quilt show, Civil War reenactors, Chautauqua, demonstrations and more. For details and locations, visit madcohistory.org.

October 4 FALL FESTIVAL, Lebanon. Arts, crafts, food and entertainment spanning

3 blocks of Lebanon's "Brick Street". 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Visit lebanonil.org.

October 4 & 5, 11 & 12 VINTAGE VOICES, Alton. Step back in time on these guided, gentle-walking tours and meet a controversial publisher, war heroes, and prominent persons from Alton's rich history portrayed by local actors. Noon - 2:30 p.m. Adult \$15; students \$10. Tours will leave every 15 - 20 minutes from the main gate of the City Cemetery at 5th and Vine Streets. For tickets, call (618) 531-6641 or visit facebook.com/vintagevoicestours.

October 6; November 5 MOONLIGHT HIKE, Godfrey. Join us on a night hike on the trails of the Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve. The terrain is light to moderate and appropriate for families. The hike will be about 2 miles with stops along the way. Meet at Talahi Lodge. October hike leaves promptly at 7 p.m. and will return at about 8:15 p.m.; November hike leaves promptly at 5:30 p.m. and will return at about 6:45 p.m. Free for members; non-members \$5. Registration is required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. To register, visit thenatureinstitute.org.

October 10 & 11 CHILI COOK-OFF, Belleville. Features the culinary creations of individuals, local organizations and area businesses. Event includes more than 60 food vendors, live music and adult beverages for purchase. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. both days. Admission is free. Veterans Memorial Fountain and along Main Street. Visit bellevillechili.com.

October 11 BELLEVILLE PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA CONCERT #1, Belleville. Join us for the opening concert of the 160th concert season. Soprano Christine Brewer will perform on this celebratory program. The orchestra will open with the rousing Zampa Overture, by Ferdinand Hérold, which was played by the orchestra on its first concert on January 26, 1867. The heart of the program will be a performance of Four Last Songs for soprano and orchestra by Richard Strauss. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Admission is free. Union United Methodist Church 721 East Main Street. Visit bellevillephilharmonic.org.

October 11 ETERNAMENTE: A DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS SPECTACULAR, Lebanon. This show, starring Mariachi Garibaldi de Jaime Cuéllar and Ballet Folklorico del Rio Grande is an homage to Mexico's rich cultural heritage, blends graceful traditional dance with vibrant storytelling that also tips a hat to the great Mexican singers of yesteryear such as Vicente Fernandez, Pedro Infante, Lucha Villa, and more. 7:30 p.m. Ticket fees vary. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. For tickets, visit thehett.com.

October 16 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM, Collinsville. Visitors can enjoy appetizers, beer, wine, and soft drinks while touring the museum. There will also be a special guest from Collinsville's historic past. 6:30 - 9 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each. Paper tickets will be sold at the museum during regular hours, from noon to 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday.

Purchase tickets online at collinsvillemuseum.org. Collinsville Historical Museum, 406 West Main Street.

October 16 THE MUSIC OF LEWIS & CLARK, Lebanon. Follow the amazing adventures of Lewis and Clark, with a musical journey from St. Louis, up to the Missouri River, across the Rocky Mountains, and all the way to the Pacific Ocean. 10 a.m. Ticket fees vary. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. For tickets, visit thehett.com.

October 17 & 18 HAUNTED TRAIL Carlyle. Brave souls embark on a hayride from Dam West Boat Ramp to the Little Prairie Nature Trail, where your hike on the Haunted Trail will begin with ghosts, goblins and ghouls awaiting you. Not recommended for children below 10 years of age. Strollers or wagons are not permitted. Parking and food vendors available at the Dam West Boat Ramp parking lot at 14500 Lake Road. 6:30 - 10 p.m. Admission is \$10. All proceeds will go to support the Fireworks Spectacular. Visit carlylelake.com.

October 18 ADVENTURE NIGHT, Troy. Face painting, food, drinks, free candy, bounce house, pumpkin decorating, dog costume contest, kids costume contest, trunk or treat. 5 - 8 p.m. Tri-Township Park, 410 Wickliffe Street by the petting zoo. Visit tritownshippark.org.

October 18 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SYMPHONY NO. 5 - TCHAIKOVSKY,

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.

► *Continued from page 16*

corridor-specific agreements that protect both the cooperative and the landowner. These updated easements ensure crews can access and maintain lines safely while respecting property boundaries.

They also help members avoid paying for the same infrastructure twice. If lines are built in public rights of way and later need to be moved for road projects, Southwestern pays the cost of relocation. Those expenses, which can reach tens of thousands of dollars, are shared among members. If those same lines are on a member's property, the co-op is reimbursed for relocation costs.

Gaffner closed with an appeal to the membership. "When Southwestern calls about an easement, please return the call. A quick response keeps costs down for you, your neighbors, and every member of this cooperative." 



Members react to Board President Jerry Gaffner's report. Right: Member Services Representatives Allissa Bohlen (left) and Toni Wodtke register a member to vote. Below: CEO Bobby Williams encouraged members to sign up for Voices for Cooperative Power.



Three Southwestern Electric members were elected to the board of directors. From left are Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams with directors Sandy Grapperhaus of Collinsville, Amy Marcot of Greenville and Ann Schwarm of Loogootee. Each director will serve a three-year term.



VCP Voices for
Cooperative
Power

YOUR VOICE. YOUR POWER. JOIN US.

voicesforcooperativepower.com



► *Continued from page 24*
Godfrey. An evening of passion and playfulness as we perform Rossini's "Barber of Seville," Sibelius' "Finlandia," and the emotional journey from darkness to triumph of Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 5". Starts at 7 p.m. Adult \$10; age 18 and younger \$5. Lewis & Clark Community College, Ann Whitney Olin Theatre, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

October 18 BARK IN THE PARK, Maryville. A fun dog contest at Kiwanis Fallfest. Noon - 2 p.m. Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Visit vil.maryville.il.us, email park-sandrec@maryville-il.us.

October 18 CLASSIC FLICKS FOR CONSERVATION, Godfrey. Watch a classic movie on our giant inflatable screen. This month's flick, *Nosferatu the Vampyre* (rated R), is for adult audiences. 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. 7 - 8:30 p.m. Event is free but donations are welcome. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

October 18 KIWANIS FALLFEST, Maryville. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Email juliedclark@charter.net.

October 18 STARGAZING, Altamont. Join Randy Harrison for a night under the stars and learn about constellations and more. 7 - 9 p.m. Come and go - no registration needed. Ballard Nature Center, 5253 East U.S. Highway 40. Visit ballardnaturecenter.org.

October 18 & 19 OWL FEST, Dow. Stop by to meet our education animals and visit our

clinic and flight cage. Event will feature children's activities, raffle, education booths and talks and artisan and craft vendors. TreeHouse Wildlife Center, 23956 Green Acres Road. Visit treehousewildlife-center.com/owl-fest.

October 19 CHILI COOK-OFF, Alton. Event encourages local chili chefs (amateur and professional) to match their favorite recipe with others in similar categories. \$100 prizes awarded to winners in 4 categories. The team chosen as "People's Choice" will receive the coveted silver ladle and bragging rights. Live music from Number4Combo. Noon - 3 p.m. Adult \$10; children 12 years of age and younger \$5. Flock Food Truck Park & Bar, 210 Ridge Street. Visit downtownalton.com.

October 19 LECLAIRE PARKFEST, Edwardsville. The event offers live music, festival food, a beer and wine garden, craft booths, a used book sale benefiting the American Cancer Society, children's activities, a vintage vehicle exhibit and trolley tours of the Leclaire Historic District. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Admission is free. Leclaire Lake Park, 900 Hale Avenue. Visit historic-leclaire.org.

October 24 & 25, 31; November 1 HAUNTED TRAIL, Kinmundy. Experience a terrifying journey on the haunted 1800s trail through the woods and in and out of the log cabins. All proceeds dedicated to preserving the cabins and grounds. 7 - 11 p.m. Kinmundy Log Cabin Village, 6260 Gesell Road. Visit kinmundylogcabinvillage.com.

October 24-26, 30-31; November 1-2 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m.; October 31 show at 11:59 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or

visit altonlittletheater.org.

October 25 BRASS TRANSIT, Lebanon. Chicago tribute band that dazzles audiences with their flawless performances and spectacular attention to every detail of the Chicago songbook. 7:30 p.m. Ticket fees vary. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Visit thehett.com.

October 25 EARS MICROCHIP EVENT, Effingham. On-site microchipping. No appointment needed. No geography or number limit. 10 a.m. - noon. Freewill donation. EARS - Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary, 408 East Fayette Avenue. Visit effinghamanimalrescue.com or call/text (217) 500-0231.

October 25 SAXOPHONICS CONCERT, Collinsville. Put on your costume and listen to the Saxophonics at Collinsville Library's Halloween Walk. We will play lots of fun tunes, highlighting Halloween favorites among jazz, rock/pop, and transcriptions from movies and classical masterpieces. Our talented musicians create their own arrangements of popular songs, bringing out the individual talents of the members. 10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Event is free. Collinsville Memorial Public Library, 408 West Main Street. Visit troyband.org.

October 30 ROUTE 66 SPEAKER SERIES: TROY TAYLOR, Edwardsville. Author Troy Taylor has written more than 150 books on history, true crime, hauntings and the unexplained in America. He'll share stories of Route 66-related hauntings in this Halloween-themed appearance. 6:30 p.m. Admission is free, but reservations are required. West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis Street. For more information, visit cityofedwardsville.com/749/West-End-Service-Station. To reserve a seat, email cmatten@riversandroutess.com.

November 8 ART & WINE WALK, Belleville. Stroll down-

town Belleville Main Street while sampling wines and celebrating unique local artisans and their work at 30 locations. All tastings, artists and entertainment are located inside our stores and restaurants. Artists' work will be available for purchase the evening of the event. 3 - 7 p.m. Belleville Main Street, 216 East A Street. Visit bellevillemainstreet.net

November 8 CRAFT BEVERAGE FESTIVAL, Grafton. Enjoy local beer, wine, spirits, ciders, seltzers, herbal teas, and more. The festival will feature live music by Sheafor & Simes as well as special brew tastings, vendors, and multiple food options. Noon - 4 p.m. Admission is \$30 advance; \$35 at the door; \$15 for designated driver. Tickets include a commemorative glass and samples. Grafton Winery - The Vineyards, 21028 Eckert Orchard Road. For more information or tickets, visit riversandroutess.com/events/craft-beverage-festival.

November 8 SAUSAGE SUPPER, Grantfork. Dinner includes homemade pork sausage, mashed potatoes and gravy, sauerkraut, green beans, applesauce and a piece of pie. Fresh packaged and fried sausage for purchase. Drive thru only. 2 - 7 p.m. All dinners \$14. Grantfork UCC (United Church of Christ), 206 South Locust Street. Call (618) 675-2595.

November 14-16, 20-23 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: TWELVE ANGRY MEN, Alton. A presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Nov. 14, 15, 20 and 21 at 7:30 p.m.; matinees Nov. 16, 22 and 23 starting at 2 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

November 15 TURKEY TROT 5K/1M, Maryville. 9 - 11 a.m. Admission \$10 - \$30. Drost Park, East Division Street. For more information, visit vil.maryville.il.us or email parksanddrec@maryville-il.us

Autumn colors begin to bloom on the Great River Road in Madison County.



THE FINAL FRAME

