

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2023 • VOLUME 75 • ISSUE 9

Water World

ARLINGTON WETLANDS
OFFERS UNIQUE OUTDOOR
EXPERIENCE

Annual Meeting 2023

SEE YOU AT THE
STATEHOUSE!

Energy Assistance

LIHEAP PRIORITY
PERIOD OPENS
OCTOBER 2

CAMPUS FIRE
SAFETY

PAY-AS-YOU-GO

MEMBER MAIL

WINTER
WEATHERIZE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

04 News & Notes

Paperless billing provides a simple, reliable solution to penalties associated with late payments. Trade your mailbox for your inbox today!

05 Member Mail

We've written about the ups and downs of our EV adventures. This month, Dorsey resident Ed Cory shares his experience regarding miles covered and thousands of dollars saved by driving a Tesla Model Y.

06 Reader Contest

Our pages often feature linemen but spotting them doesn't usually come with the chance to earn a bill credit. That changes with this month's hide-and-seek reader contest.

07 Rebate Program

The seasons are changing, and so, too, are your home comfort needs. With our rebate program, you can get that high efficiency heat pump, electric water heater or smart thermostat in time for colder weather while saving money in the process.

08 Annual Meeting

The 85th Annual Meeting of Members is Saturday, Sept. 9. Find answers to your annual meeting questions inside.

10 Pay-As-You-Go

Take control of your energy usage with our Pay-As-You-Go program and only pay for the power you need, as you need it.

11 Energy Assistance

Applications for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will be accepted on a staggered schedule this year, with the priority period opening Oct. 2. Here's what you need to know.

12 Energy & Efficiency

When winter arrives at your door, it doesn't knock. Keep the cold out with these simple and inexpensive do-it-yourself projects.

14 Health & Safety

A college education doesn't end in the classroom. These fire safety tips can help ensure that those students moving out are moving into fire-safe environments, wherever they call home.

16 Out & About

Encounter aquatic vegetation, prickly-pear cactus, a floating bridge and ever-alert blackbirds at Arlington Wetlands in Pontoon Beach.

20 Who-What-Where

You weren't stumped by our Macoupin County magnate, but perhaps you'll have more trouble locating the significant structure at the center of this month's puzzle.

22 Co-Op Kitchen

We hope you'll find this month's recipe page to be just peachy.

24 Current Events

Outdoor concerts, street festivals and nights under the stars serve to remind us that while the weather may soon be changing, summer fun isn't yet a thing of the past.

27 Final Frame

Fly catcher.

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.

Board of Directors

Ann Schwarm, President Loogootee
Jerry Gaffner, Vice President Greenville
Annette Hartlieb, Secretary Vandalia
Sandy Grapperhaus, Treasurer Collinsville
William "Bill" Jennings Alhambra
Sandy Nevinger Greenville
Jared Stine St. Elmo
Marvin Warner Pocahontas
Ted Willman Greenville

CEO

Bobby Williams Chief Executive Officer

The Southwestern

Joe Richardson Editor
e-mail: joe.richardson@sweci.com
Mike Barns Art Director
e-mail: mike.barns@sweci.com
Nathan Grimm Media Specialist
e-mail: 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.

The Southwestern (USPS 612-500) is published monthly by Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Greenville, IL. Subscriptions cost \$9.67 per year. Comments or questions regarding material in this publication may be mailed to Joe Richardson, editor of The Southwestern, c/o Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246, or e-mailed to joe.richardson@sweci.com.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to The Southwestern, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

Apple and the Apple logo are trademarks of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. App Store is a service mark of Apple Inc. Android, Google Play and the Google Play logo are trademarks of Google Inc.

ON THE COVER

Maintenance foreman Kyle Hails poses a question to the audience during a live line demonstration at Southwestern Electric's Safety Day. On Aug. 10, the cooperative offered a full day of safety training for co-op employees and their families. You can read more about Safety Day in our November issue. See the live line demonstration in person on Saturday, Sept. 9, at Southwestern Electric's 85th Annual Meeting of Members. Meeting information appears on page 8.



CO-OP REMINDERS

September 4 Offices closed for Labor Day.

September 9 Join us at Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site, 315 W. Gallatin Street, Vandalia, for Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 85th Annual Meeting of Members. For more information, see page 8.

September 11 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 Twitter. You'll find us at facebook.com/SWECI and twitter.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.



E-BILLING PROVIDES QUICK, EASY WAY TO AVOID FEES ASSOCIATED WITH POSTAL DELAYS

Paperless billing — or e-billing — provides a simple, reliable solution to penalties associated with postal delays and late payments. An e-bill is an electronic billing statement delivered to your email address. Our e-bill looks like our paper bill. Since it's sent to your inbox instead of your mailbox, it always arrives on time.

In addition to our e-bill, we also offer electronic notifications you can use as reminders, or to confirm your payment has been made. You can receive our reminders, alerts and notifications by text, voice mail and email.

Maybe you'd prefer not to think about your bill from month to month. With our Auto-Pay service, you won't need to. Auto-Pay automatically deducts your monthly payment from your checking account, or debit card or credit card. It's safe, convenient and reliable. Like our e-billing options, Auto-Pay is free and simple to set up.

If you'd like to know more, please call Southwestern Electric's billing department at 800-637-8667, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Our team will be happy to help you.



HAVE YOU HEARD?

The Southwestern Electric Cooperative podcast, that is. *Wireside Chat* is a monthly podcast aimed at delivering insight into your electric co-op in an entertaining and easily digestible way. The show is available on all major podcast-hosting platforms.

EV Adventures

The last issues of the Southwestern have had several perspectives of people both curious and wary of the changes that EVs bring with them. There are so many electric vehicle boogeymen stories out there, it is hard to separate fact from fiction sometimes.

My family EV, a Tesla Model Y, is soon to cross the 50k mile mark. Living in rural Illinois, we drive a lot. Over the last year and 36,000 miles we have saved almost \$4,400 by choosing electricity over gas. Every other night, I refill 30kWh (+/- \$3.50; less than half the total battery capacity) and wake up to my battery at 85-90 percent (my chosen 'full' battery level). This is the refilling experience for the majority of EV owners.

Mr. Malec asked a question about charging while on a trip. There are two main "very fast" charging standards in the United States. Tesla Superchargers, and CCS. I would recommend exploring PlugShare.com to see where these stations are located if you're curious. The Supercharger stations are slowly

opening up to other EVs through the use of a built-in CCS adapter, but for now all of the stations near us are Tesla only. Rivian (which manufactures their vehicles in Normal, Illinois) also has their own CCS network with a few stations only compatible with Rivian at this time. Other main charging brands available nearby using CCS are EVGo and Electrify America; most Teslas can use these CCS chargers with an adapter as well.

On long trips to Orlando, Sandusky and Wisconsin Dells I have never had to wait for a charger to be available. Going to Orlando, I left St. Louis after dinner and made it to Walt Disney World's Polynesian in time for fireworks the following evening. This was in winter when EVs charge a bit slower and have a bit less driving range due to the cold. I jokingly consider the limiting factor with how far you can travel in a Tesla to be

your bladder.

Charging on the road is more expensive than at home because of the fast-charging equipment. Tesla has recently stated that it costs them \$0.12-

14 per kWh to lease/upkeep the stations in addition to energy costs. Some sites cost more than others, but the ones I have used average \$0.37 per kWh. A Tesla supercharger station will be opening at the Mach1 Philips 66 in Vandalia soon if you want to see what they're like in person.

I hope SWECI has some EV discussion time available for those curious at the annual meeting. I'd be happy to be available and answer the good and the bad so far.

—Ed Cory, Dorsey

Editor's Note: Ed wrote to us March 4, 2023, referencing our March and February magazines. As of Aug. 1, the co-op hadn't recruited members to stage a repeat performance of the EV show offered during the 2022 annual meeting.



REMEMBER WHEN?

Do you remember when the lights came on?

When the poles went up and the lines came through?

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

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



Hide & Seek Reader Contest

For decades we ran a reader contest we called On Account. We asked you to look for a member-account number we'd hidden in the magazine. If the account number was yours, you could contact us to win a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Account numbers were selected at random from a pool that included our entire membership. The rules were simple, but your odds were long. We retired that contest with our December 2022 issue.

This year we're bringing you a new contest. It isn't based on your account number, and if you're a regular reader, you'll have a much better chance of winning a \$25 bill credit.

It works like this:

Each month — with the exception of August, when we break from our traditional format to bring you Southwestern's annual report — we hide an image in the magazine. Your job is to find it.

The image may be a photo, illustration, icon, logo — or any other graphic that catches our eye. This month's image resembles the lineman silhouette you see at right.

The actual image may be larger or smaller than what you see here. We may change the color. We may make the image black and white. Or robin's egg blue. It may be reversed. Or upside down. Or reversed and upside down. Who knows? We don't. We're making this up as we go.

If you find the image, email us or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and the page number where you found the image.

For instance, if you found this month's image on page 32, send an email or

postcard with your name, address, phone number, and a line or two saying you found the image on page 32. That would be an awful answer, by the way, as this issue is only 28 pages.

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 September contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by October 1.

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 November issue of The Southwestern.

If your magazine hasn't landed in your mailbox and the hour grows late, you can look at our online edition. You'll find PDF files of The Southwestern at sweci.com. Go to News & Information in the

main menu, then click on The Southwestern in the dropdown menu. We usually post the current issue of the magazine on the first day of the month, or when someone emails to say we haven't posted the current issue of the magazine.

That's a lot of information for a simple contest. Clearly, we didn't think

this through. If we had, we may have passed on the idea. But we've already told friends and family about it and asked IT to set up thesouthwestern@sweci.com as an email address, so good luck, godspeed, and mind the Rules To Play By in our sidebar at right.



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 messages, 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 list and not one you care to be part of.
- Again, entries must be postmarked or in our thesouthwestern@sweci.com inbox by the first day of the month following the month of publication. For this contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by October 1.
- We'll never hide the image on the front or back cover or on the page where we list the rules.
- Did we mention responding *only* by postcard or by sending email to thesouthwestern@sweci.com? Well, we have the space, so we'll bring it up one last time — just to show we're sincere.

HIDE & SEEK JUNE WINNER

Congratulations to Mary Korte of Pocahontas. Mary won our June Hide & Seek contest. She found the station wagon on page 10, hidden in our power restoration diagram. She'll receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Well done, Mary! Thanks to everyone who participated in our June contest.

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

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

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

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

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



HEATING AND COOLING

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

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

Requirements for air source heat pumps include:

- At least 16 SEER
- 9 HSPF

Requirements for ground source (geothermal) heat pumps include:

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

WATER HEATERS

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

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

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

On-demand water heaters qualify for this rebate.

SMART THERMOSTATS

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

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

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

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

- Energy Star certified
- Internet-enabled



Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site Venue for 85th Annual Meeting

Like any living, breathing thing, the annual meeting has evolved over the years.

That includes the day's events. For decades, the meeting was an event itself. Men in business attire, women in dresses and children in their Sunday best came out to partake in the food and fellowship of the day.

When COVID-19 hit, handshakes gave way to elbow bumps, crowded gymnasiums became socially distanced outdoor fairgrounds, and the entertainment, food and fellowship took a backseat to a more businesslike proceeding.

Last September, we returned to an indoors meeting, with an energy fair and live line demonstration among the draws. This year, we're planning to have a farmers market, food trucks and more to help us celebrate the 85th Annual Meeting of Members.

Here are a few of the other activities and exhibits you'll see at this year's meeting.

ANNUAL MEETING TIME, DATE AND LOCATION

The 85th Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative members will be held Saturday, Sept. 9, on the grounds of Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site at 315 W. Gallatin Street, Vandalia, IL 62471. Voting opens at 8 a.m. Business meeting begins at 10 a.m. Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Susan File,

vice president of member services, at susan.file@sweci.com or (800) 637-8667, ext. 5924.

E-CYCLING DRIVE

Don't know what to do with that old computer tower? Bring it with you to the meeting! CJD E-Cycling will be at the annual meeting from 9 a.m. to noon — or until the recycling tractor trailer is full — to collect old or broken electronics. The recycling truck will be parked on the Moose Lodge parking lot located at 328 S. Third St. in Vandalia.

Accepted items include but aren't limited to computers, printers, fax machines, scanners, phones, air conditioners, washing machines, dryers, video game consoles, car batteries and more. Items not accepted include light bulbs, DVDs, radioactive materials and flammable materials, non-electronics, prescription medication and more.



Some items, such as televisions, dehumidifiers and lamps, are accepted for a fee, depending on the item. For a full list of accepted and not-accepted items, visit CJD E-Cycling's website at cjdecycling.com.

LIVE LINE DEMONSTRATION

For the second year in a row, Southwestern Electric linemen will be putting on a live line demonstration for members. Topics include the dangers of live wires, how an outage occurs and how to safely remove yourself from a live-wire situation, among others. Don't miss this free and fun demonstration!

SCRATCH-OFF TICKETS

As a door prize this year, scratch-off tickets will be given to the first 200 members in attendance. And unlike playing the lottery, all of our scratch-offs are winners! Prizes might include food, cash or bill credits.

PARKING

All parking will be at attendees' leisure. The lot at the former Givens Meat Shop, 218 S. Third St., or the First United Methodist Church's parking lot at 127 N. Fourth St. are two nearby options for members attending the meeting. We'll have four, 8-passenger golf carts circulating between parking areas and the Statehouse for members who could use a lift.

Redeem Registration Card on Back Cover of July or August Magazines for \$30 Bill Credit

To ensure you received the 2023 voter registration card in time to claim your \$30 bill credit for voting in this year's election, we included a card in both the July and August issues again this year. The cards are identical. You only need one card to register and vote, and you may register and vote only one time.

To expedite voting, please bring the registration card printed on the back cover of the July issue or August special edition of The Southwestern to one of Southwestern's voting locations. You'll earn a \$30 bill credit by presenting the preprinted registration card when you vote in this year's election of directors. Our voting schedule appears on the next page.

Credentials & Election Committee

The Credentials & Election Committee is responsible for presiding over the vote and determining the validity of the results.

2023 Credentials & Election Committee Members

District I: Macoupin, Madison and St. Clair Counties

Ted Flath	2712 Old Staunton Road	Edwardsville, IL 62025
Kenneth Grotefendt	8243 Fruit Road	Edwardsville, IL 62025
John Sedlacek	633 Cedar Road	Saint Jacob, IL 62281

District II: Bond, Clinton and Montgomery Counties

Steven Laesch	1357 Illinois Route 127	Greenville, IL 62246
Ron Jarrett	445 Round Prairie Avenue	Greenville, IL 62246
Hal Langham	1355 Airport Avenue	Greenville, IL 62246

District III: Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion and Shelby Counties

Angela Reeter	2206 Zent Drive	Vandalia, IL 62471
Pete Burnam	2065 South Lake Drive	Vandalia, IL 62471
Brad Stein	1503 N 2000 Street	Brownstown, IL 62248

Voting Schedule

Members may cast their votes for board candidates in the 2023 election at the times and locations listed below.

\$30 bill credit with your pre-printed registration card, \$20 bill credit without your pre-printed registration card.
Bill credit to be applied on the October bill — same credit amounts offered for early and day-of-meeting voting.

Greenville office, 525 US Route 40, Greenville	Aug. 30 remains open to 7 p.m. Sept. 7 remains open to 7 p.m.
St. Jacob warehouse, 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob	Aug. 29 from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 6 from 4 to 7 p.m.
St. Elmo warehouse, 2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo	Aug. 31 from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 5 from 4 to 7 p.m.
Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site, 315 W. Gallatin Street, Vandalia	Sept. 9 from 8 to 10 a.m.

In addition to the above times, any member of the cooperative can vote during normal business hours at our Greenville office beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 25 through 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 8. We are closed on Monday, Sept. 4 in observance of Labor Day.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 85th Annual Meeting of Members will be held on the grounds of Vandalia Statehouse State Historic Site, located at 315 W. Gallatin Street, Vandalia, Ill.

If it rains, we'll move north a block and cross the street to gather indoors at First United Methodist Church, 127 N 4th Street.

Questions regarding the annual meeting may be directed to Susan File, vice president of member services, at 800-637-8667 or susan.file@sweci.com.

VOTER REGISTRATION CARD 2023 Please sign and present this card at the registration table.

85th Annual Meeting of Members
Saturday, September 9, 2023

 **Southwestern**
Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchdown Energy Cooperative

Member Signature _____

☐ Please enroll me in Operation Round Up

PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Home Phone # (if applicable): _____ Cell Phone #: _____

Service Address: _____ Billing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Fill out and present this registration card to receive an additional \$10 bill credit!

Purchase Power Day By Day With **Pay- As-You-Go** Option

Pay for the power you need as you need it — that's the idea behind Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Pay-As-You-Go program. "Most members are billed for power a month at a time. The power they've used during the last month is what they pay for," explained Susan File, vice president of member services for Southwestern Electric Cooperative. "With our Pay-As-You-Go program, you only pay for the power you need at the time, and you can add more money to the account whenever you want to."

File said the Pay-As-You-Go Program is perfect for families who want to control precisely how much of their budget they put toward electricity.

"Our main goal is to help our members use less power, and forego paying a deposit and reconnection fees," she pointed out. "Studies have shown that households typically experience a 12 percent drop in energy use after switching to this type of program."

Pay-As-You-Go allows the accountholder to purchase electricity at his or her convenience. Payments appear as credits on the member's account. The balance, which reflects energy used and payments made over the past 24-hours, is updated daily. There's no penalty for allowing funds to run out, but electric service becomes subject to disconnection when the account balance reaches \$0.00.

The cooperative doesn't mail a monthly bill to Pay-As-You-Go accounts. Rather, participating members monitor their account balance via the cooperative's online billing system, SWEC IL app or in-home display. In

addition to checking their account balance and payment history, the member will have access to an assortment of tools for tracking their energy consumption, including a breakdown of their kilowatt-hour usage and money spent on power each day.

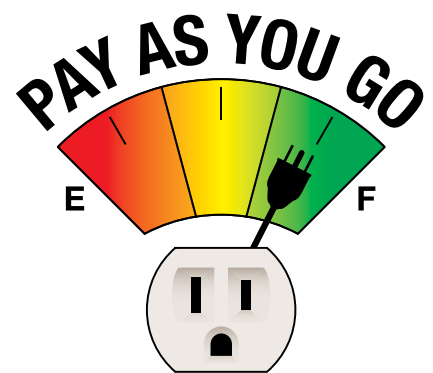
Southwestern also offers an in-home display unit (at no charge), particularly for members who don't have Internet access. The online billing system, app and in-home display allow the accountholder to view their present account balance and average daily usage.

"The member has to keep an eye on their remaining balance with this type of program, but we also have a couple of systems in place to let them know their account's status," said File. "The in-home display sounds an alarm when the account reaches a minimum dollar amount. We can also send the member a reminder message by telephone, text and e-mail if we have a valid phone number or e-mail address on file for their account."

Payments on a Pay-As-You-Go account can be made at the cooperative's Greenville office during regular business hours, at the Vandalia Farm Bureau, or deposited in the dropbox at Southwestern's St. Elmo and St. Jacob offices. Payments are also accepted 24/7 by phone, SWEC IL app and online at sweci.com. Most payments will post to the member's account within an hour. However, members should allow three day's processing time when payments are made at the St. Elmo or St. Jacob offices or Vandalia Farm Bureau.



- 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.

LIHEAP Energy Assistance

PRIORITY GROUP APPLICATION PERIOD OPENS OCT. 2

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. 2, 2023 to Aug. 15, 2024, or until funding is exhausted.

Applications in October are limited to priority groups.

Priority groups include:

- Seniors (at least one household member is age 60 or older).
- Disabled (at least one household member receives disability benefits).
- Families with at least one child under 6 years old.

Beginning Nov 1, 2023, members who have been disconnected or who are in imminent threat of disconnection can apply for benefits.

Beginning Dec. 1, 2023, all other eligible members may apply.

Agencies will begin scheduling LIHEAP application appointments for priority groups on Sept. 18.

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.

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 Guidelines

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

Family Size	30-Day Income
1	\$2,430
2	\$3,287
3	\$4,143
4	\$5,000
5	\$5,857
6	\$6,713
7	\$7,570
8	\$7,775

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

If your application is accepted, the local agency will make the appropriate payment to your energy provider(s) on your behalf, or in some cases, directly to you.

All client and vendor payments will be made by the local agency within 15 days of the application's approval.

Electric cooperative members, if approved, will receive assistance in the form of a one-time payment.

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

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

BE WINTER WISE & *Weatherize*

IT'S TIME TO BUTTON UP YOUR HOME'S WINTER COAT

Autumn will soon arrive, bringing relief to overworked home cooling systems across Southwestern Illinois—and winter will be here before you know it. Fortunately, a few simple and inexpensive tasks can help prepare your home for the coming cold.

Plug the Leaks. Sealing leaks with caulk and weather-stripping will keep more warm air inside when it's cold outside. Leaks are most commonly found around window and door frames, recessed lighting installations, pipes, vents and electrical outlets.



Clean Out the Gutters. In winter, clogged gutter drains can form ice dams, which cause water to back up and potentially seep into your house. After trees have shed most of their leaves, make time to clear your gutters. Start by removing leaves and debris, then rinse out the gutters with a hose.

Check the Furnace. Before winter sets in, make sure your furnace is



working properly. You'll have better luck scheduling service before temperatures drop and you're competing with your neighbors for an appointment. Even if your furnace seems to be in good working order, it's a good idea to have it serviced annually. Stock up on furnace filters and plan to change them regularly so your heating system can operate efficiently.

Work on the Windows. Don't let warm air escape through your windows. If you have drafty windows, consider replacing them before cold weather hits. If window replacement isn't in your budget, pick up an inexpensive window insulator kit to provide temporary coverage through the coldest months. Autumn is also a good time to replace temporary window screens with storm windows, which provide an extra layer of protection and warmth.

Protect the Plumbing. Protect your pipes from freezing (and possibly bursting) by turning off the water at the shut-off valve, then turning on your

outdoor faucets to let them drain. If you haven't already done so, drain any outdoor hoses and bring them inside. If your home has uninsulated pipes that pass through unheated spaces, wrap them with pre-molded foam rubber sleeves. Not only are outdoor faucets vulnerable — pipes that run through attics, crawl spaces and exterior walls have the potential to burst in subfreezing weather as well.

Reverse the Fans. It may seem strange to run your ceiling fans when there's frost on the ground, but this technique can save money on your heating bills. Most ceiling fans have a small switch that reverses the rotation of the fan blades, pulling air up, instead of propelling it down, to help circulate warmer air that collects near the ceiling.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative offers many ideas to help you improve the energy efficiency of your home. For more information, contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com.



Weather Stripping Seals In Energy Dollars

If you're like most people, half of your household energy budget goes to heating and cooling. Fortunately, there are a number of ways you can cut down on energy loss.

Weather stripping is an easy, inexpensive way to keep out the cold while you seal in savings. There are a variety of materials you can use, ranging from rubber to foam to metal. Weather stripping also comes in varying depths and widths. Most stripping is simple to apply, but adhesives vary. Review the instructions on the weather stripping package to make sure the product you're buying will serve your needs.

Calculating how much weather stripping you'll need for a project is pretty straightforward.

- Measure the perimeter of the doors and windows you plan to weather strip (measure twice for accuracy).
- Total your numbers.
- Add 10 percent to your total to account for error.

Before you begin applying your stripping, make sure the surfaces you're working with are clean and dry. When you're measuring the stripping, the carpenter's adage applies: Measure twice, cut once.

Here are a few other tips:

- Weather stripping should be applied in temperatures above 20°F.
- Apply weather stripping firmly against the door or window and the frame. The stripping should compress when the window or door is shut.

Weather Stripping Doors

- Buy quality sweeps and thresholds for your doors.
- Weather strip the entire door jamb.
- Apply one continuous strip along each side.
- Make sure the stripping seals well at the corners.
- Choose a thickness that compresses tightly when you close the door, but doesn't make your door difficult to shut.

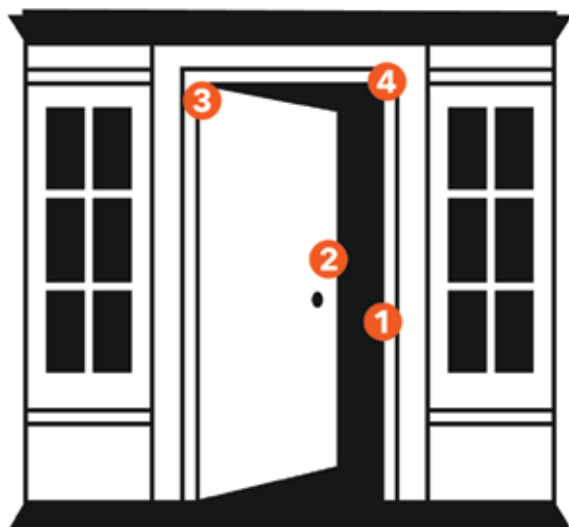
Weather Stripping Windows

- Apply stripping between the sash and the frame. As with your doors, you want the material to compress, but not interfere with the operation of your window.

WEATHER STRIPPING DOORS

Capturing Energy Savings by Sealing Air Leaks

Save energy and seal air leaks by weather stripping exterior doors. How do you know if you need to weather strip? If you can see any amount of light between the door frame and the floor, weather stripping should be applied to eliminate energy waste. This DIY energy-saving project is relatively easy and inexpensive depending on the type of materials selected. The most common weather stripping material is self-adhesive foam strips, although rubber, vinyl, metal, or a combination of materials may also be used.



- 1 CLEANING SURFACES** - Clean the door and door jamb to be weather stripped. For best results, weather stripping should be applied to clean, dry surfaces above 20°F.



- 2 MEASURING DOOR & DOOR JAMBS** - To ensure greater accuracy, measure your space twice before cutting the material. It is best to plan for one continuous strip for each side of the door and door jamb.



- 3 CUTTING FOAM** - Cut long pieces of self-adhesive weather stripping material (foam, vinyl, etc.) for each side of the door jamb and door.



- 4 APPLYING WEATHER STRIPPING** - Peel back the self-adhesive foam. Apply one continuous strip of material snugly along each side. Make sure the weather stripping meets tightly at the corners and is pressed firmly onto the door and door jamb. The material should compress tightly between the door and door jamb, without making it difficult to shut.

SOURCE: Department of Energy

College Campus Fire Safety

College students living away from home should take a few minutes to make sure they're living in a fire-safe environment. Educating students on what they can do to stay safe during the school year is important and often overlooked.

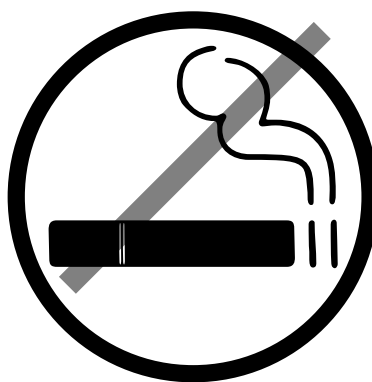


CANDLE CARE

Burn candles only if the school permits their use. A candle is an open flame and should be placed away from anything that can burn. Never leave a candle unattended. Blow it out when you leave the room or go to sleep.

SMOKING SENSE

If you smoke, smoke outside and only where it is permitted. Use sturdy, deep, non-tip ashtrays. Don't smoke in bed or when you've been drinking or are drowsy.



FACTS

- Fires in dormitories are more common during the evening hours, between 5–11 p.m., and on weekends.
- Roughly five out of six fires in dormitories are started by cooking.

SAFETY TIPS

- Look for fully sprinklered housing when choosing a dorm or off-campus housing.
- Make sure you can hear the building alarm system when you are in your dorm room.
- If you live in a dormitory, make sure your sleeping room has a smoke alarm, or your dormitory suite has a smoke alarm in each living area as well as the sleeping room. For the best protection, all smoke alarms in the dormitory suite should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.
- If you live in an apartment or house, make sure smoke alarms are installed in each sleeping room, outside every sleeping area, and on each level of the apartment unit or house. For the best protection, all smoke alarms in the apartment unit or house should be interconnected so that when one sounds, they all sound.
- Test all smoke alarms at least monthly.
- Never remove batteries or disable the alarm.
- Learn your building's evacuation plan and practice all drills as if they were the real thing.
- If you live off campus, have a fire escape plan with two ways out of every room.
- When the smoke alarm or fire alarm sounds, get out of the building quickly and stay out.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking.
- Cook only when you are alert, not sleepy or drowsy from medicine or alcohol.
- Check with your local fire department for any restrictions before using a barbecue grill, fire pit, or chimenea.
- Check your school's rules before using electrical appliances in your room.

Don't Wait — Check the Date!

Replace Smoke Alarms Every 10 Years



**Fire Prevention Week
Oct. 8-14, 2023**

Age matters when it comes to your smoke alarms.
Check the manufacture dates on your smoke alarms today!

1

Remove the smoke alarm from the wall or ceiling.



October 8, 2023



2

Look at the back of the alarm for the date of manufacture.

3

Smoke alarms should be replaced 10 years from the date of manufacture.



4

Put the alarm back on the ceiling or wall if it is less than 10 years old.



A closed door may slow the spread of smoke, heat and fire.



Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button.



If the smoke alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Go to your outside meeting place.



Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. For the best protection, make sure all smoke alarms are interconnected. When one sounds, they all sound.



Call the fire department from a cellphone or a neighbor's phone. Stay outside until the fire department says it's safe to go back inside.

For more information about smoke alarms, visit usfa.fema.gov and firepreventionweek.org.

U.S. Fire
Administration



FEMA



Water World

ARLINGTON OFFERS UNIQUE OUTDOOR EXPERIENCE

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

Some of life's loveliest moments are born from an unlikely linkage of circumstance.

This wasn't one of them.

I'm stalled on a floating boardwalk in a wetlands under a summer sun. Blackbirds are perched on posts ahead and behind. Acres of aquatic plants lie to either side. The birds are protecting their territory — enthusiastically. But it's the

plants that trouble me. That said, I can't put my finger on why.

The birds aren't moving. Neither am I.

We have some time to figure it out.

I've spent a lifetime hiking under hardwoods. I'm comfortable among the hickory and oak and plants that grow under canopy. I've dropped belly-down to the forest floor to shoot lichens and

toadstools, shinnied up vines, dodged sumac, sidestepped poison ivy and oak, worn sleeves in summer to fend off stinging nettle, and picked burs and beggar's lice from the cuffs of my coat.

But we didn't have standing water in my woods. To me, Arlington Wetlands is a wonder. An 83-acre Mississippi River remnant east of Horseshoe Lake, just outside Pontoon Beach, Arlington

Photos from February and May 2023 illustrate the winter-to-spring transformation of Arlington Wetlands. Upper right: A red-winged blackbird stakes his claim to the spatterdock.



is home to a flotilla of spatterdock — an aquatic plant — that seems to hover on a meniscus of knee-deep water.

The floating walkway that spans the wetland is cleverly constructed. Rings attach a plastic deck to metal posts, allowing it to rise and fall with the water level. As I crossed the walkway, a bird lit on one of the posts. I expected it to fly as I approached. The bird didn't move. I came closer. Saw the scarlet epaulet on obsidian feathers, bright eyes, sharp beak. A red-winged blackbird.

The beak was sharp, I knew, because I'd just seen it used. As I stepped onto the walkway, four birds, shadows in the sky from my vantage point, were driving off a hawk. They took turns diving at the bigger bird, small silhouettes driving forward and falling back in a coordinated attack.

When they were done with the hawk, they circled for home. I was on the bridge. Two birds settled into the spatterdock. One flew near and low,

landing on the post about thirty feet ahead of me. The other I lost.

I slowed as I moved closer to the bird on the post. I told it, "Well done."

The bird chirped.

I tried to remember if red-winged blackbirds were corvids — related to rooks, crows, magpies and the like. Corvids are intelligent. They recognize signs and symbols and people. They use tools. Related or no, I'd just seen these birds choreograph aerial combat. They weren't keen on hawks. No telling what they thought of humans. This one didn't seem pleased with me.

I raised my voice. "You going to let me pass?"

The blackbird took to the air. It dropped low over the foliage then swung up to land on a post nearer me. The bird appeared agitated.

I thought of the hawk. I'd assumed they'd driven it from the tree line. It was possible the hawk made a low pass over

Continued on next page ►



► *Continued from page 17*
the water, and the blackbirds' nests were near. I sized up the shore, wondering how long it would take to walk around the wetland, not wanting to traumatize the birds, not wanting the birds to traumatize me.

More blackbirds appeared at either side of the walkway. I turned around. Another blackbird — possibly the one I'd lost sight of earlier — was perched on a post behind me.

I get along well with wildlife. I caught more than my share of snakes, frogs, turtles and spiders growing up. Handled them all without incident. My record with birds? Checkered. I've had remarkable encounters with owls and

hummingbirds, and a flamingo spent an hour escorting me through a Florida park. I've also been attacked by geese, stalked by chickens, circled by vultures (on 10Ks I look like a promising meal), and mobbed by lorikeets in a nectar feeding frenzy (paid three dollars for the privilege).

While I was considering the birds, I noticed the plants. Rather, I noticed they made me uneasy.

Spatterdock covers most of the water in Arlington Wetlands. Not that you'd know it. You can't see the water for the leaves. Each spatterdock leaf is the size of a dinner plate. Attached to thick, strong stalks, on this day the leaves

stood upright, tilted, a foot and half above the wet, cupped like hands stalled in a parade wave.

Their posture made the plants appear alert, attentive, as if an audience of thousands had watched me lose a standoff with birds on a plastic walkway. The plants' unusual habitat and odd construction reminded me of flytraps or pitcher plants or other unlikely species that, rooted in inhospitable environments, draw most of their nutrients not from sun or soil, but by devouring other living things.

Standing between birds in 90-degree heat, I recall a Florida frost and manatees. In that moment, I know why the plants unsettle me.

I was attending an industry conference outside Tampa when I heard about the manatees. In winter the animals are vulnerable to hypothermia. When temperatures fall, they move out of the ocean and into Florida's warm-water rivers and springs.

They also shelter in power plant canals. At the time of the conference, a Tampa-based utility burned Illinois coal. It was a curious turn, coal aiding in the survival of a species. I thought it might make a good story. Before and after conference sessions, I drove to the coast, talked to Florida Fish & Wildlife personnel, and shot photos of manatees lazing in power plant cooling canals. I



Heartlands Conservancy is a steward of distinctive and dynamic places of ecological, cultural and community value — including Arlington Wetlands. Learn more at <https://heartlandsconservancy.org>.

drove north to Crystal River and King's Bay, where the water was clear, and on a day with a frost advisory held at 70 degrees.

On the road, I listened to BBC Radio. In the hours before dawn, BBC played a science fiction serial about people stalked by carnivorous plants. I crossed the unfamiliar Florida landscape in the dark, isolated but for the company of a story that left me uneasy.

Before I left Florida, I bought *Day of Triffids*, the novel that inspired the program, in a secondhand shop and read it on the flight home.

Surrounded by spatterdock, alone in the Arlington Wetlands but for the birds,
Continued on page 25 ►



Arlington is home to a sand prairie with prickly-pear cactus (top), and provides habitat for an array of amphibians and reptiles, like this pond slider (below) depositing eggs along the trail.



WHO • WHAT • WHERE

If the historical figure in our June issue were here today, here's what he might say:

I was born in Jefferson County, Va., on September 12, 1806. In 1835, I traveled west to St. Louis, where I became a merchant. I operated a dry goods and grocery business on the corner of Fourth and Olive Streets. After a few months, I moved from St. Louis to Slab Point, or Zanesville, in Montgomery County, Ill., to engage in general merchandising, farming and hotel keeping.

I sold my businesses in Zanesville and relocated to Carlinville, where once again I engaged in retailing groceries and supplies. In 1838, I was elected sheriff of Macoupin County. I held the job for 12 years.

In 1874, I was elected to the State Senate. I died at the age of 70 in 1876.

Before you read the solutions submitted by Scott Fischer and Bill



Malec, take a moment to study the structure at right. Do you know where it stands? We'll share some of your solutions in our November issue.

Thanks to Scott and Bill for unearthing the identity of our mystery figure. And thank you all for reading *The Southwestern*.

Beatty T. Burke. Best known in this section of the country as "Major Burke." As the clues said, he was well traveled. He was also very well liked and I didn't read a bad thing about him. That's probably why he was elected sheriff for 12 years.

— *Scott Fischer, Staunton*

The "Who am I?" challenge in your June 2023 *The Southwestern* edition is Beatty T. Burke. Burke is listed in the 1879 *History of Macoupin County* under "prominent men and pioneers." Burke's biographical sketch states, "the number of honorable positions to which Major [he was in the militia] Burke was elected, testify to his popularity, and show in what estimation he was held by his political party and fellow citizens. His acts while in office in both the county and state are matters of public record, and a part of the history of the county and state. Not a breath of suspicion or personal dishonor ever rested upon his name. His unswerving fidelity to trusts confided to him by a generous public is well known to the people of Macoupin County."

Suffice to say, they don't make 'em like that anymore.

— *Bill Malec, O'Fallon*

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



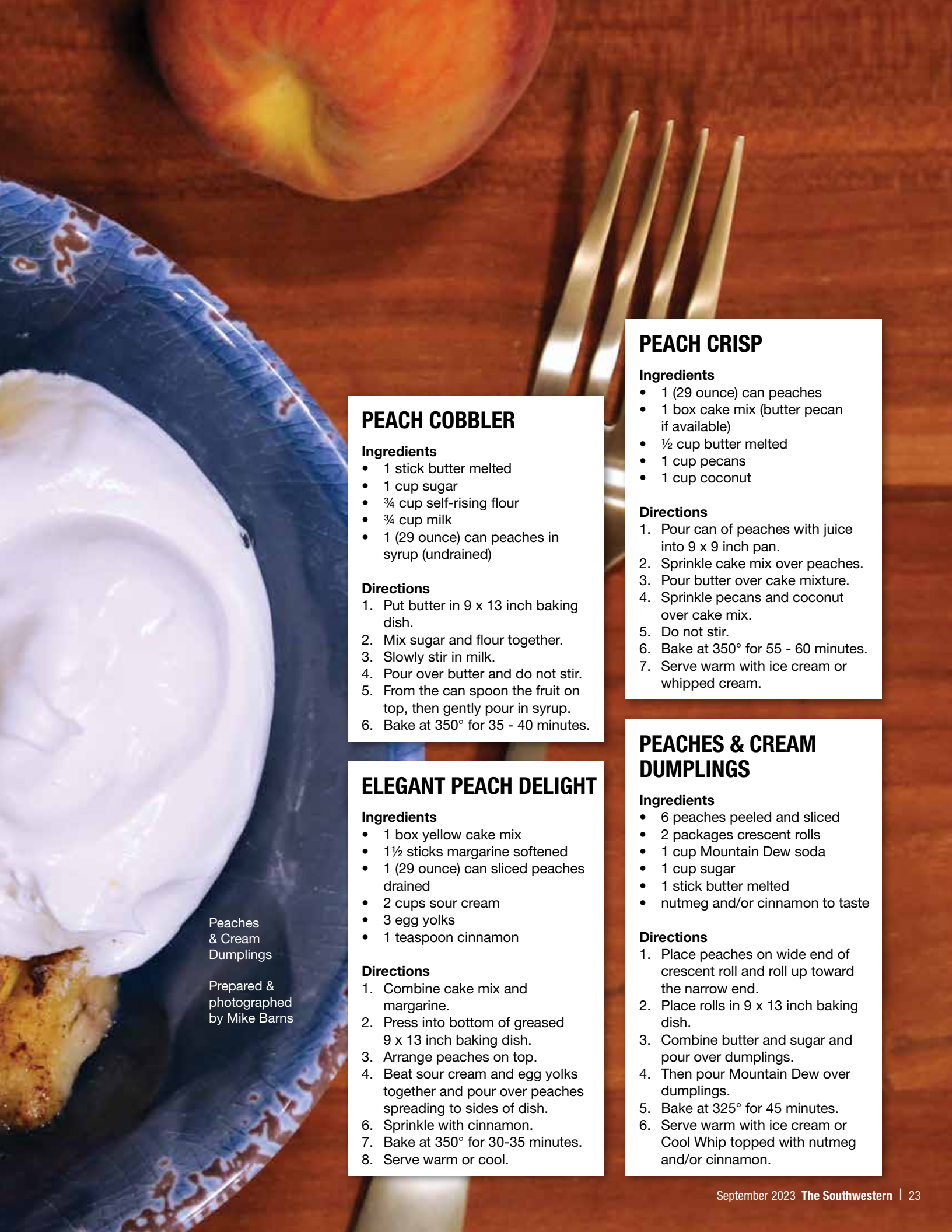


WHERE ARE WE?



CO-OP KITCHEN

Peaches Delight



PEACH COBBLER

Ingredients

- 1 stick butter melted
- 1 cup sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup self-rising flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk
- 1 (29 ounce) can peaches in syrup (undrained)

Directions

1. Put butter in 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
2. Mix sugar and flour together.
3. Slowly stir in milk.
4. Pour over butter and do not stir.
5. From the can spoon the fruit on top, then gently pour in syrup.
6. Bake at 350° for 35 - 40 minutes.

ELEGANT PEACH DELIGHT

Ingredients

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1½ sticks margarine softened
- 1 (29 ounce) can sliced peaches drained
- 2 cups sour cream
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

Directions

1. Combine cake mix and margarine.
2. Press into bottom of greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. Arrange peaches on top.
4. Beat sour cream and egg yolks together and pour over peaches spreading to sides of dish.
6. Sprinkle with cinnamon.
7. Bake at 350° for 30-35 minutes.
8. Serve warm or cool.

PEACH CRISP

Ingredients

- 1 (29 ounce) can peaches
- 1 box cake mix (butter pecan if available)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup butter melted
- 1 cup pecans
- 1 cup coconut

Directions

1. Pour can of peaches with juice into 9 x 9 inch pan.
2. Sprinkle cake mix over peaches.
3. Pour butter over cake mixture.
4. Sprinkle pecans and coconut over cake mix.
5. Do not stir.
6. Bake at 350° for 55 - 60 minutes.
7. Serve warm with ice cream or whipped cream.

PEACHES & CREAM DUMPLINGS

Ingredients

- 6 peaches peeled and sliced
- 2 packages crescent rolls
- 1 cup Mountain Dew soda
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 stick butter melted
- nutmeg and/or cinnamon to taste

Directions

1. Place peaches on wide end of crescent roll and roll up toward the narrow end.
2. Place rolls in 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. Combine butter and sugar and pour over dumplings.
4. Then pour Mountain Dew over dumplings.
5. Bake at 325° for 45 minutes.
6. Serve warm with ice cream or Cool Whip topped with nutmeg and/or cinnamon.

Peaches
& Cream
Dumplings

Prepared &
photographed
by Mike Barns

CURRENT EVENTS

September 8 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES, Litchfield. Enjoy an evening of live music by Big Shake Daddies and good food. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Admission is free. Walton Park, 10207 Niemanville Trail. Go to visittlitchfield.com for more information.

September 8 & 9 CARLYLE STREET FAIR, Carlyle. A weekend full of family fun including games, food vendors, craft vendors, direct sales vendors, events, live music, car show, penny raffle and more. Friday 4 p.m. - midnight; Saturday 10:30 a.m. - midnight. West of the courthouse on Fairfax Street. Visit carlylelake.com

September 8-10 HOMESTEAD HARVEST DAYS, Highland. A celebration of history and recognition of the role farming has played in America's growth. Event includes antique farm equipment and demonstrations, food, live music, tractorcade, craft and vendor market, silent and farm equipment auctions, petting zoo, and artisan demonstrations. Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Saturday 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. Informal Sunday worship at 8:30 a.m. Friday admission \$3; Saturday and Sunday admission \$5. Tour the Latzer home for \$2. Latzer Homestead, 1464 Old Trenton Road. Call (618) 654-7957 or visit highlandilhistory.org.

September 9 BACONFEST, O'Fallon. A fundraiser for the

relief funds that help veterans with many needs. Event includes all things bacon, dunk tank, vendors and live music. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. West 1st Street. Visit vfwbaconfest.com.

September 9 COMMUNITY BAND PERFORMANCE, Maryville. Enjoy the sounds of the Troy Community Band. 7 p.m. Maryville Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Find us on Facebook at Troy Community Band.

September 9 SOAPBOX "RACE OF FUN", East Alton. Event is designed for fun only for area youth to race in a soapbox car down Berkshire Hill. Soapbox cars are provided for the participants. Participants must be 7 years of age by race date, 4' to 4' 9" tall, and must weigh between 55 - 90 pounds. Participants must be able to pass a safety check the morning of the race, fit comfortably in the car, operate the brakes, and handle the steering of the car. East Alton residents \$2.; non-resident or unincorporated residents \$4. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. In case of rain, races may be delayed to later in the day or rescheduled for the following day (Sunday) from 1 - 6 p.m. Race held at the 600 block of Berkshire Blvd. Visit eastaltonvillage.org.

September 10; October 8 PICKERS MARKET, Litchfield. All items sold at this market are prior to 1980 including

antiques, collectibles, vintage items, up-cycled items, and refurbished items. Live music each week. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. 400 North State Street. Visit visittlitchfield.com.

September 15 & 16 ITALIAN FEST, Collinsville. Come celebrate the Italian culture and heritage that the city was built on with food, drinks, and family fun. Enjoy live music and numerous events throughout both days. Friday 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Saturday 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Admission is free. 221 West Main Street. Visit italianfest.net.

September 15-17 HILL'S FORT RENDEZVOUS, Greenville. Experience canon firing, bullet molding, vendors, blacksmiths, fife and drum corps, rope making, Illinois Territorial rangers, black powder blanket shoot, war of 1812 and colonial reenactors and more. Noon - 11 p.m. Admission is free. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Ave. Visit hillsfort.org.

September 15-17, 20-24 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: BEER FOR BREAKFAST, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adult \$22; youth 17 years of age and younger. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

September 16 COLORS OF CANCER 5K, Litchfield. 5K fun run for the entire family. Awards for top finishers. Proceeds will be donated to Montgomery County Cancer Association. Packet pickup and same day registration 7 - 7:45 a.m.; race begins 8 a.m. To register, visit litchfieldchamber.com

September 16 KICKS ON 66 CAR SHOW & CRUISE, Edwardsville. See cars, trucks, and motorcycles from all eras and meet the thriving clubs and car motorheads showing off their prized vehicles. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Car cruise starts at 2 p.m. Ray M. Schon Park, across from Glen Carbon Village Hall on North Main Street. Visit kickson66.org.

September 16 LINCOLN LAND BIRD BANDING, Hillisboro. Lincoln Land Association of Bird Banders will be capturing and banding birds at the sanctuary. Guests will learn about the scientific process of banding and how collected data is used to study topics such as bird population dynamics and the

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.

September 16 GOING GOLD TO BEAT CHILDHOOD CANCER, Edwardsville. Please join us at Liberty Apple Orchard for a family-friendly 5k run/walk and apple festival. Our annual event benefits efforts to beat childhood cancer through the American Cancer Society. We'll have music, apple donuts, fresh pressed apple cider, apple picking, a basket raffle and more. The course for the 5K run/walk is fast and scenic, traversing country roads and MCT trails. Preregister for the 5k by using the link on Liberty Apple Orchard's facebook page or by searching Going Gold at itsyourrace.com. Register at the orchard on race day beginning 7 a.m. Race starts 8 a.m. Liberty Apple Orchard, 8308 Kuhn Station Road. Visit libertyappleorchard.com or call (618) 659-9217.



► *Continued from page 19*

I was carried back to a dark Florida drive and another landscape occupied by unusual plants, brought to me by the BBC. I felt the same sense of isolation and unease.

Had it not been for the birds, I wouldn't have thought about the plants. I wouldn't have thought about the plants were it not for the book. I wouldn't have read the book had it not been for the manatees.

As I jotted those thoughts in my notebook, one of the blackbirds abandoned his post.

I crossed the bridge.

On the far side of the wetlands, I found grassland and trees. There were broad trails dappled with violets and

blackberry bushes and honeysuckle scent. Plants with wicked looking leaves growing among oaks and a misplaced maple. Bees and butterflies and wasps hunting low above short grass and sand. A pond ringed in cattails. The tell-tale chirp of startled frogs. And a pond slider depositing eggs in a ridiculously conspicuous nest that within the hour became all-but invisible.

On my way back across the wetlands, in rare places where the spatterdock had retreated, I saw slivers of black water that shone like a dark mirror under a leaden sky. I stopped to admire the plants. Imagined an ecosystem in the labyrinth beneath the leaves. I wondered how many blackbirds took shelter there, how many of this season's hatchlings

would become next year's guardians of the wetlands. As I watched the water, a red-winged blackbird lifted from the spatterdock and lit on a post, to watch me.

Some of life's loveliest moments are born from an unlikely linkage of circumstance.

This was one of them.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

Arlington's walking trail will take you across the wetlands and through a sand prairie. It's worth the walk. All in, you're hiking about a mile and a half of trail in full sun. Wear a hat and bug repellent. You'll find picnic tables and interpretive signs on the trails, but no water fountains or restrooms. Plan accordingly. **S**



Spatterdock (pictured) provides food or shelter for an array of species, ranging from invertebrates to red-winged blackbirds, waterfowl, beaver and deer.



GETTING THERE

From I-255, take Horseshoe Lake Road exit west toward Granite City. Turn north on Arlington Drive and drive about a half mile. The Wetlands will be on your left. Arlington is open daily from sunrise to sunset unless otherwise posted. There's ample parking at the entrance.

If you're mapping your trip via Google, use Arlington Dr, Pontoon Beach, IL 62040, as an address. For more information about Arlington Wetlands, visit the Heartlands Conservancy website at <https://heartlandsconservancy.org> and click Explore.

► *Continued from page 24*
impact of habitat change on the diversity and density of bird species. 8 a.m. - noon. H & B Bremer Wildlife Sanctuary, 194 Bremer Lane. Visit bremersanctuary.com.

September 16 MISSISSIPPI EARTHTONES FESTIVAL, Alton. A celebration of the Mississippi River through art, music, and conservation. Local artisans will offer their wares, music will fill the air, and food and beverages will be available. Noon - 10 p.m. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. Visit downtownalton.com.

September 16 STREET ART FEST, Highland. Watch as talented artists create artwork of amazing color, depth and complexity with chalk. There will be lots of food and beverage choices, live music, bags tournament, makers market, and a Kreative Kids Korner. 11 a.m. - 8 p.m. Downtown Square, 1216 Main Street. Visit highlandillinois.com.

September 16 WINE ON THE LAWN, Altamont. Enjoy Illinois wines, beer and live music. For a donation, guests receive a commemorative wine glass and samples of wine and beer. Music by Drew Sheafor followed by Lanny & Julie. Noon - 8 p.m. Dr. Charles M. Wright House, 509 North Main Street. Call (618) 483-6178 or visit wrightmansion.org.

September 16 & 17 FALL FESTIVAL, Carlinville. Shop a large selection of craft, antique, and small business vendors, buy fresh local produce, jams, and honey. Event also includes great food, autumn and harvest themed competitions, tours of historic Anderson Mansion and live music. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Macoupin County Historical Society, 920 West Breckenridge Street. Visit mchssociety.org.

September 16 & 17; 23 & 24 FALL FESTIVAL, Kinmundy. Fall festival, craft vendor and food

vendors. Saturdays 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sundays 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Kinmundy Log Cabin Village, 6260 Gesell Road. Visit kinmundylogcabinvillage.com

September 16; October 21; November 18 FREEDOM TO EQUALITY TOURS, Alton. Learn about Alton's significance on the Underground Railroad, discover the legendary abolitionists who fought against slavery and follow the stories of local Civil Rights leaders who made their mark on the city and the nation. The two-hour guided shuttle tours will stop at Rocky Fork Church, Elijah P. Lovejoy Monument, Union Baptist Church and the Miles Davis Statue. Tours leave at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Admission is \$32.50. Each tour will begin and end at the Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. For more information or tickets, visit riversandroutes.com.

September 17 APPLE FESTIVAL, Grafton. Festivities include apple wine tasting, warm apple pie, crafts, live music, fresh produce, kids' activities, and delicious restaurant favorites. An apple pie walk at 12:30 p.m. Bring your own pumpkin or purchase one to decorate and take part in the pumpkin roll at 2 p.m. Fastest pumpkin will win a free night's stay at our lodge. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center, 13653 Lodge Blvd. Call (618) 786-2331 or visit pmlodge.net.

September 22 FAMILY NIGHT HIKE, Highland. Follow the trail and look for a variety of animals and insects. Then, look to the stars through a telescope and see what hides in the sky. The evening finishes up with refreshments by the fire. 6 - 10 p.m. Silver Lake Park, 3099 Highland Park Road. Visit highlandil.gov.

September 22-24 ART FAIR, Edwardsville. Featuring the original works of 85-100 local, regional, national and international artists, local performing arts, live art demonstrations,

children's art gallery and food and drink vendors. A three-day opportunity for the family see art, make art, and buy art. Friday 5 - 9 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Admission is free. Call (618) 655-0337 or visit edwardsvilleartscenter.com.

September 23 CONCERT IN THE PARK, Enjoy the sounds of Riverbend Dueling Pianos. 7 p.m. Maryville Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Visit vil.maryville.il.us.

September 23 FALL FESTIVAL, Elsah. Set in the epic colors of autumn on the Mississippi, the festival will highlight historic Elsah's charm. Businesses and buildings will be open and vendors will be set up throughout the village. Listen to live music, stroll the streets, admire stone houses and support small businesses. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Downtown at 26 LaSalle Street. Visit escapetoelsah.com.

September 29; October 28 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. Hike leaves promptly at 8 p.m. Free for members; non-members \$5. Registration is required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

September 30 BELLEVILLE MAIN STREET MARATHON, Belleville. Run this hometown marathon/half marathon on a portion of America's Longest Main Street. This year's featured charity is Big Brothers Big Sisters. Both runs begin at 7 a.m. To register, visit bellevillemarathon.com.

September 30 CHALK IT UP TO ART, O'Fallon. The event features chalk artists, of all levels, creating beautiful art for the entire community to see.

Watch the artists draw, vote on your favorite and enjoy the live music. This year the event is being held in conjunction with the Vine Street Market. Theme this year is National Love People Day with fall element. Cash prizes for winners. 8 - 11 a.m. Winners announced at 11:30 a.m. Artist registration is \$15; day of event is \$25. Vine Street Market, 212 East 1st Street. Learn more at ofallon-downtowndistrict.com.

October 6 & 7 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. Friday 11 a.m. - 10:30 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 p.m. Admission is free. Downtown around the Veterans Memorial Fountain and along Main Street. Visit bellevillechili.com.

October 7 CELEBRATE CENTRALIA, Centralia. A festival of local artisans, musicians, crafters, wineries, craft brewers, and food vendors. 2 - 8 p.m. At Centralia's Downtown Event Space, the 100 & 200 Blocks of Broadway and 100 Block of South Locust Street. Visit seecentralia.com.

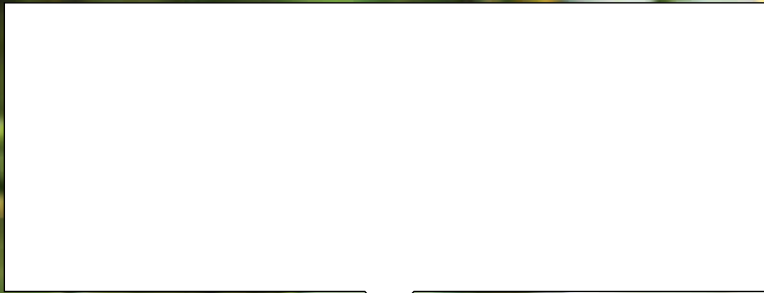
October 7 & 8, 14 & 15 VINTAGE VOICES, Alton. Step back in time on these guided, gentle-walking tours and meet a controversial publisher, war heroes, and prominent persons from Alton's rich history portrayed by local actors. Noon - 2:30 p.m. Tours will leave from the main gate of the City Cemetery at 5th and Vine Streets. For tickets, call (618) 531-6641 or visit facebook.com/vintagevoices tours.

October 8 CONCERT IN THE PARK, Troy. Come listen to the Saxophonics as they provide a variety of music from across the ages. 2 - 3 p.m. At the Gazebo in Tri-Township Park, 410 Wickliffe Street. Visit vil.maryville.il.us

Flies pollinate
a spatterdock
bloom in
Arlington
Wetlands.



THE FINAL FRAME



Southwestern
Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative 