

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2025 • VOLUME 77 • ISSUE 9

ANNUAL
MEETING

FFA AWARD

SMARTHUB

Safety Day

**WHAT IT MEANS,
IN OUR WORDS**

ELDON HAZLET
STATE PARK

READER CONTEST

WEATHERIZE

FIRE SAFETY



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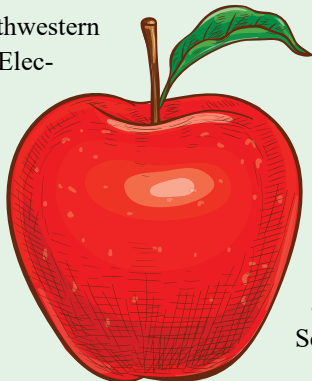
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Reader Contest

We've hidden an image of an apple 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 apple, 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 September contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by October 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 November issue of The Southwestern.

JUNE WINNER

Congratulations to Jack Manion of Collinsville. As the winner of our June Hide & Seek contest drawing, Jack will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Thank you to everyone who participated in our June 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.
- September contest entries must be 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.

ON THE COVER

Lineman Braden Clark illustrates the dangers of electricity during a live line demonstration offered on Safety Day. Held Friday,



Aug. 8, at the co-op's headquarters in Greenville, the third annual event provided a full day of safety training for co-op employees and their families. We asked the seven members of Southwestern's Safety Day Planning Committee to share a few words about the event. You can read their responses on page 12.

CO-OP REMINDERS

September 1 Offices closed for Labor Day.

September 6 Southwestern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting.

September 8 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.



FFA honors Southwestern Electric for 75 years of support

by Nathan Grimm

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's roots with the FFA run deep.

It makes sense that the two would be intertwined. Electric cooperatives were formed to meet a demand that big power companies couldn't or didn't want to meet – namely, the need for power in rural areas. And who lives in rural areas? Farmers.

It's a partnership that dates to the early days of both organizations. The FFA began in 1928 in Blacksburg, Virginia, and the Illinois FFA was founded a year later. Six years after that, President Franklin D. Roosevelt created the Rural Electrification Administration with the purpose of bringing electricity to rural America. For nearly a century, electric cooperatives have been providing power to farmers young and old, while the FFA has been nurturing them.

Southwestern Electric was recently honored for its long-standing support of the Illinois FFA at the organization's 97th annual State Convention in Springfield, Illinois. On June 11, 2025, the FFA recognized Southwestern Electric for 75 years of donating to the rural Illinois institution.

Southwestern Electric CEO Bobby Williams and Director Jared Stine were on hand to accept the award.

"Obviously, agriculture is near and dear to the hearts of all of our communities," Stine, who, along with his father and his children, was also an FFA member growing up, said. "I'm very proud that those that came before us saw that need and started to donate to help an organization that has done great things for nearly 100 years now. It's very cool to be a part of that."

Williams said supporting the FFA past, present and future is the cooperative's way of giving back and "honoring our roots."

"Farmers were the founders of the cooperative," Williams said. "Ensuring that the youth of tomorrow has the training and skills to be a thriving farmer in our community makes everybody thrive."



PHOTO COURTESY RILEY WELLS, FFA FOUNDATION ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Southwestern Electric Cooperative Director Jared Stine, left, and CEO Bobby Williams pose with an award presented to the cooperative for its 75 years of support to the Illinois Association FFA.

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



See You September 6th!

American Farm Heritage Museum Venue for 87th Annual Meeting of Members

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 87th Annual Meeting of Members will be held Saturday, Sept. 6, at the American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246.

Parking will be available on the museum grounds.

The meeting will begin at 8 a.m. We'll be serving coffee and doughnuts.

Members may vote from 8 a.m. - 10 a.m. You'll find more information about voting and the related bill credit below and on the next page.

Linemen will offer a live line demonstration. They'll discuss electrical safety, illustrate the dangers of live wires, and address steps for safely removing yourself from a live-wire situation.

The business meeting will begin at 10

a.m. Following the business meeting, Southwestern will provide sandwiches and bottled water to-go.

Questions may be directed to Jennifer Gillan, Manager of Member Services, at 800-637-8667. You can email Jennifer at community@sweci.com.



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

To ensure you had the 2025 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.

Voting Schedule

\$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. 27 remains open to 7 p.m.
Sept. 4 remains open to 7 p.m.

St. Jacob warehouse, 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob
Aug. 26 from 4 to 7 p.m.
Sept. 3 from 4 to 7 p.m.

St. Elmo warehouse, 2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo
Aug. 28 from 4 to 7 p.m.
Sept. 2 from 4 to 7 p.m.

American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue,
Greenville, IL 62246
Sept. 6 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. 22 through 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 5. We are closed on Monday, Sept. 1 in observance of Labor Day.

Commercial & Inactive Memberships

Commercial Memberships

Commercial (business) members are advised that any representative wishing to vote will be asked to present satisfactory evidence that this person has been assigned to act as an agent of the business. A commercial member, like any other, is entitled to a single vote in cooperative elections.

Inactive Memberships

Only active members of the co-op are eligible to vote in the election.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 87th Annual Meeting of Members will be held Saturday, Sept. 6, at the American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246.

Questions may be directed to Jennifer Gillan, Manager of Member Services, at 800-637-8667. You can email Jennifer at community@sweci.com.



Cooperative hosts Sept. 27 recycling drive in St. Elmo

Southwestern Electric will host an e-cycling drive at its St. Elmo Distribution Center on Saturday, Sept. 27. 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. Elmo Distribution Center is located at 2117 East 1850 Avenue (frontage road southwest of the St. Elmo exit off Interstate 70), St. Elmo, IL 62458.

- 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@cjdrecycling.com. CJD E-Cycling is a family-owned recycling business with offices in East Alton and Edwardsville. You can learn more about CJD E-Cycling and the materials they recycle at www.cjdrecycling.com.



Service Lines

We may not be their utility. We can still be their neighbor.

A note from Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams

In August, we began hearing from your neighbors. Utility customers interested in switching to Southwestern Electric Cooperative were calling to speak with our member service representatives. We were grateful for their interest and we understood the concerns driving their calls. Rising energy expenses are affecting all utilities, largely due to higher power generation, transmission and distribution costs.

As a member-owned electric cooperative, Southwestern Electric's service area is defined by state and federal regulations. In Illinois, deregulation laws prevent us from serving locations outside our designated territory — even if they're right across the street.

Since Southwestern isn't an Alternative Retail Electric Supplier (ARES), we're legally prohibited from selling electricity to anyone who isn't a member of our cooperative.

We appreciate the trust your neighbors placed in us by reaching out. We encouraged them to stay informed and engaged with their power providers.

If you or your neighbors are looking for ways to manage your energy use or lower your bill, we offer tips and tools for everyone — regardless of their power provider — online. You'll find them in the Energy & Efficiency column of *The Southwestern* magazine, online at sweci.com/southwestern, and on our social media channels.

As a member-owned cooperative, our mission is to provide reliable, affordable service to the members we're authorized to serve. If you have friends or family moving to our area and they have questions about their electric service, encourage them to call us at 800-637-8667.

We'll be happy to hear from them.

Sincerely,



CEO Bobby Williams

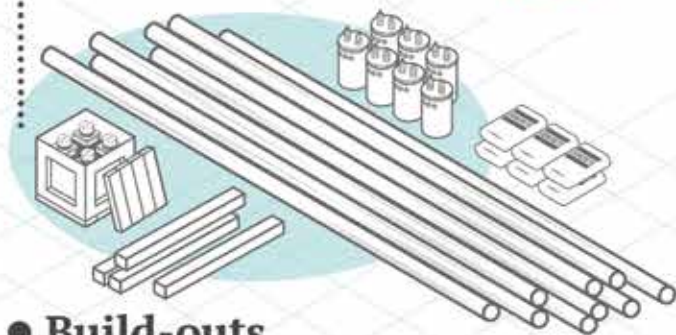


Cost Increases

The past five years have been a period of exploding costs for the electric utility industry and for broadband providers, pushed by soaring demand, supply chain challenges, raw materials shortages, increased labor costs and tariffs. The impact has been rapid increases in the cost of producing power, longer and more unpredictable project timelines and the need for more financing, all of which have driven electric rates up for residences, businesses and other end-users. Here's a look at what's contributing to the trend. **Percent increase since 2020:**

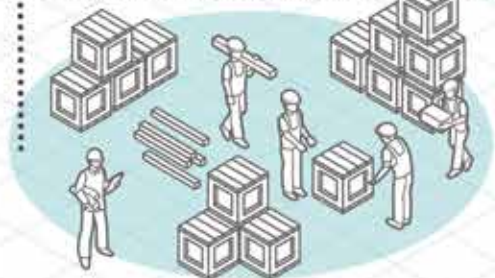
● Infrastructure

Utility poles (wood, steel, composite)	+25-40%
Crossarms & braces (steel/wood).....	+20-35%
Conductor wire (aluminum/copper)...	+30-50%
Transformers.....	+70-100%
Grain-oriented electrical steel.....	+80-100%
Oil/dielectric fluids.....	+25-40%
Copper wiring.....	+50%
Concrete.....	+25-35%
Smart meters.....	+20-35%
Pad-mounted switchgear.....	+25-40%
Circuit breakers/reclosers.....	+20-35%



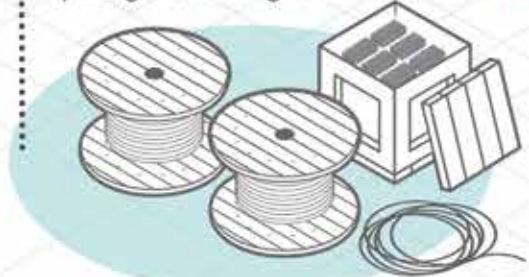
● Build-outs

Utility construction labor.....	+20-40%
Freight/logistics.....	+30-60%



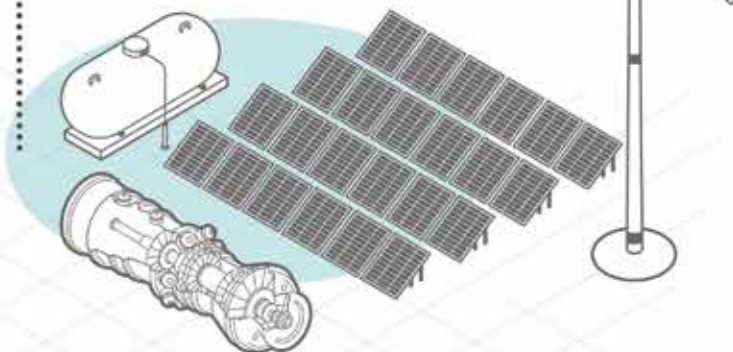
● Broadband

Fiber-optic cable.....	+25-40%
Splicing & telecom gear.....	+20-30%



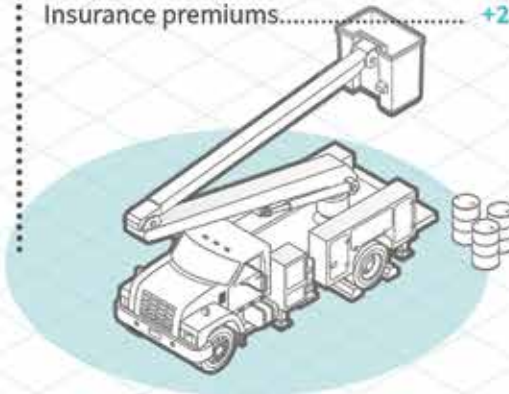
● Generation

Diesel gensets.....	+20-40%
Gas turbines.....	+20-30%
Solar PV systems.....	+25-35%
Wind turbines.....	+25-35%
Hydropower components.....	+20-30%
Battery storage.....	+25-40%
SCADA/EMS systems.....	+20-30%
Inverters.....	+20-30%
Relays & switchgear.....	+25-40%
Natural Gas.....	+20-120%
Coal.....	+30-60%
Diesel/fuel oil.....	+40-70%



● Fleets

Light trucks.....	+25-40%
Bucket trucks, digger derricks	+20-50%
Fuel costs (especially diesel).....	+20-30%
Maintenance.....	+15-25%
Insurance premiums.....	+20%



Sources: BLS; energynews.com; Reuters; Wood Mackenzie; NREL; IEA

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.

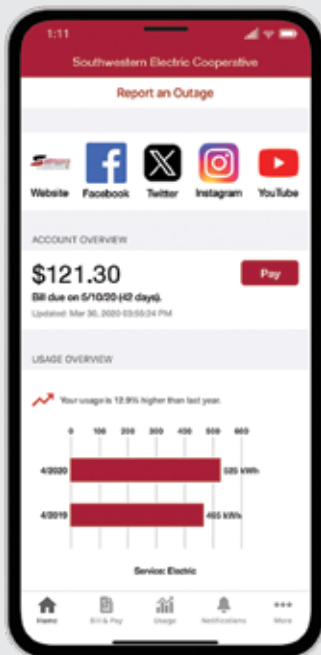
Alerts & Notifications. You can stay up to date on important account events via email or text messages, and receive the information you need to make informed decisions about your account.

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

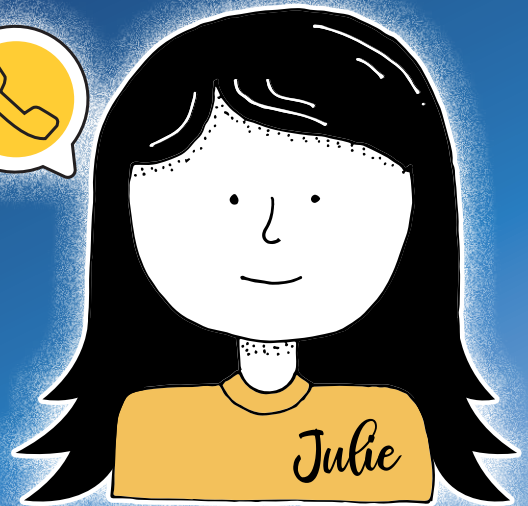
Enroll in Auto Pay and enjoy the convenience of having your bill automatically paid each month from your bank account or credit card.

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.



Steps to Solar Commissioning



1 Contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com for our information and commissioning packet.

2 Contact your installer and insurance agent. Ask your installer for a one-line diagram. Request a certificate of insurance from your agent. They're welcome to send those documents to Julie Lowe at Southwestern Electric. Or if you'd like to review them, they can send them to you, and you can pass them along to Julie.

3 After your one-line diagram is approved by Southwestern Electric, you'll receive a \$500 invoice to cover the installation of your new dual register electric meter, a system inspection, and your array's interconnection to the grid. If your installer will be paying this invoice on your behalf, we'll send the invoice directly to them.

4 After installation is complete, contact us to schedule your system's on-site review and commissioning.

5 Our commissioning team will visit your site. We will inspect your system to verify it meets our safety specifications. A team member will review a memorandum of understanding with you. You'll sign this document for our files. Note: If you won't be present for commissioning, please schedule a meeting to review and sign the memorandum beforehand. After your system passes inspection, you go live! Your array is connected to Southwestern's distribution system.

6 We'll send you and your installer a certificate of completion. Your installer will submit this document for you, so you can receive your solar renewable energy credits (SRECs).

7 Each year, you'll submit documentation to confirm you've renewed your insurance. You may add us as a certificate holder on your policy so the renewal will be sent to us automatically each year.

8 Every three years, we'll visit your system to confirm it's connected properly, well-maintained, and that your safety signs are in place.

Safety Day

What it means to the people who plan it

Every year, Safety Day brings Southwestern Electric employees, directors and families together to learn, connect and celebrate the work that keeps everyone safe. This year, we asked the seven members of our Safety Day Planning Committee to share a few words about what the day means to them. We'll publish our feature story about Safety Day 2025 in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.



“With family coming to our workplace for Safety Day, it’s a refreshing reminder of why we take the extra steps to do our job safely.”

*Journeyman Lineman
James Rickermann*

“Safety isn’t just for the workplace — it’s just as important at home. That’s why I love that Safety Day includes our families. There’s something for all ages, from learning how to stay safe online and what to do if you get lost, to watching our crew in the Live Line Demo. It only happens once a year, but the lessons really stick and it’s always great seeing everyone’s families come together for it.”

Executive Assistant Brooke Scott



“I’m so proud to be a part of the Safety Committee here at SWECI. We take safety seriously, but we also like to take the opportunity to create a fun day for our families to be a part of and to support our community too!”

*Member Services Representative
Lauren Schoen*



“One thing that I learned from Safety Day is that we take time to educate the public but often we forget to take time to educate our families on the ‘what to dos’ around electricity. I think it’s primarily because as linemen, we feel as if we would be there in any scenario. That may not be the case. We may be working at the same time they run across danger. Safety Day really sets the focus on taking the time to educate our families.”

Journeyman Lineman Braden Clark

“Electrical Safety education for employees is very important, but what may be more important is educating those not in the industry who are unknowingly around electrical hazards every day. One of the many goals of our Safety Day is to educate our families of these hazards and how to prevent or handle certain situations they may encounter.”

Staking Engineer Natalie Goestenkors



“I think what stands out to me the most is how broad safety really is. It’s the heart of our business, but it’s also important to educate on areas of safety that don’t seem as obvious. We try to incorporate vendors each year that encompass mental health, cyber security and animal safety, among others. It’s a great reminder that safety is everyone’s responsibility, and I’m glad we can include our families in that.”

Human Resources Administrator Marissa Horn



“Safety Day is so much more than just safety — it’s a celebration of our commitment to one another and to the cooperative. I’m humbled to see how everything comes together, and how everyone is ready to step in wherever they’re needed. It takes a lot of work and planning to make this day a success for our employees and their families, but what stays with me the most is the joy and camaraderie we share. Above all, it’s a reminder that safety means protecting our physical well-being while also creating a space where we feel supported and respected by our fellow team members.”

Accounting Clerk Ashley Towler

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 blades, creating an updraft. The updraft pushes warmer air near the ceiling down into the room.

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.

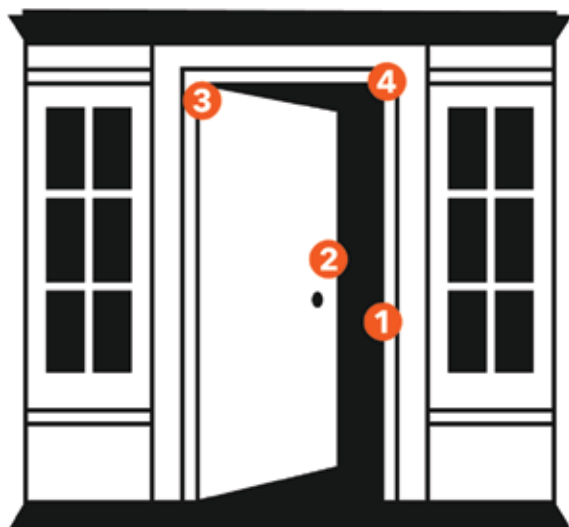
Weather Stripping Windows

- 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 dorm 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. 5-11, 2025**

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.

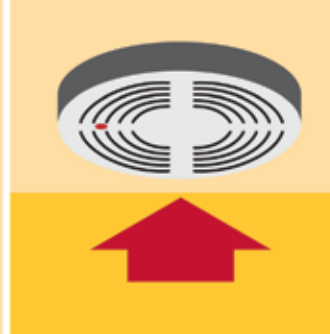


2

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



Trail Mix

There's a lot to see on the trails at Carlyle's Eldon Hazlet State Park.
There's just as much to miss. Here's an incomplete list.

Words & Photos by Joe Richardson

13 THINGS YOU'LL NOTICE

Stopping to let sun-dappled
deer cross the road.

Cardinals painting dashes of red against
Pawnee Trail's earth and green.

Snow-white egrets
standing statue-still.

Charred stumps and scorched bark near the trailhead.

The burnished lake mirroring
a tarnished silver sky.

Blooms of brilliant green, yellow, lilac and orange.

Blisters on your ankles.

Bone-white marble in the Burnside Cemetery mound.

The half dozen deer playing hide and seek on
Cherokee Trail that you were quick enough to see.

Pawnee Trail cut wide enough to walk
side by side with a friend.

Forest windows open to lake views.

Trees who grew up together,
straight and thin and tall.

Mosquito welts on the drive home.

13 THINGS YOU'LL MISS

Turkeys marching single file across
the blacktop behind you.

Bluebirds flitting through heavy shadow
at the edges of the parking lot.

A great blue heron who coughed
and cried, winging low over the water.

Sun-bleached cypress fallen by the shore.

High clouds and low light making the understory
dusk at midday, and the feel, soft and surreal,
of wandering through a dream.

Toadstools.

Poison ivy, freshly cut, weeping trailside.

Stories etched in stone.

The half dozen deer playing hide and seek on
Cherokee Trail that were quicker than you.

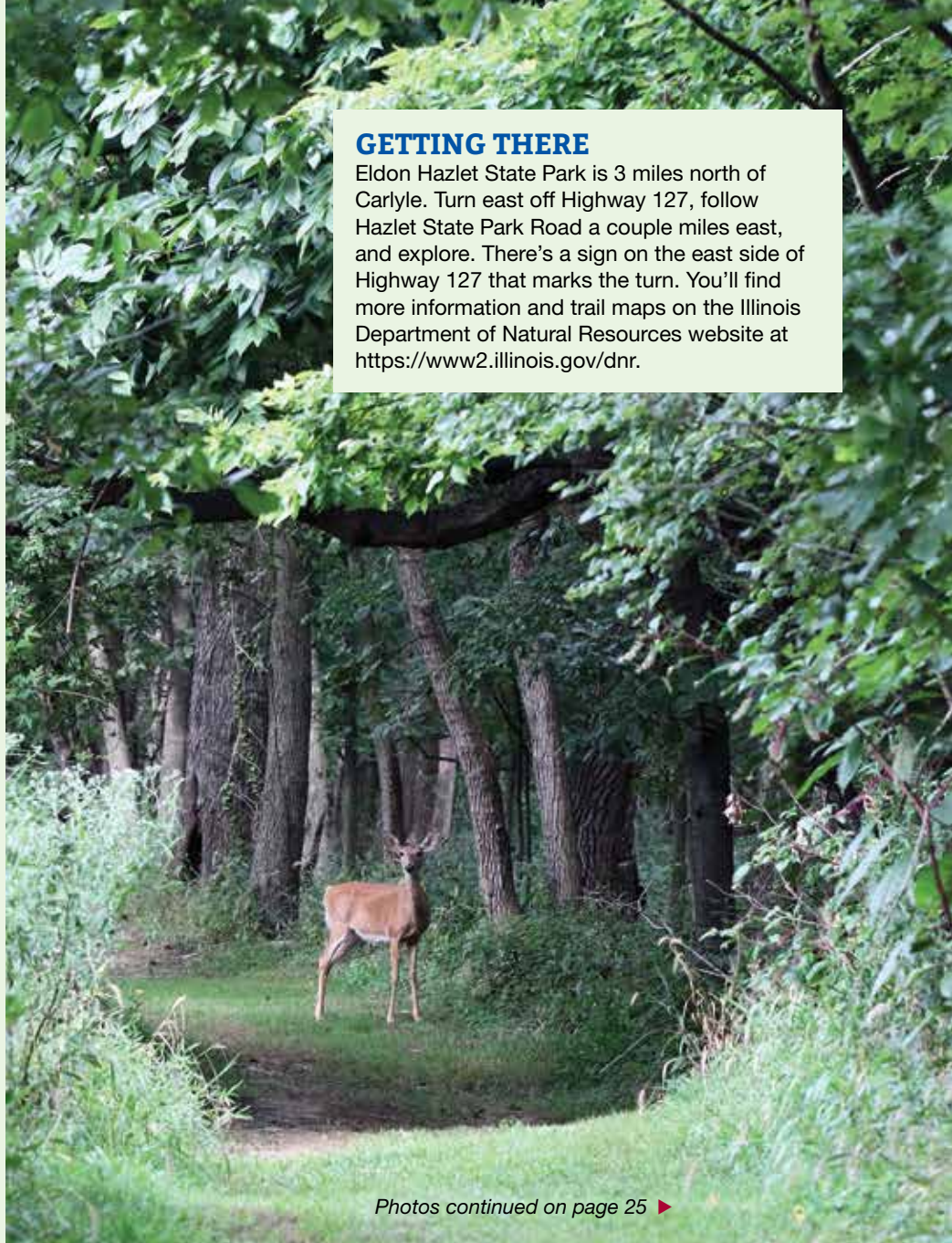
The comfortable silence
of walking alone.

Spider's silk between the water and you.

The same trees snaking like Gorgons
as they touch the sky.

Bug spray on the back of your hands.





GETTING THERE

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

Photos continued on page 25 ►



WHO • WHAT • WHERE

In July, we challenged you to identify a Clay County man playing pool with Mark Twain. Before you read the responses, spend a moment studying this month's mystery item. The two pieces work together. Each piece has a channel, or passage, bored lengthwise through the wood from the tapered ends to the holes you see in the photo.

Can you identify our mystery item? Submit your solution to joe.richardson@sweci.com, or mail it to: Joe Richardson, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

Please include your name and mailing address with your response. If you have a story associated with the artifact, we'd love to read it.

As always, we look forward to hearing from you. Thanks for spending time with *The Southwestern*.

I'm playing pool with Mark Twain: It's Albert Bigelow Paine playing pool at Mark Twain's residence at 21 Fifth Avenue in New York City. They would play pool after writing sessions together. —Lori M Rossy, Troy

The person pictured playing pool with Mark Twain is Albert Bigelow Paine. I had seen this photo previously but had to look up the name to recall who it was.

—Sandy Dunn, Highland

The answer to the "Who am I?" puzzler in your July 2025 magazine is Albert Bigelow Paine. He was an American author and biographer best known for his work with Mark Twain.

The photo of Paine playing billiards with Twain was taken in 1907 at Twain's New York City residence. Twain had a passion for billiards and once famously



quipped, “The game of billiards has destroyed my naturally sweet disposition.”

Paine lived with Twain for a time. The two spent countless hours around the billiards table as Paine did research for several books on Twain that he wrote, which included a four-volume biographical set published in 1912.

Paine had a connection with the St. Louis area. When he was 20, he moved to St. Louis where he trained as a photographer for a short time.

—Bill Malec, O’Fallon



*What
am I?*

CO-OP KITCHEN

Hearth & Harvest



APPLE HILL CAKE

Cake Ingredients

- 1 cup oil
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts chopped
- 4 cups apples peeled, cored and chopped
- ½ cup raisins

Lemon Glaze Ingredients

- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 5 - 6 tablespoons lemon juice

Directions

1. Mix together all cake ingredients.
2. Pour into greased and floured 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. Bake at 350° for 1 hour.
4. Make lemon glaze while cake is baking by mixing together the powdered sugar and lemon juice. While cake is warm drizzle with lemon glaze.

CARAMEL APPLE BARS

Ingredients

- 1 cup brown sugar packed
- ½ cup softened butter
- ¼ cup vegetable oil
- 1¾ cup all purpose flour
- 1½ cups quick cooking oats
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 4½ cups apple peeled, cored and chopped
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 3 tablespoons all purpose flour
- 14 ounces caramel candies (unwrap before using)

Directions

1. In a large bowl, cream together brown sugar, butter and oil until smooth.
2. In separate bowl combine 1¾ cups flour, oats, baking soda and salt.
3. Stir oat mixture into the creamed mixture until well blended.
4. Set aside 1¾ cups of this mixture.
5. Press the remaining mixture into the bottom of an ungreased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
6. In a large bowl toss apples with lemon juice, then add 3 tablespoons of flour and toss together.
7. Spread the apple mixture evenly over the prepared crust.
8. In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt caramels, stirring until smooth.
9. Pour melted caramels evenly over the apple layer.
10. Crumble remaining oat mixture over caramel.
11. Bake at 400° for 30 minutes, until the top is golden brown and apples are tender.
12. Cut while slightly warm and refrigerate any leftover bars.

Caramel Apple Bars prepared & photographed
by Mike Barns, mike.barns@sweci.com

AUTUMN APPLE SALAD

Ingredients

- 1 (20 ounce) can crushed pineapple undrained
- ⅔ cup sugar
- 1 (3 ounce) package lemon Jello
- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese softened
- 1¼ cups apples unpeeled, cored and chopped
- ⅓ cup chopped walnuts or pecans
- 1 cup celery finely chopped
- 1 cup whipped topping

Directions

1. Combine pineapple and sugar in a saucepan and boil for 3 minutes.
2. Stir in dry Jello, remove from heat and continue stirring until Jello is dissolved.
3. Chunk cream cheese and stir into hot mixture until smooth.
6. Let mixture cool.
7. Fold in apples, nuts, celery and whipped topping.
8. Refrigerate 2 hours before serving.

APPLE BUTTER

Ingredients

- 12 cups apples peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon allspice

Directions

1. Place apples in crockpot.
2. Combine remaining ingredients and mix well.
3. Pour over apples and mix well.
4. Cover and cook on high 1 hour.
5. Reduce heat to low and cook an additional 10 hours stirring occasionally.
6. Excess may be frozen.

CURRENT EVENTS

September 4, 8, 18 LIVE CONCERT SERIES, Highland. Join the Highland community for nights filled with fun and live music. 6 - 9 p.m. Free to the public every Thursday on the beautiful Highland Square at 914 Main Street. Performers, dates and times subject to change. Call (618) 654-6071 or visit highlandil.gov.

September 5 & 6 STREET FAIR, Carlyle. This weekend of family fun includes live music, kids activities, car cruise, pet parade, bags tournament, zip line, 3 on 3 basketball tournament and food and vendor stands. Friday 4 - 10 p.m.; Saturday 9:30 a.m. - 10 p.m. Located at the Clinton County Courthouse Square, 850 Fairfax Street. Visit carlylelake.com/carlyle-street-fair.

September 5-7, 11-14 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: ARSENIC AND OLD LACE, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, visit altonlittletheater.org.

September 6 SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 87TH ANNUAL MEETING, Greenville. 8 a.m. at the American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Questions may be directed to Jennifer Gillan, Manager of Member Services, at 800-637-8667. You can email Jennifer at community@sweci.com.

September 12 BIKES, BIRDS, & BREWS, West Alton. Local cyclists and Audubon staff will guide each session and we will

make several stops throughout the sanctuary in order to view birds and other wildlife. Following the biking portion (approximately two hours), attendees can enjoy a cold brew from local Alton brewery, Old Bakery Beer Company. Non-alcoholic beverages and light snacks will also be provided. 5 - 8 p.m. Admission is \$20. Registration is required. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. To register, visit riverlands.audubon.org.

September 12-14 SUMMER SUNDOWN MUSIC FESTIVAL, Effingham. Family-friendly, accessible, small footprint, multi-genre music festival focused on the local musicians of Central Illinois, with electrifying national artists atop the bill. Event will also feature vendors, craftspeople, tradespeople, healers, and music-lovers who all bring their own unique addition to the festival atmosphere. 10 a.m. - midnight. Friday 4 p.m. - midnight; Saturday workshops at 10 a.m., box office opens at 11 a.m., music from 12 p.m. - midnight; Sunday workshops at 10 a.m., box office opens at 11 a.m., music from 12 - 6 p.m. Weekend pass is \$95. The Stage at Lake Sara, 8724 East Marine Road. For more information, visit summersundownfest.com.

September 13 FALL PLANT SALE, Godfrey. A wide variety of native wildflowers, grasses, sedges, vines, shrubs and trees supplied by four vendors will be available for purchase at this Missouri Prairie Foundation native plant sale. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Visit thenatureinstitute.org.

September 13 ROUTE 66 CAR & BIKE SHOW, Hamel. Car and bike show, awards, food vendors, live music, 50/50 drawings, and dash plaques for all entries. Park opens at 8 a.m.; judging at noon; awards at 2 p.m. Registration is \$20. Hamel Village Park, 10 Park Avenue. To register, visit hamelroute66.com.

September 13 WINE ON THE LAWN, Altamont. Enjoy Illinois wines, beer and live music on our beautiful 5 acre property. Food available also. For a donation, guests receive a commemorative wine glass and samples of wine and beer. Bring lawn chairs and plan to enjoy a fun day in support of the Dr. Charles M. Wright House. The house will be open for tours. No outside alcohol allowed. 2 - 9 p.m. Music by Andy Rueter 2:30 - 5:30 p.m. and Drew Sheafor & Audrey Simes 6 - 9 p.m. Dr. Charles M. Wright House, 509 North Main Street. Call (618) 483-6397 or visit wrightmansion.org.

September 13, 21; October 4 CONCERTS IN THE PARK, Maryville. Enjoy the sounds of the Troy Community Band September 13 from 7 - 8:30 p.m., Friends of Bluegrass September 21 from 3 - 4:30 p.m., and Flip the Frog October 4 from 7 - 8:30 p.m. Firemen's Park, 300 East Donk Avenue. Visit vil.maryville.il.us, email parksandrec@maryville-il.us or message us (618) 223-8965.

September 13; October 25 EARS MICROCHIP EVENT, Effingham. On-site microchipping. No appointment needed. No geography or number limit. 10 a.m. - noon. Freewill dona-

tion. EARS - Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary, 408 East Fayette Avenue. Visit effinghamanimalrescue.com or call/text (217) 500-0231.

September 14; October 12 PICKERS MARKET, Litchfield. An open-air market with vintage collectibles, live music and food. 8 a.m. - 2 p.m. 400 North State Street. Visit vis-itlitchfield.com.

September 19 & 20 ITALIAN FEST, Collinsville. 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. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. both days. Admission is free. 221 West Main Street. Visit italianfest.net.

September 20 FISHING DERBY, Maryville. Fishing contest for children 15 years of age and younger (with adult present). No fishing license required for children (catch and release event). There will be attendance prizes and prizes for largest and most fish. Registration 9:30 - 10 a.m.; competition 10 - 11:30 a.m.; hot dogs and refreshments 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Admission is free. Drost Park, East Division Street. For more information, visit vil.maryville.il.us, email parksandrec@maryville-il.us or message us (618) 223-8965.

September 20 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 avail-

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 24*
able. Noon - 10 p.m. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. Visit facebook.com/EarthtonesFestival.

September 20 ROCKIN' 4 RECOVERY, Bethalto. Family friendly event will include live music, food trucks, local health and wellness agencies, vendors, and inflatables. 1 - 6 p.m. Admission is free. Bethalto Park, 211 East Central Street. Call (618) 363-7080 or visit facebook.com/events/1246675723457335.

September 20 THE RODNEY MARSALIS PHILADELPHIA BIG BRASS, Lebanon. The Rodney Marsalis Philadelphia Big Brass is America's premier large brass ensemble. The group reflects the diverse makeup of men and women in the American culture and is dedicated to the notion that music is a gift to be enjoyed by everyone. 7:30 p.m. Admission fees vary. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. For tickets, visit thehett.com.

September 20 & 21 FALL FESTIVAL, Carlinville. Tractor club tractor parade both days at 2 p.m. Museum featuring Macoupin County and Illinois History, print shop and country store, blacksmith shop, and original one room schoolhouse and church. See demonstrations, antique tractors and vehicles, and a toy and craft show. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Live music noon - 3 p.m. both days. Free parking and admission to grounds. House tour for adult is \$5; children 6 - 12 years of age \$1; children 5 and younger free. Macoupin County Historical Society, 920 West Breckenridge Street. Visit mchssociety.org.

September 20 & 21; 27 & 28 FALL FESTIVAL, Kinmundy. Over 100 craft and food vendors. Come out and enjoy the 1800's cabins, see demonstrations and do some shopping with family and friends. Saturday 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Kinmundy

Log Cabin Village, 6260 Gesell Road. Visit kinmundylogcabin-village.com.

September 21 SYMPHONY CONCERT SERIES, Edwardsville. Family-friendly free concerts performed by the Edwardsville Symphony. Free children's activities during each concert. Bring your own lawn chair or blanket. Our events kick off with a pre-concert performance at 6:30 p.m. with the Symphony's program beginning at 7 p.m. Edwardsville City Park at the Cleaon Etzkorn bandstand, 112 South Kansas Street. Visit edwardsvillecommunitysymphony.com.

September 26 IN HARMONY WITH NATURE, Godfrey. Join The Nature Institute and the Alton High School Symphonic Orchestra for our revived In Harmony with Nature concert, to be held on the beautiful Mississippi bluffs. The event kicks off at 5:30 p.m. with a chance to picnic with your family at the Skeet Range, and the orchestra performs at 6 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs or blanket, picnic dinner and drinks (no alcohol permitted). Adults \$12; students 13-17 years of age \$6; free for children 12 years of age and younger. Registration isn't required but preferred. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. To register, visit thenatureinstitute.org.

September 26-28 ART FAIR, Edwardsville. Featuring the original works of approximately 100 accomplished artists and local food and drink. A three-day opportunity for the family to see art, make art, and buy art. Friday 5 - 9 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Call (618) 655-0337 or visit edwardsvilleartcenter.com.

September 30 DISTINGUISHED SPEAKER: RUDY RUETTIGER, Lebanon. From underdog to legend, Daniel "Rudy" Ruettiger's story captured hearts worldwide.

The inspiration behind the blockbuster film RUDY. Now an Emmy-winning speaker, Rudy shares his powerful message of perseverance and hope. Experience the real man behind the movie who continues to inspire audiences everywhere to dream big and defy the odds. 7 p.m. Ticket fees vary. Free for McKendree University students, faculty and staff. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. For tickets, visit thehett.com.

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 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 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. For more information, visit call (618) 594-2484 or 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 tritownship.org.

October 18 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA SYMPHONY NO. 5 - TCHAIKOVSKY, 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 Theatr, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

October 18 & 19 OWL FEST, Dow. Stop by to meet our education animals, 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 treehousewildlifecenter.com/owl-fest.

A full-page background image showing a close-up, vertical view of tree bark. The bark is deeply textured with vertical ridges and grooves, showing various shades of brown, tan, and grey. The texture is rough and weathered.

Take time to
read the shapes,
scars, bends of
branches and
textures of trunks
and you'll see
every tree tells a
story at Carlyle's
Eldon Hazlet
State Park.

THE FINAL FRAME

