

THE Southwestern

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

MAY 2026 • VOLUME 78 • ISSUE 5

Gather 'Round'

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BENEFITS COMMUNITY

BOARD
NOMINATIONS

NEW BUILDING

DEMAND CHARGE

STORM SAFETY

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525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.
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You were well-"Red" on our April mystery man, but can you measure up in identifying this month's puzzle item?

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24 Current Events

April showers brought May flowers. What will May bring? Find out in this month's calendar of events.

27 Final Frame

Old Glory.

ON THE COVER

A storm cloud turns over a field in Altamont. We're currently in the middle of storm season in the Midwest, and while they can be stunning, thunderstorms can also be dangerous. Read our story on storm safety on page 16.



CO-OP REMINDERS

May 16 Electronics recycling at Southwestern Electric's St. Elmo Distribution Center. *Details on opposite page.*

May 19 Payment processing unavailable 8 - 11 p.m. while we perform maintenance.

May 25 Offices closed for Memorial Day.



FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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



Reader Contest

We've hidden an image of a soldier saluting the flag 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 soldier saluting the flag, 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 May contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by June 1, 2026.

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

MARCH WINNER

Congratulations to Lori Sneed of Glen Carbon. As the winner of our March Hide & Seek contest drawing, Lori will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Thank you

to everyone who participated in our March contest. This month's image appears at left. You'll find Hide & Seek rules below.

RULES TO PLAY BY

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

Southwestern Electric Planning New Greenville Headquarters

Southwestern Electric has operated from its current Greenville headquarters since 1969.

Over those 57 years, the cooperative's membership has grown and changed. With it, the needs of the cooperative have evolved as well. Just as a young family might outgrow a home, the current facility no longer meets the needs of our operation.

Six years ago, the board of directors began the process of assessing the cooperative's operational

Continued on page 26 ▶



Recycle with Southwestern

WE'RE A NATION IN LOVE WITH ELECTRONICS

According to a Connected Consumer Survey conducted in 2023:

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



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

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

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

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

Please Note

- Rechargeable batteries (NIMH, Li-ion and 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.

RECYCLING DRIVE DATES & LOCATIONS

- **May 16** Southwestern Electric's St. Elmo Distribution Center, 2117 East 1850 Avenue (frontage road southwest of the St. Elmo exit off Interstate 70), St. Elmo, IL 62458
- **June 6** Southwestern Electric Cooperative's headquarters, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246
- **Collection Times** All collections will begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first.

QUESTIONS & CJD E-CYCLING

Have questions regarding e-cycling or recyclable items and fees? Call CJD E-Cycling at (618) 659-9006 or email them at info@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.

Board Candidate Nominations

Filing Deadline: May 28

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

The cooperative's service territory is divided into three voting districts. Three of the nine board seats — one per voting district — are open for election each year. District I encompasses the co-op's territory in Macoupin, Madison and St. Clair counties; District II includes Bond, Clinton and Montgomery counties; and District III covers Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion and Shelby counties. The three directors whose terms expire in 2026 are Marvin Warner in District I, Brad Lurkins in District II, and Annette Hartlieb in District III.

The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the 2026 Nominations Committee are listed below. Any Southwestern Electric member interested in running for a seat on the board,

or who would like to submit another member's name for consideration, must notify a Nominations Committee member from the appropriate district prior to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 28.

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

Cooperative members, must be filed at the co-op's headquarters by Monday, June 29. Any candidate who doesn't file by June 29, 2026 will not be eligible to run for election until 2027.

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

The results of the 2026 board election will be announced at Southwestern Electric's 88th Annual Meeting of Members, which will take place on Saturday, September 12. Each director will be elected to serve a three-year term beginning on September 12 and ending on the date of the 2029 Annual Meeting.

Questions about board service and the election process should be directed to Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott. You can reach her at (800) 637-8667 or by email at community@sweci.com.

In last month's issue, the deadline to contact the Nominations Committee about becoming a candidate was listed incorrectly. The correct deadline is **May 28**. We apologize for any confusion and encourage interested members to reach out by the updated date.

2026 Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee will meet at the cooperative's headquarters to submit the names of qualified director candidates. Members interested in submitting a name for consideration, or who would like to run for a board seat themselves, must notify a Nominations Committee member from their district by 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 28.

District I	Dan Joachimsthaler	88 Timberwood Lane	Collinsville, IL 62234	618-979-5690
	Dennis Petry	8201 West Kirsch Road	Troy, IL 62294	618-667-6868
	Brad Staub	10579 Silver Creek Rd	New Douglas, 62074	618-560-8321
District II	Rick DeAngelo	1546 Dorris Creek Rd	Donnellson, IL 62019	618-339-2538
	Rick Hilliard	1316 Spring Drive	Greenville, IL 62246	618-882-8360
	Nick Reisner	805 Shoal Creek Road	Greenville, IL 62246	618-954-2987
District III	Tony Koberlein	2098 N 2200 St	St. Elmo, IL 62458	618-292-6952
	Joe Lawson	274 E 1700 Ave	Vandalia, IL 62471	618-780-3731
	Gordon Moore	1946 N 725 St	Vandalia, IL 62471	314-679-6601

Candidates for the Board of Directors: Qualification & Nomination Guidelines

Section 5 (B): Qualifications

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

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

Section 4 (D): Election of Directors

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

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

3. Candidates Nominated by Petition: In addition to those candidates named by the Nominations Committee, any fifteen (15) or more Members of the Cooperative may nominate such other Natural Persons as candidates for election to the Board of Directors by filing with the Secretary of the Cooperative not less than seventy-five (75) days prior to the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative a written petition bearing the signatures, names and addresses of at least fifteen Members of the Cooperative nominating such other Natural Persons as candidates for election to the Board of Directors and listing the candidate's name, address, age, and telephone number. The Secretary of the Cooperative shall post such petition at the principal places of business of the Cooperative where the list of nominations made by the Nominations Committee was posted.

4. Notice to Members of Nomination of Candidates: The Secretary of the Cooperative shall mail or cause to be mailed to the Members notice of the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative at least fifteen (15) days but not more than sixty (60) days before the date of said annual meeting a statement of the names, addresses, ages, and telephone numbers of all candidates nominated for election to the Board of Directors. Such statement shall identify the Directorate District to which such candidate may be elected, and such statement shall identify which candidates were nominated by the Nominations Committee and which candidates were nominated by petition filed by Members of the Cooperative.

VOTING OPTIONS

Absentee: at the cooperative's headquarters (525 US Route 40, Greenville) Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., August 28 - September 11. (excluding Labor Day).

In Person: Members may vote for board candidates during Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 88th Annual Meeting of Members, Saturday, September 12, at The American Farm Heritage Museum in Greenville.

CATEGORIES OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

Gather 'Round'

Operation Round Up has been doing a lot of good with a little spare change since 2005

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

The numbers are, well, numerous.

Some are big.

Some are small.

They all help tell a story, though.

Take the number 18, for example.

That's how many grants Southwestern Electric was able to bestow upon community organizations in 2025 through our Operation Round Up program.

Operation Round Up is a charitable program governed, funded, and supported by you, the members.

Take the number 1. That's the largest dollar amount a member could be asked to contribute in a given month by opting in to have their bills rounded up to the nearest dollar. That's \$12 a year at most, and many members often pay half that. In 2025, the average member contribution was \$6.86.

Take the number \$14,920. That's how much money the program received from member contributions last year. In giving out those 18 grants, Operation Round Up put another \$22,450 back into the community, benefiting the area organizations, nonprofits and initiatives that need it most. Since its inception in 2005,

ORU has given out more than \$125,000 in local grants.

It's small change, as we like to say, but with the strength of an active and benevolent membership, it can make a big difference.

"Operation Round Up is a simple yet powerful way for our members to come together and take care of our communities," Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott said. "By rounding up their electric bill each month, members turn pocket change into meaningful support for local programs and organizations.


"Giving back matters because it strengthens the places we call home and helps ensure our neighbors have the support they need to succeed. Whether it is helping provide meals through local food pantries, supporting early childhood literacy, or funding school programs, those contributions make a real difference. When we all contribute in small ways, we build a stronger, more connected community for everyone."

Earlier this year, Southwestern Electric leaders visited the Lighthouse Pregnancy and Health Services location in Vandalia to deliver a \$1,500 donation to benefit

the Christian-based ministry. Lighthouse also has a location in Hillsboro but serves the entire region, and Executive Director Tamela Polanin said the money will go towards a revamped website that will help the organization extend its reach even further.

For Polanin, the numbers that matter to her and her organization are numbers like 77, 63, 32 and 1,461. That's the number of sonograms administered, pregnancy tests given, babies born and parenting and education classes taught, respectively, by the pregnancy center in 2025.

"We are extremely happy to be able to get this grant," Polanin said. "A lot of our funding comes from corporate sponsorships, local businesses that give back to the community. It's a significant piece of our day to day. We couldn't do it without the community."

For more information on how to enroll in the program or how to apply for a grant, visit sweci.com/operation-round, call us at (800) 637-8667 or scan the QR code. 

"Giving back matters because it strengthens the places we call home and helps ensure our neighbors have the support they need to succeed. Whether it is helping provide meals through local food pantries, supporting early childhood literacy, or funding school programs, those contributions make a real difference. When we all contribute in small ways, we build a stronger, more connected community for everyone."

—Brooke Scott, Manager of Member Services



Brooke Scott,
Manager of
Member Services



Southwestern Electric Director Annette Hartlieb, left, stands with Lighthouse Pregnancy and Health Services Office Manager Tami Washburn and Financial Manager Heather Nelson inside the pregnancy center's Vandalia office.



Lighthouse Executive Director Tamela Polanin, left, and Nurse Manager Haley Willson show off the center's ultrasound machine. Lighthouse administered 77 sonograms in 2025.

“A lot of our funding comes from corporate sponsorships, local businesses that give back to the community. It’s a significant piece of our day to day. We couldn’t do it without the community.”

— Tamela Polanin, Lighthouse Pregnancy and Health Services Executive Director



Small change.
Big difference.

2025

By the Numbers



\$14,920

CONTRIBUTED BY MEMBERS



EIGHTEEN

GRANTS AWARDED



\$22,450

TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED



2,173

ACTIVE ROUND UP MEMBERS



\$6.86

AVERAGE YEARLY MEMBER CONTRIBUTION



sweci.com/operation-round

On Demand

Demand Charge to Begin Appearing on Bills

Soon, you will see a demand charge on your electric bill. What does that mean, and how can you use it to your advantage? Let us tell you.

WHAT IS A DEMAND CHARGE?

A demand charge is based on the single highest hour of electricity use during your billing period. To understand why this matters, you need to know how utilities pay for power.

Southwestern doesn't just pay for the total amount of electricity our members use — we also pay transmission and capacity costs based on our membership's peak demand. Transmission costs cover moving power across the grid to reach you, while capacity costs ensure power plants are ready to meet everyone's highest usage moments. These charges are calculated based on when the entire system experiences its greatest strain.

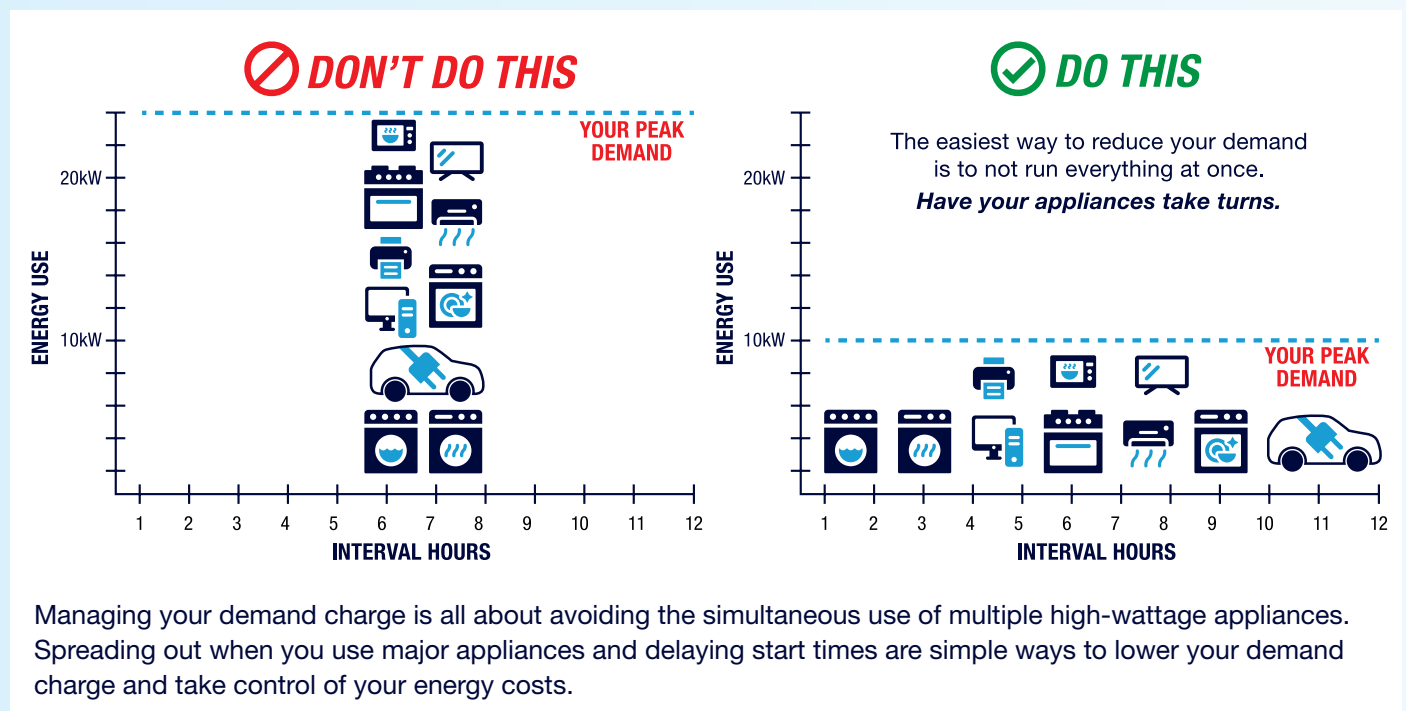
When thousands of members use large amounts of electricity at the same time, particularly during hours of high demand on

the regional grid, it drives up transmission and capacity costs for the cooperative. By managing your peak usage, you help reduce these expenses, and we can pass those savings along to you.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Imagine coming home at 4 p.m. and immediately turning on your space heater, starting the dishwasher, throwing clothes in the dryer, and plugging in your EV to charge. That single hour becomes your peak demand for the month, establishing your demand charge.

If you stagger those same activities throughout your evening — running the dishwasher after dinner, doing laundry before bed, and charging your EV overnight — you lower your peak demand, reducing your demand charge and your overall bill.



This isn't a new cost. It's already built into your current rate. We're breaking it out separately so we can reward members who help lower the cooperative's overall peak demand. When you lower your demand, you lower our transmission and capacity costs, and those savings come back to you.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO LOWER YOUR DEMAND CHARGE

Managing your demand charge is about avoiding the simultaneous use of multiple high-wattage appliances. Here are some effective strategies:

- **Spread out major appliance use.** Don't run your heating and cooling system, water heater, dryer and dishwasher at the same time.
- **Use delay-start features.** Program dishwashers and washing machines to run during off-peak evening or overnight hours.
- **Charge EVs strategically.** Set your electric vehicle to charge overnight when other household electricity use is minimal.
- **Monitor weather extremes.** On very hot or cold days when your HVAC system works hardest, postpone running other major appliances until heating or cooling demand decreases.
- **Think about timing.** Consider which tasks need to happen immediately and which can wait a few hours.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY COSTS

The demand charge puts more control in your hands. By making simple adjustments to when you use electricity, you can reduce your peak demand and lower your bill while helping the cooperative manage transmission and capacity costs more efficiently. It's a win-win that rewards thoughtful energy management.

This isn't a new cost. It's already built into your current rate. When you lower your demand, you lower our transmission and capacity costs, and those savings come back to you.

SMARTHUB IS YOUR ONE-STOP ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PORTAL

Last year, we launched SmartHub, our online account management portal. Haven't signed up yet? There's no better time to make managing your account faster, easier, and more convenient.

- **Billing & Payments** – No more waiting for your bill to arrive in the mail. Access your bill anytime, anywhere. Save time with easy payment options to avoid late fees and service interruptions.
- **Alerts & Notifications** – Stay informed on important account events via email or text messages. Receive the information you need to make informed decisions about your account.
- **Paperless Billing** – Save some time and a tree 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 about SmartHub at sweci.com/smarthub and on our social media channels.

METER READER

A three-year smart meter installation project begins in 2026. Here's what you need to know.

Power. We supply it, you use it. We're not just talking about the electricity that powers your life, though. As your accountable energy partner, Southwestern Electric is always looking for ways to give you power over your finances as well as your home or business.

That's one of the driving forces behind the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters, or smart meters, we're set to begin installing later this year. Smart meters provide timely, in-depth information about your energy usage so that you can be a more informed energy user.

That's not the only benefit, either. These new meters will also give us

faster, more detailed readings so we can provide better, more efficient service.

It all adds up to a more reliable electric grid for you, your neighbors and the entire Southwestern Electric membership.

Members will receive a courtesy call at least 24 hours in advance of work being done. Please verify that we have your current contact information on file to ensure we are able to reach you. This project will be undertaken over the course of the next three years.

Still have questions? We've tried to answer some of the most common ones below, but we're always available at (800) 637-8667 for any needs you might have, on this topic or anything else.



Southwestern Electric Cooperative Smart Meter FAQs

Q. Why is Southwestern Electric installing new smart meters?

A. Southwestern Electric Cooperative is installing Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) meters to improve reliability, efficiency, and service for our members.

These smart meters help you better understand how much electricity you use so you can make informed decisions about your energy consumption. They also provide the cooperative with important system information that helps improve power quality, optimize our electric system, and locate outages more quickly.

This project will be completed over a three-year period beginning in 2026. Members will be notified in advance prior to their meter being replaced.

Q. What is the difference between the old meters and the new smart meters?

A. The main difference between the current AMR (Automated Meter Reading) system and new smart meters is how they communicate. Our existing meters use one-way communication, meaning they only send basic usage data back to the cooperative.

Smart meters, on the other hand, use two-way communication. This allows for near real-time tracking of energy usage and enables the cooperative to both receive information and send signals when needed. Smart meters record your energy use throughout the day and securely transmit that data to Southwestern Electric.

This improved technology helps Southwestern Electric monitor the system more efficiently, identify issues faster, and respond more quickly to outages or service problems.

Smart meters communicate over a secure wireless network using low-frequency radio signals, similar to those used by common everyday technologies like smartphones, radios, and televisions.

Q. How does the new meter benefit me?

A. More reliable service

Smart meters help us identify outages faster so crews can respond more quickly.

Better system performance

The new meters help us monitor voltage levels and other system conditions to maintain a reliable electric grid.

Improved member service

You can access more timely information about your energy use, and our team can help review your usage if you have questions about your bill.

More control over your energy use

Detailed energy information can help you make smarter choices about how and when you use electricity.

Q. How does my new meter work?

A. Your new smart meter securely sends energy usage information to Southwestern Electric through a licensed and encrypted communication system. This allows us to read your meter remotely from our office.

The meter reports important system information such as energy use, voltage levels, and outage or power blink notifications.

Q. Does the smart meter notify the cooperative when my power goes out?

A. Yes. In many cases the smart meter automatically alerts us when an outage occurs.

However, we still recommend reporting outages by phone or through SmartHub to ensure your outage is properly documented.

Q. Can the smart meter interfere with equipment in my home?

A. No. The meter system meets standards set by the Federal Communications Commission and is designed to not interfere with electronics or equipment inside your home or business.

Q. How much radio frequency (RF) power do the smart meters emit?

A. Extremely little.

Smart meters send small amounts of radio frequency energy when transmitting data. These levels are far below the safety limits established by the Federal Communications Commission.

Everyday devices such as cell phones, Wi Fi routers, and baby monitors typically produce higher radio frequency levels than smart meters.

Q. Is my data secure?

A. Yes. Your meter data is transmitted through a licensed, encrypted, and secure system.

Smart meters do not collect or store personal information. Southwestern Electric keeps all member information confidential and follows applicable laws that protect personal data used for billing and member service.

Q. Who can I contact with questions?

Call us at (800) 637-8667. We're here to help.



Conservation Facilitation

An Energy Resource Conservation loan from Southwestern Electric can help with your home improvement project

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

Are you considering making a home improvement or looking to upgrade to more energy-efficient equipment to lower your energy bills? Southwestern Electric's Energy Resource Conservation (ERC) loan may be a great option for you!

Our ERC loans are a low-cost way to finance home improvements with energy efficiency in mind. These loans are available to members in good standing who receive electric service from the co-op at their primary residence.

Eligible projects include:

- HVAC system upgrades
- Water heaters
- Insulation
- Window and door replacement
- Caulking and weather stripping

If your home improvement plans focus on energy efficiency, reach out to see if your project qualifies.

Loan details:

- Up to \$10,000 are available for general energy efficiency improvements
- Up to \$20,000 for geothermal heat pump systems

- Repayment conveniently added to your monthly electric bill
- Low 5% interest rate with terms up to 60 months

The loans can be used toward projects in existing homes and other qualified commercial, industrial and agricultural structures. Installation of the energy-efficient product must be performed by the member or an approved contractor.

Southwestern Electric's Energy Resource Conservation (ERC) loan program is part of the cooperative's effort to manage power costs, meet member demand and increase environmental regulatory compliance. These funds help our members save money, reduce the need to purchase or generate energy, reduce emissions from generation of electricity, and help strengthen local economies through job creation for energy efficiency and conservation projects.

Invest in your home, save money, and enjoy year-round comfort! For more information, visit www.sweci.com/erc-loans or contact Julie Lowe at julie.lowe@sweci.com or (800) 637-8667.

Installing a heat pump or electric water heater?

You may be eligible for a rebate.

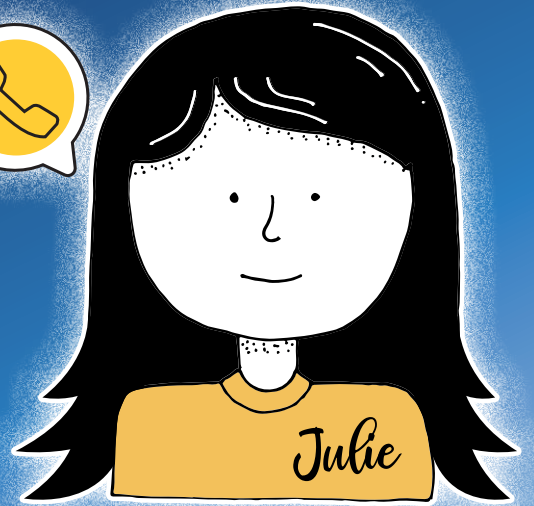
Our rebate program will help you save money on the replacement or new installation of air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats.

Backup heat must be electric for the heat pump rebate. Electric water heaters must be replacing existing gas water heaters or installed in a new construction home. 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.



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 to send a one-line diagram and certificate of insurance. Speak with your insurance agent to confirm you have appropriate coverage. 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 Every three years, we'll visit your system to confirm it's connected properly, well-maintained, and that your safety signs are in place.



BOLT

When Thunder Roars, Move Indoors

You're hiking, biking, or on a walk in the woods, when the wind shifts, the sky blackens—and *boom*—you're rattled by a blinding flash, a sharp crack, and a bass echo that rolls across the countryside. The sound and fury of thunder and lightning are awe-inspiring. They're also a signal to move indoors—immediately. Each year close to 20 people die and 200 are injured by lightning strikes. In most cases, these casualties can be avoided by taking a few simple precautions. Consider these measures the next time a thunderstorm approaches your area.

Storm Shelter. When a thunderstorm hits, you want to seek proper shelter immediately. Park pavilions, sheds and rain shelters aren't designed to protect you from a lightning strike. Look for a shelter with doors, windows, wiring and plumbing. You want an infrastructure that can channel energy from a lightning strike into the ground while keeping you clear of its path.

Home Rules. While your home offers the best protection from electrical energy in a thunderstorm, simply being inside isn't enough to protect you and your family from electrical shock. Stay clear of items that could conduct lightning, including electrical appliances, telephones and light switches and fixtures. Also avoid water and faucets. Finally, don't be lulled into a false sense of security by household safeguards like circuit breakers and surge suppressors. Lightning can fuse them into a mass of plastic and metal.



Keep an Eye on the Sky. Weather forecasts can change dramatically over the course of a few hours. If you're outside and away from TV and radio, keep an eye on the sky. You can also download reliable weather apps for your smartphone. Watch for darkening clouds—especially formations that tower or mushroom—and gusting winds. They're signals that indicate you need to seek shelter.

Danger Zones. While no outdoor location is safe when lightning is in the area, some locations are more dangerous than others. Avoid higher elevations like hilltops, wide open spaces like agricultural or ball fields, and isolated, tall objects like trees, poles and lamp posts. Picnic pavilions, metal fences and metal bleachers are also dangerous; they offer no protection from lightning and if struck, can channel energy into your body.

Field Operations. According to the National Lightning Safety Council, about two-thirds of the annual lightning deaths are associated with outdoor activities like sporting events. Game officials should suspend play and ask teams to leave the field at the first sign of lightning. Again, a park shelter isn't the best place to wait out a storm. If you're at a sporting event and expect play to continue, your hardtop automobile provides more protection from lightning than an open park pavilion.

The 30-30 Rule. The "30-30" rule works like this: Time the period between a flash of lightning and the accompanying clap of thunder. If the time is 30 seconds or less, seek shelter. Then wait at least 30 minutes after hearing the last clap of thunder before leaving the shelter. Here's a simpler rule yet, and one you can teach your children: If you can hear thunder, you're within striking distance of lightning. Seek shelter immediately.

Blue Skies. If you're planning an outdoor activity, it's important to know the regional weather forecast. Lightning has been known to travel parallel to the ground for up to 10 miles, so it's important to know what's going on around you as well as in your community.

Car Talk. Your car may be a relatively safe place to take refuge from lightning, depending on its composition. According to data provided by the National Lightning Safety Council, lightning has a tendency to ride along the outer surface of conductive materials. This phenomenon, known as the skin effect, applies to many automobiles.

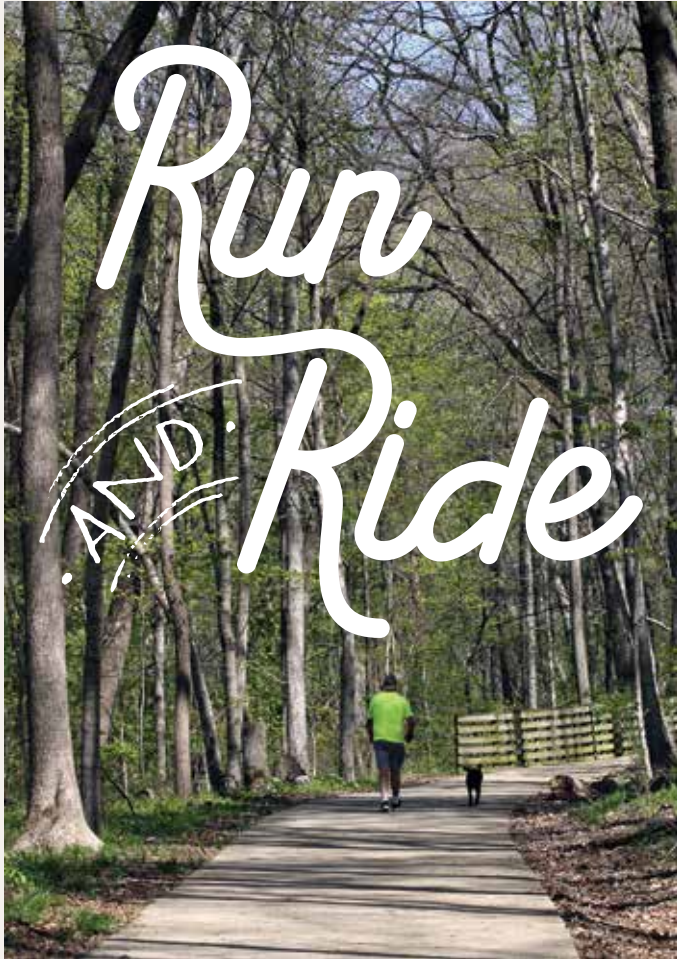
While taking shelter in a car isn't as safe as waiting out the storm in your home, it beats being exposed outdoors. In order to minimize your risk of shock, pull off the road at a safe location and take care not to touch doors, windows, electronics, or other objects that provide a path for electricity to reach inside your

car. If you drive a convertible or car with a fiberglass body, seek alternative shelter. Your automobile doesn't offer the same protection as a car with a metal body.

Water Hazards. Southwestern members are a short drive from several lakes constructed by the Army Corps of Engineers. The open walkways on elevated dams, sandy beaches, airy pavilions, in the water and on watercraft are all places you don't want to be during a thunderstorm. Water is a great conductor and engaging in water-related recreational activities elevates your risk of being hit by lightning. Wait out the storm in your car, or use the time to check out the visitor's center.

As we step into summer, we'll see abundant evidence of a thunderstorm's ability to generate tremendous amounts of energy. While lightning is awe inspiring, it's also deadly. Make sure you take measures to protect yourself and your family from one of nature's most formidable forces.

OUT & ABOUT



You've made it through another winter, another rainy April, another school year. Great—now what?

As we exit hibernation and stretch our proverbial legs, why not stretch your actual legs on one of the trails or paths near you? No matter where you live in Southwestern Illinois, there's undoubtedly a running or biking route nearby. We've listed a few here—and you'll find more on the websites referenced below. Most of these paths are longer and offer opportunities for distance running and bicycling. Keep that in mind as you plan your activity.

For trail maps, user reviews, construction and closure updates, detailed trail and terrain descriptions, and complete parking and access information, visit the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy's TrailLink website at www.trailink.com, and the Madison County Transit MCT Trails site at www.mcttrails.org. Both sites are valuable resources for hikers, bikers, runners, and folks who want to get some exercise while they take in the sunshine and scenery.

CLINTON COUNTY

Carlyle Lake Bike Trail

This 10-mile trail of asphalt and concrete carries you through woodlands and wetlands, past campgrounds, a spillway, a river walk, and across the dam of one of Southwestern Illinois' most popular recreational lakes. You can park near the Carlyle Lake Visitor Center and pick up the trail there, or off US 50, east of the suspension bridge and spillway.

EFFINGHAM COUNTY

Trail Recreation Effingham County (TREC)

The TREC system currently consists of six distinct trails, none more than roughly a mile-and-a-half long. With names like Interstate Bridge Trail, High School Trail, River Bridge Trail, Nature Park Trail and Trestle Bridge Trail, there are few surprises—the unwanted kind, at least—along your trek. A newly renovated website includes a detailed map complete with trail routes, landmarks and parking spots to aid you in your planning.

MACOUPIN COUNTY

Benld-Gillespie Bike Trail

The Benld-Gillespie Bike Trail follows the path of the Illinois Traction System, an electric interurban railway that connected Benld and Gillespie in the days before Route 66. At present, the trail offers 1.4 miles of asphalt surface. Parking is available on Park Avenue in Benld.

MADISON COUNTY

Madison County Transit Bluff Trail

This two-mile, asphalt trail follows the bluff line on the campus of SIUE past prairie grass restoration areas and university athletic fields. You'll see a log cabin, Whiteside Cemetery, and Korte Stadium. You can park at the Park & Bike lots on Stadium Drive and at Korte Stadium, both on the campus of SIUE.

Madison County Transit Confluence Trail

This asphalt/oil and chip trail stretches 20.5 miles, offering views of the Mississippi River and the Clark Bridge. You'll pass the National Great Rivers Museum and Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center on this route. Parking is available at Russell Commons Park, National Great River's Museum (Alton); Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center (Hartford).

Madison County Transit Goshen Trail

The Goshen Trail offers about 19.5 miles of asphalt running and biking surface through Troy, Maryville and Glen Carbon to Edwardsville. It intersects five other trails and includes 10 tunnels and a 175-foot bridge. Parking is available on Old Troy Road at Route 162 (Troy), Russell Drive (South Roxana) and Kyle Road Parking Lot (O'Fallon).

Madison County Transit Nature Trail

The trail may offer views of deer, turkey, and other Illinois wildlife, but don't let the name fool you—no muddy paths here. Rather, your steps will be sure along this 14.7-mile asphalt surface, which takes you from Route 159 in Edwardsville, past SIUE, to Wilson

Park in Granite City. The trail crosses creeks and passes schools and parks. You can park at Edwardsville High School during non-school hours, the Park & Bike lot on Revelle Lane in Pontoon Beach, Horseshoe Lake State Park, and at Wilson Park in Granite City.

Madison County Transit Nickel Plate Trail

More than 28 miles of asphalt and limestone pathways stretch from South Main Street in New Douglas to Old Edwardsville Road in Pontoon Beach. Along the way you'll pass farm fields and woodlands, with access to parks and historic districts in Edwardsville and Glen Carbon. Parking is available at Longfellow Road & Route 159, LCCC N.O. Nelson Campus, Longfellow & Nelson Avenues and the County Highway Building in Edwardsville; and Miner Park and the Park & Ride lot at Route 157 in Glen Carbon.

Madison County Transit Quercus Grove Trail

The Quercus Grove Trail will carry you from Schwarz and Springer Streets in Edwardsville to Hamel, Worden, and eventually to Watertower Park in Staunton. Along the way you'll see historic downtown Edwardsville and the sprawling farm fields that patchwork Madison County. The trail offers nearly 19 miles of asphalt and limestone. You can park at MCT Park & Ride on Hillsboro Avenue, Old Carpenter Road in Edwardsville, Hamel Community Park in Hamel, Worden Park in Worden, and Water Tower Park in Staunton.

Madison County Transit Watershed Trail

If you're looking for a shorter ride or run, the Watershed Trail offers a lot of scenery along a 1.3-mile stretch of asphalt. The trail takes you from West Union in Edwardsville to where it meets up with the MCT Goshen Trail, passing the Watershed Nature Center along the way. Parking is available at the lot at the corner of Second Street and High Street and the Watershed Nature Center on Terry Avenue, both in Edwardsville.



Sam Vadalabene Great River Road Bike Trail

You'll keep company with towering bluffs, the Mississippi River, and a monstrous bird as you run or ride the 20-mile Sam Vadalabene Great River Road Bike Trail. The trail begins at Pere Marquette State Park, follows the Illinois River to the Mississippi, and presses on through Grafton and past Elsah before ending at Piasa Park, north of historic Lower Alton. Parking and trail access are available at Piasa Park on Route 100 north of Alton and at Pere Marquette State Park, north of Grafton.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Route 66 Hike and Bike Trails at Lake Lou Yaeger

Twelve intersecting trails weave through the woods that abut Litchfield's Lake Lou Yaeger, and with that many trails there really is something for everyone. Most of the roughly 6.6 miles of dirt trails are considered intermediate difficulty, but the aptly named Practice Loop is for beginners and the equally evocative Lake Front Trail is only for advanced riders. Parking is available at one of the four picnic areas spread throughout the park.

Green Diamond Rail-Trail

The four-mile Green Diamond Rail-Trail is flat and surfaced with oil and chip. The north end of the trail begins in a woodland swamp. Continuing south, the view opens into farmland. Parking is available at the south end of South Cleveland Street in Farmersville and at the Historic Depot Park on Main Street in Waggoner.

SHELBY COUNTY

General Dacey Trail

Made of oil and chip, The General Dacey Trail runs between Shelbyville and Lake Shelbyville. The northernmost loops travel through forest and offer short, steep hills. The trail south crosses the dam, passes the Lake Shelbyville Visitor Center, and ends at the Shelbyville courthouse.

The largest parking lot is at the east end of Ninth Street in the Dam West Recreational Area. A smaller lot is available by the trailhead on the north side of Forest Park behind the Scout Cabin.



WHO • WHAT • WHERE

We couldn't sneak a fastball by you. April's mystery man, as many of you correctly identified, was St. Louis Cardinals legend and Hall of Famer Albert "Red" Schoendienst. Like you, trying to sneak a fastball by the Germantown, Illinois native was also ill-advised.

Before we get to your responses, can you identify this Southwestern Electric-branded item in this month's challenge? We'll print your responses in our June issue. We look forward to hearing from you.

Now, in lieu of more words from us, the floor is all yours.



Based on the bronze relief sculpture and the interlocking logo on the cap, this is Albert "Red" Schoendienst, a Hall of Fame second baseman, manager, and longtime coach for the St. Louis Cardinals.

He spent 67 of his 76 years in professional baseball with the Cardinals organization. A 10-time All-Star and three-time World Series champion (twice as a player, once as a manager). He was elected to the National Baseball Hall of Fame in 1989.

Known as "Gentleman Red," his #2 jersey is retired by the St. Louis Cardinals.

The specific sculpture in your image appears to be the monument dedicated to him in his hometown of Germantown, Illinois.

—John Gorenz, Alhambra

The individual in the photograph is baseball and Cardinals Hall of Famer Red Schoendienst, who was born in Germantown, Ill. I met him once at

Cardinal's spring training in Jupiter, Florida.

I wanted to get his autograph on a baseball. My neighbor, who had been at spring training the previous year, told me that if I stood by a door at the side of the stands near the concession area, he would come out the door 10 minutes before the game started. I stood by the door and 10 minutes before the game started, he came out of the door. I was able to get his autograph.

—Robert Diesbach, Maryville

I'm going to guess the picture in the April issue is of Red Schoendienst. He was born in Germantown, Illinois.

—Kendall Brink, Sorento

That is Albert "Red" Schoendienst. The number 2 in the sculpture cinched it. That was his Cardinals uniform number. He was from Germantown in Clinton County, Ill. My dad was raised around Breese, was a little older than Red and often talked about playing against him

WHAT AM I?

in the Clinton County leagues before he joined the Cardinals.

—Jane Dapkus, Pocahontas

I Immediately saw red when I read your Who am I? puzzler in your April 2026 magazine. Pictured is the plaque for the pride of Germantown, Illinois, Albert Fred “Red” Schoendienst, a genuine baseball legend in these parts.

His list of baseball accomplishments, both as a player, coach and manager, are voluminous during his 76 years in baseball, 67 with the Cardinals. He was a great American success story, the son of a coal miner whose family lived without running water or electricity, to the National Baseball Hall of Fame and his #2 retired by the Cardinals in 1996.

—Bill Malec, O’Fallon

It’s the bust of Albert “Red” Schoendienst from the Missouri Sports Hall of Fame in Springfield, Mo.

—Tom Galvin, Glen Carbon

The April Who~What~Where I believe is Red Schoendienst, and I believe the plaque is located in Germantown at Schoendienst Park. My grandpa, Edward

Nordhaus, told me years ago he used to play baseball games in Germantown against Red! I grew up in Germantown and lived one block from Schoendienst Park. I played a lot of pick-up softball games in my youth and played in grade school for youth CYO and women’s Clinton County softball leagues. I have so many good memories at Schoendienst Park! Reminds me of my youth.

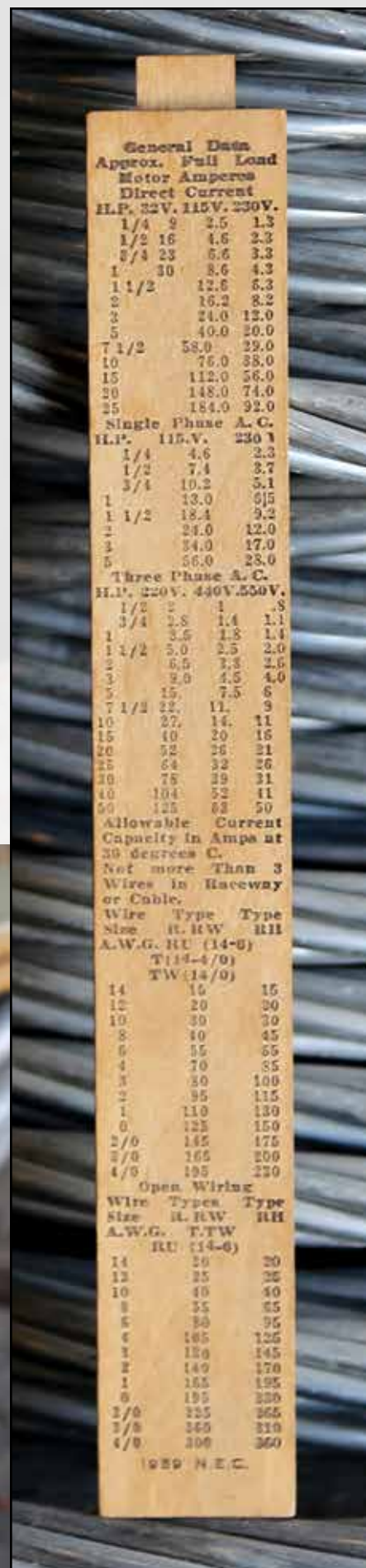
—Karen Knackstedt, Alhambra

In the April issue of The Southwestern magazine, there’s a picture of a St. Louis baseball Cardinal. This is definitely Germantown’s Albert Fred “Red” Schoendienst. He wore it from 1945-1956 and 1961-1963. The number “2” was retired by the St. Louis Cardinals. He was a switch hitter and threw right-handed.

—Rhonda Fischer, Maryville

I believe that the bust on page 21 of the April edition of The Southwestern is of Red Schoendienst.

—Gregory Smith, Beecher City



General Data			
Approx. Full Load			
Motor Amperes			
Direct Current			
H.P.	22V.	115V.	230V.
1/4	9	2.5	1.3
1/2	16	4.6	2.3
3/4	23	5.6	3.3
1	30	8.6	4.3
1 1/2		12.6	6.3
2		16.2	8.2
3		24.0	12.0
5		40.0	20.0
7 1/2		58.0	29.0
10		76.0	38.0
15		112.0	56.0
20		148.0	74.0
25		184.0	92.0
Single Phase A. C.			
H.P.	115V.	230V.	
1/4	4.6	2.3	
1/2	7.4	3.7	
3/4	10.2	5.1	
1	13.0	6.5	
1 1/2	18.4	9.2	
2	24.0	12.0	
3	34.0	17.0	
5	56.0	28.0	
Three Phase A. C.			
H.P.	220V.	440V.	550V.
1/2	2.5	1.4	.8
3/4	2.8	1.4	1.1
1	3.5	1.8	1.4
1 1/2	5.0	2.5	2.0
2	6.6	3.3	2.6
3	9.0	4.5	4.0
5	15	7.5	6
7 1/2	22	11	9
10	27	14	11
15	40	20	16
20	52	26	21
25	64	32	26
30	75	39	31
40	104	52	41
50	125	62	50
Allowable Current Capacity in Amps at 30 degrees C.			
Not more Than 3 Wires in Raceway or Cable.			
Wire Size	Type	RW	Type RH
A.W.G. RU (14-6)			
TW (14-9)			
TW (14-9)			
14		15	15
12		20	20
10		30	30
8		40	45
6		55	65
4		70	85
3		80	100
2		95	115
1		110	130
0		125	150
2/0		145	175
3/0		165	200
4/0		195	230
Open Wiring			
Wire Size	Type	RW	Type RH
A.W.G. T.TW			
RU (14-6)			
14		20	20
12		25	25
10		40	40
8		35	55
6		50	75
4		105	125
3		120	145
2		140	170
1		165	195
0		195	230
2/0		225	265
3/0		260	310
4/0		300	360
1989 N.E.C.			

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 thesouthwestern@sweci.com or send it by mail to The Southwestern magazine, c/o Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US 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.

CO-OP KITCHEN

A close-up photograph of a dark red ceramic bowl filled with chunky guacamole. The guacamole is a vibrant green color and contains visible pieces of red onion, tomatoes, and cilantro. A fresh lime wedge is perched on the left side of the bowl. The bowl is surrounded by several golden-brown, triangular tortilla chips. The background is softly blurred, showing more chips and a dark surface.

Celebrate
CINCO DE MAYO

SANTA FE SOUP

Ingredients

- 2 pounds ground beef cooked and drained
- 2 (15 ounce) cans pinto beans undrained
- 2 (15 ounce) cans kidney beans undrained
- 2 (10 ounce) cans shoe peg corn
- 2 envelopes taco seasoning
- 1 (15 ounce) can diced or chopped tomatoes
- 2 envelopes ranch dressing (powdered mix)
- 2 cups water

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients and simmer on low for 3 - 8 hours. Or, simmer on low in crock pot for 3 - 8 hours.

GUACAMOLE

Ingredients

- 1 large avocado
- 1 lime juiced
- 1 garlic clove minced
- 2 tablespoons pico de gallo
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped cilantro
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- 1 small jalapeño seeded and diced (optional)
- tortilla chips

Directions

1. Slice the avocados in half, remove the pit, scoop into a mixing bowl and mash with a fork. Make as chunky or smooth as you like.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients.
3. Serve with tortilla chips.

Guacamole prepared & photographed by Mike Barns, mike.barns@sweci.com

MEXICAN BEAN SALAD

Ingredients

- 1 (15 ounce) can each of pinto beans, black beans, garbanzo beans and red beans all drained. *4 cans total.*
- 1 (4 ounce) can green chiles
- 1 (16 ounce) jar chunky salsa
- 1 small onion diced
- 16 ounces shredded Mexican blend cheese
- tortilla chips

Directions

1. Mix together beans, chiles, salsa, onion and cheese.
2. Serve with tortilla chips.

CHICKEN ENCHILADA CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 3 cups chicken breast cooked and chopped
- 1 onion chopped and sauted in small amount of butter
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 (15 ounce) can chicken broth
- 1 small can diced green chiles
- 12 tortillas torn into pieces
- 4 cups shredded Mexican blend cheese

Directions

1. Combine chicken, soups, onion, broth and chiles.
2. Spread about ⅓ of the chicken mixture into 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. Add a layer of torn tortillas and then a layer of ⅓ of the cheese.
4. Continue with 2 more layers making 3 layers.
5. Bake at 325° for 1 hour.

BEEFY TACO DIP

Ingredients

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese softened
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 envelope taco seasoning
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 2 cups shredded Mexican cheese blend
- 4 cups shredded lettuce
- 2 medium tomatoes diced
- 1 medium green pepper diced
- tortilla chips

Directions

1. Beat together cream cheese, sour cream and mayonnaise until smooth.
2. Spread onto 12 - 14 inch pizza pan or serving dish. Refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Brown beef and drain.
4. Add taco seasoning and tomato sauce to beef. Cook and stir for 5 minutes.
5. Let beef cool completely and spread over cream cheese layer. Refrigerate.
6. Before serving, layer with cheese, lettuce, tomatoes, onion and green pepper.
7. Serve with tortilla chips.

CURRENT EVENTS

May 1 - November 8 1926 EXHIBIT, Edwardsville. Take a trip back to 1926. It was this year that Route 66 debuted in the U.S., connecting travelers from Chicago to Los Angeles, including a path through Edwardsville. In honor of Route 66's centennial, this exhibit takes a look at the news, fashions, sports and happenings of 1926 in Edwardsville. Wednesday - Sunday. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis Street. Visit cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station.

May 1 - June BARRY WALLACE ART EXHIBIT, Highland. Come see and enjoy the artwork of graphic designer Barry Wallace whose work includes detailed pencil drawings, giclee prints, and mixed media epoxy artwork. This small people friendly gallery features an original artist every two months. Work is not only on display, but is also for sale. Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Promoted by the Highland Arts Council. Latzer Memorial Public Library, 1001 9th Street. Email burnskathy11@gmail.com for questions or visit highlandil-library.org.

May 2 FISHING DERBY, Maryville. Registration starts at 9 a.m. with tournament from 9:30 - 11 a.m. Refreshments and prizes for the most and largest fish caught in various age categories. For 15 years of age and younger. 9 a.m. - noon. Drost Park pavilion #1, East Division Street. Visit maryville.il.us/98/parks-recreation.

recreation, email parksandrec@maryville-il.us or message us 618-223-8965.

May 2 LOCUST STREET HISTORICAL FAIR, Centralia. Event will feature a classic car show, Antique Power Days tractor show, crafters and artisans, food vendors and children's activity area. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Historic Downtown Centralia, 100-200-300 Blocks of South Locust Street. Visit seecentralia.com/events/locust-street-historical-fair.

May 2 MAY MARKET, Lebanon. Over 80 booths to browse and shop, food vendors and quaint shops along Brick Street. Event will be held rain or shine. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Visit facebook.com/p/May-Market-Lebanon-100082906373849/

May 3 THE ST. LOUIS BRASS BAND WITH THE ST. LOUIS BRASS ACADEMY & YOUTH BRASS, Lebanon. You won't want to miss this afternoon of music featuring everything from standard brass band repertoire to lighter toe-tapping tunes and beautiful ballads. The STLBB, under the direction of Dr. John Bell, placed second in their section at the 2024 North American Brass Band Association Championships. The Academy Band, composed of high school students, is conducted by McKendree alum Bradley Eston '24. 3 p.m. Ticket fees vary. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. For tickets, visit thehett.com.

May 7-10, 14-17 LOOKING GLASS PLAYHOUSE: 1776, Lebanon. A theatrical performance by the Looking Glass Playhouse. The seminal event

in American history blazes to vivid life in this most unconventional of Broadway hits. 1776 puts a human face on the pages of history as we see the men behind the national icons. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m., except for Sunday shows, which begin at 2 p.m. Admission fees vary. Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call 618-537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

May 7, 14, 21 ADULT DRAWING/PRINTS CLASS, Highland. Enjoy learning basic drawing skills or improving existing skills as you apply these to do innovative printing techniques. The class is designed to meet the needs of beginners as well as experienced artist. This will be a highly creative experience at which anyone can succeed. Leah Sutton, MFA, will teach and lead you through the process. Thursdays from 6 - 8 p.m. All supplies will be provided. Cost is \$100. Class size is limited and is for ages 14+. Korte Recreation Center, 1 Nagel Drive. For more information or to register, email burnskathy11@gmail.com or visit highlandartscouncil.org.

May 8-10, 14-17 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: SPREADING IT GODSPELL, Alton. This uplifting and energetic musical brings the teachings of Jesus to life with a modern-day twist. With a rock-inspired score and heartwarming storytelling, Godspell is a celebration of love, community, and hope.. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call 618-462-3205 or

visit altonlittletheater.org.

May 8; June 12; July 10; August 14; September 11 SUMMER CONCERT & MOVIE NIGHTS, Belleville. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets and enjoy free music and concerts throughout the summer. Event includes local food trucks and free activities and games for kids. Bands start at 7 p.m.; movies start at sunset. Bellevue Park Bandshell, 401 Bellevue Park Drive. Visit belleville.net/354/parks-recreation.

May 9 MOVIE NIGHT: THE LORD OF THE RINGS (1978), Godfrey. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the release of Peter Jackson's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. Therefore, we will celebrate by watching various movies set in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth on our giant inflatable screen. Bring your own seating (lawn chairs or blankets), as well as your own snacks. No alcohol is permitted. No pre-registration required. While this event is free, donations are welcome. Limited parking is available, so arrive early. 8:30 - 10:30 p.m. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Visit thenatureinstitute.org.

May 9 & 10 DEPARTURE CELEBRATION, Hartford. Celebrate the departure of Lewis & Clark as they set out on an expedition of discovery. Reenactors and historic artisans will celebrate this important date in Illinois and American history. Demonstrations will include artillery, pioneer skills, muskets, candle making, fiber arts and cooking. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Lewis & Clark State Historic Site, One Lewis

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 mike.barns@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.

& Clark Trail. Call 618-251-5811 or visit campdubois.com.

May 9; June 13; July 11; August 8; September 12 LUCY HASKELL PLAYHOUSE OPEN HOUSE, Alton. Step inside the Victorian-style playhouse, take a walk through history, and rediscover the childlike wonder that surrounds this remarkable piece of Alton's past. 10 a.m. - noon. Visit haskellplayhouse.org.

May 15-17 ART ON THE SQUARE, Belleville. Featuring the work of over 100 artists from over 27 states and one artist from outside the U.S., musical and stage performances, and local food and drink. The festival will include children's art activities, high school exhibits, live entertainment, art demonstrations, food and wine. Friday 4 - 9 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Call (800) 677-9255 or visit artonthesquare.com.

May 16 SPRING 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 a Missouri Prairie Foundation (MPF) native plant sale organized in partnership with The Nature Institute. A portion of sale proceeds will be donated to benefit the conservation work of the Missouri Prairie Foundation and The Nature Institute. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call 618-466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

May 17 DEMOULIN MUSEUM CONCERT SERIES, Greenville. This year's free concert series includes bluegrass band Number 9 Coal April 12, singer Lauren Ash April 19 and blues musicians Jeff Chapman and Travis Ried May 17. The DeMoulin Museum is located at 205 South Prairie Street. Visit demoulinmuseum.org.

May 25 TROY COMMUNITY BAND MEMORIAL DAY CERE-

MONY, Troy. 11 a.m. Veterans' Memorial at Tri-township Park, at the intersection of Wickliffe Street and Lake Drive. Visit troyband.org.

May 28 - September 26 MUSIC IN THE PARK, Grafton. Bring your lawn chairs and coolers for a toe-tapping evening of great music along the Mississippi River. From classic rock and pop to country, bluegrass and jazz, there is something for everyone. Every Thursday 7 - 9 p.m. Admission is free. The Grove Memorial Park, corner of Market and Main Streets. Visit graftonchamber.com/music-in-the-park.

June 2, 16, 23, 30, July 7 ADULT WATERCOLOR CLASSES, Highland. Enjoy learning basic watercolor skills or improving existing skills as you apply them to creating your own original painting. The class is designed to meet the needs of beginners as well as experienced artists. Kenzie Holzinger Smith, MFA will teach and lead you through the process. Afternoon class 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.; evening class 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. All supplies will be provided. Cost is \$95. Class size is limited and is for ages 14+. Korte Recreation Center, 1 Nagel Drive. For more information or to register, email burnskathy11@gmail.com or visit highlandartscouncil.org.

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

June 6 TWO RIVERS FAMILY FISHING FAIR, Grafton. Event welcomes all ages to enjoy the sport of fishing. Fishing poles, bait and supplies are provided. There are 30 outdoor

Ongoing SEGREGATION VIDEO DISPLAY, Collinsville.

Collinsville Historical Museum is proud to announce the availability of two digital displays on segregation and integration of Collinsville schools. Each of the videos is about six minutes long. One discusses the segregated Lincoln School on Goethe Street which closed in 1958. The other video discusses the integration of Collinsville Township High School, which occurred in the 1939-40 school year. Open Wednesday through Saturday noon - 4 p.m. Collinsville Historical Museum, 406 West Main Street. Call 618-344-1834 or visit collinsvillemuseum.org.



At left, Lincoln School students in 1925. Above, Lincoln School.

PHOTOS COURTESY COLLINSVILLE HISTORICAL MUSEUM

educational activities plus a trout pond, a bluegill pond and a 4,000-gallon aquarium. Special guests for this event are legendary fisherman and Hall of Famer Jimmy Houston, Mountain Man, star of "Duck Dynasty", Camo the Clown and WildHeart. Food and drinks are available on site. Guests will also enjoy free gifts and prizes. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Pere Marquette State Park, 13112 Visitor Center Lane. Call 618-786-3323.

June 7 ALL-WHEELS DRIVE-IN CAR SHOW, Alton. Come out for the cars and stay for the live music, 50-50 drawing, vendor displays, merchant sidewalk sale and great food. Event features more than 200 classic cars, hot rods and motorcycles. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Downtown on State and Belle Streets. Visit downtownalton.com.

June 7 CHICKEN DINNER, Grantfork. Dinner includes ½ chicken (breast, wing, thigh, leg), dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, slaw and cake. No substitutions. The Country Store will be back this year with lots of fun things to purchase, as well as a raffle with a quilt and cash prizes. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. All dinners \$15 carry out with limited dine in seating. St. Gertrudes Catholic Church, 202 Locust Street.

For more information, call Gail Ohren at 618-830-1384

June 13 MOVIE IN THE PARK, Maryville. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy "How to Train Your Dragon". 7 - 9 p.m. Firemen's Park, entertainment pavilion 300 North Donk Avenue. Visit maryville.il.us/98/parks-recreation, email parksandrec@maryville-il.us or message us (618) 223-8965.

June 13 ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL, Edwardsville. Event will include live music, 10K run, great food, classic car show and cruise, food vendors, kid zone, trolley tours, history tent and local artists. 10 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. Admission is free. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Visit edwardsvillerroute66.com, email gpellock@cityofedwardsville.com or call 618-692-7538.

June 14 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES, Edwardsville. Enjoy the music of Silver Creek Bluegrass Band. All are welcome to join us in celebrating and supporting local music. Doors open 5 p.m.; music starts 5:30 p.m. Admission is free will offering. Light refreshments available for purchase. Immanuel UCC Church in Hamel, 5838 Staunton Road. Call 618-560-8543.

► *Continued from page 5*

needs both now and in the future. Everything was on the table – upgrading the current facility, building new or moving into an existing space. In the same way, the board considered potential sites across the cooperative’s service area, leaving no stone unturned.

In the end, their search led them just two miles northeast of their current location. Essendant, a Staples subsidiary specializing in wholesale distribution of workplace essentials, janitorial supplies and industrial products, announced last November the closure of its Greenville location, threatening to leave the 228,600-square-foot space sitting empty for the foreseeable future.

Southwestern Electric Board President Jerry Gaffner said the opportunity was too good to pass up.

“As we went through the due diligence,” Gaffner said, “it became very clear that the Essendant building presented the membership and the cooperative an opportunity to streamline the operation at a low, low price point relative to the square footage.”

Board Vice President Jared Stine cited the ability to get valuable equipment out of the elements and under roof as just one of the “handful of things” that attracted him to the building.

“Of course, financially, this is the biggest bang for our buck for our membership,” Stine said. “It has everything that we need. The location is also very attractive. The city of Greenville has done a great job with this industrial park.

“Lastly, the benefit to the city of Greenville itself. This is a building that unfortunately might have sat empty, so to be able

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—Jerry Gaffner, Board President

to jump in and bring it back to life was very important to us.”

With the contract signed, the board will turn its attention to tailoring the new building to the cooperative’s needs. Board Treasurer Sandy Grapperhaus is the chair of the newly formed Facilities Committee that will oversee that project, with hopes that the cooperative can inhabit its new headquarters at some point in 2027.

As with the purchase of the new building itself, Grapperhaus said being a good steward of the membership’s money will be paramount in the renovation process.

“I’m honored to be on the Facilities Committee,” Grapperhaus said. “I have a lot of experience in construction and a lot of knowledge about the business, so hopefully I can be of service.”

As the project continues along, stay tuned to our social media channels and www.sweci.com/new-greenville-headquarters for updates.



United for Stronger Communities

You have the power to protect affordable, reliable electricity. Take a stand on issues that impact your cooperative and community.



American flags
line the road
along St. Clare
and Union
cemeteries in
Altamont last
Memorial Day.

THE FINAL FRAME

