

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COÖPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

SEPTEMBER 2026 • VOLUME 78 • ISSUE 9

## *The 'Power' to Succeed*

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM  
BENEFITS AREA YOUTH

ANNUAL MEETING

LITTLE FREE  
ART LIBRARIES



E-CYCLING  
DRIVE

WINTERIZATION

CAMPUS FIRE  
SAFETY

DEMAND  
CHARGE

CHANGES IN  
EFFECT SEPT. 1

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

#### Distribution Centers:

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

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

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Electric directors Amy Marcoot and Jared Stine, CEO Bobby Williams, Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott and Manager of Operations Neil Sperandio during the recent scholarship parade. Our story on the scholarship program's continuing impact starts on page 8.

### CO-OP REMINDERS

**September 7** Offices closed for Labor Day.

**September 12** Southwestern Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting.

**September 15** Payment processing unavailable 8 - 11 p.m. while we perform maintenance.



### 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

**W**e've hidden an image of a school bus 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 school bus, email us or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and the page number where you found the image. Please email us at [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or send your postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

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

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

### JUNE WINNER

Congratulations to Jim Zipprich of Moro. As the winner of our June Hide & Seek contest drawing, Jim 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](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or by sending a postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.
- Entries submitted by other methods will be disqualified.
- Entries emailed to other Southwestern Electric email

- addresses will be disqualified, deleted, then disqualified again, just to be safe.
- Entries mailed to other departments or included with other correspondence will likely never find their way to the editor. If they do, they'll be disqualified. Also, he'll add you to his list of people who can't follow instructions. It's a long (and growing) list and not one you care to be part of.
- 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.

# Co-op's New Website Brings Better Features, Functionality

If you haven't visited our website lately, it's time you gave it another look.

We recently updated the site to give it improved functionality, additional features and a cleaner design. Most notably, the new website has a mobile interface that is much more compatible than the previous one, making it easier to read and use on phones and other devices.

One of the capabilities of the new site is the addition of online forms. You will soon be able to apply for service for your residence or business on the website rather than having to fill out a paper

form. In the future, we also plan to have more functions available to do online, including applications for our Power for Progress Scholarship Program and Operation Round Up grants.



Getting in touch with your directors is now easier than ever as well. Through our Contact the Board of Directors page, you can email individual directors, all three directors for your district or the full board with just a click.

One thing that hasn't changed is the wealth of information available on the site. The website still includes all of the helpful pages regarding energy assistance, safety, solar generation and much more. You can also access your SmartHub account and see up-to-date outage news on the site as always.

Visit [sweci.com](http://sweci.com) to start exploring today!

## Rate Restructuring, Demand Charge in Effect Sept. 1

A recent rate restructuring is bringing changes to your electric bill.

Beginning on Sept. 1, 2026, Southwestern Electric increased its service availability charge and its capacity and transmission charge, lowered its distribution charge and reset the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA) to zero. The energy rate remained the same. These changes will first be reflected in the bill you will receive in October.

The most notable difference is the introduction of a demand charge. The demand charge is based on the single hour in the month when your account uses the most power. It's important to note that this is not a new charge, but rather an unbundling of our rates to allow us to better match the true cost of serving each member.



Southwestern Electric CEO Bobby Williams addresses a packed house at the Members in Action meeting at the Greenville headquarters in early August

The good news is, you're not alone. We've set up an entire page on our website dedicated to understanding demand billing, complete with frequently asked questions (FAQs), interactive demand calculators and an introductory video explaining the concept of demand and how you can best manage your own peak demand.

We also held six town hall-style Members in Action meetings in August aimed at explaining the changing rates. A recording of one of those meetings will be housed on our website for members wanting to view the presentation.

And as always, our Member Services Representatives (MSRs) are also available to answer any questions you might have about demand, your bill or anything else related to your service. Visit [sweci.com/understanding-demand-billing](http://sweci.com/understanding-demand-billing) to learn more, or call us at 800-637-8667 to speak to an MSR.



See You September 12th!

# American Farm Heritage Museum Venue for 88th Annual Meeting of Members

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative's 88th Annual Meeting of Members will be held Saturday, September 12, 2026 at the American Farm Heritage Museum, located at 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246.

Doors will open at 8 a.m., with the business meeting beginning at 10 a.m. A complimentary breakfast will be served starting at 8 a.m.

Before the business meeting, members can enjoy the Live Line Demonstration presented by Southwestern Electric Cooperative's linemen. This demonstration will cover electrical safety, illustrate the dangers of downed and energized power lines, and explain the proper steps to take if you ever find yourself in a live-wire situation.

Morning train rides will be available for members, and cooperative staff will have informational booths set up throughout the event to answer questions and provide information about cooperative programs and services.

The first 150 members to attend will receive a multi-charger as a special gift.

Parking will be available on the grounds of the American Farm Heritage Museum.

Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Brooke Scott, Manager of Member Services. You can reach her at 800-637-8667 or by email at [community@sweci.com](mailto:community@sweci.com).



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

**T**o ensure you had the 2026 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.

Members who participate in voting for the Annual Meeting will receive a \$20 bill credit. As an added incentive, members who bring their preprinted voter registration card to a voting location will receive an additional \$10 bill credit, for a total bill credit of \$30.

To expedite the voting process, members are encouraged to bring the voter registration card printed on the back cover of the July issue or the August special edition of

The Southwestern to one of Southwestern's designated voting locations. A complete schedule of voting dates, times, and locations appears on the opposite page.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 88th Annual Meeting of Members will be held at American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246.

Questions may be directed to Brooke Scott, Manager of Member Services, at 800-637-8667 or by email at [community@sweci.com](mailto:community@sweci.com).



# 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                          | Sept. 2 remains open to 7 p.m.<br>Sept. 10 remains open to 7 p.m. |
| St. Jacob warehouse, 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob                        | Sept. 1 from 4 to 7 p.m.<br>Sept. 9 from 4 to 7 p.m.              |
| St. Elmo warehouse, 2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo                     | Sept. 3 from 4 to 7 p.m.<br>Sept. 8 from 4 to 7 p.m.              |
| American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue, Greenville, IL 62246 | Sept. 12 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. 28 through 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 11. We are closed on Monday, Sept. 7 in observance of Labor Day.

# Voting Eligibility

## Business Memberships

Business members are advised that any representative wishing to vote will be required to present a letter authorizing them to act as an agent of the business. Like any other member, a business member is entitled to a single vote in the cooperative elections.

## Joint Memberships

Joint memberships are also entitled to one vote per membership.

## Active Memberships

Each active member is entitled to a single vote in the cooperative elections in accordance to the cooperative’s bylaws. Members who have more than one account may vote only once.

## Inactive Memberships

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

If you have any questions about your membership status or would like to verify your voting eligibility, please contact us at 800-637-8667.



# Great 'Power,' Great Responsibility

## POWER FOR PROGRESS SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM CONTINUES TO SUPPORT LOCAL STUDENTS' DREAMS

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

**A**stronaut. Princess. President of the United States. The question of, "What do you want to be when you grow up?" elicits many wonderfully imaginative responses from young minds. Unfortunately, our ability to help kids become Spider-Man or the starting center fielder for the St. Louis Cardinals is limited, no matter how hard we try to will it into existence.

That hasn't stopped Southwestern Electric from striving to help its young members reach their goals, though. This year, the cooperative was able to once again award

\$1,200 scholarships, including two memorial scholarships, to 14 students for the upcoming school year through its Power for Progress Scholarship Program, supporting the region's youth as they grow into the next generation of member-owners. Since its inception in 1995, the program has provided more than \$300,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate.

"These scholarships are about more than helping with the cost of college," Manager of Member

Services Brooke Scott said. "They give us an opportunity to invest in the young people in the communities we serve, build relationships with our members and their families, and celebrate students who are working hard to make a difference. Getting to be part of this exciting time in their lives and hear about what they hope to accomplish makes this program very meaningful."

It's not just the 14 applicants with the highest grade-point averages who receive the awards, either. The cooperative's Scholarship Committee, composed of nine judges consisting of both directors and staff members, read and evaluated nearly 80 applications to get to this year's 14 recipients. Criteria include

*Continued on page 10 ►*



Illinois State University freshman Alissa Korsmeyer, center, stands with, from left, Southwestern Electric CEO Bobby Williams, Manager of Operations Neil Sperandio, Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott and directors Marvin Warner, Bill Jennings, Sandy Grapperhaus and Jared Stine.



Above, Edwardsville High School senior Chase Schomber with his parents, Robin and Christopher Schomber.



At left, Ramsey CUSD #204 senior Lucas Miller with Southwestern Electric director Jared Stine.

Below, Southwestern Electric director Annette Hartlieb and Vandalia Community High School senior Maggie Tate.



#### This year's Power for Progress scholarship recipients are:

##### Graduating Seniors

- Ike Daiber.....Saint Anthony Catholic High School
- Kaylee Lurkins .....Altamont Community High School
- Molly McCalla\* .....Staunton High School
- Danny Melton .....Bond Co. Community Unit 2 High School
- Lucas Miller .....Ramsey CUSD #204
- Madelyn Moore.....Highland High School
- Reyna Rehg .....Triad High School
- Clive Schlanser .....Beecher City Jr.-Sr. High School
- Chase Schomber.....Edwardsville High School
- Maggie Tate .....Vandalia Community High School
- Grace Welser .....Father McGivney Catholic High School

##### Post-high school scholarship recipients

- Alissa Korsmeyer\*.....Illinois State University
- Trystan McClain .....Kaskaskia College
- Noah Vonder Haar .....University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana

\*Alissa Korsmeyer is the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship winner.

\*Molly McCalla is the Rich Gusewelle Memorial Scholarship winner.

*“Getting to be part of this exciting time in their lives and hear about what they hope to accomplish makes this program very meaningful.”*

—Brooke Scott, Manager of Member Services



Above, Kaskaskia College sophomore Trystan McClain, center, pictured with, from left, Southwestern Electric Manager of Operations Neil Sperandio, Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott, director Jared Stine, CEO Bobby Williams, and directors Amy Marcoot and Brad Lurkins.

At right, University of Illinois sophomore Noah Vonder Haar stands with a yard sign. Vonder Haar was one of three post-high school students to receive a Power for Progress scholarship this year.



Above, Staunton High School senior Molly McCalla, center, along with, from left, Southwestern Electric director Bill Jennings, Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott, director Jared Stine, CEO Bobby Williams, director Amy Marcoot and Manager of Operations Neil Sperandio.

► *Continued from page 8*

academic success, participation in extracurricular activities and a personal essay, among others, and each judge independently evaluates the merits of every application before the committee convenes to finalize the list.

“The great thing about the committee process is the human element,” Media Specialist Nathan Grimm, a member of the Scholarship Committee, said. “Not just that we’re humans with our own thoughts and opinions, but also that the students we’re evaluating are all individuals with interests and hobbies and goals as well. Within the span of a few applications, you can read about a young man from Beecher City who’s going to lineman school in Georgia and a young woman from Troy who’s going to Washington University in St. Louis to study biomedical engineering—and not only get to learn about them but decide that both are deserving of this recognition. It’s an awesome thing.”

*Continued on page 12* ►

Few relics of the COVID-19 pandemic remain, but some, like the rise of remote work and virtual meetings, have stood the test of time.

One of the things born of the time was the cooperative’s scholarship parade. Without the ability to have an awards dinner, directors and leadership instead took the celebration to our recipients—with the requisite social distancing measures, of course.

Even as those protocols have faded away, the scholarship parade has remained a staple for the cooperative. Each spring, after the awardees have been chosen and notified, cooperative leaders dedicate a few hours to drive across the service territory to visit the students, shake their hands and deliver a yard sign letting their friends and neighbors know they’re a Power for Progress recipient.

“One of the most rewarding parts of our scholarship program is getting to know the students beyond their applications,” Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott said. “We get to meet them at their awards ceremonies, but delivering the scholarship signs gives us a chance to visit with them and their families and hear more about their plans for the future. After reading so many great applications and essays, it is special to put a face and a story with the accomplishments we read about.”

*“Getting to know the impressive students, meet their proud families and help remove some of the monetary stress of college or a trade school is a win-win for the cooperative and its members.”*

—Jared Stine, Board of Directors Vice President



Above left, Bond County Community Unit 2 High School senior Danny Melton III, center, with, from left, Southwestern Electric director Brad Lurkins, CEO Bobby Williams, director Jared Stine, Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott and Manager of Operations Neil Sperandio.

*“We’ve always been a part of Southwestern Electric, so it’s nice to see the community back the younger generation, the next generation of people in the trades.”*

—Danny Melton III, Bond County Community Unit 2 High School graduate



At right, Beecher City Jr.-Sr. High School senior Clive Schlanser and Southwestern Electric director Jared Stine.



Above, Southwestern Electric director Annette Hartlieb with Saint Anthony Catholic High School senior Ike Daiber.



Above right, Father McGivney Catholic High School senior Grace Welser, center, stands with, from left, Southwestern Electric director Marvin Warner, CEO Bobby Williams, Manager of Operations Neil Sperandio, Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott, and directors Jared Stine and Sandy Grapperhaus.

► *Continued from page 10*

Danny Melton III is one of those recipients. The Bond County Community Unit 2 High School graduate is going to Lincoln Land Community College to study electrical distribution and said having the support of his electric cooperative “means a lot.”

“We’ve always been a part of Southwestern Electric,” Melton said, “so it’s nice to see the community back the younger generation, the next generation of people in the trades.”

Board of Directors Vice President Jared Stine chairs the Scholarship Committee. He said getting to know the impressive students, meet their proud families and help remove some of the monetary stress of college or a trade school is a win-win for the cooperative and its members.

“You get to directly change a student’s life,” Stine said. “It’s inspiring.” 



At left, Altamont Community High School senior Kaylee Lurkins and Southwestern Electric director Jared Stine.

Below, Southwestern Electric Director Annette Hartlieb, left, and Lurkins are pictured at Altamont Community High School's Honors Program.



Above, Highland High School senior Madelyn Moore, center left, stands with, from left, Southwestern Electric Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott, directors Jared Stine and Bill Jennings, CEO Bobby Williams and director Amy Marcoot before proudly staking the sign in the front yard of her Alhambra home.

Applications for the 2027 Power for Progress scholarships will open later this fall. Keep an eye on our website, Facebook page and the pages of this magazine for updates. If you have any questions about the Power for Progress Scholarship Program, reach out to Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott by calling 800-637-8667 or emailing [community@sweci.com](mailto:community@sweci.com).

# SMARTHUB IS YOUR ONE-STOP ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PORTAL

Haven't yet signed up for SmartHub, our online account management portal? 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.



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

## Cooperative hosts Oct. 3 recycling drive in St. Jacob

Southwestern Electric will host an e-cycling drive at its St. Jacob Distribution Center on Saturday, Oct. 3. Collection begins at 9 a.m. and ends at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first. Electronics collected during the drive will be e-cycled by an EPA-approved recycling center.

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

E-cycling — electronics recycling — is the process of refurbishing, redistributing and reusing electronic devices and components, rather than discarding them. It extends the lifecycle of electronics and lowers their overall environmental impact.



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

**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 NIDC) 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.

# BE WINTER WISE & *Weatherize*

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

**A**utumn 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](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).



# Low-Interest Loans Available for Energy Improvements

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.

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.



## 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

## 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. To be eligible for the heat pump rebate, the heat pump must be the main source of heat for the account. 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](http://sweci.com). You can email your completed application and proof of purchase to [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto: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.

**For more information, visit [www.sweci.com/erc-loans](http://www.sweci.com/erc-loans), scan the QR Code to the right or contact Julie Lowe at [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com) or (800) 637-8667.**



# 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. 4-10, 2026**

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.

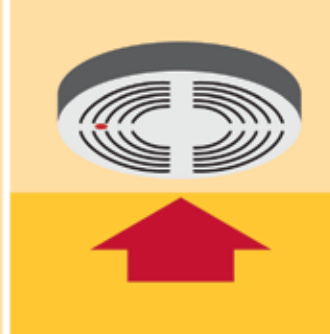


**2**

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](http://usfa.fema.gov) and [firepreventionweek.org](http://firepreventionweek.org).

U.S. Fire  
Administration



FEMA



# The Art of the Matter

Little Free Art Libraries bring vibrancy, creativity to Alton

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

“The arts are not a way to make a living. They are a very human way of making life more bearable. Practicing an art, no matter how well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow, for heaven’s sake. Sing in the shower. Dance to the radio. Tell stories. Write a poem to a friend, even a lousy poem. Do it as well as you possibly can. You will get an enormous reward. You will have created something.”

The irony is, of course, that Kurt Vonnegut did make a living through his art. The author of “Slaughterhouse-Five,” “Cat’s Cradle” and “Breakfast of Champions,” among other works, Vonnegut found art to be a lucrative outlet for his creativity.

His point remains, though. For centuries, humans have been expressing themselves through art, regardless of the return on investment. Karaoke on a Thursday night, a Saturday morning poetry slam at a local coffee shop, a Sunday afternoon spent painting in the park—all art, and all therapeutic in their own way.

Recently, creative outlets became a little more accessible in the Riverbend. Last summer, Alton’s Hayner Library partnered with Jacoby Arts Center and Lewis & Clark Community College’s YouthBuild to install five Little Free Art Libraries throughout Alton. Each library was hand-built and weatherproofed by YouthBuild students and painted by community members in collaboration with Jacoby Arts Center.

They are stocked regularly with art books, art supplies, craft kits, and other artsy materials, all free to take and create with. As with all of the “little free library” concepts, there is no expectation attached to the libraries—make a little art, take a little art, as the sign on the libraries says.

The libraries are located in four spots around Alton: Milton Schoolhouse, 1320 Milton Road; Jacoby Arts Center, 208 State St.; Alton City Hall, 101 E. 3rd St.; and The Boys and Girls Club of Alton, 2512 Amelia St.

So, you have one less excuse not to do some art this month.

Do it as well as you possibly can.  
You will get an enormous reward.  
You will have created something.

To be able to offer everything an artist might need in a little free art library, the Jacoby Arts Center accepts donations from the public. Individuals can donate high-quality, gently used art supplies at the Jacoby Arts Center, 208 State St. in Alton, during business hours.

Not all art supplies are created equal, though. Since things like glue and paint can degrade during extreme temperatures, the arts center asks that certain things not be donated.

## Do’s:

- Writing utensils—colored pencils, markers, pencils, twist-up crayons, paint brushes
- Small canvases, paper, sketchbooks, felt
- Buttons, feathers, pipe cleaners, stickers, foam stickers, Washi tape
- Play-Doh or air-dry clay, preferably in individual packs
- Crochet hooks or knitting needles
- Embroidery floss, thread, string, twine, yarn, etc.
- Stamps or self-inking stamps
- Rubber erasers or kneaded erasers

## Don’ts:

- Ink pads
- Liquid paint of any kind
- Crayons
- Liquid glue and super glue (but glue sticks are OK!)



Maeva’s Coffee  
in the Milton Schoolhouse.



Maeva's Coffee in the Milton Schoolhouse.



As you might expect, each Little Free Art Library has its own flair. The one in Maeva's Coffee in the Milton Schoolhouse mimics the downtown street art mural entitled "The Alton Ripple," while the one outside Jacoby Arts Center is covered in JAC-inspired designs.



Alton City Hall



Jacoby Arts Center



The Boys and Girls Club of Alton

## WHO • WHAT • WHERE

**M**adonna once sang, “Life is a mystery,” but the Madonna in our July puzzle didn’t have many of you stumped.

We’d hope not. The Madonna of the Trail monument outside of the Vandalia Statehouse is one of the most recognizable figures in our region, besides being part of our nation’s history—the statue is one of 12 commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution to honor the spirit of pioneer women in the United States.

We’d say more, but your responses tell it better than we could. Thank you to everyone who wrote in with their stories and memories related to the Fayette County landmark.

Since we’ve got your attention, can you tell us what item is depicted on the opposite page? It’s a little more difficult than the July puzzle, but we have faith in you. We look forward to reading what you have to say.

That is the Madonna of the Trail in Vandalia, Illinois.

It would be nice to see all of these monuments in one article. I believe there are 12 of them across the country. They were commissioned by the National Society of the DAR.

—Robert Harpster, Saint Peter

Pictured is the Madonna of the Trail monument on West Gallatin Street in Vandalia. Pictured behind is the Vandalia Statehouse. You made this too easy!

—Jane Dapkus, Pocahontas

The Madonna of the Trail, located in Vandalia, Illinois, is one of several statues that were commissioned by the daughters of the American Revolution. It commemorated all the pioneer women that braved so much for Westward expansion. The statue stands 18 feet tall and weighs 12 tons.

—Fred Faust, Edwardsville

Pictured is the statue of Madonna of the Trail at the corner of Gallatin and Fourth Street in Vandalia. I have seen it most of my life—I grew up north of Vandalia, shopped, worked and went to school here.

—Robert and Marcia Torbeck, Shobonier



The Madonna of the Trail in Vandalia by the Old Statehouse is one of 12 identical statues. They were commissioned by the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution and give honor to the pioneer women who settled the American West. All 12 are located along or near the National Old Trails Road (Route 40). The other statues can be found in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Missouri, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, and California.

—Debra Carter, O’Fallon

The solution to the July 2026 “Who am I?” puzzler can be found in Vandalia, Illinois. On the southeast corner of the Old State Capitol grounds there sits a monument titled, “Madonna of the Trail.” It’s one of 12 statues in the United States honoring pioneer women who traveled along the Old National Road and beyond. The road starts in Cumberland, Maryland and ends in

Vandalia, spanning about 620 miles. Six of the statues are located along that stretch. Others are located further west from Missouri to California.

The monuments were created by the St. Louis sculptor August Leimbach. The figure and the base of the statue are made of algonite stone, giving the monuments the warm, pink color of Missouri native granite. On two sides of the base, historic or local commemoration data is inscribed. The monument was dedicated on October 26, 1928.

—Bill Malec, O’Fallon

The photo is one of twelve identical Madonna of the Trail monuments commissioned by the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). The statues honor the pioneer women who traveled westward across the United States in covered wagons. They were erected along the National Old Trails Road from Bethesda, Maryland, to Upland, California.

This specific monument is identified on the pedestal as an N.S.D.A.R. Memorial (National Society Daughters of the American Revolution). This particular monument is in Vandalia.

—Dave Norris, Worden

The Madonna of the Trail in Vandalia symbolizes strength, protection and hardships.

—Yvonne Rieger, Troy

The picture in the July issue is “Madonna of the Trail.” Picture taken on the northeastern corner of Gallatin and Fourth streets in downtown Vandalia, Illinois!

—Sandy Worker, Ramsey

Hello!

This month’s Who-What-Where is the Madonna of the Trail statue in Vandalia, Ill.

Now I have a new quest to see them all!

—Stephanie Renken, Edwardsville



**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](mailto: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

# Sweet HARVEST

## HONEY-WRAPPED PEARS

### Ingredients

- 4 pears or apples
- 4 cups water
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 cup honey
- ½ lemon juiced

### Directions

1. Pare the fruit, then set aside (we kept whole and cored from the bottom).
2. In a medium saucepan combine water, sugar, and honey.
3. Bring to a simmer over medium heat.
4. When sugar has dissolved add the fruit, lemon juice, cinnamon sticks, cloves, and vanilla.
5. Simmer until fruit is fork tender (about 30 minutes), remove fruit, and allow to cool.
6. Simmer remaining liquid (poaching liquid) until reduced to about half a cup.
7. Cut crescent roll dough into half inch strips and wrap around fruit starting at the base and working up to the top.
8. Place fruit on baking sheet lined with parchment paper.
9. Preheat oven to 400° and bake 20 minutes or until golden brown.
10. Drizzle with poaching liquid and serve.

## AWESOME APPLE DUMPLINGS

### Ingredients

- 1 cup butter melted
- 2 cans Pillsbury crescent rolls
- 2-3 Fuji or Granny Smith apples quartered
- 1 12 ounce can Mountain Dew
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon

### Directions

1. Place melted butter in 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
2. Roll each apple slice in a crescent roll and place in dish on top of melted butter.
3. Pour can of Mountain Dew over rolls.
4. Mix together sugar and cinnamon and pour over rolls.
5. Bake at 350° for 40 - 45 minutes.

## APPLE CHEESECAKE

### Crust Ingredients

- 1 stick butter
- 1 cup flour
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla

### Filling Ingredients

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- ¼ cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 egg

### Topping Ingredients

- 4 cups apples peeled and thinly sliced
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup chopped pecans or walnuts (optional)

### Directions

1. Combine crust ingredients and press into greased 9 inch pie pan.
2. Combine filling ingredients and pour over crust.
3. Mix topping ingredients and lay on top of filling.
4. Bake at 450° for 10 minutes.
5. Then bake at 350° for 30 minutes.
6. Add chopped nuts (optional) to top last 5 -10 minutes.

## APPLE SALAD

### Ingredients

- 2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese
- 8 ounces Cool Whip
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 Snickers bars, chopped
- 3 red apples
- 3 green apples

### Directions

1. Mix cream cheese, sugar, Cool Whip, and Snickers.
2. Wash, core and chop apples (do not peel).
3. Combine apples with cream cheese mixture.
4. Chill 1 hour before serving.

## CURRENT EVENTS

**September 1 - October 30**  
ART EXHIBIT BY DAN & B WILLIAMS, Highland. Come see and enjoy the art work of Dan & B Williams. Their work is photography and mixed media involving encaustics, the use of wax to create an ethereal textual quality. Latzer Memorial Public Library, 1001 9th Street. 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. For more information, email [burnskathy11@gmail.com](mailto:burnskathy11@gmail.com) or visit [highlandilllibrary.org](http://highlandilllibrary.org).

**September 2-30** CIVIC PARK CONCERT SERIES, Granite City. See a live show every Wednesday evening with a mixed genre lineup of fantastic local and regional artists. 1301 Niedringhaus Avenue. 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. Admission is free. Call 618-452-6213.

**September 2 - November 8**  
1926 EXHIBIT, Edwardsville. 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. Wednesday - Sunday. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis Street. Visit [cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station](http://cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station).

**September 3 - September 24**  
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 coun-

try, 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 [graftonil-chamber.com/music-in-the-park](http://graftonil-chamber.com/music-in-the-park).

**September 4 - October 10** SUMMER CONCERTS, Vandalia. From sunset acoustic sets to high-energy weekend shows, your favorite local artists are taking the stage all season long. Grab your crew, sip something cold, and let the music carry you through the summer nights. Charter's Patio, 401 West Gallatin Street. For a complete schedule, visit [facebook.com/ChartersPatio](http://facebook.com/ChartersPatio).

**September 4 - November 1** GREAT GODFREY MAZE, Godfrey. On Friday and Saturday nights, the maze will be open after dark. The maze will also be open on Sundays during the day. Other activities include cow train, corn crib, hay wagon ride and jumping pillow. Fridays 6 - 10 p.m.; Saturdays 11 a.m. - 10 p.m.; Sundays noon - 6 p.m. Fees apply. Robert E Glazebrook Park, 1401 Stamper Lane Visit [godfreyil.org](http://godfreyil.org) or call 618-466-1483.

**September 5, 19** CARILLON CONCERT SERIES, Centralia. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy a different carillon performance day in the park. Carillon Park, 104 South Elm Street. Visit [centraliacarillon.org](http://centraliacarillon.org).

**September 10-13** MILL ROAD THRESHERMAN'S SHOW, Altamont. Explore a century of farming. Using antique farm equipment from the past. Demonstrating it in the present.

Preserving it for the future. The four-day event will take you back to country life on the central Illinois prairies. Farming and tractor events, horse farming, bluegrass music, women's activities, children's events and more. Camping is available on the grounds. Effingham County Fairgrounds, 722 East Cumberland Road. Admission is \$8; weekend pass \$16; children 12 years of age and younger free with paid adult. For more information, visit [millroadthresherman.org](http://millroadthresherman.org) or [facebook.com/millroadthresherman](http://facebook.com/millroadthresherman).

**September 11** SUMMER CONCERT & MOVIE NIGHTS, Belleville. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets and enjoy free music and movies 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 [bellevueil.net/354/parks-recreation](http://bellevueil.net/354/parks-recreation).

**September 11-13** HILLS FORT RENDEZVOUS, Greenville. Step back in time and experience pre-1840 living history with family-friendly fun all weekend long, including a special kids day on Friday. It's a great chance to enjoy history, demonstrations and a unique weekend for all ages. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Visit [hillsfort.org](http://hillsfort.org) or [facebook.com/hillsfort-society](http://facebook.com/hillsfort-society).

**September 11-13, 17-20**  
ALTON LITTLE THEATER: DEAR EVAN HANSEN, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. September 11, 12, 17 and 18

at 7:30 p.m.; September 13, 19 and 20 at 2 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit [altonlittletheater.org](http://altonlittletheater.org).

**September 11-13** SUMMER SUNDOWN MUSIC FESTIVAL, Effingham. 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. Friday 4 p.m. - midnight; Saturday 11 a.m. - midnight; Sunday noon - 4 p.m. Weekend pass is \$85.08. The Stage at Lake Sara, 8724 East Marine Road. For more information, visit [summersundownfest.com](http://summersundownfest.com).

**September 12** SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE'S 88TH ANNUAL MEETING, Greenville. 8 a.m. at the American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Questions may be directed to Brooke Scott, Manager of Member Services, at 800-637-8667 or email [community@sweci.com](mailto:community@sweci.com).

**September 12; October 10**  
EARS MICROCHIP EVENT, Effingham. On-site microchipping. No appointment needed. No geography or number limit. 10 a.m. - noon. Freewill donation. EARS - Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary, 408 East Fayette Avenue. Visit [effingham-animalrescue.com](http://effingham-animalrescue.com).

**September 18 & 19** ITALIAN FEST, Collinsville. Celebrate the Italian culture and heritage that the city was built on with food, drinks, and family fun.

### 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](mailto: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.

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](http://italianfest.net).

**September 19** CONCERT IN THE PARK, Maryville. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy music by the Troy Community Band. 7 - 9 p.m. Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Visit [troyband.org](http://troyband.org).

**September 19** MISSISSIPPI EARTHTONES FESTIVAL, Alton. A celebration of the Mississippi River through art, music, and conservation. Local artisans will offer their wares, music will fill the air, and food and beverages will be available. Family-friendly activities run from noon - 6 p.m.; with live music and art continuing until 10 p.m. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. Visit [facebook.com/EarhttonesFestival](http://facebook.com/EarhttonesFestival).

**September 19** MOVIES IN THE PARK, Edwardsville. Get there early to grab a spot and take part in pre-movie activities. Bring a chair, blanket, snacks and beverages. In the event, a scheduled movie must be canceled, a notice will be posted on the Facebook page of the Edwardsville Parks and Recreation Department. Enjoy Jurassic Park in July, Wild Robot in August and Wicked: For Good in September. City Park bandstand, 101 South Buchanan Street. 8:30 - 10:30 p.m. Admission is free. Visit [facebook.com/EdwardsvilleParksAndRec](http://facebook.com/EdwardsvilleParksAndRec).

**September 19** WINE ON THE LAWN, Altamont. Join us for a day of fun and music at the historic Dr. Charles M. Wright House. There will be plenty of beer and wine on hand for you to enjoy. Two musical acts include Dakota Danielle 2:30-5:30 p.m.; followed by Drew Sheafor & Audrey Simes 6 - 9 p.m. Bring your lawn chairs, relax in the shaded areas of the Wright house's 5 acres. Food will be available and the house will be open for tours.

No outside alcohol allowed. All attendees will be asked for a \$5 donation. If a guest would like a Wright House glass, that is another \$5. 6 - 9 p.m. Dr. Charles M. Wright House, 3 West Jackson Avenue. Visit [wrightmansion.org](http://wrightmansion.org) or [facebook.com/Dr.WrightHouse/#](http://facebook.com/Dr.WrightHouse/#).

**September 19 & 20** FALL FESTIVAL, Carlinville. Tractor club tractor parade both days at 2 p.m. Museum featuring Macoupin County and Illinois history, print shop, country store, blacksmith shop, original one room schoolhouse and church. Live music both days. See demonstrations, antique tractors and vehicles, and a toy and craft show. 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. 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 [macoupin-countyhistoricalsociety.com](http://macoupin-countyhistoricalsociety.com).

**September 19 & 20; 26 & 27** 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](http://kinmundylogcabin-village.com).

**September 19-21** OKTOBERFEST, Belleville. Event featuring authentic German cuisine, authentic German brew and authentic German music. Three stages of live music Friday and Saturday. Enjoy the wiener dog race and costume contest, corn hole tournament, car show, washer tossing tournament, children's area and stein holding contest. Friday 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Saturday 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Visit [bellevilleoktoberfest.com](http://bellevilleoktoberfest.com).

**September 20** FALL CRAFT & VENDOR SHOW, Effingham. More than 80 craft and vendors to shop. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Thelma Keller

Convention Center, 1202 North Keller Drive. Email [baentertainment21@gmail.com](mailto:baentertainment21@gmail.com).

**September 20** THE GOLDEN YEARS ON ROUTE 66 SYMPHONY, Edwardsville. Join the Edwardsville Symphony in celebrating the centennial of Route 66 through a lifetime of music. This special series features performances representing the milestones of life, weaving together sound, story, and nostalgia along America's most iconic highway. Bring your lawn chairs. All music lovers are welcome. Pre-concert begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by the symphony at 7 p.m. 101 South Buchanan Street. 6:30 - 8 p.m. Admission is free. Visit [edwardsvillecommunitysymphony.com](http://edwardsvillecommunitysymphony.com).

**September 25 & 26** BALLOONS OVER MARINE FESTIVAL, Marine. The event will feature launches on Friday and Saturday evening, a sunrise launch on Saturday morning and a balloon twilight on Saturday evening. The event will also feature other activities, food, drinks, live music, a bounce house and more. The proceeds of the event will be used to help victims of human trafficking and other charities. Village Park, 155 North Duncan Street. For complete schedule or more information visit [bomarine.org](http://bomarine.org) or [facebook.com/hotairballoon-sovermarine](http://facebook.com/hotairballoon-sovermarine).

**September 25-27** 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. Visit [edwardsvilleartscenter.com](http://edwardsvilleartscenter.com).

**September 26** FALL FESTIVAL, Godfrey. The Great Godfrey Maze and all of its attractions will be open for business along with additional events and activities. 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Robert E Glazebrook Park, 1401 Stamper Lane Visit [godfreyil.org](http://godfreyil.org) or call 618-466-1483.

**September 26** MOVIES IN THE PARK, Maryville. Bring your lawn chairs for a free movie in the park. The August movie will be "Zootopia 2" and "Dogman" will be shown in September. 7 - 9 p.m. Firemen's Park, 300 North Donk Avenue. Visit [maryville.il.us/98/parks-recreation](http://maryville.il.us/98/parks-recreation), email [parksandrec@maryville-il.us](mailto:parksandrec@maryville-il.us) or message us (618) 223-8965.

**September 26** VOICES OF OUR PAST, Edwardsville. Guided by knowledgeable docents, guests will enjoy a walking tour through the historic Woodlawn cemetery where talented local reenactors bring the past to life through engaging graveside performances. Tours at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Adults \$20; Children 12 years of age and younger \$10. Advanced tickets are encouraged. Tickets will also be available at the event (cash only, while available). All proceeds benefit the ongoing preservation, restoration, and care of the cemetery. Woodlawn Cemetery, 1400 Saint Louis Street. For tickets, visit [facebook.com/events/2768217303714856](http://facebook.com/events/2768217303714856) or [woodlawnedwardsville.org](http://woodlawnedwardsville.org).

**October 1-31** MOURNING COL. STEPHENSON, Edwardsville. Explore the solemn traditions and customs of early 19th-century grief at the historic 1820 Col. Benjamin Stephenson House. This immersive exhibit commemorates Colonel Stephenson's passing on October 10, 1822, with select rooms throughout the house staged to reflect the realities of illness, death, and grief in a frontier home. Tours are available Thursday-Saturday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.; Sunday noon - 3 p.m.; tours are not conducted after 2 p.m. Colonel Benjamin Stephenson House, 409 S. Buchanan Street. Visit [stephensonhouse.org](http://stephensonhouse.org).



## Voices for Cooperative Power

### *United for Stronger Communities*

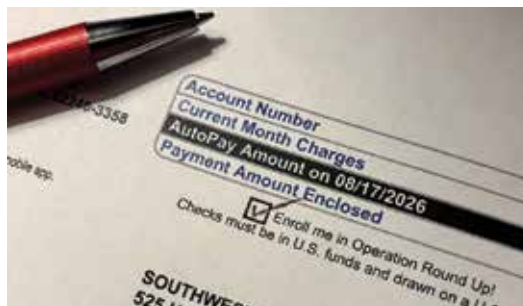
You have the power to protect affordable, reliable electricity. Take a stand on issues that impact your cooperative and community.



[aiec.coop/vcp](http://aiec.coop/vcp)

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

Don't have the time to call us and opt in to Operation Round Up? We get it. That's why we've made it as easy as checking a box on your bill.



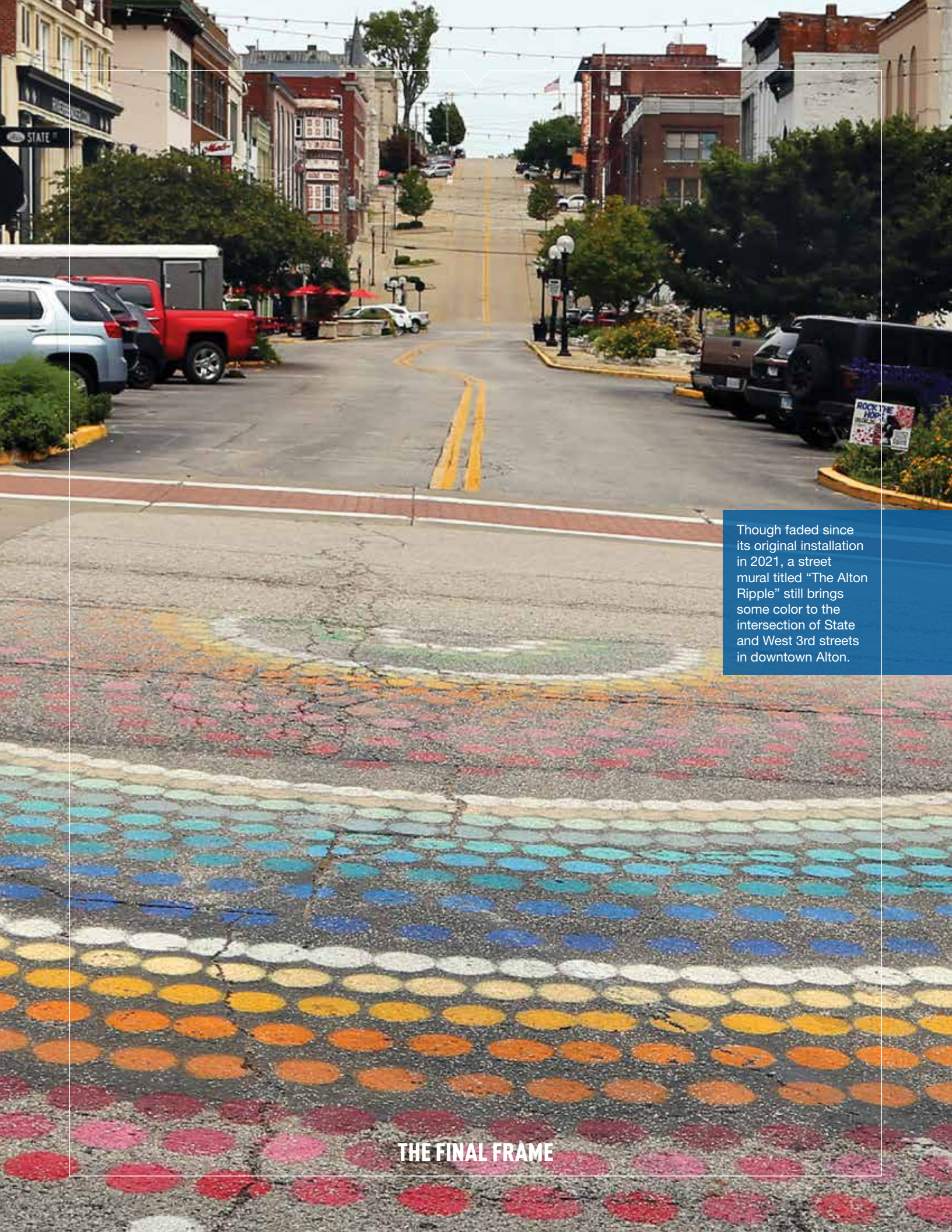
Small change.  
**Big difference.**

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

ORU grants support various community projects across the co-op's service territory, including local school programs, STEM projects, food pantries, senior centers and fire departments.



[sweci.com/operation-round](http://sweci.com/operation-round)



Though faded since its original installation in 2021, a street mural titled “The Alton Ripple” still brings some color to the intersection of State and West 3rd streets in downtown Alton.

**THE FINAL FRAME**

