

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2019 • VOLUME 71 • ISSUE 2

## Member Survey

CO-OP ASKS MEMBERS WHAT MATTERS MOST

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE APPROACHES

DISCOVER ENERGY SAVING TECH

## Vandalia Substation

NEW FAYETTE COUNTY FACILITY TAKES SHAPE



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Southwestern's new Vandalia Substation is taking shape—and it looks like this.

## CO-OP REMINDERS

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Southwestern Scholarship application deadline.

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Payment processing systems will be unavailable from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments Sunday at 4:01 a.m.

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### 20 Who-What-Where?

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On Feb. 15-18, people around the world will venture into woodlands and wetlands to take part in the Great Backyard Bird Count—but you can participate without leaving home. This month's recipes will bring the birds to *you*. In this edition of the Co-op Kitchen, we're switching things up a bit. The recipes aren't for your table—they're for your feeder!

### 24 Current Events

Have coffee and cookies with eagles in Dow, enjoy tea for two in Godfrey, test your trivia knowledge in Highland, Ramsey and Troy, warm up to a quilt show in Greenville, and make wishes come true with Make-A-Wish Illinois in O'Fallon.

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Pole Position.

**On Account:** We've hidden a member-account number in this issue (mailing label excluded). If the account number belongs to you, contact us within 30 days and we'll take \$25 off your electric bill. Good luck!



## On the Cover

Crews position an A-frame structure at Southwestern's new Vandalia Substation. Located north of Vandalia, the substation is scheduled to be energized this spring. See our story on page 6.

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# Field Work

In December we shared a photo of your directors touring an acre of raw earth in Fayette County—future home to Vandalia Substation. The ground was bare, but for a few bits of foundation. Drive past the same site today and you'll see the substation's steel skeleton cutting sharp lines against the winter horizon, and a towering transmission pole immediately outside the sub, rising higher still.

Vandalia Substation is a winter crop. The seeds for the structure were sown in fall. The project will grow quietly over the coming weeks, and become energized in spring. The sub is one of a dozen significant system improvements made by your cooperative in recent years. Infrastructure upgrades and right of way maintenance are priorities of your board and management team. As Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams pointed out during last year's annual meeting, line clearance and pole replacements, underground cable installation, substation upgrades, technology integration, right of way clearance—you can sum up the work in a single word: maintenance.

And as Williams said in his 2018 CEO's report, there's no better investment we can make than maintaining the system you own.

In recent weeks, the results of Southwestern's maintenance work have been evident. We've repeatedly seen our area raked by rain and snow and gusting winds, yet our outages have been limited. In large part that's due to the diligence of the co-op's line and forestry crews who maintain the 3,500 miles of power line you own.

Winter, fall, summer, spring, our crews are in the field clearing rights of way, driving steel in the ground, planting new poles, lifting lines in the air, working to ensure our system delivers safe, reliable power.

They're performing maintenance.

It's one form of field work that's never out of season.

For more on the Vandalia Substation and other field work, see page 6.

Joe Richardson, editor  
[joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com)



# FINAL REMINDER: SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 8



Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power for Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$245,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate. The tradition continues this year with Southwestern's pledge to award \$10,000 in scholarship money to 10 students in spring 2019 for use in the fall 2019 semester.

The completed application and supplemental materials—including a cover letter, academic transcripts, attendance records and financial information—must be delivered to Southwestern Electric's headquarters (525 U.S. Route 40 in Greenville), in a single envelope, by 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, February 8, 2019**.

For more information on the program, please contact Susan File at [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com) or (800) 637-8667.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 1) The applicant (or the applicant's parent/legal guardian) must be an active member of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. Southwestern Electric board members, employees, and their immediate families, are not eligible.
- 2) The applicant must meet all academic requirements for admission to an accredited university, college, or technical school, and be admitted to that institution as a full-time student in the fall of 2019.
- 3) The entire application must be completed in full, and received with the appropriate supplementary materials, in advance of the application deadline, February 8, 2019.

**Applications may be downloaded from Southwestern's website at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com) or picked up from the co-op's office at 525 US Route 40 in Greenville. You may also request an application by calling Debbie Whicker at (800) 637-8667.**

# Survey Says

## Co-op Asks Members to Assess Performance, Identify Priorities

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative is launching a comprehensive survey to identify and address the priorities, preferences and expectations of its members. The survey will touch on a wide range of topics, including reliability and outage response, co-op communications, crisis preparedness, Southwestern's commitment to renewable energy, initiatives to help members manage energy costs, and the co-op's member and community engagement activities.

The survey will be conducted in February and March.

"Our objective is to evaluate our performance and clearly define our membership's needs and expectations," said Bobby Williams, CEO of Southwestern Electric. "We want to know what we're doing well and where we can improve. This isn't a marketing initiative," Williams said. "We aren't selling anything. We want to identify the highest priorities of our membership, so we can effectively apply our resources to meet those needs."

Southwestern is working with Touchstone Energy and TSE Services to administer the survey. Over the last 15 years, Touchstone has assisted hundreds of electric co-ops with collection and interpretation of member feedback. In total, Touchstone's research team has interviewed more than 100,000 electric cooperative members.

"We're a Touchstone Energy cooperative," noted Joe Richardson, editor of *The Southwestern*. "Each year, Touchstone hosts national seminars and workshops on best practices. They're often led by co-ops who've interviewed their members, then integrated what they've learned into their operations, their programs and their approach to doing business."

Richardson said Southwestern's directors and employees frequently communicate with co-op members, but the conversations are often situational. "They're in response to our power restoration efforts after a storm, or a billing issue, or structural improvements we've made. Those discussions are important. But they don't necessarily reflect the overall thoughts and feelings of the thousands of members we don't hear from over the course of a year," he said. "Before we commit resources to programs or projects, we want data to guide those decisions. This study will give us that."

Richardson said Southwestern was extremely selective about partnering with an organization to conduct the survey. "We don't have the office resources to handle a survey this substantial and give every response the attention it deserves. So we looked to Touchstone Energy for help. Touchstone is a co-op created by and for electric cooperatives. So when we say

we're very protective of our relationship with the members we serve, that we've worked years, and in some cases, decades, to earn the confidence and trust of our communities, they understand that. They know that as they reach out to our membership on our behalf, they're acting as our voice."

### Phone And Email Outreach

In order to have meaning, the survey needs to reflect the thoughts and opinions of a true cross section of Southwestern's entire membership. Valid research is vital, Richardson said. "We'll use this information to guide decisions regarding how we reach our members, and which programs and services we should pursue. We'll be reaching out to all age groups and areas."

While some members spend hours on their tablet, PC or smart phone, others prefer to communicate almost exclusively by a traditional telephone. "So we're reaching out through phone interviews and by email invitations," Richardson said.

Online surveys are convenient and economical, he noted. "Members can fill out an online survey at a time that's good for them, using the device they have handy.

"But the opinions of members who don't have internet access, or who find it challenging to respond to an electronic survey, are just as important to us," Richardson said. "So phone outreach is a key part of our effort."

### Telephone Surveys

Most phone interviews will be held weeknights between 5:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. Weekend calling will be limited to Saturday only; the study doesn't involve calls on Sundays or holidays. "If you get a call related to the survey, the words "Electric Coop" will probably show up on your Caller ID, and the calls will come from area code 336," Richardson said.

### Online Surveys

Online surveys will be offered by email invitation. The email will include a link to the survey and a unique ID code. "When you click the link, it will ask you to type in the ID number. You'll see Southwestern's logo on both the email invitation and the survey. You'll also see my name and our office number—(800) 637-8667—on the email invitation. You can reach out to me with any questions or concerns," Richardson said.

Not all cooperative members will receive a call or email. Rather, a representative cross section from throughout Southwestern's service area will be surveyed. "The survey is comprehensive. It touches on many aspects of our operation and member expectations," Richardson noted. "It should take no more than 12 minutes to complete. We realize that's a significant investment of your time, but ultimately, your responses will help us plan our priorities and improve the service we provide to you, and your friends and family. By participating, you're equipping us to invest resources in the programs, projects and technology that most effectively meet your needs," he said. "We deeply appreciate your time and consideration."

*Questions or comments regarding the survey may be directed to Joe Richardson, editor of The Southwestern, at [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com).*

# Field Work

## *Vandalia Substation Taking Shape*

Vandalia Substation's A-frame steel superstructure rises above the surrounding farmland. Now under construction, the new facility will be energized this spring.

Not all fields lie fallow in winter. On a quiet acre north of Vandalia, in the hard, dark days preceding spring, your cooperative is growing a substation. Despite the season's rain and snow, Southwestern's new Vandalia Substation is rising from the landscape, its steel infrastructure visible now from Interstate 70.

Sited north of Vandalia's growing commercial district at the I-70 interchange, Vandalia Substation is a critical node—a locus of power and technology—in Southwestern's Eastern District. The new facility will make local businesses and residential members less vulnerable to lightning and other environmental intrusions that affect reliability. When the substation is energized this spring, it will take on about half the power demands currently met by Southwestern's Shafter Substation. Located several miles northwest of the city, Shafter Sub currently provides power to 1,100 members in Fayette County. By reducing daily power demands on Shafter, Vandalia Substation will extend the service life of its sister facility.

"Presently, Shafter Substation doesn't synchronize with adjacent substations," noted Chris Botulinski, Southwestern's vice president of engineering. "When the substation is taken offline for maintenance, operations crews are required to interrupt power to safely switch between substation sources."

That's about to change.

*Continued on next page >*



Construction crews raise the substation's superstructure into position. Above: Chris Botulinski, vice president of engineering for Southwestern Electric, studies substation schematics in preparation for a meeting with the co-op's engineering and operations crews.



➤ Continued from page 7

“Vandalia Substation will allow us to perform maintenance on Shafter Substation without having to schedule outages. It provides us with operational flexibility,” Botulinski said. “During inclement weather or other extreme events that can take one of the substations offline, we will have the infrastructure in place to rapidly respond and restore power with minimal effort.”

Vandalia Substation was designed and developed to meet the unique power needs of a rural, growing area adjacent to the interstate. “In anticipation of long-term load growth, and due to a significant load concentration on the southeast side of I-70 near Walmart, we conceptualized a new substation closer to the load concentration,” said Botulinski.

The substation site plan was developed to offer crews safe and easy access for routine maintenance. Vandalia Sub itself

was designed to accommodate double the capacity of Shafter Substation.

“As new commercial development comes to the area, those businesses will find we already have most of the infrastructure they need in position, and we’re ready to meet their demands,” Botulinski explained. “We will be able to support more load from the Walmart area, as well as other significant residential and commercial developments.”

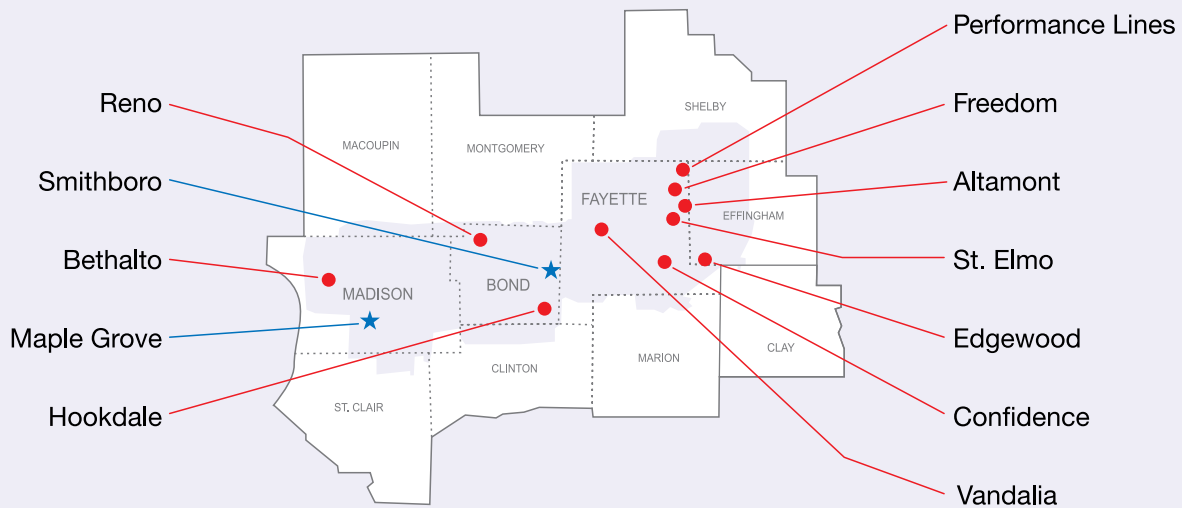
In addition to groundwork and frame construction, the project involved installation of an 85-foot-tall, six-ton laminate wood transmission pole. Fashioned from Southern Yellow Pine, the pole’s composition, shape and taper equip it to accommodate the pull of heavy conductors that link the substation’s A-frame steel structure to Southwestern’s system outside the substation fence.

Continued on page 26 ➤



Construction crews bolt Vandalia Substation’s superstructure in place.

## MAPPING OUT THE MAINTENANCE



● RECENT INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS ★ UPCOMING CONSTRUCTION

**Hookdale Substation Expansion.** The Hookdale expansion enables Southwestern to monitor and regulate voltage more precisely. It also equipped Hookdale with recloser protection—the system can clear temporary faults without creating an outage. The project included construction of 3.5 miles of overhead power line from the substation to Highway 127. The project improved reliability and will reduce outage times for up to 2,250 people.

**Bethalto Substation Work and Madison County Improvements.** Crews upgraded key components of the substation and built an intertie, linking the Bethalto, Holiday Shores West, Holiday Shores East and Worden Substations. All four substations can now be energized through an alternate transmission line if their primary line fails. The project offers the co-op more versatility for restoring power, positioning Southwestern to reduce outage times for 4,400 members.

**Communications Tower Replacement.** Southwestern Electric replaced its St. Elmo communications tower with a modern structure that’s simpler and safer to maintain. The tower supports a radio antenna array that equips Fayette County line crews to communicate with each other as well as Southwestern’s central office. Communications towers in St. Elmo, Greenville and Maryville provide vital, always-on links between the co-op’s linemen and dispatchers.





Dean Schnurbusch, senior staking engineer, surveys rights of way at the substation site.

*“The pieces we’re adding to our system ensure reliability, reduce the duration of outages, and position us to meet the energy needs of our growing membership today and in the future.”*

Chris Botulinski, Vice President of Engineering

#### **Edgewood Substation Improvements.**

Crews replaced the substation’s aging transformer with a newer unit, equipped Edgewood with new switches, fuses, oil circuit recloser units, new wiring, and a voltage regulator. The improvements will reduce outage times for more than 1,725 members.

#### **Confidence Substation Upgrades.**

Confidence Substation was outfitted with Intelligent Electronic Devices (IEDs), new regulators, and new oil circuit reclosers. IEDs enable the substation to notify Southwestern personnel when a breaker operates. The substation’s new smart switches and line reclosers help the co-op’s engineering and operations teams isolate outages and reroute power, reducing outage times. The sub’s new predictive modeling and graphical interfaces provide data to inform decisions regarding maintenance and construction investments. The work will reduce outage times for up to 1,900 members.

#### **Altamont Substation Expansion and Regional Improvements.**

Crews expanded the site’s footprint, installed an additional substation transformer, and upgraded both the transmission line that carries power into the substation and the feeders that carry power out of it. The substation’s new transformer can accommodate the

energy needs of every member served by Altamont Sub, should crews need to deenergize the existing transformer for maintenance. As part of the project, crews also balanced demands on circuits in Effingham and Fayette counties, improving overall operating efficiency. The project was initiated to improve regional reliability and meet the growing power requirements of St. Elmo’s Pinnacle Foods, a significant contributor to the area economy. The upgrades will improve service for up to 2,500 members.

**Reno Substation Upgrade.** Crews wired state-of-the-art circuit-protection technology into Reno Substation and replaced aging industrial-grade breakers with a recloser system. The new system shields vital substation components from transient power events and helps linemen isolate system issues quickly and efficiently. Overall, the improvements benefit 1,220 members.

**High Performance Power Lines.** Southwestern is field testing 17,000 feet of new, steel-reinforced aluminum conductor west of Beecher City. Covered in a non-toxic, environmentally stable film, the line is designed to move power more efficiently than traditional conductors, and discourage ice formation, potentially saving members money and reducing winter outages.

**Freedom Power Station Upgrades.** The team at Freedom Power Station (Southwestern’s natural gas-fired peaking unit) implemented the facility’s first system-wide overhaul since its construction in 1999. The work ensures Freedom can run at a moment’s notice. Freedom Power Station’s reliability and performance have saved the co-op millions of dollars in fees associated with moving power across the grid.

**Maple Grove Substation.** Southwestern has purchased ground to build a new substation near the interchange at I-270 and I-55/70. Scheduled for construction in 2020, Maple Grove Substation will provide power to thousands of members in the I-55 corridor from Troy to Edwardsville. The new substation will allow the co-op to reroute power and restore service quickly during transmission line outages or damage from severe storms.

**Smithboro Substation.** Now in the planning phase, Southwestern’s new Smithboro Sub will be larger than the existing substation, accommodate member growth, and enable line crews to reduce outage times during significant weather events.

**On Account:** If your account number is 38506001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

# Swipe & Type

Report your outage in seconds with the SWEC IL app

Use your smartphone or tablet to report an outage with the SWEC IL app. SWEC IL is available for both Apple® and Android™ devices. It's a free download from the App Store® and on Google Play™. You can add SWEC IL to your smartphone or tablet as you would any other app.



# 1

## Download the app

Download the app free on Google Play™ or from the App Store®. Enter your account number and password.

### Don't have a password?

Create one using the My Account tab at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com) or call us at (800) 637-8667.

## More Than One Account?

If you have more than one account, the app will present each of your accounts on the Account List screen. When you need to report an outage, swipe left across the account that's without power. If more than one account is affected, repeat the process for each account.



2

## Swipe

Swipe your account info

Swiping left across your account information will reveal three icons.



3

## Tap

Tap the center icon

Tapping the center icon (the lightning bolt in a triangle) will take you to the outage reporting screen.



4

## Type

Tap *Report an Outage*

Make sure the *Confirm Power Out* slider is activated. This is essential—it's how the app identifies your message as an outage report. Then tap *Report an Outage*. And that's it. The app will notify us that your account is without power.

### Only Tap *Report an Outage* When You're Ready to Report

When you tap *Report an Outage*, your notification instantly appears in our dispatch center. There's no prompt asking you to confirm your information, and no option to recall the message once you've sent it. The app makes outage reporting fast and easy—which is exactly what you're after when the lights are out.

If you'd like our automated system to call you when power is restored, enter your phone number and activate the *Request for Callback* slider. You can send comments by typing them in the *Comments* area. You'll want to take care of those items before you hit the *Report an Outage* button. After you've successfully registered your outage, the app will indicate your account is without power.

# MEMBERS IN FOCUS



"I thought you might like this picture I took of my son and his pawpaw. He is definitely a future farmer in training," wrote Brittney Royse of Altamont. Two-year-old Westen Royse is the son of Brittney and her husband, Tyler. Westen's pawpaw is Mike Kuhns of Effingham. Brittney shot the photo at Westen's aunt and uncle's home in Dieterich.



Vickie Zanetti sent this scene from Alhambra—a "cold and crisp winter day looking over our home and farm fields around us... with the sun setting," she writes.



Photos allow us to capture and recall a moment. In pictures, we relive a laugh, a smile, a winter snow or summer sun.

Members In Focus is your invitation to share those saved moments with members of Southwestern Electric.

In these pages, you can open our eyes to the people and places that mean the most to you. This is your opportunity to introduce *Southwestern* readers to everything that makes your corner of the world an exceptional place to live, work and play.

Send us your shots of life in Southwestern Illinois. We'll publish some of our favorite photos from time to time in our Members In Focus section. Your subject needn't be on Southwestern's lines. If you've taken a great photo, and you shot it on the Highland town square instead of the Brownstown back forty, send it. We'd love to see it.

## Submission Guidelines

Please include your name, address, phone number or e-mail address, and a brief description of the photo. We'd like to know when and where it was taken, what we're seeing, and the names of any people in your shot. Digital images must be taken in high-resolution JPG or TIF format (300 DPI or greater)—and make sure the date/time stamp is turned off before you shoot.

Digital images may be sent as e-mail attachments or on a CD. Prints are also welcome. Send photos by e-mail to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or by mail to *The Southwestern*, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. If you're sending prints, please make sure they're copies you don't mind parting with, as we won't be returning them. Southwestern Electric Cooperative interprets all submissions as unconditional permission to use the photos provided. We also reserve the right to not use photos. Finally, if you're submitting a shot, it needs to be *your* photo—shot by you. Questions? Contact Joe Richardson at [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or Mike Barns at [mike.barns@sweci.com](mailto:mike.barns@sweci.com), or call (800) 637-8667.



Pam Tompkins sent us this shot of her home in Smithboro, which she took on Sept. 22, the first day of fall.



Andrea Pohlmann of Worden captured this backyard moonrise in Holiday Shores.



Kathy Quandt made this photo of goldfinches having a late afternoon sunflower snack at her home in Farina, in July.



Debbie Carter of O'Fallon made this photo of her grandson, Jacob, skipping rocks at Rend Lake during a camping trip at the end July 2018.



# Smart Savings

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

## SMART DEVICES CAN IMPROVE COMFORT WHILE LOWERING YOUR ENERGY BILL

**T**here are many appliances and devices on the market today designed to help you save energy—and saving energy means saving money. Here are a few of our favorites.

### SMART THERMOSTAT

Smart thermostats perform many of the same functions as regular programmable thermostats, as they allow you to control the temperature in your home throughout the day using a schedule. But they also offer additional features, such as sensors and Wi-Fi connectivity, that allow you to adjust your home's environment remotely using your mobile or internet-connected device. This capability makes operation more convenient, offering more control of heating and cooling, and therefore more control of energy savings.

Some smart thermostats, such as the Nest Thermostat, can “learn” when the house is likely to be occupied and when it is likely to be empty, by using the location services on your mobile phone. This allows automatic pre-heating or pre-cooling, so the temperature is comfortable when you arrive. If your schedule or lifestyle change, the smart thermostat will gradually adjust to accommodate your new routine, maintaining energy savings and comfort.

Most of these smart thermostats also come with energy reports. The reports are free and easy to read, and depending on the model, can include an hour-by-hour breakdown of your home's thermostat data, inside temperature versus outside temperature by readings, humidity levels, etc.

While smart thermostats may be a wise investment for some homes, they won't work with all HVAC systems. For most smart thermostats to work, a strong Wi-Fi signal is necessary.

### SMART POWER STRIP

Traditional power strips are an affordable way to expand the number of electrical outlets in your home. The downside is that the convenience of the strip can encourage you to leave electronics plugged in all the time—and many devices continue to draw energy even when you aren't using them! DVD players, computers and TVs are all examples of products that may use significant energy in standby mode. This “phantom power” drain costs money and wastes energy.

Smart power strips work to reduce your energy usage by shutting down power to products that go into standby mode. For example, when a TV plugged into a basic smart power strip goes into standby mode, its power consumption drops. The circuitry within the strip detects the change and cuts the power to that outlet while maintaining power to other outlets on the strip.



Some smart power strips let you group items together, turning all of them on or off at the same time. Such a strip would be useful for devices that you can only use when the TV is on, like a DVD player or a gaming system.

Smart power strips come with a range of options, from basic to more high-tech—including surge protection and motion detection.

### SMART PLUG

Smart plugs are an easy and affordable way to turn ordinary appliances, lighting and other electronics into devices you can control from your smart phone.

Installation is simple. You plug the smart plug into a wall outlet or power strip. Then you plug the device of your choice into the smart plug. It's that easy. You won't gain or lose an outlet—you're making an existing outlet smart by connecting it to your home Wi-Fi network.

You'll need to install an app on your phone that's compatible with the smart plug of your choosing. From the app you will be able to control the power to the plug and schedule on and off times. Additionally, some apps support energy monitoring.

Installation is the same for all smart plugs; the variation comes with the smart phone and app you will be using. There are many models available. Compare cost and features to determine which will best fit your needs.

*For more energy-saving tips, contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).*

# Heating Bill Payment Assistance

## Available to Low-Income Families

The State of Illinois offers assistance to low-income families who struggle to pay their energy bills. Applications for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) are accepted on a first-come first-served basis until funds are exhausted.

Please review the income guidelines listed below to see if you qualify. The amount of the payment is determined by income, household size, fuel type, geographic location, and the amount of funding available.

Use the listing below to find the agency that serves the county you live in, then contact the agency and tell them you'd like to apply for assistance through LIHEAP. The customer service representative who takes your application will explain the requirements, the type of assistance available, and your rights under the program.

### When you apply for assistance, please bring the following items:

- Proof of gross income from all household members for the 30-day period prior to application date.
- A copy of your current heat and electric bills issued within the last 30 days (if energy paid for directly).
- A copy of your rental agreement (if your heating costs are included in the rent) showing the monthly rental amount, landlord's contact information, and proof that utilities are included in the rent.
- Proof of Social Security numbers for all household members.
- Proof that the household receives TANF or other benefits—such as Medical Eligibility or SNAP—if you are receiving assistance from the Illinois Department of Human Services.

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

If your application is accepted, the local agency will make the appropriate payment to your energy provider(s) on your behalf, or in some cases, directly to you. All client and vendor payments will be made by the local agency within 15 days of the application's approval. Electric cooperative members, if approved, will receive assistance in the form of a one-time payment.

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

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

County	Community Action Agency	Phone Number
Bond	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	(618) 664-3309
Clay	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(618) 662-4024
Clinton	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	(618) 526-7123
Effingham	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(217) 347-7514
Fayette	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(618) 283-2631
Macoupin	Illinois Valley Economic Development Corp.	(217) 839-4431
Madison	Madison County Community Development	(618) 296-6485
Marion	BCMW Community Services, Inc.	(618) 532-7388
Montgomery	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(217) 532-5971
Shelby	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(217) 774-4541
St. Clair	St. Clair Community Action Agency	(618) 277-6790



For more information on this program, visit [IllinoisLIHEAP.com](http://IllinoisLIHEAP.com) or call the toll-free hotline, **(877) 411-WARM.**

### Income Guidelines

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level, as shown in the chart, you may be eligible to receive assistance.

Family Size	30-Day Income
1	\$1,518
2	\$2,058
3	\$2,598
4	\$3,138
5	\$3,678
6	\$4,218
<b>Add \$50 for each additional person</b>	



# POWER PLANNING



## **BEWARE OF DOWNED LINES**

After a storm, be alert for downed power lines. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they're energized. Warn others to stay away and report the location to Southwestern Electric immediately.

## **REACHING OUT**

The ability to communicate during an outage is vital. A traditional corded phone will usually operate during an outage. A cordless phone with a base which relies on power usually won't. Keep your cellular phone fully charged and handy when forecasts suggest a storm is likely. If you don't own a mobile phone, consider buying one with an economy plan to use in emergencies.

Severe storms can cause extended outages in any season. Create a backup power plan now to ensure your family's comfort and safety year-round.

**P**ower interruptions are usually measured in minutes or hours. But when a storm damages infrastructure system-wide, an outage can last for days. No one can predict when the next powerful storm will strike. Forming a backup power plan today will help you weather an extended outage safely.

Your plan can be as simple as making arrangements to stay with a friend or family member (who lives on a different circuit) during an outage.

If friends and family aren't nearby, look into purchasing a standby generator. Investing in a standby generator is the most reliable way to ensure you always have electricity. In this month's Health & Safety section, we've offered several items you'll want to consider as you develop your backup power plan.



## WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

Check in with neighbors to see if you're the only home without service. If you are, check your electrical box for tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.

If you can't source your outage to your electrical box or your neighbors are also without power, report your outage using the SWEC IL app (see page 11), or call us at (800) 637-8667. The line is staffed 24 hours per day. Your call will be answered by a Southwestern Electric employee or a representative of the co-op's emergency response service. Be prepared to give the operator your name, address, telephone number and account number.

Don't rely on e-mail to contact the cooperative during an outage or other emergency. While our phones are constantly monitored, our e-mail isn't.

During an outage, it's a good idea to unplug or switch off lights and electric appliances, leaving on a light or two so you'll know when power is restored. Doing so will help you avoid overloading a circuit when the electricity comes back on. After your power is restored, turn on appliances and electrical devices one at a time.

**Members who depend on electricity for medical reasons should develop a backup power plan now.**



## EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Electric pumps mounted to wells won't function without electricity. If you depend on a well for water, store plenty of extra water in case of a power outage. Water is a key ingredient of your emergency supply kit.

If you already have an emergency supply kit, take a few minutes now to make sure it's stocked and your supplies are fresh. If you don't have a kit, spend some time assembling one this week. Your kit should include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day).
- High-calorie, non-perishable food like dried fruit or energy bars.
- A blanket or sleeping bag.
- A change of clothing and footwear per family member.
- A first aid kit, including prescription medicines.
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio and portable radio, flashlight, and extra batteries.
- An extra car key and a credit card or cash.
- Any special items needed by an infant, elderly, or disabled family member.
- Telephone numbers for medical emergencies, law enforcement, family members, and friends who may be able to offer assistance.
- Your Southwestern Electric account number and the co-op's phone number: (800) 637-8667.



**(800) 637-8667**



## Out & About



Tales of lives entwined with the river greet visitors to the National Great Rivers Museum at East Alton. Below: A visitor learns how Horseshoe Lake was formed as she explores a map illustrating the confluence of the Illinois, Missouri and Mississippi Rivers. Opposite page: Artifacts and interactive exhibits immerse museumgoers in river habit. Backdrop: A timeline spanning centuries walks visitors through art, commerce, culture and industry inspired by the Mississippi.

# A River Runs Through It

## GREAT RIVERS MUSEUM TELLS A MIGHTY, MUDDY GOOD TALE

Where better to see the story of the mighty Mississippi unfold than on its banks? Perched on the Mississippi River in East Alton, south of the Clark Bridge and adjacent to Melvin Price Locks and Dam, you'll find the National Great Rivers Museum.

Operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the 12,000-square-foot museum offers state-of-the-art exhibits, interactive displays, impressively illustrated wall-length timelines, and river-related models and artifacts. You'll also encounter a few river residents—bluegill, gar and turtles—who've moved indoors for educational purposes.

The museum's designers have done a masterful job of providing immersive experiences tailored to various age groups and interests. The museum houses exhibits addressing geology, history, ecology, art, literature, culture and commerce.

For younger visitors, there are craft pages to color, buttons to push, levers to pull, and interactive displays with sound.

Independently, each station is a chapter in the story of the river, and engaging on its own. When taken together, the exhibits tell a rich and multilayered tale about a force of nature that shaped American life across the centuries, just as it does today.





1990  
HEAVY FLOOD  
FLOOD AND DAM  
PAUL ROYALSON  
DAVIDSON  
AND  
AND  
AND

1973  
CLARK  
MAYNE  
AND  
AND

1994  
FLOoding  
ILLINOIS  
AND  
AND

1997  
MAJOR TRAIN  
NETWORK  
WILKINSON  
AND

1940  
KNOX FORT  
CAMPBELL  
Upper Mississippi  
River  
AND

1936  
FLOOD  
CONTROL ACT  
U.S. Army Corps  
of Engineers becomes  
responsible for flood control  
AND

1930  
RIVERS AND  
HARBORS ACT  
Congress authorized  
and  
AND

1926-1928  
FLOOD  
CONTROL ACT  
Federal funds impure  
national flood  
control laws  
AND

1924  
UPPER MISSISSIPPI RIVER  
NATIONAL WILDLIFE  
AND FISH REFUGE  
New 203-mile long refuge  
AND

### Mississippi as Muse

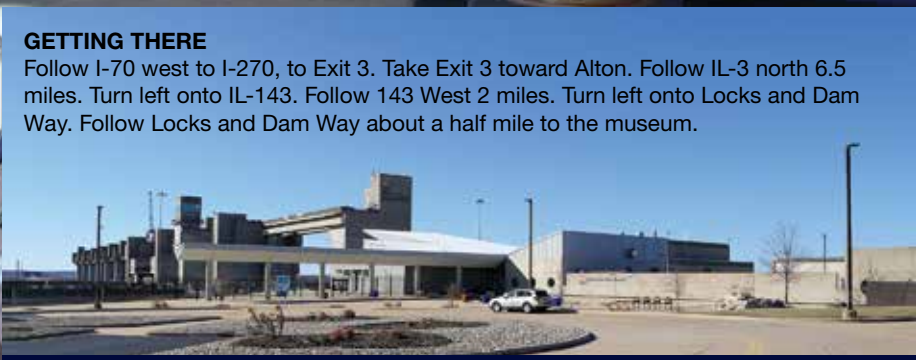
Words: "See You When You..."

Pictures

Music

Adventure!

A woman is seen from the back, looking at the exhibit.



**GETTING THERE**

Follow I-70 west to I-270, to Exit 3. Take Exit 3 toward Alton. Follow IL-3 north 6.5 miles. Turn left onto IL-143. Follow 143 West 2 miles. Turn left onto Locks and Dam Way. Follow Locks and Dam Way about a half mile to the museum.

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO**

The museum is open daily, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. The museum staff offers lock tours each day at 10 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. If high winds or poor weather is in the forecast, call ahead to confirm tours are being offered. Museum admission and lock tours are free. The National Great Rivers Museum is located at 2 Lock and Dam Way, East Alton, IL 62024. For more information, call (877) 462-6979 or go to <https://www.mtrf.org>.

# WHO



# WHAT



# WHERE



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

One of the brilliant aspects of living in an area with a rich agricultural history: the relics. You don't have to venture far to find ingenious machines engineered to make farming more efficient, or less labor intensive.

Another telling trait of agricultural communities—our vocation is our avocation. Every now and then the item on the puzzle page stumps you. But if the antique is ag-related—be it big, small, or just devilishly difficult to decipher due to obscurity—you'll send solutions.

Last month's puzzle was no exception. Many of you immediately recognized the piece of vintage farm machinery we challenged you to identify. We've printed some of your letters below. If the January puzzle left you guessing, give this month's challenge a go. We've offered a few clues to help you along.

Thanks to our Madison County member who was kind enough to let us photograph his antique machinery, and to everyone who sent a response. We appreciate your interest, and hope to hear from you again this month.

I'm contacting you about the *What Am I?* item in the January issue of *The Southwestern*. The item is a stalk chopper, an early form of a modern-day Bush Hog. Farmers used it after corn harvest to mulch up the stalks so they would break down faster over the winter and make spring tillage easier. I am too young to have actually operated one, but I saw one used at an antique farm show. Made for a long dusty day one row at a time.

—Mark Brase, Hamel

The tool in the January *Southwestern* I believe is a stalk cutter. I never used one, but I remember one in a shed when I was a kid about 75 years ago. My dad said it was used to chop up cornstalks, one row at a time. I'm not sure about the chain and hook in picture. The one I remember had a tongue and was pulled by a team of horses. I suppose it was sold for scrap iron.

—Burnell Augustin, Pocahontas

The *What Am I?* is a corn stalk cutter which was used to shred the stalks after corn was shucked. Many years ago, back in the good old days!

—Harry Bohle, Greenville



## WHO AM I?

On March 2, 1868, three of the original 10 faculty members of Illinois Industrial University stood outside the school's only building to welcome the very first student. That student was me.

Today, Illinois Industrial University is home to almost 50,000 students. You know it as the University of Illinois.

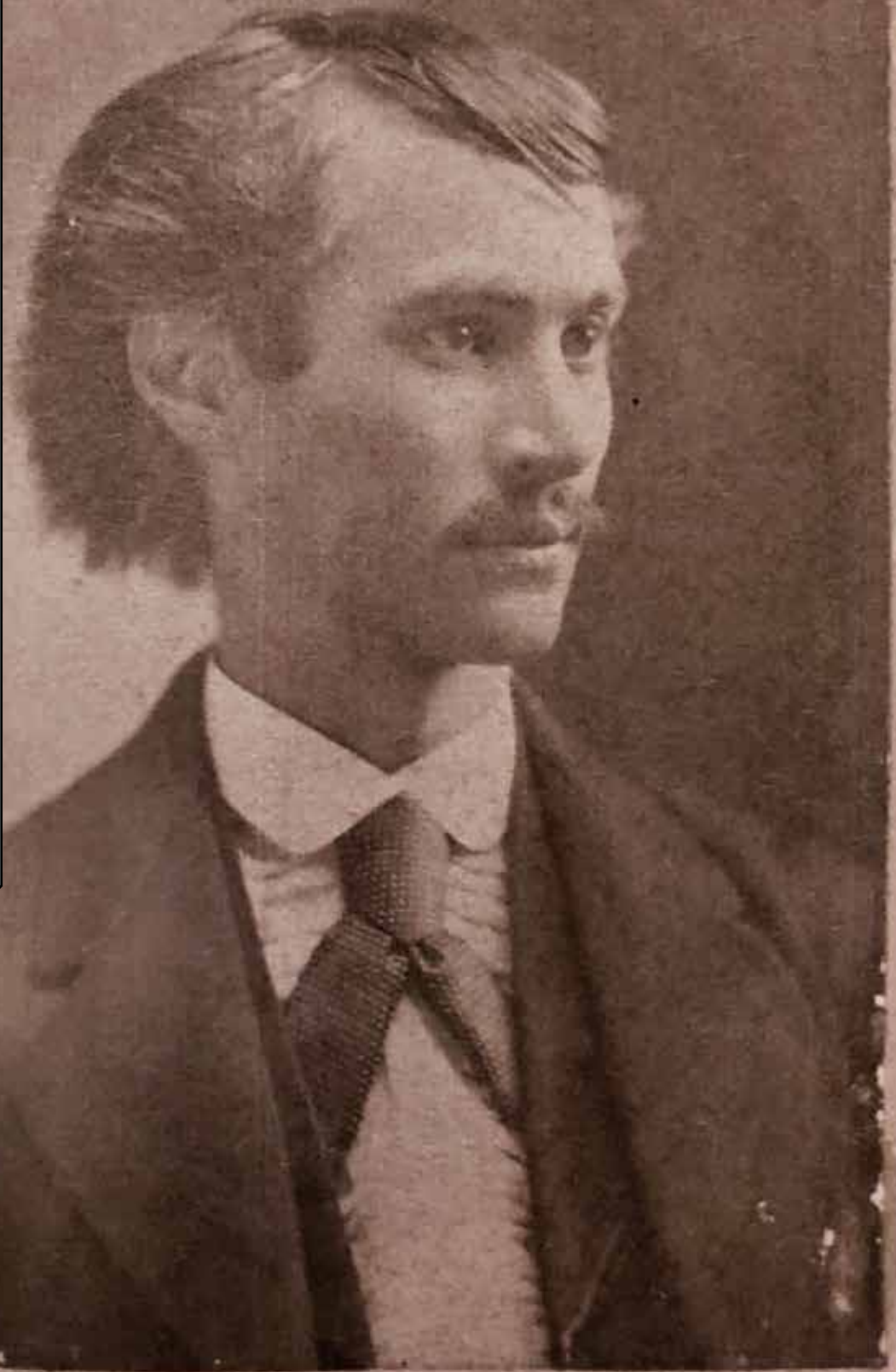
I studied literature and medicine and graduated with honors in 1872.

Although I made my living as a physician, I was widely known as the Poet of the Prairie.

I published several volumes of poetry. Among other topics, I wrote about the Illinois landscape and human suffering.

I was a close friend of Indiana poet James Whitcomb Riley. We exchanged many letters over the years.

I practiced medicine until my death in 1910.



# Feeding Your Feathered Friends



*This month's recipes aren't for your table. They're for your bird feeder!*

*Bring birds to your backyard for the Great Backyard Bird Count. See page 25.*

## WILD BIRD FOOD



### Ingredients

- 1 cup lard or shortening
- 1 cup crunchy peanut butter
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 cup quick cooking oats
- 2 cups cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup birdseed

### Directions

1. Put lard and peanut butter in a 13 x 9 inch pan and mix together.
2. Bake at 350° for 5 minutes or until mixture is melted.
3. Add sugar, oats, cornmeal, flour, and birdseed and mix well.
4. Pack mixture down.
4. Refrigerate, cut into blocks, and use as needed. Freeze unused blocks for later use.

## EASY SUET



### Ingredients

- 2 cups peanut butter
- 2 cups lard or shortening
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup quick oats
- 1/2 cup Spanish peanuts
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup chopped corn

### Directions

1. Melt peanut butter and lard in 13 x 9 inch pan in 350° oven for 5 minutes or until melted.
2. Remove from oven and mix in flour, oats, peanuts, raisins, sunflower seeds, and corn.
3. Refrigerate until hardened, cut into blocks, and place in suet feeder for your feathered friends. Freeze unused blocks to use later.

This month's recipes are courtesy of Edwardsville Garden Club's *Favorite Recipes*.

## PREMIUM WILD BIRD FOOD



### Ingredients

- 1 pound striped sunflower seeds still in hulls
- 1 pound black oil sunflower seeds still in hulls
- 1 pound raw peanuts
- 1 pound dark raisins
- 1 pound cracked corn

### Directions

1. Combine all ingredients.
2. Put in bird feeder or pack together and put in suet feeder.

## PSEUDO SUET



### Ingredients

- 2 cups peanuts shelled and unsalted
- 1/2 cup raisins
- 2-3 tablespoons cornmeal

### Directions

1. Process peanuts in food processor until they are the consistency of peanut butter.
2. Add raisins to peanut mix and process for another minute.
3. Add cornmeal and process again.
4. Press mixture into 13 x 9 inch pan, refrigerate until hardened, and cut into blocks. Freeze unused blocks to use later.

## SIMPLE WILD BIRD FOOD



### Ingredients

- 1/2 cup sunflower seeds
- 1/2 cup cracked corn
- 1/2 raisins
- 1/2 crunchy peanut butter

### Directions

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Press mixture into suet feeder or roll into balls and place on bird feeder.



# Current Events

**February 1 & 2, 4 & 5, 7 & 8, 14 & 15, 22, 25; March 4, 8** BALD EAGLE DAYS, Grafton. A site interpreter at Pere Marquette State Park will be presenting informative programs about bald eagles this winter. Visitors will learn to distinguish between immature and mature bald eagles, what eagles eat, why they spend winter months in the area and much more. There will be a short video presentation followed by an observational drive to view wintering bald eagles. Dress warmly and have a full tank of gas. Programs will begin at the park's visitor center. 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Reservations are required. Pere Marquette State Park Visitors Center, 13112 Visitor Center Lane. Call (618) 786-3323.

**February 2-23** LIVE BALD EAGLES AT TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER, Dow. See live bald eagles every Saturday and Sunday. Coffee, hot chocolate, and cookies will be available. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free-will donation. Treehouse Wildlife Center, 23956 Green Acres Road. Call (618) 466-2990 or visit [treehousewildlifecenter.com](http://treehousewildlifecenter.com).

**February 8-10** WOODWORKING SHOW, Collinsville. Show will feature woodworking presentations and tool vendors. Friday noon - 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is \$12 online; \$14 at the door; children under 15 years old are free with a paid adult. Active duty military, fire, and police with valid ID are free. Ticket good for all three days of the show. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. For more information, visit [thewoodworkingshows.com](http://thewoodworkingshows.com).

**February 8-10, 15-17** FIRST DATE, Breese. A theatrical presentation by Clinton County Showcase. All performances

begin at 8 p.m. except for the last Sunday showing, which is at 2 p.m. \$12 for adults; \$10 for students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification). Historic Avon Theatre, 535 North 2<sup>nd</sup> Street. For reservations, call (618) 526-2866 or visit [ccshowcase.com](http://ccshowcase.com).

**February 10** VALENTINE'S TEA FOR TWO FUNDRAISER, Godfrey. Join us for an afternoon of mini/tea sandwiches, desserts, song, and fellowship. Proceeds to benefit Great Rivers Choral Society. 1-3 p.m. Admission is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple. Evangelical United Church of Christ, Heggemeier Hall on Lower Level, 1212 Homer Adams Parkway. For tickets, visit [grcs-sing.org](http://grcs-sing.org).

**February 14** LIVE AT JACOBY: TIA MCGRAFF'S VALENTINE CONCERT, Alton. Bring your special someone and enjoy an intimate evening with Tia McGraff and Tommy Parham. Come early, walk through the gallery and enjoy a drink and a sweet treat. 8 - 10 p.m. doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20; children 12 years of age and younger are free. Seating will be cabaret-style. Cash bar open. Parking available on the gravel lot next door. Jacoby Arts Center, 627 East Broadway. For more information, call (618) 462-5222 or visit [jacobyartscenter.org](http://jacobyartscenter.org).

**February 16** LIONS TRIVIA NIGHT, Highland. Trivia, silent auction, and 50/50. Popcorn and soft drinks available or bring your own food. Doors open at 6 p.m.; trivia at 7 p.m. Admission is \$15 per person for tables of 8 - 10. Evangelical United Church of Christ, 2520 Poplar Street. Call (618) 779-3815 or (618) 402-7555. For more information, call (618) 772-9461.

**February 16 & 17** HOME, GARDEN AND BUSINESS EXPO, Centralia. Event will feature more than 70 vendors, live DIY demonstrations, door prizes, and concessions. Saturday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is \$2. Centralia Recreation Complex, 115 East 2nd Street. Call (618) 532-6789.

**February 16 & 17** MASTERS OF THE SKY, Alton. See eagles, falcons, owls and other birds of prey at this educational and informational program. Show times at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Adults \$5; children 12 years of age and younger \$3; children age 3 and younger are free. Only 10 tickets per person. National Great Rivers Museum, 2 Lock and Dam Way. Call (618) 462-6979 or visit [mtrf.org](http://mtrf.org).

**February 17** ALTON LITTLE THEATER: THE WELL HUNGARIANS, Alton. Enjoy one of the most entertaining bands in St. Louis. 2 - 4 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).

**February 23** TRIVIA NIGHT, Ramsey. Hosted by Ramsey Music Boosters. Family friendly, with lots of food, fun, and games. Teams are limited to 10 members and cost \$10 per player. The games are held in the multi-purpose room at the Ramsey Community Schools, 702 West Sixth Street. Starts at 6 p.m. For more information, call or text Leslie at (217) 820-1291 or email [ramseymusicboosters@gmail.com](mailto:ramseymusicboosters@gmail.com).

**February 22** "WE SHALL OVERCOME" - A CELEBRATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., Lebanon. Inspired by the words and actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this powerful, genre-defying show

## Call to Confirm

Listings are provided by event organizers or taken from community websites. We recommend calling to confirm dates, times and details before you make plans. All are subject to change.

## Submissions

To submit an event for consideration in our calendar, email your event information to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com), or mail your info to *The Southwestern*, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please include a contact number with your listing.

is filled with music, joy, and hope. It features repertoire from African-American music traditions that electrified generations of civil rights activists and defenders, interwoven with spoken words from Dr. King's recorded speeches. 7:30 p.m. Adult \$26; senior \$24; student/child \$10; McKendree University students free. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit [thehett.com](http://thehett.com).

**February 23; March 30; April 27** UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SHUTTLE TOUR, Alton. Alton's riverfront location along the Mighty Mississippi played a vital role in helping slaves make connections to the freedom of the northern U.S. Buried beneath the streets of Alton and Godfrey, remnants of this period in history still exist. Learn about local, Underground Railroad sites on a shuttle tour with J.E. Robinson Tours. The two-hour guided shuttle tours will stop at some of the sites that were part of the Underground Railroad system, including Rocky Fork Church and Enos Apartments. Morning tour 10 a.m. - noon; afternoon tour 1 - 3 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. For more informa-



tion, call the Great Rivers and Routes Visitors Bureau at (800) 258-6645.

**February 24 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: A FRENCH CONNECTION**, Godfrey. Concert featuring several French composers and works from "Carmen" by Bizet, "The Sea" by Debussy, and "Symphony No. 6 'Pathetique'" By Tchaikovsky. 3 - 5 p.m. Adults \$10, seniors 62 years of age and older \$5, children grades 12 and younger free, Lewis & Clark Community College faculty, staff, and students free with I.D. Alton Symphony Orchestra, Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. For more information or tickets, visit [altonsymphonyorchestra.org](http://altonsymphonyorchestra.org).

**February 24 POLKA DANCE**, Madison. The St. Louis Metro Polka Club monthly dance. The featured band is Larry Hallar's



**March 16 BOND COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY QUILT SHOW**, Greenville. Special entry theme is Celebrations. More than 100 quilts on display, vendors, door prizes, viewer's choice awards, raffle, and block contest. Quilt project/technique demonstrations at 11 a.m., noon, and 1 p.m. Antique quilt bed turning program sessions at 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. Featured quilters are Ginny Ennen, Georgianne Tompkins, and Janice Tompkins all of Pleasant Mound. Show hours are 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is \$3. Free Methodist Church, 1367 Illinois Route 140. For more information, call (618) 664-0575 or visit [bondcountyhistorical.org](http://bondcountyhistorical.org).

Two Star Final. 3 - 6:30 p.m. Polish Hall, 826 Greenwood Street. For more information, visit [folkfire.org/polka](http://folkfire.org/polka).

**March 2 TRIVIA NIGHT**, Troy. There will be prizes, a 50/50 raffle, and a head and tails game. Soda and popcorn will be provided and you may bring beverages/food of your choice. Doors open at 6:30 p.m.; trivia at 7 p.m. to benefit the Friends of Valley View Cemetery. \$20 per person. 10 people per table maximum. Only 15 tables available. Tri-Township Park Community Center, 410 Wickcliffe Street. For reservations, e-mail [friendsofvalleyviewcemetery@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofvalleyviewcemetery@gmail.com), message us on our Facebook page Friends of Valley View Cemetery, or call Jeanne (618) 980-9095.

**March 3 GREATER ALTON CONCERT ASSOCIATION: THE MALPASS BROTHERS**, Godfrey. Music steeped in the legacy of the Louvin Brothers, Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, Hank Williams, Sr., and others. Hear classic, real country, new Malpass tunes, and old-time gospels. This is authentic, down-home country. 3 - 5 p.m. Adult \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door; students with identification \$10. Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Call (618) 468-4222 or visit [greateraltonconcertassociation.org](http://greateraltonconcertassociation.org).

**March 6 THE EMPTY BOWL**, Collinsville. Have lunch and help the hungry. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. \$10 admission and all proceeds go to Collinsville Food Pantry. Tickets are available the day of the event or in advance at the administration office at Gateway Center, 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday - Friday. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. For more information, call Barb at (618) 910-1646.

**March 10 SAUSAGE & SAUERKRAUT DINNER**, Troy. Buffet includes grilled pork sausage, sauerkraut, green beans, mashed potatoes and gravy, applesauce, coffee, tea

and dessert. 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Adults, carryouts and curb service, \$10; children 5-10 years of age \$5; children 4 years of age and younger are free. Call (618) 667-6535 for curbside service. Friedens United Church of Christ, 207 East Center Street. For curbside service, call (618) 667-6535.

**March 23 LEGS FOR LIFE 5K**, Centralia. Sign up now to run or walk to benefit The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This USATF certified road course contains some short hills through a beautiful park. Awards given for each age division and overall. Tech shirts to all pre-registered participants. 8 - 10:30 a.m. \$20 until March 8; \$25 after March 8 and at the door. Foundation Park, 600 North Pleasant Avenue. Call Shannon at (618) 367-0003 or e-mail [legsforslife@gmail.com](mailto:legsforslife@gmail.com).

**March 30 MAKE-A-WISH CHICKEN & BEER DANCE**, Fairview Heights. Chicken, rolls, draft beer, soda, coffee and tea provided. Bring your own side dishes to share among your group (no alcohol can be brought in, a cash bar will be available). Dance and enjoy the live music, auctions, raffles, and 50/50 drawing. There will also be a *Wish Child* guest speaker who will talk about the impact the wish had upon him/her. Proceeds benefit Make-A-Wish® Illinois and provide magical wishes for children with life threatening medical conditions. Doors open at 5 p.m. Tickets are \$25 each or \$200 for a table of 10; \$30 per ticket the night of event. The event will be held in the Illinois Grand Ballroom at the Fountains Conference Center at Four Points by Sheraton, 319 Fountains Parkway, Fairview Heights. Tickets and sponsorships available at [chickenbeerdance.com](http://chickenbeerdance.com) or call Tom at (618) 406-4215 or Robin at (618) 406-4216. For more information email [cbdance@outlook.com](mailto:cbdance@outlook.com).

## 22nd Annual Great Backyard Bird Count February 15-18

For more information about the Great Backyard Bird Count, visit [birdcount.org](http://birdcount.org).

If you shoot photos while you're out and about, we'd love to see them.



You can email your shots to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com). Some of our favorites may appear in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.




Can't make it to a woodland or wetland for this year's count? Bring birds to your backyard with the feeder-friendly recipes in this month's Co-op Kitchen. See page 22.



➤ *Continued from page 9*

Vandalia Substation is the latest in a series of system-wide infrastructure improvements carried out by Southwestern's board of directors and management team in recent years.

"In the years to come, we'll continue to focus on system maintenance," said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. "Nothing provides a better return on our members' investment than taking care of the distribution system they own, so it performs safely and reliably, as it was designed to. Substation construction, transmission line upgrades, pole replacements—that's maintenance. The daily work we do doesn't make headlines, but it does ensure that our members have safe, reliable power," Williams said. "Meeting that need is what we're in business to do." 

Crews position a 12,000-pound laminate wood transmission pole outside Vandalia Substation. The pole is designed to withstand the forces of heavy conductors that link the sub to Southwestern's distribution system.

***"The daily work we do doesn't make headlines, but it does ensure that our members have safe, reliable power. Meeting that need is what we're in business to do."***

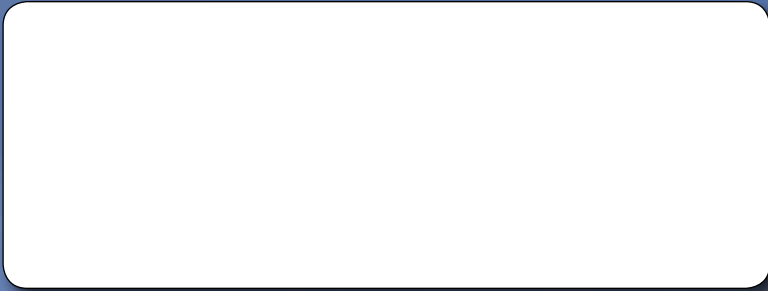
CEO Bobby Williams



Construction crews prepare to position a six-ton pole outside Vandalia Substation.



## THE FINAL FRAME



**Southwestern**  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

