

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2020 • VOLUME 72 • ISSUE 1

**EMPLOYEES
CONTRIBUTE TO
CARE PACKAGE
PROGRAM**

CEO COLUMN

**HARTLIEB
RECEIVES CCD
CERTIFICATION**

**THE HEART OF
HOMESERVE**

**A CELEBRATION
OF SERVICE**

**MANY
HAPPY
RETURNS**

**CO-OP RETIRES CAPITAL
CREDITS; \$511,000 TO
LONGTIME MEMBERS**

***Keep On
Truckin'***

**KIDS PACK THE PARK FOR SIXTH
ANNUAL EDWARDSVILLE EVENT**



Inside This Issue

04 Co-op Contributes to Care Package Program

When Military Moms of Bond County collected care packages for men and women serving far from home, Southwestern directors and employees were honored to contribute.

05 From the CEO

In a new monthly column, CEO Bobby Williams answers your co-op questions and offers insight into Southwestern and the energy industry.

06 Southwestern Retires \$511,000 In Capital Credits

More than 6,000 Southwestern members closed out the holidays with a bit of co-op good cheer—a check or bill credit equal to the capital credits they earned in 1988.

07 Director Receives NRECA Certification

A steadfast commitment to industry education and training earned Annette Hartlieb honors from the NRECA.

07 HomeServe Cares Offers Pro-bono Repairs

HomeServe Cares assists eligible homeowners with free emergency repairs.

08 Touch-A-Truck

A fleet of service vehicles pulled into Edwardsville Township Community Park for the Sixth Annual Touch-A-Truck event. Among them were a Southwestern bucket truck and enough co-op employees to equip thousands of kids with hats and safety lights.

10 Southwestern Offering \$10,000 in Scholarships

Since 1995, your co-op has provided more than \$256,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate. Our commitment to academic excellence continues with a pledge to award \$10,000 in scholarships this spring.

11 In Celebration of Service

Southwestern Electric celebrated 20 service milestones in 2019, including three additions to our co-op family and a retirement. Please join us in recognizing the employees who celebrated service anniversaries last year.

12 Members In Focus

We share your shots of a box-made bucket truck, life on the farm, and O'Fallon outdoors.

14 Energy & Efficiency

Julie Lowe, Southwestern Electric energy manager, suggests seven ways to save on your winter energy bill.

16 Health & Safety

Own a portable generator? These tips will help you use it safely.

18 Out & About

Break out your binoculars and spotting scopes—the birds are back in town!

20 Who-What-Where?

We share your solutions to our December puzzle and challenge you to identify a colorful location.

22 Co-op Kitchen

Leave the holiday hustle behind with slow and savory crock pot cookin'.

24 Current Events

Make tracks to Glen Carbon for the Metro East Model Railroad Club open house, take a luminary walk in Shelbyville, polka in Madison, and spot eagles on the Mississippi.

27 Final Frame

Alternative energies.

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

Two-year-old Maggie McNelly, daughter of Kate and Zach McNelly of Edwardsville, patiently poses for a silly Southwestern photographer at Edwardsville Township Community Park's Sixth Annual Touch-A-Truck event. See our story on page 8.

525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.
Phone: (800) 637-8667. Office Hours:
Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Visit us on the Web at www.sweci.com.

Board of Directors

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

CEO

Bobby Williams Chief Executive Officer

The Southwestern

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

Satellite Locations:

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

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

Southwestern Electric Cooperative reserves the right to re-print member comments and correspondence in its cooperative educational and promotional materials.

The Southwestern (USPS 612-500) is published monthly by Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Greenville, IL. Subscriptions cost \$8.85 per year. Comments or questions regarding material in this publication may be mailed to Joe Richardson, editor of *The Southwestern*, c/o Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246, or e-mailed to joe.richardson@sweci.com.

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

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

From the CEO

It wasn't my idea. When Bobby Williams dropped by my office the Monday after last year's annual meeting, I assumed he wanted to review the communications segment of the program. Maybe swap suggestions for improvements. Comment on the extraordinary performance of his communications team. Insist we accept a raise.

Surprisingly, that wasn't what he was after. "What did you think about our crowd," he asked me.

I said we had a strong showing and the members were engaged.

He agreed. And then he talked about the after-meeting—the members who assembled near the stage after the business meeting adjourned. "They asked good questions," he said. "I wanted more time with them."

I vetoed the notion of a longer annual meeting. It never hit the table, and I don't have a vote, but I vetoed it all the same.

A longer meeting wasn't what he had in mind. "What do you think about running a column in the magazine?"

"I have a column," I told him. "Don't need another one." I was joking, mostly. I was also buying time. Bobby is an exceptional communicator. He's also an engineer by trade and armed with a staggering array of acronyms. I'm a writer. I eschew acronyms and wield words like eschew. Our tribes are perpetually at war. "I deeply appreciate my readers and don't want an engineer running them off," I told him. "What might your column look like?"

He'd already thought it through. "Just a part of a page, where I answer questions from the members and talk about things that maybe don't have a home other places in the magazine." And in a matter of minutes, he pitched a dozen topics. All substantive, relevant and informed by his experience and point of view. Not an acronym among 'em.

You'll find Bobby Williams' first CEO column on page 5.

It wasn't my idea. I hate to admit that.

Because it's a great addition to the magazine.

Joe Richardson, editor
joe.richardson@sweci.com



“Electric car deployment has been growing rapidly over the past ten years, with the **global stock of electric passenger cars passing 5 million in 2018, an increase of 63% from the previous year.** Around **45%** of electric cars on the road in 2018 **were in China**—a total of 2.3 million—compared to 39% in 2017. In comparison, **Europe accounted for 24%** of the global fleet, and the **United States 22%.**”

IEA Global EV Outlook 2019
Technology Report, May 2019

CO-OP REMINDERS

December 31 - January 1

Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s online billing center will be unavailable from noon Tuesday, December 31, through 1 a.m. Wednesday, January 1, while we perform system maintenance. The billing center will resume operation at 1:01 a.m., Wednesday, January 1.

January 1

Offices closed for New Year’s holiday.

Operation Round Up grant application deadline, first quarter 2020.

Co-op Participates in Military Service Care Package Program

They were small comforts that couldn’t have been collected at a better time. In the early weeks of November, with the holidays drawing near, the Military Moms of Bond County Operation Care Package program made certain our service men and women knew that, though they may be stationed far away, they were close to home.

Since 2013, the Military Moms of Bond County have coordinated community care package collections for Bond County military service personnel stationed far from friends and family. Each year, in November, Military Mom volunteers collect donations from schools and businesses throughout Bond County.

Last year, on Nov. 16, they divided the donations among 70 boxes. In each box they included letters written by Bond County Girl Scouts and students. The boxes were sealed and shipped to 70 active-duty service members, timed to arrive during the holidays. Among the 70 care packages were boxes of food and personal care items contributed by Southwestern Electric directors and employees.

“The packages went both stateside and overseas, to places like Germany, Afghanistan and Korea,” noted Randi Workman of Greenville, Operation Care Package program director. “This was my first year taking over, after the previous director, Dianah Troemel, moved to Alabama,” Workman said. “I do not have a son or daughter serving, but I do have several veterans in my family. I just didn’t want to see the program end, so I volunteered to take over.”

Workman’s team invited Bond County residents to participate in assembling the care packages on shipping day. “The community really showed up to help us pack,” she said.

Carrie Knebel, Southwestern’s vice president of human resources, initiated the co-op’s participation in the program. “Each year as the holidays approach, we often talk about how we can come together as a company and support a great cause,” Knebel said, explaining the program to Southwestern employees. “Maybe it’s because Veterans Day is coming. Maybe it’s the daily news stories that remind us our military never gets a day off. Maybe it’s the group of moms here in Bond County who support those with roots in our area, who are deployed to other parts of the world. Maybe it’s all of these things and more. But our country’s humble heroes



In November, Southwestern employees and directors contributed boxes of food and personal care items to the Military Moms of Bond County Operation Care Package program.

keep coming to mind,” she said. “So this year we wanted to help out the Military Moms of Bond County in gathering items for the care packages they send to local military men and women at Christmas. We wanted to show them Southwestern Electric acknowledges the sacrifices of our local heroes,” Knebel said, “and thank them for keeping us safe.”



Local residents helped Military Moms of Bond County assemble 70 care packages for Bond County active-duty service members serving far from home.

Photo courtesy Amy Jackson



From the CEO

It began at the end of the annual meeting. As most of our members turned to the exits, a small crowd gathered by the stage. More than a dozen of you waited patiently to share your questions, comments and thoughts about your cooperative. As we noted your names and numbers, I found myself wishing we had more time to talk.

A moment later, the idea for this column was born.

I won't have the opportunity to meet most of you in person, but I can meet you in the pages of our magazine. If you have questions or comments about Southwestern Electric, please let me know. I'll do my best to address them here.

This month, I want to encourage you to read our capital credits story on page 6. In November, your cooperative retired half a million dollars in capital credits. If you've just joined Southwestern Electric, the idea of capital credits may be new to you.

Capital credits are one of the benefits of being a Southwestern member. As part of a not-for-profit cooperative, you're more than a customer. You're an owner. The poles, wires and substations we use to serve you—are yours. So each month, in addition to buying energy, a portion of your bill pays for maintenance and construction of the system you own. You're essentially loaning the cooperative money for operations and improvements, which allows us to borrow less from outside lenders.

In years where energy sales are robust, we may collect more revenue than we need to maintain the system. In time, we return that money to you. We call that equity capital credit.

Rural Utilities Service specifications suggest the infrastructure we build today should last 30 years. Accordingly, Southwestern returns capital credits on a 30-year rotation. We return the excess capital collected 30 years earlier. We pay out your capital credits.

But you don't have to wait 30 years to benefit from the cooperative business model. You benefit every hour of every day.

As I noted earlier, your investment in the cooperative allows us to borrow less from outside lenders. And that, in turn, helps us build infrastructure to ensure and improve reliability while keeping our rates in check.

The cooperative business model is hundreds of years old, but it's never been more relevant than it is today.

Thanks for sharing your time with me this month. I look forward to hearing from you. You're welcome to email me at bobby.williams@sweci.com.

Bobby Williams, CEO

bobby.williams@sweci.com

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

You spoke, we listened! In response to survey comments collected earlier this year and at last year's annual meeting, we're offering a new rebate program. This program will honor the replacement or new installation of air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats purchased after February 28, 2018.

All rebates will be applied as a bill credit upon receiving the completed rebate application and proof of purchase. Rebate forms are available on our website at sweci.com. You can email your completed application and proof of purchase to julie.lowe@sweci.com, or mail it to: Julie Lowe, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. You're also welcome to drop off your materials at our Greenville office.



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

Co-op Retires More Than \$511,000 In Capital Credits

More than 6,200 Southwestern Electric members closed out the holidays with a bit of cooperative cheer—a check or bill credit equal to the capital credits they earned in 1988.

During the November board meeting, Southwestern directors authorized retirement of \$511,279.53 in capital credits, or patronage capital. The capital was returned to active members as a bill credit. Inactive members—members who no longer live on co-op lines—received a check.

In total, the retirement returned capital to 6,283 Southwestern Electric members.

Capital credits are similar to shares of stock. When you own stock in a for-profit company, your stock may pay dividends based on the performance of that company. As a Southwestern member, you accumulate capital credits based on the revenue you contribute to the co-op and the company's financial condition.

Electric cooperatives rely on member capital to finance day-to-day operations. Member capital also offsets the need for a cooperative to raise rates or borrow money for infrastructure improvements.

When you joined Southwestern Electric Cooperative, you became part owner of the company. Every time you pay your electric bill, you build equity in a company you own.

If we gather more revenue than we need to cover expenses, that money is returned to you. That's one of the differences between an investor-owned utility and a cooperative. In a co-op, what you put in comes back to you.

In addition to general retirements, Southwestern returns capital credits to estates following the death of a member.

Capital credits remain with a member's account until they're claimed by the member or the member's estate. Credits go unclaimed when Southwestern Electric can't confirm a current address for a member who has left co-op lines, or when the co-op is unable to contact the executor of a member's estate.

Presently, about \$3.2 million in patronage capital remains unclaimed.

To search for unclaimed capital credits in your name, consult the unclaimed credits list at sweci.com. For more information on capital credits, call us at (800) 637-8667.

HOW DO PAYOUTS TO INDIVIDUAL AND JOINT MEMBERSHIPS DIFFER?

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP



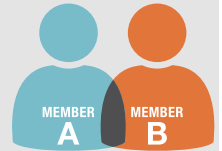
MEMBER DIES

Capital credits are disbursed to the estate upon completion of claims process.



MEMBER'S ESTATE

JOINT MEMBERSHIP



MEMBER A DIES

Capital credits transfer to surviving member. Membership converts from joint to individual.



Moving? Keep in touch!

Each time you relocate, update your contact information. By keeping your record current, you're making sure we can return your capital credits to you.

Hartlieb Receives NRECA CCD Certification

Sixteen months of industry training, at-home coursework and on-site seminars with cooperative utility personnel recently earned Annette Hartlieb the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

From February 2018 to August 2019, Hartlieb, a Southwestern director from District III, participated in sessions focusing on finance, government, decision analysis, ethics and member-focused planning.

“Our instructors were excellent,” she said. “They work in the industry, so they brought real-world experience and practical examples to the classroom.”

Hartlieb found valuable insight outside the classroom as well, as she compared

notes with directors from across the country.

“We had different backgrounds but the same objectives,” she said. “So I had the opportunity to gather all these new ideas and perspectives and bring them back to our board for discussion. We’re always learning, always improving, always looking for new ideas with our members in mind.”

Hartlieb has served on Southwestern’s board since 2017. She chairs the cooperative’s Business & Economic Development Committee and serves on the Member & Community Engagement Committee, Cyber Security Committee, and Executive Committee.

Annette Hartlieb and her husband, Dennis, live southwest of Vandalia with their children, Alexi, Bryce and Mason.



Director Annette Hartlieb (center) is congratulated by Ann Schwarm (left), board president, and Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams, after earning the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certification from NRECA in September 2019.

Holiday Shores Payment Location Closing Feb. 14

First National Bank of Staunton is closing their Holiday Shores branch office at 7301 St. James Drive in Edwardsville on Feb. 14. “Many of our Holiday Shores members are accustomed to paying their bills at that location,” noted Leslie Frandsen, Southwestern Electric’s vice president of billing. “As an alternative, we’re encouraging those members to use our online billing center or the SWEC IL App to make payments,” Frandsen said. “You’re also welcome to pay over the phone with your credit or debit card, or by eCheck,” she added, noting that the eCheck option is unavailable for Pay-As-You-Go accounts.

Members may also pay by mail, or in person at the cooperative’s St. Jacob office, located at 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob, IL 62281.

You can find a link to Southwestern’s online billing center at www.sweci.com. The SWEC IL mobile app is available for smart phone and tablet on the App Store and on Google Play.

Members with questions are encouraged to call Southwestern Electric at (800) 637-8667 or send email to billing@sweci.com.

HomeServe Cares Offers Pro-bono Repairs

The HomeServe Cares program assists eligible homeowners with free repairs when they’re faced with a service emergency. HomeServe will arrange for emergency repairs at no cost to the homeowner through HomeServe’s network of local, licensed and qualified contractors. To be eligible, a homeowner needs to meet the following general criteria:

- You have a home repair emergency and are without a service plan from HomeServe.
- You meet the financial requirements of the program.
- A delay in repairs may cause you serious health and/or safety issues.

To find out more or to apply for HomeServe Cares, go to homeservepeople.com or email HomeServeCares@homeserveusa.com.

HomeServe USA is an independent provider of home repair service solutions. They offer warranty plans that protect a homeowner’s budget from sudden, often significant expenses that come with water, sewer, electrical and heating and cooling home emergencies.

Over the last 16 years, HomeServe has saved homeowners more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in repairs. HomeServe has partnered with more than 700 municipal agencies, investor-owned utilities and cooperatives—including Southwestern Electric—to provide consumers with home warranty options.

To learn more, see the November 2019 issue of *The Southwestern*, available at sweci.com.



Touch-A-Truck

KIDS BOARD BIG WHEELS AT EDWARDSVILLE EVENT

For the second year running, a Southwestern Electric bucket truck rolled into Edwardsville Township Community Park and kept company with helicopters, fire engines, ambulances, school buses, excavating equipment, military vehicles and monster trucks.

On Oct. 5, 2019, Southwestern Electric Cooperative participated in Edwardsville Township's Sixth Annual Touch-A-Truck event. The all-day event, which took place at Edwardsville Township Community Park on Center Grove Road, provided kids with an opportunity to explore a variety of vehicles and meet the people who drive them.

"This is a great event for a number of reasons," said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. "On a typical day, kids can't get close to a bucket truck or excavating equipment. But today they could sit behind the wheel or at the controls. It's a lot of fun to see that."

Williams said the event also introduced kids to the vast array of people who operate the vehicles. "They



get to meet the guys who drive the bucket trucks, and fly the helicopters, and operate the heavy machinery. Some of these kids are already thinking about what they want to do when they grow up. The conversations we had may have sparked interest in an industry, or a career," Williams said.

Joe Richardson, editor of *The*

Southwestern, spoke with several Southwestern members who'd attended the cooperative's annual meeting a month earlier.

"They were curious about electric vehicles (EVs) and the pilot program we talked about," Richardson said. "We're blueprinting plans for the program now. At the 2020 Touch-A-Truck, along with our bucket truck, I think kids will see a Southwestern EV."

Southwestern's contributions to Edwardsville Township Park extend beyond a single day of the year. In 2013, years of planning and fundraising by



1) A future lineman (possibly) flashes a thumbs up. 2) Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams, his wife Chandra, and Susan File, Southwestern's vice president of member services, equip kids with hats and safety lights. 3) Kids take the Junior Lineman Challenge. 4) Williams completes an event-goer's ensemble with a safety light. 5) The Southwestern stand-up offered family photo ops. 6) Families took photos with dozens of service vehicles, including a Southwestern bucket truck. 7) Kids wait in line for an Instagrammable photo op.



3

Edwardsville area residents resulted in a park asset that emphasized the *community* in community park—a Boundless Playground.

A Junior Service Club of Edwardsville/Glen Carbon service project, the Boundless Playground was built in April 2013 with the help of the Edwardsville/Glen Carbon community.

Nationally, an estimated one in 10 children have a disability that makes it difficult or impossible to play on a traditional playground. Boundless Playgrounds allow children with and without disabilities to play together in an accessible, nurturing play environment.

Boundless Playgrounds also help family members and caregivers with disabilities play with their children and grandchildren.

The club raised funds for three years to pay for the project. Part of the project’s funding came through Operation Round Up—a community outreach program governed, funded and supported by members of Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

Since its inception in 2005, Operation Round Up has contributed more than \$130,000 to support about 200 community-oriented projects and organizations. Donations have stocked food pantries, provided resources



4



5



6



7

for youth activities, and supported services that might otherwise have gone underfunded.

In September 2013, Southwestern contributed to a second significant project on the park grounds—construction of the Rotary Club of Edwardsville Airplane Park Playground.

“Southwestern was proud to provide skilled labor and equipment to dig the 187 holes necessary for the infrastructure of the Rotary Club of Edwardsville Airplane Park Playground,” said Susan File, vice president of member services. “The new playground replaced existing equipment which was retired after 20 years of use. We were pleased to help provide families with many more years of play.”



Left: In 2013, Southwestern Electric donated time and equipment to drill nearly 200 holes that support the infrastructure of the Rotary Club of Edwardsville Airplane Park Playground (bottom left). Operation Round Up, a community outreach program supported by members of Southwestern Electric Cooperative, provided funds to assist in the construction of a Boundless Playground at Edwardsville Township Community Park.

SOUTHWESTERN ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR 2020



Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power for Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$256,000 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 2020 for use in the fall 2020 semester.

Scholarship recipients can apply the funding to tuition at any accredited university, college or technical school in the U.S.

Scholarship applications may be downloaded from Southwestern Electric's website at sweci.com or picked up at the co-op's office at 525 US Route 40 in Greenville. You may also request an application by calling Susan File at (800) 637-8667.

Separate applications will be provided for high school seniors graduating in 2020 and students who graduated from high school in previous years.

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 US Route 40 in Greenville), in a single envelope, by 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, February 14, 2020.**

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 2020.
- 3) The entire application must be completed in full, and received with the appropriate supplementary materials, in advance of the application deadline, February 14, 2020.

Applications may be downloaded from Southwestern's website at www.sweci.com or picked up from the co-op's office at 525 US Route 40 in Greenville. For more information on the Power for Progress Scholarship Program, please contact Susan File at susan.file@sweci.com or (800) 637-8667.

A Celebration of Service

Southwestern Electric Cooperative celebrated 20 service milestones in 2019—including three additions to our co-op family and one retirement. Together, the employees on this page represent more than 240 years of service to our members. You see the results of their work each time you turn on the lights, when power is restored after a storm, and when you're greeted with a kind word in our office or on the phone. Please join us in welcoming our new employees—and in recognizing the commitment and accomplishments of people who've made it their calling to serve you.

NEW EMPLOYEES



Brian Bast,
Journeyman Lineman



Tyler Kunz,
Journeyman Lineman



Dustin Vosholler,
Journeyman Lineman

FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE



Leslie Frandsen,
Vice President of Billing



Chris Hamby,
Forestry Journeyman



Tyler Meseke,
Journeyman Lineman



Eric Rodgers,
1st-Class Mechanic



Brooke Scott
Executive Assistant



Keith Steiner
Forestry Foreman

TEN YEARS OF SERVICE



Scott Fitzgerald,
Foreman Polyphase Meterman & Tester



Brian Mills,
Staking Engineer



Bobby Williams
Chief Executive Officer

FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE



Kyle Hails,
Maintenance Foreman



Joe Richardson,
Vice President of Communications



Michael Willman,
Vice President of Operations

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE



Annette Brown,
Meter Technician



Laura Gall,
Accounting Clerk



Rick Mersinger,
Maintenance Foreman



Carla Schneider
Member Services Representative

RETIREE Over 36 years of service.



Russ Mersinger,
Journeyman Lineman

Thank you for your service and dedication to the cooperative!

MEMBERS IN FOCUS



Junior lineman Jake Simmonds (in bucket truck), son of Southwestern Electric journeyman lineman Adam Simmonds and his wife, Rachel, represented the co-op at Greenville Elementary School's Transportation Night. The event, held May 6, 2019, invited students to build a vehicle from cardboard boxes. "Jake chose a Southwestern Electric bucket truck just like his dad drives," Rachel said. "Of course, Jake wants to be a lineman just like his dad when he grows up!" Pictured (l-r) are Jake's brother, Kyle Simmonds standing with their grandmother, Karen Simmonds, Judy Barbey (Jake's great aunt), his sister Lexi Simmonds with their grandfather, Lee Simmonds, their grandfather, Roger Thiems, and Rachel and Adam Simmonds.

On Account: If your account number is 22606001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

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 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 or Mike Barns at mike.barns@sweci.com, or call (800) 637-8667.



John Schaub of Brownstown sent photos of his sons Mason (above) and Cade (upper right) with their show pigs. Raising livestock is hard work—but as John's photos show, it can be time well spent, and a lot of fun.



Bobbi Battoe shot this sunrise from her deck in O'Fallon, Ill., in January 2019. "It was breathtaking," she said. "Just wanted to share this moment."



O'Fallon resident Bill Malec caught this photo of November light filtering through autumn leaves on Lebanon Road, north of his hometown.



7 WAYS TO SAVE

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

Early in the year as temperatures drop, our energy bills climb. But small steps can make a big difference in how much energy it takes to keep your home comfortable on a gray winter day.

Here are seven ways to save energy—and money—this season while maintaining a comfortable temperature in your home.

ONE USE THE SUNLIGHT

Open the curtains on any south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat your home. Close them at night to help keep the heat inside.

TWO COVER DRAFTY WINDOWS

Use heavy-duty clear plastic film to cover the inside of your windows during the cold winter months. Doing so is almost equivalent to adding an extra pane of glass on the window and will help to retain heat and prevent condensation.

THREE ONLY HEAT THE ROOMS YOU ARE USING

To be more energy efficient, close and seal off vents to rooms that you never use. Also, avoid heating areas of your home that are not insulated.

FOUR ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT

When you're sleeping or away from home, turn your thermostat down 10-15 degrees. According to the US Department of Energy, lowering your thermostat temperature by 10-15 degrees for a period of eight hours a day can save approximately 10 percent per year on your heating bills. When you're home, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. A smart or programmable thermostat can make it easier to adjust the temperature of your home at designated times.

FIVE SERVICE YOUR SYSTEM

Keep your furnace and vents properly maintained and replace your filters every two to three months.

SIX ONLY USE EXHAUST FANS WHEN NECESSARY

Kitchen and bathroom exhaust fans vent warm air (which rises) out of your home. Use your exhaust fans sparingly in the winter months.

SEVEN LOWER YOUR WATER HEATING COSTS

Water heating can account for up to 20 percent of the total energy expense for many households. Lower your water heater's energy usage by setting it to 120 degrees, wrapping it in a water heater blanket, and washing your clothing in cold water whenever possible.



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	BCMWS Community Services, Inc.	(618) 664-3309
Clay	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	(618) 662-4024
Clinton	BCMWS 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	BCMWS 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

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. If you rent, and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible to receive assistance.

Family Size	30-Day Income	
1	\$1,561	Additional
2	\$2,114	\$553 per
3	\$2,666	person monthly
4	\$3,219	income above
5	\$3,771	8 people, or
6	\$4,324	\$6,630 annual.
7	\$4,876	(Note 30-
8	\$5,429	day income
		rounded up.)



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



Generator Safety

Southwestern Electric Cooperative is urging members who use generators to exercise caution. “When used correctly, generators are a sound, short-term solution to a power outage. But if the proper precautions aren’t taken, generators can be deadly to the people using them and to linemen working to restore power,” said Joe Richardson, editor of *The Southwestern*.

“Read your owner’s manual and follow the manufacturer’s instructions,” Richardson said. “It should cover general safety guidelines as well as procedures that apply specifically to your model.”

Richardson cautioned members against connecting a generator directly to their home’s wiring. “That can backfeed power into our distribution lines. Our transformers will step-up that energy, increasing it by thousands of volts. And that’s more than enough to injure or kill a lineman who’s working on that system, even if he’s a long way from your home.”

TRANSFER SWITCH AND GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

- Transfer switches make life easier during a power outage while keeping linemen safe as they restore power. Without a transfer switch, power from a generator can backfeed into utility lines and electrocute linemen.
- Your transfer switch should be wired to meet standards outlined in the National Electric Code (NEC) and all local codes.
- Talk to your electrician to make sure you have the proper sized wire to accommodate your generator and the needs of your home.
- Never use a generator indoors.
- Inspect wire from your generator to the power inlet for tears in the insulation.
- Make sure the voltage your generator produces won’t damage your electronics.
- Never plug a portable generator into an outlet in your home. It can backfeed energy into power lines and compromise the safety of your family, neighbors, and service crews.



Never plug a generator into a household outlet, said Richardson. “That can also backfeed power into the distribution system, energize power lines and injure family members, neighbors or linemen.”

Generators also produce carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless and deadly gas. Never use your generator indoors or in an attached garage, Richardson said. “Run it outdoors in a well-ventilated, dry area, far away from air intakes to your home.”

Homeowners should plug individual appliances into portable generators using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords with a wire gauge suitable for the appliance load.

“All the standard cord precautions apply. Don’t use extension cords with exposed wires or worn insulation. Make sure the cords don’t present a tripping hazard, and don’t run them under rugs where heat could build up and start a fire. Be selective with what you plug into your generator,” said Richardson. Overloaded cords can cause fires and damage appliances.

“You also need to make sure your generator is properly grounded,” he said. “Generators get very hot while they’re running. They can deliver a nasty burn. Remind kids to stay clear of them.”

TRANSFER SWITCHES

The only safe way to connect a generator to your home’s existing wiring is to hire a licensed electrical contractor to install a double-throw transfer switch. The switch isolates your household, forming a break between the power coming from your

generator and Southwestern's distribution system.

"Transfer switches make life easier during a power outage while keeping our linemen safe as they restore service," said Dylan Casey, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's manager of engineering. "Without a transfer switch, power from a generator can backfeed into utility lines and electrocute line workers."

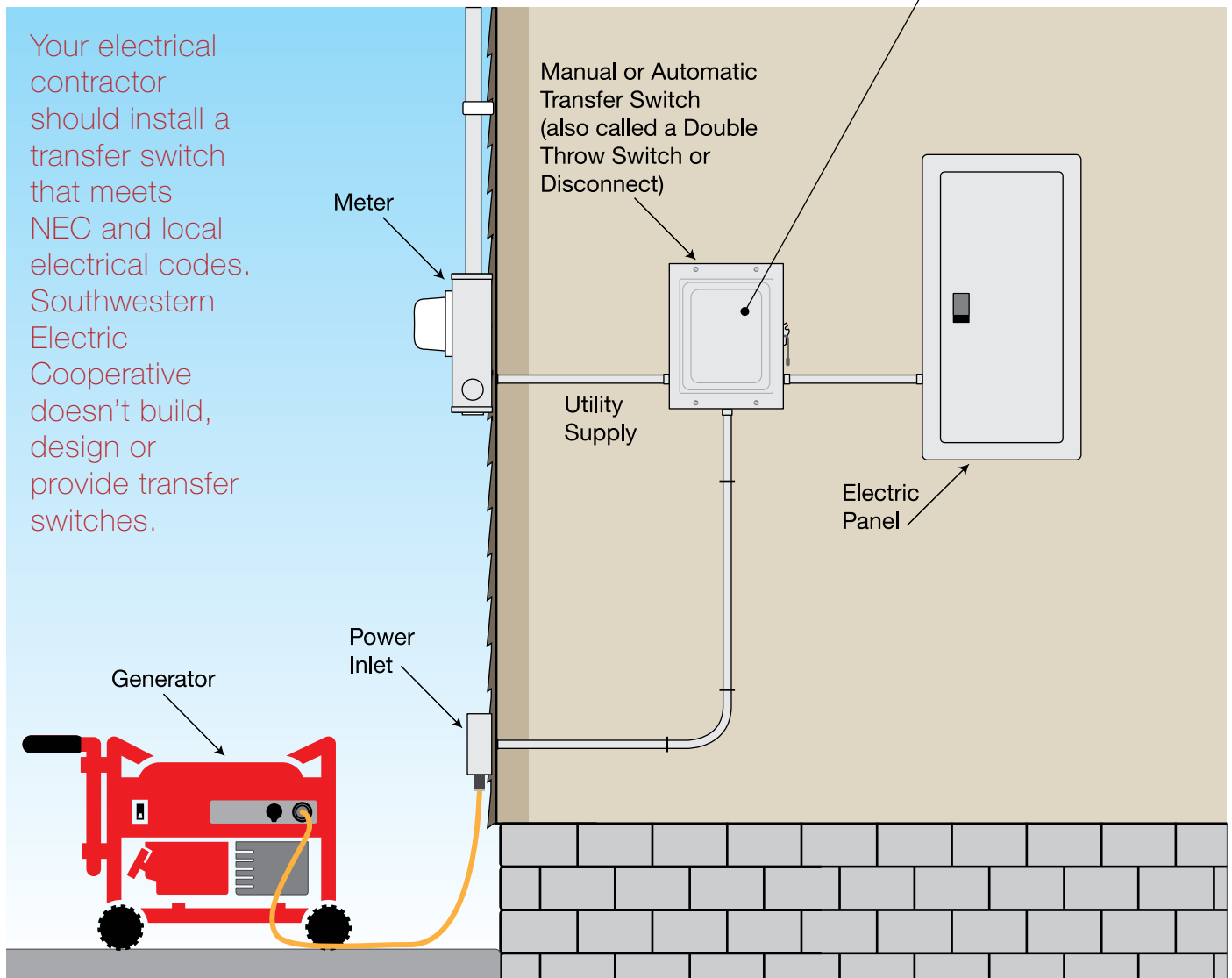
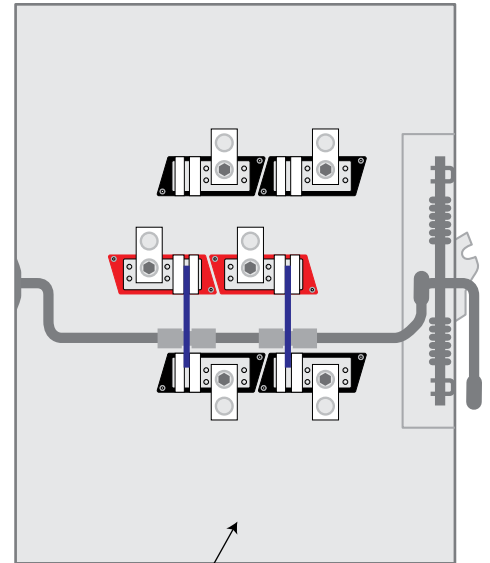
Casey said transfer switches may be manual or automatic. "With a manual transfer switch, during a power outage, you have to manually switch power from the utility to your backup source." By contrast, automatic transfer switches detect an outage and activate without assistance from the homeowner.

"Inspect the wire going from the generator to the power inlet box for tears in the insulation," Casey said. "And be

aware of the voltage you're generating to ensure you don't damage your electronics."

Your transfer switch should be wired to meet standards outlined in the National Electric Code (NEC) and all local codes, Casey added. "Talk to your electrician to make sure you have the proper sized wire to accommodate your generator and the needs of your home."

"These guidelines are in place to protect the safety of our linemen and our members" noted Christopher Botulinski, vice president of engineering for Southwestern Electric Cooperative. "We rely on our members' participation to help us take care of everyone involved."





A guide to bald eagle watching in Southwestern Illinois

Alton Visitors Center: A live bald eagle will be on display every Saturday in January from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., with experts from the World Bird Sanctuary available to answer your eagle-related questions. Admission is free and photography is welcome. The Alton Visitors' Center is located at 200 Piasa Street in downtown Alton, Ill. Call (800) 258-6645 or go to visitalton.com.

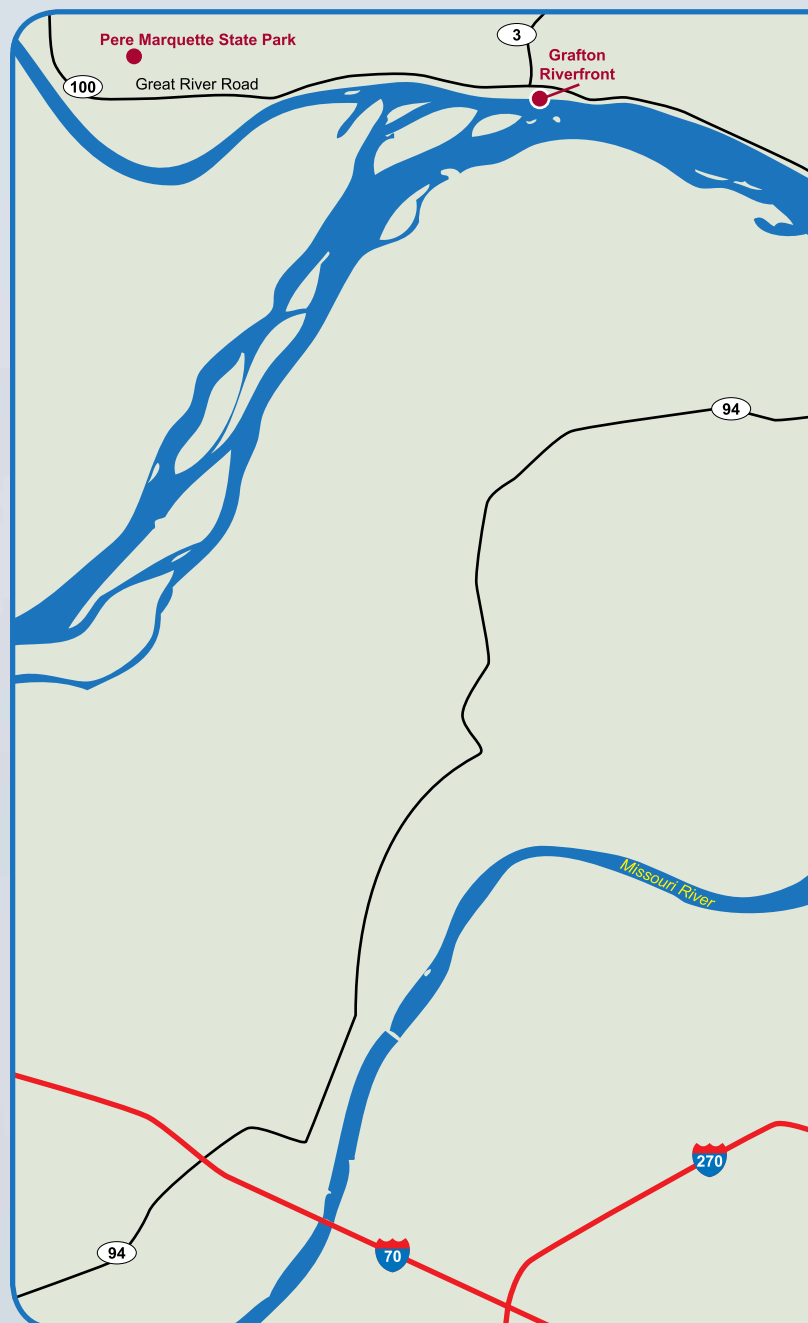
Grafton Riverfront: The picturesque river town of Grafton is situated at the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. Bald eagles can be spotted regularly from the riverfront area. Grafton is located approximately 15 miles northwest of Alton, along the Great River Road. Visit enjoygraffton.com or call (800) 258-6645.

Melvin Price Locks & Dam: A feat of engineering, the Melvin Price Locks & Dam makes safe travel possible for commercial river traffic, while also creating a popular spot for viewing bald eagles. Located along IL-143, south of the Clark Bridge, between the communities of Alton and Wood River. Open daily, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free tours are given daily; visit the information desk at the National Great Rivers Museum to sign up. Visit mtrf.org or call (877) 462-6979.

Old Chain of Rocks Bridge: Once a motor route, the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge now offers walking and biking trails over the Mississippi River, connecting Madison County, Ill., with St. Louis County, Mo. The bridge, located just south of I-270 on Riverview Drive, also plays host to a popular event called Bald Eagle Days, held annually in January.

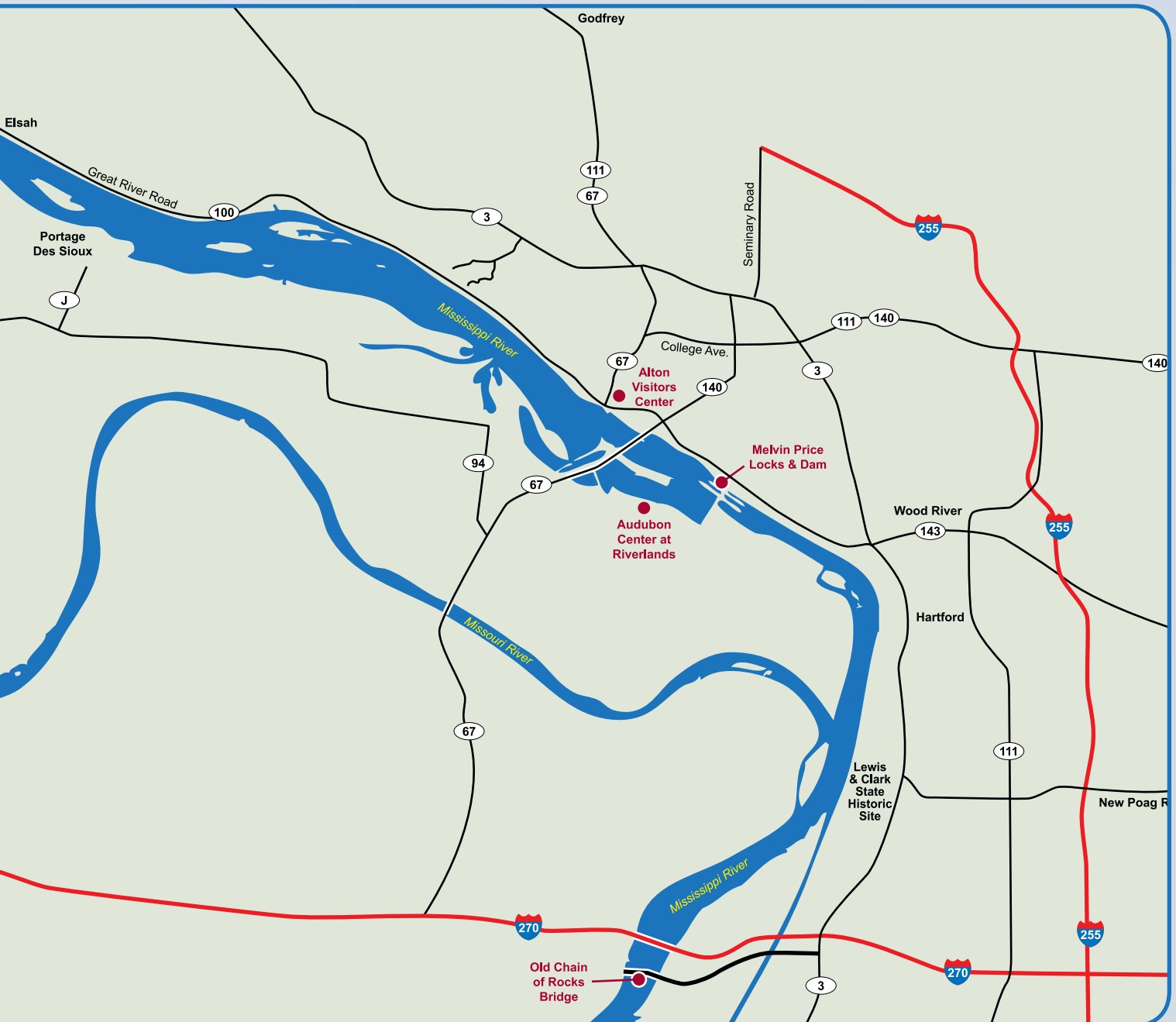
Pere Marquette State Park: Located five miles west of Grafton, Pere Marquette is the largest state park in Illinois. Bald eagles can be spotted in the marina area, located across the Great River Road from the park's lodge and visitor's center. Free eagle-viewing tours are offered at the park through February. They fill quickly and reservations are required. Visit pmlodge.net or call (618) 786-3323.

Audubon Center at Riverlands: The Audubon Center at Riverlands is located in the 3,700-acre Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary on the banks of the Mississippi River. Bald eagles can be seen feeding and perching in the trees throughout the sanctuary. An observation deck and several long range binoculars can be found near the visitors center. The Audubon Center at Riverlands is at 301 Riverlands Way, West Alton, Mo. Visit riverlands.audubon.org or call (636) 899-0090.





See our Current Events on pages 24 and 25 for area eagle happenings.



WHO

WHAT



Thanks to everyone who identified last month’s mystery figure—and there were a lot of you! We hope you’ll give this month’s puzzle a go. Meanwhile, here are a few of the many responses to last month’s challenge.

I believe the gentleman pictured is William Jarvis, namesake of Jarvis Township, Madison County, Illinois. I enjoy your articles every month. Keep up the good work!
—Mac McCormick, *Holiday Shores*

The answer to the question in *The Southwestern* magazine issue 12 is William W. Jarvis. On September 10, 1814, John Jarvis and Titus Gregg made the first entries of land that would become Troy. I’ve always wished I could see the inside of the Jarvis Home on 317 E. Center Street.
—Sue Schempp, *Troy*

The photo in the December magazine is William W. Jarvis. My hometown is Granite City. I don’t have a story about your photo, but I have one from my hometown. When we were kids (over 50 years ago) we were excited to discover three grave markers from the 1800s in the median on St. Clair Ave. I later learned they were memorial markers for the families that once farmed there. I think they’re located at the intersection of Willow and St. Clair. This is an interesting contest. Makes one think. Kudos for doing this.
—John Sertich, *Edwardsville*

December edition is William W. Jarvis, born 1842, fourth child of Wesley Jarvis, a farmer. His grandfather, John Jarvis, was an early Troy settler and was one of the first abolitionists in Madison County. Jarvis Township includes Troy, Ill., and is named after William.

President Monroe granted William 13 acres of which two are left, and his original

house still stands. The home he built in Troy utilizing his lumber company was named on the National Register of Historical Places in 1988. He was a volunteer for the Union Army, Company 1, 9th Illinois Infantry and served three years and three months. General Sherman, a personal friend, was a guest at the Jarvis home and after whom William named one of his sons.

—Anne Cicero, *St. Jacob*

The gentleman pictured in the December 2019 issue of *Who-What-Where* is William W. Jarvis. The house in the bottom photo is located at 317 E. Center St. in Troy, Ill.
—Darwin Evelsizer, *Maryville*

William W. Jarvis is the “Who Am I?” featured in the December edition of *The Southwestern*. Jarvis was a Madison County, Illinois native whose father was a farmer. After service in the Union Army he studied law for a time before transitioning to mercantile pursuits. In partnership with J. A. Barnsback, he opened the first lumberyard in Troy. He later entered the livestock commission trade at the National Stockyards of St. Clair County. He partnered with H.H. Padon to open the Troy Exchange Bank in 1887. He was one of the first Madison County commissioners.

He built what would become known as the “Jarvis House,” in what would become Jarvis Township, on a 13-acre property acquired by a land grant from President Monroe. The house remains today on approximately two acres of the original property. The house was designed in picturesque Italianate style and has been preserved to this day. Jarvis died there in 1927 at which time his daughter took occupancy. The house has remained in the family for over 100 years. The home was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

—Bill Malec, *O’Fallon*





Where are we?



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



CROCK•POT

Delicacies

This month's recipes are courtesy of 4-H House Alumni Association's *Nurture the Future @ 805 4-H House Anniversary Cookbook* (crock pot vegetables), Bond County Habitat for Humanity's Bond County Habitat for Humanity Cookbook (cheesy chicken casserole, crock pot teriyaki steak, and slow cooker chicken pizza), and the Fayette County Museum *35th Anniversary Cookbook* (beef roast and BBQ pork).

BEEF ROAST IN THE CROCK POT



Ingredients

1	beef roast	1	package onion soup mix
3	carrots cut in 2 inch pieces	1	cup water
1	pound potatoes cut in large chunks	1	cup salsa
		1	can regular Coke or Pepsi

Directions

1. Place roast in crock pot. Then surround the roast with potatoes and carrots.
2. Combine the soup mix and water until dissolved.
3. Pour soup, salsa, and soda over roast.
4. Cook on low for 8 - 10 hours.



CHEESY CHICKEN CASSEROLE



Ingredients

- | | | | |
|---|---|----|--|
| 2 | 10 ounce packages frozen broccoli spears thawed | 1 | teaspoon garlic salt |
| 2 | cups milk | 1½ | cups parmesan cheese grated |
| 2 | 8 ounce packages cream cheese | 4 | boneless, skinless chicken breasts cooked and sliced into strips |
| 1 | teaspoon salt | | |

Directions

1. Cut broccoli spears into bite size pieces (if needed) and place in bottom of greased crock pot.
2. In sauce pan, blend milk, cream cheese, salt, garlic salt, and parmesan cheese over low heat until melted and smooth.
3. Pour one cup of the sauce over broccoli.
4. Top with chicken slices and pour remaining sauce over chicken.
5. Cover and cook on low for 4 - 6 hours.
6. Serve over rice.

CROCK POT BBQ PORK



Ingredients

- 1 pound boneless pork tenderloin or pork shoulder
- ½ bottle of your favorite barbecue sauce
- 2-4 tablespoons spicy brown mustard
- 1 package Splenda or Stevia for sweeter sauce (optional)

Directions

1. Place all ingredients in crock pot and cook on high for 4 hours or low for 6 hours.
2. Using 2 forks, shred the pork, place back in the juices, mix together, and it's ready to serve.

SLOW COOKER CHICKEN PIZZA FOR TWO



Ingredients

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| ¾ | pound boneless, skinless chicken thighs | 1 | medium bell pepper cut into strips |
| ¼ | teaspoon salt | 1 | cup tomato pasta sauce |
| ⅛ | teaspoon pepper | 2 | cups rotini pasta uncooked |
| ¼ | onion chopped | ½ | cup mozzarella cheese shredded |

Directions

1. Place chicken in crock pot and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
2. Top chicken with onion and bell peppers.
3. Pour tomato sauce over the top.
4. Cover and cook on low for 4 - 5 hours.
5. Prepare pasta according to package directions.
6. Place pasta on platter and top with chicken and sauce.
7. Sprinkle with mozzarella cheese and serve.

CROCK POT TERIYAKI STEAK



Ingredients

- 2½ pounds boneless chuck steak cut into ½ inch slices
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- ½ cup soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 clove garlic crushed

Directions

1. Place meat in crock pot.
2. Combine remaining ingredients in small bowl and pour over meat.
3. Cover and cook on low for 6 - 8 hours.
4. Serve over rice.

CROCK POT VEGETABLES

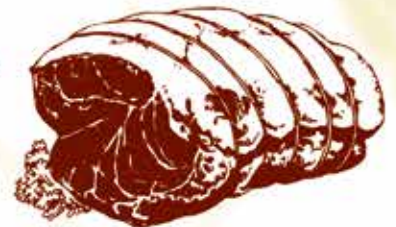


Ingredients

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | cup water | 1 | package dry onion soup mix |
| 2 | bags Scandinavian mixed vegetables | 2 | cans cream of celery soup |
| | | 1 | stick butter |

Directions

1. Grease crock pot.
2. Put water in pot followed by mixed vegetables.
3. Add remaining ingredients.
4. Cook on low for 4 hours or on high for 2 hours.





Current Events

January 3-5 LET'S GO FISHING SHOW, Collinsville. There will be a wide variety of fishing gear, boats, exhibits and seminars. Friday noon - 8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Adults \$7; children 6-15 years of age \$3.50; children 5 years of age and younger are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Visit letsgoshows.com.

January 4 AUDUBON EAGLE ICE FESTIVAL, Alton. See a live bald eagle, watch ice sculptors create works of art, and let the kids enjoy cold weather games. Then head across the river to the Audubon Center at Riverlands to see finished ice sculptures, view eagles and Trumpeter Swans with the center's viewing scopes and take a shuttle ride to look for eagles. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. Shuttle tours are \$5 per person. The Eagle

Festival activities are free. For more information, call (800) 258-6645.

January 4 TRAIN SHOWS, Glen Carbon. The Metro East Model Railroad Club will host free open houses from 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. at their club house located at 180 Summit Street (the old Glen Carbon Firehouse/City Hall). Visitors are welcome to view the club's trains running on their 18 x 27 foot HO Scale model railroad. Admission is free. For more information, call Bob at (618) 476-9228 or Bill at (618) 531-1589, or visit trainweb.org/memrc.

January 4, 11, 18, 25 EAGLE MEET AND GREET, Alton. Celebrate all things eagle related and see an American bald eagle up close and personal. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. For more information, call (800) 258-6645.

January 4, 11, 18, 25 EAGLE SHUTTLE TOURS, West Alton, Mo., and Alton. Take a 45-minute shuttle to spots along the Mississippi River to spot eagles with stops at Maple Island, Heron Pond, and Ellis Island. A guide on board the shuttle will provide tips on how to eagle watch this season. January 4 pick up and drop off will be at the Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. January 11, 18, and 25 pick up and drop off will be at the Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. Shuttle departs at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. Admission is \$5. For details or to receive a free eagle watcher's guide, call (800) 258-6645.

January 5, 12, 19, 26; February 2 BIRDS OF WINTER EAGLE SUNDAYS, West Alton, Mo. World Bird Sanctuary will have a live bald eagle inside the center for you and your

family to observe. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. For more information, call (636) 899-0090 or visit riverlands.audubon.org.

January 7, 10, 25, 27 & 28, 30; February 3 & 4, 6-8, 10 & 11, 13, 21, 28; March 6 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.

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, 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.

January 11 WINTER BIRDS, Altamont. Enjoy a slide program about the birds that visit your bird feeder. Learn how to attract birds throughout the winter. Call to register. 1 p.m. Ballard Nature Center, 5253 East U.S. Highway 40. Call (618) 483-6856 or visit ballard-naturecenter.org.

January 11, 18, 25; February 1 BIRDS OF WINTER RAPTOR SATURDAYS, West Alton, Mo. Treehouse Wildlife Center will have a live raptor inside the center for you and your family to observe. It could be an owl, hawk or falcon. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. For more information, call (636) 899-0090 or visit riverlands.audubon.org.

January 18 LUMINARY WALK, Shelbyville. Enjoy the 500 luminaries on the trail that light up 2.5 miles and over 200 luminaries will be hanging in the trees. Hot chocolate and hot cider can be found near the huge bonfire. In addition, you will find illuminated ice, a six foot tall luminary that you can autograph, s'mores, and floating luminaries on the lake. 6 - 8 p.m. At Dacey Trail in Forest Park, 325 East North 9th Street. For more information, visit daceytrail.org.

January 18 & 19 EAGLE DAYS, Granite City. Event provides an opportunity to watch eagles fish, ride ice floes, soar overhead and roost in nearby trees, as you learn more about eagles and local wildlife in the comfort of a warming tent. On both days, the World Bird Sanctuary will present an educational program featuring a live bald eagle. Other activities include a hands-on exhibit of local birds presented by St. Louis Audubon, eagle's nest replica, spotting scopes staffed by trained volunteers, warming tent, and activities for children. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. From Illinois take I-270 west towards Missouri. Exit at Illinois Route 3, go south to Chain of Rocks Road and follow west to the bridge entrance parking area (free). 4205-4207 Chain of Rocks Road. For more information, visit greatriversgreenway.org/eagledays/.

January 18 & 19 GATEWAY SPRING HOME SHOW, Collinsville. The goal of the Home Show is to inspire, motivate and excite you for your upcoming home improvement—whether it's a minor renovation or a major remodel. Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Admission is free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Visit gatewayhomeshow.com.

January 23 GATEWAY WEDDING SHOW, Collinsville. Meet vendors who can personalize and plan every aspect of a wedding. 5 - 9 p.m. Admission is \$5 online and \$7 at the door.; free admission for pre-registered brides and grooms; children age 12 and younger are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. To register, visit gatewaycenter.com.

January 23-26, 30 & 31, February 1 & 2 A GENTLEMAN'S GUIDE TO LOVE AND MURDER, Lebanon. A theatrical performance by the Looking Glass Playhouse. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m., except for Sunday shows, which begin at 2 p.m. \$10 on Thursday and \$12 Friday - Sunday for adults; \$9 on Thursday and \$11 Friday - Sunday for students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification). Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

January 25 WINTERFEST HAMFEST, Collinsville. Meet more than 180 vendors at 240 tables, and explore 30,000 square feet of convention space at the largest hamfest in the Midwest. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. For more information or tickets, visit winterfest.slsrsrc.org.

January 26 BALD EAGLE FESTIVAL, Grafton. Festival will feature live music and entertainment by the World Bird Sanctuary as they showcase the Bald Eagle and other birds during their shows. Purchase online in advance or at the front desk at 10 a.m. the morning of the festival. Tickets cannot be used at a different show time than they were purchased for. If purchasing tickets online, make sure to print out a copy and bring it with you to the event. Shows at 11 a.m.; 1 p.m.; 3 p.m. Entry into the festival free. Masters of the Sky Show \$5. Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center, 13653 Lodge Blvd. Call (618) 786-2331 or visit pmlodge.net.

January 26 POLKA DANCE, Madison. The St Louis Metro Polka Club is having a free dance to celebrate National Polka Month. The featured band is the Polka Connection. 3 - 6 p.m. Polish Hall 826 Greenwood Street. For more information, visit folkfire.org/polka.

January 31 - February 2; February 6-9 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: INHERIT THE WIND, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adult \$20; children under 18 years of age \$12. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

February 4 MOSCOW FESTIVAL BALLET: CINDERELLA, Lebanon. The classic fairy tale comes to life in one of the world's most beloved ballets. 7:30 p.m. Adult \$28; senior \$26; 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.

February 7-9 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.

February 9-11 & 14-16 ROCK OF AGES, 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 2nd Street. For reservations, call (618) 526-2866 or visit ccshowcase.com.





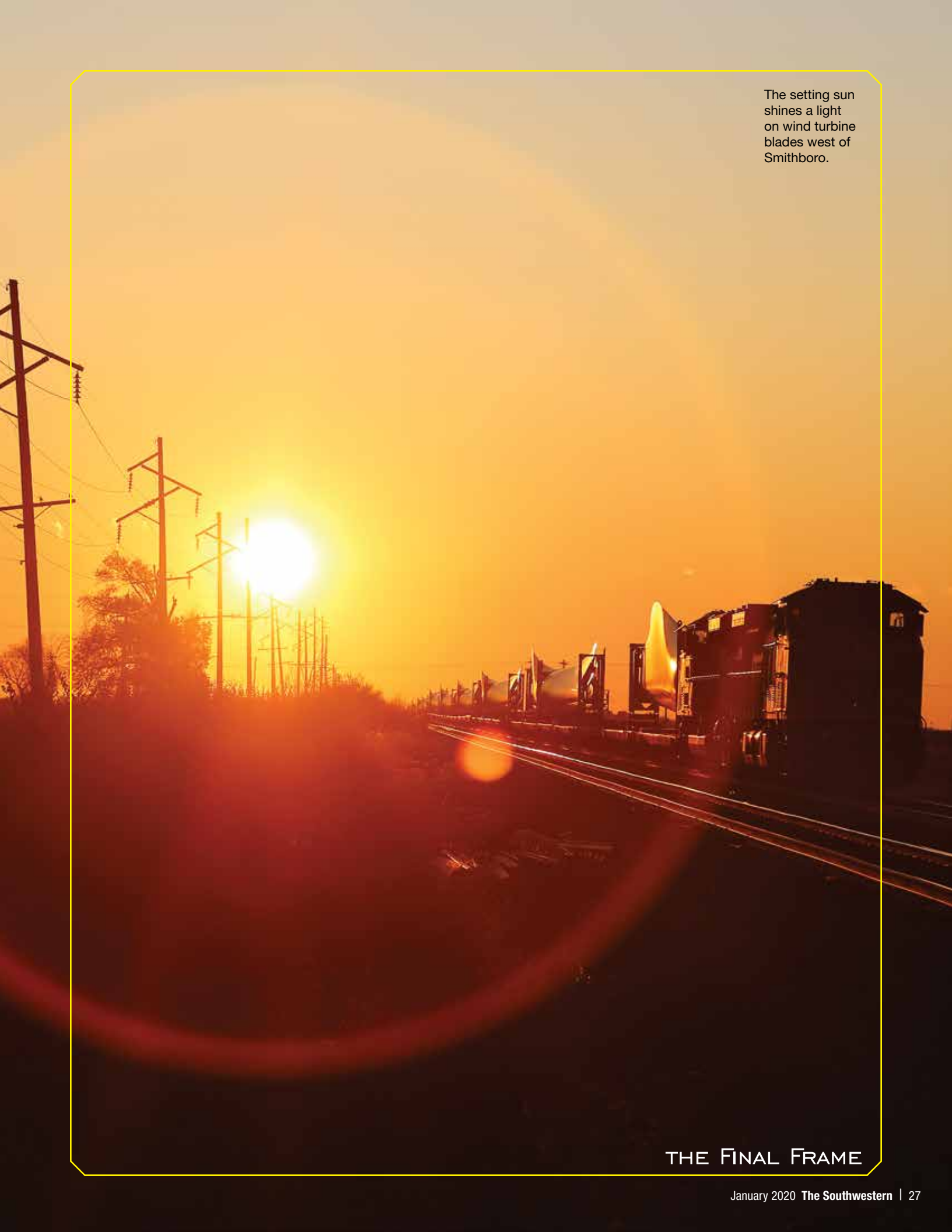
Your Spare Change Can Make a **Big Difference** Through Operation Round Up

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.

Here's how it works: After you sign up for ORU, Southwestern will round up the amount due on your monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar. Your donations are placed in the ORU account. Each quarter, an independent committee of Southwestern Electric members reviews ORU grant requests. ORU grants support various community projects across the co-op's service territory.

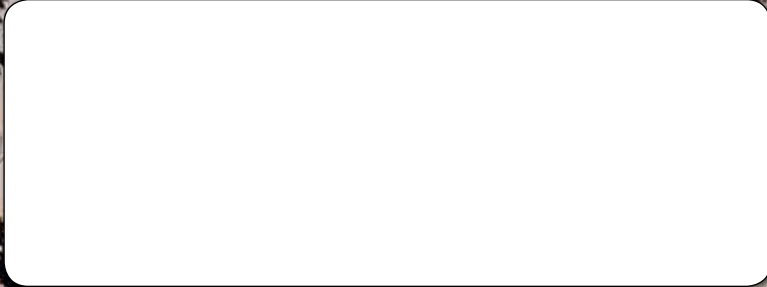
Since launching the program in 2005, **Southwestern Electric's Operation Round Up has assisted a wide variety of organizations**, including local food pantries, senior centers and fire departments.

Ready to get started? To join ORU today, just check the enrollment box on your electric bill or online, or contact Southwestern Electric Cooperative at (800) 637-8667. For more information about Operation Round Up, visit sweci.com.

A photograph capturing a train at sunset. The sun is a bright, glowing orb in the center-left, casting a warm, golden light across the sky and the scene. To the left, a series of power lines and utility poles stretch into the distance. In the foreground, a dark, silhouetted train is on the tracks, moving away from the viewer. The train's structure is dark, but some details are visible against the bright background. The overall mood is serene and dramatic, with the low sun creating a lens flare effect in the lower-left corner.

The setting sun
shines a light
on wind turbine
blades west of
Smithboro.

THE FINAL FRAME



Southwestern
Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

