

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

NOVEMBER 2020 • VOLUME 72 • ISSUE 11

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RESPONSE UPDATE**

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TO CO-OP BOARD**

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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!



## AUTUMN LEAVES

The waning days and crisp nights of autumn bring color to trees along the Great River Road. For more on the change in seasons, see the editor's letter on page 3.

## CO-OP REMINDERS

**November 9** Payment processing systems will be unavailable from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments at 4:01 a.m.

**November 11** Offices closed in observance of Veterans Day.

**November 26-27** Offices closed for Thanksgiving.

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# Seasons of Gratitude

Florida sends me photos. I open my phone to find spectacular shots of a subtropic sun melting into the Gulf of Mexico, exotic flowers springing skyward from the dark soil of a suburban park, or anatomically unlikely animals swimming, wading or waddling in a fashion that somehow seems appropriate to the Sunshine State. Florida proper isn't sending me the photos, mind you. They're gifts from a friend who lives by a bay, where each day involves encounters with curious characters, and each evening ends with the sun setting fire to sea and sky.

In return, I send her photos from Illinois. Usually they're pictures of corn. Or a tree. Sometimes beans. It's possible our exchanges are not an even trade.

I'll be the first to say rural Illinois is a great place to build a life and raise a family. But while our landscapes are lovely—rolling hills, patches of forest, silted creeks, fields of corn and sometimes beans—our geography is understated. Bucolic. Serene. Along our stretch of I-70 the descriptor *dramatic* doesn't apply—until autumn, when Illinois comes into its own.

Golden fields dip and climb and shiver in the breeze. Lemon-yellow leaves of maple trees wrap around broad swathes of burgundy oak. And blue skies stretch toward all points of the compass, edges tight and low and sharp enough to cut.

It won't last, this season. It never does. And for that I'm grateful.

Florida's sand and surf, its evolutionary imaginative flora and fauna, its ever-present afternoon showers and greenhouse humidity, are natural wonders. But even the wondrous can become everyday when we experience it every day. Human beings are attuned to change. We fear it, fight it, pray for it, embrace it. But most of all, we notice it.

How many blue-sky, 76-degree days could you step into before you failed to appreciate their perfection? Surprisingly few, I'll wager. But dial down the temperature, dim the lights, add wind or snow or rain—or a momentary splash of color—and we take note. We pause. We appreciate.

Enjoy autumn while it lasts. In coming weeks we'll lose the leaves and inherit the wind. Winter will cut through our coats and carve out our breath. And about the time we're thinking the cold will go on forever, the light will shift, clouds will gather, rain will fall, and we'll be up to our knees in corn and beans and all things green.

In a season of Thanksgiving, give thanks for the seasons. They call our attention to the passage of hours and remind us that life is ever in motion. Every quarter-turn of the carousel quickens the heart, sharpens the senses, refreshes the spirit, moves us closer to a better version of ourselves.

This morning I awoke to an ocean view, which means I'm due to shoot a bean field. She sends me sea and sky, and with autumn gold and winter monochrome, spring green and summer greener, I reply.

It's possible our exchanges are not an even trade.

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

*Coronavirus Response*

# Southwestern Operations Update

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative will continue to keep coronavirus mitigation measures in place through the end of 2020. “Based on the past several months and our current climate, it’s likely Illinois and CDC COVID mitigation measures will extend into 2021,” said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. “It makes sense to extend Southwestern’s current office and remote work arrangement into 2021 as well.”

In March, the cooperative took precautions to safeguard the health of employees and members and curb the spread of COVID-19. Protective measures included adopting CDC health and safety guidelines, observing social distancing protocols, wearing face coverings when appropriate, and reviewing safety measures with employees. Those

precautions have remained in place since spring.

Williams said the cooperative would reassess conditions in January 2021 and revise its plans or stay the course accordingly.

“We expect our lobbies and drive-up windows to remain closed through the end of 2020,” he said. “Our employees will continue to answer your calls, respond to your questions, and repair outages quickly and safely, just as they always do.”

Williams encouraged members to manage their accounts, report outages and make payments using the co-op’s online payment portal, by using the SWEC IL app, or by calling the cooperative at (800) 637-8667.

For the latest information, go to [www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com).



## Charge Your EV For Free

**Y**ou’re invited to recharge your EV free of charge at Holiday Inn Express Troy. From now through June 30, 2021, Southwestern Electric members may charge their EVs for free at the cooperative’s EV charging stations at Holiday Inn Express Troy, near I-70 Exit 18.

“Whether you’re spending the weekend or just passing through, our EV charging stations and Troy’s restaurants, hotels and parks will help you recharge before you hit the road,” said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. To recharge your EV at no cost, call or email Julie Lowe, EV

program coordinator, during office hours at (800) 637-8667 or [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com). She’ll provide you with an EV charging station passcode. You can enter the code at the co-op’s charging stations to recharge your EV for free.

Have friends or family who own EVs? For a limited time, we’re extending the *recharge free of charge* offer to EV owners lodging in Troy. Remind your visitors to ask for a charging code at the front desk when they check in to their hotel.

To request a code or learn more about Southwestern Electric’s EV program, contact Julie Lowe, program coordinator, at (800) 637-8667 or [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).

## FROM THE CEO



**E**ver wondered what it's like to sit behind the wheel of an electric vehicle? Questioned how they handle on the interstate or driving down a rural route? Have you read reviews, then wondered just how smooth, responsive and quiet a ride they *really* provide?

We'll help you answer those questions. With any luck, we'll help you answer them soon.

In September, Southwestern Electric took possession of a Tesla Model 3 EV. I am excited about this addition to our fleet. While it will see extensive use by our employees as a pool vehicle, just as importantly, it will help us answer questions posed by you. It's an EV educational tool.

In coming months, we'll have the car wrapped with a custom design to draw attention to its aerodynamic lines and 100-percent electric drivetrain. Our employees will heighten our region's awareness of electric vehicles each time they use the EV to visit members in our service area, and by answering questions when they're conducting business in one of our communities.

The Model 3 is the second part of a three-tiered approach to EV education.

The first segment of our EV education effort focused on the infrastructure we need to charge EVs. In June, Southwestern powered up two EV chargers in Troy. These chargers bridge a gap in charging infrastructure within our service area. They also promote commerce in one of our co-op communities by bringing motorists off I-55/I-70 at Holiday Inn Express Troy. With plenty of restaurants and hotels within walking distance of our charging stations, travelers can rest and recharge while their vehicle is recharging.

We launched the third segment of our EV education program last month. On October 1, we invited members to join our EV Pilot Program. The first 10 members who contacted Julie Lowe, Southwestern's energy manager and EV program coordinator, were given a Level 2 ChargePoint residential EV charger to install at home.

We couldn't predict how many members would show inter-

est in the program. The day after we opened the offer, all 10 chargers had been accounted for. The Pilot Program will deliver valuable insight into the charging habits of our EV owners. Equipped with this data, we can plan for the future and establish incentive rates that encourage charging during off-peak hours, when we can provide power more economically.

By spotlighting the benefits of EVs, we're doing our part to accelerate the transition from internal combustion engines to electric drivetrains. That evolution in transportation benefits co-op members, EV owners, and even people who will never drive an EV.

Increased EV ownership among Southwestern members benefits the co-op by increasing our energy sales. Each time you charge at home or at a commercial charger in our territory, you're investing in the cooperative. That revenue supports system improvements and helps us stabilize your electric rates. You're also taking a step to protect the environment. Preserving and improving the environment for our children and grandchildren should be a goal for all of us.

Which brings me back to your questions, and the educational opportunities offered by Southwestern's EV. The car is a tool we'll use to educate ourselves, our members, and our communities.

We will share our EV ownership and driving experiences with you in the pages of our magazine and through other forms of communication. In the future, and with any luck, soon, we will host EV Drive Days, where we can meet you, showcase a selection of EVs, and invite you to drive different electric vehicles—including the car owned by your cooperative.

My stance on EVs has changed over the past few years. That shift didn't happen overnight. My opinions changed through research, talking to EV owners, and by getting behind the wheel of different models and taking them on the road.

Seeing is believing. But experiencing is understanding. I want you to experience what it's like to drive an EV. But I will warn you now—if you drive one, be prepared to buy one. They're that impressive.

If you have questions about EVs or Southwestern's Model 3, feel free to email me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Bobby Williams, CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bobby Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "B" and "W".

bobby.williams@sweci.com

## MEMBER MAIL

### PARK PLACE

I wanted to thank you for the piece that you had in the September 2020 edition of *The Southwestern* on Drost Park in Maryville. It's a beautiful park. We're very proud of it in Maryville. I appreciate your words on page 3 reminding everyone that, even though it is an outdoor public place, we still encourage the following of CDC guidelines due to COVID—social distance, wash hands frequently, wear a mask when appropriate. In this strange year full of uncertainty, the Village of Maryville has strived to provide residents with an area to get outdoors and enjoy walking, biking, and fishing. Although our playgrounds were closed for a while at the direction of the governor, our parks have remained open throughout the pandemic.

The photographs of Drost Park are amazing. Thank you, again, for showing your readers and customers what a great place Maryville is.

—Mayor Craig Short, Village of Maryville



### WORDS AND PHOTOS

I look forward to *The Southwestern* magazine. You provide electrical technology information, safety suggestions, and interesting people stories. On the cover [of the September 2020 issue], your choice



of letter sizes and colors was perfect, with the blue background and the men and equipment.

My 76-year-old bifocaled eyes cannot read the

small black letters on the blue sky, easily, on page 2. The coneflowers are lovely, as well, on page 3. Your effort on the Inside & Out editorial was wasted on us old folks, because I could not read it. Small black letters on a dark blue sky (again). Page 14 and 15 [Members in Focus] were remarkable. I bet I may have known some of the people who sent the photos and where they lived, if I could have read the small print. Page 20 and 21: More coneflowers with a beautiful bird (what kind?). Maybe

someone will tell me how to get to Drost Park. “Getting There” directions in small letters could have been enlarged upward into a large empty space.

Page 22 is borderline on letter size and background color. Page 27 is a very good example of readable letter size, color, and the dark green that shows the white information very clearly!

I know that you are restricted to space in the mag, but the line must be drawn.

—Robert E. Travis, Worden

Editor's Note: Points well-made and well-taken, Robert. As you pointed out, balancing the demands of space, legibility and layout can be challenging. In this instance, we fell short. Our first priority should always be to provide easy-to-read information in an engaging fashion. We'll work to be more mindful of our priorities—and our readers' needs—as we move forward. As to the bird in question, it appears to be an American Goldfinch.



### WASHING MACHINE

The picture you have in the September issue of *The Southwestern* [Who~What~Where, p. 23] is a washing machine. We had one in our home for close to 25 years. My wife kept it in our laundry room. We bought it at one of my auctions, then we had it restored. It was awesome. Our grandkids loved

it and were always interested in how it worked.

Thank you for the photo.

—Tom & Kim Roniger, Greenville

### WOOD RIVER HISTORY

Enclosed is an article from a publication called *Springhouse*.

I received this magazine the first week in April. It has a story about the Wood River Massacre [The Moores of Madison County: A Pioneer and Civil War Saga, p. 5]. The monument was in your April publication [Who~What~Where, p. 21]. I enjoy your publication, *The Southwestern*.

—Mary Gayle Nevinger, Greenville



Editor's Note: You'll find *Springhouse* magazine online at [springhousemagazine.com](http://springhousemagazine.com).

# Co-op Board Elects Officers

During the board meeting held Thursday, Sept. 24, Southwestern Electric directors elected four members to serve as officers. The board of directors elected Ann Schwarm as president, Sandy Grapperhaus as vice president, Annette Hartlieb as secretary, and Jerry Gaffner as treasurer. The board conducts an annual election of officers during the first board meeting following the Annual Meeting of Members. This year's annual meeting was held Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville.



## **Ann Schwarm, President**

Ann Schwarm has served as a director since 1993 and acted as vice president of the board from 2010-2016. September marked the beginning of her fourth year as president. Schwarm brings to her role on the board a diverse professional background, including positions in agricultural communications, program

development, education and small-business management.

Schwarm recently retired after 21 years with the Regional Office of Education. She's gained additional board experience by serving on the First National Bank of Vandalia board of directors for 21 years and for four years on the Brownstown Community Unit School District Board. Schwarm is a 1979 graduate of the University of Missouri-School of Journalism.

Ann and her husband, Gene, live in rural Loogootee.



## **Sandy Grapperhaus, Vice President**

A lifelong local resident, Sandy Grapperhaus has been a member of Southwestern Electric for more than 30 years. She's served as a director since 2011 and acted as board secretary from 2013-2018. During her tenure, she's pursued an aggressive regimen of coursework, earning Credentialed

Cooperative Director designation from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"There is still a lot of work to do in regards to our aging infrastructure," Grapperhaus said. "My goal is to guide the co-op's growth and system improvements while remaining watchful of our budget."

Sandy Grapperhaus is the executive assistant at Korte Construction Co. in Highland. She also helps her husband, Dan, with their small farm between Troy and Collinsville.



## **Annette Hartlieb, Secretary**

For Annette Hartlieb, being involved in Southwestern Electric Cooperative is a family tradition. Hartlieb, who grew up on a farm north of New Douglas, was raised on Southwestern Electric lines and started attending co-op annual meetings as a child with her parents.

Hartlieb is the assistant regional superintendent of schools for the Regional Office of Education (ROE) #3, which serves Bond, Christian, Effingham, Fayette and Montgomery counties. Prior to serving as assistant regional superintendent, she was division administrator for ROE #3. Hartlieb was principal of Mulberry Grove Elementary School for six years and taught third grade at Mulberry for 11 years before accepting the principal's position.

She has served as a director since 2017.



## **Jerry Gaffner, Treasurer**

A Southwestern Electric member for more than 20 years, Jerry Gaffner served on the cooperative's Nominating Committee for three years before being elected to the board of directors in 2018.

Gaffner served as president of the Illinois Milk Producers' Association from 2002-2008, and as an elder on the Greenville First Christian Church board from 2003 to 2010.

Gaffner has also chaired the board of HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, and served on strategic planning committees at the University of Illinois and at Bond County Community Unit School District #2.

He resides on his farm northwest of Greenville with his wife, Sherri. They have three children, Jonah, Abby and Hannah.



# SOUTHWESTERN ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR 2021



## Co-op to Award \$10,000 in Academic Assistance

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power For Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$266,000 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 2021 for use in the fall 2021 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](http://sweci.com). 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 2021 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 U.S. Route 40 in Greenville), in a single envelope, by 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, February 12, 2021**.







## TIPS FROM THE JUDGES

- 1) Follow the instructions carefully. This includes selecting the appropriate application for your situation, gathering and properly assembling all of the required materials, minding the word count in the personal narrative and submitting everything in advance of the deadline.
- 2) Leave nothing blank. If any piece of required material is missing, or a single section is not completed, the application will receive a score of zero points. If a particular question is not applicable to your situation, you can mark it “N/A,” but do not skip the question entirely.
- 3) Focus the personal narrative. The topic of the personal narrative is not open-ended. Keep your narrative focused on answering the question at hand: How will you use your career/education to positively impact your community?
- 4) Leverage the cover letter. Let the judges know about your achievements, aspirations and what sets you apart from other candidates. If there’s something you want to say about yourself, and it doesn’t fit in the personal narrative, include it in the cover letter.
- 5) Allow ample time. Don’t wait until the last minute to start on your application. Each applicant will be asked to obtain several supplemental documents—including academic transcripts and attendance records—which take time to collect.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 1) The applicant (or the applicant’s parent/legal guardian) must be an active member of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. Southwestern Electric directors, 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 2021.
- 3) The entire application must be completed in full, and received with the appropriate supplementary materials, in advance of the application deadline, February 12, 2021.

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric has provided more than \$266,000 in scholarship funding, assisting 406 students.

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

On Account: If your account number is 20174001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

R FOR  
**Progress**



**SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM**

# Southwestern Electric Annual Meeting Spotlights Service in a Time of COVID-19, EVs and Gusewelle Retirement

An early voting option offered by Southwestern Electric Cooperative resulted in the organization's highest voter turnout in decades, while the co-op's annual meeting logged the lowest member attendance in 82 years—just as it was designed to do. “We’re an organization founded on democratic principles,” said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. “We wanted to encourage our members to participate in the election of directors, while keeping everyone safe in a time of COVID-19.”

In August, the cooperative's board of directors put measures in place to encourage early voting and curb the spread of COVID-19. Southwestern Electric members earned a \$50 bill credit by voting during the two weeks preceding the meeting. Members cast their ballots at drive-through polling stations the cooperative offered at its offices in Greenville, St. Jacob and St. Elmo. In total, 2,126 members claimed a bill credit for voting early.

By contrast, 35 members cast ballots the morning of the meeting, held Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville. Members were invited to vote and leave the grounds or pull into a parking area, where they could watch the business meeting from their vehicles. Podium addresses were broadcast through speakers and by short-range FM radio. About two dozen members remained for the meeting, which lasted 40 minutes.

About two dozen members attended Southwestern's business meeting held Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville.



“This is the year a virus stopped the world from spinning,” Williams told attendees. “A year when words like quarantine, social distancing and COVID-19 entered everyday conversation. When businesses closed, anxiety escalated, and hundreds of thousands of lives were lost to a disease that months earlier we’d never heard of,” he said.

“I’ve often said it’s during the darkest days your cooperative shines brightest. Recent months have underscored that point. We’ve seen Southwestern come together as a cooperative and a community. Meeting your needs during the outbreak has challenged us to think in new ways, to operate with new methods, to put our planning into practice, and to be the best version of ourselves.”

Williams told members that in cooperation with the city of Troy, the Troy, Maryville, St. Jacob and Marine regional chamber of commerce, and Holiday Inn Express Troy, Southwestern Electric installed two new electric vehicle (EV) charging stations near Exit 18 off I-55/70. “The public charging stations will draw commerce off the interstate and into our co-op community,” he said. “It’s a testament to the commitment of our crews and project partners that the charging stations launched on time despite COVID-19.”

He also delivered a report on the co-op’s new residential EV program. “By this time next year, we’ll offer incentive rates for residential electric vehicle

charging. For co-op members with EVs, that means a clean, quiet automobile charged at an economical rate from the comfort and convenience of your garage or driveway,” he said. “Each time you charge your EV at home, you’ll be investing in infrastructure that provides safe, reliable power for your house, your business, and your cooperative community.”

Williams reported that the co-op hit major milestones in infrastructure construction during the last year. “In May, we broke ground for Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s new Maple Grove Substation. Located near the I-270 and I-55/I-70 interchange north of Troy, Maple Grove will ensure reliability and reduce outage times for thousands of Southwestern Electric members. The substation is scheduled to go live in early 2021,” he said.

“Meanwhile, our Vandalia Substation has been providing power to Fayette County members since late last year. Built near Fayette County’s growing commercial district at the I-70 Vandalia exit, the substation limits service interruptions, reduces maintenance-related outages, and will accommodate future commercial and residential development. Taking care of our system so it takes care of you—seeing that it provides the power you need, safely, efficiently, when you need it—is what we’re here to do.”

Ann Schwarm, president of Southwestern Electric Cooperative, told members that co-op employees had

*Continued on next page >*



***“Meeting your needs during the outbreak has challenged us to think in new ways, to operate with new methods, to put our planning into practice, and to be the best version of ourselves.”***

Bobby Williams, CEO





***“Whether they were working from their own home offices, at the co-op’s offices, or in the field, the employees brought to work each day the same professionalism and work ethic we have all come to expect and appreciate.”***

Ann Schwarm, President

➤ *Continued from page 11*

worked creatively, collaboratively and safely to provide service in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak. “While it wasn’t a windstorm or ice on the lines that toppled poles, pulled down wires and created the crisis, it was still a crisis. The same mode of response was necessary,” she said. “Unless you wanted to walk into our building to pay your bill, you probably didn’t realize anything had changed when we closed the lobbies and the cooperative moved to a remote work force. The crews in the field simply carried on, performing essential tasks, as always, but with heightened attention to CDC safety precautions, keeping themselves safe and keeping the members safe,” Schwarm said. “Whether they were working from their own home offices, at the co-op’s offices, or in the field, the employees brought to work each day the same professionalism and work ethic we have all come to expect and appreciate.”

Following the president’s address, Southwestern Electric members, directors and employees recognized longtime director Richard Gusewelle, who was retiring from the board. “Rich has long been Southwestern’s unofficial ambassador,” said Schwarm. “Others knew our cooperative because they knew Rich. In his 36 years as a director of Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Rich served as vice president, and on committees addressing our policies and bylaws, labor, business development, scholarships, emerging technology, and member and community engagement. He earned Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certifications from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and closes his career on the board having earned the status of Director Gold, an honor held by only a few in the nation.”

Sandy Grapperhaus, vice president of Southwestern Electric, said Gusewelle



was steadfast and supportive when she joined the board in 2011. “It was a turbulent time for the co-op, with major decisions facing the board. But having Rich there, with his level-headed way of addressing matters, gave me confidence that we would make informed decisions and do what was right for our members,” she said. “We will miss his knowledge, honesty and wisdom.”

Gusewelle said when he was elected to the board in 1984, his first objective was to resolve issues with Southwestern Electric’s wholesale power contract. “At that time, our contract with Soyland Power Cooperative was forcing us to continually raise our rates. I felt challenged at that time to get on the board to do what I could to help.”

He pointed out that, with the support of the membership, Southwestern had successfully met many challenges in the years since. “When I’ve networked with

*Continued on next page >*



1) Brooke Scott, executive assistant, records proceedings at the business meeting. 2) Becky Spratt, member services representative, registers voters in St. Jacob. 3) Members pause for a photo while voting in St. Elmo. 4) Directors Sandy Grapperhaus (left) and Ann Schwarm present retiring director Richard Gusewelle with a service award (below) during his final meeting as a board member.

Opposite page (l-r): Mary Curry, staking engineer, Susan File, vice president of member services, and Jo Ellen Logue, member services representative, register voters in St. Jacob while members wait to cast their vote on Sept. 9.



***“When I’ve networked with other directors at national and regional meetings, I’ve been proud to represent Southwestern as a progressive co-op that remains on the cutting edge.”***

Rich Gusewelle, Director



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4



5

➤ *Continued from page 13*

other directors at national and regional meetings, I've been proud to represent Southwestern as a progressive co-op that remains on the cutting edge. I envision this approach continuing into the future," he said. "Thank you for allowing me to represent you for the past 36 years."

Following Gusewelle's address, members received election results. Southwestern Electric members elected one member from each of the cooperative's three voting districts to serve on the board of directors.

From District I, Marvin Warner of Pocahontas defeated candidates Mark Gusewelle, Arthur W. "Bill" Schnur and Chris Burcham, all of Edwardsville. Warner received 846 votes, Gusewelle received 816 votes, Schnur received 235 votes, and 174 votes were cast for Burcham.

Sandy Nevinger of Greenville and Annette Hartlieb of Vandalia were elected by acclamation to represent Districts II and III respectively.

Each director will serve a three-year term on the board. **S**

*Photos continue on page 26 ➤*

1) Mary Curry, staking engineer, greets a future member. 2) Members wait in line to vote at St. Elmo. 3) Susan File, vice president of member services, and Clay Snyder, mechanic, distribute signs the morning of the meeting. 4) Volunteers and employees record votes at the Bond County Fairgrounds. 5) Barb Frerker, member services representative, registers a voter at Greenville.



1



2



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4



5

1) Retired lineman and current member David Barbey casts his vote. 2) Rene Harnetiaux, work order coordinator, accepts a ballot in St. Jacob. 3) CEO Bobby Williams directs traffic in St. Elmo. 4) Carrie Knebel (center), vice president of human resources, and director Bill Jennings and his wife, Patty, offer directions at the meeting. 5) Debbie Whicker, member services representative, and Mary Curry, staking engineer, register voters in St. Elmo. 6) Members follow the business agenda at the annual meeting. 7) Linda Haberer, cashier/receptionist, assists a member in St. Jacob. 8) Kenny Grotefendt, Credentials & Election Committee member, accepts a ballot submitted the morning of the meeting.



6



7



8



This month we identify five power-hungry household items and share ways to feed them without emptying your wallet.

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

When it comes to comfort, there's no place like home. With the help of household appliances and home environmental systems, we can dial in data and create conditions to suit our personal preferences, morning, noon and night.

But that same technology can make us uncomfortable when it's time to pay our energy bills—particularly in winter and summer months.

If you notice spikes in your electric bills as temperatures rise and fall, here are five common culprits, and ways to offset that expense without sacrificing comfort.

### HEATING SYSTEMS

We couldn't weather Illinois' cold without an effective home heating system. But from December through February, the same system or appliance that takes the edge off winter is likely consuming more energy than any other system or appliance in your home. The



Use a programmable or smart thermostat to reduce your heating bills by lowering the temperature when you are away from home, and bumping it up to the temperature you're comfortable with shortly before you return home.

kilowatt-hour (kWh) range for running a heating system can be broad, with energy consumption varying widely by the type of system, size, manufacturer, and efficiency rating. Regardless of where your system lands on that scale, you can take steps to optimize its efficiency.

- Use a programmable or smart thermostat to reduce your heating bills by lowering the temperature when you are away from home, and bumping it up to the temperature you're comfortable with shortly before you return home.
- Schedule regular maintenance for your heating system to ensure that it is running at optimal efficiency.
- Consider replacing an older system with a new, high efficiency system, such as a heat pump.

### SPACE HEATERS

Space heaters can be a helpful supplement to your primary heating system. They allow you to save money





Don't rely on space heaters to warm your entire home. It is never more efficient to run more than one space heater, rather than your main heating system.

by setting your household thermostat at a lower temperature, while you rely on your space heater to make a smaller, more frequently used area warmer and more comfortable.

But don't rely on space heaters to warm your entire home. It is never more efficient to run more than one space heater, rather than your main heating system. If you opt to use space heaters, be aware of how much energy they use. A 1,500-watt space heater will consume 1.5 kWh for each hour that it runs. If used frequently, that energy will add up quickly.

Additionally, keep in mind that space heaters are fire hazards. They should never be left unattended. Read the manufacturer's guide, make sure you understand the appliance's limitations, and observe the safety precautions.

## WATER HEATERS

According to the Department of Energy, water heating can account for up to 18 percent of your home's energy use. The amount of energy your water heater consumes will vary by brand, size, and efficiency rating. The number of people in your home, your water temperature

preferences, and your appliances also impact water heater energy use.

You can reduce water heater energy use by:

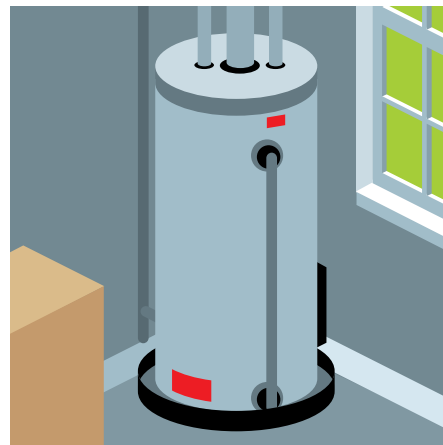
- Running your clothes washer on the cold setting whenever possible.
- Keeping showers short.
- Setting the temperature on your water heater no higher than 120 degrees F.

## COOLING SYSTEMS

We've just stepped into autumn, so the summer cooling season is months away—but these items are worth noting now as you review your 2020 energy bills and plan for 2021.

Like your heating system, the efficiency of your air conditioning unit will vary greatly by the make, model and size of the system or appliance. And just as your heating system probably consumes the lion's share of your energy budget in winter, your cooling system is probably the dominant factor in your summer electric bills. You can take simple steps to improve the efficiency of your cooling system.

- Schedule routine maintenance for your cooling system.
- Close vents in rooms that are not used frequently.



According to the Department of Energy, water heating can account for up to 18 percent of your home's energy use.

With most units ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 watts, a dehumidifier can consume a large amount of power.

- Use a programmable or smart thermostat to keep temperatures higher during hours you are away from home, and to lower the temperature shortly before you return home.
- Consider checking insulation levels in your attic. Adequate insulation will keep more of the sun's heat out of your home, so your cooling system will not have to work as hard.

## DEHUMIDIFIERS

A dehumidifier can be a valuable asset for keeping your home's humidity level in check. It can prevent the growth of mildew, eliminate odors, and make your living area more comfortable. But with most units ranging from 1,000 to 1,500 watts, a dehumidifier can consume a large amount of power. Here are steps you can take to reduce the operating costs.

- Be sure your dehumidifier is sized properly for the area it's serving.
- Close off the room in which you've placed your dehumidifier, so it isn't trying to serve a larger area than it can effectively accommodate.
- Set the timer on your appliance or set it to shut off at the desired humidity level.
- Replace older models with newer, more efficient models.

Household appliances and home environmental systems bring comfort and convenience to our lives. Being aware of your home's most power-hungry appliances and systems, and how to use those items effectively, will help you save valuable energy while lowering your monthly power bills.

*Have a question about energy efficiency? Contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).*

# *YOU SHOULD BE ALARMED*

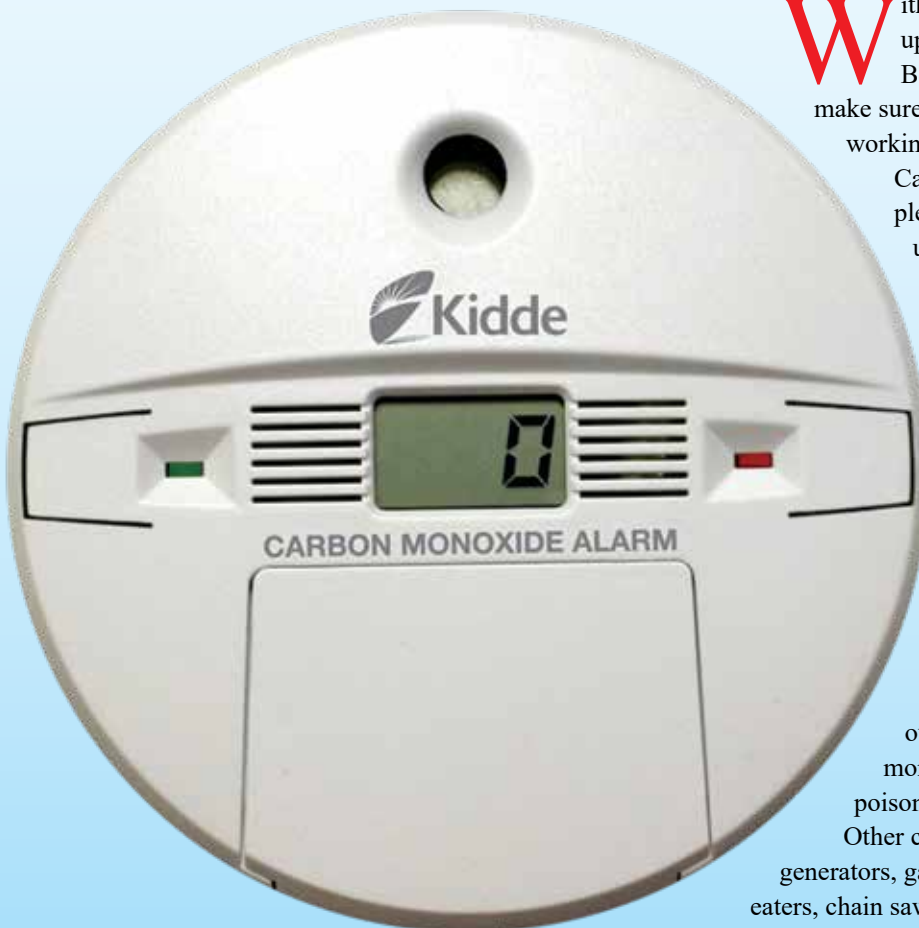
As heating season settles into Southwestern Illinois, take measures to protect your family from CO poisoning. Install detectors on every level of your home.

**W**ith winter just weeks away, many of us are firing up our furnaces for the first time since May. Before you use any fossil-fuel burning appliance, make sure your carbon monoxide (CO) detector is in working order.

Carbon monoxide, a gas produced by an incomplete burning of carbon-containing fuels, is an undetected threat in many homes. It has no color, taste or smell—and it kills more than 400 people in the United States every year. Most deaths occur during the winter heating season. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, each year about 20,000 Americans seek medical attention or lose a day of normal activity due to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Household appliances such as space heaters, gas ovens, dryers and furnaces emit carbon monoxide during regular use. Typically, vents safely channel carbon monoxide from an appliance or furnace to the outdoors. When an appliance vent leaks, carbon monoxide can seep into the home and pose a poisoning risk.

Other common sources of carbon monoxide include generators, gasoline-powered vehicles, lawn mowers, weed-eaters, chain saws and snow blowers, as well as charcoal grills and gas lanterns.



## What are the symptoms of CO poisoning?

Because carbon monoxide is odorless, colorless, and otherwise undetectable to your senses, you may not know you're being exposed. The initial symptoms of low to moderate carbon monoxide poisoning are similar to the flu (but without the fever). They include:

- Headache
- Fatigue
- Shortness of breath
- Nausea
- Dizziness

## High level CO poisoning results in progressively more severe symptoms, including:

- Confusion
- Vomiting
- Loss of muscular coordination
- Loss of consciousness
- Death

Symptom severity is related to both the carbon monoxide level and duration of exposure. If you think you're experiencing symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning, step outside into fresh air immediately. Then call emergency services using a cellular phone or from a neighbor's home to report your symptoms. If you stay in your home, you could lose consciousness and die.

## PREVENT CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING

- Install carbon monoxide detectors on every floor of your home. You can buy carbon monoxide detectors at most discount and hardware stores.
- Have your furnace, vents and fireplace inspected each fall by a professional.
- Don't use an oven or gas stovetop to heat your home.
- Don't leave a space heater running or the stove or fireplace burning while you're sleeping.
- Never let your car run in the garage, even if the garage door is open.

## Prevention is key

While carbon monoxide detectors are a useful tool and provide a vital layer of protection against CO poisoning, they're not your first line of defense. Your first step toward CO poisoning prevention is the proper use and maintenance of fuel-burning appliances.

Have your fuel-burning appliances—including oil and gas furnaces, gas water heaters, gas ranges and ovens, gas dryers, gas or kerosene space heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves—inspected by a trained professional at the beginning of every heating season. Make certain that flues and chimneys are connected, in good condition, and not blocked.

Choose appliances that vent their fumes to the outside whenever possible, have them properly installed, and maintain them according to manufacturers' instructions.

Read and follow the instructions that accompany any fuel-burning device. If you can't avoid using an unvented gas or kerosene space heater, carefully follow the precautions that come with it. Use the proper fuel and keep doors to the rest of the house open. Crack a window to ensure enough air for ventilation and proper fuel-burning.

## PROPER USE AND MAINTENANCE

You've installed detectors on every floor of your home. That's an important step toward protecting your family from CO poisoning. But don't let it lull you into a false sense of security. Your first line of defense should be the proper use and maintenance of fuel-burning appliances. Preventing carbon monoxide from becoming a problem in your home is better than relying on an alarm.

## DO THE HOMEWORK

When you shop for a CO detector, research your options and don't select a model solely by cost. Organizations such as Consumers Union (publisher of Consumer Reports), the American Gas Association, and Underwriters Laboratories (UL) can help you make an informed decision. Look for UL certification on any detector you purchase.

## IF YOUR CO DETECTOR SOUNDS AN ALARM

Never ignore a carbon monoxide alarm. If your alarm triggers, don't try to identify the CO source. Move everyone outside immediately. Then call emergency services, your fire department, or 911, using your cellular phone. Forget your phone inside? Don't go back for it. Make the call from a neighbor's home.

After you're outside, do a head count. Verify everyone is accounted for. Don't reenter your home until emergency responders have given you the all-clear. You could lose consciousness and die if you enter your home.

If the source of the CO is a malfunctioning appliance, replace it or have it repaired. Don't operate the appliance until it's been properly serviced by a qualified technician.

## OUT & ABOUT

**W**ant to explore a Southwestern Illinois wetland from the comfort of a paved trail? Include a detour to Silver Creek Preserve as part of your next trip to St. Clair County.

Tucked between farmland and creek-side forest south of Mascoutah, the wetlands at Silver Creek Preserve are encircled by a one-mile, paved walking trail. Along the loop you'll find interpretive signs, covered picnic tables, and an observation deck. The trail is flat, paved and easy to access from the preserve's parking area.

About 24 acres of prairie grass surround the wetland. The grasses are flanked by eight acres of woods. You'll also find a wildflower patch that covers more than an acre of the preserve. As you'd expect, Silver Creek is home to several species of turtles, frogs and snakes, and the preserve's wildflowers and grasslands attract a variety of birds.

There's no natural shade along the trail, and the area is open and flat, so Silver Creek Preserve isn't your pick of outings on a day you want to avoid wind, rain or direct sun.

While it's certainly worth a visit, we wouldn't describe Silver Creek Preserve as a singular destination. In much of Southwestern Electric's service area, you can experience similar environments closer to home. But if you're in St. Clair County, particularly near Mascoutah, and you'd like a little quiet time to commune with nature, Silver Creek Preserve is an excellent choice.



# Silver Creek Preserve





The preserve's wildflowers and grasslands attract raptors and finches, while wildfowl frequent the wetlands.



### GETTING THERE

Take Illinois Route 4 south to Mascoutah. Follow Route 4 through town. About 1.3 miles south of the Route 4/ Main Street (Highway 177) intersection, turn right on Grodeon Road. Follow Grodeon Road west a little over a mile. Turn left onto Brickyard Road/Lane. Follow Brickyard Road south about a quarter mile. Look for the Silver Creek Preserve sign. Turn right and follow the lane west a quarter mile into the Silver Creek Preserve parking area. Silver Creek Preserve is located at 6751 Brickyard Lane, Mascoutah, IL 62258.

Encircled by a paved walking trail, the wetlands at Silver Creek Preserve are home to turtles, frogs, snakes and molluscs.



## WHO • WHAT • WHERE

Illinois is blessed with an abundance of communities where art, history and hometown pride intersect. Case in point: Troy. Once a stagecoach stop on the National Road, standing at the confluence of Interstates 55 and 70, Troy remains a transportation hub today. You'd be hard pressed to visit Troy without learning a little about local history. It's written on the walls—literally.

Troy is home to two well-crafted wall murals. One represents the city's evolving role as a center of transportation. The other, a striking portrait of pitcher "Bullet" Bob Turley, served as our October challenge.

The puzzle kindled memories in several readers, including Smithboro native Larry Leidner, who recalled a historic moment featuring Turley's teammate, New York Yankees pitcher Don Larsen.

"[Larsen] pitched the only World Series no-hitter ever on October 8, 1956," Leidner wrote. "I remember it well because it happened on my 15th birthday! After the game ended, Yogi Berra jumped into his arms with a big bear hug. That was a very memorable day in my life!"

To those of you who shared your memories with us, thank you. And thank you for reading *The Southwestern*. We hope you'll give next month's puzzle a go. Meanwhile, here's what you had to say about our October challenge.

.....

The picture is Robert "Bob" Turley, also known as Bullet Bob for his 98-mph fastball. This is a hand-painted mural of him on the old Adams Store in Troy, Ill., located on Main Street. This building now houses The Trendy Cottage.

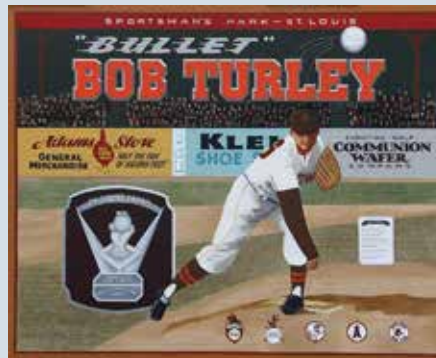
Bob was born in Troy, but was raised in East St. Louis, and the insert on the mural explains his professional baseball background.

In 1958 he led the American League in wins, was named the World Series MVP, won the Hickok Belt, and won the Cy Young Award which is also noted on the mural.

—*Yvonne Rieger, Troy*

I always enjoy seeing this mural of "Bullet" Bob Turley in downtown Troy on the side of The Trendy Cottage. Brings back fond memories of simpler days years ago when collecting baseball cards was a favorite pastime of me and my brothers.

—*Terry Blair, Maryville*



Who am I? Bob Turley, who had his best years with the Yankees. Legend has it he was able to pick up off-speed pitches from the bench and then whistle to Mantle to tip him off.

—*Robert Gordon, Mason*

Bob Turley from Troy, Ill. He played 12 seasons of Major League Baseball. He pitched one game for the St. Louis Browns in 1951 and then 10 games in 1953.

In 1954 the Browns became the Baltimore Orioles and Turley went

14-15 and made the All-Star team. He was traded to the New York Yankees in November 1954. In 1955 he went 17-13 for the Yankees and made the All-Star team again.

In 1958 he won the CY Young Award, was an All-Star, and finished second in the Most Valuable Player Award voting with a 21-7 record and 19 complete games.

—*Rich Schardan, Maryville*

I believe that is a picture of Bob Turley. There is a mural on the wall of the old Adams building here in Troy. As a child I lived down the street from his mother.

—*Sue Lindsey, Troy*

The mural featured in your October 2020 Who-What-Where column can be found on an old building on South Main Street in Troy, Ill. Pictured is "Bullet" Bob Turley, who was born in Troy and grew up in East St. Louis.

Bob was a major league baseball pitcher from 1951 to 1963, known for a fastball once clocked at 98 mph. He debuted with the St. Louis Browns and played for four other MLB teams.

In 1958, while pitching for the New York Yankees, he won 21 games and was named winner of the American League Cy Young Award, the World Series MVP, *The Sporting News* Pitcher and Player of the Year, and was awarded the Hickok Belt as the top professional athlete of the year.

—*Bill Malec, O'Fallon*

Photo is of Bob Turley who pitched for the New York Yankees and the Baltimore Orioles from 1951 to 1963. The photo is on the north side of the Trendy Cottage building in downtown Troy, Ill.

—*Darrol Gasawski, Troy*

**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*.



WHERE  
ARE WE?

# Comfort Food

*5 easy casseroles to warm your spirits as temperatures fall.*

## ZUCCHINI SURPRISE CASSEROLE

### Ingredients

- 1 pound pork sausage
- 4 medium zucchini (1½ - 2 pounds) cut into ½ inch chunks
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 1 (6 ounce) package chicken flavored stuffing mix
- ⅓ cup butter or margarine melted

### Directions

1. Brown sausage and drain.
2. Add zucchini to the sausage.
3. Combine soup and sour cream and add to sausage mixture.
4. Mix together contents of stuffing package and melted butter.
5. Spoon half of the stuffing mix into greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
6. Spread the sausage mixture over the stuffing.
7. Spoon on the remaining stuffing mix.
8. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until top is golden brown.

Corn & Macaroni Casserole





## FARMER'S CASSEROLE

### Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- 10 ounces egg noodles
- 1 cup Velveeta cheese cubed
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can cream style corn
- ¼ teaspoon salt

### Directions

1. Brown and drain ground beef.
2. Cook noodles according to directions and drain.
3. Combine beef with noodles.
4. Mix in cheese, soups, corn, and salt.
5. Put mixture in greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
6. Bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

## SPINACH-SAUSAGE CASSEROLE

### Ingredients

- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen leaf spinach thawed
- 1 cup celery coarsely chopped
- ½ cup onion finely chopped
- 1½ cups coarse bread crumbs
- 1 egg beaten
- 1 pound sausage browned
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ cup Swiss cheese coarsely shredded

### Directions

1. Combine all ingredients except cheese.
2. Place in greased 2 quart baking dish and sprinkle cheese on top.
3. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until the tip of a knife inserted in the center comes out clean.

## COWBOY CASSEROLE WITH TATER TOTS

### Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 can whole kernel corn drained
- 1 can cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese divided
- ½ cup milk
- 4 tablespoons sour cream
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 4 cups tater tots

### Directions

1. Brown ground beef and drain if necessary.
2. Mix in corn, condensed soup, 1½ cups of cheese, milk, sour cream, onion powder, and pepper.
3. Place half of the tater tots in greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
4. Pour the beef mixture over the tater tots.
5. Top with remaining tater tots and remaining ½ cup of cheese.
6. Bake uncovered at 350° for 25 minutes.

## CORN & MACARONI CASSEROLE

### Ingredients

- ½ cup butter melted
- 1 can cream style corn
- 1 can whole kernel corn with juice
- 1 cup macaroni uncooked
- 8 ounces Velveeta cheese

### Directions

1. Mix together all ingredients and put in 9 x 9 inch baking dish.
2. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes uncovered.
3. Bake an additional 30 minutes covered.

*Sprinkle with panko bread crumbs for a little crunch on top.*

This month's recipes are courtesy of 4-H House Alumni Association's *Nurture the Future @ 805 4-H House Anniversary Cookbook* (spinach-sausage casserole), Edwardsville Garden Club's *Favorite Recipes* (corn & macaroni casserole), Fayette County Museum *35th Anniversary Cookbook* (cowboy casserole with tater tots and zucchini surprise casserole), and Greenville Regional Hospital Auxiliary's *Home Town Favorites* cookbook (farmer's casserole).



Above: Annette Brown, meter technician, directs traffic in St. Elmo. Upper right: Jessica Whitehead, member services representative, registers voters in Greenville.

Right: Becky Jacobson, chief financial officer, catches up with her father, Southwestern member Bernie Obermark, before the business meeting. Far right: An EV lands front-row parking for the meeting.



Below: Southwestern employees direct traffic the morning of the meeting. Lower right: Brian Mills, staking engineer, guides members into the St. Jacob warehouse for early voting.



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The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization, and the exempt status for federal income tax purposes, have not changed during the preceding twelve months. Extent and nature of circulation: the 23,000+ members of SWECEI. Issue date for circulation data below: September 2020.

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A large fountain with multiple jets of water spraying upwards, creating a dense curtain of water. In the background, an American flag is prominently displayed, along with other flags. The scene is set outdoors with trees visible in the background.

A fountain guards the colors on Highland's historic square.

## THE FINAL FRAME

