

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2022 • VOLUME 74 • ISSUE 8



## **ANNUAL MEETING EDITION**

- Official Notice of the 84th Annual Meeting of Members
- Report for the Fiscal Year 2021

*Southwestern Electric Cooperative provides energy to 24,000 members in communities throughout Southwestern Illinois and the St. Louis-Metro East.*

*As a not-for-profit utility, Southwestern Electric works to reduce the cost of service by encouraging residential, commercial and industrial development within its service area, dividing the fixed cost of service by a larger membership base.*

*Southwestern Electric Cooperative is guided by the premise that a member owned and locally operated utility should serve the best interests of our families, neighbors and communities.*



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## SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

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Pictured: Linemen Braden Clark (front cover) and Tyler Kunz (opposite) repair damage near Ramsey after tornadoes snapped poles and downed lines in December 2021.

## ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

# Official Notice of the Annual Meeting

The 84th Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative members will be held at Highland Middle School in Highland, Illinois, on Saturday, September 10, 2022. The business meeting, beginning at 10 a.m., will take action on the following matters:

1. Roll call: Reporting on the number of members present in order to determine if a quorum is met.
2. Election of directors.
3. Reading of the Official Annual Meeting Notice and proof of due publication and mailing thereof (or the waiver or waivers of the Notice, as the case may be).
4. Reading of the unapproved minutes from the previous Annual Meeting and taking of necessary action thereon.
5. Presentation, consideration, and acting upon the reports of officers, directors and committees.
6. Unfinished business.
7. New business.
8. Announcement of election results.
9. Adjournment.

Pursuant to the election of three directors (one from each voting district), the members listed below have been presented as candidates by the Nominations Committee. Candidate names are listed in the order they'll appear on the ballot. Ballot order was determined by a random drawing.

DISTRICT I (Macoupin, Madison, and St. Clair Counties): Unopposed incumbent Sandy Grapperhaus.

DISTRICT II (Bond, Clinton, and Montgomery Counties): Challengers Bruce Unterbrink and Stacey Sidwell, and incumbent Ted Willman.

DISTRICT III (Clay, Fayette, Effingham, Marion, and Shelby Counties): Challenger Stacy Alwardt and incumbent Ann Schwarm.

Voting will be offered at Southwestern Electric's Greenville office Aug. 26 – Sept. 9 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. (with hours extended to 7 p.m. on Aug. 31 & Sept. 8); at the cooperative's St. Jacob warehouse Aug. 30 & Sept. 7 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.; at the St. Elmo warehouse Sept. 1 & Sept. 6 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.; and on Annual Meeting Day, Saturday, Sept. 10, at Highland Middle School, 2813 State Route 160, Highland, Ill.

Members who present the registration card found on the back cover of this publication will receive an added \$10 bill credit.

For additional voting and bill credit information see page 24.

Annette Hartlieb  
Board Secretary



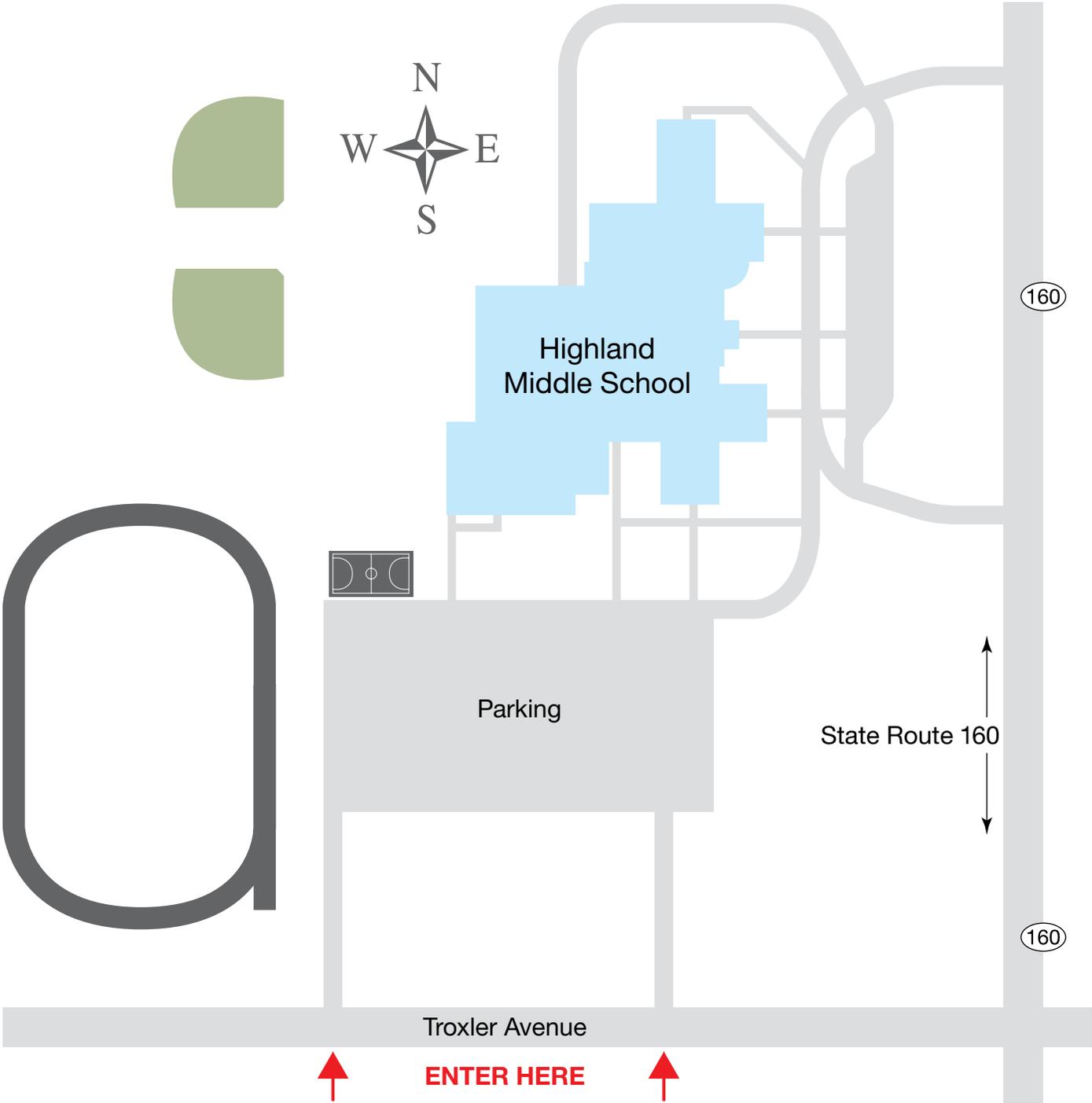
Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Greenville, Illinois

July 20, 2022

# Annual Meeting Map

The 84th Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative members will be held at Highland Middle School, located at 2813 State Route 160, Highland, Illinois.

Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Susan File, vice president of member services, at [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com) or (800) 637-8667, ext. 5924.



# Highland Middle School Venue for 84th Annual Meeting of Members

Contributed by Susan File, Vice President of Member Services

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative's 84th Annual Meeting of Members will bring a new venue, new activities and many other changes to our co-op's time-honored tradition.

We will offer early voting in a drive-through format 10 days prior to the annual meeting at our Greenville office, beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 26. We will offer two evenings for drive-through voting in each of the three districts. Members will be able to vote the morning of annual meeting **ONLY** at the meeting and **NOT** in the other two district locations. Why? Because turnout at Greenville during normal business hours and for the two evenings in each district was wildly successful while member turnout on the Saturday morning of annual meeting at the two remote locations over a three-hour period was scarce.

Regardless of whether you vote early, during the day, during one of the evening registration events, or the day of annual meeting, the bill credits will remain the same. You will receive a \$30 bill credit if you use your pre-printed registration card (which is the opposing side of the mailing address on this magazine) and a \$20 bill credit if you choose not to use your pre-printed registration card when registering.

**Venue.** So, what is planned for this year? Well, the meeting will still be held on the first Saturday following Labor Day as it has been the past several decades, which is Saturday, Sept. 10. And it just so happens that there is some truth in the old adage that sooner or later, everything old is new again. Decades ago, the meeting location rotated amongst our three districts. We are on the move....to a new location for this year's annual meeting. This year's meeting will be held at the Highland Middle School located at 2813 State Route 160, Highland, Ill.

Why a new location you ask? We are on the move to revitalize and refresh our meeting to garner more member involvement and to encourage new and varied perspectives in response to questions our members are asking of us. We will have room for an electric or hybrid vehicle car show, solar installers, live line safety demonstrations, and more. We want

to provide a venue for you to ask the questions you may have about some of the newer technologies, cars, and programs and interact with us to learn best practices and lessons we've discovered along the way. And what better location for learning than a school? Highland Middle School offers convenient parking, large meeting rooms, outdoor space for a food truck or maybe two, and inside seating areas for dining and the business meeting.

**Food, refreshments and door prizes.** That's another important piece to this meeting. Southwestern Electric will kick off the day at 8 a.m. We'll allow a couple of hours for members to register and vote if they haven't already done so before our business meeting starts at 10 a.m. A "smart" gift will be given to the first 100 memberships that attend the meeting at the school. Limit one gift per membership. Members and non-members alike are invited to look over the electric and hybrid vehicles at the car show, watch the live line safety demonstration, speak with one of the solar installation companies on hand, and visit with us over coffee and doughnuts before the meeting. A ribeye sandwich meal will be available for purchase after the meeting from a local food truck vendor.

**Election.** The annual meeting is an opportunity to exercise your vote for representation in your district on the cooperative board. Attending the meeting also gives you the opportunity during the business meeting to share and hear information about cooperative matters, ask questions, and make your voice heard in the presence of other members of your cooperative. So how does one become a director candidate? Glad you asked.

The cooperative's service territory is divided into three districts. District I entails Montgomery, Madison, and St. Clair Counties. District II entails Macoupin, Bond, and Clinton Counties. District III entails Shelby, Fayette, Effingham, Marion, and Clay Counties. There are three directors per district comprising the nine-member board. Each year, one seat from each district is open for election. Members meeting the qualifications to become a director as stated in the bylaws

*Continued on next page >*

# Annual Meeting Agenda

Registration available 8 a.m. to 10 a.m.  
Business meeting begins at 10 a.m.

Call to Order & Welcome .....	Ann Schwarm, Board President
Invocation .....	Jerry Gaffner, Board Treasurer
Pledge of Allegiance .....	Ann Schwarm
Introduction of Directors, CEO & Attorney .....	Ann Schwarm
Report of Credentials & Election Committee .....	Committee Chairperson
Report of Nominations Committee .....	Committee Chairperson
Election of Directors .....	Michael Hertz, Attorney
Notice of Meeting and Proof of Mailing .....	Annette Hartlieb, Board Secretary
Approval of 2021 Meeting Minutes .....	Ann Schwarm
Treasurer’s Report .....	Jerry Gaffner, Board Treasurer
Chief Executive Officer’s Report .....	Bobby Williams, CEO
President’s Report .....	Ann Schwarm
Unfinished Business .....	Ann Schwarm
New Business .....	Ann Schwarm
Announcement of Election Results .....	Credentials & Election Committee Chairperson
Adjournment of Business Meeting .....	Ann Schwarm

> *Continued from page 6*

may contact one of three Nominating Committee members from their respective district and ask for consideration to become a candidate. Members nominated at the May 26 Nominating Committee meeting or who successfully petition to become a director candidate by the June 27 deadline by securing signatures from 15 or more distinct memberships and are approved by the board will be officially voted on by the entire membership (and not just by the members of the district they reside in).

In contested elections, directors will be elected by plurality vote in each district. In uncontested elections, directors will be elected by acclamation as per the bylaws. Votes per candidate are announced during the business meeting. Proxy voting is not accommodated in our bylaws.

Please bear in mind that as a democratic organization, each membership is allowed one vote. If the membership is joint or individual, only one vote can be cast per membership. If the membership has one or 101 accounts under a membership, only one vote can be cast per membership. Authorized users, designated by AU after their name on the registration card, are not allowed to cast the vote on behalf of the membership. We also cannot accept a signed registration card from someone other than the member of record for purposes of voting and/or securing a bill credit.

*Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Susan File, vice president of member services, at (800) 637-8667 or [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com).*

# Meeting Minutes

## 83rd Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative Members September 11, 2021

**T**he 83rd Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative Members was held on Saturday, Sept. 11, 2021, at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville, Illinois. Notice of the Annual Meeting was given to the members in accordance with the cooperative's bylaws.

At 10 a.m., Board President Ann Schwarm called the business meeting to order. The invocation was given by Director Jerry Gaffner, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

President Schwarm introduced her fellow directors, Chief Executive Officer Bobby Williams, and Corporate Counsel Michael Hertz from the law firm of Lucco, Brown, Dawson, and Hertz. Director Jared Stine and Board Secretary Annette Hartlieb were absent from the meeting. Director Ted Willman was appointed secretary pro tempore.

Hal Langham, chairperson of the Credentials and Election Committee, reported that the quorum was met for the meeting.

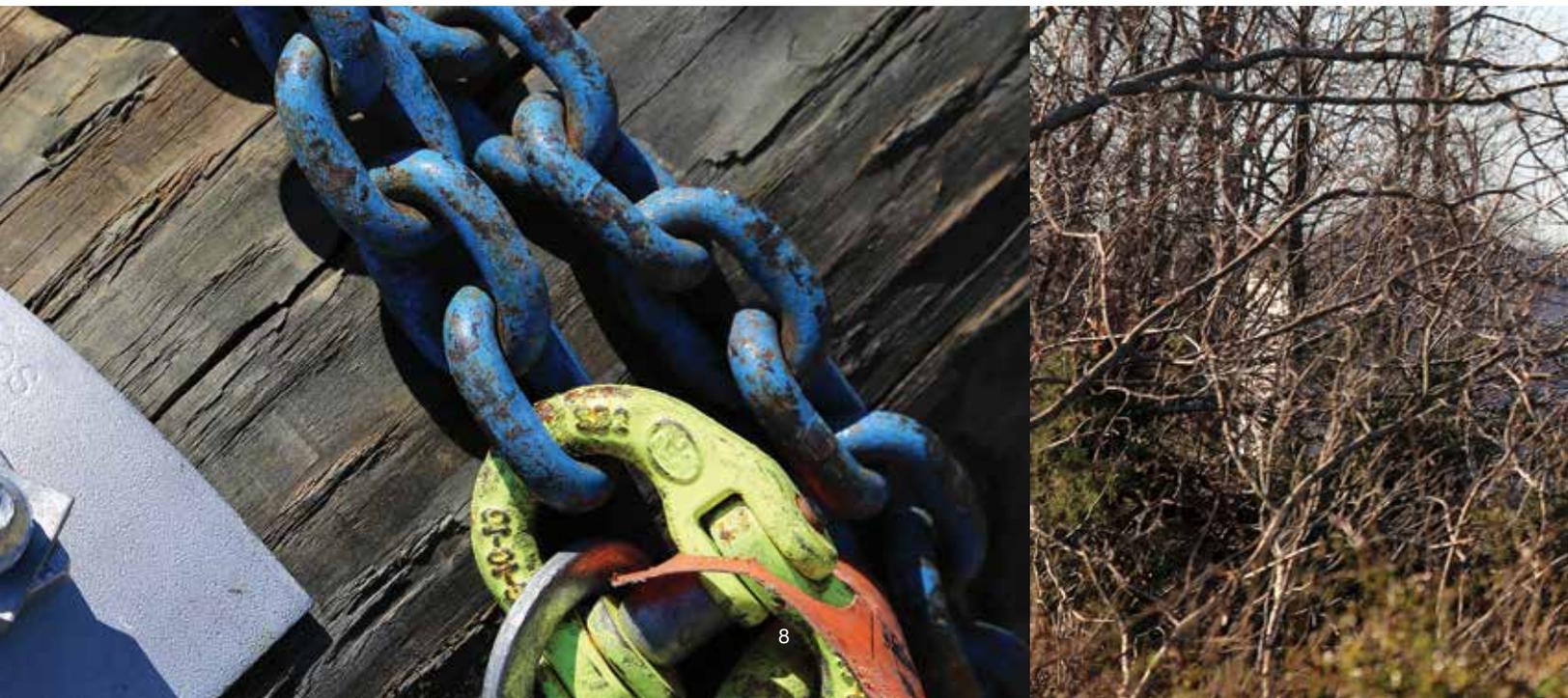
The next order of business was the election of three members to the Board of Directors. Each would be elected to serve a three-year term, beginning on Sept. 11, 2021. The term of each elected Director would end on the date of the 2024 Annual Meeting or when a qualified successor could be duly appointed. Chairperson pro tempore Joe Lawson read the Nominations Committee report. He stated that on May 27, 2021, the members of the Nominations Committee

met to nominate candidates for the Board of Directors. The candidates nominated were as follows: Bill Jennings and Phil Hocher in District I; Bruce Unterbrink and Jerry Gaffner in District II; Jared Stine in District III. With no competition in District III, Mike Willman made a motion to elect Jared Stine Director for District III by acclamation. The motion was seconded by Dan Grapperhaus and carried.

Attorney Hertz stated that the 2021 nine-member Credentials and Election Committee, consisting of three active members representing each district, was officially appointed on July 29, 2021. The Credentials and Election Committee was duly informed of their responsibilities on Aug. 26, 2021. Voting was conducted at the Bond County Fairgrounds between the hours of 9 a.m. and 10 a.m., and additionally at the co-op's branch facilities located in St. Jacob and St. Elmo. Absentee voting was offered at the cooperative's Greenville headquarters Aug. 27 through Sept. 10 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with hours extended to 7 p.m. on Sept. 1 and 9. Absentee voting was also available at the co-op's St. Jacob warehouse Aug. 31 and Sept. 8 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m., and at the St. Elmo warehouse Sept. 2 and Sept. 7 from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Attorney Hertz stated that there were no proposed amendments to the bylaws to bring before the membership this year.

President Schwarm read the Official Notice of the Annual Meeting and provided proof of its mailing. The minutes of the 82nd Annual Meeting of Members, which was held in



Greenville on Sept. 12, 2020, were printed in the Official Notice. Mike Willman made a motion to approve the 2020 Annual Meeting minutes as reported in the Official Notice with no corrections, additions, or comments. The motion was seconded by Bruce Unterbrink and carried.

Treasurer Jerry Gaffner announced that the 2020 Treasurer's Report had been published with the Official Notice, in accordance with the cooperative's bylaws. He reported strong margins of \$7.9M in 2020 and confirmed the cooperative was in compliance with all provisions of the loan agreements with their lender.

During the CEO's Report, Chief Executive Officer Bobby Williams highlighted past, present and future infrastructure plans. He discussed EV charging stations, reported on the co-op's residential EV program, and reported on several infrastructure projects that will help ensure reliability, future growth and reduce outage times for members.

President Ann Schwarm gave her report to the membership on behalf of the Board of Directors. In April, the Board of Directors opted to reinstate health and safety measures that were implemented for the 2020 Annual Meeting. President Schwarm shared several statistics, including the number of members that voted in this year's election. Next, she discussed the results of the 2019 cost-of-service study and announced a membership-wide rate adjustment that will be revenue neutral. She noted that early next year, members will

receive a more detailed, informative bill that will break out the cost of service.

President Ann Schwarm asked if there was any unfinished or new business to discuss. Hearing none, Credentials and Election Committee Chairman Hal Langham came forward and announced the election results.

Langham stated that the election was fairly and impartially conducted. In District I, Bill Jennings received 1,791 votes, and Phil Hocher received 593 votes. In District II, Bruce Unterbrink received 1,147 votes, and Jerry Gaffner received 1,220 votes. In District III, Jared Stine who was re-elected by acclamation received 2,255 votes. Langham certified that Bill Jennings had been elected as director in District I and Jerry Gaffner had been elected as director in District II.

With no further business to come before the membership, the meeting adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Ted Willman  
Secretary Pro Tempore





# *Building Bridges*

Report from Board President Ann Schwarm

**Y**our co-op has a history of building bridges. Historically, we built them to span the divides between darkness and light, manual labor and an energy-assisted agriculture, and to shelter our members from biting cold and brutal heat—providing comfort, safety and security in their stead.

We're still in the business of building bridges today. We still use wood, steel, engineering and ingenuity to improve the lives of our members.

But some of the divides we cross are a bit different these days. Today, we're spanning the gap between the organization we were and the cooperative we're growing to be.

## **TROUBLED WATERS TO SURE FOOTING**

There's a quote widely credited to Winston Churchill that goes, "A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity; an optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty." As I reflect on years past and the major difficulties faced by our cooperative, I am thankful for the optimists who prevailed. Many of Southwestern's greatest challenges have served as signposts that pointed the way forward.

I joined the board in 1993. It was a turbulent time. Extraordinary cost overruns at Clinton Power Station, in Clinton, Ill., resulted in ever-escalating wholesale power prices passed along to Soyland Power Cooperative members—

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A tall metal power transmission tower stands in a field at sunset, with power lines stretching across the sky. The scene is bathed in a warm, golden light from the setting sun, creating a hazy atmosphere. The tower is a lattice structure, and the power lines are visible against the sky. The foreground shows a field of crops, possibly corn, and a line of trees in the distance.

*“We’re spanning the gap  
between the organization  
we were and the cooperative  
we’re growing to be.”*

> *Continued from page 10*

including Southwestern Electric. Resolving the Soyland contract was at once an overwhelming issue and a galvanizing challenge for Southwestern's board of directors.

The board, management and employees worked tirelessly under the leadership of then-President Alan Libbra and General Manager Gary Wobler to extricate Southwestern Electric from the project. Other Illinois co-ops followed in our footsteps—but Southwestern was the first to accomplish what many thought to be an impossible task.

After leaving Soyland, we signed a new wholesale power contract with Cinergy Corp., Cincinnati, Ohio, that allowed us to reduce rates 20 percent over four years. It was a defining moment for Southwestern Electric. I was honored to be part of the decision-making during that dynamic period—a bridge between what was and what would be—in your cooperative's history.

Later, during a decline in our national economy, your co-op was called on to navigate the waters of a faltering energy market. We drew on our commitment, resolve and faith in the cooperative model to build new bridges and move forward. Which finds us where we are today: economically sound and secure, in one of the most financially stable periods in our organization's history.

## **NEW CHALLENGES, NEW OPPORTUNITIES**

Southwestern's distribution system was built over time—84 years and counting. Improving our aging electric system also takes time—and money. To maintain the level of exceptional service and reliability that are our hallmarks, your board has prioritized projects throughout Southwestern's system that will improve power quality and reliability, and benefit our membership as a whole.

We're addressing these projects in a matter that is timely, measured and economically responsible. We've developed

a strategic plan to address your cooperative's current and future needs in terms of energy, infrastructure and expertise. Part of that plan entailed analyzing growth, forecasting demands on our system, and prioritizing improvements and additions accordingly.

Your co-op's strategic plan is a living document that balances long-range, comprehensive objectives with immediate, changing, well-defined needs. During the drafting of our plan, your directors gave voice to the member-priorities of their respective areas, while never losing sight of the membership as a whole.

Because that's what we do. That's what a cooperative is. We're a community. We're a group of people working together to accomplish what we couldn't achieve alone.

We're building a bridge from today to tomorrow—developing plans and deploying infrastructure that will carry us from what is to what will be.

## **HONORING OUR ARCHITECTS**

None of what you see today would be possible without the work of those who came before us. Since we last met, two retired Southwestern directors who led our organization through some its most formative years were lost to us.

Alan Libbra, who served 36 years on Southwestern's board of directors—30 of them as president—passed away shortly after last year's annual meeting. Alan led the cooperative out of the dark days of Soyland and into an era of stable rates. He lived the cooperative model and made certain every member's voice was heard.

In May, longtime director Barb Tedrick passed away. Barb was a steady, reliable, no-nonsense leader who spoke quietly and confidently on behalf of the people she was elected to represent. Barb always put your needs first. And she reminded her fellow directors to do the same.

*“With your help, there’s no divide we can’t cross. We’re a cooperative. Everything we are, past, present and future, we are because of you.”*

We miss our friends and colleagues, but their work is with us still. Their legacy of leadership lives on in the cooperative we have today.

## **BUILDING BRIDGES**

The pandemic changed the way we do business. Some of those changes were temporary. While Southwestern's offices were closed, our employees fielded your questions and responded to your calls from home offices in communities across our service area. They've since returned to our buildings in Greenville, St. Jacob and St. Elmo.

Other changes endure. Tools and technology which allowed our employees to work, communicate and serve you during the pandemic are still in use today.

Some of the strategies we adopted during the pandemic will continue as a blending of old ways and new—including the look and feel of your annual meeting of members.

During the pandemic, out of concern for your health and safety, we felt compelled to forgo the age-old format of your annual meeting. I believe we all felt the loss of something akin to a family tradition. We missed seeing each other and reaffirming the ties that bind us as a cooperative and a community.

In 2020 and 2021, we adopted a meeting format that allowed you to participate in the cooperative's democratic process from the safety and convenience of your automobile. You turned out in record numbers, with many new and longtime members voting for the first time.

What we initially viewed as a time-honored tradition lost became insight and opportunity gained. We engaged with you in a manner that was new and unconventional, but effective, and obviously welcome. While keeping a safe distance, we closed the gap between our co-op and many members we'd never met face to face.

We built a bridge that covered the distance between where we were and where you needed us to be.

This year finds the residents of Southwestern Illinois once again gathering in churches, schools, and at family and community events. Your board of directors views 2022 as a time to rekindle our cooperative's annual tradition while honoring lessons learned. We're offering annual meeting options that leave how and when you participate up to you.

You can continue to vote as you have in recent years, quickly and efficiently casting your ballot from the comfort of your car.

Or you can gather with us on September 10 at Highland Middle School to enjoy a morning of camaraderie and community with cooperative friends and neighbors.

Of course, you can do both—vote early then drop by on the morning of the meeting to share time with us and hear election results.

The important point is that you participate. That you become part of the conversation. That you lend your perspective to the practices, principles and ideas that shape our cooperative.

Help us build bridges. Whether at the meeting or during the days and weeks that follow, let us know what you hope for, and what you need from your cooperative.

Help us cover the distance between where we are, and where you need us to be. With your help, there's no divide we can't cross. We're a cooperative. Everything we are, past, present and future, we are because of you.

Thank you for being the voice and vision behind every mile of line, every light that shines, every bridge we build, everything we do.

I look forward to seeing you in September.

Sincerely,



Ann M. Schwarm, President  
Board of Directors  
Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc.



# Changes

Report from CEO Bobby Williams

**L**ooking back over my columns from the past several years, one point became abundantly clear: We were due some stormy weather. Reports of system damage related to ice and wind were conspicuously absent from recent year-end reviews. Nature had granted us a time of grace.

In our industry, you learn nature's grace never lasts. That's why we plan and prepare.

That planning and preparation has served our cooperative well. It's helped us weather storms you've seen, and just as importantly, some you haven't.

## **LONG WAIT, SHORT SUPPLY**

As your accountable energy partner, we work to resolve issues before they affect you. That's why you see new substations and power lines appearing in our service area. We aren't

waiting for your demands to exceed our ability to supply you with energy. As our system grows, we analyze, forecast, plan, prepare and build. We invest in poles, wire, transformers and technology—the parts that make up the machine that is our distribution system—and deploy them accordingly.

But what if we didn't have parts for the machine?

There'd be less maintenance, less construction, and a mechanism that operated far less efficiently.

Since 2020, the slow-brewing storm of supply chain failures dogging other areas of the economy has been gathering in the utility industry. Some materials once readily available are now in short supply. Others have long intervals between order and delivery.

How have those issues impacted the quality and reliability of the power we deliver to you?

They haven't.

Maintenance foreman Rob Nesbit repairs a downed line in Fayette County after tornadoes damaged Southwestern's system in December 2021.



Because we've planned for them.

Nearly five years ago, your board of directors and management team began drafting a comprehensive strategic plan to address virtually every aspect of our operation. Part of that plan entailed analyzing and forecasting member growth, assessing our existing distribution system, and identifying the immediate and long-term improvements that would best serve you. The plan afforded us the opportunity to order many mission-critical infrastructure components before we needed to deploy them.

We've adjusted our purchasing schedule to accommodate long lead times, built those into our maintenance and construction schedules, and updated our timelines to reflect project priorities, account for parts availability, and balance our workload.

Since our plan outlines projects for the next five years and beyond, we have the ability to order materials well

ahead of the work. It's a different way of doing things, to be sure. Conventional practices call for frequent and timely materials ordering. The approach demands less space in our warehouses and pole yards. Since supply chain issues surfaced, we've taken a new tack. We order materials months in advance of major projects and fill out our inventory, so we're sure to have the project components we need, when we need them.

You've seen the results of that planning and preparation. Throughout the pandemic and in the months since, we've continued to complete key infrastructure improvements, maintain our system, make storm repairs, build new substations and construct new lines to ensure power quality and reliability, system-wide.

## **STORM STORIES**

Even the stoutest distribution system doesn't fare well in the  
*Continued on page 16 >*

*“In our industry, you learn nature’s grace never lasts. That’s why we plan and prepare.”*

> *Continued from page 15*

face of severe storms. Over the last 365 days, we've seen more than our share of disagreeable weather.

On Dec. 10, 2021, a series of storms spawned tornadoes that leveled timber, lopped off utility poles and carried away spans of wire to parts unknown. Our engineering and operations teams were watching the weather and ready to respond. Minutes after tornadoes touched down in Madison County, the co-op deployed crews to assess the damage and begin repairs. As the storms tracked east, we monitored reports and developed a response plan to address outages.

We saw system damage in all three districts of our service area, with the most significant in Fayette County, where we lost about 20 poles north of Ramsey. Debris-blocked roads challenged linemen sent to assess damage during the initial response phase. Our forestry crews played a vital role in clearing the way. By the evening of Dec. 11, crews had completed repairs and restored power. In total, about 300 members lost power during the storm, which downed more than a mile of line.

It was the beginning of a difficult winter.

During the first week of February, a winter storm interrupted power to thousands of our members. Ice and wind combined to create galloping lines which ripped insulators from cross-arms and tore cross-arms from poles.

Our linemen worked long hours in driving wind, freezing rain and snow to restore your power. Our dispatchers tirelessly coordinated crew movements in the field. Our member service representatives spent their days fielding reports of downed lines and answering inquiries about repairs and power restoration. Other Southwestern employees supported our restoration efforts in many ways, large and small.

As individuals and as a team, their work was exemplary. And you recognized their efforts. From the morning the storm struck through the afternoon we made final repairs,

you supported our employees in your calls and comments. They appreciated every kind word and expression of encouragement.

In mid-June, about 8,500 of you lost power when a severe storm swept across Southern Illinois, snapping trees, breaking poles and bringing down power lines. Not a single county in our service area was unaffected by the storm.

In order to expedite repairs, we recruited assistance from contract crews and linemen from Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Breese, Ill.; Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association, Murphysboro, Ill.; and Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, Dongola, Ill. Linemen worked throughout the night. By the following morning, they'd restored service to 1,450 members who had been without power the evening before. They continued to work until power was restored across our service area.

In recent years, we've made a concerted effort to build interties and link our substations, allowing our crews to reroute power during widespread outages. During each of these storms, those efforts paid dividends, reducing outage times for thousands of our members.

## **INFORMATION AT A GLANCE**

Most of the upgrades we made in 2022 involved substations, power lines and technology—but one improvement appeared in your mailbox.

Many of the costs associated with moving energy from a power plant across the grid and to your home used to be bundled into a single line on your bill.

No more.

In February, we provided you with a more informative bill. It breaks out our cost of service, line by line. At a glance, you can see how much you pay for energy, distribution, transmission, and other expenses associated with moving electricity from the grid to your home. The information is

*Continued on page 18 >*

*“As your accountable energy partner, we work to resolve issues before they affect you.”*

From left: Construction foreman DJ Haarmann and lineman Adam French review Ramsey Substation schematics with CEO Bobby Williams.



> *Continued from page 16*

there to help you make informed decisions about energy-related technology, and if you're considering cogeneration, assess your potential return on investment.

The new bill also made clear a nominal rate adjustment and updated fixed charges we implemented Jan. 1, 2022. The changes were prompted by findings in our 2019 cost-of-service study. The study examined our rate structure and costs associated with delivering power to the homes, businesses and industries we serve.

It brought two important points to light.

First, we could adjust our rates to more accurately reflect what it costs the co-op to provide power to our residential, commercial and industrial members. And second, our fixed charges weren't covering the co-op's investment in materials, such as poles, transformers and power lines.

The infrastructure requirements and energy demands of residential, commercial and industrial accounts vary widely from one another. Our rate adjustment and changes to our fixed charges earlier this year reflect those differences. The adjustment was revenue neutral. In other words, we didn't increase or decrease the revenue Southwestern receives from the membership overall.

## EV EVOLUTION

This year saw an expansion of our electric vehicle (EV) program. We installed new public charging stations at Anderson Hospital in Maryville and Anderson Healthcare Goshen Campus in Edwardsville. Our EV outreach team

is currently discussing additional siting opportunities with other businesses and communities in our service area.

On a related note, we wanted to see how an automobile fueled by electricity would perform on the nation's most storied highway. In March, we took the cooperative's Tesla Model 3 up Route 66, stopping in rural communities along the way.

Over the course of two days, we covered 435 miles, with a lot of stop and go. We spent \$27.77 on charging. To cover the equivalent distance in a car of comparable size—a 2020 Toyota Corolla—would have taken about 13 gallons of gas, based on the Corolla's estimated combined city and highway mileage of 34 miles per gallon. At the time, gas averaged \$4.52 per gallon along the route we covered. In a Corolla, fuel for the same trip would have cost \$58.76. It cost us about \$31 less to cover the same miles in the Tesla, with no engine oil, no petroleum products burned, and no tailpipe emissions. With gas in Illinois averaging \$5.37 per gallon as I write this, the savings would be even greater today.

We're proud of our efforts to promote EVs and we intend to continue them. That said, one piece of our plan hasn't materialized as we anticipated—our EV or Time of Use rate. At the outset of our program, we promised to develop a rate that would allow you to charge your EV at home, economically. Despite our efforts to expedite the project, the data management company that developed and maintains Southwestern Electric's billing system has, to date, failed to integrate an EV rate into our overall rate schedule. I



apologize for the delay. It's clearly going to require more persistence on our part to get the job done, but we will honor the promise we made. I guarantee it.

As we've said in the past, we want you to use energy wisely. EVs suit that objective perfectly. You can own and operate an EV more economically and efficiently than a traditional automobile. By promoting EVs, we're advocating the responsible use of resources—both yours and our planet's—while encouraging you to move around town, drive to school or work, visit friends and family, and explore roads less traveled, using electricity rather than gasoline.

### **AN INTERSECTION OF OLD & NEW**

Traditions play an important role in our lives, and in the life of your cooperative. They connect us to the past and serve as milestones as we move into the future. In 2020, the look of a Southwestern Electric tradition—your annual meeting of members—had to change. We adopted measures to ensure your health and safety, expanded our voting schedule, and encouraged you to vote from the convenience of your automobile at our facilities in St. Jacob, Greenville and St. Elmo. In 2021, we kept those measures in place.

This year we're building a better meeting by combining old and new. You can vote from the comfort of your car, or you can gather with your friends and neighbors for a more traditional meeting at Highland Middle School—or you can do both. The choice is yours, and we'll be happy to see you, regardless of which option you choose. You'll

find information about the meeting on pages 4-7 of this publication.

As I've said in the past, the interesting thing about traditions is how they change. This year's annual meeting is an intersection of innovation and tried-and-true. I don't know what our future meetings will look like. But I do know that in some form or fashion, Southwestern Electric will always hold an annual meeting of members.

You will always have an opportunity to elect your friends and neighbors to a board of directors.

Those directors will always serve as your advocates.

And the directors and employees of this organization will always listen to your concerns and act in your best interests.

Because we aren't just Southwestern Electric.

We're Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

That's one tradition that will never change.

Sincerely,



Bobby Williams  
Chief Executive Officer



# Board Treasurer’s Report

Southwestern Electric Cooperative reported strong margins of \$10.2 million in 2021. Such margins were partly attributable to the start of a new purchased power contract in 2021 and afforded the cooperative the opportunity to invest more in its infrastructure and return more equity to its members. In 2021, the cooperative invested \$12 million in construction and acquisition of plant assets to further increase reliability and retired \$2.9 million in capital credits to members while still decreasing the overall debt balance from long-term and line of credit borrowing by \$1 million.

To ensure stable electric rates for the membership while fulfilling the cooperative’s wholesale power agreements, from 2014–2017 your board of directors dedicated \$11.8 million to margin stabilization. Southwestern Electric Cooperative applied margin stabilization funding in 2019 and 2020 with the wholesale power contract obligation ending as of Dec. 31, 2020. Your cooperative did not dedicate any funds to margin stabilization in 2021 and has a remaining total of \$3.8 million as of Dec. 31, 2021, for margin stabilization use in future years.

Your cooperative remains in compliance with all loan covenants and received a clean audit opinion for the year ended Dec. 31, 2021.

For additional information, please see the financial statements on the pages to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

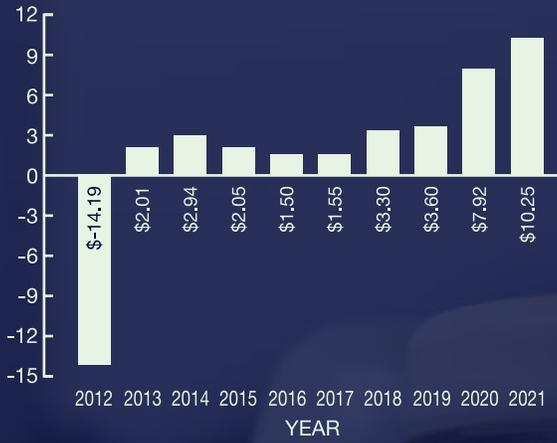


Jerry Gaffner  
Board Treasurer

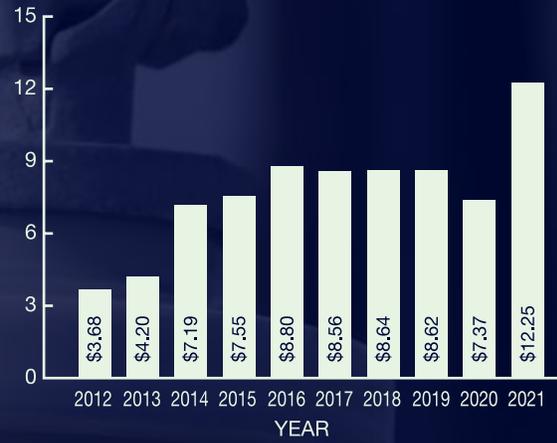
### Where did the cooperative’s revenue go in 2021?



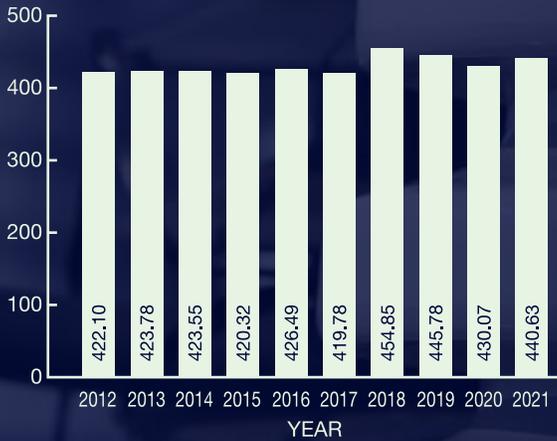
**Margins**  
in millions of dollars



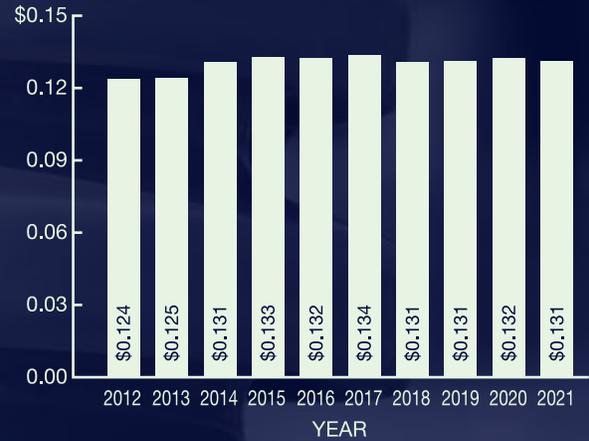
**Capital Investment**  
in millions of dollars



**Total Electricity Sold to Members**  
in millions of kWh



**Rate per kWh to Residential Members**  
in dollars (includes Service Availability Charge)



## REPORTS & FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Southwestern Electric Cooperative Financial Information

Statement of Operations	2021	2020	2019
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>			
Electric	\$61,893,176	\$62,186,853	\$63,191,680
Other	<u>314,615</u>	<u>251,305</u>	<u>386,988</u>
Total Operating Revenues	62,207,791	62,438,158	63,578,668
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Cost of Purchased Power	27,882,680	31,153,945	37,119,244
Power Production Expense - Operations	253,786	195,083	184,568
Power Production Expense - Maintenance	772,169	506,423	590,950
Transmission Expense - Maintenance	2,704	-	2,501
Distribution Expense - Operations	1,608,732	1,428,242	1,604,862
Distribution Expense - Maintenance	4,818,537	4,842,157	4,508,310
Consumer Account Expense	1,434,626	1,427,936	1,333,671
Consumer Service and Informational Expense	178,610	182,870	150,063
Sales Expense	706,054	572,316	514,766
Administrative and General Expense	5,605,774	5,477,043	5,493,311
Depreciation and Amortization	5,657,926	5,508,638	5,313,272
Taxes	211,669	212,771	214,476
Other Interest	21,477	71,634	15,344
Other Deductions	<u>233,719</u>	<u>66,445</u>	<u>50,588</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>49,388,463</u>	<u>51,645,503</u>	<u>57,095,926</u>
<b>OPERATING MARGINS BEFORE FIXED CHARGES</b>	12,819,328	10,792,655	6,482,742
<b>INTEREST ON LONG-TERM DEBT</b>	<u>3,718,547</u>	<u>3,849,876</u>	<u>3,735,459</u>
<b>NET OPERATING MARGINS</b>	9,100,781	6,942,779	2,747,283
<b>NONOPERATING MARGINS</b>			
Interest Income	57,358	57,997	81,946
Patronage Capital Credits	905,244	831,713	732,223
Other Nonoperating Margins	<u>184,093</u>	<u>91,591</u>	<u>38,673</u>
Total Nonoperating Margins	<u>1,146,695</u>	<u>981,301</u>	<u>852,842</u>
<b>NET MARGINS</b>	<u>\$10,247,476</u>	<u>\$7,924,080</u>	<u>\$3,600,125</u>

## Balance Sheet (As of December 31, 2021)

### ASSETS

#### Utility Plant

Electric Plant in Service	\$204,571,507
Construction Work in Progress	<u>5,729,754</u>
Total	210,301,261
Less: Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	<u>(64,545,104)</u>
Net Utility Plant	145,756,157

#### Other Assets and Investments

Investments in Associated Organizations	4,294,576
Notes Receivable, Net of Current Portion	504,674
Other Special Funds	<u>94,374</u>
Total Other Assets and Investments	4,893,624

#### Current Assets

Cash and Cash Equivalents	3,002,384
Accounts Receivable, Net	4,510,296
Materials and Supplies Inventory	1,631,910
Current Portion of Notes Receivable	86,214
Prepayments	410,972
Interest Receivable	<u>13,981</u>
Total Current Assets	9,655,757

#### Deferred Charges

4,040,671

Total Assets \$164,346,209

### EQUITIES & LIABILITIES

#### Equities

Patronage Capital	\$60,916,997
Other Equities	<u>3,638,518</u>
Total Equities	64,555,515

#### Long-Term Debt, Net Of Current Maturities

85,747,112

#### Accumulated Provision for

**Pension and Benefits** 94,374

#### Current Liabilities

Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	3,911,388
Notes Payable	-
Accounts Payable	2,838,216
Consumer Deposits	850,275
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	<u>1,520,416</u>
Total Current Liabilities	9,120,295

#### Deferred Credits

4,828,913

Total Equities and Liabilities \$164,346,209

## VOTING & COMMITTEE INFORMATION

# Voting Schedule

Members may cast their votes for board candidates in the 2022 election at the times and locations listed below.

\$30 bill credit with your pre-printed registration card, \$20 bill credit without your pre-printed registration card.  
Bill credit to be applied on the October bill — same credit amounts offered for early and day-of-meeting voting.

Greenville office, 525 US Route 40, Greenville	Aug. 31 remains open to 7 p.m. Sept. 8 remains open to 7 p.m.
St. Jacob warehouse, 10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob	Aug. 30 from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 7 from 4 to 7 p.m.
St. Elmo warehouse, 2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo	Sept. 1 from 4 to 7 p.m. Sept. 6 from 4 to 7 p.m.
Highland Middle School, 2813 State Route 160, Highland	Sept. 10 from 8 to 10 a.m.

In addition to the above times, any member of the cooperative can vote during normal business hours at our Greenville office beginning at 8 a.m. on Friday, Aug. 26 through 4:30 p.m. on Friday, Sept. 9. We are closed on Monday, Sept. 5 in observance of Labor Day.

## Additional Voting Information

*Commercial and inactive members, please note the following:*

### **Commercial Memberships**

Commercial (business) members are advised that any representative wishing to vote will be asked to present satisfactory evidence that this person has been assigned to act as an agent of the business. A commercial member, just like any other, is entitled to a single vote in cooperative elections.

### **Inactive Memberships**

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

# Credentials & Election Committee

The Credentials & Election Committee is responsible for presiding over the vote and determining the validity of the results.

## 2022 Credentials & Election Committee Members

### **District I:** *Macoupin, Madison and St. Clair Counties*

Ted Flath	2712 Old Staunton Road	Edwardsville, IL 62025
Kenneth Grotefendt	8243 Fruit Road	Edwardsville, IL 62025
John Sedlacek	633 Cedar Road	Saint Jacob, IL 62281

### **District II:** *Bond, Clinton and Montgomery Counties*

Steven Laesch	1357 Illinois Route 127	Greenville, IL 62246
Ron Jarrett	445 Round Prairie Avenue	Greenville, IL 62246
Hal Langham	1355 Airport Avenue	Greenville, IL 62246

### **District III:** *Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion and Shelby Counties*

Angela Reeter	2206 Zent Drive	Vandalia, IL 62471
Pete Burnam	2065 South Lake Drive	Vandalia, IL 62471
Brad Stein	1503 N 2000 Street	Brownstown, IL 62418

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT I



**Sandy Grapperhaus**  
Incumbent  
District I  
Collinsville

**S**andy Grapperhaus' rural roots run deep. A lifelong local resident, she's been a member of Southwestern Electric Cooperative for 36 years and served on the board since 2011.

During her most recent terms, she worked with the co-op's directors and management team to guide infrastructure investment and supported the installation of new technology across Southwestern's distribution system. Grapperhaus was actively involved in the comprehensive rate study that paved the way for Southwestern to provide a more transparent, informative bill which offers line-item listings of expenses associated with providing power.

Grapperhaus said she's gained valuable experience and insight into the cooperative over the last 11 years, and she'd like to carry the momentum forward to develop the board's strategic plan and complete ongoing projects.

**"I look forward to guiding the co-op to continually improve. My hope is that the members will always be proud to say they are on Southwestern's lines."**

"Maintaining reliable, affordable power remains our most important job at Southwestern. There is still a lot of work to do in regard to our aging infrastructure. My goal, if re-elected, is to guide the co-op's growth and system improvements while remaining watchful of our budget," Grapperhaus said.

"New substations, poles and wire replacement all come at a price. My focus remains on improving our infrastructure and reliability by spending within our means, thus ensuring that being part of the cooperative is rewarding for all of our members."

She named diligence in the area of cyber security and incorporating cost-effective, green energy into the co-op's power portfolio as current priorities she would continue to pursue, if elected to another term.

Grapperhaus said she doesn't take credit for the strong fiscal position Southwestern is in today. "That came about through the sustained efforts of a lot of people," she said. "But I do take pride in the input I have had as a board member to get us where we are."

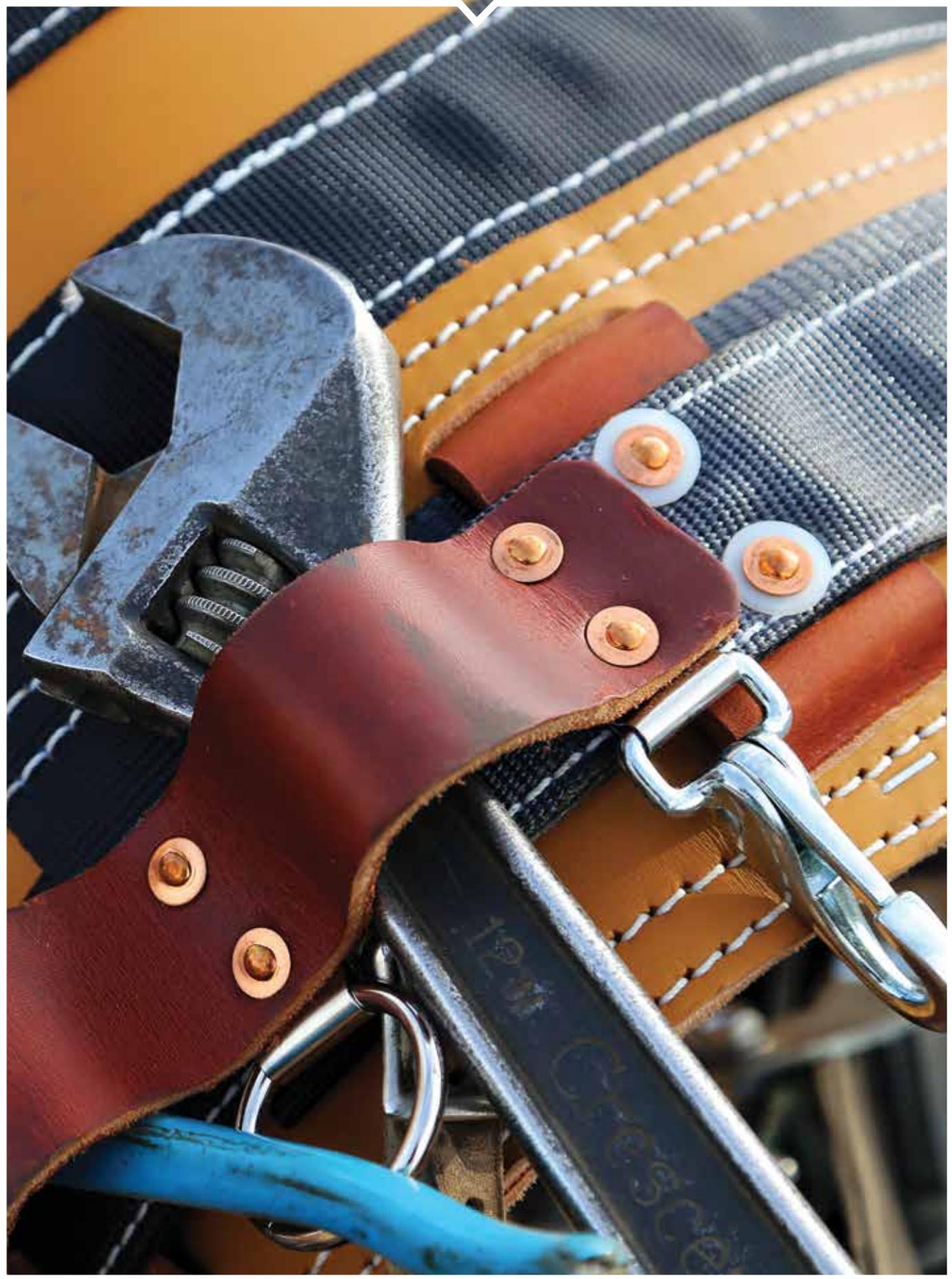
Grapperhaus has served as vice president of Southwestern's board of directors since 2018. She chairs the cooperative's Cybersecurity Committee, and serves on the Executive Committee and the Business & Economic Development Committee.

She has earned both Credentialed Cooperative Director designation and Board Leadership Certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Since 2009, Grapperhaus has served on the advisory committee for Southwestern Illinois College's Office Administration and Technology program. She is also active in the women's group at her church in Troy.

"I look forward to guiding the co-op to continually improve," she said. "My hope is that the members will always be proud to say they are on Southwestern's lines."

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. They have three grown children.



## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT II



**Bruce Unterbrink**  
Challenger  
District II  
Greenville

**B**ruce Unterbrink is interested in exploring the potential of electric vehicles and solar power. “I recognize these are advancing technologies becoming increasingly popular with consumers and I believe they can offer great benefits for the co-op and its members,” he said.

“I have an interest in how technology has changed the power industry, the same as it has the construction industry,” Unterbrink said. “I would like to pursue solar power for individual use and look at how the co-op could benefit by using solar power for consumer use,” he added.

Unterbrink said he would like to look for opportunities to further Southwestern Electric’s efforts in the areas of electric vehicle and solar education.

If elected, he would also like to explore options for using solar farms to lower rates while maintaining and improving infrastructure.

**“I would like to pursue solar power for individual use and look at how the co-op could benefit by using solar power for consumer use.”**

Unterbrink said he supports the co-op’s approach to providing reliable, affordable energy to the membership. “Southwestern Electric has and continues to seek out avenues for buying power at lower rates and passing the savings on to the members,” he said. “The co-op has been progressive in upgrading power lines and substations, and eliminating some power outages.” Unterbrink said he would like to help the cooperative continue to meet those objectives efficiently and effectively.

As owner and president of Bruce Unterbrink Construction Inc., a Greenville-based construction company with commercial projects in development around the country, Unterbrink has 40 years of experience in establishing and maintaining effective working relationships with architects, developers, commercial clients, and union personnel — experience he feels would serve the membership well if he were elected to serve on Southwestern’s board of directors.

This is Unterbrink’s second bid for a seat on Southwestern Electric’s board, and he is no stranger to board service. “I served on the Bond County Community Unit School District #2 school board for eight years, and was president for four of those years in the 1970s. As president, I sought a favorable path for teacher negotiations, with no strikes or threats of striking,” he said. “I found that a board made up of members from different backgrounds and occupations is better than a board with members who follow the same train of thought.”

If elected, Unterbrink said he would work diligently to stay current in industry trends and technology, pursue coursework in various aspects of cooperative business practices and ethics, and serve the interests of the membership to the best of his ability.

A lifelong resident of Greenville, Bruce Unterbrink was raised on Southwestern Electric lines and has a deep appreciation of his community. “My brother and I took over the farm when our father passed,” he noted. “I live at the same homestead where I grew up.”

Unterbrink has two sons: Daryn, married to Julie; and Steven, married to Chrystal. He also has five grandchildren. Most of his family resides in Greenville, not far from the family farm.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT II



**Stacey Sidwell**  
Challenger  
District II  
Sorento

**A**s township supervisor and the former road commissioner for Shoal Creek Township, Stacey Sidwell has worked in tandem with Southwestern Electric crews as they maintain rights of way in northwest Bond County. A longtime Southwestern member who appreciates the cooperative business model, Sidwell would like to put his experience in the transportation sector to work on behalf of co-op members by serving as a director.

“As chief shop steward for the Teamsters Union with Winchester Ammunition and former president of the Trades Council at Winchester Ammunition, I have acquired extensive negotiations skill that would lend itself to the inter-workings of Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s board of directors,” Sidwell said.

**“As electric demands increase, I would like to find new and innovative ways to provide high-quality, affordable electricity for all Southwestern members.”**

Sidwell said he would like the opportunity to better the community and keep rates reasonable. “As electric demands increase, I would like to find new and innovative ways to provide high quality, affordable electricity for all Southwestern members,” he said. “That would be my top priority.”

Sidwell pointed out that in the cooperative business model, co-ops partner with their customers. “They value their customers as more than just a financial asset,” he said, adding that Southwestern has always listened to its membership to work toward building better communities. He noted that he would be “proud to be part of such a professional co-op,” and that he would strive to serve as the voice of members and see that their concerns were addressed.

Sidwell said he would work to help the co-op meet ever-changing industry demands and ensure Southwestern had the most up-to-date equipment to help employees meet the needs of the membership.

If elected, Sidwell said he would work to ensure history didn’t repeat itself. “Working with high-quality, reliable, affordable partners is essential,” he said.

He noted that Shoal Creek Township has been fiscally sound throughout his term as supervisor.

In addition to his role on the board of Shoal Creek Township, Sidwell served as president of the Bond County Shrine Club in 2019.

Stacey Sidwell has been a Southwestern Electric member for 31 years. He lives southeast of Sorento with his wife, Pam. They have two daughters: Tina Elam, married to Nathan; and Toni Sidwell. They also have three grandchildren: Jillian, Reece and Cale Elam.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT II



**Ted Willman**  
Incumbent  
District II  
Greenville

**T**ed Willman has been a cooperative leader for more than 30 years. Shortly after becoming a Southwestern Electric member in 1987, Willman joined the co-op's Nominations Committee. He served on the committee for 13 years before being elected to the board in 2001.

He's earned the Credentialed Cooperative Director designation and a Board Leadership Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, and serves on Southwestern Electric's Scholarship Committee and Member & Community Engagement Committee.

Among the board's accomplishments during his most recent term, Willman noted several he found particularly fulfilling. Those included serving as a resource to Southwestern's new directors, supporting plans and procedures that allowed Southwestern to safely and effectively serve members during the pandemic, and developing policies that helped the co-op complete key infrastructure improvements in recent years—including the construction of new substations, interties and power lines that improve power quality and reliability system-wide.

**“As one of the senior board members, I have a responsibility to explain the history behind our policies, and at the same time, encourage our new directors to challenge the way we do things.”**

Willman pointed out that, with the retirement of several longtime directors over the last five years, the board has lost more than a century of leadership experience. “As one of the senior board members, I have a responsibility to explain the history behind our policies, and at the same time, encourage our new directors to challenge the way we do things,” he said.

If re-elected, Willman intends to focus on infrastructure development, cultivating opportunities for Southwestern to partner with its member-communities, and continuing to support the role renewable energy plays in Southwestern's future.

“Three years ago we had less than 100 members with solar arrays. Today we have 350, and more coming online every month. We're helping our members get their projects connected and providing information they need to make good decisions,” he said. “I want to see us continue on this path.”

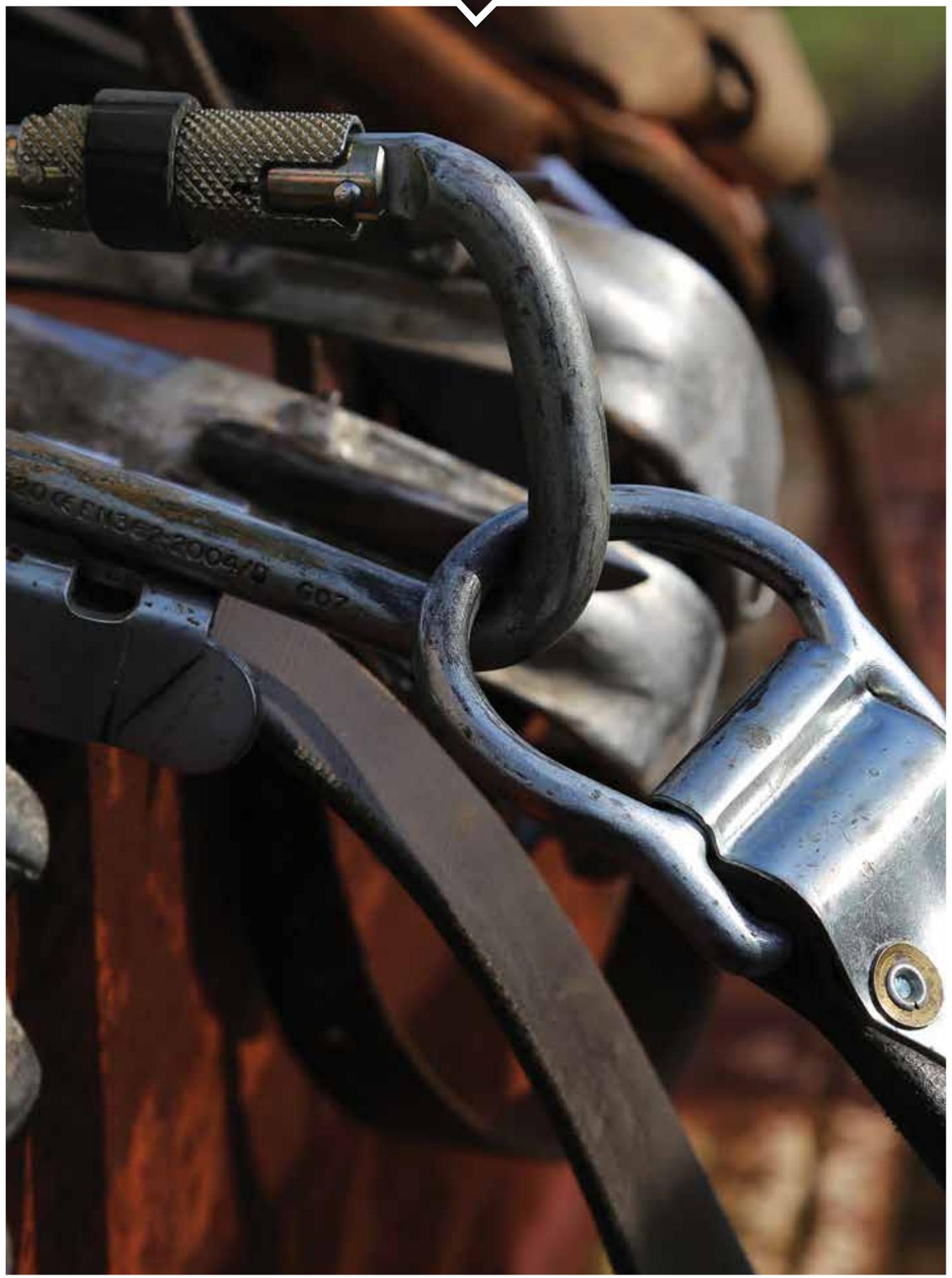
Willman said the popularity of electric vehicles (EVs) among co-op members continues to grow, and that Southwestern is taking steps to meet the needs of EV owners. “We've installed public chargers near I-70 in Troy, at Anderson Hospital in Maryville, and at the hospital's campus on Goshen Road, and we're working with our communities to strategically site more public charging stations,” he said.

Willman credits the co-op's strong financial position to the support of the membership and the board's ability to build differing points of view into a single, unified vision.

“We have an effective combination of experience and new ideas,” he said. “We have directors who know how and why policies developed, and others with fresh eyes who bring new approaches to the table. We may not always agree, but we always find common ground and move forward,” he said.

“I want to see us stay on track with the plans we've set in motion,” added Willman, who's seeking his eighth term on the board. “I'd welcome the opportunity to follow up with the implementation of our strategic plan and the projects we have in place now.”

A farmer since 1976, Ted Willman resides south of Greenville.



## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT III

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**Stacy Alwardt**  
Challenger  
District III  
Edgewood

**S**tacy Alwardt has been a Southwestern Electric Cooperative member for 26 years. “I took an interest in running to resolve existing issues and to better the company,” she said.

If elected, she intends to focus on consumer satisfaction. Her priorities would include right of way maintenance, communication with the membership, helping the co-op anticipate the needs of the members, and financial responsibility.

She said she feels that a director should address the needs of members and leave politics out of the co-op.

Alwardt said skills she would bring to her role as a director include “my ability to communicate, more responsibility and knowing what needs to be done.”

“I took an interest in running to resolve existing issues and to better the company. I intend to focus on consumer satisfaction.”



**Ann Schwarm**  
Incumbent  
District III  
Loogootee

**F**or Ann Schwarm, public service is a long-standing tradition. She's served on Southwestern Electric's board of directors since 1993, and as president of the board since September 2016. She chairs the co-op's Executive Committee, and serves on the Policy & Bylaws Committee, Scholarship Committee, and Emerging Technologies Committee.

Schwarm has been recognized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, earning both Credentialed Cooperative Director designation and Director Gold Certification.

For the last 27 years, she has served on the board of FNB Community Bank, formerly the First National Bank of Vandalia and First Vandalia Corporation. She was also a member of the Brownstown Community School District board for four years.

"I take very seriously the responsibility of public service," she said. "I very much want to continue to put in to practice what I have learned during these past 29 years."

**"The practices which govern how power and capacity are priced and sold are changing. We have to keep our finger on the pulse of the energy market."**

Among objectives fulfilled by the board during her most recent terms, Schwarm noted several she found particularly significant. Those included mentoring new directors as they developed a deeper understanding of co-op principles and practices, supporting policies and procedures that allowed Southwestern to safely serve members during the pandemic, and helping the co-op migrate its strategic plan from the boardroom to the field, where it materialized as new substations, transmission lines, public EV charging stations, and new lines and interties that improve power quality and reliability system-wide.

"Southwestern's infrastructure is aging and we're addressing the issues that come with that. We're

retiring old line, building new, adding substations, interconnecting lines to reduce outage times, and maintaining rights of way. Reliability and effective outage response are hallmarks of our organization," she said. "We should make it a point to never lose sight of our service ethic, even as we change and grow."

If re-elected, Schwarm said she would like to see the board continue to search for innovations that will provide value for the membership. She noted that Southwestern made significant strides in member outreach and education by hiring an employee to guide the co-op's green energy initiatives and help members incorporate energy-efficient technology into their lives.

"We need to stay current with emerging technologies, and develop a full understanding of how these resources can benefit our membership, what they will cost the co-op, and how they could impact our rates," she said. "Wind, water and solar are attractive philosophically, but we need to understand their potential financial impact and plan for how we can manage their addition to our power portfolio."

Schwarm said understanding the rapidly evolving energy market is imperative. "The practices which govern how power and capacity are priced and sold are changing. What we did and how we did it last time may not be what we need to do next time. We have to keep our finger on the pulse of the energy market."

Schwarm brings to her role on the board a diverse professional background, with experience in agricultural communications, program development, education and small-business management. She retired from the Regional Office of Education in 2016 with 21 years of service. She is a 1979 graduate of the University of Missouri-School of Journalism.

Ann and her husband, Gene, live on a farm in rural Loogootee. They have been married for 41 years and have two sons: Alex Schwarm, married to Samantha; and Andy Schwarm, married to Monica. They also have three grandchildren: Augie, age 4; Ada, age 3; and Seb, age 1.

## OUR TEAM

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Sandy Grapperhaus**  
Vice President  
District I  
Collinsville



**William "Bill" Jennings**  
District I  
Alhambra



**Marvin Warner**  
District I  
Pocahontas



**Jerry Gaffner**  
Treasurer  
District II  
Greenville



**Sandy Nevinger**  
District II  
Greenville



**Ted Willman**  
District II  
Greenville



**Annette Hartlieb**  
Secretary  
District III  
Vandalia



**Ann Schwarm**  
President  
District III  
Loogootee



**Jared Stine**  
District III  
St. Elmo

### PERSONNEL

#### STAFF MEMBERS

Marvin Ayala, *Chief Operating Officer*  
Michael Barns, *Art Director*  
Victor Buehler, *Vice President of Information Technology*  
Dylan Casey, *Engineering Supervisor*  
Cody Edmonds, *Engineering Supervisor*  
Susan File, *Vice President of Member Services*  
Veronica Forbis, *Manager of Billing*  
Russell Gilbert, *Freedom Power Plant General Manager*  
Nathan Grimm, *Media Specialist*  
Marissa Horn, *Human Resources Administrator*  
Laura Hugel, *Accounting Manager*  
Thaddius Intravaia, *Director of Information Technology*  
Becky Jacobson, *Chief Financial Officer*  
Andrew Jones, *Vice President of Business Development & Marketing*  
Carrie Knebel, *Vice President of Human Resources*  
Julie Lowe, *Energy Manager*  
Joe Richardson, *Vice President of Communications*  
Brooke Scott, *Executive Assistant*  
Neil Sperandio, *Manager of Operations*  
Bobby Williams, *Chief Executive Officer*  
Michael Willman, *Vice President of Operations*

#### GREENVILLE

##### Office & Engineering Personnel

Casey Eberlin, *GIS Technician*  
Barb Frerker, *Member Services Representative*  
Laura Gall, *Accounting Clerk*  
Natalie Goesten Kors, *Dispatcher*  
Renee Harnetiaux, *Work Order Coordinator*  
Cheryl Hebenstreit, *Cashier/Receptionist*  
Kristin Hentze, *Dispatcher*

Cortney Huber, *Dispatcher*  
Kim Jackson, *Dispatcher*  
Tracy Kuttin-Ferguson, *Purchasing Agent*  
Kathleen Lewey, *Staking Engineer*  
Dean Schnurbusch, *Senior Staking Engineer*  
Lauren Schoen, *Member Services Representative*  
Holly Thiems, *IT Technical Support*  
Ashley Towler, *Accounting Clerk*  
Jo Ellen Wharton, *Meter Technician*  
Debbie Whicker, *Member Services Representative*  
Jessica Whitehead, *Member Services Representative*

##### Maintenance & Construction Personnel

Mark Chasteen, *Construction Foreman*  
Patrick Harris, Sr. *Warehouseman/ Groundman/Truck Driver*  
Jimmy Revisky, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Eric Rodgers, *1st Class Mechanic*  
Adam Simmonds, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Clayton Snyder, *1st Class Mechanic*  
Scott Wollerman, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Matthew Waters, *Journeyman Lineman*

##### Meter Department

Scott Fitzgerald, *Foreman/Polyphase Meterman & Tester*  
Chris Schmid, *Lineman/Polyphase Meterman & Tester*

##### Forestry Department

Alex Goodin, *Forestry Journeyman*  
Chris Hamby, *Forestry Foreman*  
Daniel Page, *Forestry Journeyman*

#### ST. JACOB

##### Office & Engineering Personnel

Mary Curry, *Staking Engineer*  
Brian Mills, *Staking Engineer*

Vincent Sanvi, *Staking Engineer*  
Carla Schneider, *Member Services Representative*  
Becky Spratt, *Member Services Representative*

##### Maintenance & Construction Personnel

Tim Atterberry, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Brian Bast, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Braden Clark, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Leo Dublo, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Tyler Isaak, *Construction Foreman*  
Tyler Kunz, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Joel LaFrance, *System-wide Troubleshooter/ Maintenance Foreman*  
Sonny Lampe, Sr. *Warehouseman/ Groundman/Truck Driver*  
Rick Mersinger, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Rob Nesbit, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Josiah Roberts, *3rd Step Apprentice Lineman*  
Jared Tebbe, *Warehouseman/Groundman/ Truck Driver*  
Andy Wessel, *Construction Foreman*

##### Forestry Department

Dawson Chesnut, *Forestry Journeyman*  
Nick Jett, *Forestry Foreman*

#### ST. ELMO FACILITY

Adam French, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Ethan Fulk, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Douglas Haarmann, *Construction Foreman*  
Kyle Hails, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Tyler Meseke, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Keith Steiner, *Warehouseman/Groundman/ Truck Driver*

#### FREEDOM POWER STATION

David Brandt, *Power Plant Technician*  
Leo Leonhard, *Power Plant Technician*

**VOTER REGISTRATION CARD 2022** *Please sign and present this card at the registration table.*

**84th Annual Meeting of Members**

Saturday, September 10, 2022



Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please enroll me in Operation Round Up**

**PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION**

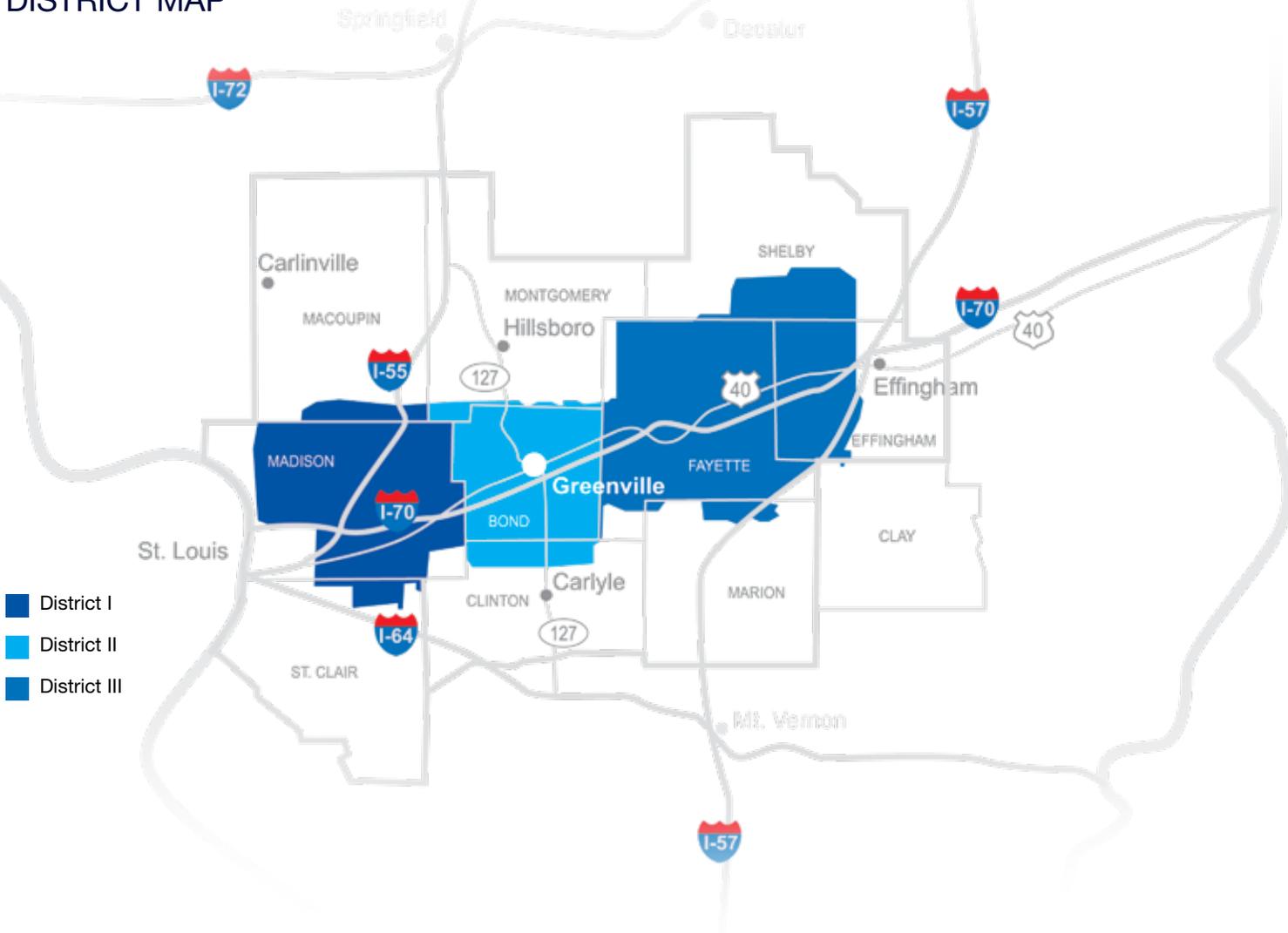
Home Phone # (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Fill out and present this registration card to receive an additional \$10 bill credit!**

**DISTRICT MAP**



- District I
- District II
- District III

