

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2022 • VOLUME 74 • ISSUE 12

Proud Partners

PARTNERS FOR PETS HELPS HOMELESS DOGS, CATS

Wildcat Hollow

WALK HILL AND VALLEY, SEE TIMBER AND STONE

FROM THE CEO

POWER FOR PROGRESS

NEWS & NOTES

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We're in the mood for a good frosting — just not the wintry mix kind.

26 Current Events

It's all Christmas, all the time in this month's calendar of events. Whether you're in the mood for an open-air German market in Belleville, a drive through the lights at any number of area displays, a home tour in Elsah or a performance of the holiday classic "A Christmas Carol" in Lebanon — among other events — you can find it all here.

We've repurposed this month's Final Frame and End Note pages to show you more of Wildcat Hollow. See our Out & About section on page 18.



FROM THE CEO



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Community can be defined in a lot of different ways. As a rural electric cooperative, Southwestern Electric is fortunate to be part of many different communities locally, across the state and nationwide. Whether they're chambers of commerce, economic development groups, trade associations or consumer cooperatives, we share similar goals and objectives.



One of the seven founding cooperative principles is "concern for community." How we show that, and who we count as members of that community, isn't defined. All that's asked is that we look out for all the people, places and things we consider part of it.

Partners for Pets is not a cooperative, but it does live by cooperative values. The St. Jacob animal rescue shelter — and Southwestern Electric member — has spent the past two decades looking out for the members of its community, namely homeless dogs and cats in the Metro East.

Since its inception in 2003, Partners for Pets has rescued and re-homed more than 22,000 cats and dogs that would have otherwise been euthanized in local animal control facilities. By opening its doors to the neglected, sick, weak and injured, the rescue shelter has worked hard to help those area organizations reach no-kill status.

As a dog lover — and a dog owner — I appreciate their concern for community.

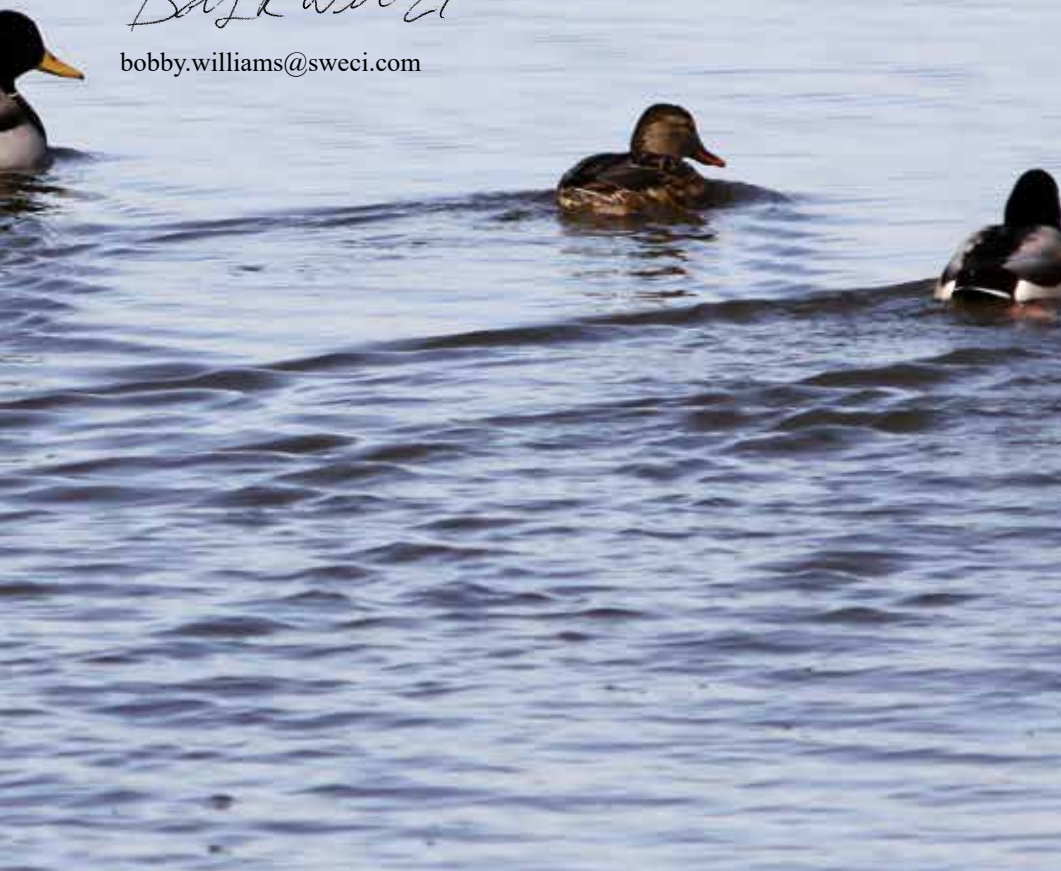
As a longtime co-op member, I appreciate their cooperative spirit.

To learn more about Partners for Pets, see our feature story on page 10.

Have a safe and happy holiday season, and thank you for making Southwestern Electric part of your community.

Bobby Williams, CEO

bobby.williams@sweci.com



E-BILLING PROVIDES QUICK, EASY WAY TO AVOID FEES ASSOCIATED WITH POSTAL DELAYS

Paperless billing — or e-billing — provides a simple, reliable solution to penalties associated with postal delays and late payments. An e-bill is an electronic billing statement delivered to your email address. Our e-bill looks like our paper bill. Since it's sent to your inbox instead of your mailbox, it always arrives on time.

In addition to our e-bill, we also offer electronic notifications you can use as reminders, or to confirm your payment has been made. You can receive our reminders, alerts and notifications by text, voice mail and email.

Maybe you'd prefer not to think about your bill from month to month. With our Auto-Pay service, you won't need to. Auto-Pay automatically deducts your monthly payment from your checking account, or debit card or credit card. It's safe, convenient and reliable. Like our e-billing options, Auto-Pay is free and simple to set up.

If you'd like to know more, please call Southwestern Electric's billing department at 800-637-8667, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Our team will be happy to help you.



ON THE COVER

Partners for Pets Executive Director Erika Skouby-Pratte and rescue dog Scooby Dee enjoy a sunny afternoon at the shelter. The Metro East rescue organization has rehomed more than 22,000 dogs and cats since its beginning in 2003. Story on page 10.



FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



For the latest news and notes, follow us on Facebook and Twitter. You'll find us at facebook.com/SWECI and twitter.com/sweci. Search for Southwestern Electric on YouTube and Instagram. Our podcast, Wireside Chat, can be heard on Apple Music, Spotify and anywhere else podcasts are found.

CO-OP REMINDERS

December 12 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.

December 23 Offices close at noon for Christmas holiday.

December 26 Offices closed for Christmas holiday.

December 30 Offices close at noon for New Year's Eve.

January 2 Offices closed for New Year's holiday.



SOUTHWESTERN'S ONLINE PAYMENT PORTAL & MERIDIAN COOPERATIVE

If you've paid your electric bill using Southwestern Electric Cooperative's online payment portal, you've probably noticed the name Meridian Cooperative appear at the point of payment. A longtime partner of Southwestern Electric, Atlanta, Ga.-based Meridian Cooperative is a leader in the development of utility software and technology solutions. Payments directed through our online payment portal are processed by Meridian Cooperative.

"Meridian houses card data for us so we are PCI (Payment Card Industry) compliant," explained Susan File, vice president of member services. "We are committed to continually upgrading our payment portal in order to make online transactions secure and protect our members against identity theft," she said.

For more information about our online payment portal or your bill payment options, call Southwestern Electric at (800) 637-8667.



Editor's Note:

Nelvin Wilson had driven his EV just over 3,000 miles when a fender bender sent it to the shop — not 30,000 miles, as an overzealous typist (me) wrote in our November Tesla Talk article. Thanks again, Nelvin, for participating in our EV Show, for sharing your insights into EV ownership, and for your hospitality. We're grateful.



NEW CONTEST FOR READERS IN 2023

For decades we've run a reader contest we called On Account. We asked you to look for a member-account number we'd hidden in the magazine. If the account number was yours, you could contact us to win a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Account numbers were selected at random from a pool that included our entire membership. The rules were simple, but your odds were long.

We're retiring that contest with this issue.

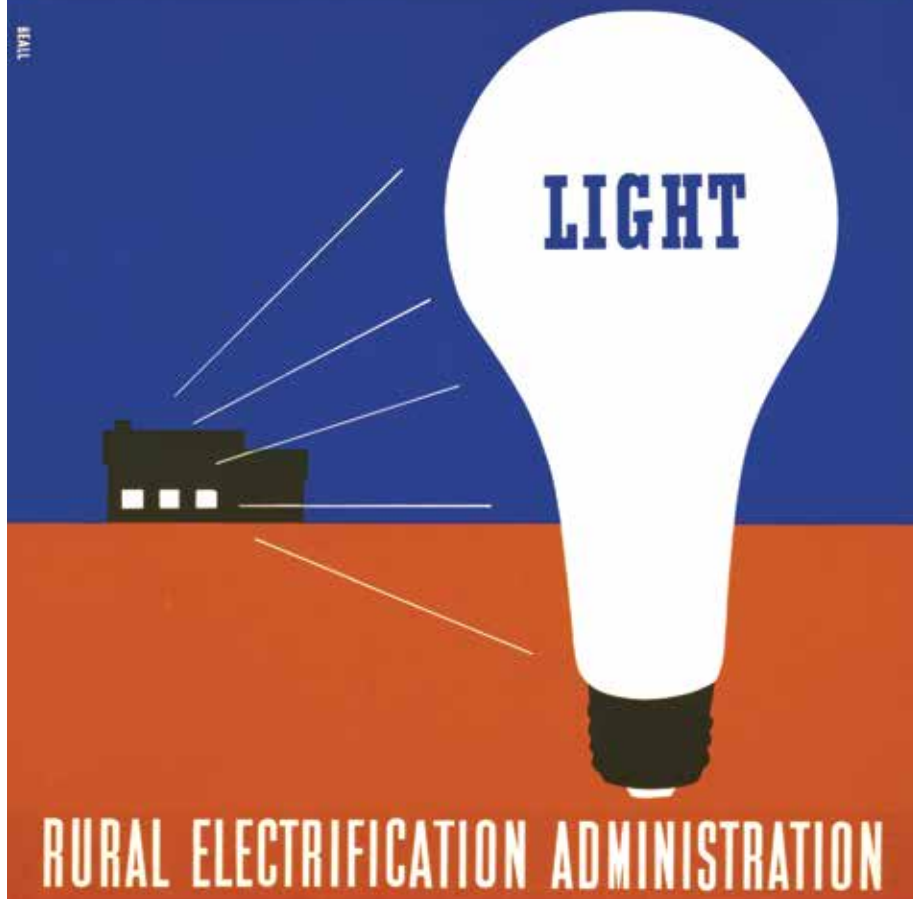
In 2023, we'll bring you a new reader contest. It won't be based on your account number, and if you're a regular reader, you'll have a much better chance of winning a \$25 bill credit. We'll print details in the January 2023 issue of our magazine.

This month — for the last time — we encourage you to look for the member-account number we've hidden 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!

Remember When?

**Do you remember when the lights came on?
When the poles went up and the lines came through?**

If you weren't there, did you hear stories from your parents or grandparents about the days before electricity lit our way? We're interested in hearing about the early days of electrification. We'd like to know how electricity changed life in your home, on your farm, or at your school. Please send your stories to Joe Richardson at joe.richardson@sweci.com or via traditional mail to 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.



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

Our rebate program will help you save money on the replacement or new installation of air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats.

Members are eligible for one rebate per category per year. All rebates will be applied as a bill credit upon receiving the completed rebate application and proof of purchase.

Rebate forms are available on our website at sweci.com. You can email your completed application and proof of purchase to julie.lowe@sweci.com, or mail it to: Julie Lowe, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. You're also welcome to drop off your materials at our Greenville office.

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



HEATING AND COOLING

High efficiency heat pumps can significantly increase the comfort of your home while lowering your energy bills. If you're thinking of upgrading to or installing a new air source or ground source heat pump, our \$300 rebate will help you offset some of the cost.

To qualify for the rebate, your heat pump must be the primary source of heat in your home. It may be installed in a newly constructed home, or replace electric resistance heat, propane or fuel oil heat. Installed backup heat must be electric, and the condenser and coil must be replaced and/or installed as a matched set.

Requirements for air source heat pumps include:

- At least 16 SEER
- 9 HSPF

Requirements for ground source (geothermal) heat pumps include:

- For closed systems—at least 17 SEER; COP 3.6
- For open systems – at least 21.1 SEER; COP 4.1

WATER HEATERS

Water heating accounts for about 18 percent of your home's energy use. Choosing an energy efficient water heater can help you reduce your monthly water heating bills.

To qualify for our \$250 water heater rebate, you can install an electric water heater as part of a newly constructed home, or replace an existing gas water heater with an electric model.

Your water heater must be at least 50 gallons and one rebate is allowed per home.

On-demand water heaters do not qualify for a rebate.

SMART THERMOSTATS

A smart thermostat learns your lifestyle and adjusts the temperature of your home automatically, helping you use less energy and save money.

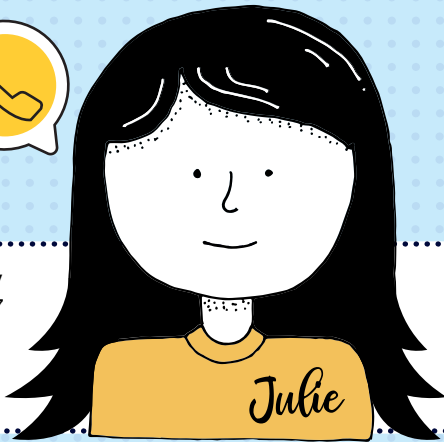
With a smart thermostat, you can control your home's temperature settings, even when you're at work or on the road. Connected to your Wi-Fi, your smart thermostat allows you to monitor and change your home's temperature from your smart phone, tablet or PC.

You can install a smart thermostat as part of a newly constructed home, or replace an existing manual or programmable thermostat.

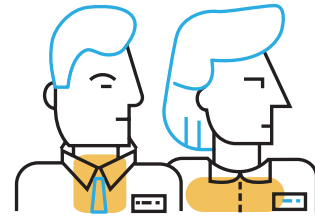
To qualify for our \$50 rebate, your smart thermostat must be:

- Energy Star certified
- Internet-enabled

Steps to Solar Commissioning



Contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com for our information and commissioning packet.



Contact your installer and insurance agent. Ask your installer for a one-line diagram. Request a certificate of insurance from your agent. They're welcome to send those documents to Julie Lowe at Southwestern Electric. Or if you'd like to review them, they can send them to you, and you can pass them along to Julie.



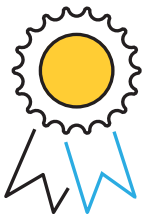
After your one-line diagram is approved by Southwestern Electric, you'll receive a \$500 invoice to cover the installation of your new dual register electric meter, a system inspection, and your array's interconnection to the grid. If your installer will be paying this invoice on your behalf, we'll send the invoice directly to them.



After installation is complete, contact us to schedule your system's on-site review and commissioning.



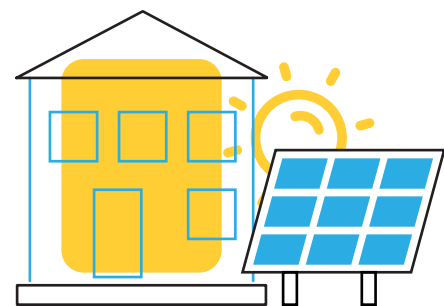
Our commissioning team will visit your site. We will inspect your system to verify it meets our safety specifications. A team member will review a memorandum of understanding with you. You'll sign this document for our files. Note: If you won't be present for commissioning, please schedule a meeting to review and sign the memorandum beforehand. After your system passes inspection, you go live! Your array is connected to Southwestern's distribution system.



We'll send you and your installer a certificate of completion. Your installer will submit this document for you, so you can receive your solar renewable energy credits, or certificates (SRECs).



Each year, you'll submit documentation to confirm you've renewed your insurance. You may add us as a certificate holder on your policy so the renewal will be sent to us automatically each year.



Every three years, we'll visit your system to confirm it's connected properly, well-maintained, and that your safety signs are in place.

SOUTHWESTERN ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR 2023

**Ten \$1,000
Southwestern
Electric Scholarships
and one \$1,000 Alan
G. Libbra Memorial
Scholarship will
be awarded
in 2023**



Co-op to Award \$11,000 in Academic Assistance



Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power For Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$287,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate. The tradition continues this year with Southwestern's pledge to award \$11,000 in scholarship money to 11 students in spring 2023 for use in the fall 2023 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. 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 2023 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, March 10, 2023**.



Libbra Scholarship Will Support Future Leaders

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 2023.
- 3) The entire application must be completed in full, and received with the appropriate supplementary materials, in advance of the application deadline, March 10, 2023.

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric has provided more than \$287,000 in scholarship funding, assisting 427 students.

For more information on the Power for Progress Scholarship Program, please contact Susan File at susan.file@sweci.com or 800-637-8667.

The family of Southwestern Electric director Alan Libbra has established the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship in his name. All Power for Progress applicants will be considered as candidates.

"Alan believed in leadership by example. He was a passionate advocate for pursuing the common good, and giving back to the people who helped you fulfill your potential," said Southwestern director Jared Stine, chair of the Scholarship Committee. "Students who aspire to provide community service through leadership will be particularly strong candidates for the scholarship Alan's family established in his name."

A lifelong member of Southwestern Electric, Alan Libbra served as president for 30 of his 36 years on the cooperative's board of directors. He worked throughout his life to serve the interests of farmers, rural communities and Southwestern Electric Cooperative members.

All Power for Progress eligibility requirements and criteria apply to the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship. For more information, contact Susan File at 800-637-8667 or susan.file@sweci.com.

RECOMMENDATIONS 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.

On Account: If your account number is 88857001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

Companion Piece

PARTNERS FOR PETS KEEPING NO-KILL MISSION ALIVE IN METRO EAST

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

At first glance, the property at 9136 Lower Marine Road in St. Jacob looks like any other rural farmhouse.

A gravel drive circles an old wooden barn with a star hung on the side, leading up to a two-story house neighbored by two large, metal outbuildings. Two old trees stand guard in the front yard, dropping leaves like confetti on a breezy and unseasonably warm early November day.

It's not until you get around to the back of the house and see the wood-and-wire enclosure filled with scratching posts and comfortable perches — dubbed the “catio” by volunteers and employees — that you realize this isn't your run-of-the-mill homestead.



The converted St. Jacob farm is actually the home of Partners for Pets Humane Society, a non-profit animal rescue that has rescued and re-homed

more than 22,000 cats and dogs since opening its doors in 2003. The rescue shelter works to help local area animal control facilities reach no-kill status by opening its doors to neglected, sick, weak and injured animals, regardless of their chances of survival.

“We call ourselves a rescue shelter, just because we do pride ourselves on taking injured and medical cases,” Partners for Pets Executive Director Erika Skouby-Pratte said. “We obviously take very healthy (animals), too — we take young, we take old, we don't just stop because of a breed or age or color, anything like that. And there are organizations that have limits. We're very much open-minded — we'll



Partners for Pets Executive Director Erika Skouby-Pratte and one of the rescue shelter's roughly 80 canine inhabitants, Scooby Dee, enjoy a sunny early November afternoon.

help anything we have space to help. Generally, we have a great foster base, so we're not limited."

At present, Skouby-Pratte said the rescue houses roughly 60 cats and 80 dogs, with another approximately 250 cats and 80 dogs in foster care homes throughout the Metro East. Because it's a non-profit, the organization has only around 20 to 25 paid employees, leaning on a robust volunteer base of approximately 150 people, including foster parents, to further its cause.

The giving doesn't just stop at caring for the animals, though. Skouby-Pratte said the community is a huge help in donating supplies, labor and funding, a necessity for a rescue shelter that doesn't receive any government funding. The catio, for example, was built by Southern Illinois University Edwardsville construction students as part of their senior project and Purina provides all the food and cat litter for free.

"We have a wonderful community that supports us," she said.

In turn, the rescue shelter supports the

community. Any unused or excess pet food or supplies get donated to community members in need, with 7,198 pounds of pet food donated by the shelter in 2021 alone.

Seeing a need, Partners for Pets also recently expanded its staff to include a full-time veterinarian and medical team, as well as a behavioral trainer. Since adding the medical team members to its staff, the rescue has been able to assist and provide care for more than 900 community-owned pets in recent years.

One need the rescue doesn't currently have is space. That hasn't always been the issue, though — they've only been at their five-acre homestead since the middle of last decade, Skouby-Pratte said, after happening upon the property by chance in 2014.

"We actually stumbled upon this property," she said. "We used to be just a mile down the road. One of our dogs got loose, and it was here. All of these buildings were here already, and it was up for auction the very next day."

Continued on next page ▶

"It's a hard thing to jump into, thinking about fostering, because everyone's initial thought is, 'I won't be able to give them up.' But when you think about it, you're bringing a pet into your home temporarily, we're paying for everything, we make it as easy and seamless as possible, and we can keep saving more lives by having fosters. Fostering is a big deal. We're always looking for more fosters."

—Erika Skouby-Pratte on pet fostering



The rescue has been at its current five-acre St. Jacob homestead since purchasing the property — after stumbling upon it by accident one day earlier — in 2014.


► *Continued from page 11*

That doesn't mean they aren't still thinking about the future. The rescue recently completed a fundraising drive to renovate the cat room with brand-new housing units, and next on their list is expanding the dog kennels.

As far as longer-term plans?

"There's always big dreams of expanding," Skouby-Pratte said. "We would love to have an adoption center on site — right now, the meet-and-greet

space also functions as an adoption space, which can get hectic and loud. So, we would love to eventually have an adoption space here, where we're pulling animals out of the shelter and into an adoption floor. But that's kind of a down-the-road dream."

For more information on rescuing, fostering or donating to the rescue shelter, call Partners for Pets at 618-540-7387 or visit www.partnersforpetsil.org. 



A rescue shelter volunteer — one of the approximately 150 volunteers that helps keep the non-profit going — walks a rescue dog near the edge of the property.

Along with being a Southwestern Electric member, Partners for Pets is also the focus of the cooperative's internal holiday donation drive for 2022.

"For the past several years SWECI has organized companywide donation drives around the holidays to give back to the community and to help support local organizations," Southwestern Electric Executive Assistant Brooke Scott, who organizes the holiday drive, said. "Last year, we asked employees what charities or causes they would like to see SWECI support. We received a wide range of suggestions. Dispatcher Kim Jackson recommended Partners for Pets. Partners for Pets is a non-profit organization that believes in second chances. They take in pets from local animal control facilities and strays. Plus, they help the community by providing resources, education and programs needed to promote community pet wellness. By hosting a donation drive, we hope to raise much-needed supplies for abandoned animals until a suitable home is found for them."

Southwestern Electric employees are asked to bring in supplies such as paper towels, laundry detergent, treats, toys and other goods to donate to the rescue shelter. At the culmination of the drive, the supplies will be delivered to the rescue by Southwestern Electric staff. No outside donations are being taken as part of the drive.

Past beneficiaries of the co-op's holiday drive include Eden's Glory and Leaps of Love, among other organizations.

By the Numbers

15

The number of "unicorns" — the term used to describe dogs that may be harder to place in a standard home due to things like dog aggression, stranger danger, or separation anxiety — successfully adopted into their forever homes in 2021.

32

The number of heartworm-positive dogs successfully treated by the rescue.

71

The number of working cats placed in suitable barn homes in 2021.

226

The number of families served through the community spay & neuter and vaccine clinics.

350

The number of community-owned pets served in 2021.

1,419

The number of pets that found their forever homes with the shelter's help in 2021.

1,538

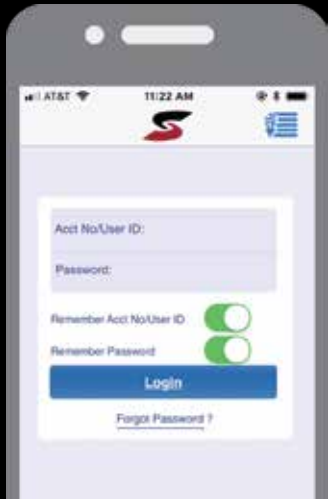
The number of homeless pets pulled into the safety of the rescue in 2021.

22,000

The number of cats and dogs that have been re-homed since Partners for Pets opened its doors in 2003.



REPORT YOUR OUTAGE IN SECONDS WITH THE SWEC IL APP



1

DOWNLOAD THE APP

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

Don't have a password?

Create one using the My Account tab at sweci.com.

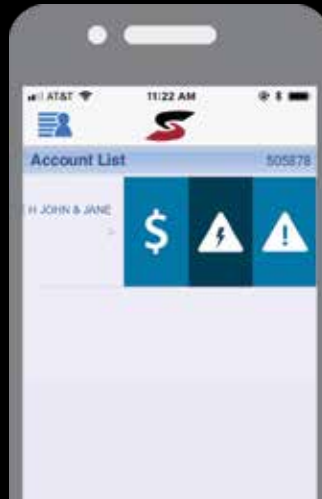


2

SWIPE

Swipe your account info

Swiping left across your account information will reveal three icons.



3

TAP

Tap the center icon

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



4

TYPE

Tap *Report an Outage*

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

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

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

More Than One Account?

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

If you'd like our automated system to call you when power is restored, enter your phone number and activate the **Request for Callback** slider. You can send comments by typing them in the Comments area. You'll want to take care of those items before you hit the **Report an Outage** button.

After you've successfully registered your outage, the app will indicate your account is without power.



View our app tutorials. Search for Southwestern Electric Cooperative on YouTube.

WINTER ENERGY SAVINGS TIPS

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

10 WAYS TO SAVE ON ENERGY COSTS THIS WINTER

Autumn is a beautiful but short-lived season in Southern Illinois. During the first week of November, temperatures can tumble from the sunny sixties to below freezing. By the time December arrives, home heating may be among the most expensive components of your electric bill. Fortunately, some simple adjustments can greatly reduce your energy usage.

Here are ten tips to reduce energy consumption and maintain a comfortable temperature in your home this winter.

1) USE THE SUNLIGHT.

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

2) ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT.

When you are sleeping or away from home, turn your thermostat down 7–10 degrees. According to the US Department of Energy, lowering your thermostat setting by 7–10 degrees for a period of eight hours a day can save approximately 10 percent per year on your heating bills. When you are home, set your thermostat as low as is comfortable. A programmable thermostat can make it easier to adjust the temperature of your home at designated times.

3) ONLY HEAT THE ROOMS YOU ARE USING.

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

4) SERVICE YOUR SYSTEM.

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

5) USE YOUR CEILING FANS.

Switch your ceiling fan's rotation to strategically achieve better airflow and circulate heat. Hot air rises, so reverse your fan's blades to a clockwise rotation to push the warmer air back down into the room.

6) LOWER YOUR WATER HEATING COSTS.

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

7) SEAL AIR LEAKS AND COVER DRAFTY WINDOWS.

Seal around interior doors and baseboards with caulking and install weather-stripping around exterior doors and windows. Use heavy-duty clear plastic film to cover the inside of your windows during the winter months – doing so is almost the equivalent of adding an extra pane of glass!

8) USE SPACE HEATERS SPARINGLY.

Space heaters can be very useful but used in excess can increase your energy usage significantly. Most of the space heaters in use now are between 1,000 and 1,500 watts, which means they use 1–1.5 kilowatts per hour while they are running. That can add up quickly, increasing your electric bill significantly.

9) CHOOSE LED LIGHTS FOR YOUR HOME AND HOLIDAY DECORATIONS.

LED lights are the most energy-efficient lighting option currently available. You may have to spend a little more upfront, but they use 75 percent less energy and last 25 times longer than standard incandescent bulbs.

10) CONSIDER ADDED INSULATION.

While your home may be insulated to a certain extent, adding extra insulation in the attic, basement, and/or external walls can greatly improve the heat retention of your home.

Have a question about energy efficiency, electric vehicles or solar arrays? Call Julie Lowe at 800-637-8667 or send email to julie.lowe@sweci.com.

Energy Bill Payment Assistance Available

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

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

Income Guidelines

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application (gross income for all household members, before taxes are deducted) is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level as shown in the chart at right, you may be eligible to receive assistance. If you rent, and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible to receive assistance.

Family Size	30-Day Income
1.....	\$2,265
2.....	\$3,052
3.....	\$3,838
4.....	\$4,625
5.....	\$5,412
6.....	\$6,198
7.....	\$6,985
8.....	\$7,324



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HEATING HAZARDS

Supplemental warming products require proper attention

Using electric space heaters, blankets or heating pads to fight winter's chill? While they may provide comfort, they also introduce safety hazards into your home.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, space heaters are responsible for 32 percent of home heating fires and involved in 79 percent of home heating fire deaths.

As is the case with any electric-powered appliance, keep the space heater, blanket, or heating pad away from water and never touch the item while wet.

Only purchase products approved by an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care of the product.

Prior to use, inspect cords and connections for cracks or frayed edges, and send the item off for repair if necessary. Discontinue use and unplug the unit immediately if you see or smell smoke. Here are additional safety tips to keep in mind:

ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

- When purchasing a new space heater, look for models with guards to protect the heating elements, and sensors that automatically shut off the unit if it tips or if an object gets too close.
- Position the space heater on hard, stable, level surfaces. Don't place it on carpets, furniture or countertops. Avoid high-traffic areas where people might knock over the heater or trip over the cord.
- Keep space heaters at least three feet away from combustible materials, such as bedding, curtains, clothing and rugs. Space heaters also have parts that can spark, so avoid using them in areas where you store flammable liquids like kerosene and gasoline.
- Plug your space heater directly into a wall outlet. Avoid using extension cords.
- Never operate a space heater if you suspect it may be damaged.
- Don't allow children or pets to come near the space heater when it's in use.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Make sure to turn off and unplug the heater before you leave the room or go to sleep.

ELECTRIC BLANKETS & HEATING PADS

- Always place the electric blanket on top of you, not below you, and keep it flat at all times: Sitting or lying on top of the blanket may damage the internal coils, exposing the heating element to combustible material.
- Avoid covering the electric blanket or heating pad with another blanket, comforter or quilt, unless the safety instructions included in the packaging specifically state that it's safe to do so.
- Discard the electric blanket or heating pad if you notice dark or charred spots on its surface. Discoloration may indicate that the unit's heating elements are burning internally.
- Turn the electric blanket or heating pad off prior to leaving the room or when not in use.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions carefully when attempting to clean the electric blanket or heating pad. Many models may only be washed by hand.

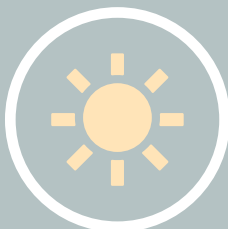


Only purchase products approved by an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL), and follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care of the product.

Space Heater Safety Tips

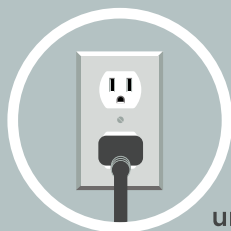
Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using a space heater doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.

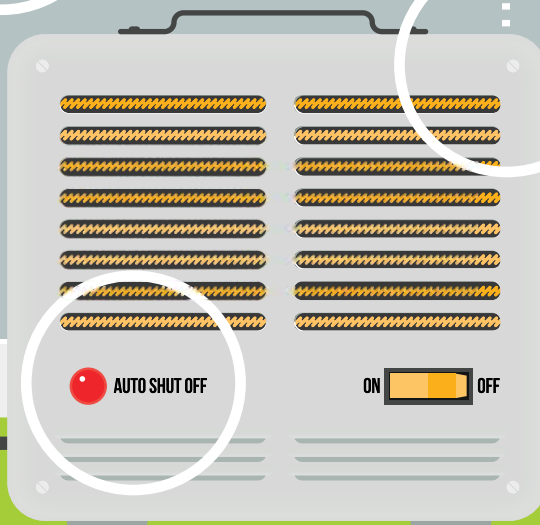


DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.



DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.



DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.

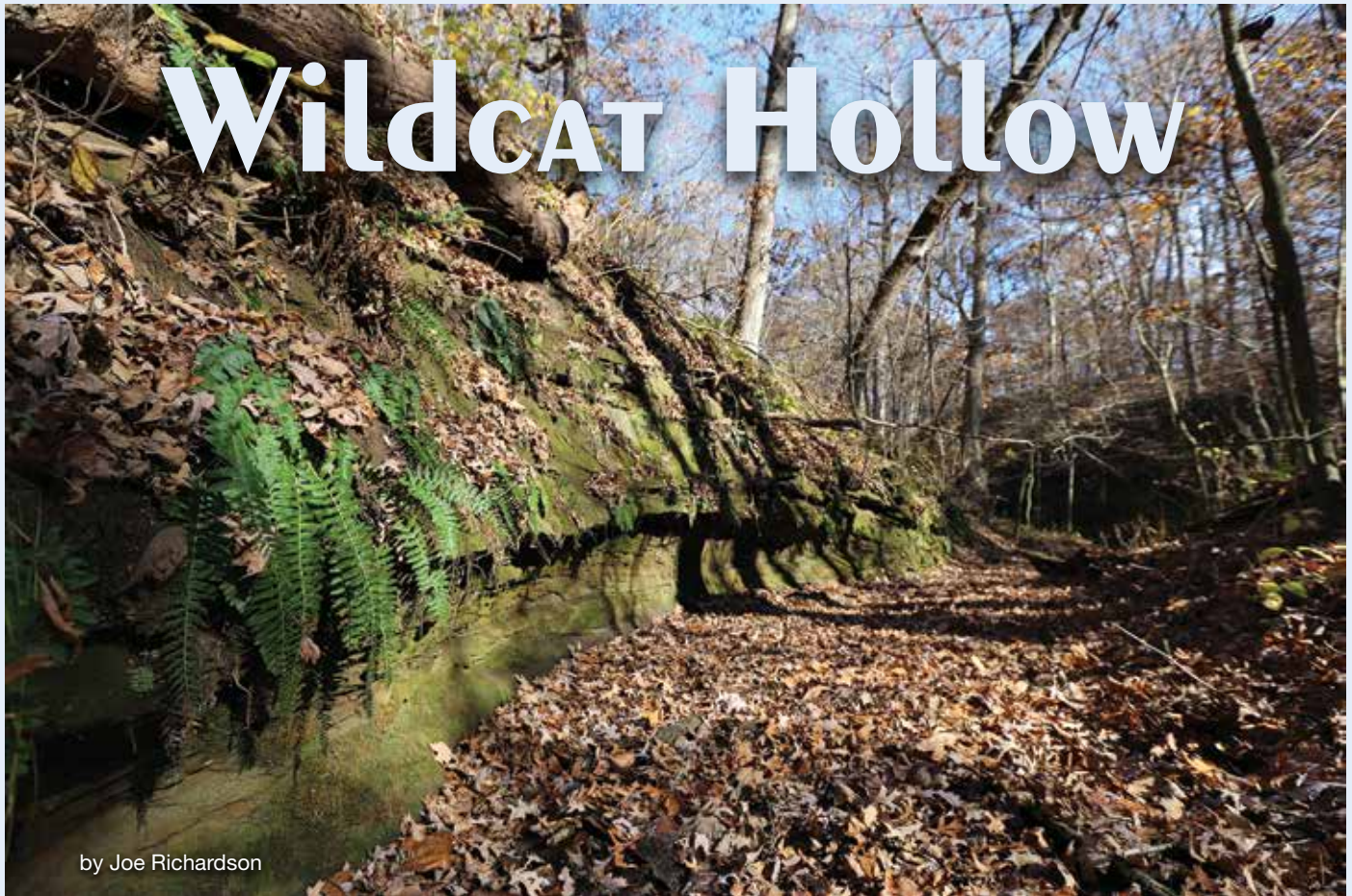


DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.





by Joe Richardson

Wildcat Hollow

WALK HILL AND VALLEY, SEE TIMBER AND STONE

Ghosts haunt the woods of Wildcat Hollow. They appear as swaths of scrub and islands of oak and hickory where field and pasture once stood, as the odd, incongruous pipe rising at an angle from the forest floor, and as dates and initials etched in stone.

Part of this forest was once a farm, and the farm home to an intelligent, educated and ultimately ill-fated woman. She loved and praised and wrote about the land that bore her name. She invited people near and far to visit the farm, where they could work and dream, plan and pray.

Most of them are forgotten.

All are a long time gone.

The artifacts left in their wake aren't as potent as they might be, were Wildcat Hollow as far from civilization now as

it was then. The stories they might share are sometimes lost in the roar of diesel engines, oversized trucks and SUVs barreling up and down I-57. Even these sounds are erased on occasion by the blast of a passing locomotive.

But every now and then, the wind falls and the traffic dies. You hear nothing but water spilling over stone. You smell the cold of moldering earth and the sweet decay of autumn. You steep in the silence and taste the air. And you wonder if this is how it felt to stand in the Hollow when it was Kempley Springs.

KEPLEY SPRINGS

It seems an unlikely place for a farm, and Henry and Ada Kempley unlikely farmers. Given their history — Henry practiced law in Effingham and Ada became one of the first women in the

United States to earn a law degree — it's less surprising that Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area, then Kempley Springs, was a site for social reform.

Tucked between the villages of Mason and Watson, the Hollow is hills and valleys and creeks and marsh and outcrops of barren stone. The site seems more suitable for raising community awareness than crops or livestock. The Kempleys were more successful with the former than the latter. They supported women's suffrage and the temperance movement and opened their farm to visitors for meetings. Their barn became the "Tabernacle at Kempley Springs."

When Henry died in 1906, Ada moved from Effingham and lived at the farm full time. She collected impressions and experiences she shared as essays and poems in an autobiography, "A Farm



Wildcat Hollow's hills, valleys, cliffs and watercourses are home to a colorful variety of plants and animals. Page 20-21: Artifacts from years past blend into the landscape while modern markers help hikers navigate trails.

Philosopher: A Love Story," she published in 1912.

Kepley didn't pursue a career as an attorney and couldn't support herself with art or agriculture. She lost the farm she loved and moved into a small house in Effingham. She died a pauper in 1925 and was buried next to Henry in Effingham's Oak Ridge Cemetery.

Ada Kepley probably wouldn't recognize the land surrounding Wildcat Hollow. But away from the interstate, standing deep in the ravines, sheltered from the present by bluffs and trees and occasions of silence, she would see the rocks and mosses and flowers and know the place we call Wildcat Hollow is Kepley Springs, and her home.

WALKING WILDCAT

I'm here in autumn. The trees are past prime and the colors gone to rust. It's a good time to hike the Hollow.

Mosquitoes are manageable and I'm not picking ticks from my pant legs. I'd be fighting both in warmer weather. That said, winter may be the best time to walk Wildcat Hollow. The hills stand taller and the valleys run deeper without undergrowth and canopy to soften their lines, and the shelter bluffs along the streams and stones that rise from the forest floor are laid bare.

Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area covers 680 acres. You'll find parking at the north, west and south boundaries. From there you can follow grass tracks or rugged trails to the Hollow's rock outcrops, springs and shelter bluffs.

At the north side of the park, grasses grow in open areas. Fulfer Creek wanders here before meeting the Little Wabash River. South of the creek you'll find forest and steep slopes. Species-savvy hikers will spot shagbark hickory, sugar and silver maple, ash, walnut and

basswood trees, sycamore and boxelder, shadbush, red cedar, hop hornbeam and several varieties of oak.

In warmer seasons, you'll see colorful plants with colorful names: yellow trout lily, blue-eyed Mary, squirrel corn, putty root orchid and silver spleenwort fern.

The Hollow is home to wildlife you'd expect to see in Illinois: white-tailed deer, wild turkey, squirrel, raccoon, fox, and during the warmer months, songbirds. The creek and river and adjoining wetlands are habitat for muskrat, beaver, waterfowl and wading birds.

You won't find toilets, picnic tables or campsites at Wildcat Hollow. You *will* find a sign at the south entrance that marks the beginning of a 3.5-mile hiking trail that takes you past springs and bluff and remnants of the Kepley farmstead.

The trails here are *trails* in the true sense. No pavement. No rock or wood

Continued on next page ▶



► *Continued from page 19*
chip trail beds. No carefully manicured foliage. Be prepared to navigate a single-track footpath with the aid, now and then, of fiberglass rods that mark the way. Several times I questioned if I was still on a trail or if I'd wandered onto a deer path, when I spotted a rod a few yards ahead.

You'll cross ravines and climb over fallen timber. Watch for ice, loose rock and soil, and sticks or vines hidden by winter snow. Look for nettles and thorns. You'll find them.

TRAIL TROUBLE

The most persistent and troublesome pitfall on my excursion: hickory nuts. They're plentiful and buried under leaves. Hiking boots and sturdy ankles saved me from hitting the forest floor on multiple occasions. Multiple — not all. After I stumbled and caught myself time and again, a boot-snagging branch caught me on a hillside. Even then, I kept my feet. It was on my return hike, as I sidestepped the same limb, that my boot dropped into a leaf-screened void. I felt a flash of pain and sat down hard.

After a full day of scaling hillsides and skating over hickory hulls, I'd been bested by a hole in the ground. Humbling, that. I took a minute to assess my injury. The little electric shock sensation and heat and tenderness around the



joint bore the familiar hallmarks of a sprain. I'd been lucky. At three quarters of a mile from my car, across a creek, through a valley and up a hillside, had it been a break, it would have been difficult to haul me out of the Hollow. That said, I'd prepared for a mishap. I had a phone, plenty of water, and I'd shared my plans with friends and family. Had I needed help, I'd have been easy to spot; I was in a fluorescent yellow t-shirt and blaze orange vest and cap. People hunt this land. Visibility is vital.

It's safer — and more enjoyable — to hike with friends. While there's much to be said for solo hikes, sharing a day-hike at the Hollow with a group has its merits — especially in winter, when a misstep can leave you waiting for help in the cold.

The week of your hike, check the weather forecast frequently. Make a final check the day of your outing. If temperatures drop dangerously low, reschedule your day out.

Let others know you're hiking the Hollow, when you plan to leave, and when you expect to make it home. Make sure you have their mobile number and leave yours with your contacts. Confirm everyone in your group is on the same page in terms of departure and return times and the terrain you'll cover while you're out.

Spend some time thinking about what



“My farm is in Mason township, Effingham County, Illinois. It has prairie, bottom and upland fields, and much pasture land. The little Wabash River and Fulfer Creek run through it. It is fructified by many living springs. There is much timber on it, grand old trees, and trees coming on; lovely ravines with gray old rocks—and ferns and mosses and wild flowers and pools of water where the cattle and other stock drink, and things that minister to the sense and love of grandeur and beauty. From my upper window I can see the gray old covered wagon bridge, a relic of the past, that crosses the Wabash River, and just beyond that are the great arches of the magnificent concrete, Illinois Central Railroad bridge that stretch across the river like an old Roman Aqueduct—the old and new in sharp contrast.”

—Ada Kepley, *“A Farm Philosopher: A Love Story,”* Worman's Printery, Teutopolis, Ill., 1912.

you'll take with you. Share your list with other members of your party and ask to see their notes. They may remind you to pack your sunglasses or the lip balm you'll be miserable without.

Wear shoes or boots with good tread and ankle support.

Keep an eye on the terrain ahead and anticipate your steps. The trail may give way to loose soil, rocks, cliffs, overhangs, or obstacles that lend themselves to falls.

In winter, be wary of shade that may shelter ice, and be mindful of what's overhead. Snow and ice may cling to branches above the trail.

It's tempting to leave technology behind when you're exploring the woods. Don't. I turned an ankle and hobbled out under my own locomotion. I was lucky. Play it safe and pack your phone. Keep in mind, your signal may be spotty — especially near bluffs.

Again, you can make your outing more enjoyable — and safer — by taking a friend. If you run into trouble, a phone and a friend can mean the difference between a minor misadventure and a serious situation.

DRESS FOR THE DAY


Comfort comes in layers. Regulate your temperature by adding or shedding clothing. My hike opened on a hazy morning with temperatures in the low

50s and ended under bright sun with temperatures in the mid-70s. I started the day with a jacket I shed around noon.

On a winter hike, for the best insulation and versatility, plan on three layers: A synthetic base layer to wick away perspiration and keep your skin dry, a middle layer of fleece to insulate, and an outer shell that repels wind and water. For added comfort, accessorize. Hats (preferably with ear flaps) and gloves or mittens are a must. Sunglasses will protect your eyes from glare, wind and the occasional wayward branch.

Water-repellent boots will keep your feet warm and dry as you cross marshy areas. Plan to double-up on socks. Wear a thin, snug sock against your skin and a thicker sock over it — both of Merino wool or a synthetic fabric.

Finally, take a backpack for snacks, water, your phone, camera and other items you're likely to use. It can also hold layers you shuck as you warm up during the hike.

A Google search of Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area will lead you to an Illinois Department of Natural Resources' PDF brochure of Wildcat Hollow, map included. You can request a paper brochure by writing to: Wildcat Hollow State Habitat Area, c/o Stephen A. Forbes State Park, 6924 Omega Road, Kinmundy, IL 62854, or by calling (618) 547-3381. 



GETTING THERE

Take Illinois Route 37 to Mason, Ill. Travel north on Main Street/ County Road 24. To park at the south entrance, turn right on the first crossroad after I-57. The road is gravel. When it abuts I-57, make a hard left. Before you reach the turn, watch out for the dog. He ambushed my car and wasn't shy about crossing in front of it. To be fair, you're driving at the edge of his yard.

Follow the gravel road along the interstate about a mile to the parking area. Potholes on this road are deep and plentiful. At least one stretches the width of the road. If your car rides low to the ground, I'd consider a different entrance. The dog may also greet you on the way out.

To go to the north entrance, stay on County Road 24 to Road 550N. Turn right onto 550N. The first parking area is about a quarter mile after the turn. To get to the second parking area, follow the road until it makes a 90-degree turn north and park in the cleared area.

The west entrance to Wildcat Hollow is on County Road 24. It's the most obvious parking area, but, it's also the furthest from the trails.



WHO • WHAT • WHERE

For your final solutions of the year, you came through loud and clear. Thank you for your informative and thoughtful replies! Let's see if you're as savvy with your next set of solutions. Can you name the figure pictured on the opposite page? Here's what he might tell you:

I arrived in the Illinois Territory in 1812 and joined the Illinois Territory Rangers. During the Black Hawk War my men elected me captain of a battalion of calvary volunteers. I farmed in Madison County and married in Edwardsville. My wife and I had 13 children. I pioneered the settlement of Greene County and donated land for the first courthouse. I served as governor and in both houses of the Illinois General Assembly. A city is named after me.

We'll share some of your solutions in February. Meanwhile, here's what you had to say about our October puzzle.

.....

This appears to be a telegraph receiver. This is what the telegraph operator listened to when they received a telegraph message. The messages were sent over the wires via Morse code. The two screw terminals on top were where two wires were connected. On the sending end was a telegraph key. When the key was depressed, an electrical current was sent through the wires which in turn activated the magnets (the two round coils in the center). This caused the metal bar to click as it was pulled to the magnets. The clicking was the Morse code that was sent.

In the early days of expansion and settlement of the American West, this



was the fastest means of news and messaging. The art of reading Morse code (which was actually devised for this) has been mostly lost today. Some old-time military radio operators and current ham radio operators still retain this art of communications.

I am a ham, do not use CW (Morse) but had to learn it when I obtained my license — no longer required as digital modes have replaced it
—Dennis Tuchalski, Moro

The October "What am I?" picture in The Southwestern is a piece of telegraph apparatus for receiving telegraph signals used by railroads. I am an antique collector and enjoy old items from days gone by.

—Don Albrecht, Staunton

That appears to be a vintage telegraph clicker although it seems to be missing a few parts. A friend collected antique telegraph items like this and also antique telephone equipment. Amazing how simple some of these inventions were and how they worked. They brought communications out of the dark ages and ushered us into a new age. I am not sure

that our new communication devices are for the better, as I see cell phones to be a bad influence on our young folks.

—Harry Volberg, Pocahontas

It's a telegraph sounder. I showed it to my husband and he knew what it was, just not what it was called. A few Google searches later and we found out it was invented in the 1800s to replace the old Morse register. He watches a lot of old Western movies and shows that made him recognize it.

—Jodi Nevills, Staunton

The "What am I?" pictured is an antique J.H. Bunnell - Ghegan M.L. railroad telegraph sounder manufactured pre-1910. This electromechanical device was used as a receiver on electrical telegraph lines during the 19th century. Machinist/inventor Alfred Vail is credited with inventing the device after 1850 which replaced Samuel Morse's cumbersome register.

—Bill Malec, O'Fallon



PHOTO COURTESY VICKIE ZANETTI

The item in the Southwestern is a telegraph receiver. My husband has both pieces given to him by his uncle Dennis.

—Vickie Zanetti, Alhambra

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

Who Am I?



Christmas Crunch

CHRISTMAS CRUNCH

Ingredients

- 7 cups rice, corn, or wheat Chex or combination of the three
- 10 ounces unsalted peanuts
- 16 ounces chocolate M&Ms — use red and green for Christmas
- 10 ounces mini pretzels
- 1½ pounds white chocolate chips

Directions

1. Combine the cereal, peanuts, M&Ms, and pretzels in large bowl.
2. Melt white chocolate chips over medium heat, stirring constantly.
3. Pour melted chocolate over cereal mixture.
4. Mix well, pour onto wax paper, spread out and let set.
5. After set, break into pieces and store in covered container.

This month's recipes are courtesy of 4-H House Alumni Association's *Nurture the Future @ 805 4-H House Anniversary Cookbook* (no-bake cookies), Edwardsville Garden Club's *Favorite Recipes* (cinnamon pecans and Christmas crunch), and Fayette County Museum *35th Anniversary Cookbook* (Crystal Gayle's sugar cookies).



NO BAKE COOKIES

Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup milk
- 4 tablespoons cocoa
- ½ cup (1 stick) margarine
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 3 cups oatmeal
- 1 teaspoon vanilla

Directions

1. Boil together sugars, milk, cocoa, and margarine for 2 minutes.
2. Add peanut butter, oatmeal, and vanilla. Mix together.
3. Drop by teaspoonful onto wax paper on a cookie sheet.
4. Chill until hardened.

CINNAMON PECANS

Ingredients

- 3½ cups pecan halves
- 2 egg whites
- dash of salt
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon

Directions

1. Place pecans on cookie sheet.
2. Bake at 325° until lightly toasted (about 10 minutes). Let cool.
3. In mixing bowl beat egg whites and salt until soft mounds form.
4. Gradually add sugar and cinnamon and beat to soft peaks.
5. Fold cooled nuts into meringue.
6. Spread mixture in single layer on buttered baking sheet.
7. Bake at 325° for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes. Let cool.

CRYSTAL GAYLE'S SUGAR COOKIES

Ingredients

- ⅔ cup shortening
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Directions

1. Cream together shortening and sugar with a hand mixer. Add egg and mix.
2. Sift together flour and baking soda and mix with other ingredients.
3. Mix in vanilla. Chill dough in the refrigerator at least one hour.
4. Roll out dough ⅛ inch thick on a board covered with lightly floured cloth or lightly floured wax paper.
5. Cut out shapes with Christmas cookie cutters.
6. Place on ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 6 - 8 minutes until lightly browned. Place on drying rack, let cool, and decorate.

Prepared &
photographed
by Mike Barns

CURRENT EVENTS

December 1-4, 8-11, 15-23 CHRISTKINDLMARKT, Belleville. An open-air German Christmas market featuring unique vendors, food, and beverages, along with live entertainment and special attractions on specific dates. 11 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.; Sundays 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Admission is free. Downtown public square. Visit bellevillechristkindlmarkt.com.

December 1-27 CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND, Alton. Drive through to view more than 4 million lights decorating the park. Take your own free photos with Santa. There will be a walk through night November 28 for anyone who wants to brave the cold. Monday - Friday 6 - 9 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 5 - 9 p.m. Suggested donation is \$7 for cars and small vans or \$1 per person for vehicles holding more than 10 people. Rock Spring Park, 2100 College Avenue. Call (800) 258-6645.

December 1-31 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WONDERLAND, Greenville. See our extensive collection of light boxes, Christmas displays and lights, and holiday scenes. 5 - 9 p.m. Free-will donations. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Call (618) 664-9733 or visit americanfarmheritagemuseum.org.

December 1-31 FANTASY OF LIGHTS, Centralia. The lights will shine daily from dusk - 11 p.m. Foundation Park, 600

Pleasant Avenue. Visit seecentralia.com.

December 1-31 THE WAY OF LIGHTS, Belleville. Visit the largest spiritual, spectacular 1.5-mile light display telling the Christmas story. 5 - 9 p.m. National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows, 442 South Demazenod Drive. Visit snows.org.

December 1-31 WINTER WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS, Lebanon. Drive through holiday light display, donations welcome and appreciated at the gate. 5 - 10 p.m. Horner Park, 11113 Widicus Road. Visit lebanonswinterwonderland.org.

December 1 - January 1 CHRISTMAS VILLAGE, Bethalto. Stroll through the Arboretum and see lighted trees, glass cottages, wire art, nativity, and more. See Mr. and Mrs. Claus and mail your letter to Santa from the park. 5 - 9 p.m. Admission is free. Bethalto Arboretum, East Central Street. Visit bethalto.com.

December 1 - January 1 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, Shelbyville. Take the last entryway into the park to start your journey through the lights. The center of the park is lit up with the Chautauqua being a giant carousel. Donations are accepted at the end of the tour. 5 - 10 p.m. Forest Park, 324 East North 9th Street. Visit lakeshelbyville.com.

December 1 - January 8 CHRISTMAS IN CARLYLE LIGHTS, Carlyle. Take a drive through City Park to view the lights, animated features, and dancing trees. Tune your radio to 90.1 FM for dancing trees music. 5 - 11 p.m. 1096 Lake Road. Visit carlylelake.com.

December 2 & 3 CHRISTMAS MARKET, Carlinville. Enjoy shopping on the historic Carlinville square, a large heated building with vendors, arts, crafts, free sleigh rides, visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus, street performers, carolers, demonstrations, and free parking and free shuttle bus. 9 a.m. 1030 West Main Street. Visit christmasincarlinville.com.

December 3 GINGERBREAD 5K RUN/WALK & KIDS' DASH, Belleville. Run with the Gingerbread Man through downtown. 8 - 10 a.m. Online registration (Nov. 1 to Dec. 2) \$30; race day registration \$35. Begins and ends at 510 W. Main St. Register at gingerbreadrun.com.

December 3 HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS TOUR, Elsah. Join us as we open the holiday season by opening our homes. Ticket includes a self-guided house tour and musical entertainment at the two Elsah churches. Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 on the day of event. Day of tickets are cash only. Advance tickets may be purchased at Alton Visitors Center or in Elsah at the General Store, Green Tree Inn, and Maple Leaf Cottage. Prepaid and day of event tickets will be available at the Civic Center, 51 Mill Street starting at 12:30 p.m. Tour is from 1 - 5 p.m. For details or tickets call (314) 308-0931 or visit historicelsah.org.

December 3 HOMETOWN CHRISTMAS, Effingham. Enjoy the traditions of Christmas with Santa, food trucks, winter drinks, train rides, Mistletoe

Market, carriage rides, music, parade, and live nativity. 2 - 8 p.m.; lighting of the Christmas tree at 5:30 p.m. Downtown on Jefferson Avenue. Visit facebook.com/experiencedowntowneffingham.

December 3 OLD FASHIONED DOWNTOWN CHRISTMAS, Shelbyville. Shop at downtown businesses, see a free movie at the Roxy at 10 a.m., visit Santa at Corner Copy, and take photos with Santa's friends along Main Street. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. Visit lakeshelbyville.com.

December 3 SANTA'S CHOCOLATE EXPRESS, Grafton. Hop on the shuttle and travel down Main Street. Register at the Visitor's Center at Grove Memorial Park. Sample holiday treats and shop sales. Enjoy the sounds of carolers and meet Santa from 2 - 4 p.m. Ticket includes shuttle service, a complimentary treat at each participating business, discounts at local businesses, a holiday shopping bag with a small selection of chocolates, and a holiday wine glass. 11 - 3 p.m. Grafton Visitor Center, 950 East Main Street. Visit graftonilchamber.com.

December 3 WINTER WONDERLAND FESTIVAL, Granite City. Watch the Candy Cane Parade, play snow games and participate in winter activities, listen to Christmas music, and shop from a variety of local vendors selling holiday items. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Admission is free. Downtown District.

December 4 & 5, 11 & 12, 18 & 19 CENTRAL PARK CHRISTMAS LIGHTS, Bethalto. See beautiful lights throughout the park. Purchase the makings for a s'more and keep warm by the fire. Visit the live nativity. Children can ride through the park on the barrel train. 5 - 8 p.m. Admission is free. East Central Street. Visit bethalto.com

Call to Confirm

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

Submissions

To submit an event for consideration in our calendar, email your event information to joe.richardson@sweci.com. Please use our Current Events format (as seen on these pages) to write your submission. Include a contact number or email and submit your listing at least two months prior to your event.

December 7; January 6 MOONLIGHT HIKE, Godfrey. Join us on a night hike through the woods on the trails of the Mississippi Sanctuary and Olin Nature Preserve. The terrain is light to moderate and is appropriate for families. The hike will be about 2 miles with stops along the way. 7:30 - 8:45 p.m. Meet at the Talahi Lodge. The hike leaves promptly at 7:30 p.m. Admission is free for members; non-members \$5. Registration is required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

December 8-11 CHRISTMAS CAROL, Lebanon. A theatrical performance by the Looking Glass Playhouse. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m., except for Sunday shows, which begin at 2 p.m. \$10 on Thursday and \$12 Friday - Sunday for adults; \$9 on Thursday and \$11 Friday - Sunday for students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification). Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

December 9-10 UNITED STATES AIR FORCE BAND OF MID-AMERICA, Lebanon. The 45 enlisted musicians and vocalists represent the professionalism and excellence found throughout the U.S. Air Force. Their diverse repertoire includes symphonic masterworks, traditional marches, modern compositions, and jazz-inspired holiday music. Performances Friday at 7 p.m.; Saturday at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. Admission is free but tickets are required. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

December 9-11, 14-18 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: BUS STOP, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2

p.m. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

December 10 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT, Godfrey. Listen to Ride, Rhythm, and Razzle-Dazzle instrumental music in the family-friendly theater. 7 p.m. Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. For more information or tickets, visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

December 10 SANTA CON, Grafton. Dress up as Santa and join many other Santas as they all stroll throughout town. Starts at noon. Corner of Market and Main Streets. Visit graftonilchamber.com.

December 10-11 ARRIVAL WEEKEND, Hartford. On December 12, 1803, the Lewis & Clark Expedition arrived at the confluence of the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers and fixed on a place to build Camp River Dubois. Arrival Weekend celebrates this arrival. The event features exhibitors of vintage tools, firearms, rocks and minerals, 18th Century medicine, military re-enactors and artillery. See how the Corps of Discovery lived during their winter encampment. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Lewis & Clark State Historic Site, One Lewis & Clark Trail. Call (618) 251-5811 or visit campdubois.com.

December 15 HOLIDAY LIGHTING CONTEST, Maryville. The village is holding its annual holiday lighting contest throughout the town. Take a drive through town to see the decorative lights starting at dusk. Visit vil.maryville.il.us.

December 17 & 18 WINTER MARKET, Collinsville. A holiday shopping experience for you and your family! Offering fashions and foods, glitter and gifts, music, and a little bit of magic. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Visit gateway-center.com.

December 17; 31 MODEL TRAIN SHOW OPEN HOUSE, Glen Carbon. Visitors are welcome to view trains running on the Club's 18 x 27 foot HO Scale model railroad. Snacks provided. 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is free. Metro East Model Railroad Club, 180 Summit Street. For more information, call Bob at (618) 476-9228, or Bill at (618) 254-6596, or visit trainweb.org/memrc.

December 17 - April 15 GOSHEN WINTER MARKET, Edwardsville. The market will be held on the third Saturday of the month and ends in April. Find seasonal produce, eggs, meats, baked goods, arts and crafts from local growers and artists. 8 a.m. - noon. In the basement of the Newsong Fellowship building, 201 St. Louis Street. Visit goshenmarket.org.

December 18 WINTER SOLSTICE SUNRISE OBSERVANCE, Collinsville. Meet at the Woodhenge reconstruction. Atop a ladder at the center post, Bill Iseminger will discuss the discovery and significance of the ancient calendar. Welcome the rising sun with Bill as he has done four times a year, during each solstice and equinox. Out of respect for Native beliefs, no ceremonies will take place during this event. Solstice t-shirts will be available for purchase. 7 a.m. The Woodhenge reconstruction is about 1/4 mile west on Collinsville Road, from the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, 30 Ramey Street. Call (618) 346-5160 or visit cahokiamounds.org.

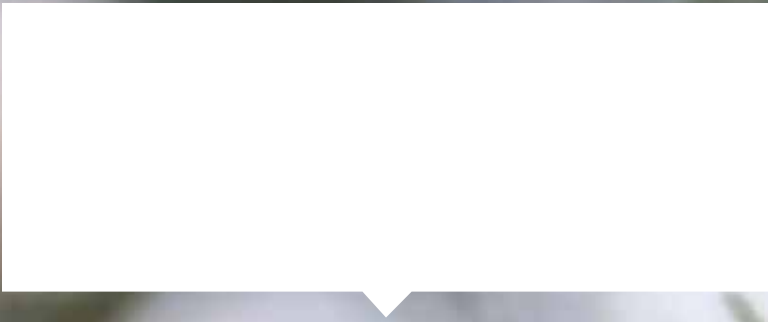
December 23 TELESCOPE NIGHT, Godfrey. Want to look at the universe through a telescope, but don't own one? Come out to the Talahi Lodge on the night after a full moon and we will have some set up. Bring your own telescope and we can help you use it. We will talk about how telescopes work and look at the moon and other night sky objects. 6:30

p.m. Free for members; \$5 for non-members. Space is limited, registration required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

December 23; January 12, 19; February 1, 3, 6 & 7, 14, 16, 21-24; March 2, 9 BALD EAGLE DAYS AT PERE MARQUETTE STATE PARK, Grafton. A site interpreter at Pere Marquette will be present programs about bald eagles. There will be a short video presentation followed by a drive to view wintering eagles. Dress warmly, have a full tank of gas, bring binoculars, wear waterproof boots and bring snacks/coffee. Programs begin at the park's visitor center at 8:30 a.m. Reservations are required. Pere Marquette State Park 13112 Visitor Center Lane. For more information or reservations, call (618) 786-3323 or visit pmlodge.net.

January 6-8 LET'S GO FISHING SHOW, Collinsville. There will be a wide variety of fishing gear, boats, exhibits and seminars. Friday noon - 8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Adults \$7; children 6-15 years of age \$3.50; children 5 years of age and younger are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Call (800) 289-2388 or visit gatewaycenter.com.

January 21 FAMILY DISCOVERY DAY: WINTER SURVIVAL CHALLENGE, Godfrey. Can your family survive the harsh winter? Build a fort, light a fire, and search for tracks in the snow and mud. Activities are appropriate for ages 4 and up unless otherwise specified. Parents/guardians are required to attend with children. 10 a.m. - noon. \$7 per person for non-members; \$5 per person for members. Pre-registration is required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.



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