

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

DECEMBER 2025 • VOLUME 77 • ISSUE 12

Competition & Camaraderie

LINEWORKER'S SAFETY
RODEO HIGHLIGHTS
SKILLS, SOLIDARITY

DEMAND
CHARGE

NEW WAY TO SAVE

COPPER
THEFT

YOUTH
TOUR

HEATING
HAZARDS

BOARD
REVIEWS
WPCA

ENERGY
ASSISTANCE



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We're excited to once again provide local students with a chance to learn about leadership at the state and national level with the 2026 Youth Tour. Apply before January 1, 2026, and join us!

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Looking to get in the Christmas spirit? You came to the right place. We've got a rundown of light displays brightening our area this holiday season.

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You tapped into your memory to recall our September item, but can you keep your mind's wheels turning to pinpoint this month's location?



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Christmas lights are a spectacle to see, but they're not the only attractions going on this month.

27 Final Frame

Christmas color.

Editor's Note: We devoted this month's recipe pages to our Lineworker's Safety Rodeo story. Our recipes will return in January.



Reader Contest

We've hidden an image of a truck and a tree in your magazine. Your job is to find it. The actual image may be larger or smaller than what you see below. We may change the color or reverse or alter the image we've hidden to make the contest more challenging. If you find the truck and tree, email us or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and the page number where you found the image. Please email us at thesouthwestern@sweci.com or send your postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

Entries must be postmarked or in our thesouthwestern@sweci.com inbox by the first day of the month following the month of publication. For our December contest,



we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by January 1, 2026.

We'll choose one winner in a random drawing. Our winner will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. We'll publish the name of this month's contest winner in the January issue of The Southwestern.

OCTOBER WINNER

Congratulations to Jo Ann Ullrich of Altamont. As the winner of our October Hide & Seek contest drawing, Jo Ann will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill. Thank you to everyone who participated in our October contest. This month's image appears at left. You'll find Hide & Seek rules below.

RULES TO PLAY BY

- One entry per membership per month.
- A membership can only win once per calendar year.
- No phone calls, texts, social media posts, walk-in traffic, carrier pigeons, singing telegrams or other clever means of communication that may occur to you.
- Please respond *only* by emailing us at thesouthwestern@sweci.com or by sending a postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.
- Entries submitted by other methods will be disqualified.
- Entries emailed to other Southwestern Electric email addresses will be disqualified, deleted, then disqualified again, just to be safe.
- Entries mailed to other departments or included with other correspondence will likely never find their way to the editor. If they do, they'll be disqualified. Also, he'll add you to his list of people who can't follow instructions. It's a long (and growing) list and not one you care to be part of.
- December contest entries must be in our inbox or postmarked by January 1.
- We'll never hide the image on the front or back cover or on the page where we list the rules.

ON THE COVER

Apprentice linemen Dawson Chesnut, Alex Goodin and Tucker Johnson collaborate on a challenge during the Lineworker's Safety Rodeo held Sept. 25 in Springfield, Ill. See our story on page 12.



CO-OP REMINDERS

December 16 Payment processing unavailable 6 p.m. to midnight (maintenance).

December 24 & 25 Offices closed for Christmas holiday.

December 31 & January 1 Offices closed for New Year's holiday.



FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For the latest news and notes, follow us on Facebook and x (formerly Twitter). You'll find us at facebook.com/SWECI and x.com/sweci. Search for Southwestern Electric on YouTube, Instagram & LinkedIn. You can listen to our podcast, Wireside Chat, on Apple Music, Spotify, Audible and anywhere podcasts are found.



Understanding the Demand Charge

A New Way to Save

In 2026, Southwestern will introduce a demand charge to your electric bill. This change gives you new opportunities to save money by being strategic about when you use electricity.

WHAT IS A DEMAND CHARGE?

A demand charge is based on the single highest hour of electricity use during your billing period. To understand why this matters, you need to know how utilities pay for power.

Southwestern doesn't just pay for the total amount of electricity our members use — we also pay transmission and capacity costs based on our membership's peak demand. Transmission costs cover moving power across the grid to reach you, while capacity costs ensure power plants are ready to meet everyone's highest usage moments. These charges are calculated based on when the entire system experiences its greatest strain.

When thousands of members use large amounts of electricity at the same time, particularly during hours of high demand on the regional grid, it drives up transmission and capacity costs for the cooperative. By managing your peak usage, you help reduce these expenses, and we can pass those savings along to you.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Imagine coming home at 4 p.m. and immediately turning on your space heater, starting the dishwasher, throwing clothes in the dryer, and plugging in your EV to charge. That single hour becomes your peak demand for the month, establishing your demand charge.

This isn't a new cost. It's already built into your current rate. When you lower your demand, you lower our transmission and capacity costs, and those savings come back to you.

If you stagger those same activities throughout your evening — running the dishwasher after dinner, doing laundry before bed, and charging your EV overnight — you lower your peak demand, reducing your demand charge and your overall bill.

This isn't a new cost. It's already built into your current rate. We're breaking it out separately so we can reward members who help lower the cooperative's overall peak demand. When you lower your demand, you lower our transmission and capacity costs, and those savings come back to you.

PRACTICAL WAYS TO LOWER YOUR DEMAND CHARGE

Managing your demand charge is about avoiding the simultaneous use of multiple high-wattage appliances. Here are some effective strategies:

- **Spread out major appliance use.** Don't run your heating and cooling system, water heater, dryer and dishwasher at the same time.
- **Use delay-start features.** Program dishwashers and washing machines to run during off-peak evening or overnight hours.
- **Charge EVs strategically.** Set your electric vehicle to charge overnight when other household electricity use is minimal.
- **Monitor weather extremes.** On very hot or cold days when your HVAC system works hardest, postpone running other major appliances until heating or cooling demand decreases.
- **Think about timing.** Consider which tasks need to happen immediately and which can wait a few hours.

TAKE CONTROL OF YOUR ENERGY COSTS

The demand charge puts more control in your hands. By making simple adjustments to when you use electricity, you can reduce your peak demand and lower your bill while helping the cooperative manage transmission and capacity costs more efficiently. It's a win-win that rewards thoughtful energy management.

COPPER THEFT IS A DANGEROUS AND COSTLY CRIME

Copper theft is a growing concern across the country, and a dangerous one – not only for electric utilities and their members, but also for the thief.

Copper wire is used in power lines and to ground electrical equipment, and it's especially prominent at substations. Also prominent at substations? High-voltage electricity, the kind that can seriously injure and even kill a person who comes into contact with it.

It's why our substations are surrounded with secure fencing and marked with warning signs. It's also why only authorized personnel are allowed inside the substations, and those personnel are wearing proper personal protective equipment before entering.

Beyond the dangers to people interacting with the wires and substations, copper theft can compromise the electrical system, potentially injuring our linemen or our members in the process. Theft of copper from our lines or substations also costs the cooperative time and money, costs that fall back on our members. Copper theft is far from a victimless crime.

It's why we're asking for your help to combat copper theft in our area. If you see any vehicles at a Southwestern Electric-owned substation that aren't ours or that look like they don't belong there, please report them to the local police. Copper theft is illegal in every state, and copper theft from an electrical substation may be a federal offense.

Thank you in advance for doing your part to keep our cooperative, our members and our community safe.



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Bright? Sure. But if your holiday lighting setup isn't efficient, your power bill may not make you merry.

Fortunately, these few simple tips could save you energy – and money – while still keeping your home aglow this winter:

Switch to LED lights

LED lights are a great option for decorating your tree and home because they're brighter, last longer and conserve more energy than incandescent bulbs. As an added bonus, they also stay cooler than traditional bulbs, reducing your risk of fire in the process.

Use an automatic timer

Unless you stay up late or wake up early, your holiday lights are likely to stay on longer than they need to. Timers are programmable, taking the work out of turning your lights on and off – and saving you money to boot.

Invest in a smart power strip

Timers are great, but devices can still draw energy unnecessarily when in standby mode. Smart power strips are able to cut power to devices in standby mode, and many also allow owners to control devices remotely via a smartphone app.

We'd like to help you find out.

Read our magazine and watch our social media channels for information on application requirements and deadlines in the coming months.



CFO Presents Cost Data

Board Reviews Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment

Southwestern Electric's board of directors will evaluate the cooperative's Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA) in December. CFO Nathan Taylor will present year-to-date data for the board's consideration. If approved, members will see a WPCA charge that reflects transmission and capacity costs for the latter half of 2025 on their February 2026 bills.

The WPCA was introduced in 2024 to ensure Southwestern can fairly recover changes in the price of wholesale power without raising rates. The adjustment — displayed as a separate line item on your bill — reflects variable costs tied to capacity and transmission. These costs fluctuate with regional market conditions. The WPCA allows the co-op to recover only what's necessary to provide wholesale power to members.

A SYSTEM DESIGNED TO WORK WITH THE MARKET

Four years ago, Southwestern revised its bill format to give members a transparent view of how energy costs are calculated. A line for the WPCA was included at that time, with no cost associated with it.

In January of 2024, Southwestern assigned a WPCA rate of 0.00534 cents per kilowatt-hour. In July 2024, the WPCA was adjusted to 0.00739. In January 2025, the cooperative assigned a WPCA rate of 0.00916 cents per kilowatt-hour, or \$9.16 per 1,000 kWh. That rate was adjusted in July 2025 to 0.01501 cents per kilowatt-hour, or \$15.01 per 1,000 kWh, as transmission and most notably capacity costs increased dramatically.

“The reset was always intended to coincide with the transition to the new rate design...we won't need to re-evaluate that cost again until the end of 2026.”

—CEO Bobby Williams

The December evaluation follows the cooperative's regular six-month review cycle. The board of directors will consider the WPCA, with any approved changes taking effect Jan. 1, 2026, and appearing on February bills. Members can stay informed about the review and board decision through Southwestern's social media channels and future issues of The Southwestern magazine.

WHY ADJUSTMENTS ARE NECESSARY

“Our contract with our wholesale power provider protects our members from extreme swings in market pricing, but it can't completely insulate us from higher capacity and transmission costs,” noted CEO Bobby Williams.

“In our region, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) manages power supply and demand. Each season, MISO assesses the capacity, or potential demand, that utilities will place on the grid. When demand projections rise or when transmission costs increase, the price of power can climb significantly,” Williams said.

In 2023, Southwestern Electric Cooperative paid \$10 per megawatt-day for capacity in the MISO summer auction. In 2024, capacity cost the co-op \$30 per megawatt day. In 2025, MISO summer auction capacity costs soared to \$666.50 per megawatt-day.

“The WPCA allows Southwestern to respond to these changes without raising our electric rates. When market prices rise, the WPCA appears as a charge. When they fall, it can appear as a credit.”

WHY THE WPCA WON'T BE ZERO IN JANUARY

When Southwestern announced in September that the WPCA would reset to zero in 2026, that step was tied to the cooperative's upcoming rate restructuring. “The reset was always intended to coincide with the transition to the new rate design,” said Williams. “When we implement our new rates, the WPCA will reset to zero, and we won't need to re-evaluate that cost again until the end of 2026.”

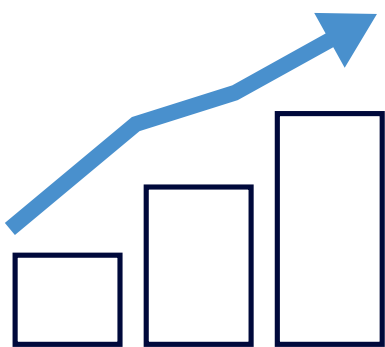
Across the region, utilities are facing higher generation, transmission, and distribution costs — pressures that have led to rising rates among investor-owned utilities (IOUs). “In August, we started hearing from IOU customers looking for

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The Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment Explained

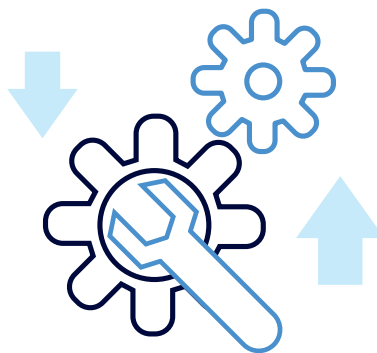
The WPCA Provides Flexibility

The Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment (WPCA) allows Southwestern Electric to recover expenses associated with changes in the price of wholesale power. Those costs include energy, capacity and transmission fees.



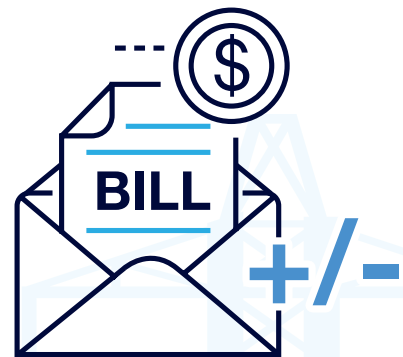
Energy, Capacity & Transmission Costs Are Increasing

The co-op is paying more for wholesale power than it was just a few years ago. Capacity costs are much higher than they once were. Transmission fees — expenses incurred in moving energy from power plants across the grid and onto the co-op's distribution system — have also increased significantly. These expenses are addressed by the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment.



The WPCA Helps Southwestern Avoid Rate Increases

The WPCA allows Southwestern to recover expenses incurred in a rapidly changing power market, without continually changing electric rates. The WPCA will rise and fall to meet fluctuating market prices.



The WPCA Is A Pass-Through Cost

Southwestern only collects what's necessary to recover variable costs associated with providing wholesale power. If energy, capacity or transmission costs drop substantially, the Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment will appear as a credit on your bill.



YOUR ACCOUNTABLE ENERGY PARTNER

Youth Tour '26

WIN A TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

Applications due Jan. 1, 2026

National Youth Tour photos courtesy Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

In spring of 2026, Southwestern Electric Cooperative will take local students to Springfield, Ill., to tour the Capitol and meet with legislators during Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day. Throughout the day, students will learn about leadership from legislators, state officers and co-op employees who've dedicated their lives to public service.

At the end of the day, two students will be selected to represent Southwestern Electric during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth to Washington Tour, June 14-21, 2026.

Expenses for both trips are covered by the cooperative.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Any high school student in Southwestern Electric's service area is eligible to participate in Youth Day.

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF YOUTH TOUR?

In Springfield and Washington, legislators and officers discuss the rewards and responsibilities of public service, while representatives from AIEC, the statewide trade association representing Illinois electric cooperatives, explore the role of grassroots organizations in government. Careers in public service can be personally fulfilling, professionally rewarding and contribute to the common good. The spring Youth Day and summer Youth to Washington experience bring these ideas to life.

HOW DO I APPLY?

Write an essay, no more than 275 words in length, that answers the question: What do you hope to gain from participating in the Youth Tour experience?

Submit your essay to Southwestern Electric Member Services Manager Jennifer Gillan. Your essay can either be delivered in person at our Greenville office, mailed to Jennifer Gillan, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246 or emailed to community@sweci.com.

Essays should be submitted no later than Jan. 1, 2026. To learn more about Youth Tour, go to youthtour.coop or [Facebook.com/ILYouthTour](https://www.facebook.com/ILYouthTour).





PHOTO COURTESY
BROOKE SCOTT



COMPETITION & CAMARADERIE

Lineworker's Safety Rodeo showcases Southwestern Electric linemen's skills, solidarity

Story by Nathan Grimm
Photos by Mike Barns



Southwestern Electric 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Tucker Johnson tightens his BuckSqueeze fall restriction device during the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' recent Lineworker's Safety Rodeo in Springfield, Ill.



At left, 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Dawson Chesnut competes in the transition climbing challenge. Below, Construction Foreman Andy Wessel maneuvers a telescoping hot stick during the cutout change event.

“Adjust!”

The word rang out from below, cutting through the whirl of bucket truck engines and the sound of climbing gaffs meeting wood poles and the blare of pop country playing through a portable speaker somewhere in the distance.

Nearly 40 feet above the noise, Tucker Johnson did as he was told. The Southwestern Electric Cooperative apprentice lineman stopped and tightened the BuckSqueeze device keeping him tethered to the pole before continuing his ascent toward the life-sized dummy hanging above. Once there, he would secure the dummy with a rope, cut it loose from its harness and slowly lower it to the ground, ending the exercise.

The scene is one of many that illustrates the spirit of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives’ (AIEC) annual Lineworker’s Safety Rodeo. The yearly rodeo, held this year on Sept. 25 at Lincoln Land Community College’s Line School Yard on its Springfield, Illinois campus, brings lineworkers from across the state together to compete in a series of events using skills focused on agility, speed and accuracy – and all with safety and efficiency at the forefront. Events included an armor rod install, cutout change, hurt man rescue and 40-foot transition climb.

Eighteen teams from 13 electric cooperatives and two municipal electric utilities participated in this year’s rodeo, including two from Southwestern Electric. That’s one more than competed in last year’s rodeo and added a new twist to the competition, with a team of veteran journeyman linemen and a team of apprentice linemen representing the co-op. Journeymen linemen competing were Dustin Kemp, Braden Clark and Andy Wessel; apprentice linemen Alex Goodin and Dawson Chesnut joined Johnson on the other team.

Despite the friendly competition and some good-natured ribbing before the day began, there’s no uncertainty about the allegiances at the heart of it.

“We were all working as a team,” Johnson said, “even though we were competing.”

Southwestern Electric CEO Bobby Williams likes to refer to the cooperative as a family.

On this sunny Thursday in late September, it’s quite literally a family affair. Along with the six competitors, the Southwestern Electric contingent included a handful of coworkers and nearly a dozen family members on hand to support the crews. Braden

Continued on next page ►

“We both love the atmosphere of the rodeo. Even though I couldn’t compete, I could still be there to cheer on my team and keep their heads clear during the competition”

—James Rickermann, Journeyman Lineman

► *Continued from page 13*

Clark's parents, Deanna and Roy, and his sister Megan made the trip to cheer him on, as did Construction Foreman Andy Wessel's parents Larry and Barb Cunningham and Dawson Chesnut's fiancée, Cherilyn Cook, their six-month-old daughter, Angelyna, and his parents, Steve and Jennifer.

For journeyman lineman Dustin Kemp, being there meant being away from his family. His twin daughters, Eleanor and Scarlett, were born prematurely this summer, and due to selective fetal growth restriction – a condition

where one twin grows significantly smaller than the other – they remained hospitalized as the rodeo approached. Because of that, Kemp had planned to bow out of the event this year, but an injury to fellow journeyman lineman James Rickermann pressed him into duty out of a sense of obligation to his cooperative brethren.

Perhaps the best example of the cooperative family spirit, though, was the presence of Rickermann himself. Rickermann, who placed first in the individual portion of the 40-foot transition climb at last year's rodeo, was set

to participate again this year before the injury took him out of competition just days before the rodeo took place. Rickermann's wife, Kim, came as well, just as she did the year prior.

Even sidelined, Rickermann said he felt it was important to be at the rodeo to support his coworkers.

"We both love the atmosphere of the rodeo. Even though I couldn't compete, I could still be there to cheer on my team and keep their heads clear during the competition, which is the same reason my family has always come to any rodeo

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At left, 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Alex Goodin dangles 40 feet above the ground while changing a cutout. Above, Journeyman Lineman James Rickermann, who was unable to compete because of an injury sustained prior to the rodeo, talks strategy with the competitors.





At left, Journeyman Lineman Dustin Kemp has his hands full with the life-sized dummy during the hurt man rescue. Above, Journeyman Lineman Braden Clark lines up armor rods during a challenge.

"We went up there with no expectations. Just go up and do the best we could do, see what happens."

—Dawson Chesnut, 1st Step Apprentice Lineman



Energy Efficient Gift Giving

A savvy shopper's guide to making the holidays green and bright

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

There's no place like home for the holidays—and thanks to today's technology, you can make home more energy efficient for everyone on your gift list. Here are eight ideas for energy-saving items you can stuff into stockings or tuck under the tree. Many of these gadgets will save your friends and family energy and money during the holidays, and every day, for years to come.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for reading my column this year. I look forward to sharing more energy tips and information with you in 2026. Until then, may your days be merry, green and bright!

1. SMART THERMOSTATS

There are many different brands and models of smart thermostats on the market, all aimed at helping you become more energy efficient. Smart thermostats live up to their name—they quickly program themselves to learn your habits and save energy by automatically adjusting the temperature of your home when you are away. They're also adaptable. If your schedule changes, you can control your thermostat using your phone, adjusting the temperature at your convenience. If you're installing a smart thermostat in your home, ask about our \$50 technology rebate!

2. STREAMING DEVICES

If friends and family members on your shopping list don't have a smart TV, consider a streaming device such as an Amazon Fire Stick or Roku as a gift or stocking stuffer. Streaming devices may use up to 30 times less energy than a video game console, which many people use to access their streaming apps.

3. SMART POWER STRIPS

Like smart thermostats, smart power strips come in a variety of models. Some sense when an appliance, such as your TV, is turned off, and switch off related electronics to reduce energy use. Smart power strips are convenient, as they let you turn off several plugged-in appliances at once with a simple flip of a switch.

4. POWER SAVING REMOTE CONTROL PLUGS AND OUTLET WIRELESS ADAPTORS

This gadget set is great for shutting off hard to reach appliances or light switches. You can cut power to electrical devices with a click of the remote, allowing you to reduce your energy consumption by powering off electrical devices left in standby mode.

5. SMART VENTS

These vents divert airflow from rooms that don't need heating or cooling and redirect that air to rooms where you need it, saving energy and shaving dollars from your power bill.

6. LED SMART BULBS

Light bulbs are some of the most frequently used items in your house. LED smart bulbs are energy efficient and, as the name says, smart. Depending on the bulbs, you can turn them on and off remotely using your phone or via a voice control system like Amazon Alexa or Google Assistant.

7. LED NIGHTLIGHTS

Have a friend or family member who's difficult to buy for? LED nightlights make great gifts and range from purely practical to whimsical and fun. They can prevent late night falls, be strategically stationed to reassure kids, or used as decoration to add a splash of light and color to a home. If you're buying for younger friends or family members, many companies design colorful, imaginative, LED nightlights specifically for kids.

8. LED HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Nothing beats the warm glow of an evergreen wrapped in holiday lights. Not only do LED holiday lights use less energy than their incandescent counterparts, they're also more resilient, so they're likely to survive years of packing and unpacking. LEDs provide brilliant, cheerful color without the heat of traditional holiday lights. With their longer life and low energy use, decorative LEDs can't guarantee a white Christmas, but they can make the holidays more green and bright.

LIHEAP Energy Assistance

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. The current LIHEAP application period is Oct. 1, 2025 to Aug. 15, 2026, or until funding is exhausted.

The listings below will help you determine if you're eligible for assistance. Payment amounts are determined by income, household size, fuel type, geographic location and available funding.

Use the listing 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.

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 agency will make the appropriate payment to your energy provider(s) on your behalf, or in some cases, directly to you. Payments will be made by the local agency within 15 days of the application's approval.

Electric co-op members, if approved, will receive assistance in the form of a one-time payment. Members using Pay-As-You-Go (see below) may qualify for LIHEAP funds. Contact your community action agency to find out if you qualify for energy assistance. For more information visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/communityservices/utilitybillassistance.html> or call 877-411-WARM.

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.	618-532-7388
Clay	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Clinton	BCMw Community Services, Inc.	618-532-7388
Effingham	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Fayette	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Macoupin	Illinois Valley Economic Development Corp.	217-839-4431
Madison	Madison County Community Development	618-692-8940
Marion	BCMw Community Services, Inc.	618-532-7388
Montgomery	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
Shelby	CEFS Economic Opportunity Corp.	217-342-2193
St. Clair	St. Clair Community Action Agency	618-277-6790

Income Eligibility

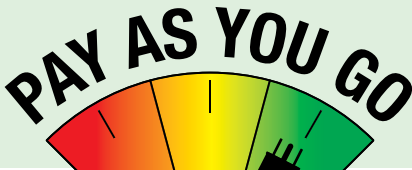
If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application (gross income, before taxes are deducted) is at or below the 60% state median income* as shown in the chart (right), you may be eligible to receive assistance. If you rent, and your heat is included in the rent, you may be eligible for a LIHEAP benefit.

**Program Year 2026 Income Guidelines are based on State Median Income and Federal Poverty Guidelines. The state reserves the right to adjust these levels based on the availability of federal appropriations.*

Family Size	30-Day Income
1	\$3,332
2	\$4,357
3	\$5,382
4	\$6,407
5	\$7,432
6	\$8,457
7	\$8,649
8	\$8,842

- Take control of your energy usage.
- No credit checks or security deposits.
- No fees for late payment or reconnection of service.
- Say goodbye to paper bills.

For more information on our Pay-As-You-Go program, visit sweci.com or call 800-637-8667 to speak to one of our member services representatives.



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 UL Solutions, 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.

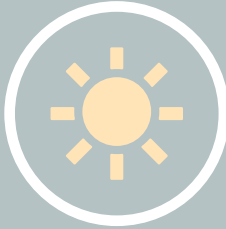


Only purchase products approved by an independent testing facility, such as UL Solutions, and follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care of the product.

Space Heater Safety Tips

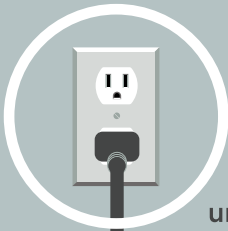
Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using a space heater doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

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

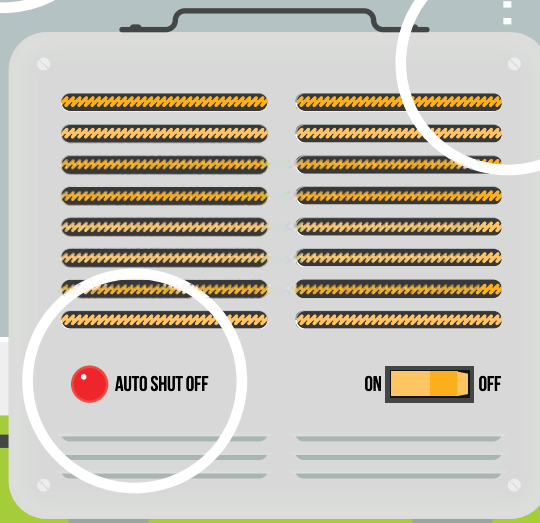


DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

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.

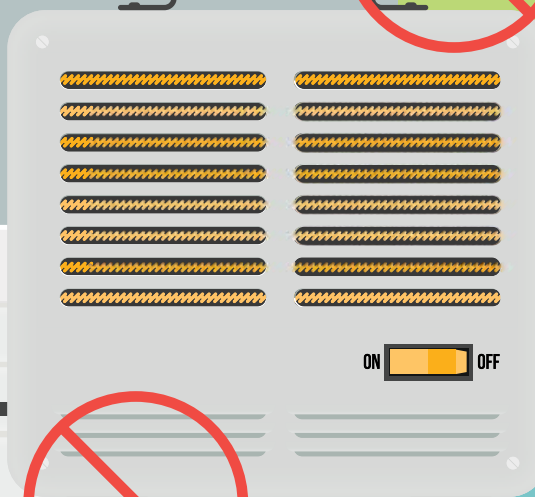


DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



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.



Light Up the Holidays

For families across the country, it's an annual tradition. On Thanksgiving weekend, parents and grandparents load kids into cars and head to a nearby neighborhood, park or town. Once there, they carefully navigate city streets or rural roads while their passengers marvel at something they haven't seen since last December — Christmas lights.

Some of us will seek out quiet cul-de-sacs aglow with animated reindeer, or holiday dioramas arranged around the town square to tell a story, or quiet country lanes with homes, barns and buildings outlined in starlight. Others will look for stunning displays made of a million and more lights. In Southwestern Illinois, your Christmas light viewing options are limited only by your willingness to explore and the patience of your passengers.

If you're a longtime local, you'll likely find a few of your favorite holiday light locations listed here. If you're new to the area — welcome. Enjoy the views and savor the season as you establish a family tradition.

Happy holidays. And may all your Christmases be bright.



Christmas Wonderland, Alton

Courtesy Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau

BEFORE YOU LEAVE HOME

Schedules and event availability are subject to change. Please confirm times and dates before planning your visit.



Wonderland In Lights,
Effingham

December 1-27 CHRISTMAS WONDERLAND, Alton. Drive through to view more than 4 million lights decorating the park. Take your own photos with Santa. Monday - Friday 6 - 9 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday 5 - 9 p.m. The suggested donation is \$10 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 1-28 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, Shelbyville. Take the last entryway into the park to start your journey through the lights. Stop by the Chautauqua building and enjoy the 30 plus trees decorated by various businesses and organizations until 9 p.m. Donations are accepted at the end of the tour. 5 - 10 p.m. Forest Park, 324 East North 9th Street. Visit lakeshelbyville.com.

December 1-31 CHRISTMAS LIGHTS WONDERLAND, Greenville. See our extensive collection of light boxes, Christmas displays and holiday scenes. Hill's Fort 1800s Christmas open Fridays and Saturdays. North Pole Express train rides Friday - Sunday. 5 - 9 p.m. Admission to display is free-will donation. Train rides \$5. American Farm Heritage Museum, 1395 Museum Avenue. Visit american-farmheritagemuseum.org.

December 1-31 FANTASY OF LIGHTS, Centralia. Experience thousands of lights including whimsical twinkling candy canes, golfing Santa and Rudolf catching some rays. Dusk - 10 p.m. Admission is free. Foundation Park, 600 North Pleasant Avenue. Visit centraliafoundationpark.com.

December 1-31 WINTER WONDERLAND OF LIGHTS, Lebanon. Drive through holiday light display, donations welcome and appreciated at the gate. 5 - 9 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 5 - 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Horner Park, 11113 Widicus Road. Visit lebanon-swinterwonderland.org.

December 1 - January 1 BETHALTO CHRISTMAS VILLAGE, Bethalto. Take a stroll through the Arboretum's 1/2 mile paved path with lighted trees, glass cottages, wire art, nativity, and more. The display is created for all ages, by all ages. 6 - 9 p.m. Admission is free. Bethalto Arboretum, East Central Street. Visit bethaltospirit.net/christmas-walk.

December 1 - January 1 FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS, Vandalia. Enjoy a stroll through Christmas lights at Rogier Park, 940 West Filmore Street. 5 - 11 p.m. Visit facebook.com/OTCFestivalofLights.

December 1 - January 1 WONDERLAND IN LIGHTS, Effingham. A drive through holiday light display at Community Park, East



Christmas Lights
In the Park, Carlyle

Courtesy City of Carlyle

Temple Avenue. Sunday - Thursday 5-9 p.m.; Friday and Saturday 5-10 p.m. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated. To extend your festivities, visit the old courthouse at 100 East Jefferson Avenue to view larger-than-life, 3-D holiday light displays. Go to visiteffinghamil.com.

December 1 - January 4 CHRISTMAS IN CARLYLE LIGHTS IN THE PARK, Carlyle. Drive through City Park to see lights, animated features and dancing trees. Tune your radio to 90.1 FM for dancing trees music. 5 - 11 p.m. 1090 Lake Road. Visit carlylelake.com.

December 3-31 NOSTALGIC CHRISTMAS & HOLIDAY DISPLAY, Edwardsville. Wednesday - Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas days. Visit cityofedwardsville.com/749/West-End-Service-Station.

December 5 & 6, 12 & 13, 19 & 20, 26 & 27 TINSEL & TAILS, Effingham. This new holiday event will take patrons on a short golf cart ride to enjoy festive light exhibits, sip on hot chocolate, roast s'mores and get in plenty of snuggles by the fire pit. 5:30 - 8:15 p.m. Admission is \$5. Proceeds benefit EARS (Effingham Animal Rescue Sanctuary). Cardinal Golf Course, 15737 North Beach Road. Visit effinghamanimalrescue.com.

December 5-7, 12-14, 18-21 FREE HORSE-DRAWN TROLLEY RIDES, Belleville. Hop aboard a 26-passenger, horse-drawn trolley that takes you through Belleville's historic and beautifully decorated public square, unique downtown shopping and dining district, and Christkindmarkt, an open-air German Christmas market. Fridays 5 - 8 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays noon - 6 p.m. The trolley starts and stops at the 1st block of East Main Street. Visit belleville.net/586/holiday-events.



Bethalto Christmas Village

Courtesy Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau

WHO • WHAT • WHERE

Congratulations to all who correctly identified this month's mystery item as a wooden keg tap spout, also known as a spigot or barrel pouring tool. This hand-carved pouring tool brought the good stuff out of barrels — ale, cider,

vinegar, molasses, even water — and into waiting mugs and pitchers. The tapered end fit snugly into a wooden keg's bung hole, while the lever or handle controlled the flow. A quick twist opened a stream. Another sealed it off.

Before metal faucets and threaded

valves were common, wooden spouts like this were the standard way to draw liquid from a cask. They were simple, reliable, and easy to replace — key qualities when your livelihood relied on barrels for storage.

Coopering and tap-making were



WHERE ARE WE?



companion trades, and rural families often kept a few spare spigots on hand in case one split or wore smooth (note the patina of the tap, showing its age, and the raw wood of the newer handle).

This particular tap came from longtime Southwestern Electric member Dale Griffith of New Douglas, who passed it along for the contest.

Dale added the tap to his collection of farm and household tools. The tap is a reminder of how life in an earlier era revolved around craftsmanship and resourcefulness. This tap may date to the early 1900s, when local farmers were still aging cider in oak barrels.

The charm of a wooden keg tap lies in its mix of simplicity and ingenuity. The design relies on the wood itself to swell and seal when wet, preventing leaks sans gasket. In taverns, cider houses and kitchens, the tap's creak and drip were familiar sounds — signs that something good was being poured.

For those who grew up in rural communities or on farms, wooden barrel taps

may kindle memories of grandparents' root cellars, country stores or family gatherings. They represent a time when beverages were stored and served quite differently than today and wooden barrels were common household items rather than decorative antiques.

The tool is a telling artifact — a reminder of a self-reliant, hands-on era of rural life. Whether displayed as a conversation piece or tucked away and treasured as a tool from days gone by, this wooden keg tap remains a symbol of community.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Who~What~Where contest. Special thanks to Dale Griffith for preserving this piece of local history and allowing us to share it with our readers.

While we're on the topic, Southwestern reader Larry Arnold of Beecher City correctly identified the ingenious antique as a tap for a wooden barrel.

Jeff Lievers of Worden also catalogued the item as an old-fashioned keg tapper.

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*.

"The small one is inserted to the larger one," he wrote. "Tap keg, insert into keg hole, turn to line up holes, tap a drink or drain the keg."

We'll raise a toast to the past — and to you — for recognizing our rural heritage and keeping it alive. Watch for the solution to our December photo (below) in the next issue.



CURRENT EVENTS

December 5 SNOWFLAKE FESTIVAL, Godfrey. Join Godfrey in celebrating the holiday season. Get your picture taken with Santa in the gazebo. There will be s'mores roasting on an open fire, carriage rides, hot cocoa and cookies, and more. This is a free event, but in honor of the giving season, we will be collecting toys for the United States Marine Corps of Alton Toys for Tots campaign. 6 - 8:30 p.m. Robert E. Glazebrook Community Park, 1401 Stamper Lane. Go to visitgodfrey.com/events/.

December 6 GINGERBREAD RUN, Belleville. Join us for the Gingerbread 5k run/walk and the Kids Ginger Loop 1-mile fun run through the festive streets of downtown. The fun run is for kids 3 - 12 years of age. Proceeds will be used towards the purchase of new playground equipment pieces at our Nichols Community Center. 5k starts at 8:30 a.m.; fun run at 8 a.m. Registration fees vary. Day of race registration opens at 7 a.m. Start and finish at Belleville Parks & Recreation, 510 West Main Street. For more information or to register, visit gingerbreadrun.com.

December 6 HISTORICAL MUSEUM HOLIDAY HOUSE TOUR, Collinsville. View six of Collinsville's finest homes in their holiday splendor. Tickets are \$25 each. Digital ticketing is preferred; however, paper tickets may be purchased at the museum from noon - 4 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. Check-in is required before beginning house tour. Tour is from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. Precedes benefit Collinsville Light-Up

Parade. For more information or tickets, visit collinsvillmuseum.org or call (618) 344-1832.

December 6 HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS TOUR, Elsah. Enjoy a walk through the historic Village of Elsah while touring selected homes decorated for the holidays. Tour also includes Farley Music Hall, Elsah Museum, the historic two-room school house, bed and breakfast inns, churches, and the village shops. 1 - 5 p.m. Admission is \$20 in advance; \$25 day of event (cash only). Tickets will be available at Farley Music Hall starting at 12:30 p.m. Admission is free for children 12 years of age and younger. Ticket includes a self-guided tour and music at the two Elsah churches. Tour starts at Farley Music Hall, 37 Mill Street. Visit historicelsah.org/tour/ or email historicelsah@gmail.com.

December 6 LIGHT-UP PARADE & CHRISTMAS AT COLLINS HOUSE, Collinsville. Event will include an evening light-up parade through uptown Collinsville and end with festivities at the Historic Collins House. The festivities will include food and drink specials at uptown participating restaurants, window display contest, tree lighting ceremony, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus, bonfires and s'mores, and various family friendly activities. 4 - 8 p.m. Admission is free. Visit facebook.com/CollinsvilleParksandRec.

December 6 WINTER MARKET FESTIVAL, Edwardsville. Find fun, one-of-a-kind gift items, enjoy festive entertainment, visit with Santa, grab

something to eat and drink and stick around for our annual tree lighting ceremony. Events start at noon and wrap up with the tree lighting at 5:30 p.m. 101 South Buchanan Street. Visit cityofedwardsville.com/759/Winter-Market-Festival.

December 13 & 14 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 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 13 & 14 SING OUT! RING OUT! CHRISTMAS CONCERT, Highland. The Heartland Community Chorus will perform in collaboration with the Gateway Ringers, a professional handbell ensemble from St. Louis. Saturday 7 - 8:30 p.m.; Sunday 3 - 4:30 p.m. General admission is \$15. St. Paul Catholic Parish, 1411 Main Street. For tickets, visit heartlandcommunitychorus.org.

December 26; January 30; February 2-4, February 18-20, February 25-27; March 6 BALD EAGLE DAYS, Grafton. Learn to distinguish between immature and mature bald eagles and why they winter in our area. Programs begin at the park's visitor center at 8:30

a.m. (reservations required). There will be a video presentation and program followed by a drive to view bald eagles. Dress warmly, have a full tank of gas and bring binoculars. Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center, 13653 Lodge Blvd. For reservations, call (618) 786-3323 ext. 1.

January 2-4 LET'S GO FISHING SHOW, Collinsville. There will be a wide variety of fishing gear, live demonstrations, kids activities, boats, exhibits and seminars. Friday noon - 8 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. - 7 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Adults \$7; children 6-15 years of age \$3.50; children 5 years of age and younger are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Visit gatewaycenter.com.

January 3, 10, 17, 24, 31; February 7, 14 EAGLE SHUTTLE TOURS, Alton. Enjoy a 90-minute guided tour of some of the best American bald eagle watching spots around the Alton area. Sites may include Clifton Terrace, Audubon Center, Maple Island and National Great Rivers Museum. Tickets are non-refundable unless the tour is cancelled due to weather. Shuttles are limited to 15 passengers and are not ADA accessible. Tickets must be purchased in advance. 10 a.m. - noon. Admission is \$22.50. Tour begins and ends at Alton Visitor's Center, 200 Piasa Street. For tickets, visit riversandroutes.com/things-to-do/buy-tickets.

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.

► *Continued from page 14*

I've ever been in," Rickermann said. "It's never to just watch. It's truly a full team competition."

Teamwork aside, the day was, at heart, still a competition.

After a morning and afternoon full of climbing poles, maneuvering telescoping hot sticks and bending metal with their hands – literally, as part of the armor rod install event – the teams found out how they fared at an awards dinner that evening. And despite the journeyman linemen team's edge in experience, it was the apprentice linemen who took home the only hardware. The trio of

Alex Goodin, Dawson Chesnut and Tucker Johnson got second place in the hurt man rescue event, earning a trophy – and maybe more importantly, some bragging rights – to bring back to southwestern Illinois.


"I was surprised we did as good as we did," Goodin said.

"We went up there with no expectations," Chesnut added. "Just go up and do the best we could do, see what happens."

And while the right to boast might be short-lived – Chesnut said the trio will be "humbled pretty quickly" by their veteran counterparts – the memory of the

day will live on. The group said they're already making plans for next year's rodeo and hope to rope in, pun intended, some more of their coworkers in the coming years as well.

Like this year's rodeo, that one will surely be a mix of competition and camaraderie, friends one minute and foes the next – but with the same objective of ensuring everyone is practicing safe, smart line work so that the Southwestern Electric family can thrive.

"At the end of the day, we all work for the same cooperative," Kemp said. "We're all pulling in the same direction and want the same goal." 



1st Step Apprentice Linemen, from left, Tucker Johnson, Alex Goodin and Dawson Chesnut accept their trophies for finishing in second place in the hurt man rescue team challenge.



Construction Foreman Andy Wessel, center, with his parents Larry and Barb Cunningham.



The day was a family affair, as multiple Southwestern Electric employees and family members of the competitors showed up to cheer on the linemen. Pictured are, from left: Kim Rickermann, wife of Journeyman Lineman James Rickermann; Journeyman Lineman James Rickermann; Manager of Member Services Jennifer Gillan; Jennifer and Steve and Chesnut, parents of 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Dawson Chesnut; 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Dawson Chesnut, his fiancée Cherilyn Cook and their six-month-old daughter, Angelyna; Construction Foreman Andy Wessel; Manager of Operations Leo Dublo; 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Tucker Johnson; 1st Step Apprentice Lineman Alex Goodin; Journeyman Lineman Braden Clark; Chief Operating Officer Vic Buehler; and Journeyman Lineman Dustin Kemp.

► *Continued from page 8*

alternatives after their bills spiked,” Williams said. “Those same market pressures are affecting all utilities, co-ops included.”

Williams said some residential members will see a small increase in their bills next year, while others may see little or no change. “We’re still finalizing our rate restructuring, so I can’t share numbers yet,” he said. “But with the Time-of-Use Rates and Demand Charge we’re building in, members will have a lot more control over their energy costs.”

Both the rate restructuring and the WPCA are designed to keep rates fair, accurate, and directly tied to the cost of providing power, Williams explained. “As a not-for-profit utility, our objective is to offer power at the lowest possible cost,” he said. “These changes help us accomplish that mission.”

HOW THE WPCA SERVES MEMBERS

The WPCA is a pass-through cost. Southwestern collects only what’s required to cover power expenses. Every six months, the cooperative’s board reviews market data to ensure the adjustment reflects the true cost of supplying power to members. The WPCA rises and falls with the market.

The process is part of a system designed to protect members from volatility, maintain financial stability, and position the cooperative to offer safe, reliable energy at the lowest possible cost.

PAYING YOUR BILL: PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

We understand that small expenses add up. Southwestern Electric offers levelized billing to help you avoid substantial changes in the amount of your electric bill from one month to the next. Levelized billing flattens the peaks and valleys that come with seasonal changes in your electric usage, making it easier for you to plan your budget. Levelized bills are calculated on a rolling 12-month average. When you sign up for levelized billing, your payment will probably vary by a few dollars from month to month.

To qualify for levelized billing, your current account must have been active for at least 12 months and have a zero balance when you enroll. You’ll need a history of consistently paying your bill on time, with no more than one late payment in the past 12 months.

Our Pay As You Go program equips you to closely monitor your daily usage and customize your payment schedule. You

aren’t required to provide a credit history or make a security deposit. With Pay As You Go, you’re not subject to fees for late payment, delinquency or reconnection of service. The co-op does require a minimum payment of \$20 each time you add money to your Pay As You Go account. Your payment will be applied directly to your usage.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) is designed to help eligible low income households pay for winter energy service. For more information, go to IllinoisLIHEAP.com or call (877) 411-WARM.

To learn more about our payment programs, go www.sweci.com/payment-programs or call us at 800-637-8667. A member services representative will be happy to help you.

ENERGY-SAVING TECHNOLOGY

Your cooperative also offers rebates on energy-efficient technology, including heat pumps, water heaters and smart thermostats.

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.

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. One rebate is allowed per home. On-demand water heaters qualify for this rebate.

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 and internet-enabled.

For more information about technology rebates, call 800-637-8667 and ask for our Energy Manager, Julie Lowe. Or you can email Julie at julie.lowe@sweci.com.

Finally, each month we offer strategies for conserving energy and saving money in the Energy & Efficiency pages of The Southwestern. You can review past issues at sweci.com. 

The WPCA is a pass-through cost. Southwestern collects only what’s required to cover power expenses.



Celosia bloom in
fuchsia and gold
bringing Christmas
color to Odelehr's
Roadside Market in
Brussels, Ill.

THE FINAL FRAME

