

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2023 • VOLUME 75 • ISSUE 1

TESLA TALES

EV MISADVENTURES
IN SOUTHERN
ILLINOIS

CAPITAL CREDITS

\$2.4 MILLION
RETURNED
TO MEMBERS

CELEBRATION
OF SERVICE

POWER FOR
PROGRESS

FROM THE CEO

EAGLE WATCHING

NEW READER
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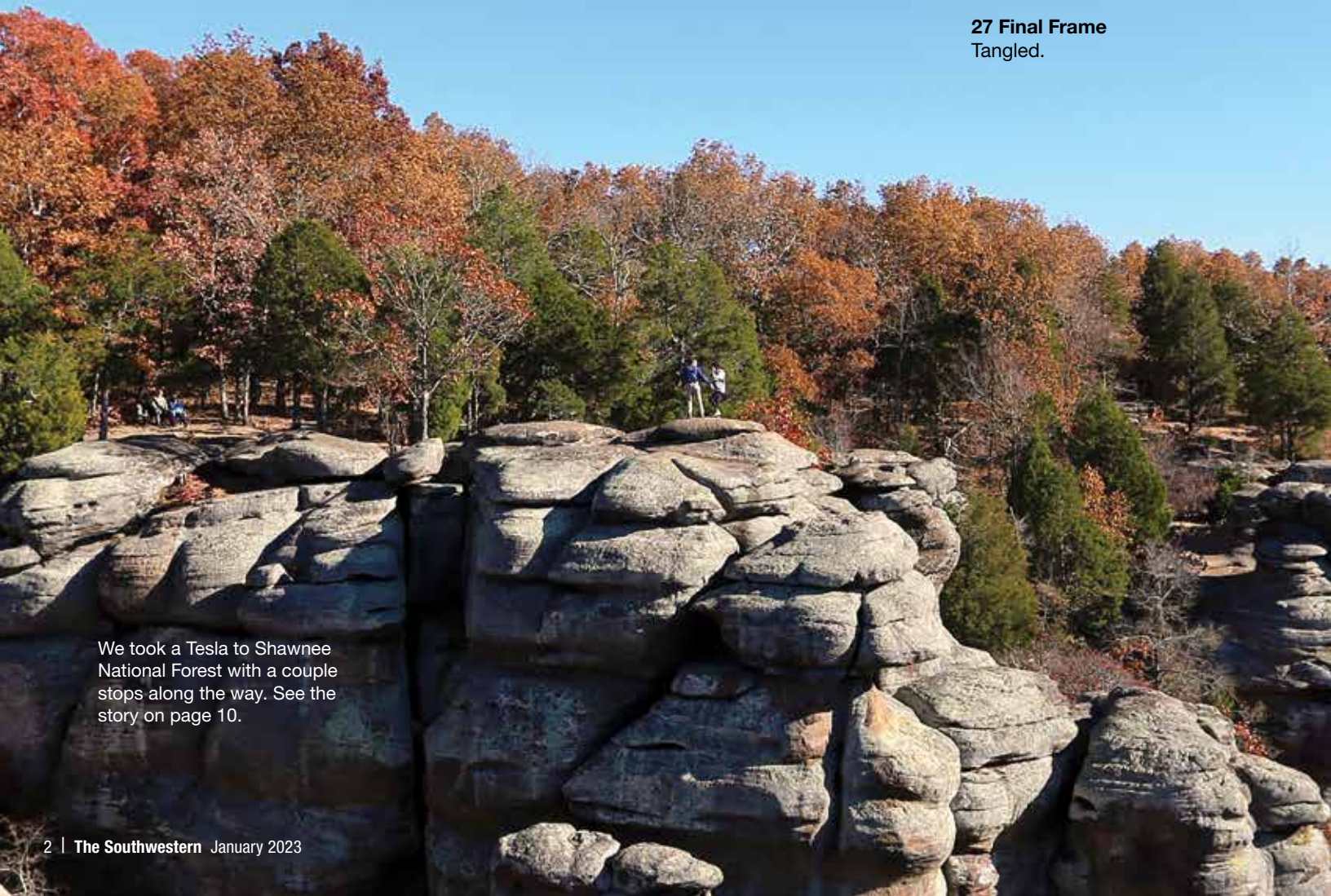
Few things pair better with cold winter air than hot soup.

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We took a Tesla to Shawnee National Forest with a couple stops along the way. See the story on page 10.

FROM THE CEO



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In July we discussed regional power supply and demand. Specifically, we talked about the possibility of preventative or prescribed power outages — they're usually called rolling blackouts — in the Midwest. I'd like to revisit that issue this month, as it surfaced in the national media shortly before Thanksgiving, on the heels of a report issued by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC).



On Nov. 17, NERC issued a national energy assessment. The report warned that "a large portion of the North American bulk power system is at risk of having insufficient energy supplies during severe winter weather. While the grid has a sufficient supply of capacity resources under normal winter conditions," NERC said, "we are concerned that some areas are highly vulnerable to extreme and prolonged cold. As a result, load-shedding may be required to maintain reliability."

NERC's report noted that reserve energy margins in our region have fallen 5 percent since last winter, with nuclear and coal-fired generation retirements totaling more than 4.2 gigawatts since winter 2021-2022.

The summary for our region closes on a note of guarded optimism, or with a warning, contingent upon how you care to read it. "Expected resources meet operating reserve requirements under normal peak-demand scenarios. Above-normal winter peak load and outage conditions could result in the need to employ operating mitigations and energy emergency alerts. Load shedding is unlikely but may be needed under wide-area cold weather events."

In other words, though unlikely, it is possible the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which manages power supply and demand across the grid in our region of the Midwest, may require utilities — ours included — to interrupt service for a defined period in specific areas, if the demand for power promises to surpass supply.

Continued on page 25 ▶



Remember When?

Blessings of Electricity Arrive at Beecher City

In 1949 Karl and I purchased 30 acres west of Beecher City. There was a two-bedroom home and some outbuildings — but no power.

We were so excited when we found out electricity was coming down our road! Sometime before spring of 1951, electricity arrived!

Once we got the house wired and the power turned on, life became much easier for us. We moved our previously purchased refrigerator in — oh what a relief that was! We purchased a few more electronic devices such as an iron, toaster, and a wringer washing machine. For me, just these few changes made my life so much easier as our family grew. Laundry was especially much easier! No longer cleaning oil lamps and purchasing the oil for them was also a blessing. We could not have been happier!

— *Thelma Fay Julius, Beecher City*



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.



CO-OP REMINDERS

January 2 Offices closed for New Year's holiday.

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



ON THE COVER

The co-op's Tesla Model 3 recharges in Marion, Ill. See our story on page 10. Back: Snow softens footsteps on the boardwalk at Ballard Nature Center in Altamont.



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](https://www.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.



New Reader Contest This Year

Hide & Seek

For decades we ran 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 retired that contest with our December 2022 issue.

This year we're bringing you a new contest. It isn't 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.

It works like this:

Each month — with the exception of August, when we break from our traditional format to bring you Southwestern's annual report — we'll hide an image in the magazine. Your job is to find it.

The image may be a photo, illustration, icon, logo — or any other graphic that catches our eye. For instance, this month, the image looks something like the Willie Wiredhand pictured at right:

The actual image may be larger or smaller than what you see here. We may change the color. We may make the image black and white. Or purple. It may be reversed. Or upside down. Or reversed and upside down. Who knows? We don't. We're making this up as we go.

If you find the image, email us or send a postcard with your name, address, phone number, and the page number where you found the image.

For instance, if you found this month's image on page 32, send an email or postcard with your name, address, phone number, and a line or two saying you found the image on page 32. That would be an awful answer, by the way, as this issue is only 28 pages.

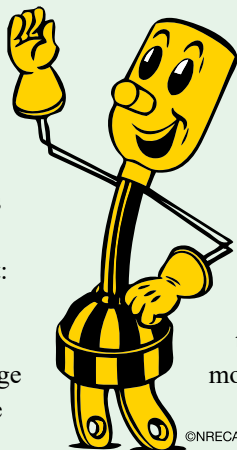
Please email us at thesouthwestern@sweci.com or send your postcard to The Southwestern Magazine, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

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

Each month 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 March issue of The Southwestern.

If your magazine hasn't landed in your mailbox and the hour grows late, you can look at our online edition. You'll find PDF files of The Southwestern at sweci.com. Go to News & Information in the main menu, then click on The Southwestern in the dropdown menu. We usually post the current issue of the magazine on the first day of the month, or when someone emails to say we haven't posted the current issue of the magazine.

That's a lot of information for a simple contest. Clearly, we didn't think this through. If we had, we may have passed on the idea. But we've already told friends and family about it and asked IT to set up thesouthwestern@sweci.com as an email address, so onward, and good luck!



RULES TO PLAY BY

- One entry per membership per month.
- A membership can only win once per calendar year.
- No phone calls, texts, 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 list and not one you care to be part of.
- Again, entries must be postmarked or in our thesouthwestern@sweci.com inbox by the first day of the month following the month of publication. For this contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by February 1.
- We'll never hide the image on the front or back cover or on the page where we list the rules.
- Did we mention responding *only* by postcard or by sending email to thesouthwestern@sweci.com? Well, we have the space, so we'll bring it up one last time — just to show we're sincere.

In Celebration of Service

Cooperation is defined as a group working together to achieve a common goal.

We'd like to begin the year by recognizing 18 Southwestern Electric employees who reached service milestones in 2022. Though their responsibilities vary, they share a single goal: providing you with the best possible service, day in and day out. You see the results of their work each time you turn on the lights, when power is restored after a storm, and when you're greeted with a kind word in our office or on the phone.

Together, the employees on this page represent more than 170 years of service to our members.

Please join us in welcoming our new employees, thanking our retirees, and in celebrating the accomplishments of people committed to serving you.

NEW EMPLOYEE



Marvin Ayala
Chief Operating Officer



Allissa Bohlen
Member Services Representative



Dawson Chesnut
Forestry Journeyman



Cody Edmonds
Engineering Supervisor



Alex Goodin
Forestry Journeyman



Cortney Huber
Dispatcher



Nick Jett
Forestry Foreman

5 YEARS OF SERVICE



Casey Eberlin
GIS Technician



Becky Jacobson
Chief Financial Officer



Josiah Roberts
3rd Step Apprentice Lineman

10 YEARS OF SERVICE



Mark Chasteen
Construction Foreman



Leo Dublo
Maintenance Foreman



Cheryl Hebenstreit
Cashier/ Receptionist



Andy Wessel
Construction Foreman

15 YEARS OF SERVICE



Russ Gilbert
Freedom Power Plant General Manager

30 YEARS OF SERVICE



Mary Curry
Staking Engineer

35 YEARS OF SERVICE



Joel LaFrance
System-Wide Troubleshooter/ Foreman

RETIREE



Scott Wollerman
Maintenance Foreman
35 years of service



Thank you for your service and dedication to the cooperative!

Co-op Retires \$2.4 Million In Capital Credits

Southwestern Electric closed out 2022 by returning \$2.4 million in capital credits to 8,695 longtime cooperative members. During the November board meeting, the co-op's board of directors authorized retirement of capital credits, or patronage capital, for the year of 1994, and 100 percent of the remaining margins for 1993 and 37.38 percent for 1995.

The capital was returned to active members as a bill credit. Inactive members — members who no longer live on co-op lines — received a check. A total of 5,470 members received bill credits. The co-op mailed checks to 3,225 inactive members.

"In the past, we've retired capital credits year by year, on a 30-year rotation," said Ann Schwarm, president of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. "We broke with tradition last year for several reasons," Schwarm said. "First and foremost, our cooperative is in sound financial condition, making it possible to return more than \$2 million in capital credits in a single year."

Schwarm said many members expressed their appreciation for the \$30 bill credit the cooperative offered for early annual meeting registration last year. "A lot of members have gone out of their way to say the bill credit came at a good time," she said. "On a similar

note, we've always retired capital credits at the end of the year, when a smaller power bill or a little extra money in the budget is particularly welcome. After reviewing the cooperative's financial forecast, we saw an opportunity to help our members and bring balance to the cooperative's capital disbursements at the same time."

Schwarm said the cooperative plans to return \$2.4 million in capital credits each year for the foreseeable future.

"We calculated the co-op's overall capital credit disbursement for the next 30 years, and found the average. That has us returning \$2.4 million in capital credits each year," Schwarm said. "This approach to capital credit retirement will give our members a better idea of the savings they'll see on their final bill each year, and it will simplify budgeting and economic forecasting for the cooperative."

Capital credits are similar to shares of stock. When an individual owns stock in a for-profit company, the stock may pay dividends based on the company's performance. Southwestern Electric members accumulate capital credits based on the revenue they contribute to the co-op and the company's financial condition.

Electric cooperatives rely on member capital to finance day-to-day operations.

Member capital also offsets the need for a cooperative to raise rates or borrow money for infrastructure improvements.

"When someone signs up for service from Southwestern Electric Cooperative, they become part owner of the company," said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. "Every time they pay their electric bill, they build equity in a company they own. If we collect more revenue than we need to cover expenses, that money is returned to them. That's one of the differences between an investor-owned utility and a cooperative," Williams said. "In a co-op, what you put in comes back to you."

In addition to general retirements, Southwestern returns capital credits to estates following the death of a member. Capital credits remain with a member's account until they're claimed by the member or the member's estate.

Credits go unclaimed when Southwestern Electric can't confirm a current address for a member who has left co-op lines, or when the co-op is unable to contact the executor of a member's estate.

Presently, about \$5 million in patronage capital remains unclaimed. To search for unclaimed capital credits in your name, consult the unclaimed credits list at sweci.com. For more information call us at (800) 637-8667.

Moving? Keep in touch!

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

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.

EV

(MIS)ADVENTURES

Can you explore Southern Illinois in a Tesla Model 3?
Absolutely — if you're up for a challenge.

by Joe Richardson

My car isn't intelligent. It isn't equipped with automated steering, traffic-aware cruise control, onboard mapping, GPS or Bluetooth. It is, however, exceedingly forgiving — as well it should be. Its ancestors spent the last century training automobile engineers and petroleum industry experts to accommodate my errors in judgement.

If I forget to fuel up before I leave town, there's a service station at the next exit. Or there will be at the exit after. In the unlikely event I run the tank dry, a phone call to a friend with a 5-gallon gas

can and I'm on the road again. No friend to be found? I'll call AAA. Point being, combustion engines and the network that's evolved to support them are resilient and robust. They pardon our sins at the cost of a brief delay then return us to the road and our day.

Electric vehicles, by contrast, while exceptionally intelligent, forgive and forget nothing. Had I kept this in mind when I set out for Southern Illinois in the co-op's Tesla Model 3, I might have written a straightforward article on the capabilities and convenience of electric vehicles (EVs). Instead, I'm sharing a

story about mindset. Specifically, mine. And possibly yours if you've spent your life behind the wheel of traditional automobiles.

I'D PAY AT THE PLUG IF THERE WAS ONE

Unfortunate experiences typically begin with poor planning. My trip was no exception. I wanted to write an article wherein I followed two-lane routes around the southern tip of Illinois in a Tesla. I'd pick up Route 4 in St. Jacob and drive it south, divert to Chester, then follow the Mississippi to the Ohio River.

In Southern Illinois, you'll find Tesla Superchargers in Mt. Vernon and Marion (pictured).



I'd trace the Ohio east and take byways through Shawnee National Forest. I'd share photos of broad rivers and narrow roads all accessible by EV.

I checked my mileage against the Tesla's range, then searched Southern Illinois for Superchargers.

The pickings were slim.

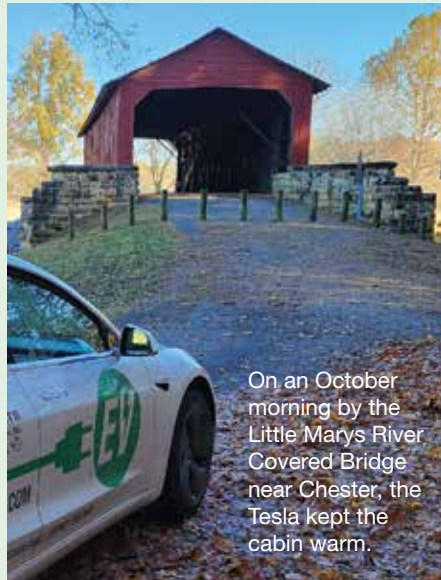
Away from the interstates, there's an astonishing absence of Tesla Superchargers in Southern Illinois. From Chester, the nearest Tesla charging station on my route was in Cape Girardeau, Mo. At Cape I could cross the river and recharge in Marion, Ill., then explore the southeastern part of the state.

But I wouldn't make Cape Girardeau via my original route. To reach Cape by way of Chester, I'd need to shed miles by heading south on Highway 127, turning west at New Minden and cutting a diagonal through Washington and Randolph counties.

Beautiful country, to be sure.

But no rock and river view.

That said, the new route would get me to Chester, where I'd photograph Shadrach Bond's grave for our puzzle page. At Chester I'd cross the Mississippi and charge at Cape Girardeau. At Cape I'd bounce back into Illinois, shoot photos along the river, then charge in Marion.



On an October morning by the Little Marys River Covered Bridge near Chester, the Tesla kept the cabin warm.

I loaded up the car bound for a grave. I never made it.

CLOSER TO HOME

Along our stretch of I-70, Tesla Superchargers are common. Southwestern's service area is bookended by Superchargers in Effingham and St. Louis. Locally, Tesla installed a bank of Superchargers at Casey's General Store in Collinsville. You'll find Tesla charging stations on I-55 in Springfield and Bloomington, and you can charge along I-57 at Superchargers in Mt. Vernon and Marion.

"I WASN'T JUST BUDGETING BATTERY. I WAS BUDGETING TIME."

To be clear, you needn't charge a Tesla at a Supercharger. Two years ago, Southwestern installed a ChargePoint Level 3 fast charger and a standard Level 2 (L2) charging station at the I-55/70 interchange in Troy. The co-op recently worked with Anderson Hospital to install L2 chargers on their campuses in Edwardsville and Maryville. With a small adapter, you can charge a Tesla at any of these.

I could have charged the co-op's Model 3 at an L2 station downstate.

But I wasn't just budgeting battery.

Continued on next page ▶



► *Continued from page 11*

I was budgeting time.

A Supercharger will take your battery from final mile to near-full — about 240 miles — in 60 minutes or so. An L2 takes hours to do the same. Between driving two-lane and plotting my route to reach Superchargers, I was connecting dots few and far between.

That's to be expected.

Today there's a gas station in every town of size. A hundred years ago, when automobiles were oddities and horses and hitching posts were fixtures on the town square, that wasn't the case.

Only in the last decade have electric vehicles shifted from novelty to practicable transportation. Is it reasonable to expect a fledgling fuel network to rival one with a hundred-year head start?

Nope.

Do we do it anyway?

I can't speak for you, but I do.

That became clear as I remapped my route, frustrated by the scarcity of Superchargers in Southern Illinois.

MANY MARYS, ALL OF THEM SMALL

An hour into my trip, I'm gliding past weathered barns, soybean stubble and corn shorn short, all painted autumn gold by a sun that's just cleared last night's clouds. I pass by places with names like Stone Church, Plum Hill, Winkle and Venedy Station. In another car, on another day, I'd investigate. Today I'm in an EV. I have charge enough to get where I'm going, but not so much I can burn battery on detours.

I feel a flair of annoyance. For me, the serendipity of side trips is an important part of travel. People and places you encounter along the way are often the most interesting part of the journey.

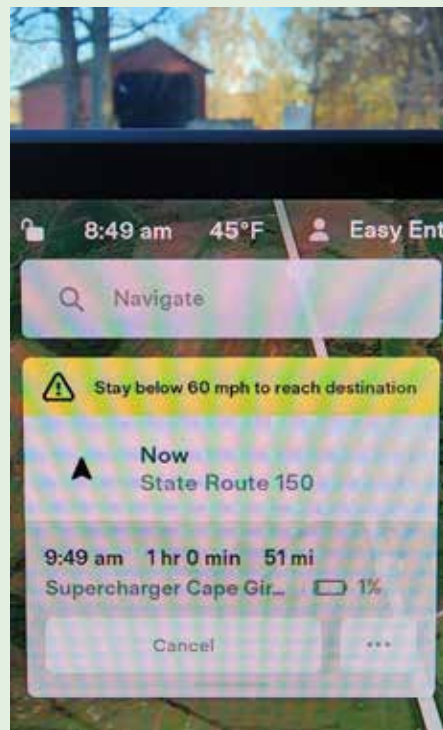
I wonder if there's a stone church in Stone Church, then check my mileage and battery charge.

I won't find out today.

In Randolph County I connect to Route 4 and follow it to Shawneetown Trail. I cross the Little Marys River, cross it again on Chester Road, cross it again on State Route 150, as river and routes braid south. I stop at the Little

Marys River Covered Bridge, about 4.5 miles northeast of Chester, and break out my camera and a sandwich. I walk the grounds, looking for shots to share. I'm taking more photos with my phone than the Canon, so I return to the car and change lenses.

At this point I have about 60 miles of battery. It's 51 miles to the Supercharger in Cape Girardeau. You can go to Cape Girardeau, the dashboard tablet tells



me, but you can't drive faster than 60 miles an hour. I fight another little flair of annoyance as I realize the bridge will be my only stop before I charge. No riverview shots from Chester. No photographs of the town square or local memorials. No shots of Shadrach Bond's grave. I'll make the most of my stop and press for extra photos after Cape.

I leave the car and amble down to the Little Marys River.

CAR TALK

I'm unaccustomed to automobiles with opinions. My car pings when I leave the lights on and sounds an alarm, on occasion, when I fail to hold the key just right. It does not, as a rule, weigh in on my driving or the destination.

Newer cars will do that.

I tend to hug the sideline on the highway. It's a preference I've developed,

as I've yet to have a guardrail suddenly shift into my lane. I've experienced that with oncoming traffic.

The Tesla, by contrast, likes to feel centered. Every now and then it gently tries to course correct. I politely but firmly decline.

On other matters, the Tesla and I align. The morning of my trip, the temperature was 45 degrees. The car warmed the cabin to 70, which suited me fine.

Therein lay my undoing.

In coming and going and changing lenses, climbing up and down the riverbank, crossing the water, standing on this side of the bridge and that, I squandered time and energy to frame a photo that never surfaced. I returned to the car cold and muddy, packed up my gear, scraped off the mud, dropped into the driver's seat — and found it wasn't just my time and energy I'd burned. I'd drawn down the battery on the Tesla.

While I was failing to see my shots, the car was maintaining a cabin temperature of 70 degrees. That required battery. I no longer had charge enough to reach Cape Girardeau. The Tesla tablet told me as much. Nor did it see any chargers on my route.

I checked Google, sure to find an L2 charger in Chester. And I did. *One.* One listing. No photos, no ratings, no reviews. Which made me wonder if the charger was in service. I called a number attached to the listing. An answering machine replied. It did not inspire confidence.

I broadened the search. The Tesla's tablet turned up a charger in Carbondale, about 40 miles away. If I drove into Chester to find the L2 and struck out, I'd need to double back. It would add about 10 miles to my trip. I'd be cutting it close to make Carbondale. I glanced up the hill that carried the road to Chester, then pointed the car toward Carbondale and left my plans behind.

WE MISADVENTURE SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO

The trip was 38 miles. I had 58 miles of battery. The car was confident I'd make it. Given the wind and cold and a road

Continued on page 26 ►

TESLA SHUTS DOWN ON HIGHWAY, LEAVES ENERGY MANAGER SECONDS TO RESPOND

As coordinator of Southwestern Electric Cooperative's EV program, Energy Manager Julie Lowe has logged a lot of miles in the co-op's Tesla Model 3. She often shares her insights and experiences with members interested in buying electric vehicles. On Nov. 9, she added an EV event to her inventory. Lowe was southbound on Route 128 west of Altamont when the co-op's Tesla sounded a warning and posted a message to the dashboard tablet: Pull over safely — vehicle shutting down.

"I was not able to accelerate; the speed slowly diminished," she recalled. "I was able to pull off on a side road — just barely. As soon as I coasted onto the side road, the car shuddered for a few seconds and then stopped completely."

The onboard tablet was active, but the car refused to shift into gear. "I Googled the warning to see if there was something I could do." The search wasn't helpful. She shut the car down and restarted it. No luck. "There was a software update that I hadn't downloaded, so I set my phone up as a hotspot and began downloading the update." She installed the update and tried the car again. The car didn't respond.

Lowe knew the issue wasn't energy related — the battery charge stood at 37 percent. And with 17,000 miles on the odometer, it wasn't suffering from wear. She used the Tesla App on her phone to contact Tesla Roadside Assistance. "I was on hold with Tesla Roadside Assistance for 1 hour and 10 minutes before speaking with someone," she said. Lowe explained the situation to a Tesla rep, who put her on hold while he researched the issue. The representative told her the car needed to be towed to a Tesla Service Center. The nearest center was in Chesterfield, Mo., about 110



PHOTO COURTESY JULIE LOWE

miles away. "I was again put on hold while they searched for a provider willing to tow the car that far." It took Tesla about 45 minutes to locate a tow truck. The rep told her it would be another 45 minutes before the truck arrived. "Since I was in a safe, low traffic area, I stayed inside the car while I waited." She'd been in contact with her family throughout the event and already had arranged for a ride home.

The towing company took the car to their shop, then transported it to Chesterfield on Nov. 10. The Tesla Service Center messaged Nov. 11 to say the car's rear drive unit had failed, they'd completed the repair, and the EV was ready for pickup. Lowe said repair and towing expenses were covered by the car's warranty, which lasts 50,000 miles or until September 2024, whichever comes first.

"It wasn't an awful experience — it could have been much worse," she noted. "The problem was taken care of promptly. The biggest issue was the time on hold with roadside assistance,

and waiting for them to contact a towing company willing to take the car from Altamont to Chesterfield. That's the biggest downfall of the Tesla — that the closest service center is so far away. Once the repair had been completed, we had to pick up the car in Chesterfield.

"Anytime something like this happens, it makes you a little jumpy that it could occur again — or that something similar could — in a less than convenient time or place," Lowe said. "Had I been on the interstate or in an area I wasn't familiar with, I wouldn't have been comfortable waiting all that time for the car to be picked up."

Lowe noted that the drive unit failure didn't announce itself in any way prior to the warning tone and tablet message addressing the shutdown. "It wasn't like a transmission going out, where you notice little things for several days or weeks indicating a problem. It was out of the blue and immediate," she said. "I had less than a minute before the car was completely disabled."

10 WAYS TO SAVE

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

Home heating can be among the most expensive components of your electric bill. Simple adjustments can greatly reduce your energy usage. Here are 10 tips to help you reduce energy use while you maintain a comfortable temperature in your home this winter.

ONE USE THE SUNLIGHT

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

TWO USE SPACE HEATERS SPARINGLY

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

THREE ONLY HEAT THE ROOMS YOU ARE USING

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

FOUR ADJUST THE THERMOSTAT

According to the Department of Energy, setting your thermostat to the lowest comfortable setting — typically 68 degrees — helps slow down heat loss for homes with a regular furnace. However, that isn't the case for homes with heat pumps. Dialing down the thermostat too much can make a heat pump less efficient. For homes with heat pumps, only adjust the thermostat a few degrees at a time until you reach your preferred setting for the season.

FIVE SERVICE YOUR SYSTEM

Keep your furnace and vents properly maintained and replace your filters at least every 2-3 months.

SIX USE 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.

SEVEN LOWER YOUR WATER HEATING COSTS

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

EIGHT SEAL AIR LEAKS AND DRAFTY WINDOWS

Seal around interior doors and baseboards with caulking and install weatherstripping 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!

NINE CHOOSE LED LIGHTS FOR YOUR HOME

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

TEN 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 go a long way toward increasing the heat retention in your home.

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

Income Guidelines

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application (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.

Snow Going

TIPS FOR WINTER TRAVEL

Living in Southwestern Illinois, you learn to cope with ice and snow — especially on the road. When you're driving, you keep your senses tuned to your environment. You work to anticipate the actions of others. And you employ defensive driving techniques.

But planning for safe travel starts before you sit behind the wheel of your car. This list will help you get where you're going safely — whatever the season.



NEVER SKIMP ON SAFETY

During mild weather, being stranded is an inconvenience. In winter it can become life-threatening. Take steps to see that your vehicle is in good operating order. Make sure your maintenance is up to date. Ask your mechanic to check your vehicle's battery, ignition, thermostat, lights, exhaust and heater.

Winter takes a toll on automobiles. Regularly check wipers, tires, lights, and fluid levels (radiator, windshield washer, power steering, oil and brakes) throughout the season. Make sure your brakes and transmission are working properly.

When it comes to wipers and wiper fluid, buy the best you can afford. All products are not created equal, and you'll notice a difference in performance. Never skimp on safety.

PLOT AND PLAN

Before you leave, check the weather along your route. Road reports are available for Illinois' interstate and freeway systems at www.gettingaroundillinois.com and at terminals stationed in interstate rest areas.

Tell a family member, friend or colleague where you're going and when you expect to get there. When you reach your destination, call in to confirm you've arrived.

If you're venturing through unknown areas, travel during the day. Print and download maps of the areas. And make sure you have proper personal identification, registration and insurance information for your vehicle.

Before you leave, fill your gas tank. And remember to dress for the weather, not your destination.

SURVIVAL KIT

Equip your car with a winter emergency survival kit. We recommend the following items:

- Ice scraper, snow brush, rags and paper towels.
- Jumper cables, a basic tool kit, antifreeze, no-freeze windshield washer fluid and extra drive belt(s).
- Shovel, traction mats or old rugs, tire chains, salt, cat box litter or sand.
- Blankets and extra clothing, including hats, socks, waterproof boots, coats and gloves.
- Non-perishable, high-calorie food.
- Candles, waterproof matches and a metal container (coffee can) in which to melt snow into water.
- Flashlight with extra batteries, flares or roadway reflectors, and a "Call Police" sign.
- A basic first aid kit and a fire extinguisher.
- A cellular phone with a backup power source.

VEHICLE OPERATION

Brush snow and ice from your windows, license plates and lights, and clear snow from your vehicle's hood, roof and trunk — snow and ice clinging to your car present a hazard to other drivers.

Go slow. Posted speed limits assume dry, clear conditions. Reduce your speed and add time to your commute.

When you're on the road, wear your seat belt, and be alert for changing weather and deteriorating road conditions. Over a short distance, driving conditions may vary depending on exposure to the sun, shade or pavement materials. Watch for ice and slick spots — especially under bridges, on overpasses and in shaded areas. Be prepared to react.

If the pavement is snow- or ice-covered, start slowly and brake gently. Begin braking early when you come to an intersection. If you start to slide, ease off the gas pedal or brakes. Steer into the direction of the skid until you feel your tires regain traction, then straighten your vehicle.

When you approach a snow plow from behind, pass with care and only when you can see the road ahead of the plow. Don't try to pass in blowing snow—there may be a vehicle hidden in that cloud of white.

STRANDED

If your vehicle breaks down, pull off the road, getting as far from traffic as possible. At this point, the greatest threat to your safety is being hit by another vehicle.

You'll have to weigh the risk of leaving your vehicle to find help against waiting to be rescued. Stand outside for a couple minutes to get a feel for the air temperature and wind chill before you decide to leave your vehicle. Even a little wind can wick away a lot of body heat, putting you in danger of hypothermia. You can suffer severe complications from exposure after walking a short distance for help. If you're not dressed for the weather, stay in your vehicle.

If you're stranded in a sparsely populated area, it may be a while before help arrives. When you feel cold, move around in the vehicle as much as possible, clap your hands, shake your legs, and stomp your feet. If you're in a vehicle with others, sit close together and cover up with blankets or extra clothing to conserve body heat. Don't permit everyone to sleep at once.

If the engine will start, run it and the heater for short periods. Partially open a downwind window to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Make sure the exhaust pipe is free of obstructions and that the windows aren't frozen shut.

If you're stranded on a well-traveled road, wait for assistance from police or other emergency responders. Raise the hood, turn on the dome light and flashers to make your vehicle more noticeable and attach a cloth to the antenna or window indicating you need help. Resist the temptation to accept a ride from a stranger. If someone offers help, ask him or her to notify the police if you don't have a cellular phone or you're stranded in an area with no signal.

Southwestern Illinois Bald Eagle Watching Guide

When Mother Nature blows in the cold winds of winter, a number of bird species take that as their cue to catch the first flight out of town.

One bird's trash is another bird's treasure, though, and the bare trees along the Mississippi River in Southwestern Illinois vacated by those migratory birds are soon inhabited by bald eagles. Whereas the cold, sterile environment is unwelcoming for the fair-weather fowls, the eagles are happy to build nests in the leafless trees and fish in the chilly river waters.

Their gain is our gain as well, as for a few weeks in January and early February we get to see these majestic creatures at multiple venues in our region. From festivals to tours to bridge lookouts, if you're in the mood for some eagle entertainment this month, we've got you covered.

Alton Visitors Center: Eagle meet-and-greet sessions and guided eagle-watching tours are just some of the eagle-centric events happening at the Alton Visitors Center this month. The Alton Visitors Center is located at 200 Piasa St. in downtown Alton, Ill. For more information, call (800) 258-6645 or go to visitalton.com.

Grafton Riverfront: Like Alton, guided eagle tours and meet-and-greet events are scheduled to take place in the river town northwest of Alton. Its situation along the confluence of the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers makes it perfect for eagle spotting along the riverfront. Visit enjoygrafton.com or call (800) 258-6645 for more information.

Melvin Price Locks & Dam: One of the key spots along the Alton area eagle-watching tour is the Melvin Price Locks & Dam. The locks and dam provide the dual service of making safe travel possible for commercial river traffic while also serving as a popular spot to view bald eagles south of Alton's Clark Bridge. For information regarding hours of operation and tours of the locks and dam, call the National Great Rivers Museum at (618) 462-6979.

Old Chain of Rocks Bridge: What's better than viewing eagles' nests from the riverfront? Viewing eagles' nests from the river! The Old Chain of Rocks Bridge, the eastern end of which is on Chouteau Island near Granite City, was once a motor route connecting Madison County with St. Louis but now serves as a pedestrian bridge. In the winter, it also provides a direct view to the riverbanks where eagles like to nest. Bring your binoculars or telescopes for up-close looks at the distinguished birds.

Pere Marquette State Park: The largest state park in Illinois, Pere Marquette has eagle-watching tour dates throughout the months of January and February for visitors to enjoy. A site interpreter presents informative programs about bald eagles, followed by a short video presentation and an observational drive to view the wintering birds. Interested guests are encouraged to dress warmly, have a full tank of gas, bring binoculars, wear waterproof boots and bring snacks and drinks. For more information or to make a reservation, call (618) 786-3323.

Pere Marquette Lodge: On the grounds of the state park, Pere Marquette Lodge plays host to the annual Bald Eagle Festival every January. This year's event is on Jan. 22 and includes unique vendor booths, live music and entertainment by the World Bird Sanctuary with their Masters of the Sky shows. Festival entry is free; however, tickets to the Masters of the Sky show are \$5 per person. For more information, call (618) 786-2331 or visit pmlodge.net.

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



EAGLE EVENTS

January 7 EAGLE ICE FESTIVAL, Alton. Enjoy a variety of activities in celebration of wintering American Bald Eagles returning to Southwest Illinois. Get a bite to eat, see a live eagle from the World Bird Sanctuary, take an eagle-watching tour, and enjoy fun winter activities for all ages. The celebration will take place at FLOCK Food Truck Park, 210 Ridge Street and the National Great Rivers Museum, 2 Lock and Dam Way. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Event is free. Visit mtrf.org or riversandroutess.com.

January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11, 18, 25 EAGLE SHUTTLE TOURS, Alton. Enjoy a 45-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 to see nesting eagles. Tickets are non-refundable unless the tour is cancelled due to weather. Shuttles are limited to 20 passengers and are not ADA accessible. Tickets must be purchased in advance. Tours at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. Admission is \$15. Alton Visitor's Center, 200 Piasa Street. For more information or tickets, visit riversandroutess.com.

January 7, 14, 21, 28; February 4, 11, 18, 25 EAGLE SHUTTLE TOURS, Grafton. Enjoy a two and a half-hour

guided tour of some of the best American bald eagle watching spots around the Grafton region. Sites may include the Brussels Ferry, Calhoun Point, and Pere Marquette State Park. Tickets are non-refundable unless the tour is cancelled due to weather. Shuttles are limited to 20 passengers and are not ADA accessible. Tickets must be purchased in advance. 9 a.m. Admission is \$30. Grafton Skytour parking lot, 3 West Clinton. For more information or tickets, visit riversandroutess.com.

January 8, 15, 22, 29; February 5, 12 EAGLE SUNDAYS, West Alton. Meet Liberty, the live American Bald Eagle, up close and presented by World Bird Sanctuary. Visitors will learn about amazing eagle adaptations and their conservation history. After your eagle meet and greet, take time to roast mallows and enjoy a fireside s'more. Sessions start at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 2 p.m. Registration is required. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. Visit riverlands.audubon.org.

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 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 22 EAGLE FESTIVAL, Grafton. Guests can shop at our vendors booths, grab a bite to eat in our restaurant, taste locally made wines, experience our historic Lodge, and meet some feathered friends. The main event, our Master's of the Sky Show presented by The World Bird Sanctuary, will introduce guests to magnificent winged creatures like owls, falcons, eagles, and more. Show times will be at 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Tickets for the shows can be purchased at our front desk 1 hour before show times. Masters of the Sky show admission is \$5. Seating is limited and based on a first come, first serve basis. Tickets cannot be used at a different show time than they were purchased for. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Entry into the festival is free. Pere Marquette Lodge & Conference Center, 13653 Lodge Blvd. Call (618) 786-2331 or visit pmlodge.net.

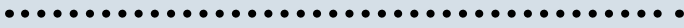


WHO • WHAT • WHERE

You're starting 2023 on a high note! Many of you recognized the sign that served as our November challenge. Thank you so much for sharing memories associated with the Wolf schoolhouse.

Speaking of memories, do you remember the item we've pictured on the next page? You may, if you used public transportation through the mid 1900s.

We'll share your solutions in our March issue. Meanwhile, here's what you had to say about our November puzzle.



Just east of Saint Peter (Fayette County) where you turn off 900, onto the Altamont blacktop, there used to be a pretty, little, red schoolhouse. It was torn down a number of years ago, and a schoolhouse-shaped sign was erected as a landmark. I always look for it when I go that way, but it's been a while. Is the sign still there?

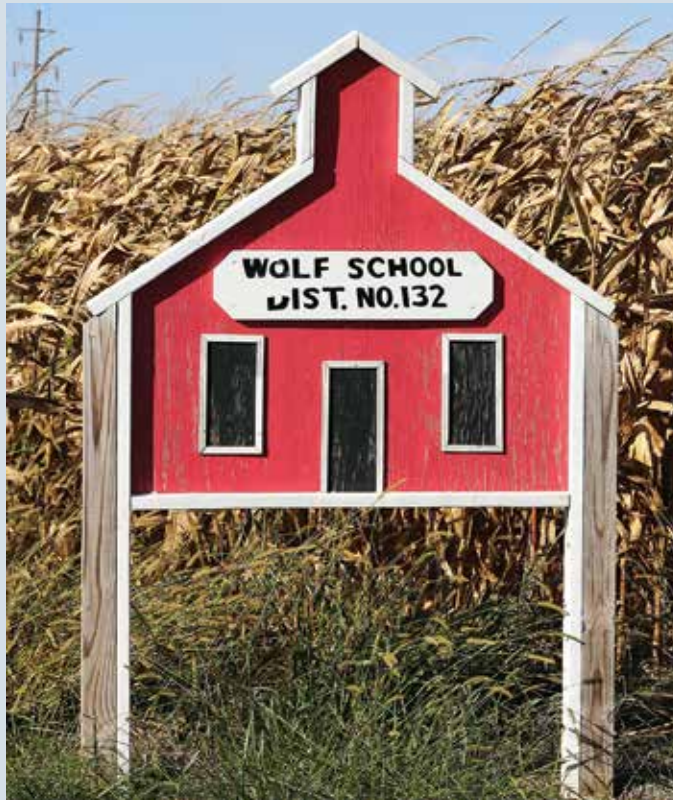
We enjoy the beautiful scenery and pictures in your magazine. Keep up the good work!

—Lorene Martin, Vandalia

Editor's note: As of December, the sign is still standing and in good repair. Thanks for asking, Lorene!

The answer to November's Where Are We is on the Altamont-Farina Road about a mile from Highway 33. It is the Red Schoolhouse corner. Years ago there was a school house at this intersection that became a landmark for directions in the local area. When the schoolhouse was torn down many people got lost in driving around there because the schoolhouse was gone. They convinced someone to put up this sign to provide a landmark for local driving directions.

—Bill Weaver, Altamont



Wolf School Dist. No. 132 is located at the junction of 900 Avenue and the Altamont blacktop, north of Farina. It served as a school for many years and was then made into a home for several years before being demolished.

My mother once told me that Ted Mangner began his teaching career here before moving on to Campground School District #15 (Meacham Township) where he taught from 1933-1934.

At the University of Illinois he was employed as the first farm radio specialist in the extension office. He wrote and broadcast 2,275 consecutive programs and had a syndicated column which was used by 38 radio programs. He was then hired as the farm specialist at KMOX radio in St. Louis, Mo., and we listened to every broadcast.

He also owned a nursing home in Vandalia, Ill., where my sister worked as a secretary in the mid-sixties while she was in high school. She considered him to be one of the best men for whom she ever worked, very personable and easy to work for.

I realize that much of this has nothing to do with the school district. However, I remember him as a caring man and felt the need to share.

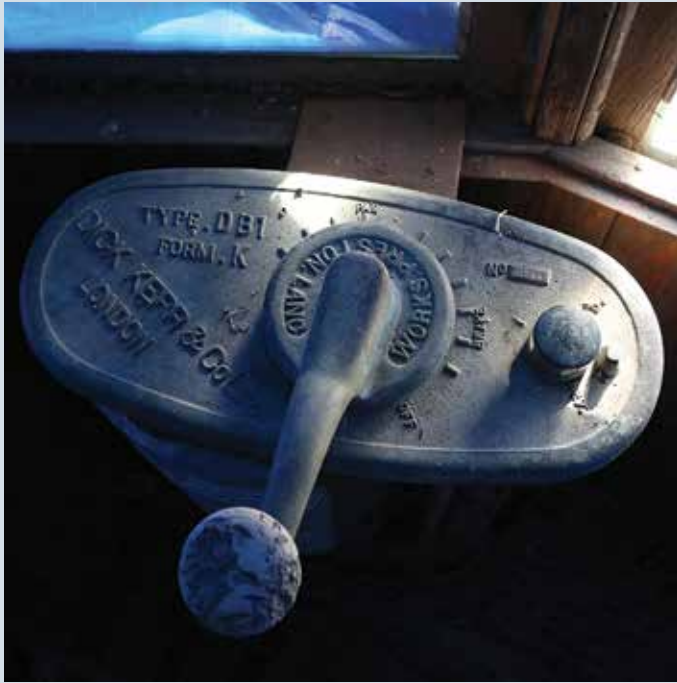
—Gale Meseke, Shobonier

The sign sits at the edge of a field that used to be the location of the little red Wolf School. It is on the north side of Farina along the Altamont blacktop in Fayette County. It was a little one-room school back in the day. It also became the home of the Lash family for a while before being torn down. The sign was placed there to show where a piece of history once stood.

—Greg McElyea, Edgewood

The sign is along the Altamont-Farina blacktop about one mile south of state route 37. The sign marks an old school that once stood there. My mother knew a

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.



WHAT AM I?

husband and wife who lived in the old school building after it was made into a home.

—*Eugene Stuemke, Altamont*

Wolf School sign located corner of 2650 E & 900 North along Altamont blacktop north of Farina. I actually lived in the school for a few months many years ago.

—*Tedd Engel, Farina*

The November issue shows a sign for the former location of Wolf School in LaClede Township about two miles North of Farina. The one-room schoolhouse stood on the corner of 900N and 2650E, otherwise known as the Farina/Altamont, blacktop for many years. It was later used as a small house. When it fell into disrepair, it was torn down and this sign was erected to mark the spot where the school had stood.

—*Dan and Ann Stock, Shobonier*

The Wolf School was a one-room schoolhouse located in LaClede township, southeastern Fayette County near Farina, Illinois. It was located at the northeast corner of 900N Avenue and 2650 East.

The school building I believe had been empty for a number of years and in the late 1970s was converted to a private residence though I do not know how long it was used as such. Abandoned again for a number of years, the building was demolished five to 10 years ago.

The red school building, when standing, was a local landmark for travelers to identify where to turn from the Altamont blacktop to drive west to Illinois Route 185.

Numerous individuals missed their turn off once the building no longer stood. The sign as pictured in the November 2022 Southwestern publication was placed as a smaller landmark for travelers to look for.

More importantly, the sign pays respect to the individuals who taught in one room schools and those students who learned their “three Rs” in such buildings. The time frame of this educational system represented a much different society than we have now. Education was an opportunity as many youngsters had numerous chores on the farm and those who could attend school got a break from the typical labor they performed on the farm. Local communities attempted to locate one room schoolhouses within three miles of each other so students would not be required to walk too far to school in the days before autos and school buses. Older students were required to assist younger students in learning and respect for the teacher was always expected.

A lively debate could probably be had discussing the merits of that education system versus our current system.

—*Shelley Young, Farina*

This sign in this picture represents the site where the Wolf School used to be and is located on the Altamont blacktop near Farina, Ill. My mom went to grade school there.

—*Patty Donaldson, Vandalia*

This is the marker for where the old Wolf schoolhouse was located, just a couple miles from me in LaClede Township, Fayette County.

—*Kathy Quandt, Farina*

CO-OP KITCHEN

Savory Soups

Taco Soup



TACO SOUP

Ingredients

- 1 pound sausage or hamburger
- 1 can corn
- 2 cans kidney beans
- 1 (15 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
- 2 (8 ounce) cans tomato sauce
- 1 package ranch dressing mix
- 1 package taco seasoning

Directions

1. Brown meat and drain grease.
2. Combine all ingredients and cook over low heat until simmering.
3. Top with tortilla chips or Fritos, shredded cheese and your favorite taco toppings.

TOMATO FLORENTINE SOUP

Ingredients

- 1 pound lean ground beef
- 1½ cups beef or chicken broth
- 2 (14.5 ounce) cans diced tomatoes
- 2 ribs celery with leaves, chopped
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 small green pepper chopped
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 (15-16 ounce) bag baby spinach
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- ¾ cup barbecue sauce
- 1 cup gnocchi shells or other similar pasta

Directions

1. Brown ground beef and drain off grease.
2. In large pot combine all ingredients except gnocchi shells and simmer for 30 minutes. Add additional broth if needed.
3. Meanwhile, in a separate pot, bring to boil enough water to cook gnocchi shells al dente and drain.
4. Add gnocchi shells to soup and simmer an additional 10 minutes.

MUSHROOM & BARLEY SOUP

Ingredients

- ½ cup raw pearl barley
- 6½ cups beef or vegetable stock
- 3 tablespoons tamari or soy sauce
- ½ - 1 teaspoon of salt
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 1 cup onion chopped
- 1 pound fresh mushrooms sliced
- freshly ground pepper

Directions

1. Cook barley in 1½ cups of the stock until tender.
2. Add remaining stock and tamari or soy sauce.
3. In separate pan saute the onions and garlic in butter.
4. When onions soften add the mushrooms and salt. Saute until mushrooms are tender and then combine with the barley mixture including liquid.
5. Give it a generous grinding of black pepper, cover, and simmer for 20 minutes over the lowest heat possible.
6. Taste and add salt and pepper as needed.

Prepared &
photographed
by Mike Barns

This month's recipes are courtesy of 4-H House Alumni Association's *Nurture the Future @ 805 4-H House Anniversary Cookbook* (mushroom barley soup and taco soup) and Greenville Regional Hospital Auxiliary's *Home Town Favorites* cookbook (tomato florentine soup).

CURRENT EVENTS

January 6; February 5 MOONLIGHT HIKE, Godfrey. Join us on a night hike 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.

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 14, 21, 28; February 4 RAPTOR SATURDAYS, West Alton. Meet live raptors presented by Treehouse Wildlife Center and learn all about these amazing birds. Raptors, or birds of prey, are special birds that hunt and eat live prey. Raptors include hawks, eagles, falcons, and owls. After your raptor meet and greet, take time to roast mallows and enjoy a fireside s'more. Sessions start at 10 a.m., 11 a.m.,

1 p.m., and 2 p.m. Registration is required. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. Visit riverlands.audubon.org.

January 20-22, 25-29 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: SHE LOVES ME, Alton. A musical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adult \$25; under 18 years of age \$15. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

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.

January 21 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. 5:30 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.

January 21 WINTER TREE ID, Godfrey. Learn to identify trees from their bark, buds, and branching. This public program is led by a naturalist. 1 - 2:30 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.

January 21 - 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.

February 2-5, 9-12 THE PRODUCERS, 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 lookingglass-playhouse.com.

February 10-12, 17-19 THE BANNER, Breese. A theatrical presentation by Clinton County Showcase. All performances begin at 8 p.m. except for the last Sunday showing, which is

at 2 p.m. \$12 for adults; \$10 for students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification). Historic Avon Theatre, 535 North 2nd Street. For tickets, call (618) 526-2866 or visit clintoncountyshowcase.com.

February 18 FAMILY FRIENDLY OWL PROWL, Godfrey. Head to TNI after dark to discover whoooo lives in the woods. Meet Treehouse Wildlife Center's ambassador owls, dissect owl pellets, and then take a night hike to search for owls. Ages 6 and up recommended due to time sitting for animal presentation. Most of the program takes place indoors. 6 - 8 p.m. Admission is \$10 for members; non-members \$15. Registration is required. The Nature Institute, 2213 South Levis Lane. Call (618) 466-9930 or visit thenatureinstitute.org.

February 18 ICE JAM AT THE DAM, West Alton. The winter-themed festival promotes outdoor recreation and celebrates all things icy along the river with live music, open dam tours, live animal programs, warm food and beverage vendors, park ranger campfire programs, educational booths, and more! Watch for American bald eagles hunting on the river, and see how barges and boats use the locks system. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. National Great Rivers Museum, 2 Lock and Dam Way. Call (618) 462-6979 or visit mtrf.org.

February 19 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA CONCERT, Godfrey. An Afternoon of Spanish Dance, Delight, and Desperation. 3 p.m. Adult \$10; under 18 years of age \$5. Lewis & Clark Community College, Ann Whitney Olin Theatre, Hawthway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. For tickets, visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

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.

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By instructing utilities to interrupt power in defined areas for short periods, MISO can reduce demand on the grid and prevent larger outages. The prescribed outage would likely be brief — a few hours — but it would probably occur when demand for energy is greatest. In winter, that’s in the morning when you’re preparing for work or school, or of an evening when you’re winding down your day or preparing for bed.

This is essentially the cold weather version of the conditional cautions we shared last summer. My recommendation from July still applies. Treat the potential for a preventative power outage as you would any other outage. Form a backup power plan. That may mean arranging to stay with a friend or family member served by another circuit in a different area, or if you prefer the peace of mind that comes with knowing you’ll have power regardless, you may choose to invest in a backup generator. Think of a backup power plan as insurance: It offers reassurance.

I’ve mentioned in the past that I never favored the phrase “rolling blackout.” It makes a prescribed outage sound like a tidal wave. It isn’t. It’s a controlled operation where transmission line operations and engineering personnel open circuits, and create a defined outage, to reduce power demand for a while. Then they close the circuits to restore power.

Unfortunately, distribution co-ops are often given little or no advance notice of these interruptions — which makes it difficult to notify you. In the event of a prescribed outage, you’ll know soon after we do. We’ll post messages on our social media channels and we’ll call you. As always, we’ll do our best to provide you with the information you need to make informed decisions.

Why is our nation grappling to balance power supply and demand?

As I said during our annual meeting in September, our industry is evolving. We’re shifting from coal-fired power plants to green energy. Older coal plants are closing and energy companies aren’t investing in new plants to take their place. In our region, coal historically has provided us with baseload, or always-on, energy. Consequently, the availability of always-on energy in our region is diminishing. Green energy is growing in the Midwest, but it takes a lot of wind and solar to bridge the gap left by baseload energy losses.

Some of you have asked what you can do to help prevent a rolling blackout. There are two steps you can take. If MISO issues an energy conservation alert for our region, we’ll pass it along to you. Using appliances like washers, dryers and dishwashers during off-peak hours — at night or early in the morning — may help our area avoid a preventative power outage.

You can also contact your state and local legislators. Express your concerns. Let your representatives know this issue has your attention. That’s the best way I know to ensure that our voice is heard in Springfield — and Chicago.

My purpose for mentioning the potential for these prescribed or preventative outages is not to alarm, but rather, inform. As your accountable energy partner, we are lending our voice to this issue and all others that would impact our service to you. My team and I are discussing the future of our industry with state and federal legislators, regulatory agencies, trade associations, and organizations shaping the energy environment.

Discussions, meetings and planning take time and energy, which leaves less of both for items like the column I’ve shared with you in recent years. This will be my last write up for a while, but I’ve asked our communications department to save me a seat at their editorial meetings. Don’t be surprised to see a guest column from me now and then.

I’ve enjoyed reading your responses to my columns, and I invite you to keep up the correspondence. You’re welcome to email me about any aspect of the energy industry or Southwestern Electric Cooperative. You can reach me at bobby.williams@sweci.com, or at Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

I look forward to hearing from you.

In closing, I want to offer a message I shared during our annual meeting. I feel it’s on point and especially timely, in light of NERC’s report.

Green energy has a place in our future, and our children’s and grandchildren’s future. But in my opinion, we should not sacrifice reliability and our way of life by relying exclusively on technology that is not ready to replace baseload generation. At Southwestern Electric, we will continue to do our part to stay ahead of these issues, and you can help, by contacting your state and local legislators. Together we will ensure your cooperative, our cooperative, is here for another 84 years.

Bobby Williams, CEO



bobby.williams@sweci.com

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that promised sharp climbs and sweeping views, I was not.

I divided my attention among the hills and hollows, the diminishing charge, and a little line bouncing back and forth that gauged my driving efficiency. What would have been a relaxed, pastoral wander in my ailing old Nissan was a mission-driven exercise in energy-efficient navigation-by-instrument-pack in the Tesla.

The most vexing part of the situation? It was entirely my fault.

I could have researched how the car responded to hilly terrain and wind and cold. I could have charged the battery to 100 percent, rather than the 82 percent default we use to prolong battery life. I could have adjusted the environmental controls to preserve power while I wasn't in the car.

Decades of driving a traditional automobile conditioned me to consider none of this. The challenge I'd faced and failed wasn't about charging infrastructure. It was about changing mindset. I'd been thinking of the EV as an automobile fueled by electricity. That's true, as far as it goes.

It doesn't go far enough.

An EV is an *electric vehicle*. Environmental conditions, the processes you employ, the accessories you use — starting up, shutting down, heating, cooling, wipers, lights, defroster, radio, tablet — all affect your mileage. All else being equal, the charge that gets you

“THE CAR WAS CONFIDENT I'D MAKE IT. I WAS NOT.”

to work and home again Monday may leave you stranded Friday, if the wind shifts or the temperature soars or plummets. Treating the Tesla like a traditional automobile rather than an EV cost me. It cost me time and miles and photos and peace of mind.

I don't tell you this to steer you away from electric vehicles. I'm sharing an experience. One experience, one driver. I'm giving you points to ponder before you invest \$40,000-\$80,000 in a battery-driven pickup or automobile.

If you were a friend commuting from Greenville to St. Louis or Effingham and considering an EV, I'd tell you it could be an excellent choice. If you were driving Illinois backroads and byways for hours at a time, I'd urge you to plot your charging stops before you buy. Then I'd ask you if the same stations will work in January and July, when your cabin

temperature is 30 degrees off what's outside.

That said, the cautionary notes I sound today may be off-key tomorrow. Back to horses, hitching posts and early automobiles — we're once again in a time of transition. If the evolution of our nation's charging network follows in the footsteps of petroleum, you'll find EV plugs in every town of size — in time.

UNPLUGGED

I made it to the L2 charger in Carbondale. I didn't use it. Someone had parked a golf cart beside it and they were nowhere to be seen. I could have worked around it, but the Tesla said I could make it to a bank of Superchargers in Marion. I was familiar with the area and knew the route, so I pressed on. I made it to Marion with 5 miles to spare.

After an hour charging, I detoured to Garden of the Gods in Shawnee National Forest and shot a few photos so I'd have more to show you than a bridge and a charging station, then I returned to Marion and topped off the battery. At that point, the Tesla had ample energy to tour Southern Illinois. My batteries, however, were done for the day.

I headed home.

If you haven't traveled Southern Illinois, I recommend it. The landscape between the Mississippi River and Highway 127 is lovely. Just make sure your EV is fully charged when you leave. Maybe I'll meet you on the road.

I'll be in an old Nissan. **S**

Garden of the Gods in Shawnee National Forest is an easy commute from the Tesla Supercharger in Marion.



Morning mist
tangles in the
treetops outside
Altamont.

THE FINAL FRAME



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