

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

JUNE 2026 • VOLUME 78 • ISSUE 6



## *Youth Day*

**STUDENTS MAKE  
THEIR MARK AT  
COOPERATIVE  
EVENT**

**OPERATION  
ROUND UP**

**MAKE YOUR MARK  
POWER FOR  
PROGRESS**

**UNDERSTANDING  
YOUR BILL**

**SUMMER  
ENERGY  
SAVINGS**

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School's out for summer, which means it's camping season. In that spirit, we've hidden a camper somewhere in this month's magazine. Find it and you could land a \$25 bill credit.

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Take a stand on issues that impact your cooperative – and community – by joining Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP) today.

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Three local high-school students attended the recent Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day in search of opportunity. They found it—and then some.

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The humidity this time of year can be uncomfortable, but not as uncomfortable as a high electric bill. Beat the heat with these tips to reduce summer energy consumption.

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**18 Health & Safety**

Almost 800 children drown in the U.S. every year, and two-thirds of those drowning deaths occur between May and August. Get the facts about kids and the danger of drowning here.

**20 Who-What-Where**

We couldn't "slide" one by you with our May mystery item. Can you bridge the gap to solve this month's puzzle?

**22 Co-op Kitchen**

Strawberry fields forever? We hope so, if it means we can make these tasty recipes in perpetuity.

**24 Current Events**

Route 66 celebrations in Edwardsville, Carlinville and Livingston highlight this month's calendar of events.

**27 Farmers Markets**

In search of locally grown produce, handmade goods or anything else from small-town vendors? Look no further than our rundown of area farmers markets.

**ON THE COVER**

Local high school students, from left, Caden Stewart of St. Elmo, Hayden Leek of Edwardsville and Joseph Krietmeyer of Vandalia got the full Springfield experience at this year's Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day this past March. Read our story on page 12.



**CO-OP REMINDERS**

**June 16** Payment processing unavailable 8 - 11 p.m. while we perform maintenance.

**July 3** Offices closed in observance of Independence Day.



**FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA**

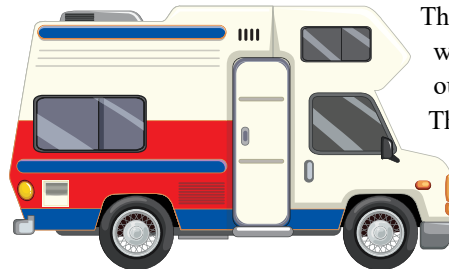
For the latest news and notes, follow us on Facebook and x (formerly Twitter). You'll find us at facebook.com/SWECI and x.com/sweci. Search for Southwestern Electric on YouTube, Instagram & LinkedIn. You can listen to our podcast, Wireside Chat, on Apple Music, Spotify, Audible and anywhere podcasts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



**Reader Contest**

**W**e've hidden an image of a camper 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 camper, 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](mailto: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](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) inbox by



the first day of the month following the month of publication. For our June contest, we'll need your entries in our inbox or postmarked by July 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 September issue of The Southwestern.

**APRIL WINNER**

Congratulations to Dewey Barnes of Worden. As the winner of our April Hide & Seek contest drawing, Dewey will receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

Thank you to everyone who participated in our April 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](mailto: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.
- June contest entries must be in our inbox or postmarked by July 1.
- We'll never hide the image on the front or back cover or on the page where we list the rules.

# JUNE 29 DEADLINE TO FILE FOR CANDIDACY BY PETITION

**S**outhwestern Electric members interested in running for a seat on the co-op's board of directors have a final opportunity to enter the 2026 race. While the deadline for standard nominations (May 28) has passed, the cooperative offers an additional month to file for candidacy by petition.

A valid petition must include the candidate's name, address, age and telephone number, along with the names, addresses and signatures of at least 15 other Southwestern Electric Co-op members. Petitions must be received at the cooperative's Greenville headquarters by Monday, June 29, in order for the candidate's name to appear on the 2026 ballot. For additional guidance on filing for candidacy by petition, please see Section 4(D)3 of the cooperative's bylaws. The bylaws are available at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com).

The 2026 board election, which will take place at Southwestern Electric's 88th Annual Meeting of Members, will fill three seats on the cooperative's board of directors. Each director will be elected to serve a three-year term beginning on Sept. 12, 2026, and expiring on the date of the 2029 Annual Meeting.

Any active member 18 years of age or older and in good financial standing with the co-op is eligible to serve on the board of directors, so long as he or she meets the qualifications set forth in Section 5(B) of the bylaws (available at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com)). Questions about board service and the election process should be directed to Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott. You can reach her at (800) 637-8667 or by email at [community@sweci.com](mailto:community@sweci.com).

## Recycle with Southwestern

### WE'RE A NATION IN LOVE WITH ELECTRONICS

According to a Connected Consumer Survey conducted in 2023:

- You probably have 21 connected electronic devices in your home.
- Half the people reading this article brought a new connected device into their home last year.
- About one out of every six of you added three or more connected electronics to your home.



Given the statistics, it's likely you own an outdated TV, PC or mobile phone. We can help you find new life for your old devices through e-cycling — electronics recycling. E-cycling is the process of refurbishing, redistributing and reusing electronic devices and components, rather than discarding them. It extends the lifecycle of electronics and lowers their overall environmental impact.

Southwestern Electric will host three e-cycling drives this year. You're invited to bring your obsolete electronics to our collection sites on the dates listed at right. Your electronics will be collected and recycled by an EPA-approved recycling center. All collections begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first.

### RECYCLING DRIVE DATE & LOCATION

- **June 6** Southwestern Electric Cooperative's headquarters, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246
- **Collection Times** All collections will begin at 9 a.m. and end at noon or when the truck is filled — whichever comes first.

### QUESTIONS & CJD E-CYCLING

Have questions regarding e-cycling or recyclable items and fees? Call CJD E-Cycling at (618) 659-9006 or email them at [info@cjdrecycling.com](mailto:info@cjdrecycling.com). CJD E-Cycling is a family-owned recycling business with offices in East Alton and Edwardsville. You can learn more about CJD E-Cycling and the materials they recycle at [www.cjdrecycling.com](http://www.cjdrecycling.com).

### We can help you recycle a variety of electronics, including:

- Computers, printers, cables and peripherals (keyboards, mice, etc.)
- Fax machines, scanners, digital converter boxes, cable receivers, satellite receivers.
- Video game consoles, digital video disc player/recorders, portable digital music players.
- Networking equipment, server, telecommunications, phones, cell phones and clocks.
- VCRs, stereos, and audio/video equipment (including cable/satellite).
- Electrical, cabling, communication machinery, and equipment.
- Home electronics, lamps, blenders, toasters, irons, etc.

#### Please Note

- Rechargeable batteries (NIMH, Li-ion and NICD) will be accepted for a fee of 50 cents per pound.
- CRT TVs, console TVs, projection TVs and monitors will be accepted for a fee ranging from \$5 - \$35 depending on their size and model. Please bring cash or check for payment.
- Light bulbs, DVDs, CDs and VHS and cassette tapes and hazardous materials will not be accepted.

# SOUTHWESTERN STUDENTS EARN POWER FOR PROGRESS SCHOLARSHIPS

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power for Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$300,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate.

This year the cooperative awarded \$1,200 scholarships to 14 students, including 11 graduating seniors and three students who graduated prior to 2025.

Each year, dozens of applications are evaluated by Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Scholarship Committee. The committee is composed of nine judges. Each judge independently evaluates the merits of every application against an extensive list of criteria, including financial need, academic success, employment, and participation in extracurricular and volunteer activities.

Southwestern Electric scholarship recipients may use the awarded funds to attend any accredited university, college or vocational school in the U.S.

This year's Power for Progress scholarship recipients are:

#### Graduating Seniors

- |                  |                                       |
|------------------|---------------------------------------|
| • Ike Daiber     | Saint Anthony Catholic High School    |
| • Kaylee Lurkins | Altamont Community High School        |
| • Molly McCalla* | Staunton High School                  |
| • Danny Melton   | Bond Co. Community Unit 2 High School |
| • Lucas Miller   | Ramsey CUSD #204                      |
| • Madelyn Moore  | Highland High School                  |
| • Reyna Rehg     | Triad High School                     |
| • Clive Schlans  | Beecher City Jr.-Sr. High School      |
| • Chase Schomber | Edwardsville High School              |
| • Maggie Tate    | Vandalia Community High School        |
| • Grace Welsler  | Father McGivney Catholic High School  |

#### Post-high school scholarship recipients

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| • Alissa Korsmeyer* | Illinois State University               |
| • Trystan McClain   | Kaskaskia College                       |
| • Noah Vonder Haar  | University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana |

\*Alissa Korsmeyer is the Alan G. Libbra Memorial Scholarship winner.

\*Molly McCalla is the Rich Gusewelle Memorial Scholarship winner.



Altamont Community High School senior Kaylee Lurkins was one of just 17 students to receive the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' \$3,000 Thomas H. Moore Memorial Scholarship. She was chosen out of 278 applicants who applied from across the state. Lurkins is also a 2026 Power For Progress scholarship recipient. Above, Southwestern Electric Director Annette Hartlieb, left, and Lurkins are pictured at Altamont Community High School's Honors Program, at which Hartlieb presented both scholarships to Lurkins.

***Congratulations to our 2026 Power  
for Progress Scholarship recipients!***  
It's a privilege to be part of your journey.





## Voices for Cooperative Power

### *United for Stronger Communities*

You have the power to protect affordable, reliable electricity. Take a stand on issues that impact your cooperative and community.



[aiec.coop/vcp](https://aiec.coop/vcp)

# SMARTHUB IS YOUR ONE-STOP ACCOUNT MANAGEMENT PORTAL

Last year, we launched SmartHub, our online account management portal. Haven't signed up yet? There's no better time to make managing your account faster, easier, and more convenient.

- **Billing & Payments** – No more waiting for your bill to arrive in the mail. Access your bill anytime, anywhere. Save time with easy payment options to avoid late fees and service interruptions.
- **Alerts & Notifications** – Stay informed on important account events via email or text messages. Receive the information you need to make informed decisions about your account.
- **Paperless Billing** – Save some time and a tree when you activate SmartHub paperless billing, an eco-friendly way to instantly access your bill.
- **Usage Monitoring** – Worrying about usage or surprising bill amounts can be stressful. When you know what devices are using the most energy, you can make money-saving decisions about your account.
- **Outage Reporting** – Need to report a power outage? SmartHub is the fastest and easiest way to let us know when your power goes out. When widespread storms knock out power to an entire region, phone lines can become overloaded. With SmartHub, you can avoid busy signals and report outages with a few simple taps on your mobile device.



For more information on SmartHub and how to get it, visit our website at <https://www.sweci.com/smarthub>.

# UNDERSTANDING YOUR BILL

In May, Southwestern Electric updated its billing format to include a demand charge, giving members new opportunities to save by managing how electricity is used.

A demand charge is based on the single highest hour of electricity use during your billing period. It does not matter what time of day it happens, only how much electricity is being used at once. This highest usage level is called your peak demand. Your bill will include a new box showing the kW used and the date and time your peak occurred. Your peak demand will then be multiplied by the demand charge listed in the Current Service Detail section of your bill.

To ease the transition, residential members will see a \$0 demand charge on their bills until October 2026 for September's usage. During this time, members can track their peak demand and learn how managing electricity use may help lower future costs.

**Why does this matter?** Southwestern Electric pays not only for the total electricity members use, but also for the cooperative's overall peak demand. By spreading out your electricity use and lowering your peak demand, you can help reduce costs for the cooperative — and those savings are being passed on to members.

Peak Demand	Usage	Date	Time
	4.928	04/17/2026	16:00

	Readings		Multiplier	kWh Usage
	Previous	Present		
04/2026	58175	58582	1	407

Current Service Detail		
Service Availability		\$44.00
Energy	407 kWh @ 0.03770	\$15.34
Distribution	407 kWh @ 0.03350	\$13.63
Cap & Trans	407 kWh @ 0.03300	\$13.43
Demand	4.928 kW @ 0.00000	\$0.00
WPCA	407 kWh @ 0.02373	\$9.66
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$96.06</b>
70 Watt LED SL (Qty: 1)		\$12.00
State Tax - Usage		\$1.30
<b>Current Month Charges</b>		<b>\$109.36</b>
Previous Unpaid Balance		\$5.12
<b>Total Due</b>		<b>\$114.48</b>

## TERMS TO KNOW

**1 Multiplier.** Meters for accounts meeting specific criteria are designed to record a fraction of the kilowatt hours consumed in a month. These meter readings are multiplied by a factor (the multiplier) to determine consumption. Most residential electric meters have a multiplier of 1.

**2 KWH Usage.** A kilowatt-hour (kWh) is the amount of energy required to run a 1,000-watt appliance for an hour. To calculate the kilowatt-hours you consumed in your current billing period, subtract your previous meter reading from your current reading.

**3 Peak Demand.** The single highest hour of electricity usage during your billing period (kW). Time is shown using the 24-hour clock; for example, 16:00 equals 4:00 p.m.

**4 Service Availability.** Recurring fixed monthly charge that covers some of the cost associated with providing service to your location regardless of usage.

**5 Energy.** The Energy charge is calculated by multiplying the kilowatt-hours (kWh) you consumed during the billing period by your electric rate (most members are on Southwestern's residential rate).

**6 Distribution.** A charge based on kilowatt-hours consumed during the billing period. This charge helps the co-op recover costs related to right-of-way clearance, line maintenance, and equipment that serves your account.

**7 Capacity-Trans (Capacity & Transmission).** Fees Southwestern Electric pays to move electricity across long distances at high voltages.

**8 Demand.** The demand charge is calculated by multiplying your peak demand (kW) by your demand rate. This charge helps the co-op recover the costs of maintaining equipment and capacity needed to handle peak usage.

**9 WPCA (Wholesale Power Cost Adjustment).** The WPCA reflects increases and decreases in the cost of capacity, transmission, and wholesale energy purchased by Southwestern.

**10 State Tax.** Taxes are applied as required.

YNNN



Visit us online at [www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com)  
Toll Free: 1-800-637-8667

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

### Important Messages

Total  
Amount Due

# \$114.48

Due Date:  
05/26/2026

**Customer Name** JANE Q. PUBLIC  
**Account #** 123456789

**Billing Date:** 05/08/2026  
**Current Bill Due Date:** 05/26/2026

Previous Balance	\$102.42
Payment - 04/30/2026	-\$102.42
Late Charge	\$5.12
<b>Current Charges Due - 05/26/2026</b>	<b>\$109.36</b>

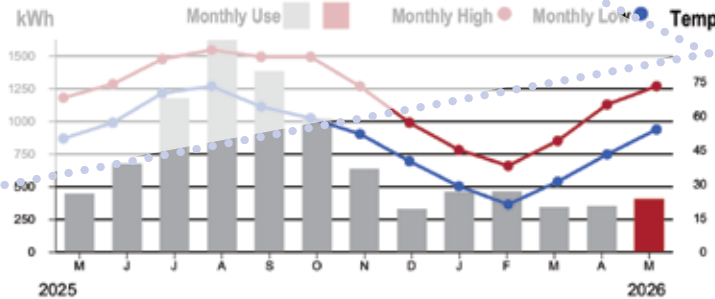
If Current Charges Not Paid By Due Date: Late Charge Applied 05/27/2026

Next Bill Date 06/08/2026

Service Address: 111 EAST MAIN STREET  
Service Location: 00000000

Rate Schedule Description	Meter No.	Reading Dates		Readings		Multiplier	kWh Usage
		From	To	Previous	Present		
Standard 1 Phase	123456789	04/01/2026	05/01/2026	58175	58582	1	407

Peak Demand	Usage	Date	Time
	4.928	04/17/2026	16:00



Current Service Detail		
Service Availability		\$44.00
Energy	407 kWh @ 0.03770	\$15.34
Distribution	407 kWh @ 0.03350	\$13.63
Cap & Trans	407 kWh @ 0.03300	\$13.43
Demand	4.928 kW @ 0.00000	\$0.00
WPCA	407 kWh @ 0.02373	\$9.66
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$96.06</b>
70 Watt LED SL (Qty: 1)		\$12.00
State Tax - Usage		\$1.30
<b>Current Month Charges</b>		<b>\$109.36</b>
Previous Unpaid Balance		\$5.12
<b>Total Due</b>		<b>\$114.48</b>

<b>This Month</b>	<b>Last Month</b>	<b>This Month Last Year</b>	<b>Avg Daily Use/Cost</b>
407 kWh 30 days	354 kWh 31 days	448 kWh 30 days	14 kWh \$3.65



525 US Route 40  
Greenville, IL 62246-3358

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

#### PAY YOUR BILL 24/7

ONLINE: E-Check or credit/debit card at [www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com) or download the mobile app.  
PHONE: (800) 637-8667



JANE Q PUBLIC  
111 EAST MAIN STREET  
DULUTH GA 30096-1234

Account Number	123456789
Current Month Charges	\$109.36
Total Due by 05/26/2026	\$114.48
Total Due after 05/26/2026	\$119.95
Payment Amount Enclosed	

Enroll me in Operation Round Up!  
Checks must be in U.S. funds and drawn on a U.S. bank.

**SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE INC**  
525 US ROUTE 40  
GREENVILLE, IL 62246-3358



# Keeping the Cupboard Stocked

## With help from Operation Round Up, the Mt. Olive Care Center takes aim at food insecurity

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

**F**or nine months out of the year, students from low-income households can get free or reduced-price meals at school through government-funded programs.

When the final bell rings and school is out for the summer, though, food insecurity—the term for when people don't have enough to eat and don't know where their next meal will come from—sets in. In the United States, 48 million people, including 14 million children, experience food insecurity annually.

Nancy Hubert is trying to change that, one paper bag at a time. Hubert is the director of the Mt. Olive Care Center, a food pantry that serves the small Macoupin County town and its surrounding areas. Hubert said the center serves more than 5,000 people a year, drawing patrons not only from Macoupin but also Bond, Montgomery and other neighboring counties.

***“Giving back to our membership through donations to organizations like Mt. Olive Care Center is us living out our cooperative principles.”***

— Marvin Warner, Southwestern Electric Director

A separate-but-connected service provided by the care center is the Kids' Café, a supplemental summertime program aimed at providing healthy food to children during those months when school isn't in session. This past March, Southwestern Electric representatives visited the center at 120 E. Main St. in Mt. Olive to deliver a \$1,000 check that will help fund the Kids' Café program this summer.

The donation is part of the cooperative's Operation Round Up initiative, which has given out more than \$125,000 in local grants since its inception in 2005. Operation Round Up is a charitable program governed, funded and supported by the cooperative's members.

“Giving back to our membership through donations to organizations like Mt. Olive Care Center is us living out our cooperative principles,”

Southwestern Electric Director Marvin Warner said.

Every Thursday morning from 10 to 11:30 a.m. throughout the summer, participants can pick up a bag of nutritious food at the care center. Hubert said bags usually contain two protein-rich items, two fruits, a gallon of milk, a fresh loaf of bread, some juice with vitamin C in it, and some snack-type items. Contents vary from week to week depending on what commodities they get from the state, but much of the food given out through Kids' Café is bought and paid for by the center—hence the need for additional funding.

“We try to keep good, healthy stuff in stock,” Hubert said.

Like many community organizations, the Mt. Olive Care Center is run entirely by volunteers. That includes Hubert and roughly 33 volunteers who help unload goods, fill orders, complete paperwork



Mt. Olive Care Center Co-Director Michelle Pfeiffer, center, tells Southwestern Electric directors Marvin Warner, left, and Bill Jennings about the food pantry's operation.



*“It means the world. We appreciate all that you do for us. I don’t have an adjective to describe how helpful it is.”*

—Nancy Hubert, Director of the Mt. Olive Care Center



At left, bags packed with nutritious shelf-stable foods—and a few sweet treats, for good measure—stand ready to be handed out to food pantry patrons. Below, a well-organized pantry makes life easier for the care center’s 33 volunteers.




and greet visitors, among other tasks.

Similarly, the care center thrives because of the support of the community. Whether food or monetary donations, Hubert said the food pantry is only able to provide as much help as they do because of the support of programs like Operation Round Up.

“It means the world,” she said. “We appreciate all that you do for us. I don’t have an adjective to describe how helpful it is.”

Aside from the Kids’ Café, Mt. Olive Care Center’s food pantry is open to all Illinois residents on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10 to 11:30 a.m. For more information, call Nancy Hubert at 331-444-3592.

Operation Round Up (ORU) is a charitable program governed, funded, and supported by Southwestern Electric Cooperative members. Co-op members may elect to have their monthly electric bills rounded up to the nearest dollar.

The rounded-up amount goes into a charitable fund that the governing committee allocates toward community projects ranging from education and athletics to veterans’ affairs and the arts. To learn more about Operation Round Up, including how to enroll in the program and how to apply for a grant, visit [sweci.com/operation-round-up](http://sweci.com/operation-round-up), call us at (800) 637-8667 or scan the QR code below. 



Small change.  
**Big difference.**



[sweci.com/operation-round-up](http://sweci.com/operation-round-up)

# 'BEYOND EXPECTATIONS'

## Youth Day provides opportunity—now, and in the future—for local students

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

**O**ppportunity. That was the common refrain from the three young men who attended this year's Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperatives Youth Day in Springfield, Ill., on March 25. Hayden Leek of Edwardsville, Joseph Krietmeyer of Vandalia and Caden Stewart of St. Elmo represented Southwestern Electric Cooperative at the annual event, which is hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

Asked at the outset of the day what they hoped to get out of the experience, Leek said the opportunity to meet with some of the

legislators who make the state's laws was atop his list. Krietmeyer echoed that sentiment, and Stewart said gaining more knowledge in general about how state government works was his goal.

"Youth Day brings students together for a day that feels both exciting and meaningful from the very start," Southwestern Electric Manager of Member Services Brooke Scott said. "As they walk through the Capitol and hear from leaders, government begins to feel more real and within reach. Throughout the day, students connect with each other, ask questions,

Continued on page 14 ►



At left, Southwestern Electric student representatives, from left, Hayden Leek, Joseph Krietmeyer and Caden Stewart get a firsthand lesson in state legislation from State Sen. Erica Harris.



168 students from 24 cooperatives gather for a photo in front of Illinois state capitol.

PHOTO COURTESY  
ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS  
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



Joseph Kriemeyer, Vandalia Community High School



Hayden Leek, Edwardsville High School



Caden Stewart, St. Elmo High School

PHOTOS COURTESY ASSOCIATION OF ILLINOIS ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

► Continued from page 12 and start to see how their ideas and voices matter in their communities. Moments like these build confidence and remind them that leadership doesn't start someday—it starts now."

The day started at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel with breakfast and addresses from AIEC CEO Craig Sondgeroth and Member Services Manager Brooke Gross. From there, groups walked the roughly eight blocks to the Illinois State Capitol Building to visit the capitol. The students got to see the House of Representatives chamber and explore the bowels of the 150-year-old building.

One of the highlights for everyone involved was the chance to speak with State Sen. Erica Harriss. Harriss, a Highland native who has been the senator for Illinois' 56th Senate District since 2023, took time out of her morning to invite the group into her office to ask her questions and learn more about the lawmaking process.

After that, it was back to the hotel for lunch. Before eating, the 168 students sponsored by 24 electric and telephone cooperatives from across the state heard from Micah Anderson, the 2025 NRECA Youth Leadership Council representative about his experience at Youth Day, the annual weeklong Electric Cooperative Youth Tour and his time on the Leadership Council. Over lunch, Illinois State Treasurer

Continued on page 26 ►

At right, the students inspect artifacts inside a lighted display case at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. Below, AIEC member Services Manager Brooke Gross addresses the crowd at the day's outset.





Asked at the outset of the day what they hoped to get out of the experience, Leek said the opportunity to meet with some of the legislators who make the state's laws was atop his list. Krietmeyer echoed that sentiment, and Stewart said gaining more knowledge in general about how state government works was his goal.



Above, State Sen. Jason Plummer takes time out of his day to visit with the students. At left, they take in one of the gallery settings from Abraham Lincoln's early life.



At left, Krietmeyer takes a break in the House of Representatives chamber. Above, Leek poses in the bowels of the Capitol building.



Micah Anderson, 2025 NRECA Youth Leadership Council Representative



Brooke Gross, AIEC Member Services Manager

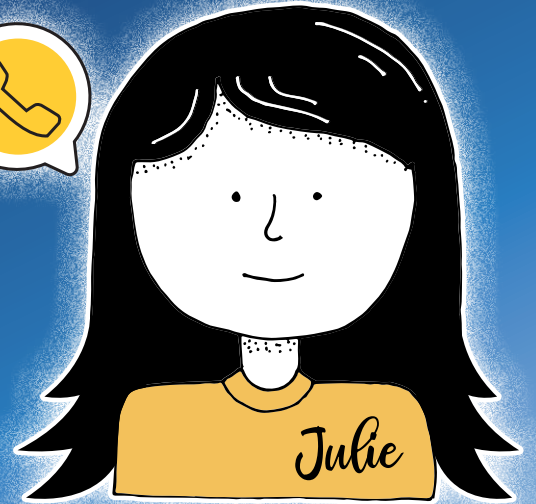


Michael Frerichs, Illinois State Treasurer

"Moments like these build confidence and remind them that leadership doesn't start someday it starts now. By the end of the day, they leave not just inspired, but motivated to take what they've learned and make a difference in their own way."  
 —Brooke Scott, Manager of Member Services



# Steps to Solar Commissioning



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

**2** Contact your installer and insurance agent. Ask your installer to send a one-line diagram and certificate of insurance. Speak with your insurance agent to confirm you have appropriate coverage. They're welcome to send those documents to Julie Lowe at Southwestern Electric. Or if you'd like to review them, they can send them to you, and you can pass them along to Julie.

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

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

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

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

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

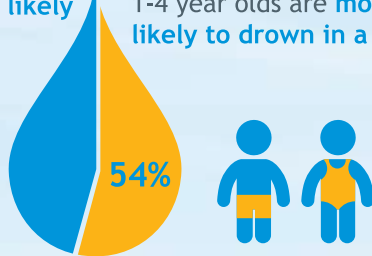
# The Facts about Kids and the Danger of Drowning

Almost 800 children drown in the U.S. every year.



Two thirds of these deaths occur during May - August.

## Drowning Risk Varies by Age



More than half of all child drowning deaths are among children ages 0 to 4.

## PARENTS' MISCONCEPTIONS

	<b>MISCONCEPTION 1</b> Nearly half of parents surveyed think that if a child was drowning nearby, they would hear it.	<b>Reality</b> Drowning is silent. There can be very little splashing, waving or screaming.
	<b>MISCONCEPTION 2</b> 1 out of 3 parents have left a child alone in a pool for two or more minutes.	<b>Reality</b> Drowning is quick. Once a child begins to struggle, you may have less than a minute to react.
	<b>MISCONCEPTION 3</b> More than half of parents surveyed think that when present, a lifeguard is the primary person responsible for their child's supervision at the pool.	<b>Reality</b> Watching your child in the water is your responsibility. A lifeguard's job is to enforce rules, scan, rescue and resuscitate.
	<b>MISCONCEPTION 4</b> 60 percent of parents surveyed would not worry as much about drowning if their child has had swim lessons.	<b>Reality</b> Swim lessons are essential, but skill level varies. A review of children who drowned in a pool revealed that 47 percent of 10 - 17 year olds reportedly knew how to swim.

## WATER SURVIVAL SKILLS

### 5 Survival Skills That Could Save Your Life in the Water



1 Step or jump into water over your head and return to the surface.



2 Float or tread water for one minute.



3 Turn around in a full circle and find an exit from the water.

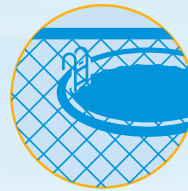


4 Swim 25 yards to the exit.



5 Exit from the water. If in a pool, be able to exit without using the ladder.

## WATER SAFETY TIPS



- ◆ Watch your kids when they are in and around water, without distraction.
- ◆ Teach children to swim and the 5 Water Survival Skills.
- ◆ Learn CPR and basic rescue skills.
- ◆ Make sure pools have four-sided fencing at least 4 feet high.

© 2016 Safe Kids Worldwide

Learn more at [safekids.org](http://safekids.org).

SAFE  
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WORLDWIDE™

N  
Nationwide®

## SKW Promotes Layered Approach to Water Safety

The information for this month's Health & Safety segment was provided by Safe Kids Worldwide (SKW), a nonprofit organization working to help families and communities keep kids safe from injuries. A 2016 study commissioned by SKW indicates nearly 800 children will drown in the year ahead, with close to 70 percent of those drownings occurring between May and August.

"Silence and speed are characteristics of childhood drowning," the study states. "Drowning prevention takes multiple

strategies and the approach used involves ensuring overlapping layers of protection. Active supervision is one of the most important layers of protection and is absolutely necessary when children are in and around water."

SKW recommends assigning a Water Watcher in settings where it's difficult for a parent to provide constant visual supervision.

"A Water Watcher is an adult who commits to watching children in and around water, so that while they are in the role, their eyes and attention are only

on that task," the report explained. "This only ends when the children leave the water and/or they turn over the responsibility to another Water Watcher."

Using the Water Watcher system for a certain amount of time (such as 15-minute periods) prevents fatigue and lapses in supervision.

To learn more about water safety and read the complete study, *Keeping Kids Safe In and Around Water: Exploring Misconceptions that Lead to Drowning*, go to [safekids.org](http://safekids.org).

## WHO • WHAT • WHERE

Even with all of the context clues, it was still impressive to receive so many insightful responses to our May mystery item.

The Southwestern Electric-branded slide rule was one of the “Electric” or “Elektro” slide rules used to determine proper copper wire sizing based on numerous factors. In layman’s terms, as reader Yvonne Rieger put it, “It’s used to determine how far electricity can travel over a wire, what wire gauge to use and how much voltage drop will occur.” Well said, Yvonne.

It’s clear that we’re not going to be able to slip many electricity-related puzzles past our members, so we’re trying a different tack with this month’s challenge. Do you recognize this painting, or maybe even the actual structures or body of water depicted? Let us know and your response could be featured in the July issue of *The Southwestern*.

I believe this was called an “Elektro” slide rule. I remember using this in college physics once or twice. I think the year was around 1965 and was replaced by an H.P.-model calculator. Used the slide rule once or twice for physics lab but never after.

—*Louis Schlaefer, St. Jacob*

In the May issue, the image displayed is a vintage reference table or general data chart for electrical motors and wire sizes based on 1939 National Electrical Code (N.E.C.) standards. It contains motor data, wire capacity and open wiring information.

—*John Gorenz, Alhambra*

It’s a vintage electrician’s slide rule for voltage drop and wire sizing. It’s used to determine how far electricity can travel over a wire, what wire gauge to use and how much voltage drop will occur.

—*Yvonne Rieger, Troy*



**Who-What-Where** is a contest that challenges your knowledge of people, places and objects in and around Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s service area. Here’s how it works: Each month, we run a photo. Your job is to tell us who’s pictured, what we’ve photographed, or where we shot the photo. You can email your response to [thesouthwestern@sweci.com](mailto:thesouthwestern@sweci.com) or send it by mail to *The Southwestern* magazine, c/o Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US 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 May 2026 Who-What-Where is a 1939 National Electric Code (NEC) electrical load slide rule (calculator) made for Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

This was used to calculate residential electrical panel load and service size using NEC demand factor method for general lighting, appliances, and electrical loads.

—Benjamin Nevin, Collinsville

The May 2026 “What am I?” is a doubleheader which only an electrician or engineer could fully appreciate.

Spread across pages 20-21 is a photo of a specialized voltage drop calculator slide rule, copyrighted in 1946. It is designed to determine the correct copper wire size based on current load and distance.

On page 21, a vintage reference tool is shown which provides electrical data based on the 1939 National Electrical Code (NEC).

Pretty much all Greek to me!

—Bill Malec, O’Fallon



CO-OP KITCHEN

# STRAWBERRY CAFE

## STRAWBERRY JAM

### Ingredients

- 4 cups ripe strawberries
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ (3 ounce) package strawberry Jello

### Directions

1. Cook strawberries and sugar until tender stirring often.
2. While still hot stir in the Jello.
3. Let cool. Pour into ½ pint canning jars or small plastic containers and freeze.
4. Thaw when ready to enjoy.

## STRAWBERRY SHORT CUT CAKE

### Ingredients

- 1 cup miniature marshmallows
- 4 cups fresh strawberries sliced
- 1 (3 ounce) package strawberry gelatin
- 2¼ cups flour
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3 eggs
- 1 small container whipped topping

### Directions

1. Sprinkle marshmallows evenly into generously greased 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
2. Combine strawberries and gelatin. Set aside.
3. Combine remaining ingredients and beat together for 3 minutes.
4. Pour batter over marshmallows.
5. Spoon strawberry mixture over batter.
6. Bake 45 - 50 minutes at 350°.
7. Serve warm or cool topped with whipped topping.

## STRAWBERRY BUTTER

- ¾ pound butter room temperature
- 16 ounces frozen strawberries thawed
- ½ cup powdered sugar

### Directions

1. Whip the butter.
2. Add strawberries and whip together with mixer.
3. Add powdered sugar and whip with mixer until combined well.

Serve on your favorite bread, muffins, scones, pancakes or biscuits. Store in refrigerator or freeze in ½ pint canning jars or small plastic containers. Bring back to room temperature before serving.

## CHOCOLATE COVERED STRAWBERRIES

### Ingredients

- 15 large strawberries (blemish free)
- 2 cups good quality milk chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon oil

### Directions

1. Wash and dry strawberries.
2. Refrigerate 2-3 hours.
3. Put the chocolate chips in a double boiler, water already boiling. Can also melt chips in a small saucepan over low heat.
4. When chips have melted, stir to get lumps out and stir in oil.
5. Dip strawberries in chocolate by holding green tops or with a toothpick.
6. Place on wax paper and refrigerate until ready to serve.

## EASY STRAWBERRY PIE ALASKA

### Ingredients

- ⅔ cup water
- 1 (3 ounce) package strawberry Jello
- 1 cup vanilla ice cream
- 3 cups strawberries sliced
- 3½ cups Cool Whip thawed
- 2 (9 inch) graham cracker pie shells

### Directions

1. Bring water to boil, stir in Jello until dissolved.
2. Add ice cream a spoonful at a time, stirring until melted and smooth.
3. Blend in Cool Whip and fruit.
4. Chill in refrigerator until mixture will mound.
5. Spoon into crusts and chill for 3 - 4 hours.

Chocolate covered strawberries prepared & photographed by Mike Barns, [mike.barns@sweci.com](mailto:mike.barns@sweci.com)

## CURRENT EVENTS

**June 1-29** BARRY WALLACE ART EXHIBIT, Highland. Come see and enjoy the artwork of graphic designer Barry Wallace whose work includes detailed pencil drawings, giclee prints, and mixed media epoxy artwork. This small people friendly gallery features an original artist every two months. Work is not only on display, but is also for sale. Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday 9 a.m. - 8 p.m. Saturday 9 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Promoted by the Highland Arts Council. Latzer Memorial Public Library, 1001 9th Street. Email burnskathy11@gmail.com for questions or visit highlandlibrary.org.

**June 2, 16, 23, 30, July 7** ADULT WATERCOLOR CLASSES, Highland. Enjoy learning basic watercolor skills or improving existing skills as you apply them to creating your own original painting. The class is designed to meet the needs of beginners as well as experienced artists. Kenzie Holzinger Smith, MFA will teach and lead you through the process. Afternoon class 2:30 - 4:30 p.m.; evening class 5:30 - 7:30 p.m. All supplies will be provided. Cost is \$95. Class size is limited and is for ages 14+. Korte Recreation Center, 1 Nagel Drive. For more information or to register, email burnskathy11@gmail.com or visit highlandartscouncil.org.

**June 3 - November 8** 1926 EXHIBIT, Edwardsville. Take a trip back to 1926. It was this year that Route 66 debuted in the U.S., connecting travelers from Chicago to Los Angeles, including a path through Edwardsville. In honor of Route

66's centennial, this exhibit takes a look at the news, fashions, sports and happenings of 1926 in Edwardsville. Wednesday - Sunday. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. West End Service Station, 620 St. Louis Street. Visit cityofedwardsville.com/749/west-end-service-station.

**June 4 - September 26** MUSIC IN THE PARK, Grafton. Bring your lawn chairs and coolers for a toe-tapping evening of great music along the Mississippi River. From classic rock and pop to country, bluegrass and jazz, there is something for everyone. Every Thursday 7 - 9 p.m. Admission is free. The Grove Memorial Park, corner of Market and Main Streets. Visit graftonchamber.com/music-in-the-park.

**June 5 & 6** INTERNATIONAL HORSERADISH FESTIVAL, Collinsville. Summer festival featuring live music, food, a bloody Mary contest, cornhole tournament, root toss, Little Miss Horseradish pageant, 5K run, car show, crafts and kids activities. 11 a.m. - 10 p.m. Admission is free. Uptown at 221 West Main Collinsville. Call 618-344-2884 or visit internationalhorseradishfestival.com.

**June 6** TWO RIVERS FAMILY FISHING FAIR, Grafton. Event welcomes all ages to enjoy the sport of fishing. Fishing poles, bait and supplies are provided. There are 30 outdoor educational activities plus a trout pond, a bluegill pond and a 4,000-gallon aquarium. Special guests for this event are legendary fisherman and Hall of Famer Jimmy Houston,

Mountain Man, star of "Duck Dynasty", Camo the Clown and WildHeart. Food and drinks are available on site. Guests will also enjoy free gifts and prizes. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Pere Marquette State Park, 13112 Visitor Center Lane. Call 618-786-3323.

**June 6, 27; July 11, 26; September 5, 19** CARILLON CONCERT SERIES, Centralia. Bring your lawn chair and enjoy a carillon performance in the park. Sharon Hettinger will perform June 6 and Joey Brink on June 27. Carillon Park, 104 South Elm Street. Visit centraliacarillon.org.

**June 7** ALL-WHEELS DRIVE-IN CAR SHOW, Alton. Come out for the cars and stay for the live music, 50-50 drawing, vendor displays, merchant sidewalk sale and great food. Event features more than 200 classic cars, hot rods and motorcycles. 8 a.m. - 4 p.m. Downtown on State and Belle Streets. Visit downtownalton.com.

**June 7** CHICKEN DINNER, Grantfork. Dinner includes ½ chicken (breast, wing, thigh, leg), dressing, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, slaw and cake. No substitutions. The Country Store will be back this year with lots of fun things to purchase, as well as a raffle with a quilt and cash prizes. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. All dinners \$15 carry out with limited dine in seating. St. Gertrudes Catholic Church, 202 Locust Street. For more information, call Gail Ohren at 618-830-1384

**June 12; July 10; August 14; September 11** SUMMER CONCERT & MOVIE NIGHTS,

Belleville. Bring your lawn chairs and picnic blankets and enjoy free music and concerts throughout the summer. Event includes local food trucks and free activities and games for kids. Bands start at 7 p.m.; movies start at sunset. Bellevue Park Bandshell, 401 Bellevue Park Drive. Visit belleville.net/354/parks-recreation.

**June 13** JUNETEENTH, Centralia. Join us in celebrating faith, freedom and community at the largest Juneteenth celebration in Southern Illinois. 11 a.m. - 6 p.m. Laura Leake Park, at North Maple and Haussler. Visit seecentralia.com/events/centralia-juneteenth.

**June 13** MOVIE IN THE PARK, Maryville. Bring your lawn chairs and enjoy "How to Train Your Dragon". 7 - 9 p.m. Firemen's Park, entertainment pavilion 300 North Donk Avenue. Visit maryville.il.us/98/parks-recreation, email parksandrec@maryville-il.us or message us (618) 223-8965.

**June 13** ROUTE 66 FESTIVAL, Edwardsville. Event will include live music, 10K run, great food, classic car show and cruise, food vendors, kid zone, trolley tours, history tent and local artists. 10 a.m. - 11:30 p.m. Admission is free. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Visit edwardsvillerroute66.com, email gpellock@cityofedwardsville.com or call 618-692-7538.

**June 13; July 11; August 8; September 12** LUCY HASKELL PLAYHOUSE OPEN HOUSE, Alton. Step inside the Victorian-style playhouse, take a walk through history, and rediscover the childlike wonder

### 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 mike.barns@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.

that surrounds this remarkable piece of Alton's past. 10 a.m. - noon. Visit [haskellplayhouse.org](http://haskellplayhouse.org).

**June 14 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**, Edwardsville. Enjoy the music of Silver Creek Bluegrass Band. All are welcome to join us in celebrating and supporting local music. Doors open 5 p.m.; music starts 5:30 p.m. Admission is free will donation. Light refreshments available for purchase. Immanuel UCC Church in Hamel, 5838 Staunton Road. Call 618-560-8543.

**June 19 SAXOPHONICS CONCERT**, Troy. 7:30 p.m. Tri-township Park Gazebo, 410 Wickliffe Street. In case of inclement weather held at St. Paul's Lutheran Church Sanctuary, 112 North Border Street. Visit [troyband.org](http://troyband.org).

**June 20 ROUTE 66 CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**, Livingston. Old Route 66 Jeep Run "Duck Hunt" honoring 100 years of Route 66, 100 years of Livingston High School and 250 years of the USA. The Jeep Run will visit 5 locations on Route 66 starting from Livingston then back to the diner for prizes afterwards. Check in 10 a.m.; depart at 11 a.m. (rain or shine). 3 - 8 p.m. First responders appreciation, touch-a-truck and/or a helicopter 4 - 5 p.m. Route 66 Cruise-In 5 - 8 p.m. Miss Red, White & Blue Pin-Up Contest. \$5 per person. Pink Elephant Antique Mall, 908 Veterans Memorial Drive. For more information, visit [facebook.com/events/2158077251267374](http://facebook.com/events/2158077251267374) or email [area66marketing@gmail.com](mailto:area66marketing@gmail.com).

**June 20 THE WORLD'S LARGEST CATSUP BOTTLE FESTIVAL**, Collinsville. Event starts at 2 p.m. with the arrival of the giant potato truck. Event will include ketchup tasting, classic car show, crafts and activities, games, vendors, Princess Tomato and Sir Catsup contest, hot dog and tater tot eating contests and many more

events. Arrival of the Great Race Route 66 Road Rally vehicles at 4 p.m. Live music at 7 p.m. Old Herald Square, 119 East Clay Street. Visit [catsup-bottlefestival.com](http://catsup-bottlefestival.com).

**July 25 MUD GIRL MIDWEST RUN**, Granite City. Join women of all ages as they tackle mud, water, and over 17 obstacles across a 3-mile course in this high-energy Midwest event. All skill levels are welcome. Doors open at 7:45 a.m.; first wave starts at 8:30 a.m.; last wave starts at 2:29 p.m. (1 p.m. is last call); festival closes at 4 p.m. Tri-City Speedway, 5100 Nameoki. For more information or to register, visit [mudgirlrun.us/st-louis-2026](http://mudgirlrun.us/st-louis-2026).

**June 25-28 FINDING NEMO JR.**, 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. General admission is \$12. Breese Central Community High School, 7740 Old U.S. Highway 50. For reservations, visit [clintoncountyshowcase.com](http://clintoncountyshowcase.com).

**June 26 ROUTE 66 JUBILEE**, Carlinville. Come celebrate where history, community, and a little bit of nostalgia meet at this event honoring 100 years of the Mother Road. Spend the day surrounded by the sights and sounds of vintage Route 66, from beautifully restored Ford Model A cars to old-fashioned games. You'll find storytelling, live music, and historical presentations woven throughout the day, bringing the spirit of the road to life in a way that's engaging for all ages. Guests are encouraged to embrace the spirit of the Roaring '20s, think feathers, fedoras, pinstripes, and pearls. Noon - 8 p.m. Admission is free. Macoupin County Courthouse, 201 East Main Street. Visit [cityofcarlinville.com/theevent/6-26-26-jubilee](http://cityofcarlinville.com/theevent/6-26-26-jubilee).

**June 27 CRAFT BEER WALK**, Belleville. The Craft Beer Walk offers attendees a beautiful

evening exploring downtown Belleville while sampling the best beer selections from over 25 regional breweries. Participants must be 21 years of age. Tickets are non-refundable and non-transferrable. This is a rain or shine event. 3 - 7 p.m. 227 East Main Street. Visit [bellevillemainstreet.net](http://bellevillemainstreet.net).

**June 27 KAYAK DAY ON DROST LAKE**, Maryville. Five 1 hour sessions of free kayaking on lake. Registration starts June 1. Kayaks and life vests provided. Noon - 5 p.m. Drost Park pavilion #1, East Division Street. Visit [maryville-il.us/98/parks-recreation](http://maryville-il.us/98/parks-recreation), email [parksandrec@maryville-il.us](mailto:parksandrec@maryville-il.us) or message us 618-223-8965.

**June 27 TROY COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT**, Troy. 7 p.m. St Paul's Lutheran Church School, 112 North Border Street. Visit [troyband.org](http://troyband.org).

**June 28; July 26; August 30; September 20 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**, Edwardsville. Join the Edwardsville Symphony in celebrating the centennial of Route 66 through a lifetime of music. This special series features five performances representing the milestones of life, weaving together sound, story and nostalgia along America's most iconic highway. Bring your lawn chairs and settle in for a free community concert. The pre-concert begins at 6:30 p.m., followed by the symphony at 7 p.m. City Park, 101 South Buchanan Street. Visit [edwardsvillecommunitysymphony.com](http://edwardsvillecommunitysymphony.com).

**July 1-3 250 ON THE MISSISSIPPI**, Alton. Enjoy a variety of activities in celebration of the nation's 250th birthday. This multiday event features three days of family friendly fun at iconic locations in downtown Alton. Wednesday at Haskell Park, 1209 Henry Street from 4 - 8 p.m. Thursday at Alton Godfrey Rotary Park, 110 East 3rd Street from 4 - 7 p.m. Friday at Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive from 5 - 10 p.m. Find us on Facebook.

**July 10 & 11 ARTISAN FAIR**, Effingham. A weekend for visitors to enjoy fine art and one of a kind crafts for purchase, artisan demonstrations, food and drink and live music. Friday 5 - 9 p.m.; Saturday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Tuscan Hills Winery, 2200 Historic Hills Drive. Visit [effinghamartisanfair.org](http://effinghamartisanfair.org).

**July 11 TOUR DE DONUT**, Staunton. The "Tour de Donut" bicycle race is a spoof on the "Tour de France." The 34 mile route follows lightly traveled roads over rolling terrain with some moderate hills toward the end of the long route. Riders can stop at two rest stops (donut stops). While donut consumption is not mandatory, the rider is awarded a five minute time credit for each donut eaten. A shorter ride is also available. Helmets are required for all riders. Must be 13 years of age to ride without an adult. Registration at 7 a.m.; race 9 a.m. - noon. Fees vary. Staunton City Park at the corner of East Pennsylvania Street and Ash Street. To register, visit [tourdedonut.org](http://tourdedonut.org).

**July 11 VOLUNTEER FIRE-FIGHTER BBQ FUNDRAISER**, Altamont. Join us for a day of delicious BBQ, fun activities and community spirit. BBQ competition, car show, inflatables for kids, live music and beer garden. Free will donation for meal. All proceeds benefit Altamont Volunteer Firefighters. 1 - 9 p.m. Effingham County Fairgrounds, 722 East Cumberland Road. Visit [facebook.com/groups/738732974581822/](http://facebook.com/groups/738732974581822/).

**July 19 SUMMER CONCERT SERIES**, Edwardsville. Enjoy the music of Hunter Sharp Band. All are welcome to join us in celebrating and supporting local music. Doors open 5 p.m.; music starts 5:30 p.m. Admission is free will offering. Light refreshments available for purchase. Immanuel UCC Church in Hamel, 5838 Staunton Road. Call 618-560-8543.

► Continued from page 14

Michael Frerichs told his story to the crowded ballroom, encouraging students to pursue their passions, participate and become lifelong learners.

“You have found time to participate in here today by coming to Youth Day,” Frerichs said. “You’re talking to people. You are learning. And I’ll tell you that learning never stops. It only stops when you decide you don’t want to learn anymore.

“If you decide to push yourself and become a lifelong learner, you’ll grow from it.”

The afternoon included a tour of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, an ice cream social and the moment all three students were awaiting in nervous anticipation—the interview for the chance to participate in this year’s Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. After wrapping up interviews, it was decided that all three students were deserving of going to the nation’s capital.

“From touring Washington, D.C., to learning the cooperative difference, Youth Tour is much more than a trip,” Scott said of the June 15-22 excursion. “It’s an experience they will carry long after high school.”

By day’s end, Leek, Krietmeyer and Stewart were all in agreement that opportunity—not only the one behind them, but also the one in front of them, the one they’d come into the day seeking—had been found.

“It went above and beyond my expectations,” Leek said.

For more information on Youth Day and Youth Tour, and to apply to be a part of the 2027 experience, visit <https://sweci.com/youth-tour>. **S**



Above, AIEC CEO Craig Sondgeroth pauses amid a busy day to chat with the Southwestern Electric student representatives. At left, Stewart, Krietmeyer and Leek strike a pose—not dissimilar to the one being struck by President Abraham Lincoln behind them—before entering the Capitol. Below, a few interlopers mix in with the lifelike figures of the Lincoln family in the museum’s plaza.



Want to represent Southwestern Electric Cooperative on the 2027 Youth Tour? Look for application information later this year in *The Southwestern!*

## FARMERS MARKETS

**June 4 - October 6 FARMERS MARKET**, Swansea. Locally grown fruits, vegetables, meats, baked goods and intriguing handcrafted goods. Every Thursday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. rain or shine. Rural King parking lot, 2801 North Illinois Street. Visit [swanseail.org/2143/Farmers-Market](http://swanseail.org/2143/Farmers-Market).

**June 5 - August 29 MARKET DAYS**, Bunker Hill. Come explore a wonderful variety of offerings, including local honey, homegrown produce, farm fresh flowers, homemade baked goods, delicious chocolates, crafts, direct sales vendors, pickers and vintage finds. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. 511 North Washington Street. Visit [facebook.com/events/1249481923981947](https://facebook.com/events/1249481923981947).

**June 6; July 4; August 1; September 5; October 3 BOND COUNTY FARMERS MARKET**, Greenville. Enjoy fresh produce, handmade goods, and friendly faces. 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. At the Courthouse Square. Visit [facebook.com/people/Bond-County-Farmers-Market/100090145407685/](https://facebook.com/people/Bond-County-Farmers-Market/100090145407685/).

**June 6 - October 3 THE MELTING POT MARKET**, Granite City. Find produce stalls, home décor, art, skin-care products, jewelry, food and snacks, locally-made crafts and live entertainment. Bring cash as not all booths can process cards. First Saturday of the month. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Civic Park, 1301 Niedringhaus Avenue. Visit [facebook.com/meltingpotmarket](https://facebook.com/meltingpotmarket).

**June 6 - October 17 FARMERS & ARTISANS MARKET**, Alton. Local home-grown fruits and vegetables, hormone-free meats, baked goods, plants and flowers, and honey. Artists and makers will offer crafts, homemade soaps and skin care products, jewelry, artwork, pottery and art demonstrations. Every Saturday 8 a.m. - noon.

Parking lot near Riverfront Park at corner Landmarks Boulevard and Henry Street. Visit [downtownalton.com](http://downtownalton.com).

**June 6 - October 17 LAND OF GOSHEN COMMUNITY MARKET**, Edwardsville. Dozens of vendors sell locally-grown fruits and vegetables, local, farm-raised meats, cheeses, eggs, baked goods and numerous non-food items. Expect live music, demonstrations of different arts and crafts, and gardening tips. The market runs rain or shine and only cancels in extremely inclement weather. Every Saturday 8 a.m. - noon. Downtown on North Second Street. Visit [goshenmarket.org](http://goshenmarket.org).

**June 6 - October 17 VINE STREET MARKET**, O'Fallon. More than 60 vendors selling produce, handmade crafts, meats, dairy, wine, baked goods and sweet treats. Saturdays 8 a.m. - noon. 212 East 1st Street. Visit [ofallonparksandrec.com/vine-street-market/](http://ofallonparksandrec.com/vine-street-market/).

**June 6 - October 31 FARMERS MARKET**, Effingham. Offers locally-grown food, art, live music and quality artisan goods. Every Saturday from 8 a.m. - noon. Effingham County Courthouse Museum lawn, 100 East Jefferson Avenue. Visit [facebook.com/effinghamfarmersmarket](https://facebook.com/effinghamfarmersmarket).

**June 6 - November 7 MARKET DAYS**, Carlinville. Locally-made goods, crafts, antiques, vintage and new clothing, jewelry, tools, home décor, baked goods, produce and more at this small business market. The first Saturday of the month. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Downtown Square, 106 North Side Square. Visit [carlinville-marketdays.com](http://carlinville-marketdays.com).

**June 11 - July 30 NIGHT MARKET**, Alton. This lively outdoor market brings the community together for an evening of live music, local artwork and

booths filled with handmade and homegrown products from talented regional vendors. Thursdays 7 - 10 p.m. Downtown on 3rd Street. Visit [facebook.com/NightMarketAlton](https://facebook.com/NightMarketAlton).

**June 11 - September 17 FARMER MARKET**, Wood River. Featuring fresh produce, handmade goods, and a wide variety of local vendors, the market showcases the best the region has to offer while supporting small businesses and area growers. Thursday evenings 4 - 6:30 p.m. Visit [facebook.com/WoodRiverFarmersMarket](https://facebook.com/WoodRiverFarmersMarket).

**June 13; July 11; August 8; September 12 FARMER'S MARKET**, Hillsboro. A great selection of locally grown produce, plants, artisan goods, and handmade crafts. 9 a.m. - noon. Courthouse parking lot, 120 North Main Street. Visit [facebook.com/hillsborofarmersmarketillinois](https://facebook.com/hillsborofarmersmarketillinois).

**June 13, 17; July 1, 11, 22; August 8 FARMER'S MARKET & NIGHT MARKETS**, Nokomis. Explore tables filled farm-fresh produce, meats, baked goods, retail products and more. Saturdays 8 - 11 a.m.; Wednesdays 4:30 - 6:30 p.m. Fred B. Johnson Park, West Central Street. Visit [facebook.com/nokomisfarmersmarket](https://facebook.com/nokomisfarmersmarket).

**June 13 & 20; July 11; August 8; September 12; October 10 FARMERS MARKET**, Vandalia. Our goal is to inspire and nurture a healthy community by building a local and sustainable food economy in an engaging downtown experience while showcasing local farmers and gardeners. 8 - 11 a.m. Downtown on 4th Street by the Old State House. Visit [facebook.com/vandaliaillinoisfarmersmarket](https://facebook.com/vandaliaillinoisfarmersmarket).

**June 16 - September 29 FARMER'S MARKET**, Highland. Support local farmers, kitchens

and artisans at a fun, family-friendly event. Every Tuesday 4 - 7 p.m. Highland Square, 914 Main Street. Email [lpinsker@highlandil.gov](mailto:lpinsker@highlandil.gov).

**June 18; July 16; August 20; September 17; October 15 JARVIS SQUARE MARKET X MARYVILLE FARMERS MARKET**, Troy. Shop fresh, locally grown produce, handcrafted goods, and support the farmers and vendors who make this market a staple in the community. 5 - 7 p.m. Jarvis Square, 112 North Main Street. Visit [facebook.com/MaryvilleILFarmersMarket/](https://facebook.com/MaryvilleILFarmersMarket/).

**June 21; July 19; August 16; September 20; October 18 FARMERS MARKET**, Mascoutah. 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Mascoutah Sportsmen's Club, 1535 North County Road. Visit [facebook.com/groups/1146895293738213/](https://facebook.com/groups/1146895293738213/).

**June 25 - September 10 FARMERS MARKET**, Brighton. Find home-grown, local produce, honey, crafts and more. Every Thursday 4 - 7 p.m. Schneider Park, 414 North Maple Street. Visit [facebook.com/groups/3285534751725580](https://facebook.com/groups/3285534751725580).

**June 26; July 31; August 21; September 25 FARMERS' MARKET**, Carlyle. Fresh produce, meat, eggs, bread, freshly cut flowers, plants, fudge, syrup... you never know what you'll find at the market. 5 p.m. - dusk. Carlyle VFW, 1250 Franklin Street. Visit [carlylelake.com](https://carlylelake.com) or find us on Facebook.

**June 27; July 25; August 29; September 26 FARMERS MARKET**, New Baden. Over 55 vendors each month, food trucks, live music, and fun free family events. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. New Baden Village Park, Veterans Memorial Parkway. Visit [facebook.com/newbadenfarmersmarket](https://facebook.com/newbadenfarmersmarket).

