

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a massive flock of birds, likely terns, flying in a loose formation against a bright, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise. The birds are silhouetted against the warm, golden light of the sun, which is visible as a bright glow near the horizon. The overall scene is dynamic and captures a natural, energetic moment.

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

JANUARY 2019 • VOLUME 71 • ISSUE 1

Board Names New Director

MEET JARED STINE, DISTRICT III

A CELEBRATION OF SERVICE

REMEMBERING A POWER PIONEER

SOUTHWESTERN SCHOLARSHIPS

CO-OP RETIRES CAPITAL CREDITS

GREAT BACKYARD BIRD
COUNT TAKES FLIGHT

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On Account: We've hidden a member-account number in this issue (mailing label excluded). If the account number belongs to you, contact us within 30 days and we'll take \$25 off your electric bill. Good luck!



On the Cover

We shot this scenic of snow geese near Southwestern's new Vandalia Substation, now under construction. If you've caught yourself making a mental inventory of eagles, geese, and other birds in our area, consider putting your sharp eye to good use during the Great Backyard Bird Count. For details, see page 18.



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For The Birds

CosmoQuest was mapping the moon and they needed a little help. While I was familiar with the concept of laymen teaming with professionals to tackle labor-intensive tasks, the call for moon mappers was the first time I'd run into the term *citizen science*—shorthand for outsourcing data collection or analysis to large numbers of people with a passion for a topic.

The practice is pretty common. We see it often in meteorology, astronomy, ecology and agriculture. Next month, you can become a citizen scientist as you help ornithologists understand the behavior of birds.

From February 15-18, birders around the world will participate in The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), an annual event led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and the National Audubon Society. During the event, birders are asked to count the number and variety of birds they see.

You can count birds anywhere you like. Your backyard, a local park, a national wildlife refuge—reports from any and all venues are useful and welcome. Your findings provide researchers at Cornell and Audubon with insight into how birds are faring, and how to protect various species and their habitats.

Last year, participants from more than 100 countries submitted 180,000 checklists and identified 6,400 species. For more information about the GBBC, log on to www.birdcount.org.

If you happen to shoot photos during your count, we'd love to see them. Email your shots to joe.richardson@sweci.com. Your photo may appear in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.

You can read more about the bird count on page 18.

Joe Richardson, editor
joe.richardson@sweci.com





A Celebration of Service

Southwestern Electric Cooperative celebrated 18 service anniversaries in 2018—including four additions to our co-op family and one retirement. Together, the names on this page represent nearly 300 years of service to our members. 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. Please join us in welcoming our new employees—and in recognizing the commitment and accomplishments of people who've made it their calling to serve you.

NEW EMPLOYEES



Robert Wright,
Forestry Foreman



Jared Tebbe,
Forestry Journeyman



Lauren Schoen,
Dispatcher



Adam Simmonds,
Journeyman Lineman

FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE



Kim Jackson,
Dispatcher



Julie Lowe,
Energy Manager



Doug (DJ) Haarmann,
Construction Foreman



Jimmy Revisky,
2nd Year Apprentice Lineman

FIFTEEN YEARS OF SERVICE



Shane Healy,
Manager of Operations

TWENTY YEARS OF SERVICE



Linda Haberer,
Cashier Receptionist, St. Jacob



Debbie Whicker,
Member Services Representative

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF SERVICE



Susan File,
VP of Member Services



Holly Thiems,
IT Technical Support



Barb Frerker,
Member Services Representative

THIRTY YEARS OF SERVICE



Dean Schnurbusch,
Sr. Staking Engineer



Renee Harnetiaux,
Work Order Coordinator

FORTY YEARS OF SERVICE



Jody Baumberger-Gehrig,
Comptroller

RETIREE



Mike Logue,
Journeyman Lineman

Thank you for your service and dedication to the cooperative!



Kallal Brought Power and Progress to Southwestern Illinois

As Southwestern Electric Cooperative's first manager, Victor Kallal's tenacity and progressive mindset helped usher in the age of rural electricity. His grit, ingenuity and commitment to the co-op set the standard for those who would follow. One of the few remaining voices of a bygone era, Kallal died Oct. 25, 2018. He was 109.

Kallal worked for Southwestern Electric from 1939 to 1957. He was the last surviving member of the 27 original managers of Illinois' rural electric cooperatives. In his obituary, Kallal's family wrote, "The REA enterprise was started from scratch. The first Greenville office opened on the west side of South 2nd Street with one desk, one telephone, one secretary, and Victor."

In 2008, Kallal toured the cooperative and was honored as a special guest at Southwestern's 70th Annual Meeting of Members. "Many of our employees went overseas to serve in World War II, so we had to deal with a major shortage in manpower," Kallal recalled during the tour. "I spent a lot of nights working alongside the linemen out in the field, and when a member lost power, either I or the line foreman took the telephone calls at home."

Kallal embraced the best available technology to serve co-op members, setting the stage for a progressive tradition still practiced decades later.

Dave Barbey, who was a 41-year veteran of Southwestern Electric in 2008, guided Kallal's tour of the cooperative. Barbey said Kallal was amazed by the growth Southwestern had experienced and intrigued by the co-op's automated meter reading system, a technological advancement that Kallal had predicted long ago.

"The technology has changed a lot, but the principles that guide our cooperative haven't changed a bit," Kallal noted after the tour. "I'm thrilled to reconnect with it."



Power Pioneers: Vic Kallal (far left) poses with Southwestern Electric board members and his wife Catherine (seated, on right) at a 1948 rural electrification meeting in Springfield, Ill.

"The technology has changed a lot, but the principles that guide our cooperative haven't changed a bit. I'm thrilled to reconnect with it." — Vic Kallal



Former Southwestern Electric employee Dave Barbey (left) talks shop with Vic Kallal (right) and Vic's son Jim (center), in 2008.

Board Appoints Jared Stine to District III Seat

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's board of directors has appointed Jared Stine of St. Elmo to the District III director seat left vacant by the death of Randy Wolf. Stine will serve through the end of the term on Sept. 11, 2021.

Stine described a director's role as being an honorable and accountable representative, collaborator, communicator and visionary. "I strongly believe in attentive listening, constructive discussion, and honorable collaboration. These ideals are what distinguish a leader. It's that simple. My desire is to listen, learn and build on the direction and values of those who served before me."

A member since 2009, Stine grew up on Southwestern lines. He has served on the Southern Illinois University Ag Leadership board since 2009, the St. Elmo Community Unit School District 202 board since 2013, and currently chairs the St. Elmo Christian Church board of directors. He also served on the Illinois Wheat Association board from 2014 to 2018.

Stine and his wife, Krista, live with their children, Sydney, 14, Anna, 13, and Wade, 10, south of St. Elmo, where they

operate a fifth-generation grain farm with his brother's family. "Southwestern Electric Cooperative is a vital part of our community," he said. "We've had the opportunity to live elsewhere and cherish those memories, but when it came time to make the decision where to raise our children, the answer was easy. This community is where I was born and raised, and God willing will be where I perish," he said. "I'm excited about being a voice for Southwestern members and our community's future."

Stine said he would like to see the cooperative continue to focus on infrastructure improvements, smart technology, and employee education, training and safety.

In accordance with Southwestern Electric's bylaws, the cooperative's board is responsible for appointing a member to fill vacancies on the board of directors. In October, the board issued a call for director candidates. Several Southwestern members expressed interest in serving as a director for District III, and in November, the board interviewed applicants at the cooperative's Greenville office. Southwestern directors provided each candidate with an opportunity to discuss his or her interest in serving the members of Southwestern Electric and their qualifications for the seat. The board appointed Stine Nov. 27.

Directors are responsible for ensuring members' needs and concerns are given fair and timely treatment, determining objectives and setting policies, adopting long-range plans and guiding the overall direction and financial stability of the cooperative.

Candidates were required to be members in good standing and residents of District III, which includes the cooperative's service area in Clay, Fayette, Effingham, Marion and Shelby counties.

"Holding a seat on the board of directors is a formidable responsibility," noted Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. "In addition to participating in monthly meetings, our directors are required to pursue courses of study in various aspects of cooperative business practices and ethics, frequently address calls and questions from members, and represent Southwestern Electric Cooperative at community functions and events.

"Perhaps most importantly, they bring the sum of their experience and knowledge to bear on issues and opportunities facing the co-op, all the while keeping the best interests of 24,000 members in mind," Williams said. "In return, our directors know they've done their part to secure the best possible service at the lowest sustainable cost for their friends and neighbors."



"I desire to actively participate in our future, and our future is sustainable power for our children." —Jared Stine



Your Spare Change Can Make a **Big Difference** through Operation Round Up

Neighbors helping neighbors. That's what a co-op is about. And that's the idea behind Operation Round Up (ORU), a charitable program governed, funded and supported by Southwestern Electric Cooperative members like you.

Here's how it works: After you sign up for ORU, Southwestern will round up the amount due on your monthly electric bills to the nearest dollar. Your donations are placed in the ORU account. Each quarter, an independent committee of Southwestern Electric members reviews ORU grant requests. ORU grants support various community projects across the co-op's service territory.

Since launching the program in 2005, **Southwestern Electric's Operation Round Up has assisted a wide variety of organizations**, including local food pantries, senior centers and fire departments.

Ready to get started? To join ORU today, just check the enrollment box on your electric bill or online, or contact Southwestern Electric Cooperative at (800) 637-8667. For more information about Operation Round Up, visit sweci.com.

SOUTHWESTERN ACCEPTING SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS FOR 2019



CO-OP TO AWARD \$10,000 IN ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Power for Progress Scholarship Program has provided more than \$245,000 in academic assistance to students pursuing a college degree or vocational school certificate. The tradition continues this year with Southwestern's pledge to award \$10,000 in scholarship money to 10 students in spring 2019 for use in the fall 2019 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 or picked up from the co-op's office at 525 US Route 40 in Greenville. You may also request an application by calling Debbie Whicker at (800) 637-8667.

Separate applications will be provided for high school seniors graduating in 2019 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 US Route 40 in Greenville), in a single envelope, by 4:30 p.m. on **Friday, February 8, 2019**.





ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 1) The applicant (or the applicant's parent/legal guardian) must be an active member of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. Southwestern Electric board members, 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 2019.
- 3) The entire application must be completed in full, and received with the appropriate supplementary materials, in advance of the application deadline, February 8, 2019.

TIPS 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.

Since 1995, Southwestern Electric has provided more than \$245,000 in scholarship funding, assisting 385 students.

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

On Account: If your account number is 23521001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

Co-op Retires More Than \$408,000 In Capital Credits

More than 5,500 Southwestern Electric members closed out the holidays with a bit of cooperative cheer—a check or bill credit equal to the capital credits they earned in 1986.

During the November board meeting, Southwestern directors authorized retirement of \$408,230.35 in capital credits, or patronage capital. 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.

In total, the retirement returned capital to 5,563 Southwestern Electric members.

Capital credits are similar to shares of stock. When you own stock in a for-profit company, your stock may pay dividends based on the performance of that company. As a Southwestern member, you accumulate capital credits based on the revenue you 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 you joined Southwestern Electric Cooperative, you became part owner of the company. Every time you pay your electric bill, you build equity in a company you own.

If we gather more revenue than we need to cover expenses, that money is returned to you. That's one of the differences between an investor-owned utility and a cooperative. 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 \$3.1 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 on capital credits, call Deb Whicker at (800) 637-8667.

HOW DO PAYOUTS TO INDIVIDUAL AND JOINT MEMBERSHIPS DIFFER?

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

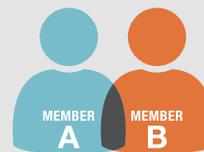


MEMBER DIES

Capital credits are disbursed to the estate upon completion of claims process.



JOINT MEMBERSHIP



MEMBER A DIES

Capital credits transfer to surviving member. Membership converts from joint to individual.



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.

MEMBERS MAKE THE MOST OF E-CYCLING OPPORTUNITY

We recycle—and clearly, so do you. In late summer and early autumn of 2018, Southwestern Electric Cooperative hosted its first electronics recycling drive. We invited you to bring your obsolete electronics to our collection sites in Greenville, St. Elmo and St. Jacob.

On three separate occasions, you made the most of an opportunity to give your old electronics new life, filling our collection trucks with enormous TVs, tiny tape recorders, tarnished coffee pots, hand-me-down PCs, hopelessly entangled holiday lights, and all manner of electronic devices between.

The electronics were collected and recycled by a regional, EPA-approved recycling center. Electronics recycling—or 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.

Thank you for making our first e-cycling drive a success! We're already in the planning stages of this year's drive. When we've determined times, dates and locations, you'll find them in *The Southwestern*.

Right: Holly Thiems, IT technical support for Southwestern, coordinated the recycling drive. Below: Victor Buehler (in green cap), vice president of information technology, helps a member move a large-screen TV.



Co-op Reminders

February 8

Southwestern Scholarship application deadline

April 1

Operation Round Up grant application deadline, second quarter

April 19

Offices closed for Good Friday



Payment Processing Systems Unavailable During January 13 Maintenance

Southwestern Electric's payment processing systems will be unavailable Sunday, January 13, from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments Sunday at 4:01 a.m.

Southwestern Recognized in National Co-op Communications Competition

Southwestern Electric Cooperative received high honors in two national communications competitions last year. The cooperative's communications team, which is staffed by Joe Richardson, vice president of communications, and Mike Barns, the cooperative's art director, earned a total of eight awards from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the Cooperative Communicators Association (CCA).

On May 8-10, Southwestern's communications department joined co-ops and co-op-related organizations from around the country to network, learn and teach during the NRECA CONNECT conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. On the opening day of the conference, Southwestern Electric received both a Silver and a Gold Award at the Spotlight on Excellence Awards program.

An initiative of the Council of Rural Electric Communicators, Spotlight on Excellence recognizes projects and programs that embody the industry's highest standards of quality and achievement in the field of communications. Winners of the 2018 Spotlight on Excellence Awards represent leading practices across all communication platforms. The evening ceremony honored writers,

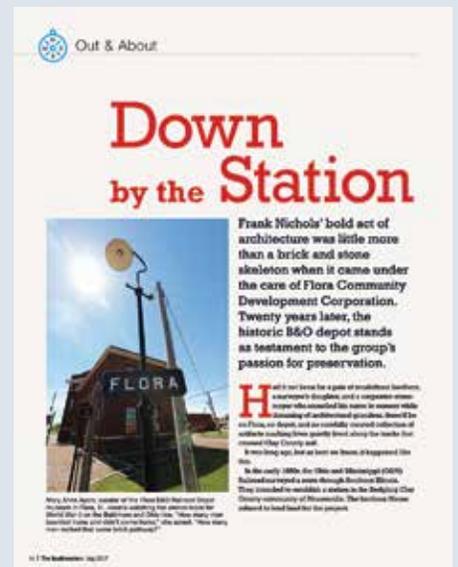
photographers and media development teams who consistently produce work with lasting impact, deliver exceptional results, and execute projects with a high level of professionalism.

This year's competition drew 769 entries representing work from utilities and marketing agencies across the country. Gold Award winners scored 90 points or more in their category and classification. In the category of cooperatives with a membership of 20,000-50,000 members, Southwestern Electric earned a Gold Award for best member publication and a Silver Award in the Best Wild Card category for a direct mail piece.

Faculty members from the University of Missouri – Columbia, and University of South Carolina, as well as noted professionals in the fields of marketing, web design and digital communications, and newspapers, judged the event.

"Electric cooperatives are being challenged to communicate to the people they serve more than ever before," said Scott Peterson, senior vice president of communications for NRECA. "Printed news publications, news releases, social media and videos are all more important than ever to keep members updated on issues affecting electric cooperatives."

NRECA hosted a reception to recognize award recipients and celebrate the



30th anniversary of the awards program. During the event, Southwestern Electric's work was displayed with pieces produced by other award-winning communicators from across the country.

"The Spotlight on Excellence event is unlike any other we've attended," Richardson said. "The award ceremony is a sidebar to the impromptu conversations and networking sessions that develop at the reception. There are hundreds of people present, each with their own experiences, interests and vision."

Southwestern's communications team participated in spirited discussions with communicators from other co-ops. Richardson said discussions addressed values, priorities, and the ever-evolving role of a communicator in today's electric cooperative. "In the space of a single

conversation, you could find yourself siding with someone's position, then passionately arguing against their point of view five minutes later. It was a great opportunity to benchmark, self-evaluate, and challenge our way of thinking."

During the first week of June, Southwestern Electric was recognized by CCA in the organization's annual Excellence in Communications competition. CCA is a professional development organization for writers, photographers, videographers, members of management and independent media teams who represent an extraordinary array of cooperatives.

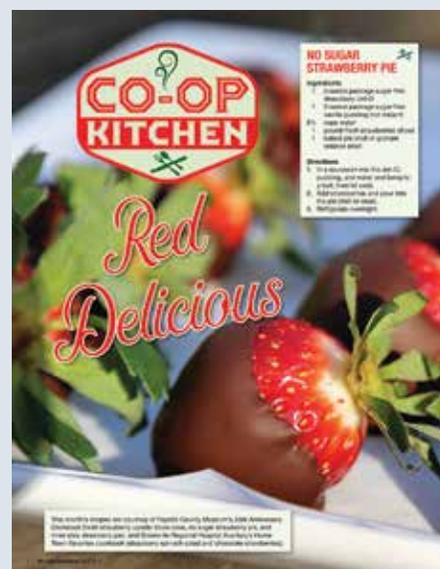
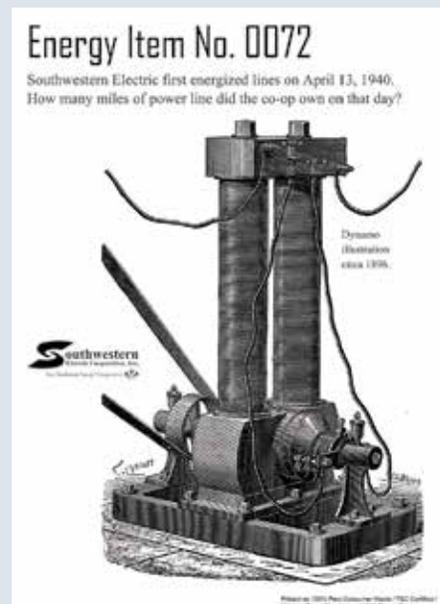
The competition attracted more than 600 entries from cooperatives around the country. Southwestern's work was evaluated against writing, photography, publications and projects submitted by co-ops from every sector of the economy, including statewide electric cooperative associations, national financial institutions, and global agricultural organizations.

The awards were announced during CCA's annual educational institute, held June 2-5 last year in Fort Worth, Texas. In total, Southwestern Electric was recognized six times, receiving awards in two divisions of the competition. In the Publications division, Southwestern took first place in the Direct Mail category and second place in the Words & Pictures competition. In the Photography division, Southwestern Electric took first place in the Smartphone category, and second place in the Photo Illustration and Photo Essay or Story categories. The co-op also received an honorable mention in the Photo Essay or Story category.

"The most valuable part of the competition comes when we sit down with the judges' comments, look at what worked, and define areas where we can improve," Richardson said. "We also review entries submitted by communicators from other co-ops to see what we can learn from their approaches and practices. We carry those lessons forward and let them inform the work we do in the coming year."

Richardson said the recognition Southwestern Electric received is a testament to the time and talent contributed by cooperative's management team, linemen, and office employees who are generous with their expertise and insight when interviewed for articles or photographed during the course of their work.

"We're privileged to work with a dedicated group of employees who care about the quality of their work and the people they're working for. And we're blessed with directors who understand the value of communicating with the people they represent," Richardson said. "We're extremely fortunate to have a membership that's engaged. That's a tremendous asset for us, knowing that what we do has value in the eyes of the people we're doing it for."



COOPERATIVE COMMUNICATORS ASSOCIATION AWARDS

Photography

- Smartphone / 1st Place / Who Am I?, Joe Richardson
- Photo Illustration / 2nd Place / Red Delicious, Mike Barns
- Photo Essay or Story / 2nd Place / Tie Lines, Mike Barns
- Photo Essay or Story / HM / Down by the Station, Joe Richardson

Publications Category

- Direct Mail / 1st Place / No Other Electric Company Gives You More Power, Southwestern Electric Cooperative Communications Department
- Words & Pictures / 2nd Place / Down by the Station, Joe Richardson

NATIONAL RURAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT ON EXCELLENCE AWARDS

- Gold Award, Best Member Publication, Cooperatives with a membership of 20,000-50,000.
- Silver Award, Best Wild Card, Cooperatives with a membership of 20,000-50,000.



Myths & Misconceptions

THE TRUTH BEHIND COMMON HOME HEATING MISTAKES AND SIMPLE WAYS TO AVOID THEM

If you've ever taken measures to cut back on your energy use, only to be disappointed with the outcome, you're not alone. Many common beliefs about energy conservation aren't entirely accurate or inflate expectations. This month, Julie Lowe, energy manager for Southwestern Electric, brings you a handful of common myths and misconceptions about home heating, and simple ways to save on your energy bill.

(1) Cranking up the thermostat will make my home warmer, faster, so I'll save money. When your heater has been off or turned down low enough for your home's temperature to drop significantly, you might assume the best way to drive the temperature up is to over-run the system. Putting extra stress on your system is more likely to cause it to run less efficiently, leading to higher energy bills and added stress placed on the unit itself. It's best to gradually increase the temperature so your system can run at its optimal rate.

(2) I can use space heaters to save money. Since running a central heating system requires a lot of energy, many people attempt to rely on space heaters to cut costs. While this may prove effective in some cases (for example, if you are trying to heat one small room), running space heaters to heat an entire house or floor doesn't cut down on costs. You're just running several high-energy appliances at once. In addition, there are safety concerns associated with space heaters, such as house fires. It's best to avoid relying on space heaters for long periods of time.

(3) Keeping my curtains closed will shut out the cold and conserve energy. It is helpful to close your curtains at night in order to trap warm air inside your home. It's equally helpful to keep your curtains open during the day to allow sunlight

to naturally warm your home. Those rays may not be enough to heat your home, but opening your curtains and blinds may help just enough to keep your heating system from running too often throughout the day.

(4) A new furnace will solve my heating efficiency issues. A modern heating system is a very powerful and efficient piece of equipment. However, it cannot do its job properly if there are underlying issues with your home. For example, if you are setting your thermostat to 70 and notice that your heater is constantly running in order to reach that temperature, it doesn't always mean something is wrong with your heating system. Be sure that you aren't dealing with any leaks near your windows, doorways, or in your ductwork that may be causing your heating system to work harder than it needs to.

(5) My system is delivering warm air, so it's in good shape. Many people assume that if their system is running, then it is working fine. But your heater's internal components may not be completely up to task even if your vents are expelling heated air. Small issues that are difficult to identify early on can cause your system to run less efficiently and lead to major repairs down the road. Scheduling regular system maintenance, especially before a heavy-use season, is a great way to save money on your energy bill, prolong the life of your system, and save on stressful emergency repair calls.

For additional energy-saving ideas and advice, contact Julie Lowe, energy manager for Southwestern Electric Cooperative, at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com. You can also visit TogetherWeSave.com, an online energy-saving resource brought to you by Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, including Southwestern Electric.

Heating Bill Payment Assistance

Available to Low-Income Families

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 below 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 current heat 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.

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

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



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

Income Guidelines

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level, as shown in the chart, you may be eligible to receive assistance.

Family Size	30-Day Income
1	\$1,518
2	\$2,058
3	\$2,598
4	\$3,138
5	\$3,678
6	\$4,218
Add \$50 for each additional person	



Snow Woes

Death by snow. Sounds like a title for Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, doesn't it? Unfortunately, it's a real issue. Each year, snowfalls and the consequent shoveling result in thousands of injuries and up to a hundred deaths.

It's hard to imagine a few shovel-loads of snow taxing your heart or testing your back, but those scoops add up. Clearing your sidewalk of wet, heavy snow may have you moving 20-pound scoops. Assume 15 scoops each minute for 15 minutes, and you've moved more than two tons of snow. That's a vigorous weight workout combined with steady aerobics. If you're unaccustomed to exercise, that's asking a lot of your body—and your body may say no.

If you're fit enough to shovel, these common sense reminders will help you make it through snow season injury-free.

The Right Tools Rule. Before the snow hits, buy a shovel that suits you. Look for a scoop and handle that are a good match for someone your height and strength.

Watch the Weather.

When there's a heavy snow forecast, stay ahead of the storm. Clear the snow every few inches instead of waiting for it to stop before you venture outside.



Wear Layers. Instead of a single heavy coat, wear layers of loose, moisture-wicking clothing. As you heat up, you can shed layers to regulate your temperature.

Watch Your Extremities. Frozen fingers and toes make for miserable work. Water-proof boots with good traction and insulated gloves that shield your skin from the wind are good choices. For a few dollars you can buy several pairs of knit gloves, wear them inside mittens, and change them when your hands get wet.



That's a Stretch. Just as you'd warm up before lifting weights or running, you need to stretch before you shovel. It can stave off strains and other injuries.

Push It. If you can push the snow aside rather than lift and throw, you'll use less energy, tire less quickly, and reduce stress on your body.

Hydrate. You wouldn't work outside in summer without water. It's just as important to hydrate in the dry winter air. You're working out. Act accordingly.

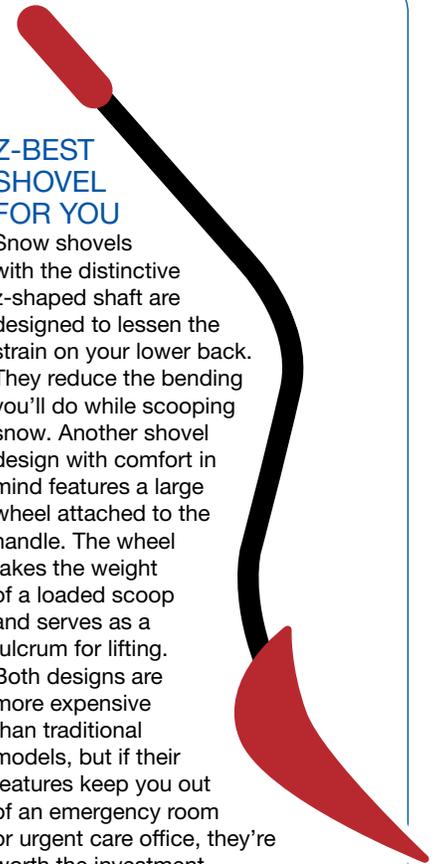


Posture Pointers. If you do lift, pay attention to technique. Squat with your legs apart, knees bent and back straight. Lift with your legs. Don't bend at the waist. Holding a shovel with your arms outstretched puts too much weight on your spine. Shovel deep snow in layers. Take an inch or two at a time. Move your feet rather than twisting.

Watch the Road. By default, shoveling a walk or drive puts you next to the road. Keep an eye on approaching traffic. That oncoming car may swerve off the snow-slickened pavement, or a snowplow may jet ice and debris your way.

Z-BEST SHOVEL FOR YOU

Snow shovels with the distinctive z-shaped shaft are designed to lessen the strain on your lower back. They reduce the bending you'll do while scooping snow. Another shovel design with comfort in mind features a large wheel attached to the handle. The wheel takes the weight of a loaded scoop and serves as a fulcrum for lifting. Both designs are more expensive than traditional models, but if their features keep you out of an emergency room or urgent care office, they're worth the investment.



Keep A Phone Handy. You may not feel compelled to Instagram your exemplary snow shoveling, but keep your phone tucked in an inside pocket close to you. You'll keep your battery warm and should you need help, it's only a call away.



If you have a history of heart disease, see your doctor before you pick up a shovel. If you're working in the snow and feel dizzy or notice a tightness in your chest, stop working immediately and seek emergency care.

Heating Hazards

PORTABLE HEATERS REQUIRE THOUGHT AND ATTENTION

Using electric space heaters to fight winter's chill? While they may provide comfort, they also introduce safety hazards into your home. Space heaters are responsible for about 20,000 residential fires each year, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

To reduce risks, follow the manufacturer's instructions for operation and care of the product.

Prior to use, inspect cords and connections for cracks or frayed edges, and send the item off for repair if necessary. Discontinue use and unplug the unit immediately if you see or smell smoke.

If you're in the market for a new space heater, look for a label from an independent testing facility, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL) before you buy.

When purchasing a new space heater, look for models with guards to protect the heating elements, and sensors that automatically shut off the unit if it tips or if an object gets too close.

Position the space heater on hard, stable, level surfaces. Don't place it on carpets, furniture, or countertops. Avoid high-traffic areas where people might knock over the heater or trip over the cord.

Keep space heaters at least three feet away from combustible materials, such as bedding, curtains, clothing and rugs. Space heaters have parts that can spark, so avoid using them in areas where you store flammable liquids like kerosene and gasoline.

Plugging space heaters directly into a wall outlet is best. Try to avoid using extension cords. If you must use an extension cord, make sure it's the correct type and the wire gauge is appropriate to safely serve your space heater.

Never operate a space heater if you suspect it may be damaged.

Don't allow children or pets to come near the space heater when it's in use.

Never leave a space heater unattended. Make sure to turn off and unplug the heater before you leave the room or go to sleep.



Throwing Snow

Snow blowers and throwers eliminate the physical strain of manual snow removal—but they come with their own unique dangers. Each winter, people lose fingers and toes to accidents involving snow clearing machinery. Many operators are diligent about staying clear of the auger, only to be injured by an impeller.

The auger, which resembles a large drill bit, is responsible for pulling in snow and feeding it to the impeller. The impeller, a metal plate sporting blades, throws snow away from the machine. Wet snow, ice and debris can clog the discharge chute and stall the impeller. By removing the clog, you enable the impeller to spin, cutting and twisting anything in its way.

Even with the machine off, the impeller can spin. Torque can drive the blade for another rotation—which is more than enough to damage fingers. Turn off a gas powered snow blower or unplug the cord of an electric model and use a clearing tool, stick or broom handle to free ice and debris from the auger or discharge chute. You want to keep your hands and feet clear of the machine—even when it's off.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Make sure you've read the operator's manual and you're familiar with the controls.
- Before it snows, take a few minutes to assess your work area. Remove sticks, mats, and other items that may stall the snowblower, become projectiles, or trip you.
- Plan a path that won't shoot snow toward pedestrians, traffic, and items that could be damaged by projectiles.
- Find eye and ear protection, store it with your snowblower, and be conscientious about using it.
- Don't wear jewelry, long scarves or other loose clothing that could become entangled in the moving parts of a snow thrower.
- For an electric model, use a properly rated outdoor extension cord with ground fault circuit protection. Plot a pattern that keeps the cord clear of the auger.

CLEARING AN OBSTRUCTION

- If the snow blower jams, turn it off.
- Disengage the clutch.
- Wait 10 seconds after shutting off the motor or engine. That should provide enough time for the impeller to stop rotating.
- Always use a clearing tool, stick or broom handle to clear impacted snow.
- Keep all shields in place. Don't remove any safety devices on the machine.
- Keep hands and feet away from moving parts. Never put your hand down the chute or around the blades, even after you've turned off the machine. The auger and impeller may spin even with the engine or motor switched off.



Birds of a Feather Flock Together for February Census

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS HELP ORNITHOLOGISTS UNDERSTAND THE BEHAVIOR OF THINGS WITH WINGS

They call it citizen science. It's the practice of outsourcing data collection or analysis to large numbers of people who possess a passion for a topic. We see it in meteorology, astronomy, ecology and agriculture. Next month, you can see it in your backyard.

In February, you can become a citizen scientist as you turn your eyes to the sky—or your front lawn—to help ornithologists understand the behavior of birds.

From February 15-18, birders around the world will take to woodlands, wetlands and windows to participate in The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC), an annual event led by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, with Bird Studies Canada and many international partners assisting.

During the event, birders are asked to count the number and variety of birds they see. Counts may be brief, 15-minute windows, or span hours over the course of the GBBC. Participation is free.

You can count birds anywhere you like. Your backyard, a local park, a national wildlife refuge—reports from any and all venues are useful and welcome.

At the end of each day, you report findings at www.birdcount.org. Your findings paint a portrait of the number, distribution, habits and habitat of the world's avian species, and your work offers researchers at Cornell and Audubon insight into how birds are faring, and how to protect various species and their habitats.

Last year, participants from more than 100 countries submitted a record 180,000 checklists and identified 6,400 species.

Launched in 1998 by the Cornell Lab of Ornithology and National Audubon Society, the GBBC was first held in the U.S. and Canada, with the intent of gathering population data before the onset of spring migrations—hence the winter count.

In 2013, GBBC went global, integrating its census with eBird—an online checklist developed by Cornell Lab and Audubon. Watchers logged 33,464,616 observations on 137,998





checklists, documenting 4,258 species—more than one-third of the world's bird species. Reports came from all seven continents and 111 countries and independent territories.

BIRDERS OF A FEATHER LOG ON TOGETHER

Expensive equipment, spotting scopes, glossy field guides and a thorough knowledge of avian behavior—you don't need any of it to contribute. All you really need are 15 minutes and a view—and the eBird app or internet access, because the data is entered and stored electronically. Getting started is easy. Here's what to do:

- Go to www.birdcount.org. Click “sign in or register as new user” and fill in the blanks. It takes about two minutes.



If you created an account for last year's GBBC or you're registered with eBird or another Cornell Lab citizen-science project, use your existing login information.

- Count birds for at least 15 minutes on one or more days of the GBBC. Count birds in as many places and on as many days as you like. Submit a separate checklist for each day, for each new location, or for the same location if you counted at different times of day. Estimate the number of each species you saw during your count period.
- At the end of each day, go the GBBC website, click “Submit Observations” on the home page, and enter your results. Or you can download the free eBird Mobile app. The app will allow you to upload your GBBC data from anywhere and is available for iOS and for Android. Your sightings will be included in the Great Backyard Bird Count if you use the app during the GBBC count period. You can read more about the app at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/birding-apps>

For more information about the GBBC, log on to www.birdcount.org. If you happen to shoot photos during your count, we'd love to see them. Email your shots to joe.richardson@sweci.com. Your photo may appear in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.

A Bird in the Hand APP ACTS AS ID CHEAT SHEET

Can't tell a Northern Cardinal from an Evening Grosbeak? No problem—there's an app for that. The Merlin Bird ID App With Photo ID is a free app for iPhone, iPad, and Android devices from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin has a Photo ID feature that helps identify a bird in an image. Merlin can help you identify more than 2,000 species in North America, Central America and Europe, and includes ID tips, photos and sounds. You can read more about Merlin at <http://gbbc.birdcount.org/birding-apps>. Merlin Bird ID with the Photo ID feature is available at the App Store and on Google Play.



WHO



WHAT

Last month's challenge related to one of the bleakest stories of the season in Central Illinois. The solution to our puzzle was the Moweaqua Coal Mine Museum, in Moweaqua, Ill., on the Shelby-Christian County line.

From the late 1800s through the early 1900s, Moweaqua was a robust coal mining community. On Dec. 24, 1932, a methane explosion collapsed the Moweaqua mine. Fifty-four miners were killed by asphyxiation or falling rock.

Today, more than eight decades later, the Moweaqua Coal Mine Museum works to keep the memories of those miners alive. Inside the museum you'll find artifacts, photos and firsthand accounts of Christmas 1932, a bygone era, and a way of life most of us will never experience.

You can read more about Moweaqua's coal mining history at <http://miningmoreinmoweaqua.com>.

Thanks to everyone who participated in our December challenge. We hope to see your names in our inbox again this month.

Our latest puzzle features an antique implement. Can you identify the item in the picture? Send us your best guess!

While we're on the topic of antiques, do you have a unique, unusual or difficult-to-identify vintage tool or machine in your collection? We'd love to see it. If you can snap a photo and send it our way, please do. If there's a story behind the item, we'd love to hear that as well. We may use your item as the subject of a future puzzle.

You can email photos and anecdotes to Joe Richardson at joe.richardson@sweci.com, or send them via USPS to Joe Richardson, *The Southwestern*, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

If you're sending a photo, please make sure it's one you don't mind parting with, as we'll be keeping it in our files. We look forward to hearing from you.

The *Where Are We?* picture is of the Moweaqua Coal Mine Museum in downtown Moweaqua, Ill. This building is full of old mining tools used in the early mining days. Until the highway bypassed town, it was passed daily by workers on their way to Decatur. —*Response from Raymond Anderson of Ramsey submitted by Ellen Menin of Nokomis*

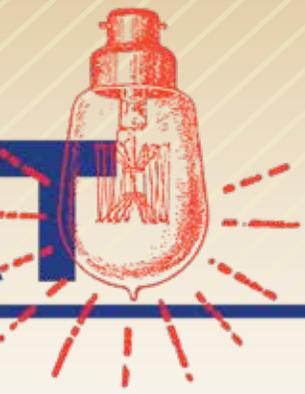
Southwestern Electric Employees,
Thank you all for all you do to keep us lighted, warm and safe. Here's wishing all of you the very best blessed holiday season.

For the December 2018 puzzle, I think this place might be the Moweaqua Coal Mine Museum, in Moweaqua, Ill.

Merry Christmas to all.
—*Deborah Johnston, Ramsey*



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 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*.



WHERE



*What
am I?*





**SMALL BITES
FOR THE
BIG GAME**

ARTICHOKE HEART HOT DIP



Ingredients

- 1 14 ounce can artichoke hearts, drained
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 clove garlic minced or ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 cup Parmesan cheese
- chopped tomatoes to garnish
- chopped scallions to garnish

Directions

1. Mix together artichoke hearts, mayonnaise, garlic, and Parmesan cheese.
2. Pour into a 9 inch pie pan and bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until lightly browned on top.
3. Garnish with tomatoes and scallions to your taste.
4. Serve with Ritz crackers.

CHEESECAKE DIP



Ingredients

- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 1 7 ounce tub marshmallow cream
- 1 8 ounce tub Cool Whip
- 1 can cherry pie filling
- graham cracker sticks

Directions

1. Mix together cream cheese, marshmallow cream, and Cool Whip.
2. Spread mixture in bottom of 9 x 9 inch pan and then spread cherry pie filling over the top.
3. Serve with graham cracker sticks.

This month's recipes are courtesy of Fayette County Museum's 35th Anniversary Cookbook.

BEAN DIP



Ingredients

- 1 can black-eyed peas drained
- 1 can pinto beans drained
- 1 can black beans drained
- 1 can red beans drained
- 1 can shoe peg white corn drained
- 1 small jar pimentos drained
- 1 medium onion diced
- 1 cup celery chopped
- 1 cup green pepper chopped
- 2 Jalapeños finely chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon water
- ¾ cup cider vinegar
- ½ cup oil
- 1 cup sugar

Directions

1. Mix together all the beans and vegetables in large bowl.
2. Mix together salt, pepper, water, vinegar, oil, and sugar in saucepan.
3. Bring mixture to a boil and pour over beans and vegetables.
4. Refrigerate at least 4 hours or overnight, drain and serve with Fritos Scoops.

This makes a ton of dip.

BAKED SPINACH DIP



Ingredients

- 1 10 ounce package frozen chopped spinach
- 16 ounces cream cheese softened
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 pound bacon cooked and crumbled
- ¼ cup onion chopped
- 1 tablespoon dill weed
- 1-2 garlic cloves minced
- 1 round loaf unsliced Hawaiian sweet bread
- assorted vegetables (optional)

Directions

1. Thaw and squeeze dry the spinach.
2. In a large bowl, beat the cream cheese and mayonnaise until blended.
3. Mix in spinach, cheese, bacon, onion, dill weed, and garlic.
4. Pour into a greased baking dish, cover, and bake at 350° for 45 - 50 minutes or until heated through.
5. Carefully hollow out the bread, leaving a 1½ inch shell.
6. Cube the removed bread and set aside.
7. Fill the bread shell with the baked spinach dip.
8. Serve warm with the reserved bread cubes and vegetables (optional).

MINI PIZZAS



Ingredients

- 1 pound sausage
- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 pound Velveeta cheese diced
- 1 loaf party rye or pumpernickel bread
- Oregano to taste

Directions

1. Brown and drain meats.
2. Add cheese and let cheese melt into the meat.
3. Place bread slices on cookie sheet.
4. Spoon mixture onto the bread, sprinkle with oregano.
5. Bake at 350° for 10 to 15 minutes, or until lightly browned and crisp.



Current Events

January 2-26 CROSSROADS: CHANGE IN RURAL AMERICA, Shelbyville. A Smithsonian Institution traveling exhibition, as well as a companion local exhibit will showcase the Change in Rural America. Monday - Thursday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday noon - 9 p.m.; Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Army Corps of Engineers Visitors Center, East State Highway 16. Call (217) 827-2806 or visit museumon-mainstreet.org.

January 5 AUDUBON EAGLE ICE FESTIVAL, Alton. See a live bald eagle, watch ice sculptors create works of art, and let the kids enjoy cold weather games. Then head across the river to the Audubon Center at Riverlands to see finished ice sculptures, view eagles and Trumpeter Swans with the center's viewing scopes and take a shuttle ride to look for eagles.



January 4-6 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. For details call (800) 289-2388 or visit letsgoshow.com.

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. Shuttle tours are \$5 per person. The Eagle Festival activities are free. For more information, call (800) 258-6645.

January 5, 12, 19, 26 EAGLE MEET AND GREET, Alton. Celebrate all things eagle related and see an American Bald Eagle up close and personal. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. For more information, call (800) 258-6645.

January 5, 12, 19, 26; February 2 BIRDS OF WINTER RAPTOR SATURDAYS, West Alton, Mo. Treehouse Wildlife Center will have a live raptor inside the center for you and your family to observe. It could be an owl, hawk, or falcon. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. For more information, call (636) 899-0090 or visit riverlands.audubon.org.

January 5, 12, 19, 26 EAGLE SHUTTLE TOURS, West Alton, Mo., and Alton. Take a 45-minute shuttle to spots along the Mississippi River to spot eagles with stops at Maple Island, Heron Pond, and Ellis Island. A guide on board the shuttle will provide tips on how

to eagle watch this season. January 5 pick up and drop off will be at the Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. January 12, 19 and 26 pick up and drop off will be at the Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. Shuttle departs at 10:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m. Admission is \$5. For details or to receive a free eagle watcher's guide, call (800) 258-6645.

January 5, 28 & 29, 31; February 1 & 2, 4 & 5, 7 & 8, 14 & 15, 22, 25; March 4, 8 BALD EAGLE DAYS, Grafton. A site interpreter at Pere Marquette State Park will be presenting informative programs about bald eagles this winter. Visitors will learn to distinguish between immature and mature bald eagles, what eagles eat, why they spend winter months in the area and much more. There will be a short video presentation followed by an observational drive to view wintering bald eagles. Dress warmly and have a full tank of gas. Programs will begin at the park's visitor center. 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Reservations are required. Pere Marquette State Park Visitors Center, 13112 Visitor Center Lane. Call (618) 786-3323.

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, or mail your info to *The Southwestern*, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please include a contact number with your listing.

January 5 - February 23 LIVE BALD EAGLES AT TREEHOUSE WILDLIFE CENTER, Dow. See live bald eagles every Saturday and Sunday. Coffee, hot chocolate, and cookies will be available. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free will donation. Treehouse Wildlife Center, 23956 Green Acres Road. Call (618) 466-2990 or visit treehousewildlifecenter.com.

January 6, 13, 20, 27; February 3 BIRDS OF WINTER EAGLE SUNDAYS, West Alton, Mo. World Bird Sanctuary will have a live bald eagle inside the center for you and your family to observe. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Admission is free. Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way. For more information, call (636) 899-0090 or visit riverlands.audubon.org.



January 18-20, 24-27 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: ON GOLD-EN POND, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adults \$20; Youth \$12. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

January 19 & 20 EAGLE DAYS, Madison. Bundle up your family to view eagles along the Mississippi River from the historic Old Chain of Rocks Bridge. Viewing scopes will be stationed on the bridge to allow close-ups of eagles. Live eagle presentations every 20 minutes. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Event is Free. Free parking is available at the Old Chain of Rocks Bridge entrance. From I-270, drive south on Illinois Route 3 to Chain of Rocks Road, turn right (west) on Chain of Rocks Road and cross the Chain of Rocks Canal. Follow the road and park near the Illinois bridge entrance. Call (314) 877-6014.

January 19 & 20 GATEWAY SPRING HOME SHOW, Collinsville. The goal of the Home Show is to inspire, motivate and excite you for your upcoming home improvement—whether it's a minor renovation or a major remodel. Saturday 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. Admission is free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. Visit gatewayhomeshow.com.

January 24 & 26 SAUSAGE SALE & SUPPER, Alhambra. Sausage sale on Thursday noon - 6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.; sausage sales prior to Thursday call (618) 488-3733. Saturday sausage supper will include fresh homemade sausage, sauerkraut, potatoes, gravy, green beans, applesauce, dessert, coffee and milk. Supper will be served 2:30 - 8 p.m. Adult \$10 donation; children 5 - 10 years of age \$5 donation. Salem United Church of Christ, 1117 West North Street. For more information, call Lewis at (618) 488-3733.

January 24-27, 31; February 3 JESUS CHRIST SUPERSTAR, 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. Adults \$10 on Thursday and \$12 Friday - Sunday; students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification) \$9 on Thursday and \$11 Friday - Sunday. Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

January 25 LIVE AT JACOBY: WANDA MOUNTAIN BOYS, Alton. Southern Gospel Music group Wanda Mountain Boys will perform. 7 - 10 p.m.; doors open at 6:30 p.m. Admission is \$10. Jacoby Arts Center, 627 East Broadway. For more information, call (618) 462-5222 or visit jacobyartscenter.org.

January 26 WINTERFEST HAMFEST, Collinsville. The largest hamfest in the Midwest exceeding over 30,000 square feet of convention space, over 180 vendors with 240 tables, and 1,000 attendees. 8 a.m. - 1 p.m. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. For more information or tickets, visit winterfest.slsrc.org.

January 27 POLKA DANCE, Madison. The St Louis Metro Polka Club is having a free dance to celebrate National Polka Month. The featured band is the Button Box Club. 3 - 6:30 p.m. Polish Hall 826, Greenwood Street. For more information, visit folkfire.org/polka.

February 2 GROUNDHOG DAY AT THE VISITOR CENTER, Alton. We will have Murray the Groundhog at the Visitor Center and you are invited to come see what he predicts. Coffee and cookies will be served. 9 a.m. Admission is free. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. Call (618) 465-6676.

February 8-10 WOODWORKING SHOW, Collinsville. Show will feature woodworking presentations and tool vendors. Friday noon - 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.; Sunday 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Admission is \$12 online; \$14 at the door; children under 15 years old are free with a paid adult. Active duty military, fire, and police with valid ID are free. Ticket good for all three days of the show. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. For more information, visit thewoodworkingshows.com.

January 24 GATEWAY WEDDING SHOW, Collinsville. Meet vendors who can personalize and plan every aspect of a wedding. 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Admission is \$5 online and \$7 at the door.; free admission for pre-registered brides and grooms; children age 12 and younger are free. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. To register, call (800) 289-2388 or visit gatewaybridalshow.com.



February 8-10, 15-17 FIRST DATE, 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 reservations, call (618) 526-2866 or visit ccshowcase.com.

February 10 VALENTINE'S TEA FOR TWO FUNDRAISER, Godfrey. Join us for an afternoon of mini/tea sandwiches, desserts, song, and fellowship. Proceeds to benefit Great Rivers Choral Society. 1 - 3 p.m. Admission is \$20 per person or \$35 per couple. Evangelical United Church of Christ, Heggemeier Hall on Lower Level, 1212 Homer Adams Parkway. For tickets, visit grcs-sing.org.



February 14 LIVE AT JACOBY: TIA MCGRAFF'S VALENTINE CONCERT, Alton. Bring your special someone and enjoy an intimate evening with Tia McGraff and Tommy Parham. Come early, walk through the gallery and enjoy a drink and a sweet treat. 8 - 10 p.m. doors open at 7:30 p.m. Tickets are \$20; children 12 years of age and younger are free. Seating will be cabaret-style. Cash bar open. Parking available on the gravel lot next door. Jacoby Arts Center, 627 East Broadway. For more information, call (618) 462-5222 or visit jacobyartscenter.org.

February 16 LIONS TRIVIA NIGHT, Highland. Trivia, silent auction, and 50/50. Popcorn and soft drinks available or bring your own food. Doors open at 6 p.m.; trivia at 7 p.m. Admission is \$15 per person for tables of 8 - 10. Evangelical United Church of Christ, 2520 Poplar Street. Call (618) 779 3815 or (618) 402 7555. For more information, call (618) 772 9461.

February 16 & 17 HOME, GARDEN AND BUSINESS EXPO, Centralia. Event will feature more than 70 vendors, live DIY demonstrations, door prizes, and concessions. Saturday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is \$2. Centralia Recreation Complex, 115 East 2nd Street. Call (618) 532-6789.

February 16 & 17 MASTERS OF THE SKY, Alton. See eagles, falcons, owls and other birds of prey at this educational and informational program. Show times at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., and 3 p.m. Adults \$5; children 12 years of age and younger \$3; children age 3 and younger are free. Only 10 tickets per person. National Great Rivers Museum, 2 Lock and Dam Way. Call (618) 462-6979 or visit mtrf.org.

February 23 TRIVIA NIGHT, Ramsey. Hosted by Ramsey Music Boosters. Family friendly, with lots of food, fun, and

games. Teams are limited to 10 members and cost \$10 per player. The games are held in the multi-purpose room at the Ramsey Community Schools, 702 West Sixth Street. Starts at 6 p.m. For more information, call or text Leslie at (217) 820-1291 or email ramseymusicboosters@gmail.com.

February 23; March 30; April 27 UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SHUTTLE TOUR, Alton. Alton's riverfront location along the Mighty Mississippi played a vital role in helping slaves make connections to the freedom of the northern U.S. Buried beneath the streets of Alton and Godfrey, remnants of this period in history still exist. Learn about local, Underground Railroad sites on a shuttle tour with J.E. Robinson Tours. The two-hour guided shuttle tours will stop at some of the sites that were part of the Underground Railroad system including Rocky Fork Church and Enos Apartments. Morning tour 10 a.m. - noon; afternoon tour 1 - 3 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Visitor Center, 200 Piasa Street. For more information, call the Great Rivers and Routes Visitors Bureau at (800) 258-6645.

February 22 "WE SHALL OVERCOME" - A CELEBRATION OF DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR., Lebanon. Inspired



by the words and actions of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., this powerful, genre-defying show is filled with music, joy, and hope. It features repertoire from African-American music traditions that electrified generations of civil rights activists and defenders, interwoven with spoken words from Dr. King's recorded speeches. 7:30 p.m. Adult \$26; senior \$24; student/child \$10; McKendree University students free. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

February 24 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: A FRENCH CONNECTION, Godfrey. Concert featuring several French composers and works from "Carmen" by Bizet, "The Sea" by Debussy, and "Symphony No. 6 'Pathetique'" By Tchaikovsky. 3 - 5 p.m. Adults \$10, seniors 62 years of age and older \$5, children grades 12 and younger free, Lewis & Clark Community College faculty, staff, and students free with I.D. Alton Symphony Orchestra, Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. For more information or tickets, visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

March 1-3, 7, 9 & 10 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: THE GLITTER GIRLS, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adults \$20; Youth \$12. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

March 3 GREATER ALTON CONCERT ASSOCIATION: THE MALPASS BROTHERS, Godfrey. Music steeped in the legacy of the Louvin Brothers, Johnny Cash, Marty Robbins, Hank Williams, Sr., and others. Come hear classic, real country, new Malpass tunes, and old-time gospels. This is authentic, down-home country. 3 - 5 p.m. Adult \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door; students

with identification \$10. Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Call (618) 468-4222 or visit greateraltonconcertassociation.org.

March 6 THE EMPTY BOWL, Collinsville. Have lunch and help the hungry. 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. \$10 admission and all proceeds go to Collinsville Food Pantry. Tickets are available the day of the event or in advance of the event at the administration office at Gateway Center 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday - Friday. Gateway Center, One Gateway Drive. For more information, call Barb at (618) 910-1646.

March 7-10, 14-17 PETER AND THE STARCATCHER, 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. Adults \$10 on Thursday and \$12 Friday - Sunday; students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification) \$9 on Thursday and \$11 Friday - Sunday. Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglass-playhouse.com.

March 23 ALTON HALF MARATHON & 5K, Alton. Jog or walk into spring and enjoy the scenic views of the Mississippi River and historic areas of Alton. Route also includes crossing the famed-Clark Bridge. Starts at 8 a.m. Admission fee varies depending on when you sign up. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. For more information, visit altonhalf.com or e-mail altonhalf@gmail.com.

March 23 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: COMEDIAN BOB NELSON, Alton. A comedic presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. 7:30 - 9:30 p.m. Admission is \$25. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.



A sleeping oak
shadows the
winter landscape
as it dreams of
spring.

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