

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

JUNE 2020 • VOLUME 72 • ISSUE 6

## Coronavirus & Cogeneration

TEAMS PRACTICE CDC SAFETY PROTOCOLS  
DURING SOLAR COMMISSIONINGS



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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!



## MAKING THE GRADE

Crews combine earth-moving machinery with GPS precision to prepare the site for Southwestern's Maple Grove Substation. Located near the I-270 and I-55/70 interchange in Madison County, Maple Grove will ensure power quality and reliability for thousands of members.

## CO-OP REMINDERS

To help curb the spread of coronavirus, we've temporarily closed our offices. For updates, visit us at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com).

**June 8** Payment processing systems will be unavailable from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments at 4:01 a.m.

**June 29** Deadline for board candidates to file by petition.

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

## FROM THE EDITOR



525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.  
Phone: (800) 637-8667. Office Hours:  
Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Visit us on the Web at [www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com).

# Well Traveled

While our stretch of Illinois isn't Kansas flat, most Southwestern substation sites are. By the time construction crews finish groundwork in Madison County, the three acres supporting Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Maple Grove Substation will be no exception.

Sited near the interchange at I-270 and I-55/70, Maple Grove will provide power to thousands of members in the I-55 corridor from Troy to Edwardsville. The new sub will improve reliability and allow crews to reroute power and restore service quickly during transmission line outages or damage from severe storms.

In early May, I ventured out to shoot ground preparation. I'd spent a good 15 minutes circling the construction site, scavenging for vantage points, searching for a shot that communicated the scene's sense of scale. But even with the throaty rumble of heavy machinery reverberating in the air, the scent of fresh earth being cut and churned, folded, tracked and packed, and semis rolling down the interstate just yards away, I couldn't focus on finding my frame.

I kept glancing back at Maple Grove Road. It was well traveled on a Monday afternoon. Better stated, it was traveled *heavily*.

Many drivers were not traveling well.

Construction crews had flanked the site with bright orange caution signs offering motorists ample time to slow down. A lot of them passed on the opportunity.

If you're traveling Maple Grove Road, please be mindful of pedestrians and vehicles, particularly near the I-55 overpass. In the months to come, expect to see people and trucks moving on and off site. Allow a little extra time to get where you're going. Respect caution signs. Check your speed. And enjoy the view of a new Madison County landmark as it rises from the landscape.

Joe Richardson, editor  
[joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com)

### Board of Directors

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### Satellite Locations:

St. Jacob Office  
10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob, IL 62281

St. Elmo Distribution Center  
2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo, IL 62458

Southwestern Electric Cooperative reserves the right to re-print member comments and correspondence in its cooperative educational and promotional materials.

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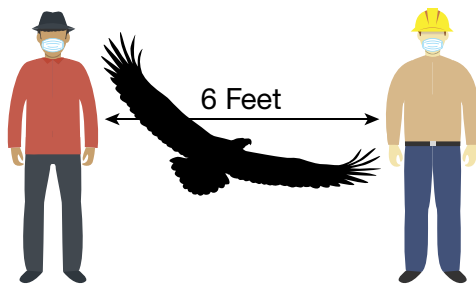
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## Board Meeting Minutes

We've rebuilt our website! The new site is easier to navigate and displays well on a broad range of devices. It also allows us to accommodate additional material. You'll find updates and a link to this year's board meeting minutes on the drop-down menu under the News & Information tab at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com).

### PLEASE RESPECT CDC SOCIAL DISTANCING GUIDELINES

Social distancing means keeping the wingspan of an eagle between you and others at all times.



*Eagle used for illustrative purposes only.  
Please do not use actual eagles for measuring.*

## Energy Efficiency Rebates On Hold Until 2021

Due to the high level of member participation in Southwestern Electric Cooperative's energy efficiency rebate program, funding has been exhausted for 2020. The program, which launched in 2019, offers rebates on the replacement or new installation of energy efficient air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats.

Members who make qualifying purchases this year are encouraged to download rebate applications at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com) and submit them to Julie Lowe, energy manager, at [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com). "We'll hold your applications until our funding is replenished in 2021," Lowe said. "At that time, we'll honor rebates on a first come, first served basis."

For more information about the program, log on to [sweci.com](http://sweci.com), or contact Julie Lowe at (800) 637-8667 or [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com).

### Coronavirus Response

## Offices Closed Through May; Remote Work Plan Continues

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative continued to operate using its remote work plan through May. At press time, it was uncertain when the co-op would resume on-site operations.

"Our workforce will continue to assist members from in-home offices across our service area, until shelter-in-place orders are lifted," said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. "We've expanded our field operations to include cogeneration commissionings and additional field work. Our line crews are responding to outages as they have been throughout the pandemic, and our training and technology ensure we'll continue to provide safe, reliable service."

Williams said the co-op was continuing to monitor state and local health department recommendations and CDC advisories. "When those agencies assure us we can resume working from our offices without compromising the health of our employees and members, we'll move everyone back to the office. Until that time, we'll continue working remotely."

Members are encouraged to manage their accounts, report outages and make payments using Southwestern Electric's online payment portal, by using the SWEC IL app, or by calling the cooperative at (800) 637-8667.

For updates, go to [www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com).



## From the CEO

Every month, like clockwork, your power bill appears. And every month, just as reliably, you pay it. Or maybe every month until recently. Financial fallout from the coronavirus pandemic has left a lot of members with mounting expenses and dwindling resources, making it hard to decide which bills to pay and when to pay them.

We understand the challenges you're facing. We're committed to doing all we can to help you. While we're doing that, we have an obligation to maintain the practices and principles that make our cooperative a fair and equitable organization for all members, whether business or residential, large or small—and we're going to meet that obligation as well.

In March, we made sure you could shelter in place safely and comfortably, without fear of losing service. We suspended late payment fees and established a moratorium on disconnections. Those policies are still in place as I write this, and they'll continue through the end of May.

In April we turned our attention to planning for the longer-term financial impact of COVID-19 on the co-op and its members. You may not be able to fully pay your bill today. We encourage you to pay what you can. Paying part of your bill now will reduce the multi-month balance you'll need to address later. If you're having trouble paying your power bill, please call us at (800) 637-8667 or email us at [billing@sweci.com](mailto:billing@sweci.com). We'll suggest resources that may be able to help.

Last month, I mentioned an energy assistance program. As a reminder, if you're concerned about your electric bills, I'd encourage you to look into LIHEAP. The program offers a one-time benefit that eligible households can apply to their energy bills. The amount of the benefit is determined by income, household size, and available funding, among other factors.

To be eligible for assistance, your household's combined income for the 30-day period prior to application can't exceed the program's income guidelines. You can learn more by contacting the agency that serves your area. You'll find income guidelines, phone numbers and agency information on page 7.

It's a difficult time. We understand. And we're here to help you through it. Please don't hesitate to contact our billing department at (800) 637-8667 or [billing@sweci.com](mailto:billing@sweci.com) for resource suggestions.

As always, I welcome your questions and comments regarding any aspect of your cooperative. Please email me at [bobby.williams@sweci.com](mailto:bobby.williams@sweci.com).

Thank you for your time and attention. I'll check in with you again next month. Until then, stay safe out there.

Bobby Williams, CEO

[bobby.williams@sweci.com](mailto:bobby.williams@sweci.com)

# View, Pay, Create, Update, Alert, Report, Send & Receive?



## There's an app for that.

Look for SWEC IL on Google Play or the App Store.





## What does it mean to be a co-op member?

You may not be able to fully pay your bill today. We encourage you to pay what you can. Then call us at (800) 637-8667 or email us at [billing@sweci.com](mailto:billing@sweci.com). We'll suggest resources that may be able to help.

*You may qualify for energy assistance through LIHEAP.  
Find out more at [sweci.com/energy-assistance](http://sweci.com/energy-assistance).*

## It means we're here for you.



***YOUR ACCOUNTABLE ENERGY PARTNER***

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Income Guidelines

If your household's combined income for the 30 days prior to application is at or below 150% of the federal poverty level, as shown in the chart, you may be eligible to receive assistance. If you rent, and your heat and/or electric is included in the rent, your rent must be greater than 30% of your income in order to be eligible to receive assistance.

| Family Size | 30-Day Income |  |
|-------------|---------------|--|
| 1           | \$1,561       | Additional \$553 per person monthly income above 8 people, or \$6,630 annual. (Note 30-day income rounded up.) |
| 2           | \$2,114       |  |
| 3           | \$2,666       |  |
| 4           | \$3,219       |  |
| 5           | \$3,771       |  |
| 6           | \$4,324       |  |
| 7           | \$4,876       |  |
| 8           | \$5,429       |  |



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

# Cogeneration & Coronavirus

## *Southwestern teams observe CDC safety protocols during solar commissioning*

**A**fter a hiatus that lasted from late March through April, Southwestern Electric Cooperative's cogeneration commissioning team resumed on-site solar project reviews in May. "In early spring, at the onset of the coronavirus outbreak, we put cogeneration commissionings on hold," said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams. "At that point, shelter-in-place orders were being issued. In the interest of member and employee safety, we limited fieldwork to essential operations."

Williams said Southwestern's management team monitored the environment while reviewing information from the World Health Organization, CDC, and state and local health departments." By late April, safety practices and protocols were well-established. "At that point, we were comfortable we could review new cogeneration projects and evaluate systems scheduled for recommissioning without compromising the health of members or employees," Williams said.

Julie Lowe, energy manager for Southwestern Electric, said Southwestern's cogeneration team is observing CDC health and safety protocols during the commissioning process. "Team members that travel together wear masks, and we keep them on while we're on site," she said. "Even with masks in place, we're observing the six-foot social distancing guidelines issued by the CDC."



Chris Botulinski, vice president of engineering for Southwestern Electric, observes CDC protocols while commissioning a co-op member solar array (top right) in May.



Lowe said Southwestern personnel also use hand sanitizer before exiting their vehicles and immediately after entering them. "We want our members to know we're taking their health and safety seriously. That's why we perform inspections of cogeneration projects before we connect them to our distribution system—we're making sure the system operates properly, and that key safety requirements are met," she said.

"We're asking our members to respect CDC health and safety guidelines when they meet a Southwestern employee," said Lowe. "We understand communicating across distance or through masks can be a challenge, but we're successfully working through it. If a member would prefer to talk to us through a storm door, or on the phone while we're on site, we're happy to do that," she said. "We want everyone to feel as comfortable as possible while we adapt to conditions, work toward our goals, and keep everyone safe."

### COGENERATION COMMISSIONING

Southwestern's cogeneration commissioning process involves a safety and engineering inspection, system test, and installation of a new meter. "We try to schedule the commissioning on a sunny day. We like to see the system producing as close to maximum capacity as possible," Lowe explained. After the system passes on-site tests, a Southwestern meterman replaces the member's existing meter with a dual-register meter. The commissioning process usually takes about 30 minutes.

"After commissioning, each year you'll submit documentation to confirm you've renewed your insurance," she said. "Every three years, we'll visit your system to make sure it's connected properly, well-maintained, and that your safety signs are in place. At that point, we're just verifying the system is operating safely, that the interconnection with Southwestern's distribution system is sound, and that the array doesn't compromise the integrity of the grid."

For more information on Southwestern Electric Cooperative's solar energy options, call Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or email her at [julie.lowe@sweci.com](mailto:julie.lowe@sweci.com). You can review an outline of Southwestern's cogeneration project commissioning process on page 15.



# Southwestern Students Earn Power for Progress Scholarships

The escalating cost of tuition, books, fees and incidental expenses makes a college education difficult to afford. That's why Southwestern Electric Cooperative developed the Power for Progress Scholarship Program. Since 1995, Southwestern has provided \$266,000 in financial assistance to a total of 406 students.

This year the cooperative awarded \$1,000 scholarships to 10 students, including eight graduating seniors and two students who graduated prior to 2020.

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.

"The class of 2020 has seen an academic year like no other. They've embraced unprecedented circumstances with grace and good cheer," said Ann Schwarm, president of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. "In a season of uncertainty, we see these exceptional individuals and their families moving forward with confidence, conviction and optimism. We're grateful to play a very small part in their journey."

This year's Power for Progress scholarship recipients are:

#### *Graduating Seniors*

- |                     |                                 |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Grace Baum        | Greenville High School          |
| • Cameron Gusewelle | Metro-East Lutheran High School |
| • Nicholas Hanratty | Highland High School            |
| • Nicole Knackstedt | Highland High School            |
| • Emma Kuhns        | Altamont Community High School  |
| • Faith Liljegen    | Collinsville High School        |
| • Isabelle Marsala  | Collinsville High School        |
| • Lane Sedlacek     | Triad High School               |

#### *Post-high school scholarship recipients*

- |                  |                        |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • Hannah Albert* | Kaskaskia College      |
| • Katelyn Duncan | University of Missouri |

\*Hannah Albert is this year's Judy Siebert Memorial Scholarship winner. This scholarship is awarded annually in memory of longtime cooperative director Judy Siebert, who died in 2001.



# June 29 is deadline to file for candidacy by petition

Southwestern Electric members interested in running for a seat on the co-op's board of directors have a final opportunity to enter the 2020 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 2020 ballot. For additional guidance on filing for candidacy by petition, please see Section 4(D)3 of the cooperative's bylaws.

The 2020 board election, which will take place at Southwestern Electric's 82nd 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 September 12, 2020, and expiring on the date of the 2023 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). If you have questions about board service or the election process, please contact Susan File, vice president of member services, at (800) 637-8667, ext. 5924.

***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 2020 ballot.***

## SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC 2020

Verify your voting eligibility today. In a joint membership, either person who signed the membership application may vote. With an individual membership, voting rights are granted solely to the person who signed the application.

Board candidates who missed the nomination deadline may file for candidacy by petition. The petition for candidacy, with required signatures and residency information, must be filed by June 29.

Members may vote absentee at the cooperative's headquarters (525 US Route 40, Greenville) Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., August 28 - September 11.

# VERIFY YOUR VOTING ELIGIBILITY

**S**outhwestern Electric Cooperative members are advised to verify their voting eligibility before the co-op's annual election in September. The election gives members an opportunity to elect or re-elect their peers to the board of directors and approve any proposed amendments to the bylaws.

"We're encouraging members to check their membership status to keep registration and voting areas moving," said Susan File, vice president of member services for Southwestern Electric. "Each active membership is allowed to cast one vote, but the type of membership determines exactly *who* may cast that vote."

The cooperative offers two types of residential membership: individual and joint.

With an *individual* membership, only the individual who signed the membership application is entitled to voting rights.

With a *joint* membership, two people sign the membership application, but only one of them may vote in a given election.

Southwestern also offers a commercial membership status to businesses and other organizations. Each commercial membership is entitled to one vote, which may be made by a duly appointed officer or agent of the business with proper documentation of said appointment.

"If you're a widow or widower, and the membership is in the name of your deceased spouse, or if you've recently changed your name due to marriage or divorce, you'll want to give us a call to make sure the voting rights are under the correct name," said File. "Membership classification also determines how we distribute capital credits to that membership, so even if you're not planning to vote, you have good reason to make sure the information is correct."

## VOTING OPTIONS

**Absentee:** Available at the cooperative's headquarters (525 US Route 40 in Greenville), Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., August 28 - September 11 (excluding Labor Day).

**In Person:** Available Saturday, September 12, at the cooperative's 82nd Annual Meeting of Members.

*The time and site of Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 2020 Annual Meeting of Members has yet to be determined.*

## CATEGORIES OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

**Individual Residential:** One name is listed on the account, and only this individual is entitled to voting rights.

**Joint Residential:** Two names are listed on the account, but only one of them may vote in a given election.

**Commercial:** The name of the business is listed on the account, and one duly appointed officer or agent may vote in a given election.

The cooperative may offer additional polling hours at the alternate sites for absentee voting. Updates will appear in future issues of *The Southwestern* and at [sweci.com](http://sweci.com).

To verify or make changes to your membership status, contact us at (800) 637-8667. In order to ensure changes are made in time for the election, members are asked to contact the cooperative prior to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 10.

## VOTING AND ELECTION OUTLINE

Members may vote for board candidates during the co-op's annual meeting, Saturday, September 12. *The time and site of Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 2020 Annual Meeting of Members has yet to be determined.*

Members elected to the board begin serving a three-year term September 12, 2020. Their term ends on the date of the 2023 annual meeting.

Election results are published in the October issue of *The Southwestern*. A summary of the annual meeting appears in the November issue.

## MEMBERS IN FOCUS

Photos allow us to capture and recall a moment. In pictures, we relive a laugh, a smile, a winter snow or summer sun.

Members In Focus is your invitation to share those saved moments with members of Southwestern Electric.

In these pages, you can open our eyes to the people and places that mean the most to you. This is your opportunity to introduce *Southwestern* readers to everything that makes your corner of the world an exceptional place to live, work and play.

Send us your shots of life in Southwestern Illinois. We'll publish some of our favorite photos from time to time in our Members In Focus section. Your subject needn't be on

Southwestern's lines. If you've taken a great photo, and you shot it on the Highland town square instead of the Brownstown back forty, send it. We'd love to see it.

### Submission Guidelines

Please include your name, address, phone number or e-mail address, and a brief description of the photo. We'd like to know when and where it was taken, what we're seeing, and the names of any people in your shot. Digital images must be taken in high-resolution JPG or TIF format (300 DPI or greater)—and make sure the date/time stamp is turned off before you shoot.

Digital images may be sent as e-mail attachments or on a CD. Prints are also

welcome. Send photos by e-mail to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or by mail to *The Southwestern*, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

If you're sending prints, please make sure they're copies you don't mind parting with, as we won't be returning them.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative interprets all submissions as unconditional permission to use the photos provided. We also reserve the right to not use photos.

Finally, if you're submitting a shot, it needs to be *your* photo—shot by you. Questions? Contact Joe Richardson at [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or Mike Barns at [mike.barns@sweci.com](mailto:mike.barns@sweci.com), or call (800) 637-8667.

Robert Ridlon submitted this tranquil scene. Robert's wife, Elizabeth, captured mists rising from a pond they share with their neighbor, south of Troy, in late summer 2017.





“With corona 2020 I spend a lot of time watching the birds at my feeders on my back deck,” wrote Denise Medford, of Glen Carbon. “I caught this perfect shot of a young red-bellied woodpecker (left) coming in for a landing, upset that the mourning doves were in *his* feeding tray. Thus, the ruffled look about him.”



Spring rains served as the backdrop for Denise Edwards’ beautiful heron photo (above). “With all the rain we have had, the creek flooded our field, which of course was an invitation for this great blue heron to come visit us,” she wrote. “He was a little camera shy, but allowed me to get this great photo.” Denise lives with her husband, Jason, and grandmother, Ellen Milhoan, south of Mulberry Grove near Hurricane Creek.



Jennifer Neuber of Troy shot this spectacular sunset from Zenk Road in Troy.



Yvonne Ping of O’Fallon caught this bird’s eye view at Woodland Park in Collinsville.

# 10 TIPS FOR SUMMER SAVINGS

by Julie Lowe, Energy Manager

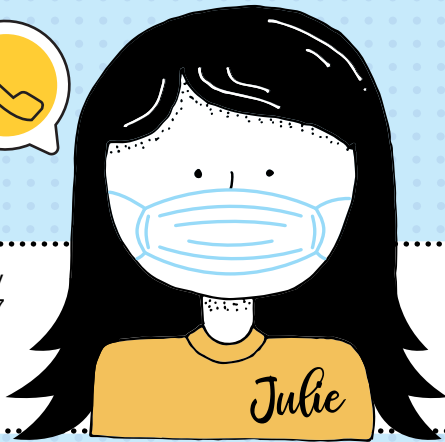
**W**hat a spring we've had! For some of us, not much has changed with our everyday lives during the COVID-19 pandemic and stay-at-home order. For others, we've had to adjust a lot of our routines. Some of us are now working remotely, at our dining room tables or home offices. Some of us are waiting to return to our jobs, or open the doors to our businesses, and see customers and coworkers we've missed.

Whatever your situation, it is very likely that with summer coming on and pools being opened up and A/C units being kicked on for the first time, your electric use and energy bills will be on the rise. Here are 10 tips to reduce energy consumption this summer, while keeping your home cool and comfortable.

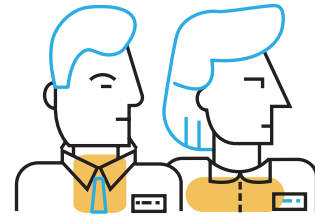
1. **Schedule regular maintenance for your cooling equipment.** Have a trained technician check your system each year before the cooling season begins to ensure it is in good working condition. Be sure to clean or replace filters monthly.
2. **Set your thermostat as high as is comfortable.** It may be helpful to install a programmable or smart thermostat to help you adjust temperatures when you are away from home. Set it to bump up the temperature when you are away, and set it to decrease the temperature a few hours before you're due home.
3. **Keep blinds and curtains closed during the day.** Blinds and curtains can be used during the day to keep the sun's light from heating up your home. During cooler evening hours, consider turning off the A/C and opening your blinds and windows if practical.
4. **Use ceiling fans to increase cooling efficiency.** Remember, fans cool people—not rooms. Be sure to turn fans off when you leave the room. Use bathroom fans after showering to remove heat and humidity from your home.
5. **Minimize indoor heat in the afternoon.** When possible, use an outdoor grill or microwave to prepare your meals on hot summer afternoons and evenings. Run your clothes dryer and dishwasher at night and let the dishes air dry.
6. **Install efficient lighting that runs cooler—such as LEDs.** Only about 10 percent of the energy that incandescent bulbs consume actually results in light—the rest is turned into heat! LEDs are energy efficient and long lasting.
7. **Lower your water heating costs.** Water heating can account for up to 20 percent of the total energy expense for many households. You can lower your water heater's energy use by wrapping it in a water heater blanket, setting it no higher than 120 degrees, and washing your clothing in cold water.
8. **Seal air leaks.** Seal around interior doors and baseboards with caulking and install weather-stripping around exterior doors and windows.
9. **Consider adding insulation.** Be sure your attic floor is well insulated to prevent hot attic air from heating your home. Also, your attic needs to be ventilated to expel the heat. Attic ventilation can come from soffit and gable vents, roof fans, or any combination of these.
10. **If you have a pool, consider upgrading to a variable speed pool pump.** Install a timer to control the pump's cycling. Be sure to keep intake grates clear of debris.

On Account: If your account number is 49828001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

# Steps to Solar Commissioning



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.



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



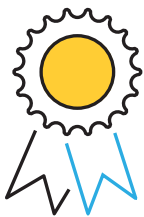
As your installation nears completion, call us. We'll discuss the commissioning timeline. You'll receive a \$500 invoice to cover the installation of your new dual register electric meter, a system inspection, and your array's interconnection to the grid.



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



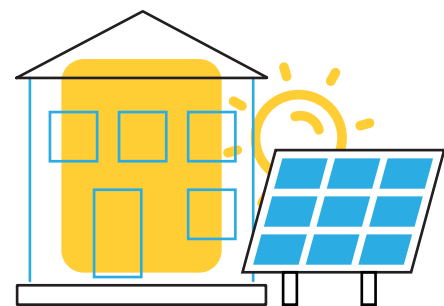
Our commissioning team will visit your site. An engineer will inspect your system to verify it meets our safety specifications. A team member will review a memorandum of understanding with you. You'll sign this document for our files. Note: If you won't be present for commissioning, please schedule a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



We'll send you a certificate of completion, which you'll submit to your installer to receive your solar renewable energy credits, or certificates (SRECs).



Each year, you'll submit documentation to confirm you've renewed your insurance.



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

# Water Hazards



## ELECTRICAL SHOCK DROWNING

Though they may look safe, docks and boats are sources of electrical hazards. Faulty wiring or electrical cords and other devices not approved for marine use can cause surrounding water to become energized. Energized water can result in complete loss of muscle control, ventricular fibrillation, and electric shock death.

Southwestern Illinois offers lakes, rivers and ponds perfect for swimming, boating, fishing, and other water sports. But being in or near the water presents distinctive dangers. Here are five tips to help you avoid water hazards.

**PLAN AHEAD.** Taking a boat out? Make sure the vessel has all the required safety equipment, including lifejackets, fire extinguishers and visual distress signals. If it's a power boat, check the electrical and fuel systems for gas fumes, which can be a sign of mechanical problems. Check the weather forecast and water conditions, and for longer outings, consider filing a float plan with a friend or family member.

**PROTECT YOURSELF.** Limit your exposure to direct sunlight during peak hours (10 a.m. - 4 p.m.) and apply sunscreen with a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 or greater. Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes from severe glare. Drink plenty of water. And keep a life jacket on at all times when boating. According to the U.S. Coast Guard, about 90 percent of the people who drown in boating accidents were not wearing lifejackets.

**AVOID ALCOHOL.** According to water safety officials from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, more than half of all people who drown each year drank alcohol prior to the accident. Alcohol was also found to be the leading cause of nearly 20 percent of all boating accidents. Consuming alcohol vastly increases the risk of water-related accidents because it can impair vision, judgment, balance and reaction time.

**KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS.** How strong a swimmer are you? Ask yourself this question before jumping into the water. Swim only in designated areas, preferably those patrolled by a lifeguard, and swim with a buddy whenever possible. Never dive into lakes, rivers or ponds, because hidden dangers can lurk below the surface.

**GIVE CHILDREN SPECIAL CARE.** Children need additional supervision in and around water. Never leave a child unattended and make sure your child is paired with a buddy when swimming or playing in the water. If your child isn't an experienced swimmer, enroll him or her in a water safety course or swimming class. Per Illinois law, all children younger than age 13 are required to wear life jackets when boating, so make sure the kids are suited up before getting on board.



# WARNING: PREVENT ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING FOR MARINA AND DOCK OWNERS AND OPERATORS

Unknowingly, many swimmers and boat operators place themselves in the face of danger by swimming near electric-powered boats and docks. This innocent act of fun can turn tragic as electric shock drowning occurs each year. Help prevent electric shock drowning or other electrical injuries with these tips from ESFI.



For more information on boat and marina electrical safety visit: [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org)

# Refrigerator Fish



## WHAT'S NEEDED

- Paper Plate
- Foam Brush
- Scissors
- Glitter
- Craft Paint
- Colored Paper
- Glue Stick
- Googly Eye

## DIRECTIONS

1. Paint the bottom of your paper plate. Any color will do. Let it dry.
2. Cut a triangle from the right side of your plate. Glue it to the left side of the plate. This is the tail. The open area is your fish's mouth.
3. Cut two fins from colored paper. Glue one to the top and one to the bottom of your plate. Then glue on a googly eye.
4. Trace circles about an inch round on colored paper or colored index cards. These will be your fish's scales. For tracing, you can use a milk jug cap, the cardboard tube from a roll of paper towels, or other item you have around the house.
5. Cut out the circles and fold them in half. Rub glue on one side of each circle and sprinkle it with glitter.
6. Starting in the middle of the plate, glue on your fish scales. The fold in your paper should face the mouth. Overlap the scales a little. Rows are nice, but you can glue them any way you like, as few or as many scales as you want.
8. Let your fish dry. Then use a magnet to attach it to your fridge. You can make a background for your fish or attach it directly to your refrigerator.





## WORD SEARCH

Circle all the words you can find that describe things you might see in and around a swimming pool. But keep in mind, the words are listed in every possible direction, including diagonally, backwards and upside-down. Good luck!

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| BATHING CAP  | POOL CHAIR |
| BEACH BALL   | SANDALS    |
| DIVING BOARD | SANDBOX    |
| GOGGLES      | SNACK BAR  |
| FLIPPERS     | SNORKEL    |
| KICKBOARD    | SUNSCREEN  |
| LADDER       | SUNGLASSES |
| LEGGINGS     | SUN HAT    |
| LIFEGUARD    | SWIMSUIT   |
|              | TOWEL      |
|              | UMBRELLA   |
|              | WATER      |

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## WHO • WHAT • WHERE



**L**ouis H. Ludwig waged war on weeds. In 1916, Ludwig filed a patent application for a handy tool that made quick work of extracting unwanted plants from your lawn or garden.

“Be it known that I, Louis H. Ludwig, a citizen of the United States, residing at Waukegan, in the county of Lake and State of Illinois, have invented new and useful WeedPullers, of which the following is a specification,” he wrote in his 1916 patent application.

“The principal objects of the invention are to provide a simple and inexpensive device adapted to be conveniently handled and capable of being readily inserted into the ground alongside a weed and which will loosen the soil about the same and withdraw said weed bodily from the ground when the device is withdrawn,” Ludwig wrote.

“Other objects and advantages of the invention will hereafter appear and the novel features thereof will be particularly pointed out in the appended claims.”

The United States patent office agreed the features were novel. They granted Ludwig a patent in 1919. A century later, Evelyn Knebel of Pierron found one of the tools in a barn that had belonged to her parents, Ted and Marie Schrage, of Pocahontas.

Evelyn was curious about the origins of the tool and thought *Southwestern* readers could help her identify it.

And so you did. In an impressive feat of detection, Bill Malec, of O’Fallon, even supplied the patent date!

Overall, your responses to the puzzle were some of the most varied we’ve seen to date. Thank you to everyone who submitted a suggestion. We hope

you’ll give our June puzzle a go. Can you identify the brothers on the next page? We’ve included clues to get you started. Meanwhile, here are a few of the potential uses you saw for Ludwig’s invention:

.....

The pictured item looks amazingly like the pickle fork that was kept in the big pickle barrel at the general store. I am sure we will find out next month what it is, but you have my recollections from 75 years ago.

—*Harry Volberg, Pocahontas*

The “What Am I?” is a weed puller.

—*Tim Thompson, Edwardsville*

“Litter picker upper” litter stick.

—*Anita Heggemeier, Troy*

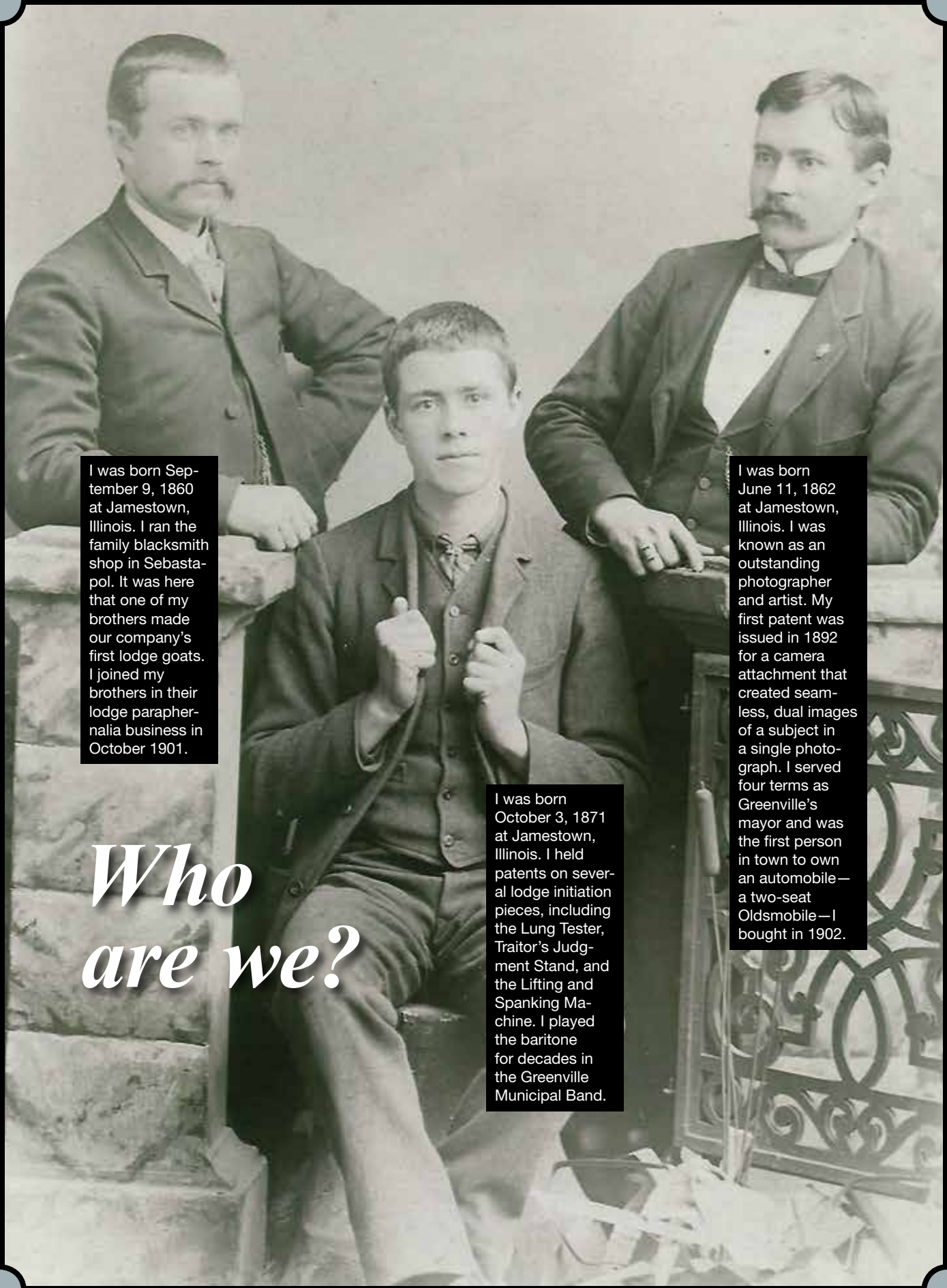
French writer Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr coined the phrase, “Plus ça change, plu c’est la même chose” [“The more things change, the more they remain the same”]. He died in 1890 so he didn’t live to see your “What am I?” in the May 2020 *Southwestern* but his quote still seems fitting.

The item pictured is an antique shed gardening tool, weed puller patented on February 11, 1919. Other than cosmetic changes the tool looks much like the shorter version of the one in my toolbox right now. They’re functionally identical.

—*Bill Malec, O’Fallon*



**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](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com) or send it by mail to Joe Richardson, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please include your name, mailing address, and hometown. If you have a story about our photo topic, include that as well—we love these! The puzzle solution—possibly accompanied by a few words from you—will appear in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.



I was born September 9, 1860 at Jamestown, Illinois. I ran the family blacksmith shop in Sebastopol. It was here that one of my brothers made our company's first lodge goats. I joined my brothers in their lodge paraphernalia business in October 1901.

I was born June 11, 1862 at Jamestown, Illinois. I was known as an outstanding photographer and artist. My first patent was issued in 1892 for a camera attachment that created seamless, dual images of a subject in a single photograph. I served four terms as Greenville's mayor and was the first person in town to own an automobile—a two-seat Oldsmobile—I bought in 1902.

I was born October 3, 1871 at Jamestown, Illinois. I held patents on several lodge initiation pieces, including the Lung Tester, Traitor's Judgment Stand, and the Lifting and Spanking Machine. I played the baritone for decades in the Greenville Municipal Band.

# Who are we?

CO-OP KITCHEN

# *Petals & Pie*



## **Have a recipe to share?**

Please mail recipes to: Co-op Kitchen, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Or you're welcome to email recipes to Mike Barns at [mike.barns@sweci.com](mailto:mike.barns@sweci.com). When you send your recipe, remember to include your name and hometown so we can credit you in print. If you've taken a photo of your dish, you're welcome to include that as well. Thanks for sharing. We look forward to dining with you.

## FRESH BERRY PIE

### Ingredients for 9 inch pie

- 1 - 1½ cups sugar
- ⅓ cup flour
- 1½ tablespoons cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 4 cups fresh berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, or blackberries) your choice
- 1½ tablespoons butter
- 1 frozen pie crust or make your own

### Ingredients for 8 inch pie

- ⅔ - 1 cup sugar
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 cups fresh berries (blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, or blackberries) your choice
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 frozen pie crust or make your own

### Directions

1. Mix together sugar, flour, cornstarch and cinnamon.
2. Then mix lightly through berries.
3. Pour into pastry-lined pie pan and dot with butter.
4. Cover with top crust and flute or crimp the edges of the crust using a fork and cut slits in the top to allow steam to escape.
5. To prevent over-browning, cover the edge with 1½" strip of aluminum foil.
6. Bake at 425° for 35 - 45 minutes or until crust is nicely browned and juice begins to bubble through slits in crust.

For a star topped pie simply use a small star cookie cutter, stamp stars out of top crust portion and place on top.

## SWEET PETALS

"This was one of my mother, Doris Mayfield's most loved homemade treats. Please share it with the rest of your members."

—Layne Mayfield

### Ingredients for dough

- package yeast
- ¼ cup warm water
- ¾ cup scalded milk
- 3 tablespoons Crisco
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 2½ - 3 cups flour
- ½ cup melted butter

### Cinnamon/sugar mixture

Mix together ¾ cup sugar, ¼ cup firmly packed brown sugar, and 2 teaspoons cinnamon.

### Glaze

Combine ½ cup sifted confectioner's sugar and 1 - 2 teaspoons milk.

### Directions

1. Soften yeast in ¼ cup of warm water.
2. Combine scalded milk, Crisco, sugar, and salt.
3. Cool to lukewarm and stir in softened yeast.
4. Gradually add 2½ - 3 cups of flour to form stiff dough.
5. Knead on floured surface until satiny (3 - 5 minutes).
6. Place in greased bowl, cover, and let rise in warm place until double in size.
7. Place foil in 12" round pan and turn foil up around side of pan.
8. Pinch off small pieces of dough and roll into strips about ½ inch in diameter. The length of the strips doesn't matter.
9. Dip strips in melted butter and then dip in cinnamon/sugar mixture.
10. Place the first piece in the center of your pan, curling it around itself like the center of a rose. Repeat with remaining strips, winding them around the center piece.
11. Cover and let rise for 45 - 60 minutes.
12. Bake at 350° for 25 - 30 minutes and let cool.
13. Drizzle with glaze.

When eating, the "petals" can be pulled away from the outside of the coil in small pieces. It's delicious when eaten warm, coated with butter and taken with milk or coffee.



Lyle and Doris Mayfield played music at Southwestern Electric's annual meetings in the 1970s.



# GO FISH

Whether you're a seasoned angler or a first-time fisher, we've got a puzzle for you. Never been fishing? Try to identify the items in our First-Time Fisher list. Own your own waders? Give our Seasoned Angler list a go. The solution appears on page 26.





**FIRST-TIME FISHER**

- 4 Crawfish
- 6 Frogs
- 1 Small curly tail grub
- 1 Big curly tail grub
- 1 Egg sinker

- 3 Bell sinkers
- 2 Bullet sinkers
- 8 Bobbers
- 1 Zebco 202
- 1 Salamander
- 4 Bass Birds

**SEASONED ANGLER**

- 9 Marabou jigs
- 2 Pop Rs
- 1 Hula Popper
- 1 Jitterbug
- 1 Rapala original floater

- 2 Rooster tails
- 1 Yellow spinner bait
- 2 Gold willow spinner blades
- 1 lure for walking the dog while you fish



# GO FISH

## FIRST-TIME FISHER

- 1. 4 Crawfish
- 2. 6 Frogs
- 3. 1 Small curly tail grub
- 4. 1 Big curly tail grub
- 5. 1 Egg sinker
- 6. 3 Bell sinkers
- 7. 2 Bullet sinkers
- 8. 8 Bobbers
- 9. 1 Zebco 202
- 10. 1 Salamander
- 11. 4 Bass Birds


## SEASONED ANGLER

- 12. 9 Marabou jigs
- 13. 2 Pop Rs
- 14. 1 Hula Popper
- 15. 1 Jitterbug
- 16. 1 Rapala original floater
- 17. 2 Rooster tails
- 18. 1 Yellow spinner bait
- 19. 2 Gold willow spinner blades
- 20. 1 lure for walking the dog while you fish



### June 19-22 FREE FISHING DAYS.

This is the one time of year when it's perfectly legal to fish any (public) Illinois waters without a fishing license, inland trout stamp or salmon stamp.



Fiddleheads flourish in the soil and sun of Effingham County's Rock Cave Nature Preserve.

**THE FINAL FRAME**



**S**outhwestern  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

