

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

MARCH 2020 • VOLUME 72 • ISSUE 3

CLEARANCE CORRIDOR

MAINTENANCE PROMOTES
SAFETY AND RELIABILITY

MEMBER MAIL

HOMESERVE CARES
PRO-BONO REPAIRS

SAVE WITH A
SOUTHWESTERN
REBATE

EV ECONOMY

MAINTENANCE
MAP

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MUSEUM SHOWCASES
CAST IRON INGENUITY



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24 Current Events

Treat your feet to a dance in Granite City, take your dog for a walk at the Pooch Party in Collinsville, see Shakespeare in Lebanon, run a fundraiser 5k in Centralia, catch a community sale in Ramsey, and attend the Handbags for Hearts purse auction in Vandalia.

27 Final Frame

Industrial art.

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

Crews clear right of way in Fayette County south of Herrick. Southwestern's right of way maintenance program ensures system integrity and power reliability. Read more about the co-op's maintenance work on page 8.



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Because Bark Can Bite

My first day in the desert outside Albuquerque, I knew I'd never belong. The landscape was magnificent. Nothing but flat and tan earth, bits of grass, barbed wire, and shadows standing between me and the mountains beyond. The high desert was beautiful to behold, but I grew up in Bond County with fields and forests and silted streams.

I could never feel at ease in a land without trees.

As a kid I learned to appreciate the rough bark that provided handholds when I was hauling myself up a hill, low boughs that were ladder rungs to higher branches, and root systems that spread like fingers through the forest floor, holding the creek banks in place. In my woods, walnut and hickory were plentiful, persimmon and pawpaw less so, and willow and maple were rarer still—but you could find them, if you knew where to look.

I'm not unique in my appreciation for trees. Most folks in the utility industry share a love for the outdoors. Strike up a conversation about rights of way, and it may begin with poles and power lines, but it will inevitably end with talk of trees and grasses and the habitat they provide for deer, turkey, bobcat, butterflies and other Illinois wildlife.

While we appreciate trees, we also recognize they're a leading cause of power outages. That's why we'll set to work clearing rights of way again this spring. With each circuit we clear, our crews are preventing blinks and outages. You'll find a story about our right of way maintenance program on pages 8-9. Our 2020 right of way clearance plan appears on pages 10-11.

Finally, I'd ask you to be mindful of rights of way when you're planting trees on your property. With planning and proper maintenance, we can enjoy summers in the shade, striking fall foliage, and heat and light.

I'd be remiss if I didn't remind you to never climb trees near power lines. That said, there's a massive oak on the back forty I haven't seen in a while, and my old running shoes might tread well on tree bark...

Joe Richardson, editor
joe.richardson@sweci.com



Member Letter

Mr. Williams,

Please extend our appreciation to the crews who fought terrible weather conditions to locate and repair the cause of our overnight electrical failure. Mother Nature can certainly create disruptions to our daily routines, especially when the result is lost power. But a disruption like we experienced through the night is minor and serves as a reminder of how spoiled we are in contrast to the people of Puerto Rico and other areas of the world.

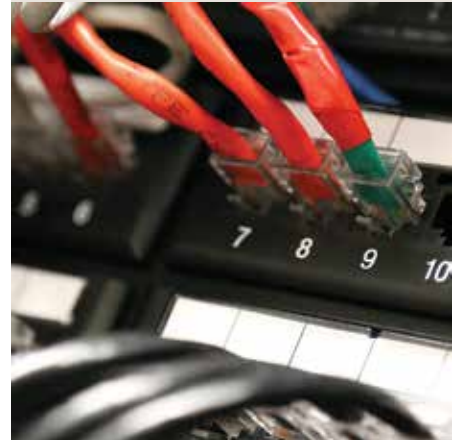
We have received Southwestern Electric service for the past 20 years. The reliability has been excellent. Whenever there is a power failure the response has been prompt. We know that restoration is difficult at best during freezing rain and darkness. We also realize the effort is definitely dangerous.

Again, please thank your crews and the office staff that tolerates those of us who may not fully understand the challenges all of you face when Mother Nature decides to create havoc.

—Ben and Kathy Dickmann, Edwardsville

BILLING CENTER OFFLINE FOR MAINTENANCE

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's online billing center will be unavailable from 12 a.m. Saturday, March 7, through 12 a.m. Monday, March 9, while we perform system maintenance. Our billing center will resume operation at 12:01 a.m. Monday, March 9.



HomeServe Cares Offers Pro Bono Repairs

The HomeServe Cares program assists eligible homeowners with free repairs when they're faced with a service emergency. HomeServe will arrange for emergency repairs at no cost to the homeowner through HomeServe's network of local, licensed and qualified contractors. To be eligible, a homeowner needs to meet the following general criteria:

- You have a home repair emergency and are without a service plan from HomeServe.
- You meet the financial requirements of the program.
- A delay in repairs may cause you serious health and/or safety issues.

To find out more or to apply for HomeServe Cares, go to homeservepeople.com or email HomeServeCares@homeserveusa.com.

HomeServe USA is an independent provider of home repair service solutions. They offer warranty plans that protect a homeowner's budget from sudden, often

significant expenses that come with water, sewer, electrical and heating and cooling home emergencies.

Over the last 16 years, HomeServe has saved homeowners more than three-quarters of a billion dollars in repairs. HomeServe has partnered with more than 700 municipal agencies, investor-owned utilities and cooperatives—including Southwestern Electric—to provide consumers with home warranty options.

To learn more, see the November 2019 issue of *The Southwestern*, available at sweci.com.





From the CEO

We work in a dangerous industry. When you're building power lines, it isn't enough to understand the mechanics of what's immediately in front of you. You need to be aware of your crew, your environment, the disposition of people miles away, and the potential for your actions to affect them.

Restoring power after a storm is particularly challenging. Our crews are working to identify and isolate damage that may be evident—a broken pole or tree in our lines—or nearly invisible, as is the case when a cracked insulator 35 feet above ground causes a fault.

Power restoration is difficult, demanding work under the best of conditions. Rarely do we encounter the best of conditions.

Restoration efforts typically find our crews working in wind, rain, ice or snow, and often operating overnight. Our employees go about their jobs quietly, intent on the mission, working without complaint or expectation of acknowledgement.

Which isn't to say they don't appreciate hearing from you.

In mid-January, linemen reported for work to find a message I'd passed along from Ben and Kathy Dickmann of Edwardsville (see opposite page). The Dickmanns wrote in response to a challenging Saturday that saw our linemen working overnight to restore power after a tree broke into our right of way. Ben and Kathy expressed their appreciation for the time and effort our crews put in under trying conditions.

It was a great way to start the week.

Now it's my turn to say thank you. In good weather and bad, we appreciate your patience and support. I want to thank Ben and Kathy for their kind words, and all of you who waited patiently for the lights to come on January 18. If you reached out, I thank you for your email. I appreciate hearing from you, be it a compliment, criticism or question.

I especially enjoy passing along words of appreciation to our employees.

Thank you for giving me that opportunity.

If you have a comment or question you'd like to share, please email me at bobby.williams@sweci.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Bobby Williams, CEO

bobby.williams@sweci.com

Co-op Offers New Rebates for High Efficiency Heat Pumps, Electric Water Heaters, Smart Thermostats

Southwestern Electric offers rebates on the replacement or new installation of air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats purchased after Feb. 28, 2018.

Rebates will be awarded on a first come, first served basis until program funding for the 2020 calendar year is exhausted.

All rebates will be applied as a bill credit upon receiving your completed rebate application and proof of purchase. Rebate forms are available on our website at sweci.com. You can email your completed application and proof of purchase to julie.lowe@sweci.com, or mail it to: Julie Lowe, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. You're also welcome to drop off your materials at our Greenville office.

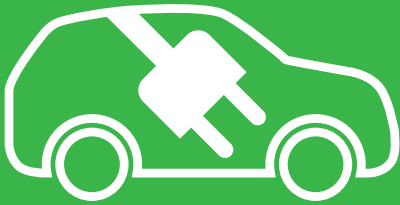


**Have questions?
Call Julie Lowe at (800) 637-8667 or email her at julie.lowe@sweci.com.**

CO-OP REMINDERS

April 10

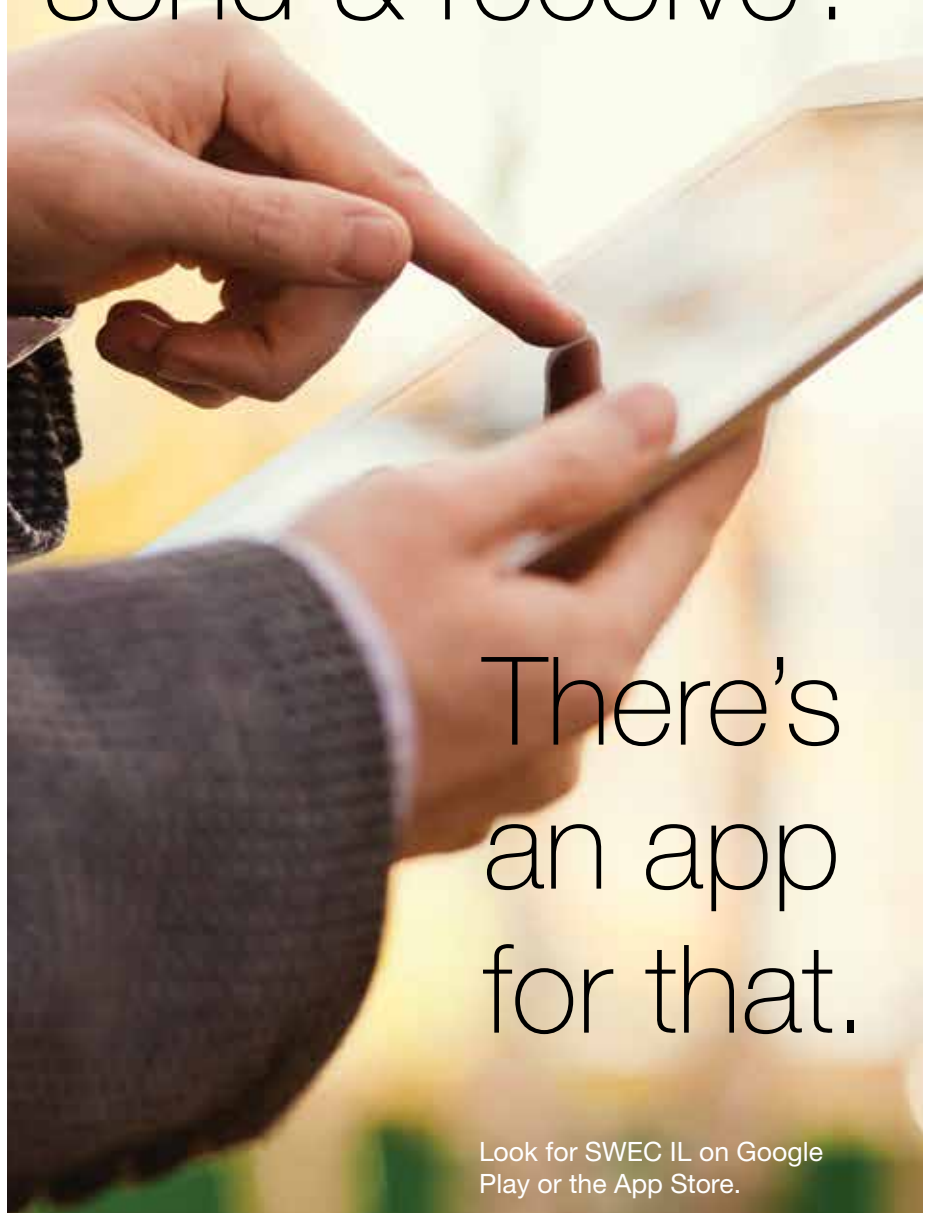
Southwestern Electric Cooperative's offices will be closed for Good Friday.



General Motors' vision of an all-electric future is gaining momentum. **In January, the company pledged \$2.2 billion to retool its Detroit-Hamtramck assembly plant for all-electric truck and SUV production.** GM's first all-electric pickup is slated to roll off the assembly line in late 2021. The company committed to investing **more than \$2.5 billion** in Michigan to bring electric vehicles to market, with investments at Orion assembly, GM battery lab in Warren, Brownstown Battery and the Detroit-Hamtramck plant. The company will invest an **additional \$800 million** in supplier tooling and projects related to electric truck production. **GM expects EV production at Detroit-Hamtramck to create 2,200 manufacturing jobs.**

Source: GM Corporate Newsroom

View, pay, create, update, alert, report, send & receive?

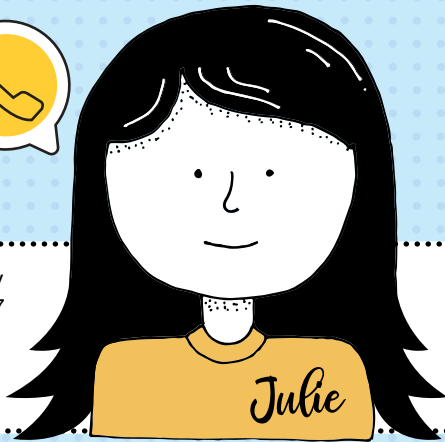


There's an app for that.

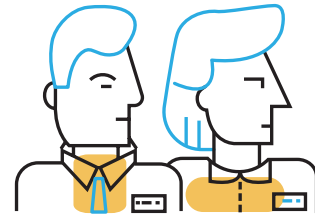
Look for SWEC IL on Google Play or the App Store.



Steps to Solar Commissioning



Contact Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or 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.



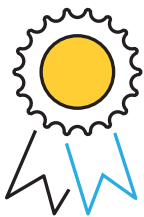
As your installation nears completion, call us. We'll discuss the commissioning timeline. You'll receive a \$500 invoice to cover the installation of your new dual register electric meter, a system inspection, and your array's interconnection to the grid.



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



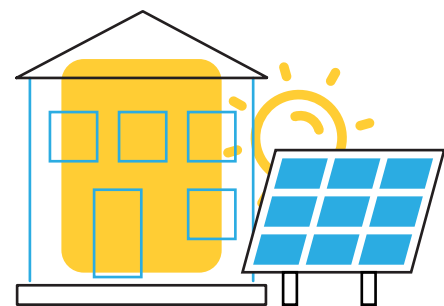
Our commissioning team will visit your site. An engineer will inspect your system to verify it meets our safety specifications. A team member will review a memorandum of understanding with you. You'll sign this document for our files. Note: If you won't be present for commissioning, please schedule a 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.

Reliable Rights of Way

LINE CLEARANCE PROMOTES SAFETY & RELIABILITY

Every now and then, Southwestern Electric receives calls or letters from members regarding right of way maintenance work. More often than not, those members are reaching out to compliment our crews on a job well done.

But not always.

On occasion, we hear from a member who's returned home after a long day to find co-op crews have cleared right of way on their property, and the extent of the work has surprised them.

That member may have seen tree trimming—select branches being cleared from lines to eliminate blinks—but he or she wasn't familiar with the corridor clearing our crews perform when they're cutting back foliage for right of way maintenance.

Tree trimming is the work most of you are familiar with. You've probably seen our crews making small, select cuts to specific limbs that have grown near or into our lines. Our objective with tree trimming is to resolve a blink or reliability issue that's confined to a well-defined area.

On pages 10-11, you'll find a map that outlines our right of way clearance plan for 2020. The circuits we highlighted on our map are scheduled for right of way maintenance. In this work, we clear a path that spans about 20 feet on either side of the power lines.

With right of way maintenance, our objectives are to ensure and promote member safety, system integrity, and long-term power reliability.

The work demands considerable time and resources. We currently clear right of way in an area once every seven years. So if you're new to Southwestern Electric, you may not have noticed right of way maintenance in your area.

The change in landscape is dramatic, particularly in an overgrown area. But the close-cropped look is short-lived. You'll see significant and rapid change in spring and summer, when the open corridors allow grasses to take root and the canopy reaches into the edges of the corridor we cleared.

We understand the pride and affection you have for your timber and green spaces. We feel that way ourselves. As our operations and engineering teams will tell you, while trees are a tremendous asset, they're also a leading

cause of outages. Consequently, sound forestry practices are vital to keeping your family cool in the summer and warm in the winter months.

The co-op's right of way maintenance program has significantly reduced the number of outages you experience. It's also offered our crews better access to power lines, improving our power restoration times after storms.

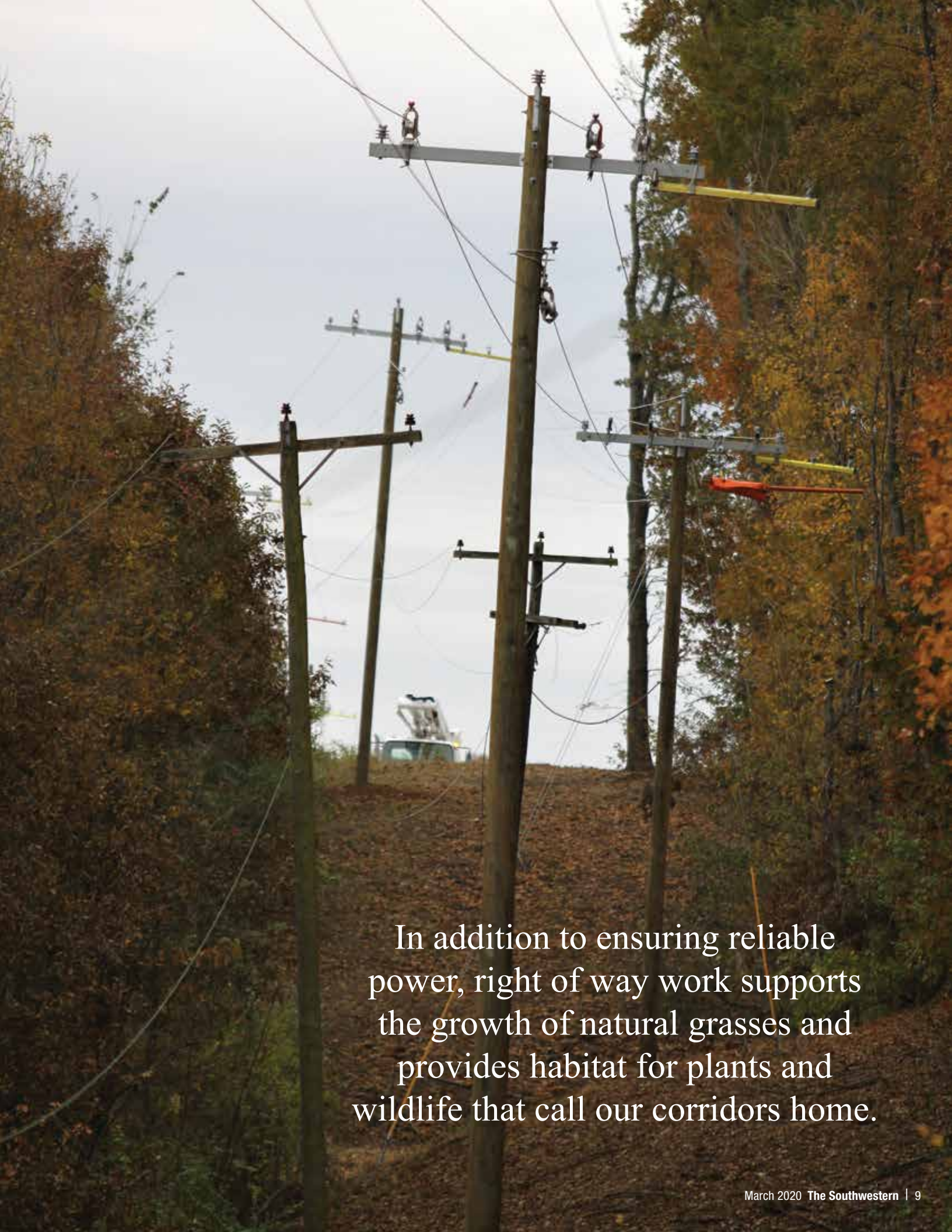
In more remote areas, where lines travel through field and timber far from roads, it's a challenge for linemen to access our infrastructure and repair damage. So it's particularly vital that we do all we can to promote line integrity near homes in areas like this.

In the past, some members have requested we not clear right of way on their property. We simply can't honor that request without compromising the lines that serve them, their neighbors, and in some cases, many other members.

We presently notify members by phone before we begin work on a circuit. We'd prefer to stop by and speak with each of you personally before we begin maintenance in your area. These are expensive endeavors, and we're mindful of how we use the resources you entrust to us. As we review our budget for right of way maintenance, we assess the cost and opportunities included in dedicating an employee to meeting each member before right of way work begins.

Ultimately, we hope to create conditions that support growth of natural grasses in our rights of way, and provide habitat for plants and wildlife that call these corridors home.

With right of way
maintenance,
our objectives
are to ensure and
promote member
safety, system
integrity, and
long-term power
reliability.



In addition to ensuring reliable power, right of way work supports the growth of natural grasses and provides habitat for plants and wildlife that call our corridors home.

MAINTENANCE MAP

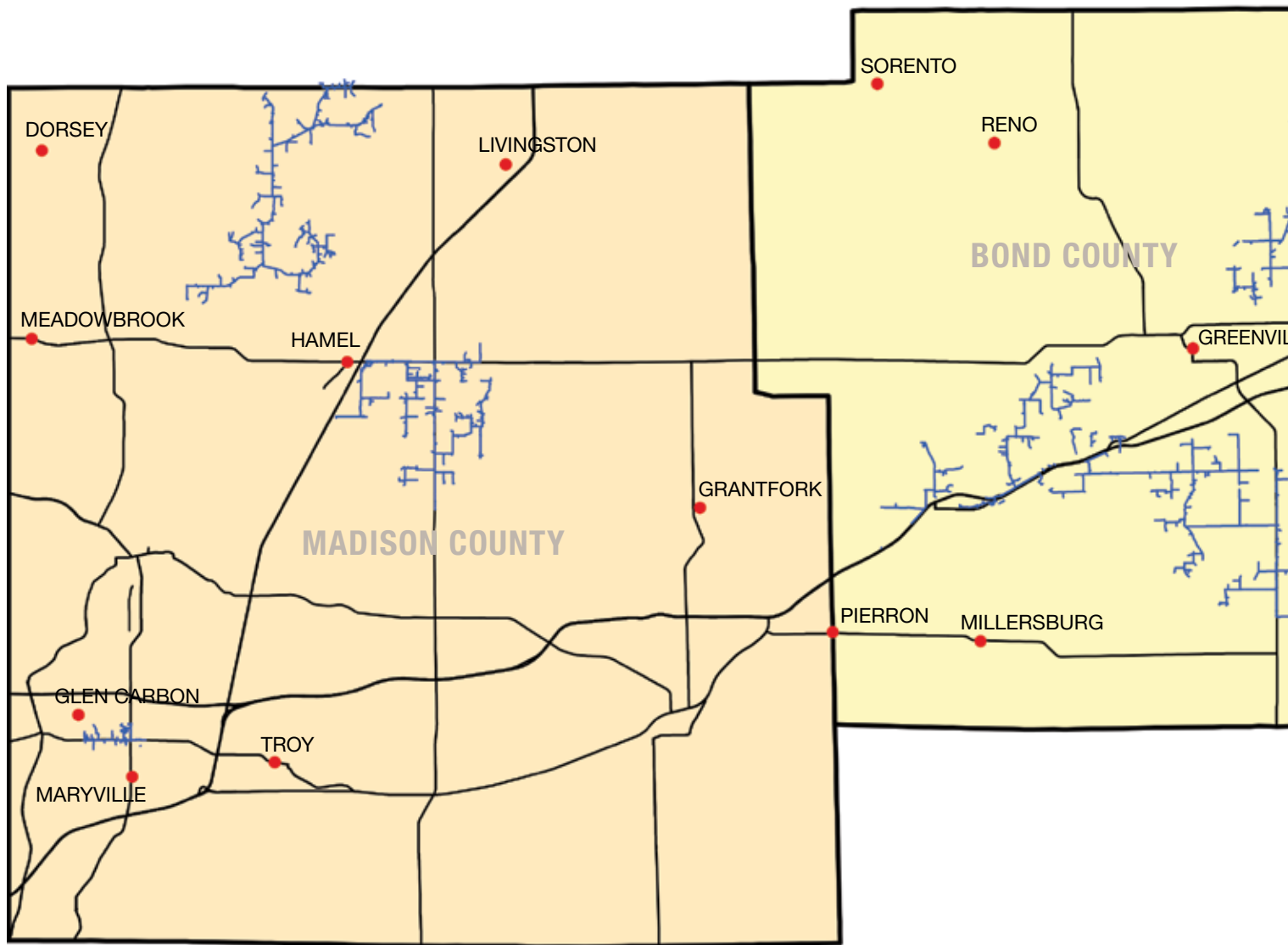
2020 RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The areas highlighted in blue are scheduled for right of way maintenance in the coming months. When performing right of way maintenance, our crews clear a path that spans about 20 feet on either side of the power lines.

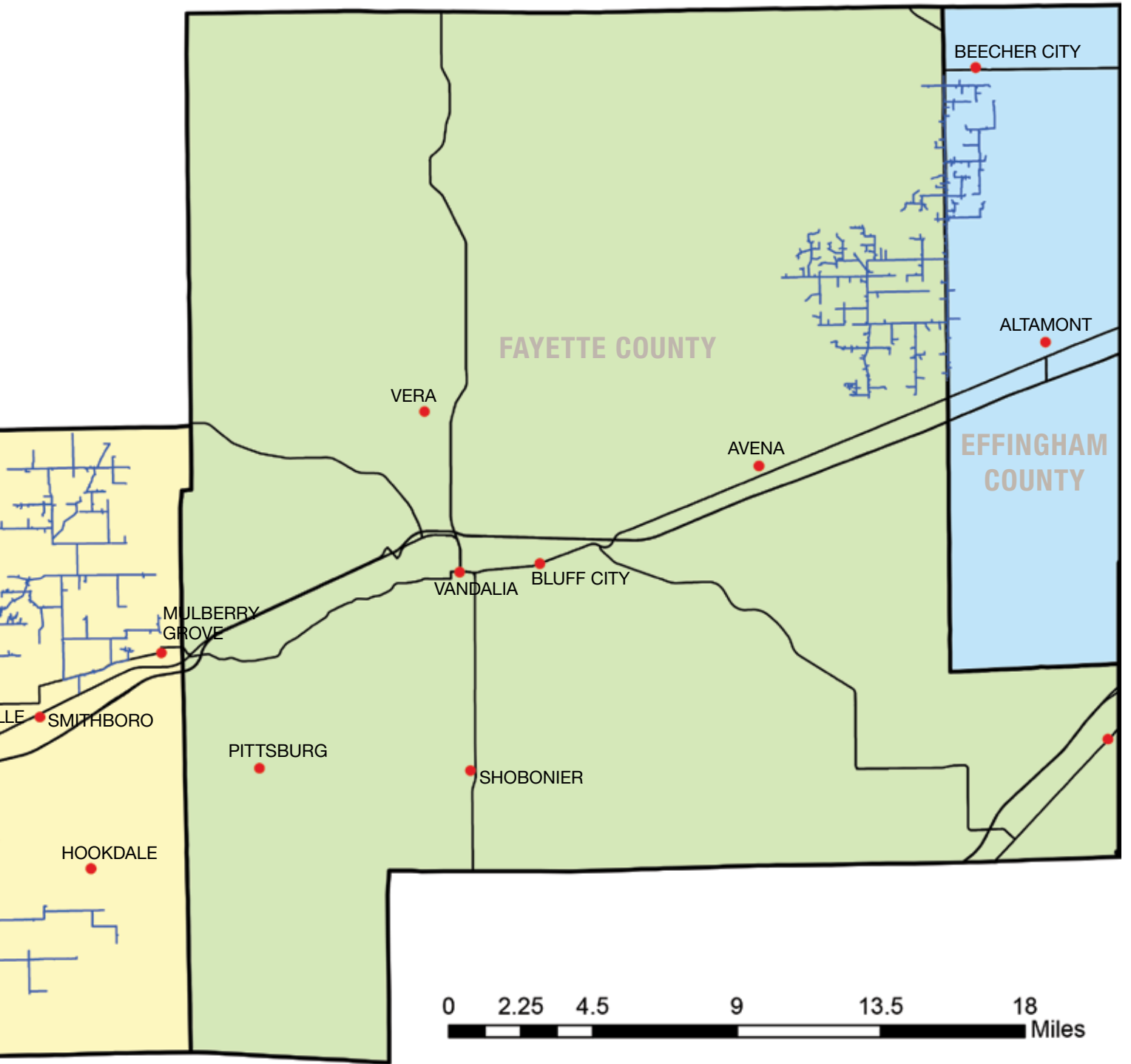
Southwestern's right of way maintenance program has significantly reduced the number of outages you experience. It's also offered our crews better access to power lines, improving our power restoration times after storms.

You can read more about our right of way maintenance work on page 8.

We'll call before we begin right of way maintenance in your area.



On Account: If your account number is 29788001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.



2020 Lines to Trim



Primary Roads



Towns



Counties



Madison County



Bond County



Fayette County



Effingham County

BE PREPARED

Powerful storms can cause extended outages in any season. Form a backup power plan today.

Every utility works to keep the power on around the clock, every day of the year. And every utility falls short of the goal. Elements ranging from mechanical failures to weather to wild animals interrupt service.

Most interruptions are measured in minutes or hours. But in the case of a storm that damages infrastructure system-wide, an outage can last for days. No one can predict when the next powerful storm will strike. But developing a backup power plan today will help you weather an extended outage safely when it does come.

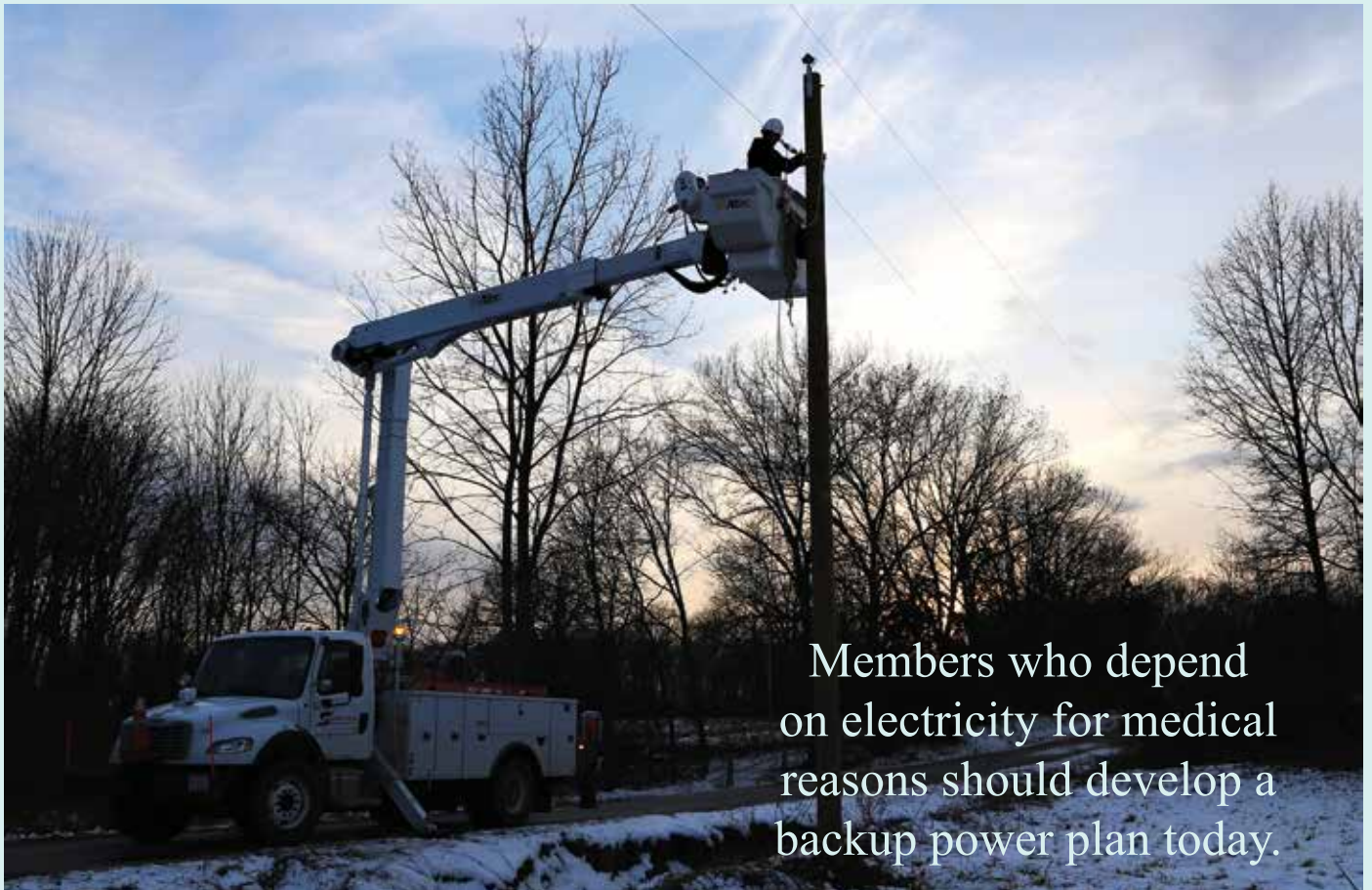
Your plan can be as simple as making arrangements to stay with a friend or family member (who lives on a different circuit) during an outage.

If friends and family aren't nearby, look into purchasing a standby generator. Investing in a standby generator is the most reliable way to ensure you always have electricity. Consider the following items as you develop your backup power plan:

REACHING OUT

The ability to communicate during an outage is vital. If you usually rely on a cordless phone with a base, keep in mind, it probably won't operate during an outage.

Most of us own a cellular phone. Keep yours fully charged and handy when forecasts suggest a storm is likely. If you don't own a mobile phone, consider buying one with an economy plan to use in emergencies.



Members who depend on electricity for medical reasons should develop a backup power plan today.

EMERGENCY SUPPLIES

Electric pumps mounted to wells won't function without electricity. If you depend on a well for water, store plenty of extra water in case of a power outage. Water is a key ingredient of your emergency supply kit.

If you already have an emergency supply kit, take a few minutes now to make sure it's stocked and your supplies are fresh. If you don't have a kit, spend some time assembling one this week. Your kit should include:

- A three-day supply of water (one gallon per person per day).
- High-calorie, non-perishable food items such as dried fruit or energy bars.
- A blanket or sleeping bag.
- A change of clothing and footwear per family member.
- A first aid kit, including prescription medicines.
- Emergency tools, including a battery-powered National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio and portable radio, flashlight, and plenty of extra batteries.
- An extra set of car keys and a credit card or cash.
- Any special items needed by an infant, elderly, or disabled family member.
- Telephone numbers for medical emergencies, law enforcement, family members, and friends who may be able to offer assistance.
- Your Southwestern Electric Cooperative account number and the co-op's phone number: (800) 637-8667.

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT

Check in with neighbors to see if you're the only home without service. If you are, check your electrical box for tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses.

If you can't source your outage to your electrical box or your neighbors are also without power, call Southwestern Electric at (800) 637-8667. The line is staffed 24 hours per day. Your call will be answered by a Southwestern Electric employee or a representative of the co-op's emergency response service. Please be prepared to give the operator your name, address, telephone number and account number.

You can also report outages using the SWEC IL app.

Don't rely on e-mail to contact the cooperative during an outage or other emergency. While our phones are constantly monitored, our e-mail isn't.

During an outage, it's a good idea to unplug or switch off lights and electric appliances, leaving on a light or two so you'll know when power is restored. Doing so will help you avoid overloading a circuit when the electricity comes back on. After your power is restored, turn on appliances and electrical devices one at a time.

BEWARE OF DOWNED POWER LINES

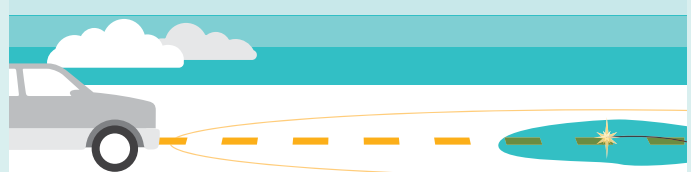
After a storm, be alert for downed power lines. Tree limbs and debris may disguise deadly electrical hazards. Treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they're energized. If you spot a downed or low-hanging line, warn others to stay away and report the location to Southwestern Electric immediately.

Downed and Dangerous

If you see a downed power line, always assume it is energized and dangerous. Avoid going near it or anything in contact with the power line.



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 ft.** away – so keep your distance.



Never drive over a downed line or through water that is touching the line.



If you see a downed line, notify the local authorities immediately.



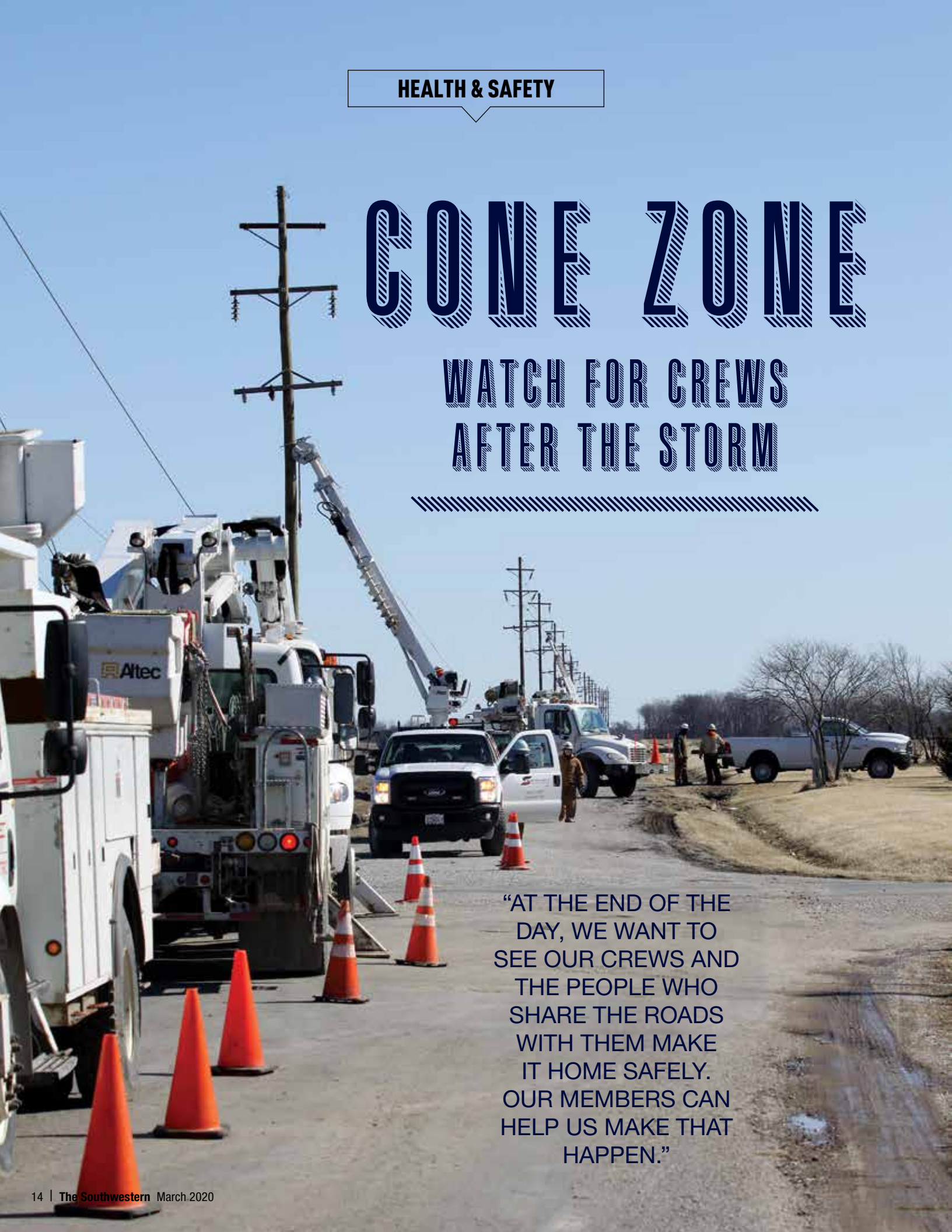
Never try to move a downed power line, even if you think the line is deenergized or if you're using a non-conductive item – this will not prevent injury or death!

Source: ESFI.org

Keep your cellular phone fully charged and handy when forecasts suggest a storm is likely. If you don't own a mobile phone, consider buying one with an economy plan to use in emergencies.

CONE ZONE

WATCH FOR CREWS
AFTER THE STORM



“AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE WANT TO SEE OUR CREWS AND THE PEOPLE WHO SHARE THE ROADS WITH THEM MAKE IT HOME SAFELY. OUR MEMBERS CAN HELP US MAKE THAT HAPPEN.”

In winter, Southwestern linemen navigate multi-ton trucks down snow-slickened blacktops to reach work sites. In spring they fight 40-mph gusts to replace poles in failing light. Come summer, they'll string wire after storms, working by headlamp and floodlight in 100-degree heat. Regardless of the job or season, our linemen approach each outage with a single concern foremost in mind: safety.

From the clothes they wear to the tools and training they use, safety is at the forefront of all they do.

But some aspects of a crew's safety aren't entirely up to them.

They're up to you.

"Most motorists our crews encounter are cautious and courteous. They make good decisions when they're approaching a work site," said *Southwestern* editor Joe Richardson. "But there are always a few who approach the area too fast. By failing to respect the crews, the cones, and the warning signs, they're endangering themselves, their passengers, and our linemen."

Richardson urged drivers to exercise caution when driving during or after bad weather.

"Storms bring down power lines and bring out work crews," he said. "In

many instances, moving a bucket truck off the road isn't an option. Drivers need to watch for signs and cones that signal crews are in the area. They may crest a hill to find linemen working and trucks parked immediately over the rise."

Every driver has a responsibility to exercise caution and good judgment. Leaving early, driving carefully, devoting your full attention to the road, and being attuned to the environment can help prevent accidents. "Ideally, you stay home when the weather makes roads treacherous," Richardson said. "If you have to get out, keep in mind you'll

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be sharing the road with line crews and service trucks."

After a storm, stay alert for debris. Storms can drop poles and power lines into roadways. The lines could be energized, and they're very hard to see. "You may have rounded a bend a thousand times with no trouble—but storms change the environment. Reduce your speed and pay attention to the landscape. Are lights out? Limbs down? Then there's a good chance we have a crew working in the area."

It's important for drivers to recognize their limitations, especially in bad weather, Richardson said. "Some people aren't comfortable driving in rain or snow. I know a few drivers who rely on experience, and familiar routes, to compensate for slower reflexes, and eyesight that isn't as sharp as it used to be."

Those strategies are less effective when conditions are poor. "Don't risk your safety and the well-being of others. If you have to get out, call a friend or family member for a ride," he said. "At the end of the day, we want to see our crews and the people who share the roads with them make it home safely. Our members can help us make that happen."

ROAD RULES

Safe travel begins before you sit behind the wheel. Make sure your maintenance is up to date. Ask your mechanic to check your vehicle's battery, brakes, ignition, transmission, exhaust, and heating and air conditioning system.

Weather takes a toll on automobiles. Regularly check your wipers, tires, lights, and fluid levels (radiator, windshield washer, power steering, oil).

When you're shopping for tires, wipers and fluid, buy the best you can afford. All products are not created equal, and you'll notice a difference in performance. Never skimp on safety.

PLOT AND PLAN

Before you leave, check the weather on your route. Road reports are available for Illinois' interstate and freeway systems by visiting gettingaroundillinois.com.

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

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

Remember to dress for the weather, not your destination.

STRANDED

If your vehicle breaks down and you have to pull off the road, move your car as far as you can from the flow of traffic. Call for help and wait for assistance from police or other emergency responders. Raise the hood, and turn on the dome light and flashers to make your vehicle more noticeable. Attach a cloth to the antenna or window to signal you need help. If a stranger offers you a ride, decline. Ask him or her to notify the police if you don't have a cellular phone or you're stranded in an area with no signal.

EMERGENCY KIT

Equip your car with an emergency kit that includes:

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

The Art of Artifacts

Belleville Museum Showcases Cast Iron Ingenuity



In a 2018 photo, museum docent Gary Meyer Sr. demonstrates the physical demands of foundry work.

Had the county courthouse not been razed by a wrecking ball, Judy Belleville wouldn't be surrounded by stoves. But that's where a February morning finds her: county of St. Clair, city of Belleville, corner of Church and B streets, standing at the heart of a historic home, in the center of a stove gallery.

It's a lovely room.

High ceilings, polished floors, soft illumination, and 34 stoves, most of them cast iron—all born in Belleville—strategically staged for viewing. It lacks the dust and must and metal-sweat scent you'd expect in a room housing several tons of antique kitchen appliances. There's a smart shine to the glazed porcelain and a clean black matte on even the oldest coal-fired models. A manufacturing timeline runs along the west wall. Earliest date: 1881.

As collections coordinator for the Belleville Labor & Industry Museum, Judy Belleville, who shares a surname with the city she loves, sees that artifacts are cleaned, exhibits carefully catalogued, antiques photographed, and provenances recorded and shared online.

Belleville attributes the rise of the Labor & Industry Museum to the fall of the 1860 St. Clair County Courthouse in May 1972. Demolition of the community icon spawned the Belleville Historic Preservation Commission.

In 1995, when the St. Clair County Transit District planned to level a 158-year-old German Street House for parking space, the Preservation Commission moved to prevent history from repeating itself. "They gave us 30 days to raise \$36,000 to buy the building," says Belleville. "Which we did."

Built in 1837, the Conrad Bornman House, home to the

museum since 2002, is a standing testament to the qualities it celebrates. “We hauled three dumpsters of trash out of this building,” says Belleville. “It was just a wreck. When we finished, we had nothing but an empty building.”

It wasn’t empty for long.

As word of the museum spread, artifacts appeared. Relics delivered by owners or by mail arrived daily from Belleville and beyond. Local craftsmen volunteered to build exhibits, cases and displays. Donation inquiries came from all corners of the country, many from people with Belleville stoves. “We knew that we manufactured stoves, but no one had any idea of the variety, and how many, or how long the different companies were in business,” Belleville says. “I think what we have is rare. We have a unique niche we need to talk about.”

Today, hundreds of pieces of the past are on display. “It only took us three years to restore this building and open it to the public with exhibits. Three years. I can’t believe it,” Belleville says. “When I look back on it, I think, ‘How in the world did that happen?’ The community was unbelievably charitable.”

Age of Ingenuity

For Germans seeking refuge from political unrest in early 1800s Europe, Belleville was a beacon. The open acreage, fertile soil, abundance of coal, and proximity to St. Louis made it a prime location for agricultural development. In the wake of the Civil War, rail lines expanded, and the city thrived. “We had workers, we had power, and we had a way to get our product out,” says Belleville. The city grew into an industrial community that rivaled Peoria.

Coal and rail fueled the economy, but it was the work ethic and ingenuity of German settlers that set the city in motion. “They were mathematicians and mechanics,” Belleville says. From the beginning, they looked for opportunities to improve tools of the trades and manufacturing methods. “They would change one tool into something else to make their job easier.

Continued on next page >



Judy Belleville, Labor & Industry Museum collections coordinator, points out structural changes denoting decades of building evolution in the space of a few feet. The stove gallery (below) represents more than a century of art, invention and manufacturing in Belleville.



➤ *Continued from page 17*

A file might end up in a foundry being used as a chip hammer. They had the ability to invent something then make it better and more useful.”

Living History

Demolition of a landmark frequently fuels the flames of preservation in a community. But it’s often a quiet moment that stokes the same sense of purpose in an individual. In the 1980s, Judy Belleville was attending a preservation conference at the University of Illinois. She found herself seated next to historian and U of I faculty member Lachlan Blair. He asked Belleville if her city had a museum. She referenced the St. Clair County Historical Society House Museum.

“He said, ‘No, I don’t mean a house museum.’” She told Blair there was no museum exclusive to the city. “And he said,

‘Then you understand that nothing happened in your town.’ That’s exactly what he said to me. ‘You understand that if you don’t have a museum about your town, nothing happened there.’ I was so offended I couldn’t stand it. I could not stand it,” Belleville recalls. “But he was right.”

Without a museum, Belleville says, the city would have no opportunity to share its past, much less a place to showcase it. “How would we promote to the public that we were the stove capital of the world at one time? How does that even come up? How do you even know it if somebody isn’t researching?”

It’s hard to imagine Belleville not knowing a piece of city history. In addition to being the Labor & Industry Museum’s collections coordinator, and a charter member and past chair of the Belleville Historic Preservation Commission, she literally wrote the book on Belleville history—twice. In 2004, she

Continued on page 26 ➤



Docent Bob Poole (above) describes the ingenuity of mechanical engineers. Mike Hutsch (right) explains the history of Jumbo #1486, a traction engine manufactured by Harrison Machine Works of Belleville. Harrison operated from 1858-1954.



Artifacts from Belleville’s German and English newspapers are on display in the museum annex.



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.

WHO • WHAT • WHERE

Old inventions and antique machinery are imbued with artistry and elegance much of today's tech can't match. That's true of the artifacts in this month's Out & About column, and it applies equally to the lantern that served as last month's puzzle piece.

Southwestern member Rita Barns of Altamont allowed us to photograph the lamp for our February issue. Rita is aunt to Southwestern art director Mike Barns. "My aunt, who doesn't forget anything, said my great-grandparents used it on their buggy as a light," he said. "She even remembered exactly where they hung it in the barn when it was not in use."

A number of you identified the antique as a railroad lantern. And you may be right. As Judy Belleville, collections coordinator for the Belleville Museum of Labor & Industry noted, people learn to be resourceful, repurposing tools for new jobs. It's possible lamps like these lived several lives. There's room for interpretation. This particular lamp, however, lit the way for a buggy in Effingham County.

Thanks to everyone who sent a response. And special thanks to Rita Barns of Altamont for allowing us to share the lantern with our readers.

We hope you'll participate in this month's puzzle. Can you name the historical figure on the facing page? Meanwhile, here are some of the responses to last month's challenge.

I believe the answer to the "What am I" in the February issue of *The Southwestern* is a lantern that was used by the caboose man on a train to signal to the engineer. My uncle ran the caboose on the Cottonbelt railroad many years ago. When I was a little girl in the 1940s, we visited my aunt and uncle in Illmo, Mo. My uncle would take me on the caboose and show me what all he did. I have fond memories of this and although this lantern looks newer and more shiny than the one my uncle used, I still think this is what it is used for.

—Jane Scheibal, Collinsville

I think this is an old-time lantern for a carriage.

—Sherri Rose, Edwardsville



I would say that is a brakeman's lantern. They were hung on the back of the caboose and also carried by the brakeman to inspect cars and undercarriages of the train.

—Effie Volberg, Pocahtontas

I believe that the object shown in *The Southwestern* member magazine is a vintage railroad signal lantern, sometimes called a semaphore lamp. My grandfather had quite a collection that he enjoyed adding to.

—Susan Frey, Troy

At first I thought this was a mine inspector's lamp, but then I realized (I believe) that this is a Dietz union buggy driving lamp, and has been refurbished from the original black to an attractive shiny copper color. It probably uses kerosene and has a wick that must be lit by opening the glass door. It can be held or attached to the carriage. That's my story and I am sticking to it!

—Anne Cicero, St. Jacob

The answer to the February 2020 *What Am I?*, I believe, is a headlamp off of a 4-6-2 railroad locomotive (carbide fired).

—Russell Blackard, Dorsey

This is a vintage kerosene railroad lantern.

—David Barbey, Greenville

Pictured as your February 2020 "What am I?" is an antique brass carriage buggy oil lantern lamp light.

—Bill Malec, O'Fallon

The Who-What-Where challenge for the February 2020 issue is an antique kerosene headlamp for an early motor vehicle—probably an automobile—and sometimes referred to as a driving lantern. The lamp is one of a pair and shows a mount on the left side. The other lamp would have a matching mount on the right side.

Thanks for another interesting and enjoyable challenge as always.

—Tim Bennett, Holiday Shores

Who-What-Where is a contest that challenges your knowledge of people, places and objects in and around Southwestern Electric Cooperative's service area. Here's how it works: Each month, we run a photo. Your job is to tell us who's pictured, what we've photographed, or where we shot the photo. You can email your response to joe.richardson@sweci.com or send it by mail to Joe Richardson, Southwestern Electric Cooperative, 525 U.S. Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246. Please include your name, mailing address, and hometown. If you have a story about our photo topic, include that as well—we love these! The puzzle solution—possibly accompanied by a few words from you—will appear in a future issue of *The Southwestern*.



*Who
am I?*

My father was from Austria. My mother came from Switzerland. My parents immigrated to Madison County separately.

I attended McKendree College in Lebanon and Illinois Industrial University in Champaign (now the University of Illinois).

I was a founding director of Helvetia Milk Company and went on to become president. We were renown for our canned evaporated milk.

Built in 1901, my home was equipped with a handpump-fed attic holding tank that provided running water, a gas light system, tubes that allowed people in separate rooms to speak with one another, and one of the first telephones in my community. The house still stands today.

A library bears my name.



CO-OP KITCHEN

Casserole Cookin'?

Taco Casserole

ALPINE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 4 cups chicken breast cooked and chopped
- 2 cups celery sliced
- 2-3 cups toasted bread crumbs
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup onion chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- dash of pepper
- 8 ounce package Swiss cheese slices cut into thin strips
- ¼ cup slivered almonds toasted

Directions

1. Combine ingredients except nuts and mix well.
2. Place in 2 quart casserole dish and sprinkle with nuts.
3. Cover and bake at 350° for 40 minutes.

HAM & CHEESE NOODLE CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 1 (8 ounce) package wide noodles
- 1½ cups ham cooked and diced
- 2 cups swiss cheese shredded
- ½ cup green pepper chopped
- 1 tablespoon onion chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup sour cream
- green pepper rings

Directions

1. Cook noodles according to directions and drain.
2. Toss together noodles, ham, cheese, green pepper, onions, and salt in large bowl.
3. Blend in sour cream.
4. Place mixture in 2 quart baking dish.
5. Bake at 375° for 25 - 30 minutes or until heated through and cheese is melted.
6. Top with green pepper rings.

HAMBURGER & SAUERKRAUT CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 1 pound hamburger
- 1 medium onion diced
- 1 can sauerkraut drained
- 1 package Kluski noodles cooked
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup cubed cheese

Directions

1. Brown hamburger and onion.
2. Put in greased casserole dish.
3. Layer on sauerkraut and noodles and spread soup on.
4. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes, top with cheese and bake another 5 minutes.

TACO CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 envelope taco seasoning
- 1 bag nacho cheese chips
- 1 can condensed cheddar cheese soup
- taco toppings: diced tomatoes, onions, peppers etc. (whatever you prefer)
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- lettuce

Directions

1. Brown beef and onion. Add taco seasoning according to directions.
2. Crush ¾ bag of chips and sprinkle in bottom of 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. Top with beef mixture and cover with soup.
4. Sprinkle toppings over soup.
5. Then sprinkle cheese over toppings.
6. Bake uncovered at 350° for 20 minutes.
7. Sprinkle on lettuce after baking and serve.

ARTICHOKE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 4 tablespoons butter
- ½ pound fresh mushrooms slices
- 2 cloves garlic chopped
- 3 tablespoons flour
- ⅔ cup chicken broth
- 3 tablespoons dry sherry or white wine
- 2 (15 ounce) cans artichoke hearts drained
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese shredded

Directions

1. Season chicken breasts with salt, pepper, and paprika and brown in 2 tablespoons butter.
2. Transfer chicken to 9 x 13 inch baking dish.
3. Melt 4 tablespoons of butter, add mushrooms and garlic, and brown.
4. Add flour, chicken broth, and sherry. Simmer until sauce thickens.
5. Add artichokes, stirring well. Then pour over chicken.
6. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese, cover, and bake at 350° for 35 - 45 minutes.
7. Uncover for the last 10 minutes of baking. Serve with rice.

This month's recipes are courtesy of Bond County Habitat for Humanity's Bond County Habitat for Humanity Cookbook (ham and cheese noodle casserole and taco casserole), Fayette County Museum's *35th Anniversary Cookbook* (hamburger and sauerkraut casserole), Edwardsville Garden Club's *Favorite Recipes* (artichoke chicken casserole), and Greenville Regional Hospital Auxiliary's *Home Town Favorites* cookbook (alpine chicken casserole).

CURRENT EVENTS

March 6 BALD EAGLE DAYS, Grafton. A site interpreter will present programs about bald eagles. Visitors will learn to distinguish between immature and mature bald eagles, what eagles eat, why they spend winter months in the area and more. There will be a short video presentation followed by an observational drive to view wintering bald eagles. 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.

March 7 GREAT PIANISTS OF THE WORLD: FANYA LIN, Belleville. Fanya Lin has delighted worldwide audiences with dazzling and heartfelt performances with orchestras, at festivals, and has garnered top honors at international piano competitions. 7:30 - 10 p.m. Adult \$20; seniors age

55 and older \$18; military \$18; youth 18 and younger are free. Philharmonic Hall 116 North Jackson Street. For tickets, visit bellevillephilharmonic.org.

March 12-22 IT'S ONLY A PLAY, Lebanon. A theatrical performance by the Looking Glass Playhouse. All performances begin at 7:30 p.m., except for Sunday shows, which begin at 2 p.m. \$10 on Thursday and \$12 Friday - Sunday for adults; \$9 on Thursday and \$11 Friday - Sunday for students, senior citizens and active military personnel (with valid identification). Looking Glass Playhouse, 301 West Saint Louis Street. Call (618) 537-4962 or visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

March 14 FFA ALUMNI DINNER & AUCTION, Edwardsville. In addition to dinner, the event includes live auction, silent auction, and raffles. Proceeds support the Edwardsville High School and Middle School FFA programs enabling members to receive scholarships, attend state and national conventions, and participate in educational contests and awards. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6 p.m. \$25 for adults and \$12.50 for children age 5 to 12. Advanced bidding on specific auction items can be made online by texting the word AUCTION to (210) 321-9710. Moose Lodge, 7371 Marine Road. To order tickets, contact FFA Adviser Jaci Jenkins at jjenkins@ecusd7.org or call (618) 656-7100 ext. 20680.

March 14 SWING BAND DANCE, Granite City. Join us for an evening of music and dancing. Granite City Community Concert & Swing Band will perform. 6:30 - 9:30 p.m. Township Hall, 2060 Delmar Avenue. Visit graniteband.com.

March 15 ST. PATRICK'S DAY POOCH PARTY, Collinsville. Bring your pooches in their St. Patty's Day outfit—we'll be judging for best costume. Event includes a K-9 demonstration, adoptions from the Madison County Humane Society, and dog treats and goodies. Bellemore Animal Hospital will offer micro-chipping and shots. 1 - 4 p.m. Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve, 631 Willoughby Lane. Call (618) 346-7529 or visit willoughbyfarm.org.

March 16 SHAKESPEARE FESTIVAL ST. LOUIS PRESENTS CYMBELINE, Lebanon. One of Shakespeare's final plays—and one of his greatest achievements—Cymbeline is a romantic adventure story on an epic scale. 6:30 p.m. General public \$10; McKendree students, faculty and staff \$5. The Hett Center for the Arts, 400 North Alton Street. Call (618) 537-6863 or visit thehett.com.

March 20-22, 27-29 ALTON LITTLE THEATER: HOLY LAUGHTER, Alton. A theatrical presentation by the Alton Little Theater Company. Thursday - Saturday at 7:30 p.m.; Sunday at 2 p.m. Adult \$20; children 17 years of age and younger \$12. Alton Little Theater, 2450 North Henry Street. For tickets, call (618) 462-3205 or visit altonlittletheater.org.

March 21 ALTON HALF MARATHON & 5K, Alton. Enjoy the scenic views of the Mississippi River and historic areas of Alton. Route includes the famed-Clark Bridge. Starts at 8 a.m. \$55 for half marathon; \$20 for 5k. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. E-mail altonhalf@gmail.com or visit altonhalf.com.

March 21 BEGINNING VEGETABLE GARDENING, Collinsville. This class will cover selection of a site for

a vegetable garden, soil preparation, and discuss what to plant and when to plant it. 10 a.m. - noon. This is a free class. Call (618) 977-0941 to pre-register. Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve, 631 Willoughby Lane. Visit willoughbyfarm.org.

March 22 BEST OF MARYVILLE ART CONTEST & SHOW, Maryville. Open to all students with 5 different mediums, any subject. Student entries are free. Open to all adults, but subject needs to focus on events, people, pets, or landscapes in or around Maryville area. Adults \$1 per entry. 1 - 3 p.m. Community Center, 500 East Division Street. Visit www.vil.maryville.il.us or call (618) 772-8555.

March 22 GREATER ALTON CONCERT ASSOCIATION: MARK TRAMMELL QUARTET, Godfrey. Enjoy the music of gospel singer Mark Trammell. 3 - 6 p.m. Adults \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door; students \$10. Lewis & Clark Community College, Ann Whitney Olin Theatre, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Call (618) 468-4222 or visit greateraltonconcertassociation.org.

March 22 IMMANUEL UCC CHICKEN DINNER, Edwardsville. Serving an all you care to eat family style chicken dinner. Raffle for quilt and 32" TV, country store, and youth basket raffle. 11:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Donations are \$10 for adults; \$5 for children 6 - 9 years of age; free for 5 years of age and younger; carry-outs \$10. Immanuel United Church of Christ, 1 1/2 miles south of Hamel, 5838 Staunton Road. Call (618) 656-2328 or (618) 633-2277.

March 28 LEGS FOR LIFE 5K & LITTLE LEGS 1-MILER,

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 use our Current Events format (as seen on these pages) to write your submission. Include a contact number or email address and submit your listing at least two months prior to your event.

Centralia. Sign up to run or walk to benefit The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society. This USATF certified road course contains some short hills through a beautiful park. Tech shirts to all pre-registered participants. 8 - 10:30 a.m. Entry fee for 5k is \$20 until March 13; \$25 after March 13. Entry fee for the 1-miler \$15 until March 13; \$20 after March 13. Foundation Park, 600 North Pleasant Avenue. For more information or to register, visit legsforlife5k.com, e-mail legsforlife@gmail.com, or call Shannon at (618) 367-0003.

March 28 SYMPHONIC SPECTACULAR: RACHEL OSTLER, Belleville. Violinist Rachel Ostler has been recognized for her interpretive artistry and charismatic presence. She joins the Philharmonic in this concert featuring works of two musical legends. 7:30 - 10 p.m. Adult: \$20; seniors age 55 and older \$18; military \$18; youth 18 and younger are free. Church of Our Lady of the Snows, 442 South

Demazenod Drive. For tickets, visit bellevillephilharmonic.org.

March 28; April 25 UNDERGROUND RAILROAD SHUTTLE TOUR, Alton. Alton's 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 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.

March 30 COFFEE CONCERTS RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN: GETTING TO KNOW YOU!, Belleville. Features Ida Edwards Mercer, cello, piano, host; Ethan Edwards, voice, cello, piano. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Admission is \$15 (advance tickets only). Philharmonic Hall 116 North Jackson Street. For tickets, visit bellevillephilharmonic.org.

March 30 LOOKING GLASS PLAYHOUSE TRIVIA NIGHT, Belleville. Doors will open at 6:30 p.m.. Tickets are \$12 per participant with tables consisting of 8-10 players. Soda will be available for purchase, you may bring your own snacks and beverages. Event will also include a 50/50 raffle and silent auction. Heritage Hall Althoff High School, 5401 West Main Street. To reserve a table, e-mail Gigi Dowling-Urban at dongji33@aol.com. For more information, visit lookingglassplayhouse.com.

April 4 ANNUAL COMMUNITY SALE, Ramsey. Presented by the Ramsey Lions Club. Bidding begins at 9 a.m. but attendees are encouraged

to arrive early. Admission is free. Food will be available for purchase. Lions Park, one block west of U.S. Route 51. Call (618) 267-6012.

April 4 SPRING FLING CRAFT & VENDOR FAIR, Bethalto. Shop a variety of vendors. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. Entry fee for 12 years of age and older. All proceeds benefit fine arts programs at Bethalto schools. Civic Memorial High School, 200 School Street. For more information, e-mail bethaltofineartsboosters@outlook.com.

April 4 TRIVIA THROUGH THE DECADES, Edwardsville. Teams compete to answer trivia questions in a wide range of categories spanning the 1920s through present day. Teams are encouraged (but not required) to come dressed in costume from their favorite decade or join the event volunteers in the 1950s. This year's decorating theme is Pop's Diner (1950s). Trivia questions are not centered around our decor theme. Doors open at 6 p.m.; trivia starts at 7 p.m. \$200/8 person table or \$25 per person. Teams registered and paid by March 27 receive their Mulligans for free. Edwardsville Moose Lodge, 7371 Marine Road. For reservations, call (618) 692-1818 or visit stephensonhouse.org.

April 4 - August 2 PHOTOGRAPHY EXHIBIT, Elsah. Amateur and professional photographers will display photographs of the Village of Elsah and the immediate area, in an exhibit entitled "My Favorite Window." The purpose of the exhibit is to celebrate and foster an appreciation of the beauty and unique qualities of Elsah. Photographs will be for sale and photographers will retain all proceeds. Opening exhibit April 4 from 1 - 4 p.m. Museum hours are Saturday and Sunday from 1 - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Village of Elsah Museum, 26 La Salle Street. Call (618) 374-1565 or visit escapetoelsah.com.

April 5 ALTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: AMEN!, Godfrey. This concert experience is designed to combine the orchestra with voices of our audience as we sing hymns that have survived numerous generations and have brought peace and hope to so many. Music from Jesus Christ Superstar, A Hymn Song and Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat. 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. Alton Symphony Orchestra, Lewis & Clark Community College, Hatheway Cultural Center, 5800 Godfrey Road. Call (618) 792-4002 or visit altonsymphonyorchestra.org.

April 6 HANDBAGS FOR HEARTS PURSE AUCTION, Vandalia. Friends and Family of Fayette County Hospital present designer purses from Kate Spade, Michael Kors, Coach, Vera Bradley, and other designers. Event will include silent auction, food and drinks. Doors open at 5 p.m.; live auction at 7 p.m. Tickets are \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door and include 6 raffle tickets. Proceeds benefit the hospital's cardiac monitoring system. Blind Society, 330 West Gallatin Street. For tickets or more information, call (618) 283-5401 or (618) 283-5464, or purchase tickets at the Sarah Bush Lincoln Fayette County Hospital information desk.

April 17-19 SPRING INDIAN MARKET DAYS, Collinsville. Indian artists and vendors display and sell their artwork, crafts, clothing, and jewelry. Friday noon - 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Admission is free. Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, 30 Ramey Street. Call (618) 346-5160 or visit cahokiamounds.org.



March 21 ALTON HALF MARATHON & 5K, Alton. 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. \$55 for half marathon; \$20 for 5k. Liberty Bank Alton Amphitheater, 1 Riverfront Drive. E-mail altonhalf@gmail.com or visit altonhalf.com.

➤ *Continued from page 18*
coauthored *Belleville: 1814-1914*, with Robert Fietsam Jr. and Jack Le Chien. In 2013, she wrote *Belleville: 1914 and Beyond*, with Robert deV. Brunkow and Robert L. Arndt. Both are entries in the Images of America series by Arcadia Publishing. “We’re coming up with things all the time that no one knew about Belleville,” she says, pausing to survey the room.

Above her hangs an agricultural implement invented by a German settler. To her right stands a National City stockyards exhibit. To her left, the stove gallery. A cigar store window display illuminates the wall ahead. Shelf exhibits line the wall behind her.

Blair had it right, Belleville says. “If you do not have a museum in your town, you are telling everyone that nothing happened there. That got me going on the collection part of it.”

Time And Time Again

The Belleville Historic Preservation Commission’s push to form a museum came at the right time. Several companies that donated artifacts have since ceased operation or changed hands. And people who remember the city’s history because they lived it—or made it—are rare in 2020. Belleville points to an interpretive display that explains a foundry production process. “This was made for us by a man who owned a stove foundry. He was 90 years old when he made this,” she says. “If I wanted to do this now, I’m not sure where I would go.”

While residents who shaped Belleville’s history are fading into the past, people with questions are not. She still takes calls from historians, potential donors, and artifact owners researching Belleville relics—usually stoves. “People collect stoves. They’re enamored with them,” Belleville says. “Our stoves have come from Colorado, from Kansas—from all over the country. People call us and say, ‘We have a stove that was made in Belleville.’” The owners provide provenance if they have it and quiz Belleville on the manufacturer’s backstory, which she gladly provides.

On occasion, the conversation ends with a new piece for the gallery. The museum doesn’t accept duplicates, but



Visit the museum online at laborandindustrymuseum.org.



Located at 123 North Church Street in Belleville, the Labor & Industry Museum (above) is open Saturday 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. and by appointment. For more information call (618) 222-9430.

The Charles Beck family manufactured tobacco products in the building from 1913-1957. Floorboards at the cigar rolling station bear impressions from decades of shuffling feet.

if the model is new to the collection, in good condition, and the donors are willing to pay freight, the museum will log the item into its collection and stage it in the gallery.

“We got a call just yesterday from a man, and he emailed a picture of his stove. It’s a gorgeous Orban Stove,” Belleville says. “He had a whole story about how he acquired the stove. He’s in Washington state and he wanted me to help him determine the age of his stove, because there wasn’t a date on it.”

Other queries come from near and far. “I have two appointments this week to talk to people about things they want to donate to the museum. Sometimes I go there and sometimes they come here,”

she says. “I talk to two people a week at least,” she says, discreetly glancing at her watch.

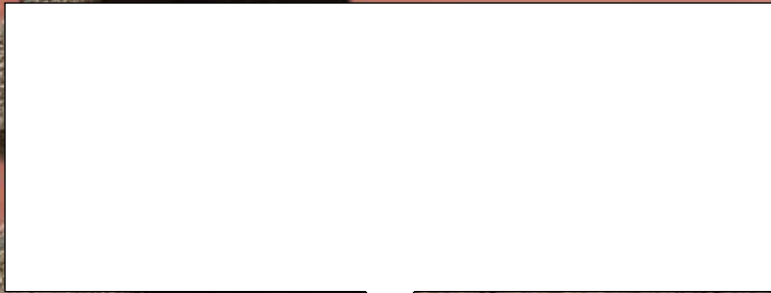
As much as Judy Belleville loves the past, she lives in the present. She understands a museum is more than a house for artifacts. It’s a home for ideas. A point of discovery. A basecamp for daily expeditions that provide insight into the past, inform the present, and may, from time to time, foreshadow the future.

For the Labor & Industry Museum’s collections coordinator, time is precious, and there are only so many hours in the day to make history.



Craftsmanship elevates an everyday appliance to a work of art at Belleville's Museum of Labor & Industry.

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