

# THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

AUGUST 2020 • VOLUME 72 • ISSUE 8

## **ANNUAL MEETING EDITION**

- Official Notice of the 82nd Annual Meeting of Members
- Report for the Fiscal Year 2019

## **INSIDE**

- Annual Meeting Agenda
- Voting Information
- Board Candidate Profiles
- Reports from Southwestern's President, Treasurer, and CEO





*Southwestern Electric Cooperative provides energy to nearly 24,000 members in communities throughout Southwestern Illinois and the St. Louis-Metro East.*

*As a not-for-profit utility, Southwestern Electric works to reduce the cost of service by encouraging residential, commercial and industrial development within its service area, dividing the fixed cost of service by a larger membership base.*

*Southwestern Electric Cooperative is guided by the premise that a member owned and locally operated utility should serve the best interests of our families, neighbors and communities.*

 **Southwestern**  
Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



# Table of Contents

## ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

- 04 Official Notice
- 05 Directions and Map
- 06 New For This Year's Meeting
- 07 Agenda
- 08 2019 Meeting Minutes

## REPORTS AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION

- 10 Board President's Report
- 14 Chief Executive Officer's Report
- 18 Board Treasurer's Report
- 18 Financial Information

## VOTING & COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- 22 Voting Schedule
- 23 Credentials & Election Committee

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES

- 24 District I, Mark Gusewelle
- 25 District I, Arthur W. "Bill" Schnur
- 26 District I, Marvin Warner
- 27 District I, Christopher Burcham
- 28 District II, Sandy Nevinger, Incumbent
- 29 District III, Annette Hartlieb, Incumbent

## OUR TEAM

- 30 Board of Directors
- 30 Personnel
- 31 Voter Registration Card

On the Cover: Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 82nd Annual Meeting of Members will be held at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville. To reduce the potential for coronavirus transmission, attendees will be asked to remain in their vehicles. For more information see pages 4-7. Left: Linemen survey their work after completing repairs in Fayette County.

## SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246  
(800) 637-8667  
[www.sweci.com](http://www.sweci.com)

### FACILITY LOCATIONS

10031 Ellis Road, St. Jacob, IL 62281

2117 East 1850 Avenue, St. Elmo, IL 62458

## FREEDOM POWER STATION

2516 N 2125 Street, St. Elmo, IL 62458

Auditor: CliftonLarsonAllen LLP  
109 North Main Street, Austin, MN 55912-0217

*The Southwestern* (USPS 612-500) is published monthly by Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc. Periodical postage paid at Greenville, IL. Subscriptions cost \$8.85 per year. Comments or questions regarding material in this publication may be mailed to Joe Richardson, editor of *The Southwestern*, c/o Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246, or e-mailed to [joe.richardson@sweci.com](mailto:joe.richardson@sweci.com). Postmaster: Send address corrections to *The Southwestern*, 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.

## ANNUAL MEETING INFORMATION

# Official Notice of the Annual Meeting

The 82nd Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative members will be held at Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville, Illinois, on Saturday, September 12, 2020. The business meeting, beginning at 10 a.m., will take action on the following matters:

1. Roll call: Reporting on the number of members present in order to determine if a quorum is met.
2. Election of directors.
3. Reading of the Official Annual Meeting Notice and proof of due publication and mailing thereof (or the waiver or waivers of the Notice, as the case may be).
4. Reading of the unapproved minutes from the previous Annual Meeting and taking of necessary action thereon.
5. Presentation, consideration, and acting upon the reports of officers, directors and committees.
6. Unfinished business.
7. New business.
8. Announcement of election results.
9. Adjournment.

Pursuant to the election of three directors (one from each voting district), the members listed below have been presented as candidates by the Nominations Committee or nominated by petition. Candidate names are listed in the order they'll appear on the ballot. Ballot order was determined by a random drawing.

DISTRICT I (Macoupin, Madison, and St. Clair Counties): Mark Gusewelle, Arthur W. "Bill" Schnur, and Marvin Warner, nominated by the Nominations Committee; and Christopher Burcham, nominated by petition.

DISTRICT II (Bond, Clinton, and Montgomery Counties): Unopposed incumbent Sandy Nevinger, nominated by the Nominations Committee.

DISTRICT III (Clay, Fayette, Effingham, Marion, and Shelby Counties): Unopposed incumbent Annette Hartlieb, nominated by the Nominations Committee.

Voting will be offered at Southwestern Electric's Greenville office Aug. 28 – Sept. 11 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.; at the cooperative's St. Jacob warehouse Sept. 1 and Sept. 9 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.; at the St. Elmo warehouse Sept. 2 and Sept. 10 from 4 p.m. – 7 p.m., and on Annual Meeting Day, Saturday, Sept. 12, at the Bond County Fairgrounds and the St. Jacob and St. Elmo warehouses from 7 a.m. – 10 a.m.

Members who present the registration card found on the back cover of this publication will receive an added \$10 bill credit.

For additional bill credit information see page 22.

Annette Hartlieb  
Board Secretary



Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc.  
Greenville, Illinois

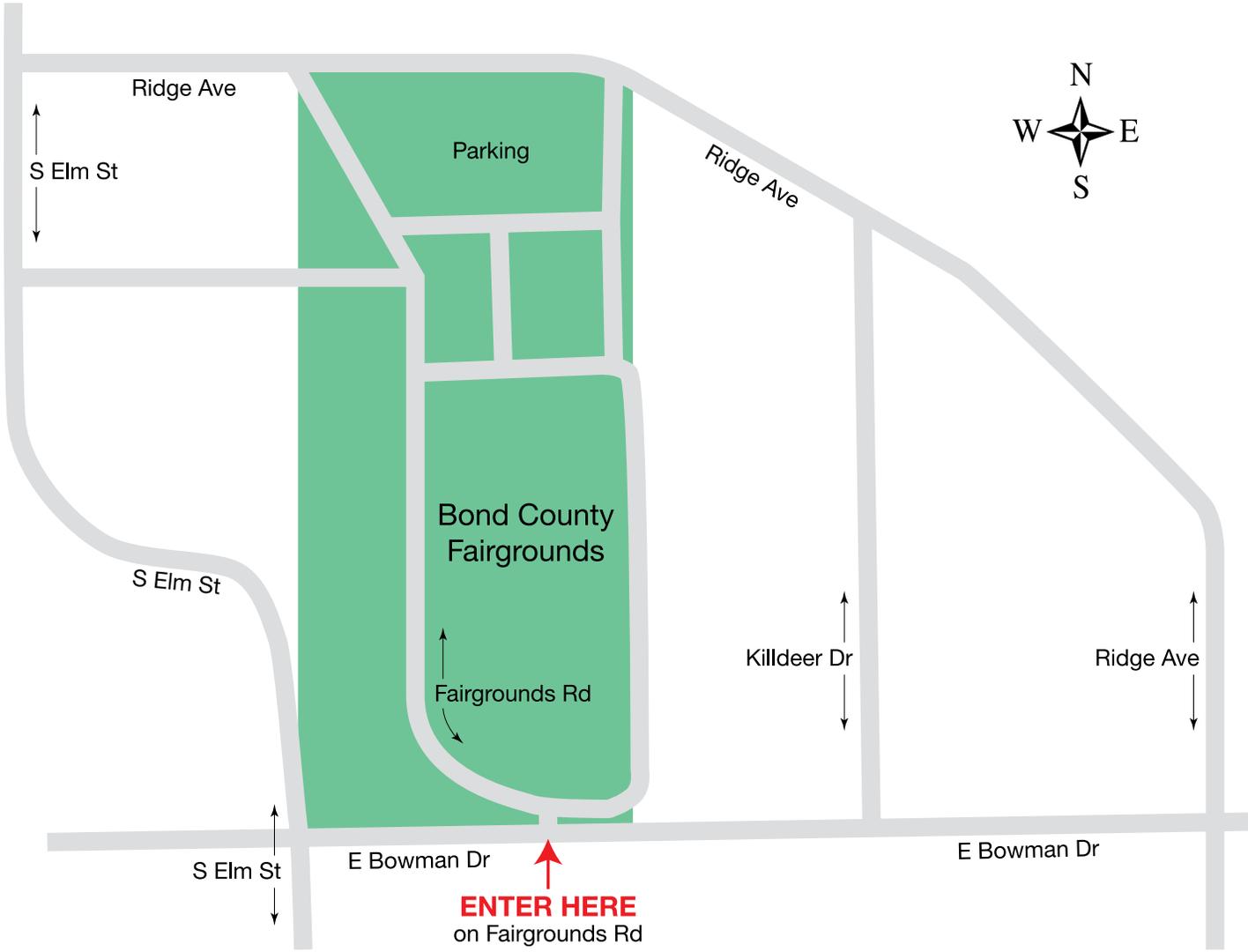
July 23, 2020

# Annual Meeting Directions and Map

The 82nd Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative members will be held at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville, Illinois, located East of South Elm Street on Fairgrounds Road.

To get there, follow US Route 40 to South Elm Street. Turn north onto South Elm (you'll see Southwestern's office on the hill). Follow South Elm about a half mile north to East Bowman Drive. Turn right on Bowman. Drive about 500 feet, then turn left onto Fairgrounds Road. Parking will be available on the fairgrounds. Attendees will be asked to remain in their vehicles for the duration of the meeting.

Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Susan File, vice president of member services, at [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com) or (800) 637-8667, ext. 5924.



# Focus on Safety Prompts Venue Change and Early Voting Options

Amidst continuing concerns regarding COVID-19, this year's annual meeting is designed to encourage social distancing and allow members to participate in the cooperative's democratic process as comfortably and safely as possible.

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 82nd Annual Meeting of Members will be held at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville. The meeting will be offered in a drive-through or pull up and park format. Members may vote and leave or vote and pull into a parking area to await the president's address, CEO report and election results.

Attendees will be asked to remain in their vehicles for the duration of their stay. The meeting will be broadcast through a short-range FM transmitter, and attendees will listen on their car radio.

To expedite voting, members are asked to bring the registration card printed on the back cover of this magazine. To more effectively practice CDC recommended health guidelines and help ensure member and employee safety, the co-op is encouraging members to vote before the day of the meeting.

Members will earn a \$50 bill credit by presenting their preprinted registration card and voting before Sept. 12. Voting schedules appear on page 22.

In addition to creating an environment which encourages social distancing, the co-op will limit interpersonal contact at this year's meeting. Southwestern Electric will not serve meals, offer attendance gifts, hold prize drawings, play BINGO or put on a carnival. There will be no drawings for cash prizes or a year of free electricity.

At 10 a.m., Ann Schwarm, president of Southwestern Electric Cooperative, and CEO Bobby Williams will deliver their reports. Election results will follow.

Questions or comments regarding the meeting may be directed to Susan File, vice president of member services, at (800) 637-8667 or [susan.file@sweci.com](mailto:susan.file@sweci.com).



Linemen restore power after a spring storm pulls down power lines near Vandalia.



# Annual Meeting Agenda

Registration available 7 a.m. to 10 a.m.  
Business meeting begins at 10 a.m.

Call to Order & Welcome .....	Ann Schwarm, Board President
Invocation .....	Jerry Gaffner, Director
Pledge of Allegiance .....	Ann Schwarm
Introduction of Directors, CEO & Attorney .....	Ann Schwarm
Report of Credentials & Election Committee .....	Committee Chairperson
Report of Nominations Committee.....	Committee Chairperson
Election of Directors .....	Michael Hertz, Attorney
Notice of Meeting and Proof of Mailing .....	Annette Hartlieb, Board Secretary
Approval of 2019 Meeting Minutes .....	Ann Schwarm
Treasurer’s Report .....	William “Bill” Jennings, Board Treasurer
Chief Executive Officer’s Report .....	Bobby Williams, CEO
President’s Report .....	Ann Schwarm
Unfinished Business .....	Ann Schwarm
New Business .....	Ann Schwarm
Announcement of Election Results .....	Credentials & Election Committee Chairperson
Adjournment of Business Meeting .....	Ann Schwarm



# Meeting Minutes

## 81st Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative Members September 7, 2019

The 81st Annual Meeting of Southwestern Electric Cooperative Members was held on Saturday, September 7, 2019, at Bond County Community Unit #2 Jr. High School in Greenville, Illinois. Notice of the Annual Meeting was given to the members in accordance with the cooperative's bylaws.

At 10 a.m., Board President Ann Schwarm called the business meeting to order. The invocation was given by Director Jerry Gaffner, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance. First grade students from Greenville Elementary School then sang "The Star-Spangled Banner."

President Schwarm went over various opportunities members had to participate in the drawings held throughout the meeting. The first prize drawing was held for a \$100 electric bill credit courtesy of Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

President Schwarm introduced her fellow directors, Chief Executive Officer Bobby Williams, and Corporate Counsel Chris Threlkeld from the law firm of Lucco, Brown, Threlkeld and Dawson. President Schwarm and Treasurer Sandy Nevinger paid tribute to long-time board member Randy Wolf, who passed away September 2018.

Hal Langham, chairperson of the Credentials and Election Committee, reported that a quorum of over 150 members had been met for the meeting.

The next order of business was the election of three members to the Board of Directors. Each would be elected to serve a three-year term, beginning on September 7, 2019. The term of each elected Director would end on the date of the 2022 Annual Meeting or when a qualified successor could be duly appointed. Chairperson Barb Tedrick read the Nominations Committee report. She stated that on May 16, 2019 the members of the Nominations Committee met to nominate candidates for the Board of Directors. The candidates nominated were as follows: Christopher Burcham, Sandy

Grapperhaus (incumbent), and James Ryan Morris in District I; Roger Thiems and Ted Willman (incumbent) in District II; Ann Schwarm (incumbent) in District III. With no competition in District III, Dannie Donaldson made a motion to elect Ann Schwarm Director for District III by acclamation. The motion was seconded and carried.

Attorney Threlkeld stated that the 2019 nine-member Credentials and Election Committee, consisting of three active members representing each district, was officially appointed on July 25, 2019. The Credentials and Election Committee was duly informed of their responsibilities on August 22, 2019. Voting was conducted at Greenville Jr. High School between the hours of 7 and 10 a.m., and additionally at the co-op's branch facilities located in St. Jacob and St. Elmo. Absentee voting was offered at the Greenville headquarters during normal business hours August 23 through September 6, and at the co-op's branch facilities September 4 and 5, from 4:30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Attorney Threlkeld stated that there were no proposed amendments to the bylaws to bring before the membership this year.

The second prize drawing was held. The winner of the drawing received a \$100 electric bill credit courtesy of Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

Secretary Annette Hartlieb read the Official Notice of the Annual Meeting and provided proof of its mailing. President Schwarm stated that the minutes of the 80th Annual Meeting of Members, which was held in Greenville on September 8, 2018, were printed in the Official Notice. Edgar Barnal made a motion to approve the 2018 Annual Meeting minutes as reported in the Official Notice with no corrections, additions, or comments. The motion was seconded and carried.

Treasurer Sandy Nevinger announced that the 2018 Treasurer's Report had been published with the Official Notice,

in accordance with the cooperative's bylaws. She encouraged each member to review the cooperative's financial report and contact the office if they had any questions.

The third prize drawing was held. The winner of the drawing received a \$100 electric bill credit courtesy of Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

Treasurer Sandy Nevinger recognized the 2019 scholarship recipients. This year the cooperative awarded nine \$1,000 scholarships to students throughout the voting districts. Along with these nine scholarships, one additional \$1,000 scholarship was awarded: the Judy Siebert Memorial Scholarship. A short video was shown of the scholarship winners thanking the membership for their support. Nevinger introduced Director Ted Willman, who acknowledged this year's exhibitors and thanked the members that were present at the meeting. The drawing for the \$1,000 scholarship was held.

At this point in the business meeting, another prize drawing was held for a \$250 electric bill credit courtesy of Southwestern Electric Cooperative.

President Ann Schwarm introduced Vice President of Member Services Susan File who gave a presentation on how Operation Round Up (ORU) contributes to our area communities. File encouraged members to consider joining ORU by checking the box on their bill stub or calling the office to be added.

During the CEO's Report, Chief Executive Officer Bobby Williams explained how Southwestern works to provide exemplary service and exceptional reliability at a reasonable cost. He discussed how the co-op is investing in new infrastructure to keep up with member growth, what is needed to maintain an aging system, and how electric vehicles (EV) can help meet the cooperative's needs.

President Ann Schwarm gave her official report to the membership on behalf of the Board of Directors. In 2019,

members of the management team and the Board of Directors developed a long-range strategic plan for Southwestern. Key elements included infrastructure and system improvements, emerging technologies, safety, community and member engagement, and financial planning. President Schwarm commented on the cooperative's unique footprint with two major interstates running through it, and the opportunity to sell power to electric vehicle travelers.

President Ann Schwarm asked if there was any old or new business to discuss. Topics of discussion included efficiency, aid-to-construction, and the closure of the Coffeen Power Plant.

Two drawings were held, courtesy of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. The first was for a Nest Thermostat, and the second was for a \$500 bill credit.

Credentials and Election Committee Chairman Hal Langham came forward and announced the election results. Langham stated that the election was fairly and impartially conducted. In District I, Sandy Grapperhaus received 918 votes, James Ryan Morris received 138 votes, and Chris Burcham received 127 votes. In District II, Ted Willman received 802 votes, and Roger Thiems received 420 votes. In District III, Ann Schwarm who was re-elected by acclamation received 1065 votes. Langham certified that Sandy Grapperhaus had been re-elected in District I and Ted Willman had been re-elected in District II.

With no further business to come before the membership, the meeting adjourned at 11:42 a.m.

At the close of the business meeting, two drawings took place. The first was a \$500 cash prize drawing for Operation Round Up participants, and the final drawing was for one free year of electricity.

Respectfully submitted,



Annette Hartlieb  
Board Secretary

The background of the page is a photograph of a rural landscape at dusk or dawn. A road with utility poles and power lines stretches into the distance. A truck is visible on the road. The sky is filled with clouds, and a rainbow is visible in the upper right. The overall mood is one of resilience and hope.

# *Weathering the Storm*

Report from Board President Ann Schwarm



**C**lorox and toilet paper, bread and vanilla ice cream—simple, everyday items on most families' grocery lists. They were on my list the Saturday before we were asked to shelter in place. A simple trip to Vandalia's Walmart rendered me anxious and fearful.

I didn't yet have a mask or gloves.

*Should I go in or go home?*

That was the question I asked myself as I sat in the parking lot during one of the first days of the pandemic. I decided to go in. I had, after all, made the trip to town.

Where the basics had been plentiful just days before, I was met with aisle after aisle of empty shelves. That's when it hit me. At a moment's notice, life had changed—for me, for you and for your cooperative.

Through the weeks that followed, time and again, I looked to family, friends and neighbors for a sense of stability. I found reassurance in the knowledge that, though life had changed, the character of the people in my life had not. I drew confidence from the notion that, together, we could weather any storm.

I found the same reassurance and sense of stability among the directors and employees of our cooperative. Last year I described Southwestern Electric as *Your Accountable Energy*

*Partner*. Those words were a promise. In the days since, we've fulfilled that promise. And now, in the face of COVID-19, we're living those words like never before.

## **CHARACTER & COMMITMENT**

Our environment has changed. Our mission hasn't. Nor has the service ethic of the employees carrying it out.

I have often said there is no better team during a crisis than the crew at Southwestern Electric. While COVID-19 is not an outage caused by ice or snow or a storm that topples trees and brings down power lines—the weather-related crises handled so efficiently and effectively by the cooperative's workforce—it is a crisis, and one that has deeply affected the people in our region. We've all felt the impact personally, professionally, emotionally and economically.

Safety is paramount at Southwestern. Each day, we are focused on the dangers inherent to the industry. This year, the need for safety extended to protecting our members and employees from the coronavirus. Implementing the cooperative's remote work plan and following CDC recommendations while upholding our commitment to service were the orders of the day.

What I believe is remarkable, is that unless you are accustomed to walking into one of our offices to pay your electric

*Continued on page 12*



Backdrop and page 13: Co-op crews make repairs under a brightening sky after storms move through Fayette County in May.

bill, you may not have noticed anything was different at the cooperative—which was our objective when we enacted the remote work plan. We closed our office doors in late March, but Southwestern’s team continued working, assisting you by answering questions, solving problems and providing support.

They did their work from their own home offices. Of course, our crews in the field kept performing their essential tasks throughout our 11-county service territory. These individuals, working as a team with courage, creativity and compassion, continued to provide safe and reliable electricity to all of us. They helped make these unusual days seem just a little more normal. To echo Bobby Williams’ words: It’s during difficult times that our team shines brightest.

I’ve never been more proud to be a member of this cooperative.

*“Last year I described Southwestern Electric Cooperative as Your Accountable Energy Partner. Those words were a promise. In the days since, we’ve fulfilled that promise. And now, in the face of COVID-19, we’re living those words like never before.”*

## FROM A DISTANCE

The world changed this spring, but it didn’t stop, and neither did your board and management team. As it became clear COVID-related safety precautions would extend into summer, we addressed the need to restructure Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s 82nd Annual Meeting of Members.

We are proud of how the annual meeting has evolved into the event it is. Each year the meeting grows in depth and breadth thanks to the creativity and tireless work of the cooperative’s employees. In 2021, we hope to bring back the activities, exhibits and opportunities for conversation. For now, we are focusing on the essentials. We’ve developed a format which allows members to stay safe per CDC guidelines while still participating in the governance of the cooperative.

To allow for social distancing, the venue for the annual meeting has changed and the dates and times for absentee voting have been expanded (see page 22). In an effort to

maintain social distancing, rather than offering attendance gifts and awarding a free year of electricity, the board of directors voted to increase bill credits awarded to those who vote early, encouraging participation while limiting interaction.

In this Official Notice of the 82nd Annual Meeting of Members you will find reports, financial information and director candidate profiles. Please participate in the election of directors by voting early or at the annual membership meeting on September 12th.

## MOMENTUM & MILESTONES

While developing an effective response to COVID-19 has rightfully occupied much of our time and attention, we’re still getting the work done. Your cooperative’s board of directors has pushed onward to refine and implement the strategic plan established in February 2019. In the CEO’s report, you will learn more about infrastructure improvements achieved during the past year, with the completion of Southwestern’s Vandalia Substation and site development for a new substation at Maple Grove.

Emerging technologies have received the attention of a special board committee as directors research and study the potential of battery storage, electric vehicles (EVs), and wind turbines, along with the many solar installations that dot our service territory. If you have driven I-55 or I-70 lately, perhaps you have noticed our billboards announcing the launch of Southwestern’s EV charging stations in Troy. You will read more about that in Bobby’s report as well.

Data drives the decisions made by this board of directors. To that end, the entire board has been involved in developing a financial plan which is both long range and comprehensive. The need to increase kilowatt sales is at the forefront of the plan. That said, your board of directors will continue to support environmentally-aware energy practices and promote energy-efficient technologies. These sometimes conflicting priorities make the future both complicated and exciting.

Life can change at a moment’s notice. But one aspect of life will never change—this cooperative’s commitment to you. We are family, friends and neighbors. Through the days, months and years to come, amidst shifting circumstances, we can reach out to each other and regain our stability. We’ll find reassurance in the knowledge that life may change, but our character and our commitment to one another will not. We will move forward with confidence, knowing together we can weather any storm.

Sincerely,



Ann M. Schwarm, President  
Board of Directors  
Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc.





**“**  
**WE ARE FAMILY,  
FRIENDS AND  
NEIGHBORS.  
WE WILL MOVE  
FORWARD WITH  
CONFIDENCE,  
KNOWING  
TOGETHER WE  
CAN WEATHER  
ANY STORM.**  
**”**



# *A Year To Remember*

Report from CEO Bobby Williams

**W**e'll be tempted to forget 2020. It's human nature. We keep moments that nurture us near and push unpleasant experiences aside, where they can fade from memory. On balance, 2020 has given us plenty we'd like to leave behind.

This is the year a virus stopped the world from spinning. A year when words like quarantine and COVID-19 entered everyday conversation. When businesses closed, anxiety escalated, and hundreds of thousands of lives were lost to a disease that months earlier we'd never heard of.

That's an accurate account. It isn't, however, a full one. But I'm getting ahead of myself. Let me tell you about March.

The early days of the pandemic were unlike anything our organization had encountered in its 80-plus years in the utility business. The data was complex and confounding and reports and recommendations were conflicting. We found ourselves moving through an ever-changing environment equipped with imperfect advice. It posed questions we're still addressing today, the most significant of which goes something like this: How do you keep everyone safe while you're keeping the lights on?

We'd never planned for a pandemic. But we've always planned for safety and system maintenance. We spend our days developing ways to keep our members and employees out of harm's way while we keep the co-op's systems running. As we moved into March, we reviewed our tactics, training and technology, and found virtually all operations inside the building would migrate seamlessly to home offices outside it. Armed with that insight, our response evolved rapidly.

In mid-March, employees planned, prepared and tested tools and procedures in preparation for deployment. We closed our lobbies March 16. A week later we closed our offices. Our workforce shifted from stations in a few buildings to home offices scattered across the cities, small towns and rural routes that make up Southwestern's service area.

I've often said it's during the darkest days your cooperative

shines brightest. Recent months have underscored that point. We've seen Southwestern come together as a cooperative and a community. Meeting your needs during the outbreak has challenged us to think in new ways, to operate with new methods, to put our planning into practice, and to be the best version of ourselves.

Our team's performance has been exemplary. I've never been more grateful to work with my colleagues, and I speak for everyone here at Southwestern when I say we've never been more proud to work for you. Your concern for our employees, your patience as we implemented new safety protocols and procedures, and your support and encouragement provided welcome reassurance as we moved forward.

As I write this, we've begun the methodical process of shifting our operations back to our buildings. At this point, we're still closed to visitors. We encourage you to make payments electronically, as you have been. I realize financial fallout from the pandemic has left many of you with mounting expenses. 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 do what we can to help you.

## **BREAKING GROUND**

The virus changed the way we work. It didn't stop us from working. Last year we told you about infrastructure improvements planned for Madison County. In May, we broke ground for Southwestern Electric Cooperative's new Maple Grove Substation.

Located near the I-270 and I-55/I-70 interchange north of Troy, Maple Grove will ensure reliability and reduce outage times for thousands of Southwestern Electric members. The substation is scheduled to go live in early 2021.

Meanwhile, our Vandalia Substation has been providing power to Fayette County members since late last year. Built near Fayette County's growing commercial district at the I-70 Vandalia exit, the substation limits service interruptions, reduces maintenance-related outages, and will accommodate future commercial and residential development.

*Continued on page 16*



“

THE VIRUS  
CHANGED THE  
WAY WE WORK.  
IT DIDN'T  
STOP US FROM  
WORKING.

”

Substation construction, transmission line upgrades, pole replacements—these are significant projects, certainly. But they're also essential maintenance—ongoing system work that ensures safe, reliable power reaches your home or business. Taking care of our system so it takes care of you—seeing that it provides the power you need, safely, efficiently, when you need it—is what we're here to do.

## EV ENERGY

On June 3 we powered up. In cooperation with the city of Troy, the Troy, Maryville, St. Jacob and Marine regional chamber of commerce, and Holiday Inn Express Troy, Southwestern Electric installed two new electric vehicle (EV) charging stations near Exit 18 off I-55/70. The public charging stations will draw commerce off the interstate and into our co-op community. It's a testament to the commitment of our crews and project partners that the charging stations launched on time despite COVID-19.

The new chargers spotlight the advantages of EVs and move us closer to a residential charging program designed to benefit current and future Southwestern Electric members.

***“Taking care of our system so it takes care of you—seeing that it provides the power you need, safely, efficiently, when you need it—is what we're here to do.”***

For years, we've encouraged you to conserve energy. You've taken that lesson to heart. Each year, as our membership grows, our energy sales remain more or less the same.

Why is that an issue?

We have 3,500 miles of power line to maintain, substations to build, old technology to retire and new to deploy. That takes resources. Bolstering our bottom line through EV-related power sales will position us to update technology, maintain rights of way, and replace miles of old conductor with newer, more resilient lines, while keeping your rates in check.

We began sketching out ideas for our EV program in 2017. In the years since, we've studied EVs and EV-related energy programs launched by other utilities around the country. This year we're turning that knowledge into action.

In October, we'll launch our residential EV program. By this time next year, we'll offer incentive rates for residential electric vehicle charging. For co-op members with EVs, that means a clean, quiet automobile charged at an economical rate from the comfort and convenience of your garage or driveway. Each time you charge your EV at home, you'll be investing in infrastructure that provides safe, reliable power for your house, your business, and your cooperative community.

And if you don't plan to buy an EV? You still benefit from the program. Energy sales driven by EVs will help us build a better system for every co-op member—including your friends, your neighbors, and you.

## ANNUAL MEETING 2020

Southwestern Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members is a novel event. This year we're cutting it down to a short story. The meeting will be held at the Bond County Fairgrounds in Greenville. We're focusing on social distancing and limiting personal interaction, so we won't be serving

Site preparation for Maple Grove Substation takes shape while the co-op's EV charging stations at Holiday Inn Express Troy go live. Previous page: Crews move a 25-ton transformer into place at Vandalia Substation.



meals, handing out attendance gifts, holding prize drawings, playing games or offering a carnival. There'll be no cash prize drawings and no drawing for a year of free electricity. Rather, we're offering bill credits of up to \$50 to every member who takes time to make their voice heard by participating early in the election of directors.

Our objective is to offer an environment that allows you to take part in your co-op's democratic process safely. The spirit of celebration you bring to the meeting each year means a lot to us, but your health and safety mean more. With luck, next year we'll be able to return to our traditional format.

## YEAR IN REVIEW

I'd like to close with a few words of gratitude. I'm grateful to our board and employees for their commitment to the organization, to each other, and to you. Their performance has done nothing less than inspire.

Closing our offices, adapting schedules, and adopting procedures to ensure the safety of employees and members alike required patience from everyone involved—including you. As I mentioned earlier, your calls and comments have been overwhelmingly supportive. From everyone here at Southwestern Electric, thank you.

That brings me back to where I started.

This could well be a year we choose to forget. A year when a virus put our lives on hold. When health concerns stood between family, friends and us.

The year we kept our distance.

Or it could be the year we drew near. When we reached out to the neighbor next door, the family across the street, the people on the far side of town, and in the midst of isolation, found friends.

It may be the year we lost loved ones far too soon.

It can be the year we found faith in our community, hope in our willingness to work for a common good, and comfort

in the measures we took to keep each other safe.

It will be the year businesses closed.

Let it be the year opportunities opened. When we expressed our appreciation for local shops and services by spending with intention, and supported our entrepreneurs by investing in their energy, their industry, their dreams.

It may be the year we watched the world through a window and lived life behind a mask.

It can be the year when conversation over a cup of coffee, attending a wedding, watching graduation in a school gym, dining out, a day at the zoo, the affirmation of a warm hello, a handshake, or a hug, gain more meaning. A year when something large enough to blanket the planet yet small enough to go unseen made us appreciate the amazing, mundane miracle of everyday life, which also went unseen, until it was taken away and we could see nothing else.

We can forget 2020. Push the hardship aside and let it fade.

Or we can keep it near. We can carry the lessons we've learned into the next year, and the year after, and all the years to come. We can use this time to make us better, stronger, more appreciative, more compassionate human beings. The choice is ours.

I plan to make this a year to remember.

And I intend to start today.

Be healthy and stay safe.

Sincerely,



Bobby Williams  
Chief Executive Officer

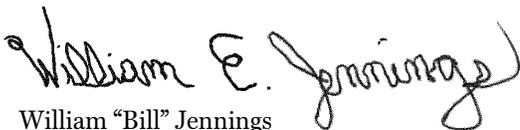


# Board Treasurer’s Report

Southwestern Electric Cooperative reported strong margins of \$3.6 million in 2019. Accordingly, Southwestern Electric was in compliance with all provisions of the loan agreements with CoBank, who is the sole lender for all of the co-op’s long-term debt. In order to maintain such compliance and our current rates, \$4 million in margins were applied to 2019 from the Margin Stabilization Plan. In 2014, the board of directors had the foresight to defer margins to future years to offset projected expenditures. The application of these deferred margins to the 2019 financial statements was both expected and planned. As of Dec. 31, 2019, Southwestern has a remaining total of \$7.8 million for margin stabilization in future years.

For additional information, please see the financial statements on the pages to follow.

Respectfully Submitted,

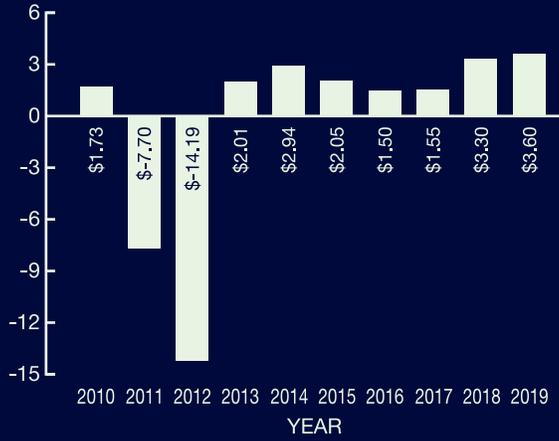


William “Bill” Jennings  
Board Treasurer

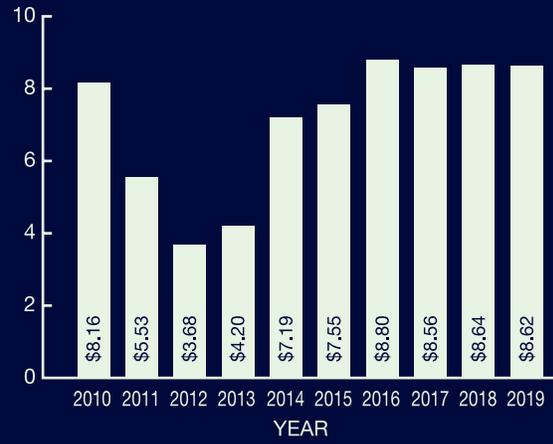
### Where did the cooperative’s revenue go in 2019?

Power Production .....	\$778,019 .....	1.2%	
Purchased Power .....	37,119,244 .....	57.7%	
Operations & Maintenance .....	6,113,172 .....	9.5%	
Customer Accounts and Sales Expenses .....	1,998,500 .....	3.1%	
A&G .....	5,493,311 .....	8.5%	
Depreciation & Amortization .....	5,313,272 .....	8.2%	
Taxes, Interest & Other Deductions .....	4,015,867 .....	6.2%	
Operating & Nonoperating Margins .....	3,600,125 .....	5.6%	
<b>Total Operating &amp; Nonoperating Revenue .....</b>	<b>\$64,431,510 .....</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

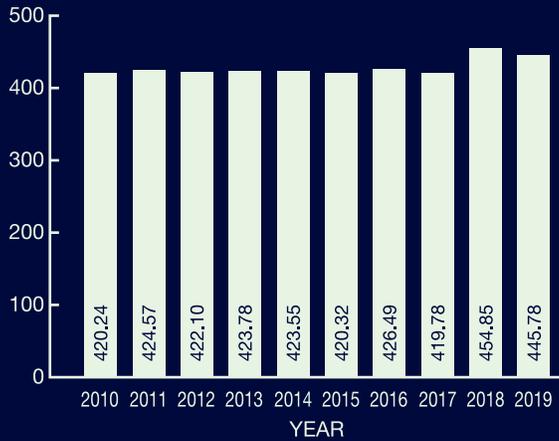
**Margins**  
in millions of dollars



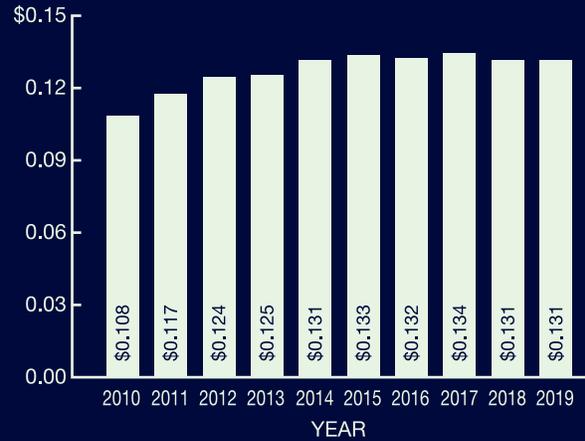
**Capital Investment**  
in millions of dollars



**Total Electricity Sold to Members**  
in millions of kWh



**Rate per kWh to Residential Members**  
in dollars (includes infrastructure and operations charge)



## REPORTS & FINANCIAL INFORMATION

### Southwestern Electric Cooperative Financial Information

Statement of Operations	2019	2018	2017
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>			
Electric	\$63,191,680	\$60,263,464	\$53,815,941
Other	<u>386,988</u>	<u>393,774</u>	<u>370,676</u>
Total Operating Revenues	63,578,668	60,657,238	54,186,617
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES</b>			
Cost of Purchased Power	37,119,244	34,880,047	30,531,471
Power Production Expense - Operations	184,568	256,925	266,073
Power Production Expense - Maintenance	590,950	647,333	556,607
Transmission Expense - Maintenance	2,501	-	342
Distribution Expense - Operations	1,604,862	1,462,023	1,187,920
Distribution Expense - Maintenance	4,508,310	5,016,715	4,325,862
Consumer Account Expense	1,333,671	1,342,381	1,332,637
Consumer Service and Informational Expense	150,063	127,239	31,228
Sales Expense	514,766	493,991	535,483
Administrative and General Expense	5,493,311	5,148,087	6,020,097
Depreciation and Amortization	5,313,272	5,151,760	4,906,186
Taxes	214,476	207,222	202,558
Other Interest	15,344	19,786	39,426
Other Deductions	<u>50,588</u>	<u>36,472</u>	<u>35,006</u>
Total Operating Expenses	<u>57,095,926</u>	<u>54,789,981</u>	<u>49,970,896</u>
<b>OPERATING MARGINS BEFORE FIXED CHARGES</b>	6,482,742	5,867,257	4,215,721
<b>INTEREST ON LONG-TERM DEBT</b>	<u>3,735,459</u>	<u>3,791,277</u>	<u>3,719,041</u>
<b>NET OPERATING MARGINS</b>	2,747,283	2,075,980	496,680
<b>NONOPERATING MARGINS</b>			
Interest Income	81,946	83,582	63,260
Patronage Capital Credits	732,223	1,038,428	919,239
Other Nonoperating Margins	<u>38,673</u>	<u>101,072</u>	<u>67,616</u>
Total Nonoperating Margins	<u>852,842</u>	<u>1,223,082</u>	<u>1,050,115</u>
<b>NET MARGINS</b>	<u>\$3,600,125</u>	<u>\$3,299,062</u>	<u>\$1,546,795</u>

**Balance Sheet** (As of December 31, 2019)

**ASSETS**

**Utility Plant**

Electric Plant in Service	\$194,092,886
Construction Work in Progress	<u>1,562,879</u>
Total	195,655,765
Less: Accumulated Provision for Depreciation	<u>(57,960,003)</u>
Net Utility Plant	137,695,762

**Other Assets and Investments**

Investments in Associated Organizations	3,758,953
Notes Receivable, Net of Current Portion	666,142
Other Special Funds	<u>127,760</u>
Total Other Assets and Investments	4,552,855

**Current Assets**

Cash and Cash Equivalents	7,588,408
Accounts Receivable, Net	5,545,555
Materials and Supplies Inventory	1,586,894
Current Portion of Notes Receivable	87,711
Prepayments	363,925
Interest Receivable	<u>14,163</u>
Total Current Assets	15,186,656

**Deferred Charges**

	<u>3,946,335</u>
--	------------------

Total Assets	<u>\$161,381,608</u>
--------------	----------------------

**EQUITIES & LIABILITIES**

**Equities**

Patronage Capital	\$46,834,611
Other Equities	<u>3,306,092</u>
Total Equities	50,140,703

<b>Long-Term Debt, Net Of Current Maturities</b>	85,620,740
--	------------

**Accumulated Miscellaneous**

<b>Operating Provisions</b>	1,743,046
-----------------------------	-----------

**Accumulated Provision for**

<b>Pension and Benefits</b>	127,760
-----------------------------	---------

**Current Liabilities**

Current Maturities of Long-Term Debt	3,799,799
Notes Payable	3,000,000
Accounts Payable	6,725,557
Consumer Deposits	817,086
Other Current and Accrued Liabilities	<u>1,281,212</u>
Total Current Liabilities	15,623,654

<b>Deferred Credits</b>	<u>8,125,705</u>
-------------------------	------------------

Total Equities and Liabilities	<u>\$161,381,608</u>
--------------------------------	----------------------

# Voting Schedule

Members may cast their votes for board candidates in the 2020 election at the times and locations listed below.

## **\$50 bill credit with registration card, \$40 bill credit without registration card**

<b>Greenville office</b>	525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246	Aug. 28 – Sept. 11 from 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
<b>St. Jacob warehouse</b>	10031 Ellis Road in St. Jacob	Sept. 1 and Sept. 9 from 4 – 7 p.m.
<b>St. Elmo warehouse</b>	2117 East 1850 Avenue in St. Elmo (frontage road at the I-70 St. Elmo exit)	Sept. 2 and Sept. 10 from 4 – 7 p.m.

**Members must bring the registration card on the back cover of this publication to receive the additional \$10 bill credit.**

## **\$30 bill credit with registration card, \$20 bill credit without registration card**

<b>Bond County Fairgrounds, St. Jacob &amp; St. Elmo warehouses</b>	Annual Meeting Day, Saturday, Sept. 12, 7-10 a.m.
---	--

**Members must bring the registration card on the back cover of this publication to receive the additional \$10 bill credit.**

# Additional Voting Information

Commercial and inactive members, please note the following:

### **Commercial Memberships**

Commercial (business) members are advised that any representative wishing to vote will be asked to present satisfactory evidence that this person has been assigned to act as an agent of the business. A commercial member, just like any other, is entitled to a single vote in cooperative elections.

### **Inactive Memberships**

Only active members of the co-op are eligible to vote in the election.



# Credentials & Election Committee

The Credentials & Election Committee is responsible for presiding over the vote and determining the validity of the results.

## 2020 Credentials & Election Committee Members

### **District I:** *Macoupin, Madison and St. Clair Counties*

Ted Flath	2712 Old Staunton Road	Edwardsville, IL 62025
Kenneth Grotefendt	8243 Fruit Road	Edwardsville, IL 62025
John Sedlacek	633 Cedar Road	Saint Jacob, IL 62281

### **District II:** *Bond, Clinton and Montgomery Counties*

Steven Laesch	1357 Illinois Route 127	Greenville, IL 62246
Ron Jarrett	445 Round Prairie Avenue	Greenville, IL 62246
Hal Langham	1355 Airport Avenue	Greenville, IL 62246

### **District III:** *Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion and Shelby Counties*

Angela Reeter	2206 Zent Drive	Vandalia, IL 62471
Pete Burnam	2065 South Lake Drive	Vandalia, IL 62471
Brad Stein	1503 N 2000 Street	Brownstown, IL 62418



Chris Botulinski, vice president of engineering for Southwestern Electric, observes CDC protocols while commissioning a solar array in May.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT I



**Mark Gusewelle**  
District I  
Edwardsville

**F**or Mark Gusewelle, Southwestern Electric is more than a cooperative. It's a way of life. As the son of retiring director Richard Gusewelle, Mark has watched a lifetime of leadership lessons unfold during his father's 36 years of service to the members. "My dad always treats co-op members like family and looks out for their best interests," Gusewelle said. "I'd like to carry on that tradition."

Gusewelle believes a director should act as a liaison between the board and Southwestern members. He says a director's role is to oversee co-op operations, to listen to the membership, bring member concerns before the board, and act on the members' behalf.

**"I want to give my neighbor-members a voice with the board of directors."**

He appreciates the democratic principles on which cooperatives were founded and feels the organization should never lose sight of its not-for-profit member-service ethic. Transparency and open communication are vital to effective leadership, Gusewelle said. "I want to give my neighbor-members a voice with the board of directors," he noted.

If elected, Gusewelle intends to spend his first term focusing on infrastructure maintenance, right of way clearance, and exploring renewable energy options for Southwestern members. He recognizes maintaining the co-op's 3,500 miles of right of way is a significant investment, but says it's essential to ensure power reliability and quality.

Gusewelle also brings business management, critical thinking, leadership and problem-solving skills to his bid for the board. He served as a police officer for the city of Edwardsville from 1990 to 1996, and for the village of Worden from 1997 to 2003. He's worked as a local electrician and business owner for more than 30 years.

Mark Gusewelle has been a member of Southwestern Electric Cooperative for nearly 20 years. He resides in rural Edwardsville.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT I



**Arthur W. "Bill" Schnur**  
District I  
Edwardsville

**B**ill Schnur spent more than 40 years using his engineering skills to design building systems that serve the needs of consumers throughout the United States. Now he'd like to put that experience to work for Southwestern Electric members.

Schnur, who plans to retire soon, has spent the last 25 years at Woolpert, one of the premier architecture, engineering, geospatial and strategic consulting firms in the world. "I would like to use my skills in engineering system design, analysis, cost estimation, and team leadership/participation to enable Southwestern Electric Cooperative to achieve its objectives and help the community in which I live," he said. "I enjoy new challenges and believe that I can readily apply my skills in the electric power distribution domain."

Schnur's areas of interest include infrastructure and facilities assessment, life cycle cost analysis of proposed maintenance and capital projects, and ensuring the co-op's long term financial stability.

As Woolpert's senior associate and HVAC systems design engineer, Schnur has spent much of his career performing infrastructure and facility condition assessments. In the course of his duties, he created an application that compiles infrastructure and facility data, and reports deferred maintenance items and costs, identifies priorities, and lists detailed and high-level estimates.

**"I would like to use my skills in engineering system design, analysis, cost estimation, and team leadership/participation to enable Southwestern Electric Cooperative to achieve its objectives and help the community in which I live."**

Over the last 42 years, Schnur has analyzed and designed HVAC systems for institutional, military, commercial, aircraft, industrial and educational facilities. "One of our latest projects is a study that we prepared for the Illinois Capital Development Board regarding the elimination of a coal-fired power plant at Choate Mental Hospital near Anna, Ill.," he said. "Our recommendations include the decommissioning of the coal-fired power plant, the installation of a new electrical service to the campus, and a new gas-fired medium pressure steam plant to provide heat to the campus."

He is also responsible for the creation of facility energy models and performing life cycle cost analyses on those facilities.

Schnur said a director should use his skills and knowledge to best serve the cooperative and its members. "A director should work to understand the needs expressed by other board members, and how they fit into the cooperative's overall plans," he noted.

If elected, Schnur said he would like to focus on deferred maintenance assessment, risk reduction, exploring the potential for alternative energy sources, and ensuring reliability. "When the power is out, most people are not thinking about the cost," he said. "They just want their power back on. It is important not only from a convenience standpoint but also from a health standpoint for those who rely on power for personal medical equipment."

Schnur has served on the Edwardsville High School Ice Hockey Board for two years. He coached two years for the same organization, coached Twin Bridges hockey for 13 years, and served on the Rules and Discipline Committee for the Missouri Hockey Association. "We implemented an academic standard requirement to play, adopted the school district's official code of conduct, and organized bus service to and from the games," Schnur said, "making the organization much better for years to come."

Bill Schnur has been a member of Southwestern Electric since 1991. He lives in rural Edwardsville.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT I



**Marvin Warner**  
District I  
Pocahontas

**M**arvin Warner learned about the privileges and responsibilities of being a co-op member at an early age. He grew up on a farm in Shelby County, where his family was active in Shelby Electric Cooperative. “I believe that members of a democratic society need to do things that benefit their fellow citizens,” he said. “I see serving on the Southwestern board as a way to help give back to the members of the cooperative.”

Warner noted the cooperative approach to business allows members to contribute equitably and democratically, and that the membership has a voice in how the cooperative provides for its needs.

If elected, Warner would focus on keeping rates low, ensuring quality customer service and power reliability, and looking out for the safety of cooperative employees.

Warner said the cooperative should continue to work toward securing long-term contracts to control rates, providing training to employees to improve skills and safety, and that Southwestern should survey members regularly for input on improving cooperative services.

**“I believe that members of a democratic society need to do things that benefit their fellow citizens. I see serving on the Southwestern board as a way to help give back to the members of the cooperative.”**

Warner has extensive experience working with a board focused on governance and policy development. He served as an educator in Highland Community Unit School District 5 (CUSD5) for 33 years. During the last 18 years of his career he was an administrator, serving as superintendent of schools during his final four years at Highland CUSD5.

After his retirement from Highland, Warner worked for the Regional Office of Education in Madison County, coordinating professional development for educators. He retired from the Regional Office of Education in December 2017 after 10 years of service.

Warner served on the Highland Area Christian Service Ministry board, a food pantry, from 2001 to 2017, and on the Highland Pregnancy Care Center board from 2010 to 2016. He currently serves on the Highland Area Community Foundation board.

Warner was also an elder on the Greenville First Christian Church board, and has served in that capacity intermittently for more than 35 years. During that time, he chaired and was involved with numerous building projects. He currently serves on the Greenville First Christian Church mission team, overseeing the mission budget and coordinating trips to visit supported missions.

A charter member of the Highland Area Schools Alumni Association, he served on the association board from 2006 to 2016, and is in the midst of his 2019-2022 term. “I am especially proud of this organization’s efforts to honor alumni of the Highland area schools,” he noted.

Warner has served on the Highland Area Community Foundation board since 2016 and was elected president for 2020-2021. He also serves on the board of the Environmental Education Association of Illinois.

“I believe all of these experiences serving on a variety of boards have given me a clear vision of the role of boards in providing good governance,” he said.

Marvin Warner has been a Southwestern Electric member for 15 years. He lives northwest of Pocahontas with his wife, Teresa. They have two children and five grandchildren. Their son Brent and his family live near St. Augustine, Fla. Their son Chad and his family live in St. Louis.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT I



**Chris Burcham**  
District I  
Edwardsville

**C**hris Burcham is passionate about clean and renewable energy. “I believe clean, renewable energy will give us and our children a better chance at a healthy and sustainable future. I want to work with the board and Southwestern Electric to find ways to transition to clean energy without raising rates for members,” Burcham said, adding that he wants to give renewable energy a stronger voice on the board.

“Running for the board gives me an opportunity to affect energy choices on a larger scale than I can do alone,” he said. “I want to advocate for policies that encourage more members to install solar and support members with existing solar installations, while also supporting the development of large-scale solar and wind projects in the region.”

Burcham would also like to see Southwestern develop programs that communicate ways to be more efficient with energy usage, thereby saving members money. “It is usually much cheaper and more effective to reduce energy usage than to generate more power,” he said.

**“I want to advocate for policies that encourage more members to install solar and support members with existing solar installations, while also supporting the development of large-scale solar and wind projects in the region.”**

Burcham pointed out that the cost of renewable energy continues to drop, and that it can be generated locally. “Locally generated power will help the local economy,” he added. Burcham also feels locally generated renewable energy would ultimately reduce member rates.

“I would like to see Southwestern look into energy storage options. These solutions could be turned on and off quickly to supply power during peak times. This would save Southwestern money and improve reliability,” he said. “Ideally, that could be paired with larger solar or wind projects.”

Adopting advances like energy storage solutions and micro-grid concepts could make Southwestern an innovation leader in the Midwest, Burcham said.

“My career is in Information Technology. To be successful in my career, I must be constantly informed of and educated on current and emerging technologies. When I’m not in the office, I work on small DIY electric conversion projects like the electric bicycle that I take to work, an upcoming electric riding mower, and a small power wall. While I’m not an electrician, I have a solid understanding of electrical fundamentals. I would love the opportunity to quickly learn the operations of Southwestern Electric and contribute to making it an affordable, reliable, and sustainable service for its members,” he said.

“Southwestern Electric is already reliable and has been doing a great job with maintenance and upgrades,” Burcham noted, referencing recent and planned infrastructure improvements throughout Southwestern’s service area. “Continuing maintenance and upgrades like that will improve reliability and reduce power interruptions.”

Chris Burcham has lived in a Southwestern Electric household most of his life. He’s been a member for three years. He lives outside Edwardsville with his wife and kids.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT II



**Sandy Nevinger**  
Incumbent  
District II  
Greenville

**S**andy Nevinger spent more than 30 years as an employee of Southwestern Electric before running for the board in 2011. As the cooperative's director of member services and public relations, she acted as a liaison to the membership and brought member issues to the board and management team.

"After 31 years of service, I retired from Southwestern in 2008. However, my interest in helping co-op members never faded," she said. "With the experience and understanding I gained during my time at Southwestern Electric, I felt I could contribute to the challenges facing the co-op and be a strong voice for the members."

As an employee at Southwestern Electric, Nevinger oversaw bylaws and assisted with policies, procedures, rates and incentive programs. Her position allowed her to work with local, state and federal legislators to address co-op concerns. In addition, she oversaw electrical safety initiatives, administered Operation Round Up, managed Southwestern's scholarship program, and coordinated Southwestern Electric Cooperative's annual meeting of members. "My greatest gratification was addressing issues and helping our members with their concerns, being their advocate, and bringing value to our cooperative," she said. "My goal, and our goal as a board, is to improve the lives of those we serve."

**"With the experience and understanding I gained during my time at Southwestern Electric, I felt I could contribute to the challenges facing the co-op and be a strong voice for the members."**

Nevinger noted significant infrastructure improvements, the development of Southwestern's strategic plan, mentoring a new CEO, CFO and three new directors, and the co-op's response to COVID-19 as milestones of her most recent term.

Looking ahead, she would like to further address the co-op's aging infrastructure and apply new technology to ensure reliability and keep costs in check. "Renewable energy, battery storage technology, electric vehicles and charging stations, cyber security—we continue to explore the role each of these will play in our cooperative's future," she said.

"We may offer many services and programs," she added, "but providing reliable service at a reasonable cost is always at the forefront of our mission. Rates, reliability and service, along with power supply, are constantly discussed in and out of the board room."

A Southwestern member since 1977, Nevinger serves on Southwestern's Scholarship Committee and Cyber Security Committee, and chairs the Policy & Bylaws Committee.

She's a lifetime member of the Bond County Memorial VFW Post 1377 Auxiliary, where she's served as a trustee and chaplain, and a past board member of the Bond-Madison Water Company. "It was a privilege to be part of the dynamic group of volunteers who brought potable drinking water to our neighbors and beyond, signing up potential customers, and serving on its first board," she said.

Nevinger also serves as secretary-treasurer of the Zion Cemetery Board.

"I was honored to be elected to Southwestern Electric's board of directors in 2011," said Nevinger. "I take my responsibilities for the members very seriously. Even though some decisions are extremely challenging, every decision is made with the best interests of the members in mind. The members are always first."

Sandy and her husband, Mike, live northeast of Greenville.

## BOARD CANDIDATE PROFILES - DISTRICT III



**Annette Hartlieb**  
Incumbent  
District III  
Vandalia

**F**or Annette Hartlieb, being involved in Southwestern Electric Cooperative is a family tradition. Hartlieb, who grew up on a farm north of New Douglas, was raised on Southwestern Electric lines. “I started attending Southwestern Electric annual meetings as a young child with my parents. They instilled a strong cooperative belief in me by always attending and voting at the cooperative meetings,” she said.

Hartlieb, who was active in 4-H and FFA, remembers Southwestern board members attending county fairs and auctions to support agricultural producers and future farmers. “It was a true honor when I was elected to the board in 2017 and given the opportunity to serve the members,” she said. “I felt it was my opportunity to give back to the cooperative that had always served my family and rural roots so well.”

During her first term, Hartlieb pursued a rigorous itinerary of industry training through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), earning the association’s Credentialed Cooperative Director certification in 2019. Her areas of focus included finance, government, ethics, decision analysis and member-focused planning. Hartlieb also completed NRECA’s Gettysburg Leadership Experience training, with an emphasis in strategic planning.

**“A lot of families are struggling to make ends meet, particularly now, with the COVID-19 outbreak. So providing low-cost, reliable service to our members will continue to be a priority for me.”**

“The instructors for those courses work in the industry, so they bring real-world experience into the classroom that easily transfers to the board room,” she said. “The ultimate educational experience you encounter at these trainings is interacting with other board members from throughout the United States, and gaining insight through group discussions. We have different backgrounds but the same objectives.”

As a director, one of Hartlieb’s primary goals is to ensure the co-op continues to offer reliable

power at reasonable rates. “A lot of families are struggling to make ends meet, particularly now, with the COVID-19 outbreak,” she said. “They’re working with limited resources. So providing low-cost, reliable service to our members will continue to be a priority for me.”

Hartlieb currently serves as the Assistant Regional Superintendent for the Regional Office of Education (ROE) #3, which serves Bond, Christian, Effingham, Fayette, and Montgomery counties. Prior to that she served as the division administrator for educational services at ROE #3.

She taught third grade at Mulberry Grove Elementary School for 11 years before accepting the principal’s position, which she held for six years. Hartlieb has been a member of the Illinois Principals Association and Illinois Education Association, and served on various school committees and organizations. She’s also served with the Alhambra Jaycees, the Bond County Health Department Medical Reserve Corps, and as a professional development trainer for ROE #3.

Having spent 23 years in education, she appreciates the value of quality training and recognizes the impact of social interaction and the exchange of ideas. “It takes a highly skilled team to build a successful organization,” she said. “This is accomplished by everyone working together, contributing their strengths, recognizing areas where they can improve, and absorbing knowledge from others.”

Hartlieb said a director’s duty first and foremost is to serve the members. “As an educator, I always found myself asking, ‘Is this the best option for my students?’ Now as a board member, I’ve found myself thinking, ‘Is this what’s best for our members?’ I will continue to base my decisions on this question.”

Hartlieb serves on Southwestern’s Member & Community Engagement Committee and the Cyber Security Committee, and chairs the Business & Economic Development Committee. She also serves as secretary of the Executive Committee.

Annette Hartlieb and her husband, Dennis, live southwest of Vandalia with their children, Alexi, Bryce and Mason.

## OUR TEAM

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Sandy Grapperhaus**  
Vice President  
District I  
Collinsville



**Jerry Gaffner**  
District II  
Greenville



**Annette Hartlieb**  
Secretary  
District III  
Vandalia



**Richard Gusewelle**  
District I  
Edwardsville



**Sandy Nevinger**  
District II  
Greenville



**Ann Schwarm**  
President  
District III  
Loogootee



**William "Bill" Jennings**  
Treasurer  
District I  
Alhambra



**Ted Willman**  
District II  
Greenville



**Jared Stine**  
District III  
St. Elmo

### PERSONNEL

#### STAFF MEMBERS

Michael Barns, *Art Director*  
Chris Botulinski, *Vice President of Engineering*  
Victor Buehler, *Vice President of Information Technology*  
Dylan Casey, *Manager of Engineering*  
Susan File, *Vice President of Member Services*  
Leslie Frandsen, *Vice President of Billing*  
Thaddius Intraiva, *Director of Information Technology*  
Becky Jacobson, *Chief Financial Officer*  
Andrew Jones, *Vice President of Business Development & Marketing*  
Carrie Knebel, *Vice President of Human Resources*  
Julie Lowe, *Energy Manager*  
Joe Richardson, *Vice President of Communications*  
Brooke Scott, *Executive Assistant*  
Neil Sperandio, *Manager of Operations*  
Bobby Williams, *Chief Executive Officer*  
Michael Willman, *Vice President of Operations*

#### GREENVILLE

##### Office & Engineering Personnel

Jody Baumberger-Gehrig, *Comptroller*  
Virgil Bowden, *Custodian*  
Annette Brown, *Meter Technician*  
Casey Eberlin, *GIS Technician*  
Barb Frerker, *Member Services Representative*  
Laura Gall, *Accounting Clerk*  
Natalie Goestenkors, *Dispatcher*  
Renee Harnetiaux, *Work Order Coordinator*  
Cheryl Hebenstreit, *Cashier/Receptionist*  
Kim Jackson, *Dispatcher*  
Tracy Kuttin-Ferguson, *Purchasing Agent*  
Kathleen Lewey, *Staking Engineer*

Jo Ellen Logue, *Member Services Representative*  
Carla Schneider, *Member Services Representative*  
Dean Schnurbusch, *Senior Staking Engineer*  
Lauren Schoen, *Dispatcher*  
Holly Thiems, *IT Technical Support Specialist*  
Marilyn VanUytven, *Payroll & Benefits Specialist*  
Debbie Whicker, *Member Services Representative*  
Jessica Whitehead, *Member Services Representative*

##### Maintenance & Construction Personnel

Brian Bast, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Mark Chasteen, *Construction Foreman*  
Patrick Harris, Sr. *Warehouseman/ Groundman/Truck Driver*  
Eric Rodgers, *1st Class Mechanic*  
Chris Schmid, *4th Step Apprentice Lineman*  
Adam Simmonds, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Clayton Snyder, *1st Class Mechanic*  
Scott Wollerman, *Maintenance Foreman*

##### Meter Department

Scott Fitzgerald, *Foreman/Polyphase Meterman & Tester*  
Andrew Wessel, *Lineman/Polyphase Meterman & Tester*

##### Forestry Department

Chris Hamby, *Forestry Journeyman*  
Josiah Roberts, *Forestry Journeyman*  
Keith Steiner, *Forestry Foreman*

#### ST. JACOB

**Office & Engineering Personnel**  
Mary Curry, *Staking Engineer*

Linda Haberer, *Cashier/Receptionist*  
Brian Mills, *Staking Engineer*  
Vincent Sanvi, *Staking Engineer*  
Becky Spratt, *Member Services Representative*

##### Maintenance & Construction Personnel

Tim Atterberry, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Edgar Braundmeier, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Leo Dublo, *Construction Foreman*  
Tyler Isaak, *Construction Lineman*  
Tyler Kunz, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Joel LaFrance, *System-wide Troubleshooter/Maintenance Foreman*  
Sonny Lampe, Sr. *Warehouseman/ Groundman/Truck Driver*  
Rick Mersinger, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Rob Nesbit, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Jimmy Revisky, *3rd Step Apprentice Lineman*  
Dustin Vosholler, *Journeyman Lineman*

##### Forestry Department

Jared Tebbe, *Forestry Journeyman*  
Robert Wright, *Forestry Foreman*

#### ST. ELMO FACILITY

Adam French, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Ethan Fulk, *Journeyman Lineman*  
Douglas Haarmann, *Construction Foreman*  
Kyle Hails, *Maintenance Foreman*  
Todd Hodson, Sr. *Warehouseman/ Groundman/Truck Driver*  
Tyler Meseke, *Journeyman Lineman*

#### FREEDOM POWER STATION

David Brandt, *Power Plant Technician*  
Russell Gilbert, *General Manager*  
Leo Leonhard, *Power Plant Technician*

**VOTER REGISTRATION CARD 2020** Please sign and present this card at the registration table.

**82nd Annual Meeting of Members**

Saturday, September 12, 2020



Member Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Please enroll me in Operation Round Up

**PLEASE UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION**

Home Phone # (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Billing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**Present this registration card to receive an additional \$10 bill credit!**

**DISTRICT MAP**

