

THE *Southwestern*

A SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MEMBER MAGAZINE

MAY 2021 • VOLUME 73 • ISSUE 5

Principles & Progress

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ON 36 YEARS OF SERVICE**

Commissioning Cogeneration

**CO-OP APPROVES RECORD
NUMBER OF PROJECTS IN 2020**

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MEMBER MAIL

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**MAKE YOUR
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Just being nose-y.

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

Spring is in bloom at Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve in Collinsville. Read more about Willoughby on page 20.

FROM THE CEO

I'll open by thanking Patty Lanz of Collinsville for the email that sparked this column. In March, Patty reached out regarding a proposition on the Collinsville Township ballot. The proposition read:



"Shall the Township of Collinsville, Madison County, Illinois have the authority to arrange for the supply of electricity for its residential and small commercial retail customers in the unincorporated portions of Collinsville Township not otherwise part of a municipality of Madison County, Illinois, who have not opted out of such program."

"We are very happy with our service and do not wish for it to change," Patty wrote. "We are not sure exactly how this proposition would affect that."

Great question, Patty.

The short answer: It won't affect you. The proposition will have no impact on the service we provide to you or any member in Collinsville Township. Your service and rates will remain unaffected by the proposition.

Here's the longer answer, explaining why:

When utility deregulation legislation was being drafted in the '90s, legislators recognized a fundamental difference between not-for-profit cooperatives and investor-owned utilities, their priorities, and how they operate in the market.

Investor-owned utilities are tasked with meeting the needs to two separate groups of people: customers and shareholders. They have to balance the needs of their customers—service, sustainable rates and infrastructure investment—against the expectations of their shareholders—a reasonable return on investment, or profits.

In a cooperative, there are no competing interests. Our shareholders and customers are one and the same: You.

As a member, you're part-owner of Southwestern Electric. Revenue we make that exceeds what we need to purchase energy, build and maintain our substations, poles and power lines, and operate the business, is returned to you. We call your equity in the cooperative capital credit. You can think of it as a rebate equal to the margins we make.

Illinois deregulation legislation acknowledged that co-ops are structured to meet the needs of their respective memberships. It didn't obligate cooperatives to open their members to marketing from power brokers, or alternative retail electric suppliers (ARES).

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Coronavirus Response

Mitigation Measures Remain in Place

Southwestern Electric Cooperative will keep its coronavirus mitigation measures in place through May. The co-op's response plan calls for lobbies and drive-up windows to remain closed through May 31. Employees will continue to answer calls and questions from members, and crews will respond to outages and make repairs quickly and safely, as they have been throughout the pandemic, said CEO Bobby Williams.

In March 2020, the co-op took precautions to safeguard the health of employees and members and curb the spread of COVID-19. Protective measures included adopting CDC health and safety guidelines, observing social distancing protocols, wearing face coverings when appropriate, and reviewing safety measures with employees. Those precautions have remained in place since last spring.

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

For the latest information, see our social media channels or go to www.sweci.com.

FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

For the latest news and notes, follow us on facebook and twitter. You'll find us at facebook.com/SWECI and twitter.com/sweci.



CO-OP REMINDERS

May 10 Payment processing systems will be unavailable from midnight to 4 a.m., while we perform system maintenance. No payments will be processed during this time. We will resume processing payments at 4:01 a.m.

May 31 Offices closed for Memorial Day.

BOARD MEETING MINUTES

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



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.

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.

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.

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.

Clearing Right of Way, Putting Down Roots

by Jim Shelton

As a young boy, 7 or 8, I can remember helping my father and uncle cut the right of way to make a place for the poles to be set. It was probably 1947 or 1948 and my folks were in the planning process of building a new home for our family. There was about a half-mile of timber on the south side of the township road that needed cut. The trees were felled using a crosscut saw. It was a mile from Route 128 to where the line ended. My grandfather lived between our home and my uncle's home and he opted out of getting electricity at that time, but later did. I think I remember the person from SWECI that worked with us was from Greenville and had the same last name as ours.

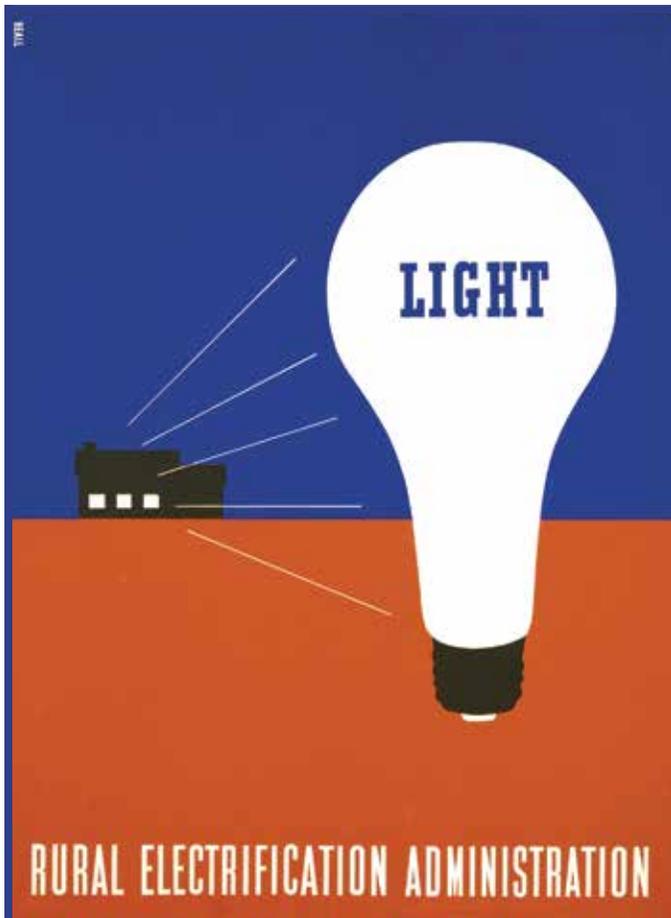
The lighting to do school homework and reading before was with kerosene lamps. The water was inside with a hand pump in the kitchen and the toilet was 30 paces north of the house.

The lights got to our place before dad got started on our new home, so he drilled a hole through a wall and we had a single light bulb in each room.

The old home was moved and the new home was built in the same area and completed in 1949 or 1950. Mostly built with oak lumber from the farm, which dad and mom felled. They hauled logs to the sawmill and lumber back to the site with an F-12 tractor. Dad was a farmer/carpenter and did most of the building. The house still is standing well and was occupied until 2018.

Fifty years later, my wife and I built just east of where my grandparents (mother's parents and also her grandparents) lived since 1903. We have been with SWECI for a little over 20 years.

Jim Shelton and his wife, Janet, live in Beecher City.



Remember When?

Do you remember when the lights came on?

When the poles went up and the lines came through?

If you weren't there, did you hear stories from your parents or grandparents about the days before electricity lit our way? We're interested in hearing about the early days of electrification. We'd like to know how electricity changed life in your home, on your farm, or at your school.

Please send your stories to Joe Richardson at joe.richardson@sweci.com or via traditional mail to: 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL 62246.



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

Having trouble paying your bill?

Call us at (800) 637-8667 or email us at billing@sweci.com.
We'll suggest resources that may be able to help.

*You may qualify for energy assistance through LIHEAP.
Find out more at sweci.com/energy-assistance.*

It means we're here for you.



YOUR ACCOUNTABLE ENERGY PARTNER

CO-OP COMMISSIONS RECORD NUMBER OF SOLAR PROJECTS

They didn't miss a beat. In the months marked by COVID mitigation measures, Southwestern Electric's cogeneration commissioning team reviewed and approved about 130 member-owned solar arrays — nearly half the projects currently on co-op lines. After an April 2020 hiatus, the team resumed on-site solar project reviews in May 2020. "By that time safety practices were well-established," said Julie Lowe, energy manager for Southwestern Electric. "Safety is always our top priority. That's why we inspect projects before we connect them to our distribution system. We're making sure they operate properly and that our safety requirements are met."

Lowe advises members considering cogeneration to call the cooperative when they begin making plans. "We'll talk about the commissioning process and go over how the co-op reimburses cogeneration credits on your bill. We reimburse the avoided cost," she said. "That's different than net metering. You'll want to understand the difference before you invest in a system."

While cogeneration is an attractive option for many members, it isn't the right investment for everyone, Lowe said. "If you use very little power and your bill runs about \$100 per month, you'll want to consider carefully before investing in cogeneration," she said, noting that members with cogeneration still pay taxes and co-op facility charges.

"Right now, the future of the Solar Renewable Energy Certificates (SRECs) program is uncertain. SRECs aren't available. You'll want to consider that as you calculate your return on investment. Without SREC money, if you're paying on a \$25,000 system over 10 years, that's \$2,500 a year or a little over \$200 per month," she said. "That may not make sense for you financially. You'll want to consider how long it will take you to break even, and what your power consumption is now versus what it will be after your solar project is installed."

For more information about Southwestern Electric Cooperative's cogeneration program, call Julie Lowe, energy manager, at (800) 637-8667 or email her at julie.lowe@sweci.com.

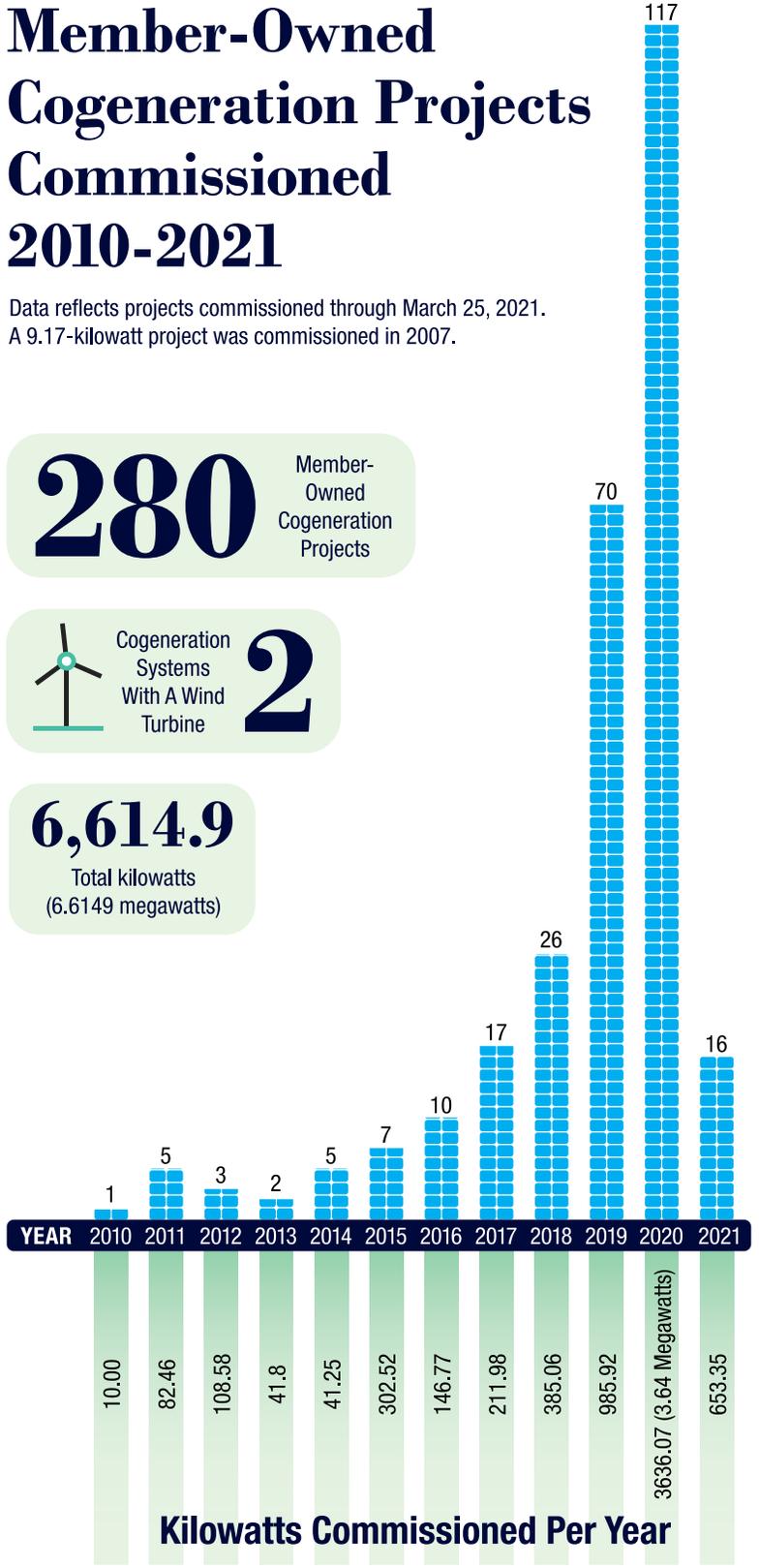
Member-Owned Cogeneration Projects Commissioned 2010-2021

Data reflects projects commissioned through March 25, 2021. A 9.17-kilowatt project was commissioned in 2007.

280 Member-Owned Cogeneration Projects

 Cogeneration Systems With A Wind Turbine **2**

6,614.9 Total kilowatts (6.6149 megawatts)



How can we improve your EV ownership experience?

Let us know by taking our EV owner survey at sweci.com/EVsurvey.

Your responses will help us build EV incentive rates and shape Southwestern's EV program. The survey takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

Questions? Call or email Julie Lowe at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com.

Take our EV owner survey at sweci.com/EVsurvey.



YOUR ACCOUNTABLE ENERGY PARTNER



RESIDENTIAL CHARGER REBATES AVAILABLE

Southwestern Electric Cooperative is offering a \$200 bill credit to the first 50 members who install new Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) residential chargers. All brands are eligible.

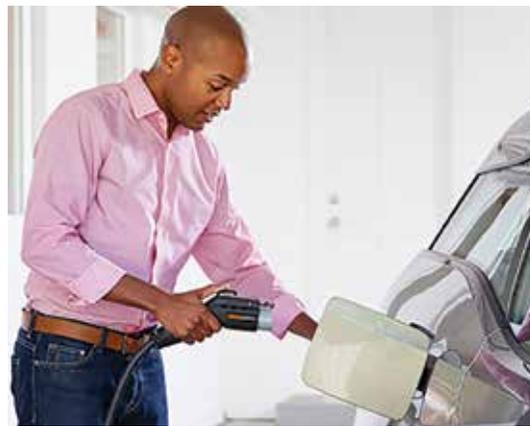
The rebate is part of Southwestern Electric's EV Pilot Program — an initiative launched in October 2020 that will help the co-op identify energy demand and usage patterns among EV owners and develop EV-oriented incentive rates.

Rates will be structured to reward EV owners, with margin enough to fund infrastructure improvements.

Until incentive rates are in place, EVs will charge at a member's existing electric rate. The co-op's immediate goal is to make electric vehicle ownership an attractive option, encouraging higher EV adoption rates among members.

"More EVs mean more power sales," said Julie Lowe, program coordinator. "We can use that revenue to fund more infrastructure improvements while keeping our rates in check."

Incentive rates and prime charging hours will become clear later this year as Southwestern reviews data from the EV Pilot Program. For more information, contact Julie Lowe at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com.



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

You embraced our 2020 rebate program with enthusiasm. We're offering more savings in 2021. Our rebate program will help you save money on the replacement or new installation of air source heat pumps, geothermal systems, electric water heaters and smart thermostats.

Members are eligible for one rebate per category per year. All rebates will be applied as a bill credit upon receiving the 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 leave your materials in the drop box at our Greenville office.

PLUG or PUMP?

PAY AT THE PUMP

\$2.76

Average price per gallon.

PRICE AT THE PLUG

\$1.12

Average price per eGallon.

An eGallon is the cost of fueling a vehicle with electricity compared to a similar vehicle that runs on gasoline. Pricing information provided by energy.gov based on Illinois averages as of March 20, 2021.



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

Board Candidate Nominations

Filing Deadline: May 27

As a not-for-profit cooperative, Southwestern Electric is both owned and governed by its members — the consumers who receive their electricity from the co-op. A board of directors, consisting of nine members democratically elected by their peers, is responsible for overseeing the general direction and financial stability of the organization.

The cooperative’s service territory is divided into three voting districts. Three of the nine board seats — one per voting district — are open for election each year. District I encompasses the co-op’s territory in Macoupin, Madison and St. Clair counties; District II includes Bond, Clinton and Montgomery counties; and District III covers Clay, Effingham, Fayette, Marion and Shelby counties. The three directors whose terms expire in 2021 are William “Bill” Jennings in District I, Jerry Gaffner in District II, and Jared Stine in District III.

Potential board candidates are advised to begin their preparations for the 2021 election soon. The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the 2021 Nominations Committee appear below.

Any Southwestern Electric member interested in running for a seat on the board, or who would like to submit another member’s name for consideration, must notify a Nominations Committee member from the appropriate district prior to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 27.

If the nomination deadline is missed, members may also file for candidacy by petition. Such a petition, bearing the names, addresses and signatures of at least 15 Southwestern Electric

Any Southwestern Electric member interested in running for a seat on the board, or who would like to submit another member’s name for consideration, must notify a Nominations Committee member from the appropriate district prior to 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 27.

Cooperative members, must be filed at the co-op’s headquarters by Monday, June 28. Any candidate who doesn’t file by June 28, 2021 will not be eligible to run for election until 2022.

All members 18 years of age or older and in good financial standing with the co-op are eligible to serve on the board of directors, so long as they meet the qualifications set forth in Section 5(B) of the bylaws. The relevant sections of the cooperative’s bylaws are reprinted on the next page for your reference.

The results of the 2021 board election will be announced at Southwestern Electric’s 83rd Annual Meeting of Members, which will take place on Saturday, September 11. Each director will be elected to serve a three-year term beginning on September 11 and ending on the date of the 2024 Annual Meeting.

Questions about board service and the election process should be directed to Susan File, Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s vice president of member services. She may be reached by telephone at (800) 637-8667, or by e-mail at susan.file@sweci.com.

2021 Nominations Committee

The Nominations Committee will meet at the cooperative’s headquarters to submit the names of qualified director candidates. Members interested in submitting a name for consideration, or who would like to run for a board seat themselves, must notify a Nominations Committee member from their district by 4:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 27.

District I	Duane Meyer	6223 Staunton Rd	Edwardsville, IL 62025	(618) 633-2349
	Dan Joachimsthaler	88 Timberwood Lane	Collinsville, IL 62234	(618) 979-5690
	Dennis Petry	8201 West Kirsch Road	Troy, IL 62294	(618) 667-6868
District II	Rick Hilliard	1316 Spring Drive	Greenville, IL 62246	(618) 882-8360
	Brad Lurkins	1466 Airport Ave	Greenville, IL 62246	(618) 977-3464
	Clarence Zimmerman	857 RC Cardinal Lane	Greenville, IL 62246	(618) 664-0495
District III	Joe Lawson	274 E 1700 Ave	Vandalia, IL 62080	(618) 780-3731
	Barb Tedrick	778 N 200 St	Vandalia, IL 62471	(618) 425-3543
	Tony Koberlein	2098 N 2200 St	St. Elmo, IL 62458	(618) 292-6952

Candidates for the Board of Directors: Qualification & Nomination Guidelines

Section 5 (B): Qualifications

To be eligible to become or remain a Director of the Cooperative, such person:

1. Shall not be a Close Relative of an incumbent Director;
2. Shall not be an employee or agent of the Cooperative;
3. Shall not be, directly or indirectly, employed by or financially interested in a competing enterprise, business selling electric energy or supplies to the Cooperative, or a business primarily engaged in selling electrical or plumbing appliances, fixtures or supplies to, among others, the Members of the Cooperative;
4. Shall not be, directly or indirectly, interested in any contract, permit, franchise or other similar agreement or authorization to which the Cooperative is or may be a party;
5. Shall be a Member in good standing with the Cooperative and receiving energy or service from the Cooperative at his primary place of abode;
6. Shall be a Natural Person;
7. Shall be at least eighteen (18) years of age; provided, however, that a duly elected officer or duly appointed agent of any Member which is not a Natural Person shall be exempt from the qualifications stated in Section 5(B)(6) and Section 5(B)(7) if such Member is in good standing with the Cooperative and receiving energy or service from the Cooperative.

VOTING OPTIONS

Absentee: at the cooperative's headquarters (525 US Route 40, Greenville) Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., August 27- September 10. (excluding Labor Day).

In Person: Members may vote for board candidates during the co-op's annual meeting, Saturday, September 11. The time and site of Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 2021 Annual Meeting of Members has yet to be determined.

CATEGORIES OF ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP

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

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

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

Section 4 (D): Election of Directors

At each annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative, Directors shall be elected by secret written ballot cast (except as otherwise provided in this section) by the Members present at such annual meeting and qualified to vote under the terms and conditions of the Bylaws. Such election shall be conducted as follows:

1. Appointment of Nominations Committee: The Board of Directors shall appoint, not less than one hundred fifteen (115) nor more than one hundred forty-five (145) days prior to the date of the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative, a Nominations Committee which shall consist of nine (9) Natural Persons, three from each Directorate District. Members of the Nominations Committee shall not be employees, agents, officers, or Directors of the Cooperative, shall not be known candidates for Director, and shall not be Close Relatives of employees, agents, officers, Directors of the Cooperative, or known candidates for Director.
2. Candidates Nominated by Nominations Committee: On or before eighty-five (85) days prior to the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative, the Nominations Committee shall:
 - a. Nominate as many Natural Persons who meet the qualifications stated in Section 5B of these Bylaws as the Nominating Committee deems desirable to be candidates for election to the Board of Directors; and,
 - b. Post a list of the names of such Natural Persons so nominated by the Nominations Committee at the principal place of business of the Cooperative.
3. Candidates Nominated by Petition: In addition to those candidates named by the Nominations Committee, any fifteen (15) or more Members of the Cooperative may nominate such other Natural Persons as candidates for election to the Board of Directors by filing with the Secretary of the Cooperative not less than seventy-five (75) days prior to the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative a written petition bearing the signatures, names and addresses of at least fifteen Members of the Cooperative nominating such other Natural Persons as candidates for election to the Board of Directors and listing the candidate's name, address, age, and telephone number. The Secretary of the Cooperative shall post such petition at the principal places of business of the Cooperative where the list of nominations made by the Nominations Committee was posted.
4. Notice to Members of Nomination of Candidates: The Secretary of the Cooperative shall mail or cause to be mailed to the Members notice of the annual meeting of the Members of the Cooperative at least fifteen (15) days but not more than sixty (60) days before the date of said annual meeting a statement of the names, addresses, ages, and telephone numbers of all candidates nominated for election to the Board of Directors. Such statement shall identify the Directorate District to which such candidate may be elected, and such statement shall identify which candidates were nominated by the Nominations Committee and which candidates were nominated by petition filed by Members of the Cooperative.

On Account: If your account number is 51735001, call us within 30 days to receive a \$25 credit on an upcoming electric bill.

Principles & Progress

RICH GUSEWELLE REFLECTS ON 36 YEARS OF COOPERATIVE SERVICE

Story by Joe Richardson | Photos curated by Mike Barns & Brooke Scott

On a table in the living room of his rural Hamel home, not far from photos of his children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, there's a book that bears Rich Gusewelle's name. The pages are filled with words and pictures chronicling 36 years of service to the members of Southwestern Electric Cooperative. A gift from the co-op's directors and employees, the album is more than a memento. It's a testament to the respect and affection Gusewelle has earned in the cooperative community, the role he's played in the lives of countless co-op members, and a reminder of the place he holds in those lives today.

To tell the full story would take two dozen volumes and another table to support them. Since the early 1980s, Gusewelle has committed time and energy to more than 500 committee and board meetings, countless conversations with co-op members, untold hours of state, regional and national delegate work, years of concentrated study on industry issues, all manner of community and member outreach, and innumerable words of wisdom and support delivered



in timely fashion to Southwestern members and employees alike.

Regardless of the time, the topic or the business at hand, whether it was a gathering of two or 2,000, if the occasion called for a well-pressed suit or cowboy boots, or both, Gusewelle's way of seeing the people around him never changed. "It was always like being with family," he said. Soft spoken, thoughtful with his words, Gusewelle made a practice of putting other people first, which made him ideally suited to represent the members of Southwestern Electric.

Seven months after his retirement from the board and nearly four decades after he was first elected, Gusewelle is still grateful, and perhaps a bit overwhelmed, by the steadfast support and kindness he received over the years. His sole regret is that COVID-19 curtailed annual meeting activities in 2020, denying him a proper opportunity to say goodbye and thank people in person. "I want our members and employees to know how much I appreciate everything they've done for me through the years," he said. "Working with our members, getting to know so many employees, thinking about all we accomplished together, I have a lot to be thankful for."

SOLVING SOYLAND

Gusewelle's early years on the board coincided with a turbulent era for Illinois electric cooperatives. As a member of Soyland Power Cooperative, the co-op's wholesale energy provider at the time, Southwestern Electric was part-owner of the Clinton nuclear plant — a regional power project dogged by delays and escalating construction costs.

Gusewelle was keenly aware of Soyland's likely long-term economic

impact on Southwestern. A member since 1975, he also understood the potential for Southwestern Electric to improve the quality of life for residents of rural Southwestern Illinois. He was already active in the cooperative when an article announcing the election of directors caught his eye. He and his wife, Donna, who passed away in 2004, served on a co-op advisory committee. "I told Donna, 'Someday, I'd like to run for the board.'" She supported the idea.

A few days later, a Southwestern member asked if he would consider running for the District I seat. Gusewelle made a bid for the board in 1983. He lost to the incumbent, but the election experience — meeting members, discussing issues — was overwhelmingly positive. He ran again in 1984 and won a seat he held until retiring in September 2020.

Upon being elected, Gusewelle became part of a team that pressed for new approaches to resolving the Soyland issue. He made clear and consistent communications a priority, acting as both member advocate and board liaison, carrying messages from the board to the membership, and relaying words of support or concern from the membership to management and the board.

The early, difficult days of searching for solutions to Soyland forged a bond among board members that grew into decades of open, pointed discussion. "We would sit there and discuss things for hours," Gusewelle said, recalling marathon meetings lasting late into the night. The board gathered around a table like family, and family rules applied

Rich and Joyce Gusewelle pause for a photo in 2020. Married in December 2005, they look forward to spending more time with family in the years to come.

Opposite page: Gusewelle arrives at Southwestern's office for a board meeting in 2014.



Rich Gusewelle greets members outside Greenville High School at Southwestern Electric Cooperative's 46th Annual Meeting of Members on Sept. 8, 1984. He was elected to the board of directors for the first time later that morning.

to the discussion. "We didn't always agree, but we did always listen. We worked together. We talked things out. Everything was upfront." Every member of the board contributed something unique, some context or perspective that reflected their own experience and observations, he said. "Everybody had a chance to voice their opinion."

Through years of planning, preparation and persistence, the board positioned Southwestern to dissolve ties with Soyland Power Cooperative and enter a new wholesale power agreement with Cincinnati, Ohio-based Cinergy Corp. It was a groundbreaking move for a small distribution cooperative.

For Southwestern Electric, the Cinergy contract laid the foundation for a sound financial future.

Gusewelle credited the outcome to the faith and patience of the membership, the board's willingness to debate issues and find common ground, and the leadership and tenacity of longtime board president Alan Libbra. Resolving the decades-long issue opened new opportunities for the co-op to pursue programs and projects on behalf of the members. "It just made a world of difference," Gusewelle said.

LEARNING AND LEADING

From day one, he made education a priority. "In the utility business, things are always changing," he said, citing consumer trends, technology and the power market as examples. "It seemed like every month at the board meeting, we were discussing something new. You needed to know what was coming." Gusewelle participated in industry seminars, workshops and summits at the state, regional and national levels, all the while sharing Southwestern's position on legislative and regulatory issues with co-op and national association delegates, and making sure Southwestern members

Continued on next page ▶



Photo courtesy Sandy Grapperhaus

► *Continued from page 13*

had a voice in decisions that could affect them. He built bridges between Southwestern and professional associations, cultivated relationships with other co-ops, and kept in touch with directors and trade association employees who served as a source of support and inspiration — people he called on for insight and information, and people who called on him for the same.

In 2001 and 2003 respectively, Gusewelle received high honors from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, earning Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership certifications. While national summits drew representatives from all corners of the country, he found some of the most productive meetings were close to home. Ideas for new programs and projects often surfaced at regional meetings. “That’s where you get in on the beginning of everything,” he said. “Then you get involved at the national level to see how things work together.”

From every meeting, workshop or interaction, Gusewelle brought back ideas he shared with the board, management and members. His experience served the co-op community well. During his tenure, he was active on Southwestern’s Policies & Bylaws Committee, the Business Development & Marketing Committee, and the co-op’s Scholarship Committee, and served as vice president of the board of directors from 1996 to 2009. He also assumed leadership roles in co-op community organizations, serving on the governing boards of Alhambra Hitz Home, Eden Village, Hamel Co-op Grain Co., and the Northeast Central County Public Water District, and as a trustee for Hamel Township and for the Quercus Grove Cemetery Association.



Rich Gusewelle was elected to his second term on Southwestern Electric’s board of directors in 1987. Pictured are (l-r) manager Bob Neece and directors Carl Barth, Barb Tedrick, Gusewelle and Alan Libbra.

His roles in different organizations equipped him to compare and contrast issues and approaches, applying lessons learned in one area to obstacles in another. “Everybody’s got their own way of looking at things,” he said. “You learn how people are different, how they’re alike, when to speak up and when to listen.” Relationships he built with other co-ops provided instruction as well. “Different co-ops do things different ways,” he noted. “When we talk, we can learn from each other.”

PRINCIPLES & PROGRESS

The senior board member at the time of his retirement, Gusewelle guided the co-op through three CEO and management team transitions. During his time on the board, he saw subdivisions take shape, commercial and industrial parks flourish, and hospitals and schools rise from fields where corn once grew.

He noted the evolution of electric vehicles and rise of cogeneration as changes that will have a lasting impact on co-op operations, the programs Southwestern offers, and the priorities of the membership.

Technology has made the co-op more efficient and responsive, Gusewelle said, but it can also allow people to fall out of touch. He fears that many companies, even cooperatives, run the risk of losing the personal qualities that define them. Even in an age of smart phones and social media, Gusewelle said, co-op leaders need to be actively engaged — in spirit and in person — in the communities where their members live.

“When a member brought a problem to me, I took that conversation to the board and staff. We’d talk about the issue and how we were going to fix it.” Many of those conversations started spontaneously when Gusewelle saw a co-op member at church, a school function, or at a local business or community event.

“We have to meet the needs and expectations of a lot of different people,” he said. “We have a lot of young families on our lines now. I think that’s why I always got so much feedback on our scholarship program.”

“We didn’t always agree, but we did always listen. Everybody had a chance to voice their opinion.”

A longtime member of Southwestern's Scholarship Committee, Gusewelle actively supported the co-op's involvement in education. When Donna passed away, his family and he established a scholarship fund in her name. The Donna Gusewelle Memorial Scholarship helped many Southwestern students pursue college degrees and vocational certifications.

After the Quercus Grove Rural Club, a Madison County civic organization, lost their meeting venue to a fire in 2007, the group elected to disband. As a member of the Rural Club, Gusewelle recommended the organization donate a significant part of its treasury to Southwestern's scholarship program. His fellow members agreed.

"People see how we're working in our communities. They recognize that we're making decisions with their kids in mind, and they appreciate that," he said. "But we also need to look after our older, rural members out in the country. We can't forget them, or we become just another utility. We're a cooperative. We stand out because we do care."

Gusewelle made it his mission to look out for the membership's best interests, position Southwestern to offer reliable energy at affordable rates, and to see that the organization had the resources

it needed to operate effectively day-to-day. "Our members put their trust in me. They knew I'd listen and make decisions on their behalf," he said. "That meant a lot to me. I always appreciated that."

LOOKING BACK, MOVING AHEAD

Avid travelers, Rich and Joyce Gusewelle intend to explore more of the U.S. when conditions improve. It's telling that their living room isn't filled with photos of the places they've been, but rather, the people they know. Photographs reflect the priorities of the people who keep them near. The photos framed in the Gusewelle home make it clear Rich and Joyce put family first.

Family is a word that surfaces frequently in conversations with them, and it's the analogy Rich Gusewelle comes back to when he talks about his time with the cooperative. Directors, employees, co-op members—are *family*.

He's grateful for the leadership role that brought them into his life. Grateful to his fellow board members who were with him for the journey. Grateful to the many employees who came to be friends. And most certainly, grateful to the thousands of Southwestern members who expressed their support by asking him to be their voice in the cooperative,



"Being part of the co-op changed my life. Even in the bad times, it was good. I will always be grateful."

year after year, term after term, time and again.

He's thankful for everyone who make his 36 years of service a privilege, a pleasure, and most of all, meaningful. "Being part of the co-op changed my life," he said. "It was a good time. Even in the bad times, it was good. I will always be grateful." **S**

Directors, members and employees thanked Rich Gusewelle for 36 years of service during Southwestern Electric's 82nd Annual Meeting of Members, held at the Bond County Fairgrounds on Sept. 12, 2020. Pictured are (front) directors Bill Jennings, Gusewelle and Sandy Grap-perhaus and (back) CEO Bobby Williams and directors Jared Stine, Ted Willman, Ann Schwarm, Annette Hartlieb and Jerry Gaffner. Top: Gusewelle expresses his gratitude to co-op members and employees during his farewell address.

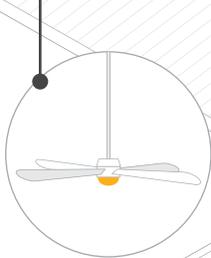


HEATING AND COOLING TIPS FOR MANUFACTURED HOMES

If you own a manufactured home, take measures to ensure you have an efficient heating and cooling system. You can also make simple improvements that save energy and make your home more comfortable.

\$ Install ceiling fans

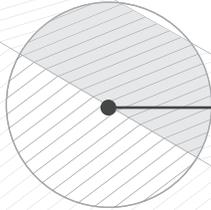
Install ceiling fans throughout your manufactured home. Ceiling fans are energy efficient and can be used to keep warm or cool air moving throughout your home. Be sure to turn them off when you're away. Remember, ceiling fans cool people, not rooms.



- \$** Option for smaller budgets
- \$\$** Option for flexible budgets

\$\$ Efficient roof color

Choose a light-colored roof if you live in the southern part of the U.S. and a dark-colored roof if you live in the northern U.S.



\$\$ Install a mini-split system

Eliminate unnecessary heating and cooling by installing a single zone strategy throughout your manufactured home. A zone system allows you to save energy by only heating or cooling rooms that are occupied.

ZONE 2

ZONE 1

\$ Install awnings

Install awnings over windows to keep sunlight from overheating your home during the summer.



\$\$ Add insulation

If you have a home that was manufactured before 1976, you could add insulation to your home's underbelly to reduce any heat loss.



Source: U.S. Dept. of Energy

Purchase Power Day By Day With **Pay-As-You-Go** Option

Pay for the power you need as you need it — that’s the idea behind Southwestern Electric Cooperative’s Pay-As-You-Go program. “Most members are billed for power a month at a time. The power they’ve used during the last month is what they pay for,” explained Susan File, vice president of member services for Southwestern Electric Cooperative. “With our Pay-As-You-Go program, you only pay for the power you need at the time, and you can add more money to the account whenever you want to.”

File said the Pay-As-You-Go Program is perfect for families who want to control precisely how much of their budget they put toward electricity.

“Our main goal is to help our members use less power, and forego paying a deposit and reconnection fees,” she pointed out. “Studies have shown that households typically experience a 12 percent drop in energy use after switching to this type of program.”

Pay-As-You-Go allows the accountholder to purchase electricity at his or her convenience. Payments appear as credits on the member’s account. The balance, which reflects energy used and payments made over the past 24-hours, is updated daily. There’s no penalty for allowing funds to run out, but electric service becomes subject to disconnection



when the account balance reaches \$0.00.

The cooperative doesn’t mail a monthly bill to Pay-As-You-Go accounts. Rather, participating members monitor their account balance via the cooperative’s online billing system, SWEC IL app or in-home display. In addition to checking their account balance and payment history, the member will have access to an assortment of tools for tracking their energy consumption, including a breakdown of their kilowatt-hour usage and money spent on power each day.

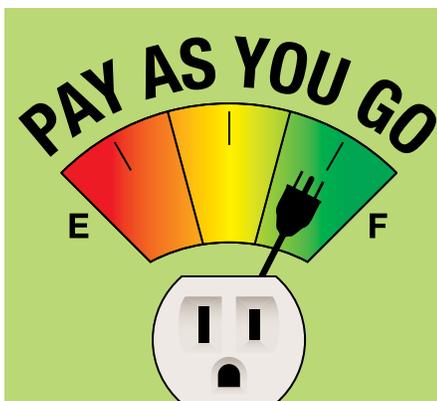
Southwestern also offers an in-home display unit (at no charge), particularly for members who don’t have Internet

access. The online billing system, app and in-home display allow the accountholder to view their present account balance and average daily usage.

“The member has to keep an eye on their remaining balance with this type of program, but we also have a couple of systems in place to let them know their account’s status,” said File. “The in-home display sounds an alarm when the account reaches a minimum dollar amount. We can also send the member a reminder message by telephone, text and e-mail if we have a valid phone number or e-mail address on file for their account.”

Payments on a Pay-As-You-Go account can be made at the cooperative’s Greenville and St. Jacob offices during regular business hours. Payments are also accepted 24/7 by phone, SWEC IL app and online at sweci.com. Most payments will post to the member’s account within an hour. However, members should allow three day’s processing time when payments are made at the St. Elmo office or Vandalia Farm Bureau.

For more information on our Pay-As-You-Go program, visit sweci.com or call (800) 637-8667 to speak to one of our member services representatives.



- Take control of your energy usage.
- No credit checks or security deposits.
- No fees for late payment or reconnection of service.
- Say goodbye to paper bills.

KEEP TO THE CODE

May is Electrical Safety Month. Now's the time to evaluate your home's electrical system and eliminate hazards. Being aware of common electrical issues is a critical step toward preventing electrical fires, burns and electrocution. The balance of accident prevention requires follow-through.

You're probably comfortable making simple repairs yourself. More complex projects require the attention of a professional. If you're questioning whether you should tackle a task or hire help, error on the side of caution and find a qualified electrician to do the work.

INSPECTION & UPGRADE

With the addition of living space, appliances, and entertainment and computer systems, a home electrical system designed to accommodate more modest demands can become overburdened, resulting in faults or fires.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI) recommend electrical inspections for houses that are more than 40 years old.

An electrical inspection entails a comprehensive examination of your home's electrical system. The inspection will identify loose connections at outlets, older and deteriorated wiring, and outdated and overburdened electrical service.

Repairs may be minor, such as the cleaning and tightening of connections or the addition of outlets, or more involved, running into several thousand dollars, such as the addition of circuits and subpanels or replacement of degraded wiring.

Older homes may require a "heavy-up," or an upgrade of the electrical service. For example, based on your needs, an electrician may suggest that your 60 amp or 100 amp service be upgraded to a

200 amp service, which is more likely to accommodate today's electric demands. A qualified, licensed electrician can determine if repairs or upgrades are necessary and estimate the cost.

PROTECTIVE DEVICES

If you're renovating your home, make sure your contractor installs the following electrical safety devices to keep the people in your household safe.

Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI)
 AFCIs protect against electrical fires resulting from malfunctions. The CPSC estimates that 50 percent of home electrical fires can be prevented by proper AFCI protection.

Surge Protective Devices (SPD)
 Surge Protective Devices protect against transient power events (surges) that can damage or reduce the lifespan of your electrical system and devices.

Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI)
 GFCIs protect against electric shock and are required in areas where water and electricity may come in contact.

Tamper Resistant Receptacles (TRR)
 Tamper Resistant Receptacles function like traditional receptacles, but they feature an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects from being inserted into the outlet.

ROOM BY ROOM

For homes undergoing renovation, the 2020 National Electric Code requires installation of the following protective devices.

Area	Protective Device
Bathrooms.....	GFCI protection
Basements & Crawl Spaces.....	AFCI protection (finished basements) GFCI protection (crawl spaces at or below grade)
Bedrooms.....	AFCI protection
Common Rooms <i>Family and dining rooms, libraries, dens, recreation rooms and similar areas</i>	AFCI protection
Garages.....	GFCI protection
Hallways & Closets.....	AFCI protection
Kitchens.....	GFCI protection (Where receptacles are installed to serve counter top surfaces or within 6 feet of a sink) AFCI protection
Laundry Areas.....	AFCI protection GFCI protection
Outdoors.....	GFCI protection



HOME SAFETY DEVICES

Renovate your Home to Code

The National Electrical Code is revised **every three years** and outlines the minimum requirements for **safe electrical installations**. Many older homes may not have an adequate electrical system to meet the electrical demands of today. If you're renovating your home, **make sure to have the following electrical devices installed** to maintain an electrically safe home.

Safety Devices



Arc-Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCI): Available as a circuit breaker and receptacle. AFCIs protect against electrical fires from malfunctions. The Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates that 50% of home electrical fires can be prevented by proper AFCI protection.



Surge Protective Devices (SPD) protect against surges that can damage or reduce the lifespan of your electrical system and devices.



Ground-Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI): Available as a circuit breaker and receptacle. GFCIs protect against electric shock and are required in areas where water and electricity may come in contact.



Tamper Resistant Receptacles (TRR) function like normal receptacles but they include an internal shutter system to prevent foreign objects, other than plugs, from being inserted into the outlets.

2020 Code Requirements

Renovating the following areas in your home? The following protection is required in these areas as of the 2020 National Electrical Code:

Bathrooms

✔ GFCI Protection

Basements & Crawl Spaces

✔ AFCI Protection (finished basements)

✔ GFCI Protection (crawl spaces at or below grade)

Bedrooms

✔ AFCI Protection

Common Rooms

✔ AFCI Protection

(Family, dining, parlor, libraries, dens, recreation, and similar rooms)

Garages

✔ GFCI Protection

Hallways & Closets

✔ AFCI Protection

Kitchens

✔ AFCI Protection

✔ GFCI Protection

(Where the receptacles are installed to serve the countertop surfaces or where receptacles are installed within 6 feet of a sink)

Laundry Areas

✔ AFCI Protection

✔ GFCI Protection

Outdoors

✔ GFCI Protection

2020 National Electrical Code Highlights



All receptacles in homes, garages, accessory buildings, and common areas of multifamily homes must be protected by TRRs.



New and replaced service equipment are now required to be protected by **listed Type 1 or Type 2 Surge Protective Devices**.



Outdoor emergency disconnects are required for new construction and homes having their service replaced.



www.facebook.com/ESFi.org



www.twitter.com/ESFIdotorg



www.youtube.com/ESFIdotorg

OUT & ABOUT



DOWN ON THE FARM

PAST MEETS PRESENT AT WILLOUGHBY HERITAGE FARM

Story by Nathan Grimm | Photos by Mike Barns

At Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve, bird really is the word. Goat, too. And horse.

In fact, there are a lot of words, all favorable, to describe the Collinsville farm, which is surrounded by more than 30 acres of wildlife preserve. No matter the time of year, Willoughby is replete with nature and nostalgia, thrilling

visitors of all ages.

The farm is located on 40 acres of bluff line prairie and woodland overlooking the American Bottom, and the preserve features hiking trails, bridges and no shortage of scenic views. Barns, tractors and a Craftsman-style farmhouse offer a step back in time to the 1940s, providing a glimpse into what life was like close to a century ago.

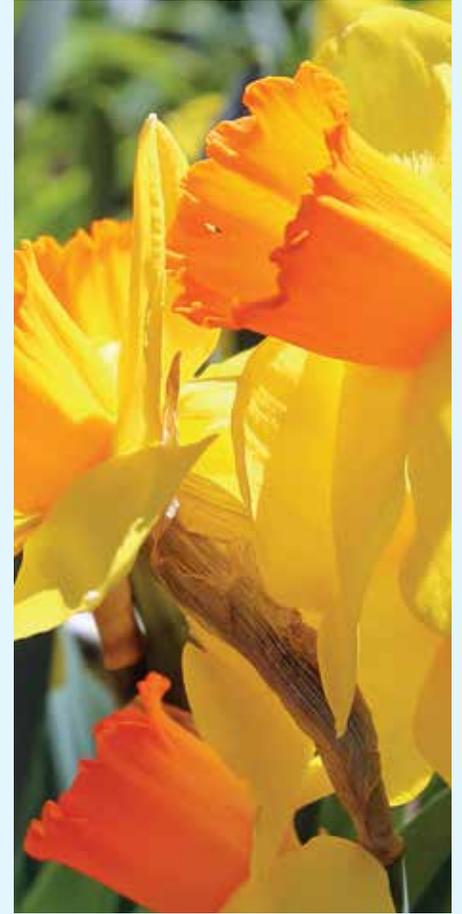
Not to be mistaken for an artifact, the farm still does harbor life in the form of chickens, pigs and goats, along with whatever wildlife roams the surrounding preserve. And of course, on any given day the sound of giggling children playing on the farm's playground can be heard as well. A public park maintained by the city of Collinsville, the farm is always free to enter and is open daily.





GETTING THERE

Interstate 70 West will get you most of the way there, taking Exit 11 to North Bluff Road in Collinsville. From there, stay right onto Beltline Road, making a right onto Johnson Hill Road and another right onto Summit Avenue. A right onto Rose Street, a left onto Vivian Street and a right onto Willoughby Lane leads you to the park's entrance.



It's never a bad day to explore the great outdoors, and these cousins recently took advantage of some early April sunshine to check out Willoughby Heritage Farms and Conservation Reserve. From left, Elijah, Piper, Jacob and Haddie Turner stand on a bridge at the Collinsville farm, which has been turned into a public park. Elijah and Jacob Turner are the sons of Robert and Angela Turner of Edwardsville. Piper and Haddie Turner are the daughters of Troy and Hanna Turner of Troy.



WHO • WHAT • WHERE

Last month we mentioned adjusting our solution schedule to accommodate postal delays. Until the delivery issue is sorted, we're holding our solutions for two months. The letters you're reading today are in response to our March puzzle.

Special thanks to Anne Cicero of St. Jacob for providing the intriguing image that served as our March mystery item. Anne shot the photo while touring historic Giger Schoolhouse, near Highland, where her grandmother, Sedelia Weder, and her grandmother's sister, Leta Weder, went to school.

We'll share the solution to this month's puzzle in our July magazine. Meanwhile, we hope you enjoy the responses to Anne's mystery item.

Thanks to everyone who submitted a solution to our March puzzle — and thank you for reading *The Southwestern*.

The March 2021 "What Am I?" photo is an inkwell, most likely in a school desk. Dip pens with metal nibs were used from the mid-1800s until replaced by the ball point pen after WWII. School desks from the late 1800s until the 1940s and 50s had inkwells in the upper right corner. While the inkwells went away, some of the desks remained in use through the 1960s when children my age wondered why there was a hole in the desk.

—Mike Dietz, O'Fallon

I am old enough to remember fat pencils and Big Chief tablets with the dotted lines, but I'll have to guess that this month's teaser is a school desk inkwell.

—Dave Wetzel, Alhambra

The "What Am I?" photo in the March 2021 issue of *The Southwestern* is an inkwell or inkwell holder on a school desk. I cannot tell if the ink well is

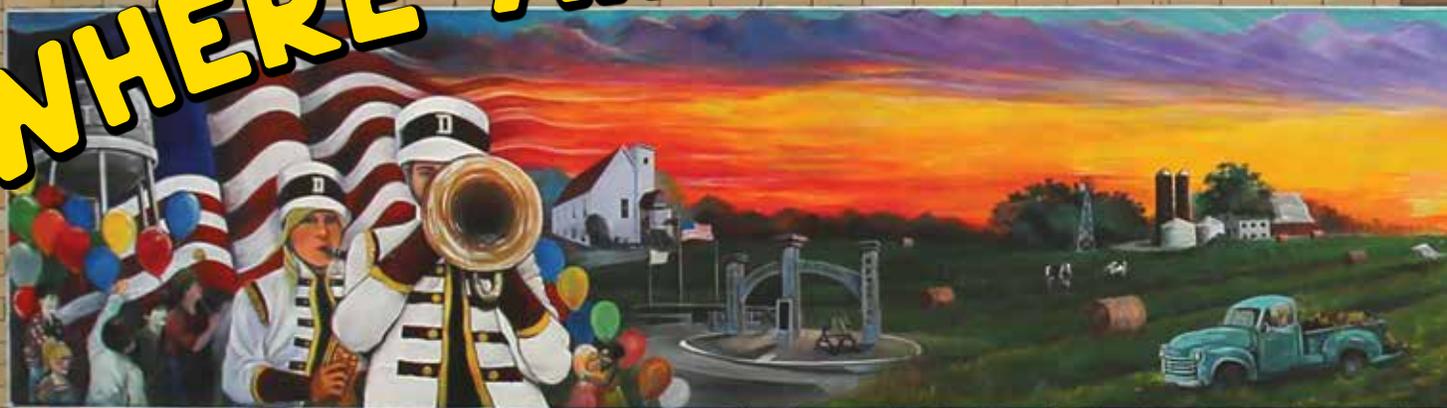
actually in the holder or if the well is contained in the whole apparatus. I do not have a story for this since I am not old enough to have used one, but my late mother-in-law could have talked about it. She grew up in rural Alabama. My hometown is Falkville, Ala.

—Bill Weaver, Altamont



Photo courtesy Anne Cicero

WHERE ARE WE?





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*.



Top This

CRANBERRY SALAD DRESSING

Ingredients

- 2 cups fresh cranberries
- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic minced
- 3 cups canola oil
- 1½ cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 tablespoon salt
- dash of fresh ground pepper

Directions

1. Use blender to purée cranberries, vinegar, and garlic.
2. Transfer to large mixing bowl, add remaining ingredients, and whisk together well.
3. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

BLUE CHEESE SALAD DRESSING

Ingredients

- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ¼ - ½ cup salad dressing
- 1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese grated
- ¼ - ½ cup crumbled blue cheese
- 1 teaspoon garlic salt
- ½ - 1 teaspoon salt to taste

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients well, pour in jar and refrigerate until ready to serve.



CAESAR SALAD DRESSING

Ingredients

- 2 small garlic cloves minced
- 1 teaspoon anchovy paste
- 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon worcestershire sauce
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup Parmigiano-Reggiano freshly grated
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper fresh ground

Directions

1. In a medium bowl, whisk together garlic, anchovy paste, lemon juice, mustard, and worcestershire sauce.
2. Add remaining ingredients and whisk until well combined.
3. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

GRANDMA'S SALAD DRESSING

Ingredients

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon Accent seasoning
- 2 tablespoons water
- ⅓ cup red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon dry minced onion
- ¼ teaspoon dry mustard
- 1 package Good Seasons Italian Dressing mix

Directions

1. Mix together all ingredients, pour in jar and refrigerate until ready to serve.

YOGURT LEMON SALAD DRESSING

Ingredients

- ½ cup plain low-fat yogurt
- ½ cup skim milk
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon dill finely chopped
- pinch of oregano
- pinch of salt
- pinch of pepper

Directions

1. Mix all ingredients in blender and refrigerate until ready to serve.

This month's recipes are courtesy of 4-H House Alumni Association's *Nurture the Future @ 805 4-H House Anniversary Cookbook* (blue cheese and yogurt-lemon salad dressing), Fayette County Museum's *35th Anniversary Cookbook* (Caesar salad dressing), and Greenville Regional Hospital Auxiliary's *Home Town Favorites* cookbook (cranberry salad dressing and Grandma's salad dressing).

► *Continued from page 3*

By the time deregulation was signed into law, Southwestern's board of directors had thoroughly reviewed wholesale power market options. They determined Southwestern could negotiate lower wholesale power rates for the membership as a whole than it could for an ever-changing segment of the membership. That approach ensures lower wholesale power rates and mitigates the impact of power market price fluctuations. It also precludes individual members from buying energy on the power market. So as a Southwestern member, alternative retail electric suppliers and aggregate offers don't apply to you.

Getting back to Patty's email, it appears the township of Collinsville is seeking an aggregation program to serve eligible residents in unincorporated areas. That power will most likely be provided by an ARES. As we just noted, ARES agreements don't apply to Southwestern members.

It's worth noting that cities, counties and other governmental bodies with aggregation agreements are essentially creating power purchasing collectives to negotiate better electric rates for their constituents. They're doing what Southwestern Electric did in 1939. We've been leveraging the cooperative advantage to provide you with affordable, reliable power ever since.

Finally, if you run across a piece of marketing material from an ARES, take a close look at the terms. You'll probably notice the broker is quoting a price for power — not the overall cost for service. There's a cost attached to the construction and maintenance of poles, wires and substations that deliver power

from the point of generation to your home. ARES customers continue to pay their local power company for delivery, regardless of who supplies the power or where it comes from.

Thanks again for the great question, Patty. I'm happy to hear you're pleased to be a part of Southwestern Electric. We're grateful to have you as a member.

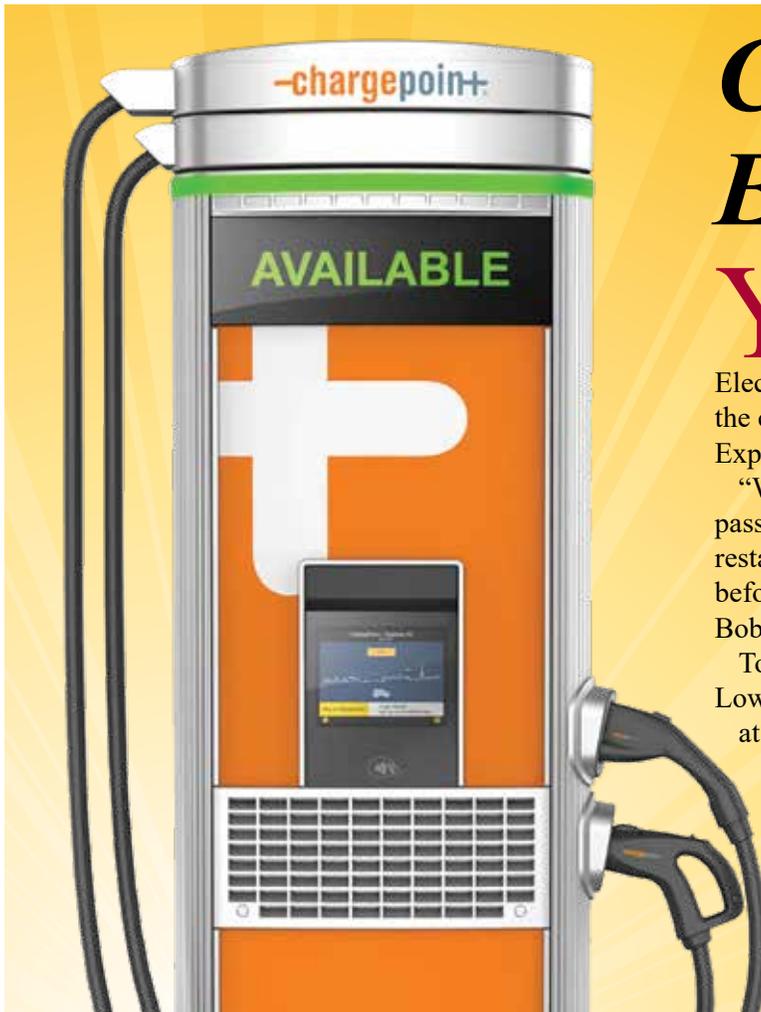
Bobby Williams, CEO



bobby.williams@sweci.com

ASK THE CEO

Have a question for the CEO? Send it to Bobby Williams at bobby.williams@sweci.com, or write to him at Southwestern Electric Cooperative, Inc., 525 US Route 40, Greenville, IL. Periodically, we'll print some of your questions with his replies in *The Southwestern*. Each member who submits a question will be entered in a drawing for a \$25 bill credit. We'll draw a name each time we run an "Ask The CEO" Q&A segment in the magazine.



Charge Your EV For Free

You're invited to recharge your EV free of charge at Holiday Inn Express Troy. From now through June 30, 2021, Southwestern Electric members may charge their EVs for free at the cooperative's EV charging stations at Holiday Inn Express Troy, near I-70 Exit 18.

"Whether you're spending the weekend or just passing through, our EV charging stations and Troy's restaurants, hotels and parks will help you recharge before you hit the road," said Southwestern CEO Bobby Williams.

To recharge your EV at no cost, call or email Julie Lowe, EV program coordinator, during office hours at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com. She'll provide you with an EV charging station passcode. You can enter the code at the co-op's charging stations to recharge your EV for free.

To request a code or learn more about Southwestern Electric's EV program, contact Julie Lowe, program coordinator, at (800) 637-8667 or julie.lowe@sweci.com.



A resident of Collinsville's Willoughby Heritage Farm and Conservation Reserve wonders if the camera lens smells as good as it looks.

THE FINAL FRAME



Southwestern
Electric Cooperative, Inc.
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

