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Arkansas Living

NOVEMBER 2026



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of Milestones & Memories

1946-2026

A publication for members of **First Electric Cooperative**

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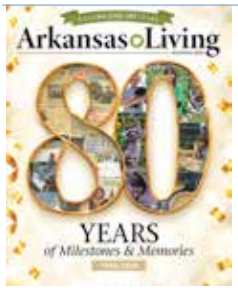
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Pages in Time

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

I'm generally in favor of keeping ages to ourselves. But when you're 80 and look this good, you've earned a little attention.

So, we're making a bit of a fuss over Arkansas Living this month.

This anniversary gave us the chance to revisit eight decades of the magazine and plenty of reasons to linger along the way.

Somewhere in all that looking back, the history started to feel less like history.

The fashions changed. The technology changed. The price tags really changed. But page after page, there were Arkansas people doing many of the same things we write about today: building their communities, helping their neighbors, gardening and farming, exploring the state and figuring out what to make for dinner.

What also became clear was just how much of Arkansas Living belongs to its readers. For 80 years, generations of you have shared your stories, photographs and recipes, welcomed the magazine into your homes and helped shape what it has become. Along the way, generations of editors, writers, designers, photographers and others have had the privilege of bringing it all to life on the page.

We're simply the latest people entrusted with its care.

Fortunately, that care is in the hands of an outstanding team: Associate Editor Nancy Moore, Advertising Coordinator Amber Helms, Communications Specialist Rachel Blocker and Communications and Content Coordinator Addison McCaulley. We're also fortunate to work with longtime contributors Graphic Designer Dixie Rogers (the longest-serving member of the magazine crew) and Copy Editor Denise Dorton, whose talent and dedication are reflected in each issue.


Spirit of Tradition Marks Holiday Feast

What's for dinner? It's a question Arkansas Living has been helping readers answer for decades, from everyday meals to special occasions — like these holiday recipes from November 1977.

Together with our other wonderful contributors and cooperative partners across the state, we're carrying on a tradition that began long before us and one we hope will continue long after us.

For 80 years you've shared your lives with us and given us stories worth telling.

We're grateful to be the magazine's stewards for a little while. Thank you for continuing to make it your magazine.

Here's to the next 80 years,

Jennifer

Jennifer Christman Cia
jennifer.cia@aeci.com

Arkansas Living

NOVEMBER 2026

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Heartfelt Thanks

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN
President and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation



Given all the imagery of Thanksgiving being celebrated by Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1621, it is easy to think that Thanksgiving has always been celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. However, that is not the case. The Pilgrims actually celebrated their famous harvest feast in either late September or early October.

The first official Thanksgiving holiday occurred when President George Washington designated Nov. 26, 1789, as a day of gratitude and prayer. But it wasn't until 1863, in the midst of the Civil War, that President Abraham Lincoln established an annual Thanksgiving observance on the final Thursday of November. His proclamation called on Americans to give thanks for the nation's blessings while remembering those who were suffering. Every president since has issued an annual Thanksgiving proclamation.



GENERATED BY AI

Thanksgiving continued to be celebrated on the last Thursday of November until 1939, when November had five Thursdays. Concerned that the late holiday would shorten the Christmas shopping season during the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt moved Thanksgiving to the next-to-last Thursday. In 1941, Congress passed and Roosevelt signed legislation establishing Thanksgiving as the fourth Thursday in November.

I read many of these presidential proclamations while preparing to write this article and they all contain a similar theme — that we should give thanks for the blessings that an Almighty God bestows upon our great nation. Many of them also ask us to remember those less fortunate, and to give thanks to our family, friends, neighbors and fellow citizens who have blessed us.

This is where the story becomes deeply personal for me. On July 3, after spending the entire day in the heat getting ready for my big fireworks celebration, I noticed a pressure in my chest at bedtime, and it remained for several hours. When I told my wife the next morning, she declared a family intervention, and I was summarily surrounded and coerced to head to the emergency room. I groused and grumbled but relented, and went in to get checked out for a possible heart attack. My tests came back clear, and I was released with the recommendation that I go to my family doctor for a more thorough checkup.

I went home, shot my fireworks and went back to work Monday, continuing a busy CEO life for the next month. However, on Aug. 13, upon returning from speaking at the University of Idaho, my flight was delayed. To avoid missing my connection at the next airport, my wife and I had to run past 32 gates with carry-on bags to catch the last flight home. We made the flight, but when I got seated, that strange pressure returned.

I knew something wasn't right, but based on a relatively recent coronary artery calcium (CAC) scan with a low calcium score of 2 — not bad for a 58-year-old, out-of-shape office guy with borderline cholesterol levels — I assumed it couldn't be heart-related. I also never felt tired, short of breath or anything like that. However, the next morning, I made an appointment with my family doctor, Joseph Nelson in Bryant. Dr. Nelson squeezed me in the next Tuesday and was so concerned, he texted Dr. Randy Minton, his cardiologist colleague, asking him to see me as soon as possible.

Dr. Minton saw me the next day and, after hearing my story and learning of my family history (both my mom and dad had heart bypass surgeries in their 40s), he scheduled me for an immediate heart catheterization procedure that Friday. To be clear, this was one week after my first call to the doctor asking for an appointment for "chest pressure." I remember Dr. Minton telling me that he was pretty sure that I would be going home with some new hardware that Friday.

He was right. He found my left anterior descending artery (LAD) 100% blocked with soft plaque. For noncardiologists, this condition is often referred to as a "widowmaker." I was essentially a ticking time bomb.

HEARTFELT *continued on page 6*

Dismang named AECI Vice President of External Affairs


Jonathan Dismang

Jonathan Dismang has been named Vice President of External Affairs for Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI).

"Jonathan Dismang has excelled at serving his constituents at the state level, and he will bring that same commitment to the 17 distribution cooperatives and their more than 1 million members," said Vernon "Buddy" Hasten, president/CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation and AECI.

Dismang, who resigned as a state senator, will succeed Bill Gossage as Chief External Affairs Officer following his retirement in January 2027.

"During Bill's time with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, he has championed our mission and core values while ensuring the cooperative message of reliability, affordability and responsibility was communicated to state and federal officials. We thank him for his dedication and wish him the best as he transitions into retirement," Hasten said.

Dismang served in the Arkansas Legislature since 2009, after his election to the House of Representatives. After one term in the House, Dismang was elected to the Senate in 2010. Dismang served as Senate President Pro Tempore during three general assemblies, including two consecutive terms to which he was elected by his Senate colleagues. He was the first senator since the 1930s to serve consecutive terms in the position.

He earned a bachelor's degree in accounting and economics at Harding University with cum laude distinction.

"Electric cooperatives are rooted in the communities they serve and exist to make sure families, farmers, small businesses, schools and hospitals have reliable and affordable electricity," Dismang said. "In many ways, joining the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas allows me to continue doing what I have always tried to do as a public servant: listen to people, solve problems and work on behalf of the communities that call our state home."

HEARTFELT *continued from page 5*

Dr. Minton was able to insert two stents to alleviate the blockage, which speaks to his skill, as this condition often requires bypass surgery.

It has been several weeks and I am doing great. So, this Thanksgiving, I have a lot to be thankful for. My heartfelt thanks go to my wife, who insisted I seek medical care, and to two great doctors who quite literally saved my life. I count three separate miracles: first, Dr. Nelson's personal engagement in my health by reaching out to Dr. Minton and getting me an immediate appointment; second, Dr. Minton's willingness to see me the next day; and third, Dr. Minton's skill as a cardiologist in diagnosing and performing an immediate procedure that cleared a life-threatening blockage.

I figure that either God has more work for me to do here in Arkansas, or He wanted to give me more time to get right before I face judgment. The moral of this story: If anything you have read sounds vaguely familiar, don't wait. Get it checked so that you have many more Thanksgivings to share with family and friends.

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Total No. Copies	383,003	379,772
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Mail Subscription	381,614	378,142
Total Paid Circulation	381,614	378,142
Free	750	850
Total Distribution	382,364	378,992
Office Use, Left Over, Unaccounted, Spoiled After Printing	639	790
Total	383,003	379,772
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	99.80	99.77

Hasten attends EPA rule repeal announcement

President/CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten of Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., was in Houston in September when Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin announced the repeal of the 2024 Carbon Pollution Standards.

Hasten attended the G20 Energy Abundance Ministerial, where the announcement was made. The 2024 rule included requirements involving carbon capture and storage technology, which electric cooperatives have said would significantly increase costs while relying on technology that has not been demonstrated at the scale required.

"We remain committed to responsible practices without placing unnecessary burdens on our member-consumers and businesses," Hasten said. "We believe the path forward should be based on sound science, technological feasibility, economic reality and a commitment to keeping America's energy system reliable, affordable and responsible."



COURTESY OF EPA

President and CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten (fifth from right) and other national utility leaders support the Environmental Protection Agency announcement to repeal the 2024 Carbon Pollution Standards.

Where Is It?

Welcome back to our hidden object contest, "Where Is It?"

In the October issue, our yellow mum was tucked away in the Arkansas Living change of address/subscriptions box on page 4. Joked one correct reader, "Perhaps the mum's address has changed."

Winners selected in our drawing to receive Arkansas Living grocery totes were:

Arkana and Jessie Alsfeld, Ward (First Electric Cooperative)
Billy Joe Randolph, Osceola (Mississippi County Electric Cooperative)
Malachi Hickey, Mineral Springs (Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
Ellen Peeler, Wynne (Woodruff Electric Cooperative)
Joan Scott, Cove (Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative)



To celebrate our 80th anniversary, we'll randomly select 10 winners to receive Arkansas Living mugs this month!

We've tucked a little taste of Thanksgiving somewhere in the November issue. Can you "jell" where the cranberry sauce is hiding? Nov. 15 is the deadline. To enter, click on the "Where Is It?" link on the homepage of **arkansaslivingmagazine.com**, or go directly to **arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest**.

Or mail entries to: Where Is It, Arkansas Living, P.O. Box 510, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Include your name, address and electric co-op (nonmembers also are eligible), plus the correct page number.

If your magazine arrives after the deadline, submit your entry by the 15th of the following month. We'll send a prize to a randomly selected latecomer. September's winner was: ***Mark Santangelo, Harriet (Petit Jean Electric Cooperative)****.*

• TRIVIA •

Arkansas Living debuted in 1946. Here's what else was making history that year:

- The year 1946 marked the first full year of peace following the end of World War II.
- The bikini swimsuit was introduced by French designer Louis Réard on July 5.
- The National School Lunch Program was established in the United States.
- Tupperware products first became available to consumers.



- Sony was founded in Tokyo as Tokyo Tsushin Kogyo.
- The first mobile telephone call from a car was made using early radiotelephone technology. The telephone weighed 80 pounds and only worked in major cities.
- Jackie Robinson played his first minor league season with the Montreal Royals, the Triple-A affiliate of the Brooklyn Dodgers, integrating the International League before breaking Major League Baseball's color barrier in 1947.



- The Baby Boom generation began and birth rates surged following World War II.
- The first successful photographs of Earth from space were taken on Oct. 24 from an altitude of 65 miles using a 35mm motion picture camera on a rocket launched from the White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico.
- *"Although no one can go back and make a brand-new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand-new ending."*
  — Carl Bard, author

MILESTONES & MEMORIES

80 highlights from our eight-decade story

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA, NANCY MOORE AND ADDISON MCCAULLEY

Eighty years. More than 950 issues. Millions upon millions of copies.

Since our first edition landed in Arkansas mailboxes in November 1946, this magazine has chronicled an extraordinary amount of life, both the history-making kind and the kind involving gelatin, bologna, sweet pickle and American cheese (all in the same — *hard-swallow* — recipe!).

We dug into eight decades of archives (you can too at **arkansaslivingmagazine.com/stories/archives-2**) to find 80 tidbits, facts, numbers, oddities and only-in-Arkansas Living moments. Some made us proud. Some made us nostalgic. Some made us laugh out loud. And a few made us wonder what on earth we were thinking.


ARKANSAS REA NEWS

Arkansas To Get Million In REA Loans

1. It started small with a big idea. The first Arkansas REA News rolled off the press in November 1946: eight black-and-white pages for 21,018 electric cooperative members, dedicated to informing and entertaining readers.

2. Our first editor had two firsts. Ed H. Thomas was the magazine's first editor and the statewide association's first full-time employee.

3. Readers were part of the story from the start. That first issue invited cooperative members to become self-appointed "reporters" and send in news from their communities. Today, readers contribute stories, photos, recipes and more.

4. A subscription cost a buck. In 1946, a year of Arkansas REA News cost $1. Today, a nonmember subscription to Arkansas Living costs $12 a year. Still a pretty good deal.

5. We were talking 4-H and FFA from the very beginning. Stories about Arkansas 4-H, FFA and other youth programs appeared in the first issue, beginning a tradition that continues today.

6. Our first advertiser was selling something life-changing. Isgrig Pump & Supply Co. of Little Rock advertised Myers Water Systems and the enticing promise of "Running water for a modern bathroom."

7. Electricity itself was news. Early issues introduced readers to all the new things electricity could do at home and on the farm.

8. We predated color TV. Commercial color television sets didn't reach American consumers until 1954. We'd already been in Arkansas living rooms for eight years.

9. Groceries looked a little different, too. In 1946, bacon, eggs and milk cost a fraction of what they do today. Suddenly, a $1 annual subscription doesn't seem quite so surprising.

10. There were only 48 states. Alaska and Hawaii didn't join the United States until 1959. Arkansas REA News was already a teenager.

11. The food coverage goes way back. Our first issue offered tips for making the most of a home freezer. By October 1948, recipes were on the menu, including Country Sausage and Sauerkraut and Sausage with Sweet Potato and Apple. Sausage was clearly having a moment.

12. Then came Ouida Cox. She joined the staff in 1949 to oversee the Women's Department, which featured recipes, dress patterns and other household fare. She was just getting started.

13. We kept readers in stitches. Beginning in 1950, readers could order dress patterns through the magazine, starting with a 20-cent Summer Pattern Book promising "smart fashions to be well-dressed." The feature lasted until 1991, when "Fashions Styled for the Nineties" cost $3.50.

14. We had something for the men, too. A 1950s "Man of the House" feature showed Dad making cheeseburgers on an electric griddle while the women relaxed on the patio. We're OK with this arrangement.

15. We got a new name in 1954. Arkansas REA News became Rural Arkansas. Two more name changes would come decades later.

16. Our classifieds had just about everything. In the 1950s and '60s, the popular Farm Market section advertised farm equipment, livestock, linens, hunting dogs and — because apparently somebody needed them — African giant worms.

17. Appliances were once considered the height of romance. A 1964 graphic suggested that a husband facing his wife's birthday or anniversary


Yes, Running Water

MYERS WATER SYSTEMS

ISGRIG PUMP & SUPPLY CO.

6. OUR FIRST ADVERTISER


7. ELECTRICITY WAS NEWS


9. EGGONOMICS, 1946


12. OUIDA COX



13. DRESS PATTERNS


15. NEW NAME

should "Treat her to the luxury of an automatic kitchen appliance." How could she resist?

18. Annual meetings were must-see TV. In 1964, we reported that annual meetings for Arkansas Valley Electric, C&L Electric and Craighead Electric aired on local stations.

19. Naturally, the door prizes were electric. Air conditioners, hair dryers, toasters and color TVs were among the giveaways. You could win a TV while watching TV.

20. Cox took over in 1968 for the long haul. She served as editor for 44 years, retiring in 2012 at age 90. Now that's staying power.

21. The magazine got a makeover, too. Rural Arkansas was redesigned as a 24-page magazine in 1968.

22. Fashion was feeling groovy in 1968. A Rural Arkansas forecast called for wide-wale corduroy coat dresses, colorful neck scarves and fit 'n flare paisley frocks with puffed sleeves. Somewhere, a fashion trend is plotting its comeback.

23. "Editor" was a very broad job description. Before desktop publishing, Cox sold advertising, wrote stories, took photographs and laid out the magazine by hand.

24. Sometimes finding a story meant knocking on a door. Cox traveled Arkansas' dirt and gravel roads, occasionally stopping at a cooperative member's home unannounced and coming away with a story.

25. Sometimes the dog stole the show. One of Cox's favorite photographs featured an Ozark couple with their dog, Pete. The woman later had one complaint: "Pete outshined me."

26. You could buy a maple tree for 98 cents. In 1976, an ad offered 3- to 5-foot red maple trees for 98 cents each. Shipping cost another 99 cents. It was, after all, the pre-Amazon Prime era.

27. We were serious about hunter safety then, too. A full-page 1976 graphic implored hunters not to shoot at power lines. Fifty years later, this one still bears repeating.

28. Miss Fluffy Rice graced our pages. In 1977, Rural Arkansas featured Mary Burton of Swifton, who held the enviable title. The Farmers Electric member received $200 for winning, plus $75 for her Oriental Rice Salad recipe.

29. We found a prickly character in Prairie Grove. A 1970s story featured Ozarks Electric member "Cactus Jack" Merget, whose nurseries sold more than 1.5 million potted cacti across the country.

30. Solar isn't exactly new. A 1970s DIY article showed readers how to build solar panels using 1,000 empty 12-ounce drink cans and a few hardware-store supplies. First step: Start gulping.

31. Ice on demand was a modern marvel. A 1977 General Electric ad promoted a refrigerator that dispensed crushed ice or cubes without even opening the door. Talk about cool.

32. We once calculated the price of screen time. In 1977, AECI General Manager Harry L. Oswald told Rural Arkansas readers that running a color TV for an entire year cost just $15.40. At that price, binge-watching would have been a bargain.

33. "It's-a-Lotta Bologna Salad" happened. The 1970s recipe combined unflavored gelatin, vinegar, celery, sweet pickle, American cheese and diced bologna. We cannot confirm that anyone asked for seconds.

34. High art was surprisingly affordable. A 1970s ad offered a full-color "Poker Playing Dogs" picture for $3, plus 25 cents shipping. Classy.

35. Elvis was still in the building. Three months after his death in 1977, an ad offered Elvis Presley albums for $5.50 or, for the technologically advanced, eight-tracks for $6.98.

36. One 1977 story has a striking 2026 sequel. The September issue announced that Newark had been selected for a 1,600-megawatt coal-fired generating station. In October 2026, Arkansas Living reported plans for the Independence Gas Plant, a 1,499-megawatt combined-cycle natural gas facility to be built next door.

37. Tracking your electric use took a little more work. In 1978, Rural Arkansas printed a chart for readers to record daily meter readings and estimate their monthly bill. Today, there's an app for that.

38. Recycling newspapers became a statewide assignment. Briefly. In February 1978, members were urged to save newspapers so they could be recycled into cellulose insulation, thought to be in short supply. By October, there was an update: Never mind. There was no shortage after all.

39. Energy-saving advice got very specific. In 1979, Rural Arkansas suggested choosing wallpaper over paint for the added thickness. Every layer counted.

40. And then there was the chandelier. Another 1979 energy-saving tip advised: "You don't need a large, overhead chandelier to darn socks." Clearly, conservation was afoot.

41. One Arkansas couple lived without electricity until 1980. Don and Violet Cockrell of Benton County were among the last Arkansans to get electricity, according to a Rural Arkansas story. Carroll Electric had made service available in their area, but the Cockrells said they couldn't afford it until then.

42. Some of Arkansas' biggest stories unfolded in our pages. After the Titan II missile explosion near Damascus in 1980, Rural Arkansas reported that more than 1,400 Petit Jean Electric members were evacuated for about 12 hours.

43. An editorial from 1980 sounds surprisingly familiar. "Electric Power: What about tomorrow? You can't stockpile kilowatts for lean years," warned that demand for electricity was increasing faster than new generating facilities could be built.

44. And yes, we really printed that. Actual headlines from our archives include "Cocaine: A mistaken thrill" from May 1991 and, in November 2002, the unforgettable "Were you born to be fat?"

45. Readers got the picture in 1992. That's when Reflections, our longtime reader photo feature, made its debut.

46. Here's a little Trivia about Trivia. We found the feature serving up fascinating facts as far back as April 2001.

47. Then came Sweet Potato Party Punch. The 2002 concoction called for cooked pureed sweet potatoes, apricot nectar, pineapple juice, orange sherbet and ginger ale. "Yam" going to need a minute.



25. PETE



26. 98-CENT MAPLE TREE



28. MISS FLUFFY RICE



31. ICE ON DEMAND


IT'S-A-LOTTA BOLOGNA SALAD

Sprinkle gelatine on 1 cup of the cold water in saucepan to soften. Place over low heat, stirring constantly until gelatine is dissolved. Remove from heat. Add remaining 1½ cups water, salt and vinegar. Chill until the mixture is the consistency of unbeaten egg white. Fold in remaining ingredients. Turn into a 6-cup mold; chill until firm. Unmold on watercress and serve with mayonnaise thinned with sour cream. Surround mold with thick slices of tomato, topped by a green pepper ring and a spoonful of minced onion. Serves 8 to 10.

33. IT'S-A-LOTTA BOLOGNA SALAD

48. Doug Rye knew watt was watt. In the 2000s, the energy-efficiency expert filled our pages with practical tips for saving energy and cutting utility bills.

49. When Hurricane Katrina struck, Arkansas cooperatives answered. In 2005, our pages documented the massive mutual-aid response: 300 Arkansas cooperative employees, 78 bucket trucks, 40 digger derrick trucks and other equipment headed to Mississippi, Alabama and Louisiana to help restore power.

50. We did home makeovers, co-op style. From 2008 through 2017, the annual Energy Efficiency Makeover Contest transformed members' homes, and Arkansas Living shared the before-and-after stories.

51. Johnny Cash helped us change our tune. Our July 2011 commemorative issue featured Cash and efforts to preserve his childhood home in Dyess. It also debuted a new name: Rural Arkansas Living.

52. Two months later, we dropped a word. In September 2011, Rural Arkansas Living became simply Arkansas Living. That one stuck.

53. Let's Eat has been making us hungry since 2011. The restaurant feature began with Doug White and was later written by Rob Roedel. These days, a rotating cast of staffers takes a turn at the table.

54. Cox never forgot who the magazine was for. Looking back on her career before retiring in 2012, she said the magazine was first and foremost for members, "those people out there at the end of the line."

55. Janet Carson put down roots in our pages in 2013. The longtime gardening expert has been helping readers grow greener thumbs ever since.

56. We finally joined the World Wide Web in 2015. ArkansasLivingMagazine.com went online and went on to win several awards, including international recognition. Look at us, getting all digital.

57. Juliana Goodwin has whipped up more than 400 recipes for us. She began contributing recipes in January 2018. That's a lot of grocery lists and an impressive amount of butter.

58. In 2019, we hid a pink rose. Things escalated. The first "Where Is It?" hidden object appeared in the May issue and grew into one of the magazine's most popular traditions.

59. Readers take finding tiny objects very seriously. "Where Is It?" has averaged about 1,461 online entries a month, with an estimated 128,568 entries from its 2019 debut through September 2026. Never underestimate an Arkansas Living reader with a magnifying glass and a mission.

60. Victor Fleming put Arkansas on the grid. Literally. His first crossword for the magazine appeared in January 2021. The theme, "On the Grid ... and the Map," challenged solvers to find five Arkansas towns.

61. Y'all take a lot of pictures. The annual Reader Photo Contest has drawn more than 2,000 entries each year since 2024. And honestly, keep 'em coming.

62. We survived totality. The April 8, 2024, total solar eclipse was the first to cross Arkansas during the magazine's history.

63. Eighty years. Just four editors. Thomas was the first, followed by Cox, Sheila Yount (2013 to 2021) and Jennifer Christman Cia (since 2021).

64. Fourteen governors. One encore. From Benjamin Laney to Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Arkansas Living has seen them all — including Bill Clinton twice.

65. Our covers have featured some pretty recognizable people. Over the years, they've included Rosanne Cash and Frank Broyles.

66. Arkansas Living runs in the family. Some readers are the third or fourth generation in their families to receive the magazine.

67. We're huge Down Under. Well, our circulation records show at least one copy of Arkansas Living has made it to Australia.

68. One magazine is actually 16 magazines. Each 44-page issue includes 40 pages shared by all readers, plus three local pages and a customized cover for all 16 participating electric cooperatives. That means producing 104 different pages each month.

69. Those magazines go to a lot of mailboxes. With an October 2026 circulation of 379,772, Arkansas Living reaches more Arkansans than any other publication in the state.

70. Stack them up and things get ridiculous quickly. A stack of all 379,772 copies of a single issue would rise nearly 4,000 feet, roughly three-quarters of a mile.

71. We read between the lines. And every line out loud. Before each issue goes to press, our staff gathers for two hours of old-school, read-aloud proofing. Think book club, but with coffee instead of wine and no skipping chapters.

72. Our magazine has a commute. Arkansas Living is printed by Quad in Hartford, Wisconsin, before making its way to mailboxes back home and to subscribers around the country.

73. Our website gets plenty of traffic, too. ArkansasLivingMagazine.com averaged 21,444 visits a month in 2026, with visitors most often heading to "Where Is It?," recipes and the Reader Photo Contest entry form. Find it, eat it and photograph it is a pretty good digital strategy.

74. More than 20,000 people follow us on Facebook. Our biggest post of 2026, a story about Cavender's Greek Seasoning, drew 549,267 views. The spice cabinet has entered the chat.

75. Print is doing just fine around here. In our 2025 readership survey, 97% of readers said they prefer reading Arkansas Living in print.

76. Readers really do read us. Seventy-seven percent said they read all four of the most recent issues.

77. Readers come hungry. Sixty-six percent had cut out or used an Arkansas Living recipe during the previous 12 months. Food and recipes were also our most frequently read content, at 84%.

78. Readers stick around awhile, too. Fifty-one percent spend 30 minutes to an hour with an issue.

79. And they like what they're reading. Ninety-three percent gave Arkansas Living a positive overall satisfaction rating, averaging 4.7 out of 5.

80. Eighty years later, the name has changed. The reason we're here hasn't. These pages have recorded extraordinary changes in Arkansas homes, farms, communities and electric cooperatives. Our first issue asked cooperative members to help us tell their stories. They did, and they haven't stopped. For more than 950 issues, Arkansas Living has had the privilege of sharing them. And now, on to the stories still to come.



48. DOUG RYE



50. HOME MAKEOVERS



57. JULIANA GOODWIN



58. WHERE IS IT?



64. GOVERNORS



74. CAVENDER'S

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It Starts with the Heart

The Smiths of Howard County are Farm Family of the Year

BY AMBER HELMS

Most mornings, you can find Jared and Cathren Smith enjoying a cup of coffee and a few quiet moments at their kitchen table overlooking their farm. The work ahead will demand plenty of them before the day is through, but that first hour belongs to their family, one reward of the lifestyle they have intentionally created.

"You have to have a heart for it," Cathren says, when asked what it takes to build a successful farming operation. "For the animals, for the land, for the lifestyle."

That heart shows up everywhere on the Smith family's poultry and cattle operation outside Dierks in Howard County, where they are members of Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative. It's in the way Jared and Cathren work side by side. It's in the way their children, Cooper and Clara, are already raising cattle of their own. And it's in the pride the whole family takes in a life built around one another, all working toward the same goal — a simpler life.

"Our kids have daily chores, and they spend their free time outdoors with family and friends on the farm," Cathren says. "Our evenings are spent driving the property, looking at the cows or sitting on our front porch."



COURTESY OF ARKANSAS FARM BUREAU

Farming is a family operation for Cooper, Cathren, Clara and Jared Smith of Dierks, the Farm Family of the Year winners.

Deep roots

The Smiths' story starts, fittingly, at the Howard County Fair, where Jared and Cathren met one September, just shy of Cathren's 17th birthday. By December, when she brought him home to meet her family, the future had already written itself. "Once that meeting took place, it was pretty much set," Cathren recalls with a smile.

Farming wasn't something either of them had to learn to love. Jared grew up working row crops in Ozan, while Cathren was raised on a farm just down the road. They both always knew Howard County was where they wanted to keep building their life together.

"We never considered moving anywhere else," Cathren says. "This is home and always will be. I'm planning to see my grandkids raised here, just like my parents get to do."

Today, that story includes the next generation. Cooper and Clara learned early what the lifestyle demands — the early mornings, the patience, the responsibility of caring for something that depends on you. Cooper has carried that education further through FFA, competing in land judging and showing his own animals, while Clara helps her mom in the chicken houses and cares for her calves. Last year, when one of Clara's calves (named "Skeeter") struggled nursing, she stepped in, bottle-feeding him twice a day for weeks, until he was strong enough on his own.

When the time came to sell Skeeter, Clara felt it. "It hurt when we had to sell him," she says. "I had gotten attached."

Inside the operation

The eight-house poultry farm keeps roughly 250,000 chickens at any given time, producing around 12 million pounds of poultry for market each year. Jared and Cathren split the houses evenly, four apiece, and what started as a practical division of labor has turned into a running family rivalry. Every month, when performance numbers come in, the competition is on, each of them checking to see whose houses climbed higher in the regional rankings, neither willing to let the other hold bragging rights for long.

"The farmer can control about 30% of the outcome of their houses," Jared says. "That percentage is made up of food, water and air quality."

The cattle side requires a different kind of care, especially once calving season hits. During one hard ice storm, a calf got separated from its mother out in the pasture and it became an all-hands effort, with the whole family bundling up to track it down and carry it inside to warm up by the fire until it was strong enough to go back out.

Ask Jared what it takes to run a farm like this, and he'll tell you plainly: "a strong back, work ethic and adaptability. We have no hired help."

More than a living

For the Smiths, farming is more than a way to make a living, it's a way to contribute to society. Knowing their work puts food on other families' tables gives the long hours their meaning.

"It makes me smile when I go to the grocery store and see Tyson Chicken and think I could have raised that," Cathren says.

Jared feels the same. For all the early mornings and long days the operation demands, he says the payoff comes quickly — there's no waiting months or years to see the results of the work. That immediate, tangible reward is part of what makes the hours worth it, a sense of pride that resets and renews with every cycle.

A shared honor

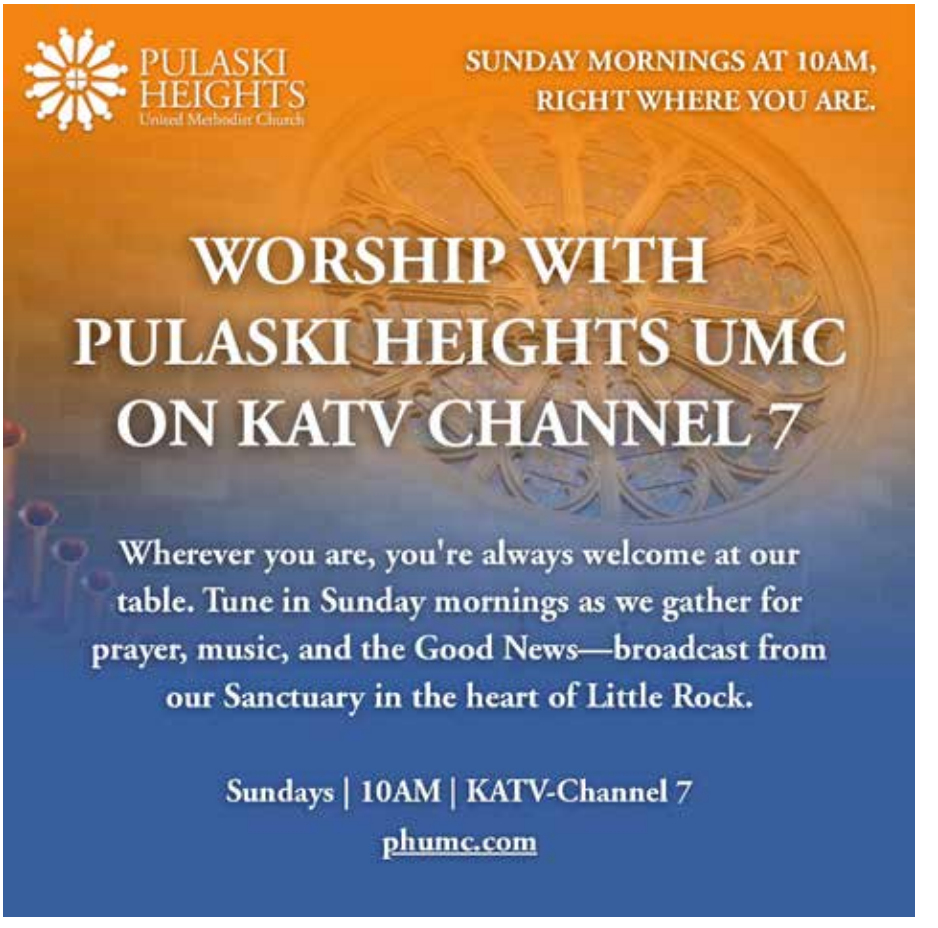
Walk into the Smiths' home, and you'll find photos from their December 2025 Farm Family of the Year recognition set against the backdrop of their own pasture, a fitting reminder of what the award really represents. But for all their success, the Smiths stay humble, treating the honor less like a personal win and more like a nod to farming families everywhere.

"Winning was a complete surprise," Cathren admits. "Every family nominated was so deserving. The farming community is a big extended family. Everyone was so happy for us, as we would have been for them had they won."

And that, in the end, is the real story of the Smiths. Not a story about a farm, but about a family who, simply put, enjoys being a family.

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas are a longtime sponsor of the Arkansas Farm Family of the Year program, which has recognized achievements in agriculture since 1947. The competition rounds go from county to district honors, with the final state Farm Family of the Year announced at the Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation luncheon each December.





Million-Dollar Holler

Dierks High School scores T-Mobile stadium upgrade

BY CHRIS HOOTEN

No one in Dierks, home of the Outlaws, can remember a time when they didn't affectionately refer to the high school football field as "The Holler."

The Holler is short for "the long holler," a natural and steep ravine that runs south over 2 miles in a straight line from the football field to Main Street (U.S. 70).

First State Bank Stadium at Ayers Field is the official title, but The Holler predates both.

Dierks High School (DHS) teacher and cheer coach Adriana Bray Hogg graduated from Dierks in 1999.

"The Holler is just a very special place to us," she says. "It has always been called The Holler, but now it's the Million-Dollar Holler, and I think that's going to stick."



CHRIS HOOTEN



COURTESY OF T-MOBILE

ABOVE For generations, Friday nights at The Holler have brought the Dierks community together.

LEFT The Outlaws take the field at their newly renovated stadium.

Outsized support

Hogg served as the T-Mobile contest school coordinator the past year when Dierks competed with 2,100 schools nationwide to win the second annual Friday Night 5G Lights competition and its "ultimate football field upgrade."

Dierks, with fewer than 900 residents, reached the top 25 with creative social media and a compelling video produced by local photographer Nikki Fields. T-Mobile chose the finalists, Dierks and Lebanon (Oregon) High School, and awarded the $1 million grand prize to Dierks after its supporters logged more than 2 million votes.

"You see the hometown pride," says Sheila Crisotomo, south region vice president for T-Mobile, "and the way students, faculty, families and the community start to spread the word, and they grow into these sizable moments."

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders, singer Tracy Lawrence, former Razorback great Darren McFadden and comedians Jeff Foxworthy and Larry the Cable Guy helped push Dierks across the goal line.

"People saw our original video of how bad our field was, and they stepped in to help our small, little town," Hogg says. "We never would've won without people from across the nation voting for us."

Serious upgrades

The Million-Dollar Holler now features a level playing surface with cooler, softer NFL-grade turf and an underlying gravel base and shock pad to help reduce the risk of concussions. Tax dollars funded new lights and visitor bleachers, while the Dierks booster club raised $1 million to help pay for a weight room, track, concession area, ticket booth and stadium entrance. T-Mobile ambassador Rob "Gronk" Gronkowski's company, Gronk Fitness, donated weight room equipment.

As of press time, the Outlaws were 5-1 with four regular-season games to play.

No small investment

T-Mobile has poured $1.4 billion over the past two years into rural communities like Dierks.

But the improvements at Dierks High School represent more than a financial investment. The renovated stadium is also a celebration of tradition.

Dierks High School Principal/Athletic Director Paul Ernest said on Sept. 18 before the dedication of the renovated football stadium, "For the people at this pep rally, the alumni, the coaches, the players and all our fans, a million dollars does not begin to cover what that field is worth to all those people. There is no price tag you can place on the tradition that takes place every Friday night at The Holler."

WEB EXCLUSIVE! Read an expanded version of this story at: **arkansaslivingmagazine.com**

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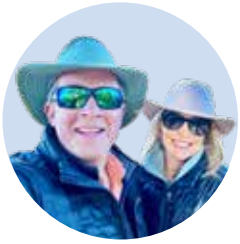
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November Nibbles

Cooler weather calls for savvier fishing



PHOTOS AND STORY BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

When asked about the best month for fishing in Arkansas, our answer is usually the current month. Every day is a great day for fishing! (Except when there's lightning or severe weather. Then you can cozy up and reread your favorite issues of Arkansas Living magazine until the weather clears.)

Some of us may not realize just how fortunate we are when it comes to fishing. In Arkansas, we can fish every day of the year. While other states have fishing seasons, we don't, which means if you wake up and want to fish, you can!

By November, fish are stocking up for winter, and your goal is simple: become part of the food chain.

As temperatures drop, fish may become a little less aggressive, but they're still looking for substantial meals to help them "winter up." Kind of like when we see leftover Halloween candy and start looking longingly toward Thanksgiving pies. "Wintering up" just seems like the right thing to do.



Spinnerbaits appeal to a fish's sense of sight, sound and smell all at once.



Give this a spin: Spinnerbaits can be especially effective in changing fall conditions.

If you're fishing for bass, one great go-to this time of year is a heavier spinnerbait — around a half ounce or more. Spinnerbaits are excellent for locating fish, especially after fall rains change the water color. That's because they appeal to several of a fish's senses at once: sight, sound and smell.



Avid fisherman Carlton Wing says every day is a great day to fish in Arkansas.

Sight: The flash of the blades catches a bass' attention, and the body looks like food.

Sound: As the blades spin, they create vibrations in the water that a bass detects through its lateral line.

Smell: Add a good trailer and you can give your presentation both the look and taste of a meal. Garlic and salt are popular ingredients. They may stink up the truck on the way to the lake, but that smell could be the scent of victory.

A trailer adds action to the whole ensemble. (The holidays are all about style!) It's amazing that spinnerbaits catch fish when they hardly look like lunch to us. But to a bass preparing for winter, that flashy combination checks all the boxes.

November can be tricky in Arkansas. One day feels like September; the next offers a preview of February. If the bigger baits aren't working, reach for a shaky-head jig and slow things down.

Either way, enjoy your day on the water. After all, we get 365 days to fish in Arkansas. And be sure to remind your friends up north: We're casting lines year-round.

Carlton and Leigh Wing are hosts of the "Arkansas' Great Outdoors" weekly television series. Visit ***facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors****.*

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Flavor Maker

Pink House Alchemy crafts syrups for coffee, baking and beyond

STORY AND PHOTOS BY KAT ROBINSON



ABOVE Pink House Alchemy's simple syrups, cocktail shrubs and aromatic bitters are made with locally sourced natural ingredients and fresh botanicals.



LEFT Founded in 2012, Pink House Alchemy in Fayetteville sells its products from coast to coast.



RIGHT Rosemary Salt is made in-house and is perfect for topping baked goods or rimming cocktail or mocktail glasses.

Syrups, shrubs and bitters may sound like throwbacks to another era. But Emily Lawson and her crew at Pink House Alchemy (**pinkhousealchemy.com**) are giving them a modern twist, creating products for a nationwide market from the company's Fayetteville headquarters and coffee shop.

These simple syrups, cocktail shrubs (drinking vinegars) and aromatic bitters are made with natural ingredients and fresh botanicals, many of them locally sourced in northwest Arkansas. Each of them was developed by an alchemist and every one of them is produced in an appropriately pink establishment along College Avenue. They're used in coffee beverages, cocktails, mocktails, baked goods, sodas and all sorts of dining experiences.

The business started in 2012, with Lawson, a coffee stand and an inspiration tied to a bundle of lavender.

From those small beginnings a company was formed. She experimented with local herbs and fruits, with vanilla beans, beet-lemon shrub and bitters. Thus Pink House Alchemy was born. Lawson first operated in a 120-year-old pink house on Huntsville Road, where she cooked on a tiny 1940s gas stove. It was hard, but it was a path she was willing to take.

Now the operation spreads across several buildings on her Fayetteville block. Production workers cook and bottle syrups, make bitters, dehydrate fruit and create sugars, salts and finishing products. A shipping crew sends orders out in special recycled-cardboard packaging designed for the company to reduce waste.

House blends

Her principal sugar used to create all these wonders is a high-molasses, single-origin product from a regenerative farm in Brazil. Securing it at commercial volume took nearly 11 years. The company also relies heavily on Arkansas growers like McGarrah Farms in Pea Ridge, which supplies almost all of the berries the company uses. "There are three-quarters of a pound of berries in every bottle," Lawson says.

Pink House Alchemy also offers lavender and vanilla syrups, with the vanilla suited to sweet breads and other baking where a liquid sweetener works. Other flavors are seasonal, like the recent raspberry syrup celebrating the end of summer, or inventive ones like the miso-salted caramel, with its rich umami notes.

Pink House also makes shrubs and bitters. Grapefruit bitters combine citrus and fresh hops for a distinctive bright flavor. Sarsaparilla bitters offer a particular Ozarks nostalgia. The aromatic house bitters feature Lawson's favored cardamom. And then there's a smoked bitter with vanilla, chipotle and red currant. "You get the heat, you get the smoke, but you can still taste the currant," she states. The bitters emphasize part of Lawson's vision. "It's showing people this is what you can do to taste the perfection of individual botanicals."

Sweet success

In 14 years, Pink House Alchemy has been able to expand its reach from coast to coast. Recently, word of its products has gone organically viral, with the internet discussing all the business has to offer. "A lot of people are talking about us and loving on us right now," Lawson says, "and we are trying to show up for them in the way we promised that we would.

"It's been just experimenting and showing people this is what you can do to taste the perfection of individual botanicals."

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The Class of 1946

Honoring 80 years of service, growth and grit



BY JD LOWERY

This month, Arkansas Living magazine is marking eight decades of telling the stories of The Natural State that are captured through its people, communities, businesses and way of life. As it turns out, we are not the only ones celebrating an 80th birthday.

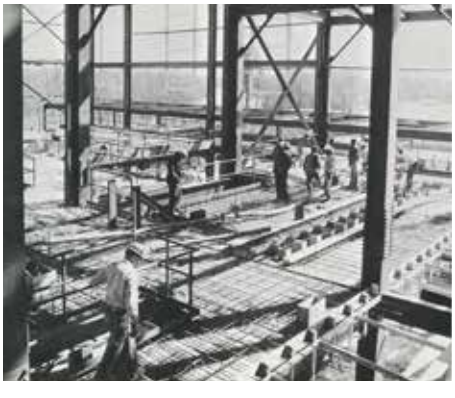
The year 1946 was an important one in Arkansas. World War II ended just months earlier. Thousands were returning home. Communities were growing, businesses were being created and rural Arkansas was on the cusp of a transformation.

Some of the organizations born during that remarkable time are still going strong today.

Baldwin & Shell Construction Company of Little Rock traces its roots to 1946, when P.W. Baldwin, Werner Knoop and Olen Cates combined their expertise to form The Baldwin Company. Over the decades, the company has helped shape the state itself, constructing hospitals, schools, churches, offices and industrial facilities across the state.

That same year in Booneville, brothers A.B. and W.C. Littlefield and their spouses established Littlefield Oil Company. What began as a single service station soon added a fuel transport truck to serve neighboring communities. Today, Littlefield has grown into a regional operation serving customers across portions of four states.

Eleven Arkansas Extension employees also came together in 1946 to create what is now the Cooperative Extension Service Federal Credit Union. Their idea was simple. They created a cooperative financial institution where employees could save and borrow. It continues serving members from its Little Rock office.



COURTESY OF BALDWIN & SHELL

Captured in late 1969 or early 1970, this photo shows Baldwin & Shell constructing the John L. McClellan Generating Station for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation in Camden. The plant was operational in 1971.

In Fort Smith, James William and Cleo Glidewell started Glidewell Distributing from their home and a single panel truck. Today, the family-owned company has grown into a major regional wholesale distributor of many grocery-related products serving Arkansas and Oklahoma.



COURTESY OF THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

In 1946, Riceland Foods began packaging and advertising its products, becoming one of the world's largest rice millers and marketers.

Still locally owned and operated, McGeorge Contracting Company employs more than 400. Its work in construction, earthmoving and site development has literally helped shape the state.

Riceland Foods has roots stretching back more than a century, when local rice farmers organized a cooperative in Stuttgart to better market their crops. While it predates 1946, that year marked an important milestone. It was when Riceland began packaging and advertising its products under the Riceland label. Today, the farmer-owned cooperative is one of Arkansas' best-known agricultural businesses and one of the world's largest rice millers and marketers.

Different industries. Different missions. But these organizations share something important with Arkansas Living. They have staying power.

The Arkansas of 2026 would be almost unimaginable to those who were building these organizations in 1946. Technology has changed. Industries have changed.

But the principles that sustain an organization for 80 years haven't changed.

To our fellow members of Arkansas' Class of 1946, happy 80th. We're proud to be in good company.

JD Lowery is the director of Community and Economic Development for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.

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Low Vision Optometrist
Bentonville, AR



Veterans Day 2026


Alex Williamson


Ben Spencer


Brad Fear


Brett Kennedy


Hunter Gullick


Jackie Raymick


Jackson Teague


Jen Leos



Johnny Bradley


Kane Waymire


Kevin Dixon


Kyle Sanders


Luke Irving


Mark Hamby


Mitch Swann


Nate Roberts


Shawn Barry


Tel Webster


Tim Hendricks

Not pictured:
Jordan Lott
Lee Charles
Matt Goetz

Honoring our veteran employees and all who served our country.

Behind every veteran is a story of service, sacrifice, and commitment to something greater than themselves. This Veterans Day, First Electric and Connect2First salute the men and women who have served our country and helped preserve the freedoms we enjoy every day.

We are proud to count veterans among our employees and members. Their leadership, experience, and dedication continue to make a difference throughout the communities we serve. To all who have worn our nation's uniform: Thank you for your service and for the lasting example you set for us all.

Small Change. Stronger Communities.

Small change can go a long way when neighbors work together. Through First Electric's Operation Round-Up, members turn small monthly contributions into meaningful support for the communities we call home.

When you round your electric bill up to the next whole dollar, you join thousands of members supporting local nonprofits, fire departments, food programs and youth organizations. Together, these contributions have provided more than $1.9 million in community support since 1998.

Enroll today by calling 800-489-7405 or logging in to the First Electric app. Your spare change can help make a lasting difference for our neighbors.

Members' Small Change Provides $22,250 in Community Support

First Electric members are making a difference one rounded-up bill at a time. In October, Operation Round-Up® awarded $22,250 to 21 organizations serving communities throughout our service area.

The funding supports a variety of local needs, including youth programs, literacy, fire and emergency services, and assistance for children and families. These contributions help organizations continue their work and extend their reach to more neighbors.

Operation Round-Up allows participating members to round their monthly electric bill up to the next whole dollar. Those small contributions are pooled to provide grants to organizations serving our communities.



In August, Fishnet Missions of Jacksonville received a donation from Operation Round-Up.

October 2026 Grant Recipients

- Jacksonville Boys & Girls Club — $1,250
- ASPSF of White County — $1,000
- PFK Shield and Shelter — $750
- Perry County Arts League — $500
- Bryant Youth Association — $750
- Literacy Council of Central Arkansas (LACA) — $1,000
- Prevention Education Programs, Inc. — $1,000
- Morrilton Human Relations Council, Inc. — $1,500
- Prim Fire & E.M.S., Inc. — $2,000
- Children's Protection Center — $1,000
- Village Walk for Cancer Research — $1,500
- Commission Fields — $500
- Heroes Behind the Line — $500
- Benson Box, Inc. — $1,250
- Altrusa International of Hot Springs Village AR, Inc. — $1,500
- Imagination Library of Lonoke County (Building Bridges) — $1,500
- Wilburn Fire & Rescue Department — $1,000
- Timothy Hill Ranch — $1,500
- Feline Fix Them — $1,000
- Cherry Hill Community Center — $750
- Children's Advocacy Alliance — $500



In July, the ARCO Youth and Development Program received a donation from Operation Round-Up.

Thank you to every member who participates in Operation Round-Up. Your generosity helps strengthen the communities we call home. To enroll, call 800-489-7405 or log in to the First Electric app.

More co-op news on page 26

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Eureka Springs Holiday Events

November 27
Holiday Hangout Opens— Crescent Hotel
The Great Passion Play Light Trail Opens

November 28
Shop Small Saturday Celebration!— Basin Park 9-10 am
Tree Lighting Ceremony— Basin Park 5:30 pm

December 3
59th Silver Tea— Crescent Hotel 1:30 pm
Gingerbread House Making— Crescent Hotel 10 am

December 4
Christmas Parade of Lights— Downtown 6 pm
"Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer" — The Aud 7:15 pm

December 5
Preservation Society's Tour of Homes— 1-5 pm
Santa in Basin Spring Park 3-5 pm
Eureka Christmas Express ES&NAR Railway 3, 4, & 5 pm
"The Christmas Chronicles" — The Aud 7:15 pm

December 11
Cocoa & Cookie Crawl— Downtown 5-7 pm
Home For The Holidays — The Aud 7-9pm

December 12
Green Eggs & Grinch Breakfast Feast— Crescent Hotel 9-11 am
Santa's Mountain Village— Crescent Hotel 12-5 pm
Christmas at the Inns— 1-5 pm
Santa in the Basin Park 12-3 pm
Eureka Express ESNAR Railway 3, 4, & 5 pm
Living Windows & Mrs. Ropers Downtown 5-7 pm
"How the Grinch Stole Christmas" — The Aud 7:15 pm

December 13
Ozark Chorale Christmas Concert The Aud 7 pm

December 19
Christmas Breakfast Feast— Crescent Hotel 9-11 am
Santa in the Basin Spring Park 12-3 pm
Santa's Mountain Village— Crescent Hotel 12-5 pm
Eureka Christmas Express ESNAR Railway 3-5 pm
Christmas Caroling— Basin Park 5:30 pm
Jinglin Jeep Parade—Downtown 6 pm
"Red One" —The Aud 7:15 pm

December 31
NYE Bash with a Splash— Downtown 8 pm - Midnight +

ChristmasinEureka.com

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Single vs. Joint membership

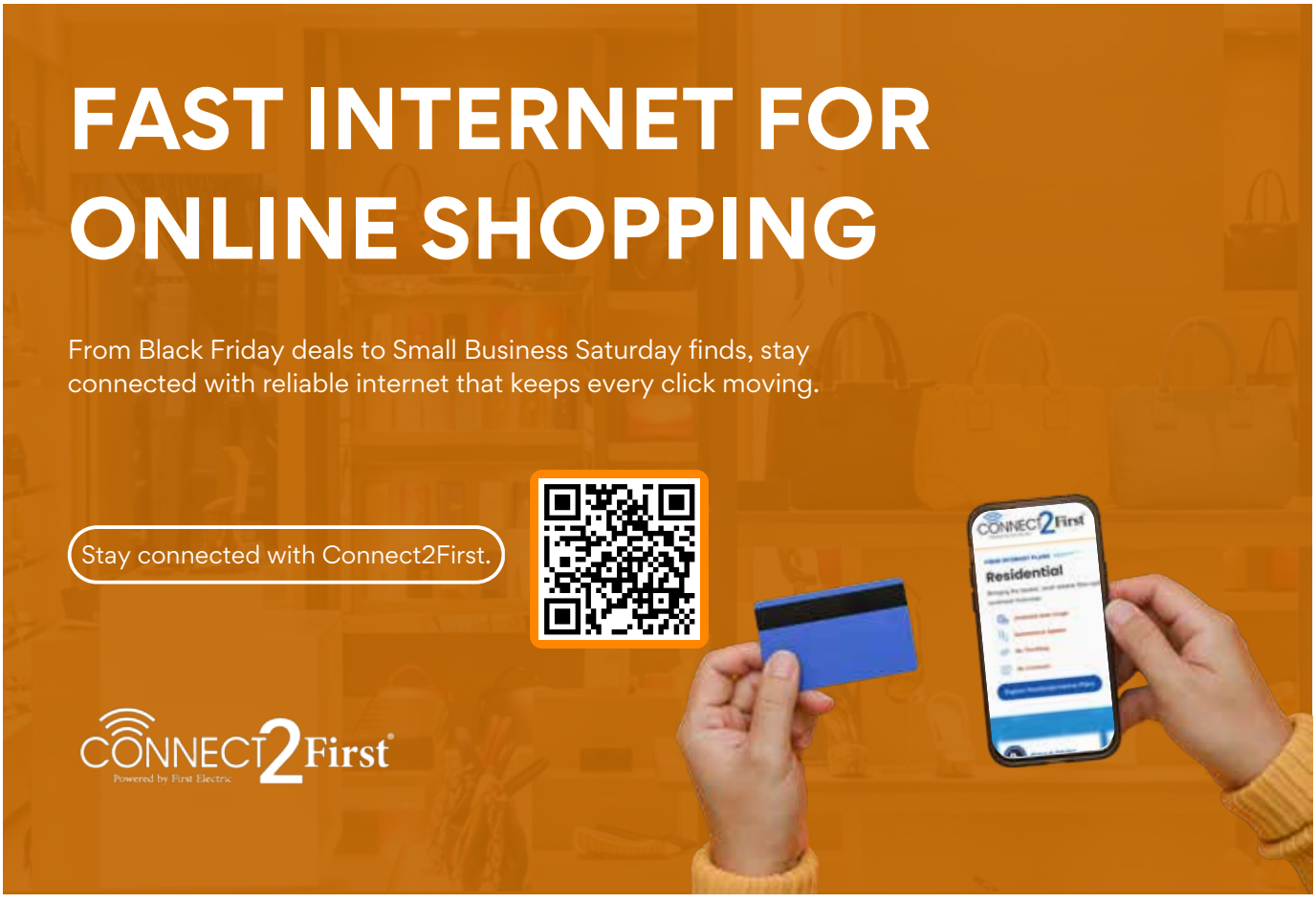
At First Electric Cooperative, every member account is set up as either a single membership or a joint membership.

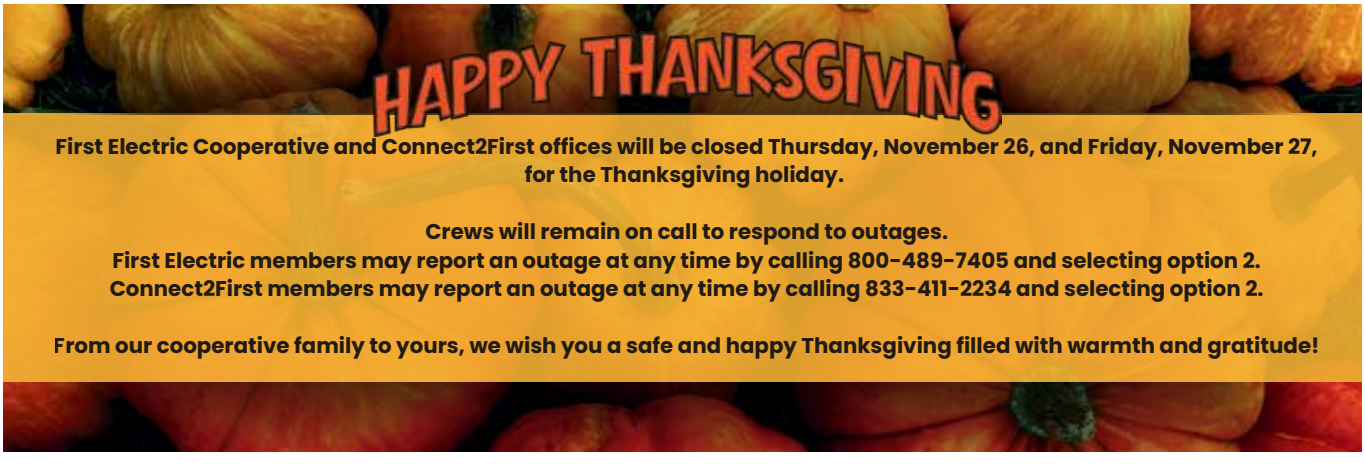
Single Membership – One name appears on the account and bill. Only that person can access account details, request changes to service or vote in the cooperative's annual election.

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A member service representative will explain the process and inform you of the required forms and documents.





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Snapshots from our readers



Jack helps with the Thanksgiving feast!
Charlotte Stone, Star City.



Remington transforms into the Thanksgiving turkey, thanks to a T-shirt his mom made!
Mary Quilhot, Gassville.







Samuel John is ready for his very first fall.
Sherry Davis, McCrory.



Sage in her nana's backyard.
Amber Allen, Lincoln.



Topher is bringing the energy to second grade this year! Dana Smith, Little Rock.



Elliott and Max having big fun in the fall leaves. Traci Peterson, Bearden.



Wesley and his mom, Peyton, share a swing surrounded by sunflowers at Jackson Farm. Rebecca Rhodes, Maynard.



Enjoying the pumpkin patch at Fayetteville's Rivercrest Orchard Farm. Alan Zuniga, Fayetteville.



Fall fun is in full swing for this little sunflower at Arbor Grove Free Will Baptist Church's festival. Cody McQuay, Pocahontas.



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Please submit high-resolution photos with detailed information about the pictures (who took it, where, who is in it, etc.) to: **arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-photo**.

Branch Out

November is ideal for planting trees



BIGSTOCK.COM

Ginkgo trees display vibrant yellow color in the fall.



BY JANET B. CARSON

Trees add beauty and shade, but many people take them for granted until they lose one. With the horrible drought and hot weather we have had this summer, there may be quite a few dead or weakened trees next spring. Wait until trees begin to grow in the spring before assessing their health or removing them. November, however, is the ideal time to plant new trees.

This month, trees are going dormant or are dormant, but we still have some residual soil heat, and typically there is ample rainfall in the fall. This allows the tree to get established more quickly without having to provide energy for leaves.

When choosing a tree, assess your landscape needs. Do you want a large shade tree or a smaller ornamental tree? What mature height are you looking for, and how much room do you have for the canopy? Make sure you plant trees far enough away from your home to allow the canopy to branch out in all directions. Always look up before planting. Plant trees at least 25 feet away from power lines. And always contact Arkansas 811 (**ar811.org**) before you dig.

Water is the most important ingredient for success in the first three years after planting.

SIZE	TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS	FALL COLOR
LARGE TREES (60 FEET OR MORE)		
Oak	Pin oak - traditional oak-shaped leaves, medium growth habit. Willow oak - grows large with small, narrow leaves.	Good color Moderate color
Tulip tree	One of the largest and fastest-growing shade trees, so give it room to grow.	Yellow color
Bald cypress	Large at maturity, but narrower growth habit. One of the few conifers that sheds its needles.	Copper color
Blackgum	Tall with a narrower growth habit; first tree to turn color in the fall.	Brilliant red color
Ginkgo	Slow-growing while young, but eventually grows quite tall. Look for male-only cultivars to avoid smelly fruit.	Excellent yellow color
MEDIUM TREES (25 TO 50 FEET)		
Red maple	Many cultivars are available. Named varieties will ensure good fall color. Red Sunset and October Glory are two options.	Variable color
Hornbeam	Sturdy tree with nice form. Carefree.	Moderate color
Chinese pistache	Good street tree with a wide canopy.	Moderate red color
Saucer or Tulip Magnolia	Showy flowers before the foliage comes on. Many varieties to choose from.	Little fall color but great spring blooms
SMALL TREES (UNDER 25 FEET)		
Dogwood	Common dogwood - understory tree. Not drought-tolerant. Flowers before foliage. Kousa dogwood - tougher than common dogwood but flowers after foliage appears.	Variable color
Redbud	Many varieties are available. Some have variegated foliage. Weeping and upright forms are available.	Little fall color but great spring blooms
Fringetree	American and Chinese fringetrees are both excellent small, flowering trees in the spring. Clusters of fringe-like white flowers are followed by small fruits.	Little color
Maple	Paperbark maple - beautiful bark; protect from full afternoon sun. Japanese maple - many varieties to choose from; protect from full afternoon sun.	Variable color Outstanding fall color

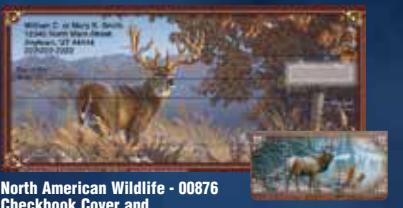
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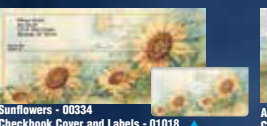
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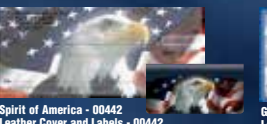
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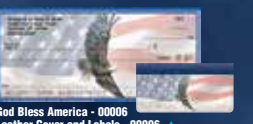

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Festive Fall Flashback

Retro recipes fit for celebratory feasts

RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Potatoes a la Almonds

Makes 8 servings.

- 10 medium-sized russet potatoes (use 8 if they are big)
- 2/3 cup half-and-half
- 11 tablespoons salted butter
- 3/4 teaspoon salt or more to taste
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1/2 cup smoked almonds, chopped

Peel, slice and boil potatoes until tender. Drain. Immediately add half-and-half, butter, salt and pepper. Mash to desired consistency. Allow to cool for 5 minutes, then stir in eggs.

Heat oven to 375. Spread into a casserole dish. Top with almonds. Bake for 10 minutes. Serve.

Note: I put whole almonds in a plastic bag and hit them with a hammer; it's easier than chopping.



Orange Marmalade Carrots

Makes 6 servings.

- 1 pound baby carrots
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 1/2 cup orange marmalade
- 1/4 teaspoon thyme or 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary
- 1 small garlic clove, minced

Heat oven to 400.

Add carrots to baking dish. Drizzle with olive oil and toss to coat. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Stir together butter and marmalade. Add to carrots and stir to coat. Add either thyme or rosemary and garlic.

Bake for 20 minutes for carrots that are still crisp. If you prefer softer carrots, cook for another 10-15 minutes.



Brown Sugar Pecan Cake with Maple Frosting

Makes 8 servings.



Cake

- 2 1/2 cups flour
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1 2/3 cups light brown sugar
- 2 eggs, plus 1 yolk
- 1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 3/4 cup chopped pecans

Maple frosting

- 8 ounces whipped cream cheese at room temperature
- 1 stick unsalted butter
- 2 cups powdered sugar
- 1/2 cup maple syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

For cake: Heat oven to 350. Line a deep 9-inch square or round pan with parchment paper, then grease paper and pan. (A springform pan makes it easy.)

In a mixing bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder and salt and set aside. With an electric mixer in a separate bowl, cream butter and brown sugar. Once light and fluffy, add eggs one at a time, then add the yolk and vanilla extract and mix.

In a separate bowl, combine buttermilk and oil.

Next, add half the dry ingredients and half the buttermilk mixture to butter mixture. Stir just until combined and then add remaining wet and dry ingredients, stirring until just combined. Fold in pecans.

Pour into prepared pan. Bake for 29-33 minutes and check for doneness. Allow to cool for 10 minutes and remove from pan. Cool completely before frosting.

For maple frosting: In a mixing bowl, beat together cream cheese and butter until combined. Gradually add in powdered sugar, maple syrup and vanilla extract. Spread over cooled cake.

Note: Juliana adapted the cake portion from a recipe originally published in Arkansas REA News in January 1953 and added her own maple frosting.





This month's web exclusive recipes:

Sour Cream Pie with Chai Drizzle
Grandma Gander's Rolls

More recipes on our website: **arkansaslivingmagazine.com**

Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler. If you have a question, email ***julianalovesfood23@gmail.com****.*

Gourd-geous Dishes

Pumpkin and squash bring warmth to every course

Butternut Squash & Carrot Soup

Makes 6-8 servings.

- 1 medium butternut squash (about 2 1/2 pounds), peeled, seeded and cubed
- 3 large carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 small onion, quartered
- 3 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or coconut milk
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- Sour cream or creme fraiche, roasted pumpkin seeds or chopped herbs for garnish (optional)



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Heat oven to 400. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Spread squash, carrots, onion and garlic on prepared baking sheet. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Toss to coat evenly. Roast for 25-30 minutes, or until vegetables are tender and lightly caramelized.

Transfer roasted vegetables to a large pot. Add broth and bring to a simmer. Simmer for 10 minutes.

Using an immersion blender, puree until smooth. Or, working in batches, carefully puree soup in a blender. Stir in heavy cream or coconut milk, nutmeg and cinnamon. Season with additional salt and pepper to taste. Serve warm, garnished with sour cream or creme fraiche, roasted pumpkin seeds or chopped herbs, if desired.

Note: This soup pairs beautifully with crusty bread or a grilled cheese on sourdough for a comforting meal.

Timothy Walston, Hatfield

Mexican Pumpkin Hot Chocolate

Makes 1 generous serving.

- 1 1/2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon pure pumpkin
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 ounces dark chocolate, chopped

Whipped cream

- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- Powdered sugar, to taste
- Grated chocolate for garnish (optional)

Place a mixing bowl, glass measuring cup and metal beaters of an electric mixer in freezer to chill.

In a saucepan over low heat, slowly heat milk and pumpkin, whisking occasionally. Add cocoa powder, brown sugar, ginger, cinnamon and nutmeg. Whisk until combined.

When mixture is hot, add chopped chocolate and remove from heat. Whisk thoroughly until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth.

For whipped cream: Remove chilled bowl, measuring cup and beaters from freezer. Pour heavy cream into measuring cup and transfer to chilled bowl. Using an electric mixer, beat cream on medium-high speed until stiff peaks form. Do not overbeat. Add powdered sugar to taste.

Whisk hot chocolate again, then pour into a mug. Top with whipped cream and grated chocolate, if desired.

Rachel Aristeo, Fayetteville

Pumpkin Crunch

Makes 12 servings.

- Nonstick baking spray
- 1 (15-ounce) can pure pumpkin
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 eggs
- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1 (15.25-ounce) box yellow cake mix
- 1 cup pecans, chopped
- 2 sticks butter, melted

Heat oven to 350. Coat a 9x13 baking dish with nonstick baking spray.

In a mixing bowl, combine pumpkin, sugar, cinnamon, eggs and evaporated milk. Pour into prepared baking dish.

Sprinkle cake mix evenly over pumpkin mixture. Sprinkle pecans over cake mix. Pour melted butter evenly over top to cover cake mix.

Bake for 50-60 minutes.

Angie Goodman, human resources specialist, Clay County Electric

Submit your favorite recipes! If your recipe is selected for printing, we will send you an Arkansas-shaped cookie cutter, complete with a QR code linking to cookie recipes.

Email: **arkansasliving@aeci.com** Online: **arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-recipe**

Entries must include your name, phone, address and origin of recipe.



NEW RECIPE CONTEST: *Spring into the Kitchen!*

Spring is on the menu! Send us your favorite recipes for the season. Think Easter and family favorites, brunch dishes, fresh salads, picnic and potluck fare, garden-inspired sides and sweet spring treats.

To enter: Submit your best spring recipe by Feb. 15 to **arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-recipe**.

Four randomly selected winners will each receive a reversible acacia-wood deviled egg tray/serving board with lid.



Cozy Comforts Winners Announced

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Cozy Comforts recipe contest. Congratulations to our five winners, each receiving a copy of Kat Robinson's new cookbook, "What We Eat in Arkansas: 50 Recipes for The Natural State's Signature Dishes, Volume 1."

Christie Howton, Palestine (Woodruff Electric Cooperative)
Tracy Noland, Garfield (Carroll Electric Cooperative)
Joan Michalek, Mountain Home (North Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
Hunter Johnson, Austin (First Electric Cooperative)
Sam Sullivan, Bono (Craighead Electric Cooperative)



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This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of $2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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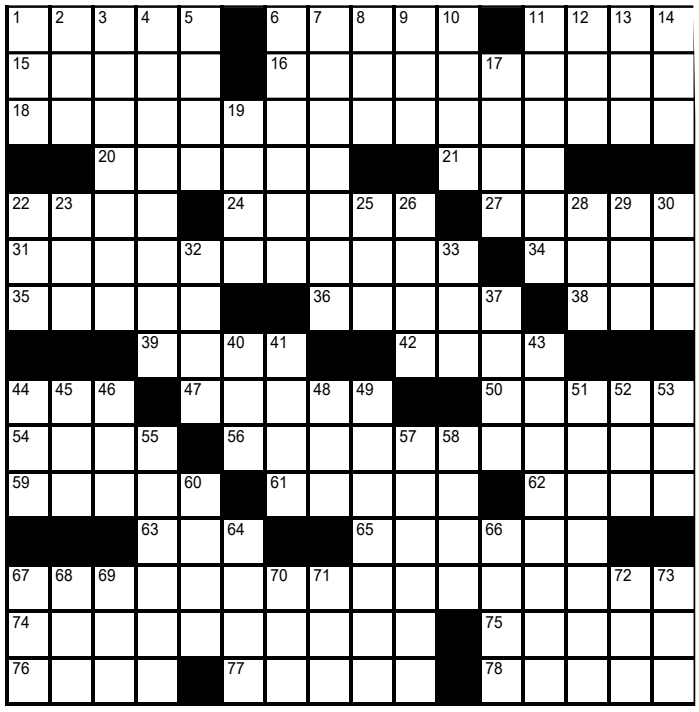
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American Legend

By Victor Fleming



ACROSS

1 "We've Only Just ___"
6 "The tongue of the wise ___ knowledge aright ....": Prov. 15:2
11 Become enraged
15 Biological copy
16 Waters' edges
18 1971 56-Across hit
20 Of direct descent
21 Pond fish
22 Dull-witted one
24 Inclines to one side
27 Bart Castleberry, Vivian Flowers or Pat McCabe
31 With 34-Across and 28-Down, 1974 56-Across hit
34 See 31-Across
35 Lyons and Reid
36 Prefix meaning "nine"
38 Detroit labor inits.
39 Controversial kind of centers
42 Hard to rattle
44 "___ Be Seeing You"
47 Allegro, for instance
50 Bas-relief material
54 Ballpark section
56 Late singer-songwriter, actress and businesswoman (1/19/46-8/25/26)
59 Coil-shelled mollusk
61 ___ of the Ozarks (annual Springdale event since 1945)
62 Factory seconds (abbr.)
63 Balloon-breaking sound
65 As an example
67 1977 56-Across hit
74 ___ House (landmark at Garrison and Fifth in Fort Smith)
75 Friend of Fran and Ollie
76 Basks in the sun
77 "The Creation" composer
78 Affirmations

DOWN

1 Secretly include, in correspondence, initially
2 "All Over the World" band
3 Bet 100% of your stash
4 Like some poems
5 "Eat at Joe's" gas
6 Daily delivery
7 Question to which "Let's" is an answer
8 Countless years
9 Audition, with "out"
10 Relative of "Darn!"
11 Of an offspring
12 108-card game
13 Cousteau's domain
14 Apostrophe follower, often
17 Appear menacingly
19 Cheese from sheep's milk
22 Archaeological excavation site
23 Be behind in payments
25 "I'll ___ your hide!"
26 'N ___ (pop group)
28 See 31-Across
29 Biologist's eggs
30 Remote "Back up" button letters
32 Atty.-wannabe's hurdle
33 Aegean or Bering
37 Bit of pond vegetation
40 "Excellent adventure" taker of film
41 Eros, in Rome
43 Lemon ___ pie
44 "___ Howdy Doody time ..."
45 ___-Manuel Miranda
46 Bucolic setting
48 Arafat's group (abbr.)
49 Galaxy or Windstar
51 Problems for window washers
52 Coll. club
53 Carry-___ (airline luggage)
55 Attains maturity
57 Navy clerk
58 Go (over) carefully
60 Puzzle pioneer Sam
64 "The House at ___ Corner"
66 Like some Chardonnays
67 How tall someone is (abbr.)
68 Swifties' time frame
69 Also-___
70 Hoagy Carmichael's "___ Lazy River"
71 Ex-Dodger Ron
72 Project end?
73 "It Ain't Hard To Tell" rapper

CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 39

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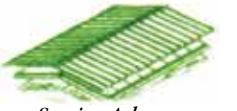
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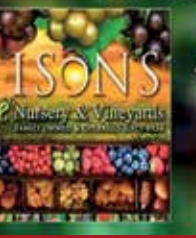
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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

for puzzle on page 38

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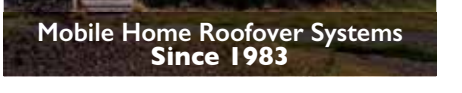
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STORY AND PHOTOS BY NANCY MOORE

At La Cascada Mexican Restaurant in Valley View, the story begins long before the first basket of chips and salsa hits the table. The restaurant has become such a community fixture that locals have given it an unofficial nickname, the "Valley View Country Club."

The playful moniker speaks to the restaurant's popularity, but it also reflects the atmosphere owner Ignacio Patino and his family have worked to create.

"I want customers to be happy and then go home and want to come back," Patino said. "I like them to tell more people and more family, and they come back as a bigger table."

The journey started more than two decades ago when Patino came to Arkansas to work for his uncle, who operated a restaurant in Jonesboro.

"I was working for him, but then I said, 'I want to go on my own,'" Patino recalled.

While searching for a location, he stumbled across a restaurant for sale in Manila. Patino soon bought it, and what began as a single restaurant in Manila has grown into a family-operated business with other locations in Lake City, Brookland, Valley View and Trumann, which opened earlier this year.



Seasoned pork topped with pineapple glaze, fresh cilantro and onions inside soft corn tortillas, La Cascada's Tacos Pastor strike a lively balance of spicy, smoky, tangy and sweet.



Owner Ignacio Patino (third from left) and his dedicated team are the friendly faces behind La Cascada.

Today, La Cascada is a true family affair. Patino's five brothers, sisters-in-law and extended family members help manage the various locations, ensuring that each restaurant maintains the welcoming atmosphere that has made the brand successful.

Family influence shows up across the menu, alongside the familiar favorites diners expect. "It's Mexican, but we got a little bit of Tex-Mex," he said. "The recipes are what we grew up with."

A meal at the Valley View location begins with complimentary chips and salsa, but one of the most irresistible starters is the Queso Fundido. Served bubbling hot in a cast-iron skillet, the creamy cheese dip with chorizo arrives still sizzling beneath a blanket of golden, melted cheese. Arkansans know their cheese dips, and this one will disappear in no time.

The restaurant's signature entree is the Sofia Special, one of the most popular dishes on the menu and Patino's own recommendation. A generous mound of grilled chicken, steak and shrimp is cooked with onions and bell peppers, then piled over a bed of rice and topped with cheese dip. The combination delivers a smoky grilled flavor while the creamy cheese ties everything together into a hearty, satisfying meal.

The Tacos Pastor showcase the



Served straight from a sizzling skillet, the creamy Queso Fundido with savory chorizo is an absolute must-try starter.

THE EATING ESSENTIALS

La Cascada Mexican Restaurant

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restaurant's Mexican roots. Three soft corn tortillas are filled with seasoned pork topped with a pineapple glaze, fresh cilantro and diced onions. Served with lime wedges and a spicy chipotle sauce, the tacos strike a lively balance of spicy, smoky, tangy and sweet.

The combination plate offers another glimpse into the restaurant's diverse menu. One option is a savory tamale alongside a tender chicken enchilada smothered in white cheese sauce. Served with Mexican rice and refried beans, the plate delivers several classic flavors in one satisfying meal.

La Cascada's flan is a sweet finale. The Mexican custard is topped with whipped cream, a cherry and drizzles of strawberry sauce. Smooth, rich and lightly caramelized, it offers just the right amount of sweetness with a touch of cinnamon.

As impressive as the food may be, Patino believes the restaurant's success ultimately comes down to the communities that have embraced it.

"Manila is a big supporter," he said. "Valley View has been a real good supporter, too. Big time."

That support continues to fuel La Cascada's growth. With the possibility of future expansion on the horizon, the family business shows no signs of slowing down.



The smooth, rich flan topped with whipped cream, a cherry and drizzles of strawberry sauce is an ultimate sweet finish.

Still, despite the growth, Patino's mission remains simple: serve great food, welcome guests like family and create a place where people want to gather.

Judging by the crowds that fill the Valley View location's dining room — and the nickname locals have affectionately bestowed upon it — La Cascada has accomplished exactly that.

Dining recommendations? Submit at: **arkansaslivingmagazine.com/contact-us**



Calendar



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Glitz & Garland
Benton, glitzandgarland.com

Nov. 6-7

Momentous Music and Arts Festival
Bentonville, tinyurl.com/MomentusMAFestival

Mistletoe Market
Russellville, facebook.com/mistletoemarket

Nov. 7

Reenactment of the Battle of Prairie D'Ane
Prescott, tinyurl.com/BattleReenactment

Arkansas Cornbread Festival
Little Rock, arkansascornbreadfestival.com

35th annual Reigning Cats & Dogs
Little Rock, warmhearts.org/reigning2026

Veterans Day Parade
Eureka Springs, visiteurekasprings.com/event/veterans-day-parade

Nov. 10

Downtown Christmas Open House
Conway, tinyurl.com/ConwayChristmasOpenHouse

Nov. 11-15

Porsche Palooza
Eureka Springs, visiteurekasprings.com/event/porsche-palooza

Nov. 14

Holiday Market
Bella Vista, bellavistapoa.com/events/holiday-market-2026

Nov. 19

25th annual Taste of the Holidays
Hot Springs, tinyurl.com/TasteoftheHoliday

Nov. 20-Jan. 1

Lights of the Ozarks
Fayetteville, tinyurl.com/LightsoftheOzarks

Nov. 21

Lighting of the Square
Bentonville, tinyurl.com/BentonvilleSquareLighting

Nov. 21-Dec. 31

Garvan Woodland Gardens Holiday Lights
Hot Springs, tinyurl.com/GarvanWoodlandGardens

Nov. 27-28

World's Championship Duck Calling Contest & Wings Over the Prairie Festival
Stuttgart, tinyurl.com/DuckCallingContest

Nov. 27-Dec. 30

Trail of Lights
Sherwood, tinyurl.com/SherwoodTrailofLights

Nov. 28

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Eureka Springs, visiteurekasprings.com/event/shop-small-saturday

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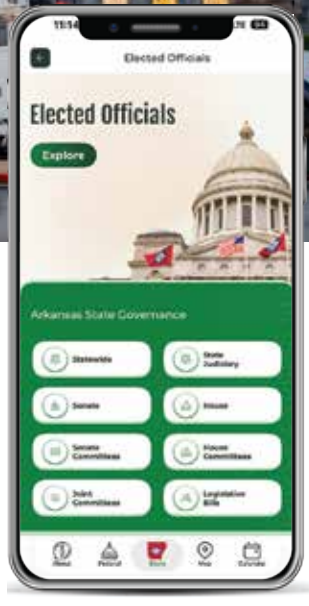
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