

# Arkansas Living

JULY 2024

## Red, White and Blue-tiful!

Make it a festive Fourth

*Page 8*

*Plus:*

“Antiques Roadshow”  
in Arkansas

Peach Picking Time

2024 Arkansas  
Farm Family



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# Don't Get Rattled!

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

**Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) Reliability**

Supervisor Lori Jones remembers her first snake encounter years ago. Having relocated to Arkansas from New York, she was asked by friends to go “herping” — searching for reptiles/amphibians in their natural environment. She thought it was a joke, but friends talked her into it.

She recalls shaking as she picked up a harmless speckled king snake — one much like the live model coiling around her hands today: “It’s going to bite me! It’s going to kill me!”

Speaking recently to a meeting of cooperative employees about snake safety, Jones poses a question: “So, can anyone complete my sentence: The only good snake is ...?”

“A dead snake!” exclaims Lana McLeod, Arkansas Living advertising coordinator, with a laugh.

Jones smiles as she provides the correct answer: “A nonvenomous snake.” Besides, she points out, it’s illegal to kill snakes in Arkansas unless they pose an immediate threat to people, pets or property.

According to the AGFC, there are 36 species of snakes in the state. Only six (copperheads, cottonmouths, western diamondback rattlesnakes, timber rattlesnakes, western pigmy rattlesnakes and Texas coral snakes) are venomous.

“If we could just learn the venomous ones, how to identify them, then we’re safe,” Jones says.

The AGFC offers a full Arkansas Snake Guide ([tinyurl.com/arsnakeguide](http://tinyurl.com/arsnakeguide)).

When you’re outside this summer hiking, camping or just gardening, Jones advises, “Wear closed-toe shoes, and keep your eyes open. I spend every day looking for snakes; snakes are actually hard to find. But if you encounter one, just back up, and don’t go near it.”

And in the event of a bite from a venomous snake, seek immediate medical attention — for goodness’ sake!

Have a sssafe sssummer,

Jennifer Christman Cia  
jennifer.cia@aeci.com



AECC Reliability Supervisor Lori Jones, joined by a speckled king snake, educates cooperative employees.

It didn’t. In fact, the experience gave her life.

Jones says, “I just really fell in love with things that live around us — all things, not just snakes. It’s frogs and birds. ... So, if I went over to your house and you had big rocks or logs in your backyard, I may wander off and look for snakes.

“I just think it’s cool. It’s very weird — I know. I think it’s neat.”

So neat, in fact, that prior to working for AECC, Jones studied to be a herpetologist and formerly served as education coordinator for the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC).

# The Bank of Trust

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

*President and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation*



When I was a kid growing up in Keokuk, Iowa, my parents took me to town to open my first savings account at the Keokuk Savings Bank and Trust. They issued me a savings passbook that looked like a cross between a passport

and a checkbook.

My parents highly encouraged me — OK, ordered me — to find ways to make money from a very early age. I mowed lawns, delivered newspapers, picked fruit, cut wood, shoveled driveways and sidewalks, and I even ran my own business for a time. When I was 12, my Aunt Mary called our house and asked me if I wanted to make some money. Of course I did. She told me that if I would get her garden cart, take it to our farm and fill it with cow-lot dirt that she would pay me \$1 a load. She lived just up the hill, about a quarter of a mile, so I hustled up there, got the cart and spent the day hauling good old black barnyard dirt — or more accurately, cow manure — up the hill. The job came with another bonus, in that she had air conditioning, and Aunt Mary allowed me to cool off in the AC between trips.

I likely made about \$10 that day and got a few glasses of fresh lemonade as well. While \$10 isn't that much money, back then in rural Iowa, I felt rich. My Aunt Mary used that black dirt in her flower beds, and later that year, she won an award from the local garden club for her beautiful roses. Everyone asked Aunt Mary how she got her roses to grow so well, and she said it was the boy down the gravel road and his barnyard dirt.

There is no advertising like word of mouth, and my phone started to ring off the hook from her competition wanting some of that good dirt. When I turned 13, my dad let me drive the farm truck into the barnyard and shovel it full of that dirt. When he got home from work, he would drive me to wherever it was to be delivered, and I charged \$20 a load. To teach me true business fundamentals, my dad charged me the IRS mileage rate for all miles I put on his truck, in the name of my manure

business. After a while, he let me use the tractor's front loader to fill the truck, and then I was really in business. Sales took off, however, I excavated so much dirt that the foundation started showing on the barn. Alas, I had to shut the business down to prevent collapsing our barn.

Once a week, my dad would let me keep about \$20 for spending money, but the rest of it — all of it — went into my savings account. I would take a pocketful of cash into the bank, and the teller would take my deposit and update my savings passbook. At 14, I got a full-time summer job working six days a week at a large fruit-and-vegetable farm, which paid \$4 per hour. I made \$192 a week, and still my dad let me keep \$20 to spend, and the other \$172 went into the savings account. Week after week and job after job, those deposits were made. One day, I had need of that money, and when I looked, I had over \$6,000 in the bank, which equals about \$22,000 in today's money.



## The Bank of Trust

How much is in your account?

I think that life and leadership have a lot of parallels to this story. I tell my kids and my employees that I still make deposits in several banks every day because some day, I might need to make a withdrawal for an important reason. These deposits are made into the Bank of Trust, and I have several accounts. I have accounts with my wife, kids, employees, friends, board members and ultimately you, our member-owners. Every day, I try to do things to earn more trust to deposit into those accounts. Some days, they are small deposits, and other days they are quite large, but the goal is to make as many deposits as I can to grow a useful balance. While it might be convenient ➤

*TRUST continued on page 6*

# Crews assist co-ops following tornadoes

Destructive tornadoes ripped through north Arkansas over Memorial Day weekend, resulting in multiple fatalities and tremendous devastation. The storms also caused widespread, multiday electric outages.

At the peak, cooperatives in the northern tier of the state reported more than 70,000 outages and nearly 1,500 damaged or destroyed structures.

More than 1,200 workers, including lineworkers, right-of-way workers and other professionals, were involved in restoration efforts.

Responding to assist were employees from Arkansas cooperatives, including Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), Craighead Electric, Ozarks Electric, Ashley-Chicot Electric, Arkansas Valley Electric, C & L Electric, Farmers Electric, Petit Jean Electric, Rich Mountain Electric, Southwest Arkansas Electric and Woodruff Electric.

This massive restoration project also involved crews from Alabama, Kansas, Kentucky, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma and Texas.



Crew members from Arkansas and 10 other states restore power after Memorial Day weekend tornadoes in northern Arkansas.

# AECC celebrates 75th anniversary of service to Arkansas

Incorporated on July 11, 1949, Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) celebrates its 75th anniversary this month.

Based in Little Rock, AECC's primary mission is to provide 1.2 million electric cooperative members with Reliable, Affordable and Responsible electricity by generating, selling and delivering wholesale electric energy — along with related services — to its 17 member-owned electric distribution cooperatives in Arkansas.

AECC and its member cooperatives serve about 62% of the geographical area of Arkansas and approximately 30% of the total load in the state. AECC is also a member of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator and

Southwest Power Pool regional transmission organizations.



**Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation**

AECC's wholly owned generation plants include two natural gas/oil-based plants, three hydroelectric generating stations on the Arkansas River and four natural gas-based plants.

The Balance of Power, a central philosophy of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, is to maintain a portfolio of diverse energy generation resources to deliver dependable and cost-effective electricity, which includes intermittent projects.

*TRUST continued from page 5*

to make little withdrawals from my Trust accounts, the best course is to be disciplined and to resist the temptation. Otherwise, the balance will not grow to a useful amount.

Money is the commodity of daily life, and without it, life is a struggle. Trust is the commodity of leadership and relationships, and without it, life is also a real struggle.

Trust can be earned simply by doing what you say you will do, following through on promises and commitments, doing something unexpected because you care, being transparent with information and decisions, being honest in all that you do, being competent in your decision-making and using good judgement on behalf of others. Just like when I was a kid, I continue to work to earn trust and deposit it in the Bank of Trust for a day when I know I will ultimately need to make a withdrawal.

As a husband, father and CEO, there will undoubtedly be times when I need to make a decision that is not popular or may not be fully understood by all. It is at this moment that I need to go to the Bank and make a withdrawal. As the leader of my family and of my employees at Arkansas Electric, I need those I lead to sometimes follow me, even if it is unpopular or something they are not completely familiar or comfortable with. And for them to do that, they have to trust me.

We live in a time when trust in the government, the press and leaders is diminishing. And I hope that each of you reading are able to make weekly deposits in your Trust accounts, raise your balances to levels where you can use them and effect positive change in your families and communities.

# Arkansas Living website wins national award

Arkansas Living, the magazine of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas, recently received national honors for its website.

**ArkansasLivingMagazine.com** won a silver award for Best Web-based Project in the Spotlight on Excellence Awards of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The website was redesigned in 2023 to freshen the look while improving functionality.

According to NRECA, "The Spotlight on Excellence Awards program recognizes a body of outstanding work produced by electric cooperative communication and marketing professionals from across the country."

Arkansas Living, published by the cooperatives for more than 77 years and mailed to more than 420,000 members monthly, has the largest circulation of any state publication.



CHANCE ALLMON

The Arkansas Living staff, which includes (from left) Nancy Meador, Jennifer Christman Cia, Lana McLeod and Rob Roedel, receives a NRECA Spotlight on Excellence Award.

## Where Is It?

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

In June, we hid a honey jar for Pollinator Month.

"Bee-fore you look any further, check out the cover page for some sweet, sweet honey," joked one correct reader who spotted it hidden in the flower in the cover photo.

In a random drawing of correct answers, the following five winners were selected to receive Arkansas Living insulated cooler bags:

- Kain Faulkenberry, Osceola (Mississippi Electric Cooperative)**
- Amanda Kelley, Imboden (Craighead Electric Cooperative)**
- Renee McBryde, Star City (C & L Electric Cooperative)**
- Kathy King, Arkadelphia (South Central Arkansas Electric Cooperative)**
- Shauna Potter, Wynne (Woodruff Electric Cooperative)**

To celebrate summer, this month we've hidden these flip flops, and you might have to flip through the magazine a few times to find them!



Enter by July 15 via the "Where Is It?" link on the homepage of [arkansaslivingmagazine.com](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com), or go directly to [arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest/](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest/).

Or mail in 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! May's winner was: Teresa Rogalla, Greenbrier (Petit Jean Electric Cooperative).*

- Blue fireworks are rarely seen in shows. The color is the hardest to make due to an instability of chemical compounds at high temperatures.
- George Washington had only one working tooth left in his mouth when sworn in as president in 1789.
- The Grimmys are awarded to writers for the best obituaries by The Society of Professional Obituary Writers.
- The water that surfaces in Hot Springs averages 143 degrees. The 47 springs produce more than 1 million gallons of water per day.
- On one "Joy of Painting" episode, Bob Ross created a monochromatic landscape for a colorblind viewer.



- On July 4, Americans will "relish" 150 million hot dogs — enough to stretch from Washington, D.C., to Los Angeles, more than five times — according to the National Hot Dog and Sausage Council.
- The mystery flavor of a Dum-Dums sucker isn't actually a mystery. It's a combination of the end of one batch's flavor and the beginning of the next.
- Chesty, Tubby, Burpy, Wheezy and Awful were names that Disney considered naming the seven dwarfs in "Snow White."
- "Best friend isn't a person — it's a tier." — Mindy Kaling, actress

# Red, White and Blue-tiful!

*Make it a festive Fourth*



BY JACK SCHNEDLER

**F**ounding Father John Adams' patriotic vision still inspires Arkansans as we celebrate the Fourth of July.

Adams wrote his wife Abigail on the eve of July 4, 1776, that future Independence Days “ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forevermore.”

The future second U.S. president (who would later die on July 4, 1826) added, “I am apt to believe that this day will be celebrated by succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival.”

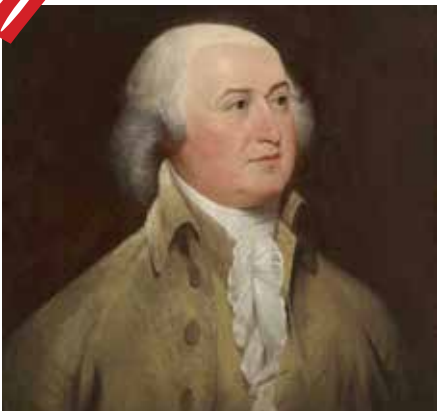
It would be several decades before Independence Day celebrations took root in today's Natural State, as the land was then a possession of Spain. Arkansas' secession from the Union brought a lull in festivities between 1861 and 1864.

July 4 has remained the date of Independence Day, while other holidays like Memorial Day and Labor Day have been shuffled on the calendar to create long weekends. So, it may be surprising that Adams wanted the holiday to be July 2, when the actual independence vote took place before formal adoption two days later.

One feature of Independence Day celebrations took place only in



COURTESY OF NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



In 1776, John Adams, captured in this painting by John Trumbull, wrote Independence Day “ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade.” He'd later die on July 4, 1826, as would fellow former President Thomas Jefferson.







LEFT Pops on the River in downtown Little Rock draws crowds of 5,000 to 7,000 each year.

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

1776. During that summer, some colonists marked the birth of independence by holding mock funerals for King George III. That symbolized the end of the British monarchy's hold on America.

George Washington got into the spirit on July 4, 1778, the second anniversary of independence, by issuing double rations of rum to all his soldiers. He did the same three years later. That was also when Massachusetts became the first state to make July 4 an official holiday. It became a federal holiday in 1870.

The fireworks that accompanied early celebrations might disappoint today's audiences. Pyrotechnics back then came only in orange rather than today's eye-popping mix of colors. That's because it took until the 1830s for Italian inventors to open the spectrum by adding metals like strontium and barium to explosive mixtures.

Public fireworks displays — John Adams' "illuminations" — are scheduled across Arkansas as highlights of the holiday. The pyrotechnics generally start between 8:30 and 9:30 p.m. Festivities also may include military honors, music, concessions and other fun. Most shows are free, though there may

be a charge for seating. Here is a sample:

**Pops on the River**, Little Rock, July 4, [pops.arkansasonline.com](http://pops.arkansasonline.com). The sponsoring Arkansas Democrat-Gazette expects attendance of 5,000 to 7,000 at Riverfront Amphitheater. The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra provides the music. ►



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

Families wait for the Pops on the River fireworks show to get poppin'!



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

The statue of U.S. Marshal Bass Reeves is illuminated by fireworks in Fort Smith.



ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

The River Valley Community Band performs at the Mayor's Annual 4th of July Celebration in Fort Smith.

**Star-Spangled Spectacular**, Camden, July 4, [explorecamden.com](http://explorecamden.com). Billed as the largest fireworks display in southern Arkansas, this Ouachita County sky show takes place at Camden Municipal Airport.

**Independence Day Fireworks**, Hot Springs, July 4, [hotsprings.org](http://hotsprings.org). Barges on Lake Hamilton will launch the fireworks near the east side of Arkansas 7 at the bridge opposite the DoubleTree Hotel. The sky show will be synchronized with music on KQUS-FM 97.5.

**Fireworks Over the Harbor**, Mount Ida, July 4, [mountainharborresort.com](http://mountainharborresort.com). Viewers can watch from land or by boat on Lake Ouachita at Mountain Harbor's marina. Daytime events will include a parade and flag-raising ceremony.

**An American Salute**, Rogers, July 4, [waltonartscenter.org/AMP](http://waltonartscenter.org/AMP). The Walmart Arkansas Music Pavilion is the setting for fireworks accompanied by the Symphony of Northwest Arkansas. Tickets for seating or the lawn may be bought online.

**Mayor's Annual 4th of July Celebration**, Fort Smith, July 4, [fortsmith.org](http://fortsmith.org). Harry E. Kelley River Park will be the scene of fireworks with music by the River Valley Community Band. Bus service to the event is free as an alternative to finding parking.

**Community Fireworks Display**, Russellville, July 4, [mainstretrussellville.com](http://mainstretrussellville.com). Fireworks will light the sky over Lake Dardanelle in Russellville's Independence Day celebration, with prime viewing at Old Post Road Park.

**Ventris Trail's End Resort Fireworks Display**, Garfield, July 5, [beaverlakeresorts.com](http://beaverlakeresorts.com). This Beaver Lake resort has been saluted by Reader's Digest magazine as one of the most pleasant Independence Day locations in Arkansas.

**Let Freedom Ring**, Fairfield Bay, July 5, [visitfairfieldbay.com](http://visitfairfieldbay.com). Greers Ferry Lake is the setting for the pyrotechnics at this Van Buren County resort community. The daytime highlight is a town parade.

**Fireworks Extravaganza**, Heber Springs, July 6, [hebersprings.gov](http://hebersprings.gov). Sandy Beach on the shore of Greers Ferry Lake is the location for daylong activities. The night's fireworks will be choreographed to music broadcast on KSUG-FM, 101.9.

*For more Independence Day events, see the Around Arkansas calendar on page 42 or at [arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas).*



Russellville will host its rousing fireworks display on July 4.



Fairfield Bay's Let Freedom Ring fireworks show extends the festivities by taking place on July 5.

## Celebrating Safely

The National Safety Council offers these cautions for the personal use of fireworks:

- Never allow young children to handle fireworks.
- Older children should use them only under close adult supervision.
- Never use fireworks while impaired by drugs or alcohol.
- Wear protective eyewear when using fireworks or standing nearby.
- Never hold lighted fireworks in your hands.
- Never light them indoors.
- Only use them away from people, houses and flammable material.
- Only light one device at a time, and maintain a safe distance after lighting.
- Never ignite devices in a container.
- Keep a bucket of water nearby in case of fire.

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The Allens of Hot Spring County are the 2024 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year.

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

# Entrepreneurial Allens

*Bismarck business owners are Farm Family of the Year*

BY NANCY MEADOR

In 1994, Jeremy Allen took out a Farm Service Agency (FSA) Loan and bought his first herd of cattle. He was 14. That's when his entrepreneurial spirit first hit.



NANCY MEADOR

Magen Allen helps to run multiple businesses from her office inside JA Farms Feed & Mercantile in Bismarck.

Thirty years later, Jeremy and his wife, Magen, own and operate a feed mill, a mercantile store, an auto parts store, a trucking company, a cattle and hay operation and a hardware store. Last December, they were recognized for their hard work as the 2024 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year.

"He's quite the entrepreneur," Magen says about Jeremy, who built businesses in his Hot Spring County town of Bismarck to meet the needs of his family and neighbors.

In 2007, Jeremy created a feed mill as a way to feed his own cattle. JA Farms Feed now sells 20 different varieties of custom feed mix for cattle, horses, pigs, goats, sheep, chickens and even deer. JA Farms Trucking delivers the feed to regional retail locations.

Once the feed business took off, they opened JA Farms Feed & Mercantile on Arkansas 7 in Bismarck in 2022.

"Our local hardware store closed down," Magen explains. "Jeremy said he'd like to have hardware back in town for the



community and ourselves. We were always running to town for a bolt.”

The community embraced the hardware business. And Jeremy had another idea — auto parts. So, JA Farms Feed & Mercantile became an authorized Bumper to Bumper auto parts dealer.

“The store really does encompass a lot. We’ve got everything from fishing poles to nuts and bolts,” Magen says. “Literally. There’s a whole wall of nuts and bolts.”

Jeremy chimes in laughing, “We have pool supplies coming this week!”

### Homegrown hustle

The businesses are a family affair with the help of their four children: Lane, age 19; Brody, age 16; Evie, age 10; and Eli, age 9.

Lane helps in the feed mill, runs the hay equipment and does the hay baling. He’s also a welder. Brody also helps in the hay fields and works at the auto parts counter. Eli helps with the retail side of the feed store.

And then there’s Evie, who doesn’t let her brothers outwork her on the farm. The pageant-girl-turned-rodeo-barrel-racer drives a tractor with hay baler.

“I just enjoy doing it,” Evie says. “It’s funner to do that instead of the work my brothers do in the hay.”

If owning and operating several businesses and having four active children isn’t enough to keep them busy, Magen also sits on the Arkansas Farm Bureau Board of Directors, and she is a member of the Bismarck School Board.

“We’re super involved in the community and our church,” Magen says. “We always support our FFA and sports programs and anything that our kids are involved in.”

She plays it off, saying “That’s just what we do.” But adds, “It’s also the most important thing to do.” ➤



Entrepreneur Jeremy Allen built several businesses in Bismarck to help family and neighbors, including an auto parts dealership.



Biscuit considers herself the quality control inspector at JA Farms Feed & Mercantile.



Evie Allen at JA Farms Feed Mill which sells 20 varieties of custom feed mix.

**Down the road**


As for Jeremy's next big idea, he says he's considering adding more lines to the mercantile store and possibly even a drive-thru for feed purchases.

"If our neighbors will come here first and give us a shot before they go to town, I'll try to carry what they need," he says.

The store is reminiscent of old mercantile establishments that sold a bit of everything, including bologna sandwiches.

"We get hit up for that!" Jeremy says, grinning. "We're usually asked when we're going to start serving burgers."

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 begins with selection of top county farm families; eight District Farm Families of the Year are then selected, with the final state Farm Family of the Year announced at the Arkansas Farm Bureau Foundation luncheon each December.

As 2024 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year, the Allens will compete with nine other state winners in the Sunbelt Ag Expo Southeastern Farmer of the Year program in Moultrie, Georgia, in 2025. 



NANCY MEADOR



NANCY MEADOR

ABOVE Eli Allen stocks hardware at JA Farms Feed & Mercantile.

LEFT JA Farms Feed is sold in bulk at JA Farms Feed & Mercantile.

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# Powering Down

## *Set your home to vacay mode*

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

**Q:** How can I lower my electric bill when I'm gone on vacation?

**A:** While you are off enjoying a new adventure or time away, give your home's equipment a vacation, too. Doing so can reduce unnecessary energy waste and unneeded wear and tear on your heating and cooling system, appliances and more. Here's how to set your home to vacay mode:

### Adjust your thermostat

Your heating and cooling system keeps you comfortable. If you aren't there, it doesn't need to be quite so comfortable in your home. Setting the thermostat closer to the outdoor temperature can save you energy and money. I don't recommend completely turning off the heating or cooling system. In extreme heat, your cooling system also helps to protect your home from damage.

As a rule, you can typically set your thermostat 5 to 10 degrees closer to the outdoor temperature when you aren't home.

Installing a smart thermostat gives you the ability to control your settings remotely from your smart phone. This allows you to adjust the temperature after you leave home and right before you return.

### Lower the setting

Most water heaters include a vacation mode setting. This setting drops the temperature to reduce wasted energy when you're away. A storage water heater is like an insulated tea kettle, standing by and ready for you to have hot water whenever you need it. Give that water heater a vacation, too. Leave yourself a note with a reminder to turn it back on when you get home, so you don't wind up with a disappointing shower before the first day back at work.

### Keep the heat out

Closing the curtains can provide two benefits. It can keep heat from the sun at bay. This reduces the load on your heating and cooling system, which saves energy. It also has the benefit of blocking visibility into your home when you're away.



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES


Following energy-saving tips before vacation ensures you won't come home to a higher bill.

### More ways to save

For security, some people use timers or leave on exterior lights. Make sure any lights left on are LEDs, instead of incandescent or compact fluorescent bulbs. LEDs use less energy and have less impact on your electric use when left on all night. You can also consider adding smart LEDs to your home that can be controlled remotely through an app on your phone.

Before you leave, walk through your home and unplug devices and small appliances. Make sure gaming consoles and computers are fully powered down. Unplugging any devices that have lights, clocks or use standby mode can also reduce wasted energy.

Having peace of mind that your home is powered down and secure can help you enjoy your vacation. After all, we all need an occasional break.

*Miranda Boutelle writes on energy-efficiency topics for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 electric co-ops.* 



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Set your thermostat 5 to 10 degrees closer to the outdoor temperature when you aren't home.





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# On the 'Roadshow' Again

Popular PBS series returns to Arkansas

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STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY BOB ROBINSON

Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville is renowned for housing a world-class collection of priceless masterpieces.

On a day in May, it accommodates treasures of a different kind.

Crystal Bridges is hosting a day of appraisals for “Antiques Roadshow” — the most-watched, ongoing primetime public television series — during the show’s third visit to Arkansas. The Bentonville event will be featured as part of the show’s 29th season, which airs in 2025.

Executive Producer Marsha Bemko says, “We seek a location with a sense of history, place and community to host the ‘Antiques Roadshow.’ We found the Bentonville area fit the bill for everything we were looking for.”

The show, which airs locally on Arkansas PBS Mondays at 7 p.m., has about 5 million viewers each week. So, it’s no surprise when registration for the Arkansas show totals over 10,000 applications. A random drawing narrows the field to more than 2,000 lucky people to receive a ticket.

My girlfriend, Dalene Ketcher, is a “vintage seeker” herself and a big fan of the show. I score major points when I tell her I have tickets. All she must do is sort through her “she shed” to select two items to take for a free appraisal.

### From Elvis Presley to pickles

From the moment we arrive at Crystal Bridges, the organization is impressive. Guests have been assigned staggered arrival times, and the impact of 2,000 attendees is never an issue. With the show’s road crew, and over 100 local volunteers, answers to attendees’ questions are just a couple of steps away.

The Triage Room greets us as we step off the elevator. Inside, experts perform the first evaluation of everyone’s items. They assign them



“Antiques Roadshow’s” stop at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville will air in 2025.



ABOVE The Triage Room is where experts evaluate items and assign them to one of 25 categories.

LEFT Native American art appraiser Ted Trotta of “Antiques Roadshow” shares the history of a warrior ax with Dalene Ketcher.



to one of 25 categories, ranging from Asian arts to furniture to musical instruments.

As visitors patiently stand in line to await their assignments, they peer about, observing the treasures of others. There are people with paintings, glassware, odd-looking lamps and wagons stacked high with assorted objects.

Bobbie and Tommy (“Antiques Roadshow” only allows media to use attendees’ first names) are in line behind us, pulling a wagon with a tall white dog statuette, fireplace andirons and a reddish glass bowl stacked on top.

“We hope this is Elvis Presley’s dog, Nipper,” Bobbie cheerfully explains.

She describes a famous performance, during which “The King” had playfully danced about the stage with a white dog — the spitting image of their own figurine.

The colorful glass bowl was something they picked up at Goodwill for \$20 for their son. He has red hair and likes red knickknacks around his apartment.

Once Dalene’s items are categorized, we leisurely meander through Crystal Bridges in search of the tables with the Tribal Art and Jewelry flags behind them. We also make new friends along the way.

“Did you see that one?” our newest friend, June, whispers as she eavesdrops on a nearby appraisal. “They brought in a 179-year-old preserved pickle.”

### It’s showtime

When it’s our turn at the Tribal Arts table, we are greeted by a smiling Ted Trotta. Although he has been appraising one item after the other all morning, he enthusiastically examines Dalene’s tomahawk and asks about the history.

“My late husband was a full-blooded Cherokee. His father was Deputy Chief to Principal Chief Wilma Mankiller,” Dalene begins. “This was passed down from his father, my husband’s grandfather.”

Trotta specializes in early Native American art. He inspects the tomahawk intently from all angles before expertly sharing the weapon’s history.

“This was crafted some 200 years ago,” he says. “It is an authentic warrior’s ax intended for close combat.”

Fingering the heart cut out in the ax head, he explains, “It is often referred to as the weeping heart ax. There is a lot of myth and lore associated with the heart.”

In the end, he concludes that it is in great condition. With what appears to be the original handle, it could bring about \$600 at auction.

Our next stop is Jewelry, where Dalene shows Kevin Zaviar an Egyptian necklace her father had brought back from World War II. ➤



### CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

With a giant spider sculpture, “Maman,” lurking in the background, Bentonville’s Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art serves as a unique setting for “Antiques Roadshow.”

Lights! Camera! Action! Bentonville is ready for its “Antiques Roadshow” closeup.

Tommy and Bobbie bring a dog statuette to “Antiques Roadshow,” in hopes that it’s Elvis Presley’s dog, Nipper.



Vintage seekers bring family heirlooms for appraisal and a shot at being featured on the popular "Antiques Roadshow."

Zaviar is a third-generation jeweler. He is very gracious in evaluating the piece, but in the end, he concludes it has no monetary value.

Dalene responds, "The rich story of my father bothering to bring it home during the war to give to my mother makes it priceless."

### Amazing appraising

From start to finish, the all-day "Antiques Roadshow" appraisal event is a first-rate operation. Many of the crew have been with them for years. The appraisers are not paid for their services. When I ask Zaviar why he does it, he replies, "For the friendship of the ('Antiques Roadshow') associates and the love of what I am doing."

Back to Bobbie and Tommy, their dog is not the original Nipper. It is just one of many RCA mass-manufactured figures, worth no more than the \$50 they paid for it at a garage sale.

However, the glass bowl is worth \$1,200, and the fire andiron is worth over \$1,800.

For more information on "Antiques Roadshow" and the Bentonville episodes airing in 2025, visit [myarkansaspbs.org](http://myarkansaspbs.org).

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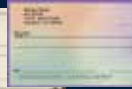
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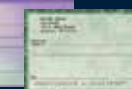
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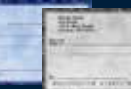
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# Operation ROUND UP

## Nine students to receive Round-Up scholarships

First Electric awarded a \$2,000 college scholarship to nine recent high school graduates living in the cooperative's five districts. The scholarships were funded by the co-op's Operation Round-Up program. Scholarship recipients for 2024 are:

- Ian Price of Bryant (Homeschool)
- Abby Matthews of Benton (Bryant High School)
- Emily Fuller of Heber Springs (Heber Springs High School)
- Chloe Liles of Prim (Quitman High School)

- Madison Holmes-Jared of Cabot (Cabot High School)
- Terrion Hughes of Sherwood (Sylvan Hills High School)
- Meechah Collins of Cabot (Cabot High School)
- Grace Turner of Bigelow (Bigelow High School)
- Jaden Steeland of DeWitt (Dewitt High School)



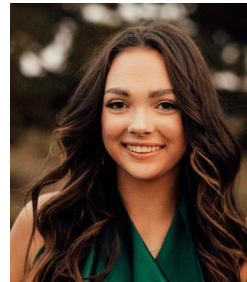
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Emily Fuller



Chloe Liles



Madison Holmes-Jared



Terrion Hughes



Meechah Collins



Grace Turner



Jaden Steeland

First Electric members participating in Operation Round-Up volunteer to have their monthly electric bill rounded up to the next even dollar amount. Since 1998, the Operation Round-Up program has awarded nearly \$1.6 million in donations to nonprofit organizations and college scholarships.

Members may enroll in Operation Round-Up by visiting [firstelectric.coop/operation/round-up](https://firstelectric.coop/operation/round-up) or by calling (800) 489-7405.

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- Reduce your hot water use by taking showers after 8 p.m.
- Use the microwave or grill outside instead of the oven or stove.
- Unplug electronic devices when not in use.
- Check your HVAC filter monthly and change as needed.
- Check for air leaks around windows, recessed lighting and attic flues. Seal the leaks with caulk or expandable foam.
- Make sure your attic has adequate insulation.
- Turn on ceiling fans in occupied rooms to circulate air and help reduce the need for air conditioning.
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# Just Peachy

*Johnson County Peach Festival is Ripe for the Picking July 18-20*

BY KAT ROBINSON

Whether it's in a cobbler, under ice cream or straight off a tree, a peach is one of summer's best flavors. For nearly 150 years, Arkansas has enjoyed the fruits of the orchard on the regular.

According to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas, "peaches were introduced as a crop in Arkansas after the Civil War, as were many other fruits and vegetables, during the New South Diversification movement in agriculture." This meant having different crops in circulation to keep from being dependent on a single crop, like cotton.

"Historically, the major peach production areas were the southern reach of the Ouachita Mountains from Mena to Hope," says Dr. Curt R. Rom, a professor with the University of Arkansas' Department of Horticulture. "At one time the nation's largest peach orchard was in Nashville. They grew especially well on the ridgelines and hills bordering the Arkansas River from Atkins to Fort Smith, with the region of Russellville to Clarksville and Ozark being the epicenter. Some locations in Northwest Arkansas had microclimates where peaches grew well, but location was important. Northwest Arkansas had a reputation of lack of reliability due to spring frosts."

## In the flesh

Dr. Amanda McWhirt, fruit and vegetable extension specialist with the University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture, says, "Peaches bloom in early spring, and the blooms can be killed by spring frosts. Every few years, we get a smaller peach crop if there are bad freezes during peach bloom."

McWhirt continues, "Peach season is generally June to July in Arkansas. Typically, mid-June is when harvest starts in the southern part of the state, but this year, it appears to be starting a bit earlier."

The cultivation of Elberta peaches sparked a burgeoning industry at the end of the 19th century. Unlike many older varieties, Elbertas were sturdy and firm enough to be transported by rail and had a longer shelf life, so they could be sent fresh to further away places. James R. Tolbert and Johnson J. Taylor started growing Elbertas in Johnson



The Peach Pickin' Paradise in Lamar offers pick-your-own peaches.



Peaches became a crop in Arkansas after the Civil War.



Pageants are part of the Johnson County Peach Festival's fun.

County in 1893, and they were soon adopted all across the state, including at that aforementioned nation's largest peach orchard in Nashville. At one point, up to 175 boxcars of peaches were sent out daily.

Today, a wide range of cultivars, many developed through the University of Arkansas Fruit Research Station at Clarksville, have diversified the peach crop. Eat-fresh peaches, like the White Cloud and the White Diamond, have come from this work, as well as cling peaches for canning such as the Roygold and the Goldilocks.

These newer peaches mean more peaches to harvest over time. "Newer cultivars can extend through August and early September, and some local growers have those to sustain markets until fall crops," Rom adds.



## Pickin' and partying

Mark Morgan with Peach Pickin' Paradise, a pick-your-own operation in Lamar, says a freeze in March means peaches will be available earlier than expected this year.

"We usually have a six-to-seven-week, late June, July, August window, but this year, we have them in mid-June," Morgan reveals. "We could have a longer season, but this is how it works with the type of peaches we have planted. For those who want to come pick their own, any Saturday in July is good, and we should have plenty around the time for the peach festival."

Johnson County has long celebrated its affection for the fuzzy fruit. In 1938, a celebratory festival was first held in the Ludwig community. Since then, it has been moved to the county seat at Clarksville, and it now sits on the third week of July. Over the course of three days, the town celebrates with a parade, peach-eating and peach-pie-eating contests, a cardboard boat regatta, beauty pageants, fishing tournaments, a greased pig chase, a frog jump, a peach cobbler bake-off, a terrapin derby and pocket car races. And of course, there are plenty of opportunities to purchase peaches.

The Johnson County Peach Festival is July 18-20 on the downtown square in Clarksville. For more information, visit [jocopeachfest.com](http://jocopeachfest.com).

And if you'd like to pick your own at Peach Pickin' Paradise, information on what peaches are available and what hours the orchards are open is available at [facebook.com/peachpickinparadise](http://facebook.com/peachpickinparadise).

## PEACH VANILLA CREAM PIE

from "The Great Arkansas Pie Book"  
by Kat Robinson

- 6 whole graham crackers, pounded to crumbs
- 1 tablespoon butter, melted
- 1 (8-ounce) package cream cheese, at room temperature
- 7 ounces sweetened condensed milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 4 fresh, ripe peaches, sliced

In a large bowl, blend together graham cracker crumbs with butter, then press into pie pan. Set aside.

In a large bowl, blend together cream cheese, sweetened condensed milk, vanilla extract and lemon juice. Pour into pie crust. Place peach slices on top. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve.



Peach Vanilla Cream Pie

KAT ROBINSON

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# LIHEAP offers cooling assistance

The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps qualifying individuals and families pay for cooling costs in the summer months.

Don't delay! Applications for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will be accepted starting in July on a first-come, first-served basis as long as funds are available.

Businesses are excluded from receiving the benefit. LIHEAP is not administered by your local cooperative, but rather through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and it is operated by community action agencies.

The amount of financial help available varies based on income, the number of people in a household and other factors.

LIHEAP eligibility in Arkansas is based on 60% of State Median Income (SMI) and 150% of Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG). According to DHHS, the program is designed to lower the energy burden for low-income households that pay a high proportion of household income for home energy costs by paying benefits for home energy bills.

Contact your local Community Action Agency (CAA) to check eligibility. Visit [acaaa.org/local-community-action-agencies](http://acaaa.org/local-community-action-agencies) for a list of CAA offices around the state.



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ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT



## FFY 2024 ARKANSAS LIHEAP ELIGIBILITY CHART

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	INCOME LIMIT DETERMINED BY:	MAXIMUM MONTHLY COUNTABLE INCOME (MCI)
1	SMI	\$2,054
2	SMI	\$2,685
3	SMI	\$3,317
4	SMI	\$3,949
5	SMI	\$4,581
6	SMI	\$5,213
7	FPG	\$5,678
8	FPG	\$6,320
9	FPG	\$6,963
10	FPG	\$7,605
11	FPG	\$8,248
12	FPG	\$8,890
13	FPG	\$9,533
14	FPG	\$10,175
15	FPG	\$10,818
16	FPG	\$11,460
17	FPG	\$12,103
18	FPG	\$12,745
19	FPG	\$13,388
20	FPG	\$14,030

**Add \$642 for each additional household member**

**ADDITIONAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**  
 If utilities are included in your rent, you must provide a lease agreement. Your lease agreement is required to demonstrate an Energy Burden. Energy Burden criteria are different for subsidized housing than unsubsidized housing.



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# Snapshots from our readers



**O' Doc showing his love for America!**  
Tiffany McClelland, Walcott.



**Aspen experiencing ice cream for the first time.** Cassie (Lindsey) Mitchel, Lead Hill.



**Alder is proud to be an American!**  
Dylan and Samantha Jacobs, Bryant.



**Maverick and Amelia celebrating Independence Day.**  
Makaleigh Wright, Walnut Ridge.



**Ava Rae is an all-American girl.**  
Rachel Rushing, Jonesboro.



**Sadie proudly flying the colors, with little Dixie joining the parade.** Lesli Efrid, Umpire.



**Amelia says, "Happy Fourth, everyone!"**  
Kay Chevallier, Horseshoe Bend.



**Jasmine has her own festive way to celebrate.**  
Mary Jane Pabula Givens, Sparkman.



**LuLu is the family meat inspector. Watch out!** Shea Wilson, Bearden.

Share your photos with your fellow Arkansas Living readers! 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](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-photo).

# Echinacea: Easygoing, easy growing

*Colorful coneflowers are simple to 'cone-trol'*



STORY AND PHOTOS BY JANET B. CARSON


Gardeners dream about plants that can bloom 24/7 with no care. While no such plants exist, there are some long-blooming perennials that are fairly carefree, once they are established. Having something that can bloom all summer that we don't have to replant each season, like summer annuals, is a great thing. The echinacea family is one of the longest-blooming perennials, and long-lived as well.

Echinacea, commonly called coneflowers, is a wonderful family of native perennials that will thrive statewide in full sun to partial shade. Prized for their long-lasting beauty in the garden and as a cut flower, they are also used

medicinally. Native echinacea come in shades of purple or yellow, but through plant

hybridizing, today there are now red, orange, yellow, white and multi-colored forms. Most begin blooming in mid to late May, and depending on species, will continue to flower up until frost. Deadheading, or removing the spent blooms, will ensure faster repeat flowering. Toward the end of the growing season, let the spent flowers mature and form seeds, which can help in reseeding the plant, and also provide food for the birds.

Echinacea prefer a well-drained soil. The first year or two they should be watered regularly to ensure a strong root system. Once established they are fairly drought-tolerant. Fertilize them in the spring as new growth begins, and then again mid-summer. While some species can grow up to 4 feet or more, they produce strong stems and rarely need staking. The plants are excellent for pollinators, attracting bees and butterflies. They are also deer-resistant.

Many species are readily available at local nurseries or can be grown from seed, which is best planted in the fall. If they get overcrowded, they can be divided. 



Echinacea provides long-lasting beauty in a variety of colors.



*E. paradoxa*, or Yellow Coneflower, grows up to 3-feet tall.

SPECIES	CHARACTERISTICS	BLOOMS
Purple Coneflower <i>E. purpurea</i>	Originally available in purple, numerous cultivars exist with flower colors including white, pink, red, orange and yellow. Most common species and longest-blooming.	Single ray-like disk of blooms per stem. Some blooms are double. Each flower can be 3 to 5 inches across and 12 inches to 4 feet tall, based on cultivar.
Pale Purple Coneflower <i>E. pallida</i>	Grows 18 inches to 3 feet tall, with thin petalled blooms, which can be pale purple or nearly white. The blooms are almost spider-like.	Each bloom is 3-4 inches across, but since they reflex down, they look smaller. Very drought-tolerant. Typically blooms May-July but can have sporadic blooms into fall.
Yellow Cornflower <i>E. paradoxa</i>	Grows up to 3 feet tall, with thin, downturned petals. Bright yellow with dark brown centers.	Large, fragrant blooms up to 6 inches across. Drought-tolerant and long-lived. Blooms May-June.
Narrow-Leaf Coneflower <i>E. angustifolia</i>	More compact plant growing 1-2 feet tall. Light pink to pale purple ray-like petals.	A more compact version of the pale purple coneflower with droopy petals.



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# Tropical Tastes

*Cool down and spice up with sun-kissed flavors*

RECIPES AND PHOTOS  
BY JULIANA GOODWIN



## Tropical Punch

Makes 5 servings.

- 4 cups mango nectar
- 1/3 cup fresh lime juice
- 1 cup water (see note)
- 2 cups apple juice
- 2 cups ginger ale

Chill all ingredients before making punch. In a large pitcher, stir together mango nectar, lime juice, water and apple juice. Top with ginger ale and serve.

*Note: If you plan to fill the pitcher with ice, use half as much water because the ice will melt and water down the punch.*



## Tropical Tres Leches Cake

Makes 12 servings.

### Cake

- 1 (20-ounce) can pineapple tidbits, divided use
- 1 (15.25-ounce) box white cake mix
- 1/2 cup sour cream or Greek yogurt
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup sweetened coconut flakes

**For cake:** Heat oven according to cake mix package directions. Grease a 13x9 pan, and set aside.

Drain pineapple, reserving 1 cup of juice for cake and 1 cup of pineapple tidbits for sauce (remaining fruit can be saved for another use).

Beat together white cake mix, 1 cup reserved pineapple juice, sour cream or Greek yogurt, eggs and canola oil for 2 minutes.

Add sweetened coconut flakes, and beat until just combined. Pour into prepared pan, and bake according

### Sauce

- 1 (3.4 ounce) package coconut cream instant pudding mix (can substitute with cheesecake or vanilla flavor; add another 1/4 cup coconut flakes)
- 2 cups milk
- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk
- 8 ounces whipped topping, thawed
- 1/4 cup coconut, toasted (see notes)

to package directions, about 30-35 minutes. Allow to cool completely.

**For sauce:** In a large bowl, beat pudding mix and milk. Refrigerate for 10 minutes. Whisk in sweetened condensed milk and whipped topping. Spread over cake. Top with 1 cup pineapple tidbits and toasted coconut.

*Notes: To toast coconut, place in a nonstick pan over medium-low heat, stirring as it toasts. Toast for about 5 minutes or until most of the coconut changes color. Do not leave unattended, as it can quickly burn.*





## Elote Chicken Dip

Makes 6 servings.

- |                                    |                             |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 cups rotisserie chicken, chopped | 1 teaspoon ground cumin     |
| 1 (15-ounce) can corn, drained     | 1 teaspoon chili powder     |
| 1/4 cup red onion, minced          | 1/2 teaspoon smoked paprika |
| 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped          | 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt    |
| 3/4 cup mayonnaise                 | 1/2 lime, juiced            |
| 1/4 cup salsa                      | Tortilla chips for serving  |

In a large bowl, stir together chicken, corn, red onion and cilantro. In a separate bowl, whisk together mayonnaise, salsa, cumin, chili powder, smoked paprika, garlic salt and lime juice until combined. Thoroughly mix with chicken. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours before serving with tortilla chips.



*This month's web exclusive recipe:*  
**Chilled Peanut Noodles**

More recipes on our website:  
[arkansaslivingmagazine.com](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com)

*Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler.  
If you have a question, email [julianalovesfood23@gmail.com](mailto:julianalovesfood23@gmail.com).*

# Summery Sides

*Dishes to cook up for your next cookout*

## Stove Top Baked Beans

- 2 slices bacon, cut into half-inch pieces
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 (14-ounce) cans baked beans
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons barbecue sauce

In a large skillet, brown bacon with onion. Stir in remaining ingredients, and cook over medium heat for about 15 minutes. Lower heat to simmer, and cook until thickened, about 10 more minutes. Enjoy.

*Note: My mother made this when I was growing up; my daughter and I have carried on the tradition.*

*Liz Hickman, Alicia*



Stove Top Baked Beans

JENNIFER CHRISTMAN, CIA

## Spaghetti Slaw

- 1 (16-ounce) package angel hair pasta
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 small green bell pepper, chopped
- 1 (16-ounce) bag coleslaw mix
- 2 cups coleslaw dressing

Cook angel hair pasta according to package directions. Drain, rinse in cold water, then drain completely before adding to a large serving bowl. Stir in remaining ingredients, mixing well. Refrigerate for 2 hours before serving.

*Notes: This is a great side dish adapted from one of my favorite cookbooks, "In the Kitchen with Mary & Martha." I visit Arkansas from time to time, and it is a beautiful state!*

*Lisa Hansen, Appleton, Wisconsin*

## Summer Squash Casserole

- 8-10 medium yellow summer squash, trimmed and diced
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 (10.5-ounce) can cream of mushroom soup
- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 1 cup croutons or plain breadcrumbs
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil (optional)
- Fresh ground pepper to taste

Heat oven to 350.

In a large pan, sauté squash and onion in butter until tender. Stir in remaining ingredients. Spread mixture into casserole dish, and bake for about 30 minutes.

*Note: I got this recipe from my Mom.*

*Vickie Henry, Texarkana*

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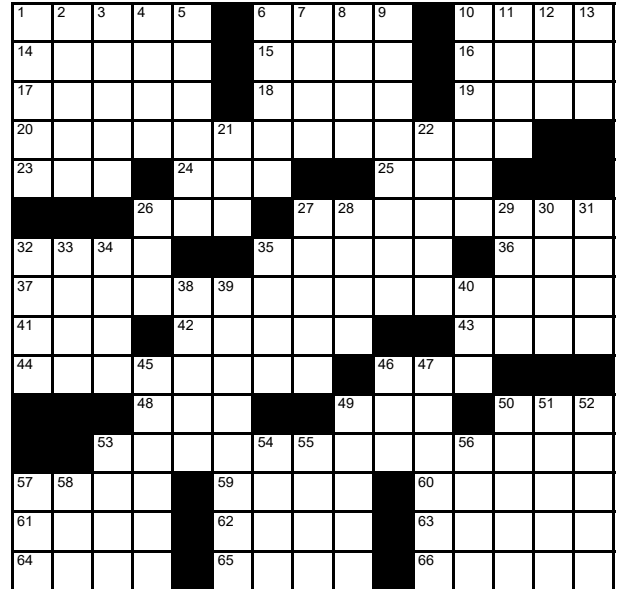
### This Month *By Victor Fleming*

#### ACROSS

- 1 "Time is money," e.g.
- 6 Breadth
- 10 Word that may precede 20- and 53-Across (abbr.)
- 14 Eel that is an ambush predator
- 15 Polk County's \_\_\_ Lisa Mine
- 16 Baby bang-up
- 17 "What \_\_\_!" (poor peer review)
- 18 Name of several Norwegian kings
- 19 Defensive spray
- 20 July 12
- 23 "Finding Nemo" setting
- 24 Animal that bugles
- 25 Physique, informally
- 26 Braves' home (abbr.)
- 27 Leather fabric
- 32 Equitable
- 35 Original name of Abraham's wife, in Genesis
- 36 Lyricist Gershwin
- 37 July 4
- 41 Canonized French woman (abbr.)
- 42 Busts
- 43 Citrus coolers
- 44 Afternoon social
- 46 Pepper or Bilko (abbr.)
- 48 Incoming flight info
- 49 "Needless to \_\_\_"
- 50 Battleship initials
- 53 July
- 57 Creole vegetable
- 59 Brick troughs
- 60 Cowboys' happening
- 61 Animated character
- 62 A seeming eternity
- 63 Blue sky hue
- 64 Cola containers
- 65 "Don't budge" directive to a dog
- 66 High school students, usually

#### DOWN

- 1 Build up



- 2 \_\_\_ Gillis (old TV comedy character)
- 3 A bouquet has one
- 4 John Irving's "The World According to \_\_\_"
- 5 Opening for a lace
- 6 Apronlike garment in an art studio
- 7 \_\_\_ sci (college major, colloquially)
- 8 Gray subj.
- 9 Soup ingredient
- 10 Wanderers
- 11 At the opponents' field
- 12 Behavioral quirk
- 13 Marianna's county
- 21 In need of a doctor
- 22 Architectural order
- 26 "Diamonds \_\_\_ Forever"
- 27 \_\_\_ longlegs
- 28 "\_\_\_ Tu" (1974 hit song)
- 29 Infamous pirate
- 30 "Dies \_\_\_"
- 31 Votes against?
- 32 "Duke" character
- 33 The "A" in A.M.
- 34 Light bulb, in comics
- 35 Mad mood
- 38 Babble
- 39 Otolologists treat them
- 40 Gobble up
- 45 Nuts in some pies
- 46 "Play It Again, \_\_\_"
- 47 Certain fitness enthusiast, slangily
- 49 Brazen
- 50 Excessive
- 51 Rudder's place
- 52 Pumps and clogs
- 53 Anemic one's concern, perhaps
- 54 Tree anchor
- 55 Novelist Ferber
- 56 Exude slowly
- 57 How some meds are sold, initially
- 58 Campers' org.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 41

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# Art of cooking on display at Cozy Nook Gallery Café



STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY ROB ROEDEL

What do you get when you combine a retired art teacher, a historic building with a full commercial kitchen and a working art studio? You have the Cozy Nook Gallery Café in Lonoke.

Terri Taylor had a vision for a classic building in downtown Lonoke and lovingly transformed the space into an eclectic business that is unique and fun. She opened the studio in 2018 and began offering artisan breakfast and lunch in 2023. The décor features the work of local artists and items you would expect to find in an art studio. The building has tin ceiling tiles, stained glass windows and a cool



Hospitality is a top priority for Crazy Nook Gallery Café's owner and artist Terri Taylor and team member Hannah.

skylight made from a chicken coop. One of my favorite items was a beautiful, custom 18-foot hardwood table that weighs about 2,000 pounds.

Creative sandwiches are served on scratch-made bread and come with chips, fresh fruit and a homemade cookie. Since it is a working studio, sandwiches are named after famous artists, ranging from Warhol to Picasso to Michelangelo. So, after you visit the Cozy Nook, you can tell your friends you have purchased several pieces by famous artists.

The restaurant strives to create a warm, welcoming environment with a menu that includes as many locally sourced items as possible. Terri and her team take great pride in offering allergy-sensitive, vegetarian and gluten-free meal options.

The Grantwood, featuring sliced roast beef, grilled onions, Swiss cheese and "horsey" sauce, was very good — as iconic as "American Gothic," painted by its namesake Grant Wood.

Michelangelo arrived next, featuring delicious meatballs and lively marinara sauce on freshly baked garlic bread with parmesan cheese. This creation, served open-faced, was a definite favorite.

The Kahlo, named after Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, was a classic sandwich that featured ham and turkey, mayonnaise, sliced Colby jack cheese, lettuce and a slice of fresh garden tomato. A



Cozy Nook's sandwiches — like the Kahlo, featuring ham, turkey and cheese — are named after artists and served on bread made by owner Terri Taylor.

perfect sandwich for any day.

The restaurant even has an artistic take on PBJ, the Picasso, featuring peanut butter and homemade "golly" grape jelly.

The Cozy Nook offers a daily blue plate special, made from recipes that Terri's grandmas taught her while she was growing up. They are made from scratch and with love. I lucked out on the timing of my Let's Eat visit and enjoyed a nice bowl of Dumplings and Chicken. This is my go-to comfort food, and my sincere thank-you to Terri's grandmas for passing along their skills. The flavor (secret unexpected ingredient: cumin!) was excellent, and the dumplings were bites of coziness.

The soup of the day during my visit was Gumbo. What a treat. The rich gumbo wasn't too spicy and provided a great mixture of flavors. One of my guests loved it so much that she packed up the remainder of the bowl and enjoyed it for dinner.



The Cozy Nook's Gumbo is full of flavor.

## THE EATING ESSENTIALS

### Cozy Nook Gallery Café

106 N. Center St., Lonoke  
(501) 282-8343  
cozynookstudios.com

### Hours of Operation

Tuesday-Saturday: 7:30 a.m.-4 p.m.





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Each sandwich comes with a freshly baked cookie. I also got to sample the gluten-free brownie. It was a chocolate fantasy, as the warm brownie was topped with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and drizzled with chocolate sauce. A strawberry accented the presentation. The Cozy Nook also has pies.



Serving breakfast and lunch in Lonoke, the Cozy Nook Gallery Café offers feasts for the appetite as well as the eye.

Breakfast is offered Tuesday through Friday from 7:30 to 11 a.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. The menu includes an option for “bottomless” Biscuits and Sausage Gravy!

If you are bringing a large group, Terri and her team appreciate advance notice, as each item they prepare is made-to-order, and they take great pride in producing genuine masterpieces that guests can enjoy one bite at a time. 

**Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at [rob.roedel@aecc.com](mailto:rob.roedel@aecc.com).**



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## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

for puzzle on page 38

S	N	E	T		S	T	A	S		S	N	C	A	
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# Calendar



Grill Wars: Triple Steak Cook-off



Cave City Watermelon Festival



Big Grass Bluegrass Festival



Altus Grape Festival

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

## July 3

### Fireworks and Food Trucks

Sherwood, [cityofsherwood.net/264/Independence-Day-Celebration](http://cityofsherwood.net/264/Independence-Day-Celebration)

### Freedom Fest

Conway, [facebook.com/FreedomFestConway](https://facebook.com/FreedomFestConway)

## July 4

### Big Bang Fireworks Show

Jacksonville, [cityofjacksonville.net/609/Big-BANG-Fireworks-Show](http://cityofjacksonville.net/609/Big-BANG-Fireworks-Show)

### Cabot's Fourth of July Celebration

Cabot, [cabotparks.com/268/Cabots-4th-of-July-Celebration](http://cabotparks.com/268/Cabots-4th-of-July-Celebration)

### Evening at Orchards Park

Bentonville, [bentonvillear.com](http://bentonvillear.com)

### Fireworks Spectacular

Rogers, [amptickets.com/performance/fireworks-spectacular-2024](http://amptickets.com/performance/fireworks-spectacular-2024)

### Mayor's Annual 4th of July Celebration

Fort Smith, [fortsmith.org/2024-4th-of-july-celebration](http://fortsmith.org/2024-4th-of-july-celebration)

### Independence Day Fireworks

Hot Springs, [hotsprings.org](http://hotsprings.org)

### Independence Day Homecoming

Corning, [corningar.gov](http://corningar.gov)

### Pops on the River

Little Rock, [pops.arkansasonline.com](http://pops.arkansasonline.com)

### Star-Spangled Spectacular

Camden, [explorecamden.com](http://explorecamden.com)

## July 5

### Let Freedom Ring

Fairfield Bay, [visitfairfieldbay.com/events/let-freedom-ring](http://visitfairfieldbay.com/events/let-freedom-ring)

## July 5-6

### Freedom Fest

Heber Springs, [heber-springs.com](http://heber-springs.com)

## July 6

### Fireworks Extravaganza

Heber Springs, [heber-springs.com](http://heber-springs.com)

## July 7-8

### Grill Wars: Triple Steak Cook-off

El Dorado, [mainstreeteldorado.org/grill-warsummer-concert](http://mainstreeteldorado.org/grill-warsummer-concert)

## July 11-13

### Falcon Club of America National Car Meet

Hot Springs, [falconclub.com](http://falconclub.com)

## July 12

### Art of Wine Festival

Fayetteville, [waltonartscenter.org/special-events/art-of-wine](http://waltonartscenter.org/special-events/art-of-wine)

## July 18-20

### Johnson County Peach Festival

Clarksville, [jocopeachfest.com](http://jocopeachfest.com)

## July 19

### Big Grass Bluegrass Festival

Paragould, [facebook.com/collinsbluegrassfestival](https://facebook.com/collinsbluegrassfestival)

## July 20

### Great Arkansas Beer Festival

Little Rock, [facebook.com/GreatArkansasBeerFestival](https://facebook.com/GreatArkansasBeerFestival)

### The Rock City Margarita Festival

Little Rock, [facebook.com/therockcitymargaritafestival](https://facebook.com/therockcitymargaritafestival)

## July 25-27

### Cave City Watermelon Festival

Cave City, [cavecitywatermelonfestival.com](http://cavecitywatermelonfestival.com)

## July 26-27

### Altus Grape Festival

Altus, [altusgrapefest.com](http://altusgrapefest.com)

## July 27

### Christmas in July

Van Buren, [oldtownvanburen.com](http://oldtownvanburen.com)



# Help your child start school with confidence. Prepare now for kindergarten 2025.

Written by Kelli Hilburn, Better Beginnings Program Administrator

## Getting ready to start school

Preparing for school begins at birth. Daily interactions with family and other caregivers promote learning. Talking, reading, and playing may seem simple but are critical activities that help children’s minds and behaviors develop.

Family involvement will continue to be a major factor in school success. Better Beginnings online resources provide fun and interesting hands-on activities for learning with family.

## Kick off 2025 kindergarten readiness this summer

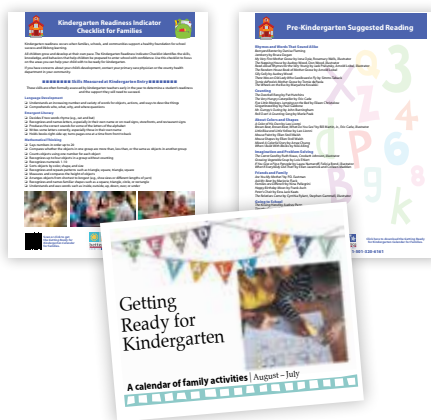
The **Getting Ready for Kindergarten Calendar** guides families, week-by-week, with activities and suggested reading that help children learn literacy and math basics and creative activities to help them develop the fine motor control needed to hold a pencil correctly and use scissors – essential skills for kindergarten. Children are encouraged to develop self-help and problem-solving skills as well as various social skills.

The *Kindergarten Readiness Checklist* helps families focus on areas of development their child may need help with before starting school. All resources are free and available online for download.

We encourage families to partner with their child’s early educators to help their child start kindergarten with confidence.



Scan the code or click **Kindergarten Readiness** in our website footer for the tools to get started.



The year before kindergarten is the ideal time to focus on children’s readiness for school.

## Looking for your early education partner?

Better Beginnings early care and education providers prepare children for kindergarten with positive experiences, research-based curriculum, and learning through play.

Click the orange banner at [ARBetterBeginnings.com](http://ARBetterBeginnings.com) to find star-rated quality early care and education providers who help children get ready for kindergarten through age-appropriate and positive learning experiences.

Better Beginnings is administered by the Arkansas Department of Education.



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