



Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Renaissance Festival creates magic, merriment for all ages

Page 8

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Traveling Texarkana

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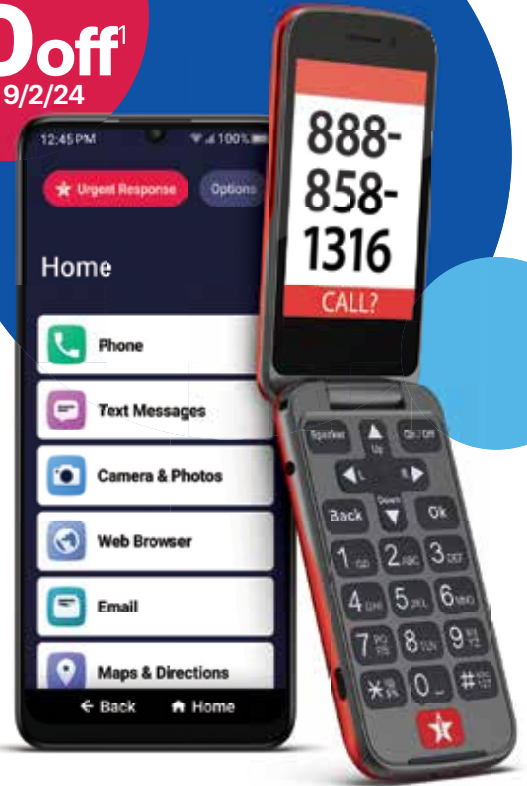
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ON THE COVER

The Arkansas Renaissance Festival welcomes guests this month to the new Dragonstone Springs, a land of enchantment in Mount Vernon.

Photo by Tanis Taft.

Follow us!
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The Sound of Music

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Never let it be said that Arkansas Living doesn't have range!

Later in this issue, we'll feature Hillberry Music Festival (page 24), a hippie happening in Northwest Arkansas. So, here, let's discuss very different music resounding in another part of our state.

For the Arkansas Symphony Orchestra (ASO), September will be a key (get it — musical key?) month. Opening the new 20,000-square-foot Stella Boyle Smith Music Center in Little Rock's East Village with a three-day celebration from Sept. 13 to 15, ASO will have its first permanent home since incorporating in 1966.

While larger concerts will

tradition of great musicians, and we want this space to be a place where we can cultivate the next generation of great musicians from Arkansas."

Can't get to Little Rock for a visit, just yet? Littlejohn says, that's OK — they'll bring the symphony to you.

"We'll be able to do more recording here and then make it accessible to people in hospitals, people in nursing homes, anybody who can't get to us will still be able to hear us and be able to be part of the community in terms of hearing music and experiencing music and experiencing their own Arkansas symphony."



MATT HENRY/SEVEN

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra celebrates the grand opening of its new permanent home, Stella Boyle Smith Music Center in Little Rock, from Sept. 13 to 15.

If a trip to the state's capital is something you're planning in the next few months, consider adding an ASO performance to your itinerary. Some popular concerts in the 2024-2025 season are sure to include: "Star Wars: Empire Strikes Back," (Oct. 18-20); "Beethoven & Blue Jeans" (Nov. 2-3); "Home for the Holidays" (Dec. 20-22); "Broadway Rocks" (Feb. 8-9); and "Superheroes vs. Villains" (March 8-9). Visit arkansasymphony.org.

Have a happy, harmonious September,

Jennifer Christman Cia
jennifer.cia@aeci.com

continue to take place at Little Rock's Robinson Center, the state-of-the-art Stella Boyle Smith building will feature spaces for music education, practice and performance, as well as a broadcast and recording studio. And it's where nearly 300 Youth Ensemble students — representing 37 communities throughout the state — will pursue their passion for music.

Christina Littlejohn, ASO's CEO, says, "We really want to be accessible to all Arkansans. We want this space to be a radically welcoming hub of musical activity for all . . . Johnny Cash was from Arkansas, as well as Florence Price. Arkansas has a long

Memorable Moments

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

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



According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the average life expectancy for men in the United States is 74.8 years and 80.2 years for women. This results in an average human life expectancy of 77.5 years.

Some more age-related trivia: The oldest verifiable woman to have ever lived was Jeanne Calment of France, who lived to be 122 years old, and the oldest woman alive on earth today is Maria Branyas of Spain, who is 117 years old. The oldest verifiable man to have ever lived was Jiroemon Kimura of Japan, who lived to be 116 years old, and the oldest man alive right now is John Tinniswood of the United Kingdom, who is 111 years old.

Life is made up of a precious commodity called time and, on average, women get more and men get less, but all together we get about 2.4 billion seconds in our lives. For centuries, people have been looking for ways to extend our lives and, in the last century, we have truly made some significant progress. Life expectancy in the United States was 39.4 years in 1860, 69.7 years in 1960, and is expected to increase to 85.6 years by 2060. However, some great philosopher (and no, it was not Abraham Lincoln even though you can find it on the internet) said, "And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count, it's the life in your years."

For some reason, this phrase came into focus for me as I was writing this article. Initially this article was about the promise of promotions, but 30 minutes into writing, I closed my eyes to remember a story from the past when a realization hit me. While there are on average 2.4 billion seconds in our lives, only the moments that you can truly remember clearly are most significant.

This has become even more apparent to me as I get older and cram more things into my head. When I was a kid, my head had a lot of open space, and I could remember almost everything. Our school required us to memorize scripture from the KJV Bible and recite it in front of the class. Sometimes these passages would be an entire chapter of the Bible. Procrastination comes easy to a teenager, so I usually put off memorizing my verses

until the night before they were due. One time, my mom saw me heading out of the house, and she asked if I had my verses memorized. I said, "No." She sent me to my room to memorize. About 5 minutes later, I returned and said I was going out. She stopped me and requested a recitation on the spot, presumably to confirm that I wasn't done yet, however, I rattled off every verse and then continued out the door. You see, back then, I could read it once or twice and then close my eyes and remember it all. If I tried that trick today, I would be heading back to my room.

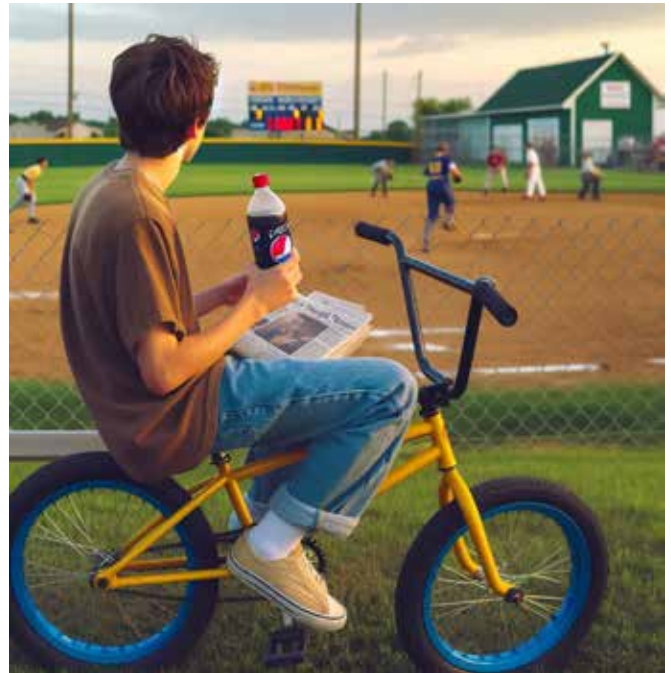


ILLUSTRATION GENERATED WITH MICROSOFT COPILOT

An insignificant moment turns into a monumental memory for CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten.

Today, when I close my eyes and try to remember things, it is the truly significant moments that burn brightest, and everything else requires more focus to recall. I assume that this trend will continue, and it will be the significant moments that make up most of what I remember in the end. There will be bad moments, like the death of a parent or a friend, or a bad decision in an angry moment. There will be good moments, like asking Tracy to be my wife and her saying "Yes," the birth of ➤

MEMORABLE MOMENTS *continued on page 6*

AECI board elects new officers

The Board of Directors for Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI), the statewide service organization of Arkansas' electric co-ops and publisher of Arkansas Living, elected new officers at the AECI Annual Meeting on July 30. They are:

- **Chairman:** Keith Mosbey, vice chairman of Craighead Electric Cooperative Board of Directors
- **Vice Chairman:** Rodney Chapman, general manager of Ashley-Chicot Electric Cooperative
- **Secretary:** Emory Austin, president of Ashley-Chicot Electric Cooperative Board of Directors
- **Treasurer:** Brad Harrison, president/CEO Mississippi County Electric Cooperative.



Keith Mosbey



Rodney Chapman



Emory Austin



Brad Harrison

NRECA CEO speaks at Arkansas cooperative conference



Jim Matheson

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), recently spoke at the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Directors' Summer Conference in Rogers. NRECA represents more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, public power districts and public utility districts in the United States.

In keeping with the conference's theme, "Reliable Realities," Matheson spoke about the challenges co-ops face in protecting grid reliability as demand for electricity continues to soar.

Matheson, a former congressman, said NRECA will continue to fight against policies that threaten electric reliability, like the recent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) power plant rule, and he remains optimistic about the cooperatives' future.

He said, "We're about people over profits. ... It gives us a standing of authenticity in a world where no one seems to trust anyone anymore."

MEMORABLE MOMENTS *continued from page 5*

our children and grandchildren, a first car or the moment I found Jesus.

I have one of these moments in time that is truly unexplainable because it is insignificant in every way, and yet it is a vivid memory that radiates with happiness. I was a paper boy in ninth grade, and my friends, Bill and Tim Walker, were as well. The Walkers went on a summer vacation, and I covered their paper routes while they were gone. The three routes totaled over 300 newspapers and were spread out over town. I was not as familiar with their routes, so it took a lot longer than normal. I put a lot of miles on my bike that week.

However, one day after I finished delivering all the papers, I stopped at a small neighborhood corner grocery. You know, the old kind with a wooden screen door, wood floors and a manual cash register that is extinct these days. I purchased a Hostess Apple Fruit Pie and a bottle of Pepsi and then went outside, sat on my bike and watched a softball game next door. It was almost sunset, the evening was cooling off, and I clearly remember the sounds of the game mixed with a delicious Hostess Pie and Pepsi while I straddled my bike, enjoying that moment.

I think of this moment often, and it was this memory that flashed through my mind while I was trying to recall a different one to write about. I don't know why; maybe it was the endorphins kicking in after four hours on my bike delivering newspapers or satisfaction of a job well done.

Or maybe it was a moment when God revealed to me that He can be found in the simple things too. The older I get, the clearer I see that of all the moments good and bad, the ones that are most memorable and significant are rarely associated with things. They are almost always associated with people and relationships and either how I felt or made others feel in those good and bad moments.

According to life expectancy statistics, I have 18.5 years or 585 million of my 2.4 billion seconds left to create a few more significant good moments. Even more motivating is the thought that, just by acting with kindness or thoughtfulness toward others, I might create good significant moments in their lives — while being totally unaware of those moments in my own life — and, thus, I can do exponential good in the world.

How many moments do you have left? I hope that you too are making the most of your moments.

2024 Summer Cereal Drive a success

Once again, employees of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas have a lot to Cheer-ios about!

Collecting \$17,825 — or 17,825 boxes of cereal (\$1 equals one box of cereal) — the cooperatives won first place in Division Three of the THV11 Summer Cereal Drive benefiting the Arkansas Foodbank.

“Your support made an impact on our community,” Kimberly Brown, human resources coordinator, told employees who gathered for a wrap-up event at the Little Rock campus. “And because of you, there will be food for children and families out there who need it.”

Employees could donate via payroll deductions, purchase items from a silent auction, attend an employee breakfast fundraiser or contribute to the “Pie HR in the Face” Competition.

Since 2012, the cooperatives have participated in the drive, an annual effort to collect nonperishable breakfast items for food-insecure families during the summer months.

The cooperatives’ grand total over 13 years of participation is 232,659 boxes of cereal.

For more information about the Arkansas Foodbank, visit arkansasfoodbank.org.



Grace Todd, Kimberly Brown and Thomas Wheeler of the Summer Cereal Drive Committee celebrate the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas’ win.

- The 2024 presidential race will be the first without a Bush, Clinton or Biden on the ballot since 1976.
- In the original script, the time machine in “Back to the Future” was a refrigerator. Fearing that children would try to re-create the time machine and get locked inside of old refrigerators, Steven Spielberg had it changed to a DeLorean.
- Bobbing for apples originated in the United Kingdom as a dating technique. Females would bob for apples with men’s names on them, determining their future partners.
- Seven years after the first college football game was played, the official rules were written down in 1876.



Where Is It?

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

In the August issue, we hid a school bus.

Joked one correct reader who found it: “Page 14, upper left corner header, Worth the Drive, ‘Schoolhouse Rock!’ article. Took a while to find it. I almost missed the bus!”

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

- Andrea Murdock-McDaniel, Drasco (First Electric Cooperative)**
- Mary Obermire, Cassville, Missouri (Carroll Electric Cooperative)**
- Jo Johnson, Springdale (Ozarks Electric Cooperative)**
- Ron Hutchinson, Tuckerman (Farmers Electric Cooperative)**
- Jeff Pillow, Paragould (Craighead Electric Cooperative)**

September is not only National Chicken Month, it’s Better Breakfast Month, so we’ve hidden this fried egg. And — no yolk! — finding it is not going to be “over” easy!

Enter by Sept. 15 via the “Where Is It?” link on the homepage of arkansaslivingmagazine.com, or go directly to 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! July’s winner was: Faye Orrell, Pearcy (Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative).*



- The Statue of Liberty has a Morton’s toe, meaning the second toe is longer than the first.
- Squirrels fail to recover up to 74% of the acorns they bury, which helps with forest regeneration, according to a study by the University of Richmond.
- Arkansan Ben Pearson, the first person to design and mass-produce archery sets, is known as the founder of modern archery.
- Ballpark nachos were first publicly introduced in 1976 at a Texas Rangers baseball game.
- “I learned the value of hard work by working hard.” — Margaret Mead, author and cultural anthropologist



Hear Ye, Hear Ye!

Renaissance Festival creates magic, merriment for all ages



BY KAT ROBINSON

Out near Mount Vernon in Faulkner County, there's a village rising. Within 80 acres, you'll find the homes of hobbits, wizards, vikings, noblemen, artisans and jousters — where a king and queen invite you to watch the sport of the day. This is the Arkansas Renaissance Festival, hosted at the new Dragonstone Springs.

Patrick Taft and his family came up with the idea for this idyllic town. Taft owned a number of H&R Block offices across Arkansas before retiring.

"We were driving home from The Castle at Muskogee (a different permanent Renaissance Festival in Oklahoma), full of excitement and encouragement from a great day and wondered why Arkansas didn't have anything like this," Taft says. "During that four-hour drive, we decided to create our own."



COURTESY OF KNIGHTS OF MAYHEM

Mirth and make-believe

The idea spurs from a lifelong interest.

"I have always loved that time period, probably from playing 'Dungeons and Dragons' when I was a child," Taft says. "I think it only grew the more time I spent at festivals. I love the sense of community, family and freedom to be yourself. If you want to dress your family up as hobbits or wear a kilt, you can do that without judgment."

While Arkansas hosts several Renaissance faire events, Dragonstone Springs will be the first permanent home for a festival in The Natural State.

The Tafts searched long and



TANIST TAFT

Dress up like the "faire-est" one of all, or come as you are to the Arkansas Renaissance Festival.



The professional Knights of Mayhem team will provide jousting demonstrations before stands of excited spectators.

will have the opportunity to show their stuff in front of an audience at the end of the day. Kids can visit a fairy grove and a gypsy hollow, encounter pirates and Celts and play loads of fun games. There are six stages of different sizes with entertainment of all sorts. And then, there is the jousting.

Joust for fun

“We searched for performers for a high-impact show. I cannot tell you how happy we are to have found the Knights of Mayhem,” Taft says. “The experience, energy, passion and professionalism they bring to the festival is more than I ever hoped for. I feel their performance at Dragonstone Springs will be a great way to introduce the denizens of Arkansas to the Renaissance experience.”

Jousting on horseback will face off in a purpose-built ring, where spectators can climb the stands to watch over a unique event not offered elsewhere in our state. ➤

hard for land to purchase for the endeavor, with very specific needs. “Our desire was to have cover and shade, and to keep the area as rustic as possible, but to also have paved access to it,” Taft says. “We didn’t want to be in town. We wanted no noise pollution, but also wanted to be no more than 45 minutes from major towns and interstates.”

The spot at Mount Vernon, 30 minutes from both Conway and Beebe, fit the bill perfectly.

“The site has a beautiful stream, six natural springs and tons of wildlife,” Taft shares.

The project has proceeded quickly. After breaking ground in October 2023 and setting up underground water and electricity runs, major construction began this April. The Arkansas Renaissance Festival’s initial run begins Aug. 31, and by then, there will be dozens of structures — including a jousting arena, marketplace, food court, pirate’s cove, Shakespearean stage, hobbit’s grotto, archery range and queen’s pavilion.

Performers will be present from the moment guests walk through the tower gate. Visitors will be able to compete in an archery competition, where the winners



TAVIS TAFT

The queen’s pavilion is a permanent structure at the Arkansas Renaissance Festival, which opens on Aug. 31.



KAT ROBINSON

➤ The Arkansas Renaissance Festival’s tower gate welcomes visitors to magical times.



There will be merchants throughout the property, offering various hand-crafted wares. Each vendor is a vetted artisan offering something unique, from baskets and pots to bows and clothing. There's also a bakery and a food court with meat pies, food on a stick, roasted corn, baked potatoes and ice cream.

Speaking of food, twice a day during the festival, a magnificent five-course feast will be held, where visitors can dine like royalty with entertainment, pomp and circumstance. And, separately, there's an opportunity for an audience with the queen in her garden, a beautiful grove with vine-woven fences, flowers and arbors and a fountain. In this fairyland setting, another extraordinary experience awaits.

"During the festival, three times a day, we do tea and biscuits with the queen," Taft says. "She will come out to your table and have tea with you." Seating for the feasts and the queen's teas is limited, so reserving online for those activities in advance is recommended.

The garden is by the Royal Pavilion, where Royal Court will be held each day. Taft says being granted an audience at court is a memorable moment. He has witnessed kids — and adults, too! — waiting patiently for an hour for a chance to be knighted.

Over the next few years, Taft says, there are plans to add a tavern, a large viking longhouse and eventually even a castle.

About 40,000 to 50,000 people are expected to visit Dragonstone Springs over the course of five weekends from Aug. 31-Sept. 29. The festival will also be open for special events throughout the year, such as Highland Games each spring.

Guests will also be able to book weddings and small events at the property during weekends it's not in active use.

The Arkansas Renaissance Festival at Dragonstone Springs takes place Saturdays and Sundays from Aug. 31-Sept. 29. Tickets are available online or at the gate. Daily admission is \$22 for adults, \$20 for senior citizens and \$15 for children ages 5-15, and free for children 4 and under. Season passes are available. For more information, visit [ArRenFest.com](https://www.arrenfest.com).



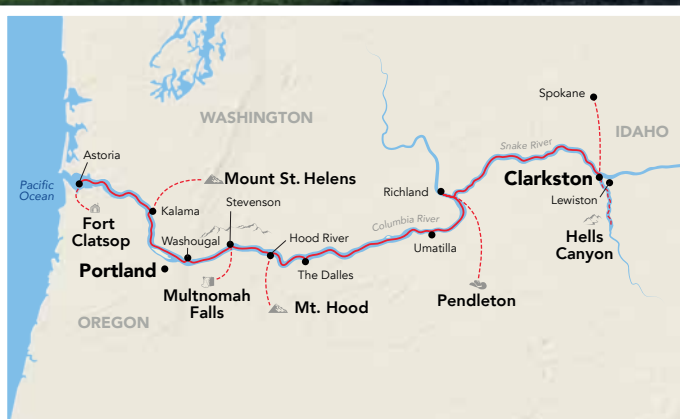
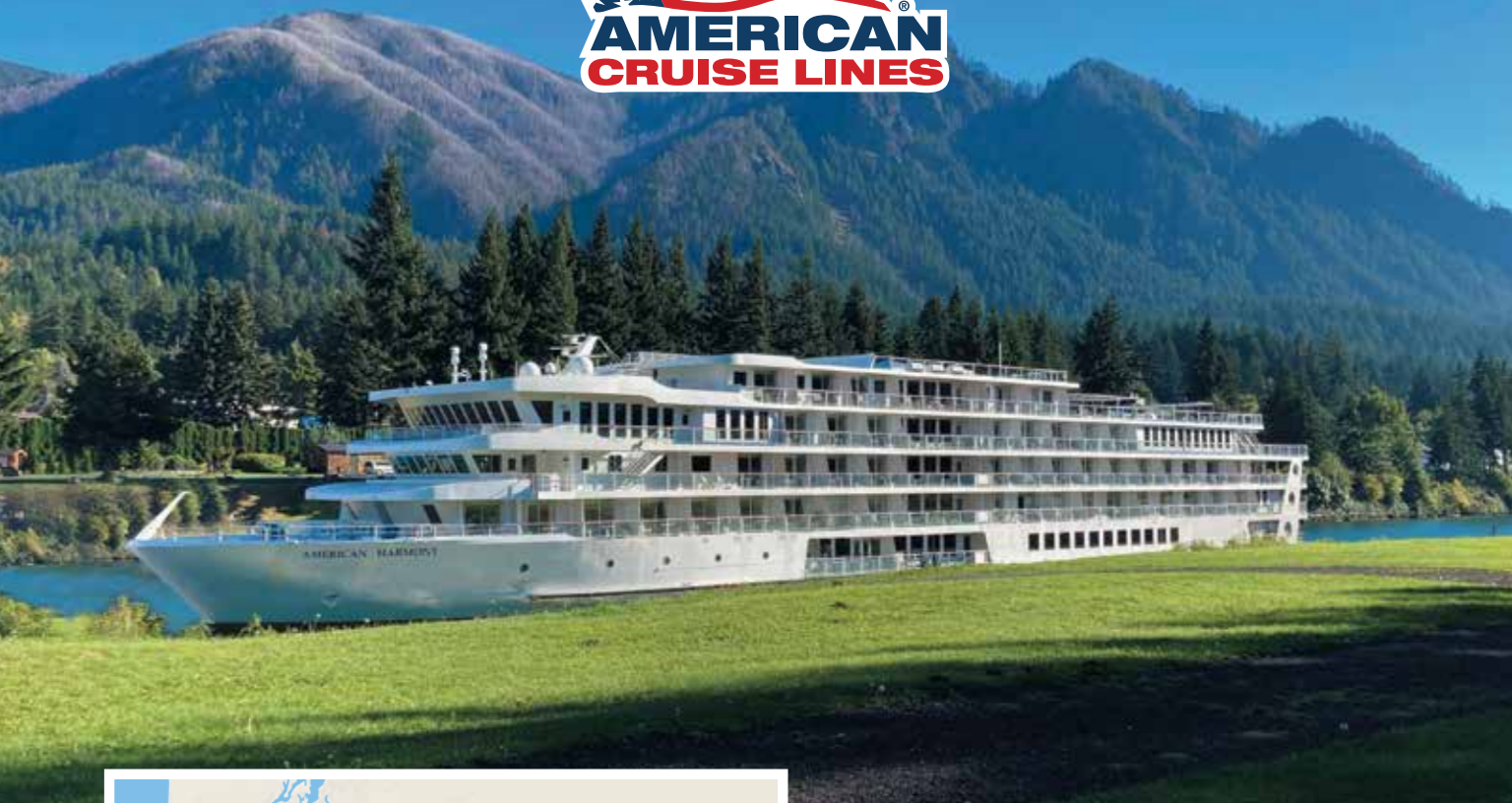
ABOVE A stockade makes for a unique photo opportunity.



LEFT Call it a knight: Guests can be knighted at the festival.



BELOW A variety of permanent vendors have set up shop at the new Dragonstone Springs, re-creating a Renaissance village.



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- Photos can be from any time, not necessarily this year.
- Photos must be high-resolution (300 dpi) and .JPG format.
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- Please submit photos by Nov. 1 to: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/2025-photo-contest/



MICKEY ARLOW

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Written by Kelli Hilburn, Better Beginnings Program Administrator

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Stepping Out

Take a hike — or maybe just an easy walk! — this season



The Ozark Plateau Trail in Hobbs State Park has two concrete walking trails and meets the Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

and walkable gardens. Even better, no single walk is the same due in large part to the diverse landscape of the state. Many of the areas have designated trails labeled as easy, with some of those meeting Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. What does that mean? The trails are primarily flat and often paved. The bottom line is, if you are hankering for a stressless stroll through a pleasant environment, then lace up your shoes and get going.

BY WERNER TRIESCHMANN

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM

As we slide our way toward fall, we can hope against hope that the temperature outside backs off several notches from insufferable heat. If so, it's time to get outside in the great outdoors and go for a hike.

Let's see, for a proper hike, we need sturdy boots, bug spray, maybe a first-aid kit, a charged phone, several bottles of water, a backpack ... um, OK, how about just a walk instead? Set aside those hiking dreams for a more ambitious day. What about a calming walk in a diverting environment that's not the same old route around a neighborhood or a blander-than-bland oval gym track?

You are in luck, as Arkansas is The Natural State and, as such, is blessed with an impressive collection of state parks (arkansasstateparks.com)

LEFT Arkansas State Parks have a variety of easy walking trails to choose from, like the Brushy Creek Trail in Cossatot River State Park.

Happy trails

In Northwest Arkansas, Rogers' **Hobbs State Park - Conservation Area** stakes its claim as being Arkansas' largest state park, with 12,054 acres sitting along the southern shore of Beaver Lake. Hobbs' trail system is extensive, with 54 miles available for horseback riding, mountain biking, hiking and walking. Hobbs' **Ozark Plateau Trail** is comprised of two concrete walking trails — a 1/4-mile inner loop and a 1/2-mile outer loop. The ADA-designated Plateau Trail is barrier-free.

What can a visitor expect to see when out on the Plateau Trail?

"There are no severe ups or downs on that trail," says Syd Dettmer, a staff member at Hobbs State Park. "You'll walk among short-leaf pine trees, oak trees and hickory trees."

While the trail won't take you into the deep, deep woods, you'll be sharing space with a variety of critters.

"Walking on the trail, it's common to see chipmunks and gray squirrels," Dettmer says. "If you are lucky, you'll see a white tail deer or a red fox. Occasionally there are snakes, but not often."

In the southwestern corner of the state, the **Crater of Diamonds State Park** in Murfreesboro features the **Little Missouri River Trail**. One of the longer easy trails in a state park, the Little Missouri River Trail gives the visitor a 1.2-mile walk through the woods to an up-close view of the river. Half of the trail is paved and provides barrier-free access. The park touts the trail as the longest wheelchair-accessible trail in southwest Arkansas. Once you are done with the Little Missouri River Trail, you can step out to the Crater of Diamonds field and hopefully trip over a big, fat diamond. A person can dream, right?

Maybe you don't want to or aren't able to tackle a full mile of walking. Then set your GPS for Wynne and the **Village Creek State Park** in eastern Arkansas. While the park features 7,000 acres of forest and streams, including 33 miles of multiuse trails, the park's **Arboretum Trail** is a brief, brisk detour of a 1/4 mile. If you don't mind a little education with your walk, you can stop at the trees with identifying signs along the way. Might come in handy in your next trivia competition.

To the west, the **Brushy Creek Natural Trail** is in Wickes' **Cossatot River State Park - Natural Area** and is where you can watch a river roll past. The easy 3/4-mile trail follows along a ridge top that sits above the confluence of



Walks on state park trails are a great way to enjoy The Natural State this fall.

Brushy Creek and the Cossatot River. There is also a steel walkway that crosses the river.

History is the name of the game at the **Historic Townsite Trail in Davidsonville Historic State Park** in northeast Arkansas. The 3/4-mile easy trail goes past the site of Arkansas Territory's first post office, courthouse and federal land office. Twelve exhibits along the path inform about historic Davidsonville.

Hardcore nature buffs are perhaps best served by



Garvan Woodland Gardens in Hot Springs has trails with scenic views for every season.

checking out Hot Springs' **Garvan Woodland Gardens** (garvangardens.org), the botanical garden of the University of Arkansas. Garvan has 4.5 miles of trails and, though not all the paths through Garvan are flat, the designed waterfalls and beautiful flora on display make up for it. Garvan has an option for those who want to but can't take another step — \$20 gets you a golf cart ride. 🕒

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‘Twice as Nice’

Texarkana attractions abound in Arkansas and Texas

STORY BY JACK SCHNEDLER

PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

Visitors can snap their pictures at Texarkana’s prime selfie site from a pedestrian island in the middle of **State Line Avenue**, with one of America’s most photographed post offices as the backdrop.

They’ll be posing outside America’s only federal building that straddles two states. Arkansas lies to the east of the dividing line with Texas to the west, as pointed out on a photogenic sign. The symmetrical Beaux-Arts structure also houses a separate U.S. district court for each state.

Arkansas’ Texarkana, headquarters city for **Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative**, promotes its attractions and activities on **OurTexarkana.com**. The site’s heading, “A Side of Goodness,” leads into this inviting message: “When you’re in Texarkana, Arkansas, you’re destined to find something special! From our small-town charm and Southern hospitality to our locally crafted food, museums, local art galleries and water park, there’s a whole world to explore and experience.”

Tale of two cities

Touting their close kinship, separated by State Line Avenue, the two cities offer combined visitor information through Texarkana USA Chamber of Commerce (**texarkana.org**). The slogan on the shared site is “Twice as Nice.”



The Rail Yard Entertainment District is a five-block area of restaurants and bars.

Both cities’ mayors took part in the dedication of a **colorful mural** picturing silent-movie star Corinne Griffith, known in the 1920s as “The Orchid Lady of the Screen.” Although she was born on the Texas side of Texarkana, the mural — sponsored by Dr Pepper — is located in Arkansas at Olive and Broad streets.

That location is part of the **Rail Yard Entertainment District**, a downtown Texarkana, Arkansas, enclave where visitors ages 21 and older can carry alcoholic beverages outdoors in approved open containers.

One of the district’s popular eateries is **Hopkins Icehouse**, 301 Wood St. (**hopkinsicehouse.com**), operating in a former feed store that was remodeled in 2007. It offers pet-friendly patio seating, with brunch menus on weekends.



Texarkana’s post office on State Line Avenue is America’s only federal building that straddles two states.



Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Perot Theater was constructed in 1924 and is home to the Texarkana Symphony Orchestra.

Near one edge of the entertainment district, The Gallery at 1894, 105 Olive St. (1894citymarket.com/1894-art-gallery.html), shows work by more than 100 painters, sculptors and crafts artisans from Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana.



A mosaic-covered tractor art piece greets guests at the Museum of Regional History.

Home to dozens of artists' studios, it occupies part of a 130-year-old grocery warehouse restored as the City Market (1894citymarket.com).

Four States Auto Museum, 217 Laurel St. (fourstatesautomuseum.org), displays two dozen vintage vehicles, most of them on loan from private owners. Memorabilia includes auto advertisements of old. One from 1940 is headlined, "We've Been a Ford Family for Years ... More Than 30 Years, in Fact."

The Automobile Age was dawning when the **P.J. Ahern Home** was built by an Arkansas businessman in 1906 at 403 Laurel St. The Classical Revival mansion, owned by his descendants, is operated by the Texarkana Museum System (texarkanamuseum.org). It can be rented for private events.

One of Texarkana's most imposing public buildings is the century-old **Arkansas Municipal Auditorium**, Third and Walnut streets (ourtexarkana.com/attractions). During its heyday in the mid-20th century, it hosted performers, including Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, Conway Twitty and Johnny Cash.


Four States Fair Grounds, 3700 E. 50th St (fourstatesfair.com), is the venue each spring for the 10-day Four States Fair & Rodeo. Coming up at the site on Oct.



A mural of musician Scott Joplin is the first stop on "The King of Ragtime" self-guided tour.

12 is the Spurs and Cleats 2024 Season Showdown of bull riding and freestyle bullfighting.

For Texarkana visitors with enough time, these attractions on the Texas side of State Line Avenue are well worth a stop: **Perot Theatre**, 221 Main St.; **Museum of Regional History**, 219 N. State Line Ave.; **Ace of Clubs House**, 420 Pine St.; and the **Scott Joplin Mural**, 311 Main St.

The lively **Joplin mural** (mainstreettexarkana.org/scott-joplin-tour.html) is among dozens of examples of public art in Texarkana. It is also the first stop on a self-guided driving tour of 10 Texas and Arkansas locations related to "The King of Ragtime," who was born in or near Texarkana in 1868. 



Located on the Texas side, Redbone Magic Brewing Company serves craft beer and wood-fired pizza.



The Big Dam Water Park is a popular family-friendly attraction.

From two cities to Three States

About 30 miles south of two-state Texarkana, a stone marker locates the spot where visitors with enough agility can stand simultaneously in three states: Arkansas, Texas and Louisiana.

Where Arkansas' Lafayette County meets Texas' Cass County and Louisiana's Caddo Parish, a colorful billboard erected last year by nearby residents proclaims, "Welcome to Three States."

The much older stone, engraved with the three state names, is located where Texas 77 becomes Louisiana 1. It stands at the base of a tree that has partly grown around it. The junction can be reached from the nearest Arkansas community, Ravanna, 4 miles to the north.

Taking the Credit

Programs make home efficiency upgrades more affordable

BY MIRANDA BOUTELLE

Q: How do I use federal tax credits and rebates to upgrade my home?

A: Tax credits and rebates can help bridge the affordability gap to higher efficiency equipment for your home, allowing you to complete energy-efficiency upgrades that can lower your energy use and save you money in years to come.

A tax credit is a dollar-for-dollar amount that taxpayers can report on their tax documents to reduce the amount of taxes owed. You apply for a tax credit when you file your tax documents, so it typically takes longer to reap the benefits than it does with a rebate.

According to ENERGY STAR®, homeowners can qualify for up to \$3,200 annually in federal tax credits for energy-efficiency upgrades. Federal tax credits are available for heating and cooling system upgrades, including heat pumps, furnaces, central air conditioners, boilers and geothermal heat pumps. Tax credits for ENERGY STAR®-rated heat pump water heaters cover 30% of the project cost, up to \$2,000. You can also improve your home's envelope — the portion of the home that separates the inside from the outside — with tax credits for insulation, windows and skylights.

If an energy-efficiency upgrade requires improving the electrical panel in your home, there's a tax credit for that, too. You can receive 30% of the cost of the panel upgrade, up to \$600.

These federal tax credits are available through 2032. You must own the home you're upgrading, and it must be your primary residence. Federal tax credits only apply to existing homes in the United States, not new construction.

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 expanded available funding for many home upgrades. The act allocated \$8.8 million for home rebate programs to be implemented at the state level, and this funding is offered in two different programs. The HOME Investment Partnership Program (HOME) allows

up to \$8,000 per home for standard-income households. Higher rebates are available for low- to moderate-income households. The Home Electrification and Application Rebate (HEAR) program offers rebates of up to \$14,000 per home for qualified electric equipment for low- to moderate-income households.

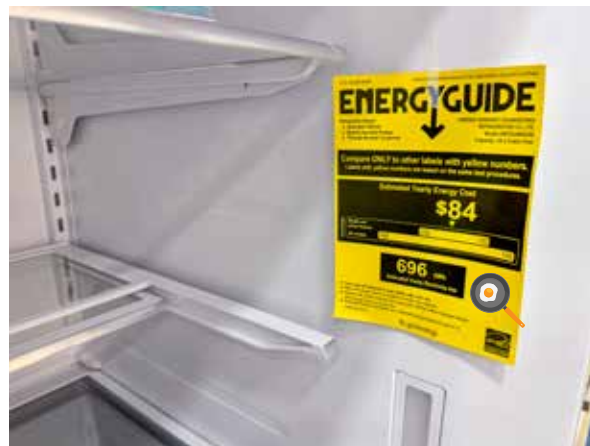
While not available in Arkansas at this time, these programs are designed to bolster existing programs and could be available in late 2024 or early 2025.

Additional energy-efficiency rebates might also be available. More than half of U.S. states — including Arkansas — require energy-efficiency programs for residents, according to the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy. These programs can help people save money on their electric bills and help states meet climate goals, reduce system costs and improve the electric grid.

Tax credit and rebate programs can make upgrades more affordable — helping people save money and improve the overall comfort of their homes.

For more information on incentives that may be available for your household, visit homes.rewiringamerica.org/calculator.

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



MARK GILLILAND, PIONEER UTILITY RESOURCES

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT: *Rivendell Behavioral Health Services* SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Amid an overwhelming national shortage of mental health professionals and facilities, Rivendell Behavioral Health Services stands out as a beacon of hope. Established in 1985, this unique facility, with its 80-bed acute psychiatric hospital nestled in a 17-acre wooded glen in Benton, is a rare gem in the field of mental health care.

Rivendell has been responding to families and individuals in crisis for over 38 years. They offer a secure setting that provides the peace of mind and discretion necessary for patients and their families to fully embrace the healing process.

With a team of nearly 200 dedicated professionals, including physicians, nurses, therapists, educators, activity/recreational specialists and mental health associates, Rivendell Behavioral Health Services is committed to fostering a healing environment. This team, with its wealth of experience, offers a range of psychiatric and behavioral health treatment options for adults, adolescents and children, ensuring the best care for their clients.

Laura Davis, licensed clinical social worker (LCSW) and current director of Risk Prevention, Performance Improvement and Compliance, has held various roles during her almost 40-year career at the facility. Davis said, “When I was a teenager, I knew I wanted to have a career in social work. After earning my bachelor’s degree from the University of Arkansas and my master’s degree in social work from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, I joined Rivendell as one of the original group of employees hired weeks before the facility opened in 1985.”

For over 25 years, she acted as clinical director, overseeing Rivendell’s mental health associates, counselors and education staff. That role evolved into ensuring the hospital’s licensure and good standing under the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) and its accreditation by The Joint Commission.

“I am extremely proud of the work we have done here at Rivendell serving the needs of our clients. I have seen the growth of our programs, the services we offer, and the professionalism shown by the staff. It is an honor to work with others here who share the same collective dedication to helping people,” Davis said.

The staff of Rivendell has created a therapeutic environment where privacy and comfort are always a priority. If you know someone in need or struggling with mental health or suicide, call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.



Rivendell Behavioral Health Services in Benton.



Laura Davis, licensed clinical social worker and current director of Risk Prevention, Performance Improvement and Compliance for Rivendell.



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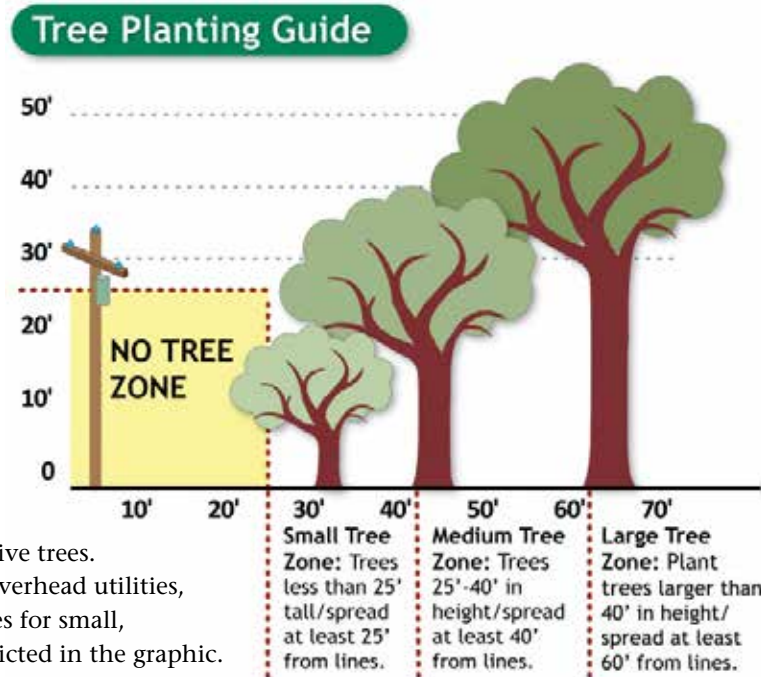
When selecting a tree for planting, consider its mature height when determining a suitable planting location. Native species often grow better with fewer insects and disease problems than non-native trees.

For areas near houses and overhead utilities, there are three tree height zones for small, medium and large trees, as depicted in the graphic. In the no-tree zone, plant only large shrubs and small trees with mature heights of 20 feet or less.

Before you plant any trees near underground utilities, it's essential to call Arkansas 811 at least 48 hours in advance. This proactive step will ensure your safety and the integrity of the utilities, as they will be marked at no charge, helping you avoid any potential issues.

Trees planted within First Electric's easement (15 feet on either side of the line) must be removed once trimming becomes necessary. All trees along fences, roadways and other unmaintained areas will be removed during regularly scheduled maintenance, regardless of size or height.

Go to firstelectric.coop/vegetation-management for more information on vegetation management.



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Fit to be Tie-Dyed

Hillberry Music Festival a five-day fall experience in Eureka Springs

STORY BY BOB ROBINSON

It's almost time for the Hillberry Music Festival — five days of art, dance, food and craft vendors, plus two stages showcasing a unique mix of Americana, bluegrass and funk music. The event returns to the Eureka Springs area Oct. 2. It is hosted by The Farm, which has won the Arkansas Country Music Awards Music Venue of the Year and is presented by Jon Walker, awarded Promoter of the Year.

Hillberry burst onto the festival scene in 2015 after the last-minute cancellation of Phases of the Moon Music & Art Festival. Within hours of this news, Walker, owner of Deadhead Productions, created a Facebook page announcing plans for the Hillberry Music Festival. By the end of the day, he had over 1,000 people respond, saying they would attend.

“Phases had merged with the area’s longtime favorite, Harvest Music Festival. No Phases meant no Harvest,” Walker explains. “I felt it was up to me to carry on the magic of Harvest Music Festival for all their dedicated followers.”

With Phases scheduled at nearby Mulberry Mountain, Walker hoped to attract performers who had already planned to be in the area. Hillberry drew 13 of their headliners. His 160-acre concert/event venue, The Farm, bordering the Mark Twain National Forest, proved to be the perfect setting. Hillberry attracts nearly 4,000 attendees annually.

Deadhead Productions has grown the event through the years, interspersing a mix of nationally known artists, such as Leftover Salmon, Railroad Earth and Elephant Revival, alongside popular local artists like Arkansauce, Eureka Strings and the Patti Steel Band.

Patti Steel says, “Hillberry has become one of my favorite local music festivals in Arkansas because of the grassroots, team-building atmosphere and the community it has created.”

Get your Hillberry on

Once festivalgoers enter The Farm, they leave the real world behind to become immersed in the Hillberry Experience.

The first order of business is finding a campsite. Walker and his crew have expertly subdivided The Farm’s rolling grass-covered hillsides into distinctly marked avenues. Attendees can cruise the various neighborhoods until they



GAMSON SHELTON



BOB ROBINSON

ABOVE
The Hillberry Music Festival will be held at The Farm in Eureka Springs Oct. 2-6.

LEFT
Nearly 4,000 visitors annually attend the Hillberry Music Festival.

find that perfect site to call home. Once the campsite is in order, it's time to explore.

It's a small venue, so no map is needed. Just strike out in whatever direction calls. Marvel over the creative campsites others have constructed. Tie-dye is the requisite pattern, draped across makeshift curtain lines and lounge chairs and featured in the clothing of festivalgoers.

The Farm regularly operates as a campground. There is a general store, showers, a disc golf course and a hiking/biking trail. Attendees purchase a \$20 pass for showers and flush toilets. For everyone else, there are wildly painted “vintage” portable toilets, which are well-maintained throughout the festival.

Meander down to Vendor Alley to check out food truck dining options and to grab a morning cup of coffee. While there, look over the schedule for the Activity Tent. Audience participation workshops, including tie-dye T-shirts, yoga, juggling and meditation, are held daily.

After browsing various tents offering locally crafted apparel, purses and jewelry, head across an open meadow to the artist community. Hillberry attracts a wealth of talent, with featured artists creating pieces throughout the festival.

In the groove

Artist Mystic Easel (aka Amanda Graves) says she can't wait to return for this year's festival, expressing her deep connection with the event.

"Hillberry and The Farm feel like a hug for your soul — the kind that wraps you in reassurance and leaves you with a deep sense of well-being."

The Main Stage is situated next to the artists' tents at the end of a valley. The surrounding forest and Ozark Mountains create the perfect natural amphitheater. Music from the stage can be enjoyed throughout The Farm.

The second stage, The Shrine, has a smaller clearing fronting it and is situated further up the hillside. Nestled among the trees, it helps confine the bands' music, making it an ideal setting for late-night and morning performances.

The Shrine's name comes from the nearby Jerry Garcia shrine, a native stone memorial for the late musician, who would have been right at home at Hillberry. The memorial is decorated with colorful mementos left by festivalgoers. It is often accompanied by a large bulletin board with strips of ribbon for visitors to write words of wisdom to share with others.

For annual attendees, the Hillberry Music Festival is more than an outdoor concert. It's community.

At a previous festival, sitting around a campfire as Railroad Earth's jam rhythms from the Main Stage filled the air, Grant Nally, a regular, captured Hillberry in a single sentence. "A just-right combination of Arkansas fall camping, excellent roots-based bands and friendly music fans in a setting that lets you pick whatever pace you want."

Hillberry Music Festival takes place Oct. 2-6 at The Farm in Eureka Springs. For more information, visit hillberryfestival.com. 



The lifesize Hillberry sign welcomes festivalgoers.



Dressing in costume is part of the Hillberry fun.



Young music lovers catch the Hillberry vibe with bubbles and laughter.



The shrine is a tribute to the Grateful Dead's late lead singer, Jerry Garcia.

EPA rule threatens electric reliability

In May, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a rule that impacts energy production from power plants. The power plant rule will undoubtedly threaten access to reliable electricity for our local community and communities across the country.

The rule constrains existing coal and new natural gas plants by requiring them to install carbon capture and storage (CCS) — a technology that has potential but has not been proven to be viable as required. No power plant in North America currently uses CCS at the scale and levels mandated by EPA. When power plants aren't able to comply with EPA's CCS requirements, they will be required to shut down, significantly limit operations or switch fuels. These unrealistic standards will force the unnecessary and early shutdown of many power plants that currently provide reliable electricity 24/7.

Intermittent sources, such as solar and wind, are important components of our Balance of Power generation mix. But given the intermittent nature of these energy sources, we simply cannot depend on them because the wind doesn't always blow and the sun doesn't always shine. The need for always-available power generating resources is still essential.

The timing of the power plant rule is equally troubling. At the same time the EPA is leading our nation down the path to fewer power plants, utilities are facing a surge

in electricity demand — driven by the onshoring of manufacturing, the growth of the American economy and the rapid expansion of data centers to support artificial intelligence, e-commerce and cryptocurrency.

Many states have already experienced rolling outages, and if the supply of electricity is further threatened by the EPA's power plant rule, the problem will only get worse. In fact, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's electric reliability watchdog, recently forecasted that over the next five years, all or parts of 19 states are at high risk of rolling power outages during normal peak electricity demand conditions.

It's also no secret that when demand is high and supply is low, costs go up. We're concerned about threats to reliability as well as cost increases to our members.

Just as electric cooperatives have always done, we will look for solutions that serve our members best. We are joining electric co-ops across the country to fight these regulations, and we are working with our local elected officials to help them understand the consequences this would have on all.

Electric cooperatives deliver power to 42 million Americans. At the end of the day, our top priority is to meet our members' energy needs, and we must have reliable electricity available to do that.

For more information, visit aecc.com/balance-of-power.

IMPACTS OF THE EPA'S POWER PLANT RULE

The Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) power plant rule threatens access to reliable electricity for millions of Americans. The EPA's power plant rule will:

- 1 Force the premature closure of many power plants that currently provide electricity 24/7.
- 2 Mandate the deployment of unproven carbon capture and storage technology.
- 3 Jeopardize the reliability of the grid at a time when America is already facing a surge in electricity demand.
- 4 Heighten the risk of rolling power outages to relieve pressure on the electric grid.
- 5 Increase costs for consumers as utilities are forced to pay for new power generation to comply with the EPA rule.



NOW Serving Little Rock and NWA Helping Macular Degeneration Patients

8 Ways We Can Help

When you've been told **"nothing else can be done"** then it's time for a low vision exam.



1 Spectacle Miniature Telescopes

Designed for tasks requiring better central vision and mobility, these glasses are used by drivers to see signs and traffic lights, by grandparents to see grandchildren playing soccer and bridge players to see cards on the table.

2 Bioptic Driving Glasses

Bioptic Drives glasses allow drivers to continue to drive when they struggle with seeing road signs. These glasses have small telescopes that allow drivers to see road signs and traffic lights. They can also be used by grand parents to see grandchildren playing soccer and other sports.



3 Spectacle Microscope Glasses

Compounded high powered prescription lenses give crystal clear images for reading. Where regular reading bifocals or lenses don't help enough microscope glasses allow reading vision.



4 Spectacle Prismatic Glasses

These moderate powered lenses are useful for near tasks like reading, writing, and handicrafts.

5 E-Scoop Contrast Enhancing Glasses

Macular degeneration and other diseases reduce contrast sensitivity. E-Scoop lenses combine 5 elements to create a larger, clearer high contrast image. E-Scoop lenses improve overall vision and reduce the risk of a fall.



6 Electronic Magnification

Portable purse size & full size magnification far superior to hand held magnifiers. Take it with you, to read menus, price tags books and newspapers.



7 Virtual Reality Wearables

Affordable autofocus, head worn electronic magnification for advanced loss. For advanced vision loss these provide many advantages over traditional cctv's. Induction charging and other specialty features for advanced vision loss.

8 Testing and solutions individually prescribed

If it's one thing experience has taught me. There is no one solution for helping low vision patients. Each case involves listening carefully to the specific needs of each patient, carefully examining their usable vision and then using the best low vision solutions to address their individual needs. Prescription telescope, bioptic and reading glasses are only available by prescription.

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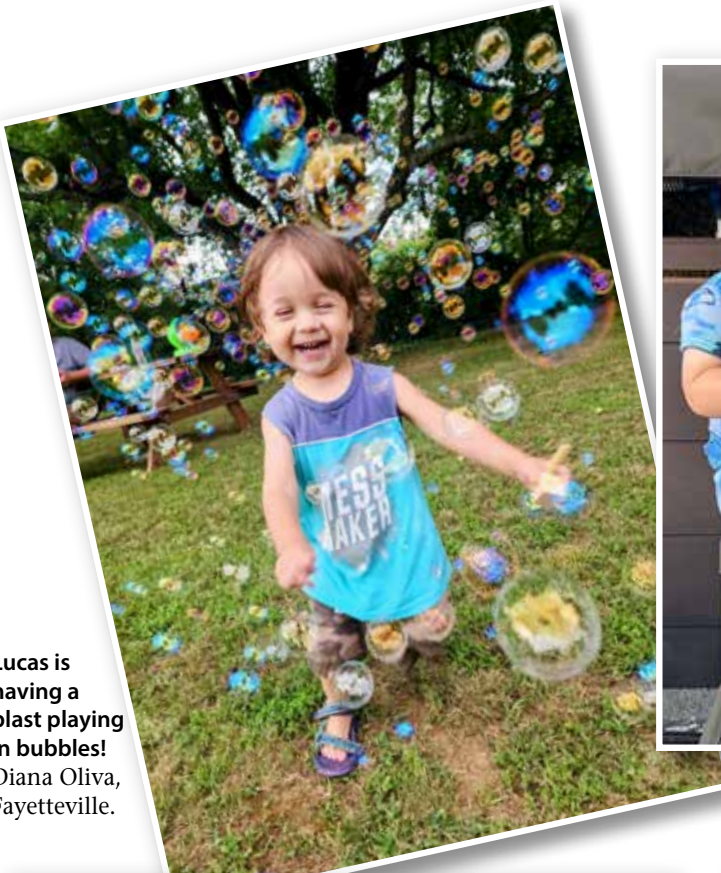
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101 W. Walnut, Rogers AR**

Dr. Brett Mills, OD

**Low Vision Optometrist
Bentonville, AR**



Snapshots from our readers



Lucas is having a blast playing in bubbles!
Diana Oliva, Fayetteville.



Declan, Bennett and Gwen are too cool for school.
Susie Baker, Springdale.



Wylder enjoying a nice ice cream cone to cool off.
Ashley Winkley, Doddridge.



Bo and his buddy, Maverick, under an ominous Arkansas sky.
Melissa Crow, Texarkana.



Addie running free with her two pups, Izzie and Oakley.
Kay Spurlock, Wilmar.



Bubba chillaxin' in the shade. (He doesn't know he's a goat!)
Karen Johnson, taken on Pension Mountain.



Charles and Zoey saying, "Cheese!"
Charlotte Stone, Star City.



Stella is getting her goove on!
Breanna Walker, McCrory.



Nora, that fish is as big as you are!
Velta Pruitt, Dover.

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.

Kale Yeah!

A guide for growing fall greens



BY JANET B. CARSON

For some gardeners, summer vegetable plants succeeded, while others have thrown in the “trowel.” But now, it’s time to think about fall and winter crops.

September through early October is a great time to plant greens. From a staple Southern food to a hard hitter in the nutritional world, greens have gained in popularity nationwide.



Spinach can be planted from young transplants or seeds.

Nutritionally, greens can’t be beat; they are high in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber.


Greens can be planted as an early-spring crop or as a fall crop. Today, some gardeners are growing them year-round with just a bit of protection,

depending on the winter weather.

With the addition of transplants of kale, Swiss chard, collards and spinach, we can also extend the planting time. If planting from seed with no winter protection, planting time depends on location:

- North Arkansas — Plant no later than mid-September.
- Central Arkansas — Plant through late September.
- South Arkansas — Plant as late as early October.

With transplants or with high tunnels or winter covering, continue to plant into October and possibly into early November statewide.

Late-summer or early-fall planting have both benefits and drawbacks. Warm soil temperatures often provide faster germination and growth, but hot, dry weather in early fall means more attention must be given to watering needs. Another drawback can be insects. Monitor plants closely, and catch any infestations before they ruin crops. 



Kale is a nutrition superstar.

GREEN	TYPE	VARIETIES	CULTURE
Beet	Seed-grown.	Ruby Queen, Detroit Dark Red, Red Ace	Both roots and leaves are edible.
Collard	Seed or transplants (60 days minimum before harvesting).	Champion, Georgia, Morris Heading, Vates	Largest of the green crops. Very cold-tolerant. Needs well-drained soil. Fertilization should be done at planting, and then side-dress two to three more times throughout the season.
Kale	Seeds or transplants.	Green Lance, Lacinato, Redbor, Red Russian, Winterbor	Cold-tolerant. Harvest as baby greens, or let grow. Water when dry. Can be edible ornamental.
Mustard	Seeds or sometimes transplants.	Florida Broadleaf, Red Giant, Savannah, Southern Giant	Most pungent spicy green. Can be harvested as microgreens, or let grow to maturity. Fertilize at planting.
Spinach	Seeds or transplants.	Bloomsdale Long Standing, Tyee Hybrid, Avon	Prefers more alkaline soil with excellent drainage. Easier as a fall crop.
Swiss Chard	Seeds or transplants.	Bright Lights, Fordhook Giant, Rhubarb	Often used as an edible ornamental. Colorful stems and edible foliage. Not as cold-tolerant as other greens.
Turnip	Seeds or sometimes transplants.	Alamo, Purple Top, Sevel Top, Tokyo White	Easy crop to grow. Can be used as a green manure crop. Very cold-hardy. Grown for greens on top and turnip roots beneath.

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Al Fresco Fare

Fresh flavors to enjoy at a picnic or on a patio

RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Grilled Stuffed Peppers Two Ways

Makes 6 servings.

Filling

- 1 (8-ounce) container onion-and-chive cream cheese, softened
- 2/3 cup canned corn, drained
- 1 green onion, sliced
- 1 cup shredded Mexican blend or cheddar cheese

Bacon Taco version

- 1/3 cup real bacon pieces
- 1/2 teaspoon taco seasoning

Cajun Shrimp version

- 2/3 cup cooked shrimp, diced
- 1/2 teaspoon Cajun seasoning

Peppers

- 1 orange bell pepper
- 1 yellow bell pepper
- 1 red bell pepper



For filling: In a medium bowl, stir together onion-and-chive cream cheese, corn, green onion and cheese. Split mixture in half. To one half, add bacon pieces and taco seasoning. To other half, add shrimp and Cajun seasoning. Stir well.

For peppers: Cut each bell pepper in half, removing seeds. Fill three pepper halves with each filling mixture.

Heat grill to 450. When hot, place stuffed peppers on grill, and lower lid. Cook for 13-15 minutes, until peppers are soft and have grill marks. Serve.

Tomato Pesto Sandwich

Makes 4-5 sandwiches.

Pesto

- 1/4 cup pine nuts or shelled, salted sunflower seeds
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 1/2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon red wine vinegar
- 1 cup packed basil leaves
- 5-6 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2-3 tablespoons fresh Parmesan, shaved
- Salt to taste

Sandwich

- 1 baguette
- 1 (6.5-ounce) container garlic-and-herb soft, spreadable cheese
- 4-5 Roma tomatoes or 2-3 beefsteak tomatoes
- Salt to taste
- Red onion, thinly sliced



Spread 2-3 tablespoons of spreadable cheese on bottom of each sandwich. Spread 1-2 tablespoons of pesto on top. Add tomato slices, salting to taste, and add desired amount of red onion. Eat immediately.

Notes: For pesto, sunflower seeds are a less expensive alternative for pine nuts.

These sandwiches will get soggy if they rest too long. If you want to eat them later, assemble sandwiches without tomato, adding slices at the last minute.

For pesto: In food processor, thoroughly blend pine nuts or sunflower seeds, garlic, lemon juice and red wine vinegar until well-combined. Add basil, and add olive oil, a little bit at a time, blending between each addition. Once consistency is to your liking, blend in Parmesan cheese, adding more oil and salt if needed.

For sandwich: Cut baguette into 4 or 5 large sections, and split down middle.



Smoked Salmon Salad Niçoise with Dijon Dill Dressing

Makes 3 servings.

Dressing

- 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon dried dill weed
- Pinch of salt and pepper

Salad

- 1 (10-inch) piece smoked salmon
- 2 cups new potatoes
- 2 cups fresh French green beans, trimmed
- 2 tablespoons niçoise or kalamata olives
- 1 small cucumber, sliced
- 1/2 cup jarred artichokes, drained

For dressing: Add all dressing ingredients to a lidded jar, and shake until combined. Set aside.

For salad: Boil potatoes in heavily salted water for 15 minutes or until tender. Drain and set aside.

In a separate pot, boil green beans for 8 minutes. Immediately rinse beans in cold water or drop in an ice bath. Set aside.

Slice potatoes in half, and add salt and pepper. Arrange all salad ingredients on a platter. Pour dressing on dish and serve.

Note: This is a light, healthy and flavorful meal, perfect for the outdoors. If you want to take this on a picnic, prepare it in a large, lidded plastic container, adding dressing just before serving.



This month's web exclusive recipe:

Asian Pork Loin

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.

Vegging Out

Savor end-of-season garden goodness

Garden Fresh “Pizza”

Makes 4 servings.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1/4 cup butter or margarine | 3 ounces pepperoni, sliced, or ground sausage, browned and crumbled |
| 1/2 cup onion, chopped | |
| 1 cup mushrooms, sliced (fresh or canned) | 1 cup cheddar cheese, shredded |
| 3 cups yellow squash, sliced | 1/2 cup hot pepper cheese, shredded |
| 3/4 teaspoon garlic salt or minced garlic | 1/3 cup Parmesan cheese, shredded |
| 1/2 teaspoon pepper | |
| 4 eggs, beaten | |

In a 10-inch nonstick skillet, sauté butter, onion, mushrooms, yellow squash; add garlic salt/garlic and pepper. Cook, covered, over medium heat until tender.

Pour eggs over vegetable mixture, cooking until eggs are set (do not stir). Layer on pepperoni/sausage and cheddar, hot pepper and Parmesan cheeses, cooking until cheeses melt.

Cut “pizza” in fourths and serve.

Notes: Recipe is adapted from one that appeared in a Little Rock paper in 1986.

Linda Wolf, Russellville

Grits with Eggs and Vegetables

Makes 4 servings.

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| 1 cup quick-cooking grits | 1 medium tomato, cut into small chunks |
| 1 cup cheddar cheese, grated | |
| 2 tablespoons oil | 8 eggs |
| 1 small onion, chopped | Butter |
| 1 zucchini, thinly sliced | Salt and pepper to taste |

Cook grits according to package instructions. Stir in cheese, heating until melted. Divide into 4 bowls.

In a large skillet, add oil, and sauté onion and zucchini until tender. Add tomato and cook until just tender, about 1 minute. Divide mixture into fourths, and place on top of grits.

In a skillet, fry eggs in butter until whites are set, but yolks are still runny.

Place 2 eggs on top of each bowl of grits and vegetables. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Lisa Lovell, Elm Springs

Dilly Beans

Makes 4 pints.

- | |
|-------------------------------------|
| 2 pounds fresh green beans, trimmed |
| 4 fresh dill heads |
| 4 garlic cloves |
| 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes |
| 3 cups white vinegar |
| 3 cups water |
| 1/4 cup salt |

Pack green beans lengthwise into 4 hot, sterilized pint canning jars, leaving 1/4-inch head space. To each jar, add 1 dill head, 1 garlic clove and 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes.

In a saucepan, combine vinegar, water and salt, and bring to a

boil. Pour boiling liquid over beans, leaving 1/4-inch head space. Remove air bubbles with a chopstick.

Close jars, careful not to overtighten. Process about 10 minutes in boiling water bath; water must cover jars by 1 inch.

Store jars in a cool, dry place. Beans must mellow for at least a month or more (longer is better) to develop the best flavor.

Notes: I adapted this recipe from “Ball Blue Book.” There appears to be an abundance of beans this year, so this is a good way to use some of them. They also make great gifts.

Erna Spath, Mountain Home

Editor’s note: New to canning? Learn safe procedures and pointers first. A helpful resource is ballmasonjars.com/water-bath-canning.



JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

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

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS

for puzzle on page 38

S	N	O	S		Y	M	V	G	A	E	L	V	E	V	
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It was a perfect late autumn day in the Northern Rockies. Not a cloud in the sky, and just enough cool in the air to stir up nostalgic memories of my trip into the backwoods. This year, though, was different. I was going it solo. My two buddies, pleading work responsibilities, backed out at the last minute. So, armed with my trusty knife, I set out for adventure.

Well, what I found was a whole lot of trouble. As in 8 feet and 800-pounds of trouble in the form of a grizzly bear. Seems this grumpy fella was out looking for some adventure too. Mr. Grizzly saw me, stood up to his entire 8 feet of ferocity and let out a roar that made my blood turn to ice and my hair stand up. Unsnapping my leather sheath, I felt for my hefty, trusty knife and felt emboldened. I then showed the massive grizzly over 6 inches of 420 surgical grade stainless steel, raised my hands and yelled, "Whoa bear! Whoa bear!" I must have made my point, as he gave me an almost admiring grunt before turning tail and heading back into the woods.

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I was pretty shaken, but otherwise fine. Once the adrenaline high subsided, I decided I had some work to do back home too. That was more than enough adventure for one day.

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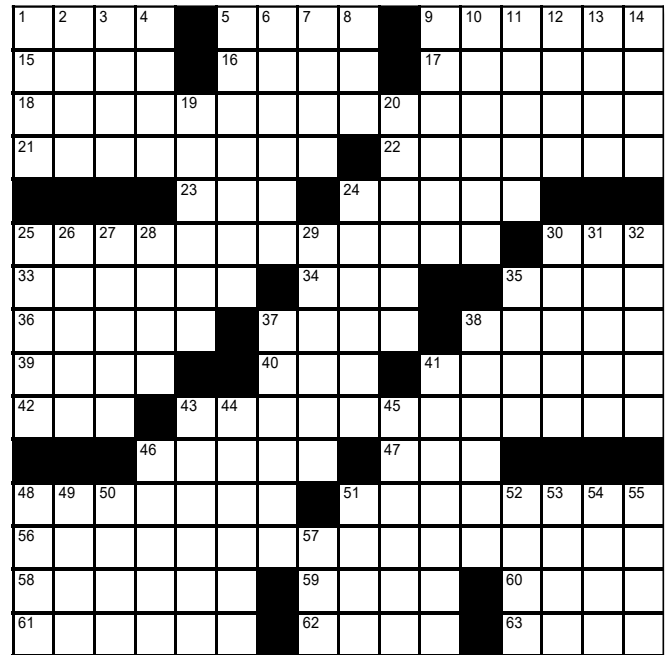


CROSSWORD PUZZLE

September Verse *By Victor Fleming*

ACROSS

- 1 Ricardo of an old sitcom
- 5 Boxer's pokes
- 9 Dobie of an old sitcom
- 15 Bassoon's kin
- 16 Guthrie of folk music
- 17 Like some magazines
- 18 Start of a colorful seasonal poem
- 21 Tool part used to make a hole
- 22 Eli Manning's alma mater, familiarly
- 23 Tyson, Knotts or Henley
- 24 Biota component
- 25 Part 2 of the poem
- 30 "Rumor ___ it ..."
- 33 Lunar orbit apex
- 34 Bucolic spot
- 35 Expected result, say
- 36 Casual shirts
- 37 Gave a prompt
- 38 I have, in Havana
- 39 Eve's grandson
- 40 Tulsa sch.
- 41 Withdraw
- 42 Hi-___ monitor
- 43 Part 3 of the poem
- 46 Surname in "Married ... With Children"
- 47 Cat's prey
- 48 Awakening
- 51 "Unfortunately, yeah"
- 56 End of the poem
- 58 Novelist Allende
- 59 Billion addition
- 60 Abraham's grandson
- 61 Add bubbles to
- 62 Like venison's flavor
- 63 "My Three ___"



DOWN

- 1 Seattle Storm All-Pro guard Jewell ___
- 2 Lyft competitor
- 3 E. ___ (health menace)
- 4 Give a holler
- 5 Samson's weapon
- 6 Following a curve
- 7 Smear on a page
- 8 Coll. club
- 9 Creep, as in a car
- 10 Hospital staffer
- 11 Fleeced beast
- 12 Taylor of "Mystic Pizza"
- 13 Calligraphers' supplies
- 14 Cong. meeting
- 19 Doo-wop songs, often
- 20 Kind of mutual fund
- 24 Make available
- 25 Become narrower
- 26 Ahead by a point
- 27 Caramel-filled candies
- 28 A.C.L.U. and others
- 29 Media disc format since 2006
- 30 "Your ___, I object"
- 31 Debate (with)
- 32 Didst bash
- 35 Adult eft
- 37 Treat like a baby
- 38 Coroner's label
- 41 Falderal
- 43 Reddish hue
- 44 Allow
- 45 Little Rock's Stone Ward Agency, e.g., for short
- 46 McCoy featured in John Brummett's columns
- 48 Et ___
- 49 Ascend
- 50 Poet Khayyám
- 51 Sarah McLachlan song
- 52 Foreboding March day
- 53 Playground retort
- 54 Adult cygnet
- 55 Burden of proof
- 57 Bother with multiple reminders

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 36

Email feedback to judgevic@gmail.com

CORRECTION - Richard Nixon was the 37th U.S. president. Last month's puzzle included an incorrect number.

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Ouachita Valley Meats 'steaks' claim on flavor



STORY AND PHOTOS
BY ROB ROEDEL

How can you ensure that the food you eat is as fresh as possible?

Simple. You go to the source. In the Arkadelphia area, people are flocking to Ouachita Valley Meats, owned by the Huneycutt family, for locally sourced meats and outstanding meals to go.

The Huneycutts, a seven-generation farm family with a passion for producing quality meats and grain to retail, were the 2022 Arkansas Farm Family of the Year. Their farm operation includes cotton, corn, wheat, soybeans, hay and cattle



Family-owned Ouachita Valley Meats in Arkadelphia offers locally sourced meats and take-and-go meals.



THE EATING ESSENTIALS

Ouachita Valley Meats

2859 Walnut St.
Arkadelphia
(870) 800-6328
ouachitavalleymeats.com

Hours of Operation

Monday-Friday: 10 a.m.-6 p.m.
Saturday: 10 a.m.-3 p.m.



(arkansaslivingmagazine.com/story/a-cutt-above/).

Ouachita Valley Meats owners Jeff Liggins and brother-in-law Luke Huneycutt manage and operate the sparkling clean and tastefully decorated establishment.

"We started with a local meat market concept on Feb. 28, 2023," Liggins said.

"As we visited similar shops across the nation, we picked up on a trend to offer fresh, hot food, in addition to our other products. People really enjoy our hot plates and other menu items. It has been so popular that we hired some additional help to maintain our service level to our standard."

A farm-to-table butcher shop, Ouachita Valley Meats serves as a take-and-go style restaurant operation with a couple of picnic tables at the front of the store. While enjoying my lunch there, I thought it would have been great to pick up a few meals and head over to Lake DeGray for a nice lunch with a view.

As I talked with a few patrons, I learned the restaurant has a large group of dedicated fans. One customer told me that he plans his weekly schedule around the day the Shaved Ribeye Sandwich is featured. The shaved slices of freshly butchered, fork-tender ribeye steak are coated in a tasty sauce and lovingly placed on a bun. I think this was my favorite menu item that I sampled.

I also tried the Smoked Pork Tacos. This plate included two large,



Ouachita Valley Meats smokes meat daily, including the tender Smoked Brisket.

soft flour tortillas filled with fresh, tender smoked pork and topped with sour cream, pickled onion and cilantro. The simple combination delivered huge flavor. A side of queso with corn chips made the perfect accompaniment.

The Turkey Sandwich had mounds of yummy turkey slices topped with lettuce, tomato, sliced onion, pickles and American cheese. Simple, but a great option for a hot day, or any day for that matter.

Liggins said that the team fires up the smoker each day and offers smoked meats for customers to buy by the pound. The store also offers



The Smoked Pork Tacos are even more satisfying with a side of queso and chips.




The classic Turkey Sandwich is piled high with mounds of meat.

a Smoked Brisket hot plate lunch. I could tell when the brisket was delivered that these guys knew what they were doing. The brisket had a nice “bark” on the outside and that moist, tender texture that only a master smoker can deliver. The meat was outstanding and needed nothing but a fork to enjoy each bite. The sides — homemade macaroni and cheese and baked beans — were very good.

I also loved the Chicken Salad Sandwich. The house-prepared chicken salad was light and a tasty option.

Huneycutt and Liggins grinned as they offered me a few desserts. Although I did not eat 100% of each item, I sampled homemade Banana Pudding, freshly baked Chocolate Chip Cookies, Bread Pudding and Nana’s Chocolate Pie. Which one was the best? Let’s just say this: I wanted to order another serving of each to enjoy for the next four days.

The “heat and eat” offerings are very popular for super busy families. Meals and sides include: Chicken Cajun Pasta, Working Man’s Casserole, Creamy Spinach Chicken, Baked Potato Salad, BBQ Beans, Breakfast Casserole, Mac and Cheese, Nana’s Cornbread and Pinto Beans. 

Dining recommendations? Contact Rob Roedel at rob.roedel@aecc.com.



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Cane Hill Harvest Festival



Beatles at the Ridge Musical Festival



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Weekends
Aug. 31-Sept. 29
Arkansas Renaissance Festival
 Mount Vernon, arrenfest.com

Sept. 1
Labor Day Fireworks
 Lake Hamilton, hotsprings.org

Sept. 5-7
Buffalo River Bluegrass Festival
 Jasper, facebook.com/
 buffaloriverbluegrass

Ozark Folk Festival
 Eureka Springs, ozarkfolk.com

Sept. 6-8
Arkansas Comic Con
 Little Rock, arkansascomiccon.com

Sept. 7
South Arkansas Outdoor Expo
 El Dorado, southarkexpo.com

Sept. 11-21
ACANSA Arts Festival of the South
 North Little Rock, acansa.org

Sept. 13-14
Local Festival
 Jonesboro, foamusic.org/events/local-fest-2024

Sept. 13-15
Arkansas Hot Air Balloon State Championship
 Harrison, exploreharrison.com

Sept. 18-21
Bikes, Blues & BBQ
 Rogers, bikesbluesandbbq.org

Sept. 20-28
Arkansas Oklahoma State Fair
 Fort Smith, arkansasoklahomafair.com

Sept. 21
Beatles at the Ridge Musical Festival
 Walnut Ridge, beatlesattheridge.com

Cane Hill Harvest Festival
 Cane Hill, historiccanehillar.org/festival

CottonFest
 Wilson, wilsonarkansas.com/events/
 cottonfest

Hispanic Heritage Festival
 Siloam Springs,
 siloamhispanicheritagefestival.com

Sept. 22
Main Street Food Truck Festival
 Little Rock, mainstreetfoodtrucks.com

Sept. 22-29
Six Bridges Book Festival
 Little Rock, cals.org/six-bridges-book-festival

Sept. 27-28
Big Steam Music Festival
 Hot Springs, bigsteammusicfestival.com

Downtown Jonesboro BBQ Festival
 Jonesboro, facebook.com/
 downtownjonesborobbqfest

Get Down Downtown
 Searcy, getdowndowntown.com

Sept. 28
Blooms and Butterflies Festival
 Black Rock, visitjacksonfarm.com

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