

# Arkansas Living

JANUARY 2025



## Clever Captures

Winners of our 2025  
Reader Photo Contest

Page 8

Plus:

Martin Luther King Jr. Park  
Navigating Newport  
New Outdoors Column





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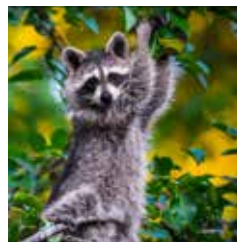


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*A baby raccoon is perched among the branches of our pear tree, stretching to grab a pear!*  
Bryant — TIFFANY HARPER

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# Ringtail-ing in a New Year

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

For the Chinese New Year — celebrated Jan. 29 — 2025 is the Year of the Wood Snake.

But for our Arkansas Living Reader Photo Contest, 2025 is the Year of the Raccoon.

Of the thousands of stunning photos submitted, several of our staff favorites happened to depict these magical, sometimes mischievous, masked mammals.

You've already seen Tiffany Harper of Bryant's adorable, awe-inspiring photo on our cover (see the rest of our winners beginning on page 8). Her caption for the wild critter who looks positively posed: "A baby raccoon is perched among the branches of our pear tree, stretching to grab a pear!"

That the ambitious raccoon is reaching for fruit seemed like an aspirational and hopeful image to begin a new year.

We're not sure if it's the same raccoon or maybe a photogenic sibling, but it's the same photographer — Harper — who also captured another irresistible image (TOP), captioned, "A curious glance from a baby raccoon!"

Nancy Steenburgen of Heber Springs caught another animated animal in the act of rabble-rousing (CENTER). Her caption: "This little rascal is peeking out from behind a tree to see if he can get to my birdfeeders."

And then there was nothing at all ambitious, curious or animated about these last two raccoons, idling in a tree (BOTTOM). Photographer Alana Anders of Warren captioned this photo: "Enjoying a lazy day!"

Maybe you're starting off 2025 feeling determined like our cover raccoon, or maybe you're feeling a little sluggish like the limb loafers.

Either way, we wish you a fruitful and peaceful new year!

*Jennifer*  
Jennifer Christman Cia  
jennifer.cia@aeci.com



TIFFANY HARPER



NANCY STEENBURGEN



ALANA ANDERS



# The Juice Theory

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

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



Years ago, I stepped into my boss' office and pitched a somewhat radical new idea. He listened carefully and told me that my idea was interesting and had merit, but said I didn't have enough "Juice to get it done." I was confused

and asked, "What is Juice?" That is when he explained the Juice Theory — a concept I've used ever since.

He told me to imagine an empty glass pitcher. He told me to draw a line on the pitcher somewhere between empty and full to represent my idea. He told me that I would need to fill the pitcher with enough Juice to reach the line if I wanted the idea to proceed and ultimately succeed.

I am partial to orange juice, so I envisioned a pitcher with it filled up to the line I had mentally drawn on my imaginary pitcher. He said the more challenging or transformational an idea, the higher the line — or the more Juice — needed in the pitcher. He explained that Juice is the amount of power or delegated authority that one has and, more importantly, it is the amount of influence a person possesses to make a change or implement a new idea or program.

He said that every employee in the company (or sailor on the submarine, in this specific case) has a certain amount of Juice. The higher you are in the organization, you generally have more Juice, however all employees have Juice — even new employees on Day 1.

He said the mistake I made was thinking I could come into his office, get his blessing and implement the idea. I incorrectly assumed that he possessed an infinite amount of Juice, believing that his authority alone could fill the pitcher. He told me that, as the leader, he had the

proverbial 51% vote or enough Juice to fill the pitcher just over halfway full. But my idea was so significant that it required a nearly full pitcher to ensure its success. He told me that, as a leader, I had Juice. If he and I both poured our Juice into the pitcher, it would be something like 65% full. However, my idea required that the pitcher be closer to 90% full to guarantee success.


The way we make things happen is by using our Juice. My boss sent me away with a challenge: Collaborate with my peers, get their buy-in, encourage them to pour their Juice with mine, and come back with enough Juice to make the pitcher 90% full.

As CEO, I have a lot of Juice delegated to me by the Board of Directors. But I don't have an infinite amount of Juice. If all the senior leaders in the company combined their Juice together, they would likely have almost as much or more Juice than the CEO. They definitely have enough Juice to change a CEO's mind. Another truth: If every employee in the company combines their Juice, that is a lot of Juice, and the effect is the same. This much Juice can and will impact decisions that are important to everyone.

The Juice Theory works not just in companies but also in groups and families. If my wife, kids and grandkids combine their Juice and propose an alternate to my plan, my plan generally goes out the window. Only in the most significant or extreme situations would a leader use their 51% vote or Juice to veto or override the collective Juice of a group or family.

The Juice Theory is just a simplistic way to think about the power of collaboration. Everyone matters, and doing the work necessary to get others to add

their Juice to yours pays big dividends.

It is a new year, and I think that 2025 will be both interesting and transformational. My question to you is: How will you use your Juice this year to make good things happen? 



The Juice Theory symbolizes the level of influence and resources needed to bring an idea to fruition.



# Cooperatives launch “Better Connected, Together” campaign

The Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas announce the launch of a comprehensive marketing campaign, “Better Connected, Together.” The initiative aims to strengthen the connection between the 17 electric distribution cooperatives in Arkansas and the 1.2 million members served.

Developed in partnership with ChrisMarketing LLC of Jonesboro, with input from statewide surveys and focus groups across diverse demographics, the central message emphasizes the cooperatives’ commitment to powering Arkansans’ connected lives. The campaign features a multiplatform approach. Billboards, print ads, radio and TV spots and social media posts will bring the “Better Connected, Together” message to life.

“We’re thrilled to unveil the ‘Better Connected, Together’ campaign,” said Rob Roedel, senior director of corporate communications. “Our member-focused cooperatives and subsidiaries deliver reliable, affordable and responsible products, electricity and services to every corner of Arkansas and across the nation. Many of the electric cooperatives have expanded their services to offer even more resources, like fiber internet, to connect the communities they serve. This campaign celebrates our unique cooperative way of doing business. We’re locally owned, controlled and operated and united in our mission to serve Arkansans and our neighbors in other states.”



## AECI, AECC honor Employees of the Year

Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (AECI) and Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) recently honored the 2024 Employees of the Year.

### Earl Maxwell, AECI, Assistant Manager Warehouse

Starting his career on Jan. 2, 1981, Maxwell has served the cooperative for more than 40 years — tirelessly. President/CEO Vernon “Buddy” Hasten said Maxwell “arrives to work most mornings at 5 a.m. and is considered the workforce of his crew. He’s usually the first to get called in for storm work and the last to go home.”



Earl Maxwell receives the AECI Employee of the Year award from President/CEO Vernon “Buddy” Hasten.

### Tara Patrick, AECC, Director - Fuels

When describing Patrick, Hasten said, “She supports the 24/7 nature of our business, which means working weekends, holidays and many off hours. She does this without complaining. She is both very professional and a joy to work with, dedicated to the job day after day, and has been with AECC for over 30 years. She leads a team that is instrumental in making sure that our plants can operate each day.”

Congratulations to Earl and Tara!



Tara Patrick receives the AECC Employee of the Year award from President/CEO Vernon “Buddy” Hasten.



# AECC Board of Directors elects new officers

The Board of Directors for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) elected new officers at the Annual Meeting on Dec. 10. They are:



Terry Rorex



Rodney Chapman



Lisa Hendrix



Brad Harrison

- Chairman:** Terry Rorex, board chairman, Craighead Electric Cooperative;
- Vice Chairman:** Rodney Chapman, general manager, Ashley-Chicot Electric Cooperative;
- Secretary:** Lisa Hendrix, board member, Ouachita Electric Cooperative;
- Treasurer:** Brad Harrison, CEO, Mississippi County Electric Cooperative.

## Where Is It?

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

In the December issue, we hid a reindeer. Joked one correct reader: "I spent half an hour scouring through everything and had nearly given up before flipping back toward the front, finding it hidden within the sky of the 'On The Cover' image on the bottom left of page 3. An outright Christmas miracle, I suppose."

In a random drawing of correct answers, 10 winners (double the fun for Christmas) were selected to receive Arkansas Living mugs:

- Matt Bauer, Paragould (Craighead Electric Cooperative)
- August Griffith, Ozark (Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative)
- Glynn Stewart, Mena (Rich Mountain Electric Cooperative)
- Kim Parrott, Shell Knob, Missouri (Carroll Electric Cooperative)
- Melissa Legg, Camden (Ouachita Electric Cooperative)
- Bradley Kovac, Eudora (nonmember)
- Tracy Jones, Palestine (Woodruff Electric Cooperative)
- Jody Gardner, Melbourne (North Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
- Michael Usnick, Hot Springs Village (First Electric Cooperative)
- Lakynn Carlton, Texarkana (Southwest Arkansas Electric Cooperative)

For January, we've hidden ice skates, and finding them will be a test of your "ice-sight!"

Enter by Jan. 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.

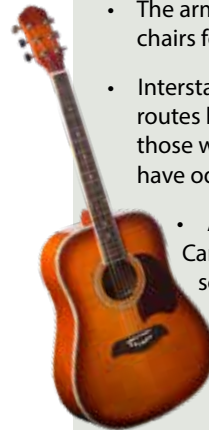
Include your name, address and electric

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! November's winner was: Tammy Jackson, Conway (Petit Jean Electric Cooperative).*



- The Diderot effect is a phenomenon in which buying something new leads to a spiral of additional purchases.
- Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King paid for the hospital bill of actress Julia Roberts' birth.
- Hershey, Pennsylvania, drops a giant Kiss at midnight on New Year's Eve. Dillsburg, Pennsylvania, rings in the new year by dropping a pickle.
- Every time you shuffle a deck of cards, chances are its order never existed before.
- The average person has four to six dreams per night, according to the National Sleep Foundation.
- The arms of chairs are just chairs for arms.
- Interstates with east/west routes have even numbers, and those with north/south routes have odd.
- Arkansas' own Glen Campbell played guitar on songs for Elvis Presley, the Beach Boys, Frank Sinatra, Merle Haggard and The Monkees.
- All mammals get goosebumps due to a process called piloerection.
- New-car smell is actually a mix of over 200 chemicals found in car interiors.
- It is impossible to breathe and swallow at the same time.
- "Good resolutions are simply checks that men draw on a bank where they have no account." — Oscar Wilde, poet and playwright







*Eastern gray squirrel enjoying an early morning drink of water, Buffalo River — JAMI LINDER*

# Clever Captures

*Winners of Arkansas Living's 2025 Reader Photo Contest*





*Horse at Golden Hour, Springdale* — LACY TACKETT

A thirsty squirrel. A filthy hand. A humble clump of mushrooms.

Such subject matter could seem ordinary.

Yet, through the lens of perspective and the art of storytelling, the simple becomes special, and the mundane turns magical, revealing layers of beauty, mystery and meaning.

So, take some time to explore and enjoy these winning entries (some have titles, some have captions; all wording comes directly from the photographers) of Arkansas Living's 2025 Reader Photo Contest. And uncover the enchantment woven into each of these clever captures.



*Snow Day on the Horseshoe Dot Ranch, Viola* — HANNAH DAVIDSON ►





*Planting Ornamental Corn, Siloam Springs — REBECCA DRAKE*



*Frog, Pollard — DONNA POE*



*The guide, waiting to take you on a woodland adventure, Rogers — JAMIE GAGLIARDI*





*Lazy days*, Searcy County — STEVEN DROWN ➤





*Where's mom?* Rogers — PHILLIP MARTIN



*Shrooms*, Edgemont — MARY PIKE





*Girl in a Soybean Field,*  
Hartman —  
TAYLOR PLUGGE




*Guard dog protecting his goats and ducks by the barn, Berryville — DAN WHITE*



*Mama hen protecting her babies, St. Francis County — DAWN GRAY*



*Blondie the cow says, "Good mooo-rning, Papabear! Mooo-re bananas, please!"  
Springdale — BOB ERNST* 



# If you love music, *Mississippi* should be on your playlist.

American music is a truly global phenomenon, but its roots trace back to one place—Mississippi. Over 100 years ago, in the Mississippi Delta, the blues ignited a music revolution that would give rise to rock 'n' roll, gospel, country, and R&B while influencing genres from jazz to hip hop. And the story continues today. In Mississippi, you can explore the lives and legacies of icons like B.B. King, Elvis Presley, and Muddy Waters at music museums and on the Blues and Country Music Trails, or catch today's rising stars at juke joints, music clubs, and theaters across the state. Learn more at [VisitMississippi.org/Music](https://www.visitmississippi.org/music).

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# Navigating Newport

*Jackson County seat blends nostalgia, innovation*

STORY BY JACK SCHNEDLER, PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

An alcove in Newport's **Walmart Supercenter** displays a mini-museum devoted to the retailing genius who operated his first store here in 1945 as a prelude to revolutionizing America's shopping habits.

A photograph shows Sam Walton kneeling next to a display that details his time at the Ben Franklin store near Newport's Jackson County Courthouse. As he ran the outlet, "his knowledge of retail grew significantly over those five years and would shape him into the retailer he became."

Five-and-dime stores are now nearly extinct. Today's courthouse neighbors, in this **Farmers Electric Cooperative** headquarters city located along the newly designated Interstate 57, include **Tech Depot**, 209 Hazel St. ([dtechpark.com/tech-depot/](http://dtechpark.com/tech-depot/)), a job-training center for information technology. Tech Depot is cited by Newport Economic Development Commission Director Jon Chadwell as an example of the city's recent growth.

"One of four things that stands out is our pride about (Newport's) history." The other three are "the roaring days of being a steamboat and railroad town from 1875 to 1925, when we were wide-open and bustling. Also the proud tradition of our high school in both academics and sports: Greyhound pride. And **ASU-Newport** ([asun.edu](http://asun.edu)), one of Arkansas State University's two-year colleges and one of the fastest growing."

For a primer on local history, Chadwell highly recommends stopping at **Jacksonport State Park** ([arkansasstateparks.com/parks/jacksonport-state-park](http://arkansasstateparks.com/parks/jacksonport-state-park)), 111 Avenue St., five miles northwest of Newport off Arkansas 69. Jacksonport served as the Jackson County seat from 1854 until the courthouse was moved in 1892 to Newport, which by then boasted a population 10 times that of its rival.

In today's Newport, **The Angry Possum**, 306 Front St. ([facebook.com/thangrypossum](http://facebook.com/thangrypossum)) is a popular eatery with music and karaoke on weekends. Its logo sports a snarling cartoon opossum.

Another spot can boast of historical credentials. **Postmaster Spirits Craft Distillery**, 200 Hazel St. ([facebook.com/postmasterspirits](http://facebook.com/postmasterspirits)), occupies the city's former U.S. Post Office. The 7,300-square-foot building was completed in 1915, with terrazzo floors and soaring arches. The distillery serves food as well as adult beverages.



Built in 1892, the Jackson County Courthouse in Newport is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.



Visitors can enjoy a fishing pier, walking trails and picnic pavilions at Lockwood Park in Newport.

An offbeat attraction, open by appointment only, is **Jackson's Funeral Home Museum**, 1900 Malcolm Ave. ([jacksonsfh.com](http://jacksonsfh.com)). A staff member explains the exhibits date back to a time when many visitations were held at home. A prime display is an ornate funeral carriage that was drawn by horses.

The **Jackson County Courthouse** 200 Main St. ([jacksoncountyar.com](http://jacksoncountyar.com)) is the most stately of the city's 10 listings on the National Register of Historic Places. Built in 1892 in Late Victorian style, it is one of the state's oldest courthouses still serving its original purpose.

On a blue-sky day, **Lockwood Park** ([newportarcity.org/city-of-newport](http://newportarcity.org/city-of-newport)), on Newport Lake off Malcolm Avenue, offers varied family attractions. They include two playgrounds, picnic pavilions, a fishing pier and a trail for walking or jogging. Farmer's Market Park, near the lake, maintains a spacious dog park.

April 5 will be a day of celebration, as Newport marks the


sesquicentennial of becoming a city in 1875. The mood figures to be much less raucous than was true in "the roaring days" of that decade mentioned by Chadwell. In the 1870s, according to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas: "Newport attracted a rough cadre of loggers, trappers, boatmen and farmers whose boisterous activity was reflected in a news article in the 1879 Jacksonport Herald. It reported whimsically that 'latest statistics show one pint of Newport whiskey contains four fights, three knockdowns, one stealing of the ballot box and one contested election.'"

### Rock 'n' Roll Highway 67

In Newport's Front Street Park, a mural displays a Rock 'n' Roll Highway 67 logo along with portraits of Elvis Presley, Sonny Burgess and several other musical luminaries.

The highway's name "is derived from the rockabilly music performed at nightclubs and other venues located on the highway by legendary progenitors of the genre," according to the Encyclopedia of Arkansas. "The designation by Act 497 of the 87th Arkansas General Assembly in 2009 has spawned music festivals, museum exhibits and plaques in communities along the highway."

Newport, near the midpoint of the four-county route, has scheduled this year's Delta Arts Festival and Music Jam for June 6-7. In the 1950s and '60s, music venues in the city and surrounding Jackson County bore such jaunty names as Rainbow Tavern, Bloody Bucket, Porky's Rooftop and Jarvis Bamboo Club.

Newport's Rock 'n' Roll Highway Museum is closed for now, with exhibits in storage at the ASU-Newport campus. A new museum location is being sought. 

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# Campsite Cuisine

*Cooking up outdoor adventures with cast iron*



STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

After a long, active and exhilarating day enjoying the great outdoors in Arkansas, nothing quite compares to sitting down to a satisfying meal cooked in cast iron.

The properties of cast iron enhance the flavor of your meal; using coals to heat the iron adds to the adventure.

How do you get started? You will need these seven items for the cookware and fuel:

- **Dutch oven** Manufacturers will specify an “outdoor” or “camp” Dutch oven. You can discern an outdoor Dutch oven by the legs underneath to hold it above the coals on the ground, which ensures evenness of cooking. The elevated lip around the outer edge of the lid helps hold the coals in place on the top. We started with a 10-inch, and that size was perfect for our family of six.

- **Lid holder** This is used to hold the lid while you stir your food or add to the ingredients inside the Dutch oven. Remember, your Dutch oven will be sitting directly on the ground outside, and when you’re cooking, the bottom of that lid sits right next to the food inside, so it’s imperative that you keep the bottom of the lid clean. Warning: The picnic table is not a good option since the cast iron will be very hot.

- **Lid lifter** The lid will have a handle specifically designed to be used with the lid lifter. The lid will be filled with hot coals and the residual powder of disintegrating coals. A hot pad won’t do; you need a

way to safely and cleanly lift the lid without spilling coals into the food or burning yourself.

- **Coals** The number of coals depends on the recipe, but in general, you’ll need between 20 to 40 per recipe. Either briquettes or lump charcoal will work. Briquettes are good to begin with because the size is uniform, making the number easier to determine. Once you get the hang of it,



Outdoor Dutch ovens have legs to position them above the coals.



Between 20 to 40 briquettes or lump coals are needed per recipe.

lump charcoal is more natural and can enhance flavor.

- **Chimney** The chimney shortens the time it takes for the coals to heat and offers a safe container for lighting them. Pro tip: Bring some newspaper to help light the coals.

- **Leather gloves** Heat-resistant gloves keep your hands safe.


- **Long tongs** These allow you to maneuver the coals for optimum heat dispersion both above and beneath the oven.

Once you have the equipment and see how it works, you can adapt your favorite meals to outside cooking. Your taste buds and your family will thank you!

In next month’s article, we will share a favorite family recipe adapted to campsite cast iron.



Heat-resistant gloves and long tongs are safety essentials.

*Carlton and Leigh Wing are hosts of the Arkansas Great Outdoors weekly television series. Visit [facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors/](https://facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors/).* 



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# Living the Dream

Planned Arkadelphia park to honor Martin Luther King Jr.

BY JACK SCHNEDLER

Arkadelphia is creating Martin Luther King Jr. Park. It's a multiuse project that could make the headquarters city of South Central Arkansas Electric Cooperative an Arkansas focal point for activities on the federal holiday marking the civil rights icon's birthday (Jan. 20 this year).

The park's groundbreaking is planned for late 2025 on former hospital grounds at 1420 Pine St., a mile or so northwest of the Clark County Courthouse. The park opening is expected by the end of 2026.

A committee of Arkadelphians was formed a decade ago to recommend the best way to honor King. The committee's park idea was adopted in 2016 by the city's board of directors. Another committee was set up in 2018 to devise suggestions for design and content of the park, which is projected to cost \$2.5 million.

"The park has been planned with a holistic approach of both recognizing Dr. King, and providing much-needed recreational opportunities for all citizens of Arkadelphia as well as visitors," says City Manager Gary Brinkley. "We expect this to be done so well and at such a high level that it will become a regional destination."

He notes that Arkadelphia does not have a park for physically disabled children. The future park "is planned to address that need with proper playground elements and surfacing. It will also address the lack of recreational activities in this part of town. And it will have educational elements on Dr. King's life and message of hope."

Brinkley is a member of the MLK Memorial Park Committee, along with Arkadelphia Mayor Dr. Scott Byrd. The committee's chairman is Roland Gosey,



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A rendering depicts the multiuse Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Arkadelphia, scheduled for completion in 2026.

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owner of Williams Funeral Home. Honorary co-chairmen are Fitzgerald Hill, former president of Arkansas Baptist College, and Mitch Bettis, an Arkadelphia native and head of Arkansas Business Publishing Group.

The project's website ([mlkjrpark.org](http://mlkjrpark.org)) reports that the park's design was partly inspired by a 1967 King speech, "What is Your Life Blueprint?" In it, he cited "a good, solid blueprint" as important for planning a life.

According to the website, the park's design draws specifically from two passages in the speech: "Your life's blueprint should be a deep belief in your own dignity, your worth." And it should include "the determination to achieve excellence."

The goal of the park similarly "reflects a commitment to providing a solid foundation. Because of the park's central location, surrounding neighborhoods, schools, churches and businesses have access."

An "abundance of opportunities for all ages" is envisioned, including "art, nature, sports and history. Initial park design includes a quarter-mile walking loop, Youth Empowerment Zone play area, splash pad, amphitheater next to a green gathering space and paved civil rights educational trail. A series of kiosks will be placed along the walking route to educate the public on the Civil Rights Movement."

The website imagines an impact beyond just Arkadelphia: "Our city is poised along Interstate 30 midway between Texarkana and Little Rock, making it an easy destination for field trips, group travel and future historic and tourism opportunities." 



A walking loop, splash pad, play area and amphitheater are planned for the new Martin Luther King Jr. Park in Arkadelphia.

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Mid-America Science Museum in Hot Springs was awarded a \$1,000 donation from Operation Round-Up.

### ORU Recipients Awarded Funds at December Meeting

The Operation Round-Up board of trustees met on Dec. 5 at the First Electric office in Jacksonville to review applications submitted for the last board meeting of 2024. The following applications were reviewed and approved:

#### Arkansas County

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Arkansas County \$500

#### Cleburne County

Cleburne County Fair and Livestock \$2,000  
 Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Cleburne County \$1,500  
 Margie's Haven House, Inc. \$2,000

#### Faulkner County

The Harbor Home Ministries \$1,000

#### Garland County

Mid-America Science Museum \$1,000

#### Independence County

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Independence County \$250

#### Lonoke County

The CALL in Lonoke & Prairie County \$2,000  
 Building Bridges \$1,500

#### Perry County

Perry County Day Services Center \$2,000  
 Renewal Ranch \$2,500

#### Prairie County

Smith's Friends Animal Rescue \$500

#### Pulaski County

Girl Scouts Diamonds \$1,000  
 Hearts of our Heroes \$1,000

#### Saline County

Hot Springs/Hot Springs Village Symphony Guild \$2,000  
 Bryant Youth Association \$1,000  
 Turtle Creek Volunteer Fire Department \$1,700  
 Cooper-Anthony Mercy Child Advocacy Center \$2,000  
 Lisowe's Lights \$1,200

#### Stone County

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Stone County \$250

#### Van Buren County

Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund of Van Buren County \$250

#### White County

Imagine & Believe Foundation \$2,000  
 Arkansas Service Paws \$1,000



## Capital Credit Retirements Make Christmas Greener!

Each December, our board reviews the cooperative's financial position, and we determine the amount of capital credits to refund. This year, over \$7.07 million was returned to you — our members. That includes a complete retirement of 2002 and percentage of 2019-2023. That brings the total capital credit retirement to over \$153.6 million since we began the practice in the 1940s.

Thank you for your membership in First Electric Cooperative. We're wishing you and your family a prosperous 2025.



Jessica Gardner, senior marketing representative, delivers a capital credit check to Tumbling Shoals Water Department.



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# Decades of Dirt

## *Buffalo Headwaters Challenge turns 20*

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BOB ROBINSON

From Jan. 24 to 26, the Buffalo Headwaters Challenge (BHC) — what has become the premier mountain bike event of the winter season — celebrates its 20th anniversary. Cyclists travel from as far away as Colorado to attend the annual event, hosted at Headwaters School in Red Star, located in Madison County.

Rob Reno, president of Ozark Off-Road Cyclists (OORC) said, “You really don’t want to miss this year’s platinum anniversary event. We have added trails that have never been included, and we will have some huge mountain-bike-related news to share that everyone will be very interested in.” This will include details about Phase II of the Buffalo Headwaters trail system.

This three-day, all-inclusive “off the grid” festival offers a fun-filled weekend for everyone. It includes five meals, libations, primitive/RV camping, two bands, fantastic mountain biking and a “gravel grinder.” There’s a trail run for outdoor enthusiasts who choose sneakers over knobbies. There is even a nonrider entry pass for all the festivities except for cycling.

### Day 1

The first day of the event is “nesting” day, as everyone settles in for the weekend ahead. Participants head to the registration tent to collect wristbands and a goodie bag. Then, after locating the perfect place to pitch a tent, they can wander about, visiting with old friends and making new ones.

### Day 2

Whatever the weather conditions, don’t expect Reno and OORC to cancel the event. Since OORC launched the



In addition to biking, participants can enjoy meals, primitive camping and live music.



The Buffalo Headwaters Challenge celebrates its 20th anniversary Jan. 24-26 in Red Star.

event in 2005, it has endured torrential rains, freezing temperatures, ice storms, a global pandemic and other assorted calamities.

The “Challenge” is a 40-ish-mile, semi-supported backcountry mountain bike adventure through the mountains of the Buffalo River headwaters area. The course changes yearly, but rest assured it will include screaming mile-long, roller-coaster descents, followed by long thigh-burning climbs. Between the ups and downs, riders pedal through creek crossings that can be waist-high. In keeping with the spirit of this being a ride and not a race, many riders will often pause after a particularly tricky stream crossing to cheer on their fellow cyclists and provide beta on the best route across the stream.

For those not up for the full 40-ish mile route, there are marked bailout routes throughout, so riders can adjust their own route.

### Day 3

OORC provides several options for enjoying the final day of the event. There is a vigorous gravel ride across the Boston Mountains, a free shuttle service for Buffalo Outdoor Center’s challenging downhill mountain bike trail system (including a 1,300-foot screaming descent) and a trail run on the Headwaters trail system. Or there is option four: Sleep in, sip on a mug of coffee and reflect with friends on the beautiful adventure that was had over this epic weekend.

For more information on the Buffalo Headwaters Challenge, visit [bikereg.com/67489](http://bikereg.com/67489). 

WEB EXCLUSIVE! Read an expanded version of this story at: [arkansaslivingmagazine.com](http://arkansaslivingmagazine.com)



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The Arkansas Department of Agriculture's Arkansas Grown Program is partnering with Arkansas agriculture associations and organizations to host the Arkansas Grown Conference & Expo, focusing on farmers and producers who grow for our local food system with networking, workshops, and a trade show.

Keynotes provided by Lisa Chase, The University of Vermont, Extension Professor: Natural Resources Specialist and Director of the Vermont Tourism Research Center

- Working Together to Embrace the Natural State - January 31
- The Most Interesting Things You've Learned - February 1

Again in 2025, we are hosting the  
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- Arkansas Association of Grape Growers
- Arkansas Blackberry Growers Association
- Arkansas Farmers Market Association
- Arkansas Agritourism Association
- Arkansas Association of Conservation Districts
- Arkansas Pecan Growers Association
- Mid America Strawberry Growers Association
- University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture

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The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provides help with paying heating costs in winter months to qualifying individuals and families.

Beginning Jan. 6, applications are accepted 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). It is operated by Community Action Agencies.

Check eligibility at your local Community Action Agency ([acaaa.org](http://acaaa.org)).



Qualified families and individuals can apply for assistance with paying electric bills through the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance program (LIHEAP).

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# Snapshots from our readers



**Riggs is off to work!**  
Jordin Head, Perryville.



**Titmouse headed to church and the birdie buffet.**  
Holly Hipple, Cabot.



**Emory striking a pose while helping daddy feed the calves.**  
Lacey Dotson, Gentry.



**"Are you my brother from another mother?"**  
Nadine McKenzie, Middlebrook.

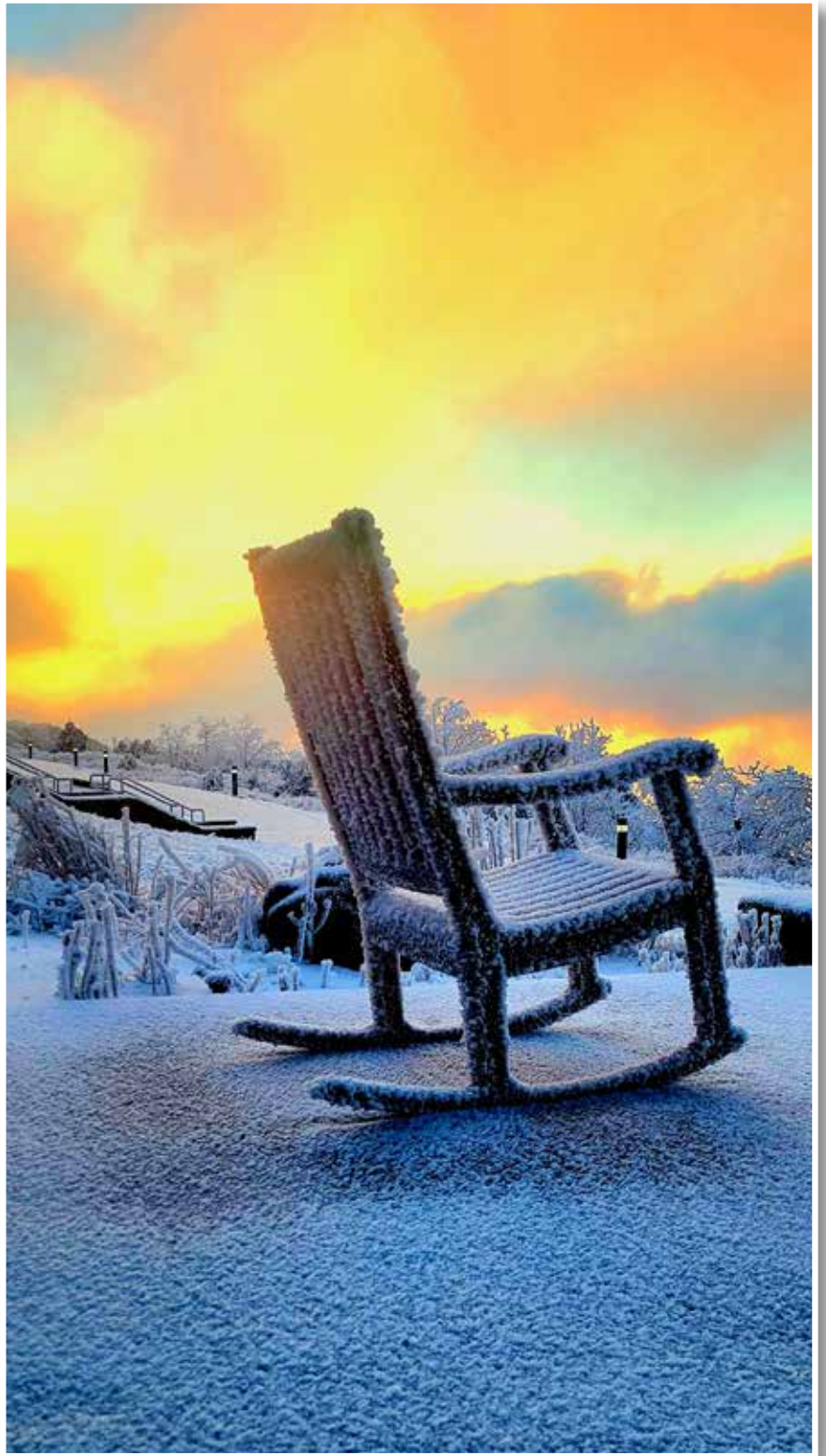




**Barred owl surveying the woods.**  
Lori Sitton, Russellville.



**Rascal says, "Daddy can't leave home without me now!"** Jim and Ginny Farney, Wesley.



**A little too cold for rocking today!** Monica Murray, taken at the lodge at Mount Magazine State Park.

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).




# Winter Wonders

*Indoor flowering plants brighten home*



BY JANET B. CARSON

Our homes look a bit drab after the holiday decorations come down, and with colder weather and shorter days, we spend more time inside. Flowering indoor plants can add some color and brighten spirits as well.

With proper care, poinsettias can continue to flaunt color well into spring. And there is a wide range of plants you can buy to add color for a few weeks up to a few months. 

Add color to your home this winter with vibrant indoor flowering plants like cyclamen.



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PLANT	DESCRIPTION	CARE
African Violet	Small rosettes of foliage topped with clusters of pink, purple, white or bi-color flowers.	Needs bright light, even moisture (usually watered from the bottom of the container). Can bloom for months. Plants can last for years.
Amaryllis	Large strappy leaves usually follow the tall trumpet-shaped blooms in reds, pinks, whites and bi-colors.	Plant a dormant bulb in soil, water it, and give it bright light. In six to eight weeks, plant will usually have blooms that last for a month or longer. Top-heavy plants may need support to prevent toppling. With care, bulbs can last for years.
Anthurium	Glossy green leaves with waxy spathe blooms in shades of red, pink, white, salmon or purple. Red is most common.	With bright light and even moisture, it can bloom for two months or longer. Toxic to children and pets. It is challenging to get it to rebloom in our climate unless you have a greenhouse.
Begonia	Wide range of types, including Angel Wing, Reiger and Tuberous. Colors can be pink, red, white, yellow or orange.	Bright, indirect light. Moist, but not too wet; let them dry out in between waterings. Depending on variety, can last for years.
Bromeliad	Wide range of types. These plants are epiphytes and do well with little water. The colorful center stalks or blooms can be red, yellow, orange or purple.	Bright or indirect light. Infrequent watering. Color can last for months with little care. Many mother plants die after bloom but will produce "pups" at the base. Time-consuming to rebloom, so buy new ones.
Chrysanthemum	Same plants you put in the garden in the fall, but florist mums can be purchased year-round. Orange, red, yellow and white flowers.	Bright light and even moisture. Color can last for four to six weeks.
Cyclamen	Almost heart-shaped leaves topped with interesting pink, red or white blooms.	Bright light for four to six hours a day with well-drained soil. Too wet and they rot; too dry and they stop blooming. Can be a bit finicky but can last with proper care for four to eight weeks.
Kalanchoe	Waxy, scallop-edged leaves topped with clusters of blooms in red, white, pink, orange or yellow.	Bright light, well-drained soil. Don't overwater. It can bloom for two months or longer, and with cool temperatures and no artificial light at night, can rebloom off and on all year. Long-lived.
Ornithogalum – Orange or Yellow Star	A bulbous plant in the hyacinth family, it has lance-shaped leaves with taller clusters of orange or yellow flowers.	Bright light and even moisture, but does not like wet soil. Can bloom for six to eight weeks. You can try planting outdoors after frost, but it's usually best just to discard after bloom.

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# Al Dente Delights

*Cold nights call for comforting, pleasing pasta dishes*

RECIPES AND PHOTOS  
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

## Killer French Onion and Mushroom Pasta

Makes 5-6 servings.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 3 cups rigatoni, uncooked                    | 16 ounces portobello mushrooms, sliced    |
| 1 (8-ounce) package whipped cream cheese     | Water or chicken stock as needed          |
| 1 (1-ounce) packet dry French onion soup mix | 1 teaspoon sugar                          |
| 1/4 teaspoon pepper                          | 1/2 teaspoon dried rosemary               |
| 6 tablespoons olive oil, divided             | Dash of salt                              |
| 1 very large red onion, thinly sliced        | 2 cups rotisserie chicken breast, chopped |

Prepare rigatoni according to package directions. Before draining, reserve 1/2 cup pasta water.

While pasta cooks, in a medium bowl, stir together whipped cream cheese, French onion soup mix and pepper. Set aside.

Use two nonstick skillet warming at the same time over medium heat (one should be larger than the other). Add



3 tablespoons olive oil to each. When hot, add red onion to smaller skillet. Add mushrooms to larger skillet. Cook until onions are caramelized and mushrooms are cooked. You might need to add water or chicken stock to both to prevent sticking. When onions are done, add sugar. It will take about 30 minutes to thoroughly caramelize onions. When mushrooms are done, add rosemary and salt. Remove from heat

To largest skillet with mushrooms, add cream cheese mixture, reserved pasta water, caramelized onions, pasta and chicken, and stir until thoroughly coated. Serve immediately.

## Spaghetti with Creamy Romesco

Makes 3 servings.

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 1/2 pound spaghetti, uncooked                      | 1 teaspoon smoked paprika      |
| 1 (12-ounce) jar roasted red bell peppers, drained | 1/2 teaspoon oregano           |
| 1/2 cup almond slivers                             | 1 tablespoon tomato paste      |
| 2 teaspoons garlic, minced                         | 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil |
| 2 ounces goat cheese, crumbled                     | 2 tablespoons water            |
|  | Salt to taste                  |

Cook spaghetti according to package directions.

While pasta cooks, place all other ingredients in a food processor, and pulse until mostly smooth. Transfer sauce to a large pan, and turn on low- to medium-low heat. When



pasta is done, drain and transfer to pan with sauce. Toss to thoroughly coat, and serve immediately.

*Note: This is vegetarian, but you can toss cooked chicken or shrimp with this dish if you want to add protein.*



## Quick Shrimp Hibachi Pasta

Makes 2 servings.

- |     |                             |       |  |
|-----|-----------------------------|-------|--|
| 6   | tablespoons butter, divided | 1/2   | teaspoon garlic powder                     |
| 1/4 | small onion, thinly sliced  | 1/4   | teaspoon pepper                            |
| 6   | mushrooms, sliced           | 1     | cup raw shrimp, deveined and tails removed |
|     | Half a zucchini, sliced     | 1 1/2 | tablespoons soy sauce                      |
| 4   | baby carrots, sliced        | 2 1/2 | cups cooked spaghetti noodles              |
| 1/2 | teaspoon salt               | 1/2   | teaspoon toasted sesame oil                |
| 1/2 | teaspoon ground ginger      |       |  |

In a large wok or skillet, heat 2 tablespoons butter. Add onion, mushrooms, zucchini and carrots, and cook on medium-high heat until they reach desired tenderness.

In a small bowl, mix salt, ginger, garlic powder and pepper. Sprinkle some seasoning on vegetables, and set the rest aside. Remove vegetables from heat.

Use the same skillet, and heat 2 more tablespoons butter. Add shrimp and cook until no longer translucent; add soy sauce. Sprinkle with remaining seasoning mix.

Add last 2 tablespoons butter to skillet, and add pasta. Drizzle with toasted sesame oil. Cook until noodles are just heated, and add cooked vegetables. Toss and serve immediately.



*This month's web exclusive recipe:*

## One-Pot Goulash

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).*



# Simmer Down

Warm up with these flavorful soup-er stars

## Caldo de Pollo

- |   |  |    |   |
|---|--|----|---|
| 6 | carrots, sliced                                    | 2  | (10-ounce) cans diced tomatoes with green chiles (like Rotel)       |
| 1 | onion, chopped                                     |    | Fresh garlic to taste   |
| 3 | ears fresh corn on the cob, cut into 2-inch pieces |    | Salt and pepper to taste  |
| 3 | medium-sized new potatoes, cut into chunks         | 48 | ounces chicken stock  |
| 1 | large zucchini squash, sliced                      | 1  | rotisserie chicken, meat removed and shredded                       |
| 2 | stalks celery, chopped                             |    | Optional garnishes: avocado, cilantro, sliced jalapeño, lime wedges |
| 1 | pint cherry tomatoes                               |    |   |
| 1 | large tomato, diced                                |    |   |
| 2 | jalapeños, diced with seeds removed                |    |   |

Add all ingredients — except cooked chicken and optional garnishes — to a large soup pot. Bring to a boil, then simmer for about 40 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Add cooked chicken for final 5-10 minutes, cooking until warm. Serve with garnishes if desired.

*Notes: This is a Mexican-inspired chunky soup — big pieces of vegetables and meat you can see. I cheat and use rotisserie chicken. If you prefer using raw, bone-in chicken, cook it in the broth with vegetables. The corn, you just kind of eat like a Ferris wheel — spin and eat.*

*Celeste McMahon, Longview, Texas*



## Happy New Year Black-Eyed Pea Soup

- |     |  |     |   |
|-----|--|-----|---|
| 2   | pounds dried black-eyed peas (pre-soaking not required)      | 3   | cloves garlic, minced                   |
| 1/2 | pound ham, diced   | 4   | cups chicken or beef broth              |
| 1/2 | pound smoked sausage, sliced                                 | 1   | tablespoon prepared spicy mustard       |
| 1   | large onion, diced   | 1   | teaspoon salt                           |
| 1   | large red bell pepper, diced                                 | 2   | teaspoons black pepper, coarsely ground |
| 1   | large green bell pepper, diced                               | 1/2 | cup cooked bacon, crumbled              |
| 1   | (10-ounce) can diced tomatoes and green chilies (like Rotel) |     |   |

Add all ingredients to a large soup pot. Bring to a boil, then simmer about 40 minutes or until everything is cooked through and tender.

*Note: Origin of recipe: Wanita Blanks, my mother. Wanda Hammack, Salem*

## Broccoli Soup

- |     |  |   |  |
|-----|--|---|--|
| 1   | boil-in-bag packet instant rice                                      | 2 | (12.5-ounce) cans of chicken, drained  |
| 1   | (12-ounce) package chopped frozen broccoli                           | 1 | (8-ounce) package cream cheese         |
| 1   | stick butter   | 1 | pound processed cheese (like Velveeta) |
| 1   | medium onion, chopped  |   | Salt and pepper to taste               |
| 1   | teaspoon garlic, minced  |   |  |
| 1/2 | cup flour  |   |  |
| 1/2 | (32-ounce) box chicken broth, more if needed for desired consistency |   |  |

Follow package directions to cook broccoli and rice. Set aside. In a large soup pot over medium-high heat, melt butter; add onion and garlic, cooking until tender. Gradually stir in flour. Gradually stir in chicken broth and add more as needed; I prefer my soup thicker) and bring to a boil. Add cooked rice and broccoli, chicken, cream cheese, processed cheese, salt and pepper; simmer until cheeses melt and soup comes together.

*Note: This recipe was given to me by a friend. Joyce Hogue, Star City*

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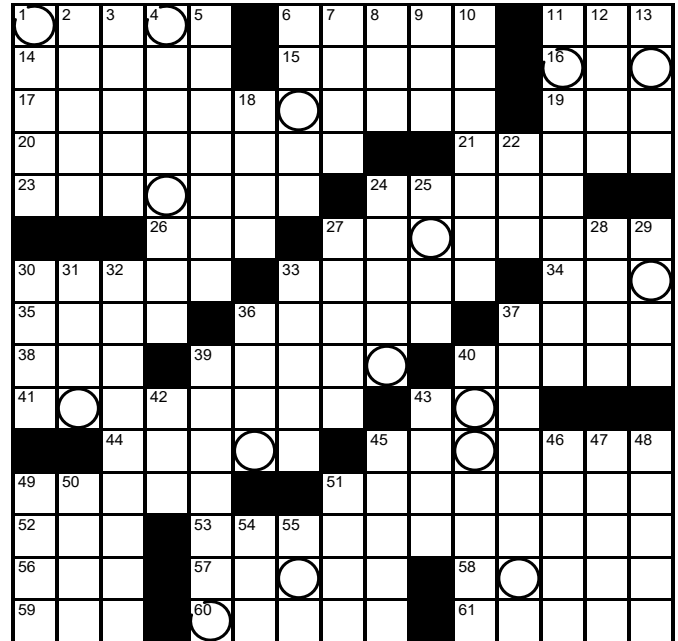


## CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### What's when this month? *By Victor Fleming*

#### ACROSS

- 1 Drum kit part
- 6 “\_\_\_ you!” (challenger’s taunt)
- 11 Airline to Oslo
- 14 Bring joy to
- 15 Alabama protest city
- 16 Domino dot
- 17 \_\_\_ Day (Jan. 8)
- 19 Anticavity org.
- 20 Dancers Fred and Adele
- 21 Award named for Poe
- 23 Escorted to the door
- 24 Change form
- 26 Wed. preceder
- 27 Viewing audience estimates, casually
- 30 Ancient Peruvians
- 33 Toss back and forth, with “about”
- 34 Playing marble
- 35 Marc, Nate or Roy
- 36 Available money
- 37 Eye annoyance
- 38 “Double Fantasy” artist Yoko
- 39 Louisiana hero
- 40 Costume
- 41 Mini-massages of the nape area
- 43 Be a chatterbox
- 44 Musical drama
- 45 More out of practice
- 49 Taco topper
- 51 Fanatical devotion
- 52 Disco ’70s, e.g.
- 53 \_\_\_ of Life Day (Jan. 22)
- 56 Be a thespian
- 57 Beast slain by Hercules
- 58 En \_\_\_ (as a group)
- 59 “Ain’t \_\_\_ Sweet?”
- 60 \_\_\_ no (kind of question)
- 61 Ballet bends



#### DOWN

- 1 “\_\_\_ My Brother” (1964 Simon & Garfunkel song)
- 2 Admission after a defeat
- 3 “The Outcasts of Poker Flat” author Bret
- 4 Resident of a large Georgia city
- 5 Repetitive and boring
- 6 “The best \_\_\_ to come”
- 7 Bank acct. entries
- 8 2001 Will Smith biopic
- 9 LBJ’s successor
- 10 With gusto
- 11 National \_\_\_ Day (Jan. 4)
- 12 44-Across with a “Triumphal March”
- 13 Argue (with)
- 18 T, on some tests
- 22 Baseball plays in which two are retired, for short
- 24 “Mork and \_\_\_”
- 25 Brit. lexicons
- 27 Shuffle alternatives
- 28 Yeas’ opposites
- 29 \_\_\_’Pea (Popeye’s adopted infant)
- 30 Relic depicting a holy figure
- 31 “\_\_\_ of your beeswax!”
- 32 National \_\_\_ Cake Day (Jan. 27)
- 33 John Brummett’s friend McCoy
- 36 Count in a quartet
- 37 Pretax figure
- 39 Overly didactic
- 40 Old-time lighter
- 42 GI mess-hall crews
- 43 Assured (abbr.)
- 45 Construction material made of steel and concrete
- 46 “Who’s there?” response
- 47 Having a chewed-up edge
- 48 Duren and Sandberg
- 49 Coral and Red
- 50 University of Texas quarterback Manning
- 51 Number of items in a null set
- 54 Appraiser’s skill
- 55 Mormon group, for short

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 41

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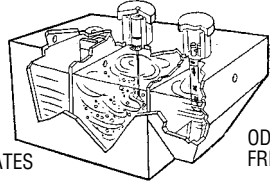
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# Big Banjo Pizza: A slice of history in Pine Bluff



STORY AND PHOTOS  
BY ROB ROEDEL

It is not often that a restaurant endures for 50 years, unless there is something magical about the place. Such is the case with Big Banjo Pizza of Pine Bluff.

Located on 28th Avenue, it is in the original location and has been family owned and operated since the beginning. Pine Bluff natives and brothers Richard “Dickie” Ratliff and Russell Lee Ratliff started their family business by taking out a small loan, using their status as U.S. Army veterans to gain the trust of a local



The famous Big Banjo Pizza dough is made daily, and toppings are the freshest ingredients available.



Excellent pizza and dedicated staff members, like Business Manager Amy Parker, are essential to Big Banjo’s enduring legacy.

banker. According to family, another brother, Joe Ratliff, was also involved in the restaurant. The brothers developed the Big Banjo recipes for the dough, sauce and other components that are still used today.

“The restaurant is near and dear to my heart, as it was opened years before I was born,” said family member Brandy Ratliff, the current owner of the legendary establishment. “When my father, Dickie, unexpectedly passed away, I was so moved by the respect shown for him and Big Banjo by the community.

Many of our employees are like family and have worked here for more than 20 years. We work to keep the restaurant going and thriving to honor

my dad.”

For 45 years, Dickie worked tirelessly to hold the high standards of the restaurant while giving back to the community, especially to local schools by donating to scholarship funds and sponsoring many pizza parties throughout the years, Brandy said.

Amy Parker, business manager for the restaurant and a member of C & L



The presentation of the popular and unique Taco Pizza includes packets of taco sauce under each slice.



## THE EATING ESSENTIALS

### Big Banjo Pizza

4208 W. 28th Ave.  
Pine Bluff  
(870) 879-3801  
bigbanjopizza.com



### Hours of Operation

Sunday-Saturday: 10 a.m.-10 p.m.

Electric Cooperative and First Electric Cooperative, has worked at the Pine Bluff institution for 10 years. She was an outstanding host during my visit.

Parker said the famous dough is made fresh daily, and the toppings consist of the freshest ingredients available. The pizza spices are proprietary, as they are a Big Banjo secret.

Big Banjo Pizza's extremely popular lunch buffet is available seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is also a dinner buffet served Sunday through Wednesday from 5 to 8 p.m. The customer-oriented team ensures piping-hot varieties of pizza are available during the buffet hours. During my visit, I sampled a few made-to-order items, but I must admit the buffet was very tempting.

The Cheese Sticks were fabulous. The thick crust was covered with a blend of cheeses and sprinkled with house-prepared seasoning that delivered a unique flavor. The sticks were served with homemade marinara sauce.

Big Banjo's signature pizza is the Taco Pizza, a work of culinary art due to a secret spice. This creation featured a thin, crispy crust, taco-seasoned ground beef, shredded lettuce, chopped tomatoes, chopped onions, shredded cheddar cheese and black olives. The presentation included



Family-owned Big Banjo Pizza of Pine Bluff has delighted patrons in the same location for 50 years.

individual packets of taco sauce under each slice. The unique taste is a favorite of adults who recall birthday parties, special dinners and other events at Big Banjo.

Pizza-oven-baked sandwiches are also a favorite. The Ham and Cheese Sandwich, featuring melted mozzarella was a nice option with great flavor; oven toasting made the sandwich surprisingly different.

The dessert pizzas are also a favorite of new and longtime fans. I sampled the Strawberry Pizza and highly recommend it along with the Chocolate Chip and Snickerdoodle. 🍪



Sandwiches like the Ham and Cheese are baked in Big Banjo's pizza ovens.

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

## CROSSWORD ANSWERS

*for puzzle on page 38*

S	E	L	I	P	R	O	S	E	S	H	E	
E	S	S	M	A	R	A	H	T	C	A	V	
N	O	I	T	I	B	R	C	E	L	V	E	R
Y	T	O	A	Z	E	V	S	A	L	S	A	V
I	E	R	S	T	U	A	R	O	K	E	O	N
S	E	I	S	G	B	O	P	O	B	O	N	O
E	T	Y	E	S	N	D	S	F	U	N	H	O
M	A	T	A	D	N	B	A	S	C	I	N	I
S	N	S	E	L	S	N	I	T	O	N	E	
S	H	P	M	O	U	T	O	N	E	E	S	
R	A	R	G	A	D	E	S	I	R	E	S	A
V	A	D	A	G	I	N	P	L	D	R	O	M
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**Winter Migration Birding**



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Pine Bluff,  
facebook.com/KingCottonHolidayClassic

**Dec. 31**

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Searcy, searcybeatsandeats.com

**Jan. 1**

**First Day Hikes**

Arkansas parks statewide,  
arkansasstateparks.com/first-day-hikes

**Jan. 2-29 (Dates vary)**

**Eagle Cruise**

Lake Dardanelle Park, arkansasstateparks.com/events/eagle-cruise

**Jan. 3-5**

**Antique Alley Arkansas**

Conway, antiquealleyarkansas.com

**Jan. 10-11**

**Offroad Products Expo**

Hot Springs, offroadproductsexpo.com

**Jan. 11**

**Winter Migration Birding**

Hot Springs, arkansasstateparks.com/parks/lake-catherine-state-park

**Jan. 11-12**

**Northwest Arkansas Comic Con**

Rogers, nwacomicon.com

**Jan. 15**

**MLK Challenge**

Little Rock, mosaicemplarscenter.com

**Jan. 16-19**

**Ozark Mountain Music Festival**

Eureka Springs,  
ozarkmountainmusicfestival.com

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**Arkansas Wedding Show**

Little Rock,  
facebook.com/arkweddingshow

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**Arkansas Big Buck Classic**

Little Rock, bigbuckclassic.com

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