



# SALT RIVER ELECTRIC

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

A Monthly Publication For The Members Of Salt River Electric

Zachary Epperson, Editor



## Remembering a hometown hero

# Salt River News

A monthly publication for the 55,321 members of the Salt River Electric Cooperative Corporation, serving Bullitt, Nelson, Spencer, and Washington County, plus portions of six surrounding counties, since 1937.

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## On Our Cover

Not only does the month of February feature President Abraham Lincoln's birthday, it also marks Black History Month. Turn to 26D for a story about one of Springfield's local heroes, who helped care for his community in a desperate time of need. Photo: Zach Epperson

# Scholarship application now available for area students

## Co-op's program revamped, new scholarship added

Supporting our local communities is something we're dedicated to, especially when it comes to helping the next generation of cooperative members. Since 1966, Salt River Electric has awarded annual scholarships to graduating seniors from around the cooperative's service territory who are taking the next steps in their education. From agriculture to business degrees, we've seen students pursue all sorts of goals.

In recent years, we've seen more and more students pursue other career opportunities, too, particularly those that don't require a college degree. That's why we're revamping our scholarship program and opening it up to more of our area seniors.

Beginning this month, graduating high school seniors who are planning to pursue a traditional degree at a college or university and graduating seniors who are planning to pursue a career through a trade or vocational program at an accredited school are encouraged to apply to receive one of eight \$1,000 scholarships.

Also new this year is the \$2,000 Larry Hicks Memorial Scholarship. Named in honor of



*Salt River Electric revamped its scholarship program, opening it to those pursuing vocational opportunities and naming a scholarship after former President/CEO Larry Hicks, above. Photo: Salt River Archives*

Salt River's former president/CEO, this scholarship will be awarded to a current college student from our service area who is actively pursuing a degree in accounting or finance at an accredited college or university.

Applications and related materials for both scholarships must be turned in by Friday, April 14 at any of our four offices to the attention of Diana Edwards. For more information and to find a scholarship application, head over to our website, [srelectric.com](http://srelectric.com).





*Tim Sharp, President & CEO*

# Who represents you?

If you're a fan of Jeff Foxworthy like I am, you'll likely remember his time hosting the game show, "Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader?" There, each episode challenged adults to see if they could answer questions that today's young students are expected to know.

In that spirit, here's a question for you that local social studies teachers are likely asking their students.

Can you name who represents you in Congress and in the Kentucky General Assembly?

The congressional question is probably easier, because Senators Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul have been familiar names for years. In the U.S. House, Salt River Electric is mostly represented by Brett Guthrie; some parts of Spencer County are represented by Thomas Massie.

Because of elections and redistricting every 10 years, it's possible some new names are on the list of those representing you in Frankfort and Washington. I encourage you to look in the center of this issue of *Kentucky Living* for the Kentucky Electric Cooperatives 2023 Legislative



*President/CEO Tim Sharp, left, director Joe Osbourne, 2nd District Rep. Brett Guthrie, Board Chair Linda West and Board Vice Chair David Stevens. Photo: Zach Epperson*

Guide. In addition to the handy maps of the Kentucky Senate and House, the guide lists the representative and senator for each county served by a cooperative.

Turn to page 10 of the Legislative Guide to learn more about who represents you in the Kentucky House and Senate.

Salt River stays in contact with our elected officials throughout the year to make sure they are aware of how legislation and regulations affect our ability to safely serve you with reliable electricity at the lowest cost possible. To be sure, these lawmakers are also being contacted by others with different agendas, that sometimes are not in the best interests of

cooperative members like you.

It is important for all of us to know who represents us and be ready to speak up when necessary. As a Salt River member, you are invited to add your name to the Kentucky electric co-op grassroots network on [RuralPowerKY.com](http://RuralPowerKY.com).

Elected officials trust electric cooperatives because they know we are led by and belong to the people we serve. They know we tell the truth and that they can rely on us, just as our members do, to be their trusted energy advisor.

Thanks to all of our elected leaders for your service. We know who you are!

# Hometown hero

If you take a drive down Main Street in Springfield, it may seem that not much has changed over the past few decades, even the past 100 years. The businesses that occupy the historic structures come and go, but the buildings remain.

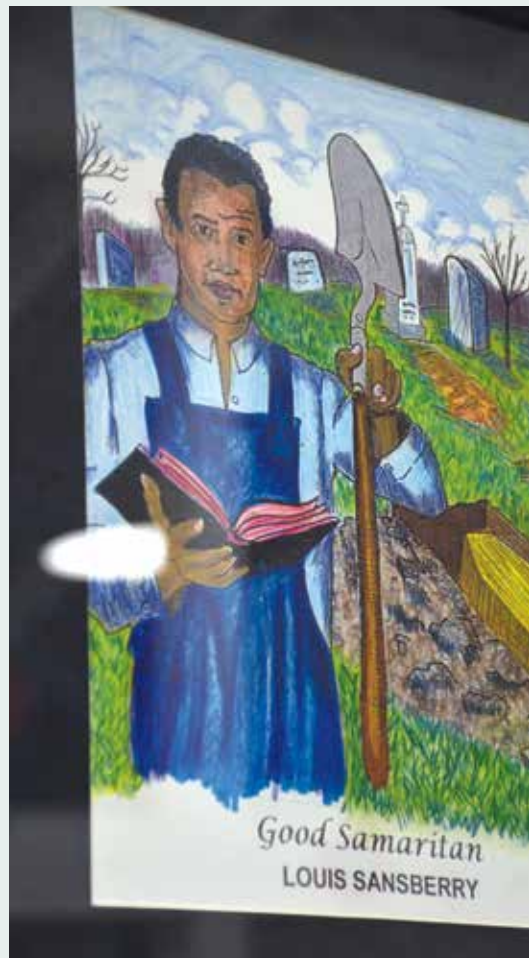
Most of them, anyway.

Nearly 180 years ago, the lot at the corner of Walnut and Main was home to a blacksmith's shop, owned by a man who might as well have been called the Angel of Springfield.

In 1833, Kentucky was paralyzed with an epidemic of cholera, a bacterial disease spread by drinking contaminated water. It entered the commonwealth in places like Louisville after traveling up the river, then quickly spread elsewhere as residents fled their affected homes and

communities. Eventually, the deadly disease made its way to Springfield, then home to around 620 people. In her book, *It Happened in Kentucky*, Mimi O'Malley writes that in the first day of the outbreak in the city, three people contracted the disease and died. The next day, five more died, and 10 on the third day. By the end of 1833, it's believed that 80 people had died from the illness. Facing such a fatal illness, it's no surprise the town's residents quickly fled, which brings us to the subject of this story.

Louis Sansbury was a 27-year-old man enslaved by George Sansbury, a hotel owner. As the disease quickly spread throughout the area, George prepared to flee the disease-stricken community, giving Louis the key to his hotel

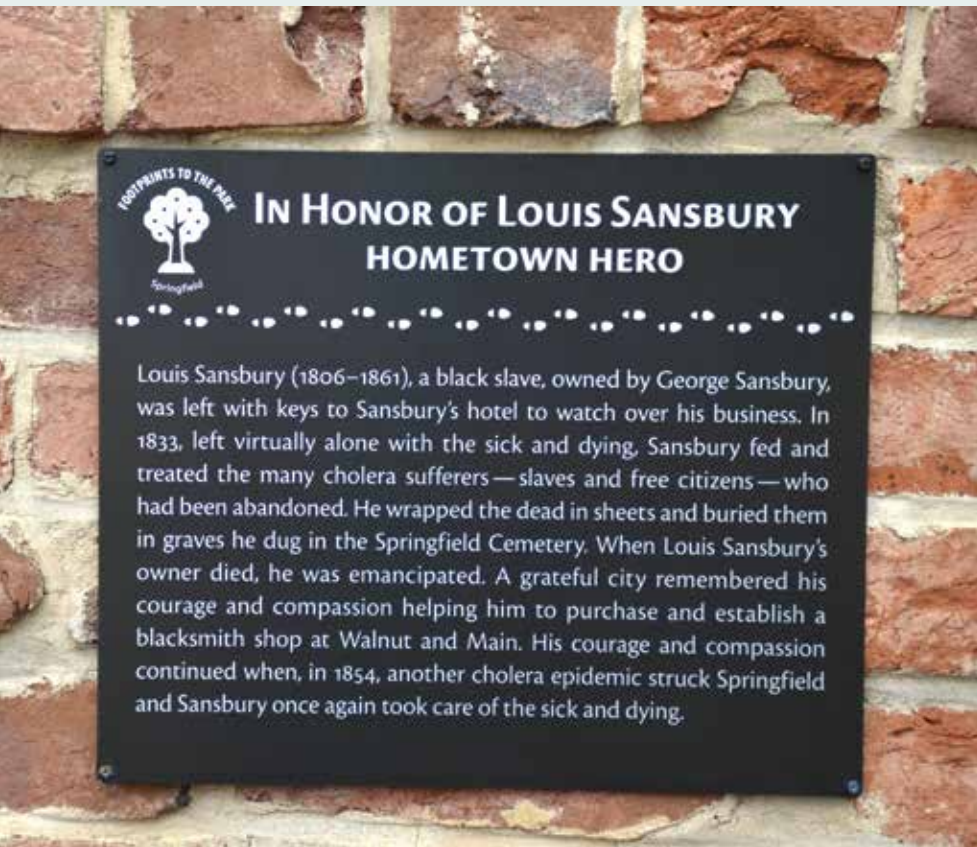


and asking him to watch over it while he was gone. Soon, more of the town's business owners and shopkeepers also fled, leaving their keys in the hands of Sansbury, who promised to watch over their shops as well.

Louis kept his word, taking care of the shops left to him, as well as caring for the sick and dying residents who stayed behind. He was not alone in his mission of caring for those around him. A cook named Matilda Sims also stayed in Springfield, helping Louis feed and care for the sick.

To this day, it is not known why Louis and Matilda did not

*Left, an information plaque near the site of Sansbury's former business.*







Left, artwork commemorating Sansbury at the Washington County Public Library. Above, a stone monument honoring the heroism of Sansbury at Springfield's Cemetery Hill. Photos: Zach Epperson

become infected with cholera themselves, or why Louis did not simply ignore the instructions of his enslaver and flee north to freedom.

The book *Pioneer History of Washington County, Kentucky*, written by former community historian Orval W. Baylor, as well as the book by O'Malley, offer insights into how Louis and Matilda cared for the town. When death struck, Louis and Matilda would prepare the bodies for burial, placing them in graves that Louis had dug on the sides of the road leading to Springfield's Cemetery Hill.

His compassion and care made him a local hero to the residents

of Springfield. The town showed their gratitude to Louis in 1845. After George's death, the town purchased Louis' freedom, and helped him establish his own businesses—first, a stable and livery, which they stocked with horses, and eventually a blacksmith shop at the same location.

According to a display at the Washington County Public Library, Louis was deeded a large house on High Street in 1853 for \$75. The house still stands today, currently undergoing renovations.

Louis' work tending to cholera patients would not be completed, as a second wave of the deadly disease hit Springfield in 1854. Just as he had done 21 years

before, Louis stayed in Springfield as others fled.

Louis Sansbury died on April 12, 1861, a 55-year-old former slave turned free man. His care of the sick and dying residents of Springfield through two cholera outbreaks is remembered in several places around town: a drawing featured at the library, a plaque secured to a brick wall near the site of his former business and a monument on Cemetery Hill with this inscription: "This monument is dedicated to those who lost their lives during the cholera epidemics of 1833 and 1854, and Louis Sansbury, a black man who cared for and buried the victims in these approximately 106 unmarked graves."



*One of the powerful advantages of being a members-first utility is that we're always here, with a smile, to help our fellow neighbors. Photo: Wade Harris*

## Our common bond

These days, there's a lot of talk about the differences that divide us. We've probably all heard more than we care to on that subject.

But what about those things that unite us? Membership with Salt River Electric is a fine example of the powerful benefits that come from having a common bond.

Consumer-members of Salt River share more than affordable electricity. We also benefit from long-held cooperative values that chart a positive course for our member-owned company and those it serves. As one of Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, we value:

■ **Integrity.** Members first. Every day. That's the power of membership. As a not-for-profit electric cooperative, we deliver electricity to members at the cost of service. This differs from investor-owned utilities, which give out profits to their investors rather than those they serve.

■ **Accountability.** This electric co-op belongs to you, our members. Decisions made benefit those in our community because co-op business is conducted by a local board of directors elected by the members.

■ **Innovation.** Salt River Electric uses state-of-the-art technology and offers cutting-edge programs that meet the needs and expectations of our members. We're proud to offer programs such as automatic bank draft payments, lightning-quick mobile outage reporting and renewable programs such as Cooperative Solar and Envirowatts.

■ **Community.** We are committed to improving the quality of life in the communities where our members live, work and play. It's the reason we donate time, energy and resources to charities, schools and community events and take a leadership role in economic development projects. Sponsoring war veterans for the Honor Flight trip

## Making an impact

Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives are helping build stronger communities through economic development initiatives. In 2022, these efforts helped bring \$2.5 billion in new investments and create an estimated 1,750 jobs. Since 2015, more than \$11 billion in new investment and 16,500 new jobs have been created in commonwealth communities served by electric cooperatives.

to Washington, D.C., and taking an active role in supporting the Special Olympics Kentucky Summer Games are just two examples of our commitment to community.

These values guide Salt River like a compass. They set the course for powering our communities and empowering our consumer-members. These values are the bond that makes us stronger, and better, together.



## Safety Matters

# Operate space heaters with care

Many Kentucky families rely on portable space heaters for wintertime warmth. While space heaters do provide some additional warmth in the cold winter months, because they're both equally inefficient as heat sources and expensive to run, we recommend not using them unless they're a necessary heat source.



PROSTOSIET/ADOBE STOCK

Though they can help keep your space toasty, portable heaters can be dangerous if used carelessly. Salt River urges you to follow these safety rules to avoid an electrical fire or other accident.

**DON'T leave it unattended.** Don't leave a space heater running while you're out of the room, away from home or sleeping. Unplug it when it's not in use.

**DO use approved models.** Purchase only Underwriter Laboratories (UL) or Electrical Testing Lab (ETL) lab-tested and approved heaters.

**DON'T use gas or kerosene indoors.** Gas-fueled space heaters not vented to the outside can release harmful gases that can cause illness or even death. Electric space heaters are the safe choice for indoor use because they don't emit carbon monoxide or other pollutants.

**DO plug directly into wall outlets.** To avoid overloading circuits, don't plug heaters into power strips, surge protectors or extension cords.

**DO be mindful of placement.** Keep heaters at least 3 or 4 feet away from flammable items such as furniture, blankets, clothing, towels, curtains, mattresses and bedding. Don't place them on throw rugs, furniture or countertops.

**DON'T forget smoke and carbon monoxide detectors.** Install interconnected alarms—which will all go off at the same time—inside and outside each bedroom on every level of your home, and test them monthly.

**DO keep kids away.** Teach your children about the dangers of touching a heater. If they won't remain a safe distance away, remove the space heater.

Be cautious if you decide to use an electric space heater to stay cozy and safe in the cold months.

## Don't let emergency heat inflate your bill

You've heard it before: a winter storm is on the way with the potential for heavy snow or ice, and anyone with a heat pump should switch their unit to emergency heat to prevent damage. Just this past December, social media posts circulated detailing the same information. But what exactly is emergency heat, and why should you be careful when using it?

Emergency heat is a feature found in homes that use a heat pump, and is usually reliant on electricity. When a unit is switched to emergency heat, the compressor and heat pump are turned off and the unit's electric heating strips are energized. Essentially, it becomes one big space heater for your home.

Sounds pretty inefficient, so why use it?

Well, as the name implies, you should only manually switch it on in emergency situations as a last resort. An outdoor unit should defrost itself in times of winter weather, so if you notice that heavy amounts of ice have frozen to the outdoor unit, it's probably a good idea to switch the emergency heat on to avoid potential damage to the heat pump's outdoor unit.

However, if you decide to switch on emergency heat in a non-emergency situation, you could be costing yourself on your next bill, as the electric heat strips use a large amount of kilowatts to heat your entire home. Occasionally during the winter months, we'll find that some members who experienced above-average usage had simply forgotten to switch off their emergency heat.

Using emergency heat in non-emergency situations can possibly wear down the unit, leading to problems with the feature later on when it's really needed.

So next time you're scrolling through Facebook and a post tells you to switch to emergency heat, consider the facts first.



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Our offices will be closed Monday,  
February 20, in observance of  
Presidents Day.

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On Twitter? Give us a follow! @SaltRiverCoop



## Congratulations to these 12 members on winning an \$85 bill credit in 2022!

**January:**  
William Miles

**February:**  
Michael Vencion

**March:**  
Greg Obst

**April:**  
Jeffrey Votaw

**May:**  
Gregory Elswick

**June:**  
Richard Dawson

**July:**  
Oatis H. Hall

**August:**  
Joanne Spaulding

**September:**  
Julie Morrow

**October:**  
Whitney Schuler

**November:**  
Joseph Weis

**December:**  
Gabrielle Haynes



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