

SALT RIVER NEWS

A monthly publication for the members of Salt River Electric | JULY 2025



www.srelectric.com



Message from the President

Keeping the streak alive

It seems appropriate that our country's Independence Day celebration and the International Day of Cooperatives fall on consecutive dates this year. Though it might lack the hotdogs and fireworks, the July 5 observance for co-ops honors independence, too.

"Autonomy and Independence" is one of the seven principles by which Salt River Electric and other cooperatives operate. This principle is fundamental to who we are as a co-op: an independent organization controlled by members, free from outside influence. It empowers a special brand of self-determination and resilience that we Kentuckians know well.

At the most basic level, this principle shows plainly that Salt River is controlled by you, the members who actually use the co-op's services, not by outside, unaffiliated interests or shareholders. We remain independent from those outside entities by controlling our own cooperative's destiny.

During our annual meeting last month, I mentioned that cooperatives exist to serve the interests and needs of their members. This is where "self-help" comes in. We're here to help one another meet a shared need—access to safe, reliable and affordable power—through



a set of shared values. And it all began when local people banded together to improve the quality of life in this corner of the Bluegrass State.

The principle of autonomy and independence demonstrates the importance of democratic, member-owned control and maintaining our cooperative autonomy when we enter into agreements or raise capital. This ensures our cooperative values always take priority in every business transaction.

By maintaining that independent "streak," and keeping our governance in

our owners' hands, Salt River is in a better position to do business according to our values. We're able to put our members' and community's needs first as we work together to maintain a strong, sustainable, livable local economy.

Enjoy your Independence Day celebrations, on both the 4th and 5th!



**SALT RIVER
ELECTRIC**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

*President and CEO
Tim Sharp*





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Salt River News

A monthly publication for the 57,405 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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Announcements



We're committed to the communities we serve. Help us by donating much-needed items to the Ronald McDonald House.

We're collecting donations in July at our office.

Learn more at www.facebook.com/saltriverelectric.

*Thank you for supporting Kentucky families
who have sick children.*



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Office Closure:



Our offices will be closed Friday,
July 4, for Independence Day.

BRAD PICTADORE STOCK

Salt River celebrates Member Appreciation Day and Annual Meeting

On Monday, June 2, Salt River Electric welcomed 3,305 members to all four offices once again for our yearly Member Appreciation Day. The drive-thru event, now in its fifth year, was a great success, bringing co-op employees and members together for a picture-perfect day.

"I tell everyone that this is my favorite event of the year, and when the day arrives, it's easy to see why," Manager of Communications Zach Epperson says. "Of course, we see members all throughout the year in our offices, but this day is unique in that we're not talking about bills, or usage, or anything else. We're simply catching up with neighbors, old friends—the people who live in the communities we serve."

This year, Salt River members who attended received a bucket, lightbulbs and a bag of kettle corn, as well as other giveaway items. Members also were registered for gift card giveaways, and 40 members were selected. They are:

Nelson District

Joe Logan
Rhonda Spalding
Scott B. Bickett
Jimmy Cross

Burris Rarden
Sharday Sheckles
Leona Bratley
James R. Keeling
Thomas L. Dewitt
Rhonda E. Grugin

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Eric M. Walls
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John M. Sizemore
Donald R. Mathis, Jr.
David A. Shelburne
Larry Welch
Sandra L. Voight
Joseph L. Green
David Allen Norton
Loretta Ann Riker
Larry W. Robinson

Washington District

Judy Loveless
Richard J. Kidwell
Ken Begley
Michael Reynolds
Leo Boblitt
Martin C. Burns
Shirley C. Stone
Kyle Tingle
John McFadden
James Aaron Spalding

At 5 p.m., the co-op's board of directors gathered at the main office for the 87th annual meeting, streamed live on Facebook and YouTube. Elaine Hammond, chair of the independent election committee, announced that both Darrell Tingle and David Stevens, who ran unopposed in their respective board elections, will remain on the board for another four-year term.

"It's a tremendous honor to once again have the opportunity to represent the members of Spencer County," Stevens said.

"I'm truly blessed to serve on this board and represent my fellow Washington County members," Tingle said.



Photos: Wade Harris

Pearl's Memory Babies

Dolls help return a light to dementia patients

The Alzheimer's was getting worse.

Despite their best efforts, Sandy Cambron and her husband, Wayne, had to make a difficult decision: Wayne's mother, Pearl, would be moved to a care facility specifically for those suffering from Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

"We tried, like everyone, to keep her at home, but it became unsafe for her," Sandy explains.

Once there, Pearl withdrew, hardly leaving her room or talking with others. No amount of coloring books or stuffed animals could get her to engage. Until Sandy came up with an idea.

"Why don't we buy her a baby doll?"

The effect was immediate. In an instant, the mother of five connected with the doll, keeping it with her no matter where she went.



"We're not doctors; we can't cure it," Sandy says. "But we can do our part in helping."

Dinner? Sitting in her lap.

Surgery? It found a place at her side on the operating table.

"She never let it go," Sandy says. "She would talk to the baby, rock it. We saw her kind of come back to life, as much as she could, because of the baby."

Spreading the joy

Slowly, the couple bought the other residents baby dolls and stuffed animals, each with the same effect.

"I was making some extra money, so we took all that money and bought all of those residents a doll or [stuffed animal] pet," Wayne says.

All it took was a simple photo, taken by a friend, that changed their outreach into something they never would have dreamed of.

"We didn't know anything about it [social media]," Wayne says. "So, she takes a picture of [the dolls and residents], posts it on her Facebook account, and within three days there were 10,000 views. Within five days, there were 300,000 views."

"It went viral," Sandy chimes in with a smile.

As the views grew, so too did the number of comments and messages from individuals all across the country asking how they could help.

"My son-in-law said we need to start a GoFundMe page," she says.

The amounts were astounding.

"Shocked, totally shocked," she says.

"It's a God thing, I believe. As long as God keeps the donations coming, we will keep [the dolls] going out."

A small but mighty operation

With small, humble beginnings, you might think that Pearl's Memory Babies would grow into an industrial-level operation. After all, Sandy, Wayne and their helpers get messages not only



Sandy Cambron holds two of the many dolls that are routinely given away to the patients they visit.



For nearly 10 years, Sandy and her husband, Wayne Cambron, have led Pearl's Memory Babies, named after Wayne's mother, Pearl.



A team of family and friends carries out the mission of Pearl's Memory Babies, visits facilities all over the United States and corresponds with others across the world.

Though the work of preparing each delivery is tiring, the effect had on recipients makes it worthwhile. "You get so in to it," Sandy says.

from all over the United States, but from around the world.

"We actually corresponded with people in Australia," she says. "We've sent babies to England. We've sent several deliveries to Canada."

But even with the amount of donations and the level of interest they receive, it's still a hands-on family operation, with Sandy, Wayne, family and friends preparing each delivery or shipment.

"Our daughter comes down every single Saturday and helps me," Sandy says. "We wrap the babies, dress them and get them ready for shipping."

Instead of buildings or warehouses of dolls and stuffed animals, the Cambron home has become the assembly line and warehouse of sorts for the operation.

"If you could see my house," she laughs. "We have babies in every room.

I have to reserve our bed, because I can't fill up my husband's side."

"I have to fight," Wayne says with a smile and a laugh.

Making a lasting impression

Though Pearl passed away from Alzheimer's in 2009, her memory has been kept alive through the outreach of Pearl's Memory Babies. In her office, Sandy keeps a map of the United States, placing a pin on each city they visit. The mission remains the same everywhere they go, but the reactions they receive make the long drives worth it.

"When we get done, it's kind of draining, but in a good way," Sandy says, "because you get so in to it."

After a quick scroll of their Facebook page, where they keep followers informed of their deliveries, it's easy to see why. When the wagon

is rolled into a facility, and a baby doll or puppy is handed to a resident with some form of dementia, the light seems to return to their eyes. Those who are emotionless become emotional again. And even the voices that have faded with the disease slowly return, if only for a moment.

On a particular trip, Sandy presented a doll to a resident who had never spoken with staff at the facility. After handing the woman a doll of her own, Sandy and the nurse heard something: a soft hum from the resident cradling her doll, almost as if she was rocking it to sleep with a lullaby.

The woman's nurse said, through tears, that the patient had never spoken, Sandy recalls: "As long as she's been here, we've never heard her voice."

"We're not doctors; we can't cure it," Sandy says. "But we can do our part in helping."

Stock the shelves:

Item collection for the Ronald McDonald House Wish List Drive

This month, Salt River Electric is once again collecting items for the Ronald McDonald House's Wish List Drive—and you can help.

For many years, Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have partnered with the two Ronald McDonald House locations in Kentucky—located in Louisville and Lexington. In an effort to help these locations stock up on supplies, we're asking members some of the following items in to donate to the Louisville house. Those include:

- Toilet paper
- Disinfectant spray
- 4-gallon and 13-gallon trash bags
- Heavy duty paper plates

A full list of Wish List items can be found by going to srelectric.com/wishlist.

Once collected, the items will be taken to the Louisville house in August. Last year, more than \$18,000 of much-needed items were donated for the Ronald McDonald Houses in Lexington and Louisville. Since 2017, co-ops have collected items from employees and the public.

The Ronald McDonald Houses, which are not-for-profit homes that enable families to be near their hospitalized children, can be used by any family whose child is receiving treatment at a medical facility near the house. That means a family



ZACH EPPERSON



Members of Kentucky's Touchstone Energy Cooperative's routinely volunteer at the Ronald McDonald Houses in Lexington and Louisville for spring cleanup, Christmas decorating and for the annual Wish List Drive. Photo: Tim Webb

from Washington County could be in Louisville for their child, and could use the houses' facilities.

Commitment to community is one of the cooperatives' core values, and helping families of sick children fits the bill perfectly.

"Our cooperatives are proud to support this organization and the priceless service they provide to families during their times of greatest need," says Manager of Communications Zach Epperson.

Salt River Electric will collect items through the month of July at all four of our office locations. Those are:

- 111 W. Brashear Ave, Bardstown
- 6260 Hwy 44E, Shepherdsville
- 127 Settlers Center, Taylorsville
- 805 Bardstown Rd, Ste 4, Springfield

Donations will be collected from July 1-31. Find more information at srelectric.com/wishlist.

Eliminate electrical hazards on the water

With 45 major lakes and more navigable miles of waterways than any other state except Alaska, Kentucky is a boater's paradise. If you moor your boat at a private dock, take steps to prevent electrical hazards.

"Outdated wiring and a lack of routine maintenance on docks can cause situations where electricity 'leaks' into the water," says Drew Akridge, safety and training coordinator at Salt River. "If someone swims into that energized water, the result can be electric shock drowning."

In Kentucky, a "boat dock" is legally defined as "a structure that protrudes into a body of water for the purpose of mooring a boat or for other water-related recreation and that is connected to an electrical power source in any manner." Adhere to these steps for accident prevention at private docks:

- Install ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers on circuits feeding electricity to the dock. Test GFCIs monthly.
- Use bonding jumpers to connect all metal parts of the dock to a ground rod on the shore. When a dock is properly grounded, any electrical charge occurring on it will trigger the GFCI to shut off power.
- All electrical installations should be performed by a licensed electrician familiar with marine codes and standards and inspected at least once a year.
- Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make your neighbors aware of the need for safety inspections and maintenance.

Take these simple steps to bring your boat dock up to safety standards to make your boating adventures as safe as they are fun.



GIULIO BENZINADORE STOCK

Mind your thermostat settings

One of the easiest ways to manage your energy bill in the summer is to be smart about your thermostat. Raising your thermostat by just a few degrees can lead to noticeable savings, and combining it with good cooling habits makes your home more comfortable and efficient.

Try these strategies:

- Set your thermostat as high as you're comfortable with when you are home and higher when you're away.
- Use a programmable thermostat or smart thermostat to automatically adjust settings when you're sleeping or out of the house.
- Don't set the thermostat lower than usual to try to cool your home faster—it won't work, and it wastes energy.
- Pair your thermostat with ceiling fans to circulate cool air and make higher temperatures feel more comfortable.
- Keep internal heat sources like ovens and lamps away from the thermostat.
- Make gradual temperature adjustments rather than big swings.

If your air conditioner seems to run constantly, consider having it serviced. A well-maintained system cools more efficiently. Smart thermostat use, combined with seasonal maintenance and good airflow, can make a significant difference in your energy bill this July.



SCOTT HABERMANN/ADOBE STOCK

Celebrating our country – and our co-op

It's almost Independence Day, and across the state, folks are planning cook-outs, fireworks and family get-togethers. Behind the scenes, there's even more planning than usual—because the countdown has begun for July 4, 2026. Next year will mark the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence.

The next 12 months are full of opportunities to explore and celebrate American history, our founding ideals and the sacrifices that have made our nation great.

That's why, in this issue of *Kentucky Living*, we want to invite you to share on a very special topic: **what makes you proud to be an American?** It might be a story, a memory or a photo; but whatever it is, we want to hear from you. *Kentucky Living* will collect and review your responses, and next July, many of them will be shared online at KentuckyLiving.com, and some will be printed in the magazine. Learn more about this special opportunity at KentuckyLiving.com/250.

In a nation of 340 million people—and a state of 4.5 million—each of us will answer that question a little differently. But it's no coincidence that many of the same things that make us proud to be Americans are also things we love about our co-op family. Here at Salt River Electric, every voice matters. In the communities we call home, we look out for our neighbors. When tragedy or disaster strike, we learn once again just



how much we rely on each other—and we celebrate sacrifices for the common good.

It's not hard to find examples of service and self-sacrifice in our communities. We see it in our first responders, who put themselves in harm's way, and in our teachers, who invest so much in the next generation. We see it in our lineworkers, who brave

challenging conditions to maintain and restore power. And we see it daily in you, our consumer-members, through countless acts of kindness and generosity. The examples could go on and on.

What is greatness, after all? It's not prestige, wealth or power. True greatness is found in serving others.

Our co-op community makes us proud to be Americans. How about you?

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Spencer County

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