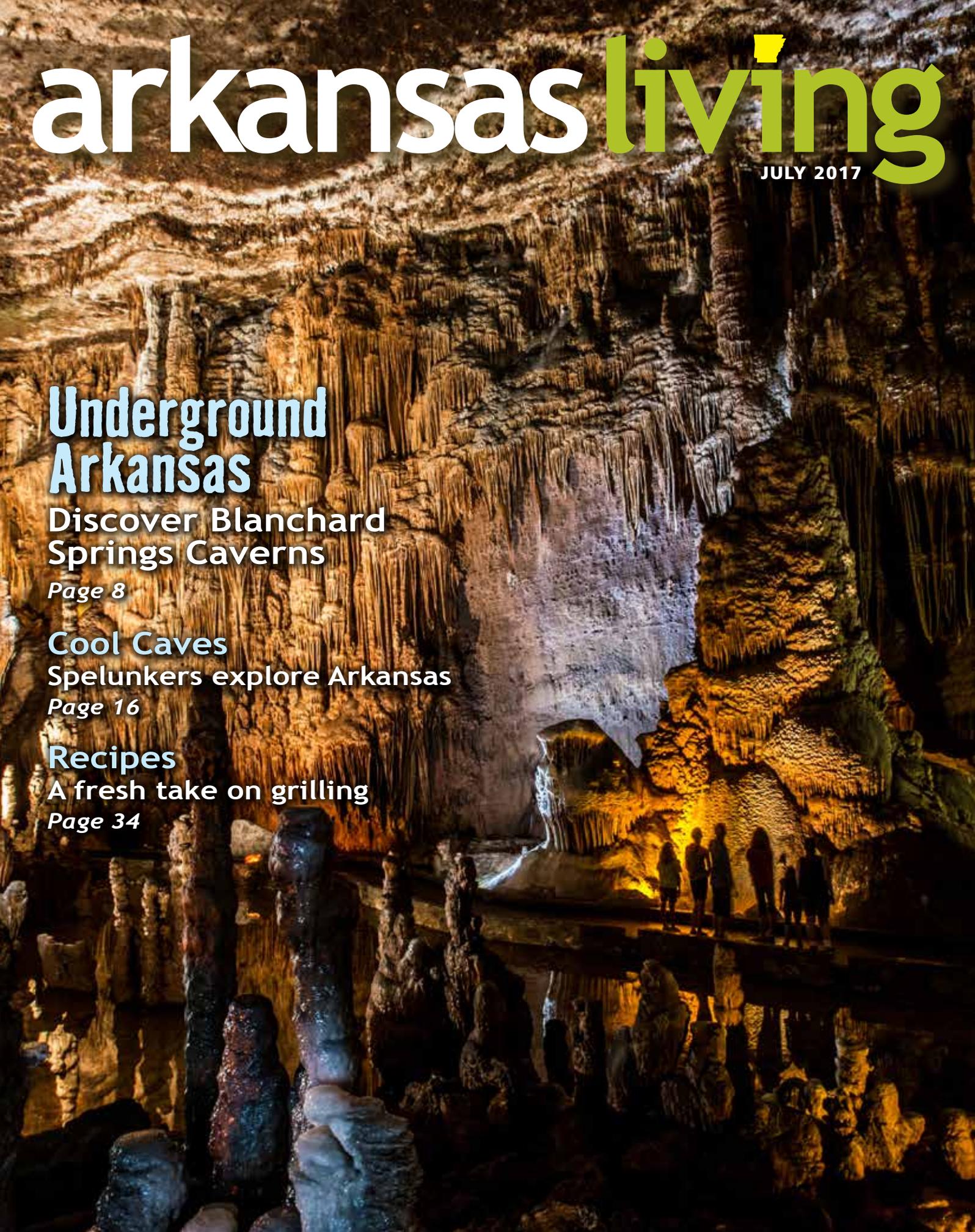


# arkansas **living**



JULY 2017

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At Blanchard Springs Caverns, tourists are dwarfed by the natural beauty of underground Arkansas.

*Photo by Casey Crocker*



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Arkansas Living (ISSN 0048-878X) (USPS 472-960) is published monthly by Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc., 1 Cooperative Way, Little Rock, AR 72209.

Periodicals postage paid at Little Rock, AR, and at additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Arkansas Living, P.O. Box 510, Little Rock, AR 72203-0510  
Members: Please send name of your cooperative with mailing label.

An Official Publication of



Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.

- Duane Highley President and CEO
- Sandra Hochstetter Byrd Vice President, Public Affairs & Member Services
- Sheila Yount Editor
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501.570.2312

Subscription Price:  
\$7.00 per year for non-members

Member of Arkansas Press Association



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BY SHEILA YOUNT

Besides staying inside a nice air-conditioned home, many people resort to the lake to cool off in the summer. While that's a great option, we have another idea. Why not visit one of Arkansas' cool caves on your summer vacation?

Rob Moritz, a Little Rock-based writer, recently toured Blanchard Springs Caverns and shares his experience in the cover story, which begins on page 8. He also interviewed caving enthusiasts about their hobby in the "Cool Caves: Spelunkers explore Arkansas," feature on page 16.

Summer is the best time to start up the grill, and for a new twist, try some healthy and tasty recipes from the Mushroom Council on page 34. If an old-fashioned juicy hamburger and onion rings are more to your liking, leave the cooking to the East End Café, the topic of this month's Let's Eat feature (page 40).

Another way to beat the heat in your home is to change out your old incandescent lightbulbs to cool, energy-efficient LEDs. Bret Curry has the lighting scoop in the Smart Energy Tips column on page 24. He also urges you to enter the Energy Efficiency Makeover Contest, where you will have the chance to win a lighting kit of up to 58 General Electric (GE) energy-efficient LED

bulbs valued at about \$400. To enter, fill out the entry form/business reply card included in this month's Arkansas Living or go enter online at [www.aecc.com/home-makeover-application](http://www.aecc.com/home-makeover-application).

To learn more about what's going on at your local electric co-op, be sure to check out your local co-op's pages (pages 22-23), now marked with a green "My Co-op" tab to help you locate them more easily. You receive this magazine as part of your electric co-op membership. The electric co-ops' business principles call for keeping members informed about issues related to the electric co-ops and the electric industry. In addition, we show our commitment to our communities, another co-op principle, by promoting all things Arkansas! We are proud to be your local energy partners, and we are honored to bring you this magazine to showcase our wonderful state.

Until next month, stay cool, fly your flag, grill something good and enjoy your vacation.

Happy reading.

Sheila Yount  
editor@aeci.com

# A close call

BY DUANE HIGHLEY, PRESIDENT AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

*Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation, Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.*

When I think of close calls, I remember my visit to the Ajax Café. The Ajax Café was a pleasant seafood restaurant on a quiet little bay near Seattle, Wash. Most visitors enjoyed a nice meal and maybe some live music. The best thing I can say is, I survived my visit.

Traveling on a family vacation, my wife and I had looked forward to our dinner at the Ajax. We arrived early for our reservation, and one of our young children was fussy. I took him outside to look at the boats as we waited for our food to arrive. I noticed a man nearby had pulled his sailboat out of the water onto a trailer and was slowly pulling forward. As he kept moving our direction, I noticed far too late that he had left the mast up on his sailboat and was about to make contact with a high-voltage power line overhead. As the mast hit the line, I gripped my toddler son and ran. In less than a second the power line we had been standing under hit the ground, sparking and hissing. I hate to imagine the outcome if we had not noticed the accident and run out of the way. In this event, the worst thing that happened was the delay to our meal because of the resulting power outage. But, hundreds of people each year are not so fortunate.

Despite continued efforts to educate people

in electrical safety, accidents such as the one I witnessed continue to occur. It is easy to forget the reach of long items like masts and ladders, and the consequences can be deadly.

A new concern as we enter the summer months is dock safety. Many people enjoy the advantages of an electrified dock, but all too often these systems fall into disrepair. If the wiring is damaged or installed incorrectly the electrical system can appear to operate normally, but the water surrounding the dock can become inadvertently electrified, giving no warning to the danger. For this reason no one should ever swim near an electrified dock. Don't

take the risk; let your children swim somewhere else.

Sometimes a summer storm knocks down a power line. Remember, you can't tell by looking

if that line is dead. Never assume it is. If you see a line on the ground, call 911 or your local utility, and let trained linemen resolve the danger.

My close call ended well, but for all too many people that is not the case. Electricity is the greatest servant of man, but it can also be very dangerous. If you see a hazardous situation developing, say something. Let's work together to help each other stay alert and avoid the dangers of accidental electrical contact. ■

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**It is easy to forget the reach of long items like masts and ladders, and the consequences can be deadly.**

## Be safe as you celebrate July 4th

The National Council on Fireworks Safety (NCFS) encourages consumers to review all safety tips before purchasing and using fireworks.

“Every year, safety is our first priority as families begin to plan their Fourth of July festivities. While fireworks are the most iconic and festive way to celebrate our country’s independence, there can be dangers if fireworks are used improperly,” said Nancy Blogin, president of the National Council on Fireworks Safety. “Consumers should purchase fireworks from a reputable company or fireworks stand, check local and state laws for fireworks use in your city, and check all instructions on fireworks packaging before use.”



The fireworks industry has made great progress in improving firework quality and reducing injuries; however, there is still work to be done as the vast majority of fireworks-related injuries in the U.S. each year result from the misuse of fireworks.

There has been an increase in injuries among youth that have used fireworks in videos unsafely to impress their friends or to get a laugh. Parents are urged to help put a stop to using fireworks in viral videos by encouraging safety and by explaining that the improper use of fireworks can produce serious injuries or even death.

“We have a collective responsibility as a community to put a stop to improper fireworks usage. If you see something that is unsafe, say something or report it to your local fire or police department,” said Blogin.

The NCFS’s mission is to educate the public on the safe use of fireworks and encourage consumers to follow the following safety tips before engaging in fireworks celebrations this Fourth of July:

1. Obey all local laws regarding the use of fireworks.
2. Know your fireworks; read the cautionary labels and performance descriptions before igniting.
3. A responsible adult should supervise all firework activities. Never give fireworks to children.
4. Alcohol and fireworks do not mix. Save your alcohol for after the show.
5. Wear safety glasses when shooting fireworks.
6. Light one firework at a time and then quickly move away.
7. Do not hold a fireworks item in your hand.
8. Use fireworks outdoors in a clear area, away from buildings and vehicles.
9. Never relight a “dud” firework. Wait 20 minutes and then soak it in a bucket of water before you discard it.
10. After purchasing fireworks, always store them in a cool, dry place.
11. When using fireworks always have a connected hose, bucket of water or other water source nearby.
12. Never carry fireworks in your pocket or shoot them into metal or glass containers.
13. Do not experiment with homemade fireworks.
14. Dispose of spent fireworks by wetting them down and placing them in a metal trash can away from any building or combustible materials until the next day.
15. Ensure all pets and animals are away from fireworks noise.
16. With the rise in stress-related disorders affecting American service men and women, pay special consideration to individuals who may be sensitive to loud noises in proximity to your fireworks show.

*The National Council on Fireworks Safety is a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating the public about the safe and responsible enjoyment of consumer fireworks. For more information, visit [www.fireworkssafety.org](http://www.fireworkssafety.org).*

## Avoid deadly electric shock

Whether at home or on vacation, boating, fishing and swimming can be fun ways to enjoy the great outdoors. The Energy Education Council wants to help you keep this time a safe time and is sharing the message, "If you feel a shock, swim away from the dock," to help keep people safe from a hidden hazard called electric shock drowning (ESD).



Electric current near boat docks can be deadly.

As Molly Hall, executive director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program explains, "If an electric current is present in fresh water and someone swims into that energized water, the result can be electric shock drowning. If the electrical current is strong enough, the electric shock can cause muscle paralysis, which leaves the affected individual unable to swim to safety. It's a particularly dangerous hazard because it's impossible to tell by sight if the water is energized."

Outdated wiring and a lack of proper safety equipment and routine maintenance on docks and boats can cause such situations where electricity "leaks" into the water. According to the Electric Shock Drowning Prevention Association, between 10 and 15 milliamps, which is just 1/50th of the wattage of a 60-watt light bulb, can cause drowning. They also report that many ESD deaths have occurred around private docks and boats plugged into shore power while docked.

Safe Electricity, along with the American Boat and Yacht Council and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers/National Electrical Contractors Association, recommends adhering to these steps in order to enhance water recreation safety and accident prevention:

1. **All electrical installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor familiar with marine codes and standards, and inspected at least once a year.**
2. **Docks should have ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) breakers on the circuits feeding electricity to the dock.**
3. **The metal frame of docks should be bonded to connect all metal parts to the alternating current (AC) safety ground at the power source. That will ensure any part of the metal dock that becomes energized because of electrical malfunction will trip the circuit breaker.**
4. **Neighboring docks can also present a shock hazard. Make your neighbors aware of the need for safety inspections and maintenance. Marinas should comply with NFPA and NEC codes.**

For more electrical safety information, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

- American painter Andrew Wyeth was born 100 years ago this month. He learned painting from his father, N.C. Wyeth, also a noted American painter, and today his son, Jamie Wyeth, is an acclaimed painter. Paintings by all three Wyeths have been exhibited at Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville.
- Arkansas has more than 8.5 million acres more forested land than Switzerland does.
- Both North American countries, the United States and Canada, have birthdays in July. The Dominion of Canada was founded on July 1, 1867, 91 years after America's Declaration of Independence was signed July 4, 1776.
- Most of Emily Dickinson's poems can be sung to the tunes of "The Yellow Rose of Texas" and the theme to "Gilligan's Island."
- July 11 marks the day that founding father Alexander Hamilton was killed in a duel with his rival Aaron Burr in 1804.
- Three presidents in a row — John Adams, Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe — all died on Independence Day. Adams and Jefferson died within five hours of each other on July 4, 1826. Five years later, Monroe died on July 4, 1831.
- July 31 is Mutt's Day, celebrating mixed breed dogs of all varieties.
- Arkansas is 261 miles long and 239 miles wide at its furthest points.
- Director Steven Spielberg earned his college degree from Cal State Long Beach in 2002, 33 years after he'd started. The student film he turned in to graduate from the film program was "Schindler's List."
- *"Those who think they have not time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness."* — Edward Stanley, 15th Earl of Derby



BY ROB MORITZ  
PHOTOS BY CASEY CROCKER

# Underground Arkansas

## Discover Blanchard Springs Caverns

**I**t is 80 degrees and sunny on the steps that lead to the entrance to Blanchard Springs Caverns. The equivalent of 21 stories below, where the public tour begins, it's 58 degrees and dark.

"Are you ready for an adventure?" Tracy Wiley, a guide with the U.S. Forest Service, asks the 18 explorers in sweatshirts and jackets who have paid \$10 each to experience The Discovery Trail, one of two guided tours offered to the public numerous times daily.

Wiley, who has been a tour guide at the caverns for two years, reminds the group that what they are about to enter is "a living cave" and home to "80 to 100 documented critters," including a variety of salamanders and four types of bats.

After a short elevator ride down, about 220 feet, and a moment to adjust their eyes, Wiley leads the group into an immense room that is nearly as long as four football fields and has a spectacular domed ceiling.

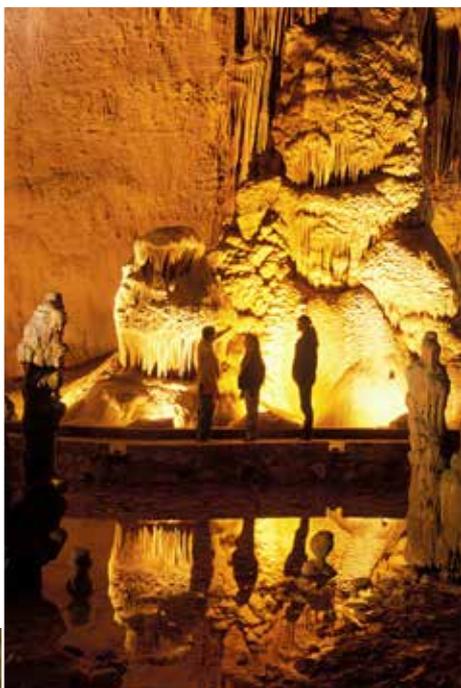
It's the Cathedral Room, one of the most popular spots in Blanchard Springs Caverns. ➤

Blanchard Springs Caverns in Mountain View has three levels of caverns, with three guided tours designed for various levels of fitness and activity.

Keith Symanowitz, another tour guide, says concerts are often held in the Cathedral Room, including the annual Caroling in the Caverns between Thanksgiving and Christmas. "It has great acoustics," he says.

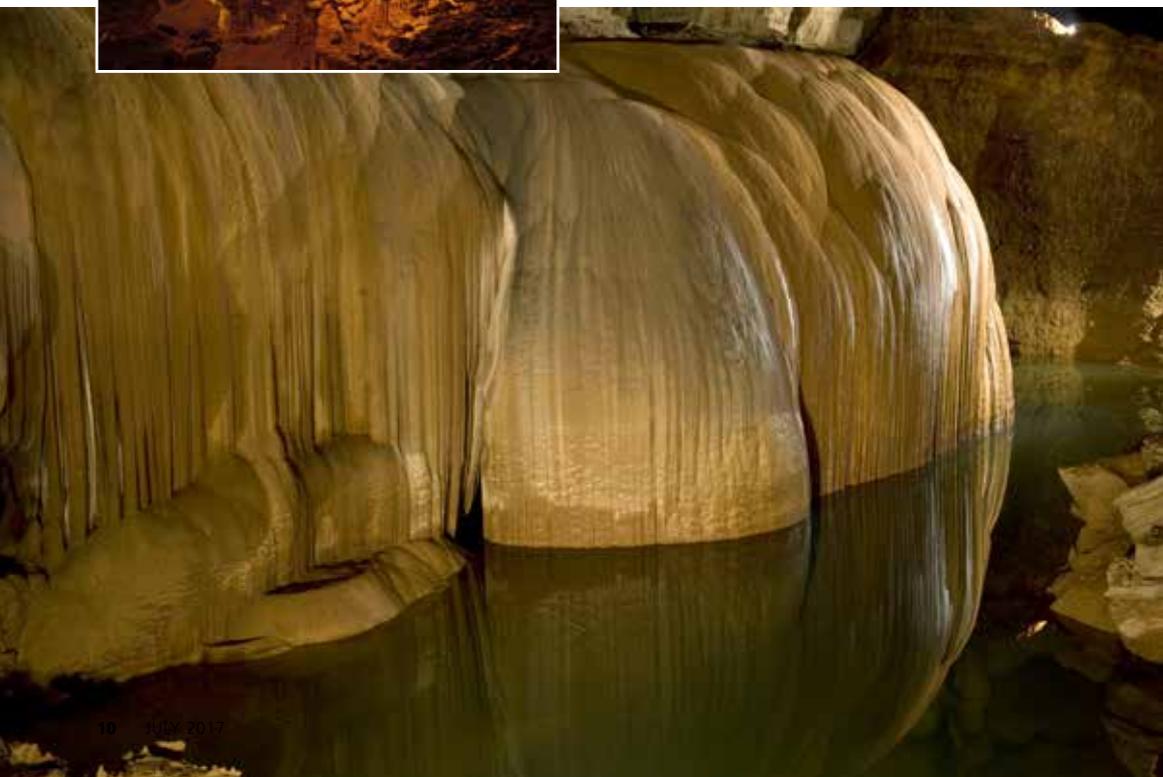
Blanchard Springs Caverns is a three-level limestone cave system in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests, about 15 miles north of Mountain View in Stone County. Two of the levels are open daily for public guided tours. A third tour, the Wild Cave Tour, available by reservation only, is much more physically demanding and involves going into undeveloped sections of the cave.

The Dripstone Trail, the easiest for visitors, runs through the uppermost level of the caverns for about



LEFT Guided tours of the cave are available several times daily, throughout the year.

BELOW At 160 feet long, the Giant Flowstone at Blanchard Springs is one of the largest of its type in the United States.



a half a mile on paved trails. It opened for public tours in 1973 and is open year-round.

The Discovery Trail, where Wiley and Symanowitz are leading the group, opened in 1977 and loops through a 1.2-mile section of the cavern on paved trails. It is only open during the summer, and the 90-minute walk is strenuous at times, with about 700 steps. A stretch near the end has become known as "heart attack hill" because of roughly 75 steps that seem almost straight up.

## Back in time

The underground tour should perhaps be called the Reverse Discovery Trail. Contemporary visitors are guided from rooms discovered more recently to parts of the cave that were explored before and after the U.S. Forest Service purchased 160 acres from John Blanchard in 1908.

"We're actually going into the cave backwards from the way the earliest explorers came," Wiley says, adding that the Cathedral Room, unknown until 54 years ago, is near the beginning of the tour, and the natural entrance to the caverns, where explorers entered, is near the end.

During this trip back through time, visitors descend to one of the lowest parts of the cave, 290 feet underground. They walk through what was a stream bed millions of years ago. Marvelous rock formations are visible along the way, and Wiley notes marks along the wall known as "scallops."

"When you see small ones like it that means the water was flowing fast," she says. "In other areas, big scallops mean the water was deep and flowing slowly, like a stream that meanders through."

Some of the rock formations seen include rimstone dams, which create the various pools in the caverns, and flowstones, nearly smooth deposits of calcite or other minerals formed by water flows down the wall or along the floor cave. The Giant Flowstone, where visitors are provided rows of benches to sit and view, is one of the biggest in the United States at 160 feet long, 35 feet tall and 30 feet thick.

While on the walking path, Wiley not only explains various formations in the cave but also answers questions. ➤

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Jeram, 10, who is visiting with his grandparents from Kansas, listens with interest to an explanation of the difference between stalactites, rock formations that hang from the cave and stalagmites, formations that rise from the floor. He tells Wiley that he once heard that someone yelling could make the stalactites fall.

“No, you can’t get a good enough vibration to get them to fall,” she replies.

## Early exploration

People living in the region knew about the caverns — parts of them anyway — for decades, and the treacherous darkness had been visited long before white settlers. The only recorded visit in the 1930s was by a Forest Service employee who was lowered briefly into the entrance. The next recorded explorers visited the cave in the 1950s and 60s.

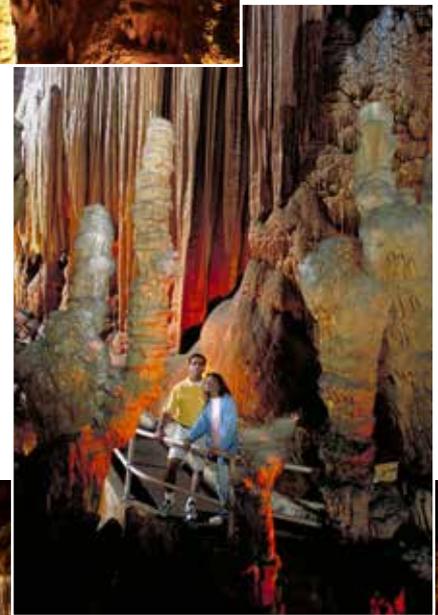
Wiley says the various rooms of the cave were discovered over a period of years as explorers with carbide lamps made their way farther and higher through tunnels and cracks.

One by one, she says, spectacular rooms were discovered. The Christmas Room was named for its tree-shaped formations. The Ghost Room got its name from a large white flowstone that startled its discoverer. ➤



LEFT Stalactites hang down from the ceiling; stalagmites form from the ground up.

BELOW Paths lined with guardrails protect visitors from steep falls on the Discovery and Dripstone Trails.



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Around every winding curve are more discoveries to admire. Some points of the guided tours are about 300 feet below ground.

Although they would not have called it graffiti, 20th-century cave explorers wrote their names on the walls in an area known as the campground. Names visible include Hail Bryant and his wife, Faye, and two young explorers, Robert Hanford and Mike Hill.

At the bottom of the Discovery Room, about 300 feet below the surface, Wiley uses a high-beam flashlight to point out a small opening, up to the left. Hanford and Hill, teenagers at the time, squeezed through that space on their way to discovering the Cathedral Room in 1963, Wiley says.

“That’s about a 100-foot hill up peanut-butter mud, thick and nasty,” Wiley says. “Imagine what it would have been like in this big old room and trying to do that.”

## Tours developed

It was the discovery of the Cathedral Room that persuaded the U.S. Forest Service to develop the caverns for public tours, Wiley says. That included hauling cement for walking trails and mixing it with gravel and water from inside the cave.

Handrails help the tour group make its way along the dimly lit path. A few bats flutter around; a faint odor of bat

guano and a large pile of the bat waste are evidence that the cave is actually home to many more. About 372,000 bats — gray, Indiana, big brown and tri-colored — hibernate in the cave, Wiley says, and the guano is a good sign that healthy bats are sleeping or hibernating on the ceiling.

“We have a complete air exchange about every 24 to 36 hours in the cavern,” she says. One area was known by early explorers as a “wind tunnel” because air whipping through often extinguished their carbide lamps.

Today, visitors on the Discovery Trail walk underneath the natural entrance to the cave used by the early explorers. The old scaffolding and winch, used to lower equipment to build the trail, are still in place.

They see the rushing Blanchard Springs, which drains about 10 million gallons of water a day from a watershed of 16 square miles. About 4,000 feet of the underground passage where the springs flow through has been surveyed, while 1,000 feet of the passage is completely filled with water.

For more information call the Caverns at 870-757-2211 or visit [blanchardssprings.org](http://blanchardssprings.org) or [www.fs.usda.gov](http://www.fs.usda.gov). ■

*Rob Moritz is a Little Rock-based journalist. Casey Crocker is a photographer for the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.*



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<b>BATESVILLE</b> Vicki Haas	<b>CROSSETT</b> Dan Pevy Deb Zeigler	<b>GREENWOOD</b> Phil Hicks	<b>NORTH LITTLE ROCK</b> Dan Cook Brian Cress Monica Reiners Curtis Short	<b>SHERWOOD</b> Becky Bradley Scott Richards
<b>BEEBE</b> John Hayes	<b>DUMAS</b> Stacy Berry	<b>HAMPTON</b> Mark Hodnett	<b>NASHVILLE</b> Steve Tate	<b>SPRINGDALE</b> Steve Harp
<b>BELLA VISTA</b> Scott Comiskey	<b>EL DORADO</b> Amber Manning Myers	<b>HARRISON</b> Roger Earnest	<b>NEWPORT</b> Mark Manning	<b>STAR CITY</b> James West
<b>BENTON</b> Todd Matthews	<b>ENGLAND</b> Meredith Johnson	<b>HEBER SPRINGS</b> Tim Brewer	<b>OZARK</b> Toby Hogan	<b>TEXARKANA</b> Missy Dickens Kim Wren
<b>BERRYVILLE</b> Richard & Mary Lou Harp	<b>FARMINGTON</b> Griggs Covington	<b>HOPE</b> Trey Wright	<b>PARAGOULD</b> Ty Sims	<b>VAN BUREN</b> Stuart Davis Ted McEvoy
<b>BOONEVILLE</b> Jerald Baker	<b>FAYETTEVILLE</b> Whit Hensman Drew Trucks Taylor Wethers	<b>HOT SPRINGS VILLAGE</b> Josh Putman	<b>PARIS</b> Jimmy Pannell	<b>WALNUT RIDGE</b> Danny Gibson
<b>BRYANT</b> Laryssa Calley Cory Pratt Matt Steele	<b>FORT SMITH</b> Jeff Clark Brent Lovell Patrick Pruitt	<b>IMBODEN</b> Denny & Kelly Durham	<b>PERRYVILLE</b> Baylor House	<b>WARREN</b> Greg Harton
<b>CABOT</b> Paul Killingsworth	<b>GLENWOOD</b> Simon Mack	<b>JACKSONVILLE</b> Scott Everett	<b>PIGGOTT</b> Tonya Coomer	
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# Cool Caves

## Spelunkers explore Arkansas

BY ROB MORITZ

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND TOURISM

If it's too hot this summer for outdoor activities above ground, consider going below. Underground, mostly in Northwest and north-central Arkansas, there are beautiful caves with forgotten springs and rivers, amazing rock formations and mazes, along with little-known creatures that live only in the dark.

And the temperature in the caves is in the mid- to high-50s year-round. (Caves, however, offer no respite from humidity.)

There are more than 2,000 documented caves in Arkansas with the highest concentration in the Ozarks.

The most popular of Arkansas caves, and those that generate the most money for the tourism industry, are eight privately owned "tour caves" and Blanchard Springs Caverns, owned and operated by the U.S. Forest Service. These caves offer guided tours and are easily accessible with lighted walkways and handrails.

There are thousands of people, known as spelunkers, who like their caving a little more challenging — and dirty. They enjoy spending their time squeezing through openings, crawling through gooey mud or using ropes to climb up and down tall, smooth rock faces.

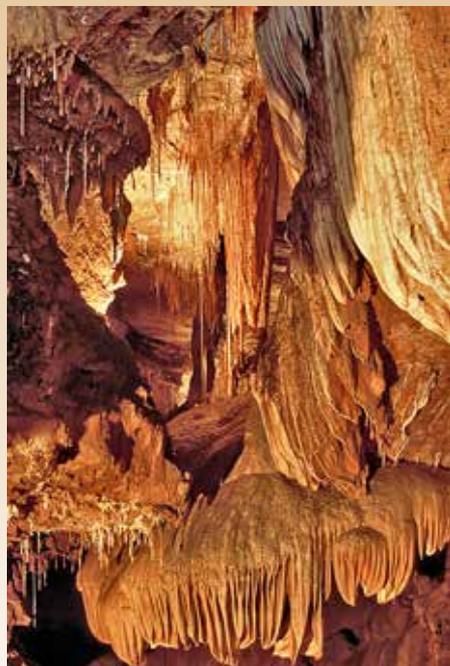
Dewayne Agin of the Little Rock Grotto, an organization of caving enthusiasts, said it's difficult for many people to understand the fun of "laying down in the mud or going through a crawl with my face half in the water."

For Agin, caving is a chance to "see things that few people, and sometimes no

other person, has seen before." There are five grottos in Arkansas. Grottos are local chapters or organizations affiliated with the National Speleological Society that sponsor caving trips, offer training, and practice conservation and preservation.

There are 25 to 30 active members in the Little Rock Grotto, which organizes caving trips during which members take underground photographs, survey and map caves, and help with cleanup and restoration as needed. Agin has been caving for 43 years and for 20 years was president of the Little Rock Grotto.

"We go (caving) really all over the state, but mainly in central to northeastern parts



Stalactites drip like melted wax from the ceilings at Cosmic Caverns, Berryville.



of the Ozarks,” he said, adding the grotto’s members search for caves they would like to explore. Sometimes, however, property owners seek the grotto’s help with exploring caves they are reluctant to enter themselves. And every so often, grotto members just go out hiking and look for small caves, he said.

The COBRA Grotto — that is, Cavers of the Batesville Region of Arkansas — is affiliated with Lyon College in Batesville and has about 50 regular members. It does spelunking for fun and research.

“Caving is like entering another planet while still on

Earth,” said COBRA President David Thomas, the W.D. Bryan Professor of Biology at Lyon College. “That analogy is actually quite real; I use cave environments on Earth to simulate possible cave environments on other planets or moons,” he said.

Thomas also has done some research on White-Nose Syndrome, a disease fatal to some bat species that was found in several caves in Arkansas in 2014. The disease, which killed millions of bats in northern states since it was first identified in 2006, is not a threat to humans, pets or livestock. ➤



The by-reservation-only, physically demanding Wild Cave Tour at Blanchard Springs can be a guided introduction to more hands-on spelunking in Arkansas.

Since the discovery in Arkansas, “pretty much all of the public land caves in Arkansas have been closed, but there are a few exceptions. Blanchard Springs is one,” Thomas said.

The geology of the Ozark Mountains, stretching from northeast Oklahoma through northern Arkansas and into Missouri, was perfect for the creation of caves for about 350 to 500 million years, Thomas said.

“All of that rock used to be an ocean bed, so you have a lot of limestone and dolomite and sandstone, all of which are relatively easily erodible types of rocks,” he said. “So they are the types of things caves form in.”

The economic impact that caving has on tourism in Arkansas is real, Thomas said, but it would be difficult to quantify. Cavers camp or stay in hotels, purchase supplies and equipment and eat, just like other outdoor enthusiasts.

“Cavers tend to be naturally outdoor people, and parts of the state are really built on the outdoor tourist industry, so caving is going to have an impact on that,” he said.

Thomas and Agin admit caving can be expensive because of the equipment necessary to explore safely. They also said inexperienced and unprepared cavers often — too often — venture off into places they are not prepared for.

Both men, along with other experienced cavers from other grottos in the state, responded to the Blowing Cave near Cushman in Independence County last summer when three Arkansas State University students were lost. “It took us all day to find them and get them out,” Thomas said.

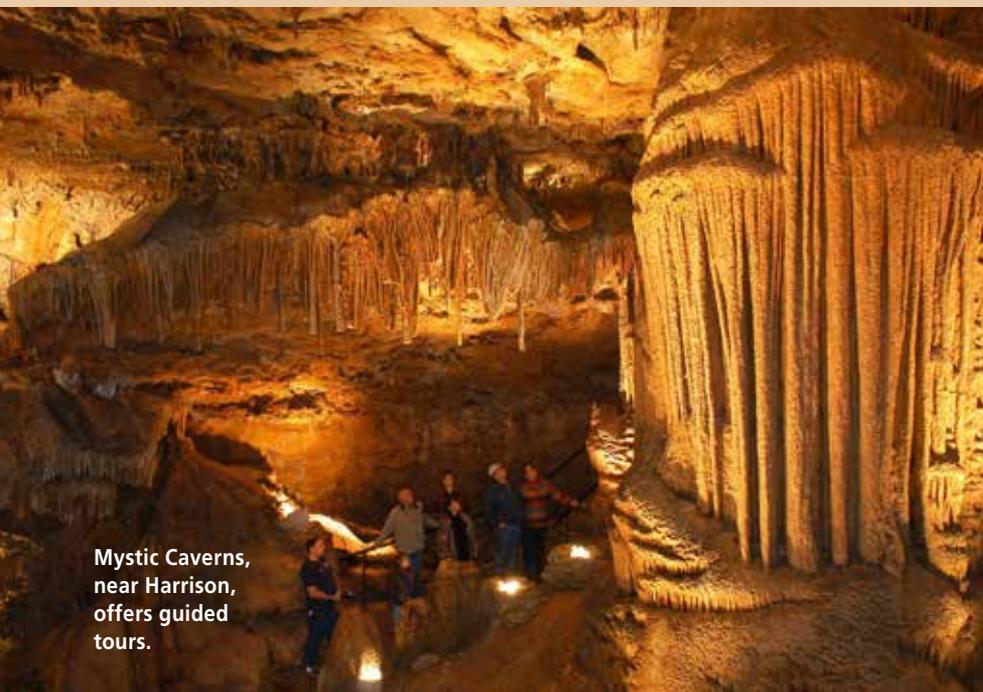


The Wild Cave Tour at Blanchard Springs rewards the agile and brave with sights not accessible on the regular public tours.

The three were reported missing on a Wednesday afternoon after they failed to return from the caving trip. They were found the following afternoon by rescuers.

Proper safety equipment, including helmets and knee pads, as well as proper ropes for rappelling, are all key, he said. Proper lighting also is a must. Caving safely can be costly, just like any other hobby.

“I’ve got what is considered a cheap head lamp among cavers, and my head lamp cost \$400,” Agin said. “And I’ve got a friend who said, ‘Don’t tell my wife, but this is what I bought for \$1,600.’ So, there are varying degrees, and not everything is that expensive.”



Mystic Caverns, near Harrison, offers guided tours.

### Caves that offer daily guided tours:

- Blanchard Springs Caverns north of Mountain View.
- Bull Shoals Caverns.
- Cosmic Caverns in Berryville.
- Mystic Caverns and Crystal Dome Caverns, both near Harrison.
- Onyx Cave in Eureka Springs.
- Old Spanish Treasure Cave near Sulphur Springs.
- War Eagle Cavern near Rogers on Beaver Lake.
- Hurricane River Caverns in Pindall is closed for renovations. ■

*Rob Moritz is a Little Rock-based journalist.*

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# First Electric Cooperative

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## First Electric dedicates one-megawatt solar field in Benton

A one-megawatt solar field in Benton was dedicated on May 31 by the FECC board of directors.

“First Electric is dedicated to providing our members with safe, reliable electricity in a cost-effective manner,” said Don Crabbe, president/chief executive officer. “Our board works to meet the needs of our membership both today and in the future. Our members will all share in the benefits from the renewable energy produced by the solar field.”

FECC board of directors officially commissioned into production the five-acre solar field which has 3,840 solar panels. The field is located at 8271 Congo Road in Benton.

The solar field is projected to generate 47,651,737 kilowatt-hours of non-emitting energy over a 25-year span. In one year, the solar field may reduce as much carbon dioxide as 35,000 trees.

At peak production times, the solar field may produce enough renewable energy to power 100 to 125 homes.

In addition to providing renewable solar energy to its members, FECC plans to use the solar field as an educational opportunity for field trips for local school groups and organizations.

For more information on solar or to schedule a group tour, call a marketing representative at 1-800-489-7405.



**Participants in the dedication** of First Electric’s one-megawatt solar field included the cooperative’s board of directors and chief executive officer. **BACK ROW** (Left to right): Harry Hamlin, attorney for the board; Don Crabbe, president/chief executive officer; Tracy Hudspeth, Drasco; Larry Wood, vice chairman, Lonoke; David Luebke, Scott; Tom Hasty, Jr., Almyra; **FRONT ROW** (Left to right): Rick Love, Jacksonville; Karissa Rushing, Benton; Jimmie Crockett, Rose Bud; Robert Maertens, secretary-treasurer, Benton; and Robert Hill, chairman, Perryville. (Photo credit: Rob Roedel)



**First Electric employees** attended the solar field dedication. In addition to providing renewable solar energy to its members, FECC plans to use the solar field as an educational field trip opportunity for local school groups and organizations to learn about solar energy. (Photo credit: Gary Bean)



**Flipping a switch** to dedicate the one-megawatt solar field were (left to right): Robert Hill, FECC board chairman; Don Crabbe, president/chief executive officer; Duane Highley, president/chief executive officer of Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.; and John Bethel, director of the Arkansas Public Service Commission. (Photo credit: Gary Bean)

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# Schedule an energy audit, learn ways to save money

The goal of First Electric Cooperative's energy audit program is to help you save money by identifying areas where your home's energy efficiency can be improved. We offer diagnostic and walk-through energy audits. Both are performed by First Electric marketing representatives who have been trained and certified through the Building Performance Institute.

## Diagnostic energy audits

A blower door as well as a Duct Blaster and infrared camera are tools that can be used during a diagnostic energy audit. They allow a marketing representative to locate thermal deficiencies, air infiltration and leakage that can cause high energy consumption and an uncomfortable home.

You get a detailed report that includes the measured air tightness of your home, any infrared camera results and recommendations for improvements that could reduce energy usage. They could range from no-cost tips, such as adjusting the thermostat's temperature, to projects that could require an initial investment but could pay off in energy savings, such as adding insulation or having the HVAC system inspected.

The diagnostic energy audit costs \$100, but that fee is reimbursed if at least \$100 of recommended repairs are made within six months.

## Walk-through energy audits

Marketing representatives can conduct a free walk-through energy audit. They visually inspect your home and evalu-



“Energy audits will find out the small things that make a difference. It will dispel misinformation like space heaters that I thought were saving energy when they were actually running our bill up. Little things can put money back in your pocket. And, that's very important in today's market.”

— Tommy & Sheri Kincaid,  
Hot Springs Village

ate the energy efficiency of the building, household appliances, heating and cooling system and lighting. You will receive a list of recommendations showing steps that can be taken to reduce energy costs.

Contact the marketing representative in your area to schedule an energy audit —

- Call 800-489-7405
- Email [helpdesk@fecc.coop](mailto:helpdesk@fecc.coop)
- Stop by a First Electric office in Benton, Heber Springs, Jacksonville, Perryville or Stuttgart.

# Beat the Extreme Heat

During periods of extreme heat, hot weather mixed with outdoor activities can lead to dangerous situations. According to the CDC, people can suffer heat-related illness when their bodies are unable to properly cool themselves. During extreme heat, follow these guidelines to protect yourself and your loved ones.



**Stay informed:** Check local news for extreme heat alerts.



**Stay cool:** If you do not have access to an air-conditioned space, visit a shopping mall or public library for a few hours. Call your local health department to locate heat-relief shelters in your area.



**Stay hydrated:** Drink (nonalcoholic) fluids regularly, regardless of your activity level. Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.



**Don't** leave anyone in a closed, parked vehicle



**DO** check on elderly friends and neighbors.



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# Cool off the house with LEDs

BY BRET CURRY

Last month, we revealed details for our 10th Annual Energy Efficiency Makeover contest. By June 12, we had received nearly 5,700 entry forms! Join the fun and maybe you'll be chosen to receive an LED lighting retrofit kit provided by General Electric (GE). Each kit will include LED general purpose, candelabra, recessed and flood lights — enough to retrofit most homes. Ten winners from each of the 17 distribution cooperatives will be chosen by a random drawing and notified by Aug. 4. All winners will be listed on the [www.smartenergytips.org](http://www.smartenergytips.org) website and social media. July 15 is the deadline for entries, so don't delay.

In previous columns this year, we have extensively discussed LED lighting. A key point is that LEDs use nearly 80 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs. Also, when shopping for lightbulbs, be aware the industry has created new labeling and has transitioned from measuring in watts to measuring in lumens. If you prefer the same light appearance as incandescent bulbs, look for a Kelvin (K)-scale temperature of 2,700 to 3,100 K. Whiter and daylight colors range from 4,500 to 6,500 K. Also, the estimated average usage for an LED equivalent to a 100-watt incandescent bulb only has an operating cost of about \$1.81 per year. Even changing from compact fluorescent spring lamps to LEDs will recognize a savings, although not as significant as swapping out an incandescent.

Another impactful benefit from conversion to LEDs is a reduction in unwanted heat inside the home. As a reminder, approximately 90 percent of the energy used to light up Thomas Edison's incandescent bulb is emitted in the form of heat. Those of you who remember the Easy Bake Oven may be able to relate. It was a 100-watt incandescent bulb, and in some models, two incandescent bulbs, that provided the heat to bake cookies. Imagine 15 100-watt incandescent lightbulbs in use during the summer. This scenario would be comparable to one 1,500-watt space heater in use while the air conditioner is running.

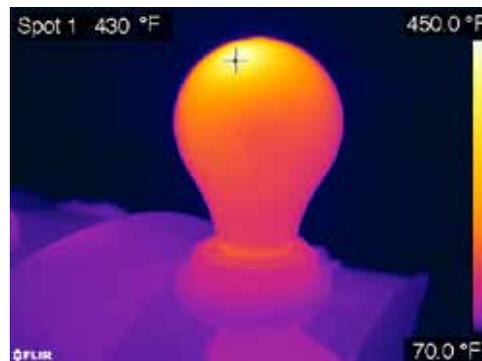
Heat always moves to cool, so during the summer the air conditioner is working to move Mother Nature's unwanted heat back to the great outdoors. Also, the unit is removing heat that originates inside the home. The list of indoor heat sources is comprehensive and generally correlates with creature comforts and modern conveniences. For instance,

heat emits from a stove, oven, refrigerator, toaster, coffee maker, television, people, pets, bathing, hair dryers, and lighting, to name just a few. Transitioning to LEDs saves money on energy costs for operation, reduces unwanted heat and helps the air conditioner run less.

The infrared images that accompany this column illustrate the heat emitted from an incandescent and LED bulb. Since GE is our makeover partner, I thought it would be fitting to use their product for our demonstration. Note the temperature difference between the incandescent and the LED confirmed by the infrared camera. Regrettably, you won't be able to bake cookies with LEDs. But, you'll save money and have a more comfortable home.

Be sure to enter the makeover contest today! And please feel free to contact me at [smartenergytips@aecc.com](mailto:smartenergytips@aecc.com) with any energy efficiency questions. Also, be sure to follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/smartenergytips.org](http://www.facebook.com/smartenergytips.org), as well as listen to our podcasts. ▀

*Bret Curry is the residential energy marketing manager for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), which provides wholesale power to Arkansas' 17 electric distribution co-ops.*



Incandescent bulbs emit lots of heat (430 F).



An LED bulb with same lumens and K-color scale, but emitting much less heat (164 F).

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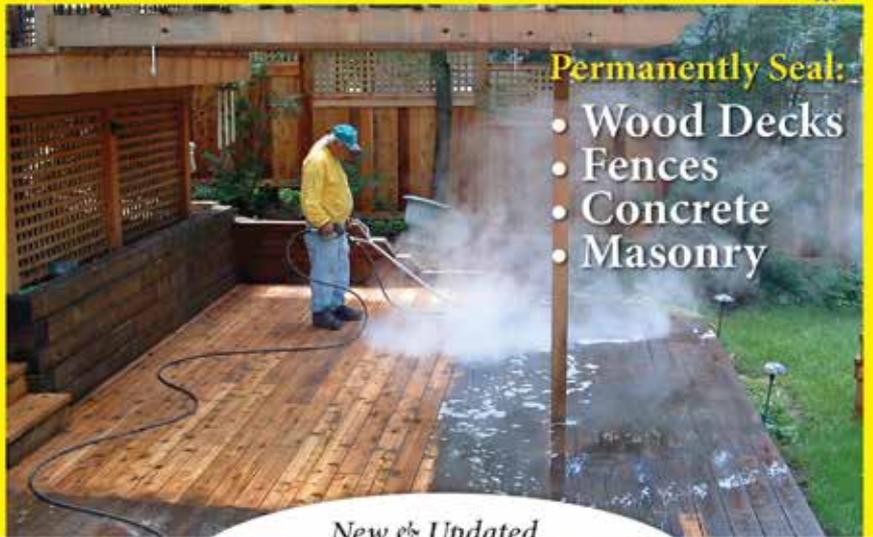
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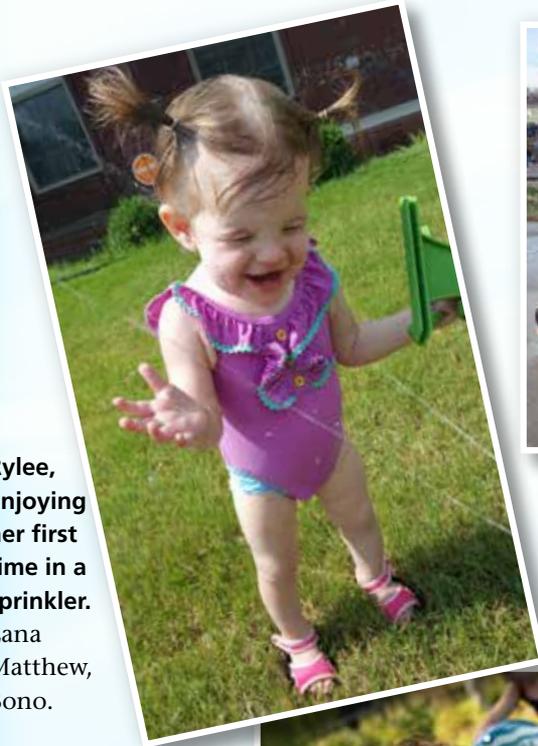
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*Snapshots from our readers*

# Reflections



**Rylee, enjoying her first time in a sprinkler.**  
Lana Matthew, Bono.



**Jaylea and Zoe, it just doesn't get any better on a summer day!** Kayla Rich, Van Buren.



**Amelia, just chillin' in Mimi's pool.**  
Levi Corkern, Russellville.



**Austin having some summer fun!** Shannon Gordon, Greenwood.



**Sawyer, doing what boys do.**  
Josh Markham, Umpire.

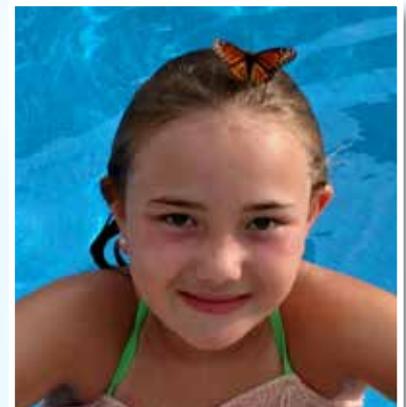
**Dillon is into the birdbath again.**  
Peggy Davis, Bella Vista.



**Gracelyn Joy, having a big time!**  
Devon Hicks, Heber Springs.



**Seventeen grand-kids on a summer visit to their grandfather's pond.**  
Bill Bierman, Hot Springs Village.



**Peyton has a little friend on her head.** April Ellard, Jonesboro.



**Israel, splashing in her turtle pool.**  
Susan Abner, Center Ridge.



**Gracie has her very own doggie pool.** Marie Johnson, Hamburg.



**Cousins Jace and Brody, taking a flying leap.** Kerry Cook, taken at Lake Catherine.



**Erin and Leila, having fun in the cool water.** Carol O'Donnell, Dalton.



**Birds need some splashing, too!**  
Sharon Patnoe, Elkin.



**Kathryn and Mason, admiring their rocks from the creek.**  
Colleen Sommer, Bella Vista.



**Momma bluebird needed some shade.** Sherry Marshall, Uniontown.

Share your photos with your fellow Arkansas Living readers! Please send high-resolution photos with detailed information about the pictures (who took it, where, who is in it, etc.) to: [Dixie.Rogers@aeci.com](mailto:Dixie.Rogers@aeci.com)

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# Destination Delta

Arkansas Delta's economic potential showcased

BY SANDRA BYRD

Exciting things are happening in the Arkansas Delta. For the second year in a row, Simmons Bank of Pine Bluff hosted an economic development conference to showcase the wonderful new education, employment, health, and “destination recreation” success stories in the region.

A distinguished group of speakers — ranging from Governor Hutchinson and other government officials to academics, physicians, and economic development leaders spoke at the May 9 conference leaders. Rex Nelson, then senior vice president and director of corporate communications for Simmons Bank, led the program.

## Industrial investment

Hutchinson noted that Big River Steel in Osceola, Hino Motors Manufacturing in Marion and Shandong Ruyi Technology Group in Forrest City are investing millions in manufacturing in Arkansas and have plans to provide more than 1,800 new jobs in the Arkansas Delta. These industries draw from the state's agricultural resources (timber, cotton), low-cost electricity, water, plentiful and affordable land, and Arkansas' wonderful people. Arkansas is definitely gaining momentum in growing the economy in the Delta, but the speakers also stressed the need for creating a highly skilled labor force with computer coding abilities and other high-tech industry skills.

## Telemedicine

Beyond growing the manufacturing jobs, Arkansas Delta communities are also focusing on improving health, the speakers said. The two biggest challenges in this area are smoking and obesity, conference speakers said. The use of “telemedicine,” which brings doctors and health professionals to rural clinics via videoconferencing and computer technology, is on the rise. ASU's College of Osteopathic Medicine in Jonesboro is making new inroads in the area of rural health. The facility's staff train doctors to start practices in small towns and utilize the latest telemedicine technology. By placing these doctors on the front lines, all of the key health risk factors can be lowered.

## Tourism

Other speakers, like Chris Masingill, co-chair of the Delta Regional Authority, Robert Moore of the Arkansas Highway Commission, and Dr. Ruth Hawkins of Arkansas State University, stressed the importance of tourism —

art, music, food, culture and history — all of which are abundant in Arkansas Delta communities and play a large part of the attraction to the Delta. Local cultural assets like these go hand-in-hand with business development and the economy, they said. Some of the cultural success stories in the Delta include the Johnny Cash Boyhood Home in Dyess and the Johnny Cash Heritage Music Festival, which the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas helped establish; Lakeport Plantation in Lake Village; the restored Hemingway-Pfeiffer Museum and Educational Center in Piggott, and the Southern Tenant Farmers Museum in Tyronza. These tourism destination trips have brought bed & breakfast inns and hotels, restaurants and retail shops to the Delta.

The Arkansas Delta is also becoming a “destination place” in the areas of hiking, biking, nature trails, wildlife and scenery.

The Arkansas Delta is also richly blessed in the area of wildlife. The

Delta region is also a destination state for duck hunting, kayaking and canoeing, and bayou water trails are emerging as a tourist attraction.



## Council is formed

“The seeds for growing a positive future for any rural community live within the community itself,” said J.D. Lowery, manager of community and economic development for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation.

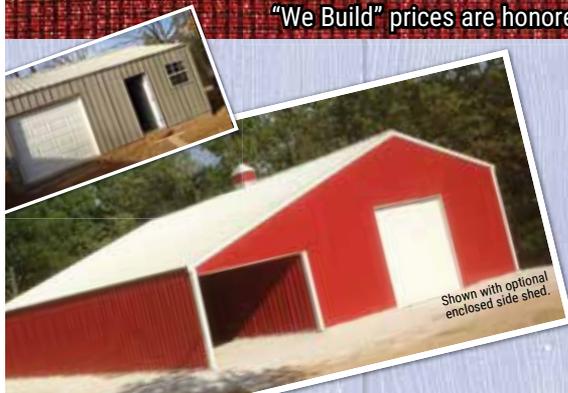
He reiterated the tourism and entrepreneurial potential of the eastern part of the state. “We aren't only looking for that big business that will relocate and bring 100 or 500 jobs,” he said. “We're looking at how to create 10 or 100 vibrant local small businesses from within, that will support a family and each generate one to five additional new jobs. Tourism-based jobs are part of that equation.”

Recently, to achieve a more unified development effort, the Arkansas Delta Council, Inc., was formed to pull all of the Delta development efforts together under one organization. By combining the knowledge of the Delta, the people and the efforts, the continued development can happen more quickly and in a more holistic way. The future of the Delta communities in Arkansas and surrounding states is very bright indeed. ■

*Sandra Byrd is vice president of public affairs and member services for Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation and Arkansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc.*

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# Brighten your garden with summer bulbs

BY JANET B. CARSON

When you say bulbs, most people think of spring-blooming tulips and daffodils. Aside from the common spring bulbs, there is another group of bulbs that shine and can be just as easy to grow as daffodils. They will give you loads of color in foliage and/or flowers, and will actually bloom longer than their spring counterparts.

There are summer bulbs for sun and shade. Two of the most popular shade-loving bulbs are caladiums and elephant ears. Caladiums are annuals and must be replanted each year, or they can be lifted and stored for the winter before a killing frost. Some caladium bulbs will do well in full sun, but I think there are so many sun-loving options that I relegate this bulb to the shade or partial shade areas of the garden. If you can still find the loose bulbs now, you can plant them. They will be up almost instantly in warm soils, since they are heat lovers. Never plant caladium bulbs in cold soil or they will be greatly delayed in their growth cycle. If you can't find the bulbs, you can find caladium plants that are already growing in a pot. The foliage can come in shades of white, pink or red, with many different leaf patterns. If you have heavy shade,



Fancy elephant ears.

choose the light pink or white varieties to brighten things up.

Most elephant ears are winter hardy and should come back year after year. However, if you are investing in some of the fancy and expensive forms, for safety's sake you may want to lift and store for the winter. Elephant ear is the common name for a variety of plants including alocasia, colocasia and xanthosoma.

Regardless of what you call them, most of them get large, although dwarf ones are available. Another group of bulbs prized for their foliage as well as their flowers are canna lilies. These plants do best in full sun, but do like water and nutrition. There are tall varieties getting 6 feet tall or higher, but dwarf introductions can be in the 3-foot range. They multiply quickly, so consider dividing them every few years to improve their blooming.

The showstoppers in the garden right now are lilies in all colors and forms. The Asiatic lilies are very easy to grow, along with the orange- and black-spotted tiger lilies, and the large dramatic oriental lilies, which include the stargazer lily. Plant lilies in a well-drained site in full sun and enjoy their

magnificent blooms annually. Gladiolus bulbs are great cut flowers. Many gardeners plant a row of these next to their vegetable garden and use them indoors all summer long. Cut just the flower stalk when the first bloom begins to open and they can easily last two weeks or more inside. And don't overlook members of the amaryllis family for summer and fall enjoyment. Do your homework when planning your garden. Make sure you have something blooming in all seasons, and adding some of these low-care summer-blooming bulbs into your summer garden mix will give you plenty of color. ■

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And don't overlook members of the amaryllis family for summer and fall enjoyment. Do your homework when planning your garden. Make sure you have something blooming in all seasons, and adding some of these low-care summer-blooming bulbs into your summer garden mix will give you plenty of color. ■

*Janet B. Carson is an extension horticulture specialist for the University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service.*



ABOVE Caladiums are shade loving, and must be replanted each year.



LEFT Plant lilies in a well-drained site in full sun and enjoy their magnificent blooms annually.



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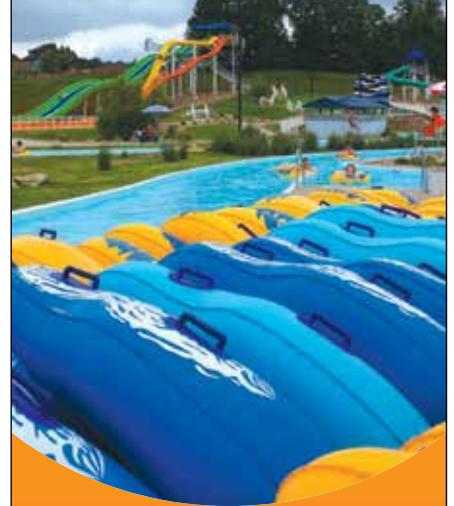


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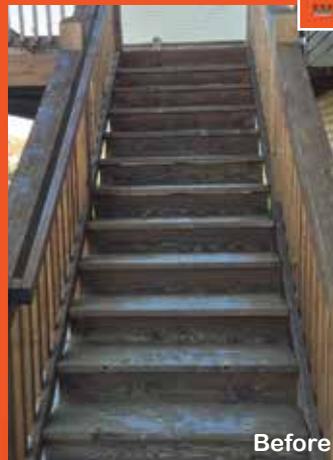
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# A Fresh Take on Grilling

Teach an old grill new tricks with healthy ingredients

## Mushroom Burger Wrap

- 6 oz. white button mushrooms
- 6 oz. cremini mushrooms
- 4 2-oz flatbreads
- 2 teaspoons plus 2 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup low-fat ricotta cheese
- 8 oz. lean ground beef
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
- 2 teaspoons dried basil or 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- freshly ground black pepper

Preheat grill. Chop mushrooms into 1/4-inch pieces. While grill heats, toss mushrooms with oil and season with black pepper. Cook mushrooms in one layer in a grill basket, in batches if necessary. Cook until one side is deep brown, about 4 minutes; turn and cook other side until a similar color is achieved, another 4 minutes. Cooking times may vary. In a large bowl, combine cooked mushrooms, ricotta cheese, ground beef, egg, breadcrumbs and basil. Form mixture into 4 burgers. Grill burgers over a direct heat for about 5 to 7 minutes on each side, or until done. Serve in flatbread. Serves 4.

## Mushroom Thin Crust Flatbread Pizza

- 6 oz. white button mushrooms
- 6 oz. cremini mushrooms
- 2 12-inch light flatbreads
- freshly ground black pepper
- 4 oz. lean ground beef
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 cup part-skim ricotta cheese
- 1 cup shredded reduced-fat Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese

and basil. Spread the cheese mixture on two 12-inch light flatbreads, dividing evenly. Layer equal amounts of the beef and mushroom mixture on top of the cheese mixture. Sprinkle with the grated cheese. Place pizza directly on the grill and close lid. Cook for 8 to 10 minutes or until cheese melts and bread is crisp. Serves 2.



Mushroom Thin Crust Flatbread Pizza

Mushroom Burger Wrap



- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil

Chop mushrooms into 1/4-inch pieces. Heat olive oil in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add meat and mushrooms and cook, breaking meat into very small bits. Drain. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Remove from heat. In a small bowl, combine ricotta cheese, oregano,

## Grilled Mushroom Quesadillas

- 32 oz. fresh white button mushrooms, sliced
- 6 light flatbreads
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups (approximately 8 ounces) shredded cheese, such as



*Grilled  
Mushroom  
Quesadillas*

*reduced-fat cheddar and Monterey Jack, plus extra for garnish*

- 2** *ripe avocados, peeled, pitted and thinly sliced*
- 6** *tablespoons fresh cilantro leaves (optional)*
- salsa verde and diced tomatoes, for garnish*

Preheat grill. While grill heats, toss mushrooms with oil and sprinkle with salt. Cook mushrooms in one layer in a grill basket, in batches if necessary. Cook until one side is deep brown, about 4 minutes; turn and cook other side until a similar color is achieved,

another 4 minutes. Cooking times may vary. Assemble quesadillas; distribute half the cheeses and avocado slices on left half of six light flatbreads. Distribute cooked mushrooms and cilantro leaves among the flatbreads and top with remaining cheese. Fold flatbreads in half and grill for 2 to 4 minutes with lid closed until cheese begins to melt. Transfer to cutting board, cut into wedges and serve with salsa verde, tomatoes and additional cheese. Serves 6.

*Recipes courtesy of the Mushroom Council.*

*Source: Family Features.*



## Hot Grilling Tips

- For a fast pizza, throw a flatbread on the grill. Layer with sauce, cheese and mushrooms and cook for 4 minutes or until the cheese melts.
- To grill portabella mushrooms, lightly scoop out exposed gills, brush caps with oil or a simple marinade and grill for 4 to 6 minutes each side until they are a dark brown.
- Cook delicate varieties of fresh mushrooms and smaller vegetables in a grilling basket to protect them from falling through the grate.
- Leave space around each food item on the grill to allow for even cooking and smoke penetration.

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# crosswordpuzzle

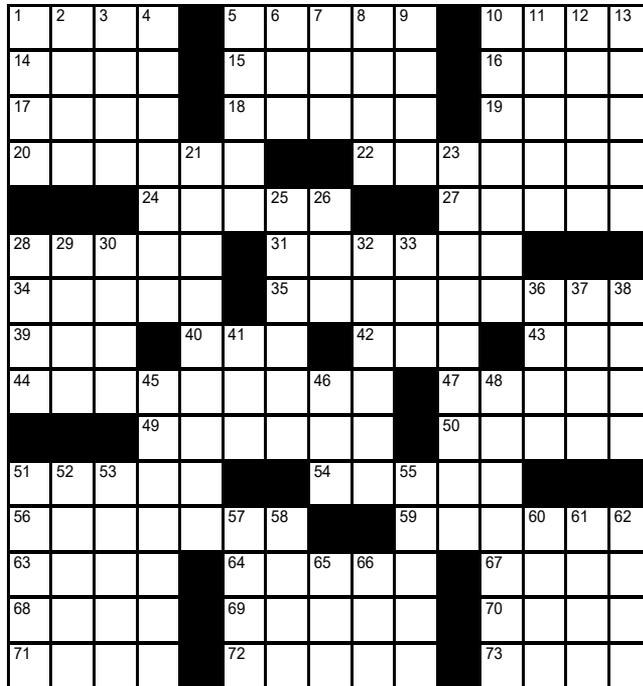
BY JULIE K. COHEN

## ACROSS

1. Tolkien creatures
5. Sir or \_\_\_\_\_
10. Vacation site (not just for kids!)
14. Spick-and-span
15. Not just fat
16. Fried vegetable
17. Decorative pitcher
18. Arkansas' cotton region
19. Sail holder
20. Failure to follow rules
23. Altus \_\_\_ Festival
24. Arkansas River's Six Bridges \_\_\_
28. Always, poetically
29. Use a surgical beam
33. Equip
34. Spreads out
36. Top-of-the-line
37. Appointing beforehand
41. La \_\_, a cold event
42. Salem's County
43. Spews lava
46. Cancun coin
47. Columbus Day mo.
50. Hopelessness
52. Hitler and Göring
54. Use to calculate currency conversion
58. Style of poker
61. Tobacco holder
62. Courage
63. Type of Drive?
64. Type of cleanse
65. Luau strings
66. Kennel cry
67. Medicated
68. Purse Museum in Little Rock

## DOWN

1. Anxious
2. Upgrade electrically
3. Roman emperor



4. Razor sharpener
5. Math calculation
6. Not up yet
7. Kosher \_\_\_
8. Daisy like flower
9. Not as nice
10. "Huh?"
11. Letters before an alias
12. "\_\_\_ Doubtfire"
13. Philanthropist \_\_\_ Walker
21. Contradict
22. Movie animation tech.
25. Warner Bros. creation
26. Mao Tse-\_\_\_
27. Chowd down
30. "Much \_\_\_ About Nothing"
31. A lord's worker
32. Eventually become
34. Involved in
35. After-Christmas event
37. Wild destructive force in forests
38. Burden
39. "\_\_\_ magic!"
40. Who might be to blame?
41. Beatty of "Deliverance"
44. Paycheck deduction
45. Set a dog on someone
47. Arkansas, Missouri and Oklahoma mountains
48. Little Rock, Fort Smith and Fayetteville: Arkansas' biggest \_\_\_
49. African fly
51. Zoo heavyweight
53. Debate
55. Matures
56. Most people have a first and last one
57. Alum
58. Farm area
59. "What's \_\_\_ matter?"
60. Dot-com's address

Crossword answers on page 41

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# East End Café will treat you like family

BY ROB ROEDEL

The East End Café has been a local landmark to the residents of the close-knit community of East End for about 20 years. It is known for its homemade offerings and excellent, hometown-style service.

Owner Todd Taylor is a seasoned 32-year restaurant veteran who has owned other eateries in central Arkansas and managed locations of many large, national chain franchises. He acquired the East End Café in 2012.

"We strive to deliver homemade food based on dishes that only come from fresh ingredients," Taylor said. "We hand-bread our fried foods with our own batter and seasonings. Some of our menu items are based on favorites at my previous restaurants and others



East End Café manager Ricci Arnold and owner Todd Taylor.

are East End originals."

The café offers a potpourri of daily specials for lunch that are served with your

choice of two vegetables that include corn, hand-battered onion rings, pinto beans, mashed potatoes, green beans, great northern beans, black-eyed peas, french fries, tater tots, fried okra, fried squash, rice pilaf, macaroni and cheese, baked potato and coleslaw. Dinner specials are offered on Thursday (steak), Friday (fried catfish) and Saturday (steak and salmon).

"We have some people that eat here three times a day," said Ricci Arnold, the restaurant manager. The café is a community gathering place for residents of East End and surrounding communities. A customer started a community "library" at the café where patrons swap books. Arnold said that the East End Café has hosted several fundraisers for residents in need, concerts and even weddings. The venue will seat 150 for meals.

Breakfast is served from 6 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. daily, so Taylor wanted me to try the Western Omelet. It was served with two sausage patties, cheese-covered hash browns and toast. The omelet was delightful and loaded with bacon, sausage, chopped bell peppers, onions and cheese.

Salads are very popular at the East End Café. I tried the Grilled Chicken Salad that features mesquite-seasoned chicken breast, diced tomato, black olives, mushrooms and cheddar cheese on a bed of fresh lettuce. The chicken and other ingredients blended to deliver a healthy, filling salad that was quite good.



The East End Cheeseburger and hand-battered onion rings.

The East End Cheeseburger is an East End Café staple. The half-pound patty is a must-try for hamburger lovers. The thick, juicy patty is filled with flavor. It was served with the café's hand-breaded onion rings.

The farm-raised USDA catfish filets were dressed in the East End Café's cornmeal-based breading and cooked perfectly on the outside with a golden crunch. The inside was hot and moist.

The hand-battered Chicken Fried Chicken was finger-licking great. The team at East End Café hand-cut their chicken breasts and hand-bread the pieces, which results in the perfect fried chicken breast. It is topped with white gravy that accents the wonderful flavor



A plate full of comfort. hand-battered Chicken Fried Chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, green beans and a roll.

## the eating essentials

### EAST END CAFÉ

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### Hours of Operation

Monday - Sunday: 6 a.m. - 8 p.m.





# Calendar

## July 1

### Fireworks Extravaganza

Sandy Beach, Heber Springs

## July 2

### CCC Reunion Day

Devil's Den State Park, West Fork

Put on your best 1930s style clothing and join us as we honor the legacy, tradition, and hard work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. dinner, games, dance, music, movies. 479-761-3325.

## July 3

### Diamond City Annual Fireworks Display

Bull Shoals Lake, Diamond City

Bring the family and view the show from land or bring your boat. 9:15 p.m. www.diamondcitychamber.net.

## July 3-4

### 4th of July Festival at the Bay

Fairfield Bay Marina

8:30 a.m. - 10:00 p.m. 901-233-8245.

## July 4

### 2017 Independence Day Games And Races

Ozark Folk Center State Park, Mountain View

Fun for the entire family. Sack racing, carrying eggs, and a watermelon seed spitting contest. www.ozarkfolk-center.com.

### Independence Day Celebration

Walmart Amp, Rogers

Music by the SONA Orchestra and a spectacular fireworks display. www.arkansasmusicpavilion.com.

### 34th Annual Pops On The River

River Market District, Little Rock

Fireworks show with the Arkansas Symphony

Orchestra. Children's activities, a shopping marketplace, food trucks, singing contest, live music. www.pops.arkansasonline.com.

### Beebe's Annual 4th of July Extravaganza

Beebe Ballpark

Food, drinks, ice cream, three giant water slides, fireworks show. www.beebeark.org.

## July 8

### 2nd Annual Tesla Fest

Mid-America Science Museum, Hot Springs

Witness the world's most powerful conical tesla coil and learn about the science behind Tesla's experiments using hands-on demonstrations and more! www.midamericamuseum.org.

### Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

Sheid Auditorium, Mountain Home

Appreciation for all police officers in Baxter County. 870-425-5116.

## July 9

### Kayak Workshops

Hobbs State Park Visitor Center, Rogers

## July 15

### Firefly Fling

Botanical Garden of the Ozarks, Fayetteville

The gardens will be filled with musicians and storytellers. After dark, glowing games and glow-in-the-dark performances. Bring blankets and picnics. 6-10 p.m. www.bgozarks.org.

### Artistry in Wood Show

Bella Vista Assembly of God, Bella Vista

Watch woodcarvers, wood turners and pyrographers share their skills. 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. www.bellavistawoodcarvers.org.

## July 20-22

### 76th Annual Johnson County Peach Festival

Downtown on the Court Square, Clarksville

Concessions, entertain-

ment, street dance, bicycle obstacle, water balloon toss, peach cobbler, peach pie eating, skateboard competition, 4-mile run/walk, fishing derby, cardboard boat, greased pig, frog jump, terrapin derby, bed race, peach pit spitting, parade. 9 a.m. - 11 p.m. www.jocopeachfestival.8m.com.

## July 24-29

### 98th Annual Fulton County Fair

Fulton County Fairgrounds, Salem

Exhibits, carnival, pageants, talent contest, rodeo, entertainment, truck pulling, ATV Rodeo, Kid's Day, and special days honoring veterans and seniors age 60 and over. www.fultoncountyfair.org.

## July 27-29

### 38th Annual Cave City Watermelon Festival

Cave City Park, Cave City

A huge summer celebration bringing Grammy -winning artists, kids' fishing derby, a car show, Melon Dash 5K, a wet zone for kids, watermelon games, and a free watermelon feast. www.cavecitywatermelonfestival.com.



## July 28

### Kingston Music on the Square

Kingston

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## July 29

### 31st Annual World Championship Cardboard Boat Races

Sandy Beach, Heber Springs

Plenty of fun for the entire family. 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. www.heber-springs.com.

## July 29-30

### South Hot Springs Lions Club Gun and Knife Show

Hot Springs Civic Center, Hot Springs

www.hsionsgunshow.com.



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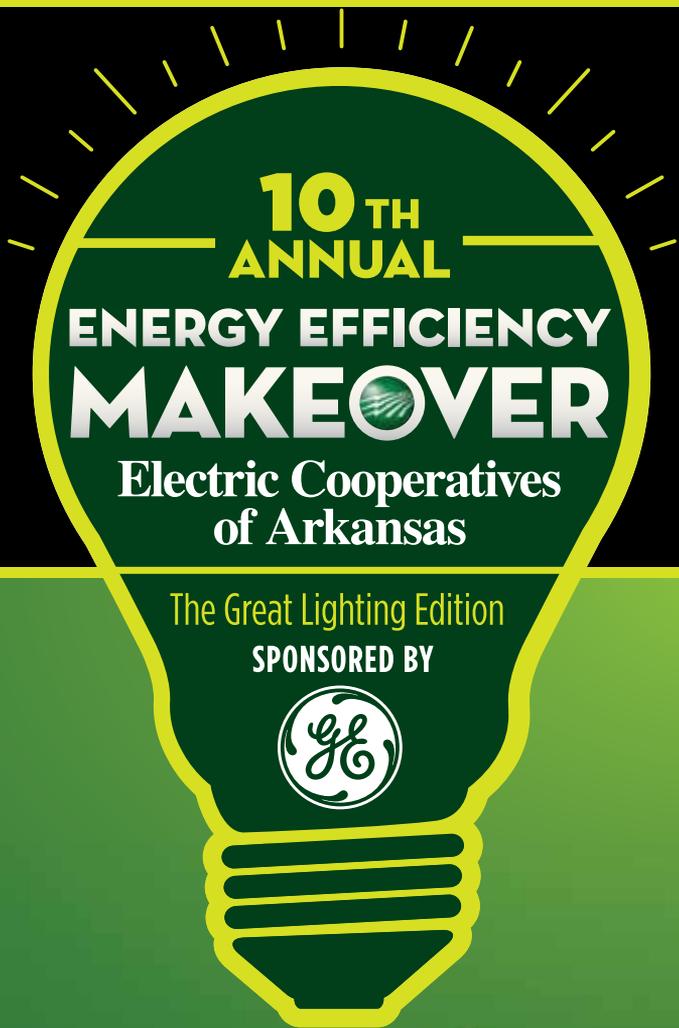
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Rules and entry form are available at [aecc.com](http://aecc.com).

