

Arkansas Living

AUGUST 2026



Honoring Heroes

Youth Tour connects past patriots with future leaders

Page 8



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ON THE COVER

At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour delegates Maryn Harvey and Kailyn Burroughs, both representing First Electric, pay tribute to Pfc. Aquila Baker of North Little Rock, who was killed in action in 1966 at age 22.

Photo by Chance Allmon.



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Patriotic Perspective

BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA



A surge of sunlight ignites the summer sky as an American flag snaps in the wind above Marines frozen in their iconic struggle. The result is an image that feels less like a monument and more like a moment. Though the subject is the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial in Washington, D.C., the photograph, animated by light and movement, appears remarkably alive.

With this picture, Youth Tour delegate Kaydence Garland of Jonesboro, representing Craighead Electric, won this year's Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour Photo Contest on Arkansas Living's Facebook page.

The photograph carries personal significance for Kaydence, whose father served as a Marine and whose mother loves photographing dramatic skies.

"In this moment, everything just came together," Kaydence says. "The crowd had moved out of the way. I had the perfect view of the memorial with a beautiful sky behind it. I felt like it was a perfect photo to send to both of my parents."

Her victory came against strong competition from three other finalists: Isaac Merriman of Carroll Electric (Korean War Veterans Memorial); Maggie Poteat of First Electric (Lincoln Memorial); and Maryn Harvey of First Electric (U.S. Capitol).

Their photos were taken during Youth Tour, which brought high

school seniors from across Arkansas to Washington, D.C., June 13-19. Their visit came at a meaningful moment, as the nation prepared to celebrate its 250th anniversary.

Photographs like Kaydence's and stories told in the delegates' own

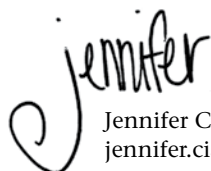
words (see page 8) capture places where history was made while inspiring a new generation to engage with it. And make no mistake: This generation is engaged.

Consider Kaydence's own thoughtful reflection on her winning picture. "This photo is a reminder that freedom is not free," she says. "It represents sacrifices made by our veterans, those who gave their lives so that we may live

ours. It also speaks to the power of unity. Like E Pluribus Unum — out of many, one — we are stronger when we stand together. As one nation under God, it is our responsibility to work side by side for the good of our country and for our neighbors, striving together to achieve the best possible future."

And that future — with young people like Kaydence and her fellow Youth Tour delegates leading the way — looks promising.

With optimism,



Jennifer Christman Cia
jennifer.cia@aeci.com



KAYDENCE GARLAND

Delegate Kaydence Garland of Jonesboro won this year's Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour Photo Contest with her stunning photo of the U.S. Marine Corps War Memorial.

Resilient Leadership

BY VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

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



Every summer, Arkansas' electric cooperative directors gather for several days of training and educational seminars on topics essential to their role. The theme of this year's conference was "Resilient Leadership," and I can't think of a time in recent

history when this has been more critical.

The original electric cooperative founders had to overcome numerous obstacles and be Resilient Leaders just to establish the system and bring power to rural Arkansas. And there have been challenges along the way that required Resilient Leaders, such as the national mandate in the 1970s to transition from natural gas to coal power for electric generation. This shift nearly bankrupted Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC), the electric cooperatives' wholesale energy provider, and required a series of rate increases that totaled 56% between 1980-1984. I can only imagine former CEO Carl Whillock's stress level during this time, well, actually, I can totally relate. Why? Because history is repeating itself in reverse.

Over the last 20 years, there has been a shift away from coal to natural gas to reduce national carbon emissions. This resulted in several of AECC's coal power plants being mandated to prematurely retire in 2028 and in 2030. This means replacing approximately one-third of our power generation in a very short time frame at a cost of about \$3 billion. The only technology that can meet our needs for reliable, affordable and responsible energy for our members is natural gas. Hence my statement that history is repeating itself in reverse — a mandated shift in fuel source in a short period of time resulting in rate increases for electric cooperative members.

This is also coming at a time of historical electric load growth with demand for electric generation and transmission equipment exceeding global supply causing the cost of this equipment to double and triple. Imagine sitting in a cooperative boardroom, knowing many of your members are already struggling with the rising cost of everyday

necessities while also knowing it is your duty to keep their power as affordable, reliable and responsible as possible. So, this is no easy day, and this is why we discussed Resilient Leadership in detail this summer.

The idea for this year's theme came to me the week before Christmas last year. I got a call from my sister that my mom was not doing well, and the hospice nurses recommended I get home to be with her for her last days. As fate would have it, there was a major winter storm in progress in Illinois, and my drive was in blowing snow and the temperature was -14 degrees when I pulled up in front of my mom's house.

I had not visited in over a year, so imagine my guilt as I walked in and saw her fighting to hang onto life. My mom was always a fighter, figuratively and literally, and she fought for over a week. It was during this time of serious reflection — with four hours between administering doses of morphine for pain relief in shifts with my two sisters (Melanie and Savannah) in a small 713-square-foot home — that I figured a few things out.

My relationship with my mother was complicated. She suffered abuse as a child that she never talked about but everyone in the family knew about. It was always the justification for the strained relationship between me and my brothers and her once we reached our teenage years.

If you have seen the movie "Dolores Claiborne," then you have by proxy met my mother. My mom got pregnant with me at 17, was thrown out of the house, lived with her aunt and uncle when I was born, never graduated high school, never had any material possessions and died with \$300 in her bank account.

Conversely, I made straight A's in high school and college and went on to have an amazing career in the nuclear submarine force and now with the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas. My success only caused my mom to put more forced distance between us, and while I know she was secretly proud of me, she was outwardly detached.

My mom passed on Christmas Eve, and during the week that I stayed at her house, one of the things I gained greater appreciation for was the extra bedroom that she had ➤



COURTESY OF VERNON "BUDDY" HASTEN

A handwritten note by Vernon "Buddy" Hasten's mother inspires the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Directors' Summer Conference theme, "Resilient Leadership."

RESILIENT LEADERSHIP *continued on page 6*

Independence Gas Plant project approved

The Arkansas Public Service Commission has given final approval to Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation (AECC) to build a combined-cycle generation facility near Newark.

The Independence Gas Plant (IGP) will be located adjacent to the existing Independence Steam Electric Station and will be co-owned by municipal utilities in Conway, Jonesboro and West Memphis along with East Texas Electric Cooperative.

The project cost is estimated at \$2.6 billion, with AECC's share at about \$1.96 billion.

IGP will provide 1,499 megawatts (MW) and create about 800 construction-phase jobs with 25 to 35 long-term operations jobs.

"With the expected closure of the Independence Steam and White Bluff Electric Station coal plants in Arkansas, IGP will fill a critical gap to ensure electric cooperative members are not exposed to energy shortages and continue to receive reliable, affordable and responsible power 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," said AECC President/CEO Vernon "Buddy" Hasten.

The anticipated in-service date is scheduled for January 2031.



The Independence Gas Plant near Newark will generate 1,499 megawatts and is scheduled for operation in 2031.

Employees build home, hope with Habitat for Humanity

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas employees traded office work for tool belts during a Habitat for Humanity volunteer project, June 25-26 in North Little Rock.

For many volunteers, the two-day effort offered a chance to learn new skills, use power tools and work alongside coworkers in a setting far different from their daily routines.

Doris Whitt, compensation analyst and volunteer organizer, said the project reflected the cooperative commitment to serving others.

"It was inspiring to see our employees step in with such willingness and enthusiasm," Whitt said. "They were not only helping to build a house, they were helping to build hope for a family in our community."



Employees of the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas help to build a home for Habitat for Humanity.

RESILIENT LEADERSHIP *continued from page 5*

converted into her personal library with many shelves full of books. Not dime-store novels but books on medicine, law enforcement, politics, military history, religion, animals and veterinary medicine, and entire sections dedicated to great leaders in history she admired. Men like Abraham Lincoln and Sir Ernest Shackleton. It was her love of Resilient Leaders like Lincoln and Shackleton that captured my attention and planted the seeds of this summer's conference.

Like it or not, a lot of who we are comes from our childhood, and it was in that library that a light came on for me. The mother who loved me warmly as a young boy but distanced herself from me as an adult had also transferred a lot of values and knowledge to me. She played a key role in any success I have achieved in life, especially in leadership. She took the best traits from her heroes and tried to instill them in me.

I have written many stories about my stepfather, who

was transformational in my life, but precious few about my mom. Maybe someday I will write a book about her. I shared some of the lessons in Resilient Leadership that she taught me at our conference this summer. And I will share a couple with you now.

While sitting at her bedside, I opened a small jewelry chest on her nightstand to see a small 3x5 card in her handwriting that read, "Be a leader. Leaders are not followers, leaders lead. Humility is the key." As I thumbed through her book titled "Endurance: Shackleton's Incredible Voyage," I saw this on the inside cover: "In appreciation for whatever it is that makes men accomplish the impossible." Beneath that, a small note in my mother's handwriting read, "I found this book after a long 22-year search. It cost me \$1 at a bargain bookstore in Macomb, IL. God does answer prayer if one is patient enough to wait."

Thanks, Mom — we all needed that. 🙏

Scooping up support for Summer Cereal Drive

Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas employees raised \$24,847 during the THV11 2026 Summer Cereal Drive benefiting families served by the Arkansas Foodbank.

"I'm so proud of the way our employees showed up for this year's Summer Cereal Drive," said Cheryl Hughes, administrative services coordinator and fundraiser organizer. "Every breakfast ticket, bake sale purchase, taco lunch and auction bid helped us make a difference for Arkansas families."

Throughout June, employees supported the effort through payroll deduction, fundraising events and an online auction. Each event reflected the generosity, teamwork and community spirit that continue to make the Summer Cereal Drive a meaningful tradition.

For more information, visit arkansasfoodbank.org.



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas employees present a check for \$24,847 to the Arkansas Foodbank, representing funds raised during the THV11 2026 Summer Cereal Drive.

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS FOODBANK

Where Is It?

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

In the July issue we hid a quill in honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. Said one correct reader: "Appropriately you have placed your quill at the end of Rob Roedel's last column of the Let's Eat feature on page 41. Rob, enjoy your next venture as much as you did eating your way around Arkansas." Winners selected in our drawing to receive Arkansas Living grocery totes were:

Linda Marie Timke, Rogers (Carroll Electric Cooperative)
Harry Dacko, Hot Springs Village (First Electric Cooperative)
Nancy Pace, Cherokee Village (North Arkansas Electric Cooperative)
Megan Knight, Crossett (Ashley-Chicot Electric Cooperative)
James Duncan, Corning (Clay County Electric Cooperative)

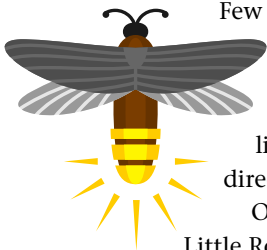
Few things say Arkansas summer like watching lightning bugs from the porch at dusk. For August, we've hidden one in this issue. Glow on and see if you can catch it!

Aug. 15 is the deadline. To enter, click on the "Where Is It?" link on the homepage of arkansaslivingmagazine.com, or go directly to arkansaslivingmagazine.com/where-is-it-contest.

Or mail entries to: Where Is It, Arkansas Living, P.O. Box 510, Little Rock, AR 72203.

Include your name, address and electric co-op (nonmembers also are eligible), plus the correct page number.

** If your magazine arrives after the deadline, submit your entry by the 15th of the following month. We'll send a prize to a randomly selected latecomer. June's winner was: Rebecca Landes, Mulberry (Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative).*



TRIVIA

- Washington, D.C.'s, east-west streets are lettered, but there's no J Street. In the 18th century, the letters "I" and "J" looked so similar that they were often confused, thus city planners simply skipped J Street.
- The first alarm clock could ring only at 4 a.m.
- Cows have best friends and can become stressed when separated from them.
- The first person convicted of speeding was Walter Arnold in 1896. He was driving 8 mph in a 2-mph zone.
- A lightning bolt is five times hotter than the surface of the sun.
- The longest place name in the world is a hill in New Zealand: Taumatawhakatangihangakoauauotamateaturipukakapikimaunahoronukupokaiwhenuakitanatahu.
- The first known vending machine dispensed holy water in ancient Egypt.
- In medieval England, animals could be put on trial and formally prosecuted for crimes.
- Alaska is the westernmost, easternmost and northernmost state in the United States.
- The Washington Monument stands 554 feet and 7 inches tall and remains the world's tallest masonry structure.
- The largest living organism on Earth is a fungus in Oregon covering more than 2,000 acres.
- "Curiosity is the wick in the candle of learning." — William Arthur Ward, author

Honoring Heroes

Youth Tour connects past patriots with future leaders



Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour delegates visit George Washington's Mount Vernon leading up to America's 250th anniversary celebration.

STORIES BY ARKANSAS YOUTH TOUR DELEGATES

PHOTOS BY CHANCE ALLMON



A Capitol Hill highlight is meeting Arkansas Sen. John Boozman (front row, left) and Sen. Tom Cotton (front row, right) on the steps of the U.S. Capitol.

For 47 high school seniors, the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Youth Tour was more than a trip to Washington, D.C. It was a chance to see history up close, honor heroes past and present, make lasting memories and form new friendships.

Before heading to D.C. to visit the monuments and memorials that honor America's earliest leaders, delegates heard from a present-day public servant, state Sen. Dave Wallace of Leachville, who shared about his service in the Vietnam War.

"What we always have to remember is that freedom is not free," Wallace said. "Those names on that Vietnam Veterans Memorial in D.C. are the men and women who gave up all their tomorrows, so we can have the freedom that we have today."

Wallace's message became personal for the delegates when each student received



“What we always have to remember is that freedom is not free,” Wallace said. “Those names on that Vietnam Veterans Memorial in D.C. are the men and women who gave up all their tomorrows, so we can have the freedom that we have today.”

the name of a Vietnam War service member from near their hometown whose name is engraved on the memorial. At the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in D.C., students searched for those names on the wall — a quiet, sobering reminder of the sacrifice behind the freedoms they were there to learn about.

“Youth Tour gives students the opportunity to experience history where it happened and see how the lessons of the past connect to the leaders they can become,” said JD Lowery, Youth Tour coordinator and director of community and economic development for the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas.

Youth Tour, held June 13-19, was especially meaningful as the capital city prepared to mark the nation’s 250th anniversary. Throughout the trip, delegates reflected on the leaders who helped shape the country and the ideals that continue to guide it.

The following essays, written by three delegates, share their experiences and reflect on the lasting influence of some Founding Fathers.

LEADING BY EXAMPLE

BY KAMBREE ALLEN

SHERIDAN, C & L ELECTRIC

During America’s 250th anniversary, history came alive more than ever when strolling through Washington, D.C. We witnessed how the leadership of George Washington still shapes our country. Touring his

home at Mount Vernon and seeing the Washington Monument made us realize that his legacy is so much

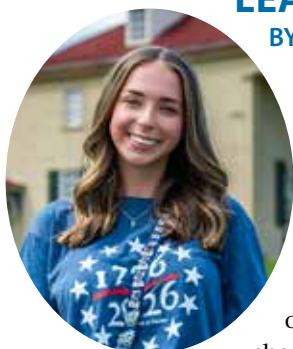
more than the pages of a history book.

One of the most memorable stops was Mount Vernon. We enjoyed learning about Washington’s farm and how he took care of the land. We were surprised to discover that he was not only our first president and a military commander, but also an innovative farmer who experimented with crops and promoted prudent land management. After touring his home, we came to know more about him than just being a Founding Father. Mount Vernon, during America’s 250th celebration, made us think that values Washington lived by are still reflected in our nation today.

“What stood out to me is that Mount Vernon wasn’t ➤



Holding an Arkansas flag in front of the state’s pillar at the World War II Memorial, Petit Jean Electric delegates Shari Bell of Damascus, Ethan Stortz and Zeke Leonard of Bee Branch, proudly represent the state during their visit to the nation’s capital.



Maryn Harvey of Bryant (First Electric) views a bust of George Washington in the museum at Mount Vernon.

just some historical monument, it was a home full of love and life. It was a home that reflected the values that George Washington held, the values that our nation seeks to pursue,” said delegate Maggie Poteat of Bryant (First Electric).

Walking through Washington’s home made it clear that honesty, service and humility were part of his everyday life before they were part of the foundation of our country.

Seeing the Washington Monument made us think about how much he affected the United States. The obelisk structure represents his character, his ability to lead and his willingness to put our country before himself. After two terms as president, he voluntarily relinquished power, setting an example of unselfish leadership that still sustains our democracy today.

What we learned from this Youth Tour experience is that the legacy of Washington lives on — not just in the monuments built to honor him, but also in the leadership, service and accountability that is still shaping our nation 250 years after its creation.

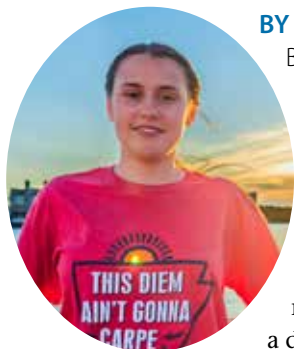
IDEAS THAT ENDURE

BY SOFIA MERRIMAN

BELLA VISTA, CARROLL ELECTRIC

Walking through Washington, D.C., delegates quickly realized that the city is a living archive of American ideals.

“It is where every street echoes with history and every monument reminds you that one person can make a difference,” delegate Eilam Holland of Mena (Rich Mountain Electric) said.



Mary Jansen of Pocahontas (Clay County Electric) and Josie Pearson of Lamar (Arkansas Valley Electric) are in awe after seeing the nation’s founding documents at the National Archives.

This concept is brightly reflected through the landmarks of Thomas Jefferson’s legacy: the Thomas Jefferson Memorial and the National Archives.

The Jefferson Memorial rises in quiet grandeur by the glimmering and tranquil Tidal Basin. Completed in 1943, the marble columns and domed roof encircle a 19-foot bronze statue of Jefferson. With the Declaration in his left hand and his figure captured midstride, Jefferson stands as a symbol of advancing democracy.

Four curved walls of the memorial chamber capture Jefferson’s key principles for the young country: the universality of human rights, the choice to practice any faith, the belief that liberty is a gift from God and the idea that laws must evolve as society progresses.

The rotunda bears Jefferson’s solemn vow: “I have sworn upon the altar of God eternal hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man,” truly reflecting his commitment to build a strong and lasting nation. The Jefferson Memorial faces north toward the White House, with the Washington Monument in the middle, creating a symbolic link of legacy between the Founding Fathers.

It is easy to feel what delegate Isaac Merriman of Bella Vista (Carroll Electric) described: “The beauty is awe-inspiring and the atmosphere mirrors Jefferson’s sense of duty for our homeland.” ➤



The obelisk structure represents his (George Washington’s) character, his ability to lead and his willingness to put our country before himself. After two terms as president, he voluntarily relinquished power, setting an example of unselfish leadership that still sustains our democracy today.

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The National Archives exhibits the most iconic documents of American freedom: the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights. They rest under dim protective light, and the faded ink still carries the promise our Founding Fathers established.

Learning that the museum is a home for billions of records across all three branches of the U.S. government, delegate Hudson Smith of Bentonville (Carroll Electric) reflected, “The foundation of our country is in the fight for the power of justice and against inequality.”

Today, Washington, D.C., is a hub where political, economic and military actions ripple across the world. It was there our delegates got to explore the country’s past, respect its present and picture its bright future.



Andrew Vondran of Monticello (C & L Electric) looks up at the powerful photographs surrounding him during a visit to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

understand the gravity of his contributions to our nation.

Through his writings, like the Federalist Papers and his work at the Constitutional Convention, he helped convince Americans to support the new Constitution and build a stronger nation.

Fellow delegate Shari Bell of Damascus (Petit Jean Electric) said: “Stay ready so you don’t have to get ready,” which perfectly described Hamilton’s life. He constantly prepared himself to lead and serve others.

Youth Tour showed us that Hamilton’s legacy is not found in one place. It is in every monument, tribute and painting made in honor of him, and it is in our government today. An impact like that doesn’t go away, and Youth Tour helped remind us of it.

FOUNDATION STILL STANDS

BY REMY VONDRAIN

PALESTINE, WOODRUFF ELECTRIC



Many students only know Alexander Hamilton through the musical “Hamilton.” After visiting Washington, D.C., Youth Tour delegates gained a better understanding of his real impact on American history.

One of the stops on the trip was at the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing. Hamilton’s portrait appears on the \$10 bill. Seeing where money is produced reminded us of his role as the first Secretary of the Treasury. His ideas helped establish the nation’s financial system and continue to influence our economy today.

Another meaningful visit was at the U.S. Capitol. While walking through the building, we saw portraits and artwork honoring important figures from American history, including Hamilton. A statue of Hamilton in Statuary Hall recognizes his contributions in the American Revolution and the groundwork he helped lay in our government. Seeing these things made in tribute to him helped us

Throughout the week, delegates encountered many examples of American leadership — from the Founding Fathers who shaped the nation to veterans like Sen. Wallace, who defended its freedoms, and today’s public servants, including Arkansas Sens. Tom Cotton and John Boozman, whom the delegates met at the U.S. Capitol.

The experience also shined a light on the next generation of leaders. Delegates selected Kailyn Burroughs of Mount Vernon (First Electric) to represent Arkansas on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association Youth Leadership Council, earning her a \$5,000 scholarship while continuing to develop her leadership skills through state and national cooperative programs.

Through Youth Tour, delegates learned that history is not only something to study, it is something they have the opportunity to carry forward. 🌱



Kailyn Burroughs of Mount Vernon (First Electric) is the 2026 Youth Leadership Council delegate, winning a \$5,000 scholarship.



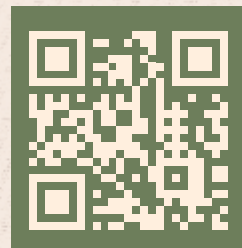
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recreational shooting and archery programs, and bringing the outdoors to communities and classrooms across Arkansas. Scan the code below to make an impact where it matters the most.



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Corning Charm

Rivers and history run through Clay County

BY JACK SCHNEDLER PHOTOS BY MARCIA SCHNEDLER

The lawn of Corning's (corningar.gov) courthouse is graced by a tall obelisk honoring America's war dead. The gleaming pillar rises outside the one-story building, which shares the role of Clay County's seat with a nearly identical structure in Piggott, 25 miles to the east.

Inscribed on the Corning memorial is a message that blends a universal focus with a local one: "In honor and loving memory of the veterans of all wars, with a special salute to those from Clay County who gave their lives for our country. May they not have died in vain."

Train town

The building of a railroad from St. Louis to Little Rock led to Corning's establishment as Clay County's seat with its incorporation in 1877. It was named for one of three men connected with the rail line, but which Clay remains unclear. By 1880, the community's population reached 393 as oak and cypress products were harvested and shipped north. The next year, a second courthouse opened in Piggott to ease access to official business given the county's swampy terrain.

Corning attracted light industry in the 1950s and 1960s, but most of those factories later closed. One of the city's largest employers today is **Clay County Electric** (claycountyelectric.com) and their fiber subsidiary, **Clay County Connect** (claycountyconnect.com). Other prominent employers include 1st Choice Healthcare, the Corning School District, Peco Foods, Inc. and Riceland Foods.

Parks and places

M.B. Ainley, Jr. Community Center (tinyurl.com/AinleyCommunityCenter), 536 E. Elm St., is the city's main venue for indoor recreation. Its facilities include a basketball court, a cardio room, a weight room and a racquetball court, as well as conference and dining rooms.



Wynn Park in Corning hosts several festivals throughout the year, including the Harvest Festival in October.

Victory Lake Park, which partly surrounds the center, contains the city's golf course as well as a fishing pier.

Two Corning homes are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sheeks House, 502 Market St., is a wood-frame structure with a hip roof. It was built in 1872 and has been owned for most of the time since by Edward V. Sheeks and his descendants. He was one of the community's first prominent businessmen.

Oliver House, 203 W. Front St., is an 1880 L-shaped structure with porches supported by Tuscan columns. It was built by J.W. Harb and bought soon after by Dr. J.L. Oliver Jr. The interior's original woodwork includes two impressive fireplace mantels.

Dining choices include **Parkview Restaurant**, 1615 W. Main St. (tinyurl.com/ParkviewRestaurant); **Gigi's Restaurant**, 301 N. Missouri Ave. (facebook.com/GigisRestaurantCorning); **Harold's BBQ Restaurant**, 1108 W. Main St. (facebook.com/haroldsbbqcorning); **American Dragon**, 1504 W. Main St. (facebook.com/americandragoncorning); **Market 602**, 602 SW Second St. (tinyurl.com/Market602); and **Twisted Toppings Pizzeria**, 2000 U.S. 67. (tinyurl.com/TwistedToppings).

Fishing and festivals

Tucked in Arkansas' northeast corner, **Clay County** (claycountyarkansas.org) is a popular fishing destination. That is thanks in large part to the four rivers — Black, Cache, Current and St. Francis — that flow through the county's 639 square miles. The Black River runs just southeast of Corning from its source in southern Missouri.

Wynn Park, on Kipper Lane off West Main Street (U.S. 62) hosts several popular events. Annual festivities include the Corning 4th of July Picnic, Easter Egg Hunt, Boo Bash and Hop Alley Rally, a spring festival held on Main Street. On the fourth Saturday in October, the Harvest Festival features crafts booths and displays of old-time farm equipment that mark the county's agricultural history. Christmas in the Park salutes the holiday season each December.



An obelisk monument honors war veterans at the Clay County Courthouse in Corning.



A fishing pier at Victory Lake Park in Corning is available to the public along with the city's golf course.

RECTOR CELEBRATES LABOR DAY TRADITION

One of Clay County's most treasured yearly events is the **Rector Labor Day Picnic**, set for Sept. 4-7, some 25 miles southeast of Corning.

Nearly every September since 1941, Rector has held the festive gathering, founded to raise funds for the upkeep of Woodland Heights Cemetery, an effort that continues. The first Miss Rector, Demetra Bradshaw, was chosen in 1944. During that decade, elaborately decorated floats and bicycles were featured in a parade, which happens this year on Sept. 7.

In the 1970s, the Rector picnic expanded to the entire Labor Day weekend. In the 1990s, the park's Community Center was built to enhance the festivities.

The fun begins Sept. 4 with the Rector Saddle Club Rodeo, as well as the start of family, class and work reunions. The fun culminates on Labor Day morning (Sept. 7) with the parade from downtown to the picnic grounds in Veterans Memorial Park, along South Main Street just north of U.S. 49. Attractions at the park include a talent show, games, carnival rides, music and food.

For more information, visit rectorarkansas.gov/labor-day. 



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Cool Currents

Tailwaters make summer trout fishing possible



STORY AND PHOTOS BY CARLTON AND LEIGH WING

Hot Arkansas summers. Those three words fit together so routinely they are almost cliché. Some heat-averse types avoid anything outside until October. Very late October,

like Halloween. But those opposite-temperature hibernators need not fear. Arkansas has a secret summer weapon to beat the heat: Tailwaters are nature's air conditioner.

Those same rivers located immediately downstream from hydroelectric dams host some amazing trout, and also host smart anglers who beat the heat with great fishing. Trout are cold-water fish, but thanks to several dams along Arkansas waterways, you can fish for trout all year long. Those last three words should be capitalized because trout fishing in the summer in the South should not be a thing, but it is!

Here's why: Trout need cold water, but how is any water cold during a "hot Arkansas summer?" Answer: The beauties of science make the water at the bottom of the lake cold. The dams pull their flows from the bottom of the lake, meaning the river that flows from that dam is as cool as a Darius Acuff three-pointer. This is the kind of science that makes trout happy ... and hot anglers happy. Everybody wins!

Several lakes in Arkansas feature this temperature inversion therapy: Greers Ferry, Beaver Lake, Lake Greeson, Lake Catherine, Lake Ouachita, Norfork Lake and Bull Shoals Lake offer temptingly temperate fishing. (The tailwaters along the Ouachita River chain are only stocked with trout from November through April.)

We should add that the Spring River is also a coldwater fishery, but its coolness isn't from a dam, its naturally fed spring water is 58 degrees. Trout love that.

Important safety tip! Some of our tailwaters rise and fall dramatically depending on the power generation schedule

at the dam. This is huge when it comes to your safety. Strong current will turn a peaceful trout stream into a raging trout river and will sweep you away. Fortunately, the generation schedule is published ahead of time.

Before fishing tailwaters, always check conditions. A good place to start for each lake is [agfc.com/tag/arkansas-wildlife-fishing-report/](https://www.agfc.com/tag/arkansas-wildlife-fishing-report/).

It's also a good idea to keep your eye on the water level by finding a spot just above the waterline close to the shore. When the waterline rises, it's time to get out.

Cool tailwaters keep your tail cool Freon-free! It's a great way to enjoy a hot summer day in Arkansas' Great Outdoors!

Carlton and Leigh Wing host the "Arkansas' Great Outdoors" weekly television series. Visit facebook.com/arkansasgreatoutdoors.



On a fishing trip with Trout Magnet owner Jeff Smith (right), Carlton Wing reels in a brown trout on the Little Red River, where cold water from Greers Ferry Dam keeps trout fishing productive throughout the summer.



Cold water, released from Arkansas' tailwater dams creates ideal trout habitat — and memorable catches like this brown trout.

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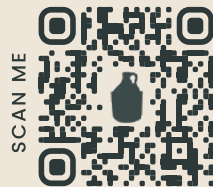
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Island Adventures

Camp, paddle and play on Lake Ouachita

STORY AND PHOTOS BY BOB ROBINSON

Ugh! Summers in Arkansas. It's too hot to hike or backpack, and the streams are too shallow to float. What's a person to do when they want to spend some time in the great outdoors?

How about heading to the islands! The Lake Ouachita Islands, that is.

Spanning 40,000 acres, Ouachita is not only the largest lake entirely within Arkansas' borders but also consistently ranked among the cleanest lakes in the United States. Also, it is the only Corps of Engineers lake in the state that allows camping on its islands.

The pristine environment is the result of being surrounded by the 1.8-million-acre Ouachita National Forest. With this protective buffer zone, there are minimal signs of development on its shoreline. This creates a level of natural tranquility that is increasingly rare.

So, load up your kayak or canoe and get ready for an exhilarating island adventure.



Camping on the Lake Ouachita Islands offers tranquil views of Arkansas' largest body of water.

Float your boat

With over 700 miles of shoreline and more than 200 islands, the paddling exploration options are limited only by your quest for adventure.

One of the more popular routes is the Ouachita Geo-Float Trail, which was the first water-based interpretive trail included in the National Trails System. This 16-mile trip guides boaters around the lake, highlighting and describing some of the interesting geological formations bordering the shoreline.

With yellow buoys flagging the route, the trail leads



Paddle your way around 700 miles of shoreline and more than 200 Lake Ouachita Islands.

boaters to 12 suggested areas for exploration. You can pick up a map, which will provide background on the features, at Blakely Dam or from the local Corps of Engineers office.

Submarine Slide is one of the more interesting formations. This conglomeration of boulders, pebbles, cobblestones and sedimentary rocks is the result of a giant underwater mudslide created by an ancient earthquake. The slide mixed rocks, mud, silt and sand that eventually compressed into stone.

Another site it passes has long been an unresolved mystery for geologists. Rolling Stones is a collection of sandstone boulders that came from the outcrop up the hill. The mystery is what brought them down to the shale beach. Geologists believe the boulders were likely moved by Ice Age freeze-thaw cycles or ancient flash floods.

Other features that are always popular for floaters to explore are the mini-caves found throughout Lake Ouachita. The alcoves are the result of the lake's waves wearing away at the soft lime that cemented the rocks in place.

For the birds

Another favorite paddling destination is a site designated an important bird area by the Audubon Society. With an estimated 30,000-50,000 of the species roosting in the area between late July and early August, Bird Island is Arkansas' largest known purple martin roost. The island is a staging area for birds as they feed on insects and develop fat stores before migrating to South America.

Located approximately 1 mile from the nearest mainland

shoreline, the only way to reach the area is via boat. In the interest of protecting the bird habitat, visitors are not allowed on the island. However, at sunset, the offshore view from your boat of the swirling vortex of thousands of purple martins gathering for their nightly roost is a must-see experience.

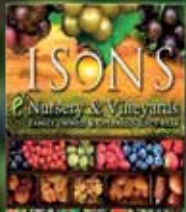
With additional water trails such as Buckville, Rabbit Tail and others, Lake Ouachita will continue to draw you back for more island adventures. After a day spent swimming, paddling and exploring, there's no better reward than watching the sun melt into the horizon from your own island campsite, surrounded by little more than water, sky and quiet.

Contact the Lake Ouachita Visitor Center for more information at (501) 767-9366. 



Bird Island on Lake Ouachita is home to an estimated 30,000-50,000 birds and the state's largest known purple martin roost.

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Throw Yourself a Bone

Full tang stainless steel blade with natural bone handle —now **ONLY \$79!**

The very best hunting knives possess a perfect balance of form and function. They're carefully constructed from fine materials, but also have that little something extra to connect the owner with nature.

If you're on the hunt for a knife that combines impeccable craftsmanship with a sense of wonder, the **\$79 Huntsman Blade** is the trophy you're looking for.

The blade is full tang, meaning it doesn't stop at the handle but extends to the length of the grip for the ultimate in strength. The blade is made from 420 surgical steel, famed for its sharpness and its resistance to corrosion.

The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

But we don't stop there. While supplies last, we'll include a pair of \$99 Stauer pocket binoculars *and* a genuine leather sheath **FREE** when you purchase the **Huntsman Blade**.

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Five Oaks Agricultural and Education Center in Stuttgart

Passion Provides Purpose

A passion that began in the heart of 27-year-old George Dunklin Jr. in 1983 has grown into more than 6,000 acres of conserved land, a private lodge, a research and education center and a haven for wildlife.

Long-time First Electric and Connect2First members, Five Oaks Agricultural and Education Center in Stuttgart is more than a destination, it's a home away from home.

Today, Five Oaks is a world-class, nonprofit hunting destination with a mission that reaches far beyond the field: education, research and conservation.

One of its most impactful initiatives is its youth camp program. Through hands-on experiences, young campers learn about nature, wildlife, outdoor safety and conservation while developing a lasting appreciation for the outdoors.

Through a partnership with the University of Arkansas at Monticello, Five Oaks gives selected graduate students the opportunity to live and work in Stuttgart alongside experienced biologists while conducting wildlife and conservation research.

New research initiatives, habitat projects and educational programs continue to support Five Oaks' mission to protect waterfowl, wetlands and the ecosystems that sustain them.

That dedication is evident throughout the property. When asked what the land's wildlife visitors might say if they could speak, Chief Operating Officer Stewart Hornor's response captured the heart of the organization's work: "I hope they would speak of the intentionality that is brought to Five Oaks, the intention of building a resourceful and safe rest stop during their visit, as only a small portion of this land is actually for hunting."

Today, Five Oaks' impact can be seen in campers discovering the outdoors, graduate students advancing conservation research and wildlife finding refuge across the land. What began as Dunklin's passion has become a legacy rooted in outdoor experiences, education and conservation.



COURTESY OF FIVE OAKS

Through a partnership with the University of Arkansas at Monticello, graduate students live and work at Five Oaks in Stuttgart, conducting vital wildlife research alongside experienced biologists.



COURTESY OF FIVE OAKS

What began as a personal passion for George Dunklin Jr. in 1983 has grown into Five Oaks Agricultural and Education Center — a 6,000-acre destination in Stuttgart where conservation, research, hunting and education thrive together.



COURTESY OF FIVE OAKS

Hands-on experiences at the Five Oaks youth camp teach kids about wildlife and conservation, fostering a lifelong love and respect for the great outdoors.

NOTICE: Capital Credit margins are allocated or assigned to members who belong to the cooperative during the year in which a margin is generated. Margins are allocated proportionally based on the amount a member paid for electricity during the margin year. The capital credit allocation for First Electric residential members for 2025 is 7.17%. For other rate classes, please contact our office at (800) 489-7405. For more information on capital credits, go to firstelectric.coop/capital-credits.

A Journey That Inspires Future Leaders

Four exceptional First Electric Cooperative delegates returned home from the 2026 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour with unforgettable memories, new friendships and a deeper understanding of leadership and public service.

Representing First Electric this year were Kailyn Burroughs of Mount Vernon; Margaret Poteat of Bryant; Maryn Harvey of Bryant; and Chloe Sims of Perryville. During their week in Washington, D.C., the students joined more than 2,000 young leaders from across the country to experience America's history, government and the cooperative difference firsthand.

From touring the U.S. Capitol, Arlington National Cemetery and the Smithsonian museums to visiting the nation's most iconic monuments, the delegates experienced history in a way that can't be replicated in a classroom.

The week concluded with an exciting honor for First Electric. Kailyn was selected as Arkansas' 2026 Youth Leadership Council (YLC) representative, an achievement recognizing her outstanding leadership, character and commitment to serving others. As Arkansas' YLC representative, Kailyn will continue representing the state's electric cooperatives throughout the coming year, including attending the Electric Cooperatives of Arkansas Summer Directors' Conference and National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's PowerXchange Conference.

First Electric is proud of Kailyn, Margaret, Maryn and Chloe for representing the cooperative with integrity and enthusiasm, and we look forward to watching each of them continue to lead and serve in their communities.



First Electric Youth Tour delegates Margaret Poteat, Maryn Harvey, Kailyn Burroughs and Chloe Sims visit the U.S. Capitol during their weeklong educational trip.

Members Reelect Directors

First Electric Cooperative members have reelected Karissa Rushing of Benton and Larry Wood of Cabot to serve six-year terms on the Board of Directors. The election results were announced during the cooperative's Annual Membership Meeting, held June 25 at First Electric's headquarters in Jacksonville, where the results of the mail-in ballot election were officially certified.

First Electric also extends its sincere appreciation to John Gaunt and Terry "Lucas" Minton for their willingness to run for the Board of Directors. Their participation reflects the strength of the cooperative's democratic process and their commitment to serving fellow members. The cooperative congratulates all four candidates for their dedication to First Electric and the communities it serves.

As a member-owned electric cooperative, First Electric is governed by a Board of Directors elected by and from its membership. The board has a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interests of the cooperative and its member-owners by establishing policies, providing governance and ensuring the cooperative remains financially strong while delivering safe, reliable and affordable electric service.



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Free Ride

Razorback Transit keeps Fayetteville rolling

STORY AND PHOTO BY KAT ROBINSON

The City on the Hill's booming economy, expanding housing market and influx of tens of thousands of college students keep Fayetteville bustling year-round. Helping connect it all is a public transportation system that is absolutely free to students and the general public alike.

Razorback Transit is a bus system that moves through much of the city, opening up possibilities across the region. It requires no pass, no parking permit, no fare at all.

But how? Drew Watzke, media specialist for Razorback Transit, explains, "Razorback Transit receives federal funds from the FTA (Federal Transit Administration), as well as from a small fee that is included in students' tuition." Together, those funding sources support a transportation system that serves both the University of Arkansas community and Fayetteville residents.

Riders do not have to flash a student ID or pay a fee to board. Anyone can ride.

"Since it is largely funded by federal dollars, Razorback Transit is a free public transportation service to the community," Watzke says. For a town that, in parts, has extremely limited parking options, the bus system becomes a lifeline.

These buses cover a surprising amount of ground. "Razorback Transit runs 14 routes that cover all of campus and much of the city of Fayetteville, including the west end of town down Wedington Street and the north end of town by the Northwest Arkansas Mall," Watzke shares. It reaches apartment complexes, shopping areas, work sites and medical facilities.

During the school year, routes are more plentiful, offering riders both inbound and outbound options to and around the university. During summer and the holidays, routes are simplified and condensed.

Connecting community

Then there are game days. On Razorback football and basketball game days, the population swells. Hotels and rentals fill up and traffic slows the entire town. Razorback Transit helps keep the situation from getting out of control.

"Transit runs specialty routes for football and basketball game days," Watzke says. It helps fans get to the action they want to see without taking minutes or even hours hunting for a parking spot within walking distance.

The system is built with accessibility in mind. "All



Comprising 14 routes, the Razorback Transit bus system offers free rides to University of Arkansas students and the general public.

transit vehicles are equipped to serve persons with mobility needs," Watzke shares. "Razorback Transit also operates a paratransit service that allows individuals with special needs to request on-demand transportation." It's intended for individuals with disabilities that limit them from using fixed-route buses.

The system also complements the region's massive cycling network, particularly those using the Razorback Greenway and its subroutes to traverse the area on two wheels. To get across a larger portion of the region more quickly, Razorback Transit is the next link in the chain.

"All transit buses are equipped with bike racks on the front of the vehicle for riders to mount their bicycles while they ride," Watzke says.

How can you catch up with Razorback Transit? The app Passio GO!, a real-time bus tracking platform, is available for download to your phone. It includes live route information, directions to bus stop locations, arrival times and system alerts. The system can also be accessed online at parking.uark.edu/transit.

It also allows riders to track the other area public transit option, Ozark Regional Transit, which offers fixed routes all the way north to Bentonville and to areas not served by Razorback Transit. Between the two systems, there are 220 fixed, fare-free stops available for pickup and step-off.

For a city of more than 93,000 residents and 34,000 college students, Razorback Transit offers an easy way to get around without relying on a car, filling up the gas tank and hunting for a parking spot. And the price tag — free — is just right. 



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Operation Round-Up Continues to Make a Difference

The generosity of First Electric Cooperative members continues to create a lasting impact across the communities we serve. Through Operation Round-Up, members voluntarily round up their monthly electric bills to the next whole dollar, with those spare change combining to make a powerful investment in local nonprofits, schools, emergency responders and community organizations.

At its July meeting, the Operation Round-Up Board approved grants to organizations dedicated to improving the lives of Arkansans through education, health and human services, youth development, public safety and community enrichment.

Congratulations to the following organizations selected to receive Operation Round-Up funding. Thank you for the important work you do to strengthen our communities and improve the quality of life for those you serve.

Brandon Burlsworth Foundation — \$500
 Sugarloaf Council — \$1,000
 Fishnet Missions — \$2,000
 Breakin' Bread Community Kitchen — \$2,000
 Methodist Family Health Foundation — \$1,500
 City of Pangburn, Fire Department — \$2,500
 Arkansas County Youth Growth & Development Program — \$1,700
 Pulaski County Council for Communities Children and Youth — \$1,000
 The City of Hope Outreach — \$500
 The Hedge Ministry, Inc. — \$2,000
 AR Kids Read — \$2,000
 Bay Area EMS, Inc. dba Heart of the Bay Food Pantry — \$1,000
 Goodness Village — \$1,000
 Holy Sews, Inc. — \$2,000
 Lonoke County Safe Haven — \$2,000
 Saline County Safe Haven — \$2,000
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2 Bioptic Driving Glasses

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



3 Spectacle Microscope Glasses

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



4 Spectacle Prismatic Glasses

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

5 E-Scoop Contrast Enhancing Glasses

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

6 Electronic Magnification

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



7 Virtual Reality Wearables

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

8 Testing and solutions individually prescribed

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

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Snapshots from our readers

**Cousins
picking
blueberries.**
Jessie Erwin,
Quitman.



Mabry's a big help watering the garden!
Sarah Lair, Russellville.



Heidi and Huck showing off their tater harvest.
Heather Long, Rowell.



Just a boy and his ever-vigilant steed watching over him.
Amber C., Etowah.



Cicada ghost army. Keeli Gay, Calamine.



Kai and Kes give pup Bub (and each other!) rides in the wheelbarrow. Cathy Messer, Austin.



Sampling Nanny's first tomato.
Becky Noonan, Clarksville.



Clayton watering the garden.
Madilyn Bazyk, Paris.



Elsie Mae enjoying her backyard bathtub.
Kennedi Blankenship, Melbourne.

Share your photos with your fellow Arkansas Living readers! Please submit high-resolution photos with detailed information about the pictures (who took it, where, who is in it, etc.) to: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-photo.

Crape Expectations

Myrtles offer beauty beyond blooms



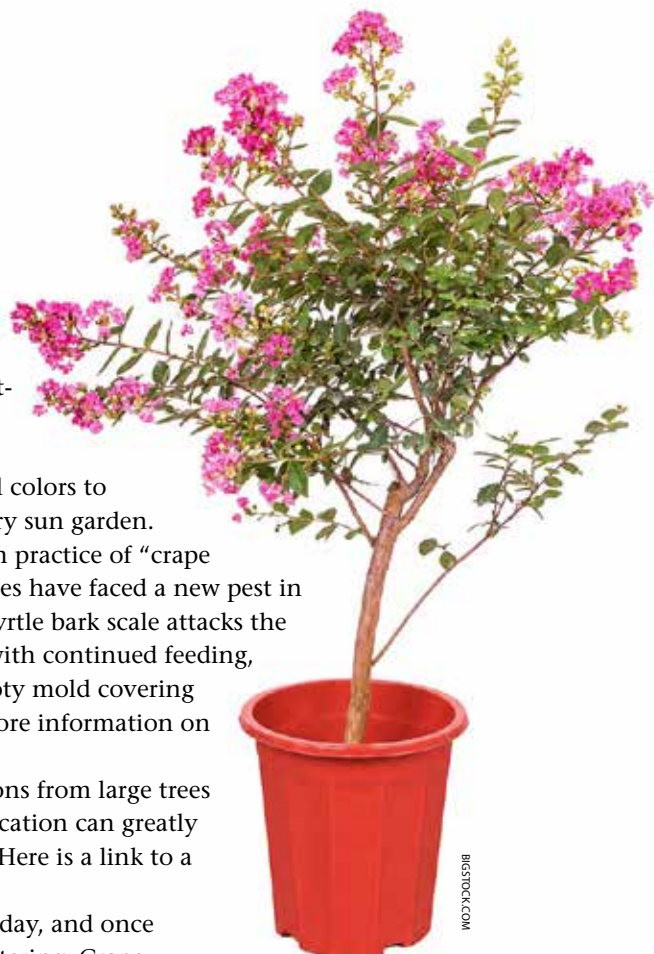
BY JANET B. CARSON

One of the most ubiquitous plants in the Southern landscape is the crape myrtle, and it's in its prime right now. A true Southern plant, it loves sun, can take heat and humidity, is drought-tolerant and blooms all summer. There is little wonder why it is so common in our landscapes. With a wide range of mature plant sizes and several colors to choose from, there is a crape myrtle variety for every sun garden.

While long considered almost bulletproof, other than the common practice of “crape murder” — cutting them back to their knees every year — crape myrtles have faced a new pest in recent years that has reared its ugly head again this year. The crape myrtle bark scale attacks the stems or trunks of the tree. It first appears as small white specks, but with continued feeding, the scale insects give off sticky honeydew, which can lead to black sooty mold covering the stems. If you see the problem, here is a link to a fact sheet with more information on how to control it: tinyurl.com/CrapeBarkScale.

When choosing a crape myrtle for your yard, know you have options from large trees to dwarf, almost groundcover varieties. Choosing one that fits your location can greatly reduce your maintenance chores and give you a better-looking plant. Here is a link to a database of varieties by color and size: tinyurl.com/CrapeDatabase.

Crape myrtles need a minimum of six to eight hours of sunlight a day, and once established, usually don't need an excessive amount of fertilizer or watering. Crape myrtles offer color in every season, with beautiful flowers from summer through early fall, great fall foliage and, on standard varieties, beautiful bark color. 



With a wide range of sizes and colors, the sun-loving crape myrtle is a true Southern plant.

SIZE	VARIETIES	FLOWER/BARK COLOR
Dwarfs — 1 1/2 to 5 feet	Cherry Dazzle — 3-5 feet Chickasaw — 1 1/2-2 feet Rosy Carpet — groundcover, 1 1/2 feet	Red (slow growing) Pink Dark pink
5-10 feet	Colorama Scarlet — 10 feet Pink Velour — 6-10 feet Pocomoke — Up to 10 feet	Scarlet red Deep pink flowers/burgundy foliage Pink/cinnamon bark
11-20 feet	Dynamite — 15 feet Thunderstruck Lavender Skies — 15 feet Twilight — 12 feet	True red/long flowering Lavender Lavender pink
20 plus feet	Muskogee — 25 feet Natchez — 25 feet Tuskegee — 25 feet	Pink White flowers/cinnamon bark Watermelon pink/gray-white bark



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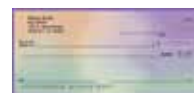
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Chill Out

Fresh, no-fuss recipes make for easy entertaining

RECIPES AND PHOTOS
BY JULIANA GOODWIN

Dill and Chive Vegetable Dip

Makes 6 or more servings.

- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 3/4 cup sour cream
- 2 chives, sliced thin
- 2 tablespoons fresh dill, chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill
- 1 teaspoon seasoned salt (like Lawry's)
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- Assorted vegetables for serving

In a mixing bowl, combine all dip ingredients. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours before serving with assorted vegetables.



Watermelon Bruschetta

Makes 5-6 servings.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| Topping | 1 | tablespoon balsamic vinegar |
| 3 cups watermelon, diced and drained | | Salt to taste |
| 1 garlic clove, chopped | Baguette | |
| 1/4 cup red onion, chopped | 1 | baguette |
| 1/2 cup basil, sliced | 3 | tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil |
| 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil | 1 | large garlic clove |

For topping: In a mixing bowl, combine all topping ingredients.

For baguette: Heat oven to 400. Slice baguette and brush with olive oil. Bake for 6-8 minutes until crisp. Slice garlic clove in half and rub on each piece of bread. Add topping to baguette slices.





Lemon Strawberry Icebox Cake

Makes 8 servings.

- 1 (15.2-ounce) package lemon-filled cookies
- 1 (10.5-ounce) jar lemon curd
- 8 ounces whipped cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1/3 cup powdered sugar
- 1 1/2 pounds strawberries, hulled and sliced thin
- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Arrange a single layer of cookies on bottom of a 2.5-quart casserole dish, breaking up cookies to fill in gaps. Set aside.

In a mixing bowl, beat together lemon curd, cream cheese and powdered sugar. Spread half the mixture on cookies. Top with half the strawberries.

In a separate mixing bowl, using whisk attachment of mixer, beat together heavy whipping cream, sugar and vanilla extract until soft peaks form. Spread half the mixture on berries.

For the next layer, split cookies open and place cream side down. Top with remaining lemon mixture, strawberries and whipped cream. Refrigerate for several hours before serving. Cookies will soften a little but still maintain a crunch.



This month's web exclusive recipe:

Curry Egg Salad

More recipes on our website: arkansaslivingmagazine.com

Juliana Goodwin is a food columnist, cookbook author and avid traveler. If you have a question, email julianalovesfood23@gmail.com.

A-maize-ing Creations

Celebrating corn, one of summer's most versatile vegetables

Fiesta Corn Salad

Makes 8 servings.

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-----|--|
| 2 | (15-ounce) cans corn, drained (or use fresh corn, cooked) | 1/2 | cup mayonnaise |
| | | 1/2 | cup sour cream |
| 1 1/2 | cups cheddar cheese, grated | 1 | (9.25-ounce) bag chili cheese-flavored corn chips (like Fritos), crushed |
| 1 | cup red bell pepper, minced | | |
| 1/4 | cup green onions, thinly sliced | | |

In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients except corn chips. Chill until ready to serve.

Just before serving, stir in corn chips.

Missy Masterson Hale, Hot Springs Village



JENNIFER CHRISTIAN/CIA

Smoky Corn on the Cob

Makes 1 to 10 servings.

- 1-10 ears corn, in husks
- 1-10 slices bacon

Pull back corn husks, leaving them attached, but remove silks. Wrap each ear of corn with 1 slice bacon. Pull husks back over corn and wrap each ear in aluminum foil. Grill or cook over a campfire until corn is tender.

Notes: You will not have to butter this corn. It will take on the flavor of the bacon so deliciously. The bacon won't get crisp and can be discarded once it's done, but all that flavor will be in the corn. It is the best corn you've ever had in your life.

Amy Rogers, Lampe, Missouri

Quinoa, Corn and Black Bean Salad

Makes 10 servings.

Dressing

- 3/4 cup lime juice
- 5 tablespoons red wine vinegar
- 1 1/4 teaspoons pepper
- 1 3/4 teaspoons salt
- 1 1/2 tablespoons oregano

Salad

- 1/2 cup dry quinoa
- 1 cup water
- 2 (15.5-ounce) cans black beans, rinsed and drained

- 2 (15.5-ounce) cans corn, rinsed and drained (or use fresh corn, cooked)
- 1 (15.5-ounce) can garbanzo beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 large orange bell pepper, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 3 large jalapenos, seeded and chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, minced
- 2 large tomatoes, seeded and chopped
- 1 large ripe avocado, diced
- 1/2 cup cilantro, chopped

For dressing: Combine all dressing ingredients in a jar; shake well. Refrigerate until ready to use.

For salad: In a saucepan, bring quinoa and water to a boil. Cover, reduce heat and simmer for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand 20 minutes. Fluff with a fork and cool completely.

In a mixing bowl, combine quinoa, black beans, corn, garbanzo beans, orange bell pepper, onion, jalapenos, garlic and tomatoes. Add dressing and stir to coat. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, and fold in avocado and cilantro before serving.

Debra Denbroeder, Hot Springs Village

Submit your favorite recipes! If your recipe is selected for printing, we will send you an Arkansas-shaped cookie cutter, complete with a QR code linking to cookie recipes.

Email: arkansasliving@aeci.com Online: arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-recipe

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



NEW RECIPE CONTEST: Cozy Comforts

Arkansas Living is giving away five copies of Kat Robinson's new cookbook, "What We Eat in Arkansas: 50 Recipes for The Natural State's Signature Dishes, Volume 1."

To enter: Submit your favorite winter recipe (think holiday family favorites, snow-day comfort creations, simmering soups, cozy casseroles, slow cooker staples and sweet seasonal bakes) by Sept. 15 to arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submit-a-recipe.

Flavors of Fall Contest Winners Announced

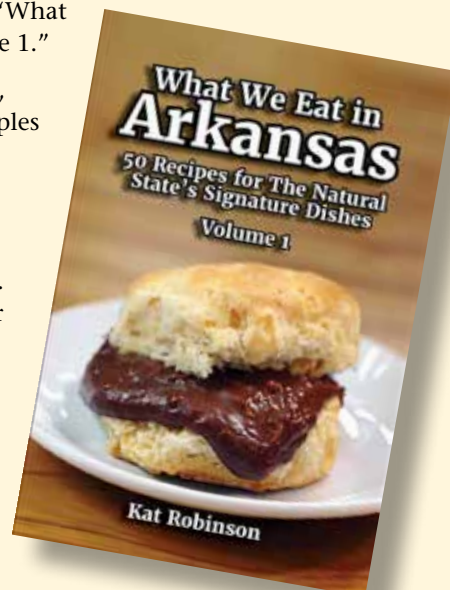
Thank you to everyone who participated in our Flavors of Fall recipe contest. Congratulations to our four random drawing winners, each receiving a Mueller Pro Chopper vegetable chopper and mandolin slicer:

Andrea Ricketts, Pea Ridge (Carroll Electric Cooperative)

Wynona Spadaro, Little Rock (First Electric Cooperative)

Sarah Morrow, Arkadelphia (South Central Arkansas Electric Cooperative)

Genny Barr, Pocahontas (Clay County Electric Cooperative)



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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

This Month Around the State *By Victor Fleming*

ACROSS

1 Boxing legend Willard

5 Detect with one's nose

10 1980s Chrysler product

14 "Commedia dell' ____"

15 Backyard feature

16 Extraordinary

17 Aug. 1 performer at North Little Rock's Simmons Bank Arena

19 48-Across' 53,179 square miles

20 Berlin mister

21 Regains some energy

23 "Our plan succeeded!"

27 Basketball needs

28 Security staffers

29 "Forget that you're ____ up" Anon.

32 Colossal chasm

33 Sandwiches from Taziki's

34 Beirut's country (abbr.)

37 Place between hills

38 Saw romantically

39 "____ it to the judge!"

40 That Cuban?

41 Underneath

42 Felled, as a tree

43 Golden State rooster

45 "____ is believing!"

46 Not taken yet, as a prize

48 Tennessee neighbor

50 Protein source

53 1871 Verdi opera

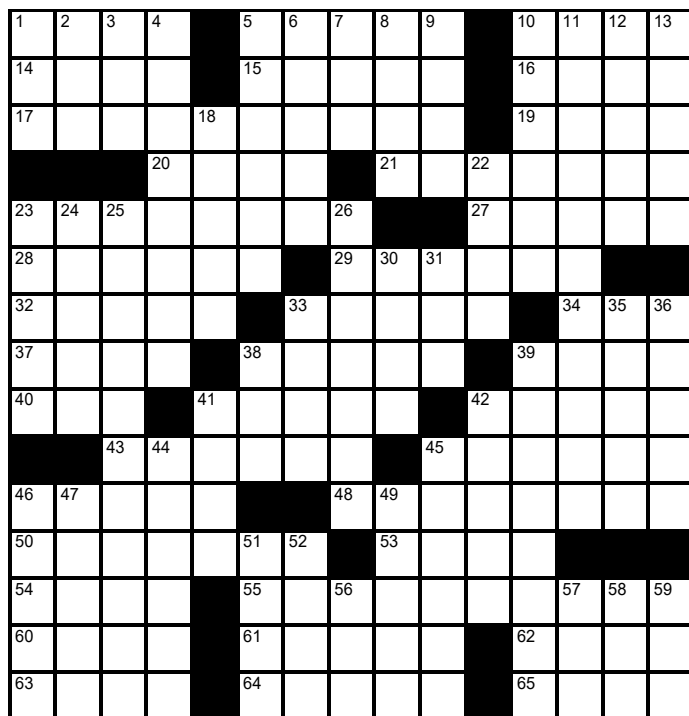
54 Remove from a battle zone (abbr.)

55 Aug. 7 performer at Pine Bluff's Saracen Casino

60 Pro ____ (proportionate)

61 Arrange in a row

62 Brickell or Falco



63 Small paving stone

64 Football's Grier

65 Cowboy's gear

DOWN

1 Boxer's punch

2 "To ____ is human"

3 Pigs' abode

4 Aquarium critter

5 Firecracker flashes

6 Miguel's mother

7 When the plane might land, initially

8 Lacking stiffness

9 Come in last

10 Former Polish capital

11 Aug. 22 performer at Conway's Kings Live Music

12 "Bible Sales ____" (2025 Walker Hayes song)

13 Gathers, as crops

18 Egghead types

22 Greek R's

23 "____ you a second chance!"

24 Big horns

25 Aug. 22 performer at Hot Springs' Timberwood Amphitheater

26 Florida speedway site

30 Got larger

31 "Spare the ____, ..."

33 Apple variety

35 Actress Verdugo of "Marcus Welby, M.D."

36 Edifices: (abbr.)

38 Cool, in '80s slang

39 Adolescent

41 Cause of distress

42 Exhilarating

44 Black-spotted feline

45 Nonfat, in coffeehouse lingo

46 Computer operators

47 Astronomical dazzlers

49 "Home on the ____"

51 A bit cracked?

52 ____ contendere (court plea)

56 Grafton's "____ for Homicide"

57 "Who wants dessert?" reply

58 Back talk

59 Director Ang

CROSSWORD ANSWERS ON PAGE 39

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS
for puzzle on page 38

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E	I	D	E	N	G	I	T	V	C	V	R
L	L	I	G	A	N	N	H	O	R	C	V
				D	A	V	N	A	B	O	S
S	A	S	N	A	K	R	A	N	O	M	N
G	N	I	E	S	E	N	F	A	B	N	
D	E	M	E	H	W	O	L	B	E	O	S
L	T	L	E	D	A	T	E	D	A	V	
B	E	L	S	O	R	A	G	S	S	A	B
				N	W	O	R	A	G	S	
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P	U	S	K	R	E	P	R	E	H		
A	V	E	A	R	E	A	D	V	N	A	B
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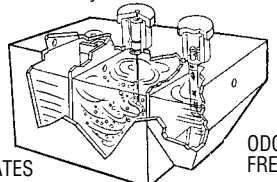
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STORY AND PHOTOS BY JENNIFER CHRISTMAN CIA

Housed in an 1832 building nestled within Historic Washington State Park, Williams Tavern offers more than a meal — it offers a brief trip back to a slower, simpler era. Today's visitors arrive by automobile rather than stagecoach, but a weekday lunch or Saturday breakfast still feels wonderfully removed from the rush of modern life.

More than a restaurant, it feels like a visit to grandmother's house — warm and welcoming and impossible to leave hungry. Whether you're

planning one last summer road trip or a weekend outing, Williams Tavern is worth seeking out in southwest Arkansas.

A group of Arkansas Living staff recently stopped in for lunch before an afternoon visit to the nearby Rick Evans Grandview Prairie Nature Center and its summer display of blackland prairie blooms.

The menu featured plenty to choose from, offering everything from appetizers, salads and sandwiches to burgers, Southern plate lunches and daily specials. Like the tavern itself, the menu favors substance over fuss. Portions are generous, prices are reasonable and flavors are familiar and comforting.

Because we still had an afternoon of exploring ahead of us and a drive back home, our group gravitated toward sandwiches, lighter selections and the just-right sweet tea. That meant passing on tempting plate lunches such as Chicken-Fried Steak,

Ham Steak with Cherry Sauce and Hamburger Steak, as well as desserts.

Saturday visitors can enjoy breakfast. The restaurant also hosts special buffet meals for the annual Christmas and Candlelight in December and the Jonquil Festival in March.

Our meal began with two standout appetizers. The Fried Green



Set behind a white picket fence, Williams Tavern in Historic Washington State Park looks untouched by time and serves comfort-food favorites.

Tomatoes arrived golden brown and crisp, their cornmeal coating providing a satisfying crunch before giving way to the tomatoes' slight tartness. One member of our group, with a view of the tavern's garden, couldn't help but wonder whether our tomatoes had been picked that very morning. Equally impressive were the Fried Pickles, which managed the difficult balance of being crunchy and flavorful without feeling heavy or greasy. Served with



Williams Tavern's Fried Pickles are crunchy and flavorful and a great start to any meal.



THE EATING ESSENTIALS

Williams Tavern

Historic Washington State Park
105 Carroll St.
Washington
(870) 983-2890

tinyurl.com/historicwashingtonstatepark

Hours of Operation

Tuesday-Friday and Sunday: 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Saturday: 7-10 a.m., 11 a.m.-3 p.m.



Piled high with corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese and Thousand Island dressing, the Reuben is one of Williams Tavern's most popular sandwiches.

ranch dressing, both quickly became favorites around the table.

The restaurant's rolls also earned enthusiastic reviews. Soft and served fresh, they disappeared quickly and set the tone for the plentiful plates that followed. In fact, by the time the main dishes reached the table, we already questioned how much room we had left. But we pressed on, forks and knives in hand — a fitting approach in Historic Washington, home of the legendary Bowie knife.

A Bison Burger, served on a toasted roll with traditional toppings, offered a well-seasoned nod to the region's frontier heritage. The menu notes that buffalo once roamed the very land where diners now sit. A Reuben arrived piled high with corned beef, sauerkraut, Swiss cheese and

Thousand Island dressing between slices of toasted rye, while a satisfying BLT delivered plenty of crisp bacon and fresh toppings. Another opted for the tavern's thick-cut Fried Bologna Sandwich, a nostalgic classic that carried just the right amount of caramelization from the griddle.

Not everyone chose a sandwich. One member of our group assembled a vegetable plate with Southern sides of black-eyed peas, greens and fried okra — the last one earning particular praise for its crisp coating and tender interior.

Of course, part of Williams Tavern's charm is its location. Before or after lunch, visitors can explore the homes, museums and workshops of Historic Washington State Park,



Fried okra is a perfect side for a Southern summer favorite, the BLT sandwich.

a preserved 19th-century village that ranks among Arkansas' most significant heritage destinations.

Whether you're drawn by the history, the scenery or simply the promise of a solid meal, Williams Tavern delivers all three. 

Dining recommendations? Submit at:
arkansaslivingmagazine.com/contact-us



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Calendar



Arkansas Fiddle & Banjo Championships & Concert

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM



Bluegrass & Fried Chicken Festival

ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM



National Championship Chuckwagon Races

COURTESY OF PORCH PIG PHOTOGRAPHY



Arkansas Renaissance Festival

COURTESY OF ARKANSAS RENAISSANCE FESTIVAL

Aug. 1

53rd annual Pine Tree Festival

Dierks, tinyurl.com/PineTreeFest

Aug. 1-2

Arkansas Sales Tax Holiday

Statewide, dfa.arkansas.gov

Aug. 4-8

Tonitown Grape Festival

Tonitown, tonitowngrapefestival.com

Aug. 6-8

Hope Watermelon Festival

Hope, hopewatermelonfest.com

Aug. 7-9

Hot Springs Baseball Weekend

Hot Springs, hotsprings.org/events/baseball-weekend

Aug. 8

Gravette Day

Gravette, facebook.com/CityOfGravette

Arkansas Fiddle & Banjo Championships & Concert

Mountain View, facebook.com/OzarkFolkCenterStatePark

Aug. 14-15

Soar NWA

Bentonville, soarnwa.com

Aug. 15

Chaffee Crossing Food and Artisan Market

Fort Smith, chaffeecrossinghistoricdistrict.com/market

Aug. 21-22

Bluegrass & Fried Chicken Festival

Mountain View, arkansasstateparks.com/events/bluegrass-fried-chicken-festival

Aug. 29

Great Southern Stone Skipping Championships

North Little Rock, stoneskipping.org

79th annual Mount Nebo Chicken Fry

Dardanelle, tinyurl.com/ChickenFry26

Aug. 29-Sept. 6

National Championship Chuckwagon Races

Clinton, chuckwagonraces.com

Weekends

Aug. 29-Oct. 4

Arkansas Renaissance Festival

Mount Vernon, arrenfest.com

Find more events at arkansaslivingmagazine.com/around-arkansas.
Submit events at arkansaslivingmagazine.com/submissions/submit-an-event.



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Todd Matthews

BERRYVILLE

Tonya Williams

BRYANT

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CABOT

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