

Cooperative annual meeting is just around the corner

Mark your calendar now for Friday, June 4, 2021. You do not want to miss your cooperative's 83rd Annual Meeting of Members at the Shelby County 4-H Fairgrounds in Shelbyville. This year, things will be a little different as registration and the meal will be drive through only (see map below).

As in the past, the Shelby County Pork Producers will be serving a pork chop dinner. Please go to

the cooperative's website, shelbyelectric.coop, and click on the red RSVP button to let us know how many people will be coming so we can plan for enough meals. **Meals will be limited to one per person in vehicle.**

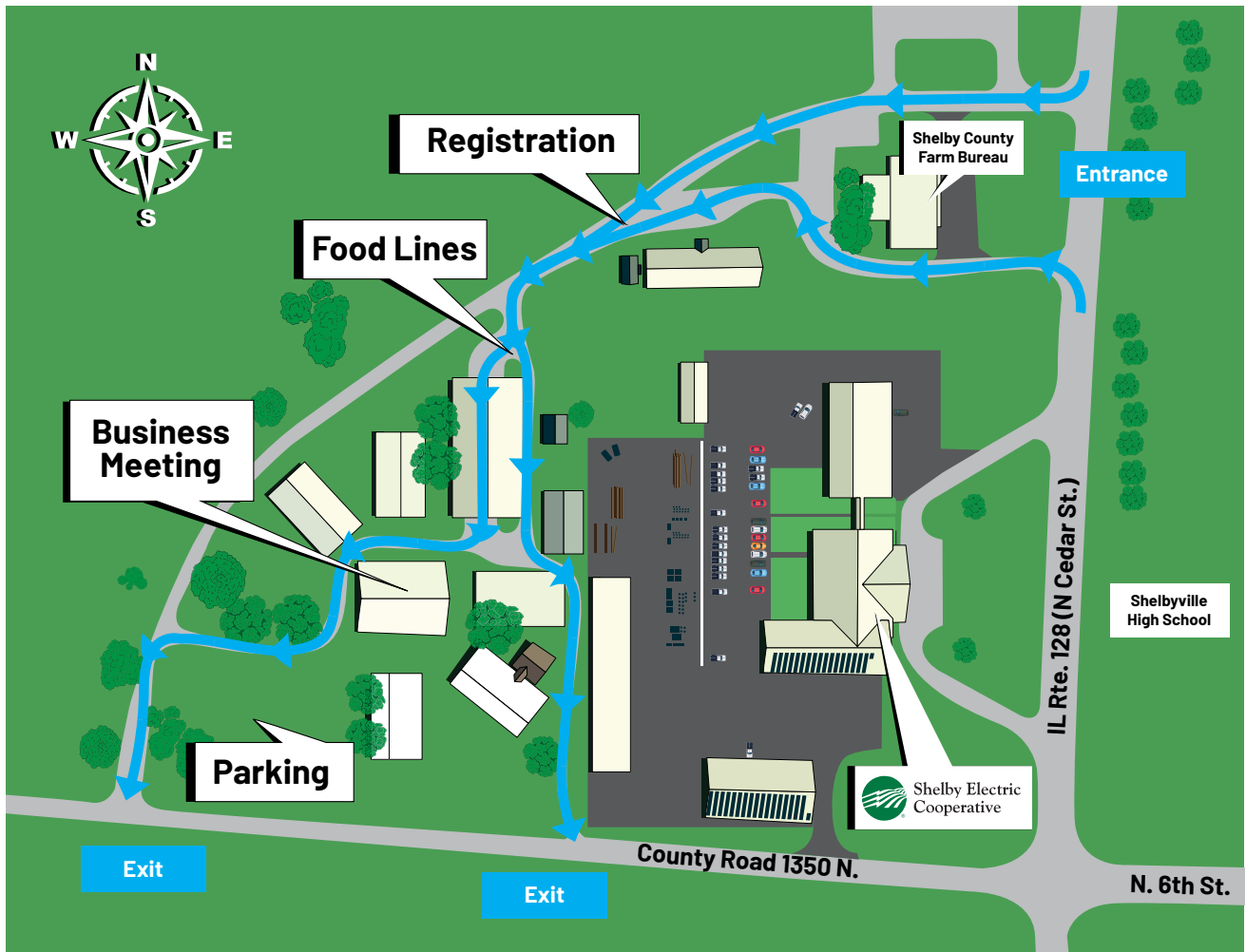
Registration and drive through meal will begin at 10:30 a.m. All registered members will receive a \$15 bill credit. For those who would



like to attend the business meeting, it will be held in the show arena at 1 p.m.

Look for your annual meeting notice, "Weathering the Storm," that will arrive in your mailbox later this month.

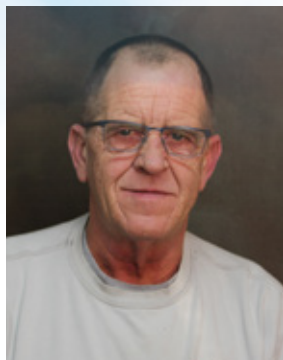
Hope to see you for the drive through meal and the business meeting on Friday, June 4 at the Shelby 4-H County Fairgrounds in Shelbyville.



The Shelby County 4-H Fairgrounds are located just west of the Cooperative on the north end of Shelbyville. This is a drive through event; please follow the route shown above.

Next step: Steve Darnell retires

May is the month many high school seniors graduate and begin their next step in life. For Steve Darnell, in 1978, that next step was to work for Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) when he was hired as a custodian. In 1981 Steve left, pursuing other ventures, then returned in 1989 as a groundman. Working through the apprenticeship program, he became a journeyman in May 1993. After 35 combined years of service, Steve will now be taking the next “next step” into retirement.



you an appreciation for what we do as linemen,” he said.

Steve not only worked to keep the power flowing at SEC but assisted other cooperatives with their devastating weather-related outages. “We work long hours in extreme conditions, but the adrenaline keeps you going and the

sense of satisfaction of a job well done when you see the power come back on. You just can’t beat that feeling,” he explained.

Changes in equipment and hydraulics were a few things Steve said improved the efficiencies of being a lineman. “While we still had to climb a pole occasionally, bucket trucks and digger derricks were vast improvements in how we did our work,” he said.

When someone ends a career after working more than 30 years for one organization, it can be hard to hang up the hooks and walk away.

“It has been a part of my daily routine for most of my life. Your fellow employees become like family because you spend as much time, if not more, than you do with your real family,” he reflected. “You also end up knowing a good number of members on a first name basis and that is probably what I’ll miss the most.”

When asked what he will not miss about the job, “I won’t miss those middle of the night trouble calls,” smiled Steve.

While he cannot wait to continue spoiling his six grandchildren, Steve will stay busy with other ventures he has been involved in over the years. He will be busy with his 20 head of cattle, trucking and excavating business, and Spruce Street Car Wash.

“My other ventures are my hobbies and what I like to do with my free time, so I’m sure I’ll stay busy in retirement. I’m very appreciative of the opportunities SEC provided me,” he said.

Best wishes on your retirement, Steve!

“It is hard to believe where the time has gone, but there are a lot of memories that will carry me the rest of the way,” noted Darnell. “I always enjoyed the day-to-day work orders, but what really got my adrenaline to flow was working outages after a major storm.”

To this day, he remembers the 1978 ice storm, along with many other prolonged outages caused by winter and summer storms. “It is exciting to see the lights come back on. It gives

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**Office Hours:
7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**



Illinois State Representative Brad Halbrook talks with Steve Darnell during a site visit.

Co-op Connections® & Healthy Savings Discounts

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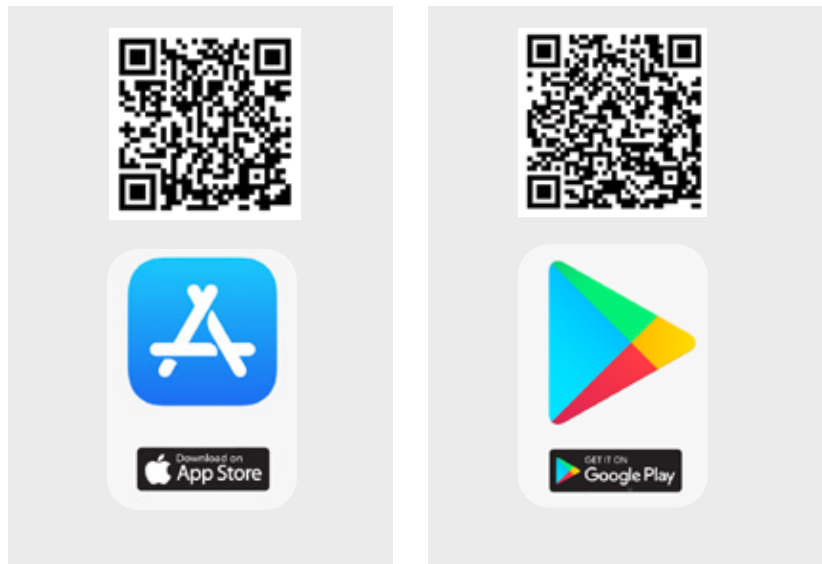
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REAL LIFE  REAL POWER

Getting Real with Marla and Yard Work

Birds are chirping, the sun is shining, grass and weeds are growing and growing. You have a little time before dark to take a whack at spiffing up your landscaping. As you reach for the container of 2-cycle oil mix the weed eater requires, you realize the container is empty. After scrounging around the garage, you locate the correct oil for mixing with gasoline. Once the inevitable spills and drips are cleaned up, the weed eater is properly fueled, and you have displaced your shoulder while attempting to pull-start the contraption, you swear there must be an easier way to complete your yard work! Oh boy, do you swear!

Electric-powered yard and garden tools may fit your needs. Many brands have corded and cordless options available. Following are a few electric tools that may help you maintain your yard more efficiently.

- **Lawn mowers** - For smaller yards, in addition to electric push mowers, robotic mowers are available to take a true hands-off approach to lawn maintenance. Like battery-powered robotic vacuums, these mowers are programmed to mow the grass. Be prepared to pay for the convenience and research what is required for programming the boundaries.
- **Hedge trimmers** - Electric hedge trimmers can make a demanding job much lighter on the arms and back. When using a corded version, stay mindful of the cord. It is easy to become tangled in it while working or to shear the cord. If you do not want to drag

several feet of extension cord, try a battery-operated model.

- **Hand-held shears** - This convenient tool can be used with only one hand. They often come with two attachments, a short hedge shear and a grass shear. Using this tool can make dead-heading, trims, and shape-ups much easier than using hand pruners.
- **Leaf blowers** - These are good for so many tasks in addition to cleaning up leaves in the fall. Why sweep the sidewalk, patio, and garage when you can use a leaf blower? Depending on the location of your outlets, choose a corded or battery-operated model to make quick cleanup of clippings and other outside debris.
- **Tillers** - For small gardens and flower beds, an electric tiller

provides ease and convenience. These lighter-duty options take less of a toll on your back than hand-pulling or hoeing.

Check out your local garden center or hardware store to see what other items may make your life easier this summer. Today's technology has improved electric garden tools' performance to be competitive with their gas-powered counterparts on many residential projects. Plus, electric tools are low maintenance and do not exhaust noxious fumes. If the battery runs low, take that as your cue to enjoy a cold beverage on the porch or patio while you and your tools recharge.

*~Marla Foor,
Communication Specialist*

