

Scholarship time again

It is that time of year again when high school seniors start their final semester, decide where they want to attend college, and how to pay for it. There are various types of scholarships available to help relieve some of that financial burden.



Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) will once again be awarding three academic scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each. Eligible students are sons and daughters of any current SEC member who is receiving electric service from the cooperative at the time the scholarship application is submitted. Students must be high school seniors pursuing a college education in the United States.

These \$1,000 scholarships may be used for educational costs at any two-year or four-year accredited college or university, including vocational/technical schools. Recipients are

chosen based on academic and community accomplishments, character, and financial need as demonstrated in the application and essay process. Tuesday March 5 is the deadline for receipt of the completed applications for the 2024 graduates. The three scholarship winners will be notified in May and announced at the cooperative's Annual Meeting of Members on Friday June 7.

In 2023, the winners were Audrey Summers of Mode, Evan Swisher of Tower Hill, and Kallie Havera of Taylorville. "We are pleased to be able to provide these outstanding students with a scholarship as a way to give back to the communities we serve," said Faith Wheeler, who coordinates this program for the cooperative.

Applications, official rules, and complete guidelines can be found by visiting SEC's website, shelbyelectric.coop and clicking on the "Community"

tab, or scanning the QR code below. They are also available from area high school guidance counselors. Please call the cooperative at 217-774-3986 or 1-800-677-2612 if you would like additional information about this scholarship opportunity.

Previous winners offered these tips for filling out scholarship applications: apply for as many scholarships as you can; list all of your high school accomplishments, as well as activities outside of the classroom; always have someone proofread your essay; and make sure you accurately and effectively communicate who you are.

If you have not started filling out scholarship applications yet, now is the time. Deadlines are fast approaching so do not delay!



Scan this QR code for full details



The 2023 scholarship recipients, pictured from left, were Audrey Summers of Mode, Evan Swisher of Tower Hill, and Kallie Havera of Taylorville.

Employee News



Congratulations to Austin Bly

Austin is now officially a full-time employee in the operations department as a Laborer. Austin originally was hired in April 2022 as a Broadband Technician with PWR-net. In May of 2023, Austin moved to assist the line crews as summer help and recently was offered and accepted a full-time position as a Laborer. **Way to go, Austin!**



Luke Brown promoted

Shout out to Luke Brown! He was recently promoted to Forestry Foreman. Luke came to the cooperative as an apprentice lineman in January 2018, he worked his way up to Journeyman, and now he is a Foreman. **Congrats, Luke!**



Vance Bolin retires

Van recently retired from his position as GIS Coordinator. He was hired in April 2000 in an IT capacity and transitioned to the position of Geographic Information System Coordinator when connecting data to a map became an integral part of operations at the co-op. He wanted to end his career quietly and without fanfare, but we wanted say thank you for his 23 years of service. **Thank you, Van!**



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



Welcome to Megan Miller

Megan recently accepted the position of GIS Coordinator. A Taylorville High School graduate, she attended Eastern Illinois University studying Industrial Technology with a concentration in Construction Management. She worked 11 years at Ameren in a similar position before joining the cooperative. Megan is looking forward to the new opportunities this position affords with the experience she brings to the job; she is up to the challenge. Megan and her husband Cody, who works for the Illinois Natural Resources Conservation Service, have three boys, Archer, Oliver, and Theodore. They also have two dogs, Marley and Thor. In her spare time, she enjoys making soap for her company Boutique Moose, spending time with her family, and bow hunting. **Welcome, Megan!**



Faith's

ROADTRIP



Family business continues to evolve

What do an outdoor country music festival, construction work site, and a wedding reception all have in common? Bet you did not guess Nolen Restroom Rentals. This multigenerational family business has evolved and grown over time. Whether the need is for a large festival or as simple as a portable toilet during a remodel, they have you covered. To find out how they got here, we would have to go back to the beginning.



Pictured from left to right: Jeff Nolen seated, Daniel Nolen standing with his two boys, and the late John Nolen seated.

In 1959, John Nolen began a new business in Stonington, Illinois, called Nolen Building Supply, where he worked as a general contractor. In 1986, his son Jeff took over Nolen Building Supply and decided to focus his efforts primarily on plumbing, heating, and air conditioning. He renamed the business to Nolen Plumbing, Heating, and Air Conditioning to suit the main focus of their work. Today, the third generation of Nolens, Daniel, shares ownership and operation with his dad as they oversee a diverse business now branded as Nolen Services. They provide portable restroom rentals, as well as septic, plumbing, and HVAC services.

Daniel introduced the septic plumbing and portable restroom rental service into their business model in 2019 with the initial goal to set 56 units at Lake Taylorville. However, the new service took off like wildfire, and they now have over 1,000



Nolen Restroom Rentals range from the typical on-the-job-site variety to an all-inclusive luxury bathroom set up.

units. "We service all our units a minimum of once per week, some of them once per day, and some even multiple times per day. Sometimes our units can be spread far apart, which can make it tempting to neglect our services, but that's not who we are or what our business model is built on; this is a business where service is absolutely everything," Daniel commented. While it may not be the most glamorous job, the employees know that what they do genuinely matters and makes a difference.

They also began to offer luxury restrooms that range from two stall units to ten stall units. Each trailer is equipped with heat, A/C, running water, hot water sinks, flushing toilets, Bluetooth stereo systems, onboard fresh water, and wastewater. "These restrooms get rented out a lot for events, whether it be for weddings, concerts, or even construction sites," Daniel said. "The luxury restrooms are a great addition to an outdoor wedding, because it relieves the stress of having to clean the inside of the house/restroom for guests to use," he said.

Between regular restroom and luxury restroom rentals, the Nolens send their units all over Illinois, as well as surrounding states. They currently supply restrooms to many events, including Tailgate and Tallboys concerts in Taylorville, Bloomington, and Clinton,

Iowa. Last summer they provided over 6,000 services in just two weeks during the month of June. "If there aren't a sufficient number of restrooms at an event, people will either leave or spend all their time in line for the restroom instead of in line for merchandise, drinks, or food. There is a direct correlation to the success of an event and people being happy with the restrooms," Daniel said.

In the sense of marketing their business, the Nolens rely strongly on word of mouth. "If you have someone that you trust and they tell you how much they enjoyed the services, that will always give us the best rate of return," Daniel shared. Throughout their restroom rental journey, the Nolens noticed that the original brown restrooms blended into the environment too much, like at construction sites. This also made it more difficult for their employees to identify the restrooms to service them. As they continued to grow, they started investing in bright green restrooms, which made it easier to spot for both the employees and customers.

The Nolen family has a successful, multigenerational business built on years of hard work and integrity. So, the next time you are out and about and nature calls, keep an eye out for one of their portable restrooms.

Thanks for riding along. I'll see you down the road!

Winter weather and your propane tank

Winter can produce some of the most magnificent scenery, but it can also be challenging. Accumulated snow and ice have the potential to damage your propane system. While you can not always predict snowstorms or hazardous weather conditions, you can take measures during and after winter storms.



Try to keep your propane equipment free from snow and ice.

Keep snow and ice from accumulating on propane equipment

Snow or ice accumulation can potentially cause parts of your propane system to crack or break, resulting in a gas leak. It is your responsibility to make sure that all propane pipes, valves, regulators, and tanks are clear of snow and ice. Gently brush away snow or ice that has accumulated around the tank, meter, regulator, and any other piping. Do this using a broom or by hand. If you must use a shovel, use extreme caution around all equipment. If you notice any snow or ice buildup that cannot be removed easily, contact your propane provider. **DO NOT** attempt to remove snow or ice by kicking or hitting any equipment.

Be alert to snow buildup on rooftops and other areas

Frequently check where snow or ice collects on your roof, structure, or nearby trees, and clear it if you believe it might fall on any part of your propane system. Never shovel snow off of roofs and onto propane equipment. Heavy accumulations of snow or ice falling on tanks, regulators, meters, piping, or valves may cause damage that could result in a gas leak.



Keeping your propane tank free from snow and ice will allow your propane provider safe and easy access to service your tank.

Keep vents clear

Appliance vents and chimney flues must **ALWAYS** be clear of snow or ice. Some homes may have “direct” vents, which are close to the ground. Improper venting can cause carbon monoxide to become trapped in your home, resulting in serious illness or even death.

Clear driveways and pathways to propane tanks

Please remember that a propane delivery truck needs at least a 10-foot-wide path to be able to deliver fuel to your home. Also, keep the tank area and

a path to the tank free of snow. When plowing, snow blowing, or shoveling, do not push or pile snow around your tank, meter, regulator, or piping.

Talk to your contractors

If you use a snow removal service, make sure that they know the location of all propane equipment on the property. Instruct them to keep their equipment clear of all parts of your propane system. If your snow removal service shovels snow off your roof, instruct them to never shovel snow onto any part of the propane system.




Propane safety tips



Shelby Energy Company

- Handle any propane-powered equipment cautiously and always follow the manufacturer’s instructions.
- Cylinder tanks for equipment such as stoves and ovens must be located outside of the home.
- Never store or use propane gas cylinders larger than one pound inside the home.
- Never operate a propane-powered gas grill inside the home.
- Have propane gas equipment inspected periodically by a professional for possible leaks or malfunctioning parts.
- Carefully follow the manufacturer’s instructions when igniting a pilot light.
- If you smell a strong odor of gas, leave the area immediately, call 911 from outside the home, and then call your propane provider.

Shelby Energy Company is an LP gas subsidiary of Shelby Electric Cooperative.

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