

POWERLINE

NEWSLETTER FOR CO-OP MEMBERS OF CORN BELT ENERGY



EDITION: MAY 2024

Lil Beaver Brewery, it's the place to be...aver

Nestled at the south end of Veterans Parkway, a brewery sits with a story as refreshing as its brews. What started as a modest operation focused solely on brewing exceptional beer has evolved into something so much more. Inspired by their love for tasty food and great company, co-owners and brothers Adam & Justin Bellas have brought their shared vision to life, creating an unparalleled experience that captures the essence of Central Illinois: The Lil Beaver Brewery.

The brothers' first venture, Bellas Landscaping, a quality residential & commercial landscape design and build company was established in 2003 and is today still growing & proudly serving the entire Central Illinois area.

The design and construction expertise Adam and Justin have refined over the years is artfully demonstrated in the brewery taproom and patio. Their passion for excellence is evident in every detail, from the meticulously crafted high-quality craft beers to the mouthwatering cuisine served in the expansive indoor/outdoor dining areas. Surrounded by over 20 varieties of craft brews on 30 taps,



big-screen TVs, and aging barrels filled with Lil Beavers finest beer, patrons are treated to a sensory delight. A local designer, Patty Young works with the brewery to create the beer label designs and a member of the Lil Beaver family hand-paints the artwork on the walls. This unique touch amplifies the inviting atmosphere and not only promotes an enjoyable place to drink craft beer but exemplifies the family friendly environment as well.

But what truly sets Lil Beaver apart isn't just the indoor atmosphere, it's the large patio— expertly designed & landscaped by Bellas Landscaping— that makes Lil Beaver Brewery truly special. Boasting a central fireplace which casts a warm glow over ample seating and lively atmosphere, LBB welcomes pets with open arms. The patio also features the Bar Box anchored on the south side of the patio where guests can easily order

their favorite beverages or scan the QR Code without leaving the great outdoors (or your four-legged family members). This— and easy restroom access—makes it obvious why Lil Beaver's patio has become a favorite local spot.

LBB doors swing open to a diverse crowd, they take pride in accommodating everyone from the blue-collar workers in "dirty" boots to a table of executives in suits. They welcome all and have purposefully made it a place for everyone to enjoy. At the crossroads of I74/I55, US 51, and US 39— and just off Historic Route 66 the brewery is strategically positioned. Chicago, Indy, and St. Louis converge here, and so do the stories of those passing through who make LBB destination spot. "In 2024, we're on track to welcome over 100,000 unique customers" said Justin, "while I can't personally meet

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them all, I relish every chat, every shared moment. Each face represents a story & a reason Lil Beaver Brewery thrives”.

The taproom buzzes with chatter as regulars and newcomers alike share laughter, stories, and a mutual appreciation for artfully crafted brews. “We love to see friends come together to celebrate weddings, birthdays, families, happy hour, and intimate dinners. LBB encourages families to enjoy a night out together - their kids menu items are kid inspired, kid tested, & kid approved!” said Justin.

The Bellas brothers expanded the brewery to include a full-service restaurant, marrying the art of brewing with culinary delights. It is not just the beer that keeps patrons coming back for more! Their menu offers a wide variety of specialties offering a symphony of flavors that perfectly complement their extensive selection of craft brews. The food selections include everything you need to complete your night, from pretzels,



and nachos to paninis and smash burgers to skillet cookies and so much more. One of chef Javi’s specialties is the beef Barria tacos, they are a staff favorite & highly recommended. Another must-try is the ultra-thin pizza with many delicious options available.



They include Lent options – not just on Friday’s. Vegan options are always available too!

The mastermind behind Lil Beaver’s exceptional brews is Collin Shaffer. His experience in culinary arts, keen eye for detail and knack for experimentation pushes Collin to test the boundaries of traditional brewing, constantly seeking out fresh ingredients and innovative techniques to craft beers that tantalize the taste buds and defy expectations. He oversees every aspect of the brewing/canning process with meticulous attention to detail. From sourcing the



finest ingredients to fine-tuning the fermentation process, Collin’s hands-on approach ensures that each batch meets uncompromising standards of quality and flavor.

Like art, beer is an acquired taste. Not everyone will enjoy the same thing, so Lil Beaver Brewery offers a variety of beverages - including seltzers and non-alcoholic beers in addition to their brews. Stouts, IPA’s, ciders, ales, sours and more are on constant rotation in their taps. With the help of the Lil Brewery’s staff– and free samples – they work to help you find something



you enjoy. “Our selection of beer is constantly changing, keeping up with the season and demand” said the brothers” we currently have several hard seltzer options that many patrons say are the best they’ve ever had.” He went on to add “we also have light beers, they have a similar taste to popular domestic beers and can really help introduce people to the craft beer sector.”

Lil Beaver Brewery cans their own beers and most varieties are available in 4-packs from their Beer-to-go cooler at LBB or in supermarkets throughout the state.

“Each employee is not just a staff member but a vital part of the Lil Beaver family, sharing in the passion and commitment to excellence that defines our ethos” said Justin. “The collective effort and unwavering dedication of our team members fuel Lil Beaver Brewery’s success story. Each of our employees, from the Brewmaster to the servers, play an indispensable role in bringing our vision to life and enriching the experiences of all who walk through our doors.”

Visit the brewery in person at 5 Finance Drive, Bloomington, IL 61704. Whether you’re a seasoned beer aficionado or simply looking for a place to unwind, you’ll find a warm welcome and a cold brew waiting for you at this hometown favorite.

Lil Beaver Brewery is open from 11 am - 9 pm, Sunday through Thursday and 11 am - 11 pm, Friday and Saturday. Cheers!

Youth Day 2024



Students representing Corn Belt Energy met with State Senator Sally Turner while attending Youth Day in Springfield, IL

For more than 60 years, the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois have given tomorrow's leaders the opportunity to learn from today's public officials. On March 20, more than 200 students from across rural Illinois represented 25 co-ops during Youth Day, including seven from Corn Belt Energy Corporation.

"Youth Day gives students across the state an up-close look at democracy in action as they meet their elected representatives in Springfield," said Baylee Flowers, legal and government relations coordinator at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "State senators and representatives have the opportunity to inspire and encourage the leaders of tomorrow during this annual event."

In addition to meeting elected officials, the students also learned more about their electric or

telephone cooperative's role in their own communities and had the opportunity to tour the Illinois State Capitol and the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum.

State Senators Sally Turner (R-44) and David Koehler (D-46) met with the students representing Corn Belt Energy. These students included: Vittorio Causarano, Austin Miller, Jaxon Carder, Maxwell Nord, Sarah Hill, Corinna Thomas and Isabelle Phillips.

During lunch, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director Natalie Phelps Finnie addressed the students. She discussed her background as a healthcare provider and how she got into politics. She encouraged them to follow their passions, live confidently and work hard.

"You're embarking upon adulthood," Phelps Finnie said to

the students. "You can do anything you want to do. I just ask that you come to adulthood with the right posture and attitude. ... Don't come with a sense of entitlement that everything is owed to you. Work for it. Earn it."

Participants also met Paris Van Dyke, the 2023-24 Illinois Youth Leadership Council representative, who was sponsored by Wabash Communications during last year's Youth Day. She spoke about her experiences over the past year and challenged attendees to say, "Yes."

"What I want to say to you today is something that I decided to do during this day last year ... take every opportunity," Van Dyke said. "You will learn so much if you just choose to say, 'Yes.'"

At the end of the day, attendees were interviewed for the chance to participate in Youth Tour, an annual trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives. This year's trip will be held June 14-21. Maxwell Nord and Isabelle Phillips will represent Corn Belt Energy on the weeklong trip and meet their elected officials, see historic sites, learn firsthand how cooperatives work and gain valuable leadership skills.



Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) is here!

In early Spring, Corn Belt Energy began its Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) upgrade.

AMI is an integrated, fixed-network system that enables two-way communication between Corn Belt Energy and its members.

It will improve accuracy, reliability and better integrated outage reporting.

Starting mid May, you will begin to see contractors, at your location, changing out meters. Please leave a clear path and make sure that your electric meter is always accessible to our installers. Contractors vehicles will be clearly marked with "Meter Contracting Crew" for easy identification.

Improved Member Services

In customer service, AMI will be an invaluable resource for assisting our members with high bill complaints.

AMI will deliver the data needed to provide our members with daily and hourly consumption. It will also integrate with our SmartHub app, which will give the ability to view daily and hourly consumption without contacting our office.

There will also be an improved handling of accounts, meter accuracy and support (i.e. connects,

re-connects, transfer of service, blink history and usage data).

Improved Efficiency

With AMI, we will have the ability to verify momentary interruptions or blinks in your service. Sometimes blinks originate on our side of the meter, sometimes they originate on the member's side. Either way, AMI will help identify those problems and resolve the issue in a timely manner.

However, if you experience an outage, please call. Do not ever assume we know you are without power.

Safety

Enhanced meters have a detection built-in to alert Corn Belt Energy when something is wrong including overheating, tampering and low voltage.

Improved Reliability

These new meters will report, identify and isolate causes of power outages so crews can respond more quickly.

They will also enhance the ability to identify potential problems, and to plan and construct for our future power needs.

We hope to have the AMI project completed by the end of the year, if not sooner. Throughout the next six months, all main meters on our system will be replaced, and you will likely see our crews in your neighborhood.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to contact the office Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 309-662-5330






SAVE THE DATE: Mark your calendar for Corn Belt Energy's 86th Annual Meeting!

**Friday, June 14, 2024 | Business meeting start time: 10:30 am
Normal Community High School, 3900 E Raab Rd, Normal, IL 61761**

Further details will be mailed to all members in the 2024 Corn Belt Energy Annual Report and will be available online at cornbeltenergy.com.

CONTACT US

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1 Energy Way, Bloomington, IL 61705 | Office Hours: Monday - Friday, 8:00 AM to 4:30 PM

