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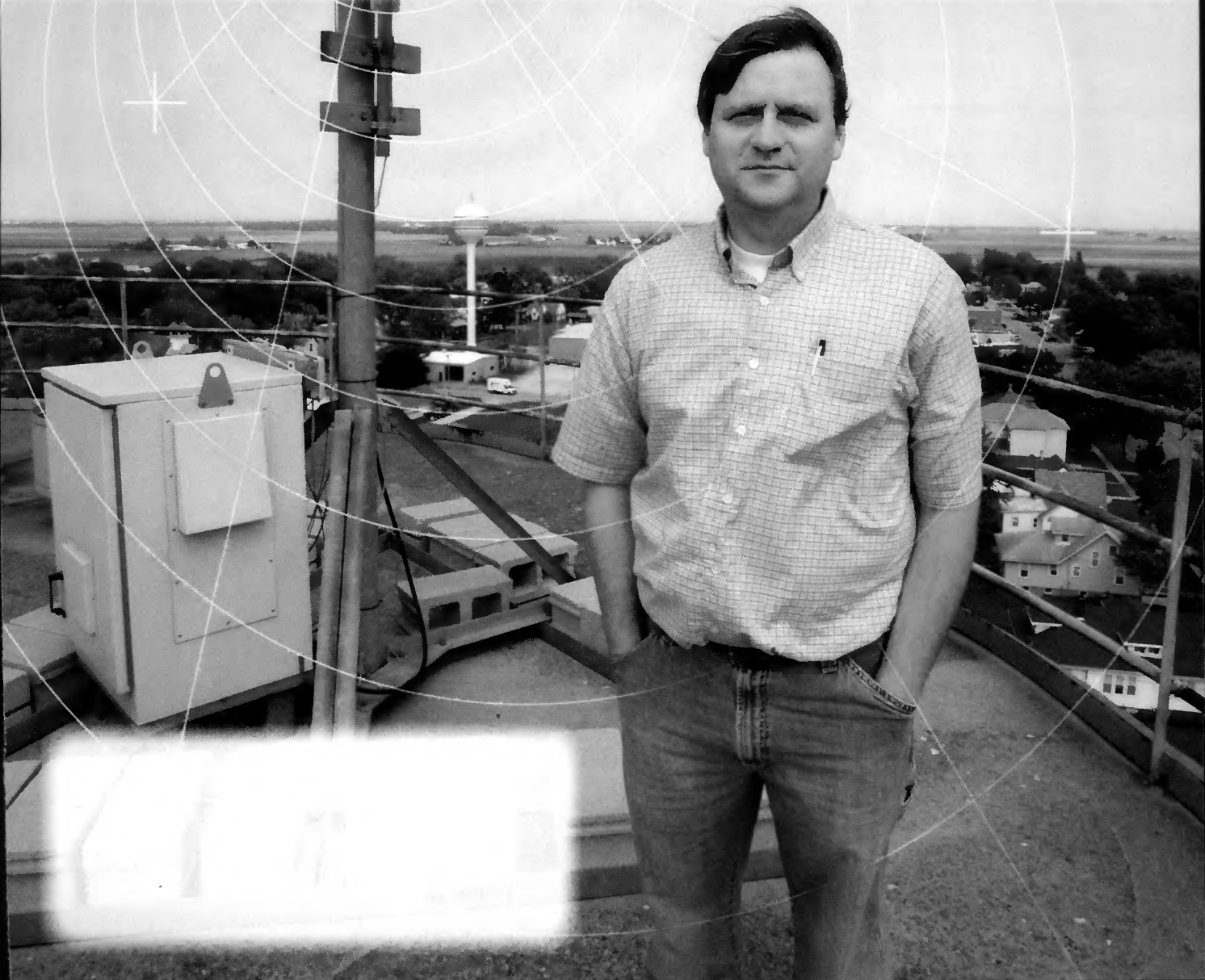
ILLINOISTM

COUNTRY LIVING

July 2006

BROADBAND PIONEERS

Co-ops and entrepreneurs filling the rural broadband void





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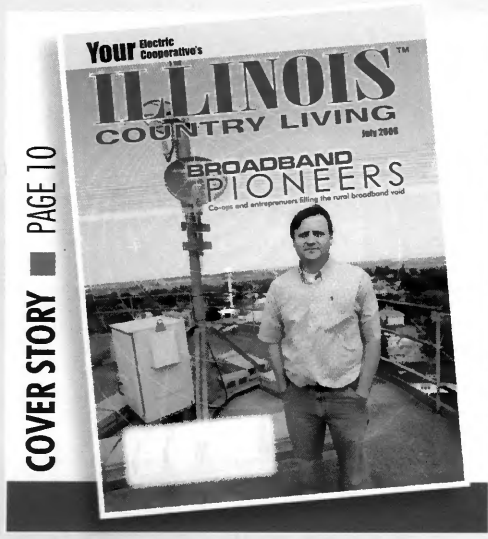
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ILLINOISTM COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 64, No. 3, July 2006

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BROADBAND PIONEERS
Rural co-ops and small-town entrepreneurs are beginning to fill the rural broadband void. One of those broadband pioneers is Kevin Osterbur, an employee of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Paxton.

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www.icl.coop
800-593-2432 • aiecinfo@aiec.coop

John Lowrey Editor
Michelle McNeal Assistant Editor
Nancy R. Nixon & Catrina McCulley Wagner. Associate Editors
Denise Guttery Advertising Representative
Sandy Wolske Advertising Coordinator/Graphic Designer
Jennifer Danzinger, Kathy Feraris
& Chris Reynolds..... Graphic Designers
Derek Squires Graphic Technician/Designer
Connie Newenham Circulation Coordinator

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The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and 23 Illinois electric cooperatives are members of the Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of 625 electric cooperatives. Touchstone Energy cooperative employees adhere to four core values — integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community.

Get Down To Business

Touchstone Energy® co-ops working to boost business

Touchstone Energy, the national branding initiative for rural electric cooperatives, was initiated in 1998. Since then, more than 630 cooperatives nationwide have joined forces to promote the many benefits of cooperatives and the Touchstone Energy program.

Touchstone Energy was created in part to develop programs to reward people for being co-op members.

One such program is the Co-op Connections Card program, where membership reward cards and key fobs are issued to the members of the participating electric cooperatives. These cards can be used at participating businesses that are offering discounts on products and services through the program. To date more than 6 million cards are in circulation for use at thousands of businesses nationwide. At a time when many costs are increasing, Touchstone Energy is helping to ease that burden.

Touchstone Energy has also developed the Sites Across America program and Web site. Sites Across America is the only national listing of properties that is available free of charge for use by business and industry site location consultants — people who assist businesses with their site location process. There, consultants can find information pertinent to the site selection decision such as property location, size, price and zoning, and they can see photos of the properties. Touchstone Energy-served properties are listed free of charge.

This program is important to co-op members because it helps to draw businesses and jobs to rural communities. The program

wouldn't exist without Touchstone Energy's large national alliance of co-ops.

To date more than 3,600 properties are listed and more than 120 properties have been sold. A follow-up round table meeting is scheduled with several of these consultants to discuss potential revisions to improve the Web site and program.

Another Touchstone Energy program developed in conjunction with the site location consultants is the Touchstone Energy Boot Camp program. This program assists communities in effec-

tively responding when a commercial or industrial prospect has an inquiry about a potential site location.

The boot camp program is sponsored by the local cooperatives. Each participating community or county indicates the type of business or industry they are interested in attracting. This information is forwarded to Lockwood Greene, the site location firm that developed the program. Lockwood Greene will send the community a "mock" request for information based upon the community's interest.

The community is then asked to submit a detailed proposal to Lockwood Greene pertinent to their specific industry. Upon receipt of the information Lockwood Greene will evaluate each response carefully and "grade" the community's submittal. Lockwood Greene will then come to the community and conduct a one-day seminar on economic development.

This program has been extremely well received by participants, and they have received an average of 9.8+ on a 10-point evaluation scale.

All of these programs are excellent examples of the basic cooperative guiding principle of commitment to community.

The Touchstone Energy alliance of 630 cooperatives has enabled representatives of cooperatives to meet their colleagues from across the country and share ideas and experiences. This broadens their focus, allows them to pool resources, and gives them a much louder voice than they had as an individual co-op. For the first time, state legislators and Congress are hearing the collective co-op voice loud and clear, and that gives you, the member of your local Touchstone Energy cooperative, the power of human connections.

For more information about Touchstone Energy, log on at www.touchstoneenergy.coop or contact your local Touchstone Energy electric cooperative. ■

"All of these programs are excellent examples of the basic cooperative guiding principle of commitment to community."

Aaron Ridenour is the Manager of Marketing and Business Development for Soyland Power Cooperative.



The opinions and views of guest commentators are their own and may not represent those of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives or the electric co-ops of Illinois.

Mathew Brady photograph of the color bearers and color guard, 7th Illinois Volunteer Infantry, armed with Henry rifles.

SOLDIERS BOUGHT HENRY RIFLES IN 1862 TO WIN THE WAR. YOU'LL BUY THEM TODAY BECAUSE THEY'RE A HOOT TO SHOOT!

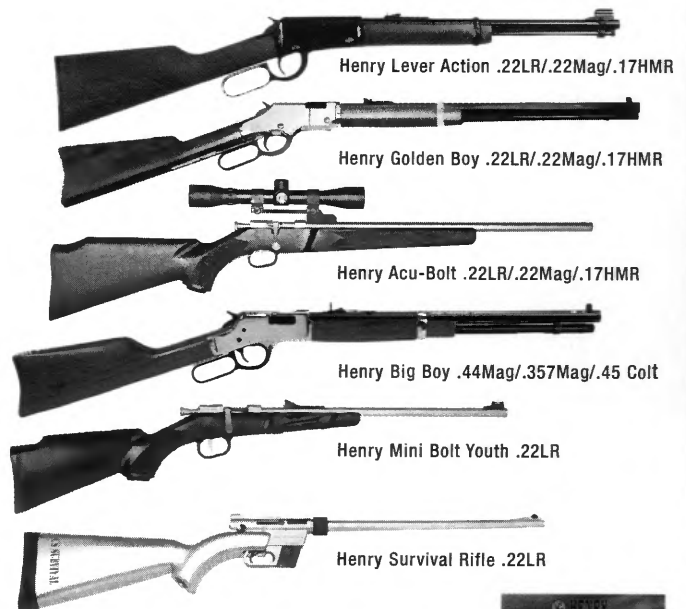
Some Civil War soldiers jumped at the opportunity to purchase their own 16-shot Henry Rifle. They gladly spent three months of their pay - about \$40 - to march into battle armed with superior firepower to the single shot muskets that were the predominant weapon of choice at the time.

These days, folks are buying Henry rifles for different reasons: they shoot great, are made in America, and sell at affordable prices.

The Henry Lever Action, well known for its reliability, accuracy, handsome looks and smooth action is available in calibers .22LR, .22Magnum and .17HMR. The award-winning Henry Golden Boy, a headturner with its gleaming receiver and octagon barrel, is destined to become a family heirloom that will be handed down from generation to generation.

The unique Henry US Survival Rifle .22LR breaks down into three pieces and is ideal for any outdoorsman wanting a compact/lightweight rifle that easily fits into a backpack, back of a pickup, or storage compartment on a boat.

The Henry Big Boy, available in .44Mag, .45Colt and .357Mag, got the highest score ever given to a centerfire lever action rifle and was rated a "Buy It" from Gun Tests magazine. It's a rifle that satisfies the needs of big game hunters, collectors and cowboy shooters alike. Visit us on the web at WWW.HENRY-GUNS.COM, mail the coupon or call 718-499-5600 for our free catalog containing information on all our rifles as well as a list of gun shops in your area.



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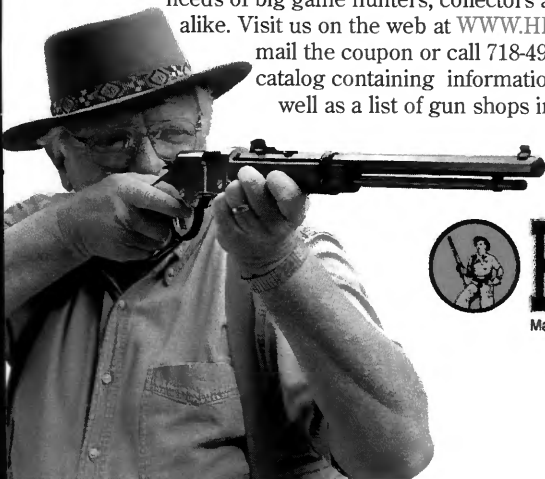


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EnergyNet Students Honored by Lt. Governor

Students around Illinois have identified solutions to high energy costs in their schools and homes. Working with Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Lt. Governor Patrick Quinn and EnergyNet, students have applied their skills and imaginations to energy concerns.

Their findings address issues such as efficient construction choices, renewable energy, environmental stewardship and behavior modification. The students' reports were presented to Lt. Governor Quinn on May 10 at EnergyNet's WE Compete Awards Ceremony. More than 200 EnergyNet students visited with the Lt. Governor in the Auditorium of the Howlett Building. The Lt. Governor said he would incor-

porate the student's work and suggestions in policy making.

For more information on how

your local school and students can get involved go to www.energynet.net. ■



EnergyNet Director Carol Timms (right) reviews an energy conservation project portfolio with students from Centralia High School.

What Veterans Need To Know About ID Theft

Personal data on about 2.2 million active-duty military and Guard personnel - not just 50,000 as initially believed - were among those stolen from a Veterans Affairs employee in May.

"The magnitude of this data breach is simply breathtaking and overwhelming," said Rep. Lane Evans, D-Ill., the top Democrat on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. He called on the Government Accountability Office, Congress' investigative arm, to launch an investigation and get a full accounting.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is asking all veterans to be extra vigilant and to carefully monitor bank statements, credit card statements and any statements relating to recent financial transactions, and to immediately report any suspicious or unusual activity.

You do not have to close your bank account or cancel your credit cards. You should however take

steps to protect yourself against identity theft.

One way to monitor your financial accounts is to review your credit report. By law, you are entitled

to one free credit report each year. Request a free credit report from one of the three major credit bureaus - Equifax, Experian, TransUnion - at www.AnnualCreditReport.com or by calling 1-877-322-8228.

Suspicious activities could include the following:

- Inquiries from companies you haven't contacted or done business with.
 - Purchases or charges on your accounts you didn't make.
 - New accounts you didn't open or changes to existing accounts you didn't make.
 - Bills that don't arrive as expected.
 - Unexpected credit cards or account statements.
 - Denials of credit for no apparent reason.
 - Calls or letters about purchases you didn't make.
- Source: www.military.com ■



FAA Halts Bloomington Wind Power Project

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued stop work orders on several wind farm development projects around the nation, including at least 15 in the Midwest. The agency says more research is necessary on the issue of whether the farms would interfere with military radar operations.

Among the stalled projects is a proposal for building the nation's largest wind farm outside Bloomington, Ill. Horizon Wind

Energy is planning a development with nearly 250 giant turbines in rural McLean County.

According to wind power proponents, the heart of the government's action in stopping the developments is resistance to a controversial project located in the channel between Martha's Vineyard and Cape Cod in coastal Massachusetts.

Congressional action during last year's appropriations process ordered the Department of Defense to study

whether wind towers could mask the radar signals of small aircraft. The FAA has cited this provision in stopping work on any new wind turbines within the scope of radar systems used by the military.

Senator Dick Durbin and Barack Obama criticized the FAA decision. Durbin said, "This decision to halt windmill construction is premature and may have serious negative economic effects." ■

Electric Co-op Directors – Grassroots Strength Fights For You

Nearly 3,000 local electric co-op directors came to Washington, D.C. in May urging members of Congress to support the issues and priorities important to you, your local electric cooperative and your community.

The legislative meetings and rallies that co-op directors take part in are a critical part of what makes electric co-ops a strong and respected consumer voice in Washington, D.C. It is a forceful demonstration of the grassroots approach to advocacy that has been the hallmark of our program and serves to remind officials in Washington of how unique and special electric cooperatives are.

Ronald Bergh, President of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), says, "In 2005 NRECA member cooperatives fought for and won enactment of a co-op friendly energy bill. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 brings federal policy into alignment with the economic, environmental and technical realities of the 21st century, while recognizing the special bond between a co-op and its members. In fact, it codifies that relationship and endorses the cooperative difference. The legislative victory is testament to our ability to work together toward a common goal." ■



Local Illinois electric cooperative leaders met with U.S. Senators Durbin (4th row on left) and Obama (5th row on right) on the Capitol steps during a national electric cooperative legislative rally in May.

You Can Prevent Home Repair Fraud

Every year, my Consumer Fraud Bureau prosecutes numerous contractors who have defrauded homeowners in every region of the state. However, the best way to combat home repair fraud is to prevent it from happening in the first place.

Taking the time to shop around is the most important step you can take to avoid falling victim to a home repair scam. Try to get written estimates from at least three prospective contractors, but do not go automatically with the lowest bidder. You should ask for and contact the contractors' references, particularly references from the local community.

There's also a simple way to protect yourself from paying for a job that never gets finished. Never do business with a contractor who asks you to pay for the entire job up front.

Crooked contractors tend to exhibit some tell-tale signs. In general, you should be concerned when a home repair contractor:

- Phones you or comes to your home uninvited;
- Insists that you need to make the repairs immediately or

your safety will be in danger;

- Promises to negotiate the cost of the job with your insurance company;
- Pressures you to sign papers today;
- Drives an unmarked vehicle or has out-of-state plates; or
- Offers to drive you to your bank to withdraw funds to pay for the work.

For more information go to: www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov or call Attorney General Lisa Madigan's Consumer Fraud Hotlines at Springfield 800-243-0618 (TTY: 877-844-5461), Carbondale 800-243-0607 (TTY: 877-675-9339). ■



Fair Fun In Illinois

A favorite Illinois pastime began this year in Clark County when the first of the state's 105 county fairs opened an eight-day run on June 11 in Marshall.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture has released the complete schedule of 2006 county fairs. Copies can be obtained by calling the department's Bureau of County Fairs and Horse Racing at 217-782-4231 or visiting its Web site at www.agr.state.il.us. The electronic version on the Internet includes a database that is searchable by both date and location.

"Illinois takes great pride in its county fairs," Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke said. "Each summer, people throughout the state gather on their local county fairgrounds to renew acquaintances, celebrate our agricultural heritage and have a good time. And, there's certainly plenty to see and do. From livestock shows and demolition derbies to games and carnival rides, county fairs offer entertainment the whole family can enjoy."

Other county fair attractions typically include queen pageants, truck and tractor pulls, musical concerts and 4-H exhibits. Thirty-eight county fairs feature harness racing. Eight offer thoroughbred racing.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture supports the efforts of the volunteer boards that organize county fairs by providing funding for award premiums, the maintenance of facilities and agriculture education programs. In 2005, this support totaled more than \$7.7 million.

The 2006 county fair season concludes Sept. 17 with the Okawville Agricultural Products Fair in Washington County. ■



Find a fair near you. Go to www.agr.state.il.us/fair/countyfairssched.php for a list of this year's county fairs in Illinois.



The Meaning Behind Old Glory

By Stacy Slatton, ICL Intern

The flag of the United States of America stands for many things: Justice, Independence, Freedom and Liberty, just to name a few. It's not hard to understand why the flag is the symbol of our Independence Day and flown with respect from residences, businesses and cars all over the country.

Every part of the flag, from the design to the colors to the folding for ceremonies, has its own significance. Although there is no official stance on why Old Glory consists of the red, white and blue colors along with the stars and stripes, there are many myths. According to a legend on www.ushistory.org, George Washington thought the stars were taken from the sky, the red signifies British colors and the white stripes stand for the secession from Britain. Today it is more commonly known that the 13 stripes stand for the original 13 colonies and the 50 stars represent the people from 50 states defending our freedom.

Although there is no record of what the colors on the flag stand for, the Congress of the Confederation chose the same colors for the Great Seal. Each color represents a core value and belief of the nation: red for valor and hardiness, white for purity and innocence and blue for vigilance, perseverance and justice. The flag's colors have also come to stand for the same values.

Draping the flag over a casket and folding it when the casket is laid to rest is showing deep respect for both the person and the flag.

The 13 folds represent the original 13 colonies. The folded flag as a whole represents the cocked hat that General Washington and his men wore while

Every fold in the flag stands for something:

- ☆ 1 - Symbol of life.
- ☆ 2 - Symbol of our belief in the eternal life.
- ☆ 3 - To honor and remember the veteran who gave a portion of life for the defense of our country.
- ☆ 4 - Represents our weaker nature. We trust in God and turn to him in times of peace and war for His guidance.
- ☆ 5 - Tribute to our country.
- ☆ 6 - Symbol of our hearts.
- ☆ 7 - Tribute to our Armed Forces.
- ☆ 8 - Tribute to the one who entered the valley of the shadow of death.
- ☆ 9 - Tribute to womanhood.
- ☆ 10 - Tribute to fathers.
- ☆ 11 - Represents the lower portion of the seal of King David to Hebrew citizens and glorifies God.
- ☆ 12 - Represents an emblem of eternity to Christian citizens and glorifies the Trinity.
- ☆ 13 - After the 13th fold only the stars show. This reminds us of our national motto "In God We Trust."

fighting for our freedom.

So the next time you see a flag waving in the breeze, remember that there's a lot more to Old Glory than meets the eye.





BROADBAND PIONEERS

Co-ops and entrepreneurs filling the rural broadband void

By John Lowrey

The United States, the birthplace of the Internet, is in 19th place in broadband access. And according to recent FCC data, Illinois is in the bottom half of states when it comes to broadband access. It's even worse in rural areas and small towns. The good news is that a few pioneering electric and telephone co-ops, along with several adventurous entrepreneurs, are blazing new broadband trails for rural Illinois.



Kevin Osterbur (left), Manager of Illicom Telecommunications and Conxxus, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's telecommunication subsidiaries, reviews the fiber optic customer mapping with co-op President/CEO David Champion, Jr. The co-op provides fiber optic broadband service to Paxton and wireless broadband to rural areas.

"If you don't have broadband, your community is rapidly being passed by because no one is going to locate their company there and no one is going to want to live there," says Jack Schultz. He is author of Boomtown USA (boomtownusa.blogspot.com) and CEO of Agracel, Inc., an Effingham-based industrial development firm specializing in small towns tied to farming, or as Schultz calls them—agurbs.

Schultz, who lived without electricity for a time in Brazil, says electricity was the most important technology for his grandparents, and broadband access will be that important for our children.

"Without broadband your community is out of the game," says Schultz, who is a Norris Electric Cooperative member. "Without broadband you won't be able to attract people."

There are several key ingredients Schultz says rural communities need to survive and thrive. On top of his list are entrepreneurs. He said that adding broadband capabilities means entrepreneurs can start businesses from rural Illinois and market them worldwide. It also means companies can outsource many jobs to rural employees working from home.

More than 12 million Americans

telecommute full-time and another 10 million telecommute at least once a week. Employers, employees and small rural towns are beginning to see the opportunities offered by telecommuting via the Internet.

Carolyn Brown-Hodge, Director of Rural Affairs for Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn's office, says, "If we've outsourced jobs to India, why can't we outsource services to southern Illinois."

She adds that before her job with the state she worked for the American Heart Association from a home office. "They closed the regional offices across the state. They didn't have to pay for the overhead of an office, just the phone line and Internet service."

A member of EnerStar Power, Brown-Hodge was one of the first to sign up for WildBlue broadband satellite service. "I love it," she says. "It is worth every penny to me even though it is \$50 a month, which is a lot for some people to afford."

Demand for WildBlue service was so high that the satellite's capacity was quickly sold out. A new satellite is already built and is scheduled to launch between October and January.

To improve broadband access,

Brown-Hodge says the Illinois Broadband Deployment Council was created. One project is to create a statewide map showing broadband service availability.

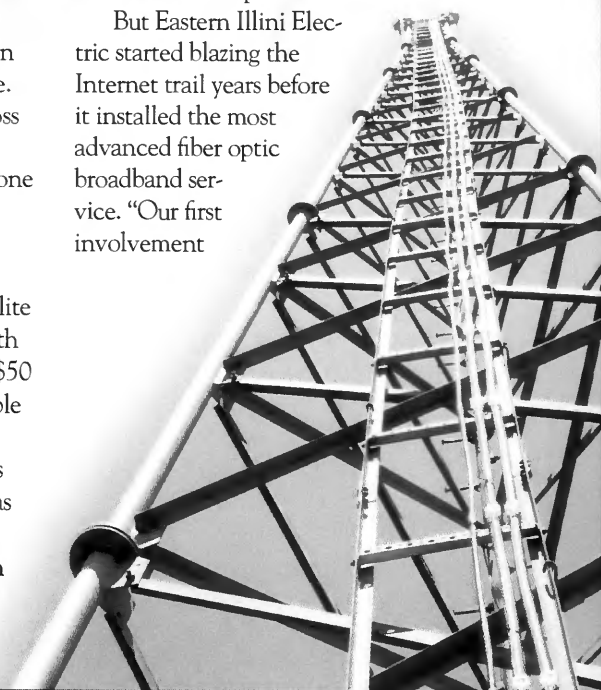
Another pilot project will utilize 14 state-owned towers to provide wireless broadband service in Montgomery and Macoupin counties. Brown-Hodge says, "We want local entrepreneurs to come forward and use the towers and handle the service and billing. If the take rate is just 15 percent, we will pay for those nodes on the towers and the state will make money."

Much of rural Illinois, if it is being served at all, is being served by co-ops or broadband entrepreneurs. "For example, in Salem, local entrepreneur John Andrews started building a fiber optic to the home service," says Brown-Hodge.

Paxton is the only other small town in Illinois that has fiber to the home broadband service, thanks to Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative. Fed up with the price of T-1 broadband service, the co-op decided to build its own fiber optic backbone from Champaign to Paxton. With its investment and what it learned, the co-op decided to begin serving schools, churches and homes in Paxton.

"Now we have 550 fiber customers receiving the triple play of broadband Internet, video and telephone service," says David Champion, Jr., President/CEO of the co-op.

But Eastern Illini Electric started blazing the Internet trail years before it installed the most advanced fiber optic broadband service. "Our first involvement



with Internet service was because our members had to pay a long-distance toll to even access the Internet with dial up service," says Champion. The co-op also was an early provider of video and Internet service through C-band satellite technology. The problem with satellite broadband service is latency, the time delay caused by how far the signal must travel in space.

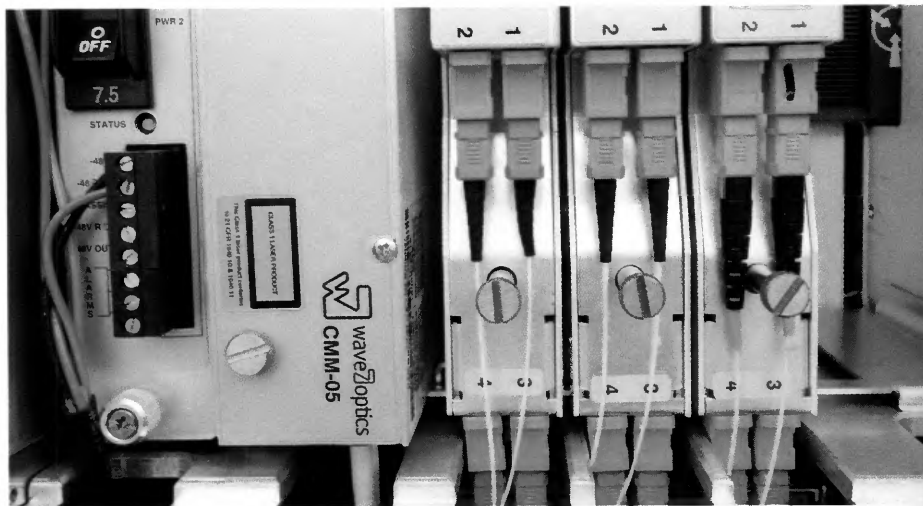
Champion is most excited about the co-op's wireless broadband service. "Our wireless broadband company is cash flow positive. I believe this is absolutely worth the business risk. Although we can't afford to build fiber to the home in the rural areas where we have a density of just three meters per mile, there is a solid business case for providing wireless service out there."

The co-op is cooperating with local communities to use water towers, grain elevators and other towers to strategically locate new wireless broadband services. "Word gets out and we have a waiting list of people before we even get the antennas up," says Champion.

Gary Van Gordon, Key Accounts Representative for Eastern Illini Electric, says broadband is critical to schools, hospitals and businesses. "Iroquois Memorial Hospital in Watseka was really interested in broadband for transmitting x-rays and other records," he says. "Another example in Watseka is the Big-R Midwest Headquarters. They do a vast majority of their catalog business over the Internet."

Kevin Osterbur, Manager of Illicom Telecommunications and Conxxus, the Eastern Illini Electric subsidiaries providing the wireless and fiber optic service, says Cissna Park, a town of 805, is a good example.

"They didn't have Internet service when we started," he says. "We contacted the grain elevator, another cooperative, and they said it would be great. They



Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative's fiber optic service provides video, telephone and broadband service to Paxton residences. Fiber optic cable is too expensive to install in rural areas at this time and only two communities in Illinois have fiber optic service to the home.

knew we would be benefiting their members too."

Wireless broadband requires line of sight between the antenna on the grain elevator or water tower and the home or business. The co-op was one of the first customers of a Canadian company that has a system capable of providing a wireless broadband signal inside a structure without an external antenna. That capability is dependent on the distance from the co-op's antenna, but in the first few miles it makes it easier and cheaper to install.

Wireless broadband technology continues to improve and the new WiMAX standard will improve on the current WiFi technology.

Osterbur says, "It depends on how busy a particular sector is, but we advertise speeds up to 512 kilobits per second both ways. We compare to DSL service. Over the fiber with our Conxxus service we can provide 3 megabits per second. We could do a lot more on the fiber, but realistically most computers can't handle data much faster anyway."

With an accounting background, Osterbur understands the business risks of this venture. He also understands how important it is to manage growth and maintain good service. But he says, "It is always good to hear people get excited about getting service they've been waiting on for so long. It is easy to get lost in the day-to-day problem solving and not step back and realize what

we've built. You can take it for granted."

Other electric and telephone cooperatives have taken the job of creating rural broadband businesses. Others have chosen to partner with broadband entrepreneurs. Others have helped existing broadband entrepreneurs market their services.

Randy Olson, Member Services Representative for Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative, was surprised at the number of broadband entrepreneurs in the co-op's 11 county service area when he researched available broadband services. "We found nine companies, including two telephone co-ops, that provided high-speed Internet." Wabash Telephone Cooperative provides broadband service via DSL to Wayne-White Counties Electric's office. Hamilton County Telephone provides DSL, wireless broadband and WildBlue satellite broadband.

Except for Verizon and Earthlink, the other broadband service providers Olson found were all local entrepreneurs like Jerry Gill. He runs a family-owned TV and appliance store his father started in the 1950s called Gill's Sales and Service. "Repairing TVs was a big part of the business when his dad started the business, but Jerry has had to change with the times," says Olson. "He started Fairfield Wireless and he provides broadband service for Fairfield, Albion, Crossville, Grayville and Gold-

en Gate—little communities that didn't have any options before.”

Olson says there are still some areas within the co-op's service territory that do not have a broadband service option. “We thought there would be more holes,” he says. “I think these are small entrepreneurs that have not been able to afford the promotion so that people know about them.”

Olson is maintaining a list on the co-op's Web site and invited all the broadband entrepreneurs to the co-op's annual meeting so they could promote their businesses.

Another broadband entrepreneur, John Scrivner, has big plans for the Mount Vernon area with his Mount Vernon Net wireless broadband service. Tri-County Electric Cooperative is cooperating with Scrivner by providing space on the co-op's radio tower in Mount Vernon. “We have an agreement with him that we can get on one of his towers in Ashley and for that we will provide backup generation for him at the tower,” says Marcia Scott.

Scrivner says, “The myth is that rural America does not need broadband service. The fact is rural people need it even more than people in urban areas.”

Partnering with a co-op has been helpful to Scrivner. He says, “There are three big strengths in working with co-ops — access to electricity, shared right of ways and vertical real estate.”

Tri-County Electric and five other southern Illinois electric cooperatives have joined forces to investigate broadband service options.

Mark Stallons, Vice President/General Manager of Egyptian Electric Cooperative, says, “together through Southern Services we've looked at the WildBlue satellite option. In terms of wireless we looked at TWN and various local Internet carriers in southern Illinois.”

Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative and SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative are also part of the group of cooperatives called Southern Services. The southern Illinois co-ops

are also investigating the relatively new broadband over power line (BPL) option. Stallons says, “We have looked at Main.net, Amperion, Current, Media Fusion and IBEC for BPL. To date we have not found an option that, in our opinion, has advanced past the research and development stage and is economical, reliable and priced competitively for rural southern Illinois. We are currently researching the latest BPL second-generation product from IBEC. We are hopeful that in the near future we will be able to provide the benefits of high-speed Internet to our members in southern Illinois.”

Distance and low population density have always made it difficult and expensive to serve rural areas with any kind of new service. But that is exactly why broadband service is so important. It can virtually make distances between people disappear and connect an isolated grandparent with a grandchild halfway around the world. Or it can help a rural stay-at-home parent create a business that they can market to the world.

Eastern Illini Electric's Champion doesn't like to compare what the co-op is doing today to what the people he calls the real

pioneers did in bringing electricity to rural areas nearly 70 years ago, but he does admit to plowing new ground.

Champion says, “This is about continuing to improve the quality of life in the rural areas we serve. It's about following the Touchstone Energy® core values of innovation and commitment to community.”

More Information:

Several other electric and telephone cooperatives in Illinois provide Internet service and/or partner with local Internet service providers. Contact your local electric cooperative for more information. Also, more information is available on this magazine's Web site: www.icl.coop



(L-R) Dennis Ivers of Tri-County Electric, John Scrivner and Dan Hamilton of Mount Vernon Net at a recently installed relay tower in Bluford.

Better Bike Behavior

Safety is about more than just helmets

With summer here, children are going to want to get on their bikes. Many adults also enjoy riding bikes for pleasure, exercise, touring or transportation. An added incentive this summer is soaring gas prices. It is estimated that 57 million Americans ride 10-speed, 18-speed, touring models, dirt bikes, or something in between.

With all these cyclists sharing the same roads as motor vehicle drivers, it becomes critical to take precautions and wear protective equipment. Statistics from 1999 cite that 900 bicyclists were killed and 70,000 suffered disabling injuries. Every year about 176,000 kids go to the emergency room because of bike accidents. The most important step we can take before getting on a bike is to wear a bike helmet. The National Safety Council offers the following tips for safe cycling:

- **Obey the law.** Cyclists must follow the same traffic rules as motorists.
- **Be familiar with your bike's capabilities.** Know how your bike maneuvers around curves, changes directions, stops, and gets through small spaces.
- **Ride with traffic, not against it.** Stay as far to the right on the pavement as possible, keeping a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you.
- **Ride in single file.** Two abreast are more dangerous.
- **Stop, look left, right, left again, and over your shoulder** before riding into traffic.
- **Use hand signals when making turns.** Left arm straight out for left turn; forearm up for right turn. Signal turns half a block before an intersection.
- **Use care when crossing intersections.** Dismount and walk a bike across streets at the

crosswalks where the traffic is heavy and also when you need to turn left.

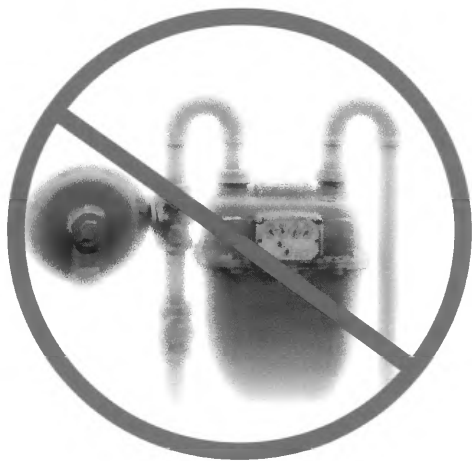
- **Never hitch a ride on cars.** A sudden stop or turn could send you flying into the path of another vehicle.
- **Be visible.** Wear bright clothing in the day and reflective clothing at night.
- **Wear a helmet.** Head injuries account for 85 percent of all bike fatalities. Wear the helmet level covering the forehead rather than back on the forehead. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standard helmets are recommended. Helmets should have these characteristics:
 - A lightweight, stiff outer shell.
 - An energy-absorbing liner at least ½ inch thick
 - A chinstrap to keep the helmet in place.
 - A comfortable fit. Tell children to never wear a hat under their helmet.
 - Handle a helmet with care rather than throwing it around carelessly. If you are in a major crash, be sure to get a new one.
 - Kids enjoy getting helmets in bright colors or personalizing them. Reflective stickers can be fun while also making your child more visible in traffic.
- **Use safety equipment on your bike:**
 - A red reflector in the rear and a white reflector on the front.
 - A red or colorless spoke reflector on the rear wheel.
 - An amber or colorless spoke reflector on the front wheel.
 - Pedal reflectors.
 - A horn or bell.
 - A rear view mirror.
 - A bright headlight for night riding.
- **Clothes matter.** Make sure kids understand the importance of wearing clothes that will not hinder their riding ability. Loose pant legs or shoelaces can get caught in a bike chain. Sandals and cleats can interfere with gripping the pedals. Going barefoot can lead to skinned-up toes or foot injuries. ■

For more information
on bike safety, go to
<http://kidshealth.org>
or www.nsc.org.



Patti Faughn, Family Life Educator for the University of Illinois Extension, Springfield Center, P.O. Box 8199, Springfield, IL 62791, 217-782-6515, pfaughn@uiuc.edu.



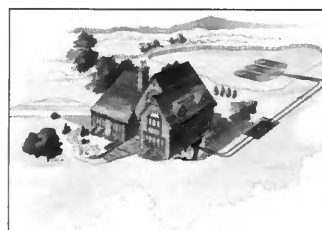


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Skeeter Beaters

Tips to keep pesky mosquitoes away this summer

Is there anyone who likes mosquitoes, short of the entomologists who stick their arms in cages to test repellents? Truth is, they probably don't even like them, but enjoy the resulting paycheck.

The first batch of skeeters showed up in central Illinois at the end of April, resulting from the warm temperatures and rain. However, by mid-May they were gone. That's just wishful thinking for the rest of the year.

It doesn't take much rain to bring them back in force. And with them comes the potential for West Nile Virus (WNV) disease and the ruination of your summer. Even if you don't end up with WNV, and the hope is that you don't, constantly swatting the mosquitoes or spraying repellents on your body every couple of hours can be really annoying, ruining outdoor sports activities, picnics, gardening and just plain relaxing with a cool drink of your choice.

Most repellents contain DEET, as they have for the past half-century or so. The product OFF™, and all its formulations usually contain DEET and can provide several hours of protection outside.

There are other products, marketed more as organic or natural products.

There are also foggers you can spray over an area that keep the pests at bay for several hours. They work

as long as there isn't a wind to blow it away, and high temperatures don't cause them to break down quickly.

Make sure you read and follow the directions on the label. Don't spray the product in your eyes or mouth, and watch carefully what you put on children.

Make sure you thoroughly cover exposed body parts. Lots of people forget the ears and back of the neck. Occasionally, you'll find the mosquito landing on your shirt so you might want to consider lightly spraying your clothing.

There are no such things as repellent plants, contrary to what you see advertised. Plants don't have the ability to create an impenetrable force field miles high and wide. Crush a few leaves of the plants, and set the plant right next to your arm and you might get some benefit. Walk a couple feet, and the pesky mosquitoes will quickly find you.

Go out of your way to make sure mosquitoes don't invade your property in the first place:

- Plant a variety of trees, shrubs and flowers to attract birds and other predators.
- Keep gutters clean and well drained.
- Don't allow water to sit for more than an hour in any type of container.
- Poke holes in tire swings so water drains.
- Fill in holes and puddles with pebbles or soil.
- Make sure ditches eventually drain a day or two after a heavy rain.
- Keep weeds mowed.
- Make sure water features have circulation. Some fish will go after mosquito wigglers, the larval stage. There are also products, variously labeled as Mosquito Dunks or Mosquito Do-Nuts, which kill the larva in standing water areas.
- Empty watering cans and plastic swimming pools.
- Make sure saucers under pots don't have water sitting in them for any length of time. ■

"There are no such things as repellent plants, contrary to what you see advertised."



David Robson is an Extension Educator, Horticulture, at the Springfield Extension Center, University of Illinois Extension, P.O. Box 8199, Springfield, IL 62791. Telephone: 217-782-6515. E-mail: drobson@uiuc.edu.



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Location, Location, Location

Your ductwork's location could lead to wasted energy

Folks, you can't imagine how much I enjoy having you call me with your energy questions. I'm also glad to hear that these columns are helping you make your homes more energy efficient. Please be sure to tell your electric co-op how much you appreciate the tips.

Did someone say electric co-op? This is about the time of year when all electric companies start getting calls about high electric bills. That is, of course, unless you live in a home that is built to Doug Rye energy efficiency standards.

I expect nearly all folks wish their electric bills were lower. But, electricity is one of the best consumer buys available. That is, of course, unless a lot is being wasted.

How do you know if you are wasting electricity? Try this. Over the years, I have developed a simple rule-of-thumb formula to give me some kind of idea as to whether a person's utility bills are lower than average, average or higher than average. Here's the formula: Take the square footage of your house and multiply it times .07. Example: 2,000 square feet X .07 = 140.

If your 2,000-square-foot house has average energy efficiency, you should never have a total energy bill (electricity plus gas) over \$140 in any month.

If your calculation shows you are paying considerably more than this figure, your house probably has some serious energy efficiency problems.

When someone tells me, for example, that their

2,000-square-foot house sometimes has energy costs of \$200 to \$300 a month, my first thought usually goes to the ductwork.

With the exception of air infiltration problems, the single biggest energy problem in residential construction is ductwork. How can ductwork be such a major energy waster? There are four basic ways.

- 1) The location of ductwork.
- 2) Sizing and design of ductwork.
- 3) Ductwork tightness.
- 4) Type of ductwork.

First, let's consider the location of the ductwork. This is so elementary I almost feel guilty writing about it. But let's do so anyway. Where is the hottest place, by far, in your house in the summertime? That would be the attic, which sometimes reaches up to 160 degrees.

How would you like to sit in the attic and make homemade ice cream or, should I say, try to make homemade ice cream? It would take a lot of ice and a lot of energy and it most likely still would not freeze. With that in mind, where is the one location you should at all costs avoid placing your ductwork? You're right – the attic.

So do why do most houses in the south have ductwork in the worst possible location? You can answer that question any way you want to, but the only real reason is because that is the way it has always been done and adults are hard to change.

What's the best option, you ask? By simply installing your ductwork in the conditioned space, in the slab, or in the crawl space/basement, you would immediately account for a minimum 20 percent reduction in cooling energy costs.

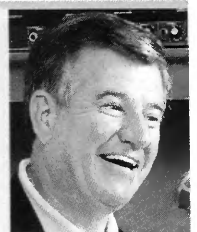
Next month, we will discuss the other ductwork-related issues that can lead to high bills. In the meantime, feel free to call me here at the office at 501-653-7931 with any energy efficiency questions you might have.

P.S. You must admit that I do make sense, right?

You can now listen to my radio show live on the Internet at 9:05 a.m. on Saturdays. Just go to www.1037thebuzz.com. ■

"By installing your ductwork in the conditioned space, in the slab or in the crawl space/basement, you save 20 percent."

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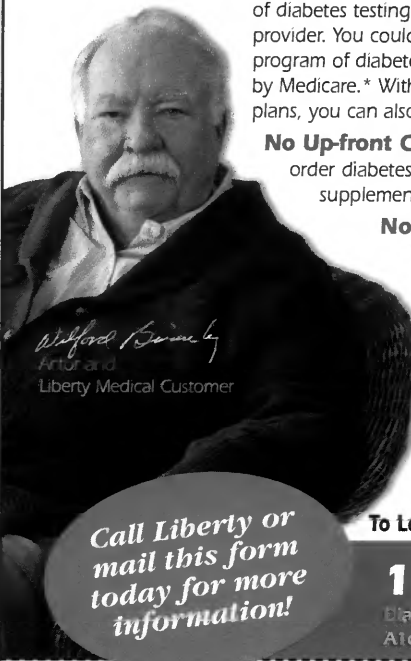
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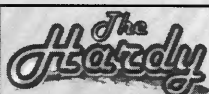
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 Details: Soft-backed, comb-bound
 Pages of recipes: 40
 Send checks to: Pat Virag,
 Box 121 Smithfield, IL 61477
 or call her at (309) 783-2742.



Strawberry Shortcake (above)
Sharon Wells

- 1/3 C. margarine
- 1-1/4 C. flour
- 3/4 C. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 C. milk
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 egg, unbeaten
- Strawberries
- Whipped cream

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease the bottom of an 8x8-inch square pan. Put the softened margarine in a mixing bowl. Add the sugar, salt, baking powder and flour. Don't mix. Add the milk and vanilla. Stir carefully and mix all together. Beat exactly 1 minute at high speed with an electric mixer. Add the egg. Beat 1 more minute. Put mixture in the pan and bake for 25 minutes. Serve with strawberries and whipped cream.

Creamy Hawaiian Apple Salad
Nellie Keime

- 1 pkg. sugar-free instant vanilla pudding
- 3/4 C. powdered milk
- 3/4 C. water
- 1 (8-oz.) can tidbit pineapple
- 3/4 C. fat free Cool Whip
- 2 C. apples, peeled and diced
- 3/4 C. miniature marshmallows

Drain pineapple and save juice. Combine dry ingredients and stir in pineapple juice and water. Blend in Cool Whip. Add rest of ingredients and mix gently.

Hamburger Chinese
Pat Virag

- 1 onion, chopped
- 4 T. butter
- 1 C. celery, chopped
- 1 green pepper, chopped
- 1 lb. ground beef
- salt and pepper
- 2 tsp. oil
- 1/2 lb. bean sprouts
- 3 T. or more Soy sauce
- Rice

Sauté onion in butter. Add celery and pepper, sauté. Meanwhile, cook ground beef, drain off fat. Add other ingredients to meat and vegetables. Add soy sauce and bean sprouts. Serve over rice.

Zucchini Casserole
Debbie Baughman

- 4 C. zucchini, sliced and peeled
- 2 med. onions, sliced
- 3 cans cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can sliced mushrooms
- 2 C. cottage cheese
- 1 C. minute rice, uncooked
- 2 lb. hamburger, browned and drained
- Cheddar cheese

Boil the zucchini for 3 minutes and let cool. Layer in a casserole dish, 1 can of soup, 1/2 of zucchini slices, 1 onion, 1/2 can mushrooms, 1 C. cottage cheese, 1/2 C. rice and 1/2 hamburger. Repeat layers, ending with a can of soup and hamburger. Top with cheese. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

Applesauce Sweet Potatoes

- 2-1/2 C. cooked or canned sweet potatoes, drained
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 C. applesauce
- 1/3 C. brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 C. quick oats, uncooked
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 T. melted butter

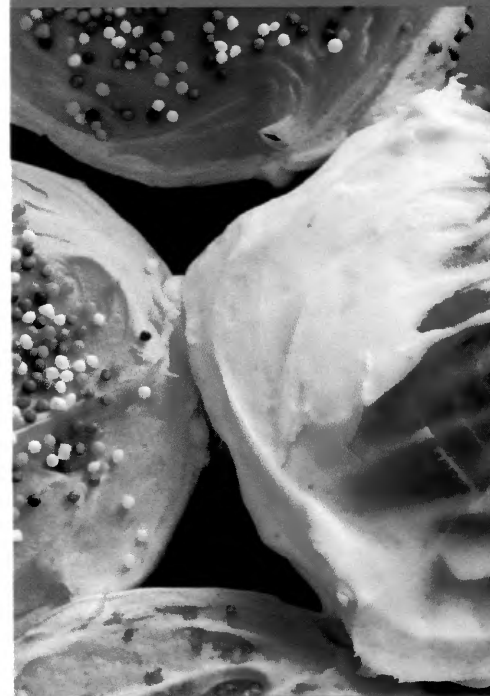
Put sweet potatoes in a baking pan. Sprinkle with salt. Pour applesauce over the sweet potatoes. Mix brown sugar, rolled oats and cinnamon. Stir in butter. Sprinkle over sweet potatoes. Bake at 375° for about 45 minutes or until lightly browned.

Batter Dipped French Toast

- 1 C. pancake mix
- 2 eggs
- 1 C. milk
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 12 slices bread

Combine the pancake mix, eggs, milk and cinnamon in a shallow dish. Dip bread on both sides into the batter. Fry in hot oil until golden brown. Dust with powdered sugar, or spread with jam or maple syrup.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner



Recipes & Remembrances

Who: The Anderson Family
Cost: \$12.50, plus \$5 shipping

Pages of recipes: 371

Details: Hard-backed, three-ring-binder bound

Contact: Francine Anderson,
13542 W. Iroquois Trail, Homer Glen, IL 60491
or call her at (708) 301-4975.



All American Flag Dessert (above)

4 C. boiling water, divided
2 (4-oz.) pkgs. Berry Blue Jell-O
2 (4-oz.) pkgs. any red Jell-O
3 C. cold water, divided
1 (4-oz.) pkg. lemon Jell-O
1 (8-oz.) ctn. Cool Whip, thawed

Put the blue and red Jell-O into two separate bowls. Stir 1-1/2 C. boiling water into each until dissolved. Stir 1-1/2 C. cold water into each bowl. Spray a 9x13-inch pan with non-stick spray; place on a cookie sheet. Pour Berry Blue Jell-O into the pan. Refrigerate for 45 minutes until set, but not firm. Refrigerate red Jell-O in a bowl for 45 minutes. Meanwhile, stir remaining 1 C. boiling water into the lemon Jell-O until dissolved. Refrigerate 25 minutes or until slightly thickened (the

consistency of unbeaten egg whites), stirring occasionally. Stir in whipped topping with a wire whisk. Gently spread over Berry Blue Jell-O in the pan. Refrigerate for 10 minutes or until set but not firm. Gently spoon thickened red Jell-O over first two layers in the pan. Refrigerate for 4 hours or overnight until firm. Decorate with additional whipped topping and fruit (such as blueberries and strawberries) to resemble a flag. Makes 16 servings.

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We want to help you start your holidays off right with a Christmas baking contest.

Here's how it works. You send us your favorite holiday recipe (one recipe per person, please), and from those recipes, we will choose our top 10.

Our recipe editor will personally make each of those 10 recipes and photograph them. Those 10 recipes will appear as the main feature in our December issue, along with the names of those who submitted them. A panel of judges will rate their

favorites out of those 10 based on taste, color, ease of baking and texture.

The grand prize is a Sunbeam Digital Bread Maker, second place prize is a 75th Anniversary Better Homes and Gardens Cookbook, third place prize is Church Suppers Cookbook - 722 Favorite Recipes From Our Church Communities, and the fourth and fifth place prize is an Illinois Country Cooks cookbook.

Please send entries to: Christmas Bake-Off, Illinois Country Living magazine, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Please include your name, address, daytime phone number, and the name of your local electric cooperative. **Entries must be received no later than September 1, 2006, to be considered. Good luck!**

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- 4) Mail to: Illinois Marketplace, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708, by deadline.

Deadlines: September issue — July 20;
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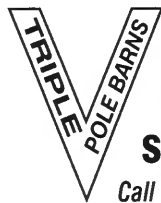
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Getting Back To Nature

Take your family camping this summer

By Stacy Slatton, ICL Intern

Tired of the hustle and bustle of everyday life? Jobs, families and appointments can keep you busy. Sometimes getting away from everything to spend some time with nature is just what you need to recharge your batteries. Camping is a popular pastime in Illinois and can be enjoyed by everyone.

The first decision your family has to make is where you want to pitch your tent, and which activities, such as fishing, swimming, hiking, horseback riding or canoeing, you want to include. State parks, private campgrounds or even your own backyard could offer you the adventure you're looking for.

If you're unsure about where specific campgrounds are located in Illinois, you can consult the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Web site (www.dnr.state.il.us) for a list of state parks and recreation areas that have camping available and the required fees. Woodall's (www.woodalls.com) has an online search engine available to seek out campgrounds by state and distance from cities.

Once you decide where you want to set up camp, choosing what to pack is the next obstacle. Creating a checklist for your family is a simple way to assure that you don't forget anything. First aid kits are a must for every camping trip. If you're going to camp far away from your vehicle, make sure you pack light in order to make it easier to hike to the campground destination. Packing according to weather is important. Plan on bringing tarps to cover the tent in case of rain and extra long underwear for those cold nights.

Now your family has decided on a campground, you're packed and on the way to visit nature. There are many things to keep in mind in order



Looking for a different kind of vacation this year? Why not try a road less traveled—maybe one of Illinois' many rivers like the Sangamon pictured above. Or check out state parks and recreation areas. Visit the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Web site at www.dnr.state.il.us for a listing of areas.


to have a safe and joyful camping experience. Here are a few tips from experts, as well as the casual camper:

- Weather can be unpredictable. Check the weather forecast for the area before departing.
- Tell someone where you're planning on camping and what time you'll be back in case something happens and you don't return.
- Check the first aid kit for missing or expired medicines before you leave.
- Pack extra supplies in case of an emergency.
- Do not feed or approach wildlife. This can lead to abnormal and po-

tentially dangerous animal behavior.

- Be respectful of the natural environment—keep the trees and shrubs alive and growing.
- Keep fires small and always have water available to extinguish the fire properly.
- Always plan where to meet should one of your family members get separated during hiking excursions.
- Leave your campground as clean or cleaner than you found it.

The main goal for your camping trip should just be to have fun and enjoy the Illinois outdoors. Happy camping!



The POWER Of YOUTH

Electric cooperatives investing in the future of students

One year ago, Casey Steffey of Flat Rock, a student at Lawrenceville High School, represented her school in Springfield, Ill., for a day of visiting with legislators at the State Capitol and touring the historic sites of Springfield. At the end of the day, she was one of the finalists interviewed and selected out of 30 students from other area schools in Norris Electric Cooperative's territory to win a trip to Washington, D.C.

In June 2005, Steffey toured Washington, D.C. with 62 other students from Illinois who won the trip from their area electric cooperatives. They joined more than 1,500 students from 44 other states in the nation's capital for the week of sightseeing and visits with their Congressmen and Senators. During the tour, Steffey was selected by her peers to be the Illinois delegate on the Youth Leadership

Council (YLC) of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Since being the YLC representative this past year, Steffey returned to D.C. in July 2005 to attend a week-long summer Leadership Conference, where she took courses on leadership and how to write and deliver speeches. She spoke at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' (AIEC) annual meeting in Springfield later that month and attended and worked at the NRECA annual meeting last February in Orlando, Fla.

Steffey returned to Springfield in April for the Youth Day where it all started, but this time she gave a speech to the new group of students waiting their turn for the trip to D.C. Steffey said, "I can't believe all of the people I met and all of the memories I will keep forever. I've learned so much

Casey Steffey of Flat Rock says she can't say enough good things about the Youth to Washington program and the leadership skills she has found so valuable. She was elected to the Youth Leadership Council by her fellow participants in 2005.

about the electric co-op industry and how important it is to our future."

Steffey expressed her thanks to the manager and board of Norris Electric Cooperative and the AIEC for believing in the youth of America. Steffey will enter college in the fall where the skills she has learned will last forever and a new YLC representative will be looking forward to the year ahead.

Visit www.aiec.coop to learn more about the Youth to Washington tour and how students can win the trip for next year.



1-2, The 10th Annual Freedom Celebration at Hennepin Canal Parkway in Colona. Visit the Hennepin Canal Parkway for a fishing derby for kids ages 5-15, a 200-plus car show, a horseshoe tournament, fireworks at dusk and much more. 309-792-9536.

2, Poke Around The Pond at Rock Springs Nature Center in Decatur. 2-3 p.m. Families are invited on an expedition to explore the animals and plants of the Bike Trail Pond. 217-423-7708 or www.maconcountyconservation.org.

4, Fourth Of July Celebration in Carbondale. 9 p.m. An impressive fireworks display is planned. Free. 618-457-5255.

4, Fourth Of July Celebration at the Coles County Memorial Airport in Mattoon. 9 p.m. County-wide firework displays to celebrate Independence Day. 217-258-6286.

7, Make a Gift For Someone Day at the Children's Discovery Museum in Normal. 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Make a gift for your special someone, whether it be a parent, a sibling or a friend. You'll be making candles, handprint crafts and much more. \$2. 309-433-3444 or www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net.

4, Fourth Of July Celebration at Riverside Park in Murphysboro - Seasonal Events The largest fireworks display in Southern Illinois with live entertainment. 618-684-3333.

4, Fourth Of July Celebration in Litchfield. Independence Celebration featuring gigantic fireworks display over beautiful Lake Lou Yager with camping, swimming and boating available. Fun Run/walk along with other activities. 217-324-5253.

4, Fourth Of July In The Park in Tuscola. Enjoy a mud volleyball tournament, a three on three touney, inflatable rides for the kids, food, a band and more. 217-253-5013 or 800-441-9111.

4, Fourth Of July Celebration in Clinton. Fireworks display sponsored by Clinton Chamber of Commerce and area businesses who donate money for the event. 217-935-3364.

8, The 21st Belleville Dollhouse And Miniature Show at the Belle-Clair Expo Building in Belleville. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. This show will feature ready-made and dollhouse kits. Miniature items of all kinds will be available including furniture, chandeliers, wall-paper, outdoor furniture, plants, flowers, pictures, food, rugs and more. Admission is \$3. 618-233-0940

9, Old Time Music Jam at Rock Springs Nature Center in Decatur. 1-4 p.m. Come out and enjoy good foot tappin' tunes played by area musicians. 217-423-7708 or www.maconcountyconservation.org.

8-9, The 10th Annual CFA Cat Show at the Williamson County Pavilion in Marion. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Admission is \$5 for adults, \$4 for children ages 6-12 or seniors 55 and older, or \$10 per family. 618-625-6136, rkman@shawneelink.net or www.southernillinoisfelinefanciers.org.



11-15, Fisher Community Fair And Horse Show in Fisher. Tractor pulls, donkey races, horse show, amusements, car show and much more. www.fisherfair.com or 309-820-8403.

14, Kitchen Science At The Children's Discovery Museum in Normal. 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Hands-on fun with items you might find in a kitchen. You'll take a look at the science behind our crafts today to see how and why they turn out like they do. \$2. 309-433-3444 or www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net.

15, Women In The Outdoors Event at Randolph County State Fish and Wildlife Area in Chester. An all-day program from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Open to females ages 14 and older. Select from a variety of outdoor-related classes being offered throughout the day, including archery, shotgunning, outdoor cooking and many more. 618-357-6617 or frannybake@aol.com.

14-15, 27th Beef And Ag Festival in Princeton. Friday 5-9 p.m. at Soldiers and Sailors Park, Saturday 8:00 a.m.-9:00 p.m. at Darius Miller Park. There will be plenty to eat and lots of entertainment. (815) 875-2616 Princeton Chamber of Commerce.



22, Disney Sketch Artist in Carson's Court at the Harlem Irving Plaza in Chicago. 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. Disney artist and historian Stacia Martin will entertain families, Disney fans and art students by sketching favorite Disney characters while telling stories about each of them as they "magically" appear on her sketchpad. Martin sketches a breadth of characters including the classics from Cinderella, Alice in Wonderland, Peter Pan, Sleeping Beauty and Lady and the Tramp. Martin has been employed by The Walt Disney Company for 27 years. Come dressed as your favorite Disney character and receive a free gift. Free. 773-625-3036 or www.shopthehip.com.



16, Music In The Park at Starved Rock State Park in Utica. The Illinois Valley Symphony Orchestra will bring you an outdoor musical experience the whole family will enjoy. Bring your blankets or lawn chairs. Admission is free and open to the public. 800-868-7625.

21-23, The 25th Annual Millroad Stream Tresherman's Festival And Antique Tractor Show at the Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont. Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Horse pull Friday night; antique tractor pull Saturday night; flea market and train show; Civil War living history Saturday and Sunday. "Betsy Ross" will be present Saturday at noon. All brands of tractors and equipment. Admission for non-members is \$2 and members are free. 618-483-5201.

28-29, The Fourth Annual River Country Quilt Show at the Jacksonville High School cafeteria in Jacksonville. Quilts on display, vendors, a raffle for a quilt, door prizes, demonstrations and much more. 217-742-5621.

28-29, Sesquicentennial Celebration in Buckley. Food, entertainment and fun for young and old. 217-394-2577.

15, Women In The Outdoors Event at Henry White Experimental Farm in Millstadt. An all-day program from 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Open to females ages 14 and older. Select from a variety of outdoor related classes being offered throughout the day including archery, herbs and their uses, landscape design, plant ID, butterfly gardening, perennial plants and propagation and many more. 618-233-8124.

22, The Third Annual Day At The Strip Car Show at the Mid-American Air Center in Lawrenceville. All years and models of cars are welcome. 618-943-4856 or www.bowler-transmissions.com.

29, Classic Car Show on the rooftop of Harlem Irving Plaza in Chicago. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Everyone is invited to cruise through 33 different classes of cars on display, from the antique classics predating 1949 and Corvette classes from the '50s up, to original and modified stock cars, import cars and the early and late classes of trucks. Registration is from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. and judging takes place from 12-3 p.m. An awards presentation begins at 3:30 p.m. at which trophies will be awarded to 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in each class. There is also an award for Best of Show and for a Participant's Choice that is voted on by participating show vehicle owners. All shows are judged using a 100-point system. Registration is \$20 per car. Spectators are welcome free of charge to any segment of the car show. For advance car registration visit www.showcaseclassics.com.

22, Bats In The Barn at Rock Springs Nature Center in Decatur. 7-8:30 p.m. Discover the truth about these mysterious creatures, then carpool to Sand Creek Conservation Area to observe some of our local bats. 217-423-7708 or www.maconcountyconservation.org.

21, Painting Palooza at the Children's Discovery Museum in Normal. 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m. A day all about art and painting. Try your hand at scratch art and some painting techniques that are a little out of the ordinary. \$2. 309-433-3444 or www.childrensdiscoverymuseum.net.

22-23, The Ninth Annual Model Train Show at the Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont. Saturday: 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sunday: 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Model trains will be on display, set up and running. Dealers will be present selling supplies. Admission is \$3. 217-536-6400.

Check us out Online!

Go to www.icl.coop to find these events and all your other Illinois Country Living favorites.

Illinois Country Living publishes event listings as space allows, giving preference to events of regional or statewide interest. Event listings are provided by the event sponsors and the Illinois Bureau of Tourism. The magazine assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of information submitted for publication and advises calling ahead to confirm dates and times. To be considered for inclusion, e-mail cwagner@aiec.coop or send listings and photographs (If sending photographs please include self-addressed stamped envelope) to Illinois Datebook, Illinois Country Living, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708-3787. The September deadline is July 15.



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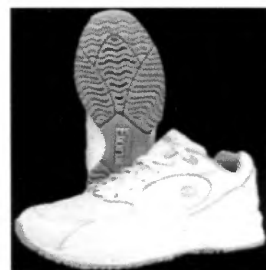
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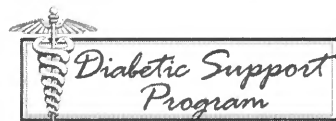
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