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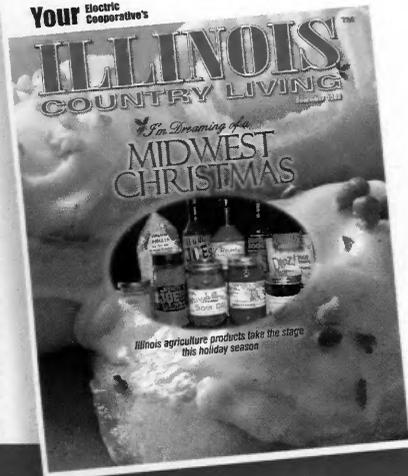
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I'M DREAMING OF A MIDWEST CHRISTMAS

Illinois agriculture products take the main stage this holiday season.

ILLINOISTM COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 66, No. 8, December 2008

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For Rural Development Speed Matters

We must eliminate the speed bumps to rural broadband access

"Live where you want. Work electronically!" This is probably going to be a promo that you are going to see more in the workforce, especially as the baby boomers begin to retire. It is a trend that I'm seeing more often in my travels around the country.

In the Lost Rivers Valley of Idaho I recently met Kevin and Cheri Pearson who are living exactly that dream. Kevin graduated from college in computer science in 1995 and immediately went to work for Hewlett-Packard (HP) in Boise. He and Cheri decided that they didn't want to raise their two children in the big city. Kevin approached HP about working permanently from home. HP agreed, and Kevin, Cheri and their two children moved from Boise to the Lost River Valley.

The Pearsons live on a small farm that is about three miles outside of Moore, Idaho. Having a DSL connection at the farm was one of the key decisions on where to live when they made the move back home.

Are you ready for these new electronic workers in your town? Do you have the broadband connections that they are going to need?

The results of a second annual survey of Internet speeds, conducted by the Communication Workers of America, show that the United States has not made significant improvement in the speeds at which residents connect to the Internet.

Our nation continues to fall far behind other countries. The median download speed for the nation was 2.3 megabits per second (mbps). In Japan, the median download speed is 63 mbps, or 30 times faster than the U.S.

The survey included nearly 230,000 people in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Surveyors visited speedmatters.org and took an Internet speed test. The final results show the United States has fallen to 15th behind other industrialized nations in the percent of the population subscribing to broadband. (Visit www.speedmatters.org.)

Many states and communities have begun to take action. The Broadband Development Council

has been established in Illinois to "advocate for affordable, world-class communication networks in every corner of Illinois, not just for individual citizens, but for businesses, schools, hospitals, libraries and other organizations."

Broadband access is a topic we researched extensively for the book *Boomtown USA*. We felt then, as we do today, that broadband access to all corners of the United States is critical for the long term competitiveness of our country, in particular, the rural regions. With high speed Internet access, anyone can become a global competitor.

I'm convinced that broadband is a necessity for rural economic development, and is as important as water, sewer and electricity. I've yet to have an industrial client show up on a site visit and ask me, "Do they have electricity here?" Broadband is already as important as the three other infrastructures. It's something you must have!

I'm happy to see electric and telecommunications cooperatives and entrepreneurs taking the initiative to develop rural broadband and fill in the gaps where larger broadband providers still do not see a high enough profit. As with electricity in the early 1900s, distance and low population density have always made it difficult and expensive to serve rural areas with any kind of new service. However, if you ask anyone who lived in the "pre-electricity" days what the single most important technology developed in their lifetime, they will undoubtedly tell you electricity to the masses. And these are people who witnessed man walking on the moon, atomic bombs, air travel and television.

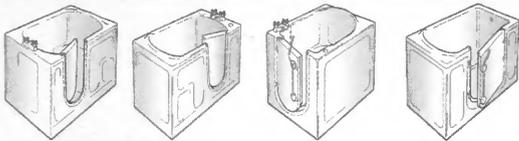
Going forward, we need to remember that our children are depending on us to create a future in which they can succeed. And, ideally, that future will involve them staying in their hometowns and establishing businesses, even some that may require an international presence. Broadband availability will be a key component to that success. If we don't act now, our communities will risk losing these young entrepreneurs, and our future. ■

Jack Schultz is founder and CEO of Agracel, Inc., Effingham, Ill., an industrial development firm focused on rural America (www.agracel.com).

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.



"I'm convinced that broadband is a necessity for rural economic development, and is as important as water, sewer and electricity."



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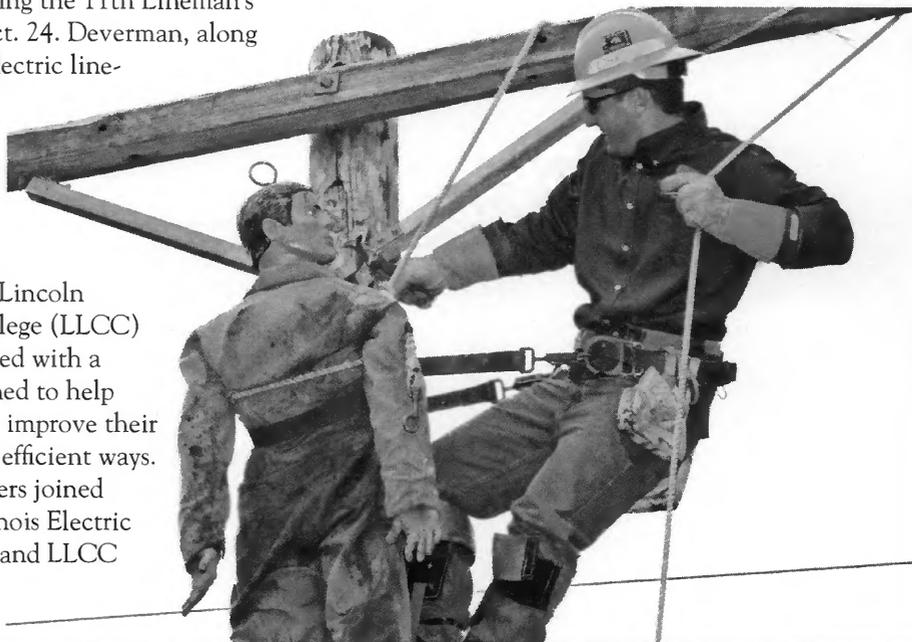
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Seconds Can Save a Lineman's Life

Linemen know that when a buddy is in trouble on a pole seconds can make the difference between life and death. That's why they practice safety skills like the hurt man rescue. Darren Deverman, Journeyman Lineman for Menard Electric Cooperative, Petersburg, cuts loose the rescue dummy during the 11th Lineman's Safety Rodeo, held Oct. 24. Deverman, along with fellow Menard Electric linemen Jeremy Willis and Rob Hanner, placed first overall and second in the hurt man rescue event. The Lineman's Safety Rodeo, held at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield, coincided with a series of courses designed to help electric line personnel improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways. Several electric suppliers joined the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and LLCC in co-sponsoring the event. ■



Obama's Energy Plan Includes Plans for a Smart Grid

President elect Barack Obama's energy plan includes ideas for increasing energy efficiency. Achieving these aggressive energy efficiency goals will also require significant innovation in the way we transmit electricity and monitor its use.

The Obama administration will pursue a major investment in our national utility grid using smart metering, distributed storage and other advanced technologies to accommodate 21st century energy requirements. They will establish a Grid

Modernization Commission to facilitate adoption of SmartGrid practices.

They will instruct the Secretary of Energy to: (1) establish a Smart Grid Investment Matching Grant Program to provide reimbursement of one-fourth of qualifying Smart Grid investments; (2) conduct programs to deploy advanced techniques for managing peak load reductions and energy efficiency savings on customer premises from smart metering, demand response, distributed generation and electricity storage systems; and (3) establish demonstration projects specifically focused on advanced technologies for power grid sensing, communications, analysis and power flow control, including the integration of demand-side resources into grid management. ■



Illinois electric co-op leaders met with Senators Barack Obama and Dick Durbin in May, 2006 to discuss energy and rural issues. As part of his energy plan President elect Obama plans to encourage smart grid technology like the automated metering systems already installed by many Illinois electric co-ops.

Coal Is Now Global Commodity

A new research report from Standard & Poor's (S&P) says high coal prices, in large part due to increasing global demand, are likely here to stay and U.S. electric utilities should recognize and deal with this new reality.

The United States has nearly 250 years of coal reserves at current consumption rates, which offers the potential for inexpensive power and enhanced national energy security. But a jump in worldwide coal demand—especially from China—has affected U.S. coal prices.

From 2002 to 2007, worldwide coal consumption increased about 35 percent. This has helped drive spot prices to unprecedented levels, with prices for coal rising 200 percent, from \$47 per ton to \$145 per ton.

Coal prices have come down and could fall further if the global economy continues to slow, but spot prices will likely remain volatile through 2011. Longer term issues affecting coal prices include the build-out of new supply infrastructure, the nature of U.S. climate change legislation, the extent of new nuclear power construction and the advancement of new technologies such as carbon capture and storage. But the key factor, S&P said, will continue to be the growth of coal consumption in China.

Source: CFC Solutions News Bulletin ■



December To See Slightly Warmer Than Normal Temperatures

The sea-surface temperatures across the Equatorial Pacific are forecasted to remain close to average. Taking a look back at past climate records across Illinois reveals that in years when a neutral phase develops during the fall (specifically 1986, 1996, 2001), temperatures during the month of December tend to average slightly above normal.

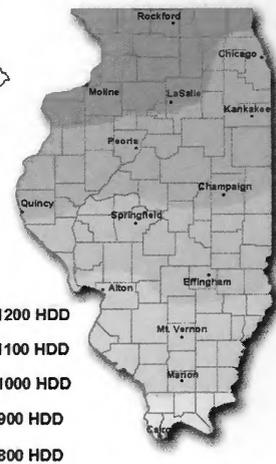
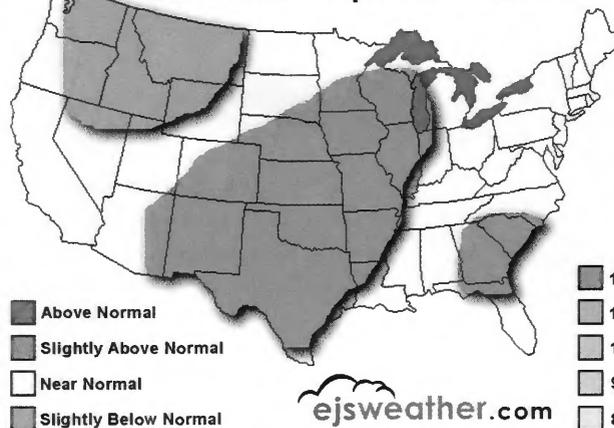
The NAO (North Atlantic Oscillation), which can have more of an influence during neutral phase winters, is forecasted to be positive at least during a portion of the month. Usually, a positive NAO index results in upper-level ridging across the eastern third of the country and therefore milder temperatures.

The Illinois map this month depicts the number of heating degree days that occur across the state on average for the month of December. Based on a forecast of slightly warmer than normal temperatures, total heating degree days across Illinois this December should be about 30 to 60 lower than average. This will likely be some good news for the consumers.

Heating degree day (HDD) and cooling degree day

Average December Heating Degree Days

December Temperature Outlook



(CDD) are designed to reflect the demand for energy for heating or cooling. The number of heating degrees in a day is defined as the difference between a reference value of 65°F and the average outside temperature for that day. Normally at 65°F outside temperature no heating or cooling is required. For example, if the average temperature for a given day is 55°F then it would be a 10 degree-day. ■

Domestic Honeybees Key to Illinois Specialty Crops

Illinois is the country's leading pumpkin producer, but most people are unaware of that fact and the role honeybees play in that process. Honeybees are critical to the pollination of Illinois' pumpkin crop, as well as about one-third of all food we consume.

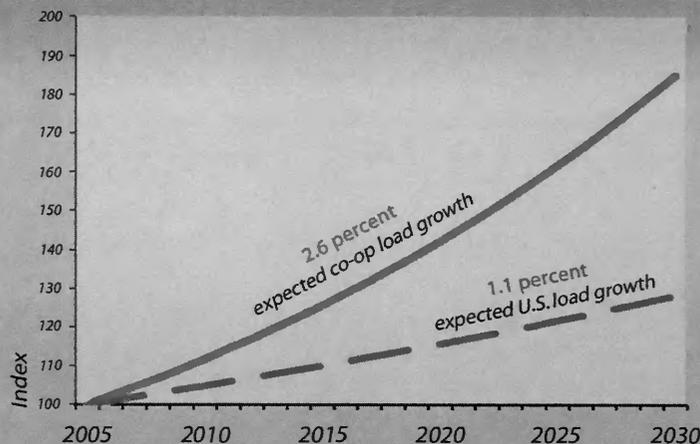
Unfortunately, due to disease and pests, the number of wild honeybees has significantly decreased over the past few years, greatly increasing the need for domestic apiaries (bees kept by beekeepers). The threat of Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) has the potential to damage the Illinois honeybee industry and the specialty crops industry. That's why the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is doing all it can to keep local honeybees healthy and productive.

Honeybee Facts:

- A honeybee must visit about 2 million flowers to make a pound of honey.
- Bees are required to make a total flight path equivalent to three orbits around the earth to make one pound of honey.
- The average worker bee lives for only six weeks during the summer and makes one-half teaspoon of honey in her lifetime.
- During the summer, one normal colony of bees contains one queen, 300 drones (male bees), and 50,000 workers (female bees).
- Bees use honey for flight fuel. They obtain approximately 7 million miles per gallon of honey.
- A bee flies at 15 m.p.h.
- Bees have five eyes and four wings.
- There are about 1,320 beekeepers in Illinois, keeping nearly 20,000 colonies of honeybees.
- There are more than 2.9 million honeybee colonies in the United States.
- The value of honeybee pollination to U.S. Agriculture is approximately \$14.6 billion. ■

Co-op Load Growth Leads Industry

A projected 2.6 percent average annual load growth for electric cooperatives through the year 2030 exceeds the U.S. electric utility average of 1.1 percent, and works out to almost a 90 percent increase over present consumption.



Sources: U.S. Energy Information Administration, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

Safety Can't Take a Holiday

Wisp of smoke were rising from his chest when Maria Worth came upon her injured son. Shawn Miller was unconscious and badly burned. He had been hanging holiday lights in the trees that lined her yard. As he tossed the lights up into the trees, 7,200 volts of electricity had entered his body, traveling from the overhead power lines through his strand of lights.

Miller had to be revived three times and ultimately, survived the tremendous shock. He lost his left hand and a finger on his right hand, suffering 27 exit wounds throughout his body. Dozens of surgeries and skin grafts later, he is a walking miracle who wants to offer others the gift of electrical safety awareness for the holiday season. He has joined forces with Safe Electricity's Teach Learn Care TLC campaign to get the word out about the importance of electrical safety.

"Power lines were the last thing on my mind that day," said Miller. "I was just hanging Christmas lights at my Mom's house like I do every year, only this time, I was decorating a new area, the trees that lined the front of the yard. I'm lucky to be alive. I want everyone to be careful, be aware of power lines."

For more information on electrical safety and to learn more about Shawn's compelling story visit www.SafeElectricity.org. ■



Shawn Miller lost his hand and nearly his life while stringing Christmas lights near a power line. He says, "I have to find ways to move on with my life and help people learn from what has happened to me. Safe Electricity is helping me help others."



How To Weather a Winter Outage

Severe winter storms containing high winds and ice can cause widespread and prolonged outages. Always call your cooperative when you have an outage, and follow these steps to get through it safely.

1. Have the following on-hand this winter:

- Battery-powered radio
- Flashlights
- Extra batteries
- Extra blankets
- Spare containers you can fill with water for drinking/washing/hygiene
- Food that doesn't require cooking and a hand-held can opener
- Extra prescription medicines
- Special items for infant, elderly or disabled family members
- A first aid kit

2. If you have a standby generator, make sure you operate it safely and have a transfer safety switch. Install a transfer safety switch now, before your generator is needed. The switch will prevent electricity from traveling back through the electric lines, making the lines very dangerous for crews working to restore your power.

- 3.** Switch off lights and appliances so you don't overload your circuits when power is restored. Leave on one lamp to signal when your power is back on.
- 4.** Close off any unused rooms.
- 5.** If you fear your water pipes will freeze and you don't have a well, turn the taps on slightly so water slowly drips. If you are on a well you can shut off the main water supply to your home and then turn all the taps on all the way to drain any remaining water (pour this water into containers so you can use it for drinking, washing, etc.)
- 6.** If using grills to heat food, use them outside only, away from the house, to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- 7.** Don't open the refrigerator or freezer. Food can stay fresh in a full refrigerator for 24 hours, and in a full deep freezer for 48 hours (24 hours if only half full).
- 8.** Stay inside when possible and dress in layered clothing.
- 9.** Warning: Never go near downed electrical lines. Even if your power is out, the lines could be energized. Call your cooperative immediately and inform them of any dangerous lines.

I'm Dreaming of a **MIDWEST CHRISTMAS**

Illinois agriculture products take the stage this holiday season

by Catrina McCulley Wagner

*I*f Illinois has been your home for many, many years, you may have overlooked the remarkable things for which this central state is known. For instance, did you know that the world's first Skyscraper was built in Illinois? Or that Metropolis, the home of Superman, really exists in Southern Illinois? Or how about that Illinois had two capital cities, Kaskaskia, and Vandalia, before Springfield became the final choice? And did you know that more than 28 million acres of land across Illinois are farms? That's nearly 80 percent of the state's total land area.

So it's no surprise that Illinois' agricultural commodities generate more than \$9 billion annually. With more than 950 food-manufacturing companies across the state, Illinois is well equipped to turn its crops and livestock into food and industrial products. Food processing is the state's number-one manufacturing activity, adding almost \$13.4 billion annually to the value of Illinois' raw agricultural commodities.

What better way to celebrate the holidays than to showcase a few of those fantastic Illinois food products? For a full list of Illinois products, go to <http://www.agr.state.il.us/markets/mis>.

Ahruns Famous, Inc.

Established in 2003 and located in Crystal Lake, Ill., Ahruns Famous offers an array of sauces with very unique names, as well as tastes. Ahruns Famous products include: Voodoo Magic hot sauce, Carolina mustard barbecue sauce, Zombie Boogie barbecue sauce, Outrageously Applicable barbecue sauce and Outrageously Delicious Bloody Mary mix.

Cugino's Gourmet Foods

Cugino's Gourmet Foods was established in 1995 in Lake In The Hills, Ill. and features award winning soup and dip mixes, spice rubs, garlic spread, pasta sauce and Italian dressing/marinade.

Gramp's Gourmet Pickles

Located in Scales Mound, Ill., Gramp's Gourmet offers a variety of pickles including original sweet, original sour dill, horseradish sweet or sour, garlic sweet or sour, jalapeno sweet or sour, habanero sweet or sour, as well as pickled beets and the intriguing "Apple Pie in a Jar."

Kathy's Kitchen

Kathy's Kitchen, located in Virginia, Ill. offers an array of wonderful home-canned products including bread and butter pickles, blue ribbon sweet pickles, beet pickles, dilled asparagus, dilled jalapeno slices, sweet jalapeno slices, jalapeno relish, chili sauce, chow chow, corn relish, lime pickles, salsa, hot salsa, Mexican salsa, green tomato pickles, inferno relish, onion relish, red cinnamon pickles, sweet basil peppers, zucchini pickles, zucchini relish, sweet pepper relish, apple butter, blackberry jam and jelly, black raspberry jam and jelly, grape jelly, jalapeno jelly, sweet pepper jelly, onion jelly, pumpkin butter, red raspberry jam and jelly, red tomato preserves and honey.

Futter's Nut Butters

Futters Nut Butters is a family-owned business in Buffalo Grove, Ill. that produces all natural and certified organic nut butters. Products include almond butter, cashew butter, pistachio butter, hazelnut butter, pumpkin butter, sunflower butter, brazil butter, macadamia butters, walnut butter, pecan butter chocolate nut butters, chocolate almond espresso, chocolate walnut butter and cinnful pecan butter.

Beverly's Dressing

In 1991, Beverly's Dressing was established in Roanoke, Ill. and offers Original Raspberry Poppy Seed and Fat-Free Raspberry Poppy Seed Salad Dressings. The unique sweetness of the dressing is what put her on the map as the best raspberry poppy seed dressing to be tasted in Illinois.

Hannah's Granna's

Hannah's Granna's is located in Charleston, Ill. The original product that started the business was a sweet zucchini relish from a recipe that is more than 50 years old. Since then, the products have expanded to include hot zucchini relish, zesty zucchini relish, cinnamon apple spread and homemade pies.

Oakland Noodle Company

The Oakland Noodle Company was established in 1991 in Oakland, Ill. They offer homemade egg noodles that are done completely by hand.

Uncle Joe's Sauces

Located in Ina, Ill., Uncle Joe's Sauces offers four different flavors of sauces and an all-purpose seasoning rub that can be used for anything you can imagine. Uncle Joe's sauces come in Original, Sweet Smoke, Chipotle and XXX Hot.

Hazelnut Butter Cookies with Chips



Pepper Jelly Cheesecake Dip



Mexican Egg Noodles



Uncle Joe's Zesty Meatballs



Pepper Jelly Cheesecake Dip

- 2 (8-oz.) packages cream cheese
- 10 oz. grated (not shredded) sharp cheddar cheese
- 2 eggs
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (8-oz.) jar **Kathy's Kitchen Jalapeño Pepper Jelly**, divided

Mix cream cheese, cheddar cheese, eggs and garlic with a mixer or in a food processor. Blend in half **Kathy's Kitchen Jalapeño Pepper Jelly**. Oil an 8-inch spring form pan and pour in the mixture. Place on top rack of a preheated 350° oven. Place another pan filled with water on the bottom rack of the oven beneath the spring form pan to keep the cheesecake from drying. Bake for 45 minutes or until cake is brown on top and a toothpick comes out clean. Cool on rack. Refrigerate for several hours before serving. When ready to serve, remove ring from spring form pan. Spread remaining **Kathy's Kitchen Jalapeño Pepper Jelly** over the top. Serve with crackers. Best served at room temperature.

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Hazelnut Butter Cookies with Chips

- 1-1/2 C. all purpose flour
- 3/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter, room temp
- 1 C. **Futter's Hazelnut Butter**
- 1/2 C. sugar
- 1/2 C. packed golden brown sugar
- 1 lg. egg
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 (12-oz) pkg. semisweet mini chocolate chips

Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt into medium bowl. Using electric mixer, beat butter, **Futter's Hazelnut Butter** and both sugars in large bowl until light and fluffy. Beat in egg and vanilla. Beat in flour mixture. Stir in chocolate chips. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours. Preheat oven to 350° F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Using 1 level tablespoon for each cookie, roll dough between palms of hands into 1-inch balls. Arrange 1 inch apart on prepared sheets and slightly flatten. Bake about 12 minutes or until cookies are brown. Let cool on sheets on racks for 5 minutes. Transfer cookies to racks and cool. Makes 48.

ILLINOIS COUNTRY LIVING • DECEMBER 2008

Uncle Joe's Zesty Meatballs

- 1 lb. zesty hot sausage
- 1 egg
- 1/4 C. breadcrumbs
- 1/3 C. grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 C. milk
- 1 (18-oz) bottle **Uncle Joe's Sweet Smoke BBQ Sauce**

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. In large bowl, place sausage, egg, breadcrumbs, cheese and milk. Stir until well combined. Shape into small meatballs and place in single layer on a wire cooling rack placed on a baking sheet. Bake for 20 to 25 minutes or until browned and cooked through. In a small saucepan, warm **Uncle Joe's Sweet Smoke BBQ Sauce**. Serve with meatballs.

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Mexican Egg Noodles

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3-4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 C. whole kernel corn
- 3 C. water
- 1 (2.25-oz.) can sliced black olives, drained
- 1 (14.5-oz.) can chopped tomatoes with juice
- 1 (15-oz.) can chili beans, drained
- 1/2 C. chopped green onions
- 1 (1.25-oz.) package taco seasoning mix
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 (12-oz.) pkg. **Oakland's Egg Noodles**
- Sour cream and Cheddar cheese, for topping

In a large skillet over medium heat, cook the ground beef, onion, and garlic until beef is evenly brown. Drain. Add the corn, olives, tomatoes, chili beans, green onions and water into the skillet. Season with taco seasoning and salt. Cover, and cook 15 minutes. Add **Oakland Egg Noodles** into the skillet. Cover, and continue cooking 12 minutes, or until egg noodles are tender. Top each serving with a sprinkle of Cheddar cheese and a dollop of sour cream.

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Raspberry Poppy Seed Pasta Salad



Zombie Boogie Baked Beans



Gramps' Delicious Deviled Eggs



Hannah's Granna's Apple Cinnamon Rolls



Zombie Boogie Baked Beans

- 2 (16-oz.) cans baked beans
- 1 (8-oz.) can pineapple tidbits, drained
- 1 lg. sweet onion, chopped
- 1 lg. red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 8-10 slices bacon, fried crisp and chopped
- 3/4 C. **Ahrun's Famous Zombie Boogie Sauce**
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 2 tsp. honey mustard
- 1/4 C. brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large casserole dish, combine the beans, pineapple, onion, pepper, garlic and bacon. Stir to blend. Add **Ahrun's Famous Zombie Boogie Sauce**, soy sauce, mustard and sugar. Mix well. Cover and bake until bubbly and heated through, about 45-55 minutes. Serves 6-8.

ILLINOIS COUNTRY LIVING • DECEMBER 2008

Raspberry Poppy Seed Pasta Salad

- 1 (16 oz.) package penne pasta
- 1-1/2 C. cubed cooked chicken
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 C. dried cranberries
- 4 green onions, chopped
- 1-1/2 C. **Beverly's Raspberry Poppy Seed Dressing**

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the penne pasta, and cook until al dente, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain, and rinse under cold water until the pasta is cold; drain well. Place the drained penne pasta into a large mixing bowl, and stir in the chicken, celery, cranberries, and green onions. Pour in **Beverly's Raspberry Poppy Seed Dressing**; stir until evenly mixed.

ILLINOIS COUNTRY LIVING • DECEMBER 2008

Hannah's Granna's Apple Cinnamon Rolls

- 1 loaf Frozen bread dough

Filling:

- 2 T. soft butter
- 1 T. cinnamon
- 1/4-1/2 C. **Hannah's Granna's Apple Spread**
- 1 tsp. warm water, to seal

Frosting:

- 4 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 3/4 c. sweet butter
- 1-1/2 c. confectioners' sugar
- 3/4 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- Chopped pecans or toffee pieces, opt.

Thaw bread dough in a warm place. Roll out on a floured surface in a rectangle. Spread soft butter over dough. Sprinkle cinnamon over butter. Spread **Hannah's Granna's Apple Cinnamon Spread** over dough. Roll up starting at long end of dough. Seal edges with warm water. Cut into pieces about 1 inch wide. Place pieces into an 8 x 8-inch baking pan that has been sprayed with non-stick cooking spray. Cover with a towel and let rolls rise in warm place until double in size (about 30 minutes). Bake at 350° for about 15 minutes. **Frosting:** In a large bowl, combine cream cheese, butter, sugar, cinnamon and vanilla. Beat until fluffy. Spread onto warm rolls. Sprinkle tops with chopped pecans or toffee pieces.

ILLINOIS COUNTRY LIVING • DECEMBER 2008

Gramps' Delicious Deviled Eggs

- 6 large eggs
- 1/4-1/2 T. dill weed
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- 1/8 tsp. cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 tsp. garlic powder
- 1/4 C. mayonnaise
- 1/8 C. **Gramp's Sweet Pickles**, chopped
- Paprika

Place eggs in saucepan covered with about 1-2" cold water. (Starting them in cold water gets the shells off easier.) Once they reach the boiling point, boil for 10 minutes. Run under cold water and peel when cool. Slice each egg in half the long way and place all yolks in a bowl. Add dill weed, curry powder, cayenne pepper, onion powder, garlic powder, mayonnaise and **Gramp's Sweet Pickles** and mix well. Add more spices to your liking if desired. Divide mixture evenly in each egg and place in plate, sprinkle with paprika. Serves 4-6.

ILLINOIS COUNTRY LIVING • DECEMBER 2008

Cuginos French Onion Soup



Cuginos French Onion Soup

2 sm. onions, sliced
3 C. water
1 C. beef stock
1 pkg. Cuginos Baked Burgundy French Onion Soup Mix
2 T. butter
Gruyere cheese, grated
Sourdough bread, sliced
Broiler safe crocks

Melt butter on the stovetop, add onions and cook until soft and starting to brown. Add water, beef stock and Cuginos Baked Burgundy French Onion Soup Mix. Bring to a slow boil for 20 minutes. Arrange the sourdough slices in single layer on baking sheet and bake in a 400-degree oven until the bread is dry, crisp and golden at edges, about 10 minutes. Set aside. Set individual broiler-safe crocks on baking sheet and fill each with about 1-3/4 cups of soup. Top each bowl with 1 or 2 baguette slices (do not overlap slices) and sprinkle evenly with Gruyere. Broil until cheese is melted and bubbly around edges, 3 to 5 minutes. Let cool 5 minutes before serving.

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Don't Get Burned

Fireplace safety starts with a chimney inspection and fire extinguisher

As we progress through fall and winter, the old fireplace will be used once again. Many people are particular when it comes to the types of wood they want to burn in their fireplaces. Typically, oak, hickory and ash are sought. Each species has its own burning qualities, but on a weight basis, all species of wood generate the same amount of heat.

What makes species like oak and hickory more desirable?

The answer lies in the density, or weight per unit of volume. A cubic foot of oak weighs considerably more than the same volume of soft maple. More maple would have to be cut and used to get the same amount of heat as a lesser volume of hickory or oak.

There are several hardwoods, such as osage orange and black locust, that have higher densities, and therefore higher heat values per cord. These woods, however, are harder to split, harder to start burning, and especially in the case of osage orange, tend to pop or spark.

How much wood is supposed to be in a cord? A standard cord contains 128 cubic feet of wood, but actually is closer to 80 to 90 cubic feet, due to the space between pieces. A facecord and rick are sometimes used interchangeably with cord, but many times these are smaller than a cord.

A standard sized pickup with wood randomly thrown into the top of the bed will equal about one-third of a cord. If the wood is neatly stacked, the amount of wood will be closer to one-half of a cord.

When storing wood, keep the pile covered, off of the ground, and avoid direct contact with buildings. Firewood should be seasoned for six to nine months prior to burning, to

remove moisture that sacrifices energy and produces smoke.

As for the fireplace, it's always prudent to inspect and maintain it yearly. Keep the fireplace in good condition by repairing cracks in the flue lining, bricks and mortar. This is especially important in areas that experienced last springs earthquake.

Inspect the flue and chimney, and keep it clear of soot, and creosote build up.

Have a type ABC fire extinguisher near the fireplace, and install a screen that completely covers the fireplace opening to keep sparks from flying out. Keep flammable materials such as carpets, furniture, paper, logs and kindling at least 3 feet away from the fireplace. Arrange the andirons so logs can't roll out.

Use only enough fuel to keep the fire at the desired temperature. Avoid large fires.

Keep the damper open when using the fireplace to prevent accumulation of gases.

Most artificial logs are made from sawdust and wax. They do not burn the same as real wood. Use only one at a time. If you use more, they can produce too much heat for some fireplaces.

If a chimney fire does happen, call the fire department or 911 and get everyone out of the house. If possible, close all air inlets and dampers to smother the fire. Discharge a fire extinguisher into the fireplace, or use a chimney fire extinguisher stick. Wet the roof and watch for outside fires caused by sparks. Have your chimney inspected before putting it back into service.

Baking soda can be used to help suffocate a fire in the absence of a fire extinguisher. Check with your local fire department for the availability of fire extinguisher sticks. These devices emit large amounts of smoke to help smother a fire.

While most chimney fires are confined to the chimney itself, the intense heat sometimes ignites surrounding building materials and furnishings.

For more information on burning wood safely, visit the following Web sites:

http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/forestry/timber_harvest/firewood.html

<http://web1.msue.msu.edu/imp/mod02/01500595.html>

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/warren/news/chimney.html> ■

"Have a type ABC fire extinguisher near the fireplace, and install a screen that completely covers the fireplace opening."



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Helpful Humidity Hints for Houseplants

Don't kill your plants with over watering, add humidity

Houseplant success during the winter months is determined by proper sunlight, correct watering and the right humidity levels.

The first two, light and watering, are the easiest to manipulate. You can move plants closer to the window, further away, or provide supplementary light in some way, shape or form, usually by placing the plants under a lamp.

Once you learn that plants don't suck up as much water during the winter, mainly due to the lack of sufficient light, you start to hold back. Of course, plants will tell you right away that you're watering too much by dying. Over watering is often credited as the number one way houseplants fail to survive.

So, the next time you get a plant, you withhold the water until the plant starts wilting, and then you take it into the sink and give it a thorough flushing. The plants will usually perk up.

But then there's humidity. It's the bane of houseplants, and the curse of the well intentioned who can modify the light and the achieve grandeur with watering. Sooner or later, the ugly head of humidity, or more correctly, the "lack of humidity," will make itself known.

Most houseplants are tropical in nature, even bulbs such as amaryllis. Essentially the cacti and succulents can tolerate lower humidity levels that usually occur once we fire up the furnaces and the forced air starts drying out the rooms.

Being tropical, most houseplants would prefer humidity levels above 50 percent. Being stuck in Illinois homes, they're lucky if they get 20 percent humidity.

In response to our lack of appreciation on their part, many plants start to go limp, which causes us to over water and eventually kill them. Or, they start shedding some of their leaves, which makes us think that we aren't giving them enough water, so we flood the soil, and eventually kill them.

Sometimes the plants will turn yellow or brown along the edges of the leaves. Then we take the plants into the shower or sink, give them a bath, unaware that the water is filling the pot,

forcing all the air out of the soil around the roots, and guess what? Eventually killing them.

If you do nothing, the plants will look ratty, but will respond in the spring when the furnaces are turned off and the windows opened to let in the fresh air. All is good until we turn the air conditioner on, which also dries out the air.

We need to look at raising the humidity level, and really, it's not that hard. There are some easy things to do.

First, you could add a humidifier to your furnace. Granted, that costs more money, and you'll have to have an outlet for the excess water that drains from the furnace. But all in all, it's the best course of action.

Next, you could add a room humidifier. These are great as long as you keep them filled. Most gardeners come to a quick realization that it makes more sense to put the humidifier in the room with the plants, or the plants in the room with the humidifier.

Another option is to group plants together. As the moisture escapes their leaves through the natural transpiration process, it does create a small humidity chamber around the plants. Unfortunately, it may not be as great as you think.

Setting the plants on trays filled with pebbles, and then adding water around the pebbles, is one of the best options for adding humidity. As the water evaporates from the trays, it adds humidity to the room, and especially around the plants. You just need to make sure the pots are sitting above the water, and not in it. Or eventually the plants will die.

The worst thing you can do is mist the plant with a spray bottle. It makes you feel good, but the water vapor doesn't hang around the plant, any more than spraying perfume in one spot stays there. Eventually it dissipates everywhere.

If, after doing everything, the plants still seem to be listless and yellow, consider replacing them with cacti and succulents that can tolerate lower humidity. ■

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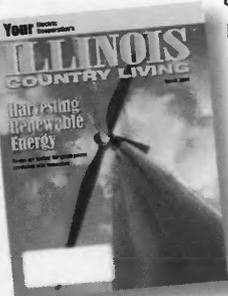


"Setting the plants on trays filled with pebbles, and then adding water around the pebbles, is one of the best options for adding humidity."

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The Dreaded Delta T

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Yes, it's cold outside and yes, I am still wearing my shoes when I go out to get the morning paper. It's definitely winter right now, but spring will be here before we know it.

If you read and implemented the information in the last two columns, your floors should be warmer and your walls should be more energy efficient, therefore making your whole house more comfortable.

Certain types of wall insulation perform better than others when it's cold outside and, particularly, when the wind is blowing. When it's 75 degrees outside, no one really worries about wall insulation. In fact, they may open the windows and go fishing. When it's 25 degrees outside, and the wind is blowing, no one wants to go out outside, much less go fishing.

You are, no doubt, aware that the wind chill temperature can be considerably lower than the real temperature. Generally speaking, non-heated moving air is not conducive to comfort in the winter.

You may be asking, "What is Doug getting at?" Well, just bear with me; I'm getting there.

You're probably aware of wind chill, but you may not be aware of another type of air movement, which we call a "driving force." This phenomenon occurs when there is a temperature difference between two locations, such as the interior and exterior of a

house. That temperature difference is called a Delta T.

In nature, warm air always moves toward cold air. Think of it this way — the hot air is trying to get out of the house in the winter, but in the summer, the hot air is trying to get in the house.

The greater the Delta T, the faster the air movement and the greater the driving force.

Here's a good example. When you open an oven door, you can feel the hot air rush out. You



can literally feel the "driving force" of the hot air as it escapes. And, in your house, the greater the driving force, the faster you'll lose the heat, which means your heating system has to work harder.

If there are cold spots on your wall, the warm air goes to those spots and heat is lost as long as the wall remains cold. In other words, you are going to keep losing heat until you fix the problems. If you take steps to make the wall warmer, such as caulking and installing insulation, the Delta T and the driving force are less.

Here's something else to consider. In most cases, the warm air also contains moisture. When that warm air hits a cold spot, such as your window glass, it may well turn to water. It can do the same thing on or in your wall, causing mold or mildew to appear.

Well, I think you understand the problem, so what's the solution? Simply stated, just caulk and insulate the wall and other locations to eliminate cold spots. I have learned through the years that cellulose or foam insulation is best for this purpose. Warming the wall will reduce the driving force by reducing the dreaded Delta T. ■

Doug Rye, the "Doctor of Energy Efficiency—the King of Caulk and Talk" can be heard on several different Illinois radio stations. Or you can go to his Web site at www.dougyrye.com, e-mail him at info@philliprye.com, or call 888-Doug-Rye or 501-653-7931. You can also sign up for a free newsletter and order his "how to" videotapes.



"In nature, warm air always moves toward cold air."

Get a Geothermal Grant

Grants still available for not-for-profits and public geothermal heat pump projects

Grants of up to \$50,000 to fund geothermal heating and cooling projects in not-for-profit and public institutions served by Illinois electric cooperatives are still available. The grant funding is being offered through GeoAlliance, a unique venture between the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF) and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) to further the education and proliferation of geothermal technology in rural areas.

The ICECF funded the program with a total of \$1 million, and the AIEC acts as its administrator. The original Oct. 31 application deadline has been extended until Feb. 1, 2009, or until the remaining funds are depleted.

According to Nancy Nixon, Marketing Administrator at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative, "With energy costs on the rise, there has never been a better time to install geothermal technology than now. Geothermal heat pump systems use the earth's natural energy and that's why they are so efficient and so inexpensive to operate. In the summer, heat and humidity from inside a building is transferred into the earth through tubing in the ground. During the winter the process is reversed. Just a minimal amount of electricity is used to operate the circulating pumps, fans, controls and compressor, which along with the heat exchangers are the major components of the geothermal heat pump."

Though geothermal systems typically cost more than standard heating/cooling systems, the quick payback and subsequent savings make the technology very attractive.

GeoAlliance grants fund one-third of the incremental difference between a standard fossil fuel furnace/

air conditioning system and a geothermal system, up to \$50,000 per grant.

To date, 29 projects have been funded or approved for funding and several others are awaiting approval. Some of the projects include a 130-ton system in the 60,000 sq. ft. temporary library storage facility at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, a 32-ton system in the Kaskaskia College Sports and Wellness Complex in Centralia and a 20-ton system in the 8,349 sq. ft. cancer wing of Sarah Bush Lincoln Health Center in Mattoon.

The GeoAlliance application process is basic by grant writing standards. It includes submitting a completed application, proof of 501 (c) (3) status tax exempt status, bids for a standard fossil fuel system (must be a minimum of 10 SEER) and a geothermal system, a full energy analysis completed by the bidding

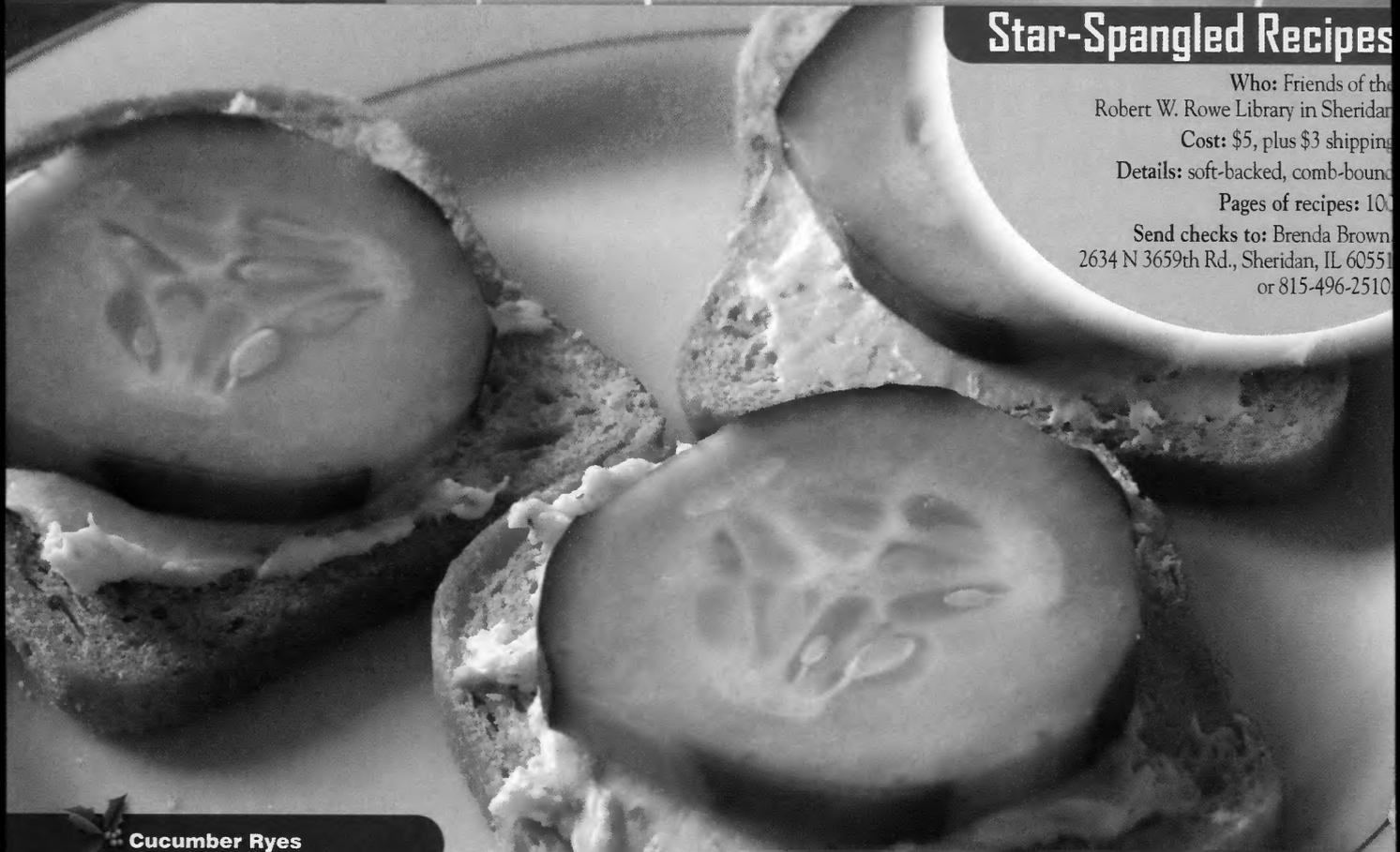
geothermal dealer, a description of the project, financing specifics and a summary of weekly and annual hours of use for programmed activities in the facility. An application would also need to include the scope of the project, the project timeline and estimated completion date. Eligible geothermal projects must be sized at 10 tons or greater.

The remaining GeoAlliance Grant funds are available on a first-come, first-serve basis. To download a GeoAlliance Grant application form, go to www.aiec.coop. On the Web site home page, under the Energy Efficiency button, double-click on the GeoAlliance button. The application and a list of criteria for applying and funded project profiles can be found there.

For questions about the program, contact Nancy Nixon at nnixon@aiec.coop or at 217-241-7954.



With the help of a grant from the GeoAlliance, a geothermal heat pump was installed at the Sarah Bush Lincoln Hospital's new cancer wing. Dick Shelton, Facilities Service Director for the hospital, says the geothermal system has cut annual energy costs as much as \$8,500. "These savings are extraordinary," says Shelton.



Who: Friends of the
Robert W. Rowe Library in Sheridan
Cost: \$5, plus \$3 shipping
Details: soft-backed, comb-bound
Pages of recipes: 100
Send checks to: Brenda Brown
2634 N 3659th Rd., Sheridan, IL 60551
or 815-496-2510

Cucumber Ryes

**Roast Pork With
Apple Topping**

- 2 T. flour
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1/2 tsp. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. rubbed sage
- 1-1/2 C. applesauce
- 1/4 tsp. ground mace
- 1-3/4 tsp. salt, divided
- 1 tsp. caraway seed
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1 (4-5 lb.) pork loin roast
- 1/2 C. packed brown sugar

In a small bowl, combine flour, 1-1/2 tsp. salt, mustard, caraway, sugar, pepper and sage; rub over roast. Cover and let stand for 30 minutes. Place on a greased baking rack, fat side up, in a roasting pan. Bake, uncovered, at 325° for 1 hour. Combine applesauce, brown sugar, mace and remaining salt; mix well. Spread over roast. Roast 1 hour longer or until the internal temperature reaches 160° to 170°. Let stand 15 minutes before slicing.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

Gingerbread

- 3 C. all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 T. ground ginger
- 2 tsp. allspice
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/2 C. brown sugar, tightly packed
- 4 T. milk
- 1/2 C. light molasses
- 2 T. dark molasses
- 1/2 C. butter
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp. baking soda

Preheat oven to 375°. Grease and line a baking pan about 10x7x2-1/2-inches. Sift flour, salt and spices together. Add sugar. Put 3 T. milk into a small pan with the molasses and butter and melt over a low heat. Add beaten egg and stir into the flour mixture. Beat well. Dissolve the baking soda in the remaining 1 T. warm milk and beat into the mixture. Spread evenly in the prepared pan and bake for about 50 minutes. Cool in the pan and cut into squares.

Cucumber Ryes (above)

- 1 (3-oz.) pkg. cream cheese
- 1 T. mayonnaise
- 1 pkg. dry Italian salad dressing mix
- 1 loaf party ryes
- Cucumber slices
- Dill weed (opt.)

Mix Cream cheese, mayonnaise and Italian dressing mix. Spread mix onto party ryes. Top with slices of cucumber. Sprinkle with dill weed, optional.

Christmas Wreath Fudge

- 1-3/4 bags semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk, reserve can
- Raisins
- Pecans, chopped

Line a round cake pan with plastic wrap. Put chocolate and milk in a large pan. Melt over medium heat. Remove from heat. Mix in fruit and nuts. Place the empty can in the center of the cake pan. Spoon the fudge around the can. Allow to firm. When you remove the can, it looks like a wreath. You may also use white chocolate and red and/or green mint candy pieces instead of fruit and nuts.

Family Traditions

Who: Rhea and Britton Families of Flora

Cost: \$5, plus \$2 shipping

Details: soft-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 49

Send checks to: Carroll Britton,

232 Palm Lane, Flora, IL 62839

or 618-676-5361.



Peppermint Stick Pie

Peppermint Stick Pie (above)

- 3 C. crisp rice cereal
- 3/4 C. semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
- 2 quarts peppermint stick ice cream, softened
- Chocolate Syrup
- Crushed peppermint candies

Combine cereal and chocolate, mix well. Press into the bottom and up the sides of an ungreased 10-inch pie plate. Freeze for 5 minutes. Spoon ice cream into the crust. Freeze until ready to serve. Garnish with chocolate syrup and peppermint candies. Pie may be made ahead and frozen. Remove from freezer 15 minutes before serving.

Visit www.icl.coop to see an archive of past Illinois Country Living recipes.

Cappuccino Egg Nog

- 6 eggs, slightly beaten
- 2/3 C. sugar
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 5 C. milk
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 2 C. hot espresso coffee
- 1 C. coffee liqueur
- 2 C. heavy whipping cream
- 2 T. packed brown sugar
- Ground cinnamon

Stir together eggs, sugar and salt in a heavy Dutch oven. Gradually stir in milk. Cook over low heat for 15-20 minutes, stirring constantly, just until mixture coats a metal spoon. Remove from heat. Stir in vanilla. Stir together coffee and liqueur. Gradually stir coffee mixture into egg mixture; keep warm. Just before serving, beat whipping cream and brown sugar in a chilled, large bowl with an electric mixer on high speed until stiff. Gently stir 2 C. of the whipped cream into the egg mixture. Pour into mugs. Top with dollops of remaining whipped cream. Sprinkle with cinnamon. Serve immediately. Refrigerate leftovers.

Hearty Cheese Dip

- 2 C. Mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 2 C. Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1 C. mayonnaise (not salad dressing)
- 1 C. pepperoni, chopped
- 1/2 C. onion, chopped
- 1 (6-oz.) can black olives, drained and chopped

Mix all ingredients together. Place into a 9x13-inch pan. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes. Serve with your favorite crackers.

Christmas Salad

- 1 pkg. instant pistachio pudding
- 1 (20-oz.) can crushed pineapple, drained
- 1 jar maraschino cherries, drained and chopped
- 1 C. miniature marshmallows
- 1 ctn. whipped topping

Place dry pudding mix in a bowl. Add pineapple and cherries. Fold in marshmallows and whipped topping. Refrigerate overnight before serving.

ICE OUTAGES HAPPEN

We can't stop extreme weather outages but we can learn from them

Freezing rain predictions in February of this year sent people scurrying about, storing up a little extra food just in case they were stranded at home for a couple of days.

But what ensued would end up testing the mettle of co-op crews in southern Illinois and force members to be resourceful for days on end, much longer than anticipated.

The rain started to fall in the afternoon on Feb. 11, in temperatures common to the season. By 6:30 p.m., scattered outages were being called into staff at Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative in Dongola. It was evident by 11 p.m. that a serious situation was developing. The line crews were dispatched to work the storm throughout the night. By 1 a.m., a call went out asking for help from electric co-ops around the state.

In a short period of time, falling rain and freezing temperatures had coated everything in sight. Trees and lines were laden with half to three-quarters of an inch of ice. Sleet fell on top of that, as much as two to three inches, according to records

logged by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

The result: By 5 a.m. Feb. 12, 6,400 members were without power. Before long that total became Southern's entire service area, 11,500 members in Johnson, Alexander, Massac, Union, Pulaski and Pope counties.

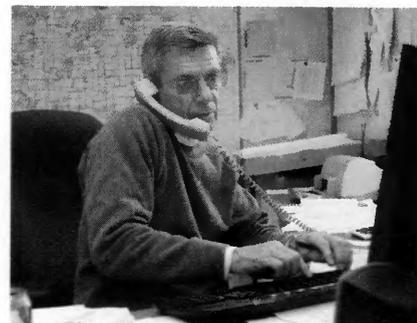
"Never in the history of the co-op had we had everything go. We've never had it where every single member was without power," says Jerri Schaefer, Director of Communications for the co-op.

The phones were ringing non-stop at the co-op. Members wanted to know when their power would be restored. But it was impossible for anyone to predict how long it would take.

"We couldn't tell them," Schaefer says. "We couldn't fix our distribution lines (from substations to homes) until the transmission lines (from the power plants) were fixed."

The complaints followed.

"You don't realize what I'm going through," was a call that



During a major outage hundreds or even thousands of co-op members may try to call in at the same time, overwhelming phone systems and employees. Phone call outage reports can help, but many co-ops are also using new automated meter reading systems to pinpoint outage areas.

resonated time and again. Members were frustrated. Some had medical conditions. Kids were home from school with little to do. Restaurants and stores were closed. Most members' homes, including those of co-op employees, were dark and cold.

The devastation to co-op property was monumental. There were 177 broken poles and hundreds of spans of wire down among the 2,100 miles of line in the six-county region. To put it in perspective covering 2,100 miles of line would be like driving to New York and back again.

The co-op's 44 crewmen, coupled with the 118 additional people from contractor crews and other electric co-ops, worked endlessly.

Some 16,000 calls and 11 days later, electricity had been fully restored and the small-town



Ice, like water, can be deceptively heavy. The weight of ice on this transmission line caused it to sag into trees also coated with ice. The result was a short that caused the fire and an outage to thousands of members served by the high voltage line.

pleasantries reappeared. Pies and cakes were brought to the co-op as thank-you gestures.

Every crisis is a learning experience. Schaefer says communication has to be a priority during a crisis like this. She worked with the local media to get the word out on progress during the outage and to stop false rumors.

Kevin Bernson, Vice President of Media and Public Relations at Shelby Electric Cooperative, says the co-op in Shelbyville experienced similar challenges in November and December of 2006. That was the first major ice storm recorded since 1979.

A similar amount of ice fell in Shelby Electric's territory, with the worst damage in the northwest, west and southwest, stretching from Macon to Winona. Of the 9,600 meters, 5,400 were without power. During most ice outages, the first few days progress is normally painfully slow as damage to the systems continues and traveling on icy roads remains difficult and slow. Within the first 48 hours Shelby's linemen and other crews were only able to restore power to about 1,500 members.

Bernson says employee experience resulted in almost an instinctual response.

"The experience of those at the co-op brought them together as a team. Despite the conditions we were efficient," he says. But like Schaeffer he notes they learned things from the experience to help them prepare for future weather-related outages.

Though storms were plentiful last

winter according to the UIUC, which qualifies the 2007-2008 season as "different from any other in the prior 110 years" – it wasn't the only season to see nature's fury.

Two wind storms, the worst on Aug. 5, also brought down poles, lines and trees in the territory served by M.J.M. Electric Cooperative in Carlinville. Crews from the co-ops of Menard, Illinois Rural, Egyptian, Monroe, Tri-County and Adams responded to help restore power knocked out by gusting 70 mph winds.

According to Bronson Borowiak, Member Services Director, around 4,000 members were initially without power. The last of damage to the system was repaired by the morning of Aug. 9.

Of the lessons learned there, Borowiak said the co-op has taken a much more aggressive stance in tree trimming. He said proper clearance is the key to fewer outages.

"If winds come through, tree limbs aren't as likely to fall on lines."



Electric co-op linemen from across the state and region are always ready to help out other co-ops during an ice storm. You can help keep linemen safe by using an emergency generator properly. Unless you've already installed a double throw transfer switch to isolate your generator from the electric grid, it's safest to simply plug appliances directly into the generator. It's impractical and potentially deadly to try and supply power to the entire house with a portable generator.

What caused the Feb. 11-12 storm?

The winter of 2007-2008 was "unique" according to the Illinois State Water Survey at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, with a large number of warm-season type storms intermixed with a large number of winter storms. One such result of that pattern was the Feb. 11-12 ice storm.

The report suggests that by Feb. 11, Arctic air extended south to the Gulf of Mexico, and a low-pressure system was developing over the north central Rockies. The low moved in an Alberta Clipper track south-eastward to Kentucky. This cyclone track, as recorded, led to the major ice storm across southern Missouri and Illinois. It brought very high winds and thick ice layers in the farthest regions of the state.

Things you need to know to better survive outages

- Medical facilities and members with healthcare issues requiring electricity should have generators, a battery backup or a site to which you can be transferred.
- If an ice storm hits prepare for longer outages. Overestimate the time you may be without power.
- Have extra water, extra food, more than adequate blankets for winter outages and an alternate place to go.
- Stay tuned to media, via battery-powered radios, to learn where shelters are being set up.
- Understand that a neighbor's power may be restored before yours. The co-op's linemen will be trying to restore power to the maximum number of homes. Homes on a single tap or ones with damage to the secondary service will take longer.
- Have friends and relatives outside the outage area to check co-op's Web sites for progress reports.
- Members with power restored early should stay prepared. Melting ice and blowing winds can bring more trees and lines down for second outages, especially during the first few days.
- Members should always look out for downed power lines. If you see a line on the ground, a broken pole or sagging lines, call the co-op to alert crews.

It's planting time. We have white pine and Norway Spruce to plant as wind break or privacy screen. Call John at TurfGreen. 217-793-1114.

Guest House Vacation Rental. Elizabethtown, IL. 2BR, 2Bath. Overlooking Ohio River. Near Garden of the Gods/Shawnee Forest. www.Hardincountybluehouse.com 618-876-9118.

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Let the pros lease your hunting rights. Liability insurance provided. Call for a free landowner's packet. 1-866-309-1507. BaseCampLeasing.com.

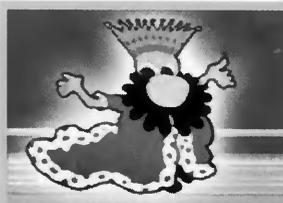
First Street Restaurant Equipment used slicers, tenderizers, grinders, meatsaws, ss sinks, tables. New and used cooking equipment, pottery wheels and kilns. 2615 So. First, Springfield, 217-522-3934, 217-971-8592.

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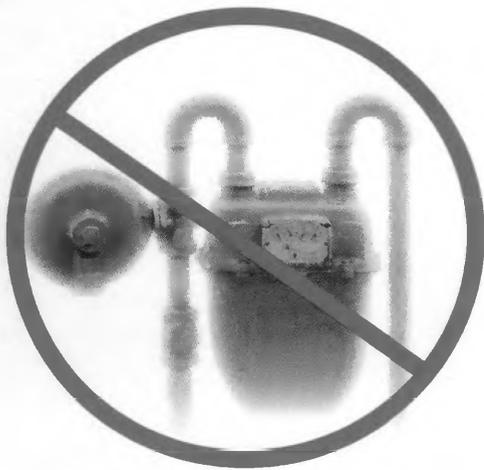


How to place an ad:

- 1) Type or print ad neatly.
- 2) Count words. Cost is \$30 for up to the first 20 words. \$1.50 each additional word. Ads with insufficient funds will not be printed.
- 3) Prepayment is required. Include check or money order with ad for amount due. Also include address label from Illinois Country Living or other proof of Illinois electric cooperative membership. Only members of Illinois electric cooperatives may place Marketplace ads.
- 4) Mail to: Illinois Marketplace, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708, by deadline.

Deadlines: February issue – December 19;
March issue – January 20.

We reserve the right to reject any advertisement. Ads postmarked after the deadline will be placed in the next available issue.



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Jerseyville, IL
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& Cooling
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Power Through Policy

Co-op members must continue energy dialogue with Congress

By Scott Gates

As businesses owned and governed by their members, electric cooperatives have a long-standing obligation to keep a safe and reliable supply of electricity flowing at a price consumers can afford. In recent years, however, outside pressures have started to chip away at the ability of co-ops to fulfill that commitment.

"We're facing major issues as we talk about our energy, our future, and what's going to happen over the next decade," says Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned electric co-ops. "For all Americans to enjoy safe, reliable and affordable electric power, electric co-op members need to be engaged in a campaign to convince elected officials to focus policy decisions on the critical issues that make up achieving long-term energy solutions – those involving affordability, technology and capacity."

A major factor influencing affordability is the cost of new generation coupled with dramatic increases in electric demand. A projected 2.6 percent average annual load growth for electric cooperatives through the year 2030 exceeds the U.S. electric utility average of 1.1 percent, and works out to almost a 90 percent increase over present consumption.

For electric co-ops to meet that level, new baseload generation capacity must be built. Yet, costs for building new power plants have skyrocketed. Worldwide economic growth has created a bottleneck for even basic construction materials such as steel, cement, and crushed stone. As a result, the average cost of building coal and nuclear power plants in North America is up a full 130 percent from 2000, according to a study by Cambridge Energy Re-

search Associates and the consulting firm IHS, Inc.

"That means a coal plant that would have cost \$1 billion to build in 2000 would cost \$2.3 billion to build today," English remarks.

English adds national energy policy decisions made today will determine whether electric co-ops can "keep the lights on" down the road—and if the standard of living for all consumers will decline. To achieve economically and politically sustainable energy solutions, he recommends the following actions:

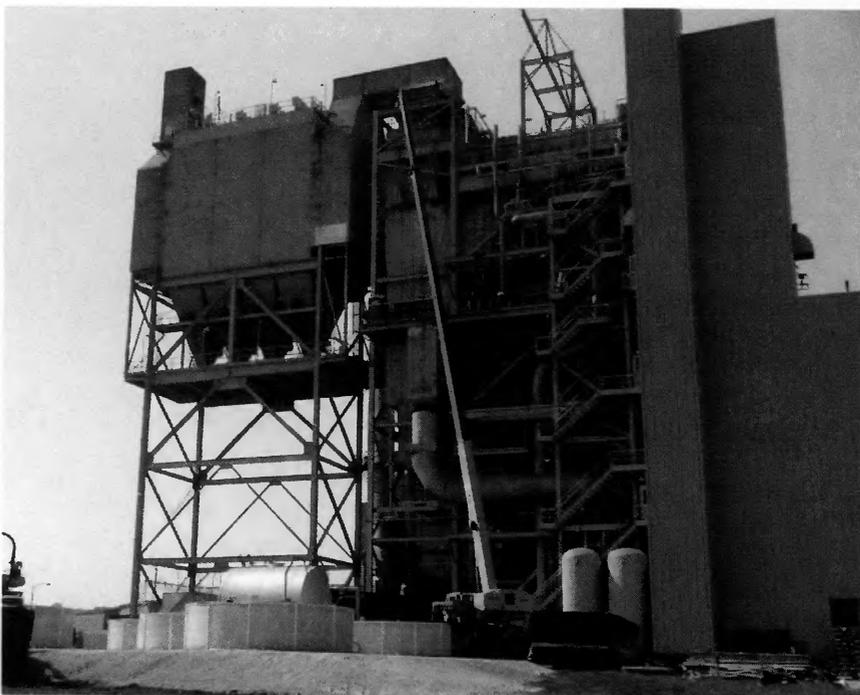
- **Boosting energy efficiency efforts with \$2,500 in direct assistance to the poorest 20 percent of households—those who earn too little to take advantage of existing**

tax incentives—allowing them to add adequate insulation, replace or upgrade windows, purchase Energy Star appliances, and install more efficient lighting and HVAC systems.

"This will provide the quickest way to slow down the growth in electric demand," English maintains. "Many household efficiency upgrades come with upfront price tags that, today, lose out to priorities such as groceries and bills for many lower-income families."

- **Fast-tracking plans for building new transmission lines, connecting rural regions where renewable electricity is generated to the population centers where it's needed.**

More than 80 percent of the nation's electric co-ops draw some



Innovative energy projects have already started at many co-ops. For example, Associated Electric Cooperative and Central Electric Power Cooperative have teamed up with local universities to explore the carbon dioxide-absorbing potential of algae. Using photosynthesis, algae in four large pools of water will use energy from sunlight to feed on carbon dioxide from the Chamois coal-fired power plant's flue gas. An additional benefit is that the oil found in algae can be processed into a biodiesel.
Source: Associated Electric Cooperative Inc.

amount of electricity through renewable sources such as hydropower, wind, and biomass. Nationally, more than 9,000 MW of new wind generation is currently under construction, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

“But any large-scale increase in renewable generation requires transmission lines to move the power from windswept plains and sunny valleys to city centers and suburbs,” English emphasizes.

■ Spending \$2 billion per year over the next decade for energy-related research and development. Technologies such as carbon capture and storage, which separates carbon dioxide gas from power plant emissions (primarily coal- or natural gas-fired generation), compresses it for long-term, underground storage, could significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions blamed for contributing to climate change.

Some pilot programs have already explored this technology.

Dakota Gasification Company, a subsidiary of Bismarck, N.D.-based Basin Electric Power Cooperative, captures 8,700 metric tons of carbon dioxide at its Great Plains Synfuels Plant every day. The gas is piped to Weyburn, Saskatchewan, and injected in depleted oil fields where it helps bring more crude to the surface.

“That means a coal plant that would have cost \$1 billion to build in 2000 would cost \$2.3 billion to build today.”

In Missouri, power supply co-ops Associated Electric Cooperative and Central Electric Power Cooperative have teamed up with local universities to explore the carbon dioxide-absorbing potential of algae. The algae, grown in four large pools, will

use energy from sunlight—through photosynthesis—and feed on carbon dioxide from power plant flue gas.

■ **Cutting through bureaucratic red tape and accelerating the construction of new nuclear power plants.** Nuclear generation, a proven, low-emissions producer of baseload generation, currently accounts for 13 percent of electric co-op capacity, a number that must be more than tripled by 2030 to meet demand while reducing carbon emissions.

“Standardized plant designs, new safety features, and a streamlined permitting process would make an expanded nuclear fleet more attainable,” English comments. “Involvement by the U.S. Department of Defense would mitigate risks associated with nuclear reactor technology and the resulting radioactive waste.”

With electric use surging every year, English warns that these pressing issues can’t be ignored any longer. “There’s no sugarcoating the emerging power crisis we face as Americans.”



Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

Our Energy, Our Future

America is facing an energy challenge. Demand for electricity is expected to grow 30 percent by 2030 — and co-op demand is projected to grow at about double the national average.

The nation’s ability to meet that demand is in serious question. Unless we take action soon, co-op members could see brownouts and blackouts.

Costs are rising.

The cost of coal and natural gas, which fuel 70 percent of our power plants, has doubled in the past year. The cost of building new power generation is rising: A \$1 billion plant built in 2000 would cost \$2 billion to build today.

If Congress doesn’t get climate change policy right, electric bills could increase dramatically — and consumers are already having difficulty. It’s time to ask elected officials tough questions:

Do they have a plan for meeting rising demand?
Are they willing to invest in technology that can help solve our energy problems?

What are they doing to keep consumers’ electric bills affordable?

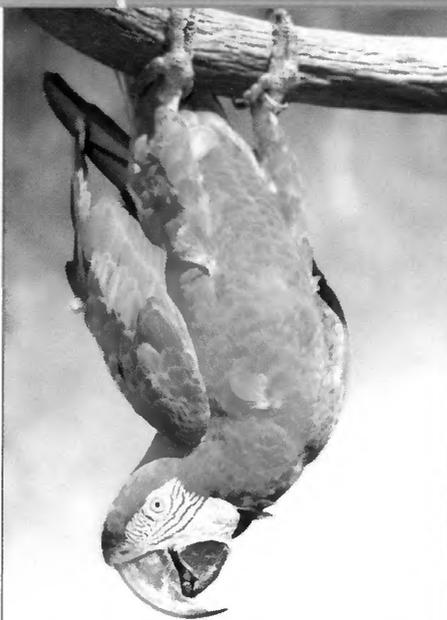
**It’s time to have a conversation
visit www.ourenergy.coop
and send an email to your elected officials.**

2-31, Wired: Rural Electrification of Northwest Illinois Exhibit at the Galena History Museum in Galena. Discover how Jo Daviess County farmsteads acquired electricity in the early 1940s and the dramatic changes it brought about. 815-777-9129 or www.galenahistorymuseum.org.

6-18, Grease at the Chicago Theatre in Chicago. Join teen idol Frankie Avalon as he takes you and your family back to the 50s in one of the most beloved American musicals of all time. 312-922-2110 or www.thechicagotheatre.com.

8-11, All-Canada Show 2009 in St. Charles. Canadian lodges and outfitters. Enjoy hands on activities, plus a hunting and fishing simulator. Concessions will be serving shore lunch and Labatt Blue. 800-325-6290 or www.allcanada.com.

9, Twilight Snowshoe Hike along the Galena River Trail to Beuhler Wilderness Preserve in Galena. Snowshoes and headlamps provided. Reservations required. 815-776-9425 or www.feverriveroutfitters.com.



10-11, Jimmy Buffet Weekend at Chestnut Mountain Resort in Galena. Island-themed party with Caribbean food and tropical drink specials. Prize giveaways, including a pair of skis and binding. Live entertainment from 9 p.m. – 1 a.m. by Pirates Over 40, a Jimmy Buffet cover band. 800-397-1320 or www.chestnutmtn.com.

18, Bridal Expo in Joliet. 11 a.m. The area's largest exposition on wedding products and services. This spectacular daylong event features exciting exhibits on display throughout the venue and fashion show on stage. Door prizes, samples, show specials and much more. Tickets are \$10 in advance and \$12 the day of the event. 815-726-6600 or www.rialtosquare.com.



24, Leopards and Tigers and Bears, Oh My at Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. 4 p.m. Visitors can watch as the zookeepers feed the Sumatran Tiger, Amur Leopard and Sun Bears. This will take place indoors and is free with zoo admission. www.millerparkzoo.org.

28, Bluegrass Jam Session at Lincoln Log Cabin in Lerna. The last home of Thomas and Sarah Lincoln, Abraham Lincoln's parents. Sargent Farm, an 1840s living history farm and program; new visitor center with exhibits and film; picnic areas. 217-345-1845 or www.lincolnlogcabin.org.

31-2/2, Southern Illinois Boat and Fishing Show at the Williamson County Pavilion in Marion. This show offers vendors, demonstrations and presentations, as well as live music and children's activities. Food and drawings also included. Free. 618-997-3690 or www.BoatandFishingShow.com.



17-2/28, 2009 Bald Eagle Bus Tours in Galena. Guided 4-hour tours of bald eagle wintering communities. Learn and view the bald eagle's habits life history, preservation efforts and threats to its future. Reservations required. Bus departs from Stoney Creek Inn. 815-594-2306 or www.eaglenature.com.

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To be considered for inclusion, please submit events in the format used above. Preference is given to events sponsored by non-profit entities. Submitting an event is not a guarantee of publication. Photos are welcome, but will not be returned unless a self-addressed and stamped envelope is provided. Events are subject to change, so please contact the event sponsor for confirmation.

Deadlines: November 15 for February Events, December 15 for March Events **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708 **E-mail to:** cwagner@atiec.coop

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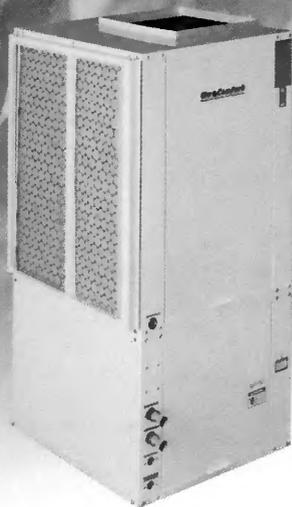
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