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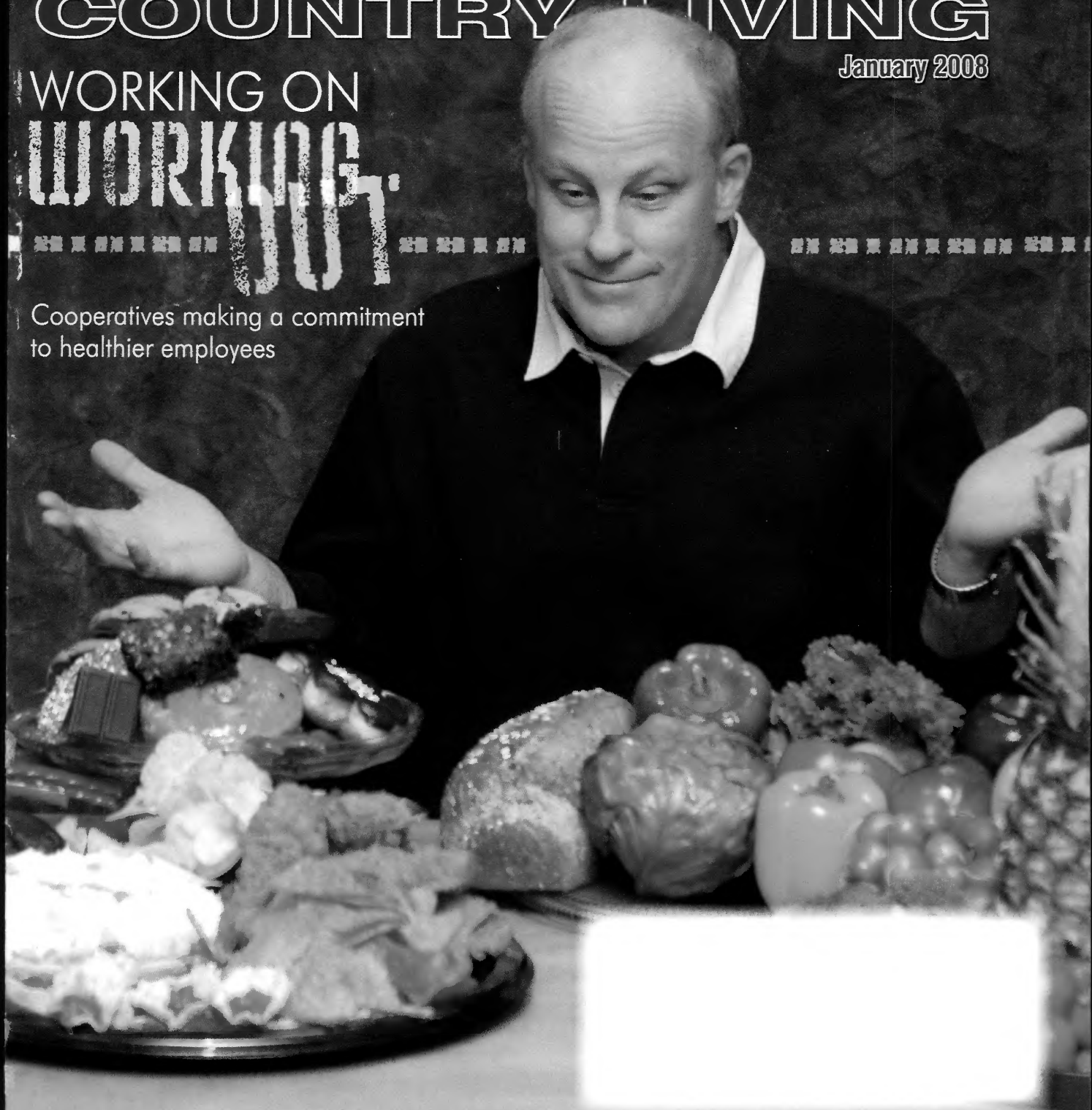
# ILLINOIS<sup>TM</sup>

## COUNTRY LIVING

January 2008

WORKING ON  
**WORKING**  
**WELL**

Cooperatives making a commitment  
to healthier employees



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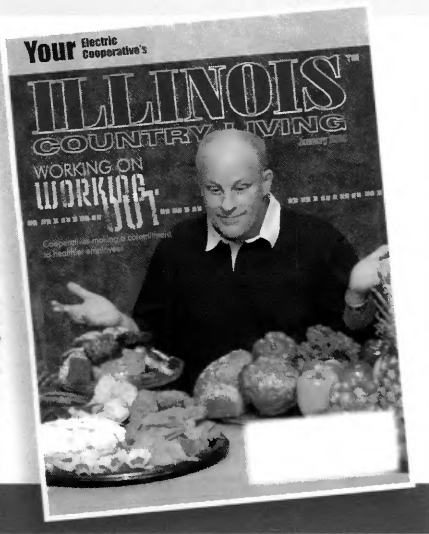
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**WORKING ON WORKING OUT**

Making healthy choices can be difficult. Employees at one co-op set an example.

**ILLINOIS<sup>TM</sup>  
COUNTRY LIVING**

Volume 65, No. 9, January 2008

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# January is Radon Action Month

*Reduce your family's risk of lung cancer with a free home test*

January is Radon Action Month and it's a good time to make testing for radon a 2008 New Year's Resolution. Why test for radon? Testing and mitigation can dramatically reduce the risk of lung cancer. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer following smoking and the first leading cause for non-smokers.

Radon is a naturally occurring, colorless, odorless radioactive gas that comes from the radioactive decay of uranium in the soil. Radon is also a Class A known human carcinogen.

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) is offering free test kits to those who want to test their homes because as IEMA Director Andrew

Velasquez III said, "Testing is the only way to find out if your home has elevated levels of this cancer-causing radioactive gas. It really doesn't matter where you live in Illinois or what type of home you live in, because we've seen excessive radon in every county in Illinois, and in every type of home - old, new, with basements, with a crawlspace or on a slab."

A kit can be ordered by logging onto [www.radon.illinois.gov](http://www.radon.illinois.gov) or calling 800-325-1245.

You should not use a test kit, but hire a licensed radon measurement professional, if involved in a real estate transaction. In January the new Radon Awareness Act, which Governor Rod R. Blagojevich signed this summer, will go into effect. Beginning Jan. 1, 2008, anyone buying a home, condominium or other

residential property in Illinois must be provided with information about indoor radon exposure and the fact that radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and the second leading cause overall.

While the occupant of a home can test their own residence, anyone providing a service to test or reduce radon levels must be licensed with the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) Radon Program.

Radon enters buildings because of air pressure and temperature differences between the building and the outside air. It also enters through openings between the slab and the soil such as crawl spaces, floor and wall joints and cracks.

When testing, if results are above the Action Level of 4.0 picocuries per liter, radon reduction (mitigation) is recommended. While the resident of the home can reduce radon themselves, it is recommended that you hire a licensed professional. As with radon measurement professionals,

mitigation experts in Illinois are licensed by IEMA to ensure they have the proper equipment, specialized training and technical skills to do the job right and

reduce radon in the home to safe levels.

Depending on the home, radon mitigation usually cost between \$800-\$1,200. A list of licensed professionals is available at the IEMA Web site of [www.radon.illinois.gov](http://www.radon.illinois.gov).

If you are building a new house you can also follow passive radon resistant new construction guidelines. By building a design into a new home, it is easier and less costly to activate a system if radon is discovered once testing is completed. While building contractors are not required to be licensed to install passive systems, it takes a licensed professional to activate the system.

Reducing lung cancer risk is what Radon Action Month is all about. I urge you to take the time to learn more about this indoor air pollutant. More information about radon, including results from the IEMA statewide study, lists of licensed radon measurement and mitigation professionals and requests for free home test kits are available on the IEMA Web site at [www.radon.illinois.gov](http://www.radon.illinois.gov). Radon information and free home test kits are also available through the radon hotline at 800-325-1245. ■

NATIONAL  
RADON  
ACTION MONTH

**"Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer following smoking and the first leading cause for non-smokers."**

**Cindy Ladage works for the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Radon Program and has been with this program since 1989.**

*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.*





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## The Illinois Electric Council Evolves to Become the Energy Education Council

The Illinois Electric Council has grown and is transitioning to a name that better reflects its activity and reach. Its new name is the Energy Education Council.

The Illinois Electric Council (IEC) in the recent years has expanded its reach far beyond the Illinois borders. Its largest outreach and education program, Safe Electricity, has more than 200 utility partners in 20 states. And energy efficiency education is universal regardless of the power or fuel source.

Throughout the council's history, there have been many who saw the name and were unclear as to what the IEC was and what they did. "As the Energy Education Council, there is no confusion as to our educational mission and the nature and reach of our work," says Molly Hall, Director of the Energy Education Council.

"The council's 501 (c) (3) non-profit status is unchanged. Our dedication to promoting awareness of electrical safety, energy efficiency, renewable energy and power quality remains strong as we move into the future," says Hall.

The electric cooperative and investor-owned

utility-sponsored organization has a distinguished half-century history of providing a wide variety of educational opportunities through 4-H, grounding/bonding, power quality and other workshops and conferences. The creation and expansion of Safe Electricity dramatically increased public awareness outreach and education activities.

Now the council has two redesigned educational Web sites, sends out frequent news releases on safety and efficiency issues, produces public service ads and sponsors energy solutions workshops for the public and industry leaders.

Hall says, "Already we have seen Safe Electricity program partners expressing growing interest in our efficiency materials. Indeed, the council, through Safe Electricity, is a national organization. A name that clearly defines what we do eliminates the need to explain that we are educational, or have grown beyond our statewide reach with a program that now has national partners."

For more information go to [www.EnergyEdCouncil.org](http://www.EnergyEdCouncil.org). ■

## New Fuel Economy Lists for 2008 Models

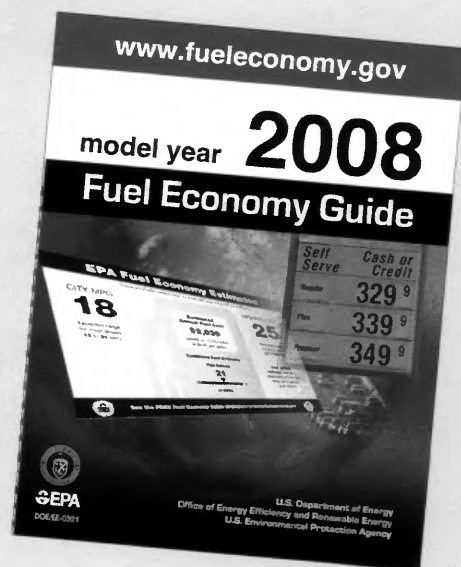
"Greater fuel efficiency is something we must approach more aggressively, effectively and creatively than we have over the past 30 years," says Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman. "The president's ambitious 20 in 10 Plan forces us, not only to approach increased vehicle efficiency like never before, but significantly reforming CAFE standards in a way where safety remains a priority."

Data show that hybrid vehicles continue to lead the government's fuel economy ratings and hybrid technology can be effectively used to improve fuel economy. The Toyota Prius tops the list at 48 mpg city and 45 mpg highway. More hybrid models are available than ever - including SUVs as well as cars - giving consumers greater choices when shopping for fuel-efficient vehicles.

Fuel economy estimates, which appear on the window stickers of all new cars and light trucks prior to sale, are determined by tests that manufacturers and EPA conduct according to EPA specifications. This year's label values are based on new test methods EPA finalized in December 2006.

The new methods are designed to better account for actual driving conditions that can lower fuel economy, such as higher speed driving, use of air conditioning and cold weather operation. Because of the new methods, fuel economy estimates for all vehicles will generally be lower than those of last year.

To view the guide and for tips on increasing vehicle efficiency, visit [www.fueleconomy.gov/](http://www.fueleconomy.gov/). ■



## Electric Co-ops Urge Congress to Support the Stronger Building Codes

NERCA is calling on House members to support Section 9031 in the House Energy Bill (H.R. 3221) encouraging states to establish building codes to meet energy-saving targets of 30 percent after 2010 and 50 percent after 2020.

Stronger building codes will save energy. Improved building energy codes can, by 2030, save 5 percent of our total national energy use, save consumers \$50 billion a year, and achieve a greenhouse gas reduction equivalent to taking 70 million cars off the road.

Stronger building codes are achievable. Thousands of new homes today already meet the 50 percent savings goal, which is required to qualify for a federal tax credit.

Section 9031 leaves state and local governments in charge, but encourages and helps them to reduce the two-fifths of our nation's energy use that occurs in buildings. ■

## Energy Efficiency Ranks # 1 In Consumer Green Building Priorities

A new survey conducted for the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) confirms that a desire for greater energy efficiency drives consumers to choose a green-built home.

"Green building is the home buyer's best defense against soaring energy costs," said NAHB President Brian Catalde. "But it's up to the nation's home builders to make sure the cure is not more expensive than the problem itself. The NAHB National Green Building Program paves the way for authentic, yet cost-effective, green building," he said.

The voluntary program, based on the 3-year-old NAHB Model Green Home Building Guidelines, is set to launch Feb. 14 at the International Builders' Show® in Orlando.

"New technologies, advances in building science and materials for insulation, windows and other components mean that homes are significantly more energy efficient than they used to be," Catalde said.

The survey was conducted the week of Oct. 15. When 800 registered voters were asked how important certain items would be in their decision to either purchase a new green home or remodel their current home to be more green, nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of consumers polled said that "reduced energy costs" would be the most important.

"For the same reason, affordability is a prime motivation for the NAHB National Green Building Program. Our builders want to provide credible, cost-effective green building, so more home buyers' money can go to green features, not green program fees."

However, said Catalde, energy use is not the whole picture. "We need to think about water efficiency, resource efficiency and indoor environmental quality. We need to build green."

The NAHB National Green Building program will link dozens of successful state and local voluntary green building programs with a national online scoring tool for builders and verifiers and extensive educational resources. "A flexible, regionally appropriate approach is preferable to a unilateral approach that does not take into account local issues, architecture or geographic differences," Catalde said. ■



## Phones are Critical Link

Imagine for a minute that you have no phone in your home. You're alone one evening and feel severe pain in your chest. You're having trouble breathing. Clearly, you need emergency medical help. But you have no way of calling 9-1-1.

These situations are all too real for too many people in Illinois. Fortunately, we can all do something to help address the problem. Three government programs administered by the not-for-profit Universal Telephone Assistance Corporation provide qualified low-income individuals with financial assistance to help them obtain and maintain basic local phone service.

Through Link-Up, a federally funded program, and the Universal Telephone Service Assistance Program (UTSAP), which is funded entirely by voluntary contributions from Illinois citizens, qualified individuals can receive up to \$40 off the cost of telephone installation. A third program, known as Lifeline, provides a small monthly credit against the ongoing cost of basic local service.

To qualify, an individual or household must be participating in one of the following government programs: Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), federal public housing, National Free School Lunch Program and/or Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF). To enroll simply contact your local phone company and ask to enroll in Link-Up and Lifeline. The company can determine your eligibility.

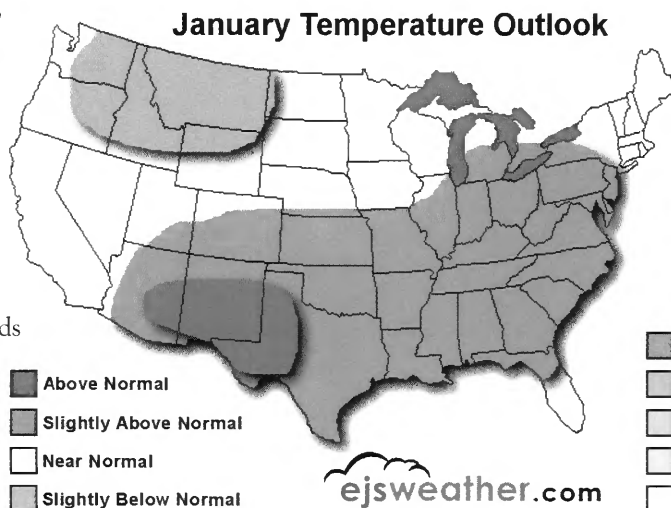
For those who want to help you can contact your local phone companies and ask to contribute to the Universal Telephone Service Assistance Program. The phone company can then add a small charge (ranging from 50 cents to \$5) onto each month's phone bill. Helping our neighbors stay connected is something of which we can all be proud. More information about these programs can be found at the UTAC Web site: [www.linkupillinois.org](http://www.linkupillinois.org). ■

## January to See Near to Above Average Temperatures

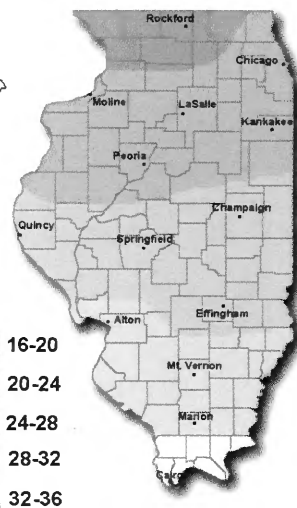
The latest long-range climate models and indices suggest that January, across the state of Illinois, will feature temperatures that average near, to slightly above, normal.

Cooler sea-surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific continue to persist. As a result, a weak to moderate La Nina phase is expected to maintain itself over the next couple of months. Taking a look back at historical climate records indicates that a similar La Nina was in place in both January of 1996 and 2006. January of 1996 featured more average temperatures, while January of 2006 went down as one of the warmest on record.

Record setting warmth is not anticipated for this January, but mean temperatures are forecasted to average 2 to 4 degrees above normal throughout much of the state. As a result, energy usage and costs with respect to heating should also be lower than normal for the month of January.



January Average Mean Temperatures (°F)



The Illinois map this month shows average mean temperatures for January across the state. As can be seen, there is about a 16-degree difference in mean temperatures between the northern and extreme southern portions of the state. ■

## Governors Sign Climate Platform and Greenhouse Gas Accord

In Nov. 16, nine Mid-western governors and the Premier of Canada's Manitoba Province signed the Midwestern Regional Greenhouse Gas Reduction Accord.

The historic agreement, signed at the Midwestern Governors Association (MGA) Energy Security and Climate Change Summit held in Milwaukee, Wisc., will serve as a regional strategy to achieve energy

security and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that may contribute to global warming.

During the MGA Energy Summit, states officially pledged to collaborate on a menu of activities including:

- Establish greenhouse gas reduction targets and timeframes consistent with MGA member states' targets;
- Develop a market-based and multi-sector cap-and-trade mechanism to help achieve those reduction targets;
- Establish a system to enable tracking, management and crediting for entities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Develop and implement additional steps as needed to achieve the reduction targets, such as a low-carbon fuel standards and regional incentives and funding mechanisms.

The Midwestern Greenhouse Gas Accord does not have the force of law. Signatories commit themselves

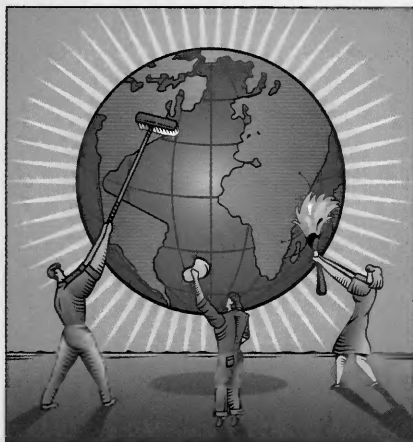
to greenhouse gas reduction targets and timeframes "consistent with Midwest Governors Association states' and (Canadian) provincial targets, developing a multistate/multi-sector cap-and-trade mechanism, and joining the Climate Registry."

The accord also laid a framework for how a cap-and-trade system will be developed by a working group:

1. Enable linkage to other regional systems.
2. Minimize job losses.
3. Reduce leakage.
4. Credit past and present CO<sub>2</sub> mitigation actions.
5. Address integration with potential federal regimes.

Within 12 months, the states will complete development of a proposed cap-and-trade agreement and model rule. Within 30 months, the model rule and agreement will be implemented.

Source: Illinois Energy Forum ■





# A New Year's Resolution That Makes Safety Sense!

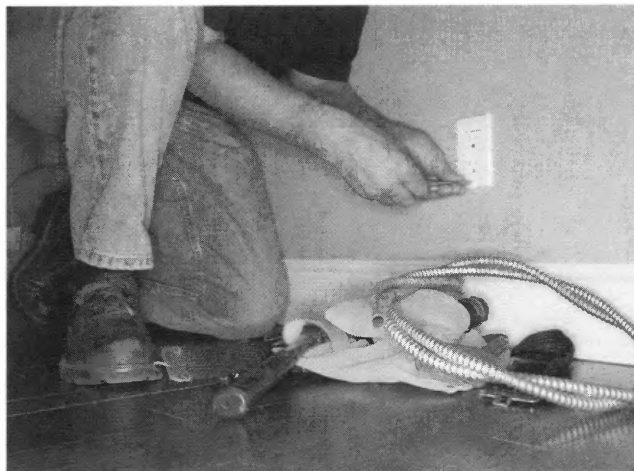
*Eliminate electrical hazards in your home*

**T**ens of thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home, but most can be easily prevented with a few simple steps. Taking a few minutes to check for and eliminate electrical hazards is a New Year's resolution that makes sense!

"Electrical accidents and fires kill more than a thousand people, and result in tens of thousands of injuries each year," says Molly Hall, Director of Safe Electricity. "Overloaded outlets, misused and faulty cords and electrical devices are leading causes of home electrical shocks and fires."

Safe Electricity suggests teaching your children how to be safe around electricity. Use this electrical safety checklist to help protect your home and loved ones:

- **Electrical outlets** – Check for loose-fitting plugs, which can be a shock or fire hazard. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children in the home, make sure unused outlets are covered.
- **Plugs** – Never force them into outlets. Don't remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet. Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- **Cords** – Make sure they are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.
- **Extension cords** – Use them on a temporary basis only. They are not intended as permanent household wiring. Make sure they have safety closures to protect young children from shock and mouth burn injuries.
- **Light bulbs** – Check the wattage to make sure light bulbs match the fixture requirements and are screwed securely in place. Replace bulbs that have higher wattage ratings than recommended and consider replacing burned-out bulbs with compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs, which last 10 times as long and use one-fourth the energy of an incandescent bulb.
- **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)** – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement and garage as well as on outdoor outlets. Test them monthly to ensure they're working properly.
- **Circuit breakers/Fuses** – Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting. If you don't know the correct rating, have an electrician identify and label the correct size to be used. Always replace a fuse with the same size you are removing. Check that circuit breakers are working properly.
- **Appliances/Electronics** – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Look for cracks or damage in wiring and connectors. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics.
- **Electrical wiring** - Wiring defects are a major cause of residential blazes. Check periodically for loose wall receptacles, wires, or lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. Immediately shut off, then professionally replace light switches that are warm to the touch and lights that spark and flicker.
- **Service capacity** – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or breakers trip frequently, you may need to increase electrical service and add new branch circuits. A qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.
- **Portable generators** – Be sure your generator is properly grounded and is not plugged into a home outlet or connected directly to your home's wiring system. A transfer switch should always be installed to protect you, your neighbors, and repair crews from serious injury resulting from backfeed. Follow all manufacturer's installation instructions and if you have questions call a licensed electrician for help. Also notify your local utility that a backup generator has been installed.



*A qualified, licensed electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.*

# WORKING ON

# WORKING

## Cooperatives making a commitment to healthier employees

By Lisa Rigoni

We're living in a junk food nation and obesity is the new epidemic. Fighting this battle of the bulge isn't easy, but electric co-ops nationwide are attacking this health issue head on. Co-op health and wellness programs help reduce healthcare costs, but more importantly, they can improve employee morale, productivity and longevity.

According to Juli Dennis, Senior Advisor of Clinical Programs for National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), co-ops nationwide are working to provide health and wellness benefits to their employees. She said physical activities and good nutrition are among the wellness topics that are covered. Keying in on both aspects will help in the prevention of heart disease now reported by the American Heart Association to be today's number one killer in the United States, as well as strokes, diabetes and some cancers.

"We focus more on prevention than ever before," says Dennis. "And it works! Co-ops are doing things like health screenings, safety evaluations and some are subsidizing various exercise options. Many also provide information on nutrition and health

risks such as smoking. And as a result, some co-op employees have discovered health concerns they didn't know were an issue."

### Uncover Health Issues Through Health Screenings

For example, Shelby Electric Cooperative, Shelbyville, conducts regular health fairs/screenings. "Diane Hensley, Benefits Administrator, coordinates our health fairs, which typically offer employees screenings on their bone density, weight, hearing, glucose,

staff. One of the things we have noticed is that people can feel and look perfectly healthy, but the tests that are offered at these events sometimes uncover health risks that people weren't aware they had."

Marla Berner, DirecTV Customer Service Manager for Shelby's subsidiary, agrees. "We had one employee one year who took the bone density test and was informed that she had osteoporosis. We also have a weight-loss competition each year that begins in January, and it has helped others address some health risks."

Jason Nohern, a Bulk Truck Driver for Shelby Energy Company, the cooperative's propane subsidiary, is a prime example. He lost 34 pounds last year during the three-month competition. "I got into the annual weight-loss competition after one of our health fairs. Some of my numbers came back, and it was a wake-up call. My triglyceride count was really

high," says Nohren.

Your triglyceride count is a number that is linked to the occurrence of coronary artery disease in some people according to reports from the American Heart Association. Elevated triglycerides may be a consequence of

**"Having the equipment at the office helps with the accountability. Several of us work out together and even challenge one another."**

nutritional evaluations, cholesterol/triglycerides, flexibility and have even offered mammogram screenings in the past," says Kevin Bernson, Shelby Electric's Vice President of Media and Public Relations. "The health fairs are facilitated by Sarah Busch Hospital

Marla Berner leads by example as she takes to the glider. She coordinates and participates in Shelby's weight and fitness challenges.



other diseases, such as untreated diabetes mellitus, as well.

Nohren says, "Once I got my weight under control, my numbers went down I have twice the energy. I'm addicted to working out and I have changed my eating habits. I cut out fried foods for the most part and eat more fish, tuna, etc. And I eat breakfast, which I never did before. All the changes have made it easier to do my job. I think some of the others, like our linemen, would agree ... it's harder to climb poles and do the things necessary for our jobs if we are carrying extra weight or are not in good physical shape."

### Be Physically Active Each Day

Regular physical activity is certainly important for one's overall health and wellbeing. The problem is just doing it. To make your workout work, include activities that you enjoy and can easily fit into your daily routine — such as walking your dog, working in your garden or riding your bike. Almost any activity can be beneficial.

Being active for 30-60 minutes on most days can help you build strength and fitness, relax and reduce stress, gain more energy and improve your sleep. These benefits all add up to decreasing your risk of heart disease and other conditions, such as colon can-

cer, diabetes, osteoporosis and high blood pressure.

Shelby Electric has taken steps to ensure its employees have the opportunity to include activity in their daily schedules. They set up a fitness room so that employees can get a workout while at the office. Shelby's main office includes two treadmills, an Elliptical, an Ab Lounger, a stationery bike, weight bench and weights, plus free weights, and equipment has also been set up at the DirecTV office. Employees are encouraged to use the fitness equipment when on breaks or at lunch. And, of course, before and after work are popular times, as well.

Chrissy Grant, Accounting Assistant, says she uses the fitness room at least three times a week, mostly after work, taking advantage of the exercise equipment and the videos. "It's convenient. Once I get home, I may not have the motivation to get back out if I had to go someplace else. Having everything I need right here eliminates those excuses. I feel healthier and have more energy," Grant says. "If I do decide to come in on a weekend or something, it's nice that I can also bring my family. It's a great perk."

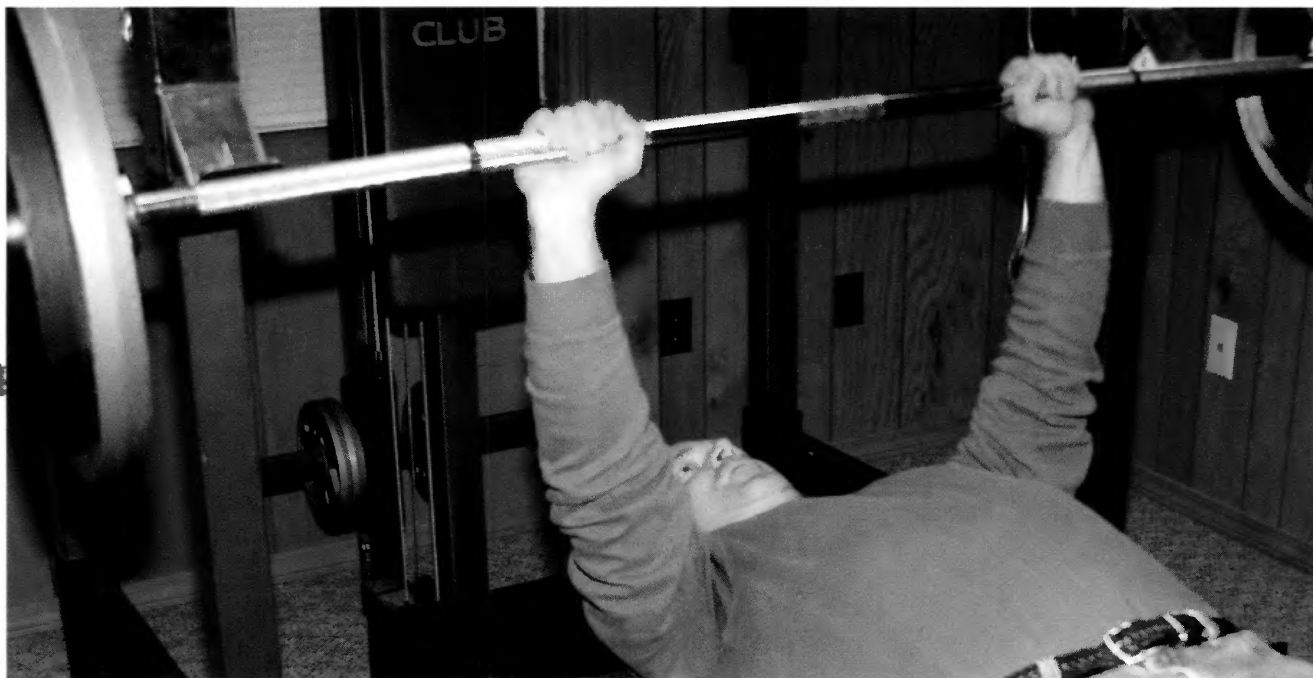
Bernson says, "I take advantage of the fitness room for health reasons. I used to be able to eat whatever I wanted. It wasn't a problem. But

about five years ago I was diagnosed with Graves' disease and basically, I don't have a thyroid anymore. I have to work out a lot and watch what I eat a lot more closely than I did before to keep things regulated. Having the equipment here helps a lot."

According to Becky Sloan, Receptionist/Cashier, "About one-third of our employees do use the equipment, and more so in the winter. When the weather is warmer a lot of us walk outside, too." The third of employees who use the workout facilities range in age from 20 to 57 years old. And both men and women are participating.

Dennis says of the 650 national co-ops, about 160 of them participate in some type of fitness or wellness challenge. "A lot of them try and do something fun like a 'Biggest Loser' competition. We have also had co-ops calculate the miles of electrical lines they serve and challenge their employees to walk that number of miles within a certain length of time. Some do individual challenges, while others do team efforts." If Shelby Electric took on that challenge, their employees would have 2,219 miles to conquer!

Berner, Grant and Sloan are three of nine Shelby Electric employees who were involved in a building-to-building "Biggest Loser" challenge in the fall. "We wanted to



do something before the holidays hit, so we weighed-in and success was determined by weight-loss percentages.” Berner says. “And we threw in some temptations like they do on the show to keep it fun.” For example, it wasn’t unusual for a box of Twinkies or other goodies to land in the opposing team members’ offices or break rooms.

### Eat a Nutritious Diet

When it comes to dieting, the key is to follow the basics:

- Eat a healthy diet by choosing a variety of fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid fats, added sugars and salt.
- Control your portions.

MyPyramid.gov suggests starting with simple steps you can make easily to begin a healthier lifestyle. Some of those suggestions are:

- Make half your grains whole
- Vary your veggies
- Focus on fruit
- Eat calcium rich foods
- Go lean with protein
- Find your balance between food and physical activity
- Drink 6 to 8 glasses (8 oz.) of water daily

According to information on [www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov) eating right not only makes you feel good, it’s important for reducing the risks of heart disease,

some cancers, diabetes, stroke and osteoporosis. Healthier eating could actually reduce cancer deaths in the United States by as much as 35 percent.

That’s why Sloan lobbied for healthier snacks to be included in the vending machines at Shelby Electric. “We have found that people like the healthy options. And since starting to workout, we often find ourselves making better choices with our food in general, like having a Subway sandwich loaded with vegetables for lunch, rather than grabbing a burger and fries.”

Dennis said one of the trends she has seen as co-ops try to help their employees make better choices is not only the change in what is available in the snack machines, but also at meetings. “While donuts may still be offered at a breakfast meeting, some co-ops have also started offering a selection of fruit. You would be surprised at how many opt for the apple,” she says. “And statistics show that three-quarters of the chronic diseases in the U.S., such as heart disease and diabetes, can be controlled by a healthier diet and incorporating more activity.”

### Be Accountable

Accountability is often cited as one of the most important factors in dieting and exercising. This is evident in seeing successful programs such as

Weight Watchers, Jenny Craig, TOPS (Taking Off Pounds Successfully) and others. Weight Watchers claims that those who participate in their meetings lose three times more weight than those who go it alone. Sloan and Grant say that they agree that accountability is one of the keys.

“Having the equipment at the office helps with the accountability. Several of us work out together and even challenge one another,” says Grant.

Sloan and Grant, along with Berner and another DirecTV co-worker, Monica Nohern, trained for a half-marathon (13.1 miles) using the fitness facilities provided by Shelby as part of their training grounds. “I finished the half-marathon, which is huge. Now I can run three miles easily. When we started I couldn’t run around the block,” Grant says with a laugh, poking fun at herself. “To think I was able to actually finish a run is a great accomplishment.”

“And I average about a 12-minute mile when I run now,” adds Sloan.

Berner says of her and Nohern, “Something came up that prevented us from going to the run, but we had made a commitment and together did a 14-mile trek on our own – we also walk most days at lunch and track it on a calendar – more accountability. It helps.”

# Mind Over Matter

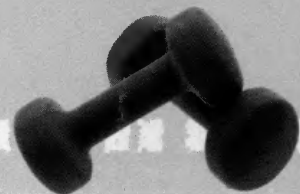
Often eating right is an issue of mind over matter. Ever heard of stress-induced or emotional eating? When you are down, depressed do you go for the big bag of greasy chips or do you have veggies and dip? How about when you are celebrating? Do you go for the biggest piece of cake with the most frosting, or do you opt for selections off of a fruit platter? Many of us were taught that food is comfort, food is for celebrating, and today we often think food should be fast and convenient.

For many today the normal routine is often grabbing a quick lunch or dinner from the drive-thru, eating in the car or at your desk, or worse yet, sitting in the recliner or on the couch in front of the television. For the hurried, Sara Lopinski, a registered dietician at St. John's Hospital Center for Living, Springfield, offered a few basic tips for mindful eating (eating with awareness) in their fall guide.

- If stressed and hurried, take several deep, slow breaths to quiet yourself and prepare your body for digestion.
- Chew your food 20 to 30 times per bite.
- Eat with your non-dominant hand (e.g., your left hand if you are right-handed).
- Eat without the distraction of television, computer or the newspaper.
- Never eat in the car.
- Eat while seated.
- Put the proper food portions on your plate and make the meal last for at least 20 minutes.

## For More Information

- [EveryDayHealth.com](http://EveryDayHealth.com)
- [Health.discovery.com](http://Health.discovery.com) (check out the National Body Challenge 2008)
- [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov)
- [Weightwatchers.com](http://Weightwatchers.com)
- [www.healthierus.gov](http://www.healthierus.gov)
- [www.prevent.org](http://www.prevent.org)
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- [www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/maps](http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/obesity/trend/maps)



*Kevin Bernson presses on ... taking advantage of the weights at Shelby Electric. He says he uses the workout facilities to help him keep his health in check.*

## Is it Really That Big of a Deal?

U.S. obesity trends showed that in 2006, only four states had a prevalence of obesity less than 20 percent. Twenty-two states showed that obesity affected equal or greater than 25 percent of their population, and two of these states showed that obesity affected equal to or greater than 30 percent. Illinois was in the 20- to 24-percent ranking. In fact, the United Health Foundation reported that obesity has increased from 11.6 percent of the population in 1990 to more than 25 percent today. More than 55 million Americans are obese and as a

promotes health, prevents disease and disability and reduces costs. Employees and their families benefit because they feel better, have more energy and a better understanding of the importance of healthy living. Employers benefit from increased employee productivity and morale, a happier and healthier workforce and lower health care costs. Co-op members benefit because the co-op employees are in a better state of mind to offer quality customer service.

"That's why we offer incentives to those co-ops involved in the NRECA healthcare plans. We want to encourage and help foster a healthy workforce," says Dennis.

For Shelby Electric it's a win-win situation...employees benefit by improving their overall health and the cooperative benefits by receiving discounts that allow them to put money back into the wellness program.

"Management and directors understand that it may cost money, but if your employees are healthier, their attendance will be better, their productivity will be stronger," says Bernson. "Bottom-line—it just makes sense."

**"It's harder to climb poles and do the things necessary for our jobs if we are carrying extra weight or are not in good physical shape."**

result are at significant risk for other diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, stroke and cancer.

According to Dennis, NRECA Wellness Program research shows that a well-implemented wellness program

# Compact Fluorescent Light Disposal

*Improper disposal increases the potential for mercury exposure*

Many households are switching from traditional light bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs, or CFLs. These bulbs use significantly less electricity. According to Energy Star, if every American home replaced just one light bulb with a CFL, we would save enough energy to light more than 2.5 million homes for a year and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of nearly 800,000 cars.

Most compact fluorescents contain four to five milligrams of mercury, which would cover the tip of a ballpoint pen. Mercury is an essential component for these lamps to operate. Mercury vapor in the lamp is used in conjunction with phosphor to produce visible light.

Any product containing mercury should be handled with care. Chronic exposure to mercury poses health risks. Normal operation of CFLs does not pose a health or environmental risk, but improper disposal increases the potential for mercury exposure. Breakage of lamps releases mercury, which may occur if CFLs are thrown into regular trash, or are accidentally broken.

Simple safety measures to prevent accidental breakage in the home include screwing and unscrewing the lamp at its base, not by the bulb. Do not forcefully twist a CFL into a light socket.

If a compact fluorescent bulb is broken in the home, there are several steps to follow to decrease mercury exposure risk. If applicable, windows should be opened in the room where the light broke for at least 15 minutes, to allow proper ventilation. People should not be in the room during that time. After ventilating the room, carefully place glass pieces in a plastic bag that can be sealed, using rubberized gloves. If a CFL breaks on a carpet, remove all materials possible by hand, again using rubberized gloves. Sticky tape may be used to assist in picking up small glass fragments and powder. If a vacuum is still needed, discard

the vacuum bag after use. Do not use a vacuum or broom to clean up bulb fragments on hard surfaces. Pick up fragments, and wipe up any powder by using a damp paper towel.

After placing cleanup materials in a sealed bag, place that bag in a second sealed bag and place in an outdoor trash container or protected area for the next trash pick up.

According to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, mercury-containing lamps discarded by households are not subject to hazardous waste rules and can be accepted by municipal-waste facilities. However, a better option is to place bulbs that are broken or no longer work in a sealed plastic bag and dispose through a Household Hazardous Waste collection site. To know if such a collection is taking place, visit the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency schedule at [www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/hhwc-schedule.html](http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/hazardous-waste/household-haz-waste/hhwc-schedule.html).

While these bulbs do contain mercury, the U.S. Environmental Protection agency states that CFLs help reduce the amount of mercury entering the atmosphere. Many power plants use coal, which releases mercury to the atmosphere when burned. Since CFLs require less electricity, the reduction in demand will allow a power plant to emit less mercury. In addition, mercury content in CFLs is expected to drop even further, due to changes in technology.

For more information, visit the following Web sites:

[www.epa.state.il.us/land/fluorescent-lamps/lamprecycle.org/](http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/fluorescent-lamps/lamprecycle.org/)

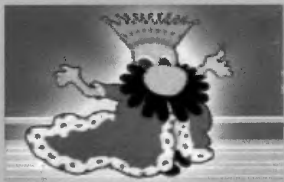
[www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr\\_cfls](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=cfls.pr_cfls) ■



**“Normal operation of CFLs does not pose a health or environmental risk.”**

Duane Friend is a Natural Resources Management Educator at the University of Illinois Extension, Springfield Extension Center. Contact him at (217) 782-6515 or e-mail him at [friend@uiuc.edu](mailto:friend@uiuc.edu).





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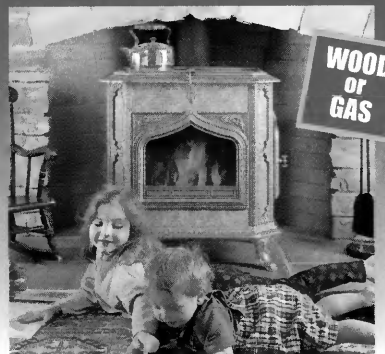
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# Kitchen Scraps Make Interesting Houseplants

*No need to wait until spring to start growing your plants*

**B**ack in the 70s, you could find an avocado pit speared and partially submerged in a glass of water in every kitchen. Then three years later, someone would finally get around to throwing out the resulting tree that did nothing but produce green leaves, though it probably was the center of many cocktail parties.

That was the start of recycling, well before the emphasis changed to glass, newspapers and your old appliances.

Starting in the 90s, many gardeners started to shun these free plants. Kitchen scraps were something shoved down the disposal or thrown in the trash. However, are we missing an opportunity to recycle our kitchen trash and turn it into a treasure that we can share with others, including our kids and grandkids? Are we missing an opportunity to brighten the dreary days of winter with our green thumb prowess?

Not everything makes a kitchen treasure, and some things are just down right nasty. Sure, you could probably cut the top off a beet and grow it, but why would you? Beets are nasty things that don't even belong in your kitchen or garden in the first place.

**Not everything makes a kitchen treasure, and some things are just down right nasty.**

Some things just won't grow. Forget about any luck with anything that comes in a can.

However, there are some things that can be mildly interesting.

Potatoes are the simplest to sprout; sometimes they do it on their own under the sink if they don't turn into a putrid smelling rotting mass first. Cut up a

few pieces of the potatoes, making sure you have an eye in each one, and plant in a pot or large cup with potting soil. Water and stand back.

Chances are, though, you won't get many tubers forming, and after awhile, you'll find that sprouted potatoes aren't the most interesting of houseplants.

Sweet potatoes can also be sprouted, but since they aren't a tuber like regular potatoes, you can't cut them in pieces and expect lots of plants. Tubers are

swollen stem tissue with lots of buds; sweet potatoes are tuberous roots with only buds at the end.

Find the growing end of the sweet potato and cut it off. You can dangle it in water, or allow it to dry on the counter overnight and plant it. Eventually, you'll get waxy green foliage and lots of plants emerging from that end. This should happen in a matter of weeks. If not, you probably started the wrong end.

Sweet potatoes look nice on the kitchen window ledge, cascading down toward the counters and sink. Over all, they're more attractive than potatoes. If you keep them alive long enough, you can plant them outdoors around Mother's Day.

Most of us get sick and tired of them by then, though.

Grapefruit, lemon, orange and papaya seeds will sprout. If every papaya seed germinated, we'd be overrun with

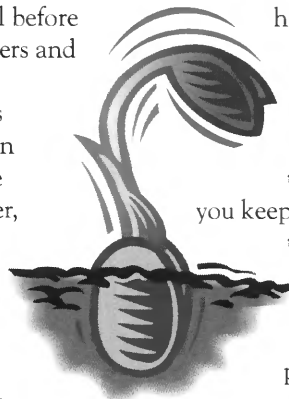
papaya groves. You can even start kiwi seeds if you want to take the time to separate them.

Mango and avocado pits will also grow, though the key to them is recognizing what is up and what is down. Avocados should have the biggest end sitting down, sort of like humans. Mangos have one edge that is slightly wider that looks like an eye – that goes up.

The riper the plant, the faster the seeds start. However, overripe fruit can be magnets for insects and molds. Once you've dug out the seeds, let them sit on the counter for a couple of days to dry. Since it's winter, they shouldn't attract too many fruit flies.

You can recycle fast food containers for pots, making sure the container is relatively clean. Poke a few holes in the plastic or Styrofoam to allow water to drain.

Before you know it, you'll have a jungle of plants that will seldom give anything back to you for all the attention you've given them. Sort of like a teenager. ■



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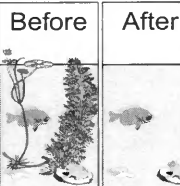
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# Resolve to Lose Some Kilowatts

*Help yourself and someone else trim their energy bill*

**S**urely it is not the beginning of another year already. You mean it is time for New Year's resolutions? I still haven't lost that 20 pounds that I resolved to lose for the last five New Years!

I do think it is all right for me to make a New Year's resolution if I will just work hard to fulfill it. I remember when I resolved to learn to drink coffee without cream or sugar. It was difficult, but I did it. The truth is, I would really rather smell the coffee beans than drink the coffee.

That same year I resolved to learn how to fish with a plastic worm. I bet all you gals are impressed with that one. It took time, but I learned to do it.

These were all fine changes, but as I've grown in my "maturity," my New Year's resolutions have become more serious. I recently heard someone suggest that there was one New Year's resolution that would change your life. They said, do a good deed for someone every day and don't tell anyone about it.

I liked that and I imagine that most of you would agree that that would be a wonderful thing to do. And there are limitless ways to do that.

Since this column is

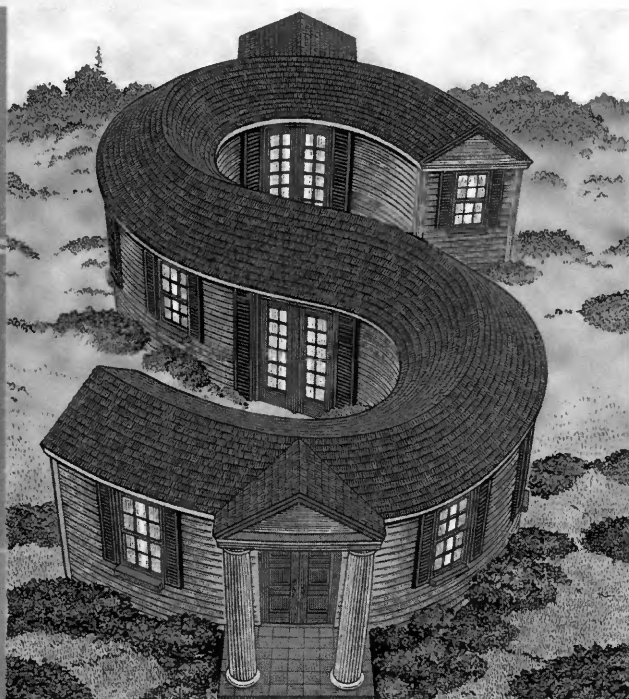
**"Do a good deed for someone every day and don't tell anyone about it."**

dedicated to energy efficiency, I thought I would share a few ways that you could do a good deed for someone and help them save money on their energy bills. That would be a great deed, I believe. Don't you? And there are ways to help others that don't cost you anything or if they do, very little.

## Here we go:

1. Share these columns with others, especially your friends and family who don't get this magazine.
2. Encourage others to listen to my electric cooperative-sponsored radio show, "Home Remedies," which airs on many Illinois stations on Saturday mornings. Check with your local electric cooperative for more information.
3. Check with your local electric cooperative about energy saving tips brochures and share those with your friends and family.
4. Buy a package of compact fluorescent lights for a friend as a gift this year.
5. Buy a water heater blanket for your mom or grandmother. She'll appreciate it, I promise.
6. Buy some tubes of caulk and go over to your neighbor's house and offer to show him or her how it can be used to make their house more comfortable.
7. If you haven't done all you can do to make your home energy-efficient, take some time to do a good deed for yourself.

These were just a few tips that came to mind. I bet you can think of many, many more. I hope this will help you with your New Year's resolutions. I think you'll find them to be simple and rewarding. But if these resolutions don't sound good to you, just remember, you can always resolve to try losing that 20 pounds again. Good luck!! ■



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.dougye.com](http://www.dougye.com), e-mail him at [info@philliprye.com](mailto: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.



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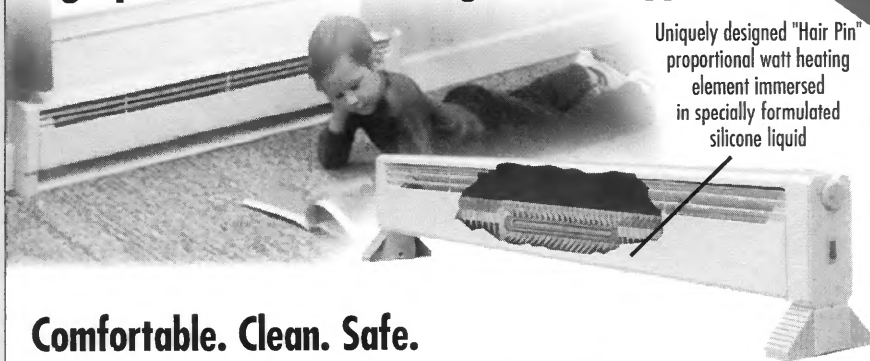
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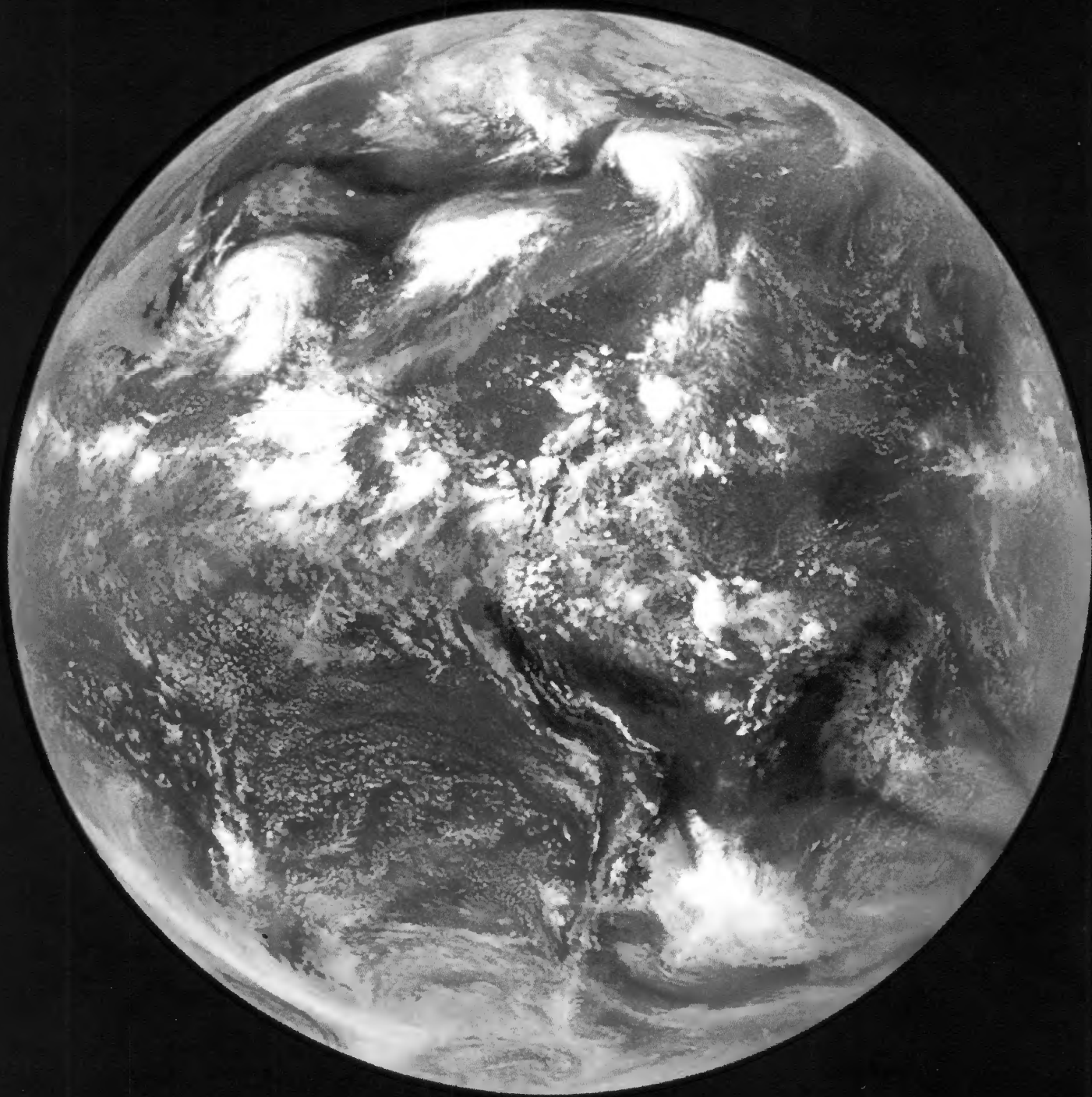
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# America's Perfect Storm

*Will the country be able to keep up  
with the growing demand for energy?*

It's hard to escape the media coverage surrounding climate change. Lawmakers, business leaders, clergy and environmental groups compete for sound bites. According to ABC News and other recent polls, the American public is generally aware of climate change and the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They are unclear, however, about what needs to be done, who should do it, and what it will cost. Resoundingly though, consumers say they don't want to get stuck with a big price tag to pay for climate change solutions.

Solutions to curbing greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, include energy efficiency, new technologies (such as finding ways to store carbon dioxide emissions produced by coal- and natural gas-fired power plants), nuclear power and renewable energy resources. But what will these solutions cost? According to one article last year in *The Washington Post*, electricity bills could rise by 25 to 33 percent just to "stimulate and pay for new technologies."

"All of this presents a huge challenge for electric utilities, especially electric cooperatives," says Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the service arm of the nation's 900-plus not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric co-ops. "Electricity demand is increasing because of growth, and we need to build more generating plants and transmission lines to meet this growing demand."

According to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, which oversees reliability of the bulk power system covering the United States and most of Canada, demand for electricity will increase over the next 10 years by 18 percent, although the electric industry's capacity to generate power will increase by only 8.5 percent.

A longer-term forecast by the U.S. Department of Energy predicts that demand for electricity will increase by 40 percent over the next 25 years. Clearly, the country could face brownouts and blackouts unless additional power plants are brought into service.

"We have an obligation to keep the lights on and prices affordable at a time when the costs of fuel and raw materials to build new generation are skyrocketing," states English. "With a shortage of electric capacity, huge increases in demand for power, and the cost of climate change, we have the making of a perfect storm."

Based on calculations by Charles River Associates, a utility analysis firm, climate change proposals currently circulating in Congress, if passed, could result in a 50 to 80 percent increase in wholesale power costs by the year 2020. Translate that into retail rates and electricity bills could climb by 25 to 40 percent.

"When it comes to climate change, Congress will legislate, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will regulate, and state and local governments are already moving forward," says NRECA Vice President of Environmental Issues Kirk Johnson. "With carbon constraints in our future, it's essential that lawmakers and elected representatives understand the financial repercus-

sions their political actions could cost Americans."

The *New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal* observed this past summer that the issue of cost should be put on the table. If climate change legislation is not handled intelligently and carefully given these accumulating factors, electric bills could double or even triple, based on the best available estimates.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit utility-sponsored consortium, whose members include electric co-ops, has developed a seven-part plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions based on technological solutions including energy efficiency, carbon capture and storage, and renewable sources. Although ambitious, the EPRI model would cut carbon dioxide emissions to 1990 levels (45 percent) by 2030.

Energy efficiency, by reducing the amount of power needed, remains one of the easiest and most cost-effective ways to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Over the past three decades, electric co-ops have emerged as leaders in helping their members use electricity wisely. However, energy efficiency alone can't indefinitely postpone the need to build new power plants or solve climate change. EPRI notes that efficiency improvements will reduce electric demand just 9 percent over the next 22 years.

Renewable energy and nuclear power development are greatly impacted by massive global price increases for raw materials like nickel, copper, steel and concrete, all of which raise construction costs for new generating plants. And renewable energy sources, like wind turbines, require transmission lines to move any power generated. At present, the nation's electric grid is not equipped to do so.

With 50 percent of the nation's power supply produced by burning coal, research and development of carbon capture and storage technology becomes crucial for keeping coal-fired power plants viable—and the lights on. EPRI asserts, however, that cost-effective carbon capture and storage technology will take years, if not decades, to become commercially available. The best guess – assuming the federal government embarks on a massive \$30 billion research and development program (bigger than putting a man on the moon) – affordable carbon capture and storage technology could hit the market as early as 2020.

Since no single "silver bullet" solution for tackling climate change exists, electric co-ops are working closely with policymakers to seek long-term, practical and affordable remedies to our nation's energy challenges. Through it all, electric cooperatives remember their commitment to delivering a reliable supply of electricity at a competitive price.

*Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, North American Electric Reliability Corporation, Electric Power Research Institute, Department of Energy, Charles River Associates, The Washington Post, The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal.*

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 2967 Rolla Road, Carterville, IL 62918  
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**Apple Butter Baked Beans**

**Apple Butter Baked Beans  
(above)**

- 3 (16-oz.) cans pork & beans, drained
- 1/2 C. onion, chopped
- 1 C. apple butter
- 1/4 C. pancake syrup
- 1/4 C. ketchup
- 3 slices bacon

Combine pork & beans, onion, apple butter, syrup and ketchup together. Pour into a baking dish and place bacon on top and bake at 350° for about 2 hours. Crock Pot method: Combine all ingredients except bacon in a crock pot. Cook bacon until crisp and lay on top. Cook on low for 3-4 hours.

**Hot Ham Salad**

- 3 C. fully cooked ham, cubed
- 1 (8-oz.) pineapple tidbits, drained
- 1/4 C green pepper, chopped
- 1/4 C red pepper, chopped
- 1 C. mayonnaise
- 1/4 C. Mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1 (11-oz.) can mandarin oranges, drained
- 1/2 C. almonds, slivered

In a bowl, combine the ham, pineapple, green and red pepper, mayonnaise and cheese. Gently fold in oranges. Transfer to a greased baking dish and sprinkle with almonds. Bake uncovered at 350° for 30 minutes or until heated through. Yields: 4 servings.

**Tortellini Soup**

- 1 lb. Italian sausage
- 1 lg. onion, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 3 (14.5-oz.) cans beef broth
- 2 (14.5-oz.) cans diced tomatoes
- 1 (8-oz.) can tomato sauce
- 1 C. red wine
- 2 carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 T. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1 med. zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 sm. can mushrooms, sliced
- 1 (9-oz.) pkg. cheese tortellini
- Parmesan cheese

Brown and drain sausage. Add tomato sauce, wine, beef broth, tomatoes, onion, garlic, sugar and Italian seasoning. Bring to a boil and simmer 30 minutes. Stir in carrots, zucchini, mushrooms and tortellini and cook for 10 minutes. Serve with Parmesan cheese.

**Strawberry Bread**

- 3 C. flour
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 3 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 C. sugar
- 2 pkgs. frozen strawberries, thawed
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 1 C. pecans, chopped
- 1-1/4 C. oil

Sift the dry ingredients together. Mix the sugar, oil and eggs, fold in the strawberries and juice. Stir in the dry ingredients just enough to blend well. Don't use a mixer. Grease and flour 3 loaf pans. Bake for about 1 hour at 350° or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Do not over-bake. Cool 30 minutes before removing from pans.

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### Puppy Chow (right)

- 8-9 C. Crispix cereal
- 1 stick butter
- 3/4 C. creamy peanut butter
- 1 C. chocolate chips
- 2 C. powdered sugar
- 1 brown paper bag

Melt butter, peanut butter and chocolate chips. Place cereal into a brown paper bag and dump chocolate mixture on top. Shake. Then dump powdered sugar on top and shake some more.

### Pasta Salad (below)

- 1 head cauliflower, chopped
- 1 bunch broccoli, chopped
- 1 lb. carrots, chopped
- 1 red onion, diced
- 1 (6-oz.) can black olives, chopped
- 2 (16-oz.) pkgs. noodles (your choice)

#### Sauce:

- 3 C. vinegar
- 3-1/2 C. sugar
- 3 tsp. Accent
- 3 tsp. garlic powder
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Boil noodles; drain and cool. Mix together vegetables and noodles. Pour sauce over all and mix well. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour before serving.

### Chicken Divan

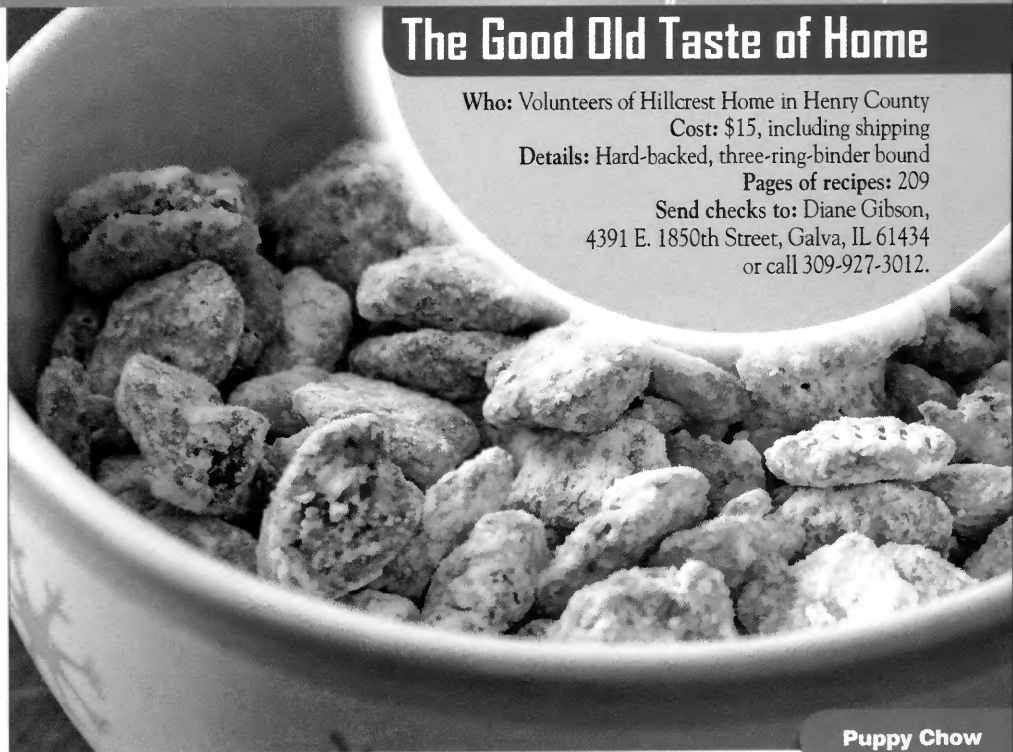
- 2 (10-oz.) pkgs. frozen chopped broccoli
- 2 C. diced chicken, cooked
- 2 C. cream of mushroom soup
- 1 C. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. lemon juice
- 2 tsp. curry powder
- 2 C. shredded Cheddar cheese

#### Topping:

- Bread crumbs
- Melted butter

Slightly cook broccoli in salted water for 5 minutes; drain. Place broccoli in a 9x13-inch pan. Place cooked chicken on top of broccoli. Combine soup, mayonnaise, lemon juice and curry powder. Pour over chicken. Sprinkle with cheese. Mix bread crumbs and melted butter together and sprinkle on top. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner



Puppy Chow

### World's Best Chocolate Chip Cookies

- |                                |                       |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 3 C. flour                     | 3/4 C. sugar          |
| 3/4 tsp. baking soda           | 2 eggs                |
| 3/4 tsp. salt                  | 2 T. vanilla          |
| 1 C. brown sugar               | 1 bag chocolate chips |
| 2 sticks real butter, softened |                       |

In one bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda and salt. In another bowl mix together the softened butter, brown sugar, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Combine dry and moist ingredients. Add chocolate chips. Bake on greased cookie sheets for 10-12 minutes at 350°.

Pasta Salad



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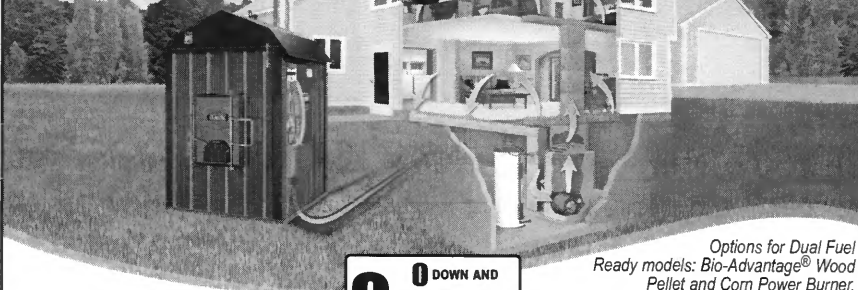


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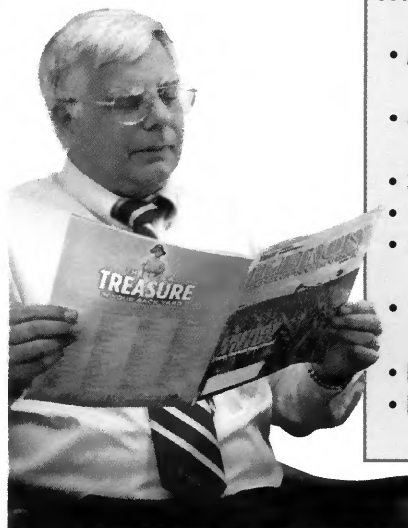
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### Why advertise with Illinois Country Living?

- Advertisers stay for extended periods of time because readers bring them results.
- 60 percent of our readers use ads as reference when making purchases.
- 36 percent save an ad for future reference.
- 13 percent have contacted advertisers.
- 12 percent have purchased a product or service.
- 10 percent recommended a product or service to someone else for purchase.
- Largest downstate monthly publication.
- For more than 60 years, providing information on rural issues.

**ILLINOIS<sup>TM</sup>  
COUNTRY LIVING**

Contact Lisa Rigoni at **Irigoni@aiec.coop**  
or  
**217-241-7953**

# Take a Trip

## Discover something new in Illinois

Will you be one of the more than 50 million people who will explore Illinois this year? January may seem like an odd month to talk about this, but there are plenty of daytrips that can get you and your family out of the house and help keep cabin fever at bay.

It's also a good time to think about that spring or summer vacation. You may only think of the more traditional out-of-state destinations like exotic locales or tourist magnets, and sure, the Bahamas are lovely and the Grand Canyon is big, but does an out-of-state trip include a visit to a double-decker outhouse? Or a history lesson brought to life like visiting Lincoln New Salem's Historic Site? Or a trip to discover gangsters and superheroes? If not, you're missing out on what you can find right here in Illinois.

With more than 110 historic sites, 4,300 miles of shoreline, almost a 1/2 million acres of state parks, not to mention all the small and unique places to visit, you can easily find some interesting daytrips, weekend adventures or official summer family vacations in your own backyard. So load up the kids and gas up the car and get moving!

We'll be reviewing some of these destinations throughout the year as space allows in this publication. If you're anxious to get started now, check out the books or Web sites below for more information.

• **Illinois Travel Counseling System** at 1-800-2-CONNECT puts you in touch with an expert travel counselor who can answer your questions, make trip suggestions or prepare a full itinerary and send it to you in minutes by fax or e-mail. Or visit the Web site [www.enjoyillinois.com](http://www.enjoyillinois.com). You can take a virtual journey through the regions of the state via the Web site.

• **Daytrip Illinois: A Travel Guide to Daytrips in the Land of Lincoln, 2nd edition** by Lee N. Godley and Patricia M. O'Rourke.

We got our copy of this book from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) online store at [www.dnr.state.il.us](http://www.dnr.state.il.us). The book features maps, outlined routes based on Interstates and detailed information about sites and towns along each route. Phone numbers, addresses and Web sites are also offered to gain more information.

• **Oddball Illinois: A Guide to Some Really Strange Places** by Jerome Pohlen.

We also got this book from IDNR. It features places such as the birthplace of Popeye the Sailor, the two-decker outhouse, the world's largest ketchup bottle and much more. If you're looking for unusual sites to see as a destination itself or to view on your way elsewhere, this is a great guide.

• **Illinois Travel Guide**

Divided by region, this book tells you what you can find in Chicago, Chicagoland, Northern, Central, Western, Southern and Southwestern Illinois. Attractions, dining, hotels, historic sites, shopping and how to



Tall Paul holding a giant hot dog at the annual Happy Wiener Fest on Route 66 in historic Atlanta, Ill.

find more information are all listed. You can request your book by calling 1-800-2-Connect.

• **Tales and Trails of Illinois** by Stu Fliege

We found this interesting look at Illinois, published by the University of Illinois Press, [www.press.uillinois.edu](http://www.press.uillinois.edu), at a local bookstore. Whether you're a history buff or a parent trying to share history with your children, this book offers gangsters, hangings, salt and coalmines, Illinoisans who changed the world and much, much more. You can find museums and statues and other ways to make history come alive by visiting the places reviewed.



Photo by Dana Smith

## Linemen Battle The Darkness

There are everyday heroes all around us.  
We take them for granted until we really need them.  
Then we forget to say thanks, good job, we appreciate what you do.  
Linemen are our everyday heroes.  
*Thank you.*



The Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup> Cooperatives of Illinois  
*The power of human connections*  
[www.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://www.touchstoneenergy.coop)

**5-27, "Prairie Paintings"** at the David Strawn Art Gallery in Jacksonville. Join the gallery in welcoming artist Roger Dewitt. Opening reception is Jan. 5 with an artist gallery talk. 217-243-9390 or [www.strawnartgallery.org](http://www.strawnartgallery.org).

**12, Bald Eagle Bus Tours** departing from Stoney Creek Inn in Galeana. A guided four-hour tour of bald eagle wintering communities. Learn about the bald eagle's habits and life history, plus preservation efforts and threats to its future. View bald eagles feeding, roosting and/or nesting. Reservations required. 815-594-2306 or [www.eaglenature.com](http://www.eaglenature.com).

**12, Call of the Wild** at the Apple River Fort State Historic Site in Elizabeth. Enjoy a brisk afternoon of outdoor woodsmen activities. Learn the history and how-to's of snowshoeing while exploring the outdoors using traditional trekking skills. Relax at the log house with fresh baked bread and hot apple cider. 815-858-2028 or [www.appleriverfort.org](http://www.appleriverfort.org).

**16-19, Illinois Snow Sculpting Competition** at Sinissippi Park in Rockford. Watch snow-sculpting teams form stunningly beautiful figures from giant blocks of snow. Giant dragons, abstract shapes and whimsical figures take shape under the skilled hands of 30 top competitors. Bad weather dates: 1/23-1/26. Viewing as long as sculptures last. 815-987-8800, [rpdmil@rockfordparkdistrict.org](mailto:rpdmil@rockfordparkdistrict.org) or [www.rockfordparkdistrict.org](http://www.rockfordparkdistrict.org).

**16-18, Masters of the Sky** at the National Great Rivers Museum in Alton. Witness the "Masters of the Sky" birds of prey demonstration. Come see eagles, falcons, owls and other birds of prey at this educational and informational program presented by the World Bird Sanctuary. Admission: \$5 for Adults; \$3 for children 12 and under; 3 and under are FREE. Only 10 tickets per person. 877-462-6979.

**19, WSEC/PBS's Fun Time Station** at the Orr Building on the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield. 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The theme is "All Aboard the Alphabet." Enjoy 26 stations of fun crafts and activities for children ages 2-10. There will also be a bounce house, concession stand, PBS Store and face painting. Clifford the Big Red Dog and Curious George will be joining us for this day of fun and learning. Tickets are \$3 in advance or \$4 at the door. 1-800-232-3605, ext. 224 or [www.nktv.tv](http://www.nktv.tv).



**16-3/2, Maple Syrup Time** at Lincoln Memorial Garden in Springfield. Visitors can view and participate in the maple syrup making process including tapping trees, collecting sap and boiling it into syrup. Demonstrations are at 1, 2 and 3 p.m. 217-529-1111 or [www.lmgnc.com](http://www.lmgnc.com).

**26, V.A.M.P. Comedy Improv** at the White Owl Winery in Birds. 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Enjoy a four-act live Improv comedy based on your suggestions. Featuring four to seven actors, audience participation and prizes! Show includes hors d'oeuvres, wine tasting and a full buffet dinner. \$40 per person. Reservations required. 618-928-2898.

**Visit our Web site,**  
[www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop).

**26-27, Klondike Kaper** at Chestnut Mountain in Galeana. Activities include on-slope barbeque, live entertainment, food and drink specials, ice sculptures, Reality Check snowboard competition, fireworks and more. 800-397-1320 or [www.chestnutmtn.com](http://www.chestnutmtn.com).

**30, Disney's High School Musical: "The Ice Tour"** at the newly renovated MetroCentre in Rockford. Professional ice skaters bring the popular musical to the ice. 815-968-5222 or [marketing@centreevents.com](mailto:marketing@centreevents.com).

**2-3, Effingham Homebuilders Show 2008** at the Keller Convention Center in Effingham. Come see what's new in the home building trade. Great for remodeling ideas or new home designing. 217-347-5115.

**2-29, "Watercolors"** at the David Strawn Art Gallery in Jacksonville. Join the gallery in welcoming artist Pat Damsgaard. Opening reception is Feb. 2 with an artist gallery talk. 217-243-9390 or [www.strawnartgallery.org](http://www.strawnartgallery.org).

**7, Lord of the Dance** at the Coronado Theatre in Rockford. Enjoy Michael Flatley's incredible Irish dancing phenomenon. 815-968-2722.

**8, ARC Taste of Galena** at Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa in Galena. Sample specialty cuisine from more than 25 area businesses. Live jazz music. Advance and at the door ticket sales are subject to availability. 815-777-2248 or [www.galenaarc.org](http://www.galenaarc.org).

**8-10, Mardi Gras Weekend** in downtown Galena. A pub crawl, ice sculptures, Cajun food specials and more. 815-777-9050 or [www.galenadowntown.com](http://www.galenadowntown.com).

**9, Massbach Ridge Cabin Fever** at Massbach Ridge Winery near Elizabeth. Break the winter blues with wine, cheese and chocolate tasting. Pruning demonstrations. Collect grapevines to make your own grapevine wreaths. Weather permitting. 815-291-6700 or [www.massbachridge.com](http://www.massbachridge.com).

**16, The Ninth Annual Children's Art Show** at the University of Illinois Extension Building in Effingham. A juried show for children preschool - 12th grade. 618-238-4497.

**22-23, Dinner And A Murder!** at the DeSoto House Hotel in Galena. "Five Card Draw," a fixed card game at the Short Branch Saloon. Friday night reception, with dinner and murder on Saturday night. 888-459-1847 or [www.bestofgalena.com](http://www.bestofgalena.com).

**Visit our Web site,  
[www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop).**



**9, 16, 23, Bald Eagle Bus Tours** depart from Stoney Creek Inn in Galena. A guided four-hour tour of bald eagle wintering communities. Learn about the bald eagle's habits and life history, plus preservation efforts and threats to its future. View bald eagles feeding, roosting and/or nesting. Reservations required. 815-594-2306 or [www.eaglenature.com](http://www.eaglenature.com).

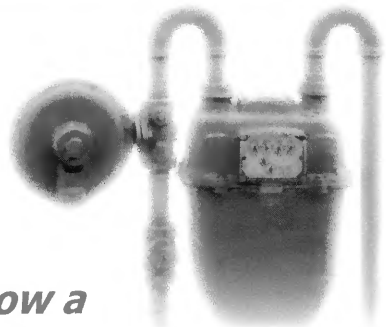
**22-24, Country Treasures Craft Show** at the Keller Convention Center in Effingham. Dozens of crafters exhibit their creations. 217-347-5115.



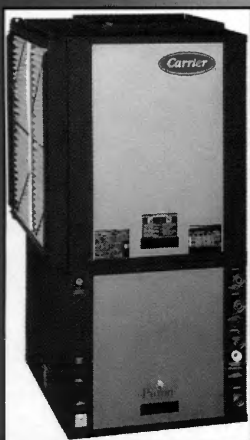
To be considered for inclusion, please submit events in the format used above. Preference is given to events sponsored by non-profit entities. Submitting an event is not a guarantee of publication. Photos are welcome, but will not be returned unless a self-addressed and stamped envelope is provided.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

**Deadlines:** Jan. 15 for April Events, Feb. 15 for May Events **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708  
**E-mail to:** [cwagner@aiec.coop](mailto:cwagner@aiec.coop)

# Got Gas?



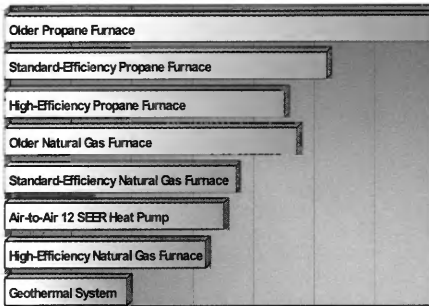
*Call your local Carrier expert to learn how a geothermal system can ease your gas pains.*



## Check out these advantages

- ✓ Uses nature's renewable energy source
- ✓ Saves up to 50%
- ✓ Comfortable and quiet
- ✓ Exceptional warranties
- ✓ Free hot water
- ✓ Puron® refrigerant

## Typical operating cost comparison



Heat Cheap with Geothermal!

### Altamont

R & H Plumbing & Heating  
(618) 483-6159

### Astoria

Astoria Plumbing & Htg  
(309) 329-2443

### Athens

Dixons Heating & A/C  
(217) 636-7934

### Belleville

Belo Sales & Service  
(618) 234-3310

### Bloomington/Normal

The Lane Company  
(309) 663-8412

### Mayol Plumbing & Htg

(309) 828-7906

### Pro-Air Htg, Clg, Electrical

(309) 452-3415

### Breese

R & B Plbg, Htg & A/C  
(618) 526-7723

### Champaign/Urbana

Rose Heating & A/C  
(217) 328-4557

### Clifton

Blasey Electric  
(815) 694-2008

### Decatur

Design Air  
(217) 429-1105

### Fairbury

Nussbaum Plumbing & Htg  
(815) 692-2042

### Macomb

Arnold Brothers Htg & Clg  
(309) 833-2852

### Mason City

Hernan Plumbing & Htg  
(217) 482-5805

### Mendota

Walter Brothers Plbg & Htg  
(815) 538-6516

### Peoria Tri-County

AAA Northgate Htg & A/C  
(309) 686-1786

### Garber Heating & A/C

(309) 266-9372

### GP Systems, Inc.

(309) 579-3650

### Heinold Heating & A/C

(309) 467-6112

### Rushville

Gardner Heating & A/C  
(217) 322-4404

### San Jose

Whiz-Shawgo  
(309) 241-8520

### Sheffield

Bohm Plumbing & Htg  
(815) 454-2337

### Springfield

Henson Robinson Co.  
(217) 544-8451

### Taylorville

Blakely Htg. & Clg.  
(217) 824-4684

### Virden

Snell Enterprises  
(217) 965-3911

### Williamsfield

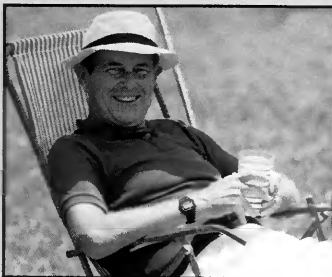
Ingle Electric  
(309) 639-2400



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As an ENERGY STAR® Partner Carrier has determined that this product meets the ENERGY STAR® guidelines for energy efficiency.

The results shown in the chart are for comparative purposes only, but generally reflect current energy prices. Your Carrier dealer can provide savings estimates for your home. Based on electricity at \$0.07 per kilowatt hour, natural gas at \$0.80 per therm in summer and \$1.00 per therm in winter, and propane at \$0.70 per gallon in summer and \$1.35 per gallon in winter.



Flatten your stomach without gut wrenching exercises.



Clogged arteries could virtually disappear when you add this to your life once a day.



What you should never eat when taking prescription drugs.



# “HONEY Can Heal WHAT?”

If you want to learn how to use gentle folk remedies to unleash your body's healing power instead of resorting to dangerous prescription drugs or risky surgery, you need *The Folk Remedy Encyclopedia: Olive Oil, Vinegar, Honey and 1,001 Other Home Remedies*, an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Medical Publishing® in Peachtree City, Georgia.

You'll be amazed by how many inexpensive, easy, natural cures you can find all around you — in your pantry, garden, garage, and grocery store.

The authors provide many health tips with full explanations.

- ▶ One super vitamin protects your vision, fights infections, keeps skin, bones, and cells healthy, plus fights heart disease, cancer, memory loss, arthritis, liver disease, Parkinson's, and complications of diabetes. Are you getting 100%?
- ▶ Flatten your stomach without gut-wrenching exercises. These tips turn ugly flab into rock-hard abs!
- ▶ A natural way to rejuvenate your veins and arteries that will have you feeling brand new.
- ▶ Miracle healing seed lowers blood pressure, reduces risk of stroke, plus fights arthritis, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stomach disorders, and even mental problems!
- ▶ Prevent high blood pressure, colon cancer, senility, and fragile bones. All with one — yes, one — inexpensive daily supplement that keeps you healthy and strong.
- ▶ That “spare tire” around your waist is doing more than just slowing you down. It also increases your risk of many life-threatening illnesses. Burn it off without gut-wrenching sit-ups and grueling fitness regimens.
- ▶ Nature's wonder food for your body — once praised by Gandhi. Fights heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis, type 2 diabetes, and even protects against breast, colon, and prostate cancer!
- ▶ Clogged arteries virtually disappear when you add this to your life every day.
- ▶ Here's the secret to naturally block out calories from foods. Just add this when you eat — and watch the weight melt away.
- ▶ It protects your heart, lowers your cholesterol,

fights cancer, and much more! Researchers take a good look at this “miracle” mineral.

- ▶ Kills cancer cells dead in their tracks! Duke University study proves this tiny seed packs a powerful punch!
- ▶ Just 2 glasses a day of (you won't believe this — but it's true!) lowers your cholesterol — and prevents heart attacks too!
- ▶ Trick your body into losing weight! Melts off fat safely, naturally and best yet, easily.
- ▶ Give your brain the nutrients it needs for a better memory. Don't let your brain deteriorate when you can so easily power it up.
- ▶ Discover an antioxidant that's so powerful for your eyes that it fights night blindness, cloudy corneas, and can even successfully treat an eye disorder that leads to blindness!
- ▶ This tasty Chinese fruit works like a Roto-Rooter® on your arteries. Just a few bites a day makes the plaque go away!
- ▶ What you should never eat when taking this prescription drug. This is critical news you won't hear from your doctor or pharmacist!
- ▶ You can improve your eyesight without glasses, without contact lenses, surgery, drugs, or medicine of any kind.
- ▶ Munch on this tasty veggie every day and watch your blood pressure go down ... Down ... Down! Just as effective as drugs — but with no side effects.
- ▶ Tomato juice for high cholesterol? Yes, tomato juice can keep your cholesterol from oxidizing and attaching to your artery walls. A new study shows how much you need to drink each day.
- ▶ Rebuild your joints and relieve arthritis pain. Natural ways to help your body repair itself.
- ▶ Unclog your arteries with purple grape juice! Studies show that purple grapes can reduce blood clotting by 91%.
- ▶ The amazing healing power of honey. It's not just a sweetener anymore. Use it to cure these 4 common problems.
- ▶ Frustrated because you can't lose weight? Forget dieting! Just “fluff” up your foods instead and watch the pounds drop off. Pennsylvania State University study.
- ▶ Flex your mental muscle and send Alzheimer's packing. Simple mental activities that build your brainpower and ward off the

ravages of Alzheimer's.

- ▶ Keep your brain sharp and your memories clear. Herbal remedy used for centuries.
- ▶ Open up blood vessels narrowed due to heart disease. Relax with this beverage and decrease your chances of suffering a debilitating stroke.
- ▶ Nature's insulin controls blood sugar and type 2 diabetes. What is it? Cinnamon! It helps your fat cells recognize and respond to insulin better.
- ▶ High blood pressure? You know you have to limit alcohol and salt, but did you also know certain oranges can cause your blood pressure medication to build to toxic levels? Read about some other hidden dangers and some unusual methods of defense.
- ▶ Keep your arteries clean with this simple bean!
- ▶ Back pain, pain in your shoulder, muscular pain from physical exertion, wrist, thumb and hand pain all are as individual as their remedies.
- ▶ Arthritis pain comes in many shapes and sizes. Read about 7 types of relief.
- ▶ 11 simple ways to keep your mind sharp as a tack.
- ▶ Sip your way to wide-open arteries! The best beverage for your blood vessels.
- ▶ Foods that cause wrinkles ... foods that prevent wrinkles ... Consult the lists and eat smarter for smoother skin.
- ▶ Discover 6 ways to protect your brain from Alzheimer's.

Learn about all these natural healing folk remedies and more. To order a copy, just return this coupon with your name and address and a check for \$9.99 plus \$3.00 shipping and handling to: **FC&A, Dept. PWW1**, 103 Clover Green, Peachtree City, GA 30269. We will send you a copy of *The Folk Remedy Encyclopedia: Olive Oil, Vinegar, Honey and 1,001 Other Home Remedies*.

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