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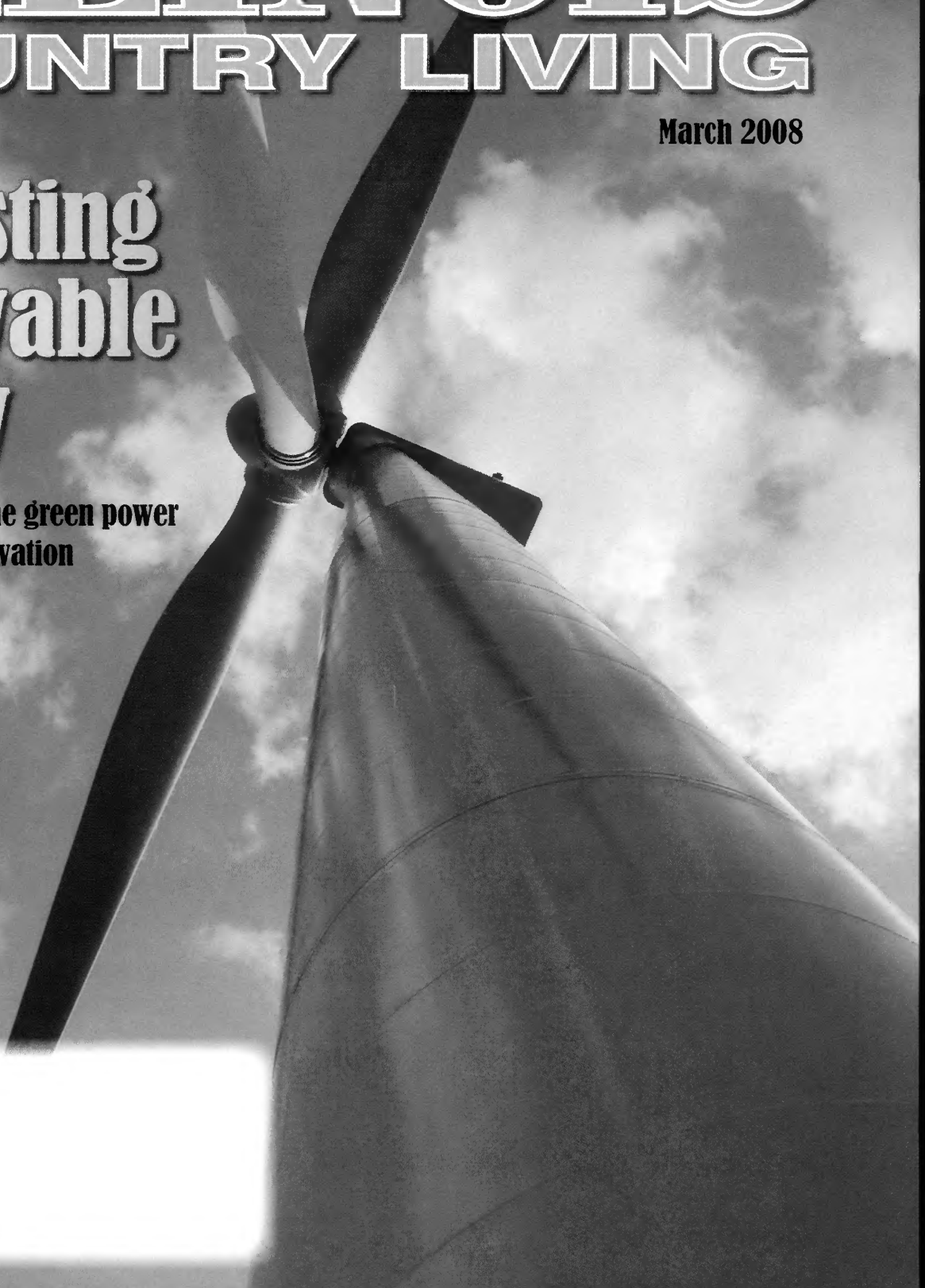
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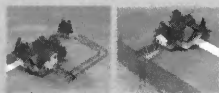
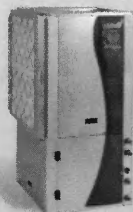
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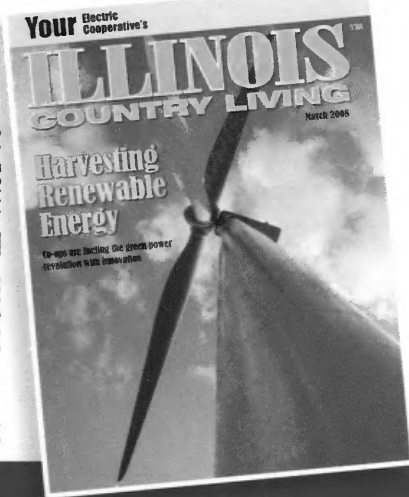


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HARVESTING RENEWABLE ENERGY

Electric co-ops are trying innovative solutions to add renewable energy to their power supply. Leaders say realistic solutions are possible with public/private cooperation instead of mandates.

Published by
Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives
 6460 South Sixth Frontage Road East,
 Springfield, IL 62712
www.icl.coop
 800-593-2432 • aieinfo@aiec.coop

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Illinois Country Living is a monthly publication serving the communications needs of the locally owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives of Illinois. With a circulation of more than 174,000, the magazine informs cooperative members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois. Illinois Country Living (ISSN number 1086-8062) is published monthly and is the official publication of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, 6460 South Sixth Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. The cost is \$2.50 plus postage per year for members of subscribing cooperatives and \$8 per year for all others. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, Illinois, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708.

ADVERTISING: The national advertising representative is The Weiss Group, 877-934-7747. Acceptance of advertising by the magazine does not imply endorsement by the publisher or the electric cooperatives of Illinois of the product or service advertised. Illinois Country Living is not responsible for the performance of the product or service advertised.

ILLINOISTM COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 65, No. 11, March 2008

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Trees, Ice and Electric Lines Don't Mix

Cooperatives are ramping up right-of-way maintenance

The past couple years electric utilities and cooperatives have been hammered by an unusual number of ice storms. Ice storms are our regions version of a hurricane. They create widespread damage, even worse than tornadoes.

Water is deceptively heavy and when it is frozen to power lines and tree limbs the added weight brings it all crashing down.

Earlier in my career I was the Senior Vice President for the subsidiary of an electric cooperative. The co-op's subsidiary provided right-of-way maintenance for cooperatives and other utilities across the midwest. So my perspective on right-of-way maintenance comes from real-world examples of what works and what does not work.

It is clear, in terms of what works, that cooperatives do it the right way for the right reasons.

Cooperatives take a very different approach to maintaining their rights-of-way. I'm sure that your cooperative, as does ours, places an emphasis on service and reliability and is willing to take a long-term approach in order to achieve it economically.

In other words, your cooperative, because of the cooperative business structure, is not interested in year-end margins or dividends, but in providing the best possible service at the lowest possible price. Electric co-ops have been doing this for

nearly 70 years and plan to do it another 70 years.

Your cooperative's approach to right-of-way maintenance depicts this. Committing the necessary resources to clearing and/or spraying the rights-of-way to its full legal limits (15 to 20 feet on either side of the line, ground to sky) is a clear example.

This allows your cooperative to extend the time required before employees or contractors must return and trim what God continues to grow. Most cooperatives will commit the resources necessary for a five to six year rotation.

The alternative, used too often by those interested primarily in year-end margins, is to simply cut the limbs out of the line that are causing

the immediate problem. Short-term this is quicker and cheaper, but long-term it will require more trips, result in more outages, and cost more money. Again, cooperatives take a different approach that emphasizes stewardship, service and reliability.

Why is it important for a member of a cooperative to understand the process and the rationale behind funding it? It's your cooperative, it's your money, and the reliability of electricity affects you. The consequences associated with not maintaining rights-of-way correctly are higher rates and danger due to electricity escaping through trees that are in contact with power lines (yes, trees do conduct electricity because of moisture and sap).

Further consequences are readily seen during ice-storms, high winds and other inclement weather when the trees that are touching or close to power lines cause blinking lights and outages. Even when the proper process is followed you may still experience an outage. However, the frequency and length of those outages will be dramatically reduced. With a properly maintained right-of-way linemen can get to the lines and poles, which are no longer obstructed by vegetation, and restore power quickly. This is your cooperative's goal. But they can use your help.

Please work with your local cooperative when notice is given that clearing and/or spraying may be taking place in your area. Try to be understanding when trees are trimmed under cooperative lines that are on your property. Do not plant trees under the power lines. Keep areas around meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit access. Finally, let your cooperative know if you are aware of trees that are in lines or near line equipment - do not attempt to remove them on your own.

Remember the goal of your cooperative is to provide safe and reliable electricity at a reasonable price. With your assistance and a cooperative approach to right-of-way maintenance this is attainable. ■

"Your cooperative places an emphasis on service and reliability and is willing to take a long-term approach in order to achieve it economically."

Steve Epperson is President/CEO of McDonough Power Cooperative, Macomb, Ill.



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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Sales of Compact Fluorescent Lights Jump to 20 Percent of Market

The sales of Energy Star-qualified compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) nearly doubled last year, according to the estimates of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2007, 290 million CFLs were sold, and the energy-saving bulbs now account for about 20 percent of the light bulb market in the United States. Energy Star-qualified CFLs use approximately 75 percent less energy and last up to 10 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs.



An Energy Star CFL can save about \$30 or more in energy costs over the length of its lifetime. If every U.S. household replaced just one light bulb in their homes with a CFL, the United States would save more than \$600 million each year in energy costs and prevent greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those of more than 800,000 cars. Go to www.energystar.gov for more information or contact your local electric co-op. ■

Charting a New Direction for America's Energy Policy

Last December, the Congress approved the Energy Independence & Security Act. The new law puts innovation, efficiency and entrepreneurship at the top of America's 21st Century energy agenda. Key features of this new law include:

- **An Historic Increase in Vehicle Fuel Efficiency:** The centerpiece of the new law is a landmark requirement—three decades in the making—to increase the efficiency of cars and trucks on American roads. By raising average fuel economy standards to 35 miles per gallon, the United States will save about 2 million barrels of oil a day by 2025—more than America imported from Saudi Arabia last year.
- **A Boost for Home-Grown Biofuels:** The new law invests in rural America and improves our energy security at the same time, by increasing the amount of renewable fuel in U.S. gasoline supplies to 36 billion gallons in 2022—enough to replace another million barrels a day of imported oil.
- **Economy-Wide Efficiency Solutions:** Experts have called the new law the most sweeping energy efficiency legislation ever enacted. Thomas Edison's 1880s-era lightbulb will be replaced with new technologies. Common household appliances, from clothes and dishwashers, to refrigerators and freezers, will meet new energy-saving standards.
- **Greenhouse Gas Reductions Through Innovation:** The new law makes a commitment to research, development and demonstration of new technologies that will help cut greenhouse gas emissions. It invests in carbon capture and sequestration, a key technology for addressing the threat of global warming. It promotes research on new vehicles, batteries, biofuels, building technologies and many other promising areas for clean energy development.
- **Green Collar Jobs for America's Working Families:** The new law makes it a national priority to train America's workers for new jobs in emerging energy technology fields. It will provide training opportunities so that Americans of all ages, income- and education-levels have a chance to pursue opportunities in the green energy economy. ■



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Locating the nearest healthcare services to your home in Illinois is about to become as effortless as a click of the computer mouse. Health-E Illinois is a free online service that helps to quickly find hospitals, doctors' offices, nursing homes, pharmacies, specialists, support groups, medical information and many other health care services throughout the state. Its comprehensive directory is easily searchable by location, providers, services, specialty and health issues or diseases. To access the Health-E Illinois database go to: <http://apps.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/local/illinois/homepage.cfm?areaid=32>. ■

FCC and USDA Launch New Rural Broadband Web Site

For those in rural America looking to bring the benefits of broadband services to their communities go to <http://wireless.fcc.gov/outreach/ruralbroadband>. This "Broadband Opportunities for Rural America" Web site makes available the expertise and resources of the FCC and USDA in a single, easily-accessible

location. The site provides instructions on how to locate companies already licensed to provide wireless services in or near specific rural communities, as well as helpful links to other government and private resources related to encouraging broadband opportunities in rural America. ■

Co-op Members Save \$230,000 on Prescriptions in January

Touchstone Energy® has just received impressive numbers capturing co-op members' utilization of the pharmacy discount attached to the Co-op Connections card. In the month of January alone, co-op members flashed their cards nearly 17,000 times at 2,200 pharmacies nationwide, resulting in savings of more than \$230,000.



A member of United Cooperative Services (Cleburne, Texas), sums up the impact of the savings the card delivers: "Thank you for the Co-op Connections card. I used it for a prescription that usually costs \$167 but now costs \$142. That might not sound like a lot of money, but I don't have insurance so every penny saved is a blessing." ■

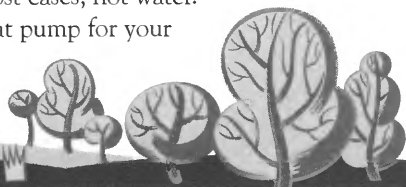
Illinois Audubon Society Going Green This Spring

The Illinois Audubon Society will be utilizing green technology for its heating and cooling system when it completes its headquarters this spring. The society's new headquarters, located in Springfield, will have a model geothermal heating and cooling system installed along with a solar lit parking lot to increase efficiency.

The not-for-profit Illinois Audubon Society was recently granted \$7,165 by the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation for the new geothermal system. This grant compliments the \$24,000 it received in 2006 for energy efficient engineering and architectural design.

Geothermal systems are extremely efficient, using 25 percent to 70 percent less energy than conventional heating and cooling systems to operate. Absorbing natural heat from the ground as opposed to outside air, geothermal pumps can be used for heating, air conditioning, and in most cases, hot water.

Interested in installing a geothermal heat pump for your organization? Visit www.energystar.gov for more information. ■



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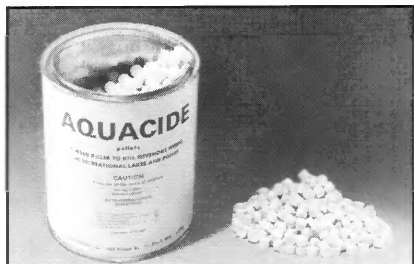
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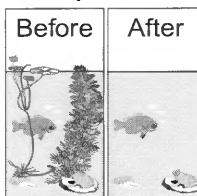
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March Forecasted to be Near to Slightly Warmer Than Normal

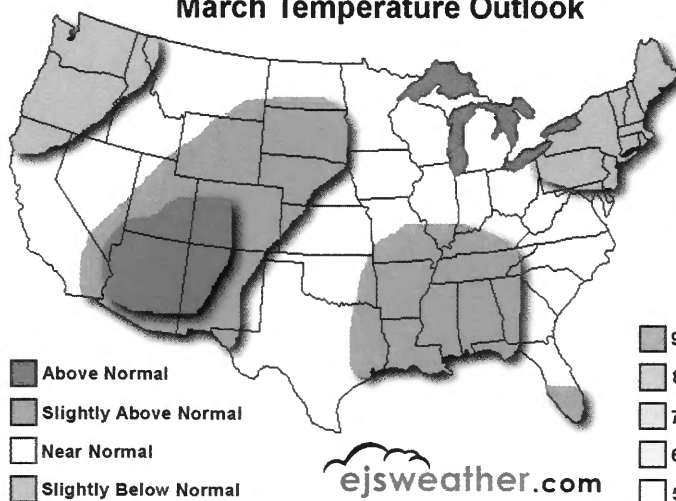
The latest long range climate models and indices point to March seeing temperatures that average near to slightly above normal across Illinois.

Right now it appears that the southern third of Illinois will see mean temperatures that average two to three degrees warmer than normal while the rest of the state is expected to experience closer to average temperatures.

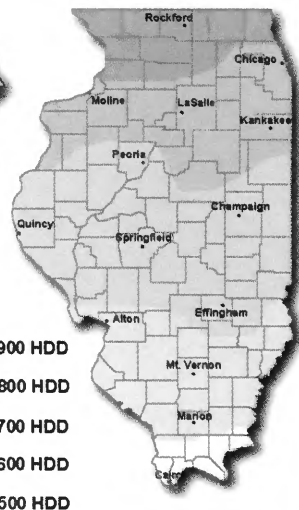
The weak to moderate La Nina in the equatorial Pacific continues to persist, which will likely be one of the main influences on milder weather affecting portions of the state. Similar La Nina events occurred in the early spring of 1989, 1996 and 2006 and all three of those years saw March temperatures across Illinois that averaged close to or above normal.

There are some indications that the NAO (North Atlantic Oscillation) may be negative during a good portion of March, which would allow for periods of cooler weather across mainly the eastern third of the country.

March Temperature Outlook



Average March Total Heating Degree Days

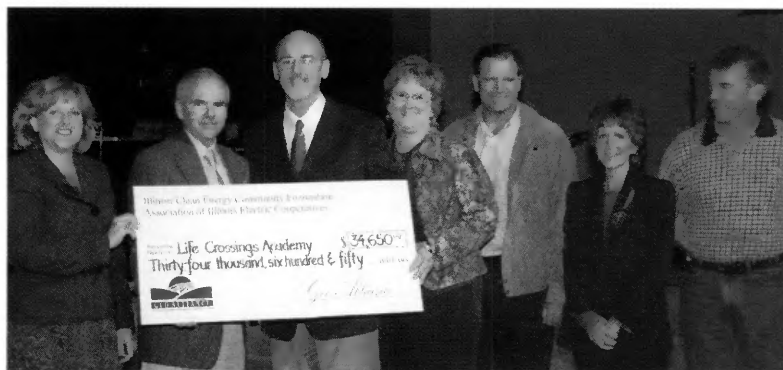


ejsweather.com

This factor has to be taken into consideration and is the reason why more average temperatures are predicted across central and northern Illinois.

The Illinois map this month shows the average total number of heating degree days (HDD) that typically occur during the month of March. Southern Illinois will likely see HDD values this March end up being about 60 to 90 lower than the average number seen here. ■

Grants Available for Geothermal Heat Pumps



Life Crossings Academy in Bloomington was awarded \$36,450 from the Geo-Alliance program of the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation and Corn Belt Energy. The funding supported the academy's installation of a geothermal heating/cooling system. From left to right are Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) Marketing Administrator Nancy Nixon, Pastor Ed Herald, Pastor Beth Herald, State Senator Bill Brady, Life Crossings Academy Principal Lyn Mounce and Victory Christian Center Elder Dennis Sinks. Grants are still available for other geothermal technology installations in not-for-profit businesses and public facilities served by electric cooperatives. Call Nancy at the AIEC at 217-241-7954 for more information.

Co-ops Help Organize Illinois Geothermal Heat Pump Association

A group of interested leaders in the Illinois geothermal industry met in Springfield early February to lay the plans for formation of an Illinois geothermal heat pump association. The meeting was held at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC).

"This is an effort that is long overdue. We've had so much success in building the geothermal industry in our state and an association like this has the potential to take geo to even greater heights," said John Freitag, AIEC's Vice President of Operations.

The AIEC is optimistic that the association will get underway this spring.

Please contact John Freitag by e-mail at jfreitag@aiec.coop if you have any questions or ideas/suggestions for this organization. ■

High School Juniors Can Win a Trip to Washington, D.C.

More than 275 students and chaperones, representing 27 electric and telephone cooperatives are expected in Springfield on Wednesday, April 9, for Illinois Electric and Telephone Cooperative Youth Day activities. Throughout the day, students will visit the State Capitol, where they will meet with their local legislators and spend much of the morning learning about the legislative process and tour the Supreme Court. Students will also tour the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum and the Old State Capitol in downtown Springfield.

Following the full day's schedule, several co-ops will be judging the participating students to select the winners for the "Youth to Washington" trip. Each co-op will use different methods to select its students, so be sure to contact your local co-op for more information.

During the week of June 13-20, 2008, the electric and telephone cooperatives in Illinois and across the United States sponsor groups of young people on the "Youth to Washington" program. During the week in the nation's capital, these students get an up-close look at democracy in action and get to meet with their congressional delegation and staff.

The "Youth to Washington" trip is a unique experience that offers students the opportunity to meet new friends, create lifelong memories, and have a blast while learning about the foundation of our nation. Participants return with a deeper respect for our country, individual opportunity, and a better understanding of the political traditions that move America forward. It is truly an opportunity of a lifetime.

Since 1957, hundreds of future leaders have been introduced to government and the legislative process through this program. Many alumni of the program have gone on to lead-



"This trip has truly changed my life..." said Jana Bonifacius, center, one of five students who posed above in front of the Washington Monument during the 2007 Youth Tour. From left are Tisha Thompson, Aaron Sellers, Jana, Brooke Saline and Tiffany Elliot.

ership positions in our communities and government.

This all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. is well organized with good chaperones and is recognized as a phenomenal experience for any youth. Participants will tour the nation's capital, its monuments and museums and the battlefield at Gettysburg, PA.

Last year, more than 60 students won trips through 27 electric and telephone cooperatives in Illinois.

Don't delay – deadlines are near. Take advantage of the opportunity your electric or telephone cooperative is offering. If a student is interested in going on the trip and is not selected by a co-op, the cost will be \$1,100 to join the tour. Interested students should contact their local co-op for eligibility.

For more information, contact your

guidance counselor, local electric cooperative or Linda Comstock at 217-241-7914 or e-mail at lcomstock@aiec.coop. You can also visit our Web site, www.aiec.coop. Just click on Youth Programs and the link to www.youthtour.coop. If you are an alum of the tour, please contact us at the above e-mail address.

Here is a note from Jana Bonifacius of Cowden, Ill., 2007 participant sponsored by Shelby Electric Cooperative, "The 2007 'Youth to Washington Tour' was one of the most educational and best experiences of my life! Some of my closest friendships resulted from being a part of the trip. This trip has truly changed my mind on what I want to become when I am older. If I could, I would go back to Washington, D.C. with the 'Youth to Washington' kids and do all the same things again!"

Harvesting Renewable Energy

By John Lowrey

Co-ops are fueling the green power revolution with innovation

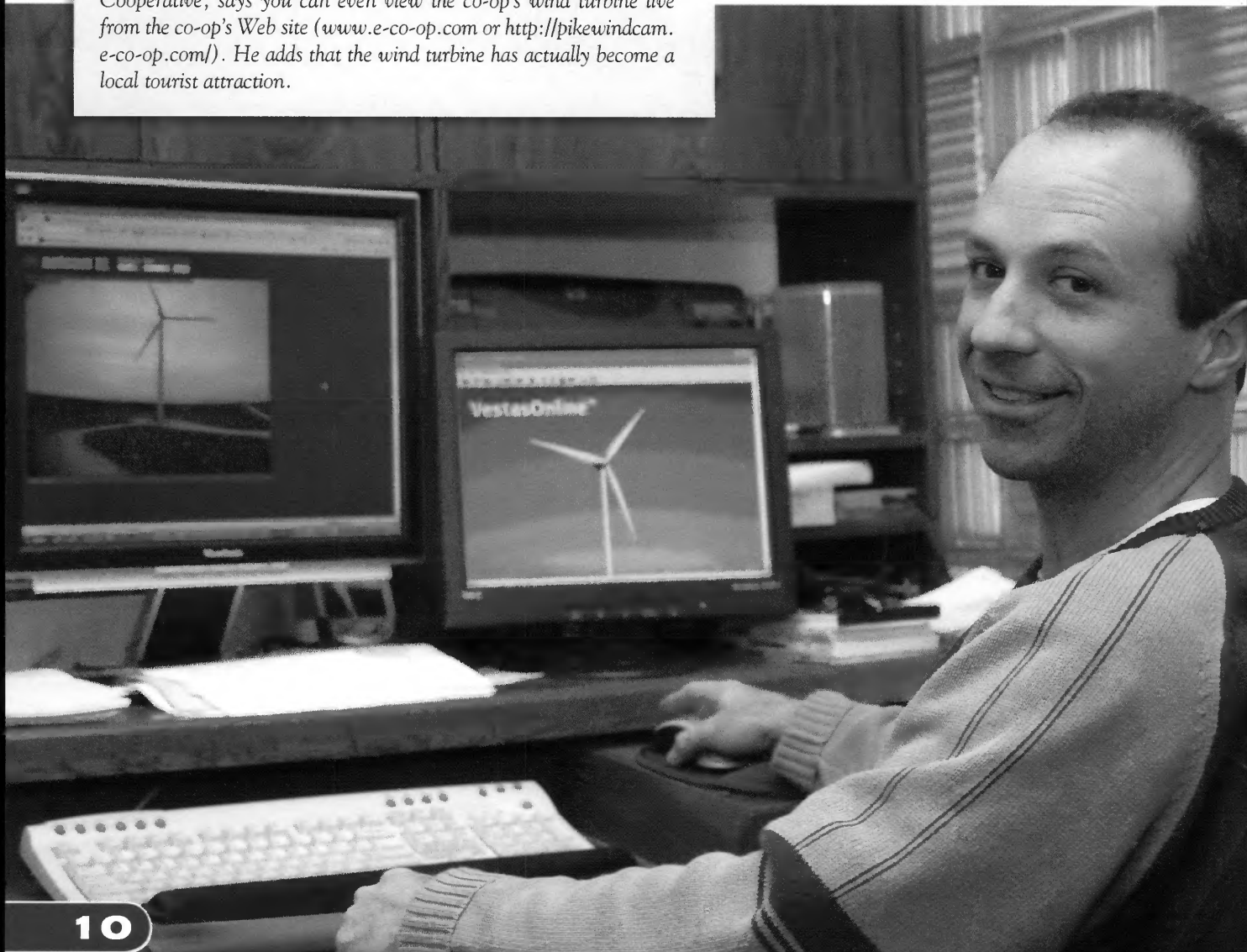
Sean Middleton, Manager of Engineering for Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative, says you can even view the co-op's wind turbine live from the co-op's Web site (www.e-co-op.com or <http://pikewindcam.e-co-op.com/>). He adds that the wind turbine has actually become a local tourist attraction.

I remember climbing on my great-grandfather McCormick's windmill on the plains of Oklahoma, you know, the state where the winds come sweeping down the plain. Taking a dare to see how high you would climb and then playing in the water trough below the windmill was good for at least half a day of fun. Wind generators still fascinate me.

For my great-grandfather the windmill was more than for fun, although I think he enjoyed watching us play on it. No, the windmill was a necessity.

Today it is essential that we find new ways to harness the wind and other renewable forms of energy. And rural electric cooperatives are uniquely positioned to help develop these resources.

We could talk about biofuels, ethanol and biodiesel, and electric cooperatives certainly have a role to play in developing the corn and soybean fields of Illinois into energy fields. But electric co-ops are also helping provide innovative solutions to harnessing wind, solar, biomass, hydro and geothermal energy. And they are doing it proactively without being mandated to do the right thing by the state or federal government. Innovation works better when it is a choice.



Co-ops have an advantage when it comes to being innovative. They're small. Okay, smallness has its disadvantages too. But when you don't have to deal with a large bureaucracy of committees and subcommittees on top of subcommittees you can make decisions and move forward. Also, co-ops are close to the ground where the rubber meets the road. Local people elect other members to serve on boards of directors where decisions are made that fit the local needs and benefit local people. Oh yes, and in rural areas you have lots of wind, biomass and room to erect wind generators. Where else are you going to build a wind farm?

First to tilt at windmills — Illinois Rural Electric

Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative, Winchester, is a good example. It started with a simple question. The co-op just asked its members, "Should the co-op be involved with renewable energy?"

"The majority said yes, we should be involved in some sort of renewable energy project," says Sean Middleton, Manager of Engineering for Illinois Rural Electric. "That was back in 2003 and it was the catalyst."

The co-op board and management asked Middleton to do the homework and if it was feasible they were willing to build the first wind generator in Pike county. Fast forward a few years and a lot of work on the part of Middleton and others and the co-op has a 1.65 megawatt wind generator producing enough energy to serve 500 homes.

Was it easy? No. First there was the money. Although the wind may be free, wind turbines of that size cost millions of dollars. There was no way the co-op could justify the expense without plenty of grants and a low interest loan. The Pike County board had never okayed something like this and had some legitimate questions and concerns. Then when everything seemed to be lining up, the Federal

David Stuva, President/CEO of Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, says, "Our co-op is taking a proactive position on renewable energy instead of a reactive position as a result of future mandates." Stuva says he also considers geothermal heat pumps a very cost effective way for members to take advantage of the earth's constant temperature, lower electric bills and reduce the demand for new energy.

Aviation Administration called. Uh-oh, the 235-foot tall turbine is going to be near a flight path. Now what?

"It seemed like every day we'd get a new hurdle thrown at us," says Middleton. "I joked with Bruce Giffin our manager that we were getting to be pretty good hurdle jumpers."

Perseverance is the other side of innovation.

New wind projects

Now that Illinois Rural Electric has blazed this trail two more co-ops, Adams Electric Cooperative, Camp Point, and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, are both trying to develop similar wind energy projects.

Corn Belt Energy, Bloomington, is working with a family owned company, AgriWind LLC, that has developed a unique four-turbine wind farm. AgriWind partnered with John Deere Wind Energy to develop the project. Energy from the wind farm will be purchased by Wabash Valley Power Association, the generation and transmission (G&T) cooperative serving Corn Belt Energy. Also, Horizon Wind Energy contracted with Corn Belt Energy to operate and maintain the electric system for a very large 240 turbine wind farm located in the co-op's service area.

Wabash Valley Power Association also serves EnerStar Electric Cooperative, Paris, and MJM Electric Cooperative, Carlinville. The G&T has been very proactive in developing



Perseverance is the other side of innovation.



Sean Middleton has started learning a little about solar energy with a small demonstration unit on his co-op's building. "Solar is still pretty pricey and not as efficient as the wind turbines," he says.

landfill gas generation plants. Using the waste methane gas that is produced by decaying waste in landfills, the co-op is producing 25.6 megawatts of renewable energy. The good thing about landfill gas projects is the electricity can be generated 24/7, so it is more like traditional coal, gas or nuclear generation and unlike wind generation, which is only available when the wind blows.

Although renewable energy such as wind and solar will help with our energy future, to ensure reliability

base load plants will have to be built to match and back up wind turbine energy capacity. Also, one of the biggest obstacles for large-scale wind energy development is transmission line capacity that will transmit wind energy from rural areas to larger metropolitan areas where it is needed.

New small hydropower projects

Hydropower is our country's largest source of renewable energy, but not here in the flatlands of Illinois. However two co-ops, Adams Electric

Cooperative and Shelby Electric Cooperative, Shelbyville, are both exploring small hydropower projects.

Adams Electric would simply be a buyer for power produced by three turbines that may be installed by the city of Quincy next to river locks on the Mississippi. There are still a lot of environmental, regulatory and other hurdles to overcome, but Bill Stalder, Manager of Marketing and Member Service for the co-op, says, "We think it's a great idea." The river is an untapped resource and the co-op hopes power from the river will someday flow to its members.

At Shelby Electric, President/CEO Jim Coleman says they are working with their G&T Prairie Power, Inc. to develop a small hydropower project at the Lake Shelbyville dam. In the future Coleman says they may try and work with a dairy farm to develop a methane digester power project.

While Coleman is optimistic about renewable energy projects like this, he is also a realist and he worries about unreasonable expectations.

Coleman says, "I think renewable energy is fine as long as the public and government do not create unreachable expectations. Any energy produced must be able to stand on its own within a reasonable amount of time. Many renewable energy projects do not have the science to ever be economically acceptable without a handout from the government."

Coleman says Shelby Electric, like many electric co-ops across the state, has passed net metering and renewable energy policies that will make it more economically feasible for individual members to invest in renewable energy. But he warns, "Don't throw away your hard earned money until you know it will be worth the investment."

Co-op plans first Illinois biomass-fueled power plant

Jo-Carroll Energy, Elizabeth, in September announced plans to build the state's first biomass-fueled renewable energy power plant. The plant would use corn stover and wood waste to fuel the 80 megawatts of out-



put. On top of that the co-op would sell steam from the plant to a nearby Danisco plant for its industrial processes. Waste not, want not.

Financing and partnerships for the plant are still being worked out, but Jo-Carroll President/CEO Michael Hastings, says, "We haven't hit any major hurdles and we think it is a good idea for our specific region. We are kind of where the cornfields hit the timber. We also have river and rail access, and we are close to Chicago and could dispose of some of their wood waste."

The new plant would be an important part of the co-op's energy supply and help provide power for the new members and territory that Jo-Carroll purchased from Alliant Energy. "We hope that it will serve as a base for relatively stable energy prices for the next 20 years," says Hastings.

Jo-Carroll also receives power from Dairyland Power Cooperative, a Wisconsin G&T. Serving a large number of dairy farms, Dairyland Power has been one of the most proactive utilities in the country in developing waste-to-energy facilities, or as some call it "cow power" plants. Each anaerobic manure digester facility can generate 775 to 840 kW of energy. Dairyland's long-term goal is to create up to 25 megawatts of renewable "cow power," enough to power 20,000 homes.

Future power needs expensive to meet

Whether it is a renewable energy project or new coal-powered plant electricity is going to become more and more expensive to generate. And our appetite for energy keeps growing.

Over just the next 10 years electricity usage is expected to grow more than twice as fast as the committed resources available to meet that new demand. Combine that increased demand for energy with aging infrastructure retirement and reliability problems, concern for global warming, the uncertainty of proposed government regulation and taxes, increased demand for fuel and raw materials for power plants world-wide, plus the

don't-build-it-in-my-backyard (NIM-BY) problem and there is one fact that is clear—we need all the innovative answers we can find to solve our energy and environmental issues.

What can you do?

First, before you even think about investing in your own wind turbine or solar panel, invest in your home's energy efficiency. The return on your energy efficiency investment is almost guaranteed. It'll at least beat the stock market right now. Plus you'll be more comfortable.

One option you should consider is a geothermal heat pump. Yes it is expensive, but for many homes and families it provides a decent return on investment with incredible energy savings, improves your comfort, increases property value and, yes, uses renewable energy. Because it takes advantage of the solar power stored in the earth geothermal heat pumps are up to 70 percent more energy efficient compared to other heat and air systems.

Call your local electric cooperative and the member service employee there can help you with other energy efficiency ideas. For example, if you need more insulation chances are they will recommend cellulose insulation, which is the best insulating material and made from recycled newspapers.

If you are really serious about investing in a wind turbine or another renewable energy project, contact your local co-op. They have a brochure that can help you work through the numbers to see what kind of payback the wind turbine will have. They can also talk to you about the safety and power quality issues that need to be addressed when connecting a wind turbine or any generator to the power grid.

Middleton says since the co-op put up its wind turbine the site has become almost a tourist attraction and the co-op has become a local resource for wind energy information. "We get calls constantly asking us things like 'Where do I find out more about it?' We now have a local small wind turbine dealer and there are a lot of good Web resources," says Middleton.

Middleton says some people just want to do it no matter the cost. But he says some home units can cost \$30,000. "These are not cheap. I definitely encourage people to not only double check the wind speeds at their site, but also run your own numbers." Some units are just big enough to run a hair dryer. So be sure and do your homework and have realistic expectations, he says.



Wind Energy Web Sites

Middleton suggested the following Web sites for more information on wind energy.

- www.windustry.com
- www.nrel.gov/
- www.rurdev.usda.gov/RD/
- www.illinoiscleanenergy.org/
- www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/solar_renewables/page/wind/wind.html
- www.commerce.state.il.us/dceo/Bureaus/Energy_Recycling/
- www.elpc.org/
- www.awea.org/
- www.eere.energy.gov/windandhydro/windpoweringamerica/wind_maps.asp
- www.iira.org/
- www.windonthewires.org/
- www.nationalwind.org/

Poisons Lurking Around Your Home

Why you should always read and follow pesticide label directions

In honor of the coming lawn season, I did a bit of research on reading labels; and learned quite a bit in the process.

For instance, all pesticide labels contain the statements, "It is a violation of federal law to use this product in a manner inconsistent with its labeling," and, "Keep Out of Reach of Children." Go ahead, check a few containers. I did.

In addition, there is a signal word on the label telling how dangerous the product is to humans. **DANGER** is the highest, it means highly toxic. **WARNING** is defined as moderately toxic. **CAUTION** is the lowest, or slightly toxic.

Under the **Precautionary Statements** section you will find information on how to protect the individual applying the product and any others that may be exposed, including pets. Read this section carefully.

Make note of the **Statement of Practical Treatment**, as it contains information on what to do in case of an accidental poisoning. All **DANGER** labels will contain a note to physicians outlining treatment and listing an antidote, if one is available; important information to take with you to the emergency room, in case of accidental poisoning. In fact, always take the label with you if accidental poisoning occurs, even for products labeled **WARNING** or **CAUTION**.

Another item listed under the **Precautionary Statements** is the **Environmental Hazards Statement**. It warns of potential dangers to the environment. Some may choose to skip this section, but the first time you kill off the goldfish in your water garden or cripple your crop of tomatoes, you will understand why I highly recommend reading this information. Also, setback guidelines (how far away from a specific site you must be before applying the product) will be outlined here.

The **Directions for Use** heading is where you will find the misuse statement mentioned above ("It is a violation of federal law.....inconsistent with its labeling"). In simple terms, it makes you

responsible for use of the product. On a bigger scale, the courts generally recognize the label as a binding contract, requiring you to use the product exactly as directed. If you do not, you are using the product illegally.

What is the main reason to read the **Directions For Use** section? It tells you what pests are controlled by the product, mixing or dilution rates, application rates, equipment you will need for application, how often to apply, etc. Basically, it tells you how to use the product successfully. Good information to know from the beginning. It is always frustrating to discover after the fact that you now have to wait 14 days before eating any of those apples on your tree.

Pay special attention to the **Re-entry or Restricted Entry Statement**. It explains how long to wait after application before entering a treated area. It typically provides the same information for pets, if necessary, too. If a statement is not provided, the legal interval is assumed to be when sprays are dry (liquid application) or dust is settled.

Another section to read carefully is **Storage and Disposal**. Proper storage of the product is important if you plan on using the product again. Disposal of leftover product is best accomplished at a Household Hazardous Waste collection site. Contact your local municipality to see if your community hosts such an event. If they do not, contact your Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to locate the nearest collection site.

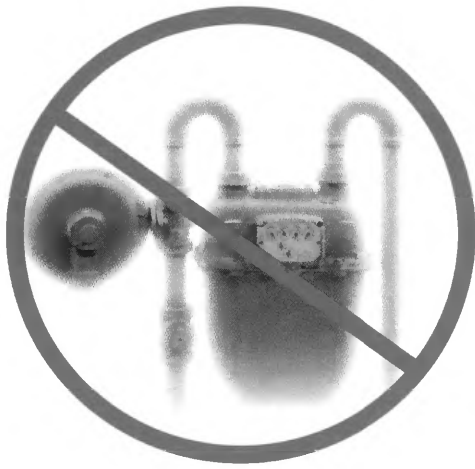
If you have a container with the label partially missing, worn off, etc. search for it at greenbook.net. This site contains labels for all agriculture, turf and ornamental products.

I know it is time consuming, and sometimes requires a magnifying glass, but it really is worth the extra five minutes of time to read the label on a product. In fact, doing it before you purchase the product might save you time, money and another trip to the store. ■

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All DANGER labels will contain a note to physicians outlining treatment and listing an antidote, if one is available; important information to take with you to the emergency room, in case of accidental poisoning.

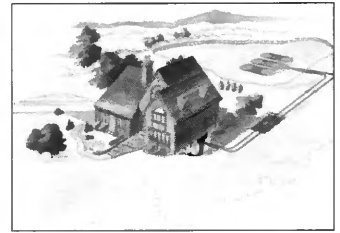
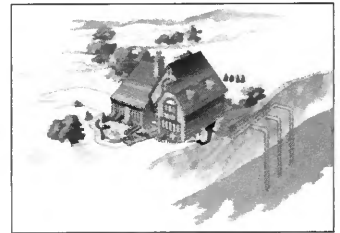


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Azaleas and Rhododendrons Done Right

Picking the right ornamental shrub for your garden

Growing certain plants in Illinois can be difficult, depending on your location. Our friends in the southern tip can do well with many things that our northern counterparts only dream about. On the other hand, Douglas fir, blue spruce and most birches do better in the northern part of the state.

Which only goes to prove that summer's heat can be just as positive or negative as winter's cold, depending on where you're located.

And that brings us to azaleas and rhododendrons, the classic spring flowering shrubs noted for their masses of purple, white, orange or pink colored blossoms. You can find plants growing throughout the state, but maybe not the same plant. It's sort of like the hydrangea issue.

Technically, all azaleas are rhododendrons, but not all rhododendrons are azaleas. That's because, technically, rhododendron is the scientific name of the plant.

But if we still want to get technical, there is a difference between the common azalea and common rhododendron.

For the most part, but not always, rhododendrons tend to have shiny, glossy, leathery green leaves that are somewhat evergreen, at least staying on through most winters. Azaleas, on the other hand, tend to be more of an olive green, fuzzy and

deciduous, turning somewhere between a yellow and burgundy wine color in the fall before dropping off the plant.

Again, for the most part. We have deciduous rhododendron and evergreen azaleas.

What really separates the two is the number of stamens in the flowers – rhododendrons have 10 and azaleas have five.

Stamens, the male parts of the flowers, are easy to identify as rhododendrons and azaleas only have one pistil, or female part.

By and large, azaleas tend to be hardier than most rhododendrons, probably because there's less winter injury to azaleas because they are void of leaves.

There are literally pages and pages of rhododendron and azalea cultivars, with flower colors from

blood red to red to pink to orange to yellow to cream and white.

There seems to be more emphasis on azaleas at garden centers and nurseries, probably due to their wider range of hardiness, portability and seemingly less transplant problems, though the latter is more of an urban myth.

Of all the azalea series, probably the Northern Lights series sees the most action. The Northern Lights group is noted for being cold-hardy to -30 degrees F, which means you can practically guarantee bloom year after year in Illinois. Most of the cultivars end in "Lights" such as Mandarin Lights, Orchid Lights, Golden Lights and White Lights.

Of the rhododendrons, the P.J.M. is the hardiest, with pink-purple flowers blooming even into Canada. There are all sorts of various crosses and cultivars related to the P.J.M. that are cold hardy.

Success with rhododendrons and azaleas comes down to two things – the correct hardiness and correct planting.

Rhododendrons and azaleas like an acid soil that is well drained. Give them those two criteria and they will go to town.

It's easy to acidify a soil. Just add sulfur-related compounds.

Root rots occur with regularity on azaleas and rhododendrons and it's related to a heavy soil that stays wet and doesn't allow oxygen around the roots. Unfortunately, the symptoms cause homeowners to do the opposite of what's needed.

Root rots will cause the leaves to fold under and look wilted. So what do gardeners do? They water more, which just makes the situation worse.

To avoid all this, consider digging the hole at least two to three times as wide as the root ball, but only one-half deep. Plant the specimen, bringing in soil from another part of the garden to gradually slope away from the stem, creating a little mound or berm. This way, it becomes more difficult, but not impossible, to over water. ■

"Success with rhododendrons and azaleas comes down to two things – the correct hardiness and correct planting."

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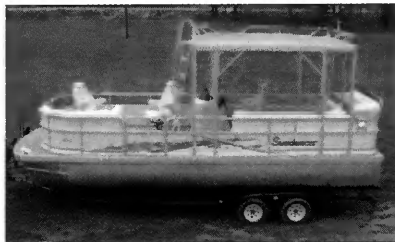
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Make Your Plan Now

Saving energy shows significant return in the future

I'm writing this column during a break from a seminar at a hotel in the Midwest. I've just completed conducting seminars in Arkansas, Kentucky and Illinois. Next week, I'll be talking in Colorado and back to Illinois and on and on across this country.

And at every location, I hear this cry, "Our utility rates have risen drastically. What are we going to do? Somebody please help me."

Well, forgive me for saying I told you so. But the truth is, I've been telling you that this was going to happen for 20 plus years. It is now time to pay the fiddler, even if you don't like the music.

Well folks, I will help you if you really want to be helped. Now, there isn't much you and I can do about energy rates, but we do have a great deal to say about the amount of energy that we use. I have spent my entire adult life helping folks just like you use less energy and still be comfortable in their homes. I have taught literally hundreds of thousands of people how to construct their new houses so that they will be totally comfortable and have the lowest utility costs feasible. For years, I have used this statement, "Build your houses like I teach and your heating and cooling costs will always be half that of your neighbors." When my neighbor's energy cost is \$100, mine is \$50. As

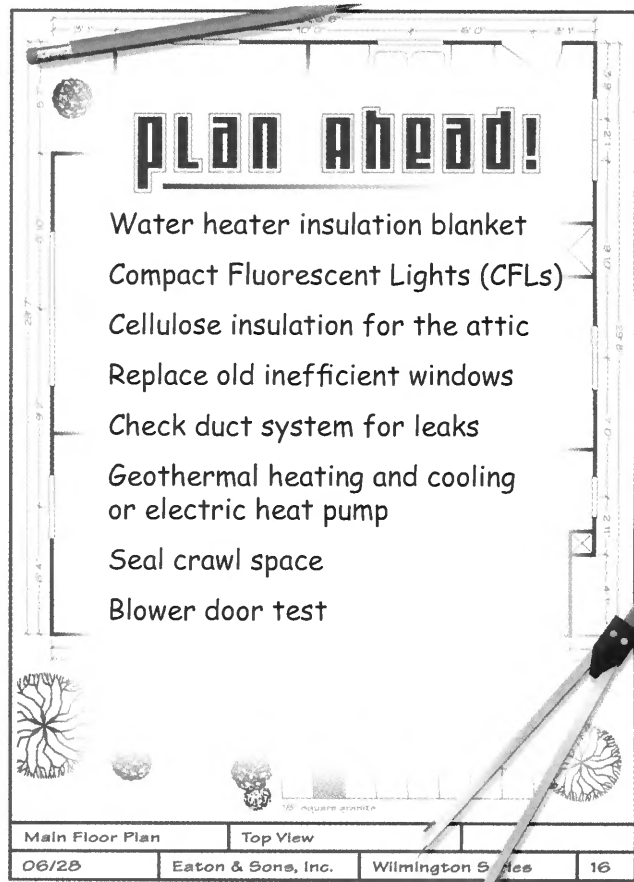
rates increase, when the neighbor's bill is \$200, mine will be \$100. I'm sure you understand this principle.

Now, I never like to be the bearer of bad news. But it most likely will get worse before it gets better. Let's look at the future. When the neighbor's cost is \$800, mine will be \$400. You see when

the cost of energy was very low, it didn't make a lot of difference. But now and in the future, it becomes extremely important.

Remember your two choices. You can complain and maybe feel better for a couple of hours or you can implement a plan that will help forever.

"Prepare your energy plan and implement your plan as funds and time permit."



As the Jaycees say, "Plan your work and then work your plan."

So read this column every month, prepare your energy plan and implement your plan as funds and time permit. So if you are serious, get your pen and paper and start making your plan. Write it down just like a honey-do list. Then implement your plan and mark items off one at a time.

I am answering your call for help. Just call me somebody. Also remember that your local electric co-op can help too. Go to their Web site or call them for energy efficiency advice. ■

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, 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.





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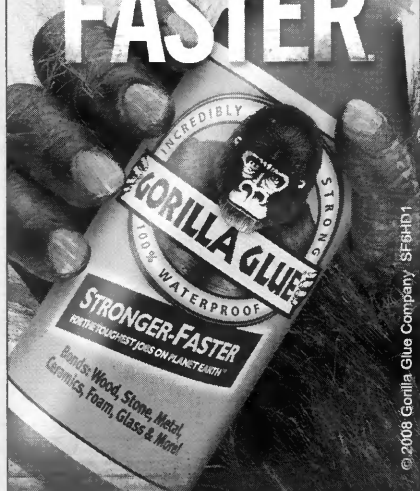
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Building The 100+ MPG Car

Electric co-op member works to shape the future of the automobile industry

The drive for a sustainable future, one unencumbered by dependence on foreign oil, and the lure of a \$10 million prize, has Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative member Kevin Smith, of Divernon, and his team vying for first place in an international race to build the world's first 100-mile-per-gallon production vehicle.

Over the course of two years, the team, Illuminati Motor Works (IMW), plans to build a hybrid car from the ground up and race cross-country in the Automotive X PRIZE (AXP) competition. With more than 40 teams across the globe participating, the competition is steep. The contest requirements are stringent and no current vehicles in production meet them, nor do many of the well-funded AXP competitors' cars. Borrowing from the Touchstone Energy cooperatives' principles of innovation and cooperation, IMW thinks they have what it takes to win.

Team IMW includes engineers, an automotive technician, a graphic artist and car enthusiasts with decades of experience. While some members have built motorcycles, as well as alternative fuel vehicles, they face new challenges with the current competition. According to Kevin Hecht, one of the team's engineers, "It's all the challenges that anyone faces if they try to start a new car company from scratch. In the United States, that has proven to be very hard to do."

That's an understatement. Existing car companies have yet to meet a demand for an attractive, extremely fuel-efficient (at least 100 mpg), four-wheel vehicle, with a low carbon footprint that's capable of seating four tall men, offers a decent amount of trunk space, and is priced realistically for today's car market. AXP requires this of all contenders, which is why most teams have entered into the



Illuminati Motor Works, (front l-r): Thomas Pasko, Josh Spradlin, (back l-r): Steve Becker, volunteer David Hecht, Kevin Smith, and Kevin Hecht.

lesser "alternative class" and hope to win a smaller prize. IMW are amongst a minority of teams confident they can meet all of the "mainstream class" goals to earn the \$10 million prize.

Flexibility is important, as the U.S. is currently considering fuel sources for the future of transportation. Team leader Kevin Smith has experience building solar, natural gas and hybrid electric vehicles. He knows the danger of designing a product that's too specialized for the evolving market. In 1996 he helped convert a Taurus to a natural gas vehicle when Ford Motor Company hosted the Future Car Challenge in Detroit, Mich.

At the time, natural gas seemed to be the future fuel for daily drivers. It didn't come to pass. Natural gas vehicles have become a large part of mass transit, but are only now being marketed for consumer use in metropolitan areas of California and New York. Smith doesn't want

to create another vehicle doomed to extinction. "Our vehicle design allows for the use of multiple fuel sources including: diesel, biodiesel, gas, electricity, ethanol, natural gas, propane and others. More options help to stabilize our future energy infrastructure," Smith explains.

Not only must the team design and build the car, they have to draft plans to show it can be put into production. The X PRIZE Foundation is not interested in expensive one-of-a-kind concept vehicles that will only be seen in car shows. All teams must demonstrate how their car can be affordably mass-produced. The winning car must be commercially viable, which creates a huge challenge for Steve Becker, the artist of the group. In order to meet the efficiency goals, the size and shape of the vehicle are severely limited. He's charged with making it look attractive to consumers.

"If it looks like a clown car, only clowns will buy it," says Becker. "It

has to have curb appeal. People will walk by the car on the sidewalk and say 'I want one of those.' It has to be marketable. It has to be something someone is going to want to buy. A lot of people seem to think that if you make a car that gets 100-miles-per-gallon, people will just rush right to the dealerships and buy them. The fact is, they won't." Current purchasing trends show average consumer is more concerned with appearance and usefulness than fuel economy alone.

Team member Josh Spradlin agrees. The most efficient hybrid on the market, the Toyota Prius, doesn't look tough enough to make men want to buy it. He also points out that while most guys want a sports car, they have to compromise in order to make their wives happy.

Spradlin says, "We have to make it look family oriented, because people look at a Dodge Charger and think, 'oh that's cool, I want one,' but you also can fit three kids in the back." If their car looks sporty but

offers space for child car seats, it will have a marketing advantage over many of its competitors.

When asked why they decided to face such challenges, their answers spoke overwhelmingly of environmental conscience and camaraderie. "It dawned on me clear back when I was working on the GM electric vehicle program that more efficiency was both possible and necessary," Hecht explains.

Hecht believes farmers will be creating the future alternative fuels, but he cautions that a combination of innovation in fuel crops and increased fuel-efficiency is important if the nation's farmers are going to be able to continue to produce both food and biofuels. "If we build a car like this and we run on ethanol, which is a possibility, we don't have to choose between eating and driving. If we add efficiency by creating vehicles that go so much farther on a given amount of fuel, then you have both. You can still eat and power your vehicle and

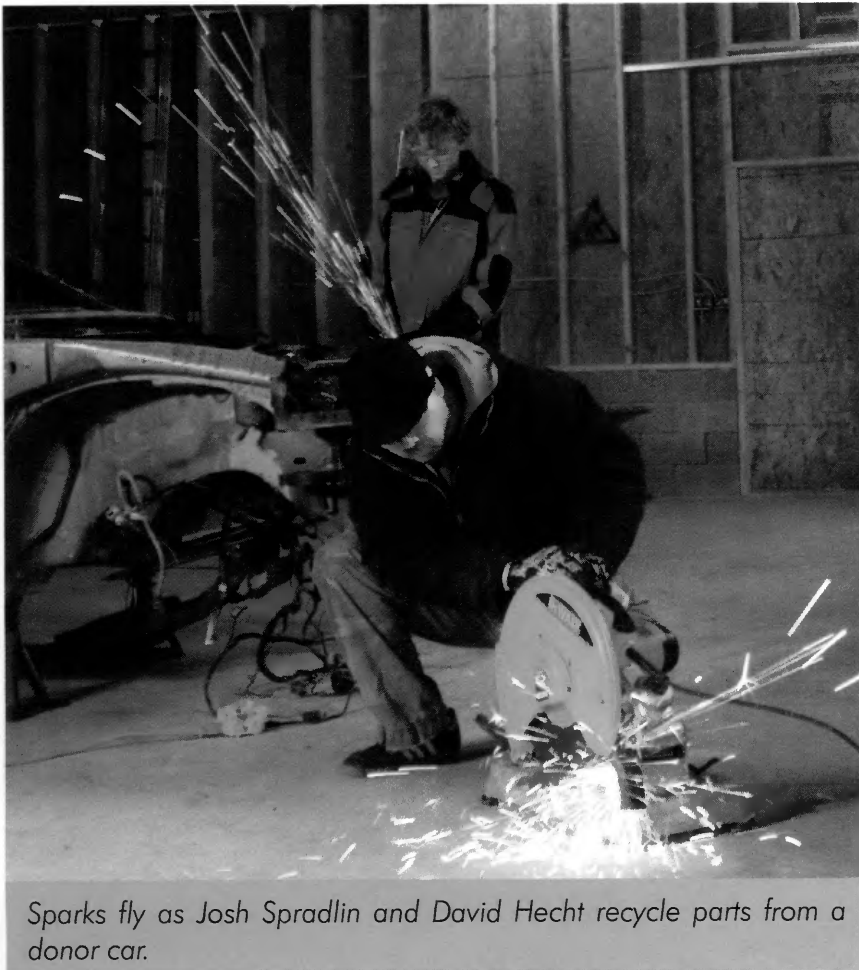
continue your life as you've become accustomed to," he says.

Thomas Pasko, the team's automotive technician, says the U.S. automotive industry must move to alternative fuels "because fossil fuels cannot continue to be the main thrust of how we get around." He'd like to see the country be less dependent on foreign oil and he wants to help bring the U.S. back to the forefront in innovative technology. He also cites his friendship with Smith as the primary reason why he's involved. "Kevin has a great ability for defining problems and then coming up with solutions, but we also work well together on that kind of thing. When we are talking and figuring out a solution to a problem, that brings me a lot of pleasure," he says.

The cooperative effort doesn't end with these five team members. Thirteen-year-old David Hecht volunteers his time on the project because he says, "It's a lot of fun and it will help the environment a lot."

Recently, the team posted a call for help on their Web site, which has seen an increase in traffic since the team was featured in the January 2008 issue of *WIRED Magazine*. They encouraged visitors to view sustainability as a personal responsibility and to help any of the teams striving for the Automotive X PRIZE. Unlike most contenders, IMW started without sponsors, in a rural workshop in central Illinois. The five-man team knew that finances would be just one of the challenges facing them, but had faith that a large cooperative effort would help them reach their goal. Their site asks visitors to consider donating services to their cause. The response has been remarkable. Professionals nationwide, including a patent attorney and a statistical mathematics professor, have volunteered. The time has come for eco-friendly transportation and people are excited to do their part to bring about an innovative solution.

For more information about the Automotive X PRIZE, or to see how you can help, go to: Auto.XPRIZE.org and IlluminatiMotorWorks.org.



Sparks fly as Josh Spradlin and David Hecht recycle parts from a donor car.

Spicy Garlic Chicken Pizza (above)

- 12-oz. boneless chicken
- 1/2 C. green onion
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 T. white vinegar
- 2 T. soy sauce
- 1 T. olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper
- 1 T. cornstarch
- 1 (16-oz.) Boboli pizza crust
- 1/2 C. Monterey Jack cheese
- 1/2 C. Mozzarella cheese

Cut chicken into 1/2-inch pieces. In a large bowl, combine 1/4 C. green onion, garlic, vinegar, soy sauce and red and black pepper. Add chicken. Let stand 30 minutes at room temperature. Drain, reserving marinade. Heat oil in a skillet and add chicken and cook. Stir cornstarch into reserved marinade. Add marinade to the skillet. Cook and stir until thickened and bubbly. Spoon evenly on top of the pizza shell. Sprinkle with cheeses. Bake, uncovered, at 400° for 12 minutes. Top with remaining green onion. Return to the oven for 2 more minutes.

Grandma's Cinnamon Pull-Apart Bread (below)

Bread:

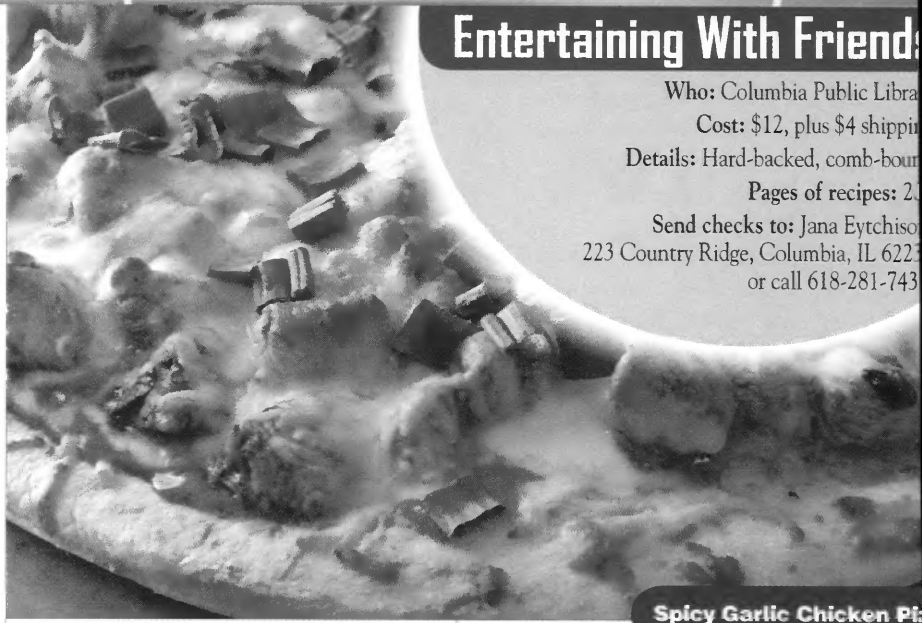
- 3/4 C. sugar
- 1 T. ground cinnamon
- 2 cans refrigerated buttermilk biscuits
- 1/2 C. butter, melted and divided

Icing:

- 4-oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1/2 C. powdered sugar
- 1-2 T. milk

Bread: Preheat the oven to 350°. Cut biscuit dough into quarters with scissors. Mix sugar and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Roll dough quarters in cinnamon/sugar mixture. Place half of the biscuits into a greased 12-cup fluted tube pan. Drizzle with 1/4 cup of the melted butter. Top with remaining biscuit quarters and melted butter. Top the unbaked loaf with remaining cinnamon/sugar mixture. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until golden. Let loaf stand for 5 minutes and invert onto a plate.

Icing: With an electric mixer, blend the cream cheese and powdered sugar together. Add milk until desired consistency is reached. Spoon immediately over warm loaf.



Spicy Garlic Chicken Pizza

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Pages of recipes: 24

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Pesto Chicken Cheesecakes

- 2 (8-oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2 lg. eggs
- 3 T. all-purpose flour, divided
- 1 C. prepared pesto
- 1 C. cooked chicken, chopped
- 1 (8-oz.) ctn. sour cream
- Mixed salad greens
- Fresh chives for garnish

Beat cream cheese until smooth. Add eggs, 2 T. flour and pesto. Stir in chicken and pour into four 4-inch spring form pans. Bake at 325° for 20 minutes. Stir together remaining flour and sour cream and spread over the cheesecakes and bake for another 10 minutes. Cool for 10 minutes on a wire rack. Gently run a knife around the edges of cheesecakes and release sides. Serve hot or cold on top of salad greens.

Root Beer BBQ Chicken

- 1 jar (18-24-oz.) Kansas City-style barbeque sauce
- 1 (12-oz.) can root beer
- 2 lbs. chicken leg quarters

In a small saucepan, combine barbecue sauce and root beer. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat; reduce heat and simmer, stirring occasionally, until sauce is reduced to 2 cups, about 25 minutes. Place chicken on a grill over medium heat; cover and grill for 40-50 minutes, turning occasionally and basting with sauce during the last 15 minutes, until internal temperature of thigh registers 180 degrees. Makes 4 servings.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

Grandma's Cinnamon Pull-Apart Bread



The Rock, The River, The Recipes

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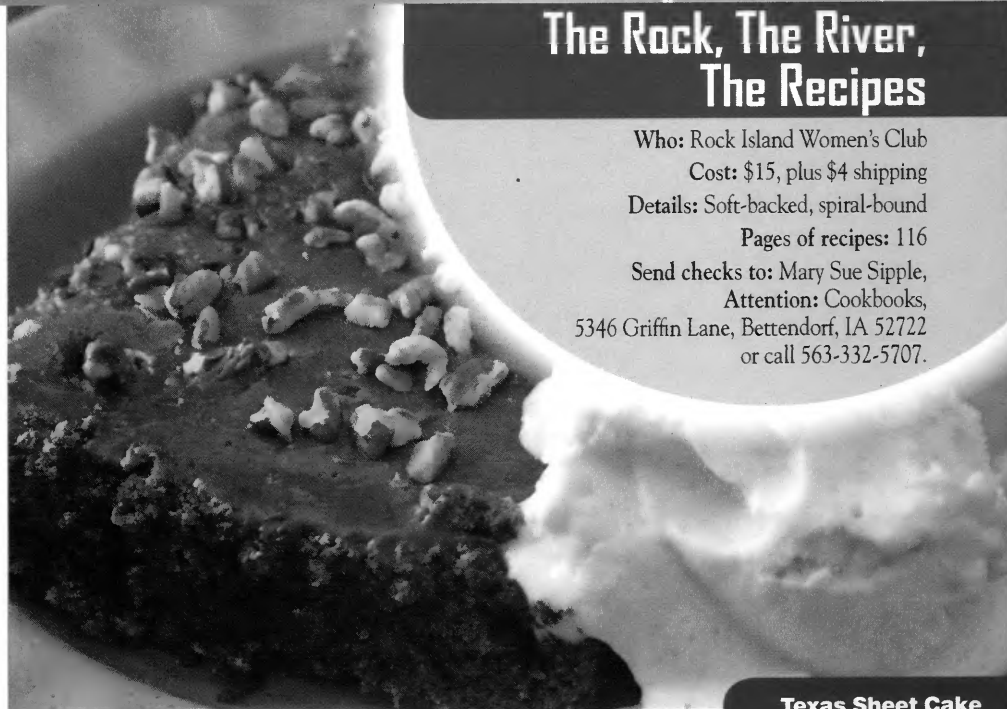
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Attention: Cookbooks,

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or call 563-332-5707.



Texas Sheet Cake (right)

- 2 C. flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 T. cocoa
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 C. sour cream
- 2 sticks butter, melted
- 2 C. sugar
- 1 C. water

Frosting:

- 1/4 C. cocoa
- 6 T. milk
- 1 stick butter
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 lb. powdered sugar
- 1 C. nuts, chopped

Combine flour, baking soda, cocoa and salt. In a separate bowl, combine eggs, sour cream, melted butter, sugar and water. Combine all together. Pour into a greased jellyroll pan. Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes. Frosting: Bring cocoa, milk and butter to a boil and mix in vanilla, powdered sugar and nuts. Frost cake while frosting is hot.

Texas Sheet Cake

Cream Sherry Cake (below)

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1 sm. box instant lemon or vanilla pudding
- 3/4 C. oil
- 3/4 C. cream sherry

- 4 extra large eggs
- 3/4 - 1 C. chopped nuts (opt.)
- Glaze:
 - 1 C. powdered sugar
 - 1/4 C. cream sherry

Mix cake mix, pudding, oil, sherry, eggs and nuts together. Pour mixture into a greased and floured tube pan. Bake at 350° for 45 - 60 minutes, or until done. Let cake stand for 5 minutes, then invert onto a serving platter. Poke holes into the top of the cake and drizzle with glaze.

Glaze: Mix powdered sugar and sherry together on stove top; bring to boil. Drizzle over cake and top with more nuts, if desired. This cake can be frozen for later.

Cream Sherry Cake



Nutty Broccoli Salad

- 1 pkg. broccoli slaw
- 1 bunch green onions, chopped
- 2 pkgs. Ramen noodles, broken
- 1/2 C. butter
- 1-oz. sesame seeds
- 1 C. slivered almonds

Dressing:

- 1/2 C. sugar
- 1/2 C. white vinegar
- 1/3 C. oil
- 1 T. soy sauce

Sauté noodles, butter, sesame seeds and almonds until light brown. Stir and watch because they burn easily. Boil dressing ingredients for 1 minute. Cool. Mix all together just before serving.

Corn Broccoli Casserole

- 2 (15-1/4-oz.) cans cream corn
- 1 pkg. frozen chopped broccoli
- 2 eggs
- 1 sm. onion, chopped
- 1/2 C. crushed soda crackers
- Dash of salt and pepper, to taste
- Buttered bread, crumbled

Mix corn, broccoli, eggs, onion, crackers and seasonings together. Pour into a casserole dish. Cover with buttered breadcrumbs. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes to 1 hour.

A Sound Approach to Climate Change

By Jennifer Taylor and Scott Gates

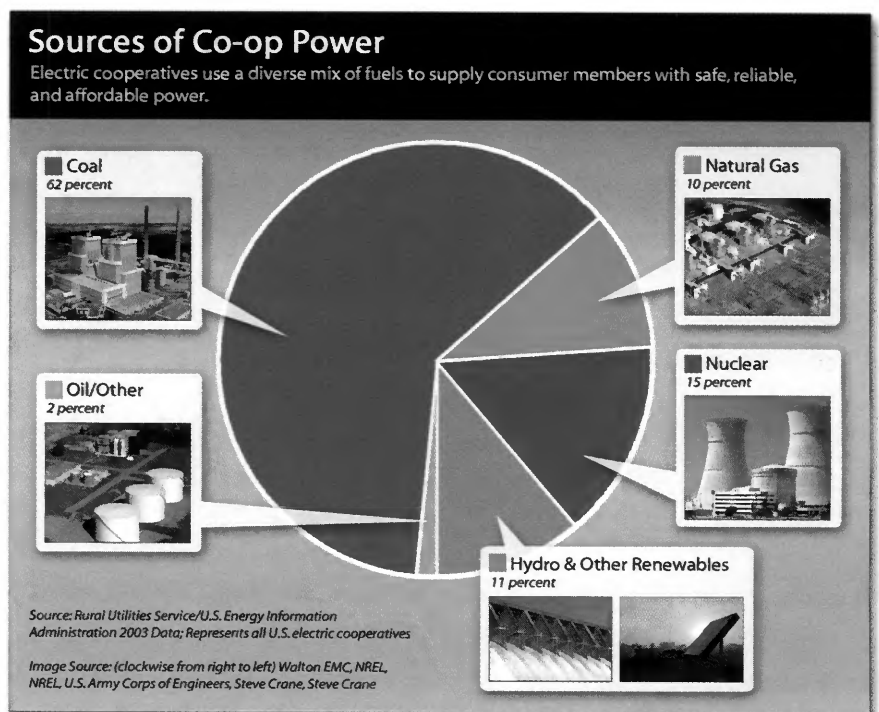
Discussions about global climate change inevitably include electric power generation. The reason: power plants that burn fossil fuels such as coal and natural gas produce more than 2 billion tons of carbon dioxide every year. That's 39 percent of all man-made carbon dioxide, the largest single source of the principal greenhouse gas blamed for contributing to climate change.

As the climate change debate takes aim at power generation, electric cooperatives have a responsibility to keep policy makers in check, ensuring that the right solutions are developed and implemented in ways that keep the nation's lights on in an affordable way.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit, utility-sponsored consortium whose members include electric co-ops, believes we can do just that. It has developed a technology-based framework that would achieve a 45 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions over the next 22 years while meeting growing demand for electricity.

"Technology is what it's all about," notes Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned electric co-ops. "It gives electric cooperatives the opportunity to address climate change and, at the same time, generate the amount of power we need to meet the needs of our members."

Even though demand for electricity is predicted to increase by 18 percent over the next decade, capacity to generate electricity will only increase by 8.4 percent, according to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, a non-profit organization charged with monitoring America's power system



reliability. This means that unless new power plants and transmission facilities to carry the power are constructed, Americans will have to adjust to the almost unimaginable possibility of not having electricity available every time they flip on a switch.

What's more, climate change legislation could have a dramatic effect on power generation and electric bills. Local, state and federal lawmakers are currently considering additional costs on power plants to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, notably carbon dioxide.

EPRI's analysis recognizes this reality and encourages aggressive new action in seven specific areas: boosting energy efficiency, improving the operating efficiency of advanced coal-fired power plants, investing in renewable energy, expanding nuclear power capacity, capturing carbon dioxide produced by coal-fired power plants and storing it deep

underground, adding distributed generation resources and putting plug-in hybrid electric vehicles on the road.

The recommendations are sound, although implementing many of the ideas on a large scale will require a massive investment of government resources and mobilization of every sector of the economy. Making some technologies, notably carbon capture and storage, commercially viable will require expensive research and development – an estimated \$1.4 billion per year through 2030. But Revis James, director of EPRI's Energy Technology Assessment Center, feels confident that the overall goals can be met through a progression of milestones.

"Let's suppose that as a society we want to send a man to Mars," James says, providing an example of a project similar in scale. "Are we currently building rockets designed to go to Mars? Absolutely not. But we do

have technology available now that will be valuable in getting there.”

James sees curbing carbon emissions in the same way. “Underlying research has already laid the foundation. We’ve got a good bedrock of current technology to build on in years to come.”

Energy Efficiency

Energy efficiency stands as the most cost-effective approach for managing electricity use and lowering greenhouse gas emissions. Steps include making simple modifications around a home or office, such as replacing insulation or caulking air leaks around doors and windows. Energy efficiency measures also reduce how much more generation needs to be built. Still, energy efficiency improvements will reduce electricity consumption by 9 percent over the next 22 years, according to EPRI.

Renewable Energy

New domestic renewable energy resources, such as wind, solar, hydro and biomass (including landfill gas, livestock waste, timber byproducts and crop residue), can help diversify our nation’s fuel mix, shrink dependency on foreign sources of energy, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EPRI sees “green power,” led by wind energy, leaping from 2 percent of kilowatt-hours produced nationally today to 6.7 percent by 2030. Of course, transmission lines must be built to bring the power generated at remote wind farms, for example, to population centers.

Nuclear Energy

Many more nuclear power plants will be needed to meet the growing demand for electricity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EPRI proposes that roughly 12 two-unit nuclear plants come online in the United States by 2020, with two

additional plants then added each year through 2030. On average, it takes 10 or more years to construct such a facility, including permitting. Presently, only four license applications for new nuclear reactors have been submitted to the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission, although many more are expected. Although nuclear plants supply 20 percent of the nation’s electricity, none have been ordered in the U.S. for about 30 years.

Advanced Coal Plant Efficiency

Presently, coal generates 50 percent of our country’s electricity and new technologies are being developed

and development of carbon capture and storage technology will likely take years, if not decades, to come online – assuming the federal government provides sufficient funding.

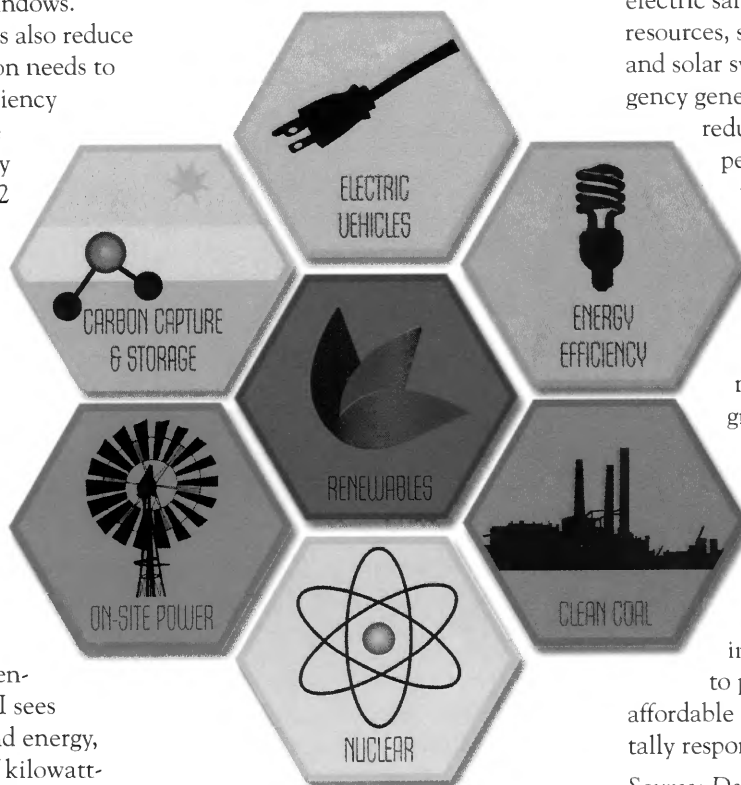
Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles and Distributed Generation

Plug-in hybrid electric vehicles and small-scale power plants owned by consumers are also among EPRI’s solutions. In the first project of its kind, electric co-ops are testing whether plug-in hybrid electric vehicles can wean the nation off foreign oil, curb greenhouse gas emissions and increase off-peak electric sales. Distributed energy resources, such as “backyard” wind and solar systems, as well as emergency generators, help electric co-ops reduce load during times of peak demand – the electric utility industry’s equivalent of rush-hour traffic and the time when power costs skyrocket – offset the need to build new power plants and transmission lines, and slash greenhouse gas emissions.

In coming months, a closer look at each of these seven areas will demonstrate how electric co-ops have emerged as industry leaders, all in their continuing efforts to provide safe, reliable and affordable power in an environmentally responsible manner.

Source: Department of Energy, Energy Information Administration; North American Electric Reliability Corporation; Electric Power Research Institute; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation’s 900-plus not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric co-ops.

Jennifer Taylor is writer of consumer and cooperative affairs and at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Scott Gates writes on technology and energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



to improve plant efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. These new technologies must be implemented to improve coal plant operating efficiencies – finding ways to burn less coal and still produce the same amount of power.

Carbon Capture and Storage

Effective ways to capture and store carbon dioxide emissions can make coal – a readily available and affordable fuel – an integral part of the nation’s electricity supply. Research

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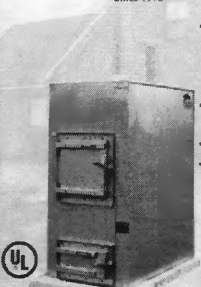
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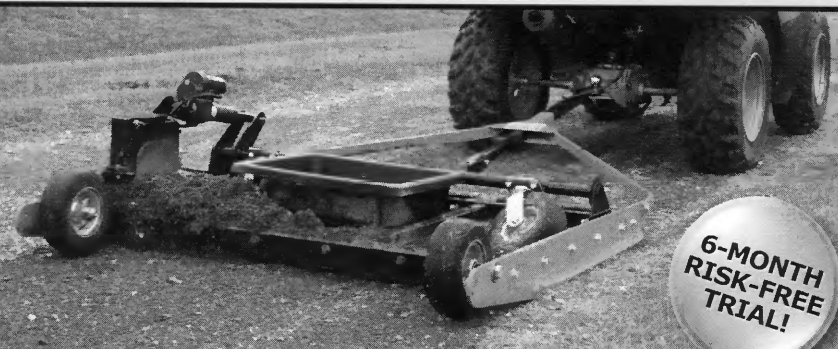
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March

28-29, Dresden Memories at the Assembly of God in Clinton. \$3. Enjoy bed-turning, door prizes, vendors, lunch and more than 100 quilts. 217-935-6083.

28-30, The Second Annual Lake Home and Cabin Show at the Schaumburg Convention Center in Schaumburg. Adults: \$12, Youth 5-15: \$5 and children younger than 5 are free. More than 175 exhibitors from across the country will showcase everything you need or want for your lake home or cabin. 952-471-1192.

29, The Illinois Farm Bureau's IAA Foundation's Tribute to Speaker Dennis Hastert at the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry in Chicago. The tribute is to recognize the former speaker for his leadership and support of agriculture. The event is also a fundraiser for the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program. 6:30 to 10 p.m. 309-557-2230.



April

5, The 10th Annual Lake Sara Dam Run at Lake Sara Dam in Effingham. The run includes a 5K run/5K walk, 8-mile run and a kiddie run. All participants welcome. There is an admission fee. All proceeds go to the Special Olympics. Registration from 8 - 9:45 a.m. 217-347-2711.

5-6, Home and Garden Showcase at Forest Hills Lodge in Machesney Park. More than 100 companies offering an array of products and services for the home and apartment. See the latest trends in landscaping, decks, backyard ponds and waterfalls, remodeling, gazebos, neat gadgets and more! 815-877-8043 or www.showtimeproduction.net.

6, Grada Celtic Ensemble at Illinois College in Jacksonville. A blend of contemporary music styles, modern songs and traditional Irish music, Grada has garnered a strong following around the globe. The Celtic quintet has performed at numerous international festivals and played to four consecutive sold-out shows in Dublin before beginning their world tour. The group's five members play a variety of instruments, some familiar, such as the guitar, fiddle, whistle and flute, and others more traditional Celtic instruments, such as the bouzouki and the bodhran. 217-245-3000 or www.ic.edu.

Visit our Web site, www.icl.coop.

12-13, The Fourth Annual White Hall Civil War Days at the White Hall Reservoir in White Hall. Saturday from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. and Sunday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Sunday. Civil War encampments, battles both days, period vendors, exhibits, cannons, Cavalry and Infantry troop demonstrations and food vendors. Plus special appearances by General Grant and others. Also enjoy an old-fashioned church service at 9 a.m. Sunday. \$3 for adults; children 12 and younger are 217-927-4301 or gengrant1865@yahoo.com.

6, 13, 20, 27, Bird-watching Kayak Tour on the Galena River. A leisurely hour and a half tour learning about and observing birds and their habitat on the Mississippi River backwaters. Reservations required. 815-776-9425 or www.feverriveroutfitters.com.

10-12, The Totally Rockin' '80s Prom at historic Turner Hall in Galena. Put on your dancing shoes! Travel back in time for this audience-participation dinner theatre celebrating teen angst and '80s music. 815-777-0917.

10-13, Charlotte's Web at the Community Park in Jacksonville. The Jacksonville Theatre Guild's adaptation of the story of a barn spider named Charlotte and her friendship with a pig named Wilbur – Some Pig! 217-243-2420.

12, Pope County FFA Antique Tractor Show on Main Street in Golconda. 619-683-5637.

12, Farmer's Market Begins in Golconda. Every Saturday morning, 7 a.m. – 12 p.m. through September. 618-683-6246.

12, The 21st Annual Class Pack Automotive – Oil and Gas Memorabilia Motorcycle Swap Meet at the Effingham County Fairgrounds in Altamont. 7 a.m. – 4 p.m. \$2. 217-234-6372 or www.classpack.com.

12, Mineral Springs Haunted Museum Tour in Alton. As part of your haunted tour, experience "a night in the museum" as you browse the torture devices on loan from the Museum of Historic Torture Devices located in the Wisconsin Dells, as well as the history of the devices. 618-465-3200 or www.mineralspring-shauntedtours.com.

12-13, Fever River Railroad Spring Open House in Freeport. For model railroad aficionados and everyone else who has ever enjoyed model trains-this model railroad is something to see. The Fever River Railroad is a 103 by 24 foot HO scale model of a hypothetical railroad running from Duluth, Minn. to St. Louis, Mo. The railroad intersects with models of "real" railroads, each of which can be operated independently – up to 20 trains can be operating at one time. A collection of railroad memorabilia and pictures are on display. 815-239-2345 or www.stephenson-county-il.org.

18, Jim Brickman at the Raue Center in Crystal Lake. Jim Brickman returns to the Raue Center to present his revolutionary sound of adult contemporary music with his pop-style solo piano. 815-356-9010 or www.rauecenter.org.

18-20, River City Air Expo 2008 in Peoria. A spectacular fun-filled event for all ages! This year's show will feature the US Navy Blue Angels and other popular performers. 309-697-6757 or www.prairieair.org.

18-20, President Grant's Grand Birthday Celebration in Galena. A variety of events commemorating Grant's birthday, military encampment, battle re-enactment, 1860s baseball, a Grand Birthday Ball, parade and more. 815-281-0408. or www.galenahistorymuseum.org.

19, National Federation Lure Collector's Club 2008 at the Knights of Columbus in Effingham. Come see and have a chance to own antique fishing tackle. The public is invited to bring their antique fishing tackle. You will receive a free appraisal and can put your tackle up for the auction. 217-868-2427.



19, Macon County Start! Heart Walk at Fairview Park in Decatur. Come out for a day of fun and learn how to live a longer, healthier life while helping the American Heart Association raise funds to fight American's number one killer. Register at www.heartwalk.kintera.org/maconcountyil.

19, The Third Annual Effingham Artisan Fair on the courthouse lawn in Effingham. The Juried Artisan Fair will be a one-day event recognizing artistic talent of all ages. The attendees will be offered a tour of Sculpture on the Avenues, opportunities to talk with the artists, observe the artists producing their work, view the art work and have the opportunity to purchase art work. They will also be able to enjoy various types of performing arts. 217-342-1234.

19-20, Classics and Chrome in Loves Park. A spectacular indoor car show featuring 100 exceptional antique, classic and specialty autos and motorcycles from throughout the Midwest. A luxury will be raffled off during the show, plus loads of activities for the family to enjoy. 815-399-8850 or classic-sandchrome.com.

19-20, Rockmania in Rockford. Rock River Valley Gem and Mineral Society annual show and sale with exhibitions and demonstrations including geode cracking, beading with seed beads, gem trees, fossil displays, professional vendors, fossil and rock identification and a special kids' activity area. 815-397-9112 or www.midwayvillage.com.

20, Spoon River China Art Guild Annual China Show at the Donaldson Center in Canton. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Hand-painted China displays, door prizes, China painting demonstrations and refreshments. Free, but donations accepted and appreciated. 309-647-3390.

20, Halloween in April at Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. 1-3 p.m. Visitors can take part in a costume parade with candy plus enjoy crafts, face painting, games and up close creepy animal encounters. This event will take place indoors if weather is inclement, and is free with regular paid zoo admission. 309-434-2250 or www.millerparkzoo.org.

25-27, Birding Fest 2008 in Southern Illinois. Something for everyone, including guided hikes and tours for people of all ages. All programs will take place at the Cache River Wetlands Center and include guided canoe tours, birding hikes, live bird demonstrations, wildlife photo exhibit and more. www.birdingblitz.org.



26, Beaux Arts Ball at JHS Bowl in Jacksonville. A proud tradition of the community, this gala brings out the finest in the city's youth for a wonderful ball and coronation of king and queen of the event. Largest annual fundraising event for the David Strawn Art Gallery. 217-243-5678 or www.jacksonvilleil.org/tourism.

26, The Third Annual Wings of Spring Confluence Birding Festival at Riverlands Migratory Bird Sanctuary in Alton. Plan on off-site birding trips, arts and entertainment, family-centered educational activities and live bird meet and greets and much more. 618-465-6676 or www.wingsofspring.org.

26, Mississippi River Clean Up 2008 begins at 8 a.m. at Ferry's Landing in Galena. Join the JDCE, Galena Boat Club and a growing number of volunteers to help clean the Mississippi River. Free lunch. 815-858-9100 or www.jdcf.org.

26-27, The Gathering at Macktown Forest Preserve in Rockton. A two-day celebration of the first non-native American settlement in northern Illinois with traders, trappers, voyagers, militia, re-enactors and demonstrators, historic food, music and games. Park at the old high school on Hononegah Rd. 815-624-4200 or www.macktownlivinghistory.com.

27, Benny Goodman Tribute at Lewis and Clark Community College in Godfrey. In 2007, 20-year-old David Bennett played for the Greater Alton Concert Association with the New Reformation Jazz Band. This outstanding clarinetist has recreated the music of Benny Goodman and brings to the stage his seven-piece ensemble. It's like going back to the 40s. Don't miss this musical rising star. 618-465-7536 or www.altonconcert.org.

27, Blessing of the Bikes at Bald Knob Cross in Alto Pass. Motorcycles gather atop Bald Knob Cross to receive a blessing for a good riding season. 618-893-2344.

27, Birding Festival in Cypress. Birders of all skill levels, field trips and seminars for beginners. Live bird demonstrations, hikes and canoe trips. Skilled birders may want to compete in the Birding Blitz to see the most species of birds. 618-634-2231 or www.birdingblitz.org.

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: Feb. 15 for May Events, March 15 for June Events **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708
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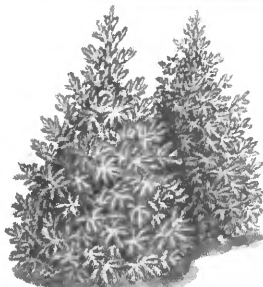
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