

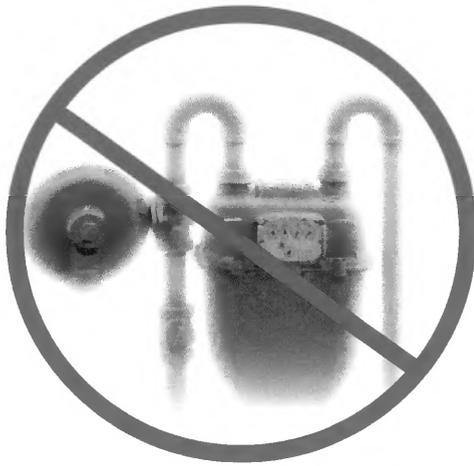
Your Electric
Cooperative's

ILLINOISTM COUNTRY LIVING

April 2008

Illinois
**Animal
Rescue**
Giving homeless pets a second chance



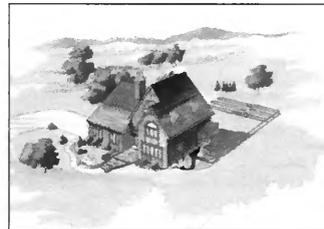


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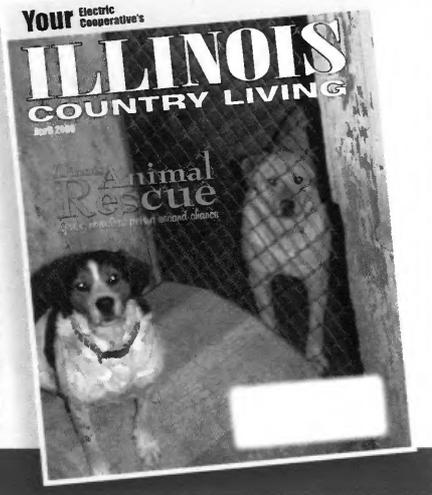
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ILLINOIS ANIMAL RESCUE

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 800-593-2432 • aieinfo@aiec.coop

John Lowrey.....Editor
 Michelle McNeal.....Assistant Editor
 Katrina McCulley Wagner.....Associate Editor
 Lisa Rigoni.....Advertising Manager
 Nancy R. Nixon.....Marketing Administrator
 Andy Wolske.....Advertising Coordinator/Graphic Designer
 Jennifer Danzinger, Kathy Feraris
 & Chris Reynolds.....Graphic Designers
 Connie Newenham.....Circulation Coordinator

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ILLINOISTM
COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 65, No. 12, April 2008

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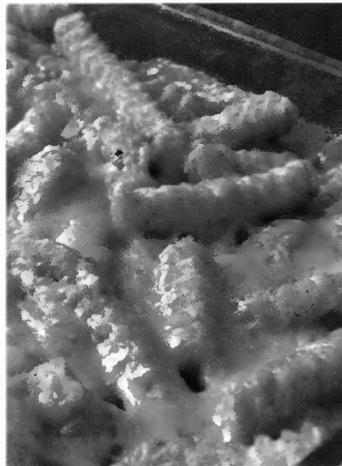
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The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and 25 Illinois electric cooperatives are members of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of 660 electric cooperatives. Touchstone Energy cooperative employees adhere to four core values — integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.

It's Our Energy and Our Future

You have the right to ask questions of your leaders

I'd like to take you back just a decade or so. The experts then said deregulation of the utility industry was a great idea. It would save money and make the utility business more efficient. I was in the state legislature at the time and I remember vividly one of the large investor-owned utilities based in my home district and how they were adamantly in favor of deregulation.

It sounded like a good idea.

Then the cooperatives came to me and said, "We understand that, however, because of our business model of member ownership and democratic control we would like to have local control over whether or not to enter the deregulated market. With our locally-elected directors we can be more responsive to what our member-owners want."

Hindsight has been 20-20 and shown that it has not been the success that the investor-owned utilities had hoped for. We probably made some mistakes.

I think because in 1997 the co-ops understood their business model and understood that the deregulation decision should be made locally they made the right decision. That's one thing we got right because co-op leaders spoke up and their elected representatives listened.

The investor-owned utilities told us we could

have our cake and eat it too. It turned out we ate it and had no cake left.

Co-op leaders have one motivation—keeping the lights on and keeping the rates as low as possible for their fellow member-

owners. In a way that means electric co-ops are truly the only consumer-advocate utilities in this new energy debate over climate change and what to do about it.

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on your cooperative – and on you.

Climate change is but one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the

country will be short of power within one or two years.

And yet energy supply isn't an issue our elected representatives are spending a lot of time on. These forces, the desire by government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and the growing demand for power by consumers, are about to collide.

Some people say we can meet demand through efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is we need all the efficiency and renewable energy we can get, but that will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership – without a sound, responsible plan – government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. That's why I want to encourage you to contact your elected officials.

You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions helps find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

Right now, members of Congress as well as state elected officials are hearing from lots of different interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. We need a plan people can live with today while we deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.

To make things easy, the National Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NRECA) has created a Web site that will send an e-mail for you. Go to www.ourenergy.coop and plug in your address. ■

"You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions."

N. Duane Noland is the President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, Springfield. He is a former state senator, active on his family farm near Blue Mound and a member of Shelby Electric Cooperative.



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

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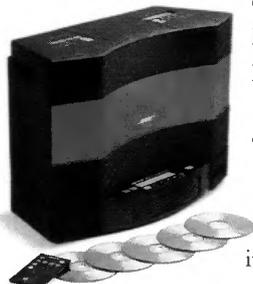
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Cost of Power Plants up 27 Percent in One Year

The cost of building a new power plant in North America has risen 27 percent in the past year, 19 percent in the most recent six months, 76 percent in the last three years and is now 130 percent higher than in 2000, indicating that a plant that cost \$1 billion in 2000 would, on average, cost \$2.31 billion to build today, according to a new study by Cambridge Energy Research Associates (CERA) and IHS Inc. Rising prices for raw materials and continued tightness in the labor market have been the main forces pushing up the cost of new power plants, and CERA expects costs to remain high for the next 12 to 18 months. Excluding nuclear plants, costs have risen 79 percent since 2000, CERA said. ■



TVs to Meet New Energy Star Requirements

The Environmental Protection Agency announced a revised Energy Star specification for televisions on Feb. 5, 2008. Effective Nov. 1, 2008, TVs that carry the Energy Star label will be up to 30 percent more efficient than conventional models and will save energy while they are on and when they are off.

“Energy Star’s new specifications for televisions are turning

the channel on energy guzzling sets – making them go the way of rabbit-ears and the black and white TV,” EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson said.

If all TVs sold in the United States meet the Energy Star requirements, the savings in energy costs will grow to about \$1 billion annually and greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by the equivalent of about 1 million cars.

TVs first earned the Energy Star label in 1998 and ever since, TV manufacturers and EPA have worked together on efficiency improvements. The United States now has more than 275 million TVs in use; they consume over 50 billion kWh per year.

For more information on Energy Star appliances, visit www.energystar.gov. ■

Electric Co-ops Honored for GeoAlliance Program

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) received the 2008 Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) Inspiring Efficiency Innovation award during MEEA’s annual meeting in Chicago on January 10. Through the Inspiring Efficiency awards, MEEA annually recognizes leaders in the Midwest who have made great strides in increasing energy efficiency awareness and

innovative technologies, policy and programs in the region.

The award recognized the association’s efforts in GeoAlliance, a joint venture between the AIEC and Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation (ICECF), which encourages the use of geothermal technology in cooperative-served, not-for-profit and public facilities. The ICECF funded the program with \$1 million in grant money, and the AIEC is the program administrator.

For more information about the GeoAlliance grant program, call Nancy Nixon at 217-241-7954 or e-mail her at nnixon@aiec.coop. ■



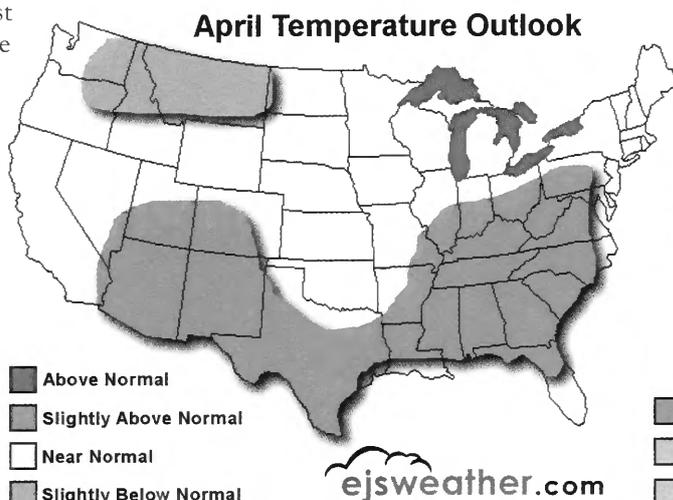
From left to right are Wendy Jaehn, MEEA Executive Director; David Eijadi, MEEA Board Chairman; Jim Mann, ICECF Executive Director; Alecia Ward, MEEA President/CEO; Nancy Nixon, AIEC Marketing Administrator and John Freitag, AIEC Vice-President of Operations.

La Nina Expected to Persist Through Spring

Though in recent weeks there have been some early signs of weakening, most climate models indicate that the current La Nina will hold on through the upcoming spring months. With that being the case, April is forecasted to see near to slightly above average temperatures across Illinois.

Locations across the southern part of the state will have the best chance of seeing milder weather during the month of April. Temperatures are expected to average between 1 to 3 degrees above normal in this part of the state, which will lead to a deficit of heating degree days of between 30 and 90. Late season energy usage with respect to heating should also be a little lower than normal across much of the state.

The Illinois map this month illustrates the average temperature departure from normal across the state for this past winter. While the southern third of the state saw a slightly milder winter, the extreme northern and northwestern portions of the state actually saw a winter season that was a little cooler than average.



Dec-Feb Temperature Departure From Normal



The reason for this difference is largely due to the difference in snowfall amounts. Locations from the Quad-Cities to Rockford have seen a very snowy winter with over 50 inches fallen. On the flip side, much of southern Illinois has seen less than 15 inches of snowfall this winter and most of that has been short lived. The added snow cover in northern Illinois allowed for low temperatures to drop well below zero more often and for lower maximum temperatures on many days. What a difference a few hundred miles makes! ■

Adams Electric Cooperative Gets Green Light for Wind Project Financing

Electric cooperatives in 11 states got the green light from the IRS to issue Clean Renewable Energy Bonds (CREB) worth \$143 million. CREB awards to cooperatives ranged from \$300,000 to \$30 million. Approved projects include: 14 wind projects, five landfill gas projects, six hydropower projects; one solar project and one open-loop biomass project. Adams Electric Cooperative, Quincy, will receive \$1,504,080 for its wind turbine project.

As part of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the CREBs program provides electric cooperatives and other not-for-profit utilities incentives to invest in renewable generation resources. Comparable to Production Tax Credit (PTC) available to investor-owned utilities, CREBs provide low-cost capital for renewable energy facilities because the government provides tax credits to the purchasers of the bonds.

"Most of the nation's renewable energy resources can be found in the service territory of cooperatives," noted Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. "Clean Renewable Energy Bonds are the financial instrument that allows cooperatives to unleash that power."

Awardees may now apply to the National Rural Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) or other qualified lenders to issue bonds on their behalf. On February 6, 2008, the CFC announced it had issued almost \$31 million in CREBs, following IRS allocations made in fiscal year 2006. ■



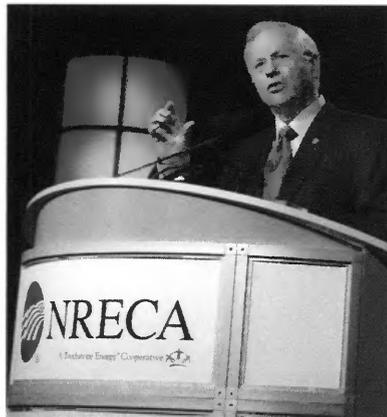
New Public-Private Partnership Could Solve Energy Issues

Invoking the successful public-private partnerships of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the legacy of the "REA," Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, called on government to work with consumers to achieve national climate change goals. "In the 1930s, when Roosevelt initiated the 'New Deal' the president didn't say: You people go out and provide electric power all across the country while the rest of us sit on the fence and determine what penalties will be assigned if you don't meet these goals. No, President Roosevelt said we need a partnership between government and the people."

Before an audience of nearly 9,000 electric cooperative leaders assembled for the Association's 66th Annual Meeting, English observed that whoever is elected president this fall will face a tremen-

dous challenge. Crafting and enacting policies to meet our nation's climate challenge will consume many of the new president's first 100 days, he said.

English encouraged co-op leaders to energize their local members, to empower co-op consumers and begin a dialogue between elected officials and electricity consumers. "The cooperative principles require that we educate and inform the membership," said English. "We have a responsibility also to provide elected officials the information they need to make good decisions and effective policy. Consumers need straight answers about the current state of technology, capacity and cost. Co-op consumers recognize that balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. They want to know how much this is going to increase their electric bills and what elected officials will do to make it affordable." ■



NRECA CEO Glenn English

Illinois Starts Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force

A new state task force will begin work to create a comprehensive food production and distribution system to expand the availability of Illinois-grown produce. The Local and Organic Food and Farm Task Force held its first meeting in January.

Our state is one of the nation's leading producers of agricultural

products, but imports more than 90 percent of its food. If we could develop a system to satisfy consumers demand for organic and locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables and keep food sales in-state, we'd have a tremendous opportunity to improve the health of our diets and revitalize rural communities.

Food travels an average of 1,500 miles before it reaches Illinois consumers. The challenge is to become more self-sufficient and to make Illinois produce more readily available, especially in inner-city neighborhoods where fresh fruits and vegetables often are in short supply. ■

Lakeland College Adds Geothermal System

Along with its many alternative energy projects, Lake Land College is utilizing geothermal energy in its new Student Fitness Center. The completion of this green project was greatly aided by a \$45,000 award from

the GeoAlliance Grant. Pictured from left to right are Nancy Nixon, Marketing Administrator, Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives; Chris Christman, Coles Moultrie Electric Cooperative Chief Executive Officer; Ray Rieck, Vice President for Business Services at Lake Land College; and Scott Lensink, President of Lake Land. Coles Moultrie Electric Cooperative assisted Lake Land College in obtaining the geothermal funding. GeoAlliance is a cooperative effort between the Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation in Chicago, which funds the grants, and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield, which administers the grant program. The grant is part of a \$1 million program to further the proliferation of geothermal technology. ■



Tree Trimming

Why it's necessary



Take a look at the photo above. This tree was definitely planted in the wrong place and you can see clearly why it had to be trimmed. Help us out by not planting trees under or near our lines. If your trees and nearby power lines tangle, you can bet that trees will win the match and your power will go out. That's why your co-op has a right-of-way tree trimming program.

Your co-op provides electricity across thousands of miles of power lines. And trees surround many of those lines.

Winds blow and tree branches rub against lines and cause your lights to

blink. Three blinks in short succession and your power goes out until someone at the co-op can investigate. Or limbs break off in strong winds or due to ice storms and crash onto lines, causing fuses to blow or breakers to trip. And worse case scenarios, trees can tumble down and take out the power line and pole nearby, as well as cause damage to others down the line.

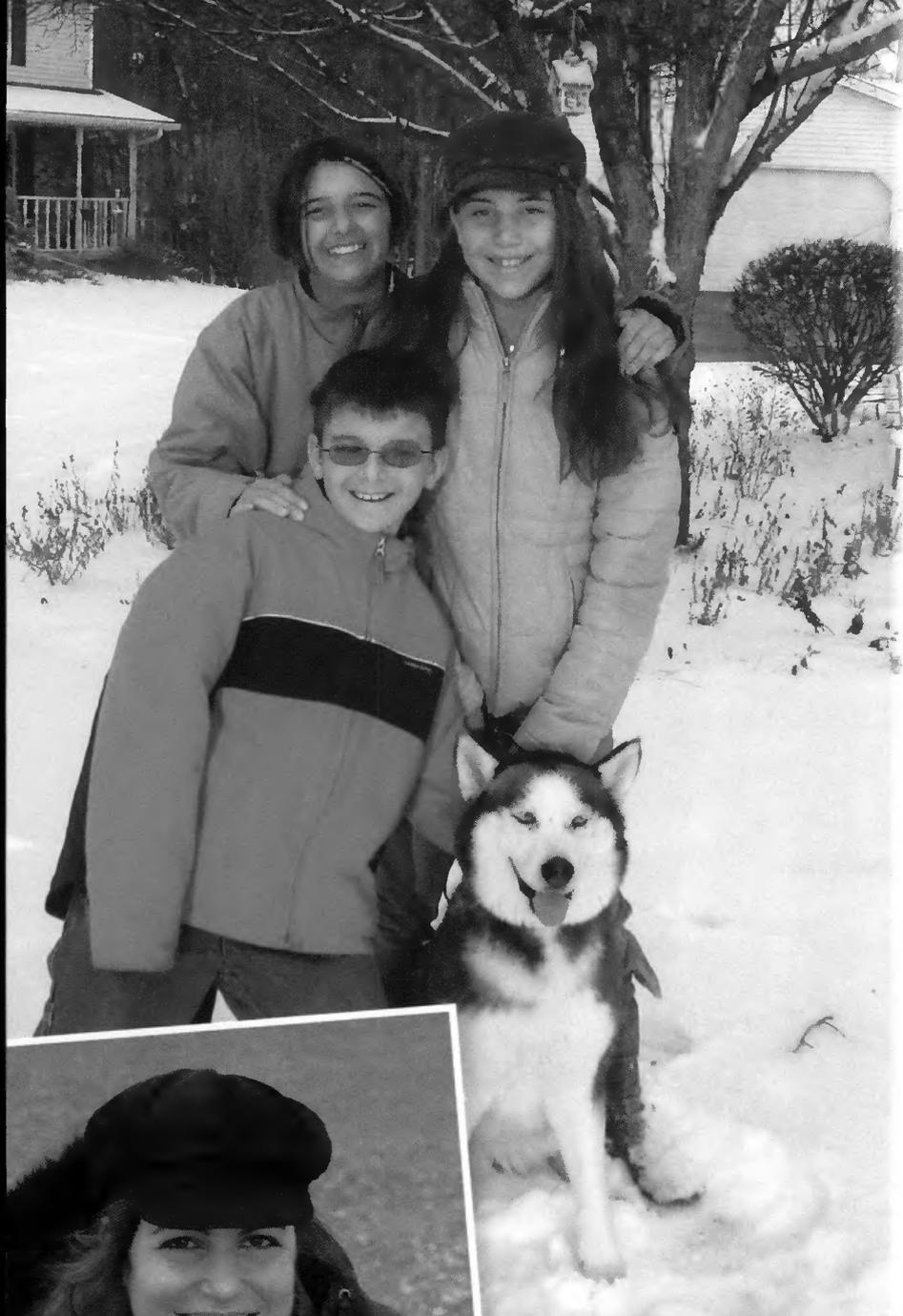
We can't always predict which trees will do what. But we can do our best to identify trees that are likely to fall and branches that are too close to lines. Then we can do something about it.

We need to keep the right of way

of lines clear, not just for you, but for your neighbors as well. And a clear right of way is also easier for linemen to access and fix other problems that may occur.

That's why we prune trees. We use safe cutting methods that are not damaging to the tree's health. Some co-ops use contract crews while others have their own team of tree trimming professionals. Call your co-op today to find out their tree trimming schedule and who will be performing the work.

And remember co-ops seek to provide you with safe, reliable service year round. Tree trimming is just one more tool to achieve this.



Illinois Animal Rescue

*Giving homeless pets
a second chance*

By Catrina McCulley Wagner

Blue is living every dog's dream. She goes for long strolls every morning, plays fetch and gets kisses on her nose. But life hasn't always been easy for this beautiful blue-eyed Husky. It wasn't long ago that she was surviving, not living, with 23 other dogs and 28 cats under unruly conditions without food or water. Her owner was what some would call an animal "collector" or "hoarder." Nine of Blue's friends had already died. It was too late for them. But Blue was a survivor. She had to be. She was pregnant.



▲ (L-R) Marley Reynoso and Delaney and Brennan Auth pose with Blue.

◀ Kim Auth says rescuing Blue was one of the most rewarding experiences of her life.

By the time Blue, her pups and her friends were rescued by Corn Belt Energy members Pat and Garrie Burr, owners of Central Illinois Small Animal Rescue (CISAR) in Colfax, she had parasites and tumors and was in need of medical treatment. "It was a sad sight and the worst case of neglect we'd ever seen," says Garrie. "We just love animals and hate to see them suffer," Pat says.

Fortunately, Blue's luck changed when Kim and Tim Auth and their children, Marley, Delaney and Brennan contacted the Burrs at CISAR wanting to rescue a dog. "We went to their facility and were immediately drawn to Blue. My husband loves Huskies," says Kim. "We knew right from the start that she would be a challenge because she had lived at the shelter for a year and a half and had been adopted once before and was brought back to the shelter due to a severe separation anxiety issue."

Kim and her family were up for the challenge. "Every dog has its problems. People give up too easily. You can find the answer to any behavior issue online or in books. And if you're willing to devote a little extra time at the beginning, you can get the behavior taken care of. The extra effort is so rewarding," Kim says.

"The problem people have is that they try to humanize their dogs," Kim says. "Dogs are not human and don't have the same thoughts or emotions. The way to have a successful relationship with a dog is to learn as much as you can about a dog's behavior and natural instincts. If you do that, you'll find that owning and loving a dog is very easy."

The Auths have had Blue for a year now and say that Blue has been such a wonderful addition to their family. Lucky for Blue, her story had a happy ending, but unfortunately, for so many other animals out there, that's just not the case.

The Burrs opened their non-profit, no-kill shelter in 2003 because they felt the kill ratio at the other local shelters was far too high and unacceptable. "Most of the animals being killed were perfectly healthy. We knew we could help find those animals homes," Pat says.

"We firmly believe that there is a home out there for every animal. We've made it our mission to do whatever we can to find homes for them," says Garrie, who says 80-85 percent of the animals at their shelter were rescued from animal control after being picked up in rural areas.

"Animal dumping in the rural areas has become a real problem," Garrie says. "People think that's more humane, but it's really cruel. Those animals don't know how to survive on their own. They get hit by cars and if they aren't spayed or

neutered, they create more unwanted animals to fill the shelters."

"Our society is too disposable," says Rose Rebbe, Executive Director for the Animal Protective League in Springfield. "If a pet is inconvenient, they just get rid of it. If the animal is going to require some medical attention (money) or behavior training (time), they are no longer desirable. It's easier to just get rid of that animal and get a new one."

Penny Standerfer, wife of Shelby Electric Cooperative Board Director Jeff Standerfer and Telecommunicator for the Shelbyville Police Department, has seen this epidemic firsthand.

"Living in the rural area, I see a lot of animals that have been dumped. People think the animal stands a better chance. They are wrong."

Standerfer, along with her friend Peggy Martz of Shelbyville, and like the Burrs, was tired of the amount of healthy animals being euthanized by her local animal control shelters and decided to take a stand to help. Together, and without any funding, Standerfer and Martz have helped save hundreds of dogs and cats in Shelby County. "We started seven years ago on a small scale, just featur-

"We firmly believe that there is a home out there for every animal. We've made it our mission to do whatever we can to find homes for them."



Central Illinois Small Animal Rescue owners Pat and Garrie Burr opened their rural shelter in 2002 to help cut down the amount of animals being euthanized each year.



Penny Standerfer cuddles one of her rescued cats, Slick, who was among a litter of kittens that were thrown in a dumpster outside of an oil change business. "When we found the kittens, they were covered with motor oil. I cleaned them up and found homes for the rest of the litter," Standerfer says.

ing one animal a week. But in the last three years, it's escalated and we've really gotten the community involved," says Standerfer.

Working very closely with their local animal control, they're able to get photos of those animals whose lives are teetering near the end. "We send those pictures to every possible news media we can. Our local paper, the Shelbyville Daily Union, gives us a full page every Tuesday and ShelbyCountyNews.net posts our pictures online. Both of these venues help us free of charge. We wouldn't have the funds to do as much without the community support," Standerfer says.

Standerfer even has the support of her employer, the Shelbyville Police Department. She says that sometimes when they have puppies or kittens that need rescued, she'll bring them into the station and everyone pitches in to care for them until she can find homes for them. "Sometimes the ladies at City Hall have even taken some of the animals home with them when I've needed extra help," Standerfer says.

Shelbyville Chief of Police Dave Tallman says, "We're very proud of what Penny is doing. I believe there is

a void that needed to be filled that she is filling. The amount of animals being euthanized now compared to seven years ago is just a fraction. She works hard and has really stepped up the plate to find these animals homes."

Standerfer says too many animals are needlessly dying around the country. She says it will literally take everyone doing their part to end

animal cruelty, overpopulation and unnecessary death. "Spaying and neutering your animals would be a great first step," Standerfer says. "Every cat that's not fixed running around free, could potentially be responsible for thousands of unwanted cats down the road. There are a lot of programs out there that can help with these expenses both locally and statewide."

In December of 2005, the Illinois Public Health and Safety Animal Population Control Act was passed into law. This law states that controlling the dog and cat population would

have a significant benefit to public health and safety by aiding in the prevention of dog attacks, reducing the number of automobile accidents caused by stray animals and it would also save taxpayer dollars by reducing the number of animals to be handled by animal control facilities.

"Anyone on public assistance can apply for grant money through the

Illinois Department of Public Health.

That person would then only have to pay \$15 to get their animal fixed," says Rebbe. She says when people tell her they can't afford to get their animals fixed she

tells them they can't afford not to. "No one considers the expense they could incur if there were complications with a pregnancy, the birth or the offspring. What if the puppies contract Parvo? What if the kittens are born and the mother dies? How will they afford these expenses?" asks Rebbe.

Rebbe says that spaying or neutering does not affect an animal's

It will literally take everyone doing their part to end animal cruelty, overpopulation and unnecessary death.

personality or make them lazy like many people believe. "It only makes them happier, healthier and calmer. I've heard men say they would never neuter their dog - like it's a personal thing. Dogs have no sexual identity and don't relate to neutering like people do. It's an absurd way of thinking," she says.

Rebbe believes that part of her job and any animal shelter's job is educating the public about animals, whether that is giving them reasons why they should adopt the homeless rather than buy from a puppy mill, or simply teaching people how to crate train. "If we can assist someone and prevent an animal from coming to the shelter or ending up on the streets, we are very happy," Rebbe says.

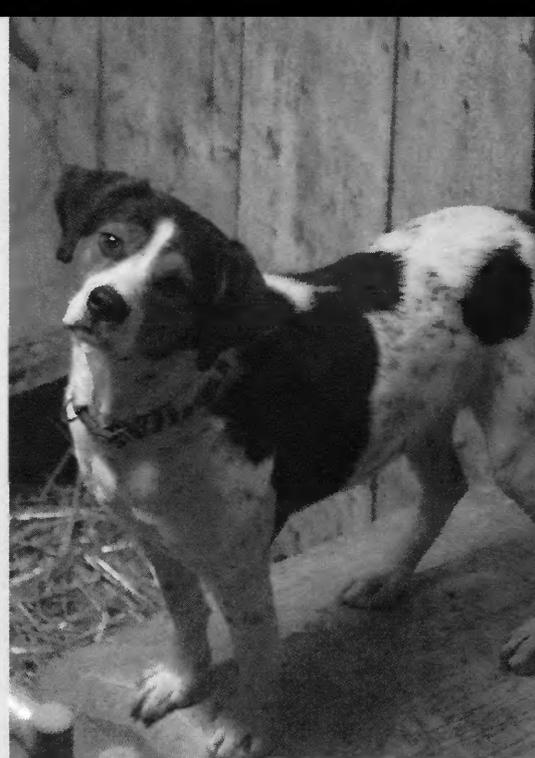
It's startling to learn that only 12 percent of the nation's pets are adopted from animal shelters. The rest are purchased from breeders or pet stores, or are either picked up as strays or transferred from one family to another. "When you think about all the competition for homes out there and then compound that with the number of kittens and puppies being born, it's not hard to see why there is a problem," Rebbe says.

"When you're looking for a new pet, try your local shelter before searching for a breeder. If you give them long enough, I'm sure they can find exactly what you're looking for," says Standerfer. "There's truly no greater reward than knowing you've rescued an animal from death."

"With any animal there is an adjustment period, but it's a lot less time when you're dealing with an adult cat or dog than with a kitten or puppy. If you buy a puppy, be prepared to devote two years on training and re-directing behavior. But if you rescue an older dog, your adjustment time is an average of only two months," says Auth. "If you went to a shelter and just walked around, you would be instantly drawn. The animals in there are just dying for attention and they truly, truly appreciate you when you rescue them. You'll have a friend for life." ■

Help Your Local Shelter

Help save lives by donating your time or money to one of your local non-profit animal shelters. "It's very expensive to operate a shelter. Last year it cost approximately \$10,000 a month to run our shelter," says Garrie Burr, owner of CISAR in Colfax. "There are so many costs involved that people don't think about. We're completely non-profit and we depend solely on people who love animals to help. Every bit of money we get goes right back into our business and every donation is acknowledged."



To help, contact your local animal shelter or visit one of the shelters listed below:

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www.benldadoptapet.org
217-835-2538

Animal Protective League

Springfield
www.springfield-illinois.com/apl
217-544-7387

Assisi Animal Foundation

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815-455-9411

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www.petfinder.com/shelters/
IL323.html
217-698-3804

My Mathew's House (Shelter for Cats)

Carthage
www.mymathewshouse.org
217-357-9123

Pets In Need Midwest

Ringwood
www.petsinneedmidwest.org
815-728-1462

Quad City Animal Welfare Center

Milan
www.qcawc.org
309-787-6830

For more Illinois shelter listings and for information on pet care and/or adoption, visit <http://muttcats.com/shelters/Illinois.htm>.

Turn That Music Down

More than a million teens could have prevented hearing loss

You could feel the base sound pounding in your chest the music was so loud. Attending a rock concert with a group of teens reminded me that of the 23.3 million Americans who have hearing loss, 1.3 million are 18 or younger. One third of all hearing losses result, at least in part, from the loud noises of modern life.

As teens head for rock concerts or turn up their iPod or car stereo, they may want to consider a radical response to the following bits of information. The average 70-year-old reports some hearing loss, but for young people exposed to loud noises, the aging process is accelerated. Entering freshmen in a midwestern college were tested and 60 percent were found to have hearing loss. By comparison, only 3.8 percent of sixth-graders had hearing loss.

Loud noises destroy the tiny cells in the inner ear that signal the auditory nerve to send sound messages to the brain. Once those cells die, they never grow back.

Our modern society is filled with loud noises. Appliances (blenders, blow dryers and vacuum cleaners), city traffic, jet engines and power lawn mowers are just few. Many of us are regularly exposed to noise at dangerous levels.

Noise is measured in decibels. Anything 80 decibels or louder is potentially dangerous. Examples of noises that are likely to be harmful include:

- lawn mowers (90 decibels)
- snowmobiles (100 decibels)
- a jet plane takeoff (120 decibels)
- firearms (140 decibels).

The louder the noise, the shorter the time it takes to damage your hearing. Your ears may be able to endure 90 decibels of noise, such as a lawn mower, for about eight hours before damage occurs. But for every five decibels above that, it

takes only half as much time for damage to begin.

A noise at 95 decibels will hurt your ears in four hours. An arcade full of video games could cause damage in two hours. A stereo headset or iPod with ear buds set at full blast (about 110 decibels) could damage your ears in half an hour. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health actually recommends that exposure to noise at those levels not exceed one minute, 29 seconds.

So, how do we tell if music is loud enough to damage hearing? If you can hear the music when the ear buds are in your child or teen's ears, that's a sign it may be too loud. Or if you have to raise your voice to talk to someone who is an arm's length away, then the noise is likely to be hazardous.

The best way to protect your hearing is to avoid loud noises as much as possible. If the loud noise cannot be avoided—you're mowing the lawn, attending a concert, or working in shop class—protect your ears.

When dealing with your personal stereo, consider wearing headphones that block unwanted sound. The unwanted noise allowed by ear-bud-type devices may cause listeners to increase the volume. Headphones that fit over the ear are more effective at blocking unwanted sound.

What about all the other noises? Stuffing cotton in your ears won't work. Earplugs, the least expensive alternative, are usually available at hardware, music and sporting good stores. You can even have earplugs custom made through an audiologist.

The plugs usually come with a noise reduction rating on the label established by the Environmental Protection Agency. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which regulates hearing safety in the workplace, recommends using earplugs with a rating twice as strong as you need to ensure protection.

If you are going to a rock concert (the average concert has 110 decibels of sound) you would need to wear 45 decibel earplugs to make the concert noise safe for your ears. Thirty decibel plugs are probably the strongest plugs you can buy without going to an audiologist. But even the 30 decibel plugs would lengthen the time you could listen without damaging your ears.

I know what you're thinking—only a small percentage of teens wear earplugs to concerts. So just think a little longer and then suggest your teen consider bucking the trend, doing something radical, being a rebel and protecting his/her hearing. ■

"If you can hear the music when the ear buds are in your child or teen's ears, that's a sign it may be too loud."

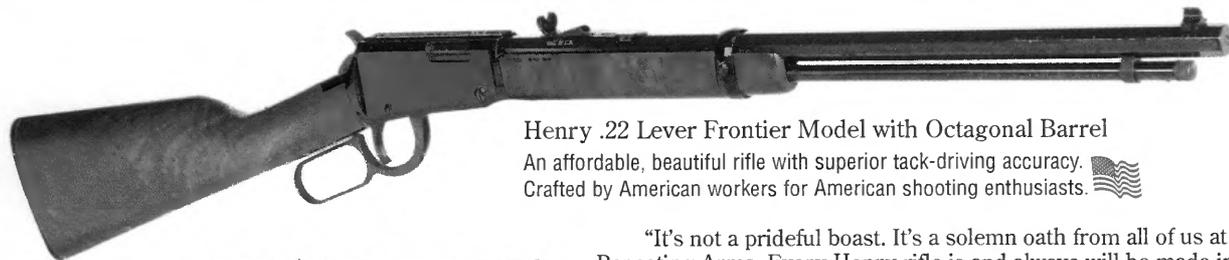
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Wack a Mole

Hitting some of the facts about moles

Let's hit some of the fun mole facts that can make you the hit of any cocktail party circuit or church potluck social.

1. A group of moles is called a "labor." You may have other words, but remember this is a family magazine.
2. Moles are carnivores. They eat only earthworms, grubs and any other creatures that happen to be crawling around.

They don't intentionally eat roots, seeds or bulbs. If the root, seed or bulb happens to be close to the worm or insect, it might get eaten, but it's not on purpose. It's important to remember they won't eat plant materials.

Now, plant material can end up dying. As the moles form their feeding tunnels, they'll expose the roots to air, cause bulbs to turn on their sides or upside down, and drop seeds into the tunnel where they may germinate, but not grow. For lawns, the damage is the exposed roots to the air and wilting due to lack of moisture.

3. Moles tend to be solitary, except for that time in the spring when male moles get together with female moles. Then they part ways. While it seems you may have lots of moles in your yard, you probably don't.

"While it seems you may have lots of moles in your yard, you probably don't."

4. Moles are blind. They sense their food by hearing them moving in the soil. They also have an acute sense of smell.

5. The average mole eats about 80 to 100 percent of its weight a day.

Essentially, it feeds for about 2 to 3 hours, rests an hour, and then starts the loop over. Eating and sleeping. That's about it.

Just imagine trying to eat your weight a day. That's lots of food. More importantly, that's why there are lots of tunnels, and why moles tend to be solitary. You have to constantly dig for the worm or grub, and you don't want competition from someone else.

6. If you find a big mound of soil in your yard without a hole in it, chances are you have a female nesting about 2 to 3 feet down somewhere close.

The female pushes the soil out of the tunnels to create the nest. Once the little ones are able to fend for themselves, they're kicked out.

7. Moles love wooded areas. That's where the most insects are. Chances are, if you live out in the middle of an old corn field, you won't have mole problems. Sometimes you might, but usually not. The more trees and shrubs you plant, the more likely you'll have problems in a few years.



Photograph by Michael David Hill, 2006.

Now, on to the control.

Poison peanuts will NOT work. They won't. Won't. Won't. They are plant material and moles only eat insects and worms. The only thing that happens when you buy the poison peanuts, or pellets as some stores advertise, is an increase in the bottom line of the manufacturer.

Gas cartridges also don't work well due to the extensive tunnel system. Flooding the tunnels with water usually only results in a wet and annoyed mole.

Castor bean plants and castor bean derivatives have been shown to have some mild repellent properties. But, they only work in a short space, and as far as the repellents are concerned, only as long as they aren't diluted.

Pepsi bottles buried to their necks won't create a noise that scares the moles away. Neither will plastic sunflowers that spin in the wind.

A terrier or border collie works well though there is the inherent care of the pet.

Then there are the traps, which are probably the only thing that truly does work. There are three or four different types, and all basically stab or choke the mole. They need to be placed in the main tunnel runs.

I won't get into the issue of killing moles or not; that's something you take up yourself.

However, I will point out that nature abhors a vacuum. Kill the mole in your yard, and chances are another will show up until all the food is gone. ■

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



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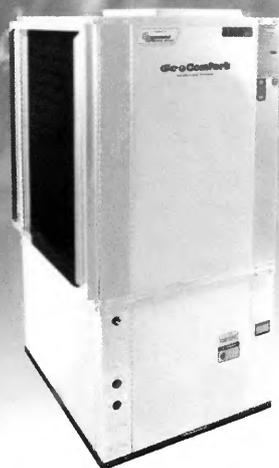
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Some Cold Hard Facts

Do you really need two or three refrigerators or freezers?

Somebody is here to help you again. You know it is really not that difficult. As I write this column, I am still on the road conducting energy seminars. Still teaching folks just like you how to have lower utility bills and comfortable homes. As I help folks every single day, yes, I mean every single day, Monday through Friday at work, Saturday on the radio and even Sunday after church, it often occurs to me just how simple it really is to solve most of your energy problems.

So why doesn't everybody implement these solutions? Sometimes it is a lack of funds, but most of the time, I believe it is simply a lack of action and a lack of awareness of some really simple steps.

In last month's column, I challenged you to prepare your energy plan. I trust that you have completed that. Please keep in mind that it might need revision as time goes along. I really wish that there was a way that I could sit down beside every one of you and read your list. I would enjoy

the fellowship and no doubt become wiser for it. I have a pretty good idea, however, what issues most of you face. And I told you that I would give you more energy-saving tips this month that many of you could implement at absolutely no cost.

So here we go.

Perhaps you can relate to the following story: A recent energy audit at an older house in Arkansas revealed that the family had a refrigerator in the kitchen, which is needed and expected. The family also had a refrigerator and a large chest freezer in the garage. There was absolutely nothing in the refrigerator except three trays of ice cubes in the freezer compartment. It was in running condition and doing a good job.

The chest freezer had two small boxes of popsicles. The lady of the house said these were for the grandchildren. Being a pawpaw myself, I understand the importance of that. When

I explained to the family that it was costing about \$60 per month to have 36 ice cubes and 20 popsicles, it was quickly understood by all that there had to be a better way. So the lady of the house moved the popsicles to the kitchen refrigerator while her husband gladly unplugged the two unused and unneeded units.

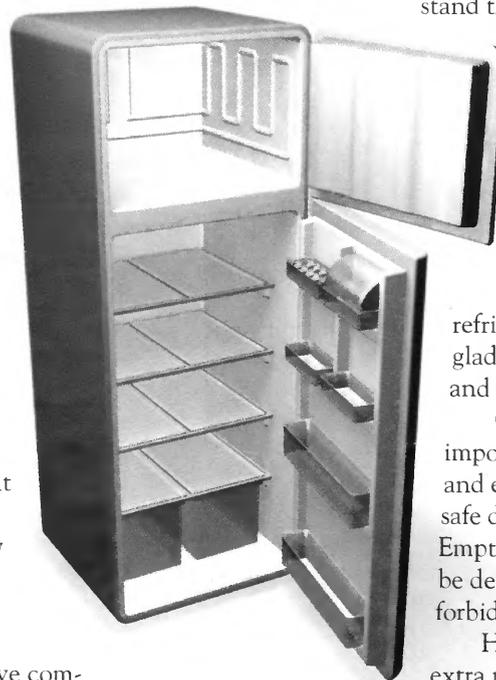
Of course, we discussed the importance of properly caring for and even more importantly, the safe disposal of these two units. Empty refrigerators or freezers can be death traps to pets or heaven forbid, children.

Here are the facts about those extra refrigerators and freezers:

- Fact 1 – Refrigerators and freezers that are 10 years old or older use at least \$1 per day on energy costs.
- Fact 2 – It is very difficult for us to dispose of a refrigerator or freezer that is in perfect working order.
- Fact 3 – You probably don't even need that extra refrigerator, which easily costs at least \$30 a month.

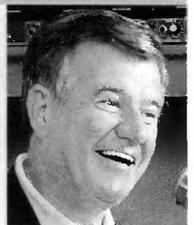
If this tip fits your situation, list it in on your energy plan, get rid of it and mark it off your list. And smile when you get your next electric bill.

You know, this really isn't that difficult. Maybe somebody will help you next month, too. In the mean time feel free to call me at 501-653-7931 with any energy savings questions you may have. ■



"It often occurs to me just how simple it really is to solve most of your energy problems."

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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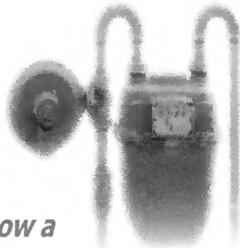


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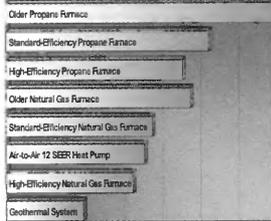
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Ramping Up Our Energy Efficiency Efforts

By Jennifer Taylor

Not since the energy crises of the 1970s-early 1980s have efficiency and conservation received so much attention. In today's technology-driven world, everything relies on electricity — computers, plasma televisions, DVR systems, cell phone chargers, laptops, video games. Consumers' demand for electricity continues to increase while the supply of electricity is becoming more and more scarce.

According to a February article in *The Washington Post*, utility and government officials warned that the metropolitan area surrounding our nation's capital must come to grips with a simple fact: "In a little more than three years, lights could flicker off in rolling blackouts." For its part, the Maryland Public Service Commission found that the Free State might face such outages as early as 2011 or 2012.

And it's not just large cities dealing with power supply concerns. It's a nationwide challenge that includes California, the Rocky Mountain states, New England, Texas, the Southwest and Midwest.

The Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit, utility-sponsored organization whose members include electric cooperatives, sees energy efficiency as the most cost-effective, near-term option for managing electricity use, reducing the need to build new power plants and lowering emissions of greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide.

Electric cooperatives are recognized industry leaders in promoting energy efficiency to help consumer-members reduce electricity consumption and save money. Virtually all electric co-ops provide energy efficiency education to their members, while more than 40 percent offer energy audits services and promote high-efficiency items such as new lighting systems, geothermal and air-source heat pumps, cellulose insulation and Energy Star appliances.

In addition, electric co-ops are tops in reducing power consumption — and keeping the lid on wholesale generation costs — by controlling when electricity gets used. These programs are known by various names — load management, demand-side response, or peak load shifting/shaving — that interrupt electric service to water heaters, air conditioners, furnaces and other specialized equipment in the homes of volunteer co-op members for brief periods, typically just a few hours. The control generally takes place during times of peak demand, the electric utility industry's

equivalent of rush-hour traffic, when power costs skyrocket.

In fact, local electric co-ops working with their wholesale power suppliers shaved demand last year by 2,200 MW [comparable to a commercial nuclear power plant], saving \$50 million in fuel costs and offsetting more than 2,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions.

Co-ops are also taking advantage of recent technology advancements to increase system efficiency: 72 percent are upgrading power lines, 56 percent are replacing older

transformers, 50 percent use advanced technology to control voltage fluctuations and 40 percent have deployed advanced metering devices that will create the backbone of the new smart grid.

But the biggest bang from energy efficiency involves easing pressure on constructing new power plants. Based on EPRI's framework for reducing carbon dioxide emissions, the overall impact of energy efficiency measures—even simple ones like replacing incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights—directly reduces the amount of power needed and defers the need to build as much new generation.

"Energy efficiency measures can help electric co-ops head off the need for new generation and curb greenhouse gas emissions," observes John Holt, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Senior Principal for Generation and Fuel.

"To run today's economy without the energy efficiency improvements that have taken place since 1973, we would need 43 percent more energy supplies than we currently use—more energy than we currently generate from any single fuel source like nuclear, gas, coal or renewables," explains Jim Kerr, President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and a member of the North Carolina Utilities Commission.

"Energy efficiency remains key to how electric co-ops will keep electricity affordable in the face of rising energy prices," concludes NRECA CEO Glenn English. "Whether it's fostering the construction of more energy-efficient buildings, promoting the development and use of more energy-efficient appliances, or accelerating the development and use of advanced electric infrastructure, co-ops will put their energy and business knowledge to work in developing innovative member programs that help get the most out of every kilowatt."



Illinois electric co-op energy advisors have recommended energy efficient technology such as geothermal heat pumps for years. They also practice what they preach. This geothermal loop installation was installed at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' headquarters in Springfield several years ago. Geothermal heat pumps can cut heating, air conditioning and water heating energy use in half by tapping into the earth's geothermal energy.

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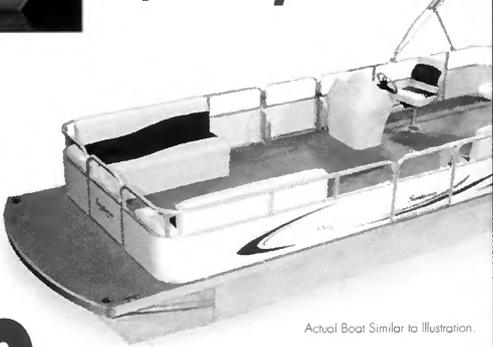
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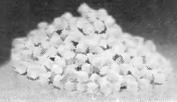
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**Hugs And Chips
Cheesecake**

- 2 (3-oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 1 (14-oz.) can Eagle Brand sweetened condensed milk
- 1 egg
- 1 C. mini chocolate chips
- 1 (6-oz.) chocolate graham or cookie crust
- Chocolate curls
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. flour

Chocolate Glaze:

- 1/2 C. mini chocolate chips, melted
- 1/4 C. whipping cream

Preheat oven to 350°. With a mixer, beat cream cheese until fluffy. Gradually beat in condensed milk until smooth. Add egg and vanilla; beat well. Toss chocolate chips with flour and stir into the cheese mixture. Pour into the crust. Bake for 35 minutes or until the center springs back lightly when touched. Cool and top with chocolate glaze and chocolate curls. Serve chilled. Refrigerate leftovers.

Glaze:

Mix melted chocolate chips with whipping cream. Cook and stir until thickened and smooth. Spread immediately over pie.

**Green Bean and
Hamburger Dish**

- 1 med. onion, chopped
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 2-3 C. green beans
- 1-1/2 lbs. ground beef
- 1 can tomato soup
- Potatoes, cooked and mashed
- 1 C. Cheddar cheese

Cook onion and ground beef together until meat is no longer pink and onions are tender. Season with salt. Add drained green beans and tomato soup. Continue to heat and pour into a greased casserole dish. Drop mashed potatoes in mounds over the meat mixture. Sprinkle with Cheddar cheese. Bake at 350° for 30 minutes or until heated through and cheese is melted.

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Who: Schuyler Co. Homemakers Education Association

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Details: Soft-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 42

Send checks to: Judith Anderson
92 Golf Road, Springfield, IL 62701
or call her at 217-546-2400



Orange Dream Cake

Orange Dream Cake (above)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 lemon cake mix | 1 C. cold water |
| 1 env. unsweetened orange drink mix | 1 C. cold milk |
| 3 eggs | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 1 C. water | 1 (3.4-oz.) pkg. instant vanilla pudding mix |
| 1/3 C. vegetable oil | 1 (8-oz.) carton frozen whipped topping, thawed |
| 2 (3-oz.) pkgs. orange gelatin, divided | |
| 1 C. boiling water | |

In a mixing bowl, combine cake mix, drink mix, eggs, water and oil. Beat for two minutes on medium speed. Pour into an ungreased 13x9-inch baking pan. Bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted near the center comes out clean. Using a meat fork, poke holes in the cake. Cool on a wire rack for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, in a bowl, dissolve 1 pkg. of gelatin in boiling water. Stir in cold water. Pour over cake. Cover and refrigerate for 2 hours. In a mixing bowl, combine milk, vanilla, pudding mix and remaining gelatin. Beat on low for 2 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes then fold in whipped topping. Frost cake. Refrigerate leftovers.

Good Corn Casserole

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| 1/2 stick butter | 2 cans corn, drained |
| 1/2 C. sugar | 1/4 C. sugar |
| 1/4 C. flour | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| 2/3 C. evaporated milk | |

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease a casserole dish. In a saucepan, mix butter and sugar and heat until melted. Mix flour in and remove from heat. Add milk and corn. Pour into casserole dish and bake for 60 minutes. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon.

Pony Shoe Casserole (right)

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 can Cheddar cheese soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 bag French fries
- 1 pkg. shredded Cheddar cheese

Brown ground beef and drain. Mix beef and soups together. Put in a 9x13-inch casserole dish. Put French fries on top. Cover with foil and bake at 350° for 50 minutes. Uncover and sprinkle with shredded Cheddar cheese. Bake uncovered for 10 additional minutes or until cheese melts.

Crab Fondue

- 1 (5-oz.) ctn. Kraft Old English Sharp Cheese spread
- 1 (8-oz.) cream cheese
- 1 (7-1/2-oz.) can crab meat
- 1/4 C. half and half
- 1/4 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1/4 tsp. cayenne pepper

In a double boiler, place cheese spread and cream cheese and stir until smooth. Add remaining ingredients, stirring constantly until thoroughly blended. If too thick, add more half and half, continue stirring until smooth and hot. Place in a fondue pot and serve with chunks of French bread.

Chocolate Crinkle Cookies

- 4 squares unsweetened chocolate
- 1/2 C. oil
- 2 C. sugar
- 4 eggs
- 2 T. vanilla
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 2 C. flour
- 2 T. baking powder
- 1 C. powdered sugar

Melt chocolate. Add oil and sugar. Blend 1 egg at a time until well mixed. Add vanilla. Stir in flour, salt and baking powder. Mix well and chill overnight in the refrigerator. Drop by teaspoonfuls into powdered sugar, roll around to shape into balls. Place 2 inches apart on greased cookie sheets. Bake 10-12 minutes at 350°. Makes 50 cookies.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

St. Thomas Booster Club Cookbook

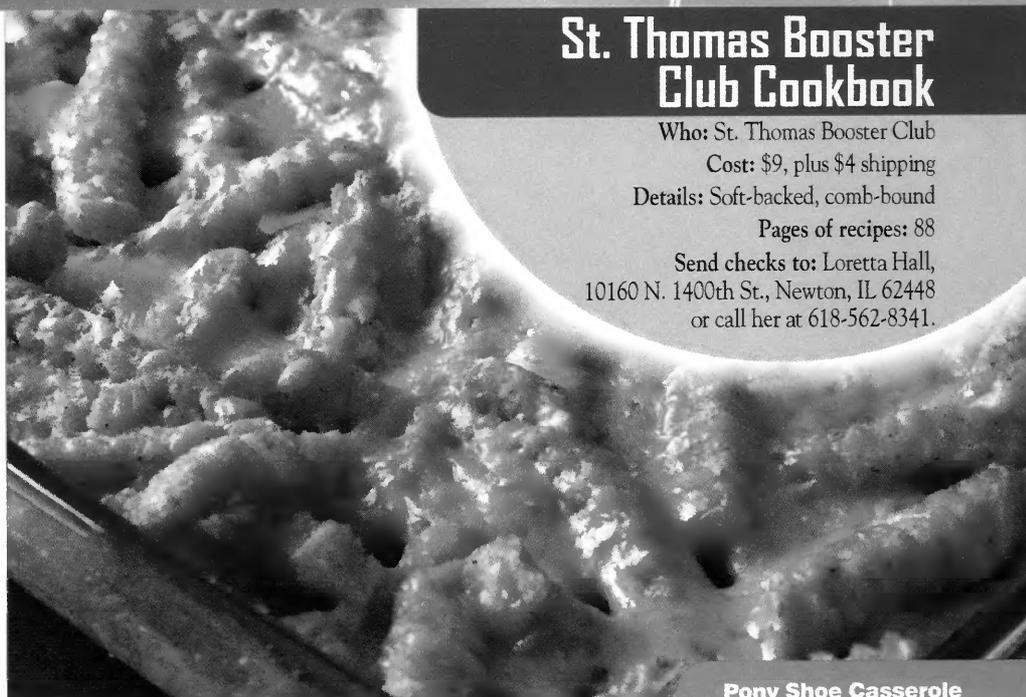
Who: St. Thomas Booster Club

Cost: \$9, plus \$4 shipping

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Pages of recipes: 88

Send checks to: Loretta Hall,
10160 N. 1400th St., Newton, IL 62448
or call her at 618-562-8341.



Pony Shoe Casserole

Speedy Seafood Gumbo (below)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 3 C. water, divided | 1 lb. frozen, cooked shrimp, peeled and de veined |
| 1 T. butter | 1 (10-oz.) pkg. frozen cut okra |
| 1/4 tsp. salt | 1 (8-oz.) pkg. imitation crabmeat, flaked |
| 1 C. uncooked instant rice | 1 T. dried minced onion |
| 4 (10-3/4-oz.) cans condensed chicken gumbo soup, diluted | 1 tsp. Cajun seasoning |
| | 1/2 tsp. garlic powder |

In a small saucepan, bring 1 C. of water, butter and salt to a boil. Stir in rice, cover and remove from heat. Let stand for 5 minutes. Meanwhile, in a Dutch oven or soup kettle, combine the soup, shrimp, okra, crab, onion, Cajun seasoning, garlic powder and remaining water. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat; cover and cook over medium heat until heated through. Stir in cooked rice.



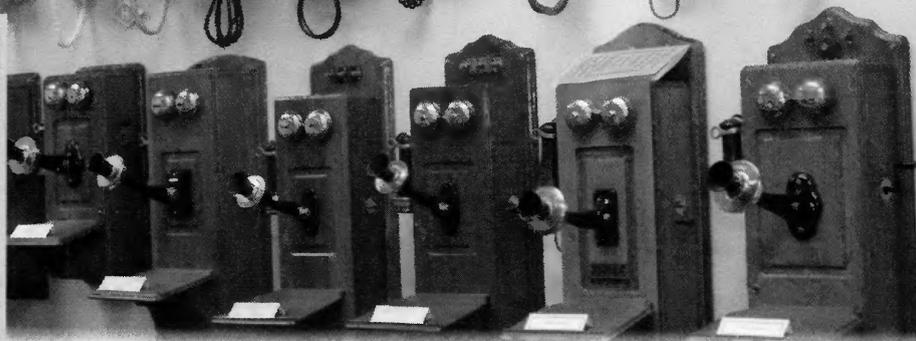
Speedy Seafood Gumbo

Dialing Up the Past

Gridley Telephone Museum preserves a rich history of independent rural communications



Curator Rogers Kaufman proudly poses amongst a collection of telephones from the 1890s to the 1970s.



by Jen Danzinger

Nestled in the quiet town of Gridley is a collection commemorating over a century of rural telecommunication. More than an assortment of phones, it offers a look back to life in a small, mid-western town.

"We had all these telephones and we wanted to do something with them. We didn't want to burn them or throw them away," curator and former owner of Gridley Telephone Company Rogers Kaufman explains. The collection of a lifetime of an independent telephone company had accumulated in the company's basement, but it could be put to better use on public display. A not-for-profit organization, the Telephone Museum Foundation of Gridley, was formed from donations and grant money from state and independent telephone companies.

Museum visitors enter a re-creation of the telephone company's office as it looked in 1920. In the "lobby" stands a wooden phone booth, double-walled for

privacy, along with a bench for customers to wait their turn on the phone or to talk to an operator. Local calls were free to customers (a 10 cent value). Many chose to come into the office to use the phone booth because it afforded privacy while at home they were on party lines that could be eavesdropped.

"They had party lines. In the country there would be 10 or 12 on a line, so if you're talking business or to your girlfriend, you'd come in here and use this phone instead of letting your neighbors listen to you. It's amazing, for many that was their pastime," Kaufman laughs.

For curator Kaufman and volunteer tour guide Carol Flesher the museum displays their families' histories. Carol's father, Charles Hoobler, owned Gridley Telephone Company from 1914-1970, and photos in the collection show him at work beside a telephone truck, and on a bed beside the switchboard when he was the night operator. Kaufman spent years installing telephone systems across the U.S. for Kellogg Switchboard & Supply Co. before returning home to Gridley and purchasing the telephone company in 1970. Until a few years ago, his son owned the company and Flesher's son still works there.

It is with a great deal of delight and pride these two guide visitors through the collection. They chuckle while telling anecdotal explanations of many of

the items in the museum, such as the pickle pickers or the 1935 payroll for operators. Their recollections bring alive Gridley's history for the nostalgic as well as the uninitiated.

Tour groups often visit, including the Red Hat Society and school children from nearby Bloomington. Flesher beams as she recalls the many children who have passed through the museum. "They'll ask intelligent questions on how things work, or what the lightning arrestors were for, but they don't even know how to dial a rotary phone."

A big hit is the working 1946 Kellogg Universal two position switchboard and magneto telephones. With a little instruction, visitors can place calls to other telephones within the museum and learn how fast-paced the job was for a switchboard operator.

Plan your trip today!

Gridley Telephone Museum
318 N. Center St., Gridley, IL 61744

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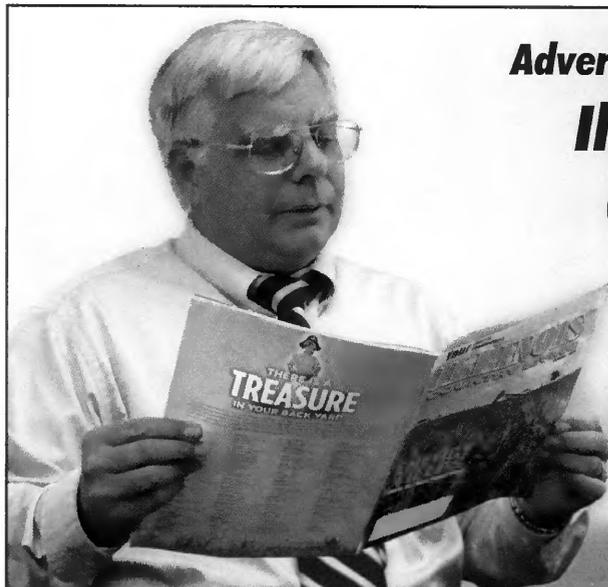
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Re-experience the Prairie State on Foot

By Ty Poppenhouse

Grab your most comfortable walking shoes or hiking boots, throw on a pair of jeans and a light jacket and head out the door. Spring means it's time to go hiking.

The spring season offers a great opportunity to experience some beautiful scenery while exploring the Illinois landscape. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) boasts a variety of more than 270 hiking trails totaling more than 700 walkable miles.

We've all been sitting cozy in front of the TV-away from the windows and draped with our favorite blanket letting our legs get used to being lazy. Keep that in mind when you step out for your first hike. Not all of us can jump out of bed the first Saturday of nice weather and pump out a six-mile hike. We need to work our way up to that, and trust me, there's plenty of time.

Start Slowly

Whether your goal is to finish that first three-miler or hike the 170-mile River-to-River trail by the end of autumn, one thing you must remember: work your way up!

If you haven't been walking long distances, start slow. Make your first hike a walk around the neighborhood. Once you start feeling comfortable with your body's walking ability, start your search for a local hiking trail. You can find trails in Illinois by going to the IDNR Web site at www.dnr.state.il.us/lands/Landmgt/Programs/hiking/.

Plan Ahead

Know the weather before you head out. Nothing can ruin a day hike like an April shower that you didn't know was coming. However, nothing can beat the smell of a spring rain when you're prepared to be smack in the middle of it with a poncho and some waterproof boots. Illinois weather is fairly predictable, but you should still be in the know with the forecast to be properly prepared.

Plan ahead and know where you're going. If you're leaving the neighborhood for your weekend trek, find a map for your destination. If you're heading to a state park, most trails are marked and maintained so you shouldn't have trouble finding your way once you're on them. You should at least know if the trail is a loop or a one way and also how long the trail is round-trip. Several books are available on hiking trails in Illinois, and most come with directions to the trailhead and directions through the trail.

Learn everything you can about a potential trail and bring any helpful material with you.

Stay Hydrated

Hydration is a top priority. Becoming dehydrated can stop any hiker mid-step. For any hike, you should be taking at least one liter of water with you. If you're planning on hiking five miles, take at least two liters. Use your best judgment when deciding how much water to take. Remember, even though it may be cloudy and not very hot, you are still losing water as you hike. It's also a good decision to drink a lot of water BEFORE the hike as well. Remember, your body mass is about 60 percent water – you should keep it that way.

Park Guidelines

Each park may have its own guidelines for hiking on their trails. Here are some basic guidelines to always remember:

- Check with park officials ahead of time to learn what they want you to know. For example, some parks close trails periodically for special hunts and maintenance.

- Don't forget to tell someone where you're going and when you expect to be back before you head out.
- Always stay on the designated trail.
- Whatever goes in with you comes out, even if it's biodegradable or food waste.
- Keep your pets on a leash at all times (this keeps them safe and helps keep you on the trail).

Enjoy Yourself

Last, use your senses, literally. We often take for granted what we expect to get out of a day hike. At first thought it's about the views, which can be repetitive and lead to boredom, but there's more. We don't always stop and think about the changing smells of budding pine and blossoming prairie flowers. We also become obsessed with the highest view or that waterfall we're hiking to. Don't forget about the journey to the destination.

For more information on hiking and to learn about its plentiful health benefits, visit:

www.AmericanHiking.org

www.slackpacker.com/map_il.html

www.trails.com/stateactivity.asp?area=10055

www.thebackpacker.com/trails/il/

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2-3, Illinois State Button Society Annual Show at the Ramada Hotel and Spa in Galena. Thousands of beautiful antique and modern clothing buttons from the 17th century to modern times on display and for sale. 309-683-2661.

2-3, Black Hawk's Raid: The Fort Under Siege at the Apple River Fort State Historic Site in Elizabeth. Experience the fort as it was more than 100 years ago as the local militia prepares for the battle. The militia will drill, fire and recruit at scheduled times throughout the day as the women and children demonstrate pioneer skills critical to their survival on the frontier. Free. 815-858-2028 or www.applriverfort.org.

3, Ride the Ups and Downs, a one-day bicycle ride on the scenic and hilly back roads of Jo Daviess County. Four routes available ranging from 22-60 miles. Color-coded maps, sag service and snacks on the route. Register at the Jo Daviess/Carroll Area Vocational Center in Elizabeth. 815-275-0041 or www.elizabeth-il.com/Ride.

3-4, The Second Annual Route 66 Red Carpet Corridor Festival along the scenic Route 66 between Joliet to Towanda. Enjoy bargain hunting, hospitality and good old fashion family fun. Have fun with 90 miles of entertainment, garage sales, sidewalk sales and yard sales, antiques, car displays, food, farmers markets, wagon rides, festivals, music, historical sites and more. Red directional signs will point the way. Each community will provide its own printed programs of events and information. 800-835-2055 or www.il66redcarpetcorridor.org

4, Cinco de Mayo (one day early) at Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. 1 - 3 p.m. Come celebrate Cinco de Mayo with live Mexican music, free chips and salsa, piñata games and up close Mexican animal encounters! This special event is free with regular zoo admission. 309-434-2250 or www.millerparkzoo.org.

Visit our Web site, www.icl.coop.



9-11, Plant Addict's Weekend at Murphy's Gardens in Galena. Browse thousands of plants, get advice from growers, designers and master gardeners. Wander display gardens. Free refreshments. Free. 815-777-4273 or www.murphysgardens.com.

10, Spring Car Corral and Festival at the Volo Auto Museum in Volo. Buy or sell your collector car here. Hundreds of great cars, plus antiques and craft vendors, food, music, beer garden and more. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. \$9 Adults, \$7 Seniors, \$5 for Vets and Active Military with ID, free for kids ages 5-12, 847-385-3644 or www.volocars.com.

10, 3 Blonde Moms at the Raue Center for the Arts in Crystal Lake. This top-notch, high energy show is jam packed and full of hysterical material about being a mom, having a mom, husbands, in-laws and more. Staring stand-up comedienne Joanie Fagan, Helen Keaney and Maryellen Hooper. Perfect entertainment for Mother's Day Eve! 7 and 9 p.m. Admission: \$37 and \$34. 815-356-9212 or www.rauecenter.org.

10, Mississippi Adventure Day in Galena. A 7-mile kayak, 3-mile hike and 16-mile bike ride. Equipment and lunch provided. Registration required and limited. 815-776-9425 or www.ferriveroutfitters.com.

17, Spring Music on Main on the Green Street Plaza in downtown Galena. Family fun for all. Dance under the stars to live music. Special activities for children. Food and beverage available. Adults \$5, ages 13-20 \$3, under 12 free. 815-777-9050 or www.galenachamber.com.

23-25, The 27th Annual Mayfest on the historic Campbell Center Campus in Mount Carroll. A weekend of premier musical entertainment, crafts, children's activities, a car show, food and spirits. 815-244-2411 or www.mount.carroll.il.us.

24-25, Apple River Fort Rocks! - Kids History Fun Days at the Apple River Fort State Historic Site in Elizabeth. Enjoy a fun-filled day full of children's games and activities. Play stump tug, snake in the grass and more while learning a little history. 815-858-2028 or www.applriverfort.org.

24, 5th Annual Wine in Bloom Open House at Massbach Ridge Winery in Elizabeth. Celebrate spring in the vineyard with live entertainment, tours of the winery and vineyard, and wine, chocolate and cheese tasting. 815-291-6700 or www.massbachridge.com.

31, Family Health and Fitness Fair at Midwest Medical Center in Galena. Learn how to lead a healthier lifestyle. Activities include cooking, dance and fitness demonstrations. 815-776-7265 or www.midwestmedicalcenter.org.

31 - 6/1, The Second Annual Kite Festival at the Rec Plex in Pontiac. 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Enjoy wonderful free family entertainment featuring a visit from the Chicago Kite/Kite Harbor, Ill. Kite Enthusiast Club. In addition, several national champion winners will be demonstrating their skills. Call 800-835-2055.

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: April 15 for July Events, May 15 for August Events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708
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