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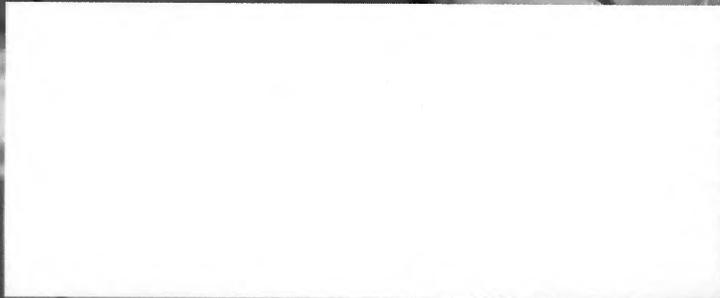
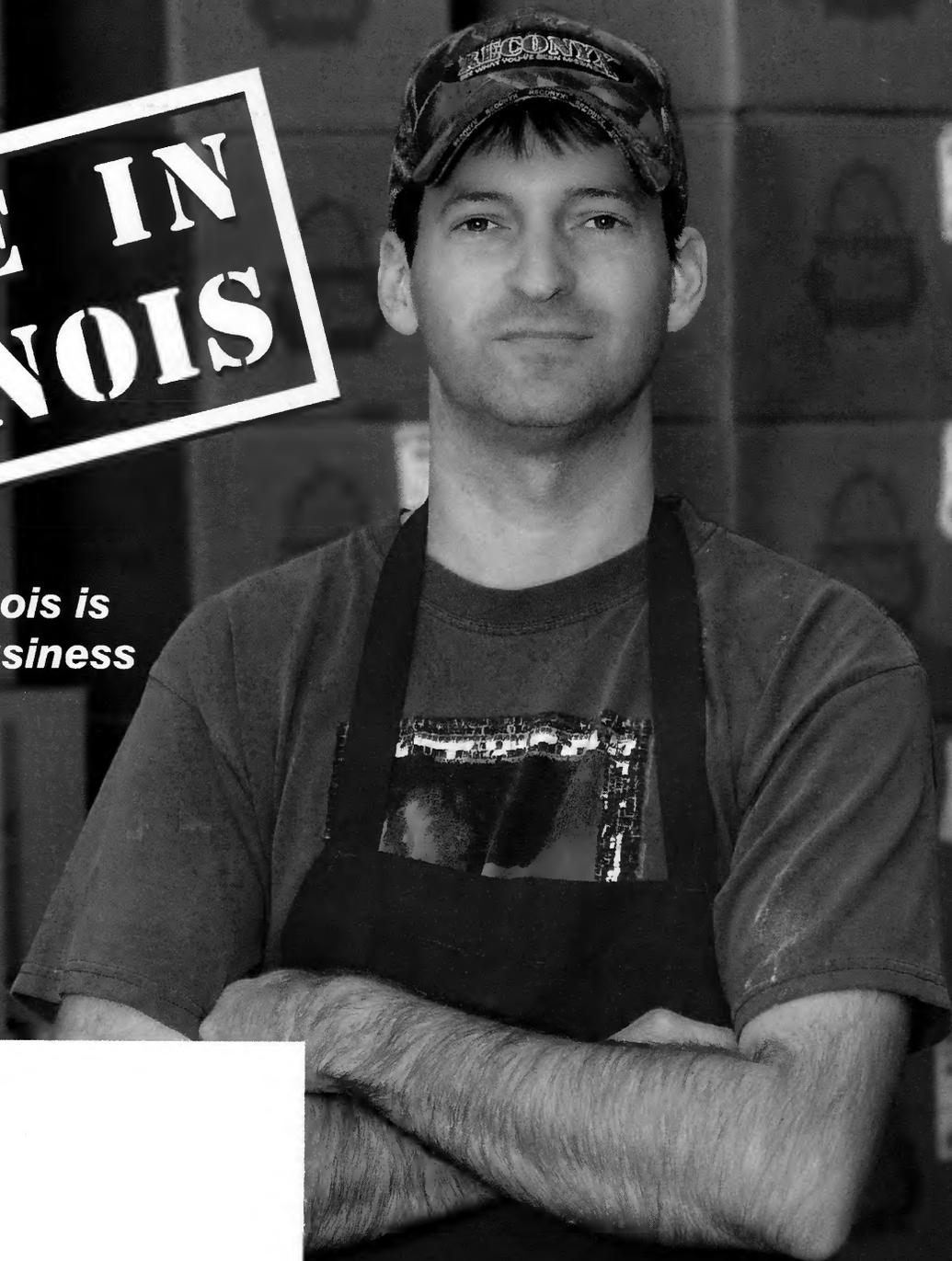
ILLINOISTM

COUNTRY LIVING

November 2009

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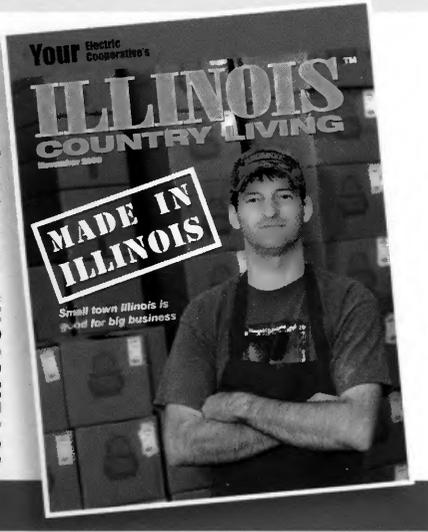
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MADE IN RURAL ILLINOIS

Kitchen Cooked Potato Chips plant manager Doug Seeley stands in front of cases of the popular chips awaiting shipment to retailers. The facility and others in rural parts of the state are providing primary jobs for many communities. State assistance is also available to them. *Cover photo by Steve Davis*

ILLINOISTM COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 67, No. 7, November 2009

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Ambassadors for agriculture examine challenges facing the industry.

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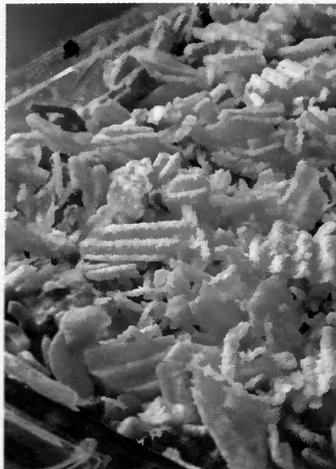
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Ambassadors for Agriculture

College students are increasing ag awareness

Each year 20 college students from across the United States are selected to be a part of The National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassador program. Selection occurs through an interview process conducted by the National FFA Organization. Ambassadors are selected based on a variety of criteria, including appreciation and general understanding of the agriculture industry and ability to communicate with an audience.

These students then receive training on how to effectively present agriculture information to a variety of audiences. During this training the ambassadors also benefit from briefings on current, important agriculture topics. The students are then responsible for completing 25 presentations about agriculture to primarily non-ag audiences throughout the school year.

The goal of the program is to increase general agriculture awareness through fun, interactive and informative presentations. Since 2006, over 1,300 presentations have been delivered, reaching over 62,000 people. BASF, Syngenta and Elanco Animal Health generously sponsor the program.

This is my second year serving on the National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassador team. I am very proud to be a part of this program.

American agriculture has benefited from persevering innovation and incredible advances in

technology. As we become more advanced we also become more efficient, which has allowed the agriculture industry to be more condensed.

Today the average American is five

generations removed from the family farm. Of course, today's agriculture goes beyond the family farm. Agriculture is a science and a business, a process that extends from production, to processing, to marketing. Agriculture is global, prices being affected by conditions all over the world. It is because of these advances in efficiency that most Americans have not had the opportunity to learn about where their food comes from. This situation can lead to unfortunate misconceptions about the agriculture industry. Informing the public about agriculture is vital to their ability to make good decisions, both as consumers and voters.

The National FFA, BASF, Syngenta, and Elanco Animal Health prepare the ambassadors to give comprehensive presentations to non-ag audiences about topics like: sustainability in agriculture, economic importance and sound science. These presentations are made with the goal of increasing the audiences understanding of a part of agriculture and addressing any misconceptions they may have. The visits are made to a variety of audiences, ranging from elementary school students to adults.

I have enjoyed my time as an ambassador very much. Training for the program provides us with a more in-depth knowledge of agriculture, and how to communicate the industry's message. The training also gives us the opportunity to practice presenting agriculture information with our peer ambassadors and sponsor evaluation, making our message more effective when we present on our own. We schedule the presentations to audiences of our choice, taking care to predominately visit non-agriculture groups.

One of the most important ideas that I have taken away from this experience is that agriculture is a concept. This means that without a basic understanding of the methods and goals of the industry, it is natural for misconception and frustration to occur.

Agriculture is an exciting industry to be a part of, especially as we examine the challenges that the industry will be pressured to overcome in the next 50 plus years. Our global population is growing fast. Today we have about 6.7 billion people. By 2050 it is estimated we will have a population of 9 billion. These additional 2.3 billion people will expand the borders of our cities with development, taking productive farmland off the market. Essentially, agriculture is faced with the challenge of providing more food, and doing so on less land than before.

For all of these reasons I am happy to play my part as a National Collegiate Agricultural Ambassador and share the story of agriculture. ■

Ashley Mason is a senior at Western Illinois University, majoring in Agriculture Education with a minor in Political Science. She is native to Canton, Ill. For more information, or to inquire about a presentation, contact Mason at AD-Mason@wiu.edu.



"Today the average American is five generations removed from the family farm."

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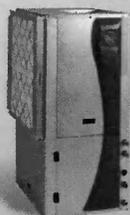
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Theodore Roosevelt Created Foundation for Rural Sustainability

The centennial of Theodore Roosevelt's "Country Life Commission" (CLC) of 1908–1909 offers an opportunity to showcase a cornerstone for sustainable rural community and economic development.

To commemorate the CLC's work, Timothy Collins, assistant director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs (IIRA) and Stephen R. Hicks, graduate assistant, developed a Website that traces the CLC's legacy. The website can be found at www.iira.org/clc/.

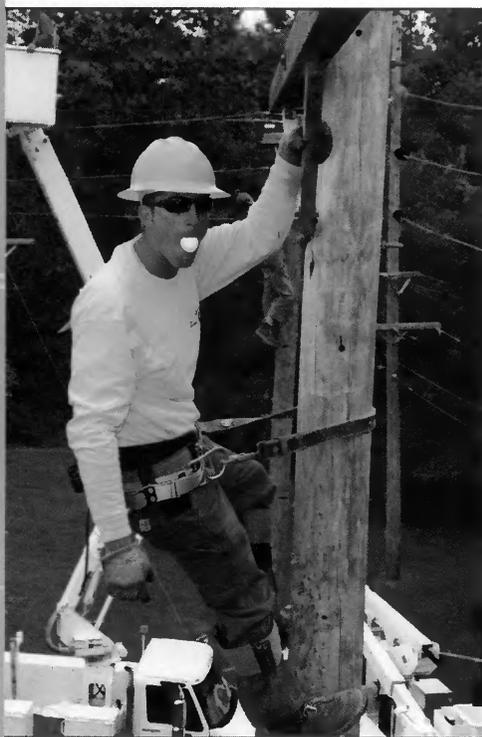
Roosevelt's CLC emerged in a turbulent time. America was being transformed from a rural, agrarian society into an urban, industrial society. Rural residents flocked to the nation's cities seeking better opportunities. This was an alarming trend to some leaders, who saw rural America, especially agriculture, as the economic, social and moral foundation of the country.

The Report of the Country Life Commission, issued in March 1909, is rarely read now. Roosevelt's biographers hardly mention it. In reality, the report is a gem. Some of its old ideas could shed some light on sustainable rural communities today.

The basic CLC idea was to get people together to talk about problems and opportunities, a basic step in community building. Rural schools and



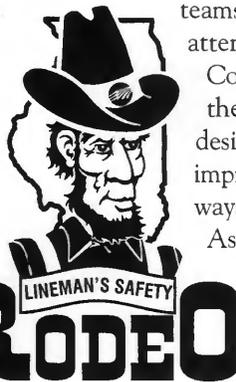
churches were central to bringing people together and educating them to build stronger communities. Community residents also would develop new businesses, such as cooperatives, to increase farm income and the quality of farm life.



Illinois Co-op Linemen Compete in Safety Rodeo

EnerStar Power Cooperative Lineman Russ Camp demonstrates the egg climb event (linemen climb a 30-foot pole with a raw egg in their mouths to demonstrate smooth climbing skills) at the 12th Annual Lineman's Safety Rodeo. Camp placed third in the event. The rodeo featured 14

teams from across the state and 150 people attended the event. Held at Lincoln Land Community College (LLCC) in Springfield, the rodeo coincided with a series of courses designed to help electric line personnel improve their work skills in safe and efficient ways. Several electric suppliers joined the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and LLCC in co-sponsoring the event. Other events included the hurt man rescue, cable splice, dead end insulator change and a mystery event.



Co-op Members Flood Senate With Half-a-Million Postcards

Thanks to co-op members from across the country, 515,000 postcards were sent to their senators asking for fair, affordable and achievable climate change legislation. The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Glenn English (left) congratulated Shelby Electric Cooperative President/CEO Jim Coleman and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives President/CEO Duane Noland for “really responding.” Out of all the states Illinois co-op members responded to the grassroots call to action by sending in one-third of all the postcards. The postcards were personally delivered by co-op leaders from across the country in late September just as the Senate Environment and Public Works Chairman Barbra Boxer, D-Calif., was set to introduce a greenhouse gas bill. Noland said the debate continues and co-op members still need to voice their opinions. He said an easy way to do that is to go to www.ourenergy.coop.



Bees Lost to Colony Collapse Disorder Threatens Agriculture

The topic of disappearing honeybees first cropped up in 2004. Thousands of commercial beekeepers across the U.S. and beyond were reporting in some cases that as many as two-thirds of their honey bees were flying away from their hives, never to return. What made the problem — dubbed “Colony Collapse Disorder” (CCD) — so unusual is that most traumas to bee colonies leave bees dead in or around their

hives, not mysteriously gone altogether.

There was no concrete evidence pointing to disease or predation or of mites that tend to attack beehives. Some speculated that chemical contamination due to widespread use of pesticides might be to blame. But no smoking gun emerged and the mystery remains today.

Whatever the cause, CCD remains a real threat to agriculture. About a third of all American farm production is dependent upon the pollination efforts of commercially raised honeybees. Bees are key to Illinois specialty crops such as pumpkins.

Organic beekeepers have not experienced CCD, leading to speculation that overall greener management practices could be the answer even if direct causes are not determined. Meanwhile, efforts to genetically modify bees that are resistant to predators and pathogens could also prove fruitful.

Source: USDA Agricultural Research Service, www.ars.usda.gov; CCD Steering Committee Q&A, www.ars.usda.gov/is/br/ccd.

One-third of the agriculture industry depends on the pollination of bees. But the Colony Collapse Disorder is creating a “perfect storm” that threatens this tiny ag worker.



Photo by Rainer Hunjershausen

Congressman Phil Hare Receives Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award

At an electric cooperative meeting hosted by Spoon River Electric Cooperative in Canton, Congressman Phil Hare (D-17) received the 2009 Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award. The award was made in recognition of Rep. Hare's dedicated public service to all citizens of the state of Illinois and for outstanding contributions to the rural electrification program.

President and CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives Duane Noland said, "Congressman Hare is deserving of our highest award. He and his staff listened to our concerns about the Waxman-Markey climate change legislation currently being considered by Congress. He co-signed a letter sent to the House leadership that voiced concerns that the legislation wasn't fair to the members of rural electric co-op members in his district and across Illinois. He understood and addressed our fundamental issue of affordability. He personally

wrote, and met with, House Energy Committee Chairman Henry Waxman regarding his concerns for the consumers in his district and he has been gracious in his support of Prairie State Generating Campus. While we still have significant concerns with the legislation, and hope to make improvements in the Senate, Congressman Hare's assistance to our not-for profit co-ops and their members is greatly appreciated and we look forward to continuing to work with him in the future."

"I am truly honored to receive this award from Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives," said Hare. "Rural electric co-ops provide power distribution to over 70,000 of my constituents. I look forward to continuing to work with our rural co-ops to get Prairie State Generating Station online, ensure consumer protections are fully met in any climate change bill, and address their other legislative needs."



Among those presenting the Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award to Rep. Phil Hare Saturday were (l-r) Spoon River Electric Cooperative's President/CEO William R. Dodds, board members Terry A. Beam, Rep. Hare, Scott Parrish, Lyle H. Nelson, Bernard Marvel, Jack L. Clark, James C. Banks and Kathy L. Smysor.

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MADE IN ILLINOIS

Small town Illinois is good for big business

By Les O'Dell

Manufacturing has been, and continues to be, the biggest slice of Illinois' economic pie, with annual production of more than \$107 billion. Picturing large factories and smokestacks, many of the state's residents consider manufacturing to be exclusive to urban areas such as Chicago, Rockford, Decatur and Peoria. It's true that nearly three-quarters of all Illinois manufacturers are located in the Chicago area and many of the others are in communities boasting more than 10,000 people. But in many smaller communities throughout the state, you will find industrial plants of all sizes churning out products proudly made in rural Illinois.

While the companies may employ just a few people or a vast majority of their town's citizens, the impact these manufacturers have on communities is significant.

"Manufacturing is very important to rural Illinois," says John Gruidl of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University in Macomb. "It is one of the real economic drivers in many parts of the state. Of course, farming is huge, but in a lot of our communities, manufacturing is just as important."

Gruidl says not only does manufacturing provide jobs for rural residents, it also brings money into areas from outside the region — money that circulates throughout the community.

"Even if a manufacturer only has six or seven employees, those people take their paychecks to the local bank, they spend money in the local grocery store and they send their children to the local schools. It has a huge impact, representing many more jobs that depend upon those people and

Vaughn and Bushnell employee Mike Ebbert works with material that will eventually become a hammer. Ebbert has worked at the Bushnell plant since 1984. Photo by Steve Davis.

that manufacturer” he says.

Jim Nelson, vice president of the Illinois Manufacturers Association says that while he estimates only about five or six percent of the state’s manufacturers are located outside of urban settings, those in rural areas benefit in a number of ways.

“Rural communities provide a good home for companies and manufacturing firms,” he says. “Many times companies locate in these places because owners prefer their own small town environments as a place to live and work. Other benefits include easy access to the marketplace, to transportation and to suppliers.”

For the owners of many rural manufacturers, location is simply a matter of starting a business where they live or continuing business where it started, but often other benefits become apparent as well.

Agricultural electronics maker DICKEY-john was developed by central Illinois farmers, so it was only natural that the company continues

production in the area, according to Vice President of Operations Jeff Schertz. About 250 people work in the manufacturer’s plant near Auburn. Schertz says having a rural workforce is a benefit to the company.

“For the work we do, it’s very good to have people who understand our customers. It really helps us having employees who understand and appreciate agriculture,” he says.

Jeff Shaner, owner of J.D. Mullen’s Dressings, a Crawford County maker of salad dressings and cooking sauces, says that his company’s rural address has in no way hampered the growth of his business.

“We’ve got all of the modern conveniences here, just like any other city. I just can’t imagine being any place else,” he says of Palestine, population 1,366.

Mike Wicoff, owner of Sterling Mattress Factory in Herrin says that in some ways a rural location benefits his business’ sales.

“In a small area, people tend to know each other very well and with so much of our business being refer-

als, we appreciate that word tends to get around faster,” he says. The company of five employees has manufactured and sold more than 20,000 premium mattresses.

Maple baseball bat manufacturer Randy Drone of Ridgway-based Dinger Bats loves conducting business from his location on the edge of the Shawnee National Forest.

“You’d think there would be drawbacks to our location, but there really aren’t any,” he explains. “We have everything we need and it’s less expensive to do business here. Plus, we have the Internet and all of the shipping

“Manufacturing is very important to rural Illinois ... course, farming is huge, but in a lot of our communities, manufacturing is just as important.”



Shipping doors at Kitchen Cooked Potato Chip’s facility in Farmington are painted just like the bags of chips produced inside. Esquire magazine called the product “the second-best potato chip you’ve never tasted.” Photo by Steve Davis.



Joe Colvin, a craftsman at Sterling Mattress Factory in Herrin stitches a pillow top to a mattress under construction. At last count, the factory had produced more than 20,000 mattresses. Photo by Les O'Dell

companies come through town every day. You can be in business any place in the world today."

Drone's bats are becoming recognized around the world. They're popular with a number of minor league teams and are used by several professional players, including All-Star outfielder Hunter Pence of the Houston Astros.

Other rural Illinois products are also gaining national, and even global, attention. Several years ago, in a national taste test of regional potato chip brands, Esquire Magazine called Farmington's Kitchen Cooked chips the "second-best potato chip you've never tasted." Produced by 90 employees in Farmington and Bushnell, the chips satisfy loyal snackers throughout western and central Illinois.

While there is significant economic effect from rural manufacturers employing even just a handful of people, the impact of large production operations cannot be understated.

"Manufacturers are extremely important," says Princeton City Manager Jeff Fiegenschuh. "They employ hundreds of people in communities like ours and provide good-paying jobs that support our tax base. They are vital to the community."

Both businesses and communities understand the unique relationship that results from production in a rural area.

"We're the major employer in Bushnell and we have a great relationship with the city," explains Ron Miller, Vice-President of Vaughn and Bushnell, a hammer and tool manufacturer that moved to the McDonough county town in 1940. Today the company employs almost 300 people. "We have employees whose fathers, grandfathers and great grandfathers have all worked in the plant. That's really something."

Many companies find both rural locations and rural workers fit their needs.

"We started out in a rural community and we've expanded by purchasing existing plants in other rural communities," says Don Welge of Gilster-Mary Lee, a producer of private-label food products which can be found in practically any grocery store in the nation. The company employs more than 500 people at a facility in Chester, 100 in Momence and nearly 1,000 in Steeleville. Altogether, Gilster-Mary Lee has 13 plants, most in Illinois and Missouri.

"In many cases, real estate and taxes are less expensive and there is much less congestion for shipping," Welge adds. "Plus we're able to get higher-quality people at a reasonable wage in these rural communities. The work ethic is outstanding."

Sally McCallum, purchasing manager for Independence Tubing, a manufacturer of steel structural tubing in Marseilles says that a rural workforce makes for a more cohesive workforce.

"Things are a lot more laid-back and informal. Everybody knows everybody and it's a good fit," she says. Communities often benefit from manufacturers not only economically, but also in terms of civic pride.

"It's very important for the morale of the communities," Gruidl of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs explains. "Some of these companies sell their products all over the world, so it's a way that the community becomes important in the world."

"I'd think we generate some excitement for the town," Dinger Bats' Drone says. "The town is behind us and they're excited about our success. This is our home."

The same can be said for hundreds of manufacturers making barbecue grills to water faucets and everything in between: rural Illinois is home. ■

Help Available for Your Business

Recovery money exists for rural Illinois, too

By Jonie Larson

With unemployment rates in the state of Illinois lingering around the 10 percent range, communities are looking for magic bullets to reestablish their economic footholds.

Judith Roussel, Director of the Illinois District of the U.S. Small Business Administration, says there are some very good programs in place to help entrepreneurs start up or expand their businesses. While her office is in Chicago, a population center for the state, she says the SBA has a commitment to small and non-agricultural businesses, too. Agriculture has its own funding sources.

A primary example dates back about a year and a half, when the SBA started a new loan program to get rural banks to use the SBA, a government program that uses no taxpayer dollars. The program encouraged banks to make loans with the reassurance of a 50- to 90 percent federal guarantee on their repayment. To further encourage the use, the majority of the loans are now guaranteed at the 90 percent rate. Fees to the borrower, which initially helped cover the program, have been eliminated.

Was it successful? In the last fiscal year, which ended at the close of September, Roussel said loans to Illinois businesses backed by the SBA totaled \$438.6 million for 1,640 businesses, both existing and new ventures.

The total has been on the rise since February when federal recovery money became available. In fact, Roussel said prior to Oct. 5, the SBA had seen a 222 percent increase over the numbers recorded in the last week in January.

The SBA offers more than loans to those in rural areas. In fact, Roussel says two components of the organization – SCORE and the Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) – are



Judith Roussel, Director for the Illinois District of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), spoke in Springfield to statewide business owners interested in capturing business contracts with government and large corporations. Roussel later suggested other ways small businesses in rural Illinois can get assistance through SBA. Go to www.sba.gov/il for more information.

tremendous resources.

SCORE, which at one time stood for Service Core of Retired Executives, is a not-for-profit counseling service started by the SBA years ago. The organization has reinvented itself to also include expert volunteers of all ages who help give counseling and training at no cost to interested business owners/operators.

Roussel said SCORE's experts try to find the perfect business opportunities for its clients. Members will look at the economic environment and propose changes if needed. They can help an owner know when it's time to expand or if there's a niche opportunity.

Another plus with SCORE is that volunteers with the organization will counsel by phone, online or in person.

"They will invest (time) in that person, as much as they need," said Roussel.

A second resource, Roussel recommends as a starting point, is the SBDC. Its services, which are typically located on community college campuses, are extensive.

Interested in starting a business? Personnel at the SBDC will assist in

writing a business plan. It's very hands-on, says Roussel, noting that the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has the cooperative contract to help fund that program with a dollar per dollar match.

Roussel says the program is a success. She says between July 1, 2008 and June 30, 2009 the SBDC served 19,581 clients, counseling 8,699 and training 10,882. SCORE had impressive numbers, too. Volunteers counseled 4,457 and trained 4,304.

GETTING STARTED: One Web site will get you all the information you need, says Roussel. Here's how the online map to assistance reads.

- Go to www.sba.gov/il.
- Locate the link to Illinois Small Business Development Centers under Resources.
- Click IEN locator.
- Put in address.

The same is true for SCORE.

- Click link to SCORE's Web page.
- Put in address.

Building Codes Save Lives and Property

Insist your builder follows the code and inspection requirements

In my position as an electrical inspector, every now and then someone will ask me why have building codes? Why can't I just build my structure the way I want to? The answer, because it's the law doesn't properly answer this question.

Officially a building code is the government's statement on building safety. Technically, building codes set the minimum safety standards for construction through a compilation of laws. Building codes are arranged in a systematic manner and (codified) for easy reference. Building codes embrace all aspects of the building construction – fire, structural items, accessibility as well as the plumbing, electrical and mechanical systems.

The earliest known code or law was known as the Code of Hammurabi. The Code of Hammurabi was an ancient law created around 1790 BC in ancient Babylon. The sixth Babylonian king, Hammurabi, enacted it. Hammurabi ruled from 1796 BC - 1750 BC and decreed that he was chosen by the gods to deliver the law to his people.

Wow does that sound like some inspectors you know! Nah! Well, at least maybe they come by it genetically.

One of Hammurabi's laws was as follows: If a builder builds a house for someone, and does not construct it properly, and the house which he built falls in and kills its owner, then the builder shall be put to death.

Another variant of this was if the owner's son dies, then the builder's son should be put to death. And you thought the Illinois State Plumbing Code was tough didn't you.

Well, we've come a long way since then and building codes have evolved. I know this won't sound very reassuring, but frankly many times codes were developed by trial and error. An example of this is the National Fire Protection Associations NFPA 13, the sprinkler code, and NFPA 70, the National Electrical Code. These codes were born out of necessity from our fire history right here in Illinois.

These fire safety codes date back to pre-electric lighting history when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over the kerosene lantern sitting on the bale of hay. Throughout this history we have learned valuable

lessons from catastrophic events such as the Great Chicago Fire of 1871. We learned that keeping ignition sources away from combustibles are a good practice and that there was a need for building codes to prevent similar occurrences in the future.

Today's fire, building and electrical codes are developed by architects, engineers, manufacturers, distributors, contractors, insurance companies, testing labs, building and fire code officials and other interested parties in building safety. It's in the knowledge they bring with them and the codes they have developed that will help prevent tragic accidents in the future.

So, who needs building codes? We all do! Building codes protect us in our homes, offices, schools, stores, factories or places of entertainment. We rely heavily on the safety of the structures that surround us in our everyday living. The public need for protection from disaster due to fire, structural collapse and general deterioration underscores the need for modern codes and their enforcement.

Safety is achieved through proper design and construction practice and a code inspection program that verifies compliance.

Did you know that before you moved into your home, office or factory, an average of 10 inspections had been made to verify conformity to minimum standards affecting electrical safety, and sanitation as well as structural, fire, and the like?

So why have building codes? Building codes give a standard for contractors to build and bid by putting all contractors on a level playing field. Building codes provide for your personal safety and that of your family and friends that enter your home. Building codes ensure the economic well being of the community by reducing potential fire spread and lowering insurance costs. They make our homes and businesses more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. They assure and protect future home and business owners that structures they occupy will be safe. ■

"We rely heavily on the safety of the structures that surround us in our everyday living."

Michael L. Ashenfelter is the Sangamon County Electrical/ Mechanical Inspector and a member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Team (www.safeelectricity.org), 217-747-5111, MikeA@co.sangamon.il.us.



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Prepare for a creature-free winter

Sanitation and proper storage are keys

There are all sorts of creatures scurrying around your house in the dead of night. Some you can hear. Others you can't unless you have Superman's ears.

We're all familiar with the obvious ones.

Crickets come and go. They are particularly annoying during October and November as they move inside from the cold. After several weeks indoors with nothing to eat, they die. Or else the four-legged felines lie in wait, pounce and then snarf the 6-legged chirpers down.

There are the flies that buzz around windows, droning on the panes to the point where they become annoying. Again, time takes care of them, or use a rolled up newspaper ... but never an electrical magazine.

Spiders last longer and you can find them on things here and there in the basement, crawl spaces or between the walls and under appliances. Yet, they cause more concern than they're worth. Just stay out of their way, keep the bedroom clean and don't stick your hand in a dark spot without shining a flashlight there first.

Cleanliness is next to godliness and next to making sure the insects are kept at bay. A thorough cleaning once a month of carpet,

upholstery, under appliances and in the basement is essential. Vacuuming sucks up many creatures, and the ones that remain may only be partially there, with a few of their legs in the vacuum bag.

But it's the other insects that you don't always see that can be really nuisances.

First, there are the cockroaches which only another cockroach or entomologist would like. They are synonymous with filth, though cockroaches themselves are one of the cleanest creatures, often bathing each other much like cats lick each other's head.

However, cockroaches feed on those food particles that fall between the cracks. You really can't blame them. They don't have the capacity

to open the refrigerator door or cupboards and pull out food. If you had a sanitary kitchen, you'd have a hard time keeping cockroaches around.

Cockroaches like to live in the walls and feed at night. They don't leave lots of little telltale signs like mice do. You may have them for years and never see them unless you make a quick foray into the kitchen at 2 a.m. and turn on the lights, and watch groggily as creatures scurry away.

Cats are one good control, as they have the patience to wait all evening for some form of entertainment,

which is chasing the cockroaches.

Traps and baits work well, but make sure you read and follow the directions. Keep the baits out of reach of children and pets.

There are other kitchen pests which tend to be noticed around this time as we start doing more baking. Pantry pests, lumped as a group, can be beetles, weevils (or their larva) and feed on grain products like oatmeal, flour, cake mixes, biscuit mixes, cereal, pet food (especially those high in cereal products), chocolate, dried beans, many herbs and spices, and surprisingly, dried flowers.

Sanitation is also important. Keep grain products tightly sealed. A cardboard box or paper sack is no match to these creatures. Store the products in plastic, metal or glass canisters.

You can also store the products in the freezer, which kills the insects and larva. Just warm up the product to room temperature before using it.

Interestingly enough, few of the pantry pests go after sweet items like sugar and honey.

Most are blackish brown to red and small. Usually they elicit more of an "ick" than anything else. Many people throw the product away. Some just sift the offending creature out and use the product. After all, most insects are safe to eat and a good source of protein. (Yes ... I know ... Ick.) ■



"Cleanliness is next to godliness and next to making sure the insects are kept at bay."

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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Geothermal Heat Pumps Have Best Payback

Fed tax credit recognizes renewable energy benefits of geothermal

We are postponing our discussion of the 10 Commandments of Energy Efficiency for a very important reminder. It's almost time to do your taxes. Yikes!

In October, 2008 the \$700 billion Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 (H.R. 1424) was signed into law. In addition to helping stabilize the nation's financial markets, the law also extended and enhanced tax credits and financing relating to renewable energy and energy efficiency. And I am pleased to announce that included in the tax credits — can you believe it — are geothermal heat pumps!

For years, I have been teaching you about the advantages of geothermal heat pumps. And here is one of the bonus benefits many people don't realize — it provides a good percentage of your domestic hot water practically free.

As I have said for years, 75 percent of the energy used in a geothermal heat pump is from the solar British thermal units (Btus) that have been stored in the earth or, in other words, geothermal is 75 percent renewable solar energy. And it appears the federal government now recognizes that geothermal heat pumps take advantage of this solar energy.

costs about \$25,000. It would produce about two kilowatts for six hours per day (25 percent of the day) if the sun were shining. That means the system would produce enough electricity to power two 1,000-watt hair dryers. The estimated payback is around 50 years and the life expectancy of the system is 20 years. I personally don't think you can find a much worse investment. There is a tax credit available for this system in the Emergency Economic Stabilization Act.

No. 2 — A typical wind generator for a 2,000-square-foot house costs between \$10,000 and \$20,000, depending on the size of the unit. It would typically produce four to six kilowatts of electricity if the wind is blowing sufficiently. In many parts of the United States residential wind generation is not a viable option. In fact, one of the most efficient wind farms in the U.S. only generated 30 percent of the time last year, with almost no generation during the hottest summer months. It is at best difficult to estimate the payback of a residential wind turbine because of such unknown factors as maintenance costs and the availability of wind. There is, however, a federal tax credit available in the new law.

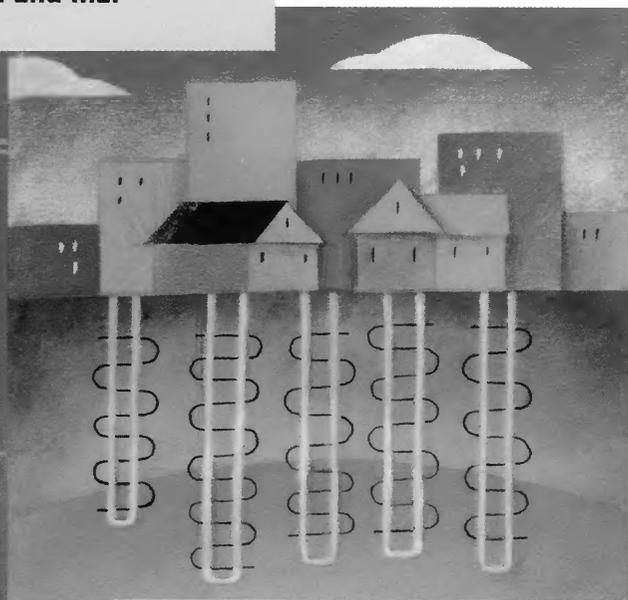
No. 3. A typical geothermal heat pump for a 2,000-square-foot house should cost about \$11,000 more than a conventional heating and cooling system. It does provide all of the heating and cooling required and it is available every single hour of every single day. The average payback for such a system will be seven to 10 years. The life expectancy of the geothermal unit is estimated to be 25 years, the loop in the ground is guaranteed for 50 years and no one actually knows how long it will last after that. And, yes, there is a federal tax credit available, at last!

Now, open your mind, think about it and you will probably be just as excited about this as I am. Geothermal has finally come of age! To learn more about the energy tax incentives, visit www.energy.gov/taxbreaks.htm. ■

"Renewable energy must be economically feasible for the average consumer like you and me."

Let's look at some popular renewable energy sources:

No. 1 — A typical solar voltaic system for a 2,000-square-foot house



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 501-653-7931. You can also sign up for a free newsletter and order his "how to" videotapes.



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The Efficiency of Space Heaters

By Brian Sloboda, CRN

Space heaters are small, versatile, and generally good at warming a room, and at some point most people consider purchasing one. However, some manufacturers claim that their electric space heater can significantly cut a home's heating bill. Do these claims make sense?

Some basic facts about space heaters will help get at the truth of the matter. Space heaters work best as a supplement to a furnace or heat pump — they are rarely used as the primary heating source. Three main types of space heaters are available, which can usually be bought for \$30 to \$100: radiant heaters, convection heaters and combination heaters.

Radiant Heaters

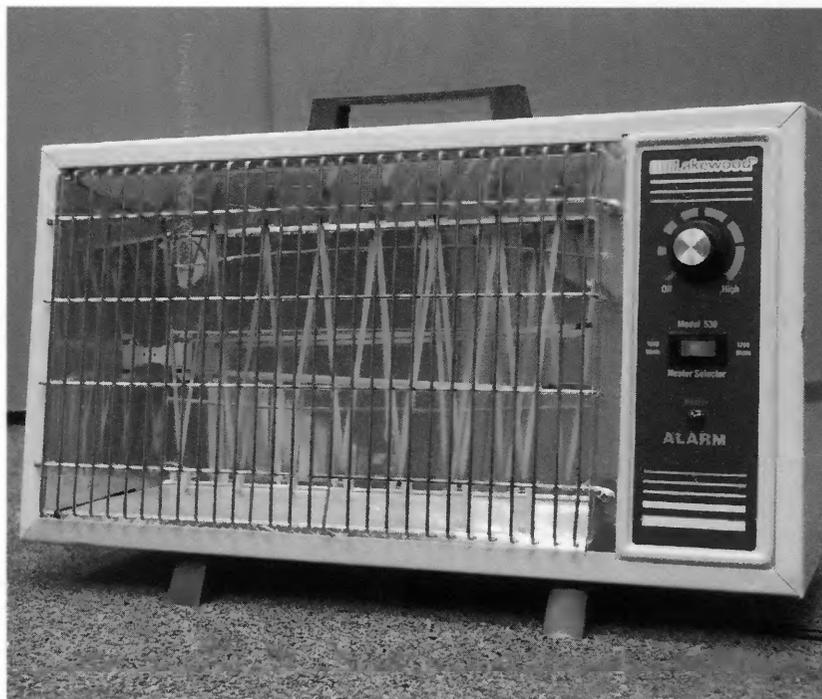
A radiant heater heats objects and people — not the air — in a room. They are best used in rooms where the person who wants to be warmed can be in direct line of sight of the heater. Radiant heaters can be a good choice if you are in a room for a short period of time and want instant heat. They can pose a burn or fire risk and should not be placed near furniture, drapery, pets, or small children.

Convection Heaters

Convection heaters are designed to heat the air — not people or objects — in a room. Hot air from the convection heater rises to the ceiling and forces cooler air to the floor. The cooler air is warmed by the heater and rises to the ceiling, creating a cycle that continues as long as the heater is on. These are typically either baseboard heaters or oil- or water-filled heaters. The oil- or water-filled heaters are the most efficient and typically look like a small radiator. Convection heaters are generally warm to the touch and, compared to a radiant heater, have a decreased fire and burn risk.

Combination Heaters

As the name implies, a combination heater tries to bring the best of the radiant and convection heaters into one package. They often have an internal



fan that aids in distributing heat throughout the room. These heaters are versatile and more common as a result, although they do not typically perform as well as a radiant or convection heater.

Before purchasing a space heater you should determine how and where it will be used, and whether a radiant, convection, or combination heater will do the job best. Combination units are versatile, but you will most likely get better performance from a radiant or convection heater. Use a radiant heater if you want heat instantly and will not move from one spot. If you need to warm an entire room, a convection heater should do the trick.

Most space heaters use between 600 and 1,500 watts of electricity. If a homeowner were to use a space heater 8 hours a day, 5 days a week for a month it would cost approximately \$15.26. So can using a space heater cut your home heating bill? Maybe.

Space heaters can only heat a small space. You can





Energy Efficiency *quick tip*

Space heaters can help cut heating costs, and here's how: Turn the central thermostat down (as low as 50 degrees) and use the space heater in a closed, occupied room.

save significant money if you use the space heater with this in mind: Turn the thermostat of your central heating system down considerably (as low as 50 degrees in some cases). Place the space heater in a room that is occupied by people, and close that room off from the rest of the home. This method of "zone heating" will save money.

Space heaters do have their place in warming a house. But they simply cannot replace energy efficient central heating or weatherization improvements to the home. For example, all electric space heaters produce 1 unit of heat for every 1 unit of electricity consumed, meaning they are 100 percent energy efficient. Those that use natural gas

are 80 percent efficient. In comparison, geothermal heat pumps can produce more than 3 units of heat for every unit of electricity consumed, making them 300 percent efficient.

As with any technology, before purchasing a space heater understand how the device is to be used and understand the energy claims of the manufacturer. While it may be technically possible to cut your heating bill by 50 percent using a space heater, it is impractical for most people.

Brian Sloboda is a program manger specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

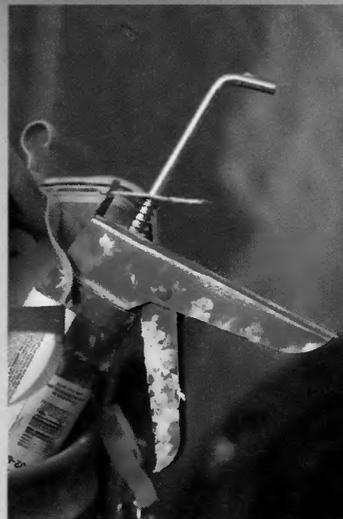
The Cooperative Research Network monitors, evaluates, and applies technologies that help electric cooperatives control costs, increase productivity, and enhance service to their consumers.

— Before you buy —

Before buying a space heater it will likely be beneficial to perform some easy and inexpensive energy-saving measures at your home. Any of these could solve your heating problems without any additional heating equipment:



- Add caulk and weather stripping around doors and windows.
- Add insulation to attics and exposed walls.
- Clean or replace furnace filters.
- Move furniture or obstacles from heat registers.
- Insulate duct work.
- Close blinds or curtains at night.



Heavenly Favorites

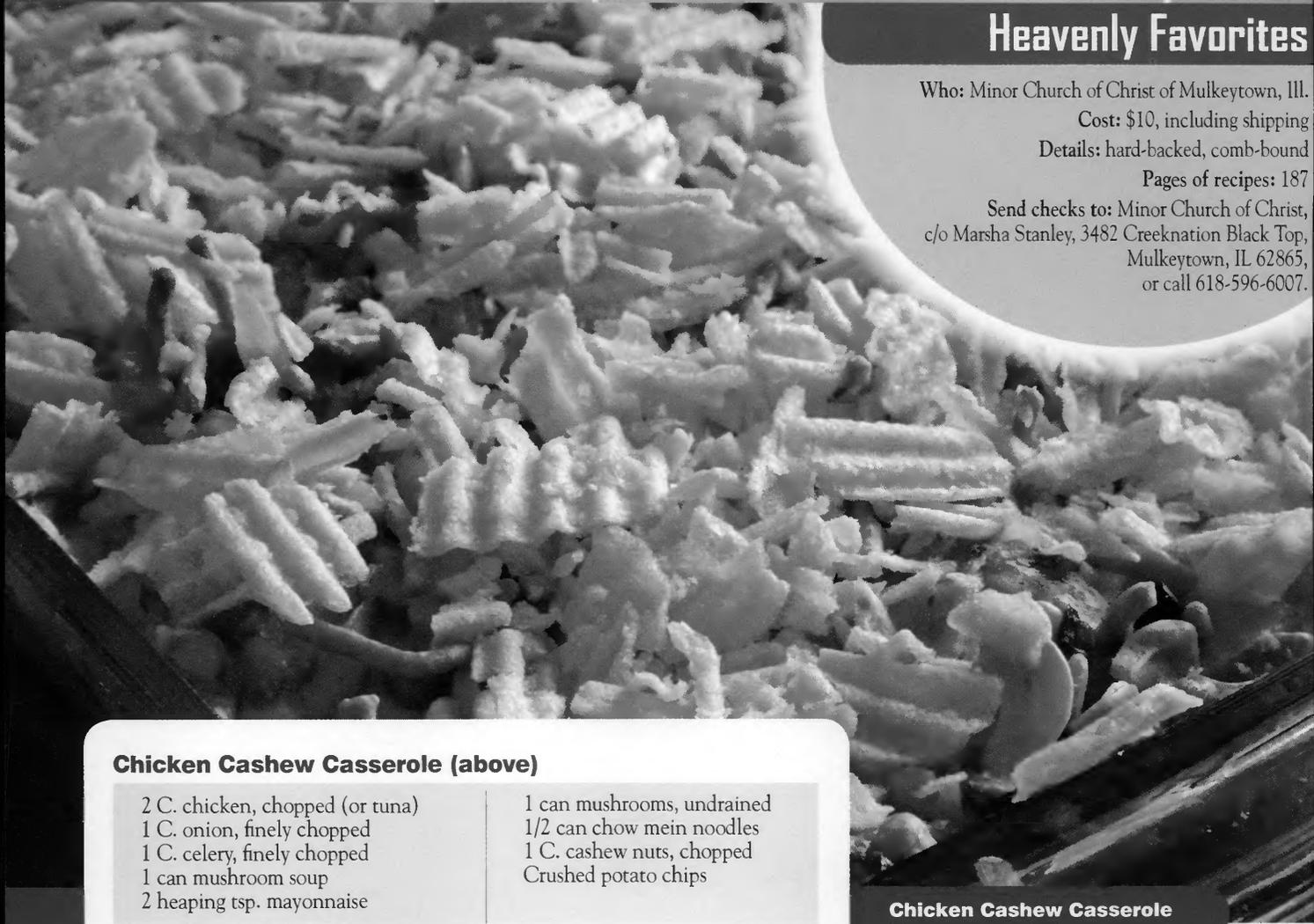
Who: Minor Church of Christ of Mulkeytown, Ill.

Cost: \$10, including shipping

Details: hard-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 187

Send checks to: Minor Church of Christ,
c/o Marsha Stanley, 3482 Creeknation Black Top,
Mulkeytown, IL 62865,
or call 618-596-6007.



Chicken Cashew Casserole (above)

- 2 C. chicken, chopped (or tuna)
- 1 C. onion, finely chopped
- 1 C. celery, finely chopped
- 1 can mushroom soup
- 2 heaping tsp. mayonnaise

- 1 can mushrooms, undrained
- 1/2 can chow mein noodles
- 1 C. cashew nuts, chopped
- Crushed potato chips

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix all ingredients together except potato chips. Place in a casserole dish and top with chips. Bake for 30 minutes or until heated through. Serves 4.

Chicken Cashew Casserole

Cool Whip Cookies

- 1 ctn. any flavor cake mix
- 1 C. Cool Whip
- 1 egg
- Powdered sugar

Mix cake mix, Cool Whip, and egg together with spoon. Drop by tablespoons into powdered sugar. Roll to cover. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 8 to 10 minutes. Let cool on cookie sheet for several minutes. Cookies will be soft. Be careful not to over-bake. Serves 24.

Crock-pot Candy

- 1 (12-oz.) jar roasted peanuts or 3/4 (16-oz) jar
- 1 (12-oz) pkg. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 (4-oz.) box German sweet chocolate
- 1 pkg. almond bark (prefer white)

Layer with the peanuts on bottom. Do not stir. Do not peek. Cook on low for 1 hour. Open lid and stir together until smooth. Dip out by spoons onto greased cookie sheet or onto wax paper. Delicious! Serves 15.

Taco Tartlets

- Meat shells:**
- 1 lb ground beef
 - 2 T. taco seasoning
 - 1 T. ice water

- Filling:**
- 1 C. sour cream
 - 2 T. red taco sauce
 - 2-oz. ripe olives, chopped
 - 1 C. coarsely crushed tortilla chips, divided
 - 1/2 C. shredded Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 375°. **Meat shells:** Combine ingredients. Mix well. Press meat mixture into bottom and sides of tiny tart pans. Set aside. Combine sour cream, taco sauce, olives and 3/4 cup tortilla chips. Spoon filling into each shell, mounding slightly. Combine remaining chips and cheese. Sprinkle over each tartlet. Bake for 10 minutes. Garnish with taco sauce. Serves 32.

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

Chicken or Turkey Divan Casserole

- 2 (10-oz.) pkgs. frozen broccoli (slightly cooked and drained)
- 2 cans cream of chicken soup or cream of celery soup concentrate
- 1 T. lemon juice
- 8-oz. shredded cheddar cheese (may substitute Cabot's brand low fat cheddar)
- 2 C. diced chicken or turkey (cooked)
- 1 C. Hellmann's Mayonnaise (may substitute reduced-fat mayo)
- 1 T. butter, melted (may substitute olive oil or extra virgin olive oil)
- 1 sleeve crackers, crushed

Spray 13x9 casserole dish with nonstick spray. Sprinkle broccoli evenly over bottom, then chicken/turkey. Mix soup (do not add water), mayonnaise, and lemon juice in small bowl; spread over chicken/broccoli in pan. Add melted butter/oil to crackers in bowl and stir until coated. Sprinkle crackers over mixture in pan. Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes until hot and bubbly.

Creamy Spinach Bake

- 2 (8-oz.) pkgs. cream cheese, softened
- 2 (10 3/4 -oz.) cans cream of mushroom soup
- 4 (10-oz.) pkgs. frozen chopped spinach, thawed & well drained
- 2 (2.8-oz.) cans French Fried Onions
- 2/3 C. crushed Ritz or Saltine crackers
- 1/4 C. melted butter

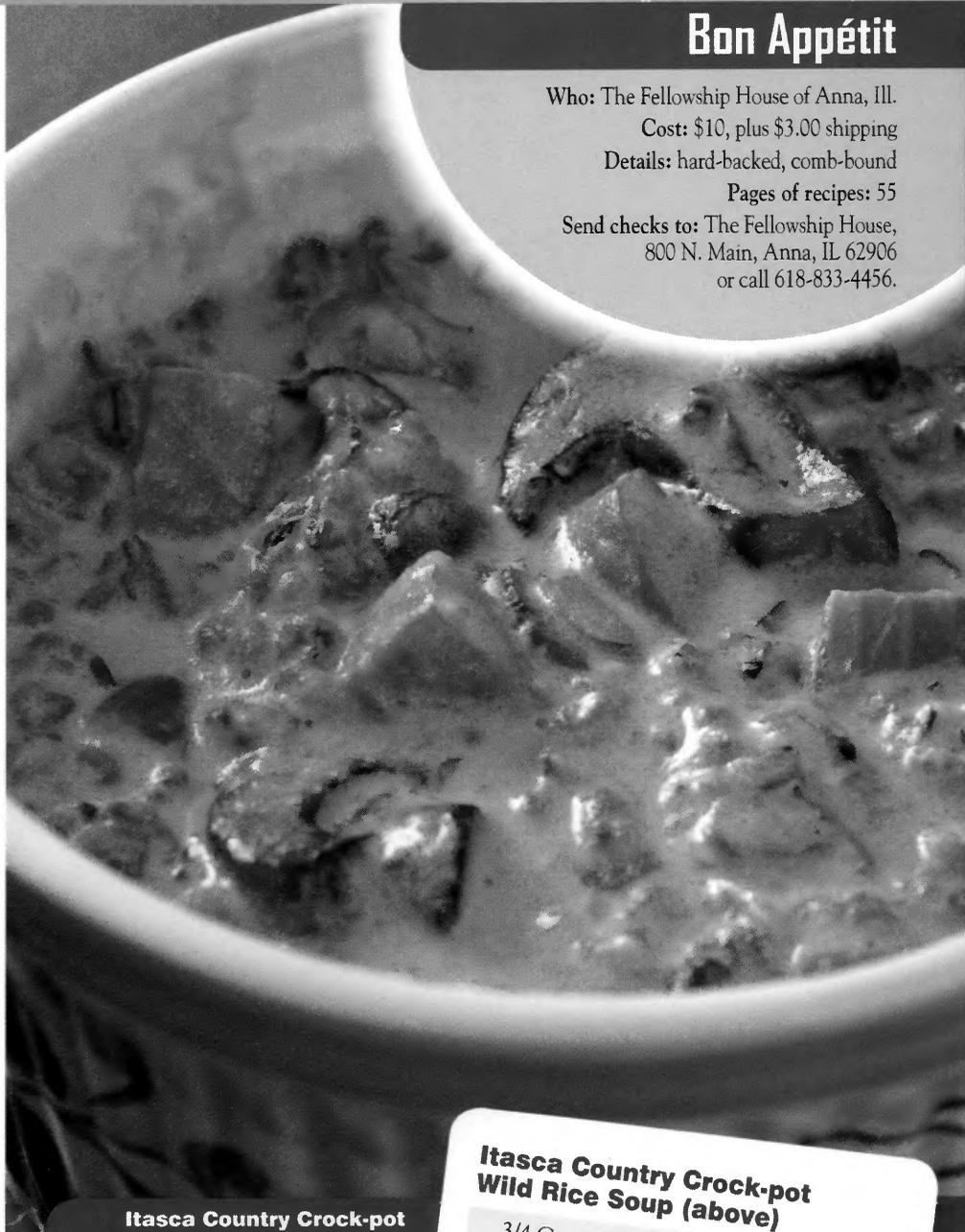
In bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Add soup; mix well. Stir in spinach and French Fried Onions. Transfer to a greased 2 1/2 quart baking dish. Combine crackers and butter; sprinkle over spinach mixture. Bake uncovered at 350° for 30-35 minutes or until heated through. Yields 10 servings.

Jax Café Artichoke dip

- 2 (8-oz.) Ctns. cream cheese
- 1 C. mayonnaise
- 1 C. sour cream
- 2 C. shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 T. minced garlic
- 5 green onions, chopped
- 1/2 C. red onion, chopped

- 1/2 C. red bell pepper, diced small
- 3 C. chopped artichoke hearts
- 1 1/2 tsp. hot sauce
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1 1/2 tsp. white pepper
- Pita chips or Italian bread (sliced thin)

Soften cream cheese. Add mayonnaise, sour cream, Parmesan cheese, garlic, onions, red bell pepper, artichoke hearts, hot sauce, salt & white pepper in bowl and mix thoroughly with an electric mixer. Bake in a 13x9 glass baking dish at 350° for 30 minutes. After baking, spoon dip into a small serving bowl and serve with pita chips or sliced Italian bread. Makes 8 cups.



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Itasca Country Crock-pot Wild Rice Soup

Itasca Country Crock-pot Wild Rice Soup (above)

- 3/4 C. uncooked wild rice
- 8 slices bacon
- 1 C. chicken or ham, cubed
- 1 C. mushrooms, slice
- 1 C. half & half
- 4 cubes chicken bouillon
- 2 T. butter
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 4 C. water
- 1/2 C. celery, diced (opt.)

Cook and crumble bacon. Combine wild rice, bacon, chicken, mushrooms, half & half, bouillon, butter, cream of mushroom soup, water and celery to crock-pot. Cook on high for 4 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve.

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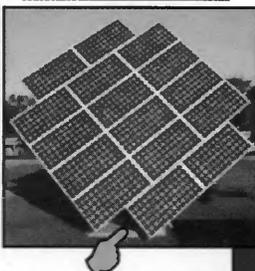
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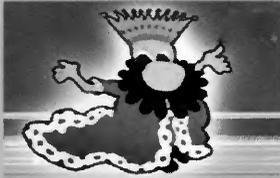


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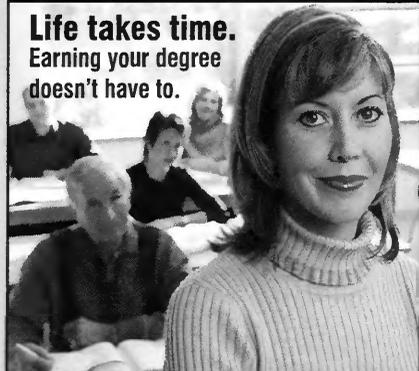
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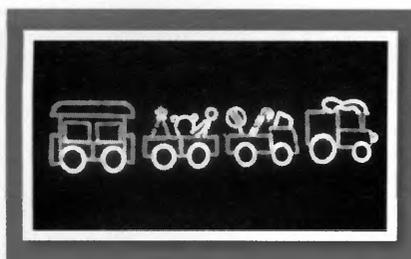
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2, Annual Christmas Concert sponsored by the United Churches of Galena. Musicians, vocalists, choirs, and praise bands. 7:00 p.m. at St. Michael Church, 227 S. Bench St. in Galena. Reception to follow in Dolan Hall. Contact information 815-777-2108.

4-5, Annual Dickens on the Square holiday celebration on Courthouse Square in downtown Macomb. Dickens era characters in period costumes strolling the downtown area. Live music and refreshments. For more information log on to www.macombareachamber.com or call 309-837-4855.

5, Annual 4-H Foundation Christmas Craft Show 9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Farm Bureau Hall in east Pittsfield. Concessions available. Door prizes and Longaberger baskets raffle. Free admission. Booth space available. For information call 217-285-5543.

5-6, Julmarknad Christmas Market. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. in Bishop Hill. Traditionally decorated shops and museums. Encounter Swedish folk characters roaming the village. Special music, Swedish foods, unique gifts and more. Chocolate Walk at Steeple Building. Select homemade chocolate delicacies for your holiday enjoyment. For information email bishophill@winco.net or call 309-927-3345.



4-6, Holiday Lights at the Henson Robinson Zoo 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. in Springfield. Tour the zoo decked out for the holidays with thousands of lights and light displays. Admission \$2.50 for adults, \$1.50 for children, or bring a new unwrapped toy donation for Toys for Tots for free admission! For information visit www.hensonrobinsonzoo.org or call 217-753-6217.



6, Pierre Menard Home Christmas Open House state historic site at 4230 Kaskaskia Road in Ellis Grove. Home of the first Lt. Governor of Illinois. Home decorated inside and out. Refreshments served by volunteers dressed in 1840's period clothing. For information visit www.friendsofthemenardhome.blogspot.com or call 618-859-3031.

5, McMillan and Life Christmas Tour 7 p.m. – 9 p.m. Southern Gospel Music hosted by The Barn located between Tower Hill and Pana. Christmas Cookies! For more information contact Joanne at 217-562-3562 (bjoanne@consolidate.net) or Judy at 217-539-4221 (jjksmith@frontier.net).

5, 12, The 7th Annual Christmas Bazaar, 119 South Appleknocker, Cobden. New and gently used, upscale and handmade items, including Christmas trees, trim, wrap, games and gifts. Shop in a restored 1892 building with old showcases and counters. 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. 618-893-2567 or 618-893-2865.

6, Annual 1830's Christmas Breakfast at the Macktown Living History Center 2221 Freeport Rd in Rockton. Step back in time and duplicate a historic, festive Christmas meal. The menu includes French-Canadian tourtiere meat pie, apples browned in butter with brown sugar and cinnamon, johnny cake and more! Period music and entertainment presented by reenactors in 1830's style clothing. For more information visit www.macktownlivinghistory.com or call 815-624-4200.

11-12, Lucia Nights Festival of Lights. 6 p.m. – 9 p.m. "Lucias" serve coffee and sweets in museums and shops. Special music at various village locations. Performers include the Peoria Cooperative Academy Chorale.

12, Open House and Candlelight Tour of Illinois' Oldest State Capitol building with period music and refreshments at 315 West Gallatin St. Candlelight Shopping sponsored by Vandalia Main St. with live window displays. Open 4:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m. For information contact Mary Cole at 618-283-1161.

12, Annual Christmas Bazaar at the Community Center in Cutler. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Also on Dec. 13th from 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. For information e-mail cutler@egyptian.net or call 618-497-2133.

12, The Barn Holiday Dinner 6 p.m. located between Tower Hill and Pana. Reservation required. Tickets \$10. For more information contact Joanne at 217-562-3562 (bjoanne@consolidate.net) or Judy at 217-539-4221 (jjksmith@frontier.net).

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12, Festival of Trees sponsored by Twelfth Street Presbyterian Church, 504 E 12th St in Alton, Ill. Holiday Ham Dinner from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. adults \$8, Children 6-10 \$5, 5 and under free. Six professionally decorated Christmas trees, holiday shop, boutique, baked goods, homemade candies, jams and apple butter. For information call 618-465-2507.

12, Super Saturday Auld Abe Syne: an 1800s Holiday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the Illinois State Museum in Springfield. Go back in time to learn of the nineteenth century holidays. Ongoing activities throughout the day take 30-45 minutes to complete and feature take-home crafts. Parents and families encouraged to participate. Registration is not required for this activity. For more information call 217-782-6044.

12, Annual Christmas House Tour 1 p.m. – 6 p.m. in Golconda. Purchase tickets at Pope Co. Museum on Main St. for \$10. Refreshments available. Christmas in the courtyard begins at 5:30 p.m. Depart from museum for candlelight walk and caroling to courtyard. Bonfire, hot chocolate, cookies and visit from Santa. 618-683-9702.

12, 31, Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, It's a Wonderful Death at Collver Family Winery in Barry. 217-335-3279.

13, Olde Tyme Christmas Fort Massac State Park, Metropolis. 1 p.m. – 4 p.m. 1700's decorations with period music and refreshments. 618-524-9321.

19, State Street Dance – The Nutcracker 7:30 p.m. at the Dellora Norris Cultural Arts Center, 1040 Dunham Rd. in St. Charles. For information visit www.norris-culturalarts.com or call 630-584-7200.



19, Christmas at the Mansions in Bloomington from 4 p.m. – 9 p.m. Tour 4 mansions decorated for Christmas. Tickets: \$10/person in advance; \$12/person at the door. Free shuttle bus service offered all evening from David Davis Mansion and Wesley United Methodist Church parking lot in Bloomington to all 4 mansions.

20, A Baroque Christmas 7:30 p.m. featuring Handel's Messiah, part 1 and the Hallelujah chorus, also carols for choir and audience. Holy Cross Catholic Church, 405 W. Clark St. in Champaign. For info visit www.baroqueartists.org or call 217-378-6802.

26, Noble Fool Theatre presents Tony N' Tina's Wedding 7 p.m. at Pheasant Run Resort and Spa, 4051 E. Main St. in St. Charles. Be a guest at this hysterical mock Italian-American wedding, where you're part of the family! Includes a ceremony full of mishaps and madcap comedy, cash bar, dinner, music and dancing. Overnight packages available. Admission \$69. 630-584-6342.

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.

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

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