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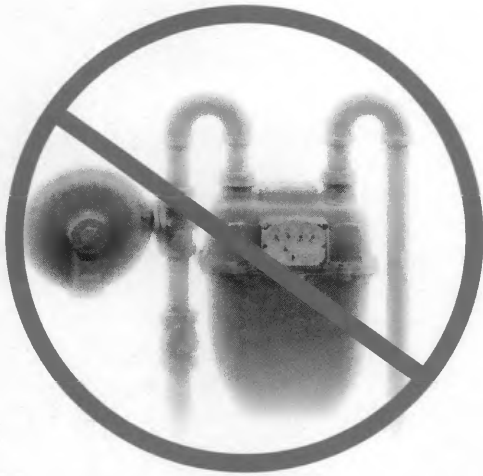
COUNTY LIVING

January 2009



PAGING ALL DOCTORS

Diagnosing and curing what ails rural healthcare in Illinois

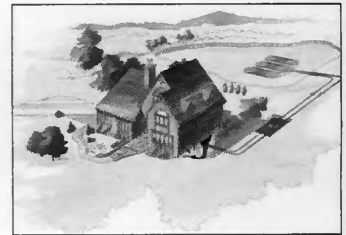
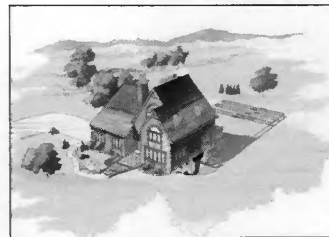


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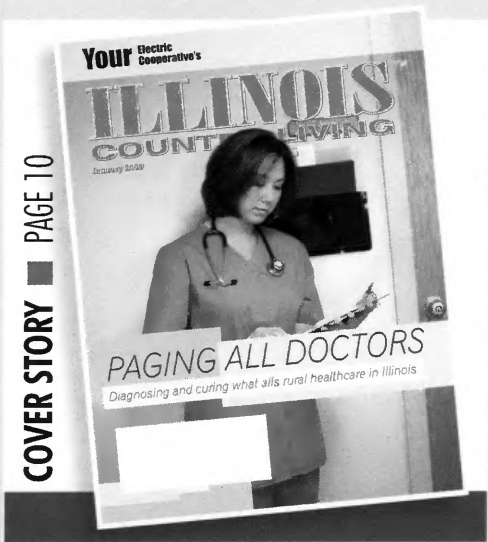
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PAGING ALL DOCTORS

Healthcare in the rural parts of Illinois is becoming harder to find, but more of a necessity. Find out what's being done to diagnose and cure this growing issue.

ILLINOISTM COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 66, No. 9, January 2009

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www.icl.coop

800-593-2432 • aiecinfo@aiec.coop

ohn Lowrey.....Editor
onie Larson.....Assistant Editor
atrina McCulley Wagner..... Associate Editor
isa Rigoni..... Advertising Manager
ancy R. Nixon.....Marketing Administrator
andy Wolske Advertising Coordinator/Graphic Designer
ennifer Danzinger, Kathy Feraris
& Chris Reynolds..... Graphic Designers
Connie Newenham..... Circulation Coordinator

Illinois Country Living is a monthly publication serving the communications needs of the locally owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives of Illinois. With a circulation of more than 174,000, the magazine informs cooperative members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

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Harvesting Earth's Geothermal Energy

Nothing beats the investment in geothermal heat pumps

Regular readers of Illinois Country Living know that electric cooperatives talk a lot about geothermal heat pumps. We have been promoting geothermal systems since the 1980s.

Geothermal is simply the VERY BEST, cleanest, most efficient, environmentally-friendly heating and cooling technology available today. That assessment isn't ours - it comes from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In other words, geothermal is green technology at its best.

How does it work? Geothermal systems get 350 to 400 percent efficiency by using the earth's natural energy, utilizing the heat from the earth for heating in the winter. Heat is usually transferred from the earth by fluid circulated through loops installed below ground. Then the heat is multiplied through a refrigeration process in the heat pump, and circulated through a forced air system. There's no combustion, no flame, no fuel. In the summer, the process reverses for cooling. Because the process uses the earth's natural energy, geothermal gets a great efficiency advantage compared to 75 to 100 percent efficiency for conventional heating and cooling equipment.

Think of the geothermal/conventional comparison this way. Contrast the mileage of an eight-cylinder sport utility truck, getting 10-15 miles-per-gallon, to a modern hybrid car getting 45-50 miles to the gallon of gas. There's simply no comparison in efficiency.

I've had a geothermal system in my 50-year-old home for nearly 10 years. My wife, Joan, and I can tell you first-hand that installing geothermal in your home or business should be a no-brainer decision. Our geothermal system has paid for itself

many times over in outstanding energy savings during the heating and cooling seasons.

The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Springfield office is also heated and cooled with a geothermal system. So I literally spend most of my waking hours every day staying comfortable because of geothermal heating and cooling!

If you're planning to build a new home or business in the near future, please consider a

geothermal system. If you're considering the replacement of an old gas furnace or central air system, consider geothermal. Either way, you'll be doing yourself a big favor for years to come.

Geothermal costs more to install up front, but you'll have a positive cash flow from day one because of your lower operating costs. Energy costs are typically less than half with geothermal compared to traditional systems. Most people find the additional cost of borrowing is more than covered by the energy savings from the more efficient system.

So, the geothermal system is one of those few investments you can make that will pay you back over and over again for years to come.

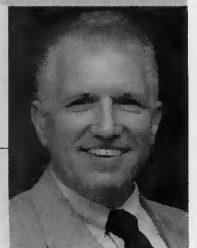
The Illinois electric co-ops believe so strongly in geothermal heating and cooling that they've taken a leadership role in forming a new statewide organization - the Geothermal Alliance of Illinois (GAI). The goal of this new organization is to advance the usage of geothermal technology and to help better educate and train all those involved in the geothermal heat pump industry. This includes dealers, installers, designers, engineers and others.

Above all, GAI wants to be THE SOURCE of good information and advice for consumers. Only those dealers that have been trained and passed a GAI-sponsored examination will be members of the organization. What this means for you, the consumer, is that by finding a certified dealer through GAI, you can assure yourself of the highest standards in the industry.

We urge you to visit the GAI Web site at www.geothermalallianceofillinois.org. At the site you can find contacts with folks who will help you locate a dealer or make contact with key people in the industry, and learn more about geothermal heating and cooling. You'll also be able to learn more about incentives for installing geothermal, like the \$2,000 federal income tax credit that goes into effect Jan. 1, 2009.

So, you want to really go green in the year ahead? Consider geothermal. ■

John Freitag is the Vice President of Operations for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. He also serves as the secretary-treasurer for the newly formed Geothermal Alliance of Illinois.



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.

"Energy costs are typically less than half with geothermal compared to traditional systems."

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DOE Expects Higher Heating Costs this Winter

The average heating bills for U.S. households will be 15 percent higher this winter compared to last winter, according to the latest projections from the Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA). The EIA's "Short-Term Energy and Winter Fuels Outlook," released in October, expects higher fuel costs to cause most of the increase, although colder weather will also contribute to the increase in many areas.

As has been the recent trend, those using heating oil will suffer most, with a 23 percent increase this winter. Those using natural gas for heating will experience an 18 percent increase, while those using propane and electricity will face the smallest impacts, with increases of 11

percent and 10 percent, respectively.

The report is also the first to note the ongoing impacts of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike on energy supplies in the United States. U.S. oil production will fall below 5 million barrels per day for the first time since 1946, while gasoline inventories are now at 180 million barrels, their lowest level since August 1967. In addition, natural gas production from federal waters in the Gulf of Mexico is projected to decline by 9.1 percent for 2008. In early October the Minerals Management Service (MMS) estimates that 44.8 percent of oil production in the Gulf remains shut-in, along with 38.7 percent of the natural gas production. ■

TV Viewers Gear up for Conversion to All-Digital Television

After Feb. 17, 2009, full-power television stations will broadcast in digital only. Digital broadcasting allows stations to offer improved picture and sound quality, and digital is much more efficient than analog. Further, DTV can provide interactive video and data services that are not possible with analog technology.

An important benefit of the switch to all-digital broadcasting is that it will free up parts of the valuable broadcast spectrum for public safety communications (such as police, fire departments and rescue squads). Also, some of the spectrum will be auctioned to companies that will be able to provide consumers with more advanced wireless services (such as wireless broadband).

For viewers who have one or more televisions that receive free over-the-air programming (with a roof-top antenna or "rabbit ears" on the TV), the type of TV you own is very important. A digital television (a TV with an internal digital tuner) will allow you to continue to watch free over-the-air programming after Feb. 17, 2009. However, if

you have an analog television, you will need a digital-to-analog converter box to continue to watch broadcast television on that set.

To help consumers with the DTV transition, the Government established the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program. Every U.S. household is eligible to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of eligible digital-to-analog converter boxes. The coupons may only be used for eligible converter boxes sold at participating consumer

electronics retailers, and the coupons must be used at the time of purchase. Manufacturers estimate that digital-to-analog converter boxes will sell from \$40 to \$70 each. This is a one-time cost. For more information on the Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program, visit the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Web site at www.dtv2009.gov, or call 1-888-388-2009 (voice) or 1-877-530-2634 (TTY).

For more information go to www.dtv.gov or call 1-888-CALL-FCC. ■





Illinois Lt. Gov. Pat Quinn (center) presented an Environmental Hero Award to the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and Prairie Power, Inc. for their newly-converted plugin hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV). John Freitag (left) of the AIEC and Greg Nieman of Prairie Power accepted the award. The U.S. Department of Energy's Idaho National Laboratory and seven electric co-ops across the country have joined the effort to give PHEVs a real-world test. So far, the converted Toyota Prius is getting about 80 miles per gallon and more than 100 mpg under certain conditions. "This is just one example of how we can take steps toward reducing our dependency on foreign oil," says Quinn.

How Families Can Cope With Economic Stress

Economic stress, job loss or pay cuts can create tremendous stress on a family. Here are some tips to protect your family during the stresses in our current economy:

- Greet each family member warmly every day. Never lose sight of how precious your family is.
- Provide structure and a predictable routine. Family meals and other daily routines help bring security in an insecure situation.
- Communicate beliefs, emotions and responsibilities with your family. Involve family members in

making major decisions.

- Make time for family fun and leisure activities.
- Resist using alcohol or drugs to de-stress.
- Build a support network with relatives, friends, neighbors and community members.
- Get help with managing your finances. Communities provide resources that can help.

The U of I Extension helps low-income families through our Food Nutrition Program (FNP) and Expanded Food and Nutrition

Education Program (EFNEP) -

www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/nutrition.

For budgeting help see *Getting*

Through Tough Times, at

www.extension.uiuc.edu/ruralroute/toughtimes.html. And if you've lost

your job, look for *Bouncing Back When Your Income Drops: Working*

Together as a Family found at

<http://pubs.cas.psu.edu/Freepubs/pdfs/ui341.pdf>.

Source: Patti Faughn, Family Life

Educator, University of Illinois

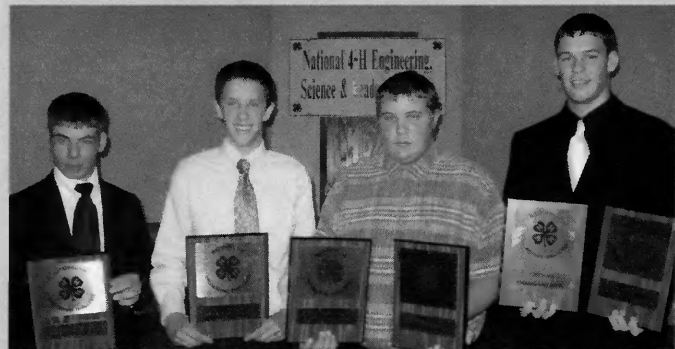
Extension, Springfield Center,

217-782-6515, pfaughn@illinois.edu. ■

Illinois 4-H Members Win National 4-H Engineering Bowl

Illinois 4-H members Mitchell Daugherty (Woodford County), Matthew Dehlinger (Richland County), Nick Salger (Randolph County) and Paul West (Henry County) won the National 4-H Engineering Bowl at the National 4-H Engineering Challenge in West Lafayette, Ind., Sept. 28-30, 2008. Illinois brought home top honors in the Engineering Bowl competition, defeating a combined team from Florida and Alabama in a preliminary round, Mississippi in the semi-finals, and Indiana in the final round to bring home the title.

The event drew 53 contestants from 12 states. Prior to the National Engineering Challenge, all of the contestants had previously won state competitions to qualify for the national event, which presented opportunities for individual competition in each of the project areas listed above. ■



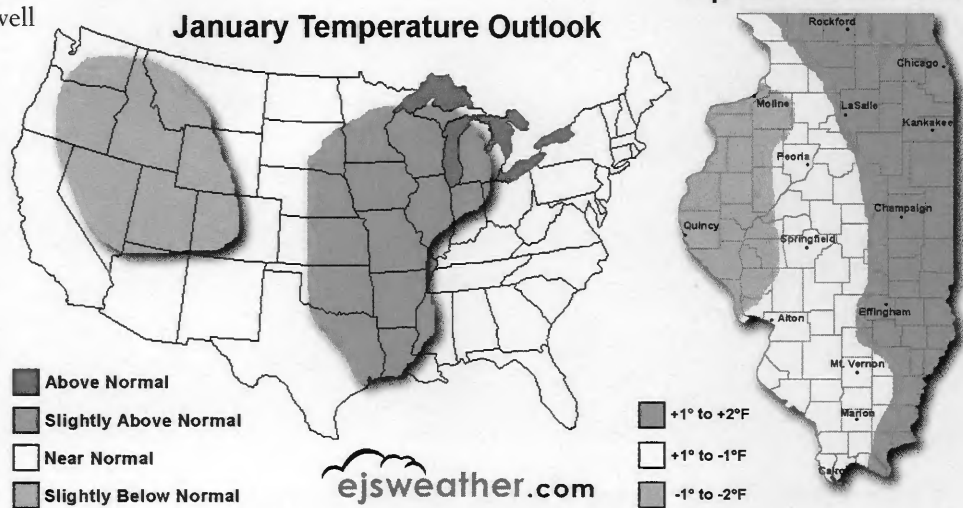
Illinois National 4-H Engineering Challenge winners (l-r) are Matthew Dehlinger (Richland County) fourth in Tractor; Paul West (Henry County) fifth in Electric Energy; Nick Salger (Randolph County) second in Tractor; and Mitchell Daugherty (Woodford County) second in Electric Energy.

Near To Slightly Warmer Than Normal January Expected

The latest long-range forecast models and climate indices are currently indicating that January of 2009 will see temperatures that average near to slightly above normal across Illinois.

Total heating degree days, as well as energy costs with respect to heating, are expected to also be lower than average in January, which should benefit the consumer.

The Illinois map this month shows the mean temperature departure from normal across the state for the past autumn season. On a whole, the state saw an average September through November when it came to temperatures. However, as can be seen, there was some contrast between the western and eastern portions of the state. ■



MIT Suggests Energy Solution

Construction of new coal-fired power plants in the United States is in danger of coming to a standstill, partly due to the high cost of anticipated requirements to capture all emissions of carbon dioxide (CO₂), according to a recent report by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). But an MIT analysis suggests an intermediate step could get construction moving again, allowing the nation to continue to use its abundant, low-cost coal reserves while also reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The MIT approach, called partial capture, can get CO₂ emissions from coal-burning plants down to emissions levels of natural gas power plants. New coal plants with lower CO₂ emissions would generate much-needed electricity while also demonstrating carbon capture and providing a setting for testing CO₂ storage—steps that will accelerate the large-scale deployment of full capture in the future.

Source: CFC Solutions
News Bulletin ■

New Opportunities Emerging for Rural Illinois Development

A new economic reality has emerged across the country in the wake of widespread job losses in manufacturing and other sectors. Unlike the older industrial economy, this new economy is embedded in smaller companies with unfamiliar names, says Timothy Collins, Assistant Director, Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University.

According to a recent Rural Research Report from the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University, new companies share common characteristics. They are flexible, adaptive and connected.

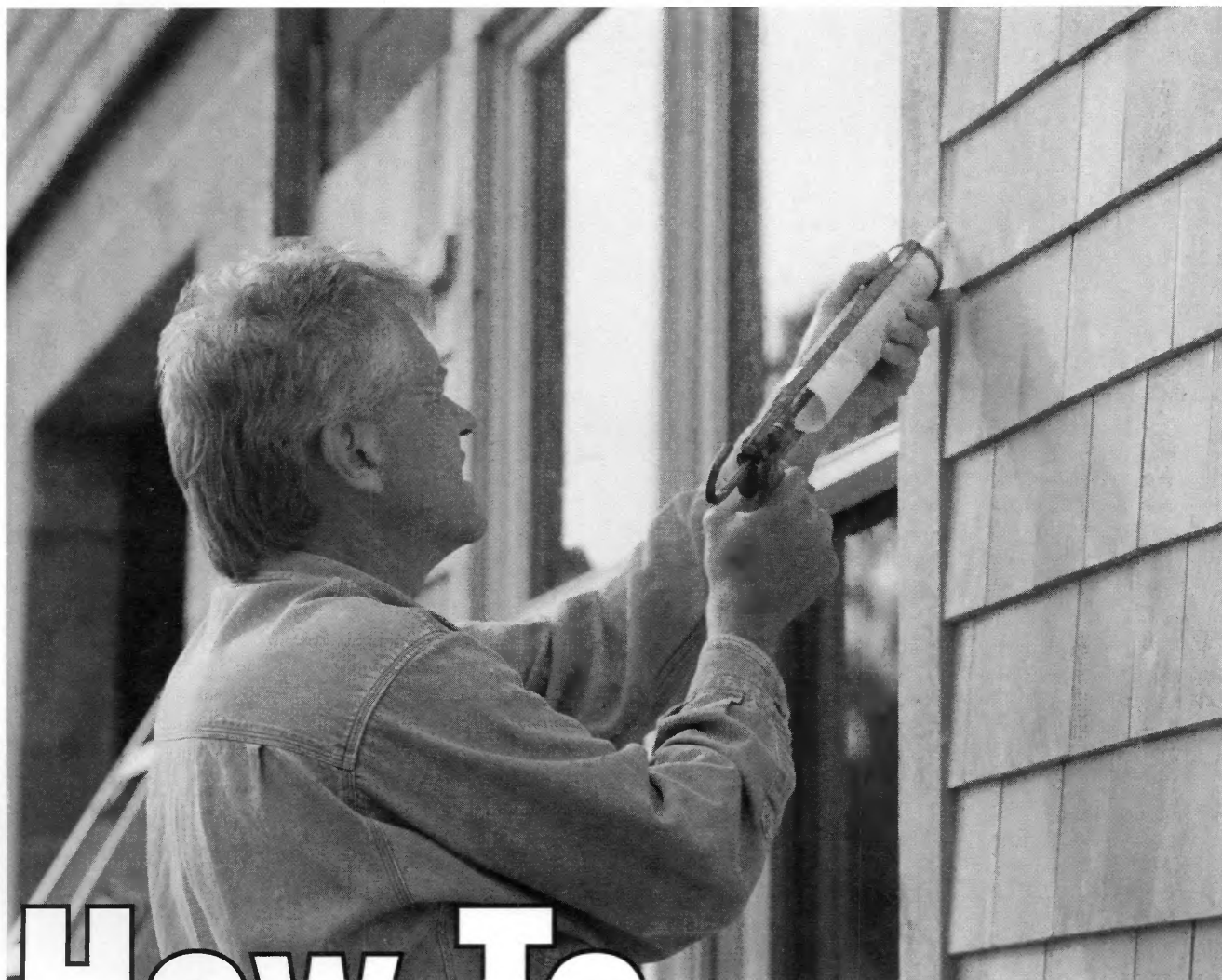
Rural communities have new and unprecedented opportunities, such as renewable energy, innovative manufacturing, value-added agriculture and cultural tourism that could create wealth even in the smallest places, says Collins.

Dozens of rural communities are now busy reinventing themselves by:

- mapping their assets and uncovering new opportunities
- leveraging their trusted networks to build stronger business connections on the outside
- aggressively pursuing broadband connections and new linkages with colleges and universities
- teaching and mentoring entrepreneurs
- reinventing their high schools
- collaborating with neighboring counties in new and different ways
- providing responsibilities more quickly to younger residents
- seeking advice and guidance from younger leaders

For more information about the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, visit www.IIRA.org or contact Timothy Collins at 800-526-9943 or t-collins@wiu.edu.

Source: Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University. ■



How To

Find and Fix Air Leaks In Your Home

Air leaks can lead to high-energy bills. Use these steps to find leaks in your home. Also, call your electric cooperative to find out if they conduct home blower door tests that will find air leaks for you.

1. Start outside. Look for gaps between your house and its foundation; gas, electric, phone, satellite, Internet and cable lines; your dryer vent; outdoor water faucets. A way to find large gaps in these places is to have someone shine a flashlight at night on one side

while you're on the other. If you can see light, air can certainly get through. Expandable foam may work well to fill in these gaps.

2. Next check the door and window frames. You can use a piece of paper slipped between the frame and window or door. If you can pull out the paper without it tearing, air can get in. Weatherstripping will seal these areas.
3. Search for small leaks using an incense stick. Pass the lit stick

along the edges of a suspected leak and see if the smoke blows in or out. Do this on a windy day. Check for small leaks around outlets on outside walls, ceiling fans, recessed lights, vent fans, etc. Caulk and weatherstripping can help stop these leaks.

Remember: If you find leaks, seal them! A variety of products, from caulk to foam sealers can be found at your local home store to help tighten up your home. Or call your co-op for more information.

PAGING ALL DOC

Diagnosing and curing what ails rural healthca

There's no such thing as a typical day for Dr. Michael McFadden. He's the only physician in Stockton, Ill., a village of 1,900 located about half-way between Galena and Freeport. After the alarm clock goes off around 5:30 a.m., the only certainty is that it'll be a long day and he'll see cases ranging from ingrown toenails to terminal instances of cancer and everything in-between.

McFadden is one of a dwindling number of physicians practicing in rural areas, a disturbing trend throughout Illinois. In fact, if the rural healthcare system in Illinois was a patient, its condition may be described as critical.

A shortage of physicians, other healthcare providers and hospitals is leading some experts to say that there is a rural healthcare crisis in Illinois. Rather than offering last rites though, many leaders and organizations are looking to cure what ails rural healthcare.

The challenges facing rural healthcare are numerous: Only about 10 percent of all physicians in the

U.S. practice in rural settings, despite the fact that nearly one-fourth of the population lives in these areas, according to the National Rural Health Association. Additionally, rural residents tend to be older and have less disposable income than people with urban addresses, and it's estimated that 35 percent of rural Illinoisans are without private medical insurance. When added to the sometimes vast distances these patients live from doctors' offices and hospitals, it's easy to understand why analysts see a looming healthcare emergency in rural areas.

"We're probably approaching what I'd call a 'dire straights' situation," says



Alice Foss, of the Illinois Rural Health Association. "We're at a crossroads."

One of the biggest problems for healthcare both in Illinois and across the country is simply a lack of providers.

"We have a shortage of medical professionals in both urban and rural areas, but it's a greater shortage in rural areas," says Tim Skinner of the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network for Healthcare Professionals. In fact, 80 percent of rural counties in Illinois are considered to be medically underserved.

The reasons why so many rural communities are left looking for physicians range from political to social to simple economics.

DOORS

Illinois

By Les O'Dell



“The cost to recruit a physician can be as much as \$30,000 per hire, plus salary. Smaller communities often don’t have those financial resources.”

- Tim Skinner of the National Rural Recruitment and Retention Network for Health care Professionals

“There are a number of factors in play right now,” Foss says. “One issue is malpractice reform and award caps. Those caps are now being challenged in a case before the Illinois State Supreme Court.

“If a physician can go into practice in another state that has malpractice reform, it’s difficult to keep them in Illinois,” Foss adds. “We’re losing doctors to other states because Illinois doesn’t look too appealing.”

State reimbursements for physicians who treat patients on public assistance is another issue according to State Representative Mike Bost (R-Murphysboro).

“When you look at rural health-

care, you’re looking at a large population of individuals on Medicare or Medicaid; and right now the state is running months behind in reimbursing providers,” he says. “If just a few of your patients are public aid recipients, and payments are delayed, it’s just a pain,” he adds, “but if a majority of your patients are on Medicare, not receiving those payments can put you out of business.”

Skinner says there are other economic factors as well.

“When medical students come out of school, they often do so with great amounts of debt. For that reason, many choose specialties that pay more than primary care and then locate their spe-

cialty practices in urban areas,” he says.

Skinner adds that smaller communities often can’t afford to compete with urban centers to attract physicians.

“The cost to recruit a physician can be as much as \$30,000 per hire, plus salary. Smaller communities often don’t have those financial resources.”

Another factor, says Skinner, has to do with the students that apply to medical school.

“Medical schools accept more students from urban areas than from rural areas, simply because there are more urban applicants,” he explains. “Once the students graduate, these new doctors tend to practice in surroundings they’re familiar with, so if we don’t

have rural students applying and being accepted, that means we don't get rural physicians.

Not only do doctors who choose to practice in rural areas bring with them health and medical benefits to their communities, they also are a tremendous stimulus to the local economy. A recent report by the Kentucky Center for Rural Health Professions indicates that each rural physician generates as much as \$343,000 annually in economic impact for his or her community. This economic boost comes in the form of other jobs, related businesses like pharmacies and household spending.

Jim Nightingale, mayor of Carthage, a town of about 2,700 people in western Illinois, says the economic benefits of having physicians are very important.

"There are a lot of pluses," he says. "Healthcare creates jobs and that means money stays in the community."

Skinner says physicians are a key piece of the economic development puzzle for rural areas.

"The smaller the community, the more important it is. If you're going to have a viable community and grow it, you have to have jobs, schools and medical care," he says.

"Without a physician," explains

Cynthia Struthers of the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University, "you're going to have a hard time attracting other people to your community. 'It's as critical as local schools. It's one of the things that's most important to people.'"

A shortage of healthcare providers and facilities in rural parts of the state puts a greater emphasis on first responders and other services like helicopter ambulance programs.

"We average 250 calls per year for our ambulance service," says Kevin Day of the Kinmundy-Alma Fire Protection District. Day and 13 other volunteer emergency medical technicians cover 148 square-miles of Marion County.

"It's a big commitment you make," he says. "Communities like ours can't afford to pay first-responders; we're all volunteers. It's a tough job, but when the tone goes off, we don't stay home. We have to value the service above everything else."

It's estimated that a majority of Illinois communities, especially those in the rural areas of the state, rely on volunteer first responders to treat medical emergencies.

"Our goal is to provide the best critical care as soon as possible, but a trip to a hospital might be as much as

35 miles," he says. "If we had a doctor or hospital closer, that would sometimes make all of the difference."

EMTs like Day rely heavily on air transport to quickly get severely injured or ill patients to the treatment they need.

"Often in the most extreme cases, a helicopter ambulance has already been notified before we ever leave our station. We land them right on scene and they can quickly get the patient to a class-one trauma center," Day noted.

Ellen Sowders of Arch Air Medical Services says flight crews are making more trips to rural areas.

"We're getting called to the rural areas because of the distances involved," she explains. "When there's a need for specialty medical care that's time-critical, that's when we get called."

With all of the challenges, it would be easy to discount the future of rural healthcare, but Dr. Andy Riffey, a family practitioner in Vienna, says that there's still a place for the small-town family doctor.

"We're the gateway into medicine for many people. We're the only medical provider many of our patients will see," he says. "But that means we get to connect with people on a very personal level."

For that reason, rural doctors like McFadden and Riffey have to be self-sufficient and confident.

"Many older patients are used to family doctors who do everything," McFadden explains. "They're not going to travel to a dermatologist or to a surgeon to have a mole removed; they're going to the same doctor they see for a regular check-up or for a twisted ankle. My friends from medical school who practice in cities don't see the diversity we do."

Riffey agrees. "My days are very diverse. I see anything from newborns to people older than 90, and common colds to well-care visits," he says.

Being a country doctor in town can be a challenge and time-consuming.

"I spend an hour a day in the car, just going to and from the hospital for

"Without a physician you're going to have a hard time attracting other people to your community. It's as critical as local schools. It is one of the things that is most important to people."

- Cynthia Struthers of the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs at Western Illinois University."

rounds," McFadden says. "Plus, there are nursing home visits, seeing patients in the office and the occasional house call. Also, I'll often get calls at home, asking if I could meet a patient at the office after hours. I would conservatively say I work 60 to 80 hours a week." He adds that it's sometimes tough to have a private life.

"Sometimes you want to go to the ball game and just blend in, but everybody wants to ask questions. You're trying to watch the game and the guy sitting next to you wants to talk about indigestion."

Riffey, who was raised on a 400-acre grain farm near Virden, and McFadden, who grew up milking cows on his family's farm near Apple River, are exactly the kind of physicians that most experts agree rural Illinois needs. That's why programs, like the Rural Medical Education Program (RMED) at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford, were established in 1993. The program actively recruits and trains students for careers in rural, primary care medicine.

"The total emphasis is on students from rural areas," explains Mark Meurer, Assistant Director of the program. "Students from rural areas tend to go back to practice in rural areas."

The efforts seem to be working. So far, more than 60 RMED graduates are serving as primary care doctors in rural parts of Illinois, including McFadden.

"I turned down offers from clinics in much larger cities, in order to practice here," he says. Lori Williams of the Illinois Hospital Association says rural hospitals also are reaching out to help identify and recruit students to enter healthcare professions. Some are even working to provide resources necessary to produce graduates.

"We have to develop a pipeline of people with a desire to enter rural healthcare," she says. "And we have to make sure we work with medical schools to prepare students for rural areas."

Other creative approaches are being implemented to overcome the lack of specialty providers in under-



Dr. Andy Riffey (left) gives Aaron Wright, one of his regular patients, an annual checkup. Riffey, who grew up on a 400-acre grain farm near Virden, now provides family medical care for the town's 3,488 citizens. As a family physician serving a rural area Riffey is a rare breed. Just 10 percent of our nation's doctors serve the 25 percent of the population living in rural areas. With the closest specialists 50 miles away Riffey's patients depend on him for a wide range of medical services.

served regions. According to Riffey, as it is now, getting patients to see specialists can be troublesome.

"Often the closest specialist is 40 or 50 miles away," he says. "Sometimes it's hard to convince patients to go to the 'big town' for specialty care."

For that reason, Williams states that many hospitals that used to compete for specialists and for patients are now entering cooperative agreements.

"Hospitals now are beginning to share specialists who can come into areas on occasion to provide services."

Other solutions may include a move toward telehealth or telemedicine, where diagnosis or consultations are provided through the Internet or closed-circuit television.

"We are starting to see more telehealth applications in Illinois," reports John Record of the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine. "Specific areas that are gaining application include radiology and mental health."

Record says it's common for X-rays and other diagnostic images such as those from CAT scans and MRIs to be interpreted by physicians in other cities. He points out that psychiatrists

or counselors don't necessarily have to be in the same room with their patients, and can often work with individuals through a video connection.

Regardless of whether healthcare providers serve a rural population through their own office or through video conferencing, what many rural patients look for is someone who has an affinity for the country lifestyle and for their community.

"People want a doctor who is like a neighbor," WIU's Struthers says. "It doesn't matter where the doctor lives, as long as he or she is considered part of the community where they practice."

That being said, when Dr. McFadden gets home tonight, finally eats a late supper and begins to work on the stack of patients' charts he carried home, he can do so knowing that he's making a difference.

"Serving a small town is very rewarding because you're not only taking care of the community; you're one of their own and people are genuinely glad to have you," he says. "It can be tough, is sometimes humbling, but always is very rewarding." ■

Make a Life Saving New Year's Resolution

How to eliminate electrical hazards in your home

Tens of thousands of fires are caused each year by electrical problems inside the home, but most can be easily prevented with a few simple steps. Taking a few minutes to check for and eliminate electrical hazards is a New Year's resolution that makes sense!

Safe Electricity suggests teaching your children how to be safe around electricity. As part of the new "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, the program urges parents and other caregivers to make sure children are aware of these hazards. Use this electrical safety checklist to help protect your home and loved ones:

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

Electrical accidents and fires kill more than a thousand people, and result in tens of thousands of injuries each year.

Keeping you safe all year is the goal of Safe Electricity, an electrical safety public awareness program created and supported by a coalition of several dozen organizations, including electric utilities, educators and other entities committed to promoting electrical safety. For more information or games and materials to help teach children about electrical safety, visit www.SafeElectricity.org. ■

Molly Hall is the Director of Safe Electricity. E-mail: molly-hall@SafeElectricity.org and for more information on these and other kinds of situations involving electricity visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



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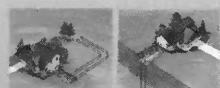
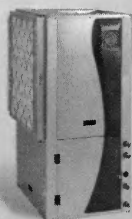
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Trees and Ice Don't Mix

How to help your trees and shrubs cope with winter

Winter is great. Snow can cover up all the dreariness of a barren winter landscape, hiding the browns and grays. Nestled on evergreen branches, snow acts like icing, highlighting the green limbs beneath.

Winter is great. Bulbs need the chilling temperatures to set the flower buds for next spring. Cold can kill many of the overwintering insects. Freezing and thawing can actually improve the quality of compacted soils over time. Winter is great as long as you experience it from an indoor window with a cup of steaming liquid in your hand.

Winter becomes a royal pain in the neck when you have to start shoveling the snow and warding off the ice that wreaks more havoc than the snow, though there are times when a heavy wet snow can do as much damage as ice.

Heavy snow and ice create weight problems for the trees and shrubs, particularly those evergreens we like to see highlighted. The larger the leaf surface, or even the "more" the leaf surface, the greater potential for damage. Deciduous trees don't suffer as much, mainly because there are no leaves to catch the ice or snow.

But experience does teach us that ice can cause problems no matter what, and not just on power lines.

Weak wooded trees, such as birch, silver maple, the most-susceptible ornamental pears, shingle oaks, willows and poplars, can snap with little more than a half inch of ice.

These fast growing trees, like most fast growing trees, don't develop the internal structure to support weight, which is fine as long as the plants are not exposed to any snow, wind or ice damage.

Even strong wooded trees such as sugar maples, many of the white and red oaks, lindens and ash can become match sticks if the ice accumulation is heavy enough or if the tree is poorly structured. Rotted or hollow trunks, poor branch angles, repeated injury and pest injury can dump a hard-

wood tree into the softwood category.

Of course, when limbs start crashing, the damage can be severe, especially if powerlines are nearby.

There's little a homeowner can do for tall trees during the winter when ice and snow start accumulating. It's, sadly, an almost "let nature take its course" attitude. Refill your mug and stuff plugs into your ears so you won't hear all the cracking and breaking.

For smaller plants you can use a broom to brush the snow and ice off. Brush up and away, not down, to prevent limbs from snapping from the weight and action of the broom.

Remember, ice crystals within the limbs, can still make branches susceptible to breakage. Use small quick strokes instead of sweeping actions.

This works best on broadleaf and needled evergreens and limbs that might be close to the ground.

If limbs do break, take stock on what you safely can remove or fix. Be realistic. Unless you're a professional, both feet should remain on the ground. Chainsaws are not to be used over your head.

Remove damage that is causing potential hazards, such as limbs dangling over sidewalks, driveways and the house. Other damage can wait until the weather is more cooperative. In fact, waiting to remove limbs until spring isn't such a bad thing, as the woody plants are still dormant.

If damage is close to a powerline, call the power company. This is a must.

Regular tree pruning helps to develop a proper shape with the proper branch angles of 45 to 60 degrees. A professional arborist can help, as well as your local University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener. Developing the correct shape starts when you plant the tree or shrub and continues throughout its life. ■



"Of course, when limbs start crashing, the damage can be severe, especially if powerlines are nearby."

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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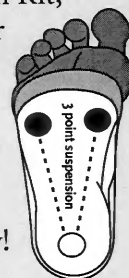
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Keeping the Cold Out for a Happy New Year

Start the year off with an easy energy-saving fix

What do you mean I need to date my check with the year 2009? Surely, 2008 isn't gone already. I haven't even begun to teach you everything that I want you to know about energy efficiency. Goodness, the years do go by fast so we better get with it.

Did you make improvements to your house during 2008 that lowered your utility bills and made your house more comfortable?

I know for a fact that a lot of you did because you have called me at the office and told me so. I don't think that I have ever received a call from anyone who said it didn't work. Well, all I know to do is just keep on teaching.

The last two articles were about cold floors. Well, let's just move up a little higher and talk about walls.

If you have your house thermostat set at a warm temperature, the walls should be warm. If they are not, it simply means that the insulation in the wall is inadequate or that the wall has air infiltration problems. In most houses we've tested, it's both.

If you want to know about your walls, wait for a cold windy day, which shouldn't be a problem finding this time of year, dampen your hand with a wet washcloth, which makes your hand more sensitive to cold air, and place it about an inch in front of the electrical outlets and switches.

You will probably be amazed at the cold air that you feel. In fact, when you add up all of the points of air infiltration in an average home, it would be like having a large hole in your wall or leaving a window open.

If you do not feel cold air at these locations it probably means that your walls have cellulose or foam insulation or that your house was well caulked and the fiberglass insulation was properly installed.

I can tell you for a fact most of you will feel the air.

So what can you do about it? If there is no insulation in your walls, it may or may not be

feasible to add insulation. Check with a local insulation company or call me at my home office and I will try to help you.

If your walls do have insulation but you still feel the air, there is a simple solution.

Go to your local hardware store and buy foam gaskets and install them at all electrical outlets and switches. Also, install childproof plugs in the unused outlets. Of course, to be safe, turn the electricity off before removing the outlet covers. Once you've finished this job, you will be amazed at the amount of exterior cold air that you can stop.

When you have finished installing the gaskets, dampen your hand again and go through the rooms of your house and check areas where there are often small cracks, such as along the baseboards, window trimming and fireplaces. In those areas where you find air infiltration, use clear caulk to seal those places. In most cases you are only talking of a few hours of work and very little expense. Trust me, you will be glad you did it. It will make a big difference.

You can also find and fix air infiltration problems around doors fairly easily. Sometimes the leaky door problem is obvious with light streaming through the cracks. But you can find the less obvious leaks using the wet hand method described above.

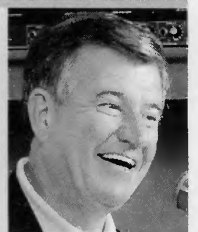
While it may not provide the best long-term sealing of doors, you can very easily buy and install self-adhesive foam weatherstripping around your doorjamb.

Now run on down to Wal-mart or your nearest hardware store, spend a few dollars on sealing material, and start sealing up your home. You can do it all on a Saturday morning and be done with your good deed for the weekend. That way you can ignore all the other honey-do chores guilt free, and spend the rest of the weekend watching football and feeling warm and toasty.

Well, that's all for now. I still can't believe it's 2009. Happy New Year, y'all! ■

"When you add up all of the points of air infiltration in an average home, it would be like having a large hole in your wall or leaving a window open."

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.dougrye.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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Planning Our Energy Future

Co-ops Working to Keep Electric Bills Affordable

By Scott Gates

While it's easy to take electric power for granted, that may not always be the case. Today's economic crisis makes it all the more critical that work begins soon to address growing issues in the energy industry. Otherwise, electricity could quickly become less of an affordable staple and more of a pricey luxury.

In recent years, the collision of several factors increasing demand for electricity, rising fuel and construction costs, and climate change – has created what's been called the energy industry's "perfect storm."

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecasts the need for electricity will climb by 30 percent between now and 2030. To meet this growth, the U.S. Department of Agriculture projects electric co-ops must double generation capacity over the next 11 years. Yet building new power plants will be expensive, so electric co-ops must turn to both cutting-edge and time-tested solutions to keeping the lights on.

"Without advancing technology, our options are limited," says Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus member-owned electric co-ops.

"But whatever solutions we come to in addressing this energy crisis, we must keep consumers in mind. With many electric co-op members already working hard to make ends meet, this is no time to enact hasty energy policy that will push electric bills higher."

Relatively high costs for construction materials and uncertainty about climate change goals have stalled development of new baseload generation.

New nuclear power plants are stymied by high costs and local political resistance in many areas. As a result, the last new reactor to become operational was a Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) plant in 1996, according to the Nuclear Energy Institute.

In years past, the burden of meeting electric demand would typically fall to coal-fired plants, which provide about half of the nation's electricity. But with plans for new coal plants hitting snags in just about every state, utilities are being forced to turn to natural gas, a more expensive fuel.

"The main challenge we're facing now is that it's hard to build new baseload generation in general, but even tougher for units that don't burn natural gas," remarks Paul McCurley, NRECA Chief Engineer. "The lower up-front



U.S. electric utilities will need to invest between \$1.5 trillion and \$2 trillion in the construction of new facilities between 2010 and 2030 to maintain current levels of electric reliability, according to a report by The Brattle Group. New generation will cost \$697 billion and \$298 billion will be needed for new transmission facilities. Another \$582 billion will be needed for distribution facilities.

costs, but higher operating costs of natural gas generation traditionally made it a good fuel source for peaking power — used only when demand for electricity is at its highest — but not for baseload power plants that generate electricity around the clock."

English says, "The resulting reliance on natural gas increases the risk of higher electric bills to consumers and lowers overall reliability due to decreasing fuel diversity. Unfortunately, the question no longer is whether electric bills will increase, but just how high they will go."

In an effort to broaden limited options and make bills more affordable, electric co-ops have come to embrace the concept of a multi-pronged solution spelled out by the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit, utility-sponsored consortium whose members include electric co-ops. With heavy focus on research and development, an array of yet-to-be-developed and existing technologies could keep affordable electricity flowing between now and 2030, while significantly reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Steps to achieving that diverse solution include:

- Investing in renewable energy.
- Building advanced, clean coal-fired power plants.
- Expanding nuclear power capacity.
- Stringing new transmission lines.
- Improving energy efficiency across the board.

Fortunately, electric co-ops have a long tradition of promoting energy efficiency. "The vast majority of electric co-ops, a full 92 percent, already sponsor energy efficiency education programs, and 77 percent offer residential energy audits to their consumers," explains Ed Torrero, executive director of NRECA's Cooperative Research Network.

Electric co-ops are also pioneers in load management programs, which allow them to reduce power consumption during peak demand periods.

For example, Shelby Electric Cooperative, Shelbyville, Ill., provides residential members with a very unique load management option. By combining the co-op's automated metering reading system (AMR) and whole-house standby generators, members can sign up for a lower rate and have backup power anytime the power goes off. The co-op can remotely turn off power to the meter through the AMR system during peak demand periods. This triggers the generator to automatically kick in just like it would during a power outage.

For every 100 members that buy the generators and agree to the interruptible rate, Shelby Electric gains about 1 MW in load management capability. That has the potential of saving the co-op and all its members \$50,000 a year in power costs.

"Our goal is to get 10 percent of our members signed up for interruptible power," says Jim Coleman, President/CEO of Shelby Electric.

Noting that load management acts like "a power plant in reverse," Torrero indicates roughly 37 percent of all co-ops can directly control appliances, chiefly water heaters and air conditioners.

"Few realize how well electric cooperatives have done in this area," Torrero says.

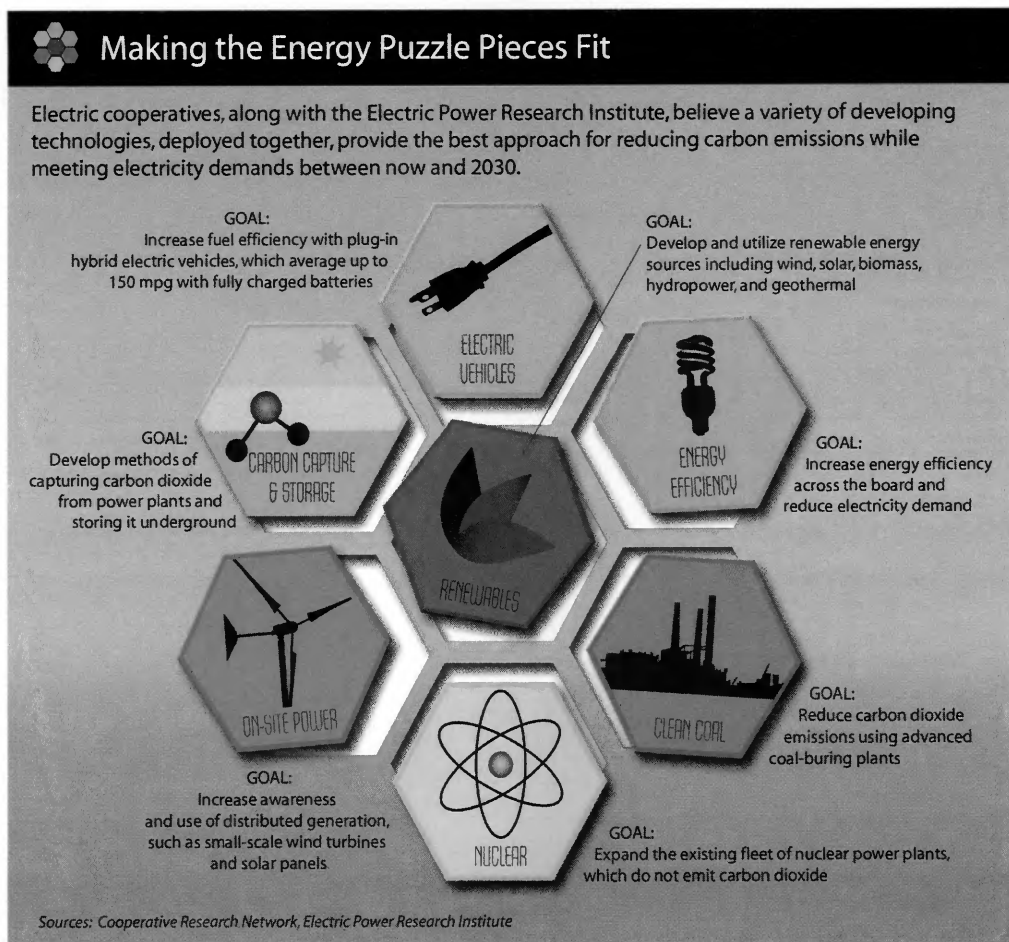
Between energy efficiency and load management efforts, local electric co-ops reduced demand by 2,200 MW in 2006 — roughly the equivalent of three large coal-fired power plants, according to EIA. That added up to \$50 million in fuel cost

savings and offset more than 2,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions, equal to what 700 cars put out in a year.

A lot more work remains and it needs to start quickly. This year, some parts of the country could experience a very real shortage of power unless more power plants are built, according to a late 2008 report by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, a Princeton, N.J.-based non-profit organization charged with monitoring America's power system reliability.

What can you do? In addition to participating in load control programs at your co-op and following energy saving suggestions from co-op efficiency experts, English points to the electric co-op grassroots awareness campaign *Our Energy, Our Future™*. It's an important part of the co-ops' nationwide effort to involve consumer-members in solving the nation's energy crisis. You simply need to visit www.ourenergy.coop to get involved.

"By creating a dialogue between consumers and elected officials about our collective energy future, we build the foundation for a working partnership in which government understands and can help meet the needs of cooperative members," English says. "Though co-ops are taking steps to deal with this impending crisis through energy efficiency and demand-response programs, serious policy decisions are ahead of us — the root problems are certainly not going away."



Who: St. John Lutheran Church of Elizabeth

Cost: \$12, plus \$3 shipping

Details: soft-backed, spiral-bound

Pages of recipes: 26

Send checks to: Pastor Steven Anderson

8315 S. Massbach Rd., Elizabeth, IL 6102

or call 815-598-3367

Turtle Cookies (above)

- 2 C. flour
- 1 C. brown sugar, firmly packed
- 1/2 C. butter, softened
- 1 C. pecan halves
- 2/3 C. butter
- 1/2 C. brown sugar
- 1 (6-oz.) pkg. chocolate chips

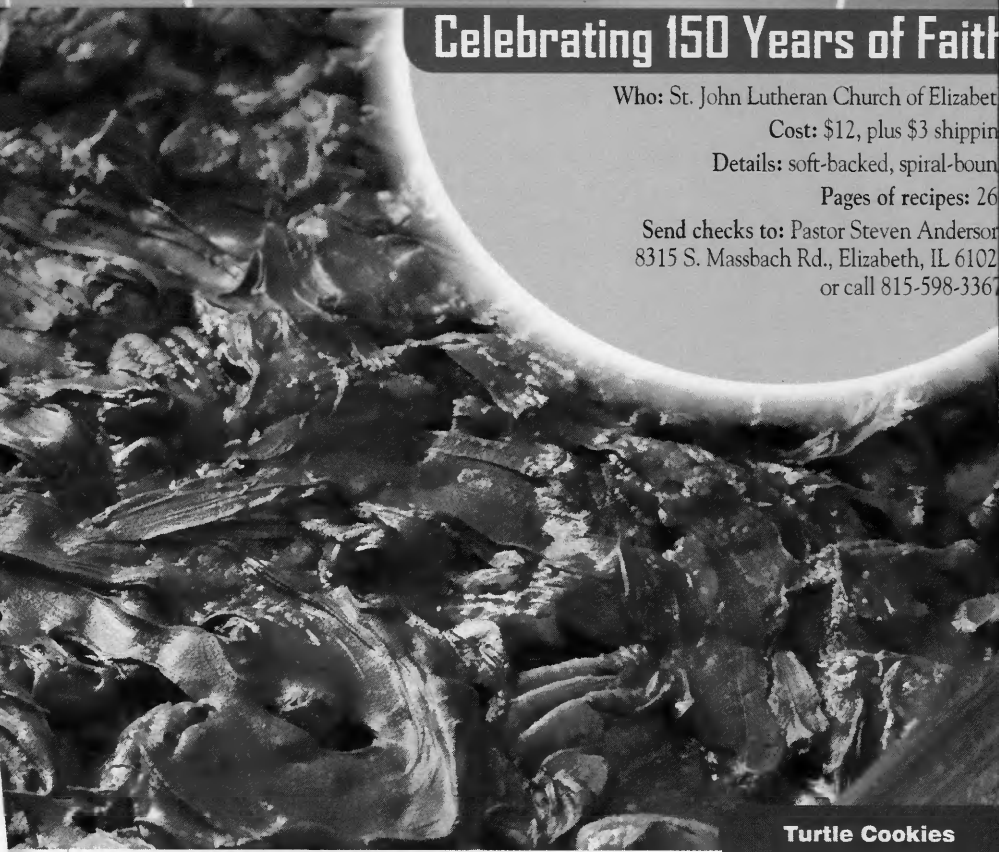
Preheat oven to 350°. Combine flour, 1 C. brown sugar and 1/2 C. softened butter. Pat into an ungreased 9x13-inch pan. Sprinkle with pecan halves. In a saucepan, combine 2/3 C. butter and 1/2 C. brown sugar. Cook over medium heat until surface begins to boil, stirring constantly. Pour evenly over the crust. Bake 18-20 minutes until caramel layer is bubbly and crust is light golden brown. Remove from oven. Sprinkle chocolate chips over the top and allow them to slightly melt for 2 to 3 minutes, then slightly swirl. Cool completely and cut.

Seasoned Pretzels

- 2 (10-oz.) pkg. small pretzels
- 1/2 C. vegetable oil
- 2 pkgs. Good Seasons roasted garlic dressing mix
- 1 pkg. Hidden Valley Original Ranch dressing mix

Put pretzels in a large pan. Mix salad mixes and oil together with an electric mixer. Pour over pretzels and stir. Spread pretzels on cake pans and bake at 250° for 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes.

Photos by *Catrina McCulley Wagner*



Turtle Cookies

Lemon Delight Cake

- 1 (18-1/4-oz.) pkg. lemon cake mix
- 1-1/3 C. water
- 3/4 C. egg substitute
- 1/3 C. unsweetened applesauce
- 3 T. poppy seeds

Filling:

- 1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese
- 1 (15-3/4-oz.) can lemon pie filling
- 1/2 C. confectioner's sugar

Topping:

- 1/3 C. packed brown sugar
- 1/4 C. chopped pecans
- 3 T. all-purpose flour
- 4-1/2 tsp. butter, melted
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp. vanilla

Glaze:

- 1/2 C. confectioner's sugar
- 4 tsp. lemon juice

In a large mixing bowl, beat together cake mix, water, egg substitute, applesauce and poppy seeds on medium speed for 2 minutes. Coat a 13x9-inch baking pan with non-stick cooking spray and dust with flour; spread half of batter into pan. In another large mixing bowl, beat cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in the pie filling. Beat in confectioner's sugar. Drop by teaspoonfuls over batter, spread gently. Top with remaining batter. Combine topping ingredients; sprinkle over batter. Bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean. Cool. Combine confectioner's sugar and lemon juice and drizzle over cake. Refrigerate leftovers.

Amish Baked Oatmeal

- 1-1/2 C. quick-cooking oatmeal
- 1/2 C. sugar
- 1/2 C. milk
- 1/4 C. butter, melted
- Warm milk

- 1 egg
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- Fresh fruit and/or brown sugar (opt.)

Combine all ingredients except warm milk and fresh fruit; mix well. Spread evenly in a greased 13x9-inch baking pan. Bake at 350° for 25 to 30 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Immediately spoon into bowls; add warm milk. Top with fruit and/or brown sugar if desired.

Recipes From The Flock

Who: Astoria Church of the Brethren

Cost: \$10, plus \$4 shipping

Details: hard-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 145

Send checks to: Nancy Heitz,
1559 E. Heitz Rd., Vermont, IL 61484
or call 309-784-4167.

Muffin Donuts (right)

3 C. sugar
1-1/2 C. vegetable oil
3 eggs
4-1/2 C. flour
3 tsp. baking powder
3/4 tsp. nutmeg
1-1/2 tsp. salt
1-1/2 C. milk
Cinnamon/sugar

Mix together sugar, oil and eggs at high speed. Add the flour, baking powder, nutmeg, salt and milk. Continue to mix well at high speed. Pour into muffin tins. Bake at 325° for 15-20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Brush the tops and bottoms with melted butter and dip in cinnamon/sugar.

Frankfurter Casserole

1 lb. frankfurters, sliced (like pennies)
2 T. butter or margarine
3/4 C. chopped onions
2-1/4 C. (12-oz.) uncooked noodles
1 can condensed tomato or cream of mushroom soup
1 soup can of milk
Chopped parsley
Grated cheese (opt.)

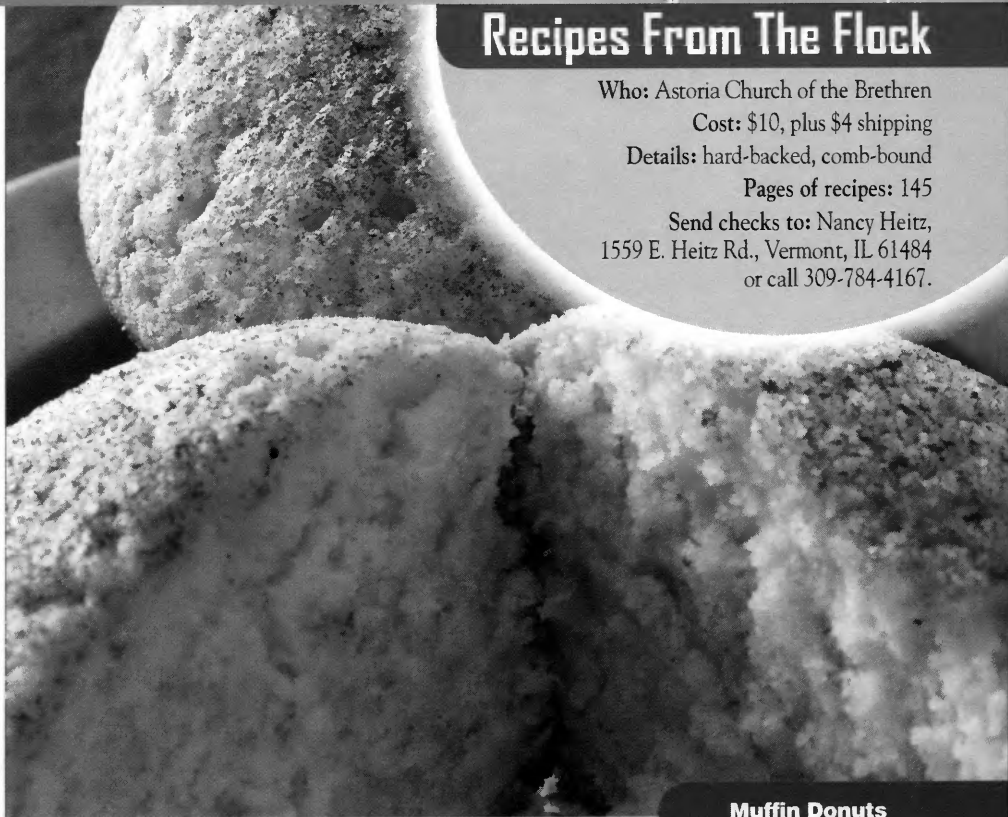
Melt butter. Add sliced frankfurters and onions. Stir frequently while browning, about 5 minutes. Add noodles, soup and milk. Bring to a boil; cover and simmer 15 minutes. Stir occasionally. Sprinkle with cheese or parsley before serving.

Hamburger Casserole

1 lb. ground beef
1 lg. onion, chopped or dry onion flakes
1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 can cream of chicken soup
1-1/2 C. water
1/2 C. plain rice
1 can Chinese noodles
1/4 C. soy sauce
1 C. chopped celery

Brown ground beef and onion in a large skillet. Add mushroom and chicken soups. Stir in water, rice, celery and soy sauce. Pour into a large 12x8-inch casserole dish. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Sprinkle Chinese noodles on top. Bake an additional 15 minutes.

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



Muffin Donuts

Rice Casserole (below)

1 C. regular rice

1 can French onion soup

1 can beef broth

1/8 tsp. garlic

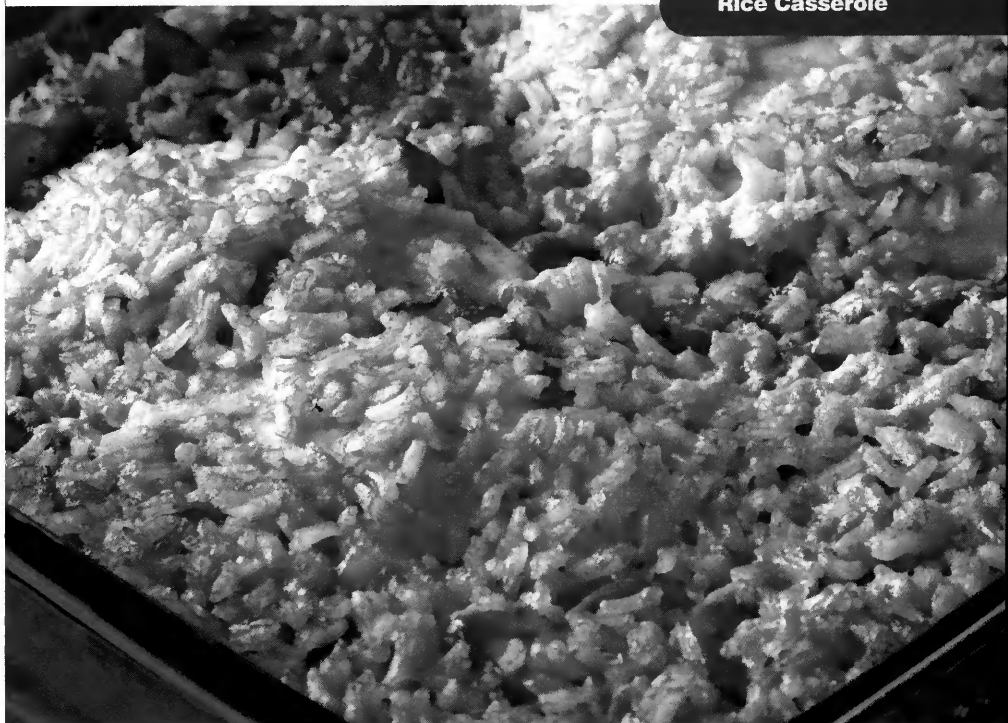
1 can mushroom pieces

1 stick butter

2-4 chicken breasts, seasoned (opt.)

Combine rice, French onion soup, beef broth, garlic, mushrooms and butter. Mix well. Place seasoned chicken breasts on top of rice (opt.). Bake at 350° for 1 hour.

Rice Casserole





Try this healthy appetizer at your New Year's Eve party

Slow-Roasted Cherry Tomato Bruschetta

- 3 pints cherry tomatoes
- 1 T. extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. freshly ground pepper
- 1/4 C. sliced fresh basil
- 1 T. red-wine vinegar
- 14 slices whole-wheat baguette, toasted
- Anchovy fillets, Kalamata olives or sliced fresh basil for garnish

1. Preheat oven to 325°F. Toss tomatoes with oil, garlic, salt and pepper. Place on a baking sheet and roast 50-55 minutes. Combine roasted tomatoes with basil and vinegar. Top baguette slices with the roasted tomato mixture. Garnish with anchovy fillets, Kalamata olives or sliced fresh basil.

Nutrition Information: Per serving: 69 calories; 1 g fat (0 g sat, 0 g mono); 0 mg cholesterol; 13 g carbohydrate; 3 g protein; 3 g fiber; 178 mg sodium; 157 mg potassium.

Healthy Eating Resolutions

1. **Eat a variety of nutrient-rich foods.** You need more than 40 different nutrients for good health, and no single food supplies them all. Eat a variety of whole foods and protein sources such as whole wheat bread, fruits, vegetables, dairy products, poultry, fish and other protein foods.
2. **Eat moderate portions.** If you keep portion sizes reasonable, it's easier to eat the foods you want and stay healthy.
3. **Eat regular meals.** Skipping meals can lead to out-of-control hunger, often resulting in overeating. When you're very hungry, it's also tempting to forget about good nutrition. Snacking between meals can help curb hunger, but don't eat so much that your snack becomes an entire meal.
4. **Balance your food choices.** Not every food has to be "perfect." When eating a food high in fat, salt or sugar, select other foods that are low in these ingredients. If you miss out on any food group one day, make up for it the next. Your food choices over several days should fit together into a healthy pattern.
5. **Remember, foods are not good or bad.** Select foods based on your total eating patterns, not whether any individual food is "good" or "bad." Don't feel guilty if you love foods such as apple pie, potato chips, candy bars or ice cream. Eat them in moderation, and choose other foods to provide the balance and variety that are vital to good health.

Please Tip The Cook

Do you have a tip that you'd like to share with others? If so, please send it to us and you may see it in an upcoming issue.

We're looking for tips of all kind – timesaving, money saving, health, safety and energy saving. Please include your name and cooperative and send your tip to Catrina Wagner, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708 or e-mail: cwagner@aiec.coop.

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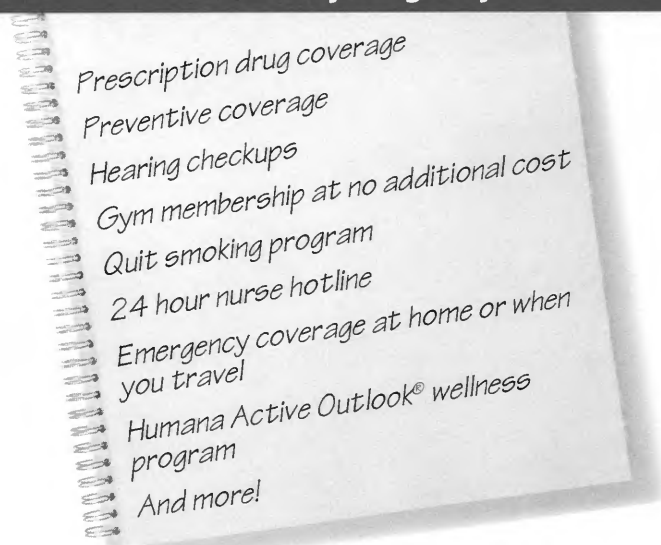


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1, Hearts and Art 2009 exhibit at the public library in Galena. Purchase from a selection of hundreds of cards made by local artists. Silent auction and raffle. Great homemade treats. 815-777-0200 or www.galenalibrary.org.

3-5, The 41st Anniversary Special Olympics Illinois Winter Games at Chestnut Mountain Resort near Galena. More than 400 athletes from the State of Illinois compete in five winter sporting events. Kick off the event Tuesday with opening ceremonies and parade in downtown Galena at 5:30 p.m. Admission is free. 630-942-5615 or www.soill.org.

5, Harriet Tubman and the Underground Railroad at the Peoria Civic Center in Peoria. This stirring musical drama is a classic tribute to the great American who freed herself and hundreds of her people from the bonds of slavery. Her courage helped to change the world. Share her adventurous life with your students in this accurate and deeply moving musical history lesson. Book and lyrics by Douglas Jones. Music by Ron Barnett. For grades 3rd to 8th. 309-673-8900 or www.peoriaciviccenter.com.

7, Seussical in Crystal Lake. Dr. Seuss's best-loved stories collide and cavort in this unforgettable musical caper! Adapted from the Broadway version, this version features 12 actors and enhanced production values. 815-356-9212, boxoffice@rauecenter.org or www.rauecenter.org.

7-8, Effingham Area Home Builders Association Home Show in Effingham. Saturday: 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Sunday: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m. Admission: \$2 for adults, children 16 and younger are free. 217-857-1672.

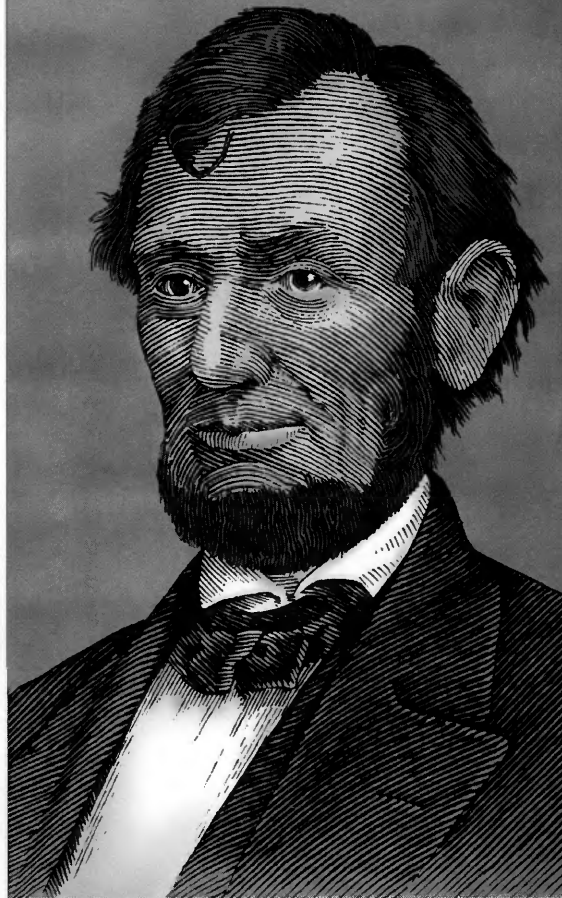
7-28, Charlotte Cleeland – A Retrospective Show in Jacksonville. Join the Art Association of Jacksonville/David Strawn Art Gallery for a showing of paintings by late Jacksonville artist Charlotte Cleeland. Opening reception is Feb. 7, from 6 p.m. – 8 p.m. Gallery Hours are Sundays 1 p.m. – 3 p.m. and Tuesday - Saturday 4 p.m. – 6 p.m. 217-243-9390 or www.strawnartgallery.org.

11-5/17, The Lincoln Project - Paintings by Don Pollack, at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Museum in Springfield. Don Pollack created the Lincoln Project as a series of contemporary paintings exploring the nature of history and representation. By highlighting the life of Abraham Lincoln, the project seeks to have a conversation with painting, photography, history and art history, and includes painted landscapes, portraits, maps and documents. 217-558-0143.

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12, Bicentennial Lunch with Guest Speaker, Michael Burlingame at the President Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Springfield. 11:30 a.m. Michael Burlingame is the Sadowski Professor of History Emeritus at Connecticut College. He is the author or editor of a number of books about Lincoln, including *The Inner World of Abraham Lincoln*. Mr. Burlingame's new book, *Abraham Lincoln: A Life* is a multi-volume biography of Lincoln and offers a fresh look at the life of Abraham Lincoln and is being published to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Lincoln's birth. Volume 1 covers Lincoln's childhood to the 1840s. Volume 2 examines Lincoln's life during his presidency and Civil War. Tickets are \$30. 217-558-8934 or www.presidentlincoln.org.



12, Through Lincoln's Eyes: Grant and Galena at the Galena History Museum. Debut celebration of a new permanent exhibit exploring the relationship of Lincoln to the Galena area and to his victorious Civil War General, Ulysses Grant. Reception starts at 7 p.m. Admission is free and refreshments will be served. 815-777-9129 or www.galenahistory-museum.org.



14, Candy the Bear's Birthday Party at Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. 1 – 3 p.m. Make gifts and cards for Candy, learn about Sun Bears, have your face painted by the Zoo Crew, enjoy a candy snack and watch Candy open her gifts and cards. This event will take place indoors and is free with admission. 309-434-2250 or www.millerparkzoo.org.

14, Ice Golf Classic on the Mississippi River near East Dubuque. An 18-hole custom designed golf course on the Mississippi River. Regulation clubs and tennis balls are used. Four-person best shot. Shot gun start at noon. Contact Mid-Town Marina at 815-747-3310 for details.

14, Effingham Art Guild's Children's Art Show in Effingham. Enjoy artwork of the local young talent. 618-238-4497 or suzis_graphics@juno.com.

15, Dean Christopher's Rat Pack in Godfrey. Join Dean Christopher and return to Las Vegas in its heyday when, without laser lights, pyrotechnics, back-up dancers or multiple costume changes a performer would come out on stage and simply entertain. Dean pays tribute to the performers that influenced him with impressions of Frank Sinatra, Sammy Davis Jr., Johnny Mathis, Tom Jones and Elvis Presley. 618-468-4222 or www.altonconcerts.org.



27 - 3/1, Country Treasures Craft Show at the Keller Convention Center in Effingham. Come shop from dozens of crafters as they exhibit their creations. 217-347-5115.

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

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

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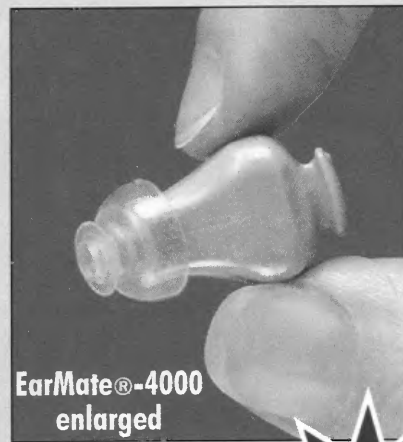
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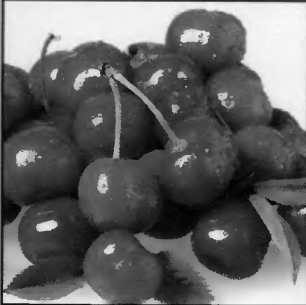
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(By Frank K. Wood)

If you want to put prescription dollars back in your pocket, feel better than ever, and reduce the symptoms of heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, and more — without risky drugs, you need *1,001 Prescription Secrets for Seniors*, an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Medical Publishing® in Peachtree City, Georgia.

You'll be amazed at all the natural ways you can treat and manage today's most common ailments, helping you slam the lid on rising healthcare costs, lower the risk of dangerous side effects, and more! Plus you'll learn how to save on prescriptions you really do need and how to use them safely.

The authors provide many health tips with full explanations.

- ▶ Is it possible to lower blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar without expensive drugs? The experts say yes. Learn more.
- ▶ The artery-cleaning fruit juice so powerful doctors are recommending it in lieu of drugs. No side effects!
- ▶ Team up to fight cholesterol! A dynamic food duo lowers your LDL better together than either one can do alone.
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- ▶ Free prescription drugs — virtually every brand name available!
- ▶ Help stay healthy and cancer free, improve your chances, without drugs. Find an alternative.
- ▶ The arthritis treatment that does what no other medication can do: It actually restores damaged cartilage!
- ▶ The lowest rate of Alzheimer's in the world: It could be because people there use so much of one spice, which can stop brain plaques from forming, and even break them down!
- ▶ Fuzzy thinking? Memory slipping? Slow

reactions? It may not be Alzheimer's, but an easily reversible condition instead!

- ▶ They lowered their risk of hardened arteries, heart attack, and stroke just by drinking one glass of juice a day. And it just might work for you!
- ▶ Simple vitamin that can lower LDL cholesterol by 20% and raise the “good kind” by a whopping 35%!
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- ▶ High blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, diabetes, depression, and weight gain are all linked to one dangerous sleep problem. How to know if you have it and what you can do about it.
- ▶ 10 terrific tips for reducing blood pressure — without risky drugs! It's as easy as reaching for beans and bananas!
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- ▶ Keep your vision eagle-eye sharp by choosing the right foods for your plate. Best foods/worst foods for your eyesight.
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- ▶ Prescription drugs can steal your memory! Find out which ones are to blame — and which foods can keep your memory healthy!

▶ Sip away your risk of Alzheimer's! Natural ingredient in a common beverage keeps brain-gumming plaques from forming, research shows.

- ▶ One delicious, vitamin-packed fruit is proven to relieve arthritis pain even better than aspirin, ibuprofen, and other drugs — with no stomach upset or other side effects.
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