

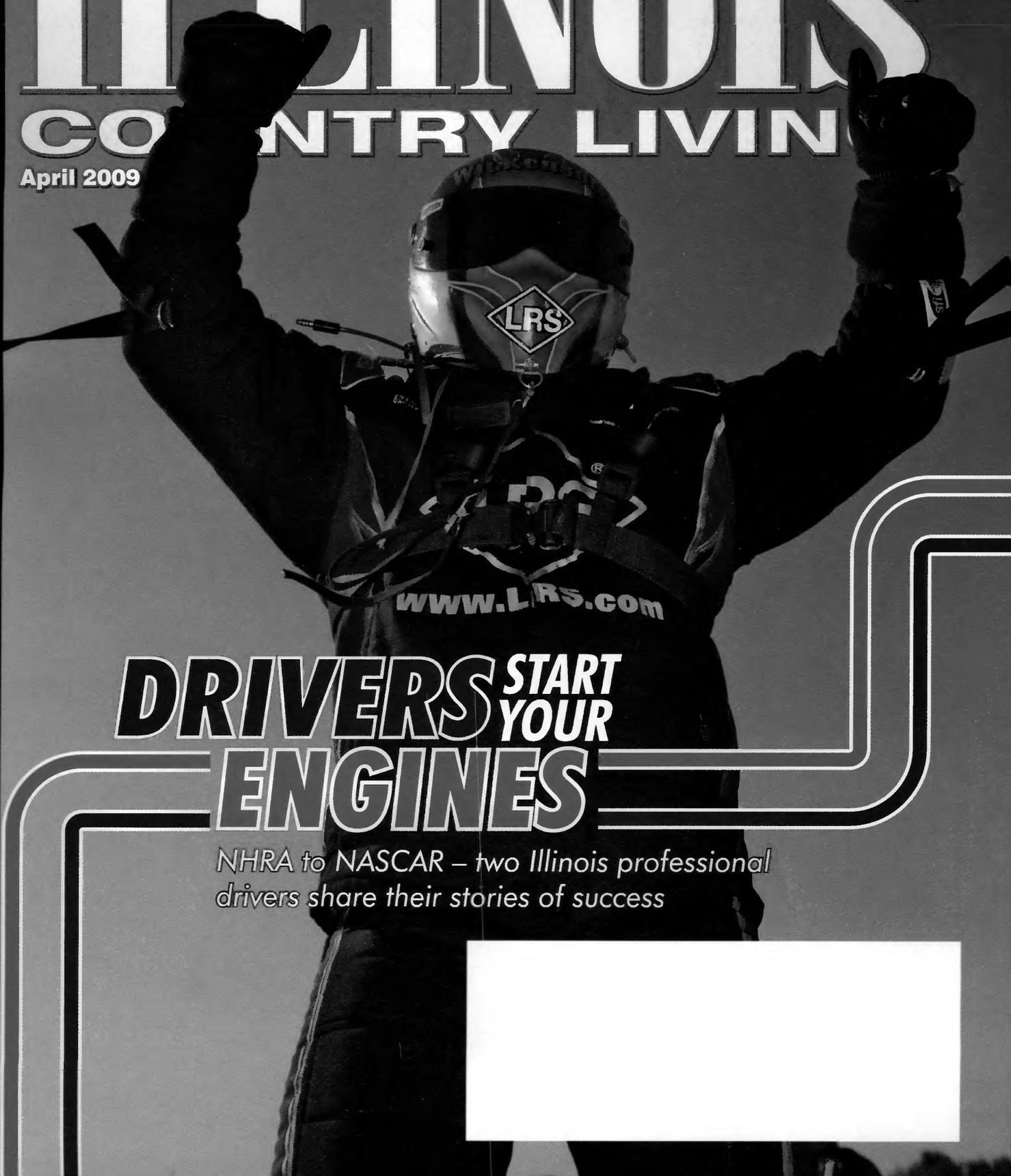
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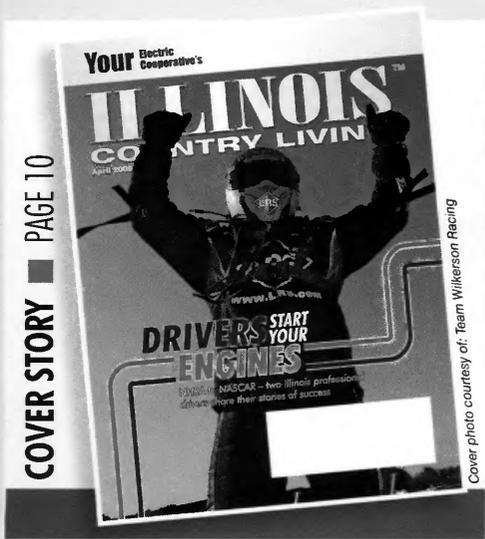
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Cover photo courtesy of: Team Wilkerson Racing

DRIVERS ... START YOUR ENGINES

Illinois natives, Tim Wilkerson, NHRA, and Justin Allgaier, NASCAR, share the trials and excitement of becoming professional race car drivers. On the cover: Tim Wilkerson

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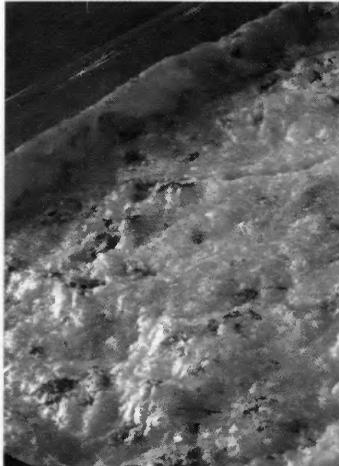
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The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and 25 Illinois electric cooperatives are members of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of 660 electric cooperatives. Touchstone Energy cooperative employees adhere to four core values — integrity,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

Rebuilding a Culture of Integrity

We need integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community

It's ironic that when we have so much to be proud of with the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's 200th birthday and the election of Barack Obama, that the lack of ethics in Illinois politics, by a few, has made our state a joke on talk shows. It has also distracted our leaders' attention away from the serious issues facing our state.

The Touchstone Energy® cooperatives' pledge is to live by four simple principles: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. These are enduring principles that will lead to success. Your co-op directors and employees espouse these core values. If only our state's elected representatives would live by those values, Illinois political scandal and abuse would not be on the nightly news.

Cooperative is not only a business model, it is a personal quality. It's a good thing to have a healthy debate of the issues, but partisan politics in the extreme accomplishes nothing.

Ethics is not a partisan issue. It's not just a business or political issue. From Gov. Ryan to Gov. Blagojevich and from Enron to the Bernard Madoff Wall Street scandal, there is plenty of blame and shame to go around. This is a trust issue and it will require serious change from our leadership and real involvement from our citizens if we are going to rebuild a culture of integrity.

Illinois is a much better state than what is being portrayed and we deserve better. To that end, Governor Quinn has formed the Illinois Reform Commission and I've been asked to serve on this commission. We

are looking at ways to restore integrity to Illinois government.

This is not a typical government-appointed task force made up of well-known political figures.

Former Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick Collins heads the commission. The other commissioners each have great professional expertise and a wide range of experiences. They include victims of corruption and experts from business, law enforcement, government, education, military and not-for-profit community groups.

This commission's hearings have been open to

the public, and although we are wrapping up our meetings this month, you can go to www.ReformIllinoisNow.org to learn more.

Subject areas we are discussing are transparency, campaign finance, state contracts and procurement, government structure (term limits and the redistricting process), enhanced enforcement and penalties, and codes of conduct.

There have been repeated attempts during the last 10 years at some kind of ethics reform. But they've nibbled around at the edges. So the public is understandably skeptical. This time I hope we will see real change.

Electric co-ops are governed democratically, just like our state and federal governments. Our co-ops and our local, state and national governments work best when citizens are involved. You need to attend your co-op's annual meeting, read your local co-op newsletter, know who the candidates are for your co-op's board of directors, and review the bylaw changes and financial statements. It's your business.

This is a critical time to be both an involved co-op member and citizen. Energy and climate change legislation are high on the agenda for Congress. The upward pressure on electric rates could be huge.

The legislation being proposed will create some kind of carbon tax. The question is, will it be a direct carbon tax or a more indirect carbon cap and trade system where the market will determine the cost? Either option will increase your energy bills. The only question is how much, and that is something very few people are talking about.

This is a political decision being made in the halls of Congress right now and the time frame has been accelerated. This is why we have been asking you to get involved and make your voice heard through the Our Energy Our Future program. You can go to www.ourenergy.coop to send an e-mail to your member of Congress and U.S. Senators expressing your concerns about keeping energy affordable. Get involved. ■

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



"Cooperative is not only a business model, it is a personal quality."

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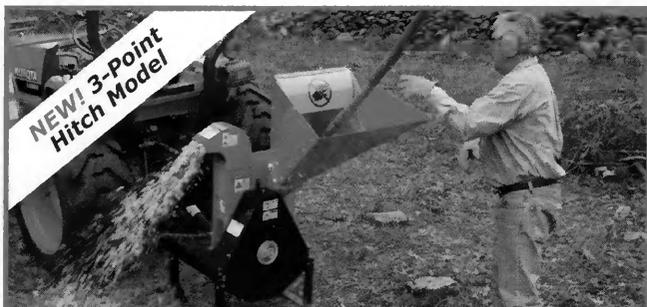
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Carbon Cap and Trade May Cause Price Volatility

A discussion paper released in January by The Brattle Group argues that a cap-and-trade approach to reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions could result in a high level of price volatility. That will deter investors' willingness to undertake capital-intensive investments to reduce emissions, increasing the cost of the program and undermining its effectiveness. The most direct way to reduce price volatility would be to introduce a carbon tax instead of cap and trade, the paper says.

Electric co-ops across the nation are also concerned about price volatility and keeping rates affordable for members. A 2008

Environmental Protection Agency analysis of the Warner-Lieberman bill to cap carbon emissions projected that under the bill, electricity prices would increase 44 percent in 2030 and 26 percent in 2050. Ultimately, consumers will be paying the bill for programs to reduce carbon emissions, whether it involves Wall Street in a cap-and-trade system or a simpler carbon



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tax. Consumers should, therefore, be considered equal stakeholders in policy debates that, until now, have included only environmental groups and industry. That's why electric co-ops are urging members to go to www.ourenergy.coop on the Internet. Enter your address and send Congress your questions. ■

Co-op Employees Help Others Dig Out of Ice Storm

In some areas of Kentucky and southern Illinois the damage was said to be similar to the aftermath of Katrina after a winter ice storm knocked out power to 1.3 million homes across parts of the Midwest and South in late January. Thousands of co-op crews came from across the country to restore electricity to areas that were in the dark for weeks.

Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn asked President Obama to declare nine southern Illinois counties federal disaster areas to help

them recover from a severe ice storm that struck the area in late January. If approved, federal assistance would allow local governments, municipally-owned utilities and electric cooperatives to recover 75 percent of their extraordinary storm-related costs. The state estimates that response and recovery costs to these entities will total more than \$16 million.

Officials blamed at least 55 deaths on the winter storm, which struck particularly hard in an eight-state swath from

Oklahoma to Ohio. Tragically, one co-op lineman gave his life during the storm repair battle in Kentucky. Andrew Reichwein, 35, from Connexus Energy in Minnesota, suffered fatal injuries when a pole snapped while he worked with others to restore power for members of Jackson Purchase Energy in Paducah, Ky.

The consensus among co-op veterans is that Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear was right on the money when he called the wintry blast "the biggest natural disaster that this state has ever experienced in modern history." In Kentucky alone, 1,000 co-op employees from 12 states, along with about 700 contract employees, were in the field for weeks.

In Illinois, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative in Dongola and SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative in Eldorado were hardest hit. More than 150 workers, many of them from unaffected Illinois co-ops, worked 12-hour shifts. ■





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From Humble Beginnings: Lincoln's Illinois, 1830-1861

In honor of the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth, the Illinois State Museum in Springfield will present an interdisciplinary exhibition entitled, "From Humble Beginnings: Lincoln's Illinois 1830-1861," which will explore the Illinois that Lincoln knew through the eyes of the people who lived here. Lincoln's Illinois traces the dynamic changes in Illinois' agriculture, industry and transportation that, by 1860, helped transform Illinois from a frontier region to a powerful state. The exhibition runs from Feb. 6, 2009 to Jan. 10, 2010. For more information go to www.museum.state.il.us or call 217-782-7386. ■

Illinois Electric Cooperatives Help Save Hospital Jobs

In 2008, four Illinois electric cooperatives were awarded a total of \$2.82 million for projects that will create at least 120 jobs and retain another 175 jobs in their rural service areas.

The funds are provided through the USDA Rural Development Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. The cooperatives pass the interest-free funds on to public bodies, non-profits and private businesses of their choice at 0 percent interest for 10 years. Grant funds are used to establish revolving loan funds to continue the program.

Co-ops can use these funds to help finance business start-ups and expansions, implement economic development plans, and make community improvements to ensure rural areas remain attractive, economically viable places to live and work.

Western Illinois Electrical Cooperative received a \$740,000 loan and a \$300,000 grant to help the City of Carthage fund the infrastructure needed for the local hospital. In February, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) honored Western Illinois Electrical Cooperative with the NRECA's Community Service Award for the cooperative's successful effort to leverage funding that enabled the community to keep its hospital.

"It's hard to imagine any other utility working cooperatively with the government to protect their consumers' access to health care. Taking on the challenge of keeping a medical facility open in the face of many hurdles illustrates the cooperative difference," says Jack Wolfe, President of the NRECA board of directors.

Other co-ops receiving REDLG grants included Corn Belt Energy Corporation in Bloomington, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative in Waterloo and Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative in Winchester.

Source: www.rurdev.usda.gov/il. ■



DOE Loan Program Can Help Co-ops Survive Power Crunch

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Glenn English says \$50 billion in U.S. Department of Energy loan guarantees authorized by the Senate will finance low-carbon power generation projects. These projects include advanced nuclear, renewable energy and carbon capture and storage technologies that will help meet new demand for electricity and carbon dioxide reduction goals.

The U.S. Energy Information Administration forecasts that by 2030, demand for electricity will be 30 percent higher, the equivalent of adding four Californias to the power grid. In some regions, demand will soon outstrip supply, according to the North America Electric Reliability Corporation.

Uncertainty over regulation of carbon has hobbled the electric utility sector's efforts to plan for projected increases in demand. The electric cooperatives, which are

growing faster than other sectors of the industry and whose power plants are older, are facing tighter time constraints.

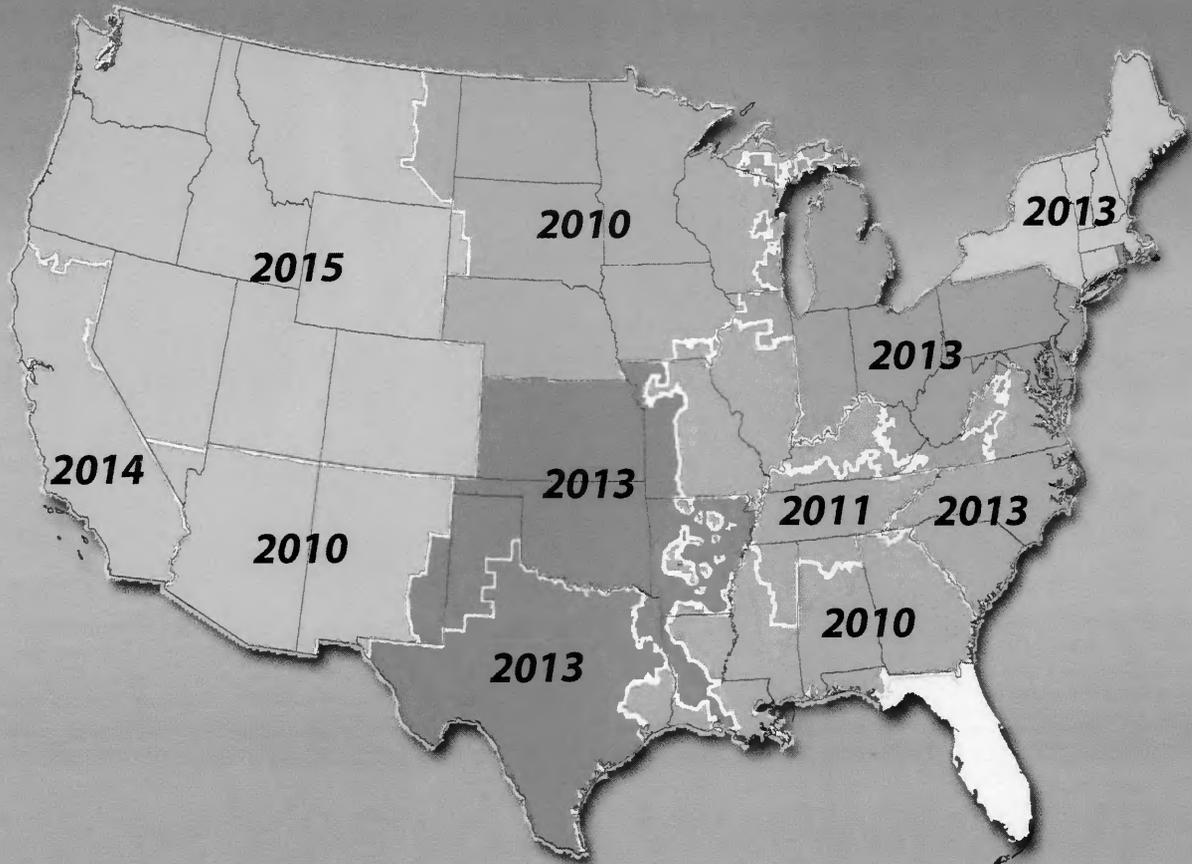
Cooperatives are aggressively seeking workable approaches to reducing carbon emissions from power generation. Clean Renewable Energy Bonds have helped jumpstart cooperative renewable energy projects. In 2005, co-ops owned or purchased 927 megawatts (MW) of renewable capacity. By the end of 2008, co-ops will have more than doubled this number adding 1,205 MW of new renewable capacity. This is a capacity increase of 130 percent in just three years since renewable energy incentives have been in place.

Low-cost financing for low-carbon projects would likewise provide a significant boost for a new, more climate-friendly energy future.

Source: NRECA ■

When will generation resources fail to meet demand?

While demand for electricity is predicted to increase by 16.7 percent over the next decade, capacity to generate electricity will only increase by 7.4 percent, according to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC). Unless additional generation comes on-line, the need for power will not be met as early as 2010 in some regions.



Sources: NERC, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



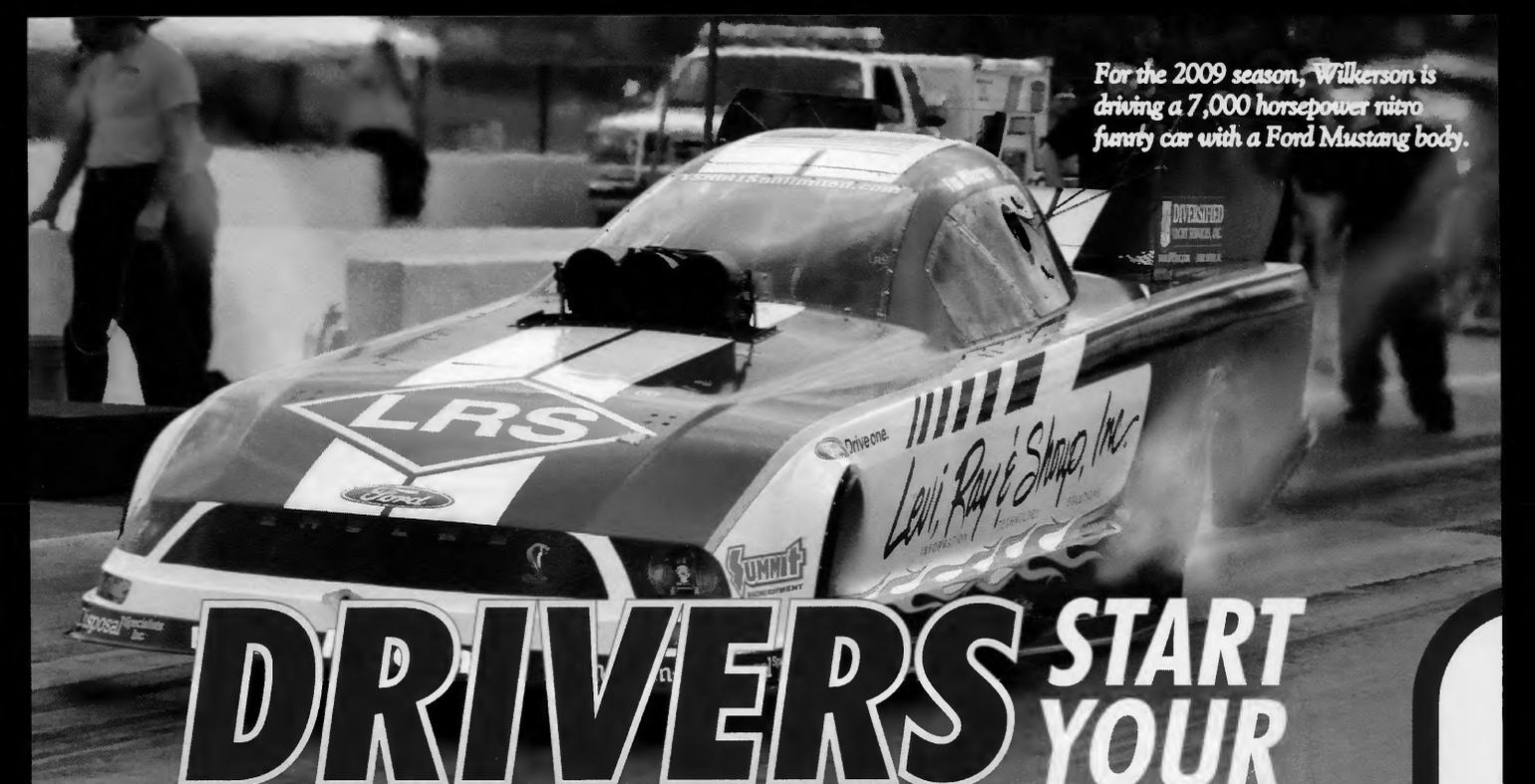
What's the main reason we use renewable energy? You're lookin' at it

Hydro, solar, wind, geothermal and more. The power we send to your home comes from all over the place. So we figure it's up to us to take care of the one place we call home. Your co-op and co-ops across the country are diversifying with renewable energy. And we'll continue to search for green solutions ... for one really good reason.



Association of Illinois
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For the 2009 season, Wilkerson is driving a 7,000-horsepower nitro funny car with a Ford Mustang body.

DRIVERS START YOUR ENGINES

By: Catrina McCulley Wagner

NHRA to NASCAR – two Illinois professional drivers share their stories of success

The buzz of a million spectators, adorned from head to toe with their favorite driver's memorabilia, resonates through the speedway. As they eagerly find their seats, a low rumble shakes the bench beneath them and the sweet smell of fuel wafts through the air. The racers rev up their engines, exciting fans into a frenzy of anticipation.

Whether you like the zero to 300-miles-per-hour (mph) blast of the National Hot Rod Association's (NHRA) dragsters, or the four-hour, 200-mph thrill ride of National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), there is one common entity all professional race car drivers and their fans share – a need for speed.

NHRA Driver Tim Wilkerson

At the early age of 17, Tim Wilkerson's blood turned to fuel. Born and raised in Springfield, Wilkerson spent most of his weekends on the drag strip in Havana racing his bracket car.

"I initially was just a motor head, a kid that loved cars," says Wilkerson. "But once it got into my blood, it was pretty hard to get rid of. We were always taught that you don't do it on the street, you do it on the strip, so that's what we did."

Racing didn't pay the bills, though, so Wilkerson pursued his degree in engineering while working at a local gas station. "The owner of the gas station came by one day, trying to talk my boss into buying the station because he was moving. My boss wasn't interested, but I was," recalls Wilkerson.

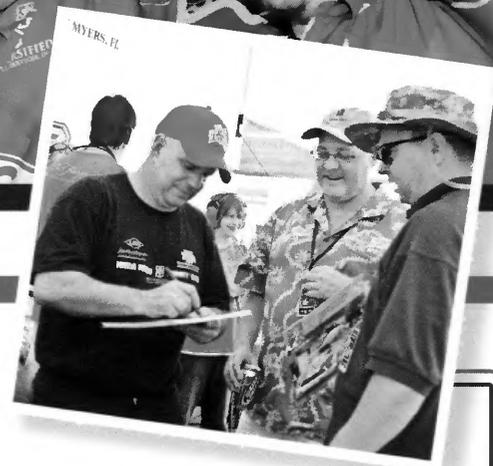
The gas station owner didn't take the 20-year-old Wilkerson seriously, at first.

"It took about six months to convince him, but I finally did, and

I went into business for myself. Five years later, I had three gas stations in Springfield," Wilkerson says, adding: "I have since sold two of my businesses and have gotten out of the gasoline industry. We presently run a vehicle service center in Springfield."

A second significant event that occurred when Wilkerson was 20, was marrying his high school sweetheart, Krista.

"She's my biggest supporter," Wilkerson says. "She takes care of all



the guys and makes sure everyone is happy. I couldn't do it without her."

"He's been racing since we met. It's been great for us. Racing has kept things interesting," Krista Wilkerson says.

In 1989, and at the age of 29, Wilkerson took his racing career to the next level and built an alcohol funny car to race for the NHRA. But the racing business is expensive, and without sponsors to support a driver, it's almost out of reach for most. "We had a couple of small sponsors, but we knew we needed to be in a class that was televised more in order to elevate the level of our program," says Wilkerson.

In 1995, Team Wilkerson decided to build a nitro funny car to get more exposure and to, hopefully, catch the eye of a big sponsor. "It wasn't too hard getting into the circuit," Wilkerson recalls. "But being competitive and doing good enough to achieve the recognition, notoriety and sponsorship, now that's another story."

And he did get good enough, eventually catching the attention of Levi, Ray & Shoup, Inc. (LRS), a global company who provides innovative information technology solutions to companies around the world. LRS is headquartered in Springfield and has been a great partner for Team Wilkerson.

"Sponsorship is really important because at the beginning, it's com-

pletely self-funded. When you get good enough to catch the eye of a sponsor, they help cover your expenses. Then what we hope for is that the sponsor sees a return on their investment based on our television time," Wilkerson explains.

This hobby, turned business, is more than Wilkerson could have dreamed. He says driving a nitro funny car is like nothing else in the world. "The 7,000-horsepower acceleration of that car, the smell of the nitro fuel that shakes the ground and shakes you, it's hard to beat," he says.

Wilkerson recalls very vividly the day he got his license to drive his nitro funny car. "It was in 1995. We went to Dallas and when we were finished, my wife said, 'What do you think?' I said, 'Well, there's probably something cooler than that car, but I don't know what it is.'"

"It was like he'd won the lottery," Krista Wilkerson remembers. "I knew at that moment what we'd be doing for the rest of our lives," she says with a laugh.

Wilkerson is widely regarded as one of drag racing's genuine "nice guys." And it's often said, "nice guys finish last." But this "nice guy" has proven that old adage wrong. Wilkerson has continued to break record after record through the years, but it was in 2008 when he really pulled out all the stops.

Top: Krista and Tim Wilkerson celebrate a victory with the rest of Team Wilkerson.

Inset: Wilkerson says he has gotten a lot of e-mail and letters from fans encouraging him when he wasn't doing well and congratulating him when he was on top. "I really appreciate my fans," Wilkerson says, "They've really given me a lot of support through the years."

"Tim didn't just avoid finishing in the cellar last year, like 'nice guys' are supposed to do, he actually came within one day of winning the NHRA Funny Car Championship and earned an even greater amount of respect and admiration from fans and racers alike," says Bob Wilber, Team Manager for Wilkerson Racing.

Wilkerson's second place finish in the funny car rankings was the outcome of a sequence of career-best performances through the 2008 season, including six race victories and four, first-place qualifying spots.

"He led the points standings for most of the season and nearly grabbed the big prize, but through all of the pressure and challenges, nothing changed about him. Tim is a dedicated family man, who owns, tunes

and drives his own car. His driving and tuning abilities are easy to see on the stat sheet, and very well known by his peers, but it's his integrity, honesty and leadership that make him what he is, and frankly he's an inspirational guy, who carries this team pretty much on his shoulders," Wilber says.

"I've been so fortunate to have so many good people around me to make everything work so well," says Wilkerson. "And that starts at home. My wife makes this so good. Our kids, Daniel (20), Kevin (19) and Rachel (17) travel to see me any chance they get. And I think that's why we do so well, because I have that support going for me. I was lucky enough to find all the right people to be able to do this with. That's an accomplishment in itself. I've been doing this a long time, and I know that a great team is very important."

Heading into the 2009 season, Wilkerson says his goals were to try to qualify for every race. "I know that sounds a little superficial," he says. "But in 2007, I missed seven of the races because we didn't qualify. Last year, we qualified for every single race and that made a big difference. As long as we qualify, we have a chance."

To view the 2009 race schedule, visit: www.nhra.com/schedules/default.aspx.

NASCAR Nationwide Driver Justin Allgaier

Riverton native, Justin Allgaier's race car beginnings came at the tender age of 5, behind the wheel of a quarter midget roadster. His parents, Mike and Dorothy Allgaier, own Hoosier Tire Midwest, so Allgaier has been around the high-speed racers all of his life.

"In the summers, when my dad was out on business, my mom would bring me to watch the quarter midget races," remembers Allgaier. "I fell in love with it. When you're 5, and you see those cars going around with kids your own age racing ... it was pretty cool," Allgaier says.

By 12 years old, Allgaier, who had earned the nickname "Little Gator" for his size and assertiveness behind the wheel, was a five-time quarter midget champion with more than 100 wins to his name.

From there, he graduated through the motor sports ranks, collecting trophies and praise on his way up. "I raced midget cars, micro-sprints and bandoleros until I was 16. We were racing four to five nights a week and traveling to North Carolina, Indianapolis and all over Illinois and Missouri," Allgaier remembers. "It was a lot of traveling, but my dream was to make this my career someday," he says.

Then at 16 years old, Allgaier got the opportunity to drive three starts in an Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) RE/MAX Series car for a

family friend. The ARCA RE/MAX Series is a minor, but professional, league of stock car racing, only two steps down from the top-level NASCAR

Top: Justin and Ashley Allgaier celebrated their third wedding anniversary in March. "We've seen big changes in our short three years and hopefully the future will hold even more," Justin Allgaier says.

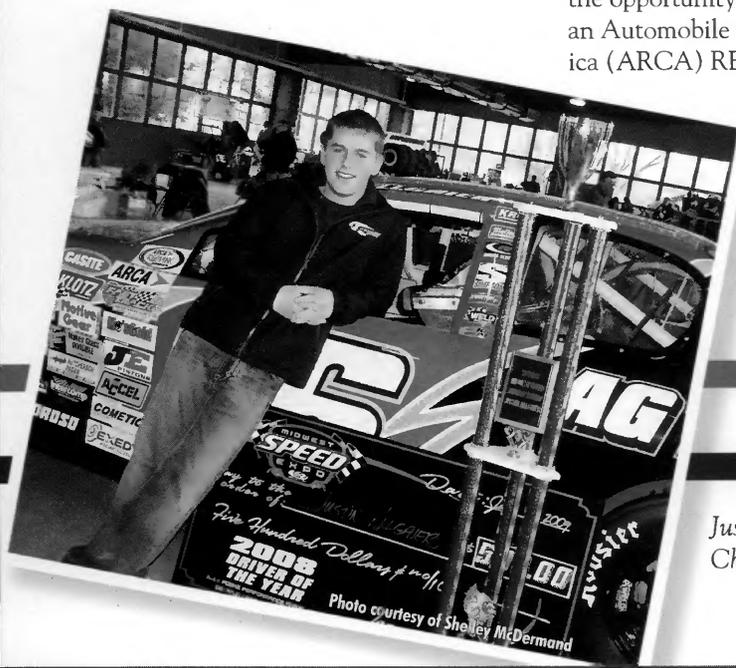
Inset: Allgaier started his first NASCAR season driving the Penske/Verizon Wireless Dodge Charger number 12 car.

Sprint Cup Series and one step down from that series' minor league, the NASCAR Nationwide Series. During those three starts, and racing against legend Ken Schrader, Allgaier finished in 11th place.

"I really loved the ARCA Series. It was different than what I was used to, but I got the hang of things pretty fast," Allgaier says about switching from a lightweight sprint car to a heavier stock car. "But I could only run a handful of races every year because you had to be 18 to run on any racetracks that were more than a mile long. But when I turned 19, I began racing ARCA full time."

Early in 2006, and before Allgaier's career advanced to the next level, he married his high school sweetheart, Ashley. "She's been great through all of this. She helps a lot," Allgaier says.

"During his ARCA RE/MAX racing days, I made all travel arrangements, paid all the bills, did ordering and kept the office organized," says Ashley Allgaier. "And on race days, I made sure all the team was taken care of and that everyone had their radios and food. And during the race, I sat on top of the pit box taking lap times and counting cautions," she says.



Justin Allgaier after winning the ARCA RE/Max Championship in 2008.



"You have to really love racing to choose this life. Ashley is by my side at every race, so I think she's ready for it," Justin Allgaier says. "It's a big change, and I'm glad she's there beside me."

Justin Allgaier continued racing in the ARCA RE/MAX series until he was 22. And along the way, he set some amazing records. In 2005, he won the Pork Pole Award for setting a record in Springfield as the fastest qualifier, shattering the previous track record set 10 years prior. In 2006, he made history again at the Illinois State Fairgrounds in Springfield by earning his first ARCA victory and becoming the first Springfield area resident to win in the 72-year history of championship auto racing at the fairgrounds. In 2007, he won two features in a midget car and placed third in the Chili Bowl behind Tony Stewart and JJ Yeley. He also finished that year with 23 ARCA races that ended with him fourth in the championship standings, racking up one win, four top-five finishes and 11, top-10 finishes.

"I've been so proud watching him win and make history," says Ashley Allgaier. "It's all been very exciting. Every year has been more exciting than the last," she says.

In 2008, at the age of 22, Justin Allgaier turned the corner on his racing career. "I raced 21 ARCA races and I won six of them. The last win was in Toledo, Ohio and we wound up winning the championship," says Justin Allgaier. "That kind of catapulted my career. A lot of people were talking about us. There was a buzz going around that maybe I should be racing in the next series up," he says.

"Justin got a phone call from the guys at Penske Racing and they wanted to meet with him, so he and his dad flew to Detroit to talk," says Ashley Allgaier.

"Before we knew it, we were signing with Penske Racing to drive in their NASCAR Nationwide Series," recalls Justin Allgaier.

Soon after he signed, Penske teamed up with Verizon Wireless to sponsor the number 12 Dodge Charger Justin would be driving in the 2009 series. "There's not many companies that can rival that brand, and I'm with a great team, so I'm definitely excited about this year," Justin Allgaier says.

"We'd had our eye on Justin for some time," says Tim Cindric, President of Penske Racing. "Penske Racing was fortunate to be in a position to bring him on board," he says.

"We've worked very hard to get Justin in a position to get to that next level," says Mike Allgaier, Justin's dad. "Not just me; there were a lot of people who worked very hard on our crew over the years.

"As a father, beyond getting a chance to do this with a first-class operation, he's remained a very good person, which is every bit as important to me as his career is," Mike Allgaier says.

Justin and Ashley moved to North Carolina to be closer to the Penske race shop. "It's so different from Riverton, Ill.," says Justin Allgaier. "I thought traffic jams were four or five cars in a row, but they're definitely more major here. It kind of makes it tough when you drive for a living," he laughs.

"This is Justin's dream and I couldn't be happier for him," says Ashley Allgaier.

You can catch Justin and the NASCAR Nationwide Series televised on Saturdays. For a full schedule of races, visit: www.nationwide.com/series/series-info-schedule.jsp.

Don't Get Burned by a Counterfeit

Buying an untested counterfeit electrical product puts your family at risk

Recently my wife and daughter returned from a shopping trip to New York City, excited about the sales and deals they'd found. They told me how they were able to find great buys on knockoff purses that looked a lot like the designer brands sold for hundreds more. Typically these purses are bought overseas and smuggled through customs then sold on the streets in back alleys and subways. What a deal, eh? So what's wrong with knockoffs?

Robert Jacksta, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of the Office of Field Operations for the U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) speaking before the House Committee for Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Terrorism, Proliferation and Trade in May of 2008, stated that the CBP seizes an average of \$652,603 worth of fraudulent commercial merchandise each day. The CBP estimates they seize more than \$200 million dollars worth of counterfeit products, averaging more than 37 seizures a day, an estimate that appears to be rising each year.

So what does that mean to us as manufacturers, producers and consumers of electrical products in the United States? By using counterfeit electrical products that have not been tested by a National Regulatory Testing Lab, we put our family, friends, possessions and jobs at risk.

Counterfeit electrical products have been found to be the cause of fire, property damage and electrocutions. Counterfeit products have been found in fake over current protection devices such as breakers and fuses. These products are marketed under legitimate brand names, but have not met the rigorous standards and testing required here in the United States. Many times well-known distributors market these fakes unknowingly. Then well-intended contractors install them in our homes and businesses unwittingly putting our families and friends at risk.

The CBP estimates that businesses and industries lose about \$200 billion a year in revenue and 750,000 jobs due to the counterfeiting of merchandise. Even more is lost by the manufacturers in costly litigation. This increases the cost of legitimate products. In a time when U.S. competition is already stiff, and the economy is struggling, we do not need cheaters and fakes. We certainly do not

need the safety hazard these fake products create.

In some countries piracy of intellectual property and counterfeiting is big business. Some of these countries then use this income to fund activities such as terrorism and organized crime.

So what can we do?

1. Educate yourselves, your family and friends of the dangers of fake electrical products. Go to Web sites like Electrical Safety Foundation International, National Electrical Manufacturers Association, the National Association of Electrical Distributors and the International Association of Electrical Inspectors.
2. Remember what our parents told us. If it looks too good to be true, it probably is.
3. Consumers, contractors and retailers should become familiar with the labels of testing labs, like the ones listed below. Labels prove that the products have been listed to meet the standards required for safety.

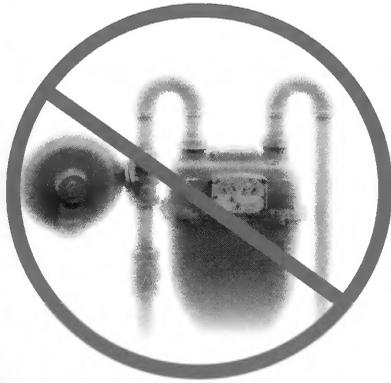
List of OSHA approved National Regulatory Testing Labs

- Canadian Standards Association (CSA) (also known as CSA International)
- Communication Certification Laboratory, Inc. (CCL)
- Curtis-Straus LLC (CSL)
- FM Approvals LLC (FM)(formerly Factory Mutual Research Corporation)
- Intertek Testing Services NA, Inc. (ITSNA) (formerly ETL)
- MET Laboratories, Inc. (MET)
- NSF International (NSF)
- National Technical Systems, Inc. (NTS)
- SGS U.S. Testing Company, Inc. (SGSUS) (formerly UST-CA)
- Southwest Research Institute (SWRI)
- TUV America, Inc. (TUVAM)
- TUV Product Services GmbH (TUVPSG)
- TUV Rheinland of North America, Inc. (TUV)
- Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL)
- Wyle Laboratories, Inc. (WL) ■

"When counterfeit products and materials make their way into our homes and businesses they create a serious health and safety risk."

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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Gardening Doesn't Have to be a Pain

Warm up to the exercise gardening provides

Sometime in April, you're going to decide that you finally have to get out there in the garden, unless you just totally abandon it for the year.

Warm weather will cause the grass to grow and you'll need to mow.

Spring rains will cause tulips to bloom, and then the flowers fade, and they need to be pruned. Forsythia plants, too, demand yearly pruning to stimulate new growth after flowering.

Cabbage and pansy transplants can be planted soon. Pots need to be moved from storage and placed on the deck or patio. Soil in containers or the ground will need turning.

And then there's the debris that's lying all over the place after winter. Leaves will be raked. Sticks picked up.

Most of us will save this for a Saturday, and if everything goes normally, on Sunday we'll be paying for the activity with strained muscles that give us cause for forsaking gardening for the rest of the year. But we don't.

Gardening is exercise no matter how you dig it. You use muscles, and in most cases, muscles you don't use daily. That's

where the pain comes in. And after months of being cooped up indoors, those muscles have forgotten everything they learned last year about gardening.

The University of Illinois Extension likes to

minimize stresses and strains with our BodySmart Gardening program, which takes into account four main areas – warm-up exercises, the proper clothing, the proper tools, and the correct way to use the tools.

Watch bodybuilders and distant runners. They always warm up with stretches to loosen tighten muscles, and prepare the body for what follows. Gardeners should do the same.

Start with 5 to 10 minutes of stretches before gardening. Since you should be bending your knees instead of your back, start with knee bends. Take your hands and stretch them over your head, going up on your toes. Standing against a wall or supported

by a chair, take your right arm and pull your right leg up behind you. Hold it for 10 seconds. Switch sides, and repeat several times.

If the stretches are extremely uncomfortable, stop. Realize, though, that if the stretches hurt, then the gardening won't be any easier. Start out slow. Give yourself a week to warm up, gradually moving to longer stretching activities.

Do the same after gardening. Stretch a bit then go and relax with a cool drink.

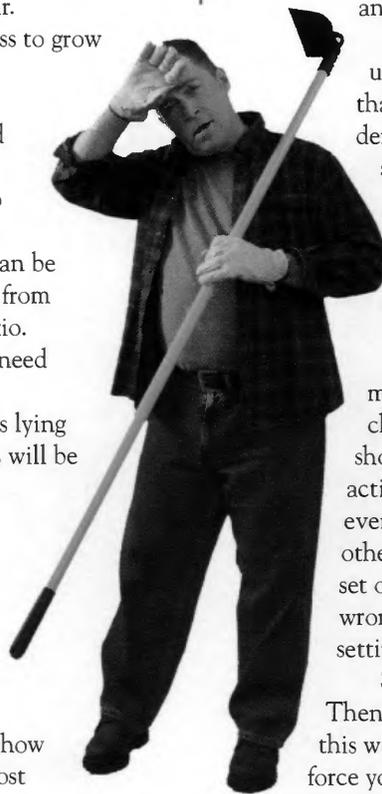
Bodybuilders don't work the same muscles over and over and over. They change their routines often. Gardeners should do the same. Start with one activity, but either take a 5 minute break every 15 minutes, or switch to some other chore that uses a totally different set of muscles. There is absolutely nothing wrong with taking a timer outside and setting it for 15 minutes.

So, you might dig for 15 minutes. Then rake for another 15 minutes. Follow this with pruning or watering. One way to force you to take a break is to drink eight ounces of water every 15 to 30 minutes. The water will keep you from becoming dehydrated, but after bottle after bottle after bottle, you will definitely need to take a break no matter what.

Don't do everything one day or one weekend. Plan out the chores. Use flags or sticks to mark progress. Remember the Chinese adage about small steps and big journeys.

And realize that you might not be able to do the things you did 10 years ago. It's called "aging" and there's nothing wrong with it. There's also nothing wrong with using it as a reason to NOT do the same things you did before.

Next month we'll look at the new tools on the market just in time for Mother's Day and Father's Day. ■



**"Gardening is exercise
no matter how you dig it."**

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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Live, Laugh, Love, Learn w/verse "Life is not measured by the breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away" - 00332 Leather Cover and Labels - 00332



John Deere Vintage - 00005 Leather Cover and Labels - 00005

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Tinker Bell Magic w/verse "Too Cute" - 00343
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Disney Legendary Villains - 00341
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The Seven Dwarfs - 00347
Leather Cover and Labels - 00347

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Lightning Strikes - 00178
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Hope Springs Etemal - 00094 One image.
Leather Cover and Labels - 00094



Spirit of the Wilderness - 00024
Leather Cover and Labels - 00024



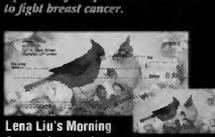
Tropical Paradise - 00052
Leather Cover and Labels - 00052



Farmall - 00328
Leather Cover and Labels - 00328



Gentle Inspirations with inspiration "Joy" - 00193
Leather Cover and Labels - 00193



Lena Liu's Morning Serenade - 00029
Leather Cover and Labels - 00029



Love Bugs - 00093
Leather Cover and Labels - 00093



Care Bears w/verse "Have a Rainbow Day" - 00335
Leather Cover and Labels - 00335



Stepping Out w/verse "Sassy" - 00240
Leather Cover and Labels - 00240



Martini Time - 00344
Leather Cover and Labels - 00344



Thomas Kinkade's Seasons of Reflection - 00114
Leather Cover and Labels - 00114



Challis & Roos Awesome Owls - 00337
Leather Cover and Labels - 00337



New



New



Serenidity - 00100
Leather Cover and Labels - 00100



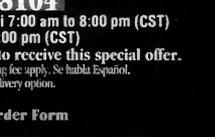
Winter Calm - 00017
Leather Cover and Labels - 00017



Faithful Friends—Chihuahua w/verse "You look at me with eyes of love" - 00309 One image.
Leather Cover and Labels - 00309



New



New



Family Guy - w/verse "Uh-oh" - 00228
Leather Cover and Labels - 00228



John Wayne: An American Legend - 00204
Leather Cover and Labels - 00204



Faithful Friends—Shih Tzu w/verse "You look at me with eyes of love" - 00286 One image.
Leather Cover and Labels - 00286



New



New



Lena Liu's Floral Borders - 00088 w/ optional verse "Lord bless and keep you." - 00117
Leather Cover and Labels - 00088



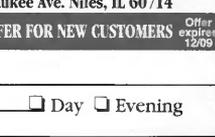
Maxine w/verse "I tried paying my bills with a smile. They wanted money." - 00234
Leather Cover and Labels - 00234



Hawaiian Sunsets - 00181
Leather Cover and Labels - 00181



New



New



Imperial - 00165
One Image.
Leather Cover and Labels - 00165



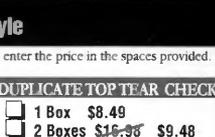
Angel Kisses - 00019
Leather Cover and Labels - 00019



America's National Parks - 00055
Leather Cover - 00151 Labels - 00055



New



New



Kaleidoscope - 00225
Leather Cover and Labels - 00225



Scroll - 00044
One image. Burgundy Leather Cover - 00030-004 Labels - 00032-008



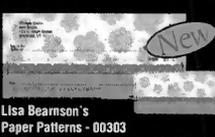
Footprints in the Sand - 00008
Leather Cover and Labels - 00008



New



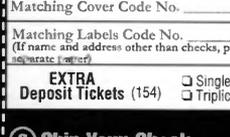
New



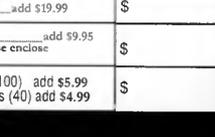
Lisa Bearson's Paper Patterns - 00303
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New



New



Blue Sately - 00207
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Leather Cover and Labels - 00155



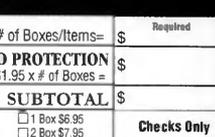
Garden Graces w/verse "Live well, laugh often, love much!" - 00172
Leather Cover and Labels - 00172



Moments of Majesty - 00001
Leather Cover and Labels - 00001



New



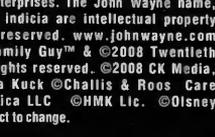
New



Jesus, Light of the World - 00018
Leather Cover and Labels - 00018



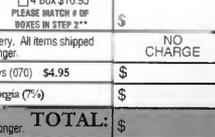
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Change is Difficult for Adults

It's time for architects to specify geothermal heat pumps

Recently I was invited to be the guest speaker for a local chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

As I often say at seminars, change is very difficult for adults. I have also known for a long time that change is difficult for architects and that was clearly evident at our recent meeting.

Folks, let's reason together for a moment. Visualize the average one-story business building in your town. Usually it has four exterior walls, a slab floor and a flat roof. The only basic difference from one building to the next is perhaps the color of the building and name of the business on the sign out front.

Now, consider this. Where is the hottest place on that building on a hot summer day?

If you said the roof, you are correct. How would you like to sit on that roof and try to make homemade ice cream? You would probably keel over before the ice cream was ready. Even if you succeeded, you would have used a lot of energy.

If you think about it, the last place you'd want to place your air conditioner is on the roof.

So why do we continue to do it? Time, after time, after time.

I had an engineer tell me in one of my seminars that an air conditioning unit on the roof did not

waste as much energy as I thought.

I asked him, "Well, just how much does it waste?"

"Only about 9 percent," he replied.

I responded, "9 percent?" And then I told him, "I sure would like a 9 percent pay raise and I sure would hate a 9 percent pay cut. I wish my CD at the bank would pay 9 percent and I wish I were 9 percent taller. I wish I were 9 percent younger, too." Well, he got the picture and I doubt he will ever say that 9 percent is insignificant again.

While adults haven't seemed to figure out that placing an air conditioning unit on top of a roof is a bad idea, younger folks have a different view.

I have often asked high school students, "Wouldn't it make sense to locate an air conditioning unit in the earth where it's a constant 57 degrees? Their answer, of course, is yes. (I'm talking about a geothermal unit, by the way).

I asked the architects at our meeting, "How many of you are familiar with geothermal heating and cooling?" Nearly every hand went up.

I then asked, "How many of you think geothermal is the most efficient heating and cooling system available?" Most raised their hands.

"How many of you would consider geothermal as a green product?" All raised their hands.

"How many of you have specified geothermal systems in any building you have designed?" Two hands were raised.

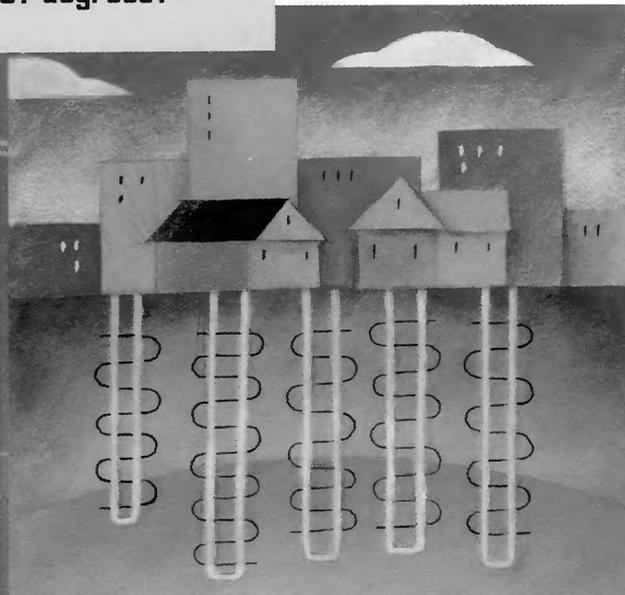
And then came the most revealing question of all. "How many of you have geothermal system in your houses?" Zero hands.

Yes, change is difficult for adults, including architects, but folks it's time to change and you mark my words, we will.

See you next month.

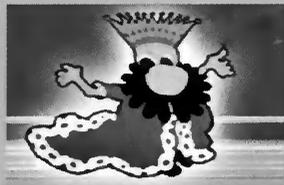
P.S. Of course, as many longtime readers of this column know, I have geothermal in my wife's house. ■

"Wouldn't it make sense to locate an air conditioning unit in the earth where it is a constant 57 degrees?"



Doug Rye, the "Doctor of Energy Efficiency—the King of Caulk and Talk" can be heard on several different Illinois radio stations. Or you can go to his Web site at www.dougye.com, e-mail him at info@philliprye.com, or call 888-Doug-Rye or 501-653-7931. You can also sign up for a free newsletter and order his "how to" videotapes.





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Defining Energy Affordability

Rising energy costs and climate change policies demand legislative solutions that keep consumers in mind

By Megan McKoy and Scott Gates

Electric co-ops nationwide meet roughly 62 percent of their power requirements from coal-based generation, 15 percent from nuclear plants, and 10 percent from natural gas. Hydropower and other renewable sources (like wind and landfill gas) make up 11 percent; the remaining 2 percent primarily comes from diesel fuel.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, the nation's electricity consumption is growing annually at a rate of 1.07 percent. Many electric co-ops are seeing even faster growth.

With demand for electricity rising and capacity maxed out, utilities across the country will need to build power plants once again. Over the next decade, co-ops alone must build 21,000 megawatts (MW) of new generating capacity just to keep the lights on.

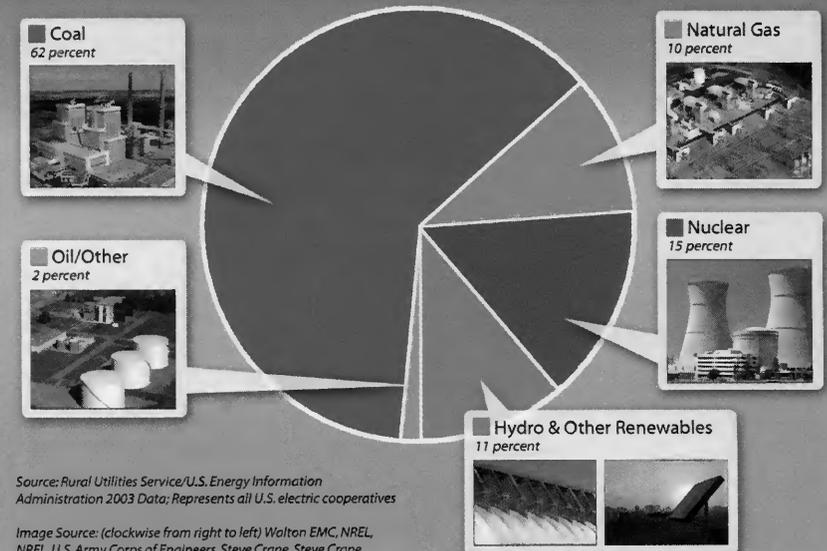
Increasing demand worldwide has increased the cost of new power plants and the fuel to run them. Unfortunately, energy and climate change policies under consideration in Washington, D.C., may add another cost in the form of a carbon tax. This could present electric cooperatives and members with their greatest challenge in history.

"When you look at the Obama administration and the makeup of Congress, there's not much question they're going to take up a climate change bill, and they likely will pass one," explains National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Glenn English.

PJM Interconnection, a regional transmission organization representing the largest grid in North America, recently completed one of the few studies to examine the potential impact of climate change

Sources of Co-op Power

Electric cooperatives use a diverse mix of fuels to supply consumer members with safe, reliable, and affordable power.



legislation. The study estimates show a wholesale price increase of ranging between \$7.50 to \$45 per MWh by 2013. That would add \$5.9 to \$36 billion to the cost of energy in the PJM market. The studies calculations are based on projected carbon prices ranging from \$10 to \$60 per ton.

"Our Energy, Our Future"

Affordability plays a key role in NRECA's "Our Energy, Our Future"™ grassroots awareness campaign. The effort, which seeks participation from millions of co-op consumers, focuses on educating Congress about the need to craft energy and climate change policies that will support a diverse mix of power generation, while keeping electricity reasonably priced.

"We've always counted on our consumers being part of the solution," relates English. "It's not a case where you can sit back and expect somebody

to take care of you. It's a case in which we've all got to work together."

This year, "Our Energy, Our Future" looks for co-op consumers to ask their U.S. representative and senators if Congress will work with electric cooperatives to make sure reliable power is available at a price consumers can afford.

Without our consumers' help, local co-ops will not be able to stop it. The stakes are enormous, both from a standpoint of affordability and from a standpoint of availability.

To get involved with the campaign, visit www.ourenergy.coop.

Megan McKoy and Scott Gates write on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.



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Who: Concord Church of Waterloo, Ill.

Cost: \$10, plus \$3 shipping

Details: soft-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 159

Send checks to: Joan Kloos,
6672 Susewind Lane, Waterloo, IL 62298
or call 618-939-3156.

Vegetable Chili

- 1 zucchini, cut into 1/4 inch slices
- 1 med. green or red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 C. onions, chopped
- 1/2 C. carrots, chopped
- 1/2 C. celery, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-1/4 C. cold water
- 1/4 C. olive or vegetable oil
- 1 (28-oz.) can tomatoes, undrained and cut up
- 1 (8-oz.) jar mild or hot picante sauce
- 1 tsp. beef bouillon
- 1-1/2 tsp. cumin
- 1/2 C. ripe, sliced olives
- 1 (15-oz.) can chili beans, undrained
- 1 (15-oz.) can garbanzo beans, drained
- 1/2 C. cashews
- 1 C. shredded Cheddar cheese
- Alfalfa sprouts, if desired

In a large saucepan or Dutch oven, sauté zucchini, green pepper, onions, celery, carrots and garlic in oil until crisp-tender. Stir in tomatoes, picante sauce, water, bouillon and cumin. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover; simmer for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Stir in olives and beans. Simmer until thoroughly heated. Serve with cashews, cheese and alfalfa sprouts.

Garlic Breath Chicken

Garlic Breath Chicken (above)

- 1 pkg. garlic Italian salad dressing mix (powder)
- 1/2 C. grated Parmesan cheese
- 6 boneless chicken breasts

Preheat oven to 400°. Lightly grease a shallow baking dish. In a bowl, mix together dressing mix and cheese. Moisten chicken with water, and then dip into the dressing mixture to coat well on both sides. Bake for 30 minutes or until chicken is cooked through.

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

Oatmeal Pudding Cookies

- 1-1/4 C. unsifted flour
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 C. butter, softened
- 1/4 C. granulated sugar
- 1 C. raisins, nuts or chocolate chips
- 3-1/2 C. quick cooking oats
- 1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding
- 2 eggs
- 3/4 C. packed brown sugar

Combine flour with baking soda. Mix butter, sugars and pudding in a large bowl. Beat until smooth and creamy. Beat in eggs. Gradually add flour mixture. Stir in oats and raisins (or 1/2 C. chopped nuts or chocolate chips). Drop by rounded tsp. onto an ungreased baking sheet 2 inches apart. Bake at 375° for 8-10 minutes. Makes about 4 dozen.

Honey-Nut Glazed Brie

- 1 (8-oz.) Brie cheese wedge or round
- 1/4 C. butter
- 2 T. honey
- 1/8 tsp. ground nutmeg (opt.)
- 1 C. coarsely chopped walnuts
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon (opt.)

In a nonstick skillet, melt the butter and stir in walnuts, cinnamon and nutmeg. Stir in honey and cook, stirring constantly until bubbling. Immediately pour over cheese. This can be served with sliced apples, grapes, crackers or a hard baguette-type bread. Serves 8.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

175 Years of Cooking

Who: Green Valley, Ill. Presbyterian Church

Cost: \$16, including shipping

Details: hard-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 120

Send checks to: Debbi Brim,
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or call 309-244-8487.

Breakfast Bake (right)

- 1 lb. sausage
- 1 (4-oz.) can mushrooms
- 2 C. shredded Cheddar cheese
- 6 eggs
- 3 C. milk
- 1 C. Bisquick
- 1/2 C. melted butter
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Pepper and other seasoning you prefer

Brown sausage and mushrooms in a skillet. Drain. Put mixture in a 9x13 inch pan that has been sprayed with non-stick cooking oil. Add cheese. In a blender, mix eggs, milk, Bisquick, butter, salt and other seasonings. Pour mixture over the sausage/cheese blend. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes. Can be mixed the night before and baked in the morning.

Jimmy's Mustard Mushrooms

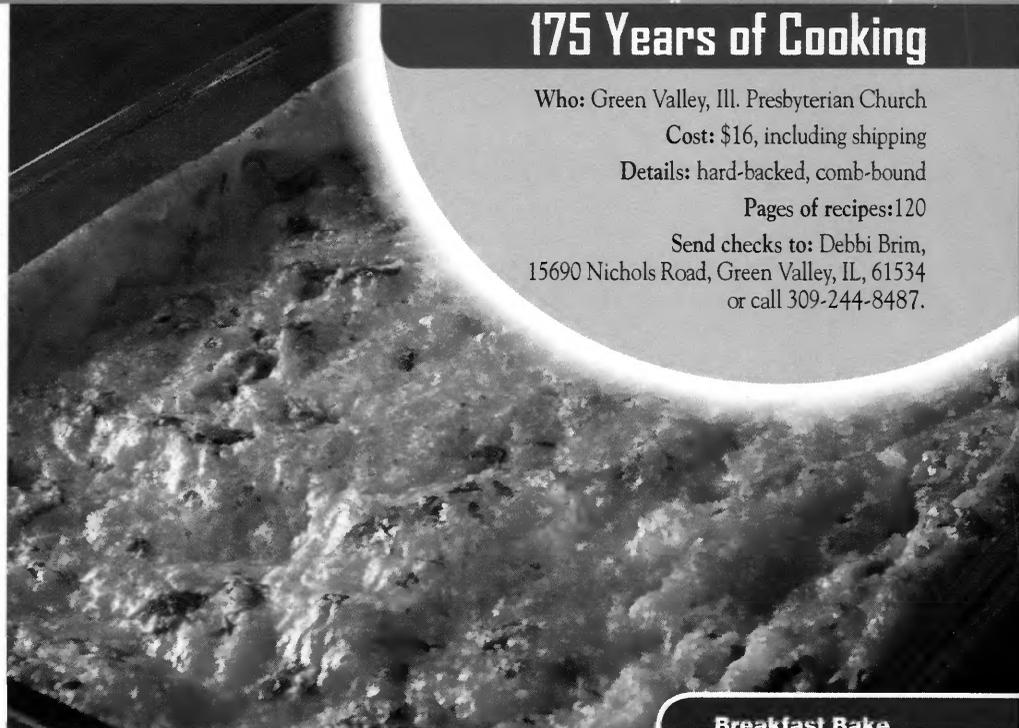
- 1/2 C. butter
- 3-1/2 T. flour
- 2 T. snipped fresh parsley
- 2 T. yellow mustard
- 3 T. grated onion
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/8 heaping tsp. nutmeg
- 1/8 heaping tsp. pepper
- 1 C. heavy cream or half and half
- 1 lb. mushrooms

Melt butter in a saucepan. Add flour and mix until smooth. Add parsley, mustard, onion, salt, nutmeg and pepper. Mix well. Layer half of mushrooms in a baking dish and dot with mustard mixture. Repeat layers. Pour cream over all and bake uncovered at 350° for 30 minutes, then stir so all mushrooms are covered. Return to oven and bake an additional 30 minutes. Can be made the day ahead and reheated.

Grilled Cheese Sandwich

- 2 slices of bread
- Butter
- 1 slice of cheese
- Thinly sliced apples
- Crispy bacon

Prepare sandwich as usual by buttering bread. Fill with cheese, apple slices and bacon. Brown in a skillet until toasted on both sides.



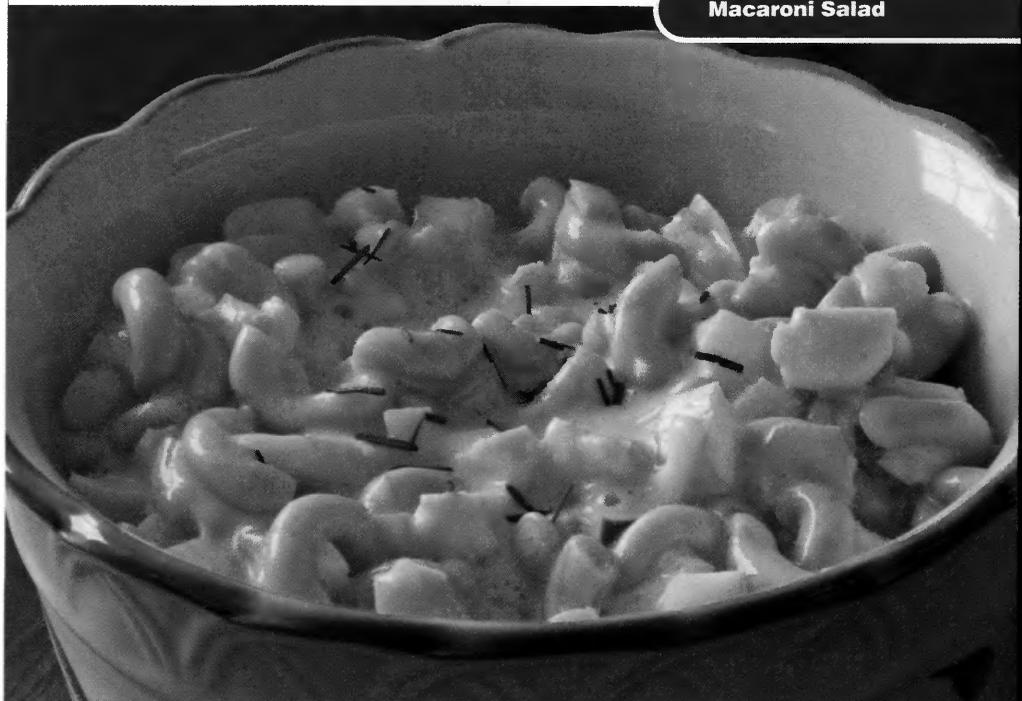
Breakfast Bake

Macaroni Salad (below)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 lb. macaroni | 1 onion, chopped |
| 1 med. head cauliflower, chopped | 1 can sweetened condensed milk |
| 1 cucumber, chopped | 1 C. vinegar |
| 1 green pepper, chopped | 1/2 C. sugar |
| 4 stalks celery, chopped | 2 C. mayonnaise |
| 4 carrots, grated | |

Cook and drain macaroni. Put cauliflower, cucumber, pepper, celery, carrots and onion into a large bowl. Mix together sweetened condense milk, vinegar, sugar and mayonnaise. Pour dressing over vegetables and then stir in macaroni.

Macaroni Salad



Helping Make Food Safety Second Nature for Your Family

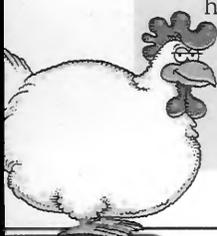
Every now and then we are alerted to outbreaks of food borne illnesses in commercially prepared foods, such as the recent peanut butter recall. It's important to take these alerts seriously and follow instructions about not eating or throwing out food.

Even more important to your family's health are the food safety rules you practice at home. You may think it strange to "teach" food safety rules, but I would venture a guess that you've taught your child to "look both ways before crossing the street," "don't talk to strangers," and "call home if you're going to be late." And just like "looking both ways," when everyone practices safe food handling on a regular basis, food safety rules become second nature for everyone in the family.

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) summarizes food safety instruction for children with four key words: Clean, Separate, Chill, Cook.

CLEAN: Wash hands and any surface used for food often. Even though we can't see the bacteria that make us sick, they can spread everywhere. Make hand washing a family habit: before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers and handling pets.

- Wash kitchen utensils, cutting boards and surfaces with hot, soapy water each time they are used. Involve your child by allowing him/her to help wipe off surfaces.
- Rinse sponge or dishcloth in hot soapy water each time they're used. Wash cloth towels often in hot cycle of your washing machine.



SEPARATE: Keep raw and cooked food separate.

- Keep raw meat, poultry and fish wrapped in sealed containers or plastic bags so the juices won't drip out.
- Wash everything, including your hands, that touches raw meat, poultry or fish before using it with other food.
- Never put cooked food on the same plate or cutting board that was used for raw food, unless you thoroughly wash it first.

CHILL: Refrigerate food right away.

- Let your child check the refrigerator thermometer. Your refrigerator should be below 40° F; the freezer should be under 0° F.
- Food should be thawed in the refrigerator or in the microwave oven.

- Freeze or refrigerate perishable left over foods in small containers within two hours.

COOK: Cook food to a safe, proper temperature.

- Using a clean meat thermometer to check the temperature, cook hamburgers to at least 160 degrees and chicken to 180 degrees.
- Both the yolks and whites of eggs should be firm. Fish is cooked until it flakes easily with a fork.
- Leftovers should be heated to at least 165 degrees. Turn and stir food that is heated in a microwave to avoid cold spots.

*Source: Judith M. Taylor, University of Illinois Extension Center
Adapted from: Nibbles for Health 33, Nutrition Newsletters for Parents of Young Children, USDA, Food and Nutrition Service.*

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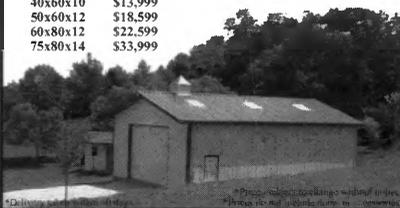
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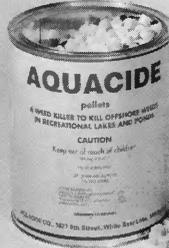
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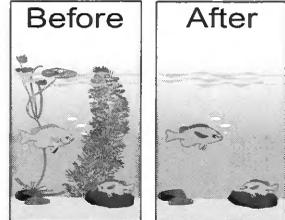


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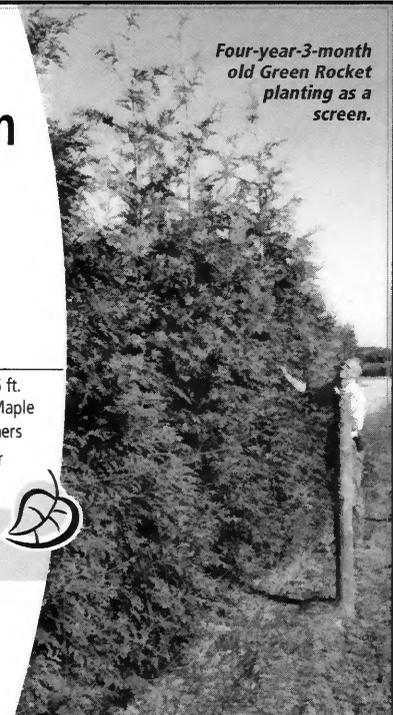
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1, Illinois State Button Society Annual Show at the Ramada Hotel and Spa in Galena. Thousands of beautiful antique and modern clothing buttons from the 17th Century to modern times on display and for sale. A unique experience. 309-683-2661.

2, Ride the Ups and Downs starting at the Jo Daviess/Carroll Area Vocational Center in Elizabeth. A one-day bicycle ride on the scenic and hilly back roads of Jo Daviess County. Four routes available ranging from 22-60 miles with color-coded maps, sag service and snacks on the route. \$20 (\$15 early bird). 815-275-0041 or www.elizabeth-il.com/Ride.html.

2-3, Galena's Got Talent at the DeSoto House Hotel in Galena. Galena's version of everyone's favorite reality talent shows. Help choose the most popular entertainers. Featuring singers, dancers, and a host of other entertainers, plus a few surprises. 815-777-0177, 815-777-3638 or www.galenahistorymuseum.com.

2, The Third Annual Airport Daze at the Logan County Airport in Lincoln. Expect interesting displays, cool aircraft, historic aviation displays and a close up look at aviation of Logan County today. 217-732-8687.

2-3, Kites Over Lake Storey at Lake Storey Park in Galesburg. A family oriented event that will feature kite flying for kids, a candy drop, single-line and show kites with many of America's top flyers. 309-343-2485, visitors@visitgalesburg.com or www.visitgalesburg.com.



3, Tres de Mayo Celebration at Miller Park Zoo in Bloomington. 1-3 p.m. Come celebrate Tres (Cinco) de Mayo with free chips and salsa from Qdoba, piñata games, and up close Mexican animal encounters! This event is free with a regular zoo admission. www.millerparkzoo.org.

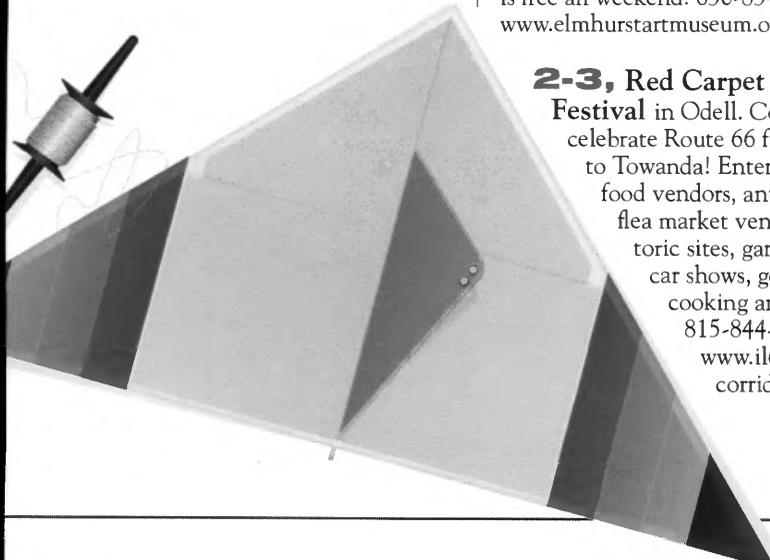
2-3, Art in the Park in Elmhurst. A wonderful weekend to find unique, artist-created handcrafted jewelry, ceramics, photography, sculpture, furniture, glass and fiber works, as well as paintings. There will be artists exhibiting works for sale all weekend-long. Enjoy live entertainment on stage and an assortment of food for sale by select vendors. Elmhurst Museum Admission is free all weekend. 630-834-0202 or www.elmhurstartmuseum.org.

2-3, Red Carpet Corridor Festival in Odell. Come and celebrate Route 66 from Joliet to Towanda! Entertainment, food vendors, antiques, crafts, flea market vendors, historic sites, garage sales, car shows, good country cooking and more! 815-844-5847, <http://www.il66redcarpet-corridor.org>.

3, Raven Moon Band at Espenschied Chapel in Mascoutah. Winner of Riverfront Times Best of St. Louis 2007, Raven Moon will present exceptional acoustic music with an American pulse. They have been delighting their audiences with everything from Blues, Celtic, Cajun, Country, Jazz and Rock and Roll for more than a decade. 1-618-566-2780 or www.Espenschiedchapel.org.

3, Spoon River China Art Guild's Annual China Show at the Donaldson Center in Canton. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m. Hand painted China displays, door prizes, China painting demonstrations and refreshments. Free. Donations accepted and appreciated. 309-647-3390 or 309-329-9946.

8, Park-N-Cruise on the downtown Square in Macomb. 6-9 p.m. Bring your friends and family to Macomb for an evening of vintage and collector cars, entertainment from Oldies 106.7 FM, shopping and great restaurants. 309-837-4855 or www.macombareachamber.com.



8-9 & 14-16, *The Sunshine Boys* in Freeport. Al Lewis and Willie Clark played vaudeville as a team for 43 years, but mutual dislike has kept them far apart the last 11 years. Now CBS wants them to appear in the History of Comedy and their reunion sparks delirious comedy. 815-232-7023, winnieshiek@hotmail.com or <http://www.wplay.org>.

8-17, *Little Shop of Horrors* at the Alton Little Theater in Alton. One of the longest-running Off-Broadway shows of all time, this affectionate spoof of 1950s sci-fi movies has become a household name, thanks to a highly successful film version and a score by the songwriting team of Howard Ashman and Alan Menken, who redefined the animated musical film with Disney's *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast* and *Aladdin*. Charming, tuneful and hilarious, *Little Shop of Horrors* never fails to entertain. Tickets are \$18 for adults and \$8 for students. 618-462-6562.

9, *Murder Mystery Dinner Theater, I've Got Friends In Buried Places* at Collver Family Winery in Barry. 217-335-3279.

9, *Miss Annie's Tea and Gossip Parlor* at the historic Ryan Mansion in Galena. Join us for a Victorian high tea and learn the latest gossip. Shhhh, Miss Annie still thinks it 1860. Victorian attire encouraged, but not required. Reservations a must. \$25. 815-777-0336 or www.ryanmansiontours.com.

9, *Spring Wildflower Walk* through Schurmeier Forest in Elizabeth. Enjoy and learn about beautiful native woodland wildflowers on a guided hike through the Jo Daviess Conservation Foundation's teaching forest. Free. 815-858-9100 or www.jdcf.org.



9, *Women In The Outdoors™* Event at the McCully Heritage Project in Kampsville. 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. Activities will include archery, shot gunning, mushrooming, butterflies, local archeology and prehistoric tools, heirloom gardening, outdoor cooking, and more. Sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation. www.mccullyheritage.org or 217-285-4114.

16, *Spring Music on Main* in downtown Galena at the Green Street Plaza from 5 – 10 p.m. Dance under the stars to live music. Special activities for children. Family fun for all. Food and beverage available. 815-777-9050 or www.galenachamber.com.

16, *The Evening Thyme Garden Club's 11th Annual Garden Fair* at the Clark County Fairgrounds in Marshall. 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. A large variety of plants, hand crafted garden items, deck, pool and pond accessories will be available. Vendor items will be raffled and demonstrations will be given. Admission is free. 217-889-2280.

16, *Music on the Green* on the Special Event Field at Eagle Ridge Resort and Spa in Galena. 6 p.m. Enjoy the stars, fresh air and live music. Bring your own lawn chairs or blankets. No carry-ins. Food and beverage concessions available. Rain or shine. Free. 800-892-2269 or www.eagleridge.com.

23, *The 6th Annual Wine in Bloom Open House* at the Massbach Ridge Winery in Elizabeth. Celebrate spring in the vineyard with live entertainment, tours of the winery and vineyard and wine tastings. 815-291-6700 or www.massbachridge.com.

23-24, *The 11th Annual Fine Art Show* in St. Charles. A forum for the display and sale of the finest quality original art. The Show features artists from across the country. 630-513-5386 or www.stcharlesfineartshow.com.

30, *Strawberry Festival* at Collver Family Winery in Barry. 217-335-3279.

30-31, *Pontiac Kite Festival* in Pontiac. This free event includes entertainment for the entire family! Bring your own kite or buy a kite onsite from Chicago Kite. Grab a chair and get ready to be entertained as members of IKE demonstrate their kite flying skills. 815-844-5847, tourism@pontiac.org or www.pontiac.org.



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

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

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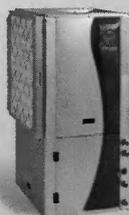
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