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COVER STORY ■ PAGE 10

BEATING HEART DISEASE

Ann Rawlings of Waverly tells about her experience with a heart attack and the medical professionals who saved her life.

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ILLINOIS™ COUNTRY LIVING

Volume 67, No. 9, January 2010

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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.

COMMENTARY

Climate Change Common Sense

Midwest has always led the way in being good steward

Over the past several months you have probably read other opinions about the effects of a carbon dioxide (CO_2) cap and trade legislation on those of us living in the Midwest. Undoubtedly, you have also been exposed to many stories in the media trying to convince you about the future effects of greenhouse gases on our environment. I am not going to try to persuade you in either direction on the science of climate change.

Instead, I believe we should have confidence in ourselves and apply a measure of common sense in formulating the correct course of action. Here is my take on some of the ideas presented in support of cap and trade.

Conservation - I do not believe that Midwesterners need to be schooled on the benefits of conservation or the importance of being careful stewards of our God-given environment. People in the Midwest have harnessed the awesome potential of our environment to literally help feed the world. The same people have also rapidly employed new technologies to ensure the sustainability of our food source and of our way of living. In other words, I don't believe you need to convince us that lowering our impact on the environment is good. I think we wrote the book on this subject. Where I think we differ from the proponents of cap and trade is only in timing. If we stand by the principles that we have lived by, we will implement effective technologies to reduce impact on the environment as fast as it is practical and affordable.

"I do not see how increasing the cost of energy could have any effect on precious jobs other than sending more of them across our borders."

Jobs - Cap and trade proponents extol the virtues of the thousands of new green jobs that would be created from carbon legislation. I don't buy it. How can we all be better off if it takes more people in the utility industry to create and deliver our energy? Isn't that the same as saying if we could just cut farm productivity in half, we would all be better off since it will take twice as many farmers to feed us. Instead, it makes sense to me that rising energy costs would take away one strategic advantage that helped build this country - economical energy. I do not see how increasing the cost of energy could have any effect on precious jobs other than sending more of them across our borders.

World Leadership - I have heard it stated that we must move first to curb emissions to convince the rest of the world to follow our lead. The knowledge the world needs is how to continually curb man's impact on the environment while continuing to improve efficiencies and growing a robust economy. It seems to me a carbon tax is akin to giving up and saying in effect that we should just lower our standard of living to demonstrate our commitment to lowering green house gases. To me, that seems too easy, and I don't think for a minute that many other nations will be willing to stifle their own economic growth. My common sense tells me that true leadership would stem most effectively from innovation.

Innovation - The proponents of cap and trade say that raising the cost of energy will lead to new and better technologies out of necessity. It certainly would create the desire for new energy sources, but who is going to pay for the research and development? Common sense tells me that the U.S. will be best poised to take risks, innovate and lead when our economy is robust.

Moderation - moving at a steady and measured pace, a pace that allows the economy to flourish and matches the speed of new rules to the speed at which new technologies are created, is what makes sense to me. I truly believe a moderate approach is the fastest and only effective way to positively impact the world in which we live.

I believe most of us on both sides of the climate change legislation desire the same outcome for our planet. I just do not believe the cap and trade system is going to get us there. Steady application of common sense and moderation will allow us to chart a better course for solving our problems and maintaining our ability to lead the world. I encourage you to please form your own opinions and let your legislators know where you stand. ■

Jay Bartlett is President/CEO of Prairie Power, Inc. (www.ppi.coop), the generation and transmission cooperative serving 10 electric distribution cooperatives in Illinois.

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A Dialogue With America

Senators are drafting climate change legislation NOW, and you can impact the outcome. Climate Change legislation should be:

☑ Fair.

Climate Change legislation needs to recognize regional differences in how electricity is produced.

☑ Affordable.

Any climate change plan must keep electricity affordable for all Americans.

☑ Achievable.

Climate Change legislation must be realistic to ensure long-term success.

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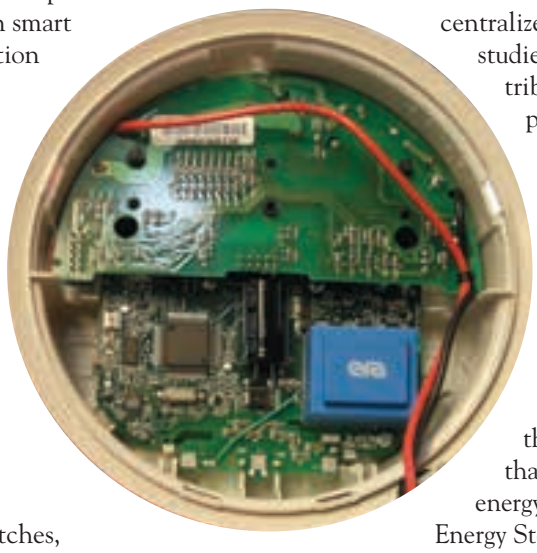
to make your voice heard.

Illinois Electric Cooperatives Receive Smart Grid Grant

Illinois electric co-ops have already made investments in smart meters like this one. Now several Illinois co-ops will join the National Rural Electric Cooperative's Cooperative Research Network (CRN) in smart grid research and demonstration projects.



The projects will be funded in part by a $33,932,146 Department of Energy Smart Grid Regional Demonstration Grant. Seventeen electric cooperatives across 10 states will match the grants and install and operate a suite of diverse smart grid technologies. Technologies will include over 130,000 meters, over 18,000 demand response switches, nearly 4,000 in-home displays or smart thermostats, and other smart grid technologies. Adams Electric Cooperative, Camp Point; Menard Electric Cooperative, Petersburg; and Prairie Power, Inc., Jacksonville are the Illinois co-ops joining this smart grid research effort.

In addition to customer-focused technologies, the project will include voltage sensors and fault detectors. The demonstration data will be centralized for all sites and include studies on total demand, distributed energy resources, peak pricing, customer appliance control and self-healing technologies for improved reliability.

"These demonstration projects will further our knowledge and understanding of what works best and delivers the best results for the smart grid, setting the course for a modern grid that is critical to achieving our energy goals," said Secretary of Energy Steven Chu. "This funding will be used to show how smart grid technologies can be applied to whole systems to promote energy savings for consumers, increase energy efficiency and foster the growth of renewable energy sources like wind and solar power." ■

New Web site offers volunteer opportunities

The University of Illinois Chicago created a new Web site designed to facilitate volunteerism among members of the UIC community. At www.uicvolunteer.org, you can select from thousands of volunteer opportunities all over the country – all you do is enter your zip code to view volunteer opportunities that are available. You can also search by your area of interest. ■

Obama Proposes New Home Energy Retrofit Program

President Barack Obama proposed a new rebate program in early December to reward homeowners for making their homes more energy efficient, while also proposing additional federal investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. Some are calling it "cash for caulkers."

As part of a speech about jobs and the economy the president noted that home energy retrofits create jobs, save money for families and reduce the pollution that threatens our environment.

"I'm calling on Congress to consider a new program to provide incentives for consumers who retrofit their homes to become more energy-efficient, which we know creates jobs, saves money for families and reduces the pollution that threatens our environment."

Details were sketchy, but some are proposing consumers might be eligible for a 50 percent rebate on both the price of the equipment and the installation of efficiency improvements, up to $12,000. So far, there is no income restriction on who is eligible. It's also not clear how the home efficiency plan would be administered. The government may issue rebates, give a tax credit, or the program might be run by state agencies. ■

Don't Get Scammed

The Illinois Department on Aging wants to empower seniors to stop exploitation from home repair and telemarketing scams. In its efforts to spread awareness, the department has issued a "Savvy Senior" campaign with the purpose of educating the aging on scam tactics.

The program has key alerts for each of the scams. In brief, when considering home repair, seniors should know the following: a) if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is; b) always get estimates; c) don't pay in advance; d) check references and even call the police to have someone checked out working in your area.

Telemarketing scams can be just as tricky for seniors. To protect yourself against phone scams: a) don't pay for any prize or send money to improve your chances of winning; b) don't be bullied into buying "right now;" don't give your credit card number to anyone over the phone unless you made the call and don't give any caller your bank account number.

Should you need to report these exploitations or any other type of elder abuse, phone the 24-hour hotline at 866-800-1409. ■

Green Cars Go Farther For Less

A few years ago the Toyota Prius was the go-to model for those with an environmental conscience and up to $30,000 to pay for the privilege of getting 35-40 miles per gallon (mpg) in the city and 45-55 on the highway. Today there are more choices. The Honda Insight is a hybrid available for less than $20,000. Other options include hybrid versions of Honda's Civic ($23,800), Nissan's Altima ($26,780), Ford's Fusion ($27,625) and Escape SUV ($31,500), Mercury's Milan ($31,590) and Mariner SUV ($29,995), Toyota's Camry ($26,150) and Highlander SUV ($34,700).

Smaller cars with regular gasoline engines also get great mileage, lower emissions and cost less. Examples include the Corolla ($15,350), Matrix ($16,550) and Yaris ($12,355) from Toyota, Honda's Fit ($14,900), the Mazda 3 ($16,045), Chevy's Aveo ($11,965) and Cobalt ($14,990), the Hyundai's Accent ($9,970) and Elantra ($14,145), Pontiac's G3 ($14,335), the Kia Rio ($11,495), the MINI Cooper ($19,500), Ford's Focus ($15,995), and the Smart Car ForTwo ($11,990). For more go to www.greencar.com or www.fueleconomy.gov. ■

Burris and 13 Others Stand Up for Fairness in Climate Bill

Several U.S. senators are standing up for consumers after being faced with an unbalanced approach to climate change. In November, Illinois Sen. Roland Burris joined 13 other Senate Democrats in a call for fairness in climate change legislation.

Illinois Senator Roland Burris

In a letter coordinated by Iowa Senator Tom Harkin and sent to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid and the chairs of each Senate committee working on the climate change bill, the group declared it's essential for Congress to fairly distribute emissions allowances to all Americans, no matter where they live.

"I'm thankful we have people in Washington, D.C., looking out for the consumer's best interest," says Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

"Over the past year, co-op members have been contacting our senators to express their concerns and urge that they make fairness and affordability a priority. Illinois co-op members sent more than 256,000 e-mails and postcards alone. We're all grateful that Sen. Burris listened to their concerns."

Congress proposed creating carbon dioxide emissions allowances for these power plants to lessen resulting increases to consumer electric bills.

But under legislation passed by the U.S. House and being considered by the U.S. Senate, these allowances won't be distributed evenly. As the letter stresses, in areas of the country less dependent on fossil fuels like coal and natural gas, consumer electric bills won't be impacted at all. In fossil fuel-dependant areas — like Illinois — consumers could end up footing higher bills to cover what should be a nationwide initiative.

"Our concerns are being recognized, and it's crucial we continue to rally for climate change legislation that's fair, affordable and achievable," stresses Noland. "We are grateful to Sen. Burris for taking the stand that he did, and we look forward to continuing to work with him and Sen. Durbin toward achieving climate change legislation that is fair for consumers."

To date more than 600,000 consumers from across the U.S. have asked Congress to craft climate change legislation they can afford. If you want to send a message join the Our Energy, Our Future™ grassroots campaign by going to www.ourenergy.coop. ■

Jobs Available for Census Takers

The U.S. Census Bureau's Chicago Regional Census Center says about 100,000 people are now being recruited across Illinois to work as census takers for the 2010 Census between December, 2009 and June, 2010. Tests for these positions, which pay between $11.50 and $18.25 per hour, are taking place through January.

Conducted every decade since 1790, the Census determines the number of seats Illinois will have in the House of Representatives. It also affects the apportionment of political districts as well as leads to the accurate distribution of community funding for schools, roads, neighborhood improvements, elderly care and the like.

The Census hires locally. Testing times and locations across Illinois are available by calling, toll free, 1-866-861-2010. More information about the positions, including application forms and a practice test, are available at the 2010 Census Web site www.2010censusjobs.gov.

Geothermal Energy can Generate Electricity and Heat Homes

Iceland derives 26.5 percent of its electricity needs from the utility-grade geothermal energy plants like this one. Here in the U.S., where geothermal is in its infancy, the Obama administration has set aside $750 million for geothermal development, and Congress has allocated $129 million to the Department of Energy for various geothermal programs. Homeowners looking to go green and lower their utility bills can install a geothermal heat pump. Liquid circulating in the loops of pipe buried in the ground is used with a heat exchanger, which concentrate the energy and releases it inside the home. In summer the process is reversed to fill the home with geothermal-cooled air. To help with the installation cost the IRS now offers tax credits for 30 percent of the cost.

Man Escapes Injury from Power Lines by Staying in Vehicle

An early morning accident in Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative's (RECC) territory could have been much worse except for the quick thinking of one of the accident victims. A truck driven by an off-duty utility worker was hit during a foggy November morning, flipped over and hit a RECC riser pole.

When RECC employee Tim Hemberger arrived at the scene, he disconnected the power from a switching cabinet and then grounded the lines lying on top of the truck.

Hemberger reported that one of the lines was indeed energized. Within seconds the driver was able to remove himself from the vehicle. He told Hemberger he thought he heard arcing and knew he should stay in his vehicle until utility help arrived to de-energize the lines. Both drivers escaped with non-life threatening injuries. It took seven linemen all day to replace the riser pole and accompanying lines.

If you should ever be in, or come across, an accident involving power lines the smart thing to do is to stay in your vehicle until utility workers can de-energize the lines. Just because you don't see or hear arcing does not mean the lines are grounded. If you have to leave your vehicle you should do so with your feet together and hop to safety. Don't become the path to ground. To learn more about being safe around electricity, go to www.safeelectricity.org.

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Photo by Chad Jeffers

BEATING HEART DISEASE

Hospitals Work Together to Provide Emergency Care for Rural Citizens

By Ed VanHoose

Ann Rawlings has her blood pressure checked by R.N. Cathy Cragoe as part of her personalized rehabilitation program at Memorial Medial Center's cardiac rehab center.

When former elementary school teacher Ann Rawlings of Waverly began to experience back pain, she attributed it to her love of sewing. After all, she spends much of her free time bent over a sewing machine.

So she ignored it.

When Ann began to have occasional heartburn, she attributed it to her new diet plan. When she couldn't complete a walk with her husband, John, she ascribed it to being out of shape. After all, she was just beginning a new workout regimen to satisfy a resolution to lose a few pounds.

So she ignored both of those signs, too.

But when Ann returned from a walk that brought on pain, "like an 18-wheeler running over my chest and my shoulder blades" she could no longer ignore it.

Ann was having a heart attack.

Stories like Ann's have become increasingly common in the United States. According to the American Heart Association's 2009 publication entitled Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics, "[a]n estimated 80,000,000 American adults (one in three) have one or more types of cardiovascular disease (CVD), of whom 38,100,000 are estimated to be age 60 or older."

When asked about the cause of the increase in the amount of heart disease in the United States, Dr. Marc Shelton, President of Prairie Cardiology in Springfield says, "The two biggest factors contributing to heart disease are obesity and smoking. Americans lead a much more sedentary lifestyle than even our recent ancestors, but we still eat the same amount."

Dr. Shelton went on to discuss ways to combat obesity.

"There are many diets out there on the market. I think some of them have it wrong. The basic thing to remember is to eat reasonable size portions. I suggest people avoid overcomplicated diet plans. All of those cards and counting can get overwhelming. Right now I'm recommending the "No White" diet. It's easy to remember, and effective. You simply don't eat any foods that are white," Shelton Says.

Paula Harwood, Supervisor of Prevention and Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation at Memorial Medical Center also stresses the importance of exercise. "You should try to get in at least an hour of exercise each day. Even if it's just to go for a walk, get up and move around."

In Ann's case, she had actually begun an exercise program, but the blockage was already too severe. "I just didn't pick up that this would be happening to me because even though I've had high blood pressure, I don't really have a cholesterol problem, so it was just such a surprise to find out I had two block-

ages. One was a 100 percent blockage and the other was 80 percent."

Fortunately for Ann, Illinois has a program called Prairie STAT Heart which claims to be one of the first in the country to focus on streamlining emergency care. The program strives to meet the national goal of providing treatment within 90 to 120 minutes from a patient's arrival at the community hospital. This insures that the patient located in the rural community receives emergent heart care as fast as or faster than patients in larger urban areas.

Since the launch of the Prairie STAT Heart Program in December 2004 in Springfield, Ill. and in August 2007 in Carbondale, Ill., the program has served 358 patients in the central part of the state and 24 patients in southern Illinois who suffer from ST-elevated acute myocardial infarctions (the worst kind of heart attack).

The challenge in rural communities has been to quickly determine which patients were having the worst kind of heart attacks and then to mobilize the transportation system and receiving hospital to move the patient to an experienced cath lab.

The cath labs at St. John's Hospital and Memorial Medical Center in Springfield and Memorial Hospital in Carbondale employ highly specialized treatments and devices to provide the highest level of care in emergency situations.

For Ann that meant within minutes there was a rescue team at her door to transport her to Memorial Medical Center in Springfield.

"After John called the rescue squad, it seemed like they never did get here. But you know, when you're in pain your perception of time is off. I had never felt anything like that. I've had three children and believe me, childbirth wasn't anything to that. It was just too awful. So I was happy when they got here, but they were trying to figure out how to get a stretcher into our house."

Ann resides in a split-level house with stairs immediately at the entrance.

"I told them 'Don't worry about it!' 'I'll walk!' And, I walked out to the front and got on the cart and said 'Now, let's get going!"

Ann Rawlings returns to her hobby of sewing quilts after experiencing a heart attack and going through recovery.

The rescue squad that picked Ann up immediately contacted Memorial and arranged to meet an ambulance en route. The ambulance met the rescue squad in a residential area and then took Ann the rest of the way to Memorial.

"Once I was in the ambulance, the paramedic started in on me with oxygen and blood pressure and gave me nitro. That slowed the pain down a little, but not enough. When we got to the hospital everything moved very quickly. I heard a man say, 'Mrs. Rawlings you're having a heart attack. We're going to the cath lab. Then they ran. They took my cart and just ran to the cath lab. I arrived at 8:30 p.m. and by 10:30 I was done and in my room upstairs. It was a really quick response."

Many patients recovering from heart-related illness are concerned with the level of activity they will have after the event. Ann found herself immediately beginning rehabilitation and even enjoying it.

"I started rehab the very next week. The first time you go, you have a consultation with Paula. She explains everything you're going to do. It's funny, but I've never been on a treadmill. I had been walking at my own pace, and when the treadmill started it was so slow that I almost fell on my face! I take a lot of kidding from the other patients about that. I'm mastering it now though, since they increased the speed."

Throughout the rehabilitation program, patients are monitored and encouraged, not only by the staff, but by each other.

Ann says, "You kind of get to know everybody and help each other. If we forget something, someone is always quick to point out, 'You forgot to stretch!' I like to kid some of the men because they don't like the stretching. I always tell them they're cheating. It's just the teacher coming out in me."

When asked about her plans for the future, and the impact that the program has had on her Ann says, "After my heart attack, I'm just like normal. I just thank God and everybody involved that I'm like that. You come home and you're thankful for the simplest activities like seeing your grandchildren. I might not have been doing that. So these people, from right here in town, all the way to the hospital – I am thankful for them all." ■

FIVE "F's" FOR HEART HEALTHY EATING

When implementing a heart healthy eating lifestyle, many may believe that you must completely renovate your eating habits. But by making a few changes as outlined below, you can jumpstart into a lifetime heart healthy eating plan.

Flaxseed Meal:

The next time you are in the baking aisle or organic foods aisle at the grocery store, hunt down a bag of ground flaxseed meal. Sprinkle one tablespoon on your cereal or in your yogurt, soup or applesauce to get the valuable omega-3 fats. Omega-3 fats are natural anti-inflammatories that also improve blood flow and interfere with blood clotting. Aim for five tablespoons each week.

Fish:

The American Heart Association (AHA) recommends eating fish, especially the oily kind, at least twice a week. Try to find ways to add fish to your healthy eating lifestyle as long as it is not deep fat fried. Your goal is 8 ounces of fish, preferably salmon, tuna or sardines, each week.

Fat:

Your body needs fat for many important functions, so a healthy eating plan includes some fat. However, you must watch the type of fat you choose. Saturated fats and trans fats may raise your risk of heart attack and stroke, because they increase the "bad" LDL cholesterol in your blood. Conversely, unsaturated fats lower your risk because they decrease your LDL cholesterol and maintain a protective level of "good" HDL cholesterol. So, replace saturated and trans fats with unsaturated fats – monounsaturated and polyunsaturated. Best strategies to use here:

Use olive, canola or peanut oil in cooking.

Enjoy nuts in small portions.

Choose soft tub margarine over stick margarine, solid shortening or butter.

Consume only three-ounce portions of lean red meat – pork, ham, beef, lamb – up to four times a week or less.

Limit processed meat such as bologna, wieners, bacon, sausage and pepperoni.

Choose fat-free or low fat dairy products.

Fiber:

We should be getting at least 25 grams of fiber daily, but most of us don't even reach half of this each day, so we have some work to do here. The type of fiber isn't so important as both soluble and insoluble fibers are linked to lower risk of heart disease. The best way to get a jump on fiber is to eat a high fiber cereal (5 grams or more per serving) each morning. Add flaxseed meal, fruit and a few nuts to boost the fiber higher. The array of high fiber cereals is vast with one to suit most everyone. If you aren't crazy about cereal for breakfast, eat it as a snack later in the day. Whole grain foods – bread, crackers, brown rice, whole wheat pasta, and so on – are the best sources of fiber. Check out the food label looking for at least a 3 gram fiber allotment per serving. Fresh fruits and vegetables also provide some fiber.

Five-a-day:

This slogan was used during a campaign by Produce for Better Health several years ago to get us to consume five servings of fruits and vegetables daily. It has since been replaced with the slogan "fruits & veggies, more matters" with recommendations to eat 2 cups of fruit and 2½ cups vegetables daily. Regardless of the slogan, we need to get fruits and veggies in as part of a heart healthy lifestyle. These foods provide many nutrients and fiber as well as disease-fighting phytochemicals – natural substances that work as a team to protect our health. Only fruits and vegetables, not pills or supplements, can provide all these nutrients together. Make it simple: fresh/dried fruit on cereal and juice at breakfast; vegetable salad at lunch; fruit for snack; vegetables at dinner.

There are many other strategies to use to get a jump into a heart healthy eating lifestyle, but if you can start with these five, you will be well on your way to a lifetime of good health.

Sara Lopinski, MS, RD, LDN
Registered Dietitian
Center for Living at St. John's Hospital

Steps for Preventing Heart Disease

The Illinois Department of Health in its Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program urges Illinoisans to:

- **Build physical activity into your family's routines and playtimes.**
- **Support and encourage daily, quality physical education in all school grades.**
- **Reduce time spent watching television and other sedentary behaviors, such as computers or video games.**
- **Create more opportunities for physical activity at work.**
- **Eat five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day.**
- **Consume reasonable portion sizes. (Avoid "supersizing.")**

Complete a chart below to find out your own risk for heart attack

ESTIMATING TEN-YEAR RISK OF HEART ATTACK
FOR MEN

(Prior heart attack or diabetes places any patient at high risk)

	AGE	AGE POINTS	SMOKING POINTS		TOTAL CHOLESTEROL POINTS				
					YOUR TOTAL CHOLESTEROL (mg/dl)				
YOUR AGE BRACKET			Non-smoker	Smoker	<160	160-199	200-239	240-279	≥280
	20-34	-9	0	8	0	4	7	9	11
	35-39	-4							
	40-44	0	0	5	0	3	5	6	8
	45-49	3							
	50-54	6	0	3	0	2	3	4	5
	55-59	8							
	60-64	10	0	1	0	1	1	2	3
	65-69	11							
	70-74	12	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
	75-79	13							
	POINTS FOR AGE		POINTS FOR SMOKING		POINTS FOR TOTAL CHOLESTEROL				

HDL (mg/dl)	POINTS
≥60	-1
50-59	0
40-49	1
<40	2
POINTS FOR HDL	

SYSTOLIC BP (mmHg)	POINTS IF UNTREATED	POINTS IF TREATED
<120	0	0
120-129	0	1
130-139	1	2
140-159	1	2
≥160	1	3
POINTS FOR SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE		

ADD TOTAL OF POINTS FROM ALL FIVE BOXES ABOVE ☐

YOUR POINT TOTAL	<0	0	2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	≥17
YOUR TEN YEAR RISK %	<1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	16	20	25	≥30

ESTIMATING TEN-YEAR RISK OF HEART ATTACK
FOR WOMEN

(Prior heart attack or diabetes places any patient at high risk)

	AGE	AGE POINTS	SMOKING POINTS		TOTAL CHOLESTEROL POINTS				
					YOUR TOTAL CHOLESTEROL (mg/dl)				
YOUR AGE BRACKET			Non-smoker	Smoker	<160	160-199	200-239	240-279	≥280
	20-34	-7	0	9	0	4	8	11	13
	35-39	-3							
	40-44	0	0	7	0	3	6	8	10
	45-49	3							
	50-54	6	0	4	0	2	4	5	7
	55-59	8							
	60-64	10	0	2	0	1	2	3	4
	65-69	12							
	70-74	14	0	1	0	1	1	2	2
	75-79	16							
	POINTS FOR AGE		POINTS FOR SMOKING		POINTS FOR TOTAL CHOLESTEROL				

HDL (mg/dl)	POINTS
≥60	-1
50-59	0
40-49	1
<40	2
POINTS FOR HDL	

SYSTOLIC BP (mmHg)	POINTS IF UNTREATED	POINTS IF TREATED
<120	0	0
120-129	1	3
130-139	2	4
140-159	3	5
≥160	4	6
POINTS FOR SYSTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE		

ADD TOTAL OF POINTS FROM ALL FIVE BOXES ABOVE ☐

YOUR POINT TOTAL	<9	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	≥25
YOUR TEN YEAR RISK %	<1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	4	5	6	8	10	12	16	20	≥25

Saved by a Safety Lesson

Teens credit timely power line knowledge for saving their lives

Less than a week after a power line safety demonstration at their high school, the car Lee Whittaker, Ashley Taylor and two friends were in crashed into a utility pole. Fortunately for them, Illinois safety expert Kyle Finley had educated them well on the proper actions to take after a vehicle hits a utility pole. They survived by remembering what Finley taught them.

"You have to remember that you can't smell, hear or see electricity, but the power in that line is tremendous," Finley says. "The safest place after a crash is inside the vehicle, and the best thing you can do for a loved one who is trapped is to stay back and call the utility to disconnect power to the line."

When the Bronco the teens were traveling in crashed into the utility pole, bringing a power line down on the car, they knew not to get out and informed those who approached the scene to keep their distance. They waited more than 30 minutes for line crews to arrive and de-energize the power line.

"It was hard to wait inside, but Kyle had emphasized several times to stay in the car," said Lee Whittaker.

"It happened so quickly after we learned about it, and to think we used it to save each other's lives," adds Ashley Taylor. "We're really lucky."

"The safest place after a crash is inside the vehicle."

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, there are tens of thousands of accidents each year in which power poles are struck by cars or large equipment. Each one of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive without awareness of the right moves to make.

In the vast majority of those accidents, the safety place to be is inside the car. Only in the rare instance of fire should people exit the car. Then, they must know how to do so safely, jumping free and clear of the vehicle, landing with feet together and hopping away. It's difficult to get out without creating a path for current to flow, which is why one should get out only if circumstances necessitate it.

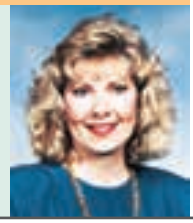
When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last thing on anyone's mind. We're often more concerned about whether anyone was injured, or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We often forget that by exiting the vehicle, we're risking bodily exposure to 7,200 volts of electricity from downed power lines.

Lee and Ashley are grateful to the local utility – White County Rural Electric Membership Corporation that sponsored Finley's Live Line Demo program at their school. They encourage everyone to learn from their experience and share this vital information with those they love.

"After the demo at school, I went home and shared it with my family and my friends," said Lee Whittaker. "They kind of laughed at me but it showed them when I had my accident that I survived with the information I heard."

To learn more about the teens' experience and power line safety during car accidents see the video on www.SafeElectricity.org. Visitors can also watch a live power line demonstration, just like the one the Indiana teens saw at their school. ■

Molly Hall is the Director of Safe Electricity. E-mail: mollyh@illinois.edu and for more information visit www.SafeElectricity.org.



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Cheeping About Seeds

Keeping the birds happy and the squirrels under control

Little known fact: I love the movie Mary Poppins. Always have and probably always will. It was one of the first movies I could remember seeing back in the 60s; well, that and a James Bond film.

Years later, when sitting at a piano, I would pick out the tunes from the movie. Never could figure what to do with the left hand, but I was good with the right hand. The first song that I finished was Feed the Birds, one of those haunting memories that make you feel good, especially when coupled with the images of the film.

To this day, I try to live up to that song, though I never could find birdseed for tuppence a bag, let alone finding a tuppence. (Yes, I know it's an English coin, but most retailers would rather have US coins.) Throughout the winter months, I try to feed the birds, not because they'll starve if I don't and they won't, but because their colors are so beautiful against any snow or the gray-brown of winter.

On top of that, the birds really entertain the indoor cats who are frustrated by that quarter inch of clear hard building material that curtails their animal instincts, and they in turn entertain me.

There are several problems associated with feeding the birds.

First, there's the cost. Well, like kids, you just decide to bear it. Birdseed isn't free and quality bird food isn't cheap. There is cheap seed, but you'll probably get the less-than-desirable birds, or those that stay may cheep that you're cheap.

"Most (squirrels) are born with the 'quitters never win' gene. So, if you can't beat them, why not join them?"

Not all birds eat the same type of seeds. Some prefer thistle while others go for the sunflowers. It's more of a trial-and-error, though there are all sorts of information at the library and on the Internet related to feeding birds, and what specific types of food the songbirds prefer.

Next, you have to contend with the unwelcomed visitors, whether two-legged or four-legged. The two-legged tend to be other birds; to date, I haven't found bird food to be tasty, but given the choice of seeds or starving, I might change my mind. Sunflower seeds are a great snack, but it takes much more of them to fill me up than a cardinal. And no, I'm not talking about eating the cardinal.

Squirrels tend to think that any food outdoors is rightfully theirs and will figure out any method to get to it. With no soap operas to watch or bills to pay, they can spend hours trying to figure out how to break through your bird-feeding defenses and scarf down the seeds.

Of course, this can be amusing; especially watching squirrels scurrying over all sorts of poles, wires, tree limbs and gutters trying to get to the food. Some are content to nibble on what falls beneath the feeder, but others are game at winning at all cost.

You can try slender metal poles at least 6 to 7 feet high and bird feeders suspended by thin wires from a limb or branch, with an extensive metal overhang over the feeding station. Squirrel claws and metal don't go hand in hand like bark or wood does. Without the overhang, they may slide down the wire and hang upside down in order to get the food.

But those furry tree rodents can jump 20 feet or more, flying through the air and trying to land on the littlest ledge in order to dislodge the seed. You'll need to locate the bird feeder far enough way so they have a difficult time.

Squirrels are prone to miss the feeder every now and then, landing smack on the ground. Most are dazed and will get back up. Most are born with the "quitters never win" gene.

So, if you can't beat them, why not join them? Throw a little extra seed out there, get some extra ears of corn and nail them to a board for the squirrels, which makes it harder for them than just scattering the seed on the ground? Then again, they don't have much to do except forage for their buried acorns, so making them work for their food isn't breaking any Geneva conventions.

What you really need to worry about are the rodents, such as rats and mice, which might nibble on the stored bag of birdseed. Instead of keeping the seed in the sack, you're better to find a plastic tub to keep the seed until you need it. Just make sure the lid is on tight. Or keep the cat nearby.

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Commandment No. 3 Invest in the Best

Thou shalt invest in an energy-efficient water heater

As we continue with the 10 Commandments of Energy Efficiency, we will keep our focus on making wise investments. This month, I am encouraging you to invest in a specific item that will make a world of difference in your utility bill. As we fight our way back to a prosperous economy remember that using your money for energy efficiency is probably the best investment you can make.

Have you ever thought much about your water heater? Are you aware that about 20 percent of your utility bill goes toward the heating of water? Have you ever had to replace your water heater? Nearly every one of you said yes. Now, why did you replace it? Was it the wrong color? Well, of course not. You replaced it because it quit working or had started leaking.

At some point, we all need to replace a water heater. Now wouldn't it be great if we could install a replacement guaranteed to never leak or rust? And wouldn't it be great if the new water heater were super energy efficient? Well, such a product is available and I will tell you how I learned about it.

About 10 years ago I was attending a really big home show in the Astrodome in Houston. It takes several days to see everything in that show, which is sponsored by the National Association of Homebuilders. I actually did an energy presentation there and had about four extra hours to look around. I was practically running through the aisles looking at every display as fast as possible.

"The Marathon is so well insulated with "envirofoam," that it has practically zero standby loss."

At one point, I looked to my left and saw some strange looking objects that were shaped like a 44-caliber pistol bullet only they were about five feet tall. I hollered over to the fellow and asked, "What are these?" And he said, "Water heaters." I said, "Commercial?" and he said, "No, mostly residential." I turned and walked his way and asked, "What is so special about these water heaters?" And he said they are guaranteed to never leak or rust and are 91 to 95 percent energy efficient. I didn't necessarily believe him but I knew that if it were true, a lot of my listeners would want to have one.

Later, when I got proof that it was true, I started telling about the Marathon water heater in my seminars and on my radio show. Folks just like you started asking where they could get a Marathon. For months, I had to say, "I don't know." But that didn't last for long because several electric cooperatives saw what a great product it was and began offering them to their members. And I know for a fact that hundreds of you have already purchased one. If you understand the facts, the rest of you will do the same.

The facts are simple. It is the last water heater that you will ever need at a particular location. It won't rust or leak because the tank has no metal. And the Marathon is so well insulated with "envirofoam," that it has practically zero standby loss regardless of the location. It does not warm your cold garage in the winter and it does not heat your house in the summer.

Now, consider this. The average gas water heater is less than 58 percent efficient, which means that about 40 percent of the natural gas you buy goes up the flue into the sky. On the other hand, the all-electric Marathons average 91-plus percent efficiency. That's a no-brainer in my book. So, my advice to you is this — when you need a water heater for your new or existing house, contact your local electric co-op and ask about the Marathon water heater. Remember – your co-op is working for you the member. That's why your co-op is doing all it can to help you save money on your electric bill by sponsoring this column, my show, my seminars, by conducting energy audits and much more. ■

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@phillirye.com, or call 501-653-7931. You can also sign up for a free newsletter and order his "how to" videotapes.

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Efficiency Experts Help Members Cut Energy Waste

By Scott Gates

Clad in jeans and a knit shirt, Jim Bennett walks confidently into a dark kitchen, puts a clipboard on the table, and waits. His eyes scan the room, darting from one appliance to another. Within minutes the home's owner walks in and flips on the light.

"Good morning," Bennett greets him warmly. Leaning over the counter, he points to a sheet of paper showing columns of numbers. "So if you look right here at 2009, you'll see your electricity use went up — that's because last winter was 25 percent colder than the others here …"

Bennett, an energy management technician with Fredericksburg, Va.-based Rappahannock Electric Cooperative, provides expert advice through an energy audit service offered to members by the vast majority of the nation's electric co-ops.

"If you track kilowatt-hour [kWh] use it tells the story," he explains.

The main trick to lowering winter electric use involves keeping drafts out and warm air in. The process, called weatherization — sealing drafty windows and doors, and adding insulation where it's needed — gets houses in top form to withstand the elements.

On average, weatherization reduces heating bills by 32 percent and overall energy bills by about $350 per year, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. The upfront investment in energy efficient upgrades can vary, although an energy advisor like Bennett can ensure money gets spent wisely.

"On average, weatherization reduces heating bills by 32 percent and overall energy bills by about $350 per year."

Expert Advice

Energy advisors, also called energy auditors, are professionals trained to find specific inefficiencies in a home or business. Working through a checklist of tests, they can determine what upgrades would offer the most bang for the buck in each particular case.

"All homes are unique," Bennett relates. "It's just a matter of evaluation. I'll talk to a member, find out what they do, how they use energy, and narrow things down from there."

Recognizing the money-saving value in energy audits, electric cooperatives are long-time champions of the process. A majority of electric co-ops nationwide, 77 percent, offer residential energy audits to their consumers. A full 92 percent sponsor energy efficiency education programs, according to the Arlington, Va.-based Cooperative Research Network (CRN), the research arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"Within two to four hours, an energy auditor can go through a home and work up a full list of recommended energy efficiency upgrades," Brian Sloboda, CRN senior advisor, points out. "With an arsenal of tools at their disposal to find even the slightest draft-some technical, some as simple as a candle-energy auditors are well worth the expense, typically at or under $300, and in some cases free to co-op members."

A standard energy auditor's tool kit includes a variety of equipment to determine the energy efficiency of a structure. Thorough audits often use blower doors, which measure the extent of leaks in a building, and infrared cameras, which reveal hard-to-detect drafts and missing insulation.

"A blower door is essentially a powerful fan that can be mounted to an exterior door," Sloboda remarks. "The fan draws air out of the home, dropping air pressure inside. The higher outside air pressure then flows in through all unsealed cracks and openings. Auditors may use a smoke pencil or candle to detect those leaks."

Infrared cameras can be used both inside and out to spot a range of inefficiencies, including air leaks, insulation effectiveness, and even abnormally hot electrical or mechanical components.

"Infrared scanning is often used with a blower door running, which helps exaggerate leaking air," Sloboda says. "The air leaks appear as black streaks in the infrared camera's viewfinder-quicker to spot than wisps of smoke from a candle."

An auditor will also pay close attention to how lighting is used, the age and number of appliances, and any other details that may be adjusted to improve a home's energy efficiency.

A Little Help from Uncle Sam

Although most electric co-ops provide energy

audits or access to an energy advisor of some kind, some homeowners may not be able to afford the more expensive improvements recommended. Identifying that a home needs extra insulation or new windows is one thing, but actually paying for and installing these upgrades involves some financial commitment on the part of the homeowner.

For this reason, the U.S. Department of Energy established its Weatherization Assistance Program in 1976. The program helps low-income families increase energy efficiency in their homes by providing both an energy audit and funds to make the upgrades.

Energy auditors inspect ductwork and every crevice in a home when assessing its energy efficiency.

The Weatherization Assistance Program has provided services to more than 6.2 million families over the last three decades, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. With a boost from the federal stimulus package, that number keeps steadily increasing, creating a need for more energy advisors in the process.

"We're going to be investing $5 billion in helping low- and middle-income families weatherize up to a million homes," U.S. Energy Secretary Stephen Chu asserts.

Households with incomes at or below 200 percent of the national poverty level are eligible for the program. For a family of four, that's an income limit of $44,100. The stimulus bill allows for an average of $6,500 to be spent on each home. Program participants receive professional energy consultation; workers then arrive to insulate walls and roofs, seal air leaks and install more efficient heating and cooling systems.

The program covers all of those under the set income limit, whether they own or rent, live in a single-family home, multi-family housing complex or a mobile home. Those wishing to participate should contact the local Illinois county Community Action Agency. Information can be found at www.ildceo.net, then clicking on Business Assistance, then LIHEAP and Weatherization.

"You're most likely to find the problems and the inefficiencies in the tightest, nasty parts of the attic and crawlspace, the spots where most homeowners just don't know to look," Bennett says. "We'll get in there. If there's a problem, we'll find it."

Scott Gates writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

The Do-it-Yourself Energy Audit

Although not as good as an expert's independent energy audit, you can conduct a basic home energy audit with a simple but diligent walk-through and the help of several Web sites. You might start with your local co-op's Web site.

When auditing your home, keep a checklist of areas you have inspected and problems you find. Full lists are available online — Touchstone Energy Cooperatives® Home Energy Saver (at www.touchstoneenergysavers.com) and the Alliance to Save Energy Home Energy Checkup (search for it at www.ase.org). Most trouble spots can be found in a few key areas.

- Typically, appliances more than 10-years-old aren't efficient.
- In older homes, foam gaskets behind electrical outlets and switch plates can insulate against wire holes drilled to the basement or attic.
- Check duct connections in the attic and crawlspaces, especially in older homes. Metal tape and duct mastic are quick, inexpensive fixes to leaking connections.
- If you have a fireplace, fill a trash bag with insulation and stuff it up the chimney to form a plug. Attach a note as a reminder to remove it before starting a fire.
- To seal attic access doors glue insulated sheathing board to attic access hatches and add a gasket around the hatch to ensure it's airtight.

Crunchy Romaine Toss

1/2 C. sugar
1/4 C. cider vinegar
Salt and pepper, to taste
2 T. butter
1 sm. bunch Romaine lettuce, torn
1/2 C. chopped walnuts
1/2 C. vegetable oil
2 tsp. soy sauce
1 (3-oz.) pkg. Ramen noodles
1-1/2 C. chopped broccoli
4 green onions, chopped

In a jar with a tight-fitting lid, combine sugar, oil, vinegar, soy sauce, salt and pepper together. Shake well. Discard the seasoning packet from the Ramen noodles. Break noodles into small pieces. Sauté in butter until golden brown. In a large bowl, combine noodles, broccoli, Romaine lettuce and onions. Just before serving, toss with dressing and walnuts.

Crunchy Romaine Toss

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

Country Cookin

Who: Christ Our Savior Lutheran High School, Evansville, IL

Cost: $15, including shipping

Details: soft-backed, spiral-bound

Pages of recipes: 318

Send checks to: Frances Wegener, 8370 S. Prairie Road, Evansville, IL 62242 or call 618-853-7300.

Delicious Apple Torte

2 C. flour
1 C. brown sugar
3/4 C. quick oatmeal
3/4 C. butter
6-8 apples
3/4 C. sugar
1 T. cornstarch
1 C. water
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. vanilla
Chopped pecans, opt.

Mix flour, brown sugar, oats and butter together like a pie crust. Save 1 C. for topping. Press remaining mixture into a 9x13-inch pan. Set aside. Peel and slice apples into a large mixing bowl. Set aside. Bring the sugar, cornstarch and water to a boil and cook until thick. Remove from heat. Add the salt, cinnamon and vanilla. Pour over apple slices; mix well and pour over crust. Top with 1 C. reserved topping. Bake at 450° for 15 minutes. Reduce heat to 350° and continue baking for 30 minutes. You may also add some chopped pecans to topping before baking.

Grader's Taters

5 medium potatoes
1 stick oleo
1/4 C. diced mushrooms
1/4 C. diced onions
1/4 C. diced green pepper
Dash of garlic powder
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 sm. block Velveeta cheese

Dice and boil potatoes until tender. While boiling, melt butter in saucepan. Add mushrooms, onions and green pepper to melted butter. Simmer until cooked down. Add salt, pepper and garlic powder to taste. Add cheese and melt down, stirring constantly. Simmer until potatoes are ready. Drain and mash potatoes. Add mixture, continue whipping. Serves 5.

Chicken Mushroom Fettuccine

1 (16-oz.) pkg. fettuccine noodles
1/2 lb. fresh mushrooms, sliced
4 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 C. butter
4 chicken breasts, cooked and diced
1/2 C. milk
1-1/3 C. grated Parmesan cheese

Cook fettuccine noodles according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a skillet, sauté mushrooms and garlic in butter for 2-3 minutes. Add chicken and milk; cook for 5-7 minutes or until heated through. Drain fettuccine and add to the skillet. Sprinkle with cheese and toss to coat.

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

Fudge-Filled Bars

2 C. quick cooking oats
1-1/2 C. all-purpose flour
1 C. brown sugar, packed
3/4 tsp. salt
1 C. butter, melted
1 C. chopped pecans
1 (14-oz.) can sweetened condensed milk
2 T. shortening
1 C. semisweet chocolate chips
1 C. plain M&Ms

In a bowl, combine the oats, flour, brown sugar and salt. Add butter and mix until crumbly. Stir in the pecans. Set aside 1-1/2 C. for topping. Press remaining crumb mixture into a 9x13-inch baking pan. In a saucepan, combine the milk, shortening and chocolate chips; cook and stir over low heat until chips are melted. Spread chocolate mixture over crust; sprinkle with the reserved crumb mixture. Top with the M&Ms. Bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Yield: 2-1/2 dozen.

Springfield Electric's 75th Anniversary Associate Cookbook

Who: Springfield Electric Supply Company of Springfield, IL

Cost: $10, plus $4.95 shipping (100% of profit goes to United Way)

Details: soft-backed, spiral-bound

Pages of recipes: 178

Send checks to: Pamela Nation, 700 N. 9th St., Springfield, IL 62702 or call 217-747-7235.

Taco Ring

Cinnamon Coffee Cake

Cake:
- 1 pkg. yellow cake mix
- 1 sm. pkg. instant vanilla pudding
- 4 eggs
- 3/4 C. water
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1/4 C. oil
- 1 C. sour cream

Filling:
- 3/4 C. sugar
- 2 T. cinnamon

Mix together cake mix, pudding, eggs (one at a time), water, vanilla, oil and sour cream. In a separate bowl, combine sugar and cinnamon. Coat a Bundt cake pan with non-stick cooking spray and sprinkle a little of the cinnamon sugar mixture in the bottom. Put half of the cake mixture into the pan, and then sprinkle with half of the remaining filling mixture. Add remaining cake mixture then top with remaining filling mixture. Bake at 350° for one hour. Let stand for 10 minutes (no longer) and dump onto serving plate.

Creamy Macaroni and Cheese with Ham

- 1-1/2 C. uncooked elbow macaroni
- 1/4 C. butter
- 3 T. flour
- 1-1/2 tsp. dried mustard
- 3/4 tsp. onion powder
- 3/4 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. pepper
- 3 C. milk
- 1/2 lb. American cheese, cubed
- 1 C. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 C. chopped ham

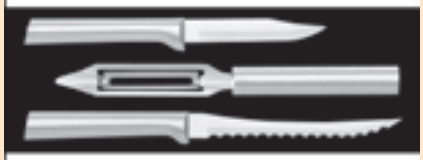
Heat oven to 350°. Cook macaroni according to package directions. Melt butter in a saucepan until sizzling, stir in flour and seasonings. Add milk; cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils and thickens (5-7 minutes). Reduce heat to low and stir in cheese. Cook until cheese is melted. Add ham and cooked macaroni and mix well. Spoon mixture into an ungreased baking dish and bake for 30-35 minutes.

Taco Ring (above)

- 1 lb. ground beef
- 1 pkg. taco seasoning
- 1 C. shredded Cheddar cheese
- 1 T. water
- 2 pkg. refrigerated crescent rolls
- 1 med. green bell pepper
- 1 C. salsa
- 3 C. shredded lettuce
- 1 med. tomato, seeded and chopped
- 1/4 C. onion, chopped
- 1/2 C. sliced black olives
- Sour cream for garnish

Preheat oven to 375°. In a medium skillet, cook and stir beef over medium heat until browned. Remove from heat; pour off drippings. Stir in seasoning mix, cheese and water. Set aside. Unroll crescent dough and separate into triangles. Circle around a 14-inch pizza pan with the wide ends overlapping in the center and the points toward the outside. There should be a 5-inch diameter opening in the center. Scoop meat mixture evenly onto the widest end of each triangle. Bring outside points of the triangle down over the filling and tuck under the wide ends of dough at the center. Filling will not be completely covered. Bake for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Cut the top off a bell pepper in a v-shaped zigzag pattern. Place pepper in the center of the ring; fill with salsa. Mound lettuce, tomato, onion and olives on top of the ring surrounding the bell pepper. Cut the ring, serve garnished with sour cream.

Fund Raising



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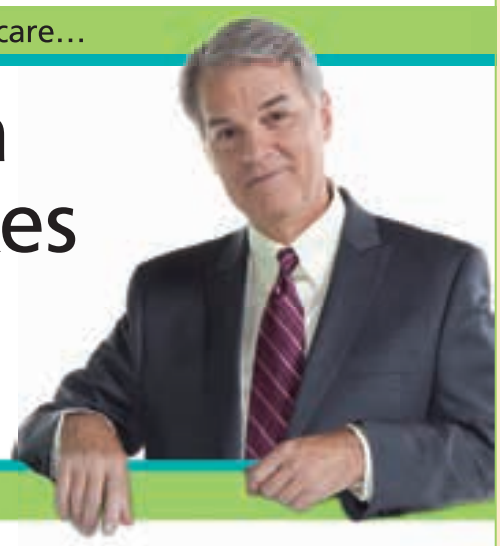

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4) Mail to: Illinois Marketplace, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708, by deadline.

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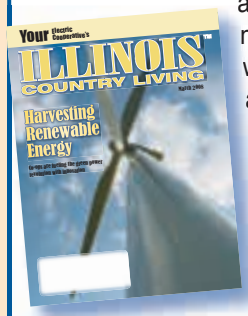

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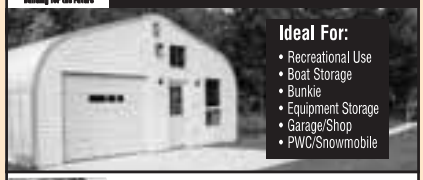

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5, ARC Taste of Galena at Eagle Ridge Resort & Spa in Galena. Sample specialty cuisine from more than 25 area businesses. Live jazz music. Silent auction. 815-777-2248 or www.tasteofgalena.com.

6, Abraham Lincoln's Birthday Party at Postville Courthouse in Lincoln. The Postville Courthouse will be celebrating Abraham Lincoln's birthday in style. Paul Beaver will be on hand to give two afternoon presentations. Postville volunteers will be conducting tours and will be serving birthday cake and punch. Period music will be playing throughout the event and the Arts and Crafts Guild will have their children's event from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. in the historic courtroom. Contest winners will also be announced. An Abraham Lincoln interpreter will be on hand to greet you. 217-732-8930.

6, Soul'd Out Quartet at The Barn located between Pana and Tower Hill. 7 p.m. At 4:30 p.m., enjoy a Hot Potato Bar (with 12 different toppings), drink and dessert. A suggested donation of $6 is suggested for the potato bar. Donations for the event appreciated. 217-562-3526 or 217-539-4221.

7, Pierre Menard Home Eagle Watching Day at Pierre Menard Home State Historic Site in Ellis Grove. 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Come to the home of the first Lt. Governor of Illinois, bring your cameras, binoculars and spotting scopes as you stand on the front porch and look for American Bald Eagles as they fly over the Mississippi River. Also look for a vast array of many smaller songbirds, which inhabit the grounds around the home. www.friendsofthemenardhome.blogspot.com or 618-859-3031 for more information.

7, Hearts and Art 2010 at the Galena Library from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. in Galena. Sale of hundreds of unique and original cards made by local artists. Silent auction and raffle. Great homemade treats. 815-777-6161 or www.galenalibrary.org.

9, Mardi Gras Festival at the Von Jakob Vineyard in Pomona. Celebrate New Orleans-style with the Dave Caputo Duo from 12 p.m. – 3 p.m. and Big Larry from 3 p.m. – 6 p.m. Plenty of food on site as well. 618-893-4500

9, Heartland Honor Band at the Shryock Auditorium in Carbondale. 3 p.m. Enjoy the Heartland Honor Band and watch them perform timeless hits. Free.

13-15, Masters of the Sky in Alton. Witness the Masters of the Sky birds of prey demonstration. Come see eagles, falcons, owls and other birds of prey at this educational and informational program presented by the World Bird Sanctuary. Admission fee: $5 for Adults; $3 for children 3-12 years; free for children younger than 3 years old. Only 10 tickets per person. 877-462-6979 or http://www.visitalton.com.

20-21, Winter Carnival at Chestnut Mountain Resort near Galena. Snow sculptures on the slopes, carnival games, Jo Jo "The Clown," fireworks, torch light parade, live entertainment and the Reality Check/Chestnut Snowboard Competition. 800-397-1320 or www.chestnutmtn.com.

20, Champaign County Heart and Stroke Ball at the Champaign Country Club in Champaign. 5:30 – 10 p.m. The Champaign Heart Ball will celebrate a decade of dedicated fund raising with the 2010 event. Your support of the Champaign County Heart and Stroke Ball will help educate our community on reducing their risk factors for heart disease and stroke, while supporting research that could lead to more lifesaving discoveries. 217-355-5119.

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12-14, All Things Chocolate Weekend throughout Jo Daviess County. Includes gourmet meals, farm stops, chocolate tastings, cooking classes and dozens of adventures. Reservations required. 815-244-5602 or www.learngreatfoods.com.

25, Comedy Night at Zanies in Waukegan. Comedian Dobie Maxwell is a regular at Zanies, and has performed stand up on CBS's The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson as well as with comedians such as Jerry Seinfeld, Jeff Foxworthy and Drew Carey. His comedy is universal and relatable to everyone. Come share an evening of fun and laughs with Dobie Maxwell and a few of his comic friends. Dobie keeps his acts funny not filthy. Space is limited! Adults 18 and older only. Register by Feb. 16. 847-360-4702 or http://www.waukeganparks.org/.

26-28, The 30th Annual Rockford Home Show in Loves Park. Find out about new products, services, ideas, and concepts; including getting expertise advise on interior and exterior designs. 815-877-8043 or http://www.showtimeproduction.net.

26-28, 2010 Illinois Deer and Turkey Classic at the Interstate Center in Bloomington. Friday 2 p.m. – 9 p.m.; Saturday 9 p.m. – 7 p.m.; Sunday 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Adult one-day admission is $12, two-day admission is $20. Children ages 6-11 are $3. Children 5 and younger are free. 800-324-3337 or www.deerinfo.com.

27, Peoria Heart and Stroke Ball at the Embassy Suites Riverfront Conference Center in East Peoria. 5:30 p.m. – 11 p.m. The Heart Ball is Peoria's most elegant evening with heart. Each year, members of the corporate and medical communities have come together to celebrate the lifesaving work of the American Heart Association. The funds generated at the Heart Ball will support American Heart Association-funded cardiovascular disease research to improve the lives of women, children and families in our community. 309-370-2276.

28, The 55th Illinois Plastic Kit and Toy Show at the Dupage County Fairgrounds in Wheaton. 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. Adults: $5, children younger than 12: $2. Buy, sell, trade or just browse. Come out and have a great time looking at, cars, trucks, airplanes, trains, military, fire, police, muscle cars, all scales, re-live your childhood memories. 630-969-1847.

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

Deadline: 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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"The #1 Cause of Big Bellies — It's Not What You Think!"

(By Frank K. Wood)

If you want to discover foods that will lower your blood pressure, cut your risk of heart disease, help you lose weight, and more — while trimming your grocery spending, too! — you need *Your Body Can Heal Itself: Over 87 Foods Everyone Should Eat,* an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Medical Publishing® in Peachtree City, Georgia.

You'll be amazed to know your kitchen is full of proven remedies — right now! See the delicious fruit juice that can help keep your mind sharp, the tasty sweet treat that can give you a good night's sleep, and the easy breakfast favorite that can lower your cholesterol. And that's just the tip of the iceberg!

The authors provide many health tips with full explanations.

- ▶ One miracle food contains nutrients that coat your arteries like a non-stick spray!
- ▶ #1 cause of big bellies: Trim your waistline by switching to a tastier alternative!
- ▶ Before you use an herbal supplement, make sure it's safe by checking here.
- ▶ Get a good night's sleep when you munch a handful of this fruit before bedtime.
- ▶ One extra serving a day of this fruit can fight strokes, obesity, and heart disease!
- ▶ Drink it to boost bones and battle osteoporosis. Surprise! It's not milk.
- ▶ Cut your risk of memory failure in half! Just eat this once a week. Incredible!
- ▶ Don't lose your vision! Eat the foods that'll keep your eyesight sharp for years to come.
- ▶ This little fruit not only fights off pesky infections, it actually works when antibiotics don't!
- ▶ The berry that may protect your vision!
- ▶ How a healthy 50¢ meal can help you lose weight and lower your cholesterol!
- ▶ The most important food you can eat — for more energy, a more youthful body, and longer life.
- ▶ Slash your risk of Alzheimer's with just 3 glasses a week!
- ▶ The 6 most dangerous foods in the country: One could be on your breakfast plate!
- ▶ Foods that lower your blood pressure, cut your risk of heart disease, and lose weight!
- ▶ Common spice blocks inflammation, helping you ward off arthritis, heart disease, and Alzheimer's!
- ▶ Delicious three-in-one remedy soothes a sore throat, stops a cough, plus helps you sleep.
- ▶ Digestive problems, joint pain, fatigue, and more could be caused by this common food ingredient!
- ▶ Want to live a longer, healthier life? Then you should eat this twice a week.
- ▶ The seasoning that can help reduce deaths from heart disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure.
- ▶ Eat this cereal daily and help prevent constipation, colon cancer — even weight gain!
- ▶ The most inexpensive meat goes from tough to tender ... with just a tablespoon of this pantry item.
- ▶ Save $50 to $150 a month on the foods you love when you follow these 9 shopping secrets.
- ▶ Crush your cravings for sweet snacks with one simple secret. Try it. It's easy!
- ▶ Give your arteries a good scrub naturally with this food.
- ▶ Little-known herbal medication can help reduce dementia symptoms and make people more cheerful!
- ▶ Just one serving per day lowers your risk of heart disease and stroke by 11%!
- ▶ One creamy, delicious food fortifies the immune system, bolsters bones, and helps you lose weight!
- ▶ Lose weight, lower cholesterol, and improve insulin levels with this fruit!
- ▶ One healthy oil lowers cholesterol and blood pressure, plus it relieves constipation, naturally!
- ▶ Avoid high blood pressure and add delicious flavor to your meals with spices rich in antioxidants.
- ▶ What type of fruit should you avoid? You'll find it in nearly every store.
- ▶ This could be your body's first line of defense against stroke, high cholesterol, and heart damage.
- ▶ Gain strength, stay sharp, and keep your bones strong with this energy-boosting power food!
- ▶ Arthritis pain? Try ginger!
- ▶ If you're feeling bloated or gassy, reach for this tropical treat.
- ▶ Sweep artery-clogging cholesterol right out of your system with this little seed.
- ▶ Keep your energy up throughout a busy morning with this fruity, high fiber breakfast.

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