


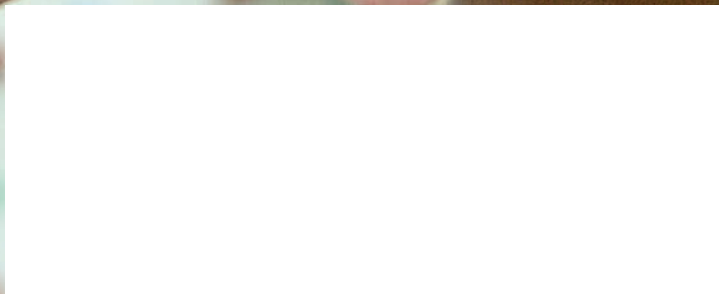


Illinois Country Living

June 2011 • icl.coop

Social media takes flight

How one cooperative's use of Facebook  helped save a bird hatchery





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Illinois Country Living

Published by

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives
6460 South Sixth Frontage Road East,
Springfield, IL 62712

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Illinois Country Living is a monthly publication serving the communications needs of the locally owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives of Illinois. With a circulation of more than 181,000, the magazine informs cooperative members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

Illinois Country Living (ISSN number 1086-8062) is published monthly and is the official publication of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, 6460 South Sixth Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. The cost is \$2.50 plus postage per year for members of subscribing cooperatives and \$10 per year for all others. Periodical postage paid at Springfield, Illinois, and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708.

ADVERTISING: Contact Lisa Rigoni, Advertising Manager – 1-800-593-2432 or lrigoni@aiec.coop. Acceptance of advertising by the magazine does not imply endorsement by the publisher or the electric cooperatives of Illinois of the product or service advertised. Illinois Country Living is not responsible for the performance of the product or service advertised.



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Communicating with Congress

Delegation delivers message in support of cooperative issues

A delegation of directors, managers, CEOs and various staff from cooperatives in Illinois made a trek to Washington D.C., May 1 – 4. I was a part of that delegation and it gave me pause to think of the many times I've been there in my life and the benefits from each trip.

The initial voyage was in 1972. My sister was a foreign exchange student and we drove her out to New York to the airport. Before we sent her on her way, we toured the capital as a family.

Since the mid-80s, I've been going to Washington D.C., not once but two or three times a year. As a young farmer I went as an Illinois Farm Bureau leader. Later, in my years as a legislator, I went to meet with members of Congress on issues related to Illinois. In the last five years, I've been going in a staff role to represent cooperative issues.

No matter how many times you go, you fly into Reagan National Airport and you look down to gaze upon the U.S. Capitol and the Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln monuments and you realize just how special that city really is.

As a representative for you, the delegation for Illinois goes as a part of a national legislative conference organized by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Joining us are representatives from 42 other states for a total of nearly 3,000 people converging on Washington to talk about rural electric cooperative issues.

Highlights this year included meeting with 12 members of Congress to express our concerns. We also met with the staff members who oversee energy issues in nine other Illinois Congressional offices.

There are some key legislative

focuses that we work on.

One of the issues is the Rural Utility Service loan program that provides low-interest financing to cooperatives to improve their services and upgrades to members. The loan level has been at \$6 billion for a very long time. Our focus is to ask Congress to maintain that funding level.

Again this year, one of the biggest concerns on capital hill is deficits and whether or not to raise the debt ceiling. Anything that puts budget pressure on the federal budget is scrutinized closely. One of those targeted is the Rural Utility Service (RUS) loan program.

Every year, literally since the Nixon administration, there is pressure to cut the program to half its funding or to eliminate it. That requires us to be persistent and make a very strong case for its benefits to our members. The money allows our cooperatives to build lines and infrastructure that keep costs low. With it we don't have to raise interest rates as much because of favorable financing.

We go to Washington to remind Congress that the RUS loan program – because it's a loan – actually returns interest to the government. We are not coming to them asking for a handout. We are actually asking Congress to continue to fund a program that actually earns \$100 million surplus. That always gets a smile or the nod of a head. It has a lot of bipartisan support.

The other big issue this year is coal combustion residuals, commonly called coal ash. We delivered a message in Washington to help Congressmen understand its benefits.

Southern Illinois Power Cooperative (SIPC) in Marion has

installed equipment, to the tune of \$15 million, which allows them to recycle this ash. Instead of just taking up room in landfills, we are able to convert that into a recyclable product such as roof shingle sand, sand-blasting abrasive, concrete manufacturing, fertilizers and a number of other products.

In our case, SIPC is recycling a large percent of that coal ash. In essence, if the EPA would determine that coal ash is a hazardous material and it couldn't be recycled, it would have to be handled in a hazardous fashion, increasing SIPC's cost of disposal by \$11 million. That is 25 percent of its fuel bill.

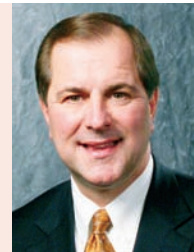
Our argument to the government is that there are 27 state EPAs, including the Illinois EPA, that have determined that coal ash is not a hazardous material. There is a beneficial reuse.

While the argument to recycle coal ash is well supported and received well, we are asking our members to co-sponsor a bill. A member can contact your members of Congress and ask them to support Bill H.R. 1391.

The argument makes sense. Why would we put ash in landfills when it can go into building materials? The message is fairly clear, it's just important that members of Congress hear this side of the story.

And that's why we keep going to Washington. It's so important for us to be there, championing our cause.

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



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Illinois co-op leaders meeting with U.S. Representative Randy Hultgren (IL-14), center, on Wednesday, May 4, were Robert Delp, left, Manager of Farmers Mutual Electric Company; and Robert Kuhns, Board Member for Farmers Mutual Electric.

Illinois delegation among leaders attending Cooperatives' National Legislative Rally

Illinois electric cooperative leaders met with members of the Illinois Congressional delegation May 2 - 4, in Washington, D.C. They joined nearly 3,000 other co-op board members and managers representing electric cooperatives from around the nation during the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Annual Legislative Conference.

The locally elected co-op board members spoke with Illinois leaders such as Congressman Randy Hultgren (IL-14) about important issues impacting the cost of

electricity. The key legislative goals for electric co-ops include:

- Maintaining the successful partnership between the Rural Utilities Service and electric cooperatives
- Providing renewable energy development incentives to co-ops
- Ensuring the continued beneficial reuse of coal combustion residuals (coal ash)
- Acting to protect consumers from uncompetitive shipping practices where monopolies exist. ■

Filling the generation gap

As the economy rebounds, so will our nation's hunger for electricity. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) predicts when the final 2010 numbers are tallied, energy use will shoot up 5 percent from 2009 levels.

The North American Electric

Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's bulk power grid watchdog, estimates we need to build 135,000 MW of new generation by 2017 to meet demand. Generation facilities on the drawing board, though, will only deliver 77,000 MW-leaving a generation gap. Compounding this

issue, some of our current power plants may soon be shut down by federal regulations. One NERC-commissioned report claims new government rules could force utilities to retire or retrofit 33,000 MW to 70,000 MW of generating capacity by 2015. ■

South Dakota electric co-op leading in renewable and clean coal energy

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in February announced the selection of Basin Electric Power Cooperative to receive a loan guarantee to construct over 100 wind turbines to produce 151.5 megawatts of electricity. When completed the turbines will join the cooperative's other electric generation projects to meet the needs of 2.8 million customers served by 135 distribution systems in nine states. The loan guarantee will provide financing for the PrairieWinds wind farm energy project in central South Dakota.

Since 2001 Basin Electric has developed more than 450 megawatts of power in the Dakotas. When the South Dakota project is completed, Basin Electric will have more than 700 megawatts of wind generation.

This electric cooperative is also an international leader in efforts to generate cleaner energy from coal and gas while capturing and sequestering resulting carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Its subsidiary, Dakota Gasification Company, operates one of three facilities worldwide that already capture, compress and sequester some of its CO₂ emissions. ■



The Co-op Connections Card: The gift that keeps giving

Everyone likes getting something free, especially when that something also saves money. So, if your electric cooperative participates in the Touchstone Energy® Co-op Connections program, and you're not using your free member benefit card, it's like not opening a gift your co-op sent you.

The Co-op Connections Card, offered by more than 350 Touchstone Energy Cooperatives across the country, 16 of which are in Illinois, provides savings of 10 percent to 60 percent off prescriptions at most major pharmacies. That includes Kroger, Wal-Mart, CVS and Walgreen's, as well as many locally owned pharmacies. Since the inception of the Co-op Connections program in 2007, Illinois co-op members have saved

more than \$900,000 on their prescriptions. Nationally, co-op members have saved over \$30 million through the program. The card does not replace an insurance card, but even if you have insurance, your pharmacist can compare the price using your insurance card to that of your Co-op Connections Card to see which is lower.

In addition to the prescription savings benefit, the Co-op Connections Card offers discounts on a wide range of products and services at more than 20,000 businesses nationwide, as well as an array of national offers.

Members of co-ops that participate in the Co-op Connections program receive a free card and two key fobs



per household. The cards can be shown at checkouts to receive the participating vendor's discount. For the more tech-savvy, the program even has an iPhone application that gives cardholders a virtual version of the card they can present to link to savings at pharmacies and participating local businesses.

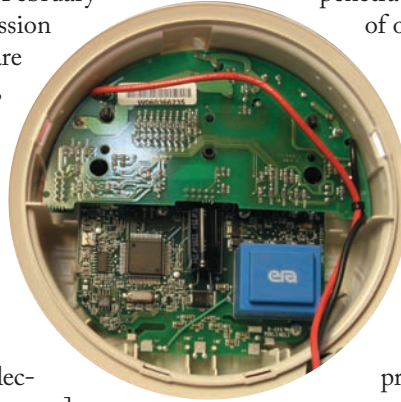
For a complete list of participating local and national businesses or other questions about the program, contact your local Touchstone Energy Cooperative, or go to www.co-opconnections.com. ■

Co-ops lead industry in smart grid meter installs

According to a new report released in February by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the nation's electric cooperatives are aggressively deploying advanced meters, demand response programs and time-of-use rates to meet the challenges of rural service territories and increasing demand.

More than a quarter of the nation's electric cooperatives have deployed advanced meters on some or all of their systems, according to the report.

The survey says, "As in previous surveys, electric cooperatives have the largest [advanced meter]



penetrations, nearly 25 percent, among categories of organizations."

The report indicates that investor-owned utilities have replaced 6.6 percent of the old electric meters with new smart meter systems, also called advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). Municipals on average have replaced 3.6 percent of their old meters with smart meters.

In addition to providing automated meter readings, smart grid meters can monitor power quality, outages, and provide new rate options that will help lower costs for utilities and their customers. ■

Bulb battle heating up in Congress

There's a battle brewing over the iconic incandescent light bulb, you know, Edison's invention and symbol of all bright ideas. On one side are energy efficiency arguments and on the other the consumer's right to choose. Legislation aimed at repealing energy efficiency provisions of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 would cost consumers billions of

dollars and risk disrupting the national lighting standards now in place.

But a bill, introduced by Sen. Mike Enzi, R-Wyo., and dubbed the Better Use of Light Bulbs (BULB) Act, is portrayed by its sponsor as a defense of individuals' ability to choose what type of light bulb they prefer. Critics contend that the 2007 legislation's stringent efficiency requirements

would effectively eliminate use of incandescent bulbs.

On the energy efficiency side of the argument the Department of Energy's Kathleen Hogan says, "It (the BULB Act) could cost consumers and manufacturers money and detrimentally affect the nation's economy, energy security and environmental imperatives." ■

DOE new analysis shows advances in electric car deployment

The U.S. Department of Energy in February released One Million Electric Vehicles by 2015, an analysis of advances in electric vehicle deployment and progress to date in meeting President Obama's goal of putting one million electric vehicles on the road by 2015.

The Obama Administration is proposing a three-part strategy that supports electric vehicle manufacturing and adoption through improvements to tax credits in current law, investments in research and development (R&D), and a new competitive program to encourage communities to invest in electric vehicle infrastructure. The strategy includes:

- Make electric vehicles more affordable with a rebate up to \$7,500 that will be available at the point of sale, instead of having to wait for tax returns to be filed.
- Advance innovative technologies through new R&D investments in electric drive, batteries and energy storage technologies.
- Reward communities that invest in electric vehicle infrastructure through competitive grants and remove regulatory barriers. ■





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Social media takes

How one cooperative's use of Facebook helped save a bird hatchery

The newspaper hasn't come yet. The television is off because there is no electricity. How long before storm relief is on its way? Enter the newest tools via high-end cell phones, the Internet and a whole new communication means called social media. Need a lot of people to know something quickly? Send a Tweet. Need to know when your electricity is coming back on? Look to Facebook.

Rusty and Lee Ann Birch have been raising birds as part of a self-imposed conservation project for quite some time now. Rusty loves to hunt and was worried about a decline in the population of game birds in his immediate locale.

As Rusty says, "It's just a way to give back and make sure they will always be there."

But the Birch's conservation efforts were nearly brought to an end this past winter during, and immediately after, the blizzard in February.

Lee Ann describes the situation saying, "We had already experienced some power outages because of the storm, but didn't expect that there would be anything else because the co-op had already gotten our power back on."

Unfortunately, all of the repairs weren't done.

It was after one of the winter storms, and the co-op was going to have a planned shutdown to do more repairs. Because Lee Ann had developed a relationship with Kevin Bernson, Vice President of Media and Public Relations for Shelby Electric Cooperative, she was aware of the Facebook page the cooperative had in place for notifying members about important events, including outages.

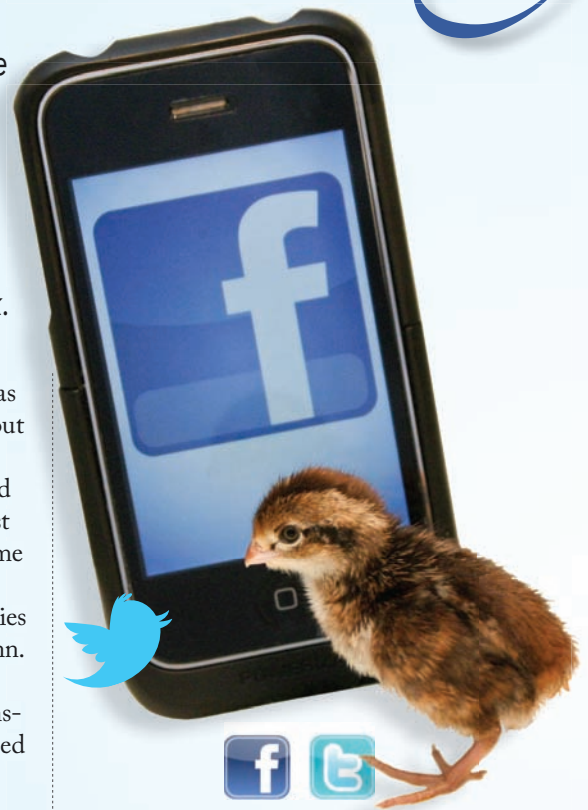
She had just added Shelby Electric as a "friend" because it was posting about its outages due to storms.

"When I saw that Kevin had posted about a planned outage that would last about an hour and a half, during a time we would not be home, we knew we had to do something to keep the babies warm during the outage," says Lee Ann.

Each of the quail the Birch's raise comes from an egg that must be painstakingly gathered from previously freed quail, and meticulously cared for in anticipation of adding to the Birch's conservation efforts. Rusty had a clutch of about 100 newly-hatched baby quail that had already been kept under heat lamps for around three weeks.

In order for a quail egg to hatch it must be kept at temperatures of at least 98 degrees, but not much more than 102 degrees. Many people swear that they get better results from eggs kept at 100 degrees. Once the eggs are hatched however, the chicks need to be kept constantly warm.

Because the Birch's knew about the outage from Bernson's post on Shelby Electric Cooperative's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/YourCoop>), they were able to rush home and try to figure out a way to keep their new babies warm. Normally the birds are kept warm with a simple



100-watt red light bulb. Without electricity though, the Birch's had to rely on their ingenuity. Necessity really is the mother of invention.

"We had plenty of time to figure out to move them close to the fireplace in the basement and rig up a way to funnel the warm air into the plastic tubs that we use for brooders. Normally we have lights on them to provide the heat. Having the information on the planned outage as early as we did, I am sure saved the quail," says Lee Ann.

"We were able to figure out a way to use the fireplace to heat up some metal sheets we had that we put over their pen. That kept them warm enough while we waited for the power to come back on," says Rusty.

flight



By Edward VanHoose

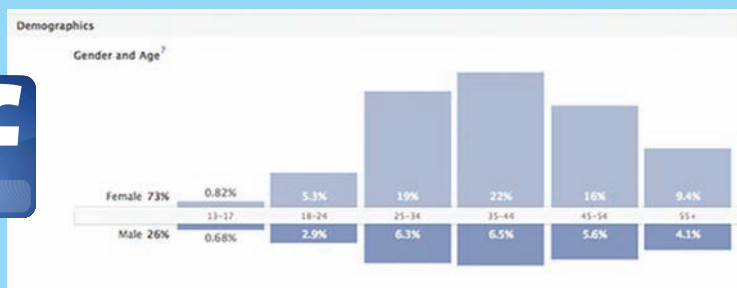
In the meantime, Shelby crews were hard at work getting the power back on, putting in long hours in extremely cold conditions. Bernson wanted to be sure that everyone could see the linemen hard at work, and was able to leverage the cooperative's new Facebook presence to give everyone a bird's eye view.

"I gave cameras to the crews and asked them to video what was going on," says Bernson. "Then I uploaded those videos so members who were following us could actually see the conditions for themselves."

At least one of those videos can still be seen by visiting the cooperative's page. You can find the videos by visiting the photos section and then clicking on "videos" at the top right.

During a large-scale outage, many times the phones are jammed with members trying to get information. Often, so many call at once that a member can wait an exorbitantly long time to get through. That can be very frustrating and is certainly not what the cooperative wants. Lee Ann sympathizes with people in that situation, and is glad the cooperative was checking up on members using this alternate communication tool as well.

"Many members were also posting during the storms if they were experiencing trouble. Sometimes it's hard to reach the office to let them know," says Lee Ann. "Kevin was able to let them know if he had an idea on when the crews would be in their area. He also posted pictures of the guys while they were working that let people know the conditions the guys had to work in."



One surprising fact for many people is the demographic information of Facebook users. The overwhelming majority of users are women, who make up 73 percent of Shelby Electric's Facebook followers. In that 73 percent most of those are age 25-54.

"Those pictures really gave everyone cause to say thanks for what the linemen do," says Rusty.

Of course, you may wonder how it is that someone could check Facebook if their power is out? These days many smart phones are capable of accessing the Internet, and many of them even have a specialized Facebook "app." It's easy for someone without power to surf the web even while depending upon candlelight to light their homes.

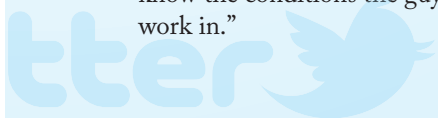
"Many people have Facebook on their cell phones to keep in touch even when the power is out," says Lee Ann. "That's how we accessed the information, even when we weren't at home."

Many people responded to Shelby Electric's Facebook page during the outage and many more have signed up to follow them since. Other cooperatives around the country have also participated in various social media experiments. Some programs have been successful, and others have shown promise. As for Rusty and Lee Ann's view on the issue, they are certainly happy Shelby Electric was progressive in their thinking, and adopted the use of social media as a communication tool.

"Having Shelby Electric and Kevin on Facebook was a big help that day," says Lee Ann.



Photo by Lee Ann Birch





Outage prompts members to use Shelby Electric's Facebook page

When asked about Shelby Electric's adoption of social media for communicating with members, Kevin Bernson says, "Social media's growing popularity and ease of use prompted us to explore using these tools. In particular, Facebook has been a more useful tool than any of the others. Facebook has made several improvements with changes to its business platform in the short time Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) has had a page. It seems Facebook wants more and more businesses to utilize the service while still keeping the people-to-people social media network as the core."

Although it took some time for members to realize that SEC had opened these lines of communications, in recent times Bernson has seen a tremendous amount of feedback from members. One event in particular caused a huge upsurge in users visiting Shelby's page.



Kevin Bernson
Vice President of
Media and Public
Relations
Shelby Electric
Cooperative
Shelbyville, Illinois

"During the early part of February we had some ice storms hit the area. Because we had the Facebook page I thought I'd start using it as another communication tool to let people

know where we had power out, etc. As the first day of the outage ended and a second ice storm was on its way, not only did we use Facebook to provide outage information to our members, our page also became a tool for inside personnel to get the latest outage information." He said local media began telling people to go to SEC's page for additional outage information.

"We saw a jump in "likes" from 200 to over 700. During the four days of outages we recorded over 129,000 page views," says Bernson.

Interactions



Post Views

129,620 ↑1,659%

Post Feedback

811 ↑1,979%

Corn Belt Energy incorporating social media in its communication mix

Corn Belt Energy entered the social media arena in 2010 with a Twitter account intended to provide members another line of communication with the co-op. It wasn't until the beginning of this year that Corn Belt began a Facebook page as well. Fortunately, the timing of opening up its page was just before the big storm hit.

"The major snow storm in early February provided an opportunity for Corn Belt to keep members updated via Facebook and Twitter in addition to more traditional means (website, phone system, etc.). According to statistics and analysis, we recorded thousands of visits to our Facebook page and our website as people checked in for status updates. Over 150 people "liked" us on Facebook during the course of that storm," says Erin Campbell.

Of course, there is always some trepidation when using new methods



Erin Campbell
Communications
Coordinator
Corn Belt Energy
Bloomington,
Illinois

and this was no different.

"Internally, we knew we were stepping into uncharted territory when we first launched a Facebook fan page. So far, our experience has been very positive. Social media gives us another opportunity to interact with our members and create a dialogue."

The cooperative wants to assure members that just because it's using this new communication tool doesn't mean it will stop communicating via traditional methods.

"Social media will not replace any of the other ways we communicate with our member-owners; it simply provides another way to engage them," says Campbell.

The cooperative may even find additional ways to leverage its social media presence.

Campbell says, "In the future, we may take advantage of survey functions and event planning capabilities that are available on Facebook. We're also looking at creating short video tutorials that would showcase energy efficiency tips and safety tips. Our goal is for members to be better informed of all the cooperative programs and services that are available to them including rebates, payment options, community programs for schools, scholarships for students and more."



Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative uses Facebook to reach out to members



Mike Wilson
Manager of
Communication
and Community
Relations
Eastern Illini Electric
Cooperative
Paxton, Illinois

Although Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative (EIEC) only began using social media in early 2010, Mike Wilson is still an early adopter in the use of social media for cooperative communication.

"I am interested in social media personally which helps quite a bit, and I have the backing of our CEO Dave Champion," says Wilson.

Wilson uses social media tools such as Facebook and Twitter in conjunction with more traditional communication methods to reach as wide an audience of EIEC's membership as possible.

"Even if only a handful of our members like this method of communication, it is worth it for us. We use our website, Twitter, Facebook, bill stuffers,

the ICL and even bill messages to help get our message out," he said.

That message is varied and includes information such as EIEC's unique business model, why electric cooperatives were originally established, promoting energy efficiency and the Co-op Connections Card discount program.

"Eastern Illini has a positive message to tell. We will use whatever methods our members are using to communicate with them," says Wilson.

Going where the member "lives" online is key to a successful social media program. Because members are already using tools like Facebook, it makes it a perfect fit for communicating with them.

And EIEC is looking to the future, too.

"The biggest thing I would like to achieve in 2011 is to get even more of our members to think social media when they think Eastern Illini. It is a quick, convenient and inexpensive way to communicate – especially during outages, when members want information updated quickly."

Southern Illinois Electric enters Facebook era



Jerri Schaefer
Director of
Communication
Southern Illinois
Electric Cooperative
Dongola, Illinois

Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SIEC) is new to the social media game. Jerri Schaefer only began work on SIEC's Facebook page in April of this year.

"Our Facebook page is so new, that we haven't had a lot of feedback yet, but many have stated they liked our flood pictures," Schaefer says.

"Our plan is to use our Facebook page as another means of communication to our members, in addition to our website, magazine and local radio and newspaper advertising. We plan to promote our Facebook presence in upcoming center sections (JAMUP) located inside the Illinois Country Living magazine."

The move was prompted by the cooperative's dedication to keeping its membership informed and safe.

"We are always looking for ways to expand our communication efforts, so that our members are better informed on electrical safety, power outages, energy efficiency and community involvement within our service territory," says Schaefer.

When asked about the challenges and reasons behind SIEC's implementation of social media Schaefer responds, "Any new technology brings with it a taste of apprehension, so we are taking things slowly. We started to realize the benefit of such a site, especially for electrical outage updates."



Rusty and Lee Ann pose with some of their older birds that aren't quite ready for the flight pen.

Weathering the storm

Warmer seasons call on members to have safety plans

Safe Electricity reminds everyone to be prepared and know how to stay safe during and after the storm. You never know when a storm may hit, creating potential electrical hazards for your family. The best solution is to plan ahead and be prepared for the inevitable.

Safe Electricity reminds everyone of the increased electrocution risks that springtime storms and flooding can cause, and offers safety tips to avoid serious injury or death when dealing with the aftermath of a major storm or disaster.

Before the storm:

Assemble a kit of essentials, like battery-operated flashlights and radios, and be prepared for the possibility of a prolonged outage due to power line and electric equipment damage.

Fill spare containers with water for washing, and keep a supply of bottled

drinking water on hand. Maintain a supply of non-perishable food items, along with a hand opener for canned food.

During an outage, switch off lights and appliances to prevent overloading circuits and damaging appliances when power is restored. Leave one lamp or switch on as a signal for when your power returns.

After the storm:

When venturing outside after a severe storm, stay away from downed power lines and be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. Assume that any dangling wires you encounter are electrical, and treat all downed or hanging power lines as if they are energized. Warn others to stay away and contact the electric utility.

Before re-entering storm-damaged buildings or rooms, be sure all electric and gas services are turned off.

Never attempt to turn off power at the breaker box if you must stand in water to do so. If you can't reach your breaker box safely, call your electric utility to shut off power at the meter.

When using a generator, follow all manufacturers' recommendations to avoid tragedy. Keep the generator dry and never plug it into a wall outlet or directly into the home's wiring. This could inadvertently energize the utility lines and injure yourself or others working to restore power.

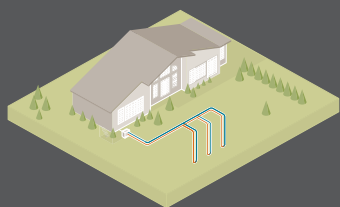
Learn more about weathering storms safely at www.SafeElectricity.org.

Molly Hall is the Director of Safe Electricity. E-mail: molly-hall@SafeElectricity.org. Safe Electricity is a public awareness program of the Energy Education Council. www.EnergyEdCouncil.org.



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That's for the birds

Many 'bad' plants are good for something

Sometimes it's a fine fine line between a good plant and a bad plant, sort of like a person. And it depends on whose definition you are using.

Many will lump poison ivy into the "bad" category, though it was here long before settlers set foot in the state. Additionally, the berries are a food source for birds during the winter, which sadly can't entirely digest the seed. That means seeds pop out the other end of the bird with a little fertilizer attached.

There are several native plants that can be annoying, aggravating or obnoxious. Yet, they are natives and probably beneficial to many of native fauna.

On the other hand, there are truly invasive plants that have put their foot in our rich soil, found it to their liking and taken off.

Sometimes uninformed folks equate exotic with invasive, saying that every exotic plant can be invasive. As we saw above, even native plants can be invasive.

But there are some exotic specimens that aren't invasive. Ginkgo trees and peonies come to mind. Of course, it depends on the location.

It's the exotics that can't be contained that are the worst but therein lies another problem.

Some plants are invasive in the Pacific Northwest or the southern U.S. Think kudzu for the latter area and scotch broom and English ivy for the former. Yet in central and northern Illinois, neither is a problem.

Kudzu has reared its ugly head in southern Illinois and is progressing slowly up north. Thankfully, cold winters can keep the plant in check.

Most of the invasives are invasive due to a couple of reasons.

First, they may be distributed



by birds that find the fruits tasty and deposit the seeds a la the same mechanism as poison ivy.

Many of the exotic invasive plants that are illegal to plant in Illinois gained their places on the Illinois Exotic Weed Law list due to this reason. Though it's ironic, most were introduced by conservationists as a means of providing food for birds and wildlife.

This list includes vining or Japanese honeysuckle (sold as both a source for bird food and soil erosion control), purple loosestrife, just about all buck-thorns in any shape or fashion and kudzu. Multiflora rose is also on the list.

Some that aren't but could be included are Russian olive and autumn olive, and just about every type of non-native vining honeysuckles. While the honeysuckles smell great, the shrub germinates easily from seed and forms dense

undergrowth in our woods, shading the undergrowth to the point where the native ferns, aroids and other plants die out.

These plants should probably be banned. Barring any government action, gardeners should seriously think against planting these.

Second, some of the plants may spread because they germinate before native plants and can establish in the limited space. Garlic mustard is probably the most common example. People don't plant it like those listed above; it just got started and keeps on going.

Third, some plants produce an abundance of seeds to the point that they can't help but become annoyances. Dandelions come to mind, but most of us don't really think of them as all that bad. Yes, they were introduced by our well-meaning European forefathers, and can still be nutritious in several forms. And a field of dandelions far from your yard still looks great.

For those thinking of planting a tree or shrub, and it's really the shrubs that cause the most problems, look at its fruiting ability. If it's going to produce lots of seeds, it probably will be a problem. Winged euonymus (burning bush) and barberries are on the watch list; you can go ahead and plant them, but if you see them producing lots of seeds and berries, consider picking them off before the birds get to them. ■

David Robson is Extension Specialist, Pesticide Safety for the University of Illinois. drobson@illinois.edu



Vinegar, Better than Prescription Drugs?

Thousands of years ago ancient healers trusted apple cider vinegar, and modern research shows - *vinegar truly is a wonder cure!*

In fact, apple cider vinegar's biggest fans believe this golden liquid can help solve the most troublesome of human afflictions.

Since even the earliest of times a daily vinegar cocktail was used to help control appetite to lose weight and continue good health.

And now after years of continued research all across the globe, over 1000 new vinegar super-remedies and tonics are available in the brand new 208-page *Vinegar Anniversary Book* by famed natural health author, Emily Thacker.

Author of the very first book of its kind since the 1950's, Ms. Thacker brings her unique wisdom, experience and down-home flavor to this complete collection.

From the Bible to Cleopatra to the fierce Samurai warriors of Japan, vinegar has been documented as a powerful tonic to ensure strength, power and long life.

In China, the health system that has been in place for thousands of years recognizes the value of vinegar. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) oversees the health of millions of Chinese – not with modern drugs – but with proven remedies that include vinegar.

Today's research studies and scientific reports continue to praise the healing powers of vinegar to maintain good health and well being.

Even grandma knew that her old remedies worked even if she wasn't able to explain why. And scientific research confirms this.

For instance, grandma said putting diluted vinegar in the ears would ward off infections. The American Academy of Otolaryngology's doctors – who specialize in treating infections like swimmer's ear - now recommend using a vinegar mixture as a preventative.

The Yale-New Haven hospital uses vinegar as a hospital disinfectant. When after-surgery eye infections became a problem, their Department of Bacteriology solved it with vinegar.

Food poisoning? Some doctors suggest that regular vinegar use can prevent it!

The 208-page *Vinegar Anniversary Book* will amaze you with its over 1000 natural remedies, secrets, tonics and cure-alls for a healthier, happier life. You'll get easy recipes that mix vinegar with other common household items to help:

- Calm an upset stomach
- Ease leg cramps
- Soothe sprained muscles
- Control appetite to lose weight
- Relieve coughs
- Banish nausea
- Arthritis pain
- Make hiccups disappear
- Cool a sunburn
- Boost memory
- Reduce sore throat pain
- Relieve itchy skin
- Lower blood pressure & cholesterol
- Eliminate bladder infections
- Chase away a cold
- Treat burns
- Reduce infection
- Aid digestion
- Improve memory
- Soothe sore feet
- Treat blemishes & age spots
- Remove corns & calluses
- Replace many household cleaners

And that's just the beginning of the over 1000 new and improved hints and tips that you'll get.

50 years ago a daily dose of an apple cider vinegar and honey tonic was used to ease arthritis. During the last 30 years or so, many wonder drugs have replaced this time-tested home remedy. Now vinegar, along with countless other old-time tonics, have new supporters including many medical professionals. *The reason?* Almost everybody has experienced the negative side of some of the powerful new drugs.

Strep and Staph infections? Vinegar is a powerful antiseptic and kills even these dangerous bacteria on contact.

Headaches will fade away with this simple vinegar concoction.

Feel good and look good with these hair and skin-friendly vinegar remedies.

You'll learn when you should *and should not* use vinegar.

Can apple cider vinegar really do all this? The answer is yes because it is such a marvelous combination of tart good taste, germ-killing acid and an assortment

of important vitamins and nutrients.

Join readers like L.S. of Monroe, N.C. who says "*Thanks, this book is wonderful. A real life saver for me!*"

Find different ways to combine vinegar with common foods like lemon juice, blueberries, onion, strawberries, garlic, honey, ginger and more to create recipes to help improve health and quality of life.

All new ideas to put vinegar to work around the home to clean, disinfect and eliminate mold and mildew. Great for those with allergies or asthma!

Save money as you put Emily's latest discoveries to the test!

There's even 365 additional tidbits to take you through the year beginning with January's winter snows through the dog-days of summer and into the golden leaves of autumn.

Yes that's over 1000 tried-and-true remedies and recipes in this handsome collector's edition and it's yours to enjoy for 90-risk free days. That's right, you can read and benefit from all 208-pages without obligation to keep it.

To get your copy of the *Vinegar Anniversary Book* direct from the publisher at the special introductory price of \$19.95 plus 3.98 shipping and handling (total of \$23.93, OH residents please add 6% sales tax) simply do this:

Write "Vinegar Anniversary" on a piece of paper and mail it along with your check or money order payable to: James Direct Inc., Dept. VA1039, 500 S. Prospect Ave., Box 980, Hartville, Ohio 44632.

You can charge to your VISA, MasterCard, Discover or American Express by mail. Be sure to include your card number, expiration date and signature.

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<http://www.jamesdirect.com>

May the force be with you

Don't let the force of heat force your bill higher

As hot as it is now it is hard to remember just how cold it was six months ago. We had a good old-fashioned winter like we haven't seen in a while and the utility companies received high bill complaints like they haven't seen in a while either. When one receives a high utility bill there is always a reason and it is almost never because the meter is wrong.

For years I have spent just about all of my working time teaching folks where their energy dollars go and what they can do to make the situation better. As the summer bills will soon be arriving, I thought it would be a good time to review "Energy Course 101."

The average house energy usage is about 50 percent for heating and cooling, about 20 percent for water heating and about 30 percent for everything else. Since heating and cooling systems are the largest users of energy, let's look at some energy facts. Basically it is all about heat transfer.

First, heat always moves toward cold and it is an actual force. You could say that there is no such thing as cold, just a lack of heat. In the summer you don't cool the house. You remove heat.

Second, the greater the difference between the two temperatures, the greater the force will be. Let's say that your house temperature is 75 degrees and you heat the kitchen oven to 90 degrees. When you open the oven door you will feel a little force of hot air come out the door. Now heat the oven to 350 degrees, open the door and feel the blast of air hit you in the face. It was a big blast wasn't it?



Again, heat creates an actual force.

So how does this force relate to the utility bill at your house? Well, let's set the house thermostat at 75 degrees. Now, let's enjoy a nice 75-degree spring day. Wow, it is a perfect day. There is no force from nature, no heating or cooling is required and the utility meters hardly move. What a day! Of course you knew it wouldn't last. Today it is sunny, 97 degrees and the heat is forcing its way into my house at every possible location. Oh no, now it's winter and 20 degrees outside. The heat that I just paid for is now forcing its way out of my house. In fact I can see the force as it hits my window glass and turns to water. Please help me. What can I do?

Folks, the places in your house that are losing heat in the winter are probably the same places that are gaining heat in the summer.

If you can totally seal those places or just make it more difficult for the heat to move through those places, you can help lower your utility bill. Just find those places and fix them.

A good energy audit using a blower door and an infrared camera is by far the best way to find those bad spots. Several electric cooperatives provide energy audits for their members. If energy audits are not available in your area, continue to read this column, which has shown you, and will continue to show you how to find and stop those energy hog forces. If you have questions, you may call me at 501-653-7931 and I will be happy to help you. In the meantime may a good force be with you.

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

For those who enjoy podcasts, you can simply visit the iTunes store and enter "Doug Rye's Home Remedies" in the search window. You can listen to Doug anytime on your computer, iPod or smart phone. ■

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Medical visits companion

Supporting senior citizen independence

By *Catrina McCulley Wagner*

Going to a doctor's office, even for a routine examination, is enough to raise anyone's blood pressure and spike anxiety levels. Remembering questions you want to ask, symptoms you've been having and medications you've been taking is difficult under these high-stress situations, even for the most astute patients. Now add to this stress 60-plus years of age, a generation gap, a communication barrier and quite probably a hearing deficit and what do you have? The risk for major medical issues to be forgotten, misdiagnosed or ignored completely.

Sara Lieber, a licensed social worker and owner of Senior Sidekicks in Springfield, saw this growing problem among senior citizens during her previous 20 years as owner of a private guardian service.

"As a private guardian, I did everything I could for people, but I always felt like I was bailing water because I got to people way too late to really help. If somebody is deteriorated enough that they require a guardian,

they have major issues. They may be medical, financial, legal or all of the above. I felt helpless," Lieber says.

After 20 years as a legal guardian, Lieber was given the opportunity to work with Medicare Part D, which was just becoming available. During her work with the program, she did a research project on senior citizens who were on Medicare Part D, but who didn't speak English as a first language. That brought her into contact with senior citizens who were stronger, more mentally alert, were in better shape physically and who had a better grasp on their finances.

"I thought, 'What if I were to work with this type of group and try to help prevent the deteriorating problems I'd seen in my previous work?' I saw a need that had yet to be fulfilled. The need for an advocacy service for seniors that supported their desire to remain as independent as possible and also supported their family caregivers by providing them respite when their loved one(s) required a doctor's visit," Lieber says. And from there, she

decided to establish her new business, Senior Sidekicks.

"It's been a very successful business because I've been able to make a REAL difference to some of my clients," Lieber says.

When Lieber meets a new client, she starts with an assessment of the senior in his or her home. "I care about my clients. I am more than a taxi service. I do not just pick up and drop off. I want to know my clients in their home. I want to see a baseline ... the calm version of them, so I can be aware when something is off. The worst time to get to know somebody is during an emergency," Lieber says.

During this assessment, Lieber gathers a medical background, a list of medications, a list of all doctors and family contact information. "I will discuss these items with the senior and family to assess the senior's capacities. Some seniors may require a reminder call before appointments; I provide that, too."

After an assessment is complete, Lieber makes herself available to take the senior to and from any appointment, whether that is a doctor visit, a day surgery, tests, eye or dental appointments. "I will also handle any medical-related task, such as appointment to adjust eye glasses, or hearing aides, filling prescriptions, physical therapy sessions or dialysis treatments," says Lieber.

"The most valuable time I get with the senior is in the car rides to and from their appointment. When they first get into the car, I never turn music on; I just let the silence bloom. Pretty soon, they'll start talking. I'll ask how everything is going and what's been going on. Sooner or later, I'll start to hear things like aches, pains and worries they've been having. When I hear something of interest,





I will say to them, 'I think the doctor would be very interested to know that information.' Then I will continue to chat with them and help them think of ways they can describe their issues to the doctor. And sometimes they will ask me to bring things up because it relieves some of the embarrassment for them if the issues are too private for them," Lieber says.

During an appointment, Lieber will make observations and write everything down. "I keep notes from every single visit so when nurse 'A' takes vitals one week, and Nurse 'B' takes vitals the next week, I can flip back and see what they were before and discuss any changes with a doctor. I'm there to oversee everything, from start to finish. I see it from the perspective of the patient. Because I see the senior at home, I watch for use of unreported over-the-counter medications, spoiled food, or other conditions, which might affect the senior's health. Doctors these days are so busy, they just don't have the time to sit there and really ease some of this information out of their elderly patients.

"I take note of all the doctor's instructions, orders and recommendations. Following the visit, I will assist the senior in carrying out the orders such as getting lab work and filling prescriptions. As the visit ends, I review the information with the senior to be sure they have heard and understood the doctor."

After the appointment, Lieber contacts the senior's adult child or caregiver and gives them a complete report of the visit. "I tell them what the doctor really said. And it's not because seniors necessarily want to lie or hide things. If the doctor talks too fast, or has an accent, or the senior has a hearing problem, he or she just may not have understood everything. And sometimes there is just so much information that they couldn't absorb it all. And that's what I'm there for."

And this service isn't just for the seniors; it's for the caregivers too. Senior Sidekicks takes some stress off the caregiver and gives them a bit of a break, knowing their loved-one is in good hands. "What I've come to see through the years is that caring for the elderly takes an enormous toll on the caregiver. There is a condition called Caregiver Syndrome, which lowers the immune system of the caregiver due to stress. I am not a doctor, but in my opinion, if we don't do something to relieve the caregiver, we're going to see more and more illnesses, premature aging and other kinds of negative affects due to the stress of it.

"If more people did what I do, we could keep people healthier longer. We can keep people out of nursing homes for longer periods. We can keep caregivers from dying before their time due to stress. But it's new and a process. I am the first Medical Visits Companion in the country. And we need to get the word out about our vital role," Lieber says.

For more information about Senior Sidekicks and Medical Visits Companions, call 217-787-5866 or visit <http://seniorsidekicks.com>.



Sara Lieber, owner of Senior Sidekicks in Springfield, has made it her business to check in on seniors.

Finest Cooking



Farmer's Casserole

The Fruit Of The Spirit

Who: United Methodist Church, Arthur, IL

Cost: \$15.65, including shipping

Details: hard-backed, three-ring-bound

Pages of recipes: 149

Send checks to: Marty Yagel,
125 E. Illinois Street, Arthur, IL 61911
or call 217-543-3159.

Farmer's Casserole (left)

- 3 C. frozen shredded hash browns
- 3/4 C. shredded Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 C. diced, fully cooked ham
- 1/4 C. chopped green onion
- 4 eggs
- 1 (12-.oz.) can evaporated milk
- 1/4 tsp. pepper
- 1/8 tsp. salt

Place potatoes in an 8-inch square baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese, ham and onions. Beat eggs, milk, pepper and salt together; pour over potatoes. Cover and refrigerate for several hours or overnight. Remove from refrigerator 30 minutes before baking. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 55 to 60 minutes or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean.

Baked Macaroni and Cheese (below)

- 2 C. macaroni, cooked and drained
- 16-oz. cottage cheese
- 1 C. sour cream
- 1 egg

- 3-4 C. shredded Cheddar cheese
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- Paprika, to taste

Mix cottage cheese, sour cream, egg, salt, pepper and Cheddar cheese together. Add cooked macaroni and mix well. Pour into an 8x8-inch baking dish. Sprinkle with paprika and bake 45 minutes at 350 degrees.



Baked Macaroni and Cheese

Chocolate Chip Cheesecake Bars

- 1 (2-lb.) family-sized tub refrigerated chocolate chip cookie dough
- 1 (8-oz.) pkg. cream cheese
- 1 C. sugar
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Press 2/3 of cookie dough into the bottom of a 9x13-inch pan. Cream sugar and cream cheese together. Mix in vanilla. Spread cream cheese mixture over cookie dough. Dot the remainder of the cookie dough on top. Bake 15-18 minutes or until dough on top is golden brown. Store in the refrigerator.

Articulate Artichokes

- 2 cans artichokes, drained
- 1 stick butter
- 6-8 cloves garlic, crushed
- Fresh mushrooms, opt.
- 1/2-1 C. Mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 1/2 C. Grated Parmesan cheese
- 3/4 C. Bread crumbs

Sauté garlic in butter. Chop artichokes and mushrooms into an 8x8-inch baking dish. Spread bread crumbs on top, followed by garlic butter. Top with cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes. Serve with garlic bread, if desired.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

Heavenly Delights

Who: Rossville Sesquicentennial

Cost: \$12, including shipping

Details: hard-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 288

Send checks to: Donna White,
19696 E. 3100 North Rd., Rossville, IL 60963
or call 217-765-3706.

Penne with Asparagus, Spinach and Bacon (left)

- 1 (8-oz.) pkg. penne pasta, uncooked
- 2 slices bacon
- 1/2 C. sweet onion, sliced
- 2-1/2 C. asparagus, sliced
- 1-1/2 C. fat free chicken broth
- 4 C. baby spinach leaves
- 1/2 C. shredded Parmesan cheese, divided
- 1/4 tsp. black pepper

Cook pasta as directed; drain, and keep warm. Cook bacon in a skillet until crisp; remove from skillet and crumble. Cook onion in bacon drippings for 1 minute; add asparagus and sauté 1 minute longer. Add broth, and bring to a boil. Simmer 5 minutes, until asparagus is tender. Stir into pasta; add spinach, 1/4 C. cheese and pepper. Toss well. Sprinkle with remaining cheese and bacon.

Penne with Asparagus, Spinach and Bacon

Easy Fruit Cobbler (below)

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1-quart fresh or frozen fruit | 3 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 C. sugar | 1/8 tsp. salt |
| 2 T. butter | 1 C. milk |
| 1-1/2 C. flour | 1 egg, slightly beaten |
| 1 C. sugar | |

Melt 2 T. butter in a 9x13-inch pan. Mix fruit and 1 C. sugar. Heat in a saucepan only until mixture boils. Mix together flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, milk and egg. Pour batter into the pan. Do not stir. Spoon hot fruit over batter carefully. Do no mix. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 minutes. Serve warm with ice cream, if desired.

Corn Salsa

- 1 can black eyed peas, drained
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 can shoe peg corn, drained
- 4-5 Roma tomatoes, diced small
- 1 red onion, diced small
- 1 bunch Cilantro, chopped
- 1 (8-oz.) bottle zesty Italian dressing
- 1 bag corn chips

Mix peas, beans, corn, tomatoes, onion and Cilantro together. Add salad dressing and stir. Cover and refrigerate over night. Serve with corn chips.

Fiesta Rollups

- 1 (4-1/2-oz.) can green chilies
- 1 sm. can black olives
- 1 sm. onion
- 8-oz. sour cream
- 8-oz. cream cheese
- 1 (12-oz.) pkg. shredded taco cheese
- 1/2 pkg. taco seasoning
- 10 lg. flour tortilla shells

Chop the olives, onion and chilies in a food processor. Add sour cream, cream cheese, taco cheese and taco seasoning. Mix together well. Spread some of the mixture on each tortilla shell and roll up tight. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour, then cut into wheels and serve.

Easy Fruit Cobbler

Ask Ed



This month's Powered Up focuses on answering more reader questions.

I'm not able to answer all of them, but I do try to get to questions asked by more than one person. Keep the questions coming! If I answer you in ICL, I will e-mail you in advance of the publication as well. That way, you have help without waiting to see it in print. Ok! On with the show!

Q Myra asks, "My grandson wants a computer for his birthday. We are going to help his mother purchase one, but none of us are sure what kind of computer to get him. How do we know what to buy?"

A Myra, I can certainly understand your confusion. There are so many options out there these days! I can give you some basic tips that should help you make an informed decision.

First, find out what kinds of things your grandson wants to do with the computer. Will it mainly be for homework? Is he planning to play games with it? Does it need to be portable? If he needs something he can carry with him, then you'll want a laptop rather than a desktop.

Mac or PC? When deciding between the two, it's now mostly a matter of preference in the operating system. If your grandson prefers Mac OS, then by all means purchase the Mac. If he is more familiar with Windows, just stay with what he knows.

The big question is, "How much power does the computer need?" If your grandson is considering using the computer for games, then you'll need to make sure there is enough Random Access Memory (RAM), a powerful processor, a hard drive with a fast access speed and a video card with dedicated memory.

Here are some good stats to start with for a computer used for games and/or other higher-end functions:

- 4GB of RAM or higher
- At least an i5 processor – preferably i7 if budget allows.

- At least a 7200-RPM hard drive – preferably Solid State, but keep in mind that those are fairly new and still rather expensive.
- A separate video card with at least 512MB of dedicated memory – preferably 1GB.

There are many other variables out there, but this list should at least get you started. If you're interested in finding out more, send me an e-mail.

Q Blake asks, "On our farm we have a system that requires a 9-pin serial port. Because most new laptops have eliminated this port, I am having trouble finding a laptop with the port still included."



A You're absolutely right, Blake! These ports are slowly but surely being discontinued. And, in most cases that's appropriate. However, there are still many legacy systems in place that rely upon them. In that case, replacing the entire legacy system may prove too costly.

While I don't like to recommend specific manufacturers, I'm going to

list a few Dells with the port already installed. Keep in mind that I am by no means suggesting that any of these laptops is better than any other on the market. Rather, they are on the list solely because they meet the criteria of having a serial port.

1. If you don't mind a refurbished laptop then the Dell Latitude D630 has a serial port on it. You can get one from overstock.com for around \$300 (<http://bit.ly/iEaYvY>).
2. Dell also has a model in their E-series of laptops that still has a serial port on it. Here's a link: <http://dell.to/1B6mOf>. If the link doesn't work, just search for Latitude E5510 laptop.
3. If you need something that can travel around with you without fear of it getting broken then there are several manufacturers of rugged notebooks you can contact. A "ruggedized" notebook is one that can survive in environments where others laptops can't, for instance in higher temperatures or even being dropped. Those may prove best for a farm setting. Here's a link to one manufacturer of rugged laptops that still includes serial ports: www.ruggednotebooks.com

Keep in mind that there are many other options out there, but I hope this list provides you at least a good place to start.

Ed VanHoose is the Digital Communications Administrator/IT Manager for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield. He is a specialist in the IT field with over 13 years of experience working in leadership roles for technology based projects in Illinois and Missouri.



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Illinois Country Mother of the Year crowned

Illinois Country Living continues to celebrate Illinois Country Mother of the Year 2011, Traci Sparrow. Around 100 people gathered at the Hancock Co. Extension Center in Carthage on April 26 to celebrate the crowning of this mother of four. The event was co-hosted by Western Illinois Electrical Coop. and the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. Sparrow is the daughter of Dyna and Donald Scanlan and was nominated by her mother and chosen from many letters that poured into the offices of Illinois Country Living Magazine from around the state.

Among Traci's many special attributes that set her apart as an exemplary mother, is that in addition to raising a biological son, Marc, she and her husband many years ago adopted three special needs children. It was a decision that would impact their home for a lifetime. Traci's story was featured in full in the May issue of our magazine, serving more than 180,000 homes and businesses in the state.



Duane Noland, President and CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, presents Traci Sparrow her title as Illinois Country Mother of the Year.



Traci Sparrow wants to express her appreciation to those who have congratulated her. Other readers have asked how they could recognize Traci Sparrow's efforts. Her mother has indicated correspondence could be sent to: Traci Sparrow, 1846 East State Hwy. 9, Dallas City, IL 62330.

Special thanks to those contributing to Country Mother of the Year 2011

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Date Book • July 2011

- 2-3, **"Eight Miles of AG-TIQUES"** in Orangeville. 815-789-4570 or www.stephenson-county-il.org.
- 2-3, **The Eighth Annual "John Deere Days"** in Orangeville. 815-281-4571 or www.stephenson-county-il.org.
- 3, **Art at Ellwood - Art Fair and Sale** in DeKalb. 815-756-4609 or www.ellwoodhouse.org.
- 3-4, **Capital City Celebration** in Downtown Springfield. 217-553-2082 or www.springfieldjaycees.org.
- 4, **Riverfront 4th** at Clat Adams Park in Quincy. 217-228-6600.
- 4, **Salute to Freedom** at Mt. Vernon Airport in Mount Vernon. 618-242-3150 or www.mtvernon.com.
- 6, **Downs Village Market**, Wednesdays in July, 4 - 6 p.m., Southwest edge of Downs, just off I-74. Call Carol at 309-378-4223 or Ruth at 309-378-4294, or e-mail marketmaster610@gmail.com for space availability and information.
- 6-24, **The All New Original Tribute to The Blues Brothers** in Chicago. 312-922-2110 or www.broadway-inchicago.com.
- 7-8, **Heritage Days & Sweet Corn Dinner** in Golden. 217-445-3151 or www.goldenwindmill.org.
- 8-9, **Irish American Heritage Festival** in Chicago. 773-282-7035 or www.irishfestchicago.com.
- 8-10, **Homewood Days** in Downtown Homewood. 708-206-3384.
- 8-10, **Into the Woods by Acting Out Theatre Co.** at Perry Farm Park in Bourbonnais. 815-644-0854 or www.actinouttheatreco.org.
- 8-16, **Galena festival of the Performing Arts** in Galena. 563-581-0911 or djmikelson@mchsi.com.
- 9-10, **The 48th Annual Invitational Fine Craft Exhibition** in Oak Brook. 630-573-0700 or www.oakbrookcenter.com.
- 9, **The Eighth Annual Midwest Nationals Wrestling Tournament** at Illinois Wesleyan University Shirk Center in Bloomington. 800-433-8226 or www.armymidwestnationals.com.
- 9-10, **Civil War Days** in Wauconda. 847-968-3400 or www.LakeCountyDiscoveryMuseum.org.
- 9, **Jazz From Reagan's Lifetime** in Sterling. 815-622-1681 or www.rockriverjazzband.com.
- 9, **Open Cockpit Day** at the Prairie Aviation Museum in Bloomington. 309-663-7632 or www.prairieaviationmuseum.org.
- 9-10, **Rock Around the Block** in Chicago. 773-665-4682.
- 9-10, **Sugar Creek Arts Festival** in Uptown Normal. 309-829-0011 or www.mcac.org.
- 10, **Plainfield Church Car Show**, Rose Hill. 618-793-2248 or hammermopars2@yahoo.com
- 12-17, **Stephenson County Fair** at the Stephenson County Fair Grounds in Freeport. 815-235-2918 or www.stephensoncofair.com.
- 13, **Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce Golf Outing** in Oak Lawn. 708-424-8300 or www.oaklawn-chamber.com.
- 14-31, **Fox Valley Repertory's Summer Arts Festival** at Pheasant Run Resort in St. Charles. 630-584-6342 or www.foxvalleyrepertory.org.
- 14-17, **Vernon Hills Summer Celebration 2011** in Vernon Hills. 847-367-3700 or www.vernonhills.org/index.asp
- 15-16, **Ain't Nothin But the Blues Festival** in Bloomington. 309-665-0033 or www.aintnothinbuttheblues.com.
- 15-16, **Chatham Jaycees Sweet Corn Festival** at the Chatham Community Park in Chatham. 217-414-2639 or www.chathamjaycees.net.
- 15-16, **Orange Power of the Past**, 5th Annual Allis Chalmers Working Show, Dale Haymakers Allis Chalmers Museum, Paris. Dale Haymaker 217-275-3428 or dhaymaker@tigerpaw.com
- 15-17, **East Central Illinois Antique Farm Equipment Club, annual show** at the Coles Country Fairgrounds, Charleston. 217-348-8898 or www.terrydalefarms.com.
- 15-17, **Pitchfork Music Festival** in Chicago. 312-746-5494 or www.pitchforkmusicfestival.com.
- 15-17, **Quincon 26** in Quincy. 217-214-3700.
- 16, **Art Fair & Music in the Park** at Methodist Park, Paris. 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., 217-466-4215
- 16-17, **Civil War Days** at David Davis Mansion in Bloomington. 309-828-1084 or www.daviddavismansion.org.
- 16-17, **Lincoln's Bloomington Festival** in Downtown Bloomington. 309-827-0428 or www.mchistory.org.
- 16-17, **Oregon Trail Days** in Lowden State Park and downtown in Oregon. 815-732-2100 or www.oregontraildays.org.
- 16-17, **Print Invitational** in Freeport. 815-235-9755 or www.freeportartmuseum.org.
- 16-17, **The Annual Buffalo Grove Invitational Fine Art Festival** in Buffalo Grove. 847-459-2518 or www.vbg.org/index.aspx.
- 16-17, 23 **Annual Metropolis Farm Toy Show** at Massac County Youth Fair Exhibit Hall. I-24, Exit 37, follow signs. 618-524-2909 or cdwill@maxbb.com.
- 17, **Art and Wine Festival** at the Mackinaw Valley Vineyard and Winery in Mackinaw. 309-645-5054 or www.mackinawvalleyvineyard.com.
- 17, **Caribbean Beach Block Party** in Tinley Park. 708-444-5678 or www.tinleypark.org.
- 17, **Third Sunday Market** at the Interstate Center in Bloomington. 217-202-2847 or www.thirdsunday-market.com.
- 20-24, **Kane County Fair** in St. Charles. 630-584-6926 or www.kanecounty-fair.com.
- 21, **Palos Heights Classic Car Event** in Palos Heights. 708-361-1800 or www.palosheights.org.
- 22-31, **"Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat"** at the Quincy Community Theatre in Quincy. 217-223-3209.
- 22-23, **Germanfest** in Quincy. 217-228-1193.
- 23, **Riverdale Music Fest** in Riverdale. 708-841-7054.
- 23-24, **Sheffield Garden Walk and Festival** in Chicago. 773-929-9255 or www.sheffieldneighborhood.org/node/2.
- 28-31, **RidgeFest 2011** in Chicago Ridge. 708-425-7700 or www.chicago-ridge.org.
- 29-31, **Ignite Fest in Zion**. 630-833-3733 or www.ignitefest.org/default.htm.

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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.

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



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