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Survival requires an adequate food supply

“Without fertilizer, forget it.”

“Civilization as it is known today could not have evolved, nor can it survive, without an adequate food supply. Without fertilizer, forget it.”

These are the words of Dr. Norman Borlaug, known as the father of the “green revolution” for developing disease resistant wheat varieties that saved millions from starvation. Dr. Borlaug is only one of seven people to have won the Nobel Peace Prize, the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional Gold Medal.

Dr. Borlaug’s statement about fertilizer’s importance in the world is simple and prophetic. Fertilizer’s role in plant growth and food production is critical because food security—having enough food to feed a growing population—remains one of the greatest challenges facing humanity. A new technology being utilized in the U.S., and soon in Illinois, to safely unlock natural gas resources (hydraulic fracturing), plays a substantial part in our nation’s ability to feed and protect its citizens.

To understand fertilizer’s importance, a look at history reveals how fertilizer has played a startling role, and demonstrates why its production in the U.S. is critical to our food future and to our national security.

Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P) and Potassium (K) are the building blocks of life. Nitrogen is the most essential because it helps in the formation of protein. Because of the importance of nitrogen in growing food, there have been wars fought over fertilizer. In the early 1800’s when population began to increase significantly and demand for food along with it, European countries fought over rich deposits of bird droppings (fertilizer) on remote

and coastal islands. In 1856, the U.S. claimed some of these islands as U.S. territories not because they would become tourist destinations, but as a source of fertilizer for American farmers. These islands later ended up being key strategic bases for the U.S. in WWII, leading to the defeat of Japan.

When the deposits of bird droppings were exhausted in the late 1880’s, two German scientists, Fritz Haber and Carl Bosch, developed an efficient industrial process that utilizes natural gas to turn atmospheric nitrogen into ammonia-based fertilizers. The first nitrogen plant was built in 1910, and the two scientists were awarded the Nobel Prize for their work in developing a sustainable source of nitrogen for food production. A sad footnote to this chapter in history is that Germany also used the nitrogen to produce ammunition. Had it not been for the Haber-Bosch process, Germany would have likely run out of ammunition and WWI would have ended earlier, nor would Germany have had the food or munitions to launch WWII. But soon other countries, including the U.S., built their own nitrogen manufacturing plants, stabilizing our world as history reveals.

Today, 60 percent of humanity owes its existence to the production of nitrogen fertilizer, as do many forms of wildlife. Without it, vast acres of habitat would have been cleared for crop production in an effort to keep up with the world’s growing population.

Now back to hydraulic fracturing. The U.S. was a key producer of fertilizer until natural gas prices in the U.S. soared in the late 1990’s, some say due to lack of a sound energy policy.

In 2006, we had the highest priced natural gas in the world. In that period, 27 U.S. nitrogen manufacturing plants were permanently closed because they could not compete in the world nitrogen marketplace. As a result, we now import 55 percent of our nitrogen from foreign countries, jeopardizing our food security. Our country is losing out on manufacturing jobs and we must pay other countries for a life-essential product we can and should be producing in the U.S.

But things are turning around. Hydraulic fracturing has resulted in stable and low natural gas prices making us once again a competitive force in the world fertilizer marketplace. U.S. based fertilizer companies are rebounding quickly, adding production and jobs. Countries like Egypt and Turkey are looking to the Midwest and even to Illinois to build new fertilizer production facilities. It’s a remarkable development and it’s all attributed to ample natural gas resources now available to us from hydraulic fracturing.

Natural gas = nitrogen = food security = national security = economic prosperity. Without fertilizer, forget it. ■

Jean Payne is President of the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association in Bloomington, Ill.





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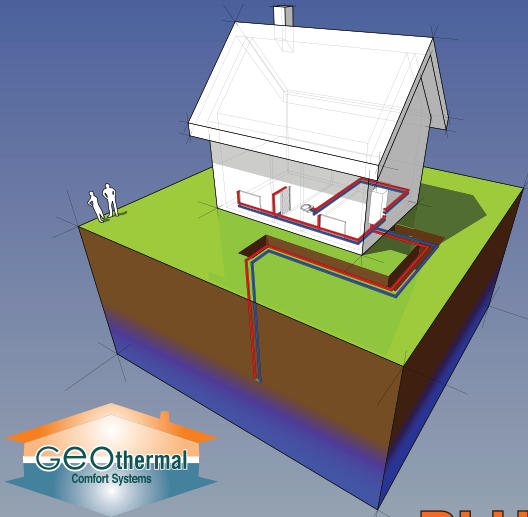
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Western Farmers Electric Cooperative contractor crews work on damaged areas in the Moore, Okla.

How to help after a disaster

The long road to recovery continues for Oklahomans impacted by the massive tornado in Moore and other twisters that hit the state in mid-May.

Electric cooperatives have an organized disaster recovery system built into their cooperative DNA and official network. But what if you want to help out after a disaster like the one caused by a historic series of tornadoes in Oklahoma?

The best way is to send money. For the victims of the Oklahoma tornadoes, the co-ops have organized the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives Oklahoma Relief Fund. The fund will assist individuals in electric cooperative service areas who were affected by the May tornadoes. Donations can be made with a credit card at www.oaec.com through their PayPal link, or by a check

payable to “TEC Oklahoma Relief Fund” mailed to PO Box 54309, Oklahoma City, OK 73154. More than \$100,000 has been collected so far.

If you want to physically volunteer, don't go to a disaster area like Moore, Okla., until you find an organization that has a specific need for you. Consider volunteering in one of the small towns or rural areas around the main disaster. Often these areas don't receive the attention of larger, more suburban areas. And consider volunteering in the weeks or months after a disaster. The need will be there a long time after the media attention is gone.

The city of Moore, Okla. is coordinating volunteers through two websites, Moore.Recovers.org and ServeMoore.com. Interested volunteers can sign up online or by calling (866) 484-3500. ■

290th birthday of the Illinois National Guard

On May 9, Governor Pat Quinn honored the 290th birthday of the Illinois National Guard, saluting its members who embody the democratic ideal of the citizen soldier. The Illinois National Guard has a dual mission: The state mission, under the governor's command, is to respond to domestic emergencies in Illinois or elsewhere through cooperative agreements between states; and the federal mission is to go into combat or respond to federal emergencies at the direction of the President of the United States. There are 13,000 Illinois National Guard soldiers and airmen serving at more than 50 armories, bases and training facilities across Illinois. ■





Jo-Carroll Energy, Farmers Mutual Electric complete merger

Two electric cooperatives in northwest Illinois have merged to serve a combined 21,372 electric members. Elizabeth, Ill.-based Jo-Carroll Energy and Geneseo, Ill.-based Farmers Mutual Electric—the state’s oldest electric cooperative—completed the merger on March 31. The integrated cooperative will operate as Jo-Carroll Energy.

The newly joined system held its first annual meeting on April 14, following some three years of cooperative work leading up to the merger. After initial discussions in May 2010, the two co-ops sought input from members, negotiated with a municipal utility adjacent to Farmers Mutual’s territory and worked to refinance debt for Farmers Mutual in order for the joined entity to remain a 100-percent National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corp. borrower. This means none of its debt is owed to the USDA Rural Utilities



Service, the former Rural Electrification Administration (REA).

“This was a big win for both co-ops,” Jo-Carroll President and CEO Michael Hastings said. “We’ll be able to spread system costs over more sales, gain access to three power suppliers and roll out additional benefits to new members pretty quickly.”

Jo-Carroll is in its third year of a four-year rollout of automated metering infrastructure; the former Farmers Mutual system will be upgraded this spring and summer. Members also will benefit from an improved billing system and Jo-Carroll’s 25-year capital credits cycle.

“It says a lot that the Farmers’ board of directors made this move for the benefit of their members,” Hastings said. “Our respective boards of directors agreed to a revised makeup that will provide former Farmers Mutual members with wider representation over six years following the merger.” ■

Farmer’s markets growing in Illinois

More than 3,000 farmer’s markets across the country offer consumers farm-fresh, affordable, convenient and healthy products. Farmer’s markets serve as integral links between urban, suburban, and rural communities and the popularity of the markets continues to rise, especially in Illinois, which now ranks third in the nation for the number of farmer’s markets.

To further the expansion and awareness of farmer’s markets take this opportunity to search for a community or roadside market near you.

The Illinois Department of Agriculture, along with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association, is working to expand the number and awareness of Illinois farmer’s markets. The number of Illinois producers that have signed-up to participate in the ILLINOIS “WHERE FRESH IS” logo program is increasing. If you are a producer, you can use this as a tool to help sell Illinois grown produce, fruits and other horticulture commodities.

For a producer to use the logo, you only need to fill out and submit an application to the Illinois Department of Agriculture. After the application is approved you will receive a list of sales materials with the logo. These materials can be purchased at cost for use at community farmer’s markets, roadside stands and grocery stores.

You can download a copy of the application at www.agr.state.il.us/markets/farmers/. For more information call 217-524-9129 or email delayne.reeves@illinois.gov. ■



Lawmakers back co-ops on water heater rule

Electric cooperatives are urging the Department of Energy to consider alternatives to a new rule, due to take effect April 2015, that stands to phase out large-capacity 55 gallon and above electric water heaters that save energy and money for co-op members in demand response programs.

Nearly 100 lawmakers on Capitol Hill are backing rural electric cooperatives when it comes to their concerns about a proposed federal standard for large capacity electric water heaters.

Senators and House members from



both parties are demanding a five-year waiver from the Department of Energy's pending rule, for the sake of utilities and their consumers, that can save energy and money by using these large, grid-enabled water heaters for load management and thermal storage.

The nation's electric cooperatives have recommended that the Department of Energy create a separate appliance category for large "grid-enabled" electric storage water heaters, or adopt a waiver for at least five years with a three-year notice for any modifications or elimination of the waiver. ■

Dairyland Power's Peregrine falcon restoration program has produced 85 chicks

A slow start to spring hasn't stopped the annual return of Peregrine falcons to the Coulee Region and Dairyland Power's nesting boxes. Mating pairs of falcons at both Alma and Genoa Site nesting boxes are incubating a full clutch of eggs. Fledging of the chicks will likely occur in late June or early July.

Cameras are installed at both the Alma and Genoa power plant locations to capture "real time" online bird watching at the nesting boxes. Click on the Bird Cam on the bottom left side of the home page at www.dairynet.com for images of the falcons' 2013 nesting season.

Dairyland has been fostering the return of the Peregrine falcon to its natural territory along the Upper Mississippi since the 1990s. Nesting boxes were installed hundreds of feet up the stacks at Dairyland's Alma and Genoa generating stations, and in 1997, a pair of Peregrine falcons produced chicks, marking the first successful Peregrine hatch in western Wisconsin in 25 years. Since then, 85 chicks have fledged from Dairyland nesting sites.

In recent years, another major

milestone in the Peregrine program has been reached, as the "power plant birds" have chosen to nest on a natural cliff dwelling near Alma. "The first time that power plant nesters relocated to the wild and successfully

produced offspring was in 2007.

They have chosen the cliff dwelling two more times since then, which is a thrill to witness," said Brad Foss, Dairyland Senior Environmental Biologist. ■





Gaining independence from England required great sacrifice from our forefathers who believed it was for the greater good in creating the United States of America.

We liken this to when electric cooperatives were formed. When little financial assistance was available to bring electricity to rural areas, it was an independent streak that inspired groups of farmers around America's countryside to band together, beating incredible odds to improve their quality of life.

So, when you're enjoying your hot dogs, parades and apple pie on July Fourth, think about the second reason to celebrate independence — cooperative independence.

Happy Independence Day from your Touchstone Energy cooperative!



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The road to recovery

Rural businesses lead the way in Illinois' economic upturn

By Ed VanHoose



Ronald Reagan once remarked, "To sit back hoping that someday, some way, someone will make things right is to go on feeding the crocodile, hoping he will eat you last - but eat you he will."

There are many memorable quotes associated with business, or the economy, or the recession. And, even though at first glance the quote above does not appear to be related to economic affairs at all, it pointedly speaks to how rural Illinois entrepreneurs have built their businesses to survive, and even prosper, despite the current state of our economy. It is the self-sufficient attitudes and practices of rural business leaders, universally providing a base for the local economy, which enables downstate Illinois to compete in the emerging world market.

But, it hasn't been easy.

All you have to do is turn on the television, or pick up a paper and you're sure to see how bad things are. Unemployment is up. Job creation is down. But somehow, through it all, these businesses keep chugging along.

So maybe things aren't quite what they seem. Just take a look at the hard numbers. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), the unemployment rate in 2009 averaged 10 percent. In 2010 and 2011 that number remained close to the same at 9.7 percent. Last year the annual average for Illinois unemployment was down to 8.6 percent. Don't misunderstand. That's still a lot of people out of work, but the trend toward a lower percent of unemployment shows hope for our economy to rebound.

Illinois entrepreneurs have played

a large part in the recovery. Did you know Illinois is home to more than 1 million small businesses? While quite a few of these are smaller, one-man shops, more than 255,000 of them employ Illinois citizens, providing much-needed jobs to their communities. Small businesses are so fundamental to our economy that they account for almost 50 percent of private sector jobs in the state. It is for that reason Illinois should celebrate its entrepreneurs.

There are a multitude of examples of the entrepreneurial spirit alive and well in rural Illinois, but in order to provide a picture of how these businesses have developed, and what they are doing to survive and grow during these trying times, we will feature three disparate businesses and the people running them.



Meat Processing

Butchering is not what it once was. Processors may be worried about undercover exposure and government regulatory issues, as well as being sued or charged with animal cruelty. But the fact of the matter is, people eat meat. And the folks at Opengate Custom Meats in Anna, Illinois have really stepped up to serve the local community.

Opengate has been in operation for nearly 35 years, but in January of 2009 a partnership of Brad Housewright, Ron Duncan and Lisa Yates purchased the plant and renewed operations. 2009 wasn't exactly a banner year for business, so it definitely wasn't the most obvious time to be entering into a new venture.

When questioned about the reason for opening during such a hard time, Housewright explains, "We survived because there is a big push for local product. People are wanting to know more about the origin of where their meat comes from. People just want to know that they're getting local product so they know it's safe."

It's that locally-grown and-operated attitude that has served so many other businesses well in rural Illinois. Opengate provides an essential service to local producers.

Manager Lisa Yates continues, "We're sustainable living at its best.

People always have to eat. That's one of the main reasons we have stayed open. There are so many cattle and hog producers in the area that need to have a place to take their meat. We have a lot of local producers that work with us. They use the meat to feed their family, and some sell at farmer's markets and grocery stores."

Housewright agrees, "From the standpoint that we have built a customer base of local producers, we are able to do all types of custom processing for them in a local food economy. They call us all the time saying we have two beef that need processed. It's building a local food market utilizing local producers for beef, pork, whatever. That's basically what we're doing."

Opengate also provides much needed jobs for downstate Illinois. Although the partners admit that they've had some turnover, they do employ 4 full-time and 2 part-time people. It's one of those jobs that's hard to fill.

Housewright says, "To be honest with you, it is a dying art because most of the stuff that large retail chains get in, is already cut up in primal cuts and then they just cut it down and package wrap most of it. They don't go through the full meat process. There are only a handful of plants in southern Illinois."

"It's one of those jobs that once you get trained and comfortable, you stay," says Yates. "For the people that stay on, this becomes a permanent home for them."

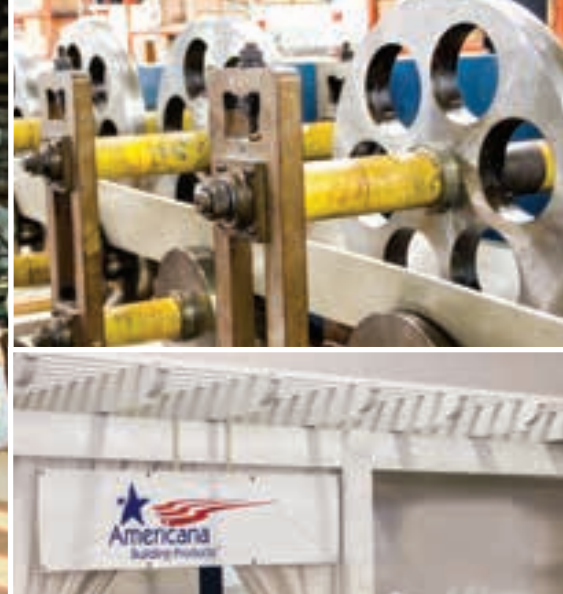
Don't get the idea they service only those looking to have meat processed. Opengate also sells meat to the local community.

"Although we are a full-service processor providing white label for producers and custom processing for producers including beef, hogs, lamb and goats, we also have a full selection of retail meats," remarks Yates.

That commitment to their community shows in Opengate's local involvement as well. It supports the WIBH Blue Ribbons for Kids Campaign, the Girl Scouts of America, Bonan-Fowler Clothes for Kids Campaign and makes many other charitable donations every year to local food pantries and fundraising causes to help people in need.

Because their business is founded upon involvement in the local economy, Opengate spends a significant amount of effort ensuring that local groups have what they need.

If you want to find out more information about Opengate Custom Meats, you can call Lisa at 618-833-5042 or find them on Facebook.



Manufacturing

Any talk about economic recovery in Illinois must include manufacturing. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Illinois manufacturers employ nearly 600,000 people. And since 2010, Illinois manufacturers have added more than 40,000 new employees. The sad fact about that statistic is most manufacturers would love to hire more, but many of them can't find qualified personnel. It's not all about assembly line anymore. Now, you need to possess math skills, the ability to pass a drug test, and in some cases, computer skills.

Tri-County Electric Cooperative members, the Purcell family are a shining example of a rural Illinois manufacturer doing things right.

Americana Building Products started out as Hindman Manufacturing Co. in 1947, and was located in Central City. The Purcell family purchased the company in 1985 to keep it from being sold and moved out of the area. In the years since, the family has carefully expanded the company through building new facilities, as well as modernization of equipment and acquisitions.

Prior to 1985, the majority of the company's sales were directly tied to products used by the manufactured housing industry. But with the rise of large home improvement chains, the family has developed great working relationships with companies such as Lowe's and Menards.

By 1996 the company had grown so much it needed to expand manufacturing and office space. Says Geff Purcell, "We were originally from Salem, so we came back. There is a large steel supplier located in Salem, also, and that didn't hurt."

The company purchased 10 acres in the Salem Industrial Park and built a 120,000 square foot plant, which included 12,000 square feet of office space. And still, this family wasn't done building their business.

"We created a new start-up in 1997 called Americana Powder Finishing. It's a state-of-the-art metal powder coating operation to paint aluminum and steel. Americana Powder Finishing is now the largest powder coater in southern Illinois. We coat for many local companies such as Jarco Inc., a manufacturer of propane delivery and transport trucks, and New Metal Fabrication. We also service large companies like Allied Tube & Conduit in Chicago and Grain Systems Inc. with plants in Assumption, Paris, Newton and Flora," says Purcell.

The plant expanded another 36,000 square feet in 2006 and last year, Lowe's approached the company about providing a modular wheel chair ramp system to be branded with their Gatehouse store brand.

"With our in-house engineering and CAD expertise, we were able to

beat out a Chinese manufacturer and another US firm with our design. This new system is being stocked in more than 300 Lowe's stores today, with expansion into more stores later this year," says Purcell.

Currently Americana Building Products employs 85 people. When asked about the outlook for their business, Purcell replies, "In the fall of 2007 the housing market and park development declined, so we began planning because we saw it coming. But, now we're starting to see it pass. Things are mostly level, with a little uptick last year. It's a slow climb out in the building products. But, in powder coating, we are seeing tremendous gains with the Ag industry and propane tanks."

If you're interested in finding out more about Americana Building Products, you can visit them online at <http://www.americana.com/> or call 1-888-442-2928.

In the meantime, Geff has this advice for anyone operating a family owned business, "Customer service is key number 1. A real person should answer the phone when you call. If there's a problem, then top to bottom, we have told our managers they have the authority to handle the situation at their level. Good customer service takes care of sales. Oh, and when working with family, work to get along. That's what's important."



Tourism

Did you know that during 2012 visitors to Illinois spent more than \$30 billion on tourism-related activities? In fact, most years Illinois has nearly 100 million visitors exploring all the areas and events geared toward attracting tourism dollars. But, we can't rest on our laurels and just expect people to continue to come and spend their hard earned money here in our state. Other states have already launched aggressive ad campaigns to tempt travelers to visit. For the most part, every dollar spent on tourism campaigns brings a nine dollar return.

So, if you're looking for something to do in Illinois head on over to www.enjoyillinois.com and you're sure to find something that suits you. But if you want a real treat of something completely out of the ordinary, try out The Smokin' Gun Hunting Lodge located in Hamilton, Ill. (www.smkgun.com).

The Smokin' Gun Hunting Lodge has a large main building that holds 21 beds in an assortment of room styles. There's a large open area for seating on the lower level, and of course tons of

outdoor space.

In addition to traditional hunting, visitors can join a skeet shooting league or just shoot for the day. Aron Metternich, a resident of Hamilton, speaks highly of the lodge, "Having shot competitively for nearly 30 years, I have been to dozens of shooting clubs across the country. Smokin' Gun is one of the best kept clubs I have been to, so much so that it has a golf course like feel to it. And, the best thing is that I only have a 5 minute drive to get there."

It's not only local residents that enjoy the lodge.

Lance Buckert of Chicago says, "The Smokin' Gun has become a destination point for me and several members of my family. My brother and I, as well as several of our cousins, get together every 4th of July to shoot sporting clays before our family barbecue. The facilities are in great shape and the management has always been very accommodating."

The Smokin' Gun doesn't employ much full-time help, but it certainly does bring dollars to the area. And,

according to Western Illinois Electric Cooperative member and Smokin' Gun manager Terry Phillips, "At any one time we can employ up to five part-time employees. We have help with the dogs sometimes. We hire hunting guides, and we have help running the leagues."

The Smokin' Gun Hunting Lodge is located at 995 E County Road 1550 in Hamilton. Your GPS should get you there, but just in case, ask any local and they'll be able to direct you to the place.

All three of the business featured here are examples of the hope Illinoisans have for economic recovery. Whether it be tourism, manufacturing, food processing or another industry, those visionary entrepreneurs who are brave enough to keep their doors open during this recession embody the American spirit—that willingness to starve the crocodile and face it head on, assured that even if we falter, things are bound to get better. In fact, they already are. ■

Drivers share life saving experience

Don't panic, and have the knowledge to survive

On Sat. April 27, 2013, at 3:30 p.m., Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative linemen Bill Hart and Curt Nicholson responded to a report of a pole being hit and electric lines on the ground near Litchfield, Ill. When they arrived, they found a broken transmission pole and a pickup that had been energized. Fortunately, Mathew Emery, the driver, didn't panic and knew the crackling sound of electricity meant he should stay in the cab until help arrived.

Emery, who had lost control on the rain slick road, said, "I was safer in there than I was outside. People who saw the accident were sitting on the road talking to me, and I knew the best thing for me to do was stay put."

This wasn't just an ordinary distribution line on top of his truck. It was a 34,500-volt Ameren transmission line. The co-op's 7,200-volt distribution line was attached to the pole under the transmission line and was now suspended about three feet above the ground just outside of the driver's door.

The Ameren lineman on the scene said that you could hear the vehicle "sizzling" with electricity. He disconnected the energized electric lines and used his bucket to lay insulated blankets on the ground and sleeves on the phase, to safely remove the driver.

In traumatic situations like this every instinct tells you to flee as you try to control the fear and panic. However, if you are in a car accident with a power line, the safest place is



A shattered utility pole remains atop the damaged pickup truck with de-energized lines still attached.

Photo By: Bill Hart

often inside the car. To survive you have to stop and think. Electricity is always seeking a path to ground. If you become part of that path by stepping out of the vehicle the results could be instantly fatal.

Only in the rare instance of fire should you exit the vehicle. Then, you 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, and doing the bunny hop may seem strange, and this is why you should get out only if absolutely necessary.

Two Indiana teenagers, Ashley Taylor and Lee Whitaker, experienced such a traumatic situation themselves in 2009 when they were in an auto accident involving power lines. Fortunately, earlier that week they had attended a program sponsored by their local electric cooperative at their school that warned of the dangers of car accidents with power poles. Lee and Ashley made sure nobody left the car and warned those who came upon the accident to stay far away.

Lee and Ashley are grateful to the Indiana cooperative, White County REMC, and the Safe Electricity partner that sponsored Illinois native and former lineman Kyle Finley, and his Live Line Demo program at their school.

It's also important to warn those who come upon such an accident to stay away, as approaching an accident scene involving power lines can be deadly.

That was the case when a Good Samaritan approached a wrecked car near Jacksonville, Fla., and was electrocuted when he stepped over a downed wire. The 52-year-old man attempted to assist a motorist whose car swerved to avoid hitting a deer and collided with a utility pole holding an electric line. The motorist was seeking help to be freed from the car when the tragedy occurred.

When people are involved in this type of 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. Remember, don't panic and stay put. And please share these safety stories with those you love and go to www.safeelectricity.org for more. ■

Molly Hall is 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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A rose by any other name...

DNA testing is changing the scientific naming of plants

Shakespeare, when trying to get Juliet to convince Romeo that she loves him and not the Montague family, spouted “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet.” In other words, whether you’re William, Will, Bill, Billy or Bubba doesn’t make a difference in the grand scheme of things.

Mr. Shakespeare was quite a prophet when it comes to plant names.

There is nothing more frustrating for horticulturists than to get to know a plant by one name, and find out someone somewhere has determined scientifically that it should be called something else.

Don’t get excited. Tomatoes are still tomatoes and apples are still apples. Sure, some know it as witloof chicory while others know it as Belgian endive, but they are still the same and no one really cares.

Common names will always prevail, and always be frustrating as what’s known by one name in the Midwest is something else in Florida or Oregon.

That’s where the scientific names came in. Each plant had one name and one name only. No other plant had that name. Names were universal, which meant if you said *Acer rubrum* in Illinois, Argentina, Bora Bora, Tokyo, Moscow or Venice, you should end up with the same plant, though the pronunciation might be a trifle off.

That was all well and good for 200+ years. It was essentially first-come first-named, though there were rules for naming plants that the professional plant namers followed. These nomenclature rules were a fairly common sense approach based on the flower structure initially, and then other physical characteristics.

It’s what created plant families. It’s what put roses with peaches, apples, hawthorns, Spirea, strawberries, cherries,

pears, Potentilla, cotoneaster and pearl bush in the same group. It’s what put orchids together. Grasses together. Beech, oak and chestnut together.

It’s a literal CSI world now. DNA testing has changed the scientific name, splitting up some families and essentially wiping out others. Plants that belonged to “A” are now in “B”, and no longer related to “C” like everyone thought.

Just moving plants from one family to another wouldn’t be as problematic as changing their names, since “A” seems more related to “D” than it ever was with “B” or “C”, so to be scientifically logical, we must now put “A” and “D” together.

For the average gardener, you probably don’t care. And rightly so. If you still call it tomato, it’s the same thing.

If you collect gardening books, and want to be absolute in your garden, these changes drive you buggy. Names change and families change from one volume to the next revised issue. Some authors don’t care. Others are fanatical.

What may seem like a new plant to you is the same wrapped with a new name and nothing else.

The good news is that plants don’t read and if you call a coleus a “Coleus”, “Solenostemon” or “Plectranthus”, or a tomato a “Lycopersicon” or “Solanum”, it still won’t answer you. Much like a teenager.

Clearing up the jungle of plant names

In an attempt to clear up and cut through the jumble of taxonomic plant names, botanists in Britain unleashed a database of 1.25 million plant names you can access at www.theplantlist.org. The idea wasn’t to clear up the confusing plant naming conundrum, but to give a clear picture of the plant biodiversity of our planet and to help preserve species under threat. This

working list provides a basic checklist of what plants are on the planet.

The longest name in the list is *Ornithogalum adseptentrionesvergentulum* and could be a great tiebreaker in a spelling contest. As a working list, only 300,000 names for species have been accepted as standard terms by the experts. And 480,000 other names are described as synonyms and alternatives for accepted names. New plants are being discovered all the time and need to be named. What’s really sad is one in five of the world’s known plant species is under threat of extinction, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Resources for identifying plants

The USDA has created a site that can help you identify plants. Go to www.nal.usda.gov/learn-identify-plants. Some resources present “keys” while others present photographs for visual matching. “Keys” offer you two choices based on a plant’s characteristics. For example, a tree key might ask whether the leaves are alternate or opposite, and if edges are smooth or serrated, etc., until a final decision about the plant’s identity can be determined.

Links to printed field guides, other websites and apps are available from the USDA site. Field guides may also present keys, illustrations or both, generally covers a certain geographic area, and may be the handiest identification aides. ■

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



Chicago Doctor Invents Affordable Hearing Aid Outperforms Many Higher Priced Hearing Aids

Reported by J. Page

CHICAGO: A local board-certified Ear, Nose, Throat (ENT) physician, Dr. S. Cherukuri, has just shaken up the hearing aid industry with the invention of a medical-grade, affordable hearing aid. **This revolutionary hearing aid is designed to help millions of people with hearing loss who cannot afford—or do not wish to pay—the much higher cost of traditional hearing aids.**

**“Perhaps the best quality-to-price ratio in the hearing aid industry” – Dr. Babu, M.D.
Board-Certified ENT Physician**

Dr. Cherukuri knew that untreated hearing loss could lead to depression, social isolation, anxiety, and symptoms consistent with Alzheimer’s dementia. **He could not understand why the cost for hearing aids was so high when the prices on so many consumer electronics like TVs, DVD players, cell phones and digital cameras had fallen.**

Since Medicare and most private insurance do not cover the costs of hearing aids, which traditionally run between \$2,000-\$6,000 for a pair, many of the doctor’s patients could not afford the expense. Dr. Cherukuri’s goal was to find a reasonable solution that would help with the most common types of hearing loss at an affordable price, not unlike the “one-size-fits-most” reading glasses available at drug stores.

He evaluated numerous hearing devices and sound amplifiers, including those seen on television. Without fail, almost all of these were found to amplify bass/low frequencies (below 1000 Hz) and not useful in amplifying the frequencies related to the human voice.

Inspiration From a Surprising Source

The doctor’s inspiration to defeat the powers-that-be that kept inexpensive hearing aids out of the hands of the public actually came from a new cell phone he had just purchased. **“I felt that if someone could devise an**

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affordable device like an iPhone® for about \$200 that could do all sorts of things, I could create a hearing aid at a similar price.”

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The high cost of hearing aids is a result of layers of middlemen and expensive unnecessary features. Dr. Cherukuri concluded that it would be possible to develop a medical grade hearing aid without sacrificing the quality of components. The result is the MDHearingAid PRO®, starting well under \$200. **It has been declared to be the best low-cost hearing aid that amplifies the range of sounds associated with the human voice without overly amplifying background noise.**

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“I have been wearing hearing aids for over 25 years and these are the best behind-the-ear aids I have tried. Their sound quality rivals that of my \$3,000 custom pair of Phonak Xtra digital ITE.” —Gerald Levy

“I have a \$2,000 Resound Live hearing aid in my left ear and the MDHearingAid PRO® in the right ear. I am not able to notice a significant difference in sound quality between the two hearing aids.” —Dr. May, ENT Physician

“We ordered two hearing aids for my mother on Sunday, and the following Wednesday they were in our mailbox! Unbelievable! Now for the best part—they work so great, my mother says she hasn’t heard so good for many years, even with her \$2,000 digital! It was so great to see the joy on her face. She is 90 years young again.” —Al Peterson

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Cooling off the hottest place on earth

Doug reveals his best tips for keeping your cool

Based on the comments I have received from some of our readers, you have enjoyed the last few columns about energy origination and the ways that heat travels from one location to another.

I have included some of these same principles in my energy efficiency presentations, and they have also been well received. So, once again remember that all energy comes from the sun, heat always moves toward cold and moisture always moves toward dry. In the next few issues, we will discuss how these principles affect the comfort and utility bills of your house. More importantly, we will give you solutions.

Since July is usually pretty cotton-picking hot, I thought we would start with the hottest location in the house, which would be the attic. In my seminars, I often ask, "Where is the hottest place in America on a hot summer day?" Someone may answer, "Death Valley, California." Well that is a good answer, but many attics are hotter. I then ask them, "Where is the one location you would not want to put the AC cooling unit or ductwork?" It usually gets really quiet at this time. Someone finally answers, "In the attic." Well, let me ask you how you would like to sit in your attic on a hot summer day and try to make homemade ice cream? We would probably keel over before the ice cream was ready.

It is now obvious to you that the attic may not be a good place for the AC cooling system. It may also now be obvious to you that a substantial



part of your heating and cooling bill is related to the location of the heating and cooling system. So why is the AC unit and ductwork still located in the attic in many of the new houses being built? It is mostly because it is more convenient and no one has demanded change.

Studies have shown that ductwork located

in attics and ductwork leakage in the attics may be the single biggest waster of residential energy. It is absolutely unbelievable how much energy could be saved if folks sealed the ductwork and made the attic cooler.

Using our energy principles, how did the attic get so hot, and what are the solutions? Of course it all started at the sun's radiant heat. The heat rays left the sun, traveled through space and headed straight toward earth. Some of the rays were absorbed or reflected by the atmosphere and clouds. And some were absorbed into the earth, trees and water, etc. Many of the rays hit the roofs and gable ends of houses. The roofing can get super hot really fast. The hot roof becomes a heat radiator and heats the attic by radiation and convection. All adjacent materials such as insulation, ductwork and framing materials absorb the heat and get hotter and hotter until the rays of the sun are reduced in some way. Much of the heat is absorbed by the insulation, keeping it from reaching the cooler living space, which is good.

Possible solutions to make your attic cooler:

1. If the ductwork is in the attic, the

best answer, in most cases, is to spray the entire sloped roof decking and gables with foam, which encapsulates the entire attic space. By doing this, there is no longer an attic at all. It is now just an odd shaped room upstairs and the ductwork is now inside the conditioned space. In this case, the ductwork leakage does not matter as much because it is inside the house anyway.

2. If the ductwork is in the attic but costs prevent you from doing the No. 1 solution, you can do what many others have done in the past: make sure that the ductwork leaks are sealed and add insulation [my preference is cellulose] until you have a total insulation depth of about 13 inches. If possible, cover the ductwork with insulation.
3. Another solution, that you may do yourself, is to properly install a radiant barrier on the bottom or between the sloped roof rafters. This can lower the attic temperature by 20 to 30 degrees on a summer day. Installing or rolling out radiant barrier on top of your existing insulation is not a proper installation method. Doing so will render a negative effect.
4. If your ductwork is not in the attic, you may only need to add cellulose insulation.

Yep, at least one of these solutions will be the answer for you when it is so cotton-picking hot. Call me at the office if you have questions. ■

Doug Rye can be heard on several different Illinois radio stations. You can go to Doug Rye's Web site at www.dougrye.com, e-mail him at info@philliprye.com, or call 501-653-7931.





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This land is our land

Roots run deep for generations of Illinoisans

By Valerie Cheatham

“And on the eighth day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, “I need a caretaker.” So God made a farmer.

God said, “I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the field, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board.” So God made a farmer.

God said, “I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn colt and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, ‘Maybe next year,’ I need somebody who can shape an ax handle from an ash tree, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make a harness out of hay wire, feed sacks and shoe scraps. Who, during planting time and harvest season will finish his 40-hour week by Tuesday noon and then, paining from tractor back, put in another 72 hours.” So God made the farmer.

*—excerpt from Radio
Broadcaster Paul Harvey’s
address to the 1978
FFA convention*

Family farms have long been part of the fiber of Illinois. In fact, according to the Illinois Department of Agriculture, more than 600 farms are officially registered in Illinois as sesquicentennial farms and more than 9,200 have the centennial designation.

These farms can be found from the northern border to far south Dongola and all points in between. The official signs may be posted at the gates or just kept close to the heart but either way are a testimony to Illinois’ rich agricultural heritage.

Cooperative roots

In 1854 the Dittmar family came to the United States from Germany to avoid the mandatory three-year service in the German Army being imposed upon their sons by the new Prussian government. The majority of the Dittmars settled in an area in southeastern Jo Daviess County, which they named Massbach after their family village in the old country. Erhardt Dittmar originally tried to settle near Shullsburg, Wisc.; he didn’t like the rolling prairie there, and instead found unique acreage south of Schapville and north of Elizabeth.

Erhardt Dittmar bought the original 160 acres for 50 cents per acre from the Illinois Central railroad and passed it down to his son, Erhardt II. Third generation patriarch, Henry Dittmar, was a Jo Daviess Farm Bureau director and one of the original incorporating directors of Jo-Carroll Energy. His signature can be found on the cooperative’s original charter. He saw the need for electricity in the rural areas and was very forward-thinking as far as technology was concerned.

Henry’s son, Delmar, was also very involved in the community. He served on the local school board and was a big proponent of the cooperative. That support for Jo-Carroll Energy, and the community in general, carried through to the following generations.

On the original farm they raised hogs and both dairy and beef cattle along with the corn and alfalfa it took to feed them. Hogs were an



Grandmother Rita along with sons (l-r) Richard, Robert and Steven hold the new Sesquicentennial Farm signs presented to them by State Rep. Jim Sacia.

important part of the farm, both because the meat was easily smoked to preserve it and the lard was used for cooking and making soap. It was common to let hogs run loose in the pasture to allow them to forage for food.

Six generations and 159 years later, the farm now belongs to Delmar's sons Richard, Robert and Steven, along with Richard's son, Michael. Richard and Michael operate the farm and still raise a few cattle and plant corn and alfalfa for the livestock. They have also branched out into a few specialty crops – sweet corn, pumpkins and apples.

The farmhouse, built in 1906, still stands today, and 90-year-old grandmother, Rita, lives there. Michael Dittmar is working hard to make upgrades to the farm and foster his children's interest in it. "I want my kids to learn a good work ethic," says Michael. "The farm does that."

There is co-op history and legacy in the Dittmar family. Merri (Dittmar) Sevey is the vice president of human resources at Jo-Carroll Energy and says, "My grandfather Delmar firmly believed if it wasn't for the co-ops, they would have still been using kerosene lamps. The investor-owned utilities thought farmers would have a light in the barn and two in the house and that would be it. My Grandmother Rita said Grandpa would have been very proud that I'm employed by the co-op."

A southern view

In far southern Illinois sits the sesquicentennial farm of Randy Mead. In the family for six generations, it was originally purchased in 1841 by his 4th Great-Grandfather Peter Rymer. The original 80 acres was passed down through the generations, and an additional 140 acres was purchased along the way. The 220-acre farm sits in rural Dongola and is being used much the same way it was more than 150 years ago. Mead has the original land purchase documents signed by President Andrew Jackson.

Mead still raises cattle and cuts hay to feed the animals, just like his predecessors. His 102-year-old grandmother, Alva Dillow, tells the story of how electricity was coming to their area and she was saving her money to get hooked to it. When her husband wouldn't agree to get electricity on the farm she moved into town. That only lasted two days and then her husband moved into town also. He never did hook up electricity on the farm, and they never moved back out onto it.

Outside his dining room window, Mead can look onto the lush, green rolling hills that were once the original farm. He wants to be able to pass this land on to his family, just as those before him did.

Randy Mead of rural Dongola with his Sesquicentennial Farm sign.



All in the family

Brothers Walt and Charles Lewis of rural Blandinsville farm 100 acres of the land their Great, Great Grandfather John B. Eakle purchased in 1852. Originally military tracts, Eakle bought 400 acres from the Colgate family who had speculated on the land and decided to return to New York.

Walt and his wife, Gayla, have two sons, Ross and Philip, and live on 100 acres in the 1907 house built for Harvey Eackle. Charles lives nearby and the brothers farm corn and beans, and up until a year ago raised livestock as well. They say their grandfather believed "the only way to sell the grain was to walk it off the farm on the hoof." The farm was self-sufficient in that regard.

The farm was passed down to their grandmother and then their mother. The family was hit pretty hard during the Depression, and their parents had to scramble to pay a huge inheritance tax bill in 1967, but the land survived. It is officially a Centennial Farm as designated by the Illinois Department of Agriculture and would also qualify as a sesquicentennial farm.

The rural Friendship Cemetery sits on their land and most of the family is buried there. They take care of it so that it doesn't fall apart and disappear into the weeds, as often happens to family plots.

Charles has never been married and has no children. Walt is hopeful Philip, who is studying ag-business, will eventually come back to the farm. The brothers have also been purchasing adjoining land that was originally in the family as it becomes available. When asked why, Walt responds, "It's heritage. It's nice to have it back in the family."

To learn about certification requirements to register your family farm contact the IDOA at 217-782-6675 or centfarms@agr.state.il.us.

Brothers Charles (l) and Walt Lewis in front of the 1907 home where Walt and his family live.



Walt and wife Gayla with sons Philip and Ross.



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Cajun Shrimp (right)

2 sticks butter or margarine
2 oz. Worcestershire sauce
2 T. seasoned pepper
1 clove garlic
¼ tsp. rosemary
¼ tsp. Tabasco sauce
1 tsp. salt
½ bay leaf
Dash of thyme
2 lemons, thinly sliced
2 lbs. medium size shell-on, deveined, uncooked shrimp

Melt butter and add all ingredients except lemon and shrimp. Rinse and pat dry the shrimp. Place shrimp in 9x13" glass pan. Pour butter mixture over shrimp. Top with lemon slices. Bake at 400 degrees for 7-10 minutes. Flip shrimp and cook for another 5-10 minutes. Serve with French bread to dip in the butter sauce. Peel the shrimp as you eat.

Mixed Antipasto

1 large clove of garlic, minced
2 T. balsamic vinegar
2 T. red wine vinegar
½ tsp. rosemary
1 tsp. basil
1 tsp. oregano
¼ tsp. red pepper flakes
½ c. olive oil
2 large carrots, ¼-inch diagonally sliced
2 fennel bulbs, cut into ¼-inch slices
2 roasted and peeled red peppers
2 roasted and peeled yellow peppers
12 oz. jar pepperoncini, rinsed and drained
¾ lb. mixture of black and green olives
¼ lb. sun-dried tomato strips (oil packed)
¾ lb. small fresh mozzarella balls
½ lb. small pepperoni slices
2 – 7 oz. jars marinated artichoke hearts, drained
⅓ c. minced fresh parsley

Combine garlic, vinegars, rosemary, basil, oregano, pepper flakes and slowly whisk in oil. Set aside. Cook sliced carrots and sliced fennel for 3-4 minutes and then blanch in ice water to stop cooking process. Drain well and place in large bowl. Slice roasted peppers and place them and all remaining ingredients in bowl. Add dressing and mix well. Chill at least 4 hours or overnight. Serve at room temperature. May be served on individual plates or on a platter so that guests may serve themselves.

Burnt Sugar Ice Cream (below)

Caramelized sugar:

2 c. milk
1-1/2 c. sugar

Custard:

1 T. cornstarch

¼ tsp. salt

1-1/2 T. milk

3 large egg yolks

1 c. heavy cream

1 tsp. vanilla extract



For caramelized sugar put 2 c. milk in a small saucepan and bring to a simmer over low heat. Cover and keep warm while caramelizing the sugar. Place the sugar in a large, heavy saucepan with high sides over medium heat. Stir with a whisk or wooden spoon until the sugar dissolves. Continue to cook without stirring until the sugar turns golden brown. Immediately remove the pot from the heat. Very carefully and slowly add the warmed milk, stirring constantly. Only add a little at a time to control the fizz. The mixture will rise, foam and splatter. The sugar may also harden into a lump on the bottom of the pan. Return the pan to medium heat and stir until the caramel has dissolved into the milk. Keep warm over low heat. For custard, mix together cornstarch, salt and milk. Stir until smooth, then beat into the egg yolks in a medium bowl. Slowly beat the hot milk and sugar into the egg yolk mixture. Pour the entire mixture back into the pan and place over medium heat. Stir constantly with a whisk until custard thickens slightly. Be careful not to let the mixture boil or the eggs will scramble. Remove from the heat and pour the hot burnt sugar custard through a strainer into a large, clean bowl. Allow the custard to cool slightly, then stir in cream and vanilla. Cover and refrigerate until cold or overnight. Stir the chilled custard, then freeze in your ice cream machine. This makes 1 quart, so plan accordingly if you want more. When finished, the ice cream will be soft but ready to eat. For firmer ice cream, transfer to a freezer-safe container and freeze at least 2 hours.



Favorite Recipes

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● Tomato Basil Tart

Tomato Basil Tart (above)

1 unbaked pie shell
 1/2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
 5-6 Roma tomatoes
 1 c. loosely packed fresh basil leaves
 4 cloves garlic, minced
 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese
 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese
 1/2 tsp. ground white pepper

Preheat oven to 425 degrees and pre-bake pie shell for 7-9 minutes. Remove crust from oven and sprinkle with 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese. Cool. Cut tomatoes into thin slices and let them drain on paper towels. Pat tops dry and then put tomatoes on pie crust to cover. Coarsely chop basil and mix remaining ingredients together and spread over tomatoes. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-40 minutes or until top is brown and bubbly.

Citrus Basil Grilled Chicken Salad

4 c. diced, grilled chicken breast
 1/2 c. minced celery
 2 T. chopped fresh basil leaves
 1/4 c. slivered almonds or chopped pecans
 1/2 c. sour cream
 1/2 c. mayonnaise
 1 tsp. fresh lemon juice
 1 tsp. fresh orange juice
 1/2 tsp. salt
 1/4 tsp. ground black pepper

In a medium bowl, combine chicken, celery, basil and nuts. In a small bowl mix together sour cream, mayonnaise, lemon and orange juices, salt and pepper. Add to the chicken mixture, tossing gently to coat. Cover and chill for 30 minutes before serving.

Uncle Don's Steak Marinade

1/2 c. olive oil
 1/2 c. Dijon mustard
 3 T. balsamic vinegar
 1/2 T. coarsely crushed peppercorns
 2 T. soy sauce
 6 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
 2 T. minced fresh rosemary
 4 filets, well-trimmed 8-10 oz. each

Combine all of the above marinade ingredients in a bowl and whisk until blended. Place the filets in a glass dish or plastic bag. Thoroughly cover the filets with the marinade, cover tightly and refrigerate overnight. Return to room temperature to cook. Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Heat a cast-iron fry pan to hot and sear filets well on both sides. Pour remaining marinade over steaks and place fry pan in oven. Check "doneness" after 8 minutes and decide. Serve on warm plates.

Angela Seel's Pineapple Rhubarb Pie (right)

3 c. rhubarb, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
 1-1/4 c. granulated sugar
 2 T. butter (cut into small bits)
 1 - 8-3/4 oz. can undrained crushed pineapple
 1/3 c. all purpose flour
 Dash of salt
 1 single unbaked refrigerated pie crust

Mix the rhubarb and the canned crushed pineapple. Combine the sugar, flour and a dash of salt and toss with the fruit mixture. Pour into the pastry lined pie plate. Dot the top with butter. Bake at 400 degrees for 40 minutes.

● Angela Seel's Pineapple Rhubarb Pie



Photos by Valerie Cheatham

Computer Shopping 103

In this computer shopping series so far, you have learned about the different kinds of processors and hard drives. Certainly, those two pieces are extremely important when purchasing a computer, but there are other parts to consider as well.

Before I get started though, let's take a moment to talk about an important word: integration. Unless you have it built for you, then most likely you're going to find your computer has mostly integrated parts. That means the majority of the parts inside are actually just components permanently attached to the motherboard.

Integration isn't necessarily a bad thing. It usually means the computer is going to be less expensive. However, it also means you may have limited video, sound or network capability. What you have to ask yourself is, "Am I using this computer for games, or just for surfing the internet and checking e-mail?" For most people, a computer with integrated parts is just fine. If you want something with a little more power, you should look at having a computer built for you, avoiding integrated components. Keep in mind though, that type of computer can get a little pricey.

Ok, let's take a look at the common parts inside a computer.

Motherboard

The motherboard is a large circuit board inside the computer that houses all the rest of the components, whether they are integrated or not. Basically, this is the piece that makes all the other pieces work together. A good motherboard will have multiple expansion ports on it. That means, you will have room to add devices should you desire to perform upgrades. Keep in mind though, no matter how many slots your motherboard has, there will be times when it makes more financial sense to purchase a new computer rather than upgrade your old one.



RAM (random access memory)

RAM chips are another type of memory. Many people get confused when told that RAM is memory. After all, you learned last month that your hard drive is memory, right? Well, a computer actually needs two different kinds of memory to work. Your hard drive is where all of your data is stored, but even with the new solid-state hard drives, this type of memory is slow. On the other hand, RAM is very fast. When you open a program, it is loaded from the hard drive onto the RAM. Then it runs from there while you have it open. RAM is temporary however, which is why you have to save your data to the hard drive in order to keep a copy of it. RAM is usually also the least expensive and most effective way to upgrade your computer.

Video Card

For the most part, today's computers come with integrated video cards. And, most of them don't have their own dedicated video memory. The video card serves to take some of the load off of the CPU, which you learned about two months ago. One of the reasons that gamers want to have a non-integrated video card is because integrated video cards actually share the memory used by the entire system. There are other benefits, but just keep in mind that a computer with a stand-alone video card will perform much better than one that has an

integrated one. As a compromise, you can purchase a computer with an integrated video card, but that also has an expansion slot on the motherboard for adding a stand-alone one in the future. That way, you can upgrade the computer as needed.

Sound Card

Once again, most modern computers have integrated sound cards. That's not necessarily a bad thing, unless you plan to engage in professional audio development, like multi-channel audio recording, most integrated sound cards will perform just fine. In fact, some of the newer ones even have some multi-channel capabilities onboard. Of course, if you want to record something like old cassettes to a modern DVD, you may have to spend a little extra on the sound card.

There are other pieces to consider, but these should at least give you a working knowledge. Thank you for sticking with it through these last three columns regarding computer purchasing. Hopefully, those who are in the process of looking for a new computer right now have benefitted from these articles. At the very least, you should be able to offer someone advice on what to do when looking. ■

Reply Online

Have a technology issue and want some advice? Visit www.icl.coop and click on Powered Up to respond. Your response might even be included in a future column.

Ed VanHoose is the Digital Communications Administrator/IT Manager for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield.



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- Pound of round steak was 90 cents
- Kodak Brownie Flash Six-20 Camera was \$13

What's new?

- First color television sets appear
- Transistor radio on the market
- Polio vaccine was developed
- Corvette, the all American sports car goes on sale
- Ian Fleming publishes his first James Bond novel

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Watching wind grow in rural Illinois

Wind energy development in the United States is rushing past recent growth records. In 2011, 6,819 megawatts of generating capacity were installed; in 2012, that figure jumped to more than 13,000 MW, according to the American Wind Energy Association. In total, the U.S. boasts more than 60,000 MW of wind power capacity.

Since 1 MW powers 750 to 1,000 average homes, more than 45 million American homes could be powered by wind. We say “could be” because wind doesn’t blow constantly. We can’t rely completely on this growing power source, but it’s a great tool to have as part of a balanced generation fuel mix.

The industry boomed thanks to federal subsidies for construction of wind farms, sharp drops in production costs, and rural economic development projects.

Wind power is often a natural fit for electric cooperatives. Co-op service territories tend to encompass rural areas supporting wind energy development. Fifty electric co-ops either own wind turbines or buy output from wind farms, amounting to 4.3 GW, or about 9 percent of the U.S. wind generating capacity. Of course, states in the Upper Midwest and Great Plains yield more opportunity for wind power than most others.

In Illinois one co-op led the way installing one of the first utility-owned wind turbines. In fact, for its leadership and innovative wind project, Illinois Rural Electric Cooperative, Winchester, won one of the first U.S. Department of Energy Wind Cooperative of the Year Awards in 2005. The 1.65 MW turbine has been a great education tool for the co-op community and now the co-op is cooperating with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to study the impact of the wind turbine on the area’s bat population.

Two other Illinois co-ops, Adams Electric Cooperative, Camp Point, and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, have also installed utility grade wind turbines and connected them directly to their distribution grid that feeds the wind energy to their co-op members.

Unfortunately, the primary federal subsidy for wind power project development—federal production tax credits—is available only to for-profit electric utilities. That means not-for-profit electric cooperatives can’t



Wind energy continues to grow in rural Illinois and the electric cooperatives of Illinois continue to find innovative ways to participate in that growth.

take advantage of the subsidies. Co-ops initially had two workarounds. Clean Renewable Energy Bonds helped co-ops add wind capacity until they expired at the end of 2010. Co-ops also formed taxable entities eligible to receive payments covering 30 percent of a project’s capital costs through the U.S. Department of Treasury Section 1603 tax grant program, but that expired at the end of 2011.

Now, to get the best deals, electric co-ops must sign agreements to buy electricity from private-sector wind projects or arrange long-term leasing agreements with a developer that qualifies for the federal incentives, rather than developing wind projects on their own.

For example, three generation and transmission cooperatives serving Illinois co-op members purchased 40 MW of wind energy from the Pioneer Trail Wind Farm east of Paxton, Ill. The three member-owned G&Ts, Prairie Power, Inc., Southern Illinois Power Cooperative and Wabash Valley Power Association entered into an 18-year power purchase agreement with E.On Climate & Renewable North America, Inc. The agreement was coordinated through the National Renewables Cooperative Organization, which was formed to promote and facilitate the development of economically viable renewable energy resources for its member cooperatives across the United States.

“Electric cooperatives are no strangers to innovation,” says Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. “As technology advances, they will work hard to add renewable resources to their energy portfolio. Illinois co-ops are taking a conservative, diversified and long-term approach to the energy portfolio supplying the co-op members at the end of the line.”

2-3 Cobden Peach Festival,

Main Street, Cobden. Sponsored by the Cobden Lions Club, features carnival rides and games, Peach Queen Contest, homemade food and peach cobbler, 5K run/walk and parade. Free admission. 618-893-2425.

4 Vintage, Vine and Wines

Festival, Mackinaw Valley Vineyard, 33633 State Rt. 9, Mackinaw. The Prairie Traveling Vintage Show members will sell vintage chic furnishings and all sorts of “shabby chic” to “rustic vintage” items they have re-purposed with a fresh flair. More than 20 exhibitors will showcase their wares. Live music. \$5 per person charge, kids 12 and under are free. 309-359-WINE or www.mackinawvalleyvineyard.com.

7 Downs Village Market,

Southwest edge of Downs just off I-74. Every Wednesday through September 25th. Find locally grown and select regional produce, baked goods and honey, plants and flowers, quality crafts and handmade items. Master Gardeners are available to answer gardening questions. For info call Carol at 309-378-4223, Ruth at 309-378-4294 or email marketmaster610@gmail.com.

8-10 The Great River Tug Fest,

Riverfront, Port Byron. This is the only tug-of-war across the mighty Mississippi River. On Saturday from 1-3 p.m. river traffic yields the right of way to a 2,400 foot, 680 lb. rope that stretches between LeClaire, Iowa and Port Byron. Teams compete to take home the Alabaster Eagle trophy for that year. The family weekend event includes carnival rides, live entertainment, parade, scenic 5K run/walk, food, arts and crafts and fireworks. Admission charged. 309-523-2500.

8-11 Welcome Home Vietnam

Veteran's, City Park, Geneseo. Hosted by the Don Cherry VFW Post and Auxiliary 5083 the main feature will be the AVTT's Traveling Wall, an 80% replica of the Vietnam Wall. Opening ceremonies will be held on the 8th at 6:30 p.m. followed by an ice cream social and music. Saturday is a Welcome Home parade at 2 p.m. at the high school, traveling through downtown Geneseo and ending at the park. All Vietnam Veterans are invited to walk or ride in the parade. Dinner will be served in the park and all Vietnam Veterans will receive a free dinner. All events are free with the exception of food. 309-714-1551.

10 Raccoon F.U.N. Program,

Crab Orchard Visitor Center, 8588 Route 148, Marion. Come out to the Visitor Center to learn all about these cool nocturnal creatures. 10:30-11 a.m. Free Again Wildlife Rehab will be presenting a live raccoon. 11 a.m.-12 p.m., fun raccoon activities. 618-997-3344 or www.craborchard@fws.gov.

17 Cruise to Mt. Carroll,

Downtown Mt. Carroll. 7th annual cruise features brick streets and country charm with music, food and fun. 4-9 p.m. For more info contact Len Anderson 815-244-7875.

23-25 Lincoln Art & Balloon Fest,

1351 Airport Road, Lincoln. Town-wide activities include hot air balloon launches and glows, tethered balloon rides, giant kite demonstrations, pro wrestling, carnival, live entertainment, Heritage in Flight Museum, bocce ball and bags tournaments, The Art of Wine, KCBS BBQ Contest, food, a beer garden, fine art fair and much more. 217-735-2385 or www.lincolnilinois.com.

24 Atkinson Heritage Day,

Downtown Atkinson. The day kicks off with a 5K run and includes flea and craft markets, car and tractor shows, bingo, children's games, food vendors, street dance, cook-off contest and a wildly popular Women's Club pie auction. Includes Rolle Bolle matches and the opportunity to buy and sample “Hutespot,” a classic Belgian dish. Call the Atkinson Village Office at 309-936-7658.

27-29 2013 Farm Progress Show,

Richland Community College, Decatur. The nation's largest outdoor farm show includes demonstrations and exhibits. The exhibit field is open to visitors from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tues. and Weds., 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Thurs. Admission is \$15 for adults, \$8 ages 13-17, ages 12 and under are free. Country music artist Chris Cagle will perform a concert on Weds. following the second day of the show. Separate tickets are required. Advance tickets are \$18, tickets at the gate are \$25. www.FarmProgressShow.com.

31 Pepper Fest, 827 Vines Rd.,

Cobden. Celebrate the pepper harvest, a favorite gathering for all chile heads and hot pepper fans. From 11 a.m.-5 p.m., walk the pepper field and see many varieties of hot peppers in bloom, meet the vendors and see who makes the best hot/spicy food, visit the Pepper Farm Store and select your favorite salsa, jellies, spices and pepper products. Relax and visit with friends, enjoy great local music and soak in great southern Illinois pepper heat. 618-893-1443.

31-2 26th Annual Casey Popcorn

Festival, Fairview Park, Casey. Casey's signature festival with free popcorn, vendors, carnival and family entertainment. 217-232-2676 or www.popcornfestival.net.



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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: July 15 for October events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. E-mail to: datebook@aiec.coop.

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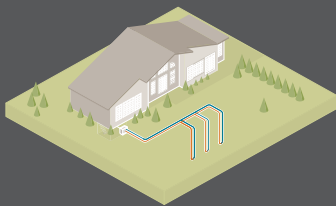
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