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Illinois Country Living

August 2013 • icl.coop

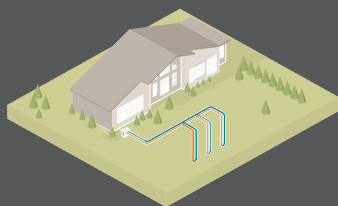


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The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and 24 Illinois electric cooperatives are members of Touchstone Energy, a national alliance of 740 electric cooperatives. Touchstone Energy cooperative employees adhere to four core values — integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.



10 ILLINOIS FALL FESTIVALS

Local festivals build community as they celebrate with the sights, sounds and smells of an approaching autumn.



Volume 71, No. 4, August 2013

4 COMMENTARY

Co-op director says he is blessed to serve and be served by cooperatives.

6 CURRENTS

Electric cooperatives are concerned that EPA regulation could increase electric rates 41 percent.

14 SAFETY & HEALTH

Find out how to tell if your home's wiring is out of date and a safety hazard.

16 YARD & GARDEN

How to take care of your garden, and your gardener, in August.

18 ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Plugging a common energy hole.

20 HOOKED ON HOGGIN' FISH

You don't need to buy any gear to go fishing. But this fishing is not for the weak of heart.

22 FINEST COOKING

24 POWERED UP

Checkout the tips on buying a "fresh" laptop computer.

25 MARKETPLACE

27 WORKING TOGETHER FOR ILLINOIS

Three new U.S. Representatives from Illinois discuss what they want to accomplish.

30 DATEBOOK

Counting your blessings

Blessed to serve and be served by co-ops

I consider myself very blessed to have been born and raised on a family farm in south-central Illinois. My parents made sure my upbringing emphasized hard work, the value of a dollar, community involvement and faith in God. In all honesty, there were many times as a boy and young man when I wished for an “easier” upbringing, but looking back on it, I wouldn’t change a thing.

Cooperatives were an integral part of my early life. It’s amazing to note the essential roles that cooperatives filled for us. The list was long. We sold milk to a dairy cooperative, secured our herd genetics through a cooperative, purchased the vast majority of our farming inputs from a cooperative, received our telephone service through a cooperative and depended on a cooperative for our electric power. No doubt about it, my family’s life would have been much poorer without cooperatives.

In the early 1980’s a new relationship with cooperatives unfolded for me. After college and returning to the farm, I was recruited to fill a vacancy on the Washington County Farm Bureau board. Little did I know that this simple entry into a director’s role would begin one of the great experiences of my life. The Farm Bureau experience led to 13 years of service on the Washington County Farm Service (FS) board, which led to a 22-year (and counting) experience on the Egyptian Telephone Cooperative board, which led to being asked to run for a position on the Tri-County Electric Cooperative board in 1998.

The Tri-County Electric board position has opened multiple opportunities for further service. I was selected to represent Tri-County Electric on our generation and transmission cooperative’s board as

In all honesty, the doors that have opened for me and the opportunities I’ve been given to serve are breath-taking. This farm boy from south-central Illinois has truly been granted a unique experience.

well as the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) statewide board. Both of these have been rewarding experiences. In 2006, I was elected to be Illinois’ representative on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) board and, this past February, I was elected an officer of that board. In all honesty, the doors that have opened for me and the opportunities I’ve been given to serve are breath-taking. This farm boy from south-central Illinois has truly been granted a unique experience.

What do I appreciate most about cooperatives? First, I appreciate the not-for-profit business model utilized by cooperatives that puts members and their needs first and margins (profits) second. It is a model with a dramatically different approach and emphasis than the one utilized in the for-profit sector of our economy. I believe the cooperative model has served rural America well in the past, and I believe it is still the best model as we look to the future.

Secondly, I also appreciate the talents of the managers and CEOs with whom I’ve worked in the cooperative world; men like Tim Reeves,

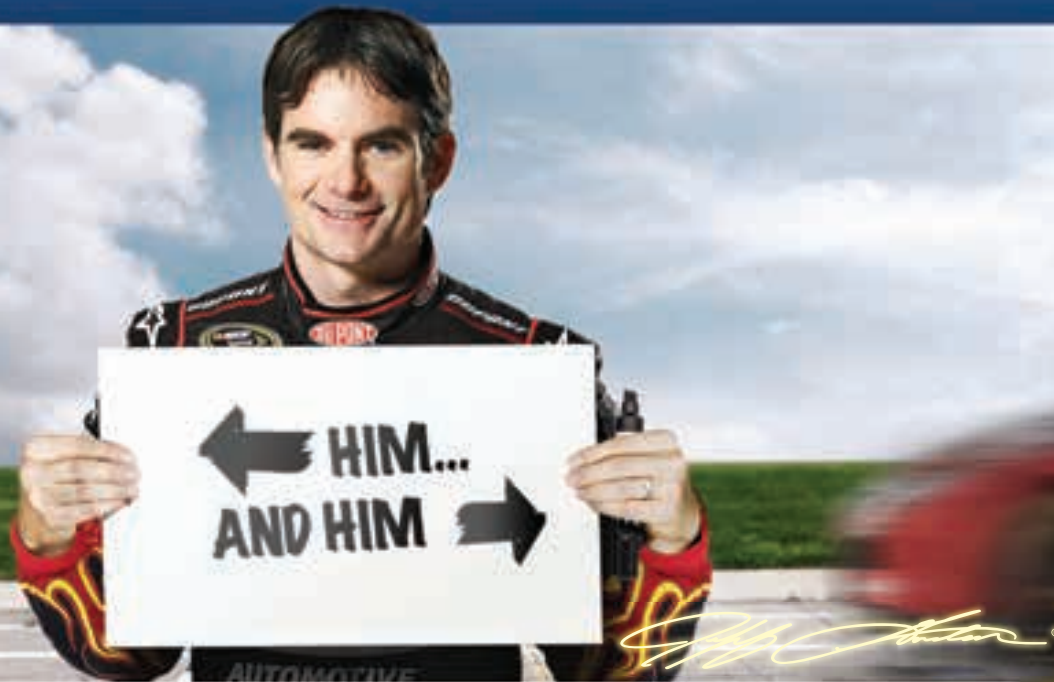
President of Southern Illinois Power our G&T; Kevin Jacobsen, CEO of Egyptian Telephone; and Duane Noland, CEO of the AIEC; and women like Marcia Scott, General Manager of Tri-County Electric, and Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of the NRECA. These are examples of people I deeply respect for their knowledge of the industry they serve, their ability to provide leadership in challenging times and their integrity.

Finally, I appreciate the skilled and diverse group of directors with whom I’ve worked over the years. These are men and women who’ve been successful in their own businesses, jobs and lives, and who’ve come together in a boardroom to chart a course forward on behalf of their fellow member-owners. I’ve noted that the best directors are not experts on all things co-op, but instead are people filled with common sense. I’ve also found that the best directors have the ability to identify and stand for core principles, but can also find common ground with others. Common ground is the place from which the board and the entire cooperative can begin to fashion a common vision and a way forward for the days ahead.

Yes, I consider myself blessed to live in rural America, to be served by cooperatives, and to have the opportunity to serve others through those cooperatives. ■

Phil Carson is the first Illinois electric cooperative representative to serve as an officer on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board of directors.





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Concealed carry gun legislation passes

In July the Illinois General Assembly voted to override Governor Quinn's veto of HB 183, concealed carry legislation originally passed on May 31. The state was under court order to come up with a law governing this matter no later than July 9.

The vote to override was 77-31 in the House and 41-17 in the Senate.

Under the provisions of HB 183, residents and non-residents who meet specified qualifications will be able to apply for a license to carry a concealed firearm in Illinois.

The license is valid for five years and the license fee is \$150 for a resident, and \$300 for a non-resident. The law requires new license applicants to

complete a 16-hour training course, with a three-hour course for license renewals. Licensees will be prohibited from carrying a concealed handgun into certain specified locations. The legislation gave the state police 60 days to license firearm instructors and training courses, which the agency will place on its website, www.isp.state.il.us. ■

Co-ops concerned by Obama's plan for cutting carbon

In June President Obama announced a broad new federal mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electric power plants. The President will instruct federal regulators to apply the Clean Air Act to carbon dioxide issued from power plants. Mark Irwin, Director of the Center for Clean Coal Technology Research, Purdue University, says the President's plan has the potential to increase rates by 41 percent over the next eight years. Rural and low-income Americans already spend disproportionately more on energy than others. For example, households with incomes between \$10,000 and \$30,000 already spend 24 percent of their income on energy consumption according to America's Power.

"Electric cooperatives oppose President Obama's proposal to use the Clean Air Act to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from power plants," said Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). "America's rural communities depend on coal-fired generation for affordable electric power and would be disproportionately penalized. The President's proposal could be, in effect, a regressive new climate tax on America's most economically vulnerable citizens."

Electric co-ops are already working to diversify energy portfolios with renewable energy sources like the Prairie Trail Wind Farm. Energy diversification and innovations can lead to lower costs. Co-ops are also at the forefront of energy efficiency initiatives, actively installing smart grid technology and adding the latest in efficient generation resources when needed to ensure long-term rate stability.



Electric co-op leaders agree with parts of the President's climate change plan announced in June, such as modernizing the electric grid and increasing the use of renewable energy from systems like this solar system owned by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. But they disagree with the carbon standard mandates that could raise rates an estimated 41 percent over the next eight years.

"Not-for-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives are about keeping electric bills affordable and stable, and finding ways to improve our members' quality of life," said Duane Noland, President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "The electric co-ops of Illinois agree with some of the major points in the President's plan that address energy efficiency improvements, modernizing our electric grid, setting higher goals for renewable energy and investing in development of new energy solutions. These proposals could help reduce energy costs. We respectfully, but strongly, disagree with the portions of his plan that will raise our members' rates. We look forward to working with our nation's leaders to make sure that keeping electric rates affordable for consumers is a high priority as we work to improve our nation's energy policy." ■



ComEd smart grid effort ramping up

ComEd laid out the general schedule for installation of smart meters throughout the city of Chicago recently. The city's south side will start to receive the new meters in 2014 and will have the network fully in place by 2016. The north side will begin to receive the meters next and, by 2018, the city's 1.3 million homes or businesses will be able to take advantage of the smart meter technology 97 percent of Illinois electric cooperative members already have.

Smart meters lay the foundation for the evolving smart grid that will improve reliability and efficiency. They can provide more information on energy use to consumers, and utility managers and engineers. They can help facilitate new rate and payment options, and improve energy efficiency efforts. Plus smart meters can help speed service restoration during outages and help identify power quality problems. ■

National Guard birthday questioned

Several readers questioned last month's article on the Illinois National Guard celebrating its 290th birthday. In honoring the service and history of our National Guard we missed the obvious question. How could the Illinois National Guard be 290 years old when the country isn't even that old? Here is the answer.

The birth date of the Illinois National Guard - May 9, 1723 - was determined last year after months of research by Illinois National Guard Command Historian Adriana Schroeder of Springfield. The diary of a French territorial captain, Diron Dartaguiette, was the primary source for the date. In the diary, Dartaguiette said he called together the village of Kaskaskia because he was



ordered to form a company of military to defend themselves. The date the armed villagers first gathered and drilled was May 9, 1723.

"When I found the diary entry, I knew I struck gold," Schroeder said. "It was the gem I had been waiting for."

"Our first muster gives us a reference point to truly understand the rich history of this organization, which we can share with our communities and our families," Brig. Gen. Daniel Krumrei, Adjutant General of the Illinois National Guard said.

In addition to serving in every major United States conflict, the Illinois National Guard has conducted peacekeeping missions around the globe, including in Egypt and the Ukraine. ■

New efficiency standards for residential water heaters coming

Starting in April 2015, new U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) water heater energy efficiency standards will be in effect. Residential water heaters affected include gas-fired, oil-fired, electric, tabletop, instantaneous gas-fired and instantaneous electric.

The standards released in 2010 increase the stringency of the existing minimum conservation standards for residential water heaters, which account for about 18 percent of energy use in homes across the country. The standards should reduce energy consumption 47 percent in large electric storage water heaters and by more than 30 percent in large gas water heaters, according to the DOE. In most cases, more insulation will be added. For heaters larger than 55 gallons, gas condensing technology will have to be added, and heat pump technology will replace simple resistance heating elements in electric water heaters.

So the same size tank will need a larger area for installation. The contractor will need to make the new water heater fit in the same space as the old water heater and it's going to be a challenge for both the contractor and consumer. Consumers should also prepare for higher initial prices, that should be recouped over time by energy savings. ■

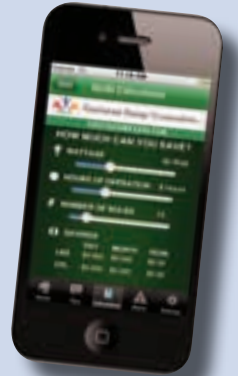


Landline phones out, smart phones in

Landline phone use among co-op members fell again last year, according to Touchstone Energy's® 2012 National Survey on the Cooperative Difference. More than half of members ages 45 to 54 have smartphones. And even among those 65 and older, smartphone ownership more than doubled last year, to 15 percent.

Researchers asked about interest in co-op apps, focusing on eight interest areas that are available already at some co-ops. More than 80 percent said they'd be interested in an app that lets them report outages and receive updates on restoration efforts. Better than 70 percent expressed interest in getting updates on their home's electric use, as well as local weather alerts. ■

Source: Electric Cooperative Today, Michael Kahn



Students return from cooperative sponsored trip to Washington DC

Sixty-five Illinois students recently returned from the 49th annual "Youth to Washington" Tour, held June 14-21. This event, sponsored by the electric and telephone cooperatives of Illinois since the late 1950s, is an introduction to our democratic form of government and cooperatives for rural youth.

The students met with their Congressional representatives and joined more than 1,520 young leaders from across the country. In addition to the Capitol, they also visited Arlington National Cemetery, the Washington National Cathedral, several Smithsonian Museums, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, the World War II Memorial, memorials to Presidents Lincoln, Jefferson, Washington and Roosevelt, the National Archives, the Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, the Newseum

and a number of other historical sites. On the way to Washington, D.C. the students stopped at Gettysburg National Park, which this year is celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg, often described as the turning point in the Civil War.

During the trip, Sarah Locke, from Shelby Electric Cooperative, was chosen by her peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The YLC is a year-long appointment and Locke will represent all Illinois cooperatives at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

To view all the photos from the 2013 Youth to Washington Tour go to <http://tinyurl.com/knchwcw>

Future leaders representing electric and telephone co-ops from across Illinois met with Senator Dick Durbin on June 20 as part of the 2013 Youth to Washington Tour. They were also honored to meet with Representatives John Shimkus, Rodney Davis, Aaron Schock, Adam Kinzinger, William Enyart and Cheri Bustos.





This year, while you're at a festival, parade or family gathering celebrating the Labor Day holiday, take a moment to remember those brave souls who fought for our right to a safer work environment, more comfortable working conditions and better pay and benefits.

Happy Labor Day, and thank you from the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives.



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Where there's smoke..... There just might be a festival!

By Valerie Cheatham

The smell of BBQ smoke and popcorn can make a mouth water. Brightly colored hot air balloons take form as they inflate and float up into the awakening dawn. The sounds of music and people. All of these are just a few of the sights, sounds and smells you can find at local festivals.

Festivals are more than just a feel-good experience that brings communities together; they can have a positive

economic impact on the community itself. Community members and hobbyists, along with large numbers of weekend travelers, look for unique ways to usher out the dog days of summer and welcome fall. Local festivals build community as hundreds of volunteers come together to plan and execute the festivities. Communities celebrate local heritage, history, agriculture, sites and interests. And,

multiple day festivals can have a very real economic impact on the area as thousands of attendees spend dollars on overnight accommodations, restaurants and shopping.

So, if you are interested in taking a road trip, consider just a few of these festivals or do a little research yourself. Who knows what you may discover along the highways and byways of Illinois

Galena Country Fair

Held at Grant Park in Galena, Galena Country Fair is the largest event that takes place in the area. It is held annually over the Columbus Day weekend and is a juried show with more than 150 artisans and craftspeople from across the country exhibiting and selling their work. This is the 34th year for the event which will be held October 12-13.

The event is operated through Jo Daviess County Country Fair Charities, Inc. which distributes the \$2 donations collected from each attendee back to local non-profits through a grant program. The funds support its communities' emergency services and preparedness, programs for youth and improving the well-being of its citizens. In 2011 alone, grants and donations from the fair accounted for more than \$70,000 being donated to non-profit organizations.

Besides the array of artisans, there is plenty for everyone. Live entertainment, fair food, children's games, a farmer's market, country bake shop

and family fun are just some of the activities offered. Visitors can also take advantage of the Ulysses S. Grant historic sites and the downtown district is full of interesting shops and eateries.

Festivals and multiple-day events have an enormous impact on Galena and Jo Daviess County and visitors appreciate the diversity of events offered. Galena Country Fair, alone, brings more than 10,000 people each year to the historic city and contributes greatly to the local economy. Direct economic impact is estimated at more than \$1 million annually and, indirectly, the total is more than \$3 million. There are very

few weekends where some type of event isn't taking place, whether it is sponsored by a local non-profit group or a business such as a vineyard or golf course.

For information on fairs/festivals in Galena and Jo Daviess County go to www.galena.org.



Morton Pumpkin Festival



The first Morton Pumpkin Festival, annually organized by the Morton Chamber of Commerce, was held in 1967 as a fund raiser and celebration of the beginning of pumpkin harvest and canning season at the local Libby's Pumpkin Plant. In 2012, Libby's Pumpkin became the official sponsor of the festival.

Today, the festival includes more than 30 events and venues hosted and organized by more than 2,000 volunteers and welcomes an estimated 70,000 visitors. There are activities for all ages including a large carnival, homemade pumpkin foods, a pumpkin weigh-off, a Libby's Recipe Challenge and Pumpkin Princess Pageant. The most popular events are the Libby's Pumpkin Classic Run and Walk, Pumpkin Festival Parade and Pumpkin Pancake Breakfast.

This year's festival is slated for Sept. 11-14 with the theme "Pumpkin Carnivale." In celebration of that, specialty food items will include pumpkin jambalaya and pumpkin king cakes.

A band from New Orleans, the Free Agents Brass Band, will be playing Friday evening and in the Saturday morning parade.

Funds raised help to support the general operations of the Morton Chamber of Commerce, which also donates thousands of dollars each year to other local non-profit organizations that assist in the operations of the festival. Funds have also been used to help support new organizations and major community construction projects.

Many of the local retailers and restaurants have some of their highest sales days during the festival and hotels are full. It has also been a catalyst for creation of other events that weekend such as a high school band competition, soccer tournament and reunions that people attend and stay to enjoy the festival activities as well.

Find out more at www.mortonpumpkinfestival.org.

Clinton Apple N' Pork Festival

The aroma of smoked ham and apple butter permeates the air and draws more than 110,000 visitors annually to the Clinton Apple N' Pork Festival. Sponsored by the DeWitt County Museum Association, the event is held on the grounds of the historic C.H. Moore Homestead and spills over onto area streets.

From a small event, begun in 1968, centered around a kettle of soup and some ham sandwiches, it is one of the state's favorites. "Original food stands were sandwiches and ham and beans," according to Larry Buss, resident manager of the historic site. "And, to this day, they are still the most popular, selling more than 6,000 servings. That's a lot of ham and beans!"

You can enjoy more than 30 food booths offering everything from apple cider and apple fritters to corn on the cob, grilled bratwurst, butterfly pork sandwiches, the ever popular ham and beans and everything in between. And, all food vendors are from non-profit organizations.

Old-time 19th century crafting can be observed and purchased, and more than 300 dealers can be found in the flea market. Free entertainment includes a Civil War band, strolling musicians, along with kid's pony rides and face-painting. Admission is free and there is tram and bus transportation available for a small fee.

Proceeds from the festival have provided the funds necessary to restore

and maintain the 1867 Victorian-era house and barn and to erect a farm museum. It is estimated the festival annually generates an additional \$2-4 million – a real boost to the local economy.

When asked why the festival is so popular, Buss remarked, "It's the food! If the food went away, the festival wouldn't be successful."

This year's festival will be the weekend of Sept. 28-29. For more information go to <http://www.chmoorehomestead.org/apple-pork.htm>.



Lincoln Art & Balloon Festival

If you've ever been driving up Interstate 55 around Lincoln, Ill. during late August you may have seen hot air balloons floating above. Those balloons, and many more, were likely part of the Lincoln Art & Balloon Festival, hosted annually by the Lincoln/Logan County Chamber of Commerce. The festival is held the last full weekend of August and draws more than 15,000 to the area.

The festival envelopes both downtown Lincoln and the Logan County Airport. A juried fine art fair, wine tasting tent, craft fair and flea market, along with the Kansas City Barbeque Society sanctioned BBQ cook-off and plenty of food and drink can be found in the historic downtown area and parks.

Out at the Logan County Airport are plenty of family activities, live entertainment, morning and evening balloon ascensions and evening glows. You'll also find tethered balloon rides, along with, of course, more food. Shuttles are available to take attendees to and from each location.

The event is the chamber's largest fundraiser and very important economically to the community. It takes more than 600 dedicated volunteers and in excess of \$52,000 to make the event successful and stimulates the economy by driving traffic to local restaurants, shops and hotels.

To get a full agenda of activities go to www.lincolnellinois.com under the Events tab and click on art & balloon festival.



According to the Illinois Office of Tourism, travel spending in 2009 in Illinois generated nearly \$5.1 billion for federal, state and local governments. The additional taxes save an average Illinois household more than \$1,000 in taxes annually. The average traveler spends \$106 per day, which can translate into some big numbers for local communities hosting events.

Lake Shelbyville Scarecrow Daze and Touchstone Energy Balloon Fest



The streets of downtown Shelbyville, Ill. come alive with a festive flair and the skies around Lake Shelbyville are filled with vibrant fall colors of hot air balloons aloft as the annual Scarecrow Daze and Touchstone Energy Balloon Fest takes place each Columbus Day weekend.

Pilots from around the Midwest take to the skies on Friday night, and Saturday and Sunday mornings. The

balloons also light up the night on Saturday with a balloon glow. Shelbyville, with a population of just under 5,000 welcomes almost 4,000 visitors to the 3-day event that includes plenty of food, music, arts and crafts, kid's games, sidewalk sales and a quilt show. For the first time, in 2010, the event was held in conjunction with the Touchstone Energy Balloon Fest. This was a winning combination for the community which saw an 11 percent increase in sales tax numbers. Area businesses say the event is the catalyst for their best weekends each year.

Area non-profit groups also benefit from the festival by setting up a variety of food booths to raise money for everything from cancer awareness campaigns to rescue squad equipment. To get a schedule of this year's events go to www.lakeshelbyville.com/events/daze.htm.



Collinsville Italian Fest



If you are Italian, or just love all things Italian, then Main Street in Collinsville is where you want to be Sept. 20-21. The festival, celebrating the city's Italian heritage and culture, is in its 30th year and annually attracts more than 130,000 people. When asked, most will say they are there for the food, but there is plenty to keep all ages entertained.

If you like a little friendly competition there is a bocce ball tournament or an old-fashioned grape stomp to see which team can stomp the most juice. An exhibit and Italian film are also part of the festival. You can also find an area with children's games and rides, plenty of live entertainment, a parade and a Paisan Pedal Push midnight bike ride to benefit Relay for Life.

Proceeds collected from Italian Fest go back into the local community supporting a variety of local charities and non-profits. More than 40 booths are staffed by volunteers from local civic groups and for-profit organizations must donate 50 percent of their profits to a charity of their choice and must show proof they have done so. More than \$1 million has been raised over the years to help out all aspects of the local community which includes everything from scholarships to medical exams for needy families, as well as multiple local programs.

Interested in attending? Check out the website at www.italianfest.net.

Kewanee Hog Days

You can go "hog wild" at the annual Kewanee Hog Days! Previously known as the Hog Capital of the World, Kewanee and Henry County have been hosting this event to pay tribute to their agricultural roots. You can wallow in the mud at the Hog Wallow Mud Volleyball Tournament, attend the annual Barrow Show, attend the World's Largest Outdoor Pork Barbeque or run in the hog stampede (now run by humans instead of real live hogs).

The World's Largest Outdoor Pork Barbeque has two custom-made 24-foot long grills that burn more than 8,000 pounds of charcoal in order

to cook between 30- and 32- thousand butterfly chops and pork burgers. Oh, and it also takes 300 pounds of their "special" Hog Days seasoning powder.

Held annually on Labor Day weekend, the event has flea markets and crafts, a Model T and A rally, carnival, live entertainment, helicopter rides, a parade and much more.

With more than 30,000 visitors, the festival pumps more than \$1 million into the local economy through overnight stays, restaurants, shopping, convenience stores and gasoline.

Want more info? Go to www.kewaneehogdays.com.

Here are just a few websites to get you started on your trip:

www.enjoyillinois.com

www.eastcentralillinoisevents.com

www.southernillinoistourism.com

www.southernmostillinois.com

Home wiring health check

How to tell if your home's wiring is over the hill

Electric capacity is a major concern with older wiring systems. Homeowners in the 1930s didn't use a lot of electrical appliances, except for a refrigerator, a few lights, and a radio. An explosion of appliance purchases followed in the late 1940s and early '50s. But the arrival of air conditioning during the 1960s soon rendered many mid-century home electrical systems obsolete. More recently, residences built as little as 20 years ago might be insufficient for handling entertainment systems, personal computers and everything we plug in to recharge.

John Drengenberg, Consumer Affairs Manager for Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., (UL), an independent product safety testing and certification organization based in Chicago, Ill., says, "Homeowners should not assume all is well simply because fuses aren't blowing, circuit breakers aren't tripping, or they're not receiving shocks or smelling burnt plastic. Inside the walls, wire insulation could be cracking and crumbling, especially if wires are drawing more current than they were designed to handle."

To avoid such hazards, consumers should understand the limits of home wiring systems. Often, this depends on when a home was built, or if the electrical system was upgraded. In other cases, though, telltale signs may indicate a problem.

"Anytime you receive a shock from an electrical appliance, outlet or wall switch in your home, it's a warning that you should talk with a qualified



This improperly wired overhead lamp switch reveals a potential home danger. Electrical code requires wire nuts for connections, but these connections have been taped. The wires could become exposed and touch the lamp's metal base, resulting in electrical shock.

Source: Underwriters Laboratories

electrician," Drengenberg cautions. "If a fuse blows or a circuit breaker trips right after you replace or reset it, you have trouble somewhere. Flickering or dimming lights could mean loose connections, overloaded circuits, improper wiring, or arcing and sparking inside walls."

In older homes, heat means too much electrical current's being drawn through outlets. "If your receptacles or plugs are hot to the touch — you can't keep your hand on them for more than five seconds — you may have an overload," Drengenberg advises.

When too much current gets drawn, wires heat up, baking and eventually weakening the insulation. Wires with damaged, decayed or brittle insulation can lead to shocks and fires.

Another issue associated with older home wiring systems is the number

of receptacles in each room. Today's electrical code requires outlets be placed every 12 feet of running wall space, about one per wall in the average 10-by-12-foot room. "Relying on extension cords is not the answer," says Drengenberg. "Extension cords are meant for temporary use only and should not be a substitute for permanent wiring."

Every home electrical system should have some type of grounding. Newer homes are wired with cables that include a ground wire, and proper grounding prevents deadly electrical shocks. Having a properly bonded grounding system is also key to surge protection for your computers and all appliances. The ground wire allows for use

of three-pronged receptacles needed to safely power certain appliances, particularly ones with metal shells, such as refrigerators and washing machines.

Many wiring systems installed in the 1950s, and earlier, lacked a ground wire. Homes from this era have only two-pronged outlets, unsuitable for many modern conveniences. Simply replacing two-pronged receptacles with three-pronged receptacles violates the National Electrical Safety Code if no ground path exists.

In some cases, older homes may feature newer wiring systems. But the era when the wiring was upgraded impacts electrical limitations. Before buying a home have someone certified in electrical work inspect the system to be safe. Visit www.inspectorseek.com for referrals. ■

Source: Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.



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Grand gardening ideas for August

Advice on August's opportunities, problems and being majestic

August is the one month with no major holiday, unless you're Canadian and you celebrate the first Monday as Civic Holiday, which is a great excuse for a three-day weekend. And who doesn't want more three-day weekends! Unfortunately the Illinois State Fair does not qualify as a holiday.

So, while other months have a holiday you can base yard and garden work on, August falls short.

Which isn't all that bad. There's not much to do in August, and if drinking liquid refreshment, fermented or not, is your cup of iced tea instead of focusing on gardening work, so be it.

For others, while it seems contrary to the stickiness pervading our clothes and the air, August can be time to do some major planting such as fall leafy vegetables like spinach, chard or lettuce. It's also the perfect time to set in cabbage, broccoli and cauliflower transplants.

You can plant a fall crop of cucumbers and green beans, which should help avoid the pesky beetles that nibble on the plants in the spring and early summer.

And, August is a great time to divide iris. Some folks will even dig and divide daylilies after they're done blooming, cutting the fans back by 50-75 percent. Truthfully, though, you can divide daylilies just about any time of the year the ground isn't frozen, and they'll survive.

The biggest problems with August are the heat and potential drought.

There's not much you can do to



protect plants from the heat, though some savvy gardeners will erect old window screens over the new transplants, whether flower or vegetable, to cut down on the light until everything has rooted successfully. Just make sure the window screen won't collapse on the transplant.

Water is just as important, but too much water can cause as many problems as not enough. A thorough drenching two or three times a week for the first two weeks, followed by a thorough drenching once or twice weekly for the next two weeks should get the plants established.

But the biggest problem with August gardening is that gardeners might not be august enough. (Sorry, folks ... I just couldn't resist the rare, once-a-year opportunity to state that.)

Heat and humidity can do the best of us in and deflate our attempts to be august gardeners, i.e. impressive, grand, dignified, noble and majestic. You can't look or feel majestic if you are red-faced and dripping in sweat. That's why we should work early in the

morning as the sun peaks over the horizon, or the couple of hours right before dusk, when hopefully the temperatures are waning.

Morning has its advantages as the winds are calmer, the birds chirping, and water dries before diseases have a chance to get a foothold like they do at night. Humans are also a little calmer and chirpier. Just make sure you have a good breakfast before working.

If you find yourself working when the temperatures are above 90 degrees F, make sure you drink plenty of fluids and take plenty of breaks.

Though an old timer told me once if you do lots of the former, you can't help but do lots of the latter.

Plan for 15 minute activities. In other words, don't spend two hours weeding or pruning. Smaller chores are better on the muscles and also give you more of a sense of accomplishment. Breaking regularly prevents muscle fatigue and may actually allow you to do more gardening. Or not. That's your call.

If you are working a large area, stick flags every so often to tell you to do something else. Or set a kitchen timer to go off. ■

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



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The attic is still hot

How to plug attic space energy holes

Publication schedules require that I submit this article almost 30 days before it reaches your mailbox. I decide what I am going to write about and how I can best help you by the number of calls I get that relate to a particular subject, and by what I think the situation will be in 30 days.

I wrote the July, "Cooling Off the Attic" column on the first week of June because I knew that attics would start getting really hot in July. I had no idea that we would have record high temperatures all across some states in the month of June and now in July. If we have record weather temperatures, I can assure you that we also have record temperatures in the attics.

I have received a greater response from the July column than from any other column that I have ever written. Even as I am now writing this column for the August issue, I am still getting calls about the July column. Let me make this clear to you. I am not complaining, but am honored to have had the opportunity to help so many of you solve your energy-related problems.

I am tempted to just suggest that you go back and read the column again, but I want to teach you even more improvements that relate to an attic.

Remember, the attic may be super hot now, but it may be super cold in four or five months. Either way can affect your comfort and utility bills.

When a house has an attic access hole, an attic pull-down stairway or a whole house attic fan located in the conditioned area of the house, it is almost always a major energy waster. Since heat always moves toward cold, the heat in the house tries to go to the attic in the winter. Transversely,



the heat in the attic tries to go into the house in the summer through any spot that is not insulated or air-tight.

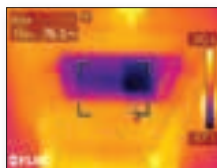
An infrared photo of a pull-down attic staircase on a hot summer day reveals a lot. It shows that the staircase ranges from 90 to 103 degrees Fahrenheit. It's trying to heat your house on a summer day, and it's trying to cool your house on a winter day. Solution: Install an insulated cover over opening. Go to www.AtticTent.com for a good solution.

Whole house fan louvers are just as bad as the pull-down staircase, and the house thermostat is usually located right under the louvers. The poor thermostat doesn't know what to do!

The best solution is to simply disconnect the fan, remove the entire

assembly and replace with a finished ceiling. Then cover the entire area with insulation. However, if you wish to retain the unit for future use, call me at the office and I will give you information for a really good solution.

For an attic access hole, weather-strip the opening and glue rigid foam insulation to the back of the access panel. You see, it really isn't that difficult to solve another energy problem at your house if you just know what to do. See you in September. ■



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.





Calling all Cooks

Holiday Recipe Contest

Everyone has those favorite foods you look forward to eating over the holiday season. What are your favorite dishes? Send us your best ORIGINAL holiday recipes -- not one you have copied from a friend or cut from a magazine or book.

We are looking for original holiday dishes that cover every part of a meal. You may only enter one recipe. Winning entries will be printed in the December issue of Illinois Country Living. Honorable mentions will be included on the magazine's website at www.icl.coop.

Enter online at www.icl.coop/contest. Each entry MUST include your name, address and phone number PLUS the name of your Illinois electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. Send entries to Illinois Country Living/Holiday Recipe Contest, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62712. No email entries will be accepted. Entry deadline: September 16, 2013.





Telling fish stories

These fish put the bite on the fishermen

By Valerie Cheatham

Long before anyone had ever heard of the television programs, “Hillbilly Handfishin’,” “Mudcats” or “Dirty Jobs,” the Williams and Campbell families had been hand-fishing (or hoggin’) in the Mackinaw and Kickapoo Rivers and Salt Creek in north central Illinois. In fact, both families have three generations of hoggers, as they refer to themselves.

“Catfish” John Campbell taught his buddy Bob Williams how to hand-fish and he was “hooked.” They then passed on the tradition to their sons. Bob Williams first took his son, Cal, at the age of 10. Cal, manager of vegetation and safety at Corn Belt Energy Corporation, has since passed on the tradition to his son, James. John Campbell’s son Frank and grandson, Frank Jr. are still part of the group that fishes each year from mid-June to mid-July.

So how in the world did they start fishing by hand? Thirteen-year-old Catfish John learned hoggin’ from several farmers in the area. During the Depression when food was scarce, farmers raised what they could to feed their families and hunted for whatever they could find whether that was rabbit, squirrel, opossum, etc. Hand fishing sprung from that need to put food on the table and it costs nothing.

There are no rods and reels or boats involved. All it requires is a buddy (or two or three), a stick and a willingness to get wet – really wet! According to Cal, “You get hooked! If you’re cut out for this, that rush you get of making a stop and getting your first big fish is going to set that in you. But, it’s not for everybody, some will go once and that will be it.”

Flathead catfish live in holes, under trees and banks or in hollow logs in rivers and lakes. They get under rock ledges and hollow out an area to hide and spawn. Some of the holes can be four to five feet in length. And, these are not the typical catfish you reel in on a hot summer day, these flatheads can be as big as 50 pounds and have to be wrestled with.

Often the fish with its coarse sandpaper-like teeth will clamp down on

“This is not fishing for the weak of heart,” says Cal Williams. “You don’t have to be crazy to do this, but it helps!”



the hogger's hand. If the hogger can get his hand down in the fish's mouth, he can get a better grip and get the stringer attached.

So why do you need a stick and a buddy? The stick is to poke into a log to try to chase the fish out the other end. The buddy helps block the fish from escaping and will pull you out if needed.

Father and son, Steve and Josh Davis from Rochester, Ill., took the plunge, so to speak, and accompanied Cal hoggin' in June of 2012. Steve is the manager of regulatory compliance at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and met Cal through work. Steve is an outdoor enthusiast, as is son Josh. Cal invited them to go hoggin' with him and his crew.

Josh admits to being rather nervous, but he and his dad donned old jeans, long-sleeved shirts and old gym shoes and joined the group. It was a cloudy, rainy day and a bit cool. They chose to wear cotton gloves but many of the others did not. They didn't want to take the chance of getting all scraped up by the fishes' teeth.

As they walked the Salt Creek they would check out the holes as they went. "They have set holes they check a couple of times a week," says Josh. "They've been on the river so many times, they know where to look. Sometimes a guy would be crawling along with a short stick checking holes and immediately be submerged, then pop up and yell 'here he is.' Everyone would come running to help."

"We were definitely the greenhorns of the group," says Steve. "But they would help us out and didn't laugh at us or anything."

"I felt the fish when it was underwater and it was weird," Josh remarked. "I couldn't really tell it was a fish until it was pulled out. And, you could hear it sometimes when the fish 'bit.' On a big one, it was like a loud thump you could hear above water."

"Catching the fish was a coordinated effort," says Steve. "Sometimes we caught fish the guys said were too small because they were maybe three to five pounds. We are used to rod fishing so they seemed to be a great size to us! Seemed odd to be throwing back that size."

So, would they go again? Both Josh and Steve say yes, if, they had some way to keep their torsos warm. It was the cold that really got to them. Part of the time they were only up to their knees in water, but by the time they were done they had been up to their necks and the cool breeze that day really chilled them.

"These guys were really great," says Josh. "They kind of reminded me of Duck Dynasty – really great, down-to-earth guys."

Hoggin' is only legal in 13 states, including Illinois, and is much more common in the southern United States. Some believe that is because the catfish are grabbed from their nests, leaving their eggs vulnerable. Each state has its own regulations on the size and number you can catch. Regarding hand fishing in Illinois, you should have a sport fishing license, but there is no limit on flathead catfish.



Bob and Cal Williams after a day of hoggin'.



Josh Davis and his father Steve with their big catch.

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Chicken Italian in Foil

- 2 lg. potatoes, washed
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 2 green peppers, sliced
- 2 tomatoes, cut in wedges
- 4 boneless chicken breasts
- Olive oil
- 1/4 c. ketchup
- 1 tsp. oregano
- 2 T. butter, melted

Cut potatoes lengthwise into 1/8 inch slices and place on an 18 x 12 inch double layer of foil. Sprinkle with salt. Add peppers and tomatoes. Lay chicken on top of vegetables and brush with olive oil. Mix ketchup, oregano and butter. Pour over chicken. Wrap foil securely around chicken and vegetables and put on a cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees until tender, about 1 hour. Makes 4 servings.

Citrus Poppy Seed Dressing

- 1/4 c. orange juice
- 2 T. white wine vinegar
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 1/3 c. sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/3 c. oil
- 1 T. poppy seeds

In blender or food processor, combine orange juice, vinegar, onions, sugar and salt. Cover; blend well. With machine running slowly, add oil, blending until thick and smooth. Stir in poppy seeds. This is great over a lettuce or spinach salad with strawberries or raspberries, red onion, feta or brie cheese and glazed pecans.

Apple Salsa with Cinnamon Chips

Salsa:

- 2 med. tart apples, chopped
- 1 c. chopped strawberries
- 2 med. kiwifruit, peeled and chopped
- 1 sm. orange
- 2 T. brown sugar
- 2 T. apple jelly, melted

Chips:

- 8 flour tortillas (7 or 8 inches)
- 1 T. water
- 1/4 c. sugar
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon

In a bowl, combine apples, strawberries and kiwi. Grate orange peel to measure 1-1/2 teaspoons; squeeze juice from orange. Add peel and juice to apple mixture. Stir in brown sugar and jelly. For chips, brush tortillas lightly with water. Combine sugar and cinnamon and sprinkle over tortillas. Cut each tortilla into 8 wedges. Place in a single layer on an ungreased baking sheets. Bake at 400 degrees for 6-8 minutes or until lightly browned. Cool. Serve with salsa. Yield: 4 cups.

Apricot Muffins

- 1 c. dried apricots
- 1 tsp. baking soda
- 1 c. nonfat yogurt
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 c. whole wheat flour
- 1-1/4 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 T. baking powder
- 2 T. canola oil
- 4 egg whites
- 1-1/2 tsp. almond extract

Heat the oven to 375 degrees. Chop the apricots; cover with 1/4 c. water and let stand. Spray muffin pans with nonstick cooking spray. Stir the baking soda into the yogurt. In a mixing bowl, combine sugar, whole wheat flour, all-purpose flour, and baking powder. Stir in the yogurt mixture, oil, egg whites and almond extract until just combined. Fold in the apricots. Spoon mix into the prepared muffin pans. Bake until golden brown, about 15 minutes. *119 calories, 4 grams protein, 2 grams fat, 124 milligrams sodium, 23 grams carbohydrates, trace amount cholesterol.*

Photos by Valerie Cheatham

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Grilled Summer Vegetables

- 2 med. zucchini, cut into 1/4" slices
- 2 med. yellow squash, cut into 1/4" slices
- 1 lg. white onion, cut into coarse chunks
- 1 sm. pkg. Portobello mushrooms, sliced
- 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 1/2 tsp. garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp. Tony Chachere's Creole seasoning
- 2 T. Italian oil and vinegar dressing

Prepare and combine all ingredients. Toss to mix. Best flavor is when cooked on a grill in a vegetable cooking basket. Stir frequently, don't overcook.

Apple-Blackberry Cake

- | | |
|---|--|
| Granulated sugar for pan | 1/2 c. whole milk |
| 1-1/2 c. all-purpose flour | 2 lg. eggs |
| 2 tsp. baking powder | 4 McIntosh apples, peeled, cored and cut into 8 wedges |
| 1/2 tsp. salt | 1 c. (1/2 pt.) blackberries |
| 3 oz. (6 T.) unsalted butter, melted | 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon |
| 1 oz. (2 T.) unsalted butter, cut into small pieces | Whipped cream for serving (optional) |
| 3/4 c. plus 2 T. packed light brown sugar | |

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Butter a 9-inch springform pan and dust with granulated sugar. Whisk together flour, baking powder and salt in a bowl. In another bowl, whisk together melted butter and 3/4 c. brown sugar, milk and eggs. Whisk into the flour mixture. Spread batter evenly into prepared pan. Arrange apple wedges over batter and sprinkle with blackberries. Gently press fruit into batter. Combine remaining 2 T. brown sugar and the cinnamon and sprinkle over fruit. Dot with remaining 2 T. butter. Bake until top is dark gold, apples are tender and a cake test inserted into center comes out clean, about 55 minutes. Let cool. Serve with whipped cream if desired. Serves 8 to 12.

Chocolate Meringue Drops (gluten free)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 2 extra-large egg whites | 1/2 tsp. vanilla |
| 1/2 c. sugar | 1/2 tsp. almond extract |
| 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted | 1 c. (generous) chopped walnuts |

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place rack in lower third of oven. Cover two heavy-duty baking sheets with parchment paper. In small metal bowl, beat egg whites; add sugar slowly until whites are stiff, but not dry. Use rubber spatula to carefully stir melted chocolate, extracts and nuts into egg whites. Drop spoonfuls of batter (1-1/2 to 2 T. each) onto parchment paper. Bake at 350 degrees until tops are dry, 12-15 minutes. Do not overbake. Cool completely in pan before removing with spatula. Makes 1 to 1-1/2 dozen.

Jambalaya

- 3 T. oil
- 1/2 lb. smoked sausage, cooked and sliced
- 2 c. frozen cut okra
- 4 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 lg. onion, chopped
- 1 lg. green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 can Ro-Tel tomatoes, drained
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. Tony Chachere's Creole Seasoning
- 1-15 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1-12 oz. pkg. frozen shrimp
- 1-2 c. Minute rice (uncooked)
- 3 c. water
- 1 chicken breast, cooked and cut into pieces
- 2 T. Tony Chachere's instant roux (found in seasonings at Wal-Mart)

Take a pot and add oil, celery, onion, green pepper and garlic. Saute until tender. Add water, tomatoes, pepper, Tony Chachere's seasoning and some salt. Add chicken, shrimp, sausage and okra. Cook about 15 minutes. Do not let it boil hard. Reduce heat. Add Tony's instant roux. Stir constantly while adding or it will ball up. This will thicken it a little. Add Minute rice. This soaks up the extra juice. Stir. Let it cook 20 minutes on low while stirring so it doesn't stick to the bottom.

Ask Ed

It's been a little while since I've answered a question directly in this column—too long in fact. I just want to remind everyone that if you have technology issues, whether they are computer or electricity related, please drop me a line and I will do my best to get you an answer. You can also visit www.icl.coop and leave a comment. Those come directly to the ICL staff, so you'll be sure to get a response. That said, let's get on with this month's Q & A.



Q Echu from Egyptian Electric in Steeleville asks, "I am thinking about purchasing a laptop, but almost every model available in stores now is made in China. In your opinion, do you think it is worthwhile to purchase a customized laptop? The customized ones seem very pricey!"

A That's a great question. For last month's column I finished up a series on purchasing a new computer, but spoke primarily about desktops. Customized laptops are certainly a harder issue than customized desktops. After all, with a laptop nearly all of the parts are already integrated, because they have to be. Otherwise, how would they all fit within the case?

And, you're right. Customizing one of them can get pretty pricey. That said, there are a few things you can do to get the price down a bit and still get something better than the standard off-the-shelf computer.

Let me start by giving you an analogy:

Imagine you're going to the grocery store to buy fresh fruit. You get there and start picking out your fruit, but how do you know which is the freshest? Which is the newest one on the shelf? They all look the same, right?

It's the same with buying off-the-shelf computers. You really don't have any idea how long a particular model has been in production, or how long

it's been sitting on the store shelf, back storeroom, truck, etc.

So, how do you avoid that? Buy one that has at least one part built to order!

The good news is that you can do that with most laptop manufacturers these days. You can actually order directly, and throw in some customization while ordering. Keep in mind that you're probably going to have to wait two weeks or so for actual delivery when you order using this method, but the end result will be a computer that's usually much "fresher." And, because you buy directly from the manufacturer, the warranty support is usually very good.

I don't advocate one brand over another, but I can tell you that I've had success ordering from several different vendors. At the end of this column, I'll list a few of their sites so you can check them out and decide which is best for you. Just make sure that whichever you choose, you don't take their base model. Change at least one item in the configuration when you order. That will ensure they have to build the machine, rather than just taking one off the shelf.

Of course, there are many others (including Apple) but I think those three should give you a good idea of what to look for in a laptop. Personally, I'd recommend looking at

something with a touchscreen if you're going to get a new Windows 8 laptop. I love mine! I couldn't imagine using Windows 8 without a touchscreen. But, that's a story for another time. ■

Here are the promised links.

Toshiba direct:
www.toshibadirect.com

HP direct:
www.shopping.hp.com

Lenovo direct:
shop.lenovo.com

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.



evanhose@aic.coop

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Midwest Bird and Animal Swap & Sale, Aug. 25 and Sept. 29, at Monroe County Fairgrounds, Waterloo, IL from 5:30 to Noon. 618-939-6809.

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Working together for Illinois

Three new U.S. Representatives share their views on bipartisanship, creating jobs and why they ran for office



Our state and nation are facing very tough issues that require the good faith effort of our leaders and a willingness to work across the aisle. Illinois' freshmen Representatives, William Enyart, Cheri Bustos and Rodney Davis, who together represent more than 40 counties, all emphasized the importance of creating jobs for their districts and bipartisanship in Congress.



Congresswoman Cheri Bustos (D-17, East Moline)



1. What motivated you to run for Congress?

As a longtime investigative journalist, I uncovered numerous stories of government corruption and saw firsthand the injustices that many faced. During my time as a city council member in my hometown, I heard time and time again that people across our region were sick and tired of politicians in Washington putting politics above working together for the people they were supposed to represent. I ran for Congress to do right by the middle class families of our region and to work across the aisle to fight for job creation and economic development, to protect Social Security and Medicare, and to stand up for our veterans.

2. How did your background prepare you for serving in Congress?

As a young girl, public service was always an important part of the life of my family. After working as an investigative journalist uncovering stories of corruption and greed, I was humbled to continue this tradition of public service by serving on the East Moline City Council. Giving back to my community has always been a top priority of mine and it continues to guide my work today as a new member of Congress representing the 17th District of Illinois.

3. What are your top three legislative issues?

My top priorities are creating good-paying jobs that can't be outsourced and growing our local economy, protecting Social Security and Medicare while reducing the deficit in a balanced way, and making sure we keep

our promises to all our brave veterans.

4. What are the greatest needs of your Congressional district?

The most important need I hear about from Illinois families across my district, is for good-paying jobs that can't be outsourced. The work ethic of the people of my district is second to none, and if given the chance our workers can outcompete workers anywhere in the world. I'll keep fighting to make sure our region's economy is strong into the future.

5. What can you do to create a more bipartisan climate in Congress?

After the election, and due to the concerns I heard about from people across my district about the lack of bipartisanship in Washington, I called or met with all the new freshman members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to introduce myself and to tell them I wanted to work with them on the important issues facing our constituents. I also joined the bipartisan group No Labels, and was named a "Congressional Problem Solver," because of my commitment to working across the aisle. I'll continue to focus on bipartisanship and working together to address the issues facing the people of Illinois in the weeks and months to come.

Congressman Rodney Davis (R-13, Taylorville)



1. What motivated you to run for Congress?

I ran for Congress because I've seen how the decisions being made in government can affect our everyday lives. My parents, small business owners, taught me the importance of public service and that we must get involved if we truly want to make a difference. I also ran for Congress because I find it wrong and immoral for our generation to saddle our kids and grandkids with trillions of dollars in debt. I cannot, in good conscience, leave my kids a country that is in worse shape than what my generation inherited.

2. How did your background prepare you for serving in Congress?

For 16 years I worked as the Projects Director for Congressman John Shimkus. In that time I became intimately familiar with the role the federal

government plays in our communities, where it can help and where it can hurt.

3. What are your top three legislative issues?

My top three legislative issues are passing a long-term farm bill, a long-term transportation bill, and reducing spending to attack the national debt.

4. What are the greatest needs of your Congressional district?

The greatest needs in the 13th Congressional District are achieving certainty in the agriculture and

transportation sectors through the passage of long-term farm and transportation bills.

5. What can you do to create a more bipartisan climate in Congress?

The biggest surprise for me is how normal members

of Congress are, and that it's not as hyper-partisan as it may appear in the news media. We have to reach across the aisle and work together, it's what we were sent to Washington to do and it's how we show leadership. I routinely meet with Democratic colleagues on how we can partner on legislation to move our country forward.

Congressman William Enyart (D-12, Belleville)

1. What motivated you to run for Congress?

A sense of duty to Southern Illinois motivated me. I felt strongly that we needed leadership to help Southern Illinois grow and prosper. I hadn't planned on seeking office and came to the campaign at the 11th hour. My party's nominee had to leave the race due to health concerns, and I felt that someone with strong credentials needed to step up quickly and fill the void. After some soul-searching with my family, I retired from the military and took on this new mission.

2. How did your background prepare you for serving in Congress?

I think my background is unique in Congress right now. I didn't come up through the traditional manner of holding lower-level elected offices. Having served in two of our armed forces (Air Force and Army), then commanding thousands of Illinois National Guard troops, I have a different perspective on service and leadership. I'm the only current member of Congress to have achieved the rank of general. When I sit in an Armed Services Committee hearing and question the military brass about wasting money, they can't easily duck the question. I bring a deeply felt commitment for our troops and veterans to DC.

3. What are your top three legislative issues?

Jobs, jobs and jobs. Retaining and creating employment in my district is the top priority for me and most of my constituents. I'm very interested in workforce development, because we have the manpower and work ethic in Southern Illinois. So I'm focused on getting our people trained for the demands that exist. Many of the other issues I deal with directly relate to jobs. If I'm ensuring the military budget is efficient, it's because we need to protect the jobs and paychecks at Scott Air Force Base. If I'm talking about levees or locks and dams on the Mississippi, it's because the river is an economic lifeline for the farms, chemical companies and coal mines for my district. It all comes back to jobs.

4. What are the greatest needs of your Congressional district?

The challenges seem to come at us on all sides. A few of my counties are at the top of the state's unemployment

list. To add insult to injury, the state has been closing facilities in counties that are already hard-pressed for good employment. Infrastructure is at the top of the list. The Mississippi River is an integral part of the nation's transportation network, and it's a continuous challenge. Already this year we've gone from drought to flood along the river. The levee system is in need of improvement in much of the district. Our transportation network in this country is aging, and we need to make sure our highways, rail lines, bridges, waterways and airports are prepared for the future. Many of our communities are cash-strapped and in need of funds for basic services like water towers, sewer lines and fire trucks. I want to ensure the decisions made in Congress address these needs, but too many outcomes – like inaction on the Farm Bill – only make things worse.



5. What can you do to create a more bipartisan climate in Congress?

I'm a problem solver, and I'm interested in solutions and action. I think, by and large, the freshmen in Congress are more interested in solving problems than scoring political points. We're not afraid to talk to each other or work together across the aisle whether it's a matter of national policy or local priorities. For example, Rep. Davis and I have already been working together on improving the locks and dams along the Mississippi River, because it makes sense for our districts. Another example – I offered an amendment to the National Defense Authorization Act to eliminate the waste and duplication in the military's uniforms policy. The Republican-controlled committee voted to include the amendment, and it was the only one offered by a Democrat to pass. It goes to show that a good idea doesn't always have a partisan bent.

- 30-1 Manito Popcorn Festival**, Village of Manito. This annual festival includes a Popcorn Princess Pageant, disc golf tournament, antique farm equipment, movie in the park, 5k run/walk, crafts, cow patty bingo, live music, pedal tractor pull and lots of food. Fri. 3 – 10 p.m., Sat. 7:30 a.m. – 10 p.m., Sun. 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. www.manitopopcornfestival.com.
- 30-2 Kewanee Hog Days**, see this month's feature for more information.
- 1 Grape Stomp and Harvest Festival**, Mackinaw Valley Vineyard in Mackinaw. It's good fun but not "clean" fun as guests compete in two big tubs while "Lucy" style stomping. Judging is done by audience applause and children are welcome to compete as well as adults. Live musical entertainment and wine tasting available. Lucy Look-a-Like Contest at 3:30. Admission: adults \$5, children 12 and under are free. www.mackinawvalleyvineyard.com or call 309-359-WINE for festival details.
- 4 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 market-master610@gmail.com.
- 7 & 21st Historic Belden School Open House**, The Galena Territory, 52 Heatherdowns, Galena. Free open house at the historic one room school house built in 1839. 1-4 p.m. 815-777-2000 or www.beldenschool.org.
- 11-14 Morton Pumpkin Festival**, see this month's feature for more information.
- 13-15 Tower Hill Community Fall Festival**, Tower Hill Village Park, Tower Hill. Activities include a tractor show, car and motorcycle show, horseshoe tournament, hypnotist, parade, demolition derby, music and much more. Fri. 6:30-10 p.m., Sat. 8 a.m. – 10 p.m., Sun. 1:30 p.m. 217-567-3110.
- 14 McLean County Barnkeepers 8th Annual Barn Tour**, Saybrook. This self-guided tour is \$20 per carload. Enjoy some great barns, inside and out and other interesting sites in the community. Go to www.barnkeepers.org to find the welcome center site. Rain or shine. 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. 309-415-6951.
- 20-21 Italian Fest** – Collinsville, see this month's feature for more information.
- 21 Butterfly Roundup**, Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, Carbondale. Monarch butterflies travel through the area each year on their way to spend the cold months of winter in Mexico. Visitors are invited to help catch and tag these butterflies as they feed and rest. 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. at the Crab Orchard Visitor Center. 618-997-3344.
- 21 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.
- 26-29 Frenchmen's Frolic**, Mack-town Living History Site, 2221 Freeport Road, Rockton. A pre-1840s rendezvous of fur traders in the Rock River area of Illinois. Includes period appropriate dress and encampment, black powder shooting matches, primitive bow shoots, traders and trader blankets sites, seminars and workshops. 815-978-8090 or www.macktown-livinghistory.com.
- 27-29 12th Annual International Route 66 Mother Road Festival**, Downtown, Springfield. More than 1,000 cool cars roll into the heart of Springfield's historic downtown for a weekend of family fun in the sun and non-stop live music and entertainment. Includes a Friday night car cruise and a horsepower alley with a burnout competition. Fri. 6-10 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m. – 10 p.m., Sun. 11 a.m. – 2 p.m. 866-783-6645 or www.Route66Fest.com.
- 28-29 Clinton Apple N' Pork Festival**, see this month's feature for more information.
- 28 58th Annual "Fall Old Market Day,"** Old Market House Historic Site, 123 N. Commerce St., Galena. Sponsored by Jo Daviess County Assn. for Home and Community Education. Typical turn-of-the-century market, ladies in early 1990s costume will offer for sale produce in season, homemade baked products, Rada Cutlery, handmade items and crafts, plus see heritage skills demonstrations. 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. 815-858-3392.
- 28-29 National Alpaca Farm Day** at Timberview Alpacas, 7910 White Oak Road, Clinton. Pet and feed alpacas. See fiber spinning, felting and carding demonstrations. Bounce slide, hay rack rides and alpaca products for sale. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. 309-275-4027.
- 28-29 Agriculture Day** – Jordbruksdagarna, Downtown, Bishop Hill. Bishop Hill's biggest event features traditional 19th century demonstrations, harvest activities, music dancing, farm produce, stew and chicken dinners. Also see Richard Clark's handmade replicas of area barns and various historical buildings. 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. 309-927-3345.



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



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All calls with InfinityDISH are monitored and recorded for quality assurance and training purposes. **Important Terms and Conditions:** Promotional Offers: Require activation of new qualifying DISH service with 24-month Commitment and credit qualification. All prices, fees, packages, programming, features, functionality and offers subject to change without notice. After 12-month promotional period, then-current regular monthly price applies and is subject to change. **ETI:** If you cancel service during first 24 months, early cancellation fee of \$20 for each month remaining applies. For iPad 2 offer, if you cancel service during first 24 months, early cancellation fee of \$30 for each month remaining applies. **Activation fee:** may apply. **Add'l Requirements:** For iPad 2 offer: customer must select Hopper system and minimum of America's Top 120 package; allow 4-6 weeks for delivery; offer not available in Puerto Rico or USVI. Available while supplies last. **HD Free for Life:** \$10/mo HD fee waived for life of current account; requires continuous enrollment in AutoPay with Paperless Billing. **Premium Channels:** 3-month premium movie offer value is \$135; after promotional period, then-current regular monthly price applies and is subject to change. **Blockbuster @Home Offer:** 3-month offer value \$30. After 3 months, then-current regular monthly price applies and is subject to change. Requires online DISH account; broadband internet to stream content; HD DVR to stream to TV. Streaming to TV and some channels not available with select packages. **Installation/Equipment Requirements:** Free Standard Professional Installation only. Certain equipment is leased and must be returned to DISH upon cancellation or unreturned equipment fees apply. Upfront and additional monthly fees may apply. Recording hours vary; 2000 hours based on SD programming. Equipment comparison based on equipment available from major TV providers as of 5/22/13. **Misc:** Offers available for new and qualified former customers, and subject to terms of applicable Promotional and Residential Customer agreements. State reimbursement charges may apply. Additional restrictions and taxes may apply. **Offers end 9/18/13.** HBO®, Cinemax® and related channels and service marks are the property of Home Box Office, Inc. SHOWTIME is a registered trademark of Showtime Networks Inc., a CBS Company. STARZ and related channels and service marks are property of Starz Entertainment, LLC. iPad is a trademark of Apple Inc., registered in the U.S. and other countries. Apple is not a participant in or sponsor of this promotion. Visa® gift card must be requested through your DISH Representative at time of purchase. \$25 Visa® gift card requires activation and \$2.95 shipping and handling fee. You will receive a claim voucher within 3-4 weeks and the voucher must be returned within 30 days. Your Visa® gift card will arrive in approximately 6-8 weeks. InfinityDISH charges a one-time \$49.95 non-refundable processing fee. Indiana C.P.D. Reg. No. TS-10-1006. *Certain restrictions apply. Based on the availability in your area.