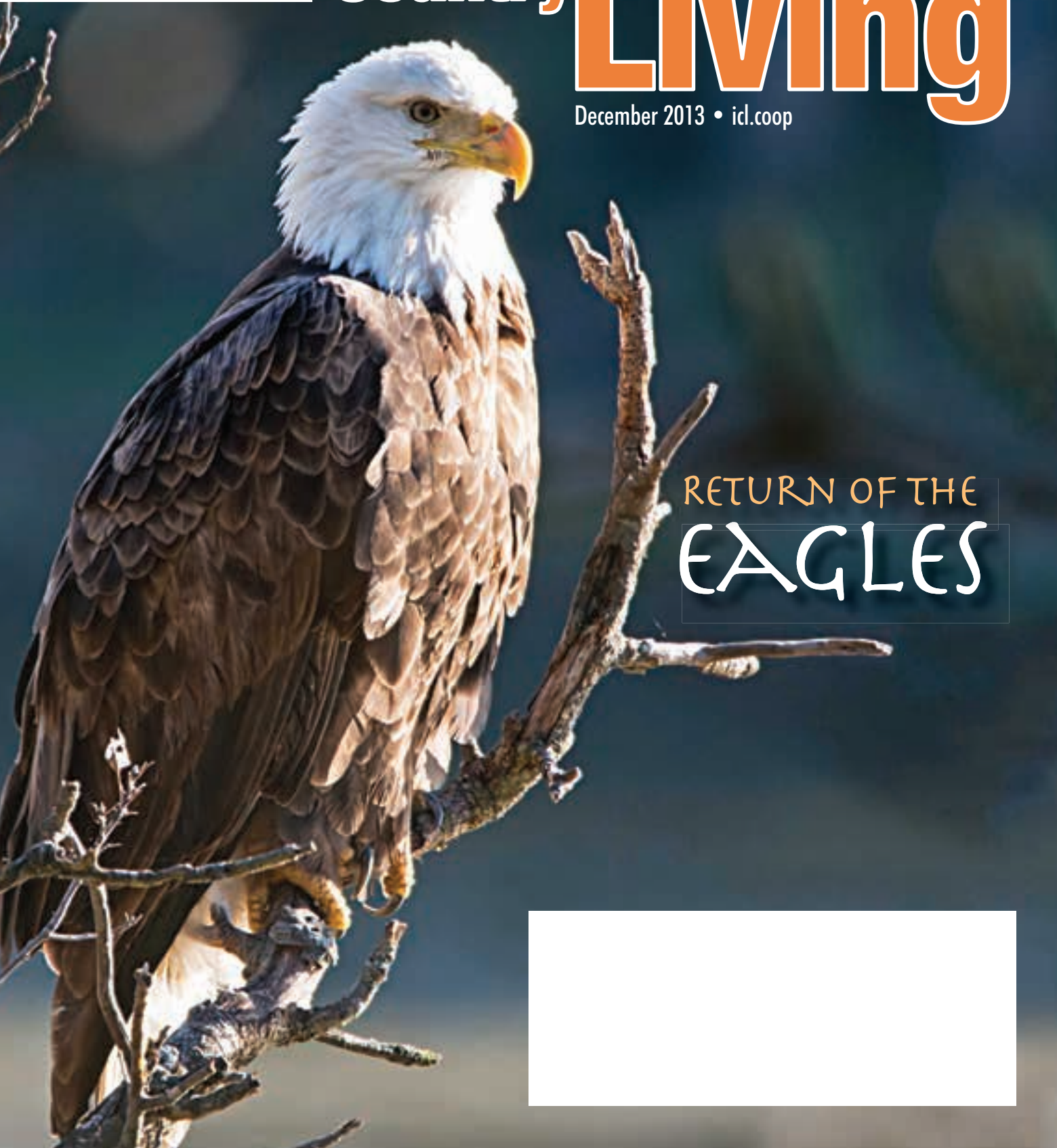


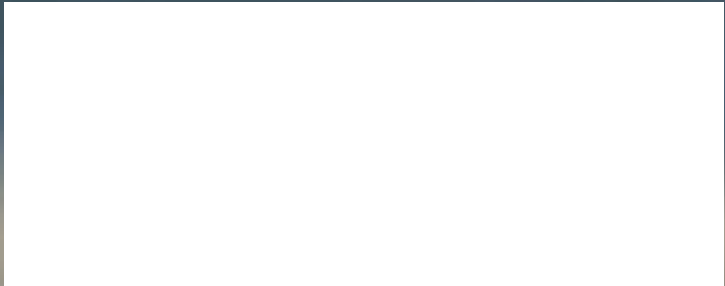
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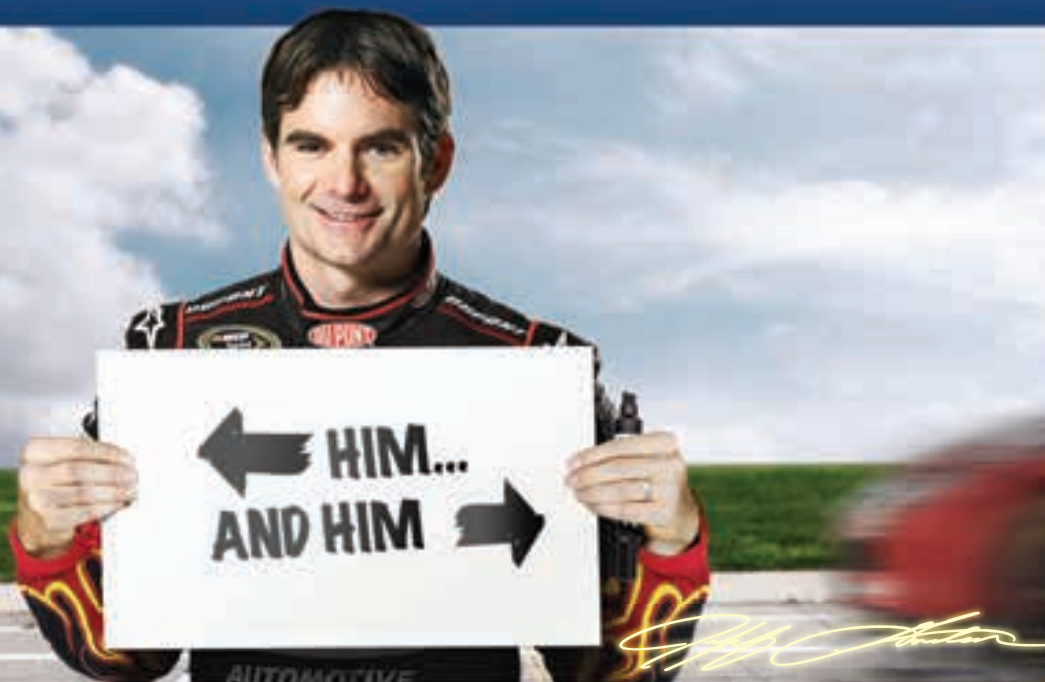
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**For address changes contact your
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President/CEO

Duane Noland

Chairman of the Board

Larry Kraft

Editor

John Lowrey

Assistant Editor

Valerie Cheatham

Contributing Editor

Ed VanHoose

**Public Relations/
Business Development Manager**

Lisa Rigoni

**Advertising Coordinator/
Graphic Designer**

Sandy Wolske

Graphic Designers

Jennifer Danzinger, Kathy Feraris,
Chris Reynolds

Circulation Coordinator

Connie Newenham

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10 RETURN OF THE EAGLES

Because of its long life, great strength and majestic looks, the bald eagle was chosen in 1782 as the emblem of the United States. Rising from near extinction the eagle is back in Illinois.



Volume 71, No. 8, December 2013

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Stopping the new blackout threat

Co-ops are taking proactive steps to stop cyber threats

Security of the nation's electric grid has received a lot of attention lately. National Geographic's October 27th airing of "American Blackout," a docudrama about a nationwide blackout following a cyber-attack may have been fiction, but the threat is real. Reports of high-profile hacking attempts on electrical facilities by parties foreign and domestic, mischievous and nefarious, keep making front-page news. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the energy sector was the target of more than 40 percent of all reported cyber attacks last year.

Illinois' electric cooperatives are already taking cyber threats very seriously. They've formed an information technology (IT) working group and held meetings to share security issues and solutions. They've also worked closely with the University of Illinois' (U of I) smart grid and cyber security engineers to perform cyber security audits. And they've consulted with the U of I, which is a partner with Dartmouth College, Cornell University, the University of California and Washington State University in a Department of Energy funded project called Trustworthy Cyber Infrastructure for the Power Grid.

Electric co-ops are being proactive about cyber security. However, co-op engineers and IT professionals realize this is an ever-evolving threat that requires continuous improvements to protect smart grid systems against new cyber threats.

In today's heightened political landscape, some have suggested that onerous government mandates—as opposed to our existing system that provides flexibility to meet new threats—are necessary to protect the

electric grid from cyber assaults. But it's not certain more regulations will make us safer. Consider these points:

- Government mandates can't keep pace with innovation. Utilities, like electric co-ops, are always deploying new technologies—and so are cyber criminals and terrorists. Top-down mandates, by their very nature, will only address known dangers; a command-and-control approach means we'll always be fighting yesterday's battle.
- "Gold plated" cyber security measures are not the answer. It's possible to build a car that will survive any crash. But the cost of such a vehicle would be astronomical. Utilities need the latitude to balance risk and cost for the good of the consumer.
- Compliance is not a deterrent. For some, federal rules create a false sense of well-being. The reasoning goes like this: "If I'm following all of the cyber security regulations that apply to me, then my system must be secure." However, bureaucracy can't decree processes that address every contingency. And any complacency opens the door to a possible cyber strike.

Continuous vigilance, innovation and improvement are the key ingredients to cyber security. Fortunately, Co-op Nation has taken a lead role on this issue. In addition to thousands of hours spent by electric co-ops helping the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the nation's grid watchdog, write Critical Infrastructure Protection standards, NRECA's Cooperative Research Network (CRN) has developed the Guide to Developing a Cyber Security and Risk Mitigation Plan. This document

—touted by the U.S. Department of Energy as a prime example for other utilities to follow (and endorsed by the head of grid security at IBM)—provides a set of scalable, online tools that can help electric co-ops strengthen their cyber security posture. While no one suggests it will prevent every possible act of "cyber-sabotage," any step at mitigation means a significant leap toward better cyber security. As a result, we've offered the guide and template to others in the electric utility industry free of charge.

The bottom line is that over the past few years, our electric grid has become more secure because of joint public-private partnerships, such as those involving NERC. Meanwhile, electric cooperatives are working diligently to understand, mitigate, and respond to cyber events while strengthening the relationships essential to electric system protection. To this end, NRECA has discussed co-op leadership and concerns surrounding this subject in testimony before Congress and meetings with President Obama and U.S. Energy Secretary Ernest Moniz.

The perils posed by cyber attacks are real. But thanks to cooperative research and development and standards fashioned by electric utilities under the current voluntary, collaborative NERC framework, we'll be better armed to defend against this new cyber threat. ■

Jo Ann Emerson is President/CEO of the National Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives.



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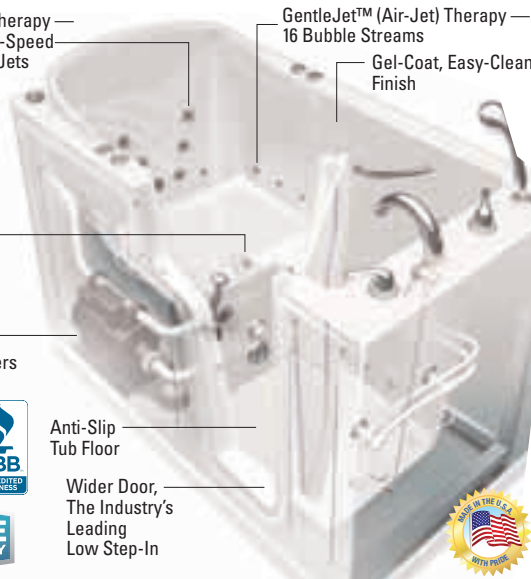


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Co-op leader urges EPA to consider the cost of regulation on the rural poor

Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives' President/CEO Duane Noland (right) offered comments on behalf of Illinois electric cooperatives at the Nov. 8 U.S. EPA Listening Session in Chicago, Ill. The session was designed for EPA to gain public input on future proposed rules on carbon emission standards for existing power plants.

Noland said the cost of providing electricity to sparsely populated rural areas is already higher than in urban areas. "We serve on average only five consumers per mile of line. In comparison, investor-owned utilities that serve the urban areas of our state serve approximately 54 consumers per mile of line. It is simple math. Spreading the cost of a mile of line between five consumers instead of 54 makes a huge difference in the cost of service."

Cooperative leaders agree with some of the major points in the Administration's energy plan. Noland said, "We've been proactive in installing smart grid technology, promoting energy efficiency, and are constantly looking to diversify our energy supply with renewable energy projects. However, while cooperatives are involved with hydro, wind, and solar power projects, the vast majority of our power production remains coal-fired. We have strong concerns about the possible additional costs that could accompany EPA's proposed rulemaking on existing coal-fired plants. While we greatly respect EPA's objectives, any cost increases our not-for-profit co-ops incur must be passed on directly to the member-owners."

Noland added that many of the counties served by co-ops suffer from higher rates of poverty and unemployment. For example, Alexander County, at the very southern tip of Illinois and about as far away from Chicago as you can travel, has a 12.5 percent unemployment rate, the highest in the state. And, Jackson County, also in far southern Illinois, has the state's highest poverty rate of 28.5 percent.

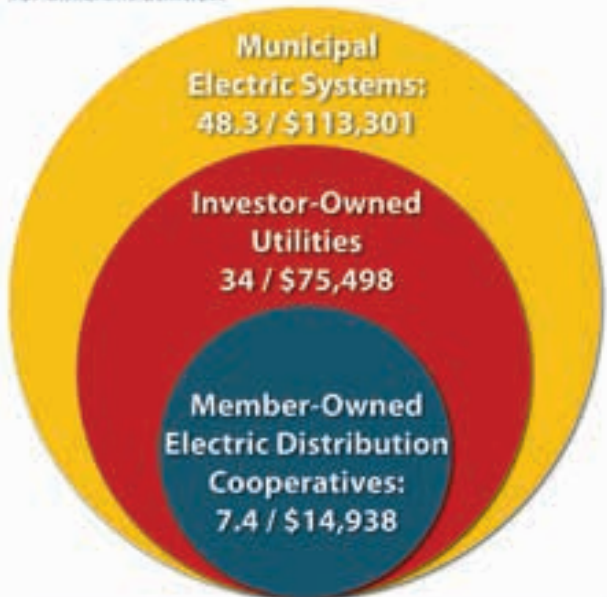
Noland said, "I respectfully urge you to consider the potential devastating economic impact of any new regulations and what it could mean to our co-op members." ■



Revenue in Review

Because of higher population densities (more consumers served per mile of line), municipal electric systems and investor-owned utilities receive more revenue per mile of line than electric cooperatives.

Consumers served/revenue per mile of line for different utilities:



Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, September 2013



Bipartisan support for inland waterways vital to Illinois economy

We hear a lot about the discord in Congress, but in October the House of Representatives passed the Water Resources Reform & Development Act with an overwhelming 417-3 vote. Earlier this year Senator Durbin and Senator Kirk both supported similar legislation.

When we think of transportation infrastructure most of us think of roads that crisscross our state and country. We don't understand the economic impact and importance of our inland waterway system. Illinois'

portion of these navigable waterways is roughly 1,118 miles, only a portion of the 25,000 miles of rivers and canals that move more than 612 million tons of cargo totaling more than \$222 billion in value across the nation.

Nearly one-third of the grain produced in Illinois is sent for export to the Port of New Orleans. According to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, waterways in Illinois support almost 50,000 jobs and move almost \$140 billion in goods and commodities through Illinois.

Locks and dams on these rivers are vital to this transportation, but some of these facilities were constructed in the 1930s and many are operating well beyond their ideal lifespan. The result is a backlog of projects that costs \$8 billion and is growing quickly as deterioration exceeds the rate of repair and new construction. Broken locks delayed the movement of goods and caused unscheduled delays in 90 percent of the locks in 2009. In 2011, delays as a result of malfunctioning locks cost industry \$33 billion. ■



Sharing the harvest, farmers give back to 4-H

As Chairman of the Board for the Macon County 4-H & Extension Foundation, Duane Noland has a unique fund raising idea he thinks could spread to other counties in Illinois. He developed a wagon to pull to farm fields during harvest for grain donations that would help raise funds for

the 4-H program. "In 2011, we received \$15,000 in grain donations and we are on pace to exceed that this year," said Noland. "We did not use it last year because of the drought. This effort funds our annual scholarship program, conference fees and travel." ■

Take action on energy costs

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued new proposed rules limiting the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of new coal and natural gas based power plants. Because of this, the Administration has abandoned its “all-of-the-above” energy strategy and embraced an “all-but-one” approach that effectively prevents construction of new coal-based generation.

Electric cooperatives strongly oppose this shift and believe the

proposed rule should be withdrawn. Co-ops support using a diverse fuel mix including renewables, natural gas, nuclear and coal to generate electricity, and support using demand response and energy efficiency to use that energy wisely and keep costs affordable. Co-ops also continue to deploy new technologies and are researching even more cutting edge technologies to meet the energy needs of the future.



Please join our effort www.Action.coop and tell EPA to reconsider its “all-but-one” approach; to work with the electric cooperatives to find a common sense solution that balances energy needs and environmental concerns. Please share this information with your friends and family; ask them to visit www.Action.coop to learn more and send their message to the EPA. ■

Illinois students build Solar Decathlon house

Students from the University of Illinois, partnering with students from Peking University, entered a demonstration home in the Solar Decathlon China competition held in October. The program challenges students to design, build and operate solar-powered houses that are cost-effective, energy-efficient and attractive. The winner of the competition is the team that best blends affordability, consumer appeal and design excellence with optimal energy production and maximum efficiency.

With 42 solar panels on the roof of the home called Etho, power production exceeded energy consumption in the home. Control and monitoring of the home’s systems was through an iPad. For example, a slider on the iPad could dim and even change the color of the home’s LED lighting fixtures.

“Our system was a lot more custom,” said Dan Murray, a computer engineering student and member of the automation sub-team. “Every other team that attempted an automation system adapted an industrial system for residential use, which is a bit unreasonable for even the most serious home automation hobbyist.

Even water-flow sensors tracked water consumption throughout the house. Pricing of both energy and water could be displayed on the iPad. The system also monitored photovoltaic production, temperatures and humidity throughout the home, carbon dioxide levels and other data.



Because Peking University had organized the competition, the Illinois-Peking team had been asked to build a showcase home, and was not officially judged in the competition.

Pipes pumped fluid through the panels absorbing heat and even slightly increasing the electrical output of the solar panels. The whole system was also integrated with the heating and air conditioning system.

Although the Illinois students have entered previous Solar Decathalons in the United States, this was the first event like this held in China. More than 60 U of I students participated in the two-year collaboration. <http://www.solardecathlon.gov> ■



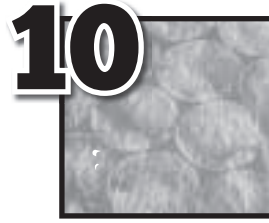
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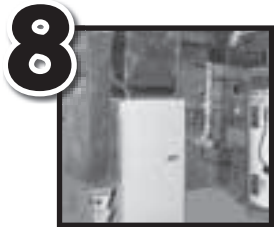
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RETURN OF THE EAGLES

RISING FROM THE BRINK, EAGLES COME BACK TO ILLINOIS

BY LES O'DELL

Bob Motz will never forget the first time he saw a bald eagle in its natural habitat. The semi-retired teacher from Rock Island High School was eight years old, ice skating with his father on the hidden waters of the Hennepin Canal, an abandoned waterway in northwestern Illinois. Even though it was decades ago, Motz still recalls how seeing that eagle made something in him soar.

"I got so excited then," he remembers. "It was great and it began an interest in me that I've tried to extend to others over the years."

Back then, catching a glimpse of the national symbol required a great deal of patience and (if you will pardon the pun) an eagle eye.

After all, the bird spent years on both the "endangered" and "threatened" species list. Today, however, things are much different. Bald eagles were officially delisted in 2007, and now they are a common sight throughout Illinois. In fact, the state is one of the species' preferred places to spend the winter.

"There aren't a lot of wildlife categories where Illinois is No. 1," explains Drew Becker, an eagle biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "but we really do have a huge concentration of eagles, especially on the Mississippi and Illinois Rivers. The only other place with eagle concentrations this high is Alaska."

Becker says the comeback of bald eagles is a testament to public efforts. He says that when the bird was endangered—mostly because their

habitats were being destroyed and the pesticide DDT was affecting eagle reproduction—two enacted laws made the difference. Both the Migratory Bird Act and 1940's Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act were milestones. "Additionally, moves to reforest areas and the Clean Water Act have helped increase their habitat. The number of eagles has grown exponentially in the last 20 years."

Like Canadian geese, eagles migrate south with the change of seasons, leaving the woods of Canada, Minnesota and the Great Lakes, in search of places to winter. Becker says they often will just work their way down rivers until they find a spot to their liking, usually alongside rivers and lakes. "They congregate on open water like the Mississippi River, the Illinois River and some of our larger lakes in Illinois," he says, adding however that since eagles' diets also may include decaying animal flesh, they can be seen throughout the state. "Growing up in Iroquois County, I never saw an eagle. The other day my dad called from Watseka. He had just seen one."

Like habitual vacationers, once wintering eagles find a spot they like, they will return year after year. "They concentrate in areas where there are large fish populations," says Donald Sparling, associate director of the Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. "They tend to have regular nesting sites year after year."

Biologists call this regular return to the same spot "site fidelity," a natural instinct to return to the same place annually. "They come back to the same nest year after year," says Scott Isringhausen, site interpreter at Pere Marquette State Park near Grafton. He adds that it is just one of several rituals in an eagle's life. "When eagles mate, they mate for life," he points out. "But when they travel south, they don't necessarily stay together as a pair. They winter, then get back together up north in the spring. They truly take separate vacations."

How many eagles actually winter in Illinois? Becker says it's impossible to count, but from Galena to Metropolis and everywhere in-between, he estimates that thousands of the birds can be seen in December, January and February. Some estimate as many as 3,000 eagles winter in the state. "We do a better job of keeping track of eagle nests, but we don't have a good handle on exactly how many wintering eagles are around," he says.

LIKE HABITUAL
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ONCE WINTERING
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THEY LIKE, THEY
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AFTER YEAR.

Becker adds that the birds can be easy to find, regardless of where along the rivers you look.

"This time of year, take a drive on the Illinois River or the Mississippi

and if you don't see an eagle, it would be unusual. You don't need to be an expert or really have a plan; just go for a fall or winter drive and keep your eyes open," he says.

During the day, eagles usually can be seen floating on chunks of ice, perching on large tree branches or on the hunt for fish.

"It's amazing to see these magnificent birds of prey soaring through the sky, catching fish from the river, and resting in trees along the riverfront," says Charlotte Morrison of the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau. "I sometimes catch myself looking out my office window and grabbing a pair of binoculars to get a closer look. As a child, I never knew they were here. Now they can be seen everywhere."

Many of the communities and public areas along the waterways offer special programs and events to assist with eagle watching. The Quad Cities' annual Bald Eagle Days is held each January. Motz takes visitors on eagle "safaris" along the Mississippi and there are formal programs at Granite





“OFTEN SPECTATORS
EVEN SEE THE BIRDS
SWOOP DOWN TO CATCH
FISH AND OCCASIONALLY
EAT THEIR PREY
WHILE IN FLIGHT.”

BOB MOTZ

City each year. Many of the locks and dams along the rivers hold special eagle watching events. Alton’s tourism bureau even offers a smartphone application to assist with eagle watching. At Pere Marquette, Isringhausen offers a number of eagle watching programs

that include guided tours throughout the year. He says he has yet to lead an excursion where participants did not get to see bald eagles.

Although he leads watchers at a completely different locale, Motz

agrees, saying just seeing the birds is thrilling, but watching others see them is equally as moving. “Every time out is different. That’s my joy—no two times are the same,” he says. “I never get tired of it. It’s fun to see the excitement and reaction of people. They really get into it.”

He adds that many of his clients never expect to see even one bald eagle, before being surprised. “They often say they think they will be fortunate if they see one, but it’s a bad day if we only see a dozen. Some days we’ll see more than 200.”

The eagles are usually easy to spot. Mature bald eagles stand about 3 feet tall (the females are slightly larger than the males) and have a wingspan of 7 feet or more. With their telltale white featured heads and claws, they are very distinctive, and can be found even with the naked eye. With binoculars and special spotting telescopes, the majestic animals are even more interesting.

“With the scopes we can see their talons, their nostrils and—if you watch for 15 to 20 seconds—you can actually see them blink,” Motz says. He adds that “often spectators even see the birds swoop down to catch fish and occasionally eat their prey while in flight.”

Isringhausen says there is a great deal of appeal in eagle watching. He says people looking for eagles also will likely find other wildlife including ducks, geese and even pelicans. Plus, there’s the attraction of seeing the once-endangered national symbol in flight. “Just to see our national bird in its own habitat is something,” he says. “Seeing an eagle fly or swoop down is great.”

“They are such noble creatures,” Becker adds. “Eagle watching can make for a very inspiring day right here in our own backyards.”

*Photos by Rich Mattas,
Jo-Davievs Conservation Foundation
Board of Trustees*

*Check out eagle viewing dates and
locations in Datebook on page 30 and
on our website www.icl.coop.*

BALD EAGLE FACTS

- Females are larger than males. Males weigh 8-9 pounds and have a wing span of 6-7 feet. Females weigh 10-14 pounds and have a wingspan of up to 8 feet. This size difference favoring females is common in birds of prey.
- Life span is 20-30 years in the wild and up to 50 in captivity.
- Flight speed is up to 100 mph while diving and 20-60 mph in normal flight.
- Eye sight is legendary and so powerful they could read a newspaper 100 yards away and see it up to 3 miles away. Their eyes work independently from each other. They can focus on a fish and look for obstacles at the same time. They can see fish underwater from more than 1.5 miles away.
- Water is key to their habitat. Eagles need an environment of quiet isolation with clean water within 300 yards. They choose tall mature trees between 50 and 150 feet for perching and nesting.
- Bald Eagles mainly eat fish but will also eat seagulls, waterfowl, carrion, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians. They can store about 2 pounds of food in their crop, allowing them to go days without food.
- Nests are used year after year and they add material each year. One nest in Florida was 10 feet across, 25 feet deep and weighed 2 tons.
- Eagles mate for life. They lay one to three eggs usually in March or April to avoid summer heat. The oldest one usually survives. Eggs are 2 by 3 inches and creamy yellow. Both parents incubate the eggs for about 35 days. The fledglings are able to fly approximately 75 days after hatching.
- Adult eagles will have the conspicuous white head and tail after 4-6 years. Juveniles will have the same rich chocolate coloration with splotches of white on the underside of body and wings.
- It is against the law to possess even one eagle feather without a permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



EAGLE VIEWING ETIQUETTE

Bald eagles are sensitive to human disturbance. Enjoy the view but lower your impact by:

- Staying in your car.
- In your car, keep a distance of 100 yards.
- On foot, keep a distance of 300 yards.
- Viewing with spotting scopes or binoculars works great.
- December through February are the best months for viewing and mornings are more productive for viewing around water. Later afternoon they will return to roosting areas.



EAGLE REHAB AND THE WORLD BIRD SANCTUARY IN ST. LOUIS

The World Bird Sanctuary is both a unique attraction and a location for treating injured raptors like bald eagles. With more than 305 acres and 200 animals in their care, they offer a one-of-a-kind wildlife experience. The World Bird Sanctuary's mission is to preserve the earth's biological diversity and to secure the future of threatened bird species in their natural environments. They work to fulfill that mission through education, captive breeding, field studies and rehabilitation. Go to www.worldbirdsanctuary.org

 **More Online**

Have you checked every bulb?

Check off Jim's Christmas safety list too

It's that time of year again. When we will start out with the hope of making this holiday season the best it has ever been! In my house I know the time has come when my wife starts hounding me to start pulling the multiple tubs of decorations from the attic, closet, and every other nook and cranny we have them stored. It's a painful task that I start with dread each year. It doesn't take long before my "Director of Winter Wonderland" has me motivated and cheerful though. She lights the fire and I start singing every tune at request.

Although slow to start, I really do enjoy the holidays and all the memories they bring. We have traditions that I hope will carry on throughout the rest of our lives.

But I want to talk to you about starting a new tradition. This year put safety at the top of your new tradition list. I don't want the twinkling lights you see coming from the top of a fire truck or ambulance. Christmas memories should bring back happy thoughts, not memories of an accident that could have been prevented.

Let's get started with trees and lights—that tangled mess of danger-prone holiday decorations. According to the United States Fire Administration, Christmas trees start an average of 260 house fires each season, resulting in more than \$16 million in property damage. Another 150 house fires are sparked by holiday lights and decorative lighting, costing \$8.9 million in damage. Typically, all of these fires are more severe and damaging, resulting in twice the injuries and five times the fatalities per blaze compared to average winter home fires.

Unsafe practices while putting up decorations are to blame for even more injuries. Ladders, freezing cold hands, staplers and slippery, icy conditions

are just a few. Are you thinking about one of the scenes with Chevy Chase from Christmas Vacation? "Russ, we checked every bulb didn't we?"

Nearly 6,000 individuals visit emergency rooms each year as a result of falls. Four thousand more are treated for injuries associated with extension cords.

Gifts trigger injuries, too. Toys that are not used as intended or used without proper supervision lead to avoidable accidents. Electrical shocks, burns, or injuries from sharp, pointed, or moving parts are to blame for many of these injuries according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

I know you have too many lists to take care of this time of year, but take a minute and read the following safety checklists:

TREES

- ★ Make sure an artificial tree is labeled "fire resistant." Be aware that "fire resistant" does not mean "fire proof." Exercise caution when it comes to your tree.
- ★ Make sure a live tree is fresh and green. Dry, brittle limbs and shedding needles are a breeding ground for sparks. Water a live tree regularly to prevent it from drying out.
- ★ Place any type of tree away from heat sources such as fireplaces, vents and radiators.

LIGHTS

- ★ Do not overload electrical outlets. Most lights are designed to connect no more than three strands. Inspect the wires periodically to make sure they are intact and not warm to the touch.
- ★ Never leave lights on overnight or when no one is home.
- ★ Only use lights that have been approved by an independent testing laboratory.

- ★ Replace any strands that show signs of damage, such as bare or frayed wires, broken bulbs or loose connections. Faulty lights can send an electrical charge through a tree and electrocute anyone who comes in contact with a branch.

GIFTS

- ★ Select gifts that are age appropriate for the recipient. Toys recommended for older children pose too many risks for younger children to use safely.
- ★ Educate children on electrical safety when using any new toy or product that requires an electrical connection.
- ★ Review all instructions and safety guidelines included with new products before you allow the child to use it. This ensures the safety of the child and protects the integrity of the product.

I remember last Christmas Eve after putting the kids to bed my wife and I were sitting in our living room by the light of our tree just thinking how beautiful it was. She had done it again! Year after year she wants it just right. I struggle and sometimes complain, but without out all of her planning and decorations it wouldn't be the same. I know that when morning comes and our kids spring out of bed, it will be the best Christmas they have ever had. From my family to yours, we wish you a safe and wonderful Holiday! ■

Jim Miles is a safety instructor and Certified Loss Control Professional for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. He can be contacted at jmiles@aiiec.coop.





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Keeping your evergreens ever green

Pine picking tips and arguments against plastic

What would December be without wrapping paper and ribbons, colored poinsettias, eggnog and folks rushing here and there? And of course, there's all the greenery from swags to wreaths to the trees.

Time has changed what evergreens we use for decorating.

Less than 50 years ago, we used what we grew or what was grown nearby. In most of the state, true pines were cut and decorated. We say "true pines" since some folks, and unfortunately too many, think all evergreens are "pines."

Scotch and white pines were the two commonly grown species. Occasionally you'd find the long needle red pine and the stiff Austrian or Black pine. But they just didn't have the appearance folks wanted and/or were too sticky and sappy, and thus were relegated to that "other" green stuck in decorations.

Pines also had the reputation of longevity, meaning you could decorate around Thanksgiving and still expect the needles to be mostly on the limb by New Year's Day. And if they did fall off, you could at least see them easily, though they were tougher on the Hoover.

Occasionally, you'd find spruce trees used as Christmas trees and in wreaths and swags. The two main spruces were blue spruce and Norway spruce. Throw in the Colorado blue spruce for good measure.

If you had a spruce, chances are you grew it, or knew someone who had a crowded windbreak. Spruces were twice as dense as pines, which meant you could use less for wreaths and swags and end up with a dense product. For trees, it meant heavier and/or more ornaments.

Unfortunately, spruces didn't hold up well. Three weeks indoors was really pushing the limit.

Transportation costs and consumer demands have opened up the ever-green market.

But in the last thirty years, there has been an explosion of the firs, first the Balsam, then the Fraser, and most recently the Noble. They combine the density of the spruces with the softness of the white pines. They retain their needles and smell great.

According to the National Christmas Tree Association the ten most popular varieties are: Fraser Fir, Douglas Fir, Balsam Fir, Colorado Blue Spruce, Scotch Pine, White Spruce, Eastern White Pine, White Fir and Virginia Pine.

Do you have that fake plastic versus real tree argument in your family? Well if you're on the real tree side, here are a couple arguments you can add this year.

- ◆ While they're growing, real Christmas trees support life by absorbing carbon dioxide and other gases and emitting fresh oxygen.
- ◆ The farms that grow Christmas trees stabilize soil, protect water supplies and provide refuge for wildlife while creating scenic green belts. Often, Christmas trees are grown on soil that doesn't support other crops.
- ◆ Real Christmas trees are biodegradable, which means they can be easily reused or recycled for mulch and other purposes.
- ◆ Fake trees are made from petroleum-based products and 85 percent come from China.
- ◆ Did you know that fake trees were invented by a company that made toilet bowl brushes? I rest my case.

Selecting and caring for your evergreen:

- ◆ Choose the freshest tree and/or

branches possible. Run a branch through your enclosed hand - the needles should not come off easily. Bend the outer branches - they should be pliable. If they are brittle and snap easily, the tree is too dry.

- ◆ Keep the needles cool, and branches in water if possible. Obviously, for a swag and wreath that's not practical, but keep them away from heat sources.
- ◆ Displaying trees in water in a traditional reservoir type stand is the most effective way of maintaining their freshness and minimizing needle loss. Make a fresh cut to remove about a 1/2-inch thick disk of wood from the base of the trunk before putting the tree in the stand. Make the cut perpendicular to the stem axis.
- ◆ As soon as the needles start dropping in quantities, get rid of the tree, wreath or swag. Dried needles are fire hazards.

Did you know that Illinois ranked #17 in Christmas tree harvest? That's according to the latest USDA Census. Okay, it's not to the level of corn and soybean rankings for Illinois, but that isn't bad for a plains state and Iowa wasn't even on the list. And remember it was a \$1.01 billion dollar business in the U.S. in 2012.

So go out there this year and support your local Illinois Christmas tree farmer! ■

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



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Let's just do it...others have!

Member lists the benefits of taking Doug's advice

Wow, time really does pass quickly. Since my last column, major winter storms have pounded the United States. The storms left many without electricity. Hundreds of crews were sent by electric utilities, including Arkansas' electric cooperatives, to help restore this wonderful product called electricity.

I heard several families say on TV that they did not realize how many ways they used electricity until they were without it. When I conduct my energy efficiency seminars at your local co-op, I show one PowerPoint slide that reads, "But the facts are, it is an all electric world." Yes, virtually everything in a house depends on electricity, even natural gas furnaces and clothes dryers.

I have always been impressed with the way electric utilities work together to restore power during a time of crisis. Furthermore, last year many of the utilities hit by Hurricane/Superstorm Sandy were "investor-owned, for-profit utilities," not "member-owned, non-profit" businesses like your electric cooperative. And although those business models differ greatly, they worked together during a difficult situation to restore electricity to those without. What a beautiful example of electric utility workers from all walks of life across America working together to improve the quality of life for those in need. I hope our elected officials will take note of the unity example set by these linemen.

Let's move on to energy efficiency. While going through the mail, I opened a letter from a lady who had attended my recent seminar at Craighead Electric Cooperative in Arkansas. I would like to share the entire letter, but there just isn't enough space within this column. So

I will just give you excerpts, exactly as written within the letter.

"Doug: Well, I have debated on whether to write you about my electric bill, but I wanted you to know how pleased I am. Your advice worked. We talked last summer about adding insulation to my attic. My Uncle Shepherd at church said that he would help me. For many Friday mornings, Lowe's would have three (insulation) machines available. When we got there, they were all checked out. Finally, one Saturday in January, we got it done. We discovered there wasn't any insulation over my laundry room, which explains why it was like killing hogs in there in the winter and hot as Hades in the summer.

"These are the things I noticed that were different after the insulation was added.

1. Felt warm when I walked into the laundry room. This was a first.
2. House was comfortable at 68 degrees. Did not have to layer clothing.
3. Did not have to turn on back-up heat (gas stove).
4. Summer thermostat set at 78 (did not change at any time) and house was comfortable even on hottest days.
5. Did not have to turn on floor fans to stay cool.
6. Children, when they visited, did not complain that the house was too hot. First time ever.
7. Unit does not run for what seems forever. I used to hear it running forever when I woke in the middle of the night. Now when I wake up, I wonder why it isn't running.
8. Electric bill is reasonable. Hallelujah!"

She also mentioned that she caulked "like mad" and installed a Marathon water heater. Her last

sentence says, "Thanks for taking the time to read my saga, but most of all thanks for all the help you give everyone on ways to cut down on energy costs."

Folks, the improvements that we teach always work. Just look at what adding cellulose attic insulation, caulking and installing a Marathon water heater did for this member. And you can do it, too.

Letters like these are humbling and make me proud to be affiliated with the electric cooperatives and their members. We've worked closely together for more than a decade to teach you how to take charge of your utility bills and improve the comfort of your home. Feedback like this is very rewarding, and I thank all of you who take the time to write.

Before I sign off, here's a couple of parting energy efficiency tips sure to help you and others save energy. Consider using LED lighting on your Christmas tree and around the house. LEDs use up to 75 percent less wattage than their incandescent counterparts and will last for many years. Also, give the gift of energy efficiency this year. There are dozens of affordable energy-saving items available at building supply centers that make for perfect stocking stuffers.

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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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FINEST

Cooking

Holiday Recipe Contest Winners

Christmas offers much to celebrate - the opportunity to gather with family and enjoy the familiar sights, sounds and smells we have come to cherish. One of the things we most associate with the holidays is food. It seems like everyone has a favorite dish they want to see on the table.

Back in August, we challenged our electric cooperative readers to send us their best original holiday recipes. We received submissions from all across the state and one thing became obvious - our readers (and their families) love dessert!

A group of judges read and scored each recipe on the basis of originality, appeal and clarity of instructions. We had many dishes that sounded tantalizing but only 10 were selected to be prepared and tasted. Those top 10 were prepared, tasted and scored to determine the winners.

We think you will find the recipes as amazing as we did!

First Place went to Gloria Bain, a member of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative, for her tasty, vegan Gloria's Cheesecake with a raspberry/blueberry topping. She is the recipient of a newly released

vegan cookbook along with an Illinois Country Living Finest Cook apron.

Norris Electric Cooperative member, Rita Schackmann, received Second Place for Rita's Double Feature Pie, a yummy combination of cheesecake and pecan pie. Rita received a copy of the *Taste of Home Christmas* cookbook, one of our Finest Cook aprons and a copy of the *NCM Cookbook*, a compilation of favorite recipes from cooperative members across the country.

Our Third Place winner was Corn Belt Energy member, Sue Crutcher, for her Squash Pie. Don't be fooled by the name, it is a sweet and delicious dessert. Sue also received one of our Finest Cook aprons and a copy of the *Taste of Home Christmas* cookbook.

Those receiving Honorable Mentions and a copy of the *NCM Cookbook* were: Dixie Aumann, Shelby Electric Cooperative, Fruit Salad with Apricot Dressing; Susan Ellis, Corn Belt Energy Cooperative, Smoked Sausage Quiche; Elizabeth Roeske, Rock Energy Cooperative, Cranberry Walnut Fudge; Malena Gillespey, Shelby Electric Cooperative, Papa's Bread Pudding; and Myra Rubach, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association for Ooey Goey Chocolatey Cake.

Finest Cooking offers tips online



If you haven't taken a look at the Illinois Country Living website lately we invite you to check it out at www.icl.coop.

We are excited to bring you video tips on recipes, cooking tools, baking hints, being creative with the ingredients on hand and more.

Something you want to see? Send an email to finestcooking@aiec.coop.

 **More Online**

Recipes prepared, tasted and photographed by Valerie Cheatham. For more recipes and photos go to www.icl.coop. Questions? Email recipes@aiec.coop.



FINEST
Cooking



First
PLACE

Gloria's Cheesecake

Submitted by: Gloria Bain,
SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

FINEST
Cooking



Second
PLACE

Rita's Double Feature Pie

Submitted by: Rita Schackmann,
Norris Electric Cooperative

FINEST
Cooking

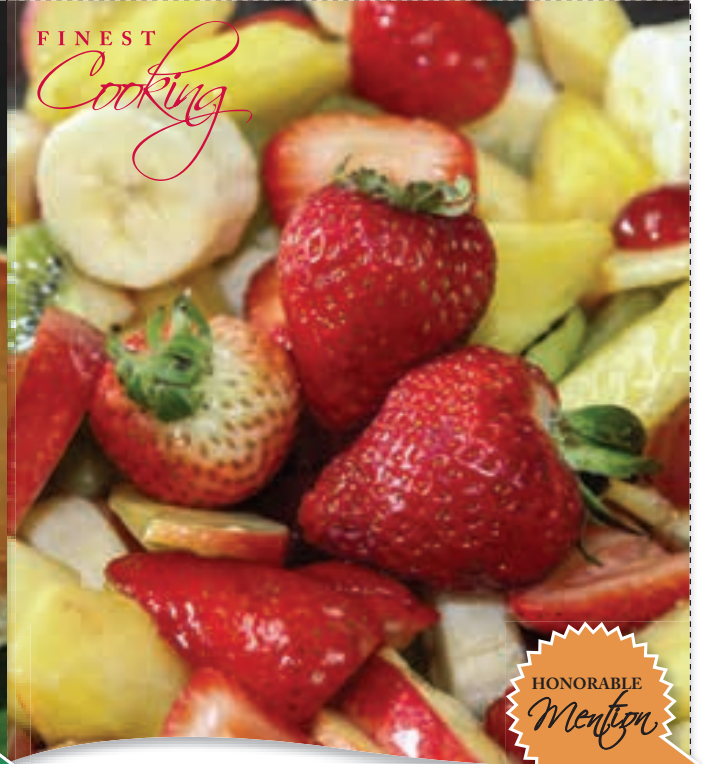


Third
PLACE

Fresh Squash Pie

Submitted by: Sue Crutcher,
Corn Belt Energy Corporation

FINEST
Cooking



HONORABLE
Mention

Fruit Salad with Apricot Dressing

Submitted by: Dixie Aumann,
Shelby Electric Cooperative

Rita's Double Feature Pie

Submitted by: Rita Schackmann, Norris Electric Cooperative

1 unbaked pie crust
8 oz. cream cheese,
softened
1/2 c. granulated sugar
1-1/2 t. vanilla
1/4 t. salt
1 egg
1-1/2 c. chopped pecans
2 beaten eggs
2/3 c. light corn syrup
1/4 c. granulated sugar
1 t. vanilla

In a medium mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, 1/2 c. sugar, 1-1/2 t. vanilla and 1/4 t. salt. Beat with stand mixer until smooth. Add 1 egg and beat until combined. Pour and spread into pie crust. Sprinkle pecans over cheese mixture. Mix together 2 beaten eggs, corn syrup, 1/4 c. sugar and 1 t. vanilla. Carefully pour over pecans. Bake at 375 degrees for 40-45 minutes. Cool completely.



Comments: At Christmas there's so many wonderful dishes and desserts to choose from. I always like pecan pie and cheesecake. I put these two together so I could have both at the same time. It's wonderful!

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Gloria's Cheesecake

Submitted by: Gloria Bain, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

1 individual pkg. graham crackers 1 c. coconut 1/2 c. walnuts 1/3 c. Salute Sante grapeseed oil or sweet almond oil 3 pkgs. Tofutti cream cheese 3/4 c. Florida Crystals (dried cane juice) Dash of cinnamon 1 T. vanilla	3 T. fresh lemon juice 3 heaping T. Ener-G Egg Replacer 1 container Tofutti sour cream 5 T. fructose 2 c. fruit juice (your choice, I like grape) 1/2 c. fructose 2 heaping T. cornstarch 1/2 bag each frozen blueberries and raspberries
--	--

Makes 1 springform or 2 - 9 inch pie plates. In a blender, grind graham crackers into crumbs and set aside in a bowl. Add coconut, walnuts and grapeseed oil to blender container and mix until blended together. Mix together with graham cracker crumbs and pat into a spring form pan or 2 aluminum pie pans and bake for 9 minutes at 350 degrees. In a mixing bowl, cream together Tofutti cream cheese, Florida Crystals and dash of cinnamon. In another cup mix together vanilla, lemon juice and egg replacer. Add to cream cheese mixture and cream together well. Pour into baked and cooled crust. Bake for 25 minutes at 350 degrees, add 10 minutes if using a springform pan. Mix together Tofutti sour cream and 5 T. fructose. Pour over top of cheesecake and bake another 9 minutes. In a saucepan, mix fruit juice, 1/2 c. fructose and cornstarch. Stir until smooth. Add 1/2 bag each of blueberries and raspberries. Bring to a boil and cook until thickened. Cool and spread on top of cooled cheesecake. Refrigerate several hours or overnight. For special occasions, top with edible flowers. Serves 10.

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Fruit Salad with Apricot Dressing

Submitted by: Dixie Aumann, Shelby Electric Cooperative

1 c. granulated sugar
1 T. cornstarch
2 (5.5 oz.) cans Apricot
Nectar
1 tsp. vanilla
6 lg. red apples, sliced
8 med. firm bananas, sliced
1 med. fresh pineapple,

peeled, cored and cut
into chunks
1 qt. fresh strawberries,
cut in half
1 c. green grapes,
cut in half
1 c. red grapes, cut in half
2 kiwi, peeled and sliced

In a microwave safe bowl, stir sugar, cornstarch and apricot nectar until smooth. Microwave uncovered on high for 6-8 minutes or until slightly thickened, stirring every 2 minutes. Stir in vanilla. Refrigerate. In a large bowl, combine fruit, drizzle with dressing and gently toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate. Yields 26 servings.



Comments: This recipe is a favorite of my family because it is not real filling, but satisfies your sweet tooth after a big meal. I like to serve this with crackers and/or cookies.

Illinois Country Living • December 2013

Fresh Squash Pie

Submitted by: Sue Crutcher, Corn Belt Energy Corporation

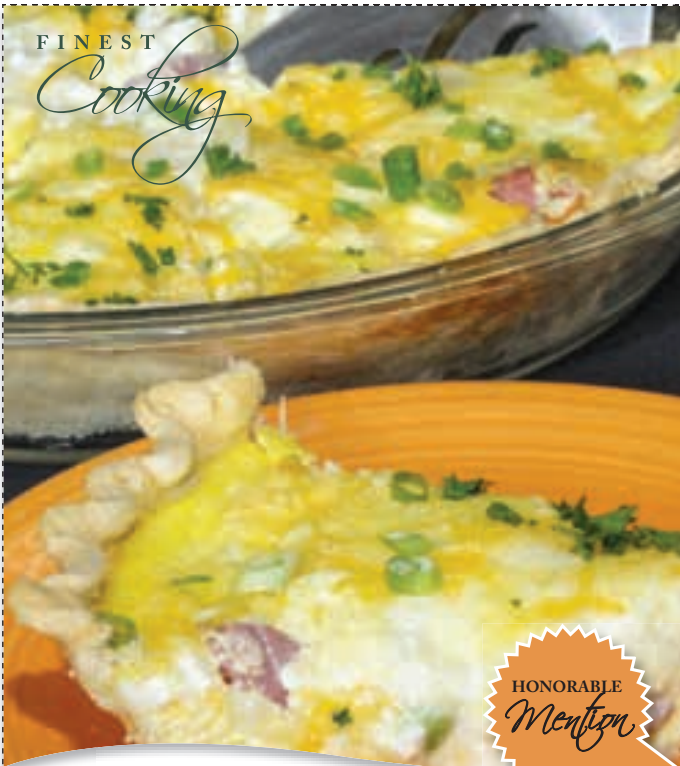
1 c. firmly packed light
brown sugar
2 T. flour
3 t. pumpkin pie spice
1/2 t. salt
2 c. fresh home prepared/
processed gooseneck
squash
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 - 12 oz. can evaporated
milk
1 fresh made 9" deep dish
pie pastry, unbaked

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Put pie pastry in 9 inch deep dish pie pan, fill 1/2 full with pie weights to keep bottom of crust from bubbling. Bake pastry for 15 min. Remove from oven, let cool and remove pie weights. In bowl, mix brown sugar, flour, pumpkin pie spice, salt. Stir in prepared squash, blend in egg and evaporated milk. Pour into partially baked pie pastry. Bake 45-60 min. or until knife inserted comes out clean. Cool completely, cut and serve. If desired, serve with whipped topping.



Comments: My mom made this fresh every holiday. It became a tradition. She would get fresh gooseneck squash in the fall and process it. Then freeze to make pies. Now I do this.

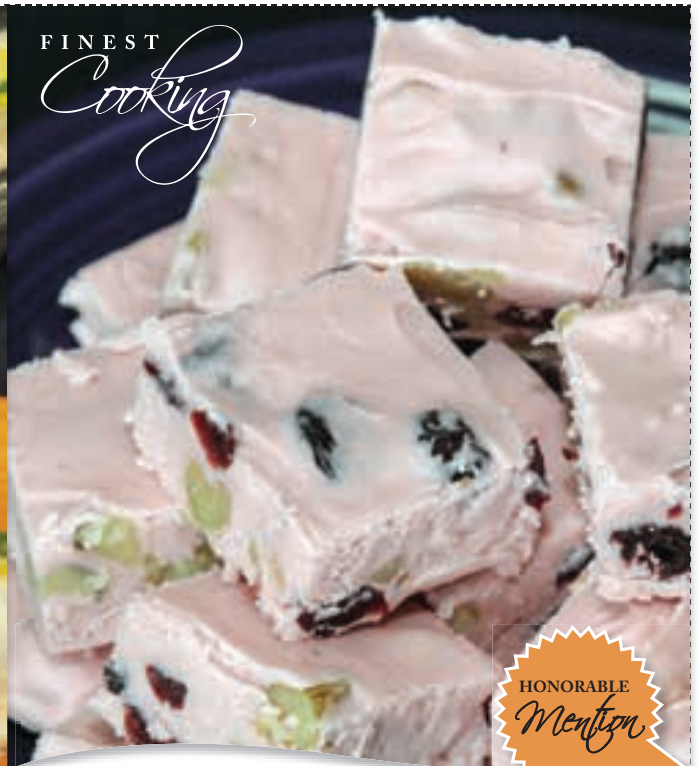
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HONORABLE
Mention

Smoked Sausage Quiche

Submitted by: Susan Ellis,
Corn Belt Energy Corporation



HONORABLE
Mention

Cranberry Walnut Fudge

Submitted by: Elizabeth Roeske,
Rock Energy Cooperative



HONORABLE
Mention

Papa's Bread Pudding

Submitted by: Malena Gillespey,
Shelby Electric Cooperative



HONORABLE
Mention

Ooey Gooey Chocolatey Cake

Submitted by: Myra Rubach,
Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

Cranberry Walnut Fudge

Submitted by: Elizabeth Roeske, Rock Energy Cooperative

24 oz. white vanilla chips
4-1/2 c. granulated sugar
2 c. walnut pieces
1/2 t. salt
7 oz. marshmallow crème
3 oz. black cherry Jello
12 oz. can evaporated milk
1-1/2 c. Craisins (7-8 oz.)
2 T. margarine



Line 10 X 15 X 1" pan with foil. Spray and smear with butter-flavored cooking spray. In bowl, dump vanilla chips, walnut pieces and marshmallow crème. In saucepan stir together sugar, salt and Jello. Stir in evaporated milk. Drop in margarine. Stir and bring to boil. Stir continuously for 7 minutes on LOW heat. Pour over the marshmallow crème mixture. Stir until chips are melted. Stir in Craisins. Pour into prepared pan. Let cool. Place in refrigerator a few hours until it sets up completely. Lift out of pan with edges of foil. Flip and peel off foil. Cut and store in airtight container in refrigerator.

Comments: I use Craisins in cookies, breads and bars, so I decided to get creative with fudge, and they loved it! It's a nice treat for those who can't enjoy the traditional chocolate fudges, and also adds color and variety to goodie trays.

Illinois Country Living • December 2013

Smoked Sausage Quiche

Submitted by: Susan Ellis, Corn Belt Energy Corporation

1 deep dish pie crust
1/2 lb. smoked sausage, chopped
3/4 c. small curd cottage cheese
1/2 c. freshly grated Parmesan

1/2 c. Cojack cheese, shredded
1 T. chopped onion
6 large eggs
1/2 c. half and half



Put pie crust on a baking sheet. Layer sausage, onion and cheeses in pie crust. Whip eggs and half and half, pour over ingredients in pie crust. Bake in a 350 degree oven 30 - 35 minutes or until center is set. Let sit for 10 minutes before serving.

Comments: It's just delicious! I make it every Christmas for my family's breakfast buffet. It's always one of the first things gone.

Illinois Country Living • December 2013

Ooey Goopy Chocolatey Cake

Submitted by: Myra Rubach, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

1 box German chocolate or dark chocolate cake mix
1 stick margarine, melted
2 T. milk
1 egg

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
1 box powdered sugar
3 eggs
1/2 c. mini chocolate chips
1/2 c. chopped pecans



Mix the first 4 ingredients together and pat into a greased 9x13" pan. Mix the cream cheese, powdered sugar and eggs with mixer. Pour over the cake mixture. Sprinkle with mini chocolate chips and then pecans. Bake for 25 min. at 350 degrees. When done and slightly cooled, serve with mocha or chocolate ice cream. Sprinkle with pecans and/or coconut, if desired. Or, simply use caramel or chocolate syrup.

Comments: Everyone loves this easy, rich dessert.

Illinois Country Living • December 2013

Papa's Bread Pudding

Submitted by: Malena Gillespey, Shelby Electric Cooperative



1 - 1 lb. loaf Raisin cinnamon bread
1 qt. whole milk
3 lg. eggs, slightly beaten
1 c. granulated sugar
3 T. vanilla
1 t. ground nutmeg plus 1/4 t. to sprinkle on top
3 T. unsalted butter, melted

Tear bread into medium size pieces into large mixing bowl. Add milk and allow to soak into bread for ten minutes until moistened, use fingers to get milk absorbed into mixture. Melt butter in microwave for 30 seconds and allow to cool. In separate medium bowl, add eggs, sugar, vanilla, nutmeg and butter. Stir thoroughly into bread mixture. Pour into greased 13x9x2 baking pan sprinkle 1/4 t. nutmeg over top before placing in oven. Bake at 350 degrees for 50-60 minutes or until butter knife inserted in center comes out clean.

Comments: Moist and the taste of holiday and home cooking. My dad's favorite bread pudding he said he has had anywhere. My old customers said it was delicious!

Illinois Country Living • December 2013

Microsoft telephone scam

Cyber criminals are all the rage these days. You see them in the news with talks about the group Anonymous and the information leaks from Edward Snowden. Did you know that the FBI even has a “Cyber’s Most Wanted List?” And, it all boils down to one thing: money. Those running scams of this sort may speak loudly about freedom of information, but at the heart of it all is their desire to scam you out of your hard-earned cash. Right now, they’ve got a new way of getting to you, using an old-fashioned means.

People all over the world are receiving phone calls from individuals claiming to be from Microsoft. Often, the caller says that Microsoft has identified a problem, or virus, on your computer and has called to help you fix the matter. Lately, these calls have even had people bring up “diagnostic” windows to show the errors. After all, seeing is believing right? So, if they show you the errors, then it must be true.

For instance, some victims report the caller has them open up Event Viewer to look at the errors reported there. In fact, many of the “errors” listed here won’t actually affect the performance of your computer. The Event Viewer logs everything that happens to your computer, so even the most minor little hiccup can cause an error to appear. If you looked right now, I bet you’d find quite a few, even if you just purchased your computer. (If you want to look, just click Start and then type in Event Viewer and press enter.)

If you stay on the line with the “Microsoft” representative, you may be asked to perform

some other tests. These tests are only designed to help prove the caller knows something about your specific computer. In actuality, what he/she is showing you are normal computer operations or errors.

The kicker comes when they ask you to allow them access to fix your computer. Most likely, the caller will direct you to a screen-sharing site to download a software that will allow for remote management of your computer. There are several of those types of applications out there, but one of the most common ones employed right now is teamviewer.com. TeamViewer is a legitimate software used for business and personal purposes.

But, if a caller purporting to be from Microsoft asks you to download it and then give them access to your computer, don’t do it. Giving them access via TeamViewer will only ensure they can control your computer. At some point, the caller is going to ask you to pay for the service. They do this in a few different ways like asking for a credit card number or redirecting you to PayPal to complete a transaction. Again, these are all scams and you should under no circumstances give them any of your payment

information.

If you have already been the victim of this scam, then there are some things you should do:

First, change your computer’s password. More than that, if you use your computer for online banking, change your password for banking as well, and notify your bank you may have been compromised. Do likewise for any other accounts you access on your computer. Change all of the passwords. Second, scan your computer with a malware tool. Personally, I like malwarebytes. Microsoft Safety Scanner is another one that works. If you have an IT Professional in your family or friends, then ask them for assistance.

Third, update and then run your virus scanning software. If you don’t have one, then you can download Microsoft Security Essentials for free (In Windows 8, Windows Defender replaces Microsoft Security Essentials.)

Finally, report the incident. You can report it to your local authorities, and also online at www.ic3.gov. It’s unlikely you will hear back, but the more reports they get, the more information available to help put a stop to these types of scams.

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

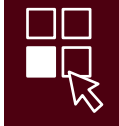
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Illinois innovation

Co-op member proves
high mileage possible

Many times innovation comes out of a backyard garage, not a big company. That's the story of "Seven," an electric 207 MPGe dream car that was born in an Illinois co-op member's pole barn.

Much has happened in the three years since Illinois Country Living last interviewed Illuminati Motor Works (IMW), the team that built an electric car from scratch and nearly won the Progressive Insurance Automotive XPRIZE. Their prototype, Seven, achieved 207 MPGe when tested at Chrysler's Chelsea, Mich. proving grounds. It also sports a new look and continues to have many adventures.

"The material used on the original body, although stated to be stable, apparently was not suitable for automotive purposes," says Kevin Smith, IMW Team Leader and Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative member. "To our horror, we discovered the spray foam would expand and contract in the sun, causing the fiberglass to

flex and warp. This left us with two options - park the car and let it sit in the garage forever or build a new body and continue to drive it."

In 2012, Smith hired composites specialist Reg Schmeiss of Motorvation, Inc. to teach the team how to recreate the body using molds and vacuum-forming carbon fiber and Kevlar to make new body panels. The composites are lighter and incredibly durable. Seven still has its iconic gull-wing doors, but the body has been streamlined with more aggressive body lines. Overall, it more closely resembles the team's early concept sketches.

During the XPRIZE competition, IMW learned the hard way that the torque from electric motors is extremely rough on transmissions. John Frana of Frana Vehicles in Rockford, Ill. created a custom one-speed transmission with a race differential strong enough to handle the power of Seven's 200 horsepower motor.



Top: Illuminati Motor Work's 207 MPGe prototype, Seven, parked on a country road near Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative's GobNob wind turbine.

Inset: Team Leader Kevin Smith poses with Seven before setting a NEDRA record at Dyno Dom's Sikeston Raceway.

For more information visit:
illuminatimotorworks.org
and ingeniousbook.com.



IMW members Nathan Knappenburger, Matthew Yochim, Nick Smith and George Kennedy with Seven at Adler Planetarium.



Seven charging with other DIY electric cars at EVCCON.

Education is IMW's mission. When giving a talk to a room of high school students, Smith invited the teenagers to come to the workshop and learn how to build cars. Sixteen year old Matthew Yochim of Springfield, Ill. became the team's intern. Yochim's first task was to disassemble a broken transmission. He continued to work long hours to help create Seven's new body. After graduation, Yochim was accepted into Purdue University's College of Engineering and as a freshman taught his fellow Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers) teammates how to create composite body parts for their project car.

Seven's social calendar has been busy. Adler Planetarium invited the team to display Seven at its July 18, 2013 Adler After Dark: Future Tech event. IMW drove their electric car from Divernon, Ill. to downtown Chicago and joined industry leaders to tell the audience about next-generation technologies such as EVs, 3D printing and green skyscrapers.

In August, Seven participated in the annual Electric Vehicle Conversion Convention in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Smith and team member Nathan Knappenburger shared ideas and brainstormed solutions to problems do-it-yourself EV creators encounter. While there, Seven placed third in EVCCON's 1/8 mile drag race and set a National Electric Drag Racing Association (NEDRA) record.

Recently, Seven was awarded first place in its class at the International Route 66 Mother Road Festival car show in downtown Springfield. A constant crowd surrounded the car and it took three-to-five team members to help field all of the questions.

Smith uses public events to spread his message. "Higher mileage cars are possible. We should expect more," he explains. "Electric cars are the future – one you can build yourself."

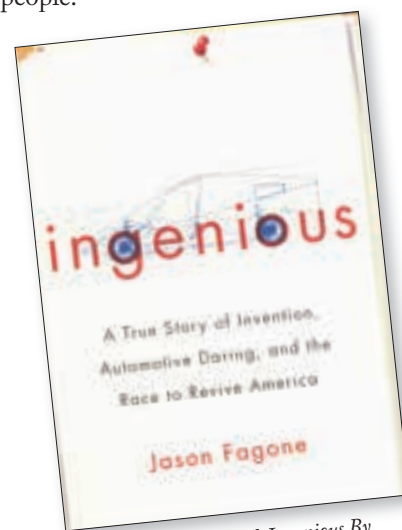
"It's not just us. There is a large range of people working on this, from wealthy people to high school students, building high efficiency cars that get hundreds of miles per gallon. The only people I don't see aggressively working to address this are the big automotive manufacturers," Smith adds.

IMW's story is included in a new book by Jason Fagone. *Ingenious: A True Story of Invention, Automotive Daring, and the Race to Revive America* follows four XPRIZE teams that attempted to do what the major automotive manufacturers would not – create an affordable, safe, 100+ mile-per-gallon vehicle.

While IMW is only a small part of the overall book, Fagone has found his audiences respond the most to Seven's story. "People love the handmade nature of the Illuminati car. The steel that was forged in the wood-burning stove. The welds and the foam and the custom fiberglass body," says Fagone.

"It kind of blows their mind, like it blew my mind when I first saw the car back in 2010. They're surprised that, one, you can actually make a car this way, completely from scratch, and two, that the car performed as well as it did. And when I explain how little money it cost, and how much of it was scavenged from scrap yards, people wonder – why isn't this a real car? They're frustrated, I think, but also inspired, because they see what's possible."

Smith, his father Nick and Seven will be joining Fagone on his east coast book tour this December. "I appreciate Fagone's effort to get the word out," says Smith. "The real heroes of this story are not the government or the manufacturers, but ordinary people."



Reprinted from the book *Ingenious* By Jason Fagone Copyright 2013 by Jason Fagone. Published by Crown, a division of Penguin Random House, Inc.

3-5 Let's Go Fishing Show, 1 Gateway Dr., Collinsville. This show is dedicated solely to anglers. Visitors not only find a "fishing tackle super-store" but attend seminars and see a wide variety of fishing tackle, rods and reels, and aluminum and fiberglass fishing boats. Scott Martin, Pro Bass Fisherman and star of the "Scott Martin Challenge" on NBC Sports will be there. Adults-\$7, Seniors age 60+-\$5, Ages 6-15 - \$3.50, Ages 5 & under - free. Fri. 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. www.gatewaycenter.com or 800-289-2388.

4-26 Guided Winter Hikes from Starved Rock Lodge, Routes 178 & 71, Utica. Every Saturday and Sunday from December through March, hikes depart at 11 a.m. and return about 2 p.m. Join a guided hike, \$12 per person, with the possibility of seeing frozen waterfalls and eagles in flight. The hike will go from the lodge to LaSalle Canyon. After leaving LaSalle Canyon, the hike continues to Eagle Cliff and Lovers Leap for the best view of the majestic eagles. Dress appropriately for the weather and wear proper shoes or boots. Don't forget your binoculars and camera. Advanced reservations are required as space is limited. To reserve tickets call 815-220-7386.

5 Alton-Audubon Eagle Festival, Audubon Center at Riverlands, 301 Riverlands Way, Alton. Join us for the kick-off of the eagle watching season. Activities include live eagle meet & greet, preview of events at the Eagle Watching Hot Spots, kid's activities, crafts and eagle viewing walks. Learn about eagle watching - how to spot eagles, where to look and what brings the eagles here each winter. Then

head across the river to Downtown Alton for ice sculpting on the streets. www.visitalton.com or 618-465-6676.

8-10 Illinois Specialty Crops, Agritourism and Organic Conference, Crowne Plaza Hotel and Convention Center, Springfield. Featuring nearly 100 speakers and 60 trade show exhibitors, the conference has a variety of pre-conference workshops along with general sessions and breakout sessions aimed at helping Illinois specialty growers cultivate their operations. 309-557-2107 or www.specialtygrowers.org.

11-12 Midwest Speed Expo, Orr Building, Illinois State Fairgrounds, Springfield. What better way to spend a wintery Saturday or Sunday just before the start of the new season. The expo is your opportunity to look over and purchase both new and used parts for your racing program as well as talk to representatives from area tracks to catch up on rule changes. On Sunday the "Driver of the Year" will be named. Make this a family event and bring the kids out for a day of action packed fun! Admission: Adults \$7, Children under 10 are free. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. www.midwestspeed.net or 217-553-1963.

19-21 The 23rd Quad Cities Farm Show, QCCA Expo Center, 2621 Fourth Ave., Rock Island. More than 200 ag companies will fill the expo center with an emphasis on the upcoming planting season. Show admission and parking are free. Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Mon. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Tues. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. www.qccaexpocenter.com.

24-26 Great River Eagle Days, Oakley Lindsay Center at Lock & Dam 21, 300 Civic Center Plaza, Quincy. The public is invited to free activities at the civic center, Black Fox Singers, Native American dancers, vendors, food, live raptors and an eagle watch. www.seequincy.com or 217-214-3700.

25-26 Annual Norge Ski Jump Tournament, Norge Ski Club, 100 Ski Hill Rd., Fox River Grove. Fun for the whole family, this U.S. Cup & International 5 Hills Ski Jumping Winter Tournament starts at noon both days. Ski jumpers from around the world will be competing. Pre-sale buttons available 2 weeks before the tournament: \$10 at local merchants, \$11 Will-Call online at www.norgeskiclub.com, \$15 at the gate on Tournament days. www.norgeskiclub.com or 847-639-9718.



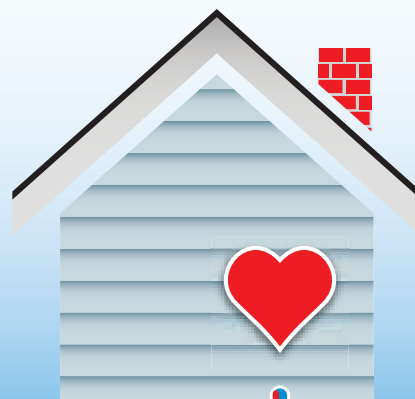
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Deadline: December 15 for February events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. E-mail to: datebook@aiec.coop.

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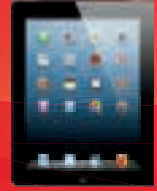
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