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Illinois Country Living

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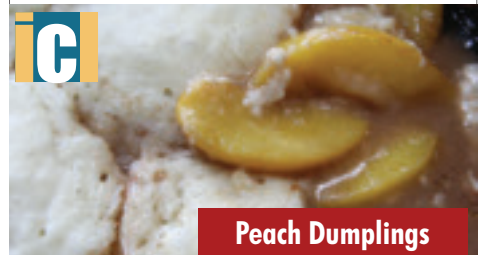
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Imposing newsprint tariffs would hurt, not help, American jobs

Trade laws and, ultimately, imposing tariffs are designed to protect American interests and jobs. That's a concept everyone can agree on.

But what happens when those laws and tariffs have the opposite effect? That's an issue that's playing out in D.C. with the Department of Commerce and the International Trade Commission.

A lone newsprint mill in Washington state, owned by a New York hedge fund, brought a complaint to the International Trade Commission (ITC) alleging unfair trade practices against Canadian producers of newsprint. NORPAC claims that production of Canadian newsprint is subsidized by the government and that it is sold in the U.S. below its fair value.

Most likely the paper on which you read your local newspaper was produced in Canada.

This year the Department of Commerce has imposed two preliminary tariffs that have increased the price of newsprint for some newspapers by more than 30 percent. This summer, both agencies will explore whether this temporary tariff should become permanent. In particular, the ITC will have a hearing in July to hear testimony from both sides of the issue.

Presently the only one supporting the tariffs is the petitioner, whereas a coalition of newspapers, commercial printers, the majority of U.S. and Canadian newsprint producers and their trade association, community groups and even members of Congress are strongly opposed to these tariffs. A joint letter signed by all the members of the House from Illinois was sent to the ITC opposing the tariffs. All 18 House members are in support of our efforts and that makes a strong statement when members from both parties are in complete agreement on an issue.



If this tariff is made permanent, trade laws that are intended to protect American jobs and interests will have the opposite effect. For newspapers, staff and newsprint are the largest expenses. Faced with those kinds of increases, newspaper publishers throughout Illinois and the rest of the country will have to make hard decisions that will ultimately impact the coverage of local issues and the staff that report on those issues.

A survey conducted by the Illinois Press Association in May illustrated the harmful effects of the tariffs if they are made permanent. Over 50 percent of the member newspapers responded. Among the findings, 68 percent responded that they would reduce the number of pages they publish, and 60 percent would reduce the size of their staffs.

Newspapers play a critical role in the communities they serve. Countless local organizations rely on their local newspaper to get their message to readers whether it's the local United Way or church group. Space devoted by newspapers for this type of coverage will be at a premium and publishers will be forced to limit or completely eliminate this critical public service.

Presently there isn't enough newsprint produced in the U.S. to meet the demand of the industry. Given the fact that newsprint consumption has dropped by more than 75 percent since 2000, no U.S. producer is going to invest in starting a newsprint mill. Mills cost hundreds of millions of dollars to build and take years to come into full production.

If these tariffs are made permanent, the New York hedge fund wins as it now has increased the value of its asset, and the federal government wins as tariffs collected go to the Department of Commerce.

Sadly, Illinois and the rest of the country will lose as local newspapers will be impacted, and those people, events and issues that newspapers report on will lose as well.



Sam R Fisher
President/CEO
Illinois Press Association

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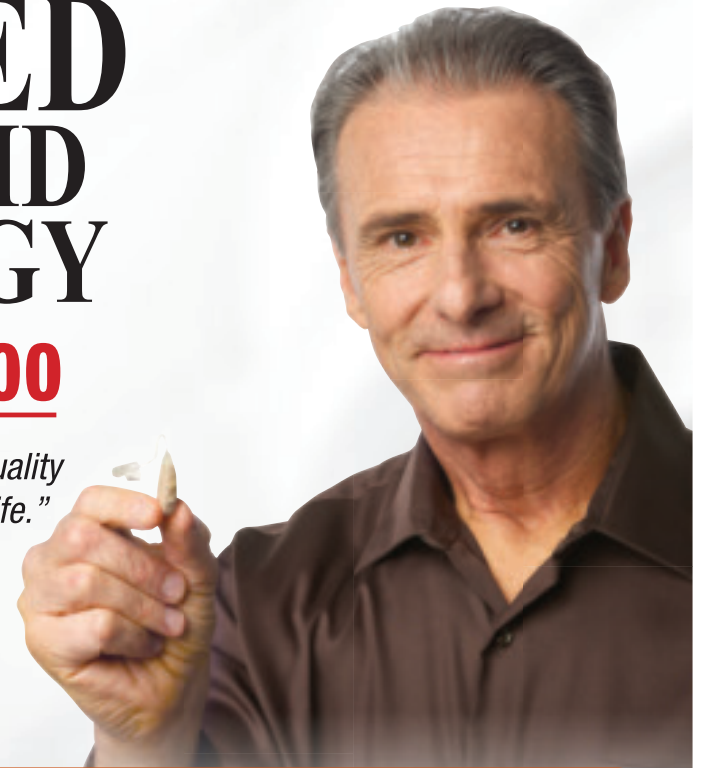
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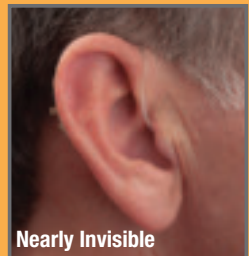
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Saving pollinators

The federal government could designate the monarch butterfly, whose numbers have been in decline for decades, as endangered or threatened. In response, electric cooperatives with territories that overlap critical monarch breeding areas and migration routes are devoting land and labor to reverse the decline of this and other key pollinator species.



One such cooperative is Dairyland Power Cooperative, a generation and transmission (G&T) co-op based in La Crosse, Wisconsin, which provides power to Jo-Carroll Energy. It first caught the pollinator preservation bug in 1994 when it prepared to cover a closed 40-acre coal ash landfill near a power plant. General practice at the time was to plant grasses, but the co-op expanded that to native prairie of grasses and pollinator plants.

Now, the G&T is developing large plots at all 18 of its solar farms to host monarch butterflies, bees and other pollinators. The combined 250 acres of habitat contain a diverse mix of milkweed, black-eyed Susans, sunflowers, lupine, cornflowers, forbs and other species. Fifteen sites are

already up and running.

Brad Foss, Dairyland senior environmental biologist, said efforts to sustain the monarch butterfly have “ramped up in the last few years, with the plight of pollinators” becoming more known. The rusty patched bumble bee, a Wisconsin native, was listed as “endangered” by the U.S. Fish &

Wildlife Service in January 2017.

Dairyland recently planted two pollinator plots of 1.5 to 2.5 acres and identified a 3-acre site in Minnesota. Plans include interpretive walking trails and information kiosks about the benefits of pollinators and the plant species. The co-op is also working with the Mississippi Valley Conservancy on an 8-acre bluff within a conservation easement to remove invasive species and return the land to native plants, including pollinator species.

“We want to develop high-profile sites, such as those located by subdivisions, for pollinator signage to educate the public on what we are doing and why we’re doing it,” said Foss. ♡

Commitment to Zero Contacts

NRECA and Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange recently introduced a Commitment to Zero Contacts initiative to help eliminate serious injuries and fatalities and enhance cooperative safety programs. A nationwide survey of 51,000 co-op employees conducted annually between 2006 and 2015 found an average of more than 23 serious injuries and fatalities each year. It’s a trend safety leaders across the country want to stop.

Since its introduction, more than 260 electric cooperative leaders in 37 states have shown strong support of the program’s goal by taking the online pledge to “Commit to Zero Contacts” and provide their senior leaders and field personnel with resources available to help prevent and eliminate these life-altering injuries. As of June 18, seven Illinois electric co-op managers had signed the pledge: Alisha Anker, Menard Electric Cooperative; Shane Hermetz, Egyptian Electric Cooperative; Eric Hobbie, Prairie Power, Inc.; Marcia Scott, Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Inc.; Mike Smith, McDonough Power Cooperative; Jim Thompson, Adams Electric Cooperative; and Alan Wattles, Monroe



County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

The factors that increase the likelihood of accidents vary but creating a strong culture of safety helps mitigate the risk at all levels of an organization, NRECA CEO Jim Matheson told safety professionals.

“If you have a strong organizational culture, it creates better teamwork, improves communications and reduces injury rates,” said Matheson.

Commitment to Zero Contacts suggests that co-ops avoid a “bad cop” mentality and instead focus on a systemwide approach that helps:

- Clarify and define life-saving rules.
- Verify use of life-savings rules.
- Create effective job planning for all jobs.
- Form a structured safety management process.
- Seek employee involvement.

“When you change attitudes, there will be a lot of nay-sayers. It’s a tough job, but this is doable,” said Phil Irwin, president and CEO of Federated. “We have the tools and the training.” ♡

Source: NRECA



Co-op youth return from Washington, D.C.

Seventy-one students from 27 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives joined more than 1,800 of their peers across the U.S. for the annual National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth to Washington tour June 8-15.

Students toured Capitol Hill, met with U.S. Senator Dick Durbin and their respective Congressmen. They also visited historical and cultural sites including Arlington National Cemetery, the Supreme Court, Newseum, Royal Embassy of Saudi Arabia, a variety of memorials and the U.S. Capitol. Among fun activities the students enjoyed were the Marine Corps Sunset Parade, the Smithsonian Museums and an assembly of Youth Tour participants from across the nation.

During the trip, Collin Moseley from Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc. was chosen by his peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) of the NRECA. The YLC is a year-long appointment, and Moseley will represent Clay Electric and all Illinois' electric cooperatives at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead.

Since 1964, the nation's cooperative electric and telephone utilities have sponsored more than 60,000 high school students to visit Washington, D.C. To learn more about the Youth to Washington tour, go to www.youthtour.coop.



Students visited many memorials during the trip to D.C. Bethanny Lawson of EnerStar Electric Cooperative and Michaela Runge of Monroe County Electric Co-Operative visit the Vietnam Memorial.



Lexa Borrowman of Adams Electric Cooperative, Kameron Kuhn of Adams Telephone Co-Operative, Kaitlin Marry of Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Evan VanHoose of Wabash Communications Co-op and Colten Shipman of Western Illinois Electrical Coop. gaze into the U.S. Capitol dome during a tour of the building.



ELECTRIC & TELEPHONE COOPERATIVES
INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

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Youth Tour participants gather for a photo in front of the White House.

Egyptian Electric lands \$360,000 REDLG loan

Areas in Jackson County will soon have increased protection from flooding thanks to Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association's (EECA) assistance in securing a \$360,000 zero-interest, 10-year loan for Degognia-Fountain Bluff Levee and Drainage District.

The loan is from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program. USDA provided \$300,000 of the funds and \$60,000 was matched by EECA.

"It has always been important for Egyptian Electric to invest in rural communities," said General Manager Shane Hermetz. "The cooperative is happy to provide support through the REDLG program."

The levee district will utilize funds from the loan to repair and replace two of the existing pump systems. "The current pumps are 40-plus years old and were never designed to do what the district needs to remove water from areas that are at high risk for flooding," said Mark Holt, commissioner for Degognia-Fountain Bluff.

According to Holt, there will be about 12,000 acres protected by these pumps. Flood events that occurred in 2011-12 caused a net income loss of more than \$19 million. "Needless to say, the impact for the area will be dramatic," Holt said.

The Degognia-Fountain Bluff Levee and Drainage District is responsible for the repair and maintenance of



On hand for the check presentation were (L-R) EECA Board President Ken Jarrett, Degognia-Fountain Bluff Levee District Board Chair Carl Heins, EECA General Manager Shane Hermetz and EECA Member Services Manager Brooke Guthman.

the levee system from Cora City to Fountain Bluff on the Mississippi River and Oakwood bottoms to Grimsby on the Big Muddy River.

This is the first REDLG loan EECA has assisted in attaining, and the co-op is currently accepting applicants from qualified member or non-member taxing entities within its service territory interested in the REDLG program. ♡



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Preparing for disaster

by Thomas Kirk

Every year, the U.S. is hit by many natural disasters, including snow and ice storms, tornadoes, hurricanes and wildfires. These types of disasters pose a significant threat to our communities and homes. The most important step you can take to keep you and your family safe is to prepare beforehand, but knowing what to do during and after the event is crucial as well.

Before disaster strikes, familiarize yourself with the types of disasters that are common in your region, especially if you're new to the area. Many of the specifics depend on what type of disaster you're expecting, but there are several general guidelines to keep in mind as you prepare:

- **Water:** You will need one gallon per person per day. If you assume your family of four may be stranded for a week, store a minimum of 28 gallons.
- **Food:** Stock up on non-perishable or long shelf-life items, such as wheat, soybeans, canned fruits, peanut butter, jelly and condensed soups.
- **First aid kit:** Make sure your kit includes adhesive bandages (assorted sizes), antiseptic wipes, aspirin, hydrocortisone ointment, scissors and a thermometer. For a full list of suggested items, visit www.redcross.org.
- **Flashlights and candles:** Be sure to keep extra batteries and matches (in a waterproof container) on hand.

For additional guidance on emergency items to keep around the house, visit www.ready.gov/build-a-kit. Also consider training offered by local emergency management services such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) classes.

Some disasters occur suddenly. Pay close attention to watches and warnings and make sure every family member knows what your emergency plan is: staying or leaving, safe rooms in the house, where supplies are



Photo courtesy of Kate Stanciu, Norris Electric Cooperative member

located, what to do if anyone is separated, and how to notify loved ones that you're safe after the event. It's also a good idea to know where your home's main water and gas shutoff valves are located.

While the U.S. electric grid is reliable, it is possible to lose power during a storm. The outage could be momentary or last hours or even days. Most power outages in the U.S. are short and will not last more than a few hours. However, without knowing in advance how long the outage will last, it's wise to assume and act as though it will last for days. Here are a few general tips for wise energy practices during a disaster:

- Consume perishable and refrigerated foods first before they spoil.
- Pack frozen foods close together and consider freezing water bottles to eliminate any air pockets. The frozen water will help keep the food cooler longer.
- Make sure you have alternative lighting sources, like candles and flashlights (with spare batteries) located throughout the home.

- Keep manual tools such as a can opener on hand to replace any electronic gadgets you typically use.
- Make sure that all cell phones are fully charged.
- If the disaster involves lightning, unplug all electronic devices to protect against a power surge.

After the storm, be cautious when leaving your home. Listen to warnings and use common sense when approaching any damaged buildings or fallen trees. If you see a power line that is down, always assume the wires are live and dangerous. If possible, call your local electric cooperative to report the downed power line.

With a little bit of forethought, you're highly likely to make it through a disaster without too many problems. Remember, you and your family's safety should always come first.

For more information on disaster preparedness, visit www.ready.gov. 📍

Thomas Kirk is an associate analyst of distributed energy resources for the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Business & Technology Strategies (BTS) division.

Steel Yourself

At \$59, this blade of legendary Damascus steel is a real steal

Damascus steel is the stuff of legend. Using a technique first mastered in the ancient city, swords made from Damascus steel were known to slice gun barrels in half and separate single strands of hair in two, even if the hair simply floated down onto the blade.

Now, you can be a part of the legend. The 7 1/2" *August Knife* features a blade of modern Damascus steel, inspired by the production techniques and legends of history. Damascus steel blade knives can cost thousands. So, at \$59, the price itself is also legendary.

Once a lost art, we sought out a knifemaker who has resurrected the craftsmanship of Damascus steel to create the *August Knife*. The elusive, ancient production technique mixes different steel alloys to form a super steel—the outcome is a beautiful one-of-a-kind pattern of banding and mottling reminiscent of flowing water.

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Understanding appliance energy use

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

Dear Pat: Several of my appliances are getting old and will need to be replaced soon. Will the appliance choices I make have much impact on my energy bill? – Chelsea

Dear Chelsea: Your energy use varies month to month, so it can be difficult to see how much difference an appliance purchase makes. It's best to view the purchase over the lifetime of the equipment. Think about the up-front cost and the lifetime energy cost. In a Consumer Reports test, the most efficient refrigerator used \$68/year less electricity than the least efficient model. Multiply that difference over a decade or two, and the lifetime energy savings could be greater than the up-front cost. All it takes to get the best appliance for your needs is some initial research.

Appliance energy use is usually less, on average, than home heating and cooling bills, but can be several hundred dollars each year. Your appliance use depends on factors like the model, how often you use it, the settings you use for its particular function and even the time of day it is most used.

Over the last few decades, new appliances became more energy efficient, driven partly by minimum government standards. These standards, created by the U.S. Department of Energy, save consumers over \$60 billion each year. Appliances are required to include an Energy Guide label that shows estimated energy use and operating cost per year. These labels help you compare different models and calculate the initial cost against the long-term savings.

Some appliances will also have an ENERGY STAR label. This indicates the appliance is substantially more efficient than the minimum standard. Your greatest energy savings opportunities can come from replacing an old appliance with an ENERGY

STAR-rated appliance. Removing a refrigerator that's 20 years old and replacing it with a new ENERGY STAR model can lower the monthly electricity cost by 75 percent, from \$16.50 to less than \$4.

In some cases, the configuration of the appliance can also make a substantial difference. For example, a side-by-side refrigerator/freezer uses about 70 percent more energy than other configurations, with all the most efficient models having the refrigerator stacked on top of the freezer. All 36 of the most efficient clothes washers of 2018 were frontloading models.

Consider how much you use the appliance. The more you use the appliance the greater your savings will be from choosing a more efficient model. If you use the appliance less or have a small household, you may get by with a smaller refrigerator or freezer, which will save you money.

How you operate appliances can also make a difference. Here are some easy ways to save:

Refrigerator/Freezer:

- Set your refrigerator at 35 to 38 degrees and your freezer at 0 degrees.
- Make sure there is adequate air flow between the wall and the back of the unit.
- Keep the refrigerator relatively full when possible.
- Replace the seals around the doors if they appear to be leaking air.
- Defrost the refrigerator and freezer regularly.



All the most efficient 2018 models of washers and dryers were front-loading. Source: Pixabay, Creative Commons.

Stove/Oven

- Use the correct size of burner to fit the pan.
- Use smaller appliances like a microwave or slow cooker instead of the oven when possible.

Dishwasher

- Use the most energy-efficient and shortest setting that gets your dishes clean.
- Air dry rather than using the heated dry function.
- Wait to run a load until the dishwasher is full.

Make the most out of your appliance energy use with a little research before buying a new model and a few easy adjustments to the way you use them. 💡

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on saving energy on your appliances, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.



VACATION ELECTRIC SAFETY

As you take that last-minute vacation before school starts, be conscious of electric safety. If you come upon electric wires on the ground, or if wires fall on your car, assume they are live. Call 911, stay calm and don't leave your vehicle.

For more electric safety tips, contact your local electric cooperative.



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperatives



Photo courtesy of Ford Motor Company

Quiet and powerful

Electric vehicles hold their own in performance

By Paul Wesslund

If you want a really powerful car, maybe one that can accelerate from 0 to 60 mph in less than 3 seconds, consider an electric vehicle (EV) like the NIO EP9.

You're right, that's too powerful. The NIO EP9 would also cost you more than a million dollars. But even more modest versions offer a respectable kick. The Chevy Bolt and Ford Focus, with price tags in the \$35,000 range, make the jump to 60 mph in 6 to 11 seconds, which is about average for all U.S. cars.

Brian Sloboda, a program and product manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, says EV costs today make them a luxury car, but that's changing. As electric car research, development and production increases, costs will be coming down. Tax breaks for electric cars at

the federal level and in some states can reduce costs by several thousand dollars. And Sloboda notes that electricity costs less per mile than gasoline.

There's a built-in reason EVs hold their own in performance, notes Sloboda. "In an electric car, all of the power is going into the wheels. With a gas-powered car, a lot of power is lost inside the mechanical engine. If you sit in an electric car and the driver smashes down on the accelerator, you are going to be thrown into the back of your seat, much more so than many gasoline cars.

"The battery is at the bottom of the electric car, so you have a lower center of gravity, which means you can take the corners crisper," says Sloboda. "If you do a lot of driving in the hills or mountains, they are fun."

Electric vehicles hold a lot of other

surprises compared to the traditional view of them as a glorified golf cart. Even electric co-ops in rural parts of the country are hearing interest from their members.

About 700,000 electric vehicles drive on U.S. roads today, according to an analysis by CoBank, a financier for electric co-ops. That number could jump to 3 million in the next five years, says CoBank. The U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration projects EV sales growing from about 1 percent of the market today, to 12 percent by 2055.

Car makers are pushing those trends. In October, General Motors said it would launch 20 new electric vehicles by 2023. In January, Ford announced plans to invest \$11 billion in a lineup of 40 hybrid and

electric vehicles by 2022. In March, Volkswagen said it had secured \$25 billion in electric car batteries and technology and plans to scale that up to \$60 billion.

One of the most radical new notions about electric vehicles, advises Sloboda, is to think of them not as cars or trucks, but as consumer electronics.

“The internal combustion engine is a perfected technology, so those cars aren’t improving at a very rapid pace,” explains Sloboda. “But electric vehicles are evolving at a very rapid pace, so you’re really kind of comparing it to a cell phone or a computer.”

Should your next car be an EV? The answer could depend on where you live. Sloboda suggests you might consider leasing an electric car rather than buying one, to make it easier to trade in the car to take advantage of the annual improvements in battery life and other features.

Electric vehicles account for just 1.2 percent of the U.S. vehicle market, but sales are booming, growing 25 percent last year. And they’re getting better and cheaper as researchers improve the batteries that power them.

Other unexpected benefits of electric vehicles that could speed their acceptance, says Sloboda, include range, maintenance and more competitive costs.

Will I run out of juice?

The electric vehicle industry has a term for the biggest roadblock to its growth—range anxiety. But Sloboda says the fear of getting stranded far from home with no way to refuel may be overblown, and getting less concerning.

“If you’re an insurance salesman, you’re logging a lot of miles, so an electric car’s not going to be for you,” he says, noting that a typical range for an electric car today is over 100 miles, and ranges of 150 to 250 miles are becoming common. “The range on the electric cars you can buy today is perfectly sufficient to cover almost

everyone’s daily commute. If you look at how many miles you drive in a day, for most people in the United States, even in rural areas, that number is under 40 miles per day. So if your car has a range of 120 miles, that’s a lot of wiggle room.”

According to the Federal Highway Administration, the average American drives 25 miles a day, and for rural areas, that average is 34 miles a day.

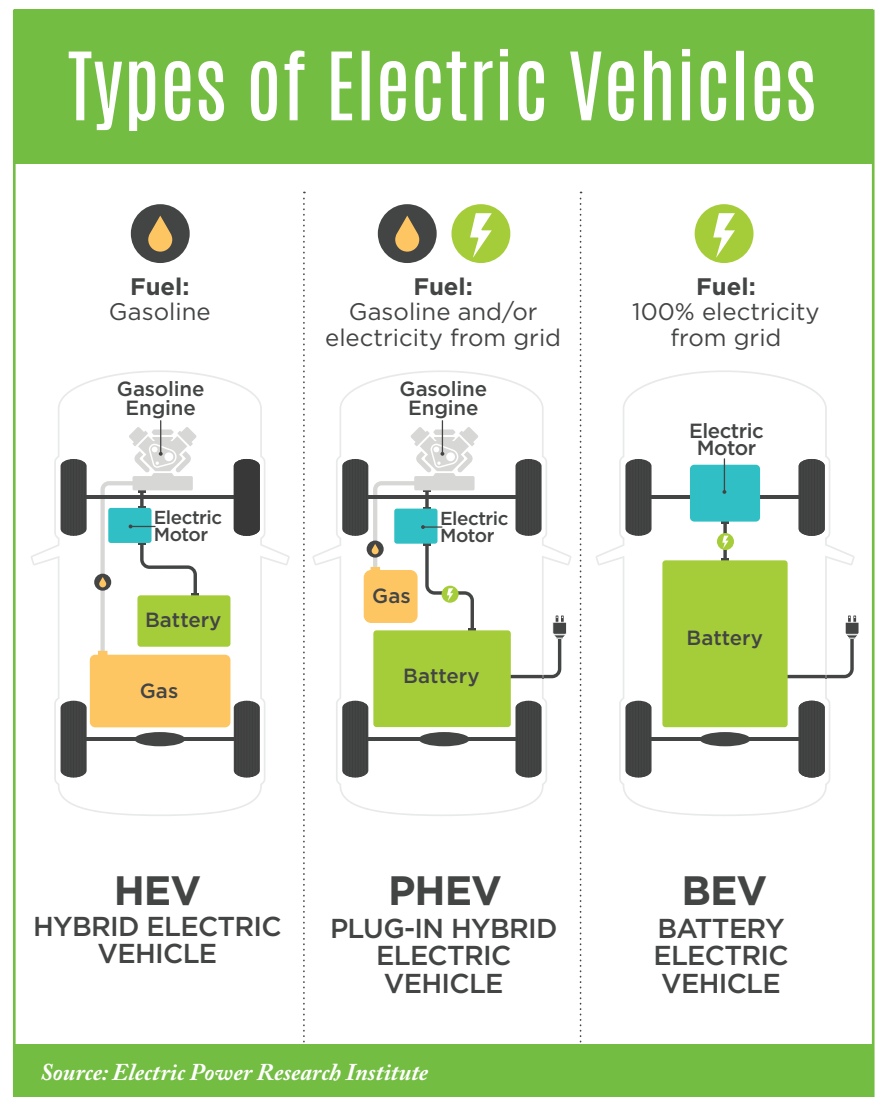
Sloboda says another reason it’s worth thinking realistically about your daily mileage comes from the most likely way an electric car would be refueled. Electric car acceptance doesn’t need to wait for a network or charging stations to appear around the country. When an EV is done

driving for the day, you can plug it in to recharge overnight. Essentially, you’re topping off the gas tank while you sleep, giving you a fully-charged battery every morning.

Electric cars can also save on maintenance, says Sloboda.

“With an electric vehicle, you don’t have oil changes, and you don’t really have transmission fluid changes,” he says.

And regenerative braking in EVs uses the electric motor to slow the car rather than relying only on brake pad friction. Sloboda says, “A lot of electric vehicle owners are saying they’ve never replaced their brakes because you just don’t have the physical wear and tear on the brake pad.”





3 ways to charge an electric car:

Level 1– The simplest charging technique is to plug the car into a standard home outlet. That will charge the battery at a rate that will add from two to five miles to its range each hour. That’s pretty slow, but Sloboda notes the battery might start the charging session already partly charged, depending on how far it’s driven that day.

Level 2– Faster charging will require a professional installer to upgrade the home’s voltage for a unit that will add between 10 and 25 miles of range for each hour of charging—a rate that would fully charge the battery overnight. Sloboda says installing a Level 2 charger in a house or garage would run \$500 to \$800 for the equipment, plus at least that much for the labor. Timers can also be used to charge the vehicle in the middle of the night when electric consumption is typically lower.

Level 3– DC fast charge requires specialized equipment more suited to public charging stations, and will bring a car battery up to 80 percent of capacity in 30 minutes. Sloboda warns this high-speed technique should only be used for special long-distance driving, since it can degrade the battery over time. That’s also why DC chargers shouldn’t be used to bring the battery up to 100 percent.

Off-peak electric rates

What you pay to charge your electric car could also depend on where you live, says Sloboda. He advises checking to see whether your local electric co-op offers a lower rate to charge an electric vehicle overnight, when the utility has a lower demand for electricity.

“It’s different depending on where you are in the country,” says Sloboda. Some local co-ops have fairly stable electric demand throughout a typical day, so they may not offer a special electric vehicle rate. He adds, “There are areas of the country where the on-peak, off-peak difference in price is extreme,” so that it might make financial sense for the utility to offer an overnight charging rate.

Another factor affecting the economics of an electric car is, of course, the cost of the vehicle.

“These cars are really in the luxury and performance car categories,” says Sloboda. As electric cars improve, projections put their cost coming down to match conventional vehicles by about the year 2025. But today, the average EV costs close to \$40,000, compared with less than \$30,000 for an internal combustion engine.

Environment and geography

For many people, one of the biggest selling points for electric cars is their effect on the environment, and that can also depend on where you live.

The sources of electricity for a local utility vary across the country—some areas depend heavily on coal-fired power plants, others use larger shares of solar or wind energy. One major environmental group analyzed all those local electric utility fuel mixes, and determined that for most of the country, electric vehicles have much less of an effect on the environment than conventional vehicles. That study by the Union of Concerned Scientists shows that in the middle part of the country, driving an electric vehicle has the equivalent environmental benefits

of driving a gasoline-powered car that gets 41-50 miles per gallon. For much of the rest of the country, it's like driving a car that gets well over 50 miles per gallon.

"Seventy-five percent of people now live in places where driving on electricity is cleaner than a 50 MPG gasoline car," says the report from the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Other local factors that will affect an electric car's performance include climate and geography, says Sloboda. The range of the vehicle will be affected by whether you regularly drive up and down mountains, or make a lot of use of the heater or air conditioner.

Sloboda concedes that electric vehicles are not for everybody—yet. One limit to their growth is that no major carmaker offers an especially popular choice, a pickup truck.

Sloboda says there's no technological barrier to making an electric pickup. He even suggests possible advantages: a heavy battery in the bottom would lower the center of gravity for better handling, and at a remote worksite the battery could run power tools.

"Within the next 24 months I believe there will be a credible pickup truck on the market," says Sloboda. "It's just a matter of time."

But one of the main reasons drivers buy electric cars is for environmental reasons.

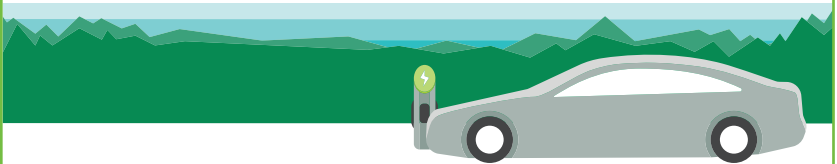
Sloboda says an electric car "is cleaner than a gas-powered car, no doubt about it." Another advantage of an electric car, he adds, is that "you're powering it with electricity from your local electric co-op."

Paul Wesslund writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

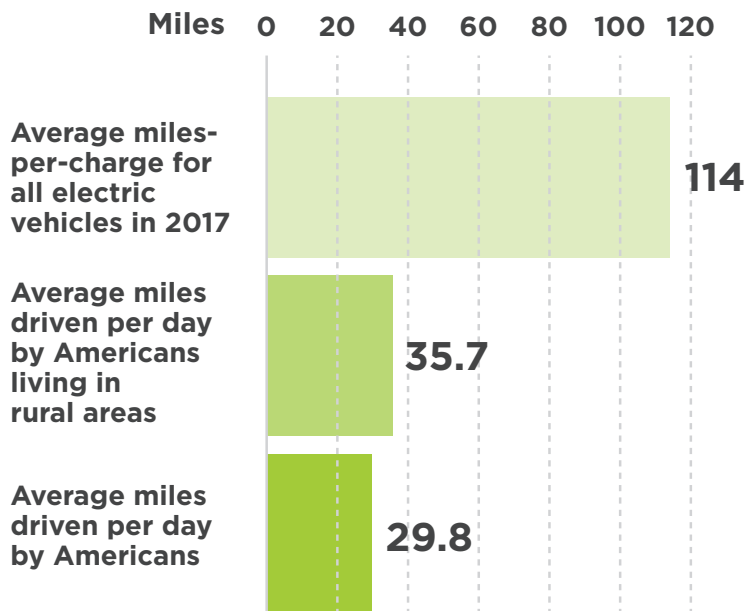
Easing Electric Vehicle Range Anxiety

Range anxiety—fear of the battery running out before you're able to recharge—is a roadblock to wider use of electric vehicles.

But statistics show this fear is overblown, even if you live in a rural area. While extra planning may be needed for vacations or longer trips, nearly everyone's daily driving needs can be met with one charge.



AVERAGE MILE COMPARISON



And when you're done driving your electric vehicle for the day, you can plug it in to recharge overnight, "topping off the tank" while you sleep!

Sources: Dept. of Energy, Energy Information Administration, AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety.



FINEST

Cooking

Peaches

Czech Peach Dumplings ▲

Submitted by Marilyn Hofman, Jo-Carroll Energy

6 lg. peaches, room temperature, washed and dried with no tears in skin
3 oz. cream cheese, softened
3 oz. butter, softened
2 c. flour
1/2 t. salt
2 lg. eggs, beaten

Mix flour and salt; set aside. With an electric mixer, cream butter and cream cheese together. Add flour mixture and mix. Add eggs, mix with hand to make stiff dough. Divide into 6 balls. On a floured board, flatten one ball and roll out into a circle about 5 or 6 inches across. Wrap this around a peach and pinch the dough together to make a smooth covering over the peach. Repeat with remaining peaches. Cook in a large pot of boiling water for 25 minutes. Remove from water with slotted spoon. Serve immediately with sugar and cottage cheese. This is a recipe which, like pancakes and waffles, can be eaten for breakfast, lunch or dinner. You can also use plums or apricots with reduced boiling time, 15-20 minutes, depending on size.

Peach Enchiladas

Submitted by Joy Zelhart, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

2 – 8 oz. tubes crescent rolls
2 sticks butter
1-1/2 c. sugar
1 t. cinnamon
4 firm Mac's Pride peaches, peeled and quartered (I have also used frozen)
1 – 12 oz. Mountain Dew

Melt butter, add sugar and cinnamon. Unroll crescent rolls and place peach quarters in each one. Roll from large end to small. Place in 12"x10"x2" pan (or use 9"x13"). Pour butter mixture over rolled up peach quarters, then pour Mountain Dew on top. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Peach Soup

3 large ripe peaches
1/2 c. apple or orange juice
1 c. water
1/8 c. honey
Zest and juice from 1/2 lime
1/8 t. salt

Add peaches to a pan of boiling water for 20-30 seconds. Remove from pan and place in bowl of ice water. Peel and pit peaches; discard. Put peaches in a blender. Add rest of ingredients and blend until smooth. Refrigerate until chilled. Pour soup into cups or bowls and serve. Makes 3-4 servings.

◀ *Sour Cream Fruit Pie*

Submitted by Kay Diekemper, Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

1 pie crust, unbaked
1-1/4 c. sugar
1 c. sour cream
3 eggs, beaten
2 T. flour
1/2 t. vanilla
1/4 t. salt
1 c. fresh or frozen fruit. *We like peaches, blueberries or raspberries*
Ground nutmeg, *optional*

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Beat the sugar, eggs, sour cream and flour. Add remaining ingredients, except fruit. Place fruit on bottom of unbaked pie crust. Carefully pour mixture into crust. Top with freshly-ground nutmeg, if you like. Bake 30 minutes or until center is firm and a knife comes out clean. Cool. Best if refrigerated overnight. (*Strawberries and rhubarb also work.*)





Easy Peach Cake ▼

Submitted by Jennifer Balding, Norris Electric Cooperative

- 1 – 15 oz. box vanilla cake mix
- 1 – 15 oz. can sliced peaches in light syrup or fruit juice
- 1 sm. box vanilla instant pudding
- 1 – 8 oz. container whipped topping

Prepare cake mix according to directions for 9x13" pan. Cool. Drain peaches but reserve all the liquid. Dice peaches or pulse in food processor until finely chopped. Mix together whipped topping, reserved peach liquid and instant pudding using whisk until smooth. Add chopped peaches. Once cake is cool, frost with peach mixture. Store in refrigerator. **Editor's note:** this recipe could easily be diabetic-friendly by substituting with sugar free ingredients.



WE NEED RECIPES! Upcoming monthly topics include recipes using egg, pork, potatoes or honey. Please email submissions to finestcooking@icl.coop or mail them to Finest Cooking c/o Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Please include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Recipes not included in the magazine can be found on our website at icl.coop/finestcooking.

Grilled Teriyaki Chicken with Peach Salsa ▲

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts | 1/4 red onion, minced |
| Teriyaki sauce, can used bottled or make your own | 1 T. freshly chopped cilantro |
| 4 fresh peaches, peeled and diced | 1 lime, juiced |
| | 1/2 t. sugar |
| | 1/2 jalapeno, finely chopped |

Marinate chicken in teriyaki sauce at least 2 hours or overnight. Mix together peaches, onion, cilantro, jalapeno, sugar and lime juice. Refrigerate 30 minutes. While salsa is chilling, grill chicken until done. Top with peach salsa and serve.

Peach Dumplings

Submitted by JoAnn Watkins, Monroe County Electric Co-Operative, Inc.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 2 T. butter | Dumplings: |
| 1/3 to 1/2 c. sugar | 1 c. flour |
| 2 c. sliced peaches | 1-1/2 t. baking powder |
| Dash salt | 1/2 t. salt |
| 1/2 t. cinnamon | 1/4 c. sugar |
| 1-1/2 to 2 c. water | 2 T. butter |
| (depending on juiciness of peaches) | 1/2 t. vanilla |
| | 1/3 to 1/2 c. milk |

Combine 2 T. butter, sugar, peaches, salt, cinnamon and water in heavy skillet or saucepan. Bring to boiling, reduce heat and simmer gently about 5 minutes. Sift together flour, baking powder, 1/2 t. salt and 1/4 c. sugar. Cut or rub in butter until mixture is crumbly. Add vanilla to milk and add that to flour mixture to make a soft dough, stirring only until flour is well moistened. Drop by spoonfuls into simmering sauce. Cook, uncovered, 5 minutes. Cover and steam gently 15 minutes longer. Serve dumplings warm with the sauce. Makes 4 servings.



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

 Visit www.icl.coop to see more Illinois Country Living recipes.

Plan now for a fall vegetable garden

Planting cool season vegetables in July and August when it's 100 degrees outside seems counter intuitive doesn't it? But for experienced vegetable gardeners, now is the time that the fall's bountiful harvest of cool season vegetables is prepared for.

The typical vegetables we plant in our gardens are grouped into categories based on how much cold they can tolerate. When thinking about what to plant for a fall garden, the plants listed as very hardy or frost tolerant are the crops we want to consider. These vegetables will be able to survive the cold temperatures that fall will certainly bring, allowing enough time for the plant to mature and be harvested before temperatures dip too low.

The plants listed as **very hardy** should be planted at least 8 weeks before the average first frost. The average first frost date for central Illinois is approximately early to mid-October, so 8 weeks before then would put you at early to mid-August for planting. Those very hardy plants that could be planted from seed include kale, kohlrabi, leaf lettuces, onions, peas, rutabaga, salsify, spinach, and turnip. You could also plant broccoli, brussel sprouts, cabbage and onion sets or plants if transplants are ready and available.

The **frost tolerant** plants should be planted about 10 weeks before the average first frost putting late July as your planting time. The plants listed as frost tolerant include beets, chard, mustard, parsnip and radish, all of which are planted by seed. You could also plant cauliflower or Chinese cabbage from transplants.

Whatever you choose to grow, be sure to choose the vegetable variety with the smallest date to maturity. Every seed packet should tell you the days to maturity of each particular variety. Count back from when that average date of frost is and make sure you are planting early enough to get a harvest.



You want that vegetable to grow to maturity as soon as possible to avoid injury from frost.

Keep in mind that the average frost date is in fact an average. There is no telling when the actual first frost will occur. Knowing that a frost could come at any time, it's always a good idea to have floating row cover material on hand that can be placed over your vegetables if an early frost is going to occur. This floating row cover can help trap heat around your vegetables and increase the temperature below a couple of degrees. This may make the difference between plant survival or death by frost injury.

Though it might be difficult to think about planting more seeds or transplants in the garden in the midst

of summer heat, the reward of another harvest in the fall certainly makes it worth it! Many of the root vegetables, like carrots, become even sweeter as the ground starts to chill in the fall.

U of I Extension has many resources available for vegetable gardeners on their various websites if you need more specifics about planting cool season vegetables: <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/vegguide/>



Candice Hart is a Horticulture Educator with University of Illinois Extension serving DeWitt, Macon and Piatt counties. She is also a Certified Floral Designer, Illinois Certified Professional Florist and is an award winning floral designer.

Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



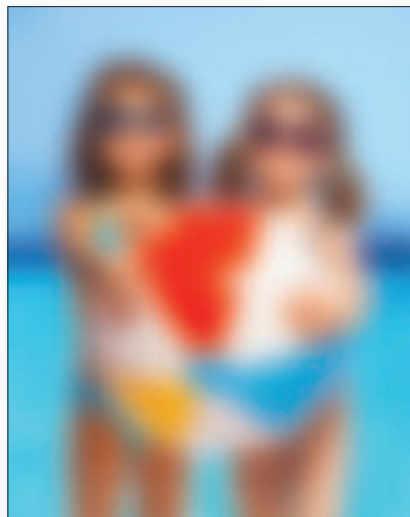
For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to help people who have lost vision from macular degeneration and other eye conditions.

"Some of my patients consider me the last stop for people who have vision loss," said Dr. Weingart, one of only a few doctors in the world who specialize in fitting bioptic telescopes to help those who have lost vision due to macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, and other debilitating eye diseases.

Imagine a pair of glasses that can improve your vision enough to change your life. If you're a low vision patient, you've probably not only imagined them, but have been searching for them. Bioptic telescopes may be the breakthrough in optical technology that

will give you the independence you've been looking for. Patients with vision in the 20/200 range can many times be improved to 20/50 or better.

Macular degeneration is the leading cause of blindness and vision loss in people over 50. Despite this, most adults are not familiar with the condition. As many as 25% of those over the age of 50 have some degree of macular degeneration. The macula



A scene as it might be viewed by a person with age-related macular degeneration.

is only one small part of the retina; however, it is the most sensitive and gives us sharp central vision. When it degenerates, macular degeneration leaves a blind spot right in the center of vision, making it difficult or impossible to recognize faces, read a book, or pass the driver's vision test.

Nine out of 10 people who have macular degeneration have the dry form. New research suggests vitamins can help. The British medical journal BMC Ophthalmology recently reported

that 56% of patients treated with a high-dose combination of vitamins experienced improved vision after six months.

While age is the most significant risk factor for developing the disease, heredity, smoking, cardiovascular disease, and high blood pressure have also been identified as risk factors.

Macular degeneration accounts for 90% of new legal blindness in the U.S. While there is currently no cure, promising research is being done on many fronts. "My job is to figure out everything and anything possible to keep a person functioning, especially driving," says Dr. McDaniel.

"Bioptic telescopes can cost over \$2,000," said Dr. McDaniel, "especially if we build them with an automatic sunglass."

"The major benefit of the bioptic telescope is that the lens automatically focuses on whatever you're looking at," said Dr. Weingart. "It's like a self-focusing camera, but much more precise."

To learn more about bioptic telescopes or to schedule a consultation, give Dr. McDaniel or Dr. Weingart a call. You can also visit our websites.

www.lowvisionofsouthil.com

1-802-350-6599

Office located in Mascoutah, Illinois
Marianne McDaniel, O.D.

www.FoxValleyLowVision.com

1-800-341-8498

Located in Oswego, IL
Ronald Weingart, O.D.

Beekeeping for Bee-ginners

By Colten Bradford

“You get this love for them, and you’d do anything to help them survive,” says Nancy Bowman, talking about her beehives while wearing a t-shirt with a large bee across the front. Her friend, neighbor and fellow beekeeper Judy Ostermeier nods in agreement as her dangling bee earrings swing in approval.

Nancy and Judy of Petersburg, Ill. are both fairly new to beekeeping. Nancy is in her second year with three hives, and Judy is in her fourth year with four.

“I took the plunge first,” Judy says. “I retired and had time on my hands. I love to garden, and I love to be outside, so beekeeping sounded perfect for me.”

“I got into it for health and nutritional reasons, as well as a love for the environment,” Nancy says. “You start reading that bees are dying off, and we need them to pollinate. Not only do I eat tons of honey, beekeepers are needed.”

To start their journey, Nancy and Judy took a class with the U of I Extension. This is where they learned the basics of beekeeping, and it helped them get started with their own hives. They advise anyone interested in beekeeping to take this class.

After taking the class, it helps you order bees, which are purchased by the pound. Two hives are recommended for beginners just in case one fails. The bees are shipped in a box, this year from California, and there’s a queen in a small cage. A jar of sugar water feeds the bees in transit.

The colony and queen are then transferred to the brood box, which is the bottom box on the hive, and you need to make sure the queen begins laying eggs. Bees are considered livestock and need to be registered. An inspector will visit to check the overall health of the hives.

If they learned one thing during their time beekeeping, it’s that



Photo courtesy of Nancy Bowman

there’s no one way to care for bees. “We learned early on, if you ask 10 beekeepers the same question, you’ll get 10 different answers,” Nancy says. “And it’s true,” Judy responds. “I don’t know if there’s a right or wrong answer. A lot of these decisions are by the gut.”

They do a lot of research by searching the internet, watching YouTube videos and asking other beekeepers questions. But in the end, they’ve learned to trust their own instinct when making decisions.

“I have lost so much sleep,” Nancy says. “I found a bug in the hive. What am I going to do? Are they getting too hot? Are they getting too cold?”

But you know what, they’ve done this for thousands of years. They are much smarter than I am. All I can do is control the problems in the hive. Judy comes to help, and the clubs are so supportive in Illinois. They will be there rain or shine. That’s very encouraging that first year.”

In Judy’s first year, she learned she was allergic to bees. “I got my bees, and then I got stung,” she says, remembering her arm ballooning. Instead of giving up on beekeeping, she goes to an allergist once a month for a shot. “And now when I get stung, not much happens.” The biggest obstacle is keeping the colonies healthy. Varroa mites are a

threat. “They will kill the bees,” Judy says. Nancy replies, “They will get on their backs and will suck the juice out of them. That’s scary for any beekeeper, to have something come in and wipe out their bees.”

The hives are inspected regularly for mites and treated to prevent an infestation. Other issues are disease and wax moths. “As long as your hive is healthy and there’s tons of bees, they pretty much take care of themselves,” Judy says. “But when they start weakening, that’s when the problems begin.”

Disease and pests aren’t the only problem for a beekeeper. Sometimes the whole colony will decide to leave. “I started with two hives last year,” Nancy recalls. “I babied them, and I knew what was going on. I had taken the honey for the last time, and then I went out there. You can usually hear them. I stood by the hive, and it was dead silent. I lifted the top, and every bee was gone. I just felt like crying.”

Nancy and Judy explain that this is called absconding. The queen decides they need a new home, and every bee will pack up and move away in a swarm.

“There’s something, and don’t try to figure out what, that the queen feels is not right in the hive,” Nancy says. “I don’t know what it could have been. I had two hives and managed them both the same.”

This happened to Judy too, except she witnessed it. She said a swarm made a temporary landing, and then those bees collapsed like a cloud and flew away. She remembers hopping on her bicycle and taking off down the road after them.

“I don’t want anyone to get into this thinking it’s a cake walk,” Nancy says. “I would never discourage anyone, but people need to know there is a time commitment, a financial commitment and you need to have a desire to learn.”

For those interested in beekeeping, Nancy and Judy have a few tips. Check your local laws. Your town may not allow beehives in the community.



Beekeepers Nancy Bowman and Judy Ostermeier

Take a class to learn as much as you can before owning a hive. Find a mentor. You’ll need help, and many experienced beekeepers are happy to assist. Last, join a club. Having a network of beekeepers will be helpful. They recommend starting with the Illinois State Beekeepers Association.

If you don’t want a hive of your own, you can still help honeybees flourish. First, plant a variety of flowers that will bloom throughout the year, so bees can have a source of pollen.

Second, stop spraying herbicides and pesticides. “Please stop spraying,” Judy pleads. “Never spray a flower because that’s what the bees go to. Herbicides hurt the bees.”

Third, don’t fear bees. “They aren’t there to sting you unless you bother them,” Nancy says.

Beekeeping started out as an interest for the two women, and it has now turned into a lifestyle.

Nancy oftentimes finds herself photographing and studying her bees. “I just love learning about these fascinating creatures,” she says.

“I love having the honey and the health benefits,” Judy says. “But the enthusiasm from my family... They are proud to say grandma is a beekeeper. It is something unique, and I love it.”



Grand Oaks Hives Honey is Nancy Bowman's product. Judy Ostermeier sells Abe's Raw Honey as well as lip balm.

Cooperative Cybersecurity

By Kaley Lockwood

Digital technologies and smart devices are facilitating greater information sharing by allowing people (and devices) to more efficiently communicate with each other. Internet-connected devices not only better enable us to stay in touch with loved ones, they simplify and streamline our lives by communicating with each other.

But greater connectivity comes with a cost.

Addressing the persistent and evolving reality of cyber threats is important for individuals and organizations alike. As people become increasingly interconnected and reliant on digital technologies, there are more opportunities for cyber threats that need to be addressed.

To this end, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) launched RC3, the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities program, to help electric cooperatives build stronger cybersecurity programs. With funding from the U.S. Department of Energy, RC3 is developing tools to help cooperatives develop a culture of cybersecurity.

Electric cooperatives, large and small, are investing time and resources to build stronger cyber defenses and increase their resiliency to cyberattacks. As co-ops ramp up capabilities in the beneficial use of digital technologies, they are integrating best practices to safeguard consumer data and grid operations from cyberattacks.

Electric co-ops are responding to the challenge, but are you? Cybercrime affects everyone—organizations, businesses and even individuals. Taking steps to protect your home network and devices from cyberattacks now will save you time and money in the long run.

Here are a few tips to beef up your personal cybersecurity:



- 🔒 Make sure you have antivirus software installed on your computer, and remember to keep it updated.
- 🔒 Don't send e-mails containing personal information, like your date of birth or Social Security Number, because that increases opportunities for mal-actors to steal your identify. Be careful when entering a credit card number into a website—if you do, make sure that it's a secure website. You can tell if it's secure by looking for the "s" at the beginning of the website address. Most begin with "http://." A secure site will begin with "https://."
- 🔒 Attachments or links in an email can contain malware that can infect your computer. Never open an e-mail attachment or click a link unless you know the person sending it, and you were expecting them to send it to you (hackers can take over an account and make it look like it's from a friend.)
- 🔒 Monitor children's online activity, and make sure they know how to practice good cyber security. Visit the U.S. Computer Emergency Readiness Team's (UC-CERT) website for security tips on how to keep children safe online (<https://www.us-cert.gov/ncas/tips/ST05-002>).
- 🔒 Always use a different password for each account. Stick to longer passwords that include a combination of numbers, special characters, with both lowercase and capital letters. 💡

Kaley Lockwood writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives. From growing suburbs to remote farming communities, electric co-ops serve as engines of economic development for 42 million Americans across 56 percent of the nation's landscape.

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• 3000 PSI piston pump for high pressure and better coverage

Customer Rating ★★★★★

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STEP STOOL/WORKING PLATFORM

Customer Rating ★★★★★

• 350 lb. capacity

NOW \$1999
\$2999

COMPARE TO \$5145
GPL MODEL: W-31

SAVE 61%

ITEM 62515/66911 shown

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PITTSBURGH **FREE** **WITH ANY PURCHASE**

CLICK-TYPE TORQUE WRENCHES

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

• Reversible

LIFETIME WARRANTY

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40 VOLT LITHIUM CORDLESS BRUSHLESS BLOWER

Customer Rating ★★★★★

NOW \$11999
\$13999

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MODEL: D697900

SAVE \$79

ITEM 64481/63284 shown

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Limit 4 - Coupon valid through 12/1/18*

COVER PRO **FREE** **WITH ANY PURCHASE**

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

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MODEL: 76377

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Customer Rating ★★★★★

• Powerful 15 amp motor

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*Original coupon only. No use on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase or without original receipt. Valid through 12/1/18.

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Meet the Electric John Deere

By Kaley Lockwood

Green and yellow are arguably the second-most American set of colors, behind red, white and blue of course. This rings true particularly for those who operate John Deere machinery on a daily basis, as the growth of our nation is supremely dependent on the country's agriculture industry, including the good folks who support it.

Technology in recent years has been the catalyst for the boom and bust of many industries. In the past decade or so, advancements in farming technology have primarily been focused on automation and precision, but with the automobile industry moving towards electric vehicles, the ag-industry is following suit.

John Deere showcased the first, fully battery-powered tractor in 2017 at SIMA, an international agribusiness tradeshow in Paris. This technological innovation was given a 'special mention' as it truly is the first of its kind. Nicknamed SESAM, for Sustainable Energy Supply for Agricultural Machinery, this all-electric tractor is modeled after John Deere's 6r series tractors.

In a press release by John Deere, SESAM is said to have all of the same "features and functionality of a 'conventional' tractor while offering the benefits of electric power." This emissions-free tractor runs at a lower noise level than other traditional tractors and is operated using two independent electric motors. The electrification of this tractor simplifies the moving parts and thus, greatly reduces the need for maintenance.

These two motors power an adapted DirectDrive transmission, producing 130 kilowatts of continuous power with a peak output of 400 horsepower, according to Farm-Equipment.com. The website also affirms that the tractor takes 3 hours to fully charge and can run up to 4 hours in the field with speeds ranging from 2 to



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30 mph. As a comparison, the Tesla model 3 may have a capacity of up to 75 kilowatt hours of battery storage (kWh), providing a range of about 310 miles. The SESAM has a capacity of 130 kWh with a range of about 34 miles, which means that this tractor uses a lot more electricity in a shorter period of time.

In order for the SESAM to take off, the battery capacity will need to expand to support the sun-up to sun-down longevity of farm work. In fact, the President and CEO of Autonomous Tractor Corporation, Kraig Schulz, purported that a 200 horsepower electric tractor would hypothetically need about 1,500 kWh of batteries to complete a full day's work. As energy storage technology continues to advance, it's only a matter of time before John Deere manufactures a tractor that can meet this need.

Although SESAM's battery technology may not yet be practical for a full day of farming, the all-electric tractor is a very exciting development for the agriculture industry. This is one

of many future steps in the direction of electrifying agricultural machinery and integrating this equipment with renewables. As the press release stated, "The SESAM tractor is a major part of John Deere's vision of the energy-independent farm of the future."

This push towards electrification of farm machinery in lieu of using fossil fuels directly supports the beneficial electrification movement. This concept, known fully as "environmentally beneficial electrification," is gaining traction among a growing number of groups in the U.S. including local electric cooperatives. Frequently promoted as a means to reducing greenhouse gases and helping the environment, beneficial electrification also helps consumers by providing products that are cleaner, quieter and easier to maintain. John Deere's SESAM tractor does just that.

Kaley Lockwood writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

A Shopper's Guide to Heat Pumps

By Diane Veto Parham

Baffled by the alphabet soup that greets you when you start looking at heat pumps? If an HVAC contractor starts spouting numbers for SEER, EER, HSPF and COP, just remember those terms are a handy shorthand for comparing the efficiency of one heat pump to another. A higher number indicates a more efficient system. That can save you money in energy costs over the life of the unit, but you may have to pay a little more for it up front.

• SEER: Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio.

This rates the cooling efficiency of an air-source heat pump. To earn ENERGY STAR certification, heat pumps must have a SEER of at least 15; mini-split SEER ratings can be in the 30s. You can buy less expensive, traditional models with a SEER of 13, the NRECA's Brian Sloboda says. "The good news is, if you have an older unit, it's probably below that, so the lowest amount you spend on a new unit will still save you money," he says.

• EER: Energy Efficiency Ratio.

It's not tied to seasonal performance, but it is a measure of cooling performance. You'll find this on geothermal (ground-source) heat pumps, usually rated 18 and up.

• HSPF: Heating Seasonal Performance Factor.

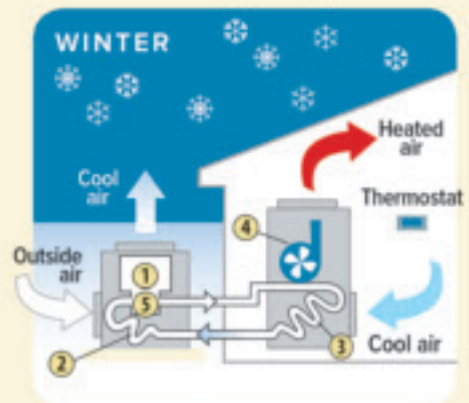
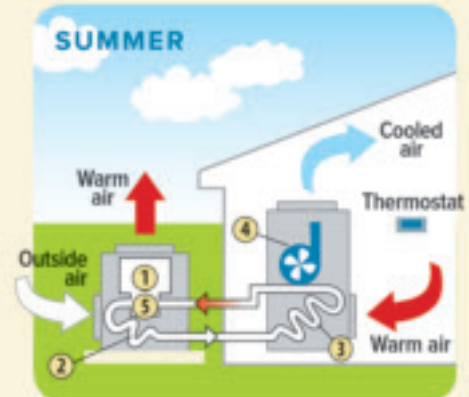
The flip side of SEER, this rates an air-source heat pump's heating efficiency. Look for a rating of 8.2 or above for ENERGY STAR-certified models.

• COP: Coefficient of Performance.

If you're shopping for geothermal systems, watch for this measure of heating efficiency, and aim for a rating of 3.6 or higher for more efficient models.

How air-source heat pumps work

By transferring heat between a house and outside air, these devices trim electricity use by as much as 30 to 40 percent in moderate climates.



- 1 **COMPRESSOR**
Increases refrigerant pressure to accept the maximum heat from the air.
- 2 **OUTSIDE COIL**
Refrigerant moves through coils, absorbing heat from the outside air in winter or releasing heat to the outside air in summer.
- 3 **INSIDE COIL**
Refrigerant moves through coils, absorbing heat from the inside air in summer or releasing heat to the inside air in winter.
- 4 **AIR HANDLER**
Fan blows air over the inside coil and into a home's ducts.
- 5 **REVERSING VALVE**
Switches the direction of the refrigerant flow, changing the heat pump's output to hot or cold air (controlled by thermostat).

SOURCE: NRECA

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FOOD GIFTS FOR

Christmas Contest

Finding the right present for everyone on your gift list can be difficult, especially those family members, friends or co-workers who are difficult to buy for. Perhaps you turn to your kitchen when faced with this conundrum and add a personal touch to your gifts.

Illinois Country Living's Finest Cooking wants to know what recipes you use for gifting. Perhaps it's an infused olive oil or honey, your secret spiced nut blend, granola, ice cream topping, jams and jellies or mug cakes – the possibilities are endless.

Enter your favorite gift recipes by going to www.icl.coop/christmas or visit our website at www.icl.coop and click on the Food Gifts Contest link on the right side of the page. All entries must be received by October 1.

First place will win a \$100 Visa gift card, second place \$50, and third place \$25 – all in time for Christmas shopping. The winners and honorable mentions will be in the December issue of Illinois Country Living. All other recipes will be found on our website at www.icl.coop.





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Twistee Treat Diner

By Valerie Cheatham

As you travel down Interstate 55 or historic U.S. Route 66 south of Litchfield, it's hard to miss the hot pink elephant that sits on the west side of those roads. If you look further, you'll spy a green spaceship, the giant top of an ice cream cone, and a large man and woman. What have you found? It's the Twistee Treat Diner and Pink Elephant Antique Mall in Livingston.

Both are frequent stops for national and international tourists as they follow the historic highway. There were license plates from Texas, Tennessee and Maryland on a quiet Monday morning.

Later in July, a busload of newspaper and magazine editors were expected to stop, shop, eat and learn as they traveled Route 66. The historic route is advertised internationally, and it's not unusual to have tourists from as far as Japan, Australia and several European countries stop in.

On a daily basis, folks can be seen taking selfies with the pink elephant, stopping in for food or ice cream, and perusing the antiques.

Housed in the former Livingston High School gymnasium, the antique mall came first.

It rents booth space to about 50 antique enthusiasts who staff the shop twice each month. The pink elephant was discovered by owner Davey Hammond and knew it would be just the object he needed to draw attention to the antique mall. He later added the other giant items and continues to watch for others on the internet.

Around seven years later, he added the large multi-colored ice cream cone with walk-up windows and began serving ice cream treats such as the popular twistee cone, a combination of chocolate and vanilla soft-serve.

Two short years later, he built a 50s diner between the mall and the ice cream shop. The bright pink and turquoise decor is like stepping back in time. The neon jukebox plays 50s tunes and turquoise and white booths lend a feeling of nostalgia. One corner sports a variety of Route 66 items including an old gas pump and the front-end of an old Chevy, and the walls bear images of James Dean, Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe.

It's not unusual to have kids, young and old, come in wearing 50s attire, order a burger and take photos. Burgers are the diner's specialty, especially the cheeseburger. They are made to order from fresh, never frozen, hamburger, and the buns are





grilled. The diner has daily specials posted by the front door. The best-selling cheeseburger was the special on Monday.

The menu consists mainly of sandwiches and ice cream. Sandwiches include burgers, grilled chicken, pork tenderloin, Philly cheesesteak, corn dogs and grilled cheese, all for wallet-friendly prices from \$3.50 to \$7. You can add fries and ice cream to make it a basket from \$8.50 to \$10.

The ice cream menu is extensive and includes a wide variety of soft-serve and hand dipped ice cream, shakes, tornadoes and sundaes. Clever Twistee creations include the Super Elephant, which is a bowl of vanilla ice cream with brownie, banana, hot fudge, nuts and whipped cream and the Jungle Delight of chocolate ice cream, cherries, brownie, chocolate sprinkles and whipped cream. If you don't see quite what you want, they will add toppings and mix-ins to match your heart's desire.



Twistee Treat Diner
 Located at 908 Veterans Memorial Drive, Livingston
 Phone: 618-637-2544

Hours:
 Open daily from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.



Crossways on the Ohio River

By Patty Gillespie

What's summertime for? Swimming, of course. On a hot afternoon, I can't think of anything better to do than splashing through the cool water of a pool, pond or lake. I don't care if it's even my grandson's wading pool. That is why I was so excited when my husband announced we were going to spend a day away from the farm at Smithland Pool.

I was doing a victory dance when my husband mentioned, "We're going fishing!"

"In a boat?" I asked. "In August, slathered in sunscreen waiting for a bobber to bob? With water, water everywhere, but not a splash to make?"

"Yep!" he remarked. "It will be great! I've arranged for a guide; his name is Jim Doom."

"Doom, despair and agony on me," I moaned.

We rose at 2 a.m., ugh, and were scheduled to meet our guide at 6 a.m. at a boat ramp, located near the south-eastern tip of Illinois, 150 miles away.

It turns out that we were destined to fish the tailwaters, the downstream side of the dam which creates Smithland Pool. We'd be fishing a stretch of the Ohio River flowing between Kentucky and Illinois. Our Illinois fishing licenses were valid.

The sun was burning off an early haze when we shook hands with our guide. Jim Doom was a pleasant enough looking guy, about 50 years old.

We boarded an 18-foot jon boat with a 90 horse-power motor. Four pedestal chairs were positioned in the boat and along one side of it were five fishing poles, equipped with bait-casting reels, heavy sinkers and circle hooks.

Off we went, roaring up the wide river. Nearing a cove formed by a creek's mouth, Jim switched to the trolling motor and prepared to throw a cast net to catch bait. Standing at the bow's edge, he held the gathered



net in one hand and a rim of the net in the other and tossed it.

It was amazing! That bright net smoothly radiated outward, its weighted border forming a circular outline. It seemed to suspend, as if it were intending to float, then submerged. Jim pulled a connecting cord and lifted the enveloping net. The little fish were wriggling and flipping, and the silvery sides were glinting.

Jim motored us into position below the dam. Torrents of water plunged from open gates. We may not have been near enough to feel the spray of the rushing water, but we were close enough to feel the shove and see the swirling upheaval of all that water.

As the boat floated with the current, crossways under Jim's control, I was instructed to allow the line to free spool until the sinker hit the bottom. As the line played out, the spool rolled and rolled. I asked about the depth.

"Fifty feet or so," he answered.

I touched my life jacket, just a flexible tubing, the kind that inflates when the wearer pulls the cord. "How fast will this fill with air?" I asked.

"Real fast," he added with an impish grin. "Now, don't go thinking about

swimming in this current 'cause we'd be picking you up in New Orleans."

Before I could think of a come-back, I felt a tug on my line and exclaimed, "I've got one!"

Jim said, "I think you're just feeling the sinker bouncing along over rock at the bottom. You'll know it when a fish takes the bait."

"Where's a bobber when you need one?" I mumbled. Then I did feel a pull. I whooped and reeled, but Jim and his large dip net were moving away to the stern. My husband's pole was bent, the line taut. He was reeling in a fish that was either mighty big or mighty strong. It was a striper (striped bass), five pounds or maybe more!

The pull I'd felt had been caused by my line becoming tangled with my husband's and being dragged as he reeled.

Jim Doom placed the fish in the cooler and was working on our tangled lines, when he said, "Well, Miss Patty, it appears that the male fisherman here caught the first fish of the day." My husband grinned and gave a thumbs-up.

"Oh, yeah," I responded! "Well, my line was involved in the capture, so I also get to claim that fish!"



DORM SAFETY: 101

AVOID ELECTRICAL OVERLOAD



It's the time of year when college campuses are preparing for students moving all of their worldly possessions into their home away from home - the dorm!

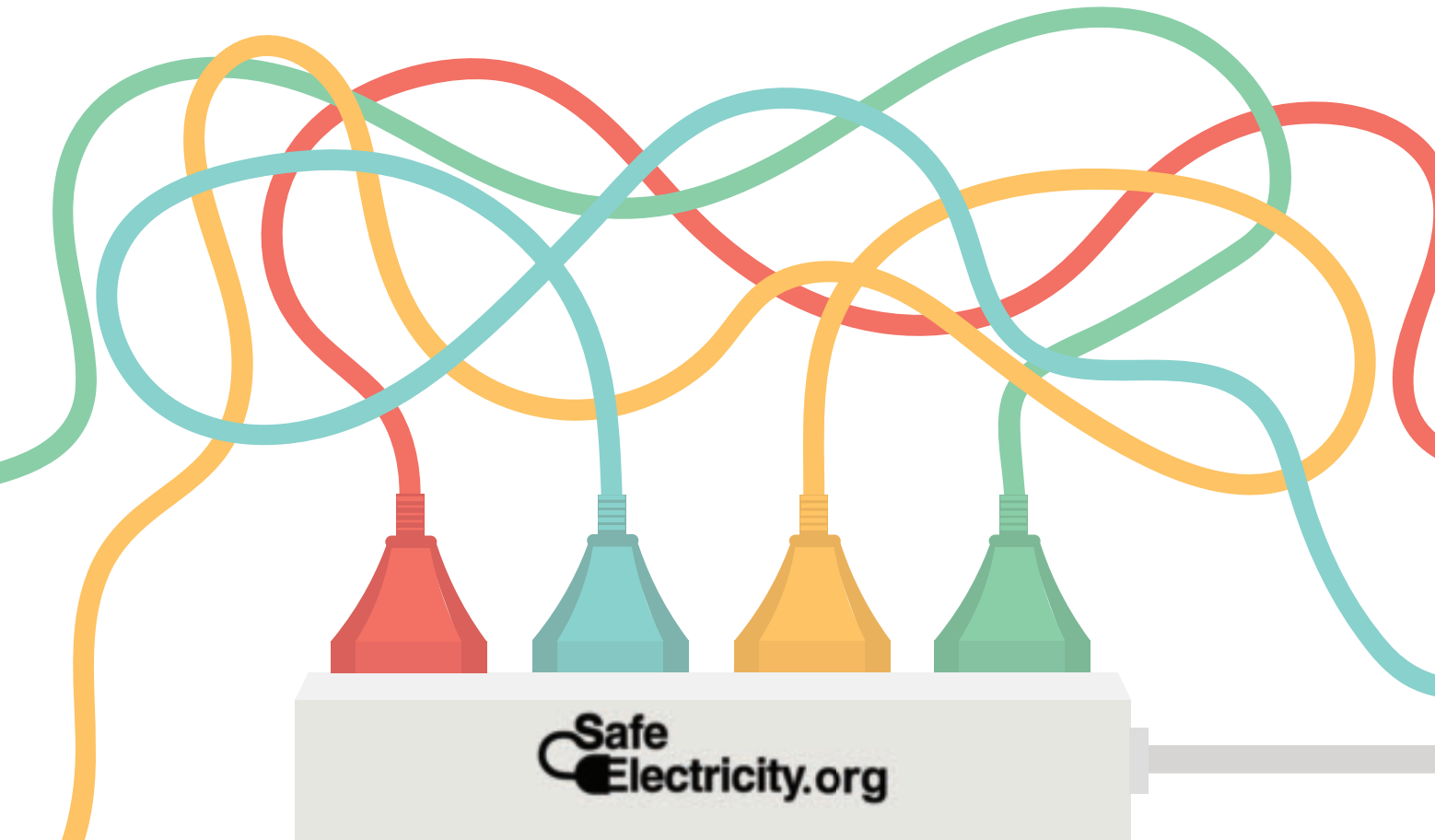
Safe Electricity urges everyone to make sure their college-bound students take precautions to prevent and protect themselves from campus-related fires and shocks. **Do not overload your electrical outlets, power strips, or extension cords.** Use power strips with an over-current protector that will shut off power automatically if there is too much current being drawn.



Potentially older wiring in student housing and apartments may not be able to handle the increased electrical demand of today's college student. If use of an appliance frequently causes power to trip off or if its power cord or the outlet feels hot, the appliance should be disconnected immediately and the condition reported to a resident assistant or housing manager.



Visit SafeElectricity.org for a complete list of safety steps to prevent and reduce the risk of electrical fires.



Scenic Illinois

1 Steve Schlager

Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

Photo taken from a World War II B-25 Bomber while circling Bald Knob Cross of Peace at Alto Pass, Ill.

2 Kelly Stogner

Corn Belt Energy

Taken during an early stroll through Merwin Nature Preserve along the Mackinaw River.

3 Marla Johnson

McDonough Power Cooperative

Restoration of the 125-year-old barn that stands on the family farm.

4 Sue Woodfin

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Sunrise

5 Susan Cheney

Western Illinois Electrical Coop.

Clouds

6 Courtney Page

SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Sunset over southern Illinois from the Ohio River.

**photo descriptions have been edited for clarity and space*

Upcoming themes

October – Halloween/Kids in costumes

November – Colors of the fall

December – Winter wonderland

January – Wildlife

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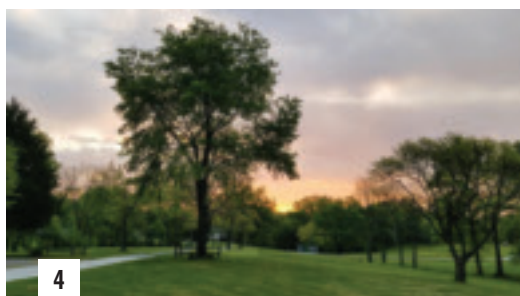
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Cobden Peach Festival



WHEN: August 3-4, 2018, 4 p.m. Friday to 10 p.m. Saturday

WHERE: 117 S. Appleknocker Dr., Cobden

COST: Free admission

CONTACT: 800-248-4373

Celebrate the local peach harvest, with the annual peach festival sponsored by the Cobden Lions Club. Enjoy fresh peaches from local orchards, carnival rides and games, crowning of Miss Peach Queen, homemade food, peach cobbler and pie and a 5K run/walk and parade on Saturday.



Mill Road Thresherman Show



WHEN: August 10-12, 2018, all day

WHERE: Effingham County Fairgrounds, 722 E. Cumberland Rd., Altamont

COST: Day pass-\$5, Weekend pass-\$10

CONTACT: Jim Schroeder at 217-821-1426 or info@millroadthresherman.org

The 37th annual show celebrates 100 years of the John Deere Waterloo Boy. There are activities for young and old including field demonstrations, kids pedal pull, truck and tractor pulls, bluegrass bands, car show, flea market and craft show, train and farm toy show, a petting zoo and much more. www.millroadthresherman.org



Sangamon Valley Woodcarvers 28th Annual Show



WHEN: September 1-2, 2018 – Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

WHERE: Illinois State Fairgrounds, Illinois Building, 11th & Sangamon, Springfield

COST: \$4, 12 and under free

CONTACT: Lee or Betty Legg, 217-546-8792 or go to www.svwoodcarvers.org

Join well-known woodcarvers, pyrographers, intarsia carvers and wood turners at this annual show that features carvings, wood, tools and supplies. How-to seminars and soap carving will be presented each day and door prizes will be drawn every half hour. Vendors include The Woodcraft Shop from Bettendorf, Iowa and Moore Roughouts from Kindred, N.D.



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