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OCTOBER 2018 • ICL.COOP

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PLUS

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The power of community

Priests, grocery store owners, engineers, attorneys, Farm Bureau and Cooperative Extension (the County agent) employees and, most certainly, farmers were the community leaders that helped birth rural electrification. Only 1 percent of Illinois' farms had central station power 100 years ago. Once the community got organized with the passage of the "REA" in 1936, 21 cooperatives across downstate Illinois would join more than 800 counterparts across our great country to build power lines over the next three years.

This is the power of community. This is the cooperative story. This is commitment to community, one of the seven guiding principles of rural electrification. This continues today locally throughout Illinois and the United States.

Electric cooperatives have a great heritage as democratically-controlled, nonprofit organizations. But it is the community aspect that really breaks through. That was true 82 years ago in 1936 and it is still true and flourishing today. Being local, community-focused organizations sets us apart. We are better equipped to do our job because we know, care about and understand our communities. Our co-op employees and leaders live in these very same communities and have a vested interest to build and grow thriving communities for your family and theirs.

No two electric cooperatives are exactly alike, just like no two families are identical. Every co-op is shaped over time by the community it serves, each with specific needs. For some, it is forming a rural water cooperative to supply potable water. For others, it's developing broadband internet service to fill an unmet need.

All cooperatives are focused on building the economic base of their communities. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

has a wonderful program through the Rural Utility Service to grow rural investment and create more jobs. This program is called "REDLG" or the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program. USDA provides zero-interest loans to local electric cooperatives which, in turn pass those funds through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas.

This has happened recently in communities such as Pana, which is building an addition to its community hospital. With assistance of a REDLG loan from Shelby Electric Cooperative, and funds from community banks, this project is on its way to completion. Shelby Electric has also assisted with a REDLG expansion loan for local manufacturer IHI Turbo America. Once complete, it will result in additional jobs and boost the local economy. Egyptian Electric Cooperative recently assisted the Degognia-Fountain Bluff Levee and Drainage District with a REDLG loan to repair and replace existing pump systems to protect 12,000 acres from flood events, such as one in 2011-12 that resulted a net income loss of more than \$19 million.

Another area where our cooperatives are committed to community is youth development. This can be in the form of college scholarships, summer internships and numerous contributions to 4-H Clubs, school and youth events, including the CEO Program. Since 1964, through our national association, more than 60,000 students have been selected for the Youth to Washington summer tour, including 1,800 this past summer.

Seventy Illinois students boarded a bus from our Springfield office for a long overnight ride to Washington, D.C. at the start of a 10-day tour. It's



more than a sight-seeing trip to our nation's capital – they come back with great friendships, experiences and broader horizons. Bethanny Lawson was sponsored by EnerStar Electric Cooperative from Paris and wrote about her experience on this very page in the September issue. She closed her commentary by saying, "I came home with a hundred new ideas on how to change the world."

In a recent issue of *Prairie Farmer* magazine, Charlie Hensley from Bushnell, whose family farm is served by McDonough Power Cooperative, was also one of the participants. He gushed about making new friends all over our state. His takeaway was that our cooperatives are working together to accomplish common goals that benefit everyone involved. What a great experience for young people that will benefit our communities for years to come.

As per our goal years ago, our cooperatives are now providing quality electric service to every mile and to that last farm and home in the country. But today it's other investments in our communities that drive our cooperatives. I can think of no better investment than in our youth and good paying jobs in rural Illinois.



Duane Noland is the President/CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, Springfield, lives on the family farm near Blue Mound and is a Shelby Electric Cooperative member.

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YES	20-1/2" DEPTH	YES
41-3/8"	HEIGHT	41-1/4"
5	DRAWER COUNT	4
YES	DRAWER LATCHES	NO
YES	PRE-CUT DRAWER LINERS	YES
YES	LOCKING SWIVEL CASTERS	YES
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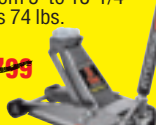
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Customer Rating
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Customer Rating
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Two receive IEC Public Service Award

During the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's (AIEC) annual meeting, held July 26-27, State Senator Jason Barickman, R-53rd District, and State Representative Terri Bryant, R-115th District, received the 2018 Illinois Electric Cooperatives' Public Service Award. The awards were made in recognition of their dedicated public service to all citizens of the state of Illinois and for outstanding contributions to the rural electrification program.

Senator Barickman has served in the Illinois Senate since 2013 and serves as the Assistant Republican Leader. He previously represented the 105th District in the Illinois

House of Representatives from 2011 to 2013.

Representative Bryant has served in the Illinois House since 2015. She serves on several committees, including: appropriations-public safety, judiciary-criminal; tourism and conventions; youth and young adults and veterans' affairs.

"Senator Barickman and Representative Bryant are great supporters of rural Illinois and responsive to the needs of its residents," said Duane Noland, AIEC president/CEO. "They understand the importance of the electric cooperative program and we appreciate the leadership they provide."💡



Sen. Jason Barickman expresses his appreciation for being selected to receive the IEC Public Service Award from AIEC Board President Dennis Fredrickson.



After Rep. Terri Bryant received her award, she took time to meet with AIEC President/CEO Duane Noland (l) and V.P. of Government Relations Nick Reitz.



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OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH




Shelby Electric helps secure REDLG monies for local manufacturer

IHI Turbo America, a designer and manufacturer of diesel, gasoline and natural gas turbocharger products, will be expanding thanks in part to a \$2 million loan, part of the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program through Shelby Electric Cooperative.

The interest-free loan will help the manufacturer fund a 250,000-square-foot \$40 million expansion and result in an additional 90 jobs for the area including manufacturing, engineering and management positions. Beginning in

2020, the company will assemble turbochargers for Honda North America.

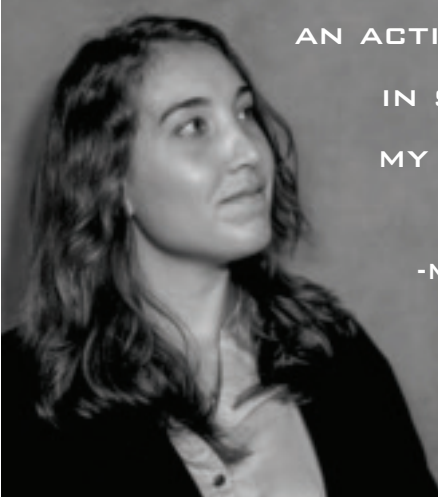
Josh Shallenberger, president and CEO of Shelby Electric Cooperative, said, "USDA has provided a tool to enable the co-op to be proactive and help with the multiple expansions. It fortifies the relationship as a business community partner."

This is the third plant expansion supported by REDLG monies. 



"I WANT TO PLAY AN ACTIVE ROLE IN SHAPING MY FUTURE"

-MARIA, 20, ILLINOIS



CO-OPS VOTE
A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
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What is Co-ops Vote?

America's Electric Cooperatives understand what's important to our homes and our communities, and we understand that registering to vote and voting in every election is vital to protecting our way of life.

Co-ops Vote is a non-partisan campaign focused on enhancing the political strength of electric cooperatives through relationship building and voter engagement. The main goal of the campaign is to boost voter turnout in cooperative areas, making sure that our consumer-members exercise one of their most basic rights – the right to vote. Working in collaboration with states and local co-ops, this effort educates and engages candidates and voters on important issues like expanding broadband coverage throughout rural America, ensuring continued access to reliable electricity and promoting the work of co-ops within the communities they serve.

The program is important because we must elect public officials who identify with America's electric cooperatives and will vote to support the issues important to 42 million electric cooperative consumer-members across the nation. Electric cooperatives are a trusted resource in the communities we serve. For more information visit vote.coop.

Are you registered to vote? 

Top three co-op priorities for the final version of the Farm Bill

The House and Senate each passed versions of the Farm Bill earlier this summer and are seeking to reach a compromise on the legislation in the fall.

NRECA is urging lawmakers on the Farm Bill conference committee, tasked with coming up with the final version of the bill, to consider electric co-ops' priorities.

"We are encouraging Congress to pass a final Farm Bill that supports several key policy issues for electric co-ops and their member-consumers in rural America," said NRECA CEO Jim Matheson.

Here are the top priorities for co-ops:

Remove Senate changes to Rural Electrification Act loan program

The House Farm Bill retains existing escrow accounts for co-op loan repayments and treatment of deposits into those accounts. The Senate-passed version eliminates the escrow or "cushion of credit" program that allows greater financial flexibility to co-ops and benefits the government by having funds pre-deposited toward loan payments.

"Cooperatives depend on the USDA's electric loan program and its escrow treatment to serve the most rural, hardest-to-serve areas of the country," said Matheson.

Promote true high-speed broadband for rural areas

The House version provides for significant financial investment in broadband development by electric co-ops and other providers in rural areas that have either no internet service or substandard service.

The Senate Farm Bill increases funds for rural broadband but provides only limited support for projects in areas



with existing but inadequate service.

"Deployment of rural broadband is essential to keeping rural communities competitive," said Matheson. "NRECA is working to ensure co-op member-consumers get high-speed internet service on par with the rest of the country."

Include funds for rural economic development and innovation

Co-ops use the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDLG) to finance economic development projects, such as refurbishing a library or buying emergency response vehicles. Both bills reauthorize and improve the program through 2021. NRECA supports the Senate provision, which also provides \$5 million for the program each year. 💡

Source: Cathy Cash, NRECA



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Did you know?

More than 90 percent of the nation's canning pumpkins grow in Illinois. Mmmm, pumpkin pie!

Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



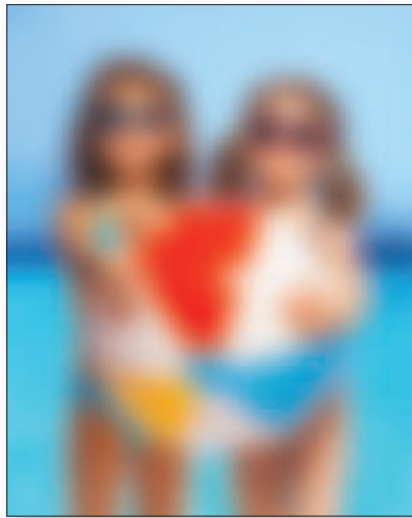
For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to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

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Make time for safety this harvest season

Harvest season often means putting in long hours, which can make it difficult to stay alert and on the lookout for potential hazards. Safe Electricity provides safety tips to help farmers make this harvest season a safe one.

Be prepared for potential emergencies before the rush of harvest season begins. Be sure that you can see well in work areas. Consider adding extra lighting around grain bins and augers.

Take the time to look up and look out for electrical lines. Always be aware of where they are in relation to your equipment. Keep a minimum of 10 feet away from all electrical equipment, and lower extensions before moving equipment. If you see a power line that is sagging or low, contact your utility. Also keep an eye out for guy wires. While these wires are not energized, they can bring down live lines.

In equipment with auto-guidance systems, less focus is needed on steering, which may lead some drivers to think that they do not need to be as aware of navigation issues. Yet, even while using a GPS with auto-steering, farm workers need to keep safety in mind and stay focused on their surroundings. Recognize when you need to take breaks so that you can be active and engaged in the farm work.

Additional electrical safety tips include:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Look up and use care when moving any equipment such as extending augers or raising the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Always set extensions to the lowest setting when moving



loads to prevent contact with overhead lines. Grain augers should always be positioned horizontally before being moved.

- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

If the machinery you are operating does make contact with a power line, stay on the equipment. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the utility crew to cut the power.

Only on the rare occasion that the machinery catches fire should you leave the vehicle after contact is made. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and machinery at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area. Never



touch anything that is in contact with a power line.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Molly Hall is a public awareness program of the Energy Education Council. www.EnergyEdCouncil.org



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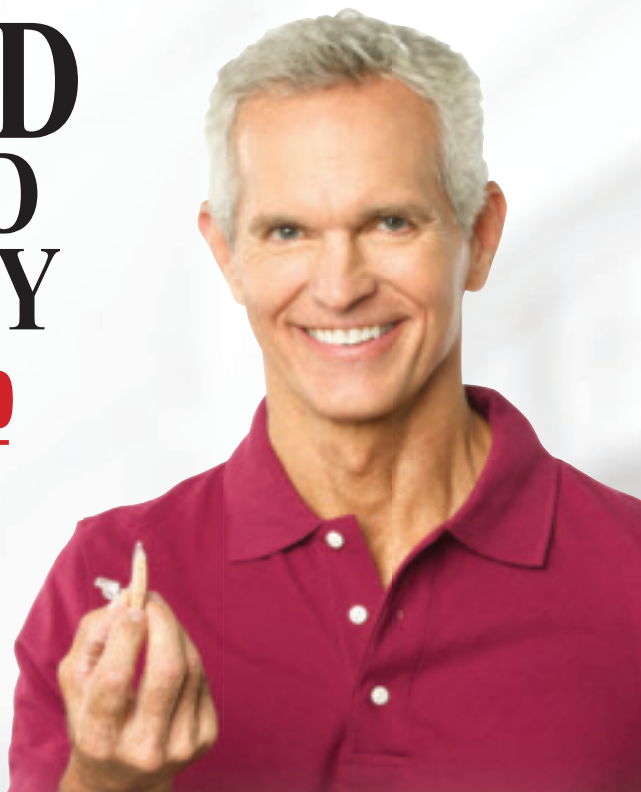
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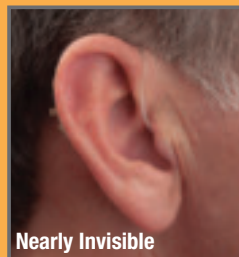
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Tips to stay comfortable this winter

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

Dear Pat: Last year, we spent our first winter in our new place, which is actually an older home. Even with the heat turned up, it always felt chilly indoors. This year, we added insulation, but we're wondering if there are additional steps we can take to make the house more comfortable this winter. Can you offer any advice? – Emily

Dear Emily: When we talk about comfort in our homes, we usually think about where the thermostat is set. But, as you're finding, there's more to the picture than just the indoor temperature.

An important piece of the comfort puzzle is radiant heat, which transfers heat from a warm surface to a colder one. A person sitting in a room that's 70 degrees can still feel chilly if there's a cold surface nearby, like a single-pane window, a hardwood floor or an exterior wall. Covering these cold surfaces can help. Try using area rugs, wall quilts or tapestries, bookcases and heavy curtains to help prevent heat loss and make your home feel more comfortable. Keep in mind, radiant heat can really work in your favor. A dark-colored tile floor that receives several hours of direct sun can retain heat during the day and radiate it into the room during the evening.

Another possible cause of discomfort during the winter is air movement. We recognize this when weather forecasts report chill factor, which is a calculation of air temperature and wind speed.

Moving air makes us feel colder, which is why we use fans in the summer. But during the winter, cold outdoor air can infiltrate our homes.

On average, a typical home loses about half its air every hour, and that amount can increase when outdoor temperatures are extremely cold and the wind is blowing. In

this case, the best way to keep your home toasty is to minimize air leaks. You can easily locate air leaks in your home with a blower door test, which is typically conducted by an energy auditor. These are some of the most common spots air leaks occur:

- Penetrations and cracks around windows and doors
- Exterior cracks in brickwork and siding
- Plumbing and wiring penetrations from the exterior to the interior of the home
- Mail slots or pet doors

A variety of products like caulk, weather stripping, outlet cover gaskets and dryer vent covers can be used to seal these leaks.

A fireplace can also be a major source of air leakage. If you don't use the fireplace, you can seal the opening or install an inflatable chimney balloon. Before using the fireplace, consider this: unless you have a high-efficiency insert, your fireplace will suck heated air from the room out through the chimney. Always close the fireplace flue when it's not in use.

Your pursuit of comfort should also include a careful look at your home's heating system. Is it distributing heat evenly and efficiently? Forced-air systems distribute air through supply ducts and registers. Small rooms may only have one register, but large rooms could have several. You may find some supply registers are blowing copious amounts of warm air and others little at all.

Ideally, every room should have return air registers. If you see



*During the winter, covering cold surfaces like hardwood floors can improve comfort. An area rug can be visually appealing while helping retain indoor heat.
Photo Credit: Pixabay.com*

possible shortcomings with your forced-air system, enlist the help of a certified contractor that really knows how to improve ductwork.

Ensure your furnace is running at peak efficiency by scheduling an annual inspection. Check your filter monthly and replace or clean it as necessary. If you heat your home with radiators, bleed them at the beginning of the season so they flow more efficiently.

Beyond that, you can always warm yourself by wearing heavier clothing, doing some light exercise throughout the day, and snuggling with a pet or under a blanket.

By taking some of these small steps, I hope you will enjoy a more comfortable winter in your new (older) home! ♡

This column was co-written by Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on staying comfortable in winter, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.



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Cooperative month

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Gerry and Denice Kinney
Photo courtesy of Arm Dynamics

A new perspective on life

Lineman shares his story of perseverance

By Colten Bradford

It was a hot, humid July day in 2015. As usual, Gerry and Denice Kinney reported for work at Wayne-White Counties Electric Cooperative (WWCEC). Gerry was a lineman, and Denice worked in the records department. Around 10 a.m., Denice received a call from a friend who told her a lineman had been injured.

Her heart sank. She soon learned the injured lineman was Gerry.

“It was supposed to be an easy day,” Gerry recalls. He was in the bucket truck working with his crew to put up a neutral line that had been



knocked down during a storm. "I was making a motion to tie in... a finger in the air in a circular motion."

Gerry didn't realize his bucket was higher than it should have been. He remembers two occasions when he boomed the bucket up: once for a passing car and once to help his visibility. When he made that motion to tie in, his right index finger brushed the 7,200-volt power line.

Electricity entered his right hand, traveled through his chest and exited his left hand. The incident happened so fast it didn't blink the system. Gerry himself didn't know what had happened.

"Honestly, it probably took me 30 to 45 seconds to realize I got into a wire," he remembers. "I reached down to move my bucket, and I couldn't figure out why my hand wasn't working... I couldn't make it do anything."

So, he pulled his hand off the controller and tried his other hand. It wouldn't work either. That's when he saw his skin peeking between his long-sleeved shirt and gloves. It was a beet red, brownish color. That's when he understood what happened. Then the pain set in.

"The pain came down my arms and was horrendous," he recalls. "I remember I was screaming at the top of my lungs for them to get me down, and they said when they got me to the ground, I was just barely whispering."

Gerry was told it didn't take long for the three men in his crew to realize something was wrong. They lowered the bucket, got Gerry out and called for help.

"All three of them guys that day... I can't imagine the panic and stress they

were under," Gerry says. "But they did everything right."

Fortunately for Gerry, the co-op provided the Air Evac helicopter with exact coordinates of his location, and the chopper was already warmed up for an event that day when the call came in.

"I don't know how many minutes that saved, but in a situation like this, minutes mean a lot," Gerry says. "If the minutes didn't save my life, it probably saved inches or lengths of my arms."



After an accident with a power line, Gerry Kinney spent five weeks in the burn unit at Mercy Hospital in St. Louis and underwent eight surgeries.

He was flown to Mercy Hospital in St. Louis and, despite his pain and injuries, stayed conscious the entire flight. He credits that to the anger he felt.

"I could not believe that I allowed that accident to happen. I was just mad," he says. "How in the world could I do something so simple and have this kind of accident? I'm not going to lie, I think about it today."

During the flight, he thought about Denice. "My wife is going to kill me," Gerry said to the flight nurse because

they were going on a 10-day vacation the next day. The months ahead were far from a vacation for the Kinneys.

Before seeing Gerry for the first time, Denice knew what would happen. "I knew he was going to lose his hands, so I was mentally preparing myself, but when I saw they were black, I knew for sure," she says. "Of course, you're always hopeful they can save them."

Three days later, doctors handed Denice a consent form to authorize

the removal of her husband's hands. "That's the toughest thing I've ever done," Denice says. "But it was either that or he was going to die."

Gerry spent five weeks in the burn unit at Mercy and underwent eight surgeries. "All three surgeons that worked on me said they had no idea how I survived," he recalls. "They had never seen injuries like that because [patients with those injuries] never make it there. That's a sign I'm pretty blessed."

After his surgeries, Gerry spent two more weeks in rehab. He wasn't released to go home until he could get himself off the floor without

assistance. "That's hard to do without hands," Gerry says. "What you've got left is tender and bandaged up to the hilt, and so for two weeks it was pretty miserable."

He went home in September, and Denice took care of him. Her background in animal medicine helped prepare her. She cared for his wounds and kept track of medications – he had 27 at one point. Nine months after his accident, Gerry went off his pain medications, and nine months

after that, he stopped his nerve meds. “I’ve not taken any since, and I don’t ever plan on it,” he says.

“He was a good patient,” Denice says. “He never complained. For husband and wife to be able to survive that, there’s a bit to say there, especially about him.”

“I don’t believe I would be in the position I’m in if it wasn’t for my wife,” Gerry says. “She’s never complained. You can imagine what she had to do for me. She just did it, didn’t say a word about it and kept going.”

In January 2016, he was healed enough to be fitted for prosthetic arms, and today he has two different kinds. One is body powered and the other is battery-operated.

The body powered is operated with a harness that goes around his shoulders, and Gerry rolls his shoulders to operate his hooks. The battery-operated hands aren’t as physically demanding. His arm fits into a socket, and a sensor inside will detect muscle movement and will open and close on demand.

“I still feel like I have my hands,” Gerry demonstrates. “If you tell me to move my forefinger, I use the muscle that used to operate my forefinger... when I rotate my hands, I think in my mind that I am bending my wrist to the right.”

Gerry has three different hand attachments to go with the battery-operated prostheses, and he can select different grip patterns with a push of a button. Gerry admits it takes a lot of practice. For example, if he’s in a hurry to shake someone’s hand, his hand may rotate instead.

“I’m considered a high user,” Gerry explains. “I can’t tell you how many hands I’ve broken.” He’s broken at least eight fingers, both wrists and one set of hands. “It doesn’t hurt to break a finger. All I do is pop my hand off, send it off and they put a new finger on there. I don’t have to wear a splint while it’s getting repaired.”

While grateful for his prostheses, he admits their weight can get tiring. “When I get in the house for the evening, I can’t wait to take my arms off,”



Gerry Kinney always has a project at home. Last summer, he laid more than 1,700 bricks for a patio and built a fire pit. Above: With a special attachment on his steering wheel, he can drive again.

Gerry says. “It’s like getting home and taking off a pair of shoes.”

At home, he has learned to do most everyday tasks without his hands. He has devices that slip over his stub, so he can feed himself or brush his teeth. Denice puts food in special bowls, so he can easily pop the lids off. Gerry describes his bathroom as a carwash for himself. It is equipped with three shower heads, strategically placed sponges and a full body dryer.

Getting used to his new way of life hasn’t been easy. “You can’t believe how many times I’ve failed, but you can’t believe how many successes I’ve had either,” Gerry says. “Some of my

goals now are just doing things I used to do all the time.”

It was hard for Denice to watch and allow him to struggle, but they both knew it was the only way he could learn to be independent.

“You can’t be afraid to learn a new way,” Gerry says. “I get frustrated, and I’m not above having a fit. I don’t let that frustration get me to the level that I quit... I might lose the battle for that day, but I’m not going to lose the war.”

At the same time, he isn’t afraid to ask for help. “Believe me, there’s a lot of awesome people in this world,” he says. “You cannot believe the

generosity and help I've received since my accident."

After the accident, the Kinneys received much support from family, friends, community members and strangers, but their electric cooperative and employer WWCEC helped in a big way.

"Denice and I will never ever be able to thank them enough," Gerry says. "They went way above and beyond. I don't know how they could have done any more."

While Gerry was in the hospital, WWCEC sent two or three co-op employees on company time almost every day to be with the Kinneys. Every morning before his surgeries, the staff would gather in prayer. When they returned home, fellow employees brought out supper every night for six weeks. Denice was even allowed to work from home, so she wouldn't have to take time off to care for Gerry.

Because of all the help he's received, Gerry has gained his independence back.

"He is so versatile and fluent with his prosthetic arms," Denice says. "I live with him and sometimes I forget he doesn't have hands because he does everything like he always did. It might take him longer or he might do it a different way, but he does what he wants to do."

For example, with his prosthetic hands and a special attachment on his steering wheel, he's able to drive again.



Gerry Kinney shows how his prosthetic arms work.

He still feels his hands. "They always feel like they're burning. That never goes away," he explains. "It feels like a chemical burn. The only time I notice that they're not hurting is when I'm busy." So, Gerry stays busy.

He speaks at many events and goes to schools to talk to children. "I love kids. They will ask you anything," Gerry says. Kids ask the obvious questions. Can you write? Can you feed yourself? How do you go to the bathroom?

"One kid put his hand up and asked, 'What does it feel like to be a superhero?'" Gerry remembers. He replied that he didn't feel like a superhero. "Then the same kid asked, 'If you

were going to become a superhero, what would you call yourself?' I've been called everything from a pirate to a cyborg to a superhero."

Occasionally, Gerry will do studies for different prostheses, and he's enjoyed every minute of it. "You get to play with the new stuff," he says.

Gerry explains that he will always have a project at home. He mows the lawn, trims shrubs and power washes buildings. Last summer, he laid more than 1,700 bricks for a patio and built a 120-stone fire pit to go with it. He's been working on updating an old barn and has installed all the wiring.

Last September, Gerry and Denice finally went on that vacation they planned before the accident. They rode four wheelers at the Hatfield-McCoy Trails in West Virginia, and they plan to do it again.

Gerry also started to help with the lineman's program at Frontier Community College in Fairfield where the co-op now sponsors a full ride scholarship every year in Gerry's name.

"I loved my job. I miss linework terribly, and I loved all the people I worked with," Gerry says. "But on July 16, 2015, that path ended abruptly. That day, I started down a new path. At times, I thought that path was impassable, but now I'm optimistic about the one I'm on. I've gotten to do and see things I never would have otherwise... To me, every day is a new day with the simple fact that I wonder what each day will hold."



Gerry and Denice Kinney on vacation at the Hatfield-McCoy Trails where they rode four wheelers.

FINEST

Cooking



High in protein and low in calories, eggs are an excellent and inexpensive choice when it comes to feeding your family. Packed with 6 grams of protein and only 70 calories, they provide a variety of essential vitamins and minerals. Once mainly considered a breakfast food, eggs today can be found topping burgers and even pizzas. A great way to use up leftover meat or vegetables is making burritos. Just heat up those leftovers, add some beaten eggs and scramble. Put the mixture in a warmed flour tortilla with a bit of cheese and salsa and you've a quick snack or dinner on the go.



◀ Huevos Divorciados

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 10 eggs | Pinch of baking soda |
| 10 corn tortillas | Salt, to taste |
| 2 - 15 oz. cans black beans | 1-16 oz. jar Herdes salsa verde |
| 1 T. oil, plus extra for frying tortillas | 1-16 oz. jar Herdes red salsa |
| 1 clove garlic, minced | Queso fresco, crumbled |
| 1 med. onion, finely diced | Green onions, chopped |
| | Cilantro, chopped |

In a medium pan, heat oil. Add onions and garlic and cook until translucent and lightly browned. Put undrained black beans in a food processor and lightly process. Pour into pan with onions, stir and add baking soda and salt. Turn heat to medium high and let it heat, stirring occasionally. Once it starts boiling, reduce heat to low and let it reduce for 10 minutes. Warm the salsas. Meanwhile, in a separate skillet, cook each egg over easy. While eggs are cooking, heat oil in skillet for tortillas. Dip each tortilla in the hot oil to soften. They usually start inflating and that means they are ready. Put on paper towel to absorb excess oil. Finish by spreading bean mixture on each tortilla. Top with one egg and put green salsa over half of egg and red salsa over other half. Sprinkle with queso fresco, green onions and cilantro. Serve immediately.

▶ Breakfast Pizza

Submitted by Connie Carlyle, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 2 cans crescent rolls | 2 c. cheddar cheese, shredded |
| 2-3 c. shredded hash browns, thawed | 10 eggs, beaten well |
| 1 lb. ground sausage, browned and drained | 1/2 c. milk |
| | 1/2 t. dry mustard |
| | 1/2 t. pepper |

Press crescent rolls into bottom of a jelly roll pan. Layer on hash browns, sausage and cheese. Mix together eggs, milk, dry mustard and pepper. Pour mixture over top of layers. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes or until firm in the middle. This is my family's favorite and it's great for a brunch.



WE NEED RECIPES! Upcoming monthly topics include recipes using potatoes, pork, maple syrup and pie. 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.



Asparagus Swiss Quiche ▲

10 strips bacon, diced	1/4 t. salt
1/2 c. chopped onion	1/8 t. pepper
1 lb. fresh asparagus, trimmed	1 – 9" unbaked pie shell
1 c. shredded Swiss cheese	3 eggs
1 T. flour	1/2 c. half and half

In a skillet, cook bacon over medium heat until crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon to paper towels; drain, reserving 1 tablespoon drippings. In drippings, saute onion until browned; drain. Cut eight asparagus spears into 4-inch long spears for garnish. Cut remaining asparagus into 1-inch pieces. In a saucepan, cook all of the asparagus in a small amount of boiling water until crisp tender; drain. In a bowl, toss the bacon, onion, asparagus pieces, cheese, flour, salt and pepper. Pour into pastry shell. In a bowl, beat eggs and half and half; pour over bacon mixture. Top with asparagus spears in a pinwheel design. Bake at 400 degrees for 30-35 minutes or until a knife inserted near center comes out clean and crust is golden brown. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.

Apple Baked French Toast ▶

1 lg. loaf French or Italian bread	3 t. cinnamon
8 large eggs	1 t. nutmeg
3-1/2 c. milk	6-8 medium cooking apples (we used Granny Smith)
1 c. sugar	2 T. butter
1 T. vanilla	

Slice bread into 1-1/2-inch slices. Spray a 9x13" pan with cooking spray. Place bread in baking dish with sides touching (snug fit). In a bowl with a whisk, beat together eggs, 1/2 c. sugar, milk and vanilla for about 30 seconds. Pour one half of egg mixture over bread. Peel, core and slice apples. Place apples on top of bread to cover. Pour rest of egg mixture evenly over bread. Mix remaining 1/2 c. sugar with cinnamon and nutmeg and sprinkle evenly over top of apples. Dot with butter. Cover and refrigerate overnight. In morning, preheat oven to 350 degrees. Uncover dish and bake in oven for 1 hour or until center is set. Remove from oven and allow to rest for 5 to 10 minutes before serving. Cut into squares and serve with warm syrup or powdered sugar.

Scrambled Eggs with Goat Cheese

16 extra-large eggs, beaten	4 T. butter, divided
1-1/4 c. milk or half and half	6 oz. goat cheese, crumbled
1-1/2 t. kosher salt	2 T. minced chives
3/4 t. pepper	

Whisk eggs with milk, salt and pepper. Heat 2 T. butter, add eggs and cook to desired doneness. Off the heat, add goat cheese, chives and remaining butter. Stir and allow to set for 30 second. Serves 6.



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.

Cooler weather brings indoor pests

Now that fall has arrived and the winter season is approaching, many of us start to notice various insect critters trying to find shelter inside our homes.

The good news is that most of these insects are perfectly harmless and are simply a nuisance. In fact, many of them are actually quite beneficial because they eat other soft bodied pests that we're not big fans of, like aphids. Now that the season is ending, these insects are simply just looking for a place to survive the winter.

Some of the common pests that we see trying to find shelter include Asian lady beetles, elm leaf beetles and boxelder bugs. Asian lady beetles, for example, spend the winter in cracks and crevices of cliffs in their native areas of Japan. Since we're absent of many cliffs here in Illinois, they look for other cracks and crevices to hide in, including the ones in our homes.

These insects may enter through cracks in the foundation, around windows or air conditioning units, or may simply just hitch a ride as we come in the door. The good news is that elm leaf beetles, boxelder bugs and ladybugs don't reproduce or feed while they are indoors, so you only have to deal with the ones that make it indoors.

A quick method of cleanup is to vacuum up the insects or scoop them up and send them back outside. In order to help prevent this problem further, it's advised to try and fill up any cracks outside the home using caulking materials.

One pest to keep an eye out for is the brown marmorated stink bug (BMSB). This pest has been found in many counties in Illinois at this point. BMSB is a pest that can cause serious feeding damage to many of our agricultural crops and then becomes a nuisance as it starts to enter our homes in the fall.



Asian lady beetles



Boxelder bug



Brown marmorated stink bug

Typically, the adults will begin to move to overwintering locations in September, with peak movement in late September and October. Homeowners may start to see BMSB begin gathering on homes, barns and garages during this time.

If you see a stink bug that you think may be BMSB, you can bring it to your local Extension office for identification.



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.

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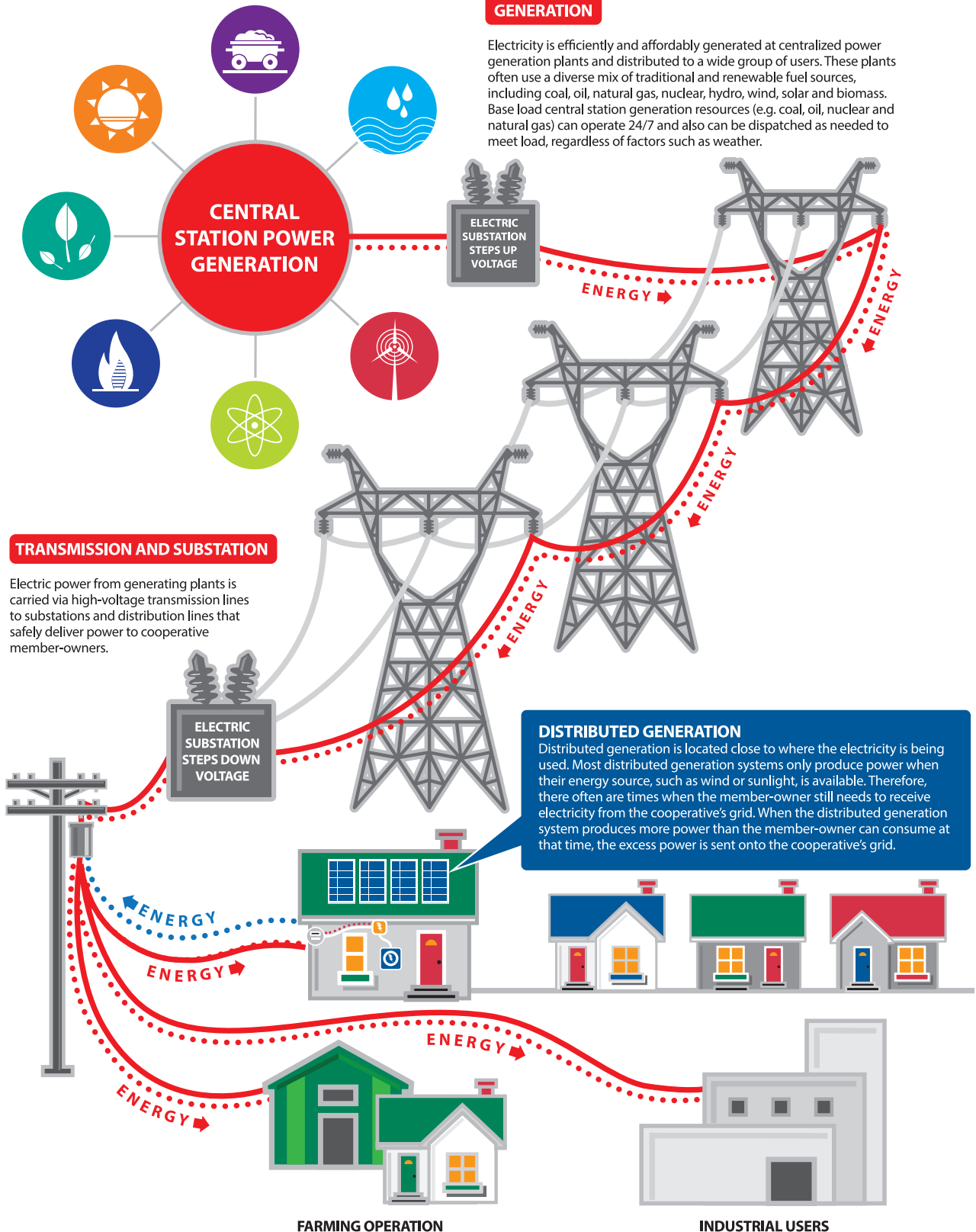
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How the Grid Works



GENERATION

Electricity is efficiently and affordably generated at centralized power generation plants and distributed to a wide group of users. These plants often use a diverse mix of traditional and renewable fuel sources, including coal, oil, natural gas, nuclear, hydro, wind, solar and biomass. Base load central station generation resources (e.g. coal, oil, nuclear and natural gas) can operate 24/7 and also can be dispatched as needed to meet load, regardless of factors such as weather.

TRANSMISSION AND SUBSTATION

Electric power from generating plants is carried via high-voltage transmission lines to substations and distribution lines that safely deliver power to cooperative member-owners.

DISTRIBUTED GENERATION
 Distributed generation is located close to where the electricity is being used. Most distributed generation systems only produce power when their energy source, such as wind or sunlight, is available. Therefore, there often are times when the member-owner still needs to receive electricity from the cooperative's grid. When the distributed generation system produces more power than the member-owner can consume at that time, the excess power is sent onto the cooperative's grid.

FARMING OPERATION

INDUSTRIAL USERS

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Cryptocurrency

By now, most everyone has heard of cryptocurrency or at the very least Bitcoin, a specific type of cryptocurrency. If you have been unfortunate enough to experience ransomware, you know that cryptocurrency is the form of payment that is usually required. If you have ever wondered what Bitcoins are and how cryptocurrency works, hang in there with me while I attempt to explain without diving into the crunchy technical details.

Cryptocurrency seems to have a negative connotation associated with it because it tends to be the form of payment widely used for the black market, ransomware and may other illegal activities. However, although this form of currency is appealing to criminals, it also has many advantages over paper currency. So, what is cryptocurrency?

Cryptocurrency is a form of digital money created from code. Unlike our U.S. dollars and cents, there is no physical form of cryptocurrency. You cannot hold it in your hand. More importantly, it is a decentralized transaction system unlike our traditional centralized transaction system used by banks. Any payment network is made up of accounts, balances and transactions.

To prevent what is called double spending, your bank (the central transaction system) is the authority on validating what transactions are made on your account that affect your balance. This is not the case in the decentralized system used by cryptocurrency.

Cryptocurrency uses a peer system made up of computers all over the world. Every peer in the network needs to have a list of all transactions to validate future transactions. If the peers disagree even with one transaction, everything is broken. To achieve consensus without a central authority, a man by the name of Satoshi Nakamoto devised a system that uses a network of nodes (computers) that validate the transactions and the users making the transaction by using



cryptographic algorithms.

To my knowledge, the system used for cryptocurrency has held its integrity and has not been compromised. This is mainly due to the blockchain process, which makes a new transaction record with the nodes permanent and unalterable, along with the strong encryption techniques used for authentication. Once a transaction is confirmed, it is there permanently and cannot be reversed. So how are transactions confirmed, you might ask.

You may have heard the term cryptomining or bitcoin mining. This is a process by which a person sets up a computer to be used for mining cryptocurrency. A mining node is what confirms the transactions that take place. Once a transaction is confirmed by a miner, all nodes must add that transaction to its database and it has become a permanent part of the blockchain. Miners then get rewarded with a token of the cryptocurrency, this could be bitcoin. Now you understand how people make money by crypto mining and why it is an important part of the system.

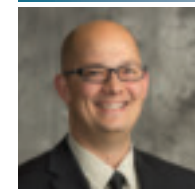
Cryptocurrency is fast and available worldwide. Transactions propagate within minutes across the network

from anywhere in the world. As far as electronic payments go, it is probably the only pseudonymous payment available, which is why it is appealing to criminals. It is irreversible. Once a transaction has taken place and is confirmed, it is there to stay, and no one, I mean NO ONE, can change it. Cryptocurrency is secure to say the least. It is controlled by a public key cryptographic system by which only the owner of the private key can send the currency. It is basically impossible to hack the system.

Hopefully I have answered more questions about cryptocurrency than I have created and you have a little better understanding of what it is and how it works. I'll let you decide if it might be the next revolutionary currency of the future.

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Dan Gerard, CISSP, is the Chief Technology Officer for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield.

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Growing hope in the heartland

By Nancy R. McDonald



◀ On a business visit to SPECS in Carthage through Hancock CEO, Dr. Dan Hayden, left, instructs student Trevor Sandidge on giving an eye exam to a fellow student.



▲ Michelle Cordes, owner of Michelle Cordes Photography in Carrollton, presents her business to Greene-Calhoun CEO students.

The statistics are daunting. Once considered a land of opportunity, Illinois is losing population at a record rate. People are leaving in search of jobs, lower taxes and a better quality of life. According to the Illinois Census Bureau, from July 2016 to July 2017, 83 of 102 Illinois counties lost population, primarily in the rural areas served by the state’s electric and telephone cooperatives.

Population loss affects nearly every aspect of life, and the American dream of achieving a better quality of life through hard work is fading. Job prospects are diminishing, as is hope. No one sees this reality more than young people – our future business leaders. But what is their incentive to stay in the state?

“Up until the Industrial Revolution, kids from down the street could be apprentices,” says Sand Roads Consulting CEO Bruce Giffin, who manages Illinois Electric Cooperative in Winchester. “Kids learned the trade there. They were nurtured in the

community and were kept in the community. Now we just export them. If we don’t nurture and grow our own, we’re just going to continue to have all of this population decline.”

With the purpose of helping the younger generation find more value and potential in their home communities, Illinois Electric and many other electric and telephone cooperatives are now participating in the Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities (CEO) program through Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship in Effingham. Of the communities that offer the program, 98 percent fall within the U.S. Census Bureau definition of rural areas.

While traditional education provides the tools for students to use in a future career, CEO’s unique business model integrates entrepreneurial education into the traditional high school curriculum and teaches practical application of those tools. For 90 minutes each school day, a trained program facilitator helps students ascertain how

to become an entrepreneur. A significant portion of the class includes meeting with area business leaders to learn how their businesses operate and the skills necessary to be an owner or a manager.

During each class, students



◀ Morgan-Scott CEO students tour Arends-Awe, Inc. John Deere Dealership in Riggston with Owner Marsha Awe.

receive assistance from community mentors to start their own businesses. This provides a great opportunity for them to experience starting a business without the risk normally associated with such a venture. Illinois Electric Cooperative employees act as the facilitators for three programs in west central Illinois. Classes are only held at businesses or community organizations. Other electric and telephone co-ops also provide this level of leadership or space for classes, funding and/or serve on the board of their local CEO program.

According to Giffin, the CEO program teaches skills students are not learning anywhere else. In his opinion, one of the most important is social capital, or as he puts it, “a really diverse and productive network.” By having access to so many businesses and business leaders, students can find help for nearly any issue that arises with their own businesses and this provides indelible ties to the community. “So, a kid who finishes the CEO program knows everybody who knows anything in the community. If they don’t have the answer, they know someone who does,” explains Giffin.

CEO alum Trevor Sandidge, a native of Warsaw who participated in the Hancock County CEO program,

agrees. “More than anything, I think the network that provides access to the amount of people I know back in my hometown today, who I didn’t know before, is unreal. Anything I need, I know that I can call and get in touch and they’ll help me out in that aspect, and likewise from me to them.”

Another area addressed through the program is social skills. So much of today’s communication, especially among young people, is on a screen rather than face-to-face and doesn’t foster a true social connection. “It might sound crazy, but it’s unreal just how many young people can’t hold a conversation with an adult,” says Sandidge. Giffin and Gina Hamilton, owner of Hamilton’s Catering in Jacksonville, team up for every class addressing every aspect of social etiquette – conversational skills, how to greet people, when and where to sit, and proper table manners.

CEO is underwritten in part by Midland Bank in Effingham, but considerable funding comes from local businesses. Rather than depending on large donations from a few donors, each CEO class relies on \$1,000 donations from 30-50 community leaders. These funds underwrite costs to run the program and ensures that a substantial number of businesses have

a vested interest in its success. The businesses also participate as presenters and offer business tours as part of the CEO curriculum.

To apply for the CEO program, students must write an essay expressing their interest in the program and include recommendations from a teacher or guidance counselor and an employer or someone they know from the community. They must undergo a rigorous selection process as competition for program seats is fierce. Grades are not a consideration for acceptance to the program but being trustworthy and having good work ethic is a requirement. Giffin says he has one spot for every two applicants, and siblings of former CEO participants are now vying for class slots. Given the experience gained, one would think the cost to participate would be high, but there is no cost to students.

There are potential financial rewards for CEO students. At the end of each class, \$5,000 in college scholarship money is divided based on the success of each student’s business.

The CEONext National Trade Show, through the Midland Institute for Entrepreneurship, is held annually for students to showcase their businesses. Students participate in the trade show on an invitation-only

basis, and three exhibitors are awarded \$2,500 to invest in their businesses.

Illinois colleges are recognizing the value of the CEO program. For instance, Illinois College in Jacksonville, John Wood Community College in Quincy, Lewis and Clark College in Godfrey and Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield give college credits for students who have successfully completed the CEO program. Sandidge says that because of this, he was able to save the cost of a year of tuition.

Among others, Illinois College and Millikin University in Decatur offer entrepreneurship programs. Trevor May, enrollment management, network strategist, adjunct faculty in Tabor School of Business at Millikin, says, "Millikin sees the CEO program as the first entrepreneurship program in the high schools currently producing some top-notch students who are thinking outside the box and pushing the envelope when it comes to entrepreneurial thinking."

Millikin offered \$10,000 scholarships for the first time in 2018 to students who exhibited in the CEONext trade show, and 14 scholarships were awarded. May explains, "We want to see students who are in this environment of entrepreneurialism and creativity come to a place that has the same feel and the same opportunities to really grow their entrepreneurial spirit. It's kind of like the CEO program but with more autonomy, more traction and more resources." He adds, "When the university started looking at all these high performing students who came out of the CEO program, we knew we needed to get them to Millikin. They're the kind of students who need to be here." Millikin's next step will be offering college credit for students who complete the CEO program.

How successful is CEO? Although

it is still in its infancy, the fruits of its labor are evident. As he works toward a degree in business management and management information systems at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb., Sandidge continues to operate Legacy Conversions, the business he started through the CEO program. The company specializes in converting VHS tapes to DVDs, slides to digital photos and Super 8 film to DVDs.

Some other businesses that can



attribute their start to the CEO program include Mette's Distinctive Lighting in Effingham, an upscale lighting company; and DKJ Designs and Show Clothing in Moweaqua, which creates upscale jackets for showing horses.

Because Sandidge and other CEO alums have already experienced writing business plans, running a business, and have support from the contacts they've made through the program, they have more confidence as they look to the future. Since local business leaders work directly with the students, they can see their potential and work ethic first-hand. It's not unusual for a local business owner to tell a participant that when he/she finishes

▼ Zach Mette proudly poses at Mette's Distinctive Lighting in Effingham, the business he started through the 2015 Effingham CEO program.

college, to return to the community and work for him/her. Sandidge has already received three job offers.

Since its inception, CEO has grown to 45 communities in Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota and Colorado with the goal of having a national presence. The formula works – people are investing in the community, growing it and creating opportunity for generations to come. But, it's not just about growing a community; it's about growing hope.

For more information about the CEO program, visit www.midlandinstitute.com.



Chef Niall Campbell and his wife and partner Kristie



Reused and upcycled materials offer Firefly Grill a comfortable and welcoming look.

Firefly Grill: Farm and table, not farm to table

By Karen Binder

What diners can expect on the menu at Firefly Grill is local, sustainable and honest, as well as some great food.

Chef Niall and Kristie Campbell have blended their experiences from Illinois, Maine, Puerto Rico, Alaska and San Francisco to create an eating destination that's the sum of its parts: gardens, irrigation, cover crops, mulching, plot rotation and a look to the future with hoop houses and a small wagyu cattle herd for a uniquely local eating experience.

Chef Niall stresses the restaurant is “not farm to table. We are farm and table.”

Yet it was a combination of family roots and a request that landed them in Effingham. While Kristie spent time with her grandparents in Effingham, it was Jack Schultz of Agracel, a commercial real estate firm, and others who asked them to open the fine dining restaurant around 2006, well before the farm-to-table trend and “have a place to recruit quality people to our community,” Kristie explained.

“You don't say no to that kind of opportunity,” Niall said.

Walking up to the front door says plenty about the eatery before one can sit down with a menu. The exterior is surrounded with garden plots and that's reclaimed and reused barn wood and galvanized metal constructing the building's exterior shell.

Some of Kristie's fondest memories are the trips to her grandparent's home in Effingham and catching fireflies in their backyard. A picture of her late grandmother, Lucille Samuel, hangs in the dining room.

Why garden plots? Niall and Kristie recalled the process to get fresh tomatoes, peppers and herbs to the Vieques island restaurant, off the coast of Puerto Rico. They had to drive to the San Juan airport to pick up crates of fresh produce from the U.S. mainland and then drive back to Vieques via ferry.

“It was ridiculous. We had a lot of sun there. It's hard to get fresh herbs on islands and we started growing herbs ourselves,” Niall said.

“Let's not kid, a tomato you grow versus a tomato you purchase is a totally different experience,” Kristie added. “We want that for our customers.”

More than a half dozen gardens surround the restaurant, including an herb patch at the front door and a raised bed garden that's filled with 30 or so heirloom tomato varieties.

They also have plans for more garden space, an orchard and a small wagyu cattle herd at their 12-acre residential property.

As small specialty farmers, the Campbells are essentially organic growers but without “all the paperwork, cost and government involvement” of USDA certification, Niall said. Making the biggest impact on their plots is the use of mushroom compost to rebuild their soils and planned vegetable rotations to limit disease and rebuild soil nutritive value.

The restaurant was named in 2008 by Bon Appétit magazine as the second-best eco-friendly restaurant in the nation. “We don't do it for the sake of being green. We do it because they are smart decisions,” Kristie said.

At the core of Niall's creative process as a chef is his ability to adapt to what's going on with the farmers.

“(Restaurants) are used to trucks just showing up and bringing boxes in perfect squares that fit into your walk-in (cooler). It's really about working with the farmers” he said.

“You have to make a commitment to this kind of food as guarantee of quality and taste. Everyone fights for the bottom line. We spend more time working on doing the right thing and the bottom line ends up hashing out anyway. Yes, it's more work but it's worth it.”

What this means for diners is a seasonal menu that regularly changes with fresh ingredients. It also means that



Herb Patch



American Burger

Niall tends to think about menu six months in advance. “The fact that we’ve added a whole different element to it with the farm and the garden, is really fun. I’m thinking about spring and summer in January as we’re buying seeds,” Niall said.

Among the restaurant’s mainstay menu items are fried green tomatoes, Montana mignon, caprese salad and squash blossoms as well as a fall display of pumpkins, squash and gourds that shrinks as diners enjoy their dishes.



Fried Fish

About Firefly Grill

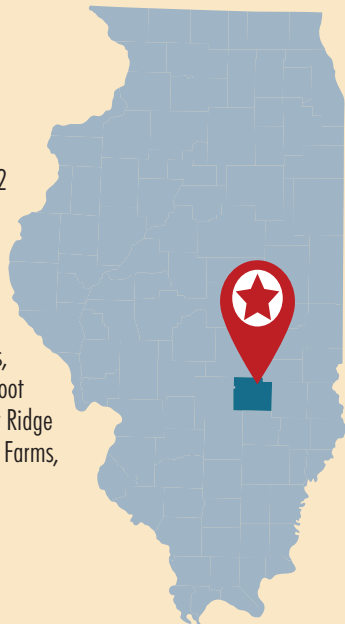
Where: 1810 Avenue of Mid-America in Effingham

Hours: Open daily for lunch, dinner and brunch

Reservations: 217-342-2002

Website: www.fireflygrill.com

Illinois purveyors: Cahokia Rice, McClure; Kilgus Farmstead Milk, Fairbury; Little Egypt Alliance of Farmers, various Southern Illinois; Marcoat Creamery, Greenville; Paw Paw Ridge Farms, Teutopolis; Prairie Fruit Farms, Champaign; and River to River Farm, Ozark.



Why not support them?



Fish Tacos

The baby foxes

By Jim Gillespie as told to Patty Gillespie

The temperature was hovering at a few degrees above freezing. The sun had set, and I had just finished feeding a bottle of milk supplement to the orphaned calf. I was closing the pasture gate at the road when a movement to the east drew my attention. I caught just a glimpse of a fox as it ran across the road.

I began walking a short distance downhill, hoping to see the fox scouting for food in the bottom field, east of the barnyard.

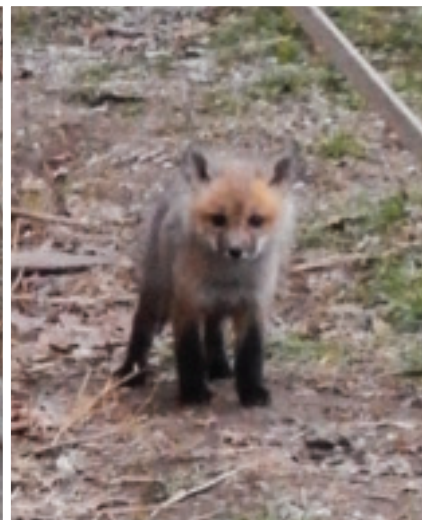
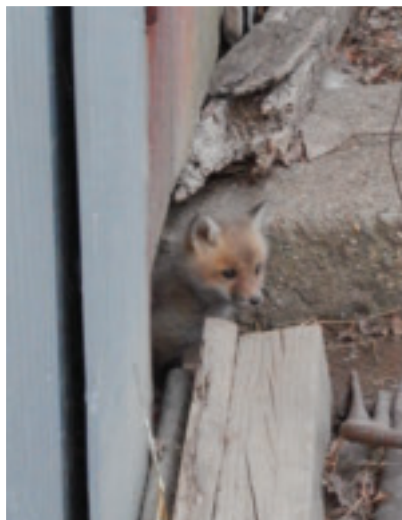
I heard an abrupt raspy sound and saw the source – a baby fox! No, five baby foxes. They were hurrying along on the road, most likely trying to follow their mother. The closest fox kit turned and saw me. It scurried up the embankment on the south side of the road. That roly-poly fellow had scampered as fast as its short legs could go, and I knew in an instant where it was headed.

Yet the others were still precariously positioned. I moved quietly to the north side and tried to herd them off the road, hoping to convince them to go the way the first one had gone.

They went scooting off, occasionally yapping their funny barks as they ducked under the fence and ran through the pasture. All went scampering westward, except one. That one stood its ground.

Its small furry reddish face peered at me. The little fox's body was gray, with black legs and its bushy tail was white-tipped. It approached me as if I were an oddity and laid back its pointed black ears at the sight of me. It began moving hesitantly westward, but it insisted on traveling the roadway. I followed behind.

Then that pup of a fox stopped, turned to face me and barked a warning. I couldn't help but chuckle out loud. It dashed away.



The kit's destination I could easily surmise. I knew of a game trail that ended at a gap in the barn's foundation. Through that opening, small animals could access a secluded dry-dirt area. During many winter trapping seasons, I had been catching raccoon, opossum or even skunk by setting a body-gripping trap at that gap.

It was likely that during this cold wet spring, the vixen had chosen to slip in and give birth there beneath the wooden floor of the barn.

I smiled as I envisioned those five little rambunctious foxes safely tucked together in that sheltered earthen den, waiting for their mother's return.

Years ago, other baby foxes had also been waiting for their mother's return. Probably 50 years ago. I had been a young teenager then and lived in the city with my parents, but my home was the farm. Every summer since I was probably 6 years old, I had been tramping over every inch of woodland, splashing through puddle and creek, and exploring hill and dale on my grandparent's land. Most days, I'd be hunting in the wilds. My gun was a stick, a cowboy rifle toy or a BB gun, and finally a

410 shotgun.

Each day I'd do chores on the farm too. I liked helping my grandmother take care of her chickens. The money Grandma obtained from the sale of eggs was the grocery money, buying whatever she couldn't raise in her garden. Every day at dusk when all the chickens were in at roost, I'd shut the henhouse door to keep them safe from predators.

One spring evening as I came in from shutting up the chickens, Grandma said, "Jimmy, I saw a fox today, carrying a hen in its jaws and heading east. That fox is probably feeding babies. It will be back again and again for another and another. Will you take care of that for me?"

That spring, so many years ago, I had been hunting the groundhogs that were destroying our crop by eating the newly-emerged beans and had discovered the groundhogs' tunnels. I knew that foxes often used those burrows as their dens. So, the next day I went there and killed two of those baby foxes. I have always regretted it. ♡



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Happy Halloween!

1 Brittney Roysce

Norris Electric Cooperative

My son is all boy and obsessed with everything farming!

2 Karen Storm

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

My great-nephew is the sweetest Dracula ever.

3 Jill Kirts

Norris Electric Cooperative

We have the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, the Good Witch and Uncle Steve.

4 Christen Parks

Spoon River Electric Cooperative

The Table Grove Fire Department Dalmatian.

5 Jane Kaisner

Corn Belt Energy Corporation

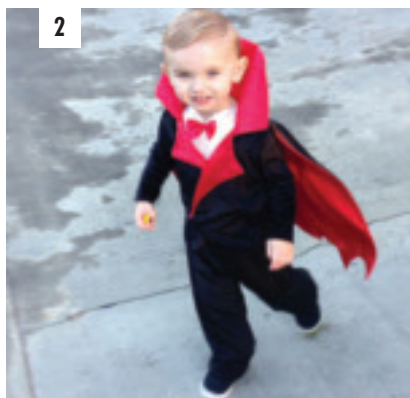
I made these fox and hound costumes for my granddaughters.

6 Mary St. Clair

EnerStar Electric Cooperative

This is my favorite photo of my 1-year-old grandson trying to decide what these orange things are.

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



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December – Winter wonderland

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February – Reflections

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7

COOPERATIVE PRINCIPLES

1 VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP



Cooperatives are voluntary organizations open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without gender, social, racial, political or religious discrimination.

2 DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL



Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. The elected representatives are accountable to the membership. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote), and cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.

3 MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION



Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital is usually the common property of the cooperative. Members usually receive limited compensation, if any, on capital subscribed as a condition of membership. Members allocate surpluses for any or all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative, possibly by setting up reserves, part of which at least would be indivisible; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

4 AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE



Cooperatives are autonomous, self help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control by their members and maintain their cooperative autonomy.

5 EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION



Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives. They inform the general public, particularly young people and opinion leaders, about the nature and benefits of cooperation.

6 COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES



Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together through local, national, regional and international structures.

7 CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY



While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members.



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Contact: gkcf@springnet1.com



39th Annual Harvest Daze

WHEN: October 5-7, 2018 – all day
WHERE: Old Courthouse Museum Lawn,
 103 W. Cherry Street, Watseka
COST: Free
CONTACT: Iroquois County Historical Society
 815-429-3595 or go to
www.iroquoiscountyhistoricalsociety.com



Join us for a fish fry on Friday evening, a craft show with 100 vendors, car show on Saturday and tractor show on Sunday. The Victorian Room has a bake sale and the Red Barn is open with barbeque and much more. Free entertainment will be ongoing in the big tent on Sat. and Sun. and museum exhibits will be open. There will also be a multi-faceted pumpkin decorating contest. See the website for more information.



Candlelight Tour of Lincoln's New Salem

WHEN: October 5-7, 2018 – 7-9 p.m.
WHERE: 15588 History Lane, Petersburg
COST: Free
CONTACT: 217-632-4000 or email
hpa.newsalem@illinois.gov



This candlelight walk offers the only opportunity to see the village at night. Period clothed interpreters will be inside many of the log homes and shops in the village to talk about life in the 19th century. Gingerbread and cider will be served in the Rutledge Tavern. The site is located 2 miles south of Petersburg on Rt. 97.



Kampsville Knap-In

WHEN: October 13-14, 2018 – 9 a.m.
 Oct. 13 til noon Oct. 14
WHERE: McCully Heritage Project,
 592 Crawford Creek Rd., Kampsville
COST: Free
CONTACT: McCully Heritage Project 618-653-4687



Enjoy flintknapping demonstrations and tutorials, vendors, an atlatl range, artifact id, native plant walks and demonstrations of primitive skills. Tent camping, fishing and hiking are available at the 940-acre site and a shower house and restroom are available. The event is not for buying, selling or trading of relics. No local chert collections are allowed without property owner permission.



Pulaski Pecan Bonanza

WHEN: October 20, 2018 – all day
WHERE: Pulaski County Fairgrounds,
 497 W. Commercial St., Pulaski
COST: Free
CONTACT: 618-342-6700



Come join us at this annual fall festival for pecan chili, pecan cookoff, parade, pageant, bingo, musical entertainment, prizes and the barbeque pork butts and chicken smoked with pecan wood by Rex Wilburn. We also take orders for the pork butts in advance.



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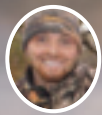
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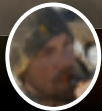
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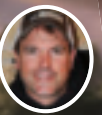
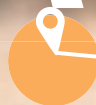
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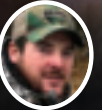
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