

AUGUST 2019

Illinois Country Living

Fall in  with nature
Waterfall adventures in Illinois

CO-OPS

Linemen receive
Red Cross award

ENERGY SOLUTIONS

Charging electric
vehicles

GARDENWISE

Beware of leaves
of three

CO-OP
NEWS



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Illinois Country Living

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VOLUME 77 • NO. 4

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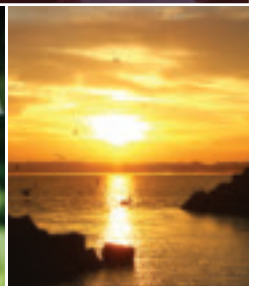
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Help for veteran-owned small businesses

ARE YOU A VETERAN who owns a small business or is looking to start one? If so, you'll soon be able to access the equipment your business needs to thrive as a result of my Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act, which became law earlier this year after both branches of Congress overwhelmingly approved it in December.

My bipartisan bill will allow veteran small business owners, including farmers, to participate in the Federal Surplus Private Property Program. For years, government agencies and non-profit organizations have been able to obtain surplus equipment, such as trucks, tools and computers, that the federal government no longer has any use for. This excess inventory is available cost-free, with participants only responsible for covering shipping and handling and other administrative fees that are required to run the program year after year.

Even in an era of such political gridlock, it made no sense to see this surplus equipment go unclaimed while thousands of veterans struggle to scrounge up enough resources to run their own businesses.

Once the U.S. Small Business Administration and U.S. General Services Administration fully implement the Veterans Small Business Enhancement Act, that soybean farmer in southern Illinois might not have to stay up at night worried about how he'll possibly be able to pay for that much-needed generator.

That former Marine can get the computer she needs to do the accounting work that keeps her restaurant afloat.

And, American taxpayers will no longer have to foot the bill to store all those resources that belong in showrooms, offices and cornfields.

A win-win, by anyone's estimation.

There's a reason veterans are twice as likely to start or lead their

own companies as civilians, with roughly 10 percent of small businesses across the country run by those who've served, including 80,700 in Illinois alone.

It's because no matter where they were deployed, no matter which branch they call their own, those who've worn the uniform have a kind of courage instilled in them that's impossible to root out—the type of resilience and determination that can turn a longshot idea into a smooth-running, profit-making business.

Yet thanks to a number of factors, the number of veterans leading their own companies is plummeting as compared to generations past. While a staggering 49.7 percent of World War II veterans went on to run or own businesses, followed by 40 percent of Korean War veterans, just 4.5 percent of those who served after September 11, 2001, had launched their own businesses as of late 2016.

We know that veterans are far more likely to hire other veterans, especially those who are struggling with the wounds of war, both visible and otherwise. So fewer vets at the helm of companies means fewer vets throughout the ranks, too. Fewer learning the ropes of an industry. Fewer climbing the ladder to the top. Fewer who, someday, might start a business of their own.

My hope is that this bill will help change all that, beginning to reverse the trend of entrepreneurship among recent veterans and, in doing so, getting more of our heroes hired and trained today so they can succeed tomorrow.

After all, these women and men risked their lives for the rest of us overseas. We are long overdue in delivering legislation that looks out for them when they step back onto U.S. soil.

So, to all those veterans who run or are looking to start their own business or farms, this bill is for you. Once it's implemented, all you have to do to begin laying claim to those unused items and their untapped potential is contact your local state agency. 📍

After all, these women and men risked their lives for the rest of us overseas. We are long overdue in delivering legislation that looks out for them when they step back onto U.S. soil.



U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth is an Iraq War veteran and Purple Heart recipient who was elected to the U.S. Senate in 2018. She previously represented Illinois' 8th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Illinois Country Living is a monthly publication serving the communications needs of the locally-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives of Illinois. With a circulation of almost 189,000, the magazine informs cooperative consumer-members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

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AUGUST CHECKLIST

Back to school.

Remember to slow down and pay attention when kids are present, especially before and after school.



Did you know? Every three minutes a child in the U.S. is treated for a sports-related concussion. Know the warning signs. Go to nsc.org for info.



Save \$\$. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your air-conditioning thermostat. The thermostat senses heat from these appliances, which can cause the A/C to run longer than necessary.

Source: energy.gov

Tip of the month.

Keep your tires properly inflated. It is safer, they last longer, and it can improve your gas mileage.



Source: fuelconomy.gov



Farm Progress attendees can play games at the Illinois Touchstone Energy® booth and win prizes.

Farm Progress Show is back in Illinois

The nation's largest outdoor farm event will be held at Progress City in Decatur Aug. 27-29. For 66 years, the Farm Progress Show has celebrated agriculture by bringing tradition and business together. It is where people from all over gather to meet, observe and learn. Major manufacturers roll out their newest offerings, and agricultural families take a break from their daily routines to immerse themselves in the wider ag community. The show rotates annually between Decatur and Boone, Iowa.

Be sure to look for the Illinois Touchstone Energy® Cooperative's booth at its new location on Lot 217 on Second Street between Central Progress and East Progress Avenue, near Gates 7 and 8. Representatives from several Illinois electric cooperatives will be on hand to share information about cooperatives, safety, energy efficiency and more.

Be sure to catch a Live Line Safety Demo, sponsored by Corn Belt Energy Corporation,

where you'll learn from a safety expert about electricity and how to stay safe around electrical equipment.

For 66 years, the Farm Progress Show has celebrated agriculture by bringing tradition and business together. It is where people from all over gather to meet, observe and learn.


Stop by the booth to charge your phone at one of the charging stations and, while you're there, play a game for a chance at a prize. Cooperative members who present their Co-op Connections card or show the Co-op Connections app will receive a special gift.

Visit farmprogressshow.com to learn more about the show. 💡

Students return from life-changing experience

Sixty-two students from 26 Illinois electric and telephone cooperatives joined more than 1,800 of their peers in June at the annual National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth to Washington Tour.

The students toured Capitol Hill, met with U.S. Senators Dick Durbin and Tammy Duckworth and their local U.S. representatives. They also visited historical and cultural sites including Arlington National Cemetery, the Supreme Court, President Lincoln's Cottage at First National Cemetery, a variety of memorials and the U.S. Capitol. Among fun activities the students enjoyed were an assembly of more than 1,800 Youth Tour participants from across the nation and a special farewell event at the Newseum, scheduled to close later this year.

During the trip, Kally Mayo of Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association (EECA), was chosen by her peers to represent Illinois on the Youth Leadership Council (YLC) of the NRECA. The YLC is a year-long appointment, and Mayo will represent EECA and all Illinois' cooperatives at national and state meetings and events in the year ahead. 




Illinois YLC Representative Kally Mayo with U.S. Senator Tammy Duckworth.

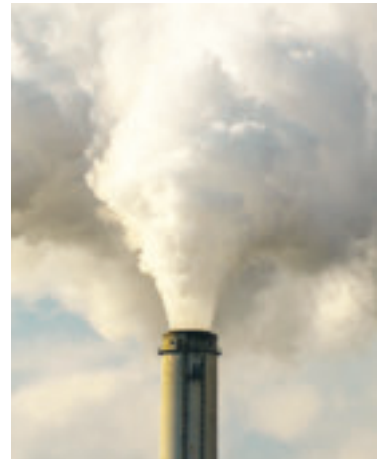


Sophie Marcolla, left, is recipient of the \$10,000 NRECA Glenn English Scholarship for 2019. She is shown with 2019 YLC Kally Mayo.

Marcolla receives Glenn English Scholarship

Sophie Marcolla, 2016 Illinois Youth Leadership Council representative and Adams Electric Cooperative member, has been selected as recipient of the \$10,000 NRECA Glenn English Scholarship for 2019. The Glenn English Scholarships are one of the few sources of private scholarships for current college students. Each year, one \$10,000 and four \$1,000 scholarships are awarded. Applicants are required to have completed at least one year of college as a full-time student.

Marcolla is currently a sophomore at the University of Kentucky studying political science. She is spending her summer interning on Capitol Hill in the office of U.S. Representative Darin LaHood (R-18). 




DOE expects no coal subsidies

While individual states roll out initiatives to shore up the economics of nuclear generating facilities, the Department of Energy (DOE) is explicitly rejecting the idea of government help for economically troubled coal-fired plants that some contend are needed to ensure grid stability during extreme cold weather episodes.

The DOE's position represents a departure from its earlier stance that plants keeping a 90-day fuel reserve on-site merited special considerations to keep them available even if they were economically uncompetitive in wholesale markets.

DOE Assistant Secretary Bruce Walker told reporters, "Nobody I know is looking at subsidizing coal, period," after addressing a conference of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) in Washington, D.C., a Platts report said.

Walker's NRECA address stressed the need for grid resilience in the face of growing reliance on intermittent generation sources. He told the co-op audience the DOE regards coal as just one of several generation types available to backstop reliability in the event of problems with natural gas-fired plants served by pipelines. 



Fear of falling

A recent study published in the journal of the American Medical Association found that for people over 75, the number of those who died from falls more than doubled from 2000 to 2016. As individuals increase in age, they typically have to force themselves to exercise or simply keep moving. However, staying active can help prevent falls.

Mike Holloway, a physical therapist with Peoria-based OSF HealthCare, says there are several reasons that increase our risk of falling as we get older. We naturally become weaker as we age if we don't exercise, our balance becomes less stable, vision worsens, sensors in feet are less responsive, and we can develop issues with our inner ears which affect equilibrium.

Holloway says it's important to resist the inclination to lay down and rest if you aren't feeling well or after a fall. "You get a little weaker when you lay down and your endurance goes down within a couple of days," he says. "The best thing you can do is, within pain levels, get up and move as much as you can. The more you move, the better and as long as you're feeling comfortable you should move."

When dealing with aging family members, ask them regularly not only if they have fallen, but also if they have had a loss of balance or an increase in trips or stumbles. Those can be a sign of a potential problem.💡

Source: OSF HealthCare

Volunteer to make a difference

Sometimes we all need to pause for a moment and remember to appreciate the simple things, like people helping people and how getting involved often makes a lasting difference in our lives.

Think about all the things that nurture and strengthen our local communities. They begin with family, follow through to faith and forge the bonds that foster civility and create wholesome and healthy societies.

Even when so many of us are preoccupied with vacations, hobbies and all the summer activities that break up our regular routine, that commitment to community involvement can be part of just about everything we do.

Coaches and referees keep summer youth sports leagues running, smiling senior volunteers quietly patrol our favorite parks and teenage counselors help create summer memories for younger kids with games, crafts and field trips.

Some of us take a week or so of our vacations to chaperone a youth outing, help out at scout camp or support a church group outreach mission.

Many of us know at least one person who is so committed to a particular cause that they find ways to make an impact throughout the stages of their lives.

What about the moms and dads who take their teenagers along for a day of service making sandwiches or folding clothes for the local shelter?

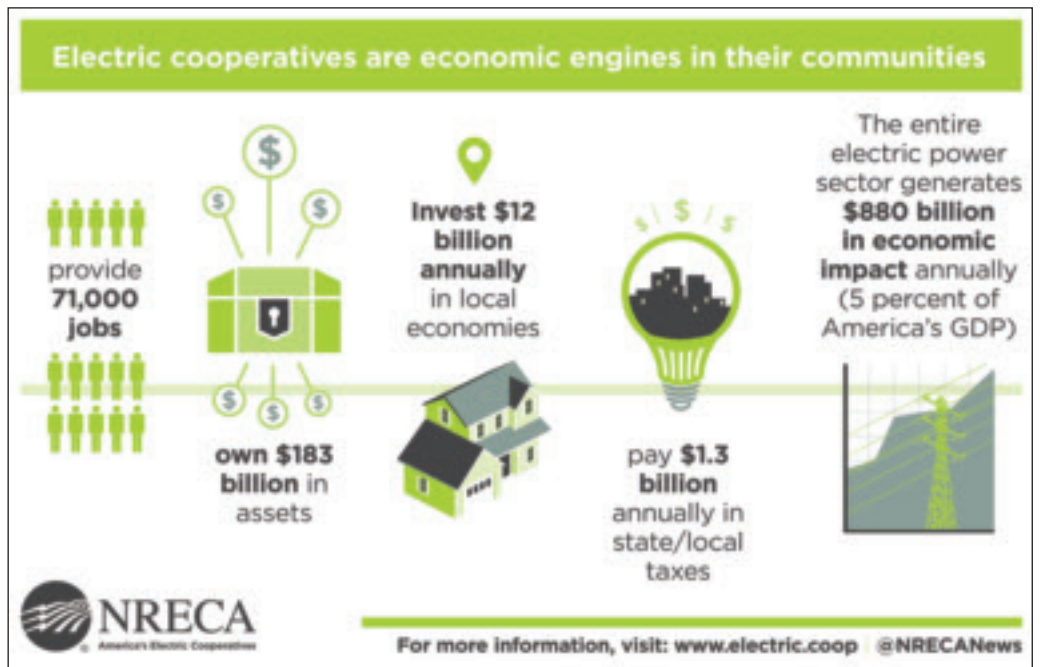


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All of these things are fine ideas that lead to great actions and produce lasting results. What makes them really special is that they cost little more than our personal decisions to look around, see what's needed and jump in and get involved.

With technology cutting back on our personal connections to people, maybe we need to look for ways to touch the lives of those close by, and volunteering is a great way to start. If you think about it, we all can choose to give a bit of ourselves to help make things better. Volunteer to serve and see for yourself.💡

Source: Derrill Holly, NRECA



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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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PANCAKE ITEM 61615/60637 95275 shown

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4-1/2" ANGLE GRINDER

SAVE 44%

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NOW \$14.99

NOW \$9.99

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TAILGATOR SUPER COUPON

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

900 MAX. STARTING/700 RUNNING WATTS 2 HP (63 CC) 2 CYCLE GAS GENERATOR

• 5 hour run time @ 50% capacity

SAVE \$16

NOW \$109.99

COMPARE TO POWERSMART MODEL: P650 **\$126.10**

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luminar OUTDOOR SUPER COUPON

24 FT., 18 BULB, 12 SOCKET OUTDOOR STRING LIGHTS

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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BLACK ITEM 64486 63483 shown

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PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE SUPER COUPON

RAPID PUMP® 3 TON STEEL HEAVY DUTY LOW PROFILE FLOOR JACK

• Weighs 73 lbs.

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE \$100

NOW \$179.99

COMPARE TO TEQ CORRECT MODEL: T830018Z **\$279.99**

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MECHANIC'S GLOVES

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AVAIL. IN SM, MED, LG, XL, XXL

SAVE \$5.00

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COMPARE TO VALEO MODEL: 25521 **\$14.99**

SAVE 66%

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16389228

LIMIT 5 - Coupon valid through 12/11/19

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE SUPER COUPON

3 TON HEAVY DUTY STEEL JACK STANDS

• Adjusts from 11-3/4" to 16-3/8"

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 45%

NOW \$18.99

COMPARE TO TORIN JACK MODEL: 1007102 **\$34.99**

ITEM 38846/69597/62392/61196 shown

16389256

LIMIT 3 - Coupon valid through 12/11/19

COBRA SUPER COUPON

4 CHANNEL WIRELESS SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM WITH 2 CAMERAS

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

HIGH DEF. 720P RESOLUTION

• Night vision

SAVE \$30

NOW \$229.99

COMPARE TO ALC MODEL: ALC-AWS3266 **\$259.99**

NOW \$249.99

ITEM 63842

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LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 12/11/19

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10" PNEUMATIC TIRE

SAVE \$5.00

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

• 64 sq. ft. of shade

SAVE \$64.00

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COMPARE TO SHADE TECH MODEL: 157467 **\$99.98**

SAVE \$44

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LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 12/11/19

VIKING SUPER COUPON

JUMP STARTER AND POWER PACK

Customer Rating **★★★★★**

NOW \$69.99

\$79.99

SAVE \$70

COMPARE TO SCHUMACHER ELECTRIC MODEL: SL1 **\$139.99**

ITEM 64412/62749 shown

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LIMIT 1 - Coupon valid through 12/11/19

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ITEM 67514

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

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Customer Rating **★★★★★**

SAVE 69%

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- 3 AAA Batteries (Included)
- 144 Lumens

ALL IN A SINGLE SUPER POWERFUL LIGHT

COMPARE TO PERFORMANCE TOOL MODEL: WZ364 **\$13.52**

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SUPER COUPON

20% OFF ANY SINGLE ITEM*

16356032

Limit 1 coupon per customer per day. Save 20% on any 1 item purchased. *Cannot be used with other discount, coupon or any of the following items or brands: Inside Track Club membership, Extended Service Plan, gift card, open box item, 3 day Parking Lot Sale item, compressors, floor jacks, sales, storage cabinets, chests or carts, trailers, welders, Admiral, Ames, Bauer, Central Machinery, Cobra, CoverPro, Dayton, Diamondback, Earthquake, Fisher, Hercules, Icon, Jophier, Lynx, Proban, Predator, Tailgator, Viking, Vulcan, Zurich. Not valid on prior purchases. Non-transferable. Original coupon must be presented. Valid through 12/1/19.

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CURRENTS

Four life hacks to beat the summer heat

As summer temperatures continue to go up, there's no need to let the heat get you down. There are several ways you can keep cool this summer—without wreaking havoc on your home's air conditioner! Use these four simple life hacks to beat the summer heat.

- 1. Make aloe vera cubes.** Whether you're nursing a sunburn or just wanting to cool off, aloe vera cubes will offer some relief. Simply fill an ice tray with aloe vera gel, freeze it, then place the cubes on your body's pulse points, like the neck and wrists, for a quick cooling sensation.
- 2. Try a cooling pillow.** If you're willing to spend a little, a cooling pillow can help you feel more comfortable on those muggy summer nights. Prices range from \$27 (like Plixio Pillows) to \$180 (like the Technogel Pillow), so you can determine how much you're willing to spend.
- 3. Just add mint.** Menthol makes our bodies feel cool, so by adding spearmint essential oil to products like body wash and lotion, you can get an instant cooling effect. Essential oils can be purchased at most drugstores or online.
- 4. Spend a few bucks on a handheld fan mister.** Sure, you may feel a little silly carrying around a tiny fan, but you'll be more comfortable than everyone else—and they'll probably ask to borrow it. You can typically find these at big box stores like Walmart or Target, or you can order one online.

There are additional ways to keep you and your home cool this summer:

- Close blinds and curtains during the day and open them during the evening when the temperatures are cooler.
- Use ceiling fans and portable fans to stay comfortable. But remember, fans cool people, not rooms.
- Use appliances that put out heat, like clothes dryers and dishwashers, during the evening to minimize indoor heat during the day when temperatures are higher.

Don't let the heat get in the way of summer fun. Use these tips to keep your cool and enjoy the rest of the season! 💡

Source: Abby Berry, NRECA



Adding spearmint essential oil to products like body wash and lotion gives you an instant cooling effect.

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3rd Annual Steam Threshing Event

AUGUST 2-3 Come see the harvesting and threshing of oats as they are cut and bound into sheaves by a horse-drawn mechanical binder. Threshing will be done with antique farming equipment and other vintage equipment will be on display. Other activities include blacksmithing and horseshoeing, a petting zoo, pony and buggy rides, children's games and more. A food tent will serve meals, ice cream, kettle corn and lemon shake-ups. Fun for the entire family.

August 2-3, 2019 - Fri. 1-8 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

- Illinois Amish Heritage Center, 284 Illinois 133, Arthur
Admission is by donation
217-791-1026

Midwest Makers & Artisan Market

AUGUST 3 Midwest makers, artisans and live music are all available in one venue. Illinois products range from foods, beverages, art, furniture, and health and wellness will be on display. The popular Craft Brew Festival is being held in conjunction with this event.

August 3, 2019 - 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

- 27 South Central Park, Jacksonville
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AUGUST 14-18 Enjoy daily activities including blacksmithing, steam engines, wheat threshing, veneer and sawmills, grist mill, dynamometer, gas engines, tractors, baker fans, corn shelling, plowing, rope making, broomcorn threshing and broom making, and a giant flea market. Includes three big nights of ITPA tractor pulls, a kid's pedal tractor pull on Aug. 17 and an antique auto show on Aug. 18.

August 14-18, 2019 - all day

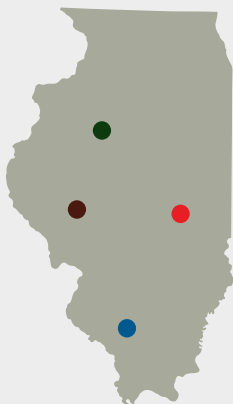
- Perry County Fairgrounds, Fairground Road, Pinckneyville
Admission is \$7 per day
618-318-0745

36th Annual Tractor Show & Swap Meet

AUGUST 24-25 Learn the history of agriculture and see many brands of antique tractors, garden tractors and stationary engines. There will be an antique tractor pull, garden tractor pull, and a pedal tractor pull for kids and adults. Free vendor space for flea marketers. Breakfast and lunch will be available. Check the website for a schedule of activities.

August 24-25, 2019 - all day

- Butler Haynes Park, 9424 S. Mapleton Rd., Mapleton
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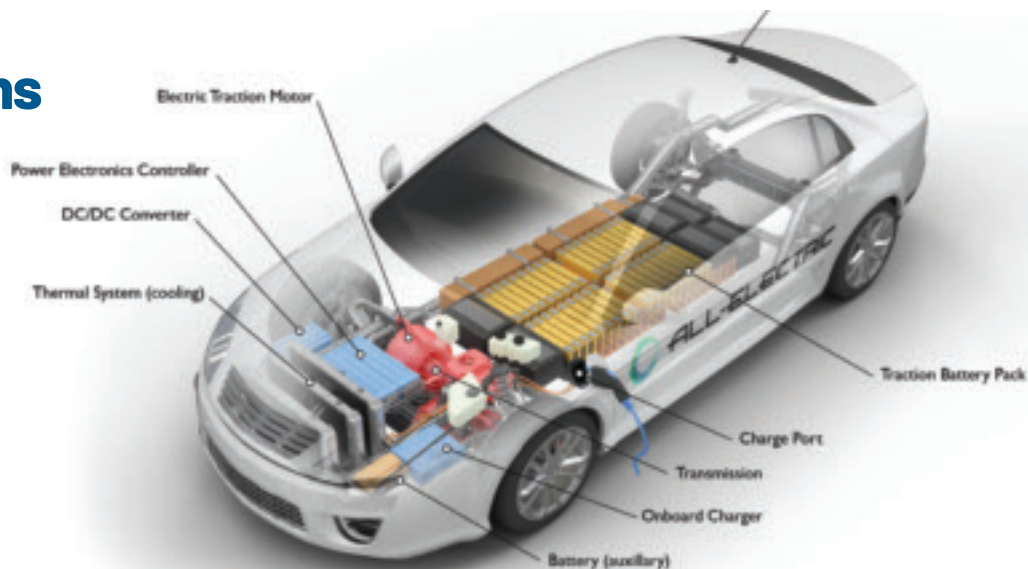


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All Electric Vehicle

An all-electric vehicle (AEV or EV) can have lower overall costs of ownership than a gasoline-fueled vehicle due to its lower number of moving parts.

Power up! Four steps to charging your EV at home

Dear Pat and Brad: I'm seeing more info about new models of electric vehicles with longer ranges and better prices. Is it worth making the switch from gas to electric? How would I charge the battery at home? – Damien

DEAR DAMIEN: YOU'RE RIGHT!

Electric vehicles (EVs) are getting more attention these days. Electricity as a vehicle fuel is typically one-half to one-third the cost of gas or diesel, and EV batteries now enable longer ranges. The upfront price of an EV is still higher than its gas-powered cousin, but the cost is coming down.

The Chevy Bolt, for example, has a range of up to 238 miles on a full charge and costs about \$36,000 before incentives. The number of models is also increasing. We could even have an electric pickup truck in the near future.

It's important to note you may have to pay upfront costs to charge your EV at home, but it depends on which charging option you select. Let's take a look at the important steps.

Step one: Choose your EV

There are two basic types of EVs: the all-electric vehicle, commonly referred to as an AEV or EV, and the plug-in hybrid electric vehicle, known as the PHEV, which can run using an electric motor or a

gas engine. Unlike the gas/electric hybrid that started with the Toyota Prius in 2000, where the battery assists the gas engine, yet the car is fueled solely by gas, the PHEV features a larger battery that fuels an electric motor, which can power the car independently. A PHEV can run solely on electricity for 15 to 50 miles depending on the model. This electric-only range may be sufficient for running errands or for those with a shorter daily commute.

Step 2: Select your charging level

There are two levels of charging to consider for your home. A Level 1 charging unit is the most basic. It's usually included with the vehicle and plugs into a typical 120-volt outlet, so it is the easiest and cheapest charging solution. A Level 2 charging unit is more powerful and needs purchased separately. It plugs into a 240-volt outlet, the type used for large appliances, which most of us don't have in our garages or outside our homes, so there's an additional cost to have the outlet installed.

Step three: Know your needs

Most EVs travel 3 to 4 miles per kilowatt-hour (kWh). Level 1 charging units distribute charge to the battery at 1 to 2 kWh, giving the battery roughly 3 to 8 miles range per hour of charging. So, if you drive

your car 40 miles or less during the day and can charge it for 10 hours a night, this will probably be adequate. Level 1 charging makes the most sense for PHEVs and early EVs with smaller batteries and shorter ranges. Level 2 units typically supply power levels from 6 to 12 kWh, depending on the amperage of the circuit and the power level the EV can accept. This means the Level 2 chargers will provide between 18 and 48 miles of range per hour of charging.

Step four: Count the costs

A Level 1 charging unit comes with the car and will meet the needs of most PHEVs and early-model, short-range EVs. A Level 2 charging unit can cost \$500 to \$700, with installation between \$500 and \$2,700 depending on how far your electrical panel is from where you will be charging the EV.

Now that you know the basic options, you should talk to your electric co-op before making your EV charging decision. Some electric co-ops offer special incentives for members installing Level 2 chargers or members willing to schedule EV charging during non-peak energy hours. Give them a call to learn more! 💡

This column was co-written by **Pat Keegan** and **Brad Thiessen** of Collaborative Efficiency. For more info on home charging your electric vehicle, please visit: www.collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips.

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Robots and sensors

Electric co-ops use innovative technologies for real-time feedback on the health of the grid

ELECTRIC GRIDS ARE IMMENSE machines that span counties, even entire states, bringing power to homes and businesses. So how do the electric companies know what's happening on their lines? How much power is being delivered? What equipment needs to be replaced? These are important questions that electric co-ops spend a lot of time and money to answer.

For years, electric co-ops relied entirely on in-person inspections to determine asset conditions and calls from members to discover outages. During and after storms, this could mean lengthy recovery times as supervisors evaluated the available info and decided where to send line crews, who then searched for damaged lines to make repairs and restore electric service. Even normal operations required personnel to be sent into the field constantly to perform manual inspections.

Today, electric co-ops may choose from a variety of technologies that give near real-time feedback on the health of the grid. Monitoring and automation technologies are becoming more affordable and gaining more functionality leading to greater use in the field.

Two common technologies in this space are Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI).

SCADA systems have evolved since their original development in the 1920s. Modern systems take advantage of communication, monitoring and automation technologies to give utilities a real-time picture of how substations are performing and make changes as needed. At the end of the line, AMI, also known as smart meters, report back to the utility how much energy consumers use, often on a 15-minute basis. Utilities can “ping” these meters to determine if they’re still receiving power during storms or other types of outages.

Beyond AMI and SCADA, utilities explore a host of other sensor technologies for niche applications including fault location, power theft detection and asset management. These applications are being enabled by a new wave of inexpensive sensors that cost one-tenth of what they did a decade ago.

When a fault occurs on a transmission line (the large power lines that carry power from plants to substations), they create transient waves on the lines. By placing special sensors on transmission lines and measuring the time that a wave reaches two of these sensors, the location of a fault can be accurately and quickly determined. This lets the utility know exactly where to send repair crews.

Across the U.S. electric industry, roughly \$6 billion worth of electricity is stolen annually, which leads to higher prices for everyone. Traditionally, one of the best tools for identifying power theft is visual inspection of meters for signs of tampering, but with AMI systems, utility personnel aren't visiting meters in-person as often.

Load-monitoring sensors—often called current transformers (CTs) or current sensors—can be placed on distribution power lines to help catch significant losses along a line, from theft or other reasons. Data gathered by CTs can be reconciled with meter readings to investigate discrepancies between the electricity passed through the line and the electricity measured by the meters. CT devices are valuable for diagnosing line loss due to other problems, such as conductor damage or aging transformers.

For members, these technologies provide three primary benefits: increased reliability, reduced outage times and lower prices as the utility manages employee time and resources more efficiently. As sensors continue to improve and drop in price, expect to see more real-time grid monitoring. 💡

AMI meters, also known as smart meters, benefit electric co-op members with greater accuracy in billing, faster outage restoration, operational savings versus manual meter reading and detailed data that you and your co-op can use to manage electric use much more accurately.

Source: NRECA



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Underground power and the big green box

ELECTRICITY MIGHT FLOW INTO your neighborhood over your head, or under your feet. It's easy to spot wires on top of those wooden poles and figure out how electricity gets delivered by overhead lines. But there's also a way to deduce that you've got underground lines—look for green metal boxes about the size of a mini-fridge sitting in people's front yards.

They're called pad-mounted transformers and they do the same thing as those gray cans up on top of the poles—step higher-voltage electricity down so it's more useful and safer for your home. The major difference is a pad-mounted transformer connects to underground power lines.

No one's exactly sure what share of power lines in the U.S. are

underground, but one industry study estimated 18 percent. To a lot of people, underground lines look better. But they're more expensive to install. A lot more. As much as five or 10 times the cost, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. And while falling trees and cars crashing into poles can knock out above-ground power lines, underground problems can be more difficult to pinpoint and correct.

The big green boxes that connect power lines look surprisingly simple inside—wires come in and go out through the transformer.

Now that you know what they are, you don't have to go looking inside, and you shouldn't. Those locked boxes are routing a lot of electricity, so only expert

lineworkers should be near the equipment.

Never use pad-mounted transformers as benches while waiting for the school bus, and kids should never play on or near them. Don't plant landscaping around pad-mounted transformers because our crews may need to get to them, and roots can interfere with the underground wires. Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer—remember to dial 8-1-1 for any outdoor projects that require digging.

Whether you're around underground or overhead utility equipment, the same safety rules apply—stay away from power lines. 💡



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.

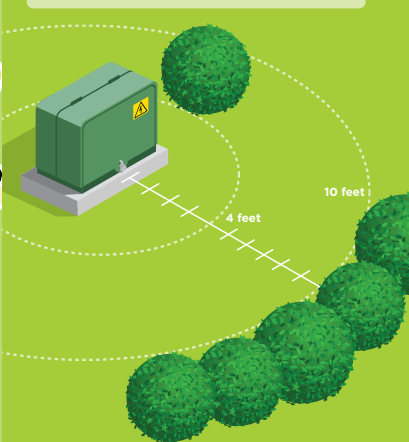
Avoid the Big Green Box

Please stay away from pad-mounted transformers (the big green box). While safe, they are not meant for touching, climbing or playing. Pad-mounted transformers carry high voltages of electricity that serve many homes in our communities.

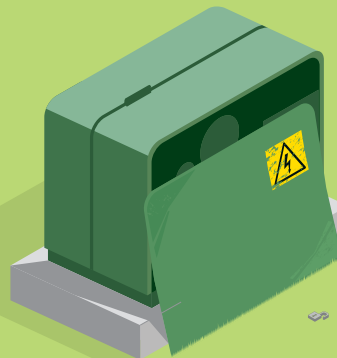
Never touch, climb or play on pad-mounted transformers. Never put fingers, sticks or other objects through cracks in the transformer.



Keep areas surrounding the pad-mounted transformer clear so that workers can safely maintain transformers as needed. Keep shrubs and structures at least 10 feet away from the transformer doors and 4 feet away from the sides.



Report problems. If you notice anything amiss, like an unlocked transformer or one that has been damaged, please contact your electric cooperative immediately.



Never dig near a pad-mounted transformer. They are surrounded by underground cables. Hitting the cable could result in electrical shock or disruption of service. Always dial 8-1-1 before you dig.



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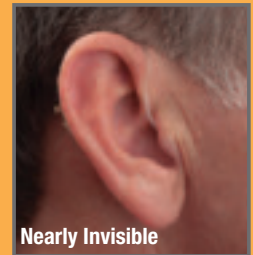


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Stinging Nettle

Don't touch these plants



Poison Ivy

POISONOUS PLANTS HAVE BEEN in the news lately, and for good reason. Many plants in Illinois can cause skin irritation. If you spend time outdoors, be aware of these plants. We'll break these plants into categories.

Poison plants

Poison plants contain a toxin called urushiol oil, which is in the sap of the plant. Touching this plant can cause skin rashes and blisters. This includes poison ivy, oak and sumac.

Poison ivy is common in Illinois. The main characteristic of poison ivy is the trifoliate leaves. "Leaves of three, let it be," as they say. It can grow as a vine or low shrub and produces greenish-white berries.

Poison Oak can also be identified by trifoliate leaves; however, it is a shrub with hairy leaves that have an oak-like appearance. Poison Sumac is a shrub or small tree that can grow from 6 to 20 feet tall. Luckily for us in Illinois, poison oak and sumac are traditionally found in other parts of the U.S.



Poison Oak



Poison Hemlock

Skin irritant plants

Including spurge, poinsettias, pencil cactus, daffodils, hyacinths and buttercups, skin irritant plants can cause skin irritations, and the reaction varies from person to person.

Spurges often have a milky sap that is a mild skin irritant but is also poisonous and considered carcinogenic. Like cow parsnip and giant hogweed below, exposure to the sun induces irritation. There are many plants that belong to this group.

Photo dermatitis plants

Mainly members of the carrot family, like Queen Anne's lace, wild

parsnip and giant hogweed, are considered photo dermatitis plants. The rue and mulberry families also have culprits including garden rue, gas plant and fig trees. The reaction is caused by furocoumarin chemicals in the plants in combination with sunlight. Blisters form in a few hours after exposure to the plant saps and sunlight.

Giant hogweed and cow parsnip: Although rare in Illinois, be aware of giant hogweed. It can reach a height of 15 feet, stems up to 4 inches in diameter, leaves 5 feet broad, and the inflorescences can get up to 2.5 feet across. Cow parsnip, which is common in Illinois, has lobed leaves which are not as deeply lobed as giant hogweeds. The stems of cow parsnip are green or light purple and have fine hairs giving it a fuzzy appearance. Giant hogweed has coarse hairs and purple blotches. The reaction from giant hogweed is more severe than cow parsnip, resulting in large blisters and red/purple rashes that can scar.

Wild parsnip: The stem of wild parsnip is somewhat hairy, grooved and 2 to 5 feet tall. Flowers are yellow and arranged in an umbrella shape. If the juice from broken stalks, leaves or flowers contacts skin and then is exposed to sunlight, a rash can result 24-48 hours later. Wild parsnip is easier to identify from the other photo dermatitis causing plants because of the yellow flower.

Poison hemlock: This carrot family member resembles wild carrot and has the characteristic umbrella shaped inflorescence of small white flowers and leaves that extend at the base sheathing the stem. Poison hemlock can be identified by the purple blotches on the stem. The leaves of poison hemlock are also more dissected compared

to wild carrot and the plant reaches 3 to 7 feet tall. Although poison hemlock is more known for poisonings as a result of ingesting, the plant's natural oils may absorb through the skin.

Stinging plants

Stinging plants have nettles. Touching a nettle can cause a toxic reaction. However, the initial/immediate reaction does not last long and has no lasting effect.

Stinging nettle: Touching stinging nettle can produce itching and welting. This plant is armed with small hairs that can inject a cocktail of histamine, serotonin, acetylcholine and formic acid when touched. Stinging nettle often grows in patches and can grow up to 5 feet but is typically between 2 to 3. To identify nettles, look at the stems to see if stinging hairs are present.

Exposure to any of these plants can be mitigated by wearing gloves, long pants and long-sleeved shirts when in outside areas that could contain these plants. Plan weeding activities for later in the evening, during low levels of sunlight, to avoid activating the blistering process of the photo dermatitis plants.

If you think you've found a population of any poisonous plant, **DO NOT TOUCH!** Instead, take close-up photos of the leaves, flower heads and stem, and contact the Extension Master Gardener volunteers at your local Extension office. 💡



Cow Parsnip



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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Fall in with nature

Waterfall adventures in Illinois *By Jerry McDonald*

WHEN YOU THINK OF waterfalls, Illinois doesn't automatically come to mind. In fact, an online guide to waterfalls doesn't mention Illinois in its listing of states with waterfalls. But they are in our own backyard and, big or small, are a welcome sight that adds to the joy of a walk in the woods.

Because of Illinois' geography, most waterfalls are in the southern region of the state near Carbondale. Southern Illinois is home to several state parks, national wildlife refuges and the Shawnee National Forest. The natural features make it perfect for waterfalls. Some appear after a heavy rain and are gone within days or even hours. Others generally run from midwinter through early spring; however, due to this year's rains, most were still flowing as of late June.

While most of Illinois' waterfalls are in the south, there are a few in the northern region, and that's where we will begin our adventure.

Waterfall Glen Trail

Located just a few miles west of Chicago, Waterfall Glen Trail is a 9-mile loop that leads through woodland beside a stream and offers several panoramic views. The waterfall is only a few feet high, but with the backdrop of trees along the low stream bank, it makes for a lovely photograph,

especially in the fall. The trail is broad, well-marked, and suitable for hikers of all skill levels, runners and people with pets. It is a kid-friendly park, but strollers may have difficulty in some areas.

As with any green space in an urban/suburban setting, the sounds and sights of civilization are present at points along the trail, but this should not detract from the overall enjoyment of your time there. The park is open all year, with some trails groomed for cross-country skiers, but March through November is the best time to go.

Starved Rock State Park

About 100 miles southwest of Chicago, off Interstate 39, is Starved Rock State Park. The park is named for its signature feature, a 125-foot sandstone butte that towers above the Illinois River. With more than 13 miles of trails and nine scenic waterfalls – St. Louis, Aurora, French Canyon, Wildcat Canyon, Tonty, LaSalle, Ottawa, Kaskaskia and Illinois – the park offers lots of opportunity.

There are two main trails, the Bluffs Trail and the River Trail, with connecting trails at several points in between. All falls, except for St. Louis, are accessed via the River Trail, which fronts the Illinois River. As you hike, you will

Top: The Dells in Matthiessen State Park**Bottom: Rocky Bluff Trail in Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge**

enjoy lovely views of the river, a variety of plant life along the trail and interesting geological formations. The Bluffs Trail runs through the woodland above the river valley, with views of the river and several waterfalls along the way. Both trails are well-marked with signage and trail maps every 200-300 yards. While family-friendly, there are steps and other barriers to maneuver. The trails become more natural and the degree of difficulty increases the farther away from the visitors' center you get.

As for the falls, each seems to have a personality. For instance, French Canyon Falls, reached by a narrow winding path, is quiet, peaceful and almost shy as it glides down a long rock incline to slip gently into a small horseshoe-shaped pool.

By contrast, Wildcat Canyon, though small, is unbridled energy. The water doesn't just fall, it leaps, exuberantly hurling itself through a narrow gap between the rocks and plummets into the pool to create ripples that lap at the feet of visitors.

Remember that Starved Rock's falls usually flow from mid-winter to midspring or briefly after a heavy rain. The ice falls that form in winter are quite impressive. The park itself is open year-round, and summer is the busiest time. Last year, Starved Rock, which is Illinois' premier natural attraction, was host to more than 2 million visitors.

Matthiessen State Park

Three miles south of Starved Rock is Matthiessen State Park. Matthiessen is a 2,000-acre multi-activity park with several hiking trails, but the most popular and spectacular feature is the Dells, a mile-long hairpin canyon that runs from Deer Park Lake to the Vermilion River. The canyon is divided into the upper and lower Dells. The upper Dells begin at the falls at Deer Park Lake and continue to Cascade Falls.

The lower Dells begin with Cascade Falls' 45-foot drop and continue to the river. The best way to get an overview of the Dells is to take the Loop Trail, a broad, easy path through mature woods that takes you around the perimeter of the canyon with bridge crossings at three points. In the canyon, which can be accessed at several points, hikers can enjoy the profusion of ferns and sandstone formations along the cliffs.

The Dells stream is lake-fed, so the falls flow year-round; however, spring and early summer or fall when the leaves begin to turn are the best times to visit. The Dells are family-friendly, but with 12 sets of steps and landings to get from the parking lot to the loop trail and additional steps to access the Dells, it is not a park for strollers or wheelchairs.

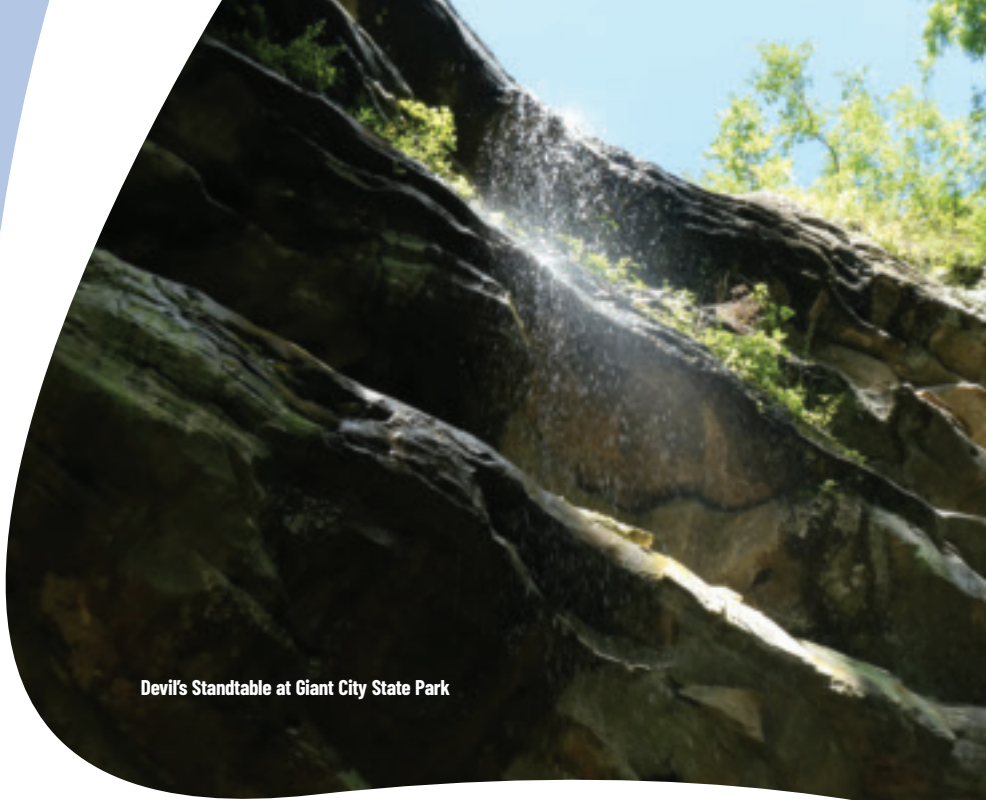
Rocky Bluff Trail

Rocky Bluff Trail is part of the Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge, located east of Carbondale, and there is a \$2 per day use fee. This fee is per vehicle, not per person. Even if you don't visit the rest of the refuge, you get your money's worth at Rocky Bluff. Park your car, take the path just to the left of the sign and almost immediately you are looking down on a two-tiered waterfall that drops about 25 feet into a



LEARN MORE

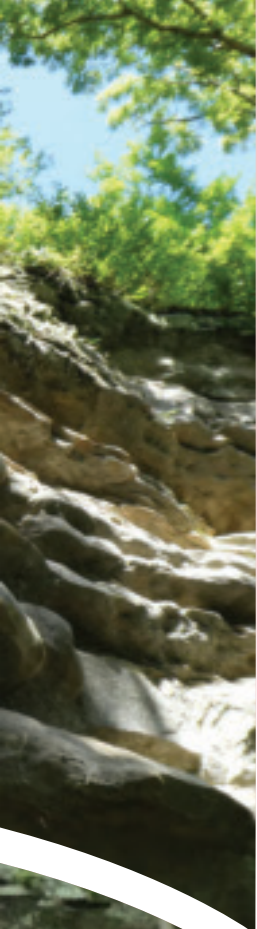
For more information about Illinois state parks and hiking opportunities, go to the Illinois Department of Natural Resources website at www.dnr.illinois.gov, click on Parks/Recreation and then click "State Parks" in the drop-down menu. You can then search for parks by region or name. For more information on the Little Grand Canyon Trail go to www.fs.usda.gov/shawnee, click on special places and scroll to Little Grand Canyon Trail. These sites not only give an overview of the trail, but provide updates on any changes in trail conditions, section closings and improvements.



Devil's Standtable at Giant City State Park



Waterfall Trail at Ferne Clyffe State Park



rock-strewn stream. A moderately difficult but short path leads to the base of the falls.

Back up at the sign, the path to the right heads to a 2-mile trail that crosses a small stream, plunges into the woods and leads you to another waterfall. The next portion of the hike takes you along the face of sandstone cliffs with a small creek before bringing you back to the waterfall through a hardwood forest. The trail is open year-round, but the best times to visit are in April for the wildflowers or fall for the colors. The trail is not suitable for strollers, but a 4- or 5-year-old can navigate it easily with a little help at a couple of the steeper spots.

Ferne Clyffe Waterfall Trail

Ferne Clyffe State Park, just south of Goreville, has 18 trails, but the waterfall trail is popular. Getting to the falls is moderately difficult or very easy depending on your approach. The difficult path begins at a sign in the Deer Ridge Campground and takes you down a .75-mile path of rocks and roots that crosses a small stream and joins with the flat mile-long path that begins at the picnic area.

Although the path from the campground isn't difficult, the picnic area path is better for small children. Walking up the picnic shelter path through the tall trees, you see the cliff and rock formations ascending and the basin narrowing as it nears the falls. Descending from the campground, the trail leads to the base of the south cliff wall.

Ferns are everywhere, but the centerpiece of the basin is the falls, 100 feet from rim to pool, cascading off the rim and flowing down a 40-foot slope of rock into the pool. As with all the parks, each season has its charm, but if you want to see the falls in action, your best bet is April or May, depending on the rainfall.

Giant City State Park

Like Starved Rock, Giant City State Park takes its name from a geological feature, in this case giant

sandstone walls. Of the eight designated hiking trails in the park, two have waterfalls: Devil's Standtable and Red Cedar Falls.

Devil's Standtable Trail leads to a rock formation that gives the trail its name. Step onto the trail and in 100 yards, you are standing in front of a huge rock shelter with a slender stream plunging over the rim. It is a modest waterfall but stand quietly and you'll see chipmunks scampering around the foot of the bluff and bank swallows flitting to and from nests in the cliff.

The Red Cedar Trail, the most rugged and longest trail in the park at 12 miles, is designed for those wanting a challenging hike and backpacking experience. The falls is a few miles in, but this is not a trail for families with small children or inexperienced hikers.

Little Grand Canyon Trail

One of 19 trails in the Shawnee National Forest, Little Grand Canyon Trail is a three-mile loop that offers a panoramic view of the Mississippi River valley, some interesting waterfalls and, especially on weekdays, a chance for some solitude. The section of the trail down to the canyon outlook and the section of trail from the main outlook back to the parking area are broad and easy to walk. While steep in some sections, there are benches conveniently located.

The section between the outlooks and the trail is narrow and quite difficult near the waterfall. Another factor to consider with these falls is water level. Water is needed to have flowing falls, but incessant rains put much of the canyon and part of the trail under water. Great times to visit are in the spring when the falls are flowing and the wildflowers are in bloom and in fall when the canyon will be ablaze with autumn color.

Whether you are hiking to see a waterfall, looking for wildlife or just enjoying some time away, be respectful of nature. Please stay on the trails, don't litter and always be mindful of your fellow hikers. Happy hiking! 💡

Little Grand Canyon at Shawnee National Forest





Where else can you paddle through picturesque waters of a wildlife reserve, peruse beautiful art exhibits at a local gallery, and wind down the night with live music at sunset?



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Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



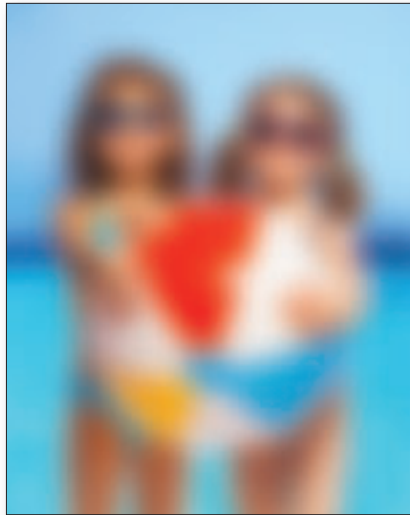
For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to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



Life on the line

PHOTO BY FAITH WHEELER, SHELBY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Linemen receive life-saving award from American Red Cross

By Colten Bradford

ON MAY 8, 2018, line personnel from Shelby Electric Cooperative (SEC) had an ordinary safety training session. Pole top rescue training involves a 200-pound dummy situated at the top of a utility pole, and the lineman needs to get it to the ground safely to perform any necessary Red Cross life-saving skills of first aid and CPR.

This simulation helps linemen prepare for a situation if a fellow lineworker needs help. On this day, the safety training session turned into a real-life rescue mission when Kevin Carlen, forestry line foreman, suffered a sudden cardiac arrest at the top of the pole.

His fellow co-workers and safety instructor immediately sprang into action. The actions that these men

made ultimately helped save Carlen's life.

Because of their quick response, the 14 men involved were recently awarded the American Red Cross Certificate of Merit, which is the highest award given by the organization.

On the day of the incident, Thad France, the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's (AIEC) manager of lineworker and apprentice development, was instructing the SEC line personnel. "We had probably gone through seven or eight guys," he says. "Kevin went up and actually did well."

Lineman Cary Bryson was in the bucket truck resetting the course. "[Carlen] went up and did an excellent job," he says. "He helped me

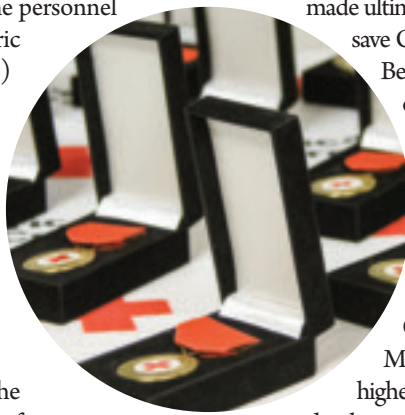
hang the dummy, and I was moving back to get out for the next guy. Somebody yelled... I looked down and Kevin was leaning back."

Carlen's safety gear held him securely to the pole, but he was unresponsive. His legs were kicked out of the pole, his arms were dangling, and he was bent over backward.

"I went over to the pole and started yelling his name," France says. "I noticed [Carlen] was making a gargling sound. I first thought he was choking on something. Then I saw the color of him... I knew something was pretty bad."

"There was just a second or two there of almost disbelief of what was happening, and then instantly all the guys around jumped in," adds Brian Chevalier, construction superintendent.

Being in the bucket truck, Bryson got to Carlen first and was able to quickly wrap a rope around Carlen as Nick Dunaway, lineman, climbed the pole to assist. Several other



ABOVE: Kevin Carlen helped present the American Red Cross Certificate of Merit award to the men who assisted in saving his life. Pictured left to right - Carlen, Jerry Johnston, Adam Schrock, Jamie Sharp, Blake Knearem, Luke Morse, Luke Brown, Nick Sloan, Brian Chevalier, Cary Bryson, Andy McDonald, Nick Dunaway, Jake Kull and Thad France. Not pictured: Brad Wright.

men got into position to help bring Carlen down with the handline.

"It was a scary deal," lineman Adam Schrock says. "When we first went to lift him up, I could hear the last breaths coming out... It was a little frightening. I first thought we were injuring him worse."

Lineman Nick Sloan called 9-1-1 and ran to the road to await the ambulance, and lineman Jake Kull ran to get an AED machine. An AED, or automated external defibrillator, is a portable device that helps during a cardiac arrest. It provides instructions and delivers an electric shock to re-establish a normal heart rhythm.

In the meantime, Carlen was brought safely to the ground and lineman Jerry Johnston started performing CPR until the AED arrived. Johnston then followed the instructions and the AED gave Carlen his first shock. When the EMTs arrived, they replaced the AED with a machine of their own and said Carlen's heart was stable.

"I never felt relief like that before," France says. "It was just the most unusual feeling I ever felt."

Because these men were well-trained, their instincts kicked in. Everybody knew exactly what to do and worked well together to save the life of a fellow lineworker.

"It was a terrible situation, but it couldn't have happened in a better place," Chevalier says. "All the guys were around, trained. It was just a reaction. Everybody jumped in and grabbed a job and worked together."

Although these men helped save a life, they don't consider themselves heroes. "We don't look at it that way," France says. "What we look at is we did our job... Everybody worked together, everybody picked a job, and everybody just got it done. The outcome, [we] allowed this guy to be able to see his wife and be able to see his kids. It just puts things in perspective."

During SEC's annual meeting on June 7, the American Red Cross presented the Certificate of Merit to the 14 men involved in saving Carlen's life. These men include: SEC's Luke Brown, Cary Bryson, Brian Chevalier, Nick Dunaway, Jerry Johnston, Blake Knearem, Jake Kull, Andy McDonald, Luke Morse, Adam Schrock, Jamie Sharp, Nick Sloan, Brad Wright and AIEC's Thad France.

"The Certificate of Merit is one of the highest awards given by the American Red Cross," says Dawn Morris, executive director of the south-central Illinois chapter of the American Red Cross, during the meeting. "The actions of the 14

men we honor today exemplify the highest degree of concern of one human being for another who is in distress."

According to the American Red Cross, the Certificate of Merit is one of three awards given in its lifesaving awards program, which has roots dating back to 1911. This program has awarded more than 330 individuals who have all played a role in saving more than 140 lives. The certificate is signed by the honorary chairman of the American Red Cross, U.S. President Donald Trump.

"I truly believe a real hero is the man that continues to fight even when he is scared," Morris says. "As I think back to May 8, 2018, I cannot even fathom the emotion around every one of you at that moment. Because of your quick and calm thinking, Kevin Carlen lives on and is with us today. I hope that through this story, we can learn the importance of CPR and first aid training."

Today, Carlen is doing well. He even helped present the awards to the 14 men who helped save his life. "I'm glad we have such a good group. They're my brothers," he says. "As the saying goes, 'I'm my brother's keeper.' And they performed that task perfect."💡

LEARN MORE

For the full story of the pole top rescue, visit ICL.coop to watch a video by Paul Dow, coordinator of video productions at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

To learn more about Certificate of Merit and other American Red Cross awards, go to LifesavingAwards.org.

For training on first aid, CPR and AED, visit redcross.org for details.



BELOW: Shelby Electric Cooperative lineworkers Jamie Sharp, Brian Chevalier and Luke Brown rescue a 200-pound dummy during a pole top rescue training.



Monarch Brewing Company

By *Lisa Cherry*

PETE BERGSTROM, in his own words, admits he is “failing retirement.” Already the owner of Bergie’s Place, a brunch and event venue on the square in Monticello, he was approached by Monarch Brewing Co.’s then owner, Matt Miller, in October 2018. In November, Bergstrom took over the restaurant and brewery.

Miller still owns the building. That building, also on the square, was formerly the United Methodist Church of Monticello from 1911 to 2016. Extensive renovations were made prior to Monarch’s opening in 2017, but its spirit remains. Sunlight streams in through beautiful stained-glass windows, the hostess stand is the church’s original pulpit, and pews line the back wall. Bergstrom says the project received a Preservation and Conservation Association Restoration Award (secondary use), and he feels lucky to be the building’s caretaker.

The business itself came about largely due to local investors who participated in a Kickstarter campaign. Plaques with their names adorn the tables in the restaurant, which were made from the church’s original floor joists.

Miller, an engineer by trade, had been a home brewer. Bergstrom says the restaurant business is totally different, and as a result, Monarch had a bit of an identity crisis in the beginning. “It was a brewery that served food,” he says. “My goal is a great restaurant that happens to brew beer.”

Bergstrom made a lot of changes, including the service, how the food was prepared and the speed it was served. “We’re in the service business,” he says.

The brewery was new to him. He says the three-barrel system they use is manageable for the single brewer on staff. Monarch has 14 microbrews on tap, seven of which are consistent and seven that change. His personal favorite is the Allerton Amber. He says False Alarm is a hoppy pale ale, and Frequency IPA is a coffee IPA that’s smooth and not heavy. There’s also a new blueberry Hefeweizen on tap for summer.

The house-made pretzel twists, served with an IPA beer cheese and an ale mustard, is a favorite on the menu. Other signature dishes include the Monarch Cuban (black forest ham, pulled pork, dill pickles, swiss cheese, ale mustard, served on sourdough), the house-smoked pulled pork (slow smoked



The pulpit now serves as a hostess stand.



Monarch has 14 brews on tap.



The dining room is lined with the church’s original stained-glass windows.



The cobb salad (above) and drunken nachos (below) are popular menu items.



The Monarch Cuban is one of the restaurant's signature dishes.

pork, beer battered onion rings, stout BBQ sauce), bison bacon BBQ (ground bison, cheddar, double smoked bacon, beer battered onion rings, stout BBQ sauce), and the Clydesdale (classic horseshoe plus two slices of cheddar, house smoked pulled pork, double smoked bacon, beer battered onion rings, stout BBQ sauce, topped with more bacon). He supports Illinois producers, like Lieb Farms, supplier of Monarch's bison.

He says the building has been feeding people for 70 years—as a church, it also served as a cafeteria for local elementary schools.

The kitchen and brewery are in the basement. Bergstrom jokes that with the number of stairs they climb every night, employees don't need a gym membership to lose weight.

He's excited to work with the larger staff and believes restaurants offer great mentoring opportunities. He says his employees are most important. "Take care of them, and they take care of guests. They're happy at work."

"It's a good career for a people person," he adds.

Bergstrom moved to Monticello in 2002. Before that, he lived in Boston, Seattle, California and Detroit. His first restaurant experience took place in a Jewish deli in Boston, followed by a stint at a pancake house. He later became an Army pilot, which led to his love of radio-controlled planes. That, in turn, led him to a position in product development with Horizon Hobby in Champaign. Strangely enough, it was that move that would bring him back to the food industry.

His job involved being on the road and attending corporate events. Bergstrom says he got tired of dried out hamburgers and hot dogs. He and his wife decided they could do better, so they began catering local events on a volunteer basis. Eventually he realized he ought to charge for his services.

He started doing pop-up dinners in town and catered on the side. He noticed the town needed a small event space and bought the kitchen he'd been using for catering, which, for the last three years, has been known as Bergie's Place.

All of this led to Monarch. He says they are working on new beer and food pairings and have music (on the church's original stage) every Friday, trivia on Thursdays and up-and-coming acoustic acts on Wednesdays, including locals and some acts from Nashville.

Bergstrom says patrons come all the way from Champaign, Rantoul, Tuscola and Decatur, but his desire is to be a great local restaurant, where it takes people 10 minutes to say goodbye to all the people they know. He says they get all ages—young couples with kids to a class of '58 reunion—and have hosted two weddings in the past three weeks, flipping the restaurant back to the church for the ceremony and back again for the reception.

Bergstrom would love to see the Monarch become Monticello's gathering spot. As for him? "I love doing it. I plan on doing it for a while," he says. 📍

LET'S EAT!

Monarch Brewing Company

212 S. Independence St.
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GENERAL HOURS

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- 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Saturday
- 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday

HAPPIEST HOURS

- 7-9 p.m. Tuesday-Wednesday
- 7-10 p.m. Friday-Saturday
- 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday

KITCHEN HOURS

- Lunch & Dinner
- Closed Monday
 - 11 a.m.-2 p.m. / 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday
 - 11 a.m.-2 p.m. / 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Friday
 - 11 a.m.-9 p.m. Saturday

SUNDAY BRUNCH

- 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Sunday



Fruit or vegetable?

AS A CHILD, I remember going into our family garden, picking the biggest, reddest tomato I could find, wiping any dirt off on my shorts and biting into this sun-kissed delight. The juice dripped down my chin and I relished every bite. It was my favorite then and that hasn't changed. We often have meals of sliced tomatoes and sweet corn, and I can't wait for both to be in season again.

Tomatoes come in so many varieties and colors. Large pink beefsteaks to red, orange and yellow cherry and grape tomatoes, and multi-colored heirlooms, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. August gardens have an abundance of this juicy delight and the recipes this month will help you enjoy them even more. 💡

Valerie Cheatham

WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming monthly topics

- Coffee
- Root vegetables
- Chocolate

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.



Recipes prepared, tasted and photographed by **Illinois Country Living staff**. 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.



Turkey Taco Tomatoes

Servings: 4

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 3/4 pound ground turkey or chicken
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 1-ounce package taco seasoning
- 4 large, ripe tomatoes
- 1/2 cup shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded lettuce
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- Salsa

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil and add onion, stirring until soft. Add ground turkey and taco seasoning. Break apart meat as it cooks until no longer pink. Core tomatoes and cut into wedges without cutting all the way through the tomato. Divide meat between the tomatoes, top with cheese, lettuce, sour cream and salsa, if desired.

Nutrition information: 335 calories; 21.2g fat; 223mg sodium; 12.1g carbohydrates; 29.1g protein.

Caramelized Onion and Fresh Tomato Risotto

Servings: 6

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1 tablespoon plus 1 teaspoon olive oil, divided | 2 tablespoons tomato paste |
| 1 pound yellow onions, thinly sliced | 2 tablespoons fresh thyme leaves |
| 1 teaspoon granulated sugar | 1-1/2 cups Arborio rice |
| 2 pounds fresh tomatoes, halved | 3-4 cups chicken broth, heated |
| 3 garlic cloves, minced | 1/2 cup freshly grated Parmesan |
| 1 cup dry white wine | 1 tablespoon butter |
| | Salt and pepper to taste |

Heat a large pot over medium-low heat and add 1 tablespoon olive oil. Add onions and stir. Cook 20 to 30 minutes until onions begin to soften and turn golden. Stir in sugar. Cook until onions are very soft and brown, about 30 additional minutes. Preheat oven to 400 F. While the onions cook, spread cut halves of tomatoes with remaining olive oil and place in a roasting pan. Roast tomatoes until skins blister, about 25 minutes. Cool until easy to handle then remove peel and seeds and coarsely chop. Don't discard juices in pan. When the onions are caramelized, turn heat to medium and add garlic. Saute' 1 minute. Stir in wine, tomatoes, reserved tomato juices, tomato paste and thyme. Raise heat and bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 5 minutes until liquid reduces by a third. Stir rice into pot and allow mixture to simmer until most of the remaining liquid is absorbed, stirring frequently. Begin adding heated broth about 1 ladle at a time, allowing the rice to absorb the liquid before adding the next one. Continue process until rice has absorbed 3 to 4 cups and is tender. This process takes around 20 minutes. Stir in Parmesan, butter, salt and pepper until creamy. Serve. *Adapted from connoisseursveg.com.*

Nutrition information: 312 calories; 7.3g fat; 589mg sodium; 43.1g carbohydrates; 13.1g protein.

Bruschetta Pasta

Submitted by Sarah Rahe, Menard Electric Cooperative

Servings: 4

- 1 pound spaghetti
- 4 small tomatoes, cut into quarters
- 2-3 ounces basil, finely cut
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 ounce fresh Parmesan cheese, grated

Break pasta in half and cook as directed on package. Drain and place back in pot. Place tomatoes, basil, garlic and oil into a food processor and pulse to combine all ingredients. Add the bruschetta mixture to the cooked noodles and stir to combine. Grate fresh parmesan cheese over pasta, stir and serve.

Nutrition information: 599 calories; 19.6g fat; 45mg sodium; 89.5g carbohydrates; 17.3g protein.

Royal Tomatoes

Submitted by Dixie Riley, Shelby Electric Cooperative

Servings: 1

- Fresh tomatoes
- Cottage cheese
- Lettuce leaves
- Tuna, chicken or turkey salad, prepared
- Olives, green or ripe

Place one lettuce leaf on a plate and top with 1 scoop of cottage cheese. Cut tomato into wedges without cutting all the way through and place on top of cottage cheese. Place one scoop of chicken salad on top of tomato wedges and garnish with olives.

Nutrition information: 295 calories; 13.9g fat; 1174mg sodium; 19.6g carbohydrates; 22g protein.



BRUSCHETTA PASTA

Easy Stewed Tomatoes

Submitted by Joann Watkins, Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Inc.

Servings: 8

- 6-8 large tomatoes, skin removed
- 1-2 cups cold water
- 1/8 cup granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 1/2 teaspoon fennel seeds
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1-1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1/2 yellow onion, chopped
- 1 tablespoon dry red wine, optional

Chop tomatoes coarsely. Put tomatoes and their juice in a 3-quart heavy saucepan. Add enough water to barely cover the top tomatoes. Stir in remaining ingredients except for wine. Cover and bring to a boil stirring occasionally. Reduce heat and simmer covered 30 minutes or until celery is soft. Add wine and simmer uncovered 30 minutes until slightly thick. Serve over buttered noodles. For a pasta sauce, add a 7 ounce can tomato paste and 1 teaspoon dried basil. Simmer uncovered 30 minutes. This recipe works well in a pressure cooker also.

Nutrition information: 70 calories; 2.5g fat; 304mg sodium; 11.5g carbohydrates; 1.8g protein.

CARAMELIZED ONION AND FRESH TOMATO RISOTTO



Here we go 'round

by *Patty Gillespie*

HERE WE GO 'ROUND the mulberry bush, the mulberry bush ... early in the morning. That nursery rhyme makes me think of red mulberry, indigenous to Illinois. To find a mulberry tree, all anyone need do is follow the parade of wild creatures headed that way when the berries are ripe. Name a songbird and it is probably in the lineup. I enjoy seeing the cedar waxwings that flock in,

probably sprouted 25 years ago on the barnyard side of the pasture fence. With a rounded crown and low branches curving downward, it merrily shades the chicken pen and produces berries that are nearly as big as the tip of my thumb. Picking those mulberries is a joy! They go into the pie I often find myself serving off the tailgate of the work truck as the tractor and planter idle momentarily.

line beside a road ditch in a busy metropolitan area where my young son, who was hating apartment living, found a super raspberry patch. The homemade raspberry jam he brought home and gave everyone for Christmas was very good.

Often in July, my husband and I have companionably trudged through the tall prairie grasses and waded into the briar patches growing around the old pond in our restored wildland. Some summers we bring home a load of wonderful blackberries, but it's the chiggers that make the most lasting impression on me. Adorn yourself in a long-sleeved shirt, light-colored pants perfumed with insect repellent, boots, and don't forget a cap or sunbonnet. Take the advice of the rhyme. Go early in the morning or try to avoid the hottest part of the day. Wild edible fruit-bearing plants abound in Illinois; however, if you don't own the land, ask permission before you pick, even on public lands.

Berries are full of nutritional value, vitamins, antioxidants, minerals, fiber and all that jazz! Picking berries is a very merry adventure. Especially adventurous is the hunt for a certain ruddy orange-colored spherical berry that ripens in the fall. If you pick a persimmon and take a bite before the fruit is fully ripe, your mouth will surely pucker!

As summer flees and cold autumn breezes find me, I go 'round the persimmon tree. This luscious fruit, touched by frost and temporarily overlooked by wild critters, will soon be the main ingredient of fresh-from-the-oven persimmon pudding. 💡



seemingly dressed for the occasion with dark eyeliner across their faces, feathered topknots on their heads, and highlights of yellow on tips of tail and red on wings. Once I even saw a groundhog 15 feet up in a mulberry tree – yes, a groundhog.

Mulberries are delicious. Sweetest and juiciest when dark red or nearly black, the berries taste especially good because they are among the first wild fruits of summer.

My favorite mulberry tree is a tall multi-trunked one, which

On our farm, wheat harvest follows quickly behind planting season, and if I'm not hauling grain, then I'm picking raspberries, my favorite. Wild black raspberry is in the rose family. The stems bear thorns, but a little bloodletting is worth it, if, after an hour of picking, my recycled gallon ice cream pail is full of raspberries.

Berry-producing wild raspberry canes can be found in partial shade, where the absence of mowing or grazing has allowed growth for at least two years. It was along a fence



Patty Gillespie is involved in education, agriculture, land stewardship and the study of nature. She writes from the heart and for the sheer joy of it.



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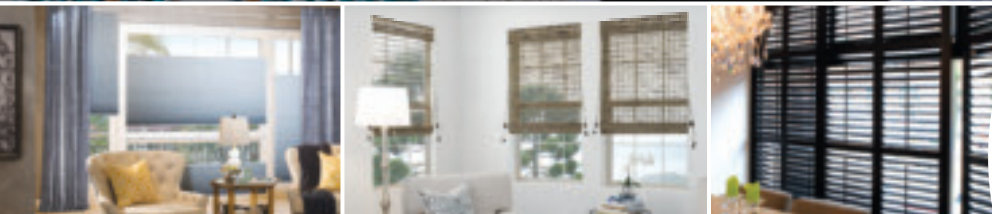
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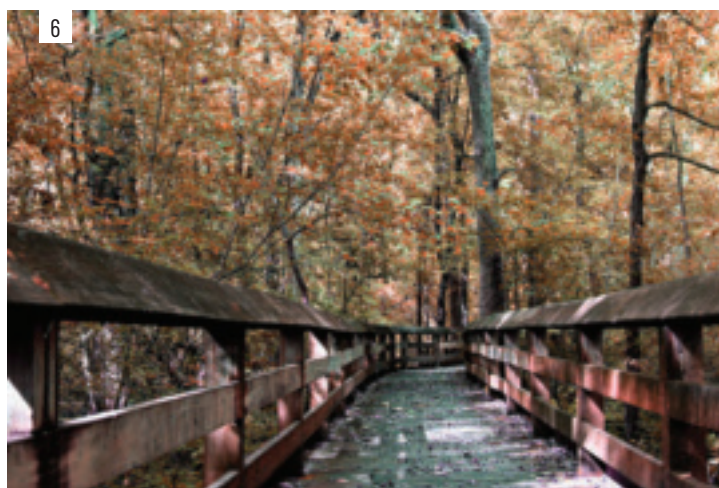
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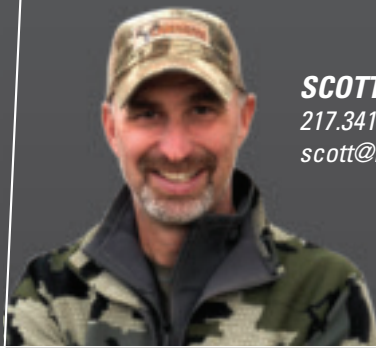


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