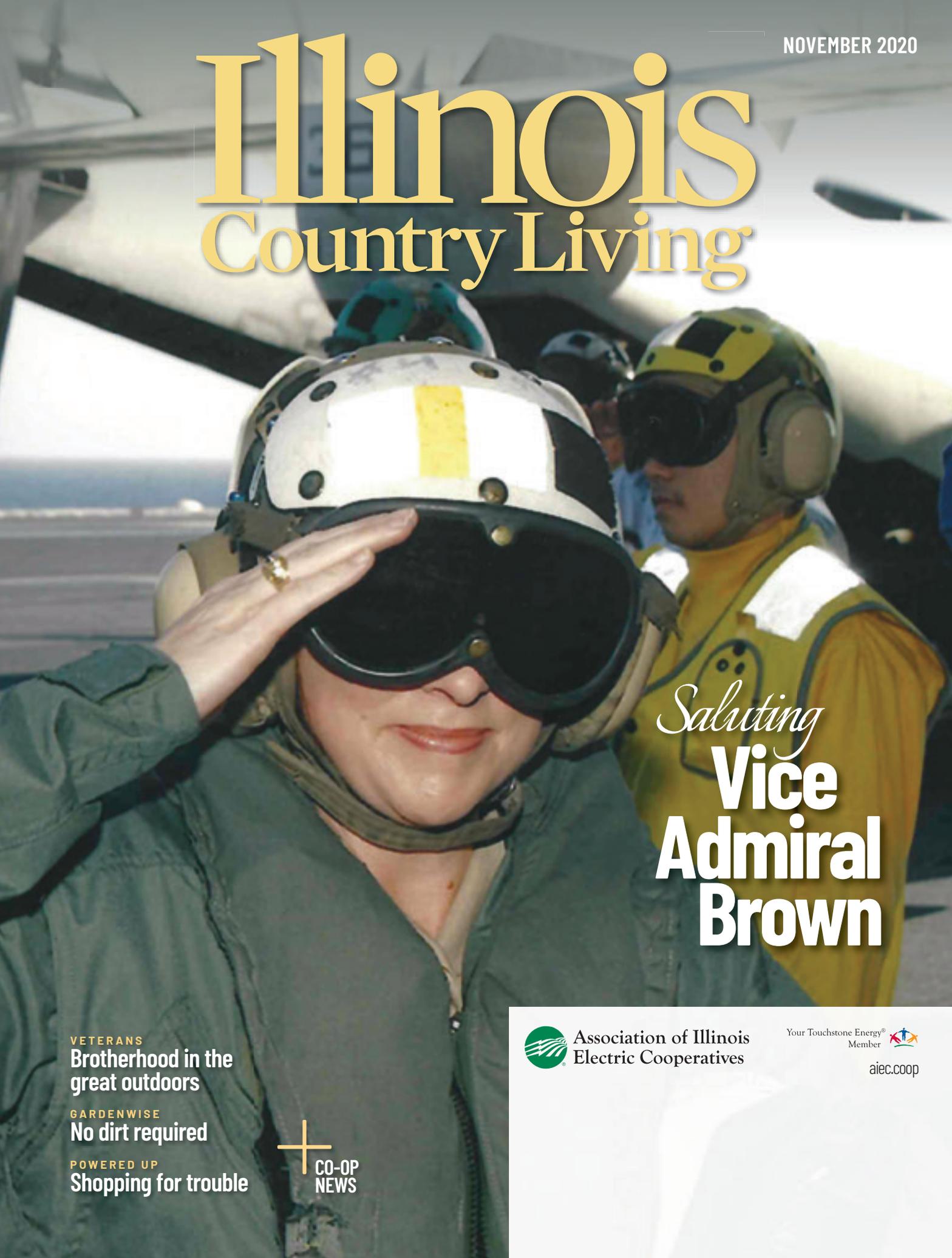


Illinois Country Living



Saluting **Vice Admiral Brown**

VETERANS
Brotherhood in the
great outdoors

GARDENWISE
No dirt required

POWERED UP
Shopping for trouble

+
CO-OP
NEWS

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Illinois Country Living

NOVEMBER 2020
VOLUME 78 • NO. 7



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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 191,000, the magazine informs cooperative consumer-members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

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Defining moments

HISTORY IS A COLLECTION of defining moments. Unfortunately, 2020 has yielded more than enough defining moments for a generation. But trying times bring out the best in those being tested; and I've always said southern Illinois is the best place to live because of its people. We help our friends and neighbors in their time of need, no questions asked – simply because it is the right thing to do.

Throughout the COVID-19 shutdown, our healthcare workers, first responders, grocery clerks and truck drivers have been working tirelessly on the front lines. What's more, individuals, businesses and non-profit organizations stepped forward to help their communities get back on their feet.

In Mount Vernon, Cusumano and Sons partnered with the United Way of South Central Illinois and Laborers' Local 773 to distribute boxes of fresh produce to food pantries and families – over 14,000 boxes a week.

Jadie from Pontoon Beach, Jo-Nita from Sparta and the Carbondale/Murphysboro Fabric Mask Response Team have made

and distributed tens of thousands of masks to first responders, hospital workers and others who need them.

Angie from Edwardsville is organizing birthday parades for kids who can't celebrate with their friends. Bobby and Ken from Swansea

made intubation boxes for local doctors and hospitals. The list goes on and on.

Their inspiring stories speak to our southern Illinois spirit and the resiliency of our people. When we see problems, we find creative solutions to fix them. We persevere through tough times, and when we get knocked down, we get right back up and keep fighting.

We're now just over half a year into a shutdown we never could have envisioned. Businesses are safely re-opening and people are going back to work. Kids are going back to school. But, there's still much work to do.

In Congress, Republicans and Democrats came together to pass four bipartisan bills to respond to COVID-19. That included \$175 billion for hospitals, \$26.2 billion for testing, and \$659 billion for small businesses through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). In our region, those PPP loans helped over 10,000 small businesses keep the lights on, and most importantly, those loans helped keep over 100,000 southern Illinoisans employed.

Despite all the bipartisan work we have accomplished, there still is more to be done. It is my hope that when we return to Washington in November, Speaker Pelosi and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin will return to the table to negotiate an agreement to provide additional relief for our communities. COVID-19 is a fight like we've never seen before, and it will take all of us working together to defeat it for good. But when we do, we will come back stronger than ever. That's the southern Illinois way. 💡



Rep. Mike Bost (R-12), Murphysboro, has served the people of southern Illinois since 2015 in the U.S. House of Representatives. Prior to that he served for two decades in the Illinois House of Representatives.

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NOVEMBER CHECKLIST

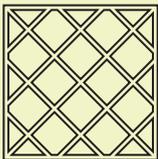
Think local.

What local business can you help support?



Time to change.

A clean filter will help your furnace run more efficiently.

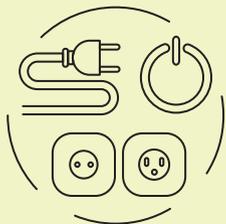


Dinner is ready.

Preparing dinner in a slow cooker saves energy and gives you less clean-up on busy evenings.



Tip of the month. Save energy by unplugging kitchen appliances when not in use.



Illinois co-ops assist in restoration

The year 2020 has been challenging in innumerable ways. With COVID-19, fires, derechos and hurricanes, co-ops have been serving members and each other in times of need.

When Hurricane Laura roared onto the Gulf Coast in August, it devastated the service territories of Louisiana's Jeff Davis Electric Co-op and Beauregard Electric Co-op. Wind and flooding took down miles of lines, broke thousands of poles and crumpled transmission towers, leaving more than 100,000 members in the dark. Complete restoration was initially expected to take between 6 to 8 weeks.



Due to the extensive damage, electric co-op crews from 10 states, including 14 Illinois electric cooperatives, sent more than 500 linemen to the region to assist in recovery and restoration efforts. Known as mutual assistance, this practice is common among electric cooperatives. Living by the cooperative principles of cooperation among cooperatives and concern for community, co-ops send crews to affected regions to help speed recovery efforts.

With the extra challenges of COVID-19, safety protocols were put into place, tent cities were erected to house assisting crews at 50 percent capacity, grab-and-go meals were planned and extra cleaning was required for tents, restrooms and shower facilities.

For the latest currents news, go to www.icl.coop

In mid-September, while restoration in Louisiana was still ongoing, Hurricane Sally moved into Alabama and Mississippi knocking out power to more than 77,000 members. Six Illinois teams responded by either sending new crews or moving existing ones.



As of early October, there have been three 2-week rotations of Illinois line and forestry crews. Many reported experiencing the worst devastation they have ever seen with power poles snapped like toothpicks as far as the eye can see and entire structures obliterated. The heat and humidity made for miserable working conditions, but they had one thing on their minds – working as quickly and safely as possible to restore power to the region. A third hurricane hit the gulf region on Oct. 9. Eight Illinois co-ops responded. 📍



Prairie Research Institute collaborations lead clean energy drive

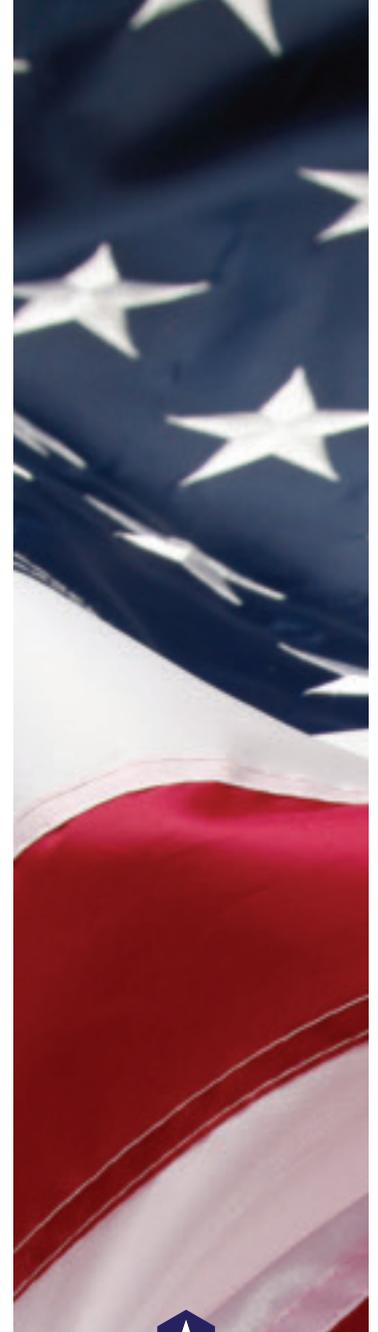
Prairie Research Institute (PRI) and three Illinois power plants (Prairie State Generating Company, Marissa; City Water Light and Power, Springfield; and the University of Illinois' Abbott Power Plant, Champaign) are collaborating to implement sophisticated technologies that remove carbon from air emissions (carbon capture).

Three PRI surveys are working to complete a front-end engineering design (FEED) study for the retrofit of the Prairie State Generating Company in southern Illinois.

The goal is to design a system to capture more than 90 percent of carbon emissions at the facility and incorporate additional carbon offset strategies to achieve net-zero CO₂ emissions. The FEED study is made possible through a \$15 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOEA) Office of Fossil Energy that is administered by the National Energy Technology Laboratory and \$3.75 million from Prairie State Generating Company.

In addition, the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center (ISTC), a division of PRI, is overseeing a large pilot test of the performance, safety and environmental compliance of carbon capture technology at City Water Light and Power. Abbott Power Plant is currently hosting two DOE-funded carbon-capture research projects. 📍

Source: ISTC



For your unwavering dedication to our safety and freedom, the electric cooperatives of Illinois thank all veterans for their service.





Medicare open enrollment

If you have a Medicare health or prescription drug plan, you should review and compare coverage options. Open enrollment runs through Dec. 7, and now is the time to make changes to your plan. Even if you're happy with your current coverage, you might find a better fit for your budget or health needs. If you miss an open enrollment deadline, you'll likely have to wait a full year before you can change your plan.

Here are five things every Medicare beneficiary can do:

1. **Review your plan notice.** Be sure to read any notices about changes for next year, especially your "Annual Notice of Change" letter. Look at your plan's information to make sure your drugs are still covered and your doctors are still in network.
2. **Think about what matters most to you.** Do you need a new primary care doctor or does your network include the specialist you want for an upcoming surgery? Does another plan offer the same value at a lower cost? Take stock and determine if you need to make a change.
3. **Find out if you qualify for help paying for Medicare.** Learn about programs in Illinois to help with the costs of Medicare premiums, Medicare Part A and Part B deductibles, coinsurance and co-payments, and Medicare prescription drug coverage.
4. **Shop for plans that meet your needs and fit your budget.** If you find your current coverage still meets your needs, then you don't need to make any changes.
5. **Check your plan's star rating before you enroll.** The Medicare Plan Finder includes star ratings on a one- to five-star scale. Visit medicare.gov/plan-compare to find information.

For more information, call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) and say "Agent."

Source: ssa.gov

Help build the future of housing in Illinois

As our communities change, our housing needs and preferences change too. While some housing needs are common throughout Illinois, many others are tied to the unique conditions of life in urban, suburban and rural communities. To understand and address these varied needs, the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) is creating a Housing Blueprint: a new statewide plan that aims to understand and meet the housing needs of communities across our state, both now and in the future.

IHDA is committed to creating a plan that is inclusive of and relevant to all residents across our state, and the agency is encouraging all residents to complete a Statewide Resident Survey to share their perspectives and recommendations for the future. What do homes in your community look like today? What is there a need for in the future? What goals would you like your community to achieve in the years ahead? The survey is short, anonymous and your responses will help to shape the goals and strategies included in the Housing Blueprint.

Through this plan, IHDA hopes to support every Illinois community in their efforts to attract economic growth, create jobs, expand housing choice and provide the type of development residents prefer. Please help IHDA raise the voices of all Illinoisans by taking the survey and sharing it throughout your community.

Learn more and make an impact by taking the survey at ILHousingBlueprint.org.

Source: IHDA



Another look at ENERGY STAR

When it comes to consumer technology, innovation not only can mean more and better features, it can also mean more efficient energy use designed to save money. That's been the goal of the government-backed ENERGY STAR program since 1992.

"When it comes to heating and cooling costs, savings are driven by local climate

conditions," said Maureen McNamara, a utility partnership manager with the ENERGY STAR program. "That's why we're constantly looking at products in the marketplace to determine which ones best meet consumer needs."

That means many products that now carry the ENERGY STAR label are much more efficient than similar devices were a decade ago.

Replacing older heating and cooling equipment with a properly sized and installed ENERGY STAR-certified heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system can save the average consumer about \$160 per year on utility costs.

ENERGY STAR-rated smart thermostats can add another 8 percent to your annual savings, and a heat pump water heater rated under the program can potentially shave \$330 from annual utility costs.

"Consumers need to consider two price tags: the price to buy a product and the price to operate it," said McNamara.

With consumers taking a more active role in controlling their energy costs, ENERGY STAR has added more online tools and provides useful information on various categories of appliances, home entertainment and communication devices. Visit energystar.gov and click the "save at home" tab for more information about ENERGY STAR-rated appliances and electronics.

Source: [Derrill Holly](http://DerrillHolly.com), NRECA

Sudoku

by Myles Mellor and Susan Flanagan

		8						
2	7			3				1 9
9	3		4	1				
5					8	6		
		2	7		1	9		
		7	9					3
				4	9		8	1
1	6			8			4	7
						3		

Solution on page 37.



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Managing home energy use

If you want to make the best use of your efforts to save money on your energy bill, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) can show you where to start.

Nearly half of the electricity Americans use in their homes, 43 percent, goes to heating and cooling air and water. Nearly a third of our electric use, 31 percent, goes to running our heating and air conditioning systems, and another 12 percent powers water heaters.

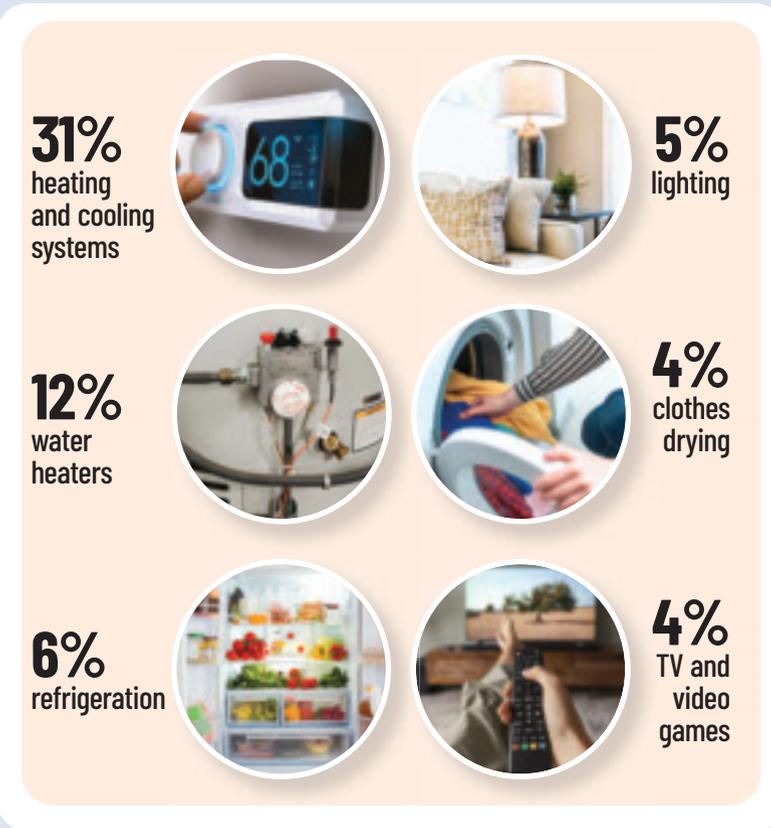
In second place for residential electricity use is a grab bag of appliances and lighting. One-fifth of the electricity we use in our homes goes to refrigeration (6 percent), lighting (5 percent), clothes drying (4 percent) and TV and video games (4 percent).

To get the quickest and biggest return on energy savings, focus on how you use your heating and cooling system and water heater.

“Turning off an LED light bulb may come to mind when you think about saving energy,” says Keith Dennis, vice president of consumer member engagement for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. “But in the grand scheme of things, it’s adjusting your thermostat that’s going to make the biggest difference.”

Small changes to energy use habits, like turning off lights when you leave a room or unplugging devices when not in use, can help you save. To make the biggest difference in energy use, pay attention to how you heat and cool your home. That’s where the biggest potential for saving energy lies. 💡

Source: Paul Wesslund



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/s/Valerie Cheatham



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Became part of the National Electrical Code in 2008; if your home does not have these, install childproof devices.

NOVEMBER Crossword

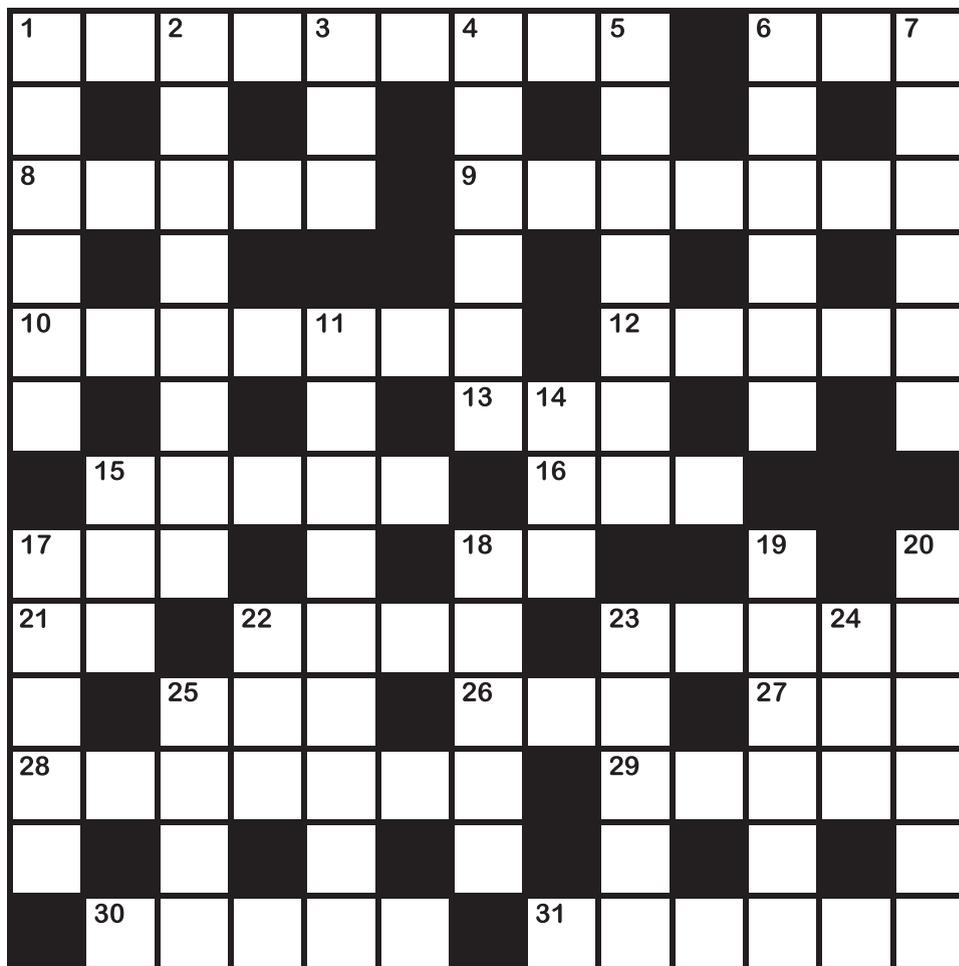
Illinois Country Living



Datebook is being temporarily suspended until it is safe for everyone to attend events. In its place, we are putting a crossword puzzle to help you fight boredom. We hope you enjoy it.

**ANSWER KEY CAN BE
FOUND ON PAGE 37.**

by Myles Mellor



Across

- 1 Microbrewery output
- 6 Green, prefix
- 8 Coolpix maker
- 9 Lattes and mochas
- 10 Dignify
- 12 Lotus car and dedicatee of a piano classic
- 13 Elmer, to Bugs
- 15 Opera villain, often
- 16 All-purpose vehicle, for short
- 17 Rihanna's first #1 *Billboard* single
- 18 Wall or Main
- 21 Military officer, for short
- 22 Put up on Facebook, say
- 23 Pretty in French, Angelina in movies

- 25 Montblanc, for one

- 26 Getaway key on the keyboard
- 27 Brown or Yale
- 28 Rapper and a state
- 29 Golf Cup
- 30 Disney movie with a Polynesian setting
- 31 Nation famous for Abba and saunas

- 7 Bluepoint, e.g.

- 11 Luxury shoe
- 14 No longer popular
- 15 Halloween sound
- 17 Taylor of pop
- 18 The turf, not the surf
- 19 Moved like Sarah Hughes and Michelle Kwan
- 20 A beautiful Bugatti

Down

- 1 Famous film festival
- 2 Hot Springs National Park state
- 3 Beach basking result
- 4 Chiseled
- 5 Mirror
- 6 Bam! chef

- 22 It separates "pay" from "view"
- 23 Store popular for its button downs
- 24 _____ *Got a Secret* (TV game show)
- 25 Sport celebrated on shirts

Veterans, we honor you!

“As we express our gratitude,
we must never forget that the highest
appreciation is not to utter words,
but to live by them.”

John Fitzgerald Kennedy



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How to breathe easy about your home's air quality

Dear Pat and Brad: I read your column a few months ago on sealing air leaks, but I've heard a home that's sealed too tight can lead to air quality issues. How can I be sure I have healthy air as I seal air leaks in my home? - Lee

relative humidity is above 60 percent. One sign your home is sealed too tight is window condensation, which happens if moist air doesn't exit the home at an adequate rate.

Pollutants can cause physical reactions such as coughing or

are not expensive, and your local health authorities can provide more information. If radon levels are too high, hire a professional to install a system to divert radon gas outside of your home.

A few additional pollutant reduction measures to consider: never smoke tobacco inside, run exhaust fans in the bathrooms and kitchen after use, store toxic cleaning and painting products outside, and never idle a vehicle in an attached garage, even for a minute.

Ventilation

Your home probably has more than enough natural ventilation from outside air leaking into the home. If you suspect this isn't adequate, hire an energy auditor to do a blower door test.

Experts recommend sealing the home as tight as possible and using mechanical ventilation to ensure a consistent and adequate supply of outside air. The most energy efficient ventilation system is a heat recovery ventilator (HRV), which pulls in outside fresh air and captures heat from indoor air before it is exhausted to the outside.

Clean the air

Change your furnace filter at least once every three months and keep your furnace supply and return air registers free of obstructions. If rooms do not have an air return, keep the doors open. There are several home air cleaning systems available—some are effective and some are not. The EPA offers an online guide: epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq/air-cleaners-and-air-filters-home.

We hope these suggestions will be helpful as you seal air leaks in your home and enjoy fresh, healthy indoor air. 💡



An HVAC professional can inspect and test a furnace to make sure it is operating safely and efficiently. Photo Credit: NAVFAC Hawaii HVAC Specialists

DEAR LEE: SEALING AIR leaks is one of the best ways to make your home energy efficient, and there are steps to ensure your home has an adequate amount of healthy, fresh air.

The average home loses about half its air volume every hour, so it can be sealed considerably (often at a low cost) and still have more than enough healthy air.

Pollutants are the main cause of poor indoor air quality, and the most dangerous pollutant is carbon monoxide (CO). It comes from furnaces, water heaters or stoves that burn natural gas, propane or wood. The problem usually occurs in devices that are old, in need of repair, or installed or operated in a manner that prevents clear, unobstructed supply and exhaust of combustion air.

Moisture in the air can be considered an indoor pollutant because mold and dust mites thrive when

sneezing, but carbon monoxide causes severe reactions, such as headaches, dizziness, nausea, shortness of breath, confusion, blurred vision or loss of consciousness.

Eliminate pollutants

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the first strategy to ensure healthy indoor air while increasing your home's energy efficiency is to eliminate or reduce the source of pollution. The first pollutant to eliminate is carbon monoxide. A combustion furnace should be inspected and serviced regularly by a professional. If you have any combustion appliances, it is critical to install CO detectors and replace them every five to seven years.

Determine if you live in an area with radon by checking EPA's radon map. Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer. Radon tests

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

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Shopping for trouble

AS WE LOOK AROUND our communities, many local businesses have closed, potentially forever, because of COVID-19. While the retail industry has been negatively impacted, not all retail is suffering.

Online stores have noticed an uptick in the amount of purchases made, including items not typically



bought online prior to the pandemic. Adobe's Digital Economy Index found that e-commerce shopping was greater from April to May 2020 than the entire 2019 holiday shopping season.

If you're going to shop online, it is important to take precautions to protect yourself, especially during the holidays. Online shopping is not only convenient for consumers, but also for attackers looking for your personal and financial information.

Here are the three most common ways attackers compromise their victims:

1. Unpatched or unprotected computers

Computers not regularly kept up to date with critical security patches and antivirus software makes it easy for attackers to exploit vulnerabilities. Keep your computer updated and run reputable antivirus software.

2. Unencrypted transactions

If an online retailer is not using encryption, it is easy for an attacker to "listen in" on the transaction. This is called a man in the middle attack. Also, avoid making transactions on public Wi-Fi networks.

3. Fake websites and malicious emails

When you walk into a store, you know where you're shopping. Online, attackers can replicate websites. A common way an attacker gains information is through unsolicited fake emails redirecting you to a malicious website identical to the real thing. In response, the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) encourages consumers to review the following tips.

Do business with reputable vendors

Before providing personal or financial information, be sure you are interacting with a reputable vendor. Verify the validity of the vendor before supplying information. Locate phone numbers and addresses in case a problem arises.

Make sure website is encrypted

Many sites use Secure Sockets Layer to encrypt information. Indications your information will be encrypted include a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) that begins with "https," instead of "http," and a padlock. If it is closed, or locked, the information is encrypted. The location of the icon varies by browser. It may be to the right of the address bar or at the bottom of the window. Some attackers try to trick users by adding a fake padlock icon, so make sure the icon is in the appropriate location.

Be wary of emails

Attackers may attempt to gather information by sending emails requesting a purchase confirmation or account information. Legitimate businesses will not solicit this type of information through email. Do not provide sensitive information through email. If you receive an unsolicited email, don't click any links and log on to the authentic website by typing the address yourself.

Use a credit card

While laws exist to limit your liability for fraudulent credit card charges, debit cards may not have the same protection. Unauthorized charges on debit cards could leave insufficient funds to pay bills. Minimize damage by using a single, low-limit credit card to make online purchases. Also use a credit card on a payment gateway such as PayPal, Google Pay Send or Apple Pay.

Check shopping app settings

Look for apps that tell you what they do with your data and how they keep it secure. There is no legal limit on your liability with money stored in a shopping app (or a gift card). Unless otherwise stated under the terms of service, you are responsible for all charges made through the app.

Check your statements

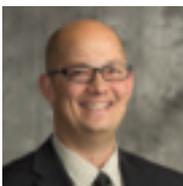
Keep a record of purchases and copies of confirmation pages and compare them to your bank and credit card statements. If there is a discrepancy, report it immediately.

Check privacy policies

Before providing personal or financial information, check the website's privacy policy. Make sure you understand how your information will be stored and used. 🗨️



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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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Empower yourself when the lights go off

AS COLDER TEMPERATURES

APPROACH. preparation is important in staying safe and warm should the electricity go out. Safe Electricity shares tips to help you prepare for winter power outages.

If power lines go down because of a winter storm, you may be in for a prolonged power outage as cooperative crews work to get the lights back on. Having an emergency kit prepares you to weather the storm and outage safely and comfortably. The kit should include bottled water, non-perishable food, flashlights, a weather radio and extra batteries. For a complete list of recommended items, visit ready.gov.

Before a storm begins, tune into your local weather service for the weather forecast. It is important to know the differences among various watches and warnings.

- **Winter storm watches** signify that a winter storm event, including heavy snow, heavy sleet or ice, is likely. You should be alert, as

adverse conditions could begin within the next 24 to 72 hours.

- **Winter storm warnings** call for a winter storm event to begin within the next 12 to 36 hours. Those in the range of the warning should be mindful of impending conditions and consider canceling plans to travel outside of the home.

If bad weather is headed your way, it is a good idea to keep cell phones and other electronic devices charged and ready for use. Consider purchasing a power bank to charge mobile devices.

When power is lost, notify your utility of the outage. Unplug all sensitive electronics to avoid a surge when electricity is restored. Leave one light switched on as a quick reminder that power is restored.

Stay inside. Dress in warm, dry layers and wear a hat, which can help keep in heat. Be aware of the temperature in your home. Cover windows at night, close off

unnecessary rooms, and place draft blocks at the bottom of doors to minimize cold air entering the house.

If you are using an alternative heating source during an outage, know how to use it safely and have all supplies for it gathered. Never heat your home with stoves or grills.

During an outage, only venture outside if absolutely necessary. Be on the lookout for downed electrical equipment. Snow can obscure an electrical hazard, so take caution when driving. Never drive over a downed line, doing so could pull down the pole and other equipment, causing additional hazards. If you see a downed line, do not get out of your car. The safest place is inside the vehicle. Contact the utility immediately.

For more winter electrical safety tips, visit SafeElectricity.org. 



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Air plants are unique and easy to grow

GROWING HOUSEPLANTS ADDS A natural element to your space, but comes with challenges familiar to new growers: am I over- or under-watering?

Air plants are named for their process of getting water – through the air. With more than 500 species, they are some of the easiest plants to grow in your home or office given proper sun, water and air circulation. They look like little tufts of grass with a silver or gray appearance and can range in size from 1 to 6 inches wide.

Air plants are epiphytes, meaning they attach to another object for support, but not in a harmful way. In nature, the sole purpose of their roots is for attachment and they often grow on trees and rocks. The leaves take on the role of absorbing water and nutrients from the environment.

Air plants need bright, indirect sunlight to stay healthy. Good air circulation is also essential to allow the plant to dry out between watering and to prevent disease on the foliage.

Dry plants will curl or roll, dull in color, and tips may brown. When watering, they can be misted, rinsed

or soaked. Mist plants every other day until run-off occurs. To rinse, place the plant under lukewarm water for a few seconds and then lay it face down on a towel to drain off excess water. This should be done at least one to two times per week.

The plants can also be submerged in lukewarm water for 30 minutes and drained well. Allow plants to dry for several hours before placing them back in a terrarium. While not necessary for success, fertilize while watering with a balanced, all-purpose fertilizer once a month at quarter-strength of the recommended rate.

Small flowers, varying in color and shape, will occasionally form. Blooms rising out of the center are pink, purple and red. After a mature plant flowers, it dies and new plants (called pups) grow at the base of the mother plant. These offsets easily separate from the mother plant so you can share with others. You can also leave pups attached to develop a ball or mound of plants.

After the threat of frost has passed in the spring, air plants make nice additions to an outdoor garden or patio. Place them in a bright but shaded location out of late-day

sun. Hang air plants from trees or pergolas for character and to create layers in the landscape. Keep plants watered well throughout the summer. Bring plants indoors once night temperatures fall below freezing.

Since air plants do not need soil, they can grow practically anywhere. They can decorate nearly any space or surface if you get creative. They look beautiful growing among other organic elements (think bark, driftwood, rocks, moss and shells), or on a bookshelf or windowsill that needs color. Air plants also make nice additions to open terrariums or dish gardens.

For the holidays, air plants positioned on a wreath or in a glass ornament make for great gifts.

Air plants offer a unique texture and color to any space, are easy to grow and make great natural additions to decor. For more information on growing Tillandsia indoors or in a garden, contact your local county Extension office.

Purchase the plants at your local garden center or online and create your own masterpiece. 🌱



Brittney Haag is a Horticulture Educator for the University of Illinois Extension serving Livingston, McLean and Woodford counties. Her work focuses on youth horticulture education through school gardens and Jr. Master Gardener programs.

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The handle is made from genuine natural bone, and features decorative wood spacers and a hand-carved motif of two overlapping feathers—a reminder for you to respect and connect with the natural world.

This fusion of substance and style can garner a high price tag out in the marketplace. In fact, we found full tang, stainless steel blades with bone handles in excess of \$2,000. Well, that won't cut it around here. We have mastered the hunt for the best deal, and in turn pass the spoils on to our customers.

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Saluting Vice Admiral Brown

By Les O'Dell



NANCY BROWN, OR MORE properly known as Vice Admiral Nancy Brown, U.S. Navy (retired), could be described as a veteran's veteran.

Just from her military achievements and accomplishments alone, fellow veterans admire the rural Marion native. But it is her ongoing and unwavering support and service to other former sailors and soldiers that continues to earn her respect.

"I have been so fortunate in my life and career that I believe I need to try to give back," Brown, 68, explains. "I think now, in some ways, veterans get a lot of attention, but they are still pretty neglected in other ways. There's a lot of work to be done and whatever I can do to help – to benefit others – I want to try to do that."

She involves herself in efforts and programs with the same drive and determination evidenced during her more than three decades in the Navy. It was a career that took her to places she never dreamed as a young girl growing up on her family's Williamson County farm.

"It never occurred to me that I would ever move or travel or really do anything," she recalls. "Opportunities for women were pretty limited then, so just going to college was unique. I always knew I wanted to go to college, but never thought hard enough about what came after college and what I would do."

Following graduation from Stephens College with a teaching certificate and a degree in American history, she returned home to find a job.

Trouble was, lots of other new graduates returned, too, and teaching jobs were hard to find.

"I was pretty depressed. One day my dad said to me, 'Why don't you join the Navy?' and the reason he picked the Navy was he thought they had the best food," she says.

The naval recruiter she visited was less than enthusiastic toward the young lady.

"He told me that the Navy wasn't for me," she says, adding his stance was that the service would not take someone with her background. She says she convinced him to submit the paperwork anyway. A call a few weeks later informed Brown that she had been chosen for Officer Candidate School.

"I packed up my little car and headed to Newport, R.I.," she says. "At that point, I don't even think I knew that the Navy had ships."

Brown says her first few months in the service were eye-opening.

"I had no idea what I was getting into. I would talk to my parents and they often asked me what it was like, and all I could say was, 'It's different, it's different.' In boot camp, I kept thinking about how I had a college degree and there I was scrubbing floors," she says.

Looking back, Brown says she was fortunate with her first assignment: a placement in communications, working with systems ranging from RADAR and satellite to radio transmissions. Brown says it was as close as she could get to an operational environment in the Navy.

“At that point, women couldn’t serve on ships, so I was as close to the action as I could possibly get,” she remembers.

Eventually, she did serve onboard naval vessels and got closer to the action. In fact, some would say she was in the heart of it – working in the White House during the Clinton administration.

Her first White House role was to oversee the technical and highly classified communications and intelligence systems that supported the Situation Room. The 5,525 square-foot conference room in the basement of the West Wing is used by the president and advisors during times of potential crises.

“It’s kind of the hub of activity in the White House,” Brown explains. “I was in more of a behind-the-scenes role. We maintained all of the presidential documents and records, but my encounters with the president were pretty limited, although I did brief the senior staff members on what we were doing.”

Her next White House assignment was different.

“With the second appointment, I was the senior military person at the White House and in charge of all military support provided to the president,” she says.

When Brown says all, she means all. She ultimately was responsible for everything from the White House

Communications Agency to Camp David (the presidential retreat), from the service men and women who cook meals to valets who personally support the president, and all presidential transportation including motorcades, the presidential helicopter Marine One and the well-known Air Force One aircraft. In all, she oversaw about 5,000 military personnel.

The role also made her a frequent traveler with the president.

“I worked for a civilian who was a political appointee. One of the two of us went on every trip. ... Since he was considered more senior, he got the good trips, I got the others,” she says with a laugh. “I’m not complaining, though, it was all fun.”

Brown says the role came with a great deal of responsibility, including occasionally being the bearer of bad news, which she personally had to deliver to the president or his chief of staff.

“If there was a problem with the plane or any military support, I had to explain to him why we couldn’t take off until we fixed it. That was challenging because the president didn’t understand delays.”

Much of her White House assignment involved juggling political desires, requirements of the Pentagon, needs of the president and the Secret Service and simple logistics.



“There was a lot of balancing and trying to do what was best for everybody and then trying to find a way to explain why we couldn’t do it,” she recalls.

Looking back, she says the memories of her nearly four years working on Pennsylvania Avenue are too many to measure.

“It is still hard for me to believe that all of it actually happened to me,” she says. “There are so many stories that I could tell, but I can’t,” she says. “During my time there I always thought, ‘I can’t believe this is really happening.’ I mean, every day, walking into the White House, I almost had to pinch myself.

“It was such a great opportunity to see how our government works and the difference between the way things are done in the military and the political arena. I got insight into why things are done the way they are – all of the planning and effort that goes into things every time the president goes somewhere, even if it just a couple of blocks in D.C.”

After about a year flying on Air Force One and riding in motorcades, the Navy had another destination and rank in mind for then Captain Brown.

“By the time I was given command of a communications station, the Navy decided communications was an up and coming field and they probably should put more emphasis on it. They started looking for someone to oversee communications as an admiral,” she explains. “I was about the only one who had the experience.”

She was selected to be a vice admiral in 2009, one of just 15 female admirals in the branch. The post and her leadership skills led to experiences she will never forget.

“Every disaster we’ve had, it seems I’ve been in the middle of it. I was the first female flag officer on the ground in Iraq; I lived in one of Saddam’s palaces,” she says, about her role in rebuilding the nation’s communications infrastructure. “When [Hurricane] Katrina hit, I was responsible for reconstituting communications. I often thought the only difference between the two was that in Iraq, I was armed.”

With a scrapbook full of experiences, Brown considers herself lucky.

Vice Admiral Nancy Brown helped conduct a flag ceremony prior to leaving Marion on a 2018 Honor Flight

PHOTO COURTESY OF JEN FORTUNE/VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS





PHOTO COURTESY OF VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS



“It wasn’t my planning or forethought, it was luck. I just always seemed to be in the right place at the right time,” she says acknowledging the same fortune during the 9/11 attack on the Pentagon. A meeting she was scheduled to attend when and where the plane hit was moved to a different building just hours before.

Upon retirement in 2009, Brown and husband Peter Hesser, a decorated U.S. Marine, returned to her family’s centennial farm near Marion. She began to look for ways to give back.

“The first thing I got involved with was the VFW and the American Legion, trying to do what I could. Then I became associated with the honor guard rituals team doing funerals.”

Then, another way of serving called. A member of the Veterans Honor Flight of Southern Illinois reached out to Brown, asking her to help get the program started in the region. There was no way she could say no. The program gives veterans a free day-long trip to the nation’s capital so they can visit memorials and sites which honor them.

“I didn’t even know there was an Honor Flight here. I had been involved in other places, so I volunteered and the next thing I know, I’m on the board and I’m working full-time to help. It was a lot of work getting to where we could actually do the first trip. But, I tell you, that morning at the airport, seeing the veterans, how excited they were and interacting with them, hearing their stories, made it all worth it.”

Accompanying the veterans, she continued to give back.

“When’s the last time an admiral offered to get you water?” she asked the guests, then proceeded to bring each one a bottle of water.

Using her skills and contacts, she made the trip special.

“One of the veterans was a Seabee, part of the construction unit in the Navy,” she says. “I asked one of the police officers escorting our bus if we could drive by the memorial for the Seabees and he suggested taking this veteran in the squad car.”

Brown says the veteran rode in the police car to the memorial with lights flashing for a VIP treatment.

“I have pictures of him touching it and he’s in tears. I still get emotional talking about it. To be able to do something like that is very special,” she adds.

Doug Kimmel, director of the aptly named Veterans Airport of Southern Illinois and a member of the board of directors for the area’s Honor Flight



**Honor Flight No. 6,
October 2019,
Washington, D.C.**

PHOTO COURTESY OF
HOPE PATTERSON/VETERANS HONOR
FLIGHT OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

organization, says having Brown work with Honor Flights is extremely valuable.

“Nancy has been instrumental in propelling the Veterans Honor Flight of Southern Illinois forward after our initial formation,” Kimmel says. “What she brought to the table in terms of her leadership, knowledge and willingness to put forth time has been amazing.”

Kimmel continues, “She has been instrumental in our program, from fundraising to the logistics of everything, especially in Washington, D.C. What is most memorable to me is the respect and admiration the veterans themselves have for Nancy – a respect and admiration that she has for them, too.”

For Brown, soldiers and sailors come first. It was that way when she was in command and continues to be at the forefront as she volunteers.

“One of the things I always did was visit my sailors at odd hours,” she says. “They often saw me scrubbing floors or doing something they were doing. I tried to pitch in and see what life was like for them. It was important for me to stay in touch and not get disconnected. I wanted to know what I could do to help them make life better.”

She is still working to make their lives better.

“I think honoring the service that veterans have provided is very important and making sure they feel appreciated,” she stresses. “I have been very fortunate and believe I need to give back.”

Brown has an important message for her fellow veterans.

“I want to thank them for their service. That is not a hollow statement. For me, it’s a thank you to them coming from an understanding of the sacrifices they made. They left everything behind to put on a uniform and serve their country. They went where they were told to go. They did what they were told to do. We all should appreciate the sacrifices they made and realize the impact it had on their lives. It’s significant, and I don’t think many people are able to appreciate what a veteran has really done, but I can.”

To veterans, that’s a salute from a vice admiral. 🇺🇸



Vice Admiral Brown helps a veteran off the bus at one of the stops in Washington, D.C.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF VETERANS HONOR FLIGHT OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

Peace, joy and brotherhood in the great outdoors

by Nancy McDonald

WHILE ON DEPLOYMENT IN

Afghanistan, Army Specialist Eric Bakken learned that his team leader SSG John Bates and fellow Specialist Eric Finniginamm had never hunted or fished. As an outdoor enthusiast, he wanted to share his love of outdoor sports, so he promised to take them out upon returning to the U.S.

Subsequent conversations led them to begin developing a program to give veterans the opportunity to get outdoors and connect with other veterans. Finniginamm was killed in Afghanistan in 2010, and The Fallen Outdoors (TFO) was launched in his honor five years later.

The commitment

Open to both men and women, whether veterans or active service personnel, TFO is a nonprofit organization that organizes trips for various outdoor sports or activities – hunting, fishing, archery, camping, hiking, cycling and clay shoots. Participants can enjoy a sport they love at little to no cost, experience brotherhood and connect with like-minded individuals.

Transformation from the military's regimented structure back to civilian life can be difficult. Illinois TFO Team Leader Jason Wryn retired from the Army in 2000

after 21 years of active duty. He understands the challenge for those returning from duty.

"These trips are especially important for our veterans," he explains. "You dedicate your life to the military. It's not just a job, it's a way of life. It's your whole culture. You always hear service members call each other brother and sister because it is a family. When you move back home and there's not a big military presence, you find yourself not fitting in. You don't have anybody who understands what you've been through."

Because of this, everyone associated with the TFO organization is required to be or have been a servicemember and a volunteer.

Brothers saving brothers

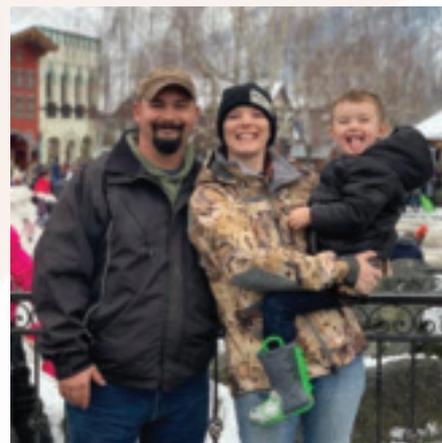
Once an event is finalized, a plea to find participants is posted on the national TFO website. Trips may include a duck hunt for eight people or a salmon fishing trip for six. Interested parties send in requests and winners are randomly selected. Occasionally, if someone has a special circumstance, that formality is skipped.

TFO's reach has quickly grown to more than 40 states, and the Washington team is one of the most

active in the country. Washington TFO Team Leader and Army Veteran Andrew Morton recalls setting up a fishing trip for a group of veterans. The night before the trip, Morton called one veteran to finalize details. He was concerned because the veteran sounded down and basically "out of it." Morton coaxed him into going, saying, "Just pack everything up for the day and we'll talk about it." The vet showed up and they headed out on the boat to fish. "We caught a few steelheads," says Morton. "He started opening up and told me about his experiences in Iraq and what he saw, what he felt, and about some of the brothers he lost."

After packing up the gear that day, the vet told Morton that his call the night before kept him from committing suicide. "That vet is now very active in the program, talking about his experience... how fishing saved his life," Morton says. "The program works. It really works."

Morton's wife Shasta, also an Army



TFO staff member Andrew Morton and his wife Shasta, TFO secretary, with son, Riley, have been instrumental in the success of the national TFO program.



The Fallen Outdoors (TFO) Illinois Team Leader Jason Wryn, left, poses with a group of veterans proudly showing the rewards of a TFO-sponsored dove hunt.

veteran and TFO's national secretary, echoes that sentiment. "We're honestly out there saving these veterans' lives because it gives them an outreach of other veterans. We don't force anybody to talk about anything they don't want to, but you get on a boat or a trip, you start talking and people open up about how they feel about their own experiences, and it sometimes saves their lives."

Reconnecting in Illinois

Closer to home, Team Illinois was recently reorganized. Wryn began working to restart the program with just \$400 in his pocket and is looking to expand the number of trips the team can offer. He counts on social media, media interviews and event coverage, the Illinois website, booths at outdoor shows, and word of mouth for promotion. If he sees someone with a veteran's license plate or wearing a veteran's hat, he'll engage them in a conversation about TFO.

COVID-19 has affected the TFO organization, so fundraising

efforts are more important than ever. In addition to sales of T-shirts and other Team Illinois-related merchandise, raffles and membership dues, donations from individuals, various organizations and events are enabling the team to continue providing trips. The generosity has been overwhelming.

Hunting clubs have donated waterfowl, whitetail deer and upland bird hunts. Fishing clubs have helped provide fishing trips for crappie, catfish and other game fish. Food purveyors help feed event participants and coordinators. One donor is even providing a 5-week-old certified black lab hunting dog.

TFO participates in Fishing for Freedom, held annually in Quincy. Hosting more than 300 military personnel and veterans from 25 states, the multi-day event is one of the largest military fishing events in the country, and an important source of income for Team Illinois. An auction raises thousands of dollars, and proceeds are donated to various veterans' groups. The tournament was canceled this year due to the pandemic, but organizers are optimistic about hosting it in 2021.

"The money made in Illinois stays in Illinois, and every dollar

raised is used to support the program and its mission," says Wryn. "We spend our own money on hotels, food, gas and donate our time, because we truly believe in what we do."

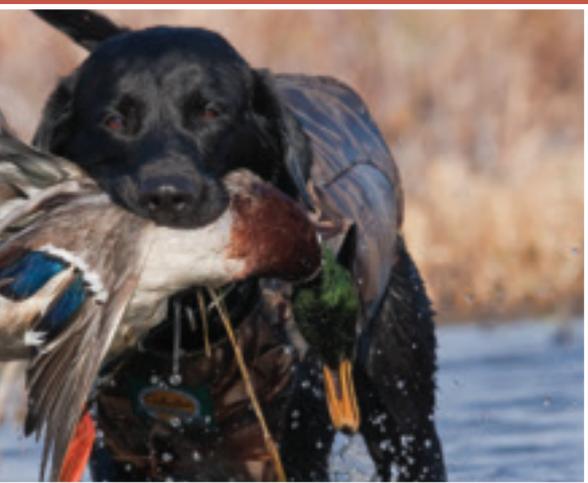
Mission possible

While TFO is still in its infancy, it has made remarkable progress and Wryn has high hopes. "One of these days I'm going to go to a show and ask somebody, 'Have you heard of The Fallen Outdoors?' 'Oh yeah, I follow you on Facebook. I love what y'all are doing. You know, that's why I came to the show. I just believe we are making such a huge difference in veterans' lives.'"

If you serve or served honorably in the military, you are eligible to be a member and a participant. Bakken says, "You are my brother and sister. I do not care how long you served, what branch, what job, combat or garrison, wounded or untouched. The Fallen Outdoors is here for you, and I am here for you." 

LEARN MORE

For more information or to donate, visit thefallenoutdoors.com/illinois.



The connections made throughout the country since the inception of The Fallen Outdoors have changed lives and created memories. Out of respect for their privacy, interviews with participants are not included in this article, but testimonials such as these are proof of TFO's impact:

"I stumbled upon The Fallen Outdoors on Facebook and it has been a life changer ever since. As a disabled veteran, it is difficult for me to get out and hunt on my own. TFO has connected me with many veterans who have kept in touch ever since. Between fishing and hunting adventures, the professional staff has helped me every step of the way and made these activities enjoyable once more. I will forever be grateful to this incredible organization!" – Andy H.

"I don't know where I'd be without TFO. I don't know that my family would have made it. This is the best organization. It's really as simple as that. As a veteran, husband and father, I am forever grateful for what TFO and its donors have enabled me to become, and it is all because of a fishing trip." – Drew E.

"Many hunting and fishing groups tend to exclude women. TFO has been the total opposite. They have been very encouraging towards beginners and women, especially women who are just getting into hunting and fishing. When you tell the group you are new to something, they are quick to offer suggestions. TFO nation has given me the confidence to give hunting and freshwater fishing a try." – D.W.



FALLEN OUTDOORS



Iced

By Valerie Cheatham

JODI ALLEN CAN PROBABLY credit her grandfather with her love of baking. Beginning in her preteen years, he would find recipes and ask her to bake them. And so it began.

Iced, in downtown Shelbyville, is owned by Jodi and husband Rick, Shelby Electric Cooperative members. It is Jodi's love of baking that prompted Rick to suggest they purchase the decrepit Main Street storefront and turn it into a bakery.

Previous owners had plastered walls, installed a drop ceiling and carpeted the floors. To the Allen's delight, under that dingy carpet laid beautiful hardwood floors, plaster masked rustic brick walls and ceiling tiles hid the original tin paneled ceiling.

"It was a total gut job," Jodi says. "We purchased the building in October and opened in June." During the renovation, Jodi studied for her food service license and learned all she could about setting up a commercial kitchen. Her degree in accounting helps with the business end of things.

A self-admitted perfectionist, Jodi says she wants everything to have a certain look and taste and has had to adjust to everyone not always having the same work ethic. "I was brought up to work hard and not stand around," she explains. "I keep busy and have a little bit of a hard time letting go."

She arrives early every morning to start cooking and baking. Jodi and daughter Kearah do most of the baking and they recently added another baker.

Iced is known for its daily cheesecake specials. Some of the unexpected flavors have turned out to be the most in demand. "Our cinnamon roll cheesecake is probably our most popular," says Jodi. "But, sometimes the weirder the better – like our maple bacon cheesecake."

Varieties include candy bar, apple cider, s'mores and even cotton candy – a summertime favorite. Jodi explains it is topped with cotton candy mousse that is swirled in shades of pink, blue and purple and tastes just like its namesake.

The bakery case has a rotating variety of delectable goods including cupcakes, decorated sugar cookies, Rice Krispies Treats, pie, cake, toaster pastries and more.

On the last day of September, the case contained cran-apple pie, cinnamon roll pumpkin mousse cups, pumpkin spice donuts, candy corn Rice Krispies



Pumpkin spice donuts



Almond salted caramel cupcakes



Cinnamon roll pumpkin mousse cups



Cran-apple pie



Treats, pumpkin shaped sugar cookies and vanilla, chocolate and salted caramel cupcakes. Iced also takes requests.

During the year, flavors change to suit the season. “During spring and summer, we do more fruity flavors, but in the fall we switch to pumpkin, caramel apple and the spices people love,” she explains. “At Christmas, we get into peppermint, but our favorite time is Valentine’s Day. It is our busiest two days of the year.”

What is so special about Valentine’s? Iced fills its case and takes orders for chocolate dipped strawberries and a variety of red, chocolate and/or heart-shaped grab-and-go desserts like red velvet cupcakes, chocolate Ding Dongs, heart-shaped chocolate-covered cookie dough and cake balls. The New York-style or chocolate cheesecake for two topped with a dipped strawberry is a favorite. Iced does three weeks of business in those two days.

However, it is known for more than just sweet stuff. It also serves lunch including paninis, salads and a daily special – all made from scratch.

The spinach artichoke and loaded chicken bacon ranch paninis are their most popular lunch items. The spinach artichoke is made on ciabatta bread with a garlic spread, spinach, artichoke hearts and mozzarella. The chicken bacon ranch includes chicken, bacon, tomato, spinach, ranch and pepper jack cheese.

Salads are also popular, especially the seasonal strawberry salad with strawberries, apples, oranges, bacon and pecans with a mango vinaigrette. You can also order a half and half with your choice of a panini, salad or homemade soup.

Homemade chicken and noodles with authentic mashed potatoes and freshly baked bread is a popular lunch special. Other days you can find items such as chicken lasagna with garlic bread, bacon wrapped meatloaf, pork roast or cheesy chicken enchiladas, to name just a few.

To wash it all down, Iced has a variety of hot or iced coffee or tea drinks, chai, flavored lemonades and fruit smoothies. During fall, apple cider slushies are popular.

Information on items in the bakery case, lunch specials and soup of the day can be found on the Iced Facebook page. If something sounds good, don’t delay, it’s not unusual for the bakery case and lunch specials to sell out early. 📍



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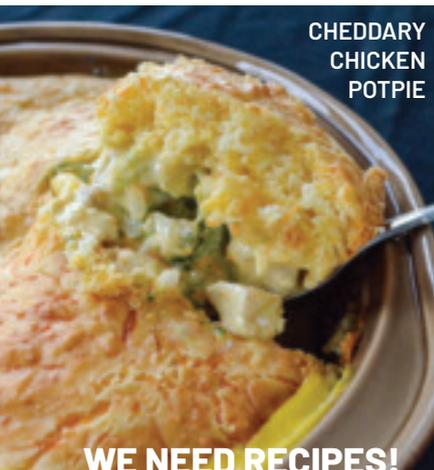
HOURS

Tuesday-Friday
10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Saturday
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Tastes like chicken!

POPULAR AND VERSATILE, CHICKEN is a low-fat alternative to red meat. It can be found in a multitude of cuisines, takes well to a variety of spices and is economical. Readers submitted their favorite chicken recipes and we supplemented with a few favorites of our own. 💡



CHEDDARY CHICKEN POTPIE

WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming monthly topics

Pasta

Lemons

Cinnamon

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@aicc.coop.

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



Cheddary Chicken Potpie

Servings: 6-8

- 1 10-ounce can cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 1 cup milk, divided
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped
- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/4 cup celery, chopped
- 1/4 cup carrots, shredded
- 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups cooked chicken, cubed
- 1 10-ounce frozen chopped broccoli, cooked and drained
- 1 egg
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- 1 cup Bisquick
- 1 cup sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds, optional

Preheat oven to 375 F. In large saucepan, combine soup, 1/2 cup milk, onion, cream cheese, celery, carrots, Parmesan cheese and salt. Cook and stir until mixture is hot and cream cheese is melted. Stir in the chicken and broccoli; heat through. Pour into an ungreased 2-quart baking dish. In a medium bowl, combine egg, oil and remaining milk. Add Bisquick and cheddar cheese and blend well. Spoon over hot chicken mixture. Sprinkle with almonds if desired. Bake uncovered for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown. Nutrition information: 416 calories; 22.3g fat; 783mg sodium; 19.9g carbohydrates; 34.2g protein.

Best Chicken Enchiladas

Submitted by: Sherry Reuter, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

Servings: 8-10

- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 small white onion, diced
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, diced into small pieces
- Salt and pepper
- 1 4-ounce can diced green chilies
- 1 15.5-ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1/2 cup corn
- 12 large flour tortillas
- 3 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 small cans red enchilada sauce

Preheat oven to 350 F. Heat oil and add onion and saute for 3 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add diced chicken and green chilies and season with salt and pepper. Saute for 6-8 minutes, stirring occasionally until chicken is cooked through. Remove from heat and set aside. In separate bowl, combine black beans with corn. To assemble enchiladas, on each tortilla, spread 2 tablespoons enchilada sauce over surface of tortilla. Add a large tablespoon of corn/bean mixture in a line down the middle of tortilla. Add 2 tablespoons of chicken mixture, then sprinkle with cheese. Roll up tortilla tightly and place in a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Repeat process. Spread remaining enchilada sauce over top of tortillas and sprinkle with remaining shredded cheese. Bake uncovered for 20 minutes. Nutrition information: 747 calories; 22.2g fat; 1144mg sodium; 63.3g carbohydrates; 75.2g protein.

Chicken Bibimbap

Servings: 4

- | | |
|---|---|
| 8 ounces boneless, skinless chicken breasts, chopped into small bites | 2 cups fresh baby spinach |
| 1/4 teaspoon minced garlic | 4 eggs |
| 1 tablespoon soy sauce | 2-4 cups cooked rice |
| 1 tablespoon sesame oil | Sauce: |
| 1 teaspoon brown sugar | 3 tablespoons gochujang (red chili) paste |
| Pinch of salt | 1 tablespoon sesame oil |
| 2-3 tablespoons canola oil | 1 teaspoon minced garlic |
| 2 carrots, cut into matchsticks | 1 tablespoon brown sugar |
| 1 seedless cucumber, cubed | 1 teaspoon rice wine vinegar |
| 1 red bell pepper, sliced into strips | 1 tablespoon toasted sesame seeds |

Prepare rice. Combine sauce ingredients and set aside. Place chicken in medium bowl and toss with garlic, soy sauce, sesame oil, brown sugar and pinch of salt. Set aside. Heat skillet over high heat and add 1-2 tablespoons oil. When oil is hot, add carrots and toss for 1 minute and remove to a small dish. Add spinach and cook briefly just until wilted; remove to a dish. Add peppers and cook 1 minute then remove to another dish. Add another tablespoon of oil to pan and cook chicken until opaque. Remove from pan. When rice is done cooking, divide among 4 large bowls. Top with each vegetable in a different section around bowl. Put chicken in middle. Add oil to skillet over high heat and fry eggs until cooked but center is soft. Top each bowl with an egg. Serve with sauce. Nutrition information: 1020 calories; 22.2g fat; 752mg sodium; 167.5g carbohydrates; 33.7g protein.



COQ AU VIN

Crockpot Continental Chicken

Submitted by: JoAnn Lynch, Eastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Servings: 6-8

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 6-8 chicken breasts, boneless and skinless | 1 10-ounce can cream of mushroom soup |
| 6-8 slices bacon | 1/2 cup sour cream |
| 1 package Buddig beef | 1/4 cup flour |

Arrange beef in bottom of greased crockpot. Wrap each chicken breast with a slice of bacon and lay on top of beef. Mix sour cream and flour. Add soup and stir together; pour over chicken. Cover and cook on low 8-10 hours or 3-4 hours on high. Serve over hot buttered noodles. Nutrition information: 359 calories; 23.1g fat; 814mg sodium; 6.7g carbohydrates; 31.8g protein.

CROCKPOT CONTINENTAL CHICKEN



Coq au Vin

Servings: 6-8

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 3 pounds boneless, skinless chicken thighs | 1/2 bottle Cabernet Sauvignon |
| 1 pound carrots, diced | 3 cups chicken broth |
| 4-6 celery stalks, diced | 1 sprig thyme |
| 1 pound mushrooms, sliced | 3-4 tablespoons canola or olive oil |
| 1 large onion, diced | Flour |
| 2 ounces tomato paste | Salt |
| 1/2 bottle Tempranillo wine | Pepper |

Preheat oven to 300 F. Lightly toss chicken thighs with salt, pepper and a little flour. In large, oven-safe pan with lid, heat 3-4 tablespoons oil over medium-high heat. Once warm, brown chicken on all sides in batches (it does not need to be cooked through, it's only about color). Remove chicken from pan. For vegetables, add a little more oil to pan and cook onion until caramelizing, then add carrots, celery and mushrooms and cook until browning. Add tomato paste and cook until rust colored. Add chicken back to pan, nestling down into vegetables. Add red wine (use the cheap stuff), chicken broth and thyme. Ideally, the liquid should just barely cover the chicken and vegetables. Bring pan to simmer, cover and put in oven for 3 hours. Serve with mashed potatoes or noodles and your favorite green vegetable or salad. Nutrition information: 526 calories; 20.3g fat; 496mg sodium; 13.6g carbohydrates; 54g protein.



When critters become a nuisance

MANY HOMEOWNERS LIKE BEING able to see wildlife around their yards. Some will create habitats to encourage the presence of birds and animals. However, sometimes good intentions result in attracting unwanted wildlife or having them invade a home. Taking a few preventative measures will decrease the chances of this happening.

To keep squirrels and raccoons from taking over bird feeders, use a gravity-operated treadle, so only birds can access feed. In addition, do not allow feed to accumulate underneath the feeder. If pets are fed outdoors, move feeders indoors at night.

Trees with branches extending over the roof of a house should be trimmed. An alternative is to place a 3-foot wide band of sheet metal around the trunk of the tree at least 6 feet off the ground. If you live in an area where deer are present, consider protecting your smooth bark trees like maples from being rubbed by male deer during fall.

Installing a chimney cap will help prevent direct entry into a house. To find out if animals are already in the chimney or attic,

sprinkle flour or talcum powder around the top of the chimney and watch for tracks for several days. If animals are present, they will need to be removed before the cap can be installed. Contact the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to get a listing of licensed nuisance wildlife control contractors or call your local city or county government offices to see if they have animal control services.

Firewood should be stacked away from the house, at least two feet above ground. This will not only lessen the chances of wildlife making a home in the wood, it will decrease the possibility of termites making a home in your house.

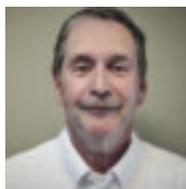
Openings around foundations should be sealed. Openings should be covered with wire mesh, sheet metal or concrete. If there is concern about small animals digging underneath a foundation, place wire mesh at least 6 inches below ground to discourage digging.

Keep trash containers tightly closed. If needed, secure the lids with elastic cords. Do not add meat, grease or bones to compost piles.

Having animals and birds around the home can be visually pleasing. Enhancing an area for certain types of wildlife can be done without creating a place for wildlife you do not want. For more information on specific types of



wildlife and management, visit the University of Illinois Extension Living with Wildlife website at wildlifeillinois.org.💡



Duane Friend is an environmental stewardship and energy educator for the University of Illinois Extension Center in Jacksonville.

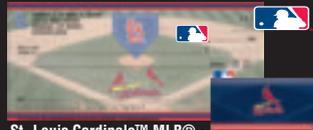
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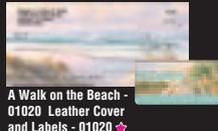
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00552 Leather Cover
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Tropical Paradise -
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and Labels - 00052 ☆



North American
Wildlife - 00876 Leather
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Winter Calm - 00017
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00017 ☆



Prayers of Serenity w/
verse "Trust in the Lord
with all your heart" - 00194
Leather Cover and Labels - 00194 ☆



Beach Escapes - 00743
Leather Cover - 00697
Labels - 00743 ☆



Nurses Rule! - 00542
Leather Cover
and Labels - 00542 ☆



Glitter Sparkles -
01327 Fabric Cover
and Labels - 01327 ▲



Thomas Kinkade's Faith
for All Seasons w/verse
"Believe all things
are possible with God" - 00105
Leather Cover and Labels - 00105 ☆



Footprints w/verse "One
night I dreamed that I was
walking along the beach with the Lord." -
00667 Leather Cover and Labels - 00667 ☆



Rescued is My Breed
of Choice - 00379 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00379 ☆
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to a national no-kill animal shelter.



Rescued is Something
to Purr About - 00525
Leather Cover and Labels - 00525 ☆



On the Wings of Hope -
00384 One image. Leather
Cover and Labels - 00384 ☆
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to fight breast cancer.



Coping Together -
01397 Leather Cover -
00451-008 and Labels - 01397 ☆
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to the American Nurses Foundation.



Grandkids Rule! w/verse
"I'd rather be with my grandkids." - 00437
Leather Cover and Labels - 00437 ☆



Mountains - 01287
Leather Cover and
Labels - 01287 ☆



Words of Faith w/verse
"With God all things are possible." - 00551
Leather Cover and Labels - 00551 ☆



Cowboy Boots - 00434
Leather Cover and
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Farm and Tractors -
00785 Leather Cover
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Live, Laugh, Love, Learn w/
verse "Life is not measured by the breaths we take,
but by the moments that take our breath away" -
00332 Leather Cover and Labels - 00332 ☆



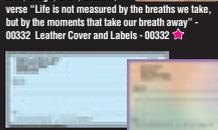
A Touch of Color II -
01370 Leather Cover
and Labels - 01370 ☆



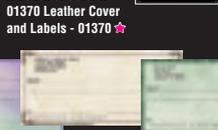
Nightmare Before
Christmas - 00531
Leather Cover and Labels - 00531 ☆



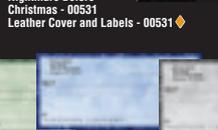
Ohio State University -
00513 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00513 ◆
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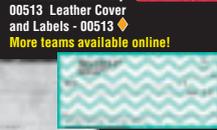
Blue Safety - 00027
One image.
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00155 ▲



Reflections - 00125
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00125 ▲



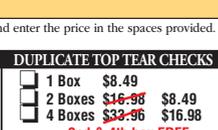
Parchment - 00612
Burgundy Leather
Cover - 00030-004
Labels - 00032-008 ▲



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One image. Leather
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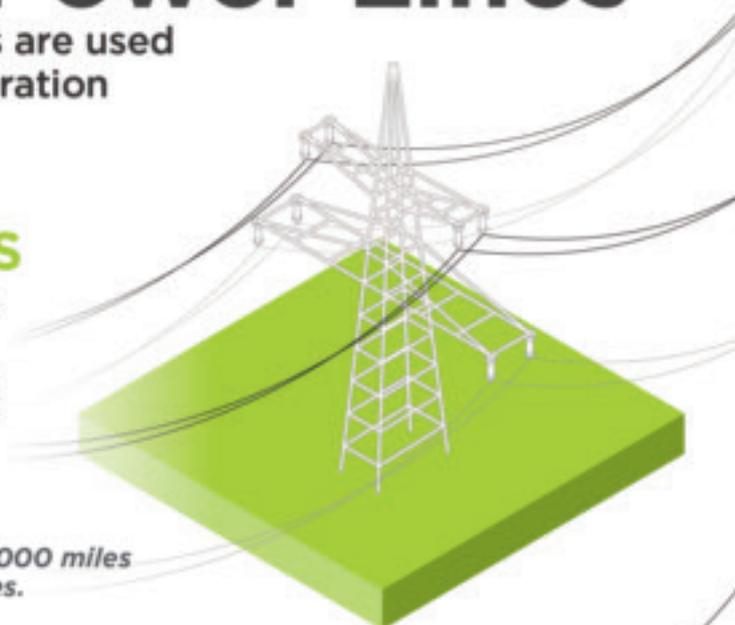
A Field Guide to Overhead Power Lines

High-voltage transmission lines are used to deliver electricity from generation plants to consumers.

HIGH-VOLTAGE TRANSMISSION LINES

Large amounts of power, measured by watts, are delivered by transmission lines. These lines are energized with very high voltage in order to move the power long distances with minimal losses. Insulators on the towers prevent the power from flowing to the towers or the ground.

Electric cooperatives own and maintain 65,000 miles (6 percent) of the nation's transmission lines.



SUBSTATIONS AND SUB-TRANSMISSION LINES

Transformers at transmission substations reduce the voltage from transmission levels to sub-transmission levels, typically ranging from 115,000 volts to 34,500 volts. Sub-transmission lines deliver power over shorter distances to distribution substations and large industrial sites. At distribution substations and large industrial sites, transformers reduce the voltage to a lower level, typically 7,200 volts or 14,400 volts.



DISTRIBUTION LINES

The lines typically seen along rural roads and next to homes are generally single phase distribution line, energized at 7,200 or 14,400 volts. Transformers on the utility poles lower the voltage to between 120 and 480 volts to serve residential homes and small businesses.

Electric cooperatives own and maintain 2.6 million miles (42 percent) of the nation's distribution lines.



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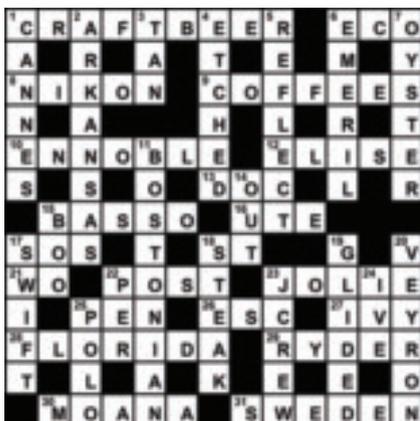


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9	3	5	4	1	7	8	6	2
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3	4	2	7	6	1	9	5	8
6	8	7	9	5	4	1	2	3
7	2	3	6	4	9	5	8	1
1	6	9	5	8	3	2	4	7
8	5	4	1	7	2	3	9	6

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- January - Barns
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- April - Rainbows



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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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