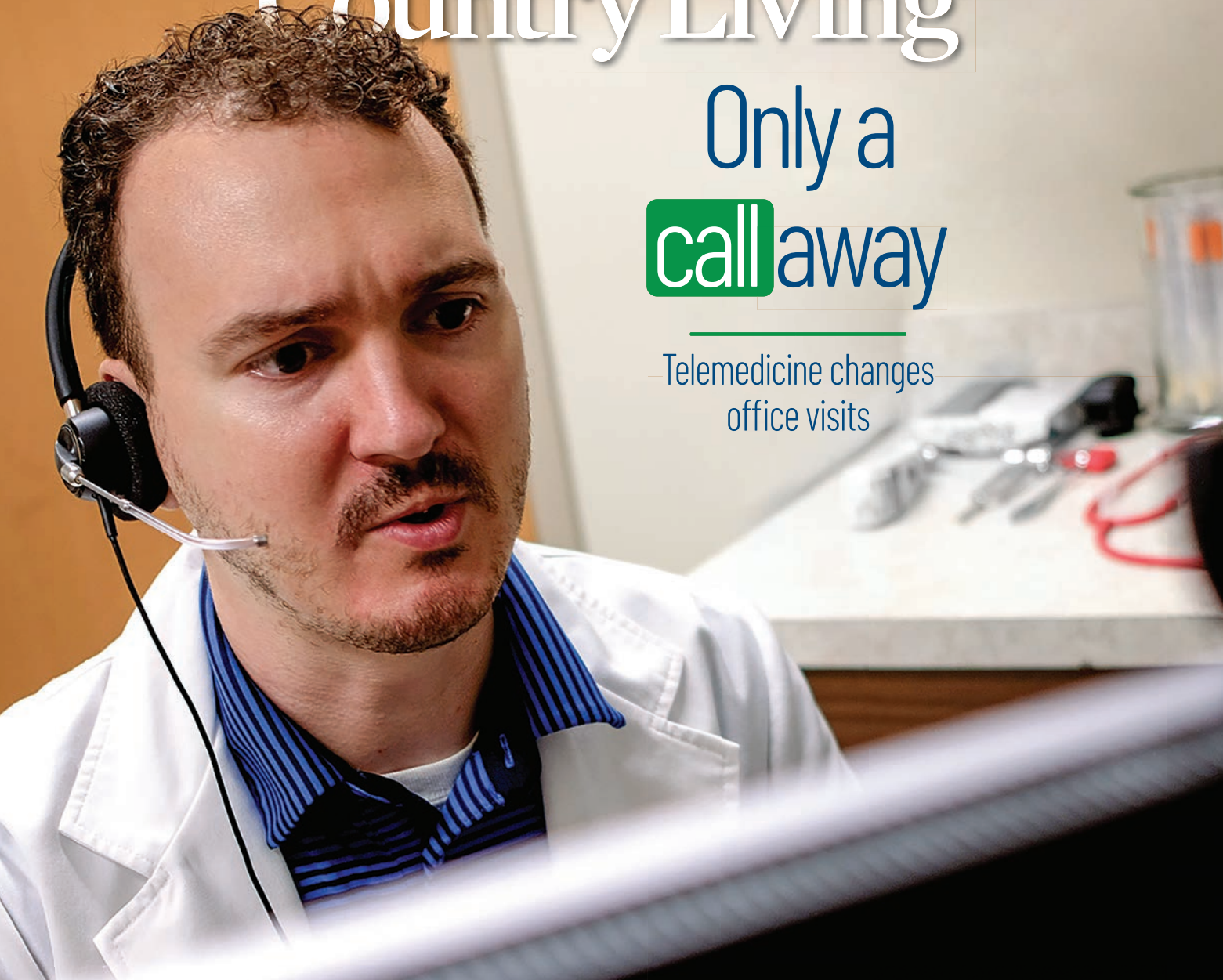


# Illinois Country Living

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RURAL ILLINOIS  
**Hurdles to finding mental  
health services**

FINEST COOKING  
**Mamma Mia!**

FIRST THOUGHTS  
**Finding the good in Illinois**

 CO-OP  
NEWS

# Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

*High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again*



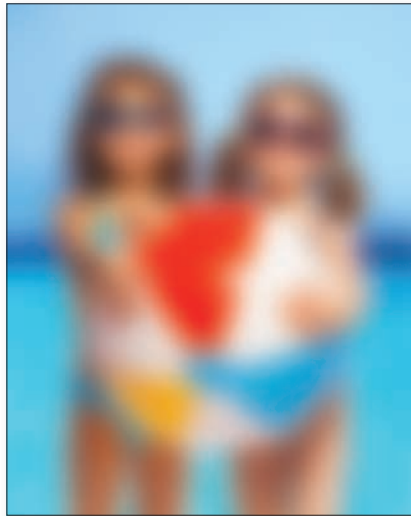
**F**or many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

[www.mascoutaheyecare.com](http://www.mascoutaheyecare.com)

**1-618-566-8899**

Office located in Mascoutah, Illinois

**Marianne McDaniel, O.D.**

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DAVID OROSCETTI/USFHEALTHCARE

# Illinois Country Living

MARCH 2021  
VOLUME 78 • NO. 11

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# THE PEOPLE HAVE THE POWER

John and Barbara heard powerful voices at the electric co-op meeting ... their own. Only with an electric co-op is every customer an owner of the business. Unlike other electric utilities, your co-op exists to make sure your needs are always met, not to make a profit. And since every electric co-op is locally owned and operated, your co-op is always there with you, reinvesting in your community. That's why in an electric co-op, the people have the power.



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## Elevating the Land of Lincoln to new heights

**WE'VE ALL HEARD WHAT** they say about Illinois. “Elected officials are corrupt.” “The business climate is horrible.” “Citizens are leaving.” “Our kids are choosing to go to college out of state.”

It's all negative news that our neighbor states enjoy perpetuating, and it has, in many ways, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Illinois has been amid an identity crisis for a while now. For too long we have let others define who and what we are, and not always in the best light. As Illinoisans, we should be proud of our state. From our heritage, our industry, our innovation and our people, we have been and continue to be a world leader.

For more than a decade, various groups ranging from economic developers to op-ed writers have sporadically worked on changing the negative messaging. They all believed it was time to take back our narrative and remind ourselves and others why Illinois is a remarkable place to call home, do business and visit. Unfortunately, past efforts have been fractured and ended when the volunteer enthusiasm dies.

That changed in late 2019 when Janet Mathis, Craig Coil, Jim Nowlan and David Dyer got together and engaged others from across the state in vetting and starting a new nonprofit that is, at its core, a positivity campaign. The purpose is to bring together Illinois citizens and groups ranging from regional planning organizations to YMCAs and electric utilities to farm bureaus in order to amplify recognition of Illinois' positive news.

Elevate Illinois (Elevate) was officially formed in 2020 as a 501(c)(3). Elevate is the apolitical, non-geographic-centric, all-encompassing place to share the myriad of positive stories that are happening across Illinois.

The launch of Elevate Illinois' website, blog and social media platforms occurred in January. The website ([elevateillinois.org](http://elevateillinois.org)) encourages grassroots sharing by citizens, organizations and others

of stories, videos and photos for use in future Elevate Illinois blogs and social media posts.

This effort is widely backed, including by Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives President/CEO Duane Noland. Other supporters include former Governor Jim Edgar, Group O founder Bob Ontiveros and former University of Illinois President Bob Easter.

Elevate Illinois' board of directors reflects the state's vast diversity. The eight members are from locations across the state from East Moline to Carbondale and Okawville to Decatur. The board includes four men and four women; three democrats, three republicans and two independents; racial and age diversity; and a variety of career and personal experiences.

To be successful, Elevate Illinois needs everyone to do the following:

1. Like and follow Elevate Illinois on Facebook at [facebook.com/ElevateIL](https://facebook.com/ElevateIL)
2. Follow Elevate Illinois on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/elevate-illinois](https://linkedin.com/company/elevate-illinois)
3. Follow Elevate Illinois on Twitter at [twitter.com/ElevateIllinois](https://twitter.com/ElevateIllinois)
4. Use #elevateillinois on your own positive social media posts about the state.
5. Go to [elevateillinois.org](http://elevateillinois.org) and submit your own stories, photos and videos to be shared on the site's blog and in Elevate Illinois social media posts.
6. Share this information with all of your social and other networks and ask them to do all of above.

We hope you'll join the movement. Together, we can Elevate Illinois. 💡



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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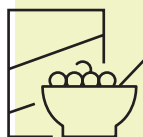
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## MARCH CHECKLIST

### March is National Nutrition Month.



Kick off the month by eating a healthy breakfast every day.

### Be kind to your eyes.

Schedule an annual exam and give your eyes periodic rests when working on computers.



### Dial it right.



The new 217 area code overlay began Feb. 27; don't forget to dial all 10 digits.

### Tip of the month.

Remember to change your CO and smoke alarm batteries when the clocks change on March 14.



## Lawson receives national scholarship

Bethanny Lawson, former youth tour alumna from EnerStar Electric Cooperative, Paris, was recently chosen as one of six recipients of the annual Glenn English National Cooperative Leadership Foundation Scholarship.

Lawson recently graduated from Waldorf University with a degree in business administration. She is currently working as a legislative correspondent for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. and applying to law schools for the 2021-22 school year.

"I decided on pursuing business and law after interning at the White House in the office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Policy Coordination," says Lawson. "I learned a lot about management, the American workforce, and the strengths and



weaknesses of our government. I caught the 'D.C. bug' in full force when I attended the 2018 Youth to Washington tour."💡



## Geothermal tax credit extended

A 26 percent federal tax credit for geothermal installations was extended for two more years. The extension was part of the federal government's \$900 million COVID relief package passed by Congress in December 2020.

The extension is good news for those considering the benefits of geothermal. It keeps the tax credit at 26 percent for residential geothermal for 2021 and 2022. The new law extends the credits for geothermal heat pump installations through 2023.

The residential credits are 26 percent through 2022 and step down to 22 percent in 2023, expiring on Jan. 1, 2024. Commercial credits remain at 10 percent through 2023.💡

Source: Federated Rural Electric Association

## Co-ops award grants to empower classrooms

Three electric cooperatives recently awarded more than \$30,000 combined to classrooms within their service territory to help improve the learning environment or increase educational resources.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Paxton, is in its fourth year awarding classroom grants through its Empowering Education Grant Program. This year, the co-op awarded a total of \$20,000 to 42 classrooms to help with needed funding for innovative school projects.

Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Waterloo, awarded \$500 Touchstone Energy Empowerment grants to 15 area schoolteachers. Some projects and resources included Chromebooks, live stream cameras, metronomes, LED microscopes, an art digital program and more.

Clinton County Electric Cooperative, Breese, awarded a total of \$3,000 to three area teachers through its Touchstone Energy Classroom Empowerment Grant Program. Germantown Elementary received \$1,500, \$1,000 to Wesclin High School and Mater Dei Catholic High School received \$500.💡





## 2021 insulin costs cap in Illinois

A newly-enacted law in Illinois changes the Illinois Insurance Code to cap out-of-pocket insulin costs at \$100 per month for all patients using a state regulated insurance plan. Sen. Andy Manar, D-Bunker Hill, was chief sponsor of the Senate bill and says the legislation shows that Illinoisans don't have to accept costly prescriptions.

"People spoke up and told their stories," said Manar. "That's why this legislation passed. It didn't become law without their effort."

The law applies regardless of the amount of insulin or type of covered prescription insulin drug used to fill the insured's prescription. The law orders the Illinois Departments of Insurance, Human Services, and Healthcare and Family Services to create a public insulin pricing report to control and prevent overpricing of insulin prescriptions.💡

Source: Illinois.gov

## FCC urged to vet rural broadband provider promises

A bipartisan group of 160 senators and House members is calling on the Federal Communications Commission to verify that broadband providers can truly give rural Americans the high-quality service they promised to deliver.

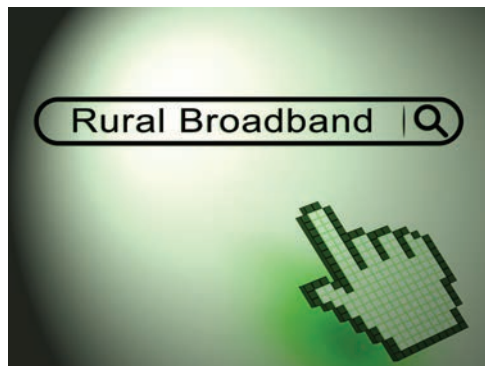
NRECA and NTCA – The Rural Broadband Association are worried that some companies that made winning bids during the first phase of the recent Rural Digital Opportunity Fund auction do not have the ability to carry out their ambitious plans.

In a letter sent Jan. 19 at the urging of the NRECA, lawmakers asked the commission to scrutinize the long-form applications that auction winners must now submit to the agency to validate that they have the technical, financial, managerial and operational skills and resources to perform as promised. Providers must submit the applications for approval to receive federal funds.

One of NRECA's concerns is that some companies won bids promising service they cannot deliver. For example, several companies said they could provide gigabit speeds using fixed wireless technology that is not widely available, said Kelly Wismer, NRECA's lobbyist on broadband issues.

"Many of the winning applicants claim they will deliver levels of service with certain technologies that are only achievable in extremely limited conditions and terrain – or still not commercially available," Wismer said. "At the end of the day, what's important to NRECA is that the broadband provider, whoever it is, can deliver on the promises they made so unserved Americans get access to high-speed internet."💡

Source: NRECA



## Get REAL

If you still don't have a REAL ID, the deadline set by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security is Oct. 1, 2021.

The REAL ID is a driver's license or state ID that is compliant with the REAL ID Act passed by Congress in 2005. The ID will be needed to fly domestically or visit military or other secure federal facilities.

You will need to visit a Secretary of State Driver Services Facility and provide several forms of acceptable documentation:

### A document identifying yourself.

Acceptable documents include a birth certificate, U.S. passport, Consular Report of Birth Abroad from the U.S. Department of State, a certificate of citizenship from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, certificate of a naturalization, employment authorization document, or a foreign passport with a valid U.S. visa.

**Proof of your Social Security number.** This can be in the form of a Social Security card or a W-2 or pay stub with the full number on it.

**Provide two current residency documents that includes your full name.** This could include a bank statement or canceled check dated within 90 days; a credit card statement; a school report card or certified transcript; a credit report from within the past 12 months; deed/title, mortgage or rental/lease agreement; insurance policy; medical claim or statement from a private or public insurance company dated within 90 days; pay stub; official mail from federal, state or county government; pension or retirement statement; official mail from a college or university within the past year; utility bill within past 90 days; or a voter registration card.

**Proof of signature.** Provide a credit/debit card, canceled check or current ID with your signature on it.

The driver's facility will give you a temporary paper ID when you leave. Watch your mail for your new ID to arrive within 15 business days.💡

Source: Illinois Secretary of State



Mow your Zoysia lawn once a month – or less! It rewards you with weed-free beauty all summer long.

# 7 Ways Our Amazoy™ Zoysia Lawn Saves You Time, Work and Money!

## 1 CUTS WATER BILLS AND MOWING BY AS MUCH AS 2/3

Would you believe a lawn could look perfect when watered just once? In Iowa, the state's biggest Men's Garden club picked a Zoysia lawn as "top lawn – nearly perfect." Yet, this lawn had been watered only once all summer to August!

In PA, Mrs. M.R. Mitter wrote, "I've never watered it, only when I put the plugs in...Last summer we had it mowed 2 times...When everybody's lawns here are brown from drought, ours stays as green as ever." *That's how Amazoy Zoysia lawns cut water bills and mowing! Now read on!*

## 2 NO NEED TO DIG UP OLD GRASS

Plant Amazoy your way in an old lawn or new ground. Set plugs into holes in the soil checkerboard style. Plugs spread to create a lush, thick lawn, driving out weeds and unwanted growth. Easy instructions included with every order.

## 3 ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY

No weeding means no costly chemicals. Since Amazoy Zoysia lawns naturally resist insects, you'll save money, while helping to protect the environment. You'll never have to expose your family and pets to the risk of weed killers and pesticide poisons.

## 4 FOR SLOPES, PLAY AREAS, BARE SPOTS AND PARTIAL SHADE

You can't beat Amazoy Zoysia as the low-cost answer for hard-to-cover spots, play-worn areas, places that have partial shade and erosion on slopes.

Meyer Zoysia Grass was perfected by the U.S. Gov't, released in cooperation with the U.S. Golf Association as a superior grass.

## 5 IT STAYS GREEN IN SPITE OF HEAT AND DROUGHT

"The hotter it gets, the better it grows!" Plug-in Zoysia thrives in blistering heat, yet it won't winter-kill to 30° below zero. It just goes off its green color after killing frosts, and begins regaining its green color as temperatures in the spring are consistently warm.



## 6 CHOKES OUT CRABGRASS AND WEEDS ALL SUMMER

Your established Amazoy Zoysia lawn grows so thick, it simply stops crabgrass and most summer weeds from germinating!

## 7 NOW 3 WAYS TO START YOUR AMAZOY ZOYSIA LAWN!

1) **Freestyle plugs** come in uncut sheets containing a maximum of 150 - 1" plugs that can be planted up to 1 ft. apart. Freestyle plugs allow you to make each plug bigger and plant further apart – less cutting and planting – you decide.

2) **New Super Plugs** come pre-cut into individual 3"x3" plugs ready-to-plant (minimum 1 per 4 sq. ft.). They arrive in easy to handle trays of 15 Super Plugs. Save more time and get your new lawn even faster!

3) **Amazoy Approved Seed-As** The Zoysia Specialists for 60+ years, we finally have a Zoysia seed available that meets our standards and homeowners expectations.

Learn why at [zoysiafarms.com/mag](http://zoysiafarms.com/mag) or by phone at 410-756-2311.

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**ORDER TODAY - GET UP TO 1000 FREESTYLE PLUGS - FREE!**

Freestyle Plugs You decide how big to cut the plugs. Each grass sheet can produce up to 150-1 in. plugs. Plant minimum 1 plug per sq. ft.					
Max Plugs	Free Plugs	Grass Sheets	Your PRICE	+ Shipping	SAVINGS
300	—	2	\$29.95	\$16.00	—
500	+100	4	\$50.00	\$18.00	25%
750	+150	6	\$66.00	\$22.00	36%
1100	+400	10	\$95.00	\$33.00	44%
2000	+1000	20	\$165.00	\$54.00	52%

Super Plugs Precut plugs 3 inches by 3 inches READY TO PLANT Packed in trays of 15 Super Plugs. Plant minimum 1 plug per 4 sq. ft.					
Super Plugs	Free Plugs	Tray	Your PRICE	+ Shipping	SAVINGS
15	—	1	\$24.95	\$12.00	—
60	+15	5	\$90.00	\$24.00	35%
95	+25	8	\$110.00	\$34.00	49%
120	+30	10	\$125.00	\$40.00	53%
180	+45	15	\$180.00	\$54.00	56%

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## DOE awards \$25 million to Prairie Research Institute

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has awarded \$25 million to a three-year project led by the Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois, that will design a next-generation power plant in Springfield. The innovative plant design combines multiple techniques to both reduce emissions and capture and re-use carbon dioxide.

The project (Front-End Engineering Design Study for Hybrid Gas Turbine and USC Coal Boiler (HGCC) Concept Plant with Post Combustion Carbon Capture and Energy Storage System at City Water, Light and Power) is part of DOE's Coal FIRST (Flexible, Innovative, Resilient, Small, Transformative) initiative, which aims to spur innovation in coal-fired plants. 💡

Source: Illinois Sustainable Technology Center

# ELECTRICAL Safety

for Teens



**DO NOT use generic chargers** or cords. They could **overheat** or shock or burn you.



**DO NOT** put your cell phone **under your pillow** or take it to bed with you.



**DO NOT** use charging cell phones or other electrical devices **with wet or damp hands**.



**DO NOT** bring a charging cell phone or other electrical devices **near water**, including a **bathtub or pool**.



If you are in a car accident involving a downed power line, **DO NOT get out of the vehicle** unless you see smoke or fire.

**If you must exit a burning vehicle** near or on a downed power line, make a **clean exit from the car** and **land on both feet**; then **hop** with feet together, **DO NOT WALK**, to safety.

Safe Electricity.org



For the latest currents news, go to [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop)



*According to a study by the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, 14 percent of American households that have curbside recycling pickup do not participate.*

## Can I recycle that?

Reasons to recycle are both environmental and financial, and the list of recycling rules is long and complicated. Master them by trying three types of thinking.

1. **Think like a sorter.** When your curbside bin gets emptied, it's taken to a materials recovery facility to be sorted. Think about items that might cause problems with sorting.
2. **Think local.** Find out who handles recycling in your community and ask for a list of what can be recycled.
3. **Think like an accountant.** You can help keep recycling costs low by following the most-wondered-about recycling rules.
  - **Mail.** With one exception, all mail can go in the bin. Staples and plastic windows get sorted out by the machinery. The exception is magazines wrapped in plastic—that kind of shrink wrap is better handled by supermarkets, which specialize in recycling bags and other plastic “stretch wrap” around food, paper towels and other products.
  - **Food containers.** Check with your recycler, you may not need to rinse out that empty peanut butter jar or cottage cheese container.
  - **Cardboard boxes.** The only reason to break them down is to save space in your bin. They will be crushed in the truck that picks them up.
  - **Plastic bottle caps.** Screw the lid back on, and recycle the bottle and cap.
  - **Labels.** You don't need to remove them.
  - **Plastic straws.** Can be recycled but tend to fall off the conveyor onto the floor, where they get swept up and hauled off to a normal landfill.

The point is to reduce the waste from your home into the world. First, reduce—if you don't really need to buy something, don't buy it. Second, reuse—bags and wrapping paper can have more than one life.

Remember, recycling helps our environment but can also reduce the cost of local waste management programs. 💡

Source: Paul Wesslund, NRECA

## Sudoku

by Myles Mellor and Susan Flanagan

Complete the grid so every row, column and 3x3 cube contains every digit from 1 to 9 inclusive with no repetition. Solution on page 37.

Level: Medium

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




## 2021 fishing and hunting licenses go on sale

Illinois fishing, hunting and sportsman combination licenses go on sale beginning March 1 and will be valid through March 31, 2022.

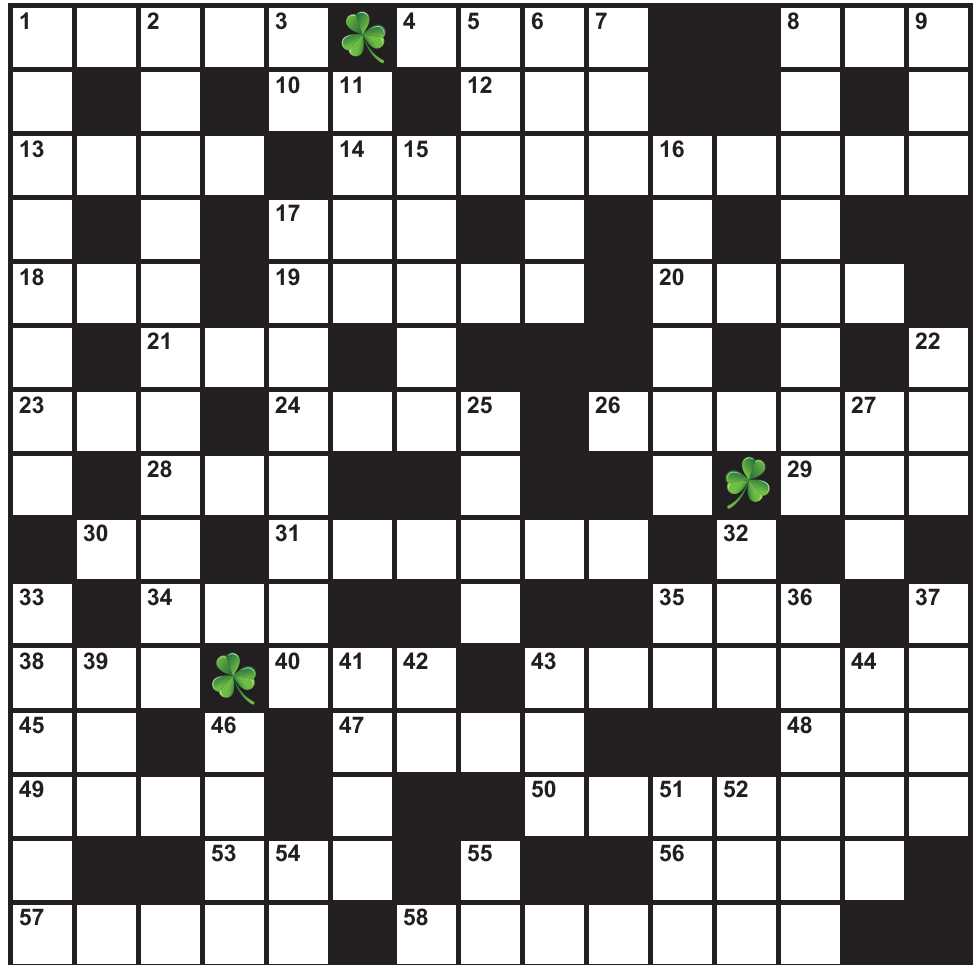
Visit [il.wildlifelicense.com](http://il.wildlifelicense.com) to apply online. 💡





**Illinois**  
Country Living

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



## ACROSS

1. St. Patrick's Day color
4. Old name for Ireland
8. Irish \_\_\_\_\_ (water body)
10. Let's \_\_\_\_\_ lunch!
12. Emerald is its birthstone
13. Spark
14. Irish mythical creature
17. Cocktail mix ingredient
18. Agreement to keep confidential, for short
19. "The Irish \_\_\_\_\_" popular song
20. Irish city
21. Shelter
23. Blue
24. Popular Irish singer who sang in "The Lord of the Rings"
26. Orange and apple

28. Tavern
29. Largo or West
30. High exam scores
31. "In \_\_\_\_\_'s fair city, where the maids are so pretty"
34. Green field
35. Fitness center
38. Yes, to the captain
40. "Tasty!"
43. Green fruit
45. Concerning
47. First word of an Angelina Jolie movie
48. Debate side
49. "Far and \_\_\_\_\_" movie based on Irish people's lives
50. City where the river is often colored green on St. Patrick's Day

53. "The Matrix" role
56. Grass eaters
57. Vote
58. Irish liqueur

## DOWN

1. Famous Irish beer
2. Ireland, of old (2 words)
3. Bismarck state, abbr.
5. Mischievous one
6. More unusual
7. Potato bud
8. Irish symbol
9. \_\_\_\_\_ Arbor
11. Spiced stew
15. Accredited messenger
16. Green spiky plant
17. "Nimrod" singers (2 words)
22. Gangnam style singer
25. Teammate

27. Sushi bar order
32. City where large numbers of Irish people came to escape the famine, abbr.
33. St. Patrick's Day procession
35. Approval
36. Parrots, sometimes green colored
37. Irish rock star
39. Hard wood
41. Band of 37 down
42. St Louis arch state
43. Disney network
44. Irish terriers, for example
46. Harmonize
51. Freezing surface
52. Shy
54. Friendly alien in film
55. Dad, in slang



Spend the spring season in Carbondale, Illinois and enjoy sipping wine along the **Shawnee Hills Wine Trail** and exploring the **Crab Orchard National Wildlife Refuge** on scenic hikes such as **Rocky Bluff Trail**. Peruse for fresh vinyl at local shops like **Plaza Records** and dine or drink at one of the many local bar or eateries' patios, such as **The Cellar** or **Longbranch Cafe**.

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## Remodel for efficiency and convenience

**Dear Jim:** After 25 years, we need a total kitchen remodel for more cooking and entertaining convenience and better efficiency. Do you have design tips for accomplishing these goals on a reasonable budget? - Kathy M.

**DEAR KATHY:** YOU WILL find that a more convenient kitchen design and new appliances also offer more

Before researching new kitchen appliances, first draw up a rough floor plan layout for your remodeled kitchen. The design flexibility will depend on your budget. For example, moving the sink can increase the plumbing expenses considerably.

If your budget allows you to move the sink, a location under

its efficiency, but try to avoid having it in direct sun. A white refrigerator will absorb much less heat from the sun than a stainless steel exterior. The refrigerator condenser coils need adequate air flow for efficiency, so do not surround it too closely by cabinets unless it is specifically designed for that application.

To lower costs, convert a ceiling recessed fixture to a decorative hanging pendant fixture with a DIY kit that uses a long wire that screws into the existing recessed light bulb socket. The length is adjustable by a circular cover that slides up against the ceiling, covering the recessed fixture. This provides more brightness and wider range than the old fixture.

A top-freezer refrigerator style is still the most efficient design. Newer materials and compressor designs have minimized the efficiency differences among the various styles, so don't feel too bad about selecting a design you find more convenient. Always compare the yellow energy labels and look for ENERGY STAR products.

Kitchen water usage is significant, so consider a dishwasher with an efficient two-pump design. This requires a smaller water reservoir. Install a convenient touch-control faucet with a long hose. This allows you to turn the water on and off with just the touch of a hand without having to waste water readjusting the temperature each time.

Select a multispeed range hood with LED lighting. Some have variable-speed controls to minimize excessive conditioned air loss from the house. Its size should be 50 cfm (cubic feet per minute) of air flow capacity for each lineal foot of stove top. The hood should be as wide as the stove and about two feet above it. 💡



The ENERGY STAR listed range hood is shallow to allow adequate height over the range when it is mounted under cabinets. Photo credit: Broan

efficiency. In addition to the energy and water used when cooking and entertaining, these activities produce a huge amount of heat and humidity. During summer, this can make your air conditioner run much longer, using more electricity and negatively impacting your comfort.

Since you are on a budget (as are most homeowners), you don't need high-end appliances to get adequate convenience and efficiency. Mid-level appliances have enough features to satisfy most needs instead of spending hundreds of dollars extra to get a feature you may use only once or twice a year.

A window is ideal with a recommendation of 60 inches of counter space. Split the space as closely as possible to 30 inches on each side. The window provides ventilation and efficient natural light.

The stove is best located distant from a window and direct drafts. A draft will transfer heat away from the cooking task and into the room air. This increases cooking times and the total amount of energy used. When using a typical four-element stove, a total of 36 inches of counter space around the stove should be adequate.

The location of the refrigerator is not extremely important for



Send inquiries to James Dulley, Illinois Country Living, 6906 Royalgreen Drive, Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com).



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All is still as the golden sun rises over the snowy wilderness. Then, a majestic buck steps into the clearing. His stance is powerful, his eyes and ears alert. Three more whitetails follow behind, their breath visible in the cold morning air, their backs warmed by the sun's early rays. Now you can experience nature's nobility up close with the breathtaking *Out of the Clearing Accent Light*, available only from The Bradford Exchange.

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# Home sweet, automated home

**HOME AUTOMATION HAS ALWAYS** piqued my interest. Over the last few years, I have added several smart devices to my home to take advantage of the conveniences they offer. As of today, I have added five

outdoor appearances. During Christmas, for example, I can have the porch and outdoor garage lights complement the Christmas decorations.

I arrive home and turn them off when I leave. My outdoor lights are scheduled to slowly turn on starting at sunset and automatically turn off at 10 p.m.

Having a forgetful teenager can be expensive. My son has a small space heater in his room that he consistently forgets to turn off. After installing a smart outlet, I can set it to turn off shortly after he leaves for school, which makes running the space heater less expensive and safer!

## Voice control

Initially, voice control was somewhat of a novelty. Today, “Alexa” is a household name. “Alexa, turn on the lights” has become a common phrase. Maybe we have just become lazy, but the ability to tell Alexa to turn off a device, dim the lights to a certain percentage, or change the color of a room without lifting a finger has proven to be convenient.

Buying a fancy color changing light bulb and installing it is simple. Unfortunately, the world of home automation is still being developed. If you are considering implementing home automation, you should know it is a journey. It will take time and significant effort to research the different devices, what is compatible and what is not.

To build an ecosystem of smart connected devices that all work together seamlessly and can be configured with one interface is difficult. There is simply not enough standardization yet to deploy a system easily and efficiently, especially if you are looking to have a system that operates without a third-party internet cloud provider that talks to all your devices. This is a real concern from a security/privacy perspective and should be considered when implementing home automation. 💡



Amazon Echo devices, a Nest smart thermostat, nine Phillips Hue light bulbs, eight Feit Wi-Fi light bulbs, six smart light switches, smart garage door openers, three smart electrical outlets and a home assistant server.

While this may seem like a lot of devices, in the ecosystem of a smart home including cameras, doorbells, door locks and appliances, it's really not much. If you add all the lights, electrical outlets, switches, etc. in your home, it can be overwhelming if you are looking to convert everything over. Here are a few things I can do with my smart home setup.

## Change the mood

Changing the colors to complement a birthday party or holiday is fun and adds to the festivities. Likewise, being able to change the color temperature and brightness can change both indoor and

## Control from anywhere

The ability to control everything while away from home was not one of my top priorities; however, it has proven to be convenient in several cases. Opening the garage doors remotely for a friend who needs to borrow something has become handy. Also, remotely managing the lights while on vacation so it appears someone is home adds a bit of security. When leaving for an extended time, we will lower the thermostat to conserve energy. Prior to retuning home, we can turn the thermostat back to our preferred temperature, so the house is comfy upon arrival.

## Set schedules/routines

In my opinion, setting schedules and routines brings home automation and smart devices to life. Based on my location via cell phone, I can turn the garage lights on when



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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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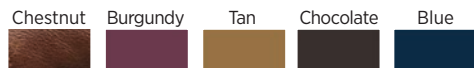
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## Spring planting

Sow seeds of safety this season

**FARMERS RETURNING TO THE** fields should stay particularly alert to the dangers of working near overhead power lines. Remember:

- Electricity can arc or “jump” from the line to equipment that’s too close. Keep equipment at least 10 feet from overhead lines.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting tractors on trailer beds.
- Designate preplanned routes that avoid hazard areas.
- Lower extensions like planter arms or cultivators to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path.
- Even if using an auto-guidance system, stay focused on equipment location while in the field. Do not simply rely on the GPS system and be ready to take action if needed.
- Consider using a spotter to alert you if you come close to making contact. A spotter can see sagging wires that would not be visible on a GPS and provide additional verification that you can pass safely.
- Before getting out of the cab, look up and double check the area around your machinery to make sure it is not in contact with overhead lines.
- Know how to stay safe if equipment does make contact with power lines!

Managers should make sure full-time and seasonal workers are educated on these and other electric safety precautions. Learn more about farm safety at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).💡





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## Favorite houseplants for home or office

**GROWING PLANTS INDOORS CAN** add a soft green touch, create a focal piece, or incorporate nature indoors, transforming any room. Houseplants vary greatly in color, texture, size and shape — there is something perfect for any spot.

The most important thing to consider when growing houseplants is placement for favorable

### ZZ plant

Architecturally beautiful, the ZZ plant (*Zamioculcas zamiifolia*) may be the toughest houseplant out there. It is often found in office greenery displays reaching 2 feet tall and wide. The glossy, dark green foliage is often so perfect that it almost looks fake. ZZ plants grow best in low to bright indirect light, but will also grow under fluorescent lighting. Water the plants when dry, but if you forget a week, it is forgiving.

One drawback is that all parts of the plant are poisonous, so keep it away from pets and children. Apply a balanced houseplant fertilizer once a month. The best method of propagation is division, but leaf cuttings can also produce new plants, they just take a long time to root. A unique variety of ZZ plant is Raven, which emerges bright green, then transforms into striking dark foliage.

Aglaonema are slow-growing plants, only reaching around 1 foot tall, so it will not need to be repotted for several years. Propagate by stem cuttings, taking new shoots with a minimum of five leaves. Favorite varieties include Emerald Bay for its foliage with dark green edges with a silver-gray center, and Georgi's Ruby, which has both dark and light green foliage plus deep pink variegation.

### Peperomia

With more than 1,000 varieties, each Peperomia (*Peperomia* sp.) has a unique look varying in leaf shape, texture, color and size. It prefers low to medium light from an east or north window and grows well under fluorescent lighting. Peperomia can be sensitive to overwatering, causing root rot, so make sure the soil slightly dries out between watering.

Peperomia is great for small spaces, as it only gets 6 to 12 inches tall. Few pests and diseases bother its thick, fleshy leaves. Propagate through division or leaf cuttings, and fertilize every two weeks during the growing season using half of the strength recommended on the label of a balanced houseplant fertilizer. Reduce to once a month in the winter.

Favorite peperomias include Jelly, with oval leaves outlined with pink and cream edges; Red Ripple, adorned with deeply textured purple, heart-shaped leaves; and Watermelon peperomia, which has dark green and silver patterned leaves. 💡



Peperomia

conditions: light, temperature and humidity. Don't be alarmed if you notice the leaves turning yellow or dropping after bringing it home. The plant is getting acclimated to its new growing environment. If it looks limp longer than three weeks, find a new spot to place your plant with more favorable conditions.

My three favorite houseplants, based on interest, availability and ease of care, are ZZ plant, Chinese evergreen and Peperomia.

### Chinese evergreen

Offering a gorgeous foliage display, the Chinese evergreen (*Aglaonema commutatum*) range from dark green and silver to hints of red. They are great for low light conditions near north or east-facing windows. However, the lighter the leaf color, the more light it will need. It prefers slightly moist soil, so don't let it dry out between watering. Fertilize aglaonema plants every four weeks with a balanced houseplant fertilizer. Reduce fertilization to every six weeks in the winter.



ZZ plant



**Brittnay 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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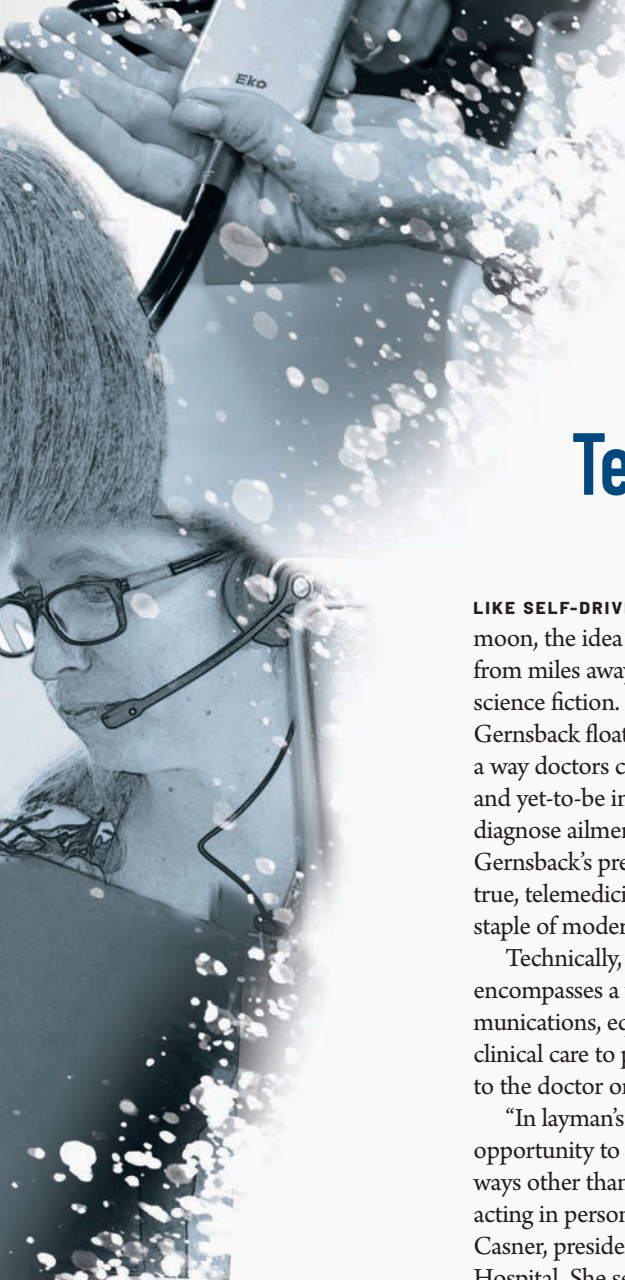
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# Only a callaway







# Telemedicine changes office visits

By Les O'Dell

**LIKE SELF-DRIVING CARS AND** colonies on the moon, the idea of physicians treating patients from miles away has long been considered science fiction. In 1925, inventor Hugo Gernsback floated the idea of the “teledactyl,” a way doctors could use remote controls and yet-to-be invented television imagery to diagnose ailments on distant patients. While Gernsback’s prediction is yet to be completely true, telemedicine has become both a reality and staple of modern health care.

Technically, the concept of telemedicine encompasses a wide range of electronic communications, equipment and software to provide clinical care to patients without an in-person visit to the doctor or specialist.

“In layman’s terms, telemedicine is the opportunity to connect with your provider in ways other than the traditional format of interacting in person at their office,” explains Trina Casner, president and CEO of Pana Community Hospital. She serves as president of the Illinois Critical Access Hospital Network and chairs the Illinois Telehealth Network. “Telemedicine expands the opportunity to have access, especially in rural areas, to specialty physicians whom otherwise would not be available locally.”

Robin Rose, chief operating officer and chief clinician of Gibson Area Hospital & Health Services in Ford County, says telemedicine is all about making medical care more readily available, ranging from a simple telephone call with a family physician to high-tech medical consultations from specialists and remote monitoring.

“One of the keys to health care and to maintain a good health care system is accessibility,” she explains. This includes if transportation isn’t available to visit the doctor or if there is inclement weather that prevents people from seeing their physician. “Telemedicine is definitely an answer to how we are able to provide care while dealing with these challenges.”

In each telemedicine application, most of which rely on cellular telephone signals or internet connections, health care providers must be certain that transmissions and patient information remain secure. With the exception of actual procedures and surgeries, many medical visits can be completed remotely through telemedicine. In some cases, telemedicine appointments are simply a telephone or video conference call between a patient and his or her physician, but the technology can be utilized in a variety of ways.

Heather Ruhe, system director for telehealth and virtual care at SIH, a three-hospital system which serves 16 southern Illinois counties, says telemedicine often works with a hub-and-spoke model where outlying health centers and clinics are provided with telemedicine equipment which connects to the larger “hub” locations.

“Using a stroke as an example, you have the stroke-certified neurologists at the SIH Brain and Spine Institute which is the hub that provides specialty expertise to the emergency rooms of eight total hospitals – those are the spokes,” she explains. Ruhe says in some cases the SIH locations also serve as the spoke, helping to connect patients with highly specialized medical providers at other locations, such as St. Louis Children’s Hospital.

“We are in a health provider-shortage area and have limited access to certain specialties. If we want to provide access to sub-specialties that our communities need in these situations, we must be prepared to facilitate the delivery of this clinical care virtually,” she says.

The technology has allowed rural health care centers to better serve their patients.

“Telemedicine has allowed small hospitals with intensive care units to work with more highly-specialized or tertiary care centers to monitor patients and provide support,” explains Pat Schou, executive director of the Illinois Critical Access Hospital





PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID CROSSETT, OSF HEALTHCARE

Team members with the Acute COVID at Home program perform twice-daily touchpoints and symptom checks with patients testing positive for COVID-19, enabling them to recover at home.



**Telemedicine simply provides greater access to more providers.**

Network as well as the Illinois Rural Community Care Organization. “It opens the door for rural communities to keep patients more local because they can access specialists and the patient may not have to be transported.”

Julie Casper agrees. As coordinator of the Illinois Dept. of Public Health’s Center for Rural Health, she understands the importance of providing rural residents access to care. “It is critically important to keep patients close to home not only for their care, but to be close to family,” she says. “They don’t have to take time off of work or find transportation or childcare. It also helps keep the no-show rates down for providers.”

She continues, “Instead of trying to decide whether to drive 30 miles to see a dermatologist, a patient can just take a half hour over their lunch break to be seen and then go back to work. It takes a lot of pressure off of the patient.”

Even the inspection of skin abnormalities can be done remotely, explains Casper. “A dermatologist can zoom in on a mole and analyze it right away,” she says. “Many of these specialties, which are not available in rural areas, can be done with telemedicine. With a camera, a provider can let the patient know if it’s something that needs to be seen in person. Telemedicine simply provides greater access to more providers.”

Rose explains that in some cases a patient can visit a rural health clinic or office in their own community and be seen by a nurse or other provider in person as well as a physician who “dials in” from another location.

“Everything is like a regular visit,” she says. “You can have a discussion with your physician just like you’re both in the office.”

Telemedicine is not only more convenient, it can also save lives. Using the example of a stroke in a rural part of southern Illinois again, Ruhe shares a scenario:

“Imagine if a person presents with the signs and symptoms of a stroke at a rural hospital. That hospital immediately activates a ‘Code Stroke’ page to our system, which is answered by an on-call neurologist. The doctor receives a summation of the signs and symptoms and then determines if the case is appropriate for a telehealth consult. If that is the case, the hospital would already have a telehealth cart in the room. The doctor would use a laptop computer he carries with him for this purpose to dial in to the cart. He’s connected within 10 seconds and he’s able to get audio, video and data from the other equipment in the room.”

Ruhe continues, “The doctor can control the camera in the emergency department with a computer mouse and talk with the medical

team and patient. This allows for immediate care. Without it, the patient would have had to be transported to another facility for evaluation and care, taking 45 minutes or an hour. With stroke, every minute is critical.”

At long-term care facilities, telemedicine also can be beneficial.

“In nursing homes or skilled care units, one of the first considerations with a patient who is not feeling well is to transfer them to a hospital. If we can do virtual visits, it might be possible to eliminate moving them five or 10 miles to the hospital emergency department and then transported back again in 2 hours. It’s more efficient and better for the patient,” Schou says.

Telemedicine also has some unintended benefits including giving doctors insight into their patients’ lives.

“Maybe there’s a patient who probably spends a lot of time in her favorite chair in her family room,” explains Charles James Jr., president-elect of the Illinois Rural Health Association. “When you make a video connection with her in that chair, providers get a lot of clues about her living environment from being able to see her in her home. They get a lot of really important socio-economic diagnostic indicators and that’s something they wouldn’t get in person; things like ‘Do they have a secure environment?’ and ‘How ambulatory is my patient?’ Things like that.”

Even non-face-to-face health monitoring can be done remotely. Health care systems can provide patients with a variety of devices ranging from scales to pulse oximeters and heart monitors and blood glucose meters, all of which send data to the physician’s office.

“All of these things can be shared by the patient without having to visit the doctor’s office,” Casner says. “It really can improve quality of life.”

If a pandemic can have a plus side, the adoption of telemedicine is it. The COVID-19 public health emergency has expanded the adoption of telemedicine initiatives, changed

the way providers are paid for practicing medicine remotely and made the public more comfortable with telemedicine.

The use of telemedicine grew exponentially because of the pandemic, with remote visits becoming the norm for many patients and their medical providers. A federal report found that nearly half of all Medicare primary care visits in Illinois during April 2020 were provided through telemedicine as opposed to less than 1 percent before the public health emergency. Even as some in-person visits have resumed, telemedicine still accounts for nearly one-fifth of all interactions with physicians.

“Overnight, COVID changed the urgency of adoption because all of a sudden, we found out that this was our only way to see patients,” James explains. “It really has magnified the value of telemedicine.”

Since the inception of telehealth, many insurance reimbursement programs including Medicaid did not pay providers for telehealth visits or didn’t pay as much as they did for







PHOTO COURTESY OF ROSSLIND RICE, SIH

Andrea Nicolaidis RN BSN, an ICU charge nurse at SIH Memorial Hospital of Carbondale discusses an EKO Bluetooth stethoscope with hospitalist Dr. Sonal Shah. Equipment such as this stethoscope are key to telemedicine consultations.



**Telemedicine will not replace traditional medicine, but it will enhance it.**

in-person visits. That changed with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, when telehealth was about the only way for patients to see their doctors. During this time, many of the reimbursement discrepancies were eliminated and there are efforts underway to make these changes permanent.

Casner says the pandemic forced many health care providers to quickly move to virtual visits and expand their telemedicine programs. Ruhe says the situation sped up her system's telehealth efforts, completing a three-year plan in just 12 months.

It also has brought to life one problem – the lack of high-speed internet access in many areas.

“The number one challenge we have is broadband,” James says. “There are still patients in some rural areas that do not have access to a computer or broadband internet access at home.”

That's one of the reasons groups like the Illinois Rural Health Network and the Illinois Telehealth Network are spearheading efforts to

increase broadband internet access throughout the state.

“We need that sort of infrastructure to medical facilities and even into homes so this can all happen,” Casner adds.

James agrees. “As the future unfolds, what we hope to do is utilize all of these mechanisms to keep in contact with our patients, especially for follow-up visits with the goal of keeping them out of the hospital,” James says. “I think the takeaway is there is no going back. Telemedicine is a really important tool to care for our patients and to help them live healthy lives. It is the new normal.”

Although telemedicine's time has come, Gernsback's vision of a teledactyl may never come to reality. There will still be times a visit to the clinic, doctor's office or hospital will be necessary, but perhaps they won't be as frequent.

“There are just certain things we can't do with telemedicine,” says Casner. “Telemedicine will not replace traditional medicine, but it will enhance it.”💡



# Small town mentality

*Barriers to mental health in rural areas*

*By Les O'Dell*

**GROWING UP IN CENTRAL** Iowa, Josie Rudolphi remembers the stress and anxiety she would see in the faces of her father and other farmers. The worries and concerns made an impact on her – so much so that she pursued an interest in helping others in rural areas with mental well-being.

Rudolphi, now an assistant professor of agricultural and biological engineering who specializes in farm safety and mental health at the University of Illinois, says emotional and behavioral wellness is a key component of being well – just as much as how we feel physically.

She says people often associate the phrase “mental health” with mental illness or psychological conditions, but in reality, mental well-being reaches across a gamut of ways we think and feel about ourselves and our world. It includes emotions ranging from contentment and happiness to daily concerns and depression.

“We really have to care about mental health because there are interactions between our mental

and physical health. It is a quality of life issue,” Rudolphi says.

Luke Raymond, director of behavior health at Peoria-based OSF HealthCare Systems which has facilities across the state from Rockford to Alton, says there is an undeniable relationship between physical and mental health.

“Mental health is our overall sense of how we’re doing mentally, emotionally, spiritually and behaviorally,” he explains. “There is a correlation between positive mental health and other positive health outcomes. We know from decades of research that the more mentally well and emotionally stable we are, the better all our other health conditions are as well. Of course, the inverse is true, too. It all goes hand-in-hand with our physical health.”

Unfortunately, the understanding and approach to mental well-being seems different in rural areas as opposed to more urban settings.

“We acknowledge that for us in rural areas, there are some barriers to talking about mental health and





big barriers to accessing professional mental health care,” Rudolphi explains.

Experts refer to many of these barriers as the four A’s, outlines Mary Garrison, a professor of social work at Millikin University in Decatur who has done extensive work on mental health issues in rural areas.

“When we look at mental health in rural areas and the challenges, we talk about availability, affordability, accessibility and acceptability,” Garrison says.

### Availability

“There simply are not enough providers,” Garrison says. “There’s nowhere to see a counselor, therapist or other mental health provider.”

In fact, a study by Merritt Hawkins, a national physician recruitment firm, shows that Illinois has less than nine psychiatrists for every 100,000 residents, and most of those providers are in urban parts of the state. Put another way, 38 percent of Illinoisans – nearly 4.9 million people – live in areas with a shortage of mental health professionals. The most prominent shortages are in rural areas.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that nearly 94 percent of Illinois’ rural hospitals are designated as mental health shortage areas, and 81 of the state’s 102 counties are without a child or adolescent psychiatrist.

### Affordability

“We know there are people who are underinsured,” Rudolphi explains. “That makes for questions of ‘Will my insurance cover this?’ and ‘How much am I going to have



***There are less than nine psychiatrists for every 100,000 residents in Illinois.***

to pay out of pocket?’ Many insurance plans don’t cover things like mental health services.

“There are a lot of financial and insurance barriers,” she says. “There’s also issues with reimbursement costs [payments from insurance carriers to providers]. That’s across all areas, but specifically in rural settings.”

### Accessibility

Rudolphi says, “One of the big questions for people is, ‘Is there even a clinic in my town? Is there a clinic in my county or am I going to have to drive to Chicago,

Springfield, Carbondale or somewhere much larger to get the kind of services I need?’ Another issue with accessibility is getting an appointment. Even in areas where there are mental health services, it can be a three-month wait for an appointment. Sometimes the people who need attention and care immediately can’t get it. Our fear is that three months is too late.”

When services are not available locally, transportation and time become factors as well.

“When people are living in small towns and they have to drive somewhere else to get the services, that can be really challenging,” Garrison points out. “There are questions like, ‘How do we get there?’ and ‘How do we overcome transportation barriers?’ Even if there are services, sometimes people can’t get to them.”

Those working in production agriculture may have even greater accessibility issues.

“Farmers, for example, are not interested in driving an hour each way for an appointment. Depending on what the weather is or what season it is, they may have difficulty keeping an appointment,” Rudolphi adds.

### Acceptance

Perhaps the biggest barrier to improving mental well-being in rural areas of Illinois is the perception of mental health services – or rather, the perception of seeking help with mental health issues.

“The thing that is particularly relevant in farm and rural communities is a stigma,” says Raymond. “The idea of seeking or receiving mental health services is still sort of taboo in those regions.”

He says the “pull yourself up by the bootstraps” mentality of rural families, the inherent isolation or living in the country and competitive temperament of farmers all contributes to a reluctance to seeking assistance. Garrison says the “everybody knows everybody” nature of small town living also has an impact.

“These are close-knit communities,” she explains. “If someone goes to see Mary the social worker, others are going to see their car outside and they are going to know what they’re doing. That doesn’t happen as much in urban areas, but in rural areas that can keep people from seeking help.”

Mental health experts and rural leaders are working together to overcome the barriers. Rural health associations are working to bring more services to rural communities. With the expansion of telehealth solutions, access to social workers, counselors and other mental health professionals is increasing. New telephone hotlines are available to people reaching out for help and efforts are underway to help those “on the ground” – lenders, veterinarians, pastors, extension agents, farm bureau leaders, emergency medical technicians and others – to recognize mental health struggles and encourage others to seek out assistance.

“We have to increase awareness and get the conversation started,” Garrison says.

Raymond adds, “We’re reducing the stigma. It’s all about education and understanding that mental health problems are the same as any other health problem we may have. It’s not a reflection of weakness; it’s not a reflection of being able to handle a problem. It’s OK to get help.”



**81 of Illinois’ 102 counties do not have a child or adolescent psychiatrist.**

## RESOURCES

### HAVE QUESTIONS? NEED TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

There are resources available to help rural Illinois with mental well-being concerns.

### NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINE

(800) 954-6246 or text “NAMI” to 741741

### AVERA FARM AND RURAL STRESS HOTLINE

(800) 691-4336

### FARM FAMILY RESOURCE INITIATIVE

(833) FARM-SOS







Grilled pork tenderloin sandwich, the house specialty

## The Dirty Bird Bar and Grill

By Valerie Cheatham

**EAST OF CARTHAGE ON** US Highway 136 lies a spot that locals have come to love – The Dirty Bird Bar and Grill. Its moniker is derived from a nickname used by patrons of the former Peacock Inn.

According to Kyle Kirby, Dirty Bird owner and Western Illinois Electrical Coop. member, the Peacock was a popular spot for locals, and everyone was disappointed when it closed. As luck would have it, the former restaurant went up for sale the same time Kirby was looking for the next step in his career.

“It was always my goal to own a restaurant or bar,” says Kirby. “Being from a small community, it’s always meant a lot to me to keep stuff like that going. I know people were excited to see someone turn it back into a restaurant.”

Kirby previously worked as an assistant manager and general manager at another restaurant. He says he has always wanted to own a restaurant and felt ready for the challenge when the establishment went on the market.

He closed on the property in February 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic closed everything. Kirby looks at it as a blessing in disguise.

“I think if it wasn’t that I couldn’t open, I would have rushed the opening and not gotten everything done like I wanted it,” he explains. “Not being able to open worked to my benefit. I was more intentional and had extra months to perfect it.”

Kirby credits the local lumber yard for helping him get things done to his specifications, and the community helped as well. The additional time also gave him the opportunity to better train his four cooks and four servers.

The Dirty Bird is known for its pork tenderloin sandwiches (fried or grilled), which Kirby sources from Farmhouse Meats in Carthage. Other popular menu items include the burgers and chicken strips. Everything is made from scratch, including the pickles. They hand bread everything, including the fried mozzarella sticks, onion rings, pickles and mushrooms.







Owner Kyle Kirby



Hand breaded onion rings



Chicken strips tossed in teriyaki sauce

Thanks to popular demand, wraps were recently added to the menu. They come in six varieties – crispy or grilled chicken, fish and pork, or the Fresh Wrap, a vegetarian option that includes sliced eggs and a variety of vegetables and a dressing of choice. The Hangover Wrap of ground beef, scrambled eggs, bacon, cheese and tomato is served with homemade cheese sauce.

The cheese sauce is also featured on the horseshoe as well as the Birds Nest, a mound of homemade chips topped with a choice of meat and lettuce, tomatoes and jalapenos.

For those who love chicken strips, a word of warning – these are not the small ones found at your favorite fast-food restaurants. Each strip is the size of half a chicken breast and come in orders of two or three, naked or tossed in barbecue, Buffalo, sweet chili, garlic parmesan or teriyaki sauce.

If you can find room for dessert, The Dirty Bird offers fried cookie dough and the Brownie Delight, a warm brownie topped with vanilla ice cream, chocolate and caramel sauce.

Kirby says he has been blessed to have so much local support during COVID-19. “We are fortunate our business has stayed pretty strong. Folks have really reached out and purchased gift cards, hoodies and t-shirts and we did a lot of takeout business when the inside seating was closed.”

He has plans to put in a sand volleyball court and schedule live music for the outdoor pavilion as the weather warms up. “It’s nice to have people outside. They can spread out a little more and use the patio or come hang out inside if the music or noise is too much for them.

Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights are busy, so plan accordingly. It is open seven days a week for lunch and dinner but close from 1:30-4 p.m. on Monday and Tuesday when it is the slowest. Watch Facebook for daily specials. 💡

## LET'S EAT!

### The Dirty Bird Bar and Grill

2139 US Highway 136,  
Carthage, IL

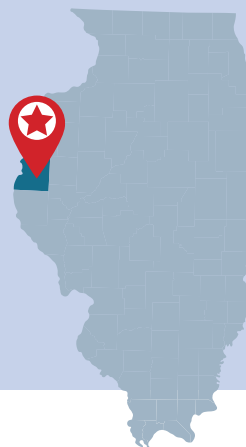
facebook.com/The-Dirty-Bird-  
Bar-and-Grill-103626857901312

#### CURRENT HOURS:

Mon.-Tues. 11 a.m.-1:30 p.m.  
and 4 p.m.-midnight

Weds.-Sun. 11 a.m.-midnight

Major credit cards accepted.



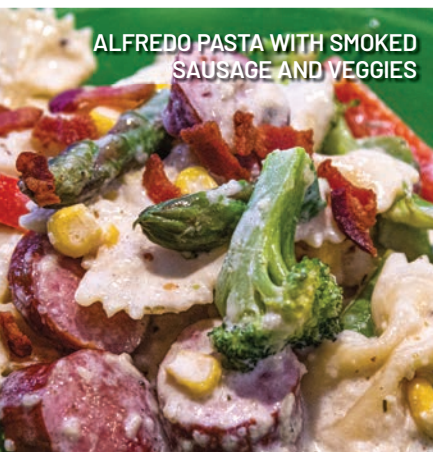
#### Warm Brownie Delight





## Mamma Mia!

**PASTA.** LINGUINE, SPAGHETTI, ANGEL hair, ditalini, rigatoni, penne and the list goes on. It's a favorite of young and old alike, whether it's smothered in sauce, stuffed or layered. It is versatile and can be as simple as topping it with a bit of olive oil and Parmesan or making homemade Bolognese sauce. 💡



ALFREDO PASTA WITH SMOKED SAUSAGE AND VEGGIES

### WE NEED RECIPES!

#### Upcoming monthly topics

Cobblers & crisps

Milkshakes & smoothies

Lemon

Please email submissions to [finestcooking@icl.coop](mailto: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](http://icl.coop/finestcooking).



Recipes prepared, tasted and photographed by Illinois Country Living staff. For more recipes and photos go to [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop). Questions? Email [finestcooking@aiec.coop](mailto:finestcooking@aiec.coop).

Visit [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop) to see more Illinois Country Living recipes.



## Chicken Lasagna

Submitted by: Sheryl Dietz, Egyptian Electric Cooperative

Servings: 8

- |                            |                                   |                                                      |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 1/2 cup margarine          | 3 cups cubed chicken              | 1/4 pound mozzarella cheese, shredded                |
| 1/2 cup all-purpose flour  | 2 cups cottage cheese             | 10 ounces frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt          | 1 egg, slightly beaten            |                                                      |
| 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano | 1/2 pound lasagna noodles, cooked |                                                      |
| 3 cups chicken broth       | 1/4 cup Parmesan cheese, grated   |                                                      |

Preheat oven to 375 F. Melt margarine in medium saucepan. Blend in flour, salt and oregano. Stir in broth. Cook until thick and boiling. Remove from heat and add chicken. Lightly grease 9x13-inch pan. In medium bowl, combine cottage cheese and beaten egg. Pour 1/3 chicken mixture on bottom. Top with half of noodles, half of cottage cheese mixture, half of spinach and sprinkle with 1/3 of mozzarella. Repeat steps. Top with final third of chicken mixture, then top with remaining mozzarella and grated Parmesan. Bake for 45 minutes. Nutrition information: 433 calories; 19.8g fat; 1015mg sodium; 26.2g carbohydrates; 37g protein.

## Alfredo Pasta with Smoked Sausage and Veggies

Submitted by: Christina Goolsby, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Servings: 4

- |                                                                                         |                                                                                                              |                                       |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 tablespoon olive oil                                                                  | Vegetables of your choice - blanched broccoli or cauliflower, cooked carrots, canned green beans, corn, etc. | 2 teaspoons garlic, minced            |
| 1 16-ounce package skinless smoked sausage, sliced                                      |                                                                                                              | 1/2 teaspoon Italian seasoning        |
| 4-5 slices bacon, cooked and chopped                                                    | 1/4 cup honey, optional                                                                                      | 1/2 teaspoon salt                     |
| 1/2 cup onion, chopped                                                                  | <b>Alfredo sauce:</b>                                                                                        | 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper      |
| 2 cups dry pasta (rotini, shells, bowtie, elbow) cooked according to package directions | 1/2 cup butter                                                                                               | 2 cups freshly grated Parmesan cheese |
|                                                                                         | 1-1/2 cups heavy whipping cream                                                                              |                                       |

Cook pasta and drain. In large, deep skillet, add olive oil. Over medium heat, add smoked sausage slices and lightly brown. Add vegetables of choice, cover with lid, stirring occasionally. To make Alfredo sauce, add butter and cream to large skillet. Simmer over low heat for 2 minutes. Whisk in garlic and seasonings, and cook for one minute. Whisk in Parmesan cheese and cook until melted. Mix Alfredo sauce with pasta and add to skillet with sausage and vegetables. Stir and cover for 2 minutes. If desired, add honey. Sprinkle with bacon and serve with garlic bread. Nutrition information: 1370 calories; 82.8g fat; 2957mg sodium; 104.9g carbohydrates; 54.2g protein.





CHICKEN LASAGNA

## Stuffed Shells

Submitted by: Sue Hubbard, Jo Carroll Energy, Inc.

Servings: 6

- 1 pound jumbo pasta shells
- 1 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- 8 ounces Italian sausage
- 8 ounces cottage cheese, small curd, drained
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 cup grated cheese, Parmesan or Romano
- Salt and black pepper, fresh ground, to taste
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 egg, beaten
- 2 cups spaghetti sauce
- 2 cups coarsely grated Swiss or mozzarella cheese

Preheat oven to 350 F. In large pot of water, boil pasta until firm but tender. Rinse in cold water and drain. Sauté the sausage and break into small pieces. Add drained spinach, cottage cheese, garlic, lemon juice, grated cheese, salt, pepper and oregano. Stir in beaten egg. Stuff shells with mixture and place in a greased baking dish. Top with spaghetti sauce and then remaining cheese. Bake until hot and cheese is melted, about 20 minutes. Serve with a crisp green salad and bread. Nutrition information: 793 calories; 19.3g fat; 836mg sodium; 119.1g carbohydrates; 39.7g protein.



STUFFED SHELLS

## Chicken and Noodle Casserole

Submitted by: Sherry Reuter, Egyptian Electric Cooperative

Servings: 6

- |                                             |                                       |                                |
|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts, diced | 1 tablespoon green pepper, diced      | 1 cup milk                     |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil                     | 1 can cream of mushroom soup          | 1 cup chicken broth            |
| 2 cups dry macaroni                         | 1 small can sliced mushrooms, drained | 1 cup shredded Velveeta cheese |
| 1 tablespoon onion, chopped                 |                                       |                                |

In skillet, heat olive oil and season chicken with salt and pepper. Add to skillet and brown. Grease a 9x9-inch pan and place dry macaroni on bottom. Top with cooked chicken. Sprinkle with onion and green pepper. In medium bowl, combine soup, milk, chicken broth and mushrooms and pour over chicken. Put shredded Velveeta on top. Cover with foil and leave overnight in refrigerator. Preheat oven to 350 F. Bake casserole for 1 hour 15 minutes. Nutrition information: 705 calories; 22.5g fat; 1208mg sodium; 29.9g carbohydrates; 92.8g protein.



CHICKEN CANNELLONI WITH ROASTED RED PEPPER SAUCE

## Chicken Cannelloni with Roasted Red Pepper Sauce

Submitted by: Brenda Epplin, Egyptian Electric Cooperative

Servings: 12

- 1 8-ounce package cannelloni shells
- 4 cups finely chopped cooked chicken
- 2 8-ounce containers chive and onion low fat cream cheese
- 1 10-ounce frozen chopped spinach, thawed and well drained
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 cup Italian seasoned breadcrumbs
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper

### Sauce:

- 2 7-ounce jars roasted red bell peppers, drained and processed in blender
- 1 16-ounce jar light creamy Alfredo sauce
- 1 3-ounce package shredded low fat Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 350 F. Blend together sauce ingredients and set aside. Cook pasta according to package directions; drain. Stir together chicken and next six ingredients. If not using large shells, cut pasta shells lengthwise through the side. Spoon about 1/4 to 1/2 cup chicken mixture into each shell, gently pressing cut sides together. Place filled side down in two lightly greased 11x7-inch baking dishes. Pour roasted red pepper sauce evenly over pasta. Bake uncovered for 25-30 minutes. Editor's note: cannelloni shells were unavailable at the time, so we substituted with manicotti shells. Nutrition information: 272 calories; 14g fat; 720mg sodium; 12.9g carbohydrates; 23.5g protein.



## Name the bunches of critters

**IN RESEARCHING AN ARTICLE** on eagles, I remembered a group of them was not technically called a flock. So, I researched the proper English terms for collective groups of animals, and sure enough ... a group of eagles is known as a convocation!

Some of the English naming of collective animal groups goes back hundreds of years, and some make little sense in today's world.

of cats are known as a clowder or a glaring. Kittens should be referred to as a litter or a kindle unless they are wild cats, then they should be referred to as a destruction, which somehow seems appropriate.

A slithering mass of cobras is known as a quiver. (Makes me quiver!)

A group of crocodiles is known as a bask. That makes sense as I have seen basking crocodiles on TV

a herd or a gang but, a business of ferrets or a cast of falcons?

A school of fish, I understand, and maybe a stand of flamingos.

Old timers sometimes call a bunch of a geese a gaggle, but why are a group of fox a charm?

I've been on many a night's gigging foray, but I have never heard my outdoor associates refer to a bunch of frogs as an army.

A band of gorillas is fine, and probably would be descriptive of chimps as well. I can see a group of giraffes being referred to as a tower because of their height. But whoever came up with collective names for many African critters was a little sketchy! Who would know a bloat is a group of hippos?

Hyenas are a cackle, jaguars a shadow, and it's a leap of leopards.

Pride of lions makes sense, but a conspiracy of lemurs and a labor of moles? My wife has been doing a lot of laboring in our yard and garden leveling out mole mounds, but at the supper table, I'm not mentioning the irony of the collective term.

What about a pandemonium of parrots?

A prickle of porcupines I can understand.

Edgar Allen Poe would be on board with the label given a group of ravens as an unkindness.

A group of owls a parliament, which makes sense as most governing bodies are a group of bird brains. While I have heard a group of apes referred to as a congress, they are officially listed as a shrewdness, but I'm not going to go there. 💡

All my life, I have called a group of buffalo a herd. Wrong. In proper terminology, they are known as a gang or obstinacy. I don't want to be obstinate, but if the buffalo being described are North American, they are actually bison.

Some groups like bees (swarm) and bats (colony) I knew off hand. But, when referring to a group of bears, one should say a sloth or a sleuth.

Camels are naturally called a caravan, and who would know a group

sunning themselves on the riverbanks in Africa. I assume the term would also apply to alligators, but they didn't make the list.

Dogs are a pack and puppies a litter, but who came up with drove for a group of donkeys? I know someone who holds the reins and guides a team pulling a wagon is sometimes called a drover. But, it sounds pretty nonsensical to say, "the drover drove a drove."

For elephants, it sounds right to call them a parade. Elk are naturally



Jack Spaulding is an outdoors writer. Readers can contact the author by writing to this publication or email [jackspaulding@hughes.net](mailto:jackspaulding@hughes.net). "The Best of Spaulding Outdoors," a compilation of 74 of Spaulding's best articles written over the past 30 years is available on Amazon.com.





# SECRETS OF A BILLIONAIRE REVEALED

*"Price is what you pay; value is what you get.  
Whether we're talking about socks or stocks, I like  
buying quality merchandise when it is marked down."*

— wisdom from the most successful investor of all time

We're going to let you in on a secret. Billionaires have billions because they know value is not increased by an inflated price. They avoid big name markups, and aren't swayed by flashy advertising. When you look on their wrist you'll find a classic timepiece, not a cry for attention— because they know true value comes from keeping more money in their pocket.

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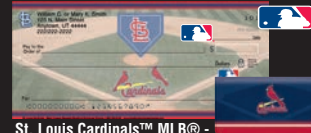
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Leather Cover and Labels - 00469



Lena Liu's Morning  
Serenade - 00029 Leather  
Cover and Labels - 00029



A Walk on the Beach -  
01020 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 01020



Faith, Hope, Christ -  
00633 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00633



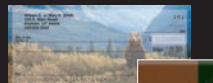
Sunflowers - 00334  
Leather Cover and  
Labels - 00334



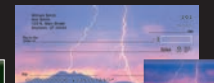
Classic Peanuts -  
00708 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00708



Spirit of the  
Wilderness - 00024  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00024



Great Outdoors -  
00552 Leather Cover  
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00178 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00178



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00052 Leather Cover  
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North American  
Wildlife - 00876  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00876



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



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



Beach Escapes - 00743  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00743



Nurses Rule! - 00542  
Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00542



Glitter Sparkles -  
01327 Fabric Cover  
and Labels - 01327



Thomas Kinkadee'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 Purrr 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

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**2 Check Options**

✓ Check the items you wish to order and enter the price in the spaces provided.  
Only ONE check design per order.

SINGLE TOP TEAR CHECKS		DUPLICATE TOP TEAR CHECKS	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Pack	\$6.99	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Pack	\$8.49
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Packs	<del>\$13.98</del> \$6.99	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Packs	<del>\$16.98</del> \$8.49
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Packs	<del>\$27.96</del> \$13.98	<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Packs	<del>\$33.96</del> \$16.98
2nd & 4th pack FREE		2nd & 4th pack FREE	

Check Design \_\_\_\_\_ Start Checks at # \_\_\_\_\_  
\*If no check start number is specified, 1001 will be used.

Enter Check price from chart above \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Distinctive Lettering ~~\$2.50 each~~  Cordial  Grand  Script  English **FREE**

Matching Cover Code No. \_\_\_\_\_ add \$19.99 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Matching Labels Code No. \_\_\_\_\_ (If name and address other than checks, please enclose separate paper) \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Add \$6.99 for DESIGNER ▲ Labels  
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**3 Shipping & Handling**

REQUIRED SERVICE/HANDLING \$2.95 x # of Packs/Items = \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **Required**

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IN-PLANT RUSH (checks only) Saves 1-3 Days (070) \$5.99 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Untrackable delivery: Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery. All items shipped separately. Delivery to Alaska and Hawaii may take longer. **FREE**

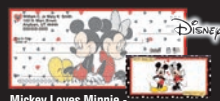
Offer Code: **22497XCH** SUBTOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Add your sales tax \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_



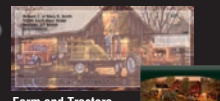
Words of Faith w/verse  
"With God all things are possible." - 00551  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00551



Cowboy Boots - 00434  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00434



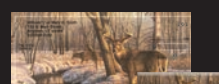
Mickey Loves Minnie -  
00422 Leather Cover and Labels - 00422  
Celebrating 90 Years of Mickey Magic!



Farm and Tractors -  
00785 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00785



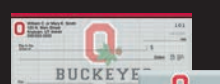
Black & White -  
01393 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 01393



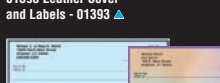
Winter Calm - 00017  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00017



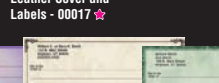
Nightmare Before  
Christmas - 00531  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00531



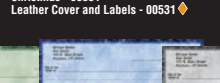
Ohio State University -  
00513 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00513  
More teams available online!



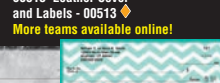
Blue Safety - 00027  
One image, Leather  
Cover and Labels - 00155



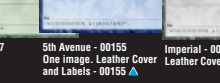
Reflections - 00125  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00125



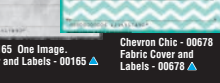
Parchment - 00612  
Burgundy Leather  
Cover - 00030-004  
Labels - 00032-008



Wall Street - 00167  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00167



5th Avenue - 00155  
One image, Leather  
Cover and Labels - 00155



Imperial - 00165 One Image,  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00165



Chevron Chic - 00678  
Fabric Cover and Labels - 00678

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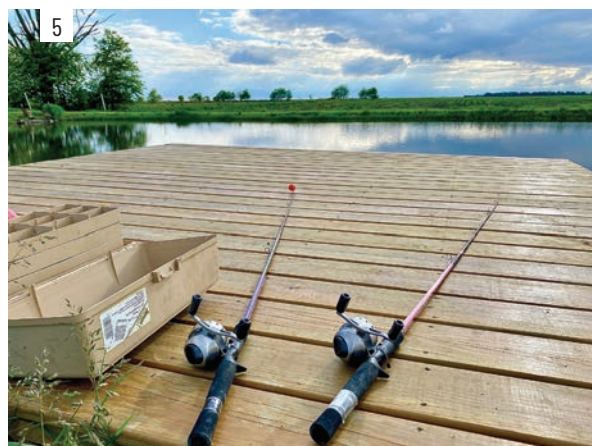
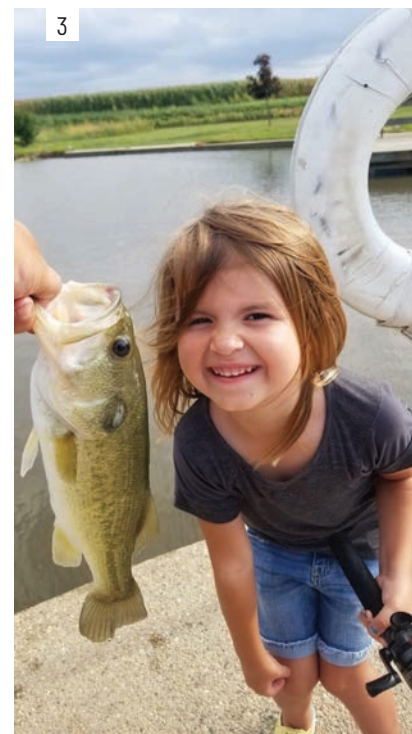
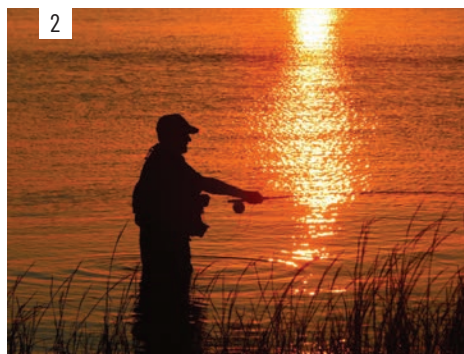


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- May - Bugs
- June - Yellow
- July - Trees
- August - Abandoned/old buildings



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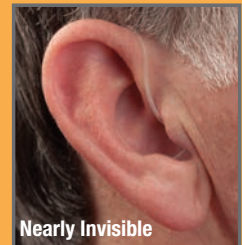
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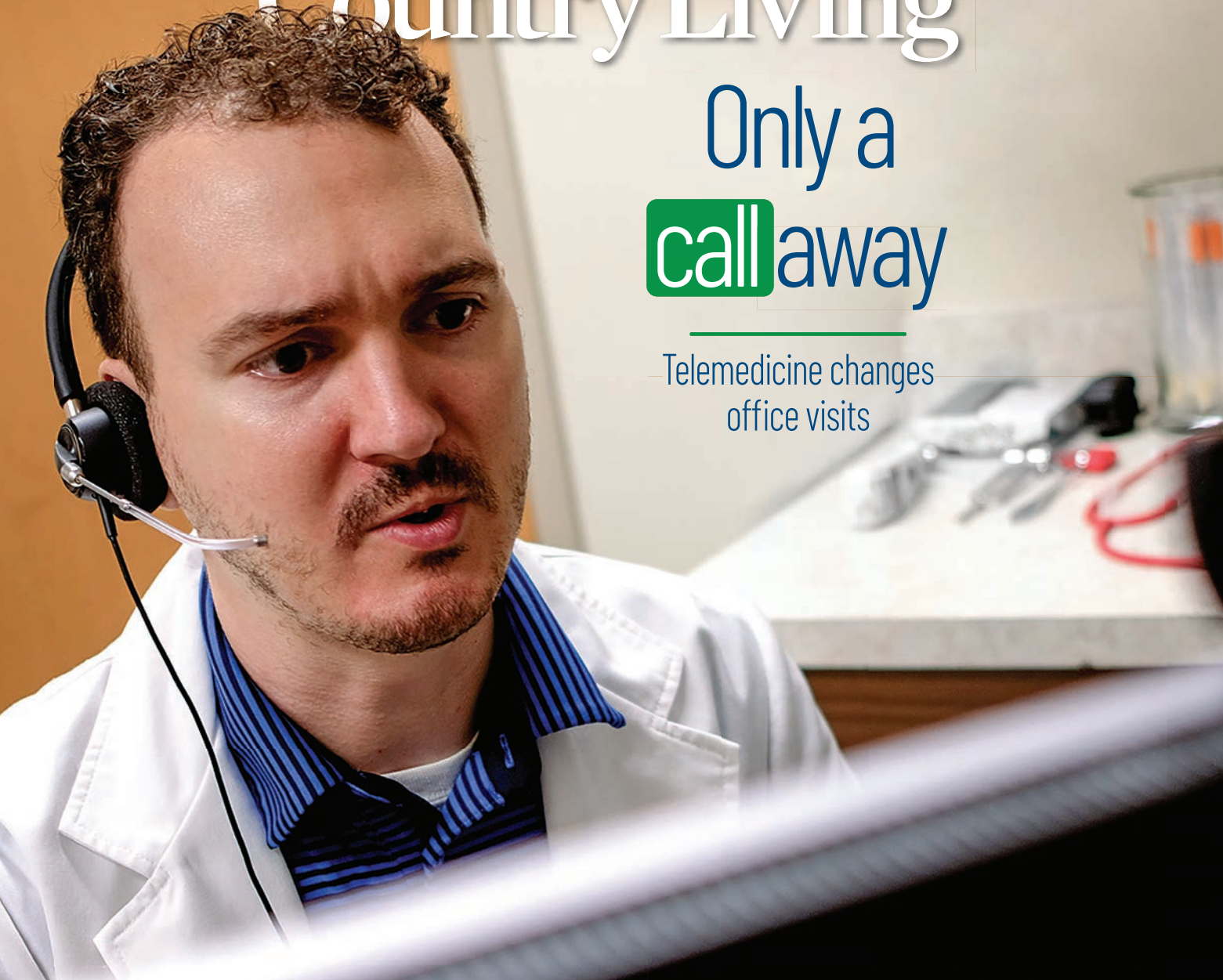
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