

# Illinois Country Living

## Destination detour

**HISTORY**  
Shadows of the past

**FIRST THOUGHTS**  
Voices for cooperative power

**FINEST COOKING**  
Shake it up!

**+**  
CO-OP  
NEWS

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# Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

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



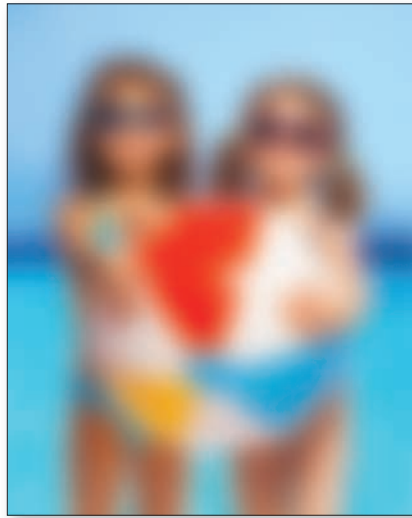
**F**or many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses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

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

**1-800-341-8498**

Located in Oswego, IL

**Ronald Weingart, O.D.**



# Illinois Country Living

JULY 2021  
VOLUME 79, NO. 3

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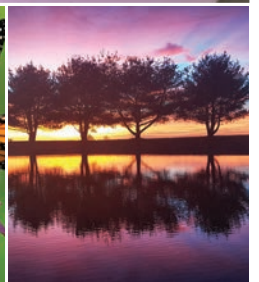
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# Independence Day



Among other medals, a dusty Purple Heart medal has rested on a shelf in the living room for years. A faded uniform now three sizes too small hangs in the attic.

He may never talk about the war because painful memories of comrades lost may still haunt him. But he may never have discussed the war because he's never been asked. Take time to talk to those veterans who have bravely fought to preserve our great nation's freedom. They'll appreciate your interest, and you'll get a history lesson no school could ever teach.

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*"I was amazed! Sounds I hadn't heard in years came back to me!"*

— Don W., Sherman, TX

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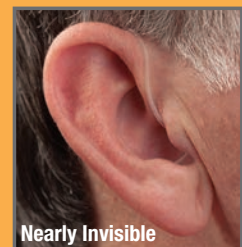
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Illinois Country Living is a monthly publication serving the communications needs of the locally-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives of Illinois. With a circulation of almost 191,000, the magazine informs cooperative consumer-members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

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# Voices for cooperative power

## Helping shape policy decisions that impact our co-ops

**AMERICA'S ENERGY SYSTEM IS** going through a fundamental transformation – and much of the focus in Washington is on large utilities in urban areas. Our electric cooperatives are fundamentally different.

Now more than ever, we need to make our voices heard in conversations about energy policies that impact not only our co-op services, but the communities we call home.

Electric co-ops play a special role in the fabric of our energy infrastructure. As not-for-profit energy providers owned by their members, our co-ops are responsive to our communities in ways that larger utility companies can't match.

Our experience is important: electric co-ops provide power to more than 42 million people nationwide. Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP) gives us a gathering place to tell our stories and influence policy decisions that affect us in personal and meaningful ways.

Whether you live in a busy suburb or the most rural parts of America, your co-op is closely aligned with the needs of your family and neighbors. Energy affordability and reliability mean different things to different communities – consumer-members living in the most remote corners of America have a different set of challenges

than members living in more populated areas.

We all know that one size doesn't fit all when it comes to energy policies. Factors, like access to broadband and affordability in persistent poverty areas, require flexible solutions that empower local co-ops to serve their people best. The same is true for energy security and dependability. Diversifying energy sources, collaborating on new technologies, and balancing progress with affordability and access are important co-op

priorities that VCP advocates for on the state and federal level.

The elections ushered in a power transition on all levels of government that will shape energy conversations for the next four years. As we work with the new administration, we will continue to champion commonsense policy solutions that reflect the needs of co-op members and the communities we call home. Putting a face on America's electric cooperatives has never been more important. We look forward to working together to ensure our electric co-ops – and our communities – have a bright future.

Speaking up on issues that impact electric co-ops sends a message to elected officials about the needs of our communities – and their constituencies. VCP gives a platform to talk about the many ways your electric co-op supports your community. Beyond delivering electricity, co-ops provide jobs, stability and economic growth – all while ensuring that energy affordability and reliability remain foundational advantages of electric co-op membership.

VCP makes it easy to have a say in energy policy decisions that impact you. Participants can customize their experience by choosing the issues most important to them, including broadband, energy efficiency, renewable energy and rural development.

Consumer-members will receive updates on those issues and information on how to contact Congress and federal agencies on proposed legislation or regulations.

“The most important voices to members of Congress are their constituents, and we want to make sure that consumer-members that care most about their communities and their co-ops are carrying their message to Congress,” says Patrick Ahearn, NRECA's director of political affairs.

Visit [voicesforcooperativepower.com](http://voicesforcooperativepower.com) to get involved. 🗣️



**Louis Finkel** is senior vice president of government relations at NRECA, the national association of electric cooperatives.



## JULY CHECKLIST

**Chill out.** If you get overheated, lightheaded, faint or confused, get into a cool or shaded area and rest.



**Hot stuff!** Sparklers burn at about 2,000 degrees. Take extra precautions before giving one to a child.

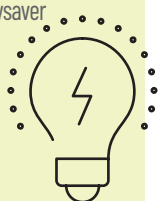


**Sudoku?** Do you miss the monthly Sudoku puzzle?

8	7	
	1	4

We'd like to hear from you; email [info@icl.coop](mailto:info@icl.coop).

**Tip of the month.** Visit [energy.gov/energysaver](http://energy.gov/energysaver) to find tips on how to save on your energy use.



## 2021 scholarship recipients announced

The Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Fund announced recipients for 2021. The fund has grown from initially awarding two \$1,000 scholarships in 1996 to now offering 12 - \$2,000 scholarships.

The Illinois Community College System Foundation (ICCSF) administers the IEC Memorial Scholarship fund.

Of the 12 annual awards, 11 are specific for high school seniors who plan to enroll in a full-time undergraduate course of study at an accredited two- or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Of those 11, six scholarships are awarded to students who are the sons or daughters of an Illinois electric cooperative consumer-member receiving service from the cooperative. Four are reserved for students enrolling full-time at a two-year Illinois community college who are sons or daughters of Illinois electric cooperative consumer-members, employees or directors.

The Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship is awarded to one student who is the son or daughter of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director.

One scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, is awarded to an individual to attend the lineworker's school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield. It is awarded at a later date.

### The Thomas H. Moore IEC Memorial Scholarship Fund recipients are:



**Megan Vogt**, Monroe County Electric Cooperative, Inc., daughter of Tammy and Tom Vogt of Fults, plans to attend Southern Illinois University Edwardsville.



**Colby Steber**, Norris Electric Cooperative, son of Ellen Steber of Claremont, plans to attend Olney Central College, Olney.



**Lauren Aldridge**, Corn Belt Energy Corporation, daughter of Beth Aldridge of Bloomington, plans to attend Lee University, Cleveland, Tenn.



**Delaney Hemann**, M.J.M. Electric Cooperative, Inc., daughter of Michael Hemann of Carlinville, plans to attend Lake Land College, Mattoon.



**Shelby Basham**, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, daughter of Christina Basham of Ashkum, plans to attend Southern Illinois University Carbondale.



**Dain Richie**, Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co., son of Anna Richie of New Berlin, plans to attend Parkland College, Champaign.



**Haley Atwater**, Menard Electric Cooperative, daughter of Julie Atwater of Petersburg, plans to attend Illinois State University, Normal.



**Maggie Holthaus**, Shelby Electric Cooperative, daughter of Jill and Robert Holthaus of Stonington, plans to attend Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield.



**Finley Hamilton**, Rock Energy Cooperative, daughter of Jeanine Hamilton of South Beloit, plans to attend Baylor University, Waco, Tex.



**Ryleigh Hawkins, Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship** recipient from Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, daughter of Kelsey Hawkins of Mattoon, plans to attend Lake Land College, Mattoon. 💡



**Jenna Spangler**, Spoon River Electric Cooperative, daughter of John Spangler of Marietta, plans to attend University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



**CBEC awards education grants**

Annually, Corn Belt Energy Corporation, Bloomington, presents education grants to six schools that serve children of Corn Belt Energy consumer-members. Five schools receive \$1,500 grants and one school receives the \$2,000 Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education. For 2021, the Jeff Reeves Memorial Education Grant was awarded to Somonauk High School. The five \$1,500 awards were presented to Hall High School, Olympia Middle/High School, Regional Alternative School, Somonauk High School, and Waltham Elementary School.

The application process for 2022 grants will open in the fall. For information, visit [cornbeltenergy.com](http://cornbeltenergy.com).



**2021 Forestry School**

The annual line clearance forestry school, hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's (AIEC) safety department, was held May 17-21, 2021 at Wayne Fitzgerald State Park in southern Illinois.

The school is designed to accommodate both experienced and inexperienced employees who wish to become more proficient in the field of line clearance – right of way management. Participants were taught the newest industry standards and were expected to demonstrate procedures and be competent in their application upon completion.

Training included chainsaw safety and maintenance, tree biology, cutting and rigging to safely clear power lines, proper pruning and hazards of storm damage to power lines. Line clearance experts from across the country instructed participants using scenarios they will encounter on the job.

Chainsaw safety instructor Alex Bildeaux, Jr., Bildeaux Services, said, "A lot of the other trainings I do are not as much hands on and some info gets lost in translation from when they hear the information and go out and try it. Here, if they have a question, they can go out and do it because there are all aspects of linemen and tree trimmers cutting down trees. This is all basic, practical information they will need to use every day."

The AIEC thanks its sponsors – Altec Industries, Inc., Anixter, A-Star Electric Company, Bashlin Industries, Inc., Black and Company, Bobcat of St. Louis, Endrizzi Contracting Inc., Husqvarna, Jarraff Industries, Inc.,

Lilly Timber Services, Inc., Matthews & Sons Contractors, Nelson Tree Service, LLC, Nutrien Solution, Pure Air Natives, Red Bud Supply, Reliable, Vermeer Midwest, Wright Tree Service and ZOLL Medical Corporation.

**Co-ops adapt to hold 2021 annual meetings**

After a year of work-from-home and closed offices due to the pandemic, co-ops used creative ways to safely host their 2021 annual meetings.

Shelby Electric Cooperative, Shelbyville, held its meeting at the Shelby County 4-H Fairgrounds. Members registered from their vehicles, received a boxed pork chop lunch and held its business meeting in the open-air 4-H show arena.

M.J.M. Electric Cooperative, Inc., Carlinville, had a drive-thru meeting for members at its headquarters. Members registered, listened to live music over a local radio station and picked up a grilled porkchop sandwich dinner. Its business meeting was broadcast on radio and Facebook/YouTube Live and prize winners were announced.

Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative, Paxton, held four member appreciation days in conjunction with its annual meeting. Members could drive through, vote on a bylaw amendment and pick up pre-ordered meals. For those wanting to attend the annual meeting, it was held at the Iroquois County Fairgrounds 4-H building.



Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative Co., Auburn, held a drive-in meeting at Route 66 Drive In Theater. Members registered from their

Continued on page 10







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## CURRENTS

Continued from page 8

cars and were treated to a boxed dinner, business meeting and invited to stay to enjoy the double feature on the drive-in movie screen.

Illinois Electric Cooperative, Winchester, held a drive-thru registration for a \$15 bill credit and members could attend the business meeting if desired. 

### President calls for stronger cybersecurity defenses

President Joe Biden is calling for stronger defenses for government computer systems, a move that could also boost the cybersecurity of private-sector supply chains and software.

The executive order calls for stronger cybersecurity standards in the federal government and removing barriers to sharing information about cyberattacks within agencies.


“This latest cybersecurity directive from the White House has no immediate impact on electric cooperatives, but its requirements could benefit co-op and private-sector cyber defenses in the long run,” said Bridgette Bourge, NRECA legislative director on cybersecurity issues.

It requires a security standard baseline for software sold to the government and for developers to label the cyber capability of their products for public awareness. Plus, it establishes a cybersecurity safety review board, composed of government officials and private sector representatives, to analyze major incidents and recommend improvements.

Biden’s executive order follows the announcement of a voluntary 100-day initiative to strengthen cyber defenses of industrial controls and operational technology systems focused on the electric sector. That effort is initially

focused on electric utilities with more than 50,000 customers.

NRECA is participating in the 100-day initiative through the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council and is working to expand the use of Essence. Essence is an NRECA-developed software that can provide early warning of a system intrusion and is one of two technologies assessed for the 100-day initiative as meeting all government requirements. The Department of Energy is expected to help support a wide-scale co-op pilot of the tool.

“We are pleased that Essence has been recognized for its sophisticated cybersecurity capabilities,” said Emma Stewart, NRECA’s chief scientist. “As an advanced anomaly-detection tool, Essence in real-time can identify and warn of possible network breaches. We look forward to putting it in play with co-ops under this initiative.” 

Source: Cathy Cash, NRECA

### Kids don’t have gills and fins like fish

Drowning remains the number one cause of unintentional death among children ages 1-4, and deaths are still rising among children ages 1-15.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission’s (CPSC) national public education campaign to reduce childhood drownings, Pool Safely, aims to remind parents that kids can’t swim like fish.

The Pool Safely campaign urges families to follow these safety tips to help protect children while in and around the water:

- Never leave a child unattended in or near water, and always designate an adult water watcher. This person should not be reading, texting, using a smartphone or be otherwise distracted. In addition to pools and spas, this warning includes bathtubs, buckets, decorative ponds and fountains.
- If you own a pool or spa, install layers of protection, including a four-sided



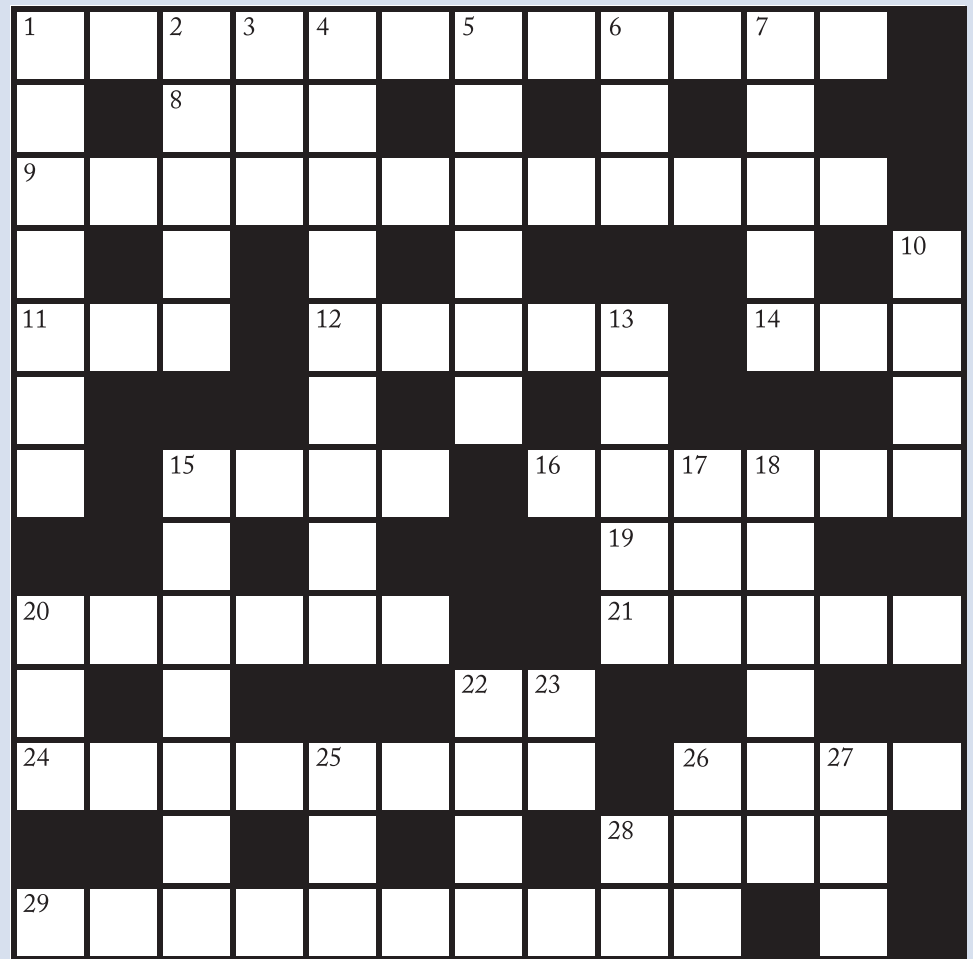
For the latest currents news, go to [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop)

fence with a self-closing, self-latching gate.

- Learn how to perform CPR on children and adults. Many communities offer online CPR training.
- Learn how to swim and teach your child how to swim.
- Keep children away from pool drains, pipes and other openings to avoid entrapments.
- Ensure any pool and spa you use has drain covers that comply with federal safety standards, and if you do not know, ask your pool service provider about safer drain covers.
- Visit [poolsafely.gov](http://poolsafely.gov) and go to the kid's corner to keep children entertained and educated with virtual water safety games and activities.

According to CPSC's latest data, there were, on average, 379 pool- or spa-related fatal drownings per year for 2015 through 2017, involving children younger than 15 years old. Annual fatal drowning rates increased gradually between those years with a spike of 395 reported fatalities involving children younger than 15 years. Residential locations, such as a child's home, a family or friend's house or neighbor's residence, made up 71 percent of the reported fatal drowning incidents. 💡

Source: CPSC.gov



**ACROSS**

- 1 It's celebrated on July 4th
- 8 Land of opportunity
- 9 It has 7 articles
- 11 Navy ship title
- 12 Revered celebrities
- 14 Last word in "America the Beautiful"
- 15 Trail
- 16 One of the most important parts of American life
- 19 One of the colors in the flag
- 20 "O say can you see the dawn's early light" and "Cause the flag still stands for freedom" for example
- 21 "\_\_\_\_\_ Home, Alabama"
- 22 Trucker's radio
- 24 The Stars and Stripes, 2 words
- 26 The "Red, white and blue"
- 28 Household chore
- 29 U.S. patriot, general and hero

**DOWN**

- 1 Allow into a group
- 2 Desert sights
- 3 NASCAR bend
- 4 Devoted to one's country
- 5 "One \_\_\_\_\_, Under God..."
- 6 Have some
- 7 Fries on a BBQ, e.g.
- 10 Alamo defender. \_\_\_\_\_ Crockett
- 13 Emblems on the US flag
- 15 Holiday celebrations
- 17 Cat sound
- 18 What we all strive to attain
- 20 Zodiac sign
- 22 Mountain goat's perch
- 23 Beside
- 25 Hawaiian wreath
- 26 Good times
- 27 Had a hot dog, say
- 28 Gala

Answer key on page 37



## LET'S GO!

For more information, a complete listing of events or to submit an event, visit [icl.coop/datebook](http://icl.coop/datebook).



## Sainte Marie Foundation Cork & Pork Festival

**JULY 10** The 7th annual festival includes wine tasting and sales by area wineries, concert by Matt Poss Band, delicious pork, a beer garden and souvenirs. All profits go back to community groups and organizations. To date, more than \$131,000 has been donated. Must be 21 years old to attend and present ID. No children or coolers allowed.

July 10, 2021 - 5-11 p.m.  
 ● Picquet Park, 200 S. Locust, Sainte Marie  
 Cost: \$10  
 618-562-3434

## 2nd Annual Galena Brew Fest

**JULY 17** Savor local and regionally crafted brews, wine and spirits atop the resort overlooking the Mississippi River. Enjoy outdoor activities and when hungry, enjoy a meal at the restaurant. Proceeds benefit the Galena ARC. Online ticket sales are available on the website. \$30 per ticket before July 1; \$35 after July 1 and day of event (includes 24 sampling tickets) and \$5 designated driver ticket.

July 17, 2021 - 1-4 p.m.  
 ● Chestnut Mountain Resort, 8700 W. Chestnut Mountain Rd., Galena  
 Admission varies  
 815-777-2248 or [galenaarc.org/galena-brew-fest](http://galenaarc.org/galena-brew-fest)



## Superman Celebration

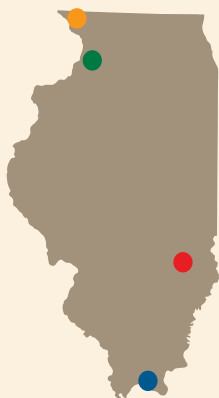
**JULY 30 - AUGUST 1** Superman visits with fans from around the world at this annual celebration. Enjoy a comic art gallery, fan films, celebrity appearances, Superman road race, super trek bike ride, kid's games, live music, costume contest, carnival and much more. Check website for daily events, schedule and related costs.

July 30 - Aug. 1, 2021 - times vary  
 ● Uptown Metropolis  
 Most events are free  
 618-524-2714 or [supermancelebration.net](http://supermancelebration.net)

## Bos Brothers Old Fashioned Threshing Bee

**JULY 30** Featuring J.I. Case equipment, experience harvesting 10 acres of wheat using equipment from early 1900-1960. See operating displays and visit demonstrations of early farm life including rug weaving, flour milling, blacksmithing, bread baking, wood turning, throwing pottery and more. Attend church service on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on the grounds. All displays of equipment are welcome. Contact Chuck Bos at number below to include your working display.

July 30 - Aug. 1, 2021 - 8 a.m.- 3 p.m.  
 ● 8105 Springhill Rd., Erie  
 Admission and parking are free  
 309-781-6394



# *Mack's*

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## Should outbuildings be insulated?

**Dear Pat and Brad:** We just purchased a home and noticed the previous owner installed an electric wall heater in the outdoor shed. How much will our electric bill go up if we use this heater next winter? Should we consider insulating the shed at some point? – Lloyd

leftover paint from freezing. The cost of heating the shed was more than the cost to replace the paint.

The cost to heat or cool your outdoor shed depends on your climate, size of the outbuilding and price you pay for electricity. I con-

climate, is the effect moisture can have in an outbuilding. Moisture enables rot, insects and mold to wreak havoc on your structure, and rust to degrade tools and other metals. Heating and insulating an outbuilding, if done right, can reduce or eliminate a moisture problem. But insulation installed incorrectly can trap moisture and foster mold growth.

Moisture in an outbuilding is usually caused by three things: leaks where water can get through (typically through the roof, windows and doorway); seepage through floors and walls; or condensation when nighttime temperatures drop. To prevent moisture buildup, you need to eliminate moisture sources and prevent condensation.

As air cools, it cannot carry as much moisture, and condensation occurs, usually on the coolest object at hand. Insulating walls and ceilings can keep the interior wall or ceiling surface from getting cold enough for condensation to occur. Insulated wall or ceiling cavities need to be carefully air sealed so condensation does not occur inside the cavity.

I should also note that the cost of heating and cooling an outbuilding can be much lower if the thermostat is carefully controlled.

Only you can decide if the value of heating and cooling your outbuilding is worth the cost and effort to properly insulate and seal. Even if your shed is not heated or insulated, it's worth keeping an eye out for mold and mildew.

We hope you enjoy your new home and your outdoor shed! 💡



**Keeping a newer shed in top condition may require insulation and proper venting.**

**DEAR LLOYD: GOOD QUESTIONS!** An uninsulated outbuilding can be quite expensive to heat (or cool) depending on where you live. Although we're currently experiencing July's warmer temperatures, I'll focus on heating since your shed includes the wall heater.

Years ago, I worked on a home energy contest that selected homes with the highest energy bills and helped the owners make efficiency improvements. One year, the home with the highest energy use had an uninsulated shed that was heated in order to keep several cans of

ducted a quick calculation that showed heating an uninsulated 6-foot by 8-foot shed could cost twice as much as heating an insulated 900-square-foot home. Wow!

Some outbuildings are heated with wood, which is a sound choice if you have a free source of firewood. Another strategy often seen in workshops is a radiant heater directed at the work area. If you're paying for fuel and decide to keep an outbuilding heated, you should definitely insulate it.

An important consideration, unless you live in a desert-dry

This column was co-written by **Pat Keegan** and **Brad Thiessen** of Collaborative Efficiency. For more information on ensuring an energy-efficient attic, please visit: [collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips](http://collaborativeefficiency.com/energytips).

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# How cooperative technology works together

IF I ASKED YOU to tell me what technology is used by electric cooperatives, you might think of things like electrical transformers, power lines, fuses, substations, and all the good stuff that allows electricity to flow safely and reliably to your home, and you would be correct!

What you might not think about are the various systems that work together to allow a co-op to operate at maximum efficiency and reliability while keeping overhead cost down and increasing safety to both the lineworkers and members.

Let us look at some of the new technology that has been embraced over the last decade, and how it works together for the benefit of the cooperative, its employees, and the members it serves.

## Advanced metering infrastructure

AMI enables measurement of detailed, time-based information. AMI typically refers to the full measurement and collection system that includes meters at the members' site, communication networks between the member and electric co-op, and data management systems that make the information available to the co-op.

It can also help identify outages. For instance, if your neighborhood power is down, the

cooperative would not be able to receive readings from the meters at your residence. This can be valuable information when determining the source of the outage.

## Outage management system

OMS maps system data and meter locations into a piece of software that models the electric grid. Eventually, there will be a power outage despite the best efforts of your electric co-op. That is where AMI and OMS earn their keep.

The basic element of an AMI is a meter that can communicate with your electric co-op. When a device on the grid reports loss of power, the OMS runs calculations to determine the exact location of the fault and the number of members impacted. The co-op dispatcher can call out or redirect a crew to the exact location of the problem. A map of the outage and number of impacted members is generated, and member service representatives are notified that an outage is in progress.

## Geographic information system

GIS is digital mapping software that locates and identifies co-op assets like lines, substations, transformers and meters. Integrated with other software, it can provide a detailed picture of what is happening across a co-op's distribution network.

"It's the central IT system for engineering and operations of distribution utilities because every bit of planning and operational work

you do is on these assets," says David Pinney, NRECA program manager for analytics. "It's just the intuitive way to understand what's going on. I think it's been revolutionary in the sense of situational awareness."

## Automatic vehicle location

AVL has full visibility into the location and activities of vehicles, and wireless communication allows better connection and coordinates the field and the office. Real-time insight into field activities means co-ops can respond quicker with more accurate information.

Cooperatives answering the call for assistance from another storm-damaged co-op can selectively offer to share their AVL data with the system of the co-op needing assistance. By doing so, the receiving system now can see the lending cooperative's shared vehicles on its AVL system map.

A primary benefit of this AVL solution is improved crew safety. With all the activity of a major storm restoration event, there is added concern in ensuring crews are not dispatched into areas currently being restored by other crews and they are not endangering each other.

While each of these systems offer benefits all on their own, they work together to provide optimum efficiency. The result is less outages with shorter durations, increased safety and availability of up-to-date information. 💡



Hand-held GPS units can be used to access and record GIS data in the field. Photo courtesy of Sumter Electric Cooperative.



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

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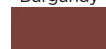


Blue

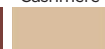


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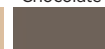
Burgundy



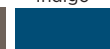
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## Before you hit the road, consider RV safety

**YOU MAY HIT THE** road to enjoy a vacation or take in a car race or baseball game. If you are traveling in an RV or converted bus, keep in mind using generators to power them can turn deadly.

Today's higher end recreational vehicles provide many creature comforts of home, such as microwaves, refrigerators and other small appliances. We can now vacation or "leisure" with more conveniences than ever, and generators are often used to power all those appliances, electronics and other gizmos.

Reports of people getting sick and, in some cases, dying from RV-related carbon monoxide poisoning have hit the news in recent years. Carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless gas that is produced any time fuel is burned. Along with generators, devices or appliances that produce the invisible gas include vehicles, small engines, grills, fireplaces, camping stoves, gas ranges and furnaces.

CO can build up indoors or in any enclosed space and poisons people or animals who breathe it in.

In 2018, one racing fan died and another was hospitalized after they were exposed to CO in a converted bus. The CO poisoning was caused by a gasoline-powered generator that was not properly ventilated.

In 2016, two men were found in a camper in the campground at Talladega Superspeedway. The confirmed cause of death for one was CO poisoning.

Safe Electricity provides tips to enjoy your RV or other mobile digs, whether your generator was factory installed or using a portable one.

- Inspect the exhaust system on the generator before using it and make sure it is in good working order.
- Do not operate a generator with a damaged exhaust system, one that needs repairs or has other problems.

- If using a portable generator, always make sure the exhaust is directed away from the camping area.
- Listen for problems (e.g. surging sound) when starting your generator, especially if it has been inactive for several weeks.
- Run the generator at least once a week. This decreases moisture in the system and lubricates the engine seals and components to prevent carbon buildup.
- Properly maintain your generator.
- Do not use it at night.

Although many are aware CO poisoning can occur in homes, they may not stop to consider it happening in any enclosed space, including a zipped tent or recreational vehicle. For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).💡



As Executive Director at Safe Electricity, **Erin Hollinshead** has a profound passion for saving lives through education. She holds a master's degree in public administration from the University of Illinois and a grad certificate in management of nonprofit organizations.



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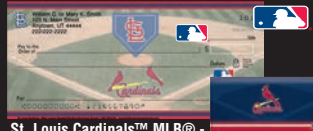
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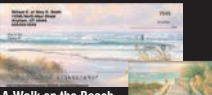
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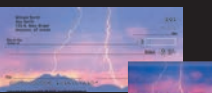
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Spirit of the  
Wilderness - 00024  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00024 ★



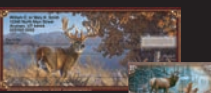
Great Outdoors -  
00552 Leather Cover  
and Labels - 00552 ★



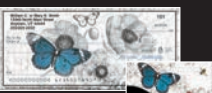
Lightning Strikes -  
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and Labels - 00178 ★



Tropical Paradise -  
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and Labels - 00052 ★



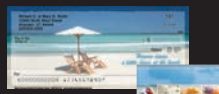
North American  
Wildlife - 00876 Leather  
Cover and Labels - 00876 ★



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



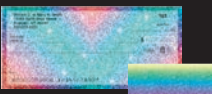
Prayers of Serenity w/  
verse "Trust in the Lord  
with all your heart" - 00194  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00194 ★



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



Nurses Rule! - 00542  
Leather Cover  
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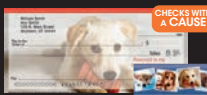
Glitter Sparkles -  
01327 Fabric Cover  
and Labels - 01327 ▲



Thomas Kinkadee's Faith  
for All Seasons w/verse "Believe all things  
are possible with God" - 00105  
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Footprints w/verse "One  
night I dreamed that I was  
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"I'd rather be with my grandkids." - 00437  
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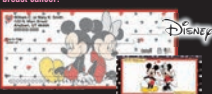
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Leather Cover and  
Labels - 01287 ★



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



Cowboy Boots - 00434  
Leather Cover and  
Labels - 00434 ★



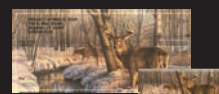
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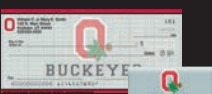
Black & White -  
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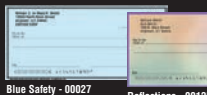
Winter Calm - 00017  
Leather Cover and  
Labels - 00017 ★



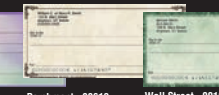
Nightmare Before  
Christmas - 00531  
Leather Cover and Labels - 00531 ◆



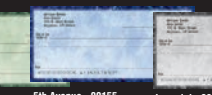
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<input type="checkbox"/> <b>IN-PLANT RUSH</b> (checks only) Saves 1-3 Days (070) \$5.99	\$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Untrackable delivery:</b> Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery. All items shipped separately. Delivery to Alaska and Hawaii may take longer.	<b>FREE</b>

Offer Code: **22525XCH** SUBTOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Add your sales tax \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
**TOTAL:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_





## Garden for butterflies

**BUTTERFLY POPULATIONS ARE DECREASING** each year due to environmental stresses like drought and loss of habitat. Do your part to save these colorful insects by making your backyard more inviting. Not only will you make your garden more beautiful, but you will be supporting biodiversity and pollination in your backyard. Just like us, butterflies need food, water and a safe, comfortable space.

The most important aspect in attracting butterflies is providing food. Butterflies need nectar-rich plants for nourishment and energy. Include a variety of plants that will bloom in succession from spring through fall. When planting for butterflies, plant multiples of a plant to grab their attention. Butterflies will visit any flower, but favor blue, purple and white flowers.

Some great perennial bloomers include smooth blue aster, phlox, bee balm, Joe-Pye weed, milkweed and prairie blazingstar. For a pop of color and consistent source of nectar, add annuals like sunflowers, salvia, lantana, zinnias and herbs. Avoid planting butterfly bush as it is not native to the U.S. and can become invasive in natural areas.

Experience the butterfly lifecycle by providing food sources for the larval stage. All butterflies have one special plant where they lay their eggs and the caterpillars eat the foliage. You will need to accept there will be some damage to plants from the caterpillars. Watch for the larva as many use camouflage to avoid being eaten. Common host plants are milkweed (monarch), parsley, dill, fennel (black swallowtail), echinacea, rudbeckia (silvery checkerspot) and aster (painted lady and pearl crescent).

Attracting butterflies to your garden isn't all about having the best food. The surrounding habitat is important to consider.

Butterflies need water to survive but do not visit large stands of water to drink. They visit damp soil or mud, known as puddling. Create your own butterfly puddler with a shallow dish, sand, soil, water and flat stones. Fill the container with sand, level it off and create an indentation in the center to collect water. Lightly sprinkle soil over the sand to provide nutrition. Add water to the container and place it in your garden among your plants. Replace the water in the container as needed. Flat stones can be placed on top of the sand for butterflies to land.

Feeders can be purchased at local garden centers and filled with homemade nectar and/or rotting fruit. Just be sure to change the nectar often so it stays fresh.

Other tips to create a welcoming habitat for butterflies:

- Butterflies need plenty of sunlight. Plant flowers in full sun locations.
  - Place bird feeders and birdbaths far away from flowering plants. Birds eat caterpillars.
  - Protect your garden from the wind with shrubs or fences. Have you ever seen a butterfly try to fly on a windy day?
  - Eliminate pesticides near your garden and all flowering plants.
  - Leave some leaf litter and plant debris in the fall for overwintering protection. Some butterflies migrate south but many stay in Illinois.
  - Place large flat stones in the garden for a place for butterflies to bask in the sun.
- Even if you don't have a big backyard, start a mini butterfly garden on your patio or front porch in colorful containers. ♡



**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.

# Christmas Candy Contest

**WHAT WOULD CHRISTMAS BE** without candy? Candy canes, fudge, caramels, chocolate-dipped toffee, handmade turtles, and the list goes on. What are your family favorites? It could be a recipe passed down for generations or one of your own. Maybe it's sugar-free for the diabetic in your family. We want to know!

You may only enter one recipe. Winning entries will be printed in the December issue of Illinois Country Living. All entries will be included on the magazine's website at [www.icl.coop](http://www.icl.coop).

Enter online at [www.icl.coop/contest](http://www.icl.coop/contest). Each entry **MUST** include your name, address and phone number **PLUS** the name of your Illinois electric cooperative, or it will be disqualified. You may also mail entries to Illinois Country Living Candy Contest, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Entry deadline is September 17, 2021.

## PRIZES:

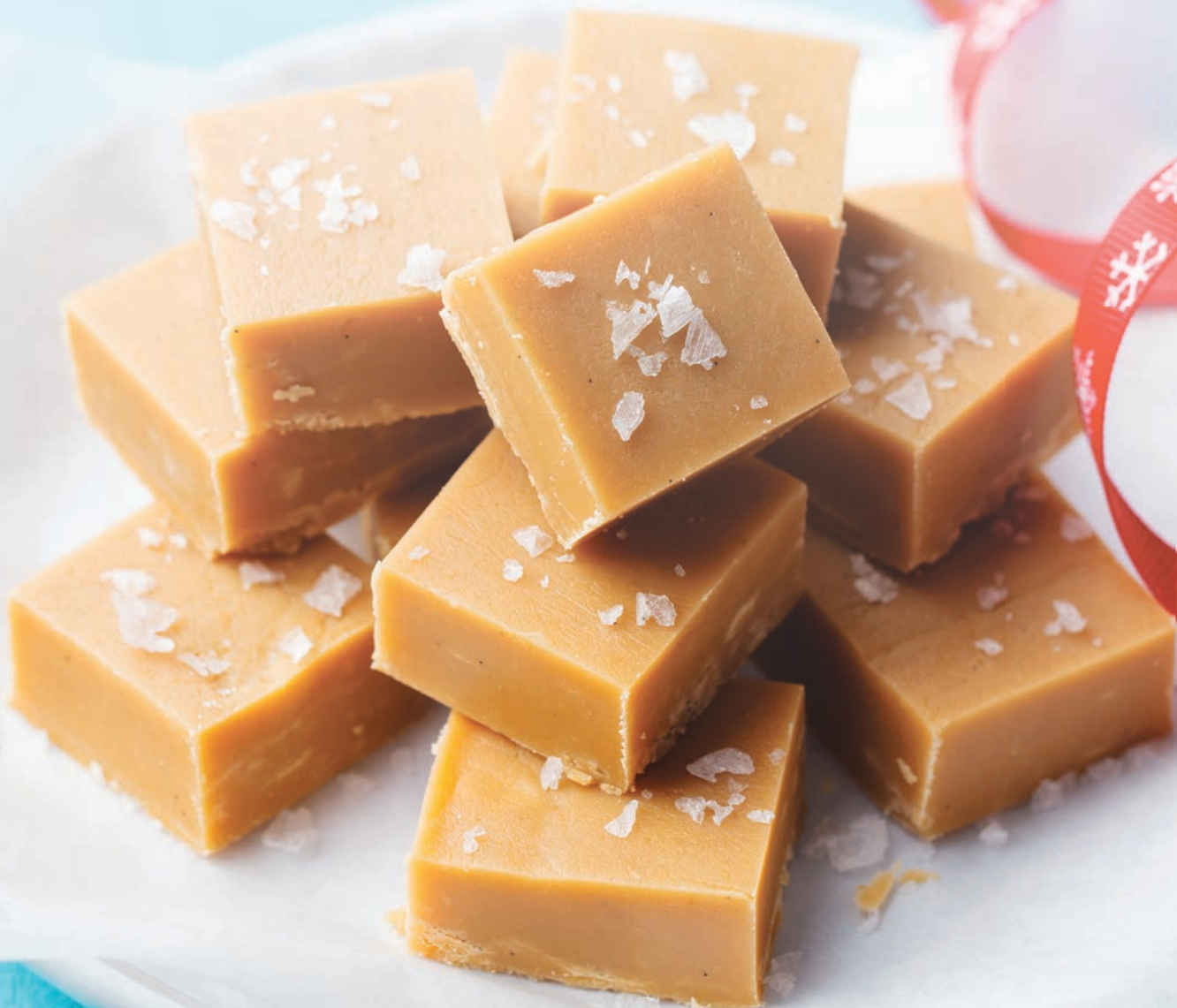
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**First place:**  
\$100 gift card

**Second place:**  
\$75 gift card

**Third place:**  
\$50 gift card

**Five honorable mentions:**  
\$25 gift cards





# Destination detour



*By Colten Bradford*

**WHETHER UNIQUE, HISTORICAL OR** just plain weird, Illinois is full of sights worth pulling the car over during your next road trip. If you only have time for a quick snapshot or if you need to get out to stretch your legs, here are a few roadside attractions across the Land of Lincoln that are free and worth the detour.

## **De Immigrant Windmill**

111 10th Ave, Fulton  
[cityoffulton.us](http://cityoffulton.us)

On a flood control dike along the Mississippi River sits an authentic Dutch windmill in the heart of Fulton. While the De Immigrant Windmill may seem out of place in rural Illinois, Fulton takes pride in its Dutch heritage. Manufactured in the Netherlands, the windmill was delivered and assembled in the small city in 2000.

Fully operational, the windmill manufactures a variety of stone-ground flours including buckwheat, corn, rye and wheat. Visitors can purchase these flours at the Windmill Cultural Center and Fulton Meat Market while supplies last.

Please note, the windmill and cultural center have been closed to visitors due to COVID-19. Be sure to check its Facebook page for updates. When opened, entrance to the windmill is free, but donations are appreciated. While in Fulton, also enjoy the Fulton Marina, views of the Mississippi River, Heritage Canyon and the Dutch Days Festival held each spring.





### Exhausted Paul Bunyan

1 University Pkwy, University Park  
govst.edu/sculpture

While this American folk hero is often the depiction of strength, the statue of Paul Bunyan in University Park shows a different side of the giant lumberjack. Titled “Paul 2006,” this fiberglass statue was created by artist Tony Tasset and stands in the middle of a field. He’s hunched over, axe dragging on the ground with a look of pure exhaustion on his face.

This sculpture is just one of 29 scattered across more than 100 acres of prairie landscape at Nathan Manilow Sculpture Park on the grounds of Governors State University. The park is open dawn to dusk and can be enjoyed year-round. Parking and admission to the park are free. Access to the statue is an easy walk on a paved pathway off University Drive. If visiting, please note that pets are welcome but must be leashed, and do not climb on the sculptures.

### Purple Martin Highrise

201 W Quincy St, Griggsville

This stop is for the birdwatchers. Griggsville claims to be the “Purple Martin Capital of the Nation.” According to audubon.org, the Purple Martin’s population is declining, and almost all nest in birdhouses made for them. Communities like Griggsville help with conservation. While the streets are lined with birdhouses, the main attraction, besides the Purple Martin itself, is the Purple Martin Highrise located in the center of

town in the median on Purple Martin Blvd. This high-rise consists of 562 apartments intended for the Purple Martin.

Although not truly purple, each blueish-black bird is said to eat 2,000 mosquitoes a day. With Griggsville’s proximity to the Illinois and Mississippi Rivers, the area can be ripe with mosquitoes, so it is the perfect place for this swallow to thrive. Stop by, snap a photo of the high-rise and grab your binoculars for a sighting of the Purple Martin.

### Sweeping Beauties

Main St, Arcola  
arcolachamber.com

To enjoy unique public art while stretching your legs, stop by Arcola. A dozen oversized brooms brightly illustrated with Arcola history and broom related puns are scattered throughout the downtown area. Each broom was painted by a different artist with the majority being from Illinois.

Why brooms? Arcola prides itself as the “Broomcorn Capital of the World” with its history of broomcorn broom production. While visitors can get swept away with the broom art, they can also enjoy much more in this small community. It is home to America’s Hippy Memorial, more than a dozen Walldog murals, and it’s the birthplace of the creator of Raggedy Ann and Andy. If you’re planning a road trip in September, stop by the town’s Broomcorn Festival held annually the weekend after Labor Day.







### World's Largest Mailbox

19 W Main St, Casey  
bigthingsmalltown.com

For oversized, everyday objects, swing by Casey. This is a community of roadside attractions with a dozen items hailed as the “world’s largest” and more than 20 other big things.

The World’s Largest Mailbox measures a whopping 5,743.41 cubic feet. On top of it all, it is fully functioning. Visitors can get inside the mailbox by climbing the stairs located in the post and mail letters or postcards of their own. There’s even a red flag that can be raised to notify the U.S. Postal Service that letters are ready to mail.

With more than 30 giant stops scattered throughout the town, this won’t be a quick detour as there’s much to see. Other sights include the 54-foot-tall wind chime, the 56-foot-tall rocking chair, the 82-foot-long functional tee-totter and the 60-foot-long pitchfork.

### Kaskaskia Dragon

2401-2599 Progress W Dr, Vandalia  
kaskasiadragon.com

If you’re looking for a fire-breathing dragon, be sure to make a pitstop in Vandalia for the Kaskaskia Dragon. While the 35-foot-long metal dragon is free to view, you’ll have to pay one dragon token to make it spit fire. Each token costs \$1 and can be purchased from Kaskaskia Supply (the hardware store down the road that owns the dragon) or from the liquor store across the street. Powered by propane, each token will buy 10 seconds of fire-breathing action, so make sure your camera is ready.

While in town, check out the Gateway Arch Replica, the Madonna of the Trail statue, the Kaskaskia River and the Vandalia Statehouse, the oldest existing Illinois capitol building.







### World's Largest Catsup Bottle

800 S Morrison Ave, Collinsville, IL 62234  
catsupbottle.com

While you can see a smiley face in Atlanta, Watseka or Makanda, a baseball in Ellsworth, a basketball in Hebron, or a golf ball at Rend Lake, Illinois' most unique water tower is the World's Largest Catsup Bottle in Collinsville. For more than 70 years, this 170-foot-tall condiment has stood next to Route 159 near Collinsville's downtown.

The tower was built in 1949 to supply water to the Brooks catsup plant, and it was decided that the tower should be shaped as one of the plant's catsup bottles. A decade later, Brooks Foods merged with another company, and the bottling operation moved out of town. However, the catsup bottle remains and displays the Brooks logo to this day. In the 90s, a group of volunteers restored the catsup bottle, and it was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2002.

### Popeye and Friends Character Trail

10 Bridge Bypass Rd, Chester  
chesterill.com/character-trail

If you love Popeye the Sailor Man, then you better stop by Chester. This small city is the birthplace of Popeye creator Elzie Segar, and it honors that history with granite statues of Popeye characters scattered throughout the community. Start your journey at the Chester Welcome Center where you can find a bronze statue of Popeye that has been overlooking the Mississippi River since 1977.

The Popeye and Friends Character Trail was established three decades later. Wimpy was the first statue erected after Popeye in 2006 at Gazebo Park with Olive, Swee'Pea and Eugene the Jeep debuting in 2007 at the Randolph County Courthouse. Every year since, a new character has been added to the trail. While there, be sure to stop by the Popeye Museum and Spinach Can Collectibles located on State Street.

### Superman Statue

Superman Square, Metropolis  
metropolistourism.com/attractions

With a name like Metropolis, of course there's a strong Superman presence in this city, which makes it a great stop for any superhero fan. Since 1993, this comic book icon has stood proudly in downtown Metropolis. The 15-foot-tall, 4,000-pound Man of Steel is actually made of bronze, and in fall 2020 he received a fresh coat of paint. After a photo op with the statue, be sure to visit the nearby Super Museum and don't go home without Superman souvenirs.

At the end of July, don't miss the annual Superman Celebration, which has been occurring for more than 40 years. The four-day extravaganza includes a comic art gallery, films, races, games, music, contests and much more. Check out Datebook on page 12 for more details.





## Boo Castle Park

31 Homewood Dr, Carbondale  
boocastlepark.com

With sculptures of wizards, dragons and other mythical beasts, this playground will take you out of this world and into a magical medieval era. Kids of all ages can enjoy all the sights as well as the large castle maze.

This is a great stop on a road trip for anyone with kids who need to release some pent-up energy. Please be mindful of the park's rules. No alcohol, drugs, smoking or firearms are allowed on the premises. Pets must be always leashed and cleaned up after. Minors must be supervised at all times, and please be respectful of the grounds and clean up after yourself.

Also known as the Jeremy "Boo" Rochman Memorial Park, it was built in memory of Jeremy Rochman who died in a car accident. The park is on private property and open to the public daily from 9 a.m. to sunset, but closes for inclement weather. While admission is free, donations are appreciated to help with upkeep.

For more unique stops for your next road trip, go to [icl.coop](http://icl.coop). 📍







# Shadows of the past



## Native American sites in Illinois

*By Jerry McDonald*

**AS EARLY EXPLORERS AND** settlers pushed into the Midwest, they were amazed to discover earthen mounds, usually near rivers, organized in patterns or groups that hinted of prior habitation. Equally mystifying were figures of birds, animals, humans or abstract symbols, painted (pictographs) or carved (petroglyphs) in caves or on cliff faces.

Today, thanks to archaeologists and anthropologists, we know much more about these remnants of earlier cultures. Although the exact purpose of rock art remains a matter of speculation, the mounds, made as burial chambers or platforms for important buildings, are the remains of societies, often complex, that grew, flourished and disappeared before Columbus made his first voyage.

There are more than a dozen recognized mound sites scattered from southern woodlands to the northwestern tip of the state. Rock art sites are not as numerous or as well understood as mound sites, but they fascinate those who visit them. Two of the most significant are in southern Illinois.



## Cahokia Mounds

Just off I-64 and across the river from St. Louis is Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, once the location of the largest prehistoric settlement north of Mexico. Occupied as early as 700 A.D., the site reached its zenith around 1050-1150 with a population of 10,000-20,000 and more than 120 mounds. The site was completely abandoned by 1350.

Eighty of the 120 mounds remain. The largest, Monks Mound, rises more than 100 feet with a base in excess of 14 acres.

Prior to the 20th century, the site suffered from deliberate destruction and neglect. By 1910, locals began to mobilize to save the site, and it became an Illinois state park in 1925. Designated as a World Heritage site by UNESCO in 1982, the park has grown to 2,200 acres with about 300,000 visitors a year. A proposal before Congress would designate it a national park.

The park boasts a world class interpretive center with extensive exhibits that offer insight into the life of the villagers and their contemporaries. Outside, there are more than 10 miles of mainly flat trails, with the exception of the climb to the top of Monks Mound. Visitors may take designated hikes, join a guided tour or wander the grounds.

## Dickson Mounds

About 150 miles north on a low bluff overlooking the Illinois River is Dickson Mounds Museum, which marks the site of a settlement that flourished from about 900-1250 A.D. The site includes several burial mounds, two cemeteries and a village remnant. It is named after Dr.

Don Dickson, who began excavations on his family farm in 1927, eventually unearthing more than 200 skeletons and opening a private museum. The state acquired the property and built the museum in 1972. The skeletons unearthed by Dickson remained on display until 1992.

Dickson Mounds is regarded as one of the most important archaeological sites in the state, but the focus of the museum has shifted from graves to exhibits and media presentations that give an overview of 12,000 years of human habitation in the Illinois River valley. A third-floor observation deck looks out on the Emiquon National Wildlife Refuge, a 2,200-acre wetland at the confluence of the Illinois and Spoon rivers. The restored wetland gives visitors an idea of how the area may have appeared to those who inhabited the area before the coming of white settlers. The 235-acre museum grounds include three outbuildings enclosing the foundations of ceremonial buildings, picnic grounds and five miles of hiking trails.

## Albany Mounds

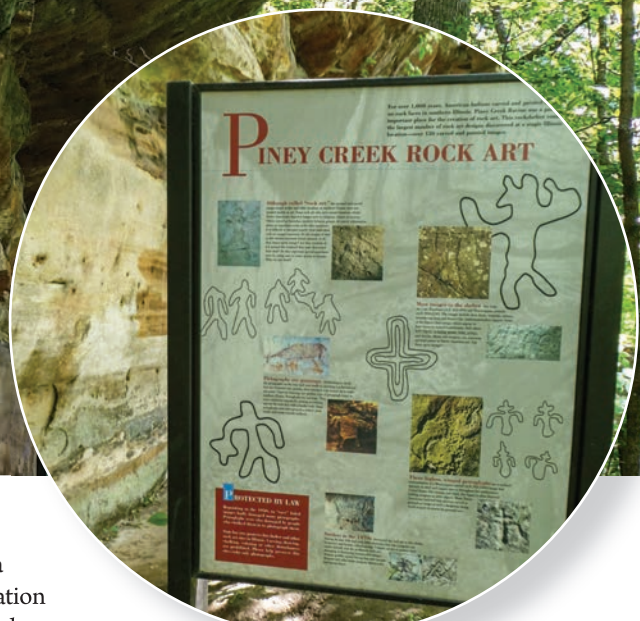
Two hundred-sixty miles north of Cahokia near the village of Albany lies the Albany Mounds State Historical Site. There were originally 96 mounds, but today only 47 remain. These mounds, dating back to Middle Woodland Period (200 B.C. to 300 A.D.), predate Cahokia by many centuries and are deemed a significant archaeological site. In the 1990s, the site was restored as a prairie, and today's visitors to the 205-acre site will find a convenient parking lot, picnic shelter and more than two miles of trails for hiking, biking or observing the wildlife of an Illinois prairie.



Cahokia Mounds







**Petroglyphs and pictographs are found on the cliffs in Piney Creek Ravine Nature Preserve. The effects of time and vandalism make many of the designs difficult to see.**

### **Gramercy Park**

Located in East Dubuque, Gramercy Park is a 10-acre city park where history, nature and recreation meet. The park includes 26 mounds dating from the Hopewell period (200-500 A.D.), walking trails with archaeological and historical signage, a spectacular view of the Mississippi River, and city amenities literally moments away.

### **Millstone Bluff**

Located just off IL-147 between Vienna and Harrisburg, Millstone Bluff Archaeological Site contains remains of stone forts created by the Late Woodland people (600-900 A.D.), petroglyphs (rock art) and evidence of a village and burial grounds of the Mississippian people (1350-1550 A.D.).

Although the only remains of the village are round depressions atop the bluff and stone graves, long ago looted and/or vandalized, interpretive signage provides an abundance of information regarding life in the village and the importance of the sandstone petroglyphs on the northwest side of the bluff. The petroglyphs depict figures thought to be tied to the religion of the Mississippian people. The site is accessed via a well-maintained three-quarter mile loop trail.

### **Piney Creek Ravine Nature Preserve**

Purchased in 1972 primarily for its rare plants, the 198-acre Piney Creek Preserve near Campbell Hill is home to the largest body of rock art in Illinois. Designs believed to date to the late Woodland and Mississippian periods have been documented. The designs include petroglyphs of humans, deer, serpents and crosses. Pictographs include humans, deer, birds, human hands and a canoe. The effects of time and human vandalism make many of the designs difficult to see. Visitors access the preserve via a moderate 2-mile trail. 📍

## **LEARN MORE**

**For more information about past civilizations and other Illinois prehistoric sites, visit [onlyinyourstate.com/illinois/prehistoric-attractions-il](http://onlyinyourstate.com/illinois/prehistoric-attractions-il).**





## Busy Corner

By Lisa Cherry

**BUSY CORNER IS AN** apt moniker for this restaurant in small-town Goodfield. Just off I-74, halfway between Peoria and Bloomington, the business is located where three major roads converge, the interstate and Routes 150 and 117.

Built in 1947, the original Busy Corner changed hands a few times before being bought by Randy and Peg Selvey in 1977. Sometime later, they added on to the building to offer more seating. In 2005, they made the decision to further increase capacity to 160 by moving to the restaurant's current location.

Current proprietor Derek Vollmer started as a dishwasher for the Selveys in 2007 at age 16, later becoming a cook and eventually a manager while studying business and finance. In 2013, he was named general manager, and he completed the purchase of the business earlier this year.

Working alongside him is a team of about 80, including part-time high schoolers and full-time staff members who have worked there 20-plus years. Together, they carry on the family-friendly, country-style establishment their customers have come to know and love. "We have a small-town feel but with a large volume of business," says Derek.

A big part of Busy Corner's success is its menu which features a variety of American cuisine favorites. "The menu has remained similar through the years, with some twists but the same style," says Derek.

Popular menu items include fried chicken, marinated ribeye, ribs, catfish, beef and noodles, and the homemade tenderloin, which Derek says is their top-selling single item. The restaurant also features regular lunch, dinner and weekend specials.

For breakfast, you can enjoy the "Skillet Corner" (a bed of golden hash browns topped with choice of two eggs, sausage, ham, veggies or western toppings covered in choice of sausage gravy, cheese sauce or both and served with toast), Eggs Benedict, biscuits and gravy, omelets, pancakes, waffles, corned beef hash, and an oldie but a goodie—homemade cornmeal mush.

The lunch and dinner menu includes appetizers, soups and salads, as well as country fried steak, burgers, sandwiches and seafood. For those looking for something different, there is also the "Smothered Chicken"



Fried chicken



Catfish



Tenderloin





Apple pie

(a 7-ounce marinated chicken breast covered with grilled mushrooms, onions and green peppers, topped with cheddar and Monterey Jack cheeses). Simpler options for children can be found on the kids' menu.

What Busy Corner is really known for, however, is pie (although other desserts can be ordered as well, like cheesecake or a root beer float). Baked pies include apple cinnamon, apple pecan, blackberry, blueberry, cherry, caramel apple, peach, pecan, pumpkin, raisin, rhubarb, red raspberry, blueberry, triple berry and Toll house.

If those flavors aren't enough, there is an extensive list of cream pies to choose from: Andes mint, banana cream, coconut cream, chocolate cream, chocolate French silk, chocolate peanut butter bliss, chocolate ribbon, chocolate silk pecan, Door County cherry, Grasshopper, lemon meringue, lemon chiffon, mocha silk, peaches and cream, peanut butter cup, peanut butter Oreo, pumpkin ribbon, raspberry ribbon, blueberry ribbon, strawberry cream, Snicker's pie, toffee Heath crunch and Turtle pie, among others.

Derek says the number one seller is coconut cream, followed closely by French silk, Toll House, triple berry and apple. While Busy Corner doesn't offer catering, their pies are often purchased for weddings and fundraisers.



French silk pie

The restaurant went to curbside pickup only in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. That Memorial Day weekend, he and his staff put up tables and chairs in the parking lot. Derek says that customers told him it was one of the best outdoor setups they had seen. The area was decorated with hay bales and flowers and umbrellas were added to the tables for the comfort of their diners. "It was a good opportunity for us to change and do what we needed to do," he says.

They still offer curbside, he says, though most people are coming back in at this point. "But if there's a mom in the car with kids," he adds, "we're happy to run food out."

The family restaurant hosts a little bit older crowd, but he says they get all ages, including businesspeople from Bloomington and Peoria during the work week—"Everybody from everywhere," Derek says. He recently added a patio which seats an additional 40 to further accommodate the amount of interstate traffic and their regulars. "It's a great spot," he says.

Derek has ideas for expansion in the future, perhaps catering or expanding the business' physical footprint. "Right now, we're just trying to keep up," he laughs. When asked, Derek's advice for fellow restaurant owners is simple: "Stay open to change; over the last year those willing to change with a positive attitude are thriving." 🍷



LET'S EAT!

### Busy Corner

302 S. Eureka St.,  
Goodfield, IL 61742

(309) 965-2361

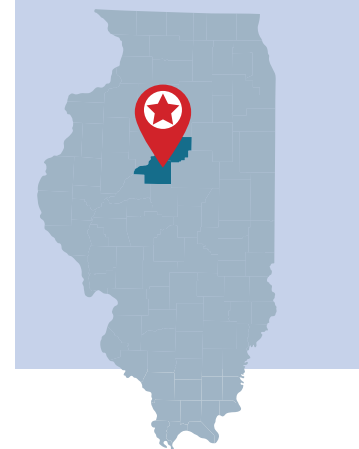
busycorner1@yahoo.com  
abusycorner.com  
Facebook

### HOURS

5:30 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Friday

6 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday

11 a.m.-8 p.m. Sunday



PHOTOS COURTESY OF BUSY CORNER.



## Shake it up!

WHETHER YOU LIKE MILKSHAKES, smoothies or both, one thing is certain – they are great for cooling us down on hot July days. Milkshakes usually include milk, ice cream and whipped cream, while smoothies are typically fruit-based but can include a wide variety of ingredients. So, pull out your blender and let your imagination run wild. 💡



### WE NEED RECIPES!

#### Upcoming monthly topics

Onions

Oats

Bacon

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.



### Purple Cow

Submitted by: *Connie Huffman, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative*  
Servings: 4

- 6 ounces frozen grape juice concentrate (do not dilute or thaw)
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups vanilla ice cream

Add all ingredients to blender and process until smooth. Nutrition information: 196 calories; 4.9g fat; 59mg sodium; 35g carbohydrates; 3.5g protein.

### Melon Smoothie

Courtesy of: *The Best of Alabama Living*  
Servings: 2-3

- 1/2 cantaloupe (rind removed)
- 1 apple (peeled, cored and sliced)
- 1 cup vanilla yogurt
- 1/2 cup coconut milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 teaspoon coconut extract
- 2-5 tablespoons honey, according to taste
- 2-3 cups ice

Into a blender, add everything except the ice. Blend until mixture is smooth. Add ice and blend until smooth. A high-powered blender is recommended. Nutrition information: 243 calories; 10.7g fat; 68mg sodium; 31.8g carbohydrates; 6g protein.







PINA COLADA SMOOTHIE

## Pina Colada Smoothie

Submitted by: Valerie Cheatham

Servings: 2

- 2 cups pineapple sherbet
- 1/2 cup coconut cream
- 1 teaspoon rum extract
- 1/2 teaspoon coconut extract

Combine all ingredients in blender until smooth. Garnish with wedge of pineapple and a cherry. Nutrition information: 256 calories; 15.3g fat; 24mg sodium; 28.5g carbohydrates; 2.4g protein.

## Frosted Animal Cracker Milkshake

Submitted by: Colten Bradford

Servings: 4

- 1 cup frosted animal crackers
- 3 cups vanilla ice cream, about 8 scoops
- 1/2 cup milk
- 1/3 cup vanilla frosting
- 1 tablespoon rainbow sprinkles
- Red food coloring, optional

Combine all ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Add a few drops of red food coloring and process for pink color, if desired. Garnish with whipped cream, nonpareils rainbow sprinkles and a few frosted animal crackers. Nutrition information: 441 calories; 19.1g fat; 205mg sodium; 61.3g carbohydrates, 3.7g protein.



FROSTED ANIMAL CRACKER MILKSHAKE



MELON SMOOTHIE

## Banana-Berry Smoothie

Servings: 2-3

- 1 cup frozen blueberries, strawberries or raspberries
- 1 banana, frozen
- 2 cups milk
- Sugar or sweetener, optional

Combine all ingredients in blender and process until smooth. Can add ice to thicken. Nutrition information: 202 calories; 3.6g fat; 78mg sodium; 40.5g carbohydrates; 6.3g protein.

## Very Berry Smoothie

Courtesy of: The Best of Alabama Living

Servings: 2

- 2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
- 3/4 cup nonfat vanilla yogurt
- 3/4 cup cranberry juice
- 1 tablespoon honey

Blend all ingredients in blender until smooth. Any cranberry juice blends work just as well. Nutrition information: 182 calories; 0.5g fat; 49mg sodium; 41.9g carbohydrates; 4.1g protein.



BANANA-BERRY SMOOTHIE





## Going down to the crawdad hole

**AS A SOCIETY, WE** no longer need to take our existence from the wilds of the land. We live in a structured, modern society which conveniently provides our caloric needs neatly cleaned, processed and wrapped, available 24 hours a day at the local mega food mart. There is no need for a skinning knife when we hit the drive-thru and pick up a Big Mac.

To deny the tastes of the wild bounty of our land from our children and grandchildren is counter-productive to our desire to preserve our outdoor heritage, rituals and traditions. As a society, we once hunted, fished and gathered from the land in order to live. Therefore, we should provide coming generations the opportunity to experience, know and relish the taste of the wild.

My daughters were raised knowing and experiencing our connection to the land. They both have helped in the preparation of game by helping prepare rabbits and field dress squirrels for the table.

One weekend, I took the minnow seine and spent the day with my family wading and catching a

5-gallon bucket of crawdads from Big Flatrock River. Later, we set about the laborious task of cleaning them, and my daughters got their first taste of deep-fried crawdad tails. We aren't Cajun by any means, but as a family, we do relish the flavor of deep fried crayfish.

That is how my children were raised. One of the family's first real "outdoor meals" was a big mess of frog legs I brought home early on in our married life. With some reassurance the frog legs wouldn't jump out of the skillet as my wife had been told, she fried up a beautiful meat platter full of golden-brown frog legs for our dining pleasure. Once my family tasted them, any plate fright was gone. All they wanted was more!

An introduction to pan fried bluegill brought a similar response. Most of the time, I almost missed my share as I worked feverishly picking out bones for our littlest one. My wife and our older daughter were quickly veteran hands at picking their own fish bones and munching bluegill. It seemed I could never catch enough.

Years later, I found with pride, both daughters found themselves in situations where fish were caught, but no one knew how to clean them. Both of my girls stepped forward and said, "Don't waste the fish, I know how to clean them. My dad taught me." Both of their future husbands found my daughters could not only catch and clean fish but cook them as well.

As we pass on our heritage of the outdoors, we also need to pass on the taste of its bounty. If you don't know how to prepare wild foods, then resolve to learn. Once you learn how, take the time to teach your children.

Many conversations at our annual family get-togethers revolve around wild game meals of the past. "Do you remember the time Dad brought home our first wild turkey? What about the time we cooked up all of those crawdads? Heh, Dad, are there any bluegill filets in the freezer?"

My reply to the last question is always, "Sorry, you'll have to catch and clean your own." 🐼



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.





# Four keys to understanding the new electric grid

By Paul Wesslund

**AMERICA'S ELECTRIC GRID IS** often called the most complex machine in the world. That's not a stretch when you think about what it does: it runs your refrigerator and charges your phone, all from a ray of sunshine, a lump of coal, falling water or a prairie breeze.

In between those starting and ending points are 160,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines, millions of miles of low-voltage power lines, 7,300 power plants, nearly 200,000 electric utility employees, thousands of electrical substations and transformers that adjust voltage for the cross-country trip along transmission lines, then back down before it enters your house.

All these parts must work together to keep power flowing safely. In addition, this complex network is adapting to weather patterns, increasing cybersecurity threats, consumer expectations and additional decentralized power

sources like rooftop solar panels.

Those are big changes for such a vast and intricate system, “but the silver lining is that technology is available to help address that,” says Venkat Banunaryanan, vice president of integrated grid business and technology strategies with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

For all its complexity, the electric grid can be described in three major parts: a power source (like a natural gas plant or wind turbine), the wires and equipment that deliver power, and a home or business that receives the power.

To understand the grid more, here are four ways it's adapting to the world's new realities.

## Resilience in the face of more severe weather

Last year was the busiest recorded hurricane season along the Atlantic Coast. Wildfires are

increasingly intense, especially in the west, and ice storms and cold weather surprised the South this winter.

These changes call for new ways to make sure the lights stay on.

Electric utilities are increasing grid resilience by integrating weather forecasting with other smart technologies that monitor electric current and analyze how to respond. NRECA's Banunaryanan calls this “predictive technology.”

By knowing how weather will affect power equipment, he says, “An electric co-op can preposition work crews so they can quickly respond to the outage and redirect the flow of electricity to take an alternate route to minimize the duration of a power outage.”

## Strengthening cyber safety

Cybersecurity measures have become standard operating procedure for utilities to protect against cyber

**With thousands of miles of power lines, nearly 200,000 utility employees and 7,300 power plants, America's electric grid and all its parts must work together to keep power flowing smoothly.** Photo Source: Dennis Gainer, NRECA



attacks. Electric co-ops and other utilities work closely with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to monitor and strengthen defenses.

Banunaryanan says, “Utilities are constantly improving to make sure they are more cyber-resilient.”

Electric co-ops also urge consumer-members at home to protect themselves from hackers. When devices like printers and smart TVs connect to the internet, that actually makes them part of the electric grid.

### More power to consumers

Many utilities have voluntary programs that manage electric loads by turning off water heaters or air conditioners for short periods of

time. Those programs add another layer of coordination. Additionally, homeowners are installing solar panels on their roofs or in their backyards, with some even selling excess electricity back to the utility—over the electric grid.

### Utilities keeping up with the change

Large fields of wind turbine farms and solar power arrays require building transmission lines to new locations, and planning for power that might only operate when the sun shines or the wind blows. These changes are necessary and helpful, but also expensive.

Annual spending on the U.S. transmission system has increased

from \$9 billion a year in 2002 to \$40 billion in 2019.

But that spending is paying off. In 2017, Americans experienced about eight hours of power interruptions, according to the Energy Information Administration. By 2019, that was down to five hours.

“Power outages have been going down because there’s investment being made to increase the robustness of the grid,” says Banunaryanan. “I expect the reliability of the grid to increase.”💡

Last year was the busiest recorded hurricane season along the Atlantic Coast. Wildfires are increasingly intense, especially in the West, and ice storms and cold weather surprised the South this winter. These changing weather patterns call for new ways to make sure the lights stay on. Photo Source: Andrea Kee, Chickasaw Electric Cooperative





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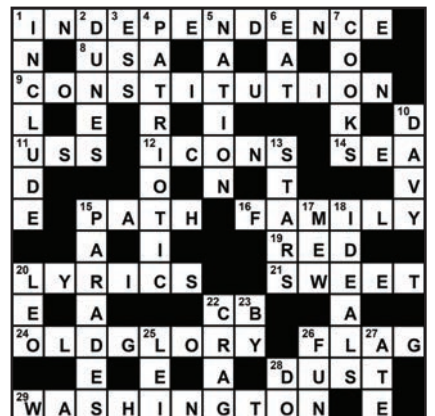
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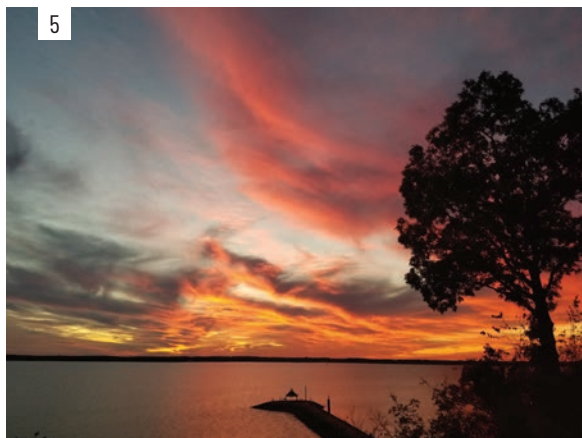
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