

Illinois Country Living



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PRAIRIE TABLE
Turn of the century

SAFETY CHECK
Avoid hazards with
grain bins

FINEST COOKING
Time oat

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NEWS**

dish

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Illinois Country Living

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PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA VOSSLER



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THERE'S A TREASURE IN YOUR BACKYARD

and it isn't just corn.

You may not realize it, but your home is sitting on a **free and renewable** supply of energy. A WaterFurnace geothermal comfort system taps into the stored solar energy in your own backyard to provide **savings of up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. That's money in the bank and a smart investment in your family's comfort. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer today to learn how to **tap into your buried treasure**.

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Htg & A/C
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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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U.S food supply chain remained strong through the pandemic

THE SUMMER OF 2021 includes a long to-do list as restrictions have been lifted and people take to the roads for vacations and family reunions.

While we missed many events in 2020, we also learned a lot in our 15 months of being cooped up.

Now is a good time to reflect. What did you learn throughout the pandemic? What did you miss, and what could you live without?

Had it not been for the pandemic, would families have rediscovered time to prepare a home-cooked dinner, sit together at the kitchen table and make conversation over a delicious meal?

Or open up family cookbooks and actually learn how to make grandma's famous cinnamon rolls and realize that it takes time to let the dough rise?

The common denominator of each of these scenarios: Food.

And it all starts with a farmer.

In the U.S., we never ran out of food. We may have tightened supplies on certain items, but by no means are we doing without. Farmers have continued to grow and restock the food supply chain.

A complex food supply chain worked day and night to keep the flow of goods moving as quickly as possible.

We continued to farm, keep people fed and clothed and helped those who couldn't feed themselves.

Some people needed assistance accessing food because they lost their job or couldn't work, but we never experienced a food shortage.

People stepped up to make sure food banks and pantries were stocked. And we developed a way to distribute food in a way that didn't involve contact.

You don't know what you've got until it is not accessible. We, as a society, have become accustomed to "if you want it, go get it and buy it." Almost 16 months later, there are some instances of car lots that don't have the inventory we expect. As consumers stocked up on meat, deep freezers became hard to come by.

Every week another story about inflation concerns or rising prices make headlines. Beef and bacon prices, for instance, have reached new record retail highs.

The good news? Just as farmers grew and restocked the food supply chain during the pandemic, they will continue those efforts in the future. 💡



Richard Guebert Jr. is president of the Illinois Farm Bureau. This piece was originally published in FarmWeek, Illinois Farm Bureau's weekly member publication.

SEPTEMBER CHECKLIST

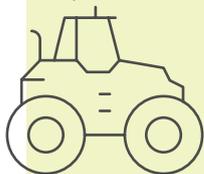
Designate a driver.

Before enjoying football tailgating, plan how to get home safely.



Heads up! As farmers gear up to harvest, be aware of

slow-moving farm equipment.



National Preparedness Month.

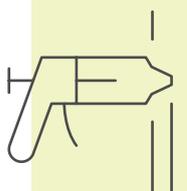
Take the time to make sure your emergency kit is fully stocked in case of a power outage. Go to FEMA.gov for a full list of supplies.



Tip of the month.

As outside temperatures begin

to drop, caulk and weatherstrip leaky doors and windows.



Envisioning tomorrow

Illinois' electric cooperative leaders looked to the future during the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's 80th annual meeting held July 29-30 in Springfield.

Co-op directors, managers and employees heard the latest on electric trucks being built in central Illinois, how the CEO (Creating Entrepreneurial Opportunities) program is helping bring young adults back to their

small towns, how entities have benefitted from USDA Rural Development funding, an electric industry update, and challenges facing the state's electric co-ops on the political front.

During the meeting, Phil Carson, current Illinois NRECA director, was honored for his years of service to the NRECA, AIEC and electric and telephone cooperatives. The Carson Conference Room at the AIEC was named in his honor. Carson plans to step down from the NRECA board when his term expires in March 2022.

During the NRECA business meeting, Warren Goetsch, Menard Electric Cooperative, was chosen by his Illinois electric cooperative peers to represent the state on the NRECA board upon the expiration of Carson's term.

During Thursday evening's reception and silent/live auctions, more than \$10,000 was raised for the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship fund. 💡



Carson, center, received his award from AIEC board chairman Kevin Brannan (l) and Duane Noland, AIEC president/CEO.

REDLG - One co-op helps another

Thanks to funds from the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) program, one cooperative is helping another in southeastern Illinois. Clay Electric Co-operative, Inc., Flora, received REDLG monies which it will relend to Wabash Communications Co-op, Louisville, Ill.

Wabash Communications will use the zero-percent loan to construct a new office building co-located with its current warehouse. Beyond its core business of being an incumbent public

communications utility, national demand for broadband has created a need for additional high-speed internet in rural areas.

Since 2015, Wabash has increased its customer base by 165 percent through natural growth and acquisition, deploying state-of-the-art fiber optic facilities to rural homes and businesses. Due to new business opportunities, its local consolidated employee base has increased from 52 employees to 127.

Clay Electric is also located in an opportunity zone and both entities serve rural poverty target strategy areas. 💡

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

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

Co-ops apply for federal grants to bring EVs to low-income rural areas

NRECA has joined with 17 of its member electric cooperatives to apply for \$8 million in federal grants to bring electric vehicles to low-income rural communities.

Most of the proposed co-op projects would install public EV charging stations at key locations such as low-income apartment complexes, medical facilities, parks and highway corridors, said Brian Sloboda, NRECA’s director of consumer solutions.

“In some cases, these would be the first public chargers that anyone in the community has ever seen,” he said.

The DOE will fund 50 percent of the cost of the projects, leaving co-ops and any community partners to pay the rest. The agency will announce a maximum of five winners at the end of the highly competitive process in October. The co-ops are competing as one unit, rather than as individual businesses, with NRECA as the project leader.

“I don’t think you can find another team that represents such a diverse group of utilities, projects and communities and that meets the ambitious goals of the Department of Energy,” Sloboda said.

When NRECA announced in April that it was seeking co-ops to apply for the DOE grants, more than 50 expressed interest, he said. However, the fast turnaround time for proposals—which had

to be completed in about eight weeks—quickly narrowed the field.

“There are going to be other funding opportunities for EVs, but they all require a very quick turnaround,” Sloboda said. “I would urge co-ops to develop their project ideas now.”

Despite increasing interest in EV charging by for-profit companies, “few companies are building this infrastructure and trying to grow EVs in the rural areas except these non-profit, consumer-owned electric cooperatives,” he said.

Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association (EECA), Murphysboro, is one of the 17 co-ops included in the NRECA proposal. Projects had to fall within the categories of corridor, destination, housing and education. If approved, EECA would receive monies for a three-year project. Year one includes several EV level 2 chargers scattered throughout its service territory in housing, destination and corridor locations. Year two plans include level 2 chargers designated as corridor and destination areas and a driver’s education vehicle. In year three, it would add level 2 destination chargers and a DC fast corridor charger.

“It’s a long-haul investment that’s not going to pay off overnight,” Sloboda said. “This is where we need the leadership from the DOE in recognizing the needs of these underserved rural communities. Without co-ops working with the DOE, we probably won’t see rapid progress.”

Source: Erin Kelly, NRECA



We remember

September 11, 2021 is the 20th anniversary of Patriot Day. In remembrance of that fateful day, and as a mark of respect to those who died, flags should be flown at half-staff.

Many observe a moment of silence at 8:46 a.m. EDT, the time when the first plane flew into the World Trade Center.

Four Ways to Combat Cyber Threats

1. Periodically change the password for your Wi-Fi router.
2. Use unique codes or phrases to create stronger passwords.
3. Do not click links or open attachments from unknown senders.
4. Update software regularly.



Eye Doctor Helps Illinois Legally Blind To See

High Technology For Low Vision Patients Allows Many To Drive Again



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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

www.mascoutaheycare.com

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Marianne McDaniel, O.D.

www.FoxValleyLowVision.com

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Located in Oswego, IL

Ronald Weingart, O.D.

Water rule remains as court allows EPA, Corps to begin WOTUS redo

The 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule will remain in place while the Environmental Protection Agency and Army Corps of Engineers revisit the Trump administration policy and potentially redefine the “waters of the U.S.”

A July 15 order by a federal judge in South Carolina granted the Biden administration’s remand petition, which asked the court to keep the rule in effect while they rework it. The court also dismissed challenges by an environmental group to the rule’s exclusion of wastewater treatment.

EPA and the Corps are seeking to undo the Navigable Waters rule, which was issued by the Trump administration after a court decided that the Obama-era Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule exceeded the authority of the Clean Water Act. The Biden administration identified what it interpreted to be substantive problems with the 2020 rule and has pledged a robust stakeholder engagement process as part of its effort to promulgate a new rule.

Action to rescind and/or replace the 2020 Navigable Waters rule will require a new rulemaking, which can take more than two years.

NRECA and its member electric cooperatives preferred the 2020 regulation over the 2015 WOTUS rule. That rule had placed features like gullies, ditches and dry washes under federal purview and would have placed greater regulatory hurdles and costs on rural electric co-op efforts to build and maintain critical infrastructure. Courts stayed the rule and it never took effect.

The Navigable Waters rule reflected the plurality in the Supreme Court’s *Rapanos v. United States* decision that federal jurisdiction was limited to waters with a “relatively permanent flow” and “continuous surface water connection.”

WHY IS MY POWER OUT?

A storm or a squirrel may be to blame



When the power goes out, we work hard to resume service as quickly and safely as possible.

Here are some common reasons the power goes out:



STORMS:

Mother Nature can interfere with power delivery.



TREES AND VEGETATION:

This is why we work so hard to keep power lines clear.



ANIMALS:

Curious animals can cause damage, especially squirrels.



ACCIDENTS: Run-ins with a utility pole or other equipment can cause an outage.



PUBLIC DAMAGE: Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all interfere.

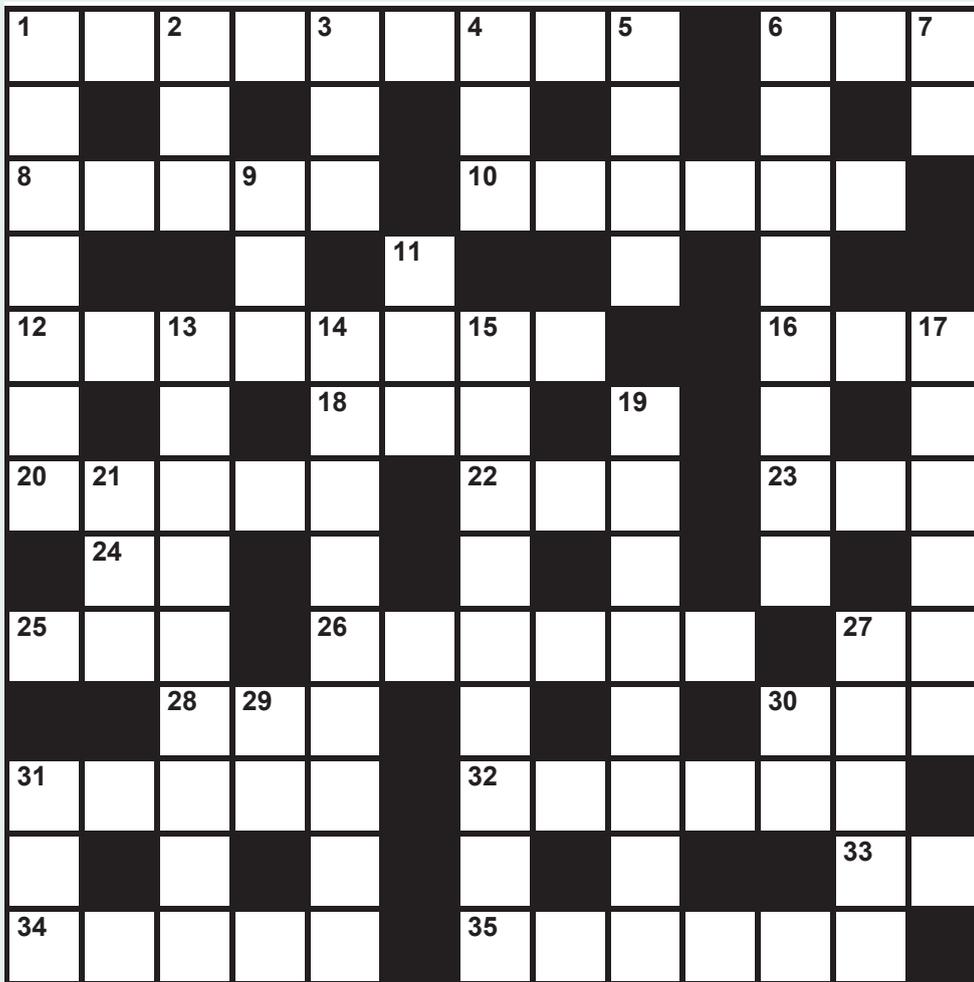


OVERLOAD: This happens when demand spikes, like on a hot summer day.



EQUIPMENT ISSUES: We maintain and inspect equipment regularly, but sometimes malfunctions occur.

Thank you for your patience during outages.



Across

- 1 “_____ is the most powerful tool you can use to change the world,” Nelson Mandela
- 6 Game arbiter
- 8 Exam mark
- 10 Does really well at school
- 12 Teach
- 16 It’s part of some school uniforms
- 18 Number ending as in twenti_____
- 20 Ambitions
- 22 “___ Given Sunday”
- 23 Science practical area
- 24 Location word
- 25 _____-school (kindergarten)
- 26 Baseball arbiter

27 British princess

- 28 Dent, for example
- 30 Curve in geometry
- 31 Word relating to volume
- 32 Keeping to the schedule, 2 words
- 33 Symbol for silver
- 34 Eagles and robins
- 35 Way of operating

Down

- 1 Important subject in high school
- 2 Land of the brave and free
- 3 Application blank info
- 4 Good to have with a drink on a summer day
- 5 Pleasant
- 6 Check on who’s present
- 7 Foot, for short
- 9 It comes at the end of a sentence
- 11 Place
- 13 Back to school month
- 14 Assets to help in student education
- 15 Winning team
- 17 Open to everyone
- 19 Provides water and fluids
- 21 Rowboat need
- 27 Something a kid holds onto for his or her future
- 29 Artificial intelligence, abbr.
- 30 Morning
- 31 Chicago player

Solution on page 37.



Stay healthy when dining out

It can be difficult to stick to a healthy diet when eating out. Portion sizes are big, there are tempting high-calorie options, and numerous beverages that can have as many calories as a meal. Some tips to help you make healthy choices at restaurants, courtesy of HealthMed:

- Drink water before and during your meal. It will make you feel fuller.
- Order sauces and dressings on the side, so you can control the portion.
- Make healthy swaps. For example, ask for a side salad rather than fries.
- Split your meal with someone or go ahead and ask for a go box and put half the meal in when the food arrives. 💡



SEPTEMBER **Datebook**

LET'S GO!

For more information, a complete listing of events or to submit an event, visit icl.coop/datebook.



Colchester Labor Day Celebration

SEPTEMBER

3-5

Bring the family and enjoy a variety of events including a car show, tractor race, Duane Beck Memorial 5K Run/3K Walk, crafts and a flea market.

Visit Colchester Lion's Club at colchesterlionsclub.org or its Facebook page for more details.

Sept. 3-5, 2021; all day

● Downtown Colchester

Cost: Free
309-255-2068

Cowboy Campout 2021

SEPTEMBER

3-5

Located in the heart of wine country and Illinois BBQ capital, Murphysboro, Ill., the Shawnee Cave Amphitheater makes it easy to come for the music and leave wanting to explore all that southern Illinois has to offer. Enjoy three evenings of stellar family-friendly country music. The lineup includes The Steeldrivers, Stoney LaRue, Ward Davis, Ben Chapman, Sunny Sweeney, Ben Haggard, The Supersuckers, Alex Williams, Franklin County Trucking Company and Murphy 500. Ticket options vary and camping is available. Visit website for tickets. Capacity is limited to 1,500.

Sept. 3-5, 2021; evenings

● Shawnee Cave Amphitheater, 3747 Illinois 127, Murphysboro

Cost: Varies

618-751-0838 or shawneecave.fun



Tomb of Unknown Soldier Replica

SEPTEMBER

13-15

The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier is a monument dedicated to American service members who have died without their remains being identified. It holds the crypts of the remains of the unknown soldiers. It is a 50 percent detailed replica of the one in Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. It is sponsored by the Abraham Lincoln DAR in honor of the 125th birthday of this DAR organization.

Sept. 13-15, 2021; 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

● American Legion Post #263, 1740 5th St., Lincoln

Cost: Free
217-447-3409

International Route 66 Mother Road Festival

SEPTEMBER

24-26

Since 2001, more than 1,000 vintage cars and 80,000 spectators continue to gather and experience the thrills plus non-stop live entertainment. Watch as thousands parade along Springfield's legendary Route 66 streets into the downtown area. Be a part of the action and enter your ride into the parade or find your spot among the thousands gathered to see an outstretched line of iconic vehicles.

Sept. 24-26, 2021; Fri. 5 p.m. - Sun. 2 p.m.

● 1 Old State Capitol Plaza, Springfield

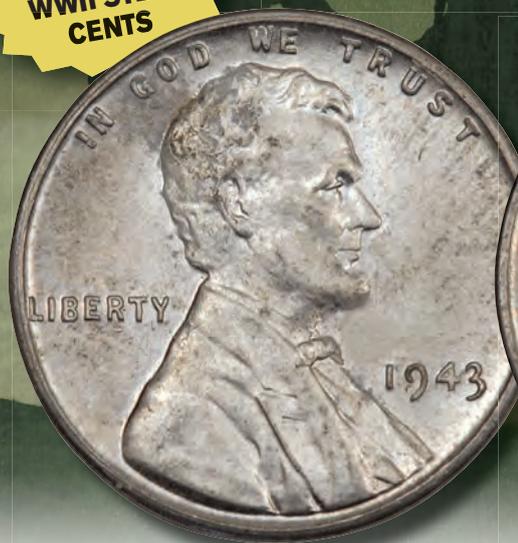
Cost: Free

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SECRET HOARD DISCOVERED:

World War II 1943 Steel Cents

When our buyer received the call, he nearly fell out of his chair. In his 19 years in the coin business, he had never seen a hoard like this. 20,000 coins—all 1943 Lincoln Steel Cents!

He quickly secured as many as he could, and now you can secure full rolls of this historic World War II-era coin at an incredible price.

What is a Steel Cent?

When the United States entered World War II, copper quickly became a coveted material. Required for our communications as well as munitions, every major supply of copper needed to be turned over to the war effort. That included the large supply of copper used by the

U.S. Mint to strike Lincoln Cents!

The Lincoln Cent is the U.S. Mint's longest-running series, sitting in the pockets and piggy banks of Americans for more than 100 years. But for one year only—1943—the Lincoln Cent was struck in steel-coated zinc instead of copper. This unique, historic mintage is now one of the most coveted in U.S. history!

Authentic Pieces of WWII History

Each 1943 U.S. Steel Cent is an authentic piece of World War II History—an example of America's dedication to aiding the Allies and winning the war.

Buy a Full Roll and SAVE!

Look elsewhere for these coveted World War II Steel Cents in this same condition, and you could wind up paying as much as \$1.80 per coin, or a total of \$90 for a full 50-coin roll's worth! But while our supplies last, you can secure a roll of authentic World War II 1943 Steel Cents for just \$29.95 — a savings of over \$60!

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There's no telling when or if another hoard of these historic WWII coins will be found. Don't wait — secure your very own piece of the Allied victory now!



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Get charged

Electric trucks and SUVs are coming

Dear Pat: I was an electric vehicle skeptic, but I just saw an announcement of the all-electric Ford F-150 Lightning. I didn't realize electric pickups could be this compelling or competitive. Are there other electric pickups or SUVs coming out soon? - Mike

DEAR MIKE: THE FORD F-150 Lightning is changing minds across America about what an electric vehicle can do. In fact, Ford declared this is their best truck to

off-road capability and safety in winter.

- The upfront cost of an EV purchase is now more competitive with similar internal combustion models, and most EVs qualify for a federal tax credit of up to \$7,500.
- The cheaper operating fuel cost per mile (for electricity) compared to gasoline or diesel is another attractive feature for drivers.

4WD model. Tesla plans to offer a 500-plus mile range version for \$70,000 that can tow more than 14,000 pounds.

GMC has announced a late 2021 release of an electric Hummer with 1,000 horsepower and additional features for off-road performance.

Rivian, a startup backed by billions of dollars from Ford and Amazon, is planning to unveil its R1T electric pickup later this year. Built in Normal, the R1T delivers a 300-mile range with up to 11,000 pounds towing capacity. Beginning in January 2022, a 400-plus mile will be available.

Crossover SUVs (CUVs) are one of the most popular types of vehicles, and several manufacturers say they'll have electric models available soon. Ford's Mustang Mach-E is available now with a range up to 305 miles, starting at \$45,000. Volkswagen's ID.4 CUV starts at \$40,000 and is available with AWD options. More electric SUVs are coming, including Rivian's R1S, Nissan's Ariya and Volkswagen's six-passenger ID.6.

It's not just vehicles that are shifting to electric. Electric snow machines and jet skis are arriving soon. Even large construction equipment like excavators, backhoes and heavy-duty trucks will have electrically fueled models.

One remaining hurdle for increased EV adoption in rural areas is fast, sufficient charging for longer trips. Most EV owners charge at home, but more fast-charge stations on rural highways will be helpful. ⚡



Ford's all-electric F-150 Lightning, arriving spring 2022, can provide portable power to a jobsite. Photo Credit: Ford Motor Company

date ... not best electric vehicle, but best truck. Period.

Electric SUVs are available now and pickups will be soon. This development has been anticipated for years. Electric vehicle (EV) sales are about 24 times higher than they were 10 years ago, with several factors driving demand:

- The instant torque from electric motors boosts acceleration.
- The low center of gravity improves handling and reduces rollover risk.
- The superior traction control of electric motors can increase

Ford's electric F-150 Lightning is scheduled to arrive in spring 2022, starting under \$40,000 for the commercial trim package (230-mile range model). A 300-plus mile battery is an option, and all models are 4X4 with respectable towing and payload capacities. The Lightning is also equipped to provide 9.6kW of home backup power or portable power for a jobsite.

Tesla has more than a million preorders for its new Cybertruck, which will likely arrive in 2022. The 250-mile range 2WD model starts under \$40,000 and steps up to \$50,000 for the 300-mile range

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

How to Be Cut Off From Civilization

When it's you against nature, there's only one tool you need:
the stainless steel River Canyon Bowie Knife—now **ONLY \$49!**

You are a man of the wilderness. The only plan you have is to walk up that mountain until you feel like stopping. You tell your friends that it's nothing personal, but this weekend belongs to you.

You've come prepared with your **River Canyon Bowie Knife** sheathed at your side. This hand-forged, unique knife comes shaving sharp with a perfectly fitted hand-tooled leather sheath. The broad stainless steel blade shines in harmony with the stunning striped horn, wood and bone handle. When you feel the heft of the knife in your hand, you know that you're ready for whatever nature throws at you.

This knife boasts a full tang blade, meaning the blade doesn't stop at the handle, it runs the full length of the knife. According to Gear Patrol, a full tang blade is key, saying "A full tang lends structural strength to the knife, allowing for better leverage ...think one long steel beam versus two."

With our limited edition **River Canyon Bowie Knife** you're getting the best in 21st-century construction with a classic look inspired by legendary American pioneers. What you won't get is the trumped up price tag. We know a thing or two about the hunt—like how to seek out and capture an outstanding, collector's-quality knife that won't cut into your bank account.

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IT career paths

I CAN'T BELIEVE MY oldest son has started his senior year of high school. I couldn't be prouder of all his accomplishments. He's a member of the National Honor Society, has maintained high grades, ranked high in the state for his position in soccer, and has completed multiple AP courses for college credits. He is a motivated young man, but I was surprised at his answer when asked what he wanted to do for a career. You guessed it ... the typical "I don't know!" was the answer. Maybe that's not so surprising. When I was his age, my answer was exactly the same.

I remember a special day in high school when we completed exercises based on our personality types that identified what areas of work we would excel in. When the results came back, I was a match for technical skills. I knew I liked technology and working on computers, but I had no idea what type of education would suit me the best. If you or someone you know is considering entering the IT field, here are some directions to consider.

Information Technology and Information Systems is one of the top degree choices among those

who wish to enter a help desk type position dealing with end users, system/server administration or systems engineering. It broadly covers many different aspects of Information Technology.

Information Science gives you the necessary tools to manage and store data. Maintaining the confidentiality of high value data is a skill set needed by the government and private companies.

Computer Science is often pursued by both new and seasoned IT professionals. It can be a difficult program as it focuses on programming, math and theory. This degree will cover a broad range of IT skills and often complements an IT supervisor or manager position well.

Software Engineering is a good idea if you want to design and develop computer programs that meet users' needs and solves real-world problems. Phones, computers, tablets and even your vehicle are examples that would be useless without software that makes it a functional piece of equipment.

Computer Engineering primarily contributes to advanced developments in communications

and network technology. Computer engineers design systems and devices that have a significant impact on the world, such as in the manufacturing, medical, transportation and economic industries.

Computer Animation teaches how to use data structures and algorithms to animate everything from online games to medical-related graphics.

Cybersecurity continues to evolve and will be an ever-changing field of study. It teaches how to create, operate, analyze and test the security of computer and network systems. It also includes areas of interest like incident response, ethical hacking and digital forensics investigation.

Regardless which direction you plan to take, your education and training will never be finished if you decide to embark on a career in an IT field. I have been working in the industry for more than 20 years and have never stopped learning. For me, one of the greatest advantages of being an IT professional is the opportunity and need to continually learn. 💡



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



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Avoid hazards with grain bins

ELECTRICAL POWER IS AN indispensable part of modern agricultural operations. In fact, electricity is such a commonplace part of a farm operation that it can all too easily become a part of the scenery and its hazards overlooked.

One often overlooked safety consideration is the power line clearance required for grain bins. Safe Electricity provides tips on avoiding electrical hazards around the farm, including the construction of grain bins.

Electrical hazards include large equipment and farm structures near overhead power lines. The best way to avoid problems is to keep equipment and new construction a safe distance from power lines.

Equipment and vehicles, such as augers and grain trucks, around grain bins are at risk of contacting overhead power lines. It is important that bins be built a safe distance from power lines to

help ensure the safety of all farm workers.

The National Electrical Safety Code sets the minimum distance that power lines must be above and around grain bins. Your electric cooperative may have additional requirements. If planning on constructing a new grain bin, contact your electric co-op before any construction begins. They can help you determine minimum safety requirements.

Keep these additional safety tips in mind anytime you are operating large farm equipment around power lines:

- Always keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, contact your cooperative.

If equipment does make contact with a power line, remember to stay on the equipment until lineworkers arrive to de-energize the lines. Warn others to stay away and call 9-1-1 immediately.

The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away to safety.

For more electrical safety information, visit 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.

Efficient and safe farming technologies

AS FARMING TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES, farmers are finding new ways to reduce costs, improve efficiency and increase crop yields. The newest trend of technological advancements for farming is precision agriculture, a strategy where farmers use advanced technologies to control the growth of crops and raising of livestock more accurately and efficiently.

As precision agriculture has grown in recent years, the technologies have become even more technical and precise by using data analytics and machine learning. With a whole suite of benefits, like reduced costs, standardized data and metrics, and minimizing resource waste, it's no surprise that technologies and strategies for precision agriculture are becoming more commonplace.

The initial wave of precision agriculture in the 1980s was made possible by GPS (global positioning system) devices, which were first placed on tractors. GPS-connected devices could control a tractor and automatically steer it based on the field's GPS coordinates. This helped reduce any overlap while driving, making farming practices more efficient.

Beyond autonomous tractors, there have been many innovations in farming technologies that are part of precision agriculture. One technology is the crop-monitoring drone, which can take aerial views of fields and help give the farmer a bird's-eye view of their land. When combined with GIS (geographic information system), the drone can help analyze the geospatial field data in real-time for the farmer.

Using robotics for precision agriculture can be applied to many kinds of machines. For example, robotic milking machines can be used to automate the cow milking

process. These machines help farmers reduce their labor demands while also increasing efficiency, freeing up time for farmers to work



on other parts of their farm. Since the machines are optimized to work efficiently, they can also help to remove more milk per cow and provide more rest for the cows.

If farmers want to optimize crop production, then variable rate technology (VRT) can help. VRT allows the farmer to use a variable rate schedule for application of fertilizer or irrigation. Although there are several different options for using VRT, the basics consist of a computer, software, GPS and a controller. Using VRT helps farmers accurately measure water and fertilizer, save time and maximize irrigation and fertilization efficiency.

To properly use these new technologies, there are some important safety tips to consider. When learning to use any new technology, be sure to fully read the manual and understand the instructions before beginning any work. This can help farmers avoid preventable accidents.

Being aware of best safety practices when working with a specific technology is the best way to avoid accidents. Additionally, since these

technologies are digital, the threat of cybersecurity comes into play. Appropriate use of any USB thumb drives and being aware of spear-phishing cyberattacks will help prevent malicious entities from gaining access to the farmer's confidential data.

Although the benefits are clear, there are a few barriers to using these new agricultural technologies. Having a well-established broadband connection is crucial for some of these technologies, and a lack of high-speed internet access can limit the use of precision agriculture technologies. Furthermore, using precision agriculture comes with a relatively large upfront financial investment, which may not provide a return on investment quickly enough to the farm.

Before incorporating precision agriculture technology into any farm, planning and preparation will be crucial to make the best use of the technology. 💡

Alexander Frick, Jr., co-owner of Frick Farms, LLC., uses a smart device to review data and plans his customized seed application for the day. Photo Source: Lance Cheung, USDA



Maria Kanevsky is a program manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing more than 900 local electric cooperatives.

Time to plant spring bulbs

FALL IS OFTEN THE time we put garden tools away as many perennial plants are preparing to brown and go dormant, but it is the perfect time to plan next spring's floral display and plant spring-flowering bulbs.

daily. Mix them in with other perennials and shrubs to screen the foliage after blooms fade.

The general rule of thumb when planting is to bury them two to three times deeper than the length of the bulb, measured top to bot-

tom. Mix them in with other perennials and shrubs to screen the foliage after blooms fade. The general rule of thumb when planting is to bury them two to three times deeper than the length of the bulb, measured top to bot-



The best time to plant spring bulbs is late September through October to allow sufficient time for a good root system to develop before winter. Depending on the location, spring bulbs begin blooming in late February (snowdrops) and continue until late June (alliums).

When purchasing bulbs, keep in mind that larger bulbs will produce larger blooms. Bulbs should be firm and free of rotting spots or signs of disease. Check out garden centers and online bulb retailers early for the best selection.

For the greatest visual impact, plant bulbs in groupings and large drifts or waves of color in areas that receive at least 8 hours of sunlight

tom. Bulbs should be spaced 6 to 12 inches apart to allow for spreading and future divisions. Make sure to plant with the nose of the bulb (pointy side) facing upward, and the root plate (flatter side) facing downward.

After covering the planted bulbs with soil, water the area well to settle the bulbs into the soil and initiate root development. If there is little rain during the fall, continue to water weekly until the ground freezes. Adding a light, 2-inch layer of mulch to the soil after planting can help minimize temperature fluctuations in the winter and conserve moisture in the soil.

To prevent pesky squirrels and chipmunks from digging up your

tasting tulip and crocus bulbs but will usually avoid digging up daffodils, alliums, scilla and hyacinth.

Get a head start on your spring-blooming porch pots by layering bulbs in a container now to overwinter outside. Layer the bulbs like lasagna – the largest bulbs are placed in the bottom of the container (with a drainage hole), add 2 inches of potting soil on top of the bulbs and then plant the next sized bulbs. Continue with three to four layers to create a dramatic and colorful arrangement next spring. Use the container of soil and bulbs as a base this winter for an evergreen arrangement or decor. 💡



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.

Enter online at 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.

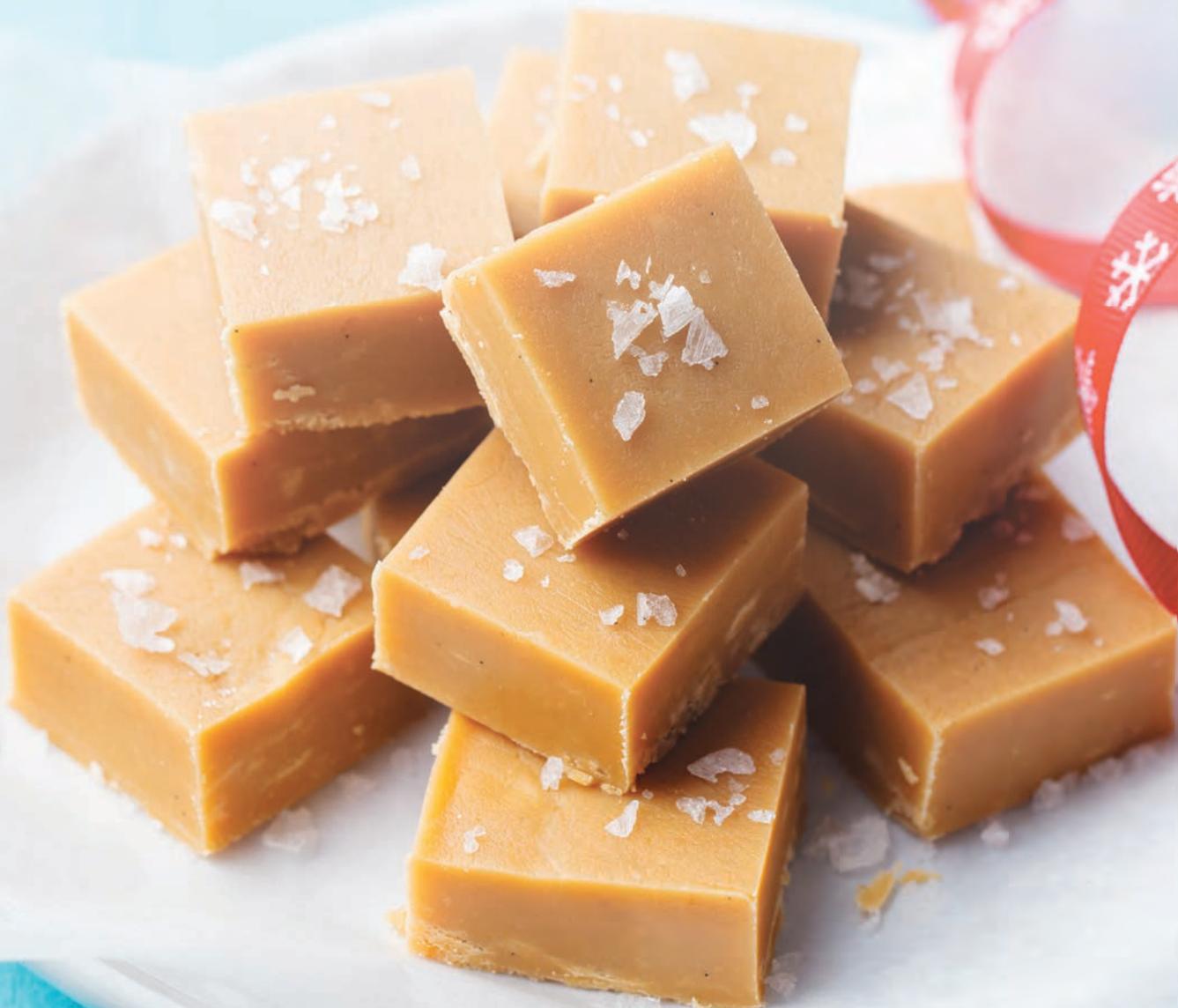
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The very first registered Little Free Library located at the organization's headquarters in Hudson, Wis.

Take a **BOOK** Leave a **BOOK** by Lisa Cherry

THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN Illinois have joined an international book-sharing movement, one that began with a son's simple but poignant tribute to his mother, who had been a teacher and avid reader. Todd Bol built a model of a one-room schoolhouse, placed it on a post in his yard and filled it with books that friends and neighbors were encouraged to borrow.

In 2012, three years following the installation of that library in Hudson, Wis., Bol co-founded a nonprofit organization called Little Free Library with Rick Brooks, based on the two men's shared passion for social enterprise. The library built in honor of Bol's mother would later be officially registered as the first Little Free Library book exchange. Today the model schoolhouse can be found at the organization's headquarters.

According to Margret Aldrich, director of communications for the nonprofit, of the 125,000 Little Free Library book exchanges that now exist worldwide, there are more than 2,700 registered in Illinois alone. An interactive map on the organization's website shows

the locations along with charter numbers and origin stories for many of them.

Those stories vary, from similar tributes to loved ones to book lovers invested in their communities and boy scouts and girl scouts earning badges for community service. Some libraries have been set up by teachers and former educators, others by rotary clubs and former librarians. Many of them offer access to free reading material in small towns and rural areas where resources are otherwise limited.

Aldrich says it was "magic" when the two co-founders met and collaborated on the ways they could actualize their desire to create a network that would both inspire readers and build community. She says in the beginning they gave materials away to fuel the movement. Word of mouth and press opportunities originally put the concept in front of people, but Aldrich says it was the internet and social media that gave participants the opportunity to share visually appealing photos of their creations and ultimately expand the reach of the movement.



A Little Free Library installed by Boy Scout Troop 58 in Rochester.



Schoolhouse themed library in Ridgway



Library located on the south end of Springfield



A repurposed owl house turned library at the McCully Heritage Project in rural Kampsville.



"I really believe in a Little Free Library on every block and a book in every hand. I believe people can fix their neighborhoods, fix their communities, develop systems of sharing, learn from each other, and see that they have a better place on this planet to live."

Todd Bol
Little Free Library Founder

Aldrich authored the book "The Little Free Library" in 2015 and joined the organization a year later. "Our mission is expanding book access where there is none," she says, adding that they recently registered a library on the South Pole and now have Little Free Libraries on all seven continents.

While getting to hear and share the stories of Little Free Library stewards around the world is her favorite part of the job, Aldrich also enjoys witnessing the creativity of those who get involved—from little libraries built to resemble rocket ships and Victorian mansions to hollowed out tree trunks visitors can actually enter.

That creativity can be seen in the Little Free Libraries across Illinois. In 2016, Bill and Katie Disney built one in Ridgway. Katie had seen little libraries in different parts of the country, and a friend told her more about the idea behind them. She says her husband Bill, a retired school administrator who knows the value of reading, is also a skilled woodworker, which turned out to be fortuitous. He embraced her idea, building a library to serve all ages in their agricultural area.

"One end is a schoolhouse with kids' books, and the other side [for adults] is a barn, representing our farming community," she says. "There's a little plastic dog on the school's porch, like old country schools." In the beginning, she adds, "we had no idea how it worked." But, with no library in the small town of 900, she says theirs has worked wonderfully and never runs out of books.

Sometimes that creativity can be found in the location, as with the Little Free Library located in front of the Davie School Inn in Anna. Owner Lyle Woodrum gave it to his wife Tammy, fellow owner and book lover, for her birthday. "We thought it would be a nice fit in front of an actual school," he says.

Built in 1910, the former elementary school closed in the late 1990s and is now a bed and breakfast serving guests exploring southern Illinois. Lyle adds that they've had a lot of fun with the

library. "It's nice to see how many people in town take it upon themselves to restock it, unbeknownst to us." Even with snow on the ground, he says, people stop by to donate books.

They aren't the only ones who have received a positive response from their community. Lorachelle Eck, patron services manager of the public library located in Rochester, says they have seen an awesome community response to the two locations local boy scouts installed in town. "We went daily at first," she said. "Now we don't have to maintain them. They are pretty much self-sufficient." The first structure was built by the library staff at a Little Free Library "Build Day" held at the Illinois State Library, the second was constructed by library board member Dave Hicks.



The Little Free Library located at the Davie School Inn in Anna.

Allison Robison, a librarian for Goreville School District in southern Illinois and member of Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative, has shared a similar experience. She and her husband, the high school ag teacher and FFA advisor, have worked together with students to create not one, but three libraries for the community. “I had read about them in the Sunday paper years ago,” Allison says. “His class builds them, and I paint them.”

According to their entry on the Little Free Library world map, “Our small community of less than 1,000 has never had a public library. With the manpower and skills of the high school agriculture students and FFA members, we now have a Little Free Library near the school so that all community members have a safe, easily accessible library. Students and citizens have donated hundreds of books to make this successful.”

The first of the three libraries is located near the school and has been functional for about six years. “There’s no library in town, and the school is the main hub,” she says, adding that people living in outlying areas not within walking distance of the school began requesting ones closer to them. Allison says she only checks them every three to four months, that they for the most part maintain themselves, with the exception of storm or structural damage. A fourth location may also be in the works at the behest of a fellow teacher and owner of the gym in town.

Little Free Libraries can be found in more remote locations as well, like the one standing on the end of the lane to the barn on No Bad Days Farm in Shelbyville, on Shelby Electric Cooperative lines. The small hobby farm, run by Kenny and Stephanie Swengel, their two daughters and their husbands, began as a way to honor their late son and brother, Tucker. “No bad days” was his motto. “He was the whole reason we did it at all,” says Stephanie. “It helps with the grieving, hands in the dirt, helping others.”

Stephanie says the library was a perfect addition. “I had seen one before, but I wasn’t sure where. I thought it was a neat idea,” she says. In the two years since its construction, they have noticed donations, even in their rural area, from passers-through on their way

to Lake Shelbyville and from their small subdivision of 16 houses.

The McCully Heritage Project, an environmental center in rural Kampsville, located on Illinois Electric Cooperative lines, is yet another unanticipated location for a Little Free Library, the books contained in a repurposed owl house. “Our board members thought it was a really good idea,” says Michelle Berg Vogel. “There’s not a lot of access to libraries and there are always books coming through the office.”

She says they stock all kinds of books, but some are pertinent to their mission of providing quality environmental education and the opportunity for the public to appreciate the cultural, historical and natural resources of the lower Illinois River valley. Visitors can also occasionally find puzzles and seeds in the former owl house. Their library was installed in July 2019 and continues to function despite a devastating flood to the area one year and the COVID-19 pandemic the next.

Occasionally issues like these arise, as they did for Heyworth Library near Bloomington. Assistant Librarian Jacque Stengel says their board wanted to do something for the community—the result was a Little Free Library in Heyworth Centennial Park, established about a year ago. Unfortunately, recent flooding prevented access for a time.

Still, “you find them everywhere, sometimes where you least expect,” says Lindy Schenk, a member of Adams Electric Cooperative and a Title 1 teacher in Astoria, who helps children in several grades with reading. A local woodworker built her Little Free Library with a roof that looks like the spine and pages of an open book. “I thought it was a cool touch,” she says.

Lindy says anything counts and she has seen all kinds of designs—wood, shingles, even benches for little kids to stand on and look inside. Her library has two sides, one for kids and one for readers of all ages. While she curates most of the children’s collection through places like Scholastic, she says the adults in town do most of the donating for the rest.

“Put it somewhere you can monitor,” she says. “You can get some good from it, too.” Lindy also suggests adding



One of the little libraries built by high school ag students in Goreville.



The little library located in Heyworth Centennial Park.



Lindy Schenk with her Little Free Library



One of several little libraries in Rochester



Library located at Bremer Sanctuary in Montgomery County

personal touches. She might put out a canister of bookmarks or even snacks if she knows her students are coming by. “Think unique—cookbooks, magazines, puzzles.”

She adds that a person doesn’t have to be a reader to get enjoyment out of one, and there are tons of ideas online to personalize the structure and create a unique experience, including leaving sticky notes for mini book reviews or a guestbook for visitors to sign. Hers is about the size of a doghouse, suspended in air. “Mine is a ‘go big or go home,’” she says. “There’s room for everything in there.”

According to Little Free Library’s Margret Aldrich, there is a one-time fee of \$40 to register a Little Free Library. The fee pays for a charter sign and other benefits, including access to book giveaways and free and reduced-cost titles, as well as access to a private Facebook site where stewards can find answers to questions, advice from other library owners and the opportunity to connect with others in their own community and beyond. “New stewards have said they meet more neighbors in a week than they have in years,” she says.

Illinois Little Free Library stewards have a few tips to share with people interested in

participating. Katie Disney says that old and torn books garner less interest; Lindy Schenk recommends some sort of UV protection if books will be exposed to sunlight, or they will fade. Some owners and communities have installed sensors and/or cameras to monitor activity. Almost all say there is no need to worry about the flow of books in and out.

For those interested in joining the book-sharing movement, a wealth of information can be found at littlefreelibrary.org, including library plans and installation tips. Other resources to aid in the process are an online store featuring library kits, book bundles, signs and accessories, as well as ways to donate.

Prior to Little Free Library Founder Todd Bol’s passing in 2018, he was quoted as saying, “I really believe in a Little Free Library on every block and a book in every hand. I believe people can fix their neighborhoods, fix their communities, develop systems of sharing, learn from each other, and see that they have a better place on this planet to live.” Through their individual efforts, Little Free Library stewards in Illinois and around the world are making his vision a reality. 📖

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY PROGRAMS

Read in Color: Launched in 2020, the Read in Color initiative promotes diversity in the reading selections made available to readers through Little Free Library book exchanges, in hopes that people will have the opportunity to read of experiences other than their own and that readers in underrepresented communities will see their own worlds reflected as well. For more information, visit littlefreelibrary.org/read-in-color/.

The Impact Library Program: This program was designed to provide no-cost Little Free Library book exchanges in areas where books are scarce. More than 1,350 libraries have been provided through this initiative. To find out how to donate or to apply for a library, visit littlefreelibrary.org/impact-about/.

Why does the snake cross the road?



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA VOSSLER

By Les O'Dell

LIKE MANY OTHER COUNTRY roads in Illinois, Forest Service Road 345 is a simple gravel lane running north and south, shaded by long-standing timber. While the 2.7-mile-long road, nestled in the LaRue-Pine Hills area of the Shawnee National Forest, might be described as off the beaten path, it is, however, known for its traffic.

Not cars nor trucks; not bicycles, hikers or even horses. Snakes have made Forest Service Road 345, or better known as Snake Road, famous.

Snake traffic on Snake Road is so prevalent that the Forest Service closes the road to vehicles and horses for two months each spring and fall so the reptiles can make their semi-annual trek from one seasonal habitat to another.

"I know of no other place where you can go to such a small geographical location – a 2.7 mile stretch of road – and possibly see 23 species of snakes crossing the road," explains U.S. Forest Service Wildlife Biologist Mark Vukovich. "I think it's very unique, not only in the forest service, but maybe in all of North America."

Scott Ballard says the Union County area, not far from the Mississippi River, is special because it is a place where two distinct territories overlap.

"It is kind of at a crossroads," Ballard, herpetologist with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, explains. It lies where a lot of northern species reach the southern edge of their geographic range and where a lot of southern species reach the northern edge of their range. It's the most diverse herpetological area in the entire state of Illinois and probably the Midwest.

In addition to being an associate professor and academic librarian at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Joshua Vossler is an amateur herpetologist. He is the author of *Snake Road: A Field Guide to the Snakes of LaRue-Pine Hills*. He says the geography of the area around Forest Service Road 345 is important as well.

"This stretch of road is really special because it is the intersection point between multiple major habitats," he explains. "On the east side of the road is the limestone Pine Hills Bluff.



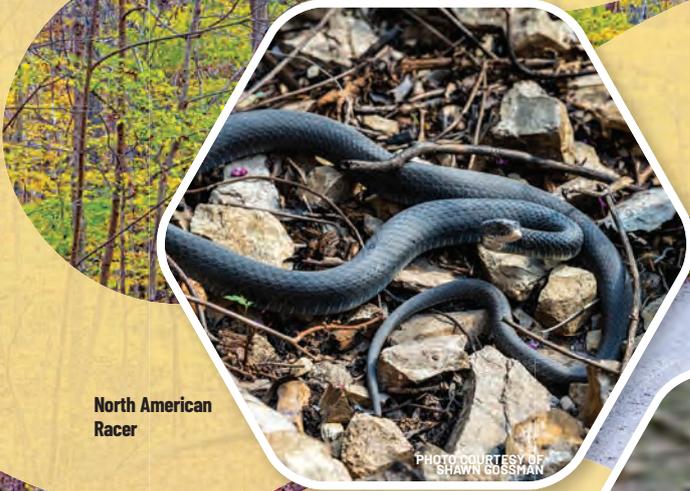
The Northern Cottonmouth, is the most commonly observed species of snake at Snake Road.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA VOSSLER



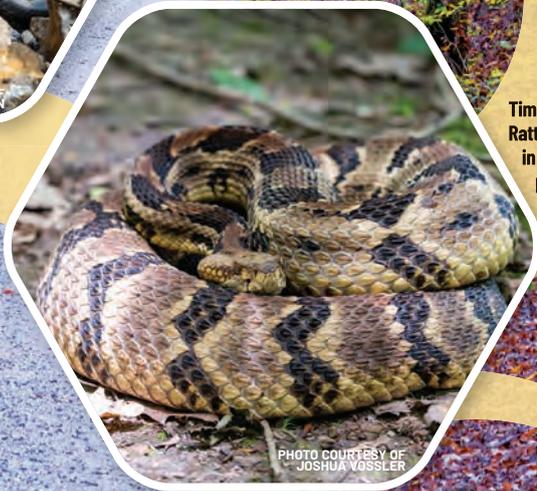
Ring-necked snake

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHAWN GOSSMAN



North American Racer

PHOTO COURTESY OF SHAWN GOSSMAN



Timber Rattlesnake in defensive posture

PHOTO COURTESY OF JOSHUA VOSSLER

On the other side lies LaRue swamp and all this variety of habitats where various species can find great places to live in a very tiny area.”

Why do the snakes cross the road?

First, it's not just snakes. For a variety of creatures, the road just happens to be in between where they spend their summers and the places they hibernate.

“In the fall, many of the snakes, salamanders, frogs and lizards that live in the area migrate across the road to find safety in the bluffs over winter. In spring, they leave the bluffs to go wherever it is that they will feed and spend the summer,” Ballard says.

So, they cross the road in quantities so numerous they not only can be regularly seen on their journey, but also enough to necessitate closing the road so they can make it across.

“The migration is significant enough that the Forest Service closes the road to everything but foot traffic for two months each spring and fall. Because it's a road, it's clear of debris and vegetation and that allows us to see all of these animals going about their lives. It's arguably the most accessible place to go snake watching in the country and possibly the world,” Ballard adds.

Forest Service regulations require the road be closed March 15 through May 15 and from the beginning of September through October. If snake traffic is heavy, the closure may be extended.

Expectations vs. reality

Those who have never visited Snake Road may envision a long ribbon of snakes, nose to tail, making their way across the road. While that's unrealistic, odds are visitors will see snakes.

“A lot of people who have come have been disappointed,” Vossler says. “That stems from wildly inappropriate expectations of what Snake Road has to offer. They thought the road would be so covered in snakes that you couldn't see the gravel . . . that it was a living carpet of snakes, but that's just not it.”

Ballard says with a grin, “It's not like one snake gets down there and sees the road is closed then signals all the others to come on across. It's not a constant stream.”

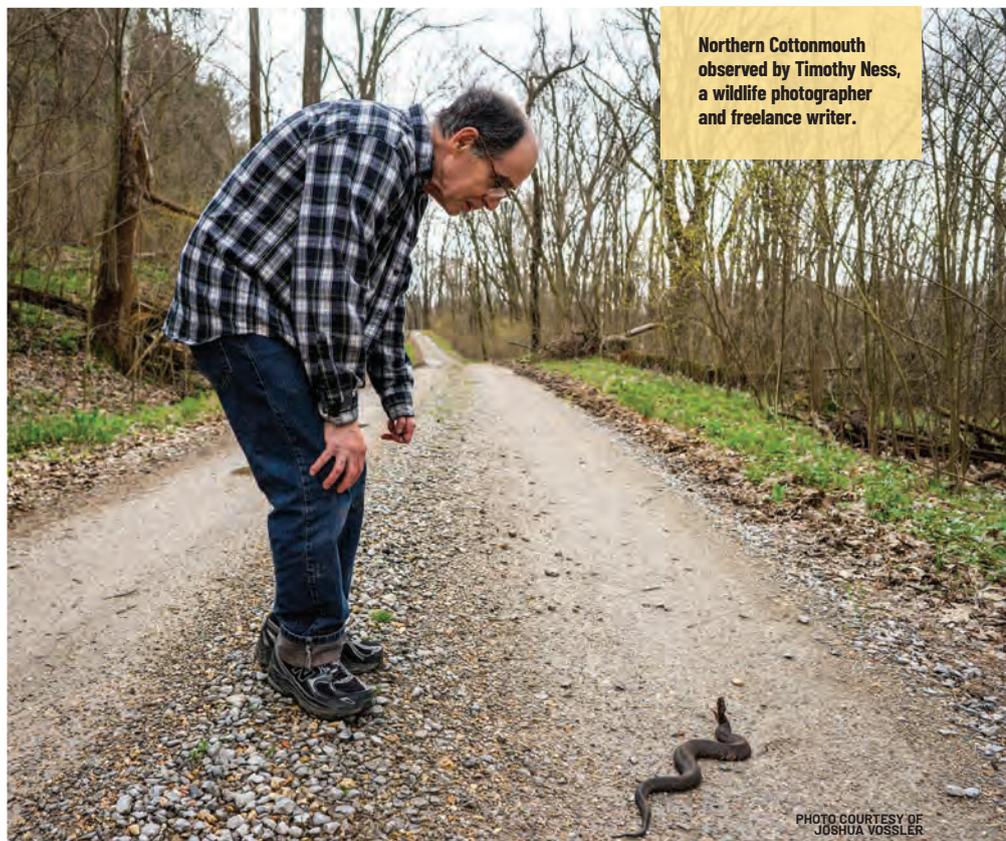
That being said, the odds snake watchers will see snakes are high. And likely they'll see a wide variety of them.

Vossler says on one trip to Snake Road in the fall several years ago, he saw a snake, on average, every couple of minutes during a 6-hour stay.

“I know of people who have seen 200 to 300 snakes in one walk, but it's not a river of serpents flowing down from the

bluff and across the road,” he adds. “Bottom line is that if you go during the migration period and you walk the entire length of the road, you'll probably see between 12 and 16 different snakes of three or four different species.”

All told, there are more than 20 species of snakes in the area says Shawn Gossman, whose popular “Hiking with Shawn” YouTube channel features nearly 1,000 videos of outdoor excursions in southern Illinois. “That includes three venomous species like the cottonmouth. You're likely to see more of those than anything else.”



If you go

Ballard explains that visitors to Snake Road should keep to the road itself and its shoulders, avoiding the bluffs and wooded areas. He recommends footwear that covers the ankle as well as blue jeans or other long pants.

“If you were to mistakenly step on a venomous snake, it's probably going to strike in the ankle. If you're wearing flip-flops and shorts, it's going to be a problem.”

He stresses while people are welcome to watch the snakes and photograph them, harassing or collecting them is illegal, adding that authorities will press charges for breaking the law.

“It's a very fragile ecosystem and everyone must respect the habitat there,” Ballard says. 💡



From left, Jube Manderico, Chris Lain and Jocelyn Boyd.



Circa 1888's "build your own" quarter-pound grass-fed burger. Pick your favorite toppings; add an egg and call it breakfast.



The Cubano



Rhubarb Coolers

Circa 1888

By Peggy Francomb

WITH ITS URBAN FARMHOUSE flavor, casual environment and Mississippi River views from the deck seating, Circa 1888 is a wonderful addition to the dining choices in Savannah. Located in a thoughtfully restored building on the river town's Main Street, Circa 1888 features homemade food from fresh and often locally sourced ingredients.

Owners Chris Lain and husband, Jube Manderico, moved to Savannah in 2013 from the northside Chicago neighborhood of Lincoln Square. "We always wanted a business, so I said, 'Let's start something,'" Chris says.

Their first Main Street enterprise was The Marketplace, a coffee shop and general store with locally designed and handcrafted goods. A couple years later, they decided to expand. "The idea with the restaurant was we wanted to own a historic building on Main Street, redeveloping something that had been let go for a long time," Chris says. "The other portion was when going to dinner with friends, we would leave town. We thought if we're doing that, there's a whole demographic. That's where the idea took shape."

Located at 305 Main Street and on Jo-Carroll Energy lines, Circa 1888 takes its name from the history of the building. Originally opened in 1888 as a billiard hall and tavern, the building was built by William Stedler, a shoemaker from New York, who owned multiple buildings in Savannah including much of the block where

the restaurant is located. The building became many things over the years.

When Chris and Jube purchased the building, it had been vacant for 10 to 13 years and was in disrepair.

"When we met our realtor for the final walk through, it was raining in the kitchen as we walked in," Chris recalls. "She said we could still get out of it. We looked at each other. Jube said, 'We still want this,' and she said, 'You two are crazy.'"

Doing much of the work themselves, they took three years to get the building back to where they were able to open. Countless hours were spent on demolition, painting and working on hands and knees to restore the original hardwood floors that had been covered with two layers of carpet and plywood.

The renovated storefront features the original windows from the post office in Mount Carroll. "I think that is cool because during prohibition, this was the post office," Chris notes.

Inside, exposed brick walls, restored hardwood floors and an original tin ceiling give Circa 1888 a comfortable atmosphere. A gorgeous brick arch, uncovered as old drywall was torn out, divides the dining area from the kitchen. A short hallway leads to a cozy deck, a great spot to enjoy river views and a meal with friends.

"This is the place where when you come in and have dinner, you get to talk with one

of the owners,” says Chris, who is also the mayor. “When we travel, it’s important to us that we go someplace that the owner is going to be there, it’s not a chain, it’s local and that money is staying in the local economy.”

Billed as an urban farmhouse kitchen, Chris explains they wanted to have an urban feel in the small town. “We feel even though it’s a rural area, it is still a downtown location,” he says. “We also wanted everything to be fresh and made from scratch. That’s where Jocelyn comes in.”

The main cook at the restaurant is Jocelyn Boyd, who worked with Chris in Chicago and is now a partner in Circa 1888. Although she has previous restaurant experience as a server, as a cook she describes herself as “mom and grandma taught.”

With the menu, they wanted to do something that was fresh food, not bar food, taking modern classics and giving them a twist. You’ll find a grilled cheese on the menu, but it’s grilled cheese with white cheddar and two fried green tomatoes – a different, more flavorful option.

Because of a small kitchen and everything made from scratch, the menu is smaller. Ingredients for the dishes are sourced locally, when possible.

“It’s like Christmas Day for me when people come in with their boxes of produce and I see what we have to work with,” Jocelyn says. “When you come to dinner here, the vegetable of the day will be whatever the local farmer brought in that morning.”

While the menu changes seasonally, steaks are always on the menu. Circa 1888 offers a 12-ounce ribeye and 8-ounce sirloin, both Black Angus, and a half-pound grass-fed burger. You’ll also find their

signature sandwich, the Cubano, a flavorful authentic Cuban sandwich featuring pork that is marinated for a couple days and slow roasted in the kitchen.

Appetizers include bone-in chicken wings and catfish bites, which come from the fish market in Fulton. Flatbreads are another popular item with the Chicago dog being a favorite.

The menu also caters to gluten-free diners. Circa 1888 has a large following who often drive one or two hours to have dinner. Buns, hoagie rolls, white and multi-grain gluten-free breads are sourced from a Missouri bakery that specializes in gluten-free. Gluten-free flatbread is made from scratch in the kitchen. Even the chicken wings have a gluten-free option.

Everything on the dessert menu is also homemade. Cheesecake is almost always on the menu while the rest changes seasonally. Last summer’s dessert offerings featured a strawberry icebox pie along with a buttermilk vanilla cake with orange frosting served with edible orchids and red raspberries.

An extensive beer and wine list is available as well as seasonal cocktails. Thursday night is half-price bottles night for wine.

“We think this was a great addition to the town,” Chris says of the business. “What I love most is we’re starting to see a lot more diversity as far as in our businesses. A lot of people see Savanna as a motorcycle town, but we’re seeing the different kinds of travelers and tourists coming into town. Different businesses starting to open is really great to see. I don’t know if we had anything to do with that or if it was just good timing, but it’s great to see so many options and different things.”



LET'S EAT!

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Outdoor dining with a river view is one of Circa 1888's biggest draws.

Time oat

OATS CAN BE USED for much more than a hot bowl of porridge in the morning. Whether quick, rolled or steel cut, the versatile ingredient is not only used for breakfast, but for desserts and entrees too. On top of that, oats aren't bad for you either. Not only are they high in vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, they are a great source of fiber too. 💡



EASY PEACH CRISP

PHOTO COURTESY OF OLDWAYS



WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming monthly to pics

Quick breads and muffins

Irish-inspired meals

Pecans

Please email submissions to finestcooking@icl.coop or mail them to Finest Cooking c/o Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Please include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Recipes not included in the magazine can be found on our website at icl.coop/finestcooking.



Recipes prepared, tasted and photographed by Illinois Country Living staff. For more recipes and photos go to www.icl.coop. Questions? Email finestcooking@aiec.coop.

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

Mediterranean Meatloaf

Submitted by Janice McNeely, Illinois Electric Cooperative

Servings: 6

1/4 cup sun dried tomatoes

1 10-ounce package frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained

1/2 cup chopped onion

1/4 cup crumbled feta cheese

1 1/2 pounds lean ground turkey

1 cup oats (quick or old fashioned, uncooked)

1 teaspoon garlic powder

1 teaspoon dried oregano

1/2 teaspoon salt, optional

1/4 teaspoon black pepper

1/2 cup skim milk

Heat oven to 400 F. Soften tomatoes according to package directions. Set aside. Cook and stir spinach and onion in small skillet over low heat, 4-5 minutes or until onion is tender. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Stir in cheese and set aside. Combine turkey, oats, garlic powder, oregano, salt, pepper, milk and reserved tomatoes in large bowl. Mix lightly but thoroughly. Shape 2/3 of turkey mixture into 9X6-inch loaf pan and place on rack of broiler pan. Make deep indentation down center of loaf leaving 1 1/2 inches around edges. Fill with spinach mixture. Top with remaining turkey mixture. Seal edges to completely enclose filling. Bake 30-35 minutes or until meat juices run clear. Let stand 5 minutes before slicing. Nutrition information: 265 calories; 11.2g fat; 411mg sodium; 14.8g carbohydrates; 27.5g protein.

Easy Peach Crisp

Courtesy of: Oldways, oldwayspt.org

Servings: 2

1 teaspoon butter

1/2 cup rolled oats

1 teaspoon sugar

1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

2 cups peaches, diced (or apples, berries, etc.)

1 tablespoon olive oil

Vanilla frozen yogurt, optional for serving

Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease a 6 1/2-inch cast iron skillet with butter. In a small bowl, toss the oats with cinnamon, sugar and olive oil. Put the fruit in the skillet and top with the oat mixture. Bake 35 minutes until fruit is bubbly and oats are golden. Let cool for 5-10 minutes. Top with a scoop of vanilla frozen yogurt, if desired. Nutrition information: 220 calories; 10g fat; 0mg sodium; 30g carbohydrates; 3g protein.

Oats, Veggies and Egg Scramble

Submitted by Komala Mathibal, Corn Belt Energy Corporation

Servings: 2

- 1 tablespoon cooking oil
- 1/2 small onion, finely chopped
- 1/2 cup chopped mixed veggies (carrots, beans, corn, green beans, peas, capsicum, your choice)
- Salt, to taste
- 1 cup quick oats
- 2 eggs, beaten
- Pepper, to taste
- Lemon juice, to taste
- Chopped coriander or parsley, optional

Heat oil in pan on medium-low heat until hot. Add onions and veggies, and sauté for a minute. Cover and cook for 3 to 4 minutes until the veggies are tender. Stir in salt and oats and cook 2 minutes. Add beaten eggs and scramble until eggs and oats are cooked. Add pepper, turn off heat and squeeze in some lemon juice. Sprinkle top with coriander or parsley leaves. Nutrition information: 315 calories; 14.1g fat; 158mg sodium; 35.7g carbohydrates; 12.4g protein.

PB&J Overnight Oatmeal

Courtesy of: Oldways, oldwayspt.org

Servings: 4

- 1 1/2 cups frozen wild blueberries
- 2 tablespoons plus 2 teaspoons chia seeds, divided
- 2 cups rolled oats
- 3 cups unsweetened vanilla almond milk
- 4 pitted dates
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter

Add 1 1/2 cups frozen wild blueberries and 1 tablespoon water to a large microwavable bowl and heat for 2-3 minutes on high. The berries should look goopy. (You may also warm them on the stove.) Once heated, add 4 teaspoons of chia seeds to the bowl, stir well, and set in the refrigerator to chill for 15-20 minutes. The chia seeds will form a gel and thicken up the blueberries into a jelly-like texture. While the blueberry jam is chilling, set out 4 jars (12.5 oz or larger) and fill each jar with 1/2 cup rolled oats and 1 teaspoon chia seeds. In a blender, add 3 cups unsweetened vanilla almond milk, 4 dates and 2 tablespoons peanut butter, and blend until well combined. Evenly pour the almond milk mixture into the 4 jars and stir well. Once the blueberry chia jam has thickened in the refrigerator, evenly spoon it into the four jars. Then cover with a lid and refrigerate overnight, or at least 6 hours, before serving. This recipe keeps for up to a week in the fridge and can be made a few days ahead of time. Nutrition information: 320 calories; 11g fat; 0mg sodium; 45g carbohydrates; 9g protein.



OATS, VEGGIES AND EGG SCRAMBLE

Whole Grain Blueberry Muffins

Courtesy of: Oldways, oldwayspt.org

Servings: 12

- 3 tablespoons canola oil
- 1/2 cup pure maple syrup
- 1 cup plain low-fat yogurt (regular or Greek)
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 1/3 cups whole wheat pastry flour
- 1 cup rolled oats
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup fresh or frozen blueberries

Preheat oven to 400 F and prepare a 12-cup standard muffin tin with spray, butter and flour, or paper baking cups. Measure the oil into a measuring cup, then add the maple syrup. (The syrup slips easily from the measuring cup due to the oil.) Pour oil and syrup into a large bowl, then add yogurt, egg and vanilla. Beat vigorously with a spoon or whisk until everything is well mixed. In a separate bowl, thoroughly combine all dry ingredients except the blueberries. Then stir the dry ingredients and blueberries into the wet ingredients until moistened. Spoon the batter into the muffin tin, filling each cup just short of the top. Bake 18-20 minutes until tops are browned and a toothpick comes out clean. Remove from oven and cool 10 minutes before removing to a cooling rack. Nutrition information: 170 calories; 4.5g fat; 270mg sodium; 27g carbohydrates; 5g protein.



PHOTO COURTESY OF OLDWAYS

Don't veer for deer

AS FALL PROGRESSES, ILLINOIS drivers will soon be seeing an increase in deer/vehicle collisions. As the leaves begin to change and cooler temperatures prevail, the Illinois

2019. A driver in the state had a 1-in-144 chance of having a collision, up from a 1-in-200 chance in 2018.

There are close to 1.5 million deer-caused car crashes annually,

375, Fulton 346, Peoria 340, Kane 337, Rock Island 318, Jackson 288 and Bureau 285.

If you hit a deer, pull off to the shoulder, turn on your hazard lights

and call 911 to report the accident. Do not exit the vehicle to check on an injured deer or pull it from the road.

“Deer populations are common in both rural and urban areas, which mean deer-vehicle collisions can happen anywhere,” said IDNR Director Colleen Callahan.

“Remember, if you do hit a deer, report the accident to local law enforcement or a conservation police officer. They can help control traffic, clear the roadway, or in the event the animal must be euthanized.”

You can take possession of a road killed deer for your personal consumption. Only Illinois residents may claim a road killed deer in the state. For more information visit dnr.illinois.gov/hunting/deer.

To report possession of a deer killed in a deer-vehicle crash, fill out the form at tinyurl.com/dnrdeer. There is no limit to the number of deer possessed under these circumstances. No part of a deer so killed can be bartered or sold. Except for law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties, it is illegal to kill a deer crippled by a collision with a motor vehicle or by methods other than lawful hunting, unless permission has been obtained from a conservation police officer. 



Department of Transportation and Illinois Department of Natural Resources are reminding residents to watch out for deer. With autumn comes deer mating season, which is a time of increased activity at dawn and dusk peaking in October through December.

“We are beginning our peak season for deer-vehicle crashes,” said Illinois Transportation Secretary Omer Osman. “We ask all drivers to keep a watchful eye and remember the cardinal rule: don't veer for deer. While the urge to swerve is instinctual, it could cause you to lose control of your vehicle or drive into oncoming traffic, increasing the severity of a crash.”

According to State Farm Insurance, Illinois ranked 34th in the nation for deer-vehicle accidents in

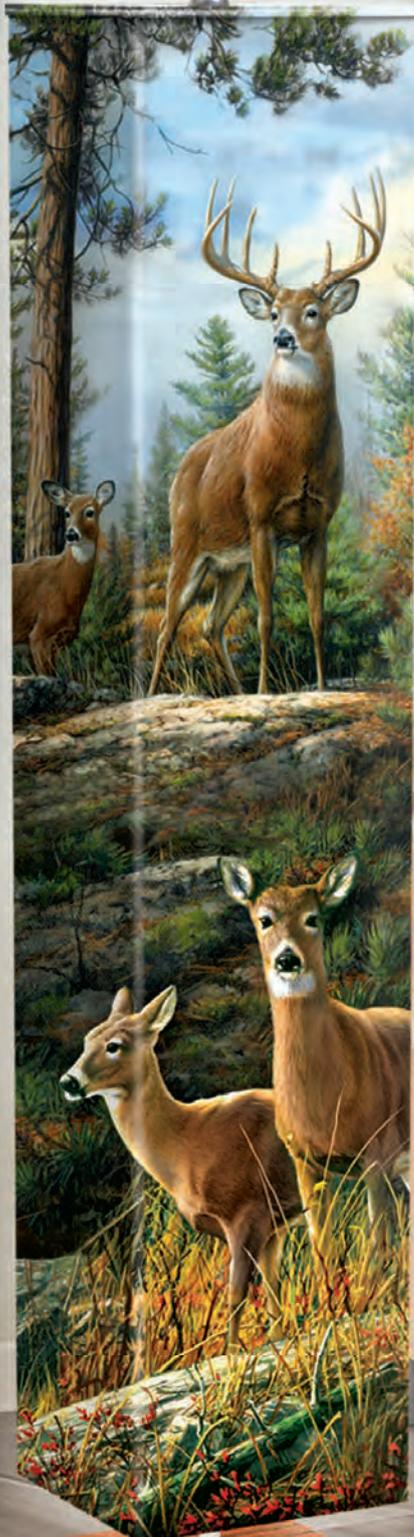
with most of them occurring in the Midwest. The number has increased over the last few years.

In 2019, a total of 16,213 crashes involved deer in Illinois. Of these, 15,605 resulted in damage to property or vehicles, while 604 caused personal injuries. Four of the crashes were fatal.

More than 40 percent of crashes involving deer in Illinois occurred in October, November and December, with November being the highest-risk month. Rural environments were the site of more than 90 percent of all motor vehicle crashes involving deer, with more than 70 percent occurring at twilight or nighttime. The top 10 Illinois counties for crashes involving deer in 2019: Cook 472, Madison 434, Sangamon 406, Will



Jack Spaulding is an outdoors writer. Readers can contact the author by writing to this publication or email 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.



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Let Us Count the Ways (They Work)

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Here are the four main types of electric cars:



HEVs

Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs) have been on the market the longest. HEVs include a small battery pack that is not charged by plugging it in, but rather the pack is charged by the internal combustion engine or the braking process. HEVs are not powered solely by batteries at any given time.



BEVs a.k.a. EVs

Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) (also known as EVs) do not rely on any gasoline to run and have zero tailpipe emissions. EV operators plug their vehicles into their home electric grid or a public charging station to charge. BEVs also generate electricity from braking, similar to HEVs, and use this as a secondary energy source.



PLUG-INS

Plug-in hybrid EVs run on both battery power and gasoline and have much smaller battery packs than BEVs. The all-battery range in these vehicles is typically between five and 30 miles, and then the internal combustion engine is responsible for anything beyond that. Plug-in hybrids reduce emissions for short trips around town; longer trips are powered by gasoline.



REHs

Range Extender Hybrid EVs (REHs) function the same way as plug-ins, but they have higher battery ranges due to design differences. Examples include the BMW i3 and the discontinued Chevrolet Volt. Some can drive more than 50 miles on a single charge.



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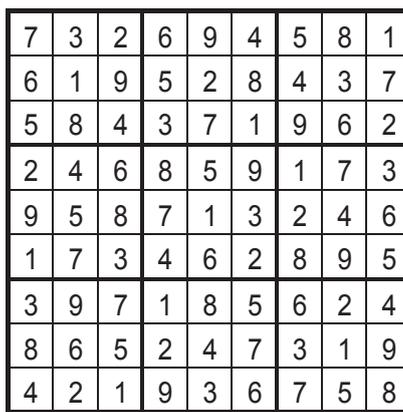
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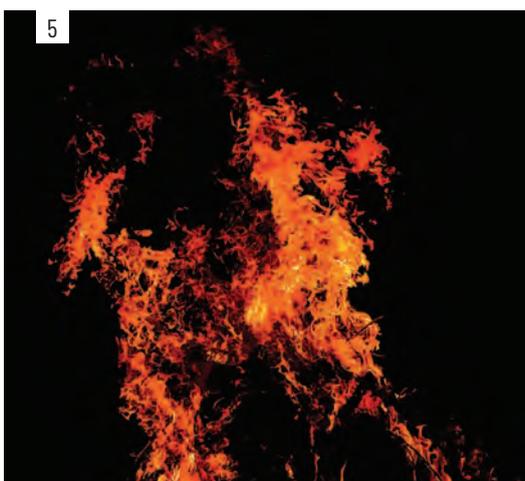
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UPCOMING THEMES

- November – Birds
- December – Churches
- January – Blue
- February – Bridges



SUBMIT A PHOTO

Online: icl.coop/snapshots
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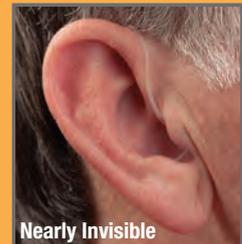
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- Over \$218.4 Million in Illinois land sales the past two years
- Over 32,800 Illinois acres sold in the past two years
- Over 454 Illinois transactions in the past two years



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