

JULY 2022

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Illinois Country Living

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Preventing copper theft

STRANGE THINGS START HAPPENING when the world price of copper skyrockets to record levels like it did this year.



An Arkansas hospital faced a possible delay in opening when thieves stole copper wiring at a construction site; hundreds of West Virginia homes and businesses lost phone and Wi-Fi service when a copper-filled cable was stolen from the region's internet provider; and 700 streetlights went out in Los Angeles when thieves made off with 370,000 feet of copper wire.



Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

Copper theft also happens in Illinois. In March, McDonough Power Cooperative, Macomb, discovered several remote locations from Fandon to Vermont with electrical services that were tampered with ... the target being copper wire.

Copper is incredibly useful. It's flexible and conducts electricity well. It's a staple for utilities and used to make nearly every type of electronic device. Copper's nontoxic nature and resistance to corrosion also make it useful in plumbing.

There's lots of it around, and over the decades when copper prices have gone up, the thieves have come out. Copper theft can

have consequences beyond just the inconvenience of stolen property.

According to a 2008 FBI report, copper thieves threaten critical infrastructure by targeting electrical substations, cellular towers, telephone land lines, railroads, water wells, construction sites and vacant homes for lucrative

profits. Copper theft from these targets disrupts the flow of electricity, telecommunications, transportation, water supply, heating and security and emergency services. It also presents a risk to both public safety and national security.

Copper crimes can result in death, with regular reports of thieves being electrocuted while removing wire from utility poles or substations. Stealing copper also threatens the lives of utility workers by disconnecting critical safety devices.

Copper theft has been a regular problem for utilities and even private homes under construction. Theft cases started increasing dramatically in 2001 when the construction boom in China sent demand, and prices, for copper shooting skyward.

The copper price and theft rate has fluctuated since then but started going up again a year ago for two reasons: the economic recovery from the pandemic and demand for renewable energy.

Last year, copper prices hit a record high. In March 2022, they went even higher. Copper's continued importance to utilities, the economy and to criminals, has led to a greater focus on preventing thefts.

Laws have been toughened over the past 20 years, and now all 50 states have statutes in place to reduce copper theft. Many of those laws focus on making sure that scrap metal dealers know the source of the copper they're buying. Companies have developed ways to secure wiring in air conditioning units and come up with coatings that can identify stolen property. Some copper products are being stamped with identifying codes, and video surveillance is being added to areas with a lot of copper.

Electric utilities, including co-ops, have placed special emphasis on preventing copper theft. Over the years, utilities have launched public awareness campaigns, offered rewards for information leading to the arrest and conviction of thieves, marked copper wire for easier recovery from scrap metal dealers and collaborated with stakeholders. In addition, law enforcement has become more responsive to electric utilities facing copper theft and collaborate with utilities to recover more stolen copper and arrest those responsible.

You can also help. Many copper thieves have been captured when observant citizens saw something suspicious and called 911. 📞

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 192,000, the magazine informs cooperative consumer-members about issues affecting their electric cooperative and the quality of life in rural Illinois.

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JULY CHECKLIST

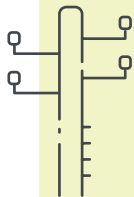
Celebrate our nation's independence.

Thank the courageous men and women who have dedicated their lives to preserve our freedom.



Help keep line crews safe.

Utility poles are not bulletin boards. Staples, nails and tacks used to hang signs and fliers create dangerous obstacles for lineworkers.

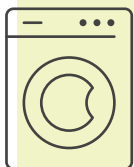


It's summer storm season.

Prepare before a storm hits by having an emergency plan in place, organizing a storm safety kit and tuning into local weather alerts.



Tip of the month.



Did you know 90 percent of energy used by washing machines goes toward

heating the water? Maximize energy savings in the laundry room by switching to cold water.

Co-op leaders gather on Capitol Hill

Hundreds of electric cooperative leaders, including 25 from Illinois, converged on Capitol Hill for the annual NRECA Legislative Conference to urge Congress to help co-ops take advantage of energy incentives, reduce their federal debt and access billions of infrastructure dollars.

"We have a 100 percent consumer focus on everything we do, particularly in the context of a discussion about policy priorities," said NRECA CEO Jim Matheson.

NRECA has identified more than two dozen components in the \$1.2 trillion bipartisan infrastructure bill passed by Congress last year that may be of interest to electric co-ops, said Matheson.

NRECA is helping co-ops band together in consortiums to seek funding for projects in five categories: electric vehicles, microgrids, cybersecurity, natural hazards, and smart grids and data.

Co-op leaders also asked members of Congress to help pass two additional bills this

year. The first would provide direct federal payments for electric co-ops to develop new energy resources and technologies, including renewable energy, battery storage projects, nuclear energy facilities and carbon capture and storage.

A direct-pay incentive would put co-ops on a level playing field with investor-owned utilities, which already receive federal tax breaks for providing power from solar, wind and other renewable sources and for investing in carbon capture.

"Over the last several years you had billions of dollars of tax credits go toward renewable energy," Matheson said. "We're on the outside looking in."

The other major priority is passage of the Flexible Financing for Rural America Act, which would allow co-ops to refinance their loans from the Rural Utilities Service at lower interest rates without prepayment penalties.

Erin Kelly, NRECA



Electric cooperative leaders in Illinois met with the Illinois Congressional delegation during the Legislative Conference to advocate for issues important to electric co-ops and member-consumers. They met with Senators Tammy Duckworth (pictured) and Dick Durbin as well as the offices of Mike Bost, Cheri Bustos, Rodney Davis, Darin LaHood and Mary Miller.

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 33.

Level: Medium

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



Learning the art of line clearance

The snarl of chainsaws sounded throughout Wayne Fitzgerald State Recreation Area in southern Illinois during the annual utility line clearance school, hosted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperative's (AIEC) safety department May 16-20, 2022.

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, storm damage and rigging, basic and advanced climbing, line trimming and electrical hazards, rigging and redirect for felling, herbicide safety and application, and vegetation management. Line clearance experts from across the country instructed participants using scenarios they will encounter on the job. 💡

DOE authorized to boost transformer production

Domestic production of transformers and other electric grid components will be fast-tracked under new authority granted to the Department of Energy by President Joe Biden—a remedy that augments recommendations by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

to address reliability concerns caused by the overburdened U.S. supply chain.

Biden signed orders in early June to allow DOE to use the Defense Production Act to help manufacturers increase their output of transformers, a move that NRECA said was necessary to meet demand in fast-growing areas of the country and for power restoration after storms and other disasters.

“For several months, America’s electric cooperatives have raised serious questions about supply chain disruptions to materials necessary for reliable operation of the nation’s electric infrastructure,” NRECA CEO Jim Matheson said in a statement.

“The Biden administration’s use of the Defense Production Act to shorten lead times for supplies of electric transformers is a much-needed step to support reliability and resilience.”

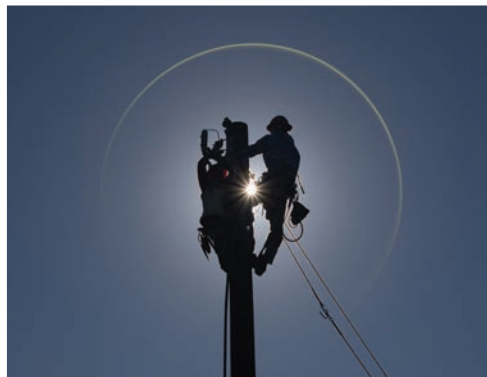


A recent report from the North American Electric Reliability Corp. confirmed that several states are facing reliability risks this summer from extreme weather and supply shortages.

Matheson said NRECA will continue to work with Washington policymakers on “additional measures” that will help ensure that co-op members’ lights stay on at a price they can afford.

“America’s electric cooperatives look forward to continuing to work with the Biden administration and Congress to reduce supply chain vulnerabilities in the short term while we increase domestic capability to meet our future needs,” Matheson said. “A diverse energy mix that includes adequate baseload supply and an assured supply chain are essential to meet those expectations.” 💡

Cathy Cash, NRECA



Bradford wins national award

Illinois Country Living Assistant Editor Colten Bradford recently won a Gold Spotlight on Excellence Award from the Council of Rural Electric Communicators in the Best Photo category for his photo taken during the fall 2021 distribution line school at Lincoln Land Community College.

The annual awards program recognizes a body of outstanding communication and marketing efforts by professionals in electric co-ops and related organizations from across the country. The contest this year received 593 entries. 💡

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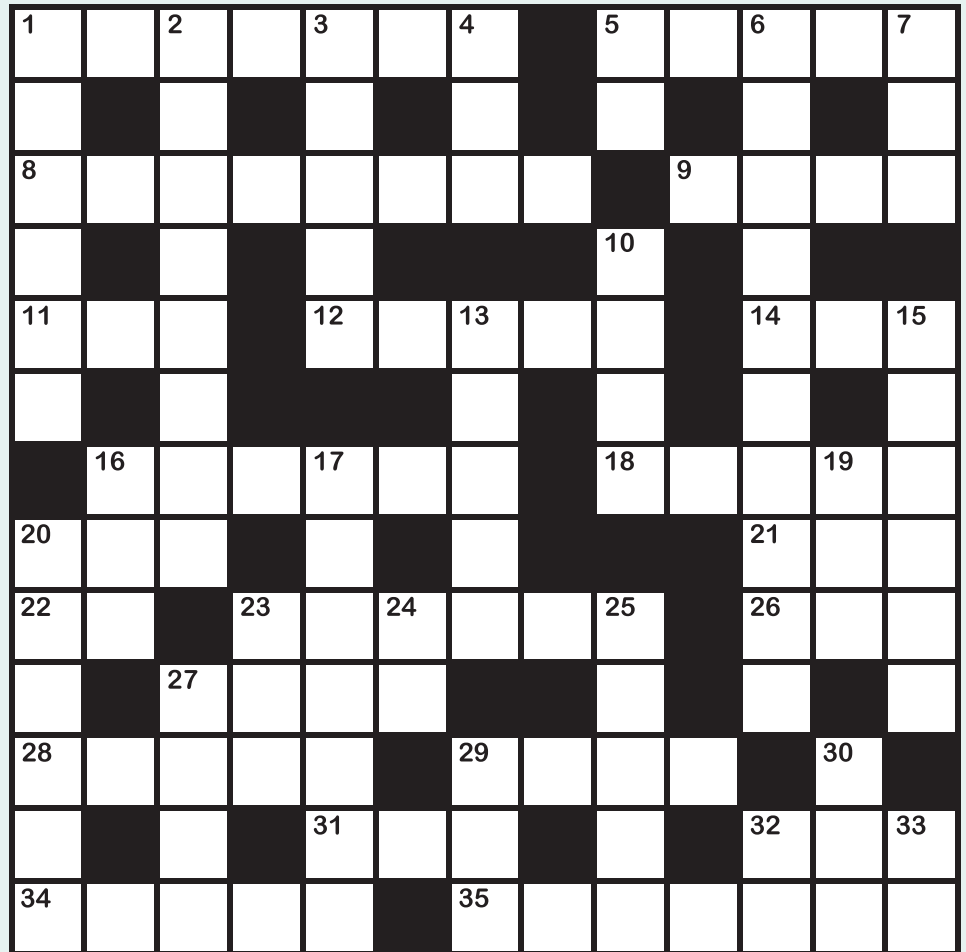
Where is it?

The winners of the May hidden object contest were Bruce Wente of Norris Electric Cooperative and Colleen Marinich of Spoon River Electric Cooperative. Congratulations! Your ICL Tervis tumblers are on their way!

June's donut was hidden on the root beer bottle on page 25. Winner's names will be drawn and notified. Visit Illinois Country Living on Facebook after each month's deadline for a closeup of the object's location and winner's names.

It's time for a new hidden object search. This month, be on the lookout for the U.S. Capitol dome in honor of Independence Day and the return of Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. The symbol can vary in size and will never be on this page, a lettered page or in an ad.

Entries must include your name, address, name of your electric co-op (non-members are also eligible), and the page number and location of the symbol. Visit icl.coop/hiddenobject and fill out the entry form, use the link under Contact Us on the website, or mail a postcard to Illinois Country Living, Hidden Objects, 6460 S. 6th Street Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. We will NOT accept letters or entries via phone call. All entries for that month must be postmarked or received digitally by the 15th. Winner's names and the location of the symbol will be published in each month's issue of Illinois Country Living. 



Across

- 1 Highland Park festival
- 5 Bright like many summer days
- 8 Silver Beach is a part of this lake's shore
- 9 Bridge
- 11 Started a camp fire
- 12 Walks a trail
- 14 Remote button letters
- 16 Beach ____ ball
- 18 Moves along in the pool
- 20 One with a six-yr. term
- 21 Land area
- 22 Former
- 23 Mallard males
- 26 Internet laughter symbol
- 27 Level on a ship

- 28 Place to get a tan

- 29 Journey
- 31 Prefix for the environment
- 32 Mom's apple dessert
- 34 Sand hills
- 35 Sampling

Down

- 1 Walk idly
- 2 Time off
- 3 Cry of a horse
- 4 Southern state, abbr.
- 5 Ave. intersector, abbr.
- 6 The Riverwalk is an artistic area of this Chicago suburb
- 7 Desire
- 10 Quizzes

- 13 Type of canoe
- 15 Kid's structure of sand near the sea
- 16 Puzzle
- 17 Evergreen trees
- 19 Cow sound
- 20 Ocean floor, 2 words
- 23 Winter month, for short
- 24 Glacier Bay state, abbr.
- 25 Goes out on a boat
- 27 Sunrise
- 29 Small child
- 30 French for wine
- 32 Circumference ratio
- 33 For example, abbr.

Solution on page 33.



Youth Tour returns

After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, high schoolers headed back to Washington, D.C. for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's (NRECA) Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. The return also marked one major change. The hundreds of Youth Tour delegates and chaperones attended in two separate groups over a 10-day period to minimize crowding: June 14-19 and June 19-24.

This year's overall group was smaller than in previous years for pandemic-related and budget reasons, said Beth Knudson, NRECA's youth programs and training manager. Co-ops in 28 states participated, compared to 44 states in typical years.

"We're excited to welcome these young leaders back to D.C., after our absence," said Knudson. "We had our usual programming and activities—they were just modified to accommodate the new group sizes and timelines."

The Illinois group attended the second week of the event with 36 students representing 16 electric and telephone co-ops. Before the pandemic, Illinois usually sent about twice that amount.

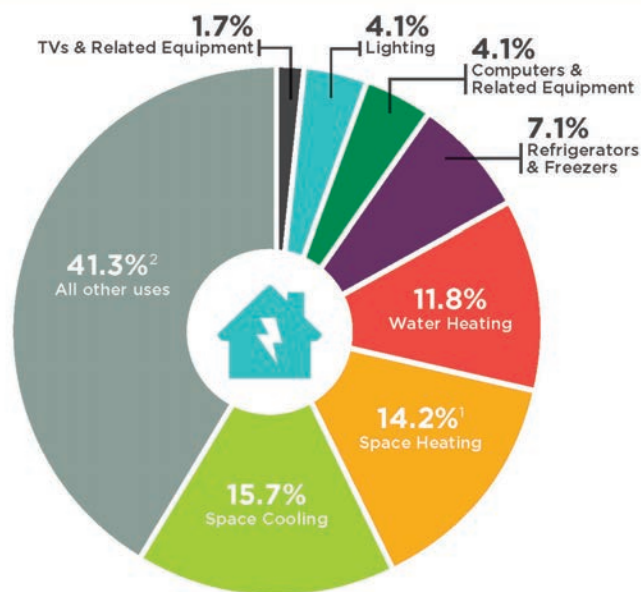
The formal Youth Day program returned this year but took place three times—twice on June 18 and once on June 20. Presenters included NRECA CEO Jim Matheson, NRECA President Chris Christensen and inspirational speaker Mike Schlappi, a wheelchair basketball player who has appeared in four consecutive summer Paralympic Games.

"The impact that Youth Tour can have on young people goes far beyond it being 'just a trip,'" said Ashley Graham, vice president of member services at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives and tour organizer of the Illinois delegation. "Many participants in the past have described Youth Tour as life changing, and we are thrilled to be able to help these students learn more about public policy, history, leadership and cooperatives." 📍

Victoria A. Rocha, NRECA

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for the largest percentage of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: Energy Information Administration 2021

¹Includes consumption for heat and operating furnace fans and boiler pumps.
²Includes miscellaneous appliances, clothes washers and dryers, stoves, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.



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LET'S GO!

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



Downtown Concert Series

JULY

15

AUGUST

5

Join Jacksonville Main Street for its free summer concert series. Enjoy Rockin Blues with Eddie 9V on July 15, The Def Leprechaun Band (Celtic) on July 22, Cody Hibbard (Country) on July 29 and The Harmans Bluegrass on Aug. 5. Food and beer wagon is available at 6 p.m., and music acts start at 7.

July 15, 22, 29 and Aug. 5, 2022; 6-9 p.m.

● Central Park, Downtown Jacksonville
Cost: Free
917-499-8787

Archeology Day

JULY

16

Spend a day exploring the fascinating 12,000-year history of west central Illinois through fun, hands-on activities, and informational exhibits and presentations about the current research being done by CAA archaeologists. This year, there will be a demonstration on the art of cutting oak splints for basketry, a beading demonstration by a Kiowa tribe member, a ceramic firing demonstration, a spear throwing competition using atlatls, experimental archaeology, and much more.

July 16, 2022; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Center for American Archeology

● 598 Stage St., Kampsville

Admission is free

618-653-4316 or caa-archeology.org



3rd Annual Galena Brew Fest

JULY

16

Savor local and regional crafted brews, wine and spirits atop the resort overlooking the Mississippi River. Enjoy outdoor activities and a meal at the restaurant. Proceeds benefit Galena ARC. Online ticket sales are available on the website. \$35 per ticket before July 1, \$40 after. Registration includes souvenir glass and 24 tasting tickets. \$5 designated driver tickets available.

July 16, 2022; 1-4 p.m.

● Chestnut Mountain Resort, 8700 W. Chestnut Mountain Rd., Galena
Cost: Varies
815-777-2248 or galenaarc.org/galena-brew-fest

Magnificent Moths

JULY

29

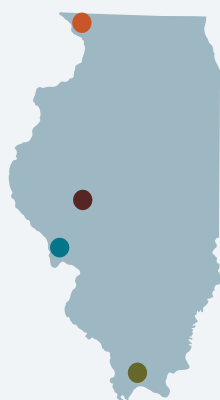
Did you know more than 150,000 species of moths exist in the world? They play an important role in the food web but are often ignored. Join University of Illinois Extension and Illinois Department of Natural Resources for its first Magnificent Moths event during National Moth Week. The outdoor event includes education about southern Illinois moths, moth crafts, planting flowers for visiting moths, and learning how to attract moths at night. The program is free and open to the public. Activities are geared toward kids ages 5-17, but all are welcome.

July 29, 2022; 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

● Cache River Wetland Center, 8885 State Route 37 S, Cypress

Cost: Free

618-657-2064 or facebook.com/events/5127936933948555



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Like millions of older Americans, I struggle with mobility. For years, I watched my quality of life slip away, as I was forced to stay home while friends and family took part in activities I'd once enjoyed. I thought I'd made some progress when I got a mobility scooter, but then I realized how hard it was to transport. Taking it apart and putting it back together was like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Once I had it disassembled, I had to try to put all of the pieces in the trunk of a car, go to wherever I was going, and repeat the process in reverse. Travel scooters were easier to transport, but they were uncomfortable and scary to drive, I always felt like I was ready to tip over. Then I found the So Lite™ Scooter. Now there's nothing that can hold me back.

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a scooter that's designed with seniors in mind. They created Electronic Stability Control (ESC) that makes it virtually impossible to tip over. If you try to turn too quickly, the scooter automatically slows down to prevent it from tipping over. The battery provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the So Lite™ Scooter is the most portable scooter ever—but it can hold up to 275 pounds—yet weighs only 40.8 pounds without the battery! What's more, it easily folds up for



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- Easier to operate



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What is Electric Shock Drowning

Know the signs of this hidden danger

Electric shock drowning (ESD) is a type of drowning that many people are not familiar with. ESD happens when electrical current seeps into water from a nearby electrical source such as a yacht, boat or dock. It can also happen in a pool, hot tub or water park if there is faulty wiring or other electrical issues.

To prevent and recognize ESD:

- Do not swim around docks with electrical service or boats that are plugged into a power source.
- If you are swimming and feel tingling or shocks, swim away from the dock or other electrical source.
 - Try to stay upright and tuck your legs up.
 - Alert others to cut the power source.
 - If you feel a shock, swim away from the dock.
- Do not jump in to try and save someone you suspect is exposed to electricity in the water. Instead:
 - Eliminate the source of power.
 - Throw a float.
 - Call 9-1-1
- After the power is shut off, pull the person in with the float rope. If you cannot find a pulse, start CPR.



Prevention and Maintenance

Boats

- If you own a boat that has an electrical system, ensure circuits have GFCIs and check them often.

Docks

- If you have a dock with electricity, have its electrical system inspected regularly by a licensed contractor.

While it is impossible to know if water is electrified just by looking, learning about the dangers of ESD can help keep you and others safe in the water.

Learn more:



How to Be Cut Off From Civilization

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Batteries are booming

IF YOUR SMARTPHONE BATTERY has become a large share of your daily thoughts, just wait ... the battery market is booming.

Innovators are developing washable and bendable batteries to heat

researchers and entrepreneurs are busy meeting those demands.

EVs

Electric vehicles (EVs), which run on large, rechargeable batteries,

cameras. This cycle of innovation is cutting battery costs too. The price of the most popular type of rechargeable battery is down more than 90 percent from what it was 10 years ago.

Large scale batteries

Utility use of large batteries is adding efficiency and reliability to the nation's electric grid. In 2019, the number of large-scale battery systems in the U.S. increased 28 percent.

Utilities, including electric cooperatives, use these batteries in several ways. They can smooth-out voltage and frequency differences that damage equipment and affect power quality. Batteries can also make better use of the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources. By storing excess solar energy produced during the day when electric demand is low, batteries can make that sun power available for use at night when electric demand is high.

Utility-scale battery capacity jumped 35 percent in 2020, tripled in the past five years, and by 2023, the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) reports electric utilities will have 10 times the battery capacity they had in 2019.

Much of that increase, says the EIA, comes from battery systems located near large solar projects, making it easier to store electricity produced by solar panels.

Innovators are also working on new types of batteries for everyday use. Low-cost, flexible power sources could be part of clothing or wristbands. Wearable electronics are a hot market, and innovators and investors see the potential.

Whether used for making electricity more reliable or a fun new gadget to track our fitness habits, battery technology will continue to play a major role in our future. 💡



Manufacturers around the world plan to spend more than \$500 million on electric vehicles and batteries in the next eight years. The Kansas City Assembly Plant shown here is Ford's first U.S. plant to assemble both batteries and electric vehicles. Photo courtesy of Ford



Paul Wesslund writes on cooperative issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the Arlington, Va.-based service arm of the nation's 900-plus consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives.

your gloves or be sewn into athletic wear to help track your exercise routine.

Electric utilities use batteries for slightly more practical reasons—to make electricity more reliable and compatible with renewable energy sources. Also, the booming electric vehicle market has been made possible by dramatic advancements in battery technology.

Analysts estimate the world battery market value at more than \$100 billion and project it will grow more than 10 percent annually over the next five years. People need batteries for their phones, laptops, power tools, watches and electric vehicles, and they want them to last longer. They want them smaller. They want them cheaper. And

are a leading example of the trend. Ten years ago, there were hardly any EVs on the road. But in 2020, EV sales hit 3 million, and now there are 10 million on the road worldwide. That growth is expected to continue.

Six of this year's Super Bowl ads featured electric vehicles. Manufacturers around the world plan to spend more than \$500 billion on EVs and batteries in the next eight years. Just in the U.S., 13 electric vehicle battery manufacturing plants are expected to open in the next five years.

The battery bandwagon brings strong incentives for investments to make batteries even stronger, so EVs can go farther and phones can hold more apps and feature fancier

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— J. Fitzgerald, VA



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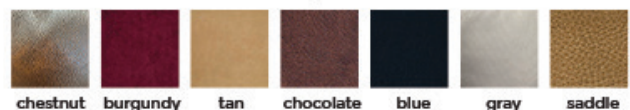
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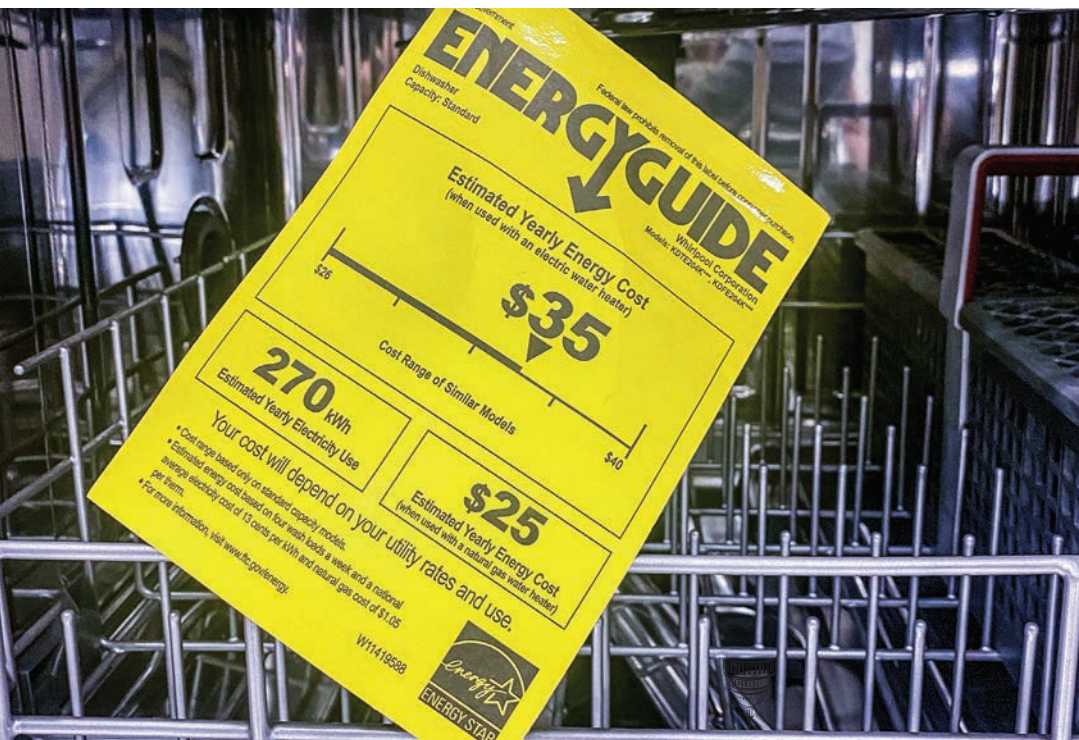
Planning a remodel? Timing is everything.

I WRITE THIS WHILE deep in the throes of a remodel that, like many remodels, has lasted much longer than planned.

models, and ENERGY STAR dishwashers save energy and water.

For kitchen faucets, there are options available with multiple flow-

and save energy used to heat water. Using less water can lower your water bill or increase your septic system's lifespan.



When shopping for new appliances, check for the ENERGYSTAR logo on the Energy Guide. ENERGYSTAR-rated dishwashers save both electricity and water. Photo courtesy of Mark Gilliland.



Miranda Boutelle is the director of operations and customer engagement at Efficiency Services Group in Oregon, a cooperatively owned energy efficiency company.

Remodeling is a great opportunity to take care of energy efficiency improvements by adding them to your scope of work. If your home is already under construction, take the extra step to make it more efficient.

Planning for efficiency is the first step. Look at the scope of your remodeling project to see what energy efficiency upgrades you can add. There may be cost savings and convenience in tackling both at once.

Here are a few examples of energy efficiency upgrades for common remodeling projects.

Kitchen

If your kitchen remodel includes new appliances, buy ENERGY STAR-rated models. ENERGY STAR refrigerators are about 9 percent more efficient than standard

rate settings. Save water by using a lower flow rate on your faucet when washing dishes, vegetables or your hands, but you can change the setting to quickly fill a pot for cooking.

Bathroom

In your bathroom remodel, include a high-performance showerhead. Look for the WaterSense logo for showerheads, faucets and toilets, which ensures the product meets performance and water use standards.

Check the fine print on your existing equipment to see how much you can save. The gallons per minute (GPM) is usually printed on showerheads and faucet aerators and the gallons per flush (GPF) is usually printed on toilets.

High-performance showerheads and faucet aerators conserve water

New siding or exterior paint

The best time to make sure your wall insulation is adequate—or to see if you have wall insulation at all—is when you replace your siding or paint the exterior of your home. Wall insulation saves on energy costs, makes your home more comfortable and reduces outside noise.

Batt insulation, spray foam or foam board are good options if you are removing the siding. If painting, you can have a contractor blow insulation into the wall cavities through holes cut into the siding or from inside the house. The holes are then plugged and prepped for paint.

Attic insulation

Often, remodeling requires work in the attic for new lighting or venting bath or kitchen fans. During any project that takes you into the attic, check insulation levels. Work in the attic can negatively impact attic insulation by crushing it or removing it to access work areas.

If more insulation is needed, air seal and check ventilation. Also, make sure all bath and kitchen fans vent to the exterior of the house. Insulation may not be as pretty as new countertops, but it can help reduce your energy costs and make your home more comfortable.

A little planning during a remodel can go a long way toward improving your home's energy efficiency. Remember: it's more difficult and more expensive to go back and tackle energy efficiency projects after your space is finished. 💡

Milkweed supports monarchs

IMAGINE EATING ONLY ONE type of food for your entire life, and your sole survival depends on being able to find it. This is a challenge monarch butterflies face every day. The monarch caterpillar feeds exclusively on milkweed plants, contributing to a unique relationship between the two species: If no milkweeds are growing in the landscape, no monarch butterflies are found.

Twenty-two species of milkweed are native to Illinois. All grow in a variety of habitats easily replicated in your own backyard, allowing you to grow the plants that support monarchs, our state butterfly.

Monarchs use chemical and visual cues from their sensory organs to identify milkweed plants. The females typically lay eggs on milkweed leaves ensuring young larvae have an immediate food source once they hatch. Larvae (caterpillars) eat foliage for about two weeks, eating about 200 times their birth weight. With energy stored, they find a nearby spot to form into a chrysalis.

This transformation occurs in 10–14 days. When the protective shell left from the chrysalis is shed, an adult monarch butterfly emerges. Hungry adults will visit the milkweed flowers for nectar and frequent other nearby high nectar-producing flowers.

Milkweeds are herbaceous perennials, dying down to the ground each winter and regrowing foliage each spring. Most milkweed species contain a milky, white sap that exudes when the plant is cut open. All parts of the plant contain toxic compounds which the monarch butterfly has adapted to ingest.

While feeding on milkweed, caterpillars will consume enough of the toxic compounds to deter birds (and small mammals) from eating them as adult butterflies. The

compounds are present at high enough rates to be both distasteful and poisonous to predators.

Milkweed flowers contain high levels of nectar and are a favorite food source for local pollinators. Flower colors vary from species to species but can be pink, purple, red, white, green or orange. Mature flowers turn into pods of seeds that are attached to white, fluffy floss which is easily dispersed throughout the landscapes by wind.

Common milkweed is a weedy species despised by many gardeners and farmers. There are alternatives to this milkweed species which support the monarch in a variety of habitats. A huge patch of milkweed is not necessary to benefit monarchs, a small patch will suffice. Consider planting multiple species for season-long support of monarchs because each species has a distinct phenology and bloom time.

Butterfly milkweed has striking orange flowers that make it an ornamental garden favorite. Many gardeners do not realize it is milkweed. It blooms from May through September, growing 2-3 feet tall and grows best in full sun and well-drained soils.

Prairie milkweed, also called Sullivant's milkweed, is found in moist to wet prairies in Illinois. It is often mistaken for common milkweed, but has smooth, succulent-like leaves and is not aggressive in the landscape. It makes a great addition to any perennial flower garden with its large leaves reaching 3-4 feet tall.

Swamp milkweed is found natively growing in swampy areas,



wet ditches and meadows throughout Illinois. The pink blooms appear June through August atop 5-foot lance-shaped foliage. This plant prefers full sun and moist, well-drained soils.

Poke milkweed grows best in shade or partial sun, in moist, well-drained soils. It reaches 2-6 feet tall, depending on growing conditions. The white drooping blooms appear June through August.

Whorled milkweed has linear leaves that grow best in full sun and moderate to dry conditions. It blooms later than most milkweed, July through September. It creates 1–2-foot-tall drifts of fine, delicately textured foliage. 💡



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.

THE TIME IS NOW for Greenfield

By Colten Bradford

A CLOCKTOWER STANDS IN downtown Greenfield, dutifully keeping time. But time has not been a friend to many of the buildings surrounding it. As roofs and foundations crumble in the empty storefronts around the square, a group of young, driven people work to revitalize the community they call home.

Aptly named, the city of Greenfield was first settled because of its fertile land. From its founding in the 1830s to this day, it continues to be a farming community. While its population has remained consistent throughout the years, at more than 1,000 residents according to the U.S. Census Bureau, its business district has dwindled. On the town square, fewer than half of the 15 buildings are occupied.

The Greenfield Revitalization Project (GRP) aims to change that. “We’re all age 37 and younger,” Lauren Sprung says, a co-founder and president of GRP. “There’s a trend of people moving back to small towns. They like the sense of community that comes with rural America. I think it’s great having more people move back, and now we are trying to give them a reason to stay.”





There are many vacant buildings around Greenfield's square. From left: the old newspaper factory was purchased by a local couple who plan to turn it into an event venue; the building owned by Lauren Sprung is beyond repair and must be torn down; a former restaurant sits empty.

Lauren and her sister Hannah Bauer grew up on a grain and livestock farm in Greenfield. Both moved away for college and found work – a business manager and an implementation project manager, respectively. When COVID-19 turned the world upside-down in 2020, both women moved back to their hometown when presented with the opportunity to work remotely.

"Moving back, I wanted more," Lauren says. "I started asking the questions, 'How did [Greenfield] get this way?' 'What can we do to help?'"

She talked to friends and family who gave similar responses – many had already asked those same questions, but no one knew where to start. "I didn't either," Lauren admits. "I've learned in my career to be resourceful. You don't have to know everything. You just need the right people."

The sisters approached Greenfield's city council, and they were given its blessing to pursue the revitalization of the town's square. From there, they started a Facebook group to "rally the troops." The private Greenfield Revitalization Project group has grown to more than 550 members, consisting of current and former residents of the community.

Austin Brannum, who works from home as a dispatch manager, discovered the Facebook group. "That's how I came to the original meeting," he says. He learned more about the group and everything it hoped to accomplish. "They had so many

great ideas, but everyone only has so much time to volunteer."

He decided to join because he wanted to help in any way. "I thought, the more people who become part of this to take items off their list, the more helpful it would be." He now manages public relations for GRP.

GREENFIELD REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Not originally from the area, Austin moved to Greenfield to be near his grandmother, who lives outside of Carrollton. "Here's the thing, everybody in Carrollton goes to the square to do things, and it was sad for me that it isn't like that here," he says. "That's what I want it to become someday."

Sandwiched between two small town communities with successful downtown districts, with Carlinville on the east and Carrollton to the west, Greenfield's square does not have much to offer in comparison.

"These towns around us are extremely established and are getting more established," Hannah says, who is a co-founder and secretary-treasurer for GRP. "They are motivating for us."

Members of the city of Carrollton started a similar endeavor several years ago called the Carrollton Square Initiative. "Their square is booming at this point,"

Hannah says. "They have so many small businesses and are doing beautiful things with their square."

They reached out to the Carrollton group for advice, and the lawyer there helped them make GRP a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization, which became official in January 2021. The lawyer, Nick Graham, has helped the group pro bono because "he believes in what we are trying to do," Lauren says. "Without Carrollton, we probably wouldn't have gotten this off the ground, or at least not as quickly."

GRP recently scored its first major win by helping to kickstart a recycling program. "It's a small victory, but those add up over time," Austin says.

In addition, the group encouraged local churches to establish daycare in the area since they are already equipped with facilities needed. The First Baptist Church of Greenfield will soon open its Little Disciples Daycare.

"I consider daycare as important as roads in terms of infrastructure," Lauren explains. "If adults don't have anywhere to take their kids, they can't work."

At first, GRP acted more like a real estate agency to help sell the vacant spaces to potential business owners. After facilitating several showings, they heard much of the same feedback. The buildings were too far gone, and renovation wouldn't be affordable. However, the potential business owners did say they would be interested in leasing.



Greenfield Revitalization Project's first building that will be restored. GRP members from left to right include: Hunter Masters, Hannah Bauer, Austin Brannum, Lauren Sprung and Jenny Hoots. Several are consumer-members of Illinois Electric Cooperative.

"That's when a light bulb went off," Lauren says. "GRP needs to buy and restore the buildings with grants and donations."

"There are quite a few people we've already talked to," Hannah says. "One couple who lives outside of town wants to own and operate a restaurant. There are a lot of cool ideas. If we can bring these buildings to people, they're going to bring businesses to town."

Once the buildings are restored, GRP plans to lease them and will reinvest that money into other projects on the square and in the community. The group hopes to purchase as many of the empty buildings as possible, despite their condition.

"Let's either demolish it and do something else with that space or restore it," Lauren says. In fact, she personally owns one of the buildings on the square, which has been determined past restoration. "It just needs torn down," she says, adding that she'd rather buy it and tear it down than let it sit empty with no hope of restoration.

"We've been told by many architects to just tear them down and build them back up," Lauren says. "But we are trying to restore and maintain that historical charm these buildings bring to the square."

GRP recently purchased one of the brick buildings with the help of local donations. Built in 1872,

it was first a bank, followed by a harness shop. While it was home to many businesses in its 150 years, it has remained empty for at least a decade.

"The professionals said we probably had two years to save the building before it would need torn down," Lauren says. "Now we're hustling for money to do a full roof replacement and board up the windows to stop the deterioration, which will give us more time to do the full restoration."

Once the renovation is complete, the upstairs level will be leased to a local business to host an Airbnb, and the lower level will become a coffee shop complete with ice cream, a deli, a bakery and a lounge area.

"Now we have laid groundwork to move forward with the others. The only thing is funding," Lauren says. Needless to say, a complete renovation of an old building is expensive.

"When restoring something like that, I've been told to plan on a half million, and if you don't have grant money, that's almost impossible," Lauren says. "At that point, you're not even talking about capital to start a business, you're talking about capital to just make the structure livable."

GRP constantly applies for grants (private, state and federally funded) and accepts donations

to help with the project. The group has been lucky enough to receive several grants and are optimistic about pending ones that will give them the ability to do a full roof replacement, board up windows, and get masonry work done to stop the deterioration and begin a full interior demo.

Applying for grants is tedious work, especially for state funded ones, according to Jenny Hoots, who moved to Greenfield in February 2020 and is the vice president of GRP. She knows a thing or two about grants because she works for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in the office of grants management.

"There are a lot of hoops to jump through, and that's just in the initial process," Jenny explains. "If you do get approved, you continue to jump through hoops throughout the process and must report on what happens after the project is complete to ensure the money was allotted correctly. There are checks and balances all the way."

"Luckily, Jenny joined our team and helped us understand the grants out there," Lauren says. "There is free money to help with this. You've got to know where to look and how to put a good narrative together."

In addition to grants, GRP hosts fundraising events, organized by its fundraising chair Lisa Goode. On June 11, the group hosted its first Family Fun Day at the lake, which included kickball, bags, fishing and volleyball tournaments. This fall, the group will hold its second annual antique car show around the square on Oct. 8. Thirty-five cars showed up to the event last fall, raising \$1,000 for the project.

"We're expecting an even bigger turnout this year," Lauren says, adding that they hope to bring more food trucks, games and a band to make it a bigger event.

From the start, GRP has hosted monthly meetings at the local bar and grill on the first Tuesday each month, right before the city council meets. While the turnout is small, most interaction is in the Facebook group, where the meeting minutes are posted, so people can stay up to date on progress.

"We have people who anticipate the meeting minutes," Hannah explains. "We have people engaged on our social media. A lot of people ask questions or reach out to us privately."

So far, feedback from the community has been mixed.

"We have members in the community who are extremely supportive," Hannah says. "They watch our every move, ask questions and communicate with us. But there are people who have their doubts, and that's fine. Everyone is entitled

to their own opinion. But that's our motivation. We can't wait to share the new buildings, share the businesses and bring opportunities to town. At that point, they'll absolutely enjoy the work that we've been doing."

They say it has taken time to gain confidence from the community. After a year of hard work, donations really started to come in. "They've seen that we are resilient," Lauren says. "I think people are taking us more seriously and understand that we are in it for the long haul."

"There has been a history of people buying or inheriting buildings and leaving them sit, or they have big plans but don't follow through with any action," Jenny adds. "A lot of people think this might be the same situation. It is our job to constantly make progress, even if it is a small change, to make sure people know things are happening."

"Now there's an actual building to back up what we're doing," says Hunter Masters, who works as a grain originator and joined GRP to help with public relations for special projects. "People can see what their money is going toward instead of just handing us a check and hoping."

Hunter confirms that many young adults are moving back to the community. At 23, he returned after college, and says many of his friends are buying houses in the area and starting families. "From my generation, I've seen nothing but positive feedback," he says. "People like me are excited for the future, knowing what this group is doing."

"Our ultimate dream is to see this town fully populated," Hannah says. "We want to have this square booming with businesses and have all the basic amenities here in town. We want it to have that old time feel ... and just live a good solid, simple life."💡

HOW TO HELP

JOIN the Facebook group Greenfield Revitalization Project.

COME to monthly meetings and fundraising events.

SHARE information and resources.

DONATE.



The Greenfield Revitalization Project would also like to know how to help you. The group hopes to inspire other small towns and would love to work with communities to help get similar projects off the ground.

The Greenfield Revitalization Project hosts several fundraising events, including an annual antique car show. This year's show will be held Oct. 8.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREENFIELD REVITALIZATION PROJECT





Spelunking ILLINOIS CAVERNS

By Les O'Dell

CARLINVILLE'S JEFFREY GOSNELL REMEMBERS his first time in Illinois Caverns.

More than two decades ago, a friend asked him if he would be interested in exploring the cave beneath Monroe County in southwestern Illinois. He thought it sounded fun, but he had reservations.

"I thought caving was something that could only be done by professional scientists. I didn't know 'regular' people could do it," Gosnell recalls. Yet, his friend convinced him to go.

Not long after descending the steep, narrow staircase – one of the few modern conveniences to greet visitors at Illinois Caverns – Gosnell was amazed at the natural beauty and the experience of being somewhere unlike anywhere he had ever been before.

"I was hooked," he says.

Since then, Gosnell has explored dozens of caves across the country. He's been to Illinois Caverns at least 50 times, taking friends, school groups and others underground.

"Illinois Caverns is by far my favorite cave," the M.J.M. Electric Cooperative member says. "I don't get tired of going back there."

Also known as Mammoth Cave of Illinois, the cavern, located off Illinois Route 3 south of Waterloo, is the second-largest cave in Illinois with nearly 6 miles of passageways and a constant interior temperature of 58 degrees.

"This is the only commercial cave open to the public in the state," explains Mic Middleton, site superintendent for the Illinois Caverns Natural Area. "What makes it unique is you don't have to be an expert spelunker or caver to enter and enjoy it and some of nature's wonder below ground."

Middleton, an employee of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) (the State of Illinois purchased the previously-private-owned cave and its accompanying 120-acre tract in 1985), says even though Illinois Caverns is not a "tourist-y" cave – it is unlike Missouri's Meramac Caverns which feature wide

sidewalks, handrails and tram-driven tours – it is not necessarily a cramped, crawl-on-your-belly space either.

“Most people think about caves where they are having to crawl through tight spaces and long distances and it’s all claustrophobic,” Middleton explains. “Illinois Caverns is actually pretty wide and open.”

With that in mind, Middleton still describes the cave as “primitive.”

“In general, it is a very natural cave. There are some bridges and a few other things that have been added just to cross some of the deeper parts, but otherwise, it is a cave in its natural environment,” he says.

Gosnell says the cave is perfect for those who have never been caving before, calling it the most accessible cavern in the state.

“It is one of the most naturally decorated caves you’ll ever see. From the moment you enter, there are stalactites and stalagmite columns. There’s just about every type of cave formation you can find. It’s fantastic,” Gosnell says. “It’s an easy walk-through experience, but if you want something a little more challenging, there are all sorts of passages that you can explore within and do more advanced caving,” adding that first-timers will not be disappointed.

Andy Waterman of Illinois South Tourism often answers questions about Illinois Caverns as a part of his job. He answers them with first-hand knowledge as he was one of those first-timers not long ago.

“I love Illinois Caverns,” Waterman says. “There’s nothing like it in our region. It’s beautiful. It’s not what I’d call a ‘Disneyfied’ kind of cave. It’s the real deal, a true caving experience.”

And don’t worry about getting lost, Middleton says.

“There’s one way in and one way out and there are places that are well-marked. I often just tell people to follow the water – there’s a natural water creek that flows constantly,” he adds.

Illinois Caverns is free to the public – currently open only on weekends – and visitors must follow specific requirements. A minimum of four people are required to enter the

cave and only after signing a waiver and receiving a permit on the surface. Everyone is required to wear a hard hat (bicycle helmets count), proper footwear and carry at least three battery-operated sources of light per person.

“Adequate footwear is important,” Middleton stresses. “It’s rough terrain and natural topography. I recommend knee boots, and I also suggest people bring a change of clothes because you will come out wet and muddy.”

Illinois Caverns has been especially popular in recent months, reopening to visitors last summer following a 10-year-long closure to protect bats.

“White-nose syndrome is a fungus that affects bats across the Midwest and nationwide. It grows on the end of their noses and over time would suffocate them.

The thought was that human traffic would spread the disease from cave to cave,”

Middleton explains. “Research shows that is not the case, so we worked out a plan to open up during the summer.”

He says the caving season is shortened so the caverns are closed in the spring and late fall to prevent disruption to hibernating bats.

Middleton says, “The plan was successful, and we had great attendance last year.”

“There is no other site like this in the entire state of Illinois,” IDNR Director Colleen Callahan said at the ribbon cutting event during the area’s reopening, which she called a “real milestone” and that her experience at Illinois Caverns reminded her of childhood.

“As I went through, I felt like a kid because there were things that I knew I had seen and read about, but it’s another experience to actually see it and feel it in person,” Callahan said.

Waterman says response to the reopening of Illinois Caverns has been amazing.

“When we posted the reopening on social media, it became our most popular post ever. It reached more than 1.7 million people,” he says. “It’s a unique place and beautiful.”

Gosnell and Middleton share a common approach for all cavers, both first timers and seasoned spelunkers.

“Take only pictures and leave only footprints,” they urge. ♡

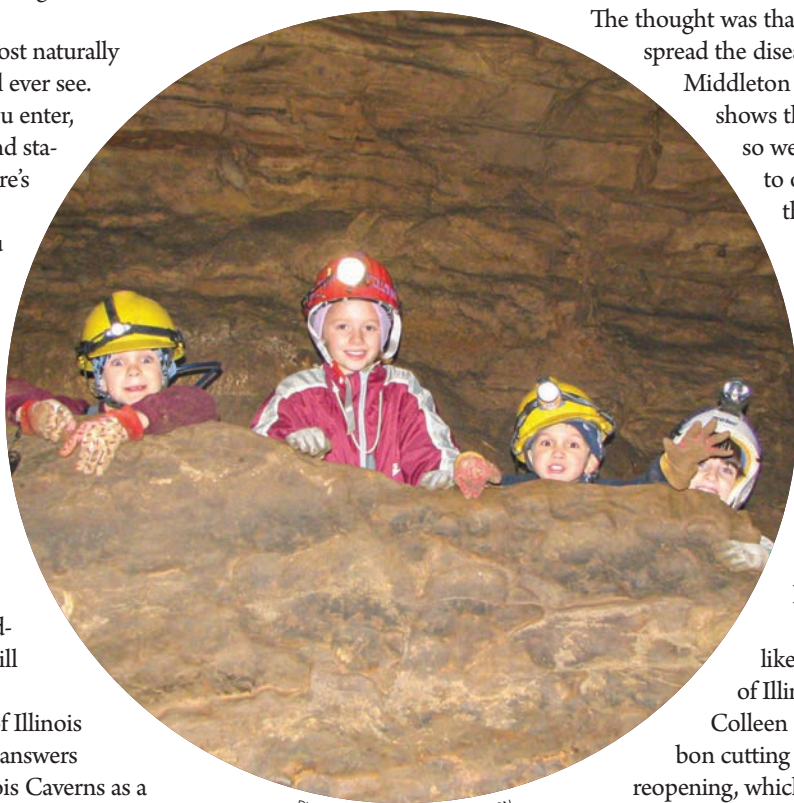


PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID CARSON



The return of the majestic bald eagle

THERE IS NO MISTAKING the majesty of our Nation's emblem ... the bright white head, piercing eyes, dark plumage and the awesome size of the American bald eagle. Those who have witnessed an eagle in the wild may recall it as a breath-taking and monumental experience.

It's been a long, hard struggle for the bald eagle in Illinois, but chances are much better to see one now. Once considered almost extinct in the state, the bald eagle was removed from the list of Threatened and Endangered Species in 2007. The return of eagles to Illinois and the Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie area after more than 100 years began nearly 20 years before then.

The biggest enemy of the eagle was the use of DDT. The pesticide was exposed to bald eagles by infecting the ground water, which contaminated the fish that would get consumed by eagles. Bald eagles migrate to the shoreline to reproduce. They consumed the contaminated fish from the water which in turn infected them. By female eagles being exposed to the pesticide anytime during their life, the endocrine disrupters in the body fat allowed the pesticide to infect the birds. This affected the mother bald eagles' success in egg laying, pregnancy and chick survival.

When the mother eagle was infected with DDT, it resulted in

her egg's shells being too thin. The shell didn't protect the chick during the incubation stage. The developing chick was often crushed when the adult bird was trying to keep it warm.

In 2004, high up in a tree along the banks of the Little Calumet River in Chicago, the nest of a mated pair of bald eagles was spotted. It was the first bald eagle nest seen around the Chicago area in more than 100 years. Today, 35 bald eagle nests have been spotted in the six counties surrounding Chicago.

Nests are easy to spot as they are constructed of stout limbs in large trees and can be almost the size of a Volkswagen Beetle. If undamaged, the nests are used year after year by the nesting pair.

Two of the nests are located at Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie. A nest was first confirmed during annual grassland bird surveys in June 2014 and, since then, it has been home to several successful fledglings. In 2017, another active nest was confirmed.

"The increase in numbers of nesting bald eagles in the Chicago area is a local conservation success story that deserves to be celebrated," says Forest Service Supervisory Natural Resources Manager Mike Redmer. "The increase in nesting bald eagles in our area provides inspiration and

hope for the return of other species of native Illinois prairie plants here."

At Midewin National Tallgrass Prairie, volunteers, partners and staff work with more than 275 species of native Illinois prairie plants to help increase and improve natural habitat for native Illinois grassland birds of all kinds, including bald eagles.

One of the great historical myths of our country is Benjamin Franklin proposing the national emblem to be a wild turkey. After the Continental Congress adopted the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, it tasked Benjamin Franklin—along with John Adams and Thomas Jefferson—with designing a seal to represent the new country.

Given the opportunity to choose a national symbol, the Founding Father never suggested a turkey. According to his notes, Franklin proposed an image of Moses standing on the shore and extending his hand over the sea with the motto, "Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God." While the committee selected the scene from the Book of Exodus for the reverse of the seal, the Continental Congress was not impressed and tabled the concept.

It wasn't until 1782 when the Great Seal of the United States with the bald eagle as its centerpiece was approved. 🦅



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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Quasar Nachos



Encounters

By Lisa Cherry

FOR THOSE SEEKING NEW adventures in food, Encounters in Divernon offers a unique take on an eclectic menu that blends Greek, Mediterranean and Mexican fare, as well as barbecue. Its extraterrestrial décor and Route 66 gifts lend to the restaurant's quirky atmosphere.

Robert Keel and his family, who live on Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative lines, established Encounters in November 2019, a few months prior to the 2020 pandemic. His wife came up with its name, which invites patrons to experience something new and gently nods to Robert's childhood love of all things alien. She is the retail manager, while their son manages the kitchen.

The menu is a further reflection of that love, listing items like their popular signature

dish, The Encounter, a 6-inch flour tortilla with tzatziki, lettuce, tomatoes and shaved and steam grilled gyro meat topped with shredded cheese.

The restaurant's alien mascot, Ezi Moondo (created by his son, who is also an artist) has his own place on the menu—as a “nacho supreme wrapped up as a burrito to eat on the go.” It's made with crushed tortilla chips, ground beef, refried beans, shredded cheese, lettuce, tomato, taco sauce, sour cream, black olives, green onion and queso in a 12-inch flour tortilla. It easily serves two.

Other meal options include the similarly themed Quasar (shredded chicken) and The 51 (a BBQ gyro). But it's the pulled pork that Robert says is most popular—baked, pulled and later steam grilled. The family tempers their barbecue

sauce by boiling it on the grill. Also popular is their Greek taco, for which they chop meat as needed.

Perhaps the restaurant's most important feature, though, is the staff's driving commitment to serve natural and chemical-free food options. The eatery uses local, organic ingredients whenever possible and routinely researches alternatives for commonly used additives.

Robert says it can be difficult to find these natural ingredients, and they tend to be significantly more expensive, like Brighton cheese, made with the seeds of the achiote plant (used in American cheese as a natural source of orange dye). However, they do their best to keep their myriad of choices affordable.

"You can taste the difference," he says, adding that chemicals used in food can cause allergies and reactions. Their commitment to healing with food extends to avoiding allergens as well. For instance, if a customer has a gluten allergy, the kitchen staff will finish their current orders and sterilize the kitchen before preparing the gluten-free order.

Robert taste tests everything they serve. He says their mission is to serve people food that is truly healthy—non-GMO, chemical-free and gluten-free. "Our customers' health and safety are extremely important to us," he says, adding that last year the establishment received a gold certificate for food safety from the Sangamon County Department of Health. "We want that to get out there to people that there's a healthier option."

Robert's personal health journey inspired the restaurant's holistic approach. After a severe injury more than a decade ago, he became dependent on opiates. Ultimately, he made the choice to go holistic, and now relies on organic supplements and CBDs.

"Organic food feeds the body and makes you feel good," he says. "I've got diehard customers that will be here once a day, sometimes twice a day." One visitor heard about the alien theme and the organic food and drove three and a half hours to check it out.

"What we eat determines who we are and how we are," Robert says. "I think if aliens were here to help us, they would want us to be healthy. They wouldn't be serving corn syrup."

"I just want to be able to stay open and grow and keep feeding healthy food to great people," he adds. "And if they want to come in and talk about aliens, that's fine, too." 🛸



Burritos with queso and chili

LET'S EAT!

Encounters

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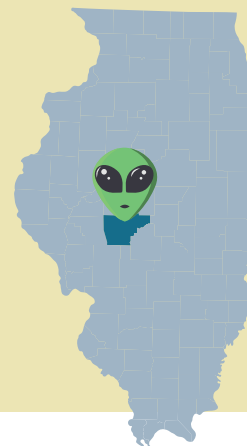
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No Bake Desserts

IF YOU ARE HEADED to a picnic or looking for a dessert that won't require heating up your house, Illinois Country Living readers have you covered! These cool recipes will satisfy the sweet tooth. 🍪

NO BAKE PEANUT BUTER COOKIES



WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming monthly topics

Fresh tomatoes

Squash

Thanksgiving sides

Please email submissions to finestcooking@icl.coop or mail them to Finest Cooking c/o Illinois Country Living, 6460 S. 6th Street Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. 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.



No Bake Peanut Butter Cookies

Submitted by: Mary Jo Olson, Rock Energy Cooperative
Servings: 24 cookies

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 cup white corn syrup
- 2 cups peanut butter
- 4 cups Rice Krispies cereal

In 3-quart pan, heat sugar and corn syrup until it reaches a boil, then stir constantly for 1 minute. Remove from heat and stir in peanut butter. Add Rice Krispies and mix well. Drop by tablespoon on wax paper. Can decorate with a chocolate candy. Let cool. Nutrition information: 199 calories; 10.8g fat; 112mg sodium; 23.6g carbohydrates; 5.5g protein.

No Bake Cheesecake

Submitted by: Laura Eaton, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative
Servings: 8

Crust:

- 1-1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 6 tablespoons butter, melted
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar

Combine crust ingredients and press into pie pan. Beat whipping cream to stiff peaks and set aside. Beat together cream cheese, lemon juice and marshmallow crème until smooth. Gently fold in whipped cream until fully incorporated. Spread over crust and refrigerate for 3 hours. Serve. Nutrition information: 375 calories; 22.9g fat; 308mg sodium; 39.9g carbohydrates; 3.6g protein.

5 Minute Sugar Free Fruit Pie

Submitted by: Jean McFadden, Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative
Servings: 8

- 8 ounces light sour cream
- 1 cup crushed fruit of your choice
- 1 sugar free instant vanilla pudding
- 1 small sugar free Cool Whip
- 1 8-inch low fat graham cracker crust

Mix sour cream and fruit together. Add dry pudding mix and blend well. Fold in Cool Whip, blending well. Spoon into pie shell, cover and chill. Note: Any soft fruit will work. Crush fruit and add it and its juice to the sour cream. If using canned, drain well before crushing. Nutrition information: 158 calories; 10.5g fat; 59mg sodium; 16.3g carbohydrates; 1.2g protein.

Filling:

- 7 ounces marshmallow crème
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup heavy whipping cream

Banana Velvet

Submitted by: Suzanna Jones, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

Servings: 9

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 2 cups mashed bananas | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| 1-1/2 cups buttermilk | 9 ounces Cool Whip |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | |

Combine all ingredients, place in freezer safe container and freeze. Serve. Nutrition information: 238 calories; 7.7g fat; 51mg sodium; 42.8g carbohydrates; 2.3g protein.

Broken Glass Torte

Submitted by: Jalayne Luckett, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Servings: 15

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3 small packages of different colors/flavors Jell-O | 1/2 cup granulated sugar | |
| 1-1/2 cups water for each package of Jell-O | 1 teaspoon vanilla | |
| 1 envelope plain unflavored gelatin | | Crust: |
| 1/4 cup cold water | | 1 cup graham cracker crumbs |
| 1 cup pineapple juice, hot | | 1 stick butter, melted |
| 2 cups heavy cream | | 1/2 cup granulated sugar |

Combine crust ingredients and set aside. Dissolve each package of Jell-O in shallow flat containers using 1 cup boiling water and 1/2 cup cold water in each. Chill until firm. Cut Jell-O into 1/2-inch cubes. Soften plain gelatin in 1/4 cup cold water, then dissolve in hot pineapple juice. Cool. Beat whipping cream with 1/2 cup granulated sugar and vanilla. Fold whipped cream into pineapple juice mixture. Carefully fold Jell-O cubes into mixture. Place 2/3 of graham cracker crumb mix into bottom of a 9x13-inch pan. Add whipped cream mixture and top with remaining crumbs. Chill 6 to 12 hours and serve. Nutrition information: 199 calories; 12.6g fat; 105mg sodium; 21.4g carbohydrates; 1.3g protein.



LUSCIOUS LAYERED CHOCOLATE PUDDING DESSERT

Luscious Layered Chocolate Pudding Dessert

Submitted by: Sarah Cannon, Eastern Illini Electric Cooperative

Servings: 15

- 1 package of cookies or 1 sleeve graham crackers, crushed
- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 1 small package instant white chocolate or vanilla pudding mix
- 8 ounces light cream cheese, softened
- 8 ounces lite Cool Whip
- 1 cup milk
- 1 large package instant chocolate pudding mix
- 2-3/4 cups milk

Combine crushed cookies or graham crackers and melted butter. Press onto bottom of 9x13-inch pan and refrigerate. For second layer, mix small package of pudding mix with 1 cup milk. Mix softened cream cheese into mixture and fold in Cool Whip. Spread mixture on top of crumb crust. Refrigerate. For layer 3, combine chocolate pudding mix with 2-3/4 cups milk. Spread on top of second layer and refrigerate. Note: Add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon mint extract to middle layer for a different taste. To dress it up, sprinkle top with mini chocolate chips, Heath bar chips or Andes Mint chips. You can also experiment with different pudding flavors. Nutrition information: 334 calories; 17.4g fat; 508mg sodium; 39.3g carbohydrates; 6.8g protein.



Americans can finally grow hair so thick “It will cover up your bald spots,” says top US Doctor

Clinical trials show a new hair loss breakthrough can help both men and women naturally regrow a thick, full head of hair – without drugs, surgery, or side effects

Thousands are rushing to get a new hair restoration method based on surprising new studies from the University of California.

It is the world's first and only hair loss solution that revives dead hair follicles. And studies confirm it helps men and women regrow a thick, full head of hair, even after years of balding.

Now, with news of this breakthrough spreading like wildfire — the manufacturers are struggling to keep up with overwhelming demand.

That's because, unlike other methods, it is prescription-free, drug-free, and has no side effects. And while hair transplants can cost \$4,000 or more, this new approach costs pennies on the dollar and doesn't involve going to the doctor's office.

Instead, it leverages cutting-edge technology to prevent hair loss, fills in embarrassing bald spots, and **Re-Nourishes** thinning hair — with results you can see and feel in 30 days or less.

As Jeanne F. from San Diego, CA reports: “When my husband began to use this product, all he had on top of his head was fuzz. His hair began to grow after 30 days and now it is about 2 to 3 inches long!”

Surprising Truth About Hair Loss

It is commonly believed that hair loss is hereditary.

Unfortunately, most people think there is nothing they can do to stop it. However, while many doctors will tell you that thinning hair, a receding hairline, and bald spots are due to your genetics, this is not the whole story.

“While genetics play a role, it's not the main reason you lose hair,” says Dr. Al Sears, the nation's top anti-aging doctor. “And surprisingly it's not just your age, thyroid, hormones, stress, or a vitamin deficiency, either.”

The latest scientific research reveals that hair loss is primarily caused by the stem cells in your

hair follicles dying.

“This discovery is a true breakthrough because by reviving these stem cells on your scalp, you can stop hair loss dead in its tracks and trigger new hair growth, even in areas that have been thinning for years,” explains Dr. Sears.

Now, at his world-famous clinic, the Sears Institute for Anti-Aging Medicine in Palm Beach, Florida, Dr. Sears and his team have used this game-changing discovery to develop a brand-new hair restoration formula that is taking the country by storm.

Breakthrough
research proves this discovery helps fill in bald spots, re-nourishes thinning hair, and leads to noticeable growth in as little as 30 days.

Sold under the name **Re-Nourish**, it is flying off the shelves with men and women of all ages raving about the results it delivers.

“I have seen a significant improvement in hair growth. Previously, you could see thinning areas at the back of my head and now hair has grown over it,” says Peter W. from Ontario, Canada.

And Susan D. from Fort Pierce, Florida reports, “My hair was thinning. So, I began to use **Re-Nourish** every day on the front part of my scalp. Now I have thicker hair.”

Regrows Hair In Just 30 Days

Scientists now know that stem cells are the lifeblood of your hair follicles.

Research from the University of California shows they're the reason you're able to grow hair. However, these stem cells aren't always active. In fact, studies reveal they're only active during certain phases of the hair growth

cycle.

“Your hair grows in three phases,” explains Dr. Sears. “First, you have the anagen phase, the hair growing phase. Then the catagen phase, when hair gets ready to shed. And finally, the telogen phase, where your hair is pushed from the follicle and falls out.”

As you get older it becomes harder for your hair follicles to complete this three-phase cycle. The results? Your hairs get stuck in the telogen phase. This is when they start falling out and stop regrowing, no matter what you try.

This process doesn't happen overnight, says Dr. Sears.

“At first, your hair dries out, becoming brittle, thin, and harder to style. Then, you start finding hairs on your pillow and down the drain. Finally, you're left with bald spots that age you prematurely.”

Fortunately, **Re-Nourish** puts a stop to this. It revives the dead stem cells in your hair follicles and reactivates your hair's three-phase cycle, triggering new growth in as little as 30 days — even in areas that've been balding for years.

Reawakens Dead Hair Follicles

For years, scientists couldn't figure out why hair follicle stem cells died.

However, a study from the University of California finally found the answer.

It has to do with T-cells — an important immune cell in your body. The researchers discovered these T-cells are the only way to command hair follicles to grow new hair.

More importantly, they showed that T-cells helped revive the stem cells in your hair follicles — spurring new growth, filling in bald spots and natural hairline.

Re-Nourish uses a unique blend of all-natural ingredients. By spraying it on your hair once per day, scientific studies show you can revive dead stem cells and improve the appearance of

thicker, fuller hair.

For example, the key nutrient of **Re-Nourish** was tested on a group of severely balding women.

After 6 months, nearly 70% of the women saw significant improvement in hair growth. Their hair was noticeably fuller, thicker, and healthier looking. Most exciting of all, they grew new hair on parts of their scalp that had been bald for years.

In another study, Italian researchers gathered a group of both men and women with thinning hair and applied the core ingredient of **Re-Nourish**. After 12 weeks, they reported a staggering 74% increase in hair growth.

“It's really mind-boggling that my hair started growing back,” says Zan R., another **Re-Nourish** customer.

With results like this, it's no surprise that demand for **Re-Nourish** is soaring. Thousands of men and women are scrambling to get their hands on the limited supply available.

Re-Nourish is not currently available in any store at any price. But we've secured a small batch for our readers.

Try Re-Nourish 100% Risk-Free

To secure the hot, new **Re-Nourish** formula, buyers should contact the Sears Health Hotline at **1-800-927-7938** TODAY. “It's not available in retail stores yet,” says Dr. Sears. “The Hotline allows us to ship directly to the customer.” Dr. Sears feels so strongly about **Re-Nourish**, all orders are backed by a 100% money-back guarantee. “Just send me back the bottle and any unused product within 90 days from purchase date, and I'll send you all your money back.”

Call NOW at **1-800-927-7938** to secure your supply of **Re-Nourish**. Use Promo Code **ICLRN0722** when you call. Lines are frequently busy, but all calls will be answered!



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UPCOMING THEMES

September – Deer
October – Nightscapes
November – Color orange
December – Snow scenes

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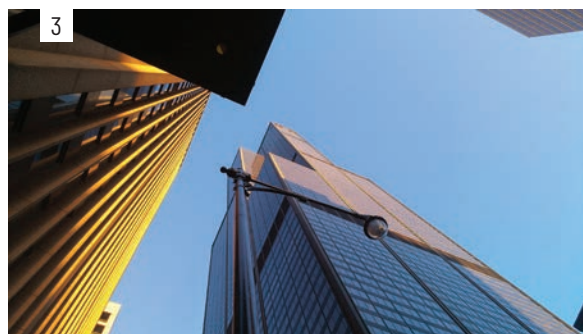
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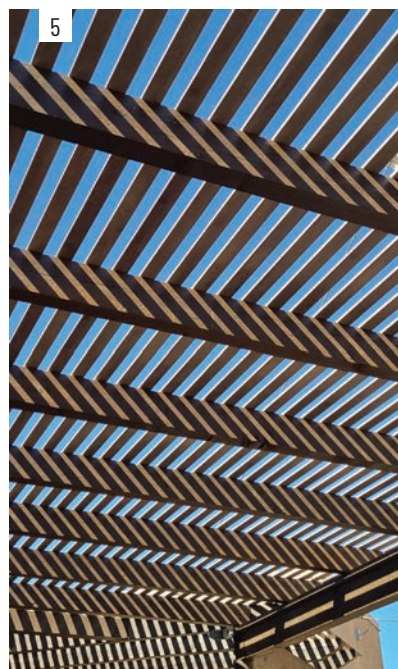
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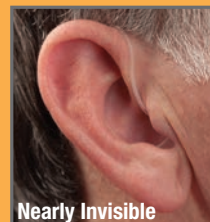
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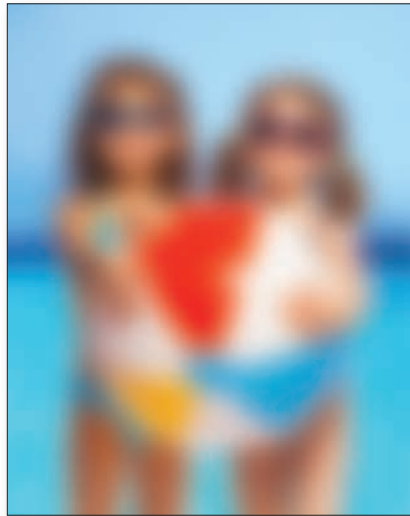
For many patients with macular degeneration and other vision-related conditions, the loss of central visual detail also signals the end to one of the last bastions of independence: driving. A Mascoutah optometrist, Dr. Marianne McDaniel, is using miniaturized telescopes that are mounted in glasses to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

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