

Illinois Country Living

Up to bat for bats



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Illinois Country Living

OCTOBER 2022
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Sleep for success

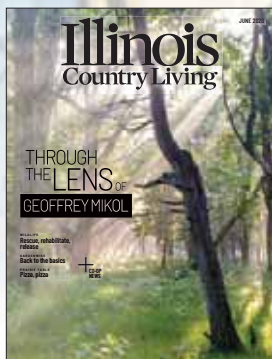
A good night's sleep improves overall health.

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Readers photographed scenes between dusk and dawn.





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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Parting is such sweet sorrow

THIS FAMILIAR LINE FROM Shakespeare’s “Romeo and Juliet” popped into my mind while contemplating my retirement.

I’m no Juliet, but I do have a Romeo, and we have big plans. Not the type that famous literary couple had, but plans, nonetheless.

When I began as editor of Illinois Country Living, it was a dream come true. I was using my college education in language arts and my love of small town life to make a difference. I had so much to learn about the publishing side of the business, but I pushed up my sleeves and dove in.

I had many mentors along the way, including former ICL editor John Lowrey. I will never forget one of the first things he told me, “Every editor needs an editor.” That is so true. I also immersed myself in growing relationships with other statewide editors and learned to “admire and acquire” their ideas. That’s the thing about cooperatives, we love to work with each other to make everyone better.

Illinois is just one of more than 30 states that produces an electric cooperative-centric statewide magazine distributed to consumer-members – encompassing more than 12 million readers across the U.S. All embrace the co-op spirit and enjoy the challenge of highlighting and

supporting our cooperatives.

I’ve enjoyed traveling the state to visit co-ops from Galena down to Dongola and Quincy to Paris. I took a trip down memory lane looking at my tenure, stories written and those I’ve met.

Rural Illinois has much to offer and interviewing such interesting members as Geoffrey Mikol, a highly talented Down syndrome photographer from Galena, was a highlight.

I’ve listened to the heart-wrenching stories of wounded Vietnam veterans and their journeys to recovery and spoke with a young man whose food allergies were so severe that at age 11, he’d never eaten in a restaurant, and I’m happy to report he is much improved after continued immunotherapy. I’ve always admired the talents of others – from artisans to female farmers, a blind triathlete and a group of young-at-heart gentlemen who embrace the Santa spirit year-round, to name a few.

Rural Illinois has many interesting personalities, and I only touched the tip of the iceberg. I know there are many more stories to tell, and the team I am leaving behind will pick up that mantle and run without missing a beat.

This cooperative family of mine is near and dear to my heart and always will be. We know how to pull together in a crisis, laugh at our shortcomings, meet those deadlines that loomed imminently, and find humor in the mundane. Maybe too much fun at times, but I wouldn’t change a thing.

While I am looking forward to slower days without deadlines and alarm clocks, the parting is bittersweet.

So, yes, it is with sweet sorrow I find myself retiring. I’ll miss my coworkers but look forward to the days ahead with my Romeo.

Blessings,
Valerie



As of the publication of this magazine, Valerie Cheatham is the newly retired editor of Illinois Country Living magazine.

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Trick or treat?

Kids already know that it's better to get a treat than a trick. When you look at your electric bill each month, which do you get ... a Snickers Bar or a sour lemon? If it's a lemon, visit www.touchstoneenergy.com/energy-solutions and find out how little changes you make can add up to big savings.

By using the numerous suggestions from the site such as sealing your home's cracks, adding insulation and installing a programmable thermostat, when your bill arrives, you'll be snickering instead of puckering!

*For more energy saving tips, call your local
Touchstone Energy Cooperative.*

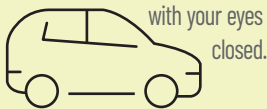


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OCTOBER CHECKLIST

Don't text and drive.

The shortest amount of time a person takes his or her eyes off the road to text is 5 seconds. At 55 mph, that's like driving the length of a football field



Stop energy vampires.

Many electronics like TVs, game consoles and coffee makers consume energy when in standby mode. When you're not using these devices, unplug them to eliminate energy waste.



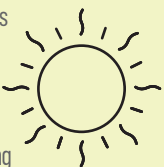
Trick-or-treat.

Make sure your trick-or-treaters are easy to spot on Halloween. Purchase glow sticks or small flashlights to help them stand out.



Tip of the month.

If your home is feeling chilly, open window coverings on all south-facing windows to let warm sunlight into your home.



Celebrating National Co-op Month



Being part of a cooperative means being part of something special. Illinois' electric cooperatives are celebrating National Cooperative Month in October, along with 40,000 other cooperative businesses serving more than 120 million people nationwide. Cooperatives generate jobs in their communities, keep profits local and pay local taxes to help support community services. Cooperatives often take part in community improvement programs, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from the cooperative experience.

15 scholarships up for grabs

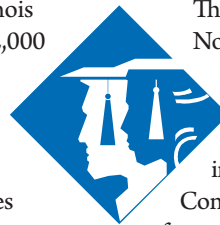
Attention high school seniors: It's time to begin applying for college scholarships. Illinois electric cooperatives will award 15 \$2,000 scholarships in 2023 to financially assist deserving students in the electric co-op family. Scholarships are awarded through the Thomas H. Moore Illinois Electric Cooperatives (IEC) Memorial Scholarship Program.

Nine scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors whose parent(s) are Illinois electric co-op members. A 10th scholarship, the Earl W. Struck Memorial Scholarship, will be awarded to a student who is the child of an Illinois electric cooperative employee or director. Four additional scholarships are reserved for high school seniors enrolling

full-time at a two-year Illinois community college whose parent(s) are Illinois electric cooperative members or an employee.

The 15th scholarship, the LaVern and Nola McEntire Lineworker's Scholarship, helps pay for costs to attend lineworker school conducted by the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in conjunction with Lincoln Land Community College, Springfield. Children of co-op members, relatives of co-op employees or directors, and individuals who have served or are serving in the armed forces or National Guard are eligible.

The deadline to apply for the first 14 is Dec. 31, 2022. The lineworker scholarship deadline is April 30, 2023. For more information regarding the scholarships, contact your local electric cooperative or go to aiec.coop/iec-scholarship.



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

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



IL ENTERTAINMENT CORNER

CHARLES "CHUCK" HARTKE, ILLINOIS farmer, former state legislator and a 1992 recipient of the Illinois Electric Cooperative Public Service Award, recently released his memoir, "A Farm Boy's Journey into Politics." In its pages, Hartke, a member-owner of Illinois Electric Cooperative, pens tales from his years growing up on an Effingham hog farm to serving in the Illinois House and as the state's director of agriculture. The author, a Vietnam veteran, also shares his travels to China and Vietnam. To order a copy, email chuck.hartke@gmail.com. Books are \$19.95 plus tax.

Cooperative cybersecurity

As cybersecurity threats continue to grow, it's important to know what we can do as individuals, how we can work with others and measures we can take to reduce our risk of cyber threats. October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month, but good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round.

Electric co-ops are guided by seven cooperative principles. One of these principles, "Cooperation Among Cooperatives," has never been more important as it pertains to protecting and defending our nation's electric grid from cyberattacks. As the grid evolves and new technologies emerge, this creates additional opportunities for threat actors to target our systems.

These co-ops are coming together to fight back and add resiliency to the electric grid. When it comes to cybersecurity, cooperation among cooperatives happens in many ways.

Electric co-ops work with each other, their local generation and transmission cooperatives, statewide organizations, and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association for electric cooperatives. Together, they're leading efforts to establish relationships, provide tools, and share resources and training information to improve the overall cyber landscape.

You can help, too. Good cyber hygiene is equally important at home. Just like grid technology continues to expand, so does the connected home. With smart technologies integrated into many homes, whether smart speakers or connected appliances, it's essential to take steps to protect devices and personal data. Here are examples of what to do.

Enable multi-factor or two-factor authentication on online accounts. This layer of security allows websites and apps to confirm you're really who you say you are. By adding this step, you're making it harder for hackers to access your accounts.

Use secure passwords. Use unique passwords for all your accounts and ensure they are at least 15 characters long.

Randomly generated passwords are typically more secure. Consider using a password manager.

Think before you click. Be careful when clicking links or opening attachments. This is one of the most important ways to protect yourself against scammers and hackers.

We all have a part to play in combating cyber threats. Electric cooperatives and their local, statewide and national partners will continue working together to advance cybersecurity defenses for all co-op members and the local communities they serve.

Justin Luebbert, NRECA

Protect loved ones from elder abuse

Concerned about protecting older relatives and friends from elder abuse? The pandemic highlighted the disproportionate impact of tragedy on underserved communities, including older adults, who face high rates of elder abuse and fraud.

It's important to remember that elder abuse can happen to anyone, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender or financial status. The Social Security Administration (SSA) is committed to helping and preventing further victimization.

A recent FBI report showed elder fraud has increased. Older adults in the U.S. reported more than \$1.6 billion in losses in 2021, including victims of COVID-related scams. Older adults also lose nearly 25 times more money to scammers than other groups – an estimated \$113.7 billion a year.

Reporting fraud can be difficult, and older adults tend to under-report – especially when money is lost. Many older Americans are unsure about the reporting process or feel too embarrassed to report. SSA works hard to protect beneficiaries from Social Security and government imposter scams. For resources to protect your loved ones, go to ssa.gov/scam.

Sheri Richey, Social Security Administration

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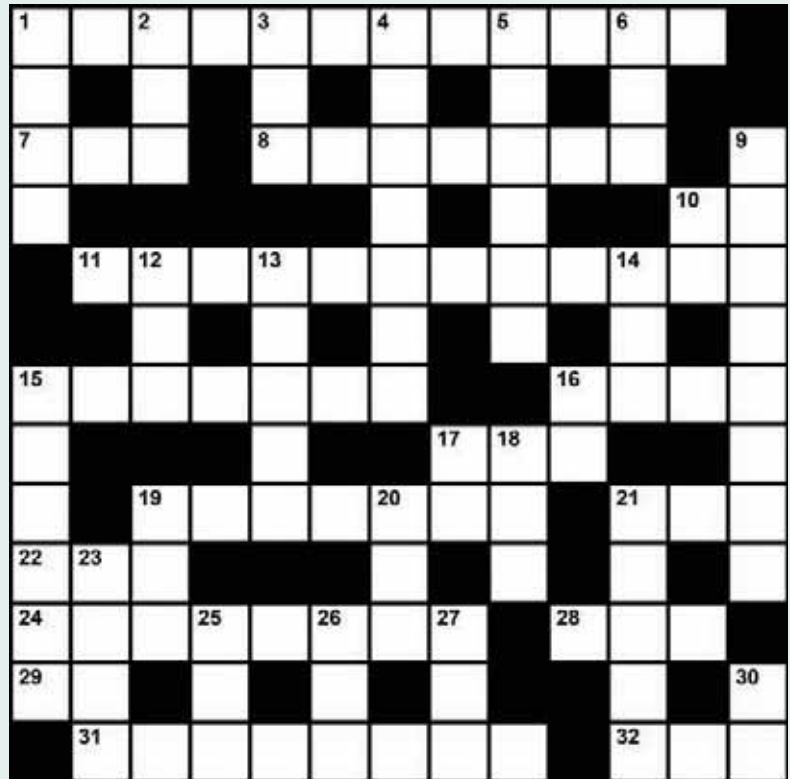
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Across

- 1 Kids' cry at Halloween, 3 words
- 7 Consumed
- 8 Corpse
- 10 Hairstyle
- 11 Carved vegetable at Halloween, 3 words
- 15 Scary insects often used as Halloween decorations
- 16 ____ a spell: bewitch
- 17 Trouble
- 19 Halloween wear
- 21 Ferrari, for one
- 22 Org dealing with emissions, abbr.
- 24 Pulpy orange yellow fleshy vegetables always seen at Halloween
- 28 Pesky insect
- 29 Street, for short
- 31 Frequent Halloween costume
- 32 Talk loudly

Down

- 1 Hopping creature which is known as a witch's pet

2 Bar 'rocks'

- 3 They sell chicken nuggets
- 4 What the witches used to warn Macbeth
- 5 Black birds that have been regarded as symbols of death and evil
- 6 Atmosphere
- 9 Large evil creatures
- 10 Frankenstein's title
- 12 "I am the greatest" boxer
- 13 Castle strongholds
- 14 Historic period of time
- 15 Uses a broom
- 16 Firm, briefly
- 17 Morning time
- 18 Animal's lair
- 19 Machine wheel
- 20 Cremation vase
- 21 Kids' rewards at Halloween
- 23 Places
- 25 Pumpkin dessert
- 26 Anger
- 27 U.S.-Canadian canals
- 30 Raise

Solution on page 33.

Co-ops, CoBank share success with local organizations

SINCE ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN 2012, CoBank's Sharing Success program has contributed nearly \$66 million to local nonprofit groups, and many recipients can be found across Illinois. Here's how it works: Customers of CoBank, which includes electric co-ops in Illinois, donate to a local cause, and CoBank matches that amount ranging from \$250 to \$10,000.

Through the years, Illinois electric co-ops have taken advantage of the program, and 2022 was no exception. Here is a rundown of some of the donations since the 2022 program launched on April 1.

Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative, Mattoon, presented a check for \$18,000 (\$9,000 matched by CoBank) to their local hospital, Sarah Bush Lincoln. This will be used toward the construction of the new 14,470-square-foot hospice house on the hospital's campus that's set to open in 2023. The co-op also donated \$2,000 to the Lake Land College Foundation, which supports students seeking a degree in technology or GIS programs.

For the 11th consecutive year, **EnerStar Electric Cooperative**, Paris, has awarded matching grants to local organizations. To date, \$145,000 in donations have been distributed in the service territory. This year, Martinsville Ag Fair Association, the Clark County Fair Association and the Edgar County Fair Association equally split grants that added up to \$20,000 to upgrade facilities at each location.



Jo-Carroll Energy, Elizabeth, awarded grants totaling \$20,000 to four local organizations. Inspire Continuing Care (pictured) received


\$10,000 to be used to provide supervised daytime community opportunities for qualified young adults. Camp Benson received \$5,000 to purchase programming materials for campers. Whiteside County Soil and Water District Education Fund received \$1,500 to administer education programs. The Galena American Legion received \$2,000 for transportation to and from medical appointments for veterans.

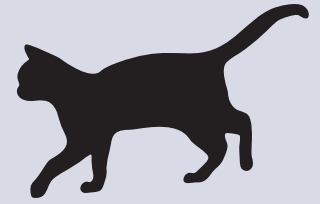
McDonough Power Cooperative, Macomb, took advantage of CoBank's Sharing Success program to provide \$5,000 each to organizations in its community: Birthright of Macomb, McDonough County 4-H Foundation, Warren County 4-H Foundation and McDonough Power Cooperative Cares Coats for Kids program.



Menard Electric Cooperative, Petersburg, donated \$3,500 to Athens Area Food Pantry (pictured) to support the pantry's purchase of needed items from the Central Illinois Foodbank. Niantic Christian Church's Sangamon Valley Backpack Program received a \$6,000 donation to help provide backpacks and school supplies to students. Petersburg's Town and Country Women's Club received a \$7,500 donation to support plans to revitalize a local park in Petersburg. Virginia Christian Women's Fellowship received a \$3,000 donation to support the group's summer lunch program.

Rural Electric Convenience Cooperative, Auburn, awarded grants to schools in New Berlin, North Mac and Taylorville. The grants totaled \$20,000 and were divided among the three schools to fund various projects.

CoBank is a cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. 




Where is it?

The winners of the August hidden object contest were Christopher Fouke of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative and Carla Reese of Corn Belt Energy Corporation. Congratulations! Your ICL Tervis tumblers have been sent!

September's electric vehicle was hidden on the ornamental grass on page 19. Winners' names will be drawn, and they will be notified. Visit Illinois Country Living on Facebook after each month's deadline for a closeup of the object's location and winners' names.

It's time for a new hidden object search. This month, in honor of Halloween, be on the lookout for a black cat. The symbol can vary in size and will not 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 (also found 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, emails or entries via phone call. All entries for that month must be postmarked or received digitally by the 15th. Winners' names and the location of the symbol will be published in each month's issue of Illinois Country Living. 

OCTOBER Datebook

LET'S GO!

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



Wabash Valley Wine & Art Festival

OCTOBER

1-2

Attend the 19th annual festival in historic Palestine. Stroll down one of Illinois' oldest Main Streets while sampling great Illinois wine from 15 wineries. Enjoy fine arts and crafts from regional artists and listen to live music. Dine at a variety of food trucks from Main Street restaurants. A car show will be held on Sunday.

Oct. 1-2, 2022; Sat. 11:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m., Sun. noon-5 p.m.

- 100-300 S. Main St., Palestine
- Cost: Free, daily fee for wine tasting
- palestinewinefest.com

Harvest Daze

OCTOBER

1-2

Come enjoy this large craft and artisan show with more than 50 vendors on the grounds of the 100-year-old courthouse. Saturday includes a Top 20 Car Show, pumpkin contest, food and drinks in the Red Barn, a Victorian bake sale and activities for kids in the big tent. Sunday is the tractor show with more food and activities.

Oct. 1-2, 2022; 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

- Old Courthouse Museum, 103 W. Cherry St., Watseka
- Cost: Free
- 815-383-1177 or iroquoiscountyhistoricalsociety.com



Kampsville Knap-In

OCTOBER

8

Many activities await at the Kampsville Knap-In. Enjoy native plant walks and demonstrations on flintknapping, traditional bow making, atlatl range, and other primitive skills. Artifact identification will be held from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tent camping, fishing and hiking will be available at the 940-acre McCully Heritage Project, which is a private nonprofit environmental center located 1 mile south of Kampsville. This outdoor event will follow current health department guidelines.

Oct. 8, 2022; 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

- McCully Heritage Project, 592 Crawford Creek Rd., Kampsville
- Cost: Free
- 618-653-4687 or <https://tinyurl.com/kampvilleknapin2022>

Fall Festival at Lincoln's New Salem

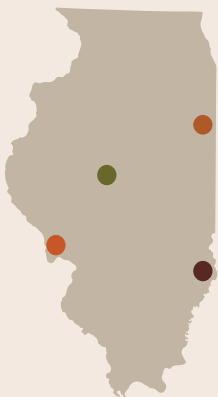
OCTOBER

22

Enjoy the fall colors as period clothing interpreters demonstrate daily tasks throughout the historic village such as candle dipping, soap making, blacksmithing, spinning wool, gardening and natural dyeing. Visitors can step into the cellar at the tavern to see how fruits and vegetables were preserved during the winter.

Oct. 22, 2022; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

- 15588 History Ln., Petersburg
- Cost: Free
- 217-632-4000 or lincolnsnewsalem.com



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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Ronald Weingart, O.D.



Only you can prevent home electrical fires

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 100th anniversary of the National Fire Protection Association's Fire Prevention Week, held Oct. 9-15. While Smokey the Bear works to prevent forest fires, at Safe Electricity, we work to prevent accidents associated with electricity.

Safe Electricity offers the following tips in different areas in your home to help find possible issues with your electrical system or appliances before they become a fire hazard. Remember, only you can prevent home electrical fires.

Electrical outlets

Check for loose-fitting plugs and loose wall receptacles. Replace missing or broken wall plates. If you have young children, install tamper resistant outlets (TROs). Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.

Electrical wiring

If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Have an electrician check it out. Also check for loose wires and loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches are hot to the touch or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.

Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)

Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement, garage and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test and reset button monthly to ensure they are working properly.

Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)

Consider having AFCIs installed in your home. An AFCI installed in a circuit breaker monitors the flow of electricity throughout your home. If the AFCI detects any abnormality, it will shut the system off, preventing a fire.

Plugs

Do not remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a plug fit a two-conductor outlet.

Cords

Make sure cords are not frayed or cracked, placed under rugs, tightly wrapped around any object, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors or other objects.

Extension cords

These are not intended as permanent household wiring, so use them on a temporary basis only. If you find you need more electrical

outlets, talk to an electrician about installing more so you will not need to use extension cords.

Light bulbs

Verify that your light bulbs are the intended wattage for the lamp or fixture they are in, and make sure they are screwed in securely so they do not overheat.

Appliances and electronics

If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics. Make sure your appliances and electronics are placed in dry locations. If an appliance has been water damaged, be sure to replace it.

Circuit breakers and fuses

Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting.

Service capacity

If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. Contact a qualified electrician.

For more information on electrical safety in your home, 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.

The Invention of the Year

The world's lightest and most portable mobility device

Once in a lifetime, a product comes along that truly moves people. Introducing the future of battery-powered personal transportation . . . **The Zinger.**

Throughout the ages, there have been many important advances in mobility. Canes, walkers, rollators, and scooters were created to help people with mobility issues get around and retain their independence. Lately, however, there haven't been any new improvements to these existing products or developments in this field. Until now. Recently, an innovative design engineer who's developed one of the world's most popular products created a completely new breakthrough . . . a personal electric vehicle. It's called the **Zinger**, and there is nothing out there quite like it.

"What my wife especially loves is it gives her back feelings of safety and independence which has given a real boost to her confidence and happiness! Thank You!"

-Kent C., California

The first thing you'll notice about the **Zinger** is its unique look. It doesn't look like a scooter. Its sleek, lightweight yet durable frame is made with aircraft grade aluminum so it weighs only 47.2 lbs. It features one-touch folding and unfolding - when folded it can be wheeled around like a suitcase and fits easily into a backseat or trunk. Then, there are the steering levers. They enable the **Zinger** to move forward, backward, turn on a dime and even pull right up to a

table or desk. With its compact yet powerful motor it can go up to 6 miles an hour and its rechargeable battery can go up to 8 miles on a single charge. With its low center of gravity and inflatable tires it can handle rugged terrain and is virtually tip-proof. Think about it, you can take your **Zinger** almost anywhere, so you don't have to let mobility issues rule your life.

Available in Green, Black and Blue (shown)



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85246

Cracking the code on cracking codes

“HOW DOES SOMEONE BREAK your password? Just by guessing? Using some algorithm? Consulting a list of the most common? What makes a password weak or strong? I know to use lowercase, uppercase, numbers and special characters, but what would make one combination of those good and another not?”

This series of questions posed by a reader is a sober reminder that oftentimes IT professionals teach

password before guessing, because you risk being locked out.

Basic knowledge of cryptography is needed to understand how passwords are secured. The three categories of cryptography include: private key, public key and hash functions. For simplicity, I will use hash function cryptography.

Hashing is a way to transform a given string into a fixed-length string. A good hashing algorithm produces unique outputs for each input given. The only way to crack a hash is by trying every input possible until you get the exact same hash.

Just because an algorithm is a mathematical function doesn't mean it would be easy to feed the hash back through a reverse algorithm. It's difficult, if not impossible, with standard computational power to reverse a complex hash algorithm, which is why they are used for passwords.

For example, using a common industry standard for hashing, the Secure Hash Algorithm (SHA256) creates a complex string of letters and numbers (or

“password.” However, one simple change makes a huge difference. Capitalizing one letter to make “Password” creates a completely different hash.

Applications don't store passwords in plaintext. After a user enters a password, it's converted to a hash and compared with the stored hashes on the server. Once matched, the user is authenticated and logged in.

When using the same hash algorithm, the password will always generate the same hash. Since “Password” always generates the

same SHA256 hash, someone might keep a list of commonly used password or character hashes. This is known as a rainbow table.

The rainbow table refers to a precomputed table containing the password hash value for each plaintext character used during the authentication process. If hackers gain access to the list of password hashes, they can crack all passwords quickly using a rainbow table. (Note: Some programmers use an additional step called salting. Salting uses a separate algorithm applied to the passwords' stored hashed value, making it difficult to leverage a rainbow table.)

This circumvents any maximum password attempt lockout policies, because the hacker is using a known hash to create the password before an attempt is made to login. Passwordrandom.com cites 91 percent of user passwords sampled appear on the list of the top 1,000 passwords.

It boils down to randomization and length. Adding “!” to the end of your pet's name as the password doesn't make it much stronger. Creating completely randomized passwords makes matching hashes extremely difficult. The more characters used, the more computational power it takes to compare against a rainbow table, sometimes referred to as a brute force attack.

Hive Systems suggests when a password combines upper and lowercase letters, numbers, special characters, and is 12 characters long, it would take a hacker 3,000 years to crack by trying every combination to generate the same hash. See the password table for more information.

Bottom line, the conventional password hashing is flawed, which is why multi-factor authentication and a push toward a future without passwords is on the rise. 🗝️

| Number of Characters | Numbers Only | Lowercase Letters | Upper and Lowercase Letters | Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters | Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters, Symbols |
|----------------------|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 4 | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly |
| 5 | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly |
| 6 | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly | Instantly |
| 7 | Instantly | Instantly | 2 secs | 7 secs | 31 secs |
| 8 | Instantly | Instantly | 2 mins | 7 mins | 39 mins |
| 9 | Instantly | 10 secs | 1 hour | 7 hours | 2 days |
| 10 | Instantly | 4 mins | 3 days | 3 weeks | 5 months |
| 11 | Instantly | 2 hours | 5 months | 3 years | 34 years |
| 12 | 2 secs | 2 days | 24 years | 200 years | 3k years |
| 13 | 19 secs | 2 months | 1k years | 12k years | 202k years |
| 14 | 3 mins | 4 years | 64k years | 750k years | 16m years |
| 15 | 32 mins | 100 years | 3m years | 46m years | 18m years |
| 16 | 5 hours | 3k years | 173m years | 38m years | 92bn years |
| 17 | 2 days | 69k years | 6bn years | 179bn years | 71m years |
| 18 | 3 weeks | 2m years | 467bn years | 111m years | 438m years |

Learn about our methodology at hivesystems.io/password

what to do or not do, but seldom explain why or how it happens. That's because the answer is not straightforward; however, I will do my best to explain the ways simple passwords can be compromised. Note, there are always caveats, exceptions and methods of which I may not be aware.

Guessing a person's password based on knowledge acquired is straightforward but not common, especially with the maximum attempt policy to which most applications or websites adhere. You'd need a general idea of someone's



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

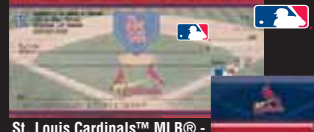
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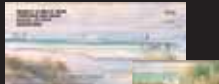
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NHL® Logo - 00757
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Lena Liu's Morning
Serenade - 00029 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00029 ★



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



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



Sunflowers - 00334
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00334 ★



Classic Peanuts -
00708 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00708 ◆



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



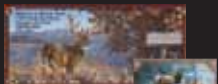
Great Outdoors -
00552 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00552 ★



Lightning Strikes -
00178 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00178 ★



Tropical Paradise -
00052 Leather Cover
and Labels - 00052 ★



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



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



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



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



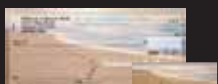
Nurses Rule! - 00542
Leather Cover
and Labels - 00542 ★



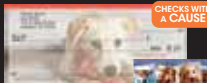
Glitter Sparkles -
01327 Fabric Cover
and Labels - 01327 ▲



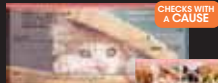
Thomas Kinkadee's Faith
for All Seasons w/verse "Believe all things
are possible with God!" - 00105
Leather Cover and Labels - 00105 ★



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



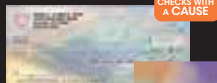
Rescued is My Breed
of Choice - 00379 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00379 ★
A portion of the proceeds will be donated to a national no-kill animal shelter.



Rescued is Something
to Purrr About - 00526 Leather
Cover and Labels - 00526 ★



On the Wings of Hope -
00304 One Image - Leather
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Coping Together -
01397 Leather Cover -
00125 and Labels - 01397 ★
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Grandkids Rule! w/verse
"I'd rather be with my grandkids." - 00437
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Mountains - 01287
Leather Cover and
Labels - 01287 ★



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



Cowboy Boots - 00434
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00434 ★



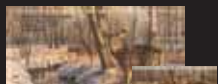
Mickey Loves Minnie -
00422 Leather Cover and Labels - 00422 ◆
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Labels - 00017 ★



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



Wall Street - 00167
Leather Cover and
Labels - 00167 ▲



5th Avenue - 00155
One Image, Leather
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Imperial - 00165 One Image,
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Insulation made easy

WHILE IT ISN'T PRETTY, insulation and air sealing provide the biggest bang for your buck when it comes to home energy efficiency improvements. When installed together,

Insulation level recommendations are based on geographic location. Generally, the colder the climate, the higher the recommended R-value.

Where to insulate

The best locations to insulate include the attic, walls and floor. If you have a forced-air heating or cooling system, ductwork needs insulated, too. You want a consistent thermal barrier around your home for maximum efficiency. A bonus to insulation, it reduces outside noise.

Attic insulation minimizes energy waste and helps maintain a consistent temperature throughout the home. Combined with air sealing, it can prevent ice dams from forming on the roof in colder climates.

Attics can be insulated using batts or blown-in insulation. Recommend R-values range from R-38 to R-60 in Illinois. If you use your attic for storage, you can build a raised platform with room for insulation underneath. Add insulation and weatherstripping to access doors or hatches.

Exterior walls and walls separating heated and unheated areas of the home (such as garages or enclosed porches) should be insulated to an R-value ranging from R-13 to R-21, based on your location and wall construction.

Wall insulation can be installed during construction or a remodel. If your home wasn't insulated when built, have insulation blown in by a contractor. Blown-in options include cellulose, fiberglass and foam.

Your home should also be insulated between the floor and crawl-space or unheated basement. If your basement is heated, install insulation in the box sills—the area between the foundation floor of the home's main level.

Consider building and insulating the exterior walls in the basement or installing foam insulation on foundation walls. Check local building code requirements. Recommended R-values for floor insulation range from R-25 to R-30 in Illinois. Also insulate heating and cooling ductwork located in unconditioned spaces to prevent energy waste.

Importance of air sealing

Air sealing prevents drafts and air infiltration from outside. It can improve efficiency, comfort and indoor air quality.

Air sealing can be done as a DIY project, but it is challenging to pinpoint and properly seal air leaks. Consider hiring a contractor to complete a blower door test and seal leaks.

Typically, air sealing is done around plumbing and electrical penetrations with spray foam or caulk. If using spray foam around gas appliances, temporarily turn off pilot lights. Spray foam is flammable.

Sheet metal and high-temperature heat-resistant caulk should be used to seal gaps between framing, chimneys and metal flues.

DIY considerations

With a DIY approach, protect yourself when going into spaces with insulation. Wear a properly fitted mask or respirator. Wearing a Tyvek suit and gloves is recommended. Also, kneepads come in handy when crawling.

Before a DIY approach for air sealing, research best practices for proper home ventilation. Also, contact several local contractors for an estimate. Sometimes the contractor can get cheaper bulk pricing on insulation.

Making insulation and air sealing a priority adds comfort, efficiency and savings to your home. 💡



There are different types of insulation, including fiberglass batts, blown fiberglass, cellulose and foam. Each has its own R-value, which is listed on the packaging. Photo courtesy of Mark Gilliland.

they help save money and make a big difference in comfort and energy use.

Insulation rating

Insulation is rated in R-value. The R stands for resistance to heat transfer. The higher the R-value, the slower the heat transfer, or less wasted energy. Types of insulation include fiberglass batts, blown fiberglass, cellulose and foam. Each has its own R-value listed on the packaging. To determine the R-value of your existing insulation, multiply the number of inches by the R-value per inch for the type of insulation.



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

Garlic planting 101

AS THE VEGETABLE GROWING season quickly screeches to a halt with fall frost, there is one crop that can be planted now for next year. Garlic is an easy-to-grow bulb crop that does best when planted now for next year's summer harvest.

Garlic is a perennial, meaning it is cold hardy in our area. However, it must be divided, or replanted, annually to produce the large, store-bought bulbs we are used to seeing. Chilling is required to initiate bulb-ing and flowering in the subsequent growing season, so garlic bulbs must be planted in fall for proper exposure to cold during winter.

Plant garlic 2-4 weeks before the average frost date in your area.

It is recommended that garlic be planted 2-4 weeks before the average frost date. For most of Illinois, that timeframe is in October. This allows cloves to root and begin to sprout before freezing temperatures set in.

Garlic seed can be purchased from several suppliers or bulbs can be saved to replant in fall. While garlic from the supermarket may grow just fine in a garden setting, I recommend purchasing a variety sold as seed garlic. The quality of

the bulb at harvest is typically better from seed garlic since the common supermarket varieties may have been developed for storage life at the expense of taste.

The planting process for garlic is simple and involves breaking up garlic bulbs into individual cloves. Do not divide garlic bulbs until just before planting as early separation of cloves has been shown to reduce mature bulb size at harvest. Generally, the larger the clove at planting time, the larger the bulb at harvest. So, it pays to select the biggest bulbs possible for planting.

I typically till the area to be planted, although planting into a relatively weed free bed also works well. Like onions, garlic does not handle heavy weed pressure well, so any measure to reduce weed competition is beneficial. After planting, I apply a heavy layer of straw mulch, which helps insulate the soil and blocks out any weed seeds exposed during tillage.

Individual cloves should be planted in an upright position (pointy end up) approximately 3-5 inches apart and 1-2 inches deep. Plantings can be done in rows that are spaced about 18 inches apart, with individual cloves spaced closer to 3 inches in the row. Cloves can be planted 5 inches apart in all

directions to create more of a patch-like planting.

I prefer rows, simply for easier access and a more orderly appearance. Additionally, I find it easier to plant in rows because a 1-2-inch-deep furrow can quickly be made by dragging a hoe through tilled soil. Cloves can then be placed in the furrow at proper spacing and with one last, quick swipe of the hoe, the furrow can be neatly filled in.

There are two types of garlic typically grown - hardneck and softneck garlic. Softneck garlic is the kind that you see woven into beautiful braids, since its shoots are more supple or "softer." Hardneck garlic is characterized by its much stiffer, more upright central stock that is quite rigid at maturity.

Hardneck garlic has larger cloves that are easier to peel, but don't last as long in storage. Softneck garlic has great storage life and since its leaves and shoots remain supple at maturity, it can be woven into braids to facilitate storage and provide an interesting display of your harvest.

Garlic is somewhat of an outlier among the common vegetables with its odd, autumn planting time. However, I really enjoy putting cloves in the ground each fall as one last gardening activity before cleaning up the vegetable plots for winter. 💡

Garlic is typically planted in the fall by separating bulbs into individual cloves.



Ryan Pankau is a University of Illinois horticulture educator serving Champaign, Ford, Iroquois and Vermilion counties in Illinois.

Up to bat for bats

IDNR, electric co-ops partner to help bat population

By Colten Bradford



MILLIONS OF BATS ACROSS the U.S. have died due to an epidemic known as white-nose syndrome (WNS). Highly contagious and with no known cure, the disease has wiped out entire colonies and endangered species of bats.

First discovered in 2006 in upstate New York, WNS has spread across the U.S. and into Canada. In 2013, it reached Illinois. The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and Illinois electric cooperatives are partnering to combat the decreasing population and help recover the 13 bat species that call this state home.

“It’s just an awful disease,” says Joe Kath, endangered species program manager at IDNR. “We’ve seen declines of many species that were considered common. The decline in some is greater than 90 percent.”

Of the 13 species, six are listed as endangered or threatened in the state, with three being federally listed. “We’re talking about species that have always been abundant, and now populations have just been nearly wiped out,” Kath says.

The white-nose syndrome name derives from the white fungal growth found on the noses of infected bats. The fungus essentially attacks the bats’ skin membrane while in hibernation – when they are most vulnerable. During this time, the fungus prevents infected bats from properly using their fat reserves, which sustain them throughout hibernation.

“This affects their metabolism,” Kath explains. “They begin to wake up during hibernation, and they’re hungry. ... They think it’s spring and it’s time to emerge. They leave the cave in the dead of winter trying to forage for insects. Of course, none are available, and they quickly die.”

Primarily spread from bat to bat, the fungal spores that cause WNS can be carried unintentionally from cave to cave by people as the microscopic spores can get on clothing and footwear.

Bats play an important role, not only in the ecosystem but also in agriculture. Bats can be considered a natural way to control pests since insects are their main source of food. According to the U.S. Geological Survey, bats save farmers more than \$3.7 billion a year on pest control, stating that “the actual monetary worth of bats is far greater per year.”

“Bats are the No. 1 consumers of crop pests,” Kath says. “Essentially, farmers are being hit with an expense to control the pests simply because bat populations are declining.”

Seeing those numbers drop, IDNR sought ways to help conserve and recover native Illinois bat species. Bats often roost in trees throughout summer – under peeling bark, in hollows, or in dead or dying trees.

“That’s where females will give birth,” Kath explains. “We call that a maternity colony. In these colonies, hundreds and hundreds of females give birth to their young.”

IDNR decided it needed to replicate these habitats to increase the number of possible locations for bats

to roost that are safe and easily accessible. That’s where BrandenBark comes in.

Developed by wildlife biologists at Copperhead Environmental Consulting and Fort Knox Army Installation, BrandenBark is essentially a sheet of fake tree bark that gets wrapped around a pole. It allows bats to crawl under the “bark” and promotes a roosting area.

“The bats are not going to know it’s fake bark, but will see it as a tree,” Kath explains. “These are structures placed on the landscape, in hopes of drawing in bats, where they can form maternity colonies and the females can give birth to their young. In essence, that will help to stabilize the population that continues to dwindle.”

Several years ago, IDNR worked with the University of Illinois to set up two roosting structures in a nature area to see if it would work. The experiment was a success. By the end of summer, several hundred bats were using them. After a DNA analysis of guano (bat excrement) collected



Silver-haired bat

at the base of the structures, it was discovered the Indiana bat was utilizing the roosts. This species is listed as federally endangered.

“We could not have hoped for a better scenario,” Kath says. He knew this needed to be a larger-scale project. While IDNR could purchase the BrandenBark, it also needed access to old utility poles and the manpower to set them up.

In the past, IDNR has worked closely with the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and electric co-ops to help set up osprey nesting platforms throughout the state to help increase the bird’s population. The structure is a square platform on top of an old utility pole. Electric cooperatives donated the old poles and helped install them.

Photo left: BrandenBark is a sheet of fake tree bark wrapped around a utility pole. Bats will crawl under the “bark” to roost during the summer and give birth to their young.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SCOTT JOHNSON



Big brown bat



Norris Electric Cooperative's Operations Manager Scott Johnson and lineworkers Jeff Higgs, Tyler Johnson, and Ben Bierman volunteered to help install the bat roosts at Embarras River Bottom State Habitat Area.

"Literally within the first season of putting up those platforms, ospreys were already using them and producing young," Kath says.

Reflecting on the success of the osprey project, Kath approached the AIEC for help.

"When Joe first contacted me and explained the project, I was eager to do what I could to help," says Brenda Carter, AIEC vice president of regulatory compliance. She acts as the liaison between IDNR and the electric cooperatives. "I think the project is a win/win. Co-ops can reuse old materials and help create habitats at the same time."

From there, IDNR pinpointed a target site at the Embarras River Bottom State Habitat Area located outside of Lawrenceville in southeastern Illinois. The local area co-op, Norris Electric Cooperative, donated the utility poles, equipment and manpower.

After looking into the project and the impact that bats have on the agricultural industry, Norris Electric Cooperative's board of directors and Manager Tamara Phillips quickly decided to provide support. "We already had old poles that we could donate. All we had to do was put them in the air," Phillips says. "It was an easy thing to contribute to help with the project."

In late November 2021, IDNR personnel and a line crew from Norris Electric erected six bat roosting structures. "Bam, bam, bam. They got all the poles installed," Kath says. "The poles were up so quick. I was just amazed. There's no way we could ever do anything like that ourselves. ... The crew was just fantastic to work with."

Kath values the partnership IDNR has with Illinois' electric cooperatives. Looking at the total cost of the project, he acknowledges and appreciates the role the co-ops play, from donating the utility poles to the expertise and manpower required to put them up safely.

"This is exactly the kind of partnership we're looking for," Kath says. "When it comes down to it, the more of these structures we can place throughout Illinois, the better chances bats are going to have to find these structures, which will hopefully result in the long-term recovery of many bat species native to Illinois."

He explains that the bats first must find the structures, find them suitable for living, and stick around. Of the six poles, Kath is happy to report that five roosts have been a success.

At the base of each pole, there is netting to catch the bat guano. The presence of the guano means the poles are in use, and after DNA analysis, IDNR will be able to tell what species of bats

have moved into the roosts. As of publication, DNA results had not been finalized.

“This was the first summer the structures were on the landscape available for bat use,” Kath says. “If one of those structures showed signs of bat use, I would have considered it a success.”

He says from the district biologists to IDNR’s partners at the Illinois Natural History Survey, that “we are all shocked and elated.”

Because all bats are being hit so hard by WNS, regardless of legal protection status, it doesn’t matter which species use the roosts. “Any use is a win for everybody,” Kath explains. “All species need help, and this is exactly the kind of habitat augmentation needed. It is simple, and it works. If this project alone isn’t a testament to how it can work, I don’t know what is.”

Because of the success of the trial run, Kath hopes to start inundating the landscape with these bat structures.

“I’m looking forward to moving toward other parts of the state and working with different co-ops to put up more of these structures,” Kath says. “Without this partnership, I don’t think this would be possible on the scale that we’re looking to do.”

For the future, Kath and district biologists have pinpointed 14 priority target sites in state-owned locations in southern Illinois to place more bat roosts. They will work their way north. They have discovered that ideal locations are in large areas of land set between two habitat types.

While the primary target for roost locations will be on state-owned property, Kath hopes to transition to private land in the future. “We target the areas where we know there’s suitable bat habitat.” He explains that ideal locations would be on 40-plus acres that are home to several different habitats.

For those interested in helping with the project, whether financially or with land, Kath says to email him directly at Joe.Kath@illinois.gov.

Donations can be made through IDNR’s Wildlife Preservation Fund but be sure to contact Kath so he can mark the donation to go toward the bat program. “That way, we know exactly where somebody’s wishes are going to be met,” Kath says, explaining that any financial contribution will go directly to purchasing more BrandenBark sheets.

“A project like this will have such an impact,” Kath says. “Bats don’t know state boundaries and having a project like this in a state with so much bat diversity is going to help recover and stabilize the bat populations throughout the entire Midwest.”

Status of native Illinois bats

Federally endangered (in danger of becoming extinct)

- ▶ Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*)
- ▶ Gray bat (*Myotis grisescens*)

Federally threatened (likely to become endangered)

- ▶ Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*)

State endangered (in danger of becoming extinct in Illinois)

- ▶ Rafinesque’s big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus rafinesquii*)
- ▶ Southeastern bat (*Myotis austroriparius*)

State threatened (likely to become endangered in Illinois)

- ▶ Eastern small-footed bat (*Myotis leibii*)

Currently unlisted

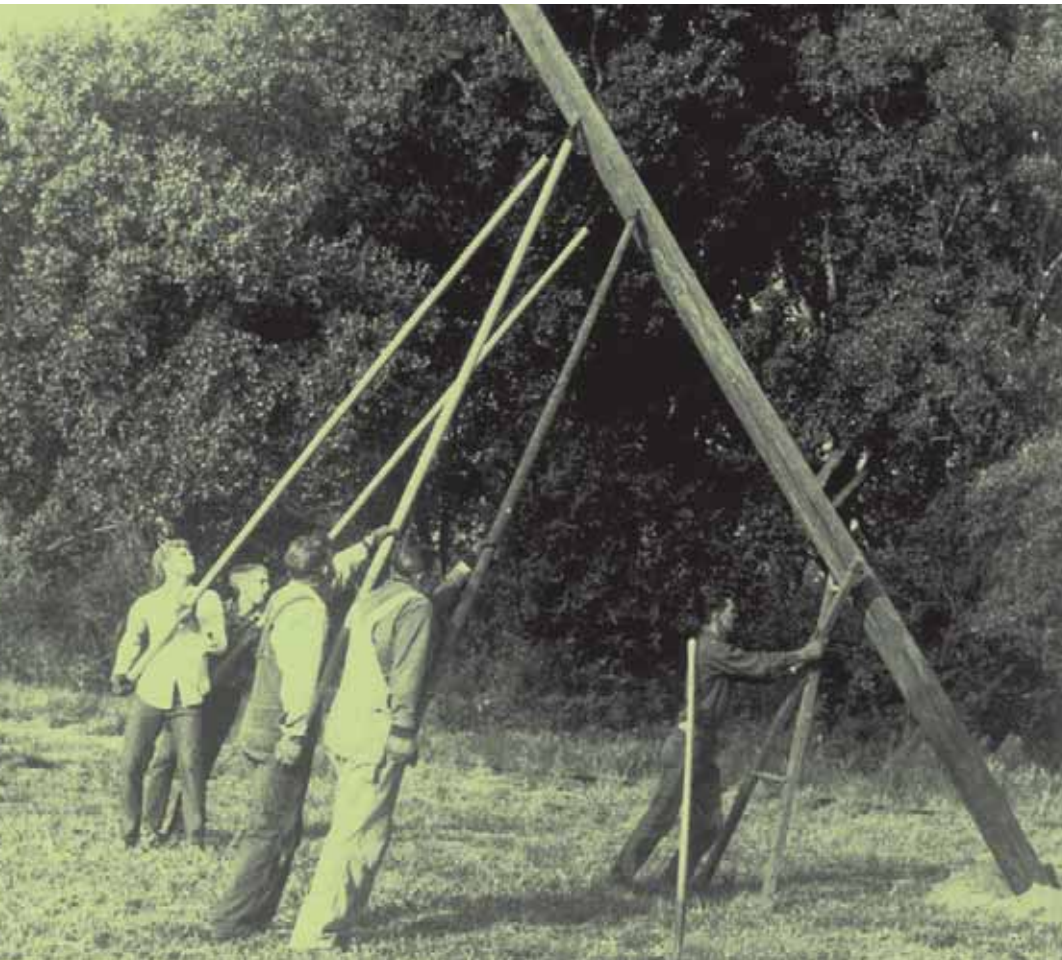
- ▶ Eastern red bat (*Lasiurus borealis*)
- ▶ Hoary bat (*Aeorestes cinereus*)
- ▶ Silver-haired bat (*Lasionycteris noctivagans*)
- ▶ Big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)
- ▶ Tri-colored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*)
- ▶ Evening bat (*Nycticeius humeralis*)
- ▶ Little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*)

Source: Illinois Department of Natural Resources



The electric co-op

HISTORY OF INNOVATION



By Paul Wesslund

DID YOU KNOW ONE of the most cutting-edge places for technology is right up the road at your local electric cooperative?

That's right. Innovation isn't happening just in computer labs or on satellites rocketing into space. Electric co-ops lead even the highly technical electric utility industry in such fast-changing areas as renewable energy and installation of smart meters that allow the more efficient use of electricity.

While it may seem surprising to think of your electric co-op as a high-tech leader, it's part of a way of doing business that has been finding new approaches to solving modern problems for nearly 100 years.

Making light out of darkness

In fact, electric co-ops were originally created to solve one of the most basic and complex of needs and desires—making light out of darkness.

That legacy still works today, and that's why time is set aside each October to recognize National Co-op Month. It's a reminder that businesses succeed not just through competition, but also through cooperation.

As a result of the member-owned cooperative form of business, co-ops stand out in many areas of the electric utility industry. They lead the way in community solar—an initiative in which the co-op

utility builds a solar array that is supported by interested co-op members buying shares of the project. Electric vehicles are getting a boost from co-ops as well, with many placing charging stations in public parks and other rural locations.

And just as co-ops first brought electricity to unserved rural areas nearly a century ago, today many of them are working to bring high-speed internet service to their local communities.

In the early part of the last century, America's cities were being transformed by this new thing called electricity. But outside the municipal boundaries, people could

only look with envy at the glow from over the horizon. Setting poles and stringing power lines miles outside of town for one or two customers was deemed too expensive.

Luckily, go-getters in America's rural communities believed they could solve the problems that kept the power companies from connecting them to modern society.

They called their friends and neighbors together and started forming their own utilities. They were community-based organizations, democratically-run, not-for-profit businesses called cooperatives. Today, there are more than 900 electric co-ops in the U.S. In Illinois, there are 25 distribution electric cooperatives and five generation and transmission cooperatives.

It wasn't easy, especially at first. They got a huge boost when, after getting the attention of some key politicians, the federal government created the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). The REA made loans available, helping finance expensive utility construction. It provided technical consulting, developing engineering techniques to carry electricity longer distances. The agency drew up model co-op bylaws and even went on the road with tent shows to demonstrate how to use the latest conveniences like electric ovens and washing machines.

A true grassroots movement

The biggest innovation is simply the co-op itself, and the notion of a utility with only one mission—to make life better for its members, who are also its customers.

Electric co-ops didn't spring from a national directive or organization. They are truly homegrown products of what local people wanted for their community. Electric co-ops first started forming as early as 1914, and the formation of the REA in 1935 helped smooth the way forward. But it was local community initiative over the next three decades that finally brought electric service to nearly everyone.

The story of electric co-ops is of a true grassroots movement of unique, homegrown organizations. The one characteristic that applies to all of them is that they care for and listen to the local members they serve.

For electric co-ops, one size does not fit all—it's the local community that's in charge. In recognizing that every one of us is different, co-ops make both an electric connection, and a human connection.

And that's a truly powerful innovation. 💡

It's a matter of principles

Cooperatives around the world operate according to the same set of core principles and values, adopted by the International Co-operative Alliance. These principles are a key reason why America's electric co-ops operate differently from other electric utilities, putting the needs of their consumer-members first. Here is a rundown of the seven cooperative principles.



Voluntary and open membership

Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender or economic circumstances.



Democratic member control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Representatives (directors) are elected among members and are accountable to them. In primary cooperatives, members have equal voting rights (one member, one vote); cooperatives at other levels are organized in a democratic manner.



Members' economic participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or all the following: developing the co-op, setting up reserves, benefiting

members in proportion to their transactions with the co-op, and supporting other activities approved by the membership.



Autonomy and independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If they enter into agreements with other organizations, including governments, or raise capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.



Education, training and information

Education and training for members, elected representatives, CEOs and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their co-ops. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives, particularly with the general public and opinion leaders, help boost cooperative understanding.



Cooperation among cooperatives

By working together through local, national, regional and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies and deal more effectively with social and community needs.



Concern for community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership.

The turkey vulture's vicious cousin

WHEN TRAVELING LAST FALL, I came across two large birds dining on roadkill just off a county road. At first, I thought they were common

can be found between the northeastern and southern United States.

Black vultures have a dark gray head and should not be confused

vulnerable or ill cows. They can be a nightmare for livestock farmers.

According to the Cornell Lab, it's not just farm livestock in danger. Household pets may be at risk, too. Wayne Long, the Jefferson County extension agent for the University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment, said small pets like cats and dogs may be at risk of attack just by nature of being small animals.

Until now, livestock owners' only recourse was to house their livestock where they are protected from the black vultures. Previously, harming the birds was out of the question since black vultures are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. Under the act, it is illegal to harm, harass or take (kill) black vultures without a permit.

Last year, the Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) obtained a statewide depredation permit for black vultures from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. IFB will work with USDA Wildlife Services to issue federal sub-permits to livestock farmers who are experiencing issues with black vultures on their land. IFB will also work with the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to secure the necessary state permits for farmers seeking approval.

"In an effort to speed up the process and reduce application costs, IFB will hold the federal depredation permit for livestock farmers facing problems resulting from black vultures," said IFB President Richard Guebert. "This process will also help farmers quickly receive a state permit from IDNR. We are hopeful that this effort will help reduce conflict between the black vulture population and livestock production."

If black vultures are presenting a threat to livestock or pets, contact the IFB, IDNR or your local conservation officer for advice. 💡



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.

turkey vultures, but as I got closer, I quickly identified them.

They were black and appeared to have less of a protruding tail than a turkey vulture and were more plump in stature; rather than bald and flesh colored heads, their heads were feathered and black.

They were black vultures. In the past, I have encountered them along the Ohio River and in southern Indiana, but their range into central Illinois is expanding. The black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) is a member of the New World vulture family and

with their larger, less aggressive and red-headed relative found throughout Illinois, the turkey vulture. Black vultures live in southern regions but are expanding their range farther north, creating depredation problems for farmers.

Like their cousin, black vultures predominately feed on carrion. But this is where their common traits end. While turkey vultures are not aggressive, black vultures are known to gang up and prey on calves being birthed, piglets, lambs and newborn goats. They sometimes attack

One Look and You'll Be Hooked



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two front pockets, rib knit cuffs and hem, and silver-toned metal tippets on the cords. Imported.

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Coal Miner's Café

By Lisa Cherry

NESTLED ON THE CORNER of Milwaukee and Hennepin streets in proverbial small-town America stands the Coal Miner's Café, a humble establishment known for its friendly service and delicious food. The restaurant's name derives from the history of its more precise location in Mark, a town originally built to accommodate miners working at the now-defunct St. Paul Coal Company's shaft in the early 1900s.

Left to right:
Alicia, Maribel
and Flor



Although the mine has long since closed, Flor Castaneda and her husband Nicolas Luna's cozy eatery continues to serve village residents and members of its surrounding communities like Granville and Hennepin. Flor's sister-in-law Maribel created their menu when the couple assumed ownership four years ago, and she plans the restaurant's daily and weekly specials while running the kitchen with her younger sister Alicia.

For Maribel, the love of cooking remains alive. She uses ingredients from local companies like Wyonet Locker in Bureau County, a small-town meat vendor offering wholesale and retail meat and cheese. "Maribel started out at Papa's Restaurant in Spring Valley," Flor says. "We just follow her lead."

Together, with the help of part-time employees (a local schoolteacher and a waitress who worked there under its former management), the family keeps the restaurant humming. Stacy, a waitress at another nearby establishment, says she dines there all the time. "Their omelets are the best anywhere around," she says.

"Breakfast is a big draw," says Flor. "[And] the morning crew is hilarious. It makes the mornings go by fast," she adds, which is fortunate since the restaurant opens at 5 a.m.

The expansive breakfast menu includes a variety of flavors of waffles, crepes, pancakes and French toast. Banana and

Nutella crepes, Oreo pancakes and a banana split French toast are just a few of the inventive options. Heartier breakfast dishes include the Coal Miner's Omelet with bacon, onion, American fries and cheese, and the gyro skillet. The more traditional fare of eggs, bacon and sausage are also options.

Their fried chicken, cheeseburgers and pork tenderloin are popular, according to Flor. "A lot of our customers also seem to like Wednesdays because it is our Mexican night," she says. On those days, as a nod to their heritage, anything from taco salads with homemade shells to tostadas and chimichangas can be found on the menu.

Other standing weekly specials are their Friday fish night and family-style fried chicken on Saturday. Rounding out the regular lunch and dinner menu is a long list of sandwiches, wraps, rolls, salads and appetizers.

The restaurant seats 70 to 80 people in Flor's estimation, whether it be at the booths lining one wall, the lunch counter up front or the rounds in between. People from all walks of life, from traveling work crews

to ladies who lunch, can be found enjoying a meal within its walls at any given time.

Oftentimes, people from the Chicago suburbs stop by while visiting family in the area. While that was not always the case during the pandemic, Flor says that the community was there for them, and she appreciates their support. She's also thankful that things are returning to normal.

"Mexican day is a big day, as well as Sunday night and Sunday morning. We're slammed Monday mornings. You just never know. Be prepared," she laughs. "And when pumpkin season comes, a lot of new visitors come in," she adds, referring to the popularity of pumpkin patches in the area. At some point in the future, she hopes to add to the building so the restaurant can accommodate private parties.

When asked the secret to their success, Flor shares what she believes is the simple reason. "I think it's just because we're such a small community, and everybody knows us. We know each other and get along with everybody, and everybody seems to love us." 📍



LET'S EAT!

Coal Miner's Café

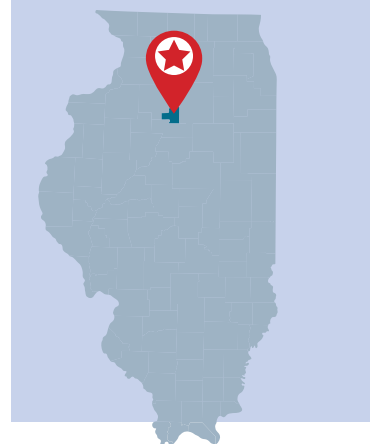
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Mon., Thu., Sun. 5 a.m.-2 p.m.

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Closed Tue.



Squashing the competition

SQUASH COMES IN A variety of sizes, shapes, colors and flavors. Whether served sweet or savory, squash is a versatile fruit that can star in any meal. While summer squash typically has a short shelf life of a few days, winter squash can be kept up to six months, if stored correctly. 🍂

SPAGHETTI SQUASH CASSEROLE



WE NEED RECIPES!

Upcoming monthly topics

Christmas cookies

Meal prep for lunch

Recipes using a Dutch oven

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.



YELLOW SQUASH BUNDT CAKE

Yellow Squash Bundt Cake

Submitted by: *Janice Aldridge, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative*

Servings: 12

- | | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 cups all-purpose flour | 1-1/2 cups granulated sugar | Glaze: |
| 1 teaspoon baking powder | 1 cup vegetable oil | 2 cups powdered sugar |
| 1/2 teaspoon baking soda | 2 cups grated yellow squash | 2 tablespoons whole buttermilk |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | 1 tablespoon lemon zest | 1 teaspoon lemon zest |
| 3 large eggs, room temperature | 2 tablespoons fresh lemon juice | 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice |

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat a 10-cup Bundt pan with baking spray. In large bowl, stir together flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Place eggs, sugar and oil in bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Beat on medium-high speed until light and airy, about 3 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides. Stir in squash, lemon zest and lemon juice. Gradually add flour mixture, beating on low until combined, about 45 seconds. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 50-55 minutes until wooden pick inserted comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes in pan then invert onto wire rack and cool 1 hour. For glaze, whisk together all ingredients until smooth. Drizzle over cooled cake. Nutrition information: 401 calories; 19.7g fat; 173mg sodium; 53.8g carbohydrates; 4.1g protein.

Spaghetti Squash Casserole

Submitted by: *John Weitekamp, Menard Electric Cooperative*

Servings: 2

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 spaghetti squash | 1/4 cup celery, diced | 1/2 cup button mushrooms, sliced |
| 1 tablespoon olive oil | 1/4 cup carrots, diced | Favorite marinara sauce |
| 1/4 cup onion, diced | 1/4 cup green pepper, diced | 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese |

Preheat oven to 350 F. Wash spaghetti squash, cut in half lengthwise and scoop out seeds. Place open side down in oiled baking dish with a small amount of water. Bake at 350 degrees approximately 1 hour or until the squash comes out easily when scraped with a fork. Scoop out the inside of the squash and place in greased 9x9-inch baking dish. In skillet, heat olive oil and cook onions, celery, carrot, green peppers, mushrooms (and other vegetables as desired). Combine cooked vegetables with squash in pan and add enough marinara sauce to cover. Top with a layer of cheddar cheese and lightly cover the baking dish with foil. Bake 30 minutes. Uncover the last 5 minutes so cheese will melt and brown. Nutrition information: 525 calories; 32.6g fat; 1397mg sodium; 39.3g carbohydrates; 19.5g protein.

Stuffed Acorn Squash Brunch

Submitted by: Colten Bradford

Servings: 4

- 2 acorn squash
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 pound breakfast sausage
- 1 yellow onion, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, chopped
- 1 crisp/firm apple, cored and diced
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 4 eggs
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 400 F. Cut acorn squash in half vertically and scoop out seeds. Brush interiors with 1 tablespoon olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper. Place cut-side down on a sheet pan and bake 25-40 minutes, or until squash is soft. While squash is baking, heat remaining olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add sausage and brown, breaking it apart into small pieces. Add onion and apple and cook until soft, about 8 minutes. Add garlic and thyme and cook another 3 minutes. When squash is done baking and cooled slightly, scoop out flesh, leaving about 1/4-inch flesh inside the skin. Do not discard skin. Mix squash flesh with meat mixture. Mound filling back into squash halves and return to oven for 15 minutes. When done, top each squash half with a fried egg and add salt and pepper to taste. Nutrition information: 638 calories; 43.9g fat; 920mg sodium; 34g carbohydrates; 29.9g protein.

Zucchini Patties

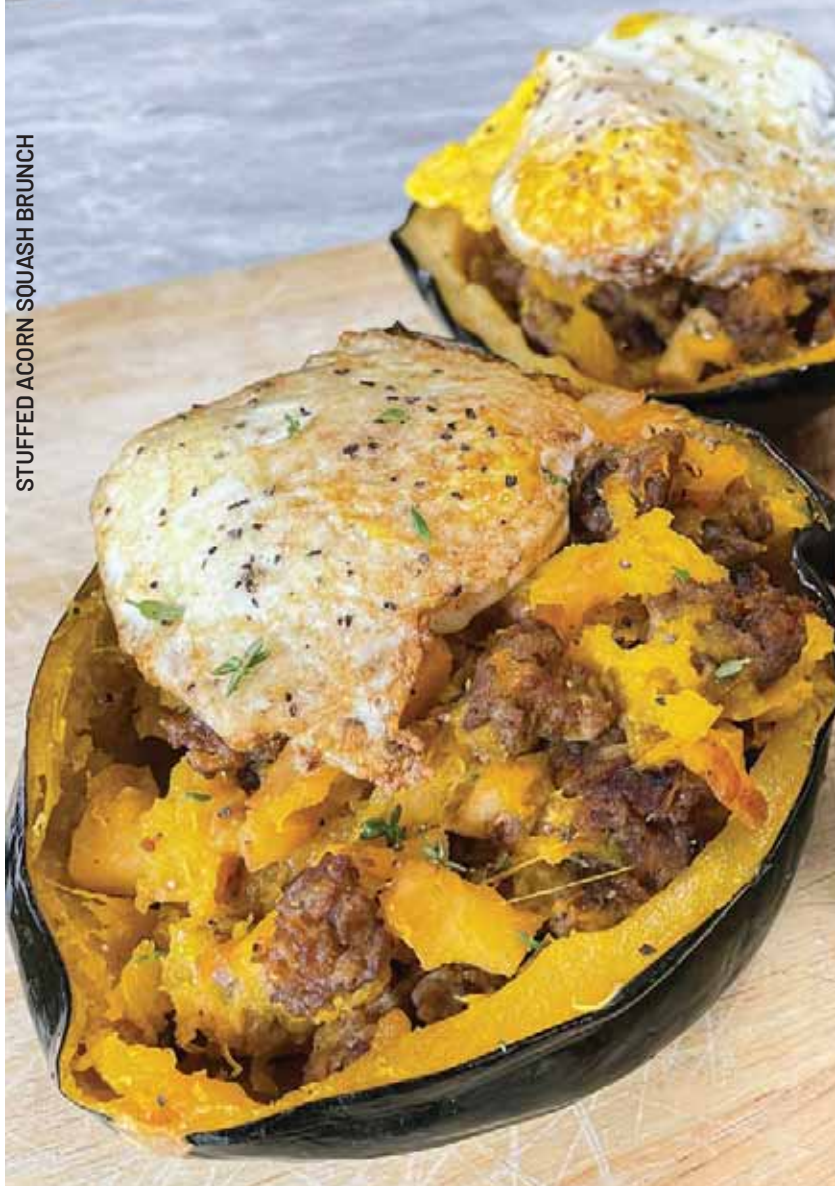
Submitted by: Nancy Davidson, EnerStar Electric Cooperative

Servings: 4

- 1/3 cup biscuit mix
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/8 teaspoon ground pepper
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups shredded, unpeeled zucchini
- 2 tablespoons margarine

Combine biscuit mix, cheese and pepper. Stir in eggs to moisten. Fold in zucchini. Melt margarine in skillet. Drop by 2 tablespoon mounds into skillet. Fry and turn until browned and cooked. Nutrition information: 184 calories; 12.5g fat; 358mg sodium; 10.1g carbohydrates; 9.3g protein.

STUFFED ACORN SQUASH BRUNCH



ZUCCHINI PATTIES

Tonya's Yellow Squash Casserole

Submitted by: Tonya Denton, Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative

Servings: 12

- 4-6 yellow squash, sliced
- 1 cup diced onion
- 1 cup cooked chicken breast*
- 8 ounces sour cream
- 1 small can cream of chicken soup, undiluted
- 4 tablespoons butter
- 2 8-ounce cans sliced water chestnuts, drained
- 2 4-ounce cans mushrooms, optional
- 1 box chicken Stove Top stuffing, prepared per package directions
- 1 teaspoon Creole seasoning

Preheat oven to 350 F. Add sliced squash and onion to a pan and cover with water. Bring to a boil and cook 5 minutes. Drain well. Return squash and onions to the pot. Add 4 tablespoons butter and Creole seasoning, combine and set aside. Combine squash/onion mixture, chicken, soup, sour cream, water chestnuts, mushrooms and cooked stuffing. Mix well. Grease 9x13-inch casserole dish and add mixture. Bake 1 hour or until top is browned. *Use baked chicken or substitute with canned chicken. Nutrition information: 175 calories; 13.6g fat; 280mg sodium; 9g carbohydrates; 4.9g protein.

Sleep for success

A good night's sleep improves overall health

SLEEP IS VITAL TO good health, no matter the age, according to Raj Dasgupta, spokesperson for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine (AASM). "People spend one-third of their lives sleeping. If you live to age 90, that's 30 years of sleep."

The AASM recommends at least 7 hours of sleep for adults. However, just being in bed doesn't mean your sleep is effective in helping your organs, brain and body rejuvenate.

"As physicians, we measure the effectiveness of sleep by quantity and quality," says Dr. Dasgupta. "If you're not getting the right amount of sleep to meet your needs and your quality of sleep is poor, your mind and body are not going to the deeper stages of REM sleep and you are at higher risk for heart disease, diabetes and obesity."

Dasgupta says society has conditioned people to prioritize productivity above sleep.

"Phrases like, 'The early bird gets the worm,' or 'Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise,' have been around long enough that people accept them as fact," he says. "However, we are finding more and more people are getting less sleep in their quests to be more productive or force more activity into the day."

While it is recommended that adults should sleep at least 7 hours per night on a regular basis to

promote optimum health, a study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention discovered more than 70 million U.S. adults reported sleeping 6 hours or less.

"The percentage of Americans sleeping 6 hours or less has increased more than 30 percent since 1985," he says. "Some people have various sleep-wake disorders such as chronic insomnia, obstructive sleep apnea or restless legs syndrome, and many of these conditions go undiagnosed or misdiagnosed."

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Dasgupta says people consistently having difficulty initiating sleep, maintaining sleep or feeling unrefreshed despite having adequate time to sleep should talk with their physician. Keeping a log or journal of sleep and daytime symptoms can assist with identifying causes.

"Sleep boosts the immune system, so don't ignore persistent sleep problems," says Dasgupta. "Talk to your medical provider if you're struggling to sleep on a regular basis."

If you're having difficulty with daytime fatigue, concentration and memory, there could be many causes.

"One of the first things physicians look for is a diminished

quantity of sleep," he says. "If that's the case, we recommend establishing a regular bedtime routine and practicing good sleep hygiene."

Setting and sticking to a regular bedtime routine, including managing noise, light levels and temperature of your bedroom, can help improve sleep.

"Be mindful of your activities a couple of hours before bedtime," he says. Eating a large meal less than 2 hours before bed, using a computer or smartphone within 30 minutes of bedtime, or using the television to help you fall asleep can reduce the effectiveness of sleep.

He suggests setting regular bedtime hours, including weekends, holidays and vacations. Set the alarm, and don't hit the snooze button. Get out of bed when the alarm goes off and get outside, especially if the weather is good.

"Many individuals report their sleep needs are not being met during the week. While you may try to make up for that lack of sleep on days off and weekends, this is not a sustainable strategy to make up for that sleep debt," Dasgupta says. "Healthy sleep is as important as proper nutrition and regular exercise for our health and well-being. Since most of us sleep about 30 percent of our lives, prioritize these sleeping hours to maximize all the benefits."💡

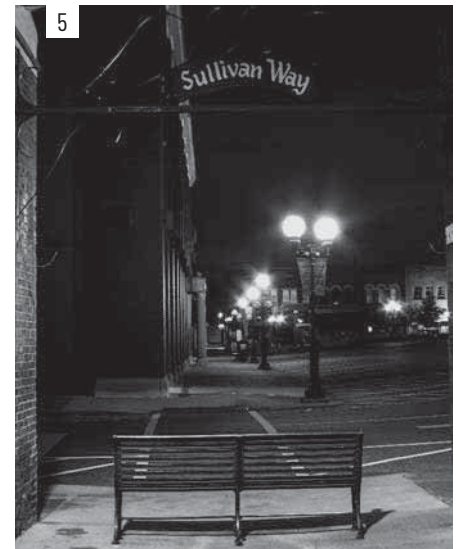
Journalist **Pamela A. Keene** writes for more than a dozen publications across the country, specializing in travel, lifestyle, features and gardening. Based in Atlanta, she is a photographer and an avid lifelong gardener.

Night vision

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UPCOMING THEMES

- December - Snow scenes
- January - Windows/glass
- February - Trains
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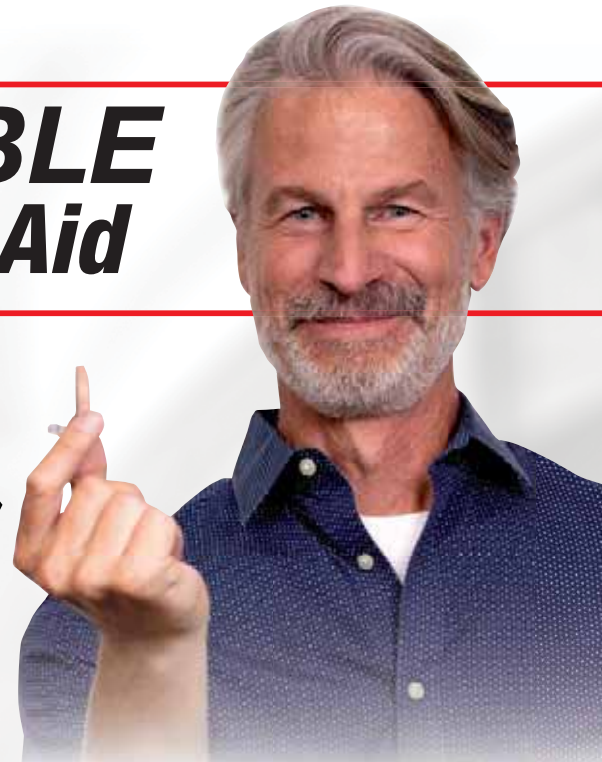
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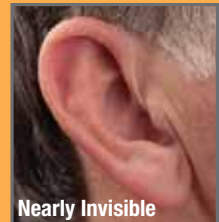
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