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NEWS



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Illinois Country Living

JUNE 2025
VOLUME 83, NO. 2



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PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINA EISEBACH



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On the cover: Will Adkins goes kayaking with his dog Rhys.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KAYLA ADKINS

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 more than 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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The 2024 Youth Tour group visiting Gettysburg.

Lessons in leadership

My year representing Illinois electric cooperatives

OVER THE PAST YEAR, I had the utmost privilege of representing Illinois on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Leadership Council (YLC). Whenever I talk about my experience, I first start by saying it all began with a dream.

Since middle school, I had always wanted to travel to Washington, D.C., to learn about our nation's history. When my local electric co-op, SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative (SEIEC), selected me to go on Youth Tour, I was beyond thrilled to be granted the opportunity to fulfill my dream. Little did I know that this opportunity would expand into so much more than I had ever imagined.

On the trip, I made many new friends and created memories that will last a lifetime. I took a chance and was thankfully elected by my fellow Youth Tour delegates to serve on the prestigious Youth Leadership Council (YLC).

My time on the YLC has been one of personal growth and professional development. From the moment I stepped on the bus for Youth Tour until now, I completely changed. I have learned how to be a confident leader, purposeful

speaker and faithful representative for my peers. One of the biggest takeaways is the knowledge of the purpose and commitment that electric

cooperatives have in our communities. They are essential to the areas they serve and work tirelessly to improve the lives of their members. This mission is what allows programs such as Youth Tour to thrive. Because of the program, I made many memories and found a deeper sense of purpose.

In the months following being elected the Illinois representative, I was tasked with several duties. In August, I attended the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives annual meeting and addressed cooperative leaders across the state about the importance of youth programs.

In October, I wrote an article to bring awareness to the vital work of cooperatives in celebration of Cooperative Month. In December, I addressed the SEIEC Board of Trustees. Then, in March, my official duties as the YLC concluded with my attendance at the 2025 NRECA PowerXChange and TechAdvantage conference held in Atlanta, Ga.

Throughout my tenure, I formed friendships with individuals from all across the U.S. We were all brought together by a shared appreciation for the work that electric cooperatives do daily.

I am beyond thankful to have been a part of the Youth Leadership Council. My experiences would not have been possible without a dream and a blessing from my local cooperative. Thank you to those in my life who supported me along my cooperative journey, especially my mom and dad. I look forward to using this experience to serve others and one day help fight for the future of electric cooperatives.



Cole Buchanan is a recent graduate of Benton Consolidated High School and will attend the University of Evansville to study finance and accounting. He represented SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative during the 2024 Youth Tour and was the 2024-25 Youth Leadership Council representative for Illinois.

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JUNE CHECKLIST

Lightning Safety Awareness Week is June 23-29.



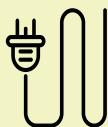
Know where to go. If there is thunder,

go indoors. If you can hear it, lightning is close enough to strike. There is no place safe outdoors.

Stay sheltered.



During a thunderstorm, take cover in a sturdy building or hard-topped vehicle with the windows closed.



Unplug electronics.

This protects them from power surges.

Don't get caught outside.

Pay attention to weather forecasts and have an action plan just in case a storm rolls in unexpectedly.



Illinois electric cooperative leaders met with Congressman Mike Bost, along with several other elected officials, during the Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., April 27-30.

The power of political engagement

Co-op leaders converge on D.C. to support rural America

American families expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford. But, with the demand for electricity skyrocketing and the supply of always-available power sources at risk, the need for smart energy policies that bolster reliability and affordability are more critical than ever before.

Electric cooperatives across the country are committed to reliably powering their local communities. Beyond routine maintenance and updates that improve the reliability of the grid, co-ops work in other ways to ensure their members' needs are addressed. One of the ways they do this is through proactively engaging with elected officials to ensure our members are well represented in Washington, D.C.

From April 27-30, more than 2,000 electric cooperative leaders from across the country, including 47 representing Illinois, traveled to Washington, D.C., for the National Rural

Electric Cooperative Association's Legislative Conference. They met with elected officials on Capitol Hill and discussed key energy issues and priorities that impact their members.

"Advocating for reliable, affordable power on behalf of Illinois' electric cooperative consumer-members is a critical part of our commitment to the areas we serve," said Nick Reitz, vice president of government relations at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "While we are always in communication with elected officials, we look forward to meeting with them face to face to discuss the important energy issues that impact us here at home."

During the meetings, the Illinois delegation focused on telling the unique story of how electric cooperatives in the state are ensuring reliable and affordable power for the communities they serve through a

Continued on page 8

Sudoku

by Myles Mellor and Susan Flanagan

To solve the puzzle, each row, column and box must contain each of the numbers 1 to 9. Level: Medium

Solution on page 33.

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



IL ENTERTAINMENT CORNER

Planning a road trip to Chicago this summer? Here's an eclectic playlist of songs about the Windy City.

"Sweet Home Chicago"
- Robert Johnson

"Born in Chicago"
- Paul Butterfield Blues Band

"Chicago"
- Sufjan Stevens

"Lake Shore Drive"
- Aliotta Haynes Jeremiah

"Chicago (That Toddlin' Town)"
- Frank Sinatra

"Meet Me in Chicago"
- Buddy Guy

"Windy City"
- Rodney Franklin

"Take Me Back to Chicago"
- Chicago

"The power" continued from page 7



The Illinois electric cooperative delegation had the chance to meet with Senator Dick Durbin and Senator Tammy Duckworth to discuss rural issues.

diverse supply of energy resources to meet the growing demand for electricity.

They also detailed the need to improve environmental permitting processes and cut costly and burdensome regulations — like the EPA Power Plant Rule — to accelerate deployment and maintenance of essential electric infrastructure.

An additional focal point of discussions with policymakers included the importance of federal programs and resources that support electric cooperative energy projects, like the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service electric loan program and the Empowering Rural America (New ERA) co-op loan and grant program, energy tax credits

with an elective (direct) pay option for co-ops, and recently funded Department of Energy infrastructure programs.

While there is much work to be done, electric cooperatives across the country hope the Trump administration and members of Congress will implement a pro-energy agenda that prioritizes reliability and affordability and strengthens our nation's grid.

While you may not consider it on a daily basis, electricity is essential and underpins nearly every aspect of modern life. Understanding today's evolving energy landscape is important as it shapes how electricity is produced, delivered and consumed. 💡

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Where is it?

The winners of the April hidden object contest were Cathy Kirkpatrick of SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative and Pat Goodwin of Coles-Moultrie Electric Cooperative. Congratulations! Your ICL campfire mugs have been sent.

The hot dog hidden in the May 2025 issue was on page 28 in the Prairie Table section. 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. In honor of the first day of summer on June 20, be on the lookout for the sun, pictured above. The symbol can vary in size and will not be hidden on this page, a lettered page or in an ad.

Entries must include your name, address, name of your electric co-op (nonmembers 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 or letter to Illinois Country Living, Hidden Objects, 6460 S. 6th St. Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. We will NOT accept entries via phone call or email.

All entries for that month must be received by the 25th. Only one entry is allowed per household every month. If multiple entries per household are submitted, only the first will be considered. Winners' names and the symbol's location will be published in each month's issue of Illinois Country Living. 💡



President Lyndon B. Johnson greets Youth Tour participants on the White House lawn in 1968. PHOTO COURTESY OF NRECA

The trip of thousands of lifetimes

What do Lyndon B. Johnson, Tim Cook and Jimmy Carter have in common? They're all connected to an extraordinary program that aims to prepare and power the next generation of cooperative leaders.

Every June since the late 1950s, high school students sponsored by electric cooperatives across the nation have converged upon the nation's capital for a week they'll never forget. They're among the young people participating in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour.

"They get to experience things they typically wouldn't have the opportunity to do," said Brooke Gross, member services manager and facilitator of youth programs at the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives. "It opens their eyes and broadens their horizons to so much of what's happening in America."

Years before Lyndon B. Johnson became the 36th President, the then-Senator energized attendees at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's 1957 Annual Meeting, urging them to focus on educating their younger members. "If one thing comes out of this meeting," he said, "it will be sending youngsters to the national capital, where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents."

A year later, an electric co-op in Iowa took 34 students to D.C., with that goal, which was followed by a busload of students from Illinois in 1959. Other electric co-ops quickly followed suit. NRECA combined the many local efforts into a nationwide program in 1964.

While the purpose of Youth Tour is to allow teens to see the nation's capital up close, learn

about the political process, and better understand the role they play as citizens, a bigger goal is to interest the students in becoming part of helping electric co-ops serve their local communities.

Youth Tour connects nearly 2,000 participants from across the country, but the students don't pay a penny. The entire cost is funded by local cooperatives, statewide associations and NRECA, all of whom recognize its value.

"While visiting D.C., participants get a first-hand look at the monuments and memorials that narrate American history, and they explore interactive exhibits and displays at the Smithsonian museums," Gross said. "The experience enriches their understanding of our nation's heritage and ignites a passion for learning. Participants also have an opportunity to meet with elected officials."

Many delegates return home invested in their electric co-ops, and some eventually become employees. Some Youth Tour alumni even earn college scholarships through the Glen English Scholarship Foundation, while others are selected to participate in a Youth Leadership Council program.

"Our goal is to make sure that Youth Tour delegates leave D.C. inspired, ready to go back to their hometown and become the leaders who will create the change their communities need to see," Gross said.

This year's Youth Tour will be held June 16-23. To see what the Illinois delegation is up to during the trip, go to [Facebook.com/ILYouthTour](https://www.facebook.com/ILYouthTour). 💡

Scott Flood, NRECA

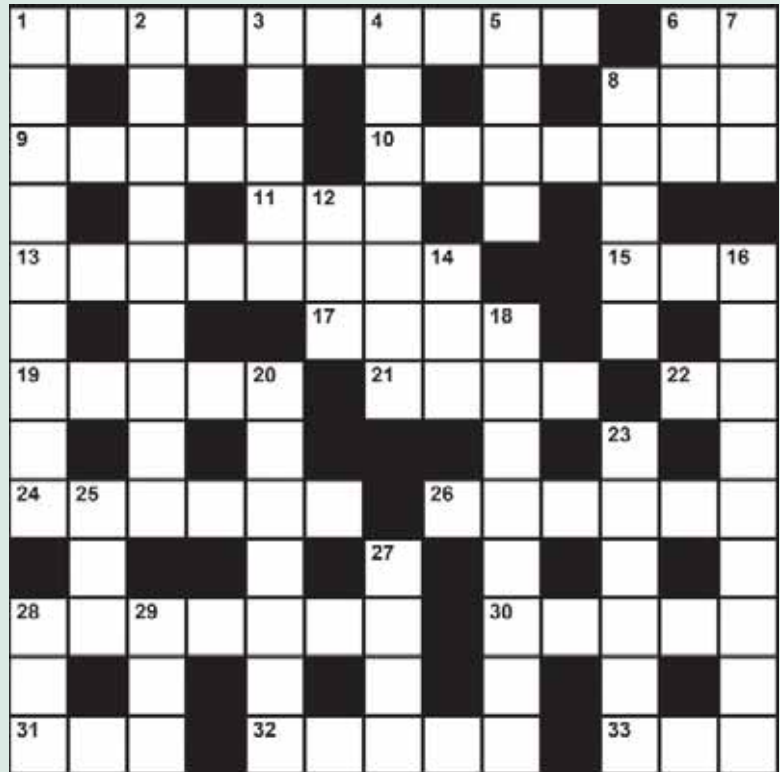
Across

- 1 Lake Michigan beach town, 2 words
- 6 Weight measurement unit, abbr.
- 8 Aegean or Caribbean
- 9 Drifters song “___ the Boardwalk”
- 10 Summer escape
- 11 Body soothing liquid
- 13 Long Island looks out on this ocean
- 15 Navigation guide
- 17 Comfortably cozy
- 19 Release a boat from its mooring, say
- 21 Fishing tackle, rod and line, etc., for example
- 22 Medical professional’s title
- 24 Romantic and affectionate pecks
- 26 Swirled
- 28 Small waterfall
- 30 Sheltered and secluded places
- 31 ___ trip
- 32 River mouth formation or major airline
- 33 Core muscles, abbr.

Down

- 1 Town on Lake Michigan known for its art galleries, wineries, breweries and pristine beaches
- 2 Goes up and down like the waves
- 3 Harbor Beach and Rogers City are great getaway towns on this lake
- 4 Sport with a rod and line
- 5 Consumes food
- 6 Grassy meadow
- 7 Coastal inlet
- 8 Moves across the water
- 12 “___ show time!”
- 14 Signal
- 16 Delightful places
- 18 It has white fragrant flowers and blooms in summer
- 20 Color of some Florida waters
- 23 Brunch cocktail
- 25 Retirement savings plan, abbr.
- 27 Aquatic mammal that barks
- 28 Fish and chips fish
- 29 State

Solution on page 33.



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JUNE/JULY Datebook

LET'S GO!

June 13-15 Superman Celebration

METROPOLIS
Actor Dean Cain to make an appearance

June 20 Dinnertime

PAXTON
Ocean to Fork Seafood
Dinner with Chef Ella
at Cedar Oak Farms

June 21 Walk with fairies

GALENA
Tour fairy villages,
make wands, buy
wings and dress up

June 26-29 Railroad Days

GALESBURG
Festival with a carnival,
entertainment and
railroad-themed events

July 6 Enjoy a jamboree

BIBLE GROVE
Opry-style live music
show with Gym
Bob's Jamboree
Band and singers

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



Metropolis Rotary Club's 38th Annual Super Car Show

JUNE

15

Registration is 8 a.m. to noon; judging begins at 9 a.m. Specialty awards include Best of Show Car, Best of Show Truck, Superman's Choice, Mayor's Choice, Harry Chamber's Memorial Award, OVC President's Choice, Rotary's Choice, Rotary Governor's Choice, Bob Eckenberg Memorial Award and James Shelton Memorial Mustang Award. Awards are subject to change based on participation. Entry fee: \$20, \$15 (same name, second entry), \$10 display only. Enter park at entrance nearest to McDonald's and Superman sign. Rain or shine.

June 15, 2025: all day

● Fort Massac State Park, 1308 E. 5th St., Metropolis

Admission: varies

618-524-2448

The Dinner Detective

JUNE

21

JUNE

28

North America's largest interactive comedy murder mystery dinner theater show is playing in Springfield. Solve a hilarious true crime murder mystery while enjoying dinner. But beware, the culprit is hiding in plain sight. You may even be the prime suspect. The event is different from a traditional mystery dinner show. It's a fun, social and interactive evening suitable for all adults. Each ticket includes the show, a full-plated dinner, waitstaff gratuity and surprises during the event. Register online.

June 21 and 28, 2025: 6-9 p.m.

● Maldaner's, 222 S. 6th St., Springfield

Admission: \$59.95

Register online at eventvesta.com/events/103760/t/tickets



39th Annual Salute to Freedom

JULY

4

Celebrate Independence Day at Mt. Vernon Outland Airport for a fun-filled evening. Children can enjoy the Kid Zone, complete with inflatables and laser tag. There will also be a variety of food vendors. A DJ will keep the party going from 5-7 p.m., followed by live music. A fireworks show will begin at dusk.

July 4, 2025: 5-9:30 p.m.

● Mt. Vernon Outland Airport, 100 Aviation Drive, Mt. Vernon

Admission: free

enjoymtvernon.com



Farm Fun Day

JULY

12

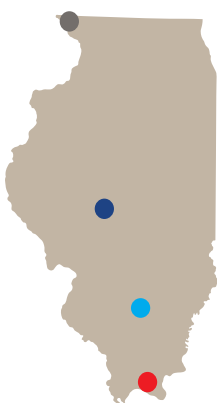
Experience life on a farm at the Farm Fun Day sponsored by the Jo Daviess County Farm Bureau. Visit the petting zoo, milk a cow, make ice cream and butter and create a "Circles of the Earth" bracelet. It's fun for the whole family. Register online and reserve your lead line today.

July 12: 10 a.m. to noon

● Shenandoah Riding Center, 200 N. Brodrecht Road, Galena

Admission: free

815-777-9550, shenandoahridingcenter.com





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Ben's big idea

Celebrating outdoor electrical safety

Downed power lines are dangerous; always assume any power line is energized.

IN JUNE 1752, BENJAMIN Franklin set out on an experiment with a kite, metal key and a thunderstorm rolling in. While this experiment should not be replicated, it is one of the most famous scientific experiments in American history, and it played a pivotal role in understanding electricity.

National Electricity Day is observed annually on June 15 to commemorate Ben's shocking experiment, its contribution to the electric industry and to raise awareness about the vital role electricity plays in our daily lives. It's an opportunity to take time to appreciate the conveniences electricity provides and to teach about everyday outdoor electrical safety.

Tips for kids

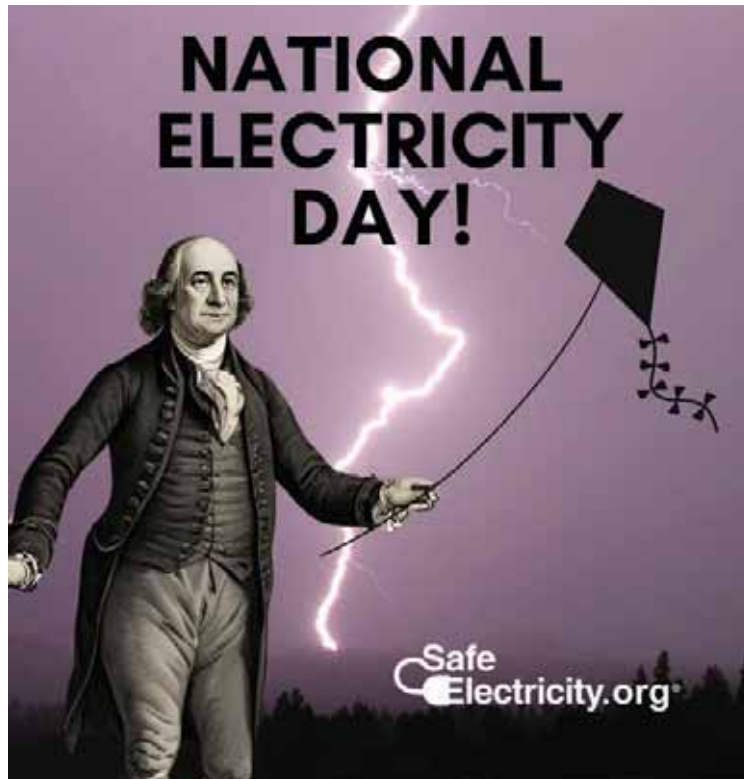
First and foremost, never fly kites during bad weather or anywhere near power lines. The same rules apply to drones and model airplanes. They should be flown only during good weather conditions in large open areas, like an open park or a wide field.

Keep these items away from overhead power lines and other electrical equipment, such as substations. If a kite gets stuck in a tree near power lines, do not climb up to get it. Electricity can travel down kite strings or wires. Do not attempt to free something stuck in a power line. Contact your electric utility for assistance.

Never climb trees near power lines. Even if the power lines are not touching the tree, they could touch when more weight is added to the branch. Also, never climb a utility pole or tower. The electricity carried through this equipment is high voltage and could kill you.



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.



Don't play on or around pad-mounted electrical equipment. These are often green metal "boxes" on cement pads and contain transformers.

Never go into an electric substation. Electric substations contain high-voltage equipment; even raising your hand inside one can cause an arc that may cause an electric shock. Never attempt to retrieve a pet, ball or any toy from these areas. Call your electric utility instead.

If you hear thunder or see lightning, seek shelter immediately. There is no safe place outdoors during severe weather.

Protection outdoors and around water

Protect all family members from serious shock and injuries by installing ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on outdoor outlets and in interior rooms where water is present. A GFCI shuts off power instantly if it detects a problem. Use portable GFCIs for outdoor outlets that don't have them. GFCIs are affordably priced and found at hardware stores.

Be careful using electrical appliances outdoors, even if plugged into GFCI-equipped outlets. Never use appliances with frayed or damaged extension cords and always be sure the ground prong is intact.

Teach kids to never touch an electric appliance while in a pool or hot tub, to keep all electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from pools, ponds and wet surfaces, and that it is never safe to swim in a pool or lake when a storm is brewing.

Downed power lines

Make sure your family members know to stay away from downed power lines and wires and tell children to report any fallen or dangling wires to an adult.

Downed power lines are dangerous; always assume any power line is energized and stay far away. Call 911 to report a downed power line. The dispatcher will contact the local electric utility to fix the issue.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



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Mexico Colonial Cities	8	1195
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Consider framing techniques, insulation levels and heating and cooling equipment to maximize your new home's energy efficiency.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MARK GILLILAND

A blueprint for savings

Energy efficiency pays off in new homes

PRIORITIZING ENERGY EFFICIENCY

WHEN building a new home can create future savings and make living more comfortable. It might cost a little more upfront but will pay off in the long run.

There are several efficiency certifications available for new-construction homes that may qualify for discounted homeowner's insurance, tax credits and other incentives.

Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification ensures the home uses less energy while prioritizing sustainable resources and healthy indoor air quality. LEED-certified homes use 20% to 30% less energy than the average home — with some homes saving up to 60% — and can cost the same as non-LEED homes with proper planning, according to the U.S. Green Building Council.

Passive House certification requires the home to be so efficient it needs little to no heating and cooling equipment while remaining comfortable. To achieve up to 90% less energy use than the average home, the certification focuses on maximizing the efficiency of the building envelope — all components that separate the indoors from

the outdoors — including proper insulation levels, air sealing and high-efficiency windows.

ENERGY STAR NextGen Certification for New Homes recognizes houses that are 20% more efficient than the average home and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% to 80%.

Although various certifications are available, you don't have to follow a set guide. Consider applying these energy-efficiency principles to your new home build.

Advanced framing techniques maximize the amount of insulated area and save on material costs in wood-framed homes. This technique can save \$500 for a 1,200-square-foot home and \$1,000 for a 2,400-square-foot home on material costs, between 3% to 5% on labor costs and 5% on annual heating and cooling costs, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Choose a contractor familiar with these techniques, and check with local building officials to ensure compliance with local codes.

The importance of a home's orientation is often overlooked. According to the International Association of Certified Home

Inspectors, homes oriented to the path of the sun use less energy for heating and cooling to reduce energy bills and improve comfort.

If you are building or buying a new home that doesn't allow options for orientation or framing, you might be able to request higher insulation levels in the attic. Increasing the insulation levels likely won't cost much more for materials and labor, but it can help you use less energy and save money in the long run.

Heating and cooling equipment should be properly sized using energy modeling tools that calculate the home's heating and cooling needs. Investing in a more efficient building envelope that is well insulated and air sealed can reduce the home's heating and cooling load, making it possible to have a smaller, less expensive heating and cooling system. This saves money on equipment costs and lowers energy use.

Optimizing the efficiency of a new home requires a whole-house approach. Analyze all systems and how they work together to ensure maximum efficiency for a safe and comfortable home. 💡



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

19 Nutrient Hair Formula Means Better Looks, More Confidence, More Fun

Clinical study shows this confidence boosting breakthrough can help both men and women enjoy a thicker, fuller looking head of hair

America's top anti-aging specialist, Dr. Al Sears, recently discovered a game-changing nutrient that's giving men and women a next-level boost in confidence thanks to the groundbreaking power of plant stem cells.

For decades Dr. Sears has stayed at the forefront of anti-aging technology. And he uncovered this exciting solution to thin, dull, lifeless hair while researching a unique nutrient called *malus domestica*. Extracted from one type of rare apple, found only in Switzerland, it produces a powerful form of plant stem cells shown to help give a once sad-looking scalp a total transformation.

Introducing **Re-Nourish**, an exciting new solution that harnesses the power of plant stem cells to help men and women go...

"From Grandparent to Gorgeous" in a Matter of Weeks

"When you look at a crisp, shiny, red apple or a lush, vibrant rose in bloom, there's absolutely no way to tell if the plant that produced them is five years old or 105 years old," says Dr. Sears. "And that's because plants produce these powerful stem cells that ensure that year after year their fruit and flowers look just as ageless as they ever did."

Dr. Sears told us he's able to tap into the power of those plant cells so **Re-Nourish** could offer that same lush, vibrant, ageless appearance for millions of men and women who are tired of their dull, withered-looking hair.

The Dawn of a New Era in Naturally Luxurious Hair

Dr. Sears couldn't be more excited about the many benefits of natural plant stem cells and the hope they offer for our future. And this naturally inspired plant-based approach makes **Re-Nourish** a unique and powerful breakthrough that's not only creating remarkable results...

But the men and women who've had a chance to try it are spellbound.

Like April W. who had been grappling with a sad, scraggly, confidence-crushing head of hair, "Conditioning treatments, vitamins, fancy blow dryers,

special wet brushes and other expensive solutions never helped." But then she tried **Re-Nourish**, "I'm seeing noticeable results with my hair thickness and length!"

John S. said he's had better-than-expected results. So, when he sat in the barber's chair, he was pleasantly surprised "My barber that I have been going to for years noticed, and I didn't tell him I was using the product **Re-Nourish**!" he continued "My hair feels and looks much fuller. That's all the evidence I need to know that this product is legitimate and useful — Great product."

And Elizabeth B. from West Palm Beach told us, "I was worried that it would leave my fine, light hair feeling heavy or looking greasy, but it hasn't done either. It also has a lovely natural botanical smell!"

For men and women with dull, thinning, or receding hairlines, **Re-Nourish** offers a new, exciting, and extremely easy way to achieve the appearance of a full, healthy-looking head of hair without expensive treatments and from the comfort and privacy of your own home.

The Secret Sauce Behind Re-Nourish

What sets **Re-Nourish** apart? Well, in addition to *malus domestica*, **Re-Nourish** harnesses the power of targeted botanicals like the legendary Burdock Root. Rich in antioxidants and used for centuries for radiant skin and luxurious-looking hair, Burdock was a must-have for a product like **Re-Nourish**.

Another secret to **Re-Nourish**'s incredible success is Rosemary. Extracts of this aromatic, evergreen shrub are well-researched for their anti-aging properties. Making it an exciting addition to **Re-Nourish**'s unique, naturally inspired formula.

While Black Cumin, known for its beautiful white and purple flowers, has been used for thousands of years to support the appearance of thick healthy hair, it was also added to the formula for its natural moisturizing properties.

These thoughtfully selected ingredients are combined with a targeted array of antioxidant vitamins and vital miner-



SENSATIONAL HAIR BREAKTHROUGH: A thick, full-looking head of real hair is finally within reach

als for a revolutionary experience that's safe, easy to use, and naturally inspired. With a pleasant scent that doesn't linger and won't leave your scalp itchy, flaky, greasy, or uncomfortable.

Now It's Your Turn for Gorgeous Looking Hair

You could be just weeks away from having the appearance of such thick, luscious hair – the kind of hair you just can't help but run your fingers through. Feeling confident, vibrant, self-assured, and youthful. So, get ready for the admiring glances and compliments. Be-



cause that's the power of **Re-Nourish**.

It doesn't just mean soft, lush, luxurious hair. It can transform your life, boost your self-esteem, supercharge your confidence – and it comes as no surprise that surveys show men and women alike prefer the look of a dense, silky, head of hair.

It's really no wonder that **Re-Nourish** is quickly gaining popularity. It's making waves in the industry and creating a buzz among those who are fed up with a

sparse, limp, wispy head of hair.

And because **Re-Nourish** is only available through Dr. Sears' partners at Pure Radiance, demand is so high the company is having a tough time keeping up. Stocks are running out faster than they can be replenished.

And that's probably because Dr. Sears is currently offering readers a risk-free trial of **Re-Nourish**.

How to Get ReNourish

"It's not available in retail stores yet," says Dr. Sears. The reason? Dr. Sears doesn't want profit-driven third-party retailers raising the price on a unique, revolutionary product that has the power to truly transform people's lives.

"Plant stem cells offer so many exciting benefits for our future. But right now, there's nothing like this available anywhere else. And that's why we want to keep **Re-Nourish** affordable for anyone who wants to try it. And this way not only can we ship directly to the customer, but we're also able to get their orders in the mail within 24 hours." And for the outliers who still feel skeptical, Dr. Sears is backing every order with a risk-free, 100% money-back guarantee.

To take advantage of this special offer, simply call the Sears Toll-Free Health Hotline at **1-888-358-9219** now. Use Promo Code **ICLRN625** when you call.

[EDITOR'S NOTE]: Due to recent media exposure for **Re-Nourish**, Pure Radiance is experiencing unprecedented demand. If the phone line is busy when you call, please try again to avoid missing this exclusive one-time-only offer.



Power you can count on

A diverse fuel mix is essential for reliable electricity

Left and center: Renewable energy sources like solar and wind provide many benefits and can deliver low-cost electricity – but they only generate electricity when the sun shines or the wind blows.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NRECA

Right: The electric grid is most reliable when a wide range of technologies, is available. Pictured is a natural gas plant.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BRENT WALLACE, COOPERATIVE ENERGY

PROVIDING MEMBERS WITH SAFE, reliable and affordable power is the mantra for electric cooperatives across the nation. Co-op members can see the work necessary to maintain reliable electricity at the local level, such as lineworkers maintaining utility poles and wires and repairing them after major storms. At the regional and national levels, a diverse mix of power generation resources, transmission lines and pipeline infrastructure are essential cornerstones of maintaining reliable and affordable electricity.

The U.S. electric grid has undergone major changes over the last decade. The share of electricity generated from coal plants has declined significantly, while the share from natural gas and intermittent wind and solar generation has grown. Fuel diversity means that your electricity is supplied by a variety of generation technologies, each with their own characteristics and performance capabilities in different weather and seasonal conditions.

Dispatchable technologies can be turned on and off as needed. Large steam generation plants (most commonly using coal or

nuclear fuels) are generally considered “baseload,” meaning they are designed to run efficiently 24/7 to serve as the base of the electricity mix. However, steam plants are less capable of ramping output up or down to meet the various peaks and dips as grid conditions change.

Natural gas is the most versatile fuel, powering large combined-cycle plants that can operate as baseload but are also more flexible ramping up and down. These capabilities are essential for meeting demand on the hottest and coldest days, and for balancing intermittent renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind.

Over the last decade, the share of electricity generated from wind and solar plants has increased dramatically. These beneficial, “no-fuel-required” plants can deliver low-cost electricity — but they only generate electricity when the wind blows and the sun shines.

The production patterns of solar and wind technologies are complementary to one another. Solar generates during the day, and wind tends to generate more at night. Across seasons, wind output is

typically higher during the colder months when there is less sunshine. Deployed together, wind and solar technologies can balance each other.

While battery energy storage technology is growing rapidly to allow some control of when renewable energy sources can be dispatched, natural gas plants remain the primary method for “firming” renewable generation resources.

Ultimately, our electric grid is most reliable when a wide range of technologies is available. When conditions lead to lower generation from one type of source, others can help compensate. When there is an imbalance, such as a major winter storm when electricity use skyrockets, grid operators are forced to rely on purposefully reducing demand and occasionally plan rolling blackouts to keep the grid operating.

While there is variation across regions in what types of power plants can be built based on weather and infrastructure, America’s electric cooperatives work diligently to ensure a diverse and reliable power supply for the communities they serve. 💡



Michael Leitman writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade association representing nearly 900 local electric cooperatives.

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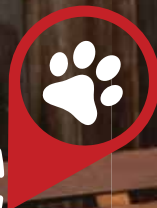
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SIT. STAY. EXPLORE!



Dog-approved travel in rural Illinois

By Kayla Adkins

IT ISN'T ALWAYS EASY to take your dog along for the ride on summer excursions. There are so many places to go and things to do — but dogs may not be allowed. However, Illinois is filled with dog-friendly businesses that happily welcome four-legged family members. If you are eager for your pup to ride along on your next excursion, here are some tips to know beforehand.

Hiking is an easy option, because dogs are welcome on the trails of all state parks, as long as they are leashed and cleaned up after. Make sure to bring water to keep your hound hydrated, and don't walk them more than their legs can handle.

While the trails are available to dogs, they are typically not allowed inside buildings, so be prepared to keep them outside. Also, be mindful of other hikers — not everyone likes dogs. Check the park's website ahead of time to verify trail closures, flooding and other hazards.

If you are looking for a place for them to run freely, head to a dog park. According to BringFido.com, there are 174 dog parks in Illinois. These parks are enclosed by a fence, making it safe for dogs to run loose. Some even have agility courses and obstacles. Note that some parks require a fee or membership. Read the rules of the park before going.

If it's chow time, sometimes restaurants allow dogs in outdoor seating areas. While pets can't be inside a restaurant with a kitchen for health reasons, some establishments love dogs so much, they have water bowls and treats ready for canine customers. Check with the restaurant before arriving to make sure it's OK to bring your dog.

Then there's dessert. Many ice cream shops offer a form of "pup cup." These sweet treats can include ice cream, whipped cream and more. As with all treats, pup cups are best enjoyed in moderation. Use the walk-up window or drive-thru to keep other patrons' ice cream fur-free.


At any destination, make sure to clean up after your pet, keep them under control and know their limits. Going out should be a good experience for everyone involved.

We have scoured the state for places to take your pooch this summer. From hiking to restaurants to dog parks and more, we have broken the stops down by region with a focus in rural areas.



Hank the dog with his dinner companion Caleb Gross at Firefly Grill in Effingham.


NORTHERN ILLINOIS

 **Starved Rock State Park**
2678 E. 873rd Road, Oglesby
dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park.starvedrock
Daily: 7 a.m. to sunset

Leashed dogs can enjoy 13 miles of marked trails through bluffs, canyons and waterfalls. Each trail leads to a unique point of interest, including the park's namesake, a 125-foot sandstone butte that offers breathtaking views. The park is nestled along the Illinois River, and Kayak Starved Rock Campground allows pups to camp with you right on the waterfront. Rent a kayak and take your furry friend out on the river.

 **Friends Forever Humane Society Dog Park**
966 W. Rudy Road, Freeport
friendsforeverhs.org/dog-park
Daily: sunrise to sunset

This 10-acre park offers large and small dog areas, an agility course and a large pond. The park is completely fenced, allowing dogs to safely play, socialize and swim. What better way to cool off after chasing around new canine friends than to jump in a pond? Membership fees apply to use the park, but guest passes are also available for purchase. Please note that the pond is closed during winter.

 **Galena Cellars Winery & Vineyard**
4746 N. Ford Road, Galena
galenacellars.com
Open seasonally: May to November
Mon-Sat: 11 a.m.-5 p.m.

Not only are dogs welcome, but the vineyard also has "wine dogs" on staff to greet guests and keep them company. There are water bowls around to keep dogs hydrated, and treats are available. Fur babies are allowed in the tasting room, and there are two pet-friendly lodging options available onsite: the Master Suite and Country Farmhouse.

Cadie hiking at Pere Marquette State Park.

 **Louie's Tap House**
5689 Elevator Road, Roscoe
louiestap.com
Mon-Sat: 11 a.m.-11 p.m.
Sun: 9 a.m.-11 p.m.

Enjoy a variety of brews and bar foods on a tucked-away patio at Louie's. Dogs are given bowls of water to wet their whistle while they visit with their owners. Sand volleyball and pinball machines add to the experience.

CENTRAL ILLINOIS

 **Pere Marquette State Park**
13112 Visitor Center Lane, Grafton
dnr.illinois.gov/parks/park.peremarquette
Daily: sunrise to sunset

Dogs are welcome to hike the 12 miles of trails at Pere Marquette with their owners. The woods and bluffs provide a scenic backdrop to your hike. Guests can also camp with their canines at the campgrounds.

 **Jacksonville PetSafe Bark Park**
894 E. Vandalia, Jacksonville
jacksonvilleil.org/business-directory/bark-park
Daily: sunrise to sunset


The fenced area of this 7-acre dog park offers climbing obstacles, shade structures, benches and waste stations. Human and dog water fountains keep all visitors hydrated during their play. Check the Facebook page for upcoming events at the park.

TAGS





From top left to right: Dixie loves shopping with her best friend Braylin Crawford at Whisker Bones Supply Co.; Rhys leading Will Adkins on a hike at Starved Rock State Park; Roxee getting ice cream with Blakely and Andi Harper at Gene's Dairy Delight; Apollo checking out dessert. Bottom: Hulk jumping the bar obstacle at a dog park.

 **Gene's Dairy Delight**
1019 S. Main St., Bloomington
[facebook.com/p/Genes-Dairy-Delight-100046497795023/](https://www.facebook.com/p/Genes-Dairy-Delight-100046497795023/)
Mon-Sun: 11:30 a.m.-9 p.m.

Gene's Dairy Delight, voted Best Ice Cream Shop and Best Dessert in the Bloomington area by The Pantagraph, is a sweet place to enjoy a treat with your pup. Gene's offers two types of pup cups, plus treats.


 **Harvest Moon Drive-in Theatre**
1175 S. Sangamon Ave., Gibson City
harvestmoondrivein.com
Open seasonally: Memorial Day to mid-August

Enjoy a movie under the stars with man's best friend at Harvest Moon Drive-in Theatre. The theater's website states that it is ranked one of the most pet-friendly theaters in the U.S. Three dog walk areas are located around the theater to stretch everyone's legs and "potty" before seeing the show. Dog treats are available at the box office or from parking attendants. Special merchandise for furry friends is also available for purchase. Watch the calendar for special pet nights with pup cups, donations to local animal shelters and contests. Check the website for showtimes.


 **Bunny's Tavern**
119 W. Water St., Urbana
bunnystavern.com
Mon-Fri: 8 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sat-Sun: 7 a.m.-10 p.m.

Enjoy breakfast, lunch, dinner or late-night with your pooch on the patio at Bunny's Tavern. This downtown Urbana restaurant has been a staple since it opened in 1936.

SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

 **Shawnee National Forest**
50 Highway 145 South, Harrisburg
fs.usda.gov/r09/shawnee
Daily: sunrise to sunset

Shawnee National Forest encompasses 289,000 acres in southern Illinois. Because it is so vast, there are several specific recreation areas within, including Garden of the Gods, Rim Rock, Bell Smith Springs and more. In addition to hiking, visitors can also swim, rock climb, kayak and camp. If you would rather stay in a room than rough it at the campground, Egyptian Hills Resort offers lakeside rooms with all the amenities. It is both pet- and family-friendly.

 **Mutts on Main**
509 W. Main St., Collinsville
collinsvilleil.org/departments/parks-recreation/mutts-on-main
Daily: 6 a.m.-9 p.m.

Mutts on Main is owned and maintained by the city of Collinsville. The park features separate areas for large and small dogs, ensuring that every dog can play safely. Starting this year, membership is no longer required to use the dog park.



Coles Creek Dog-Friendly Beach

County Road 1620 N, Carlyle
carlylelake.com/dog-days-of-summer
Open seasonally: May to September
Daily: sunrise to sunset

Nothing beats the heat like a swim. What better place to swim than the beach? Coles Creek Dog Beach on Carlyle Lake is a sandy spot for dogs to splash around. After a day of hiking the trails or camping at one of the various campgrounds, dogs and owners can enjoy some time together in the sand. Dogs must remain on a 6-foot leash at all times, even in the water. Other amenities near the beach include restrooms, water fountains for dogs and humans, and two shelters.

Black Dog Kayak Rentals

11381 Rend City Road, Benton
blackdogstorageatrendlake.com
Tues-Sun: 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

For water adventurers, book a half- or whole-day kayak rental with your hound around Rend Lake with Black Dog Kayak Rentals. The lake features six trails specifically for kayaks, some offering places to stop and walk or picnic. Human life jackets are available with the rental, but you must bring life jackets for dogs. The store has groceries and other items you might need for a day on the lake, including dog toys, signs, leashes and bowls. Upon arrival, make sure to greet Black Dog's resident pooch, Otis.

Eckert's Country Store and Farm

Various locations
eckerts.com
Hours vary seasonally by location.

Take your dog down to the farm. Most Eckert's locations in southern Illinois welcome leashed dogs. They can even ride on wagons out to the orchards and fields. Keep in mind, dogs are not allowed everywhere, including inside buildings and in the strawberry and blackberry patches and vegetable fields.

Firefly Grill

1810 Avenue of Mid-America, Effingham
ffgrill.com
Mon: 4-9 p.m.
Tues-Thurs: 11 a.m.-9 p.m.
Fri-Sat: 11 a.m.-10 p.m.
Sun: 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Firefly Grill is a farm-fresh restaurant in Effingham. Most of the food is grown on the Firefly Farm, while the rest is locally sourced. Dogs are welcome at the outdoor tables on the covered patio, where you can relax with fans and views of the water. Online reviewers remark that the staff is exceptionally pet-friendly. Water bowls are provided.

Whisker Bones Supply Co.

138 N. Main St., Edwardsville
whiskerbones.com
Mon-Fri: 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Sat-Sun: 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

This shop in downtown Edwardsville has everything a dog needs for a day out. Handmade dog treats, cookies and cakes from their bakery are sure to be appreciated. Join Club Whisker Bones to have your dog receive a monthly box of goodies. In addition, Whisker Bones offers training, grooming and a variety of items for sale, all made by local vendors. 💡

Triger, Willow, Harper and Teddy enjoying a beach.

LET'S GO

Looking for more places to go? BringFido.com is an excellent resource when traveling with your dog. Find lodging, restaurants, activities and more, sorted by city or state, as well as reviews by fellow dog owners.

THE G.O.A.T. OF GALENA

The greatest of all treks

By Diana West

AMONG THE ROLLING HILLS of northwestern Illinois, just outside Galena, awaits a one-of-a-kind experience — a guided hike with some bleating companions.

Christina Eisbach recalls spending endless days exploring the land where she lived as a child. “It was all timber and native prairie with wildlife and the ecosystem still intact,” she says. “It’s a wooded wonderland.”

Animals were also a big part of her life. “I had chickens, geese, cows, dogs, cats, horses and goats.” She dreamed of sharing her love of the land and animals with others.

Christina still lives on the land on JCE Co-op lines, located 15 minutes east of downtown Galena. Her two daughters, Sydney and Samantha, are the fourth generation on the property that their great-grandparents, John and Lois Eisbach, purchased in 1958.

They and Christina’s father John were in the forestry and lumber business and planted more than 100,000 oak, walnut and red pine trees on 300 acres. Her father had a sawmill, specializing in custom lumber. “That’s how he made his living off the land for more than 50 years, from the 1970s until last year,” Christina says.

One year, her younger daughter Samantha asked for baby goats. “I jumped at the chance,” says Christina. “We bought two and bottle-fed them.

“We discovered they followed us everywhere. Every day after school, after work, we took the girls, goats and a couple of dogs on walks with us,” she says. “We headed out on forested trails that my husband David maintained for our own recreational use. It was one of those fun activities that made us forget about our day, the stress, and concentrate on the goats’ head-butting, prancing and playing, while we fed them treats. It was super calming.”



As Sydney approached her teen years, she began looking ahead at colleges. Christina was astounded at the financial burden and wondered how the family was going to pay for it. An entrepreneur herself, she suggested the girls open a business that they could operate themselves. “You can learn how to start a business, run a business and gain life skills that will come in handy later in life,” she explains.

She suggested they conduct guided goat hikes. However, the girls were skeptical that people would pay to do that. Christina pointed out that Galena attracts about 1.5 million visitors annually, most from urban and suburban areas, who don’t have access to land, let alone goats. “It could be a fun way that you can share who you are and what this land is about, and impart some knowledge about open spaces, family land and animals,” she told them. The girls agreed to try it.

Hoof It Goat Treks took off running. “We started with five goats — our two, plus three leased from a friend — in summer 2019,” Christina says. “We’re now up to 37 goats, with more on the way.”

In addition to the goat treks, they also hold a three-day camp for kids ages 5-12 in the summer. “They learn about keeping animals and the care of them. They fingerpaint the goats with washable paint that’s then rinsed off,” Christina explains. The kids go on scavenger hunts, learn about animal tracks and make crafts. Of course, they also wander the woods with the goats.

Now that the girls are grown, Christina leads public walks for groups of 30-35 people with one goat for every couple of them. “I take out a herd of people and a herd of goats,” she laughs. For private groups, she has a six-person minimum.

Christina says visitors are enthralled by the goats’ charm and antics. Visitor Cheryl Gabriel, of Branson, Mo., says, “The goats were cute, sweet, affectionate and gentle. It’s a great experience for people who are seeking a unique outdoor adventure.”

Tours are held year-around, except if it rains (goats don’t like to get wet) or if the temperature is below zero. “We walk

in snow and have snowshoe rentals. Fall is an amazing time when we get vibrant colors,” Christina says.

In 2020, Hoof It was the first business approached by Galena Country Tourism to add special activities through their Forever Original Experiences program. Tom Rynott, communications director, says the program’s goal is two-fold. “It was started to supplement our event calendar, peak and nonpeak times, with some curated activities to fill in the week. We also wanted to expand our offerings to potentially interested groups coming here.”

Events Christina came up with have proved popular: Hoof It + Sip It involves Fergedaboutit, a local winery, which offers each person a glass of wine to take on the goat trek, followed by a wine tasting with goat cheese and other pairings. Hoof’n & Groove’n begins with an evening goat trek followed by a roaring bonfire and live music.

This year, she added Goats & Floats, where guests enjoy a root beer tasting and make root beer floats that they take on the goat trek. Offered in conjunction with Root Beer Revelry, a downtown craft soda shop, Tom describes it as a family-friendly event.

The hikes take about one hour along a 1.25-mile path. The gently rolling terrain is suitable for all ages and abilities and can accommodate strollers. Reservations are required and available by phone or on their website. See details below.

Through education, enjoyment and exposure, Christina has fulfilled her vision of sharing her land and animals. She says, “It’s all about the fun, laughter and pure joy of walking with goats through native prairie and forests.”

LET’S GO

Hoof It Goat Treks

616 S. Devil’s Ladder Road, Galena
563-663-6944
hoof.it.galena@gmail.com
hoofit-galena.com



PHOTO COURTESY OF DIANA WEST



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTINA EISBACH

Top: Cheryl Gabriel takes a walk in the woods with goats from Hoof It Goat Treks just outside Galena.

Bottom: A goat tries to taste a visitor’s wine on a Hoof It + Sip It goat trek, a Galena Forever Original Experience.



From farm to store at The Farm Store

By Lisa Cherry

ON A 40-ACRE FARM a mile north of Cooksville in McLean County, Linda Stroh cultivates fresh produce and stocks her small business, The Farm Store, with it, fresh-cut flowers, baked goods, small-batch body butters, deodorant, laundry detergent and other environmentally friendly products. Stroh, a registered nurse and Corn Belt Energy member, grew up on a farm between Normal and Hudson.

only \$10 and [come in] a new quart canning jar,” Stroh says. “I’ll have a u-pick pumpkin patch ... I [hope to] have a u-pick strawberry patch.”

Stroh says providing access to fresh produce is just one of her objectives. Another is to embrace and promote regenerative, sustainable, biodiverse farming in efforts to improve the environment.

“I’m an ecology activist [and] teach a class on zero waste,” she says. Stroh has also created a DVD version of the class that shoppers can purchase at the store. “Just buy better, buy less ... Our Earth is stressed, and we are, too,” she adds. “I’m an RN, and just in 20 years ... cancer rates have accelerated [with] all the things we’re exposed to.”

Now in her second year, Stroh offers SNAP EBT/Link and has two Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) members. A CSA, according to the USDA National Agricultural Library, “consists of a community of individuals who pledge support to a farm operation so that the farmland becomes, either legally or in spirit, the community’s farm, with the growers and consumers providing mutual support and sharing the risks and benefits of food production.”

“Every farm has their own twist on it. [With] some, you get a pre-prepared basket of produce every week. There, you’re limited,” she says. “I’ve done a lot of reading and research on it, and this is the program I like best: You just prepay whatever amount you want, and that helps [with] a lot of outlay for the gardener/farmer early in the season. Every week, you come, spend down this amount [on] anything in the store, [and] you get a free bunch of herbs.”

Stroh hopes more people will take advantage of fresh local produce, and she plans to do her part in healing the environment by continuing to promote sustainable practices. “We’re exposed to too many toxins ... our bodies just can’t take it,” she says. “What’s good for the planet is good for our health. We’re all in it together.”💡



“There was nowhere to go for 20 or 30 miles in any direction for fresh produce,” she says of her current residence. “I’ve been gardening my whole life. This ... is a little larger scale.”

Vegetable and herb gardens, strawberry and pumpkin patches, flowers and fruit trees fill the open expanse surrounding the store. “I sell a lot of fresh-cut flowers; they’re

SHOW SUPPORT

Small business owners can request to be featured in the Support Local section of Illinois Country Living magazine by submitting the form at icl.coop/local.

The Farm Store

28822 E. 1900 North Road,
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l-stroh@hotmail.com

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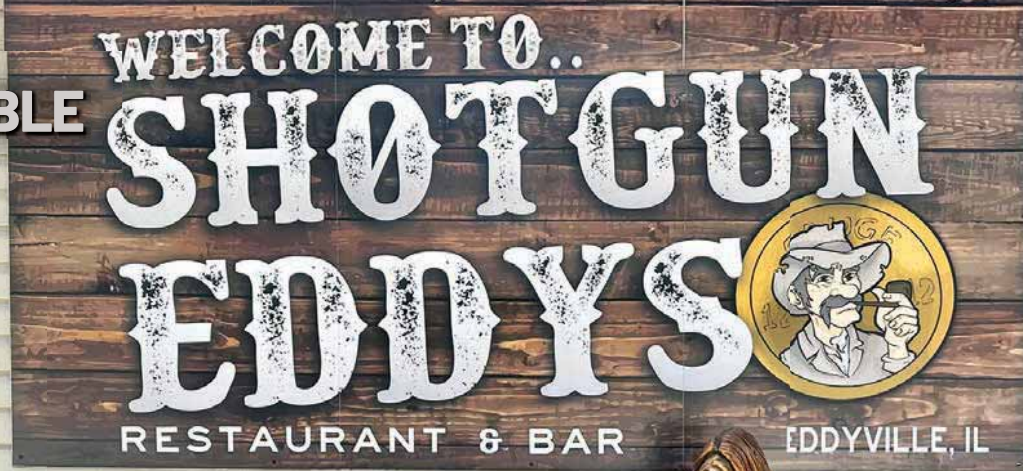
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Off the beaten path

Shotgun Eddys brings crowds to its small community

By Les O'Dell

IF THE VARYING MODES of transportation in Shotgun Eddys' parking lot are any indication, the Pope County bar and grill is popular with a wide range of people.

A quick look around on any given day will find cars with out-of-state license plates, local pickups, Jeeps, motorcycles and maybe even a few horses. The diversity and number of vehicles (and animals) is impressive, especially considering that the community of Eddyville has a population of less than 100 and is 20 miles from the nearest interstate highway.

"We're kind of off the beaten path," admits Shotgun Eddys co-owner Tami Schillinger. "Yet, people drive here just to eat and for the experience. We do have five horse camps within 10 miles, and we're a regular spot for Jeep runs, motorcycle runs and for hunters."

The proximity to popular hunting spots gives Shotgun Eddys its name. "This area is known for shotgun season — for deer hunting, turkey season, even squirrel," Schillinger says. "That's where the 'Shotgun' comes from, and 'Eddys,' of course, is from Eddyville."

Once inside the restaurant, which is on SouthEastern Illinois Electric Cooperative lines, diners find a wide-ranging menu, including breakfast served Friday through Sunday as well as lunch and dinner options seven days a week. However, many patrons don't stay inside long, opting to enjoy food and company in the pavilion overlooking the countryside and Shawnee National Forest.



Many Shotgun Eddys customers (like those who arrive on horseback) are on vacation, but Schillinger says the restaurant is a place to get away, even for the locals — a place to relax. It's a popular destination for regular customers from Harrisburg, Vienna and other southern Illinois communities. "It's like a mini-vacation," she adds. Many hikers making their way through the national forest often camp overnight on the restaurant property, too.

The food might be described as quintessential comfort food offered with a twist.

"We do a wide variety of things, from tacos to catfish, salads, and then we offer steak night on Saturday nights and family-style dinners on Sunday," she explains. "We try to change things up every week."

What doesn't change are some of their staples: ham, beans and cornbread on Mondays (a big draw for regulars from the area), chicken wings on Wednesdays, catfish on Friday evenings and prime rib sandwiches on Sundays. Other daily choices include pizza, Reuben and fried bologna sandwiches, a wide selection of burgers and more.

Popular favorites include "The Crying Pig," a marinated pork tenderloin served on a bun with pepperjack cheese, bacon and caramelized onions; a horseshoe sandwich (Texas toast, a beef patty and fries, covered with cheddar cheese sauce or queso); and cheesesteak and po' boy sandwiches.

"The food is the big thing," she says, "but the location and atmosphere are a draw, too." Live music is a feature in the pavilion, but Schillinger says the goal is to be family-friendly with entertainment. "We have an early band every Saturday night in the pavilion. It might be rock or country, but they are family-style." 📍



Top: Catfish basket
Bottom: Cowboy burger

LET'S EAT!

Shotgun Eddys

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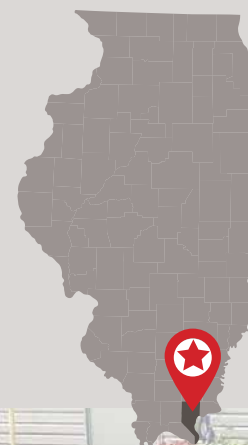
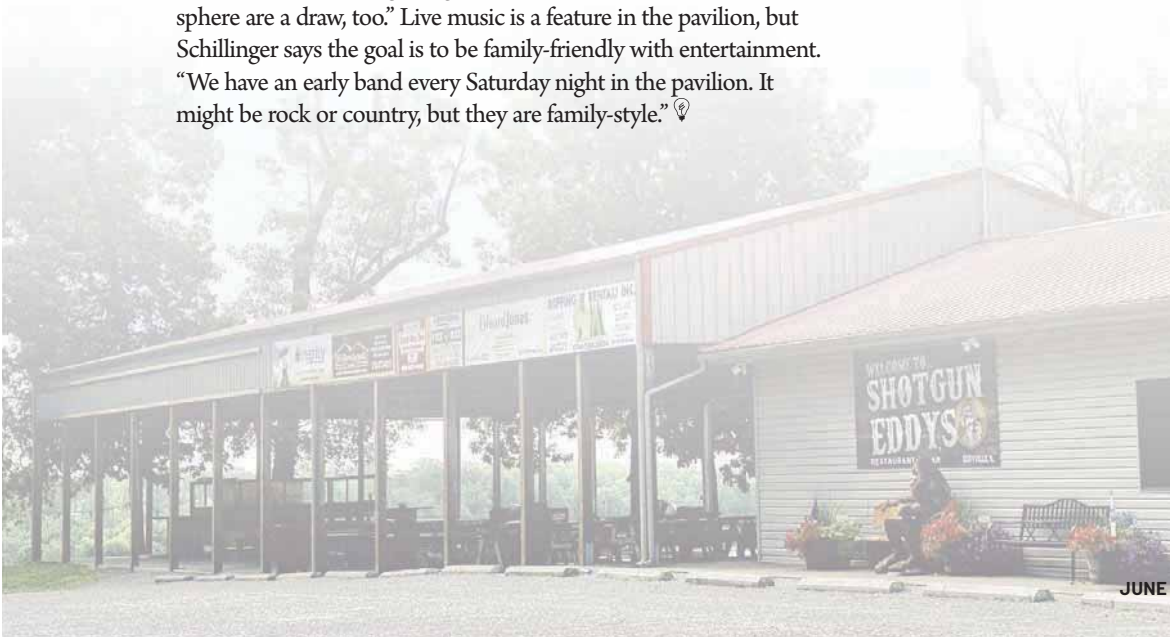
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Bottoms up

AS TEMPERATURES RISE DURING summer months, it is the perfect time to cool off with refreshing cold drinks. While simple water over ice will do in a pinch, here are a few recipes to help keep you cool in the heat. For a tropical twist, try the Rum Slush or Margarita Punch and add a little kick to outdoor gatherings. The Almond Joy Iced Coffee will help get your days started, while the Agua Fresca de Fresa con Leche is like dessert in a glass. Try a twist on a summertime favorite — the Blue Lemonade is an upgrade with the flavors of fresh berries. Stay refreshed while you enjoy your summer. ☺

WE NEED RECIPES!

Stone fruit

Pastries

New favorites

Please email recipe submissions or questions to finestcooking@icl.coop or mail them to Finest Cooking c/o Illinois Country Living, 6460 S. 6th St. Frontage Road East, Springfield, IL 62712. Please include your name, address, phone number (for questions), and the name of your electric cooperative. Additional recipes can be found on our website at finestcooking.com.



Recipes are prepared, tasted and photographed by **Colten Bradford**, Illinois Country Living editor.

Margarita Punch

Submitted by Cindy Burch, Shelby Electric Cooperative

Servings: 10-12

Ice

1/4 cup sugar

2 10-ounce cans frozen Bacardi Margarita Mixers

1 12-ounce can frozen lemonade

Fill a punch bowl with ice and sprinkle the sugar over the top. Add the frozen cans of concentrate and 2 lemonade cans of cold water. Stir and adjust the sugar to taste.

Blue Lemonade ▶

Submitted by Lara Borgerson, Menard Electric Cooperative

Servings: 5-6

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| 4 cups water, divided | 1/2 cup blackberries |
| 1-1/2 cups sugar | 1/2 cup blueberries |
| 6 lemons, zest and juice | |

In a large saucepan, heat 2 cups water with sugar over medium heat until sugar has dissolved. Continue to heat for 5 more minutes until it thickens. Add the remaining water and the lemon zest and juice. Set aside to cool to room temperature. In a blender or food processor, puree the blackberries and blueberries and add them to the water mixture. Sit at room temperature for 2 hours. Strain mixture into a pitcher and chill.

Almond Joy Iced Coffee

Servings: 1

- | | |
|--|---|
| Ice | 2 tablespoons chocolate syrup |
| 1 cup cooled strong brewed coffee or cold brew | 1/4 teaspoon almond extract |
| 1/4 cup coconut milk | 2 teaspoons sweetener of choice, optional |

In a small bowl, combine coconut milk, chocolate syrup, almond extract and sweetener. Stir well. Fill a tall glass with ice and pour in the coffee. Stir in the coconut milk mixture. Optional: Top with whipped cream, chocolate shavings and toasted coconut.



◀ Agua Fresca De Fresa Con Leche

Servings: 8-10

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 2 pounds strawberries, hulled | 1 14-ounce can sweetened condensed milk |
| 1 tablespoon vanilla extract | Ice |
| Water | |
| 1 12-ounce can evaporated milk | |

In a blender, add strawberries, vanilla and enough water to cover the strawberries. Blend until smooth. In a large pitcher, pour in the evaporated milk and sweetened condensed milk. Strain the strawberry mixture and add it to the pitcher. Stir well. Add ice and serve.

Rum Slush

Submitted by Sherry Reuter, Egyptian Electric Cooperative Association

Servings: 16-20

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 cup water | 1 10-ounce jar maraschino cherries, halved |
| 1 cup sugar | 2 15-ounce cans mandarin oranges |
| 1 quart orange juice | 1 fifth of rum |
| 1 6-ounce can unsweetened pineapple juice | 2 quarts ginger ale |

In a small saucepan, heat water and sugar over medium-high heat until the sugar dissolves. Remove from heat. In a large bowl, stir together the sugar water with the remaining ingredients. Freeze overnight. It will be frozen but not solid. **Editor's note:** To make a nonalcoholic version, substitute the fifth of rum with 1-1/2 cups white grape juice, 1-1/2 cups coconut water and 1/2 tablespoon of rum extract. Without alcohol, this will likely freeze solid. You will need to set it out a couple hours before serving. If needed, add more liquid and blend with a hand mixer.

Plant today for a fall pumpkin display

EACH YEAR, AS SEED catalogs pile up, I hand random ones to my kids and tell them to pick three things to grow. I thought this would get them involved in gardening, and it does. They engage in planting seeds, watering and harvesting. However,



they want to grow the same thing every year — pumpkins.

Fortunately, pumpkin breeders have developed many types of pumpkins, so my kids can plant different varieties each year and still not grow them all. While they gravitate toward traditional orange jack-o'-lanterns, we have also grown white, blue, warty and odd-shaped pumpkins. My favorite has been Jarrahdale, a beautiful, blue-tinted pumpkin that looks great as decor and is delicious in a pie.

While June seems early to plan for autumn, if you want pumpkins for fall, it's time to plant your seeds. Let's cover pumpkin-growing basics so you can enjoy homegrown winter squash this fall.



Chris Enroth is a horticulture educator with the University of Illinois Extension, serving Henderson, Knox, McDonough and Warren counties. This column also appears in the "Good Growing" blog at go.illinois.edu/GoodGrowing.

Don't be late to germinate

Pumpkin is a very tender vegetable. The seeds do not germinate in cold soil, and frost injures seedlings. Do not plant until all danger of frost has passed and the soil has thoroughly warmed.

Plant pumpkins for Halloween from late May to early June in northern Illinois, early to mid-June for central locations and in early July in southern Illinois. If pumpkins are planted too early, they may soften and rot before Halloween. Check your seed packet for "days to maturity" to help calculate when to plant.

More room to bloom

Pumpkins are massive, vining plants. Space may be the most limiting factor, considering each pumpkin requires a minimum of 50 to 100 square feet of growing space per hill. A hill often has four to five seeds, which are thinned down to two or three plants after the seeds sprout.

Be sure to read your seed packets to know the recommended spacing of your specific variety. If space is in short supply, there are miniature or bush-type pumpkins that require less growing area.

Irrigate and cultivate

Pumpkins undergo rapid growth over the summer, and to support that growth, regular irrigation is important. Being heat-loving plants, pumpkins can tolerate short periods of hot, dry weather fairly well. However, Illinois often has prolonged periods of drought over the summer, which may require watering by hand. In the tangle of vines, direct water to the main root system where the seed sprouted.

With such a big growing space, weeds can take over before the pumpkin vines create a canopy

over the soil. Shallow cultivation of the soil and mulching will suppress weeds long enough to let the pumpkin vine cover an area.

Mildew, pests and unwelcome guests

Each year, my pumpkins suffer from powdery mildew on the leaves, which is surprisingly worsened by drought and improved by rain. Squash bug and squash vine borer are two common pest insects that can completely ruin a pumpkin plant and discourage a gardener from ever growing pumpkins again. There are control options, including insecticides. It is important to note that pumpkins require pollinators to produce fruit, so any pest insect controls must account for protecting pollinators.

A gourd hoard

Pumpkins can be harvested whenever they are a deep, solid color (orange for most varieties) and the rind is hard. If vines remain healthy, harvest before heavy frost. It is common for vines to die prematurely from disease or other causes, so harvest the mature fruit and store them in a moderately warm, dry place until Halloween.

Harvest by cutting pumpkins from the vines carefully. Use pruners or a sharp knife. Leave 3 to 4 inches of stem attached. Snapping the stems from the vines results in many broken or missing "handles." Pumpkins without stems usually do not keep well.

June is a great time to get your fall pumpkins started. Because Illinois is the top pumpkin producer in the U.S., University of Illinois Extension has a website dedicated to the favorite winter squash. Visit extension.illinois.edu/pumpkins to learn more about growing pumpkins in Illinois. 💡

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UPCOMING THEMES

- August – Stairs
September – Art
October – Spooky
November – Fall colors



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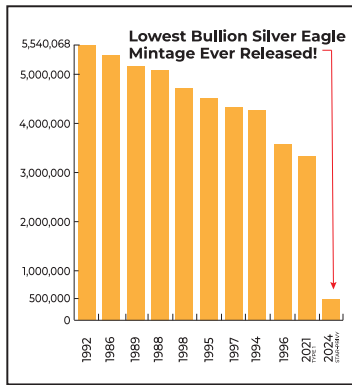
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