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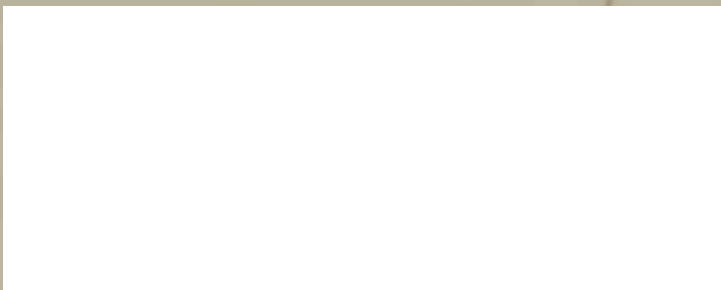
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Find out more about your heritage by using all the latest tools to uncover your family's historical treasures.

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Keeping it local and reliable

Community newspapers remain primary source of local news

There are many things that we depend on in our daily lives but take for granted without realizing their true value and importance. One such thing is the energy source for all of our electrical needs. When we flip on the light switch we expect — and take for granted — that the light will come on. The same is true when we adjust the thermostat that controls our heat and air conditioning. Electrical energy from our electric cooperatives is so dependable and used so frequently that we overlook its true value and importance in our daily lives.

Another example is our dependence on news and information to help us navigate throughout our day and the week ahead. We have a continual thirst for news and information and there is a seemingly ever-growing and endless supply coming at us across many platforms from what has progressed to a 24/7/365 news cycle. We have become so accustomed to having news and information at our fingertips, literally as it happens locally or around the world, that we often overlook not only the source, but the reliability of the source.

With all the new information platforms in broadcast and social media — including blogs, tweets and texts, several recent independent surveys show that most people still depend on a community newspaper as their primary and most trusted source for news and information. Despite reports in competing media, newspapers are still a strong and viable industry. One of Mark Twain's famous quotes appropriately applies to today's newspaper industry: "The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated."

Community newspapers are actually growing their readership and total audience through their websites,

e-editions, social media platforms and print products. To stay relevant, as well as to stay in business, newspapers have had to evolve their business model to expand both the type of news and information they provide readers, and the platforms on which it is delivered. Most newspapers wisely have embraced the Internet as an opportunity and did not accept it as a threat to their existence.

Newspapers and their websites carry a wide variety of news and information, from meetings of local government entities to school news, sports, weather, obituaries, advertising and, yes, even the widely popular crossword puzzle. Advertising is a key element of information found in newspapers. A vast majority of Illinoisans, 79.8 percent, believe state and local governments should continue to publish legal and public notices in newspapers as the best way to keep the public informed. Also, 70.2 percent said this helps to keep government more transparent and local officials more honest.

The National Newspaper Association's latest survey shows "The local community newspaper is the primary source of information about the local community for 51.8 percent of respondents compared to seeking information from friends and relatives (16 percent) and TV (13.2 percent). Readers are seven times more likely to get their news from their community newspaper than from the Internet (7.4 percent). Less than 6 percent say their primary local news source is radio."

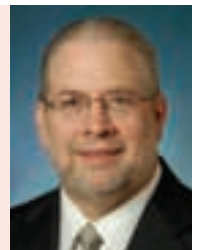
In March 2011, the Illinois Press Association commissioned a statewide survey to determine current newspaper readership levels and patterns in Illinois, as well as market research on the use of newspapers in shopping

and buying decisions. Each of the 102 Illinois counties was included in the survey of random households that included both subscribers and non-subscribers. Here are some of the Illinois results:

- 73.6 percent of adults have read at least one Illinois newspaper in the past week.
- Illinois newspapers reach more than 3.8 million households each week. On average, there are 2.33 readers per copy per household.
- Readership is strong across all age groups and household income levels: Ages 18-34, 58 percent; ages 35-54, 67 percent; ages 55+, 79 percent.
- Of adults ages 18-34, 56 percent have visited a newspaper website in the past 30 days.

Community newspapers have a long tradition of being a thread that helps to hold communities together and, also, to serve as an advocate for openness and transparency for all levels of government. By evolving and remaining relevant, community newspapers will remain strong for many years to come. Being so deeply rooted in the community that you're so often depended upon and yet taken for granted is, well, actually quite an honor.

Following a 30-year career as a newspaper publisher, Dennis DeRossett is now Executive Director of the Illinois Press Association, which represents nearly 500 member newspapers.



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March is Red Cross Month

In 1917, the United States entered World War I. After declaring war, President Woodrow Wilson ordered the American Red Cross to raise funds to support its aid to the military and civilians affected by war, as Congress had mandated. In response, the Red Cross held its first national War Fund drive in June 1917 and set \$100 million as its goal, an astoundingly large sum at the time. The public response was immediate and overwhelming.

In November 1941, with war in Europe, the Red Cross conducted a highly successful 25th Annual Roll Call. A few days later, the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor and the United States entered World War II. The American Red Cross responded immediately by declaring a War



American Red Cross

Fund campaign. By June 1942, it had raised more than \$66 million.

In 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared the month of March 1943 as “Red Cross Month.” The Red Cross set a goal of \$145 million, the largest amount ever requested in one campaign by an American organization. Again, the response was overwhelming. It took less than six weeks to reach the target. By June 1943, donations totaled nearly \$146 million. Roosevelt called it “the greatest single crusade of mercy in all of history.”

As part of the tradition, the President customarily issues a proclamation each year declaring March as Red Cross Month. This Red Cross Month go to www.redcross.org and learn more about how you can get involved. ■

You can help shape the future of rural broadband

Illinois residents have the opportunity to participate in a survey that will help shape the state’s future broadband plan. The statewide survey is being conducted by Broadband Illinois, and will reach out to households, colleges, hospitals and community organizations throughout Illinois.

“By participating in this survey, rural residents can make their voices heard about the need for broadband services in their area,” said Ed VanHoose, IT Manager for

the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives.

A major goal of this survey is to ensure that residents of rural Illinois will have access to better broadband, said Drew Clark, executive director of Broadband Illinois. “By developing a statewide strategy for better broadband, we’re creating a future that includes enhanced economic opportunities, increased availability of educational tools, and higher-quality health care for Illinois residents.”

Broadband Illinois is working with

the Illinois Institute of Rural Affairs (IIRA) and Strategic Networks Group (SNG) to conduct the survey and develop the plan. The ultimate goal of the plan is to find opportunities for the best available broadband technology and high-speed Internet throughout Illinois.

To take the survey, visit www.broadbandillinois.org, click the “Research” tab, and then click the “Broadband Availability Survey” link. Anyone with questions can contact broadbandoffice@broadbandillinois.org. ■

Illinois Recreational Access Program

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is implementing a new program to increase public access on private land for outdoor recreational activities. Through a three-year grant from the USDA-FSA, the IDNR will lease land from private landowners to provide acres for youth turkey hunting, fishing and boating, as well as birding, outdoor photography, and other similar activities focusing on young outdoor enthusiasts and families.

The goal is to provide more places for outdoor recreation and activities for youth and families. With more than 95 percent of the land in Illinois privately owned, and Illinois ranking 46th among states with public lands, there is a great



need to provide additional acreage for public access. With IRAP, private landowners who own at least 40 acres of ground and/or a pond(s), and/or have river and stream access on public waterways can enroll in the program and receive a financial reimbursement from IDNR to allow the public to access these areas for the purpose of youth turkey hunting, birding, outdoor photography and fishing and/or boating.

Information, as well as commonly asked questions, about the program can be found at www.dnr.illinois.gov/conservation/IRAP. For more information you may contact Tammy Miller at (217) 524-1266 or via email at tammy.miller@illinois.gov ■

M.J.M. Electric Cooperative receives job creation loan

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in January announced that loans and grants will be provided to applicants in 10 states to support businesses, improve the quality of medical care, and create or save hundreds of jobs. Funding is provided through USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program.

"During his State of the Union address last week, President Obama laid out a blueprint for an economy that's built to last – an economy built on American energy, skills for American workers, and a renewal of American values," said Vilsack. "The funding announced today will help support the President's vision by providing our rural communities with resources to support small businesses,

improve public facilities, and create new, sustainable jobs.

M.J.M. Electric Cooperative, Inc., Carlinville, received a \$740,000 loan that will be reloaned for construction of a new implement dealership.

USDA's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG) loans are being provided to cooperatives and utilities that will then lend the money for projects that will create jobs and improve rural economic conditions. The public/private partnership is an effort to bolster rural communities. Under the program, USDA provides zero-interest loans to local utilities that they, in turn, pass through to local businesses for projects that will create and retain employment in rural areas. For more information go to www.rurdev.usda.gov. ■

Illinois electric co-ops win energy efficiency award

For the second year in a row the electric co-ops of Illinois have won the Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance's (MEEA's) "Inspiring Efficiency Marketing Award" while competing against similar programs from the region's largest investor-owned utilities.

Last year, Prairie Power Inc. and its electric distribution co-ops won for a 16-foot "Energy Efficiency Wall" that illustrates various opportunities for air infiltration or leakage within the common home due to poor construction practices and materials.

Utilizing the display at member cooperatives' annual membership meetings, Touchstone Energy regional events, community college workshops and educational classes, homebuilder shows, county fairs, and even legislative briefings in Washington D.C., the "energy wall" helped educate over 400,000 consumers.

This year's winner was the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (AIEC) and the Home program, which helped 25 distribution co-ops perform nearly 3,500 home energy audits and deliver more than 3,000 energy efficiency rebates to help pay for efficiency improvements.

The Home program ran from May 2010 to September 2011. More than

90 percent of participating homeowners followed through with at least some of the audits' recommended improvements.

The program covered 30 percent of the costs of insulation and weatherization, with rebates of up to \$1,500 for heating and cooling system improvements. The funds were

available from a grant of \$2.5 million through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and it spurred \$25 million in energy efficiency improvements. In addition to creating jobs, the program will help co-op members save nearly half a million kWh annually. ■



John Freitag, Vice President of Operations for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives (left) and Kristin Banks, Coordinator of Workers Compensation and Youth Programs for the AIEC, accept the 2012 Inspiring Efficiency Impact Award from Jay Wrobel Executive Director of MEEA.

Free tax preparation for veterans

The Military Service Tax Preparation Project will once again offer free personal income tax return filing assistance to members of the U.S. Armed Forces who have recently returned or are still serving on active duty in a combat zone or qualified hazardous duty area. The Illinois CPA Society, in partnership with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), will match military personnel and/or their family members with CPA volunteers in their area. Spouses or family members can request assistance for those currently overseas. For more information, visit <http://www.icpas.org/militarytaxrequest/>. ■

Local food, local farmers

Illinois is increasing markets for local foods. By creating “food hubs,” or processing and distribution centers where independent, local farmers can market their products to larger entities (schools, government agencies), making locally-grown food more widely available.

To help meet food demand, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) has partnered with the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA), FamilyFarmed.org, and the University of Illinois’ Business Innovation Services to create a guidebook, “Building Successful Food Hubs: A Business Planning Guide for Aggregating and Processing Local Food in Illinois.” The guidebook will serve as a resource on how to establish food hubs. DCEO has already invested in several early food hub projects around Illinois. DCEO Director Ribley also announced a new website to help farmers find the way to larger market channels. For more information about the website, please visit <http://isupply.illinois.edu/>. The guidebook is also available to download for free at www.FamilyFarmed.org. ■

Kirk says he believes in reuse of coal ash

First-term Republican U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk met with the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives’ Board of Directors on Jan. 19, asking members to share input on ways to “spend less, borrow less and tax less to help the economy recover.”

In the approximate 30-minute visit, Kirk was direct in his endorsement of public-private partnerships to help mend the state’s economic woes, comparing Illinois to other adjoining states such as Indiana and Wisconsin, particularly in regards to transportation. He compares his plan to that of Abraham Lincoln, calling it the Lincoln Legacy Infrastructure Development Act for current times.

On point with his audience, Kirk addressed the “clean coal” issues so prominently placed before Congress.

“I’m backing proposed reform legislation by Senator Manchin dealing with clean air. I think his legislation is pro-power and pro-coal in a way that makes sure coal is part of our energy future,” he said, noting that he is well aware of the proposal from the President’s administration to treat coal ash as hazardous waste.

“I’m with you guys ... on that,” he

said. “My goal is to fix a lot of things like infrastructure upgrades and to promote common sense regulations.” If he can help stabilize those things, he believes small business will recover.

“My job is to make sure the rules aren’t changing every month and we let this economy roll,” he said.

Duane Noland, CEO of the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives, thanked Kirk for his position and support on coal ash.

“Thank you for understanding ... that we are trying to reuse coal ash in a fashion that is both environmentally friendly and which also makes good economic sense for our members/consumers,” Noland said.

Unfortunately, two days after Kirk’s visit, he suffered a serious stroke. He underwent surgery and is still recovering. Noland said, “We really appreciated Sen. Kirk and his staff for taking the time to visit with our board members, who represent so many down-state electric co-op members. It just proved how much he cares about his constituents all across the state. Our prayers go out to Sen. Kirk and his family and we hope he makes a speedy recovery.” ■



Just days before suffering a serious stroke, Sen. Mark Kirk visited with electric co-op leaders in Springfield. He said, “I’m an all-of-the-above energy guy. I want to drill in the Gulf. The President, I believe made a critical error with the Keystone Pipeline. We should build the Keystone Pipeline and buy energy from our friends and not our potential enemies. I’m pro nuclear. But you can’t run a \$14 trillion economy in the United States without coal. And we need leaders who understand that.”




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Who am I?



Piecing together your family history

by Les O'Dell

Unless you have a lot of time, you might not want to ask Dolores Ford-Mobley about her family. Because if you do, the Divernon resident will not only tell you about her children, but also her siblings, her parents, her cousins and as many as a dozen generations of ancestors. Like many Illinoisans, Ford-Mobley is a part-time genealogist and community historian, researching not only her legacy to learn the *who* of her family, but also the *where* and the *how*.

It was a passion nurtured in her as a child growing up near the small Marion County community of Alma. She recalls the stories her maternal grandfather told about his uncles. "He remembered everything and had a story for everything," she says. "I was the only one who would sit and listen to him, but I found it all very interesting."

A visit from a great aunt who produced the post-Civil War love-letters belonging to a great-great grandfather further stoked her kindling passion for the past. When a career move placed her office just blocks from the state archives in Springfield, Ford-Mobley began exploring her family's past. Since her storyteller grandpa had already compiled some records, she had a head start learning more.

"I already had a wealth of information; he had done two histories

himself in the 1950s," she adds. "For example, I already knew that I was part of the 12th generation of descendants from the Mayflower before I even got started."

Once she started genealogical pursuits some 30 years ago, she never stopped. Over the years she's written and requested records from dozens of county courthouses, poured through microfilm copies of old newspapers and records and visited countless cemeteries in search of missing pieces to the family puzzle.

"As a genealogist, you start with yourself and work backwards. You're always trying to find what is included in the dash between someone's birth year and death year," she says. "The who is the boring part; learning who they really were, where they lived, what they did and what was going on makes up the real finds."

Those discoveries are part of what makes genealogy fascinating, says Janice Fritsch of Sandwich. Fritsch serves as president of the Illinois State Genealogical Society. "Each genealogist will have a different answer as to why they do the research," she says. "Sometimes it might be to find who your immigrant ancestors were, other times it's just about finding a parent or grandparent or wanting to know your family's stories; sometimes it's solving mysteries. That's what genealogists like to do; they like to research and learn about families."

The first steps to tracing your own family histories are rather simple. Fritsch says to complete family

profile sheets for you and your siblings as well as for your parents and, if possible, grandparents, noting birthdays, marriages and other pertinent information. Then, Ford-Mobley says it's time to start asking questions.

"Interview your older relatives and ask them to tell you about where they went to school, what they did for vacations and about their parents," she says. "There is a vast amount of information in all of us. I'd suggest taking other relatives with you, because they'll pull more information out. These people just know so much and it's all things that you'll never find in





an archive. When a person passes away, it's like a library has burnt down. You don't want to lose that information."

She says that many of the other resources available today for genealogy research far outweigh those when she began her study. Today, many records including archives, some birth records and census data are all available online. Local organizations of genealogists are valuable as well.

"Our society has more than 71,000 obituaries on file, and with each one you usually can find three or four generations of your family, so that's a great starting place," Mary Duhr, president of the Iroquois County Genealogical Society says. "Of course, obituaries also give you birthplaces, marriages and places that ancestors lived."

She adds that many Illinois counties have genealogical societies, with membership eager to help others

discover their own family roots.

"Sometimes genealogy is like a puzzle," she explains. "It's a challenge, but when you find something, it's very

exciting, even if you're finding it for somebody else."

"What I find amazing," Fritsch adds, "are the things I learn about my family that haven't been passed down; things that are lost after just a few generations, the stories I didn't know."

Many genealogists say commercial websites such as Ancestry.com and others (see the accompanying list of websites) are all good starting points for researching family origins.

"I use these sites almost on a daily basis," Duhr says. "They're putting more and more information out there. While some of them are premium sites, meaning that you have to pay to belong or get access, they often have the actual documents where you can download a copy. They are a good tool."

Ford-Mobley says in using websites to do genealogical research, be careful to consider primary source information like actual documents and records differently from members' family trees. "The records are very accurate, the other information may not be," she cautions. "Often people have cut-and-pasted from other family trees because a couple of names match and they make assumptions. It's easy to do, but it may not always be right."

"I look at those trees and then try to prove it or disprove it for myself," Fritsch says. "I don't think people

For Illinois genealogy, Ford-Mobley recommends these websites:

State of Illinois Archives:

www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases.html

Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library: www.illinoishistory.gov/lib/default.htm

www.rootsweb.ancestry.com

www.usgenweb.org

www.findagrave.com

www.cyndislist.com

www.ancestry.com

Familytree.com

Familysearch.org

Fold3.com (for military records)



are trying to be dishonest, but I think they just haven't searched deeply enough. When families use the same first names generation after generation, it can be very confusing."

Ford-Mobley adds that while much research can be done from the comfort of home, trips to courthouses and cemeteries are still necessary.

"Probate records, land records and such are not online yet, so you still have to go to courthouses," she says, adding that the trips are beneficial for more than just information. "Sometimes going to the town from which your ancestors came can give you a better feeling for them."

Fritsch says genealogy research, whether online or through expeditions, can be a very enjoyable and sometimes eye-opening pastime.

"I think as a hobby you can make it go wherever you want: one family line or multiple lines," she says. "It's a great way to connect and for older and younger generations to work together. I've started showing my grandchildren about their ancestors and they're very interested in this."

She adds that you may not always like what you discover. "I would warn genealogists that what you've been told and what you believe about your family may not necessarily be true; you have to open your eyes to the possibility of whatever you discover."

Ford-Mobley says most genealogists will find some real stories in their research. She says her ancestors include an accused murderer (who was acquitted on self-defense grounds) as well as people who helped with the Underground Railroad.

"There's a little bit of everything in our family," she says. "It's farmers and teachers and preachers and people who helped make this country and state what it is. It's way better than fiction."

Finding records

Many websites exist to help you research your genealogy. Those advertised regularly include pay for information sites such as Ancestry.com and others connected to the highly trafficked web address. However, a free site is hosted which utilizes community resources – with residents and relatives being the primary contributors. You can find it online at www.findagrave.com. Explore it and decide if it's for you.

Find your relatives

The online search:

If someone has entered information from an obituary or taken pictures of headstones or monuments, you will find them posted.

1. Go to web site
2. Fill in the Grave Search Form (providing as much information as you know)
3. Click search button
4. Results for your search will appear in the shaded area near the top. Click on the person's name and any information known will appear. (Note: Clicking on other tags, such as the Genealogy Bank or Vital Records, will require you to sign up for a trial

of a paid subscription. If you do this by accident, just close out the window and return to the main site.

Help someone else find relatives

To update a site or to participate in helping build the database from cemeteries or obituaries in your area simply follow the free membership sign up. All you have to have is an active e-mail address and choose a password you can remember. Once a member, here are some simple steps you can take to help.

From the Actions menu on the left, choose to Add Burial Records or Help with Find a Grave. Become a photo volunteer. Register to take photos within a given zip code. Log in and go to Contributor Profile. Find your name and click Edit My Profile. Here you can enter a zip code and choose whether you want to be emailed new requests. For additional instructions, just maneuver around on the page. Answers to most of your questions are on the site.

More power can improve safety

Upgrading the electrical service in your farm shop

The farm shop may be the hub of winter activity for many farms. However it takes plenty of good lighting and electricity to clean combines, repair fall tillage equipment and prepare for spring planting. Power tools, compressors and welders all draw a considerable amount of power, and upgrading your electric service may also be a wintertime project.

If your farm shop is short on electrical service, we'd recommend an electrical service of 200-amp, 240 volt as the minimum for farm shops, and that may not be sufficient for larger facilities. Where motors 1/2-HP or larger will be used, install a separate circuit to serve no more than two 1/2-HP motors, and no more than one 1-HP or larger motor.

If welding equipment is used in your shop, install a 50-amp or larger 240-volt outlet for the welder. Two or more outlets properly located will make it possible to use the welder in most locations when working on machines inside the shop. Have at least one welder outlet near the large door so welding can be done outside. Put the service panel near a walk door for emergency shut off access and plan for expansion with more branch circuits and heavy-duty wire sizes.

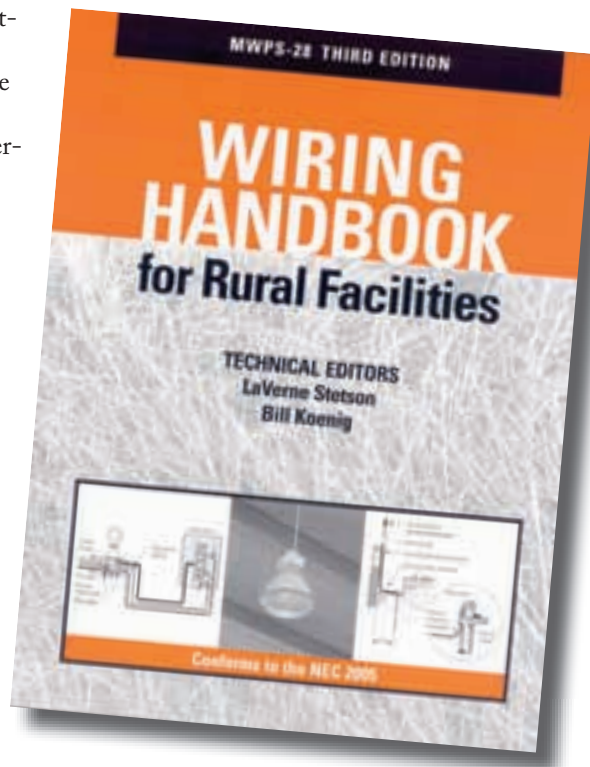
I know most farmers do their own wiring, but unless you are thoroughly familiar with wiring, always have a qualified licensed electrician do the work. Electrical wiring will need to be approved by an electrical inspector before electrical service will be connected by a power supplier. Remember that 120 volts can be very dangerous and improper wiring often is the cause of serious fires. Install 120-volt duplex outlets every 4 feet along work benches and every 10 feet along walls at a 4-foot height from the floor. If power tools are used any

distance from the walls, outlets can be installed in the floor or suspended from the ceiling.

Ground fault circuit interrupters are recommended on all single phase 15- and 20-amp outlet circuits. A GFCI senses a fault in a circuit to protect the user from electrocution. The National Electrical Code requires GFCIs on all 15- and 20-amp receptacle outlets installed on the outside of a building and near wet areas. Ground fault interrupters are available as portable units, on extension cords, as circuit breaker interrupters, or as receptacle units.

Lighting in the shop should include plenty of light above a workbench for detailed work. For task lighting, use double-tube, 4-foot fluorescent fixtures mounted about 4 feet above the workbench and positioned toward the front half. For general indoor lighting, provide at least 20-foot-candles of illumination at floor level. That's equivalent to one double-tube, 4-foot fluorescent fixture for every 80-100 square feet of floor area, assuming an 8-foot mounting height. Light-colored ceilings and upper walls help.

For general outdoor lighting, use 200-400 watt high-pressure sodium or metal halide lamps, mounted at a 15-25 foot height, with photocell control. Install exterior lights no more than 125 feet apart for the best lighting conditions. Place a 150-watt spotlight, with motion sensor activation, on one or both sides of the entrance door instead of over the door, to keep out flying insects.



For additional information on circuit sizing and safety, consult the Wiring Handbook for Rural Facilities at www.mwps.org. For more safety information go to www.safeelectricity.org. ■

Stanley (Jay) Solomon is a member of the Safe Electricity Advisory Board University of Illinois Extension Educator, Environmental and Energy Stewardship working Jo Daviess/Stephenson/Winnebago Unit, Building R, Highland Community College, 2998 W Pearl City Rd Freeport, IL 61032 • 815-235-4125 • jsolomo@illinois.edu



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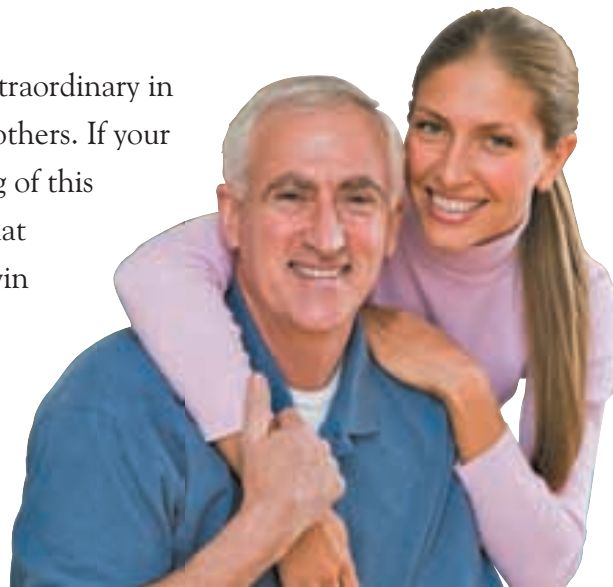
LAST CHANCE!

LAST CHANCE!

Nominate a father for Illinois Country Father of the Year

While every father is special, some are just extraordinary in their willingness to help their families and others. If your dad or another man in your community is deserving of this honor, nominate him. Tell us in 500 words about that special dad, what he does and why he deserves to win the title.

Plus, complete the following form and send it along with your essay. If sending your essay by e-mail, just include this information, also.



His Name			
Address	City	State	Zip
In which Illinois electric cooperative territory he resides			
Organizations to which he belongs			
Person nominating him			
Relationship to the nominee			
Your phone number with area code			
Nominee's phone number with area code (we would contact him only if he wins)			

Rules: The contest is open to any father served by an electric cooperative. No purchase is necessary. The winner will be selected by committee, and featured in the June or July edition of the Illinois Country Living magazine.

All nomination letters submitted will be published on Illinois Country Living's Web site at www.icl.coop.

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*E-mail entries can be sent to jlaron@aiec.coop

The death of a tree

Large trees near power lines need professional removal

Let's say your tree dies. What do you do now?

Many will heave a sigh and get out the chainsaw. Some will call a professional to remove the specimen, and depending on the added cost, grind out the stump.

Some will swear because the tree is probably located in the worst possible location, usually in the fenced in backyard. And those trees may be 3-feet in diameter meaning a professional is definitely needed.

Personally, while chain saws can be fun, they need to be used with both feet planted firmly on the ground unless you are a trained professional. So, in most cases you really should consider the professional.

And if there are electric wires nearby, it only goes without saying that the professional should be the only person removing the tree.

But, another question should be going through the back of your mind: Why did the tree die? That question isn't always easily answered.

A neighbor's big red maple that had to be about 100 years old died suddenly. One day it was green; the next day it was a green brown. The following day all the leaves were brown.

This was after a severe storm. Looking at the trunk, you could see black streaks. Diagnosis: lightning. There wasn't much that could have prevented it.

Another tree died slowly over the course of five years. A quick look at the base indicated that this huge 80-year-old monster didn't have the flared trunk, and the homeowners admitted they added a foot of soil around the base to cover the roots that were interfering with the mower. Diagnosis: root suffocation.

Seldom does a tree die outright



unless it's hit by lightning or a fast moving disease, the latter affecting some of our evergreens especially the pines.

This brings up an issue. Make sure you know for sure what type of tree you have. Not all evergreens are pines, though all pines are evergreens. But so are spruces, firs, junipers and hemlocks. Lots of folks say "my pine tree died" when it really wasn't a pine. Different insects and diseases affect the different evergreens.

Sometimes death diagnosis isn't easy for trees. You need to look carefully at the leaves (or needles), the branches, trunk, surrounding area, and sometimes the root system, which may necessitate some digging.

It would be nice if plants only died of one problem. Sometimes it's a combination of several.

Insect damage is usually obvious, though it might require you to remove bark to see if anything was feeding underneath. The presence of random holes and sap oozing from the trunk might indicate trunk feeding.

Diseases are tougher especially if the plant has died. At that time,

nature takes hold and lots of fungi and insects start with the decomposition process, sort of like what you watch with bodies on TV shows. Fortunately plants don't really bleed and ooze pinkish white parts when cut.

Usually with diseases, there will be discolorations of leaves (or needles) and possibly pimple-like eruptions on the limbs and trunks. Usually doesn't mean always.

What we do know is that "dead is dead" and no matter how much you wish, a dead tree will not come back to life. If it does, please play the lottery.

If it died, you should get rid of it so it won't infest (insects) or infect (diseases) those plants around it, especially if they are the same type of plant. ■

David Robson is Extension Specialist, Pesticide Safety for the University of Illinois. drobson@illinois.edu



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Too humid, too dry or just right?

Doug explains how to balance your home's humidity

As I said last time, I have never had a person tell me that his/her house was too dry in the summer. On the other hand, I have had many folks tell me that their houses were too dry in the winter.

Many of us can remember buying electric humidifiers in the winter to put in a child's room. I remember when my mother would place a large pot of water on the top of the non-vented gas heater to help add moisture to the air.

Just now, as I am writing this column, a fellow has called me from Kansas City to ask questions about his 16-year-old gas furnace. His house has 1,300 square feet and his HVAC dealer wants to install a new 100,000-BTU gas furnace and a 3-ton cooling system just like he has now.

After I talked to him for a few minutes, I told him it sounded like a pitiful answer to his problem. I said to him, "Your house can't possibly be comfortable. He said, "It isn't."

He told me they had to use a humidifier all winter and needed a dehumidifier all summer. I asked him why he would let his HVAC dealer install another system that would perform just as lousy as the one he has now. I told him what he should do and he said he was glad he called.

To continue, I have also had hundreds of folks who have told me their houses were too wet and water was running down the window panes, on the mirrors, dripping out of the kitchen exhaust fan, etc. How can this be? Some are too dry and some are too wet.

Say this three times. This is



not rocket science and if it was complicated, Doug Rye couldn't understand it.

If the air in your house is too dry in the winter, you most likely have too much air infiltration and perhaps an oversized heating unit. Fireplace and gas flues can also contribute to the problem. Cold air cannot hold as much moisture as hot air. When you allow a cubic foot of cold air to enter the house and then heat it, it expands and has even less moisture per cubic foot than it had before it was heated.

Remember that you are trying to keep the relative humidity at about 40 percent to 50 percent. Well, when the relative humidity gets below those figures, you will notice it with a scratchy nose and throat. Your skin will also feel dry. If this is your problem, the solution is to implement the energy efficiency improvements I have been writing about for years, such as caulking, caulking, and caulking some more. Seal the ductwork to stop as much leakage as possible.

As you make your house tighter, it will retain some of the moisture that

the occupant generates. If your house is all electric, try to stop as much outside air as possible from entering your house. If your house has a gas furnace, gas water heater, gas logs, or any other gas appliance, consideration must be given for sufficient combustion air and fresh air. In this case you may want to call a trained professional for help, or call me to answer your questions.

If the air in your house is too wet, you must simply reduce the amount of moisture in the house. You

should make a list of all the things and places that might provide moisture to your house. If your house has a crawlspace, look there first. If you have non-vented gas logs, that may be the problem. If your bathrooms do not have exhaust fans, or if you are not using them, this is part of your problem. Houseplants can add lots of moisture to the air, too. Not using the kitchen exhaust fan when cooking can add to the problem, etc.

I wish it were possible for me to visit every reader's house that is either too dry or too wet but obviously that is not possible, so I must just continue to help you by writing this column. If you do what I teach you, you will be a happy winner in both winter and summer. See you next month when the dogwoods start blooming! ■

Doug Rye can be heard on several different Illinois radio stations. You can go to Doug Rye's Web site at www.dougrye.com, e-mail him at info@philliprye.com, or call 501-653-7931.



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The Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives salutes ...

Illinois Green Pastures Fiber Cooperative – our wool producers

That favorite sweater, afghan or suit, or any other product bearing a wool symbol, had to begin somewhere. That origin could have been on a farm in Illinois.

The history of raising sheep and harvesting wool goes way back in time. It got its start in frontier times when J.G. Stolp, a New Yorker, built a mill on a small island on the Fox River in Aurora back in 1837. That was just the beginning. Wool has seen its peaks and valleys, seeing a setback in 1920 when synthetic “orlon” was introduced. However, the tried and true beauty and warmth of real wool continues to attract the hobbyist and many enthusiasts embrace its value. In 2006, that passion culminated into the formation of Green Pastures Fiber Cooperative, supported by a Small Minority Producer Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The grant helped fund increasing membership and awareness to the consumer market.

Be open minded when thinking of wool. While white bundles of sheep huddled in an open field may come to mind, there is much more to wool. From the elegant Alpaca to the gentle Columbia, adorable Angora Rabbit, hardy Cheviot and black fleece Shetland to the Navajo Churro, descended from sheep left behind by the Spanish Conquistadors, the animals raised by members of the Illinois Green Pastures Fiber Cooperative boasts an impressive variety of fiber characteristics.

Currently there are 28 members of the co-op, doubling the membership of its first year when northern Illinois farmers first joined forces. Its mission remains the same – to unite farmers producing all kinds of fiber in the state, to educate people and to help those raising it reach potential buyers.



2012
International
Year of
Cooperatives

Growth continues and the cooperative model is credited.

“I believe the co-op has given us a way to promote our farm’s individual fiber to many different people at shows and on the website that we might not have been able to do on our own,” says Julie Barr, co-op member and board member. “It enables us to pool resources together to benefit each one of the members. We can rely on each other’s strengths and knowledge to promote all Illinois grown fiber to the public.”

The cooperative is seeking other interested farmers who want to move forward with purpose. Visit the cooperative website at www.illinoisgreenpastures.org or e-mail the board of directors at info@illinoisgreenpastures.org.

In celebrating the International Year of the Cooperative, we want to show our support for the cooperative model. Please join us each month as we continue to feature a different cooperative that you may recognize or might also be a member.





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A New Beginning 2010



Snack Pizzas

Who: Rose Hill Community Church, Rose Hill, IL

Cost: \$14, including shipping

Details: soft-backed, spiral-bound

Pages of recipes: 104

Send checks to: Amanda Clark, 10389 N. 700th St., Newton, IL 62448 or call 618-526-8169

Snack Pizzas (left)

- 1 pkg. refrigerator biscuits
- 1/2 C. pizza sauce
- Shredded Mozzarella cheese, to your liking
- Toppings of your choice

Open biscuits and place on a greased cookie sheet. Flatten each biscuit into a 4-inch circle. Bake at 400 degrees for 5 minutes. Top with pizza sauce, cheese and your favorite toppings. Return to the oven for an additional 4-5 minutes, or until toppings are melted and crust is light brown.

Foil Wraps/Meal-In-One Taco Chicken Dinner (below)

- 4 chicken breasts
- 4 small potatoes, sliced thin
- 8 T. salsa
- Shredded Cheddar Cheese

- Sour Cream
- 4 tsp. taco seasoning
- Foil

Spray four square foil pieces with cooking spray. Spread potato slices onto the center of the foil pieces. Top with 1 chicken breast. Sprinkle 1 tsp. taco seasoning over each chicken breast. Top each breast with cheese, and then 2 T. salsa. Seal foil into little pockets. Bake each pocket at 400 degrees for 40-50 minutes. Serve with a dollop of sour cream.

Foil Wraps/Meal-In-One Taco Chicken Dinner



Blueberry Crunch

- 3 C. blueberries
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1/2 C. nuts, your choice
- 3/4 C. sugar
- 1 stick butter
- 1/4 C. sugar

Grease a 13x9-inch pan. Add blueberries and 3/4 C. of sugar. Mix cake mix, nuts, butter and 1/4 C. sugar together. Pour over blueberries. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes. Slit the top and bake for another 15 minutes.

Healthy Granola Bars

- 2 C. quick oats
- 1-1/2 C. Rice Krispies cereal
- 1/2 C. raisins, or dried fruit of your choice
- 1/2 C. dry roasted peanuts, or nut of your choice
- 1/2 C. white Karo syrup
- 1/2 C. brown sugar or 1/4 C. Slenda brown sugar blend
- 1/2 C. peanut butter

Mix oats, Rice Krispies, raisins and peanuts together in a large bowl. Set aside. In a saucepan, mix white syrup and brown sugar. Bring to a boil. Add peanut butter and mix well. Pour mixture over the dry mixture and blend well. Pat into a 9x13-inch pan sprayed with Pam. Cool about 30 minutes and cut into bars. Store in an airtight container.

Gumdrop Cookies

1 C. shortening
1 C. brown sugar
1 C. white sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla
2 C. flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
2 C. oatmeal
1 C. coconut
1 C. cut gumdrop pieces

Cream sugars, shortening and eggs together. Add vanilla and dry ingredients. Add oatmeal, coconut and gumdrops. Roll into 1-inch balls and place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 minutes.

Irish Soda Bread

2-1/2 C. flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 C. milk
1/2 C. butter
1/2 C. raisins
2 T. cider vinegar

Sift together flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt. Cut in the butter and raisins. Add vinegar and milk. Shape into 2 balls and cut an "x" on top. Brush with milk. Place dough in pie pans. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 minutes, then at 375 degrees for 30 additional minutes.

Calling all cookbooks!

Is your church or community organization selling its own unique cookbook filled with favorite recipes of cooks in your area? If so, send your cookbook to Catrina Wagner, Illinois Country Living, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. Please include the price of your cookbook plus postage costs and the name, address and telephone numbers (both day and evening) of the cooperative member we should contact for more information.



Cambridge Celebrates - A Sesquicentennial

Who: The city of Cambridge, IL

Cost: \$15 including shipping

Details: soft-backed, comb-bound

Pages of recipes: 326

Send checks to: Sally Vincent, 10102 E. 1500th St., Cambridge, IL 61238 or call 309-945-8928

My Favorite Noodle Casserole

My Favorite Noodle Casserole (above)

3 C. egg noodles
4 T. green onion, diced
1/4 tsp. garlic powder
2 T. butter
1 C. cottage cheese
1/2 C. sour cream
1/4 tsp. poppy seed
1/2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
1/4-1/2 tsp. salt
Dash pepper
Dash hot pepper sauce
Parmesan cheese

Cook noodles according to package directions, drain. Saute onion in butter until tender. Combine all ingredients with the noodles and place in a baking dish. Bake for 20 - 30 minutes in a 350 degree oven. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese before serving.

Shrimp And Asparagus Casserole

2 (10-oz.) pkgs. frozen asparagus cuts
1/4 C. butter
1/4 C. flour
1-3/4 C. milk
1/2 tsp. salt
1/8 tsp. pepper
1 egg yolk, slightly beaten
1/2 C. grated Parmesan cheese
1 lb. small shrimp, cooked
1/2 C. buttered soft bread crumbs

On a stove-top, blanch asparagus for 3 minutes. Drain well, set aside. In a small saucepan, melt butter. Stir in the flour; cook, stirring constantly for 1 minute. Gradually whisk in the milk and cook until thickened. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in the beaten egg yolk, cheese and shrimp. In a buttered 2-1/2-quart casserole dish, arrange half the asparagus; pour on half the sauce. Repeat layers. Top with buttered bread crumbs. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes.

Photos by Catrina McCulley Wagner

Visit www.icl.coop to see an archive of past Illinois Country Living recipes.

Looking for an fun way to recycle your old electronics? Try this link for some unique ideas: <http://bit.ly/xROjig>

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

I could never have expected that the recycling article would turn into a three-part column, but here we are. The number of e-mails you sent regarding difficulty with the recycling program was staggering, and it would be wrong not to follow-up (again) with some of your concerns. However, I promise next month we'll move on to a different topic.

It's important to note that not all of you responded with difficulties. Some of you just have helpful suggestions. For instance, Cathy from Menard Electric Cooperative wrote, "I just finished reading your follow-up article for the e-waste issue. One place not mentioned is Habitat for Humanity's ReStore in Springfield off of Jefferson. They take all e-waste as of last week when I called. They also take old Christmas lights. It benefits a good cause and keeps metals out of the landfill."

Thank you Cathy! That's a very good suggestion. The past two articles focused primarily on adhering to the new law by using recycling centers,

but many organizations can also find ways to reuse electronic materials. And we're not just talking about computers either!

Debbie from Egyptian Electric Cooperative points out, "A lot of time, electronics still work but people get rid of them because they get something new. Don't forget usable electronics or parts can be donated to Goodwill, or local thrift shops. A local thrift shop in Carbondale (Lutheran thrift shop) has organized drawers and bins of all kinds of stuff. I have gotten everything from a new charger for my cell phone when mine went bad (for \$1 instead of \$25 at the Verizon store) to keyboards and a mouse for my computer when they went bad. I have also found other things like a new glass coffee pot for my coffee maker when mine broke, again for \$1 instead of throwing out the whole unit that still worked fine. We throw away or recycle far too much stuff that hasn't even reached the end of its usable life."

I'm guilty Debbie! Being one of those "techie" people, I do enjoy getting new electronic toys. Perhaps we all could take Debbie's advice and find uses for more things that we are just upgrading. Of course, many of you are actually trying to reduce, reuse and recycle but are finding it difficult. Roy from Southern Illinois Electric Cooperative sent this note to the EPA, "What are people in extreme Southern Illinois supposed to do about recycling? The closest place for people in Alexander and Pulaski County and possibly other counties is Carbondale. That's over an hour drive for most people in this area."

Roy definitely has a point. In fact, the majority of responses to last month's column echoed Roy's problem.

Recycling centers are generally located near larger

populaces. But, we definitely don't want to see people dumping e-waste by the roadside. It's the same dilemma that Dean was faced with last month.

I have found that the EPA is pretty responsive to requests for help in finding recycling centers. In fact, you can reach them by e-mailing EPA.E-recycling@illinois.gov. Someone will usually get back to you fairly quick with some options. But, you might also take a page out of Debbie's book and contact your local thrift shops, or follow Cathy's suggestions and donate to organizations such as Goodwill or Habitat for Humanity.

Keep in mind though, that there will probably be some things that just won't be accepted. In those cases you may end up having to visit a recycling center, and it might not be in your immediate vicinity. Perhaps you could speak to your neighbors and load everything up all at once to make a single trip? I would certainly be interested to learn if a community put something like that together.

Many of you reported having difficulty getting the link last month to work. If you had trouble, please try <http://www.epa.state.il.us/land/electronic-waste-recycling/index.html> instead. It should open up a page that has several tabs on it. Click the tab that reads, "Collectors/Recyclers/Refurbishers" and then under the "Other" section you'll see a link that reads, "List of Registered Residential E-Waste Collection Sites." If you click that link, you should find the information you need.

Ed VanHoose is the Digital Communications Administrator/IT Manager for the Association of Illinois Electric Cooperatives in Springfield.



evanhose@aiec.coop

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For Sale: Historic hotel in small NW IL community. See www.hotelglenview.com for information.

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- 4) Mail to: Illinois Marketplace, P.O. Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708, by deadline.

Deadlines: April issue – February 20;
May issue – March 20.

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Home Grown Goodness



Tips for growing herbs and veggies at home

All over the country, people are taking the time to enjoy the simple pleasures of growing their own vegetables and herbs. From small container gardens and raised beds, to community-based home farms where people grow food with neighbors, the idea of home-grown goodness has taken root. In fact, a recent survey from Triscuit found that more than 60 percent of Americans say they are interested in growing fruits, vegetables, and/or herbs in a backyard garden and 44 percent have grown some of their own food in the past year.

If you haven't started digging into the trend, it's not too late. "The Gardener Guy," Paul James, has teamed up with Triscuit to celebrate the "Home Farming" movement, which encourages the simple joy of growing fresh herbs and vegetables on home farms and community-based home farms. James has shared some helpful tips to get you started.

Home Farming 101 – How-to's for beginners

- **Where to plant** – Vegetables and herbs can be grown in practically any container, which should have a hole in the bottom so it can drain.
- **Nourish your garden** – Make sure plants get at least five to six hours of sun a day and feed them every couple of weeks with a balanced fertilizer.
- **Water, water, water** – Water plants every few days and increase to every day in the summer. Saturate the top half inch of soil so seeds can absorb moisture to germinate.
- **Give them space** – All plants need sufficient room to get an adequate supply of water and nutrients. Be sure to read spacing requirements on the back of seed packets or plant tags before planting.

James says, "The number one rule is to start small. Whether it is growing herbs on your windowsill or vegetables in your backyard, anyone can start a home farm. As you gain confidence and knowledge you can always expand."

Green Thumb Academy – Helpful tips for the advanced home farmer

- **Secret is in the soil** – Good soil can help plants grow. A great recipe for container plants is to mix 75 percent sterilized potting mix with 25 percent bagged compost. Mushroom compost is ideal.
- **Organic matter matters** – Organic matter can improve soil, and includes compost, leaves, grass clippings, hay and straw. At least once a year, add organic matter to the top six inches of soil.
- **Block party** – When you plant in blocks, there are no paths between plants for weeds to grow, or wasted space.

If you don't have space for your own home farm, consider volunteering at a community-based home farm. Triscuit and the non-profit organization Urban Farming are collaborating to create 50 community-based home farms in cities across the country in 2010.

For more tips from Paul James, tools for starting your own home farm, and details about community-based home farms across the country where you can volunteer, visit www.triscuit.com/homefarming.

The Triscuit Home Farming Study, fielded by StrategyOne, is a national telephone survey among a representative sample of 1,018 U.S. adults conducted January 14, 2009 and January 17, 2009. Margin of error on total results (N=1,018) ±3.1%.

Manufactured Savings

How to boost efficiency of mobile homes

M*anufactured homes, sometimes dubbed mobile homes, often log disproportionately higher energy bills than traditional wood-frame or modular homes. But you can take steps to help manage energy costs and increase comfort.*

Manufactured homes come in several configurations: single-wide, doublewide and triplewide. Doublewides and triplewides require a crossover duct to provide air flow between the sections – a major culprit in air leaks that contribute significantly to wasted energy.

Manufactured units must also be transported to a site, and movement can disrupt the integrity of the original construction. Also, homes that sit on jack stands or blocks allow air to flow underneath.

There isn't a magic bullet to lower the energy consumption of a manufactured home. It takes time and hard work to troubleshoot all of the possible causes of energy loss. The most common culprits and ways to remedy them are:

Belly board problems

In most manufactured homes, the belly board holds the insulation in



Sealing your manufactured home, or mobile home, may take a few weekends and a few hundred dollars, but what you'll save on energy costs will be worth it. Source: Touchstone Energy

place under the floor and serves as a vapor barrier. Plumbing that runs under the floor is on the warm side of the insulation to keep it from freezing in winter. However, the belly board can be damaged by animals, deteriorate over time, or become torn, allowing the floor insulation to become moisture laden or to simply fall out, exposing ductwork and dramatically increasing energy losses. Often there is also long-term water damage from leaky pipes, toilets, and showers that has compromised floor, insulation and belly board integrity. These problems must be addressed prior to basic weatherization. Replacing the belly board and repairing leaky plumbing should be the first thing on your to do list.

Air leakage/infiltration

Infiltration of excessive outside air can be a major problem. Specific problems include deteriorated weather stripping, gaps in the “marriage wall” that joins multiple units making up the home, holes in the ends of ducts, gaps around wall registers and behind washers and dryers, and unsealed backing to the electrical panel. This is a dirty job and will require you to crawl under the home and into the attic looking for gaps. Gaps can be filled with weather stripping and insulation. You should consult your local hardware store for the exact type of insulation needed for the specific area of the home.

Crossover ducts

Sealing the ducts than run under the sections making up your mobile home will result in tremendous energy savings and increased comfort. Crossover ducts are often made of flexible tubing and are therefore prone to collapse and are easy for animals to chew or claw into. Crossover ducts made of thin sheet metal can leak air heated or cooled air to the great outdoors, which is what happens when ductwork connections are made with duct tape. Repairs are generally easy, using either special duct sealant or metal tape that can be found at most

home improvement stores. If you can afford the upgrade, consider replacing a flexible crossover duct with metal ductwork.

Lack of insulation

Insulation levels and associated R-values in walls, floors and ceilings in manufactured homes can be woefully inadequate. If it is easily accessible, adding additional insulation to ceiling and floors will help. However, adding insulation to walls will be a problem without major renovations that are often not cost justified.

Uninsulated ductwork

Ductwork itself may not be wrapped with insulation, allowing heating and cooling losses. Wrapping ductwork will lead to energy savings. You should be able to find insulation specifically made for ductwork at your local hardware store.

Single-glazed windows and uninsulated doors

Most manufactured homes come with single-glazed windows and uninsulated doors, which have a low R-value. That means the rate of heat

transfer between finished interior spaces and the outdoors is higher than what’s ideal. Replacing the windows with double- or triple-glazed windows or adding storm windows will help to make the home more comfortable. An insulated door will also help. However, these solutions can be very expensive. At a minimum, you should add weather stripping to doors and windows. Also, a window film kit is a cheap and easy-to-install upgrade that will help to keep winter winds out of the home.

It may take a couple of weekends and a few hundred dollars, but basic repairs can see significant savings. Savings of up to 50 percent have been reported in manufactured homes that have been properly sealed and had old electric furnaces replaced with new electric heat pumps. The key is to get out there and start hunting for the savings lurking under and inside your manufactured home.

Source: Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the Arlington, Va.-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

How to tell if you can benefit from improving your home's energy performance:

Your home is a good candidate for upgrades if:

- Your home was built before 1994 (and especially before 1976) and hasn't been significantly improved or upgraded.
- Your heating, cooling, or water heating equipment breaks down a lot.
- You feel drafts inside on windy days.
- The air near the floor is significantly cooler than the air near the ceiling.
- You have to wait a long time for hot water, and water cools off quickly between uses.
- You have to set the thermostat below 70 to stay cool in the summer.
- You have trouble keeping your home warm in winter or cool in summer.
- There are large fluctuations in your utility bills from month to month, and especially from the same month of the previous year.
- There is condensation on the inside surface of your windows in the winter.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Manufactured Homes : Saving Money by Saving Energy www.huduser.org

- 6 21st Annual Easter Party** at Caseyville Community Building, Caseyville. 618-345-6256.
- 7 Brewery Collectible Show,** Belle Clair Expo Center, Belleville. 618-233-0052.
- 10 Play that Hot Fiddle!** Old Time Radio and the life of “Pappy” Wade Ray of southern Illinois. A Road Scholar program at the Nashville Public Library, Nashville. 618-327-3827.
- 10 “Gravity Attacks”** presented by The Passing Zone, Virginia Theatre, Champaign. 217-356-9063.
- 12 “See How They Run,”** opens at Conklin’s Barn II Dinner Theatre, Goodfield. (Runs through May 20.) 309-965-2545.
- 13-14 Brocton Red Barn Market,** Brocton. Noon to 5 p.m., Friday. 8:30 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturday. www.broctonil.org or 217-385-2450.
- 13-15 Spring Indian Market Days** at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, Collinsville. 618-346-5160.
- 14-15 Shelby County Art Show,** Lake Shelbyville U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Visitor Center. 217-774-5318.
- 14 Southern Illinois Sheep and Craft Festival,** Monroe County Fairgrounds, Waterloo. 618-939-8536.
- 15 Corvettes Unlimited 36th Annual Show,** Joliet. 815-436-2980.
- 15 Motorcycle Parts Extraganza,** Bell Clair Fairgrounds and Expo Center, Belleville. 618-233-0052.
- 15 The Medical Side of the Civil War** at Robert W. Rowe Public Library, Sheridan. 815-496-2031.
- 15 Illinois Brass Quintet,** Cedarhurst Center for the Arts, Mt. Vernon. 618-242-1236.
- 16 The American Folk Song,** Centralia Area Historical Society, Centralia. 618-545-0657.
- 16 Juan Siddi Flamenco Theatre Company, musicians, singers and dancers from Spain and U.S.,** Wabash Valley College, Mt. Carmel. 618-263-4999, ext. 3480.
- 19 Tin Ceiling Tour & Taste** of Mt. Vernon. 618-242-6866.
- 20-21 Spores N More Mushroom Festival,** Shelbyville. Friday dinner in Windsor. Hunt starts at Forest Park. www.lakeshelbyville.com or 1-800-874-3529.
- 20-21 Cunningham Children’s Home Festival of Quilts** at the Children’s Home, Urbana. www.cunninghamhome.org/quilts or 217-337-9073.
- 21 All-American Boys Chorus,** 32-voice ensemble, Dvorak Concert Hall, Eastern Illinois University. 217-581-3010.
- 21 Dulcimer Workshop,** Dickson Mounds, Lewiston. Contact Steve Endsley at sraendsley@sybertech.net.
- 22 World Champion Trinity Irish Dancers,** The Hett, Lebanon. 618-537-6863.
- 22 Spring & Mushroom Festival,** Pere Marquette State Park, Grafton. Artisans, crafters and more hunting competition. 618-786-2331.
- 27-29 Agapefest, annual contemporary Christian music festival,** Greenville. 800-965-9324.
- 26-28 Midwest Classic, three-day Cowboy Action Shooting Match** at the Cowboy Berm, Sparta. 618-295-2700.
- 28 National Astronomy Day celebration,** free planetarium shows, star maps and crafts, Rockford. 815-963-6769.
- 28 First Cruise In for 2012,** Moline, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., SouthPark Mall. 563-355-0036.
- 29 St. Louis Antique Festival,** Belle Clair Exp Center, Belleville. 618-233-0052.
- 30 “Engaging a River of Generations”** at the Windmill Cultural Center, Fulton. Terry Feinberg, U of I Extension. www.cityoffulton.us.

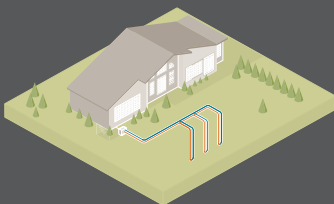
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To be considered for inclusion, please submit events in the format used above. Preference is given to events sponsored by non-profit entities. Submitting an event is not a guarantee of publication. Photos are welcome, but will not be returned unless a self-addressed and stamped envelope is provided. Events are subject to change, so please contact the event sponsor for confirmation.

Deadline: March 15 for June events. **Mail to:** Illinois Datebook, PO Box 3787, Springfield, IL 62708. **E-mail to:** datebook@aiec.coop.

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& A/C
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When you need shade in a hurry, we suggest the fast-growing Hybrid Poplar. It has a handsome shape and will actually shade a ranch-type home in just 3-5 years! We haven't found any tree that grows like it. It has a spread of 30-35' and in just a few years, at maturity, it reaches 50-60'. It normally lives 30-50 years. It is wind, disease and insect-resistant — it can take the cold as far north as Canada. This is not the short-lived Lombardy Poplar. Best use is to provide beauty and quick, cool shade for new homes. Plant Hybrid Poplars for screening! The screen variety makes an ideal privacy hedge. It has a width of about 10' and grows to a dense screen usually in 3 years. Plant for quick windbreaks on farms and for living snow fences. We ship strong, 2-4' trees.



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	N6891	WEEPING WILLOW	
	N7036	CREEPING RED SEDUM	

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