



The Ecology Action Center News

Fall 2005

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Sample Earth-Friendly Products at Eco-Fest! Our Fall Fundraiser

Date: Saturday, Oct. 15th

Time: 1:00 – 4:00 pm

Location: Unitarian Church in Bloomington, IL

Join us for an afternoon of sampling different organic, locally-produced, or environmentally-friendly products. You can test alternative brands of spaghetti sauce, soy milk, chips, salsa, granola, peanut butter, chocolate, tasty snacks, compact fluorescent light bulbs, mowers, recycled plastic products (shirts, carpet, lumber), alternative beauty products, and more! For a fun twist, we will provide scorecards to rate what you try and we will publish the rankings in our winter newsletter.

Participants can purchase raffle tickets for items donated by many local stores, such as unframed art, wine, a recycled-content dog bed, gift certificates, and more! Because this is our annual member event, a special gift bag with additional product samples will be given to members only. If you become a member, you will receive our fabulous shopping tote bag along with the sample gifts.

Free educational activities will be available for children, including their own taste-testing! The dessert social with an all-organic cake starts at 3:00 pm with raffle winners announced at 3:30 pm. Only 100 adults will be able to attend this exclusive event so sign up for tickets before they are sold out!! See pg 5 for registration info.

McLean County Recycles Day

On November 11, from 10am - 3pm, we will host contests and various events at the Children's Discovery Museum. Activities include children's games and crafts, fun and educational displays, announcements of the winners of the school Used Battery Drive and the Annual Children's Art contests, and the chance to Rededicate Yourself to Recycling. There will also be a book signing for "Logan's Recycling Adventure: Featuring Conservation Cat" and a chance to meet Conservation Cat. The first 25 visitors will receive the book for free, and others can buy it at the Children's Discovery Museum gift shop, The Garlic Press, or at our Center.

We are pleased to announce our first published work...*Logan's Recycling Adventure: Featuring Conservation Cat*

This book was written by ISU English major Ryanne Folcke and illustrated by our own Michele Bell. Business sponsors that made this book possible are Ameren IP, Horizon Wind Energy, Nicor Gas, Midwest Fiber, Allied Waste, and StarNet Digital Publishing. This book was presented at the Summer Reading Programs at various McLean County Libraries and in classrooms this fall.



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Exciting Times for Clean Energy in Illinois!

First turbines will be up and turning by the end of next year.

By Bill Whitlock, Horizon Wind Energy

In July, the Governor's Sustainable Energy Plan was adopted by the Illinois Commerce Commission. This plan sets voluntary standards for electric companies to get target percentages of their power supplies from wind or other renewable sources. By 2012, Illinois power companies are expected to obtain at least 8 percent of their electricity portfolio from renewable sources, such as wind or methane from landfills. In addition to that great news, the Energy Bill recently passed into federal law contained a two-year extension of the Production Tax Credit, which is critical for new wind energy projects, such as the one we are developing near Arrowsmith in eastern McLean County.

In August, we became a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Goldman Sachs Group and changed our name from Zilkha Renewable Energy to Horizon Wind Energy. Our new CEO, Alec Dryer, a long-time power industry executive and Illinois native, brings many years of power plant development expertise to our team.

This summer, we participated in two public hearings at Heartland Community College as part of our Special Use permitting process for the Arrowsmith Wind Farm project. Over 350 people attended the hearings with the vast majority supportive of the project. The Zoning Board of Appeals unanimously recommended approval of the project to the County Board pending several conditions. One condition was to have Road Use Agreements in place prior to the issuance of the Special Use permits. We worked closely with the Townships and the County for 9 months and completed the Agreements in August. The Township Road Agreements will be signed this week. The County Road Use Agreement moves to the Transportation Committee on September 7th and, pending their approval, on to the County Board for their September meeting.

We have been working on civil and electrical engineering designs for the first phase of the Arrowsmith project and expect to have both completed this fall. This will enable us to have the first turbines up and turning by the end of next year.

Projects like the Arrowsmith Wind Farm support rural economic development and job creation. More wind energy in Illinois means less dependence on fossil fuels, less air pollution, and cleaner water supplies. More wind energy helps to diversify Illinois' energy portfolio, decentralize our energy infrastructure, and protect electricity customers from the increased power-generation costs associated with oil price volatility.

We applaud the Governor and the ICC for making Illinois the 20th State to adopt a Renewable Portfolio Standard, encouraging power companies to purchase an increasing amount of their energy from renewable resources like wind. We also applaud utilities like ComEd for recognizing the 'overwhelming science of global warming' and for their commitment to purchase increasing amounts of wind energy to help displace greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel fired power plants.

Illinois' first utility-scale wind farm, Mendota Hills Wind Farm, produces more than 100 million kilowatts of electricity per year, enough energy to power nearly 15,000 homes. (from www.illinoisenergy.org)



New in Normal

Extension
will link
Colleges

Constitution Trail Extension

Construction will begin soon to extend the Constitution Trail from downtown Normal north to Heartland Community College and south to downtown Bloomington. From the Illinois State University campus, it will extend to Fairview Park and north to Raab Road where it will turn west to connect with Heartland Community College. This extension of the trail will link three campus communities: ISU, Lincoln College, and Heartland CC. ISU will construct and maintain their portion of the trail and Heartland CC will provide parking spaces for trail users.

According to Gary Little, Director of Normal Parks and Recreation, construction for the 3.4 mile extension will begin this fall with expected project completion by next fall. The project is funded in part by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. The trail is opened year round for running, walking, biking and roller-blading for all members of the community. During the winter, the trail is not cleared of snow but remains open for cross-country skiing.

Native tree
planting at
Maxwell
Park

Children and Elder's Forest Tree Planting

In November, 100 sponsor teams, each consisting of at least one child and at least one elder, will plant 100 saplings of 20 indigenous species in a pre-dug holes at Normal's Maxwell Park. Each tree will be given a sign that lists the names of the team members and the name of the tree. To sponsor a tree, each team is asked to donate \$150 to cover costs for digging the holes, purchasing the trees, and maintaining the grove.

Confirmation of the planting date will be sent out in early October. Visit the Normal P&R website to find a list of tree species. For more information or to sign up, please contact Jack Kaufmann (309-454-7203 or at inthegreen@yahoo.com) or Joe Grabill (309-454-2883 or at turtlecn@verizon.net).

Daily Electronics Recycling

The Town of Normal has a permanent drop-off site for Electronics Recycling! Starting September 6th, you can recycle electronics at the Normal Public Works Garage at 1301 Warriner Street from 7am to 2pm Monday through Friday. The monthly Saturday collection has been discontinued. This was made possible in part by a grant from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

Individuals can donate unwanted electronic items such as computers, monitors, computer components, televisions, copiers, and other household electronics. Items that are damaged or not working will be accepted.

Items will be processed by Recycling for Illinois of Peoria to be refurbished where possible and given to low-income individuals and those with disabilities to enrich their lives.

E-recycle on
weekdays!



Sustainable Development

A subdivision that values nature preservation

Rain gardens help clean water

Prairie Crossing: Sustainable Development

In Grayslake, a sustainable development subdivision called Prairie Crossing practices nature preservation. This area consists of large to midsize homes that use recycled materials and innovative urban designs to conserve energy and water and landscape with native lakes and prairies.

The homes of Prairie Crossing are unique in their construction, yet just as livable as the average home. Builders of these homes also use recycled wood products and nontoxic glues. Special techniques are used to conserve energy such as extensive sealing and caulking of interior and exterior spaces to prevent air leakage; sealed ductwork in the building's interior to prevent leakage of heated and cooled air; double-glazed, argon-filled, low-e windows to keep the air temperature balanced; and a double air-barrier system to provide an airtight shell and eliminate the need for polyethylene vapor barriers or house wrap. Owners use ventilation fans to control fresh air circulation in their energy smart homes.

The area includes a huge lake, various wetlands, and native prairies. The town makes use of vegetated swales and detention basins to allow storm water to drain slowly rather than being flushed through a pipe. The subdivision has been contoured to manage storm water without the use of manmade discharge systems.

Prairie Crossing founders wanted to encourage volunteer habitat restoration and environmental education programs for residents and visitors, so they set up a nature preserve area, constructed greenways, and placed houses in a manner that would protect native vegetation and wildlife corridors. Only indigenous plants are allowed in landscaping plans to protect the natural ecosystem. An organic farm is located in the town square to promote healthier food options for the community, and food is distributed at weekly farmer's markets. Environmental and ecological issues are featured in fact sheets distributed throughout the community, and classes on conversation and preservation of natural landscapes and resources are taught at Prairie Crossing's public school.

Manage Water Beautifully with a Rain Garden

A new concept is taking off in cities all over the country that are concerned with water pollution prevention—the rain garden. The garden's basic feature is a dip or swale which is a deeper area in the center to collect and hold rainwater, allowing it to filter slowly into the ground while feeding surrounding plants. Compared to conventional patches of lawn, rain gardens soak up about 30% more storm water, which helps prevent flooding, and reduces the pollution that can be delivered to streams through city storm water systems.

Rain gardens are typically placed at least 10 feet from your house, avoiding any existing septic system. It is best to locate your garden on a flat or gently sloping part of your yard, but not necessarily an area that water typically ponds. A typical rain garden to handle the storm water from a residential home is 100-300 square feet, but size depends on depth, soil type and how much roof or lawn will drain into the rain garden.

Planting a rain garden is a great way for you to make a personal contribution to protecting streams and waterways from pollution. If you are interested in getting more information about rain gardens stop by the EAC or check out: www.raingardens.org

Recycle the Ecology Action Center Newsletter by passing it on to someone else after you have read it.



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EAC Fall Events Calendar

For information about EcoFest, Peace Camp, and McLean County Recycles Day, see articles in this newsletter.

For more details about the many great educational kid's programs we have planned for the '05-'06 school year, see **Children's Activities** at our website.

The **EcoClub Program** for ages 10-14 are from 4-5:30 pm. Kids participate in indoor and outdoor hands-on activities about urban wildlife, ecosystems, and natural resources.

The **Days Off School Program** on October 7th for 1st-6th graders will focus on Trees.

"Don't Waste" Saturdays are from 1-3pm in the Oh! Rubbish exhibit at the Children's Discovery Museum.

- September 15:** EcoClub at the CDM*
- September 17:** "Don't Waste" Saturday at CDM
- September 29th:** EcoClub at the CDM
- October 7:** Tree Program at the CDM
- October 13:** EcoClub at the CDM
- October 15:** "Don't Waste" Saturday at the CDM
- October 15:** EcoFest Member Event 1-4pm
(see article for details)
- October 22:** Peace Camp at YWCA
- October 27th:** EcoClub at CDM
- November 10:** EcoClub at the CDM
- November 11:** McLean Co. Recycles Day at CDM
- November 19:** "Don't Waste" Saturday at the CDM
- December 8:** EcoClub at the CDM
- December 17:** "Don't Waste" Saturday at the CDM

*CDM = Children's Discovery Museum