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CHAPTER

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ILICA NEWS

Land Improvement Contractors Of America • Illinois Chapter

2005 ILICA Awards Winners . . .



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy New Year to all members and associates!

2005 turned out to be extremely challenging year. The dry weather was good for earthmoving projects, but not so good for drainage in this area. We are fortunate to still have some tiling projects trickle in, but we are not finding any water in the ground. Many rural families are hauling load after load of water from town, to supplement their shallow dug wells. I pray the Good Lord will provide us with some moisture to break this drought.

I believe our ILICA year was a successful one, however, we had some trouble with board meeting attendance during the year. Again, it is important to be involved in the "nuts and bolts" of any organization. The more you put in, the reward will more than pay you back.

We need everyone's input! We will not get better at serving your needs if we don't get new ideas and suggestions. I received an email from a retired member after our convention. He brought up many good points, and areas to improve upon. I appreciate his time and effort to bring out these important issues.

Our insurance program is working well. We have brought in 10 or 12 new members as a direct result of the insurance pool, but please remember, we have to make an effort to sign up new members and associates. Then we have to come up with ways to retain our members, and keep them involved. Our education and certification programs are huge keys to this task. These committees have done an excellent job, and my thanks go out to them.

Again, we have had a good year, but we have lots of room for improvement. I believe we will continue in the right direction, but that takes a lot of hard work and dedication to the cause. Your efforts and ideas are needed to achieve these results.

See you at the March board meeting!!! Please watch your mailing, as the location of the meeting may be moved. Please work safely and have a great 2006!

Joe

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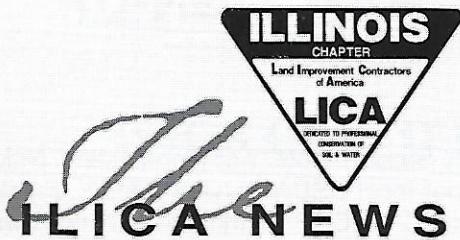
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IN THIS ISSUE



ILICA NEWS

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JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2006

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Welcome New Members!

2006 CONSERVATION SECURITY PROGRAM SIGN-UP ANNOUNCED

The Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns announced the sign-up time frame for the 2006 Conservation Security Program (CSP) for 60 Watersheds across the nation. Sign-up begins February 13, 2006 and runs through March 31, 2006. In Illinois, this sign-up opportunity is open to landowners in the Upper Sangamon Watersheds. The Lower Cache Watershed has been removed from the eligibility for 2006 due to budget constraints.

The Conservation Security Program, administered by USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) focuses on high priority watersheds. Priority watersheds were selected nationally based on: wide variety of land uses; high-priority resource issues; history of good land stewardship; and availability of necessary technical data such as digital soils information.

Interested producers in Illinois are required to complete the CSP Self-Assessment Workbook and Illinois Supplements to determine whether they are likely to be eligible for the program prior to setting up an appointment with NRCS. The CSP Self-Assessment Workbook and Illinois Supplements can be accessed on the internet at: <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp/>.

According to NRCS' State Conservationist Bill Gradle, "Producers who have decided to apply for CSP need to take a number of steps to get through the application process. All steps are needed in order to ensure CSP fund recipients are indeed the best conservation farmers out there."

The steps include:

Pick up the "Step 1: Introductory CSP Information" booklet at your local NRCS field office. The booklet explains the CSP process and basic eligibility for cropland and pastureland. It helps producers decide if they may be eligible before going through the whole process.

For Step 2, access the "CSP Self-Assessment

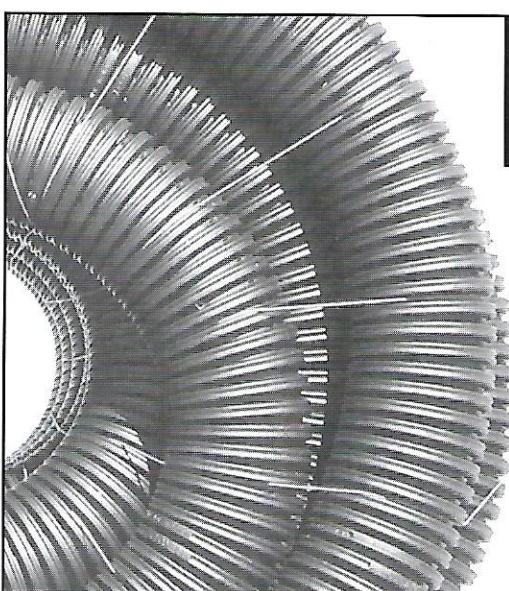
Workbook and Illinois Supplements" workbook online, pick up a hard copy at your local USDA Service Center, or get one when you attend a CSP workshop. Using the workbook will determine whether basic eligibility requirements are met and document conservation accomplishments to date.

Submit the completed workbook to the USDA Service Center and proceed to Step 3 which is making an appointment with NRCS staff. The producer will then receive the booklet, "Step 4: Preparing for the Field Office Interview", that explains the Tiers and payment levels, outlines additional resource concerns, lists the enhancement activities, and reviews the verification process that will occur after funding.

Meet with NRCS personnel to go over the self-assessment workbook. During the interview, the NRCS staff will confirm the information in the self-assessment with the producer. NRCS will also help identify future work that can be done to conserve additional resources as well as help finalize the CSP application.

"The local NRCS office will determine the enrollment category applicants fit into. Later, the categories to be funded will be determined at the National level and then we will notify those who will be funded," adds Gradle.

For more information on documents required and to locate your local NRCS office, go to <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>. Information about technical assistance and other conservation programs can be found under your local USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service office listed in the phone book under U.S. Department of Agriculture or go to <http://www.il.nrcs.usda.gov>.



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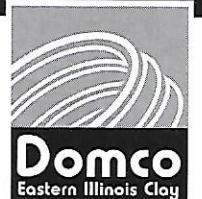


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CONTRACTOR _____

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

1. How long have you known the contractor?

Less than 5 years _____
5 or more years _____

2. Approximately how many times has the contractor performed work for you in the last 10 years?

Less than 5 _____
5 or more _____

3. Were in a position to observe the installation of or the finished product of work performed by the contractor?

Yes _____
No _____

4. Please rate the contractor in each of the following categories (1 being most satisfied, 5 being least satisfied).

Quality of work _____
Professionalism _____
Ethics _____
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Be Alert Of Moving Equipment

When construction equipment is rumbling around a project, you've got to watch your step. If both construction workers and equipment operators keep their eyes open, no one's going to get hurt. Following are ways to help you maintain a healthy respect for cranes, dozers, excavators and trucks:

- Never take for granted that equipment operators see you.
- Never depend upon hearing a horn or other warning signals; it might sometimes be lost in the general noise around a project.
- Equipment shouldn't be backed without someone to check the blind spots and give signals; nevertheless, keep in the clear whenever equipment is traveling backwards, as that's when most equipment accidents happen.
- Swinging counterweights often create a dangerous pinch-point. Don't ever get into a spot where you could get squeezed in between.
- Never hitch a ride on the running board it's fatally easy to fall under moving equipment.
- No riding on top of loaded trucks; the load might shift, and you might not have enough over-head clearance in a tight spot.
- If you're riding in a transport vehicle to a job, or between jobs, keep your arms, legs, and all parts of your body inside the unit.
- Never walk alongside moving equipment. Keep in the clear in case the unit suddenly turns your way, or slides, or the load shifts.
- Stay out from under loads on cranes or hoists. Use established walkways and beware of shortcuts.
- If the boom of a unit ever hits a power line, keep away from the frame of the unit and the load cables.
- Never lubricate, clean or work on a machine that's in operation. Stop the machine. If you have to remove a guard, replace it as soon as the work's done.

Construction equipment is husky, heavy, and extremely unhealthy to tangle with. Always assume that the operator doesn't see you; doesn't even know you're around. Always figure that it's up to you to keep in the clear.

Safety Recommendations: _____

Job Specific Topics: _____

M.S.D.S Reviewed: _____

Attended By: _____



HAPPY 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. and Mrs. Ron Masching were married 40 years on January 8th. Their children are hosting a party on Sunday, March 12th at Pour Richards, 210 Tremont Street, Odell, IL from 1-4 pm. Everyone is invited to drop in for a visit. No presents just your presence.

In Memoriam

Alvin "Al" Gruber of Arthur Illinois passed away Tuesday, January 3, 2006. Funeral services were held at 1 pm Friday January 6th at the Vine Street Christian Church in Arthur, the Reverend Michael Johnson officiated.

Al was born November 19, 1939 in Arthur, IL. He was the son of Joseph S. and Sarah D. Gruber. He married June Stevens on March 22, 1985 in Jacksonville, Florida. Al was a member and the treasurer of the Arthur Lions Club, he was also a member of the Kaskaskia Country Club and the Eagles of Mattoon, IL.

Al worked with trenchers since 1974 in Arthur for Eli Herschberger and currently was working for Northland Trenching for Larry Neid.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Gruber Family.



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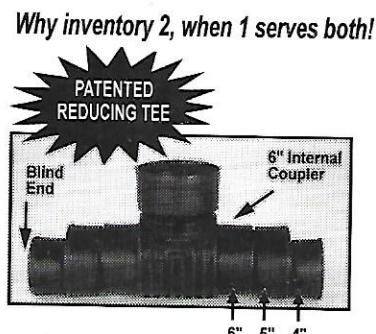
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

This past year proved to be extremely busy for Illinois ILICA. I'd like to thank all of those Board of Directors and Members for all of their help in making 2005 such a success. With all of the new ideas and relationships made, we can expect 2006 to be even better.

Some changes have been made to the ILICA website, www.ilica.net; you can now find the latest registration information for whichever event we have upcoming. Again, if anyone has ideas or suggestions regarding the new website please send those via email to ilicaslca@sbcglobal.net. We would like to see the website be our information hub for the office. If you'd like to receive your meeting notices or all other office correspondence via email please let the office know. With the price of postage increasing, we'd like to save and use email resources available.

On the Ladies Page there is a tentative itinerary for a summer Ladies Outing, please fill out the information if this

is something that the ladies would be interested in doing. You may either send your form into the office or let the office know by email as well as Jackie Streitmatter at jjstreich@starkcounty.com.

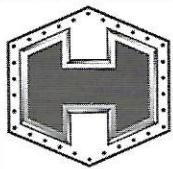
Also, a 2006 Annual Directory Information Form will be mailed in February. Please take the time to fill out the form as you would like to have your name or business information listed in the 2006 Directory. If you should have any questions regarding the Directory, please contact the ILICA office. One last reminder for those contractors who have not sent in your referrals for the certification program, you can find a copy of the referral form on page 5.

Thanks
Melanie Schutt

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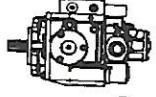
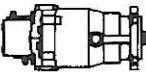
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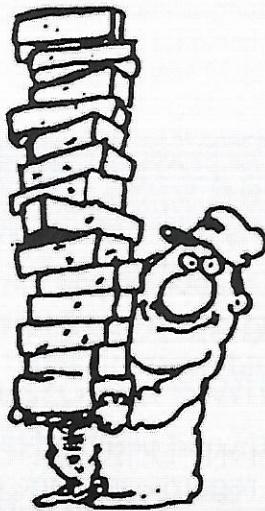
 

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ABBING ITH HE GALS...



Does it seem to you that since we have entered the years in the 1900's that they seem to go faster then in the 1900's? Maybe Mother Nature is playing tricks on us. It seems that we were always being told that the older we get the slower the time goes. For this old lady it has been the opposite. Perhaps it is an illusion in the eyes of the beholder. When Baby New Year appears as an adult, then we will have to change our Rose colored glasses and get back to Planet Earth.

Reading is one of the pleasures of my life – not being one who likes to travel, it transports one to many places and you feel as if you had been there. Stories are my favorite choice of book – that is probably why I also like crossword and cryptogram puzzles, because there is a mystery there. In reading parts of the bible that were new to me, I found it interesting and pleasant, somewhat inspiring as many times the bible is described as dry and dull. All this year it seems as if the U.S. was surrounded by real mysteries, what with this person and that person disappearing. Certainly has kept the law busy trying to find them.

What do you think of all the hoopla going on about Christmas? Wouldn't our founding fathers be surprised if they could see the odd attitude some of our citizens have developed? We have all co-existed with each other no matter what our belief for all these many years, yet it seems some will seek discussion for any cause. Now is one of those times when Mr. and Mrs. citizen should speak up and let the people know we need to keep out traditions and meaningful occasions. There is no doubt for this person the majority would be in favor of leaving it at the status quo – that is why we need to voice our opinions more often. If we are the silent majority, there is no purpose.

A test of ingenuity – a person filled a bathtub with water then gave a bucket, a cup and a tablespoon to his friend to the empty tub. Finally, friend gave up and asked was it being smart to have the bucket there to empty the tub, whereupon the person replied, "No, the smart one would have pulled the plug."

Since visiting with you last issue my health is not much improved. The surgeon re-replaced the right knee but there were some wounds from that that were not healing. So, he asked that I consult their (Loyola Hospital) plastic surgery department, which we did recently. That Dr.'s opinion was that it would heal

itself if given time and did not recommend any surgery. Hallelujah! Now, I am in the hospital in Gibson City getting antibiotic treatment (again) and my wounds are connected to a "wound vac." This takes away the bad blood and encourages good, new blood for the wounds. It is marvelous how it works and is helping greatly. Hoping to go home soon and be patient while my leg heals. Whether or not I can be with you at convention will depend on how the healing progresses. Do, if you have an extra prayer in your pocket, all are appreciated.

There are several of us who will face Christmas with no spouse this year and it is very difficult. We wish all of you God's blessing now and in the coming year. Also, if you can spare another prayer for our grandson, Eric, in Iraq it would be great!

The word for this issue is "Happy New Year" – pass it on.

..... Ramblin' Rose

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ANOTHER RECORD YEAR FOR JULIE, INC.

Over the past 10 years, the number of underground utility locate requests from professional excavators and homeowners to JULIE, Inc. has increased over 70 percent. Since its inception in 1974, JULIE, Inc. has logged over 16.6 million calls and its annual call volume makes it one of the largest industry one-call systems in the United States.

JULIE, Inc. announced today that the not-for-profit organization received a record 1.22 million underground utility locate requests from excavators in 2005. The Joliet-based, notification system reached another milestone by distributing over 7.94 million requests to its 1,700 utility members during the same period. Compared to the previous year, these totals represent approximate increases of two and three percent, respectively.

"While this increase in call volume is significant, careless digging continues to pose a threat to people and

to underground facilities," said Mark Frost, executive director of JULIE, Inc. "We stress the importance of contacting the one-call system through proactive public safety and education campaigns. A call to JULIE, Inc. helps to ensure that underground facilities are properly located and marked, and enhances the safety of excavators in Illinois."

The following is a list of the top 20 counties in Illinois for locate requests in 2005: Cook; Will; DuPage; Lake; Kane; McHenry; St. Clair; Winnebago; Madison; Kendall; Sangamon; Champaign; McLean; Peoria; Tazewell; DeKalb; Kankakee; Rock Island; LaSalle; and Macon.

Call center operators at JULIE, Inc. are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For more information about the Illinois One-Call System, along with a complete list of members by county and safety guidelines, please visit www.illinois1call.com.



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USDA ANNOUNCES COMMODITY CREDIT CORPORATION LENDING RATES FOR JANUARY 2006

Washington - The interest rate for 1995 and prior crop year commodity loans disbursed by USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) during January 2006 is 4.375 percent, unchanged from December 2005. For 1996 and subsequent crop year commodity and marketing assistance loans, the interest rate for loans disbursed during January 2006 is 5.375 percent, unchanged from December 2005.

The interest rate for farm storage facility loans approved in January 2006 is 4.375 percent, down from 4.500 percent in December 2005. The interest rate for sugar storage facility loans for January 2006 is 4.625 percent, down from 4.750 percent in December 2005.

The maximum discount rate applicable for January 2006 for the Tobacco Transition Payment Program is 9.0 percent. This is based on the prime rate 7.25 percent plus 2 percent, rounded to the nearest whole number.

Past monthly releases announcing interest rates charged by CCC on commodity and marketing assistance loans disbursed for that particular month reflected the interest rate the U.S. Treasury charged CCC for that

month. This was the interest rate specified by CCC since Jan. 1, 1982, but the process of establishing the interest rate was changed by a provision of the Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996 (the Act), enacted on April 4, 1996.

Section 163 of the Act requires that monthly interest rates applicable to commodity and marketing assistance loans are to be 100 basis points — or 1 percent — greater than the rate determined under the applicable interest rate formula in effect on Oct. 1, 1995. This formula resulted in a rate equivalent to the amount the U.S. Treasury charged CCC for borrowing for the month.

The provisions of Section 163 of the Act are not retroactive. Accordingly, this and subsequent monthly interest rate announcements will carry two sets of rates: one for 1995 and prior crop year commodity loans and one for 1996 and subsequent crop year commodity and marketing assistance loans.

Further program information is available from USDA Farm Service Agency's Financial Management Division at (703) 305-1386.



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ILLINOIS UNDERGROUND UTILITY DAMAGE PREVENTION ACT UPDATE

Governor Rod Blagojevich signed amendatory language to the Illinois Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act (JULIE Law) this past August which directly impacted excavators and operators of underground utility facilities in Illinois. The changes took place upon the Governor's signature. The changes were the result of many months of discussions with various stakeholders in the excavation community including The Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association (ILICA). According to JULIE, Inc. executive director, Mark Frost, "We truly appreciate the representation and input we received from Melanie Schutt, ILICA. As a result of her participation, ILICA members' interests were represented in the process of drafting these important changes in the JULIE law." The following list highlights those changes:

Roadway Surface Milling

Roadway surface milling was added to the definition of activities which are NOT included in the definition of excavation. Roadway surface milling is defined as the removal of uniform pavement sections by rotomilling, grinding, or other means not including the base or subbase. Roadway surface milling, when not exceeding the top layer of pavement, typically does not interfere with underground utility facilities and this change would allow excavators to complete projects in a timely fashion without calling JULIE, Inc. Additionally, member utilities will not have to use locate staff and other resources to mark facilities that are not impacted by this process. Excavators should remember that this does not prevent them from obtaining a dig request for roadway milling activities. In keeping with JULIE's emphasis on excavator safety, excavators who are undertaking roadway milling projects and want to know if underground utilities are present in the area of their proposed excavation are encouraged to contact JULIE and obtain a normal excavation request.

Open Cut Utility Locates

A definition of open cut utility locate was added to the statute. An open cut utility locate is used by utility members who are unable to determine the location of their facilities using conventional (EMF) methods. In these situations, utility members carefully excavate and uncover their facilities in order to reduce potential damage to facilities and potential harm to excavators. Formerly, member utilities who used the open cut method, which includes vacuum excavation, were required to obtain a normal locate request in order to uncover their facilities. As a result of the change in the law, open cut utility locates are treated as emergency locate requests rather than a normal locate request. This change also enhances the ability of excavators to complete projects in a timely fashion.

Emergency Excavation

Language has been implemented in the section regarding emergency excavation to clarify the process and language in the penalty section has been regarding emergency excavations has been added. The wait time for an emergency excavation is now 2 hours, or the dig start time on the ticket. This language facilitates a more efficient process. Utilities now must provide notice to the excavator in emergency situations by either marking their facilities or contacting the excavator personally by phone, answering machine, answering service, or fax to coordinate timely locating of their facilities or provide an all clear notice. Penalties now exist for facility operators who fail to provide notice in emergency situations.

History of Non-Compliance

When a penalty is warranted, the law states that the ICC uses 7 criteria to determine the magnitude of the penalty. One of these criteria is history of non-compliance. Language was added which sets the period considered to be the prior 18 months from the date of the incident. Formerly, a specific length of time was not specified and penalized operators who had made changes and/or improvements in their damage prevention awareness and safety practices.



by Melanie Schutt

The legislative session is well underway and you will be able to find updates and the latest information here in the ILICA News. Our National LICA has organized a Washington D.C visit for March 26-29, 2006 for each LICA chapter to meet with our respective state congressman on several issues pertaining to the entire LICA organization. These issues will not be decided on until the National Winter Convention in late February. Below I have listed for you an outline of our Illinois Congressional information. If you would like more information or information regarding your State Legislators you may find them at www.ilga.gov.

Congressional Information

U.S. House of Representatives

109th Congress
 Illinois State Representatives
 Illinois State Senators
 (94th General Assembly)

Illinois U.S. Senators

Senator Dick Durbin
 Senator Barack O'Bama

Illinois Governor

Governor Rod Blagojevich

Congressional Districts

- 1 Rep. Bobby Rush
- 2 Rep. Jesse L. Jackson Jr.
- 3 Rep. William O. Lipinski
- 4 Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez
- 5 Rep. Rahm Emanuel
- 6 Rep. Henry J. Hyde
- 7 Rep. Danny K. Davis
- 8 Rep. Melissa L. Bean
- 9 Rep. Janice D. Schakowsky
- 10 Rep. Mark S. Kirk
- 11 Rep. Jerry Weller
- 12 Rep. Jerry F. Costello
- 13 Rep. Judy Biggert
- 14 Rep. J. Dennis Hastert
- 15 Rep. Timothy V. Johnson
- 16 Rep. Donald A. Manzullo
- 17 Rep. Lane Evans
- 18 Rep. Ray LaHood
- 19 Rep. John Shimkus

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ILLINOIS UNDERGROUND UTILITY DAMAGE PREVENTION ACT UPDATE

Governor Rod Blagojevich signed amendatory language to the Illinois Underground Utility Damage Prevention Act (JULIE Law) this past August which directly impacted excavators and operators of underground utility facilities in Illinois. The changes took place upon the Governor's signature. The changes were the result of many months of discussions with various stakeholders in the excavation community including The Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association (ILICA). According to JULIE, Inc. executive director, Mark Frost, "We truly appreciate the representation and input we received from Melanie Schutt, ILICA. As a result of her participation, ILICA members' interests were represented in the process of drafting these important changes in the JULIE law." The following list highlights those changes:

Roadway Surface Milling

Roadway surface milling was added to the definition of activities which are NOT included in the definition of excavation. Roadway surface milling is defined as the removal of uniform pavement sections by rotomilling, grinding, or other means not including the base or subbase. Roadway surface milling, when not exceeding the top layer of pavement, typically does not interfere with underground utility facilities and this change would allow excavators to complete projects in a timely fashion without calling JULIE, Inc. Additionally, member utilities will not have to use locate staff and other resources to mark facilities that are not impacted by this process. Excavators should remember that this does not prevent them from obtaining a dig request for roadway milling activities. In keeping with JULIE's emphasis on excavator safety, excavators who are undertaking roadway milling projects and want to know if underground utilities are present in the area of their proposed excavation are encouraged to contact JULIE and obtain a normal excavation request.

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2006 ILICA Convention and

The 49th Annual Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association was held in Normal, Illinois at the Holiday Inn, now known as the Staywood Inn. We had a few bumps in the road but after all was said and done, the convention turned out to be a success! We kicked off the convention with a tour on Thursday morning at the Caterpillar Parts Distribution Plant in Morton, Illinois. Fun was had by all and what a beautiful day to get out and get some fresh air! Unfortunately this was our last day for great weather, the ladies didn't have it so good, but I've heard that's how it always happens that way. The ladies did enjoy a great tour at the David Davis Mansion and the McClean County Museum of History as well as a great lunch at the Central Station Café. All in all, good fun was had. The ladies also enjoyed a beading workshop hosted by Bonnie Minett of Beads by Bonnie of Springfield, Illinois and the great tastes of the Great Harvest Bread Company located in Bloomington. On Friday evening we had a great turnout and great support once again from our members and our attending associates at the live auction. We'd like to thank Mr. Knolenberg for his help and doing a great job as the evenings auctioneer.

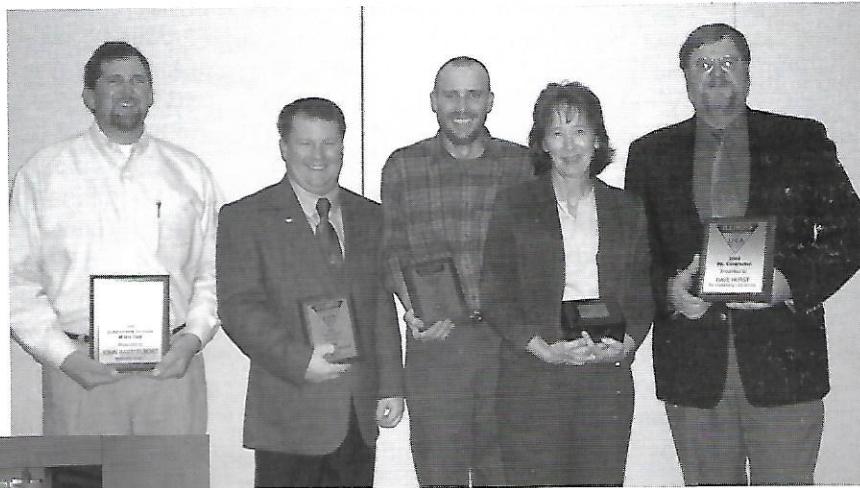
After days of learning and fellowship, we ended our 49th year with an awards banquet where our Emcee Bill Dean, was exceptionally entertaining as always! Thanks for all of your help organizing the evening and the awards committee for their great selections of recipients. We started the evening with 2005's Merit Awards going to Bill Doubet and Joe Streitmatter, Co-Chairmen of the 2005 Conservation Show Committee, a great deal of work was put into that project and a big thank you is well deserved. Next...2005 Mrs. Contractor, Janet Doubet. Janet has been a great addition to the ladies and to ILICA, we'd like

to thank her for all of her help and participation. This year's Director of the Year, went to a well deserving director, John Bartelbort of Area 7. John has only been on the Board for one full year now, but only missed one Board meeting and has taken on the responsibility with great enthusiasm. The biggest award for 2005 went to, Dave Hurst 2005 Mr. Contractor, Dave is a Director whose participation in ILICA is hard to match. He's been a great help to all committees he serves on and a great help to the ILICA office. We'd like to thank him for all of his efforts in making ILICA a huge success.

Our biggest thank you this year goes to all of our Association members for their continued support of ILICA. We had several exhibitors this year and great support in sponsorship. 2005 ILICA Convention Sponsors were: Advanced Drainage Systems, Precision Intakes, Great Lakes Inter Drain, Agri Drain, Altorfer CAT, Prins Insurance and Continental Western Group and Springfield Plastics Inc. Again, thank you for all of your help! We hope to see you all again in 2007 to celebrate our 50th Year at the Stoney Creek Inn, Moline, Illinois January 18, 19 and 20th.

The 2006 Annual Workshop was held at the same location, the Staywood Inn, January 31 and February 1st. We'd like to thank all of our supporters, especially Richard Cooke, of the University of Illinois. Mr. Cooke is a great educational advisor and much appreciated by everyone at ILICA. We had a good turnout and of course the weather was unbelievable, but we'd like to thank those contractors for coming inspite of the 50 degree weather. A great deal was learned by all!

Workshop a Huge Success!



2005 ILICA award recipients



ILICA fellowship at its best!.



Ladies Beading Workshop



Kristin Kutemeier and Kate Day enjoying the ladies luncheon at Central Station Cafe

Convention... (>p22)

RAISING THE BAR...

Technical Service Providers Increase Options for Illinois Producers

Jill Rees, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist

The delivery of quality conservation planning assistance to 21st century farmers requires the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to apply a wide range of up-to-the-minute, yet proven, technology and research. With the NRCS Technical Service Provider initiative, the Illinois NRCS has raised the bar on technological advances available as cost-shared practices.

When it comes to the latest technology, dairy producer Doug Scheider of Freeport, IL operates ahead of the herd. At his 600-head milking operation, Scheidairy Farms, Scheider runs a methane digester to process cow manure into horse power. Engineering for the project was cost-shared through NRCS's Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and designed by a private engineer registered as a Technical Service Provider, or TSP.

Scheider enrolled into EQIP in 2002, but rather than install traditional waste storage tanks, he had his eye on methane digester technology that, while still somewhat uncommon in Illinois, has emerged elsewhere in the country as a premiere way to add efficiency and value to operations like Scheidairy.

"In this case, the Technical Service Provider initiative allowed Scheidairy to receive EQIP cost-share on a practice that is not common in Illinois," said NRCS District Conservationist Jim Ritterbusch. "Without the TSP program, we may not have been able to access the engineering expertise when and where it was needed," Ritterbusch said.

Through the TSP program, Scheider did his own research into the technology and selected private engineer Steve Dvorak of GHD, Inc. in Wisconsin to design the practice. As a registered TSP, Dvorak maintains proper licenses for defined engineering practices to provide certain services for NRCS programs. While Ritterbusch administered the EQIP cost-share element of the contract, Scheider did his own legwork to request bids and select a vendor who could design the structure according to NRCS technical standards. In addition, Scheider worked directly through the vendor to manage installation and arrange maintenance and follow-up.

While EQIP cost-share for the project contributed to the waste storage structure, manure transfer system, roof water management system, and engineering costs for the project, Scheider's own capital investment to the project was significant.

"The technology is expensive," said Scheider, "but the venture offers opportunities to save in costs, add sellable items, and pay for itself in a matter of years." Thanks to the digester, Scheider now sells electricity to the local power grid. As anaerobic bacteria break down manure, enough methane is produced to run a 200-horse power electric motor, which in turn runs a generator capable of producing power for 140 homes. The TSP also

worked with Scheider to incorporate a variety of additional benefits with the system, including use of thermal energy from the generator to heat the entire milkhouse through an in-floor system.

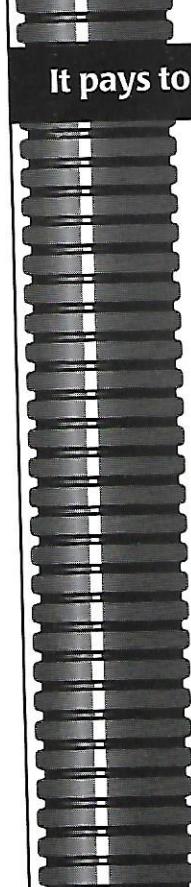
Another added benefit comes from the methane digester's byproduct, the left over solid matter. The waste solids remain in an anaerobic state at 100° for more than 21 days, which is long enough to remove disease-causing agents and render the soft plant materials safe to use as bedding for the herd. The recycled bedding saves Scheider thousands of dollars in bedding costs each week. He sells what he cannot use to nearby dairies, and sees an additional financial gain through increased milk production.

"The recycled bedding is softer than sawdust. I have a lot of it available to keep the herd more comfortable, which in turn makes them more productive," said Scheider.

Scheider credits the flexibility allowed him through the TSP program with helping to keep his operation viable into the future.

"We're not necessarily the cutting edge of technology," he said, but thanks to EQIP and the TSP option, "we're on the blade!"

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_____ hereby makes application for Affiliate Membership in the ILLINOIS LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, INC., (ILICA) and enclose Eighty Five Dollars (\$85) as my annual membership dues for the year _____. One dollar (\$1.00) of this amount is for a subscription to the "Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association Newsletter" for one year.

Affiliate members shall consist of and be limited to individuals employed by the ILICA, persons employed by an active member in the business that makes the active member eligible for membership, individuals engaged in professional soil, water and natural resource conservation work and persons, firms, corporations, associations and organizations engaged in the business of publishing magazines and newspapers, part or all of which are devoted to disseminating information on soil, water and natural resource conservation and any person, firm, corporation, association or organization that has demonstrated a special interest in soil, water and natural resource conservation.

Send completed application with dues (make check payable to ILICA) to any ILICA member or to the corporate address above.

Individual Name: _____

Firm Name: _____

Address: _____

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Associate members shall consist of and be limited to persons, firms, corporation, associations or organizations that manufacture or sell equipment or materials used by land improvement contractors.

Send completed application with dues (make check payable to ILICA) to any ILICA member or to the corporate address above.

Individual Name: _____

Firm Name: _____

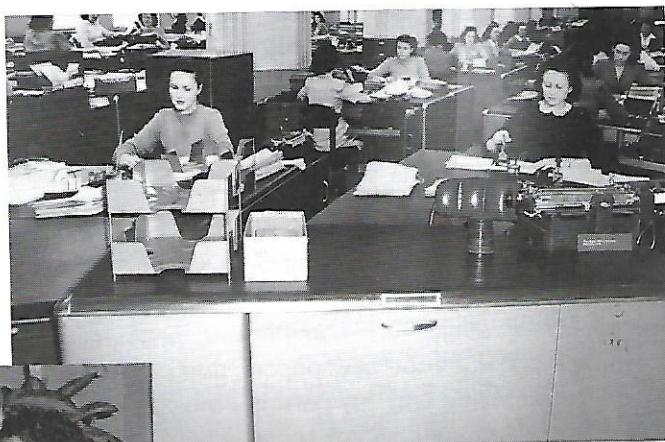
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onvention... (<p17)

Cathy Masching, Winona Hoogstraat and Diane Whittaker taking it easy after a long convention



Old office setup seen on the McLean Co. Museum of History tour.



President Joe Streitmatter welcoming everyone to the awards banquet



Stan Seevers and Scott Day trying for a shot at the ladies picture board



Luncheon

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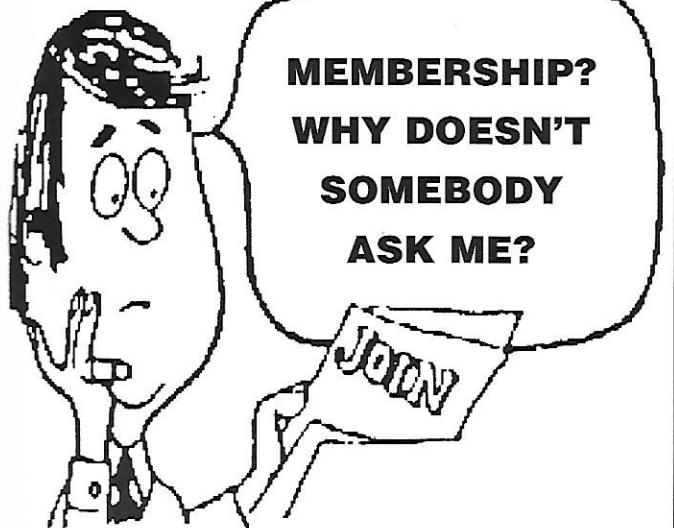
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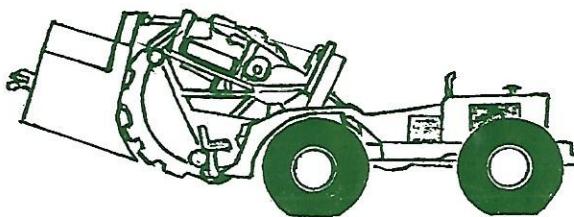
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