

# ILICA



# NEWS

Land Improvement Contractors Of America • Illinois Chapter

November/December 2004

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## 48<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention and Educational Workshop

January 12-15, 2005

The Chancellor Hotel • Champaign, Illinois

*(Program details inside)*

### DUES NOTICES MAILED

Dues notices were mailed to contractor members December 2nd. Dues will be \$400 for the 2005 year for existing active members and those of you soliciting new members, the membership voted to decrease the dues amount for new members for the 1st two years. New dues are \$285 for the 1st two years then \$400 each year thereafter, with no \$25 initiation fee. Please save the association additional postage by promptly paying your dues so second notices will not be necessary. Your help and cooperation is greatly appreciated. Associate, affiliate and retired dues have been mailed already as well. All dues are due by December 31, 2004.

### See Inside For Further Information

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by Dwight Dunbar

### News Worthy:

One of the major news items in Springfield is the U.S. average price of gasoline reaching the \$2.00 mark.

Another meth lab burned in Springfield - \$52,000 damage to the house and apparently a house in a regular neighborhood.

### Veto Session just around the corner:

Not much to report from the Capitol. Veto Session is less than a month away - Set to start 8th of November. I don't think they have a real full plate, and I don't expect them to hang around too long, and mess around with a lot of new stuff. We'll know a lot better as we get closer to the 8th start date. They left unfinished the Capital investment portion of the state budget so that business will have to be brought to conclusion. With the continuing budget problems it may already be concluded.

### Lincoln Library Dedicated October 14, 2004:

Mr. Lincoln finally gets his library. At 1:30 pm October 14, 2004 the Lincoln Presidential Library was dedicated in a public ceremony at the facility. The museum portion of the package is set to open Spring 2005.

*I hope everyone is having a good fall season, be safe and Happy Holidays.*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hi everyone, here it is almost Christmas time, where does the time go. The weather has been pretty good on our end of the state for getting things done this fall but we are still way behind.

It is Dues time again, we made some changes to the dues structure at the last board meeting and they are listed in this issue. Convention time is coming soon make your plans now to attend the convention/workshop in January see the registration form in this newsletter. We are trying a different format this year so make sure you look at the dates and what days of the week they are on. I hope to see you all there, come enjoy the fellowship and the learning, and support your associates.

The National Convention will be here before you know it too, registration form is also in this issue. In March of 2005 the winter national will be in Las Vegas Nevada, held in conjunction with Con Expo make your plans to attend now and take advantage of the early registration fees..

I hope everyone has had a profitable year and Hazel and I would like to wish everyone the Happiest of Holidays.

Stuart L Anderson  
President



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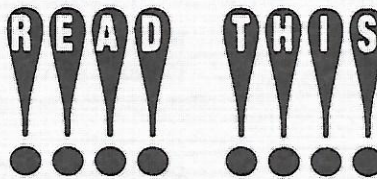
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**ILICA Board Meeting**

will be held at

**The Chancellor Hotel**

**Champaign, Illinois**

**JANUARY 13, 2005**

### Upcoming Meetings



#### ILICA BOARD MEETINGS

January 13, 2005  
Chancellor Hotel, Champaign, IL

March 5, 2005  
TBA

May 7, 2005  
TBA

**2005 Annual Convention**  
January 12-15, 2005  
Chancellor Hotel, Champaign, IL

**2005 National Convention**  
**Con Expo/Con Agg**  
March 12-19, 2005  
Las Vegas, NV



# ILLINOIS LICA SPENDS THE DAY LEARNING ABOUT WATER DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT



Scott Day of Day Drainage and Melanie Harney, Executive Director

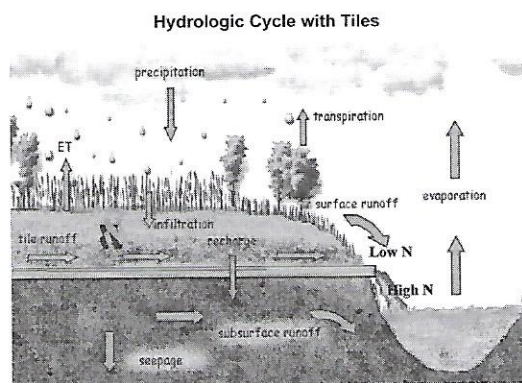
Back in September I had the liberty of attending the Illinois Drainage Water Management Tour in Champaign, Ford & Iroquois Counties, organized by the NRCS office to help educate on the importance and benefits of water drainage management here in Illinois. The tour stopped at five different sites, with one them being our very own ILICA member.

## WHAT IS WATER DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT?

### Drainage in Illinois

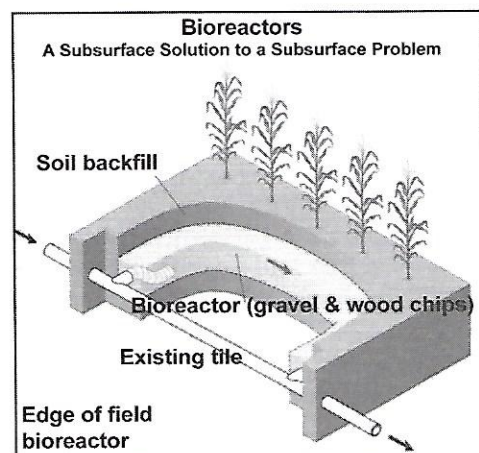
Due to naturally high water tables and flat topography, many soils in Illinois need drainage for economical crop production. Within the state, there are approximately 10 million acres of subsurface drained farmland. Drainage is practiced to ensure trafficable conditions for seedbed preparation, planting, harvesting and other field operations. It is also practiced to reduce crop stress from excess water within the root zone following periods of high rainfall.

Although drainage is essential for economic crop production, tile drainage systems tend to intercept nutrient (nitrate) rich soil-water and shunt it to surface water. Data from numerous studies have shown that a significant amount of the total nitrate load in Illinois is delivered to surface water through tile drainage systems.



### Water Level Control Devices

Drainage systems are typically installed in Illinois without any control mechanisms, allowing the soil to drain whenever the water table is above the elevation of the tile outlet. By installing water level control devices in tile main lines, the elevation of the water table in the field can be controlled or managed. Managed drainage allows for drainage outlets to be set at levels between the ground surface and the elevation of the drain outlet. In this way, the timing and the amount of drain water leaving a farm field can be managed. For example, the water table can be allowed to rise during the fallow season, which results in significant water quality benefits through reduced transport of nitrates.



### Benefits of Drainage Management

Studies of drainage management on the flat, extensively tiled areas of Illinois suggest that a 35% reduction in nitrate loading can be achieved by simply raising the water table during fallow periods.

Drainage management also allows for potential production benefits. Water level control devices permit growers to lower water levels while planting and raise water levels during drier periods of the growing season to benefit crops.





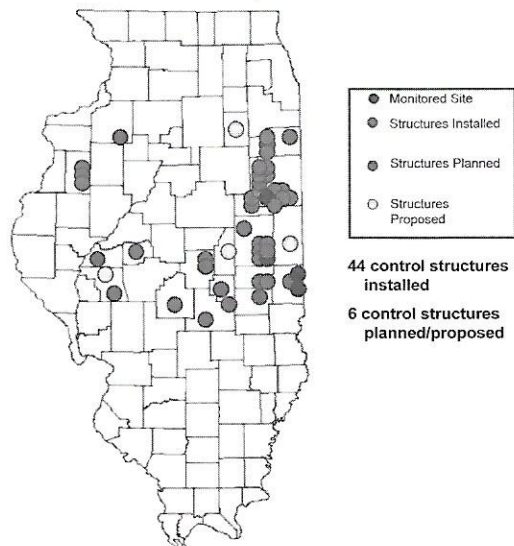
### Illinois Drainage Management Pilot

In 1998, the USDA-NRCS initiated the Illinois Drainage Management Pilot as a partnership project with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDA), and the University of Illinois. The pilot project has introduced drainage management to producers with financial assistance through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Soil and Water Conservation Assistance (SWCA) program.

To date, 44 water level controls structures have been installed through the pilot program across central Illinois, where tile drainage is extensive. The sites serve as local demonstration sites for SWCDs to educate local producers and contractors on drainage management.

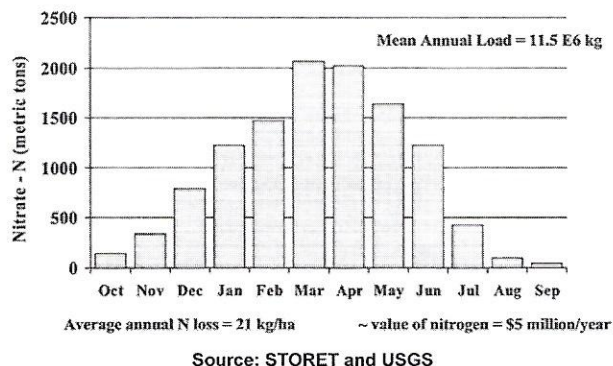
The chart above shows the average monthly nitrate load for the Iroquois River in eastern Illinois measured at Chebanse. This distribution is typical of central Illinois rivers and streams. The average annual Nitrate loss was measured to be about 19 lbs-Nitrate per acre. This is for all land in the watershed (approximately 2,100 square miles). The cost of this nitrogen as fertilizer would be about \$5,000,000 per year. About 50 percent of the nitrate load was delivered through the tile system to surface water during the fallow season (November 1 to April 1) when there is no production need for drainage to occur. Thus, total nitrate load could be appreciably reduced by fallow season tile flow management. Limiting the volume of water flowing through the tile drainage systems during times of the year when drainage is not a need can significantly reduce the amount of nitrogen lost from farmed fields.

Illinois Drainage Management  
Pilot Status Report  
-May 2004-



### Average Monthly Nitrate Load

-Iroquois River-  
Gauge Station Near Chebanse, IL (1984-1998)



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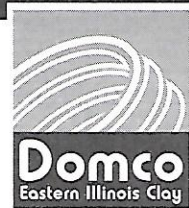
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## 2005 ILICA CONVENTION PROGRAM TENTATIVE

### WEDNESDAY January 12

8:00 – 12:00	Registration Open	8:00 – 9:30	Registration Open
9:15	Board Buses for Tour	8:00 – 4:00	Exhibits Open
9:30 – 11:30	Ag Engineering Tour	9:00 – 10:00	On-site Waste
Noon – 1:00	Lunch	10:00 – 10:30	Skin Cancer
1:00 – 4:30	Registration Open	10:30 – 10:45	Break
1:15 – 2:00	NRCS/FSA Reports	10:45 – Noon	Business Meeting
2:00 – 2:45	Insurance – Continental Western	Noon – 1:30	Lunch in Exhibitors' Area
3:00 – 4:30	Delegate/Region 4/State Report Meetings	1:30 – 2:30	OSHA Competent Person Training
5:15	Board Buses for Dinner and Tour	2:30 – 2:45	Break
5:30 – 8:30	Dinner and tour at Octave Chanute Aerospace (WWII) Museum	2:45 – 4:00	OSHA Training
		5:30 – 6:30	Social Hour
		6:30	Awards Banquet

### Thursday January 13

6:00 – 8:00	Excel set up
8:00 – 11:00	Exhibitor set up
8:00 – 12:00	Registration Open
7:30 – 8:00	Devotions
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast
9:00 – Noon	Break Out Sessions
	<b>Employers:</b>
	Labor Law Changes
	Personnel Recordkeeping
	Workman's Compensation
	Employee Compensation & Benefits
	<b>Employees:</b>
	Basic Surveying
Noon – 1:30	Lunch in Exhibitors' Area
Noon – 4:30	Exhibits Open
1:30 – 2:30	IDOT Trucking Regulations
2:30 – 2:45	Break
2:45 – 3:30	Equipment Maintenance/ Technology
3:30 – 4:30	JULIE
4:30 – 5:30	Board of Directors Meeting
5:30 – 6:30	Social Hour
6:30	Dinner/Auction

### Friday January 14

7:30 – 8:00	Devotional Service
8:00 – 9:00	Breakfast in Exhibitors' Area

### Saturday January 15

9:00 – Noon	Certification Review and Test
9:00 – 11:30	Tour of Memorial Stadium and Assembly Hall

### LADIES PROGRAM

#### Wednesday – January 12

9:00 – 11:00	Welcome Coffee/ Chocolate Taste Testing
11:00	Greeting Card Workshop

#### Thursday – January 13

8:45	Board Buses for Tour
9:00 – 12:00	Japan House Tour & Tea Ceremony
	Scavenger Hunt at Larry Kanfer Studio
12:00 – 1:00	Sun Singers Wine Tasting
1:15 – 2:15	Shopping at JBJ's Collectibles
2:30	Return to Hotel

#### Friday – January 14

9:00 – 10:00	Master Gardener Seminar
10:00 – 11:30	Tastefully Simple Open House



## ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FINDS NO-TILL PRODUCTION METHOD INCREASINGLY USED TO GROW SOYBEANS CONSERVATION PRACTICE NOW IMPLEMENTED IN NEARLY HALF OF THE STATE'S BEAN FIELDS

Illinois soybean farmers increasingly are using erosion-reducing no-till production methods, according to a new Illinois Department of Agriculture field survey.

The 2004 Illinois Soil Erosion and Crop Tillage Transect Survey found no-till methods had been implemented in 46 percent of the state's soybean fields, up from 44 percent in 2002, the last time the survey was conducted. It was the seventh consecutive survey that no-till usage increased in soybean fields.

Use of mulch tillage, a production method that leaves at least 30 percent of the preceding crop's residue on the soil surface, increased three percentage points, from 19 percent of fields in 2002 to 22 percent in 2004.

"This means conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and protect fertile cropland now are being used on two-thirds of our soybean acreage," Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke said. "Considering that figure was 51 percent just seven years ago, I think the transect survey reveals our farmers' growing commitment to environmental stewardship."

Fifteen percent of corn fields were planted using a no-till production method in 2004, compared to 17 percent in 2002. Mulch-till usage, however, rose during the same time period from 11 to 12 percent.

Overall, 46 percent of the state's grain fields utilized conservation practices, up from 45 percent last year and 33 percent ten years ago.

The survey also found the percentage of farmland with tolerable soil loss levels remained stable for a third straight year. Of the fields surveyed, 85 percent were below "T," the rate at which soil naturally replaces itself. Another ten percent was slightly above "T" and will require only minor adjustments in management systems to fall within the tolerable range.

Illinois' 98 soil and water conservation districts conducted the transect survey in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Association of Illinois Soil and Water Conservation Districts, University of Illinois Extension, Illinois Farm Bureau and United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service.

## BURNING SHELLLED CORN FOR HEAT

The combination of high fossil fuel prices (Natural gas and L-P gas) and low corn prices has resulted in considerable interest in burning shelled corn to produce heat for shops, garages, other out-buildings and even homes reports Bob Frazee, University of Illinois Natural Resources Educator. Researchers have found that dry shelled corn can be an efficient heating fuel because it actually contains a fair amount of energy and is relatively easy to handle.

University of Minnesota Agricultural Extension Engineers have published a fact sheet which provides a way for comparing costs for using different fuels. Frazee provides the following examples: If shelled corn, priced at \$2.00 per bushel, is burned in a stove with an efficiency of 65%, the cost is \$7.85 per million Btu. For propane costing \$1.00 per gallon and burning at 80% efficiency the cost would be \$13.59 per million Btu. Natural gas at \$.80/ccf and 80% efficiency would cost \$10.00 per million Btu. Electricity at \$.08/kWh and operated at 100% efficiency would cost \$23.44 per million Btu.

The above costs are for comparing fuel costs only. Frazee emphasizes that individuals also need to consider the cost for the burner, fuel storage, and other equipment needed to store, handle and use the fuel, equipment maintenance, and labor to handle the fuel and remove the ash. To download a copy of this fact sheet, go to: <http://www.bae.umn.edu/extens/energy/cornburners.html>

Other questions that should be considered before purchasing a corn burner include: Will the corn burner be a primary heat source or act as a supplementary heat source? How and where will corn be stored? Are you prepared to clean out the clinker daily and clean the heat exchanger of ash on a weekly basis? Does your corn burner meet UL standards? What type of exhaust venting is required? According to Frazee, it is important to keep in mind that the price for corn and for conventional fuels will fluctuate over time and that the cheapest fuel today might not be the cheapest fuel in the future.

Source: Bob Frazee, University of Illinois Extension, Natural Resources Mgmt, 309-694-7501, Ext. 226.

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*From the ILICA Ladies.....*

## HOLIDAY M&M BARS

- |                          |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 Cups oatmeal           | 1 tsp salt               |
| 1 & 1/2 sticks margarine | 1 lb M&M's (Red & Green) |
| 1 & 1/2 cups flour       | 1 can Eagle Brand milk   |
| 1 Cup brown sugar        | 2 Tblsp oil              |
| 1 tsp baking soda        |                          |

Mix oatmeal, flour, margarine, brown sugar, soda, & salt. Reserve 1 & 1/2 cups for topping. Grease 9x13 pan. Pat mixture in & bake for 10 minutes @ 350. Heat oil in small saucepan. Add 1/2 lb M&M's. Smash them with potato masher until broken. Take off heat & add Eagle brand milk. Pour over baked crust. Add reserved 1 & 1/2 cups crumb mixture, & remaining 1/2 lb of M&M's. Bake 18-20 minutes @ 350.

*\*Jackie Streitmatter, Streitmatter Land Improvement Wyoming, IL*

## SNOWMAN PIN

- 1 - 1" Flat white button with 2 holes
- 1 - 5/8" or 7/8" Flat white button with 2 holes
- Piece of black craft foam
- Yarn or ribbon for scarf - 3"
- 1 - Pin clasp
- Small amount of black craft paint for eyes and buttons

Paint button holes on front of buttons for eyes, buttons and mouth with black paint. Cut out black foam for hat and brim, and glue the two buttons together with the pin clasp on back. (Make sure the eyes and buttons on each button are lined up correctly.) Add ribbon or yarn for scarf.

*\*Jean Davis, Forrest Davis Construction Inc. Manito, IL*

## TOFFEE BARS

- |                    |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1 cup butter       | 2 cups flour        |
| 1 cup brown sugar  | 1 large Hershey bar |
| 1 egg yolk         | ? cup chopped nuts  |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla |                     |

Mix together the butter & brown sugar. Add egg yolk and vanilla. Mix in flour. Spread on jelly roll pan. Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes or until light golden brown. Put broken-up chocolate bar on top. When melted, spread to edges and sprinkle nuts on top. Cut in bars while warm.

*\*Janice Litwiller, Wayne Litwiller Excavating Hopedale, IL*





## VENEMAN ANNOUNCES RELEASE OF \$1.6 BILLION FOR VOLUNTARY CONSERVATION PROGRAMS ON WORKING LANDS

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the release of \$1.6 billion in fiscal year 2005 funding for conservation programs on working lands, which, by knowing the initial mandatory program funding and technical assistance levels well before the next planting season begins, will help producers connect their business decisions to protecting water, air, soil and wildlife.

"This is one of the largest investments in conservation on private lands in our nation's history," Veneman said. "In making the announcement today, we are responding to agricultural producers who want greater certainty and predictability in their decisions regarding environmental stewardship before planting season begins."

Veneman said that these program funds were being provided much earlier than in the past.

"Releasing the funds earlier in the year gives farmers and ranchers more time to make sound decisions regarding conservation practices," said Veneman. "This announcement will make conservation programs fully operational in every state and give producers the information they need to develop more effective conservation plans."

Veneman added that this effort is another example of the Bush Administration's commitment to providing the tools and resources that will help agriculture producers remain the best stewards of the land. For example, on Earth Day 2004, President Bush highlighted the progress made by USDA in restoring America's wetlands and announced an aggressive national goal to increase overall wetland acres and quality by restoring, improving and protecting at least 3 million wetland acres over the next five years. To help meet this goal, the President called on Congress to pass his FY 2005 Budget request, which includes \$4.4 billion for conservation programs. By surpassing the decade-old "no-net-loss" policy, the President sent a message that we can continue the fight against soil erosion, improve the quality of our water and air and enhance wildlife habitat across America's productive agricultural landscape.

In August, the President announced an expansion of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). As part of this announcement, the President unveiled CRP initiatives to create 250,000 acres of habitat for the northern bobwhite quail and to restore 250,000 acres of wetlands and playa lakes located outside the 100-year floodplain.

In September, the President issued an Executive Order, Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, which promotes cooperative conservation. The Executive Order

emphasized appropriate local participation in Federal decision-making, in accordance with respective agency missions, policies and regulations. Cooperative conservation will enhance the enjoyment of natural resources through greater protection of the environment by involving collaborative activity among Federal, State, local and tribal governments, private for-profit and nonprofit institutions, other nongovernmental entities and individuals.

To help implement these initiatives, the Administration is announcing the initial conservation funding allocation today to allow USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) conservationists to work with farmers and ranchers nationwide to improve soil, water, air and at-risk habitat on privately-owned working lands in several programs.

Fiscal year 2005 allocations include \$1.310 billion in financial assistance and \$306 million for technical assistance for NRCS voluntary conservation programs and other activities. Veneman said that States will receive additional money after Congress makes discretionary funding decisions.

With financial and technical assistance from NRCS, farmers, ranchers and other landowners will continue to address resource concerns on agricultural working lands, promote environmental quality, address challenges in

**Veneman Announces...** (>p10)



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*Venneman Announces... (< p9)*

water quality and quantity, protect prime farmland and grazing lands and protect valuable wetlands ecosystems and wildlife habitat.

**Key conservation programs and allocations include:**

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):** \$793,590,395. EQIP assists farmers and ranchers to improve soil, air and water quality and other related resources on private working lands.

**Ground and Surface Water Conservation (GSWC):** \$62,874,481. GSWC assists farmers and ranchers to conserve our nation's ground and surface water resources. The funding will result in improving agricultural water use efficiency and result in a net savings to ground and surface water reserves.

**Klamath Basin: \$9,734,200.** These funds will help farmers and ranchers to enhance water quality, reduce water usage by increasing irrigation efficiencies, and improve habitat for affected fish and wildlife in the Klamath Basin.

**Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP): \$244,533,800.** WRP is a voluntary program that helps landowners restore, enhance and protect wetlands through permanent easements, 30-year easements and restoration cost-share agreements. The program works to maximize wildlife habitat and wetland functions and values.

**Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP):** \$66,574,678. FRPP is a voluntary program that provides matching funds to state and local governments and non-governmental organizations to purchase conservation easements on farm and ranch land. Since 1996, FRPP, in partnership with state and local governments and nongovernmental organizations, has protected over 440,000 acres.

**Grassland Reserve Program (GRP): \$40,832,400.** GRP is a voluntary program designed to protect and restore grasslands, biodiversity, wildlife habitat and reduce soil erosion while sustaining viable working ranches. In 2005, GRP will utilize over \$2 million to benefit the Greater Sage Grouse in key western states and protect precious Tall Grass habitat in Kansas.

**Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP): \$21,935,051.** WHIP offers technical and financial assistance through long-term agreements to create, restore and enhance wildlife habitat for upland wildlife, wetland wildlife, threatened, endangered or at-risk species and fisheries as well as other types of wildlife.

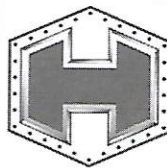
**Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA): \$12,997,456.** AMA is available in 15 states where participation in the Federal Crop Insurance Program has been historically low: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada,

New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. It helps farmers and ranchers voluntarily address natural resource concerns by incorporating conservation into farming operations while managing financial risk.

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): \$56,599,700 in technical assistance.** CRP, administered by the Farm Service Agency, encourages farmers and ranchers to voluntarily establish conservation practices to protect environmentally sensitive land, provide food and habitat for wildlife and protect ground and surface water from runoff and sedimentation. Since the inception of CRP in 1986, this program has helped reduce soil erosion by more than 40 percent and restored 1.8 million acres of critical wetland acreage.

In addition, the allocation includes dollars for the Conservation Security Program (CSP). It includes \$32,386,009 for active contracts and \$162,024,991 for 2005 sign-up. State allocations for sign-up will be made at a later date. CSP recognizes those producers who are excellent stewards of the land and are willing to do even more by supporting ongoing conservation stewardship of agricultural working lands. In 2004, CSP was offered in 18 watersheds. In 2005 it is expected to be available in watersheds in all 50 states and a renewable energy component will be introduced that rewards farmers and ranchers for converting to renewable energy fuels such as soy bio-diesel and ethanol, for recycling 100 percent of on-farm lubricants, and for implementing energy production, including wind, solar, geothermal, and methane production.

A list of allocation totals by states is attached. Additional information on conservation programs is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>. Landowners who want specific information regarding program participation should contact their local USDA Service Center or NRCS office, locate at



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FY 2005 Conservation Funding Allocation Totals by State:

\* State allocations for CSP sign-up will be made at a later date.

ALABAMA	\$16,361,398
ALASKA	\$12,063,754
ARIZONA	\$22,798,017
ARKANSAS	\$41,163,612
CALIFORNIA	\$76,527,695
COLORADO	\$44,923,235
CONNECTICUT	\$12,120,914
DELAWARE	\$13,122,624
FLORIDA	\$39,180,466
GEORGIA	\$20,318,618
HAWAII	\$14,196,660
IDAHO	\$20,118,692
ILLINOIS	\$41,285,287
INDIANA	\$31,689,560
IOWA	\$48,560,335
KANSAS	\$36,357,890
KENTUCKY	\$21,386,263
LOUISIANA	\$31,345,777
MAINE	\$12,845,445
MARYLAND	\$14,492,322
MASSACHUSETTS	\$12,723,263
MICHIGAN	\$31,701,895
MINNESOTA	\$51,799,769
MISSISSIPPI	\$34,353,345
MISSOURI	\$42,984,923
MONTANA	\$36,415,786
NEBRASKA	\$48,643,710
NEVADA	\$13,233,526
NEW HAMPSHIRE	\$12,447,787
NEW JERSEY	\$13,057,785
NEW MEXICO	\$28,662,499
NEW YORK	\$24,071,960
NORTH CAROLINA	\$26,571,141
NORTH DAKOTA	\$24,849,371
OHIO	\$27,151,680
OKLAHOMA	\$34,171,181
OREGON	\$35,879,379
PENNSYLVANIA	\$20,678,087
RHODE ISLAND	\$12,453,259
SOUTH CAROLINA	\$18,800,811
SOUTH DAKOTA	\$26,178,571
TENNESSEE	\$15,891,980
TEXAS	\$97,524,457
UTAH	\$24,517,391
VERMONT	\$12,399,553
VIRGINIA	\$16,010,934
WASHINGTON	\$31,088,315
WEST VIRGINIA	\$12,684,683
WISCONSIN	\$36,089,902
WYOMING	\$20,001,796
PACIFIC BASIN	\$1,731,669
PUERTO RICO	\$6,429,200
CSP sign-up*	\$162,024,991
Total	\$1,584,083,161



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## EVER HEAR A CLOD OF DIRT TALK? NOW'S YOUR CHANCE!

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) now has an interactive touch-screen education kiosk housed at the Main Barn at Lincoln Park Zoo's "Farm in the Zoo." In NRCS' "The Scoop on Soil," an animated character named "Claude" explores the science and wonder of the soil beneath our feet. NRCS' 9-foot tall kiosk, which appears as a small mountain of soil, is designed to teach children and adults the importance of soil in our lives.

The "Farm in the Zoo" explores many facets of agriculture, exposing children, student groups, (and plenty of parents) to rural life and explaining how agriculture fits into urban life. "Since corn, soybeans, tractors, livestock, and other issues are explored, it made sense to include the one natural resource that all agricultural components rely on—SOIL," says NRCS State Conservationist Bill Gradle.

Working with the zoo's Vice President of Education, Dr. Robert Davis, NRCS developed a concept that revolved around a simple goal: Make soil fun! Dr. Davis recalls that "one of our most well attended programs at the Farm this past year was Worms Are Wonderful, this program explored the wonders of earthworms, how they help the earth and of course ... where they live!" He knows that adding this exhibit will expand the programming immensely at the Main Barn of the Farm.

"We know better than anyone that soil and soil science can be dirty business," says NRCS' State Public Affairs Specialist Paige Buck. "But with Claude, who is really a very articulate 'clod' of dirt, we could talk to the kids, tell them stories, and share interesting facts so they could laugh while they were learning," adds Buck.

Claude serves as the kiosk's narrator and animated character on the touch-screen activity. Claude and his multi-media games teach kids about the millions of organisms that live in the soil, how soil is formed, and what's actually IN soil. Claude also emphasizes the dangers of soil erosion and explores ways we can all protect soil resources. "By touching the screen, kids can follow Claude below the surface to the soil factory or learn ways that soil is inter-connected with our own day-to-day activities above the ground," explains Jill Rees, NRCS Public Affairs Specialist.

"The other three sides of the kiosk contain samples of sand, silt, and clay so people can see what soil is made of," explains NRCS State Soil Scientist Robert McLeese. The rest of the exhibit offers funny and interesting facts about soil and includes a geologic map of Illinois, graphics, and other educational material. "Claude makes soil fun. There is something to see, do, and learn on each side of the kiosk," adds McLeese.

NRCS' "Scoop on Soil" kiosk, will be featured at the zoo for years, offering valuable information to visitors on soil and conservation-related issues. "Our hope is that this new technology will appeal to today's children and adults. Once

visitors meet Claude, play the games, and visit different screens and scenarios, they will expand their knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of natural resources," adds Gradle.

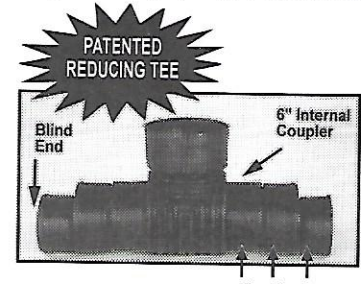
The Lincoln Park Zoo, located at 2001 North Clark Street, Chicago, is open year-round. The main barn at the "Farm in the Zoo," presented by John Deere, is open from 10:00 AM until 5:00 PM seven days a week.

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## WHAT'S NEW IN DRAINAGE? WORKSHOPS SET

Feb. 14 at Danville – **DACC Convention Center**  
 Feb. 15 at Sycamore – **Center for Agriculture**  
 Feb. 17 at Olney – **Ty's Buffet**  
 Feb. 18 at Galesburg – **Knox Agri Center**

The 2005 Illinois Regional Drainage seminars are designed to answer the question for landowners, producers, and crop consultants. Basic drainage design through current cutting edge research will be covered at each of the four regional seminars.

"Drainage System Design and Layout" by Dr. Richard Cooke, Associate Professor in Agricultural and Biological Engineering, will include design principles, new design information, and current research. He has been conducting statewide research on drainage performance varying tile spacing and varying depths. Cooke's newer research on water table management for nitrogen-loss reduction will be included in the discussion.

"Drainage Concepts" by Dr. Bill Simmons, Associate Professor in Soil & Water Management, focused on production and ecosystem impact of subsurface and surface drainage. Dr. Mike Hirschi, Professor in Agricultural and Biological Engineering,

will present "Constituents of tile water" a discussion of nitrogen and phosphorous loss reduction techniques through drainage management. Other presentations will include Drainage Law, and Using New Technologies. A contractors panel will discuss local issues and provide an installer's perspective on drainage systems.

Noon luncheon and take home materials are included in the \$25 registration fee. Registrations are due one week before the seminar to ensure accurate head count for lunch. The dates, location and local unit phone numbers are:

Feb. 14 at Danville  
**DACC Convention Center**  
 Phone: (217) 442-8615  
 Feb. 15 at Sycamore  
**Center for Agriculture**  
 Phone: (815) 758-8194  
 Feb. 17 at Olney  
**Ty's Buffet**  
 Phone: (618) 395-2191  
 Feb. 18 at Galesburg  
**Knox Agri Center**  
 Phone: (309) 342-5108

For more information, contact Stanley Solomon, Engineering Technology Educator, East Peoria Extension Center at 309-694-7501 ext 223 or [jssolomo@uiuc.edu](mailto:jssolomo@uiuc.edu), or your local University of Illinois Extension office.



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## MORE IL FARMERS USING CONSERVATION TILLAGE

Illinois soybean farmers increasingly are using erosion-reducing no-till production methods, according to a new Illinois Department of Agriculture field survey.

The 2004 Illinois Soil Erosion and Crop Tillage Transect Survey found no-till methods had been implemented in 46 percent of the state's soybean fields, up from 44 percent in 2002, the last time the survey was conducted. It was the seventh consecutive survey that no-till usage increased in soybean fields.

Use of mulch tillage, a production method that leaves at least 30 percent of the preceding crop's

residue on the soil surface, increased three percentage points, from 19 percent of fields in 2002 to 22 percent in 2004.

"This means conservation practices that reduce soil erosion and protect fertile cropland now are being used on two-thirds of our soybean acreage," Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke said.

Fifteen percent of corn fields were planted using a no-till production method in 2004, compared to 17 percent in 2002. Mulch-till usage, however, rose during the same time period from 11 to 12 percent.

Overall, 46 percent of the state's grain fields utilized conservation practices, up from 45 percent last year and 33 percent ten years ago.

**TILLAGE SYSTEMS — ALL CROPS**  
(percentage of fields surveyed with each system)

	2004	2002	2001	2000	1999
<b>No-till*</b>	29.2%	30.2%	29.3%	29.1%	25.8%
<b>Mulch-till*</b>	17.2%	15%	17.8%	18.7%	15%
<b>Reduced till</b>	20.1%	19%	21.2%	21.2%	22%
<b>Conventional</b>	33.5%	35.8%	31.7%	30.4%	36.4%
<b>Unknown</b>	0%	0%	0%	.6%	.8%

For More Info Contact:

John Hawkins, News Service Director

Phone 309 557-2237

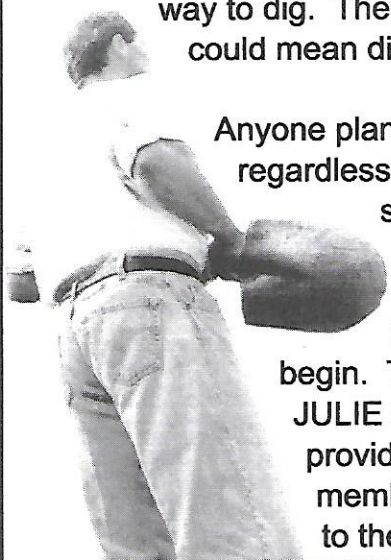
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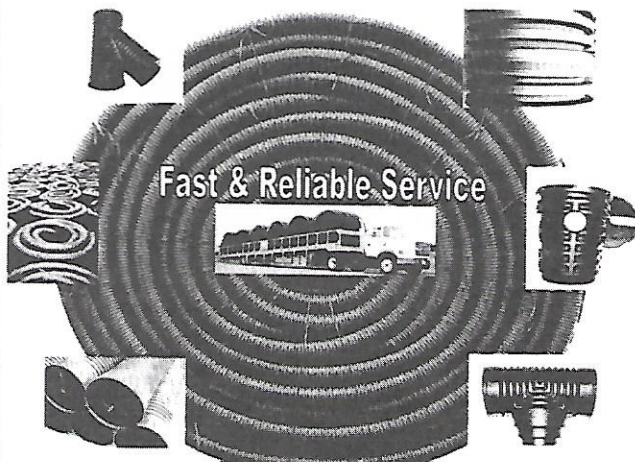
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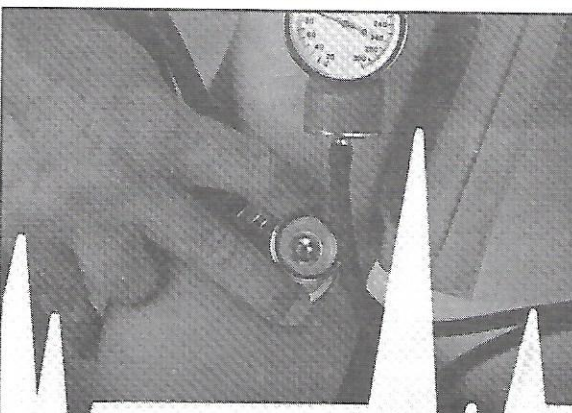
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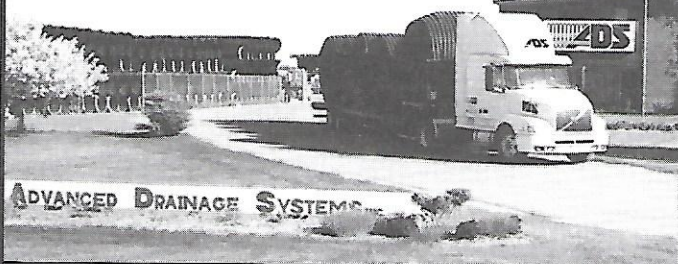
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## EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

Planning has been well underway for the **Annual Convention** and I would just like to, again, remind all of our members that this years **Convention** (January 12-15th) has been combined with the **Annual Educational Workshop**, which is usually held in February. This means that all of you certified contractors out there must attend in order to receive your required continuing education credits.

This year's registration form is slightly different than those from the past. Please fill the form out in its entirety before returning to the ILICA office. Due to the combination of the two events, the registration has been increased to cover the cost of a larger attendance, more meals and other speakers. We are trying to get better head counts for all in attendance and which events they are attending. If you have any questions regarding the Convention please feel free to contact the ILICA office.

We will be hosting a **Certification Testing** on January 15, 2005 at the Convention. So, if you haven't had an opportunity to become a certified contractor January is the perfect time!

Just a reminder...Don't forget to make those reservations for National ConExpo-Con/Agg March 13-19, 2005.

I hope everyone has a Safe and Happy Holiday Season, see you in January!

Melanie Harney

## FYI...

\*On November 6, 2004 a Special Membership meeting was held in Springfield to vote on amending the current dues amount for active membership. The new dues structure is as follows:

The first two (2) years for new members will be \$160 and existing active members remain at \$275 per year. There is also no longer a \$25 initiation charge for new members.

If you have any questions regarding the by law change, please contact the ILICA office at 217-787-7260.

\*Reminder the Annual Educational Workshop is being held in January in combination with the Annual Convention. If you are a certified contractor you will need to attend in order to receive your required continuing education credits.

## Heiser Insurance & Financial Services

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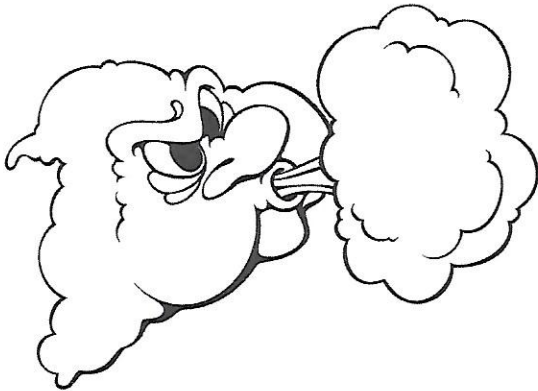
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#### RED ROCK & OLD NEVADA VILLAGE TOUR

Red Rock Canyon has evolved from a 400 million year old sea bed into a series of magnificent geological formations and wind-sculptured sandstone outcroppings. On this day tour, you will see the breathtaking view of the Red Rock Canyon scenic loop and visitors center. And you'll visit Old Nevada Village where you will enjoy a hearty lunch, ride a miniature train and witness an 1800's melodrama in the streets ... look out for gunslingers!

**WE'VE GOT SOME MORE  
ANSWERS FOR YOU ...**

### WHAT IS CONEXPO-CON/AGG?

The world's largest construction trade show! It only takes place once every three years in the US, with over 120,000 contractors and visitors attending.

### WHEN IS CONEXPO-CON/AGG?

Tuesday through Saturday; March 15-19, 2005

### WHEN WILL THE LICA CONVENTION TAKE PLACE?

March 13 & 14, 2005. We will be holding committee meetings and an Associate/Contractor Reception on Sunday. On Monday, we'll have our Delegates Session and Board Meeting, followed that evening by the Awards Banquet. Tuesday will mark the grand opening of CONEXPO-CON/AGG and the LICA booth. Why not volunteer an hour or two in the booth and help introduce LICA to contractors from all over the world!

### HOW CAN YOU GET THE BEST PRICE?

Register for both the LICA Convention and CONEXPO-CON/AGG by February 11, 2005 and you will qualify for the Advance Attendee Registration Discounts!

### HOW CAN YOU LEARN MORE?

If you have access to the internet, check out the "National Convention" page on National LICA's website ([www.licanational.org](http://www.licanational.org))

Or, call Debbie at 573-635-8694 if you need another information packet or have questions about the one we mailed to you in late August!



## USDA RELEASES \$2.1 MILLION TO RESTORE AND PROTECT WETLANDS IN 12 STATES

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman announced the availability of \$2.1 million in Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) technical assistance funds for technical service providers and other third parties to conduct restoration activities on WRP lands in 12 states.

"These resources will help expedite wetland restoration and enhancement activities and advance President Bush's wetlands initiative to restore, improve and protect at least 3 million acres of wetlands," Veneman said.

These funds will accelerate restoration of between 30,000 and 40,000 acres of wetlands. The use of third parties such as technical service providers, state governments and environmental groups expands the capability of USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service to restore acres enrolled in WRP projects.

WRP is a voluntary conservation program that offers landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance wetlands on their property. The goal of the program is to achieve the greatest wetland functions and values and create optimum wildlife habitat on every acre enrolled in the program.

States receiving the WRP technical assistance funds are:

State	WRP Funds for Technical Assistance
California	\$300,000
Indiana	\$165,000
Iowa	\$100,000
Louisiana	\$300,000
Massachusetts	\$25,000
Michigan	\$35,000
Minnesota	\$300,000
Missouri	\$200,000
North Dakota	\$75,000
Oklahoma	\$200,000
Washington	\$200,000
Wisconsin	<u>\$200,000</u>
TOTAL	\$2,100,000

Additional information on WRP is available at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp>.

## DON'T FORGET YOUR ROOM RESERVATIONS.....

*The Annual Convention is just around the corner!*

**January 12th 13th & 14th**

\*Deadline to make reservations is  
December 20, 2004

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**SEE PAGE 23**

**FOR NEW**

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(In Champaign I-72 turns into University Ave.)

Stay on University Ave. to Neil St.

Turn right on Neil St.

Stay on Neil for about one mile. The hotel is on right hand side of road at Neil and Kirby intersection.

### From 57 south: (Chicago)

Exit 237A (I-74 east exit) to Neil St. (exit 182)

Turn right onto Neil St. Stay on Neil for about two miles. The hotel is on right hand side of road at Neil and Kirby intersection.

### From 74 east: (Quad Cities)

To Neil St. (exit 182)

Turn right onto Neil St.

Follow Neil for about two miles. The Hotel is on right hand side of road at Neil and Kirby intersection.

### From I-70 east: (St. Louis)

To I-57 N. (in Effingham) Follow I-57 north directions.

### From I-57 North: (Charleston)

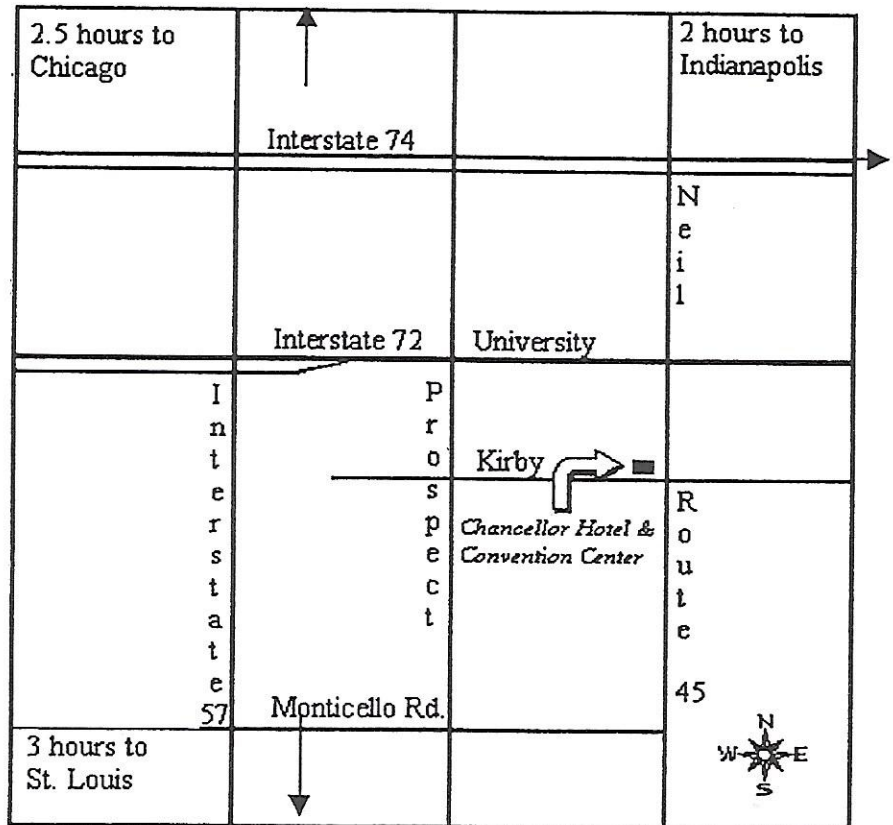
To Monticello Rd. exit, turn right. Take Monticello road to Route 45 (Turns into Neil St.) turn left. Follow Route 45 five miles. Hotel is on left hand side of road at Neil and Kirby intersection.

### From 74 west: (Indianapolis/Danville)

To Neil St. (exit 182)

Turn left onto Neil St.

Follow Neil for about two miles. The Hotel is on right hand side of road at Neil and Kirby intersection.

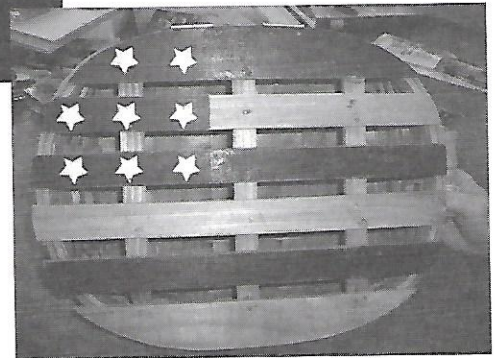
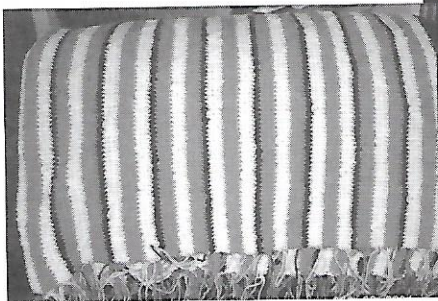
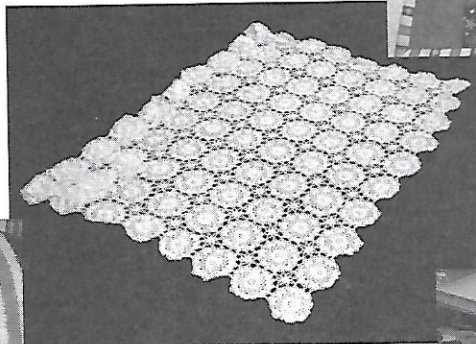




## THE ILICA LADIES COMMITTEE

The ILICA Ladies Committee will be selling raffle tickets for 6 different items to be raffled at the Annual Convention Awards Banquet in January. The cost is \$1 each or 6 for \$5. The funds raised will be used to help pay for speakers and programs the Ladies Committee will be offering in the future. The items up for raffle: (1) homemade Illini colored afghan (orange, blue and white), (1) 52" square ivory crocheted tablecloth, (1) Americana quilted wall hanging 18" x 24", (1) Americana basket, (1) handmade quilted sweatshirt jacket, (1) handmade bracelet (will have matching earrings).

If you are interested in purchasing tickets for the raffle and supporting the ILICA Ladies, please contact the ILICA office at 217-787-7260.

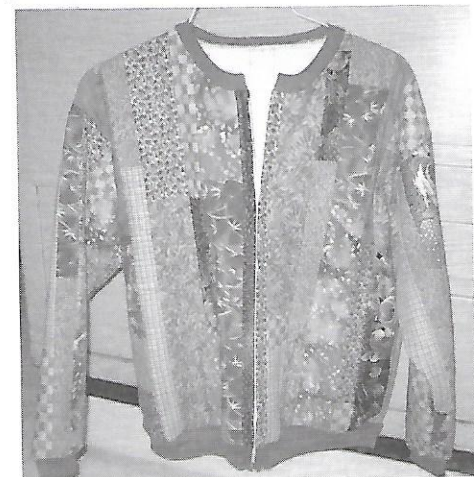


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+++++

**PRE-REGISTRATION FOR ILICA CONVENTION JANUARY 12, 13, 14, 15 2005**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Member \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_ Company Name \_\_\_\_\_

**Pre-Registration Must be received in our office by December 31, 2004**

	Individual \$145	Couple \$210	Child Under 12 \$60
Full Participation, 3 Days <b>No. attending</b> _____	_____	_____	_____
Participation for one Day <b>No. attending</b> _____	\$70 _____	\$95 _____	\$35 _____

Please indicate which day you will be attending if signing up for one (1) day participation by circling day of attendance

Wednesday      Thursday      Friday      Saturday (*certification test only*)

Please indicate No. of persons attending each event:

Wednesday Lunch _____	Thursday Breakfast _____	Friday Breakfast _____
Wednesday Dinner _____	Thursday Lunch _____	Friday Lunch _____
	Thursday Dinner _____	Friday Dinner _____

**Ladies Program:**

Wednesday Coffee/Chocolate Tasting _____	Wednesday Greeting Card Seminar _____
Thursday Japan House Tour/Tea _____	Thursday Ladies Luncheon _____
Friday Master Gardner Seminar _____	Friday Tastefully Simple Open House _____

**Registrations will not be accepted at the pre-registration price after the 12/31/04 deadline. Onsite Registration prices will be as follows:**

<b>Full Participation</b>	Individual \$170	Couple \$235	Child \$75
<b>One Day</b>	Individual \$80	Couple \$110	Child \$50





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