



ILICA NEWS

Land Improvement Contractors Of America • Illinois Chapter

March/April 2005

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Member Spotlight

David Maltby, Maltby Bulldozing

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CAPITOL UPDATE



Harney

ould like to take this opportunity to thank Dwight for all of the legislative service and consultation he Illinois LICA for the past several years. Legislative not easy and it takes heart and willingness to make efforts as did Dwight.

ope that everyone will gladly ease into the new route Illinois LICA has chosen to take. I would open the LICA office doors to everyone who has a concern. If you receive correspondence from local county Soil and Water Conservation District or other agency regarding legislation please contact our and we will gladly look into what concerns it may to our organization. With that said, listed below is a summary regarding Senate Bill 3374. This particular of legislation is sitting in the Rules committee and not been touched since March 2004. However, this is important bill that LICA will closely monitor and will every action necessary to see that this does not. If you have any concerns or questions regarding you may contact the ILICA office or check the General Assembly website at (www.ilga.gov).

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The intent of the Legislature in passing a \$4.7 million dollar appropriation in IDOA budget for Conservation 2000 cannot be met unless at least \$2.7 million is transferred to the Conservation 2000 Fund.

Senate Bill 3374, as originally introduced, contains an additional \$2,612,500 to be appropriated from the Capital Development Fund to the Department of Agriculture for deposit in the Conservation 2000 Project Fund.

Conservation 2000 dollars in IDOA's (Illinois Dept. of Agriculture) budget is used to fund both the Conservation Practices Program (CPP) and Streambank Stabilization Restoration Program (SSRP). These greatly reduce sediment erosion and protect water quality.

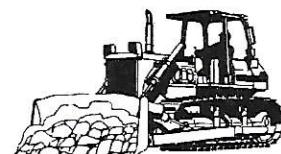
Point out that if funding for Conservation 2000 is not available that there will be no state monies for conservation work this year.

Let them know that you would appreciate their support for protecting our soil and water resources by making sure the \$2,612,500 appropriation is included in the Capital budget they will pass and that a minimum of \$2.7 million is restored to the Conservation 2000 Fund.

The National LICA Legislative Days have been scheduled for April 4 and 5. We will once again have Illinois representatives in Washington D.C. to express our concerns. Please keep look out for legislative alerts coming in the mail or check out the ILICA website at www.ilica.net.

Thanks, Melanie Harney

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello to everyone!

How has winter been treating you? Today it was 50 degrees. What a beautiful February day! We've been very fortunate to be able to tile nearly every day since the state convention in January. These are definitely bonus days, so look out in March!

I would like to thank our past president, Stuart Anderson, for his leadership during the past two years. He faced a difficult task this past year (2004), after the retirement of our Executive Director, JoAnn Huff, but six months later and a few headaches, we have a new ambitious Executive Director, Melanie Harney. Thanks again Stuart for getting us through some hard situations.

I would also like to thank the convention and education committees for a great convention in Champaign. These committees had a rough time in the planning, and execution of the event. It makes you think how we would survive without cell phones and email. A little communication can solve many big problems. Thank you for all your hard work.

One thing I would like to see, is a renewed effort from our area directors and alternates. Please try to make the board meetings when scheduled. It is important to the organization to have your opinions on issues that affect us

all. All of your votes are important. I would like to see a quorum at every meeting!

We will be trying a few new ideas in the future. Some will work - some may not, but we will keep trying. Please keep working on new members. Call a prospect, take him to coffee, share an idea or tip that works for you, and tell him why you benefit from being an ILICA member. We cannot live on shows alone!

Support our associates, work safely, and live happily!
Joe Streitmatter



NEW MEMBERS

ACTIVE

Three W Tiling

2273 Knox Road 2250 E
Victoria, IL 61485

Ken Pleines Excavating, Inc.

Ken Pleines
1056-Central St.
Minier, IL 61759

Bender Land Improvement

Cliff Bender
1394 County Road 1800 N.
Lowpoint, IL 61545

Upcoming Meetings



ILICA BOARD MEETINGS

March 5, 2005
Maverick Steakhouse, Springfield, IL

May 7, 2005
TBA

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

LICA Congressional Visits
April 4-5, 2005
Washington, D.C.

National LICA Summer Meeting
Maritime Institute, Baltimore, MD
July 13 & 14
Pre-tours
July 15-16
Summer Meeting

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Joe Streitmatter, Wyoming

Vice President
Bill Dean, Mattoon

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Wayne Litwiller, Hopedale

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Melanie Harney, Springfield

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Richard Cooke
University of Illinois

The Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association Newsletter is the official publication of the Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association, Inc., 2060 Timberbrook Drive Suite 3, Springfield, IL 62702, telephone 217/787-7260.

Subscription price \$1.00 per year, issued bimonthly: January-February; March-April; May-June; July-August; September-October; November-December.

ILICA Board Meeting
will be held at
Maverick Family
Steakhouse
March 5, 2005
at 3 p.m.

Special Membership Meeting
Immediately following regularly
scheduled Board Meeting

48th Annual Convention and

The Annual Convention & Educational Workshop was January 12-15, 2005 at the Chancellor Hotel in Champaign, Illinois. A huge thank you goes to all of the members of the Convention Committee and the Education Committee for providing us with an educational and well planned convention.

We started on Wednesday morning bright and shiny with excellent Ag engineering Tour

with 50 attendees. We had a superb moderator, who was unfortunately unable to attend, Richard Cooke. Our hats go off to Dr. Cooke and all of the staff at the College of Engineering who helped provide this successful

Wednesday evening, the ILICA members traveled by bus to Rantoul for the Chanute Aerospace (WWII) museum for dinner and a tour. The food was excellent and the tour was fantastic! Unfortunately, we had limited time for viewing all of the great artifacts.

Thursday's activities started with a great speaker after another. Some of our topics included: Labor Law Changes, Personnel Recordkeeping, Workman's Comp, Equipment Maintenance and Technology and many more. Thursday evening turned out to be an even bigger success for ILICA bringing in over \$8,000 at the auction. Not to mention collecting \$2,000 for the membership bear with a huge contribution coming from Continental Western. Thanks, G Insurance, for all of your membership support!

We would like to thank Advanced Drainage Systems and Springfield Plastics for hosting this year's hospitality suites. I do believe EVERYONE had a great time and enjoyed the food and drinks.

The Devotions Committee started off each morning with inspiration and song and those who attended sincerely appreciate their efforts. And, it's a good thing because Friday was a little more hectic and we started running behind with the programs because the speakers were so good. We had several more excellent sessions: Skin Cancer, OSHA Competent Person Training and Onsite Waste. We would like to thank all of the speakers who attended this year's convention and appreciate everything they contributed.

The Annual Business Meeting began Friday as well at 10:45 with Joe Streitmatter being elected as President, Bill Dean - Vice President, Wayne Litwiller - First Vice President, Steve Anderson - Treasurer and Melanie Harney - Secretary. Directors and Alternates were chosen by their respective Districts making up our new 2005 Board of Directors. All yearly reports were given. Friday evening concluded the Convention with our

Awards Banquet. A big thanks to Steve Baker of Springfield Plastics, Inc who did a Fabulous job as Master of Ceremonies and of course Congratulations to all award recipients!



Educational Workshop A Huge Success!



ILICA Delegate Meeting



Octave Chanute Tour



Registration Desk



Workshop Session



LADIES PROGRAM

Our ladies enjoyed another program this year. We started off with a "Welcome Coffee" on Wednesday with delicious Belgium chocolates donated by Rubens Chocolates in Champaign. On Thursday, the ladies boarded a bus and experienced an authentic Japan Tea Ceremony and learned the value of friendship and tranquility, and then it was off to Larry Kanfer's Art Gallery for a scavenger hunt. The ladies then broke for a delicious lunch at Biaggi's Italian Restaurant following up with a wine tasting at Sun Singers. On Friday, the ladies learned the art of making greeting cards with the help of Kristin Kuttmeier.

The 2005 Convention was filled with great food, fellowship and an opportunity to catch up and make new friends. Thanks to all of the ladies who participated, I hope you had a wonderful time!



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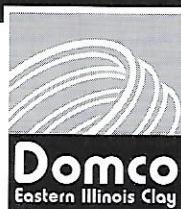


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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT.....

DAVID MALTBY

MALTBY BULLDOZING, PAWNEE, ILLINOIS

1. How long has your company been in business?

I have been a land improvement contractor for seven years.

2. Is this a family business that has been passed down from generation to generation?

No, I had the opportunity to purchase the business from a friend and leave the life of shift work behind at the power plant in Pawnee.

3. What made you want to be a Land Improvement Contractor?

I wanted become more involved in earthmoving and conservation work as well as be able to spend more quality time with my family.

4. How many employees do you currently have?

I presently have 3 employees: Gary, Ryan and Corey.

5. Why do you think LICA is important?

I enjoy the contacts, fellowship and talking with the other contractors about things they are currently working on or problems they have dealt with.

6. What type of work do you do?

I mostly do earthmoving and conservation work.

7. Of that work, which do you enjoy the most?

I really enjoy building ponds.

8. How long have you been a member of ILICA?

I joined ILICA when I purchased the business seven years ago.

**9. Are you a generational member of ILICA?
(Was your mother or father a member, which led to your eventual membership?)**

No.

10. What do you enjoy the most of being an ILICA member?

I enjoy going to the conventions and shows learning and getting updated on the industry.

11. If you could sum up ILICA in one word, what would it be?

Educational...



Well...that wraps up this issue's Member Spotlight. I would like to thank David for taking time out of his busy, wet week and letting me take pictures and get to know a little more about him and what it is that he enjoys about ILICA.

Each issue I will be calling and looking for members to spotlight as a way for me to get to know all of you a little better and for our membership to know each other as well. If you have any questions regarding the member spotlight, please contact the ILICA office.

Thank You!

From the ILICA Ladies.....

SUPPER ON A BUN

1/3	1tsp. pd mustard
1 1/2 lbs ground round	1 1/2 tsp salt
1/2 c oatmeal or 16 crackers	3/4 tsp pepper
1 egg	2 c shredded cheese
1/2 c chopped onion	1 loaf of French bread sliced in half diagonally or hoagie rolls sliced.

Mix all of above ingredients and spread onto bread or rolls.
 Bake open face at 350° for 25-30 minutes or until brown.
 Line a cookie sheet with foil and there is no clean up!

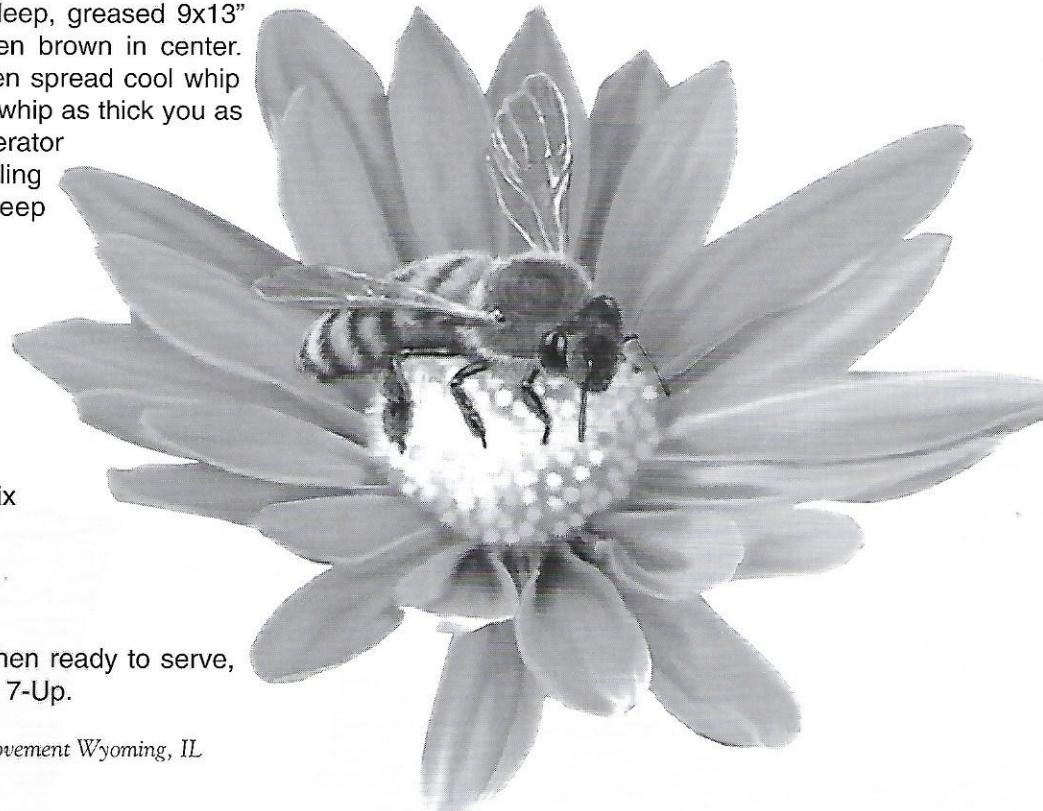
*Cathy Masching, Masching's Excavating Odell, IL

STRAWBERRY ANGEL FOOD CAKE

1 box angel food cake mix
 1 large container cool whip
 1-1 1/2 cans of strawberry pie filling

Mix cake mix and pour into deep, greased 9x13" pan and bake at 350° until golden brown in center. Once cake is finished, let cool then spread cool whip on top of cake. You may add cool whip as thick you as like, when finished place in refrigerator for 10-15 minutes. Spread pie filling onto top of and serve. Keep refrigerated.

*Melanie Harney, ILICA Office



RUM SLUSH

1 - 12oz can frozen limeade
 1 Bottle Strawberry Daiquiri Mix
 1 Lg can pineapple juice
 1 - 12oz can 7-Up
 1 Bottle of Rum

Mix all together & freeze. When ready to serve, fill glasses 1/2 - 3/4 full, & top with 7-Up.

*Jackie Streitmatter, Streitmatter Land Improvement Wyoming, IL

COMMUNITIES IN ILLINOIS WITH FLOOD DAMAGE REMINDED OF PERMIT REQUIREMENTS

As property owners in Illinois contemplate clean up and repairs following recent flooding, the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources is reminding them to contact local building and zoning officials about requirements for obtaining local permits before repairing or rebuilding flood-damaged structures.

The permits are required as part of local government participation in the National Flood Insurance Program, which provides eligibility for flood insurance, flood disaster assistance, state and federal grants and loans, and buyout funds for flood-prone property.

Local floodplain management ordinances require that permits be obtained for any construction or development activity in a floodplain area, including the repair or reconstruction of structures damaged by flooding.

Special conditions apply to substantially damaged buildings - those in which the total cost of repairs is 50 percent or more of the structure's pre-flood market value. If a building is found to be substantially damaged, federal flood insurance regulations require that repairs not begin until compliance with the local floodplain ordinance is demonstrated. In some cases, that may require repairs that include elevating or flood proofing the structure to reduce the potential for future flood damage.

Repair costs must be calculated by assuming the building will be fully repaired to its pre-damaged condition, even if the owner decides to do less. The total cost calculation must include structural materials, finish materials and labor, even if the owner chooses to do his or her own repairs.

State and federal assistance may be available to property owners to reduce the chances of future flood damage. Mitigation assistance may cover costs of relocation, or for elevating or purchasing flood-damaged structures. Flood insurance may also provide up to \$30,000 to protect a structure from future flood damage.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the IDNR work with local communities on floodplain ordinance enforcement to try to reduce the risk and costs of future flood damages.

Property owners and residents with flood-damaged buildings should contact their local building and zoning administrator for more information on repair and reconstruction permits. For more information on floodplain management and flood insurance issues, contact the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL, 62702-1271, or phone 217/782-4428, SBC Relay 800/526-0844, TDD 217/782-9175.



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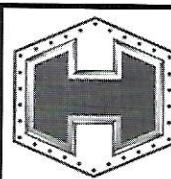


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ILLINOIS AG MARKETING PROGRAMS PRODUCE SUPERIOR RETURNS

'04 SALES OF FOOD AND

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TOTAL

EARLY \$70 MILLION

Illinois receives a high rate of return on the funds its Department of Agriculture invests to promote business development, according to new sales figures from the department's Bureau of Marketing and Promotion.

The department's marketing activities generated \$66.9 million in sales.

Illinois food companies and businesses in fiscal year 2004. Every dollar that was spent on promotions added \$63 in sales, more than triple the industry's standard return on investment of \$20 for each dollar in expenses.

"Our marketing activities are not only a sound investment in Illinois agriculture, but also a sound investment in the Illinois economy," Agriculture Director Chuck Wurke said. "The trade shows and trade missions we organize increase demand for our agricultural products in markets around the world and create jobs in an industry that employs nearly one-fourth of the state's workers."

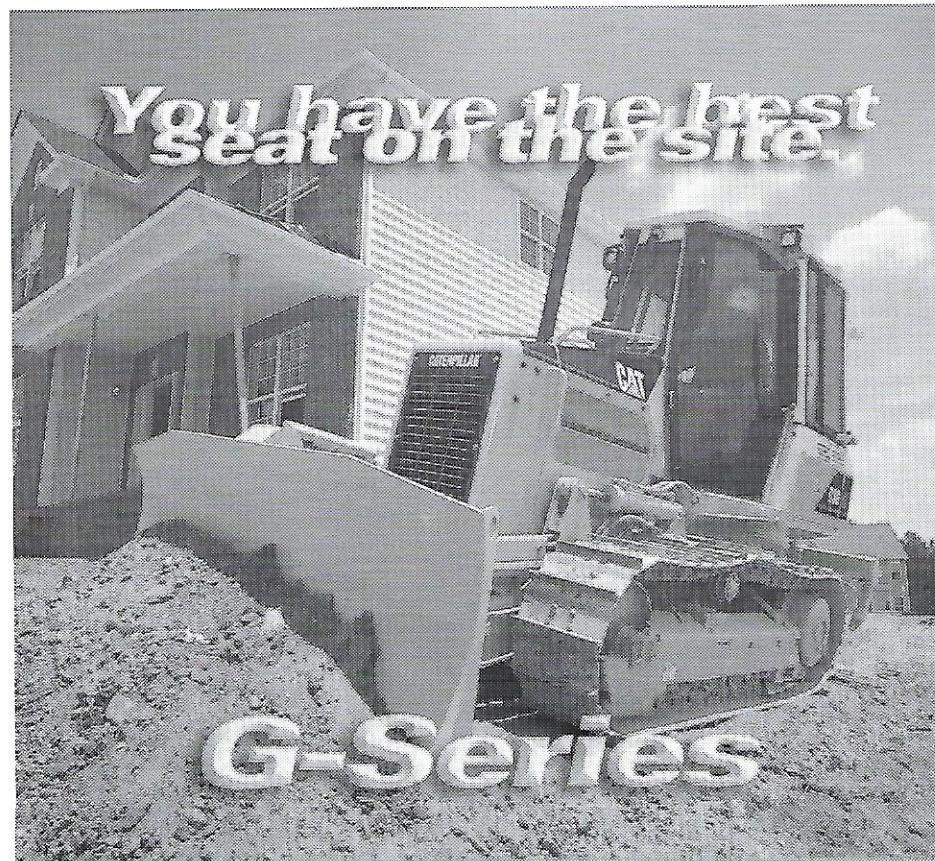
The department uses several strategies to find markets for Illinois food and agricultural products.

It distributes leads and organizes buyers' missions in cooperation with its foreign offices. Last fiscal year, about 100 international buyers from 14 countries, including Canada, Mexico, China and Japan, were brought to Illinois.

The department also sponsors pavilions at large industry trade shows, enabling small to medium-sized Illinois companies to afford booth space. Contacts made during one such show last fiscal year, the Food Marketing Institute's Supermarket Industry Convention, paid big dividends for the 29

Illinois companies that exhibited. The show produced sales of \$7.5 million.

Food accounts for \$47 million of the total sales. The remainder, \$19.9 million, resulted from purchases of grain, livestock, farm equipment and other agricultural products. The sales figure reflects the value of all actual and projected transactions that closed during the 2004 fiscal year, including those that developed from marketing events held in prior fiscal years.



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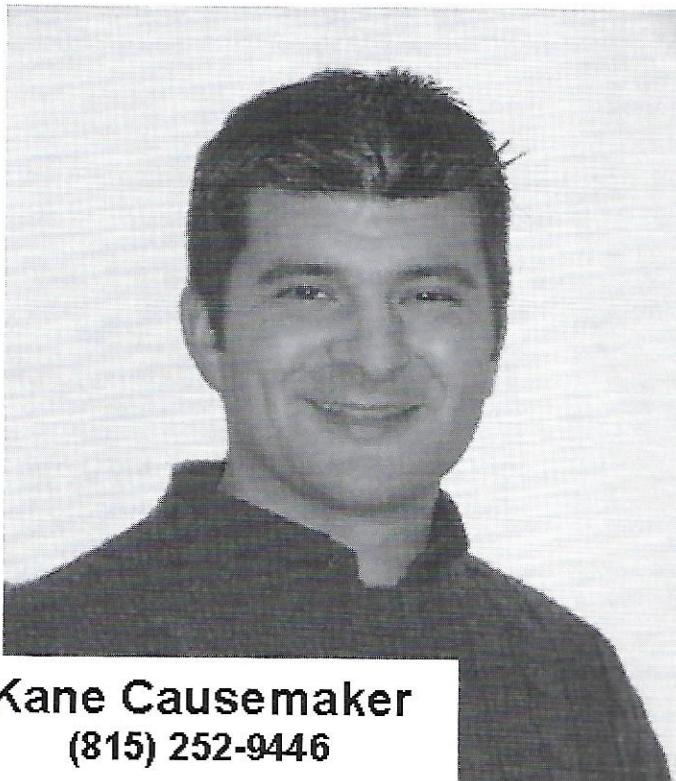


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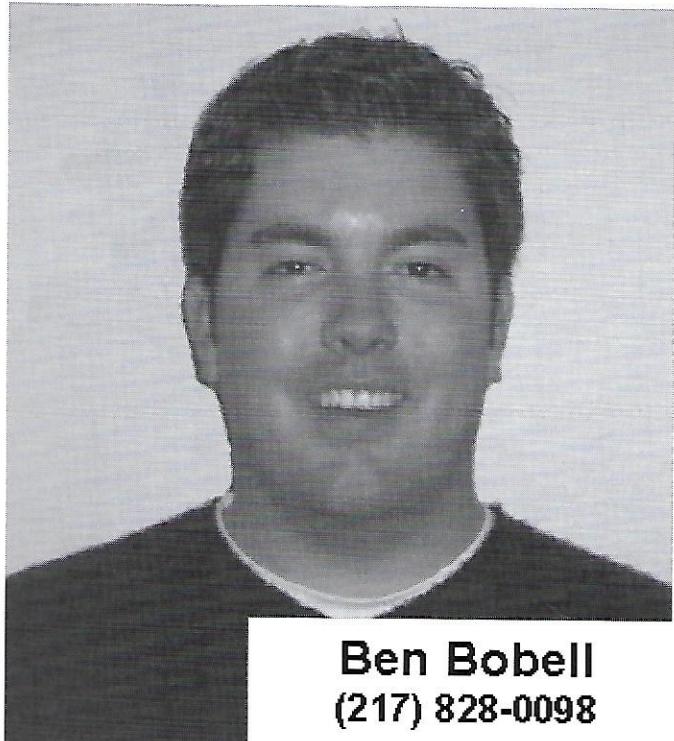
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HAZARD CONTROL FOR LASERS



The type of laser which has found the greatest use in the construction industry has been the heliumneon (He-Ne) gas laser. Its beam has been used to project a reference line for construction equipment in such operations as dredging, tunneling, pipe laying, bridge building and marine construction.

HAZARD CONTROLS

1. Lasers should not be left unattended during operation. Beam shutter or caps should be utilized or the laser turned off when laser transmission is not actually required.
2. Personnel who work with laser units should become aware of the potential eye hazards and the importance of limiting unnecessary exposure.
3. A warning sign should be attached to laser equipment in a conspicuous location indicating the potential eye hazard associated with the laser and warned against looking into the primary beam.
4. The use of corner cube retro-reflectors should be avoided at close ranges if the reflected beam is to be observed.
5. The use of binoculars or aiming telescopes should not be used to view the direct beam unless the beam intensities are greatly below safe levels.
6. During the alignment and set-up procedures, care should be taken to avoid aiming the laser into potentially occupied areas.
7. Stable mounts for the laser are important so that it can be readily controlled.

Despite the potential hazards, the laser beam can be used safely if the proper procedures and necessary precautions are followed: No employee other than highly trained persons should be permitted to work in an area where the worker could come into direct contact with a laser beam. The work area should be brightly lighted to prevent dilation of the pupils. All surfaces in laser area must be nonreflective. Work areas should be monitored regularly for ozone or other potential contaminants and stray radiation.

These guidelines should only be applied to the small HE-NE lasers and are not by any means complete. In utilizing a laser, please check manufacturer's precautions and guidelines for that particular unit.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

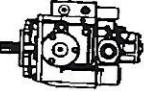
Thanks to all who gave so much time and energy to this year's 48th Annual Convention and Educational Workshop. I have to say I really had butterflies several weeks leading up to the convention and yet when it came time and everyone starting arriving at the hotel, it hit me....everything was going to be fine! I had great help from several different people and it dawned on me what a special group ILICA is. This was the first time I was able to meet a big portion of the membership and I have to say it was a pleasure!

Just a reminder...then **National Convention/Con Expo** is right around the corner, **March 15-19, 2005 in Las Vegas, NV**. If you need additional info, please contact Debbie Dickens, Missouri LICA Executive Director at 573-634-3001.

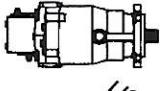
Planning is well underway for the **2005 Conservation Expo** being held August 9, 10 and 11th at the Jerry Lewis Farm in Good Hope, IL. Jerry is a member of ILICA and is extremely enthusiastic about hosting the show this year. A room block has been held at the **AmeriHost Inn** in Macomb for the show, details are in this issue. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the office.

Thank You,

Melanie Harney
Executive Director



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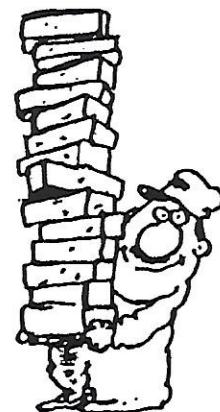
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WINTER OFF TO AN UNUSUALLY WET START

STATE CLIMATOLOGIST MONITORING CONDITIONS

The leading climatologist in the state of Illinois said the twelve days of January have yielded the wettest winter in half a century. Most Illinois residents have seen large volume of rain, and above-normal temperatures.

"The wettest January in Illinois history occurred in 1900," said Illinois Chief Climatologist Jim Angel. "If rains continued to fall at this same rate, we would break those records."

During January of 1950, 6.8 inches of rain fell. In the twelve days of January 2005, 3.64 inches of rain have fallen. Additionally, the temperature is ten degrees above normal for January. The Illinois State Water Survey, a division of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, monitors weather conditions and keeps official records. Statistics date back to 1895.

"It appears we are under the influence of a Bermuda high," said Angel. "This is unusual, because typically, our January weather in Illinois is influenced by cold dry air coming in from Canada. Instead, we are dealing with the

impact of a warm, moist weather system from the Gulf of Mexico."

The weather pattern is impacting many midwestern states. Angel says flooding problems are partly the result of an extremely wet November, which left ground saturated.

"Looking at the statistics, January rains are not indicative of a trend that will lead to an especially rainy spring," said Angel.

Angel points out that the National Weather Service makes predictions of the forecast, while the state climatologist tracks statistics and trends. However, based on the NWS forecast, Angel says colder temperatures should settle over Illinois by the weekend, and dryer air should prevail.

"The standing water will take a few days to freeze," said Angel. "Look for the pools of water to turn into patches of ice by this time next week."

Interviews are available with Jim Angel, Ph.D., State Climatologist, Illinois Water Survey. Contact Gayle Simpson 217/558-1543 or 217/725-9083 or Joe Bauer, 217/558-1537.

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OSHA REMINDS EMPLOYERS TO POST INJURY/ILLNESS SUMMARIES BEGINNING FEBRUARY 1

WASHINGTON — Beginning February 1, employers must post a summary of the total number of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred last year, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced today. Employers are only required to post the Summary (OSHA Form 300A) — not the OSHA 300 Log — from Feb. 1 to Apr. 30, 2005.

The summary must list the total numbers of job-related injuries and illnesses that occurred in 2004 and were logged on the OSHA 300 form. Employment information about annual average number of employees and total hours worked during the calendar year is also required to assist in calculating incidence rates. Companies with no recordable injuries or illnesses in 2004 must post the form with zeros on the total line. All establishment summaries must be certified by a company executive.

The form is to be displayed in a common area wherever notices to employees are usually posted. Employers must make a copy of the summary available to employees who move from worksite to worksite, such as construction workers, and employees who do not report to any fixed establishment on a regular basis.

Employers with ten or fewer employees and employers

in certain industry groups are normally exempt from federal OSHA injury and illness recordkeeping and posting requirements. A complete list of exempt industries in the retail, services, finance and real estate sectors is posted on OSHA's website.

Exempted employers may still be selected by the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics to participate in an annual statistical survey. All employers covered by OSHA need to comply with safety and health standards and must report verbally within eight hours to the nearest OSHA office all accidents that result in one or more fatalities or in the hospitalization of three or more employees.

Copies of the OSHA Forms 300, 300A and 301 are available on the OSHA Recordkeeping Webpage in either Adobe PDF or Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet format.

Employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure the safety and health of America's workers by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

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USDA RELEASES FINAL RULE AND PROVIDES UP TO \$15 MILLION FOR CONSERVATION INNOVATION GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 11, 2005—Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced that up to \$15 million is available for Conservation Innovation Grants (CIG). This is nationwide grant competition that provides farmers and ranchers with the opportunity, through innovation, to address some of the country's most pressing natural resource conservation needs.

"These grants offer an opportunity to promote public-private partnerships that provide innovative technologies and approaches to environmental enhancement and protection on working agricultural lands," Veneman said. These technologies and approaches will help farmers and ranchers improve environmental health and comply with federal, state and local regulations."

The 2002 Farm Bill established these grants as part of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, administered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). A request for proposals (RFP) is available on the federal eGrants website at <http://www.grants.gov> and on the NRCS website. Applicants will have 75 days to submit proposals. The final rule was published in the January 11 Federal Register.

CIG is offered to a diverse set of potential applicants, including state and local agencies, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, tribes and individuals, to help develop, test, implement and transfer innovative environmental solutions. Projects may be from one to three years in length and must address at least one of the CIG natural resource concerns identified annually by NRCS. Grants will fund projects targeting innovative on-the-ground conservation, including pilot projects and field demonstrations.

The final rule describes a national competition and a corresponding state-level competition. The CIG national component was implemented in fiscal year 2004. A national competition is being offered again in fiscal year 2005, along with the inaugural state competitions that will be piloted in a limited number of states. Funding availability for the distinct state-level competitions will be announced through public notices, separately from the national program.

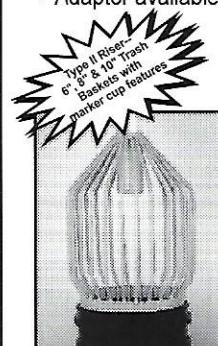
Selected applicants may receive grants up to 50 percent of the total project cost. Applicants must provide nonfederal matching funds for at least 50 percent of the project cost, of which up to 50 percent may be from in-kind contributions. An exception allows for beginning and limited resource farmers and ranchers, tribes and community-based organizations representing these groups to obtain up to 75 percent of project matching funds from in-kind contributions. The federal contribution may not exceed \$1 million for a single project.

The first CIG awards were announced by USDA on Sept. 15, 2004. Forty-one projects in 29 states were awarded a total of \$14.25 million.

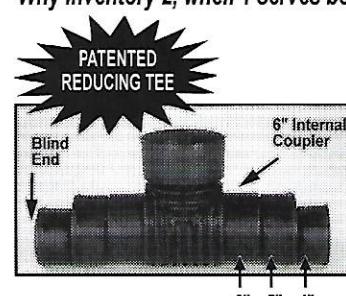
The CIG final rule and RFP may be viewed at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cig>.

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ELBERT McMULLEN RECOGNIZED BY FULTON COUNTY SWCD

The Fulton County Soil and Water Conservation District held its 58th Annual Meeting at the Heritage Inn in Canton on Tuesday, January 18, 2005. Long-time Table Grove resident, Elbert McMullen, was honored by the District at the meeting. Elbert, who recently retired after 47 years as a land improvement contractor, was recognized for the years of dedication and service provided to the County through the many conservation oriented projects he constructed.

Elbert started in the Land Improvement Contracting business on March 2, 1956, when he removed stumps for a local resident. Since that time he has completed thousands of jobs in the area. He's done major earthwork on sewage lagoons, (Table Grove and Vermont to name a couple), built dozens of farm ponds around the county and surrounding counties and performed numerous miscellaneous jobs for local farmers. These include minor clearing projects, fencerows, terraces, dry dams, grass waterways, replacing tiles, etc.

Some of the most gratifying work Elbert has performed were the many numerous conservation oriented projects for local farmers and landowners in coordination and cooperation with the local NRCS and SWCD (known as SCS and ASCS in the good old days!). Also, he replaced many culverts on township roads and county highways.

Elbert has been a long-time member of the LICA (Land Improvement Contractors Association) and he was also a past President of the Illinois Chapter. Elbert was a volunteer Fireman in Table Grove and a member of the Village Board. His wife, Theresa, was named as Mrs. Contractor of the Year in 1984 by the LICA.

Elbert and Theresa are proud to have raised six children; Christine in North Aurora, IL; Marilyn in Hardin, Montana; Sandy in Troy, Missouri; Kevin in Galesburg, IL; Barbara closest to home in Table Grove; and lastly, Keith in O'Fallon, IL. They also have 11 Grandchildren and 4 Great Grandchildren.

In summary, those who know Elbert, know a kind, gentle caring man who takes pride in his work, his family and in everything he chooses to do. One of his greatest traits is his modesty. If you told him he'd done a magnificent job on that terrace he just built, he'd shyly smile and say thanks! Congratulations, Elbert!



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GABBING WITH THE GALS...



Time for a visit once more. We all survived the state convention, the winter, and we can probably handle whatever else comes our way one way or another, right? We enjoyed the convention and especially liked the change with the banquet on Friday night instead of Saturday. We had good attendance at Devotion and appreciate the later start; otherwise it makes for a very short night. The weatherman sent us home in winter-style, snow, snow and more snow. But what else can we expect in winter? This gal figures it is much better than living in a warm climate with the risk of hurricanes and tsunamis or earthquakes. Some of the people who were in the warmer climates overseas when the storms hit have said they will go back. Guess I am a coward, not having been there but wouldn't go at all now. Plenty of sunshine and sandy beaches in our country if that's what one is looking for.

Just read a quote where they say that people will accept your ideas much more readily if you tell them that Benjamin Franklin said it first. How appropriate when I have ordered a book by Benjie, so chances are you will see some of his quotes in this column sooner or later. He was supposed to be a pretty wise guy with a sense of humor, so we shall find out one of these days. Here's one he didn't say: Education is when you read the finer print. Experience is what you get if you don't. And here's one for the countries that are still fighting each other: Truce is better than friction.

Here is some advice on making decisions: Our 25th President, William McKinley, once had to choose between two equally qualified men for a key job. He puzzled over the choice until he remembered a long ago incident. On a rainy night McKinley had boarded a crowded streetcar. One of the men he was now considering had also been aboard, though he didn't see McKinley. Then an old woman carrying a basket of laundry struggled into the car looking in vain for a seat. The job candidate pretended not to see her and kept his seat. McKinley gave up his seat to help her. Remembering this episode which he called "this little omission of kindness," McKinley decided against the man on the streetcar. Our decisions, even the small ones, tell a lot about us. Speaking of kindness, this gal wishes there was a way to thank all who have assisted me since my knees have become as obstinate as their owner. At the convention many helped and offered to help in the course of the day. Many go out of their way to help and thanks seems so pitiful when they do that. I am thankful for others in other situations that see me and come over to me to offer help – we will not be without kind people in our world, as evident in our day-to-day living. One day when the weather was inclement I had taken the grocery cart to the car and was on my way to put the cart in the corral when a lady just passing by stopped and came over and said, "I'll take that for you." Wonderful, just wonderful. And my family has been more than wonderful and are right there at the right time. Not only do I thank them, but also thank God for

creating such humanitarian people. Even our 3 ½ year old great grandson came over to the office door one day when I was leaving, and there was still snow, etc., on our porch that we walk across to get to the car; well, he came over to the door and said, "Be careful, Grandma." How's that for kindness?

Thought you might be interested in a little "education" of the mind. How many times have you told someone to 'come down off their horse?' Here's how that saying originated: Long ago, a person's rank was fairly clearly indicated by the steed he or she rode. Donkeys were used by peasants and serfs, and the run-of-the-mill horses transported shopkeepers and petty gentry. Big stallions bred and trained as chargers for use in tournaments and in war were reserved for the rich and famous. Before Columbus made his first voyage to the New World, England's pageants usually included at least one rider mounted on such a charger, or high horse. Today, a person figuratively perched astride a big stallion is likely to be so pretentious that it calls for a rebuke. So now you can analyze yourself to find out if you are qualified to be on your 'high horse.' Mark Baker could tell you that this writer would not be a problem, not being able to get up or down off my 'high horse.'

Now that the national elections are over we will soon have all our small town elections for mayor, council members, etc. We have three running for mayor of our small town; the incumbent, Brady Peters, has taken another occupation and did not choose to run again for mayor. If you live in a small town (ours is 3400, and we have a hospital) you will hear people say or complain about how this person is or that person is, but in reality, it is probably just the same in any other town the same size. Like the guy on our local radio (yes, we have our own station) will repeat every day – "Life is what you make of it." With our Lenten season upon us now maybe we can improve on our daily living and who knows, maybe that will start other to improve and it will become contagious, leading to everyone being more pleasant. We need more peace in the world and maybe it should start with us.

The word for this issue is "kindness." Since so many, many people have been kind to this person, then it is only reasonable that a lesson should be learned and to "take a page out of their book;" so maybe that's what Ramblin' Rose should work not only during lent but afterward. Even a smile sometimes is an act of kindness. And they say it takes more muscles to frown than it does to smile, so have at it. Kindness is usually repaid with kindness just like a boomerang. It is said that in the game of life is the game of boomerang – our thoughts, deeds and words return to us sooner or later, with astounding accuracy.

We are sort of at the crossroads in our organization and hopefully, if we believe, we can straighten it out and get more members to help us to do that. Keep on keepin' on!

Happy Valentines Day, Happy St. Patrick's Day and Blessed Easter is wished to all from Ramblin' Rose

LANDOWNERS, DUCKS UNLIMITED AND SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS COME TOGETHER TO STOP EROSION AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY ALONG THE ILLINOIS RIVER

Landowners in nine counties (Bureau, Marshall, Putnum, Peoria, Woodford, Stark, Fulton, Cass and Menard) along the Illinois River are eligible to receive cost share assistance to install multi-purpose soil, water and wetland conservation practices on their property. This is made possible through a special program, the Illinois River Basin Water Quality Initiative, sponsored by Ducks Unlimited in partnership with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Funding for Ducks Unlimited's Illinois River Basin Water Quality Initiative was provided through the cooperative support of Senator Richard Durbin as part of the 2005 Agricultural Appropriations Act. Commenting on the program, Senator Durbin said, "I commend Ducks Unlimited, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and the Natural Resources Conservation Service for taking the initiative to promote new innovative conservation practices through voluntary, incentive-based programs. I encourage Illinois farmers to take advantage of this unique opportunity to improve water quality and wildlife habitat on their property."

The Illinois River Basin Water Quality Initiative was designed by Ducks Unlimited to aid farmers in controlling the loss of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment from their land. According to Ducks Unlimited, cost-share and technical assistance is available from local Soil and Water Conservation Districts in the nine targeted counties to assist farmers who wish to use the following conservation practices on their farms: Managed tile drainage systems; Multi-purpose water and sediment control basins; and Created wetlands that capture run-off from cropped fields.

Eric Schenck, Regional Biologist for Ducks Unlimited, says that landowners willing to install one or more of the approved conservation practices and demonstrate their use to other farmers in their county are especially encouraged to apply. According to Schenck, \$100,000 of cost-share assistance is available through the nine local Soil and Water Conservation Districts to help farmers install such demonstration practices.

With more than one million supporters, Ducks Unlimited is the world's largest wetland and waterfowl conservation organization. Since its founding in 1937, DU has raised more than \$1.5 billion and conserved nearly 11 million acres of critical wildlife habitat across North America. Wetlands are nature's most productive ecosystems, but the United States has lost more than half of its original wetlands and continues to lose more than 100,000 wetland acres every year.

TAKING A DEEP BREATH

After being inside all day at work, you might think to yourself as you step outside to go home, "My it's good to breathe fresh air". You may be right. Yet air quality varies from place to place and, like the weather, from day to day. How can you know how "good" the air is? The EPA uses the Air Quality Index (AQI) to provide timely and easy to understand information on whether air pollution levels pose a health concern. By logging on to www.epa.gov/airnow/ and clicking on "local forecast and conditions" you can connect with one of seven urban areas in Illinois (Rockford is one) and find air quality information. On February 1st and 2nd the report for Rockford indicated that the index was between 101 and 150, that the primary pollutant is Particles (PM2.5), and that this is "Unhealthy for Sensitive Groups" - "People with heart or lung disease, older adults, and children should reduce prolonged or heavy exertion." The same report appeared for the Quad Cities and Madison. PM2.5 is particles 2.5 micrometers in diameter and smaller.

Particulate matter is the main ingredient of haze, soot, and airborne dust. "Particle pollution occurs year-round and is a mixture of microscopic solids (metals, soil, dust and allergens) and liquid droplets (including acids and organic chemicals) suspended in air". Particles can be carried in the air over long distances. Small particles of 2.5 microns in diameter and smaller pose the greatest problems because they attach to toxins, are inhaled deep into your lungs, and even get into your bloodstream. (Wisconsin Natural Resources, December 2004)

Particles can be suspended in the air for long periods of time. Some particles are large or dark enough to be seen as soot or smoke. Others are so small that individually they can only be detected with an electron microscope. Some particles are directly emitted into the air from a variety of sources such as cars, trucks, buses, factories, construction sites, tilled fields, unpaved roads, stone crushing, and burning of wood. Other particles may be formed in the air from the chemical change of gases formed indirectly when gases from burning fuels react with sunlight and water vapor. Some can result from fuel combustion in motor vehicles, at power plants, and in other industrial processes. (www.epa.gov/airnow/)

Five other substances impacting air quality are measured for the AQI: carbon monoxide from motor vehicle exhaust, construction equipment, boats, industrial processes, and fires; sulfur dioxide from coal-fired power plants and industrial processing facilities; nitrogen oxide from motor vehicles, electric utilities, and industrial and residential furnaces; lead from lead smelters, battery plants, and industrial facilities that burn fuel; and ozone from vehicle exhaust, industrial emissions, gasoline vapors, and chemical solvents.

We each breathe over 22,000 times a day. The challenge of making our air cleaner belongs to all of us.

Della Moen, Board Member, Stephenson Soil and Water Conservation District

USDA ANNOUNCES THE NATION'S FIRST CONSERVATION EASEMENT IN THE GRASSLAND RESERVE PROGRAM

Agriculture Secretary Ann M. Veneman has announced the first conservation easement completed in the Grassland Reserve Program (GRP). The easement is located on 83 acres of grassland in Sumter County, S.C.

"Our nation's grasslands provide significant economic and ecological benefits and play a key role in environmental quality," said Veneman. "This program helps conserve grasslands and helps maintain viable ranching and farming operations. This easement provides permanent protection for the property's ranching operation from conversion to non-grassland uses."

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) worked with Rowland Alston, the South Carolina landowner, to develop a grassland resources conservation plan that will maintain the viability of a perennial stand of mixed grasses through common grazing practices such as rotational grazing and cross fencing. Also, habitat for bobwhite quail will be protected from haying and mowing during the primary nesting season.

GRP, a voluntary program offering landowners the opportunity to protect, restore and enhance grasslands on their property, is administered by NRCS, the Farm Service Agency and the Forest Service. The program emphasizes protection for grasslands that are under threat of conversion to cropland or other uses.

The Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 authorized USDA to enroll up to 2 million acres of restored and improved grasslands, rangelands, pasturelands, shrublands and other similar lands into GRP easements.

GRP participants may enroll eligible lands through rental agreements consisting of 10, 15, 20 or 30-years, or through 30-year or permanent easements. In fiscal year 2004, NRCS and FSA jointly processed 10,122 GRP applications on 6.5 million acres.

Since the beginning of the program in fiscal year 2003, 302 easement projects have been approved in 37 states covering 184,842 acres valued at approximately \$61 million. GRP easements have not been completed for these projects. NRCS and GRP participants have jointly developed grassland resources conservation plans, completed appraisals and are finalizing the easement acquisition process.

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

FYI...

There will be a Special Membership meeting on March 5, 2005 immediately following the regularly scheduled Board Meeting starting at 3 p.m.

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COMMITTEE FUNCTION, RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

The committee system is the best system yet devised in a democracy to capture and develop ideas into a workable program. The FUNCTION of each committee is to gather ideas from every source that relates to its area of concern. Those ideas should be advanced in the form of a proposal. Each member of the committee has a personal RESPONSIBILITY to become knowledgeable in that area of the committee's concern. Each committee has the AUTHORITY to investigate, research, meet submit reports and develop proposals, to the extent of its budget. Committees are authorized by the By-Laws as an instrument of the Board as a means to secure ideas and suggestion from the membership. Committees which do not gather and refine ideas for presentation to the Board are missing the opportunity to serve the Association. Committees can be no stronger than the individual members who serve the Association.



Application For AFFILIATE Membership

Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association



2060 Timberbrook Drive, Suite 3, Springfield, IL 62702 • Phone: (217) 787-7260 • Fax: (217) 787-7264

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: _____

County: _____ ILICA Area Number: _____ Sponsor: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____



Application For ASSOCIATE Membership

Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association



2060 Timberbrook Drive, Suite 3, Springfield, IL 62702 • Phone: (217) 787-7260 • Fax: (217) 787-7264

hereby makes application for Associate Membership in the ILLINOIS LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION, INC., (ILICA) and enclose Two Hundred Dollars (\$200) 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.

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.

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I, _____, hereby apply for active membership in the ILLINOIS LAND IMPROVEMENT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION INC. (ILICA) and enclosed \$_____ as my annual membership dues for the year _____. One dollar (\$1.00) of this amount is for the subscription to the "Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association Newsletter" for one year.

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Address _____

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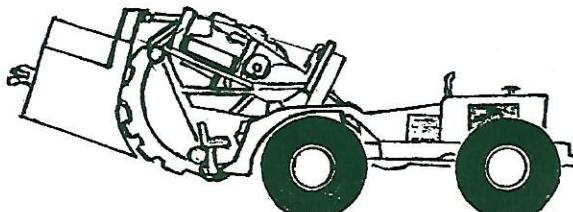
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