



[Visit Our Website](#)

Make everyday Earth Day - Green your Choices - Save Resources - Be Happy

Thanks for being our Valentine

This month is filled with heart images and messages of love. We show our love of the Earth by embracing green options whenever possible. Every day we may choose to reduce waste, reuse or recycle items. Perhaps you will join the great backyard bird count or consider purchasing an electric bicycle to cut commute emissions in good weather. Some folks are already planning this year's garden while others are making their homes more energy efficient. Thanks for all you do!

[Visit Our Website](#)

Join the Great Backyard Bird Count

Join this year's Great Backyard Bird Count running Feb. 17 through Feb. 20. It is very easy, even for begging bird enthusiasts.

1. Decide where you will watch birds.
2. Watch birds for 15 minutes or more, at least once over the four days, February 17-20, 2023.
3. Identify all the birds you see or hear within your planned time/location and use the best tool for sharing your bird sightings:
 - If you are a beginning bird admirer and new to bird



Sign Up at <https://www.birdcount.org/participate/>

identification, try using the [Merlin Bird ID app](#) to tell us what birds you are seeing or hearing.

- If you have participated in the count before and want to record numbers of birds, try the [eBird Mobile app](#) or enter your bird list on the [eBird website](#) (desktop/laptop).

If you already contribute to Merlin or eBird, continue what you are doing!
All entries over the 4-days count towards GBBC.

Rural Energy Grant from USDA

USDA is making \$300 million available under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) to expand renewable energy and support energy-efficiency projects for people living in rural America. This funding includes \$250 million provided by the Biden-Harris Administration's historic legislative package known as the Inflation Reduction Act. **The application deadline is March 31, 2023.**

USDA is seeking applications for Fiscal Year 2023 funding. Agricultural producers and rural small businesses are eligible applicants for loan guarantees and grants to develop renewable energy systems and to make energy efficiency improvements. State and local governments, federally-recognized tribes, land-grant colleges or universities or other institutions of higher education, rural electric cooperatives, public power entities, and Resource Conservation & Development Councils are eligible applicants for grants to conduct energy audits and provide development assistance. To discuss potential projects and ask questions about the REAP program or the application process, contact:



Need More Information:

Callie Heidbreder,
USDA Rural Energy Coordinator
2118 W. Park Court, Suite A
Champaign, IL 61821
(217) 403-

6217 callie.heidbreder@usda.gov

Electric Bicycle Popularity Growing

Incentivizing e-bike use by providing e-bike rentals and charging stations at parks, in downtowns and on bike trails may help increase bike ridership for work, for errands, and more while also providing access to people unable to ride traditional bikes. The bikes often offer a thumb throttle that can help with quick starts and for people unable to pedal the bike in a fast manner. While most bikes currently require some pedal motion, this advancement in biking up to 25 miles an hour may truly reduce vehicle use in good weather conditions.



Photo Courtesy of Bob Kaminecki

Seed Giveaway with Univ of IL

Getting ready for gardening? Need seeds? Join the University of Illinois Will County Master Gardeners, Naturalists and Composters for their Annual SeedFest on Saturday, February 25. It runs from 9am to 11am at the Will County Extension Office. This is a family friendly FREE event. Each attendee may choose up to 15 packets of seeds. No registration needed!



Race to Community Solar

ComEd has announced the opening of the 75th community solar development in its service territory, a 2.495 megawatt (MW) dubbed the Speedway Solar project. The project will provide more than 350 ComEd customers with the benefits of solar energy and savings on their energy bills. The Speedway Solar project includes more than 2,300 solar panels and occupies 31 acres on West Sharp Road in Elwood. By the end of this year, ComEd expects to have doubled the number of community solar projects interconnected to its electric grid to more



ComEd's Speedway Solar Project in Elwood

than 150, serving approximately 36,000 customers!

NEW Group Buy in 2023

Plans are underway to launch local group buys for geothermal and air source heat pumps, two additional renewable sources of energy that safely and efficiently provide comfortable indoor temperatures and energy savings. Geothermal wells, like those used at Joliet Junior College, exchange thermal energy between the earth below our feet and the air in a room. Air source heat pumps like the one pictured, even in cold climates like Illinois', also keep buildings warm in the winter and cool in the summer by moving thermal energy around instead of burning fuel to produce heat. Read more about [geothermal](#) and [air source heat pumps](#), and keep an eye out for group buys beginning as early as this spring.



Split Heat/AC units are energy efficient and offer a variety of applications

ReStore offers Reuse Options

The ReStore is the brain child of the Habitat for Humanity non-profit that builds homes with low income folks to assist them in becoming home owners. Homes are built by professionals with assistance from volunteers and the soon-to-be owners. Over the years, the mission realized that extra building supplies could be sold to raise funds for projects and help anyone needing to make repairs to their home. In Joliet and Aurora, with convenient hours of operation, DIY residents and handymen find sinks, cabinets, wood, drywall and much more. They even sell recycled paint at much lower prices than standard paint sold at regular retail outlets.



Offers a variety of DIY home repair items and furniture at these locations:

[1395 N Larkin, Joliet](#)
[1400 Fox Valley Center Dr, Aurora](#)

Schools Grow Gardens with UofI

The University of Illinois Extension Office works year round to assist schools, nursing homes and more with Gardens and Gardening Education. If you are a teacher or school engaged parent interested in starting a pollinator garden or vegetable garden at your school, you should contact Nancy Kuhajda, Will County Master Gardener, Master Naturalist & Master Composter Program Coordinator. She can be reached by phone at 815-727-9296 or email at kuhajda@illinois.edu



Kids love Gardens

PBS airs series on Energy

PBS is offering a series titled *Energy Switch* hosted by Dr. Scott Tinker, viewers hear diverse opinions from America's leading energy experts with differing views from across the energy policy and political spectrum. Perhaps groups will be interested in streaming it by selecting one of the 25 minute episodes, and hosting a meaningful discussion afterwards. [Click for a link](#) to more information and showtimes.



PBS Saturday mornings at 5:30am
Energy Switch

Joliet's ReThink Water Program

The City of Joliet is offering anyone receiving service from the city to purchase a [Rain Barrel at a discount](#). The City will provide a \$30.00 subsidy per rain barrel. The cost of the subsidized rain barrel is \$34.50 plus tax and a delivery fee of \$18.50 also applies. The City is also encouraging anyone on their water service to invest in a [low flow toilet](#). Not only will you save money every time you flush, you may also receive a \$100 rebate from the City of Joliet.



Metra Improves Mass Transit

Metra rolls out a brand new way for you to interact with the train system. The new [metratracker.com](https://www.metratracker.com), is a real-time train-tracking website that lets customers see precisely where their trains are and when they will reach their stations. The new site, made possible by a wholesale replacement of Metra's previous train tracking system, also makes it easier than ever to view schedules and plan a trip on Metra. Coupled with their continuation of the \$100 monthly pass, there is no better time to try Metra!



Try [Metra](https://www.metra.com)

Solar Group Buys Returning '23

Not sure about solar? The Grow Solar (Solarize) program, led by non-profits Citizens Utility Board and Midwest Renewable Energy Association, has educated over 3,000 people about solar opportunities in Will County and the region. Nearly 300 properties (including a dozen in Will County) have received group buy discounts on their solar PV systems since 2019. Once again in 2023, free informational solar events are coming to Will County, and residents will get a chance to have any of their questions answered. Stay tuned for upcoming program details this spring.



Recycled T-Shirt

The company, [For Days](https://www.fordays.com), makes a variety of clothes from recycled materials, including some great loungewear and a bunch of T-shirts. This one comes from 22 percent recycled cotton, and may be imprinted or worn plain. This is known as the Recycled Ribbed Jersey. When you are done wearing it, they will take it back to make into a new product.



**Will County does not endorse any businesses or products but strives to bring attention to those made with recycled content.*

String Light Success

Many thanks to all that participated in the past 8-9 week String Light Recycling effort at the three County locations. **Nearly 700 pounds of holiday lights were collected** in carts at the County Office Building, the Land Use office and at Sunny Hill Nursing Home. The most were contributed at the County Office Building - a whopping 425 pounds. Our thanks to Homewood Disposal for the collection carts and to A-Team Recyclers for the excellent collection service whenever the carts reached capacity. If you still have unwanted string lights, bring them to one of our Electronics Drop-Off sites.



Facebook: Food Storage Post

There is a lot to find on the internet regarding best food storage practices. Given the U.S. is estimated to waste 40% of our food, and the cost of many foods has been rising, it is in our best interest to store food properly. Reducing Food Waste saves money and time. Carrots submerged in water in the refrigerator will last up to 4 weeks. (varies by type and freshness at time of purchase) Use soft carrots in soups or stews, or make them crisp again by submerging them in ice-water.



Upcoming Events

February 18: Great Backyard Bird Count

February 25: Seed Fest

March 25: Earth Hour 8:30am-9:30pm

April 1: Recyclepalooza with HHW in Joliet (appointments now available)

April 8: Electronics Recycling in Shorewood



Water Conservation



Search for recycling and disposal options on willcountygreen.com



Geothermal Energy



Green Business Star



School Earth Flag



Take a Virtual Tour



Solar Energy



Info on Electric Vehicles



Wind Energy



Cleaning Alternatives



Donate Items



Composting



C-PACE Program



Reporting Data



Sustainable Infrastructure



Electronics Drop-Off



Household Hazardous
Waste Drop-Offs



Medication Take-Back

WillCountyGreen.com

A website of Will County
58 E. Clinton Street
Joliet, IL 60432
815-727-8834



Resource Recovery
& Energy
*A Division of the
Will County Land Use
Department*

**Will County
Jennifer Bertino-Tarrant
County Executive**





[Try email marketing for free today!](#)