



# Tallgrass Sierran

January/February 2009 Volume 37 No. 1

THE HEART OF ILLINOIS GROUP OF THE SIERRA CLUB ♦ P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614 ☎ (309) 637-1393

## HOI Group Meetings

**WED  
JAN 21** HOI Sierra Club New  
Year's Resolutions  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

A new federal administration will be sworn in on Jan. 20<sup>th</sup> and Federal environmental policy will take a 180° turn from the past 8 years. In this new environment where should HOI Sierra put its time and efforts? You are invited to share your thoughts at tonight's meeting. You can also send a letter with your thoughts to our post office box, or email members of the Executive Committee listed on the back of the newsletter. *All are welcome!*

**WED  
FEB 18** Solar and Wind Energy in  
Central Illinois  
Forest Park Nature Center, 7 p.m.

Now that you have received your January utility bills, it would be a good time to learn the costs and benefits of solar energy. Jason Loyet with Bauer Power in Dunlap will present a program on the application of solar and wind energy here in Central Illinois. *All are welcome!*

### Make Your New Year Resolution GREEN !

You CAN do it: choose something new that you can do to help the environment for 2009 ! If you have not already bought canvass or other carry sacks to stop using plastic bags: do it ! Or, maybe you have been waiting to replace your old light bulbs with CFLs: choose a room and do it ! Or maybe you thought about getting a clothes line or folding clothes rack: do it ! What else can you do to take steps to being greener in 2009 ? Yes, you can: just do it ! Happy New Year to All !

## Dirty Coal and Nude Voting

BY RALPH GINN, *Opinion Columnist*

The future of coal as a major source of energy will be in the hands of president-elect Barack Obama. He has repeatedly stated full support for reducing carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, as a moderator of global warming, but he is from Illinois, a state with vast coal resources, and he will be faced with the reality that coal is the dirtiest of energy sources. The new President will have some tough choices as he formulates energy policy. During the campaign, Obama said, "We need to modernize and clean up our coal plants and move forward to energy independence. We need to look into building four or five clean-coal plants, and find out what technologies work and what technologies don't." A first test of the new President's coal policy will come when he considers funding two Illinois coal-gasification plants, the Taylorville Energy Center in Christian County and the FutureGen plant near Mattoon. Progress on FutureGen came to an abrupt halt in October when the U.S. Department of Energy pulled its support for FutureGen and a dozen other utility companies because of cost overruns.

When Mr. Obama spoke the words, "clean coal" he was referring to the products of coal gasification and liquefying coal. Gasification uses heat and pressure to covert coal into a gas, changing the carbon dioxide into an oil-like substance and injecting it into abandoned gas or oil wells, a process called underground sequestration. Liquid coal is produced with heat and large amounts of water. When burned it releases twice the amount

of greenhouse gases, per gallon, as regular gasoline. John Mead, director of the Coal Research Center at Southern Illinois University, says, "The technology exists to cleanly burn high-sulfur coal, including projects like FutureGen and the Taylorville Energy Center."

Jeff Goodell, author of *Big Coal: the Dirty Secret Behind America's Energy Future*, says *clean coal* is a slogan, like fat-free donuts, a fantasy created by Madison Avenue advertising to paint coal white. He states that there are no commercially available technologies, including underground sequestration, that are financially feasible to burn coal without accelerating global warming.

While Barack Obama's policy is funding a few coal plants to explore technologies that would produce clean coal, the reality of coal economics and feasibility may be, given the current economic crisis, an insurmountable obstacle. Coal is similar to shale rock oil in that America owns enormous qualities of both, but extraction and cleaning is at best a futuristic dream that is likely to be buried by cost and technology failures.

While the to-and-fro of clean coal swirls above our heads, let's not take our eye off of 20th century type coal-fired power plants. There are more than 100 of these currently under proposal in America and, if just a few are realized, the increase in global warming pollution will make our efforts to reverse climate change irrelevant.

Pollution is not the only problem with coal. Mining creates negative impact on  
(See *Dirty Coal*, page 2)



Explore, enjoy and protect the planet

## Evidence Mounts of Severe Health Impacts of Toxic Waste Landfills

BY TOM EDWARDS

While Peoria Disposal Company (PDC) continues to seek legal means not to have to obey its ordered closure of its "hazardous (toxic) waste landfill" at Peoria this year, evidence keeps growing of severe health hazards of such landfills to people living near their vicinity.

Recent research in New York state revealed "strikingly elevated" hospitalization rates for strokes (15% higher among people living near such waste sites), diabetes (25% higher), heart disease (15 to 20% higher), hypertension (19% higher), and infectious respiratory disease (15 to 19% higher). In New Jersey higher rates of premature births were reported in the vicinity of such a landfill, and in Europe elevated rates of birth defects. Studies in New York state report that the "major routes of exposure" are "inhalation of contaminated air near hazardous waste sites." (About 54,000 people live within 3 miles of Peoria's toxic

waste landfill, located off Rt. 8 and adjoining the city's west boundary.)

According to Army Corps of Engineers data, Peoria County has the nation's only such landfill still active that a) sits immediately upwind of the air City of Peoria people must breathe, and b) sits right above (50 feet) the aquifer from which most of the local area's water is pumped. Illinois is one of only 13 states that has such a landfill, and it is the only one from middle Indiana to the Rocky Mts. in the nation's top half.

Also, the federal EPA's 2002 "Toxic Release Inventory" listed Peoria County as having the highest TRI in Illinois, with PDC listed as the main source by far. Peoria County's TRI was 4.3 times that of Cook County's (Chicago), according to the EPA data. These studies underscore the need for action in regard to PDC's toxic waste dump site.

## Ruling from Illinois Pollution Control Board Expected Regarding PDC Delisting Application

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

The Illinois Pollution Control Board could announce a ruling on the application by Peoria Disposal Company (PDC) to delist Electric Arc Furnace Dust waste (EAF) from being required to be landfilled in their hazardous waste landfill at Peoria, in January. In December, a letter copied to the IPCB raises issues that PDC may be infringing on an existing patent. A company from Indiana raised concerns in a letter to Royal Coulter of PDC, that the PDC process sounds much like their patents. Because PDC has not disclosed their actual EAF process to the public, the Indiana company could not be certain that PDC was infringing on their patents. Whether or not this will impact the delisting decision is not known at this time. You can view the letter and other filings in the PDC delisting application on the IPCB website at [www.ipcb.state.il.us](http://www.ipcb.state.il.us) and click on "Clerks Office Online" and enter case # AS 08-10.

### *(Dirty Coal, from page 1)*

the land, water supply, and wildlife. Locally, the strip mine proposed by Capital Resources, near Banner Marsh, survives long past a deserved execution date thanks to an incomprehensible decision by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources to issue a permit for the project. Rare eagle nests and osprey could be endangered and the community of Banner's water supply is threatened. The Illinois Attorney General's office and several environmental groups, including HOI, have long opposed this mine. And, what is more predictable than a late-hour effort by the Bush administration to relax envi-

ronmental rules on mountain top mining in Appalachia. New Bush regulations would remove a buffer zone that prevents mine activity, including dumping of mine fill, within 100 feet of a stream or river.

With the country's economy headed south, no pun intended to Southern Republican Senators who represent the states of Toyota and Nissan, we can benefit from lighter thoughts. So, what do you think about the request of Caliente Resorts in Pasco County Florida? They want Brian Corley, supervisor of elections, to provide a polling place for nude voting. Mr. Corley is opposed. And what about ending daylight savings time? Two

## Year's Largest Political Contributions from PDC

BY TOM EDWARDS

According to the Illinois State Board of Elections, local political entities who received by far the largest contributions to their political funds from Peoria Disposal Company in 2008 are:

- State Senators Dale Risinger (R) and David Koehler (D), \$2,500 each. That is the most any local legislator has ever received from PDC in a given year, and four times more than PDC gave Risinger 3 years ago. Neither were up for re-election. Koehler's predecessor, Sen. George Shadid formerly received the most from PDC, including \$2,000 in both '05 and '06. Koehler-Shadid's senatorial district includes PDC's landfill.
- Darin LaHood who unsuccessfully ran for Peoria County state's attorney, received \$2,375 from Kathy Coulter, wife of PDC owner Royal Coulter.
- The Political Action Committee of the Peoria Chamber of Commerce received \$1,000 from PDC.

Such political donations are required to be reported only if the donor's aggregate donations exceed \$3,000. They are pennies compared to the many millions a landfill clean-up could cost the landfill operator and/or taxpayers, as it has elsewhere. The Love Canal dump site in New York state cost \$247 million to rectify in 1980, and its was less than 100th of PDC's volume.



researchers from the University of California, Santa Barbara conducted a study in Indiana, where daylight time was in effect for only a few counties during the year 2006. They found that residential electrical use increased one percent with daylight time, primarily because of a rise in air conditioner use during summer months. Their computer model predicted that even greater increases are incurred in warmer, southern states. Maybe Arizona, which does not observe daylight time, knew something that the experts in Congress did not.

# Canton Citizens Forming Local Group to Raise Environmental Awareness

BY JOYCE BLUMENSHINE

Canton area citizens are organizing a group named Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues, Canton Lake and Its Watershed. The new group plans to educate the community about the importance of Canton Lake. Their issues include protecting the lake and its watershed for their community and their future. Brenda Dilts, a retired school teacher, and her husband Ron, along with others are planning their first fund-raiser for January 17th. A chicken and home-made noodles dinner will be held at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall in Canton. A silent auction will be in conjunction with the dinner.

Some members of the group have requested that the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) hold an Administrative Review of the North Canton Mine Permit #385, which would allow strip mining in 1,083 acres of the watershed about one mile north of Canton Lake. Currently attorneys for Capital Resources Development Company, now named North Canton, LLC, and the

IDNR, are in discussions with David Wentworth, attorney for individuals and for the HOI Group which is challenging the mine permit. The IDNR Administrative Review hearing is expected to begin in 2009.

At stake is the main feeder stream to Canton Lake. The strip mine would impound millions of gallons of water currently going to Canton Lake and use the water for mine operations. Canton is in the process of building a water pipeline from the Illinois River to bring water to Canton. Numerous delays in this project have been encountered. Canton and sur-

rounding communities currently rely on Canton Lake for their water supply. A popular campground and recreational area is also at the lake. Other facilities at the lake include the Youth Acres Camp, which serves over 3,000 young people a year. The mine would also impact the West Branch of Copperas Creek, which is a tributary of Copperas Creek which runs into the Illinois River.

Donations are needed. Contributions can be sent to Heart of IL Group Sierra. Indicate "North Canton Mine fund" and mail to HOI Sierra, P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614.

## **Please help your Sierra friends & other neighbors in Fulton County**

Fund-Raiser Dinner for Canton Area Citizens for Environmental Issues,  
Canton Lake and Its Watershed

**Saturday, January 17, 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.**

at the First Christian Church Fellowship Hall  
Ave. B. and West Elm St., Canton

- Home-Made Noodles with Chicken
- Real mashed potatoes
- Sides, drink, dessert

Tickets: \$8.00 - Reservations Required : Phone 309-688-0950



## Help the HOI Sierra Club: Be a 2009 Financial Sponsor

Yes, you can help HOI Sierra Club by stepping up to donate much needed funds to sponsor some of our main activities in 2009. We need donors to step up to the plate and take a swing for your local HOI Sierra Group's needs. Choose to fund all or part of any of the items below. (For example, \$35 will fund one Group meeting or half the paper costs of one newsletter issue.)

\$35 - Forest Park Nature Center rental for one Group meeting (9 meetings in 2009)

\$22 - One month for the HOI phone line

\$70 - The paper for one HOI newsletter issue (6 issues per year)

\$97 - The mailing cost of one HOI newsletter issue (6 issues per year)

\$195 - The printing cost of one HOI newsletter issue (6 issues per year)

OR JUST DONATE! Donors will be recognized at HOI Group meetings and in the newsletter, or will remain anonymous if requested. Send your check made out to HOI Sierra Club and be sure to indicate what you wish to sponsor. Mail to P.O. Box 3593, Peoria, IL 61614.

## Eastern Peoria Bypass

BY RUDY HABBEN

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) has appointed a Community Advisory Group (CAG) for the eastern bypass around the Peoria metro area. In the past this was known as the ring road. In 1998 a corridor called B5 was identified but the next phase, which would locate an alignment within the corridor, did not progress. A new corridor study will be conducted in 2009.

The CAG is composed of 47 members made up of elected officials from Woodford and Tazewell Counties as well as area businesses, environmental and recreation groups. In addition, over 100 persons have been selected to serve as advisory groups on: agriculture, community impacts, commuting, controlled growth, recreation, environment and economic impacts.

The corridor study is to be completed by summer 2010. The next phase, the alignment study, is dependent on funding. All activities of the Community Advisory Group will be available to the general public via newsletters, and all meeting minutes of the CAG will be on the web at [www.easternbypass.com](http://www.easternbypass.com).

Yes, I want to join the Sierra Club! My check is enclosed.

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City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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