

# ILICA

Land Improvement Contractors Of America · Illinois Chapter

#### March - April 2019

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Upcoming Events: National LICA Convention Tucson, AZ Feb. 26-March 2, 2019 Board of Directors Meeting

Richland Comm. College: Decatur March 9, 2019

## **2018 ILICA AWARD RECIPIENTS**

**NEWS** 



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## SAFETY WORKSHOP SERIES IMPACTFUL



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- Extension Connection: How To Keep Phosphorus In A Closed Agricultural Loop? An Innovative Practice To Capture And Recover Phosphates From Tile Drainage (page 12-13)
- State Convention and Members Mtg. Recap (page 14-15)

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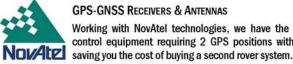




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## The ILICA News



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Safety Workshop Series Impactful
State Convention & Members' Mtg. Recap
2018 ILICA Award Recipients

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## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**



Warmer weather is on the way....well...I hear they're getting ready to plant corn in Texas at least.

First off, a big thank you to Eric Layden and his Convention Committee for an excellent convention! This year's

convention offered a large variety of education presentations, some gambling and auction entertainment and plenty of interaction during meals and dedicated trade show time. Great job everyone!

Next year's convention will be at a new venue for Illinois LI-CA. Make sure and mark your calendars, we will be moving to the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, Illinois for the 2020 convention being held February 20-22. This new venue should allow for a larger and more interactive trade show, and I know that the convention committee is excited for what's to come in 2020! While you're marking your calendars, don't forget that we will have some shows coming up, and we will need help from our contractors to complete them. In May or June, we will be working with TWI constructing a wetland on the ICC Campus in East Peoria, and at the end of August we're once again planning on installing tile at the Farm Progress Show in Decatur. We appreciate and accept any and all volunteers!

Lastly, I would like to thank Lee Bunting for a job well done during his presidency. Lee has put in countless hours, in and out of the spotlight, for ILICA these past 2 years. I applaud his dedication and sacrifice for ILICA. Once again Lee, from all of us at ILICA: "THANK YOU!"

Respectfully,

Grant Curtis



## NEW MEMBERS

## **Active Contractors**

### Will Dalenberg

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### **David Silver**

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## BOARD & MEMBERS' MEETING SCHEDULE

Unless changed by the Board during the year, the ILICA business meetings are scheduled as follows:

March 9, 2019 - Regular Meeting of the Board: Richland Comm. College, Decatur

May 11, 2019 - Regular Meeting of the Board: Jubilee Cafe, Kickapoo

Exact location, committee meeting times & other details will be published in the ILICA News and sent to members via mail and/or email.

## **Associate Members**

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### 2019 BOARD MEMBER MTG. ATTENDANCE

A = absent P = present		C = cancelled meeting				
Area / Director	Jan	Mar	May	July	Sep	Nov
Pres: Grant Curtis	Р					
VP: Steve Anderson	Ρ					
1st VP: Eric Layden	Ρ					
Area 1 - Brian Brooks	Ρ					
Area 2 - Vacant						
Area 3 - Wes Litwiller	Ρ					
Area 3 - Joe Streitmatter	Ρ					
Area 4 - David Kennedy	Р					
Area 4 - John McCoy	Р					
Area 5 - Vacant						
Area 6 - Jon Seevers	Р					
Area 6 - Bill Dean	Ρ					
Area 7 - <b>Vacant</b>						
Area 8 - Norm Kocher	Α					
Area 8 - Tom Beyers	Р					
Associate Dir: Brad Baker	Р					

## Have Great Ideas? Seeking Area Directors

Represent your ILICA Area and share your voice to help steer the Association into the future. Call the office for more details: 309.446.3700





## 2018 FARM BILL BREAKDOWN: CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), first created in the 1985 Farm Bill, has undergone a number of changes over the last several farm bills, including changes in overall acreage and an increased focus on specific resource concerns through special initiatives. The new farm bill allows for an increased acreage cap, while also addressing the issue of CRP competing with farmers for productive land by reducing rental rates, costshare and incentive payments.

#### Acreage Cap & Allocation

The 2014 Farm Bill reduced overall CRP acres from a cap of 36 million acres to 24 million acres. While there were several reasons for this reduction, NACD had concerns this reduction may have gone too far. In the fall of 2017, along with not having a national sign up for CRP general acres, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) stopped accepting applications for CRP continuous acres, noting the program was too near its 24 million acre cap to do so.

NACD supported an increase to the CRP acreage cap and Congress agreed by establishing a new acreage cap at 27 million acres in the 2018 Farm Bill. Within this cap, however, there are several allocations that must be met by USDA. There is a continuous acreage "floor" that must be at least eight million acres in fiscal year 2019, rising to 8.6 million acres by the end of this farm bill. Additionally, two million acres must be allocated to the CRP Grasslands Program. On top of that, 60 percent of available acres for enrollment must be awarded using a proportional, historic allocation.

#### **Rental Rates and Cost Share Payments**

NACD supported an increase in the CRP acreage cap but not at the expense of other conservation programs. To do this, Congress had to find a way to pay for the increased acres within the program itself. This was done partially be reducing rental rates per acre. Rental rates for general acres are reduced to 85 percent of the county average, while rates for continuous acres are reduced to 90 percent of the county average. This reduction is compounded for subsequent reenrollments.

According to the Conference Report, Congress "increased CRP's annual enrollment acreage cap and reduced the soil rental rate limits in hopes that CRP will more accurately serve one of its fundamental purposes: retiring the most sensitive lands without competing with local farmland rental markets (which may preclude some farmers from having access to prime farmland). By incorporating changes in the program that are more market-based, the Managers are hopeful that highly productive land will not be taken out of production while remaining affordable for those who wish to utilize it for production agriculture."

In addition to rental rates, landowners enrolled in CRP may receive further payments for certain practices installed. The new farm bill limits practice cost-share payments to the actual cost to install the practice and caps the cost-share for seed mixes to 50 percent of the actual cost of the seed. Regarding seed mixes, this cap was implemented due to concerns that recent increases to the complexity as well as the expense of certain seed mixtures have not only led to frustrations by landowners, but have also potentially wasted taxpayer dollars.

#### Clean Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) Initiative

The 2018 Farm Bill creates a new initiative under CRP continuous sign-up called the Clear Lakes, Estuaries and Rivers (CLEAR) initiative. These contracts will support conservation practices aimed at reducing sediment loading, nutrient loading and harmful algal blooms in these water bodies to better address water quality concerns. Of the total CRP allocation given to Continuous CRP (see above), a minimum of 40 percent of these acres must be dedicated to the CLEAR initiative. The conference report also states that Congress expects USDA to place a greater emphasis on reporting on the improvements to water quality achieved due to the increased adoption of water quality practices that will go into effect as a result of CLEAR.

#### Grazing on CRP Acres

NACD believes that allowing more grazing on CRP land can be done in an environmentally sound way and can actually improve the health of the land, and we were pleased to see increased opportunities for grazing in the 2018 Farm Bill. This farm bill included many of the same allowances for grazing during emergencies without rental rate reductions included in prior farm bills. However, this farm bill adds another opportunity to graze CRP acres while not reducing rental rates.

Approximately halfway through a CRP contract, landowners must implement what is known as mid-contract management. Prior to this law, if a landowner chose to graze this land in order to keep the land properly managed, they would receive 25 percent reduction in their rental rates. At the request of NACD, Congress changed the law so that now a landowner may graze the land as part of their mid-contract management activities and not receive a payment reduction. Additionally, by grazing the land instead of using another technique, the federal government will reduce the amount of cost-share to landowners, saving taxpayer dollars as well. NACD believes this is a win-win for the landowner by providing them an economic benefit and the environment by introducing large animals which can improve the stand of the established cover.

#### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

Before the 2018 Farm Bill, the Conservation Reserve En-

## 2018 FARM BILL BREAKDOWN: CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CONT.)

hancement Program (CREP) was not explicitly authorized in statute and was a partnership between USDA and the states. The new farm bill authorizes CREP in the statute for the first time and allows nongovernmental organizations to be the lead partner but requires them to provide at least 30 percent of the total program cost. For state-led projects, the percentage will be a negotiation between USDA and the state.

The bill incentivizes more enrollment of riparian buffers in CREP, including forested riparian buffers, by authorizing the Agriculture Secretary to make-cost share payments for forested riparian buffer maintenance throughout the length of the agreement and to cover up to 100 percent of the cost incurred by the owner or operator.

#### **Pilot Programs**

The 2018 Farm Bill created two new pilot programs within CRP. The first, known as CLEAR 30, provides a longer contract option for the CLEAR initiative mentioned above in an effort to incentivize more landowners to retire these lands for longer than the traditional 10-year CRP contract. According to the Conference Report: "The Managers intend for this pilot to serve as a tool for measuring demand for longer-term CRP contracts and to provide insights into the conservation benefits associated with long-term contracts."

The other is the Soil Health and Income Protection (SHIP) pilot program. This pilot will offer short term (three to five year) contracts to landowners to remove the least productive land from their operation, up to 15 percent of the total eligible

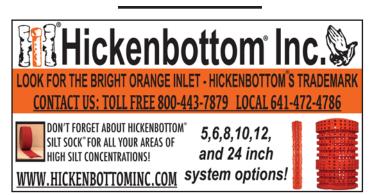
land on that farm. In return, the landowner would receive 50 percent of the normal CRP rental rate based upon the cash rent of the county. The landowner will still be required to plant cover on these acres at the cost of the landowner, though the landowner may still harvest the acres for seed or hay/graze the land outside of the primary nesting season. If the landowner is a beginning, limited-resource or sociallydisadvantaged farmer, or if the landowner is a veteran, they would receive 50 percent cost-share for the seeds and would receive 75 percent of the county rental rate.

### Transitioning out of CRP

Land coming out of CRP has long been a concern due to the investment taxpayers have made to temporarily retire that land to improve resource concerns. There is no stipulation on how the land may be utilized upon expiration of the contract, and for those landowners who are interested in farming the land again, whether that land is eligible to enroll into the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) has been murky. Additionally, there has been concern that in order to be eligible for these programs after their CRP contact expired, the farmer would have to "create" a resource concern that didn't already exist.

This farm bill makes clear that landowners may enroll in either EQIP or CSP during the final year of their CRP contract and not jeopardize their payments. Additionally, landowners may begin implementing the approved practice during this final year in preparation for returning that land to production.

Source: http://www.nacdnet.org/2019/01/22/2018-farm-bill-breakdown-conservationreserve-program/



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From designing a garden that allows you to be more mindful, to growing your own food so you can feel more at peace about what you're feeding your family, we predict that the tendencies of gardening in 2019 are leaning heavily toward creating a space that brings you health, happiness and relaxation.

#### **1. KEEPING IT LOW MAINTENANCE**

More mess equals more stress is a saying that is not limited to the indoors, which is why a disheveled garden can leave homeowners feeling overwhelmed. Considering the busy world we live in, gardeners will be looking for ways to simplify their gardens in 2019.

- Include mostly perennial plants that will come back each year and group them together based on their watering needs. For plant suggestions, talk to a master gardener in your community, attend a local garden tour to get ideas or check out the 2019 National Plants of the Year.
- Consider removing messy trees or shrubs that don't provide any ecological benefits. (For example, a tree that drops leaves

into your pond or pool; a shrub that creeps into an oftused pathway.)

- Invest in an irrigation system that can do the dirty work for you while you're away.
- Do your research when selecting hardscaping materials. Choose quality stones that won't require repair after a short amount of time or pavers that don't need to be cleaned constantly. Contain gravel pathways with robust edging.



#### 2. CREATING A STAYCATION SPOT

As designer Scott Shrader says, "Why go on vacation once a year when you can make your yard feel like you're on vacation all year round?" Gardeners are finding more ways to enjoy a staycation in the comfort of their own backyard rather than waiting in airport lines and living out of a suitcase. Here's some inspiration:

- Keep it low maintenance (see above!).
- Set up a weatherproof speaker system to enjoy music while you're outside.
- Site destination spaces—for example, a fire feature or a comfy lounge chair—in a spot that will draw people outside but not so far that you forget about it.
- Invest in outdoor furniture that you actually want to sit in.
- Include lighting to make your outdoor spaces easy to access when it gets dark out.
- Install an outdoor kitchen if you love to cook.

#### 3. MAKING BACKYARD STRUCTURES FOCAL POINTS

Some structures in the garden are necessary-sheds, walls, pool equipment boxes, etc. Since these are things you'll see every day,

why not make them beautiful? More gardeners will choose to make eye-catching structures the focal points of their gardens, rather than eyesores. Try these creative ideas:

- Use salvaged materials, such as rough barn wood and antique iron gates, to create a rustic pool house
- Repurpose an existing structure, like an old stable, into an outdoor dining pavilion
- Take inspiration from a local landmark by mimicking its design or using similar materials
- Use a kit, such as this Amish-crafted Colonial Gable Greenhouse, to build the garden structure of your dreams

#### 4. INCLUDING PRIVATE, SECLUDED PLACES

A small retreat within a larger garden can feel like a getaway. Creating a quiet space to relax, read, or meditate is going to grow more and more popular as mindfulness and finding ways to decompress becomes a priority for people. Garden designer Bernard

Trainor of Ground Studio says, "I find intimate, secluded spaces in a garden are just as important as grand vistas." Whether you want to create a dedicated outdoor yoga room that offers the quiet surroundings necessary for meditation, or you'd love a spa-inspired space to rejuvenate and pamper yourself after a long day, the garden is a great place to unwind. Easy ways to create a retreat:

- Provide just enough seating for two
- Include a simple water feature
- Surround the space with lush plants
- Use an arbor or pergola to create a sense of overhead enclosure
- Build a wall to separate a small area from the rest of the garden
- Use tall narrow plants as a privacy screen
- Evoke a sense of calm and order with a neutral color palette

#### 5. MAKING A NOTABLE FIRST IMPRESSION

Yes, a well-designed front yard adds curb appeal, but more importantly, it creates a sense of joy for you every time you return home. Homeowners have been finding creative ways to fashion an impactful entrance, and we don't imagine them stopping anytime soon. Here are some ideas to try in your front yard:

- Adding seasonal containers
- Including scented plants along an entry pathway
- Installing lighting to make the journey to the front door dramatic and easy to navigate
- Incorporating plants with flowers that complement the color



of your front door

Putting plants in crevices and between stones within walkways to add interest

#### 6. INCLUDING UNEXPECTED ELEMENTS IN YOUR **ARRANGEMENTS**

Specimens that are not traditionally used in arrangements-e.g., sticks, leaves, dried seed heads, fruits, etc.-have become increasingly popular in the floral design world, and chances are you already have something unique that truly reflects the season right in your own backyard. Not only will you create something gorgeous, but we believe that stepping outside and looking at your plants with fresh eyes is a refreshing pursuit that's good for the soul. If possible, we suggest bringing a small child along with you for this activity. They're often quite skilled at thinking outside the box and finding beauty in the unexpected!

#### 7. INCLUDING FOOD IN LANDSCAPES OF ALL SIZES

Although growing food is by no means a new trend, it seems that now more than ever consumers have a vested interested in where their food comes from and how it's being grown. And the ability to grow your own food is not limited to people with acres of land. Gardeners are finding that they can grow a surprising amount of food in limited space.

If you're looking to try your hand at growing food but don't think you have the room, consider:

- Adding a pot on your front or back porch to start
  - Researching ornamental edibles that you



Photo: David Barnum

can incorporate into your current planting design

- Hanging planters from your home's eaves or in front of a kitchen window
- Growing herbs on your walls with a vertical planter, such as the Algreen Garden View, that can be mounted indoors or out

#### 8. GIVING BACK WITH GARDENS

Homeowners are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that their gardens have the potential to be much more than a plot of land that's pretty to look at. There are many ways to give back with your garden—both to the earth and your community.

Top ways to give back with your garden:

- Look into how you can make your garden a Certified Wildlife Habitat to benefit wildlife and inspire your neighbors to do the same.
- Donate your overabundance of fresh produce to your local food bank or share with your neighbors to foster a sense of community.
- Use natural ways to get rid of weeds and control garden pests

like grubs and Japanese beetles.

- Include plants that attract pollinators such as butterflies.
- Design your garden with wildlife in mind

#### 9. GROWING ALL TYPES OF PLANTS INDOORS

Gardeners continue to find creative ways to bring green indoors, especially in the midst of winter or if they live in urban environments. When it comes to houseplants, the critical aspects of growing-lighting, pests, care, and more-are paramount, but you'll want to make sure they look fantastic, too. In Leslie Halleck's book Gardening Under Lights, she writes, "Growing plants and food indoors doesn't have to be utilitarian; it can be a beautiful practice that blends into our living space and lifestyles."

With proper plant choices and maybe some grow lights, even the darkest corner of your home can support plant life. Summer Rayne Oakes of Homestead Brooklyn recommends standards like Peperomia, Zamioculcas zamiifolia, Philodendron, and Sansevieria.

Get the most from your houseplants by displaying them in a variety of ways:

- Grow larger plants in pots on the floor
- Grow trailing plants atop a high shelf, ledge or tall piece of furniture
- Grow toxin-fighting plants as part of a living wall in your bedroom
- Grow light-loving plants, even in dark corners, with the Coltura LED Sunshelf from Gardener's Supply

#### **10. INVESTING IN FURNITURE THAT WILL LAST**

There's a lot of outdoor furniture available, and unfortunately many of us have found that some of it is...well...cheap. After finding that you really do get what you pay for when it comes to garden furniture, we foresee a continued shift toward investing in weather-resistant, quality pieces that will last and can be passed on. There's nothing quite like a classic iron bench next to a rose garden or a sturdy chaise lounge with fade-resistant fabric that you can count on year after year.

If your garden furniture needs an upgrade, here are some suggestions:

- Seek out an artisan who builds functional yet sophisticated furnishings that withstand the test of time.
- If you're the DIY type, why not build a piece of garden furniture? You'll be creating an heirloom that can be enjoyed by generations.
- Shop for furniture at a specialty retailer rather than at big box stores.
- Make sure the furniture is comfortable and visually appealing.



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## SAFETY WORKSHOP SERIES IMPACTFUL

Nothing is more important than coming home from a job, at the end of the day, the same way you left, after a job completed safely & efficiently. Striving to make this an everyday, real-life scenario for our members, ILICA scheduled three OSHA 10Hr and Defensive Driving Certification Workshops in three areas of the state during the month of February: Mt. Vernon, Springfield, Peru.

Made possible through education stipends provided by United Fire Group and Prins Insurance, the Mt. Vernon workshop held at Rend Lake College and the Springfield workshop held at Altorfer, Inc. were well attended. Unfortunately, however, the Peru workshop scheduled to be held at Dimond Bros. Insurance was cancelled due to a lack of interest from members in the area. Those that attended the workshops, which were free to members and their employees, received OSHA 10Hr. Certification from Associate member, Grey & Associates. This training has been custom tailored to be more engaging and provide more emphasis on trench safety. The training was as valuable for those members and their crew that were seeing it for the first time, as it was for those attending for a refresher. To compliment the last half day of the OSHA program, United Fire Group representatives hosted a 4 part Defensive Driving course developed by the National Safety Council. This training program, using data-driven content, taught defensive driving strategies that addressed the most dangerous driving situations and unsafe driving behaviors and attitudes. Needless to say, this type of valuable training is directly applicable on a daily basis to everyone's travel on the roads these days. And members learned firsthand of the lasting impacts defensive and distracted driving education can have on themselves, their family members, and others with whom they share the road.

With three separate opportunities to further their education in ways that have a direct impact in their day-to-day lives, over 40 members took advantage of free safety trainings provided through the support of our Associate members during the month of February; a small investment of time for such impactful knowledge.



To share your thoughts on recommended education workshop topics or to request education needs for your company, call the office at 309.446.3700.

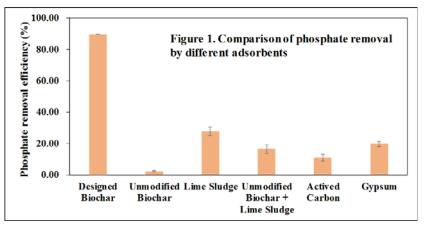




## HOW TO KEEP PHOSPHOROUS IN A CLOSED AGRICULTURAL LOOP? AN INNOVATIVE PRACTICE TO CAPTURE AND RECOVER PHOSPHATES FROM TILE DRAINAGE

Subsurface tile drainage systems have been widely used in agricultural fields in the Midwestern U.S. There are about 10 million acres, representing 35% of the total agricultural land, that are tiled in Illinois. Tile drainage not only removes excess water from the soil profile to increase crop production, but also allows earlier access to the field for planting, harvesting, and other agrotechnical operations. However, tile drainage can deliver large quantities of nutrients, primarily nitrate (NO3-N) and phosphorus, from agricultural fields into receiving wateroften identified as a primary perpetrator for the harmful and nuisance algal blooms. From the perspective of plant growth and maturity, however, phosphorus is an essential and vital component. Recently, phosphorus depletion or "Peak Phosphorus" has been gaining increased public attention because the world's resource of phosphorus ore needed for chemical fertilizers is in short supply. Therefore, it is critical to develop best management practices that can reduce phosphorus losses to mitigate contamination and simultaneously recover it for

sheds. It is of particular concern in the Midwest because this nutrient delivery has been identified as a major contributor to the growing hypoxia zone in the Gulf of Mexico. According to the U.S. EPA, Illinois contributed approximate 20% of the total annual nitrogen loads and 11% of the phosphorus loads into the Gulf of Mexico.



agricultural application. Recently, Illinois Nutri-

ent Research and Education Council (IL NREC) funded a research project led by Drs. Wei Zheng and Richard Cooke from the University of Illinois to (1) generate designer biochars to effectively capture phosphorus from tile drainage; (2) use phos-

The Illinois Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRS) has set a goal to reduce phosphorus and NO3-N loads by 25% and 15%, respectively, by 2025. The eventual target is a 45% reduction in the loss of these nutrients to the Mississippi River. Currently, a variety of nutrient management practices have been developed, including drainage water management, riparian buffers, and denitrifying bioreactors. Denitrifying woodchip bioreactors have proven to be cost-effective, practical, and sustainable solutions to reduce NO3-N from tile-drained agricultural fields in the Midwest. However, these woodchip bioreactors usually do not have a significant effect on phosphorus removal.

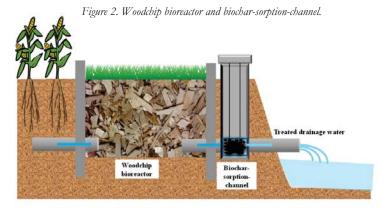
Since the mid-1990s, phosphorus losses through tile drainage has been recognized as a significant pathway for phosphorus transport because of the wide application of subsurface drainage systems and extensive adoption of no-till farming. Excess amounts of phosphorus in marine and freshwater systems are phorus-captured biochars as a slow released fertilizer; (3) keep phosphorus in a closed agricultural loop; and (4) improve water quality and increase agricultural sustainability.

Biochar is a carbon-rich material similar to charcoal. Biochar production and its application in soils have been considered as a good strategy for carbon sequestration, providing simultaneous benefits for improving soil quality and increasing agronomic productivity. In general, most biochars are ineffective to remove phosphorus, especially anionic phosphate, due to their negative surface charge. Recently, Zheng generated some designer biochars and found that they have a very high capacity for holding anions such as phosphate. Figure 1 shows the phosphate adsorption ability of a designer biochar in comparison with different sorbents. This designer biochar is produced from wood biomass pretreated with a lime sludge prior to pyrolysis. The study suggests that the pretreatment of biomass with calcium-enriched lime sludge for biochar production has a significantly synergic effect on phosphate sorption. The IL

## The Extension Connection (cont.)

NREC project will optimize the production conditions of designer biochars. Then Zheng and Cooke will use the most efficient and cost-effective biochar to capture phosphorus losses from tile drainage water. The phosphorus-captured biochar will be applied to agricultural soils as a slow-release fertilizer to keep nutrients in a closing loop. tain denitrification and phosphorus removal in tile drainage. A field study will be performed to demonstrate this innovative technique at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago's Nutrient Loss Reduction Research site in Fulton County. Third, the use of the phosphorus-captured biochars as a soil amendment can keep phosphorus in a closed

Overall, the approach and technology in this project are indeed innovative, especially in three areas. First, Zheng and Cooke will design special biochars, which can effectively adsorb dissolved phosphorus. Second, they will develop a refillable biochar-sorptionchannel to attach to denitrification bioreactors (Figure 2). After treatment,



phosphorus-captured biochars can be removed from the channels and refilled with fresh designer biochars. When compared to the traditional bioreactors, the new treatment system using woodchip denitrification followed by biochar-sorption-channel is expected to be a sustainable and more efficient way to mainenhance nutrient utilization, increase crop production, and protect water quality in tile-drained regions. The potential economic return should make this technique attractive to farming communities and foster an easy and quick adoption.



## Brown Bear 1

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loop system, enhance nutrient use efficiency, and improve crop yields.

The researchers from the University of Illinois are working together with the Illinois Farm Bureau and the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. The group expect to offer an innovative, feasible, and cost-effective practice to

## STATE CONVENTION & MEMBERS' MTG. RECAP

Tasked with orchestrating the largest Illinois LICA event each year, the Convention Committee works throughout the year constantly evaluating and reanalyzing venues, presenters, entertainment, and layouts for the two-and-a-half day event. And the planning process for the 2019 ILICA Convention and Annual Meeting was no exception, where the event was structured around the theme: "Improve Your Odds with ILICA." Deliberate changes were made to the event platform for 2019 with hopes that the Association would "improve its odds" of attendance and attendee satisfaction during the event.

In sticking with the theme, education topics addressed business practices such as accounting, taxes, employee management, and retirement planning. And a Casino Night rounded out the entertainment during Thursday night, concluding with silent and live auctions where casino "earnings" could be used to make purchases. The Casino Night was wildly successful and was something that the committee had brought back as a form of entertainment to the 2019 Convention after years of hiatus. Also brought back for 2019 were two pre-tour options where attendees could tour the Caterpillar dozer plant and/or the Caterpillar Visitors' Center before the trade show opened on Thursday afternoon. New at this year's Convention was the new member meet and greet where new members (from over the last two years) were invited for an evening of drinks, snacks, and a brief LICA benefits presentation. Another obvious change to the event was the "blocked" education and trade show platform. Where in years' past, ILICA Conventions had held the trade show concurrent with various education sessions, the 2019 ILICA Convention saw certain hours strictly designated for trade show or education time only. Anticipating that blocked trade show exhibition time and education time would drive attendance and program quality respectively, the results did seem to reflect an overall enhanced experience for 2019.

Averaging over 140 attendees during the first two days of Convention, attendees had the option of attending over half a dozen education sessions, septic training, partner reports, and the trade show, which showcased over 35 exhibitors. Ladies kept plenty busy holding their own in-house vendor show, making various crafts, and enjoying a Hy-Vee meal prep class and tour during their Friday outing. And the Awards Banquet, excellently emceed by former CAT CEO Doug Oberhelman, brought much needed recognition to our most active and dedicated members and partners (see pages 16-17).

Survey feedback from the 2019 Convention was generally positive. However after much consideration, the Convention Committee has decided to move the 2020 ILICA Convention to the Crowne Plaza in Springfield, IL. For the first time in over 5 years, the ILICA Convention will be changing venues on February 20-22, 2020. And it's a safe bet that you will see other noticeable changes to the event, as well, as the committee is always looking at "improving its odds" of an excellent event.

Thank you to all this year's Convention sponsors and donors for your generosity and support, making the 2019 ILICA Convention another valuable event!





Pictures (top to bottom): Like the septic training pictured, business themed education sessions were well attended; The 2019 trade show layout provided a new experience for convention goers as they visited 36 different Associates and Partners.









Pictures (clockwise from top left): Former CAT CEO, Doug Oberhelman emcees the Awards Banquet; Casino Night draws players and spectators to the tables; 2019 Associates and Exhibitors; Using LICA Bucks, Casino Night was fun for die hard gamblers and newbies alike; A packed dinning hall.

## Exhibitors & Sponsors

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## 2018 ILICA AWARD RECIPIENTS

On the final evening of the 2019 ILICA Convention, the Awards Committee recognized the most outstanding individuals and partners in 2018 for their contributions to ILICA. Based on membership nominations, the award winners were:

#### Merit Award

Involved with 2 of the 3 summer demonstration projects on behalf of the Association, Joe Streitmatter was instrumental in The Wetlands Initiative's constructed wetland project providing pre-construction layout and expertise that led to the unique design and functionality of "shutting off" the constructed wetland for system startup and maintenance activities.

He also provided guidance on this project during construction, both on the ground and behind the controls. Additionally, he shared responsibility for the layout and execution of the Edge of Field Partnership's bioreactor demonstration in Bureau County. For these outstanding efforts and leadership to ILICA projects in 2018, Joe Streitmatter was recognized as a Merit Award recipient.

For his lead role in the Illinois Sustainability Ag Partnership's (ISAP) saturated buff-

er demonstration project on ISU's Lexington Farm, David Kennedy of Kennedy Farm Drainage received a Merit Award. Roughly two years ago, David brought his contacts at The Nature Conservancy into discussions with ILICA regarding edge of field practice training and in-field demonstration. These initial discussions soon blossomed from two organizations discussing ideas to a full-fledged partnership (ISAP) with six other partners and the development of the Advanced Conser-



*Merit Award:* David Kennedy, with wife, Lori

vation Drainage Training (ACDT) initiative in the summer of 2018. This training initiative educated ag professionals on edge of field practices during three separate workshops. The workshop on saturated buffers included a live field demonstration fulfilled on behalf of the Association by Kennedy Farm Drainage. David Kennedy expertly complete the pro-

Merit Award:

Joe Streitmatter, with

wife, Jackie

ject demonstration as lead contractor and even donated back the income he received for completion of the project to the Association.

Finally, Steve Anderson received a Merit Award for his contributions to the The Wetland Initiative's constructed wetland in Livingston County. His dedication to the Association and its demonstration projects is evident as soon as he rolls up



Merit Award: Steve Anderson receiving award from Bill Dean, Awards Committee Chairman

on the demonstration site in his camper, where Steve resides from the first day of a project until its completion. Serving as part security guard, part nightshift operator on the TWI constructed wetland project, Steve watched over equipment on site and continued to operate until well after dark many nights, despite often times being one of the first operators working in the morning. Putting in more after-

hours than most other volunteers on the project, his outstanding earthmoving ability kept the Livingston County constructed wetland project completion on time, making it a success.

#### Shiny Shovel Award

Bringing recognition to those members and partners that have consistently supported Illinois LICA in every, or almost every, event throughout the year (i.e. financially, physically, and promotionally), Shiny Shovel Award recipients are highly engaged, supporting ILICA at the numerous functions held every year. Their shovel never sets down long enough to acquire rust, but instead is shiny from its continual use.

Blessed with many dedicated and committed members, Illinois LICA is a very active chapter and in 2018 held 6 business meetings, 3 education workshops, 2 golf outings, a member picnic, 3 summer demonstration projects, countless conference calls & industry partner meetings, and an annual meeting.

For an individual to provide financial, physical, and promotional support to all, or even most, of these events is a notable recogni-



Shiny Shovel Award: Ron Masching, with wife, Cathy

## 2018 ILICA AWARD RECIPIENTS (CONT.)

tion for someone who receives no monetary compensation for their dedication, commitment nor time donated to the Association. And yet this year's recipient earned this recognition for devoting his personal time, finances, man-power, and experiences to nearly every activity listed for this year. A longstanding member of the Association with 2019 marking his 49th year of membership and service with Illinois LICA, Ron Masching was named the 2018 Shiny Shovel Award recipient.

#### Mr. Contractor Award

The 2018 Mr. Contractor, Grant Curtis, graduated college in the early 2000's with a degree in Ag Technology. He in-

terned after college for a three state wide machinery dealer, later marrying the love of his life in 2004. During that time, he became involved in his Dad's farming operation. Due to the high land prices at that time, they felt it better served to improve there own land than buying more. With that thought, Grant rented a Ditch Witch machine, borrowed a stringing trailer, installed his first roll of Springfield Plastics' tile, installed several dry dams with a dozer, and drained several wet spots on the family farm. That same winter, he purchased a used Hydra Tandem wheel machine to begin further improving the farm with a goal of draining 40 acres a year.

In 2012, his son was born, and Grant could see he had help on the way then. Around the same time, he began meeting

several wonderful people from the ILICA organization and

Mr. Contractor Award: Grant Curtis, with wife, Lindsey

enjoyed learning about drainage design and installation; choosing to make a business from that to begin improving other farmland.

Grant loves ILICA and everything it stands for. He has a great willingness to learn and expand his knowledge of the business and is not afraid to

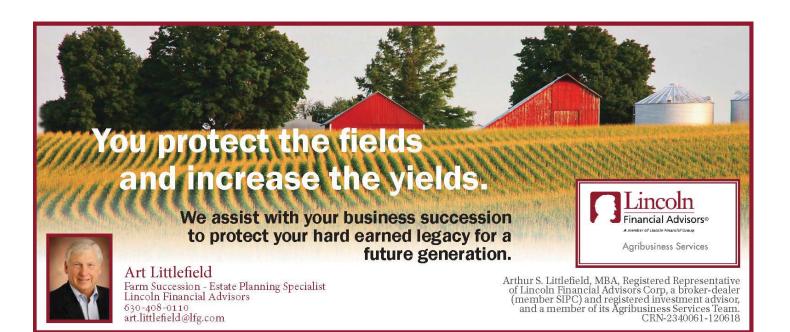
ask questions - as well as participate in many of the Associations projects and work side by side with members donating hours of his time for the benefit of ILICA.

He loves communicating, educating, and showing his customers the benefits reaped from his services, and he takes

> great pride in every one of his jobs as if it were on his own farm. He's constantly inspecting jobs completed to make sure they are working properly. He also takes pride in taking his son, wife, and anyone else he can drag along before, during and after a job he is involved with. Sometimes requiring them to help move equipment.

> Grant helps coach his sons t-ball league and is beginning to coach Pre-K and kindergarten basketball. He serves on the Wind Turbine land owner committee looking out for his landlords interests as well as his own. He currently serves on many ILICA committees as well as serving as the current Vice President and incoming president of the Association. Grant enjoys taking the family to the lake of the

Ozarks and loves the sport of drag racing and sprint car racing with the family.





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## **CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

## Illinois

## Board of Directors Meeting March 9, 2019

Richland Community College - Decatur, IL National Sequestration Education Center Committee meetings: 10 am - 12 pm Board Meeting: 1 pm

## Saturated Buffer Field Day March 20, 2019

957 CR 700E - Sullivan, IL

## National

## 2019 LICA Winter Convention February 26-March 2, 2019

El Conquistador Tucson 10000 North Oracle Rd., Tucson, AZ, 85704

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## SAFETY FEATURE: WORKING SAFELY WITH ELECTICITY

Working with electricity, either directly or indirectly, can be very dangerous. Observe the following precautions in order to keep yourself and others safe.

#### Generators

Generators can be a lifesaver, but can also be hazardous. Keep the following safety tips in mind:

- Store the generator outside where dangerous fumes cannot enter the building.
- Be sure the main circuit breaker is shut off before starting generator.
- Turn off the generator and let it cool before refueling.

#### **Power Lines**

Overhead and buried power lines pose significant dangers because they carry extremely high voltage. Be sure to remember the following safety considerations:

- Always watch for overhead power lines and buried power line indicators.
- Always assume overhead power lines are energized and stay 10 feet away.
- De-energize and ground lines when working near them.
- Use wood or fiberglass ladders when working near power lines.

### **Extension Cords**

Extension cords can pose a threat if the following guidelines are not met:

- Use only equipment that is approved to match OSHA standards.
- Do not modify cords or use them incorrectly.
- Use only factory-assembled cords that are 3-wire type.
- Use cords, connection devices and fittings that are equipped with strain relief.
- Unplug cords by pulling on the plug itself, not the cord.

#### Equipment

Normal use of electrical equipment causes wear and tear that results in insulation breaks, short-circuits and exposed wires. Observe the following precautions:

- Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on all 120volt, single-phase, 15- and 20-ampere receptacles, or have an assured equipment grounding conductor program (AEGCP).
- Use double-insulated tools and equipment, and make sure they are distinctively marked.

• Visually inspect all electrical equipment before use. Remove any equipment with defects such as frayed cords, missing ground prongs or cracked tool casings from service.

#### **Electrical Incidents**

Follow these guidelines to avoid injuries when working with electrical equipment:

- Ground all power supply systems, electrical circuits and electrical equipment.
  - Frequently inspect electrical systems to ensure that the path to ground is continuous.
    - Do not remove ground prongs from cord- and plug-connected equipment or extension cords.
      - Use double-insulated tools and ground all exposed metal parts of equipment.
        - Avoid standing in wet areas when using portable electrical power tools.

**Discussion Date:** 

### **Employee Participants**

Target On Safety Toolbox Talks - From Prins Insurance LICA Portal





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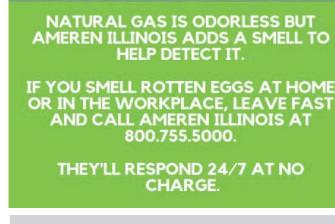
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