



# The Ecology Action Center News

Spring 2009

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## Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo 2009

*by Nick Kaminsky, EAC Intern*



The 2009 Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo is getting closer every day! Don't miss out on Friday April 17<sup>th</sup> and Saturday April 18<sup>th</sup> at Wesleyan University's Shirk Center. Every year different businesses, organizations, and community members come together to educate the community about environmentally sustainable living and wellness. The event is free and open to the public!

The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo feature many diverse exhibitors, all of which are businesses or organizations that have important messages and tips on how to help our environment and your health. There will also be workshops, games, and entertainment all about the different ways to reduce waste and conserve the natural resources in our every day lives. There will be displays on organic and locally grown foods that will be interesting and delicious. You can learn more about the environment and how to help our planet while having a great time.

Through this year's theme "Clean Water: The Ripple Effect" we want to draw attention to the importance of the quality of our drinking water. Issues like storm run-off can have an extremely detrimental effect on the water that we use and consume every day. With some education, we can all help to better protect our drinking water supplies. Highlights of the clean water theme this year include a showing of the award winning documentary FLOW. Kicking off the ISLWE on the evening of Thursday, April 16 is a panel discussion "Clean Water/Healthy Food" on the connections between water quality and agriculture.

There will also be activities for children, like The Kids Eco-Carnival, that will entertain and teach young ones about the importance of recycling. The popular Affordable Fashion Challenge returns, showing you how to make exciting new clothes while still using recyclable materials. There are many ways to live sustainably, and The Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo is the best way to find out how.

To find out more about the ISLWE including the schedule of events, exhibitors attending, or how to apply to be an exhibitor, presenter, or even a volunteer visit [www.islwe.org](http://www.islwe.org) or call 309-454-3169.

See you at the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo!

## Ecology Action Center

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Normal Illinois 61761  
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Fax: (309) 454-7508

[www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org)

9 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Monday—Friday



# Springtime at the EAC

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Assistant Director  
Michele Bell  
Environmental Educator

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## Nominations Sought for the 2009 McLean County Environmental Awards

*by Nick Kaminsky, EAC Intern*

It's time again for the annual Mclean County Environmental Awards! The 2009 World of Difference Award and the McLean County Recycling & Waste Reduction Award are two extremely important honors offered exclusively through the Ecology Action Center. Any business, organization, school, and individual can be nominated.

The Recycling & Waste Reduction Award is awarded for the best examples of: changes in management practices or operations that reduce the amount of waste produced, methods that recover, reuse, or recycle materials that otherwise would be considered waste, offering educational programs that teach the community about reducing the amount of waste we produce. Applicants will be evaluated based on innovation, environmental significance, and commitment to the program plus outreach efforts.

The World of Difference Award awarded to a business, organization, project, or individual in McLean County that has made the most significant difference in our community by raising environmental awareness and the conservation of natural resources. When nominating someone, please be detailed in how they have made an impact on our community.

Nomination applications are available at [www.ecologyactioncenter.org](http://www.ecologyactioncenter.org). After completing the application, send your nominations to the Ecology Action Center, 202 W. College Avenue, Normal IL, 61761. Envelopes must be postmarked by April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2009.

The winners of the awards will be announced Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> at the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo at Illinois Wesleyan University Shirk Center. Please help us find the best candidates for this award by nominating someone today!

## EARTH HOUR

**Sat., March 28, 2009, 8:30-9:30 p.m.**

*by Joe Grabill, of Imagine Green Bloomington/Normal  
[www.bn-green.org](http://www.bn-green.org)*

Let's help the Earth turn out for Earth Hour. Chicago is turning off the Sears Tower.

Last year our city halls, Normal Theater, the Heartland College campus, and many other buildings and homes were dark for Earth Hour the last Saturday night in March.

The Pantagraph covered our community's participation with a front page story. This year we have our mayors, State Farm, ISU, IWU, and many other leaders and institutions taking the initiative to turn off lights.

You can make a difference in saving energy. Go dark for an hour at your home and spread the word.

- Visit [www.EarthHourUS.org/toolkits.php](http://www.EarthHourUS.org/toolkits.php)
- Make posters for your school, church, and other groups
- Organize a "Lights Out" party. See [www.EarthHourUS.org/action\\_individual.php](http://www.EarthHourUS.org/action_individual.php)
- Write a letter to the Pantagraph
- Plan an event for a church group or civic organization
- Follow Google's example and darken your company's homepage for an hour
- Blog (so far Earth Hour has been mentioned on 15,000 blogs)
- Email and talk to your friends and neighbors
- Teach your kids about the race to develop low-carbon energy



## Get involved in Transition Towns!

### An Exciting Challenge and Opportunity

by Carolyn Treadway

*Inherent within the challenges of peak oil and climate change is an extraordinary opportunity to rethink, reinvent, and rebuild the world around us.*

*-Rob Hopkins*

Are you feeling, or fearing, the impacts of economic instability, climate change, and peak oil? Do you wonder what will happen as the age of cheap oil--upon which our society and economy utterly depends--comes to an end? Are you concerned how your life and the lives of your children and their descendants will be affected by these massive, interlocking forces? Would you like to prepare for forthcoming changes in creative ways that could lead to fuller harmony with each other and with the Earth? Do you dream of a restorative, nourishing, and abundant future? If so, Transition Initiatives invites YOU!

“Inherent within the challenges of peak oil and climate change is an extraordinary opportunity to rethink, reinvent, and rebuild the world around us.” This quote from Rob Hopkins, founder of the Transition movement, in his manual *The Transition Handbook: From Oil Dependency to Local Resilience*, (Chelsea Green Publishing, 2008) captures for me some of the excitement I feel about the idea of participating in the creation of a sustainable future for my own community! A Transition Initiative starts with a small core group of people sharing ideas for ways the local area might proactively begin to shift away from fossil fuels and create a lower-energy, more localized future. Through a well developed series of steps, the core group involves many community members in a creative, playful, inspiring process to develop a positive vision for the future, and to bring that future to life, here and now. Utilizing the talents, vision, and goodwill of ordinary people is a key to developing resilient community.

The Transition movement began in the UK in 2003 when Rob Hopkins and his students created an “energy descent plan” for their college that was later adopted as policy by their town council. The ideas spread rapidly, and Totnes became the world’s first Transition Town in 2006. Since then 35 communities in the UK and 500 more around the world have become Transition Towns or are involved in some level of Transition Initiatives.

To learn more about TT, see: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition\\_Towns](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transition_Towns). To learn about TT in Illinois and Champaign County, see: <http://asap.sustainability.uiuc.edu/members/johnemarlin/transitionchampaign>. Bill and Becky Wilson of Midwest Permaculture offer very informative free one-hour webinars about TT twice monthly. To sign up, contact: <http://www.midwestpermaculture.com/>. Recently I was fortunate to attend their weekend Training for Transition, the first in Illinois, which was exciting, rigorous, moving, and profoundly hopeful. It has inspired me to invite others to join in exploring ideas and possibilities of a Transition Initiative in our town. If you have interest in being part of this dialog, leave word indicating this at the Ecology Action Center (309-454-3169), or call me directly at 309-451-4503. I will convene an initial meeting as soon as at least five people express interest. I look forward to discovering what ideas we will create together!

*Carolyn Treadway is a 32 year resident of Normal, an environmental activist, climate messenger trained by Al Gore, personal life coach, and pastoral counselor/therapist.*

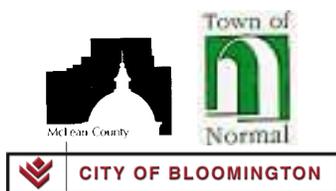
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## Calendar of Upcoming Events

March 28: Earth Hour

April 16: Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo kicks off with Panel Discussion “Clean Water, Healthy Food: Your Choice” at IWU

April 17-18: Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo at IWU Shirk Center

April 22: Earth Day

April 24: Arbor Day

May 2: Friends of Fell Arboretum Plant Sale at ISU

**Volunteers are needed at upcoming events such as the Illinois Sustainable Living and Wellness Expo as well as waste auditing and recycling survey efforts. Please contact Michael Brown at [mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org](mailto:mbrown@ecologyactioncenter.org) or 309-454-3169 for more information.**