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NEWS

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September - October 2025

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AREA 3 TRAP SHOOT & GOLF OUTING SEPT. 12, 2025

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LICA RECALIBRATING FOR GREATER SUCCESS

(page 14)



LORA, MAKING MEMORIES OFF THE BEATEN PATH

(page 16)

Also Featured Inside:

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- ▶ **Refer a Landowner, Earn Cash** *(page 11)*
- ▶ **Extension Connection: Estimating Area of Influence of Irregular Drainage Systems** *(page 12)*



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Earth has a circumference of just under 25,000 miles. Rotating at one revolution per day gives a surface speed of over 1,000 miles per hour. Earth's population is estimated to be 8,230,000,000. Yes, that's over 8 billion, and supposedly we're only separated by 6 degrees?

Shortly after we were married, we took a weekend trip to St. Louis, which included a Cardinals game. We were sitting somewhere in the upper deck of the previous Busch Stadium amongst a nearly sold-out crowd of over 40,000, only to see a high school classmate of mine sitting two rows in front of us. What are the odds?

Twenty-some years ago when the Summer National LICA Convention was in Rapid City, South Dakota, we made this a family vacation and included our daughters. While touring Mount Rushmore, we run into family friends with their kids. What are the odds?

A couple of years ago, my wife "forced" me to go on a two-week trip to Switzerland, Austria, and Germany. While on top of Mt. Pilatus in Switzerland, I ran into a guy wearing a Duke Energy coat. I asked him if he by chance worked in Charlotte, North Carolina, and if he knew a friend of mine that also works there? Not only did he know my friend, but he just so happened to be hired at Duke Energy by my friend. What are the odds?

Last January, my wife and I attended the Winter National LICA Convention in Jacksonville, FL. We always try to sit at a different table during meals to meet new people from around the country. It was the last meal of the convention when we met Greg and Joan Muenks from Missouri. Greg saw on my name tag that I was from Illinois and asked me if I knew where Monticello is. I smiled and told him that Monticello is only nine miles from our house! He continued by asking me if I

knew a local family farmer that he did an internship with while in college during the mid-1970's. Not only did I know them, but their farming operation is only 1 ½ miles from our home, and we did a sizeable project for them last year. What are the odds?

A couple of months later, when Greg was headed to Chicago for a LICA meeting, we arranged for him and Joan to stop by our home and get re-acquainted with his friends that he had not seen in nearly a half century. Greg brought an old photo album that he had compiled from the summer he spent in Central Illinois as an intern. It was fun watching them reminisce over the photos and talk about how much things have changed over the years. What are the odds?

Well, the odds increase when you become an engaged member of LICA, though the Earth doesn't spin any slower!

Jon Seevers

BOARD & MEMBERS' MEETING SCHEDULE

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

Sept. 13, 2025 - Regular Meeting of the Board:

Virtual & IP - ILICA Office, Galva

Nov. 1, 2025 - Regular Meeting of the Board:

Virtual & IP - ILICA Office, Galva

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

2025 BOARD / MEMBERS' MTG. ATTENDANCE

A = absent	P = present	C = cancelled meeting				
Area / Director	Jan	March	May	July	Sep	Nov
Pres: Jon Seevers	P	P	P	P		
VP: Tyler Seals	P	A	P	A		
1st VP: LaVerne Weber	P	P	P	P		
Area 1 - Brian Brooks	P	P	P	P		
Area 1 - LaVerne Weber	P	P	P	P		
Area 2 - Steve Anderson	P	P	P	P		
Area 2 - Stuart Anderson	P	P	P	A		
Area 3 - Grant Curtis	A	A	A	A		
Area 3 - Joe Streitmatter	P	P	P	P		
Area 4 - David Kennedy	A	P	P	A		
Area 4 - Lee Bunting	P	P	P	P		
Area 5 - Rick Maguire	P	P	A	A		
Area 5 - Earl Mast	P	A	P	A		
Area 6 - Scott Day	P	P	P	A		
Area 6 - Bill Dean	P	A	A	P		
Area 7 - John Barttelbort	-	-	P	A		
Area 8 - Tom Beyers	A	P	P	P		
Area 8 - Tyler Seals	P	A	P	A		
Associate Director: Kyle Dentino	A	P	A	A		



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U.S. TRANSPORTATION SECRETARY UNVEILS SWEEPING UPDATES TO NEPA TO FAST TRACK KEY INFRASTRUCTURE



June 30, 2025

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy today released three sets of landmark revisions to the Department's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing procedures. These revisions, which cut USDOT's NEPA procedures in half, will slash red tape, accelerate major infrastructure projects, minimize delays, and curb soaring compliance costs. USDOT has not initiated Department-wide NEPA reform in 40 years despite widespread agreement that these procedures are inhibiting the country from ushering a golden age of Transportation. Government-wide reforms in President Trump's first term would have provided much-needed regulatory relief, but the Biden Administration reversed those changes.

"Under President Trump's leadership, America is building again," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy. "USDOT's NEPA reforms will make it possible to deliver roads, bridges, and other critical infrastructure projects faster and more affordably. For too long, unelected Washington bureaucrats have weaponized environmental reviews to create endless delays and block projects. No more. These changes will help usher in a golden age of transportation for the American people."

These updates combine six separate sets of procedures into one unified USDOT Order, providing a one stop shop for USDOT NEPA reviews for most of USDOT's Operating Administrations (OAs). Two other sets of revisions include the NEPA procedures for FAA, and the procedures used by FHWA, FRA, and FTA. Across USDOT, OAs will enforce hard deadlines, simplify categorical exclusions, and hone NEPA's focus—clearing the way for robust infrastructure growth and a revitalized economy. The effort is part of President Trump's vision to unleash American energy and to reshape how these outdated, bloated procedures stop America from building great, big, beautiful things across multiple federal departments.

Additional Information:

The Department released three specific updates to its NEPA implementing procedures: (1) Department-wide Order 5610.1D; (2) Joint FHWA, FRA, and FTA procedures, 23 CFR Part 771; and, (3) FAA's Order 1050.1G. The Department is issuing these updates in coordination with the White House Council on Environmental Quality in furtherance of the

Trump Administration's strategy to simplify the environmental review and permitting process and to ensure efficient and timely environmental reviews.

Key changes by USDOT and the other agencies include enforceable deadlines and page limits for environmental studies, clarifying that NEPA only kicks in when agencies truly control a project's environmental footprint, and streamlined "categorical exclusions" that exempt routine, low-impact actions from lengthy analysis. The measures will fast-track roads, bridges, broadband and energy installations.

The revisions across USDOT include the following historic reforms:

Implement deadlines and page limits on environmental reviews required under recent amendments to NEPA, to expedite infrastructure development and reduce costs.

Provide clarification that NEPA does not apply to every action that a Federal agency takes, but only to Federal actions where the agency has sufficient control and discretion to take environmental effects into account.

Ensure simple and expeditious processes to create categorical exclusions (CEs) (the least burdensome class of action), adopt other agencies' CEs to minimize repetitive NEPA analyses, and focus agency attention on actions with truly significant environmental effects.

Prior to this update, some Federal agencies, including parts of USDOT, were utilizing NEPA implementing procedures that were nearly forty years old. USDOT's NEPA implementing procedures were last revised in 1985. By modernizing the environmental review process, USDOT will cut through unnecessary layers of bureaucracy in record time, following clear guidance to reform the NEPA process set forth in President Trump's Unleashing American Energy Executive Order; Congress' BUILDER Act amendments, as part of the 2023 Fiscal Responsibility Act, and the Supreme Court's recent landmark decision in *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County*.

The U.S. Department of Transportation has long been a leader in NEPA reform, and its actions today herald the Trump Administration's decisive action to reform, modernize, and expedite the Federal environmental review process and eliminate unnecessary delays that are holding back the growth of secure and reliable infrastructure projects across the Nation.

Source: Adapted & reprinted from "U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean P. Duffy Unveils Sweeping Updates to NEPA at USDOT to Fast Track Roads, Bridges, & Other Key Infrastructure" - <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-transportation-secretary-sean-p-duffy-unveils-sweeping-updates-nepa-usdot-fast>



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ILICA Ladies' Page

October is Breast Cancer Awareness month! Our goal throughout the month is to increase awareness of the disease and stress the importance of mammograms as the best tool to screen for breast cancer, the second most common type of cancer among women. Approximately one in eight women in the United States will get breast cancer during their lifetime and each year, more than 40,000 women die from breast cancer.

Signs and Symptoms of Breast Cancer

Different people have different symptoms of breast cancer, while some do not have any signs or symptoms at all. It is important to know how your breasts normally look and feel to be able to recognize any changes that may occur. While knowing what to look for is important, regular mammograms and clinical breast exams are crucial, as these tests can help detect breast cancer before symptoms show.

Signs of breast cancer may include:

- Lump in the breast or underarm (armpit)
- Swelling or thickening of all or part of the breast
- Dimpling or skin irritation of breast skin
- Redness, scaliness or thickening of the nipple or breast skin
- Nipple discharge (other than breast milk)
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast
- Pain in any area of the breast



Get Screened

A mammogram is a low-dose x-ray picture of the breast. Early detection of breast cancer can improve a woman's chance of survival and mammograms are the best tool to find breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat and before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms. Women should ask their healthcare provider if and when a mammogram is right for them.

How Can I Lower My Risk?

There are many factors that can influence your breast cancer risk such as family history and getting older. There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer, but lifestyle changes can help lower your risk of breast cancer such as:

- Keep a healthy weight and exercise regularly.
- Choose not to drink alcohol, or drink alcohol in moderation.
- If you are taking hormone replacement therapy or birth

control pills, ask your doctor about the risks.

- Breastfeed your children, if possible.
- If you have a family history of breast cancer, be sure to talk to your doctor about ways to lower your risk.

Pink Ribbon Guide

A pink ribbon symbolizes breast cancer awareness. The FDA Office of Women's Health launched the Pink Ribbon Sunday Mammography Awareness Program in 1998 to educate women about early detection of breast cancer through mammography. Pink Ribbon Sunday originally targeted African American and Hispanic churches. Over the years, the program's outreach has expanded to connect with as many women as possible. Pink Ribbon events help educate women about the importance of mammograms and encourage them to take charge of their breast health by getting regular mammography screenings. We are pleased to share our updated mammography resource, Pink Ribbon Guide: Mammography Matters <https://www.fda.gov/media/157056/download?attachment>

Take Action

This month and every month, there are many ways you can join the fight to save lives against breast cancer. Many women do not get their recommended mammography screenings due to fear, time, lack of knowledge about mammograms or concerns about cost. The Pink Ribbon Guide shares ways you can help make a difference including distributing reliable health information, providing emotional support and

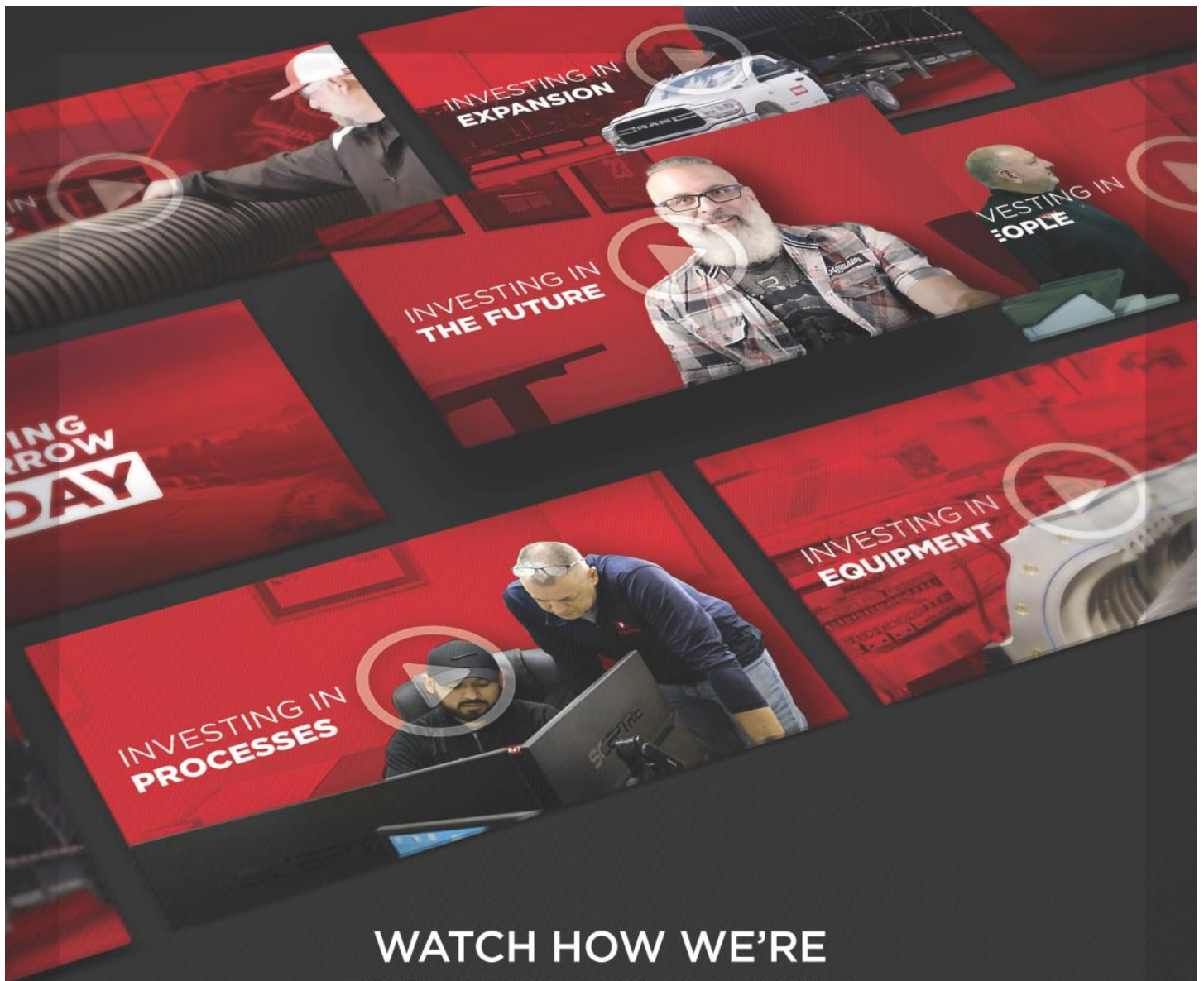
connecting women to local resources. In the guide, you will find:

- Basic facts about mammography
- Information on how to host an in-person or virtual event
- A customizable flyer and postcard to promote your event
- Resources on mammography and breast cancer

Search for a certified mammography facility in your area. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers free or low-cost mammograms. Find out if you qualify.

For resources and materials on other women's health topics, visit www.fda.gov/womens.

Source: Adapted & reprinted from "Breast Cancer Awareness Month," Knowledge and News on Women's Health blog from FDA Office of Women's Health- <https://www.fda.gov/consumers/knowledge-and-news-women-owh-blog/breast-cancer-awareness-month>



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REFER A LANDOWNER EARN CASH



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Illinois LICA has partnered with the National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD), select Illinois SWCDs, and Ecosystems Exchange Service (ESE) in mutual support of a pilot project to demonstrate the ability to scale-up conservation drainage practices in the Illinois River Basin to improve water quality, enhance wildlife habitat, and realize crop production benefits that help to support viable and sustainable agriculture.

One strategy to meet the goals of this 2-year pilot project drives implementation by leaning into those educated local landowners, producers, and contractors to create demand for these practices by referring quality sites for design consideration.

EARNING YOUR CASH

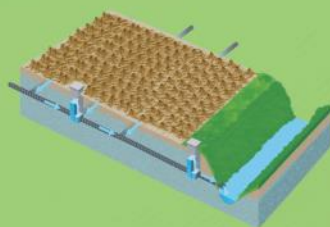
To earn cash, you must be an ILICA member and have an interested landowner or producer located in one of the eligible pilot counties with control of tile-drained, or soon to be tile-drained, cropland who agrees to a free site assessment that results in a technical determination by ESE that the site is suitable for drainage water management, a denitrifying bioreactor, a saturated buffer, or some combination of these conservation drainage practices. If the site referred ultimately gets designed with a practice, after a follow-up on-site investigation and survey at no charge to the landowner/producer, you **earn \$200 per practice per referral!**



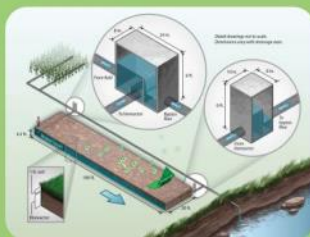
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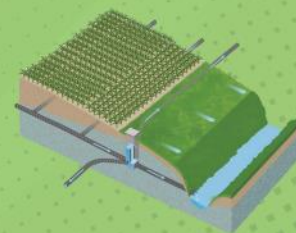
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ESTIMATING AREA OF INFLUENCE OF IRREGULAR DRAINAGE SYSTEMS

By Richard Cooke

In 1995, I conducted a survey of Illinois Land Improvement Contractors Association (ILICA) members. At that time, only about 10% of tile drainage installations were patterned systems. If the survey were repeated in 2025, I suspect the situation would be reversed, with patterned systems dominating the landscape. Nevertheless, irregular drainage systems are still occasionally installed, particularly in fields with complex layouts or legacy infrastructure.

Accurately estimating the area of influence of these systems is essential for evaluating drainage effectiveness, planning maintenance, and assessing environmental impact. This article presents two methods for such estimation, using the system shown in Figure 1 as a case study.



Figure 1. Field with irregular drainage system

METHOD 1: GIS-BASED ESTIMATE

This method uses geographic information system (GIS) principles to calculate the area of influence of irregular tile drainage. The procedure is demonstrated using QGIS, a free and open-source platform, though similar steps apply in other GIS software.

Step 1: Buffer Creation. A buffer is created around each tile line using half the recommended lateral spacing. In QGIS, this is done via:

Vector → Geoprocessing Tools → Buffer

- Set buffer width to half the tile spacing
- Disable overlap between individual line buffers
- The buffer plugin interface and resulting region are shown in Figure 2.

Step 2: Area Calculation. The area of the buffer region is calculated using:

Vector → Geometry Tools → Add Geometry Attributes

- This tool adds length to lines and area/perimeter to polygons
- The unit of measurement depends on the coordinate reference system (CRS):
 - ✓ WGS84 (Latitude/Longitude) → Square meters
 - ✓ State Plane Coordinates → Square feet
- Convert to acres by dividing by:
 - ✓ 4047 (for square meters)
 - ✓ 43,560 (for square feet)

For this example, the buffer area is **5.68 acres**.

METHOD 2: APPROXIMATE ESTIMATION

A quicker estimation can be obtained using the Region of Influence routine accessible under the “Drainage Guidelines” heading on the main page of the Illinois Drainage Guide (Figure 4)

Inputs Required.

- Cumulative tile length
- Recommended tile spacing
- Number of tile ends (excluding the outlet)
- Number of tile intersections
- Optional: Average angle of intersection (default is 90°)

Results.

The interface for the routine is shown in Figure 5. Using this method for the system in Figure 1, the estimated areas are:

- **5.65 acres** (assuming 90° intersections)
- **5.59 acres** (assuming 45° intersections)

These estimates closely match the GIS-derived area of **5.68 acres**, validating the routine’s utility for quick assessments.

CONCLUSION

Both methods provide reliable estimates of the area influenced by irregular drainage systems. The GIS-based approach offers precision and spatial visualization, while the approximation method provides a fast and reasonably accurate alternative. Together, they offer valuable tools for engineers, contractors, and landowners managing non-patterned drainage systems.

This manuscript was edited with assistance from Microsoft Copilot, an AI companion used to improve clarity, structure, and formatting.

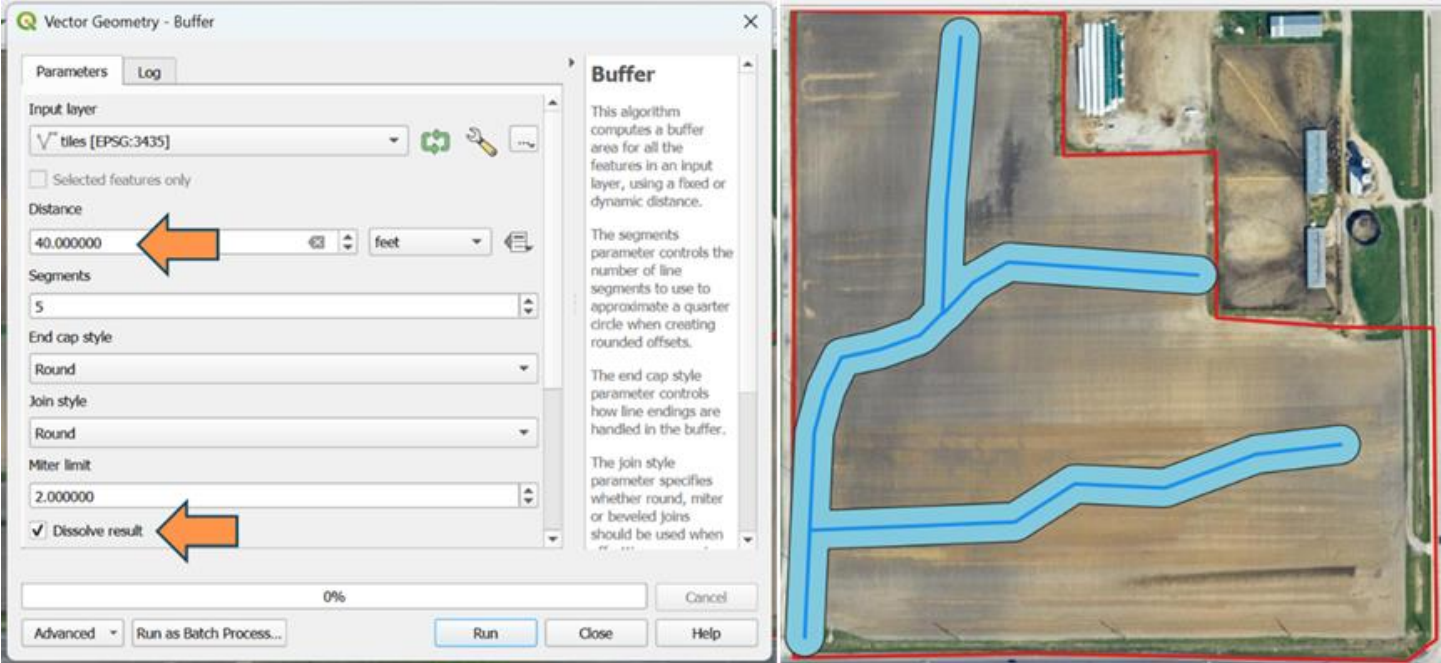


Figure 2. Buffer-Creation plugin menu and resultant buffer region.

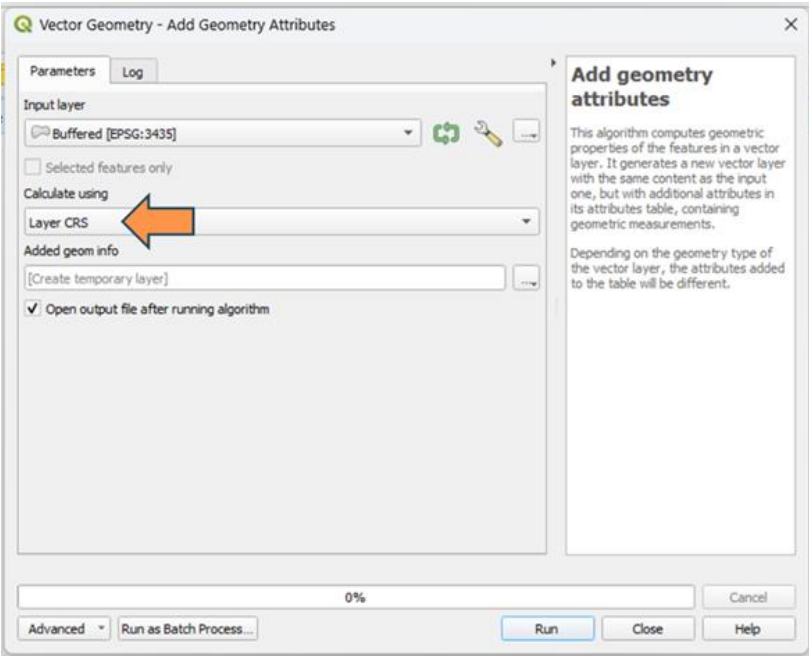
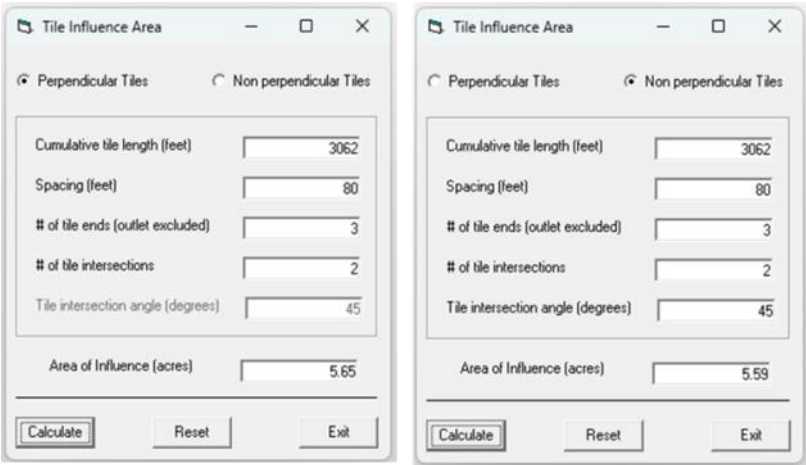


Figure 3. Add-Geometry-Attributes plugin menu.



Figure 4. Location of Area of Influence Routine on the Main Page of the Illinois Drainage Guide.

Figure 5. Interface for the Area of Influence Routine.



LICA RECALIBRATING FOR GREATER SUCCESS

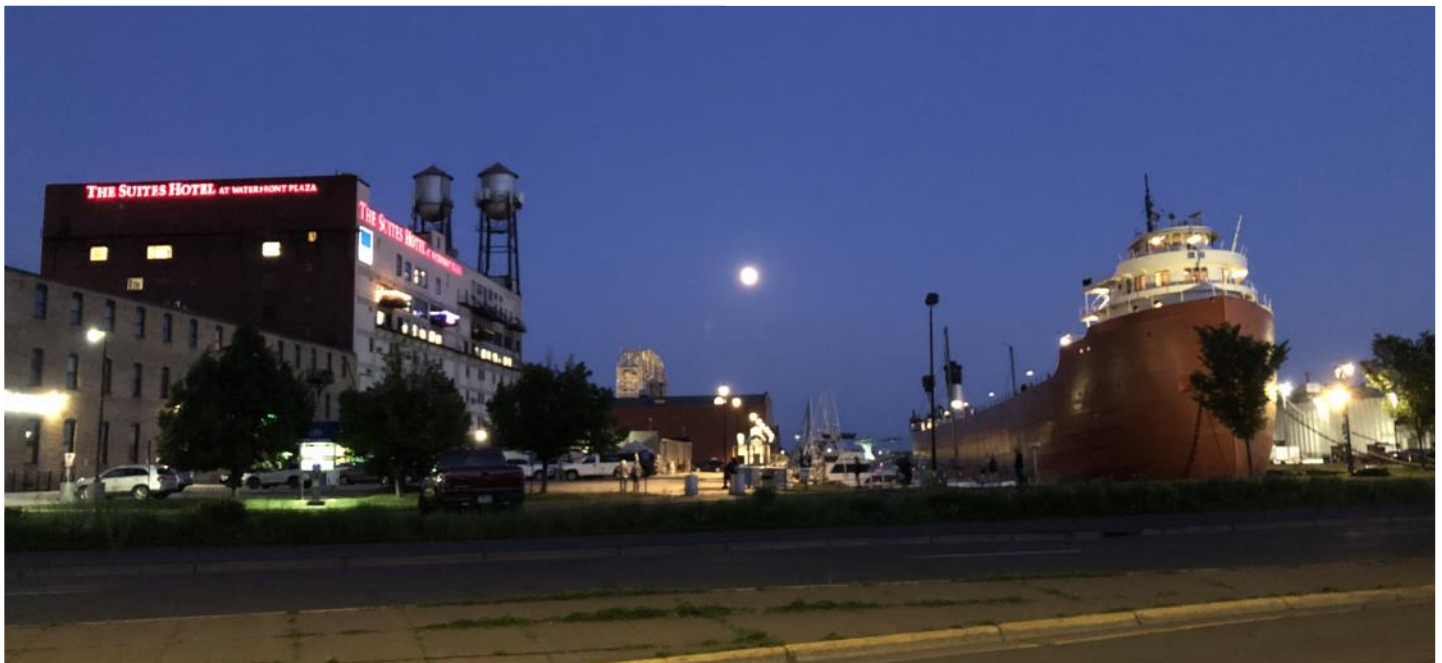


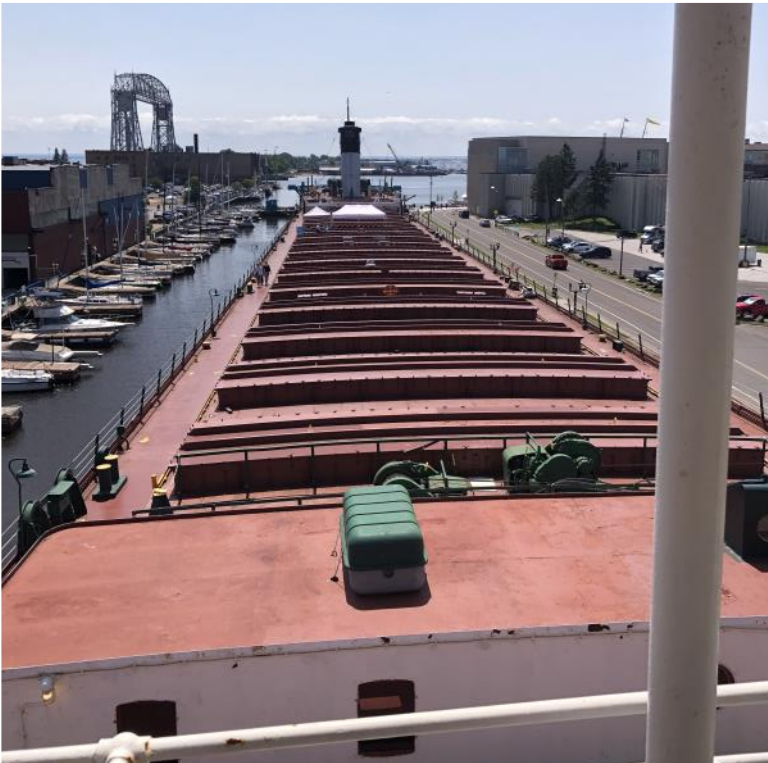
A popular Midwest tourist destination, Duluth, Minnesota, offered LICA members from across the nation a plethora of events and activities to partake in during their free time while attending the National LICA Summer Meeting in July: a tall ships festival, a high dive competition,

the world's largest rubber duck attraction, a car show, 3 blocks of street vendors, ore boat tours, and more! When indoors, members spared no time getting to business, committing meaningful time together to take a deeper dive into the broad range of factors, external and internal, that continually push and pull upon LICA, just like the ebb and flow of Lake Superior surrounding them, with the goal of recalibrating for even greater organizational success into the future.

Held the week immediately following July 4th, attendance at the LICA Summer Meeting was strong. Whether for the respite from hotter weather at home or for the opportunity to engage leadership with their chapter's concerns, members made the trek north prepared for a productive conference and looking forward to their time together with fellow members and friends. And the LICA Summer Meeting did not disappoint with plenty of discussion, reflection, and exploration occurring in meetings and hallways; plenty of social time with tours, hospitality hours, and free time activities galore. The take-home from the members present and their involvement at the conference was a recognition of change and a renewed sense of direction, spurred by open dialogue, transparency, and working together...the ebb and flow of any organization dedicated to long-term improvement and success.

For more event details and the committee meeting reports, be sure to visit National LICA's website at: <https://www.licanational.com/meeting-minutes>.





LICA OFF-ROAD ADVENTURE (LORA), MAKING MEMORIES OFF THE BEATEN PATH

With the popularity of last year's, first-ever LICA Off-Road Adventure, hosted by the Illinois & Indiana chapters, Illinois LICA's picnic committee decided that the Badland's Off-Road Park in Attica, IN would be a fun place to host this year's picnic and members' meeting; the same thoughts and approach of Indiana LICA last September. Extending the invite to our fellow LICA trail blazers in Indiana, a number of contractor members and their families converged to explore and tackle all the trails, terrain, and obstacles they could muster in one day before regrouping for a barbecue dinner and members' meeting held the last Saturday of July.

The typical hot and humid weather of July didn't seem to bother riders, drivers, or off-road rigs much with plenty of fresh mud holes, shaded timber trails, and cool creek bottoms to play around in. With more than 1400 acres of multi-directional trails and diverse terrain including sand dunes, woods, gravel, mud, and rocks, the Badlands Off-Road Park is one of Indiana's largest and most popular off-road parks for riders of all skill levels. For members new to the park, it's quickly obvious that it can't be fully explored in one day, so nearly all leave saying, "I'll be back!" The park does such a great job of catering to off-roaders and their families, with camping and cabin rentals, side by side rentals, pay showers, a food shack, and parts and gift shops, that they make it easy to want to come back to continue the adventure and to forge more memories. And I am most happy to report (including for insurance reasons) that all that attended this year's LICA Off-Road Adventure will be more than capable of returning to the Badlands Off-Road Park whenever they feel! No serious breakdowns or injuries documented (not that you have to put yourself in those types of situations at the park, but we all know those individuals who can't help themselves).

Our sincere thanks to the Badlands Off-Road Park and Off The Trail Vacation Rentals & Campground teams for setting us up onsite and to our sponsors, Advanced Drainage Systems and Fratco, for helping make the event possible. To view all the pictures and videos from the event, visit our website: <https://www.illica.net/picnics-gallery>

If you have any great ideas about other activities or events you'd like to see ILICA host, please reach out to the ILICA office, shoot us an email, or reach out to our picnic committee to share your thoughts. We'd love to hear them!





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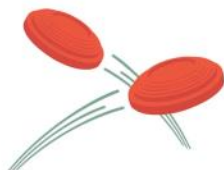
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Illinois LICA's Area 3 GOLF OUTING & TRAP SHOOT

SEPT 12, 2025



Izaak Walton League Trap-Skeet Grounds: 9:00 am
1220 W. 11th St., Kewanee, IL 61443

Baker Park Golf Course: 12 pm (shotgun start)
1095 Cambridge Rd., Kewanee, IL 61443



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| ☐ Green or Tee Sponsor - \$185 | |

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Trap Only... \$ 35.00 • Golf & Dinner... \$ 80.00 • Golf Only... \$ 55.00 • Dinner Only... \$ 40.00

Name(s)	Chicken or Steak	Trap, Golf, Dinner \$110	Trap Only \$35	Golf & Dinner \$80	Golf Only \$55	Dinner Only \$40
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*Event level sponsors: buy 3 get 1 free golf & dinner registration (\$240/foursome)

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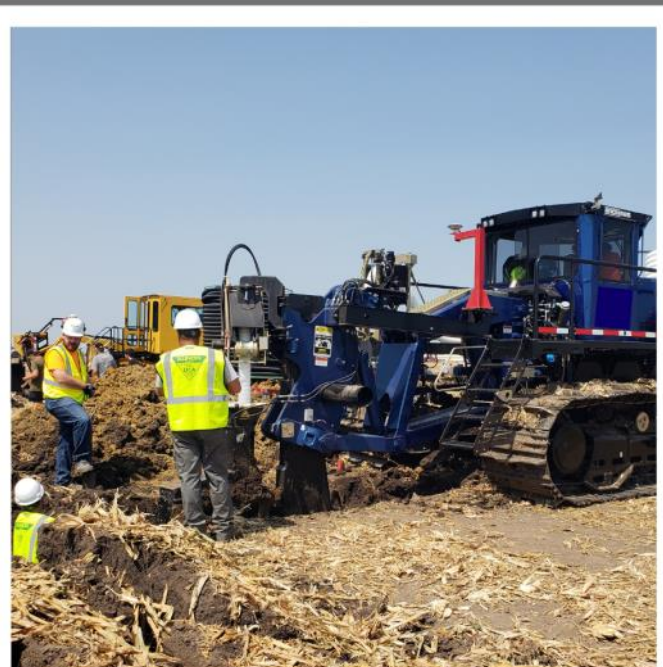
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ILICA Trivia

What contractor became a member and volunteered & supplied equipment during the Farm Progress Show in 2023?



Be the first to submit the correct
answer to michelle@illica.net
One lucky winner will receive a prize!



May/June Answer: Eileen Norin

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Illinois

Area 3 Trap Shoot & Golf Outing

September 12, 2025

Kewanee, IL

Izaak Walton Trap - Skeet Grounds: 9:00 am

Baker Golf Course: 12:00 pm

Register via QR code on page 20

Board of Directors Meeting (hybrid)

September 13, 2025

Galva, IL

Committee Meetings: 8 am - 12 pm

Board Meeting: 1 pm

In-person:

ILICA Office: 112 Exchange St., Ste. 2, Galva, IL 61434

Virtual:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9759547353?pwd=c1ZPcjFhSTBTYjhXeERNZnFRTXdOZz09>

Or call: 1-312-626-6799 Meeting ID: 975 954 7353

Passcode: 0000

Contractor Training Store & Illinois LICA

Virtual Septic Training

September 25, 2025

8 - 11:30 am

Register: <https://form.jotform.com/210405973758159>

or via QR code on page 24

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SAFETY FEATURE: MENTAL HEALTH MINUTE



It's OK Not to Be OK

Mental Health Awareness Month, observed every May, (*World Mental Health Day is Oct. 10th*) serves as a crucial reminder that mental

health is just as important as physical health. This national health observance is meant to raise awareness, reduce stigma and encourage individuals to seek help when needed.

More than half of adults in the United States will experience mental illness—which refers to a variety of diagnosed conditions that affect one's mood, behavior, feelings or thinking—at some point in their lives. Mental illnesses can occur occasionally, while others are chronic. The most common mental illnesses include anxiety disorder, major depression and bipolar disorder. However, roughly half of adults with mental illness in the United States don't receive the treatment they need.

Common barriers to receiving treatment include the high costs of and difficulty accessing mental health care, mental health professional shortages, and the stigma associated with mental health. When left untreated, mental health conditions can affect a person's ability to manage both work and personal responsibilities.

You Are Not Alone

Mental health conditions are common, real and often treatable. Seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness, so consider the following ways to gain mental health support:

- **Talk to someone you trust**—a friend, mentor or family member—and share your feelings.
- **Use confidential 24/7 hotlines** for immediate support. The SAMHSA's National Helpline (1-800-662-HELP [4357]) is a treatment referral and information service. You can also call or text 988 for the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for yourself or others experiencing a mental health crisis.
- **Join support groups** to gain a sense of community and understanding.
- **Practice self-care activities**, such as exercise, healthy eating, quality sleep, mindfulness and hobbies.
- **Seek professional help** from therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists to navigate mental health challenges.

Most people experience mental health challenges at some point, and seeking help is a courageous—and critical—step toward recovery.

4 Reasons Why Reading Is Good For Your Brain

Reading is often considered a leisurely activity, but its benefits extend beyond entertainment. Daily reading can significantly impact mental health by enhancing cognitive function, reducing stress and fostering emotional well-being. Some health practitioners even pursue bibliotherapy—books used as a therapeutic tool—to support and treat individuals living with anxiety, depression and grief.

Here are four reasons why incorporating reading into your daily routine helps your brain:

- 1) **Cognitive stimulation**—Regular readers are more likely to maintain their cognitive ability as they age.
- 2) **Stress reduction**—Reading for as little as six minutes can reduce stress by 68%. It can also be a healthy escape from daily stressors. You immerse yourself in a new world and, without visuals, can invent or visualize it yourself.
- 3) **Improved focus**—Reading requires concentration and attention to detail, which can improve one's general ability to focus on tasks.
- 4) **Social skill development**—Frequent fiction readers often have better social ability and can easily empathize with others.

While it's clear that reading is beneficial, mental illness may impact one's ability to read. If that's the case, here are some tips for improving your relationship with reading:

- **Listen to audiobooks.** Yes, listening to a book counts. Many people find it easier to process auditory words versus written words.
- **Select books you like.** Don't give in to pressure to read classic or new releases that people are talking about. Read the genres you actually enjoy. This can also keep you motivated.
- **Read short formats.** If an entire book feels intimidating, opt for short stories, magazines or even interesting articles. Experiment with different formats to find what you like best.
- **Don't pressure yourself.** If your identity feels tied to reading or you're worried about reading goals, let that self-imposed pressure go and focus on other hobbies that bring you joy.

Making reading a daily habit can yield many cognitive and emotional benefits. For further guidance, contact a mental health professional.

*Source: Adapted from Mental Health Minute Newsletter - May 2025,
Prins Insurance LICA Portal (Zynwave)*

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