

# MICHIGAN Country Lines



## Wings of Wonder

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Energy Makeover Family**



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# Midwest Energy Cooperative

## We Make a Difference In Our Community

I was part of the crowd on that cold November morning—a mere spectator to the action that was about to unfold. There were 20 or more people crammed into a small kitchen space in the Decatur home of Steve and Jaime Stone-McEnaney, all eager to see the looks on the family's faces as they realized what our Home Energy Makeover team had been up to that morning while they were conveniently away from the house.

The only thing missing was Ty Pennington and his now-famous mantra, "Move that bus!"

Your electric co-op took on an amazing project earlier this summer. The Midwest Home Energy Makeover was designed to implement measures to increase the overall energy efficiency of an existing home, and then share the experience, methods and results with other members to encourage more people to follow suit.

The project combined proven technology with tried-and-true methodology, and was very successful, as you will see from the story on page 28 of this issue. But the story is so much bigger and better than the measures implemented. Under the leadership of a team of Midwest employees, a community came together to support one of its own. And I would venture to say that every person involved, from the six family members who occupy the home to the many volunteers and partners who provided gifts of time, service and support, came away somehow changed for the better by the experience.

I've been involved in a lot of good stuff during my 36-year tenure in this business. The electric utility industry is a dynamic field, especially as it relates to technology, providing those of us on the inside with the opportunity to be

on the cutting edge of some really cool stuff. But at the end of the day and at the end of my career, I want to know

that *we* made a difference, and somehow encouraged others to do the same.

The Home Energy Makeover project was just one of many great service projects that we were involved with during 2010. Volunteerism and "giving back" has become a part of our corporate culture at Midwest, to the degree that our team gave more than 800 hours back to the community

through active service and outreach over the last year. Why do I share this? Because it's good stuff. Important stuff. In some cases, like our Home Energy Makeover, life-changing stuff.

Utilities carry an unfortunate reputation as being big, bureaucratic machines offering an overpriced commodity with minimal concern for customer service and satisfaction. Through our actions, we strive to create a different experience for our members, both in terms of your regular interactions as a customer, and in the way you think of us. We want to deliver reliable energy services with top-notch customer care. That's what we're about. And I believe what we provide adds great value to your life.

But we want to do more, and that's where our outreach efforts come in. We want to make a difference to the individuals and communities we serve—to make them better and stronger. In 2010, Midwest employees were hands and feet to people all over our service territory, supporting youth, seniors, people who are sick, and people in need. Service delivery at Midwest goes beyond poles and wires, and I hope you take pride in the fact that this cooperative—*your* cooperative—is making a difference.



**Robert Hance**  
President/CEO

# Midwest In The Community



The inaugural Midwest Energy Cooperative **Pajama Rama** for Homeless Education aimed to heighten awareness and raise donations for homeless students in all Lenawee County Schools.

Our goal to deliver this message to every community began early in 2010 and culminated with a one-day collection and celebratory event at Adrian Mall in October. Many businesses, organizations and individuals partnered to make this event a huge success by bringing in over \$13,000 in financial contributions and gift cards. Additionally, several thousand

dollars worth of goods were donated, including new socks, underwear, pajamas, back packs, sleeping bags and hygiene products.



## Teaching Energy

**S**eventeen teachers representing 14 Michigan schools recently participated in a day-long energy education workshop hosted by Midwest Energy Cooperative. The workshop was presented by Todd Rogers, a certified energy manager and northeast regional director for the National Energy Education Development Project (NEED).

NEED is a Virginia-based organization that works with state and local partners to provide energy education to teachers and students nationwide. The program helps educators implement energy programs in their classrooms while developing student knowledge and leadership skills.

“This is a great, hands-on learning opportunity for teachers, and Midwest Energy is happy to help make it available,” says Bob Hance, president/CEO. “What makes this program unique and particularly effective is that each student is provided with an energy efficiency kit to take home and install with their families. This gives them a real sense of ownership in the process and positions them to become a key link in educating about energy use and affecting change in their own homes.”



Rob Wright, Edwardsburg Middle School, and Theresa Schwartz, Plainwell High School, learn how radiant energy converts to electrical energy in photovoltaic (solar) cells.



## Employee Appreciation Dinner

Twenty employees were recognized recently for a combined 310 years of service. Pictured (front, left to right): Steve Bella, 10 years; Scotty Borah, five years; Kathy Tucker, five years; Dixie Teague, 25 years; Patti Clymer, 20 years; Terry Rubenthaler, 15 years; Jim Haas, 10 years; Steve Hunsberger, 15 years; Stacy Campbell, 10 years; (back row): Nicole Barfell, five years; Pam Hemenway, five years; Ray Welburn, 40 years; Karen Smith, 15 years; Dirk Adam, 25 years. Not pictured: Jenna Kniss, five years; Andy Badner, 10 years; Chad Ritchie, 15 years; Mike Burrell, 15 years; Pam Myers, 25 years; Bob Beardslee, 35 years.

The event also celebrated employee volunteer efforts for 2010. Jennifer Gilliam was recognized as Volunteer of the Year for contributing 25.5 hours at eight events. In total, Midwest employees volunteered 882.5 hours of their time through 24 different community service opportunities.



Teens,

You could win a trip to Washington, D.C.

If you're a 10th or 11th grade high school student who will be 16 or 17 by June 2011, and your family receives electric service from Midwest Energy Cooperative, you are eligible to apply. You may be selected to attend **Co-op Teen Days** and then be considered to **win a free trip to Washington, D.C.**

Applications are available online at [TeamMidwest.com](http://TeamMidwest.com), or contact Nicole Barfell at 800-492-5989, ext. 1112, or [nicoleb@teammidwest.com](mailto:nicoleb@teammidwest.com).

Learn more about the programs at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com), and click on "Youth." Also check out [YouthTour.coop](http://YouthTour.coop) to see videos and photos.

**Michigan  
Electric Cooperative  
Teen Days**

Tustin, MI  
April 27-29

**Rural Electric  
Youth Tour**

Washington, D.C.  
June 11-16



# College Scholarships



High school seniors whose parents or guardians currently receive monthly electric service from Midwest Energy Cooperative, and whose primary residence is in Midwest's service area, may apply for one of the four

\$500 college scholarships to be presented in spring 2011.

Selection for the scholarship is based on academic performance, extracurricular activities, community involvement and/or employment, and honors and awards. Applicants will also be asked to submit a short essay. A minimum cumulative grade point average of 3.5 on a four-point scale is required.

Scholarship applications must be post-marked by *Friday, March 18, 2011*, and winners will be notified in late April. Interested students may contact Nicole Barfell at 800-492-5989, ext. 1112, or email [nicoleb@teammidwest.com](mailto:nicoleb@teammidwest.com). The application can also be downloaded at [TeamMidwest.com](http://TeamMidwest.com).

## Midwest Energy Cooperative Case No. U-15818 2009 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately 2 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012 and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, Midwest Energy Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. Although the cooperative uses renewable energy in its fuel mix, the annual report states that the co-op did not bank any renewable energy credits in 2009. This is because Midwest Energy will acquire its renewable energy credits through Wabash Valley Power Association, the co-op's current power supplier, under an all-requirements contract. Wabash Valley's power supply portfolio for 2009 had approximately 3 percent renewable energy.

A full copy of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at [teammidwest.com](http://teammidwest.com) or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.



Last year our Energy Optimization programs helped participating members save over 30 million kilowatt hours of electricity across the state of Michigan. That adds up to big energy bill savings—with even more chances for you to save this year! Watch for information about the 2011 Energy Optimization programs at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or by calling 877-296-4319.

**KEEP ON SAVING**  
with the 2011 Energy Optimization programs.





# Nonstop Surprises For Decatur Family

**T**hanksgiving Day came early for the Stone-McEnaney family as the Home Energy Makeover team from Midwest Energy converged upon their home to deliver a morning of big surprises.

The Home Energy Makeover was designed to increase the overall energy efficiency of an existing home, giving a deserving family an opportunity to enjoy increased home comfort in a more energy efficient environment. More than 60 applications were received from all over Midwest's service territory. A team of Midwest employees reviewed all nominations and made site visits, ultimately selecting the Steve and Jaime Stone-McEnaney family as the winner.

On Tuesday, Nov. 23, after several months of ongoing work in the home, which included the installation of a brand new 3-ton, two-stage Water Furnace® geothermal unit, the family was taken to breakfast under the guise of an informational meeting with a representative from Wabash Valley Power Association (WVPA), the co-op's power supplier. When they returned, they were greeted by a bevy of local reporters and co-op staff, all eagerly awaiting the surprised look on their faces as they discovered what was behind the morning's covert operation.

What they found was a kitchen full of brand new Energy Star® appliances, each decked out with a bright red bow to celebrate the momentous occasion.

"It was just an awesome feeling," Jaime said upon walking into the kitchen. "Words can't really explain it."

The new appliances included a refrigerator, dishwasher, microwave, stove, clothes washer and dryer. But the surprises didn't stop there.

The Midwest team also presented the family with a food basket for their Thanksgiving celebration, complete with a turkey and ham. It was an emotional morning for the family, although the biggest emotional punch came with the presentation of a \$450 rebate check, offered through a geothermal incentive program offered by WVPA. The rebate was credited to the family's December electric bill. Last winter, as a result of having to heat with space heaters after the demise of their fuel oil furnace, Jaime and Steve had monthly electric bills that exceeded \$500, creating another layer of financial difficulty for the struggling family.

"Midwest Energy is more than a locally-owned utility, and I think this project demonstrates that," said Bob Hance, president and CEO. "We want to provide tools and resources to our members to help them become more educated energy users."

"Using the Energy Optimization program, we have been able to reach out to a family in need—a family that has demonstrated through their own example that they want to lift themselves out of difficult circumstances. And I think what they are going to discover as a result of this effort is

a lifestyle that they can sustain."

Bob and the Midwest team hopes that other members will recognize that this family's efficiency upgrades and energy use changes can make similar differences in their own energy use.

## Home Audits

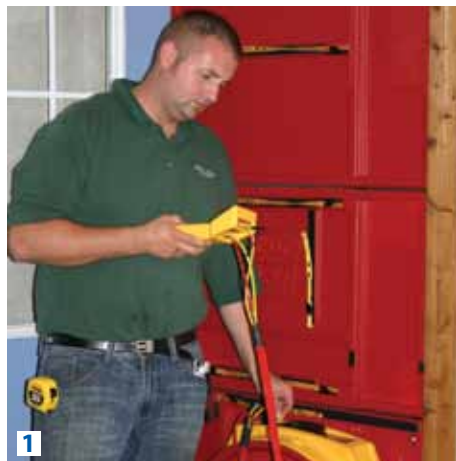
Before beginning any work, the team had to determine the status of the house in terms of energy efficiency. On Aug. 17, Brad Bartholomew and his team from **Bartholomew Heating & Cooling and Energy Saving Services** conducted a thorough energy audit to determine where we could make the biggest impact with energy efficiency measures for our family. A second audit on Nov. 16 showed a 30 percent reduction in air leakage, based on the measures implemented. With additional measures yet to come, Brad anticipates a final reduction of 50 percent.

"It will be equivalent to a new house under the highest Energy Star standards," he said.

## The Timeline in Photos

**1.** Rodney Whitcomb from Energy Saving Services takes a reading after installing a blower door during the initial audit. The blower door lowers the internal air pressure, allowing auditors to measure the infiltration of outside air pressure through unsealed cracks and openings.

**2.** Rodney and Brad review temperature readings on the infrared scanner. By mea-





asuring temperature differences on walls and floors in adjoining areas, an auditor can determine areas of cold air infiltration. It also reveals areas of inadequate or nonexistent insulation.

3. Brad uses a smoke stick to visualize air infiltration in the basement windows as part of the post audit.

4. A work team rolled up its sleeves on Oct. 15 to prepare the house for the new HVAC unit. This included jumping in a crawl space to remove insulation, hauling out the old, broken fuel oil furnace, and tearing out all existing duct work. Midwest Propane Operations Manager Billy Meggs cuts apart existing ductwork.

5. Lori Ruff, Midwest communications specialist, moves a piece of insulated foam board into place. A work team gathered on Nov. 5 to attach the foam board to the basement walls, which will help seal air leaks.

6. Students in the HVAC program at Kalamazoo Valley Community College helped design and install the ductwork for the new geothermal system on Nov. 9.

7. Nov. 23 was reveal day. Members of the Stone-McEnaney family, including (L-R) Jaime, Jim, Tommy, Annette and Stevie, were surprised not only with a kitchen full of new appliances, but a \$450 rebate offered through the geothermal incentive program from Wabash Valley Power.

## Energy efficiency measures included:

- Installation of a highly efficient, 3-ton, 2-stage (with electric resistance back-up) Water Furnace **geothermal unit** with a closed-loop, horizontal installation. The unit was provided at cost by **Water Furnace**, and all labor and installation was donated by **Water Furnace of Michiana**. Another efficiency gain from the installation of the geothermal unit is that it supplies preheated water to the water heater.

- **Design and installation of all new ductwork.** The existing ductwork was not sufficient to support the airflow needs of the new geothermal unit, so a team of Midwest Energy volunteers came in and removed all existing ductwork (as well as the non-working fuel oil furnace) to make way for the new ductwork. Gehry Gross, an instructor with the HVAC program at **Kalamazoo Valley Community College**, made this an educational and community service project for his students, designing and installing ductwork and registers that support the system's air movement.

- **Electrical upgrade.** **Bender Electric** donated labor and supplies to upgrade the home from 100 to 200-amp service to support the new geothermal unit.

- **Crawlspace sealed off and insulated.** The basement space had not been property insulated, making it a source of significant air leakage. A team of Midwest volunteers installed a foil-backed insulation board on all basement walls to seal leaks. **Air Tight Michigan** donated labor and materials to seal the

entire crawl space, basement and other strategic wall cavities in the main level of the home with a two-part closed cell foam sealant.

- **Chimney removed.** **Scott Wade Construction** and **Quality Masonry** donated labor and supplies to remove the existing chimney, which was a major air-sealing measure, and provided a cold air return cavity for the new HVAC system.

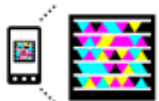
- **Other sealing measures** were implemented by a team of Midwest Energy volunteers with supplies donated by **Home Depot** in Three Rivers. This included caulking and installing foam gaskets on all electrical receptacles and light switches.

- **New appliances.** To further increase energy efficiency, we upgraded existing appliances to Energy Star® models, including a refrigerator, dishwasher and clothes washer. The refrigerator and clothes washer are both rated as Tier 3 appliances, the most energy efficient as rated by the Consortium of Energy Efficiency.

- **Other efficiency measures:** ● Replaced all existing incandescents with efficient compact fluorescent lightbulbs. ● Installed a programmable thermostat. ● Installed R4 insulated pipe wrap on all water lines.

- **Energy Aware.** To assist the family in monitoring their energy use and adapting their consumption behaviors, we will install a real-time energy monitor, donated by **Markur Communications**. The monitor is hardwired into the home and provides instant feedback about electricity consumption and related costs through a wireless in-home display.

Learn more about the Midwest Home Energy Makeover at **TeamMidwest.com**



Get the free mobile app at <http://gettag.mobi>



Many individuals were involved with the success of our inaugural Midwest Home Energy Makeover. Special thanks to these businesses, organizations and individuals for their help and support with this project.

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*HVAC Program*
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