

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES

NORTHWEST MICHIGAN SURGERY CENTER



*Meet the center's new CEO:
LoAnn Vande Leest*



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MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Community Solar Project Set to Shine

I have talked and written about affordability in this column over the years. After much more thought, deliberation and discussion since the first of this year, I believe we have found a way to make the most expensive form of renewable energy affordable.

Community solar is not a new idea. It is working in varying degrees of success at a handful of other utilities in other states. As far as I can determine, it has not been attempted in Michigan. Cherryland Electric Cooperative (CEC) has invited Traverse City Light and Power (TCLP) to work with us to make it happen for every member and citizen these utilities serve who is willing to participate.

As I write this, we are working hard to formalize concepts into written agreements, and anticipate an April 15 start date. The utilities will retain ownership of the solar panels, parts and pieces.

Individuals will sign a 25-year lease agreement for a one-time fee of \$470 per solar panel. We will start with an offering of 48 panels to be built on land next to the CEC headquarters building. If interest exceeds this number, we can easily scale up the solar array to a bigger number in a short time. Other locations around the service territories may be possible if interest warrants.

There will also be energy optimization (EO) rebates available. CEC will be offering an EO rebate of \$75 that will drop the member's out-of-pocket cost to \$395. Members with qualifying capital credits who wish to take an early discounted payout will be able to drop the price another \$75 to \$320. If you are interested in your specific options, please call our member services manager, Kevin Cragg, at 486-9200.

Individuals who step forward and commit to a lease (or multiple leases) will receive a monthly bill credit for the actual electricity produced. The vendor, Contractors Building Supply of Copemish, estimates that one solar panel can produce an average of 25 kilowatt hours (kWh) per

month. Obviously, production in June will be different from January.

Individuals will receive the prior year's average wholesale power cost, less a very small amount to cover distribution costs and line losses associated with transmitting

power from the generator to the final user.

The wholesale power price in this "first of its kind" type of project is currently being calculated in association with our legal team and necessary regulatory bodies. Based on the 25-kilowatt hour-per month estimate, our goal is to achieve a break-even for individuals that is 20 years or less. Capturing all the rebates mentioned above will

lower the break-even point much further.

There will be no additional costs to participating members. The utility partnership will cover any maintenance issues. Energy produced after the 25-year period will go to the utilities, as we attempt to recover some costs over the long-term.

If you sign a lease with CEC and move into TCLP service area (or vice versa), we will simply transfer the credit to your new account. If you move outside the service territory of either utility, you will have the ability to sell or assign your lease to another individual or business. If you fail to re-assign the lease, energy production will revert back to the utilities.

Why solar? Why now? The answer is long and has multiple responses. Basically, we have found a mechanism to achieve the fairness and affordability "mantra" so often written about over the years. Thus, we feel this program is the right thing to do for all our members. The partnership with TCLP only makes it better by spreading the risk and opening up the program to an even wider audience.

We have more details to work out before April 15. If you are interested, stay tuned for press releases, postings on Facebook and email newsletters. We are simply putting out the news early in hopes of kick-starting the project. Join in the conversation and provide us your feedback so we can make this as successful as possible.



Tony Anderson
General Manager





Photos (including cover) – John L. Russell



New First-Class Leader

Northwest Michigan Surgery Center's new CEO leads by example. **Nick Edson**

LoAnn Vande Leest has the heart of a caregiver and the brain of an administrator.

That's why she is a perfect fit as the chief executive office at the Northwest Michigan Surgery Center.

"I went to high school and college in Wisconsin and my last job was in Wisconsin, so I know something about the so-called Midwest friendliness," said LoAnn. "But Traverse City takes it to a new level. People go out of their way to say nice things and to help. I love it here already."

LoAnn is from the small town of Gillett, WI, and graduated from the Bellin College of Nursing in Green Bay. She also has an MBAH from Cardinal Stritch University to cap off her impressive resume.

"My roles are as a wife, mother, nurse and administrator," she said with a friendly smile. "But I've always believed that God puts me where I'm supposed to be, and this is where I'm supposed to be."

Her job, which she started on Jan. 14, is challenging from many different perspectives.

The surgery center, which opened in 2004 and gets its power from Cherryland Electric Cooperative, is the second busiest outpatient surgery center in the U.S.

More than 17,000 patients are treated annually at its location across from Traverse City West Junior High in Copper Ridge. And, the center has been named in Becker's Top 100 places to work in healthcare.

Patients not only receive first-class care, LoAnn said, but are cared for by a first-class

staff. "That's why the story of this surgery center is all about our staff," said LoAnn. "A lot of them wear more than one hat, because that's the nature of the work here as compared to a hospital."

LoAnn leads by example.

"I still enjoy putting on my nursing scrubs and getting out to the clinical areas from time to time," she said. "There have been times, since I'm new here, when a doctor will remark he hasn't seen me before and wonder who I am. I just tell him I'm the boss here. We get a good laugh over it."

While LoAnn admits she expects her staff to be accountable for what they do, she also believes that a happy staff is a productive staff.

"Surgery centers are different than hospitals, but we both have our own jobs to do," she said. "Hospitals are the appropriate place for overnight and long-term care. Surgery centers are for 23-hour, and less, care. They were created to lower costs, which happens when you don't have to keep patients overnight and have all the ancillary services of a hospital. They were created so doctors could get their lives back by having control over their schedules. Surgery centers are a complement to hospitals."

The surgery center works in partnership with Munson Healthcare and was developed by local physicians, in partnership with Munson Medical Center. The complex is 34,000-square-feet and has a staff of 80 physicians, 43 anesthesia providers, and a healthcare staff of over 120 people.

That's a lot of responsibility for LoAnn, but she enjoys it.

"The key to a surgery center is how the clinical staff and the business staff are co-dependent on each other," she said. "In the hospital, the clinical and business areas seldom see each other. Here, they interact closely every day. They understand that each has a job to do, and while they're very different, without either one, the other wouldn't exist."

Besides overseeing the surgery center, LoAnn is a national healthcare surveyor for the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare, and travels to other surgery centers around the country to assess their care. This gives her a chance to come back and fine-tune the Michigan center with what she has seen work around the country.

When LoAnn isn't working, she enjoys volunteering and spending time with her husband Mike and their 22-year-old son, Steve.

In the fall, LoAnn and Mike's thoughts turn to football. They have season tickets in the third row at Lambeau Field in Green Bay, home of the Packers.

"My in-laws have had season tickets at Packers games since before Lambeau Field was built, back when it was City Stadium," she said. "We love going to Packers games."

Above all, however, she loves getting involved in volunteer work.

"I have a heart for community work," she said. "Giving back is what it's all about—and it's apparent that the people of Traverse City know that and share in that enthusiasm."

LochenHeath Is Bouncing Back



At first glance, the rolling grounds of LochenHeath appear serene overlooking East Grand Traverse Bay. Luxurious homes sit near the Scottish Highland-style golf course on what was the Maitland family's cherry orchard for over 75 years. Life at LochenHeath, however, hasn't always been so peaceful.

LochenHeath was developed by the Maitlands in 1999. An Arizona development company purchased the project in 2004, realizing the amazing potential. The beautiful grounds were plotted to support over 400 high-end homes. The restaurant was run by one of the area's best chefs, Joseph George. By 2007, nine families called LochenHeath home.

It was at that point when LochenHeath hit a bump in the road, as the real estate bubble burst and the developer abandoned the project. Soon after, homeowners discovered that the sanitary and central fresh water systems were in disrepair and needed maintenance.

When the homeowners association inquired, they were notified that the systems were soon to be shut off by Cherryland Electric Cooperative for non-payment. When they contacted the developer, they were told that the developers were under no

legal obligation to maintain the property.

After more research, it was revealed that the current homeowners would have to take responsibility for the cost of the common well and sanitation system if these services were to continue. The homeowners banned together and took control of their association through a court order. This allowed them to maintain the infrastructure and keep LochenHeath operational as a viable community.

The golf course, an integral component to LochenHeath's success, was also closed and its 30 employees dismissed with two days' notice. In 2010, a group of 11 investors, who were homeowners and previous club members, formed a corporation called LochenVest LLC, and began the process of buying the golf course, restaurant and pro shop.

As a result of all these events, a new relationship was born between the local homeowners, the golf course, and Cherryland Electric Cooperative. When the homeowners began receiving very large electric bills for their fresh water and septic systems, they contacted Cherryland.

Upon inspection, it was discovered that a pump was broken on the well and required repair to stop the continuous energy use

and sky-high electric bills. Cherryland also worked with the golf course to reduce costs by efficiently monitoring water usage during off-peak times. The co-op also recommended low energy lighting and thermostats, which greatly reduced energy use and costs.

In the summer of 2008, LochenHeath Golf Course was operated by the Grand Traverse Resort. After that season, the course was left unattended by the developer, so it was closed and the greens stood empty during the summers of 2009 and 2010... almost. Some homeowners and other former club members volunteered their time to pick weeds from the bunkers and mow the grass. These volunteers kept the course alive while negotiations were underway to acquire it, according to Al Ruggirello of LochenVest.

In December 2010, LochenVest bought and re-opened the golf course, pro shop and restaurant, allowing public play. After hearing of LochenHeath's rebirth, Chef George contacted LochenVest. "I told him we were just starting out," Ruggirello recalls, "Our restaurant would just serve sandwiches and burgers." Chef George replied, "Then LochenHeath will have the best burgers in town...I don't want anyone else in my kitchen."

LochenHeath has been reborn as a welcoming community of casual elegance with a friendly, small-town attitude. The updated course design uncovers panoramic views of Grand Traverse Bay. And Chef George's kitchen creates unique meals using local ingredients, including a burger that comes highly recommended by this writer.

What's in the future for LochenHeath as we approach another golf season? Well, the golf club will soon go private, but there's still time to check out the golf and the home sites as summer comes rolling in.

Co-op News

Next Member Input Session Is June

The board of directors at Cherryland Electric Cooperative is offering another opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board. Members will be able to talk to the board next on Monday, June 17, at 9 a.m. at the co-op office in Grawn.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board. Members are asked

to keep their comments to 5 minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input portion of the meeting only.

Cherryland members are afforded a chance to meet with the board on a quarterly basis during meetings in March, June, September and December.



Check Us Out On Facebook

For the latest Cherryland news and events,

members can now follow us on Facebook.

Click "Follow us on Facebook" at the bottom left-hand corner of cherrylandelectric.com.



Kim Crockett is a member service representative at Cherryland Electric Cooperative.





75 Years: The Impact of Electricity

Later this month, after three years of interviews and document digging, our 75th anniversary book called "Lighting the Way" will appear in bookstores and be available for sale here at Cherryland.

We priced the hardcover book at a very reasonable \$10 because we wanted it to be affordable and read by as many of our members as possible.

Why? We are proud of our story and the men and women who—against great odds—were able to bring power to rural northern Michigan.

It's the story of our co-op on the local level and how co-ops nationwide brought light to the dark countryside of our nation.

In fact, during a recent trip to North Carolina to visit our grandsons, I noticed something I had never thought about before. I looked at the power lines running up and down the sides of mountains and wondered how the pioneering co-op workers did it.

When I interviewed some early Cherryland employees who worked here during the 1940s and '50s about how workers pulled off such accomplishments, they just smiled.

"Well, if you've ever tried to read by the light of a candle or haul water in the house to take a bath, you'd understand how we got it done," several of them said.

Since many of the first co-op members were farmers, electricity also meant they had light in their barns and power to use electric milking machines.

Not only that, but when people were burning old kerosene lanterns in their homes, it was dirty and required the constant washing of curtains and blankets.

"People never think about it today, but one of the big differences when electricity came to our farm was how clean it was," said one Cherryland member. "Not only could we get more done in the evenings, but we didn't have to spend as much time cleaning. When people say electricity changed their lives, they weren't kidding. There were a lot of reasons it did."

Several of the older people I interviewed recalled two huge advantages of electricity.

"Number one was having appliances like



Nick Edson

a refrigerator to keep our ice and stoves to cook our meals," they said. "Number two—and we mean this quite literally—was having flush toilets."

I have to admit I almost fell off my seat laughing at the last remark.

But the real difference that electricity makes can be seen in the

eyes of people who didn't have it decades ago. They don't take it for granted like we do, since we grew up with it and are used to having it.

Co-op News

Annual Meeting Set for June 6th

Cherryland Electric Cooperative's 75th Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, June 6, at Wuerfel Park.

The Traverse City Beach Bums of the independent Frontier League, play their home games at Wuerfel Park, which gets its power from Cherryland.

Registration runs from 3-5 p.m. on June 6, with the business meeting from 5-6 p.m. The Beach Bums game starts at 7:05 p.m.

Cherryland members will receive a free ticket to the game and a food voucher, which entitles them to a hot dog, chips



and soft drink.

More meeting details will be in upcoming issues of *Country Lines*.

Co-op Members Can Benefit At Sam's Club

Cherryland Electric Co-op has just negotiated a benefit for all its members with the Traverse City Sam's Club.

If you open a new membership or renew an existing one, you can receive up to a \$25 gift card. This offer is valid only through June 30. Information about this offer may be picked up at Cherryland's office in Grawn, at Sam's Club, or online at cherrylandelectric.com.

Please bring proof of your Cherryland Electric Cooperative affiliation (membership card or current bill) to Sam's Club and sign up soon!

Cherryland Cares Offers Grant Applications

Area nonprofit agencies who are seeking financial help can apply for a grant through Cherryland Cares.

Cherryland Cares is a five-member board, made up of Cherryland Electric Co-op members who distribute money

Frankly, I can't imagine a time without electricity. So my appreciation is more for TV and computers, which have come into their own since I was born in 1953.

But for the Greatest Generation, the folks who grew up in the 1920s, '30s and '40s, electricity was life-changing.

"It's the greatest invention of my lifetime," several long-time Cherryland members told me.

"What's second?" I asked one elderly woman.

She was silent for several moments.

"I'd have to give that more thought," she said.

But actually, her answer told me everything about the impact of electricity in our lives.

from Operation Round Up to area nonprofits. The next quarterly meeting of Cherryland Cares is Monday, June 17. The deadline for applications is Friday, June 7.

Operation Round Up money comes from Cherryland members who elect to round up their bills to the nearest dollar every month. This amount averages \$6 per year.

To receive a Cherryland Cares grant application or join Operation Round Up, call Nick Edson at 486-9222 or email him at nicke@cecelec.com.

Pay Your Bill Online

It's easy to do. You can set up your accounts to get only an e-mail bill—no more paper bills.

To sign up, access your account on cherrylandelectric.com. It will prompt you immediately after you sign in to decide whether or not you want the paper bill to continue; if you do, check the box. If not, simply press "update."

Questions can be answered by Cherryland's Member Service Department at 486-9200.



Help a kid.



One Call 231-486-9214

or



One Click marathon4kids.com

helps



One Kid *Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan*

WHAT IS IT? Marathon 4 Kids is a fundraiser developed by Cherryland General Manager Tony Anderson to raise money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan.

HOW DOES IT WORK? Tony's goal is to complete 50 marathons, one in each state. So far, he has run marathons in 20 states.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO? 100 percent of the money goes towards serving kids in northwest Michigan through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

MORE INFORMATION? Contact Tony at 231-486-9214 or marathon4kids@gmail.com, or visit marathon4kids.com.



Great Lakes Stainless, Inc.

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Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan



THE BANK OF
northern michigan



'Fighting Back'

T.C. Schools Tackle Bullying

Growing up I was neither a bully nor the victim of incessant bullying. I was, however, a witness to bullying. Many of us have had front row seats to the ongoing bullying problem in our schools.

As much as 25 percent of U.S. school children are victims of bullying every year. These children hold center stage in the continuing proliferation of childhood bullying.

Sadly, 30 percent of all child suicides can be directly related to bullying. Children who are the victims of bullying are more likely to have low self-esteem, depression and anxiety disorders, posttraumatic stress, eating disorders, and other long-lasting harmful effects in their adult years.

The negative effects of bullying are not limited to its victims. Rather, bullying hurts the culture of our schools and communities. When those of us in the front row don't take a stand on bullying we become complicit in a system that fails to protect the victims of bullying.

That's why Cherryland Electric Cooperative is excited to partner with Conflict Resolution Services and TCAPS (Traverse City Area Public Schools) as they implement a system-wide anti-bullying program.

The Olweus (ol-VEY-us) Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) is the most researched and best-known bullying prevention program available today. It has been used internationally for over 40 years with proven success at reducing bullying.

The OBPP program is not a curriculum; it is a whole-school, systems-change program that aims to:

- Reduce existing bullying problems among students;
- Prevent the development of new bullying problems;
- Achieve better peer relations at school.

According to Sharon Dionne, Blair Elementary School Principal, "the Olweus program is a proactive effort to prevent problems



Photo - iStockphoto.com

rather than waiting for them to develop."

"When there is a structured program that is consistent at every school, our schools become places where everyone is valued and everyone is treated with respect," Dionne says.

The program will kick-off in fall 2013 with weekly classroom meetings to discuss bullying and establish school rules.

"This sends a message to students that bullying is not just a school issue; it is a community issue."

This means the staff training at Traverse City schools has to begin now, says Elizabeth Pine at Conflict Resolution Services.

The sponsorships from Cherryland Electric and other community organizations help to cover training costs before the program starts and 18 months of follow-up consultation for staff members.

"Strong community support for programs like the OBPP sends a message to students that bullying is not just a school issue; it is a community issue," Pine explains. Conflict Resolution Services is still soliciting sponsorships for the program's training phase.

The schools also need more than just monetary support from the community.

Each school will invite community members to be part of their coordinating committee. The committee will be a team of eight to 15 members that help to start and oversee the school's OBPP program.

We have all been the perpetrator, victim or witness to bullying in some way. Therefore, we all have a role to play in combatting it,

and the OBPP gives us the chance to create a culture of respect in our schools and communities.

Cherryland Electric Cooperative is proud to support Blair Elementary School and TCAPS as they work to educate another generation of healthy, productive citizens.

See beyondbullyingmi.org for more details.

Rachel Johnson is the
Grassroots Advocate
at Cherryland Electric
Cooperative.





Look Up, Stay Alert During Outdoor Work, Play

As the weather turns to warm, adults and kids alike will head outside to perform winter clean-up and play. Before they do, remind them to look up, down and around, and be alert for power lines and other electrical hazards—it's the best way to stay safe from electrocution, and even death.

“Here at Cherryland Electric Cooperative, using proper procedures and safety measures is a matter of life and death,” explains Jim Carpenter, line superintendent and safety director. “We take safety seriously at home, too. Accidents happen, but if we educate ourselves and our children, we can keep them to a minimum.” See a few safety tips below...

For Kids . . .

Never fly a kite on a rainy day or anywhere but an open space. A high point in the sky makes a kite a grounding point for lightning, and kites could easily become tangled in power lines.

- Don't climb trees that are near power lines and poles—both evergreens and leafy trees can disguise danger.
- Never climb a power pole.

- Stay far away from power lines lying on the ground. You can't tell just by looking if electricity is still flowing through them. If there's water nearby, don't go in it. Water is the best conductor of electricity.

- Obey signs that say “danger” and “keep out” around large electrical equipment, like substations. These signs aren't warnings; they're commands to keep you safe.



For Adults . . .

Power lines tend to become part of the landscape, so before climbing a ladder to trim branches or access your roof, look around to make sure you are not in close proximity to electric lines.

- Remember that power lines and other utilities run underground, too. Call 811 to have utility lines marked before you start digging.

- Starting that winter cleanup yard work? Sweep dried leaves and debris from outdoor receptacles.

- If they're not already, consider upgrading your outdoor receptacles—or any outlets that could come in contact with water—to ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). GFCIs immediately interrupt power

- flow when a plugged-in device comes in contact with water. Regardless, keep your outlets and cords dry and covered outside.
- Use only weather-resistant, heavy-duty extension cords marked for outdoor use.

- Don't leave outdoor power tools unattended for curious children or animals to find.



For more safety tips and information, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Sources: Electrical Safety Foundation International, Safe Electricity

Here's What About

50¢

Will Get You...



About 50¢ a Month Makes a Difference to Your Northern Michigan Neighbors in Need.

So far, 4,000 of you have signed up for Operation Round Up, rounding your electric bill up to the next dollar. That generosity provided much-needed funding to dozens of local organizations in the last year. Plus, just for signing up you'll be entered to win \$50!

♥ Share the Love and Win \$50

Sign up at: facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop or on our website at: cherrylandelectric.com/cherrylandcares.



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Your donation
made the difference.
Thank you!



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cherrylandelectric.com



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- Key Payment Information
- Select ... “Continue”
- Retain ... Payment Verification Information

➔ *Time Spent: 1 minute, 50 seconds*

AutoPay Sign Up

To sign up for recurring monthly payment from your financial institution, complete and submit this form to Cherryland Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 298, Grawn, MI 49637. Cherryland reserves the right to revoke an autopay subscription if bank approval is denied. Please continue to pay your bill until notified on your statement that autopay is active.

Yes! I authorize Cherryland Electric Cooperative to charge my VISA, Mastercard, Discover, Checking, or Savings account for any accrued balance on the Cherryland Electric account listed:

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