

# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES



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with Rhonda

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Action

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Law Passed

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Speaks Up

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**SEPTEMBER 27, 2013!**

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## YOUR CO-OP

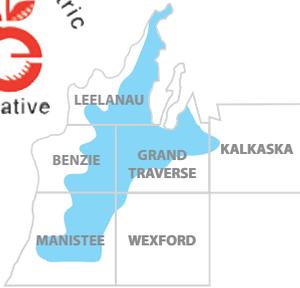
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\*Not in all editions

## On the Cover

Rhonda Oyer is her name and recycling is her game—as a unit chief for the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, that is. She's big on recycling at home, too, and her aim is to encourage everyone in Michigan to do the same.

Photo – Robert Bruce Photography/[robertbrucephotography.com](http://robertbrucephotography.com)





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## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

# Political Action

**H**ow many times have you heard the saying, “We were born in politics and we will die in politics?”

What I believe this means is, “We started by forming a group of interested people and we will cease to exist when the people are no longer interested.”

You can apply this to Rotary, Farm Bureau, and electric cooperatives like Cherryland Electric Cooperative (CEC).

In the electric cooperative world, we have evolved into a time in our history where very, very few of the people we serve remember the day when the lights came on. Electricity is now a commodity that is taken for granted. People flip a switch and 99.99 percent of the time (actual CEC reliability number) the lights come on.

Cherryland is embarking on an era during which we will attempt to re-engage our members, stressing the cooperative's purpose. One avenue of engagement is strengthening the political voice of the cooperative's members.

Why do we need a voice in the halls of Lansing and the U.S Capitol? I believe our elected officials need to hear our opinion on things such as Environmental Protection Agency regulations, a bill that would encourage more recycling of coal ash; legislation to improve the operation of present hydro facilities; a national energy conservation loan program, and a number of similar ideas that will ultimately affect the reliability and affordability of electricity in the future.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is the political action committee (PAC) for the nation's electric cooperatives. For decades, Cherryland's directors and employees have donated their personal dollars to this PAC. The money goes to candidates that support electric cooperative issues at the state and federal levels.

Yes, we can have the debate about getting into the trenches with other lobbyists

who are tossing money about. But, the fact remains that while a letter, phone call or personal visit may be effective, money increases the effectiveness.

I don't make the “rules” of the game, but I do have to play in order to benefit all the cooperative's members. Rest assured, your cooperative has never issued a check to any politician.

Soon, Cherryland will give its members the opportunity to contribute to ACRE under a program titled “ACRE Co-op Owners For Political Action.”

Federal regulations allow only residential members to contribute. These eligible members will receive an individual solicitation in an upcoming bill stuffer. This program is completely voluntary, but I can't emphasize enough how important it is to our continued success.

As a member-owner of Cherryland Electric, you have the privilege of participating in the political affairs of our cooperative. This includes the unique right to make financial contributions to the campaigns of candidates for political office who support our cooperative.

The ACRE Co-op Owners opportunity will make this unique right both simple and easy. Members who sign up will receive information on legislative initiatives, “owners only” emails, and in-person opportunities to meet with legislators.

In addition to strengthening our political voice, I hope this will create a dialogue with members interested in becoming more active in their electric cooperative. The effectiveness of our voice in the future lies in giving this voice strength.

ACRE for Owners is just one new way we can put life back into our politics for the good of all.



**Tony Anderson**  
General Manager



# New Heating Assistance Law Passed

Starting this October, Cherryland Electric Cooperative members will begin paying a fixed charge of 99 cents per month into the Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF). The charge will appear as a line item on each member's bill.

For years, Michigan has provided low-income heating and cooling assistance over and above the federally-funded tax return-driven Michigan Home Heating Credit program.

In its original form, the state assistance program was funded entirely by two large Michigan utilities—DTE and Consumers Energy—although the funds were disbursed across the state to other utility consumers, including Cherryland Electric Cooperative members.

Eventually, the utility-based program was declared illegal. Assistance dollars were then appropriated by the state legislature on a yearly basis.

Wanting a steady and more predictable stream of heating and cooling assistance dollars, state legislators began looking for an alternative to the annual appropriations process. Their solution was to return to a utility-funded program.

However, this time around the law is modified to support a utility-based program and the burden falls to all electric utility customers, not just those served by DTE and Consumers Energy. The program is scheduled to start with this year's heating season and ends Sept. 30, 2016, at which time it will likely be renewed by the Michigan Legislature.

Under the new legislation (reference Public Act 615 of 2012 and Senate Bill 284 H-1), the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) is charged with setting a monthly rate applicable to all Michigan electric customers with the goal of raising \$50 million, which is the maximum the legislation allows.

The charge has been initially set at 99 cents monthly, per meter, which the Commission says should raise the desired

\$50 million. The maximum meter charge is set at \$1 per month.

It is important to note that the line item charge will also be subject to state sales tax, pouring well over \$2 million of additional revenue into state coffers each year. Both the assistance money and the tax revenue collected by the utility will be passed on to the state Department of Treasury.

Once the state receives the money, it will be turned over to the Department of Human Services (DHS) for distribution to low-income households. Ultimately, DHS will determine where the money goes and

it will receive any or less funding collected by utilities serving other geographic areas.

It is also unclear what percentage of the money collected in a given geographic area will return to that area. In other words, how much of the money collected for Cherryland Electric Cooperative members will get returned to our low-income members?

Cherryland has chosen to participate fully in the LIEAF program. While we would prefer the Michigan Legislature not use utility bills as vehicles for collecting tax revenue, we do support the program's

Wanting a steady and more predictable stream of heating and cooling assistance dollars, Michigan legislators have returned to a utility-funded program.

who gets how much.

Prospective assistance recipients must complete an application with DHS. Most types of heat energy qualify for assistance payments, including electricity, natural gas, propane, and heating oil. So, just to clarify, while electric utilities will bill and collect the assistance revenue, the state will disburse those funds to pay for the most common sources of heat energy, not just electricity.

Curiously, the legislation does leave each utility the option to opt-out of the program. However, the exit provision comes with a couple less-than-desirable trade-offs. First, utilities choosing not to collect the surcharge can't shut off service to any residential customers between Nov. 1 and April 15.

Second, it is not entirely clear that if a utility opts-out of the program whether or not the geographic area served by that util-

objectives, as many of our members do benefit from these types of programs.

In 2012, for example, our members received over \$300,000 from various state and federal assistance programs to help pay their electric bills. Further, losing the ability to disconnect for nonpayment throughout the year could create significant cash flow and resource management issues.

For more information on the LIEAF program, visit [michigan.gov/mpsc](http://michigan.gov/mpsc) and click on "Consumer Information."

— Kevin Cragg

## Letters & More

Reader letters, call to Action.coop, Mystery Photo, and more. It's all here on your Readers' Pages.



### Independence

I grew up in the '50s in Buffalo New York. When I read your story about "Independence," it really made me think of the good old days. The boys would play baseball just like you said. We all looked forward to summer. Thanks for the story.

— Gene Ehrhardt, Schoolcraft

I am new to *Country Lines* and always read your column, but after reading "Independence," I felt compelled to contact you.

I retired in 2012 after 30 years as an elementary/middle school educator. From my own childhood and seeing changes in children over the years, we have done them no favors by regimenting their free time.

I too grew up playing pick-up games until the street lights came on and we all had to head home. We explored and spent hours at the fishing hole or nearby woods. Through these activities, we learned to understand the world, make decisions, and negotiate difficulties.

## Video: Co-ops Urge Common Sense on Climate Regulations

A micro website, called Action.coop, was just launched by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) that gives a voice to the 900-plus electric co-ops and their 42 million consumer members that oppose President Obama's climate proposal. The proposal uses the Clean Air Act to regulate carbon dioxide emissions from power plants during a fragile economic recovery.

The site's two-minute video is the first action in what will be a long-term campaign to underscore the dramatic impact new regulations could have on the country's electric generation and calls on co-op members, staff and directors to join the united effort.

"Rural communities have a great story to tell about how they are innovating, using new technologies, and leading in energy efficiency. It's our responsibility to communicate the importance of affordable energy to the communities cooperatives serve and tell their story on how we are pursuing our energy future," explains Jo Ann Emerson, CEO of NRECA. "The next few months are a critical time to unite behind that message and let



Visit Action.coop and join NRECA CEO Jo Ann Emerson and fellow electric co-op members in asking that climate change issues be approached sensibly and affordably.

policymakers know where we stand on the issues, as well as how important affordable energy is to us and the American economy."

The NRECA website announcement was made about the same time that Organizing for Action, a grassroots group of Obama supporters, emphasized their support for his proposed climate regulations in late August.

See the video and sign up at **Action.coop** to join the fight for adding common sense to the national climate change debate and keeping electric rates affordable.

As a teacher, I have seen fewer and fewer children who are independent thinkers able to solve problems. We call it "learned helplessness." As adults, we provide all the answers by structuring and supervising many aspects of our children's lives.

Most of our children no longer want to spend much time outdoors. Richard Louv's wonderful book titled, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder" speaks volumes. How will future generations protect something they haven't learned to cherish?

One of the best suggestions is from parenting advice writer John Rosemond. He says today it may not be safe for children to be completely unsupervised, but recommends that parents rotate being "available." One parent takes a book and lawn chair to the local play site. If there's an emergency, the parent is there, but otherwise doesn't intervene. The kids play, and decide by as much arguing as necessary if the pitch was a strike or Josh was out.

The ball fields behind my home are empty all summer. Oh, if we would've had these facilities as children, my mom

may have had to ring the dinner bell to get us in for the night!

— Sharon Roeck

### Wind Talkers

Our family thinks your [July-August] article on the "Pros and Cons of Wind Power" lacked some significant issues.

We live in the middle of Consumers Energy's Lake Winds Energy Park, which began operation last Thanksgiving, and know from firsthand experience the shadow flicker, flashing lights and noise are not trivial matters for many who end up having their piece of heaven literally

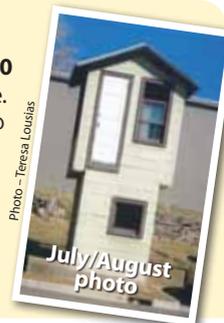


### ◀ DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **Oct. 10** will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 credit for electricity from their electric cooperative.

**We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone!** Email **mysteryphoto@countrylines.com**; enter your guess at **countrylines.com**; or send by mail to *Country Lines Mystery Photo*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and name of your co-op. Only those sending complete information will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the Nov./Dec. 2013 issue.

The July/August contest winner is Marc Parshall of Grand Ledge, who correctly identified the photo from E. Grand River St., Old Town, Lansing.



surrounded by industrial turbines and the lawsuits they have generated in most of the wind farms built in Michigan. Turbines may be wonders of human ingenuity, but after the novelty wears off they begin to wear on you.

– Eric Jefferies, Ludington Great Lakes Energy Co-op

## Using Less Electricity

Your *Country Lines* is an interesting little magazine—just read the May/June! This issue, like many others, suggests using less electricity.

Several good methods were mentioned, including low-E windows (James Dulle, “Cut Through Sales Hype Before Replacing Windows”). We had a house with those, Anderson, and not enough light came into the house—even our house plants suffered!

Another issue arises with ‘saving.’ In Manistique, we have saved our water use so much that the city now does not receive enough to pay for their treatment plant modification! Will our electricity work the same way so that our unit cost will be increased?

– Don Hartman

*Your water bill experience is not uncommon. Utilities are finding it difficult to keep rates low due to federal, state and local environmental regulations. The best way to manage rising costs is to use energy more efficiently, which helps keep energy bills low.*

*The energy efficiency programs you refer to are required by P.A. 295, the “Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act of 2008”, which requires all electric providers and investor-owned natural gas providers to implement energy efficiency programs. It’s intended to avoid the cost of constructing new power plants, which cost billions of dollars and would raise electric rates. The cheapest*

*kilowatt is the one that isn’t used. For more on Energy Optimization Programs, visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319.*

– Art Thayer, energy efficiency programs director, Michigan Electric Cooperative Association

## Hydrothermal Energy?

In July/August, your geothermal energy article makes no mention of hydrothermal heating/cooling.

Geothermal makes use of a closed-loop system that circulates a fluid thru the furnace via a pump, which does not function if the power is out. Hydrothermal input is a water source like a river, lake or an artesian flowing well.

The first two require a pump and the output is returned to the source. An artesian flow, like mine (224’ deep well), requires no pump and the output is sent into a river, lake, or other drainage system. If the power is out, the faucets and toilets still work, but the furnace does not, as there’s no electricity to run the blower.

– Dave Westfall, Naubinway

*There are three types of geothermal loops: open, closed earth, and closed pond, but not all are suited for Michigan (visit [earthcomfort.com](http://earthcomfort.com), [dulle.com](http://dulle.com), or search Wikipedia.com).*

*An artesian well system is more efficient because it eliminates pumping costs, but few people have one. Hydrothermal resources need heat over 300 degrees F to generate electricity, and there are some lower heat uses, but it’s uncertain yet how Michigan fits in. A Statewide Geothermal Data Project is being conducted at WMU, but early data shows we may not have the right temperatures. Ideal locations are currently in California, Oregon, Nevada, Idaho and Wyoming. Visit [www1.eere.energy.gov/geothermal](http://www1.eere.energy.gov/geothermal) to learn more about hydrothermal technologies.*

– Art Thayer, MECA



## Co-op Employees Experience Challenges of Rural India

**M**ichigan *Country Lines* found its way to India this summer. Ashley Copeland and Scott Blecke, electrical engineers at Great Lakes Energy (Boyer City), visited in July as part of their MBA studies. They’re shown above with a copy of the magazine in front of Mysore Palace, about three hours from the city of Bangalore. Their trip was part of a management course designed to teach the challenges and advantages global companies face in interacting with and developing products for a nation like India.

“It was a very humbling experience,” Scott says. They discovered that India’s electrical distribution systems only vaguely resemble those in America. Live wires and equipment hangs so low that people can easily touch them, and no regulations govern such unsafe situations. The

government owns the Bangalore electric system. “Something like that would never be okay in the United States, and yet over there everyone just knows that you don’t go touching the lines, and if you do, it’s your own fault,” Scott says. In the United States, utilities are expected to take responsibility for the public’s safety.

“It’s amazing,” Ashley says, the efforts some companies are making, however, to help India’s rural areas. They visited a village where a company called SELCO installed affordable solar panels to charge batteries for portable lights that children use at night. The solar units average about \$150 and residents can take five years to pay for them.

Both employees said they appreciate their U.S. lifestyle more fully after witnessing rural life in India.

– Linda Kotzian



Cherryland board members (L-R), Betty Maciejewski, Jon Zickert and John Olson at the annual meeting.

## Becoming Involved for the 'Right Reasons'

Cherryland director talks about his experience on the board.

Locally owned, locally controlled, and locally run. Democratic member control is one of the many reasons it's great to be a member of an electric cooperative.

Unlike the board of directors of investor-owned utilities who work to generate profits, our directors have only one thing in mind: keeping the lights on and keeping costs affordable. That's why you elected them.

Recently, I spoke with one of our directors, Jon Zickert, about his role in the cooperative and what he sees in our future. Jon has served on the Cherryland board since 2009.

**Q:** *How much did you know about the cooperative and the electric business before serving on the board?*

**A:** I have always been involved in energy conservation both when I worked as the Room Division Director at Crystal Mountain and now that I am a realtor with Real Estate One. Before joining the board, I paid my bill monthly and knew very little about Cherryland and what it means to be part of a member-owned cooperative.

**Q:** *What has surprised you in your tenure on the board?*

**A:** The complexity of the energy business. We take for granted that the light will always turn on when we flip the switch. I am surprised by the amount of skill and dedication displayed by all employees at Cherryland just to keep the lights on. It is a very complex 24/7/365 business with lots of moving parts. The way

*This is the third installment of a series on the cooperative principles.*

this cooperative is run is really special.

**Q:** *You are certainly busy with your work and a young family, what motivates you to serve as a director?*

**A:** The ability to be part of something bigger than just a business. The cooperative and all it stands for is an important part of this economy. Electricity plays a crucial part in everyone's daily lives. Turn the power off for just a few minutes and you get a good idea very quickly how important it is for the world to function. Being voted to serve on the board by the members is something I take very seriously.

**Q:** *What are some of the biggest challenges you foresee in the future?*

**A:** We are always and always will be concerned with energy supply. Maintaining reliability and affordability while being good stewards of our environment is a balancing act and there is no one right solution, but rather a combination of many.

Another challenge is getting our members to be engaged and involved with their cooperative. Since cooperatives are not-for-profit, they instead emphasize member service. We really need all members to become involved and think about our challenges ahead and offer their feedback and ask questions. Any time the power goes off our members seem to

be engaged, but when it comes back on we seem to settle back into our busy lives.

**Q:** *As you point out, our success relies heavily on the willingness of our members to take active leadership roles. Do you have any advice for those considering serving?*

**A:** Become involved for the right reasons—to make a difference in peoples' lives. Do not become involved to push “your” agenda or that of another organization. Become involved to understand the industry from the inside. Seek to understand how the business operates and how you can be involved to help guide your cooperative along the right path, or paths in most cases.

Also be prepared to commit some time to this position. Directors average about 4-7 hours per week. Still, it is a very rewarding position to participate in as you see the difference reliable and affordable electricity makes in everyone's lives.

As a locally-owned and operated business, electric co-ops understand the people they serve. Cherryland directors and employees share the same values and have the same “pride of place” as you do because it is our community, too. We act like neighbors because we are neighbors.

That's the cooperative difference.

*Rachel Johnson is the grassroots advocate at Cherryland Electric Cooperative.*



# Member Advisory Committee

Get Involved.



Be Heard.

- Have you ever wondered:**
- Why electricity costs keep rising?
  - How Cherryland prioritizes outage restoration efforts?
  - How Cherryland is affected by energy regulations?

**JOIN** our new Member Advisory Committee (MAC) to find out more about your electric cooperative and to provide valuable feedback on our programs and services. Our MAC will consist of representatives from all of our service areas. You must be a Cherryland member to serve on the MAC. MAC members will serve 2-year terms and are limited to 2 terms of consecutive service.

We will hold the first MAC meeting in September. The committee will meet 5 times — September, October, January, March and May — on the second Tuesday of the month, at 6 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact:  
Rachel Johnson — 231-486-9275 — [rjohnson@cecelec.com](mailto:rjohnson@cecelec.com)

Stay Informed.

Visit [cecelec.com](http://cecelec.com) “Get Involved”

# Harvesting Efficiency

Energy efficiency offers rich rewards for farmers.

Every dairy cow carries an energy price tag. Farmers pump water—and \$2.6 billion in energy dollars—to boost crops. At the end of the day, energy, both direct and indirect, accounts for 13 percent of production expenses on an average farm, so it makes sense that more farmers are turning to energy efficiency to help their bottom lines.

Electricity powers a farm's heating (water, space, heat lamps), pumping (irrigation, water wells, manure lagoons), refrigeration, ventilation, fan (drying grains, aeration) and lighting operations. Material handling—such as feed augers, manure conveyors, milking, and egg conveyors—also drain resources.

The American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy estimates farmers could save \$88 million annually by investing in efficient motors and lighting. So, how can Michigan farmers reap efficiency benefits?

Local electric cooperatives provide rebates for agricultural members (and other business and residential members) who make electricity-saving improvements through the Energy Optimization Program (visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319; Cherryland Electric Co-op members, call Member Services at 231-486-9200 or 800-442-8616).

EnSave, a national agricultural energy efficiency firm, also provides a pyramid of steps farmers can take to cut down energy use. The

## Energy Optimization Farm Rebates

- Dairy refrigeration tune-up ..... \$150
  - Low-energy livestock waterer ..... \$50
  - Exhaust or circulation fan  
for barn ..... \$2 per blade inch
  - Variable speed milk vacuum pump..... \$750
  - Variable speed milk pump ..... \$500
  - Scroll compressor replacement..... \$250
  - Milk pre-cooler ..... \$750
  - High bay fluorescent  
replacing HID ..... \$25-\$60/fixture
  - LED light bulbs ..... \$4-\$15
  - Compact fluorescent light bulbs ..... \$1-\$5
  - Outdoor dusk-dawn lights ..... \$20-\$50
- Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or 877-296-4319;  
Cherryland Electric Co-op members call  
231-486-9200 or 800-442-8616.

greatest savings come from deploying more efficient equipment, but behavioral changes and a simple analysis of how energy is consumed can result in significant savings, too.

## Equipped to Save

Each farm—dairy, poultry, beef, hog or crop—offers opportunities for efficiency improvements. For example:

**Clean equipment:** Removing dust, soot and debris will allow equipment to do more work with less effort, therefore extending its life and reducing energy use.

**Inspect equipment regularly:** Replace parts that show excessive wear before they break and cause irreparable damage.

**Plug leaks:** Be it a pinprick hole in a hose or a drafty barn, leaks waste money, fuel and electricity.

**Remove clutter:** Hoses should be flushed regularly to clear debris. Ensure that fan and motor intakes and exhausts remain clear for maximum circulation and efficiency.

## Light Lessons

After tuning up your equipment, check the lights. Light your work areas, not entire buildings, and install dimmable ballasts to control lighting levels. Use daylight whenever possible.

The type of light used also makes a difference. While useful as a heat source in limited situations, such as keeping water pumps from freezing in winter, incandescent lightbulbs only convert 10 percent of the energy used into light. The rest is given off as heat. Consider these energy-saving options, as compared to incandescents:

- Halogen incandescents use 25 percent less energy and last three times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs;
- Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) use 75 percent less energy and last up to 10 times longer;
- Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) use 75 to 80 percent less energy and last up to 25 times longer;
- Cold cathode fluorescent lamps (CCFLs) last up to 25 times longer and offer the same efficiency as CFLs.
- T-8 and T-5 fluorescent lights with



electronic ballasts operate more coolly, produce more light per watt, generate less noise (without flickering), and offer better color rendering and energy savings.

## Harsh Surroundings

Before buying new equipment or lighting, make sure your gear can survive the farm's rough environment—fluctuating temperatures, wet locations, long operating hours, and large loads. Confirm the manufacturer's specifications that the unit is intended for the environment, and review the warranty and conditions. Make sure the way you plan to use it will not void the warranty.

Look for knowledgeable suppliers and installers familiar with the local climate and your needs. Typically, farms need more rugged devices than what's available at a low cost from a retail or big-box store.

## Seeds of Change

▲ For regional or crop-specific efficiency methods, use the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service energy calculators at [energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov). Assess how much energy your farm needs for animal housing, irrigation and tillage, and discover ways to cut costs. Dairy farmers may also visit [usdairy.com/saveenergy](http://usdairy.com/saveenergy).

▲ Funding for efficiency upgrades is available through the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). Since 2008, REAP has funded over 6,800 renewable and energy efficiency grants and loan guarantees as well as 600 farm energy audits. Get details at [rurdev.usda.gov>Energy>Rural Energy for America Program](http://rurdev.usda.gov/Energy/Rural%20Energy%20for%20America).

▲ Farmers can also apply for financial and technical/energy management help from the Environmental Quality Incentives Program ([nrqs.usda.gov>Programs>Financial Assistance>Environmental Quality Incentives Program](http://nrqs.usda.gov/Programs/Financial%20Assistance/Environmental%20Quality%20Incentives)).

*Sources: American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, EnSave, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service, Innovation Center for U.S. Dairy*

# LEDs Advance Farm Lighting

One of the biggest developments in lighting our homes, businesses and streets involves the use of light emitting-diodes (LED). These lightbulbs convert electricity directly into bright, white light far more efficiently than other lighting options.

Farms pose unique challenges for lighting—excessive dirt, dust, heat, humidity and ammonia emissions impact bulb performance that conventional light sources have been unable to successfully address.

However, LEDs may offer a robust, environmentally sustainable, and potentially longer-lasting solution. Even better, since LED light can be manipulated, it may be able to improve production.

Hundreds of LED fixtures being tested at roughly 50 farms across rural America—several of which are led by electric co-ops—save on energy and maintenance costs. With a rated life of 35,000 to 50,000 hours, LEDs can last up to 25 times longer than traditional incandescent bulbs, four to eight times longer than linear fluorescent and compact fluorescent bulbs, and over twice the time of high-intensity discharge bulbs.

While LEDs are more expensive than traditional lighting, the U.S. Department of Energy reports a price drop of 54 percent over the last two years. LEDs offer farmers several attractive attributes, including:

- ▶ Rugged, vibration-resistant construction
- ▶ Directional lighting for less wasted light
- ▶ Customizable colors
- ▶ Dimmable capabilities and integration with lighting controls
- ▶ No mercury or waste disposal costs
- ▶ Water- and ammonia-resistant bulbs can be cleaned without damage.

While assessment continues, many claims about LED farm performance are not yet backed by statistically sound science, but preliminary results imply promising and significant energy savings and hint at production boosts.

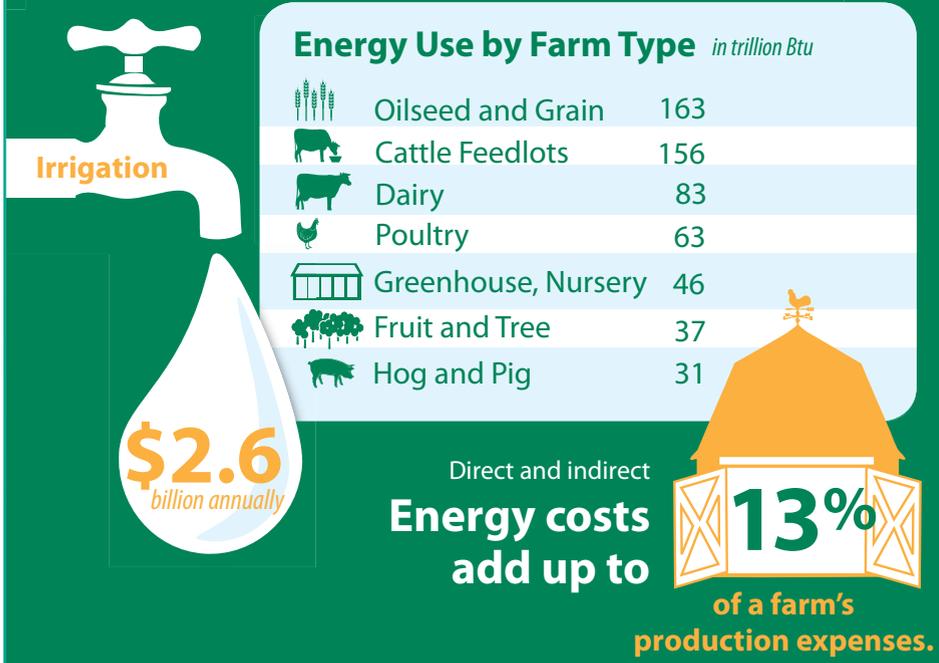
Farmers can remain cautiously optimistic that research and LED companies will be able to create lighting that is cost-effective and long-lasting.

— Brian Sloboda & Martha Carney, CRN

*As the research and development arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, CRN, the Cooperative Research Network, pursues innovative solutions that help Michigan electric co-ops deliver safe, reliable and affordable power to their consumer-members.*



## Farm Energy Costs and Potential Savings



## Ways to Save Energy

Use the animal housing, irrigation, nitrogen, tillage, and grain drying energy calculators at

[EnergyTools.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://EnergyTools.sc.egov.usda.gov)



Sources: USDA Impacts of Higher Energy Prices on Agriculture and Rural Economies; EnSave; American Council for an Energy Efficiency Economy On-Farm Energy Use Characterizations; National Sustainable Agriculture Info. Svc. Energy Tips for Irrigators



# Recycling With Rhonda

This DEQ unit chief walks-the-walk while promoting “Recycle, Michigan.”

**R**ecycling is on Rhonda Oyer’s mind every day, both at home and work. “I don’t even remember when I first became involved in recycling,” says the current chief of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality’s Sustainable Materials Management Unit (SMMU). “It may have been as a ‘junior litter picker-upper’ while camping with my family, or through a school field trip in the 5th grade when we visited the county landfill.” In any case, Oyer has worked for the DEQ for 22 years, starting as an enforcement specialist for solid waste and scrap tires. “When I got my degree in biology, no one could have predicted I would spend my career ‘talking trash!’” she adds, laughing.

“But seriously, most people give very little thought to what they throw away,” she explains. Recycling doesn’t have to be complicated, and you don’t need a fancy area to sort or store your recyclables. “You just have to want to do it and take a little time to find out what can be recycled in your area. It is the right and responsible thing to do in our society to manage our planet’s shrinking resources,” she says. At home, Rhonda recycles through the Charlotte Area Recycling Authority.

She has lived most of her life in rural areas that are served by electric co-ops, first

in Antrim County (Cherryland Electric Cooperative) and now in Eaton County as a member of Tri-County Electric Co-op, and notes that many rural areas have recycling opportunities that require residents to bring their materials to a drop-off location. Currently, only 24 of Michigan’s 83 counties have convenient access to recycling, through either drop-off or curbside collection, for all residents in single family homes.

Generally, Rhonda drops her own recycling off once every few months, and sorts the items in her garage, in...yep... recycled containers. “I have a big cardboard box that a shelving unit came in to stash the containers I use to sort things in, so they are easy to take back.” The containers include kitty litter buckets, a few old laundry baskets, and a fruit box for sorting cans, glass, plastic, boxboard, newspapers, magazines, junk mail and occasionally, batteries and lightbulbs. She usually puts out less than a half-bag at the curb for trash pick up. “So, if I forget to take out the trash one week, it isn’t a big deal,” she laughs.

A shift has occurred over the last few years in how trash is viewed, she continues, and it’s called sustainable materials management (SMM). Rhonda’s DEQ unit uses the SMM approach to redirect trash in the most pro-

ductive and sustainable way throughout its life cycles, from extraction through recycling or final disposal. This minimizes the amount of materials involved and all the associated environmental impacts, while accounting for economic efficiency and social considerations. “This aligns with the efforts of both the United States Environmental Protection Agency to address waste issues in the SMM framework and with Michigan’s 2007 Solid Waste Policy, which recognizes solid waste as a resource that should be managed to pro-

**“Electronic waste (e-waste) is the fastest growing source of waste, and includes computers, TVs and cell phones.”**

mote economic vitality, ecological integrity, and improved quality of life in a way that fosters sustainability,” she says.

Her unit is also responsible for programs that involve solid waste planning, residential recycling and composting, beneficial reuse of industrial materials, dredging, and electronic waste and scrap tire management. “We incorporate SMM concepts into our work so that the job creation, resource conservation, greenhouse gas reduction, and energy-saving benefits of viewing waste as a resource can be realized in Michigan,” she explains. They also try to lead by example, as the DEQ offices

have a good recycling program in place and the building is being redesigned to have a recycling area on each floor.

A couple of particular waste streams are also being focused on. “Electronic waste (e-waste) is the fastest growing source of waste, and includes computers, TVs and cell phones.” E-waste contains toxic materials that pose hazards to human health and the environment if not properly disposed or recycled. “E-waste also contains valuable materials,” she emphasizes, “and that’s why the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) encourages reusing and recycling over landfilling and incineration.”

Organic waste is another area where there’s a lot of opportunity to shift waste to sustainable uses. Yard clippings are currently banned from landfill disposal, and the DEQ has a program for registering yard waste composting sites. Food waste and the EPA’s Food Recovery Challenge (source reduction, feeding people and animals, industrial uses [rendering/fuel conversion/digestion], composting, landfill) are also seeing increased interest. The DEQ’s food waste efforts are focused on assessing what is currently being done here and connecting interested parties.

State leaders have also recognized the benefits of recycling, Rhonda adds. Gov. Rick Snyder has specifically mentioned forming a 2014 plan for getting Michigan up-to-speed on it and DEQ Director Dan Wyant is working with stakeholders to identify the best plan for getting all residents to recycle.

With this new focus, Oyer adds, it’s clear the state needs to measure existing recycling efforts in order to identify areas for improvement and create a way to measure progress. Estimates show there is less than a 16 percent residential recycling rate. “Industrial recycling seems to be done at a much higher rate, but again there is no consistent measurement and what data we do have is submitted voluntarily,” she reports. The DEQ is working to establish a measurement system, and identify which residents and businesses have access to recycling opportunities.

Referring to the Michigan Recycling Coalition’s awareness campaign, “We want everyone in Michigan to be a part of ‘Recycle, MI’—a place where reducing, reusing and recycling is easy and convenient,” Rhonda says. “It is really exciting to see our leaders recognize the importance of recycling to our economic recovery and rebuilding efforts. I’m looking forward to what the future holds for recycling in Michigan.”



Rhonda Oyer recycles at the Charlotte Area Recycling Authority (above). Communities that don’t have recycling available can get “how to” information from the Michigan Recycling Coalition (see box below).

## From Garage Sales to Recycling, Reduce Your Waste

**W**ith promises to unclutter our homes and provide great deals for seekers of good used stuff, garage sale signs have popped up all over our neighborhoods. There are treasures to be found here, and thanks to the do-it-yourself, thrift-shopping movement, many of them are no longer destined for the trash can.

Giving old things new life by reusing, reselling, remaking or recycling is a terrific way to reduce waste, and an important part of a sustainable future, says Kerrin O’Brien, executive director of the Michigan Recycling Coalition. So, before you unload that old dresser, think about repainting or repurposing it as another type of storage. Further, old cardboard is a good weed barrier under mulch, and a quick internet search offers many new ideas for repurposing almost anything.

### Tips for hosting a good garage sale:

- If your neighborhood has a sale day, take advantage of the free advertising and increased traffic.
- If you go it alone, signs are very important. Give people enough notice to stop ahead of your driveway.
- Price everything to sell, and be willing to deal.
- Put out enough stuff that people will be drawn to look at everything.
- Include your kids—they can sell lemonade, cookies and their old toys.
- Be friendly, talk about your stuff. Sell items over \$100 on Craigslist or eBay,

and advertise your sale on Craigslist with enticing pictures.

Recycle whatever is left that can’t be sold, donated or given away. New materials are added to recycling programs all the time, so call your local government or waste hauler (or visit [Earth911.com](http://Earth911.com)) to find out what’s recyclable in your area. Metal items can be recycled at scrap yards.

If recycling isn’t offered yet in your community, call your local government and suggest they join the “Recycle, MI” program.

### More On Recycling

- In 2012, over 800,000 tons of industrial by-products were recycled in Michigan, reducing greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to removing over 72,000 cars from the road and saving energy equivalent to about 26,000 households’ annual energy needs.
- While Michigan has no landfill ban on electronic waste disposal, individual recycling of this waste went from 1.26 lbs. in 2010 to 2.6 lbs. in 2012. This rate is average for states without a landfill ban.

#### Resources:

**MI Dept. of Environmental Quality:**  
[michigan.gov/deq/](http://michigan.gov/deq/) (click on “Solid Waste” and “Recycling”), 517-284-6591

**Michigan Recycling Coalition:**  
[michiganrecycles.org](http://michiganrecycles.org), 517-974-3672  
Holds an annual conference & training/networking events



**Above:** Shopping at the Marquette Food Co-op. **Below:** Planting in a hoophouse extends the growing season.

## Telling a Story of Food

**A**s an avid gardener, “localvore” (one who likes to shop locally), and member of Cloverland Electric Cooperative, I’m interested in the goings-on at the Marquette Food Co-op (MFC). It’s a retail outlet for organic food, some of which is grown nearby.

It’s also the epitome of the “cooperative” model. It’s an organization that, like Cloverland and Michigan’s 11 other electric co-ops, is owned by its members. In MFC’s case, members pay a one-time fee of \$150, which makes them eligible for discounts and in-store specials.

But selling wholesome food is only part of what the Marquette Food Co-op is about. They also have an exemplary community outreach program that educates people about healthy eating, lifestyles and local agriculture. Through cooking classes, food demos, workshops, farm tours and displays at community events, they connected with about 11,600 people in 2012 alone.

They also have their own “hoophouse,” in partnership with Northern Michigan University, where they teach people to garden and experiment with different growing techniques. (A hoophouse is an easy-to-build greenhouse that allows food plants to be grown in the off-season.)

However, the MFC’s grocery store is their focal point. It grossed \$5 million last year and is moving from their quaint-but-cramped quarters to a much larger store on busy Washington Street.

“There is a national interest in safe food and knowing where it comes from,” says Natasha Lantz, community liaison for MFC. This has

been spurred partly by Michael Pollen, author of “Botany of Desire,” and other authors who shed light on problems associated with eating food tainted by chemicals. America’s appetite for fast food has also resulted in higher rates of childhood obesity and type 2 diabetes. Fortunately, more people are becoming aware and seeking venues for wholesome, locally-produced food.

The MFC started in 1971 as a loose-knit group of people making runs to Ann Arbor to get organic food in bulk. Over the years, it morphed into a typical health food store, but struggled and nearly went bankrupt in the mid-90s. By 2000, with management changes and rigorous financial controls, they were talking about expanding their store. In recent years they really tapped into locally-produced products, including fruit, vegetables, meat, honey and maple syrup.

One of their crowning achievements is the U.P. Farm Directory. It lists producers offering everything from eggs to eggplant, and has made these businesses and products much more available to consumers. Many of these farmers now sell their products at the MFC store.

“Many growers came to us,” says Abbey Palmer, MFC special projects coordinator and hoophouse supervisor. Growers were also attracted through the outreach program. One of them is Dan Rabine and his wife Mary Kramer-Rabine in Eben Junction, southeast of Munising. The couple grows vegetables in season-extending hoophouses.

“They [MFC] make it possible for smaller growers,” Rabine explains. “They’ll take smaller quantities and they’re very flexible



with delivery schedules.”

Taking the co-op model to the next stage, MFC’s Lantz and Michelle Walk of MSU Extension are helping to form the U.P. Food Exchange. It’s an agricultural hub being created with funds MFC received from a Regional Food Systems Grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development last fall.

The Exchange coordinates movement between the U.P.’s three food hubs (eastern, central and western). The project aims to establish both online and physical sites for farm products, improve local food storage capacity, and educate consumers, farmers and institutional buyers about the Exchange’s resources and benefits.

The Marquette Food Co-op is really telling a story about where food is coming from, how it’s grown, and by whom, Lantz says. But they’re also writing a story by letting their greater community know what healthy eating is all about and how people can “cooperate” in growing wholesome food to feed their families.

*Neil Moran gardens in the U.P. and writes about it at northcountrygardening.blogspot.com.*





Tom Nelson, Larry Perron (physical plant director), and Jerry Gervais from the Sault Area Public Schools Maintenance Department at Lincoln Elementary School in Sault Sainte Marie.

Photo - Cory Wilson

# Sault Schools Save Big on Energy Efficiency

**D**oes energy efficiency add up for schools? Let's do the math. Not only are students and staff more comfortable and focused, but energy efficiency also helps funds go further. For these reasons and more, the Sault Ste. Marie Area Public Schools recently completed multiple large-scale lighting projects as part of their ongoing energy-saving efforts.

"Although we had been doing a great deal to reduce our energy footprint, this not only gave us an opportunity for energy savings, but the support we very much needed," said Larry Perron, on behalf of the Schools' maintenance team.

With the Board of Education's approval and the superintendent's support, the team completed 10 energy efficiency projects at four schools through the Energy Optimization (EO) Commercial and Industrial program offered by Cloverland Electric Cooperative. Cloverland is one of 12 electricity providers working together to offer rebate programs to Michigan home, farm, and business owners.

## Project Details

While there are many EO rebates for businesses, energy efficient lighting projects are the most popular because they tend to have rapid paybacks—annual energy savings often offset equipment and installation costs in

less than three years. In addition, the lighting industry is no longer manufacturing T12 fluorescent lightbulbs (as of July 2012), which makes finding replacement bulbs challenging.

These factors, along with EO rebates, motivated the Sault Schools to replace lights in four of its oldest buildings. "We are always looking at ways to improve, such as being green schools, staying up with energy savings, recycling, and water bottle refilling stations to name a few," said Perron. "This was a great opportunity to bring energy reductions to the forefront."

Another part of the program that appealed to the Schools' maintenance team was

working together with their utility and the EO staff to achieve great results.

"The thing we were impressed with the most is the great people from Cloverland and the energy firm used to supervise the rebate program and assist with new projects," Perron said. "They have been great to work with—very good at helping us work through the rebate program and great sounding boards for new energy savings within our schools." Two elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school in Sault Ste. Marie are on pace to collectively save almost \$12,000 in

## Co-op Member Spotlight

**Company:** Sault Ste. Marie Area Public Schools

### Energy-Saving Actions:

- ▲ Installed 520 high performance T8 fluorescent light fixtures in two schools.
- ▲ Replaced 2,008 standard fluorescent bulbs with reduced-watt fluorescent bulbs in three schools.
- ▲ Converted most incandescent light bulbs to CFLs, LEDs, or low-wattage induction lights.
- ▲ Replaced outdated lightbulbs at once instead of waiting for old bulbs to burn out.

**Rebate Amount:** ▲ \$5,809 and counting

### Results:

- ▲ Lowered electricity use by 102,000 kilowatt-hours per year.
- ▲ Saving \$11,600 in energy costs per year
- ▲ Expecting to double energy savings in 2014

Energy savings and rebates for anyone and everyone.

877-296-4319

[michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org)

# COLLEGE BOUND

## What To Know As They Go

**C**ongratulations! Your son or daughter graduated from high school! Now, the freshman year of college is on your doorstep, and it's a huge transition for you both. Here's a few tips to help avoid some of the "freshmen woes."

### Talk To Your Student

"From my perspective, freshman woes connect with where the student is developmentally in terms of identity, independence, intellectual, intimacy and involvement," says Ellen Thomas, student life director at Hope College in Holland, MI. "Freshmen are thrown into a new situation where they have to establish themselves as individuals within a new community." They are excited to get away from home and begin their new life, but it isn't without some reservations and questions. As a parent, talk with your son/daughter about their beliefs and values and how they will fit in with their new-found freedom.

Money is another important issue. Help them develop a budget and discuss expectations with regards to academic performance. You may get a roll-of-the-eyes, but touchy subjects like sex, alcohol and drugs warrant discussion too, says Susan Liebau, director of the Wahtera Center for Student Success at Michigan Technological University. "From a student development standpoint, it is important for students to discover and grow on their own." However, it is still important for them to know they have support from home if they need it.

### Gaining Independence

Even though you've been preparing your child for the last 18 years for this day, it may still be difficult to let go. You won't be there



Photo - Hope College

to make sure they are eating right or getting enough sleep. Will they wake up on time for class? "Instill a sense of trust in your child and empower them to tap into resources on campus," Thomas advises. Handling mundane tasks like laundry, managing money, when to study and what to eat are just some of the daily tasks that will help build and give them a greater sense of confidence and independence. Make sure they know how to do tasks such as laundry and balancing a checkbook. If your child struggles in an area, let him or her know it's okay to ask for help and encourage them to ask someone in their new community.

### Frantic Calls Home

Whether it's homesickness or frustration with a roommate, you're likely to be on the receiving end of some rants. Don't take it personally. "Sometimes a student just needs to vent," Thomas says, and calling home feels safe. "First, listen and show some empathy, then ask what steps they have taken to resolve the issue," Thomas suggests. If you are familiar with the college's resources, encourage them to talk to their resident assistant, academic advisor or counseling center. Let them take the reins to solving their own problem. Tell them you have confidence in their ability to resolve the issue. However, if you have grave concern for their health or safety, then make a call to the college.

### Academic Pressure

Most students realize college will involve

more study time, but some think the professors will remind them when an assignment is due or be lenient about due dates. Some kids who never struggled academically may fail an exam or assignment. "The freedom is overwhelming for some students who have had very rigid schedules previously," Liebau says. "It sounds silly, but sometimes they have so much time they can't seem to get anything done. Finding ways to learn from a variety of people will only support long-term success." Supplemental instruction or tutoring services are available at most colleges.

### Don't Skip Orientation

Orientation activities aren't just entertaining—they are helpful in acclimating to college life and accessing the resources available. For example, Hope College offers an orientation program for parents, students and siblings. Michigan Tech offers a week-long orientation program. Encourage your student to take full advantage of orientation activities. (An orientation tip to parents: Even in this day of texting and emails, students still love a good care package from home.)

You may not hear from your student as much as you would like, but take comfort in knowing that you have prepped them for this time in their life.

*Lisa Marie Metzler is a freelance journalist who's written over 200 articles for magazines such as Healthy & Fit, Positive Thinking, and Families First.*



# Pier

## Opportunities!



Photo—Bob Gwizdz

There's obviously a lot of fishing to be done off Michigan's shores, and a billion-dollar industry has grown up serving those that do—from boat dealers to charter boat services. But there are plenty of fishing opportunities for those who are bound to the shoreline, too. We're talking about piers.

Piers that allow anglers to enjoy the Great Lakes can be found at the mouth of many of our state's rivers, and there's a good shot at scoring a fresh catch during most months of the year.

Pier fishing in Michigan hits its peak as summer wanes, and Chinook salmon begin moving upriver on their annual spawning runs. By mid-August, there are outstanding opportunities off the northern piers, and by September it's going on statewide. From then until it's too cold to fish, the only thing that changes is the species of fish.

There are as many ways to fish the piers as there are anglers who do it. Some cast spoons or sinking lures from the pier's end. Others rig up a big sinker to hold bait on a hook—everything from live alewives to salmon eggs to insect larva—and fish near the bottom. Others prefer chunks of skein spawn and a bobber. All three techniques “produce.”

In recent years, I've been fishing the pier at Manistee with some buddies in late summer and early fall. Our best technique is using live alewives, caught with a cast net or on tiny jigs, for bait. We rig-up with a large pyramid sinker and cast into the river, keeping the

bait near the bottom. When the fish takes it, drop your rod tip, reel up the slack, slam the hook home, and hold on!

As the season progresses, other trout and salmon species join the procession. Chinooks are joined by Coho salmon, brown trout and steelhead over the course of fall and the steelhead, which are spring spawners, filter upstream throughout the winter and into spring. Techniques change as the species change—steelhead seem much more willing to take salmon eggs or insect larva than the baitfish—but anything you offer is likely to produce at any time.

By October, other Great Lakes denizens show up, especially whitefish. That's what gets guys like Doug Smith, a veteran angler from the Kalamazoo area, fired up.

“From the first of October until ice-up, you can get your limit of whitefish most days,” says Smith, who fishes from the pier at St. Joseph. “Right at deer season seems to be the best time and that's when there are fewer guys out there.

“I like to use a single salmon egg that I've boiled so it stays on the hook well, but some guys use wax worms or wigglers. I use a pyramid sinker and about a 3-foot leader and just let it sit on the bottom. And if you miss a fish, just leave it there—those whitefish will circle around and come back and get it.”

While Smith is busy with whitefish, anglers elsewhere are looking at other species. The pier at Muskegon, for instance, is noted for producing excellent walleye fishing, often at

night, usually around Thanksgiving.

After winter, it doesn't take a lot of spring weather for the action to resume. Fishing for Coho salmon and brown trout—which are near shore then—and steelhead commences as soon as the weather is nice enough to tolerate it. And there are often a few whitefish or their cousins, Menominee, hanging around. As spring progresses, steelhead filter back into the lake from the rivers and from then on, there's plenty of fishing for resident species—smallmouth bass, catfish, burbot, freshwater drum, and more—until, next thing you know, it's late summer and the salmon show up again.

There are piers on all four of Michigan's Great Lakes, from Erie to Superior, and all attract their share of anglers. Some, such as the piers at Ludington or Oscoda, attract regular crowds while others—such as many on Lake Superior—remain undiscovered by many. Pier fishing may not be as adventurous as taking to the big lake in a large boat with a handful of friends, but it can be just as exciting—and generally much less expensive—to enjoy Pure Michigan fishing on Great Lakes waters.

Learn more at [piermichigan.org](http://piermichigan.org).

*Bob Gwizdz is an avid outdoor writer featured in many hunting and fishing publications.*



# No-Cook Meals



These no-cook meals are quick and easy—no oven or grill required. Save time and energy in the kitchen, with these light and refreshing dishes.

Veggie Hummus Wraps

## Veggie Hummus Wraps

- 1 medium whole wheat tortilla
- 2 T. garlic hummus
- 2 T. sunflower seeds
- 1/2 carrot, peeled and sliced thin
- 1/2 c. spinach leaves
- 2 T. sliced pepperazzi peppers (sweet and spicy), or roasted red peppers
- 1/4 of large cucumber, sliced thin
- 2 T. feta cheese
- 2 T. Newman's Own® olive oil & vinegar dressing

Lay out tortilla and spread with hummus and sunflower seeds. Layer with spinach leaves, carrots, red pepper, cucumber and feta cheese. Roll up and secure with toothpicks. Dip wrap in olive oil and vinegar dressing. This is a quick, healthy meal that can be substituted with many different vegetables. Makes 1 wrap.

Christin McKamey, [veggiechick.com](http://veggiechick.com)

## Apple Orchard Pita Pockets

### Filling:

- 2 c. deli-roasted chicken breast, diced
- 2 Gala apples, cored, diced
- 1/2 c. honey roasted peanuts or beer nuts, finely chopped

- 1/4 c. jarred real bacon bits
- 2 c. mixed salad greens, torn
- 4 ozs. Provolone or Swiss cheese, shredded
- 4 whole wheat pita bread rounds, cut in half

### Dressing:

- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- 2 T. apple cider or apple juice
- 1 1/2 t. honey
- 1 t. apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 t. vegetable oil
- small pinch ground cinnamon
- small pinch ground cloves
- salt and pepper to taste

To make the dressing, in a small bowl, combine first seven ingredients; whisk until well blended. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Cover and refrigerate 2 hours to chill and blend flavors. In a medium bowl, combine chicken, apples, peanuts and bacon bits.

Stir dressing and pour over chicken mixture; toss to coat. Open pita breads to form pockets. Line each with salad greens. Spoon filling into pockets and top with cheese. Serve red and green grapes or cut-up fresh vegetables on the side.

Marilyn Partington Frame, Traverse City

## 'It's a Meal' Salad

**Dressing:** (prepare a day in advance & chill)

- 1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil
- 4 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 t. dried oregano
- 2 T. white wine vinegar
- salt and pepper

### Salad:

- garlic cloves
- 4 c. iceberg lettuce, broken into bits
- 1 ripe tomato, cut into small wedges
- 1/2 c. julienned ham, turkey or shrimp
- 1/2 c. swiss cheese, julienned
- 1/2 c. fresh grated Italian cheese (parmesan, romano, or asiago)
- 2 T. Worcestershire sauce
- juice of one lemon

Rub wooden bowl with garlic cloves, then add lettuce, tomato, ham, and cheeses. Drizzle worcestershire sauce and juice from lemon. Toss salad. Add dressing, toss again and serve with bread or rolls.

Lois Phelps, Stanwood

Photography by: 831 Creative



Visit recipe editor Christin McKamey's new website, [veggiechick.com](http://veggiechick.com), for healthy, vegetarian recipes and info!

## Christin's Guacamole

3 medium avocados (make sure they are ripe and high quality)

1/4 c. white onion, chopped

2 roma tomatoes, diced

2 T. fresh cilantro, chopped

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/2 -1 t. salt

1/2 t. cumin

juice from half a lime

juice from half a small lemon

Cut avocados in half. Remove seed. Scoop out avocado from the peel, put in a mixing bowl. Using a fork or masher, mash the avocados (not too much, it should be a little chunky). Add the chopped onion and tomatoes (if not eating right away, put the tomatoes in right before serving). Add cilantro, lime juice, lemon juice, garlic, salt, cumin and mix with a large spoon.

Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes about 2 cups. Serve with blue tortilla chips.

*Notes:* ▷ Much of this should be done to taste because of the variability in fresh ingredients. Start with this recipe and adjust to your taste.

▷ To keep the guacamole from turning brown, store in a plastic food container—but before you put the lid on, place some good plastic wrap or wax paper and press down over the surface of the mixture. And be sure to get all of the air out when putting the lid on. This works like a charm!

Christin McKamey, [veggiechick.com](http://veggiechick.com)

## Kidney Bean Salad

2 c. or 2 cans kidney beans, drained

1/4 c. celery, diced

3 pickles, dill or sweet, chopped

1 small onion

2 hard-cooked eggs, sliced

1/2 t. salt

1/8 t. pepper

1/2 c. mayo or salad dressing

Mix together the beans, celery, pickles and onion. Add eggs, salt, pepper, and mix lightly with mayo or salad dressing. Chill. Serve on salad greens and garnish with grated cheese.

Joan Coyne, Charlevoix

## Taco Salad

2 heads romaine lettuce, chopped

1 15-oz. can mexican style chili beans, undrained

2 medium tomatoes, chopped

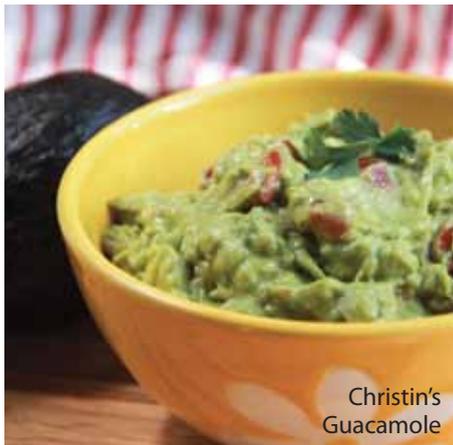
1 small can black olives, drained and sliced

2 cups shredded cheese

1/2 bag yellow corn chips, crushed

2/3 c. mild salsa or to taste

1 c. Thousand Island dressing, or to taste



Combine chopped lettuce, chili beans, tomatoes, olives and cheese into a large bowl. Top with crushed corn chips, salsa and dressing. Toss well to coat all ingredients and serve.

Lorraine Green, South Boardman

## Ham in a Pita Pocket

10 pita pockets

3 c. diced ham

1 can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed

1 c. cashew halves

1/8-1/4 c. sesame seeds

1 c. sour cream

1/2 c. mayonnaise

1 T. tarragon vinegar

salt and pepper to taste

1 c. cheddar cheese, diced

In a large bowl, combine ham with remaining ingredients. Mix well. Chill before serving. Serve in pita pockets.

Paula Brousseau, Bellaire

## Fruited Chicken Salad Wraps

1 pre-cooked rotisserie chicken

1 c. mayonnaise

1 small jar maraschino cherries

1 small onion, chopped fine

1/2 c. red grapes, halved

1 large red apple, chopped fine

1/2 c. crushed pineapple

1/2 c. shredded cheddar cheese (may use chunk cheese cut into very small cubes)

1/4 c. chopped walnuts

tortilla wraps

Remove bones from rotisserie chicken and tear into bite-size pieces. Place in a large bowl.

In a medium bowl, combine the mayonnaise and all of the juice from the maraschino cherries (do not use the cherries). Into the bowl of chicken, add onion, grapes, apple, pineapple, and walnuts. Pour the reserved mayonnaise/cherry juice over all and mix well. Allow to chill.

When chicken salad is chilled and right before serving, add the shredded cheese. Wrap the mixture into tortilla wraps and enjoy. Excellent served with cottage cheese and potato chips.

Deborah Buck, Cassopolis



**Submit your recipe!** Contributors whose recipes we print in 2013 will be entered in a drawing to win a prize: Country Lines will pay their January 2014 electric bill (up to \$200)! The 2013 winner will be announced in the January 2014 issue.

Thanks to all who send in recipes! Please send in "Shakes & Smoothies" recipes by **Oct. 10** and your favorite "Baked Goods" recipes by **Nov. 10**.

Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email [recipes@countrylines.com](mailto:recipes@countrylines.com).

# Safety Education at Cherryland is No Accident

**J**im Carpenter preaches what he practices.

Among the many hats the Traverse City native wears at Cherryland Electric Cooperative is that of a safety teacher.

He reviews safety with the cooperative's lineworkers and explains the importance of respecting electricity to its members.

And, he visits area schools and educates young students about how our power grid works and how they can stay safe by understanding a few basic lessons.

Carpenter's official title at Cherryland is line superintendent. But in his 30 years with Cherryland and four at the statewide association—the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association—he has worked as a tree trimmer, purchaser, lineman and safety coordinator. That gives him a unique perspective on safety.

With his blend of knowledge about electricity and engaging personality, students from eight to 80 grasp the importance of what he is saying.

We recently asked Jim some questions about safety education and how it relates to Cherryland members.

**Q:** *Does being a native to this area help you talk about safety?*

**A:** I think so. It helps because I know the area and I know so many people here. I've also served on many different boards, and because of that I am familiar with the needs and hot issues of the area.

**Q:** *What do you enjoy most about going into schools and talking to kids about safety?*

**A:** The kids are truly interested. They have great questions and funny stories. It's rewarding to tie what the teacher is doing into what we do here at Cherryland every day. The kids draw pictures with amazing detail from the presentation. That is the best feedback that shows me they learned from my presentation.



Cherryland's Jim Carpenter talks to a class about the importance of electrical safety.

**Q:** *When it comes to talking to adults about safety, what surprises you most that they don't know?*

**A:** Many people assume the primary conductors are insulated. And many do not realize the voltage that is in our primary lines. So it's important to educate them.

**Q:** *How important is a good culture of safety at an electric utility like Cherryland?*

**A:** It is very important because it helps establish trust that we do the right things for our members. We send our employees home every day without any serious injuries. A safe utility is a good place to work. A good place to work serves our communities well.

**Q:** *Talk about the tools you use to teach kids about safety.*

**A:** I have a table-top demonstration that represents an electrical system anywhere in North America. It is a very effective tool. I also pass around the safety equipment that our employees use every day.

While doing this, I talk about their use and importance.

**Q:** *Do you use the same tools when speaking to adults?*

**A:** The stories are usually the same, but with a different emphasis. I don't share the graphic details with the kids about some of the accidents that have occurred around the country. But adults need to understand the true effects of bad choices around electricity.

**Q:** *What do you stress most when it comes to staying safe around electricity?*

**A:** I tell everyone you can't see electricity, you can only see what it does. A line lying on the ground may look harmless, but it's not. I tell adults to call us when they find a downed line. I tell kids to tell an adult and have them call us. We want our system safe.

*Jim Carpenter is the line superintendent at Cherryland Electric Cooperative. If you are interested in a safety demonstration, call him at 231-486-9217 or email [jcarpenter@cecelec.com](mailto:jcarpenter@cecelec.com).*

# 7 Tips for a Good School Year



Nick Edson

I come from a family of teachers.

My maternal grandmother was a teacher. Both of my parents were teachers. My sister is a retired teacher. Heck, I even got my teaching degree from Central Michigan University more than 37 years ago.

I also have good friends who are teachers and school administrators. On the flip side, as parents we've all had mostly pleasant and a few not-so-pleasant experiences during our children's school years.

So, I asked a pool of teachers and parents to draw from their experience and give me tips to pass on about how students can improve their chances of having a good school year.

These were the "Top 7" tips I got as we open another school year.

- 1) **Stay Positive About Your Child's Teacher and School.** This sounds easy. Sometimes it isn't. But the key is to motivate your student by stressing the positive aspects of their teacher or school. There were times when our kids were growing up that I didn't agree with how a teacher handled a certain situation. More times than not, when I asked the teacher about it, the answer made total sense. We were very careful to stay positive about the teachers around our kids. If not, it gives kids an excuse to have a poor attitude or not try as hard in class.
- 2) **Get to Know the Teacher and Principal.** Communication is the key to a good education. And it works both ways. When you get a chance, introduce yourself to the teacher and principal—not when you have a beef, but early in the school year. Ask them about the ground rules for any "situation" that might arise.
- 3) **Know the School Schedule.** You would assume that everyone knows the bus schedule, starting times and yearly school schedule. You'd be wrong. One good idea from a parent was to post school schedules on the refrigerator so kids and parents could be reminded on a daily basis.
- 4) **Ask About Their Friends.** There are times when a student falls into the wrong crowd and misbehaves at school and the parents have no idea until they get a call from the principal's office. Several parents told me they always checked with their kids about the friends they have at school and tried to meet them.
- 5) **Don't Play the Blame Game.** This is one of my personal pet peeves. When something doesn't go well at school, the first thing some parents do is blame the teacher. Then they blame the school. Then they blame anything else they can think of. If kids learn to play the "Blame Game" early, they will use it for the rest of their lives. One of the most important things you can teach your children, both teachers and parents say, is to assume responsibility for their actions.
- 6) **React Quickly to "Situations."** Problems always arise during the school year. There is no getting around it. One of the best ways to get to the heart of the problem is to address it quickly. That is, don't put it off. Showing respect to each other—parents, teachers, children—goes a long way in solving a problem and moving on.
- 7) **Communicate, communicate, communicate.** This is the bottom line to everything. Talk with your child about school. Get to know your child's teacher. Talk to other parents about how they perceive things are going at school. Good communication isn't rocket science... it's more important than that.



# Five-Year Re-Clearing Program Improves Reliability

**B**ack in 2008, Wolverine Power Cooperative reduced its seven-year right-of-way re-clearing cycle to five years to follow guidelines set by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC).

Monitoring 211,000 miles of high-voltage transmission lines that serve 334 million people, NERC ensures the reliability of the bulk power system in the continental United States and Canada.

“By the fall of this year, we will have re-cleared our entire 1,600-mile transmission

system over a five-year period,” explains Joe Hughes, land management supervisor. “We covered more than 300 miles per year under the new, shorter cycle compared to just over 200 miles annually under our previous seven-year cycle.”

Wolverine employees and contracted crews monitor the health of vegetation on the rights-of-way and remove hazardous and overgrown trees and shrubs. Vegetation hindering the rights-of-way are cut, trimmed or mowed, and herbicides are hand-applied on recently re-cleared lines to control tree regrowth.

Overhanging tree canopies on the edges of right-of-way corridors scheduled to be rebuilt are also removed. This process, called side tree-trimming, increases the horizontal tree clearance to the new wires.

“On some sections of our rights-of-way, a tree located outside the cleared corridor may have a crown only 15 feet from the wires,” Hughes explains. “We trim horizontally to prevent tree limbs from contacting our lines during high winds or in heavy snow conditions.”

The goals of Wolverine’s right-of-way re-clearing program are to prevent power outages, provide access for lineworkers if the power is out, and keep the rights-of-way safe for the co-op and neighboring landowners.

“Our commitment to maintaining our rights-of-way keeps the lights on for our members,” Hughes says. “Reliability is a top priority.”

Wolverine’s transmission system delivers electricity to its distribution member cooperatives, including: Cherryland Electric, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. Midwest Energy, Wolverine’s fifth distribution member cooperative, owns and maintains a distribution system separate from Wolverine’s transmission lines.

## ***New Records Set by Wolverine Members***

The distribution member cooperatives of Wolverine Power Cooperative together set a new peak energy demand record in mid-July. Cherryland Electric, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, Midwest Energy and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op reached a new record of 661 megawatts on July 17, between the hours of 6 p.m. and 7 p.m. The co-ops’ previous peak record of 658 megawatts was set last year in early July.

In addition, the five co-ops set a new energy sales record of 13,321 megawatt hours for the 24-hour period beginning at 1 a.m. on July 16. The previous 24-hour energy sales record of 13,220 megawatt hours was set in July 2012.

“These milestones reflect the continued growth of our members,” says Tim Martin, manager of energy operations for Wolverine. “Our job is to meet our members’ growing demand with reliable power supply at a competitive price.”

# Landscape for Looks & Efficiency

Wise landscaping can lower utility bills and improve comfort in addition to dressing up your property.

**Q:** *We are landscaping our new house and want a wooded yard for shade and to enhance the energy efficiency of our home. Where should we plant trees, and which are best? What materials are good alternatives to grass for ground cover?*

**A:** Wise landscaping can do more than create an attractive yard. It can lower your utility bills, summer and winter, and improve your family's comfort year-round. Trees, being one of the key components of any residential landscaping design, can have the greatest affect on your utility bills.

For one, the evaporation of moisture from tree leaves actually cools the air temperature around your home, akin to how perspiration cools your skin. With the proper placement and selection of trees, you can use less electricity to heat your home by taking advantage of passive solar heating during winter,

The primary goal of efficient tree landscaping is to shade your home during summer, yet allow the sun to pass through during winter. Additional goals are, depending on your climate, to allow cool evening breezes to flow around your house or provide moisture for evaporative cooling of the air near it.

Before you start, determine your temperature zone by visiting the USDA Agricultural Research Service at [planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/#](http://planthardiness.ars.usda.gov/PHZMWeb/#) or checking with a local landscaper. Hardiness zones refer to the minimum winter temperature range. For warm climates in Zone 10, the range is 30 degrees to 40 degrees F. For cold climates in Zone 1, the range is -30 degrees to -40 degrees F. Michigan ranges from Zone 4a to 6b, depending on the area you live in. If you select trees that thrive in a climate more than one or two zones outside your range, they may not do well and require excessive care.

In an average temperate climate, a typical efficient tree landscaping plan has deciduous trees to the south, southeast and southwest. The leaves block the sun during summer, but when the leaves fall, the sun shines through to heat your home. Leave a small gap to the southwest to allow cooler evening breezes to flow through.

Plant dense evergreens along the north, northeast and northwest sides to block cold winter winds. With shorter days and the sun riding lower in the winter sky, not much solar heat comes from these directions.

In hot, humid climates, shading during summer is most important. Taller trees should be planted closer to the home to block the sun, which is higher in the sky. Leaving a gap for breezes is not as important.

There are also alternatives to grass, such as ground cover plants and gravel. Both have advantages and disadvantages for landscaping a house. The benefits of either depend on your climate, house and yard. Even in the same neighborhood, what's good for one house may not be efficient for another.

Low-growing ground cover near your house can help to keep it



A row of hemlocks on the north side of a home block cold winter winds. They do not block the sun because it does not swing that far to the north during winter.



Boulders and ground cover plants that use little water are shaded by trees in the summer and help warm a home during winter.

cool. The leaves block the sun's heat from absorbing into the ground, and they give off moisture for natural cooling. This cooling effect is most effective in drier climates because there is more evaporation. In hot, humid climates, the additional moisture from plants near the house actually increase the relative humidity level. This is more of a problem if you rely on natural ventilation compared to air-conditioning with the windows closed.

A good location for low ground cover is between an asphalt or cement driveway or walkway and the sunny side of your house. The driveway gets hot and holds the heat, and also re-radiates it up to your house.

Send inquiries to James Dulley, *Michigan Country Lines*, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com).

*James Dulley is a nationally recognized mechanical engineer writing about home energy issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*





**W**hen the crops are ready to be harvested, farmers have only a window of time—between weather, equipment breakdowns, and life events—to bring the best-quality crop out of the field. This flurry of activity to get as much work done as possible also means extra caution should be taken to watch for safety hazards.

Overhead power lines pose one of the biggest hazards. This is partly because we have to look up to see them, so especially **farm operators and workers are urged to:**

▶ Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.

- ▶ Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- ▶ Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines—at all times, in all directions.
- ▶ Inspect farm equipment heights to determine clearance.
- ▶ Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- ▶ Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- ▶ If a power line is sagging or low, call the local utility immediately.

Visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) for more tips.

**If contact is made with a power line,** it is almost always safest to stay on the equipment. Warn others to stay away, and call the local utility provider immediately. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. In this case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, “bunny hop” away. Also consider these additional tips:

- ▶ Do not use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around bins.
- ▶ Always hire qualified electricians for any electrical issues.
- ▶ Do not use equipment with frayed cables.
- ▶ Make sure outdoor outlets are equipped with a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI).
- ▶ When operating a portable generator, make sure nothing is plugged into it when turning it on, and never operate a generator in a confined area. Generators can produce toxic, deadly gasses, such as carbon monoxide.
- ▶ Always use caution when operating heavy machinery.

## STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the matter of the Commission's own motion, regarding the regulatory reviews, revisions, determinations, and/or approvals necessary for Cherryland Electric Cooperative to fully comply with Public Act 295 of 2008.

### Case No. U-17369

### NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

On March 15, 2013, April 2, 2013, and May 2, 2013, the Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) ordered Cherryland Electric Cooperative to file an energy optimization plan on or before August 1, 2013, to comply with the “Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act” (2008 P.A. 295, MCL 460.1001, et seq.) in Case No. U-17369. On August 30, 2013, Cherryland Electric Cooperative filed its application for an Energy Optimization Plan with the Commission.

Any interested person may review the filed Energy Optimization Plan on the MPSC website under Case No. U-17369 at: [michigan.gov/mpscedockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscedockets) and at the offices of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, 5930 U.S. 31 South, Grawn, Michigan or at the office of the Commission's Executive Secretary, 4300 W. Saginaw, Lansing, Michigan 48917, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Written and electronic comments may be filed with the Commission and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on November 5, 2013. Written comments should be sent to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909, with a copy mailed to Cherryland Electric Cooperative, 5930 U.S. 31 South, Grawn, Michigan 48875. Electronic comments may be emailed to: [mpscedockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscedockets@michigan.gov). All comments should reference Case No. U-17369. Comments received in this matter will become public information, posted on the Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

The Commission will review the energy optimization plan together with any filed comments and provide a response indicating any revisions that should be made. If the Commission suggests revisions, Cherryland Electric Cooperative will file a revised EOP plan. A Commission order will be issued following the filing of the application.

**CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

### Fuel Mix Report

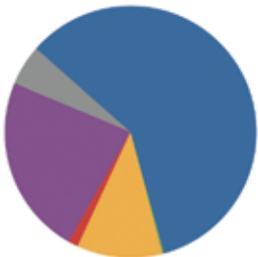
The fuel mix characteristics of Cherryland Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 6/30/13.

#### COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	59.2%	57.9%
Oil	0.2%	0.4%
Gas	11.0%	12.2%
Hydroelectric	1.3%	0.9%
Nuclear	23.1%	25.0%
Renewable Fuels	5.2%	3.6%
Biofuel	0.4%	0.1%
Biomass	0.2%	0.4%
Solar	0.0%	0.0%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.2%	0.5%
Wind	4.2%	2.2%
Wood	0.2%	0.5%

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas, and wind includes a long-term renewable purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix.

#### Your Co-op's Fuel Mix



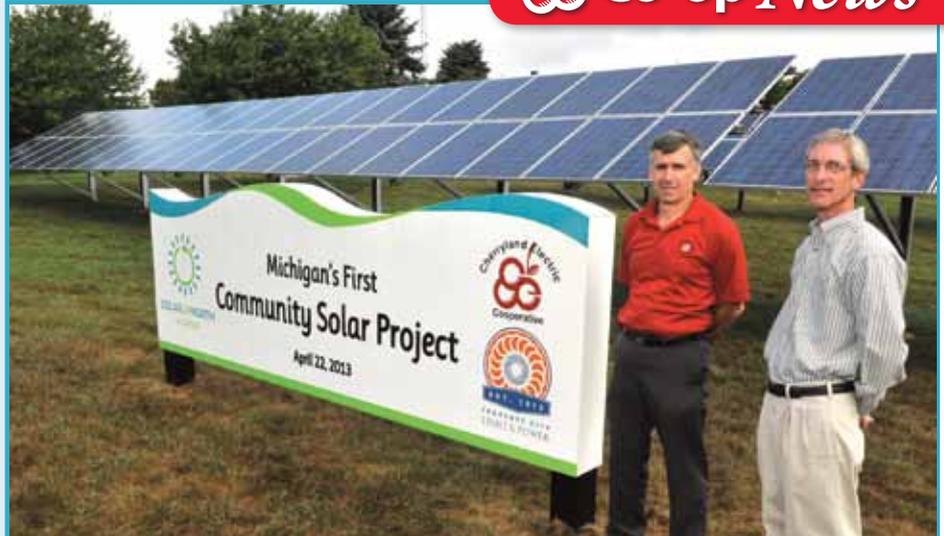
#### Regional Avg. Fuel Mix



#### EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	5.5	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,580	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.7	2.0
High-level nuclear waste	0.0077	0.0083

\*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the twelve-month period ending 12/31/12. Cherryland Electric Cooperative purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Cooperative, which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.



**COMMUNITY SOLAR PROJECT UPDATE** – As of Aug. 1, the solar array produced 7,500 kilowatt hours since the first panel went live on April 21. Members can view the current and historical solar energy production of the project at [cherrylandelectric.com](http://cherrylandelectric.com). Shares sold: 133; shares remaining: 91. Pictured (L-R) are Cherryland's general manager, Tony Anderson, and Traverse City Light & Power general manager, Tim Arends.

### Red Wings Train at Centre Ice



The Detroit Red Wings will again hold their training camp at Centre Ice, which draws its power from Cherryland Electric Cooperative.

The National Hockey League will hold scrimmages at Centre Ice starting Saturday, Sept. 17, concluding with the annual Red & White game on Tuesday, Sept. 20. They will also hold morning practices on Wednesday, Sept. 21, and Thursday, Sept. 22.

The Sept. 21 and 22 practices are new this year. Each of those afternoons, the team will fly out of Traverse City to play in an exhibition game, then return to town afterwards.

### CEC Board Adapts Resolution

At the July meeting of the Cherryland Electric Cooperative board, a resolution was adopted to reach out to members through the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program. Details of that program are included in this issue of *Country Lines* magazine.

The resolution read: "Whereas the Board of Cherryland Electric Cooperative supports efforts to increase political participation among all rural electric cooperative member consumers and;

"Whereas increased political participation amplifies the member consumer's voice and encourages

responsible legislation to ensure safe, reliable, affordable electricity and; "Whereas political activism is the basic foundation of our democracy.

"Therefore, be it resolved that the Board strongly endorses implementing the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program to increase political involvement and support ACRE®, the political action committee of electric cooperatives."

### Send Us Your Pictures

Cherryland Electric is gathering pictures for its 2013 calendar. We are asking members to send in either old or current pictures they have of Cherryland crews or employees.

Please send the photos to Nick Edson by email at [nicke@cecelec.com](mailto:nicke@cecelec.com) or by mail: Calendar Photos, Cherryland Electric Cooperative, P.O. Box 298, Grawn, MI 49637.

### Next Member Input Session

Cherryland Electric Cooperative's next quarterly member input session is planned for Monday, Sept. 16. Members can address the board at 9 a.m. at the start of the regular monthly meeting and are asked to keep their comments to less than 5 minutes.

The next member input session is scheduled for Monday, Dec. 16.

## OUR ISLANDS

Michigan not only has great lakes, we have great islands. Fox, Grand, Bois Blanc, Drummond, Poverty, Shoe and Snake. North Manitou, South Manitou, Whiskey and Waugoshance. Garlic, Gull, Ripley Rock, Partridge, Wood and Naomikong. Neebish, Two Tree, Goat and Memory. Their names roll off your tongue like pebbles skipped across the water. About 400 are named, and hundreds more aren't.

Our islands don't appear in the open hand we use to show the world where we live. We don't have nearly as many as Alaska or Florida, but we're near the top of the list. And of those islands, two are unique in the world. We owe one island to the persistence of journalist Albert Stoll, a conservation columnist for the *Detroit News* who championed its designation as a national park, which was finally achieved in 1940. We owe the other to a simple idea: no cars allowed.

I finally got to Isle Royale this summer with my son Jon, who left the heat and bustle of Chicago for the cool nights, starry skies, woodland flowers and rocky trails of one of the nation's most pristine parks. Our least-visited national park is as far from Detroit—about 485 miles as the crow flies—as New York and Des Moines. In the middle of Lake Superior, you can't get there by car, which is what protects it from the harm too many visitors would inflict. Life is precarious on Isle Royale. Fragile flowers cling to rock. Ghostly fir trees wear lichen coats of translucent green. (The lichen appearing to either cause the death of the skinny trees or, at least, to have taken advantage of their frailty.)

Nature's delicate balance is most troublesome for the island's wolves now, as scientists consider whether to import wolves from the mainland to refresh the pack. Without new blood for 18 years—the wolves must cross frozen Lake Superior from Minnesota or Canada—the pack has dwindled to eight members, leaving the moose to multiply to 900 or so. The moose population obviously likes this arrangement. (You'd think 900 moose would be enough incentive for the wolves. Or, just put up a billboard on the Canadian shore of Lake Superior: a picture



Can you find the young woman reading a book on the shore of Isle Royale?

of a moose with an arrow pointing to the island. Wolves are smart, right?) We saw neither animal on our hikes, but heard wolves howling and saw moose droppings.

Wilderness areas, like Isle Royale, give us a chance to recharge, connect with our primal beings, and simplify our lives. Not many of us would choose to live for long without the trappings of modern life, but it's nice to have those places where we can. People of all ages take advantage of the Isle. We met homeschool campers, adventurous young adults, families, and retirees on the trail. One encounter, though, left us puzzled: We met an elderly couple from Alabama who had driven from Huntsville to Houghton, then caught the plane to the island so he could see for himself the little copper mining pits dug by natives centuries ago. After a couple of hours, they flew back. We saw those little copper pits, and though interesting, they alone aren't worth the trip.

When you're on the Isle, you're off the grid. There's little or no cell phone service, spotty internet if you happen by the Isle offices at a good time, and no television. It's like living in rural America before co-ops electrified it. The National Security Agency would have a hard time tracking you there.

Not so on Mackinac Island, we discovered during a recent summer: Japanese teenagers chat in their native language and English, wear flip-flops, shorts and t-shirts with English messages, and take pictures of everything. "Let's get this over with," says one teenager in a group photo. A large Finnish family of all ages tries to agree where to go next. A newly married couple from England drives for 15 hours from

Philadelphia to spend the night, because the bride wanted to see the place where the movie "Somewhere in Time" takes place.

You may think Detroit is the international destination in Michigan, but I'd argue that for the summer months that distinction goes to charming Mackinac Island. You can hear every language under the sun there on any given day. Horses and bicycles rule—alongside cell phones. It's hard to pretend you're "somewhere in time" when modern technology keeps bumping into the past on every street and in every restaurant and fudge shop. (I wonder if Kindles now outnumber real paper books in the hands of folks reading on the Island's many porches?)

I hear that you can't stop progress. Though Mackinac Island might be a calmer place without it, progress could ruin Isle Royale. Let's hope that doesn't happen.

(On a positive note, technology can help you keep that Mackinac Island spirit alive all year long. Sign up for Bree's Mackinac Island Blog, [bree1972.wordpress.com](http://bree1972.wordpress.com). It's filled with photos and commentary as the author chronicles Island life. For Isle Royale, watch for the independent movie "Fifty Lakes, One Island" by Chicago filmmaker George Desort, who spent 80 nights on Isle Royale in 2011 traveling alone, by kayak, with his camera. You can see it at the Besse Center Theater in Escanaba on Sept. 12, [baycollege.edu/filmseries](http://baycollege.edu/filmseries).)

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