

# Michigan COUNTRY LINES



## Shaggy's Company Skis to Success

**4** Learning From Outages

**5** Solar Project Underway

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1.



### ABANDONS ALL-OF-THE ABOVE

The Administration is reversing course: ditching our **All-of-the-Above** energy strategy for an **All-But-One** approach that bans new coal plants.

2.



### TECHNOLOGY GAMBLE

New regulations essentially require technology that's **not commercially viable and prohibitively expensive**—leading to higher bills down the line.

# TOP 4 FACTS

ABOUT THE EPA'S NEW CLIMATE REGULATIONS

3.



### LIMITS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, DOMESTIC ENERGY

By banning new coal plants, Americans forfeit a **236-year domestic source of energy** with a historically stable price.

4.



### HISTORY REPEATS: ALL-BUT-ONE DOESN'T WORK

A 1978 mandate prevented use of natural gas & forced utilities into coal or nuclear—**before common sense prevailed and it was repealed 9 years later.**

**COOPERATIVE**  
  
**ACTION NETWORK**

Visit **ACTION.COOP** today to send a message to the EPA

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Association

# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES

### IN THIS ISSUE

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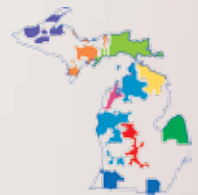
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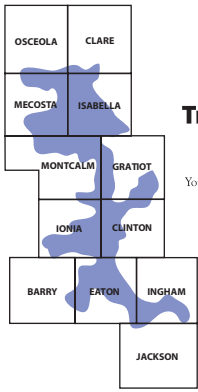
#### ON THE COVER

John (L-R), Shari and Jeff Thompson have made over 1,000 pairs of skis at their family shop, Shaggy's Copper Country Skis, in Boyne City. Featured are their "Brockway" model, and the best-selling "Tubby" (red) all-mountain ski. They have also started making skateboards, and are members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

Photo - Roger Boettcher, Leavenworth Photographics



Michigan's Electric  
Cooperatives  
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### Tri-County Electric Cooperative

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## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

# Every Power Outage Is a Chance to Learn



**W**riting this as our crews have just finished cleaning up from the Nov. 17 storm, I'm reminded that every power outage is a learning experience for us.

Ideally, of course, we would never have power outages, or blinks. But that's not the way electric distribution systems work, so instead of wishing for the impossible, we focus on eliminating potential problems.

For instance, trees are one of the most significant causes of power outages during wind storms, so we invest time and money every year into our right-of-way clearing program. Since 2006, we've nearly completed clearing all 3,400 miles of our system.

The next challenges are 1) keeping those rights-of-way clear for the future, and 2) looking out for the taller trees beyond our rights-of-way that could still fall into our lines. We'll be doing more with herbicides sooner, to stop trees before they grow where they shouldn't.

The ash tree problem of the past few years has also kept us busy. Many ash trees that were healthy when we cleared the circuit have since been infested and killed by emerald ash borers. They're now considered "danger trees" and we're being proactive by working with property owners to take care of them before they cause problems.

Our crews have also been doing circuit-by-circuit inspections, looking for loose connections, worn equipment, or other areas that need just a little work now to prevent problems later.

This work is in addition to a longer-term work plan, where our engineers review

each circuit to make sure it's working efficiently to serve the members it reaches.

We also know that communication is essential, back and forth between our dispatchers and crews, and between our office staff and members. We've worked with area telephone companies to get the best use of our phone lines.

Still, even with sending calls to a large regional cooperative call center, not everyone can get through during an outage. Especially on that Sunday in November, when the storm blasted hard through most of the Midwest. With millions of people out of power, there just weren't enough phone lines or dispatchers to take every call.

Facebook is not meant to be a substitute for calling, but it is a useful clearinghouse for information and we will continue developing our presence on Facebook, and soon on Twitter, to help keep the conversation going.

Our mission, as always, is to provide you and your family with energy and other services to improve your quality of life. Making sure your power is there when you need it is the foundation for everything we do.

Mark Kappler  
General Manager

#### Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue  
Blanchard MI 49310  
Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

#### Portland office:

7973 E. Grand River Avenue  
Portland, MI 48875  
Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

**Electric bill/account questions:**  
517-647-7556 or 1-800-562-8232

**Pay by phone, anytime:**  
1-877-999-3395

**Service questions/outages:**  
517-647-7554 or 1-800-848-9333  
(24 hours for emergency calls)

**Tri-County Propane:**  
1-877-574-2740

**High Speed Internet**  
1-800-668-8413

**homeworks.org**

**E-mail: [tricoenergy@homeworks.org](mailto:tricoenergy@homeworks.org)**  
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## Solar Plans Move Forward



**HOME  
WORKS**  
Community  
Solar  
Garden

**R**enewable energy, in some forms, is becoming more available to the average person. The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Community Solar Garden is designed to make solar power available to our members on an individual scale.

“We contracted with Cascade Renewable Energy out of Grand Rapids to install Phase 1 of our Community Solar Garden,” explains Nick Rusnell. “They’ve done a number of projects across Michigan, including the solar array at the Clare rest area.”

The first phase includes 76 American-made solar panels at 270 watts each, for a project total of about 20 kilowatts. A website will allow interested member-owners to monitor the garden’s solar “harvest.”

The panels will be in place by late January, and HomeWorks Tri-County Electric plans a public dedication on Earth Day 2014.

Rusnell says the co-op plans to offer its member-owners the opportunity to lease one or more of the panels, taking advantage of our Energy Optimization program rebates.

Members who lease a panel will receive a monthly credit equal to the kilowatt-hours generated by each panel, at Tri-County’s average wholesale rate.

After Jan. 1, Rusnell adds, we will accept deposits from members who are interested in leasing one or more panels. The exact amount of the deposit, and full lease, will be available after that date.

Rusnell says informational meetings are scheduled for early March. Dates are yet to be determined, but seating will be limited, so interested members should reserve space now.

To learn more about the project, call Nick Rusnell at 1-800-421-8956, ext. 1247, or email [solar@homeworks.org](mailto:solar@homeworks.org).



An artist’s rendering of the project area at the Portland Operations Center, provided by Cascade Renewable Energy.

## Two Great Options!

When you’re upgrading your electric water heater, come to HomeWorks for great energy-saving options!

**\$99 Down** – Get a Freedom® water heater and pay it off with your monthly Hot Water Deal\* credit.

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WORKS** **Tri-County Electric  
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\* Participating in our Hot Water Deal allows HomeWorks to temporarily interrupt the flow of electricity to your water heater for a short time during peak electric use periods. Even with the interruption, your water heater will keep water hot for hours, leaving you plenty of hot water for showers, laundry, and your family’s other needs.

# Cooking For One

Cooking for one?

These single-serving recipes will help you save time and energy, are easy to prepare, and sized perfectly for just you!

## Burrata Caprese with Balsamic Glaze

1 small loaf of french bread, cut into 1-inch slices, toasted

7-8 grape tomatoes, cut in half

3-4 large basil leaves

1 container burrata (mozzarella filled with cream) or mozzarella cheese

### Balsamic glaze:

1½ c. balsamic vinegar

½ t. honey

On a plate, arrange bread, tomatoes, basil, and burrata. For glaze, bring balsamic vinegar to a boil in a small saucepan. Reduce to a simmer, and cook until thick and syrupy. Remove from heat and stir in honey. Let cool completely before serving (it will thicken as it sets). You can also use store-bought balsamic glaze which is much easier. On each piece of

bread, spread the burrata. Add the balsamic glaze, a piece of basil, and top with 2 tomato halves. This is a quick, healthy meal that is perfect for one person. No cooking required.

Christin McKamey

## Grilled Chicken Nachos

1 oz. baked tortilla chips

¼ c. drained, low sodium black beans, heated

4 oz. grilled lean boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into small cubes

2 T. salsa con queso

3 T. chopped tomato

2 T. thinly sliced jalapeño pepper

Lay chips on plate. Top them evenly with the beans followed by the grilled chicken. Drizzle the salsa evenly over the top. Top with the tomato and jalapeño slices and serve. Serves 1.

Lorraine Green, South Boardman

## Apple Crisp for One

1 T. quick cooking oats

1 T. brown sugar

½ T. flour

dash of cinnamon

dash of nutmeg

dash of salt

½ T. margarine

1 c. sliced, peeled apples

Combine oats, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Cut in margarine with fork until crumbly. Set aside. Place apples in small microwave-safe dish. Top with oat mixture. Microwave on full power, uncovered, 2-4 minutes or until apples are tender, rotating dish once. Serve with frozen yogurt or ice cream, if desired.

Barb Spencer, Petoskey

## Curried Chickpea Stew

1 t. olive oil

1 c. onion, diced

1½ c. carrots, diced

2 cloves garlic, finely dice

1½ -2 T. curry (depending on taste)

1 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes

1 16-oz. can chickpeas

1½ c. water

1 cube chicken or vegetable bouillon

1 whole chicken breast cut into ½-inch pieces

1 T. butter

1 t. sugar

In a 4½-quart stock pot, add ½ c. water, carrots and onions. Simmer until carrots are tender. Add more water if needed, remove carrots and onions. Add olive oil and curry, and heat for 30 seconds or until bubbles appear. Add garlic, remaining water, tomatoes (juice and all), drained chickpeas, chicken



and bouillon cube. Stir until bouillon cube is dissolved. Simmer until chickpeas are tender. Add more water, if needed. Stir vigorously to thicken. Remove from heat, add sugar and butter, stir to dissolve sugar. Garnish with Greek yogurt (optional). This is a delicious, one-pot meal.

Jeff Ullen, Bellaire

Photography by: 831 Creative

## Recipe Contest Winner!



Chris McAfee

Congratulations to Chris McAfee of Pointe Aux Pins on Bois Blanc Island. Her name was drawn from all readers whose recipes we printed in 2013 and *Country Lines* magazine will pay her

January electric bill as a prize.

Chris and her family have been members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op since the co-op brought electricity to the Island in 1964. She loves her piece of paradise with lots of wonderful people, miles of ATV trails, beautiful woods, and the surrounding crystal-clear water of Lake Huron.

**Submit your recipe!** Thanks to all who send in recipes! Please send in your favorite "Easter" recipes by **Jan. 10** and "Hawaiian Luau" recipes by **March 10**.

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

Contributors whose recipes we print in 2014 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2015 electric bill (up to \$200)!



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

# HYDROPOWER

## TIME-TESTED RENEWABLE ENERGY

This is fifth in a series on how electricity is generated. The first (January) was about coal, the second about new nuclear options (June), the third about wind (July-August), and the fourth about natural gas (October). Watch future issues for stories about other fuel sources.

**E**nergy from flowing water has been harnessed and used for over 2,000 years, beginning with the ancient Greeks using water wheels to grind wheat. In the 1880s, converting a rush of water into electricity became a reality in the United States.

Today, hydropower provides about 80,000 megawatts (MW) of capacity in the United States—enough to power over 25 million average homes—and accounts for about 75 percent of all renewable electricity used by co-ops.

But how does it work? Simply, hydropower converts the natural energy of moving water to mechanical energy, using a turbine that is attached to a generator. With these highly efficient turbine-generators doing the job formerly performed by water wheels, electricity flows in a number of ways:

**Impoundment:** When most people think of hydropower, dams come to mind. By plugging a river and amassing water in a reservoir, its flow (and the resulting electricity) can be better controlled and generated as needed.

**Diversion:** Water is channeled away from a river, typically near natural falls, down to generators at the falls' base. This can be done without any visible impact to a river's natural course. In fact, this kind of generation was used to bring electricity to Buffalo NY, from Niagara Falls in the late 1800s.

**Pumped storage:** This method essentially uses off-peak electricity to make electricity for use during times of high consumption. Two reservoirs are filled, one typically uphill from the other, with an electric pump/

generator in between. At night, when demand is low and electricity less expensive, water from the lower reservoir is pumped uphill. During the day, when demand for power increases, that water is released down through the generator to make electricity.

Over 600 electric co-ops across the country buy power from 134 federally-owned and operated dams, most of which were built between the late 1930s and early '60s. Despite the incredible importance of these resources, maintenance has lagged in recent years and created room for improvement.

Electric co-ops are making efforts to address this problem, advocating that the government set aside funds to repair and maintain the dams and turbines. Researchers are also looking to create more efficient and fish-friendly ways to generate hydropower. Careful studies of aquatic environments have given dam operators a better idea of how to simulate a natural river downstream.

A 2012 report from the U.S. Depart-

ment of Energy (DOE) revealed many of the nation's dams hold untapped power. Roughly 2,500 provide conventional and pumped-storage hydropower in the United States. But the vast majority of dams—some 80,000, ranging from 4 to 770-foot-high—are non-powered. The DOE analyzed 54,391 of them.

Locks and dams on the Ohio, Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas rivers—facilities owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—offer the most untapped potential. The top 10 sites alone could provide about 3,000 MW.

“Many of these dams could be converted to generate electricity with minimal impact to critical species, habitats, parks or wilderness areas,” the DOE report states.

Co-ops' efforts in pushing for increased maintenance and technology development will ensure that hydropower remains a reliable, affordable, renewable resource for decades to come.



Cloverland Electric Cooperative's hydroelectric plant in Sault Ste. Marie generates between 25 and 30 megawatts of electricity. Clean, renewable hydro makes up nearly 35 percent of the co-op's fuel mix. To see a recent chart showing what your electric co-op's fuel mix is, visit [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) and click on the co-op name and then click the Sept. 2013 issue.

Photo Courtesy - Cloverland Electric Co-op

# News and Notes from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric

## Your Board In Action

### Meeting at Portland Oct. 28, 2013, your board of directors:

- Met with district officers and reviewed board of directors responsibilities, as district officers serve as the nominating committees for their districts.
- Reviewed current and proposed right-of-way vegetation management programs, in preparation for the 2014 budget.
- Approved the 2014 Touchstone Energy budget.
- Reviewed the October safety report, listing employee training as well as employee and public incidents.
- Learned there were 110 new members in September.
- Read and approved “Board Policy 103 – Director Compensation,” with minor wording changes, and “Board Policy 115 – Director Emeritus.”

### Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. Upcoming meetings are set for **Jan. 20 at Blanchard** and **Mar. 24 at Portland**. Members who need directions to either office or wish to have items considered on the board agenda should call 517-647-7554.



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and now

[twitter.com/HomeWorksTCEC](https://twitter.com/HomeWorksTCEC)

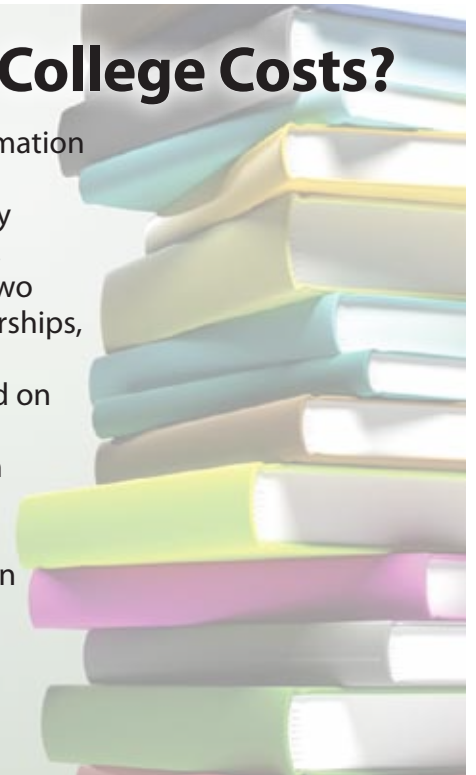


## Need Help With College Costs?

Click on [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) for information on winning your share of \$2,500 in HomeWorks Touchstone Energy Scholarships offered to members.

Seniors are eligible for one of two \$1,000 Touchstone Energy scholarships, awarded to students served by HomeWorks Tri-County and based on a combination of merit and need. We also offer two adult education scholarships of \$250 each.

Scholarship applications are due March 15. Look for application forms and complete rules online at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org), call Jayne Graham at 517-647-1252 or email [jayne@homeworks.org](mailto:jayne@homeworks.org).



## People Fund Stocks Pantries, Helps Families

You helped stock food pantry shelves and made assistance possible for military families this month through your contributions to Operation Round Up. Your spare change from rounding up your energy bill makes People Fund grants possible.

Meeting Nov. 6, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board made 12 grants totaling \$10,675.17, including:

- \$1,000 to First Congregational Church in Portland for food pantry items;
- \$1,000 to M-46 Tabernacle Food Pantry in Riverdale for food pantry items;
- \$2,000 to St. Mary's Church, SVDP in Charlotte for utility and rent assistance;
- \$224.01 to an Isabella County family to help with utility expenses;
- \$195 to an Ionia County family for septic repairs;
- \$884 to a Mecosta County family to help with utility expenses;
- \$222.16 to a Mecosta County family to help with utility expenses;

- \$1,800 to an Isabella County family for rent assistance;
- \$250 to a Mecosta County family to help with furnace repairs;
- \$100 to a Montcalm County family to help with utility expenses;
- \$1,500 to an Isabella County family for a new furnace;
- \$1,500 to Central Michigan American Red Cross for the Armed Forces Emergency Services program.

### How To Apply For a Grant

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form, grant guidelines, and other helpful information. You'll also find details and application forms at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

**Note:** Applications must be received by Jan. 20 for the Jan. 29 board meeting; and by Mar. 3 for the Mar. 12 board meeting.





Darlene Schrauben (center) enjoyed help from the Chippewa Hills FFA during our larger district meetings.



Darlene teased, and was teased, by now-retired Operations Manager Harley Jaques.



Darlene works with Christina Pulling from the HomeWorks accounting team, assembling sandwiches for a district meeting.

## Schrauben Retires After 18 Years at HomeWorks

**A**fter 18 years of serving HomeWorks Tri-County Electric members with accurate bills and delicious meals, Darlene Schrauben retired from our Portland office on Jan. 2.

Darlene grew up on a Portland-area farm and graduated from St. Patrick's School before attending Lansing Community College and Michigan State. She studied special education with plans to become a teacher, but quit to marry and raise her own children, Christy and Tim.

Darlene came to HomeWorks in July 1995 after answering a job posting. "I started in customer service and have done a little of everything except be a lineman!" she says. Most recently, she was a part of the consumer accounts team, helping to make sure all 25,000-plus meters are read promptly and accurate bills produced for the co-op's members.

But Darlene's second job here has been feeding her co-workers and members. Before coming to HomeWorks, Darlene managed Fabiano's Restaurant in Portland for 13 years, and her mother was a restaurant cook, as well.

For the past several years, Darlene has taken charge of catering the district meeting suppers, feeding close to 1,500 folks over two weeks each May. She also caters special event luncheons and board meetings held at the Portland office. In fact, she insisted on cooking her own retirement lunch, to

make sure she got the meal she wanted!

One of her favorite memories is representing HomeWorks at a legislative rally in Washington, D.C., joining thousands of co-op board members and employees meeting with Congressional representatives and staff. "That trip is a memory I'll always cherish," she says. "My husband, Wayne, had always wanted to see the capitol, and I really enjoyed telling our legislators about electric co-ops and our members."

On the work front, she says, "Oh my gosh, just about everything has changed," since 1995. "Computers used to be feared, now we know a lot of their capabilities. I can't wait to see the future!"

Darlene's immediate future includes spending more time with her family and friends, including Christy and Brian's three children, Bryce, Ty and Kennedy; and Tim's children, Sam and Lydia. She has 12 more grandchildren, plus two great-grands with her late husband, Wayne.

"I've met a lot of nice members over the years, and I'm very thankful I got the chance to do something for them," she says of her HomeWorks career.

# Shaggy's Company Skis to Success

Like most kids, Jeff and Jonathon Thompson loved taking things apart and putting them back together, never thinking that their inquisitiveness might lead to a new family business.

They were teenagers when they first built a surfboard with the help of their dad, John. That winter, Jeff wanted to build a "ski bike" by cutting apart an old pair of Dynastar skis to attach to a bike frame. Noticing how

they were built in layers, the boys decided to build a pair of skis, too.

That was 2005, and that first pair of skis was not a successful start.

"We built them in a barn that was about 40 degrees, and discovered that it needs to be warmer for skis to cure in a press. My brother brought them to the U.P. for a race that winter right after they were made, and they de-laminated before we got them on

the slopes," laughs Jeff

Previously, the family had a successful construction business, building as many as 300 homes in some years before the economic downturn. "We had vacationed in the Boyne City area for years, and as the ski business started picking up and the building business slowing down, we decided to make the move from South Lyon, where we had lived for years," John adds. ●●●●●●●●●●



John (L) and Jeff Thompson, of Shaggy's Copper Country Skis, prepare materials that will be pressed into skis, including an ash wood core, Durasurf 4001 base, triaxial fiber glass, damping rubber strips, steel edges, ABS sidewalls, Durasurf tip/tail spacer, and a graphic topsheet.



If you want to demo a pair of Shaggy's skis, the Thompsons and their reps will be visiting Michigan ski areas this winter (check the schedule at [sccskis.com](http://sccskis.com) or call 231-459-4323), or stop by their Boyne City shop.



After stone grinding, Shari Thompson applies hot wax to a new pair of skis. The Thompsons are members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

Carving a turn on a Shaggy's dropdeck longboard.



Fast forward to 2013, and you find what started as a hobby is now a full-time business called Shaggy's Copper Country Skis.

"This year we will probably make around 200 pairs of skis," John notes proudly. "We've produced over 1,000 skis since that first mistake."

The Shaggy's company is staffed by Jeff, John and wife Shari, who does the bookkeeping, ordering materials and sales. Brother Jonathon has moved to Colorado in another line of business. John and Shari have been married for nearly 35 years.

"One of the reasons we chose to move up here, in addition to having wonderful testing facilities in nearby Boyne Mountain and Nubs Nob, is that the heart of our ski – ash and beech wood – is milled just down the road at Metalski Lumber," John explains.

Each ski takes eight to 10 hours to construct and fine-tune before it's ready to sell. The company offers 10 different pairs of skis, ranging from \$595 to around \$795.

Jeff, 23, recently graduated from Michigan Tech with a mechanical engineering degree and is applying that knowledge of how a ski performs physically and geometrically to making a top ski for Midwestern and Michigan users. "Our all-mountain ski has a tighter turning radius that works well on our conditions, but it's a great ski for the mountains, too," he says. "The Tubby, one of our best-selling skis, floats well in powder and softer spring snow conditions but provides a good ride on hardpack, as well."

The Shaggy's Copper Country Skis name was Jeff's idea. Their great uncle, Shaggy Lehto, was a blacksmith who lived in the Keweenaw Peninsula and had a hobby building hand-carved skis. "He made a pair for dad's mom that's a family heirloom, and I thought, 'what a great name for the company,'" Jeff recalls. "It's uniquely Michigan."



Besides skis, Shaggy's has started making longboards (skateboards). Here, Jeff Thompson mills out the shape of a longboard deck.

# Energy-saving Resolutions for 2014

A new year is an opportunity to assess different aspects of your life and determine how you can make positive changes. Unfortunately, resolutions can be tough to keep. So, why not try a new one this year that's easy and painless? Saving energy is simple and rewarding—and, any amount you save counts. Here are four simple tips from HomeWorks Tri-County's Energy Optimization program to help you save energy—now and throughout the year.

## 1. Set, program, relax: Use a programmable thermostat.

A programmable thermostat automatically controls your home's indoor temperature based on your schedule. In the winter, it is not necessary to keep an optimal heating temperature on weekdays when you're away or at work. Just input the time you typically leave and return, set the temperatures accordingly, and your home will be nice and cozy by the time you arrive, saving you energy and money.

**Results:** Save up to 10 percent on your heating and cooling costs per year.

*Energy Optimization rebate: \$20—any model.*

## 2. Open up and let the light in.

Window treatments are an unexpected energy saver. In these colder months, keep your blinds open during the day. This allows sunlight to enter your home and warm things up. After the sun sets, close your drapes to keep out the cold and hold onto some of the warmth generated during the day.

**Results:** Energy savings will gradually add up over time. Most importantly, your home will feel more comfortable.

## 3. Same features, less energy: Switch to energy-efficient products.

Shop the ENERGY STAR® label for guaranteed product performance and quality. ENERGY STAR products—from refrigerators to TVs and lightbulbs—are backed with third-party testing, have the same features as standard models, and use significantly less energy.

**Results:** Expected energy savings range from 15 to 75 percent per year.

*Energy Optimization rebates: \$10-\$50—choose from over 20 high-performing energy-saving products. Find details at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).*

## 4. Dive in: Easy water-saving options.

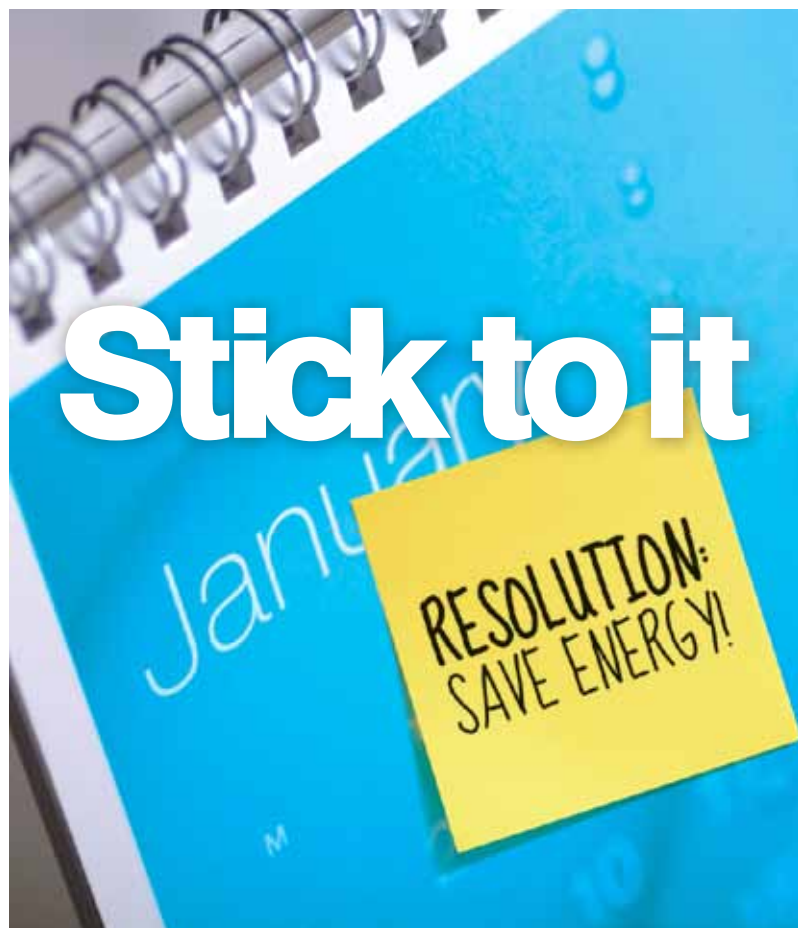
Whenever you use water, you also use energy to pump and heat the water. Making energy-saving adjustments can be simple: 1) Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. 2) Install water-saving retrofit devices, such as faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads. For recommended models that don't sacrifice water pressure, visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

**Results:** Save energy, and thousands of gallons of water.

*Energy Optimization rebates: \$10 per low-flow faucet aerator.*

### Got the energy-saving bug?

View more energy-saving opportunities and current rebate offers by calling 877-296-4319 or visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) for details.



# Stick to it

## Resolve to save energy in 2014

Want a New Year's resolution that's fast and easy? Save more energy at home and at work. Why?

**It's painless, doesn't involve exercise, and still makes you feel good!** With the help of the

Energy Optimization program, it's easy to kick-start savings with rebates for energy-efficient lighting, appliances, furnaces, thermostats, and more.

**ENERGY TIP: Take advantage of the sun's heat.**

**Even in the winter, opening your drapes during the day can allow enough radiant heat into your home to allow you to lower your thermostat settings.**

ONLINE: [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

# Information at Your Fingertips

**S**martHub and its mobile apps is a self-service application that gives HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative members convenient access to account information like monthly usage, payment history, quick bill pay, and more. This safe and secure app is available *free* for iOS (iPhone, iPad, iPod) and Android users and takes less than three minutes to setup.

If you don't have a smart phone, you can still manage your account online because the services offered by the SmartHub app are also on our website.

When you visit [HomeWorks.org](http://HomeWorks.org), click "My Account" at the top, or "View My Account" under Quick Links, to be taken to SmartHub information. If you previously used our eBill service, you are already registered for SmartHub. Once logged in, you can:

- pay or view your bill;
  - review account history and usage;
  - set up auto pay or paperless billing; or
  - change your address or phone number.
- SmartHub is easy to navigate. It's simple

and quick to make a payment or view your meter readings. You can compare bills and find out what day of the week or month you typically use the most electricity.

Members with smartphones or tablet devices can download the SmartHub app from iTunes or the Android Marketplace. The app allows you to make a payment or view your usage on-the-go.

The mobile apps also provide a "Call the Office" button that dials HomeWorks for you, along with maps to our office locations.

The SmartHub app is encrypted during every transaction run and no personal information is stored on your mobile device.

**NOTE:** Mobile devices do offer the ability to store your log-in information for apps installed on the device. If you choose to store your log-in information, any person who has access to your mobile device can access your account.

## Did you know?

You can choose to stop receiving a paper bill each month and download your statement as a pdf document from SmartHub at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org). The files can be enlarged on your screen, and they're simple to file on your home computer. Save paper and postage—it's easy!

**Use these "buttons" on [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) to log-in to SmartHub or use the "Pay Bill Now" service.**



**Pay Bill Now**  
No registration required.



## Electrical Safety Calendar

Use this handy calendar to help keep your home safe. For more tips, visit [esfi.org](http://esfi.org).

### JANUARY

- Check and replace furnace filters

### FEBRUARY

- Vacuum refrigerator coils

### MARCH

- Replace smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries if not done in last 12 months

### APRIL

- Check and replace furnace filters

### MAY

- Clean air conditioners or schedule annual inspection
- Vacuum refrigerator coils

### JUNE

- Dust light fixtures/lamps
- Schedule annual inspection of gas-powered dryer

### JULY

- Check and replace air conditioning filters

### AUGUST

- Vacuum refrigerator coils

### SEPTEMBER

- Schedule annual furnace cleaning and inspection

### OCTOBER

- Check and replace furnace filters

### NOVEMBER

- Vacuum refrigerator coils

### DECEMBER

- Dust light fixtures/lamps

**ESFI recommends hiring a licensed, qualified home electrical inspector if:**

Your home is more than 40 years old; your home had a major addition or renovation or major new appliance added in the last 10 years; and/or you are the new owner of a previously owned home.

Every month you should:

**1. Inspect all electrical and appliance cords for damage**

**2. Test GFCIs & AFCIs**

Whether you have a receptacle-type or circuit breaker-type ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI), pushing the TEST button should turn off power to the circuit. To restore power, press the RESET button. To test arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs) push the TEST button. The breaker handle should go to the middle or off position. To reset, move the breaker handle to the OFF position and then to the ON position.



**3. Test smoke and carbon monoxide alarms**

Push the TEST button or use other procedures recommended by the manufacturer. Smoke alarm batteries should be changed at least once a year. If an alarm "chirps" or "beeps" to indicate low batteries, change them right away. Replace all smoke alarms at least every 10 years.



# Embrace Change

Last summer, a dog walked into the Bay Pines Veterinary Clinic, near Harbor Springs. He must have been amazed when the staff knew him by name. "Are you Bandit?" they asked. "THE Bandit?" His Australian Shepherd tailless butt wagged with delight as he hobbled to meet their outstretched hands.

How did they know Bandit? It turns out that everyone in the clinic reads *Michigan Country Lines* and remembered him from a column I wrote over two years ago. That's the kind of community this magazine was meant to build when it began 33 years ago.

Then, every town of decent size had a printer who crafted posters, flyers, school programs, and the weekly newspaper (a local Facebook, Twitter and Craigslist rolled



Sadly, Bandit has been diagnosed with bone cancer, so this will be his last winter.

business because they couldn't adapt to the changes computers have brought to printing and publishing.

But, *Country Lines* is adapting and changing in ways that will pave the way for greater integration between print, online and social

into one). I wrote for those printers, before I became *Country Lines*' first editor.

Many of those printers, including the one in which *Country Lines* was born, no longer exist.

They went out of

media communications. These changes embrace all the ways we communicate today, and will help *Country Lines* build a stronger co-op community.

I'm proud to have been part of this magazine, and I loved working on it. It was never a job. We won a few awards along the way, and it became one of the best-read of similar publications across the country. Thank you for reading it and letting me know what you thought.

Even though this is my last *Country Lines* column, I intend to keep writing, but where I will publish is uncertain. Send me an email at [mike.f.buda@gmail.com](mailto:mike.f.buda@gmail.com) or "friend" me on Facebook if you want to know where to find my ramblings



Mike Buda is the creator and editor emeritus of *Michigan Country Lines*.



## Michigan Heritage Quilt Finds a Permanent Home

Created from 36 winning squares in a *Country Lines* quilt contest held in 2002, the Michigan Heritage Quilt depicts personal memories, traditions and images from across our beautiful state, and the Eastern Upper Peninsula History Consortium has become its permanent home.

The Consortium represents 22 E.U.P. museums, and while the Pickford Area Historical Museum will be the quilt's official caretaker, it will rotate for display among all member museums.

Many thanks to readers who sent in their ideas on where the quilt should live. For more information on the quilt or the E.U.P. Consortium, contact the Pickford Area Historical Society, 175 E. Main St., P.O. Box 572, Pickford, MI 49774, or call 906-647-1372.

Pictured above with the quilt are (L-R) Mary June, Consortium treasurer; Dianne Schmitigal, Pickford Area Historical Society president; and Susan James, vice president of the Chippewa County Historical Society.



### ◀ DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **Feb. 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](mailto:mysteryphoto@countrylines.com); enter your guess at [countrylines.com](http://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 March 2014 issue.

The Nov./Dec. 2013 contest winner is Bill Pioszak of St. Johns, who correctly identified the photo as the Cairn Monument on Cairn Hwy, north of Kewadin, marking the 45th parallel.



Nov/Dec photo

## LETTERS

### Raw Egg Recipes

I have been meaning to write and tell you that pasteurized raw eggs can be found in grocery dairy and egg sections. These are safer for recipes calling for raw eggs. Maybe you can pass that along to the lady who wrote about them in the July/Aug. 2013 issue.

I also want to comment on the diabetic recipes (Oct.). Thinking regarding diabetics and sugar has greatly changed. They are no longer limited to sugar-free substitutes for their sweetening choices. The focus is now on balancing diet with assorted proteins, fats and carbs, eating smaller portions throughout the day, and counting carbs.

As a nurse, I try to pass along information people can use. The danger of sugar substitutes is they can make diabetics think such foods are good for them or don't need to be limited or counted. Managing diabetes is a lifelong, critical process that's so much more than removing sugar from the diet.

— Laura Tomell, Tecumseh  
Midwest Energy

### Mystery Photo

The Nov-Dec mystery photo (at left) was built as a WPA project. It has a representative stone from each of Michigan's counties.

My sister-in-law's father (a stone mason in Traverse City) helped build it, so I make sure whenever any of his great-grandchildren are here that they stop to see it.

— Peg Gage, Free Soil  
Great Lakes Energy

If the only thing bigger than your propane bill is your propane tank...



## Switch to a WaterFurnace geothermal comfort system.

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