

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

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Media-Man

**O'MALLEY**

*Joins Country Lines*

Before a WaterFurnace  
geothermal dealer makes a  
commitment to you...



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Letters to the editor should be sent to Country Lines, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. Phone 517-913-3531. Email: gknudtson@meca.coop.

Association officers are Ken Swope, Midwest Energy, chairman; Robert Schallip, Cloverland, 1st vice chairman; Jon Zickert, Cherryland, 2nd vice chairman; Eric Baker, Wolverine Power, secretary-treasurer; and Tony Anderson, Cherryland, past chairman. Craig Borr is president and CEO.

Unsolicited letters, photos and manuscripts are welcome. Country Lines, however, will not be responsible for their safe keeping or return.

The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

Change of Address: Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.



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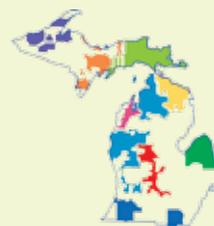
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Jack O'Malley's New Column, Mystery Photo

## ON THE COVER\*

Jack O'Malley, a Cherryland Electric Co-op member and host of a northern Michigan radio show and TV 9-10 broadcast called "Jack's Journal," is joining Michigan Country Lines magazine as a READERS' PAGE columnist.

Photo Courtesy – Beth Price / bethpricephotography.com

\*Some co-op editions have a different cover.



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
countrylines.com



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**Ontonagon, MI 49953**  
**Phone: 906-884-4151**  
**Toll-free: 800-562-7128**  
**After hours: 866-639-6098**

## OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

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**Calvin Koski**, Vice-President  
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**George Rajala**, Director  
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**David Anderson**, Director  
 Boston/Lake Linden District

## PERSONNEL

**Debbie Miles**, General Manager

**Donna Siren**, Billing Clerk

## OTHER INFORMATION

**Date of Incorporation:** Sept. 30, 1937

**Fiscal year-end:** Dec. 31

[countrylines.com/coops/ontonagon](http://countrylines.com/coops/ontonagon)

## Attend Your Co-op's Annual Meeting to Vote on Bylaws



**Debbie Miles**  
 General Manager

**T**he Ontonagon County REA annual meeting of members will be held at Chassell High School on June 21, 2014 (see page 16 for other details). This year, directors will be elected to the board from District 3-Ewen/Trout Creek, and District 7-Boston/Lake Linden. Incumbents are Paul Koski and David Anderson, respectively. Members living in those districts will receive ballots in the mail at least 30 days before the annual meeting. Ballots must be returned to the co-op office no later than noon on Monday, June 16, 2014 (votes will be counted and results shared at the annual meeting). If you don't receive a ballot, please call us at 906-884-4151 or 800-562-7128.

At this year's meeting, members will also be asked to vote on and approve changes to the co-op's bylaws (see special insert between pages 8–9).

Through this democratic election process, you have a voice in how your co-op is governed. Any Ontonagon member has the opportunity to run for the board in the district in which they reside, which assures local control. As part of this, Ontonagon's annual meeting is also a chance to discuss your concerns with your cooperative's leaders.

Every home or business receiving power from a co-op is a "member," and therefore owns a share of the utility. Across the nation, there are 18 million co-ops in 47 states serving over 42 million member-owners. Co-ops are also nonprofit, and therefore have no need to increase revenues above what is needed to run the business in a financially sound way. This helps keep your electric bill affordable. Unlike investor-owned utilities (IOUs), any profits (co-ops call them "margins") are allocated back to the member and not to some obscure investors.

Please participate in the governing of your electric co-op by attending the annual meeting on June 21. Members attending the meeting will receive a \$5 credit (one credit per membership) on their June bill. ■

## Why Do We Send You Country Lines?

We send *Michigan Country Lines* to you because it is the most economical and convenient way to share information with members. It takes the place of many mailings we would otherwise make to get information to you about our services, director elections, and member meetings, and about the staff and management decisions you should know about as an owner of the co-op. The magazine also carries legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its basic principles—to educate and communicate openly with members. The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe on the members' behalf at a cost of \$5.91 per year, paid as part of your electric bill. The magazine's current cost is 98 cents per copy, not much more than the cost of two first-class stamps. *Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. As always, we value your comments about your magazine.

## NOTICE OF 2014 ANNUAL MEETING OF MEMBERS OF ONTONAGON COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ASSOCIATION

### Date of Notice: May 2, 2014

Please be advised that, pursuant to Article II, Section 3 and Article XIV of The Ontonagon county Rural Electrification Association's Bylaws, the Annual Meeting of the Members of The Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association is hereby called by the Secretary of the Association.

The Purpose of the Annual Meeting is to seat the new directors, pass upon reports covering the previous fiscal year, vote upon the proposed Bylaw amendments in the form attached to this Notice and transact any other business as may properly come before the meeting.

The Annual meeting of the Members of The Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association shall occur at Chassell, Michigan, promptly at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 21, 2014.

Ontonagon County Rural  
Electrification Association



Randy Myhren, Secretary

### Ontonagon County REA/Dec. 31, 2013 & 2012 Financial Statement Balance Sheets

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2012</b>
<b>UTILITY PLANT:</b>		
Electric plant in service	\$21,480,078	\$21,172,769
Construction work in progress	1,465,546	1,127,857
	22,945,624	22,300,626
Less—Accumulated depreciation	(7,170,195)	(6,575,640)
Net utility plant	15,775,429	15,724,986
<b>INVESTMENTS &amp; OTHER ASSETS</b>		
Investments	641,683	586,473
Total investments and other assets	641,683	586,473
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	47,827	64,520
Accounts receivable (less accumulated provision for uncollectibles of \$40,000 in 2011 & \$15,805 in 2010)	750,465	616,623
Accounts receivable—other	45,110	45,110
Materials and supplies	292,086	276,539
Prepayments	55,640	51,803
Total current assets	1,191,128	1,078,401
Deferred Charges	<u>196,454</u>	<u>225,165</u>
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b><u>\$17,804,694</u></b>	<b><u>\$17,615,025</u></b>
<b>Member's Equities and Liabilities</b>		
<b>EQUITIES:</b>		
Memberships	\$23,045	\$22,375
Patronage capital	2,936,784	2,246,050
Other equities	<u>32,497</u>	<u>32,497</u>
Total equities	<u>2,992,326</u>	<u>2,300,922</u>
<b>LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:</b>		
Rural Utilities Service (RUS) mortgage notes	2,393,354	2,513,826
National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUFCCFC) supplemental mortgage notes	238,292	253,353
CoBank, ACB mortgage note	10,003,802	10,289,611
	\$12,635,448	\$12,634,790
Less current portion	(430,000)	(422,000)
	\$12,205,448	\$12,634,790
Post-retirement benefit obligation	392,754	348,956
Total long-term liabilities	\$12,598,202	\$12,983,746
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES:</b>		
Current maturities of long-term liabilities	430,000	422,000
Line of Credit notes payable	1,062,000	1,250,000
Accounts payable	299,478	256,006
Customer deposits	11,860	14,110
Other current liabilities	<u>352,590</u>	<u>337,843</u>
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>2,155,928</u></b>	<b><u>2,279,959</u></b>
Deferred credits	58,238	50,398
<b>TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b><u>17,804,694</u></b>	<b><u>17,615,025</u></b>
<b>Statement of Revenue &amp; Expenses Ending Dec. 31, 2013 &amp; 2012</b>		
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>\$6,031,896</b>	<b>\$5,523,019</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES:</b>		
Cost of purchased power	2,447,427	2,407,950
Distribution—Operations	304,635	356,886
Distribution—Maintenance	494,467	471,460
Consumer accounts	191,431	279,495
Customer service and informational	80,449	22,484
Sales Expense	89	—
Administrative and general	585,629	542,743
Depreciation	659,058	643,318
Taxes	206,618	199,544
Other deduction	<u>13,315</u>	<u>1,296</u>
Total operating expense	<u>\$4,983,118</u>	<u>\$4,925,176</u>
Operating margins before interest expense	\$1,048,778	\$597,843
Interest expense	<u>621,646</u>	<u>632,996</u>
Operating margins (loss) after interest expense	<u>\$427,132</u>	<u>\$(35,153)</u>
<b>NONOPERATING MARGINS:</b>		
Interest and investment income	53,620	54,290
Other nonoperating income (expense)	<u>111,302</u>	<u>98,118</u>
	<u>\$164,922</u>	<u>\$152,408</u>
Capital credits	<u>102,919</u>	<u>24,993</u>
<b>NET (LOSS) MARGINS</b>	<b><u>\$694,973</u></b>	<b><u>\$142,248</u></b>



Photos – 831 Creative

## GIVE YOUR TASTEBUDS A HAWAIIAN VACATION

These island-inspired recipes are perfect for any Hawaiian luau or just for fun.

### Hawaiian Sweet & Sour Meatballs

3/4 lb. ground beef  
3/4 c. fine bread crumbs  
1/8 c. sesame seeds, toasted  
1 small can pineapple chunks  
1 small onion, minced  
1 egg, beaten  
1 t. salt  
dash pepper  
1 T. salad oil

#### Sweet and Sour sauce

2 T. cornstarch  
1/2 c. sugar  
2 T. shoyu sauce (soy sauce)  
1/4 c. white vinegar  
1/4 c. pineapple juice  
1/4 c. water



Combine beef, bread crumbs, onion, egg, sesame seeds, salt and pepper. Shape meat mixture into balls and put a chunk of pineapple in center of each meatball. Heat oil in skillet; sauté meatballs a few at a time, browning well on all

sides. Cover and cook on low heat until meatballs are done. Combine ingredients for Sweet and Sour sauce in small pan. Cook about 5 minutes, stirring constantly till thickened. Pineapple chunks may be added to sauce, if desired. Pour sauce over meatballs and serve. Serves 4. This is a traditional Hawaiian recipe given to me by my daughter-in-law, who is Hawaiian.

*Tanya Blackmer, Atlanta*

### Hawaiian Refrigerator Cake

1 1/3 c. sweetened condensed milk  
10 maraschino cherries, quartered  
1/4 c. fresh lemon juice  
1/2 c. heavy cream, whipped  
1 c. miniature marshmallows  
Ladyfingers cookies, about 3 dozen  
1/2 c. crushed pineapple, undrained



Combine milk and lemon juice; stir until thickened. Add marshmallows, pineapple, maraschino cherries and whipped cream. Line large loaf pan with separated ladyfingers, standing halves around edge and laying them across the pan bottom. Pour in filling and cover with ladyfingers. Chill at least 6 hours. Garnish with additional whipped cream and maraschino cherries, if desired. Serves 8–10. I received this recipe from friends who had just returned from Hawaii.

*Janice Harvey, Charlevoix*

### SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "All About Snacks" recipes by **June 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)!

Find more of our readers' recipes at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)

# Cool Energy Bills with Metal Roofing

**A** **sphalt shingles** are still the norm in most regions, but the next roof over your head could be an energy-saving metal one made of stainless steel and painted to reflect hot sun rays. Thomas Jefferson chose metal roofing to shelter Monticello, his Virginia estate. Centuries later, historians say, Jefferson's "tin" roof "is in fine shape."

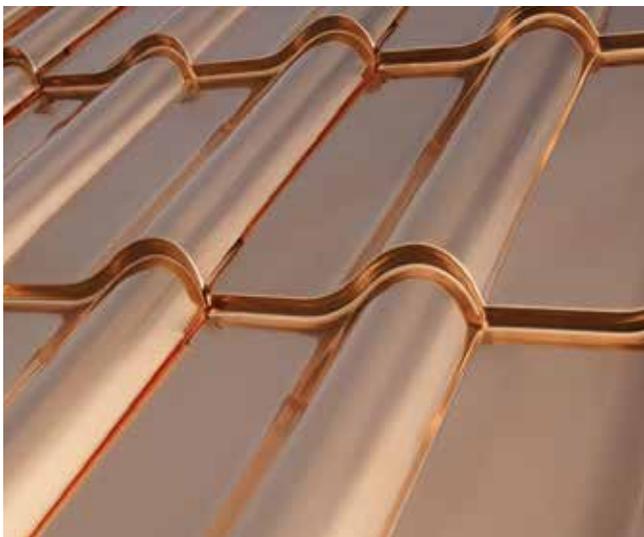
That kind of durability, say metal roofing retailers and manufacturers, is a strong selling point to a growing band of homeowners who want a building material that is not only sustainable, energy efficient, and cost-effective, but more aesthetically pleasing than asphalt. Today, consumers can select metals from copper to zinc, and roofing styles ranging from traditional vertical seams to those resembling wood shake, slate, shingles, and clay tiles. A multi-year study conducted by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Building Technology Center suggests that replacing conventional asphalt roofs with metal ones can reduce air conditioning energy use by up to 25 percent.



The metal roof on this log home features a standing seam design that reflects the sun's rays, making it both easier to cool in summer and great for shedding snow.

If you're wondering whether your house should be clad with a metal roof, ENERGY STAR® offers this guidance: homes that are hampered with high air-conditioning bills, have large roof surfaces, lower insulation levels, or located in hot, sunny climates benefit the most from metal roofing. Painted metal roofs, also known as "cool metal roofs," are designed to reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat than a standard roof. Special reflective color pigments make this possible. Whether white or a darker paint color is used, heat will still reflect well and help reduce cooling loads in summer and insulate homes in winter.

With metal roofs, there are additional ways for homeowners to save money over time, but the initial purchase price can be a factor. The cost for using metal roofing systems in home renovations or new residential construction is higher than most other materials, manufacturers say. But compared to traditional, dark gray asphalt shingles and other non-metal roofs that last an average of 17 years and require replacing about every decade or two, metal roofs last longer. A metal roof lifespan is about two to three times longer, says William "Bill" Hippard, chair of the nonprofit Metal Roofing Alliance, a coalition that educates consumers about the benefits of modern metal roofing, and the product is virtually maintenance-free. ■



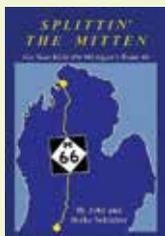
Gleaming copper that is shaped like barrel tile forms this home's new roof.

Photos – Metal Roofing Alliance

Get your kicks on  
**Michigan's**



Find "Splittin' The Mitten: Get Your Kicks on Route 66" on Amazon.com (paperback listed at \$12.47; e-book is \$2.99); at the Old Pioneer Store and Emporium (231-796-2502 or [oldpioneerstore.com](http://oldpioneerstore.com)) in Big Rapids; or order through Charlevoix's Round Lake Bookstore (231-547-2699).



**J**azz pianist **Nat King Cole** immortalized driving the open road with his 1946 hit song, "Route 66," a swinging rendition about traveling the fabled route from Chicago, Ill., to Los Angeles, Calif. But authors John and Becky Schlatter, think the Michigan highway that bears the same name is just as appealing and has its own quaint charms. To prove it, they take readers for a 237-mile ride from Sturgis to Charlevoix in a new book called "Splittin' the Mitten: Get Your Kicks on Michigan's Route 66."

"To say it's just as scenic as the route from Chicago to L.A., might be a bit of hyperbole, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder," notes John Schlatter, a retired corporate communications professional and HomeWorks Tri-County Electric



John and Becky Schlatter are the authors of a new book that travels some sites along Michigan's Route 66



A quiet rest – east of McBain



Robinson Scenic Gardens – Kalkaska/Mancelona



Hot Spot Tanning & Hair Salon – Remus



Visiting "Back to the Bricks" car show – Flint



Drink from an artesian well – Barryton



Photos courtesy of John and Becky Schlatter

Co-op member. "But when you drive [Michigan's] Route 66 and see a field of sunflowers in late summer, or cows grazing in a field and modern wind turbines in the distance, or a pretty old church, those are all very scenic in their own way."

The Schlatters' book, with 250 photographs, is an account of their trip through our rural heartland. It's a route full of history, small towns and farm life—the backbone of our mitten state.

Theirs is a story of pastures and cows, grange halls where farmers meet, ice cream parlors where families gather, and the overlay of modern times and change.

"We thought this might be a fun project," shares Becky Schlatter, who refers to herself as a "Michigan girl" and Flint native. "I get excited by stuff like this."

The Schlatters spent five days touring M-66.

Gathering material for their book required driving it twice and three shorter trips to shoot photos. One of Becky's favorite stops is Mancelona, where a downtown mural depicts the life of author Ernest Hemmingway.

Other favorite stops are Ionia's brick-lined Main Street and Charlevoix's "two waterfronts" and unique old homes.

"The worst part of the trip was not being able to stop and talk to people at length," says John, a Mississippi native who retired from Bechtel Corp in 2012 after years of moving around the country. "If we had, it would have taken three years to get it done."

John admits he didn't know much about Michigan until 2007. That's when the couple bought their Chippewa Lake cabin in Mecosta County. It's not far from M-66, a route they use to come and go.

"As a kid growing up in the south, all I knew about Michigan was Bo Schembechler, Detroit car factories, and Motown," John exclaims. "When I got here I was amazed by how rural the state is, which is why we like Route 66."

"I can't say that there was an 'aha!' moment when I knew to write the book, but I am old enough to remember the 'Route 66' television show from the 1960s," he adds. "We saw signs at Barryton saying, 'Thanks for Visiting' and 'Route 66 Keep on Cruising,' and realized we're not the only ones who think Route 66 is pretty cool." ■

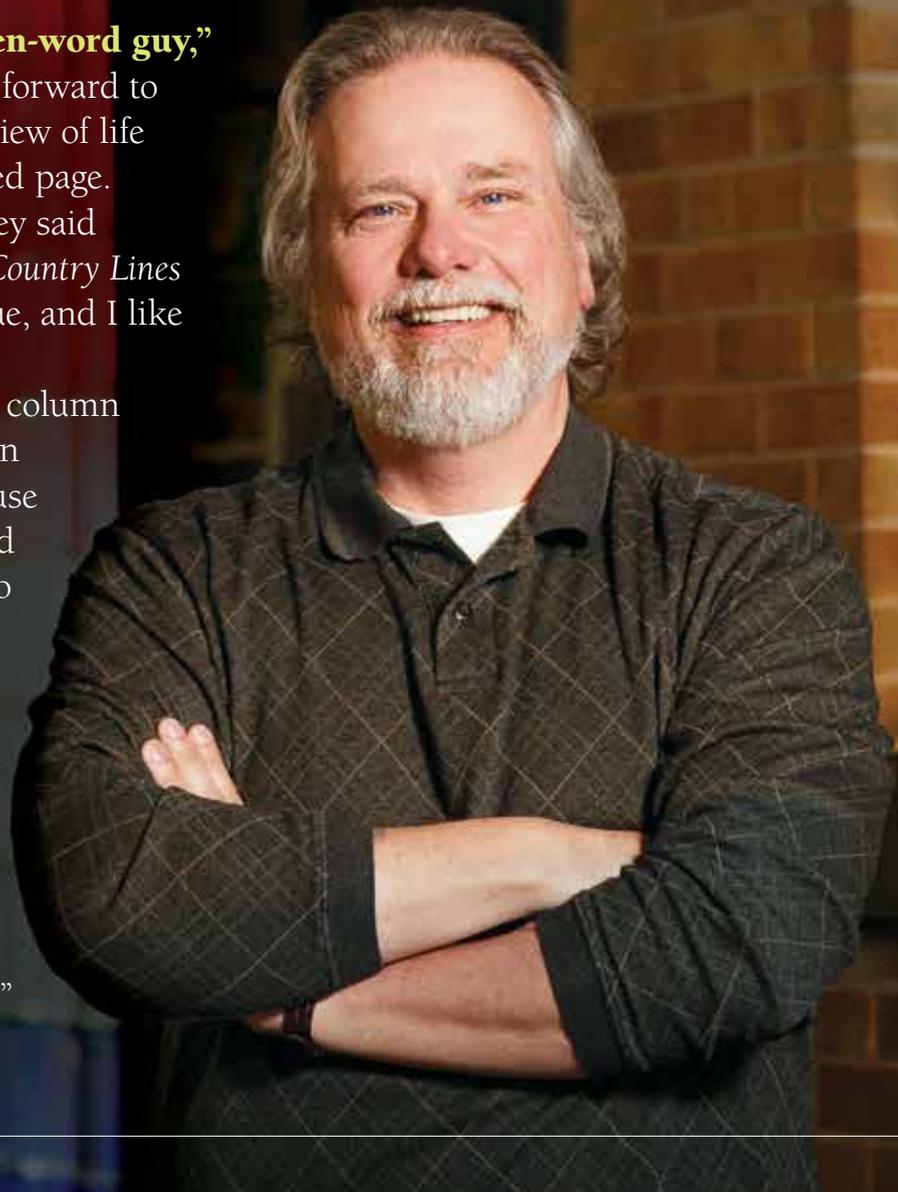
# Media-Man O'MALLEY Joins *Country Lines*

**A self-proclaimed “spoken-word guy,”** Jack O'Malley is looking forward to transferring his upbeat view of life in Michigan to the printed page.

“I’m thrilled about this,” O'Malley said about his new gig with *Michigan Country Lines* magazine. “It’s a whole new avenue, and I like a challenge.”

Beginning with this edition, his column on the Readers’ Page will appear in alternating issues. O'Malley will use the hallowed space, once occupied by Jim Hough, then Mike Buda, to expand on what he already does on northern Michigan radio and TV: celebrate the great and quirky people and places of his home state, filtering the stories through the lens of his buoyant personality.

“People get enough bad news,” he says. “They want a little good news.”



O'Malley, 54, relishes the role of good-news messenger. To Traverse City area people, his voice is as familiar as cherry pie. He's hosted the WTCM Radio Morning Show since 1984, making it the longest-running morning radio show in northern Michigan. O'Malley describes the program, which airs from 5 to 9 a.m. Monday through Friday as "full-service," meaning a complete package of music (country), news, weather, traffic reports—everything listeners need to start their day, except the coffee.

"People waking up want to know the world is still here and that all is well," O'Malley explains. "The idea is to be happy and fun, and keep people informed."

Brief interviews with various guests are also part of his routine—a local librarian offering a glimpse of what Traverse City folks are reading, an outdoor writer discussing what's biting in the Bay, or a city official discussing a development project.

A true multi-media man, O'Malley also turns up every Monday on the northern Michigan CBS affiliate WWTV (TV 9&10), in the form of "Jack's Journal," a 2-minute human-interest feature that airs during the 6 p.m. news.

The subjects?

"Gosh, it's everybody and everything," O'Malley says, tossing out a few recent examples—a hidden gem known as the Manton Military Museum, a one-man band, a funky little "Up North" tavern...

O'Malley describes the drill: "I get a cameraman and travel all over northern Michigan—from Alpena to the eastern Upper Peninsula, to the Ludington area—I follow the subject around, do an interview, put it all together."

Now and then O'Malley spends the 2 minutes musing about one of modern life's marvels—the overwhelming number of options, for example, in a supermarket cookie aisle.

O'Malley gleans ideas from his viewers and listeners, production team members, and his own observations. For *Country Lines*, O'Malley, who grew up in Detroit, will continue working Michigan's fertile human-interest soil, but on a broader, statewide field.



Jack O'Malley says his WTCM Radio Morning Show is a complete package of music, news, weather and everything listeners need to start their day, except the coffee.

"I'm a Michigan boy," he says. "My heart is in Michigan." O'Malley and his wife Robin are, by the way, Cherryland Electric Co-op members. O'Malley has two grown daughters and a 12-year-old son. As this *Country Lines* edition went to press, a first grandchild was also expected.

A veteran hunter of human-interest stories, O'Malley knows that the eyes and ears of his listeners, viewers, and now, readers, are his best bush-beaters. If you have an idea for a column, he wants to hear from you.

"I'm always open to ideas and suggestions," he says.

On column writing, as well as on grandfathering. ■



## Got Toast? Trenary Toast is a Beloved Treat

“**M**y grandmother always had Trenary Toast in her house—my brothers and sisters and I grew up on it,” said the woman on the phone, as she ordered bags of the toast for her brother and sister-in-law’s 70th wedding anniversary. As she hangs up the phone, Maureen Webber, owner of the Trenary Home Bakery, laughs and says, “I hear these stories from people all the time.” And, even though Webber bought the shop back in 2011, the U.P. native still loves being what she calls the “new face” behind Trenary Toast, Inc.

The bakery, located just moments off U.S.-41 on M-67 in Trenary, specializes in “from scratch” traditional Finnish breads from original family recipes passed down over the last century. Old Country Rye, a dense Scandinavian bread, is especially popular.

Their best seller, however, is the iconic Trenary Toast, which is distributed regionally and has been shipped to every state. Trenary Toast

starts out as a sweet bread which is baked, sliced, coated, then baked again.

“That’s what gives it that famous ‘crunch’ and dunk-a-bility,” Maureen explains. “Trenary Toast is unique because we’re the only toast that has the cinnamon sugar on the top—we hand-coat it.”

Next door to the bakery is the Trenary Toast Café, which serves breakfast sandwiches, subs, pizza bread, coffee, and, in the summer, hand-dipped Jilbert’s ice cream. Their giant cinnamon rolls and cinnamon bread are available exclusively in the Café. Webber also stocks local gift items, such as maple syrup, “Yooper” shirts, sweatshirts, and Saykly’s candy, which is homemade in Escanaba, Mich.

“Last summer, a lady came from Washington State to see where Trenary Toast was made because it was on her bucket list,” Maureen smiles. “How great is that?” ■

— Linda Sirosis

# Protect Your Equipment Against Power Surges

**P**ower surges cause millions of dollars in damage each year to TVs, computers, stereos, or anything plugged into an outlet. Here are some keys to choosing the best surge protection.

“A surge is a boost in the electrical charge over a power line,” explains Joe McElroy, safety director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. “This can be caused by lightning, but it’s more commonly caused by motor-driven electrical devices, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, that require a lot of energy for starting and stopping compressors. Surges can also be caused by faulty wiring.”

Frequent, small power surges shorten the life of appliances and electronics, and come in all shapes and sizes. “The most extreme is a lightning strike, because it can destroy equipment and sometimes

set your house on fire, but less severe ones are rooted in many different causes,” adds Alan Shedd, residential/commercial energy programs director for Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, the national brand for America’s electric co-ops. Surge severity depends on the voltage, current, and how long the event lasts. Most surges are very short, but can happen through any wire connected to your equipment.

A surge protection device mounted at the main electrical panel, or at your meter base, protects equipment from surges coming through entry ports such as outside electric, telephone, and cable TV or satellite dish lines.

Point-of-use devices do not suppress or arrest a surge, but divert it to the ground. They’re made to protect sensitive electronics, like a computer, and resemble a regular plug strip. But don’t assume your

plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. “My computer is plugged into an uninterruptable power supply with surge protection,” Shedd notes. Installing special surge protection electrical outlets can also help, especially near places like kitchen countertops.

The best protection is two-tiered. A service entrance device reduces surges to a level that protects large appliances (stove or clothes dryer), while point-of-use protectors defend sensitive electronics.

Be cautious when shopping for protection devices, as some claim to save energy, but this is generally false, Shedd says. “Surge protection is a valuable tool for protecting your home or business, but not for saving energy.” ■

## ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

**For your safety and for the protection of underground utility lines, always follow these steps before starting any digging project.**

1. Contact MISS DIG at 811 or [missdig.org](http://missdig.org)
2. Wait 3 days for utility owners to mark their lines
3. Respect the marks
4. Dig with care



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**

visit [missdig.org](http://missdig.org) for more information

## Winter's in the Rear View

**W**hew! Winter is finally in our rear view mirrors. All of Michigan's 83 counties experienced a humdinger, didn't they? Persistent cold, high accumulations without a traditional mid-season thaw, an abundance of snow days, and the Great Lakes nearing an ice-cover record made the Winter of 2013 one for the books! Yowsers!

I'm as ready for spring as the next guy, but let's be honest about winter in Michigan, too. We all love it! Winter is as much a part of who we are as the DNA that determines our eye and hair color.

We love seeing how southern towns react when hit with an inch or two of snow. Schools close, YouTube videos of garbage trucks pirouetting down the interstate are circulated, and news crews are on the scene! Why do we find such humor in our southern neighbors' response to what we consider a "light dusting"?

Bragging rights, pure and simple. We Michiganians are a tough bunch—enduring months of snow and frigid cold, driving to and from work (uphill both ways), and sending kids to the bus stop on days when the slightest breeze can leave cheeks raw and chapped. And, when warm weather friends call to complain about an inch of snow or temperatures below freezing, we can let loose! "Heck, we got a foot last night! It's minus 8 with wind chills at 35 below and schools have been closed all week!"

Not for the faint of heart, winter gives folks true grit, an identity. Anybody can do sunny and 75, but it takes seasoned Michiganians to handle negative temperatures and snow up to their backsides! Floridians have lawn mowers. A rake or two. But look in any Michigan garage and you will find all that plus an assortment of snow blowers, shovels, ice choppers, snow scoops...an arsenal for the war with winter we secretly enjoy waging year after year.



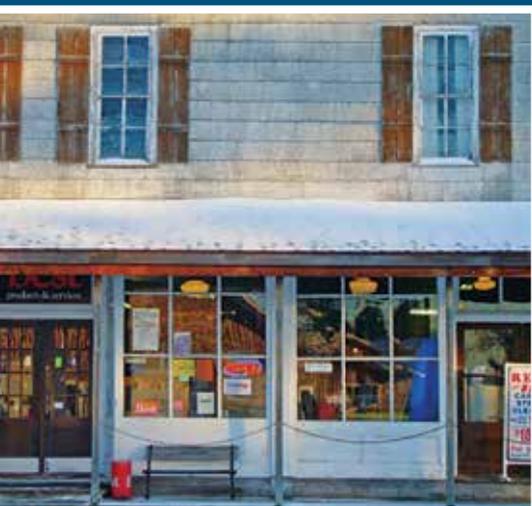
*"Winter gives folks true grit... Anybody can do sunny and 75."*

Jack O'Malley pictured using a snowblower during this infamous "Winter of 2013."

Enjoy the warm months ahead. You've earned 'em! And while boating, camping or lazing on the beach this summer, pay attention to the number of times you catch yourself bragging about how you survived the infamous "Winter of 2013." Because you will. And, you should. The seasons make us who we are. And we are from Michigan, home of the real winter!



*P.S. I am looking forward to talking with you through this column (every other issue), so if you have a topic idea to share about unique Michigan people, places and things, give me a shout to [jack@countrylines.com](mailto:jack@countrylines.com) or write: J. O'Malley, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI. ■*



## «« Do You Know Where This Is?

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

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. 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 the name of your co-op. Only those sending complete information

will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the July–August 2014 issue.

The March contest winner is **Deborah Dunlap**, a Cherryland Electric Cooperative member from Traverse City, who correctly identified the photo as Lakenenland Sculpture Park in Marquette.



March Photo

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# Don't Miss It!

## **Ontonagon County REA 2014 Annual Meeting**

**June 21 • Chassell High School**



The board of directors and employees of your electric co-op invite you to join them at the 2014 annual meeting (see notice, page 4, and right for details).

This is a chance to visit with your neighbors and friends from throughout our five-county service area and participate in your co-op's affairs. You will hear about the state of the co-op over the past year, as well as our vision for the future.

At the meeting, newly-elected directors from District 3—Ewen/Trout Creek, and District 7—Boston/Lake Linden will be seated, and voting on the bylaws changes will take place.

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- 10 a.m., Chassell High School
- Updates on co-op affairs by co-op president & general manager
- Guest Speaker: Craig Borr, President & CEO, Michigan Electric Cooperative Association
- Director election results: Ewen/Trout Creek & Boston/Lake Linden districts
- Voting on bylaws changes
- Update on your co-op's financial health
- Drawing for cash prizes
- Lunch