

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



MILLER FAMILY

FARM

— A LEAP INTO —
UNCHARTED WATERS

Both of these devices create hot air but which uses less power?



Space Heater (high)
1,500 watts



**7 Series
Geothermal Heat Pump**
900 watts¹

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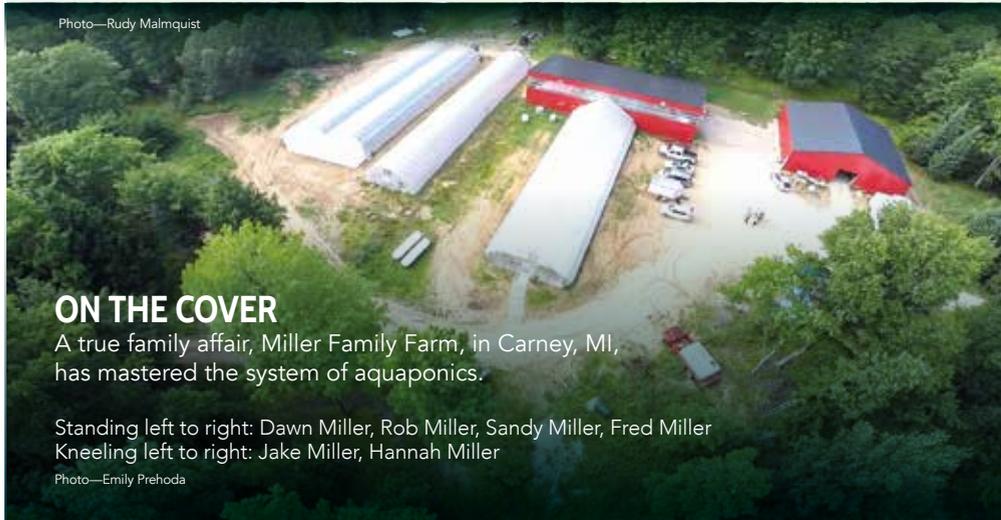


Change of Address:

Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.

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

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Photo—Rudy Malmquist

ON THE COVER

A true family affair, Miller Family Farm, in Carney, MI, has mastered the system of aquaponics.

Standing left to right: Dawn Miller, Rob Miller, Sandy Miller, Fred Miller
Kneeling left to right: Jake Miller, Hannah Miller

Photo—Emily Prehoda

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Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

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Onaway, 49765

Business Office & Billing: **989-733-8515**

Toll-Free: **800-423-6634**

Gas Emergency Toll-Free: **800-655-8565**

pieg.com

Most PIE&G natural gas rates and charges are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Presque Isle Electric Cooperative headquarters under construction in 1953, as seen from the other side of M-68.

Aging Facilities, Growing Member Needs Require Action

Your co-op leadership team has reached a crucial point regarding the deteriorating condition of our 60-year-old headquarters building. While we have diligently maintained both internal and external facilities, the building is showing its age and limitations, even as our service to members has vastly expanded.

PIE&G has seen significant change since 1955, including the 1994 expansion of operations to include natural gas service, which required more employees, inventory, vehicles and equipment. In addition:

- Our membership has grown from around 9,500 services to more than 44,000 today.
- We had 42 employees then; today, with around 20 seasonal workers included, we employ about 90.
- Vehicle considerations back then called for a six-bay garage. Today's fleet includes more than 40 service trucks and several bucket trucks.

We are evaluating the best course of action for the next 60 years—whether to renovate or build a new headquarters building. We know a number of significant issues must be addressed:

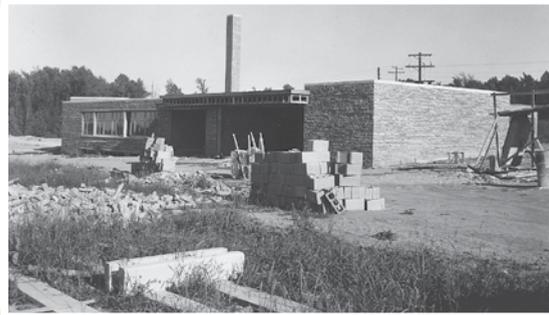
- Safety (asbestos abatement, collapsing ceilings, enhanced employee security from external threats),
- Obsolescence and non-functioning electrical and mechanical systems,



Basement area looking towards the west end of the new building.
(Note the county garage across the road.)



Construction workers hauling gravel, sand and cement for the new building.



Progress on the west end of the new building in 1953.



The new building completed in 1955.

- Energy waste,
- Organizational inefficiencies,
- Overcrowding and
- Increasing customer/member service expectations.

As always, cost is a major concern. Our commitment to the prudent use of funds was recently acknowledged when PIE&G received national recognition as having among the lowest distribution costs of the more than 900 electric co-ops nationwide. Maintaining this status will continue to be our goal as we work to effectively meet the needs of our members.

The decisions regarding our headquarters facilities will entail a thoughtful balancing of options by our leadership team and board of directors over the next several months. We are committed to keeping

a steady eye on the future while never losing sight of our responsibility to maintain your trust by improving performance, service reliability and value. Thank you for the confidence you have placed in us to make the best possible decisions on your behalf. We will be sure to keep you informed along the way. ■



Brian J. Burns
President & CEO

A History Of Prudent Planning

In 1953, Presque Isle Electric Cooperative—then operating out of the building that is now the Chagnon Funeral Home in Onaway—began construction on a headquarters building designed for the future.

The new office was built to provide “adequate space to conduct **12,000 members’** business,” as noted in the co-op newsletter of early **1955**, when the current building on M-68 first opened. At the time, the co-op had just 9,500 members; but then, as now, your co-op leadership was working to ensure that future growth was considered.

Today, the co-op provides services to more than **44,000 member accounts** from the same building—more than triple the number anticipated 60 years ago.

As a result of that growth, your co-op leadership is once again considering how best to apply resources to make sure the energy needs of our members are met well into the future.

NO BARRIERS

ADVENTURES FOR RURAL VETERANS—APPLY BY JAN. 31

Michigan electric cooperatives believe there should be “No Barriers” for veterans with disabilities. That’s the name and idea behind CoBank’s No Barriers initiative. Michigan cooperatives are looking for qualified veterans* from our local community to participate.

No Barriers is a five-day, all-expenses-paid, expedition in Colorado, designed to help veterans with disabilities transform their lives through curriculum-based experience in challenging environments (climbing, rafting and hiking).

If you are a disabled veteran, or you know of a disabled veteran in our community who would like to participate in the No Barriers program, please complete the form on our website:
countrylines.com/nobarriers

**Must have VA disability rating to be eligible.*



Storm Watch: Plan Ahead And Be Prepared

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Your electric cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared. Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving you without power. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

Winterize Your Home

- Inspect and maintain heating equipment and chimneys to ensure they’re working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to stop air leaks and related heat loss.
- Freezing temperatures can cause water pipes to burst. Wrap pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. From the inside, windows can also be covered with plastic.

- Make sure everyone knows where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it. House fires occur more often in winter, especially from using alternative heating unsafely.

Stay Warm And Safe

Plan ahead for alternate heating or other places you can go. A fireplace, propane space heater or woodburning stove is sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented and used with caution—make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working. If you use a portable generator, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload it, and use a proper outdoor extension cord that can handle the electric load.

Visit ready.gov or call 1-800-BE-READY (1-800-237-3239) for more tips on preparing for winter storms. ■



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
YOUTH TOUR



Michigan Co-ops Inspire Tomorrow's Leaders Today With **YOUTH TOUR 2017**

An exclusive summer highlight for the best and brightest youth in the state.
June 10–15, 2017

Designed to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, Youth Tour teaches the brightest students of Michigan about their past—and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. This is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors (going into their junior or senior year this summer) and is sponsored by Michigan's electric cooperatives. From the battlefields of Gettysburg to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., the program explores the leadership lessons of our nation's history and will immerse students in the cooperative spirit.

Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance students' knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build life-long friendships with other student-leaders from across the country.

**Youth Tour applications accepted
between now and Feb. 28.**

Trip Highlights Include:

- Visit the Gettysburg Civil War battlefields
- See Fort McHenry, birthplace of "The Star Spangled Banner"
- Explore the Washington, D.C., monuments and memorials
- Attend a theater performance at the Kennedy Center
- Explore the museums of the Smithsonian Institution
- Pay respects at Arlington National Cemetery
- Meet with Michigan Senators and Congressmen
- Batter up! Enjoy a Washington Nationals baseball game

**Additional information and online application
are available at CooperativeYouthTour.com.**

Agribusinesses: Save Energy And Money Now

Reducing the amount of energy used to power your farm equipment is a smart way to cut costs. Upgrade your outdated equipment today to save energy and receive cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program.

Rebates For Energy-Efficient Products And Equipment

Receive cash back when you purchase and install energy-efficient measures, such as: low-energy livestock waterers, fans and controls, milk-handling equipment, variable speed pumps, dairy refrigeration tune-ups, lighting upgrades and controls, water heaters, and more.

Farm Energy Audit

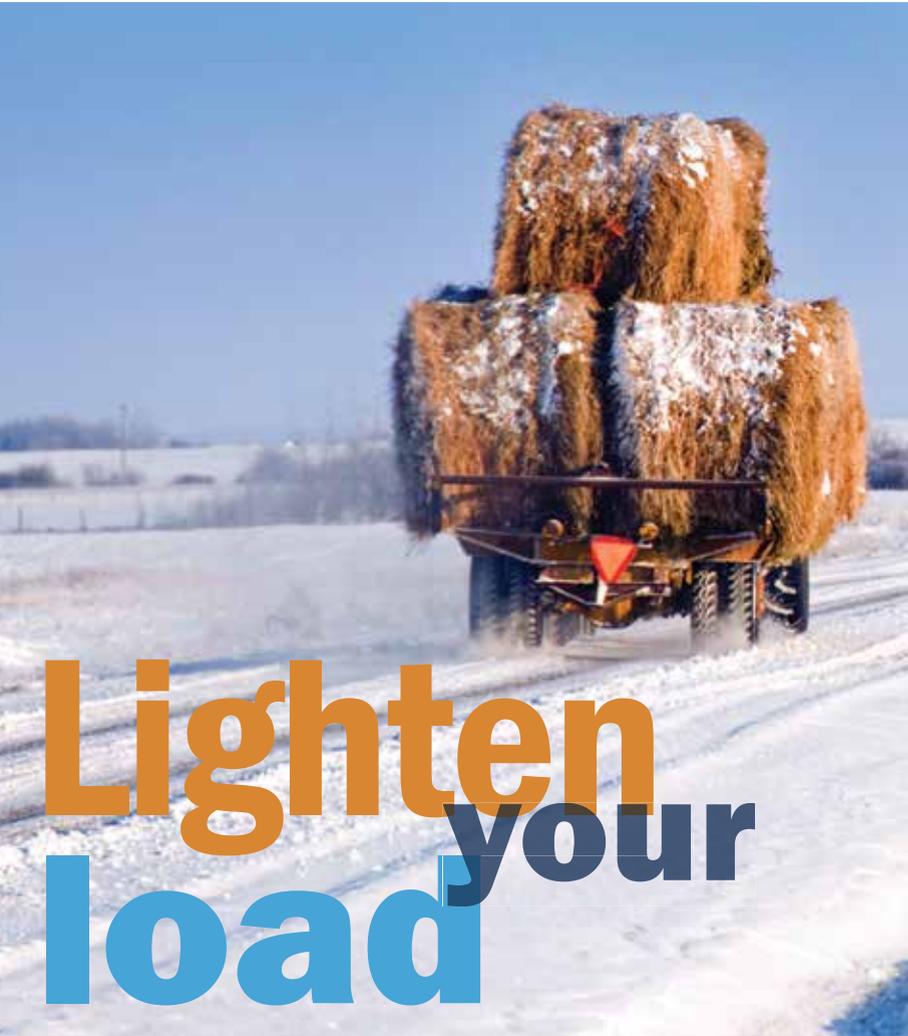
The Energy Optimization program has partnered with the Michigan Farm Energy Program (in conjunction with Michigan State University

Extension) to offer a \$500 rebate toward the cost of a farm energy audit. The audit will help you identify where and how to implement practical, energy-saving alternatives to outdated, inefficient equipment.

Rebates For Custom Projects

Have an energy efficiency project in mind, but don't see it on our list? The Energy Optimization program provides rebates for innovative and unique energy efficiency projects designed to meet specific needs, such as long-day lighting systems, milk harvesting and cooling equipment, high-efficiency, in-floor radiant heat, and more.

These are just a few of the energy-saving offers currently available for Michigan agribusinesses. View all farm services incentives at michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319 for details. ■



**Lighten
your
load**

Farm savings for the long haul

Reduce your energy use and costs now and into the future! The Energy Optimization program provides cash incentives for installing energy-saving lighting, fans, controls, pumps, compressors, and more.

ENERGY TIP: Custom rebates are available for large or complex projects unique to your agribusiness.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org
PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.

Wild Weather



Photo Fun

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*.

Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Family** due **Jan. 25**—March issue and **Planes, Trains and Automobiles** due **March 25**—May issue.

To submit photos, and for details and instructions, go to <http://bit.ly/countrylines>

We look forward to seeing your best photos!

A view of a beautiful, stormy sunrise from our back patio. *By Lynn Shultz, Posen*



The snow squall was intense, but that didn't stop our pup. *By Kim Galloway, Cheboygan*



Stunning rainbow over the Michigan State flag, American flag and the Polish flag at the 2016 Posen Potato Festival. *By Lynn Shultz, Posen*

HEALTHY LIVING

Great tasting, good-for-you recipes.

Energy Bars

Joyce Tamminga,
Great Lakes Energy

- 1 cup peanut butter, sunflower butter or almond butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup honey
- 3 cups rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup ground flaxseeds or chia seeds
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 cup any combination of nuts, seeds, and soft dried fruit (sunflower seeds, raisins, dried cranberries, etc.)
- shredded coconut

Combine the peanut butter and honey in a large mixing bowl and stir until smooth. Gradually add oats and chia seeds/flaxseeds. Add chocolate chips and nut/seed/fruit mixture. Mix gently to combine. Use a 7x11 or 9x9 pan sprayed with baking spray. Sprinkle bottom with coconut, pat down mixture firmly, and sprinkle more coconut on top and pat down. Refrigerate and cut into small bars. Enjoy for a healthy snack! Keep refrigerated.



Fresh Corn Salsa

Mary Babcock, Thumb Electric



- 2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- ½ cup red pepper, diced
- 1–2 jalapeños, seeded and minced
- ½ cup cilantro, chopped
- 4 teaspoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Sauté corn over medium-high heat until kernels begin to char. Set aside to cool. In a medium bowl, combine onion, red pepper, jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, and salt. Add sautéed corn and stir to combine. Enjoy with fresh chips!

Overnight Oatmeal (Muesli)

Mary Ellen Wynes, HomeWorks Tri-County



- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ cup yogurt (your choice)
- any fruit
- any nuts
- any fruit juice

Combine your oatmeal and yogurt. Add your fruit juice, nuts and fruit. Stir and refrigerate overnight. Enjoy in the morning!

Delicious And Healthy Avocado Pudding

Cindy Dickinson, Presque Isle Electric



- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons almond butter or peanut butter
- pinch of salt
- chocolate chips

Mash avocado in bowl until smooth. Stir in rest of ingredients. Chill 30 minutes or more. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top as garnish.



Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

Join our exclusive online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

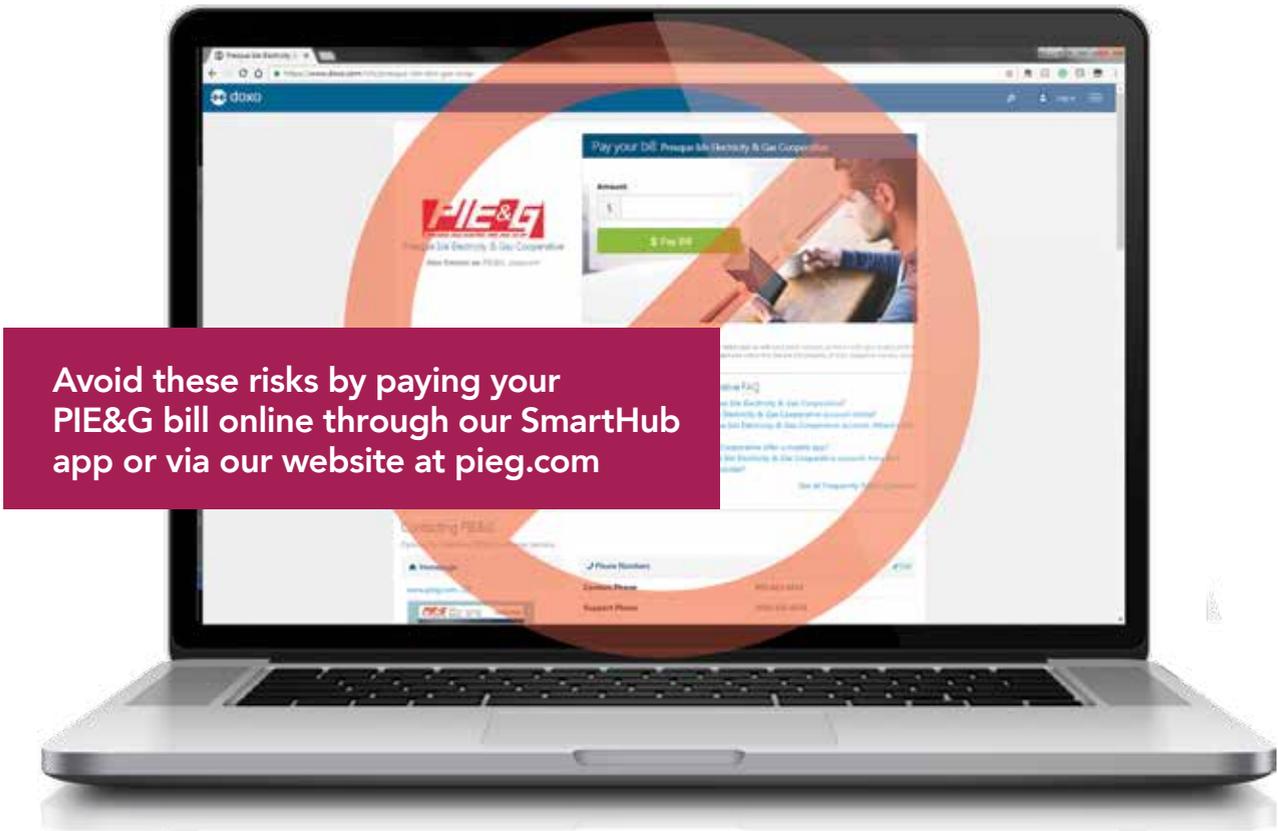
Please submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:

“Muffins & Breads” due Feb. 4

“Breakfast & Brunch” due Mar. 4

Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

Go to micoopkitchen.com to register.



Avoid these risks by paying your PIE&G bill online through our SmartHub app or via our website at pieg.com

Beware Of Other Online Payment Sites

Paying your Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op bill online is fast, easy and free when you use our website—**pieg.com**. Beware of hidden fees from other payment websites.

Pay your PIE&G bill online at any time. If you accidentally select another payment website to make your bill payment, you risk possible extra charges and payment processing delays. Make sure our website with the address above appears before making a payment. Some websites allow visitors to pay their local utility bills with the utility's name and company logo appearing on the site. Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op is not affiliated with any third party website that offers utility payment service.

If you pay your PIE&G bill on a third party website, you risk:

- Extra charges levied by the third party for each transaction on their website.
- Delays up to two days or more before the payment is posted to your PIE&G account. For some members, the delay could result in the

account being disconnected for nonpayment if payment is not received in time to avoid shut-off. Even if late payment does not result in a shut-off, late payment fees could be charged to the account. Members can avoid these risks by taking advantage of payment options offered directly from their cooperative.

PIE&G offers several free and convenient payment methods. Choose whatever option works best for you:

- **AutoPay:** Your payment is automatically deducted each month from either your checking account, credit card or debit card.
- **SmartHub:** Pay online at **pieg.com**. Make payments with a check or credit card.
- **PhonePay:** Pay at any time by using our automated pay-by-phone service. We accept payment by credit card or check over the phone. Simply dial 866-999-4571.

You can also visit our office and make your payment in person or use our dropbox. For more information visit **pieg.com** or contact us at 800-423-6634. ■

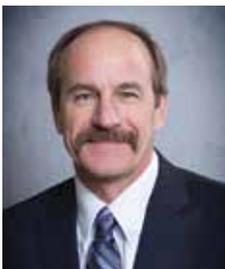
PIE&G Director Election Results

At the co-op's 79th annual membership meeting held at Onaway High School on Friday, Oct. 28, the following candidates were elected to three-year terms (2016–2019): Brentt Lucas (incumbent, Alpena District), Kurt Krajniak (incumbent, Alpena District) and Raymond Wozniak (incumbent, Presque Isle District). The number of votes each candidate received is listed below.

Immediately following the meeting, the board of directors held their election of officers and the results were as follows:

**Chairman – John Brown; Vice-Chairman – Allan Berg;
Secretary – Sandy Borowicz; Treasurer – Daryl Peterson.**

The winner of the \$100 prize raffle for voting by mail was Lyle Ballard of Armada. ■



Kurt Krajniak



Brentt Lucas



Raymond Wozniak

Alpena District (Two Vacancies)	Bob Grohowski	433
	Duane Jennings	572
	Kurt Krajniak	919
	Brentt Lucas	761
Presque Isle District (One Vacancy)	Greg Diller	428
	Leo Romel	373
	Raymond Wozniak	866



Attention Graduating Seniors!

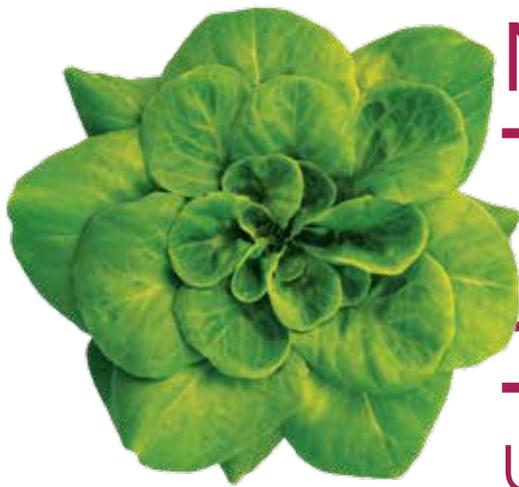
The PIE&G Communities First Fund has been awarding scholarships to graduating high school seniors since 1999. The scholarship has been expanded to include all accredited colleges or universities located in Michigan. The award is \$1,000 and is payable upon successful completion of the first term.

Eligibility requirements and applications are available online at pieg.com or by calling our office at 800-423-6634. Completed applications with supporting documentation are *due by March 1, 2017*. Scholarships will be awarded on June 1.

Your Board In Action

At their most recent regular meetings, the PIE&G Board of Directors:

- Approved the 2017 Work Plan (utility plant capital budget) of which \$2,830,000 was for electric utility plant and \$472,000 was for natural gas plant for a projected total of \$3,302,000.
- Reviewed and accepted the 2017 Operating Plan as a reasonable forecast for the 2017 fiscal year and as a useful business planning tool for the organization.
- Reviewed annual disclosure statements per board policy on conflicts of interest.
- Set the 2017 annual membership meeting for 10 a.m. on Friday, October 27, at the Posen High School. Meeting is subject to final approval by Posen schools.
- Listened to system engineer Wesley Repke's presentation on drones and their potential use in utility operations. ■



MILLER FAMILY FARM

— A LEAP INTO — UNCHARTED WATERS

By Yvonne Whitman

After a long career in the construction business, Rob Miller, then a Madison, WI, resident, found himself at a crossroad when he lost his job during the 2008 economic downturn. During this time, his son, Jake, was working for a vegetable farmer. Jake's work in the agriculture industry piqued Rob's interest in how foods were being grown. "I realized that food is a commodity that will never go away," Rob says. It was a realization that steered him and Jake to investigate alternative methods for farming. "And that led us to aquaponics," Rob explains.

Aquaponics is the marriage of aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (the soilless growing of plants) that grows fish and plants together in one integrated system. The fish effluent provides an organic food source for the growing plants, and the plants provide

In 2016, the farm was recognized as one of three finalists in the Governor's Energy Excellence Award for Best Project in the Agriculture sector.



Tilapia are a critical component to the farm. Jake is holding a fish in front of one of the farm's six fish tanks. Each carefully monitored 500-gallon tank holds approximately 250 fish.

a natural filter for the water in which the fish live. This environmentally-sustainable method of farming is free of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, plus it uses just one-tenth of the water expended in traditional field growing methods.

The Millers began working with Nelson and Pade, a Wisconsin aquaponic company, to learn everything they could about the technology. When trying to decide where to locate their operation, the decision was easy. "When I was a kid my favorite spot was Michigan's Upper Peninsula to visit my grandparents. I love it up here," Rob reflects.

In 2013, Rob, his wife, Dawn, and their three children all took a leap of faith into uncharted waters and moved their family to a seven-acre farm in Carney. Once owned by his maternal great grandparents, the farm is currently owned by Rob's parents, Fred and Sandy. Purchasing a nearby additional 60 acres, Rob began construction on the first building for the aquaponic operation.

The first shipment of 276 tilapia fish were delivered in 2014. It took them approximately one year to get the system operating at full capacity, growing both fish and produce. So, how does it work? The nutrient-rich water from the fish feeds the 200 lettuce seeds that are planted every day, six days of the week. Approximately 40 days later, the crop is harvested and ready to sell. The farm now produces several types of lettuce, kale, tomatoes and cucumbers. The produce is sold in 10 U.P. grocery stores, in addition to supplying healthy food to the Carney and Gladstone school lunch programs. This has all been accomplished with little to no advertising, but rather through word-of-mouth publicity. The quality of the produce advertises for itself, the Millers attest.



Rob Miller proudly stands in the rows of his impressively tall tomato plants.

Photos—Emily Prehoda

Still in its infancy, the operation will reach full capacity in five years when it is expected to produce 60,000 heads of lettuce and 70,000 pounds of tomatoes annually. Future plans include a certified kitchen on-site, so that they can sell the fresh fish, as well as constructing more greenhouses for crops, such as strawberries and peppers.

Family involvement weaves its way through the fabric of the farm with Rob's son, Jake, handling fish operations, his daughter, Hannah, as a greenhouse technician, and son, Jon, as general help. Rob's wife, Dawn, initially a bit reluctant at the prospect of relocation, adds, "Now that I'm up here, I love it. I love working on the farm. I've always enjoyed gardening, and this is just gardening on a different level."

"I have to attribute all of this to my mom and dad," Rob thoughtfully acknowledges. "They have been entrepreneurs their entire lives, and they taught by example. I saw first-hand their successes and failures and how they got through them. Those sorts of life lessons helped me through my own trials and errors with this business."

Together, as a family, the Millers have traversed uncharted territory to be able to supply fresh, sustainable food throughout the U.P.'s four seasons.

Miller Family Farm is a member of Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association. For more information on the farm, contact them at 906-639-2506, millerfamilyfarm2013@gmail.com or eatupmichigan.com. 🐟

VEGETARIAN MINESTRONE

A Miller Family Farm Favorite

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup celery, diced
- 1 cup carrots, peeled and sliced into thin half moons
- 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 tablespoons chicken flavored seasoning (vegetarian)
- 6 cups boiling water
- 1 teaspoon steak sauce
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce (Annie's vegetarian)
- 12 ounces fresh kale, chopped
- 3 ½ cup tomatoes, crushed
- 4 cups spaghetti sauce (homemade or store bought)
- 3 ½ cups navy beans canned (drained & rinsed)
- 1 ½ cups zucchini, cut into small bite size
- 2 cups ditalini, cooked (or other small pasta)
- salt and pepper to taste

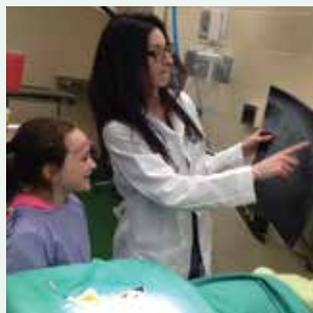
Heat oil in a large soup pot. Add onion, garlic, celery and carrots. Sauté 2–3 minutes until onion is translucent. Add mushroom, oregano and basil and cook 2 minutes over medium heat or until mushrooms are softened. Prepare broth by dissolving vegetarian chicken seasoning into boiling water, then add to pot with onion mixture. Add steak sauce, Worcestershire, kale, tomatoes, spaghetti sauce and beans. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 10–20 minutes, add zucchini and cook 10 more minutes or until zucchini is tender. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, then add the cooked pasta. Remove from heat and serve. Makes about 1 gallon.



Find this recipe and more at micoopkitchen.com.



Please Join The
COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND



Win One Of Three Prizes!

Drawing Held February 6, 2017

1st Prize
Notebook PC
\$250

2nd Prize
Tablet
\$100

3rd Prize
\$50
Bill Credit

PIE&G members who volunteer to round up their monthly utility bills to the next whole dollar generously fund the PIE&G Communities First Fund, which was created in 1998 to help boost important nonprofit groups in Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op's service area.

If you are among the 33 percent of PIE&G members who participate—helping generate about \$51,400 per year—thank you!

The average contribution is 50 cents per month, or around \$6 annually per meter, but these donations add up to make a BIG difference in northeast Michigan. More than \$1.39 million has been awarded to date to benefit our communities.

PIE&G needs your help to expand this program in 2017. If 50 percent of members participated, they would generate \$78,000 for local food pantries and schools, the Presque Isle County Servicemen's Club, Boy Scouts, the Cheboygan County Equine Unit, Girls on the Run Sunrise Side and many more.

You can help by enrolling in the program. Simply complete the enrollment form below, drop it off at our office or mail it with your utility payment to PIE&G, P.O. Box 308, Onaway, MI 49765. Or just call us at 1-800-423-6634.

Members enrolled in the PIE&G Communities First Fund before Feb. 6, 2017 (including those already participating), will be automatically entered to win one of three prizes. First prize is a notebook computer valued at \$250; second prize is a tablet computer valued at \$100; and third prize is a \$50 PIE&G bill credit.

You can be confident that all member donations go directly to help communities; the small administrative costs involved are paid by PIE&G. Contributions are tax-deductible and your total annual contribution will be listed on your January energy bill for tax purposes. An all-volunteer, independent board of directors reviews the applications and determines the awards.

Thank you for enrolling—and good luck!

PIE&G Communities First Fund Enrollment Form

Yes!

I want to participate in the COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND. Please enroll me and "round-up" my bill to the next highest dollar each month.

Name (please print) _____

Account Number _____

Mailing Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Include this coupon in your next bill payment, or mail to:
PIE&G COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND, P.O. Box 308, Onaway, MI 49765

Sky's The Limit

By Jack O'Malley

What happens when you combine a master electrician, educator, licensed contractor and self-described tinkerer? You get Mike Schmerl, an instructor at Northwestern Michigan College and owner of Panoramic Electricity.

Since starting his electrical company 23 years ago, Mike has made the study of electricity something of a hobby, fueling the fiddler within while inspiring a new generation of electricians. In fact, one of Mike's electrical apprenticeship classes was awarded a grant to study solar power. With his home now covered in solar panels, wired with various switches and batteries, Mike uses his personal experiences with this alternative energy source in the classroom. And his students seem to be warming to the idea.

"Solar has amazing benefits," Mike said. "We are much further along in its day-to-day use than people even know." An electric car, for instance, can run approximately 238 miles between charges. Mike says, "that pretty much covers the average day driving for most of us."

But what happens when you combine an electric car with solar power? Mike discovered you can have an affordable and comfortable means of transportation as proven by the solar powered golf cart he built! And while he admits some working vehicles might still need gas or diesel fuel to operate, Mike remains confident that soon we'll be picking up groceries in electric powered cars.

Some argue that Michigan's often cloudy, overcast skies make solar impractical. Mike insists that's not true. He cites Germany, a country sharing its latitude with Michigan, as a global leader in solar energy. While acknowledging that solar might not be the total solution to man's energy needs, Mike



says sun power complements other energy forms, pointing out that "even oil companies see the value of finding alternative energy sources so as to extend their production life."



Jack O'Malley

Describing solar power as the perfect marriage of old and new technology, Mike understands many of us will never be truly off the grid. "We will always need bigger generating capacity to power an ever-growing infrastructure," Mike explained. "If you want a hot tub or larger appliances, you will always need the power grid." ■

I Remember...

We invite members to share their fondest memories. Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.

Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. Country Lines retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: countrylines.com



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: Country Lines Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the November/December 2016 issue is Cathy Kinzey, a Great Lakes Energy member who correctly identified the photo as The Blue Buck on 72, a specialty market in Kalkaska.

Winners are announced in the following issues of Country Lines: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.





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