

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



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Deer Blind
Contest Winners!

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Traverse City

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**November/December
2014
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Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Gail Knudtson

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Cooperative Association**

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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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Future of U.P. In Jeopardy– Make Your Voice Heard!

The economic and financial stability of the entire Upper Peninsula is in jeopardy as a result of a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) decision in July. This decision has nearly all electric bill ratepayers in the U.P. assuming almost 100 percent of the operating costs for the Presque Isle Power Plant in Marquette.

At present, the budget is \$116 million, which includes plant operating costs and EPA compliance costs. Cloverland Electric will pay 22.5 percent or about \$21.8 million per year. Every electric account will be affected. Residential members using 1,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) per month will see an additional charge of about **\$30** monthly, or \$360 per year. Commercial members using 15,000 kWh will see a monthly spike of \$500, or \$6,000 per year. Industrial members will see an even greater increase that they may not be able to absorb. This is going to devastate the entire U.P.

We are not going to let this decision continue without first doing everything we can to get the word out about the critical financial impact this will have on the U.P. We have engaged a legal firm in Washington, D.C., with extensive FERC experience. Cloverland Electric is also working with members of the state Legislature, the governor, and the Michigan Public Service Commission. We will continue to be available for presentations to civic groups. But we can only do so much, and time is running out. If this ruling goes forward as it stands (see more background information on p. 12), you will see the increase on your January 2015 power bill.

Here's how you can help:

Contact MISO (Midcontinent Independent System Operator). This organization is responsible for the daily operation of the electrical grid system from Canada to the Gulf Coast. Also contact (information provided below) U.S. Sens. Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin, and U.S. Rep. Dan Benishek. Following is suggested language for what you will need to say:

- Cloverland Electric's 42,000 electric services in the Eastern Upper Peninsula cannot



Daniel Dasho
President & Chief
Executive Officer

Contact Information:

John R. Bear, President/ CEO

Midcontinent Independent System Operator
P.O. Box 4202, Carmel, IN 46082-4202
clientrelations@misoenergy.org
(866) 296-6476

Gov. Rick Snyder

P.O. Box 30013, Lansing, MI 48909
(517) 335-7858

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benishek.house.gov/contact-me/email-me
(877) 376-5613
Facebook: [facebook.com/CongressmanDan](https://www.facebook.com/CongressmanDan)

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow

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levin.senate.gov/contact/email/
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Sen. Howard Walker

senatorhowardwalker.com/contact/
(517) 373-2413

Sen. Tom Casperson

senatortomcasperson.com/contact/
(517) 373-7840

Rep. Frank Foster

FrankFoster@house.mi.gov
(517) 373-2629

Your Co-op Board In Action

The board of directors met on July 18 and Aug. 22. All directors were in attendance, and a summary of the meeting follows.

July

- Reviewed department reports, including financial.
- Amended budget to include money for improvements to the Straits Substation and St. Ignace circuit to Mackinac Island.
- Received communication plans for the scheduled service outage related to the Tone Substation.
- Approved contribution requests to “Education on the Farm” coordinated by the Chippewa Luce Mackinac Conservation District and to the River of History Museum.
- Received an update on several meter tampering investigations.
- Discussed and agreed on the benefits to the community for providing electricity in the Hursley Street Service Center lease agreement with the Sault Ste. Marie Police Department.
- Received notice that updates to the bylaws will be made prior to reprinting in first quarter, 2015.

August

- Reviewed department reports, including financial.
- Supported the importance of informing members about the Presque Isle Power

- Plant issue and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission’s July 29 order.
- Reviewed the MISO charges.
- Reviewed the Power Systems Engineering benchmark study.
- Received an update from legal counsel concerning meter theft, estate issues and failed commercial accounts.
- Received hands-on training with Smarthub® and the statewide association’s new electronic directory app.
- Received updates on three Community Outreach programs scheduled for the end of September and early October.
- Reviewed material and discussed the recent EPA decision.
- Discussed the opportunity for the co-op to conduct a member survey and obtaining bids from prospective companies.

Meetings are held at the co-op’s administrative office at 725 E. Portage Avenue in Sault Ste. Marie each month. The board reserves time at the beginning of each meeting for members who wish to address the board. Members who wish to present an item for board consideration at a particular meeting may submit their request for time using the member comment request form on cloverland.com or by calling 906-632-5143. ■

Future of U.P. In Jeopardy—Make Your Voice Heard!

- and should not pay the estimated \$21.8 million per year to keep the Presque Isle Power Plant open.
- The average residential electric bill could spike \$30 a month. Commercial and industrial accounts cannot absorb the additional thousands of dollars and may be forced to close.
 - Cloverland Electric does not benefit from the Presque Isle Power Plant and should not pay for it.
 - Wisconsin said they should not pay for the plant’s costs since they do not benefit from the plant. FERC agreed. Now, we are saying the same thing for Cloverland Electric members since we do not benefit.

MISO and FERC need to rehear this decision *now*, before this takes effect at the end of this year. ■

President & CEO
Daniel Dasho

Local Editor
Todd Chapman

cloverland.com

Member Service Centers

Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
906-635-6800
1-800-562-4953

2916 W. M-28
Dafer, MI 49724

836 M-134
DeTour Village, MI 49725

6214 County Rd. 403
Newberry, MI 49868

2972 W. 8th St.
Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Cloverland Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cloverland Electric Cooperative offices will be closed on the following holidays:

- **Nov. 27-28 – Thanksgiving**
- **Dec. 24-25 – Christmas**
- **Dec. 31 – Jan. 1 New Year’s**

For electrical emergencies, please call 1-800-562-4953.



HOLIDAY HAPPINESS

These make-ahead recipes are time-savers, and a perfect compliment to your holiday feast!

Holiday Spinach Dip

1 large round crusty bread, slice off top and hollow
 2 pkgs. 10-oz. spinach, defrosted, chopped, squeezed
 2 c. sour cream
 2 c. Hellman's® mayo
 1 c. chopped onion, very fine
 2 t. dill weed
 2 T. oregano
 1 ½ t. Lawry's® seasoning salt

Mix all ingredients. Chill overnight. Serve in bread. Use scooped out bread and additional small bread slices to dip. Looks pretty surrounded with cherry tomatoes.

Arlene Russel, Harbor Springs

Bailey's Milk Chocolate Truffles

¾ c. heavy cream
 3 T. butter
 1 ½ lb. milk chocolate chopped in pieces (not chocolate bits)
 ¾ c. Bailey's® Irish cream
 ½ c. confectioners' sugar
 ¼ c. cocoa powder
 ⅛ t. cinnamon

Combine cream and butter in saucepan and bring to a light boil; remove from heat. Add chocolate pieces, stir to melt. Stir in Bailey's®. Pour into bowl and refrigerate at least 6 hours. Spoon out walnut size pieces of the mixture onto cookie sheet and refrigerate until firm. Before serving, sift together confectioners' sugar, cocoa and cinnamon or you can do them all separately, for a different variety of colors. Roll each truffle into a ball and roll in cocoa/sugar mixture. Makes 40 or more. Refrigerate in airtight container. Use candy papers to keep them from sticking together when serving at room temperature. These do have alcohol in them, so serve just at an adult party.

Kami Maurer House, Sebawaing

Low Effort Eggnog



4 egg yolks
 ⅓ c. sugar, plus 1 T.
 1 pint whole milk
 1 c. heavy cream
 3 oz. rum or bourbon (or extract)
 1 t. freshly grated nutmeg
 4 egg whites

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg yolks until they lighten in color. Gradually add the ⅓ c. sugar and continue to beat until it is completely dissolved. Add the milk, cream, bourbon and nutmeg, and stir to combine. Place egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat to soft peaks. With the mixer still running, gradually add the 1 tablespoon of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Whisk the egg whites into the mixture. Chill and serve.

Laura Kurella, Sturgis

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Sandwiches" recipes by **Nov. 10** and your favorite "Soups" recipes by **Dec. 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.

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 countrylines.com for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

Don't Get Lost in the Shuffle



Craig Borr, CEO,
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

Six hundred pages, plus another 1,000 of supporting documents—that's the length of the latest proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It would amend the Clean Air Act (only 465 pages) to limit carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the power plants on which Michigan relies today.

Besides the actual rule, a lot has been written about its legality, feasibility and complexity. In fact, Michigan Rep. John Dingell, the longest-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives, emphatically stated several years ago that the EPA's regulation of carbon dioxide would result in a "glorious mess". His position, and I agree, is that Congress should determine far-reaching energy policy—not a federal agency loaded with lifetime bureaucrats.

But lost in the shuffle of these thousands of pages is *the impact on people*. How much will electric bills increase? Will manufacturers relocate? How many jobs will be lost? Which power plants will be forced to shut down? In Michigan, one-third of Michigan's coal fleet will close as a result of EPA regulations. Arguably, some of those facilities need to close, as they are old and dirty.

Energy policy questions are often difficult, but they are important questions. Michigan's electric cooperatives work hard to keep your electricity affordable and reliable. That's why we're asking the EPA for answers to these and many other questions.

We don't want you to get lost in the shuffle. We put you—our members—first. We advocate for you. Our member-cooperatives see you every month paying your bill at the office. We work with you. We know when times are tough. We often live next door.

After all, you govern us. Our board members and community leaders are one and the same. We're as local as any organization, and we like it that way.

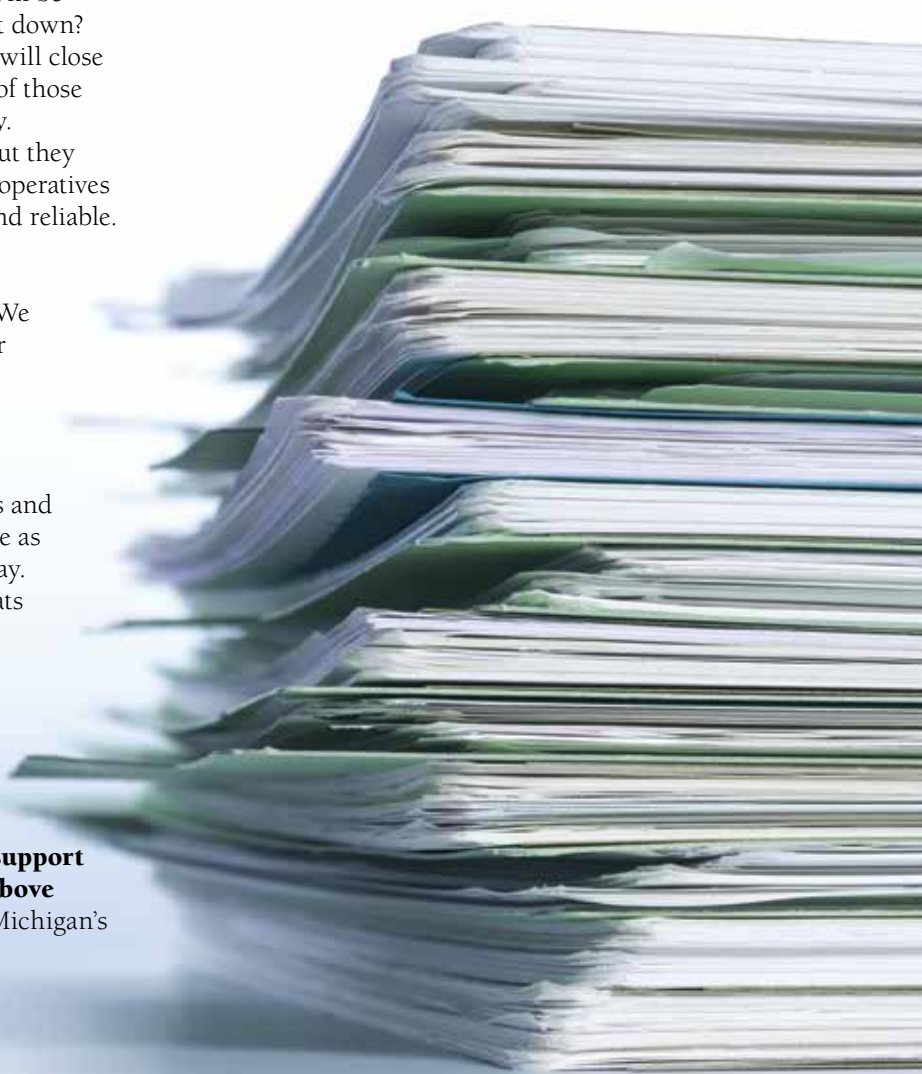
That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on the real world—where we live. That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at Action.coop and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

Please raise your voice. Don't get lost in the shuffle. **Together, we can tell the EPA that support for the environment and a true all-of-the-above energy policy are not mutually exclusive.** Michigan's

electric cooperatives lead by example. Our members are proud to be leaders in both energy efficiency and renewable energy. We have been leaders in both of these important areas long before they were required by the Michigan Legislature. Like many of our member-consumers that make their living in the agriculture industry, electric co-ops have always been good stewards of the environment because it is the right thing to do.

Together we need to remind regulators and lawmakers that the impact the EPA's proposed new rules could have on rural Michigan people, and others throughout our country, should be their *first* thought, not their *last*.

With over 900 electric cooperatives in the country backing us up, our voice can be heard. We have a great and positive story to tell. We can tell the story together. And it won't even take 1,600 pages. The EPA's public comment period is extended to Dec. 1—please take a moment to visit Action.coop today and let your voice be heard. ■



**STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF
CLOVERLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
CASE NO. U-17675**

- Cloverland Electric Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to implement a power supply cost recovery (PSCR) plan and a PSCR factor of \$0.03479 per kilowatt hour (kWh) to compute its member-customers' bills for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2015.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may contact Cloverland Electric Cooperative, 2916 West M-28, Dafter, Michigan 49724, (800) 562-4953 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Cloverland.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: December 2, 2014, at 9:00 a.m.

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Suzanne D. Sonneborn

LOCATION: Constitution Hall, 525 West Allegan, Lansing, Michigan

PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 241-6160 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Cloverland Electric Cooperative (Cloverland) September 30, 2014 application to implement a power supply cost recovery (PSCR) plan and PSCR factor in its electric service territory. Cloverland proposes a PSCR factor of \$0.03479 per kWh for its member-customers' bills for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2015, assuming a \$0.06415 per kWh allowance for cost of power supply included in base rates.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscedockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 241-6180 or by email at: mpscedockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by November 25, 2014. (Petitions to intervene may also be filed using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Cloverland's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to appear at the hearing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter becomes public information: available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure R 460.17315 and R 460.17335. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 241-6060.

A copy of Cloverland's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets, and at the office of Cloverland Electric Cooperative. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 241-6180.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.



Hank Centennial Farm Honored

The Hank beef and dairy farm in Goetzville has received Centennial Farm recognition by the Historical Society of Michigan. Owned by Caroline Hank, the 80-acre farm has been in operation since 1913.

Cloverland Electric Cooperative purchased the sign from the Michigan Centennial Farm Association and assisted in placing it on the property. Pictured (L-) are Norman Guild, Marci Guild (granddaughter), Finley Guild (great granddaughter), Caroline Hank, Benny Hank and Frances Hank (daughter).

Year Two of 10-Year Rate Process

Before we know it, 2014 will be over, and 2015 will bring new challenges, resolutions and opportunities. For Cloverland Electric Cooperative members, it brings the second year of the 10-year rate realignment process.

Cloverland purchased Edison Sault in 2010. At that time, Cloverland's facility charge was \$9 per meter, and Edison Sault's was \$3.40 per meter and had not been reviewed by the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) since 1982. Each utility had separate rates and multiple rate classes. To facilitate the merging of various rates and charges, Cloverland hired an independent utility consulting firm to conduct a cost-of-service study. The recommendation was to spread the costs across residential, commercial and industrial rate classes so that each would pay their fair share and eliminate subsidies of one class by another.

Adjusting rates is never an easy task for any utility. The most equitable approach was to adjust the monthly facility charge that every member pays for their own meter. This enables the co-op to raise the needed revenue, and each member can reduce their energy use through a variety of conservation methods. The facility charge is similar to the monthly charges billed by phone and cable providers for basic service. It's the fixed costs to have the service available and covers things like poles, wires, transformers, vehicles, tree trimming, property taxes and maintenance expenses.

The MPSC reduced our rate request from 5.7 percent to 2.4 percent. It also did not permit us to simplify the many rates classes and facility charge over the next five years, as requested. The order included a 10-year process for us to gradually adjust our energy charge each year. At the conclusion of this process, we will have one set of rates for the residential, general service, and large power classes. For a more complete explanation, please visit cloverland.com and click on the "My Service" tab, then the "Rates and Rules" tab. ■

Access To Rules & Rates

This notice is published pursuant to the rules established by the Michigan Public Service Commission as set forth in the Consumer Standard and Billing Practices for Electric and Gas Residential Services, R460, 2146 and 2149.

As a member-customer of Cloverland Electric Cooperative, the following information is available to you upon request:

1. Complete rate schedules;
2. Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive;
3. Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for the member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate;
4. Clear, concise explanation of actual energy use for each billing.



Meet Our Deer Blind Contest Winners!

From hideouts that resemble a cozy cottage (complete with area rug) to basic shelters, we received more than 60 entries in our *Country Lines* tricked-out deer blind contest. Who knew there were so many cool deer blind styles? Thanks to all who participated—it was difficult to choose! Our winners are featured here, but visit countrylines.com to tour the tricked-out blinds of other electric co-op members who entered.

“Most Tricked-Out”

Congratulations to **Ward Forquer**, a HomeWorks Tri-County member, for having the most tricked-out blind. Affectionately known as “Fort Miller Lite,” it’s a two-story 10 by 14-foot insulated structure with a carpeted observation room, solar panel, propane heat and lights, 13-inch flat screen color TV, bunk beds, and customized Miller Lite memorabilia. Located in Isabella County, it can host up to 12 people.



Photos—David Trumple Photography

“Most Interestingly-Engineered”

Kudos to **Ronald Camp** for building the most interestingly-engineered blind. Working in underground excavation for 30 years, Ron envisioned a 36-foot underground storage tank for his shelter. The HomeWorks Tri-County member set the tank upright, above ground, and added a cupola at the top that swivels 360 degrees. Getting to the top means climbing a 28-rung ladder, but he is installing a 12-volt elevator.



“Best Story Behind the Blind”

Dean Ronk made his deerblind after finding that nearly every garage sale had a fake Christmas tree—usually with a bent, broken base or missing branches. The Midwest Energy co-op member decided to bend the wire tree branches around a circle of hog fencing, with heavy plastic as a roof. His idea has gained popularity, and he says, “it makes hunting affordable, and a ‘green’ way to hunt by recycling old trees.” Now he makes them for friends, and people are giving him their old trees. ■



Photo Courtesy - Dean Ronk

Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2014–2015 Season

Program: Winter Protection Plan
Contact: Your Local Utility Company

Income Guidelines 2014–2015	
# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,505
2	23,595
3	29,685
4	35,775
5	41,865
6	47,955
7	54,045
8	60,090

Add \$6,090 for each additional member.

Note: All customers 65+ are eligible regardless of income. Customers are responsible for all electricity and natural gas used. At the end of the protection period, participants in the plan must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.

The **Winter Protection Plan** protects eligible senior and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). You may enroll between Nov. 1 and March 31. If you are an eligible low-income customer, your utility service will remain on from Nov. 1 through March 31, if you:

- pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, **and**
- make equal monthly payments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season of any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), from April 1 through Oct. 31, you must begin to pay the full monthly bill, plus part of the amount you owe from the winter months when you did not pay the full bill. **Participation does not relieve customers from the responsibility of paying for electricity and natural gas usage, but does prevent shut-off during winter months.** You qualify for the plan if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

- are age 65 or older,
- receive Department of Human Services cash assistance, including SSI,
- receive Food Assistance,
- receive Medicaid, or
- household income is at or below the 150% of poverty level shown in the Income Guidelines chart at left.

Senior citizen customers (65 or older) who participate in the Winter Protection Plan are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. However, seniors are encouraged to pay whatever they can during the winter so they will not have large, unmanageable bills when the protection ends.

Program: Home Heating Credit
Contact: Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$12,842	4	26,243
2	17,329	5	30,728
3	21,786	6	35,186

Add \$4,457 for each exemption over 6.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2014** tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed at left, or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled claimants, or claimants with 5% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

If you qualify, you may receive assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. **Forms are available mid- to late-January wherever tax forms are provided, or from the Michigan Dept. of Treasury (517-636-4486, or michigan.gov/treasury).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **before Sept. 30, 2015.**

Program: Earned Income Credit
Contact: U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service irs.gov/EITC
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury michigan.gov/treasury

The **Earned Income Credit (EIC)** is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EIC, but must file a tax return to do so. If married, you must file jointly to qualify. File Form 1040 or 1040A and attach the EIC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2014** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the **2014 MI tax booklet** for details.

Program: Crisis Assistance Program
Contact: Local Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) michigan.gov/mdhs

State Emergency Relief Program (SER): mibenefitsaccess.org You do not have to be a DHS client to apply for help with a past due bill, shutoff notice or the need for deliverable fuel through the SER. This program, available Nov. 1–May 31, provides most of its utility assistance during this crisis season. However, limited assistance is available outside the crisis season. If you receive a DHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHS or call the Home Heating Hotline, 855-275-6424.

Program: Low-Income Home Weatherization
Contact: Local Community Action Agency

You may be able to receive help with weatherizing your home to reduce energy use if you meet low-income eligibility guidelines (200% of poverty guidelines shown above) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit mcaaa.org to find one in your area.

Program: United Way
Contact: Call 2-1-1 or UWmich.org/2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free phone service operating 24 hours daily to provide information about help that may be available in a particular area with utilities and other needs. Learn more at UWmich.org/2-1-1.

Program: Medical Emergency Protection
Contact: Local Utility Company

You are protected from service shut-off for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days, possibly extended to 63 days, if you have a proven **medical emergency**. You must provide written proof from a doctor, public health or social services official that a medical emergency exists. Contact your gas or electric utility for details.

Program: Shut-off Protection for Military Active Duty
Contact: Local Utility Company

If you or your spouse has been called into **active military duty** you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may request extensions. You must still pay, but contact your utility company and they will help you set up a payment plan.

Program: Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program
Contact:

The Trust Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance. Michigan Veterans Trust Fund at (517) 284-5299 or <http://Michigan.gov/dmva>

Program: MI Energy Assistance Program
Contact: Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through MEAP, which includes funds from the Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF), became available in early October. Visit Michigan.gov/mpsc for details about organizations that have received MEAP grants. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers (regardless of income) of any Michigan electric that has chosen not to collect 97 cents monthly from its customers for the LIEAF fund.

Carrying the Load: U.P. Electricity Rates to Increase Significantly

Michigan's Upper Peninsula is dealing with a serious energy issue that will increase the electricity bills of nearly all its residents. Until a more permanent energy solution is found, costs to keep the Presque Isle Power Plant (PIPP) in operation will be determined on an annual basis. In 2015, that number is \$116 million. This figure includes PIPP operating and EPA compliance costs. A new order and recent filings made at the federal level provide that the U.P.'s portion of responsibility for that number will increase from about 8 percent to nearly 100 percent. A series of events has brought us to this point. Let's break it down:

The Cliffs mining company says goodbye to We Energies, their electricity supplier.

The Presque Isle Power Plant is owned by We Energies (Milwaukee, WI) and is the only electricity generating plant of significant size in the Upper Peninsula. In summer 2013, PIPP's largest customer, Cliffs mining, decided that it was in their best business interest to switch from We Energies to another electricity supplier. This switch was possible because of an exemption in Michigan's electric choice laws applicable only to the Cliffs mines.

After losing their largest customer, We Energies decides to close PIPP.

The Cliffs mines accounted for 80 percent of electricity We Energies sold in the U.P. Without their business, it was no longer profitable to keep PIPP operational. In September 2013, We Energies filed a request to shut the plant down.

MISO mandates PIPP stay open to ensure grid stability, but it is costly.

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is an independent agency that "maintains the integrity of the grid." MISO has determined PIPP must keep operating to ensure system reliability in the U.P. and Wisconsin. As a result, MISO agreed to pay We Energies \$4,352,832 monthly, or \$145,094 every day to keep PIPP open.

There is disagreement about who will pay for these costs.

By prior agreements among utilities in Wisconsin and Michigan dating back to 2000, the costs of installing new transmission were shared between the ratepaying customers of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula. In the original arrangement, Wisconsin ratepayers paid 92 percent of the costs and Michigan ratepayers paid

8 percent. On July 29, 2014, The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) ruled that the 92 to 8 ratio was "unjust and unfair," and ordered MISO to refigure its load-shedding analysis to determine the equitable ratio.

MISO releases new cost breakdown, raising electric costs for U.P. residents.

On July 29, 2014, MISO released a new breakdown that will result in a substantial increase in electric costs for U.P. residents. Since that time, We Energies and MISO have made further filings addressing these issues—including filing a new proposed agreement addressing the costs for running the Presque Isle Power Plant. At this time, it appears that nearly 100 percent of the costs to keep PIPP open will be allocated to the U.P.

PIPP plant does not meet EPA emissions standards.

The existing generating units have not been retrofitted with new air quality equipment that will meet federal environmental regulations before the 2016 deadline. This added cost has raised the original project cost of \$52 million to the current \$116 million, covering mid-October to December, 2015.

What does all this mean for Cloverland members?

The numbers could change due to litigation or regulatory action, but the new formula may require Cloverland Electric to assume an estimated 22.5 percent of the costs for running the Presque Isle Power Plant.

"The new formula will change every U.P. electric utility's percentage of the operational costs to keep the plant open," explains Dan Dasho, Cloverland's president and CEO. "Cloverland is very concerned with this decision and will continue to communicate with our members in a variety of ways as information becomes available." ■

What Could This Cost Mean To Me?

Cloverland's financial burden will be about \$21.8 million per year. A residential member using 1,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) will see an increase of \$30 per month (a Cloverland residential member averages about 800 kWh monthly). A commercial account using 15,000 kWh will be spending about \$500 more a month. Industrial accounts will be spending thousands more monthly, and may be forced to close.

Use Your Space Heater Safely

Many people use space heaters for winter warmth, but they can be dangerous if used improperly.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that 25,000 home fires every year are associated with space heaters, and cause over 300 deaths. An additional 6,000 people annually go to the hospital for related burns.

These fires are caused by contact with or nearness to the heating elements, flammable fuels used in the heaters, defective wiring, and carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper venting or incomplete fuel combustion.

Here are tips for using a space heater safely:

- Keep it at least 3 feet from flammables, such as curtains, clothing, furniture or bedspreads.
- Select a model with an automatic shut-off, in case it tips.
- Buy one that is certified by an independent testing lab, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Buy the right size to handle the area to be heated.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep kids and pets at a safe distance.
- Never leave it unattended, or sleep with it on.
- Never use or store flammable liquids near it.



- Do not use in a bathroom—a high-moisture area can cause damage.
- Keep it away from water to prevent electrocution.
- Check the cord for fraying and cracks, and do not use an extension cord to run it.
- Be sure the plug fits snugly in the outlet. (The cord and plug may feel warm when operating, but it shouldn't feel hot. If it does, unplug it and have a repair person check for problems.)
- Do not try to repair a broken heater yourself—go to a qualified appliance service center.

Visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSC/PUB/PUBS/463.html> for more safety tips on space heaters that use wood or kerosene. ■



Save energy, save money!

There are plenty of cues telling us that the end of the year is near—the air is cooler, the leaves have fallen, and the calendar is almost open to December. Opportunities are still available to save energy AND receive rebates and incentives.

ENERGY TIP: Do you have a plan to save energy? Electricity demand by U.S. homes is forecast to climb as much as 21 percent by 2040. Act now.

ONLINE: 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.



Alpine Power Plant
Northeast view from M-32 Hwy

Wolverine Co-op Plans New Natural Gas Power Plant

A new, natural gas-fueled electric generating plant is being planned by Wolverine Power Cooperative, of Cadillac. Called the Alpine Power Plant, its location will be in Elmira Township, Otsego County, west of Gaylord. Wolverine, a not-for-profit electric cooperative, provides wholesale electric power to six electric cooperatives throughout Michigan.

“Wolverine is excited about moving forward with a new natural gas peaking plant,” said project spokesman, Ken Bradstreet. “Our Alpine Power Plant will provide a nice balance to Wolverine’s existing power supply portfolio, while at the same time increasing electrical reliability in northern Michigan and complementing the ever-increasing amount of renewable energy in Michigan.”

Wolverine intends to present its development plans to both the Elmira Township and Otsego County planning commissions within the next month. Wolverine will also apply for an air quality permit with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

After a nearly two-year evaluation, Wolverine chose the Elmira Township site and entered into property options for nearly 170 acres of land. The location was

chosen, in part, due to the convergence of existing interstate natural gas pipelines and high-voltage electric transmission lines on the property.

Wolverine expects the project investment associated with the Alpine Power Plant to exceed \$100 million and provide significant tax revenues to several local units of government. “The Alpine Power Plant will provide a major boost to the local economy,” Bradstreet explains.

Through sound financial management, Wolverine is able to build this project with existing funds. Based on preliminary cost estimates, it is anticipated there will be no rate impact on the electric co-ops that purchase power from Wolverine. Visit alpinecleanenergy.com for further details on the proposed plant.

Wolverine supplies wholesale power to Cherryland Electric Cooperative (Grawn); Great Lakes Energy (Boyne City); HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative (Portland); Midwest Energy Cooperative (Cassopolis); Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (Onaway); Spartan Renewable Energy, Inc. (Cadillac), and Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative (Cadillac). ■



«« Do You Know Where This Is?

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

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, 48864. Include the name on your account, 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 January 2015 issue.

The September contest winner is Phyllis Burge, of Manistique, a Cloverland Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as the



East Channel Lighthouse on Grand Island in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore area.

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