

MICHIGAN COUNTY LINES



BASKETBALL MADNESS

'Floored' By Michigan Companies

Plus!

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An Impact With ACRE

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Panel Producer

9 Greatest Michigan
Basketball Team

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POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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ON THE COVER*

Upper Peninsula native Tom Izzo coaches the MSU Spartans basketball team. The flooring they—and most teams nationwide—play on is made in the U.P.

Photo—Matthew Mitchell

*Some co-op editions have a different cover.



Michigan's Electric
Cooperatives
countrylines.com



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first wrote about ACRE last year. ACRE stands for Action Committee for Rural Electrification. Formed in 1966, ACRE is the political action committee for the nation's rural electric cooperatives, serving 42 million people in 47 states. There are approximately 31,000 electric cooperative members donating to ACRE annually. The average contribution is \$44.

Last year was the first time that we opened up ACRE contributions to every co-op member. I am happy to report that at the end of 2014, 141 Cherryland Electric Cooperative members joined ACRE with donations ranging from \$25 to \$100. Thus far, Cherryland members lead all Michigan cooperatives in their support of ACRE. We hope to see this continue as we strive to grow this program.

Why is ACRE important? ACRE represents the needs of the average electric cooperative member in an era where energy policy debates often ignore the homeowner or small business owner at the end of the line.

In the Michigan legislature, 2015 will be a big year for energy issues. Public Act 295 was one of the biggest pieces of energy legislation ever passed in Michigan back in 2008, and it expires this year. Our elected officials will once again be debating the issues of renewable energy, conservation and choice. Due to term limits, many of these legislators were not in office in 2008 and therefore, they will have little knowledge of energy issues.

Getting to know members of the House and Senate takes time and money. A small campaign contribution can go a long way towards garnering the attention necessary to educate and inform legislative decision makers about our goals of reliability and affordability.

We have issues at the national level, as well. There is legislation pending on water heaters, energy conservation, endangered species, and a range of environmental issues. While our story of affordability combined with environmental stewardship will always leave an impression in a Congressional office, the ability to leave a contribution that is literally from the people who will be directly impacted by their decisions is powerful.

Some will say that they don't believe in lobbying and political action committees. In my opinion, PACS are a transparent form of political involvement because they are regulated by the Federal Election Commission, as well as state and local agencies. Unlike Super PACs and other outside groups, ACRE is required to report receipts and contributions on a regular basis and those reports are available at fec.gov. I believe that ACRE is a very effective way for citizens to have a real impact.

Please consider joining other Cherryland members, employees and board members by making a contribution to ACRE. It can be a one-time donation of your choice or a monthly contribution of as little as \$2.08. Simply call our office and tell us your account number and amount. We will do the rest and keep you informed along the way. ■



Tony Anderson
General Manager

Producing Solar Panels is a Family Affair

Allan O'Shea started researching renewable energy options back in 1972 when the U.S. was faced with a foreign oil embargo.

He and his family-run business—Contractors Building Supply Inc., in Copemish—have long been advocates of alternative energy. In fact, he is one of the founders of the annual Michigan Renewable Energy Fair held at the Ingham County Fairgrounds near Lansing.

“During the oil embargo in 1972 I was living in Detroit and started doing research on wind energy,” said O'Shea. “Two years later I founded the American Wind Energy Association. Then in 1976, I moved to northern Michigan to develop renewable energy components and systems.”

O'Shea and his company were logical choices when Cherryland Electric Cooperative sought a company to help them launch the state's first community solar program two years ago. CBS Solar is also a long-time Cherryland Electric Cooperative member.

“Tony Anderson and the Cherryland board chose us to develop it,” O'Shea said. “We assisted in putting together education programs for the members. Then we worked with Cherryland and their power supplier, Wolverine Power, to develop some well thought out legal documents to finish our task.”

The solar array sits right in front of Cherryland's office along U.S. 31 South in Grawn. There are 224 panels which produce an average of 300 kilowatt hours per panel. Fittingly, the first panel was energized on Earth Day—April 22, 2013.

Ironically, Contractors Building Supply was started 20 years ago to sell and distribute windows throughout northern Michigan, which they still do.

“But once we started working in the solar energy field, we also created CBS Solar to better define our efforts and, of course, our production of solar panels,” said O'Shea.

O'Shea said he employs 10–12 employees, including several family members. He calls his wife Lynda “the innovator” after she worked her way through the ranks at Ford Motor Co. in the 1970s to become a parts expeditor. Their son Aaron is a Navy veteran and an electrician who is the project manager for renewable installation at CBS Solar.

Devon O'Shea is an engineer and township board member. Tyson O'Shea is also a Navy veteran, master field repair technician and heads up the CBS Solar window division.

Mary McGraw is also a key member of the management team. She recruits, supports and trains a dealer network of more than 40 installers across Michigan. O'Shea also praised the efforts of employees Pam Garn, Tom Bigelow and Corey Bigelow.

“The demand for energy relief and efficiency improvements are on the rise and go hand-in-hand,” said O'Shea.

“We are achieving paybacks commercially in the 5–6 year range and residentially in the 8–9 year range or better.

“And the best part is, we're a product that is made and utilized in Michigan and the Midwest. I'm proud of the fact we make the solar panels that make renewable electricity.” ■



The family team at CBS Solar includes (L-R), Allan, Lynda, Devon, Tyson and Aaron O'Shea.



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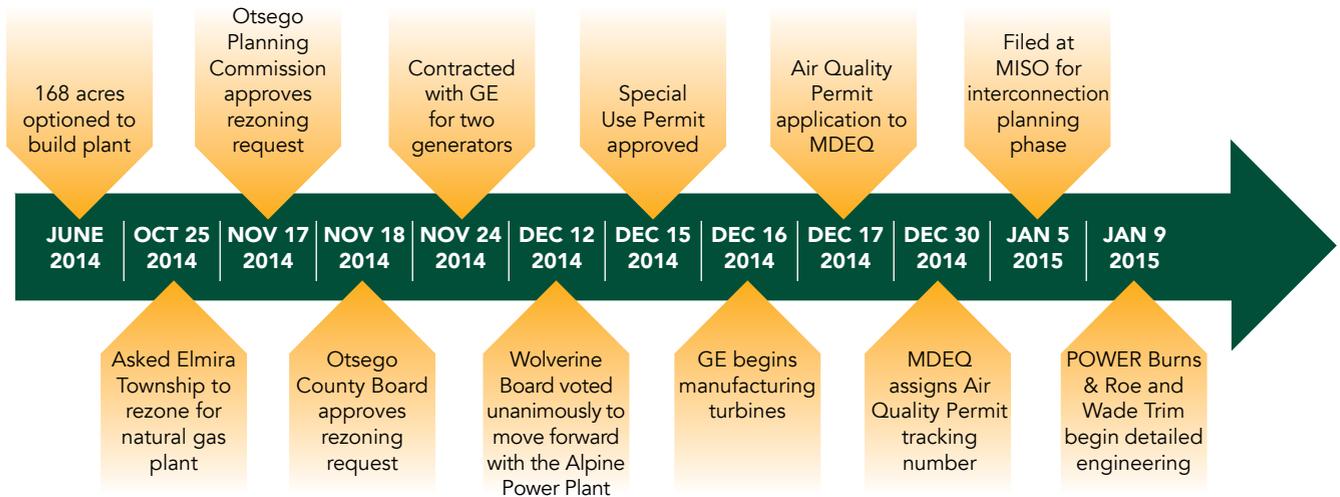
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Wolverine Power Moves Forward With Natural Gas Plant



Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative Inc., of Cadillac, is moving forward with a new 432 megawatt natural gas-fueled electric power plant, located in Elmira Township, near Gaylord. The Alpine Power Plant will use natural gas to generate electricity during times of peak demand and to compliment the ever-increasing amount of intermittent renewable energy in our state, like wind and solar. The Alpine Power Plant is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2016.

“The members of the planning commissions and boards of Elmira Township and Otsego County have voted unanimously to approve our applications, sending the message that this project is widely supported,” said Ken Bradstreet, project spokesman. Visit alpinecleanenergy.com to learn more and keep updated on this project. ■

New Touch-Control Faucets Save Water, Energy

The right kitchen faucet can have a strong impact on your water and energy savings.

Today, one-handle faucets are common, as their size and shape impact water use, but the newest, most efficient models can be controlled by the wave or touch of a hand. By not adjusting a handle, water is not wasted by readjusting the temperature. This provides a lot of savings—especially when washing dishes by hand.

A standard faucet uses more water and energy when washing dishes by hand than running a properly-loaded, efficient dishwasher. With a touch-control faucet, hand-washing dishes can be more efficient than a dishwasher. Also, fewer germs are spread because the faucet is touched less often with dirty hands, and the attractive finish lasts longer.

There are two “no-hands” models. One senses touch from your body (hand, forearm, elbow). For example, when rinsing dishes, you can hold several plates in each hand and tap anywhere on the faucet with your arm to control the water flow.

The other model has a sensor on top (a hand-wave controls it), and another on the faucet neck that triggers when your hands are in hand-washing position.

Tall faucet spouts with a pull-down sprayer are also efficient. Depending on under-cabinet clearance, pick the

tallest that fits, as the height is handy when rinsing a large pot. Choosing one with a pause button also lets you temporarily stop the flow without waving or touching the fixture.

Whichever faucet you have, never ignore a dripping one, since even a slow leak increases energy costs. After heating and cooling, heating water is the greatest energy user, but cold water also uses a lot of energy to purify, pump and treat.

Companies offering touch-control faucets include: American Standard, 800-442-1902, americanstandard-us.com; Delta Faucet, 800-345-3358, deltafaucet.com; Kohler, 800-456-4537, kohler.com; Moen, 800-289-6636, moen.com; and Pfister, 800-732-8238, pfisterfaucets.com. ■



—James Dullely



SOUP FOR THE SOUL

In a slow cooker or on the stove, these soups are the ultimate in comfort food.

Easy Taco Soup (pictured)

1½-2 lbs. ground beef
1 large onion, diced
2 15.5-oz. cans pink or red kidney beans
15.5-oz. can pinto or chili beans
15.5-oz. can shoe peg corn (or whole kernel corn)
14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes and green chilies

2 14.5-oz. cans, any brand, Mexican-style tomatoes
4.5-oz. can diced green chilies
4.6-oz. can black olives, drained and sliced
1¼-oz. pkg. taco seasoning mix
1-oz. pkg. ranch salad dressing mix

For Garnish:

tortilla chips
sour cream
grated cheese

chopped green onions
sliced black olives

Brown the ground beef with onions. Drain excess fat, then transfer to large crock pot or large pot on stove. Add beans, corn, tomatoes, olives, chilies, taco seasoning and ranch dressing mix. You may need to add ½ c. of water for desired consistency. In the crockpot, cook on low for 6 hours. On the stovetop, simmer on low about 1 hour. Break the tortilla chips and put in bottom of bowls and cover with soup. Top with your choice of garnishes.

Melody Brown, Big Bay

Butternut Cheesy Bacon Chowder—Gluten Free

4 c. chicken broth
1 butternut squash, roughly 3–4 c.
1 c. diced onion
1 c. diced celery
1 ½ t. salt

¼ t. black pepper
2 c. bacon or diced ham, cooked
2 c. shredded sharp cheddar
1 ½ c. heavy whipping cream
fresh chives, optional

Combine first six ingredients and cook until vegetables are tender. While vegetables are cooking, fry your meat of choice and drain. Using a blender, purée the vegetables and return them to the pot (an immersion blender works best). Add meat, cheese and heavy cream to the cooked vegetables. Heat through for about 5 minutes, but do not boil. Garnish with fresh chives, if desired.

Anna Kinsey, LeRoy

Mushroom Barley Soup

1½ lbs. cubed beef
1 T. vegetable oil
2 c. finely chopped onion
1 c. diced carrots
½ c. diced celery
4-oz. can mushrooms, undrained
1 garlic clove, minced

14.5-oz. can beef broth
14.5-oz. can chicken broth
2 c. water
½ c. pearl barley
1 t. salt
½ t. pepper
3 T. chopped parsley, for garnish



In a soup pot, brown meat in oil. Remove meat with a slotted spoon and set aside. Sauté onion, carrot and celery in drippings until tender, about 5 minutes. Add meat back into pan along with all other ingredients; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 1½ to 2 hours or until barley and meat are tender. Stir in parsley.

Geraldine Rutkowski, Ubly

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite **"Camping"** recipes by **April 1** and your favorite **"Burgers/All American"** by **May 1**.

Enter your recipe online at countrylines.com or send to (handprinted or typed on one side, please): *Country Lines Recipes*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

Contributors whose recipes we print in 2015 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2016 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Visit countrylines.com for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

Fuel Mix Report

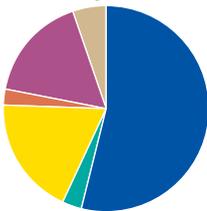
The fuel mix characteristics of Cherryland Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 12/31/14.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

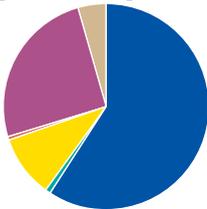
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	53.6%	60.4%
Oil	3.5%	0.7%
Gas	18.4%	8.9%
Hydroelectric	3.2%	0.5%
Nuclear	16.0%	24.6%
Renewable Fuels	5.3%	4.9%
<i>Biofuel</i>	0.5%	0.7%
<i>Biomass</i>	0.1%	0.4%
<i>Solar</i>	0.0%	0.1%
<i>Solid Waste Incineration</i>	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Wind</i>	4.6%	3.2%
<i>Wood</i>	0.1%	0.5%

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

Your Co-op's Fuel Mix



Regional Average Fuel Mix



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	4.2	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,470	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.5	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0054	0.0083

*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the twelve-month period ending 12/31/14.

Cherryland Electric Cooperative purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Cooperative, which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

Cherryland Electric Cooperative is the recipient of federal financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer. If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form.

You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or e-mail at program.intake@usda.gov.

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Legends of the Game

The Greatest Michigan High School Team Ever

So much of who I am is tied to the month of March.

That's the month my late dad, a longtime high school basketball coach and athletic director, would pack my brother and I in the car and we'd head off to East Lansing for the state high school basketball semifinals and finals.

The first year he took us was 1967—I was 13 and my brother 15. What we saw that year has stayed with us forever.

That was the year we saw the greatest Michigan boys' basketball team of all time—a team whose entire starting five players went on to play professional sports: Two in the NBA, two in the NFL and one for the Detroit Tigers in Major League Baseball.

The team was the Detroit Pershing High School Doughboys from the Public School League (PSL), which was coached by the legendary Will Robinson.

But for all the talent on the team, Robinson still faced obstacles during the season. One of those was his all-black team playing basketball months after the race riots in Detroit during the summer of 1967. He expected his players to play more than one sport and he stressed education above all else. If they didn't perform in the classroom, they didn't get to perform on his team.

"Coach didn't show any favoritism," said his star guard Ralph Simpson, a junior on that 1967 team. "If you didn't succeed academically, it didn't matter how good you were athletically—you didn't play."

His players responded, both in the classroom and on the court. His best player was 6-foot-8 Spencer Haywood. How good was the future NBA star? At age 19, he would anchor the gold medal U.S. team in the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City.

He played one year of college basketball at the University of Detroit and averaged 32 points and 21 rebounds a game. He made history after that year by becoming the first college athlete to declare "hardship" and jump to the pros. He played 12 years and was a four-time NBA All-Star.

While Haywood was the inside force, Simpson was "Mr. Outside". He played one year at Michigan State, averaged 29 points per game, then went on to the NBA. He was the only high school player in the nation invited to try out for the 1968 Olympic basketball team. He played 10 years in the ABA and NBA.

Two of the other starters—Glenn Doughty and Paul Seal—played in the NFL. Point guard Marvin Lane played briefly for the Detroit Tigers in the 1970s.

Despite all that talent, Pershing wasn't ranked No. 1 in Class A heading into the 1967 tournament. That honor belonged to fellow PSL school Detroit Northwestern, which beat Pershing during the regular season and featured future baseball star John Mayberry.

But during the tournament, an inspired Haywood led Pershing to the state championship, capped by Simpson's record 43 point performance in a 90-66 win over Flint Central in the finals.

That was the game where my brother and I bolted to our feet many times as we witnessed high school players who could throw pinpoint behind-the-back passes and dunk behind their heads.

We still talk about that game as if it was yesterday. We still talk about the weekends in East Lansing we spent with our dad every year.

We saw some great games and some great players over those decades. But we never saw any players as good as the 1967 Detroit Pershing basketball team. Chances are, no one else has either. ■



Nick Edson

The Dominant Doughboys of 1967

Spencer Haywood (1968 U.S. Olympic Team, NBA Player)

Ralph Simpson (NBA Player)

Glenn Doughty (NFL Player)

Paul Seal (NFL Player)

Marvin Lane (Detroit Tigers, 1970s)



BASKETBALL MADNESS

'Floored' By Michigan Companies

Tom Izzo surveys the basketball court in Michigan State University's Breslin Center and still relishes what that court represents. Fifteen years earlier, Izzo led the Spartans to the NCAA championship on that very floor in Indianapolis.

After beating Florida, MSU purchased the portable court for its own use from Horner Flooring Co. Inc., which has manufactured sports flooring in Dollar Bay, MI, since 1891, the year Dr. James Naismith invented basketball.

"You wouldn't put the U.P. and basketball together for being famous," Izzo says. "But when you think about it, it makes some sense."

The Upper Peninsula has been the center of the athletic flooring universe for over 100 years. And, Izzo's one NCAA title, six Final Four appearances, 11 Big Ten regular season and tournament crowns, 17 consecutive NCAA Tournament bids and eight National Coach of the Year awards make the Iron Mountain native one of Michigan's most prominent sports figures. So, it all makes perfect sense.

Michigan State's journey to the 2009 Final Four at Ford Field in Detroit and most recent national semifinal appearance the following year back in Indianapolis, ended on courts made by Connor Sport Court International Inc., located in the heart of Iron County. Connor Sport has been in business since 1872 and in 2005 was named the official supplier of courts for the men's and women's Final Fours.

Both U.P. companies have amassed an astounding list of venues they have equipped—from high schools and colleges and professional facilities to the Olympics.

During the Spartans' last practice before defeating the Gators on the Horner floor that momentous

Monday night in April 2000, Izzo commiserated with his equally renowned boyhood rival, former Iron Mountain High School and Northern Michigan University teammate and best friend, Steve Mariucci, who at the time was the head coach of the San Francisco 49ers.

"We were laughing about it, saying me, you and this floor were made up in the U.P.," Izzo says. "I always knew about the floor companies up there and there's no question that when I'm watching a Final Four or an NBA event, I take a lot of pride in it, being a Hooper."

Proximity to a select variety of hard maple trees, which thrive in the U.P. climate, is the reason Michigan has become the world leader in athletic flooring.

The U.P. companies have amassed an astounding list of venues they have equipped—from high schools to colleges to professional facilities to the Olympics.

"Hard maple trees obviously grow south of there, as well, but when you go that far north the growing season is real short," says Jason Gasperich, Connor Sports' sustainability director. "So, what happens is you end up with a very tight-grained, dense hardwood."

The old-growth forests have been replanted numerous times by an industry that has been at the forefront of renewable resource development. Some 40 different sawmills supply the lumber and a minimum of 30 trees—roughly



Photos—Matthew Mitchell

25 years old and up—will be used to make the court on which the Final Four will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, April 4–6.

Michigan State's court has been taken apart and put back together countless times between non-sporting events, such as commencement exercises and concerts.

According to MSU Deputy Athletics Director Greg Ianni, who oversees the Spartans' athletic facilities, Horner has taken the floor back to the U.P. to be refurbished on numerous occasions, though it is nearing the end of its life expectancy.

After the surface is replaced in the next year or so, parts of it will be put on permanent display, others stored in the school's archives, and "pieces will be made available to our fan base," Ianni says. "The quality of the court has been terrific, and the irony of the fact that this floor was built in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where our head basketball coach came from, is quite unique." ■



Steve Grinczel is the online columnist for MSU's athletics website, *MSUSpartans.com*, and the co-host of the "Griff & Grinz" sports radio talk show on WQTX-FM (92.1).

He covered the Spartans for 24 years for Booth Newspapers of Michigan and lives in Haslett, MI.

Co-op News

2015 Residential Rebate Program Announced

Cherryland residential members can take advantage of the cooperative's 2015 rebate program with the purchase of new Energy Star® rated appliances.

To simplify the program, \$20 rebates will be given for the following: Clothes washer (with electric water heater); clothes dryer (electric); dishwasher (with electric water heater); dehumidifier; refrigerator; freezer; televisions (21-inch or greater, limit 5); programmable thermostat.

Rebates are also available to residential members on lighting, recycling older working refrigerators or freezers and HVAC equipment. The rebate applications are available on our website cherrylandelectric.coop or at our office.

You Can Serve On Cherryland's Board

Any qualified Cherryland Electric Cooperative member can be elected to serve on the cooperative's board of directors.

To be nominated in 2015, candidates can file a petition with the cooperative's human resources administrator starting the first day of March and ending at 4 p.m. on the last business day of March.

Nominating petitions shall be signed by at least 25 active members of the cooperative, in good standing, and all signatures must be obtained within 60 days prior to the date the petition is filed.

Nominating petitions shall be in the form prescribed by the board and are available at Cherryland's headquarters in Grawn. The nominating petitions must specify the geographic service area for which the candidate is being nominated.

The term of office is three years. Two directors will be elected at this year's annual meeting, which will be held Thursday, June 11, at Incredible Mo's near Grawn. This year's directors will represent Grand Traverse/Kalkaska counties and one at-large position.

Nominees must meet the director qualifications set forth in the bylaws under Section 2 of Article III.

Any member interested in becoming a candidate is invited to visit the cooperative's office and learn about the duties performed by directors.

In the event no qualified candidate is nominated to fill the vacancy of a director whose term has expired, the newly elected board will appoint sufficient directors to fill the vacancies. The election will be by majority vote of the board and must be done within 60 days of its first meeting.

Directors elected in this manner will serve until the next annual meeting, when members will be given an opportunity to fill the balance of the regular three-year term.

Cherryland Offers Scholarships

Cherryland offers five scholarships each year—three worth \$4,000 (\$1,000 for four years) for high school seniors and two \$1,000 adult scholarships (post high school).

HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: High school seniors whose parents or guardians currently receive electric service from Cherryland and live in our service area may apply for the \$4,000 scholarship.

Selections are based on grade point average, extracurricular activities, community involvement and/or after school employment. A minimum required GPA is 2.75 on a 4.0 system.

To continue receiving the scholarship, a student must maintain a minimum college course load of 12 credits per term or semester and receive a 2.5 GPA or higher. Students may apply by contacting their high school guidance counselor; or contact Nick Edson, communications coordinator at Cherryland, as noted below.

ADULTS: Must be a Cherryland member to apply for one of the \$1,000 Adult Education Scholarships.

The scholarship goes toward covering the cost of a course or courses taken in a calendar year and will be awarded on the basis of need, grades and community service. It is a one-time award.

Applications can be downloaded on the Cherryland website. Members may also request applications by e-mail to Nick Edson at nedson@cherrylandelectric.coop (please include your name and address), or by phone at 231-486-9222 or by mail to Cherryland Electric Cooperative, 5930 U.S. 31 South, Grawn, MI 49637.

Cherryland Cares Seeks Grant Applications

Area non-profit agencies who are seeking financial help can apply for a grant through Cherryland Cares.

Cherryland Cares is a five-member board, made up of Cherryland Electric Cooperative members, who distribute money from Operation Round Up to area non-profits. The next quarterly meeting of Cherryland Cares is Monday, March 16. The deadline for applications is Friday, March 6.

Operation Round Up money comes from Cherryland members who elect to round up their bills to the nearest dollar every month. This amount averages \$6 per year.

To receive a Cherryland Cares grant application or to join Operation Round Up, contact Nick Edson at Cherryland. His direct line is 231-486-9222 or e-mail him at nedson@cherrylandelectric.coop. ■



POP QUIZ:

Do you know what to do if a power line falls on your vehicle?

Do not drive away or get out. Stay inside until utility workers say it's okay. Warn others to stay away. If you must leave the vehicle – only in case of fire – jump free without touching the ground and auto at the same time, keeping both feet together, and hop to safety. A live wire touching the ground causes electricity to fan out, and walking or running allows one foot to move from one voltage zone to another. This makes your body the electricity's path, and electrocution results.

Other safety tips:

Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down.

Never touch a downed line or a person or object that is touching it! You could be injured or killed, too.

Call 911 immediately to report a downed line, then call your electric co-op or the local utility.

Wolverine Signs 20-Year Purchase Power Agreement for 114 Megawatts of Wind Energy

Harnessing energy from the wind is one clean and efficient way to generate power. Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. (Wolverine), a generation and transmission electric cooperative in Cadillac, MI, recently increased its renewable energy portfolio by signing a 20-year Purchase Power Agreement (PPA) with Renewable Energy Systems Americas Inc. (RES Americas) for 114 megawatts of wind energy.

Known as the Deerfield Wind Energy Project, this development will be located on 20,000 acres in Huron County, in the Thumb of the Lower Peninsula. Wolverine will receive the entire output of the 114-megawatt project, expected to be approximately 400,000 megawatt hours annually.

“Wolverine is very pleased to be adding competitively priced wind energy to its power supply portfolio for its members,” said Eric Baker, president and CEO of Wolverine. “This PPA not only further diversifies

Wolverine’s overall energy portfolio, it also positions Wolverine and its members to meet Michigan’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requirement of 10 percent renewable power supply by 2015.”

In 2008, Michigan passed a law establishing the RPS, requiring Michigan electric providers to attain a retail supply portfolio that includes at least 10 percent renewable energy by 2015. With the addition of wind energy from the Deerfield Wind Energy Project, Wolverine more than meets this requirement.

RES Americas is a leader in the development, engineering, and construction of wind, solar, transmission, and energy storage projects in North America. They will be constructing and operating the project, which will provide up to 200 jobs during peak construction and up to six permanent jobs at the completion of the project. ■

Calling All ArtPrize Artists in Michigan!

We would like to spotlight Michigan artists who participated in 2014, or are entering the 2015 ArtPrize® competition, in the July/August issue of *Country Lines*.

For 19 days, 3 square miles of downtown Grand Rapids becomes an open canvas of art. Artists from around the world enter the contest, and viewing their work is free and open to the public.

If you are an electric co-op member who participated in the 2014 ArtPrize event, or you are entering in 2015, please send your contact information by e-mail to Christine Dorr at cdorr@meca.coop or by mail to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. The deadline is April 20.

ArtPrize 2015 will take place Sept. 23–Oct. 11

For more information about the event, please visit Artprize.org ■



Thumbs Up For The Thumb!

Quick! Name your favorite part of our state. Many will say the U.P., Leelanau County, or Grand Traverse Bay. My hunch is some will say, “the Thumb.” We wouldn’t be the Mitten State without a thumb, so let’s pay it some homage...

Phil Parrot, a Thumb native and owner of Parrot’s Tours (parrottstours.com or 810-376-9245), in Deckerville, sends vacationers to destinations worldwide, but he’s often asked about the Thumb area by other travel professionals. Parrot’s ready response is, “There’s the Upper Peninsula, Leelanau Peninsula, and Old Mission Peninsula, but the Thumb is Michigan’s undiscovered peninsula.”

Comprised of Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Lapeer and St. Clair counties, it boasts 150 miles of shoreline, 2,100 miles of rivers and streams, 51,000 acres of public recreation land, 49,000 acres of state game/wildlife areas, and many annual festivals and events.

Tour the Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay shoreline along M-25 with 160 miles of quaint towns and four lighthouses. The village of Sebewaing claims bragging rights as the “Sugar Beet Capital of the World” by hosting an annual Sugar Festival with a parade, carnival and entertainment tent. Caseville, near the Thumb’s tip on sandy Saginaw Bay, hosts the well-known Cheeseburger Festival every August. Algonac sits on the largest fresh-water delta in the world, with canals and an impressive 1,800 feet of boardwalk that credit its nickname as “The Venice of Michigan.”

And, visitors will want to explore the Sanilac Petroglyphs Historic State Park. The great Thumb fire of 1881, Parrot says, burned over 1 million acres and revealed prehistoric rock carvings made 300 to 1,000 years ago.

Seek a pleasant place by visiting it and giving a thumbs up for “the Thumb”! ■



Jack O'Malley



Photo courtesy of ArtPrize 2015. Photo credit: Brian Kelly.



Jan Photo

The January Mystery Photo Contest winner is Laura Neuman, of Mackinaw City, a Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op member who correctly identified the “snow people” figures in front of the tourist information building in Paradise, MI.

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Youth Leadership Summit
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