

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

## MICHIGAN'S Iron Man

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The Annual Meeting June 20

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Association officers are Robert Schallip, Cloverland Electric Cooperative, chairman; Mark Kappler, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, vice chairman; and Eric Baker, Wolverine Power Cooperative, secretary-treasurer. Craig Borr is president and CEO.

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



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



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
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**OTHER INFORMATION**

**Date of Incorporation:** Sept. 30, 1937  
**Fiscal year-end:** Dec. 31  
**countrylines.com/coops/ontonagon**

*Ontonagon County REA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



# The Power of Membership



**Debbie Miles**  
 General Manager

**Please come and join us** at the Chassell High School on June 20, 2015, for our 77th Annual Meeting of members. Registration will begin at 9 a.m. and the meeting at 10 a.m. A continental breakfast prior to the meeting will be available, and lunch will be served afterwards.

The results of the cooperative's election will be announced during the meeting. This will be an informative business meeting for our member-owners. We hope to see you all there.

Now, as always, it's a good time to be a member of an electric cooperative. Co-ops are locally owned and controlled by you, our members, to serve your needs. While Michigan electricity consumers pay power bills to companies that answer to far-away stockholders who demand a healthy profit every quarter, local members call the shots at electric co-ops like ours. Co-ops aren't under pressure to keep rates high enough to generate big profits. Instead, co-ops try to keep your bill as low as possible while providing high-quality service. Co-ops are not-for-profit and invest money in excess of operating costs back into the business or return the excess (known as margins) to you in the form of capital credits. ■



**Energy Efficiency**

**Tip of the Month**

Keep cool this summer! ENERGY STAR certified refrigerators are about 9-10 percent more energy efficient than models that meet the federal minimum energy efficiency standard.

Source: *EnergySavers.gov*

**Ontonagon County REA/Dec. 31, 2014 & 2013  
Financial Statement Balance Sheets**

**Notice Of 2015  
Annual Meeting  
Of Members Of  
Ontonagon County  
Rural Electrification  
Association**

**Date of Notice:** May 20, 2015 Please be advised that, pursuant to Article II, Section 3 and Article XIV of The Ontonagon county Rural Electrification Association's Bylaws, the Annual Meeting of the Members of The Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association is hereby called by the Secretary of the Association.

The Purpose of the Annual Meeting is to seat the new directors, pass upon reports covering the previous fiscal year, and transact any other business as may properly come before the meeting.

The Annual Meeting of the Members of The Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association shall occur at Chassell, Michigan, promptly at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 20, 2015.

Ontonagon County Rural  
Electrification Association



Randy Myhren, Secretary

<b>Assets</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2013</b>
<b>UTILITY PLANT:</b>		
Electric plant in service	\$22,609,434	\$21,480,078
Construction work in progress	487,112	1,465,546
	23,096,546	22,945,624
Less—Accumulated depreciation	(7,483,382)	(7,170,195)
Net utility plant	15,613,164	15,775,429
<b>INVESTMENTS &amp; OTHER ASSETS</b>		
Investments	705,148	641,683
Total investments and other assets	705,148	641,683
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Cash and cash equivalents	318,397	47,827
Accounts receivable (less accumulated provision for uncollectibles of \$40,000 in 2011 & \$15,805 in 2010)	737,541	750,465
Accounts receivable—other	45,577	45,110
Materials and supplies	238,573	292,086
Prepayments	60,205	55,640
Total current assets	1,400,293	1,191,128
Deferred Charges	288,082	196,454
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$18,006,687</b>	<b>\$17,804,694</b>
<b>Member's Equities and Liabilities</b>		
<b>EQUITIES:</b>		
Memberships	\$23,040	\$23,045
Patronage capital	3,380,739	2,936,784
Other equities	32,497	32,497
Total equities	3,436,276	2,992,326
<b>LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:</b>		
Rural Utilities Service (RUS) mortgage notes	2,279,573	2,393,354
National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUFCC) supplemental mortgage notes	222,659	238,292
CoBank, ACB mortgage note	9,703,370	10,003,802
	\$12,205,602	\$12,635,448
Less current portion	(439,000)	(430,000)
	\$11,766,602	\$12,205,448
Post-retirement benefit obligation	413,633	392,754
Total long-term liabilities	\$12,180,235	\$12,598,202
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES:</b>		
Current maturities of long-term liabilities	439,000	430,000
Line of Credit notes payable	1,162,000	1,062,000
Accounts payable	332,639	299,478
Customer deposits	12,250	11,860
Other current liabilities	344,176	352,590
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	<b>2,290,065</b>	<b>2,155,928</b>
Deferred credits	100,111	58,238
<b>TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES</b>	<b>18,006,687</b>	<b>17,804,694</b>
<b>Statement of Revenue &amp; Expenses Ending Dec. 31, 2014 &amp; 2013</b>		
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	<b>\$6,265,030</b>	<b>\$6,031,896</b>
<b>OPERATING EXPENSES:</b>		
Cost of purchased power	2,623,983	2,447,427
Distribution—Operations	408,022	304,635
Distribution—Maintenance	578,727	494,467
Consumer accounts	237,836	191,431
Customer service and informational	79,630	80,449
Sales Expense	196	89
Administrative and general	614,286	585,629
Depreciation	665,274	659,058
Taxes	208,810	206,618
Other deduction	16,345	13,315
Total operating expense	\$5,433,109	\$4,983,118
Operating margins before interest expense	\$831,921	\$1,048,778
Interest expense	598,083	621,646
Operating margins (loss) after interest expense	\$233,838	\$427,132
<b>NONOPERATING MARGINS:</b>		
Interest and investment income	50,929	53,620
Other nonoperating income (expense)	33,055	111,302
	\$83,984	\$164,922
Capital credits	126,135	102,919
<b>NET (LOSS) MARGINS</b>	<b>\$443,957</b>	<b>\$694,973</b>

# Efficient Indoor LIGHTING For Your Home



**P**eople often wonder which type of lighting to use in their home with all the choices on the market today. It is important to know the differences between the options available.

The wattage of a light bulb refers to how much electricity it consumes, not how much light it produces. The amount of light is measured in units called lumens. A 60-watt incandescent light bulb produces about 800 lumens of light and a 100-watt bulb about 1,600 lumens.

Today, your primary choices of bulb are halogen, CFLs (compact fluorescent lights) and LEDs (light emitting diodes), which are listed in order of increasing efficiency. For many home applications, LEDs are the best choice even though they cost more initially.

- **Halogen bulbs** are basically incandescent bulbs with halogen gas around the filament to improve efficiency enough to meet efficiency standards.
- **CFLs** are much more efficient, using only about 25 percent as much electricity as incandescent bulbs to produce the same amount of light—and they last 10 times longer.
- **CFLs** can produce true full-spectrum (simulates natural sunlight) light quality and can be purchased with warm white, cool white and daylight color temperatures. Daylight lamps have an even higher color temperature, and they produce more accurate colors and are good for tasks such as reading and painting.
- **LEDs** are the newest and most efficient light source available and provide an excellent payback. A 12-watt LED produces as much light as a 60-watt incandescent bulb. The LED bulb should also last a minimum of 20,000 hours. Most are dimmable, work well at cold temperatures and reach full brightness immediately. LEDs gradually get dimmer over time. When a LED is rated for 20,000 hours, its output will stay above 70 percent of its original brightness for that time.

If you have been using incandescent bulbs, you are probably accustomed to a yellowish light quality. This is called the “color temperature” of a bulb. Incandescent bulbs are in the 2700-degree K range. The whiter “daylight” LEDs and CFLs are in the 4,000- to 5,000-degree K range. Most people grow accustomed to the whiter light and prefer it. The color temperature is listed on the packaging.

CRI (color rendering index) is another quality of the light bulb to consider. A higher CRI makes objects in a room look more like they would look under natural sunlight. A CRI above 80 is considered adequate for homes, but 90 or above makes everything look better and doesn’t cost much more.

There are four general types of lighting uses—ambient, accent, decorative and task. Ambient lighting is for general illumination with comfortable brightness. Accent lighting can create a mood in the room or highlight areas or objects. Decorative lighting is when the light itself is the object, such as a chandelier. Task lighting is for reading or doing a specific activity.

For effective lighting, install several grouped circuits with dimmers to control and vary the lighting schemes. For example, choose high-CRI bulbs over a dining table to enhance the appearance of food. An overhead high color-temperature bulb above a chair would be good for reading or other tasks.

For existing rooms, where it may not be easy to rewire or add circuits, switch to LEDs in most fixtures, and install dimmer wall switches.

The goal for lighting efficiency is to use as little lighting as needed. Where you do not have a wall switch, such as with a table lamp, install a three-way socket and use a new three-way LED. Add a four-bulb lighting kit to a ceiling fan with a switch to allow you to switch on fewer than all four lights.

No matter which type of bulb or light fixture you choose, start saving by turning lights off when you leave a room. ■



# HOMEMADE PIZZAS

## Delicious And Easy Pizza Recipes

### Pesto Salad Pizza *(pictured)*

2 c. basil  
 ½ c. parmesan cheese  
 ¼ c. olive oil  
 2 cloves garlic  
 flour tortillas  
 onions, sliced  
 red peppers, sliced  
 goat cheese and/or feta  
 and/or mozzarella  
 mixed greens  
 balsamic vinegar

Preheat oven to 400°. Put basil, parmesan, olive oil and garlic in a food processor and blend. Line a baking pan with foil. Place tortilla shell on pan and smear with pesto. Add onions, peppers, and cheese of choice. Bake for 10 minutes. Add mixed greens to top of tortilla pizza. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar. Enjoy!

*Janice Clarkson, Granger*

### Mexican Pizza

1 pizza dough  
 12-oz. ground turkey  
 or beef  
 1 small onion, sliced  
 3 t. ground garlic  
 2 t. ground cumin  
 1 T. chili powder  
 1 can (16-oz.) refried beans  
 salsa  
 1–2 c. shredded  
 Mexican cheese



Spread pizza dough on sprayed pizza pan. Bake at 375° for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the meat. Drain. Add onion and spices. When pizza crust has cooked, spread the refried beans over it. Then layer the meat, salsa and cheese. Return to oven; bake for 10 more minutes. Options:

sour cream, shredded lettuce, sliced black olives. Any of the ingredients can be altered for individual taste.

*Dianne Compo, Brimley*

### Cool Veggie Pizza Appetizer

2 8-oz. cans refrigerated  
 crescent dinner rolls  
 2 8-oz. pkgs. Philadelphia  
 brand cream cheese,  
 softened  
 1 c. Miracle Whip  
 salad dressing  
 1½ t. dill weed  
 1¼ t. onion salt  
 1 c. broccoli flowerets  
 1 c. chopped,  
 seeded tomato  
 1 c. chopped  
 green bell pepper  
 ¼ c. chopped onion  
 ½ c. olive slices (optional)

Heat oven to 375°F. Press dough onto bottom and sides of 15x10x1 inch baking pan. Bake 11–13 minutes or until golden brown; cool. Mix cream cheese, salad dressing, dill and onion salt until well blended. Spread on crust. Top with remaining ingredients. Refrigerate. Cut into squares. Makes 24.

*Beatrice Richard, Posen*

### SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite “Fresh Seafood” recipes by **July 1**.

Enter your recipe online at [countrylines.com](http://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)!

Photos—831 Creative

# FIFTY YEARS AND COUNTING

**F**or over 50 years the radio listeners of Ontonagon County have been enjoying recipes, local news, household hints, advice and much more from Jan Tucker. Broadcasting live Monday–Friday, the 80-years young Tucker hosts the ‘audience interactive’ two-hour radio show while seated at a large desk in the living room of her historic home.

A native of Superior, Wisconsin, Tucker and her husband, Dave, first arrived in Ontonagon in 1957 when he was offered a teaching and coaching job at the local high school. “When we first drove across the bridge, we said, ‘Two years and we’ll move on’. That was 58 years ago. I guess we stay where we are loved. Home is where the heart is. This is our home.”

Tucker started her radio career in 1964 when she replaced Rudy Saari’s daily broadcast from his sporting goods store in Ontonagon. The store was closing and the station approached Tucker, who thought she “would try it for a few months.” With little hunting knowledge and not able to speak Finnish, she struggled with the original format. But one day fate and a purple stain changed things when a listener called in. “The woman said she



had spilled Kool-Aid on the counter and it had stained her counter. She wanted to know how to get it out, so I decided to ask the listeners and the phone started going bananas. It not only was ringing at my house it was ringing over at the station. And I thought, ‘Wow that was pretty neat’. That changed the whole dynamic. Then the recipe thing started. Someone called and said they were looking for a dessert recipe that their mother used to make for them. So, I told the story on the air and listeners called in. The whole thing was an evolution.”

The daily recipe is still a vital component to the show, but Tucker says over the years times have changed. “In the beginning, recipes were long. Now they are things that can be prepared in advance, like crock pot recipes.

“With most of us trying to lose some weight for spring and summer clothes, this recipe for angel cupcakes is the kind of dessert we can have without guilt but still with great taste.”

– Jan Tucker



Left: Jan Tucker seated at her broadcast desk inside her home.  
Above: Jan Tucker's historic home in Ontonagon, where she broadcasts her radio shows.

Also, ingredients need to be things that they have on their shelves. Nothing fancy." And where does Tucker get her daily recipes from? "All over the place. Listeners. Newspapers. I've used *Country Lines* recipes. I use recipes that I trust."

The mother of six children, Tucker still managed to do the radio show every morning while her children were getting ready for school, explaining, "we all became very good at sign language." Married for nearly 60 years, she credits her husband for her longevity at the microphone stating, "sometimes our home life was organized chaos, thank goodness he is a very patient man." According to Tucker her recipe for success is simple, "my listeners come first and they're very important to me." She is quick

to add, "You never know who you impact. I always say on the last day when I meet my God, he will say, 'What did you do with what I gave you?' And he gave me this, it's a vocation, not a job."

Asked if she will ever retire she responded, "I can't because then I won't have an excuse and I will have to clean my house!" On a more serious note, she summarized her career with stating, "If I died tomorrow, I can honestly say I've had it all. I have had a charmed life. I married the man I always loved. Our kids are so good to us. I've met outstanding and ordinary people that have just enriched our lives so much. Everyday before I go on the air I say a prayer. You don't know who you are going to touch that day." ■

## Angel Cupcakes

Prepare a 16 oz package of angel food cake mix, according to package directions.

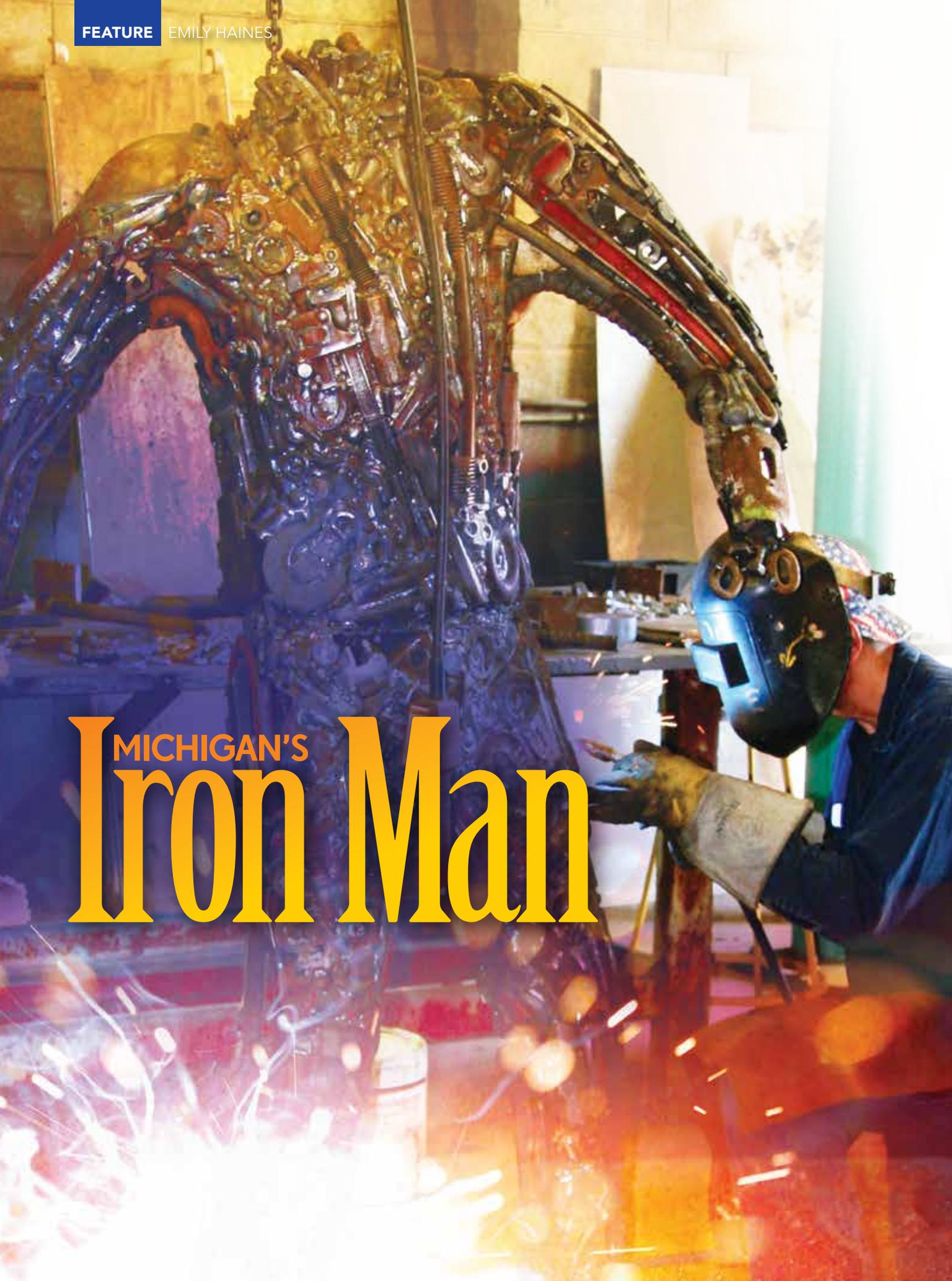
Pour into 30 paper-lined muffin cups, filling them about  $\frac{2}{3}$  full.

Bake at 375 degrees for 12–15 minutes.

Cool 10 minutes in pans and then remove to a wire rack.

When cooled completely, combine 1 package (3.4 oz.) vanilla instant pudding (can be sugar free) with two 8 oz. cans crushed pineapple with juice and 1 cup thawed whipped topping.

Spread on cupcakes and top with strawberries or other fruit.



# MICHIGAN'S Iron Man

**While he makes his living from his 37-year-old business, Moran Iron Works,** Tom Moran has had a second career as a teacher. His first student? Tom Moran.

The son of a career lumberjack, Moran always had an interest in metalwork, but with college an unlikely possibility and his high school no longer able to support metals classes, he used some of the abandoned tools in his shop class to teach himself how to weld.

“I started tinkering with some tools and working on broken chairs in classrooms,” says Moran. “Then, it was fixing trailers for teachers. By the time I graduated, I’d become the unofficial school repairman.”

After graduation, Moran worked in the logging business with his father and at night made his own tools, practiced his craft and eventually started his own business. The land where he first built, an abandoned dairy farm in Oneway, MI, has since undergone 29 additions.

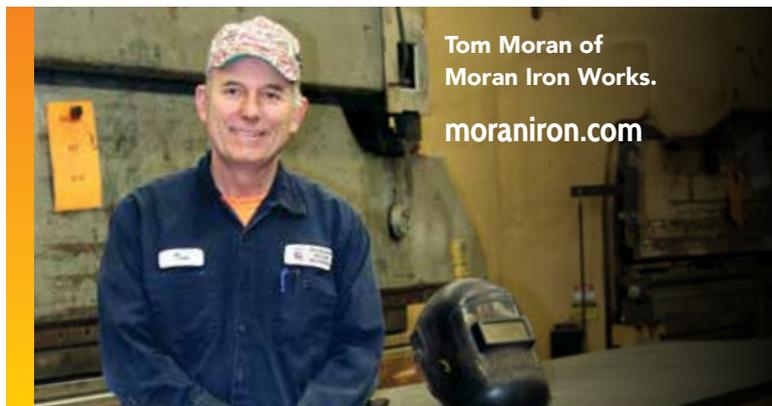
As his business grew, he was faced with the challenge of finding qualified welders and metalworkers in northeast Michigan.

“While we’re in love with northeast Michigan, it’s hard to recruit skilled tradespeople in this area of the state,” he explains. “We found the best way to make sure that we had a qualified workforce was to create our own training program,” Moran says. “We started evening classes for people with potential and interest. Some were folks we knew we’d be hiring and others were members of our community, like farmers or loggers, who wanted to be more self-sufficient.”

The training program is now a full-time school that is staffed by Moran Iron Works employees—10 full- and part-time teachers.

While Moran provides plenty of opportunities to teach his beloved trade, he’s humble and certain there is always more to learn.

Moran Iron Works has recently embarked on a large-scale project with



Tom Moran of  
Moran Iron Works.

[moraniron.com](http://moraniron.com)

Shepler’s Mackinac Island Ferry, to build their most recent ship—an 85-foot, all-aluminum ferry christened “Miss Margy” that is thought to be the first ever built entirely in Michigan. While Moran Iron has worked on many ship extensions, retro-fittings and conversions, this is the first vessel they’ve built from start to finish.

“Every project is unique and there is always something to learn,” Moran says. “With a project of this scale and scope, where you’re integrating several complex systems, you’re going to run into challenges. But in the end, the old lesson of ‘a job well planned is a job well done’ had really seen us through. Ship building is an art. The teams at Moran Iron have really turned it into an art and a science.”

When he’s not busy building ships, turbine components or customizing industrial and commercial fabrication jobs, Moran creates large-scale art projects for the annual Fourth of July parade in Oneway and as donations for area fundraisers.

“Maybe the art has gotten out of hand over 45 years,” Moran jokes. “Every year I say I’ll do something smaller and easier, but it hasn’t really gone that way.”

Maybe that’s the next lesson for Moran, but for now—the bigger the better. ■



## Country Lines, Your Partner In Communication



For over 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. This is our most empowering communication tool to keep members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op.

Each issue contains information about our services, director elections, member meetings, and the staff and management decisions you need to know about as an owner of the co-op.

The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members.

The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on your behalf at an average cost of \$3.63 per year, paid as part of your electric bill. The current magazine cost is 49 cents per copy—the same cost as a first-class stamp. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association in Okemos. As always, we welcome and value your comments.

### Notice to Members of Ontonagon County Rural Electricification Association

#### Case No. U-16595 2013 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately 2 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012 and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, Ontonagon County Rural Electricification Association submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2013, Ontonagon acquired 2,541 renewable energy credits and 97 incentive credits as a slice of system from its wholesale power supplier Upper Peninsula Power Company (UPPCO), which generated them via an UPPCO-owned hydro facility or acquired them from its wholesale power provider, Wisconsin Public Service Corporation.

A full copy of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at [ontonagon.coop](http://ontonagon.coop) or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.

## STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

### NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT Case No. U-16595

On January 27, 2015, in Case No. U-15825 et al, the Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) ordered Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association to file a renewable energy plan on or before May 12, 2015 to comply with the "Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act" (2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001, et seq.) and MPSC order in Case No. U-15800 dated December 4, 2008. On April 13, 2015, Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association filed its Notice of Intent to File Application For a Renewable Energy Plan with the Commission.

Any interested person may review the filed Renewable Energy Plan on or after May 12, 2015 on the MPSC website under Case No. U-16595 at: [www.michigan.gov/mpscdockets](http://www.michigan.gov/mpscdockets), or at the office of the Commission's Executive Secretary, 7109 West Saginaw, Lansing, Michigan, between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, or at the offices of Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association, 500 J.K. Paul Street, Ontonagon, Michigan.

Written and electronic comments may be filed with the Commission and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on June 12, 2015. Written comments should be sent to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909, with a copy mailed to Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association, 500 J.K. Paul Street, Ontonagon, Michigan 49953. Electronic comments may be e-mailed to: [mpscdockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscdockets@michigan.gov). All comments should reference Case No. U-16595. Comments received in this matter become public information, posted on the Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

The Commission will review the renewable energy plan together with any filed comments and provide a response within 60 days of the filing of the application indicating any revisions that should be made. If the Commission suggests revisions, Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association will file a revised RPS plan no later than 75 days after the filing of the application. A Commission order will be issued on or before the 90th day following the filing of the application.

Any proposed Renewable Energy Plan Charges may not exceed \$3 per meter per month for residential customers, \$16.58 per meter per month for commercial secondary customers or \$187.50 per meter per month for commercial primary or industrial customers.

**ONTONAGON COUNTY RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ASSOCIATION**

## Outdoor 'Office' Is Perfect Fit For Ontonagon Lineman

When Ontonagon REA foreman Nels Erickson told Luke Jouppe, "the co-op is looking to hire a guy," Jouppe didn't have to think twice about applying. "It was dependable, stable employment that allowed me to be outside most of the time. It's a perfect job for me." Now on the job since August 2000, the hunting and fishing enthusiast, says that the best part of his job continues to be the Upper Peninsula's great outdoors as his 'office'.

Born and raised in Dollar Bay, the 36-year-old father of 10 children received high marks from Ontonagon Line Superintendent Bill Tucker. "Jouppe is a very competent, safe and efficient lineman. He has a lot of common sense and will frequently offer suggestions to increase productivity and safety. He has a wonderful sense of humor and would probably make a great comedian. He is also a very devoted family man. He is a pleasure to work with."

Jouppe is just one of the Ontonagon co-op's dedicated team of employees that work for you, our members, striving to provide you with reliable and cost-effective power every day. ■



## ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

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

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



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**  
visit [missdig.org](http://missdig.org) for more information

# Slow Down, Go Around Roadside Utility Workers

**S**ummer travel, which lines up so neatly with utility construction and maintenance season, is just around the corner.

And Joe McElroy, safety director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA), is bracing for the almost daily reports of heart-stopping near-misses as electric equipment operators, lineworkers, groundmen and meter readers tackle projects in the rights-of-way they share with streets, roads and highways.

"It's one of the biggest concerns I have as a safety provider," McElroy says. And, protecting lineworkers by training them to do these jobs safely is getting harder. "Distracted drivers, primarily from mobile devices, are making roadway work zones more dangerous. Most any utility worker can tell you about a near-miss event. We are now encouraging work zones to be set up with an unoccupied buffer vehicle parked behind our bucket trucks to help absorb a crash."

During McElroy's 10 years at MECA, no co-op crew member has been killed in a traffic incident while on the job, but he recalls many suspected distracted-driver accidents and near-misses. "At safety meetings, operations personnel can usually recall an incident that has occurred within the past few weeks."

Last spring, McElroy joined utility reps, legislators, union leaders and Transportation Department and Public Service Commission officials, as Gov. Rick Snyder proclaimed May 22 as "Roadside Safety Awareness Day."

"Roadside safety awareness starts with us letting motorists and pedestrians know they are entering a work zone," McElroy says. "Orange signs, cones and amber lights should be enough for people to understand they are approaching an active worksite, but even with all the proper safety equipment in place, incidents still happen."

Roadside accidents annually kill 100 Michigan police officers, firefighters, and line or sanitation workers. Another 20,000 such public servants are injured by vehicles while doing their jobs.

McElroy is also quick to recommend stiffer penalties for these incidents and fatalities, and says a consistent national approach is needed. "And, I have encouraged our co-ops to use local law enforcement to help out in high-traffic areas or where visibility can be an issue. Drivers are accustomed to seeing our signs and cones, so they still speed or become



distracted. Once law enforcement is present, they seem to get it."

Meanwhile, McElroy drills co-op and municipal utility crews how to properly set up a safety perimeter. "Their situational awareness also has to be keen in the work zone, and those of us in the utility safety field have to raise awareness of these dangers."

Please "Slow Down, Go Around, and Watch Out" for folks who serve us by working near the roadways. ■

– Reprinted in part from RE Magazine



## «« Do You Know Where This Is?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **June 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](http://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 July/August 2015 issue.

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**Ontonagon County Rural  
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# Don't Miss It!

## **Ontonagon County REA 2015 Annual Meeting June 20 • Chassell High School**



The board of directors and employees of your electric co-op invite you to join them at the 2015 annual meeting (see notice, page 5, and right for details).

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

At the meeting, newly-elected directors from District 1—Green/Firesteel, and District 4—Aura/Skaneë will be seated.

### **Meeting Highlights:**

- 10 a.m., Chassell High School
- Updates on co-op affairs by co-op president & general manager
- Guest Speaker: Craig Borr, President & CEO, Michigan Electric Cooperative Association
- Director election results: Green/Firesteel & Aura/Skaneë districts
- Update on your co-op's financial health
- Drawing for cash prizes
- Lunch