

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LIVES

A photograph of Valerie Brader, a woman with long brown hair, smiling and standing with her arms crossed. She is wearing a black jacket with white lace-like patterns over a yellow top. The background is a blurred interior setting with warm lighting.

Valerie Brader is Michigan's New  
'First Lady of  
Energy'

Plus!

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9 Cherryland Meets 2014  
Energy Optimization Goal

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June 2015  
Vol. 35, No. 6

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Michigan Electric  
Cooperative Association

Design and Layout  
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Michigan Country Lines, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Okemos, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

Subscriptions are authorized for members of Alger Delta, Cherryland, Cloverland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks Tri-County, Midwest Energy, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Thumb electric cooperatives by their boards of directors. Subscriptions for nonmembers are \$6 per year.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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

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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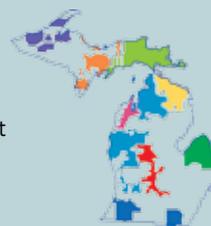
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## ON THE COVER\*

Chosen as the executive director of the new Michigan Agency for Energy, Valerie Brader says the state faces very serious energy issues but, "Big challenges offer the biggest opportunity to make a difference."

Photo—Matthew Mitchell

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



Michigan's Electric  
Cooperatives  
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# Inquiring Minds

**W**e are almost halfway through what is becoming a very busy year. Local construction is picking up and energy is a hot topic in Lansing. Therefore, we are battling on every front to keep up while keeping our members informed. So, I thought I would take a minute to briefly go over some key questions members may be thinking about.



**Tony Anderson**  
General Manager

## If area growth takes off, will rates go up?

Some 10 years ago, we were adding 800 new homes to our system each year. While growth is picking up, I don't believe we will see 400 new homes in 2015. Still, growth like this usually has the opposite effect on rates. The added sales are often enough to offset inflationary increases and thus very beneficial to keeping rates affordable.

## Why is Wolverine building a gas plant in Gaylord?

Over the past several years, our supplier, Wolverine Power Cooperative, has unsuccessfully attempted two different coal plant projects in Michigan. Member growth has simply made it imperative that we own "steel in the ground" rather than be dependent on the market. After coal, natural gas is our next best option for reliable generation. Wolverine is also increasing its use of renewable generation and we need to be able to back it up when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine. A natural gas turbine will turn on and off more efficiently than any other form of generation.

## Why are state legislators looking to eliminate energy conservation and renewable mandates?

It is my opinion that they are simply trying to prepare the state to be in the best possible position to comply with pending EPA clean air rules. If Michigan has a "clean air standard" that allows utilities to be flexible with their use of renewables and energy conservation, the state will be in a better position to comply with the federal government. Some utilities are better suited for conservation while others can more easily add renewable energy. Therefore, making everyone comply with the same numbers may not be the best way to achieve our overall goals.

## What is SmartHub?

It is an "app" for your smartphone. It allows you to report an outage, look at daily electricity usage, pay your bill and read co-op news. We do realize that some people don't have smart phones but we also know that the number of members who do is on the rise. When a large outage occurs, we can never answer thousands of calls each hour. However, SmartHub allows us to electronically take thousands of outage reports an hour. When there are no outages, members are using it daily to keep track of their energy use in order to become more aware of where they might be able to save some energy.

## With talk of coal plants shutting down all over the country, should we be worried about rates going up?

This is an emphatic, "NO." Wolverine has done a great job of proactively preparing a generation portfolio that will bring us affordable power for at least the next eight to 10 years. We will see some small increases over this time but we will not be "captive" to rising power costs on the open market.

If you have any other questions, please never hesitate to ask them. My direct line at my desk is 231-486-9214 and I can be reached via email at [tanderson@cherrylandelectric.coop](mailto:tanderson@cherrylandelectric.coop). I am happy to have a dialogue with anyone and in fact, I look forward to member questions and insights of all kinds. ■

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## Annual Meeting Returns to Incredible Mo's

**F**or the second year, Cherryland Electric Cooperative's annual meeting will be held at Incredible Mo's in Grawn.

It will take place on Thursday, June 11, from 4 to 8 p.m.

This is the 77th version of the annual meeting and last year another new member hosted the event—Incredible Mo's.

"We had a great turnout and great weather," said Cherryland General Manager Tony Anderson. "And the bottom line was, our members really enjoyed themselves. They learned more about the cooperative and they had a lot of options once they got to the meeting."

The options at Incredible Mo's range from a variety of free food—salads, pizza and soft drinks—to arcade games, bowling and listening to two of northern Michigan's finest entertainers, Kevin Reeves and Levi Britton.

The meeting opens at 4 p.m. and there will be golf carts on site to shuttle members to registration. At 5:30, the annual one-hour business meeting will take place outside under the Big Tent, with plenty of seating.

Afterwards, there will be another 90 minutes for members to enjoy themselves until 8 p.m.

At the business meeting, cooperative leaders will review 2014 and explain to members what they can expect in the years ahead. Members will get a chance to ask questions and the results of the Cherryland board election will also be announced.

After the business meeting, members can talk with co-op employees and directors or take part in their choice of games or entertainment. ■



# Tips for Building a Strong, Efficient Home

**T**here are new home construction methods available that are much stronger and efficient than typical insulated, wood framing. Some of these methods could more than double the insulation value of typical framed walls.

For a wood-framed house, use staggered, double-stud walls on 24-inch centers. Staggering the wall studs minimizes thermal bridges (direct non-insulated heat flow paths from indoors to outdoors through the wood studs). Also, install rigid foam wall sheathing on the exterior so that all of the lumber's thermal mass is inside of the insulation envelope. This can be covered with any type of exterior finish.

The “stay-in-place” method uses concrete and rigid foam insulation. The insulation forms hold wet concrete and are not removed. They provide the insulation and substrate surface for installing the interior and exterior wall coverings.

A similar method uses hollow foam blocks made to fit your home's plans. The blocks have an open cavity throughout the inside. Concrete is pumped into the top of the walls, which creates a strong, efficient structure.

Structural insulated panel (SIP) systems have a thick foam core sandwiched between two sheets of various materials. The SIP panels are often used for the exterior walls to enclose post and beam-framed and steel-framed homes for the highest insulation levels possible.

SIP panels are made of oriented strand board (OSB), a strong, highly insulated panel. The panel is self-supporting, and once attached to the foundation and connected, the SIP panels support themselves, the floors, ceiling and roof.

Steel-framed construction is excellent if strength is the goal. Steel does not burn or change shape over time as lumber does, and each steel piece is nearly identical.

Steel allows for thinner studs and wider spacing to be used. This leaves room for additional insulation inside the walls and fewer thermal bridges.

Consider these choices when selecting construction methods that will affect the strength, efficiency and durability of the finished product. The time to learn more is before you make these decisions. ■



With “stay-in-place” construction, once the insulated forms are erected and reinforced steel installed, the concrete is pumped in from the top.

Photo – Eco-Block



# CAMPFIRE COOKING

Recipes for your outdoor kitchen.

## Mountain Man Breakfast

- 12" cast iron dutch oven
- ½ lb. chopped bacon or bulk pork sausage (not links)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 32-oz. bag frozen, shredded hash brown potatoes
- 12 eggs, beaten in a separate bowl
- ½ lb. shredded cheddar cheese
- 8 oz. jar salsa



You will need a nice bed of coals or briquettes, NOT a roaring fire. Preheat the dutch oven bottom on the coals/briquettes. Off to the side, heat the lid on the coals. Brown the bacon/sausage, stirring often, then add the chopped onion and stir until the onion is

translucent. Remove the bacon/sausage and onion from the dutch oven and drain on paper towels. Wipe out the excess grease from the dutch oven. Stir in the shredded hash browns and cook until golden brown. Add the bacon and onion back into the oven. Pour the beaten eggs over the potatoes, stir and cover the oven with the preheated lid. Place a layer of hot coals or briquettes (about 15–18 coals) on top of the oven and bake until the eggs are soft set, not too wet, checking after 5 minutes (timing will depend on how hot your fire is). Sprinkle with the cheese and continue cooking until the eggs are set and cheese is melted.

Serve salsa on the side. Recipe serves 8 generously and can be easily converted for a smaller dutch oven.

This was a favorite for my husband's Boy Scout troop!

*Peg Peppler, Empire*

## Campfire Chicken Package Meal *(pictured)*

- 1 roll heavy duty foil
- 5 peeled carrots, cut into ½-inch slices
- 1 can peas, drained
- 1 can whole sweet corn, drained
- 1 lb. bacon, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut in ½-inch strips
- 3 large, peeled potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. onion powder
- 1 t. chicken broth, dissolved into 1 c. hot water

Cook bacon in skillet until done; drain and set aside. Tear off pieces of foil, 18 inches long (8 pieces total, you will use double layers of foil). Add vegetables, dividing between each pack. Add in the following order: potatoes on the bottom, carrots, and then peas and corn on top. Divide the chicken equally between the packs and top with bacon. Stir seasonings into cup of broth. Fold foil to make a pouch; pour ¼ c. broth into pouch and seal tightly. Place into campfire and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from fire, open and enjoy. Makes 4 servings.

*Ann Brown, Niles*

### 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



## First Chair in Band? Not So Much

**T**he end of the school year means that most students put away their band instruments until next fall.

At least, that's the way it used to be when I went to school.

Now, there are band camps, music festivals and small town parades that take place during the summer.

It gets me to thinking about playing cornet in our middle school and high school bands for six years.

While I enjoyed playing sports and being in band, I had totally different outlooks on both. That's because sports came easily to me and band didn't come to me at all.

I loved being part of the band. I think I'm fairly musical. But you'd never know it from listening to me play trumpet during those six years.

Band was humbling. Band made me work harder. Band scared me like no other extracurricular activity—especially the days when we had “challenges” to win a new chair.

When you sat “first chair,” you were the best. My two sisters both sat first chair when they played the flute. My brother sat first chair when he played the baritone. I was on Cloud Nine the one time in my life I won a challenge to be part of the second section, which was about chair No. 5.

So imagine my interest a couple months ago when I went to a middle school band concert and happened to ask our young friend afterward what “chair” he was.

I thought band students were ranked by chair the way we used to be. Maybe some of them still are. But not at the school I was at.

The student told me they didn't have chairs. Apparently, the prevailing philosophy at this school is that “human beings don't always appreciate being told that they aren't performing as well as others... many students tend to feel less valuable if they aren't first chair.”

It appears to be part of a notion that to build a child's self-confidence, you offer a “good job” pat on the head for whatever they do, even if it was not a good job. And now this school had no chairs in the band to help students avoid feeling bad about not being very good on their instruments.

But the truth is, the world is based on “chairs.” The sooner you learn to work hard and earn a promotion or a new “chair,” the sooner you learn about life in the real world.

Failing is part of life. I remember losing many band challenges. It didn't destroy my self confidence. It made me want to work harder and get better.

I never did get much better in band. But I learned from my mistakes. And I also learned that nothing is given to you without working for it.

Somehow, those of us who grew up learning the lesson of the “chair” system got along just fine in life.

In fact, it's one of the best lessons I've ever learned. ■



**Nick Edson**

# 2014 Energy Optimization Annual Report

**M**any New Year's resolutions begin with people wanting to tighten their waist.

At Cherryland, our 2014 New Year's resolution was to tighten our waste.

In our case, we wanted to cut down on the amount of energy our members used in 2014 through a program called Energy Optimization (EO).

Our goal was to reduce our members' usage by 3.8 million kilowatt hours (kWh), and we did that and more.

Cherryland Electric Cooperative and its members can proudly say that we achieved our EO goal for the sixth straight year. Energy Optimization is a state mandated program, through Public Act 295, that requires utilities to offer rebates on energy efficient improvements to homes or businesses they serve.

By offering rebates we can help incentivize our members to reduce their energy consumption and in turn achieve our yearly kWh reduction goal.

These rebates are available to both residential and commercial members on lighting, appliances and motor upgrades. ■



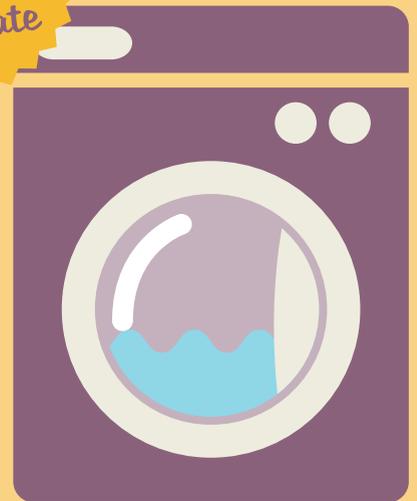
Save Energy  
**SAVE MONEY**

**Upgrading to new appliances  
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At Cherryland, we want to help you save energy and save money. That's why we offer rebates on the purchase of new, Energy Star® rated appliances. Clothes washers, dryers, dishwashers, dehumidifiers, refrigerators, freezers, and even TVs are eligible. Once your rebates are approved, they'll appear as a credit on your next energy bill. It's that simple.

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Restrictions may apply. Go online or give us a call for complete program details.

# Meet Michigan's 'First Lady of Energy'

**O**ften referred to as Michigan's "Energy Czar," Valerie Brader chuckles at that moniker. She appreciates the respect, but prefers the title that Gov. Rick Snyder gave her, executive director of the Michigan Agency for Energy.

Brader, 38, is the first boss of a brand-new agency—an acknowledgment by Snyder that keeping the lights on for Michiganders deserves the undivided attention of a high-powered executive. Brader will spearhead, among other things, the effort to keep the juice flowing while Michigan, facing federal mandates on emissions standards, finds cleaner energy sources than its coal-fired power plants.

"That's our first big challenge," Brader says. "That's the issue that will have the greatest impact."

Because of EPA air-quality requirements and the aging of conventional facilities, the state must close 10 coal-fired plants (nine in the Lower Peninsula and one in the Upper Peninsula) within the next few years. Combined, these plants currently supply electricity to more than 1 million customers. Snyder plans to wean Michigan's electric plants off coal and onto cleaner fuels, such as natural gas.

Meanwhile, the state's two largest energy suppliers—Consumers Energy and DTE Energy—see a looming crisis. They predict that, absent proper management of the

transition and careful attention to other energy challenges, rolling blackouts and electrical shortages could become a routine part of life in the state.

Averting that crisis, Brader says, will require a multi-pronged approach involving reducing energy waste, finding the right place for renewable energy in the mix, and balancing the pros and cons of utility regulation versus commercial customer choice.

Brader has been with the Snyder administration since 2011, most recently as a deputy legal counsel and senior policy adviser. Before that, she was the chief energy policy officer at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Brader also practiced environmental and corporate law, and was an adviser to former Idaho Gov. Phil Batt.

Snyder has described the new agency, which will become part of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, as one that "responds to the energy challenges that we know are before us." Choosing Brader to head the Agency is a recognition of both her energy policy expertise and legal skills, he said.

Brader and her husband, Ted, have a 2-year-old son, Finn. She commutes to Lansing from Ann Arbor every day. The high-powered job, the family, the commute... It's no wonder that when asked what she does in her spare time, Brader offers her signature laugh and a "spare *what?*" look.

The one person, Brader says, who doesn't acknowledge that she is juggling a lot of balls in the air is Finn. "He's sure the most important thing in my life is him."

Considering the energy issues Michigan must confront in the immediate future—power plant closings, pressure to deregulate the utilities, etc.—one might wonder why Brader took the job in such a tumultuous time.

"Because it's also the most exciting time..." she says. "Big challenges offer the biggest opportunity to make a difference." ■



“**Big** challenges  
offer the biggest  
**opportunity**  
to make a  
**difference.**”



# Co-op News

## Cherryland Scholarship Winners Announced



Three high school seniors and two adults have been awarded 2015 Cherryland Electric Cooperative scholarships.

The three high school scholarships are worth \$4,000 each—\$1,000 a year for four years. The adult scholarships are a one-time award for \$1,000 each.

Winners of the high school scholarships came from Benzie, Leelanau and Grand Traverse counties. They were: Samuel Elmi from Traverse City West; Kaylee Rosa from Benzie Central; and Jane Hursey from Suttons Bay.

A panel of four Cherryland employees served as judges and selected the winners based on the criteria of classroom performance, leadership, extracurricular activities, community involvement, and need.

The adult scholarship winners were Shirley Garvin and Kristen Fortine, both of Traverse City.

There were 104 entries for the high school scholarships and 15 for the adult scholarship.

## Next Member Input Session is June

The next quarterly input session for Cherryland members is June. Members can address the board of directors at 9 a.m. on Monday, June 15, during the board's regular monthly meeting at the cooperative in Grawn.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board, keeping their comments to 5 minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input session of the meeting only.

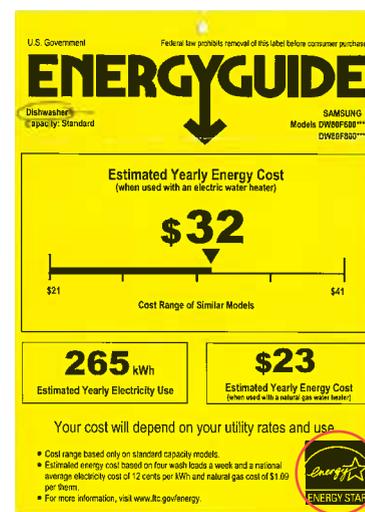
The public input sessions will also be available at the September and December meetings.

## Rebates Available to Members Buying Energy Star Appliances

Cherryland Electric Cooperative members are urged to look for the Energy Star® logo on the yellow energy guide when purchasing new appliances and LED bulbs for your home and business.

By buying Energy Star qualified appliances, members can save on energy usage over standard appliances, along with improved quality and durability. Another benefit when purchasing new Energy Star appliances such as refrigerators, clothes washers, TVs and LED bulbs, is that you may be entitled to a rebate from us.

For a complete listing of rebates available on Energy Star qualified appliances, go to our website at [cherrylandelectric.coop](http://cherrylandelectric.coop). To learn more about Energy Star visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov).



## Cherryland Cares Seeks Grant Applications

Area nonprofit 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 nonprofits. The next quarterly meeting of Cherryland Cares is Monday, June 15. The deadline for applications is Friday, June 5.

The next quarterly grant cycle is in September, with a deadline of Sept. 11.

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](mailto:nedson@cherrylandelectric.coop) ■

## Where Does My Power Come From?

**E**very month you pay your power bill to your electric distribution cooperative. But have you ever wondered where that electricity comes from?

Generally, it's not produced in your neighborhood—most electricity travels quite a distance from where it's actually generated across high-voltage transmission lines to reach the local distribution system and, finally, your home.

Your home or business receives electricity from one of roughly 840 electric distribution cooperatives in America. These local, member-owned, not-for-profit utilities build and maintain overhead and underground lines and equipment to deliver power. Typically, distribution co-ops do not generate electricity or directly negotiate with power providers. That role usually lies with generation and transmission cooperatives (G&Ts).

G&Ts are wholesale power suppliers owned and governed by electric distribution co-ops. They produce electricity directly and/or buy it in bulk from other power suppliers, then ship that power over high-voltage transmission lines to local distribution co-ops' equipment. When power reaches its destination, distribution co-ops must use transformers at substations to reduce the voltage before sending it over their lines to your home or business. Now the power is there when you turn on the lights, heat and cool your homes, and power up your computers.

Today, there are 65 G&Ts in the United States. In Michigan, there is one G&T, Wolverine Power Cooperative. Headquartered in Cadillac, Wolverine supplies wholesale power to five distribution cooperatives: Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Grawn; Great Lakes Energy, Boyne City; Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, Onaway; HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Portland; and Midwest Energy Cooperative, Cassopolis. Wolverine also has two licensed alternative electric supplier members: Spartan Renewable Energy and Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative, both in Cadillac. ■



Graphics by Funnel, Inc., and NRECA

## Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For safety, plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines

Power line right-of-way



# There's More To Cuba Than Cars, Cigars

**wanted to see Cuba before corporate interests prevail**, and the mysterious country 100 miles from Key West, FL, becomes South Beach South. As U.S.-Cuba hostility softens, the island nation is poised to become an American tourist mecca.

Around Christmas, I received a brochure from the Michigan State University Alumni Association. "Cuba," it said. "A People-to-People Educational Exchange." The offer: an eight-day exploration of a place few Americans have seen; 27 people, including my wife and I, accepted. Our group claimed 17 Michiganders, including Ross and Brenda Biederman. Biederman is president of the Midwestern Broadcasting Co., which includes radio station WTCM in Traverse City.

Despite the recent thaw in U.S.-Cuba relations, U.S. tourism is not yet allowed. The Alumni Association holds a federal license, which demands strict adherence to the educational mission. Reflecting that, our agenda included scholarly lectures and visits to a school, an agricultural commune, and other non-tourist places.

Yet, we found time for salsa dancing, cruising Havana in vintage convertibles and sampling local mojitos and Cuba Libres (rum, coke and lime juice).

Havana's iconic image—1940s and '50s American cars—are the most conspicuous evidence of Cuba's arrested development, a result of the 53-year-old U.S. trade embargo. Nearly everything there suggests a bygone era.

Our group stayed in Havana for five nights, then in Ciefuegos, on the southern coast, for two nights. In eight days we immersed ourselves in Havana's street life and explored Cuba's lush mountain forests and pristine Caribbean seaside.

One disappointment: mediocre cuisine. If you're traveling for the cuisine, go to France—not to a country known for rice and beans. Also, shoppers will encounter a paucity of possibilities. There's little to buy, except cigars and rum; U.S. citizens can bring back \$100 worth of each.

Those are trivial complaints. If you go to Cuba, you'll find the people welcoming, the music irresistible, street life stimulating, and the scenery breathtaking. It's a fascinating country. ■

"Nearly everything there suggests a bygone era."



At the Partagas cigar factory in Havana, each employee gets four cigars a day to smoke while he (or she) works.



Cuba is known for vintage cars. Shown is a '56 Chevy.



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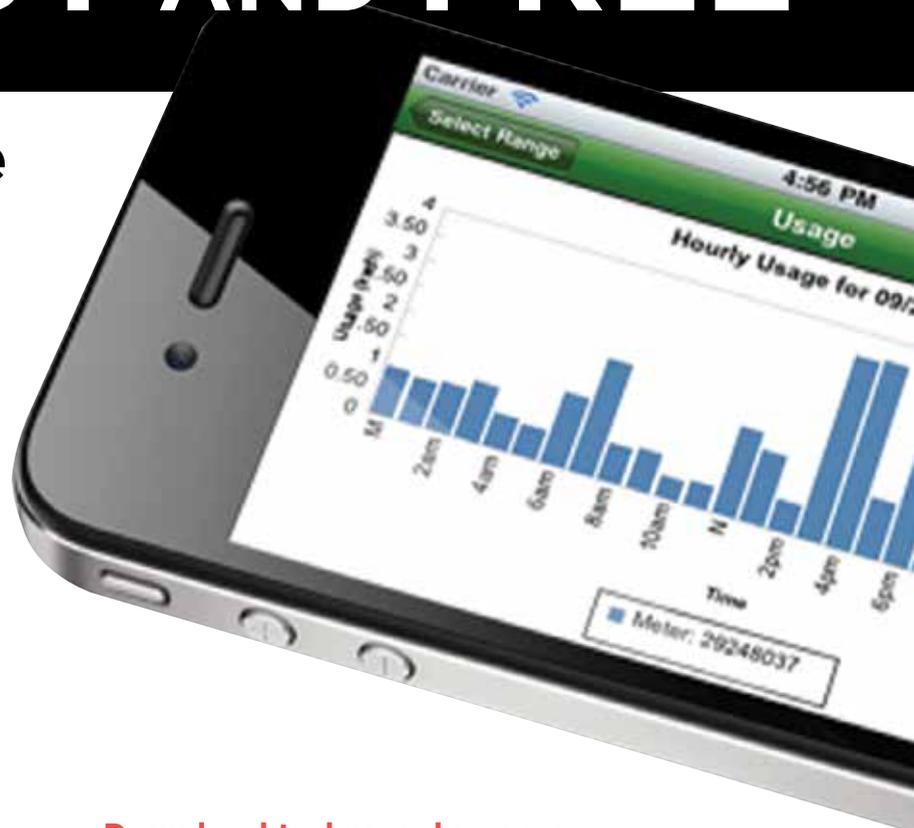


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