**Midwest Energy Cooperative** 

September 2015

# MCHIGAN OUNTRY MAS

# SUNKEN TREASURE

#### THUNDER BAY NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY



Ushering In The Era Of Member Regulation Contest Creates Safe Kids, Safe Communities College Freshmen Offer Hope For A Bright Future

#### WATERFURNACE UNITS QUALIFY FOR A 30% FEDERAL TAX CREDIT

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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives countrylines.com

#### September 2015 Vol. 35, No. 8

Executive Editor Casey Clark

Editors Christine Dorr Gail Knudtson

Publisher Michigan Electric Cooperative Association

Design and Layout **Ciesa Design** 

Michigan Country Lines, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Lansing, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

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.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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. IN THIS ISSUE

#### **ON THE COVER\***

The 4,300-square-mile Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary, located on Lake Huron in Alpena, protects one of America's bestpreserved and nationally-significant collections of shipwrecks.

\*Some co-op editions have a different cover. Photo courtesy of NOAA Thunder <u>Bay NMS</u>

# IN YOUR WORDS

Our new question of the month section of *Michigan Country Lines*. Let us know your answer and it may appear in the next month's issue or on your electric co-op's social media site. Please answer the question in your own words at http://bit.ly/1MgI7W5.

#### Now the question:

What in your life are you most thankful for?

#### SAFETY

How To Use A Portable Generator Safely

#### **OUR ENERGY**

Maintain Your Home's Heating System Efficiency James Dulley

#### HOME COOKING

Fresh and Flavorful Seafood Recipes You Will Love! Christin McKamey & Our Readers

#### FEATURE

Sunken Treasure At Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary Emily Haines

#### READERS' PAGE

Communicating In The Age Of The Emoji Jack O'Malley Guess Our New Mystery Photo!



CASSOPOLIS DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER 901 E. State Street (P.O. Box 127) Cassopolis, MI 49031-0127 M-F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

**PAW PAW DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER** 59825 S. LaGrave, Paw Paw, MI 49079 M-F, 8 a.m.–1 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m.

ADRIAN DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER 1610 E. Maumee Street, Adrian, MI 49221 M-F, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

#### **CONTACT US**

MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE 800-492-5989 • TeamMidwest.com MIDWEST CONNECTIONS 844-493-4237 • TeamFiber.com MIDWEST PROPANE 844-493-4427 • TeamMidwestPropane.com E-mail: info@TeamMidwest.com

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Find us on Facebook: facebook.com/TeamMidwest

Midwest Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



n late August, we ushered in the era of member regulation. As your elected board of directors, we're using this month's column to share a few thoughts on why we made this decision, and what it means for you, as member-owners of Midwest Energy Cooperative.

Electric cooperatives were organized in the 1930s to provide power to rural areas. Some of today's co-op members have direct roots to that movement, as members of their own families were among those who helped build the infrastructure that marked the beginning of today's electric distribution system.

In the beginning, we were member-regulated. Those who received co-op service, people like you and us, made decisions on rates, rules and regulations. We only moved away from that to seek territorial protection as investor-owned utilities began looting co-op service areas to cherry-pick the more desirable loads, which would have negatively impacted our collective rate structure. The state agreed to provide territorial protection if co-ops agreed to full regulation under the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC).

It was the right move, but over time created layers of unnecessary bureaucracy. Prior to state regulation, members effectively and efficiently made the important decisions at the local board table. As government grew in the regulated environment, effective and efficient oversight gave way to useless and expensive interventions and delays from Lansing.

You have a voice, and we encourage you to use it. While we are your elected representatives, we want and need to hear from you about the issues we wrestle with at the board table. If you ever have questions about decisions made, please reach out and share your thoughts and feedback. If you have questions or concerns about operational issues—things like outages, right-of-way clearance, staffing, and billing/payment concerns—those should be directed to the very capable staff at your co-op. As a board, we stay out of daily management and operational issues, and will always point you back to staff, if appropriate.

For your convenience, we are publishing director contact information in every issue, beginning this month. It's also available at TeamMidwest.com. This is your cooperative, and we're proud to represent you. ■

Midwest Energy Cooperative Board of Directors

Above: Stringing electrical wire (1938). Photo-NRECA

## **Midwest in the Community**

Neighbor helping neighbor—that's how Team Midwest approaches daily work and efforts to give back. We live, work and serve right here in your local community, and strive to actively live our Community value in meaningful and impacting ways. Here are just a few of our recent efforts to strengthen and support our communities.

#### Safety Month



Annika Steinke

Madison Tzsznar

Annika Steinke and Madison Tzsznar enjoyed fond memories of their recently-completed fourth grade years when they saw their artwork on Midwest Energy Cooperative billboards in August.

The girls were the winners of Midwest Energy's Safety Month contest. Nearly 700—4th grade students and teachers across the co-op service territory were introduced to electrical safety in April as part of the annual contest. Students learned various aspect of personal and public safety. Following the presentations, each student designed a poster depicting something they learned. The winning images from each service area were printed on t-shirts provided to all students, and posted on billboards over the summer.

The contest is part of Midwest's ongoing commitment to educate the community about electrical safety. "Electricity is such an integral part of our lives that we tend to forget the inherent safety concerns involved with the flow of current," says Patty Nowlin, director of communications and community relations. "Midwest is strongly committed to creating a culture of safety, both for our employees and for members of our community, and our public safety programs are one way we promote awareness."

Midwest offers electrical and propane safety programs for any group or organization. Programs are free, adaptable for various audiences and timelines, and can be conducted at Midwest or an off-site facility. For more information about safety programs, please contact the community relations office at 800-492-5989.

#### **RACK Attacks**

Over the summer, TeamMidwest delivered Random Acts of Kindness across parts of its service territory in the annual RACK Attack. Employee teams went out into the community to bring smiles to faces and encourage an attitude of thankfulness and paying it forward. Activities included surprising co-op business members with breakfast, purchasing supplies and stocking shelves at local food pantries, delivering meals to homebound seniors, welcoming and covering gate admission for guests at a local park, and handing out frozen custards around town. With each gesture, a card was shared encouraging the recipient to pay it forward with another random act of kindness.



Fiber tech Joe Alford (left) and lineman Kurt Schantz (right) package donated chicken for distribution at a local food pantry.



Customer care representative Diane Wilkins welcomes visitors and pays their admission to a local community park.

## **PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS**



#### Always read the Owner's Manual and instructions for your generator. Do NOT cut corners when it comes to safety.

These tips are merely supplemental and are not intended to substitute reading of the Owner's Manual.

#### **Carbon Monoxide and Ventilation**

- Using a generator indoors CAN KILL YOU IN MINUTES. Exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a deadly poison gas you cannot see or smell.
- NEVER run a generator indoors or in partly enclosed areas, such as garages.
- ONLY use outdoors and far from windows, doors, vents, crawl spaces and in an area where adequate ventilation is available and will not accumulate deadly exhaust gas.
- Using a fan or opening doors and windows will not provide sufficient ventilation.
- It is recommended that you install battery operated carbon monoxide alarms/detectors indoors according to manufacturer's instructions/recommendations.

#### Gasoline, Fueling and Burn Safety

- If tank is over-filled, fuel can overflow onto a hot engine and cause fire or explosion.
- Do not overfill the fuel tank. Always allow room for fuel expansion.
- Never add fuel while unit is running or hot. Allow generator and engine to cool entirely before adding fuel.
- Never store a generator with fuel in the tank where gasoline vapors might reach an open flame, spark or pilot light.
- Many generator parts are hot enough to burn you during operation and while the generator is cooling after turning off. Avoid coming into contact with a hot generator.

## Electrocution Hazard and Electrical Shock Hazards

- Connecting a portable electric generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.
- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.
- Always start or stop the generator only when no electrical loads are connected.
- Overloading your generator can seriously damage your valuable appliances and electronics. Do not overload the generator. Do not operate more appliances and equipment than the output rating of the generator. Prioritize your needs. A portable electric generator should be used only when necessary, and only to power essential equipment.
- Use the proper power cords. Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage. Do not use extension cords with exposed wires or worn shielding.
- Do not operate the generator in wet conditions such as rain or snow.
- The generator must be properly grounded. If the generator is not grounded, you run the risk of electrocution. Check and adhere to all applicable federal, state and local regulations relating to grounding.

#### **Generator Placement and Operation**

- Allow at least five feet of clearance on all sides of the generator when operating.
- Generators can be used during a wide variety of weather temperatures, but should be protected from the elements when not in use to prevent shorting and rusting.
- Operate the generator only on level surfaces and where it will not be exposed to excessive moisture, dirt, dust or corrosive vapors.
- Inspect the generator regularly.
- Always disconnect the spark plug wire and place the wire where it cannot contact the spark plug to prevent accidental starting when setting up, transporting, adjusting or making repairs to the generator.

Source: American Red Cross with technical advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Fire Protection Association (publisher of the National Electric Code<sup>®</sup>) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. ■

## **Maintain Your Home's Heating System Efficiency**

By James Dulley

ith the heating season soon upon us, make sure your heating system is running at its maximum efficiency. Doing a simple heating system tune-up yourself improves its efficiency, resulting in significant annual cost savings.

However, don't skip your regular professional maintenance calls just because you have done your own heating system mini-tune-up. There are many areas within a heating system that only a qualified technician can evaluate and adjust properly.

The first items to check are for safety. With a gas or propane furnace, put several drops of soapy water on any gas-line fittings you find. If the water bubbles at all, there are leaks. Leave your house *immediately* and call your gas company to have it repaired. With a heat pump, check to make sure the insulation on all of the external wiring looks correct. You can inspect potential 'bad spots'—damaged or frayed areas—more carefully once you turn the circuit breaker off.

Turn off the electric power to the heating unit at the circuit breaker panel. Remove its side cover to gain access to the blower. Using a vacuum cleaner brush attachment, clean any dust deposits off the blower. You may find bearing oil cups on the blower motor of older systems. Put a drop of oil in each cup.

Find the fan control switch and adjust the temperature setting lower. Common settings are on at 135 degrees and off at 100 degrees. Try using 110 and 90 degrees. This starts the blower sooner and keeps it running longer as the heat exchanger heats up and then cools down.

Replace the cover and make sure all the cabinet screws are tight. Also, check the tightness of any cabinet screws you can find. Having the cabinet well-sealed improves efficiency by maintaining the proper air flow through the coils or over the heat exchanger surfaces. With a heat pump, also check the cabinet screws on the outdoor condenser unit.

Set up the thermostat so the furnace starts. Hold a stick of lighted incense near all the joints in the ductwork, both return and supply air ducts, to check for air leaks. If you find leaks, wipe dust off the surfaces and use mastic (a gooey, non-hardening material) around the leaking joints.

This is a good time to change your furnace filter or clean a central air cleaner element. Consider installing a more effective filter element than the lowcost fiberglass ones that many systems use. This may not help indoor air quality much, but it can keep the air-flow paths cleaner for more efficient heat transfer.

Check the accuracy of the wall thermostat. You may actually be keeping your house warmer than you realize. Tape a bulb thermometer on the wall next to your furnace. Check the thermometer reading when the furnace shuts off and note the difference between it and the thermostat setting. Now you will know where to set the thermostat to get the indoor temperature you desire. If it is inaccurate, replace it with a new electronic setback model.

# SEAFOOD FAVORITES

#### Flavorful seafood recipes you will love!

#### Lobster Mac & Cheese

Doreen Zuznis, Clio

- kosher salt
- vegetable oil
- 1 lb. cavatappi (tubed corkscrew pasta)
- 1 qt. milk
- 8 T. (1 stick) unsalted butter, divided
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> c. all-purpose flour
- 12-oz. Gruyere cheese, grated (4 c.)
- 8-oz. extra-sharp cheddar, grated (2 c.)
- 1/2 t. freshly ground black pepper
- ½ t. nutmeg
- 11/2 lb. cooked lobster meat (langostinos)

Preheat oven to 375°. Drizzle oil into a large pot of boiling salted water. Add pasta and cook according to the directions on the package, 6 to 8 minutes. Drain well. Meanwhile, heat the milk in a small saucepan, but don't boil it. In a large pot, melt 6 T. of butter and add the flour. Cook over low heat for 2 minutes, stirring with a whisk. Still whisking, add the hot milk and cook for a minute or two more, until thickened and smooth. Turn off the heat, add the Gruyere, Cheddar, 1 T. salt, the pepper, and nutmeg. Add the cooked macaroni and lobster meat and stir well. Place the mixture in a large casserole dish. Melt the remaining 2 T. of butter, combine them with the fresh bread crumbs, and sprinkle on the top. Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the sauce is bubbly and the macaroni is browned on the top.

#### Crab Casserole

Virginia Rubingh, Ellsworth

- ½ lb. fresh/frozen crab meat
- ½ c. sour cream
- 1 T. lemon juice
- pinch garlic salt
- 1¼ c. cheddar cheese, divided
- 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- 2 T. Hellman's® mayonnaise
- 1¼ t. Worcestershire<sup>®</sup> sauce
- 1 T. milk

Mix all ingredients together in a casserole dish. Sprinkle half of the cheddar cheese on top. Bake at 325° for 25–30 minutes.

#### Seafood Pasta Salad

Betty Poradek, Stephenson

- 8-oz. pkg. imitation crab meat, cut up
- 8-oz. bag frozen mini shrimp, thawed (optional)
- <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> cup chopped celery
- 1–2 T. chopped green onion (including some tops)
- 1 can water chestnuts, chopped
- 8-oz. frozen peas, thawed
- 1 lb. bag rotini noodles, cooked
- dash dill weed
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> c. Miracle Whip<sup>®</sup>
- 8-oz. sour cream

Mix all pasta together and chill for several hours. Keeps up to three days in fridge.

#### **Dilly Fish**

Gertrude Romanchuk, Traverse City

- fresh pan fish
- dill pickle juice
- instant potato flakes
- peanut oil

Wash fish and dry well with paper towels. Soak fish in dill pickle juice for 15–30 minutes. Roll in potato flakes and fry in peanut oil, turning once. Fry until golden brown. Very tasty!

#### SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Easy Chicken" recipes by **Sept. 10**, "Chili" recipes by **Nov. 1** and "Gluten Free" recipes by **Dec. 1**.

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

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)!

#### Dill Shrimp Salad (pictured)

Mary Babcock, Port Austin

- 4 c. cooked small shells or penne pasta
- 1 lb. cooked fresh shrimp, diced
- 1 c. frozen peas
- 1 c. small diced celery
- 1/2 c. chopped green onions, including tops
- ¼ c. minced fresh parsley
- 10 oz. plain Greek yogurt
- 1 c. mayonnaise
- ¼ c. fresh lemon juice
- 2 T. snipped fresh dill
- ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. white pepper

In a large bowl combine pasta, tuna, celery, onions, peas and parsley. In a small bowl combine yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice, dill, salt and pepper. Pour sauce over pasta, toss gently. Cover and refrigerate at least two hours. Serves 10.



#### Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Efficient Energy Act

#### 2014 Annual Energy Optimization Report Midwest Energy Cooperative MPSC Case Number U-17365

Midwest Energy contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer the Energy Optimization (EO) efforts in order to comply with PA-295. MECA filed a 4-year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on Aug. 1, 2011, as required by PA 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on Nov. 10, 2011, and we began implementing the plan Jan. 1, 2012. The Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation (WECC) was selected to implement all Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization website michigan-energy.org. WECC has subcontracted with JACO, Michigan Energy Options, Franklin Energy, Morgan Marketing Partners, and Honeywell to assist with the implementation of the EO Programs. MECA contracted with KEMA as the independent 3rd party evaluation contractor for the certification of kWh savings.

In 2014, Midwest Energy collected \$1,168,001 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$1,049,336 resulting in an over-collection of \$118,665 which will be applied towards the 2015 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Midwest Energy achieved 5,951 MWh of energy savings in 2014. For every dollar spent on energy efficiency programs, customers will save \$3.61 in avoided energy costs. The full report can be obtained at michigan-energy.org or http://efile.mpsc.state.mi.us/efile.



### **Rake in the Savings!**

Did you know that heating and cooling accounts for more than half of the energy use in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense for most homes? **Rake in the savings** with these helpful energy savings tips this fall.

Install a programmable thermostat

Through proper use of the pre-programmed settings, a programmable thermostat can save you up to 10 percent on your heating and cooling costs.

- Clean / Change the air filter
  Lower your heating and cooling energy consumption by up to 15 percent by cleaning or replacing furnace filters.
- Schedule a tune-up before you need one
  Schedule a tune-up with your heating ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) contractor. To find a qualified contractor nearest you, visit our website or call.

**ONLINE: michigan-energy.org** 







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

#### STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

#### NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE, CASE NO. U-17811

- Midwest Energy Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its renewable energy plan costs associated with the plan approved in Case No. U-17309, for the period ended December 31, 2014.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may contact Midwest Energy Cooperative's attorney, Mr. Shaun M. Johnson, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933, 517.374.9100, for a free copy of the application. Any person may also contact Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 E. State St., P.O. Box 127, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, 800.492.5989, for a free copy of its application.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

#### DATE/TIME: October 8, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.

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

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Martin D. Snider

#### LOCATION: 7109 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, MI 48917

**PARTICIPATION:** Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Midwest Energy Cooperative's (Midwest) July 31, 2015 application for Commission approval to reconcile its renewable energy plan (REP) costs for the period ended December 31, 2014. Midwest Energy represents that its REP filings included no request for a renewable energy surcharge, no surcharge was approved and none was charged to its member-customers in 2014. Midwest Energy further represent that there are neither revenues nor expenditures to reconcile.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscedockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscedockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the cases shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by October 1, 2015. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Midwest Energy's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure R 460.17315 and R 460.17335. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

A copy of Midwest Energy Cooperative request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets, and at the office of Dykema Gossett PLLC, or at the office of Midwest Energy Cooperative. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

#### **Fuel Mix Report**

The fuel mix characteristics of Midwest Energy Cooperation as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 6/30/15.

#### COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used

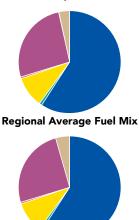
Your co-op's fuel mix

#### FUEL SOURCE

TOLESCORCE		
Coal	58.4%	60.4%
Oil	0.6%	0.7%
Gas	10.3%	8.9%
Hydroelectric	1.4%	0.5%
Nuclear	20.9%	24.6%
Renewable Fuels	8.4%	4.9%
Biofuel	0.9%	0.7%
Biomass	0.3%	0.4%
Solar	0.1%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.0%	0.0%
Wind	6.7%	3.2%
Wood	0.4%	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



#### EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF	lbs/MWh	
EMISSION/WASTE	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	5.1	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,559	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.7	2.0
High-level	0.0072	0.0083
Nuclear Waste		

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

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

## Co-op News

#### Board Allocates 2014 Net Margin

As an electric cooperative, we are different from our investor-owned counterparts in that our consumers, through their patronage, provide capital for the co-op. You are more than simply a consumer; you are a member and owner!

Midwest Energy maintains a patronage capital account for each member. At the end of each year, any operating margin ("profit") is allocated based on the amount of electricity purchased by each member. The total of these accounts is used by your cooperative to provide the equity base necessary for financial stability and is paid back to members over time as approved by the board of directors.

At their July meeting the board authorized the allocation of the 2014 net margin, totaling \$3,018,365.17. Your portion of this allocation is not payable at this time and does not represent a reduction of your electric bill, but rather indicates your equity share in our cooperative's 2014 margin.

Please notify us of any address changes so we can forward payments when patronage capital is retired. If a member or former member fails to claim cash retirement of patronage capital or other payment from the cooperative within five years after payment has been made available at the last known address, that payment will be added to the cooperative's general fund.

#### 2015 Winter Adult Scholarship Applications Available



Jacquie Reynolds-Hayward

Jacquie Reynolds-Hayward believes her strong personal values—rooted in honesty, hard work, integrity and belief in the good of human kind—helped her stay on track as she returned to college as an adult. She's currently employed as an associate teacher in an at-risk preschool program, and says she is "passionate about education being

key to individual and family empowerment." The co-op member from Paw Paw is pursuing a degree in elementary education from Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and hopes to finish her degree program and continue teaching at-risk students in rural communities.

Midwest is honored to support Jacquie with our \$1,000 adult scholarship. The scholarship program is available to adult co-op members returning to school. Adults 21 years and older who receive monthly electric service from Midwest Energy Cooperative, and whose primary residence is in Midwest's service area, may apply for the award. The scholarship may be used for tuition, fees and/or book expenses and will be paid directly to the college or university.

We are currently accepting applications for our 2015 winter award. Applicants must be enrolled for a minimum of six credit hours at a community college, a four-year college/university or an accredited trade school. Two letters of recommendation from non-family members are required. The application is available to download and print or submit online at TeamMidwest.com. Applications and all pertinent information must be postmarked by Oct. 30, 2015, for consideration.

#### Calling Team Midwest: toll-free numbers get you where you need to be

For the ease and convenience of all of our members and customers, we have unique toll-free lines for each of our business units to get you where you need to be. Please make note of these numbers for contact with Team Midwest:

#### **Midwest Energy Cooperative**

(all electric-related business) 800-492-5989

**Midwest Propane** 844-493-4427 (493-4GAS)

Midwest Connections Fiber Internet 844-493-4237 (49FIBER)

# Local Students Offer Hope of Bright Future

our Midwest Energy Cooperative families sent kids off to college this fall with a little scholarship support from their electric co-op. Each of these students earned a \$1,000 scholarship based on academic achievements, school and community activities, and honors and awards. Here's a quick glimpse into our future co-op and community leaders.



Maya Bishop has a strong and sincere desire to make a difference in the lives of others through biological science, and is beginning studies at the University of Michigan.

An academically accomplished young woman, she was in the 6

percent of students nationwide to receive a top score of 5 on the Advanced Placement Biology Exam, and the first woman ever at Paw Paw High School to test out of chemistry. Maya balanced her heavy academic load with many extra-curricular activities, including National Honor Society, Peer Assistance Leader, peer interventionist and crisis response team member, varsity competitive and varsity sideline cheer team member, teacher's aide, Friends of Rachel/Anti-bullying Club, and robotics club. She also volunteered more than 200 hours of community service during high school. Maya is the daughter of Craig and Jennifer Bishop of Paw Paw.



Kristen Cody got a leg up on college and started her first semester at Grand Valley State University as a sophomore after attending the Van Buren Technology Center for her last two years of high school. During her time there, Kristen was chosen student of the month, then honored

as student of the year among a competitive pool of high-achieving peers.

While managing a rigorous course schedule and earning a spot on the Lawton High School honor roll every trimester, Kristen also participated in cheer, cross country and track. She also actively volunteered with a number of efforts in the community. On top of everything else, she worked part-time and was chosen Miss Heart of Blossomtime for 2015. Kristen is the daughter of Harold and Denise Cody of Lawton and is studying to become a physician's assistant.



**Kayley Gay**'s mom recently found her lying on the floor pouring through school books, even though she was already done with school!

The Cassopolis Ross Beatty High School graduate is studying elementary education at Grace College & Seminary and was reviewing

her sister's books—logical for someone committed to teaching future generations of students!

Kayley has a heart for helping others. She volunteered at her high school cafeteria and with her church Sunday School and Vacation Bible School programs. She also volunteered for several years with the Faith in Action Day at a Pregnancy Helpline and a community beautification day. While in school Kayley was active in band, national honor society and dance. She also enjoys participating in bible quizzing, and has placed in competitions. Kayley is the daughter of Richard Gay II and Lori Gay of Dowagiac.



**Emily Schmidt** picked up a passion for the outdoors from her father, and is taking that to Taylor University as an environmental sciences major.

The Morenci High School graduate grew up on an 80-acre family farm

that provided a natural habitat classroom. She harvested bluegill from the pond to study the age and physical condition of the sample population against a standard population, and learned that their fish experienced stunted growth and fish dieoff. Further research and study revealed this was a result of uncontained growth of plant life due to several years of draught conditions causing a lack of oxygen. As a result of her home-based learning, she is pursuing further study of algae bloom in our great lakes and how to encourage less expensive, environmentally-friendly ways to protect our precious resources. Emily is the daughter of Jason and Amy Schmidt of Morenci. ■

# SUBJECT OF STATES OF STATE



By Emily Haines

he eerie romance of a shipwreck is something that seems saved for epic adventure novels or blockbuster Hollywood movies. But just off the coast of Lake Huron, near unassuming Alpena, MI is one of the most treacherous stretches of water in the Great Lakes—a place called Thunder Bay.

If the name itself sounds ominous, it's because Thunder Bay offers up unpredictable shifts in weather, alarming gales, fog banks and notoriously rocky shoals that play ghostly host to an area fittingly called—Shipwreck Alley. There lies the remains of over 200 ships, only about 100 that have been physically discovered. While it's difficult to imagine the friendly beaches of the Great Lakes as anything but welcoming, these deep and traitorous waters were once bustling byways for both recreational and business mariners, not all that ended at their intended destination.

"It's easy to stay motivated and excited in your work when you're dealing with such a robust historical landscape," said Stephanie Gandulla, maritime archeologist and media coordinator for Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. "There are so many stories lying just below the surface of the Great Lakes." Those stories just increased substantially as the marine sanctuary has grown from 448 square miles to a remarkable 4,300 miles as of last September. This means expanding both research and educational programs as well as a multi-year plan to "characterize" every known shipwreck in the sanctuary. Characterizing can mean a variety of informational components including having a site map, photography, data and sonar images, or even knowing the name and vessel information.

"It's no wonder our student programs appeal to our younger visitors," said Gandulla. "You don't have to be able to scuba dive 300 feet to have an interaction with maritime history. We provide and encourage hands-on experiences both in and on the water."

The experiences are anything from a class trip to the sanctuary's impressive Visitor's Center, with over 10,000 feet of exhibits, participating in a program on shipwreck archeology, or building underwater robotics. There are also glass bottom boat tours that allow visitors to view shipwrecks without ever getting their feet wet. Gandulla says it's not uncommon for students who have had a field trip in elementary or high school or invested themselves in a Shipwreck Alley class to later become a volunteer as an adult.





While all of this is available in our state's backyard, people from around the world come to marvel at these maritime catacombs, as well.

"Beyond the rich and special maritime history of this area, it's also a remarkable place to vacation," said Gandulla. "We have world class recreational opportunities available to us in Michigan and we feel very strongly about sharing them with people from around the globe."



The Monohansett, lies only 18 feet below the water's surface.

#### Visit

If you're interested in a trip to the Visitor's Center, visit thunderbay.noaa.gov/visit. Or, to book a glass bottom boat tour go to alpenashipwrecktours.com/ For more information call 989-356-8805.

#### **Project Shiphunt**

On July 13, 2011, the Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary (NMS) announced the discovery of two Great Lakes shipwrecks. The discoveries were part of Project Shiphunt, an exciting archaeological expedition, sponsored by Sony and the Intel Corp, that included five high school students from Saginaw. For more on the project, visit thunderbay.noaa.gov/shiphunt.html

#### **Monohansett Site**

For a sneak peek at the kind of discoveries you can expect, take a look at the Monohansett, a ship wrecked in 1907 that lies in three sections just 18 feet below water. thunderbay.noaa.gov/ shipwrecks/monohansett.html

Photo below: With the hull broken just forward of the boiler house and the ship listing hard to port, the wreck of the Norman, which claimed the lives of three sailors, is an intense dive experience. Photos by NOAA, Thunder Bay NMS

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES 15

#### STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF CLOVERLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE AND THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NUMBERS U-17838, U-17839, and U-17840

- Cloverland Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative and Thumb Electric Cooperative (the Cooperatives) request Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile their individual Energy Optimization (EO) plan expenditures and revenues collected for the period ended December 31, 2014.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write the Cooperatives' attorney, Mr. Shaun Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933, 517.374.9100 for a free copy of the application. Any person may review the application at Dykema's offices or at the respective offices of the Cloverland Electric, 2916 W. M-28, P.O. Box 97, Dafter, MI 49724, Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 E. State St., P.O. Box 127, Cassopolis, MI 49031, and Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main St., P.O. Box 157, Ubly, MI 48475-0157.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: October 6, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.

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

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Mark D. Eyster

LOCATION: 7109 West Saginaw, Lansing, Michigan

**PARTICIPATION:** Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the Cooperatives June 29, 2015 joint application for Commission approval to reconcile their individual EO plans for the period ended December 31, 2014. The Cooperatives are requesting authorization to reconcile their EO plan expenditures and revenues collected for the period ended December 31, 2014.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/ mpscedockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscedockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscedockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by September 29, 2015. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure R 460.17315 and R 460.17335. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130

A copy of the Cooperatives' request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets, and at the office of Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan; or at the respective Cooperatives' offices. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 2008 PA 295,

MCL 460.1001 et seq., and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

#### STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF CLOVERLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE, AND THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

#### CASE NUMBERS U-17781, U-17783 AND U-17786

- Cloverland Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative and Thumb Electric Cooperative (the Cooperatives) request Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) approval to implement their Energy Optimization Plans in compliance with Public Act 295 of 2008 and the November 24, 2014 Commission Order in Cases Numbers U-17781, U-17783 and U-17786.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write the Cooperatives' attorney, Mr. Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933, 517.374.9100 for a free copy of the application. Any person may review the application at Dykema's offices or at the respective offices of the Cooperatives, Cloverland Electric Cooperative, 2916 W. M-28, P.O. Box 97, Dafter, MI 49724, Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 E. State St., P.O. Box 127, Cassopolis, MI 49031, and Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main St., P.O. Box 157, Ubly, MI 48475-0157.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

#### DATE/TIME: Wednesday, September 30, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.

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

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Mark E. Cummins

LOCATION: Michigan Public Service Commission, 7109 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, Michigan

**PARTICIPATION:** Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the Cooperatives' August 3, 2015 joint application for approval of their Energy Optimization Plans, in accordance with Public Act 295 of 2008, and the November 24, 2014 Commission Order in Cases Numbers U-17781, U-17783 and U-17786 for Cloverland Electric, Midwest Energy, and Thumb Electric, respectively.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan. gov/mpscedockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscedockets@michigan. gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscedockets@ michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by September 23, 2015. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon the Cooperatives' attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules R 792.10422 and R 792.10432. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

A copy of the Cooperatives' request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets, and at the office of Dykema Gossett PLLC or at the respective Cooperatives' offices. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended; MCL 460.6j et seq.; 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 et seq., and the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules, 2015 AC, R 792.10401 et seq.

August 13, 2015

# Communicating in the Age of the Emoji

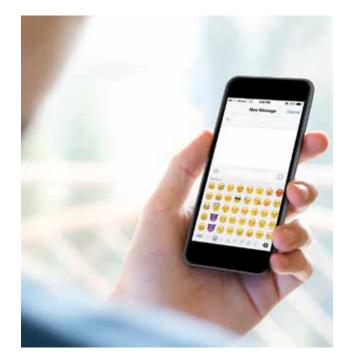
By Jack O'Malley

few years ago my son stood before a display of old rotary phones in an antique store, puzzled by the seemingly ancient devices. "How did people text with those?" he asked. I chuckled before the thought occurred to me. An entire generation now exists who've never known life without mobile phones, text messages, Google or social media.

In today's world of technology a new digital language based on acronyms and emojis has emerged, allowing people to communicate instantly with little more than a few letters and characters. In the old days, we huddled around the handset during a long-distance call, everyone listening and talking at the same time because the calls were too expensive for everyone to have a separate turn talking. I guess I'm officially an old fogie! LOL

Mobile phones have become such an essential part of our lives, we have a hard time functioning without one. Like an extra appendage, we rely on a cell's convenience, intelligence and sheer ability to do almost anything. Want to play Scrabble? Download the app. Want to enhance a photo? Download an app. Want to check Facebook? Download the app. Want to shop? Download an app. There are apps (short for "applications," programs designed specifically for use on portable devices) for everything. Just ask my wife. She'll tell you. SMH (that's **s**haking **m**y **h**ead for all you rookies out there.)

Our reliance on digital technology can only be ascertained when we forget our cell. Ever reached for your phone to make a quick call or send a text



only to realize you left your cell on the charger at home? Panic ensues. I've actually broken into a sweat and driven an hour round trip just to have my phone on hand! :)



Times have sure changed since I was a lad. These kids might run circles around me when it comes to their smart phones, but I had something they didn't. The most popular rotary phone ever made, an original Fisher-Price Chatter Telephone toy. And let me tell you, it was GR8! ■

Jack O'Malley



#### <<< Where in Michigan is This?</pre>

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

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op.

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