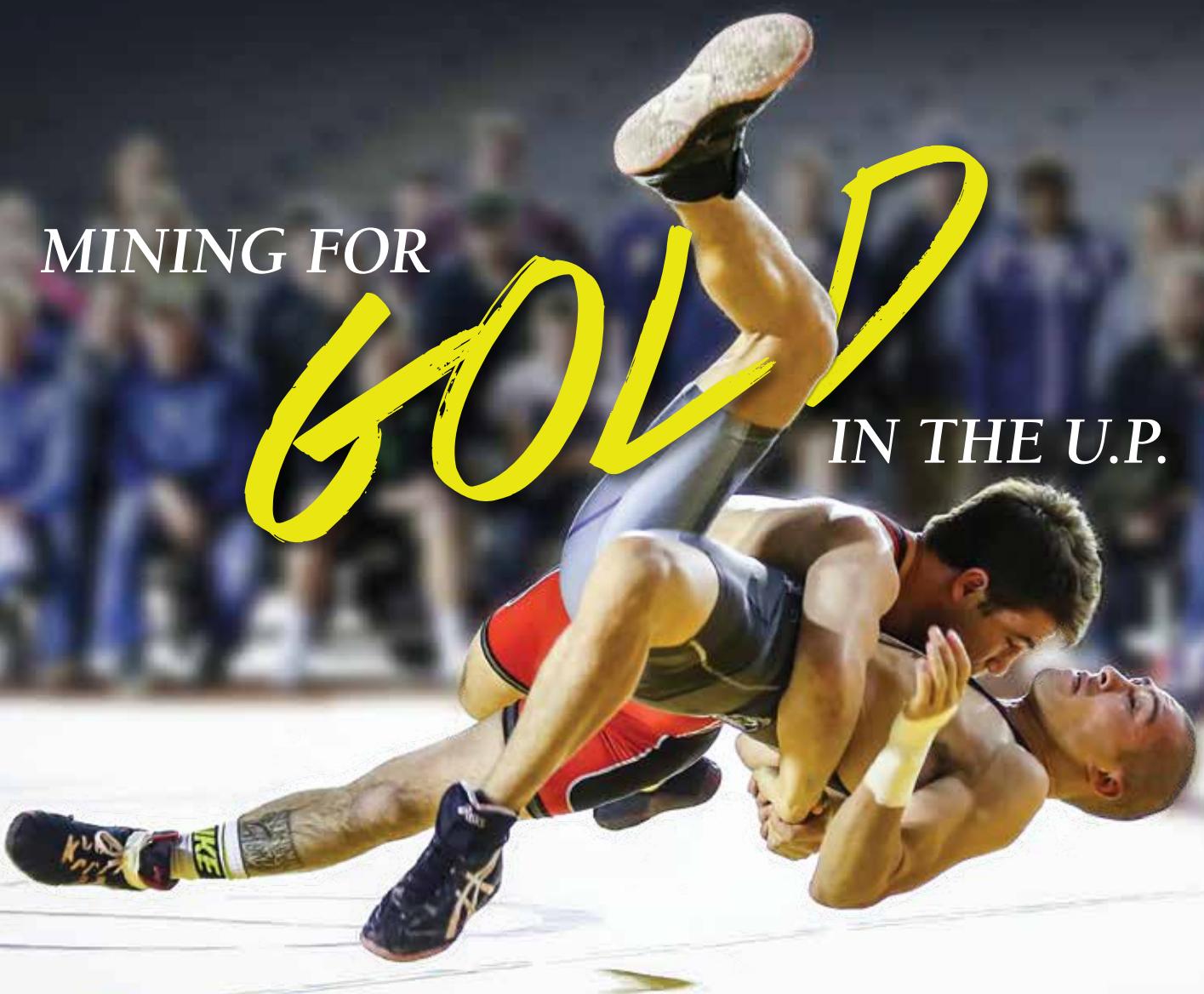


MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

MINING FOR

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IN THE U.P.



Plus!

Your New Directors

Rate Adjustment In October

Sports & Recreation Snap Shots

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Upgrading to geothermal just got more affordable, and with the 30% federal tax credit set to expire at the end of this year, the time to act is now! WaterFurnace units can save you up to 70% on heating, cooling & hot water by capturing the clean, renewable energy in your backyard to provide incredible home comfort. Now, for a limited time, we're offering homeowners with traditional systems a very special Switch-to-Geo rebate package on our most efficient and comfortable geothermal heat pumps—the 7 Series and the 5 Series—from now until Dec. 9, 2016. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer to learn more about the Geothermal Upgrade Event!

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Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Copy Editor
Heidi Spencer

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POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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

CONTACT US/LETTERS TO EDITOR:
Michigan Country Lines
201 Townsend St., Suite 900
Lansing, MI 48933
248-534-7358
cdorr@meca.coop
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ON THE COVER

During Northern Michigan University's 15-year anniversary event, Sam Jones, an NMU student-athlete (wearing red) won the 59kg match by technical fall 9-0 against All-Navy wrestler Angel Oliveras.

Photo—Courtesy of Northern Michigan University

IN YOUR WORDS

What is your favorite Michigan craft beer?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by October 1.

Last month's responses to the question:

Where can you get the best burger in Michigan?

"Clyde's in Manistique"

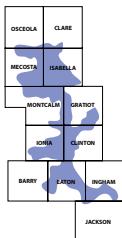
"Corky's in Allegan"

"West Pier Drive-In, Sault Ste. Marie"

"Stella's Lounge, Grand Rapids"



A student-athlete at NMU, Elizabeth Becker, is a force to be reckoned with in her weightlifting division and brings that same focus to the kitchen. With a major in environmental sustainability and dreams of owning an organic farm one day (along with an Olympic medal), Elizabeth cooks mainly organic meals. Her crockpot veggie mac & cheese is perfect for the health-conscious athlete, as well as the comfort food junkie. Visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and read more about NMU's Olympic athlete training on page 14.



Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue
Blanchard MI 49310
Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Portland office:

7973 E. Grand River Avenue
Portland, MI 48875
Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-562-8232

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1-877-999-3395

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(24 hours for emergency calls)

Tri-County Propane:

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High Speed Internet

1-800-668-8413

homeworks.org

E-mail: tricoenergy@homeworks.org

Board of Directors

District 1 — John Lord

2276 Plains Rd., Leslie, MI 49251
517-974-2518
jlord@homeworks.org

District 2 — Wayne Swiler

Vice-Chairman
11750 Ainsworth Rd., Lake Odessa, MI 48849
616-374-3141
wswiler@homeworks.org

District 3 — Luke Pohl

Chairman
15560 W. Hanes Rd., Westphalia, MI 48894
989-292-0427
lpohl@homeworks.org

District 4 — Kimber Hansen

Secretary-Treasurer
6535 N. Wyman Rd., Edmore, MI 48829
989-506-5849
khansen@homeworks.org

District 5 — Corinna Batora

7655 N. Watson Rd., Elsie, MI 48831
989-862-3004
cbatora@homeworks.org

District 6 — Ed Oplinger

10890 W. Weidman Road, Weidman, MI 48893
989-644-3079
eoplinger@homeworks.org

District 7 — Shirley Sprague

15563 45th Ave., Barryton, MI 49305
989-382-7535
ssprague@homeworks.org

Editor: Jayne Graham, CCC

 Find us on Facebook.
facebook.com/Homeworks.org

Our People May Change, But Our Mission Is The Same



Mark Kappler
General Manager

As you can see on page 5, three new directors were seated on your cooperative's board after the Annual Meeting in August.

Three new faces at the board table means we're going through an accelerated period of training, bringing John Lord, Corinna Batora and Shirley Sprague up to speed on how electric utilities work, how electric cooperatives work, and especially, how HomeWorks Tri-County works.

Directors Lord, Batora and Sprague will be "experienced" directors soon, as change continues inside the board room and throughout our co-op.

We're looking forward to fresh new viewpoints and lots of good questions from our three newest directors as they discuss policies, budgets and results over the coming months.

At the Annual Meeting, we also said goodbye to Philip Conklin, Cara Evans and Dean Floria, thanking them for a combined 74 years of service to the cooperative. Between them, they earned seven board education certificates, which recognizes a significant number of courses taken to learn how to govern an electric cooperative.

We plan to stay in touch with our three latest "retirees," seeing them at future co-op events such as district and annual meetings.

But while this change is going on, I want to assure you that HomeWorks' mission is unchanged. Whether we add new board members new employees or watch as veteran employees retire, they all learn the importance of the cooperative's mission.

Our mission statement recognizes our past, supports our present operations, and gives us a direction for our future: *To provide our members and customers with energy, comfort, and communications solutions that will enhance their quality of life.*

HomeWorks Tri-County employees come to work every day with that mission in mind. Whether taking your phone call, delivering your propane, building a stronger power line, or paying the bills, the goal is to make sure you have energy when you need it. Moreover, it also remains a top priority to safely provide your energy in a friendly, professional manner.

And, if we sometimes fail, please let us know so that we can correct our course. Our directors' phone numbers and email addresses are always listed on this page and on our website; you'll also find contact information for senior staff at homeworks.org. My own phone number is 517-647-1281, or you can email me at mkappler@homeworks.org. ■

Lord, Batora, Sprague Elected To Board

Three new directors are serving HomeWorks Tri-County Electric members following elections at the district meetings in May. They were officially seated on the board at a reorganization meeting following the annual meeting on Aug. 20.

In District 1, including Eaton, Ingham, and Jackson counties, **John Lord** defeated two other challengers to take the seat. Lord, now retired, sold furniture to schools and universities for more than 10 years. Previously, he worked at AT&T as an account service administrator and project manager for General Motors and the State of Michigan. His family includes his wife, Ellen, three children, 10 grandchildren, and 21 great-grandchildren (and two more on the way).

A member of the co-op since 1989, John's involvement with Tri-County Electric started in 1948 when his parents, Dr. George and Caryle Lord, bought the Speedway Fruit Farm on M-50 between Charlotte and Eaton Rapids.

Corinna Batora was the sole candidate in District 5, which includes Gratiot and Saginaw counties, plus parts of Clinton and Montcalm counties. She is a policy and training analyst for the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. She and her husband, Tom, have been married 23 years and they have a 14-year-old son.

A member of HomeWorks since 1998, Corinna says the Batora family has been members of the cooperative since power came to the Bannister area. She holds Bachelor of Science and Master of



John Lord, Corinna Batora and Shirley Sprague were seated on the Cooperative's board of directors following the Annual Meeting on August 20.

Arts degrees from Michigan State, and is a 2012 graduate of the Michigan Department of Human Services Leadership Academy.

In District 7, which covers Mecosta and Osceola counties, **Shirley Sprague** was elected in a two-candidate race. She has owned and operated the Perennial Patch nursery in Barryton for the past 31 years. She has been Sheridan Township treasurer for 14 years. Her family includes her husband, Eldon, and their four sons.

A member of HomeWorks since 1979, she is a graduate of Chippewa Hills High School, and has participated in educational courses for various township board positions, including board of review, election boards and treasurer. ■



Resolutions Honor Retiring Directors

HomeWorks board chairman Ed Oplinger, left, presented resolutions recognizing, from left, Philip Conklin (District 1, 24 years of service); Cara Evans (District 5, 30 years of service); and Dean Florida (District 7, 20 years of service) at the July board meeting, their last official meeting before they retired from the board of directors.



Teens Tour Nation's Capital

Jordyn Spitzley, left, of Sunfield; Kyle Leonard of Portland; and Taylor Rademacher of Fowler represented HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative and the state of Michigan at the National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., this past June. (MECA photo)



ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

So is the future of rural America.

By Justin LaBerge

In two months, Americans will go to the polls and cast votes for a president, 34 senators, 435 members of Congress, 12 governors, 5,920 state legislators and countless other local races.

While the presidential race is at the top of most voters' minds, it is the state and local races that have a more direct and immediate impact on the "kitchen table" issues that matter most to families. For rural America, the stakes in this election are especially high.

Rural America continues to experience population decline driven by out-migration of residents to larger urban areas. The trends underlying much of this out-migration—issues such as globalization, technology advances and the shift from a manufacturing-based economy to a service and knowledge-based economy—are largely beyond the control of any community, state or even country.

Although the challenges facing rural America are global, the prevailing sentiment among rural stakeholders and researchers is that the solutions are largely homegrown. In other words, if rural America is to enjoy a prosperous future, it will be thanks to the ingenuity, self-reliance and determination of its people. The rural electrification movement is a prime example of this.

When for-profit utilities based in urban areas declined to build electric lines in sparsely populated rural areas, the residents of those communities banded together to form cooperatives and build their own systems with the help of government loans. Today, America's electric cooperatives are finding new ways to support and promote the interests of the communities they serve.

Co-ops Vote

One program that is particularly relevant today is the Co-ops Vote initiative. This non-partisan, nationwide program is designed to promote civic engagement and voter participation in communities served by electric cooperatives. Co-op members can go to vote.coop to gather information on the

voter registration process in their state, dates of elections, information on the candidates running in those elections and explanations of key issues affecting rural America.

Visitors to the website can also take a pledge to be a co-op voter. By taking this pledge, they can send a message to candidates at all levels of government that electric cooperative members will be showing up at the polls in force and are paying close attention to the issues that impact the quality of life in their communities.

Growing our own leaders

Mil Duncan, a noted scholar on rural economic development issues, said in a recent essay, "far and away the biggest challenge rural development practitioners face is the need for greater human capital—for more leaders, more entrepreneurs..."

To answer the call for more rural leaders, America's electric cooperatives created the Washington Youth Tour program. Each year, approximately 1,700 high school students representing electric cooperatives from across the nation converge in Washington, D.C., for a weeklong, all-expenses-paid leadership development experience.

Previous Youth Tour participants have become university presidents, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and members of Congress. Many more have returned home to serve in many underappreciated leadership roles—coaches, small business owners, church deacons, county commissioners—that form the backbone of our communities.

Making the most of natural strengths

One of the greatest advantages enjoyed by electric cooperatives is their ability to leverage the unique strengths of the communities they serve.

The members of each cooperative are empowered to explore different approaches to solving problems and figure out what solutions are best for their community. This applies to the energy sources

they use to generate electricity, the technologies they use to operate the system and the policies and procedures they adopt. What works for co-op members in Michigan might not be right for co-op members in Oregon.

While many rural communities face similar challenges driven by similar factors, the best way to address those issues can vary widely from community to community.

Fostering connectivity

In the early 1900s, electricity access was a key factor in determining the quality of life and economic prosperity of a community. Those that had electricity enjoyed many modern conveniences. Those without it languished in darkness and struggled to compete.

When electric cooperatives brought electricity to rural America, the playing field was leveled and small towns experienced a renaissance. A similar trend is unfolding as broadband access makes its way to more rural communities.

One recent high-profile example involves Christopher Ingraham, a data journalist at the Washington Post. In 2015, he wrote a short article based on a dataset from the USDA that ranked American communities on qualities that are often indicators of desirable places to live. The community with the lowest score in the USDA ranking was Red Lake County, MN.

His story generated a lot of comments, including many from the people of Red Lake County who encouraged him to come out for a visit. He did, and was struck by the kindness of the residents and beauty of the landscape.

As a journalist who writes about data, Ingraham wasn't tied to any particular location. As long as he has a reliable high-speed internet connection, he can do his job and email his editor the finished stories. In March of this year, he announced in another story that Red Lake County had won him

over, and he'd be moving there with his wife and young children. He can make this move because of high-speed broadband.

The shift to a knowledge-based economy might hurt some traditional rural industries, but as more companies embrace teleworking, employees who were forced to move to large cities to work in certain industries can keep their jobs while working remotely from rural communities.

Expanding access to broadband in rural areas is one of the key issues addressed by the Co-ops Vote program, and Ingraham's story is just one example why.

Taking action for the future

The challenges facing rural America will not be solved by one person, one idea or one action. But on November 8, we will determine which leaders we trust to enact policies that will help small communities help themselves.

Study the issues that are critical to the future of your community. Look at the positions and backgrounds of every candidate running for every race, from the president to county road commissioner. Then join millions of fellow electric cooperative members at the polls. ■

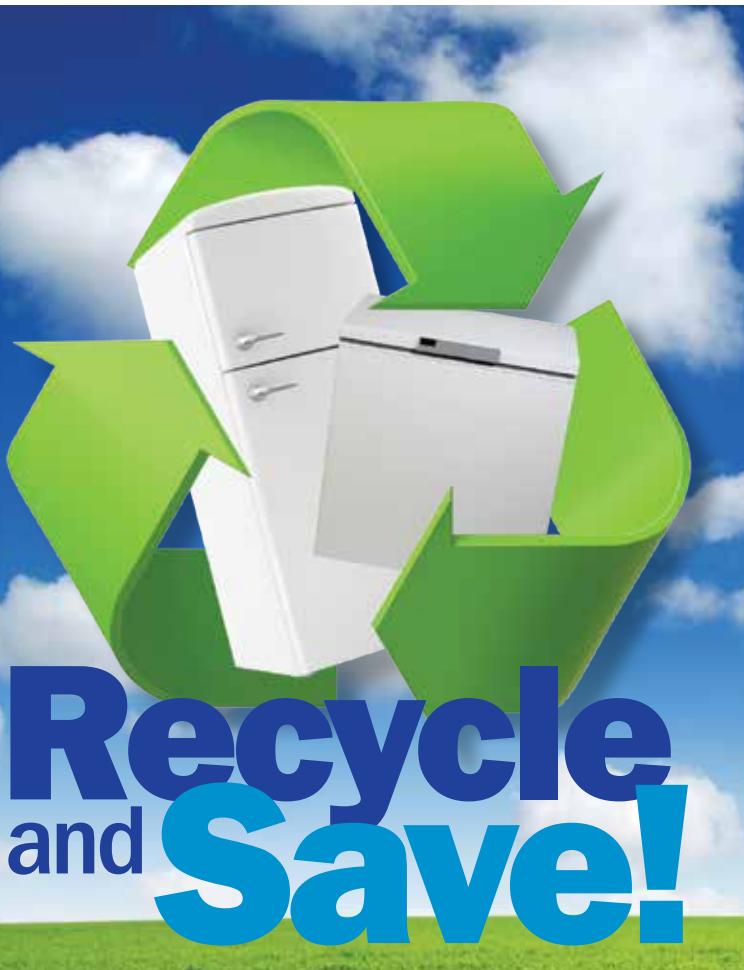


Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Efficient Energy Act

2015 Annual Energy Optimization Report HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative MPSC Case Number U-17787

HomeWorks Tri-County contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer the Energy Optimization efforts in order to comply with PA-295. MECA filed a four-year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on August 1, 2011, as required by PA 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on November 10, 2011, and we began implementing the plan January 1, 2012. WECC was selected to implement all Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization website www.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 2015 HomeWorks Tri-County collected \$552,076 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$499,903 resulting in an over-collection of \$52,173 which will be applied towards the 2016 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. HomeWorks Tri-County achieved 2,837 MWh of energy savings in 2015. For every dollar spent on energy efficiency programs, customers will save \$3.00 in avoided energy costs. The full report can be obtained at michigan-energy.org or <http://efile.mpsc.state.mi.us/efile>.



Ready to upgrade or get rid of an old refrigerator or freezer?

Recycle it and save! Earn cash incentives for recycling your old, functioning appliances.

- **Refrigerator = \$50**
- **Freezer = \$50**
- **Dehumidifier (ride along item) = \$15**
- **Window Air Conditioner (ride along item) = \$15**

Contact the Energy Optimization team to schedule a free pick up.

Shopping for new appliances?

Energy Optimization offers cash incentives for qualifying ENERGY STAR® appliances. Visit our website for a complete list of savings opportunities.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org
PHONE: 877-296-4319



**Energy
Optimization**



**Tri-County Electric
Cooperative**

SnapSHOT

Sports & Recreation



David Stevens of Bannister took this action shot at MSU's Munn Arena in East Lansing.



Rachel Spitzley of Westphalia shared this snap of her grandson, Grady Spitzley, "enjoying outdoor recreational activities on the farm."



Tina Maynard of Weidman sent in this photo taken while on vacation. "We were at Glen Arbor when I saw this pretty sailboat out on Lake Michigan," she said.



Merrie Girvin, from the Hubbardston/Muir area, shared a photo of her grandson, Connor Girvin, at his first Detroit Tigers baseball game.

Submit Your Photo!

Contributors whose photos we publish in 2016 will be entered into a drawing and *Country Lines* will choose two winners for a bill credit of up to \$100 each on their December electric bill, due in January 2017!

Upcoming Snap Shot Contest Topics and Deadlines

"Country Roads," Deadline: **Sept. 15**
(November-December issue)

"Wild Weather," Deadline: **Nov. 14**
(January 2017 issue)

"Holiday Fun," Deadline: **Dec. 15**
(February issue)

"Family," Deadline: **Jan. 16** (March issue)

Go to homeworks.org/content/snapshots to submit your photos and see additional themes. It's fast and easy. To send by mail: Include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, and details about your photo. Mail to Attn: *Country Lines* Snap Shots, 7973 E. Grand River, Portland, MI 48875. Photos will not be returned. Do not send color laser prints or professional studio photos.

DESSERTS

These decadent dessert recipes are irresistible and will satisfy any craving.

Nana's Sour Cream Rhubarb Pie

Tonya Langlois, Rogers City

- 1 unbaked pie crust
- 5 cups chopped rhubarb
- 1 egg
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar
- 1 cup sour cream
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour

Crumble Topping

- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter

Preheat oven to 450 F. Shape pie crust into pie plate. Mix egg, white sugar, sour cream, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour. Evenly coat chopped rhubarb with mixture and place in unbaked pie crust. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, brown sugar, and butter until crumbly. Sprinkle on top of rhubarb. Bake at 450 F for 15 minutes, reduce heat to 350 F and bake for 40 minutes more. Watch edges and cover as needed to avoid over darkening. Serve warm immediately.



Photos—831 Creative

Sopapilla Cheesecake (Mexican Cheesecake)

Theresa Timko, Caro



- 2 packages cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tubes crescent rolls
- mini chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ stick melted butter to drizzle

Preheat oven to 375 F. Mix cream cheese, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and vanilla together. Spray bottom of a 9x13-inch pan and lay out one tube of crescent rolls, carefully pressing seams together to form one crust on all sides of pan. Spread cream cheese mixture over crust. Sprinkle desired amount of mini chocolate chips over the cream cheese mixture. Lay remaining tube of rolls over this mixture and gently press seams together. Combine cinnamon and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar together and sprinkle over the top crust (this makes the goodness layer!). Drizzle the melted butter over the top and bake about 25 minutes. Cool completely and refrigerate before cutting bars.

Creeping Crust Cobbler

Ginny Horton, Brethren

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ cup milk
- 2 cups fruit: blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, apricots, peaches, etc.
- 1 cup or less of sugar



Preheat oven to 350 F. Melt butter in a 10-inch baking dish. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, then add milk and mix together. Spoon mixture over melted butter. Heat fresh or canned fruit with sugar, using less sugar if the fruit is canned. Pour the

fruit mixture over dough. Bake for about 30 minutes or until crust is golden brown; crust will rise to the top. Serve warm or cold, if any lasts that long!

Frozen Mocha Pie

Linda Ackerman, Thompsonville

- 1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
- 2 teaspoon boiling water
- 1 package (1 ounce or 4 serving size) vanilla flavor instant pudding
- 1 ¾ cup very cold milk
- 1 (8 ounce) container whipped topping, thawed
- 1 prepared chocolate crumb pie shell



Dissolve espresso powder in hot water. Chill, then add to milk. In a large bowl, prepare pudding as directed on package (using espresso/milk mixture). Fold whipped topping into pudding mixture; pour into pie shell. Freeze for two hours or

until pie is firm. Top each serving with additional whipped topping and a drizzle of chocolate syrup. Garnish with chocolate shavings, if desired.



Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

Join our **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

Go to **MICOOPKITCHEN.COM** and register.

Please submit your favorite "Healthy Living" recipe by November 1 for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type 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.

micoopkitchen.com

Why We No Longer Process Your Credit Card Over The Phone

By Lesa Barker

Do you ever think twice about handing your debit or credit card to your waiter at a restaurant? What could you lose if your card information is stolen, or would the restaurant be liable?

Would they help you recover your money? The answer is probably no, and that's a concern most of us have when giving out our private information.

With an increase in stories of scams, fraud and stolen information, we're always looking at ways to protect you, our member-owners, from this happening to you. One way we do this is no longer accepting your debit or credit card over the phone.

Many organizations treat card security as a one time, annual event. At HomeWorks, your protection is a daily focus—and one that is taken seriously.

In order to protect you, we follow the guidelines set forth by the payment card industry (PCI), which means our customer service representatives are not able to handle your card or the card information. We will not take your debit or credit card number over the phone, or take your card at the drive-up window or at the counter in either office.

We have several convenient, safe payment options where you can use your credit or debit card—for instance, online through Smart Hub. You can also call our automated payment line at 877-999-3395, and we have pay stations set up at both offices for you to use.



If you call our automated system, or store your card information online in SmartHub, a representative will be able to use that stored information for all future payments (or until your card information changes).

Some members have asked why we've made these changes. Why will some companies still take a card when HomeWorks won't? The reason is that YOU own this cooperative, and you pay the costs of operating the business. If we don't meet these standards, we could be penalized with a large fine, and that cost would be paid by you and your fellow members.

By protecting your personal information, we are looking out for your financial security and the best interests of all of the members of your cooperative. ■

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Tariff and Rule Changes Effective October 7, 2016, and later

The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, at a Special Open Meeting held June 27, 2016, took action on several matters:

1. Reconciled the 2015 Power Supply Cost Recovery collections and set the Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor at (\$0.00127) per kWh, to take effect October 7, 2016.
2. Revised the Cooperative's rates and availability charges to take effect October 7, 2016, to meet current and future financial needs, based on an independent Cost of Service study.
3. Revised the Cooperative's net metering tariff to credit any energy delivered to the Cooperative by systems installed and connected after January 1, 2017, at the average market price for energy.
4. In accordance with P.A. 95, elected not to participate in the State of Michigan's Low Income Energy Assistance program for 2016–2017.

For specific details on any HomeWorks tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-800-562-8232 or visit our website at homeworks.org.

Board Approves Increase To Monthly Availability Charge

As a member-owned cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County is operated by and for the people who use our electric service, not for the benefit of distant stockholders. We are run on a not-for-profit basis—but we must still meet basic financial goals to maintain the reliable service you want.

A cost of service study done by an independent professional engineer earlier this year showed we were not meeting our “revenue requirements,” the total revenue needed to fund our operating expenses and lenders’ conditions.

At the special open member meeting held June 27, staff recommended and your board approved a rate realignment, increasing the monthly availability charge to cover more of the fixed distribution costs of your electric service, and making a slight reduction in the energy charge for each kiloWatthour.

At the same meeting, the board approved a reduction in the Power Supply Cost Recovery factor going forward, to reduce the over collections since 2015 due to reduced power supply costs.

These changes will take effect with bills calculated in October. The net effect, for most residential member-customers, will be a slightly lower energy bill for the same energy use. Changes to your individual bill will depend on your energy use and your rate class. All tariff sheets are posted at homeworks.org for your reference (click on the Electric tab, then on Rates and Regulations).

This chart compares the new residential rate for 1,000 kWh energy use to HomeWorks’ current rate. We also calculated costs for the same energy use with Consumers Energy, since many people like to compare our rates. ■

Comparing The Rates	New rate	Current rate	Consumers Energy	Consumers Energy
for 1,000 kwh			Oct–May	June–Sept
Availability Charge	\$17.50	\$14.00	\$7.00	\$7.00
kWh Charge	122.80	122.85	138.17	154.23
PSCR*	(1.27)	4.01	0.14	0.14
Total Electric Service	139.03	140.86	145.31	161.37
Energy Optimization Charge	1.73	1.73	2.89	2.89
4% Sales Tax	5.63	5.70	5.93	6.57
Total Bill	\$146.39	\$148.29	\$154.13	\$170.83

Notice of Member Access to Rules and Rates

As a member-customer (member) of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative (cooperative), the following information is available to you from the cooperative, upon request:

1. A copy of the cooperative’s bylaws;
2. A copy of the cooperative’s billing rules;
3. Complete rate schedules;
4. Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive; and
5. Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for a member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate.

The bylaws, billing rules, and rate schedules are also available at the cooperative’s website, www.homeworks.org.

MINING FOR

GOLD

IN THE U.P.

By Emily Haines Lloyd



"WE'VE SEEN AMAZING STUDENT-ATHLETES TRAIN HERE AND THEN GO ON TO MEDAL AT THE OLYMPICS AND WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS."

"I LIKED THE ISOLATION OF MARQUETTE. SPENDING TIME OUTDOORS IS REALLY INSPIRING."

"YOU LEARN TO LOVE IT ALL - EVEN THE EFFORT."

Haley O'Connell,
NMU student-athlete

Photos—Courtesy of Northern Michigan University

On the shores of Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula, you can catch a glimpse of the world's largest wooden dome, fittingly called Superior Dome. It's certainly a site to see, but even more remarkable is what is happening inside.

Along with hosting Northern Michigan University's football, soccer, and track and field teams, Superior Dome is home to the NMU Olympic Training Site—one of only 18 Olympic Training Sites in the country. These training sites are world-class facilities used by elite

athletes. All of the sites have hosted Olympic or Paralympic trials, and most of them have hosted world cup or world championship events.

At NMU-OTS, you'll find some of the nation's most distinguished Greco-Roman wrestlers and



The Superior Dome on the campus of Northern Michigan University.

weightlifters preparing to make their mark in the sporting world.

"The program has been around since 1985," said Michael Kaurala, Director of Facilities at NMU-OTS. "We've seen amazing student-athletes train here and then go on to medal at the Olympics and world championships."

At the time of the interview, the 2016 Rio Olympics were just around the corner, with eight current or former NMU-OTS athletes competing in various events—Greco-Roman wrestling, freestyle wrestling, boxing, weightlifting and paracanoe.

"It's always an exciting time when the Olympics come around," said Kaurala. "When current or former athletes work so hard and then perform well—it's a great feeling."

As only one of two wrestling OTSs in the country, the draw for student athletes is tremendous.

Nate Lewis, from Arlington, WA, entered the program hoping to pursue his weightlifting and academic dreams.

"I was looking for a positive training environment without sacrificing my education," said Lewis. "I liked the isolation of Marquette. It keeps me more focused on my training, as well

as my studies. Plus, spending time outdoors is really inspiring."

The athletes know a lot about the outdoors, as coaches like to take the athletes out of the state-of-the-art facility sometimes to run along the shore of Lake Superior or up and down the sand dunes for variety in their workouts.

Dalton Roberts, a Greco-Roman wrestler, has had a lot of success in his sport both nationally and internationally. Roberts hopes to become an Olympian and World Team Member and isn't afraid to put in the hard work to make it happen.

"It's a lot of work, for sure," said Roberts. "But it also feels great to do what I love every day. People think it's hard and it is, but you learn to love it all—even the effort."

So, if you're going on a picturesque drive in the U.P. and happen to catch a glimpse of the enormous white dome peeking out through the treetops, take a moment for a closer look. Under that dome you'll find gorgeous Douglas Fir wood beams and a state-of-the-art training facility, with hardworking young men and women who have dreams big enough to fill the entire stadium. ■



Northern Michigan University-Olympic Training Site's Greco-Roman Wrestling Team.

NMU-OTS's GOLDEN GIRL

The world was watching when Helen Maroulis became the first woman to win a gold medal in wrestling for the United States at the 2016 Olympic Games. Cheering crowds in Rio were likely only eclipsed by the roaring fans in Marquette, MI—where Maroulis spent her senior year of high school and trained at NMU-OTS.

A Maryland native, Maroulis decided to finish high school in Marquette in order to pursue her wrestling dreams at NMU-OTS. Those dreams came to an apex in Rio as she battled to trim down to compete in the 53kg weight class against Japan's Saori Yoshida, three-time reigning Olympic gold medalist and 13-time world champion.

Against the odds, but with all the determination and focus she acquired through her years of training, Maroulis pinned the legend to win gold. NMU-OTS celebrated the success of their former wrestler by using her example to inspire training their current athletes whose Olympic dreams shine as brightly as their gold-winning alumna.

Fuel Mix Report

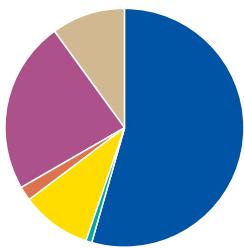
The fuel mix characteristics of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 6/30/16.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

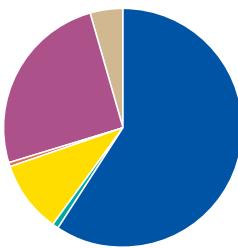
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE	Your Co-op's Fuel Mix	Regional Average Fuel Mix
Coal	50.3%	55.0%
Oil	0.5%	0.6%
Gas	17.9%	12.8%
Hydroelectric	1.4%	0.7%
Nuclear	22.8%	25.7%
Renewable Fuels	7.1%	5.2%
Biofuel	0.6%	0.7%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.1%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.0%	0.0%
Wind	5.5%	3.4%
Wood	0.5%	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, but does not include renewable energy credits (RECs) that bring the total for renewable fuels above 10%.

**Your Co-op's
Fuel Mix**



**Regional Average
Fuel Mix**



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	5.8	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,603	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.6	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0072	0.0083

*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the 12-month period ending 12/31/15.

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

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Cooperative

Case No. U-16598 2015 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

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

Under this requirement, HomeWorks Tri-County Energy Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2015, HomeWorks acquired a total of 10,719 renewable energy credits (6,865 credits from Harvest Wind Farm, LLC and 3,854 credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile) and 357 incentive credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile. All credit transfers were directed through HomeWork's wholesale power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. Wolverine will continue to generate renewable energy and bank unused renewable energy credits for future use and compliance with statutory renewable portfolio standard requirements on behalf of all of its members.

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 homeworks.org or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.

Information For All Customers of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric

Your cooperative offers a program called the Tri-County Electric People Fund, which is funded through the voluntary rounding up of your monthly utility bill to the next whole dollar amount. An all-volunteer board of directors appointed by the member-elected board of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative is charged with distributing the funds throughout the Cooperative's service area to support charitable efforts in and around the communities we serve.

Funds from the People Fund have been distributed to educational programs, fire departments, medical emergency groups, recreational organizations, senior organizations, numerous local charities, and many local families and individuals. A copy of the People Fund's annual report detailing contributions is available and has been highlighted in previous issues of *Country Lines* magazine. All grants made are also listed at our website at homeworks.org.

Your participation in the Tri-County Electric People Fund is VOLUNTARY. If at any time you wish to discontinue participation in the People Fund, please let us know and we will be happy to remove your account.

If you are participating, your monthly bill is rounded up to the next whole dollar amount. If your bill is \$78.42, it would be rounded up to \$79. The 58 cents would then be contributed by HomeWorks on your behalf to the People Fund, to be used as explained above. A customer's average annual contribution is approximately \$6. Your annual contribution to the People Fund is tax deductible and is reported on your monthly statement in January of the following year.

For additional information regarding the Tri-County Electric People Fund, you can contact the cooperative office by mail, or call 1-877-466-3957, extension 1218.

Your Board in Action

At the meeting in Portland on June 27, your board of directors:

- Reconciled the 2015 PSCR factor over collection by reducing the factor to (\$0.00127) per kiloWatthour (kWh) effective with the first billing cycle in October through December 2017.
- Following a full Cost of Service study, revised most of the cooperative's retail rate by adjusting the monthly fixed charge and reducing the per-kWh charge in most rate classes.
- Revised the Net Metering program to pay credits per kWh at the market rate for any new facilities added to the program after January 1, 2017.
- Elected to opt out of the Michigan Low Income Energy Assistance Fund again for the 2016-2017 heating season.
- Read and approved Board Policy 401 – "Assignment of Capital Credits."
- Reviewed the District Membership Meetings; attendance was just short of the record of 775 members registered in 2012; LED bulb and other Energy Optimization unit sales were very strong.

At the Blanchard meeting on July 25, your board of directors:

- Adopted resolutions honoring retiring directors Philip Conklin, Cara Evans and Dean Floria.
- Reviewed the IRS Form 990 return, and authorized staff to file the return as approved by the board.

- Discussed director compensation and expense reimbursement policies and practices.
- Learned about Phase 1 of a planned automated metering upgrade planned for later in 2016.
- Reviewed final Annual Meeting plans, named delegates and alternates to the NRECA regional meeting Sept. 7-9, and went over quarterly Energy Optimization and Tri-County Electric People Fund financial reports.
- Learned there were 115 new members in May, and 132 in June.
- Acknowledged the May, June and July safety reports, listing employee training and public and employee incidents.
- Read and approved Board Policy 501 – "Communications" as revised. ■

Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Cooperative Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. The next meetings are scheduled for September 26 at the Wolverine Power Cooperative offices in Cadillac, and October 24 at Blanchard. Members who need directions to the meeting, or wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

People Fund Provides Books, Helps Protect Firefighters

In June and July, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board made 10 grants totaling \$10,300.76, including:

- \$500 to New Beginnings Church, Six Lakes, for backpack project supplies;
- \$500 to Enrich of Ionia County to help provide job training to young adults;
- \$2,500 to CASA – Voice For Clinton County Children, St. Johns, to support their child abuse prevention program;
- \$467.40 to Positive Solutions Informed Choices, Ionia, to provide infant carseats;
- \$1,040 to Gratiot-Isabella RESD to distribute books to area children through Dolly Parton's Imagination Library;
- \$1,000 to Tri-County Office on Aging to support the Meals on Wheels program in Eaton, Clinton, and Ingham counties;
- \$1,000 to Ashley Fire Department to purchase protective firefighter clothing and gear;
- \$1,982 to an Eaton County family to help with medical bills;

How to Apply for a Grant

The Tri-County Electric People Fund provides grants to individuals and organizations in the co-op's service area for food, shelter, clothing, health, and other humane needs, or for programs or services that benefit a significant segment of a community.

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI. 48875, for an application form and grant guidelines, or visit the People Fund tab at homeworks.org.

Note: Applications must be received by Sept. 26 for the October board meeting, and by Nov. 7 for the November board meeting.

The Wheels On The Bus

By Jack O'Malley

Admit it. You just sang "go round and round" in your head. September brings cooler temperatures, football season, and the start of a new school year accompanied by a fleet of familiar vehicles on northern Michigan roads. Recognized by their distinctive color and flashing lights, school buses transported an estimated 26.9 million students in the United States last year.

Buses can only operate with a dedicated crew of drivers, and one of the best can be found in Chippewa Hills. Kent Blackmer says the first day of school can be a bittersweet time. "Summer is over, but I see all the kids again!" Yes, Kent loves being part of the kids' day. He feeds off their energy each morning, and Ken admits some days can be pandemonium, especially with the elementary kids. High school students, however, are surprisingly mellow, most listening to their music or reading during the trip to and from school.

A six-year veteran of the Chippewa Hills School District, Ken enjoys many laughs with the kids each day. Most know him by name. Some simply refer to him as Mr. Bus Driver. Either way, he says, the kids are "respectful and well behaved." And the parents? "Supportive and, like most of us, happy to have an expert behind the wheel!"

While Kent enjoys driving, he says the job does have its share of stress. "You always have to be on guard. My job is to be aware. Sometimes awareness can be difficult, especially when noise levels rise or winter roads are slippery, but I can't get distracted." Safety is paramount. Kent insists that students follow rules on his bus. And while he can't control other motorists on the road, he hopes drivers watch out for his big



yellow bus. "Unfortunately, people do run my stop sign." When they do, he gets a plate number and reports the driver.

School buses across the state roll out every morning and afternoon with drivers like Kent, happy to be behind the wheel. Kent said he does have an all-time favorite part of the job. "It may seem silly," he remarked. "But I always enjoy the reaction of the family pets when they see their children coming up the driveway happy to see them come home." ■



Jack O'Malley

Parts of the Chippewa Hills School District are serviced by HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

I Remember...

We invite members to share their fondest memories. Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.

Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. *Country Lines* retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: countrylines.com

<< Where In Michigan Is This?



Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by Sept. 30 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. 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.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the July/August 2016 issue is David LaLiberte, a Midwest Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as downtown Kalamazoo, the corner of South Street and the Kalamazoo Mall.



July/Aug Photo



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- for auto-fill customers
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 4. Discounted pre-buy prices.
 5. Budget plans to even out the seasonal roller coaster.
 6. No add-on fees hidden behind a "special" low rate.
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 8. 24-hour toll-free service at 1-877-574-2740.
 9. Online account access, for convenient payments and billing history.
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 11. Our Customer Satisfaction Index of 96.*
- * (American Customer Satisfaction Index rating based on 2014 customer survey)

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