

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Upper Peninsula Luge Club Competes On

WORLD STAGE

Plus!

A New Era Of Member Regulation

Special Member Meeting On Nov. 28



**Act now to receive a
30% Federal tax credit**

7 Series
*Ultimate comfort
and efficiency*



Time is running out to take advantage of a 30% tax credit for geothermal

You may not realize it, but right beneath your feet is an almost unlimited reservoir of stored solar energy. A WaterFurnace geothermal system taps into this free and renewable resource to provide savings of up to 70% on heating, cooling, and hot water—with a comfort you have to experience to believe. Right now you can save thousands on installation thanks to a 30% federal tax credit. But hurry, the credit is only available through the end of 2016. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer today to learn more!

Your Local WaterFurnace Dealers

Bad Axe

B & D Htg
(989) 269-5280
bdheating.com

Berrien Springs

WaterFurnace
Michiana
(269) 473-5667
gogreenmich
geothermal.com

Big Rapids

Stratz Htg & Clg, Inc.
(231) 796-3717
stratzgeocomfort.com

Caro

AllTemp
Comfort, Inc.
(866) 844-HEAT (4328)
geo4less.com

Carsonville

Certified Temperature
Innovations
(810) 300-7748

Clifford

Orton Refrigeration
& Htg
(989) 761-7691
sanduskygeothermal.com

DeWitt

S & J Htg & Clg
(517) 669-3705
geothermalservices
ofmichigan.com

Grand Rapids

Total Comfort
Resource, LLC
(616) 406-3182
totalcomfortresource.com

Hart/Ludington

Adams Htg & Clg
(231) 873-2665
adamsheatingcooling.com

Indian River

M & M Plmb & Htg
(231) 238-7201
mm-plumbing.com

Jackson/Adrian

Comfort 1
Htg & A/C
(517) 764-1500
comfort1.net/geothermal

Kalkaska

Kalkaska Plmb & Htg
(231) 258-3588
kalkaskageothermal.net

Mt Pleasant

Walton Htg & Clg
(989) 774-1566
waltonheating.com

Muskegon

Adams Htg & Clg
(231) 873-2665
adamsheating
cooling.com

Kiessel Geothermal

Htg & Clg
(231) 747-7509
kiesselsgeo.com

Portland

ESI Htg & Clg
(517) 647-6906
esiheating.com

Sunfield

Mark Woodman
Plmb & Htg
(517) 886-1138
mwphonline.com

Traverse City

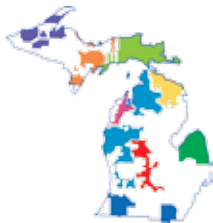
Geofurnace Htg & Clg
(231) 943-1000
watergeofurnace.com

D & W Mechanical
(231) 941-1215
dwgeothermal.com



waterfurnace.com/Credit

WaterFurnace is a registered trademark of WaterFurnace International, Inc. ©2016 WaterFurnace International, Inc.



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

November/December 2016
Vol. 36, No. 10

Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Copy Editor
Heidi Spencer

Design and Layout
Karreen Bird

Publisher
**Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association**

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, 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 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
countrylines.com

 Join us on
Facebook

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

The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

IN THIS ISSUE

6 OUR ENERGY
Home Heating Assistance Programs
For The 2016–2017 Season

7 SAFETY
Safety During Hunting Season
Tim Velder

10 COOKING COMMUNITY
Cozy Casseroles Go Straight From Oven To Table
Christin McKamey & Our Readers

14 FEATURE
U.P. Luge Club Competes On World Stage
Emily Haines Lloyd

18 READER'S PAGE
Every Vote Counts
Jack O'Malley
Guess Our New Mystery Photo And Win A Bill Credit!

ON THE COVER

Negaunee's Lucy Hill is the only full-length natural luge track in the United States. United States athletes train here before traveling to competitions in Europe.

Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

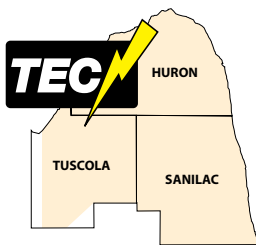
(Required by U.S.C. 3685) **1.** Publication Title: *Michigan Country Lines*. **2.** Publication No.: 591-710. **3.** Filing date: 10/1/16. **4.** Issue frequency: monthly, except August and December. **5.** No. of issues published annually: 10. **6.** Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **7.** Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **8.** Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editors, and executive editor: Craig Borr, Christine Dorr, Casey Clark, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **9.** Owner: Michigan Electric Cooperative Assoc., 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **10.** Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. **11.** Tax status: Has not been changed. **12.** Issue date for circulation data below: Sept. 2016. **13.** Extent and nature of circulation:

	Avg # of copies each issue during preceding 12 mo.	Actual # of copies of single issues published nearest to filing date
A) Total No. of copies.....	223,380	242,500
B) Paid and requested circulation.....	222,980	242,500
C) Total paid and requested circulation.....	222,980	242,100
D) 1) Free distribution by mail	436	400
2) Free distribution outside mail	2,420	920
E) Total free distribution	2,856	1,320
F) Total distribution	225,836	243,420
G) Copies not distributed	0	0
H) Total.....	225,836	243,420
I) Percent paid and/or requested circ.....	98.7%	99.7%

16. Publication of statement of ownership: November 2016
17. Signature and title of editor: Christine Dorr, Editor



Once used to describe the three devastating waves that led to the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald, Three Sisters is also the name for three tight turns and the most technical part of the Negaunee Lucy Hill luge track. Find Three Sisters Luge Pizza recipe submitted by featured guest chefs from the U.P. Luge Club at micoopkitchen.com, and see the full story on page 14.



Thumb Electric Cooperative

2231 Main Street
Udly, MI 48475-0157
1-800-327-0166 or 989-658-8571
E-mail: tec@tecmi.coop
www.tecmi.coop

Board Of Directors

HURON COUNTY

Randall Dhyse, Treasurer
District 1 • 989-551-6533

Donald Wolschleger, Vice President
District 2 • 989-975-2027

Beth McDonald, Secretary
District 3 • 989-550-7470

SANILAC COUNTY

Kim Nunn, Director
District 1 • 810-679-4291

Mike Briolat, Director
District 2 • 989-284-3405

Duane Kursinsky, Director
District 3 • 810-837-3828

TUSCOLA COUNTY

Louis Wenzlaff, President
District 1 • 989-683-2696

Jonathan Findlay, Director
District 2 • 989-551-8393

Carl Cousins, Director
District 3 • 989-871-4449

Dallas Braun, General Manager

PAYMENT STATIONS

Huron County

Bad Axe—Northstar Bank
Pigeon—Northstar Bank

Tuscola County

Akron—Northstar Bank
Caro—Northstar Bank
Mayville—Mayville State Bank
Millington—Mayville State Bank

Sanilac County

Sandusky—Northstar Bank

Visit Thumb Electric's website
www.tecmi.coop

Thumb Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



A New Era Of Member Regulation

On November 26, we will usher in the new era of member regulation. As your elected board of directors, we are using this month's column to share a few thoughts on why we made this decision, and what it means for you, as a member of Thumb Electric 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 beginning of today's rural electric system.

In the beginning, we were member-regulated. Those who received co-op service made decisions on rates, rules, and regulations. We only moved away from that in the mid-'60s 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 expensive interventions and delays from Lansing.

As a member, you have a voice, and we encourage you to use it. While we are your elected representatives, we want to hear from you about the issues. If you ever have questions about decisions made, please reach out and share your thoughts and feedback. When we discuss our options and make decisions at the board table we keep these facts in mind: 1) each of us is a member of the cooperative, just like you, 2) we each have one voice, just like you, 3) any decision we make will affect us the same way they affect you. If you have questions or concerns about operational issues—things like outages, right-of-way clearing or billing/payment concerns—those should be directed to the co-op staff. As a board, we stay out of the daily management and operational issues.

For your convenience, we are publishing the directors' phone numbers, beginning this month. We look forward to representing you in the new era of member regulation. This is your cooperative, and we are proud to represent you.

Thumb Electric Cooperative Board of Directors

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

A special Member Meeting is set for November 28, 6:30 p.m., at the Cooperative's Ubly office.

The board of directors will consider changes to the cooperative's rate and tariffs at its meeting on November 28, 2016, to be held at the Cooperative office at 2231 Main Street, Ubly, MI. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. and is open to all members of Thumb Electric Cooperative.

The session will begin with an opportunity for members to provide input to the board of directors on the item being considered. Time constraints on each member's comments will be at the discretion of the board chairman, but members are asked to keep comments to less than five minutes.

The following will be considered:

- Establish the 2017 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor, to be applied to the cooperative's retail member-consumers' monthly kilowatt-hour use. The Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor represents the power supply costs as established by the cooperative and its power supplier. The factor is established annually and reviewed monthly.
- Eliminate tariff D1.01, the annual RATE REALIGNMENT SURCHARGE/CREDIT.

Notice of changes or additions to the cooperative's rates or service rules shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in *Michigan Country Lines* at least 30 days prior to their effective date.

Participation: Any interested member may attend and participate. The location of the board meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact Thumb Electric Cooperative at 800-327-0166 a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be made before the meeting date by calling General Manager, Dallas Braun, or by email at dbraun@tecmi.coop.

MPSC Approves Revenue Requirement Increase

The MPSC recently settled Thumb Electric's 2016 TIER filing (Case No. U-17677-R) which was submitted earlier this year in March. The settlement of the case approves a 5.02% increase in revenue of \$977,060. Of this amount, 68.31% or \$667,423 will be achieved by a reduction in the allowance for the cost of power supply in the base rate per kWh, 29.95% or \$292,626 will be achieved by an increase in the energy charge, and 1.74% or \$17,012 will be achieved by a reduction in load management credits. It is anticipated that these new rates will be applied to the December electric bills. The average TEC member will see an increase of approximately \$7.00 per month. The chart below shows the changes to all the individual rates. If you have any questions regarding the rate you are on or have questions regarding this increase, please contact the staff at the main office.

Rate Class	Rate Description	Monthly Charge	Existing Rate	New Rate
D-4.00	Farm & Home (Schedule A)	Service Charge	\$12.00	\$12.00
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.12092	\$0.12257
D-5.00	Farm & Home Time-Of-Day (Schedule A-TOD)	Service Charge	\$25.00	\$25.00
		On-Peak/kwh	\$0.11006	\$0.11820
		Intermediate/kwh	\$0.07923	\$0.08265
		Off-Peak/kwh	\$0.05436	\$0.05678
D-6.00	Seasonal & Low Usage Farm & Home (Schedule A-S)	Service Charge	\$17.50	\$17.50
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.13728	\$0.14404
D-7.00	Seasonal & Low Usage General Service (Schedule SGS)	Service Charge	\$20.00	\$20.00
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.12588	\$0.13065
D-8.00	General Service (Schedule GS)	Service Charge	\$13.75	\$13.75
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.11543	\$0.11653
D-9.00	General Time-Of-Day (Schedule GS-TOD)	Service Charge	\$25.00	\$25.00
		On-Peak/kwh	\$0.11006	\$0.12763
		Intermediate/kwh	\$0.07923	\$0.08260
		Off-Peak/kwh	\$0.05436	\$0.05621
D-10.00	Large General Service (Schedule LGS)	Demand Charge/KW	\$10.00	\$10.00
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.08271	\$0.08291
D-11.00	Large Power Distribution Substation (Schedule LPDS)	Demand Charge/KW	\$10.00	\$10.00
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.06633	\$0.06586
D-12.00	Outdoor Protective Lighting (Schedule PL- 100W HPS/175W MV)	Per Light Fixture	\$12.28	\$12.52
D-12.00	Outdoor Protective Lighting (Schedule PL- 250W HPS/400W MV)	Per Light Fixture	\$20.45	\$19.75
D-13.00	Controlled Water Heating (Schedule CWH-option3-2hr)	credit/month	-\$1.55	-\$1.25
D-13.00	Controlled Water Heating (Schedule CWH-option 1-4hr)	credit/month	-\$6.25	-\$6.00
D-13.00	Controlled Water Heating (Schedule CWH-option 2-6hr)	credit/month	-\$8.00	-\$7.52
D-14.00	Interruptible Heating & Cooling (Schedule IHC)	Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.07675	\$0.08061
D-15.00	Dual Fuel Heating (Schedule DF)	Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.07196	\$0.07557
D-16.00	Energy Storage (Schedule ES)	Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.05698	\$0.05984
D-20.00	Power Supply Cost Recovery (base rate allowance)	Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.06725	\$0.06275
D-25.00	Controlled Central Air Conditioning (Schedule CAC)	credit/year	-\$20.00	-\$19.00
D-26.00	Transmission Standby (Schedule TSB)	Service Charge	\$200.0	\$200.0
		Energy Charge/kwh	\$0.06157	\$0.06299

Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2016–2017 Season

Program: Winter Protection Plan
Contact: Your Local Utility Company

Income Guidelines 2016–2017

# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,820
2	24,030
3	30,240
4	36,450
5	42,660
6	48,870
7	55,095
8	61,335

Add \$6,240 for each additional member.

Note: All customers 65+ are eligible regardless of income. Customers are responsible for all electricity and natural gas used. At the end of the protection period, participants must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.

The **Winter Protection Plan (WPP)** protects enrolled seniors and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). If you are eligible, your utility service will remain on (or restored with the WPP) from Nov. 1 through March 31, if you:

- pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, and
- make equal monthly payments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season on any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), you must begin to pay the full monthly bill, plus part of the amount you owe from the winter months when you did not pay the full bill.

Participation does not relieve customers from the responsibility of paying for electricity and natural gas usage, but does prevent shut-off during winter months. You qualify for the plan if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

- are age 65 or older,
- receive Department of Health and Human Services cash assistance, including SSI,
- receive Food Assistance,
- receive Medicaid, or
- household income is at or below the 150% of poverty level shown in the Income Guidelines chart at left.

Senior citizen customers (65 or older) who participate in the WPP are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. Service for seniors can be restored without any payments.

Program: Home Heating Credit
Contact: Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$13,070	4	\$26,756
2	17,642	5	31,299
3	22,185	6	35,842

Add \$4,571 for each exemption over 6.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2016** tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed at left or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled claimants, or claimants with 5% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

If you qualify, you may receive assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. **Forms are available mid- to late-January wherever tax forms are provided or from the Michigan Dept. of Treasury (517-636-4486, or michigan.gov/treasury).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **no later than Sept. 30 each year.**

Program: Earned Income Credit
Contact: U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service irs.gov/EITC
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury michigan.gov/treasury

The **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income, working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EITC, but must file a tax return to do so. If married, you must file jointly to qualify. File Form 1040 or 1040A and attach the EITC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2016** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the MI 2016 tax booklet for details.

Program: Crisis Assistance Program
Contact: Local Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) michigan.gov/mdhhs

State Emergency Relief Program (SER): michigan.gov/mdhhs You do not have to be a DHHS client to apply for help with a past due bill, shutoff notice or the need for deliverable fuel through the SER. This program, available Nov. 1–May 31, provides most of its utility assistance during this crisis season. However, limited assistance is available outside the crisis season. If you receive a DHHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHHS or call the Home Heating Hotline, 855-275-6424.

Program: Low-Income Home Weatherization
Contact: Local Community Action Agency

You may be able to receive help with weatherizing your home to reduce energy use if you meet low-income eligibility guidelines (200% of poverty guidelines) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit mcaaa.org to find one in your area.

Program: United Way
Contact: Call 2-1-1 or UWmich.org/2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free phone service operating 24 hours daily to provide information about help that may be available in a particular area with utilities and other needs. Learn more at UWmich.org/2-1-1.

Program: Medical Emergency Protection
Contact: Local Utility Company

You are protected from service shut-off for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days, possibly extended to 63 days, if you have a proven **medical emergency**. You must provide written proof from a doctor, public health or social services official that a medical emergency exists. Contact your gas or electric utility for details.

Program: Shut-off Protection for Military Active Duty
Contact: Local Utility Company

If you or your spouse has been called into **active military duty** you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may request extensions. You must still pay, but contact your utility company and they will help you set up a payment plan.

Program: Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program
Contact: MI Veterans Trust Fund

The Trust Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance.

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund at 517-284-5299 or michiganveterans.com

Program: MI Energy Assistance Program
Contact: Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), includes services that will enable participants to become self-sufficient, including assisting participants in paying their energy bills on time, budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, and being energy efficient. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers.

Dial 2-1-1 for more information on heating and other human services programs and help.

Safety During Hunting Season

By Tim Velder



Be aware of what's behind that big buck or it might cost big bucks.

Your electric co-op's time and money are spent every year repairing equipment and power lines that have been struck by a stray bullet. As a not-for-profit cooperative, owned by the members, we all share in this expense.

This doesn't even include the inconvenience, damages, and hazards to members down the line that require power for medical equipment or other needs, while a lineman does some hunting of his own looking at spans of line trying to locate the problem.

Hunters and other gun-owners should be cautious not to shoot near or toward power lines, power poles, and substations. A stray bullet can cause damage to equipment, could be deadly to the shooter, and potentially interrupt electric service to large areas.

Sometimes the damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months and is only discovered when an unexplained outage occurs.

Landowners are also encouraged to take note of nonmembers who are hunting on their property and remind them to be aware of power lines.

Shooting near overhead power lines or insulators can result in severe injury or death.

The main safety points to remember are:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Damage to the conductor can happen, possibly dropping a phase on the ground. If it's dry and the electricity goes to ground, there is the possibility of electrocution and wildfire.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not shoot at, or near, birds perching on utility lines. That goes for any firearm, including pistols, rifles or shotguns.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole besides utility equipment can pose an obstruction—and a serious hazard—to electric cooperative employees as they perform utility operations.
- Avoid the use of lofting poles near overhead power lines. Remember, electricity can jump across a considerable distance. ■



Energy Star Appliances Rebate Eligible

Thumb Electric Members who purchase new **Energy Star** appliances may be eligible for rebates from Thumb Electric. If you are purchasing a new appliance such as TVs, refrigerators, washers and dryers, and dishwashers, and if they are **Energy Star** certified, contact us to see if you qualify. Rebates are also available for lighting, new heating and cooling systems, and other energy saving measures.

Member Regulation Takes Effect Nov. 26

Thumb Electric member regulation goes into effect on Nov. 26. See article on page 4 for more details.

Appliance Recycling Update

Thumb Electric's appliance recycling program has closed for the year. Nearly 300 member refrigeration appliances were picked up and properly disposed. These appliances saved nearly 300,000 kWh of energy, saving members money on old inefficient equipment. Look for the program to start up again in the spring with the same EO partner SEEL.

Tree Trimming Efforts To Continue

Tree trimming will continue at an aggressive rate as 2016 enters its final months and will continue into 2017. We see fewer outages and shorter duration of outages because of these efforts. Priorities will continue for line sections that are historically problematic lines, followed by overgrown line sections, and finally, less severe circuits will be maintained.

Due to a disease in the Ash tree, which is a very popular species of tree in our service territory, we have had to adjust our trimming locations from time-to-time. It has made planning a challenge at times, but we make every effort to contact members ahead of the trimmers. We will send out a postcard to members to let them know trimmers will be in the area; and at times, we will try and call members to fill them in on specific details. If you have an updated phone number, please call us with the new contact information.

Several Payment Options Available

Thumb Electric offers members several options when it comes to making payments and turning in meter readings. You may choose the same method used for nearly 80 years at the co-op, by simply sending in the payment with the provided stub along with the reading.

Another option is to make a payment over your computer or smartphone and turn in your meter reading at the same time. We even have a cash payment option through MoneyGram offered at such locations as Walmart or CVS Pharmacies if that best suits you. For those choosing the smartphone app option (SmartHub), you have the added convenience of reporting an outage and avoid time waiting for the phone to ring through. For more information, please visit our website at tecni.coop.



Country Roads



Morning mist awaits the country road traveler in the cool autumn splendor. *By Sherry Sutherby*



A walk in the country. *By Rose Wolak*



We love living on our country road! *By Rhonda Ingalsbe*

Photo Fun

Thumb Electric invites members to share their photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Wild Weather** due **Nov. 15**—January 2017 issue and **Family** due **Jan. 15**—March issue.

To submit photos, and for details and instructions, go to <http://bit.ly/countrylines>

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



CASSEROLES

These cozy comfort foods can go straight from your oven to your table.

Photos—831 Creative

Great Chicken Casserole

Mary Ellen Babcock, Thumb Electric

- 3 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 2 cups finely chopped celery
- 1 cup (4 ounces by weight) shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 can (4 ounces) water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 1 can (10-¾ ounces) cream of chicken soup
- ½ cup slivered almonds
- 1 can (6 ounces) French-fried onion rings

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat a 9×13 inch baking dish with cooking spray. In a large bowl, stir together chicken, celery, cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, water chestnuts, soup, and almonds. Spoon into prepared baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Sprinkle onion rings evenly over top and bake 5 more minutes, or until bubbly around edges. Let stand 5–10 minutes before serving. Enjoy with a nice tossed salad on the side.

Chicken and Rice Casserole

Mary Scodeller, Great Lakes Energy

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 cups instant rice
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can onion soup
- cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350 F. Blend the three kinds of soup with 2 cups of instant rice. Pour into a casserole dish sprayed with cooking spray. Top with the chicken breasts, and cook for 1 ½ hours. Let cool and serve.



Noodle Cream Cheese Casserole

Jeanie Henrion, Ontonagon

- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 16 ounces tomato sauce
- 8 ounce package of noodles
- 8 ounce package cream cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Preheat oven to 350 F. Brown ground beef in margarine. Add garlic, salt, sugar and tomato sauce. Cover and cook slowly for 15–20 minutes. Cook noodles and drain. Combine cream cheese and sour cream.

In a baking dish, layer noodles, cream cheese mixture and half of the sauce. Repeat layers. Spread cheddar cheese over the top. Bake for about 30 minutes (until heated throughout). Serve!

Uncle Ben's Chicken and Rice

Janice Harvey, Great Lakes Energy

- 6-ounce package Uncle Ben's Long Grain and Wild Rice
- 1 frying chicken or equivalent pieces
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 ½ cups water

Preheat oven to 350 F. Sprinkle rice mix on bottom of buttered 9x13 pan. Combine soup, seasoning packet from rice, and water. Place chicken on top of rice and pour soup mixture over all. Bake for 1 hour, 15 minutes.



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 recipe for **"CHIP DIPS"** by **DEC. 4**, **"SOUPS & STEWS"** recipe by **JAN. 4** and **"MUFFINS & BREADS"** by **FEB. 4** for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

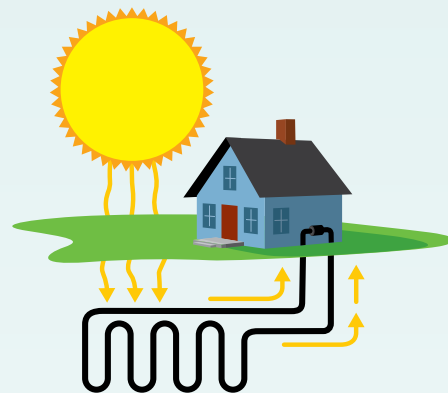
Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

micoopkitchen.com



Renewable Geothermal Heat

Geothermal is a simple technology that uses the earth's renewable energy to provide high-efficiency heating and cooling. In winter, the system draws heat from the ground and transfers it to your home. In summer, it extracts heat from your home and transfers it to the ground. **Contact the energy experts at Thumb Electric Cooperative at 800-327-0166** for honest answers on your energy choices, or call any of the trained and certified installers listed here.



All-Temperature Geothermal Systems

1103 E. Caro Rd., Caro, MI 48723
989-673-5557

Ameriheat, Justin Faber

2891 E. Forester Rd., Deckerville, MI 48427
810-376-4534

B & D Heating, Cooling & Plumbing

1148 North Van Dyke, Bad Axe, MI 48413
800-515-1117

Burkhard Plumbing & Heating

638 E. Huron Ave., Bad Axe, MI 48413
989-269-7532

Certified Temperature Innovations

3107 Custer Rd., Carsonville, MI 48419
810-300-7748

ES Sheetmetal, Gene Root

9450 Belsay, Millington, MI 48746
989-871-2067

Geo Renew Systems, Inc.

3045 Grange Hall Rd., #7, Holly, MI 48442
248-531-0325

Geomasters, Inc., Plumbing & Heating

57 Ward St., Croswell, MI 48422
810-679-2251

Geothermal Systems of Lapeer, LLC

6689 Orchard Lk. Rd. #188
West Bloomfield, MI 48322
810-240-2116

Holland Heating and Cooling

9160 Lapeer Rd., Davison, MI 48423
810-653-4328

Ingell Refrigeration

1115 4th St., Port Huron, MI 48060
810-982-4226

J & B Plumbing & Heating

7641 Pigeon Rd., Pigeon, MI 48755
989-453-3931

Jack McCain Plumbing & Heating

9651 Weale Rd., Bay Port, MI 48720
989-453-2277

Kowaleski Heating & Cooling, LLC

3977 Ruppel Rd., Port Hope, MI 48468
989-428-3371

Kulek Heating & Air Conditioning

14421 Jeddo Rd., Yale, MI 48097
810-387-4452

Kundinger & Kroll

31 E. Main St., Sebawaing, MI 48759
989-883-2770

Lakeshore Improvements

Plumbing & Heating
7825 Big Gulley Rd., Palms, MI 48465
989-864-3833

Michigan Energy Services

8445 Main St., Whitmore Lake, MI 48189
888-339-7700

NRG Control

3690 Washburn Rd., Vassar, MI 48768
989-670-2543

Newton-Johnson Plumbing & Heating

114 Enterprise Dr., Vassar, MI 48768
989-823-2341

Orton Refrigeration

31 W. Sanilac Rd., Sandusky, MI 48471
810-648-2252

Preferred Heating

7736 Arendt, Melvin, MI 48454
810-378-5454

Priority Service by Porter & Heckman

3056 Davison Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-644-8576

Shetler Plumbing & Heating

7184 Nitz St., Pigeon, MI 48755
800-547-3651

Superior, Inc.

3442 Cemetery Rd., Cass City, MI 48726
989-872-3305

Thumb Cooling & Heating

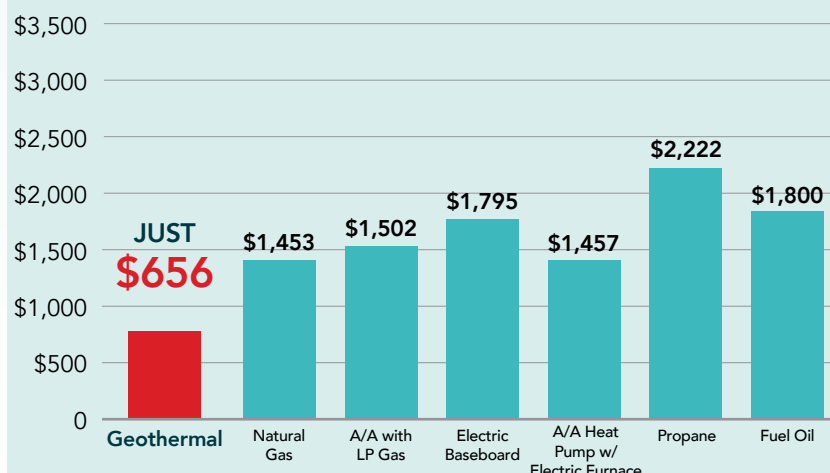
5599 Pochert Rd., Port Hope, MI 48468
989-428-4948

And: 837 South State, Caro, MI 48723
989-672-4948



Annual Operating Costs

For an Average 1,800 Sq. Ft. Home
(45,000 BTU heating load, 20,000 BTU cooling load)



Factors Used: Electric Baseboard, Air-Source Heat Pump and Geothermal—based on TEC's 7.196¢/kWh dual-fuel rate. LP gas—based on \$1.60/gal. and 90% efficient furnace. Fuel Oil—based on \$1.60/gal. and 80% efficient furnace. Natural Gas—based on \$1.08/therm., 90% efficient furnace including \$9/mo. service charge. (Electric baseboard costs do not include air conditioning.)

Contribute to THAW

(The Heat And Warmth Fund)

Keep this child—and thousands of others like him—warm this winter.



Neighbors helping neighbors in need.

- A family had funeral expenses that caused them to fall behind in their utility bill payments. THAW helped to keep the heat and electricity on during this difficult time.
- A senior citizen with an annual income of \$7,000 has to pay a large, unexpected medical bill and falls behind on utility payments.
- A 42-year-old husband with two children is laid-off. He can't find another job, his unemployment runs out...and the utility bills don't get paid.

Also visit
thawfund.org
for more
information.

These are just some of the people helped by The Heat And Warmth Fund (THAW).

THAW is a nonprofit organization that provides last-resort energy assistance to low-income families in Thumb Electric Cooperative's service area. THAW has helped more than 75,000 Michigan senior citizens and families (more than one-half with children) keep their heat and electricity on during the winter months.

Please make a donation to THAW. Your tax-deductible contribution will help someone in your community keep their heat and electricity on this winter.

Please complete and mail the clip-out form below, along with your donation to: **Department 77650, THAW Fund, P.O. Box 77000, Detroit, MI 48277-0650**. Or, make a contribution using VISA or MasterCard, by calling **800-866-THAW** (or 8429). Your gift is tax-deductible.

Yes!

I want to help someone in my community keep their heat and electricity on this winter. Enclosed is my check or money order payable to THAW. I understand my gift is tax deductible.

☐ \$10

☐ \$25

☐ \$50

☐ Other \$ _____

MAIL TO:

Dept. 77650
THAW Fund
P.O. Box 77000
Detroit, MI
48277-0650

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

To make a contribution using VISA or MasterCard, call 1-800-866-THAW (or 8429) or visit thawfund.org.

Photos—Thom Skelding

U.P. LUGE CLUB COMPETES ON WORLD STAGE

By Emily Haines Lloyd

Most Michiganders have had the experience of climbing a snowy hill with a plastic or wooden sled in tow, plopping down at the top and pushing off to feel the cold, stinging air. Regardless of the bumps or wipeouts that follow, most people laugh like maniacs, stand up and brush off the snow, then climb the hill to do it all over again.

Far fewer individuals have the experience of sliding down a 280-foot hill at speeds ranging from 50–80 mph, but that's just what's happening in

Negaunee, MI at the Upper Peninsula Luge Club. For more than three decades, beginners with wide eyes and daredevils with years of experience have made the trek up Lucy Hill to make their way down in increments upwards of a half a mile. All of this happens on a luge—which looks similar to an old-fashioned winter sled with metal runners.

"You don't start fast," Coach Levi Underwood is quick to explain. "Your first time, it's just fast enough to get down the hill, and it's still thrilling."

The U.P. Luge Club has been holding clinics and open sledding for the public since the mid-80s. It provides local communities and tourists an opportunity to experience something few people ever get to do. Sliding (not "lugging" as you might expect) isn't available just anywhere, and Lucy Hill is the only natural luge track in the United States.

"Sliding, particularly on a natural track, isn't something you find in every community," said Tammy Wills, the current secretary of the luge club, former coach from 2010–2016 and a competitive slider herself since age 13. "Yet, this one-of-a-kind experience is in the middle of the Upper Peninsula and completely accessible and affordable."



All that is needed are warm clothes, a hat and mittens—the U.P. Luge Club provides the rest. But this is not just for recreational sliders.

The U.P. Luge Club is a feeder club for the luge natural track competitive circuit. As the only natural track in the U.S., young sliders who show both promise and determination are often taken to Europe to compete—where a natural track is both prominent and very competitive.

The U.P. Luge Club President, Fred Anderson, first started sliding when he took his Boy Scout Troop to luge at Lucy Hill.

“I was hooked, and I wasn’t the only one,” Anderson explains. “Years later, two scouts from that first trip went on to compete at the Olympics. Wendall Suckow and Chris Thorpe became very successful sliders—Thorpe going on to become the first American to medal in luge at the Olympics. And they both came through this club.”

Remembering his experiences at Lucy Hill, Underwood, who competed for years in Europe and on the Olympic development team, came back to coach.

“I had so many great teachers, Tammy included, who showed me how an athlete could be humble enough to coach,” said Underwood. “And I wanted to give back to this sport that gave so much to me.”

The joy seen on the faces at the U.P. Luge Club comes from all sorts: individuals who have fallen in love with this unexpected sport; novices who are taking their first slide down a track; adrenaline junkies looking for another hit; and that inner child who remembers the freedom and excitement that comes from climbing up a hill, sitting on a sled and just letting go. ■



Three Sisters Luge Pizza

Submitted by guest chefs from the U.P. Luge Club.

Once used to describe the three devastating waves that led to the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald, Three Sisters is also the name for three tight turns and the most technical part of the Negaunee luge track.

This “three-turn” pizza is a favorite with club members and goes down as fast as a luge.

Ingredients

- 1 French Bread, sliced lengthwise
- ½ cup sweet onion, diced
- 3 ounces ham, diced
- 2 ounces pepperoni
- 4 ounces cudighi, cooked
- ½ cup green pepper
- ½ cup red pepper
- ½ cup sliced tomato
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 14 ounces pizza sauce

Instructions

Preheat oven to 450 F. Brown the 4 ounces of cudighi. Cut the French bread lengthwise and toast for 4 minutes at 450 F. Spread pizza sauce on both pieces of toasted French bread.

Then add the following ingredients to the French bread in thirds:

Turn one /Step one

First third—ham, green peppers, onions

Turn two /Step two

Second third—pepperoni, red peppers, onions

Turn three /Step three

Last third—cudighi, tomatoes, onions

Bake for 6–8 minutes and enjoy.



Have You Seen This Meter Base?

Thumb Electric Cooperative is fast approaching its 80th anniversary! 1937 marks the significant year when the power switch was first turned on. The meter base pictured on this page and many like it were used to serve member's electric needs. Many of these meter bases still remain today, mounted on the side of a house or on a pole in the yard, and can be identified by their shape and size which is round and nearly the same size as the meter that sits in it. As good as they have been at serving their purpose; they have long out grown their useful life. We have encountered many problems with these bases,

and they are a potential safety issue for personnel servicing them. They also have the potential to leave you in the dark. We recommend getting ahead of the problem by having it replaced in the near future. A proactive approach will save you money and the hassle of being out of power at an inconvenient time. TEC will supply most new meter bases at no cost; you will, however, need to hire a licensed electrical contractor to perform the work. TEC offers bill financing, if needed. If you have any questions, please give us a call, and we will help you in any way possible. ■

Metering And Service Equipment

Thumb Electric Cooperative is responsible for repairs to the meter itself. We are also responsible for the service drop, which is the line either above ground or underground running from the utility pole to your home or commercial facility. You are responsible for all other equipment at the meter location, including the service entrance cable. Contact a licensed electrician to complete any repairs that are your responsibility.

METER EQUIPMENT

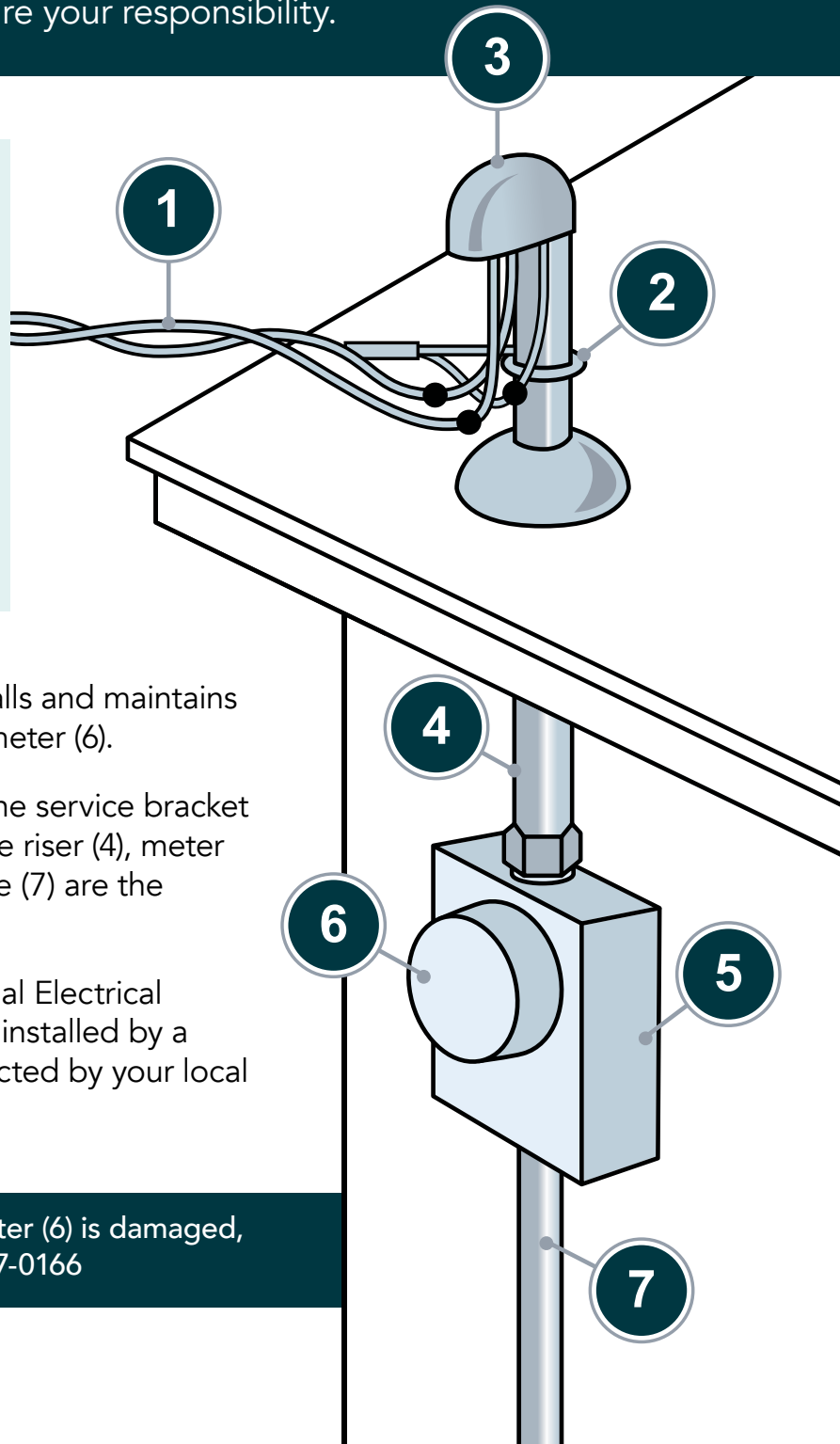
- 1** Service Line
- 2** Service Bracket or Hook
- 3** Weather Head
- 4** Pipe Riser
- 5** Meter Can
- 6** Electric Meter
- 7** Service Entrance Cable

Thumb Electric Cooperative installs and maintains your service line (1) and electric meter (6).

Installation and maintenance of the service bracket or hook (2), weather head (3), pipe riser (4), meter can (5) and service entrance cable (7) are the member's responsibility.

These items fall under the National Electrical Code and by regulation must be installed by a licensed contractor and be inspected by your local inspection authority.

If your service line (1) or electric meter (6) is damaged, please call 989-658-8571 or 800-327-0166



Every Vote Counts

By Jack O'Malley

A busy year celebrating Olympians and honoring lost legends like Gordie Howe and David Bowie, 2016 will conclude with one of the most highly debated presidential elections in history. As we prepare ourselves for a new leader, I urge you to do one of two things.

1. Vote
2. Encourage someone you know to vote.

"I don't like the candidates." "My vote doesn't make a difference." "I'm busy." These may be reasonable explanations for the nearly half of Americans who choose not to vote during a presidential election year. To those who understand voting to be a great American privilege, they might sound more like excuses releasing our neighbors of any personal responsibility for the future of our nation.

"Voting is a right, not a duty," non-voters argue. "I have just as much right to exercise my right NOT to vote!" True. American people voluntarily fight (and sometimes die) for you to keep your right to vote—whether used or not. It's a right extended to every American citizen regardless of sex, race or economic standing. It's a right exercised in peace.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court described voting like this: No right is more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizens, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined. *Wesberry v. Sanders*, 376 U.S. 1 (U.S. 1964).

Vital for the democratic process to work, your vote not only counts, but it also serves as a united voice to elected officials regardless of party. Your vote says, "Here I am, I'm paying attention!"



Jack O'Malley

Whether you choose to exercise your right to vote or not, Abraham Lincoln described it best when he said, "Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

Hope to see you at the polls. ■

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 Nov. 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 the name of your co-op.


Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the September 2016 issue is Karen Wienke, a HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as Black Star Farms in Suttons Bay. Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



Sept. Photo

American Metal Roofs

“Winter storms, ice dams, power outages...



We'll help you protect your home against the ravages of a Michigan winter ...”

Frank Farmer - President, AMERICAN METAL ROOFS

It's true, our main business is metal roofing, but this time of year we offer products that help protect your home against the damaging effects of our long, icy winters. Products like Heated Shingle[®] and Heated Shingle Ice Dam Cutter[®] are products designed to melt ice buildup on your roof before it can take hold and cause expensive damage.

Protection for any kind of roof - not just metal.

We designed our Heated Shingle products to work on asphalt roofs as well as metal. So, if you've got problem ice areas on your roof, one of our Heated Shingle options may be exactly the solution you need.

Keep the power on through local outages - no worries.

Imagine. Within seconds of a local power outage, electricity in your home is restored - automatically. A whole house generator system keeps critical systems like heat, well pumps and medical equipment online until power is restored - and you never have to go outside.

I grew up in the U.P. so I know firsthand what a Michigan winter can do.

There is no doubt that winter weather can be hard on your home. That's why we offer our Heated Shingle products and whole house generator systems; to help protect your home through the worst of winter. And once the snow clears, we'll be happy to talk with you about one of our Snow Country roofs as well.

Protection. Permanence. You deserve nothing less.

VISIT OUR SHOWROOMS:

FLINT - 6140 Taylor Drive • CHARLOTTE - 1875 Lansing Road

Call Today! 844-638-2576 844-METAL-ROOFS

Read Customer Stories and Watch Videos at:

AmericanMetalRoofs.com

See Dozens of Pictures • Enter to Win a Metal Roof • Request a Quote



Can We Use Your Home In Our Advertising?

You Could Save Thousands On A New American Metal Roof!

CALL TODAY to find out if your home qualifies for a Showcase Home Discount.

Veterans receive an extra \$500 discount!!!



Thumb Electric
Cooperative
www.tecmi.coop



THERE'S NO TELLING HOW *Youth Tour* WILL INSPIRE YOU,
JUST KNOW THAT IT WILL.

From the battlefields of Gettysburg, to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., *Youth Tour* will explore the leadership lessons of our nation's history and immerse you in the cooperative spirit. Learn more about this FREE leadership travel opportunity, sponsored by Michigan's electric cooperatives, at **CooperativeYouthTour.com**.

