

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

A photograph of a man and a woman standing together outdoors. The woman is on the left, wearing a black jacket and a plaid scarf. The man is on the right, wearing a black leather jacket and blue jeans. They are both smiling. In the background, there is a building with a blue roof and electrical equipment on the wall. The ground is rocky.

DR. POL

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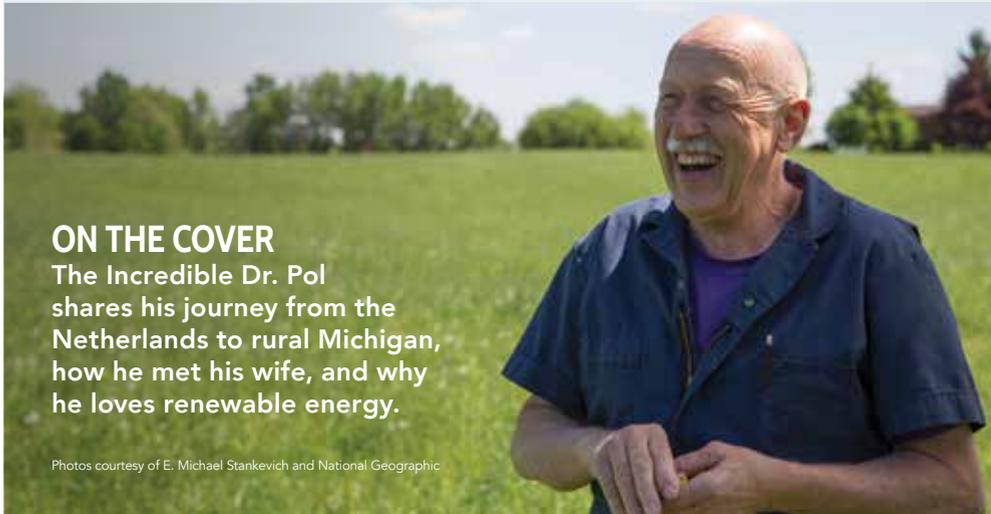


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Photos courtesy of E. Michael Stankevich and National Geographic

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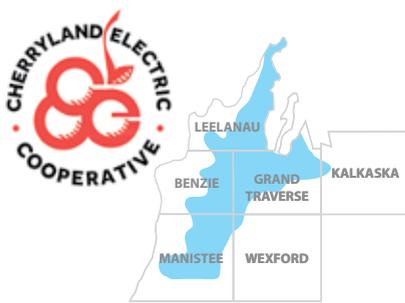
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Territory Exchange

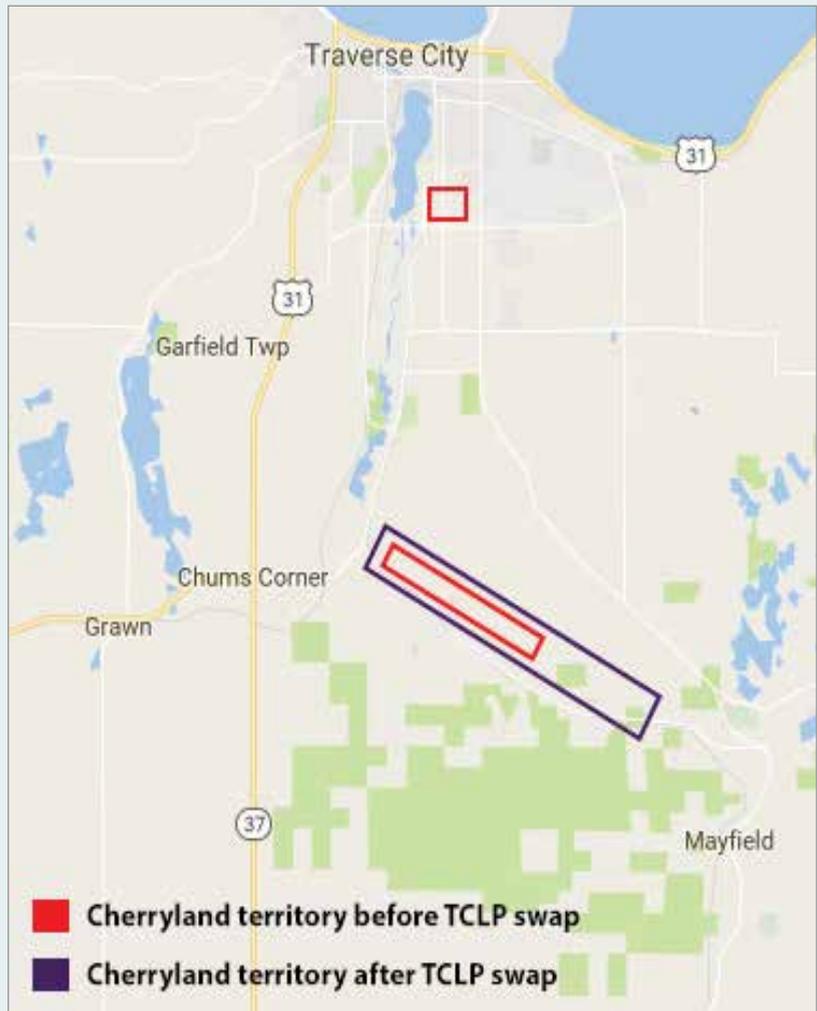


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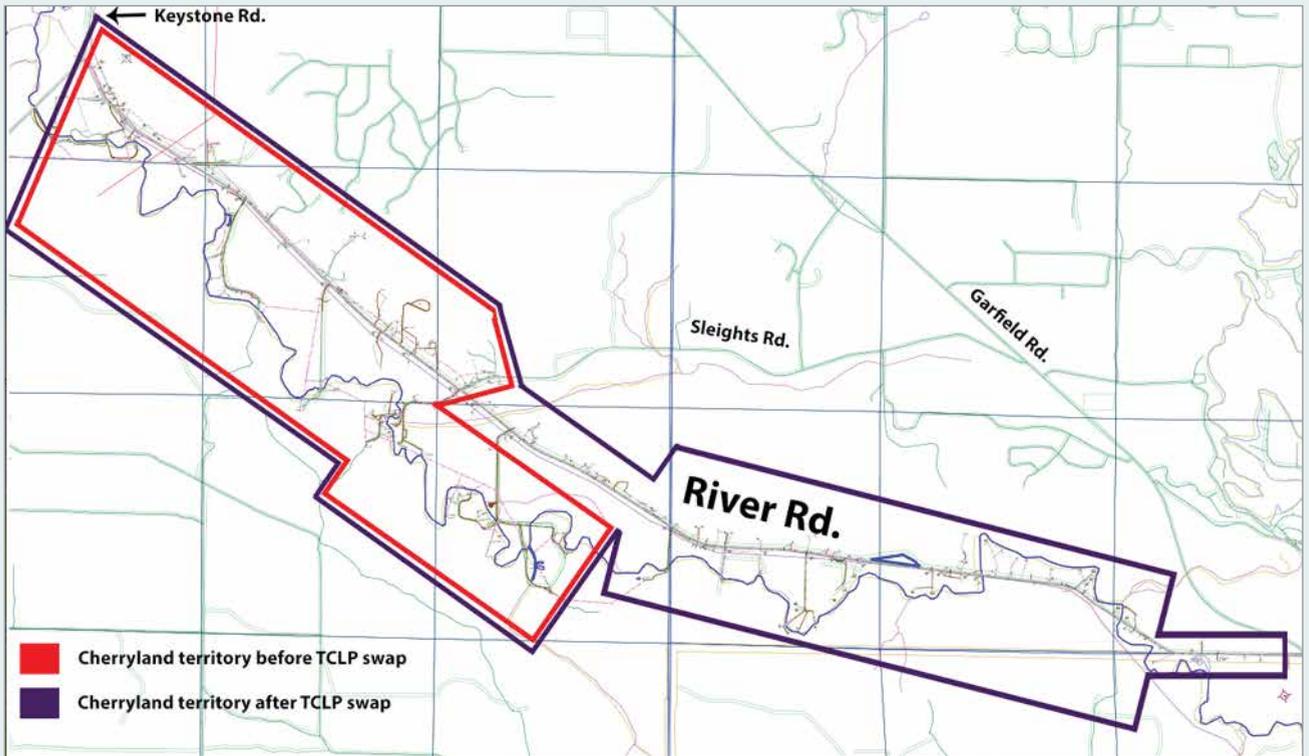
Have you ever heard of two utilities in Michigan exchanging territory AND customers/members? I haven't either. It is an idea that Traverse City Light and Power (TCLP) came to Cherryland with several months ago. As I write this, we are close to getting final signatures from both boards, and public input sessions have either occurred or are planned for the near future.

What is being exchanged? Traverse City Light and Power is trading rural municipal utility services along River Road in Grand Traverse County for cooperative services in the Barlow Street neighborhood near the city limits of Traverse City. The actual meter counts are slightly different, but the energy load based on history is almost identical.

There are a few very good reasons for this historic exchange. First, TCLP has a stand alone line that evolved in the days of hydropower at the Brown Bridge Dam serving the rural River Road area. With the dam long gone, it is the only rural area for which the city utility



Cherryland territory before TCLP swap
Cherryland territory after TCLP swap



Cherryland is investing \$1.5 million in repairs and upgrades to infrastructure in the River Road corridor in 2017.

is responsible. The municipal is on one side of the road while the cooperative is on the other.

The poles and wires of both utilities in this area are old and in need of major repair and upgrades. It will simply be more efficient and practical for Cherryland to do one upgrade that involves a consolidation of the competing lines. Cooperative members and former municipal customers will see improved reliability and a utility corridor that is visually cleaner as well.

The Cherryland service territory in the Barlow area is adjacent to the city limits. It is very old and in need of major repair. Just as it makes sense for a city utility to give up rural territory, this small piece of the cooperative's urban area was a logical candidate. The load in this area also matched the rural utility load.

While this is certainly a historical event, it is not a major transaction for either utility. The city utility will be transferring about 110 customers as Cherryland sends over just under 100 members. Thus, communication has been directed specifically to these individuals and businesses. Neither utility saw a need for a widespread public campaign.

Rate disparity is the biggest issue. Traverse City Light and Power has more than 30 meters per mile of line while Cherryland is slightly more than 11. Obviously, residential rates at the municipal entity are far lower than at the cooperative.

Cherryland is working on adding a credit to the new, incoming member bills that would slowly be lowered over a yet-to-be-determined period of years. The residential members leaving the cooperative for municipal service will see an immediate decrease. The rate impact to commercial members is specific to the individual business, and each utility will be working with them directly.

We are anticipating moving everyone to their new utility before June 1. The work will be done in phases over the April-May time period as weather and unforeseen construction issues allow.

Are we actively looking for other similar opportunities? I can't speak for TCLP. While anything is possible, Cherryland has no present plans or ideas for any future exchanges. This was a unique opportunity that clearly made sense financially and operationally while greatly increasing reliability.

Cherryland will continue to serve on the edges of Traverse City. These dense urban areas are an important part of our overall service territory and sales growth.

We will also continue to be a good utility neighbor and applaud TCLP staff and leadership for their effort to get this exchange completed for the benefit of all co-op members and utility customers. ■

Michigan Legislature Approves Energy Package



Craig Borr, CEO
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

After nearly two years of discussion, dialogue, committee hearings and, at times, frustration, the Michigan Legislature passed an energy reform package as their last initiative prior to recess in late December. The two-bill package is 200-plus pages in length and is the first major piece of state energy legislation since 2008.

One of the principal goals of the legislative package was ensuring additional “marketplace certainty” so that additional generating capacity can be constructed in our state. Michigan’s generating capacity, particularly in the Lower Peninsula, has been declining significantly over the past few years due to the many plant retirements necessitated by new, more stringent federal environmental standards.

Thankfully, electric cooperatives in Michigan are in a much better position than many of their neighboring municipal and investor-owned utilities when it comes to generating capacity and the ability to meet member demands during peak load periods. The 430-megawatt Alpine Generating Plant built by Wolverine Power Cooperative near Gaylord last year is a prime example of how Michigan’s electric co-ops are preparing for their members’ future needs. The Alpine plant required an investment of nearly \$200 million and is fueled by natural gas.

What are some of the specifics included in the energy legislation signed by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder in December, and how will they impact you and your electric cooperative?

- **Renewable Energy** – The new energy legislation increases the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) from the current 10 percent level to 15 percent in 2021. The majority of Michigan’s electric cooperatives already exceed the 15 percent renewable energy threshold required in 2021 from their extensive use of solar, wind and hydroelectric generating resources located in Michigan. Electric co-ops are Michigan’s renewable energy leaders.
- **Net Metering** – As member regulated utilities, Michigan’s electric cooperatives will continue

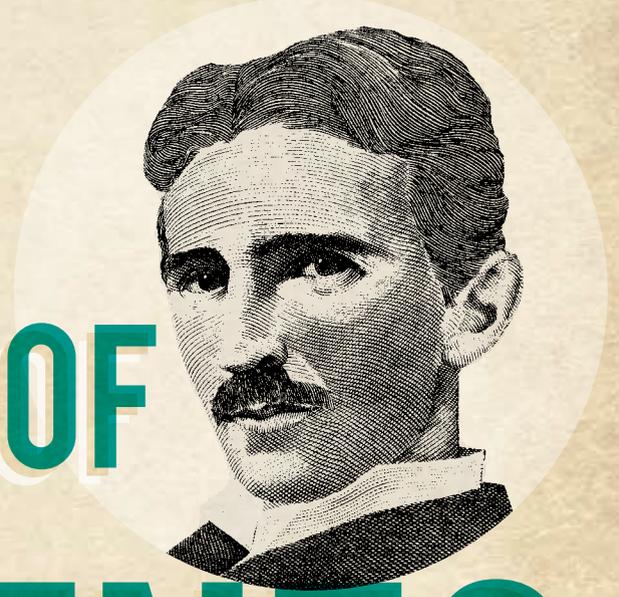
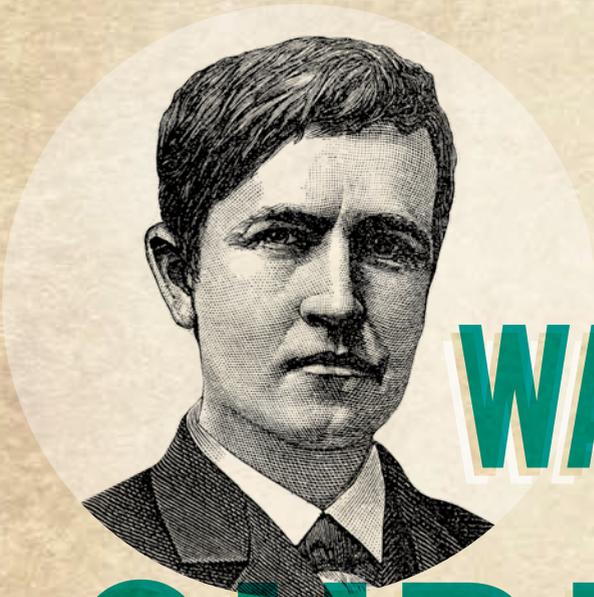


to set the parameters of their own net metering programs so that member-consumers can access their electric co-op’s net metering programs without regulatory involvement.

- **Electric Choice** – Like the state’s largest electric utilities, electric cooperatives will continue to offer “choice” to their large commercial and industrial members through Michigan’s electric customer choice program. However, electric choice suppliers will need to prove they have ample supplies of electric capacity to meet the energy requirements of “choice” customers. This is particularly important as much of Michigan’s electric generation fueled by coal continues to dwindle due to age and federal environmental requirements.
- **Energy Optimization** – Electric co-ops will continue to provide their members with energy optimization programs designed to reduce electric usage through LED lighting, installation of energy-efficient appliances and more extensive efficiency programs for commercial, industrial and agricultural members.

Michigan’s electric cooperatives were supportive of the new energy legislation and believe strongly that it will be good for our member-consumers throughout rural Michigan. We are hopeful that this package will result in the construction of new and cleaner forms of electric generation in Michigan, including new natural gas, wind and solar facilities. ■

EDISON VS. TESLA



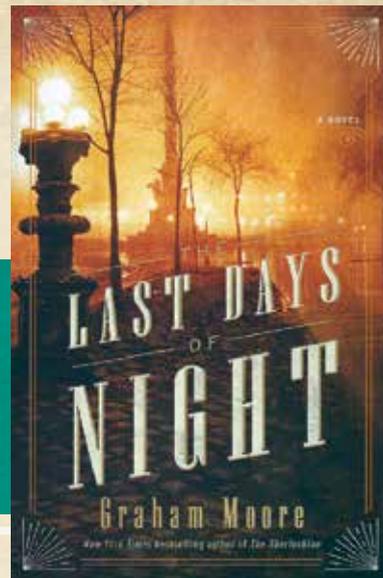
WAR OF

CURRENTS

Thomas Edison	NAME	Nikola Tesla
"The Wizard of Menlo Park"	NICKNAME	"Mad Scientist"
Milan, OH February 11, 1847	BIRTHPLACE	Smiljan, Austrian Empire (modern-day Croatia) July 10, 1856
Lightbulb, phonograph, motion picture camera	INVENTIONS	Tesla Coil, induction motor, remote radio control
Direct current (DC)	CURRENT	Alternating current (AC)
Constant and flows in one direction	CURRENT DESCRIPTION	Periodically reverses direction of flow
"Genius is one percent inspiration and ninety-nine percent perspiration."	QUOTE	"The present is theirs; the future, for which I really worked, is mine."

BOOK REVIEW: AN ELECTRIFYING NOVEL

By Paul Wesslund, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association



What if Thomas Edison was an evil genius? A man so desperate to protect his inventions that he would bribe the police (and worse) to prove his electric systems were better than his competitors? You'd have what energy-minded writers like me are searching for: A dramatic, can't-put-it-down story about electricity.

Graham Moore's new novel, "The Last Days of Night," tells the fact-based story of the ultra-high-stakes battle between Edison and George

Westinghouse over nothing less than what kind of electricity would power the United States.

In the late 1800s, Edison was turning his invention of the lightbulb into a network for electrifying the country, starting in New York City. The Westinghouse company had invented what it felt was a better lightbulb, but the lawsuits claimed it was just a copy of Edison's invention.

The much bigger issue came with how the electricity would be delivered to those lightbulbs. Edison's system used direct current (DC), which is what comes out of any battery you have in your home. Westinghouse and Nikola Tesla had developed alternating current (AC), aptly named because it actually changes direction about 60 times a second, as a more efficient way to deliver electricity over long distances. Alternating current won—AC is the kind of electricity found in your home today.

In the book, Moore (the Oscar-winning screenwriter for the 2014 movie "The Imitation Game") covers the complexities of generating and delivering electricity, but he does so with a sense of excitement.

The story ends on positive note, making the point that invention and creation require a cast of talents. The book concludes with a tribute to all of the characters: "Only together could they have birthed the system that was now the bone and sinew of these United States. No one man could have done it. In order to produce such a wonder...the world required...Visionaries like Tesla. Craftsmen like Westinghouse. Salesmen like Edison." ■

In the late 1880s, Thomas Edison and Nikola Tesla were entangled in a battle of electrical currents, known as the "War of Currents." Direct current (DC), developed by Edison, was considered the standard in the U.S. before Tesla introduced alternating current (AC). AC was clearly more advantageous in its ability to convert into high or low voltages as well as travel longer distances. In an effort to protect his DC patents, Edison tried to discredit AC. He often used Tesla's high voltage system to put on wild and misleading demonstrations, including publicly electrocuting stray animals, to showcase the "dangers" of AC. Despite Edison's attempts, Tesla and AC ultimately won the "War of Currents" after AC was selected to electrify the 1893 Chicago World's Fair.

SOUPS & STEWS

Warm up with these hearty, comforting recipes.

Larry's Mushroom Soup

Larry Rospierski, Great Lakes Energy

- 1½ pounds mushrooms (larger ones are easier to clean and slice)
- ¼ cup butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 medium sweet onion
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 3 teaspoons flour
- 1 cup half & half
- 1 quart chicken stock
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon white cooking wine
- pepper, to taste
- 4–5 large leaves fresh basil, shredded or finely cut
- ½ cup chopped scallions or chives (fresh is best)

Begin by wiping clean (do not wash) the mushrooms and slicing thin (⅛" or so). Melt butter in a large stockpot and cook mushrooms covered for about 5 minutes on low heat. While mushrooms are cooking, dice the onions. Add salt to the stockpot and stir. Then reserve about ¼ of the mushrooms on the side. Add the onions and garlic. Cover and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the flour and mix well. Remove the pot from the heat. After the mixture is completed, add the half & half slowly and whisk on low heat. Add the stock slowly, whisking on low heat. Then add the yogurt, whisking on low heat. Add the basil, stirring (not whisking) in well. Then add the wine and stir in. Using an immersion blender (or mixer), combine and chop all ingredients thoroughly. The texture will not be smooth. Add most of the mushrooms that were set aside, saving about 2–3 slices for each serving. Cover and continue cooking slowly, bringing the soup to just below boiling. Serve with two or three of the sliced mushrooms in the middle and pepper to taste. Garnish with scallions or chives.



Minestrone

Carolyn Davis, Midwest Energy

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 pound stew meat, cubed (can substitute with browned turkey or Italian sausage)
- 7 cups beef broth or beef stock
- 2 (15-ounce) cans tomato sauce
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup celery, chopped
- 2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 1 cup zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 cup carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained
- 1 cup macaroni, uncooked
- 3–4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese



In a 6–8 quart Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add stew meat and cook until browned. Stir in broth, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, onion, celery, and seasonings. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to low.

Cover and simmer for 1 to 1¼ hours or until beef is tender, stirring occasionally. Add cabbage, zucchini, carrots, garbanzo beans and macaroni. Return soup to boil. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 20–25 minutes or until the vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally. Ladle soup into bowls and top with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

Up North Venison Stew

Deb Finedell, Great Lakes Energy

- 2 pounds venison, cubed
- ¼ cup butter
- 2 cups sliced celery
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, cut up
- 3 medium potatoes, cut up
- ¼ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 3 beef bouillon cubes
- 10 ounces spaghetti sauce
- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley



Brown venison in butter (Dutch oven or large pot) over medium heat. Add remaining ingredients, mix, cover and simmer on low heat for 2–3 hours. Enjoy hot!

Submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:



- “On The Grill” due April 4
- “Chicken Challenge” due May 4

Go to micoopkitchen.com for more information and to register.

Olie Bollen (Dutch Fritters, pictured above)

Dr. Jan and Diane Pol

This Dutch pastry is similar to a doughnut-style fritter. A reminder from his childhood in the Netherlands, Dr. Pol says that big celebrations, especially on New Year’s Eve, were never complete without this delicious treat.

- 1 package active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¾ cup warm water
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups milk
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1 (1 pound) package raisins
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 quart vegetable oil for frying

Dissolve yeast and sugar in water; let stand in a warm place for 30 minutes. Combine eggs, milk, corn syrup, raisins, and yeast mixture in a large pot. Sift flour and salt into the mixture and mix well for 2 to 3 minutes. Test a spoonful of dough to see if it will fall in a lump from the spoon. If not, add a little more water or milk. Let rise in warm place for 2 hours. Heat the oil for frying to 350 degrees in a heavy bottomed, deep skillet. Drop by tablespoon into the preheated oil; fry the fritters until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Remove them to a paper towel-lined plate and repeat with remaining dough. Dust with sugar while warm.

Read the full story about Dr. Pol, Michigan’s TV reality star, on page 14 and visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and others.

Your Family Photos

Photos With The Highest Facebook Votes!

The votes are in, and we're happy to share the photo with the most votes (and some favorites) from our photo contest. Thanks to everyone who submitted a photo, voted and spread the word by sharing the post on Facebook.

Most
Votes On
Facebook!



Annual girls weekend out...tubing down the Boardman River from Ranch Rudolph—By Bonnie Kroupa



The Bardenhagen family at the Larry Skeba Barn in Lake Leelanau—By Kate Bardenhagen



Fascinating felines—By John Sturges



The Tuller family—By Dana Tuller

Enter Your Photos And Win A Bill Credit!

Submit your best photo and encourage your friends to vote! The photo receiving the most votes from our Facebook contest will be printed in an issue of *Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites. If your photo is printed in *Country Lines* during 2017, you will be entered to win a credit of up to \$200 on your December 2017 bill.

Our March theme is **Planes, Trains and Automobiles**. Photos can be submitted from **March 1 to March 20** to be featured in our May issue.

To enter the contest visit facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop and click "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs. Not on Facebook? You can also enter the contest at cherrylandelectric.coop/photo-contest. Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!

Cherryland Cares Grant Applications Due In March

Area nonprofit agencies seeking financial help can apply for a grant through Cherryland Cares. The deadline for first quarter applications is Friday, March 10. The next quarterly meeting of Cherryland Cares is Monday, March 20. For more information call Shannon Mattson at 231-486-9234 or email smattson@cherrylandelectric.coop.

Members May Give Input At Monthly Board Meeting

The board of directors at Cherryland is offering an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board on Monday, March 20, at 9 a.m. at the company office in Grawn.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board. Members are asked to keep their comments to five minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input portion of the meeting only.

Cherryland Offers Five Scholarships

Cherryland offers five scholarships—three worth \$4,000 (\$1,000 for four years) for high school seniors and two for \$1,000 each for adult scholarship (post high school).

Applications for both scholarships are available on the Cherryland website or by contacting Cherryland's office at 231-486-9200.

Members Can Serve On Cherryland's Board

Any qualified Cherryland member can be elected to serve a three-year term on the cooperative's board of directors. Two directors will be elected at this year's annual meeting: one Leelanau County director and one at-large director.

To be nominated, candidates can file a petition with the cooperative's administrative assistant starting the first day of March until 4 p.m. on the last business day of March. Nominating petitions are available on the Cherryland website and at the co-op office in Grawn.

For more information regarding board nominations and the election process, review Article III of the co-op's bylaws on the Cherryland website.

79th Annual Meeting Set For June

Cherryland's 79th Annual Meeting will take place Thursday, June 15, at Incredible Mo's in Grawn. Mark your calendars for an evening of food, fun, and information. ■

Cherryland's Board Appoints David Schweitzer



Cherryland Electric Cooperative's board of directors appointed David Schweitzer to the vacant seat on their board this January.

Schweitzer was one of 27 candidates vying for the vacant seat on the Cherryland board. "We are excited

to bring David into the board room," said Terry Lautner, Cherryland's board president. "Between his strong financial background, knowledge of our industry, and commitment to our mission, we know David can add value to the cooperative right away."

David Schweitzer is a local Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) and the owner of investment firm Schweitzer Capital Group, LLC. He has been in the investment business for 30 years.

Schweitzer was a member of the Churchside Village Board for First Congregational Church and served on their board of trustees. He was an adjunct instructor for Davenport University for 10 years and lectured on corporate finance, economics, and financial statement analysis. He is also a member of the CFA Institute.

"I'm honored and humbled to be appointed to Cherryland's board of directors. The electric utility industry currently faces many challenges, and I am eager to work with my fellow board members to deal with them. I look forward to serving Cherryland's members and am confident that I can be an asset to the cooperative," says Schweitzer.

Schweitzer's appointment lasts for the remainder of the current term, June 2017, at which time he will have the opportunity to run for additional terms as outlined in the cooperative's bylaws. ■

DR. POL

AMERICA'S FAVORITE TV
VETERINARIAN & LOCAL LEGEND



Renewable Energy

Dr. Pol, his wife, Diane, and their team care for countless animals, but they also care about renewable energy. The Pols have a long history with renewable energy, installing solar panels on their farm as early as the 1970s.

"I grew up in the Netherlands," said Dr. Pol. "With the windmills all around, renewable energy has always been a part of my life."

The Pols have invested in two additional solar projects, including their most recent which included installing approximately 5,000 square feet of high-efficiency monocrystalline panels to the barn on their property. They worked closely with their local co-op, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, as well as Ecojiva and CNR Electric.

The system is equipped to generate up to 57 kW. By incorporating solar panels on their property, the Pols hope to take full advantage of the renewable energy generated in order to offset their residential usage. The Pols plan to sell their excess energy back to the utility for the benefit of their fellow co-op members.

"It's great watching how much energy is being generated, just since October," noted Dr. Pol. "Even on overcast days power gets generated. I'm looking forward to watching the meter this summer!"

By Emily Haines Lloyd

Photos courtesy of E. Michael Stankevich and National Geographic

Don't let his frank demeanor fool you. Dr. Jan Pol, also known as *The Incredible Dr. Pol* on National Geographic's WILD channel, is all heart.

Even his journey from his native country, the Netherlands, to rural Michigan was an act of love. Pol was an exchange student, staying with a family in Mayville, Mich. That's where he met his future wife, Diane. After he returned to the Netherlands, Diane traveled to Europe where they eventually fell in love.

Growing up on a dairy farm in the Netherlands, Dr. Pol's love of animals led him to veterinary school. After graduation, the Pols were married, and Dr. Pol joined a veterinary practice in Harbor Beach, Mich. "It was a great place to start," said Dr. Pol. "But I also knew I wanted to start my own practice one day."

After 10 years in Harbor Beach, the Pols sought out a more centrally-located area to open their practice. They settled on Isabella County, in the



Check out Dr. Pol's book, *Never Turn Your Back on an Angus Cow*, which is full of amusing and poignant tales from his four decades as a vet in rural Michigan.

heart of Michigan. It was there that the Pols built their practice and their lives.

The life of a country vet is anything but redundant. Dr. Pol has treated everything from large farm animals to beloved family pets. "I've castrated 16 different species of animals," he jokes with a laugh.

It's these offhanded, hilarious and all-too-true comments that likely landed Dr. Pol his own television show. When his son, Charles, now a producer on the show, pitched the idea to some friends in the television business, he described his father as "a real character."

"I'm just a stubborn Dutch boy," said Dr. Pol. "I go around, do my work, and the camera follows. I think people are looking for reality TV that is real."

People certainly are—*The Incredible Dr. Pol* had more than 1 million viewers for its Season 7 premier, making it National Geographic WILD's most-watched telecast in its network history.

Even with his recognizable face, Dr. Pol still sees himself as the local vet.

"I love what I do. I try to help animals the best I can and make their owners happy," he said. "I'd love to see every kid grow up with animals. Kids who are taught to treat animals well become compassionate adults."

Compassion is the hallmark of Dr. Pol's practice and his life—a life that is full of love, adventure and all things incredible. ●

The Pols are members of HomeWorks Tri-Country Electric Cooperative.



Fuel Mix Report

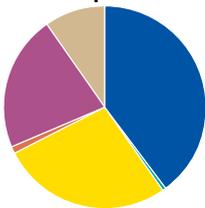
The fuel mix characteristics of Cherryland Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ending 12/31/16.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

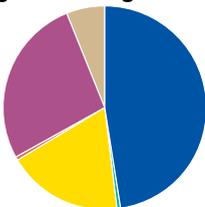
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	39.8%	47.7%
Oil	0.5%	0.6%
Gas	27.2%	18.1%
Hydroelectric	1.3%	0.8%
Nuclear	21.5%	26.7%
Renewable Fuels	9.7%	6.1%
Biofuel	0.6%	0.8%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.1%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1%	0.1%
Wind	8.1%	4.1%
Wood	0.4%	0.5%

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas; and wind includes a long-term renewable purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix, but does not include banked renewable energy credits (RECs) that bring the total for renewable fuels to 10%. The 2016 Fuel Mix numbers reflected here do not reflect current and ongoing renewable percentages of fuel mix.

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	5.4	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,578	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.5	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0068	0.0083

*Regional average information was obtained from MPPSC website and is for the 12-month period ending 12/31/16.

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

Country Lines, Your Communications Partner



For more than 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. An empowering communication tool, *Country Lines* keeps members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op. Issues contain news about our services, director elections, member meetings and management decisions that members need to know about as owners of the co-op. The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members. The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on behalf of each member at an average cost of \$4.01 per year, paid as part of members' electric bill. The current magazine cost is 49 cents per copy. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association in Lansing. As always, we welcome and value your comments.



@cherrylandec



See life through the eyes of a Cherryland lineman by following us on Instagram!

Wagner Keeps The Co-op Wheels Rolling

By Rob Marsh

Keeping Cherryland’s iconic red trucks on the road is no easy job. Between the trucks, trailers, and other equipment, there are 60 units in the co-op’s fleet to repair and maintain. That’s why Cherryland hired Adam Wagner, the co-op’s newest mechanic.

Q: Tell us about yourself.

A: I have lived on co-op lines my whole life. I grew up about five minutes south of the Cherryland office building on my family’s centennial farm. The farm was purchased in 1903 from the Monroe family, and now I’m the fifth generation of my family to operate it. We raise corn, wheat, oats, hay, and beef cattle. My hope is that my children will be the sixth generation to operate it.

I graduated from Ferris State University in 2002 with a degree in applied sciences of heavy equipment technology. After college, I worked for a few different repair shops in Traverse City before coming to Cherryland.

I’m married to my wife, Betsy, and have three young children: Lilly, Morgan, and Hunter.

Q: What is your role at Cherryland?

A: I am one of Cherryland’s mechanics. I help maintain and repair the co-op fleet of vehicles and equipment.

Q: What does a day look like for a co-op mechanic?

A: Every day is different depending on the needs of the fleet. A typical day in the maintenance garage starts with a list of needed repairs for any given piece of equipment: bucket trucks, pickup trucks, backhoes, diggers, and more. If the crews aren’t using it, we will do what’s needed to be done to return it to the service fleet. If there is nothing to repair, we also do any preventative maintenance that’s needed to keep the fleet on the road where it belongs.

Q: What attracted you to Cherryland?

A: I liked what I heard from people who worked at the co-op. Everybody I had spoken with had positive things to say about the people and the working environment. And now that I’m here, it’s great to see how much my coworkers care about their community and how willing they are to give back to others.



Adam Wagner (left) stands with fellow mechanic David Handy (center) and Engineering and Operations Manager Frank Siepker (right) by a Cherryland digger truck.

Q: And now that you are here, what’s your favorite part of working for Cherryland?

A: My favorite thing about working at Cherryland is the atmosphere. It’s a lot like working with family. As a family, everybody is willing to pitch in and make sure whatever needs to get done is done.

Q: What do you do when you are not in the garage or on the farm?

A: I like to watch my daughters play sports and participate in 4-H—showing their junior beef projects at the fair. I’m also very involved with Michigan Farm Bureau serving on the county board of directors for the last three years. ■

Cherryland’s Fleet By The Numbers

25 Light duty trucks	\$200k
12 Heavy line trucks	\$500k
11 Off-highway units	\$.85k
(trenchers, backhoes, etc.)	
12 Trailer mounted equipment units	\$.20k
and equipment trailers	
Miscellaneous overhead costs	\$.81k
Total Units	60 units
Total Cost For 2016	\$.866K
Total Miles For 2016	355,112

I Remember...

Thinking back to my fondest Michigan memories, some of them came during the darkest days of my life.

I am not only a member of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, but also an employee for the past 25 years. To me, it is much more than just a place to work; it is like family. We sometimes disagree and squabble—just like family. We tend to get on each other's nerves—just like family. And then we come together when a brother or sister is in need—much like family. When tragedy strikes, we come together in many ways. Whether it be in one another's offices to talk, at a funeral, or as a group meeting with counselors on hand.

I felt like part of the PIE&G family in 2000 when I lost my 2 ½-year-old son, Jordan, suddenly after a very short illness. My co-op family rallied together for my family. They literally delivered a truck load of food to my house. I only remember the pan of chocolate covered cookie bars that I hid in my walk-in closet under a stack of clothes. (Yes, I ate the entire pan of cookies myself.) At the funeral, bucket trucks lined up in front of the church. It was a breathtaking sight for my family. They still talk about it today. As a result of my son's death, I heard positive stories of marriages reconciling, family feuds being settled, and an attitude among many friends and family that life is just too short to not live in harmony with others.

When I returned to work, my PIE&G family was there for me and ready to listen at any moment I needed. And, exactly one year later, my family was able to meet a very sweet little girl that received my son's liver. These were truly some of my fondest memories.

Heather Homan
Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

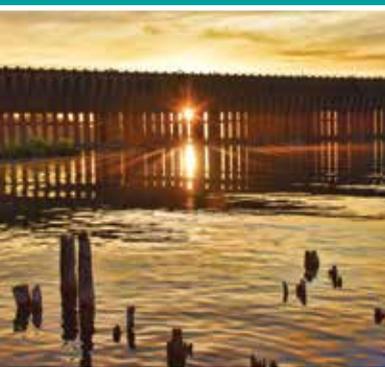


We invite members to share their fondest memories.

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 April 10 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 January 2017 issue is James Pelkey, a Thumb Electric member who correctly identified the photo as the Emergency Ark (Boat Barn) near Caseville on Oak Beach Road.

Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



Jan. Photo



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