

Cherryland Electric Cooperative

April 2017

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



JOSHUA  
DAVIS

**MICHIGAN'S  
MUSIC MAN**

REMAIN CALM

Meet Our Newest Lineworkers

Life Lessons From My Dogs



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is regulated by water.



The Earth's temperature  
is regulated by water.



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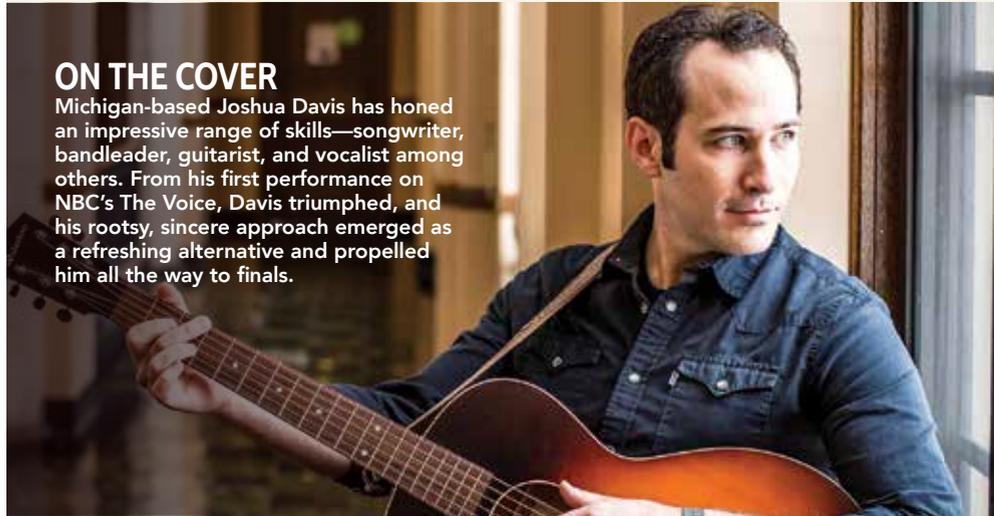


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# IN THIS ISSUE



## ON THE COVER

Michigan-based Joshua Davis has honed an impressive range of skills—songwriter, bandleader, guitarist, and vocalist among others. From his first performance on NBC's *The Voice*, Davis triumphed, and his rootsy, sincere approach emerged as a refreshing alternative and propelled him all the way to finals.

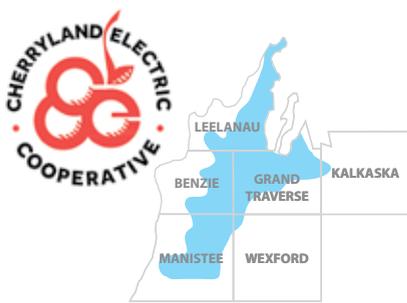
**6 SAFETY**  
Help Celebrate National Lineman Day April 10  
Plant The Right Tree In The Right Place

**7 OUR ENERGY**  
Walk The Line  
*Jack O'Malley*

**10 COOKING COMMUNITY**  
These Muffin And Bread Recipes Are Perfect For Breakfast, Brunch Or Snack Time  
*Christin McKamey & Our Readers*  
Enter Our Recipe Contest And Win A Bill Credit!  
Special Guest Chef Recipe From Angie and Bryan Aerts

**14 FEATURE**  
Joshua Davis—Michigan's Music Man  
*Emily Haines Lloyd*

**18 READER'S PAGE**  
Memories On Our 1940s Michigan Farm  
*Erma Barber Deater, Great Lakes Energy*  
Submit An 'I Remember' Story And Earn \$50!



# CO-OP NEWS

## Cherryland Office Closed Good Friday

The Cherryland office will be closed Friday, April 14, in observance of Good Friday. Normal business hours resume Monday, April 17.

Line crews are on call to respond to any outages or emergencies. You can report your outage through SmartHub or by calling us at 231-486-9200.

## Members Donate To Local Nonprofits Through Cherryland Cares

You can help local nonprofits by contributing to Cherryland Cares. Cherryland Cares is funded through the voluntary rounding up of member's monthly electric bill to the next whole dollar amount. A member's average annual contribution is approximately \$6.

The funds are then distributed by the Cherryland Cares board: a five-member volunteer board who reviews grant applications and allocates the funds to nonprofits seeking assistance.

If you are interested in participating, call the Cherryland office at 231-486-9200 or sign up through SmartHub.

## Cherryland Offers Five Scholarships

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

The application deadline for both scholarships is Friday, April 7. Applications are available on the Cherryland website or by contacting Cherryland's office at 231-486-9200.

## 79th Annual Meeting Is June 15—Save The Date

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.

## April 10 Is National Lineman Appreciation Day

Wind, rain, sleet, or snow, Cherryland's line crew is ready for any challenge set before them. A big thank you to all the Cherryland lineworkers for their hard work and dedication! ■



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# REMAIN CALM



**Tony Anderson**  
General Manager

**W**ell, it's been a couple of months under a new administration with a president who had no previous political experience. Will the Clean Power Plan go away? Is the temperature of the climate going to go out of control? How will the environment survive the next four years or maybe longer?

These are all serious questions. As I watch the membership in environmental organizations climb and donations to fight "battles" pour into these groups, my simple answer is, "Remain calm." Whether you support this administration or not, this too shall pass. Every party comes into power and every party goes out of power. This will never change, nor should it.

A lower carbon economy will continue to grow. The United States will remain a climate leader. Our leadership may be more market-driven rather than executive-order-driven, but I am confident this country will remain at the cutting edge of environmental improvements.

No president can stop the aging of our coal fleet. Many coal-fired plants have simply reached the end of their useful lives. It has nothing to do with the present administration or the last administration. It is simple economics.

Market forces were already pushing the United States beyond the Clean Power Plan targets before Inauguration Day. This won't change. Wind prices will nudge lower. Solar will continue its downward

trend. Utilities will purchase more energy from both as their affordability targets are met. No late-night Twitter storm can stop the market.

A recent Energy Department analysis determined that the use of natural gas has surpassed coal as a main source of electricity generation in 2016. Thus, affordability of electricity has tilted heavily towards the price of natural gas. We have the boom in fracking to thank. If you are worried about increasing electricity prices in the future, you need to hope that proposed fracking bans in various states are defeated or forgotten.

Yes, there is no doubt this administration will be different than the last. We will see more exploration on land and in the sea. This had to happen regardless of the political party in power. The world will continue to grow and continue to be hungry for energy. It will not all come from the wind and the sun.

Making big changes is not popular for any president. If we are patient while we defend respective positions and beliefs, we will see that there are no big, dramatic changes coming down.

There will be a better climate for business. Coal will not be as dirty of a word, just as solar will become more economical. All renewables will have to stand strong on their foundations as the attack on coal diminishes.

It is a political cycle with a twist like we've never seen, but it remains a cycle in a lifetime of cycles. Relax, take a breath, remain calm. When the tweets settle on the ballroom floor, the renewable options and the "not-all-eggs-in-one-basket" theories will still remain. ■

# Thank A Lineworker On April 10

As the “first responders” of the electric co-op family, lineworkers perform around-the-clock duties in dangerous conditions and challenging situations to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety. These brave members of our community go above and beyond to restore power to their neighborhoods and towns, often in the most hazardous environment. That’s why electric co-ops have designated the second Monday in April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. This year, April 10 is the day we honor the hard-working men and women who keep the lights on.

Resolutions adopted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) explain it best: *“Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas there would be no electric co-ops without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of lineworkers.”* Lineworkers everywhere deserve this special day of recognition.



These highly-skilled men and women light our homes and businesses every day. They endure harsh weather and long hours, all to make our lives more comfortable. On April 10 (and every day), please take a moment to thank them. Lineworkers are the heart of the co-op nation, proud and strong.

Use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support for the men and women who light our lives. ■

## Plant A Tree In The Right Place

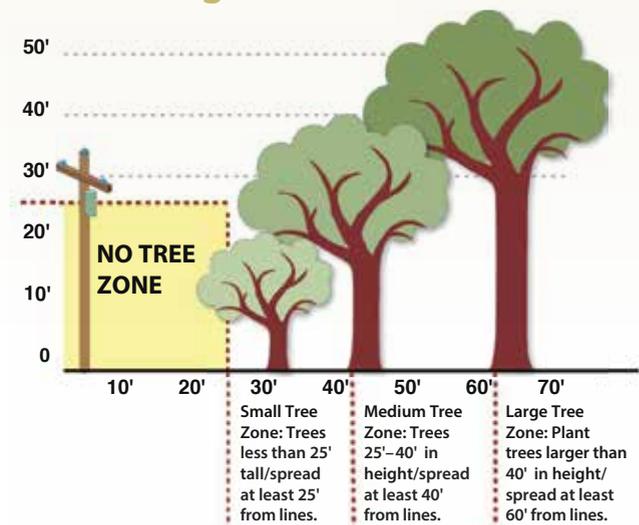
Earth Day is April 22. Show the earth some love, and plant a tree. Choose the right tree for the right place and avoid future problems with power lines.

To avoid future electrical hazards, planting tips include:

- Consider the mature height of trees. Any tree that can grow as tall as 25 feet or more should not be planted near overhead power lines. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended.
- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow and interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities could also damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.

- Before digging, call 811, the local underground utility locator service, so that accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided. ■

### Tree Planting Guide





## Walk The Line

By Jack O'Malley

Linemen are the backbone of every power system. They are the people on the front lines who maintain the grid regardless of weather conditions. Moreover, while these linemen are restoring power in sometimes the most difficult situations, the backbone of these hardworking individuals are the family members supporting their odd schedules. Spouses keep the home fires burning while their lineworker is on call or out in the field.

Bryan Aerts, a young lineman, met Angie, a college student, on the job with Great Lakes Energy. Their introduction sparked a romance that led to a trip down the aisle and four daughters, ages one through 14.

The wife of a now-seasoned lineman, Angie adapts each day to Bryan's sometimes-grueling work schedule. "It's as if I'm two different people," she explains. "There's mom mode and storm mode. When he's gone, it's like I'm a single mom."

When on call Bryan stays close to home, often missing the kids' basketball games. And holidays are never guaranteed. One Christmas, oldest daughter Brenna asked Santa to bring Dad home in time for the holiday. Bryan had been gone for days after a big storm hit the region. Reminiscent of a scene from the movies, he woke up Brenna at 4 a.m. Christmas morning to let her know he was home. Santa had come through!

While the uncertainty of Dad's schedule, combined with prolonged absences, can be hard on the girls, Angie admits she struggles, too. Shuffling four active kids when Bryan is on call can be a challenge, but her concerns run deeper than the inconvenience of trying to find family and friends to help her while Bryan's away. Angie understands perfectly the risks associated with his job.

Confident in his abilities and the comprehensive safety training programs required of all linemen, Angie and Bryan understand that each situation is different. Ice, wind and falling limbs are out of his control. And every decision made on the job could mean the difference between life and death.

Fortunately, casualties are few. And when the job calls, Bryan knows his girls anxiously await his safe return, proud of their Dad for the sacrifices and risks he takes to ensure the community has power. ■



Jack O'Malley

Photo L to R: Allie is being held by Bryan's wife Angie. Brenna is to the right of Angie, with Audrey to the far right. Caeley is sitting on Bryan's lap.

Photo courtesy of Forbear Photos

# New To The Crew

Cherryland's line crew grew a little bigger this past year. We sat down with four of our newest lineworkers to see what motivated them to take on this important job.

## Dallas Knoll

I'm originally from the Kalamazoo area. I grew up on Gun Lake and loved everything about living on a lake. I went to school at Alpena Community College and received my associates degree in utility technology.

Growing up, my family and I always vacationed up north, and I always thought I would live up here one day. I heard about Cherryland and was very impressed when I visited. Now, I live on Lake Ann and have been working here since May of 2016. I love it!

I wanted to become a lineman because I love being outdoors and being a part of something bigger than myself. Being a Cherryland lineman is great because we are member-focused, unlike big utilities. It's a great place to work and learn!

## Hunter Brengman

I have been in the area for the past 15 years, originally living in Maple City. I am a bit of an outdoor enthusiast, so living and working in this area is perfect for me.

I knew from the very beginning that I wanted to help people. For that reason, I always thought that I would become a paramedic. However, becoming a lineman has worked out because I am still able to help people, just in a different way!

At Cherryland, I'm outdoors, I'm surrounded by experienced people, and I genuinely enjoy the work I am doing. What's not to like?



## Kyle Mason

I was born in Grand Rapids and lived in Lowell for a time before my family moved north when my dad became a Cherryland lineman. I always knew I wanted to stay in northern Michigan. It's a great place to live and raise kids.

Early on, I knew that I didn't want to work behind a desk, so I studied to become a lineman at Alpena Community College. I worked as a lineman all around northern Michigan. I started with a summer job at Great Lakes Energy Cooperative in Petoskey, and that eventually turned into a full-time position. From there, I got a taste of the municipal utility life at Traverse City Light & Power before joining the team at Cherryland.

Since starting at Cherryland a year ago, everything has been great. I enjoy the other guys I work with, and there is a real sense of comradery here. In everything we do, we are in it together.

## Jeff Morris

I feel incredibly lucky to have been born and raised in Traverse City. Most people don't realize how lucky they are to live in such a beautiful place.

I've always loved building things with my hands. From a very young age, I was out with my dad helping him with his construction projects. I loved working with my hands so much that I became a contractor, which seemed to be an appropriate career path for me. But I wasn't satisfied. I had a couple of friends that were linemen who encouraged me to try a lineman apprenticeship and sent me in the right direction. Needless to say, I took their advice, and haven't looked back in these last 10 years.

My wife and I got married this last fall and want to start a family. Since I had been a contractor my whole career, traveling and living in hotels—it would have been very difficult to raise a family the way we would like. So when an opportunity came up to be a lineman at Cherryland and be able to come home every night, I jumped on it! All I can say is, it's great working in my backyard again.



# MUFFINS & BREAD

These recipes are perfect for breakfast, brunch or snack time.

## Banana Chocolate Chip Bread

*Pamela Blamer, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op*

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup butter, at room temperature
- 8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature
- 2 cups granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 3 cups flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups mashed ripe bananas (about 3–4 medium)
- 1 cup chocolate chips (I use mini chips)
- 1 cup chopped nuts, optional

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, beat butter and cream cheese with mixer until combined. Add sugar and eggs. In a separate bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Stir dry ingredients into mixture. Add mashed bananas. Mix. Add chocolate chips. Stir in by hand. Spoon mixture into two greased bread pans. Sprinkle nuts (optional) over batter. Bake at 350 F for 1 hour. Test for doneness.



## Hawaiian Loaf

Janice Clark, Cherryland

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup mashed, ripe banana
- 4 cups flour
- 2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 can (20-ounce) can crushed pineapple, undrained
- 1 cup flaked coconut

Preheat oven to 350 F. Beat butter with electric mixer until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in sugar until light. Add eggs and beat well. Fold in mashed bananas. Stir flour, baking power, baking soda and salt into butter mixture till just smooth (don't over-mix.) Fold in pineapple and coconut. Spoon batter into two greased and floured 9x5 loaf pans. Bake at 350 F for 60–70 minutes or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean.



## Lemon Raspberry Muffins

Mary Ala, Ontonagon REA

- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup half-and-half
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- 1 teaspoon lemon extract
- 1 cup fresh or frozen unsweetened raspberries, do not thaw (Blueberries also work well.)

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, mix eggs, cream, vegetable oil and extract. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in berries. Fill cupcake liners ⅔ full. Bake at 350 F for 18–20 minutes.

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

- “Chicken Challenge” due May 4
- “Apple Recipes” due July 5

Go to [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for more information and to register.



## Garlic Cheddar Chicken

Angie and Bryan Aerts

In honor of National Lineman Appreciation Day on April 10, here is a family favorite for a busy day from Angie Aerts, wife of Great Lakes Energy lineman, Bryan Aerts.

- ½ cup butter
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- ¾ cup dry bread crumbs
- ½ cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1½ cups shredded Cheddar cheese
- ¼ teaspoon dried parsley
- ¼ teaspoon dried oregano
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 8 skinless, boneless chicken breast halves—pounded thin

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Melt the butter in a saucepan over low heat and cook the garlic until tender, about 5 minutes. In a shallow bowl, mix the bread crumbs, Parmesan cheese, Cheddar cheese, parsley, oregano, pepper, and salt. Dip each chicken breast in the garlic butter to coat, then press into the bread crumb mixture. Arrange the coated chicken breasts in a 9 x 13 inch baking dish. Drizzle with any remaining butter and top with any remaining bread crumb mixture. Bake 30 minutes in the preheated oven, or until chicken is no longer pink and juices run clear.

Read the full story about the life of a lineman on page 7 and visit [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for this recipe and others.



See life through the eyes of Cherryland's line crew by following us on Instagram!

# Life Lessons From My Dogs

This month's "Animals Near Me" photo contest received a record number of submissions and votes. We've had a similar response to one other photo contest. The theme? "Cute Pets."

As I ponder the overwhelming response to these contest themes, I am struck by the indelible mark that pets leave in our lives and on our families.

In December, my husband and I lost our two Boxer dogs within just a few days of one another.

Our seven-year-old, Suki, passed away unexpectedly from the dog equivalent of a heart attack. Suki was a gentle, brindle-colored Boxer who believed there was no human problem so big she couldn't lick it.

She was shameless and unapologetic about her affection. She rejected the idea that some people aren't dog people; choosing instead to believe they just hadn't been loved hard enough yet. She was a bit of a canine evangelist in that regard.

She embraced a simple approach to happiness. She was content with a dog bed in the sun, a companion to cuddle and an occasional treat for good behavior.

She was infinitely playful and never really grew up. She loved hide and seek, and she loved to swim.

She taught me to love freely, find joy in simplicity and to never stop having fun.

A few months after we got Suki we sensed that she needed a companion. That's when we adopted Luna. Luna was five at the time and so much older and wiser than Suki. I assumed this was a consequence of age, but I was wrong; Luna was an old soul.

Luna was amazingly intuitive and wicked smart. She had a knack for opening cabinets and doors, and planning escapes and baked good heists that would have made any seasoned criminal proud.

She didn't give her love as freely as Suki, but once she loved you, she loved you unconditionally and forever.



My dogs, Suki (left) and Luna (right), brought joy to times of celebration and times of quiet reflection.

She was infinitely loyal and fiercely protective of those she loved. She hated to be left behind or left alone, and I always suspected it was because she worried about who would protect her loved ones if she wasn't with them.

When I would leave the house, I would often lean down and say, "I'll protect myself now; you stay here and protect Suki."

We had noticed signs that her health was failing but the weekend Suki died, Luna began a rapid decline. Just three days after we lost Suki, we found out that Luna's body was riddled with cancer. Perhaps sensing that her earthly work was done, she let us know that it was time.

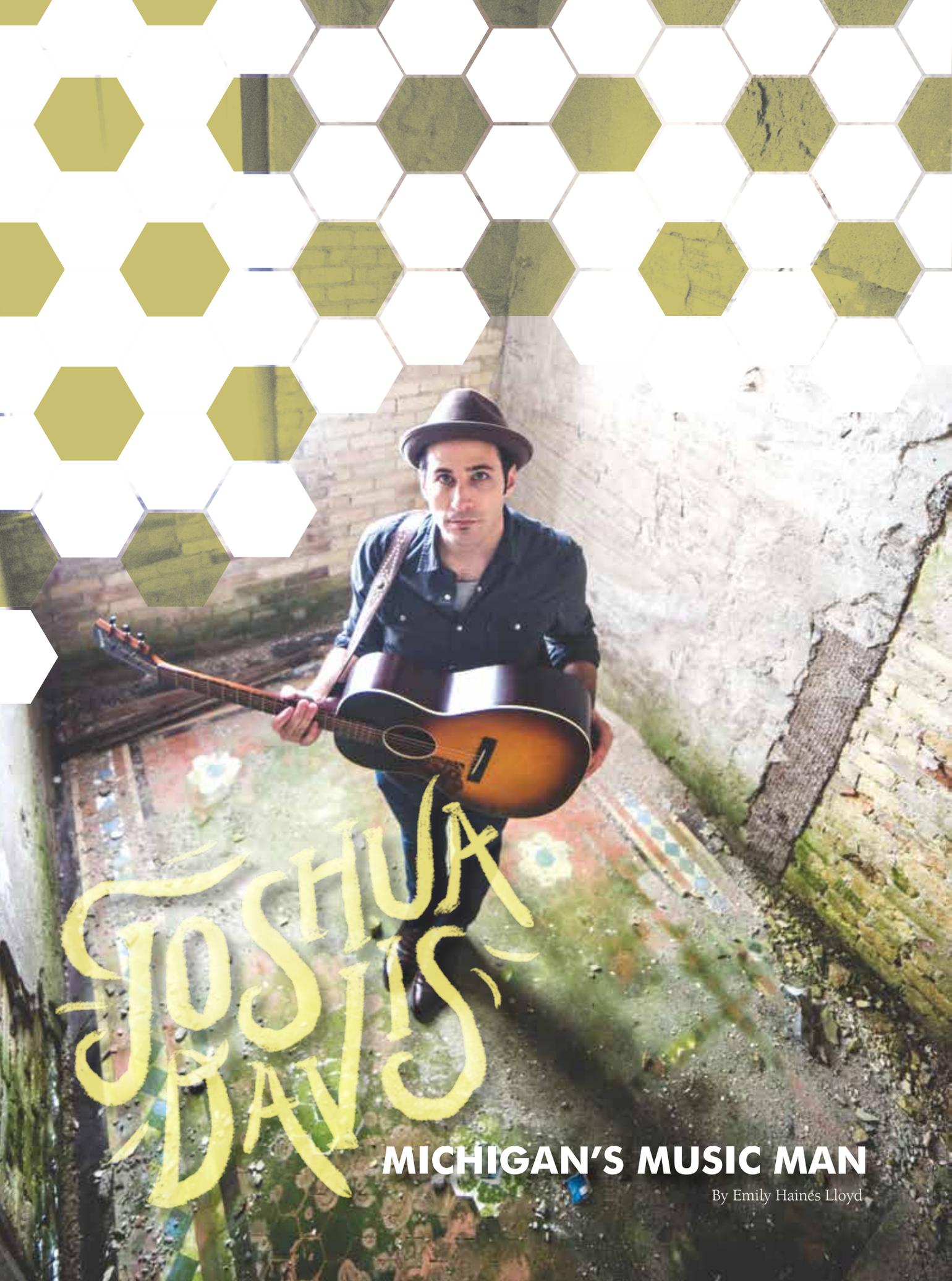
She taught me to love deeply, to find joy in the quiet times, and to never abandon a friend in need.

Through my pets and your shared pictures of yours, I am reminded of how much we can learn from them about how to love and how to live. The world would be a better place if we emulated the unwavering loyalty and selfless devotion of our dogs.



**Rachel Johnson**  
Member Relations  
Manager

Or, as Charles Schulz famously said, "All his life he tried to be a good person. Many times, however, he failed. For, after all, he was only human. He wasn't a dog." ■



# GOSHUA DAVIS

## MICHIGAN'S MUSIC MAN

By Emily Haines Lloyd



**M**any people were introduced to Joshua Davis on NBC's *The Voice*, where he stunned audiences with his authentic, grassroots sound and Midwest charm. However, those who are tuned into the Michigan music scene have known Davis for ages, both as a solo artist and member of the popular band, *Steppin' In It*. Fans close to home weren't at all surprised by his popularity on the show or that he made it all the way to the show's finals.

Born in Marquette and raised on the east side of the state, Davis comes from deep roots in both music and humility.

"My parents lived off the grid—in the woods, no running water, no electricity. Real pioneer-type stuff," Davis said. "They took me to folk music festivals as a kid and all of that really had an effect on me."

Davis describes folk music as "music by and for the people," and that legacy has definitely impacted his career and his lifestyle.

"There was a point where my wife and I knew we either wanted to move to a larger city or find a place in the country," explained Davis. "Eventually we chose a home in Leelanau County. We'd been coming up here for years—playing music, vacationing, camping—it's remarkable—all the beauty, fresh water and community we have here."

Community is another popular theme with Davis, who is a member of *Earthworks Music*, a collective group of independent artists who use music to raise awareness, mentor youth, build community and celebrate local culture. While Davis is involved with many community efforts that range from social and hardship causes to environmental work, he notes that fine arts education for kids is especially close to his heart.

"Obviously, I love music and I think it's important to pass on the history and power of music to kids," said Davis.

Davis has taught classes at Interlochen, the prestigious music school in northern Michigan. He has taught songwriting and instrumental classes to children, as well as adults, through the school's College of Creative Arts program.

"Interlochen is an incredible place," said Davis. "There's such a unique energy there and so much talent and enthusiasm; it's hard not to be inspired by the students."

Davis has settled back into life in the Mitten State after the rush of additional attention created by *The Voice*. While Los Angeles provided an opportunity of a lifetime, this husband, father, activist, teacher and, of course, musician has returned home to Michigan where there's nothing like real life to inspire new music.

**After *The Voice*, Davis got right back to the studio, cutting a seven-inch vinyl with two tracks "Always Gonna Be Here For You" and "Let Me In." These tracks are included on his most recent album, *The Way Back Home*, released in February 2017.**

# Animals Near Me

## Photos With The Highest Facebook Votes!

The votes are in, and we're happy to share the photo with the most Facebook 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.



Legacy—By Lisa Coates



Empire sunset—By Susi Pilath



Deer ventured into our backyard for some corn—By KC Springberg



A girl and her puppy—love at first sight—By Kimberly Kroupa



Gracie enjoyed her first ride on our family's miniature horse, Elvis—By Kelli Weber



Pretty Princess the Chinchilla—By *Melissa Schneider*



Snow Dog—By *Sarah Johnson*



Just hangin' around—By *Lynell Singer*



Great place for shade—By *Jennifer Grochowalski*



Bailey enjoyed a boat ride on Elk Lake—By *Debbie Bantien*

 **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 April theme is **Farms and Barns**. Photos can be submitted from **April 1** to **April 20** to be featured in our June issue.

To enter the contest visit [facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop](https://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](https://cherrylandelectric.coop/photo-contest). Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!

# I Remember...

## Memories Of 1940s Michigan Farm Life

Born in the winter of 1929 at our home on Elder Road in Alden, Mich., I was the ninth child in a family of 12. When World War II ended, life started to become normal again. My dad was back home from Detroit where he had worked during the war to earn money for a new barn—as ours had blown down from high winds in 1940.

Having no barn meant my dad had to rent a barn a half-mile away on Helena Road for our livestock. It was up to my mother, brother and me to tend to our livestock while dad worked in Detroit. Mother would get my brother up at 4:30 a.m. every day to go milk the cows before going to school in Elk Rapids. We were transported to school by bus at that time. It was my job to let the cattle and horses out of the barn at noon to go down to the cistern, and break the ice (during winters), so they could have a drink of water. I was in the seventh and eighth grades during that time at Alden Elementary School.

In 1946, after dad returned home, he was able to build a new barn with steel stanchions and automatic milkers. He also was able to repair the well that had quit working when I was quite small. I remember we had to carry our drinking water for years from our neighbor's property. We hauled water from the creek, and my mother would heat it in a copper boiler for washing clothes. She washed our clothes by hand on a wash board until she finally had a gasoline washer for all of us.

In 1947, I was a senior at Elk Rapids School, and the first day returning home from school after the Christmas holiday I received the best surprise—a fully lighted house! Mom and dad would now have life a little easier. Electricity was God's blessing to my parents! They deserved it!

I would never trade those first 17 years of growing up with hard work and a loving family. Electricity sure made life much easier, for which we were all thankful. Not having electricity for the first part of my life made me appreciate it as a real commodity. Today, I'm thankful for all the people that work hard to keep our lights on.

*Erma Barber Deater, Great Lakes Energy  
Cooperative member for more than 50 years*



Actual photos from 1946–1947

*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](http://countrylines.com) or email to [cdorr@meca.coop](mailto:cdorr@meca.coop)

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