
MICHIGAN

COUNTRY LINES

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Courageous Coffee

The Perfect Blend

Building A Fiber System

Our Safety Story

Teens Visit U.S. Capitol

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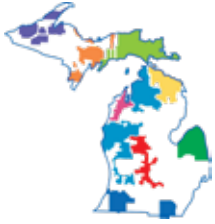
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Win \$150 for stories published.

Guest Column

Country Lines invites members to submit stories.

Guidelines

1. Approximately 350 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Submit your guest column at countrylines.com under the MI Co-op Community tab

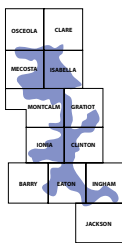
Win \$50 for stories published.

I Remember...

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Submit your memory at: countrylines.com under the MI Co-op Community tab.



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Portland office/Mail payments to:
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Portland, MI 48875
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday

Blanchard office:
3681 Costabella Avenue
Blanchard, MI 49310
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Night deposit box available at both locations.

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(24 hours for emergency calls)

Tri-County Propane:
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HomeWorks Connect
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Your Voice, Your Choice

Mark Kappler, General Manager

We make choices every day: which route to take to work, where to have lunch, where to go on vacation, what temperature to set the thermostat. We take this ability to make choices for granted.

There are at least two days this year that your choices should not be taken for granted: August 7 and November 6.

2018 is going to be an interesting and important election year, and electric cooperative members have the opportunity to play a vital role in it:

- Michigan voters will decide a number of U.S. Senate and Congressional seats.
- We will select a new governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general.
- And, all 38 seats in the Michigan Senate and all 110 seats in the Michigan House of Representatives are up for election. Of those, 26 Senate seats and 24 House seats are termed out, so someone new to those seats will be elected.
- There are several statewide ballot proposals planned, not to mention your local city or township and county seats.

How can you make sure your choice is known, and your voice is heard? **VOTE!**

The last day to register for the August primaries is July 9, and you can request an absentee ballot until August 4. For the general election, the last day to register is October 9, and the absentee ballot deadline is November 3.

Because rural issues are too important to leave for others to determine, America's electric cooperatives created a website, VOTE.COOP, to help co-op members find key voting information. You can register to vote, find your local elected officials, and review information on candidates and issues.

Reliable electricity, rural infrastructure and access to rural broadband are just a few of the issues we all care about. These issues will only become priorities if we continue to make sure our elected officials hear our voices through our votes.

When we miss a chance to vote, we also lose the opportunity to communicate our concern to our leaders about the issues that matter to us, where we work, live, and raise families.

Registering to vote and showing up to the polls on Election Day are the most effective ways to send this message. Join me in making this important choice on August 7 and again on November 6.

Join us on Facebook.
[facebook.com/homeworks.org](https://www.facebook.com/homeworks.org)



Fiber Construction Continues

Visit Join.HomeWorksConnect.org
To Help Your Zone Grow

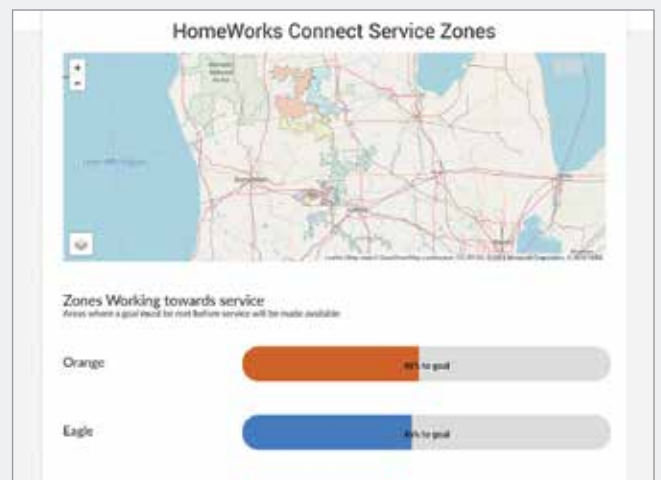
HomeWorks Connect, our new fiber business, is growing rapidly on two fronts: physical construction and member interest via signing up on our crowd fiber site, Join.HomeWorksConnect.org.

A second contractor began work in the Grand Ledge area in early June, while our first contractor continues work around Portland. As of early June, over 50,000 feet of fiber has been installed along our electric system.

These crews will have HomeWorks magnetic signs on their trucks, and if you have questions you can call our office to confirm the crew is working for us. They also have some handout materials to help explain the work they're doing.

Phase 1 includes the following circuits: Portland (PT) 2, 3, and 4; Grand Ledge (GE) 2, 3, and 4; and the Odessa (OD) 1 and 3. NOTE: You can see what circuit you're served on by checking the map location (MAP LOC) printed above your name and address on the back cover of this magazine.

While we're busy with ropes and shovels, you can take action today by visiting Join.HomeWorksConnect.org to show your interest in fiber service. Enter your address and the site will tell you if you're in Phase 1, then fill out a simple questionnaire, and you're signed up—there is no obligation at this point. But the sign-ups will add up and help your Zone (based on your circuit) to move up to the top of our list, or even reach our Zone goal. Be sure to tell your neighbors, too—the more sign-ups in your Zone, the better!



2018 YOUTH TOUR

Photos courtesy of Doug Snitgen

Washington, D.C. Highlights

Electric Cooperative Youth Tour teaches students about their past and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to explore leadership lessons from our nation's history, build life-long friendships with students from across the country, and be immersed in the cooperative spirit.

Michigan's electric cooperatives sponsored 22 high school juniors and seniors on this once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C. this past June.



Students from across the state toured multiple landmarks, including a guided tour of the U.S. Capitol.



The Michigan pillar is a tribute within the National World War II Memorial, and represents the 620,000 Michigan residents who served during World War II.



Youth Tour students visited the historical home of George Washington, Mount Vernon.



The group visited the Marine Corps War Memorial.



Students enjoyed meeting with Congressmen Bill Huizenga and Jack Bergman on the steps of the U.S. Capitol building.

Information is available at CooperativeYouthTour.com



Five Friendly Tips For The Farmers Market

By Grace Derocha

Michigan residents are fortunate in their ability to grow and buy fresh, locally grown produce throughout the summer and fall. According to the Michigan Farmers Market Association, the mitten is home to more than 300 farmers markets, reaching residents in nearly every county of the state. Trips to the farmers market can be a fun family tradition to inspire healthier eating habits and explore new foods and flavors. While planning a visit to the farmers market, keep in mind some of the following tips:

1. Ask Questions

Don't shy away from making conversation with the vendors at a local farmers market. Unlike a grocery store setting, shoppers are given the opportunity to learn more about what they're purchasing, ask questions and get advice for their own growing/gardening purposes. Some vendors may even have insight on cooking methods or tasty food pairings.

2. Bring Bags And Cash

Farmers market vendors do not usually supply shopping bags. Bringing reusable bags from home guarantees a means of carrying purchases while reducing waste. It's also common for farmers market vendors to only accept cash, so be sure to have bills and small change on hand before heading out the door.

3. Pick The Right Time To Go

Crowds at the market tend to pick up around midday, so it's best to arrive right as it opens. Early shoppers have a better chance of avoiding lines, getting advice from vendors and picking from high-demand fruits or vegetables. On the other hand, those in the market for a good deal may want to visit later in the day. Oftentimes farmers market vendors will discount their products instead of risking waste.

4. Know Seasonal Produce

Having an idea of what produce is in season can help set expectations for purchases at the market. Research what grows in the area, talk to the farmers about what produce will be coming and plan shopping trips from there. Many farmers markets provide customers with a crop calendar at the information booth to show when various fruits and vegetables will be available.

5. Meal Plan Ahead

Going to the farmers market without a list or plan may lead to unnecessary purchases. To avoid waste, look around the kitchen and get an idea of which foods might pair well for meals in the week ahead. Use the seasonal produce available at the market for inspiration and explore using any leftover produce in a new soup, salad, sandwich or casserole recipe.

To find a farmer's market nearby use the **Find a Farmers Market** tool, found on the **Michigan Farmers Market Association** website: mifma.org/findafarmersmarket/.

Fruits and vegetables in-season throughout the summer in Michigan include, but are not limited to:

- Apples
- Apricots
- Asparagus
- Beans
- Broccoli
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cabbage
- Carrots
- Celery
- Cherries (tart and sweet)
- Cucumbers
- Greens (turnips, collards, kale)
- Peaches
- Peas
- Peppers
- Radishes
- Raspberries
- Spinach
- Squash (yellow, zucchini)
- Strawberries

Optimize Your Home With A *Free* Energy Audit

Is your home properly sealed, insulated, and ventilated? If you've noticed any issues such as mold, mildew, ice dams, drafts, or overall discomfort, your home may require improvements to resolve energy inefficiencies. To better understand and manage your home's energy use and costs, take advantage of the Energy Optimization program's free energy audit!

The Home Energy Optimizer is a brief online survey that analyzes your home's energy use. You will be asked to enter some specific information, such as the year your home was built, the type of heating and cooling systems in place, and when various other systems and appliances were purchased and installed.

Once you've completed the survey, you will receive a personalized, comprehensive report, as well as cost-saving tips and recommendations to help reduce energy waste throughout your household. Additionally, all participants will receive a free energy-saving kit, which includes light bulbs and other devices to help save energy and water!

How to complete your home energy audit:

- Visit the Energy Optimization website (michigan-energy.org).
- Select your electric utility from the drop-down menu at the top of the page.
- In the left menu bar, select "Online Home Audit."
- Click "Get Started Now!" and complete the questionnaire.

Upon completion of the Home Energy Optimizer survey, your free energy-saving kit will be mailed to the address you provide. Have questions about the free home energy audit or energy-saving kit? Call us at 877-296-4319.



Energy Savings At Your Fingertips

Team up with the Energy Optimization program to improve the comfort, durability and energy efficiency of your home! Complete our Online Home Audit to assess your home's energy performance and receive a comprehensive report featuring cost-saving tips and opportunities.

ENERGY TIP: Receive a **FREE** energy-saving kit when you complete your Online Home Audit!

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877.296.4319

Better Together



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



Snap Shot

Fan Spirit

1. Kayla Orbell from Eaton Rapids shared a Snap Shot of sister Aricka, left, and herself, up on the big screen at Spartan Stadium in East Lansing. The Orbells say they are the biggest fans at all the Michigan State home games...this was against U of M!
2. Heather Schafer of Hubbardston took this photo while watching an Ionia varsity girls' softball game in April, on a sunny 60-degree day with a side of snow! Shown on the field are Danielle Schafer, 3rd base; Michaela Castle, short stop; Sara Bevington, pitcher; and Maddie Braman, catcher.
3. Aricka Orbell of Eaton Rapids describes Kayla, left, and herself as "sisters who waited at 5:20 a.m. to get into football games so they could have front-row student seats, and win contests... catch footballs....etc."



Upcoming Snap Shot Contest Topics And Deadlines

- "Fall Colors," Deadline: July 16 (September issue)
- "Pumpkin Faces," Deadline: Aug. 15 (October issue)
- "Celebrations," Deadline: Sept. 17 (November-December issue)

Enter to win a
\$100
energy bill
credit!

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

Submit Your Photos!

Contributors whose photos we publish in 2018 will be entered into a drawing. *Country Lines* will choose two winners for a bill credit of \$100 each on their December electric bill, due in January 2019!

Eggcellent

Jump start your day with these egg recipes!

Crustless Quiche

Mary Gavlek, Great Lakes Energy

- ½ cup Bisquick
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup melted butter
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- cooked chopped meats of choice
- diced vegetables of choice

Preheat oven to 425 F. Mix together Bisquick, eggs, butter, salt, pepper, milk and cheese with a wire whip. Add meat and vegetables. Pour into a round pie plate or 9×9 square pan. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes, serve and enjoy.



Watch a video of this recipe at micookitchen.com/videos



Rise N' Shine Eggs

Kathie Riess, Cherryland

- 2-3 tablespoons butter
- 4 large eggs
- ⅓ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese
- ⅓ cup seeded and chopped tomatoes
- 1-2 teaspoons prepared horseradish (not cream style)
- Tabasco sauce, to taste
- salt and pepper

Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. In a mixing bowl, whisk eggs until almost totally homogenized. Add eggs to skillet and stir gently. After they have begun to thicken, add remaining ingredients. Stir until cheese melts and is incorporated. Serve immediately.



Potato Crusted Quiche With Morels, Ramps, Asparagus, Bacon And Swiss

Bonnie Langworthy, HomeWorks Tri-County

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 medium potatoes, peeled and sliced 2 tablespoons oil ½ cup ramps (leeks), chopped ½ cup roasted red bell pepper, chopped ¼ cup morel mushrooms, coarsely chopped ¼ cup blanched asparagus, chopped | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ¾ teaspoon dried thyme 8 strips bacon, cooked crisp 4 ounces gruyere cheese, grated 8-10 large eggs ½ cup half & half ¼ teaspoon salt ¼ teaspoon ground pepper • pinch of nutmeg |
|---|---|

Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a 9-inch pie pan. Blanch potatoes in salted, boiling water for 1½ minutes. When cool, place a single layer of potatoes in the pan, slightly overlapping. Stand up slices (also overlapping) around edge. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ramps (leeks), red pepper, morels, asparagus and thyme and sauté 5 minutes. Spoon mixture on top of potatoes. Crumble bacon on top of veggie mix. Spread cheese on top. Whisk together eggs, half & half, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Whisk until color lightens. Pour into pie dish. Bake for 35 minutes. Cool 25 minutes and serve in wedges.



Cocktails And Drinks: due August 1
Holiday Favorites: due September 1

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

Enter to win a
\$50
energy bill credit!

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

FEATURED GUEST CHEF

When Courageous Coffee's Tanya Schneider puts so much soul into roasting the perfect coffee beans, it seems a shame not to take advantage of all that heartfelt flavor. She shares a recipe that uses brewed coffee for the ultimate coffee companion.



Cappuccino Muffins

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cups all-purpose flour ¾ cup sugar 2½ teaspoons baking powder ½ teaspoon salt ½ cup milk | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ cup strong brewed coffee ½ cup butter, melted 1 large egg 1 teaspoon vanilla extract 1 cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips |
|--|--|

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, combine the milk, coffee, butter, egg and vanilla. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in chocolate chips.

Fill greased muffin cups two-thirds full and bake for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Serve with cream cheese spread (optional).

Cream Cheese Spread

- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips

Mix all ingredients together until well blended and spread on muffins.

These muffins pair well with a cup of Courageous Coffee!

Read the full story about Tanya Schneider, owner of Courageous Coffee, on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.



DISTRICT 6 - ED OPLINGER



DISTRICT 3 - LUKE POHL

★ ELECTION OUTCOMES ★ **POHL, OPLINGER RE-ELECTED**

Luke Pohl of Westphalia and Ed Oplinger of Weidman have been re-elected to their HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative board seats. They will serve three-year terms.

Elections this year were conducted by mail ballots, provided with the April issue of *Michigan Country Lines*, combined with in-person voting at their respective district meetings.

For 2019, members in Districts 1, 5, and 7 will vote for their board representatives. District 1 includes members in Eaton, Ingham and Jackson counties. District 5 is comprised of members in Gratiot and Saginaw counties, plus Bingham, Duplain, and Greenbush townships in Clinton County, and Bloomer, Crystal, and Evergreen townships in Montcalm County. District 7 includes members in Mecosta and Osceola counties.

Watch for nomination information in the January 2019 issue of *Country Lines*, and a mail ballot in the April 2019 issue.

Your Board In Action

Meeting at Portland on May 21, your board of directors:

- Named Kevin Sopocy of Saint Johns to fill the open District 5 seat on the Tri-County Electric People Fund board of directors, following the retirement of longtime board member Peggy Pirhonen.
- Learned about progress made with the HomeWorks Connect fiber-to-the-home business.
- Discussed recommendations made by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Governance Task Force and how they apply to HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.
- Reviewed April financial statements, the Cooperative's loan portfolio, and the 2017 IRS Form 990 for not-for-profit corporations.
- Approved donating \$2,000 from the Cooperative Financial Corporation (CFC) 2018 patronage capital refund to the Territorial Integrity Fund maintained by CFC.
- Approved donating \$2,500 to the NRECA International Foundation, to help electrify communities in need around the world.
- Learned there were 98 new members in April.
- Acknowledged the May safety report, listing employee training and minor employee and public incidents.

Time Set Aside For Members To Comment Before Cooperative Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. The next meetings are scheduled for 9 a.m. on July 23 and August 27 at Blanchard. Members who need directions to the meeting, or wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

People Fund Continues To Provide Grants

Meeting May 30, the Tri-County Electric People Fund made seven grants, totaling \$8,732.70, including:

- \$1,789.73 to the Mecosta County Senior Center in Mecosta, to purchase and install a new water heater;
- \$275 to the Adult Handicap Program in Charlotte, to help sponsor their handicap bowling program;
- \$1,000 to the Saint Johns Baby Pantry to purchase diapers and wipes for families in need;
- \$659.98 to the Mecosta County Council on Aging – Retired & Senior Volunteer Program in Big Rapids, to buy office printers;
- \$1,545 to a Montcalm County family for electrical repairs;
- \$2,462.99 to an Ingham County family for medical bills and a new refrigerator; and
- \$1,000 to a Mecosta County family, to help with housing expenses and furnace repairs.

How To Apply For A Tri-County Electric People Fund Grant

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

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

Note: Applications must be received by August 13 for the August board meeting, and by September 24 for the October board meeting.



Youth Tour Visits Capitol

Jenna Birch of Blanchard, Isabella Waite of Morley, and MaeLynn Huhn of Portland represented HomeWorks Tri-County Electric during the National Rural Electric Youth Tour June 9–14 in Washington, D.C. One tour day included a visit to the U.S. Capitol, meeting with Michigan’s senators and representatives and their staffs.



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HOME
WORKS Tri-County Electric
Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 



Courageous Coffee

The
Perfect Blend

By Emily Haines Lloyd



While coffee is a daily part of many people's lives—there are some folks for whom coffee is more than a ritual, it's a calling.

For Tanya Schneider, her fascination with coffee started early in life.

As a young girl, she would get up in the morning with her father, an otherwise busy man, and watch him sit down with a simple coffee cup and relax. By the time she was six, she'd asked for her first mug of coffee, served with an ice cube and a dash of milk. It was love at first sip.

Years later Schneider began to educate herself more deeply. She read books on the growing seasons of coffee beans and how to roast them. While Michigan weather would never allow her to grow her own beans, it couldn't keep her from roasting them.

Armed with her first coffee roaster, which was the size of a toaster oven and only roasted about a quarter-pound of beans at a time, Schneider trial and errored her way into her craft. She saved money along the way with a bigger dream in the back of her mind.

In 2010, Schneider, who is employed with HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, had an opportunity to roast her coffee for military care packages that were being assembled at work.



"It felt so good to roast for someone else, instead of just myself and my family," said Schneider. "I knew that if this ever grew—the purpose would have to be bigger than myself."

In 2016, Schneider found herself on a mission trip to Belize with a group of individuals from church. In the evenings, she and the other women on the team sat together and shared stories about their lives and connected with one another. Schneider shared with them that she'd just started a business the month before—Courageous Coffee.

"I shared that I roasted coffee—mostly for family and friends—and I told them of my mission to make a difference by roasting coffee," said Schneider. "I was so amazed by their support and it gave me a huge boost of confidence that I really needed in order to move forward."

At that moment, Courageous Coffee went from a quiet passion to a full-blown dream come true.

Soon after the mission trip, she and her husband bought the future home of Courageous Coffee—a 12x12 Amish-built building that found itself on the back of the couple's property. Next came a larger, upgraded roaster and a few 150-pound bags of quality coffee beans. By the end of the year she'd sold her first bag of coffee to a co-worker. Within a few months several local businesses were carrying Courageous Coffee for sale and it was available for purchase online at mycourageouscoffee.com.

Since then, Schneider has been roasting her heart out. In line with her early vision to have her business serve others, 10 percent of all proceeds are donated to nonprofit causes.

For Schneider, Courageous Coffee is an homage to perfect moments over a cup of joe and a knowing nod to seemingly impossible dreams. Bold, strong, courageous—it really is the perfect blend for coffee. And for life.

Bolivian Expedition Blend Fundraiser



Courageous Coffee's next service mission to give back is a specialty blend that's brewing to support the next *Partners for Power* project by Michigan's electric cooperatives.

This September, linemen from Michigan electric cooperatives are headed to Bolivia to bring reliable electricity to the community of Yata. The people of Yata are an ambitious bunch. But before many of them can realize their dreams, they need access to reliable electricity.

When you buy a bag of Courageous Coffee's *Bolivian Expedition Blend*, you help support the project. To learn more about the project and other ways to get involved, visit partnersforpower.org.



Join Tanya in her kitchen as she explains how she brews the perfect cup of coffee using the pour over method. A short instructional video is available at countrylines.com.



TALKING SAFETY

With HomeWorks Safety Coordinator Jeff Erridge



At HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, the safety of our employees and our members is our top priority. This month, we sat down with HomeWorks' new safety coordinator, Jeff Erridge, to discuss the co-op's commitment to a "safety first" culture. Here's what Jeff had to say:



You've worked at HomeWorks for five years, but just recently accepted the position of safety coordinator. What have you observed about the co-op's safety culture since taking that role?

The safety culture here at HomeWorks is great. Safety is our number one priority over anything else, and that commitment starts right at the top with our board and our general manager. From the top to the bottom, everyone is on board and dedicated to working safely day in and day out.

What are some ways the importance of safety on the job is emphasized to employees?

As soon as a new employee is hired, no matter what department they're joining, I meet with them on their first day to go over our safety procedures and to stress our safety expectations. We also have company-wide safety meetings on different topics each month, and our linemen and propane team have additional job-specific safety meetings and training monthly. To me, the most important factors when it comes to safety are accountability and communication. With all of our employees working together to meet those expectations, we create a safe working environment for everyone.

Why is safety such an integral part of the HomeWorks way?

The products we supply, electricity and propane, can both be very dangerous if they are not handled properly. The training, safety information and protective equipment we provide our employees helps them to be able to deliver those products safely for themselves and our members. Our priority is to get our employees home safely to their families at the end of each workday, and we are committed to doing what it takes in terms of training and resources to make sure that happens.

Is that focus on safety working? Are you seeing results in terms of a reduction in the number of safety incidents that occur?

Definitely. Our propane team recently marked eleven-and-a-half years without a lost time



HomeWorks lineman Adam Doughty works through a recent pole top and bucket rescue training exercise.



HomeWorks linemen meet with Michigan Electric Cooperative Association safety coordinator Tom Ulatowski during a recent electric-specific safety training exercise at our Blanchard office.

accident, which is remarkable. Our electric team hasn't had a lost time accident in over a year, and historically, we're fortunate to have had very few incidents or injuries. With safety being our main priority, our employees know that no matter what they're doing, they're allowed to and expected to slow down, take their time and think about what they're doing and how to prevent any mishaps that could occur. All of our employees think that way, and that generates great results in terms of our safety incidents.

HomeWorks was recently evaluated by the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP), which occurs every three years. How did that go?

The RESAP evaluation went very well. Our employees are great about keeping up-to-date on their safety training and information, and also about keeping all of our tools and equipment in good condition and communicating any safety issues as soon as they come up so that they can be addressed. That helped the evaluation go very smoothly, and we got a great report. We conduct an internal safety evaluation every year, but it's important to get that third party in here every few years to have a fresh set of eyes to note any issues that we may have missed or procedures that could potentially be improved.

What do you do to teach members how to stay safe around our products and equipment?

We take member safety very seriously. We post safety tips and info on our Facebook page and website, and that's where we would also communicate safety concerns, such as downed power lines. Additionally, we have safety pamphlets available in our offices, and even safety-themed coloring books to teach kids about electric safety. We are also reaching out to schools and other organizations in our service area to set up presentations with our hotline demo, which is a fun, interactive way to teach both kids and adults about the dangers of electricity and how to stay safe around it.

For safety questions or to set up a safety demo, call Jeff at 517-647-1207 or email jerridge@homeworks.org.



The HomeWorks Safety Triangle

Guess this photo and enter to win a \$50 energy bill credit!



Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo above by July 20 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 May 2018 issue is Richard Fluegge, a Thumb Electric Cooperative member, who correctly identified the photo as Stafford Park in Port Hope. It's an icy view from the Port Hope Marina looking back at the famous historic chimney at Stafford Park.

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

May 2018



Photo courtesy of Karen Murphy

Best Beaches

We asked our members to share their favorite Michigan beach in our Great Lakes state—so take their recommendations to heart and enjoy!



1 Brimley State Park, Whitefish Bay

Brimley State Park, located on the shores of Whitefish Bay in the U.P., is one of the best beaches in Michigan in my opinion. It provides a non-traditional “beach” setting in the fact, that the water is a little cooler, the sand isn't the most pristine, and there isn't a fancy pier. What you will find is a beautiful, relaxing and picturesque scene of the beautiful Whitefish Bay. The very best part about this beach is that the Soo Locks are very close, so you will see freighter traffic throughout your day! Don't forget to download the “Boatnerd” app on your phone, so you know the names of the freighters you will see floating by! —Karen Murphy, Thumb Electric

2 Tawas Point State Park and East Tawas City Park Beach, East Tawas

We visit East Tawas for its beaches every year. There are wonderful cottages to rent, gorgeous sunrises and the water in the bay is shallow and warm for swimming. East Tawas also has the cutest downtown with great ice cream, antique shops, a chocolatier and more. —Joanne Preston, Midwest Energy & Communications

3 Aral Beach, Empire

Aral Beach is hands down my favorite in Michigan! It is located outside of Empire at the end of a dirt road in the middle of nowhere. Beautiful views of the Empire bluffs, very few people around and my four-legged friends are welcome. —Mindy Aves, HomeWorks Tri-County

4 Young State Park, Boyne City

Young State Park in Boyne City is a favorite. You can just enjoy the beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and walk the sandy beaches. Amazing! —Kristine Diegel, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op



Best of Michigan

Up Next: Best Cider Mills! Apples, Cider and Doughnuts—Oh My! Share your favorite spot for these delicious fall treats. We will publish these gems in our September issue.

Submit your favorites at countrylines.com under the MI Co-op Community tab by August 1.

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