

# MICHIGAN Country Lines



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**Plugging  
Energy  
Drains** Page 12

**4 Midwest Propane**

**5 Unlock Energy Savings**

**25 She's The 'Talk Of The Town'**





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# MICHIGAN Country Lines



12



22



30

## 10 Dowagiac: Big City Flair

The home of the popular Dogwood Fine Arts Festival is a fine place to visit anytime.  
*Rita C. Henehan*

## 12 Energy Drains

Even with advances in energy efficiency, consumers continue to use more energy.  
*Megan McKoy*

## 13 Tankless Water Heater Hype

The technology sounds good, but do tankless water heaters really deliver as promised?  
*Cooperative Research Network*

### COLUMNS

- 11 **Comment** *Michael Peters*  
Absolute zero
- 14 **House & Home** *James Dullea*  
Dress up your home with landscaping
- 16 **Our Kids** *Linda Wacyk*  
Healthy habits for earth-friendly families
- 22 **Outdoors** *Don Ingle*  
Michigan steelhead from California
- 24 **Gardening\*** *John Bruce*  
Cool tools make the difference
- 30 **Guest Column** *Nick Edson*  
Giving hope to Haiti

\*Not in all editions

Pages specific to your electric utility are: 1, 4-5, 8, 25, 28-29, 32

### COVER \*

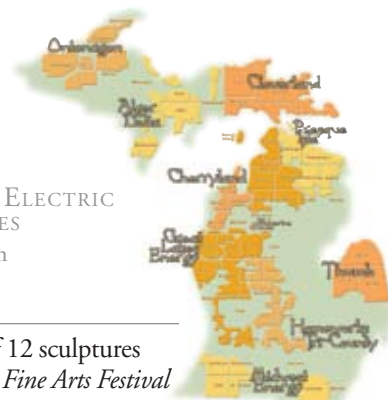
"Dawn of Creation," by world-famous sculptor Tuck Langland, is one of 12 sculptures by various artists that are spread throughout Dowagiac. *Photo—Dogwood Fine Arts Festival*

### DEPARTMENTS

- 6 **Readers' Pages**  
Broadband, call for ideas, letters
- 18 **Home Cooking**  
Morel mushrooms
- 24 **Wolverine Power\***  
Clean Energy Venture update
- 26 **Country Lines Marketplace**  
Classifieds from readers



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# Midwest Energy Cooperative

## A Cooperative Approach To Midwest Propane

I recently heard about a retired couple living in Coloma. Good people. Trusting people.

This couple heated their home with propane, and used a competitor propane provider. Like many propane customers, they were very loyal to their provider, paid their bills on time, and were long-term customers.

This past winter they had trouble paying their bills and couldn't understand why it had become so expensive to heat their small home. They queried a trusted neighbor about his heating bills, and shared their own information with him. He took a look at their bills and helped them discover the problem.

The incumbent propane provider delivered gas at the end of January and charged this couple \$7.28 a gallon. It seems their policy is that deliveries of less than 100 gallons come at a premium price. The provider had set this couple up with a 120-gallon tank, so most of their deliveries were likely less than 100 gallons. They were on budget billing for \$98 a month, with February as their settlement month. So the late January delivery, combined with the budget balance due, gave them a bill of \$770.32 due in full in February.

Sadly, these kinds of stories are not uncommon—particularly during the volatile heating season. Unlike electricity, propane is not a regulated industry, so providers can essentially charge whatever they want and create any type of policy or rule that they choose.

We've been in the propane business for over a decade now, and over that period of time we have never changed our way of doing business. Out of the gate we applied the cooperative approach to our propane business model, vowing to provide high quality service with excellent customer care at fair and competitive prices.

Twelve years and 6,500 customers later,

it's still an approach that works.

I never cease to be amazed, and disappointed, at some of the stories we hear.

But that's the nature of the beast in an unregulated energy environment. Our approach to buying gas has typically served our customers well. We monitor the gas markets well in advance of the heating season and purchase when the prices are favorable. We then establish a fair and competitive price and cap that rate through the volatile heating season.

Last year presented a unique challenge. As is our normal practice, we established and implemented our 2009-2010 guaranteed capped rate last summer. The price, \$1.91, was established based on the gas supply we secured during 2008 and early

**Our prices will always be determined by a strategic and thoughtful buying practice. It doesn't mean they will always be the lowest, but they will always be fair.**

2009. It was a fair price and one we felt would be very competitive. Then came the summer of 2009.

Energy markets are always an interesting thing, and last summer certainly proved that. Wholesale gas markets were unusually low, giving our competitors an opportunity to promote low first-fill offers to bring in new customers. We saw first-fill rates as low as \$1.09, making it very difficult for some of our customers to stay the course at \$1.91. Many called us, and some even left us. Most stuck it out, knowing our history for taking care of our customers during the volatile heating season.

Once again, our model prevailed as we watched average gas prices across Michigan escalate north of \$2.20 per gallon as the cold weather set in. It's a predictable pattern: prices bottom out during the low-use summer months, then follow the markets during the higher-use heating ►



**Robert Hance**  
President/CEO



## How Much is Too Much?

Electrical outlets that are overstuffed with power strips, extension cords and outlet splitters are a fire hazard.

Plugging more appliances, lights and electronics into a single outlet than it is meant to handle causes the receptacle or cords to overheat and potentially start an electrical fire. The Consumer Product Safety Commission attributes 3,500 fires each year to outlet issues. Check for these indicators of potential electrical hazards:

**HOT OUTLETS:** If you can't touch a cord, plug or faceplate for more than 5 seconds without saying, "Ouch!" the outlet is overloaded.

**SHOCKS:** Small shocks from appliances or outlets could mean danger.

**BLOWN FUSES:** If fuses continue to blow after you replace them, or circuit breakers constantly trip, the wiring cannot handle the outlet's load.

**FLICKERING LIGHTS:** Lights that flicker or dim could mean an overloaded outlet.

**WAVERING SCREENS:** If computer or TV screens waver when a large appliance is plugged in, it may mean the outlet is overstressed.

**HIGH-WATTAGE APPLIANCES:** Never plug a high-wattage appliance, such as a refrigerator or dryer, into an extension cord.

Any of these symptoms could mean your home's wiring can't keep up with the demand. Call a licensed electrician for an estimate on wiring repairs or upgrades.

### ► Midwest Propane, *continued*

We've always chosen the high road—it's the co-op influence at work. Our prices will always be determined by a strategic and thoughtful buying practice. It doesn't mean we will always be the lowest-cost provider, but it does mean that we will always be fair. Most importantly, it means we will offer stability during the time that volatility rules.

The story I shared at the beginning does have a happy ending. The neighbor who helped is a Midwest Propane customer. Once he got to the bottom of the story, he shared the Midwest Propane way with his elderly neighbors and they made the call.

As I've encouraged in previous columns, pay attention to your bills. Don't just accept what is presented in the bottom right corner. Look at what comprises that figure and ask questions if it doesn't make sense. Loyalty is a good thing, but not when it causes you to become a victim.

## Board Members Re-elected

As a co-op member, you could submit your name to run in 2011.

**B**en Russell, district 6, Colyne Sorsby, district 7, and Harry Gentz, district 9, were recently re-elected to new terms on the Midwest Energy Cooperative board of directors after running unopposed in their respective districts.

If you are interested in taking a more active role with your cooperative, you might consider running for one of the elected director positions. The cooperative is governed by a nine-member board, the members of which are elected to serve three-year terms. Each director is elected by and represents members living in his or her respective district. Board positions are important roles that should not be taken lightly, as your board members are the ones who make critical decisions on behalf of the member-owners of this cooperative. You, as a member, are entitled to vote for your district representative, but you are also entitled to



Ben Russell



Colyne Sorsby



Harry Gentz

submit your name as the candidate to represent your district on the board of directors.

Three seats on the Midwest Energy board will be up for election in 2011. District 1, represented by Jerry Campbell of Decatur, includes Hamilton, Decatur, Porter, Volina, Marcellus and Penn townships. District 2, represented by Jim Dickerson of Bloomingdale, includes Silver Creek, Pipestone, Bainbridge, Keeler, Coloma, Water-vliet, Hartford, Lawrence, Paw Paw, Waverly, Arlington, Bangor, Covert and Bloomingdale townships. District 5, represented by John Green of Dowagiac, includes Milton, Howard, Pokagon, LaGrange and Wayne townships.

For more details about serving on the board of directors, please call the cooperative at 1-800-492-5989. More information will be shared in the November/December issue of *Michigan Country Lines*.

## Unlock Energy Savings

Give us about 30 minutes of your time, and we'll give you the keys to unlock energy savings right in your home.

The Online Audit offered through Midwest Energy Cooperative's Energy Optimization (EO) Program provides two options for creating a personalized energy-use report.

The "Full Energy Profile" gives you the most accurate results for your

home, with you answering questions about your energy use so no assumptions are made. The Full Energy Profile takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. For your convenience, you may want to print the questionnaire and take it around the house with you, filling in each section as you go. You can then return to your computer and enter the information in one session. When you take the time to complete and submit the Full Energy

Profile audit, you will receive a free energy efficiency kit which includes five CFLs, a low-flow shower head, two low-flow faucet aerators, an energy education wheel, and additional EO information.

If you are pressed for time, take the "EZ-Energy Profile." This version makes a few general assumptions, but still provides a complete analysis.

For more information or to take the online audit, please visit [Michigan-energy.org](http://Michigan-energy.org). If you do not have internet access at home, Midwest Energy has set up computer stations in each of our district offices on which you can complete the audit. Or, call us at 800-492-5989 and we will mail a copy of the audit to you. You simply complete it at your convenience and mail it back, and we input the information and contact you to review the results.



**Take the online  
Energy Audit at  
[Michigan-energy.org](http://Michigan-energy.org)**

## FCC Pushes Faster Internet

If you're not using high-speed internet because it's unavailable or slow, would you like to do something about it? The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has unveiled a pair of tools to help.

Both are available on the FCC's broadband.gov website. One tool is the Consumer Broadband Test. When you click the box that reads, "I want to test my connection quality," a short questionnaire pops up. It asks where you're accessing the internet, including the street address and whether it's a home, a business, or on a mobile device.

Then the test begins. At the *Country Lines* office in Okemos, it took 55 seconds to determine that our Comcast cable has a download speed of 13,709 kilobits per second.

Compare that to just 56 kilobits per second for dial-up internet service.

For those without high-speed service, there is what the FCC calls the "Broadband Dead Zone Report." Click the "I do not have broadband at home" button, and a short questionnaire asks for the home address and whether there would be interest in purchasing broadband service.

"Transparency empowers consumers, promotes innovation and investment, and encourages competition," says Julius Genachowski, FCC chairman. He said the tools "will arm users with real-time information about their broadband connection and the agency with useful data about service across the country."

—Michael W. Kahn, NRECA

## A "Glorious Mess"

In your column (Mike Peters/March), "We need your help to avoid A Glorious Mess," you concluded that we can help by telling our delegation that we don't support unelected bureaucrats taking the lead in regulating CO<sub>2</sub>. While I don't disagree with your point, I think it would have been better if you urged the membership to also ask our delegation to get busy, work together and accomplish meaningful change that will avoid the need for knowledgeable bureaucrats to even seek ways of implementing reduction in greenhouse gases on their own. After all, it is the failure of some in Congress to act that is resulting in others looking to take the lead.

Tom Fleming, Suttons Bay

Your comment, A "Glorious Mess," regarding the regulation of carbon dioxide, states that: "...we do know that if EPA does move ahead on their own, the regulations will be more onerous and more costly than if Congress were to act." However, EPA has not addressed in detail regulation of carbon dioxide or moved ahead on their own yet, and Congress has not yet acted. You also state: "...we don't know which direction Congress will ultimately take." Therefore, we, or you, cannot conclude that if EPA does move ahead on their own, the regulations will be more onerous and more costly than if Congress were to act.

The EPA is an agency charged to protect human health and the environment by writing and enforcing regulations based on laws passed by Congress. Greenhouse gases, which include carbon dioxide, threaten the public health and welfare of the American people. Therefore, until Congress passes new laws changing or clarifying EPA's regulatory role regarding greenhouse gases, the EPA should step forward to



© iStockphoto.com/Damian Gadal

regulate carbon dioxide.

The EPA has performed well over the last 30 years as a regulatory agency to reduce air pollutants in a manner which has not been overly costly to the American economy. As such, the EPA has gained the experience needed to address complicated issues associated with environmental problems. That experience should be utilized, not ignored. And the EPA should not be assumed to be "more onerous and more costly" in its regulatory efforts before the EPA and other governmental entities have addressed the issues in detail.

Daniel Tuharsky, Redford

Mike Peters replies: You have raised a good point. My comment was based on a comparison of the House-passed bill and several proposals being considered in the Senate with what some believe regulation under the Clean Air Act (CAA) could lead to—including [observations of] one of the author's of the CAA, Congressman John Dingell. I have read enough about CAA regulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) to lead me to believe that regulation without clear Congressional direction is not a good path. Our position has been to support measures that will lead to regulation that is "fair, affordable, and achievable."

There were provisions in the House bill that we did not support (allocation of emissions based on sales, as they were not fair to Michigan and other Midwest states) and we thought the early emission reduction targets were overly aggressive (not achievable). We also supported clear preemption language so that we don't end up with multiple

# Stay Clear!

**A downed power line may not be a dead line. It could cause serious injury or death.**

If someone is injured by contact with a power line, call 911 and keep others away until help arrives.

If a power line falls across or near your vehicle while you are in it, stay inside until help arrives. If you must exit, jump clear so that no part of your body is touching the car when you land. **KEEP BOTH FEET TOGETHER**, and shuffle or hop at least 30 feet away from the vehicle.

## Michigan's Electric Cooperatives



layers of regulation. When Congress acts they should preempt states from adopting different standards, and they should make it clear that EPA is to regulate GHGs under the legislation as passed and not under the Clean Air Act or the Clean Water Act.

Having one standard implemented by the EPA will lead to the most workable regulatory scheme for GHGs possible. However, that being said, you are correct that we don't know for certain what EPA will do, and since Congress has not acted we can't compare the two paths.

## How Country Lines Began

It might be of interest to readers to know more about the early efforts (Ramblings, January) to get a regular flow of information to the member-owners of Michigan's electric co-ops. The decision was made in 1978 to establish the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) and employ a full-time administrator to manage and operate the new organization. I was selected for the job and we began full-time operation in January, 1979.

In the work plans and budget for 1980, I advocated the start-up of a publication to be mailed to all of the cooperatives' members, then numbering approximately 200,000, and preferably on a monthly basis. The MECA Board of Directors voted in favor of a bimonthly publication, if and when we had enough co-ops subscribing to reach a minimum circulation of 100,000.

We achieved that and made plans for a tabloid publication to be known as *Michigan Country Lines*. A big step forward was made when we asked a popular *Lansing State Journal* columnist, Jim Hough, to write a human interest column for our magazine. Being from the U.P., he knew something of the plight of rural folks catching up with their city cousins in the conveniences of modern living. When he said, "Yes, I'll do it," I knew we had a winner who would vastly boost reader interest in our publication.

Thanks, Jim, for joining our *Country Lines* team and treating us to so many entertaining stories and personal experiences. We wish you and Darl

the very best in retirement.

*Ray Kuhl, former MECA CEO  
and executive editor*

## Energy Vampires

Could you give some sources for the whole house indoor meter, please? The article (Feb. 2010) said when, in an experiment, people were required to check their meters, electrical use went down significantly. Even afterwards, when it was no longer required, people still checked it and lowered their electrical use. If true, I hope this is something the co-ops might consider in the future as a standard fitting for every home. (Give yourselves a 15-year 'heads up' if you want, but think about it.)

*Beth Clemensen, via email*

One meter is TED, available at [theenergydetective.com](http://theenergydetective.com), ranging in price from \$119 to \$455. We'll have more in May.—ed.

## Tweeting

I just finished reading the column regarding tweeting [Ramblings, March]. I thoroughly enjoyed it and 'yes,' this baby boomer was shaking her head. I refuse to sign up on Facebook, or Twitter. I don't need one more thing to absorb me on this computer. I keep telling myself to hold off until I retire, when I have more time. I didn't want to get into this texting thing, either; however, I finally realized it is the best way to get a response from my kids.


I do feel there is a time and place to do this. It is called 'respect of others,' whether you are in a meeting, with friends, or even driving. We use to laugh about my father-in-law who refused to use a microwave, and he retired from GM when computers were taking over after 35 years. He was amazed at how times had changed.

In 1970 I was a military wife, and my first child was born in Japan. It cost \$29 a

## How to Clean Up a Broken Compact Fluorescent Lightbulb (CFL)



- 1 Ventilate the room. 
- 2 Scoop up powder and glass fragments using stiff paper or cardboard. Seal in a plastic bag. 
- 3 Use duct tape to pick up any fragments or powder. 
- 4 Immediately place all materials used to clean up and the plastic bag in an outdoor trash container. Remember to wash your hands. 
- 5 Discard any clothing or bedding that comes in direct contact with broken glass or powder from inside the bulb. Washing tainted items may cause mercury fragments in clothing to contaminate the machine and/or pollute sewage. 

To learn more about CFLs and why you should be careful when cleaning up a broken bulb, visit [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov). 

Source: Electrical Safety Foundation Institute, YASLY

minute to call home. We put money aside to pay for that minute to be able to call my parents about the birth of their first granddaughter. I couldn't even talk, I cried the whole minute just hearing their voices! Now I am the one saying, 'Times sure have changed!' Thanks for the great story! It really inspired me.

*Deanna Alexander, via email*



## Help us create stories and features that match your interests!

**Favorite Michigan-made product.** We'll build stories around your favorite Michigan-made products, whether past or present. Send us no more than 100 words describing your favorite product made in the state and why you have a passion for it. Think Vernor's Ginger Ale, Life Savers, Stroh's beer, American Spoon Foods' cherry butter, a 1952 Ford pickup. Just remember, it must be, or have been, made in Michigan. And if you have a photo (not from a computer printer) of you or someone close to you with the product, send it along. Send now and throughout the year.

**The iconic all-time favorite *Country Lines* recipes.** *Country Lines* has published reader recipes for 30 years, and over that time readers have clipped and copied them—from Swedish meatballs to chocolate oatmeal cake—and stuck them in folders, notebooks and card tins in the best kitchens in the state. Pull out that food-spattered clipping, copy it and send it in, along with an explanation of why you like it. We'll run them in a special tribute to our 30th anniversary in November. Deadline is Oct. 1.

Send your entries for favorite Michigan-made product and *Country Lines* recipe to: *Country Lines* Editor, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864, or email [knudtson@countrylines.com](mailto:knudtson@countrylines.com).



## A Plea From the Garage Refrigerator

*“Don’t do it. I’m warning you—you’ll regret it.*

*Your alleged “friends” at Midwest Energy Cooperative are going to try to convince you to get rid of me.*

*Me! Your trusted friend and companion. Granted, you stick me out in the garage to tend with the hot summers and cold winters along with the tools, chemicals and other*

*things not really considered fit for the home. And, you don’t even want to know who else runs around here at night when you’re all snug in your bed!*

*I know there’s a newer version of me humming away comfortably in the kitchen, interacting regularly with you and the kids. Frankly, I was a little bitter about that at*

*first. I know I’m not as attractive and don’t have all the cool features. What I wouldn’t give for my own ice and water dispenser! But the fact is that I served you well for our first 15 years together, and I know I’ve got another 10-15 years in me.*

*You’ll miss me if I’m gone; I know you will. Who will keep you from hitting the back wall of the garage (I’ve been very forgiving for the dings and dents you’ve given me over the years)? Who will offer ambiance and character to my corner of the garage? And who is going to keep your fine selection of beverages cold?*

*Look, they’re going to tell you that I’m an energy hog and that you’d be better off without me. They’re even going to offer you money to get rid of me and pick me up for free. I’m tellin’ you—don’t buy it. You’re going to miss me when I’m gone.”*

### Want a cool way to save money?

Recycle that second refrigerator or freezer you have running in your basement or garage. If it’s more than 15 years old, it’s likely using four times more energy than today’s refrigerators and could be costing you \$150 a year in electricity.

Midwest Energy Cooperative will help you eliminate this extra expense *and* give you a \$30 rebate. In partnership with JACO Environmental, we will pick up your old second refrigerator or freezer at no cost, recycle it in an environmentally safe way, and send you a rebate check for \$30.

This program is available for Midwest Energy Cooperative members with an active electric account in Michigan. Refrigerators and freezers must be between 10 and 30 cubic feet in size and in working condition. The program is available on a first-come, first-served basis, and rebate incentives are subject to change and availability.

For more information or to schedule a pick-up, call 877-296-4319, or log-on to [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).



# Absolute Zero

I have a “Far Side” cartoon framed next to the thermostat in my house. I’ve had the cartoon since it was published by Gary Larson in 1989. The picture is of several guys in lab coats holding test tubes and the caption reads: “A team of scientists at the Helsinki low-temp lab reduces a temp to the lowest ever reached, 2 billionths of a degree above absolute zero—or the temperature at which a father will allow his children to turn up the thermostat.”

I find the cartoon rather funny. My kids never have. And, my wife knows she actually controls the temperature in the house, regardless of what I may think.

But over the years I’ve done what I could to keep the house at least slightly above absolute zero, yet keep the electric and gas bills to reasonable levels. I’ve replaced the old dial thermostat with a digital set-back

thermostat, and I have it set back fairly aggressively for the time between midnight and 6 a.m. They’re all asleep, anyway, so no one is complaining about how cold it is.

Every light that could have a CFL has one. I’ve caulked about everything imaginable that could or should be caulked. I’ve added insulation in the attic, although I may add more over one part of the house that still seems a bit chilly. I’ve installed ceiling fans in almost every room.

We have a whole-house fan that works great most days of the year before it gets really hot and humid. We replaced all the windows about five years ago. We had insulation blown into the walls two



**Michael Peters** is president and CEO of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. His email address is [mpeters@countrylines.com](mailto:mpeters@countrylines.com).

years ago when federal tax credits became available.

Whenever we have had to replace an appliance—and over the last 14 years it’s been most of them—we have replaced them with Energy Star®-rated appliances. I’ve wrapped the water heater with insulation and added pipe wrap to the hot water line. I know my heating ducts leak, and sealing those up is on the list of “things to do.” And, I really want to switch my furnace and air conditioning

to an air-to-air heat pump. It’s just a matter of time.

I know there are more measures we can take to reduce our energy bills, but I see this as a process, especially in an older house.

Your electric co-op has many suggestions to help you reduce your energy bills, as well. Whether it’s an online energy audit, rebates for Energy Star appliances, or paying a bounty and picking up your extra freezer or that refrigerator in the garage, your cooperative can help you reduce your energy bills.

I am really happy to see that the refrigerator pick-up program is finally rolling out statewide over the next several months. My column in the 2009 issue showed a picture of an old green refrigerator along with the announcement that we wanted *your* old refrigerator. Unfortunately, getting the program up and running across every cooperative’s service area has proved more difficult than we first thought. I think I received more emails—asking *me* when *I* could come pick up an old refrigerator—than for any other comment I’ve written.



**We’re coming to get ‘em!**  
“The refrigerator pick-up program is finally rolling out statewide over the next several months... I think I received more emails—asking *me* when *I* could come pick up an old refrigerator—than for any other comment I’ve written.”

**To learn more about your cooperative’s energy optimization programs, go to [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org)**

# Dowagiac: Small Town With Big City Flair

The home of the popular Dogwood Fine Arts Festival is a fine place to visit anytime. **Rita C. Henehan**



Will Claflin, a storyteller at the Dogwood Fine Arts Festival.

Photo - Dowagiac Dogwood Festival

**W**hat do bestselling authors Kurt Vonnegut, Norman Mailer, John Updike, Ann Patchett, Joyce Carol Oates, William Styron and Sara Paretsky have in common with nationally known artists like Dale Threlkeld and Winifred Godfrey, world-renowned sculptors Richard Hunt and Tuck Langland, and musicians such as Arlo Guthrie and Chanticleer?

They have all come to Dowagiac, a southwestern Michigan town of about 6,000, to participate in its renowned Dogwood Fine Arts Festival, which started back in 1993.

When Bobbie Jo Hartline, festival secretary, is asked how Dowagiac gets such big names to participate, she responds with a simple, "we ask them." She further explains that they have a wish list of potential participants. "The ones we have managed to attract believe in what we are trying to do here and agree to work things out with us. Education is a big piece of the festival. The speakers and performers have to be willing to give presentations at local schools as well as at the festival." This gives students a chance to discuss literary works with authors, jam with musicians, and work with artists.

A major aspect of Dowagiac's philosophy is making the arts accessible to all. At one point in talking with Hartline, a fellow in bib overalls and a knit cap pokes his head in to ask her a question. After he leaves, she notes that he is one of the largest pork producers in Cass County. "He's supplying the pork for the festival's first culinary arts show with 'Big Daddy' Aaron McCargo Jr.," she adds. "Like I say, we try to get everyone

involved." Find details about the May 6-15 festival by calling 866-490-2847 or on the web at [dogwoodfinearts.org](http://dogwoodfinearts.org).

The festival has also given birth to a permanent display of statues called "Sculptures in the City."

"In the mid-90s, we were approached by the Tremble-Dalton families who wanted to purchase a sculpture for the city," explains Hartline. "Since then, our visual arts commit-



"We're the best-kept secret in Dowagiac," says Museum Director Steve Arseneau, pictured near a display of Round Oak heating stoves. Admission to The Museum at Southwest Michigan College is free.



tee has brought donors and sculptors together to create 10 more outdoor displays.” There’s even a brochure that leads visitors to all the sculptures, with the majority located in the downtown area.

## Other Reasons to Visit

Dowagiac’s natural resources are also a big draw. Nested in Cass County’s rolling hills, the town is surrounded by numerous inland lakes that draw many Chicago-area residents here for the summer. And with that clientele, there is a demand for shops, restaurants and entertainment.

The shopping/restaurant district is concentrated around Front Street. “We have dedicated customers who keep coming back because we provide them with service and quality,” explains Susan Kazlauskas, owner of The Marshall Shoppe, a woman’s clothing store. Her store opened in 1947 and was named in 1957 after Stella Marshall. In 1973, Martha DeShazo (Kazlauskas’ mother) bought the shop and in 1991 Kazlauskas purchased it from her mother. “I’m also excited to see a lot of younger merchants coming into town,” she says. “A number of new shops have opened up and down the street.”

Kazlauskas also mentions her next store neighbor, The Wood Fire Italian Trattoria, an upscale restaurant that brings live entertainment to the area. Leon Redbone performed this winter.

And, there are a number of other restaurants. For the more casual, try Zeke’s with its 250 beers from around the world, or for an old-fashioned treat, try Caruso’s Candy and Soda Shop.

“Our shop is like stepping into the past,” says Caruso’s co-owner, Jane Wright. The original black Italian marble soda bar, with pedestal stools, and the tin ceiling and



This bronze lion by artist Rosetta is one of several statues that are part of Dowagiac’s “Sculptures in the City” display.

glass cases full of chocolate treats attest to that. “Kids can see sodas being made at our fountain and we have hand-dipped malts in any flavor.” Wright and her sister, Julie Johnson, are the current owners of this family business.

Antonio Caruso and his wife, Emilia, bought the business in 1922 and managed it for 45 years with the help of their children, among them Julia and Theresa. In 1969, Antonio handed the reins over to Julia’s husband, William Rutherford, and in 1982, Julia’s daughter Mary Myers steered. In 2005, Theresa’s daughters, Wright and Johnson, took over.

“All our candies are handmade, one piece at a time,” says Wright. “Our bestsellers are our toffees, turtles and peanut clusters. We also ship our candies throughout the state and are

working on setting up our website for home-made candy orders.” The sisters are ensuring that their grandfather’s legacy and the art of candy-making survive in Dowagiac.

Further preserving the area’s legacy is The Museum at Southwestern Michigan College, which is two miles east of downtown on M-62. “We are Dowagiac’s best-kept secret,” says Steve Arseneau, director. “We’ve just finished a major renovation, which we started in 2006. We have four galleries with interactive displays.” The first gallery portrays the town’s history; the second displays Round Oak Stoves, the manufacturer of wood heating stoves that put Dowagiac on the map. The third is dedicated to the fun you can have in the area, and the last to locals who became famous, such as Webb Miller, the World War II journalist, and James Heddon, who is credited with inventing the fishing lure.

The museum houses an extensive collection of Round Oak stoves, including “The Katelee,” which is the Holy Grail for wood stove collectors. There’s also an interactive display showing how the different Heddon lures respond when pulled through the water.

“The idea behind the Festival is to make the arts available to everyone,” comments Bobbi Jo Hartline, secretary for the Dowagiac Dogwood Fine Arts Festival. This year’s event is May 6-15.



Photos – Rita C. Henehan



Jane Wright and her sister, Julie Johnson (not shown), are the third generation of their family to operate Caruso’s Candy and Soda Shop in downtown Dowagiac.



# Energy Drains

Even with advances in energy efficiency, consumers continue to use more energy. **Megan McKoy**

**O**dds are your home has a big-screen TV, a satellite or cable box, and a DVD or Blu-ray player—maybe two or three. Add an Xbox®, Wii™, PlayStation®, or other video game console, and your entertainment center's ready to go.

Indeed, most of us depend on a large number of electronic gadgets these days—and not just for entertainment. Personal computers, stereos, alarm clocks, coffee makers, battery chargers, cell phones, microwaves... the list goes on and on.

Most of the electricity used in the average home goes toward heating and air conditioning, water heating, and lighting, all of which are significantly more energy efficient than even just a decade ago. Yet our demand for new electronic devices means we continue to consume more electricity every year—a whopping 15.6 percent rise since 2000. Younger American consumers use cell phones more for playing games, listening to music, and watching TV than talking on them, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.

“Despite anticipated improvements in energy efficiency, any energy savings are

likely to be overshadowed by rising demand for technology,” cautions Nobuo Tanaka, executive director for the Paris-based International Energy Agency (IEA), an autonomous body. He estimates that by 2030 consumer electronic use will climb threefold—equivalent to the combined residential electricity consumption of the United States and Japan.

However, there are ways to avoid the coming energy pile-up. For example, cell phones are now extremely energy efficient because of consumer demand for longer battery life.

“Many mobile devices are already far more efficient in their use of power than other products which run solely off a main electricity supply,” explains Tanaka. “Because extending the battery life of a mobile device is a selling point, manufacturers placed an emphasis on designing products which require very little power. This shows us what

can be achieved.”

If consumers demand that manufacturers reach the same level of efficiency with other electronics, such as gaming consoles, TVs, and even alarm clocks, IEA believes energy use in this sector could be cut in half.

Electric cooperatives are active on this front, offering home energy audits and financial assistance for weatherization, as well as educating consumers on the benefits of purchasing energy-efficient appliances. Making consumers aware of how many energy dollars small electronic devices drain from a family budget is just one more way co-ops are working to keep electric bills affordable.

## Appliance Accountability

Computers and monitors were the first products to receive an energy efficiency rating from Energy Star®, a program launched in 1992 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). Since then, more than 60 categories have been added, from dishwashers and windows to DVD players.

Energy Star-rated products deliver the same or better performance as comparable models while using less energy. Although actual energy savings depend on what's being replaced, new Energy Star appliances save significantly more energy. For example,

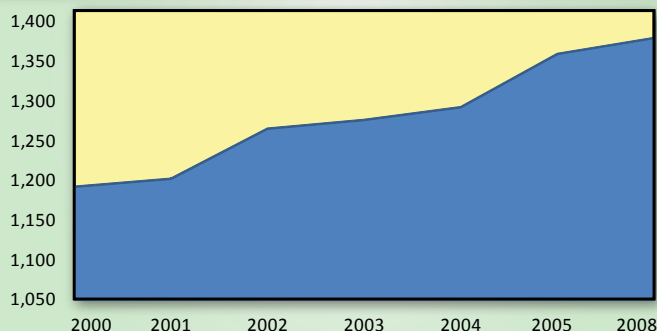


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## Appliances more efficient, but energy use rises

Although appliances have become more efficient, American consumers are adding more electronic devices in their homes. As a result, overall energy use rises every year.

Average Annual Residential Electricity Use *billion kilowatt-hours*



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers

Since 2000:

Energy used by clothes washers drops 64%

Refrigerator, dishwasher energy use drops 30%

Consumer energy use rises 15.6%



switching out a clothes washer made before 2000 with a 2010 Energy Star model could save up to \$135 per year on a consumer's electric bill. Replacing a refrigerator made before 1993 could save up to \$65 annually. However, 44 percent of refrigerators that could be retired and recycled are converted into a second fridge, given away, or sold—keeping inefficient technology in American homes. That's something Michigan co-ops are trying to remedy with their appliance recycling pick-up service and rebate.

In the wake of Energy Star's success (over 2 billion Energy Star-rated products have been purchased), DOE is pushing for more items to meet efficiency standards. In January, manufacturers sent energy use data on more than 600,000 residential appliances in 15 product categories to the department.

## Silent Energy Drains

Oddly enough, many electronic devices draw power while waiting to be used. Very likely, your big-screen TV, DVD player, and stereo burn kilowatt-hours even when turned off. According to IEA, this standby or "vampire" load accounts for more than 5 percent of residential electricity demand.

Although the amount of standby power used by individual appliances may be small—often between 0.5 watts and 10 watts—a typical home may have 20 appliances on standby at any given time. For the last decade, IEA has encouraged appliance manufacturers around the globe to cut this wasted power to no more than 1 watt. The Energy Star program takes this measurement into account when certifying many appliances.

## Cash for Appliances

Thinking about replacing an old refrigerator or washing machine? This spring the last of the state-specific "Cash for Appliances" programs, mandated by the federal stimulus bill, went into effect. These programs provide rebates ranging from \$50 to \$250 as an incentive for Americans to switch from energy-guzzling, outdated appliances to new Energy Star-rated alternatives.

In February, Michigan was allocated \$8.8 million for this program, and as of March 22, there was \$5,276,805 in rebate funds remaining. When the funds are gone, the offer ends. For Michigan-specific details on how you can take advantage of this offer, visit [energysavers.gov/rebates](http://energysavers.gov/rebates) or [mirebates.com](http://mirebates.com).

*Megan McKoy writes on consumer and cooperative affairs for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

# Do Tankless Water Heaters Live Up to the Hype?

**A**n unlimited supply of hot water sounds like a sweet deal to many homeowners. So do reduced water heating costs, instantaneous hot water on demand, and more space in utility closets.

These are all promises made by companies selling tankless water heaters. But does the technology really deliver?

Unlike traditional electric resistance or gas-fired water heaters, tankless models do not store hot water—they heat water only as it's consumed. Heating elements within a tankless water heater are activated when a hot water faucet or valve is opened.

## 'Unlimited' Hot Water?

An unlimited supply of hot water sounds great, but even the largest whole-house unit may not supply enough hot water for simultaneous, multiple uses.

For example, such a unit may be able to supply only two showers simultaneously or perhaps one shower, a dishwasher, and a sink. If users demand too much water, temperatures will drop. As a result, a tankless system probably won't meet the needs of a large family.

## Hidden Costs

Tankless water heaters do not require a lot of space, but they do require an upgrade in electrical service. This is something most home improvement stores often don't mention, and a chief reason electric co-ops generally don't recommend these appliances. This means consumers who want to replace an existing conventional water heater with a tankless unit or add one as part of a home-remodeling project will incur additional costs.

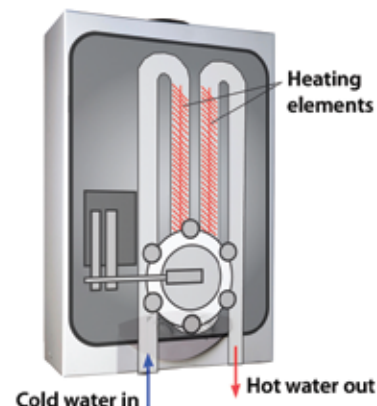
For example, a traditional tank water heater with 4,500-watt elements operates on #10 wire and a 30-amp circuit breaker. One whole-house tankless model boasts four 7,000-watt elements for a total electrical load of 28,000 watts, requiring wire and a circuit breaker that will handle at least 120 amps.

If a tankless water heater is installed in an existing home without upgrading the electrical service, low voltage or sudden voltage drops are likely. This will cause dimming lights, blinking lights, and other problems.

The extra load also requires a larger and more expensive meter loop and main breaker panel for the house. In some cases, consumers also must pay for new wiring between the

### A tankless water heater at work

Unlike a traditional water heater, a wall-mounted tankless model does not store hot water. It heats water only as it is used with heating elements inside the water heater that are activated when a hot water faucet or valve is opened. Consumers can generally save more on energy costs by using traditional water heaters (with a tank) efficiently.



Source: U.S. Department of Energy

distribution transformer and electric meter. Check first with a licensed electrician or your electric co-op to determine if you would need to improve your electric connections.

While gas-fired tankless water heaters generally do not need basic service upgrades, the same considerations must be made when determining how many hot water faucets will be turned on at any given time and how far the heater is from sinks and showers.

## Other Options

Consumers looking for an efficient water heater should consider a heavily insulated electric resistance tank unit. These appliances are often the most cost-effective option over the long term. And because of their hot water storage capabilities, many electric co-ops employ electric resistance water heaters as a key component of load management programs that shave power costs during times of peak demand—a proven way to help keep electric bills affordable.

The Oak Ridge National Laboratory also suggests using simple and low-cost efficiency measures such as tank insulation, temperature setback, timers, heat traps and low-flow showerheads. All of these are more practical and provide a greater return on investment than putting in a tankless water heater.

—NRECA Cooperative Research Network

# Dress Up Your Home—and Cut Energy Costs—With Landscaping

Landscaping does more than make a home look nice. It prevents air leaks and provides shading.

People tend to appreciate landscaping for its aesthetic value, but proper landscaping also impacts the energy efficiency of your house. From an environmental standpoint, good landscape design also minimizes the need for mowing and other lawn care. This not only saves you time, but you may be able to get by with a push mower or a battery-operated mower to eliminate gasoline costs.

In addition to increasing your home's efficiency, wise landscaping can reduce the need for watering. In the past, this was an issue primarily for the Southwest. Today, water shortages are an issue across the nation. Even if there's adequate water available, it takes large amounts of energy at municipal waterworks facilities to process and pump domestic water.

Proper landscaping includes the use of ground cover, dwarf and full-size shrubs, climbing vines, and trees. Ground cover is typically some type of plant, grass or gravel. The selection you make depends on your climate and specific house. Within the same neighborhood, a combination that works well for one house may not be the best for a home just one street away.

In general, try to use low-growing ground cover plants or gravel instead of grass. Other than some unique types, most common species of grass require maintenance. Grass is still the best choice for areas of your yard where children play or pets roam, but try to keep it to a minimum.

In all but the most humid climates, placing low-growing ground cover plants near your house helps keep it cool during summer. The leaves block the sun's heat from being absorbed into the ground, and they give off moisture. This evaporation of water from the leaves, called transpiration, cools air near the home—similar to when we perspire.

In hot, humid climates, gravel which is shaded from the sun can be more effective than ground cover plants. Using gravel also eliminates the need for watering, but it may increase the air temperature around your house. The thermal mass of the gravel stores the afternoon sun's heat, causing the heating effect to last into the evening. Though not helpful during summer, during winter gravel

be planted to the northwest side of taller shrubs and trees. These smaller plants begin directing the cold winds upward toward the tops of taller trees. The upward wind path continues over the top of your house, not against it.

Planting climbing vines on a trellis can create effective shading to reduce the heat buildup on a wall during summer. In

most climates, locate the trellis close to the house to also take advantage of transpiration cooling. In humid climates, locate the trellis a little further away from the wall. This allows the air flow to carry the moisture away, but still provides good wall shading.

Climbing vines are often more effective than trees for shade because you can target specific windows and areas of your house where heat produces the greatest problem. Deciduous vines that lose their leaves

during winter are best so the winter sun still reaches the house. One with a robust stem structure can help disrupt the force of winter winds.

Trees have perhaps the greatest impact upon your utility bills. The actual landscaping details vary for different climates, but some general concepts apply to all. Evergreen trees are effective for the northwest across to the northeast side of a house to block the winter winds. During winter, the sun does not shine from those sides. Deciduous trees planted on the other sides provide summer shade, but allow the winter sun through. You may want to leave a small gap to the southwest to allow summer breezes to reach your home.

*Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to: James Dulley, Michigan Country Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com).*



Dwarf shrubs block the wind and the rocks capture the sun's heat during winter. During summer, trees shade the house wall and rocks.

provides an advantage.

When selecting ground cover plants, consider their specific characteristics (mature size, water needs, propagation, foliage density, etc.). To minimize the watering requirements, group the plant types based on their watering needs.

Dwarf shrubs are ideal for energy-efficient landscaping because they remain small at maturity (2 to 3 feet high). Plant some near the house foundation and some further away for windbreak ramps. Since they stay small, they require little care and watering.

Dwarf shrubs can also cut your utility bills year-round. The sill plate, the bottom frame along a home's foundation, is one of the greatest air infiltration pathways into many houses. Planting dwarf shrubs near the house, especially evergreen varieties, can block the force of cold winter winds and reduce the amount of air leaking in.

As a windbreak ramp, dwarf shrubs can

Photo: James Dulley





# Buying WaterFurnace geothermal has never been easier with a **30% RENEWABLE ENERGY TAX CREDIT**

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**Cheboygan**  
Jim's Handyman  
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**Carsonville**  
Certified Temperature Innovations  
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S & J Htg & Clg  
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# Healthy Habits for Earth-friendly Families

**A**t the tender age of two-and-a-half, my granddaughter has hiked trails, fished streams, waded shorelines, and snoozed in rustic campgrounds. Furthermore, she has mastered an outdoor skill that confounds many a grown woman. When it's necessary (and sometimes even when it's not), Nellie knows how to tinkle in the woods.

I'm impressed. And I'm glad she's learning early to appreciate nature. It should motivate her to care about the Earth's resources, like clean air and water.

Good thing, too, because according to experts who track these sorts of things, Nellie has already gone through about 8,000 disposable diapers. Then there is the environmental impact of baby food jars, formula cans, plastic containers of wipes, scented disposable diaper bags, plastic swings and teething rings, and a crib with all its trimmings.

To tell you the truth, though, I worry more about the impact the environment might be having on her. With new research hinting that everything from autism to hyperactivity might be linked to toxins in our food, plastics and emissions, it just makes sense to avoid as many as possible, while teaching children some habits that will protect the resources we all need.

## Go Beyond Baby-Proofing

In its Blue Butterfly Campaign, the Children's Health Environment Coalition suggests "Five Easy Steps" to an environmentally child-safe home.

**Avoid pesticides and insecticides.** Read labels carefully to choose nontoxic, pesticide-free products for your family. Remove shoes and wash hands immediately after playing outside to prevent chemical-laced dirt from being tracked indoors.

**Use nontoxic cleaners.** As concerns about household toxins grow, companies are eagerly pushing their "green" versions of traditional cleaning products. Unfortunately, researchers say some potentially dangerous substances can still appear in products that are marketed as green. No matter what cleaners you use, take some simple precautions to minimize the dangers: dilute them; rinse surfaces after use; thoroughly wash sponges

after cleaning or store used cloths in a sealed receptacle, make sure the space that is being cleaned is well ventilated during and several hours after cleaning.

**Clean indoor air.** Indoor air pollution is linked to a host of health effects, including asthma. Use natural products whenever possible, from upholstery fabric and carpeting, to building material glues and adhesives, to paint and wallpaper. Use nontoxic techniques to scent the house, such as placing orange slices, lemon slices, cloves, or any other herb in boiling water on the stove.

**Go organic.** The baby food aisle of local supermarkets has seen a substantial increase in organic selections from companies such as Gerber® and Earth's Best®. "But why not think outside the jar?" asks Shazi Visram, founder of Happy Baby, whose frozen meals come in individual cubes in flavors like "Smarter Squash and Wiser Apple." "In our country, babies are started on processed food....but it cooks the flavor and nutrients out," Visram says.

**Use plastic products more wisely.** Choose smart plastics and avoid putting them in the microwave (where they can release dangerous chemicals when heated) or the dishwasher (where they can degrade in the heat and excessive moisture). Vinyl bath toys and plastic teething and bottles could also contain phthalates and Bisphenol A (BPA), which have been shown to disrupt the reproductive systems of lab animals. You can use the recycling codes to determine content, according to the folks at Healthy Child, Healthy World. If it's marked #1, #2, #4, or #5 it's safer; if it's marked #3, #6, or #7, avoid it.

## Want to do more?

If you're really serious about protecting your child and the planet, a few extra actions can



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earn you some bonus points.

**Eat local, and in season.** Sometimes you just need a tomato or strawberry, but eating foods raised or grown locally and in season is cheaper, better tasting, and better for you. It's better for the planet, too, since local products have less packaging and require fewer transportation resources.

**Choose "Green Schools."** Or work with your child's school to conserve valuable resources to ensure future availability and save money. Schools like Rapid River Public Schools near Escanaba are joining a growing number of "green schools" that provide more healthy, comfortable and productive learning environments, while saving energy, resources and money. As a result, kids are learning more and spending fewer days out of school. Plus, they're learning how to take care of the environment they will inherit.

**Diaper-free?** A small, but growing movement to abandon diapers completely might be the ultimate in "natural" parenting. DiaperFreeBaby now has groups and mentors in 35 states and 11 countries—but none in my neighborhood, if the reactions of the young moms I queried can be trusted.

Even if you're not ready for a move that extreme, consider taking one or two steps this month to make your family friendlier to the planet so that Earth can remain a safe and healthy place for our kids.

## RESOURCES

**HealthyChild.org** Healthy Child, Healthy World is a nonprofit on a mission to inspire parents to protect young children from harmful chemicals. Their website offers a wealth of information and tips for families to get started.

**EarthDay.net** April 22, 2010, marks the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, which makes this a great month for families to take up the challenge to protect the planet and keep our kids healthy now and for generations to come. Learn more and (maybe) find local activities.



# Energy Optimization



## About Energy Optimization

Energy Optimization programs offer solutions that can reduce your energy use and deliver significant savings on your electric bill. These programs are brought to you in partnership with the utilities listed below.

## Online Energy Profile

Is your home wasting energy? Use the online Energy Depot to get details on:

- Your energy consumption
- Your home energy use
- How to save on your utility bills

Free energy-saving kit with the completion of a full profile.

## Appliance Recycling

Is a second refrigerator or freezer running up your electric bill? Older units can use 2-3 times more energy than newer ones, quite often to chill only a few beverages. Turn in your old working appliance through this recycling program and:

- Get a \$30 Rebate
- Save Money & Energy
- Protect the Environment

## Residential & Small Business Energy Star® Program

This program provides incentives for installing Energy Star® qualified products.

## Heating, Ventilation & Air Conditioning (HVAC)

Great rebates on select energy efficient air conditioners, ECM motors, water heaters and pipe wrap encourage eligible consumers to reduce electricity consumption.

- Municipal electric consumers should call 877-296-4319 for more information
- Electric co-op members should contact their electric provider for details.

## Energy Efficiency Assistance/Income Qualified

If you're having trouble managing your energy bill, this program offers assistance. Improvements can be made to your existing home at no cost. To qualify, you must be eligible for the Department of Energy's weatherization program and your household income must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines.

To enroll in this program, please contact your local Community Action Agency.



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Contact us  
for more information

**877-296-4319**

or check out our website at  
**[www.michigan-energy.org](http://www.michigan-energy.org)**



City of Stephenson



Ontonagon County  
REA



Newberry Water  
& Light Board

# Morels!



May is Morel Month in Michigan. Most of these recipes are from the "Taste Of Boyne 1995 Morel Mushroom Cookbook," a publication of the Boyne City Mushroom Festival (see p. 19). Find even more recipes at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com).

## Rainbow Trout With Morel Stuffing

6-7 oz. fresh rainbow trout fillets  
 1/2 lb. smoked bacon  
 1 c. fresh spinach, chopped  
 1/4 c. domestic mushrooms, sliced  
 1/4 c. Shiitake mushrooms, sliced  
 1 c. fresh morels or 1/4 c. dried, reconstituted in water, quartered  
 1/4 c. chopped leeks  
 1/8 t. sage  
 1/8 t. basil  
 salt and pepper  
 3 c. flour  
 3 eggs  
 2 c. milk  
 1 c. chopped walnuts  
 1 c. bread crumbs

Sauté bacon until golden brown. Drain off grease, reserving 2 tablespoons in sauté pan. Add shiitake, domestic and morel

mushrooms; sauté gently. Add leeks and continue cooking on low heat. Add spinach and sauté until spinach becomes soft. Finish with sage, basil, salt and pepper to taste. Lay trout, filleted open, skin side down. Spoon on stuffing and fold over in half carefully. Combine walnuts and bread crumbs and place in shallow pan. Beat together eggs and milk. Roll each fillet in flour, then dip in egg wash. Roll in walnut-crumbs mixture. Place in an oven proof, preheated sauté pan. Brown fillets on each side. Place in a 400° oven; bake 10-15 minutes.

Stafford's, Boyne City

## Chicken-Morel Bisque

3/4 c. butter  
 3/4 c. flour  
 2 minced shallots  
 2 c. Half and Half®  
 6 c. good quality chicken stock  
 2 c. chopped, cooked chicken  
 1 c. heavy cream  
 1/4 t. grated fresh nutmeg  
 salt and white pepper  
 1 oz. dried morels, reconstituted and drained  
 1/4 c. butter

1/2 lb. fresh morels

Sauté reconstituted, dried morels in 1/4 cup butter; set aside. Melt 3/4 cup butter in a 3-quart saucepan; sauté shallots for 2 minutes to soften. Whisk in flour and cook for 2-3 minutes without allowing to brown. Add Half and Half and whisk smooth. When thickened, gradually add chicken stock and cook for 5-6 minutes; stirring constantly. Stir in chicken, morels and heavy cream. Season with salt and pepper. Heat to serving temperature but do not allow to boil. Makes 8 servings.

The Rowe Inn, Ellsworth

## Spinach Balls

2 sm. pkgs. frozen chopped spinach  
 18-oz. pkg. Pepperidge Farm® seasoned stuffing mix crumbs  
 4 eggs  
 3/4 c. butter or margarine, melted

1 med. onion, finely chopped  
 1/4 t. thyme  
 1/2 t. garlic  
 3/4 c. chopped morel mushrooms  
 1/2 t. pepper  
 3/4 c. Parmesan cheese

Cook spinach as package directs; drain well. Beat eggs; add all ingredients and mix well. Chill mixture for 1 hour. Roll into bite-sized balls and place on cookie sheet. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Serve immediately. These can be made ahead, frozen, then baked as needed. Makes 60-80 pieces.

Deer Lake B&B, Boyne City

## Morel and Asparagus Quiche

1 9-inch pie shell, prebaked for 5 minutes  
 2 t. butter or margarine  
 1 T. minced onion  
 6 fresh morel mushrooms, halved or dried morels soaked for 2 hours  
 4 eggs  
 1 1/2 c. milk  
 1/2 c. plain yogurt  
 1 t. Dijon mustard  
 1/2 t. thyme  
 1/4 t. salt  
 1 c. grated cheddar cheese  
 2 fresh asparagus spears, blanched, cut into 3-inch pieces  
 1/4 c. chopped, seeded tomato  
 1/3 c. Parmesan cheese

Melt butter in skillet; sauté onion about 2 minutes. Add mushrooms and sauté until tender, set aside. In a bowl, food processor or blender, blend eggs, milk, yogurt, Dijon mustard, thyme and salt. Stir in cheddar cheese. Pour egg mixture into pie shell. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes or until filling begins to firm up. Top with mushrooms, asparagus and tomato. Sprinkle with Parmesan cheese and continue to bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean and quiche is golden brown, about 15 minutes. Let stand 10 minutes before cutting.

Duley's State Street Inn, Boyne City

## Morel and Leek Pizza

pizza dough of choice  
 1/4-1/2 c. pizza sauce or pesto sauce of choice  
 Mozzarella cheese, sliced or shredded  
 morels  
 leeks  
 spinach  
 herbs of choice

Place pizza stone or baking sheet in a 500° oven. Wash and slice morels and leeks; sauté gently in butter; set aside. Prepare dough. Top dough with sauce, sautéed morels, leeks and cheese. Remove pizza stone from oven. Slide

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prepared pizza onto stone and place back in oven. Bake at 500° for 5-10 minutes until golden brown.

*Kim Brown, Morel Festival Committee*

## Morel Mushroom Gravy

1/2 c. dried morels  
warm water  
4 T. butter  
3 T. Wondra® or flour  
3/4 c. milk  
salt and pepper to taste

Cover dried morels with warm water and soak for 1/2 hour. Strain water from morels through a coffee filter, reserving water; set aside. Cut morels into pieces. In a saucepan, melt butter; stir in flour. When mixed, add milk and morel-flavored water. Stir until thickened. Add morel pieces; heat through. Season sauce with salt and pepper to taste. Serve over warm biscuits.

*Pam Chipman, Boyne City*

## Moe's Favorite Morel Sauce

1/4 lb. butter  
3 green onions with tops, chopped  
2 c. fresh morels, quartered lengthwise  
1 sm. clove fresh garlic, minced  
1 c. heavy cream  
flour  
1 c. Chablis wine  
salt and pepper

Roll morels in flour. Melt butter, sauté green onions, garlic and morels until morels are limp. Add wine and bring to a boil; boil for 1 minute. Reduce heat and simmer to reduce liquid. Add heavy cream; simmer 5-10 minutes. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve over char-broiled poultry or steak.

*Lena's Wine Cellar, Boyne City*

## Morel Mayonnaise

6 egg yolks  
1 t. salt  
pinch white pepper  
2 T. wine vinegar or lemon juice  
3 c. safflower oil  
2 T. mustard, optional  
2 lbs. morels  
2 c. Madeira wine

Wash morels, soak in Madeira for one hour; set aside. In a non-steel bowl, season egg yolks with salt and pepper and half of the vinegar or lemon juice. Whisk until smooth. Slowly add oil to mixture, adding 1-2 tablespoons at

a time and whisking until combined with egg mixture. When mixture begins to thicken, oil may be added more quickly. Mayonnaise will become hard to whisk, add remaining wine vinegar or lemon juice. Continue beating and adding remaining oil. Place marinated morels and Madeira in a saucepan on medium heat; sauté mushrooms for 5 minutes. Remove mushrooms; cook Madeira until reduced down to approximately 1/4 cup. Blend mayonnaise, morels and reduced Madeira in a food processor until smooth. Yield 1 quart.

*Wolverine Dilworth Inn, Boyne City*

## Salmon Fillets With Wild Mushroom Ragout

3 T. butter  
5 shallots, minced  
18 oz. assorted mushrooms – morels, oysters, chanterelles  
3/4 c. bottled clam juice  
2 T. whipping cream  
2 t. chopped, fresh tarragon  
6 6-8 oz. salmon fillets  
fresh lemon juice  
2 T. butter, melted  
fresh tarragon sprigs

Preheat broiler. Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a large, heavy skillet over medium heat. Add shallots; sauté 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium-high; add mushrooms and sauté 8 minutes. Add clam juice and wine; boil until liquids are syrupy, about 20 minutes. Add cream to mushrooms, simmer until thickened. Mix in tarragon, and salt and pepper to taste. Arrange salmon, skin-side down on broiler pan. Brush with lemon juice, then melted butter. Season with a pinch of salt and pepper. Broil just until cooked through, without turning, about 6 minutes. Transfer to plates. Spoon mushrooms over salmon. Garnish with tarragon. Yield 6 servings.

*The Tannery Saloon, Boyne City*

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May 13-16



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# It's Digging Season, Remember to Call

**S**pring is finally here, and so is National Safe Digging Month! With the snow melted and the ground ready for planting, anxious homeowners, like yourself, are gearing up to start those outdoor digging projects. Before you reach for that shovel to start, remember to call MISS DIG at 811 to ensure that your buried utility lines are marked.

National Safe Digging Month was designated to remind us that our land is made up of a complex underground infrastructure of pipelines, wires and cables. Striking an underground utility line while digging can cause harm to you or those around you, disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Michigan law mandates that a call must be placed to MISS DIG before every digging project, from simple landscaping projects like planting trees or shrubs, to building a deck or installing a rural mailbox. MISS DIG also takes calls and notifies the electric company when a project is in close proximity to overhead electric lines.

## Here's how it works:

One free, simple phone call to 811 makes it easy for MISS DIG to notify all appropriate utility companies of your intent to dig. The call center is open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to take these calls.

Call at least three business days prior to digging to ensure enough time for the utility lines to be properly marked.

When you call 811, a representative will ask for the location and description of your digging project.

MISS DIG will notify the affected utility companies, who will then send a professional locator to the proposed dig site to mark the approximate location of your lines



at no charge.

Once the lines are properly marked, roll up those sleeves and carefully dig around the flagged areas.

MISS DIG has processed over 17 million calls in its 40-year history,

and remains dedicated to protecting the public and utility infrastructure in Michigan. You can protect yourself and your utility service by always calling 811 before digging and working safely around the utility marks and lines themselves.

For more information on safe digging practices or any of the programs offered by the call center, please visit [missdig.org](http://missdig.org).

— Eric Urbain, MISS DIG System, Inc.

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# Michigan Steelhead

## ...From California With Love

**A**s other anglers along the Little Manistee watched, another angler clearly had his hands full.

His fishing rod was bent over from the weight of a hook-stung rainbow trout, while all marveled at the red-flanked steelhead's power and feisty refusal to quit. It thrashed clear of the water to tail-walk over the stream top before plunging back into the battle.

After several minutes of this give-and-take, the fish finally ran out of steam and another angler waded up to help with a landing net.

The fish's size and beauty is an answer to why it's so popular among Michigan anglers. Subduing this magnificent cold water game fish is a trophy experience in itself, and April is the time to join this game, as steelheading fever spreads.

It is something we can thank early-day fisheries pioneers for when they decided to add this acrobatic member of the Pacific salmon family to the state's waters.

Yes—you read it right. The rainbow trout, once thought to be a true trout of the salmon family, like the brown trout, is actually a close relative of the Pacific salmon—a family that includes the coho, chinook and pink salmon. However, unlike its Pacific cousins, the rainbow often survives after spawning and may, if not injured or over-stressed during spawning, return to the natal streams where it was born (or released to be imprinted) again in future years.

Michigan received its first rainbow trout from California 134 years ago. Michigan's steelhead were first reared and released to state waters from stocks developed primarily from the McCloud River strain. From these original California imports were developed what we now call the Michigan steelhead. Over these 136 years, many additional strains were brought in and have combined, evolved and contributed to the genetic development of the Michigan or Little Manistee strain.

Michigan's steelhead stocks began with both hatchery and wild fish, specifically the

Campbell's Creek and McCloud strains from California; to these strains were added fish from the Klamath River in Oregon. These were first planted in Michigan's AuSable River. Though the Upper Au Sable is noted more for its brown and brook trout fishing, it still has land-locked rainbows that would have been running upriver until they were cut off from Lake Huron by power dams.

The program's success resulted in the planting of rainbows into many tributaries throughout the state. By 1903, Michigan was

One happy steelheader on the Little Manistee River.

planting out 800,000 fry in over 50 of its 83 counties.

By 1908, plantings of over 1 million fish were made, with numbers increasing to 2.5 million by 1911 and 5 million in 1914. Much of the stock reared then came from the Paris fish hatchery along the Muskegon River. These numbers were supplemented by 4 million wild fish from the Pine River (landlocked ancestors of the Pine rainbows still swim and tempt anglers in that watershed today).

From rainbow stocks in the Little Manistee River, the modern steelhead program took off in 1966. Eggs and milt (male sperm) were taken from rainbow trout in the wild Manistee, Little Manistee and Platte rivers. Since 1968, the Little Manistee River has been the major source of Michigan steelhead eggs. Eggs are collected at a weir, stripped from females by injecting air into the egg sac, but leaving these females unharmed and fit to be released back into the stream. Milt taken from the males is then mixed with the eggs, and each batch held for an on-site inspection and health check.

Any infected eggs are destroyed and healthy eggs are transferred to hatchery facilities like Oden, where fingerlings hatch and then go to rearing facilities to grow to release size.

Recent creel studies show that many steelhead caught in Michigan waters are wild fish that have evolved and adapted well since the late 1800s. Michigan has come to the forefront of management and preservation of its great steelhead resource.

Today, the Little Manistee River supports a fishery with annual runs of over 10,000 adult steelhead trout and is maintained entirely by natural reproduction. The Little Manistee facility produces over 5 million eggs each year that go to hatcheries here and in other states.

And now, April is here, bringing a chance to test your luck against what is clearly one of America's legendary game fish.



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# Cool Tools Make the Difference

*Tool tips—many from Master Gardeners—prove helpful for successful harvests year after year.*

**T**here are so many different types of gardening tools available, both hand and power. To help you choose, a simple rule of thumb is to buy the best you can afford (you can always upgrade to better quality tools, as needed).

For starters, you'll need tools to dig with, such as a shovel or spade. A shovel is good for mixing or moving material, and a spade is best for digging—the blade is straighter than a shovel's and is made to be pushed into the soil.

Long-handled tools offer better leverage and reach, and allow work from a standing position. The handle may have a straight or D-shaped grip, and some, like long-handled pruners, have extensions available.

Short-handled tools are lighter, usually less expensive, and more compact to store. They let you work in confined spaces or while kneeling. Common short-handled tools include hand pruners and clippers, hoes, garden trowels and cultivators. The handles are usually wood, fiberglass or metal.

Using short-handled tools means spending time low to the ground. A good, firm foam pad or strap-on kneepads can help prevent aches and pains. The choices are many and range from simple pads to foldable seats.

Here's a checklist of basic (and not-so-basic) gardening tools to look for:

**Cultivators.** A tool with heavy curved or bent tines (or multiple spinning blades) to aerate the soil. Styles with tines are also used to mix materials and loosen weed roots.

**Garden hoses, watering cans, nozzles and wands.** These essentials are used to provide supplemental water, clean tools, and apply fertilizers or pesticides. Soaker hoses are an environmentally friendly choice. The Proven Winners® Water Wise™ Kit ([provenwinners.com](http://provenwinners.com)) is an easy solution for container gardening.

**Garden knives.** Useful for cutting twine and plant ties and opening bags and plant root balls, the safer ones have noncollapsible fixed blades.

**Garden rakes.** A heavy tool with short, stiff tines and a flat or bow-shaped metal frame, it is useful for raking heavy materials, removing rocks and debris, and smoothing the soil in preparation for planting.

**Hand pruners and shears.** Use for removing flowers, lightweight foliage and small branches.

**Hoes.** For weeding and scraping the soil's surface, hoes include the traditional flat scraping or chopping types and the loop, scuffle and stirrup styles.

**Leaf rakes.** A light rake with long, thin, flexible tines for gathering leaves and lighter materials.

**Long-handled pruners and loppers.** A long-handled version of hand pruners, these provide greater reach and leverage needed to cut larger items. Some heavy-duty versions have ratchet mechanisms for additional power.

**Mattocks.** A heavy, flat-bladed tool used to dig in the soil on one end, and a sharp point to break up heavy or rocky soils on the other.

**Pitchforks.** Used to pick up and move loose materials, they have round, long, thin tines that are lighter than those on a spade.

**Pruning saws.** These handsaws facilitate efficient pruning. Some have rope-controlled loppers in addition to the saws.

**Round-nosed shovels.** These are for heavy digging and mixing, adding soil amendments, or preparing planting holes.

**Spading forks.** Used to open the ground, dig bulbs, incorporate soil amendments and turn compost. They have heavy, flat tines and often a D-shaped handle.

**Square-nosed shovels.** The flat blade can be used to scoop up materials, level high spots in the soil and cut straight lines through sod and soil.

**Tillers.** These power tools are used to break up large areas of compacted soil and incorporate soil amendments.

**Wheelbarrows or carts.** These move heavy and bulky materials like soil, garden debris and compost. They're

useful as mixing containers for soils and amendments.

**Cool ideas.** A favorite newer tool is the Weed Wrench® ([weedwrench.com](http://weedwrench.com)), a manually-operated, all-steel tool designed to remove woody weeds by uprooting them.

**High-tech wonders.** The Easy Bloom® Plant Sensor ([easybloom.com](http://easybloom.com)) shows which vegetables, fruits, herbs, flowers, trees, shrubs or houseplants will grow anywhere, indoors or out.

To make your tools last, give them a thorough once-over before putting them away. Wash them with soap and water to loosen the dirt. A plastic kitchen spatula works great to scrape off dirt and mud, and use a wire brush on stubborn chunks or rust. Use a file or sharpening stone to sharpen blades and coat them with a light oil.

You'll want to avoid clutter and damage by keeping your tools organized and dry. Both stores and online sites have a great selection of storage racks, systems, organizers, outdoor closets and sheds. Some of the fancier storage units are mounted on wheels and have seats. Here are some simple storage ideas:

■ A bucket caddy with cloth pockets that wraps around a 5-gallon bucket is good for storing small tools. Dump weeds in the bucket! Another idea for keeping small tools, seeds, sunscreen and other items handy is to mount a jumbo mailbox on a post near the garden.

■ To store long-handle tools, fit a 1x4-inch board with shaker pegs, long nails, hooks or tool hangers and nail it to a wall in your garage or shed. Lay the tools on the board as if they were already hanging, then position and fasten the pegs or nails appropriately. Finally, nail the board to the wall and hang the tools on or between the hangers.

Whatever the garden size, picking tools and storage methods should be a fun process.



## TOOL RESOURCES

.....  
 Ace Hardware, [acehardware.com](http://acehardware.com)  
 Ames-True Temper, [ames.com](http://ames.com)  
 Clean Air Gardening, [cleanairgardening.com](http://cleanairgardening.com)  
 Garden Hardware Co., [gardenhardware.com](http://gardenhardware.com)  
 Gardener's Supply Co., [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com)  
 Mantis Garden Tools, [mantis.com](http://mantis.com)  
 Garden Tips & Educ., [thegardenhelper.com](http://thegardenhelper.com)





## She's the 'Talk Of The Town'

Bobbie Jo Hartline's radio show takes off. **Carla Lowe**

**S**ome may not like to be known as the “talk of the town,” but it’s a label that Bobbie Jo Hartline wears with pride.

“Talk of the Town” is the radio program hosted by Bobbie Jo. The show airs Mondays from 9:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Dowagiac-based WGTO, and focuses on educational topics, community events and community service activities.

Bobbie Jo was working as secretary of the Dowagiac Dogwood Festival when she stumbled into her radio gig. She was meeting with an advertising executive to promote the festival when the advertiser suggested that she had a great voice for radio. “I laughed, not taking him seriously, and then proceeded to request air time for the festival,” Bobbie Jo recalls.

Shortly thereafter she was introduced to Larry Clymer, a community leader and host of a local radio show titled “Clymer’s Corner” at WGTO. “Clymer’s Corner” was a one hour call-in show that focused on current events, friendly dialogue and debate, and community activities. Larry was looking for someone to host his show one day a month so he could travel, and asked Bobbie Jo if she was willing to give it a try.

“I remember thinking, ‘How much trouble could I do one day a month?’

and agreed to give it a shot,” Bobbie Jo explains. She proved herself a capable host, and one day a month soon grew into a weekly spot. Shortly thereafter, Larry told Bobbie Jo that he wanted to officially pass the “Clymer’s Corner” baton to her.

“I told Larry that I couldn’t do what he does,” Bobbie Jo remembers. “And he told me he didn’t want me to do what he did. He wanted me to do my own thing.” Thus, “Talk of the Town” was launched.

One of Bobbie Jo’s favorite “Talk of the Town” shows was one dedicated to suicide prevention and awareness. The guests included a local high school girl who lost two family members to suicide, a counselor from a prevention and awareness organization, and a suicide survivor. After the show aired, the mother of a suicide victim called in to thank Bobbie Jo for healing some of her guilt and for bringing a voice to the emotions she had experienced.

“It was very fulfilling,” Bobbie Jo shares, not realizing the impact her show was having on its audience. “Whatever I thought I was going to do with the show, it has been so much more for me—and I hope it has been more for my guests and listeners. My guests are the true stars of the show.”

Outside of the station, Bobbie Jo enjoys other interests that fill her time. After studying art and design at Southwestern

Michigan College, she began her career in interior design and ultimately opened her own business with a resolve to “never leave a room without a floral arrangement.”

Unfortunately, interior design proved to be seasonal work in southwestern Michigan, so she took her eye for detail and passion for creativity and began designing Christmas ornaments. Slowly but surely her ornaments became hot commodities; she even patented one of her most unique designs. “My sister says that making Christmas ornaments is my therapy, and the running joke is that I must need a lot of therapy given the amount of time I spend making them,” she laughs.

Bobbie Jo’s background and interest in the arts made involvement with the Dogwood Festival a natural fit. What began as volunteerism slowly melded into a vocation as she assumed the role of Festival Secretary, in charge of coordinating the activities and logistics of the week-long event that blends the best in art, music, literature and dance.

“I’m very fortunate to have been able to blend my interests into careers and hobbies that I love and are very dear to me,” Bobbie Jo says. “None of them really seem like work. I enjoy all of the experiences each one brings, and the people I meet as a result.”

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## What Members Collect

Ed Frenak of Rochester Hills has been collecting chipmunks for 10 years.



Many of Jeanne Furman's trinket boxes come from antique stores or as gifts. She has collected them for over 20 years. Jeanne lives in Shelby.



Bonnie Smith of Johannesburg collects anything with an owl on it. She has over 1,000 items in her collection.



Do you collect something unusual? We'd like to hear about it! Please send your name, address/phone, and a color photo (not from a computer printer) of your collection to Editor, *Michigan Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864, or by email to czuker@countrylines.com.

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# Midwest Energy Line Clearance Program

**A**s your electric utility, Midwest Energy Cooperative is committed to preserving the landscape and environment while providing reliable and safe electricity. Following is some important information about our forestry program.

## Line Clearance

We have a comprehensive program in place to control the growth of vegetation around power lines and other energized equipment. Our experienced team understands both line clearance requirements and the growth patterns of trees, which allows us to spot hazards and potential problems.

Prior to beginning any tree work, a Midwest Energy forester will determine the work to be done. He or she tours the area, looking for trees growing under power lines, overhanging branches and limbs, hazardous trees, or trees with the potential to contact power lines in the near future. Our goal is to remove obstructions to provide at least 15 feet of ground-to-sky clearance from each side of the line.



Before ▲ and after ▼ shots of a line circuit in Dowagiac.



Once a plan is in place, we mail notices to all customers in the area to alert them that tree work is planned.

## Our Commitment to Safety

Our chief priority is safety, and any tree in close proximity to a power line can present a safety hazard. Midwest will take immediate action to remove any “climbable” tree that is too close to a power line. Other circumstances may also require a tree to be removed, in which case we will work with the property owner and/or community prior to removal.

Always be aware of downed power lines because they pose a serious safety hazard. It is impossible to look at a downed wire and determine if it is energized. Also, cable TV and telephone lines may become energized if they come in contact with an electrical line. If you ever see any downed line, consider it dangerous, stay away and call Midwest at 800-492-5989.

## Planning Guide

Trees and power lines do not mix, which is why careful planning is important before you plant your new tree. Outages and personal

injury can result when trees come in contact with electrical conductors. We strongly encourage members to avoid planting trees near or under power lines. Small variety trees should be planted at least 15 feet away from power lines, medium variety trees, at least 30 feet away, and large variety trees, at least 40 feet away.

Never plant a tree or shrub on an underground right-of-way, and always maintain a clear area of at least 20 feet around any utility pole or padmount transformer. And, as always, call before you dig. The Miss Dig program is Michigan's one-call utility notification organization and can be reached at 800-482-7171. Member utilities will mark the approximate location of their underground public utility lines at no charge.

## Service Line Trimming

Midwest Energy Cooperative will trim along the service line running from the transformer to your home when the tree is in con-

tact with the power line. We do not remove trees. If you would like a tree removed, we would be happy to drop the line so that you can have the tree safely removed. Please ►

During 2010, we will be clearing 129 miles of lines in the following Michigan townships:

- Wayne
- Silver Creek
- Brady
- Wakeshma
- Schoolcraft
- Hartford
- Bangor

All customers on the circuit(s) to be cleared will receive notice by mail prior to any work. Please watch for the notice and contact us with questions or concerns.

▼ The ground-to-sky approach to line clearance helps to make sure that trees don't form a canopy over the lines.



▼ A newly cleared right-of-way can look extreme at first, but as the growth returns the landscape regains its natural beauty.





# Farming Efficiency

Energy efficiency offers new harvest for farmers. **Megan McKoy**

**T**o get the biggest bang for their electricity dollar, more and more farmers are turning to energy efficiency to boost their bottom line and productivity.

Electricity on the farm powers everything from heating (water, space, heat lamps), pumping (irrigation, water wells, manure lagoons), refrigeration, ventilation, lighting and fans (drying grains, aeration) to feed augers, manure conveyors, milking, and egg conveyors. For motors and lighting alone, the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) estimates farmers could save \$88 million annually by implementing cutting-edge efficiency measures using available technology.

EnSave, a Vermont-based farm energy audit group, has created a pyramid revealing the steps agricultural operations can take to cut down on energy use, arranged by cost and the benefits of improvements.

First, farmers should analyze energy use. This may reveal opportunities to save on electric use and in some cases could lead to increased productivity. Next, farmers should try energy conservation—changing behaviors and simply using less energy daily. After this, the greatest savings may be achieved through energy efficiency—working smarter and saving money by using more efficient equipment.

Each farm—from dairy and poultry to general agriculture—provides different opportunities for efficiency upgrades, varying by region and crop. However, regular equip-

ment maintenance also provides universal benefits. For example:

**Clean equipment:** Removing dust, soot and debris from equipment will allow it to do more work with less effort, extending its life and reducing energy use.

**Inspect regularly:** Equipment should be checked regularly. Replace parts that are showing excessive wear before they break and cause irreparable damage.

**Plug leaks:** Be it a pinprick hole in a hose or a drafty barn, leaks waste money, fuel and electricity. By plugging the leaks, savings can be considerable.

**Remove clutter:** Hoses should be regularly flushed to clear them of debris. Ensure that fan and motor intakes and exhaust units remain clutter-free for maximum circulation and efficiency.

Lighting presents another efficiency touchpoint. Light work areas, not entire buildings, and use daylight when possible. Installing dimmable ballasts can also help control light levels.

The types of lighting used on a farm can make a difference. Incandescent lightbulbs typically convert only 10 percent of the energy used into light. There are many other options available:

Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) deliver the same amount of light as incandescent bulbs, but use only a quarter of the electricity. Installing CFLs may cost a little more initially, but they can last up to 10 times longer.

Cold cathode fluorescent lamps (CCFLs)

or resident. In non-maintained areas, crews will leave wood, branches and limbs for use by the homeowner or resident or to decompose naturally. During emergency power restoration, crews clear trees from our facilities and move to the next location. Midwest does not return to remove wood, branches and limbs.

## For More Information

For more information about our line clearance procedures, please contact our Customer Care Department at 800-492-5989.



can last up to 25 times longer and have around the same efficiency as CFLs.

T-8 and T-5 lights with electronic ballasts generate less noise, produce more light per watt, offer better color rendering, minimal flickering, cooler operation, and provide electric cost savings.

For more regional and/or crop-specific energy efficiency options, the U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service provides farm energy calculators. From animal housing operations to irrigation estimates, the calculators assess how much energy your farm currently uses and provide insights on how to cut your energy costs. Learn more at [energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov](http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov).

*Sources: American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy, EnSave, U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service*

## Savings Incentives

Midwest Energy Cooperative now offers incentives on qualifying equipment through our **Energy Optimization Commercial and Industrial Prescriptive program**. Incentives are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and include measures for irrigation pumps, lighting, motors and other electrical equipment. To qualify for the incentives, applicants must first obtain written approval prior to any installations.

Franklin Energy Services is providing program management to Michigan's electric cooperatives and other utilities for their C&I programs, and can help you decide which project offers you the most savings while meeting program requirements.

For details or to obtain a program application, please visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org), or call 877-367-3191 and select the "C&I Program" option.



## ► Line Clearance, *continued*

contact the cooperative office at 1-800-492-5989 and provide at least a 24-hour notice before any work is to begin.

## Jobsite Cleanup

Our contract crews will dispose of branches and limbs in the most economic and practical manner possible. During regular line clearing activity, crews will remove branches and limbs within maintained or landscaped areas and leave wood for use by the homeowner

# Giving Hope to Haiti

**A**fter spending a week amid the devastation and desperation in Haiti, Lane Wildfong went back to work at Cherryland Electric Cooperative literally counting his blessings.

Haiti was hit on Jan. 12 by an earthquake that measured 7.0 in magnitude and reportedly killed more than 150,000 people and left hundreds of thousands more homeless.

"It really hit home to me how good we have it here," said Lane, a 29-year-old apprentice lineman who has worked at Cherryland almost four years. "The irony is that one day, near the end of our trip, we went to the ocean. When we were looking out toward the ocean, it looked like heaven. When we turned around and saw all the destruction on land, it was like we were in hell."

But that didn't stop Lane and seven members of a Buckley church group from rolling up their sleeves and helping out for a week in early March. In fact, Lane says the experience was life-changing.

"I witnessed a miracle from God when I saw a little 10-year-old girl survive after being told earlier in the night that her chances of living were 10 percent," he said. "We were told she had cerebral malaria."

In fact, he said that particular night was one he'd never forget. In addition to helping doctors and nurses keep tabs on the ailing girl, Lane was called away to deliver a baby.

"As an EMT, I had always wanted to experience a birth, but not quite the way this happened," he said. "The mother delivered standing up, so I caught it coming out. There were a few other people there to help, but the baby and the mother were fine. In fact, within 15 minutes after the birth, the mother, baby and her friend left to go home."

In the meantime, the 10-year-old girl began to show improvement during the night. By the light of morning, doctors said she would survive.

"It was quite an emotional night," said Lane. "I got back to the little Wesleyan church we were staying at nearby and began to cry like a baby. It's funny, the first three days we were there, we were so busy



Donations are still needed in Haiti. Here are a few reliable sites for giving:

**ClintonBushHaitiFund.org**  
**RedCross.org**  
**Care.org**

Lane Wildfong visiting with Haitian children.

and everything was so new that we just took everything in. But after that, when small miracles happened, we cried quite a bit—mostly tears of joy."

What struck Lane as much as the destruction in Haiti was the upbeat attitude of the Haitian people.

"They are beautiful people in every sense of the word," he said. "They would always smile and greet you. And physically, they are mostly slender and dress up on an everyday basis as much as they can. That surprised me."

Lane and his church group spent the first part of the week helping to build a 16 x 24-foot clinic to treat people. Before the clinic was built, patients were seen under tarps to shield them from the harsh temperatures.

"It was hot all the time," Lane said. "It was in the 90s during the day and in the 80s at night."

The second half of his week was spent helping the Haitian people in any way he could. Lane and his group ate some of their own food they brought over, but were also treated to some "fantastic" meals by the Haitian relief group.

"With my electrical background at Cherryland, I did the wiring for the clinic," he said. "But they didn't have electricity yet. I just got it ready to be hooked

up when electricity becomes available."

For Lane and his group, the experience was both spiritually rewarding and eye-opening.

"In just the week we were there, you could see how hard the Haitian people were trying to keep going, trying to forge ahead," he said. "Markets were going back up and people appreciated the little things that we brought over with us, like flashlights, toys and candy."

"I think what we did—and what the relief effort is doing—is offering a glimmer of hope to these people again. And they are responding with kindness and smiles. That's what kept us going."

But it also made Lane yearn to return to his family.

"It made me realize how blessed we are here and how we take the great lives we have for granted," he said. "When I got home, I hugged my wife and kids so hard. My wife and I cried together for a half hour when I got home."

"It made me feel good to know that we helped in a small way," he said. "And little by little, their conditions are improving. That's what keeps them going. That's what gives them hope."

*Nick Edson is communications coordinator for Cherryland Electric Cooperative.*



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