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July/August 2010

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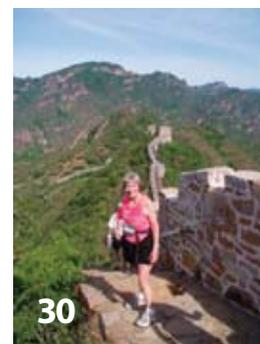
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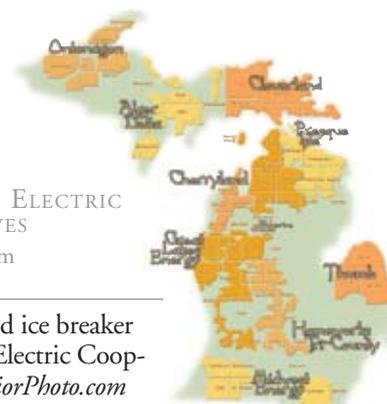
A scene looking north to the Soo Locks, shot from the deck of the retired ice breaker *Mackinaw* during a summer festival. Building on the left is Cloverland Electric Cooperative's hydroelectric power plant. *Photo* – © *Shawn Malone/LakeSuperiorPhoto.com*

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MICHIGAN'S ELECTRIC  
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# Midwest Energy Cooperative

## The Costs of Convenience

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There's comfort in convenience. After mowing the yard, it's comforting to walk into your nicely cooled home. And, as the ravenous kids arrive home after soccer practice, it's comforting to know you can pull something out of the refrigerator and toss it into the microwave for a quick snack. When your teenager is out late with friends, it's comforting to know that you can leave a light on to help guide her home.

Many of the conveniences we enjoy every day are accessible because of the availability of electricity. And even when that electricity goes out, no matter the time, it's comforting to know there is always someone at the other end of the telephone line to take the outage call and dispatch a lineworker to diagnose and fix the problem.

Electricity is all about comfort and convenience, and the resulting value to life and living. But comfort and convenience come at a cost.

Several years ago, we itemized your electric bill to help you understand the various components. Over 60 percent of your bill is related to power supply and the actual kilowatt-hours you use, and these are represented in the "Energy kWh" and "Power Cost Adjustment" lines. These are pass-through costs, meaning we bill for and collect the money based on your electric use, and pay it right back out to the power generators and suppliers.

But it takes more than just the kilowatts – there has to be a transportation system in place to get those kilowatts from the substation to your home. Our cost of doing business, listed on your bill as the "Monthly Service Charge" and the "Distribution kWh Charge," represent the cost of providing and maintaining a distribution system to deliver the energy to your home. Without poles, wire, transformers,

substations and other infrastructure; without lineworkers, call center representatives, accountants and engineers; without the myriad of other costs associated with daily business operations, none of the conveniences of electricity would be available to you.

We get a lot of questions about the service charge. When we first itemized the bills, many accused us of adding an additional charge when, in fact, it was always represented in the total. And when we raised it from \$7.50 to \$12, many accused us of trying to increase our profits, not understanding that as a nonprofit, member-owned co-op, any profits or margins we

have at the end of the year are assigned back to you, our end users. All this tells me we have not done enough to help you understand the service charge, and that's my goal.

Many of us pay \$40 or more for the convenience of having a landline telephone. That phone may never ring during that month, but we pay \$40 nonetheless to have access to the service, 24/7. Additional bells and whistles, such as long distance charges, caller ID and voicemail are typically billed on top of the basic service fee. Your electricity is no different. It takes infrastructure and staff to have power available to you 24/7. The distribution system and everything related to providing and maintaining it has to be in place so that the kilowatts can do their job whenever you flip the switch. That's the cost of convenience.

Every few years, we engage in a study to understand the real costs associated with being an electric distribution system. Results from the last study showed that our service charge should be around \$30 monthly. We've attempted to make the case for a more realistic charge, but the



**Robert Hance**  
President/CEO

**“Many of the conveniences we enjoy every day are available because of electricity. But, like everything else, the costs of comfort and convenience are going up.”**

Continued, page 25



# Zoo Days

When summer draws to a close, Midwest Energy also wants to celebrate a day of family fun at our 2nd annual “Day at the Zoo” customer appreciation events.

## Binder Park Zoo

Southwest Michigan district customers are invited to join us on Sunday, Sept. 12, at Binder Park Zoo in Battle Creek. You can pick up your reserved tickets and visit with other members and co-op staff over a complimentary picnic lunch from 11 a.m.–2

p.m. at the Oak and Maple Pavilions just beyond the zoo entrance. Zoo hours are from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m.

## Toledo Zoo

On Sunday, Sept. 19, our southeast Michigan district customers are invited to join us at the Toledo Zoo. Reserved tickets may be picked up from 10 a.m.–2 p.m. in the Midwest tent at the zoo entrance. A complimentary picnic lunch will be served from 11:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. in the Nairobi Event Pavilion, inside of the zoo. Zoo gate hours

Above, a group of siblings gets up-close-and-personal with a giraffe at Binder Park Zoo, and a young visitor enjoys the picnic lunch at the Toledo Zoo.

are 10 a.m.–4 p.m., but guests have until 5 p.m. to enjoy their visit.

To sign up, visit [TeamMidwest.com](http://TeamMidwest.com) or call 800-492-5989. The reservation deadline for both events is Friday, Aug. 27, and tickets are limited to six per household. Additional tickets may be purchased from the zoo on the event day. Tickets not picked up by 2 p.m. will be available at the will-call booth. A confirmation letter with more instructions, including parking details and a map, will be sent about two weeks prior to each event.

Join us for a fun-filled day at the zoo!

## Attend Family Fair Day

In celebration of our family of members, Midwest Energy proudly invites you to join us this summer at two of southern Michigan’s finest fair events.

On Friday, July 30, Midwest Energy will host “Family Ag Day” at the Lenawee County Fair. With our sponsorship, we have available 400 coupons valued at \$2 off one adult admission for that day only. Coupons are available on a first-come/first-served basis and are limited to four per account.

They may be picked up at the Adrian office between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. from July 26, through July 29, or at the fairground’s South Grandstand Gate from 2 to 7 p.m. on Friday, July 30. Learn more at [lenfair.com](http://lenfair.com).

On Saturday, Aug. 7, Midwest returns as the proud sponsor of “Family Day” at the Cass County Fair. All visitors will enjoy \$1 admission and many food and ride options for only \$1 from Noon to 6 p.m. Log-on to [casscountyfair.com](http://casscountyfair.com) for details.

**WIN A TV** Don’t miss your opportunity to win a 24” Viore LCD TV with LED backlight. Stop by the Midwest table at each fair to enter the drawing. One entry per family, and one winner will be drawn from attendees at each fair. Midwest staff will be on-site with special treats and giveaways. Stop by to visit!

Midwest offices will be closed for Labor Day on Monday, Sept. 6. Payments may be made at the drop box and will be posted on the next open business day.

★★★★★

**Have a happy and safe Labor Day weekend!**

## Internet Service Mapped in State

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) has completed broadband availability maps aimed at promoting development of high-speed internet access.

The maps, accessible online at [connectmi.org](http://connectmi.org), are a product of the Connect Michigan broadband initiative, a public-private partnership between the MPSC and Connected Nation, a national nonprofit focused on technology expansion in underserved areas.

"This is an important first step as the state seeks to target resources to those areas of the state without high-speed

internet service," said Orjiakor Isiogu, chairman of the MPSC.

The map details where broadband does and does not exist across Michigan by type of broadband service.

The initial maps include data from more than 86 state providers. The key findings show that 95.41 percent of Michigan households have access to broadband service of at least 768 kbps downstream (excluding mobile and satellite service); 4.59 percent of Michigan households are unserved, representing approximately 174,000 unserved households of which 165,128 are rural.

Consumers can search for high-speed internet service providers using their home address, service providers can make informed expansion decisions, and state and federal policymakers can target resources to unserved and underserved communities.

Those who do not currently have broadband access can add their name and address to a secure database of households that would like to subscribe, if given the opportunity.



Map of available DSL service on [connectmi.com](http://connectmi.com).

## MYSTERY PHOTO

Everyone who identifies the correct location of the photo below by **Aug. 10** will be entered in a drawing for a **\$50 coupon redeemable for electricity from your electric cooperative.**

Call in your entry to *Country Lines* at 517-351-6322, ext. 306, email [jhansen@countrylines.com](mailto:jhansen@countrylines.com), or mail it to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and co-op. The winner will be announced in the September 2010 issue.

The **May** contest winner is **Karen Altman** of Gaylord, who correctly identified the row of "cottages" near the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.



May photo

Do you know where this is?



## National Electric Co-op Youth Tour Means Education, Fun

A group of 13 teens from across the state traveled to Washington, D.C., recently to participate in the Rural Electric Youth Tour. Sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, this annual event gives high school sophomores and juniors the opportunity to learn about electric co-ops, politics and current issues.

"I gained so much from this trip..." says Brittany Bonar of Charlevoix, "...new friends, more knowledge about our country, and I found the monuments, memorials and museums to be very intriguing. These are memories that will last forever."

Along with a tour guide and three chaperones, the group toured Arlington Cemetery, the Smithsonian museums, war memorials, Supreme Court and Capitol, and enjoyed a play at the Kennedy Center, a visit to the National Zoo, and a Potomac River boat cruise.

The students also met with Sen. Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Reps. Bart Stupak, Dave Camp, Vern Ehlers, Fred Upton and legislative staff to ask questions and discuss economic and energy-related issues.

And, joining 1,500 electric co-op-sponsored students from across the country, the group also convened for National Youth Day to learn from inspirational

speakers, including Mike Schlappi, a four-time paralympic medalist and two-time world champion in wheelchair basketball. Schlappi shared his inspiring message: "Just because you can't stand up, doesn't mean you can't stand out."

McKenna Wolf, a junior at Constantine High School, was chosen to represent Michigan on NRECA's Youth Leadership Council. She will return to D.C. in July to attend a youth conference designed to strengthen leadership and public speaking skills.

Participating co-ops included Cloverland Electric, Cherryland Electric, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, Midwest Energy, and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. The students were chosen by their sponsoring co-op after attending Michigan Electric Cooperative Teen Days in April—a three-day camp to learn about electrical safety and energy efficiency, and how co-ops operate.

Learn more about these co-op-sponsored youth programs at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com); click on "Youth."



Mike Schlappi and McKenna Wolf

Top photo: (back row from left) Marcus Ruff, Jake Smith, Tyler Ashbaugh, Robert Myers, Kevin Bolz, Will Puerner and Luke Smith; (front row) Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Esther Hardies, Karol Chubb, Tabitha Lyon, McKenna Wolf, and Brittany Bonar.



Honda. Why is it so hard to understand that even though the Honda was “assembled” in the USA the purchase supports Japan and not the Michigan workers who pay state taxes and spend their money in Michigan? While traveling through the state I see so many foreign cars, especially around Traverse City.

I could go on, but I’ll make my point. With our income down around 40 percent and job prospects as bad as they are, if my wife loses her unemployment before finding a job, we could lose our vacation home. That will be one more family not spending their money in northern Michigan. When are the people of this state going to learn and stop sending our potential tax revenue to Japan, Korea and China?

*Tony Burkel, Macomb Township*

### “Greener” Lawn

In his article, Brian Sloboda (“A Greener Way to a Greener Lawn,” June 2010) failed to mention another alternative to mowing or trimming a lawn, reducing emissions, and using less oil.

There are new products at [golehr.com](http://golehr.com) that you might be interested in: a propane-powered lawn mower and gas trimmer. I have the trimmer myself. It is powered by a 4-cycle motor. Emissions are far less than with conventional fuels. The trimmer and lawn mower use a 16-ounce camping-style canister that lasts two hours. The canister is recyclable and in the future it may be possible to re-fill these containers.

The amazing thing is there is no mixing of oil and the canister can be removed and used anytime with no worry of it becoming “old.” Octane ratings stay the same. The trimmer and lawn mower are a clear alternative to old methods while helping the environment. Cub Cadet makes

a propane-powered zero-turn lawn mower.

Propane is a clean-running fuel and it doesn’t require burning fossil fuels to create the fuel to run it and it is in plentiful supply. I hope others will begin to use this equipment as I have to help reduce emissions that impact our planet.

I plant natural grasses and plants in my yard so that I have reduced my mowing to zero. I trim my yard, but I burn weeds with a propane “Weed Destroyer” so that I eliminate my use of chemical pesticides.

*Jim Ege, Pentwater*

*Propane is a fossil fuel. Propane is cleaner burning than gasoline, but not as clean as natural gas or electricity when used to power equipment. In terms of emissions, from higher to lower, the order is gasoline, propane, natural gas, electricity. —ed.*

### About Coal & Nuclear

I’d like to respond to a letter in the May 2010 issue of *Country Lines*.

It appears [the writer] is suffering from severe selfishness, preferring to avoid any responsibility for encouraging profligate use of carbon-yielding fuels rather than working, in any way he could, to reduce the negative impact that today’s use of those fuels probably have on his grandchildren—and mine. If he were to adopt an increased sense of altruism he might find that he can look at all children and know that he has done something for all, not just for his personal concepts of what is best for our world.

Look outside your window and you’ll discover there is a world worth working to save.

*Jon Wennerberg, Skandia*

Physicians for Social Responsibility has information about energy sources people making decisions about those sources should be familiar with.

*Gerald Drake, MD, Petoskey*

## Students Win Scholarships



Ben Schell



Brandon Kieft

Brandon Kieft, a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, and Ben Schell, Cheryland Electric Co-op, have each won a \$1,000 scholarship from the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA).

Brandon is the son of Paul and Gina Kieft of Rothbury, and a graduate of Montague High School, where he was active in varsity basketball and soccer, and community service and leadership organizations. He plans a career in bio-medical engineering.

Ben is the son of Timothy and Linda Schell of Traverse City and a graduate of St. Francis High School, where he was active in community service and played varsity football, basketball and track. He will attend the University of Michigan and plans to pursue a career in medicine.

A total of 156 scholarship applications were received by MECA, which publishes *Michigan Country Lines* for the state’s nine electric co-ops.

### Recycled Paper

*Michigan Country Lines* is now printed on recycled paper from FutureMark Paper, which taps the “urban forest” of waste paper thrown out in Chicago every day. Using recycled paper reduces the carbon emitted in paper production, the paper deposited in landfills, and water and air pollution. The energy to produce recycled paper is about one-half the amount required to make paper from pulp.

### Support Michigan

I am from the Detroit area, lived here for all of my almost 52 years. Most of my family and myself have worked for the auto industry and I have worked directly for Ford Motor Co. R&D for the last 17 years. I am also not embarrassed to say I am a Lions season ticket holder, but go to very few games in October or November. I spend most of those months in northern Michigan. There is nowhere else on earth that I’d rather be in the fall.

We own 20 acres in Manistee county where we just built a vacation home in late 2008. We’ve spent countless vacations in Da U.P., eh! My wife and I have seen over 100 waterfalls there and a large portion of the lighthouses. We purchased a plaque for my mother and stepdad in the Marquette Lighthouse tower that was to be used for restoration. We have gone out of our way to vacation and spend money in Michigan’s north country.

With all the jobs lost in Michigan in the auto industry, it is no wonder tax revenues are down. My wife has been out of work for a year-and-a-half and my income is down over 30 percent, yet we still find a way to visit the north. When are the people of Michigan going to learn to buy products from Michigan/USA, which pay Michigan income taxes, property taxes and corporate taxes and quit buying from companies that send money back to Japan, China and Korea?

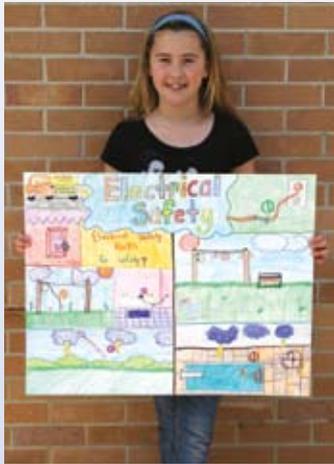
A teacher friend was complaining to me about the state’s financial crisis and how his taxes are going up and [he’s] losing benefits, yet he drives a



# Midwest In The Community

The Midwest Family has again been out-and-about in the community, providing outreach and educational services to a variety of groups and organizations.

## Safety Contest



**E**mily Demeter, left, a 4th grader from Sister Lakes Elementary, shows off her winning electrical safety poster from Midwest's inaugural Safety Month contest. The effort was kicked off in April with hotline safety demonstrations for all 4th grade classes in the Cass, Dowagiac and Marcellus school systems. After the presentation, all students designed a poster depicting an electrical safety message. Each classroom then selected one poster and the representative posters were all submitted to Midwest. The community affairs team selected one winning poster from each of the school systems, and from those three, Emily's design was selected as the best overall.



Midwest provided a pizza party and a field trip to the HealthWorks! Kids' Museum in South Bend for the students from the three winning classrooms. Each student was also given a t-shirt bearing Emily's winning design. The design will also be used in future promotions of Midwest's electrical safety programs.

## Generous Hands

**A** team of nine Midwest employees spent the day at Generous Hands, a Vicksburg organization that provides backpacks of food every Friday to local school children who are at risk of hunger on the weekends.

The organization was formed by a Bible study group of 10 women. What started in a closet-sized room at a local elementary school has expanded to a program utilizing many community volunteers to prepare "Friday Packs" for hundreds of southwest Michigan students each week from a 4,000-square-foot warehouse.



Alyson Gillam, left, a customer care representative, restocks cereal boxes in a storage tote while Josh Hance, information systems technician, and Diane Beardslee, customer care representative, put the finishing touches on a "Friday Pack."



# Cooperative Principles Still Working After 75 Years

A few years ago I joined my son and his Boy Scout troop on a 10-day backpack trip at the Philmont Scout Ranch, the Boy Scouts' 214-square-mile-high adventure base located in the mountains of northern New Mexico. Since we were a "boy-led troop," our purpose as adult leaders was simply to follow the Scouts and only step in if it became a matter of safety. Each day the boys picked a different trail leader and that scout was responsible for setting the pace and navigating the trails. For the most part, the trails were fairly well marked and getting lost took some effort. However, in some of the more rocky regions there really is no trail and you had to use the compass and map to make sure you were heading in the right direction.

I recall one occasion where the scouts headed off down a path the adult leaders knew was incorrect. We were tired and really didn't want to wait too long to see how far they would go before figuring out we were "lost." In our minds, we were recalling a hike we took five years earlier where we walked 10 miles on a five-mile trail as we dutifully kept following behind a scout who was obviously lost. We didn't want to needlessly add to our trek, but we also didn't want to squash the enthusiasm of the leader. So instead of shouting out that he was wrong or lost, or taking over, we slowed the pace and gave him a chance to figure out we were not heading down the right trail. Fortu-

nately, it only took him about 10 minutes to figure it out. This led to a conversation about the need to stop every so often, look around, and reconfirm that you are on the right trail.

As cooperatives, we follow a more general road map: the seven cooperative principles. These principles have been around for hundreds of years and have guided all types of cooperatives. As we hit our 75th year, it makes sense for us to pause, take a look around, and reconfirm that we are still on the right trail.

Following are the principles that guide cooperatives:

## 1. Voluntary and Open Membership

Cooperatives are voluntary organizations, open to all persons able to use their ser-

vices and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

## 2. Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members, who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions.

## 3. Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.

## 4. Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members.

## 5. Education, Training, and Information

Cooperatives provide education and training for their members, elected representatives, managers and employees so they can contribute effectively to the development of their cooperatives.

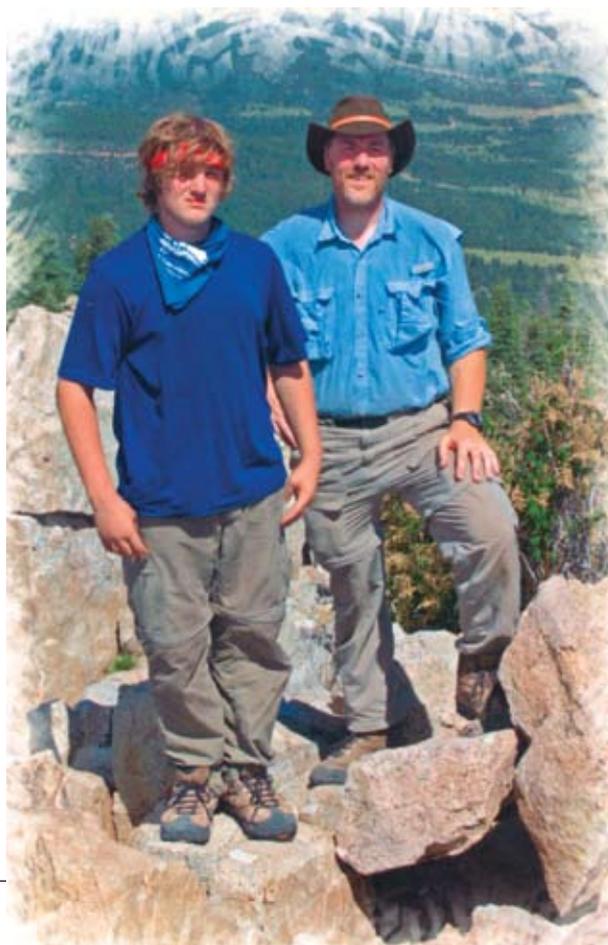
## 6. Cooperation Among Cooperatives

Cooperatives serve their members most effectively and strengthen the cooperative movement by working together.

## 7. Concern for Community

While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities.

I can think of numerous examples of cooperatives that have stayed true to these principles and are walking the right path.



Michael Peters and his son, Barrett. Peters is president and CEO of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. His email address is mpeters@countrylines.com.



Photos – Sault Convention & Visitors Bureau

# See the Soo

The busy waters of the St. Mary's River ensure that Sault Ste. Marie never loses its undercurrent of excitement and possibility. **Linda Sirois**

**A**n old French word, "sault" describes the turbulent rapids and waterfalls that have caused river traffic to pause and linger for hundreds of years in Sault Ste. Marie. Since its European settlement in 1668 by Jesuit priest Jacques Marquette, this area where lakes Superior and Huron are joined by the river has been a lively crossroads of trade, travel and activity. Even earlier, generations of Ojibwa people gathered at "the cascading rapids" to harvest the abundant resources of whitefish, maple sugar and fur.

"The river defines the town geographically and historically," says area resident Will Fowler, who wears many hats as an employee of the local bookstore, member of the Chippewa County Theatre Guild, and employee of Sault Historic Sites. "So many groups have had influence on the area—each group has left its mark."

## A Crossroads and a Destination

Sault Ste. Marie, or "the Soo," has a tradition of being a place to re-stock provisions and relax. This second largest U.P. city is also the oldest European settlement in the Midwest and combines small town friendliness with enough authentic attractions to please the whole family.

"It's a very friendly city," says Linda Hoath, lifelong Cloverland Electric Co-op member and director of the Sault Ste. Marie Convention and Visitors Bureau. The Sault area is an ideal home base for the numerous day trip destinations located just a short distance away. Traveling time is a few minutes by bicycle, foot or car within the compact downtown waterfront area, and a few minutes to a few hours to the natural beauty, history and fun

the eastern U.P. offers.

The International Bridge spans the St. Mary's to join the U.S. and Canada, and offers easy access to the sister city of Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario (call U.S. Customs at 906-632-2631 for border-crossing rules).

## History FUN!

Fun is never separate from history in Sault Ste. Marie. The Tower of History features an amazing panoramic view of 1,200 square miles, including the Canadian side of the river, for those who take the high speed elevator 210 feet up to the observation decks.

From the top of the Tower, the Museum Ship *Valley Camp* can be seen a short distance away. This retired Great Lakes freighter has 20,000 square feet of exhibits and re-creations of the ship's heyday as an iron ore and taconite carrier. Visitors can wander the crew's quarters and pilothouse, view recovered artifacts from the *Edmund Fitzgerald*, and sense the sheer volume of a Great Lakes ship, which is only about one-half the size of freighters cruising today.

The newly-opened River of History Museum beautifully displays information about the diverse cultures and development of the St. Mary's River system and Sault area. In the same building is the Interpretive Center for the Sault Tribe of Chippewa, a free learning experience featuring native artwork, craft displays and a tribal library.

Money-saving combination tickets are available for the three venues above (visit [sault-historicsites.com](http://sault-historicsites.com) or call 888-744-7867).

A national historic site, the American Soo Locks (Visitor's Center: 906-253-9101) should not be missed. This engineering marvel allows ships that are 1,000 feet long



to narrowly negotiate the 21 feet of difference in water levels between lakes Huron and Superior. The Soo Locks Boat Tour (906-632-6301) uses double-decker boats to take visitors along the St. Mary's and through the Locks.

Rarely open to the public, the block-long former Edison-Sault Hydroelectric Power Plant—now owned by Cloverland Electric Cooperative—is a dazzling work of circa 1898 cut-stone architecture, with "hidden" lighthouse columns.

Other attractions include the Great Lakes



Photo - Soo Locks Boat Tours



Photos - Linda Sirols



**Opposite:** The International Bridge to Canada (top), with one of three train bridges behind it, and a freighter preparing to pass through the Soo Locks. The historical homes (bottom) of John Johnson, Bishop Baraga and Henry Schoolcraft flank Sault Ste. Marie's city marina, with the Tower of History museum and its observation decks spiraling in the background.

**Above (clockwise, from top left):** This eagle fountain on the corner of Portage and Ashmun represents the Soo area's history, according to Lee Brown, director of the Downtown Development Association, and marks the location of the Farmer's Market that sets up for business each Wednesday evening and Saturday morning during the warmer months. • A freighter follows a tour boat through the Soo Locks. • Genny Kaunisto, a Cloverland Electric Co-op member, serves up a smile and delicious drinks and Mexican fare at the colorful, historic Palace Restaurant and Saloon. • This humorous clock face is one of many quirky creations at Riverstone Gallery. The owners recycle outmoded electronics and camera parts into unique clocks and jewelry. • Eric and Kathy Demaray represent 55 local artists in their Sault Realism gallery on Portage Ave., as well as offering printing, mounting, and framing of artwork.

Shipwreck Historical Society, and St. Mary's, Michigan's first Catholic church. The current building is the fifth on this site and dates from 1881.

Local storyteller Jim Couling, also known as "Woodsmoke Jim," delights in leading his Twilight Walking Tours ([twilightwalkingtours.com](http://twilightwalkingtours.com) or 906-440-5910), which offer tales that combine history and mystery.

"Each story is a gem," Couling says, adding that he loves sharing his enthusiasm for "cool and creepy untold stories." Some of the untold stories focus on his "Strong Women

of the North" tales. "Their [the women's] stories are compelling," he says. With his wife Mary, who adds her vocal talents, they offer family-friendly evening strolls that depart appropriately across from the Haunted Depot on Portage Avenue.

Historic Sugar Island is just a hop away by ferry. Be sure to try the funky 1949 Clyde's Drive-In restaurant near the ferry landing.

### Speaking of Food...

Even eating is more fun in the Soo. Try ship-watching at the riverfront while feasting on

fresh whitefish, fine dining at the Ramada Inn Ojibway (National Historic Landmark), or tasty Mexican specialties at the renovated 1903 Palace Restaurant and Saloon. Zorba's serves up Greek, and Cup of the Day boasts great coffee, specialty sandwiches and homemade soups. Owner Anthony Stackpoole keeps a bowl of fresh water just outside the door for passing four-legged friends.

Unforgettable family dining awaits at the award-winning Antler's Restaurant on Portage Avenue, where about 500 antler racks and animals—real and frankly fake—enliven the atmosphere from their perches on the walls and ceiling. Legend has it that among the names under which it has operated, the "Bucket of Blood Saloon and Ice Cream Parlor" is the most colorful. The Antlers offers homemade hamburger buns, twice-weekly fish fries, and delicious steaks. Their beer-of-the-month feature and traditional Paul Bunyan burgers are in demand by local Lake Superior State University students. (*Hint: the steak bites on garlic bread and s'more cheesecake are amazing.*)

### A Lively Arts Scene

Shopping, theaters and art galleries are scattered throughout the Soo. Sault Realism, an art gallery run by Eric and Kathy Demaray, offers a mix of locally-created paintings, jewelry and photography. Some of the retro prints shown were taken by Eric's grandmother, nationally known photographer Marion Stahl Boyer.

Nearby is Riverstone Gallery, specializing in Michigan and Sault art. Owners Gregory and Donna Steele, and daughter Allyson Schwartz, shape one-of-a-kind jewelry and clocks from re-purposed materials.

The Alberta House Art Gallery has traveling exhibits and a gift shop. Mahdziwin, on Ashmun St., is owned by the Sault tribe and offers original Native American artworks. Kewadin Casino also has a large gallery and gift shop with Native creations.

A recent "Cool Cities" grant has allowed the local drama community to renovate and use the historic Stars Theatre (906-632-1930), on Ashmun St.

The river's special energy, collaboration among diverse cultures, and a strategic location make the Soo area an unforgettable destination with a charm found nowhere else.

"Sault Ste. Marie has found its own," explains Hoath. "We are not Mackinaw City, we are not Mackinac Island, we are not St. Ignace. We are Sault Ste. Marie."

To plan your trip to "The Place Where Michigan Was Born," see [saultstemarie.com](http://saultstemarie.com) or call 800-647-2858.

# Unique in the U.P.

Take a Michigan vacation this summer by visiting Keweenaw Bay in the western Upper Peninsula. *Kath Usitalo*



Bill and Nancy Leonard are the owners of the Einerlei Shop in Chassell. Much of the area is served by Ontonagon County REA.



Teresa Palosaari's Country Craft Cabin offers soaps, rag rugs and honey, among other things.

**T**o know Bill and Nancy Leonard is to wander through their airy, two-story Einerlei Shop at the heart of Chassell in the Keweenaw Peninsula. Every artfully arranged item, from handcrafted jewelry to kitchen gadgets and gourmet foods, garden plants, pet

accessories and books, is a reflection of their interests. *Einerlei*, German for “one and the same,” expresses their goal of combining work and play. It’s a philosophy that has guided them to the 35<sup>th</sup> anniversary of their one-of-a-kind store, involvement in their adopted hometown, and 45 years of marriage.

The couple had vague plans to “do something on our own” when they left Indiana and their careers—his as an engineer, and hers as a special education teacher—in their VW camper in 1973. “We were kind of Hippie-ish,” says Nancy, when they happened upon Houghton and stayed “to see what it was like to live with a lot of snow.” An avid sailor, Bill says, “Big water attracted us.” They also liked being close to Michigan Technological University.

## “Let’s sell something!”

Two years after arriving in the U.P., the couple launched Einerlei on a lark, “because we had store windows,” says Nancy of the building that had housed a restaurant and barbershop. “Let’s sell something!” they said, and opened shop with handcrafted items and furniture they refurbished.

Gradually, they added inventory to reflect their home and garden interests, renovating the building in phases to make room for the works of local artists and musicians, greeting cards, housewares and apparel. The variety appeals to their clientele, a mix of tourists, locals, and the Michigan Tech and Finlandia University communities. “When I buy for the new year, I try to redefine (the shop). We have to constantly change, and that’s great because it keeps us interested,” Nancy says. “I try to find companies that are doing good on their own,” she adds, preferring those that donate to causes, deal in fair trade, and are conscientious about packaging.

## Community Center

The couple is also active with local historical, business improvement and tourism committees, and Humane Society fundraising. Bill was township supervisor for 12 years, and Nancy’s passion for vintage clothing inspired “Friends of Fashion,” a volunteer group that preserves historic apparel and presents pageants depicting those who wore it.

The Leonards also serve as the unofficial Chamber of Commerce, readily sharing



The Einerlei Shop has an ever-changing collection of unique clothing.

tips on what to do in the area. In summer, mountain bikers and hikers hit the Chassell Classic cross-country ski trail, and paddlers enjoy Chassell Bay and the Keweenaw Water Trail. The Chassell General Store carries everything from instant toothache pain relief to extension cords, refurbished computers, Vollwerth's sausage, fishing lures and fresh fruit. Across the street, Treats and Eats offers ice cream and makes sandwiches for easy picnics at Centennial Park, with its playground, fishing pier and sandy beach on Chassell Bay.

### A Berry Good Time

The waterfront was the site of a sawmill built in 1887, and lumbering reigned until the mill closed in 1928. Farmers realized the area was ideal for growing strawberries and Chassell became a major supplier. The story is told in the "Lumber Kings to Strawberry Kings" exhibit at Chassell's Heritage Center Museum. Housed in a handsome former school, the Center is a Heritage Site of the Keweenaw National Historical Park. It's open summer Tuesdays and Thursdays, with a variety of Thursday evening programs.

A handful of berry growers, some with U-Pick farms, remain in the area and Chassell celebrates with the annual Copper Country Strawberry Festival (July 9-10). It features parades, entertainment, an arts and crafts sale, whitefish "boil" and famous strawberry shortcake. Folks gather at the park pavilion to clean and



In L'Anse, Lynn Ketola built the Ivory Mansion Bed & Breakfast to offer unique lodging and keep her family's homestead.

prepare 1,200 quarts of strawberries for the signature treat.

### Along U.S.-41

Roadside attractions near Chassell include the Bishop Baraga Shrine, a towering monument overlooking Keweenaw Bay, and birders flock to the Sturgeon River Sloughs, a designated wildlife viewing area. Teresa Palosaari's Country Craft Cabin is filled with soaps, rag rugs and honey, and a bright red sign signals North Entry Road. A giant bear trap at the Bear Trap Iron Works is a can't-miss photo stop.

Houghton offers a variety of lodging, but for a unique alternative, check into the Ivory Mansion Bed & Breakfast in L'Anse.



Stop at the Baraga Drive-In for a quick meal, ice cream and a friendly welcome.



The Chassell General Store has "a little bit of everything," from garden tools to canned tuna and firewood.

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# The Next Water Heater

New heat pump water heaters may signal the rebirth of an energy-saving technology. **Alice Clamp**

**C**old showers aren't a pleasant way to start the day, and hot water plays a hefty role in cooking and cleaning, too. As a result, water heating has become the second largest energy user in an average home, accounting for approximately 20 percent of residential energy use.

To save energy, consumers have wrapped water heaters in blankets or wrapped hot water pipes in insulation. While those practices should continue, a new type of water heating product is entering the market, promising to lower energy consumption and save consumers money.

Heat pump water heaters, while not a new technology, are experiencing a rebirth. A handful of small companies produced units in the 1980s and 1990s. But random failures and other issues (such as the need for utilities to install special electric service to power the devices) soured consumers on the technology.

In addition, many electric co-ops offered (and still offer) load management programs that depended on briefly shutting off standard electric resistance water heaters (which can store hot water for many hours) as a way to cut electric use during times of peak demand when power prices skyrocket. These programs, in turn, helped co-ops keep electric bills affordable. Heat pump water heaters, unfortunately, could not be used in these efforts.

Now, some major water heater manufacturers and other appliance companies have entered the market with a new and improved generation of heat pump water heaters. Many electric cooperatives are currently testing these products for possible deployment in their service territories—a critical step in determining whether they will really help consumers save energy and trim electric bills.

## How They Work

Heat pump water heaters come in two types. The more expensive “integrated” model replaces an electric resistance water heater with one that combines a heat pump with a storage tank. The second version adds a heat pump unit to an existing electric tank.

In both versions, a heat pump circulates a refrigerant, which absorbs heat from surrounding air before it passes through a compressor to maximize heat output. Essentially, heat drawn from the air transfers to water in the tank.

While a heat pump water heater can produce most of the hot water a family requires, a backup electric resistance element in the tank takes over when outside air becomes too cold or consumers need extra hot water. In summer, cool exhaust air can be released into the vicinity where the heat pump water heater is located, assisting home cooling, or it can be returned outside through ducts.

Because a heat pump water heater uses electricity to move, rather than generate, heat, it consumes roughly half the electricity of a conventional electric resistance model. This



efficiency qualifies integrated heat pump water heaters for an Energy Star® rating, a first for electric water heaters.

But this added efficiency comes with a high price tag. Integrated units sell for \$1,400 to \$2,000—more than twice the cost of standard electric resistance water heaters. However, depending on your co-op's electric rate and the installed cost of a heat pump water heater, including any financial incentives, payback for the purchase can take as little as three years. In areas with low electric rates and limited financial incentives, though, the payback period can be much longer.

Heat pump water heaters are most efficient in warm and damp climates. Homes in those regions also benefit from the appliance's cooling and dehumidifying features.

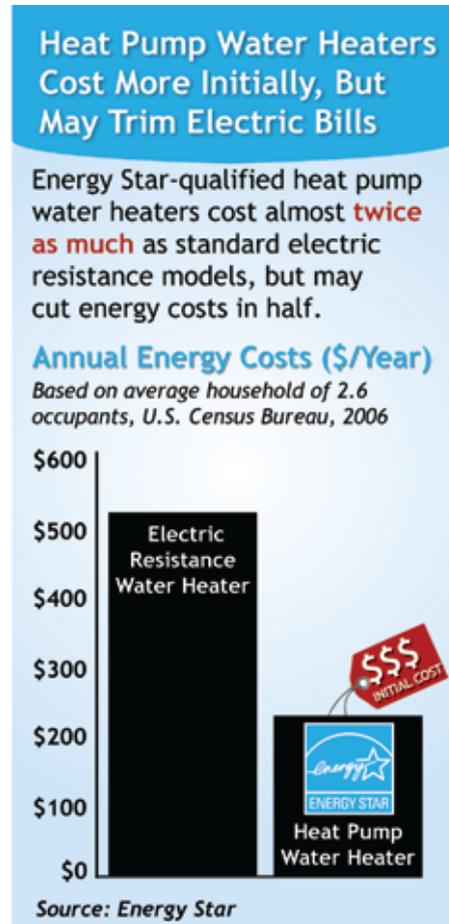
A heat pump water heater needs space of at least 10 feet square to ensure adequate air exchange. An open basement, a utility room, or—in some areas—a garage, will work.

Noise becomes another consideration when deciding where to place a unit. While conventional electric resistance water heaters operate quietly, most heat pump water heaters boast noise levels similar to window air conditioners.

Heat pump water heaters are not a universal option. Residents in colder climates will see decreased performance during winter. In the Pacific Northwest, for instance, if the heat pump is designed to work at ambient air temperatures of 45° F or higher, the water heater's electric element will operate whenever air temperatures drop below that level, reducing energy savings.

To learn more, visit [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov), and search for heat pump water heaters.

*Alice Clamp is a technology writer for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*





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# Do the Math! Kids Need It; You Can Help!

In the collective rhythm of our lives, summertime has become the mellow jazz of the year, especially for our kids. A growing number of students, however, are picking up the tempo by tackling some summer-time learning.

Adding motivation for high school students are the Michigan Merit Graduation Requirements. Starting with the class of 2011, these standards require *every* student to master rigorous subjects like Chemistry, Physics, and Algebra 2.

Since no subject seems to cause more anxiety than math—Algebra 2, to be exact—I asked math experts for some tips.

## STARTING THIS SUMMER

**Target your help** – Discover where your teen’s strengths and weaknesses were in last year’s math classes. This will uncover areas where you could catch up or get a jump-start on next year.

“Ask for worksheets or assignments for students to work on over the summer,” says Jamie Wernet, a math tutor and high school teacher. “Or explore websites that offer free math games, tutorials, worksheets, and more.

**Plan and practice** – All too often the summer can slip away, regardless of the best intentions. Schedule study sessions and follow it. Take advantage of summer schools if one is offered.

“Summer schools often offer smaller classes or a different approach to the material,” says Wernet.

**Study the standards** – Review local and state standards, which explain what your child will be expected to learn each year (see sidebar).

“What does it mean to ‘pass Algebra’? List the topics found in the standards and make sure your child is learning them.” urges W. Michael Kelley, author of a series of math guides for people who don’t “speak math.”

## AFTER SCHOOL STARTS

**Be visible and accessible** – Introduce yourself to teachers early on. Let them know

you’re interested in your child’s progress. Ask if there is a class website or other way to track when assignments are due.

“Send an email early so that the teacher has easy access to your email address,” says Wernet.

**Learn what to expect** – Ask about the textbook or curriculum used. Does the teacher use a traditional approach, or one that emphasizes group work, problem solving, and investigations? What will a typical lesson look like? How much homework should you expect?

“Math instruction doesn’t always look the same as when parents were in school, and that’s okay!” Wernet says.

**Keep students on track** – Have a set time to work or study a little every day. Often, success hinges on just keeping up with daily assignments.

## MOTIVATING RELUCTANT LEARNERS

**Uncover the root** – Is it boredom? Discouragement? Confusion? Then match the remedy to the cause.

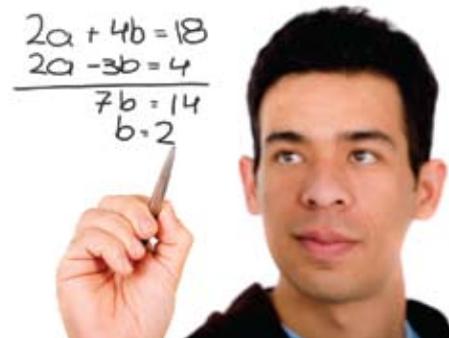
**Create a can-do attitude** – Kelley says some parents believe their children will fail math because they, themselves, failed the subject. *Never* give any child the idea that it’s okay to give up on math.

“Avoid comments like ‘I was never good at this stuff’ or ‘I never use this math,’” Wernet says. “If you need to, study the material yourself!”

**Use positive peer pressure** – Find a compatible study buddy who challenges your teen, and arrange regular homework sessions together. It gets students talking about math, and each might take different things from the lesson. “It’s easier to do anything if you’re not alone,” says Kelley. Plus, a little healthy competition can motivate them to complete work well and on time.

## TIME FOR A TUTOR?

**Don’t wait** – Once a student falls behind—for any reason—or feels discouraged, both Kelley and Wernet urge families to seek help



©iStockphoto.com/Andres

right away—especially if you know your own math skills are rusty.

**Look for quality and passion** – Ideally, families should look for a certified math teacher, but there are other options: college students, retired or unemployed teachers, tutoring centers, or online tutoring. Look for one that fits your budget and your child’s personality—and who is passionate about math.

**Don’t sell yourself short** – According to Kelley, parents are willing to help out with just about everything *except* math and science, especially in higher grades. His series of “Humungous” guides (see sidebar) provide very detailed answers to math problems, showing you how to work out every problem, and they don’t skip steps.

“A surprisingly large share of my readers are adults determined to master what they never understood in school,” Kelley says. “Parents are using my books to learn the material so they can help their own children.”

So enjoy the lazy, hazy days of summer, and allow kids time to dance to their own music. But do what it takes to start September on a strong note.

“There is no shame in asking for help,” Kelley says. “Asking for help when you’re already hopelessly lost is too late.”

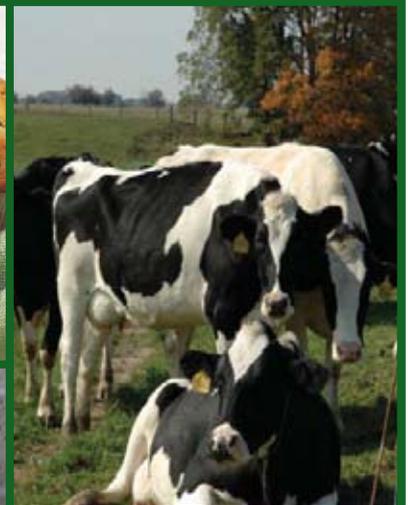
## RESOURCES

**The Humungous Book series** of math study guides by W. Michael Kelley makes the intricacies of math perfectly clear. Look for *The Humungous Guide to Algebra*, and similar titles for Geometry, Statistics and Calculus.

**Online math sites** like [aaamath.com](http://aaamath.com) and [hotmath.com](http://hotmath.com) offer worksheets, games and more.

**Michigan’s High School Content Expectations (HSCE)** describe what students need to master before they graduate. Review them for math and other subjects at [Michigan.gov/mde](http://Michigan.gov/mde) (select “parents and family” at left).

# SOY



## Little BEANS - Big BENEFITS!

Soybeans play an important role in Michigan's economy. According to the latest census, the soybean crop is 2nd only to corn in value of field crop production with a total impact of over \$1 billion. Over 2 million acres are planted to soybeans annually in Michigan. Instate soybean processing represents a total economic impact of \$44 million and soybean farming results in nearly 7,000 jobs. Soybeans are little beans with big economic benefits!

For more soybean information visit  
[www.michigansoybean.org](http://www.michigansoybean.org).





# Chicken

Did you know? Hong Kong is the only place in the world where people consume more chicken per person than the United States. Find many more recipes from readers at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com).

## Sour Cream-and-Dill Chicken

8-10 skinned chicken pieces  
 1 10¾-oz. can cream of mushroom soup  
 1 envelope dry onion soup mix  
 8 oz. sour cream  
 1 T. lemon juice  
 1 T. freshly chopped dill or 1 t. dry dill weed  
 1 4-oz. can sliced mushrooms, drained  
 pepper to taste  
 paprika  
 wide egg noodles, cooked

Place raw chicken in a single layer in a 9x13-inch baking pan. Sprinkle with pepper. Combine mushroom soup, dry soup mix, sour cream, lemon juice, dill and mushrooms; pour over chicken. Sprinkle with paprika. Bake, uncovered at 350° for 1 hour or until chicken is tender. Meanwhile, prepare egg noodles according to package directions. Serve chicken over noodles.

*Barbara Palzewicz, Daggett*

## Tuscan Chicken

1 lb. boneless chicken breasts, cut into cubes  
 2 cloves garlic, minced  
 2 T. olive oil  
 4 c. cubed potatoes  
 1 med. bell pepper, diced  
 1 jar pasta sauce  
 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen green beans  
 salt and pepper to taste

Sauté chicken and garlic in olive oil until lightly browned. Add potatoes and peppers and cook 5 minutes; stirring occasionally. Add sauce, beans, salt and pepper; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 35 minutes until chicken is cooked and potatoes are tender.

*Mary Waterbury, Fenton*

## Baked Taco Chicken

1 c. all-purpose flour  
 2 envelopes taco seasoning  
 1 t. salt  
 2 eggs  
 2 T. milk  
 2 3-4 lb. broiler/fryer chickens, cut up

In a large re-sealable plastic bag, combine flour, taco seasoning and salt. In a bowl, beat eggs and milk. Dip chicken pieces in egg mixture, then place in bag and shake to coat. Place chicken pieces on a foil-lined 10x15-inch baking pan. Bake uncovered at 350° for 55-60 minutes or until juices run clear.

*Naomi Yoder, Scottville*

## Cheese Nip Chicken

4-6 boneless chicken breasts  
 4-6 crushed Cheez-It® Crackers  
 1 c. crushed Cheez-It® Crackers  
 8 oz. sour cream  
 1 stick butter, melted

Place chicken in a baking dish, spread evenly with sour cream, then sprinkle with crushed crackers. Pour melted butter over crackers. Bake uncovered at 375° for 1 hour.

*Helen Benner, Lansing*

## Wild Rice Casserole

1 c. wild rice  
 1 lg. onion, diced  
 2 c. diced celery  
 1/4 c. diced green pepper, optional

1/2 c. sliced mushrooms  
 1 can cream of mushroom soup  
 1 can cream of chicken soup  
 1 soup can cold water  
 2-3 T. soy sauce  
 2-3 lbs. cooked, skinless chicken breasts

Wash rice and cover with warm water; let set for 3 hours. Sauté onion, celery and green pepper; combine with soy sauce, soups and cold water. Add rice and mushrooms. Gently fold-in chicken. Place all in a buttered casserole dish. Bake at 325° for 1½ hours.

*Mandy Rebone, Interlochen*

## Tarragon Chicken with White Wine

4 lbs. chicken cut into pieces  
 2 T. butter or margarine  
 2 T. oil  
 1 lg. onion, chopped  
 2 T. flour  
 1 c. white wine, Inglenook® Chablis is best  
 1 T. tarragon  
 grated rind of 1 lemon  
 chopped parsley for garnish

Brown chicken in combined oil and butter; set aside. Sauté onion in the same butter. Add flour and gradually add wine, stirring in browned pieces from bottom of pan. Add tarragon; cook until sauce has thickened. Return chicken to pan; cover and cook for 50 minutes or until done. Garnish with grated lemon and chopped parsley.

*Duane Alvard, Port Sanilac*

## Chicken Salad

2 c. whole seedless green grapes  
 3+ c. cooked and cubed chicken breasts  
 1 c. cashew halves  
 1/8-1/4 c. sesame seeds  
 1 T. butter at room temperature, or melted  
 1 c. sour cream  
 1/2 c. mayonnaise  
 1 T. tarragon vinegar  
 1 t. salt  
 pepper to taste

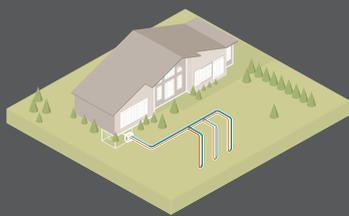
In a large bowl, combine chicken and butter. Add remaining ingredients; mix well. Chill before serving. Serve in a pita pocket, alongside a croissant, or on top of a tomato cut into eighths served on a bed of lettuce.

*Jeanne Stewart, Lansing*

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# Co-op Member *Gardeners*

From the Ohio border to the U.P., gardening is a common interest throughout electric co-op territories in Michigan.

**T**here is no shortage of gardeners among electric co-op members. From vegetable gardening to growing fruits, berries and flowers, co-op members do it all. This spring, while not tending my own garden, I talked to a few co-op folks who garden for fun and profit. They shared their stories and a few green thumb tips.

I'm always looking for an excuse to stop at Burdock Farm Greenhouse, in Dafter, to shop for plants and talk to Karen Bartunek, whom I've known for years. Now retired from the Sault Area Schools, this Cloverland Electric Co-op member runs a small business in a country setting. She sells plants

and gifts to area gardeners. Her business could be described as 'a passion for gardening that got out of hand.'

"It's something that evolved," explains Bartunek. "I grew plants for myself and pretty soon had too many and started selling them to neighbors. So I decided to try it on a bigger scale—this is big enough," she says with a chuckle.

Bartunek mostly enjoys starting plants from seed, though it isn't practical, even on a small scale, to start enough plants from seed to supply to area customers. Still, she manages to plant a number of things inside her house long before the snow melts. She germinates most of her seeds over heat tape and sometimes by placing germination trays on a cookie sheet over the pilots of a gas stove.

Assisting her in this endeavor is her 92-year-old mother, Belma. Karen's mother doesn't let a little arthritis keep her from her passion, which she obviously passed down to her daughter.

With the help of her daughters, who live on either side of her, Belma is able to continue doing something she loves. Each year she starts plants from seed in a spare bedroom, eventually hardening them off in a small greenhouse not far from her front door. With the help of a ramp and walker, Belma can mosey down to the greenhouse each day

At 92, Mrs. Hugo has been involved in growing things for 78 years. Her current garden includes broccoli, onions and garlic.



Karen Bartunek is the owner of Burdock Farm Greenhouse, in the eastern U.P., where she's turned her fondness for growing things into a small business by selling plants and gardening gifts.

to tend to her gardening chores. She uses a chair on wheels and a long-handled water wand to maneuver within reach of the plants in the greenhouse.

Eventually, some of the hundreds of plants Belma raises will be on the retail display racks at Burdock Farms, or they may just get potted up and placed where she can see them from her living room window.

"Oh, I just love it," said Belma, smiling as bright as the sun. "It keeps me going."

Bartunek's rustic garden center is large enough to offer a nice variety of plants, yet small enough for the personal service Karen offers her customers. She says helping her customers is what makes this endeavor worthwhile. "Most people come here in a good mood and leave in a good mood. You're making people happy."

My long-time friend and gardener, Brian Howard, of Blanchard, usually calls about the time asparagus is coming on in my garden. We compare notes on the weather and discuss what each of us is going to plant in the coming year. This year was no exception.

This summer, Brian and his wife, Priscilla, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op members, are busy adding to the 17 varieties of apple trees in their small orchard. "I grow a lot of apples for cider," Brian explains. "I also grow the Ida Reds for eating." They are also adding another 1,000 strawberry plants to the ones they were already growing for market, and they're planting another large



vegetable garden this year.

Brian understands strawberries—his family has grown them for years in the Remus area. He grows several different varieties, including Jewels, Early Glow, Sparkles (one of his favorites) and a variety that sets flowers a little later in the spring—Ovation—which increases the chances of escaping a late spring frost.

The Howards give away, sell or can what they can't eat fresh. They're always on the lookout for the least toxic controls for insects and disease, which he admits is difficult—but perhaps not impossible, even with apples.

Brian has always been involved in gardening and some type of agriculture. The former beekeeper grew up on a farm near Remus. His father sold farm equipment for Ford in the Mt. Pleasant area, and Brian spent summers helping his grandfather garden and eventually gardened with area 4-H kids. "A lot of my interest in gardening came from my grandfather," Brian says.

Mrs. Hugo (the only name I've known her by), is a new Cloverland Electric Co-op customer due to the Co-op's recent acquisition of Edison Sault Electric. She says she cultivated most of her love for gardening in Germany,

where she lived into her late teens.

Her first exposure to gardening was when she was about 14, and wanted to become a hair stylist. To enter this vocation, she was first required to work for a year, either in a home, doing domestic work, or on a farm. She chose a farm, and today is glad she did. On the farm she learned a lot about gardening.

"It was very fascinating to see a garden grow," she says of her first experience. She shuns the use of chemicals in her backyard garden, and has instead adapted some of the nonchemical insect control techniques of Jerry Baker (gardening author who coins himself 'America's Master Gardener') to grow her tomatoes, carrots and other veggies.

"There is a personal satisfaction when you see the vegetables grow," she says in her German accent. "There is so much pleasure."

Her words of advice? "Start out with a small garden and encourage your children to garden."

*Neil Moran is the author of "North Country Gardening: Simple Secrets to Successful Northern Gardening," and "From Store to Garden: 101 Ways to Make the Most of Garden Store Purchases."*



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# Metal Roofs Are Cool

Metal roofs save energy by keeping homes cooler during summer. And they look good, too.

**M**any—but not all—metal roofs qualify for the federal energy conservation tax credit for 2010. Metal roofs save energy by keeping your house cooler in the summer, which can dramatically improve comfort and reduce electric bills if your home is air-conditioned. In winter, a metal roof has little impact on the energy efficiency of your house.

Generally, to qualify for the energy tax credit the roof must meet Energy Star® qualification standards. For roofing, this means the TSR (total solar reflectivity) must be greater than 25 percent when new and 15 percent after three years of aging. To be sure the roofing qualifies, ask for the specifications and a manufacturer's certification statement (MCS). It pays to be diligent these days: I recently got quotes on a roof installation, and several roofers told me their asphalt shingles qualified for the tax credit. In actuality, they did not qualify.

The amount of the tax credit is 30 percent of the roofing materials cost (not installation expenses), up to a maximum of \$1,500. Use IRS form 5695 to apply for the tax credit and save the payment receipt and MCS in case of a tax audit.

For my own home, I eventually selected an aluminum roof by Classic Metal Roofing Systems. It is made from 98 percent recycled aluminum, and the one-by-two-foot panels are formed to simulate cedar shakes. It's attractive and certainly unique: many neighbors were stumped trying to figure out exactly what it is.

To install the aluminum panel roof, a special film underlayment was nailed down with plastic clips and stainless steel fasteners over the existing shingles (which saved the expense of tearing off the old shingles). Each aluminum panel interlocks with the adjacent ones on all four sides. The top of each panel is held down by a stainless steel nail through a hole in the upper corner and an aluminum clip attached midway across the top. It is designed to withstand up to a 120-mph wind.

Although it is more expensive to install than an asphalt shingle roof, my new metal roof will never have to be replaced. From a lifetime cost comparison, it is cheaper than



The metal roofing panels are installed over the underlayment. Hidden stainless steel nails and aluminum clips are used to secure each panel.

installing an asphalt roof every 20 to 30 years. I also get a 3 percent reduction on my homeowner's insurance because of the reduced fire hazard.

Most metal roofs reflect more of the sun's heat than asphalt shingles, particularly black shingles. My Classic metal roof has a TRS of 0.43, whereas a black asphalt shingle roof has a TRS of only 0.05. This keeps the roofing materials cooler so less heat is radiated down through the ceilings to the living area. Also, the underside of the aluminum metal surface has lower "emissivity" (the ability to emit heat) than shingles, so even less heat radiates downward.

It was warm, sunny weather when my metal roof and ridge vent were installed, and the second floor was noticeably cooler than before.

The final energy advantage is that Classic's aluminum panels are relatively thin, with the contour of shakes formed into them. This contour creates an air gap between most of the roofing and the sheathing or shingles below it. This gap allows some outdoor air to naturally circulate up under the metal roof panels to keep them cooler. I sealed off my gable vents so outdoor air is now drawn in the soffit vents and exhausted out the ridge vent.

One minor drawback to the aluminum

shake panels is they can dent if you indiscriminately walk on the high points of the contour. This can be avoided by stepping on the lower nailed area of the panels. Contoured insulating foam pieces were placed under areas of the panels to provide walkways on the roof to clean my skylight and service the ridge vents.

Steel roofing is another option becoming more popular on homes. Painted standing seam or tile steel roofing is very durable. Instead of trying to simulate some type of standard roofing material, their bright colors and unique appearance are signatures of upscale homes. The finish coating on aluminum and steel often uses a Kynar®-based paint with heat reflecting additives in a multistep process.

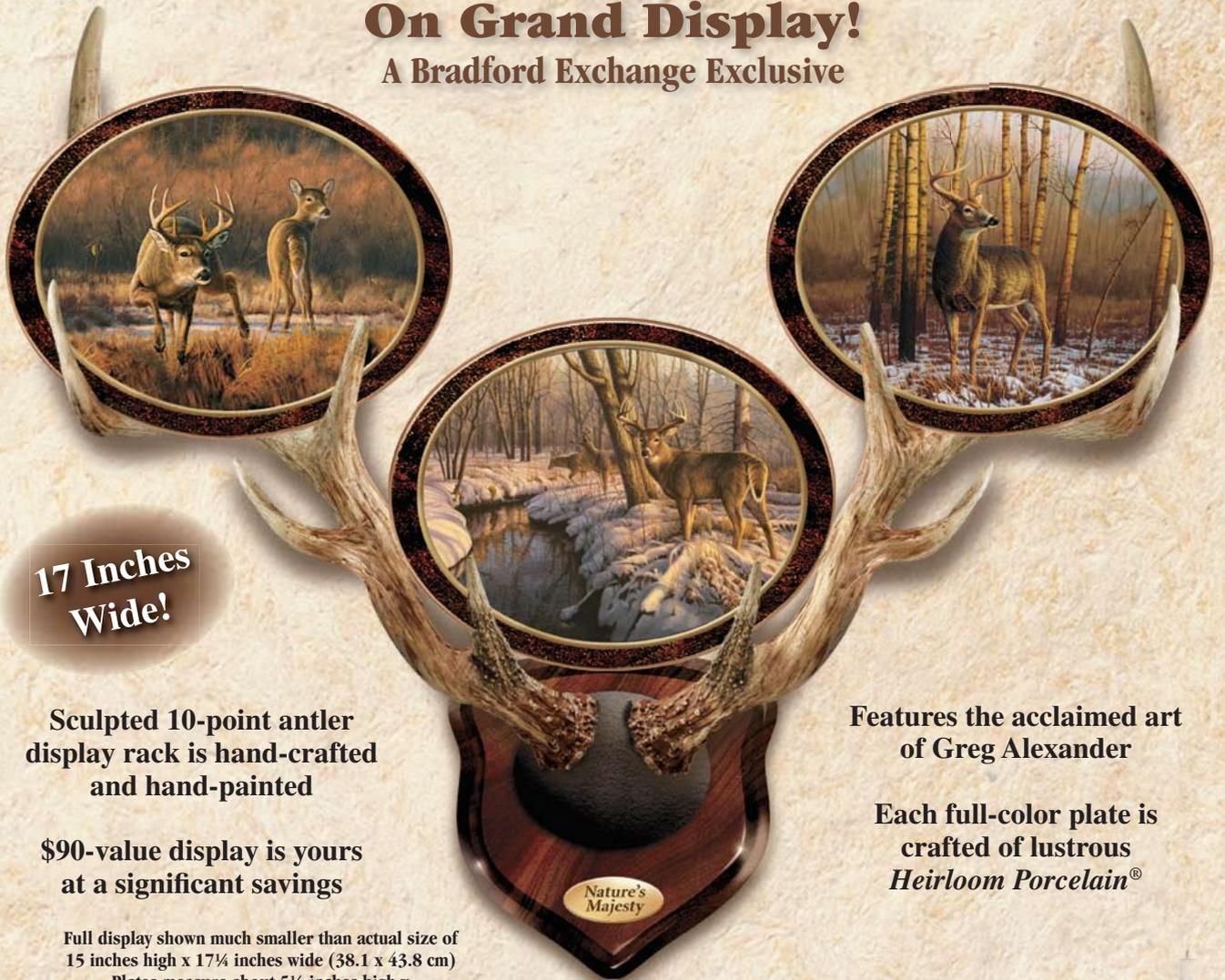
These companies offer metal roofs: American Metal Roofs, 888-221-1869, [americanmetalroofs.com](http://americanmetalroofs.com); Classic Metal Roofing, 800-543-8938, [classicmetalroofingsystems.com](http://classicmetalroofingsystems.com); Conklin Metal, 800-282-7386, [metalshingle.com](http://metalshingle.com); Follansbee Steel, 800-624-6906, [follansbeeroofing.com](http://follansbeeroofing.com); and Met-Tile, 909-947-0311, [met-tile.com](http://met-tile.com).

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

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# Summer and Sunfish Go Together

**T** rue—the state fish is a trout. But as good as the fishing is for that species, the availability of waters to fish for them is scant compared to the amount of lakes and streams holding members of the sunfish family: sunfish, bluegill, crappie, rock bass and those big cousins that most call “black bass” (really just larger members of the same family).

From late April into early July, spawning time arrives for the sunfish clan. You’ll see round, dish-shaped redds (or nests) beginning to appear around the shoreline shallows; it signals a warm season of sunfish angling in the state’s lakes and warmer streams.

By mid-July, with spawning over, the fishing shifts to deeper water by day and back to the shallows in the early morning and evenings.

Most tackle handles sunfish, but the most fun can come by using ultra-light spinning tackle or a fly rod. Either are top choices.

Most who enjoy fly-fishing for panfish are real familiar with the “rubber-leg spider” or the “small popper”—tempting surface lures used with fly rods, and they are effective once fish are on the redds. Dark, fuzzy, wet flies, cast out and allowed to sink and then twitched back in a slow retrieve underwater, can get sunfish to hear dinner bells during or after the spawn.

On a fly rod’s limber action, a good-sized bluegill or sunfish is as frisky and feisty as a brown trout – given a sunfish’s instinct to turn its body right-angle to the line. This action adds the water’s resistance to its struggles, so a 7- to 8-inch bluegill can feel like a 10- or 12-inch rainbow or brown trout at the other end.

Ultra-light rods, with reels loaded with 2- to 4-pound test line, offer great light-line fishing fun. Like the fly rod, they are a suitable match with these smaller, sprightly gamefish. Cast small spinners, spinner baits, 1/32 or 1/16-ounce jigs with small grub tail worms or live bait, and you’ll be heading



© iStockphoto.com/Cliff Buhs

for a fish fry.

Into July, after spawning is complete, sunfish go deeper as surface waters warm and they are hungry from their efforts, turning to larger food such as summer insects that fall to the water.

Not just insects, either. Small bait-fish, minnows and small fish of other species also respond to the warming summer waters. Even crayfish begin to get more active; all of these are natural foods that attract larger sunfish like rock bass and black bass. Lures that imitate these, or live bait such as minnows, become very good choices.

A favorite way of exploring for sunfish when they are off the beds is to fish with soft-hackle nymph flies on a fly rod and work them from shore or boat over the depths of 2 to 8 feet. I use dark, fur-bodied nymphs tied with soft hackle, which, when twitched, give the fly a lot of action. I let them sink after the cast, then retrieve slowly with rod-tip action to make the nymph’s

hackles flutter and the fly twitch enticingly. It usually gets a notice if the sunfish are in the shoreline shallows.

Some days sunfish just want meat, so grab a spinning rod and cast half a night crawler or red worms on a bait hook with a bobber. Just strike when the bobber goes under and keep the line tight as you retrieve it.

A feisty bulldog of a sunfish digging for freedom on the end of a fly line or bowing over an ultra-light rod tip is a fishing hoot.

I spend quite a few fishing days every summer seeking the black crappie, my favorite of the two crappie species that we have in our state.

The white crappie is common in Lake Erie and connected waters, and in larger, down-state impoundments. But in the cooler northern waters where I cast my lines, the black crappie is more commonly found. It is a handsome fish and where it has good habitat, food and clean waters it can grow to slab sizes.

Crappies love minnows, so live minnows fished under a slip bobber, or a small minnow-imitating lure are sure to get you into action.

Then there is the “goggle-eye” – the “every man’s fish.” Rock bass are delightfully predictable fish—give them a worm and they will take it, often with a bullish pull for their size.

Rock bass are well-distributed around the Great Lakes and these fish are aptly named because they love rocky areas, and so does that sunfish cousin, the smallmouth bass. It is quite common to find a rock bass on your line when fishing for smallmouth and a smallmouth there when fishing for rockies.

Don’t forget that all sunfish make for great eating. Carry a cooler and put your catch on ice as soon as you can to bring home the makings of a fish fry.

With summer at hand, it’s time to head for a sunfishing payoff in fun and food. Now *that’s* a pairing made in fishing heaven.

# Myth or Fact?

## Be Sure For Power Line Safety



If birds can touch electrical wires, are they safe for people, too? If you're not on a metal ladder, are you clear of danger from power line electrocution? Know for sure before you take a chance with your life.

First, the facts: Electricity always looks for the shortest and easiest path to the ground—including people and objects that touch or come too close to power lines. Electricity is fast, and it can cause severe burns or death if it flows through the human body. Read on to find the facts on some myths:

**Myth:** *Wires must be safe to touch if birds can land on them.* **Fact:** Birds don't represent a direct path to the ground, giving electricity nowhere to go but back to the wire. It's easier for the current to simply stay in the

wire. So touching a power line is *not* safe for humans.

**Myth:** *Power lines are safe to touch because they're insulated.* **Fact:** Most lines are insulated only to protect against slight tree contact, but not enough to prevent human injury. Don't touch them!

**Myth:** *Non-metal ladders are safe to rest on a power line.* **Fact:** Anything that can get wet can conduct electricity, and many non-metal ladders still contain metal parts. Keep your ladder away from power lines, no matter what it's made from.

**Myth:** *Ladders are safe near power lines as long as they don't touch.* **Fact:** Electricity can "jump," especially when a good conductor like a metal ladder comes close. Keep a safe

Electricity always looks for the shortest and easiest path to the ground—including people and objects that touch or come too close to power lines.

distance of at least 10 feet.

**Myth:** *Trimming trees around power lines is safe if I don't use a ladder.* **Fact:** Electricity doesn't need metal to conduct. The moisture in the tree is enough. If a tree contacts with the line while you're trimming, it has a direct path to the ground through the tree, your pruning tool, and you. Call your electric co-op when it's time to trim trees near power lines.

### Costs, from page 4

Public Service Commission isn't yet willing to consider it. So, we're left to recover those fixed costs in the "Distribution kWh charge," which is based on your monthly usage. This means that a member with higher usage is paying a disproportionate amount for fixed costs every month because a large part of those charges are based on usage. If the service charge was appropriately set, we could likely do away with the distribution kWh charge and every user would pay their fair share for the convenience of having access to the electric distribution system.

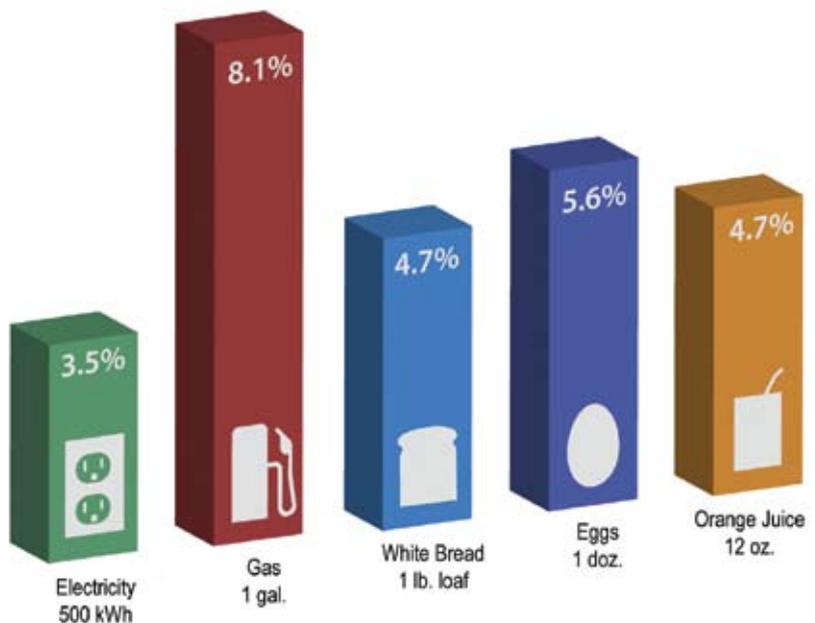
There is a cost to doing business, and like all other businesses, our costs are going up. We have applied for a rate increase which would be reflected as a \$4 monthly increase in your service charge. If approved, it will go into effect sometime this fall. Because the cost of service is reflected both in the monthly service and distribution kWh charges, you will also see a slight decrease in the latter.

Again, comfort and convenience come at a cost. Before complaining about the cost of your electricity, I challenge you to consider everything it offers to you, 24/7 at the flip of a switch. Give it a thorough review and honest assessment, and I think you'll agree that it's still one of the best values around.

## Electricity Remains a Good Value

Electricity continues to be a bargain, especially when compared to other consumer goods. As demand for energy rises and fuel prices increase, your electric cooperative is committed to providing safe electricity at the lowest possible cost.

### Average annual price increase over the past decade:



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; NRECA

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**VIEW FROM THE TOP** A collection of Jim Hough’s columns from the past 10 years in *Michigan Country Lines*.



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### VACATIONS

**3-BEDROOM, BREVORT** – Lakefront vacation home. 20 minutes north of the bridge. [lindafarquhar@cox.net](mailto:lindafarquhar@cox.net) 316-721-3420 [lakefrontvacationrental.com](http://lakefrontvacationrental.com)

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## What Members Collect



Owen Heng of Midland has over 100 nutcrackers in his 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](mailto:czuker@countrylines.com).



Walt Rusin of Muskegon collects old wooden and bakelite telephones from the '20s, '30s, '40s and '50s.

# 2009 Annual Report

## Independent Auditor's Report

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of Midwest Energy Cooperative as of December 31, 2009 and 2008, and the related statements of revenue, patronage capital, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of Midwest Energy Cooperative's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

We conducted our audits in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation. We believe that our audit provides a reasonable basis for our opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Midwest Energy Cooperative and subsidiary as of December 31, 2009 and 2008, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Harris Group  
March 18, 2010

## STATEMENTS OF REVENUES

Years ending December 31, 2009 and 2008  
(Dollars in 000)

	2009	2008
Operating Revenues	\$ 61,742	\$ 57,859
Operation & Maintenance Expense	51,986	47,399
Depreciation, Taxes, Interest, Etc.	9,318	8,985
Operating Margin	438	1,476
Capital Credits	1,556	1,617
Other non-operating income (exp)	641	(50)
Net Margins (LOSS)	\$ 2,635	\$ 3,043

## BALANCE SHEETS

Years ending December 31, 2009 and 2008  
(Dollars in 000)

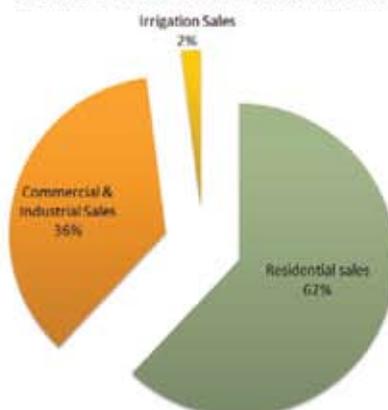
### ASSETS

Utility plant in service, net	\$ 93,414	\$ 92,760
Other assets and investments	14,269	12,292
Current assets	5,661	5,981
Deferred charges	4,018	3,169
Total Assets	\$ 117,362	\$ 114,202

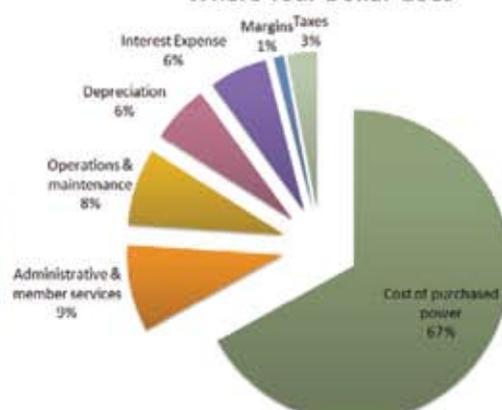
### EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES

Equities	\$ 32,125	\$ 27,952
Long-term debt	66,740	65,466
Accumulated operating provisions	3,475	5,903
Current liabilities	9,272	10,333
Deferred credits	5,750	4,548
Total Equities and Liabilities	\$ 117,362	\$ 114,202

### Where Our Revenue Comes From



### Where Your Dollar Goes



## Survey Helps Us Serve You Better

At Midwest Energy Cooperative, we are interested in learning more about our customers. The more we know about your use of electricity and other energy sources, the better we are able to efficiently and effectively serve as your energy resource.

In your July bill is a customer usage survey asking about a variety of things from family and home information to heating and cooling, lighting and other applications. Please take a few minutes to complete this survey. The information will be used only

**Complete a survey and be eligible to win a \$100 energy credit!**

by Midwest Energy and not made available to any outside entities. To encourage you, we are offering a \$100 energy credit to 10 individuals, selected at random, who return their completed survey by Friday, Aug. 20. The survey must be completed in its entirety to qualify.

Accurate contact information allows us to serve you better and more efficiently, and is kept in strict confidence. If you prefer to update personal information over the phone, please call our office Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. at 800-492-5989.

## 10 Ways You Can Help Conserve Electricity During Peak Periods

In the heat of summer, it's not uncommon for your cooperative to experience high peaks of energy use. During these peaks, we ask that you do what you can to help conserve energy. You'll both help your electric co-op through the brief period of peak energy use and save money on your own electric bill.

Here are **10** easy ways to conserve energy this summer:

**1.** Set your thermostat at the highest comfortable temperature—76 degrees or higher—and keep it there. Each degree a thermostat is raised can save up to 4 percent of the cost of operating an air conditioner and help the power companies keep the electricity flowing. If you have window air conditioners, keep them on the highest temperature setting.

**2.** Postpone using major appliances, such as clothes dryers and dishwashers, until late evening or early in the morning.

**3.** Turn off all unnecessary lights and check for any computers, TV sets, stereo equipment and other appliances that may be on but aren't in use. Not only do they use extra electricity, they add heat to the house and that makes your air conditioner work harder.

**4.** Close drapes and blinds on the sunny side of the house. The sun streaming in through a window can add considerable heat

to a room and make it harder to cool.

**5.** Reduce the amount of space that must be cooled by closing off rooms that aren't being used. If you have a den, utility room or bedrooms that aren't in use, close those air conditioning vents and shut the doors. With window units, simply shut the doors to unused rooms or shut off any window air conditioners that are located in these rooms.

**6.** Keep the door to your refrigerator and freezer closed as much as possible. A refrigerator with the door standing open uses a lot more energy.

**7.** Make sure the filter on your air conditioner is clean. Good air flow is a key to keeping cool, so make sure your system isn't working harder than it has to. In addition, make sure vents are clear of furniture or other objects that can block air flow.

**8.** Use your microwave instead of a conventional oven. A microwave uses up to 70 percent less energy and releases far less heat into the kitchen.

**9.** If your water heater is electric, limit your hot water use so it doesn't run as often.

**10.** Use fans to keep air moving. Ceiling fans use about as much energy as a light bulb, which is far less than an air conditioner. With a fan, you can set the thermostat on your air conditioner to an even higher temperature and still stay comfortable.

## Attaching Items to Poles is Illegal

Attaching signs or other objects to utility poles without the electric utility's consent is against the law and can be dangerous for our lineworkers.

Our lineworkers have reported all sorts of attachments, from signs and posters to basketball rims, birdhouses, satellite dishes and deer stands. The objects themselves, as well as the staples, nails and tacks used to attach them, pose dangers and make it difficult for lineworkers to do their work.

Line crews climb utility poles at all hours of the day and night, often in the worst of conditions, to restore power or perform routine maintenance. Sharp objects left on poles can puncture rubber gloves and other safety clothing or equipment, making lineworkers vulnerable to injury or electrocution. It only takes one nail partially driven into a pole to cause serious injury. Nail holes also allow moisture to enter wooden poles, causing premature decay and the expense of early replacement.

Midwest Energy asks the public to be respectful of co-op equipment and property and refrain from placing signs or other structures on power poles.

**Sharp objects and other attachments to utility poles put lineworkers at risk of injury.**



A Midwest Energy lineman recently fell into the latticework around this pole while attempting to perform some routine maintenance. Co-op members should not attach anything on or around electric poles.

**W**hen Brian Burns, CEO of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, recently suggested we might want to do a feature on a woman who lives in his hometown of Indian River and who is running a marathon to raise money for a day care center in Mexico, I balked. I mean, if we run a story on one run-for-a-cause, it could look like an endorsement and open the floodgates to hundreds of requests to publicize other runs for money. Of course, it turns out Dorothy Johnson is not just another runner. She has a compelling life story, and she's written it all down. I read it and it made me tired. Seriously, she needs to put it all in a book.

You've probably noticed there are a lot of people running in Michigan these days. And I don't mean politicians running for everything from sheriff to governor. (There's even a sheriff running for governor.) I'm talking about the fit-and-trim grandmothers, school track teams and just-out-of-rehab heart bypassers who are lacing up running shoes and hitting pavement and trail to run—or walk—in hundreds of 5K, 10K, half-marathon and full-marathon races this summer and fall.

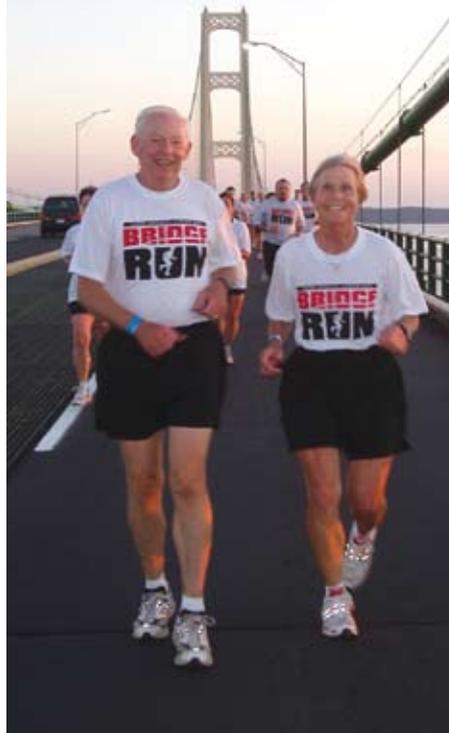
Let's be honest, most of us who participate in these races aren't in them to win. We're in them to get a little exercise, certainly, but mostly we run on weekends to join friends, get a t-shirt and a snack, and help out a cause we believe in.

Sometimes, it's personal. Cherryland Electric Co-op CEO Tony Anderson has pledged to run a marathon in every state to raise money for Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Northwest Michigan because he wants to give back for all the help he got as a kid after his father died. ([marathon4kids.com](http://marathon4kids.com))

Charity runs have become a big deal. The top 30 "thon" fundraising programs generated more than \$1.62 billion in gross revenue for charity in the U.S. last year, according to the Run Walk Ride Fundraising Council, which keeps track of such things. The big winners are Relay for Life (American Cancer Society), \$405 million; Race for the Cure (Susan G. Komen for the Cure), \$120.3 million; March for Babies (March of Dimes), \$100 million; Start! Heart Walk (American Heart Association), \$100 million; and Team in Training (Leukemia & Lymphoma Society), \$98.9 million.

If you're interested in participating and contributing, you'll find 430 big and small run/walk events through the rest of this

# Love to Run



John and Dorothy Johnson ran across the Mackinac Bridge on Labor Day.

year on [runmichigan.com](http://runmichigan.com).

I've run and walked through a few 5K races, and I probably should push myself to actually 'run' longer and more often, but, like many of us, I haven't yet experienced the runner's high that devoted runners say feeds their desire to keep running.

No doubt Dorothy Johnson has experienced that high. She's had fast feet since 1986, when, at 41, she ran the 10-mile Crim race in Flint, where she continues to run every year, and where she and her first husband, Jim, were teachers. (Jim French died in 1997; they'd been married 31 years.)

She must be in constant motion. Even before she started running, she was a "serious" biker in the '70s and '80s, riding in extended events in Michigan and elsewhere. She recorded her longest bike day trip in 1987: 176 miles for the "One Day

Ride Across Michigan." In 1995, she biked 100 miles each day for three consecutive days with her sister, Barbara.

But her love now is running, for both the health and fun of it. "I do race to win, but I don't," she says. "It's really a social thing for me."

She retired in 2004, married John and moved to their vacation home on Burt Lake. She runs with her friends in the Indian River Striders club, which she started in 1999 so she would have someone to walk and run with in her future retirement community. She runs an average of 30 miles a week and walks 12.

She's completed 25 marathons since her first, the Flying Pig in Cincinnati, in 1999. She ran the Boston Marathon for the first time this year and counts the Great Wall of China Marathon as her most interesting. (She's traveled all over the world.) Over the last few years, she's run 1,400 miles annually and 'briskly' walked 600 miles more.

She will be running in this fall's Chicago Marathon—in her first charity run—to raise money for a daycare center in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico, where she and her husband have volunteered for four years through the Cross in the Woods Shrine, their parish in Indian River. ([marathon.casadelosangeles.org](http://marathon.casadelosangeles.org))

The center provides a healthy, safe place for children of low-income, single, working parents. It operates solely on volunteers and donations, Dorothy says. "Not a penny is wasted, and it helps a lot of people."

Given Michigan's problems, maybe the politicians should team up with Dorothy. They could put together a charity run for the state. We could make a dent in the deficit and all lose a few pounds to boot. I think she could pull it off. She may not win all her races, but she finishes what she starts. She was a teacher, after all.

"If they can do it, so can I," she said in the beginning, always the motivator.

"If I can do it, so can they," she says now.



*Mike Buda is the founding editor of Country Lines and continues to work on the magazine, as well as other activities of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. He's going to run more.*

Email Mike at [mbuda@countrylines.com](mailto:mbuda@countrylines.com).



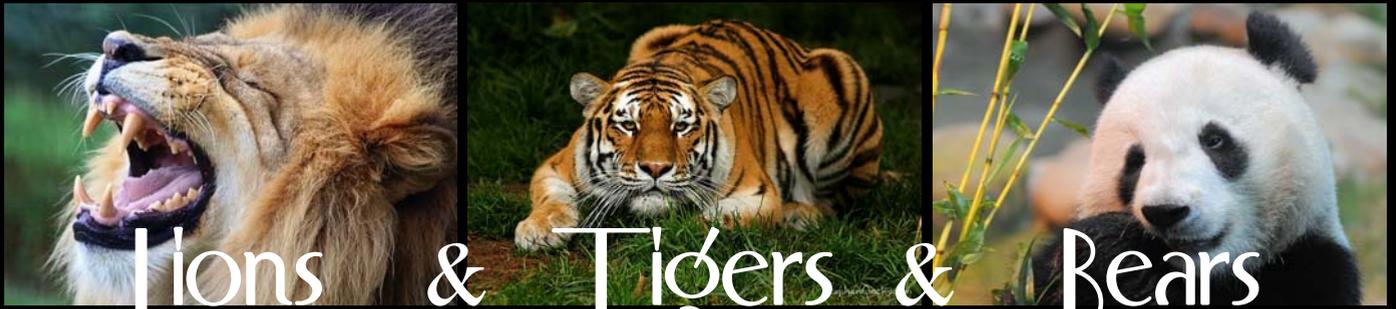
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# A Day at the Zoo



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Sunday, Sept. 12  
Binder Park Zoo  
Battle Creek, MI

*Adrian District  
customers are invited to join us*

Sunday, Sept. 19  
Toledo Zoo  
Toledo, OH

Midwest will provide zoo admission, a buffet lunch and an afternoon of fun exploring the sites and sounds of two of this region's finest zoos.

Log on to [TeamMidwest.com](http://TeamMidwest.com), see related story inside this issue, or read your August *Midwest Minute* bill insert for details.