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June 2010

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Co-op  
Way***

- 
- 
- 4 Broadband Over Powerline Update**
  - 8 Midwest In The Community**
  - 25 New Energy Optimization Offers Available**



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# MICHIGAN Country Lines



10



12



16

## 10 Walking Alpena

Resurgent Alpena proudly displays its unique physical and cultural charms.  
*Rhonda Dedyne*

## 14 Learning the Co-op Way

Michign Electric Cooperative Teen Days gives students from around the state a new take on learning. *Cindy Zuker*

## 16 When Will I Get My Power Back?

A guide to the process your co-op uses to restore your power after an outage.  
*Megan McKoy*

### COLUMNS

9 **Comment** *Michael Peters*  
All politics is local

15 **Our Kids** *Lisa Doublestein*  
Expect more from students

20 **Gardening** *Neil Moran*  
Grow terrific tomatoes

22 **House & Home** *James Dullea*  
Clean plates, lower bills

24 **Outdoors\*** *Don Ingle*  
Lovells' Museum of Trout Fishing History

30 **Ramblings** *Mike Buda*  
Beautiful places

### DEPARTMENTS

6 **Readers' Pages**  
Internet access, letters, call for topics

12 **Energy Wise**  
A greener way to a green lawn

18 **Home Cooking**  
Appetizers

24 **Wolverine Power\***  
Biomass research keeps moving forward

26 **Country Lines Marketplace**  
Classifieds from readers

\*Not in all editions

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



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### COVER \*

Deryk Steinman, an apprentice lineworker for Midwest Energy Cooperative, helps Michigan Electric Cooperative Teen Days participant Rachael Hunt, of Hillman, climb a utility pole (story, p. 14). *Photo – Cory Wilson*



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# Midwest Energy Cooperative

## Broadband Over Powerline Update

**W**e just wrapped up another successful year of member district meetings. With everything going on in the state and national energy landscape, we knew this year's meetings would be more important than ever in terms of making sure our members were educated and informed about what's coming at all of us.

Good conversations. Folks appreciated the information and "heads up" about what's going on now and in the future with energy prices. But what they really wanted to know was when their BPL internet service was coming!

Honestly, it wasn't a big surprise to us. BPL (broadband over powerline) has been a hot topic for a few years now, and remains very top-of-mind for our membership, which is largely unserved or underserved in the world of high-speed internet access. We anticipated the questions and were prepared to address them with the same sense of honesty and transparency that we approach all issues related to your cooperative. What we still don't anticipate is how very much you affect and touch us in the emotion and desperation in your collective voice when you talk about the need for internet options.

The district meetings gave us a chance to update about 300 members, and now we're letting the rest of you in on the latest news about our efforts to bring BPL or other high-speed options to our family of members.

I last updated you in our September issue, when we reported that unexpected equipment issues were slowing our build-out process and we would not extend deployment efforts until those issues were resolved. While we still have not built beyond the first two substations, we have resolved some of the equipment issues and are feeling more confident in the future of this service. As a matter of fact, this month we have about 150 customers successfully and happily using the service.

The biggest obstacle is underground service. We've discovered that the signal cannot travel across underground wire, and we have a lot of that on our system. It's good for your electric reliability, but not good for our BPL

efforts. We continue to work with our business partner, IBEC, to resolve these issues.

IBEC is also starting to certify lines, which means they are confident in the ability of the line to deliver this service at the prescribed levels. Once certified, we will actively promote BPL availability on those line segments. Again, we will continue our efforts and completely activate the first two substations prior to starting on another. As such, we have no target date at this point for the next substation deployment. Our efforts will remain focused on addressing and fixing existing

problems with the service before proceeding to a new area. Although we have struggled to get over a number of BPL technology challenges, we are also encouraged by a number of successes.

On a related note, we continue to examine alternatives to bring affordable and reliable high-speed internet access to rural America. Last summer we submitted an application for stimulus dollars through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act to bring a wireless option known as WiMAX to our area. We learned in late February that our application was rejected. With only two weeks to turn around an application for Round II funding, we re-evaluated the technology options and applied for a fiber-based project. Fiber was looked upon very favorably in Round I, and we believe we have an excellent application. This technology is recognized as the standard bearer for customer solutions, but is also the most expensive to provide. Without the benefit of stimulus dollars, it would be impractical to consider any investment in fiber technology. And, as we learned with our first-round application, there are no guarantees because there are a lot of players competing for a very limited pool of money.

Regardless of what happens with the Round II process, we will continue working with IBEC on BPL efforts. Please know that we understand the urgency to bring high-speed options to rural America and are doing all that we can to pave the way.

Thank you for your continued patience and interest.



**Robert Hance**  
President/CEO



# April Outage Affects 7,500

In the wee hours of April 6, Mother Nature slammed southwest Michigan with a storm that destroyed buildings, broke large utility poles in half, toppled irrigation systems, and left over 7,500 Midwest Energy customers without power. Crews worked nearly three days on restoring service and clean-up.

One member's pole barn was lifted out of the ground and thrown into our three-phase line, and another reported 3-inch hail lodged under the shingles of his home.

Crews also fixed or replaced over 100 broken yard lights and 33 poles. "The clean-up effort with a storm like this is monumental," said Mike Roush, operations vice president. "Our staff did a tremendous job of restoring power under very difficult circumstances."



Midwest Energy Lineman Steve Stange tries to pull wire through a mess of downed branches during outage restoration. **Below:** High winds broke and scattered utility poles across the landscape and caused extensive damage to buildings.



## Attend an Energy Audit Workshop

Energy Depot® is a new set of online tools and resources to help customers better understand and manage their home energy use and costs. The free, easy-to-use online audit format gives users a personalized energy profile with an estimate of energy costs for each home energy system/appliance. It also offers specific tips on how you can reduce energy use. The service is available through Midwest Energy Cooperative's Energy Optimization

(EO) program.

If completing an online audit seems overwhelming to you or you don't have a computer, we invite you to join us for a workshop during which we will introduce this resource and actually complete a sample audit to demonstrate the process.

When you RSVP, you will be sent a questionnaire to complete and return at the workshop. This allows us to help you complete your audit at that time, if your schedule

permits. Staff will also be there to answer questions on EO programs and services.

For convenience, we have scheduled three one-hour sessions around mealtimes at each of our three district offices. In exchange for your time and interest, we'll provide a free meal to go along with the session.

Space is limited to 15 per session, and RSVPs are required and accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. To reserve, call Lori at 800-492-5989, ext. 1139, by June 11.



Energy Audit Workshop Times:

### ■ Tue., June 22

Cassopolis District Office, 901 E. State Street  
Session times: 8-9 a.m.; Noon - 1 p.m., 6-7 p.m.

### ■ Wed., June 23

Paw Paw District Office, 59825 S. LaGrave  
Session times: 8-9 a.m.; Noon - 1 p.m., 6-7 p.m.

### ■ Thur., June 24

Adrian District Office, 1610 E. Maumee Street  
Session times: 8-9 a.m.; Noon - 1 p.m., 6-7 p.m.

**Midwest Energy offices will be closed for Independence Day on Monday, July 5.**

**Payments may be made at the drop box and will be posted on the next open business day.**

**Have a happy and safe Independence Day!**



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## Talk About Waste!

Nice article in [the May] *Country Lines*, "Waste Not." This is something I have been advocating for years. We use mostly fluorescent lighting and have for years, though some decorative incandescent bulbs remain. We have used a geothermal heat pump since 1992 and love its efficiency. In the summer we re-use its output water to fill the pool and for irrigation. We also have two wood stove fireplaces (work like wood stoves, but look like fireplaces) though we don't heat with them routinely.

A few other things we've done is to put all computers in our home on a power strip. Computer off/strip off saves up to 20 watts of vampire power per PC. CRTs are replaced with flat panels, cutting power consumption considerably. A front-load washer and dryer

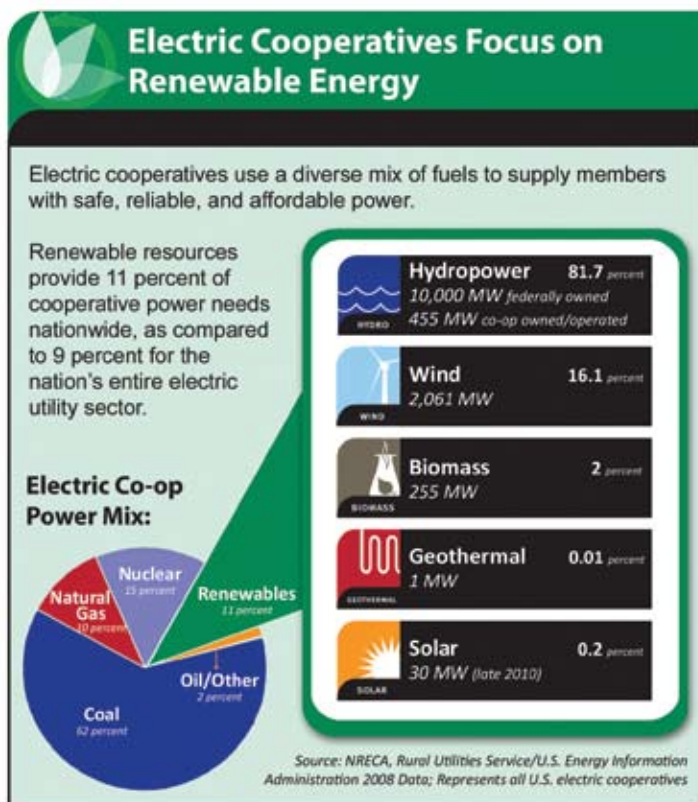
and highly efficient refrigerator and dishwasher have come to our home in the last three years, as well. Our TV and stereo system consume less than 1 watt combined when turned off.

The one thing left that was really bugging me was the electric water heater in our basement. I looked around and found a heat pump for that, too! For \$700, it makes 2.5 gallons of hot water for every gallon the Marathon® unit makes. As a bonus, it kicks out cool, dry air. This can reduce or eliminate the need for a dehumidifier in some homes, saving even more money. Since my old heater was 15 years old, it got the boot, and the new unit took over two years ago. We love it.

*Larry Bolhuis, Middleville*

We have an appliance we use to melt snow in back of our house in winter, and to add humidity to the ambient air for our neighbors. We also use it in summer to increase township warming. Y'know, think globally, act locally.

Shortly after we married, I



attached a pair of me bryde's pantyhose to the dryer pipe to catch the lint and keep the heat and humidity in the basement. But me bryde didn't much like the plan. So we went back to heating the neighborhood.

Wonder if you could get a grant to design a heat-and-humidity trap that would be acceptable and workable, and that would not add too much heat and humidity all in one place in a house?

*Bill Swart, via email*

*Such units are available, but you can't use them with gas or propane dryers, and they may add too much humidity to your home. A heat exchanger is an option, but the payback could be long. —ed.*

## Turtles Don't Sing

The article (May/"Turtles Are Out and About"/Ingle) misinterprets the quote from the "Song of Solomon." The "voice of the turtle is heard in our land" is the turtle dove, a bird.

This is a common error, presumably because the author is

not a bird-watcher (or listener).  
*Ms. Gene Regenstreif, Ann Arbor*

## Coca-Cola Museum

Great article and picture. Perfect timing for people planning summer trips close to home. Sounds like a full day with lots of fun for the whole family.

*Christine Drumm, Onkama*

I would highly recommend visiting the diner and pizzeria. The food is delicious and the atmosphere is so cool.

*Mollie Kieffer, Goshen, IN*

## 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.



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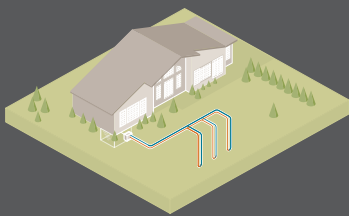
**The iconic all-time favorite Country Lines recipes.** Country Lines has published reader recipes for 30 years, and over that time readers have clipped and copied them—from Swedish meatballs to chocolate oatmeal cake—and stuck them in folders, notebooks and card tins in the best kitchens in the state. 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.



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## Scholarship Winners

**M**idwest Energy Cooperative recently awarded \$500 college scholarships to three 2010 high school graduates. Over 50 students applied for the program. Applications were judged on academic achievements, school and community activities, and honors and awards. Students also had to submit an essay detailing what they would say to members of Congress about pending climate change and energy legislation.

Any high school senior whose parents or guardians receive monthly electric service from Midwest Energy Cooperative and whose primary residence is in Midwest's service territory were eligible to apply.

"We're proud to use this scholarship program to help support today's student leaders on the path to becoming tomorrow's business and community leaders," said Bob Hance, Midwest Energy president/CEO.

### 2010 scholarship winners are:



Ryne Bell

Ryne Bell, son of DJ and Sue Bell of Three Rivers, is a 2010 graduate of Three Rivers High School, and plans to begin studies this fall at Rose Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute, IN.

Elizabeth Mays, daughter of David and Suzzane Mays of Cassopolis, is a 2010 graduate of Ross Beatty High School, and will begin her studies this fall at the University of Michigan.



Elizabeth Mays



Brittany Martin

Brittany Martin, daughter of Brad and Rosemary Martin of Vandalia, is a 2010 graduate of Mishawaka Marian High School, and plans to study this fall at DePauw University in Greencastle, IN.

Midwest also awarded one \$500 scholarship through the Lenawee County Education Foundation. The winner of that award is Jared Cutlip, son of Edward (Maryann) Cutlip and Tammy (Terry) Weadock of Onsted. Jared is a 2010 graduate of Onsted High School and plans to begin studies this fall at the University of Michigan.



Jared Cutlip

*Midwest Energy Cooperative congratulates all of our scholarship winners.*



## 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.

In April, a team of employees helped prepare and serve lunch at the monthly soup kitchen event at St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Dowagiac. **(1)** Bobbi Lowe, mapping technician, and Vicki Polmateer, customer care representative, slice loaves of bread which is then **(2)** served with a smile by Kathy Tucker, propane customer care.

**(3)** Field Technician Rich Drews talks about rope as a conductor of electricity for a group of visiting sophomores from Howardsville Christian School. The hotline safety demonstration is a free service provided to interested groups and organizations.

**(4)** Lori Ruff talks insulation with a visitor at the recent Earth Day event at Dr. T.K. Lawless Park in Cassopolis. The Earth Day event gave us a chance to debut the new Energy Express trailer. **(5)** The trailer is an interactive educational tool designed to help people understand some of the simple and inexpensive ways to increase home energy efficiency and maximize energy dollars. The trailer will be used in the community at fairs, festivals, trade shows and other events where we can promote energy efficiency education.

If you are interested in more information or would like to schedule an event, please contact Lori Ruff at 269-445-1139, or email [pr@teammidwest.com](mailto:pr@teammidwest.com).





# All Politics Is Local

**T**he legendary former Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Tip O'Neill, Jr., often said, "All politics is local."

One of the best examples of "local politics" is your electric cooperative's board of directors. Your cooperative is governed by a set of principles, one of which is "democratic control."

No other utility provider operates quite like an electric cooperative. Yes, all electric providers have a similar mission of delivering reliable and affordable electric energy to their customers. But with an electric cooperative, the mission goes beyond just keeping the lights on, it is *the whole reason* your cooperative was formed and exists today. And, guiding your electric cooperative is a board of directors made up of members just like you. These individuals ran for and were elected by the membership to set the direction for your cooperative.

We recently received a handwritten letter (seems most of the letters I get are email) from Paula Brousseau, a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative. Besides thanking us for *Michigan Country Lines*, she states, "I enjoy voting for the board members." Based on other comments in her letter, I am guessing she may not know any of the board

members personally, but she likely read their biographies in the magazine, and based on that information, she cast her vote. By her letter it is obvious that getting to vote for the people that run her electric cooperative is important to her.

In many cases, members personally know the board member from their "district" and may even call on them when the lights go out or they have a question about their service. Although we suggest you call the electric co-op office if there is ever an outage, a co-op board member is often seen as the cooperative's local contact.

But your board member is so much more.

At any given board meeting, your board may be deciding on issues such as approving management's plan to build a new substation at a cost that could exceed \$1 million, adjusting the rates the cooperative charges to operate the business,

deciding to invest more in energy efficiency measures to help members hold down their electric bills, approving a request to purchase new equipment to better able the employees to build new lines or restore power after an outage. The list is endless.

In 2008, the Michigan Legislature



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

passed legislation that recognized a cooperative board of director's unique place in representing the membership. During the discussion of that legislation, we were questioned about the qualifications of those who serve on a cooperative's board. Members of the legislative committee hearing testimony on the issue that day were surprised to learn that our board directors

are comprised of very well-qualified individuals, including some who are (or were) farmers, business owners, developers, builders, school board members, bankers, retired utility employees, lawyers, engineers, and more. Your board of directors is made up of diverse individuals who come together to make decisions that affect them just as they affect you. As such, they are fulfilling their role of representing you on the board and upholding the cooperative principle of "democratic control."

So, exercise your right to elect your co-op's directors—you'll help keep politics local.





# Walking Alpena

Resurgent Alpena proudly displays its unique physical and cultural charms. **Rhonda Dedyne**

**Y**ou can add the word “walkable” to the water, woods and wildlife that are part of Alpena’s attraction.

The town’s assorted walkways and bike trails are an excellent way to see all that Mother Nature provides for more than 11,000 residents of this northeastern Michigan community and the thousands of guests who visit each year.

“The Alpena Bi-Path and other walkways that connect downtown and other parts of the city definitely help attract visitors here, and it’s also a plus for our residents,” says Jackie Krawczak, Chamber of Commerce director. The city’s walkability also helped it earn a recent designation as a “Community for a Lifetime” by the Michigan Office of Services to the Aging. “There’s really nowhere you can’t get to by bike or on foot,” she adds.

## Water, Water Everywhere

Beautiful blue water edges the 16-mile Bi-Path as it passes through the city’s parks and beach areas on Lake Huron and the Thunder Bay River. Visitors have a great view of Lake Huron at Bay View Park, where part of the walking path runs along the breakwall. The park, with its performing arts stage, play and picnic areas and basketball and tennis courts, is a favorite spot for both residents and tourists. Fun in the water is the focus at other city parks such as Mich-E-Ke-Wis, Starlite Beach, Blair Street, and Thomson.

A walk on the Maritime Heritage Trail is

a “must do” for any visitor. Also part of the Bi-Path, the Trail winds along the Thunder Bay River, starting in the downtown area and ending at South Riverfront Park. It includes interpretive signs with information on the importance of Lake Huron and the river in the community’s maritime heritage. A pedestrian bridge located behind the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center is a recent Trail addition that was funded in part by “Cool Cities” grants that Alpena received several years ago.

Other popular walkable areas are Duck Park and Island Park, which are part of the city’s 600-acre wildlife sanctuary located on the corner of U.S.-23 and Long Rapids Road. Island Park features nature trails and fishing platforms, while Duck Park has both fishing and a picnic area, and is a nationally-known viewing area for many varieties of birds.

“It’s pretty unusual to have a wildlife sanctuary right in the middle of a city, and have it so readily accessible for visitors,” Krawczak explains. “Bird-watchers come from all over to see all the different species.”

## Over 200 Shipwrecks

Alpena and Thunder Bay are also well-known for something less peaceful than bird watching. Over 200 shipwrecks have been identified in the water that’s part of the 448 square-mile Thunder Bay National Marine Sanctuary. The first of its kind in the Great Lakes, the sanctuary was established to pro-

tect the collection of shipwrecks.

“Lots of divers are attracted to Alpena because of the shipwrecks,” Krawczak says, noting that some are even visible from the surface of the water. “I’ve taken my kayak out and seen some—that’s pretty amazing.”

If diving or kayaking isn’t your thing, at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center you can view shipwrecks without being on the water. The 20,000-square-foot building includes live video feeds from divers at shipwreck sites and many interactive exhibits and displays. You can even feel what it’s like to be on the roiling waters of Lake Huron when you board a replica of a ship that sank in Thunder Bay.

There’s no admission fee to the Center, which is open year-round, and has special events and activities during the Thunder Bay Maritime Festival that is part of Alpena’s annual Fourth of July celebration (<http://thunderbay.noaa.gov>).

## Lighthouse Lovers

Whether they sank or travelled safely on Lake Huron’s waters, every ship’s captain focused on the rays of hope that came from light signals. Lighthouses in and around Alpena include the Alpena Light that can be viewed from the transient docks at Alpena City Harbor; Middle Island, where you can even stay overnight; Thunder Bay Island, one of the oldest light stations on Lake Huron; and two of the most famous stations on Michi-



gan's "Sunrise Side"—the "old" and "new" Presque Isle lighthouses. Located about 20 miles north of Alpena, the Old Presque Isle Lighthouse was built in 1840. The "new" station dates to 1870, and at 113 feet, it's the tallest lighthouse on Lake Huron.

If you love lighthouses, but your time in Alpena is limited, visit the Huron Lights Gift Shop and Museum, located at U.S.-23 and Long Lake Road. Owners Jerry and Barbara Roach have photographed and written about hundreds of lighthouses, with photos and books for sale beside a wide variety of Michigan-made products.

"We enjoy working with local artisans and displaying their items," Jerry says about the hand-crafted wares, including stained glass, metal art, woodworking, and log furniture. "People are always surprised when they stop here and see everything—it's not just about lighthouses, although we certainly enjoy our connection with the Middle Island Lighthouse Association and its museum here, too." Check out Huron Lights on Facebook or call the shop at 989-595-3600.

Alpena also hosts the Great Lakes Lighthouse Festival (Oct. 7-10; 586-566-1603 or [lighthousefestival.org](http://lighthousefestival.org)), but from Saginaw to Mackinaw, lighthouses will be open for tours and visits.

## Downtown: Art and A Ghost

Beautiful sights and fun things to do aren't limited to the outdoors. Alpena offers many shopping and eating choices if you are in town for a day trip, weekend events, or a longer vacation outing.

One of the most well-known restaurants in the historic downtown district is the John A. Lau Saloon. The food is great and the brew tasty—just ask Agnes, a ghost of the saloon's original owner who makes occasional appearances.

"It's a fun place to go, and the legend about Agnes makes eating there even more

interesting," Krawczak says about the restaurant, where John A. Lau first served hungry lumberjacks back when the timber industry reigned in Alpena.

The current owners, John and Connie Van Schoick, have kept that history alive through renovations following their purchase of the business in 1987. See old and new photos—and learn about Agnes—at [johnalausaloos.com](http://johnalausaloos.com)

A short walk away is the Center Building, another of Alpena's many vintage structures that have been lovingly renovated for 21st-century lifestyles. Retail shops such as The Fresh Palate, featuring gourmet breakfast and lunch; and The Forget Me Not Shoppe, with scrapbooking offerings, fill the first floor.

Alpena's cultural heritage is on full display on the third floor, home to the Art in the Loft Gallery of the Northeast Michigan Center for Fine Arts. Nearly 200 artists keep the spacious gallery filled with works from all genres.

"In addition to all

the various art pieces that are available for sale, our artists conduct workshops and demonstrations throughout the year," says Karen Bennett, a board member for the nonprofit association. "We like to call this part of the downtown area our 'creative district'—close to our theatres, shops and cafes that are all nearby."

For details on Art in the Loft and the Passport to the Arts Program that includes special events at many venues around Alpena, visit [artintheloft.org](http://artintheloft.org) or [artownmichigan.org](http://artownmichigan.org).

Other summer happenings include the Michigan Brown Trout Festival (July 17-25); Art on the Bay (July 17-18); Wings Over Alpena Air Show (Aug. 21). More details and lodging options are available through the Alpena Convention and Visitors Bureau at [alpenacvb.com](http://alpenacvb.com) or 800-425-7362.



Photos - Rhonda Dedyne

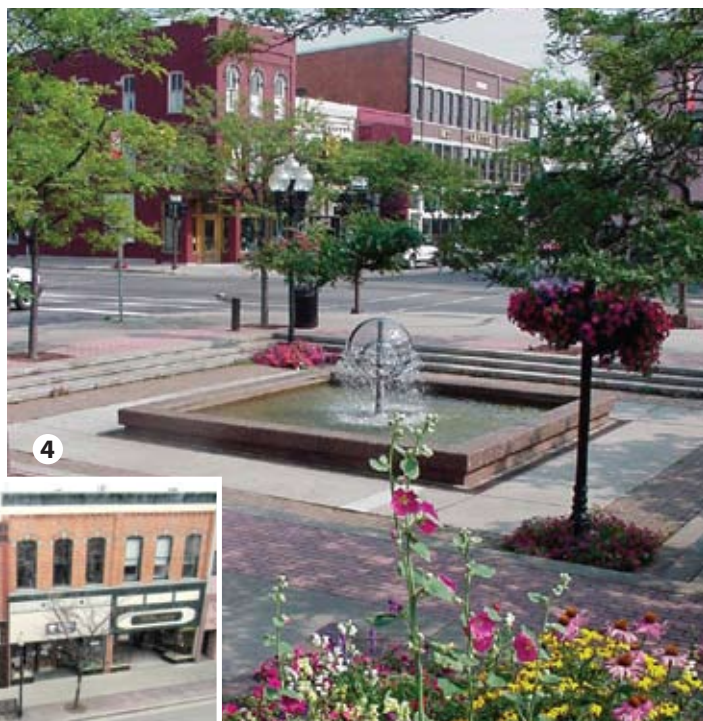


Photo - Rhonda Dedyne

Photo - City of Alpena/Chamber of Commerce

**1)** Shipwreck history comes alive at the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center.

**2)** Views of Lake Huron to the east—and the pretty city of Alpena on the west—greet walkers on a section of the Alpena Bi-Path that runs along the breakwall near Bay View Park.

**3)** Lighthouse lovers will want to see the Middle Island Lighthouse Association's museum, and nearby Huron Lights Gift Shop.

**4)** Culligan Square, and shops in downtown Alpena. The town has many vintage buildings that have been renovated.



# A Greener Way to a Green Lawn

Most summer weekends are filled with the sounds of splashing in swimming pools, kids riding bicycles, and the steady din of lawn mowers. Mowers and other gas-powered equipment roar to life in most neighborhoods to keep yards looking trimmed and pristine.

However, these small engines emit a surprisingly large amount of pollution. By some U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates, engines used to maintain lawns and gardens account for 5 percent of total U.S. air pollution. Although regulation of small engines has not been a government priority, new rules will go into effect in the next year or two that govern these emissions.

The gas engines powering lawn mowers and other yard equipment emit carbon monoxide, a colorless, odorless gas that is toxic to humans. They also emit hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxide that contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone. Operating a gas-powered lawn mower for one hour produces the same amount of smog-forming hydrocarbons as driving an average car almost 200 miles, according to the EPA.

What's more, gas lawn mowers are noisy—

just ask anyone who wanted to sleep in on a Saturday morning when a neighbor decided to get an early start on yard work.

Luckily for your lawn and neighbors, options exist to help keep the grass groomed while reducing air and noise pollution.

A manual reel mower is a great option. These mowers have no engine, no fuel, and use human power to operate. They have zero emissions and operate with very little noise. The cost of a reel mower starts at \$70. To maximize their effectiveness, the blades should be sharpened regularly and the wheels lubricated. These mowers can last years with proper care. Though it's still hard to push this mower through tall grass, today's models are lighter and easier to maneuver than those of several decades ago. They are best-suited for smaller yards, although they can be used on any size lawn. Just keep in mind: the bigger the lawn, the more energy is needed from whoever is doing the mowing!

Electric- and battery-powered mowers offer another alternative. Like gas mowers, these have a motor that spins a blade, which cuts the blades of grass. They are quiet, emit no direct pollutants, and are available in corded or cordless.

Costs for a corded mower are similar to a gas-powered machine, ranging from \$150 to over \$400. However, they do have one very limiting feature: they must be connected to the house via an extension cord. As you can imagine, users must be aware of where the cord is at all times in order to avoid running over it with the mower.

Cordless rechargeable mowers are more convenient than their corded counterparts. Some cordless mowers have a removable battery that can be charged inside the home and placed in the mower when it is time to mow. Costs range from \$200 to over \$500.

Rechargeable mowers are limited by the life of the battery pack, so they may not be best for large lawns. When shopping for a cordless mower, look for information on the size of lawn the mower can handle or the minutes the mower will be able to run on a single charge. Many cordless mowers claim to handle one-third to one-half acre of yard or have a cutting time of 45–60 minutes. Actual times will vary depending on the battery's age, grass height, and how quickly the user can get the job done.

In recent years, the choice in cordless mowers has expanded, with models introduced by well-established companies like Toro® and Black and Decker®, as well as newcomers like Neuton®. But cordless mowers receive mixed reviews. Given their higher price tag, careful attention should be paid to the brand and model being purchased, and online reviews are a helpful resource in picking the right one. Many retailers offer customer reviews of products and these should be looked at prior to purchasing.

Gas-powered lawn mowers can be found on almost every street in America. However, because of rising fuel costs and environmental concerns, more people are switching to human-powered reel mowers or electric mowers. These alternatives are a reliable and attractive alternative to gas-powered models. They pollute less, and perhaps most importantly, they won't disturb your neighbor's summer nap.

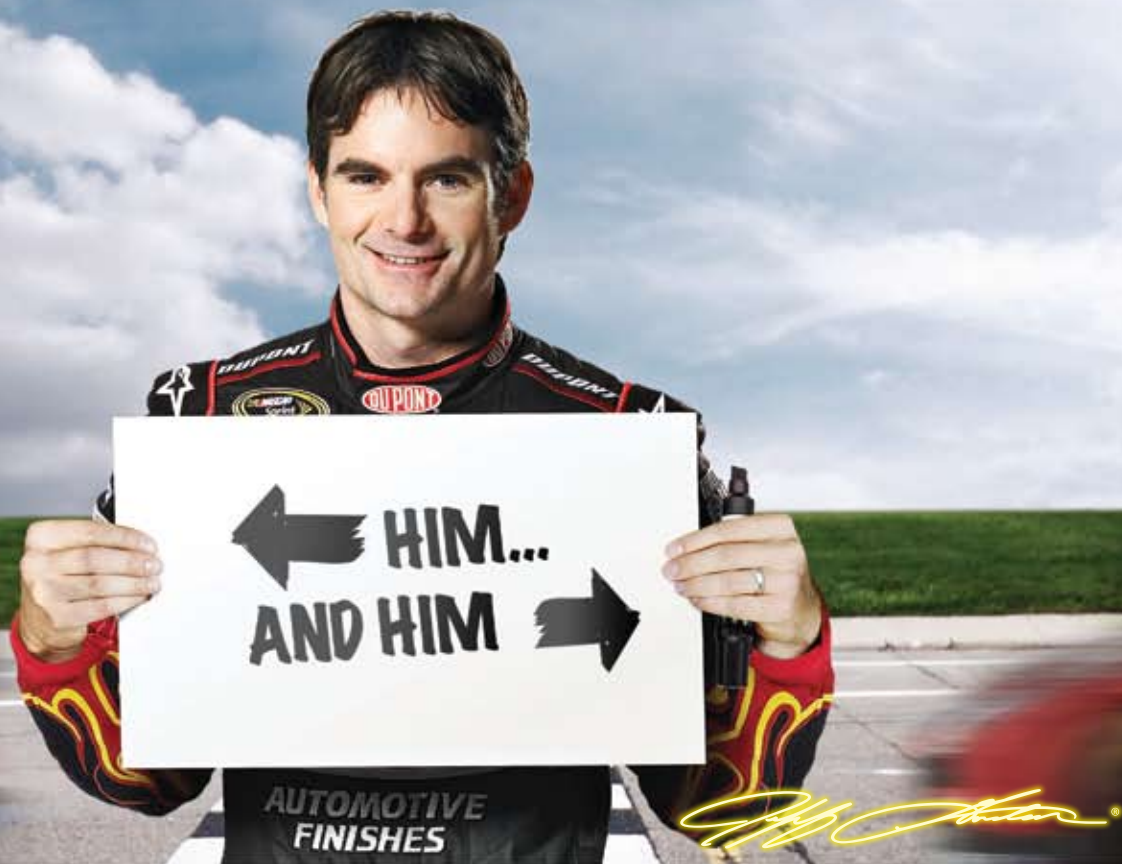
*Brian Sloboda is a program manager specializing in energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

Neuton battery-powered mowers run on a rechargeable DURACELL® battery.



Photo—Neuton





# A WATERFURNACE GEOTHERMAL UNIT IS LIKE TAKING TWO CARS OFF THE ROAD

(Sorry, you can't pick *which* two...)

Jeff Gordon's office is a bit more extreme than most. It's hot. It's loud. You don't want to know what he spends on gas. So when Jeff gets home, he wants to be **comfortable without spending a fortune on fuel**. That's why when it was time to decide how to condition his house, **Jeff chose a WaterFurnace geothermal heat pump**. A WaterFurnace geothermal system uses the **clean, renewable energy stored in your backyard to save up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. It's the environmental equivalent to **planting an acre of trees or taking two cars off the road**. It's good for the environment, it's great for your budget and thanks to a **30% federal tax credit**, now is the best time to act. Visit **waterfurnace.com** for more information and to find a local dealer.

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# Learning the Co-op Way

Michigan Electric Cooperative Teen Days gives students from around the state a new take on learning.

**A**iming to inspire the next generation of co-op leaders, six Michigan electric co-ops recently sponsored 29 high school sophomores and juniors from across the state to participate in a three-day “electric camp.”

The annual Michigan Electric Cooperative Teen Days event gives participants the opportunity to learn hands-on about staying safe around electricity and how to use it efficiently, information on careers in the electric industry and at their local electric co-op, and how the cooperative business model works.

While riding 60 feet up in a bucket truck or learning how wind turbines are built, the students also made lasting friendships as they increased their awareness about electricity.

“I came to Teen Days not knowing much about electricity or energy and not knowing anyone,” one student said, “but I left with more knowledge of electricity and co-ops, and many new friends. Teen Days is sweet.”

Held at the Kettunen 4-H Center near Tustin, the students also had the unique opportunity to watch a live newscast at TV 9&10 and take a tour of Wolverine Power Cooperative where they visited the energy



control center.

Wayne Bumstead (right) and Bob Kettle of Great Lakes Energy’s safety department brought in a hotline demonstration trailer, and Ray Bouvet, safety director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, taught the importance of safety at all times with special emphasis on not texting while driving!

Lineworker Deryk Steinman of Midwest Energy Cooperative demonstrated how to climb a utility pole and students had the opportunity to strap on the gear and try

it themselves.

Forming a mock board of directors, the students also learned about the co-op business model and how their co-ops are involved in the communities in which they live.

“Teen Days made me realize how much work people put into giving us power and how much they care,” says Rachael Hunt. “This experience was amazing.”

Nine co-op employees and two board members acted as chaperones for the event.

Thirteen of the students were also chosen to visit Washington, D.C., in June for the Rural Electric Youth Tour. Learn more about these co-op programs at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com), and click on “Youth.” — *Cindy Zuker*



Participating co-ops and students included: **Cherryland Electric**—Robert Myers, Autumn Russell and Gabrielle Kuznicki. **Cloverland Electric**—Maddy Hancock, Jared Hill, Kevin Bolz and John Swanson. **Great Lakes Energy**—Jessica Honig, Brittany Bonar, Dylan Koszegi, Molli Andor, Brady Rands, Jake Smith, Luke Smith, Tyler Ashbaugh and Will Puerner. **HomeWorks Tri-County**—Tabitha Lyon, Emily Wilson and Karol Chubb. **Midwest Energy**—Craig Zebell, McKenna Wolf, Marcus Ruff and Emily Williams. **Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op**—Christian Tollini, Brook Szymoniak, Jasmine Materna, Rachael Hunt, Esther Hardies and Debbie LaLonde.



# Expect More From Students

**W**hen she was 17, high school senior Dawn Lankford started hanging around with an older crowd. The Taylor resident lost interest in school, and when she realized that she couldn't graduate with her class, she gave up on her diploma.

"It is to this day my biggest regret," Lankford says. "This has been a very difficult road. For two years I struggled for everything—food, gas, bills. The emotional toll it took on my family and me was unbearable at times; would I be able to take care of myself? Would I get stuck in an overall 'bad situation'?"

It's a road traveled by too many Michigan students. One of every four won't graduate with their class, and in 2009, 11 percent didn't graduate at all.

## Dropout Potential

Cara Harvey, guidance counselor at Forest Hills Central High School and president of the West Michigan Counseling Association, says some kids show "red flags" when they're struggling to stay in school.

"Low academic achievement, low extracurricular involvement—a general detachment or blatant withdrawal," she explains. "If a student does not have connections to the school community they are certainly at higher risk." Athletics, music, drama and relationships with teachers and fellow students are important connections.

The dropout risk is increased even more if a student doesn't see the relevance of school or have goals or see school as a step to meeting those goals. Other contributing factors can be substance abuse, lack of family support, and pregnancy. There are also unfortunate times when a student is needed to work to help support the family or themselves, or school is given up in order to focus on basic survival, such as, "What will I eat? Where will I sleep? How will I escape abuse?"

## Helping Kids Succeed

Identifying and helping potential dropouts succeed is a major project for state and federal lawmakers. In April, Gov. Granholm announced that the state's high school dropout rate has decreased 3 percent since 2007 (from 14 to 11 percent), when tougher graduation requirements were adopted. Research says that holding kids to higher standards is a good idea. In a recent survey,

high school dropouts said they felt that classes were uninteresting and no one noticed if they failed to show up.

To address these issues, the 2009 "Superintendent's Dropout Challenge" was issued by Mike Flanagan, state superintendent of public instruction. He pushed Michigan's elementary, middle and high school administrators and staff to identify 10-15 students in their schools who were nearing or in a transition year with multiple dropout risk factors, and to provide support and intervention. It's a more personalized version of Granholm's higher standards—letting kids know that they're expected to work hard, but they've got help when and where they need it.

## What Parents Can Do

"I encourage parents to be involved in their students' lives, including their education," Harvey says, and "Praise students for successes, keeping in mind success is relative."

Be interested in what is happening, she adds, and recommends being involved with the school, talking with teachers and counselors, and being willing to consider outside help, such as professional counseling, tutors and after-school programs. Parents must also "Be willing to face and confront the issues, whatever they may be, that are interfering with their child's success."

Harvey suggests starting with the school

counselor, who can help identify programs, advocate for the child, and be a listening ear to all.

If a student has already dropped out, parents should recommend that he or she meet with a GED chief examiner as soon as possible. Jack Thompson, executive director for the University Center at Gaylord and GED chief examiner for Otsego and Cheboygan counties, says even if the child isn't interested in obtaining a GED, "at some point, the realities of life usually kick in. It might take a year or it might take 10."

Many GED students are accustomed to failure when it comes to education, Thompson explains, but "Completion of the GED is a second chance to achieve a goal they didn't appreciate, or that may have escaped them earlier in life." Most are very pleased to earn their GED certificate, he says, and a certain sense of pride and self-esteem is restored.

## On Her Way

In 2006, at age 19, Dawn Lankford took the GED exam, and now attends Wayne County Community College. This fall, she'll attend Wayne State University to pursue degrees in science and nursing.

"I feel pretty great about my life now," Lankford says.



## High School Graduates:

- ▶ Live longer and are less likely to be teen parents
- ▶ Are more likely to raise healthier, better-educated children
- ▶ Earn nearly \$10,000 more annually
- ▶ Contribute about \$60,000 more in taxes over a lifetime.

## On The Other Hand:

Dropouts from 2008 will cost Michigan almost \$12 billion in lost wages over their lifetimes. Nationally, the U.S. would save between \$7 billion and \$10.8 billion annually by improving the education level reached by people who receive food stamps, housing assistance and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families.

If just the male graduation rate were increased by only 5 percent, the nation would see an annual savings of \$4.9 billion in crime-related costs.

## Resources:

- ▶ [ProjectFindMichigan.org](http://ProjectFindMichigan.org) (*educ.support/all students*)
- ▶ [DropoutPrevention.org](http://DropoutPrevention.org) (*publications, research, links*)
- ▶ [ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml](http://ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml) (*No Child Left Behind*)
- ▶ [michigan.gov/adulteducation](http://michigan.gov/adulteducation) (*517-373-8800*)
- ▶ [solutionsforamerica.org/healthyfam/dropout\\_prevention.html](http://solutionsforamerica.org/healthyfam/dropout_prevention.html)
- ▶ [acenet.edu/resources/GED/center\\_locator.cfm](http://acenet.edu/resources/GED/center_locator.cfm) (*find a local GED program*)

# When Will I Get My Power

**E**ver wonder how your electric co-op decides where to start restoring power after an outage? When your co-op's staff begins assessing storm damage, they focus on fixing the biggest problems first, prioritizing repairs according to how quickly and safely they can get the most homes back into service.

## Step One: Clearing the Path

Think of the flow of electricity as a river in reverse. It originates at a single ocean of power (a generation plant) and diverges from there into a series of transmission lines, substations and smaller feeder lines until it reaches homes and businesses at a trickle of its original strength.

Transmission lines, which carry power at high voltages from power plants, and local substations, where the voltage is lowered for safe travel to neighborhoods, must both be inspected for damage and repaired before any other restoration efforts take place. After all, if the substation linked to your neighborhood's power supply is damaged, it doesn't matter if lineworkers repair every problem near your home—the lights will stay dark.

## Step Two: Bulk Efforts

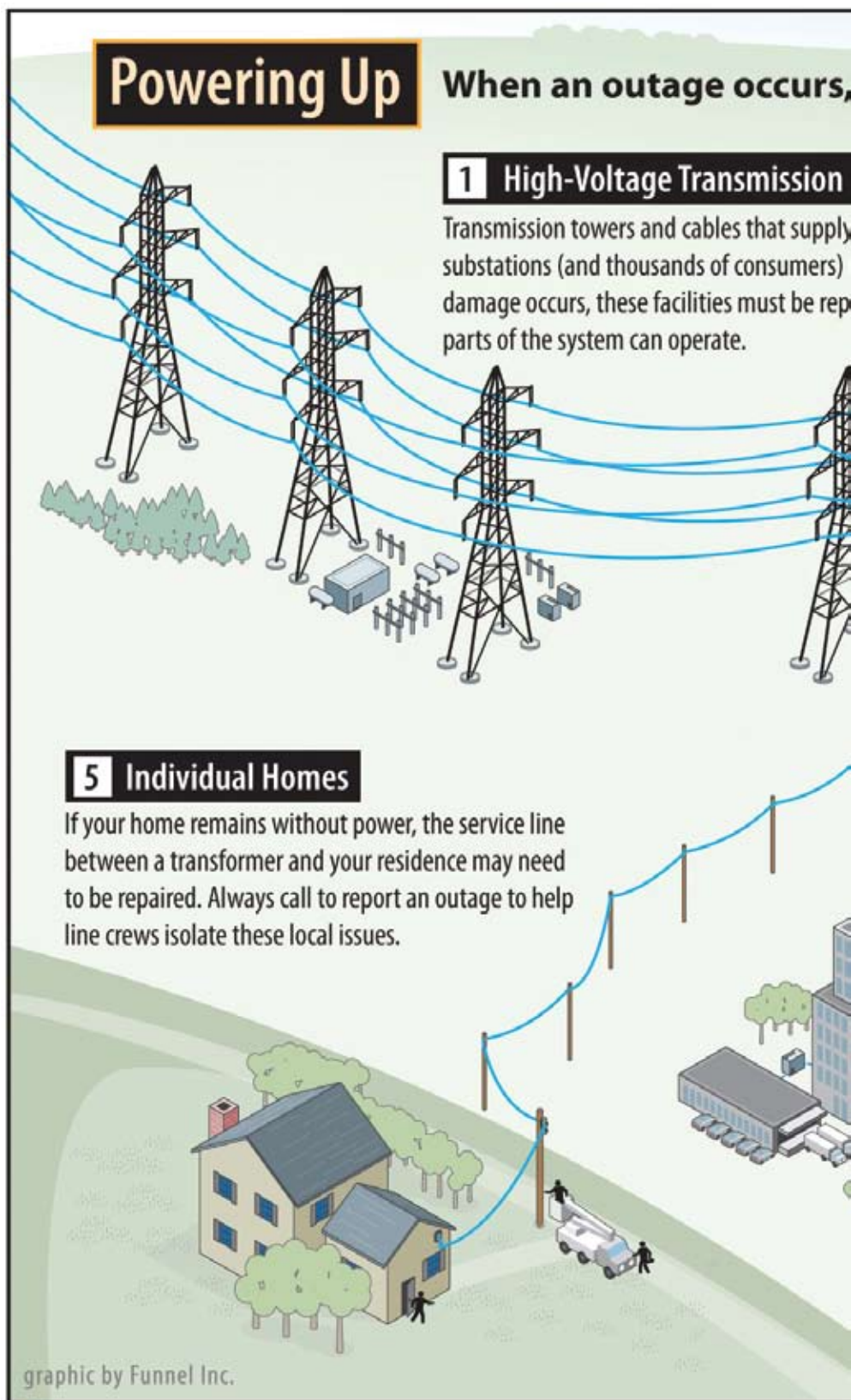
After restoring the flow of power to local substations, co-ops focus on getting power back to the greatest number of members. Distribution lines in more populated cities and communities are checked for damage and repaired quickly, delivering electricity to most members.

What does this mean? You may live on a farm with neighbors a mile or two away, or you may live in a neighborhood surrounded by 20 homes. Folks in neighborhoods will likely see power return before those in remote areas. Line repairs are once again prioritized by the number of members who benefit.

## Step Three: One-on-One

After fixing damage that blocks power from large pockets of members, your co-op focuses on repairing tap lines (also called supply or service lines). These lines deliver power to transformers outside homes and businesses. This is the final stage of power restoration, requiring a bit more patience.

If you or a family member depends on special medical equipment, let your co-op know before an emergency arises, so you can receive special attention. — Megan McKoy



When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a long, hard hours, often in bad weather, to restore service safely to the great



# er Back?

## line crews work to pinpoint problems

### Lines

power to transmission  
rarely fail. But when  
failed before other

### 2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

### 3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

### 4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

**Stay clear of downed power lines!** They may still be "live" and 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 and feet land at the same time. Keep both feet together and then shuffle or hop at least 30 feet away from the vehicle.

few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work  
est number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.



# appetizers

Find many more recipes from readers at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com).

## Salmon-Cucumber Appetizers

2 oz. canned salmon, chopped  
3-4 oz. cream cheese, softened  
1/4 t. dry dill weed  
2 lg. cucumbers, peeled and cut into 1/4-inch slices

Mix salmon, cream cheese and dill weed. Spoon onto cucumber slices.

Mary Ann Frazee, Baldwin

## Hot Virginia Dip

1 c. chopped pecans  
2 t. butter  
16 oz. cream cheese, softened  
4 T. milk  
5 oz. dried beef, minced  
1 t. garlic salt  
1 c. sour cream  
4 t. minced onion

Sauté pecans in butter; set aside. Mix remaining ingredients together; mixing well. Place mixture in a 1 1/2 quart baking dish; top with pecans. Chill until serving time, then bake at 350° for 20 minutes. Serve hot with crackers or small breadsticks.

June Dougherty, Evart

## Celery Canapes

celery  
sharp cheese spread  
chunky peanut butter

Separate celery stalks; wash and dry. Fill stalks with cheese or peanut butter. Tie stalks together lengthwise; chill well. To serve, slice stalks crosswise in 1-inch thick slices.

Janet O'Donnel, Beaver Island

## Beer Dip

2 8-oz. pkgs. cream cheese, softened  
1 envelope dry Ranch dip or dressing mix  
1 can or bottle flat beer  
shredded cheddar cheese

Using a mixer; combine cream cheese and dry dip mix. Slowly add beer, mixing until

smooth and of dipping consistency. Add cheese to your liking. Serve with pretzels.

Tommie Schmidt, Union

## Pickled Eggs

1 16-oz. can sliced beets  
12 hard cooked eggs, peeled  
3/4 c. cider vinegar  
1/2 c. sugar  
2 T. salt  
1/2 t. cracked pepper  
1/8 t. ground allspice  
6 whole cloves

Begin recipe 12-72 hours before using. Into a 1-quart saucepan, drain liquid from beets. Place beet slices and eggs in a 1 1/2 quart jar or a large glass bowl. Into the beet juice, stir vinegar, sugar, salt, pepper, allspice and cloves; heat mixture to boiling. Pour boiling mixture over eggs and beets in jar. Cover and refrigerate at least 12 hours to allow flavors to penetrate eggs. To serve, drain liquid from eggs and beets. Slice eggs crosswise, place egg slices on small crackers and top with a dollop of mustard or mayonnaise, then add a piece of sliced beet. Egg and beet slices can also be used to dress-up salads.

Paula Brousseau, Bellaire

## Stuffed Mushrooms

8 oz. cream cheese, softened  
8 oz. bacon  
12 oz. medium-sized button mushrooms

Place softened cream cheese in a bowl. Fry bacon until crisp; drain, cool and crumble into cream cheese; mix together. Wash mushrooms, pop out stems; drain caps on paper towel. With a butter knife, stuff caps

with cream cheese mixture using all the filling. Place mushrooms, filling side up, in a 9x9-inch baking dish. Bake at 350° for 15-20 minutes or until cheese is slightly brown and mushrooms have cooked. Remove from oven, let stand 5 minutes then transfer to a serving dish. Mushrooms may be broiled, but must be watched more carefully. Mushrooms can be filled the day ahead, covered with foil and refrigerated until ready for baking.

Mary Paukert, Gaylord

## Sugar & Nut-Glazed Baked Brie

1/4 c. brown sugar  
1/4 c. chopped pecans  
2-3 T. maple syrup  
1 16-20 oz. double crème Brie round, with rind on  
apple wedges  
crackers

In a small bowl, stir brown sugar and nuts together. Place brie round, in rind, on a foil covered cookie sheet. Sprinkle sugar-nut mixture on top. Drizzle maple syrup over nut mixture. Bake at 350° about 15 minutes until topping mixture is slightly bubbly and cheese is soft. Place Brie on a large plate surrounded with crackers and apple wedges.

Pamela DeTullio, Ann Arbor

## Sweet and Sour Chicken Wings

3 lbs. chicken wings  
1/2 c. flour  
1/2 c. cornstarch  
2 eggs, well beaten  
**Sauce:**  
3/4 c. sugar, brown and white combined  
1/2 c. cider vinegar  
1/4 c. chicken stock  
3-4 T. catsup  
1 T. soy sauce  
1/2 t. MSG, (optional)  
1/2 t. salt

Sprinkle wings with garlic salt and MSG. Let set for one hour; refrigerate. Heat oil. Combine flour and cornstarch. Dip wings in flour mixture, then in beaten eggs. Fry in oil until golden brown. In a saucepan, heat all sauce ingredients until sugar dissolves. Lay chicken wings in a baking pan; pour sauce over wings. Bake at 350° for 1 hour, turning after 1/2 hour.

Mary Ann Schultz, Scottville

► **Send in your recipes!** If published, you'll receive a free kitchen gadget. Send in: **POULTRY recipes by June 10, SANDWICH recipes by Aug. 10, and STIR FRY recipes by Sept. 10.** Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email [jhansen@countrylines.com](mailto:jhansen@countrylines.com).



## Fresh Bruschetta with Feta Dip

3 med. tomatoes, chopped in 1/4-inch pieces  
1 T. fresh minced garlic  
1/4 t. salt  
1/4 t. pepper  
1 T. balsamic vinegar  
1 T. fresh chopped parsley  
1 T. fresh chopped basil  
1 T. fresh chopped mint  
1/2 c. feta cheese  
2 lg. baguettes  
1 T. fresh chopped parsley  
2 T. grated Parmesan cheese  
1/4 c. olive oil

Slice bread into diagonal length pieces; place slices on a large cookie sheet. Drizzle olive oil over all slices until gone. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on slices; then parsley. Bake uncovered at 375° about 10 minutes. Meanwhile, combine all dip ingredients except feta cheese. Let dip sit for 5 minutes; add feta cheese and mix well. Serve dip with hot bread slices.

*Danielle Cochran, Grayling*

## Marinated Mushrooms

3 lbs. whole mushrooms  
4 oz. Kraft Zesty Italian dressing  
5 sprinkles oregano

5 sprinkles Worcestershire sauce  
2 sticks butter or margarine  
1 pkg. dry Italian Good Seasons® dressing mix  
4 beef bouillon cubes

Put everything in a crock pot. Heat on high for 6 hours, stirring occasionally.

*Julie Grulke, Cheboygan*

## Hors d'oeuvres

1 sleeve Ritz® crackers  
cheese, any flavor  
pepperoni slices, optional  
olives, black or green, halved  
mayonnaise or Miracle Whip®

On each cracker, spread a small amount of mayonnaise or Miracle Whip. Top with a slice of cheese, a piece of pepperoni and half of an olive.

*Patricia Sutton, Punta Gorda, FL*

## Sweet Onion Appetizer

1 1/2 c. chopped sweet Vidalia onion  
2 c. shredded Swiss cheese  
1/3 c. mayonnaise  
few splashes hot pepper sauce, optional  
paprika

In a medium bowl, mix onion, cheese, mayonnaise and hot sauce. Spray an 8x8-inch baking dish with cooking spray. Spread onion

mixture in baking dish. Lightly sprinkle with paprika. Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes until bubbly and golden brown. Serve warm with crackers or slices of hearty dipping bread.

*Katy Lutz, Traverse City*

## Cheese & Ham Spirals

1 egg  
1 T. water  
1 sheet puff pastry, (1/2 of 17 1/4-oz. pkg), thawed  
1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese, divided  
1/4 t. cayenne pepper, approximately  
8-12 slices shaved ham

Beat egg and water with wire whisk until blended; set aside. Unfold pastry on a lightly floured surface; roll into a 14x10-inch rectangle. Brush lightly with some of the egg mixture. Sprinkle 3 tablespoons of the cheese and the cayenne pepper evenly over pastry. Place ham slices down center of pastry, lengthwise. Roll jelly-roll fashion to make a log, 14-inches long. Cut into 24 equal slices. Place on a greased baking sheet and brush with remaining egg mixture. Sprinkle with remaining cheese. Bake at 400° for 12-14 minutes until golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.

*Janice Harvey, Charlevoix*

# 10 Hot Tips for "Green" Summer Cooking

Keep your cool this summer when preparing meals. You can save money and reduce your carbon footprint with these 10 easy tips for "going green" when cooking summer meals.

**1** Cook outdoors when possible to reduce the load on your air conditioner. Try a solar cooker or oven. Solar cookers and ovens are by far the most energy-efficient cooking appliances. They require no fuel, reduce unwanted summer heat in your home by taking cooking outside, and can accommodate any food a slow cooker can. Some solar ovens can reach 500 degrees. To learn more, visit [solarcooking.org](http://solarcooking.org).

**2** Toaster ovens, convection ovens, and slow cookers get the job done with less energy than conventional stove tops or ovens, especially when preparing smaller meals.

**3** Use as small a pan, as little water, and

as little pre-heating time as possible.

**4** Bake in glass or ceramic oven ware instead of metal. You can turn the temperature down by 25 degrees, and foods will cook in the same amount of time.

**5** Avoid thawing food in the microwave. Thawing food in the fridge is far more energy efficient, contributes to the fridge's cooling, and is safer than thawing food on the counter top or in the sink.

**6** Don't open the door and peek in the oven. Use the oven window instead!

**7** Clean burner pans (trays under burners that catch grease) regularly – they'll reflect heat more effectively to the cookware. Dirty burner pans absorb heat and reduce efficiency.

**8** Use flat-bottom cookware that rests evenly on the surface of electric coil burners, solid-

disk elements, or radiant elements under smooth-top ceramic glass.

**9** Use residual heat. Turn the stove or oven off before cooking is done to allow cooking to continue while reducing energy use. An electric burner element can be turned off two minutes before removing the cookware, since it remains hot. Ovens can be turned off 20 minutes before cooking's done.

**10** Consider substituting one or more stove top burners with an induction cooker. The typical efficiency of an induction cooker is 84 percent, gas stove tops are 40 percent efficient, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. What's more, induction cookers (which require magnetic cookware such as cast iron or enameled steel) produce as much heat as gas and are less costly to operate than a conventional electric burner. Visit [theinductionsitesite.com](http://theinductionsitesite.com) to learn more.

*John Bruce is a freelance writer based in South Carolina. He writes on energy efficiency for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*



Photos © iStockphoto.com

## Grow Terrific Tomatoes

**T**omatoes are an equal opportunity vegetable. That is, anyone can grow them as long as they have a spot that is sunny most of the day. You can grow tomatoes in a large garden, small garden, containers, or a patio—and upside down, for gosh sakes! However, they aren't equitable when it comes to ripening. So let's see if we can level the playing field so that everyone, even us folks up North, can enjoy a juicy red-ripe tomato.

Tomato plants (rather than seed) are probably the best option now that summer's here. Select varieties that have a fighting chance in your area. I envy folks in the southern part of the state who can grow the humongous "Beef Steak" tomatoes. It's human nature to want to grow one of these huge hamburger slicers. However, if you've left more of these rotting on the vine than you care to remember, you may wish to try some smaller, but no less tasty varieties, such as "Early Girl," "Big Beef Hybrid," or my favorite, "Celebrity."

If you really want a guarantee you'll be seeing red in August, grow the cherry type. These sweet things are a joy to eat right off the vine, and are great in a salad. They can even be canned. There are many varieties, including "Sweet Million Hybrid" and "Sweet

Baby Girl Hybrid."

Tomatoes planted right in the garden should be planted in soil rich in organic matter, such as compost or well-rotted livestock manure. Tomatoes are heat loving plants and very susceptible to frost, so set them out when the weather is warm and settled. Remove the tomatoes from their containers and sink them down into the soil so that the lower branches are buried in the ground.



This encourages multiple roots to form and keeps the plant well-anchored in the wind. Water the plant with warm water before you fill in the hole and firm the soil around the plant base.

To hold water in after a rain or watering, construct a 3-4 inch berm about a foot out from the base of the plant. Sprinkle a little 12-12-12 or organic fertilizer inside the berm.

To grow tomatoes in a container, you'll need a 12x12-inch pot that drains well. Fill the container with a combination of a quality potting mix and compost at about a 50/50 ratio. Mix in a little slow-release fertilizer, such as Osmocote®. Choose a compact variety of tomato for the container, such as "Superbush" or "Tumbling Tom" (a cherry type that is best grown in a hanging basket). Put only one plant per container and place

it in a sunny, protected area and be ready to water almost daily during summer's heat.

While the weather's still cool in early June, I like to protect my tomatoes from the chilly north wind and give them a little kick-start. One way is to use one of my own inventions, which is to place an 18-inch-tall wire cage around the plant and drape a black plastic garbage bag over the top and around the cage. Cut the bottom out of the bag so the plant is exposed to the sun. Secure the plastic to the fencing with clothes pins. This method will really draw heat to the plant and protect it from the wind. Keep the plastic on until the weather has warmed up nicely. After you remove the plastic, you'll have a nice support for the plant.

Another trick to ensure ripe tomatoes is to surround the base of the plants with black or red plastic mulch. Both colors will warm the soil. Red plastic mulch has the added benefit of increasing tomato yields, according to studies at Cornell University. There is something about the red spectrum rays reflecting up into the tomatoes that encourages them to be prolific.

The next few strategies are critical if you want the bragging rights to "Big Red." Water well once per week during the growing season. Fertilize with an all-purpose fertilizer each time you water, applied at half strength.

Stake the tomatoes as necessary and continue watering once per week until the plant starts to set fruit. At this time you can ease back on the watering. Once the tomatoes are fully mature you won't be watering at all. If you're still worried they won't ripen, try a little technique I learned from a vegetable garden author, Dick Raymond. He says to 'grab hold of the trunk and give it a nice yank.' This will interrupt tomato growth, which hastens ripening.

Prevent disease by purchasing disease resistant varieties and practicing proper spacing and watering (i.e., never water the plant's foliage). An application of lime that contains calcium will help prevent blossom-end rot disease. Don't worry too much about browning leaves underneath the plant, it's common. Remove diseased plants from the garden each year and keep them out of the compost pile.

I hope this gives you enough helpful tips to satisfy your desire (obsession?) with growing red-ripe tomatoes.

Happy gardening!

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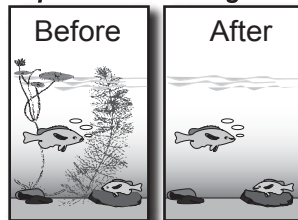


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# Clean Plates, Lower Bills



Photo-Miele

New energy efficient dishwashers save hot water and trim energy bills.

Using an automatic dishwasher is typically more efficient than hand-washing dishes (although if you take your time and are very miserly with water usage, hand-washing can be more efficient).

No matter which new dishwasher you select, you can be certain it will use less electricity and hot water than your old one. The vast majority of dishwashers made today exceed Energy Star® efficiency standards. Over the life of the new dishwasher, the energy and water savings as compared to your old one can pay back its initial cost.

The majority of the cost of using a dishwasher is for heating the water. A portion of this energy is used by the home's primary water heater, the rest by an internal heater in the dishwasher. With this in mind, if a dishwasher design consumes less water, less energy is needed to wash a load of dishes. Always compare the overall water consumption specifications for an average load cycle among the models.

Of course, the most important feature is how well a washer cleans dishes. If it does not clean well, people tend to run it on the heavy cycle when normal will do, or they hand rinse

the dishes first. Rinsing can use more than 10 extra gallons of water, and if hot water is used, more energy is being consumed. With a good dishwasher, a simple hand-scraping of dirty dishes should be adequate.

Top-of-the-line dishwashers offer many cycle settings to fine-tune the process to the cleaning needs of the specific load. This is a nice feature, but most families can get by with three basic cycles: light, medium, and heavy (for pots and pans).

Some dishwashers also sport a two-pump design in the bottom of the tank: one small pump is used for spraying the dishes and another is used to drain the unit. Many models still use a single, reversing pump that sprays in one rotation and drains in the other. Two smaller pumps require a smaller water reservoir, but the efficiency difference between one- and two-pump models has narrowed considerably.

Newer electronic controls offer greater convenience and efficiency. Hidden digital electronic controls—which typically run along the top edge of the door—look good when the door is closed, but you cannot watch the progress of the cycle and see the time left. Partially hidden controls are another

This efficient dishwasher uses three spray arms to clean all the dishes from many cabinets and the exterior digital controls allow you to follow the progression of the cycle.

option. A dishwasher I recently selected has exposed controls, which I find easier to see and use.

Newer dishwashers are also much quieter, accomplished by better motor/pump design and higher insulation levels—both for noise reduction and better efficiency. Layers of insulation are placed around the pump assembly and the cabinet door and walls. The stainless steel dishwasher I recently installed in my own home is significantly quieter and has shorter cycles.

Automatic dirt sensors measure the cloudiness of the water to determine when the dishes are clean and how long to run the cycles. There are several technologies to accomplish this, and they function pretty well. A filter option strains the water inside the dishwasher to remove food particles. Self-cleaning models use a grinder, but this may increase the noise level. A rinse-hold feature uses only two gallons of water to rinse the dishes if you do not plan to run the dishwasher for a long while.

And, as for efficient washing by hand? I've tested it in my own home using a Delta® spray kitchen faucet with touch control, which allows me to minimize water usage when rinsing the washed dishes.

The overall energy savings when hand washing is really only realized during winter. I leave the warm sudsy water in the sink until it cools off. This heat is given off to the kitchen air, so the heating system has to run less (the same applies when taking a hot bath during cold winters). During summer, I do not hand-wash dishes to reduce the heat and humidity buildup indoors. Hand-washing dishes in the summer can actually cause a double loss because your air conditioner has to run longer to remove the excess heat and humidity.

The following companies offer efficient dishwashers: Asko, 800-898-1879, askousa.com; Bosch Appliances, 800-944-2904, boschappliances.com; Dacor, 800-793-0093, dacor.com; Kitchenaid, 800-422-1230, kitchenaid.com; and Miele Appliances, 800-843-7231, mieleusa.com.

*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).*





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# Lovells' Museum of Trout Fishing History

If Lovells, along the north branch of the Au Sable River, wasn't such a good place to wet a fly line it would be merely another ghost town relic left from the vanished lumberjack era.

But it was a good place to fish for the trout that had been introduced into the state's coldwater streams to replace the vanishing—and now extirpated—grayling (freshwater salmon family).

A century ago, when people like Henry Ford, the Dodge Brothers, Nash and other early auto magnates found the fishing here to their liking, this small hamlet became their place of choice for an away-from-home camp for fishing. The North Branch Outing Club (today a bed-and-breakfast inn catering to anglers) was a club name used by Ford and his fishing friends.

Others discovered North Branch fishing, and they too began to build cabins and camps along this stream. Today, even if auto industry bigwigs no longer call the area home, several generations of other early-day "summer people" continue to live and fish along this stream, as do many other anglers who now come to share the quality fishing the river still offers.

Because the stream and its trout fishing history have been so long revered, it led to the formation of a small township historical society. Small maybe, but giant-sized in the volunteer efforts to preserve the history and lore of trout fishing and the fly-fishing legacy that goes with it. Perhaps they drew their inspiration from the German philosopher Goethe, who wrote, "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Action has power and magic in it."

The small working group of Society members undertook the building and successful operation of the Lovells Museum of Trout

Fishing History, starting with the construction of a log building to host a growing collection of artifacts from photos, letters, tackle and all things related to the fishing lore and legend of the North Branch. Major collecting efforts resulted in gathering a treasure trove of artifacts from the early days to today.

Each year, beginning on the opening day of trout season, the museum becomes the center of a day-long series of programs and the opening of a new theme exhibit. Exhibits are changed each year and reflect the many facets of life along a trout

stream. Past show themes have featured the days of the industrial giants who summered here to the early lodge owners and camp operators who began a tourism base that continues to this day.

Last year, the exhibit theme featured the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Trout Unlimited, the national conservation organization which was born on the nearby mainstream of the Au Sable.

The tradition of Lovells' fishing guides and the fabled Au Sable Riverboat, which carried guides and "sports" down the stream, were featured in this year's show. These unique watercraft have carried anglers and cargo up and down the Au Sable River for 130 years or more, from the times when no roads were open and only horses or narrow-gauge logging railroads brought anglers here.

Inside the nearby Lovells Township Hall, experts in fly-tying, bamboo rod building, and other fishing related skills gave demonstrations. Outside, opportunities to cast antique bamboo rods were offered for those who had never known the special power and grace of cane fly rods like those your great-granddad would have known.

In a rustic tent, some volunteer camp cooks offered up some logging camp-style food.

In the past few years, other fun events were

added, including a mini-marathon that is run by anglers wearing waders, and includes both a land and stream course. Called the "Leaky Waders Run," it's a popular event.

However, it's in the interior of the log museum where the heart and soul of Lovells' fishing story is found. Walls and easels hold cases of photos and copies of historical letters and memorabilia of the history of this small-but-important destination for the serious fly-fisherman.

This year, the quality of the artistic displays highlighted the museum volunteers' skill in selecting a fresh theme—and then building a show around it.

Do not think that it is "all work and no play" for these Lovell folks. Not in a village that spoofs the annual five-mile-long Mackinac Bridge Walk held on Labor Day. No sir, not these folks from the North Branch. On Labor Day, they make their own "bridge walk"—over the North Branch River bridge—for about 200 feet, and ending the parade at the local Lovells watering hole.

After all, these volunteers and friends of the Lovells Museum of Trout Fishing History might work hard all winter to create each theme show, but they still remember that cardinal "Rule One" of fly-fishing.

"In the end, fly-fishing's all about fun."





# New Energy Optimization Offers Available

**M**idwest Energy is pleased to introduce two new rebate deals available through the Energy Optimization program.

## Clothes Washer Rebate

Customers in the market for a new clothes washer can take advantage of the \$50 rebate on eligible purchases through the Energy Star® program. If your clothes washer is more than 10 years old, studies show that you can save an average of \$135 annually on energy costs by replacing it with an efficient Energy Star washer. Energy Star washers include some of the latest technology to reduce energy and water consumption by over 40 percent in comparison to older models. The highly efficient motors spin clothes two to three times faster to extract more water. Less water in the clothes also results in less energy used in the drying process.

You must have an electric water heater



to qualify for this rebate. If you are replacing an existing clothes washer, it must be a non-Energy Star model. The washer must be installed and operable in the customer's single-family, owner-occupied residence on co-op lines.

## New Heat Pump Incentives

A new heat pump offer is available through the Residential HVAC program. Members with existing all-electric heating systems are

eligible for bill credit incentives of \$125/ton for qualified air source heat pump installations and \$150/ton for qualified geothermal installations. Heat pumps must have a minimum 15 Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) and 8.5 Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF). Open-loop geothermal systems must have a minimum 16.2 Energy Efficiency Ratio (EER) and 3.6 Coefficient of Performance (COP), and closed-loop systems, 14.1 EER and 3.3 COP.

The heat pump credit is limited to 10 tons per residence, and the unit must be installed and operable in the customer's single-family, owner-occupied residence on co-op lines.

Both offers expire *Nov. 15, 2010*, and incentives are subject to change and availability.

For more information or to download a rebate application for either program, please visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

## Public Act 295: The Clean, Renewable and Energy Efficient Act

Annual Energy Optimization Report  
Midwest Energy Cooperative  
MPSC Case Number U15818

Midwest Energy contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer an Energy Optimization (EO) plan in order to comply with P.A. 295. MECA filed a 2½-year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on Feb. 18, 2009, as required by PA 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on May 12, 2009, and we began launching EO programs in June 2009.

In August 2009, CLEAResult Consulting, Great Lakes LLC, was selected to implement the "Residential and Small Business Energy Star Program," the "Commercial and Industrial Prescriptive Program," and the Energy Optimization website at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org). CLEAResult has subcontracted with Franklin Energy and JACO to assist with EO program delivery.


In 2009, Midwest Energy collected \$284,725 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$131,839—resulting in an overcollection of \$152,886 that will be applied towards 2010 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Midwest Energy achieved 228.8 megawatt hours of energy savings in 2009.

The full report can be obtained in the Midwest Energy section of [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

**PIANOTUNING PAYS** – Learn with American Tuning School home-study course. Tools included. 800-497-9793.

## FINANCIAL

**HOMEOWNERS 62 OR OLDER** – With an FHA government insured "Reverse Mortgage," can borrow against the equity in their home with no monthly payments. Call James Harry 231-972-8898. 

## HEARTH &amp; HOME

**LOG SIDING, T&G PANELING** – Cabin logs, mouldings, deck railings. D&D Products, 231-832-3100.

## MISCELLANEOUS

**BECOME AN ORDAINED MINISTER** – Correspondence study. Founded in 1988. Free information. Ministers for Christ Outreach, 7549 West Cactus Rd., #104-207, Peoria, AZ 85381. ordination.org

**FREE BOOKS/DVDs** – Soon the "Mark of the Beast" will be enforced as church and state unite. Let the bible reveal. The Bible Says, POB 99, Lenoir City, TN 37771. 1-888-211-1715. thebiblesaystruth@yahoo.com

**VICTORIAN MARBLE-TOP DRESSER** – Call Mary, Petoskey, 231-347-5230.

**MOUSE TRAP** – Safe, humane and works on small rodents of all kinds, even rats. Best 15 bucks you will ever spend. coxx.com for pictures. 231-846-0346 anytime.

## OUTDOORS

**GARY'S STUMP GRINDING** – Cheaper by the dozen. 800-870-3871 or 231-587-9296.

**SAWMILL FOR SALE** – \$4,995, new portable band saw, saws 36-inch x 16-foot log. 231-288-0066.

**OUTDOOR WOOD BOILER** – Kits and welded, from \$1,295. 231-288-0066.

**SEMI-LOAD, CUT AND SPLIT** – Wood delivered, dry oak, covered, super clean. We deliver the trailer and come and get it in the spring, \$3,000. Four available. 231-846-0346, in Lower Michigan only. coxx.com

**DEBARKER MOR-BARK** – 4 inches to 14 inches diameter, auger unloading, portable, pto-driven, \$5,000. Commercial grade. 231-846-0346 anytime.

## REAL ESTATE

**WEIDMAN, MI, 40 ACRES** – Trails, wildlife, 3-bedroom, 2-bath house, built 1994. Covered porch, 2-car garage, pole barn, workshop, \$309,900. David Zamarron, ERA Central Real Estate. 989-773-6000.

**MASON COUNTY, VICTORY TOWNSHIP** – 7 acres, 1,100 foot, north branch Lincoln River, 3-bedroom house, garage, shop, pole barn. 231-757-2106.

**200 FEET ON LAKE SUPERIOR** – Fabulous view, white, sandy beach, Brimley, MI. Near trails, 3-bedroom, 2-bath, mobile home, \$134,900, negotiable. Let's talk, 231-879-4381.

**220 FEET RIVER FRONTAGE** – Muskegon River, Paris, MI. Phone 815-685-7010.

**9.9 ACRES MASON COUNTY** – Logan Township. Well, septic, power. \$32,000 or best offer. 231-750-4129.

**5 LOTS SOUTH OF BALDWIN** – \$2,000. 231-750-4129.

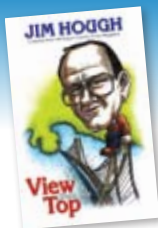
**CABIN NEAR BALDWIN** – And Pere Marquette River, 2-bedroom, living, kitchen, dining room, lake access, cable TV, storage shed. Near some of the best trout and salmon fishing. Will return calls. Negotiable, 231-592-4988.

**YEAR-ROUND, FURNISHED** – House with 50 feet frontage on Long Lake, 3-bedroom, 2-bath, 2-car garage with dock and hoist. Half-way between Alpena and Rogers City, \$169,900 or best offer. Call 989-340-0271 or send email to houseinfo316@yahoo.com for more information.

**LAKE MARION, CHARLEVOIX COUNTY** – 3-bedroom home on 10 acres of beautiful woodland, 121 feet lake frontage, great fishing. 586-823-5200.

## 2-for-1 Book Sale!

Great gift idea!



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

**ON THEIR OWN POWER** The only book to tell the Michigan electric co-op story, from their birth in the 1930s. Filled with first-hand testimonials and experiences of the people who blazed the trail for electric co-ops. Written by Ray Kuhl, former general manager of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association.

Includes tax and shipping. **No substitutions. Both books only \$6**



## Book Order Form

Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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Account # \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card \_\_\_\_\_

Exp. Date \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable and mail to: **MECA**

2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864

## Classified ad rates:

▲ \$3 per word (\$30 min.), including ALL business, agent and broker ads

▲ \$1.50 per word (\$15 min.) for co-op members running nonbusiness ads

Each initial, group of figures, phone number, abbreviation, e-mail address and website address counts as one word. Hyphenated and slashed words count as two or more words. Ads are subject to editor's approval and editing. For member rate, attach your mailing label. To pay by credit card, include card number, exp. date, address related to the card and signature with ad. M/C or VISA only, please indicate which. Send your printed or typed ad and check made payable to MECA (advance payment required) by 15th of month prior to publication to: *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864, or email jhansen@countrylines.com. Call 517-351-6322, Ext. 201, for more information.

**No classifieds accepted by telephone.**

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(Until the next issue of the magazine is published.)



**SECLUDED, WOODED, 2 ACRES** – With 246 feet Muskegon River frontage near Hersey. Gorgeous sunset view, older functional mobile. \$47,000. Eight additional wooded acres across dead-end road. Great hunting. \$18,000. 269-731-2822.

**NORTHERN MICHIGAN HOME** – Fishing, snowmobile haven. Frederic, MI, 1,000 square feet, newly remodeled, hardwood flooring, 2-bedroom, 1-bath, garage, \$44,500. Please call 231-590-5431.

**FURNISHED, 3-BEDROOM** – 2-bath, air conditioning, double-wide, over looks Little Traverse Bay, \$50,000. Will deal, 231-487-0071.

**BREVOORT LAKE** – Upper Peninsula, 3-bedroom, 1-bath cabin, stone fireplace, storage shed, 100 x 740-foot lot. Asking \$250,000. Phone 906-293-8770.

**6,000 SQUARE FEET** – Concrete block, tri-level building. Four roll-up doors for semi-trucks to back in, inside loading dock, mobile home with nice family room, 8 acres. Very secluded, yet 8 miles from U.S.-131 E., 1 hour north of Grand Rapids. For big toys or serious hobby, 231-846-0346 anytime.

#### VACATIONS

**MARTINY WATERFRONT COTTAGES** – Completely furnished, air and boats included. Pontoon rental available. 616-897-5062.

**3-BEDROOM BREVORT** – Lakefront vacation home. 20 minutes north of the bridge. lindafarquhar@cox.net 316-721-3420 lakefrontvacationrental.com

**LAKE COUNTY, NEAR BRANCH** – Totally private 2,000 acre preserve, miles of trails and streams, fishing is excellent. Smaller rustic cabin on 7-acre lake with beach and boat, \$400/week. Larger cabin on 50-acre, spring-fed lake, 2 boats/beach, \$950/week. Call 248-559-7744 for information.

**SUMMER RENTAL** – 2-bedroom, furnished, with washer & dryer. 1 mile to village of Lake Leelanau, lake access, private, quiet setting. Boat parking space available. \$450/week. 231-256-2836.

#### WANTED

**BUYING OLD WOODEN DUCK** – Goose, fish, decoys. 248-877-0210.

**BUYING GUN RELOADING EQUIPMENT** – Bullets, ammo, gun parts, old stock and more. 517-623-0416.

**WANTED, RING** – Middle Eastern flair, 22-carat only, please. Her birthday is April 1st, from Baghdad. Looking for something old, if possible. 231-846-0346 or alanj@coxx.com

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# STATE OF MICHIGAN

## BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

### NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-16326

- Midwest Energy Cooperative may reconcile its Energy Optimization plan costs for the period ended December 31, 2009, if the Michigan Public Service Commission approves its request.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 East State Street, P.O. Box 127, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, (800) 492-5989 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Midwest Energy Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

**DATE/TIME:** June 29, 2010, at 9:00 a.m.  
This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

**BEFORE:** Administrative Law Judge Barbara A. Stump

**LOCATION:** Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7, Lansing, Michigan

**PARTICIPATION:** Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 241-6160 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the April 30, 2010 application of Midwest Energy Cooperative (Midwest) for authority to reconcile its Energy Optimization plan expenditures and revenues for the period ended December 31, 2009, and other relief. On May 12, 2010, Midwest filed revised testimony and exhibits to 2009 Energy Optimization Reconciliation filings.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: [michigan.gov/mpscdockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscdockets). Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to [mpscdockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscdockets@michigan.gov). If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 241-6180 or by email at [mpscdockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscdockets@michigan.gov).

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by June 22, 2010. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Midwest's attorney, Joseph J. Baumann, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case, may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter will become public information: available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure.

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure R 460.17315 and R 460.17335. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 241-6060.

A copy of Midwest's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at [michigan.gov/mpscdockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscdockets), and at the office of Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 East State Street, Cassopolis, MI. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 241-6180.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.51 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 et seq., and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

May 24, 2010



# Handle Food Safely When Grilling

**A** favorite American pastime is grilling, and it's not just for summer any more. Americans are discovering this art in milder climates, using handmade brick ovens or ceramic grills that heat quickly and stay hotter longer. But most grill enthusiasts still favor large gas grills, or simple-yet-effective charcoal grills, and usually during the spring and summer.

No matter the season or type of grill you use, grilling food starts with proper food handling. Here are some safety tips:

► **Wash away harmful bacteria** – Avoid providing a hotbed for bacteria. Unwashed hands are a prime cause of food-borne illness, also known as food poisoning, as are unwashed perishable foods such as meat, seafood and peeled or cut fruits and vegetables.

► **Keep all perishable foods cold** – If you'll be meeting friends away from your backyard grill, it's best to transport all perishables such as raw meat, poultry and seafood in an insulated cooler with ice or frozen gel packs.

► **Throw away perishable leftovers** that have been out of a refrigerator or cooler for more than two hours—one hour if the temperature is above 90 degrees F.

► **Keep coolers out of direct sunlight** and avoid opening them frequently.

► **Marinate safely** – Marinated meats should be stored immediately in a refrigerator or cooler, not on the kitchen counter or outside next to the grill. As long as a marinade is stored in a cool environment, it can remain there for several hours or days.

► **Do not use marinade that was mixed with the raw meat** as a sauce on the cooked meat, unless you first cook the sauce to a boil destroying harmful bacteria.

► **Shortcuts** – Partially cooking food indoors before putting it on a preheated grill will give you quick results when your friends are hungry, or the grill is slow or small. Conversely, flame-grill meat for a smoky, char-grilled flavor, then bake in an oven until it's done.

► **Cook thoroughly and use a meat thermometer** – It's best to cook food to the safe minimum internal temperature to destroy bacteria. On the grill, meat and poultry will brown quickly, but the inside may be only



Photo — Underwriters Laboratories, Inc.

partially cooked. Here are some safe minimum internal temperatures (F):

- **Chicken breasts:** 165 degrees
- **Beef hamburgers:** 160 degrees
- **Beef, veal & lamb steaks/roasts/chops:**  
Medium rare: 145 degrees; medium: 160

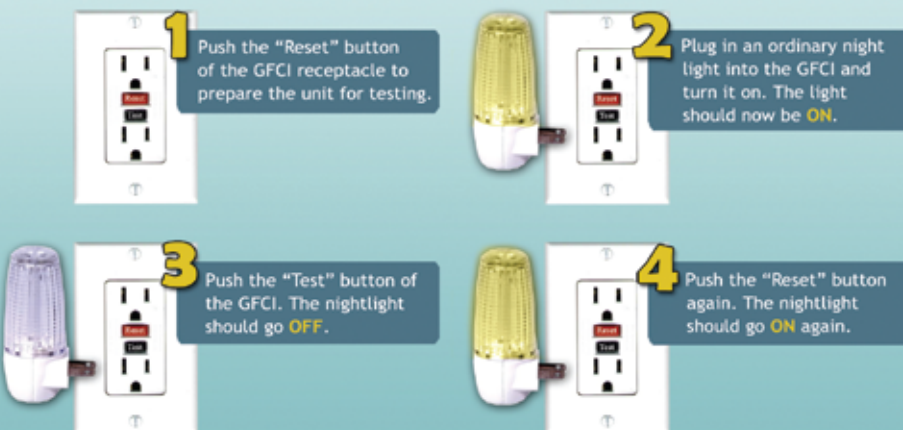
degrees; and all pork: 160 degrees.

Fortunately, most people seldom get sick from contaminated food, and consumers can feel safe knowing that with proper refrigeration and thorough cooking, harmful food-borne illnesses can be avoided altogether.

## How to test electrical outlets

Since the 1970s ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) have saved thousands of lives, helping cut the number of home electrocutions in half. The safety devices prevent deadly shock by quickly shutting off power to the circuit if the electricity flowing into the circuit differs from the amount returning. The safety devices should be used in any indoor or outdoor area where water may come into contact with electrical products.

GFCIs should be tested once a month to make sure they're working properly. To test a device, follow these four steps:



Source: Electrical Safety Foundation International



Looking west from Presque Isle Pt., Marquette.



A farm in Leelanau County.



A stream flowing into Lake Superior.

# Beautiful Places

**Y**ou can drive from Lansing to Washington, D.C., faster than you can drive to Ironwood. And you can see a lot of great things along way, depending on the route you take. But the ride north is infinitely better.

I know: there's a lot of nothing along the way, nothing but trees, lakes, rivers and trout streams. But look closely as you drive and that nothing is really something: the flat, neat farms between Lansing and Clare; the clean, fresh air as you climb U.S. 127 through gentle hills to Harrison, Houghton Lake and Grayling; the northern forest seen from the hills north of Gaylord; THE bridge; the windy, rugged Lake Michigan shoreline along U.S. 2; the straight-line wilderness of the Seney Stretch; the outdoor mecca that is Munising (Why haven't more people discovered its rugged adventures?); the expansive beauty of Lake Superior; the cosmopolitan, worldly oasis of Marquette; the stark, rocky woods and streams surrounding M-28 as you drive from Champion to Michigamme, Covington, Sidnaw, Kenton, Trout Creek, Bruce Crossing, Ewen and Bergland.

(We've driven to Ironwood to visit family more than 100 times in the past 40 years and it never gets old. The beauty is lost on kids. When our boys were boys we kept them occupied on those long trips with music tapes, games and books. Once we resorted to a roll of paper toweling, which was the only thing that quieted toddler Jon's painful howling as he joyously shredded every towel, filling the back seat with wads of paper over the last two hours of our 11-hour return trip home.)

But the rest of the country seems oblivious to Michigan's rugged beauty, too. Ask folks outside the Great Lakes region their impression of Michigan, and they'll say, 'Detroit.'

Now, I like Detroit. I like Greektown, Eastern Market, the Tigers, Pistons and Red Wings, even the Lions, the new river front, the Detroit Institute of Arts, Henry Ford Museum and Pewabic Pottery. And Detroit music is terrific.

But when I'm there, I wonder: Why don't they do more to honor their music? Why is the only tribute to Motown the simple house it was born in?

How could they let Jack White, one of the most inventive and original musicians in the country, leave Detroit to open a studio in Nashville?

Why doesn't Detroit reclaim its French heritage by creating a French district like Montreal's?

Why doesn't it turn more of its empty spaces into world-class parks?

For all its problems, I think Detroit is coming back, but Detroit is not just Michigan and Michigan is not just Detroit.

The saying goes that 'trout only live in beautiful places.' The same can be said about electric co-ops. When you work for electric co-ops you get to visit a lot of those beautiful places, because that's where the co-ops are.

A few years ago, we were privileged to host a national meeting of editors of electric co-op publications like *Country Lines*. We held the meeting at the 110-year-old Stafford's Perry Hotel in Petoskey. The editors were astonished by the beauty of the area, and of Michigan in general. Many planned to come back for another visit. They had expected Detroit, as if the city defined the state.

But we are so much more, and the rest of the world should know it. That's why I was disappointed that our legislature couldn't scrape up the dollars to fund the state's superb "Pure Michigan" marketing campaign at

previous levels. It is our country's most successful state marketing program, returning \$2.34 for every \$1 spent in advertising. A \$30 million budget has been cut in half for this year. Do the math. By some accounts, tourism is Michigan's second biggest industry. The damage done to tourism by the recent recession is devastating to the state, but especially to just those areas where co-ops serve. The damage caused by cutting the state advertising budget just adds to the pain.

The problem, of course, is money—or the lack of it. One co-op area legislator we talked with recently said he, too, is disappointed in our inability to find a way to fund tourism advertising in the amount required, agreeing that it's an investment in our state. But he also noted that we're not able to properly invest in improvements for roads and education, either.

Well, we're going to do our little part to help. We've been running features on places to visit in Michigan, and now we're offering a page (*opposite*) to the Travel Michigan people for their Pure Michigan campaign.

We hope it helps, a little, to get you to visit our beautiful places. As the ads say, your trip begins at [michigan.org](http://michigan.org).



*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 grew up in Ironwood.*

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





We go this way to school.

That way to work. One way home.

And before we know it, we get stuck in a routine.

So let's take a left instead of a right.

Instead of the direct route, let's take the scenic route.

To a place where something new and exciting  
is waiting for us just around the corner.

Right this way to Pure Michigan.

PURE *M*ICHIGAN®  
Your trip begins at [michigan.org](http://michigan.org)



Midwest Energy Cooperative invites members to nominate their home and family for our first Midwest Home Energy Makeover. Our plan is to update the overall energy efficiency of an existing home, giving a deserving family an opportunity to enjoy increased home comfort in a more energy efficient environment.

Is your family deserving of a Midwest Home Energy Makeover?  
Share your story today!

**Apply online at [TeamMidwest.com](http://TeamMidwest.com) or  
call 1-800-492-5989 for an application.**

Applications due June 30, 2010.