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March 2010

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Pauline Hancock, executive director and founder of the Elk Country Animal Shelter in Atlanta, MI, is shown with a shelter resident. *Photo—Roger Boettcher/Leavenworth*

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Telling One Family's Story

Deals are hard to come by these days, but here's a good one: For just about 50 cents a month, you can help make a happy ending out of a sad story.

A big part of my job is assisting the Tri-County Electric People Fund board—I take the phone calls and answer questions, make sure applications get to our volunteer board members for review, then contact the applicants after the board meets, sometimes with the “yes” they're hoping for, but sometimes with a “no”.

Telling someone “yes” is usually a happy moment, whether it's for an individual or helping out a community organization.

Telling someone “no” is hard. Actually, the hard part is explaining the “why” behind the “no”—that, believe it or not, there are people out there who are worse off.

Let me tell you about someone who could be your neighbor. A husband and wife, grandparents who'd worked hard all their lives, had their lives turned upside down by his medical crisis, which required surgery and lots of doctor visits, tests and prescription drugs afterwards.

Her job kept their life fairly normal, and their income was smaller but steady. Then she was laid-off. And then her unemployment assistance ran out. She's looking for a job, but it's hard to find one these days, even without having to take time off to be with her husband when he needs help.

She told me she has sold everything that could be—even some childhood treasures. She has picked up pop bottles along the roads to come up with gas money for her husband's doctor visits. And through all this, she was trying to keep her husband from getting stressed about their dire situation.

By the time she called the People Fund, she told us, “I am literally giving up. I never thought my life would come to this.”

The People Fund board saw their need and helped out with three months of mortgage payments, plus a gas card to help with getting to those doctor appointments. That was one call I looked forward to making!

She cried, but they were tears of happiness for the helping hand. Now, I'm sure this family still has a long, difficult road ahead of them, but the People Fund—through your donations—was able to give them a bridge, something to keep them going while he applies for permanent disability assistance, and while she hunts for a job.

There are lots of stories out there like this one. There are organizations who get People Fund grants that in turn help needy families directly.

Marilyn Danielson of the Portland Congregational Church food pantry, who is shown on the front cover of the People Fund's annual report attached to this issue of *Michigan Country Lines*, says food banks used to be a way to tide people over temporarily.

Now, she's seeing “regulars” because things haven't changed for them. They come for help not because they want to, she says, but because they have to.

If you're already rounding up your electric bill, *thank you*, on behalf of all our neighbors who need help. If you're not, and you're able to spare 50 cents a month, please consider returning the card on the cover to start helping us make more happy endings.

Denise J. Weeks

Miller Named To Lead Electric Operations



Matt Miller

Matt Miller, a 23-year veteran of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, was named manager of electric operations in January. He will take over the leadership role from Harley Jaques, who plans to retire April 1.

Matt brings 36 years of line experience to the position. He began his career with electrical construction contractors, then worked for Wolverine Power Cooperative for several years doing maintenance and construction of transmission lines and substations. He joined HomeWorks in 1986, and for the past 10 years has served as the Portland area district operations supervisor.

"As a team, we have emphasized working safely and efficiently to produce quality work for the cooperative's members," Miller

says. "I've also helped develop apprentice lineworkers into highly effective and responsible linemen and leaders over the years at HomeWorks.

"These will continue to be our priorities, and I'm looking forward to working closely with the cooperative's leadership team to find new and better ways to accomplish our goals," Miller says.

He has attended several technical and leadership courses offered through the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, and earned a supervisory certificate through National Rural Electrification Cooperative Association courses.

Matt is a graduate of Ionia High School, and he and his wife, Margo, have three grown children.

Your Board In Action

Meeting at Blanchard, Jan. 18, your board of directors:

- Approved the minutes of the special meeting held Jan. 6, 2010, at which the board voted unanimously to move forward with member regulation (minutes of the Jan. 6 meeting were published in February's *Country Lines*.)
- Reviewed the right-of-way clearing costs for 2010, compared with previous years, and learned the reliability initiatives for 2010 will focus on inspecting and upgrading equipment on certain circuits.
- Read and approved "Board Policy 107 – Directors' Attendance at Meetings," and "Board Policy 108 – Indemnification of Directors and Others."
- Reviewed an annual report detailing the cost of director compensation, benefits and other board expenses paid directly by the cooperative, as required by Board Policy 103.
- Reviewed preliminary December 2009 financial statements, and learned there were 85 new members for the month.
- Acknowledged the December safety report, with two safety meetings listed.

Last Chance to Win!

STUDENTS: Win a \$1,000 scholarship or travel to Washington, D.C., for a week of sightseeing and leadership opportunities.

For high school seniors, two one-time \$1,000 Touchstone Energy® scholarships are available for the 2010-11 school year.

We also offer two one-time \$250 scholarships to adults returning to school for further education or training.

Teens age 16 or older are eligible for Michigan Electric cooperative Teen Days, set for April 28-30, 2010, at the Kettunen Center near Cadillac. HomeWorks will send up to four teens, then select two to attend the National Rural Electric Youth Tour, June 12-17, in Washington, D.C. A simple essay contest determines who will attend; the two top essay writers will also win \$50 U.S. savings bonds.

Scholarship and Teen Days/Youth Tour applications are due **March 15**, and are available at homeworks.org. Call Jayne Graham at 517-647-1252 or email jayne@homeworks.org for more information.

.....



Applications for both Teen Days/Youth Tour and the Touchstone Energy scholarship program are available at homeworks.org. Select the "Electric" tab, then click on "For Students."

And, visit youthtour.coop for a photo gallery, several videos and lots more information about Youth Tour.

Co-ops Agree to Push Affordability

Close to 6,000 key staff and locally-elected directors from the nation's cooperative electric utilities met in Atlanta, GA, in February to set 2010 policies for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). They agreed that co-ops should strongly push Congress to take responsibility for climate change policy, and not leave it to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Glenn English, NRECA's CEO, told attendees they must demand that elected officials put affordability at the center of their energy policy discussions.

English said a unified, focused co-op position can help cut through the polarization and political stridency in the nation's capital that has stalled efforts to produce constructive energy-related legislation.

"Electric cooperatives cannot afford a scorched-earth politics. We cannot afford to participate in that kind of political debate.



Brandon Gregg, whose parents are members of Midwest Energy Cooperative, represented Michigan as a member of NRECA's Youth Leadership Council.

That divides co-ops," he said. *Michigan Country Lines* was among the five finalists for the Haggard Award, which recognizes magazine excellence among state electric co-op publications.

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of rural electrification, film and TV actor Edward Asner opened the general session with a dramatic and moving portrayal of President Franklin D. Roosevelt.



Lighten Up

Well, you gave me my laugh for the day. After reading your slightly condescending instructions on your publication's current name directing that we "notice the 'r' between the 't' and the 'y' in country" I turned to the [February] cover of *Michigan Country Lines*. Imagine my surprise to see someone's head covering *Country* in the title—all you can see is the "c" and the "y". Turns out the 'r' is invisible—also the "o", "u", "n" and "t".

So please lighten up, as you have plainly (or not so plainly) shown. We all make mistakes.

Sharon Miller, East Jordan

A Question of Subsidies

I have to take issue with your statements about renewable energy. [Comment, February] First, with solar PV (photovoltaics), the generous 30 percent rebate coupled with programs like DTE SolarCurrents and Consumers EARP programs puts the payback time for PV at about 12 years. The life expectancy of a PV system is 25 years, so, after the payback period, the cost of producing

is almost zero. Also, the low cost of producing electricity from coal is greatly exaggerated when you factor in the cost of mining and transporting it and not to mention the environmental cost. Also, you say that interest is not as high as is reported because of the number of net metered customers in the state. Not all customers net meter and I hear of more customers pulling the plug than ever!

John Wagner, via email

Mike Peters replies: I took issue with the statement in the MPSC report that "solar is reaching price parity." Price parity implies that the cost to generate solar is equivalent to the cost to generate with other (coal, natural gas, nuclear) sources of fuel. Your comment addresses the fact that solar is heavily subsidized, actually confirming my comment that solar has not reached price parity with the cost of conventional generation. The real cost of solar PV is subsidized so the customer does not have to pay the full amount.

As for your comment about the exaggerated cost of coal not including mining and transportation costs, the cost to generate with coal does include those costs. When a generator purchases coal, the price they pay includes the cost to mine it. Transportation can be part of the coal contract or it can be separated. Either way,

MYSTERY PHOTO

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

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

The **January** contest winner is **April Darga** of Posen, who correctly identified the old iron ore dock in the lower harbor at Marquette.



Do you know where this is?

Scholarships Offered

Each year, the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association awards two \$1,000 scholarships to qualifying applicants. Individuals are chosen based on their scholastic achievement and extracurricular involvement during their high school career.

The applicant's parent or guardian must be a member or employee of a Michigan electric co-op, and the applicant must be planning to attend a Michigan college or school full-time.

Selection will be based on grade point average, character, leadership, academic achievement, extracurricular and community activities, and essay response.

Applications are available at countrylines.com; click on "Youth," email wolford@countrylines.com, or call 517-351-6322, ext. 205, to request an application by mail. Eligible applications must be postmarked by **April 1, 2010.**

the cost to generate with coal that I quoted in the comment includes the fuel, transportation, and all related generation costs. And the fact that a well-maintained coal generation facility can last for 70 years supports the fact that coal is a relatively cheap source of generation fuel. Some coal plants have an output cost of less than 4 cents per kWh.

You are correct that the cost to generate with fossil fuels does not include all of the environmental externalities. Although there are considerable environmental costs that have been added to power plants to make burning coal as clean as possible, such as scrubbers and precipitators to remove sulfur dioxide, mercury and nitrogen oxide, there are still environmental and societal costs that are not captured in the cost of generation. With advancements in technology, there will be carbon capture available that will greatly reduce CO₂ emissions, as well as less all other pollutants associated with burning coal. I also recognize there are advancements being made in solar technology every day. I am hopeful that at some time in the future solar PV really will reach "price parity."

Finally, as for individuals pulling the plug and going off the grid, it has been our experience

that out of the approximately 350,000 electric meters served by electric cooperatives no member has gone completely to self-generation. We have had a few dozen members install wind or solar generation units, but none have fully disconnected, yet.

The bottom line is that we need all forms of generation to adequately and affordably meet power supply needs now and into the future. We support a mix of renewables, fossil fuel and nuclear generation, as well as energy efficiency as the best way to keep the lights on and keep it affordable.

CFLs vs. Incandescents

I have on occasion seen time duration break-even points for incandescent and fluorescent lighting, but have forgotten the time frames involved as to most efficient use versus shut-off. In other words, how long does each type of light need to be turned off in order to overcome the additional electricity needed to restart the light? And are CFLs the same as other fluorescents, or is there a different break-even time of shut-off?

As we try to become more energy conscious in our homes and businesses, this type of "rule of thumb" information is helpful in deciding whether to turn off each type of light when leaving a room or is it better to leave the light on?

Donald Pishney, Williamsburg

We'll quote Umbra Fisk, the popular energy columnist at *Grist.com*, who quotes Anne Ducey, residential lighting program coordinator at Seattle City Light. Here's her unflinching bottom line:

"Turn out the lights if you are the last to leave a room, unless you are coming back within two minutes. Contrary to popular belief, turning lights on consumes no more electricity than they use when already lit. This is true for both fluorescent and incandescent bulbs. Out! Out!"



The 2010 Centennial Farm calendar, depicting centennial farms throughout Michigan, are still available for a reduced price. The program has certified more than 6,000 farms since 1948. Calendar price is \$8 + \$2 shipping. Send your order with payment to Michigan Centennial Farm Association, Box 80151, Lansing, MI 48908.



Appliance rebates are now available through the economic stimulus package.

The stimulus plan provides rebates for consumers who replace an old appliance with a new, energy-efficient model rated by Energy Star.

Each state's plan is unique. Visit

www.energysavers.gov/rebates

to find out how rebates can help you keep your electric bills affordable!

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 appropriated funds to each state for the establishment and administration of appliance rebate programs. The amount available to Michigan residents for refrigerators, clothes washers and dishwashers is \$6,641,514.

This is a first-come-first-serve rebate program launched February 10. Michigan residents who replace an existing appliance from an eligible category with a new ENERGY STAR® or CEE qualified appliance after February 10, 2010 may apply for the rebate.

Approved applicants will receive a Visa® Prepaid card via mail. A goal of the program is to stimulate the economy by encouraging consumers to replace old appliances with new energy efficient models.

To apply for the rebate, visit the program's website at www.MIrebates.com or call 1-866-621-8782.

Eligible Appliance Categories	Visa® Prepaid Rebate Value
Dishwashers - ENERGY STAR rating	\$25
Dishwashers - CEE Tier 2 rating	\$50
Clothes Washers - CEE Tier 3 rating	\$50
Refrigerators - ENERGY STAR rating	\$50
Refrigerators - CEE Tier 3 rating	\$100

COMING UP: ▶ Favorite recipes: **MOREL MUSH-ROOMS** by Mar. 10 and **SAUCES** by Apr. 10.

Mail to: Recipe Editor, Country Lines, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864, or email jhansen@countrylines.com

Safety Warnings & Rules Protect Us All

Do any of these sound familiar?
 ▲ “Keep out of eyes. In case of contact with eyes, flush thoroughly with water. Avoid contact with broken skin. Do not store above 105 F.”

▲ “Bridge Ices Before Road”

▲ “Ear protection must be worn when there is a possibility of hearing damage, which can occur during continuous expo-

sure to noise or impulse exposure to loud impact noise.”

The first is a guideline in fine print on the back of a bottle of hand sanitizer, found everywhere during flu season. The second is a warning you’ll see several times along any stretch of interstate highway. The last is a rule found in the HomeWorks Tri-County safety manual, which our employees follow

to work safely, and which we are now updating to current standards.

Whether we realize it or not, several times a day we find ourselves deciding whether or not to follow safety warnings, laws and rules. These decisions include the basics, such as buckling your seat belt or staying within the speed limit, and using chemicals—even hand sanitizers—properly.

The purpose of safety rules is to protect ourselves, our families and the general public from undue harm. Safety and security are among our most basic needs, and these rules provide us with a road map to meet that basic need.


Most of us, at one time or another, have made a conscious decision to ignore one of these rules. Most of us were lucky and didn’t experience the ill-effects that could have resulted. But the decision to ignore the rules—neglecting our own safety and of the people around us—is habit-forming and contagious.

Once we bend stretch the safety rules in one situation, we tend to bend and even break them in other situations. It’s even easier to ignore safety rules when we’re rushed and under stress.

This creates a ripple effect—an unnecessary and ever-increasing amount of exposure for you and everyone around you, as they begin making the same types of decisions in their daily activities. So, keeping our families safe—and our friends and coworkers, as well—should start with leading by example.

The enforcement of safety laws and rules is just as important as the road map they represent. Many people view enforcement as punishment, but if society was left to its own devices the world would be a much more harmful place. Without constant, dedicated enforcement we would have a road map with no initiative and no direction.

As your cooperative reviews and revises its safety policies, take a moment to think about how important safety is in your life. Keeping your family safe is well worth taking a few extra moments to live safely.



Chris O'Neill is HomeWorks Tri-County's safety coordinator.



Among the employees honored recently for reaching milestone anniversaries in 2009 were, from left, front: Deb Rogers, Missy Robson, Jody Birch, and Bruce Snyder, and back row: Randy Spayd, Chris Vallier, Tom Manting, Jon Shattuck and Kyle Balderson.

Employees Honored for 160 Years of Service to Co-op's Members

Each year, HomeWorks Tri-County honors employees for reaching service milestones. For 2009, those employees included:

Five years: Kyle Balderson, Nick Rusnell, Kathie Simon, Bruce Snyder and Lanny Withey.

10 years: Becky Beard, Jody Birch, Calvin Foster, Jon Shattuck, Randy Spayd and Chris Vallier.

15 years: Chris Teachout.

20 years: Tom Manting, Missy Robson and Deb Rogers.



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A Helping Hand on Energy Costs

Little houses don't use much energy, but family-size houses do. They have a lot of lightbulbs, many windows, and all kinds of places that simply leak energy. Your electric co-op has Energy Optimization programs that will help you **use electricity more efficiently**, and will even **pay you** to make the switch to more efficient products.

At www.michigan-energy.com you'll find an online package of programs called **Energy Depot® for Homes**, where you can perform your own **home energy audit**, calculate your energy costs and learn what you can do to reduce energy use by **hundreds of dollars a year**. Plus, you'll qualify for a **free energy improvement kit** that will help you immediately reduce your energy use.

The **Appliance Recycling** program is now available. **We'll pay you \$30** to take that old, working refrigerator—the one in the garage chilling your beer and pop—off your hands.

Plus, **rebates** for compact fluorescent lighting, water heaters, other appliances, and furnace blowers continue. **Combine them with federal and state rebates** and save more.

Commercial and Industrial (C&I) customers can earn **incentives** for the installation of energy-efficient equipment, such as high efficiency lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment, motors/fans/pumps/drives, water heaters, refrigeration, food service equipment and controls.

See more information about your co-op's EO program elsewhere in this magazine.

You'll find all these programs, and more, at
www.michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319



Grappling with a Changing Energy Future

Electric co-ops search for new ways to keep electricity affordable in the face of federal carbon regulation. **Scott Gates**

Escalante Generating Station in Prewitt, NM, will utilize solar thermal technology—using mirrors to reflect sunlight to heat a liquid and create steam—to scale back the burning of coal. This illustration shows where the new solar facility will be located.



Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association

For decades, electric utilities across the country have relied on fossil fuels to do most of the grunt work, burning coal and natural gas to create steam, spin turbines, and generate electricity. While fossil fuels remain the most cost-effective way to create massive amounts of electricity, that may not be the case in the future.

Looming government regulations targeting climate change and carbon dioxide will add to the costs of operating fossil fuel-fired power plants. As the cost of generating electricity goes up, the cost to consumers inevitably goes up with it. As a result, electric cooperatives, along with other electric utilities, have launched several initiatives to limit carbon emissions while keeping electricity flowing and your electric bill affordable.

Looming Regulations

In December 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) declared that six greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, are “endangering public health and welfare” of current and future generations. Emissions from motor vehicles of four of those greenhouse gases, including carbon dioxide, were also said to contribute to air pollution.

The action comes in response to a 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Massachusetts v. EPA*) that opened the door to regulation of greenhouse gases under the federal Clean Air Act.

“The Clean Air Act as written was never designed to deal with carbon dioxide, and it could be awkward at best and probably a disaster, at worst,” warns Glenn English, CEO of the National Rural Electric Coop-

erative Association (NRECA).

In addition to potential carbon regulation from EPA, Congress is mulling over its own set of regulations, and English urges electric co-op members to continue to ask that any resulting legislation be fair, affordable and technologically achievable. If passed, Congressional legislation should also preempt use of any other existing laws—like the Clean Air Act—in order to avoid a regulatory disaster that would only add to costs for consumers.

“Regulation of carbon dioxide as a pollutant will occur with or without congressional input,” English explains. “But Congress must not simply add new legislation on top of old regulations. Any climate change bill should become the roadmap—the single strategy—for reducing carbon dioxide emissions at federal, state and local levels. By staying engaged in the process, electric co-ops can have a measureable impact on the outcome in order to keep electric bills affordable.”

A Smarter Way of Doing Business

Once regulations are in place, whether under the Clean Air Act or from Congress, electric co-ops will be faced with the daunting task of meeting our nation’s growing electricity demands while finding cleaner ways to burn fossil fuels. Since coal, natural gas, and other fossil fuels currently account for more than 70 percent of all electricity generated in the United States, new technology will be key to keeping the lights on. Cleaner use of fossil fuels, an increased use of renewable energy, and a big commitment to energy efficiency

will all be necessary.

Simply using electricity more efficiently in residential, commercial and industrial sectors could lead to total energy savings of 236 billion kilowatt hours by 2030, according to the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), a non-profit, utility-sponsored consortium, whose members include electric co-ops. That’s a lot of power: equivalent to the electricity used in a year by New York City—14 times over.

A more efficient electric grid—often called a “smart grid”—could provide co-ops with a big payoff. More than 50 co-ops and public power districts in 15 states recently captured U.S. Department of Energy smart grid investment grants, a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (better known as the federal stimulus bill).

The not-for-profit utilities are receiving more than \$215 million of the \$3.4 billion total awarded, amounts they will match with their own funds.

In addition, NRECA’s Cooperative Research Network (CRN) received a \$33.9 million smart grid grant for a wide-ranging project that joins 27 electric co-ops in 10 states. Local co-ops will match the grant money awarded, creating a pool of nearly \$68 million for technology development.

“Cooperatives, who are leading the industry in the deployment of smart meter infrastructure, have the potential to drive the national effort to understand which smart grid technologies work best and are cost effective,” remarks English.

Cooperatives’ use of advanced, or “smart,” electric meters, a fundamental smart grid

technology, jumped from 3.8 percent in 2006 to 16.4 percent in 2008—well above the industry as a whole—according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Michigan co-ops are well ahead of the curve in installing advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) on their systems, and some 30 percent of co-ops nationally have begun to integrate AMI with other systems, according to NRECA. AMI includes devices and software applications that enable two-way communications with smart meters and provide electric utilities, using frequent meter reads, with near real-time oversight of system operations.

Smart meters, which help consumers save money by lowering co-op operating costs, will be a big part of CRN's project: Approximately 132,000 are planned for installation. Other cost-saving components include 18,000 load control switches; nearly 4,000 in-home displays, smart thermostats, and other personal energy management devices.

"This represents the first opportunity for a nationwide pilot that tests end-to-end smart grid connectivity from a power plant all the way to a consumer's home," says CRN Executive Director Ed Torrero.

Generating Innovation

While technology will get electricity to your home more efficiently and help consumers use it more efficiently, new methods of generating electricity are also being tested. Looming regulations make carbon dioxide-mitigation research a priority for any future fossil fuel-fired power plants.

Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, a Westminster, CO-based generation & transmission co-op that supplies wholesale power to 44 local electric distribution co-ops in four western states, has recently joined with EPRI to host a study that will convert a 245-MW coal-fired power plant into a "hybrid plant."

Escalante Generating Station in Prewitt, NM, will utilize solar thermal technology—using mirrors to reflect sunlight to heat a liquid and create steam—to scale back the burning of coal when possible. The hybrid plant will work like this: on a hot summer afternoon, when the sun is scorching, air conditioners are on full-blast, and electricity demand peaking, solar generation will switch on so less coal needs to be burned. When the sun goes down and the flow of solar power begins to drop, the coal generation side of the plant steps up to keep electrons flowing.

In this way, a plant will emit less carbon dioxide while also using less fuel.

We need your help to avoid...

A "Glorious Mess"

Washington and politicians in general have slipped in the eyes of the American people. Recent polls show that only 37 percent express a favorable opinion of Congress, while 52 percent hold an unfavorable view. Positive opinions of Congress have been declining for some time.

Sometimes, the American people are justified in their dim view of Congress. The partisanship seems to be running at an all-time high as both parties believe they can "pick up seats in the next election." "Rule or ruin" seems to be the game plan on both sides of the aisle.

But there is one issue that appears to have bipartisan support: the EPA should not move forward with regulating carbon dioxide under the Clean Air Act without clear authorization by Congress. Although Congress has yet to pass legislation to control greenhouse gases, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering new rules and regulations under the Clean Air Act to limit greenhouse gas emissions from power plants, and that could lead to higher electric bills for everyone.

EPA bureaucrats want to use the Clean Air Act to enforce their new rules—but Congress never intended for EPA to address climate change this way. The Clean Air Act was not designed to address climate change. It's the wrong tool for the job and if allowed, says Michigan Congressman John Dingell, one of the primary authors of the Clean Air Act, it will result in a "glorious mess." I couldn't agree more.

This issue is the responsibility of Congress. It is not for bureaucrats at EPA to decide. This is where your help is needed. We must convince our members of Congress that they need to put the partisan wrangling aside and come together to rein in the EPA and their efforts to regulate without Congress-



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

sional direction. We know that regulating CO₂ will lead to higher energy costs. We have seen various estimates of those costs based on the various approaches. Some approaches are more manageable than others. Although we don't know which direction Congress will ultimately take,

cap-and-trade or a carbon tax, we do know that if EPA does move ahead on their own, the regulations will be more onerous and more costly than if Congress were to act.

Your representative in Congress and your U.S. senators need to know you're concerned about this issue. Tell your legislators that Congress needs to step in and prevent EPA from using the Clean Air Act as a tool for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's the role of Congress to determine any climate change policy—and to ensure that the impact of that policy is fair and keeps electricity affordable for all Americans.

Thankfully, some in Congress understand this. They've recently introduced legislation to stop EPA from acting. **You can tell our delegation to support this legislation**

by logging-on to OurEnergy.coop. By doing so, you will be telling your member of Congress that this issue is important, too important to let unelected EPA bureaucrats take the lead. Your emails and postcards can urge lawmakers to co-sponsor legislation to stop EPA from moving forward, because it's Congress' responsibility to determine how to best deal with greenhouse gases—while at the same time keeping electric bills affordable. Let's help Congress help themselves improve their record in the eyes of the American voter.



Lighting Innovations on the Horizon

A new lighting product quickly making gains in the market may one day overtake compact fluorescent lights (CFLs) and other types of lights in many applications. Light emitting diodes (LEDs) are being hailed as the next great innovation in lighting, promising long life, great light quality, and super efficiency. However, the ultimate promise of LED technology is still on the horizon.

The Cooperative Research Network (CRN) partnered with several electric cooperatives throughout the United States to test a variety of LED lamps as alternatives to conventional lighting or CFLs. Electric co-ops are optimistic about LED technology because of the following consumer benefits:

- ▶ LEDs last longer, perhaps for decades;
- ▶ LEDs can run on substantially less energy than CFLs or other fluorescents;
- ▶ With no mercury content, LEDs are more environmentally friendly;
- ▶ The products are rugged and more resistant to breakage;
- ▶ LEDs perform well in cold climates, especially outdoor applications;
- ▶ LEDs are dimmable and produce a more pleasing light.

As promising as the technology appears, the path to seeing store shelves stocked with reliable and affordable LEDs may be a long and rocky one. Limited light output and high initial prices are barriers to widespread LED use. In the current economy, consumers will not purchase LED lighting until manufacturers bring down costs significantly.

The Cost of an LED

An initial investment in an LED fixture is far greater than for an incandescent bulb—sometimes as much as 100 times more expensive when compared to a 100-watt Edison bulb priced at \$1. However, the total cost of ownership over its lifetime, including the energy cost to run the light and replacement costs, puts the LED in a more favorable light.

When LEDs are perfected, it should take about 50 incandescent bulbs, or eight to 10 CFLs, to equal the life of one LED lamp. LEDs also are expected to be about 20 times more efficient than an incandescent bulb.

The Edison lightbulb creates light by heating a filament, an inefficient process that actually produces more heat than light. LEDs, on the other hand, create light through



GE's 7-Watt Energy Smart PAR20 LED, created for use in restaurants and other commercial settings, cuts energy use by 77 percent—but typically costs more than \$30. When you compare the lifecycle cost of a light source, the question is: Which would you rather pay—\$550 to use an incandescent bulb, or \$154 to use an LED?

a semiconductor chip mounted on an electronic circuit board. When energy passes through the chip, it creates bright light and almost no heat on the bulb itself.

LEDs are not entirely new. In fact, they are the familiar red or blue indicator lights on electronics panels, computers, and even traffic lights. Over the last two years, there have been technological strides in the development of white, high-brightness LEDs. This opens opportunities for much broader lighting applications within our homes, offices, and for outdoor street lighting. Several electric co-ops are working with CRN to test LED

lamps in parking lots, roadways, farms and schools. The test results will give co-ops a strong voice with manufacturers in creating new LED lamps that will be less expensive, last longer, and benefit consumers.

A Strong Word of Caution

Poor quality LED products are flooding the marketplace and are easily purchased on several well-known websites and through big box retailers. Many products promising to be “good for the planet” are not as environmentally friendly as claimed. Several of these products are manufactured outside the United States with components that produce low light levels, don't last long, or have exaggerated energy-saving claims.

With LED lamps, you get what you pay for. A product that costs \$15 is likely to provide less light and have a shorter life than one that costs \$50. Even high-quality LED lamps are in a relatively early stage of development and few have undergone rigorous testing.

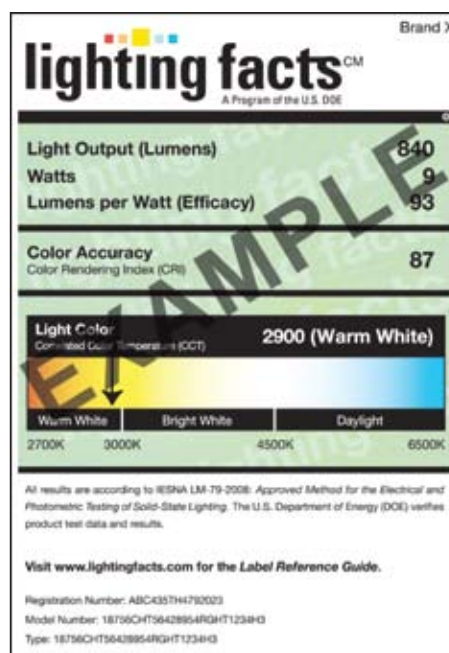
The Department of Energy (DOE) is establishing Energy Star® standards for LEDs. Until this happens, DOE encourages consumers to become educated before investing in LEDs and to look for the SSL Quality Advocate label (see left), which is similar to the one used by the FDA for food labeling.

LED lighting holds a great deal of promise. However, most ready-for-prime-time LED products are in only a few niche applications, such as task and display case lighting. General illumination lights are still a work in progress. Smart consumers will do a little homework before purchasing LED lights.

Comparing Lifecycle Lighting Costs

	Incandescent Bulb	LED Lamp
Useful Life	50,000 hours. Requires 50 replacements	50,000 hours. Requires no replacement
Wattage	100 watts	10 watts
Cost of bulb/lamp	\$1	\$100*
Energy costs to operate	\$500	\$54
Total Cost of Ownership	\$550	\$154

Source: Cooperative Research Network *Estimated cost of high end LED lamp. Even at this exaggerated cost the lifetime savings of the LED may make sense for some consumers.



Sample of what a SSL (Solid-State Lighting) Quality Advocate label looks like.

Soy

April is National Soyfoods Month

Eating soyfoods daily has many health benefits:

- Protection against osteoporosis
- Alleviation of menopausal symptoms
- Make room for soyfoods on your plate, a great way to support your health and Michigan agriculture.
- Prevention of certain cancers
- Help with lowering cholesterol

Better Bran Muffins

1 ¼ cups flour
½ cup soy flour
1 cup bran flake cereal
½ cup brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon
⅛ teaspoon ground cloves
2 slightly beaten eggs
⅔ cup soymilk
½ cup raisins
¼ cup soyoil



Spray muffin pan with vegetable cooking spray or line with paper baking cups. Stir together all dry ingredients. Combine eggs, soymilk and soyoil. Add egg mixture to flour mixture; stir until moistened. Fold in raisins. Fill muffin pan ⅔ full.

Bake in a 400°F oven for 15-20 minutes. Yield: 12 muffins.

Per serving (1 muffin): 134 calories, 4.7 grams protein, 26.4 grams carbohydrates, 6.7 grams total fat, 0.8 grams saturated fat, 30 mg cholesterol, 188 mg sodium. Source: www.soyfoods.com/recipes



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Abby

Two-year old Toad was left by the roadside, so dirty and matted that he had open sores.

Five-year old Chester was discovered lying in a yard with his leg shattered from a shotgun blast.

Had these victims been human, the people responsible for such cruelty would have faced criminal prosecution. But these were dogs.

Lucky for Toad and Chester, there are people like Pauline Hancock of Atlanta, MI, and Sandy Bassett of Caro. With other dedicated volunteers, they care for thousands of unwanted and injured pets while seeking "forever homes" for them.

Elk Country Animal Shelter

For years, the Montmorency County Sheriff's Department animal control section provided the only stray dog shelter in Atlanta. The animals had to be housed outdoors and minimal care was available.

In fall 2002, Pauline Hancock, a Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op member, held a meeting with fellow citizens and started a volunteer group called the Elk Country Animal Shelter (ECAS). The volunteers helped at the shelter with cleaning, vaccinations and promoting adoptions.

In April 2009, ECAS opened its own facility after volunteers raised enough funds to renovate a building next to the Sheriff's Department.

Through strictly volunteer efforts, Pauline explains, "they created something from nothing with only their hearts, brains and hands." About 30 volunteers now work at the shelter, and many more help with fundraising. As executive director, Pauline also sits on the board of directors, and her husband Dave chairs the building committee.

Since opening, the new shelter has already accepted 206 dogs, 131 cats, and five other animals, including a pet rat named Stuart. So far, 78 dogs, 88 cats, and all the other animals, including Stuart, have been adopted.

"We're good at what we do," Pauline explains. ECAS provides vaccinations, worm-

Left: Sandy Bassett, of Caro, cuddles puppies she is sheltering at her home until they can be adopted to "forever homes."

RESCUE ME

Two Country Lines 2009 Volunteer of the Year nominees create 'Happy Tails.' **Linda Kotzian**



Elvira



Jena



John and Jean



Chewy

Photos: Pet Friendz

ing, and basic care. Local veterinarians volunteer to provide rabies vaccines, microchip all the animals, and spay or neuter them at no charge before they are adopted.

Pauline describes Montmorency County as one of the poorest in Michigan. "But that doesn't stop the help from coming to us," she adds, and is grateful for that.

Pauline first rescued a litter of barn kittens when she was 12. "I loved animals even when I was little and always thought it was an honor to be liked by them," she says.

Cathy Hehir, a fellow volunteer who adopted a golden retriever says, "Pauline is a tiny powerhouse of a woman who knows how to relate to animals, even injured and frightened ones. She's our own little 'dog whisperer.'"

Pauline acknowledges how difficult it is to see animals in pain and afraid, but the breakthrough can be as simple as a friendly lick on the hand, and the work can also bring unexpected smiles. While she and Dave were bathing a rabbit named Emily, they noticed what appeared to be two tumors on the animal's underside. It turns out they weren't tumors, and Emily was renamed Elmer.

Pauline and Dave adopted Elmer, plus three dogs, a cockatiel, and three cats, and she still says the best part of their work is seeing an animal placed in a "forever home." It benefits the animal *and* enriches the life of the person who adopts.

Cass River Pet Friendz

Sandy Bassett, a Great Lakes Energy Co-op member, brought so many animals home when she was little that her parents threatened to banish her.

As an adult, she took early retirement and began a "critter sitter" business in Caro. But people began bringing her strays, and so she started trying to find homes for them, too.

By 2001, Sandy and a group of volunteers started a rescue operation called Cass River Pet Friendz. Unlike most shelters, rescue organization volunteers generally care for animals in their own homes. At Pet Friendz, just five people care for the animals, handle paperwork, and hold fundraisers.

Since 2001, Sandy has cycled over 1,842 animals through her home, and adopted two

shih tzus, Charley and Marley.

Since cats reproduce in large numbers if not fixed, they are the largest challenge in time and expenses. With an unemployment rate of 17 percent locally, Sandy worries about the group's revenues.

"Money is down and calls for assistance are way up," she reports. Grants subsidize local fundraising, but they often come earmarked for spaying and neutering, so Sandy hesitates to label the group as a "no kill" refuge.

"We have to make hard choices that can result in euthanasia if an animal is vicious or not trainable," she explains. "We try to do the best thing for the animal, but there are many sleepless nights."

"No one except those who work with her understand the sacrifices Sandy has made to follow her heart with this endeavor," says Susan Green, a fellow volunteer.

Cindy Fox, who's miniature Schnauzer, Sully, is a steady customer of Sandy's pet day care, became a Pet Friendz volunteer out of admiration for Sandy. Eight years ago, Cindy brought a grimy dog to Sandy after finding him running loose. When Cindy visited a few days later, a beautifully groomed dog greeted her—it was Sully, and she adopted him.

As for Toad and Chester...

A truck driving couple adopted Toad after Sandy transformed him from a mass of tangled fur into a beautiful shih tzu. They bring Toad to visit her when they pass through.

Chester's leg was amputated, and the Hancocks adopted him. Pauline says the Lab-mix dog "can run like crazy" even with just three legs.

To Pauline and Sandy, the best happy endings come with tails.

Donkeys Need Friends, Too

There are many animals that need our help, but one of the more unique rescue operations we found in Michigan is for donkeys.

Sharon Windsor is the founder of Turning Pointe Donkey Rescue, where she currently shelters nearly 70 of all types on her farm near Dansville. With a few volunteers to help, she finds homes for about 20-25 per year.

Why? "Because they are the most loving, intelligent, fun, and given enough time and patience, the most forgiving of any creature I have ever met," she explains. Donkeys are very intelligent, she says, and due to their cautious, not stubborn, nature they cannot be forced to do anything they feel is unsafe.

"One of the most loving donkeys here was the victim of a shooting," Windsor

adds, and another was so abused her only defense was to kick at anyone who came near because she was too lame to run away from her tormenters. Others were loved pets, but due to an owner's ill health or death they needed new homes. Still others come from auctions, a law enforcement seizure, or from people that never should have gotten a donkey in the first place.

If you have a donkey(s) you want to surrender, Turning Pointe is happy to welcome your animal and find it a new home.

If adopting a donkey just doesn't work, sponsoring one with a donation makes a unique gift for an animal lover, who will be sent regular news and pictures of their rescued donkey. Contact Sharon Windsor, as noted in the box below.



Joe Blow

Photo: Sharon Windsor

Elk Country Animal Shelter, Atlanta
989-785-3738
elkcountrysanctuary.org

Cass River Pet Friendz, Caro
P.O. Box 513, Caro, MI 48723-0513
petfriendz.org

Turning Pointe Donkey Rescue
517-623-0000
turningpointdonkeyrescue.org

Adoption/Find a Shelter/Your Area:
adoptapet.com
800-728-3273

Early Intervention Improves Young Lives

At the risk of sounding hopelessly uncool, I confess that every so often I long to turn back the clock for today's children. Back to a time when families had fewer things, but more time together. When children sought adventure in family-friendly neighborhoods. When teens talked to people in the room, undistracted by digital "chats."

But then I remember at least one thing I don't miss about raising and teaching children in the "old days." We used to wait for children to fail before we'd take much action to improve their chances of success. "Don't worry," we'd tell parents. "What will be, will be. Let's wait and see if things get better on their own."

These days, we know better. We know that if a child experiences a developmental or learning delay, this can compound over time. By intervening early with appropriate therapies for children and families, we minimize these delays and maximize our kids' chances of reaching normal milestones in development and learning.

"Don't worry, but don't wait," we tell parents today. And this philosophy is making all the difference, both before and during their days at school.

Reaching the Youngest Learners

Two free services exist in counties across Michigan to help young children who may not seem to be growing, developing or learning at the same pace as others their age. Early On provides services and support to infants and toddlers up to age three.

Project Find serves children ages three and older by making families aware of special education supports and services provided in public schools. Both programs offer answers to questions parents may have, and deliver services and support to children who qualify.

Early On is a federally-funded system of early intervention services under Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Project Find is funded under Part B of the same act through a grant from the Michigan Department of Education. Both programs

are coordinated by Michigan's intermediate school districts or regional service agencies.

Early On intervention involves specialized education and therapy services for the child, as well as support for the whole family through information, advocacy and emotional support. The process may begin with a telephone call from a parent, referral from a physician, or a visit in the hospital when a child is born. It may lead to a home visit to learn more about the child's needs.

If the child needs help, Early On staff will tell parents how to get it at little or no cost. Infants or toddlers up to three years old may qualify for speech services, physical or occupational therapy, or other support. Services are often delivered directly to the child at home, and parents and caregivers are also given tips and support on how to assist the child.

Anyone who has concerns about an infant or toddler's development, behavior, speech and language, physical impairment or delay, can visit 1800EarlyOn.org or call 800-EARLY-ON.

Project Find addresses concerns about children or youth over age three. Project Find refers individuals up to 26 years of age for a free evaluation to help identify physical, social, emotional or learning conditions that prevent a young person from learning in school. The evaluation is the first step in getting the help he or she needs. These young people may be eligible for free special education services provided by Michigan public schools.

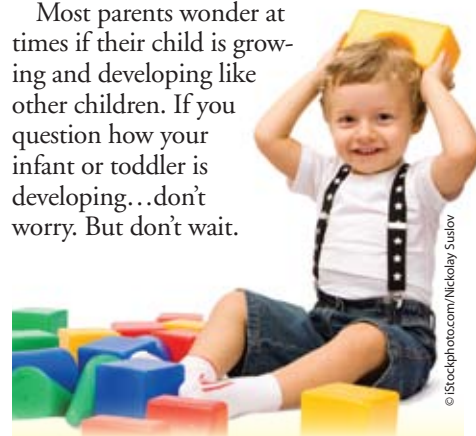
Early intervention is an important factor in special education for children with disabilities. Research during the 1960s and '70s showed that the earlier children received special education, the better their outcomes. Research also showed that families who were supported earlier were more empowered to advocate for their child later on.

In Michigan, eligible children, youth and young adults may receive special educational services from birth through 25 years of age. And by the way, all Michigan's children with disabilities, including those who are homeless or wards of the State, and who attend private schools, regardless of the severity of

their disabilities, are eligible under the law for special education services.

Anyone can make a referral for a Project Find evaluation. A free evaluation is available for individuals from birth to age 26. All information contained in the evaluation and educational program is confidential. To learn more, visit ProjectFindMichigan.org or call 800-252-0052.

Most parents wonder at times if their child is growing and developing like other children. If you question how your infant or toddler is developing...don't worry. But don't wait.



Step-by-step guide to your baby's growth

By 3 Months, Does your baby...

- Roll from side to side?
- Play with her hands?
- Laugh out loud?
- Look at a rattle?

By 6 Months, Does your baby...

- Pass things from one hand to the other?
- Look at herself in the mirror?
- Sit up with little support?
- Roll over?

By 12 Months, Does your baby...

- Wave goodbye?
- Drink from a cup without help?
- Stand alone for at least two seconds?
- Use a few short words like "mama?"

By 24 Months, Does your toddler...

- Walk and run well?
- Handle a spoon well?
- Ask for things by name?
- Use two or three words together?

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Update: Due to the tremendous success of the Geothermal Homeowners Stimulus Event, WaterFurnace has **extended the program to March 31st!** Call your local WaterFurnace dealer today, or **visit waterfurnace.com/event** to learn more.

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WaterFurnace Michiana
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Big Rapids
Stratz Heating & Cooling
(231) 796-3717

Caro
All-Temp Heating
(989) 673-5557

Charlevoix
Great Lakes Plumbing & Htg
(231) 547-1035

Cheboygan
Jim's Handyman
(231) 627-7533

Carsonville
Certified Temperature Innovations
(810) 300-7748

DeWitt
S & J Htg & Clg
(517) 669-3705

Gaylord
Family Htg & Clg
(989) 732-8099

Grand Rapids
Montgomery Htg & Clg
(616) 459-0261

Hart
Adams Htg & Clg
(231) 873-2665

Harbor Springs
Great Lakes Plumbing & Htg
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Ionia
Home Experts
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Lapeer
Porter & Heckman
(810) 664-8576

Michigan Center
Comfort 1 Heating /
Lenawee Heating
(517) 764-1500

Mount Pleasant
Walton's Htg & Clg
(989) 772-4822

Muskegon
Geofurnace Htg & Clg
(800) 922-3045

Petoskey
Great Lakes Plumbing & Htg
(231) 347-3900

Palms
Lakeshore Improvements
(989) 864-3833

Traverse City
D&W Mechanical
(231) 941-1215

Geofurnace Htg & Clg
(231) 943-1000

Webberville
Applegate Home Comfort
(800) 377-2272

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Crustless Tuna Quiche

- 1 T. butter
- 1/3 c. chopped onion
- 1/4 c. chopped red or green pepper*
- 4 eggs
- 3 T. flour
- 1/4 t. salt
- 1/8 t. pepper
- 1 1/2 c. milk
- 1 1/2 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 6 1/2-oz. can tuna in water, drained and flaked

Melt butter in a small skillet. Sauté onion and pepper until tender, about 3 minutes. Combine eggs, flour and salt in a medium-sized mixing bowl; beat until well-blended. Stir in milk; add cheese, tuna and sautéed vegetables; mix well. Pour into a well-buttered 9-inch pie plate. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes before serving. *Pimento, carrots or mushrooms can be substituted for peppers.

Olivia Hayward,
South Boardman

Tuna Florentine

- 6 T. butter or margarine
- 1/2 c. chopped onion
- 1/4 c. flour
- 1/2 t. salt
- dash nutmeg
- 2 c. milk
- 6 oz. Gruyère cheese, shredded
- 2 7-oz. cans tuna, drained and flaked
- 2 10-oz. pkgs. frozen, chopped spinach, thawed and drained
- 1/2 c. fine dry bread crumbs
- 1/4 c. grated Parmesan cheese

Melt butter or margarine in a medium-size saucepan; sauté onion just until soft. Stir in flour, salt and nutmeg; cook, stirring constantly, just until bubbly. Stir in milk; continue cooking and stirring until sauce thickens and bubbles, about 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in shredded cheese just until melted; add tuna. Place spinach in the bottom of a lightly greased 6-cup baking dish. Spoon tuna-cheese mixture over top; top with crumbs and parmesan cheese. Bake at 350° for 25 minutes or until golden. Yield 8 servings.

Nancy Krzykwa, Alto

Hot Crossed Tuna with Cucumber Sauce

- 2 6 1/2-7 oz. cans tuna, drained
- 1 10-oz. pkg. frozen peas, thawed
- 1 c. shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 c. diced celery
- 1/2 c. bread crumbs
- 1/4 c. chopped onion
- 1/4 t. salt
- Dash pepper
- 1 c. mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 8 oz. pkg. crescent rolls

Cucumber Sauce:

- 1/2 c. mayonnaise or salad dressing
- 1/2 c. sour cream

- 1/2 c. chopped cucumber
- 1 T. chives
- 1 t. parsley
- 1/4 t. dill weed

Combine sauce ingredients; mix well and chill until casserole is ready. Combine all casserole ingredients, except rolls; mix well. Spoon into a 7x10-inch baking dish. Separate dough into 2 rectangles. Press perforations to seal. Cut into 4 long and 8 short strips. Place over tuna mixture in a lattice design. Brush lightly with a little salad dressing and sprinkle with sesame seeds if desired. Bake at 350° for 35-40 minutes. Serve with chilled cucumber sauce.

Sharon Walcott, Grandville

Tuna Cakes

- 2 6-oz. cans light tuna in water, drained
- 1 pkg. stuffing mix for chicken
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1/2 c. shredded carrots
- 1/3 c. mayonnaise
- 2 T. pickle relish
- 3/4 c. water

Mix all ingredients, cover and refrigerate for 10 minutes. Heat 3 tablespoons oil, in a skillet, on medium heat. Scoop tuna mixture into a skillet with an ice cream scoop. Flatten cakes, cook 3-4 minutes on each side or until golden brown on both sides. Yields 6 servings.

Mary Waterbury, Fenton

Tuna Fish Pie With Cheese Roll Crust

Cheese Roll Crust:

- 1 1/2 c. flour
- 3 t. baking powder
- 1/2 t. salt
- dash cayenne pepper
- 3 T. shortening
- 1/2 c. milk
- 3/4 c. grated cheddar cheese, or other
- 2 pimentos, chopped

Combine flour, baking powder, salt, pepper, shortening and milk. Mix with a fork until a soft dough forms. Roll dough into an 8x12-inch rectangle. Top with cheese and pimentos. Roll up jelly-roll style. Cut into 8 slices; flatten slightly.

Tuna Fish Pie:

- 1/2 c. sliced green pepper
- 1 onion sliced
- 3 T. butter
- 6 T. flour
- 1/2 t. salt
- 3 c. milk
- 1 lg. can tuna, drained
- 1 T. lemon juice
- grated cheddar cheese, or other

In a saucepan, melt butter. Add peppers and onions; cook until brown. Add flour and salt; blend. Add milk slowly, stirring constantly. Boil 2 minutes. Add tuna and lemon juice. Pour into a 9x13-inch baking dish. Top with prepared cheese rolls. Cover with grated cheese; bake at 450° for 30 minutes.

Sylvia Behrens,
De Tour Village

Tuna Fish Dip

1 12-oz. can tuna fish,
drained
8 oz. cream cheese
1/4 c. soy sauce
1 med. onion, finely diced
1 T. parsley flakes
1/4 c. chopped nuts

Combine all ingredients, except nuts, in a bowl; mix well. Shape mixture into a ball and roll in nuts. Chill well. Serve with crackers or chips.

Dorothy Hessell,
New Haven

Tuna Crunch

1 c. chopped celery
1/2 c. chopped onion
1 T. butter
1 T. water
1 can cream of mushroom soup
3/4 c. water
6 oz. can tuna, drained and
flaked
3 oz. can Chinese noodles
1/2 c. frozen peas

In a saucepan, sauté celery and onion in butter and 1 tablespoon water until tender. Add soup, water, tuna, noodles and peas; mix well. Place mixture in a buttered, 1 1/2-quart casserole dish. Bake, uncovered, at 350° for 30 minutes.

Connie Foltz, McMillan

Broccoli and Tuna Roll-ups

1 can cream of mushroom soup
1 c. milk
1 12-oz. can tuna in water,
drained and flaked
1 10-oz. pkg. frozen broccoli
florets, thawed and drained
1 1/2 c. shredded cheddar
cheese, divided
1 lg. can French-fried onions
6 super-sized flour tortillas

Combine soup and milk; set aside. Combine tuna, broccoli, 1 cup cheese and 1/2 can onions; stir in 3/4 cup soup mixture. Divide the tuna mixture into the tortillas and roll up. Place seam-side down in a lightly greased, 9x13-inch pan. Pour remainder of soup mixture over the tortillas. Cover with foil and bake at 350° for 35 minutes. Top with remaining cheese and onion; bake uncovered 5-7 minutes longer, until onions are brown and cheese is melted.

Lynn Bischof, Traverse City

Mashed Potato Tuna Patties

2-3 c. mashed potatoes
6 oz. can tuna, drained
1 sm. onion, diced
flour



Combine potatoes, tuna and onion. Form into balls and roll in flour. Flatten balls into patties. In a skillet with a bit of oil, fry patties on both sides until crispy.

Beverly Callewaert, Hersey

Tuna Tulips

Biscuit dough:

2 c. flour
1/3 c. shortening
3 t. baking powder
3/4 c. milk
1/2 t. salt

Tuna filling:

1 c. chunk tuna
1 c. diced celery
1/4 c. salted peanuts
1/2 c. mayonnaise
1 T. lemon juice
1 t. grated onion

To prepare dough, stir dry ingredients and shortening together until mixture forms coarse crumbs. Add milk; stir with fork until blended. Turn mixture onto a board and knead 10 or 12 times. Roll dough 1/2-inch thick, forming a 12x18-inch rectangle. Cut into six squares. Place squares into a greased muffin tin. Combine filling ingredients; mix well. Spoon mixture into dough-lined muffin tin. Fold corners over and seal by pinching tops together. Bake at 400° for 15-20 minutes until brown.

Velma Mahler, Berrien Springs

Send in your recipes! If published, you'll receive a free kitchen gadget. Send in: **MOREL MUSHROOM recipes by March 10, SAUCE recipes by April 10 and APPETIZER recipes by May 10.** Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email jhansen@countrylines.com.

Curried Tuna

1/4 c. butter
2 t. curry powder
2 green onions, with tops, thinly
sliced
3 c. cooked rice
1/4 c. hot water
1/2 t. salt
1/4 t. ground ginger
1/8 t. garlic powder
1/8 t. ground red pepper
1 12 1/2-oz. can albacore tuna
in water, drained

1 hard-boiled egg, chopped
1 T. parsley

In a large skillet, over medium heat, cook and stir butter, curry powder and onions. Stir in rice, water, salt, ginger, garlic powder, red pepper and tuna. Cook and stir until tuna is hot, about 5 minutes. Sprinkle with egg and parsley.

Cheryl Murray, Armada

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Delightful, Delectable

Daylilies



Photo - PerennialResource.com

You can have your flowers and eat them, too, with this hardy perennial.

The daylily (*Hemerocallis* species) is an old-time favorite that grows in all climates. Early settlers carried it to all ends of America because of its beauty, endurance and adaptability to a wide range of soils, and for another practical reason: It's edible.

Today, more and more gardeners are rediscovering the delicious daylily. Not to be confused with true lilies, daylilies grow from tuberous, fleshy roots rather than bulbs. Daylilies have been eaten for centuries in Asia, where they originated.

During summer, the daylily buds and blossoms are the sweetest parts—particularly the yellow and orange, which contain more vitamins A and C than beans. Raw or boiled, stir-fried or steamed, they can be eaten with other vegetables. With their savory taste and gelatinous consistency, the blossoms add a flowery zest to soups and vegetable dishes.

Blossoms may also be dipped in a light batter of flour and water and fried. Unopened flowers are boiled 3 to 4 minutes, then served with butter and salt or dipped in egg batter and quickly fried golden-brown in hot oil. Dried petals are an ingredient in Chinese hot-and-sour soup.

At almost any time, roots can be eaten raw

or added to salads, soups and stews. Boiled, stir-fried or creamed, they can be served as a side dish to substitute starches such as peas or potatoes. The flavor is similar to asparagus.

A strong word of caution: Some people are allergic or otherwise sensitive to daylilies, just as they can be to other vegetables. When first sampling any part, try only a small bite, and do so only when other people are around. Don't swallow if it tastes bad. If it tastes good, then wait at least an hour before trying again, and then only a small amount.

Tolerating freezes, hot temperatures, dry spells and dampness, the hardy daylily thrives in full sun, semi-shade, in containers, in the yard, or on a balcony. Almost any soil works, but for best results, add plenty of compost or other well-rotted organic material. Keep them moist during the flowering season. Side dressings of compost or seasoned manure can improve performance. Usually they respond very well to fertilizer.

The American Hemerocallis Society (AHS), the top authority on daylilies, recommends selection of varieties to plant from winners of its Popularity Poll. Winners are judged annually across the nation in each AHS region.

Winners from each region perform well in each geographic area. For the 2009 winners, access daylilies.org/PopPoll/2009. Visit

daylilies.org/AHSreg.html for a map of the 15 AHS regions. Winners can be found at gardening centers nationwide. Local daylily clubs are a good source of cultural information for specific locations, and clubs are listed for each region.

Planting and Care

In northern areas, daylilies should be planted six weeks before the first hard frost, typically by Sept. 1. Southern growers may be able to plant during winter. Over-wintering in containers or raised beds is not advised in extremely cold climates, such as USDA hardiness zone 5 and colder.

Each plant needs about 2 feet of space, as they multiply rapidly and form large clumps. Those planted in winter usually flower the first season and reach full bloom during the second and third year.

The time to feed is when plants show new growth after dormancy, usually March. If possible, it is also a good idea to fertilize daylilies a second time, a few weeks after they finish blooming.

You can safely leave a daylily clump to grow for 10-15 years. Dividing is simply a matter of digging up, cutting into quarters with a spade or sharp knife, then replanting separately.

Apart from their tastiness and beauty, daylilies are resistant to most pests and diseases, and are sold in nearly every shade of the rainbow, with various forms and bloomtimes.

More than 65,000 varieties of daylilies have been bred since the early 1900s, when only yellow, orange and rusty reds were available. Modern hybrids offer a wide range of heights, a broader spectrum of colors and patterns, more robust flowers of varying sizes, and higher bud counts.

Daylily Resources

Many daylily recipes can be found on the internet, for example through Recycled Gardens, a division of POPPA Inc., at poppainc.org/pdfs/Daylily_recipes.pdf.

The American Hemerocallis Society publishes *The Daylily Journal*, a quarterly magazine featuring new cultivars, how-to articles on care, feeding, hybridizing and more. Visit their website at daylilies.org for membership details and access to a wealth of resources, including retailers and a list of the society's Daylily Display Gardens.

GrowDesignerPlants.com is another good information source, and daylilies also ship well by mail order.

John Bruce is an editor, writer and gardener.

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Recessed Lighting is More Efficient Than Ever

Recessed lights have been popular for decades, and remain the lighting fixture of choice for overhead lighting. As with any other home product, some recessed lights are more energy efficient than others. Efficient options can use 80 percent less electricity than inefficient versions which provide the same amount of light output with practically the same appearance.

Recessed light fixtures are unique because they penetrate and are mounted in the ceiling of a room. From an energy conservation standpoint, this is not an issue when installed in the first floor ceiling of a two-story house. However, if fixtures are installed in the second-story ceiling or the first floor ceiling of a one-story house, a hole is created between a conditioned living area and the open, unconditioned attic area.

Without an efficient design and proper installation, a recessed lighting fixture can allow conditioned air to leak out of the house. This is particularly true during winter, when the warmer air inside a home naturally rises to the ceiling. This not only wastes energy, but may create a chilly draft in rooms where cold outdoor air leaks indoors.

There are new energy-efficient recessed light designs that meet Energy Star standards. All of these fixtures use fluorescent light sources instead of inefficient incandescent bulbs. This fact alone reduces electricity consumption by 75 percent. The inside surface of the new fixtures is also more reflective, which reduces the amount of light trapped and dissipated inside a fixture before ever getting into a room.

For fixtures in ceilings where indoor air leakage seems likely, select a new airtight design with a sealed canister. When installed properly, this unit forms an airtight seal between the ceiling and the fixture. These types of fixtures are most often used in ceilings beneath an unconditioned attic, but they are also effective for unheated basement ceilings,



Juno angular recessed lights fit a sloped ceiling for downlighting that highlights a home's architectural design features.

minimizing drafts between floors.

As a safety note, if you already have recessed lighting in your home, do not go into the attic and wrap them with insulation to try to save energy. Wrapping older fixtures with insulation can hold in too much heat, particularly when standard incandescent bulbs are used. These fixtures are not designed to be airtight and the excess heat buildup can become an electrical or fire hazard.

If recessed lighting will be installed in a ceiling under an insulated attic floor, select an insulation contact-rated (IC) design. These are designed to touch insulation without overheating the fixture. When installing new non-IC fixtures, the insulation must be kept away from the canister. This insula-

tion void increases heat loss from the room below even if the installation is airtight.

When installing recessed light fixtures yourself, first determine your lighting goals. To brighten an entire room, downlighting can be quite effective. In a normal-height ceiling, a 4-foot spacing provides an even lighting pattern at floor level. Typical 6-inch-diameter fluorescent fixed vertical fixtures work well for downlighting. If you'd like to dim some of the lights, consider installing a second circuit and dimmer switch with incandescent bulbs in those fixtures.

For task lighting, a single fixed vertical unit directly over the work area seems effective. Wall-wash recessed lighting can be used to accent a painting or other wall hangings. An eyeball recessed light is best for this application because the light path can be adjusted. For a sloped cathedral ceiling, install an angular recessed fixture—preferably an IC model, since it will contact with ceiling insulation.

It's not difficult to install recessed lighting fixtures by yourself. For an attractive, efficient installation, cut the mounting holes the exact size recommended by the manufacturer.

This makes it much easier to create a good seal between the fixture and the ceiling. Before drilling and cutting holes, make sure your fixture layout clears all the floor joists.

The following companies offer efficient recessed fixtures: Capri Lighting, 800-234-1890, caprilighting.com; Cooper Lighting, 770-486-4800, cooperlighting.com; Juno Lighting, 847-827-9880, junolighting.com; Lightolier, 800-215-1068, lightolier.com; and Sea Gull Lighting, 800-347-5483, seagulllighting.com.

Have a question? Send inquiries to: James Dulley, Michigan Country Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit dulley.com.

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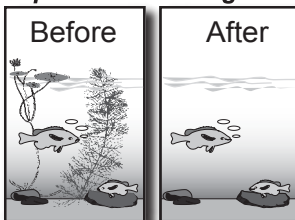


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Harvest Wind Farm Produces More Electricity in Second Year

Wolverine Power Cooperative saw an increase in the amount of electricity generated by the Harvest Wind Farm in 2009. Harvest produced 132,940 megawatt hours (MWh) of electricity in 2009, up from 122,254 MWh in 2008. Wolverine is buying the total output of the wind farm under a 20-year agreement with John Deere Wind Energy, the project owner/operator.

"We're seeing a capacity factor of just below 30 percent for Harvest for 2009, which is typical for wind farms in Michigan," said Pete Chase, vice president of power supply and energy control. "A capacity factor of 30 percent means Harvest is generating at full capacity, on average, 30 percent of the time."

Harvest's 32 turbines operate when wind speeds in Michigan's Thumb area, where the farm is located, are 8 mph or more. When all turbines are running, the farm is capable of meeting the electricity needs of about 15,000 Michigan homes.

The wind farm spans 3,200 acres between Elkton and Pigeon on property leased from landowners in two townships. Wolverine supplies the electricity it purchases from Harvest to its six members:

- Cherryland Electric Cooperative
- Great Lakes Energy
- HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative
- Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op
- Spartan Renewable Energy
- Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative

Harvest began producing power in December 2007. Wolverine was named Wind Cooperative of the Year in 2008 by the U.S. Department of Energy, in partnership with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, for its vision and leadership in



developing the wind farm with John Deere Wind Energy.

"We partnered with John Deere because we believe wind power and other forms of renewable energy have a definite role in the

creation of more balanced and cleaner electric generation in our state," Chase said.

Harvest is Michigan's first commercial-scale wind farm and represents an investment of \$94 million.

Wolverine Exploring Wind Farm, Biomass Near Rogers City

In addition to partnering with John Deere Wind Energy on the Harvest Wind Farm, Wolverine Power Cooperative is evaluating the feasibility of a wind farm east of Rogers City, MI, as part of its Wolverine Clean Energy Venture (WCEV). An analysis of weather data collected at the proposed wind farm site is nearing completion.

Wolverine is also working with Michigan Technological University and Michigan State University to grow biomass crops to fuel its power plant development near Rogers City. The proposed plant, a solid fuel facility capable of generating 600 megawatts, is the other component of the WCEV. At this time, the cooperative is awaiting a decision from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment on the air permit for the power plant.

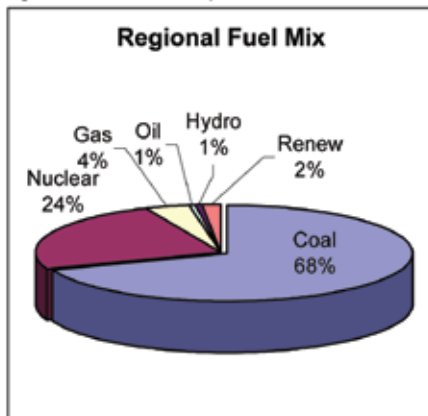
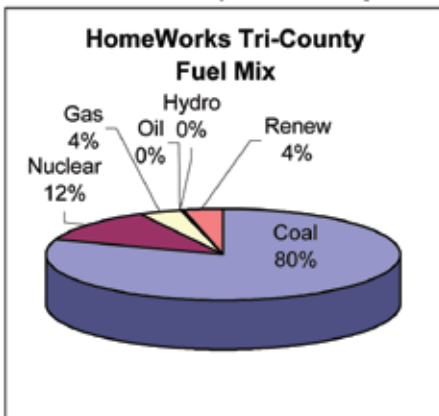


HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

The environmental characteristics of your electricity as required by Public Act 141 of 2000.

Comparison of the Fuel Sources Used to Generate Electricity

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric vs. regional average for the 12-month period ended 12/31/2009



Fuel Sources	Percentage of fuel types used to produce HomeWorks Tri-County electricity.	Percentage of fuel type used to produce electricity in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin (12/31/08).
Coal	80.4	69.4
Nuclear	11.7	23.9
Gas	4	4
Oil	0.1	0.5
Hydroelectric	0.2	0.6
Total Renewable Fuels	3.6	1.6
Biomass	0	0
Biofuel	0	0
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1	0.6
Wind	3.3	0.3
Wood	0.1	0.7
Solar	0	0

Note: (1) Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas, and (2) Inclusion of long-term renewable (wind) purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix.

Airborne Emissions and High-Level Nuclear Waste Comparison

HomeWorks Tri-County vs. regional average for the 12-month period ended 12/31/2009.

Type of emission/waste	HomeWorks Tri-County average lbs/MWh	A regional average of all generation in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin (12/31/08).
Sulfur Dioxide	6.6	10.4
Carbon Dioxide	1,814	2,049
Oxides of Nitrogen	2.3	3.1
High-level nuclear waste	0.0083	0.0083

Note: HomeWorks Tri-County purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Cooperative, which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

Notice of Member Access to Rules and Rates

This notice of *Access to Rules and Rates* is published pursuant to the rules established by the Michigan Public Service Commission as set forth in the Consumer Standards and Billing Practices for Electric and Gas Residential Service, R460-2146.

As a member-customer (member) of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative (cooperative), please be advised that the following information is available to you from the cooperative, at homeworks.org anytime or upon request:

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- Go to ebill.homeworks.org to review your monthly HomeWorks energy bills and account history.

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■ Come see our friendly faces in person at either office, Blanchard or Portland. There is a night deposit box at either office after regular office hours and on weekends.

■ You can always pay by mail. Just send your payment to HomeWorks at Dept. 1005, P.O. Box 30516, Lansing MI 48909-8016.

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People Fund Helps With Food, Housing

Your spare change can help families through rough times (see p. 4 story), and make community services available to more people, through Tri-County Electric People Fund grants.

Jan. 20, the People Fund board made five grants totaling \$8,425:

- ♦ \$1,500 to Mt. Hope St. Johns Food Pantry, for food pantry expenses.
- ♦ \$2,500 to Housing Services for Eaton County in Charlotte, to help with housing expenses.
- ♦ \$1,505 to Briggs Public Library, St. Johns, to purchase computer stations.
- ♦ \$420 to a Montcalm County family to pay for a monthly health monitoring service.
- ♦ \$2,500 to another Montcalm County family to help with medical expenses.

Be sure to read the People Fund's 2009 annual report, provided as a cover wrap to this issue of *Michigan Country Lines*, for more about how the People Fund helped our neighbors in mid-Michigan again this year. There's also a mail-in postcard you can use to make sure you're part of the People Fund through rounding up your monthly energy bill.

How To Apply For a People Fund Grant

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form, grant guidelines, and other helpful information. You'll also find information and application forms on our website at homeworks.org.

How You Can Help Support the People Fund

Tri-County customers can opt in or out of the voluntary Operation Round Up program any time. Just enclose a note with your bill payment, or call us at 800-562-8232.

Learn More About 2009 People Fund Grants

Read the annual report supplied with this issue of *Country Lines* to learn how your contributions were granted back to help your neighbors in mid-Michigan.

Co-op Connections Helps You Save

HomeWorks members can take advantage of a valuable pharmacy discount by using the Co-op Connections® card at participating local pharmacies. These pharmacy discounts are not insurance and not intended as a substitute for insurance, but they *can* save you money!

To find a pharmacy that participates, you can log-on to locateproviders.com and use code 22203 as the group number under the "Groups" log-in section. Next, enter your zip code and the recommended mile radius of 100 to search for providers near you.

You can also call the program's member services department at 800-800-7616, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. EST, and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., to find local pharmacies.

To search by a specific prescription drug and zip code, log-on to rxpricequotes.com. Do not call your local pharmacy for price quotes, as they may change from day to day.

Once you're at the pharmacy, present your Co-op Connections card, along with your prescriptions, to the pharmacist. You'll pay the best price available.

If you experience any difficulties in using the pharmacy program, please call, or ask the pharmacist to call, the program's member services department at 800-800-7616, during their regular business hours, listed above.

Mail Order Prescriptions Are Another Benefit

If you use maintenance medications (a long-term prescription), you can save an average of 10 percent below AARP's prices and beat the lowest retail pharmacy price by \$5 on prescriptions priced over \$10, with no postage or handling fees.

To use the mail-order service, call HealthTrans at 877-839-8121, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. For price quotes, initial orders, and reorders, give the service representative the name, strength and quantity of your medication(s).

HomeWorks Tri-County members have used

Co-op Connections®

Card pharmacy benefits

1,507 times,
saving \$32,427.69

Price quotes are valid one time only and expire after 30 days. Be sure to call and ask for a price quote before each order, as prices may change.

You'll be asked to fill out and mail in a patient profile form with your prescription and payment.

Orders are shipped within 48 hours of receipt of payment via First Class Mail or UPS Ground, based on the package contents. Special shipping arrangements can be made for an additional fee. Check with a service representative for more information.

Orders are automatically filled using generic medication, unless prescription specifies "brand necessary" or the member requests "brand." HealthTrans performs a seven-point quality assurance test before mailing your prescriptions to you.



If your local business would like to offer HomeWorks members a discount on your products or services, call Jayne Graham at 517-647-1252 or email jayne@homeworks.org.

Energy Expo Set For April 24

Some people think because we're the "electric company," our goal is to sell as much energy as we can.

But we're an electric cooperative, and that means we are operated for the benefit of you, our members. The people who buy our electricity are also the owners of the cooperative, and that makes our mission a little different.

In fact, our mission is "to provide our members and customers with energy, comfort and communications solutions that will enhance their quality of life."

To us, that means we want you to use energy in a way that gives you the best value, not just use energy for the sake of using it.

That's why we've promoted heat pump technology for many years. Heat pumps, whether they're geothermal or air-to-air, give you more heating and cooling for your energy dollar, year-round. They're clean and quiet, and in many cases will qualify you for a discounted electric rate for your heating and cooling.

We've worked with top-notch area contractors over the years to bring you information and choices, whether you're retrofitting your current house or building a new one, whether

you have a pond, or need a ground loop system.

We also sell two different brands of water heaters. Both the Freedom® and Marathon® models are energy efficient, and we're making sure we stock the models that are Energy Star® compliant, so you'll get more hot water for less cost.

To give you an opportunity to learn more about these products, we're planning an Energy Expo for Saturday, April 24.

We've got some details to put together yet, but we hope to have several area heat pump installers there so you can ask questions one-on-one, with no obligation. We will also have a few short presentations on general subjects like how a heat pump works, or what kind of Energy Optimization programs you can take advantage of.

Watch this space in next month's *Michigan Country Lines* for more details. We hope to see you on April 24.



Nick Rusnell
Energy Advisor

**Count on
HomeWorks
for energy
ideas.**

You Have The Power To Make A Difference

Every day you buy electricity when you flip a light switch, plug in an appliance, or turn on your TV. You have the power to make better choices that will save energy and money. Whether you upgrade to an Energy Star®-qualified water heater or clothes dryer, install a programmable thermostat, or just wrap your water pipes with insulation, you can earn a cash-back rebate from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

If you're not already using compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs), you can get \$1 back for each of the first five you install with a HomeWorks rebate. Watch your monthly energy bill for more information and an easy-to-use rebate form.

Check out these other HomeWorks Energy Optimization programs at homeworks.org/SaveEnergy

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CASH BACK
WATER HEATER
PROGRAM

\$300

CASH BACK
HVAC BLOWER
PROGRAM

\$20

CASH BACK
THERMOSTAT
PROGRAM

\$4

CASH BACK
PIPE INSULATION
PROGRAM

\$30

CASH BACK
OLD APPLIANCE
PROGRAM

\$50

CASH BACK
CLOTHES WASHER
PROGRAM



Energy
Optimization

SAVE THE DATE

If you've got questions about geothermal heating & cooling, or about other home energy efficiency measures, be sure to mark your calendar for Saturday, April 24. HomeWorks Tri-County will host area contractors and other energy experts from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., giving you the opportunity to get all the answers you need.

There's no fee for HomeWorks Tri-County members to attend, so mark the date and start gathering your questions. Watch next month's *Michigan Country Lines* for the location and other details!

**HOME
ENERGY**
April 24, 2010



Tri-County Electric
Cooperative



Are You Tweeting Yet?

My son Jon took the train up from Chicago a few weekends ago. We ate out, cooked together, saw the movie *Crazy Heart*, watched the Olympics and a Spartan basketball game on TV, and capped the weekend with a terrific concert by Wilco. We try to pack things in because the weekends we spend together, whether we go to Chicago or he comes to Mason, are precious to us.

We're glad Jon's close and we can see him once in awhile. It's tougher to get to Austin, TX, for short visits to see Dan, so those longer visits take on the trappings of a vacation.

We're not unlike other parents whose children have left the state in the midst of the worst economy for young people that any of us remember. If Michigan's economy were in better shape, it's possible our kids wouldn't be leaving to find the work they want. But our parents went through the same thing. There weren't many opportunities in the western U.P. in the 1960s. When the mines closed, the jobs disappeared, so most of our classmates scattered across the country. That's happening now all over the state and we're poorer for it. It's nice to travel to visit our kids, but it's not an ideal arrangement.

So, like most parents, we compensate by staying in touch by phone, email and even texting. It's the way of the modern family.

Now the question is whether we should use any of the new social networking tools, like Facebook and Twitter, or Skype for video chatting.

Twitter allows people who need a constant communications fix to stay connected to just about anyone who is also connected to Twitter. Your message can be seen by a few people or thousands, even millions. In just three years, Twitter has almost 400 million users.

So, what you do is sign up for a Twitter account and find people who you want to stay connected to, like your kids, doctor,

bowling team, best friends, people who like the same rock band, or the President. Then you wait for all those important messages to start rolling in, like "I just saw a great movie," or "the dog wants to go outside," or "I bought a green bowling ball," or "the Senate's got to pass health care." Anything you can say in 140 characters. And everyone you Tweet can Tweet you back. Then you can direct your Tweets to Facebook or any of several other sites that will collect those Tweets for you. See how easy it is?

Those of you who grew up with personal handwritten letters and a phone tethered by wire to a wall outlet are probably shaking your head. This is mostly an age thing.

Like other parents our age, Barb and I live in the middle, between the stone age and the space age.

Our older relatives don't email or tweet or Facebook or text. So we talk on the phone. (Barbara also likes to write notes, cards and even full-blown letters. Me, not so much. Frankly, my handwriting has gotten so bad I can't decipher it myself. I should sign up for a remedial handwriting class. Remember the Palmer Method? But, probably because of computers and texting, kids are having trouble with cursive writing, too. I hear teachers are now printing notes to students because they can't read a cursive message.)

Phones still work great. You can dial a number and talk. A five-minute conversation can cover a lot of ground.

Remember when a long-distance phone call was a major event, simply because it was so infrequent? College students, members of the military and long-moved family would call every few months and talk long enough to let the folks at home know they were alive. Back then, a long distance call meant someone might be in trouble. The recipient's first comment might be, "What's wrong?" Now if loved ones don't

regularly call or send a message of some kind—like daily—we think they're in trouble.

Computers, cell phones and smart phones have given us multiple ways to stay in touch. I am grateful for all this new technology. But you can have too much of a good thing.

I recall a meeting last year where a woman, hyped on social media, kept three panels open on her laptop, one each for email, Twitter and Facebook discussions—and she also could talk on her cell phone—while she was following an in-person presentation.

Now we are being told that *Country Lines* magazine should have a Facebook page, so we can encourage friends of the magazine to engage with us online. Is this a good idea? Other magazines have a page. I've seen their fan count—as high as a few hundred—compared to a circulation of several hundred thousand.

But, maybe we'll try it anyway. It's another way to stay in touch with all those folks who have reluctantly left the state in search of work. If you'd like to become a fan, just search for *Michigan Country Lines* in Facebook.

That Twitter thing will have to wait. We need to hear our kids' voices.



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 lives in Mason with Barbara. Their boys, Dan and Jon, have flown the coop.

Email Mike at mbuda@countrylines.com



Flatten your stomach without gut-wrenching exercises.



Clogged arteries could virtually disappear when you add this to your life once a day.



What you should never eat when taking prescription drugs.

"HONEY Can Heal WHAT?"



(By Frank K. Wood)

If you want to learn how to use gentle folk remedies to unleash your body's healing power instead of resorting to dangerous prescription drugs or risky surgery, you need *The Folk Remedy Encyclopedia: Olive Oil, Vinegar, Honey and 1,001 Other Home Remedies*, an informative new book just released to the public by FC&A Medical Publishing® in Peachtree City, Georgia.

You'll be amazed by how many inexpensive, easy, natural cures you can find all around you — in your pantry, garden, garage, and grocery store.

The authors provide many health tips with full explanations.

- ▶ A natural way to rejuvenate your veins and arteries that will have you feeling brand new.
- ▶ That "spare tire" is doing more than just slowing you down ... it raises your risk of many life-threatening illnesses! Burn it off without gut-wrenching sit-ups or grueling fitness regimens.
- ▶ One super vitamin protects your vision, fights infections, keeps skin, bones, and cells healthy, plus fights heart disease, cancer, memory loss, arthritis, liver disease, Parkinson's, and complications of diabetes. Are you getting 100%?
- ▶ Miracle healing seed lowers blood pressure, reduces risk of stroke, plus fights arthritis, heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stomach disorders, and even mental problems!
- ▶ Prevent high blood pressure, colon cancer, senility, and fragile bones. All with one — yes, one — inexpensive daily supplement that keeps you healthy and strong.
- ▶ Nature's wonder food for your body — once praised by Gandhi. Fights heart disease, high blood pressure, stroke, arthritis, type 2 diabetes, and even protects against breast, colon, and prostate cancer!
- ▶ Clogged arteries virtually disappear when

you add this to your life every day.

- ▶ Here's the secret to naturally block out calories from foods. Just add this when you eat — and watch the weight melt away.
- ▶ It protects your heart, lowers your cholesterol, fights cancer, and much more! Researchers take a good look at this "miracle" mineral.
- ▶ Kills cancer cells dead in their tracks! Duke University study proves this tiny seed packs a powerful punch!
- ▶ Just 2 glasses a day of (you won't believe this — but it's true!) lowers your cholesterol — and prevents heart attacks too!
- ▶ Trick your body into losing weight! Melts off fat safely, naturally, and best yet, easily.
- ▶ Give your brain the nutrients it needs for a better memory. Don't let your brain deteriorate when you can so easily power it up.
- ▶ Discover an antioxidant that's so powerful for your eyes that it fights night blindness, cloudy corneas, and can even successfully treat an eye disorder that leads to blindness!
- ▶ What you should never eat when taking this prescription drug. This is critical news you won't hear from your doctor or pharmacist!
- ▶ You can improve your eyesight without glasses, without contact lenses, surgery, drugs, or medicine of any kind.
- ▶ Tomato juice for high cholesterol? Yes, tomato juice can keep your cholesterol from oxidizing and attaching to your artery walls. A new study shows how much you need to drink each day.
- ▶ Rebuild your joints and relieve arthritis pain. Natural ways to help your body repair itself.
- ▶ Unclog your arteries with purple grape juice! Studies show that purple grapes can reduce blood clotting by 91%.
- ▶ The amazing healing power of honey. It's not just a sweetener anymore. Use it to cure these 4 common problems.
- ▶ Frustrated because you can't lose weight? Forget dieting! Just "fluff" up your foods

instead and watch the pounds drop off. Pennsylvania State University study.

- ▶ Flex your mental muscle and send Alzheimer's packing. Simple mental activities that build your brainpower and ward off the ravages of Alzheimer's.
- ▶ Open up blood vessels narrowed due to heart disease. Relax with this beverage and decrease your chances of suffering a debilitating stroke.
- ▶ Nature's insulin controls blood sugar and type 2 diabetes. What is it? Cinnamon! It helps your fat cells recognize and respond to insulin better.
- ▶ High blood pressure? You know you have to limit alcohol and salt, but did you also know certain oranges can cause your blood pressure medication to build to toxic levels? Read about some other hidden dangers and some unusual methods of defense.
- ▶ Keep your arteries clean with this simple bean!

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