

A SERVICE OF THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

September/October 2010

# MICHIGAN Country Lines



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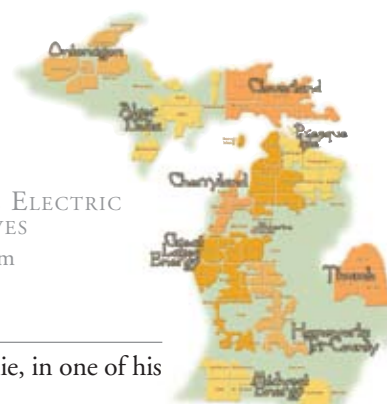
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MICHIGAN'S ELECTRIC  
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### C O V E R \*

Great Lakes Energy member Pat Broderick of Manistee and his wife, Ellie, in one of his classic Mustangs. *Photo – Linda Kotzian*





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# THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## What's In My Electric Bill?

**T**he electric bill you receive in the mail every month is basically payment for the comfort and conveniences that electricity provided for you the previous month. Okay, but what actually makes up the costs on your bill? Let's take a deeper look.

First, not everyone's bill will be the same. At Thumb Electric (TEC), like other electric utilities, there are several different rate classes. For example, farm and home, industrial, general service, or commercial rate, just to name a few. When you first receive service from us, you are assigned a rate to meet your particular needs. So, in a nutshell, we have different rates to meet the different needs of our members. Every few years, we also perform a cost-of-service study that reviews all the rate classes. This ensures that each rate class is paying their fair share for the electricity received.

Based on today's philosophy of rate case cost analysis, our members are paying their fair share, which is a good thing. I am sure you don't want to subsidize the factory down the road, and vice versa. More on this a bit later, so now let's talk about what makes up your electric bill.

### ENERGY CHARGE

A basic line item on your bill, this amount represents your actual energy consumption, which is measured in kilowatt-hours (kWh). The electric meter on your home or business records how many kilowatt hours are used each month, and you are billed accordingly. The more you use, the higher your energy charge will be; the less you use, the lower your energy charge. Later this year, the energy charge for most rates will increase by approximately 2 percent.

### MONTHLY SERVICE CHARGE

This is a fixed fee that will be the same every month whether you use 1 kWh or 5,000 kWh. It is used to help offset some of the fixed costs that TEC incurs just to

make power available to you. Whether you use any electricity or not, there is still a cost for the wire, poles, transformers, meters and other equipment that enables you to use electricity at your convenience. Currently, this charge varies from \$8 to \$16, depending on your rate class.

Later this year, the service charge will increase by \$1 for most rate classes. Remember that cost-of-service study that we mentioned earlier? The costs to cover these fixed costs, however, are actually around \$35! At this time, the Michigan Public Service Commission, which regulates the rates a utility can charge, is reluctant to allow an electric utility to recover its true fixed costs in the service charge.

Do you also have a phone or cable bill you pay? How do you pay for these ser-



**Dallas Braun**  
General Manager

**Later this year, the monthly energy charge for most rate classes will increase by approximately 2 percent, and the service charge by \$1.**

vices? Typically, most of the cost to have these services is in a fixed monthly rate in the \$40 range, and then if you actually make a phone call, there is an additional charge. As we move forward, I believe the trend will be toward a higher monthly service charge to reflect true fixed costs and an accompanying lower energy cost. This method would allow everyone to foot their share of costs more evenly and remove some of the subsidization by energy users that is in the current structure.

### FUEL & POWER ADJ

This item is a fuel and power adjustment. In the electric industry, the cost to purchase power fluctuates on an hourly basis.

The energy charge you are billed for (mentioned earlier) captures some of the cost to produce and deliver electricity, but doesn't account for it all. Electricity use or demand is constantly changing.

## My Electric Bill, *continued*

When demand is low, like in the middle of the night, the most efficient and lowest-cost generators are producing energy. As demand picks up throughout the day, especially on hot, humid days, more and more high-cost generators start producing power. Fuel costs to run these generators fluctuate, depending on the type of fuel used. Transmission costs to deliver energy from the generating facility to your home or business also increase with demand.

In short, all these factors make it nearly impossible to figure an exact month-to-month cost, let alone hour-to-hour. So, the fuel and power adjustment charge is a tool used to match the *actual* cost to produce and deliver energy. This amount may show up as a positive number on your bill (amount you owe), or as a negative number (credit), depending on the actual costs.

## ENERGY OPTIMIZATION SURCHARGE

This is a new line item, as of last year, that represents your share to support state-mandated energy efficiency programs.

However, if you participate in the Energy Optimization (EO) programs that are offered through your cooperative, then your monthly dollar savings will exceed your cost to support them. This is good, but you have to participate in order to reap the savings benefit. So, if you are not participating, please call the TEC office and find out how you can save some money.

## RPS SURCHARGE

This is another new line item you can expect to appear in 2012. This is your share of the cost to support a state-mandated Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). This law requires all Michigan utilities to buy or produce 10 percent of all power from a new renewable source from within the state by 2015. In 2012, utilities must start ramping up to meet the 10 percent by 2015.

Although it is not as interesting as the Tigers game or as good as cold lemonade on the front porch, I hope you learned a little more about your electric bill, and what is happening with Michigan utilities. Changes are coming, and it is our goal at Thumb Electric Cooperative to keep everyone "in the know."

## Important Seasonal Member Information

As required by the Michigan Public Service Commission, Thumb Electric Co-op recently did a meter reading for seasonal members who receive electric service under Rate Class II and have a \$13 monthly service charge.

Billing for most seasonal member consumption during the past 12 months will occur on Oct. 1.

Each month, nearly 200 seasonal members report their meter readings and the dates they are read. They make monthly payments for electricity consumed, in addition to the monthly service charge, to avoid receiving the annual bill.

Seasonal members are encouraged to read their meter and include the reading date whenever possible, to reduce the potential for electrical problems and billing concerns.

Seasonal members are also encouraged to sign up for our automatic bill payment plan. Rather than writing a monthly check, the money is withdrawn from your checking or savings account automatically on the day the bill is due.

# THE RESULTS ARE ENLIGHTENING!



## See the difference saving money can make.

The business pictured above has participated in an energy efficiency program that is currently available to commercial and industrial companies throughout Michigan. Through the Commercial & Industrial Prescriptive Program, significant rebate incentives are available to offset overall project costs for an immediate payback on your investment, and to help lower your long-term energy bill.



For more details on this program please visit  
**michigan-energy.org** or call **877-296-4319**



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## Heat Pump Water Heaters Don't Work Here?

I read the article on the heat pump water heaters, and also happened to see many commercials for them during the recent Olympics for those units made by GE.

All the warm and fuzzy green stuff about saving energy needs to be taken cautiously. These units would rarely make sense in Michigan.

Heat pumps simply move heat from one place to another. In the case of the units in question, it is from where the unit is located to the water in the tank. If you put such a unit in "conditioned space," such as a basement, you will be taking the heat you generate with other means, and putting it into the water. The "waste" from the unit is cool air, which might not be desirable in your basement. If you put the unit in your garage, you must

protect it from freezing. If you put it outdoors, well—I've seen a lot of water heaters outdoors. In California, not in Michigan! Our climate is not conducive for outdoor water heaters.

Heat pump efficiency is rated by COP—coefficient of performance—and this is a moving target based upon the ambient temperature. If you are heating, the efficiency goes up as the ambient temperature goes up. In summer, an outdoor mounted heat pump water heater in Michigan would be very efficient... but that would be from May-September? In colder seasons, and as your ambient temperature drops to the 30s, they can't make enough heat.

Sorry, the units are not for Michigan climates. They don't work well where WE put our water heaters, and people buying them would just be using heat they made with other sources to pump into their water.

*Michael Salemi, Novi, via email*

*Even with the things you mention taken into consideration, heat pump water heaters produce hot*

## Consumer Energy Forums Set

The state agency responsible for regulating electric and natural gas utilities, as well as certain services of telephone, cable and motor carriers, is hosting a series of forums for consumers in September and October.

At the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) forums, you can meet with an MPSC commissioner, learn about electric and natural gas rates, discuss telephone service updates, and voice utility-related concerns.

Local utility service providers and assistance organizations will be present.

To make the most of this opportunity, customers are asked to bring utility bills, shut-off notices, tax information and proof of any other assistance.

The forums:

**Southfield**, Sept. 20, 1 p.m.  
Southfield Senior Center,

McDonnell Towers Dining Room, 24350 Civic Center Dr.

**Sault Ste. Marie**, Sept. 30, 6 p.m., Lake Superior State University Cisler Center, West Superior Room, 650 W. Easterday Ave.

**Traverse City**, Oct. 6, 6 p.m.  
Grand Traverse Civic Center, 1213 W. Civic Center Drive

**Kalamazoo**, Oct. 12, 6 p.m.  
Kalamazoo Valley Community College, M-TEC Amphitheater, 7107 Elm Valley Drive

**Greenville**, Oct. 21, 6 p.m.  
Greenville Community Center, 900 E. Kent Road

**Detroit**, Oct. 25, 4 p.m.  
Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, 2080 W. Grand Boulevard

**Flint**, Oct. 28, 6 p.m., Univ. of Michigan-Flint, Northbank Center Ballroom, 432 N. Saginaw Street

*water at half the cost of other means. Performance declines in Michigan winters, but ambient heat is adequate for the HP water heater to operate, and the unit does double duty in summer by dehumidifying. —ed.*

a foreign name, remember most U.S. cars are not made in the USA. My car company has factories in the southern tier of states where most of their cars sold in America are made. This fact seems to me that they are American-made.

*Mike Obrigewitsch, via email*

## MYSTERY PHOTO

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

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

The **July** contest winner is **Julie Traynor of Marion**, who correctly identified the old cabin on 20-Mile Road, east of Tustin in Osceola County.



July photo

Do you know where this is?



## Car Wars

I am retired and live in northern Michigan. Many retirees have less income now than when we were working and have to get the most for our dollar. I recently traded a 6-year-old, "foreign-made" car for a 2010 "foreign-made" model. The old car never had any serious problems, got me 38-41 mpg and had 150,000 miles. The new car is getting the same mileage and cost \$14,200, including tax, title and prep. Show me a car made in America, not Mexico or Canada, that gets that gas mileage, and for that price, and I would consider buying it. Until then I will spend my money where it gets me the best deal.

Before we damn all cars with

## Recycled Paper

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



about other peoples' spending habits. For example, lecturing about buying automobiles that are made in the U.S. but owned by a foreign company from Japan, China or Korea.

Honda builds automobiles in the U.S. and generates millions of dollars in tax revenue for local communities, as well as thousands of jobs for Americans. Those Americans earn good incomes that they, in most cases, spend in the U.S. economy, and they produce a great product.

Would you complain if China wanted to open a new manufacturing plant in Michigan and employ 2, 4 or 6,000 Michigan citizens? And how many foreign-made products can you count in an American-made automobile?

[If] you want everyone else to support your job, how about giving up your summer home to a homeless family who doesn't have a job in northern Michigan? How about jobs, anyway we can get them, foreign or otherwise?

*H.R. Lee, Howard City*

## Hydroelectric Questions

I received your [July] *Michigan Country Lines* and was happy to see you do a feature on Sault Ste. Marie, my home for 10 wonderful years.

[I have questions about] Cloverland Electric's hydroelectric power plant. I hope you can help; they have been nagging at me for years since I took a tour of the power plant many years ago. At the time I toured the power plant only four of the turbines were being used, even though there are over 100 (if my memory serves

A record 2,700 visitors attended Cloverland Electric's hydro plant open house June 25.



me) turbines in the powerhouse. Why doesn't Cloverland use all the turbines and sell the power and lower our electric bills?

I understand the renewable supply from Lake Superior is precisely the out-flow of the St. Marys River, (and power canal), whose 124-year average flow rate (from 1860 to 1984) is 75,500 cubic feet per second. Obviously, one of the benefits derived from this huge volume of water is the generation of hydroelectricity.

Hydroelectric power is cleaner than coal or nuclear power, but it seems none of the "powers that be" even bring up hydroelectricity.

Many of my friends and family in the Sault area wonder the same—in this time of massive amounts of oil polluting our oceans, nuclear power plants leaking spent fuel, and coal polluting our air and land—why isn't Cloverland Electric using the whole power plant, and if it needs repairs to its turbines why not repair or rebuild the turbines instead of building new power plants using billions of taxpayer dollars?

As a former member of Cloverland and a 26-year member of Great Lakes Energy—your service and people are fantastic!

*Priscilla Massie*

Cloverland replies: *The amount of water available for hydro power is decided by the International Joint Commission (IJC). Their job is to regulate all the Great Lakes levels to keep them balanced. Once the IJC decides how much water to release from Lake Superior, they divide this amount 50/50 between the U.S. and Canada. The 50 percent share of U.S. water is then divided between U.S. Hydro and Cloverland Hydro.*

*This surplus water is what is available after meeting the needs of all the government facilities within the Soo Locks complex, and water needed to supply the rapids area west of the lock systems. Each month, Cloverland receives an allocation of water. This allocation has been well below average in recent years, due to the low level of Lake Superior. Cloverland uses the water allocation in the most efficient manner possible to keep their members' electric bills lower. They do this by ramping up plant production during the peak-load hours of the day. This helps offset the amount of higher cost power that would have to be purchased from other sources to meet higher demand. Conversely, plant production is ramped down during "off peak" hours when demand is lower.*

*The Cloverland plant has 74 turbines. It seems highly unusual that only four would be*

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running. A possible explanation: There are four "buses" in the plant, with each bus having about 18 to 19 turbines. There may only be one bus running during off-peak hours, or possibly even on peak, depending on the time of year and demand levels.

During low-water years, when the allocation of water to the U.S. side of the river is too low to run both U.S. Hydro and Cloverland Hydro 24/7, all units would not run.

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*If 9-1-1 is called, Thumb Electric will be charged about \$1,200 by the local fire department to respond.*

Please call Thumb Electric at 1-800-327-0166 or 989-658-8571 if you see arcing or burning wires that aren't a threat to the public or buildings. Arcing wires could be caused by trees or loose electrical connections.

Call Thumb Electric Cooperative and not 9-1-1 if there is no danger to buildings or the public. *Thank you!*

## Thumb Electric Cooperative Energy Efficiency Loan Program



Thumb Electric Cooperative has expanded its Energy Efficiency Loan Program for existing homes. Qualified members of existing homes may borrow up to \$6,000 at 7 percent interest, payable over seven years for the following home improvements—water heaters and central heating and air conditioning systems that reduce energy consumption, including:

- Gas and fuel oil furnaces/boilers
- Geothermal systems
- Air-source heat pumps
- Electric furnaces and boilers
- Wall, ceiling and floor insulation
- Ventilation fans
- Clock thermostats
- Duct, pipe, water heater insulation
- Thermal windows, storm windows, insulated doors and storm doors



**A geothermal unit uses renewable energy from the earth and can heat, cool and also heat the water in your home.**



Call **1-800-327-0166** or **989-658-8571** to schedule a home energy analysis. We will show you how much money you can save. The loan portfolio is limited to \$225,000 per calendar year.



# 30 Years!

I am writing this the day before my wife and I travel home to Illinois to attend our 30th high school reunion. Fortunately, we graduated together, so there will be no awkward moments for the spouse attending the other's reunion. We have not attended a class reunion since our 20th, so it will be interesting to see our "old" high school classmates and reminisce. I did see pictures from our 20th, and am glad I still have a full head of hair.

I am also writing this column the week before the retirement of Michael Buda, executive editor of *Michigan Country Lines* magazine and external affairs director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA). Mike retired Aug. 31 after 30 years of service on behalf of MECA, the electric cooperatives, and more importantly you, our readers and co-op members.

Mike started at MECA in 1980, to promote energy efficiency and education for the members. However, his true calling was found when he launched *Michigan Country Lines* magazine. The highly-regarded consumer publication you are reading today began as a tabloid newspaper, and under his creativity and leadership evolved into today's color publication with a circulation of over 270,000. Mike's work as editor and *Michigan Country Lines* magazine have been recognized on three separate occasions (Haggard Memorial Journalism Award) as the best co-op consumer publication in the nation by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

But for MECA and the co-ops, Mike does so much more. He directed MECA's marketing and economic development efforts, and over the years has worked closely with all the co-ops on member communications and marketing. He also leads MECA's efforts in working with various outside groups, such as the "Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm," a group of utility representatives and government staff work-

ing to assist low-income customers with utility service. Mike started and continues to run the Michigan Geothermal Energy Association, created to educate consumers and promote the use of geothermal heating and cooling systems. Mike has played a major role on behalf of the Michigan Centennial Farm Association, created to recognize farms with continual family ownership for over 100 years. Mike created the MECA and *Michigan Country Lines* websites, putting the award-winning publication online. He has played a valuable role as part of MECA's government relations team, working to educate legislators about the electric co-ops, and protecting consumers. On more than a few occasions, Mike's Yooper roots (Ironwood native) have proven extremely beneficial in working with our legislators and Congressmen from the U.P.

Although Mike has retired from MECA's daily operations, he won't go too far because he plans to con-

tinue writing his "Ramblings" column (p. 30)—about Michigan people, places and things—and freelance stories for the magazine. As you recall, the "last page" was occupied for many years by a "Right

At Home" column written by former *Lansing State Journal* columnist, Jim Hough. Mike also plans to enjoy travel with his wife, Barbara, who retired this year after 33 years as a Mason home-ec teacher.

Even with Mike's retirement, we assure you the magazine will continue. Gail Knudtson, who has 18 years with MECA and the magazine, will become executive editor, and our staff will work together to maintain the standards Mike established as we continue educating consumers about using electricity

wisely and the benefits of co-op ownership. I know we have big shoes to fill, but Mike has taught us well over these 30 years.

30 years! It sure goes by fast.



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



Mike and Barb Buda with sons Dan (left) and Jon.

# Wind and Basic Math

Get the facts before buying into wind power. **Bob Gibson**

**T**he spinning fan of a windmill pumping water from a well was once a common sight across rural America. When electric co-ops began lighting up the countryside in the late 1930s, farmers and rural residents began replacing the windmills' mechanical energy with electricity from power lines.

Today's wind turbines are distant cousins to those windmills. The essential difference is that today's systems—generally a three-blade rotor connected to a generator and tail and mounted on a tower—convert wind energy into electricity, rather than simply turning gears to lift water. The most popular residential-scale wind turbines can generate between 2 and 10 kilowatts of power—about one-third to one-half of what a typical home needs—but actual output can vary drastically. The wind turbine in Midwest Energy Cooperative's renewable energy park, for example, produces only 4.3 percent of the maximum energy possible.

The Cassopolis co-op developed their Danny Young Memorial Renewable Energy Park to help consumers understand what to really expect, in terms of up-front costs and expected generation (teammidwest.com).

In recent years, small wind turbines have become more reliable and, to a degree, prices have decreased as more are built. More dealers are also offering a better choice of products and more experienced installers are available to erect the units.

So, is installing a wind turbine at your home a good idea? That depends on two basic factors: your motivation and your location.

If your motivation is to save money by spending less on electricity or to make money by expecting the small wind turbine to earn you a profit by selling power back to your local electric co-op—proceed with care. Even though federal tax credits and utility incentives and rebates have helped lower the cost for some, in most parts of the country it remains difficult to generate electricity at a price equal to or lower than what you'll obtain from your electric co-op. While the wind that blows through your property may be free, the equipment needed to capture it is



This small wind turbine stands about 46 feet tall, compared to the 300 feet reached by utility-scale wind turbines.

*Source: Central Rural Electric Cooperative/Oklahoma*

not, and wind doesn't blow all the time.

Electric utilities are required by law to buy your excess power, but in many areas they are only required to pay the same price they

pay any other power generator—known in utility jargon as “avoided cost.” But even where your bill might be credited for wind power at retail rates, called “net metering,”





# Questions You Should Ask

*Interested in buying a wind turbine? Make sure to ask these questions first:*

the sale of those kilowatts won't make you rich. Paying back the cost of installing a wind turbine, which runs from several thousand dollars to \$50,000, can take several years to several decades.

You also need to consider your location. In more densely settled areas, local zoning laws may prohibit construction of a wind turbine. But in any location, you must know just how much wind you have, day after day. In these calculations, average wind speed becomes critical.

While the federal government has mapped out average wind speeds across the country ([nrel.gov/wind](http://nrel.gov/wind)), each specific site is unique, affected by factors such as elevation and obstruction from buildings and trees. Better wind speeds are found higher off the ground, and there can be a huge difference between speeds at the 300-foot height of a large-scale wind turbine and the 80- to 100-feet of a small one.

Before installing a small wind turbine, do your homework. This includes checking with your electric co-op well in advance of making a purchase. Being aware of your co-op's policies and procedures on interconnecting a wind system to the grid will avoid headaches, disappointments and unexpected costs.

The grid is a complex, interrelated machine and some costs may need to be incurred for studies or upgrades to preserve safety, reliability, or quality of power. Your co-op may be able to help you estimate what those costs might be in advance and help you find additional opportunities for energy efficiency that could further reduce your electric bills.

To find out what incentives may be available in your state, go to the Database of State Incentives for Renewables and Efficiency at [dsireusa.org](http://dsireusa.org).

More and more people are attracted to the idea of generating their own electric power through the use of "backyard" renewable energy systems. Small wind turbines are one of the most popular choices, but careful study and assistance from your co-op can make sure you know the facts before buying one.

*Bob Gibson manages research in renewable energy and energy efficiency for the Cooperative Research Network, an arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

## **1. How reliable is the rated energy output? How do you calculate the output? What wind speeds do you use?**

Experts advise ignoring the "peak output" and "power curves" provided by vendors. Rather, look for the monthly or annual energy output (in kilowatt-hours) for the turbine, estimated for the average wind speed you expect or measured at your site.

## **2. Is the inverter UL® listed?**

If the inverter (required to convert direct current power from the turbine to alternating current power of the grid) is not Underwriters Laboratories, Inc. (UL), listed, find another vendor. Most electric co-ops require an inverter to carry a UL 1741 certification for interconnection with the grid.

## **3. What is the estimated total installed cost? What do the turbine and tower cost each? How much will installation and interconnection cost? How much maintenance will be required, and cost?**

Budget for labor expenses as well as the cost of equipment rental, concrete and rebar, electrical components, shipping, and sales tax. It adds up fast.

Avoid giving a large deposit if you can. This may help protect you if the vendor doesn't honor what's promised or service/equipment isn't up to par.

Work with the turbine manufacturer to find reputable installers and pay close attention to the process. If something doesn't seem right, don't accept it just because the vendor says so.

Visit [teammidwest.com](http://teammidwest.com) to see the economic analysis used for Midwest Energy's renewable energy park (shows all costs and compares them against the generation).

## **4. How long is the warranty and what does it cover—parts? Labor? Can it be extended? If so, what will it cost?**

Warranties (longer = better) range from one to five years. Make sure it covers labor and parts. Ask the owners of wind systems bought from the same vendor about performance and reliability before deciding on an extended warranty, if available. If you live in a lightning-prone area, strongly consider

the lightning protection option.

## **5. How long has the vendor been in business? How many turbines have they sold? Are their turbines certified? Can they perform maintenance, or is there another licensed repair technician in the area?**

Look for vendors that have been in business for at least five years or have acquired the product line of another vendor. Also research the number and types of wind turbines the vendor has installed (don't just take their word for it) and ask for the names of at least two people who have installed a similar model. Check with the references and ask them if there was anything they wish they had known before investing in a turbine.

The Small Wind Certification Council has been conducting a certification process in the U.S. ([smallwindcertification.org](http://smallwindcertification.org)). Small turbines can be certified using the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) standard, IEC 61400-2, for testing wind turbine power performance. This standard is increasingly used by U.S. manufacturers.

## **6. What are your electric co-op's interconnection policies? What will the co-op pay for any excess energy you may produce?**

Electric co-ops must provide all of their members with safe, reliable, affordable electric service. Most co-ops have interconnection policies designed to permit interested members to own their own generation without impacting the quality or cost-of-service received by other members. Knowing what these policies are before buying a wind turbine will help you better evaluate the full costs and benefits of the investment.

## **7. What local zoning laws, electrical codes, homeowners' association requirements or other local laws and standards apply to wind turbines?**

Some local zoning ordinances and homeowners' association policies restrict the height of wind turbines or require that they be set back a specified distance from the property line. These restrictions may keep you from taking advantage of the best wind resources or require extra time to get a waiver or exception. Local electrical or building codes may also impose additional time or expense.



### Looking For Farm Sites

The Michigan Film Office is looking for farming locations in the Thumb and southeast regions of the state for a potential movie production by acclaimed director Ramin Bahrani. They're looking for large corn/soy farms, elevators with corn, dirt roads and boarded-up small towns with maybe only a Post Office and diner left. For more about filming in Michigan, go to [michiganfilmoffice.org](http://michiganfilmoffice.org).

Crescent Bakery owner Bob Korten (R), Frankfort, poses with actor Michael Cera and the donuts made famous in the film "Youth in Revolt."

# Hollywood Discovers Mi

Directors are increasingly looking to rural Michigan for their movies. **Kim Schneider**

Shirts that read "Tom's Feed Mill" become Hollywood's latest fashion statement, thank Lisa VanDenTop. Passing out free caps to the cast and crew of the feature film "Touchback" was just one ploy to attract the attention of Kurt Russell and company as they filmed recently outside her Coopersville shop.

It worked. That, or the large sign she painted that read, "Welcome Kurt Russell and Brian Presley."

"I can't tell you anything he said when I met him," VanDenTop said, "but I know he talked. I don't remember, because it was Kurt Russell!"

Russell and co-stars like former Detroit Lions running back Barry Sanders were charming locals and taking the local football field with a huge cast of local football players, teachers, coaches and marching band members for the movie "Touchback" about the same time Hope College theater major Ben Hertel was getting his big screen shot a bit further up the Lake Michigan coast.

Playing a young Nazi, he shot the lead character in the film "Return to the Hiding Place"—Dutch resistance fighter Piet Hartog (aka L.A.-based actor Craig Robert Young)—as the sun sank over a scenic Manistee beach.

Meanwhile, across the state, nearly 200 potential extras were flocking to a casting call in Bad Axe. Some pulled up in a four-

wheel drive pick-up or brought along a dog, as requested by producers, hoping for a shot at joining Sean Penn in this month's filming of "This Must Be the Place."

If anyone doubts that rural Michigan is the place for filmmaking these days, they need only glance at onlocationvacations.com, a traveler's guide to what's filming where. Or they can take a gander at the Michigan Film Office's current list of features in production.

Nineteen films have been made in Michigan so far this year, 14 currently in production, thanks largely to a generous state film incentive. Since the program began in April

2008, 106 films have been completed, according to the Michigan Film Office.

The largest filming concentration remains in the Detroit metropolitan area, home to a large film crew base and other practical perks. But as trained crews pop up elsewhere, directors are increasingly looking rural to film farmland scenes, find lake-front settings, even make horror movies, says Ken Droz, the film office communications director.

Hugh Jackman shot scenes for his movie "Real Steel" on a Livingston County farm recently, Droz said, and at the Ingham County Courthouse in Mason. Ben Stiller's been in Grand Rapids this summer, shooting

Filming a scene for "Fitful" inside the car ferry S.S. City of Milwaukee in Manistee.







Makeup artist Dan Phillips of St. Clair Shores uses makeup to “beat up” L.A.-based actor Craig Robert Young before a culminating scene in “Return to the Hiding Place,” being filmed on a Manistee beach. The *City of Milwaukee*, a car ferry docked in Manistee, was the inspiration for the movie “Fitful,” mostly filmed there. (Photo by Rich Brauer Productions)



# Michigan

“30 Minutes or Less” about a pizza delivery man abducted during a delivery and forced to rob a bank. Newly-released films like “Youth in Revolt” (Michael Cera and Justin Long) and “What If?” (Kevin Sorbo and Kristy Swanson) and the upcoming “A Year in Mooring” (Josh Lucas) were made entirely in rural northwest Michigan.

“We currently have well over 100 leads we’re working on, feature films looking at filming in our area,” says Rick Hert, head of the West Michigan Film Office. “It’s a very exciting time.”

Once discovered, locations can sell an area or even inspire a film. Filmmaker Rich Brauer says he wrote the script for the thriller “Fitful” around the S.S. City of Milwaukee, a historic car ferry docked in Manistee.

Similarly, director Lee Storey couldn’t have found a more perfect setting for her documentary “Smile ‘Til It Hurts: The Up With People Story,” than Mission Point Resort, where the group actually originated. The Dutch-influenced architecture of Holland, MI, also proved fortuitous for the directors of “Return to the Hiding Place,” a moving action film about some heroic Dutch resistance workers who saved an entire orphanage slated for genocide by the Nazis. A few scenes will be filmed in the Netherlands, but most were recently shot in Holland, Zeeland or Manistee, where 10 West Studios built intricate sets that included a replica made



## Popular Movie Sites

Michigan may not have Iowa’s “field of dreams,” New Zealand’s hobbit-happy scenery or Austrian hills alive with music, but it does have the Grand Hotel, perhaps the most intact film location in the world. The setting for the time-travel romance “Somewhere in Time” is also the state’s biggest movie location draw, particularly in mid-October when the annual “Somewhere in Time” weekend is held (Oct. 15-17 in 2010). Attendees can mingle with cast, crew and other fans in (optional) period dress over five-course dinners, champagne receptions and lectures on everything from cinematography to Victorian underpinnings ([grandhotel.com](http://grandhotel.com)).

Self-guided tours that follow the footsteps of Jimmy Stewart and Lee Remick, stars of the 1959 film “Anatomy of a Murder,” remain a popular draw to Marquette and are downloadable at [marquettecountry.org](http://marquettecountry.org).

A growing number of west Michigan locales are also showing up on the big screen, including the Lake Leelanau RV Park and Frankfort’s Crescent Bakery (see photo, opposite page), where various donuts “auditioned” for directors.

to exact dimensions of the original “hiding place.”

Dormitory lodging was an unexpected benefit of filming on a college campus for the creators of coming-of-age story “Cherry,” filmed at Kalamazoo College and Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo and released earlier this month.

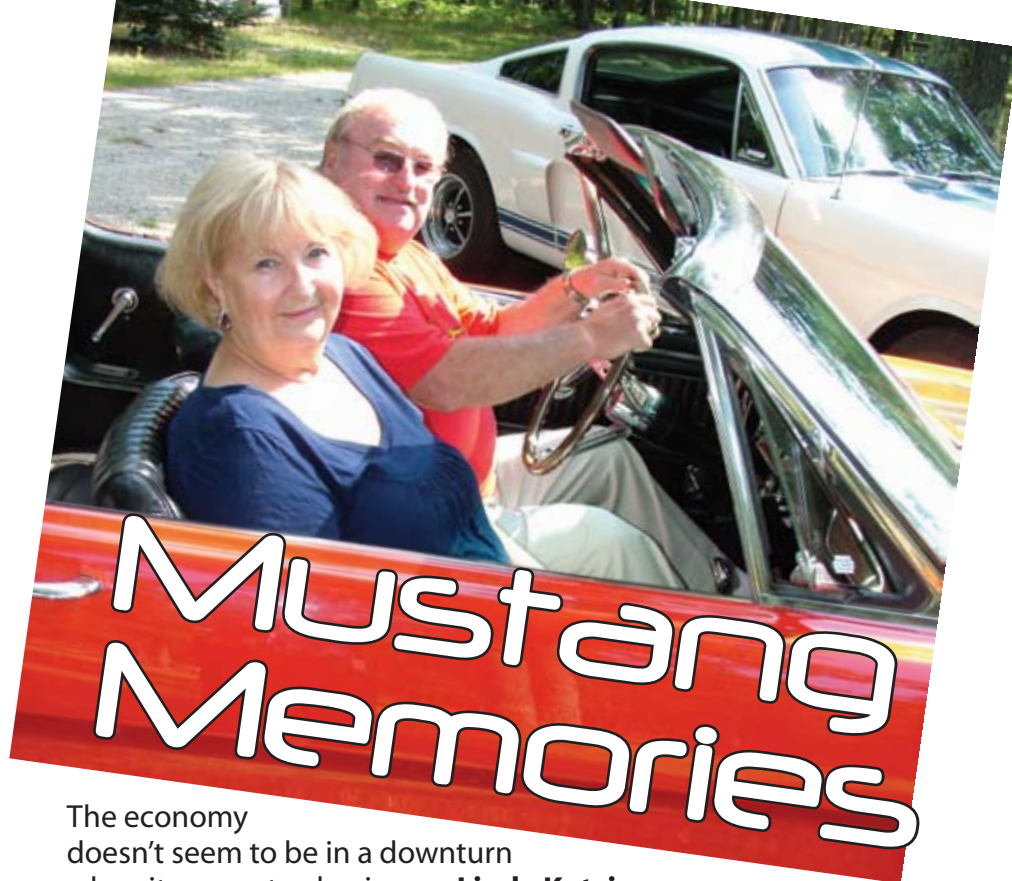
“We had bocce ball tournaments down halls, had a putt-putt course set up on one of the floors,” said producer Jeffrey Fine. “There’s even a shout-out in our credits giving special thanks to the Fox Hall mattresses. I was pretty happy to get back to my bed at

home, but that was the only part about Fox Hall I didn’t love.”

What made an even bigger impression was Midwestern kindness and generosity, a theme echoed over and over by various producers, filmmakers and cast.

“Cell reception was so bad with AT&T in Michigan that I’d be in rural Michigan and pull over to talk on my cell phone,” Fine says. “People would literally pull over to see if I was okay. We’d go to film somebody’s house, flip their lights upside down, and they’d bring us cookies. People were so excited that Hollywood was coming to town.”





The economy doesn't seem to be in a downturn when it comes to classic cars. **Linda Kotzian**

**C**lassic car collecting provides a boost to many a personal pocketbook. Some experts estimate that a classic car, properly restored and cared for, can appreciate in value an average of over 10 percent annually.

Great Lakes Energy Co-op member Pat Broderick, a classic car collector in Manistee, says that rather than speculating in stocks or a 401(k), auto collectors prefer investing in something they can see and touch.

Following in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Broderick hired into Ford Motor Company in Dearborn during 1961, and worked over 30 years in the sales and service division.

In 1966, he bought a brand new '66 red Ford Mustang fastback that he still owns. The car now has 39,000 actual miles.

Over the following years, he bought four more vintage Mustangs, including northwest Michigan's oldest model—a 1964-1/2 brown coupe known as "Plain Jane." He exhibited

it at Ford's world headquarters in Dearborn during their 100th anniversary in 2003.

"The cars are like his children," Broderick's wife Ellie explains. "I think it's great that he has this hobby and was fortunate enough to acquire such nice cars."

Smiling, she says Broderick occasionally lines up his cars in their yard to take pictures because he enjoys the memories each one brings him.

The couple's eight children and 18 grandchildren enjoy and encourage his hobby.

Broderick says that memories account for a lot classic car collecting's appeal. In general, classic cars are those 25 years or older. Gazing at cars from their younger days often causes a rush of memories for people who visit car shows. For younger fans, the responsibility of owning, restoring and caring for a classic car often involves family members and creates togetherness.

Classic car shows also boost local economies. Even small shows can draw thousands

of people. Large shows in big cities like Detroit and Chicago typically attract spectators in the hundreds of thousands.

Broderick says car collecting also fosters "cottage industry" businesses, such as shops that provide detailing or restoration work. Others stock parts or literature, such as owner and service manuals.

He feels retired baby boomers with time and money are likely behind the current interest in this hobby. "They recognize the investment potential of classic cars and enjoy the related memories," he explains.

Many car clubs sponsor local charitable groups, turning club shows and events into fundraisers and providing another economic boost. "Our car shows draw people (to a community)," Broderick adds. Meanwhile, car club members donate their time.

Broderick has been president of the Customs-n-Classics Car Club of Manistee for over eight years.

Manistee club members will next bring their cars to a show at the Port City Street Fair in Manistee on Sept. 11. In an average year, members take their cars to at least 10 shows, mostly in western Michigan.

Manistee club members are close-knit and passionate about their cars, and enjoy sharing car history with the public and act as resources to help each other find, restore and maintain their vehicles. "We all work together, get things done, and know each other like family," Broderick says.

Wives and significant others are active in the club, too. They manage event publicity and select suitable local charities to accept car show proceeds. Some enjoy working on restoring, upholstering or detailing cars.

Regular club social occasions include monthly luncheons, an annual steak fry, holiday parties, and a fall color tour.

For those who want to join the growing society of classic car collectors, Broderick has some advice: "Don't be afraid to ask other collectors for help, attend car shows and swap meets to learn, and expect to work hard."

Broderick and his fellow collectors get a lot of satisfaction and pride in preserving these great pieces of car history.

This herd of classic Mustangs looks ready to ride in Pat and Ellie Broderick's yard. Shown (L-R) are: "Drop-top"—a 1966 convertible; "Shelby"—a 1965 Shelby GT350; Pat's first Mustang, a 1966 fastback; "Plain Jane" (for its lack of flashy options)—a 1964-1/2 coupe; and "Grandpa's Car"—a 1965 coupe that was owned by Pat's father. The Ford toy pedal car shown was a promotional release (\$12.95) when the Mustang convertible came out in '65.







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# A Lifeline for Homeless Students

STEP program helps 800 teens in Grand Traverse area.

**H**eather, Mike and Haley are your typical Traverse City high school aged students for eight hours every day.

They look and talk like other teenagers. However, they are part of a group of over 800 Grand Traverse area students who have one thing in common: They are homeless.

But they aren't hopeless because of a program called Students in Transition Empowerment Program (STEP). It's been in operation more than 10 years and is supported through a grant with the Department of Education—plus local donations—and serves 22 public school districts in the five-county Grand Traverse area.

"We live in a beautiful area, a tourist area where there is wealth and many second homes," said Joan Abbott, who coordinates the STEP program. "What we tend to overlook are the children, the teens, the families who are in homeless situations. They can be invisible to us."

That's because, Abbott says, homeless families and teens who aren't living with a parent or legal guardian tend to find shelter with family friends, with relatives or share housing with a friend. There are those, however, who live in shelters, tents or even in cars.

But the Grand Traverse area isn't alone. According to the Michigan Department of Education, there are nearly 15,000 homeless students in the state. That number reflects a 92 percent increase in the last three years.

How do students wind up in these situations?

"For two out of three students, it's because of family conflict," said Abbott. "That can be because they are abandoned by their parents, abuse or neglect and/or family financial issues."

Some students don't seek out the STEP program, Abbott said. So she trains school secretaries, principals, counselors, social workers and teachers to look for tell-tale signs that students need help.

"We have to be very sensitive about approaching students," she said. "We look for signs like who suddenly stops buying lunch and starts sharing lunch with a friend. Or who

goes to get the free peanut butter lunch day after day. There are also behavioral issues we watch for."

When a student is approached, Abbott said it's in a very non-confrontational manner.

"We want the students to know that being homeless is a situation, it doesn't define who they are," she said. "In fact, when communicating with the students, we don't use the word homeless. We prefer to call them Students in Transition."

Abbott works closely with liaisons in each area school district to ensure that eligible students are identified and receive educational services, as required by federal law.

Once a student has been identified, the help begins. The STEP program ensures a free breakfast and lunch at school, academic assistance, clothing for school purposes, transportation to school via a school bus, BATA or gas card and referrals for everything from housing, counseling and job training.

"We believe that early identification is the key to successful intervention," said Abbott. "Our goal is to reduce dropout rates and provide a support system that leads to life skills training to the most at-risk teens."

A recent report indicates that 68 percent of all criminal activity in Michigan is committed by high school dropouts. Over 50 percent of the inmates in Michigan jails are high school dropouts, and it costs the state \$30,000 a year to house each one. Also, 40 percent of parents on public assistance in Michigan are also drop-outs.

So the money spent to fund the STEP program is well worth it, said Abbott. That money comes not only from the State Department of Education, but from private individuals and service organizations, such as Cherryland Cares.

The Cherryland Cares program donated



© iStockphoto.com/Jordan Chesbrough

\$5,000 to the STEP program at its June meeting. The Cares board is made up of five Cherryland Electric Cooperative members. They decide which 501 3c non-profit groups will receive monies from Cherryland's Operation Round-up. It's a fund that Cherryland members have funded by rounding up their electric bills to the nearest dollar.

Over the past six months, the Cares board has handed out more than \$42,000 in assistance to programs like STEP.

"Students experiencing homelessness have diverse needs," said Abbott. "But it starts with a safe and stable place to live."

The STEP program is making a difference in the lives of homeless teens, Abbott said. Many of the students in the program agree.

"I needed help to figure out how to manage time between school work, work and the things I love to do," said Heather. "In addition, I appreciated help in finding ways to return to my home and for conflict resolution to heal the pain."

There has been an 11 percent increase in family homelessness over the last three years, according to the Department of Education, with the largest increases occurring in rural areas.





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# Sandwiches

2 T. minced fresh basil  
2 t. balsamic vinegar  
salt and pepper to taste  
1/4 c. olive oil  
3 T. grated Parmesan cheese  
1/4 t. garlic powder

On four slices of bread, layer mozzarella cheese and tomatoes. Sprinkle with basil, vinegar, salt and pepper. Top with remaining bread slices. In a small bowl, combine oil, Parmesan cheese and garlic powder. Brush over outsides of each sandwich. Cook sandwiches, on a griddle, over medium heat until golden brown on both sides.

Shannon Powers, Middletown

Sandwiches became popular in America when bakeries first started making pre-sliced bread. Here are some favorite reader recipes. Find many more at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com).

## Nina's Cheesy Chicken Buns

1 15-oz. jar Cheese Whiz®  
1 10 3/4-oz. can cream of mushroom soup  
1/2 c. mayonnaise  
1/4 t. pepper  
4 c. chicken, cooked and cubed  
1 c. chopped celery  
1/4 c. chopped onion  
4 boiled eggs, chopped

Mix Cheese Whiz, soup, mayonnaise and pepper together. Stir in chicken, celery, onion and eggs. Simmer in a saucepan on stovetop or bake uncovered, at 350° for 20-30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve on your favorite type of bun. To serve more people, add more chicken, eggs, celery and onion, but do not increase the sauce.

Joyce Tamminga, Jenison

## Roast Beef Sandwich

1 sheet puff pastry, slightly thawed  
1 c. thinly sliced roast beef for sandwiches  
4 oz. cream cheese  
1 T. Parmesan cheese  
1/8 c. bleu cheese crumbles  
kosher salt  
freshly cracked pepper

Place puff pastry on a flat surface. Using a rolling pin, roll it out twice in each direction. Spray a 10x15-inch cookie sheet with non-stick spray. Place pastry on cookie sheet. Slice cream cheese lengthwise into 1/4-inch thick slices. You will be layering ingredients on half the puff pastry, leaving the other half to fold over filling layers. Working from left, lengthwise, place first cheese slice 1-inch from left edge of pastry. Lay remaining cheese slices end-to-end on pastry. Sprinkle Parmesan cheese on top of cream cheese. Layer roast

beef on top of cheeses. Sprinkle bleu cheese over roast beef. Fold unused half of pastry over filling layers and seal edges. Cut three slits on top of pastry. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Bake at 385° for 25 minutes until top is golden brown.

Danielle Cochran, Grayling

## Mushroom-Cucumber Veggie Sandwich

bread  
fresh mushrooms, sliced and sautéed  
Swiss cheese slices  
cucumbers, peeled and sliced  
radish sprouts  
Italian dressing

Place cheese and mushrooms on a slice of bread. Top with another slice and grill both sides like a grilled cheese sandwich. As soon as sandwich is golden brown, open it and add cucumbers, sprouts and a light sprinkling of dressing. Replace bread slice and enjoy.

Leslie McCrum, Howard City

## Greek Burgers

2 lbs. ground beef  
2 T. dried onion  
2 T. chopped fresh parsley  
2 t. garlic salt  
2 t. oregano  
pita bread  
sour cream  
sliced onion  
sliced cucumber

Combine ground beef, dried onion, parsley, garlic salt and oregano; shape into patties and refrigerate eight hours or overnight. Fry patties to desired doneness. Warm pita bread in oven or microwave. Cut bread in half. Place a burger in each pita half. Top with sour cream, and sliced onion and cucumber.

Cynthia Yingling, Wolverine

## Basil Tomato Grilled Cheese

8 slices Italian bread, cut 3/4-inch thick  
8 slices part-skim mozzarella  
2 lg. plum tomatoes, sliced

## Mock Monte Cristo Sandwich

2 c. crushed Rice Krispies® cereal  
3 eggs  
3/4 c. milk  
1/4 t. salt  
2 T. powdered sugar  
1/4 t. salt  
12 slices bread  
6 oz. thinly sliced cooked ham  
6 oz. thinly sliced cooked turkey  
6 oz. sliced cheese, any type  
powdered sugar

Place crushed cereal in a shallow dish. In another shallow dish, beat eggs slightly; add milk, powdered sugar and salt, blend well. Assemble sandwiches by layering six slices of bread with ham, turkey and cheese and topping each off with another slice of bread. Dip each sandwich into the egg mixture, then coat each side of each sandwich with the crushed cereal. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 425° for 10-15 minutes, until crisp and slightly browned. Sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.

Debbie Coombs, Wayland

## Bananawiches

12 T. peanut butter  
6 hot dog buns, split open  
6 bananas  
6 T. strawberry preserves

Spread 2 tablespoons peanut butter in each bun. Place a banana inside each bun. Spread 1 tablespoon preserves over each banana. Wrap in colored plastic until ready to serve.

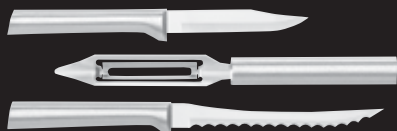
Bonnie Bourn, Constantine

More sandwich recipes on page 20 ►

► **Send in your recipes!** If published, you'll receive a free kitchen gadget. Send in: **STIR FRY recipes by Sept. 10**, and **your ALL-TIME FAVORITE previously published Country Lines recipe by Oct. 10** (no gadgets this category). Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email [jhsansen@countrylines.com](mailto:jhsansen@countrylines.com).



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Sandwich Recipes, continued from page 18

## Rolled Sandwiches

16 slices white or whole wheat bread  
16 slices bacon  
16 slices American cheese  
32 wood toothpicks

Lay one slice of cheese on each slice of bread. Roll them up and wrap with a slice of bacon. Secure each end with a toothpick and place on a lightly greased broiler pan top. Bake at 400° for 10-15 minutes, turning if necessary, until toasty brown and bacon is cooked. Serve with tomato soup or cut rolled sandwiches in half and serve as appetizers. Reheat any leftovers quickly in a microwave.

Pat Mooney, South Lyon

## Ham and Cheese Sticky Buns

1 pkg. dinner rolls  
1/2 lb. ham, sliced  
1 lb. cheese  
Sauce:  
1/2 c. butter  
1/3 c. brown sugar  
2 T. Worcestershire sauce  
2 T. mustard

Put a slice of ham and a slice of cheese on each bun. Place tops on buns and place them in a pan or cookie sheet close together. Combine butter, brown sugar, Worcestershire sauce and mustard in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and boil for 2 minutes. Pour sauce over buns; cover with foil and bake at 350° for 20 minutes.

Arlene Yoder, Scottville

## Pulled Pork Sandwiches with Jerry's BBQ Sauce

2 c. ketchup  
1/4 c. molasses  
1/2 c. light Karo® syrup  
1/2 t. liquid smoke  
1/4 c. minced onion  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
2 T. Worcestershire sauce  
1/2 t. paprika  
1 T. lemon juice  
1/2 t. salt  
dash of crushed red pepper  
dash cumin  
2 t. cornstarch

Roast a pork shoulder roast overnight in a slow cooker, remove and discard any fat, then shred pork back into the cooker. Blend sauce ingredients in a saucepan, heat and simmer for 5-10 minutes. Pour a generous amount of sauce over meat, heat 1-2 hours until the flavors meld. Serve on your favorite type of bun.

Jerry Martin, Sandusky



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No one, including the United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve, can guarantee a Gold Coin's future value will go up or down. © 2010 United States Rare Coin and Bullion Reserve

# The Old Switcheroo

Slide into energy savings by replacing an old, wide window with a sliding glass door.

**T**he overall efficiency of an airtight sliding glass door can be better than an insulated partial wall with a large inefficient window above it. My double horizontal slider window had double-pane glass, but the gap seal failed on one panel and all the weather-stripping was worn out, creating air leaks.

Although homes are constructed differently, you'll generally find a lot of reinforcing lumber framing around window openings. This is great for structural strength, but leads to inefficient thermal bridges and leaves little room for insulation. Once I removed the drywall, I found the sill plate had not been sealed properly and air was leaking in at the bottom of the wall. Seal as much of the sill as possible to the foundation.

I selected a super-high-efficiency sliding glass door made by Thermal Industries ([thermalindustries.com](http://thermalindustries.com)). It uses a steel-reinforced vinyl frame and triple-pane glass panels. Two of the glass panes have a low-emissivity coating and dense krypton inert gas between them. This provides a high insulation level and cuts down on noise. Always select a door which is Energy Star®-qualified and meets federal energy tax credit requirements.

Another option is double-swinging French patio doors. If you have clearance in your dining room for swinging doors, these are more efficient. Swinging doors close on compression weatherstripping, so they seal better over the long-term than a seal on sliding glass doors. Also, when you open both swinging doors, there is more open area for natural ventilation.

Thermal Industries sent along an expert to help me with my installation. Following are some of the tips he taught me.

Spend a few extra dollars and rent a large masonry saw to cut through the brick wall

also recesses the door, making it easier to install tight thermal drapes during winter. The Warm™ Company makes good thermal drapes for this application.

For the simplest installation, cut straight down from the existing window opening. You will have to build out the interior opening with studs to the same width as the brick, but this is still easier than resizing the entire opening. This will leave a gap between the new studs and the brick which must be insulated.

I used Great Stuff® low-expansion foam, but fiberglass is also effective. Once the foam was sprayed in and expanded, the insulation was covered with 3/4-inch pressure treated plywood. Thermal Industries had custom-sized the door to fit in this final opening size with about one-half inch overall clearance. Make sure to use shims for all screws and don't over-tighten them. The framing on a large door can easily be pulled out of balance during installation without supportive shims.

My door frame was placed over pressure-treated lumber trimmed with aluminum

flashing to raise it because I mistakenly cut the brick too low. Whether you're installing a door over lumber, brick, or a precast sill, liberally apply silicone caulk between the bottom of the door frame and the base to prevent leaks. There are weep vents in the door track to prevent water collection.

To see all the project photos and details, visit [dulley.com/newdoor](http://dulley.com/newdoor).

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



Photo - James Dulley

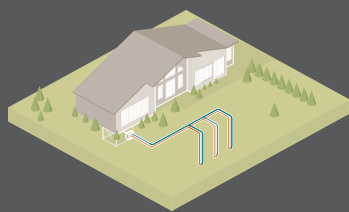
in one pass from the outdoors. I bought a cheap masonry blade for my circular saw. It cut through the brick, but I had to make both outdoor and indoor cuts to get through the full width of the wall. This led to an uneven cut and an unbelievable amount of dust indoors. Wear a good N95 breathing mask whenever you cut masonry.

With a brick veneer wall, the width of the brick and the total wall-framing thickness will be about twice the width of the sliding glass door frame. The installer recommended positioning the door out on the brick to create a more stable door base. Indoors, this



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# Life with a Tap-dancing Bird Dog

September brings us grouse and woodcock season. But this scribbler has been without a bird dog for a few years after my red Labrador passed. Up until now I have been like the character Blanche in the play, 'A Streetcar Named Desire.' She was 'dependent on the kindness of strangers,' and I'm currently dependent on 'kind friends with bird dogs.'

But I have begun to look around at bird dogs again and may no longer have to do my own flushing and retrieving.

Hunting dogs and their owners form a close bond. Not just any bond, but one that often uses glue from the "twilight zone."

As the calendar flips over to fall's upland hunting seasons, hunters—this writer included—begin getting their dogs back into the field and may take time to ponder this special bond and what comes with it (a lot).

Consider these things that come from sharing life with a dog named Socrates:

▲ Labrador retrievers snore. They can be first-class snorers, capable of producing loud, vibrating, decibel-rich rumbles guaranteed to wake the dog's human roommate from the deepest sleep.

▲ Dogs have audible dreams that are replete with body language that adds to the insomniac show observed by the now-very-awake human—rotating the rear legs as if running, and little yips and yelps that sound like anemic barking on the chase.

▲ Sleeping dogs also (pardon me if I am indelicate in relating this part) frequently 'pass wind,' assuring another reason that the night may be a long and wakeful one for the master.

Being awake brought other observations about Socrates' personality.

Retrievers are, by nature, inclined to



A trailbreak on a warm fall day near Grayling with my friend, Socrates.

pick up and carry things around in their mouths. Retrieving is their job. Normally, it would be birds brought down on the hunt. But with Socrates, the instinct to pick things up sometimes went beyond the primal "fetch it" stage.

Take mail, for instance. I get a lot of it, and it sometimes falls off the desk to the floor. Socrates considered that fair game, but paper retrieves were not always just fetched and dropped. He frequently sampled mail pieces as if testing for a new 'flavor du jour.' In his time, Socrates chewed enough letters and envelopes to wallpaper two counties and one-half of Traverse City.

Then there was the famous "head on the lap" routine. While sitting in the easy chair, I'd frequently find about 20 pounds of Labrador head resting on my lap and big brown eyes rolling up at me with warm expressions of canine love.

This lap load was often accompanied by a certain amount of drool that was deposited on my best pair of slacks.

This routine was then followed by what I call the "paw pull." If I hadn't yet gotten the hint of what he wanted, he would place a large paw over my arm and pull and tug until I finally got up to see if,

1) his water bowl was empty; 2) it's time for food (earlier and earlier as the years went on), or 3) he wanted to go out for a whiz.

By the way—is your dog right- or left-pawed? Being a southpaw myself, I found that I'd been matched with a Labrador leftie. Pure Kismet!

Finally, there is the "tap dance." It is said that dogs are color-blind. Not so. Socrates knew without hesitation what hunter blaze orange was, and to pull an orange cap, vest or other hunting coat out of the wardrobe set off the tap dance.

While he was no Fred Astaire, he could do a pretty good time-step with his two front paws as he gave an eager dance recital by the door.

If it was a certain 20-gauge shotgun that emerged from the gun safe, he'd put on a one-dog "Riverdance" performance.

However, such vagaries were easily forgiven once bird season opened. When a hit bird tumbled into the thick puckerbrush and brambles where human legs dare not venture, Socrates would soon emerge, bird in mouth and ready to be delivered to the master's hand.

When night came and we finally hit the sack back home, Socrates wasted little time resuming his nighttime snores. After a day of tramping the shintangle and puckerbrush in his wake, he had serious snoring competition from this old hound.

For 12 years of sharing the field, my home, my bedside carpet and a big share of my heart, memories of that big hunk of fox-red, paw-pulling, lap-drooling, tap-dancing hound continue to bring a sense of fun and affection.

A new bird dog is likely soon, but it will have a hard act to follow.



# Watch Out For Downed Power Lines

Power lines are easy to overlook—stringing high above your roof, along property lines and roadways, or near trees—but can pose serious hazards if they are forgotten.

Strong winds, storms and heavy ice can topple trees or shatter branches that pull down power lines and cause outages. Even if heavily damaged, lines can stay energized, with the potential to electrify trees and nearby objects.

Electric current caused by arcing or flash-overs can also easily injure or kill someone nearby. In winter, extra weight from snow and ice can bend or break branches and bring them close to power lines. In warm weather or when the lines are carrying heavy electrical loads, they can heat up and sag as much as 15 or 20 feet, dropping them toward vegetation. Be sure to pay attention to power lines by using these safety tips:

▶ Look for nearby power lines before you cut down or trim trees. If a tree falls into a power line, call Thumb Electric Cooperative at 989-658-8571 or 800-327-0166.

▶ Treat all power lines as energized. Never climb or touch a tree that has a limb caught in a power line. Evidence that the tree is “electrified” or dangerous may not be visible.

▶ Maintain required clearances between equipment and power lines.

▶ If a fire starts from a fallen line, stay clear and call the fire department and Thumb Electric Cooperative.

▶ Do not use water on or near a fallen power line.

You can help stop power line problems by notifying the co-op of trees or branches that may interfere with the lines or pose a serious threat.

When planting trees, shrubs or hedges, do not put them directly under or within 25 feet of power lines for short trees, and at least 40 feet away for medium-sized trees.

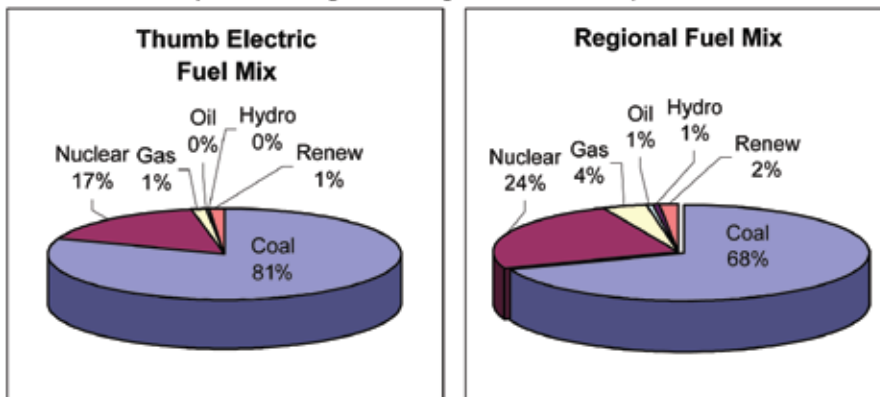
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### Comparison of the Fuel Sources Used to Generate Electricity

Thumb Electric Cooperative vs. regional average for the 12-month period ended 12/31/2009



Fuel Sources	Percentage of fuel types used to produce Thumb Electric Cooperative electricity.	Percentage of fuel type used to produce electricity in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin (Issued Nov. 2009)
Coal	80.5	69.4
Nuclear	16.5	23.9
Gas	1.4	4
Oil	0.2	0.5
Hydroelectric	0.1	0.6
Total Renewable Fuels	1.3	1.6
Biomass	0.64	0.02
Biofuel	0.01	0
Solid Waste Incineration	0.54	0.57
Wind	0.04	0.27
Wood	0.08	0.74
Solar	0	0

Note: (1) Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas.

### Airborne Emissions and High-Level Nuclear Waste Comparison

Thumb Electric Cooperative vs. regional average for the 12-month period ended 12/31/2009

Type of emission/waste	Thumb Electric average lbs/MWh	A regional average of all generation in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin
Sulfur Dioxide	8.6	10.37
Carbon Dioxide	2,084	2,049
Oxides of Nitrogen	2.3	3.08
High-level nuclear waste	0.0055	0.0083

Note: Purchased electricity accounted for virtually 100% of the electricity sold by Thumb Electric during the period. Because the actual fuel mix characteristics of all purchased electricity could not be discerned, the fuel mix data presented by Thumb Electric is the same data offered by DTE Energy, which supplies nearly all of Thumb's purchased power.

## Tree Trimming Service Offered

A tree trimming service is offered by Thumb Electric Cooperative to its members.

This program should not be confused with TEC's normal clearing program to remove trees and brush near overhead power lines. This is private tree work, where members pay the co-op to have trees pruned or cut on their property.

The program offers: ▶ pruning for safety and tree health; ▶ hazardous tree removal; ▶ stump grinding; and ▶ small-lot clearing and brush disposal.

“This program was created out of member demand,” explains Rick Ewald, TEC's assistant operations supervisor. “Residents often ask the crews who clear our rights-of-way if they can do additional trimming work. For a reasonable fee, we can now provide this service.”


The service is recommended for residents who want to eliminate a hazardous situation on their property where a tree or limb could fall on their home or cause injury.

For more details, contact Thumb Electric at 658-8571 (local calls) or 800-327-0166 (Michigan toll-free).

## BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

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

## FINANCIAL

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

## MISCELLANEOUS

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**LYMAN OUTBOARD BOAT** – 15-foot Merc 200 motor, cover, stored inside, excellent, MI registration, \$1,500. 260-758-3471.

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

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

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

**CHIPPER-SHREDDER** – 5.5 HP, new yard machines. \$375 or best. 248-229-1634.

**NEW AND USED WOOD BOILERS** – 888-825-0808. comfortableheating.com

## REAL ESTATE

**ISABELLA COUNTY, 163.8 ACRES** – Beautiful piece of hunting property, small older trailer, small barn, well, electric, pond, 20 acres tillable and the rest a mixture of cedar swamp and wooded, rolling, high ground, \$320,000. 616-209-2230.

**LAKEFRONT CABIN** – Near Big Star Lake, Baldwin. 110 feet lake frontage, paved road, one mile to Pere Marquette River, 1.4 acres, garage, bunkhouse, perfect condition, \$99,000. 616-669-8424.

**BREVOORT LAKE** – Upper Peninsula 3-bedroom, 1-bath cabin, stone fireplace, deck, storage shed, on 100x740-foot lot. Reduced, phone 906-293-8770.

**9 ACRES, MASON COUNTY** – Well, septic, power, \$30,000 or best offer. 231-750-4129.

**ATLANTA, ELK CAPITAL OF MICHIGAN** – 3-bedroom home, 4-car garage and workshop attached. Approximately 275x125 foot lot, \$21,000. Call 989-785-4110.

**ATLANTA, ELK CAPITAL OF MICHIGAN** – 3-bedroom, sunroom and balcony-top floor. 2-bedroom, 1 1/2 bath, walk-in guest quarters, 20x40 foot pole barn, 300-foot stream frontage, bridge crossing, inland lake within 30 feet with fishing dock, boat included. Call 989-785-4110.

**HUNTING CABIN AND 70 ACRES** – of prime hunting land near Hale, MI. 810-441-7623.

**MOBILE HOME, WEIDMAN** – Lakefront, year-round, furnished, \$35,000. 517-485-9335 or 989-644-3754.

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in Fife Lake, MI. 3-bedroom, 1-bath, garage and outbuildings, \$215,000. 231-879-3109.

**RIVERFRONT HOME, 7 ACRES** – With 1,100 feet N. Branch Lincoln River, pole barn, garage, shop. 6 miles north of Scottville, \$220,000. 231-757-2106.

**8 ACRES, 800 FEET** – North Branch Lincoln River, 6 miles north of Scottville, good building site, hunting, fishing, \$45,000. 231-757-2106.

**RECREATIONAL HAVEN** – Whitefish Bay. Spacious home, 28x40 ft. garage, 179 feet lakefront with 18 acres, can sub-divide. Skiing, hiking, ATV, snowmobile, trails, year-round secluded playground, \$399,000. 906-440-8276.

**FOR SALE, RIVERFRONT HOME** – Walkout, 3 bedrooms, 3 full baths, 1,700 sq. ft. up, 1,000 sq. ft. down. Two-car attached and 24x36 ft. matching building, 2.3 acres, huge windows with a 400-ft. view of the Sauble River. Half-way between Ludington and Manistee. Easy access cul-de-sac, privacy, dry, beautifully landscaped, \$229,900. 231-464-5004.

**\$64,900, 3-BEDROOM HOUSE** – On 18 acres. Best Kalkaska County deal for a totally remodeled stick-built with garage. Call Realtor Mike at 231-570-1111 or visit TCarea.com

**MARTINY LAKES, BARRYTON** – Canal front. Furnished mobil home and garage with access to several good fishing lakes, \$56,000. 517-626-2046.

**ONAWAY AREA LEASE** – S.E. Cheboygan County, 100 acres, Black River frontage. Lease now for turkey, bow and gun seasons. Pay taxes. 248-217-5217.

**THUNDER BAY RIVER, ALPENA MI** – 100 feet river frontage, 2-bedroom, 1-bath, newly remodeled home. 989-354-3650, leave message.

**WEIDMAN, MI, 40 ACRES** – Trails, wildlife, 3-bedroom, 2-bath house built 1994, covered porch, 2-car garage, geothermal heat, pole barn, workshop, \$299,000. David Zamarron, ERA Central Real Estate, 989-773-6000.

**BIG SAUBLE RIVERFRONT** – Home/retreat. Mason County, 3 large bedrooms, 2 baths, fireplace/heatilator in open plan living area, laundry, patio and covered porch on river-side, 2-car attached garage, workshop, many updates. 115 feet of trout stream frontage. Beaches, biking, hiking, golf, skiing, incredible salmon, trout, steelhead fishing nearby, \$199,750. 231-464-7228.



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# STATE OF MICHIGAN

## BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

### NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-16336

- Thumb Electric Cooperative is requesting approval from the Michigan Public Service Commission to reconcile its renewable energy plan for the period ended December 31, 2009.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, Ubyl, Michigan 48475-0157, (800) 327-0166 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Thumb Electric Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

**DATE/TIME:** September 28, 2010, at 10:00 a.m.

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

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

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

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

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the July 29, 2010 application of Thumb Electric Cooperative (Thumb) to reconcile its renewable energy plan costs associated with the plan approved in Case No. U-15821, for the period ended December 31, 2009. Thumb's application states that its Renewable Energy Plan included no request for a renewable energy surcharge, no surcharge was approved, and none was charged to Thumb's customers in 2009. Thumb's application states that there are no collections or expenditures to reconcile.

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

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by September 21, 2010. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Thumb's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, Dykema, Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

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

A copy of Thumb's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: [michigan.gov/mpscdockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscdockets), and at the office of Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, Ubyl, MI. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 241-6180.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6h et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

August 18, 2010



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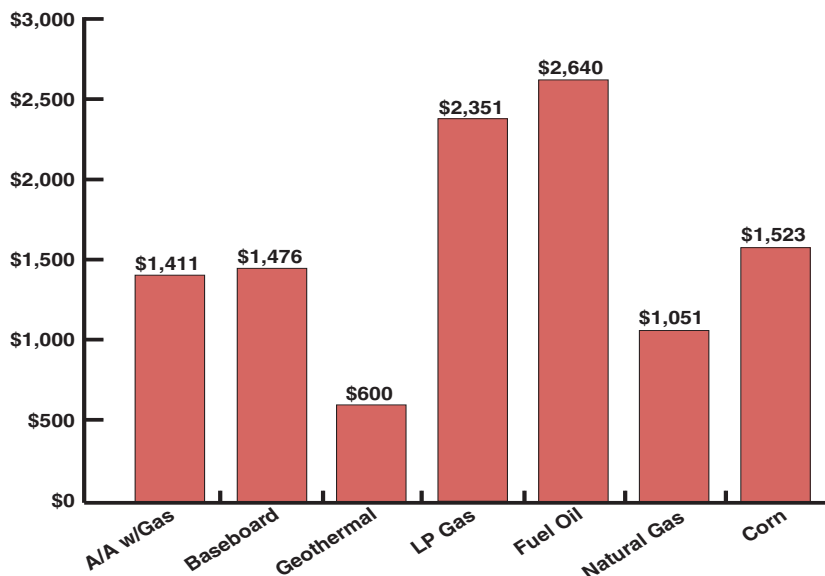
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# Leftovers

I'm cleaning out my office. Retirement is just two days away. There's 30 years worth of 'leftovers' here that I never had the good sense to toss.

Most of it will end up in the trash. Dozens of folders filled with agendas, notes and reports that will never be read again and probably didn't need to be saved at all. I've just realized that most of these files end in the mid '90s, when we started using computers and email to move documents around. It was supposed to be a paperless revolution, but we still make paper copies of important things. Knowing that an original is still on the computer, though, we usually throw out the copy, which just adds to our pile of paper trash.

Some of these leftovers are interesting.

A bookcase is filled with books and notebooks about energy conservation, remnants of the early '80s, when, once again, we were going to 'get off of foreign oil.'

A camera bag holds a couple of Canon camera bodies and several lenses, which no one here remembers how to use. Everything is digital now, and so much easier.

Boxes of slides, photos and black-and-white contact sheets fill drawers and shelves. We took dozens of photos to make sure we got a few useable ones. A co-op director, worried we were spending too much money on photography, once asked why we didn't publish *all* the photos we took.

There's also a gadget for viewing those slides. It's bigger than a laptop computer.

One cupboard contains stacks of 3 1/2-inch computer floppy disks and ZIP disks. (ZIP disks once cost \$25 a pop, no wonder it's hard to throw them out.) We don't have equipment that will read them anymore.

There are rubber-banded bundles of business cards collected over decades from people I haven't seen or heard from in years, from businesses no longer in existence. All the 'keepers' have long since been transferred to a computer address book.

There's a folder of old job performance evaluations. I don't even want to look. They were a painful exercise for both sides.

There are notes from Ray Kuhl, who

(thankfully) hired me in 1980 and fathered this magazine, although not without complications: There are forms dated 1980 from co-op managers who said they wouldn't subscribe to *Country Lines* because it was an unnecessary expense. So we started with six out of 13 co-ops; within a year, all had subscribed for their members.

There's a folder with columns and ideas from Harold 'Doc' McCaughrin, one of the sharpest directors the co-ops ever had. He died in February at age 99.

If there ever was a role model for retirement, it was Doc. He managed to create a whole new life after he retired as a dentist and moved to northern Michigan. He read every day for three hours, learning new things and staying informed about the energy industry. He became a director for Great Lakes Energy Co-op at 78 and served until 90. His questions were always the best and most informed.

My father is another model. Frank's body is 93, but his mind is 25. He still watches the news and Charlie Rose, reads the newspaper every day, helps my mother, does the laundry, and cooks. He combats the indignity of failing strength with his own quiet dignity and acceptance. When he retired at 61 after years of tough, physical outdoor labor on the Soo Line Railroad in Upper Michigan and northern Wisconsin, he didn't just sit back with a beer and watch the sunsets. He reinvented himself as a carpenter, rebuilding, with my mother, an abandoned, run-down farmhouse on Pump Station Road north of Ironwood. It became his job, something to do every day.

"What are you going to do?" friends ask when we tell them we are "retiring."

"We don't know yet," we say, realizing that sounds pretty lame, like the kid who answers 'nothin' when his mother asks him what he's doing. Obviously, we'll be doing something. We just haven't decided exactly what.

Retirement is not a simple thing. One day you're working, the next you're not. We feel fortunate to have had careers we enjoyed—Barbara teaching, me publishing

this magazine and working with and for the best businesses in the state: the co-ops, and co-workers we enjoyed spending time with (you'd better like them, you spend more waking time with them than at home). We knew it was coming, but we never really thought about the days after retirement. Oh sure, we say, we want to travel, see new places, do new things, meet new people, visit family and friends. And we will, but the structure of the days after that is up in the air.

We've had structure for 40 years. The daily, weekly and yearly schedules were fairly predictable and those schedules propped us up. Daily events changed, but our lives had a pattern; we knew what was coming, what was expected of us.

Now, we're free to do what we want, when we want. That's exciting and intimidating at the same time. And we're mindful that not everyone is as fortunate as we are. The bad economy has ruined retirement for many.

We've watched others go through this. Some chuck everything at once—the job, the house, the spouse—and move on. Others are more measured, making elaborate plans for golf and fishing and second homes in the sunny south.

I asked my dad for advice on retiring. "Just take it as it comes," he said.

So the formula might go like this: Stay physically active and mentally engaged, watch Charlie Rose—and have a beer and watch the sunsets.

Thanks for joining us. It's been fun.



*Mike Buda, the founding editor of Country Lines, will continue to write this column and help out on the magazine as he tries to figure out the rest of his life.*

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





We go this way to school.

That way to work. One way home.

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

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

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

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is waiting for us just around the corner.

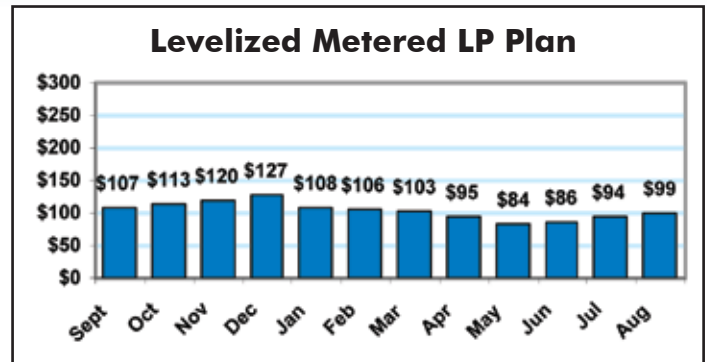
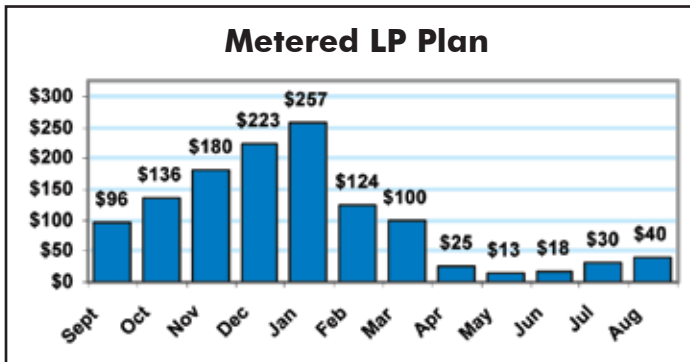
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