

A Service of **Great Lakes Energy**

July/August 2011

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES



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Lansing 10**

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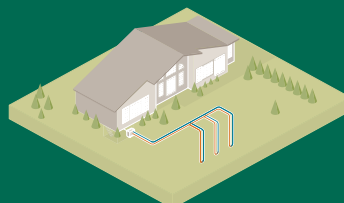
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climatemaster.com

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*Not in all editions

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On the Cover

A young Lansing Lugnuts baseball fan meets the team's mascot, Big Lug.

Photo – Brendan Dwyer/Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau



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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Exercise Your Membership Right

This issue of *Michigan Country Lines* contains a mail-in ballot that allows you to fill the three openings on the Great

Lakes Energy Cooperative Board of Directors.

Your right to vote gives you the unique ability to elect representatives whose decisions will be guided by a responsibility to act on your behalf as a member. That is just one of the fundamental differences between Great Lakes Energy and other energy providers. You're more than a customer to us; you're a member who shares in the ownership and operation of the cooperative.

As your elected delegates, the board's decisions help determine how well we can provide reliable and affordable power. Strong board leadership has enabled us to make major reliability improvements in the last five years that have reduced average outage times and benefitted thousands of Great Lakes Energy members. Improvements in technology have made it possible for us to implement an automatic meter

reading infrastructure and look to future initiatives like paperless billing.

The progress we've made must continue because there are still many areas on our system where reliability is a concern. Adequate financial resources must be available to ensure that all members enjoy the same high level of reliable service.

Your board faces many challenges in its mission to meet the needs of Great Lakes Energy members. In addition to the big investments required to improve our electric distribution system, there are power supply issues that threaten our ability to keep electricity reliable and affordable.

That's why your vote is so important. Please take a few minutes to read over the candidate biographies (pp. 28-29) inside this issue and cast your vote for three candidates.

Your co-op's staff and employees, empowered by the board, are looking out for you. Exercise your right as a member to vote—it's the cooperative difference.



Steve Boeckman
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Energy Efficient Act Annual Energy Optimization Report Great Lakes Energy Cooperative MPSC Case Number U-15817

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

CLEAResult Consulting, Great Lakes LLC, was selected to implement the Residential, Commercial Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization (EO) website michigan-energy.org. CLEAResult has subcontracted with Franklin Energy, JACO, Enercom, and the Michigan Community Action Agency Association to assist with EO program delivery.

In 2010, Great Lakes Energy collected \$1,797,151 through the Energy Optimization surcharge and spent \$1,330,599, resulting in an overcollection of \$466,552 which will be applied towards the 2011 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Great Lakes Energy achieved 12,181.6 mWh of energy savings in 2009–2010. The full report can be obtained at michigan-energy.org or at michigan.gov/mpsc.

2011 Coloring Contest Winners

Thanks to everyone who entered our coloring contest this year. Congratulations to the following kids whose prize-winning entries included great ideas for saving energy.

4 years and under

- 1st place: Nathan Winchel, Wayland
- 2nd place: Zack Dust, Fountain
- 3rd place: Anna Zielinski, Gaylord

5-7 years old

- 1st place: Daniel Smith, Gaylord
- 2nd place: Jack Ledig, Pellston
- 3rd place: Cayden Gray, Hart

8-10 years old

- 1st place: Jeb Stewart, Custer
- 2nd place: James Brown, Evart
- 3rd place: Katherine Ledig, Pellston



Coloring Contest Winners:

(L-R) Nathan Winchel, Jeb Stewart and Daniel Smith.

Thanks to all co-op kids who entered!

For more energy saving ideas for kids, visit touchstoneenergykids.com.

Members-only Pricing!

Your electric cooperative is offering members valuable rebates for the purchase and installation of ENERGY STAR® products. Rebates are available for items purchased at any store.

Visit michigan-energy.org (click on your utility and choose Residential ENERGY STAR Program) to learn more about the energy-saving products and download rebate applications.

**Smart power strips are also available for purchase online at a discounted price; however, rebates do not apply.*

Must be a Michigan resident and cooperative member to be eligible for this program. Items purchased must be installed in a home that receives service from a participating cooperative. For residential accounts only while supplies last. Restrictions may apply.

Available Rebates	
\$1.50	Per CFL (limit 12) <i>Must be ENERGY STAR compliant</i>
\$15	Per Ceiling Fan w/ Light Kit (limit 4) <i>Must be ENERGY STAR compliant</i>
\$20	Per Smart Power Strip* (limit 2) <i>Must include 1 uncontrolled socket connected to a primary device</i>
\$25	Per Clothes Dryer (limit 1)
\$25	Per Dishwasher (limit 1) <i>Must be ENERGY STAR compliant</i>
\$50	Per Clothes Washer (limit 1) <i>Must be CEE Tier Rating of 2 or 3</i>

michigan-energy.org
877.296.4319

3474 Alaiedon Parkway; Suite 600
Okemos, MI 48864



Learn about all of your electric co-op's programs at michigan-energy.org • Questions? 877.296.4319

Scholarship Winners Announced

Kayla Bischer and Brandon Gregg have each won a \$1,000 scholarship from the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA).

Kayla, daughter of Thumb Electric Co-op members Daniel and Sharon Bischer, graduated from Harbor Beach High School with an academic letter for maintaining a 4.0 GPA. She was class vice-president for three years, a member of the National Honor Society, played varsity softball for four years, and received three all-conference scholar-athlete awards. Kayla plans to study accounting in college.

Brandon, son of Midwest Energy members Clarence



Kayla Bischer



Brandon Gregg

and Katrina Gregg, graduated from Edwardsburg High School where he served on the student council, the National Honor Society, and received an academic award for excellence. He also received a Michigan High School Athletic Association Scholar Athlete Award this year. Brandon played varsity football, ice hockey and ran track, and he has been very active in 4-H. He plans to go to medical school and become an anesthesiologist.

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



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Heat from sunlight coming through windows and hitting the roof can increase air conditioner use significantly. Use shade trees and shrubs in landscaping design to reduce cooling costs. Block heat in the summer—but let it through in the winter—with deciduous trees, which will lose their leaves in the winter.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

MYSTERY PHOTO

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

We will no longer accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone! Email mysteryphoto@countrylines.com, or send by mail to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and co-op. The winner will be announced in the September 2011 issue.

The May contest winner is Debbie Nowak of Alpena, who correctly identified the photo from the Great Lakes Maritime Heritage Center in Alpena.



May photo

Do you know where this is? ▶



Life-changing Experience!



Back row (L-R): Alyssa Zuiderveen, Grace Wiesner, Alli Rayburn, Katelyn Waters, Sen. Debbie Stabenow, Ashley Fogarty, Kaylee Kessler, Jenni Herrema and Dory Shaffer. Front: Justin Dahl, Carlos Portillo, Tyler Orlando, Heath Welch, Cade Dailey, Nate Millen, Matthew Richards and Allan Cramer.

Sixteen teens representing seven Michigan electric co-ops didn't expect a free trip to Washington, D.C., when they applied to attend Michigan Electric Co-op Teen Days in April, but that's what they experienced in June as part of the National Rural Electric Youth Tour.

The tour is designed to bridge the gap and personalize the relationship of youth and government, and they joined more than 1,500 students representing electric co-ops from across the country.

The Michigan teens visited memorials, museums and monuments. Highlights of the trip included guided tours through Arlington Cemetery, the National Cathedral, Library of Congress and U.S. Capitol, seeing a play at the Kennedy Center, and a riverboat cruise on the Potomac. The group also visited Sen. Debbie Stabenow and U.S. Reps. Dan Benishek, Bill Huizenga, Dave Camp and Fred Upton on Capitol Hill.

"The Youth Tour experience

changed my life. I was able to connect with history and establish my standings as an American," commented Jenni Herrema of Custer. "I am so grateful for this opportunity."



Tyler Orlando (left), a junior from Lake Isabella, was voted by his peers to serve on

the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Leadership Council. He will return to D.C. in July to attend a youth conference that strengthens leadership and public speaking skills.

Youth Tour participants are chosen by their co-op, who sponsors them on the trip. Participating co-ops included Cloverland Electric, Cherryland Electric, Great Lakes Energy, Presque Isle Electric & Gas, Wolverine Power Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County, and Midwest Energy.

Learn more about co-op-sponsored youth programs at countrylines.com/youth.

Tell us about your favorite Michigan-made products!

Share a few paragraphs with us about your favorite Michigan-made product and we may write about it. Be sure to share why you like it and if you have a unique story to go with it, please send that, too. Email by **March 10** to czuker@countrylines.com or send to: *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864.



More Michigan-made

I just read your article “Game On” in the latest issue of *Michigan Country Lines*, and saw your request for favorite Michigan-made products. Well, have I got a site for you! A few months ago, I created a new Facebook page called Favorite Michigan Products (no kidding)! There are daily posts about a variety of products made right here in our home state—beer, baked goods, spices, chocolate, hotdogs, baby goods, jewelry, fashion wear, and more!

There’s no end in sight when you really start looking. We make a lot of great stuff here! In fact, I just posted a link about the Carrom Company, which was the subject of your article.

I think it would be wonderful, and much appreciated, if you could post a bit of information about this new Facebook page in your next issue. The link is facebook.com/favoritemichiganproducts. If you “Like” the page, you’ll start to get a flavor for our daily posts in your own Facebook newsfeed. And in case you didn’t know, this page is open to the public, so anyone can post a link or comment, and a growing number of people are doing that.

Thanks for considering!

P.S. I am a Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op member, which is why I get your magazine.

— Jodi Bollaert

About Wild Things

Get your great little magazine every month and have enjoyed reading the articles that make our electrical system available!

The May issue contained a “letter” that needs clarification, as it could influence a person to a major misconception of how to handle a wild creature (skunks).

Having the opportunity to

live in the great North, and being privileged to be part of a conservation system that allows hunting as part of their management practice, and even to keep predators in balance, through harvest is legal, and traditional.

Your magazine readers should be made aware that wild creatures have their own instincts and habits that must be addressed before you try to handle them. And if the unqualified person tries to remove one by putting the wild animal in a defensive position, the creature will defend itself.

To allow your readers to believe that any wild animal is easily handled is misleading and should be corrected.

Rabies are carried by certain wildlife species and if bitten by an infected animal, could cause a fatal viral disease.

Believe your readers should be properly informed.

— Doug Mummert, Gaylord

Single Moms Are Strong, Too

Wow, I am still bristling over the “Strong Dads Make Strong Families” article. In an area where a lot of children are raised by only their mothers, in just a few keystrokes Lisa Doublestein has told us that our children are misfits, possible criminals and probably couldn’t find their way out of a room with only one door. To ease the pain of knowing that we are raising such devastated children, however, she has added “on average” so we don’t feel that all of our children are doomed to failure. Then she blames single mothers for part of the federal government’s budget problems.

I am delighted that Lisa’s husband is active in her children’s lives. However, there are reasons (and usually very good ones) for why mothers raise their children alone, and this article effectively slapped all single mothers in their collective faces and told us that we have failed our children miserably by raising them without a father. Shame on you. Interestingly enough, the sidebar

about things fathers can do to share their interests with their children are things that a single mother does do every day (and sometimes even better!).

I hope *Michigan Country Lines* will be more aware of the dynamics of their readers in the future.

— Yolanda Lyons

You bring up good points about single moms that we should all be aware of. However, the article wasn’t intended to criticize them—merely to celebrate the value of dads near Father’s Day, and discuss facts about how some (not all) kids are faring and ways they might be helped. Thanks for writing. —Ed.

Vernors Ginger Ale

Having grown up in Detroit myself, I enjoyed the article by Marjory Priest about Vernors Ginger Ale (June). I too have memories of getting it if I was sick to my stomach, or occasionally as a special treat. I also remember reading the bottle label as a kid, and back then, it was called Vernor’s Ginger Ale and it touted that it had been “aged 4 years in wood barrels.” Currently, the label now reads “Vernors Ginger Soda” and it is “Barrel Aged for 3 years.” I have been wondering when this change actually took place and has the successful recipe for the

product been altered for any special reason? Any insight for the change would be appreciated and answer my curiosity.

— Barbara Wolf

In “Ruff” Weather...



We received this pillow at an open house in Suttons Bay. Thought it was great, so did our cocker spaniel, Rockford. He has always carried around socks and things, but this pillow is his favorite. Of course we would like to see his picture in *Country Lines*, but either way we wanted to share this with you.

Couldn’t help but think of this as a possible caption: “When the weather gets ‘Ruff,’ Rockford, our cocker spaniel, depends on Cherryland Electric.

— Paul Dover, Lake Leelanau

Bulbs Die Differently

Worried when you hear a compact fluorescent light-bulb (CFL) pop or sizzle? According to Underwriters Laboratories Inc. (UL), a nonprofit firm that tests and sets standards for electric items, CFLs die differently than their incandescent cousins. These sounds actually signal that the bulb is working safely in its final hours. Smoke, a popping noise, and even a slight odor are typical and do not pose a fire risk.



Traditional incandescent lightbulbs tend to burn out with a pop and a flash. When shaken, a familiar rattle confirms that the bulb needs to be changed. With CFLs, light dims over time and the lamp may produce a more dramatic exit, as noted above. Sometimes the plastic at the base of a CFL will turn black, which is normal in most cases as safety standards require application of special flame-retardant plastics.

Consumers should look for the UL mark on packaging when purchasing CFLs to know that it meets safety requirements. For more information, visit SafetyAtHome.com.

Bring Your Kids to a Park Party!

WOOD TV8 personality "Maranda" is hosting Park Parties for kids again this year in the southern part of our service area. Touchstone Energy® cooperatives Great Lakes Energy and HomeWorks Tri-County Electric will partner to join the fun.

You'll find free food for kids, games, prizes, rides, entertainment and information at these free events. Stop by GLE's booth and ride our energy bike!

The parties take place on Thursdays from noon-2 p.m. Put one of them on your schedule now!

July 7	Barry County Expo Center	Hastings
July 14	Kollen Park	Holland
July 21	Upjohn Park	Kalamazoo
July 28	Allegan County Fairgrounds	Allegan

Great Lakes Energy Cooperative Candidates for Board of Directors to be elected at the 2011 Annual Meeting

Nominations By Petition

Date Posted: June 13, 2011

The following individuals have been nominated by petitions verified by the secretary of the cooperative for the three (3) open positions on the board of directors:

Chris Dandeneau
8745 Van Tyle Road
Elmira, MI 49730

Larry Monshor
1541 Thumm Road
Gaylord, MI 49735

Richard Evans
11195 Essex Road
Ellsworth, MI 49729

Paul Schemanski
5974 Stolt Road
Petoskey, MI 49770

Benjamin Harris
9284 W. Railroad Ave.
Bitely, MI 49309

Susan Scott
10653 15 Mile Road
Evart, MI 49631

People Fund Donators Can Win Twice!



Can you give just 50 cents a month to help your community? If so, you're already a winner.

We round up your electric bill to the next dollar and that difference—which averages 50 cents a month—goes into the People Fund. With your small monthly contributions, you have the power to help local charitable organizations better meet the needs of your community.

But there's more! Some lucky Great Lakes Energy members will be selected by random drawing in December to win \$100 billing credits. To be eligible, all you have to do is contribute to the People Fund, and you're automatically entered. No People Fund money is used to support this contest.

Win for you and for your community. Join the People Fund today. It's the most good you can do for about 50 cents a month.

Receive Country Lines While You're Away

You can continue to receive your *Michigan Country Lines* magazine even if you're away from home for an extended time.



Simply contact us if you plan to be away for more than a month and give us the address where you would like the magazine sent. Contact us again when you return home to ensure there will be no interruption in your

magazine mailings.

Contact us by dialing 888-GT-LAKES (485-2537), ext. 1817, or by visiting the member services section of gtlakes.com, found under "Your Home" and by clicking on "Change of Address."



Find us on Facebook!

facebook.com/greatlakesenergy

Engaging Washington

Michigan co-ops take the message to Capitol Hill.

Like it or not, your member-owned electric co-op is deeply rooted in politics. The Roosevelt Administration believed it was the government's duty to supply electric power where private enterprise claimed it was not profitable, and therefore not possible. In 1935, the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) was created to bring electricity to America's rural areas. Thus began an interesting, and sometimes unusual, relationship.

While your co-op is democratically run by its members, state and national political decisions continue to affect how it works to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Recently, representatives from Michigan's electric co-ops joined nearly 3,000 others from around the nation for a legislative conference in Washington, D.C. The Michigan co-op group met with 11 members of Congress and their staff to communicate four key legislative goals that are important to your co-op:

Access to Affordable Lending

Over 75 years of partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) makes it possible for co-ops to construct and maintain their distribution and generation systems.

Loans available through the RUS electric program help make these worthwhile investments possible. While President Obama's 2012 budget recommends an acceptable loan level, it would restrict two-thirds of the lending to renewable-related or carbon sequestration projects only.

Because several Michigan co-ops rely on the RUS loan program for a portion of their financing, your co-op leaders urged members of Congress to support the program, but to let locally-driven business decisions, not Washington, D.C., determine what type of projects are constructed. While co-ops support renewable energy initiatives that make good business sense, there is a greater need



Photo - © iStockphoto.com/Svetlana Foote

for basic infrastructure—backup generation, poles and wires—here in Michigan.

Development of Renewable Generation Incentives

Electric co-ops can play an important role in developing the nation's renewable energy resources. However, not-for-profit co-ops cannot directly utilize conventional tax incentives that Congress provides the for-profit energy sector. Electric co-ops pay state and local taxes, but as nonprofit utilities they do not have the federal income tax liability they would need to utilize the Treasury Grant Program and are ineligible to participate directly.

New renewable generation remains more expensive to install than conventional gas or coal generation. Your co-op leaders urged members of Congress to develop co-op-friendly incentives—such as renewable energy bonds or tax grant programs—that would allow co-ops to cost-effectively develop renewable energy generation.

Continued Reuse of Coal Ash

Coal combustion residuals, or coal ash, are materials produced when coal is burned to produce electricity. When properly managed, coal ash offers environmental and economic benefits because it can be recycled into roof shingles, wallboard, bricks and highway construction materials.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Environmental

Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed federal regulations governing the disposal of coal ash. This type of regulation would create significant compliance costs at coal-based generation facilities—where most of the electricity in the Midwest comes from—to levels that would force some plant closures and raise consumer electric rates.

Your co-op leaders support working with the EPA to ensure a consistent level of safe handling of coal ash, but also urged members of Congress to support policies that further the goals of reliable, affordable electricity—without overly-burdensome regulations.

Promoting Competition

The nation's antitrust laws are meant to protect consumers and the general public from businesses that try to stifle competition, but railroads are exempt. Lack of competition has allowed freight railroads to manipulate the market, reaping huge profits from coal delivery without marketplace or legal consequences. At several generation and transmission co-ops, low coal stockpiles have threatened the reliability of the electric system. Some have even been forced to buy more expensive foreign coal because they can't rely on timely railroad deliveries. When replacement coal is unavailable, co-ops must rely on more expensive natural gas. Both alternatives drive up consumer electric bills.

Your co-op leaders urged members of Congress to support the Railway Antitrust Enforcement Act. This legislation would force the railroads to comply with antitrust laws, and thereby provide co-ops with a more reliable—and cost effective—fuel for generating electricity.

We're forever grateful to the Roosevelt administration visionaries that helped make the dream of bringing electricity to the countryside a reality. And we'll continue to work with elected officials to provide our member-owners with a safe, reliable and affordable energy future.

Ways to experience

LANSSING

In the heart of Michigan, our capital city (the state's fifth largest by population) is a diverse region where people come together to enjoy music, food, recreation, the arts and so much more. Here are some highlights. **Lori Lanspeary**



Photos - Greater Lansing Convention and Visitors Bureau

Capitol ◀

Step back into the Victorian era with a visit to Michigan's award-winning Capitol Building. Designed by Elijah E. Myers, one of the foremost architects of public buildings during the Gilded Age (1865-1914), construction took six years to finish and has over nine acres of hand-painted surfaces. The building was dedicated to Michigan citizens in 1879 and underwent an extensive three-year restoration that was completed in 1992, removing years of "modernization" including half floors and unsightly drop ceilings. This building is a national historic landmark and a state treasure. It's open to the public for tours weekdays, 9 a.m.- 4 p.m. Tours of the public areas and the House and Senate galleries are available every half-hour. Visit michigan.gov to learn more.



Potter Park Zoo ▶

This is Michigan's oldest zoo (1920), and is home to over 600 animals, many of them endangered. The zoo offers seasonal camel and pony rides, a Zoo-venir gift shop, concession stands and multiple interactive exhibits such as "Wings from Down Under." Purchase a seed stick and delight as birds flutter down to perch and nibble. Nestled in an oak forest, the zoo is a relaxing stroll that can be completed in two hours. See hours and fees at potterparkzoo.org or call 517-316-4222.

Historical Museum

The Michigan Historical Museum surrounds visitors with history from prehistoric times through the late 20th century. Exhibits include a three-story Michigan relief map, a copper mine, one-room schoolhouse, and more. Explore all 26 galleries and the museum store with unique items reflecting the state's rich heritage. Open weekdays 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., and Sun. 1-5 p.m. Free. michigan.gov/museum or call 517-373-3559.



Lansing Lugnuts/ ▲ Cooley Law School Stadium

Enjoy good times with good friends as Lansing's minor league baseball team, the Lansing Lugnuts, celebrates its 16th season. Its family fun at an affordable price, so don't miss out on the action and your chance to "GO NUTS." Admission starts at \$8. lansinglugnuts.com



OldTown ▲

OldTown is Lansing's historic boutique and arts district. The neighborhood's beautiful Victorian buildings are filled with unique galleries, tasty eateries, quaint specialty shops, creative businesses, nightclubs, and more. Voted one of the top places to bring visitors and the winner of IKEA's "Main Street Makeover," OldTown is an urban neighborhood with a small-town feel. This district also hosts festivals, gallery walks and farmers markets year-round and is "the place" for exceptional customer service. Located at Grand River Avenue and Turner Street, one mile north of downtown Lansing and at the northern point of the city's 13-mile River Trail. iloveoldtown.org



Photo - Greg Smith

Michigan's Festival Capital

With over 58 area events and festivals, Greater Lansing sets the stage for you to enjoy a wide array of music and cultural events that are as diverse as they are engaging. From the quaint celebrations of surrounding communities to the heart-pounding week-long Common Ground Music Festival, the Lansing region invites you to come and experience a kaleidoscope of festivals and events!

Coming up:

July 11-17 • Common Ground Festival
commongroundfest.com • 517-267-1502

July 30 • Car Capitol Celebration
reoldsmuseum.org • 517-372-0529

Aug. 5-6 • Lansing JazzFest
jazzlansing.com • 517-371-4600

Visit lansing.org for more, and michigan.org for surrounding area events.

Impression 5 Science Center

Impression 5 is a hands-on learning environment that challenges visitors to experience, discover and explore! Exhibits include “Bubbles,” “Throwing Things,” “Light & Color,” “Electricity & Magnetism,” the “Giant Eye,” and more. After exploring the exhibits, make “Slime,” and shop in the Science Store! And, don't miss the newly opened First Impressions Room for young explorers ages 0–4 years old and their caregivers. Open Mon.–Fri., 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sat. 10 a.m.–7 p.m., Sun. noon–5 p.m. Admission: Ages 5 and up \$5, ages 0–4 pay your age. 10 percent discount for seniors/grandparents. impression5.org or call 517-485-8116.

Lansing Metro Marinas

Lansing Metro Marinas provides river boat tours, private cruises and taxi services on the Grand River. The pontoon rides let you experience all of the new vibrant downtown Lansing developments and natural surroundings from the water's view. Hop aboard outside of the new Lansing City Market, water conditions permitting. Mon.–Fri., 11 a.m.–2:30

p.m., 5–8 p.m., Sat.–Sun. 11 a.m.–5 p.m. metromarinas.com or call 517-410-0801.

Lansing City Market

An urban public market with a diverse merchant mix begins its second 100 years in a new state-of-the-art venue situated on the Grand River. Offering produce, meats and poultry, artisan breads and desserts, cheese and dairy, gourmet coffee, full-line grocery, ethnic, food and horticultural artisans. Open year-round Tue.–Fri. 10 a.m.–6 p.m., Sat. 9 a.m.–5 p.m. lansingcitymarket.com or call 517-483-7460.

Lansing's River Trail

Among the largest in the country, the River Trail traces the banks of the Grand and Red Cedar rivers and connects comfortable parks, historic sites and urban activity centers for over 13 miles through Lansing and East Lansing. Public parking is available at regular intervals, including Saginaw and Oakland Avenues, Turner-Dodge House, Potter Park, and others. lansingrivertrail.org

RE Olds Transportation Museum

This collection of vehicles and memorabilia is a tribute to the auto industry, courtesy of one of Lansing's most prominent citizens, Ransom Eli Olds. The very first Oldsmobile, built in 1897, is on display along with antique REOs, Stars, and auto advertising memorabilia. This gift shop has diverse auto-related items. Open Tue.–Sat. 10 a.m.–5 p.m., Sun. noon–5 p.m. Admission: Adults \$5, students and seniors (65+) \$3, family up to 5 \$10. reoldsmuseum.org or call 517-372-0529.

Taking an Energy Detour

Engaged co-op members are helping to reduce energy traffic and their electric bills.

Many electric co-ops are asking their members to help save energy during times of “peak demand,” which is the industry’s equivalent of rush-hour traffic—when power supply costs are highest. By working together, co-ops and members are reducing energy use and higher power costs during these high-traffic periods.

Electricity can’t be easily stored, so it must be used as soon as it’s generated. As a result, electric co-ops must be ready to supply enough energy to meet spikes in electricity use. If energy use could be spread more evenly over time instead of peaking once or twice each day, fewer power plants would be needed and power costs would level out.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, electric co-ops, public power districts, and public utility districts can shave 6 percent of their peak demand—including about 1,440 megawatts (MW) of residential load—through programs known variously as demand-side management, load management, or demand response. These measures help keep electric bills affordable.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the nation’s bulk power grid watchdog, estimates America needs to build 135,000 MW of new generation by 2017 to meet growing demand for electricity. Power plants on the drawing board, however, will only deliver 77,000 MW. To fill this gap, a 2009 Federal Energy Regulatory Commission assessment found that 150,000 MW could be offset by conservation and energy efficiency measures, or by lowering peak demand.

Efforts by co-op members to curb energy use during peak times may provide a detour to new plant construction, at least temporarily.

The Rush-Hour Toll

We use a steady amount of energy, whether we’re at home or away. Refrigerators, air conditioning and heating systems, and appliances create base load power requirements—the minimum amount of electricity your co-op needs to reliably supply all of its members.

Lots of consumers tend to use electricity at the same time—in the morning to warm up the house and get kids ready for school, and after work when making dinner and settling in for the evening.

The price for power rises and falls depending on the fuel type (coal, natural gas, nuclear, hydro, etc.) used to generate electricity, and the fuel used often depends on when power is needed. For example, generating a steady flow of power with a baseload coal, nuclear, or hydro plant costs far less than starting up a natural gas peaking plant on a hot, humid summer weekday afternoon or extremely frigid winter morning.

As a result, when power is required during demand peaks, your electric co-op—and you the co-op member—pay a steep toll.

Detours Save Money

Up to 75 percent of your monthly electric bill goes directly to buying power—the rest must be stretched to cover bucket trucks, poles and wire, right-of-way trimming, payroll, and other operating expenses.

The easiest way to cut power costs is to use less energy—stay off the road—during rush hour. Some co-ops ask members to stop using energy when electricity use surges, an effort commonly called “Beat the Peak.”

“When we started our Beat the Peak program, everybody told us, ‘It won’t work, you can’t measure it, you can’t sustain it,’” recalls Bill Andrew, CEO of Delaware Electric Cooperative. “Today more than 35,000 of our members participate, and 10 percent of the co-ops in the United States have launched similar programs. That’s pretty good!”

With the help of in-home peak indicators and aggressive communications (text alerts, radio ads, e-mails, social media), this co-op cut 50 MW off its 345 MW summer peak.

In El Dorado, KS, Butler Rural Electric faced a 9 percent rate increase. To keep electric bills affordable, the co-op gave incentives for cutting energy use during peak times.

“By allowing our members to decide when to use electricity, they gained more power over their electric bills,” explains Travis Griffin, Butler’s member services representative. “After a year, we experienced only a 5 percent rate increase because members began shifting when they did certain chores, like washing clothes and running the dishwasher, to off-peak times.”

Managing Traffic

Some electric co-ops take peak-shaving fur-

ther by installing load control equipment. Devices attached to electric water heaters, air conditioners, and other special appliances can cut demand by briefly switching them off—an action generally unnoticed by the homeowners who volunteer to take part.

“Our primary goal is to reduce peak demand and delay construction of new power plants,” explains Stephanie Cornett, senior analyst for East Kentucky Power Cooperative’s demand-side management effort called “SimpleSaver.” The Winchester, KY-based generation and transmission co-op and its 16 distribution members offers incentives to consumers who let them manage air conditioners and electric water heaters during peak demand.

“Comfort level is a common concern,” admits Cornett. “I tell participants, ‘You should experience no more than 2 degrees difference in your home, if that much.’ Our cycling strategies are frequent, with very brief on and off times—most people never notice a change.”

But the savings on electric bills adds up. “Our 2009 research summed it up simply: folks want to lower their electric bills,” notes Cornett. “For some, a bill credit is a big draw. Others want to support the environment. The bottom line is that most members want to help their local co-op cope with rising costs.”

In Delaware, electric bill savings have been hard to miss. “We lowered our wholesale power costs by \$10 million in 2009 and another \$1.5 million in 2010,” Andrew says. “We encourage, educate and inform our members about the role they play in Beat the Peak. Our members want to help. If you show people what they can accomplish, they show up big time.”

Help Us Keep Your Electric Bill Affordable

The Michigan Electric Cooperative Association and your local electric co-op remain committed to providing you with affordable power, but there are some costs we can’t control. Our energy efficiency programs help you manage your energy use, and we’re deploying state-of-the-art solutions to help us control operating costs and improve service reliability. For more ways to cut costs, visit TogetherWeSave.coop.

Home Canning Gets Preserved

What warms body and soul better than a jar of home-canned food? **Gail Knudtson**

The art of canning food is trendy again, and a Michigan man has invented a tool to help preserve it.

Loren Stieg, a tool-and-die maker by trade, invented the “Tattler Reusable Canning Lid,” during a shortage of the metal canning jar lids.

“A scarcity of canning lids, causing a frustrating market condition for home canners in the mid-’70s, led to exploring the feasibility of a plastic reusable product,” Stieg explains. Besides being reusable, the plastic lids won’t corrode.

The lids are made at Chippewa Plastics in Evart, which has produced over 1 million since startup in spring 2010, and are packaged and shipped from the Stiegs’ Reed City location. A new box design, tooling and rubber rings were finished this year and built by



Loren Stieg invented the Tattler Reusable Canning Lid.

Bawnco, a local tool shop. Stieg is proud that his products are “Made in the USA.”

Stieg and his son Brad figured if the business could survive and be stable for a year or two, they would have a good chance at success. “My son in Colorado has become my business partner, and at the end of

our first year (March 2011) we have experienced more than 10 times projected sales,” Stieg says. They also now produce and ship from his son’s location in Grand Junction, CO, and ship to all 50 states, Canada, and other countries.

While most sales are online, the small company also has nearly 100 retailers sell-

ing the lids, and they have met with Hope Network (Moarc) of Paris, MI, to discuss a need for more packing capacity. Stieg says increased demand for the lids has meant more production, and therefore more jobs.

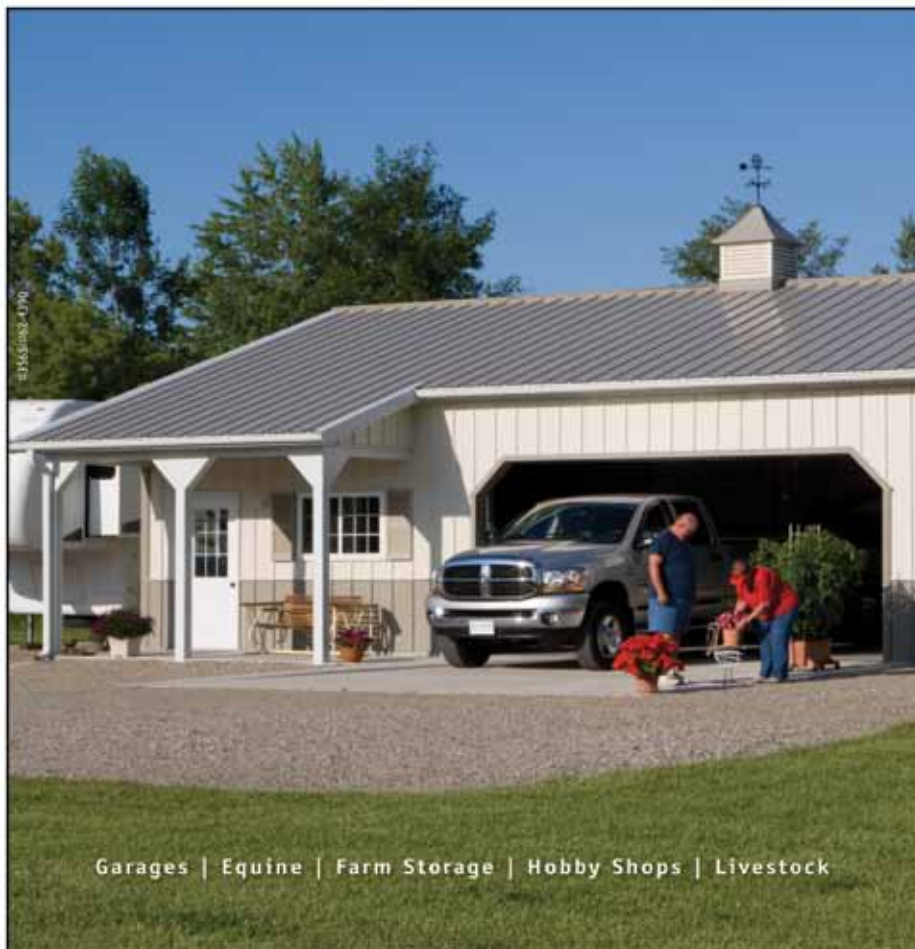
Other factors driving interest in canning are a desire for local, whole foods and recent food safety scares. “The home canning industry continues to thrive, and has seen a recent resurgence due to economic conditions, individual resourcefulness, increased self-sufficiency, and a bit of nostalgia,” he says.

The reusable lid saves money and time, he adds, and “...are fantastic for those of us who wish to reduce, reuse and recycle.” The BPA-free and FDA-approved lids work extra well for acid foods, like peppers, and some of his customers have used them for over 30 years.

A recent *Detroit Free Press* story notes that sales of home canning equipment is up 10 percent from last year.



Photos Courtesy—Loren Stieg



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Kayaks Gain Paddlesport Popularity

The view from the Hoxeyville Bridge, high over the Pine River, is a good place to see or photograph canoes in the season of paddling sports.

But slowly and surely, kayaks are catching up with canoes as a popular watercraft for floating Michigan's streams; viewed from this bridge, it seems that more kayaks than canoes go floating downriver these days.

Women seem to be taking to the sport as much, or maybe more so, than men. A kayak is a lot lighter load to handle, launch and retrieve than a canoe, and this finds favor with lady paddlers.

At many of the established canoe liveries, including Baldwin Canoe Rental in Baldwin, Wisner's Canoe Rental and Powers Outdoors in Newaygo, River Rat Canoe Rental in Grant, Kellogg's Canoe Rental in Hesperia, the Sawmill in Big Rapids, and many of the canoe liveries serving the Au Sable in Grayling, kayak rentals are reaching a par with canoes for day trippers. This trend is also appearing in the sales of adventure watercraft. Canoes are still first in total numbers on our streams, but kayaks are closing the gap more each season.

Eric Sharp, *Detroit Free Press* outdoor writer, once summed up the sport of kayaking this way: "Kayaking is like bicycling—the more you do it, the better you get and the more you enjoy it, and like cycling it can be enjoyed at many levels, from a casual, hour-long sunset cruise around the lake at the family cottage to week-long expeditions on wilderness waters."

Sharp noted that few other states can match Michigan for easy access to waters suited to kayaking. From four of the Great Lakes that border our state, to some 36,000 miles of streams and thousands more inland lakes, the kayaker can pick and choose water to match their skills or their idea of a pleasant paddle.

Our state also has several national forests where kayaking access is easy. The Huron-Manistee National Forest offers nine rivers (AuSable, Big Manistee, Big Sable, Hersey, Little Manistee, Pere Marquette, Pine, Rifle and White) that have about 550 miles of stream suited to canoeing and kayaking



Photo - ©iStockphoto.com/Gene Churka

within the Forest's boundaries.

Most river launches are for car-top boats, canoes or kayaks, except for those at some of the larger dam ponds.

Beginner and novice canoeists and kayakers should be able to handle most of the rivers, although log jams, sharp hairpin turns and fast currents on some stretches may challenge novice to intermediate paddlers.

Most state rivers (except a few of the larger watersheds) range from 20 to 80 feet wide, meandering through deep cuts in glacial sand and clay banks, then flowing over wide, flat, flood plains. The larger ponds, created by hydroelectric dams, provide slow lake canoeing and kayaking options. (High winds may present a hazard, so novice paddlers should watch weather conditions on larger open waters.)

There are a number of schools and training sources for kayaking newcomers, but if you are a woman, one of the best perhaps is offered by the Michigan DNR's B.O.W. program (Becoming an Outdoor Woman). This successful program has led the way for women (18 and above) to learn many outdoor

skills in the company of other women. Kayaking is one of the program's more popular summer courses, and includes six hours of intensive hands-on instruction.

"This course teaches participants how to paddle the proper way to make their experience on the water safe and more enjoyable," says Lynn Marla, BOW coordinator.

"We are very pleased to have top-notch women instructors lined up for our two-day workshops," she adds. The workshops are limited to 16 women to allow for individual instruction. Dates and a registration form are available at michigan.gov/bow or by calling 517-241-2225.

If you want to paddle your own canoe—oops, make that kayak—our region's rivers and lakes are the perfect place for paddle-sport fun.

Don Ingle is an avid outdoorsman and award-winning outdoors writer that submits regularly for Country Lines.



Monkeyball Takes Hold

On the first Saturday in August, a diverse and widespread community of leisure-sport enthusiasts knows to block out their calendars and avoid all wedding invites. They know to pack their camp chairs, kids, coolers, trail mixes and canopies. They know to hydrate and bring the “A-game” they’ve been honing for a full year—all for a sport called “Monkeyball.”

Monkeyball is known by many other monikers, including (but not limited to) Hillbilly Golf, Polish Horseshoes, Ladderball and Bolo Toss. However, devotees of this sport reject them all. Monkeyball, a game frequently seen at tailgate parties and backyard barbecues, is played with ladders made from PVC pipe and “monkeyballs”—two golf balls connected by rope. The object is to toss the monkeyballs onto the pipe ladder and outscore your opponent.

The unique distinction Monkeyball claims over other imitators rests in the regulations and formality of its events. Founder and commissioner Andy Frushour, a DeWitt, MI, resident, explains. “The difference between Monkeyball and others is that we have our own rule book (which varies slightly from other versions of the game), we have world rankings, we have fun t-shirts, and most importantly, we host the biggest ‘ladder golf’ tournament in the country—the annual World Championships.”

In 2011, the seventh annual Monkeyball World Championships will take place in Dimondale, MI. The tournament (known colloquially as ‘MB7’) will be on Aug. 6, with first matches beginning at 10 a.m. Competition is individual, and the tournament is partially seeded to accommodate both experienced players and those new to the game. Commissioner Frushour invites all to play. “Anyone is welcome to play in the 7th annual event—rookies & veterans, young & old. We’re expecting over 100 players, a third of which usually hail from the Lansing area.”

Frushour, who also claims the No. 2 spot on the Official Monkeyball World Rankings list (ranks over 550 players), is happy with how the game has taken hold.

“I’m the self-appointed ‘Grand Pooh-Bah’



The seventh Monkeyball World Championships (“MB7”) are Aug. 6 at The Old Orchard (3426 N. Michigan Rd.) in Dimondale, MI. See playmonkeyball.com, or call 517-449-8256, for information about the sport and related events.

of Monkeyball. Since 2005, we’ve hosted over 100 tournaments across eight states with over 700 different players. And, we’ve had a lot of fun while playing this silly backyard game.”

While the tournament focuses on individual play, the camaraderie amongst the Monkeyball community spans across competition. With all ages welcome to participate,

it is not unusual to see a 5th grader advancing through the first round. A family-friendly event, the Monkeyball World Championships are an affordable and terrific way to spend an afternoon meeting new friends, playing a “new” game in an organized setting, and enjoying the outdoors.

— Andrea Osters

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STATE OF MICHIGAN

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF ALGER DELTA COOPERATIVE ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION, CLOVERLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE, MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE, ONTONAGON COUNTRY RURAL ELECTRIFICATION ASSOCIATION, PRESQUE ISLE ELECTRIC & GAS CO-OP, THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, and HOMEWORKS TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE,

CASE NOS. U-16678, U-16681, U-16682, U-16683, U-16684, U-16685, U-16686, AND U-16687

- Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association, Cloverland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative, Ontonagon Country Rural Electrification Association, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-Op, and Thumb Electric Cooperative plan to file Energy Optimization Plans in compliance with the "Clean, Renewable, and Energy Efficient Act" (2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001) and Michigan Public Service Commission Order in Case Nos. U-16678, U-16681, U-16682, U-16683, U-16684 U-16685, U-16686, AND U-16687, dated March 17, 2011.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write the Cooperatives' attorney, Mr. Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933, Phone: 517.374.9100 for a free copy of its application, which will be available on or before August 1, 2011. Any person may review the application at Dykema's offices or at the respective offices of the Cooperatives.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE: August 9, 2011, This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

TIME: 9:00 a.m.

PRESIDING OFFICER: Administrative Law Judge Theresa A. Sheets

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 a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the August 1, 2011 joint application of the above named cooperatives to file Energy Optimization Plans, which include specific line item charges on customers' bills as follows:

Energy Optimization Plan Charge

For residential customers, a per kWh charge, not to exceed 2.2% of the total annual retail sales revenue.

For all other customers, an itemized charge not to exceed 1.7% of the total annual retail sales revenue.

The Commission has selected this case for participation in its Paperless Electronic Filings Program. The Commission recognizes that filers may not have the computer equipment or access to the Internet necessary to submit documents electronically. Therefore, filers may submit an original and one paper copy to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909. Otherwise, no paper documents will be required to be filed in this case. Requirements and instructions for filing electronic documents can be found in the Electronic Filings Users Manual at: <http://efile.mpsc.cis.state.mi.us/efile/usersmanual.pdf>. You may contact Commission staff at (517) 241-6170 or by email at mpscfilecases@michigan.gov with questions and to obtain access privileges prior to filing.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by August 2, 2011. (Residential customers may file petitions to intervene using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon the Cooperatives' attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, MI 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/her wish to make a statement of position.

A copy of the Cooperatives' request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at <http://efile.mpsc.cis.state.mi.us/efile> and at the office of Dykema Gossett PLLC, or the respective cooperative office, on or before February 18, 2008. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 241-6170.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.51 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6h et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

Dated: June 30, 2011, Lansing, Michigan



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Eggplant recipes



Eggplant has a reputation as a versatile vegetable even though it's technically a fruit. Smaller ones are generally less bitter because they have fewer seeds. Find more recipes at countrylines.com.

Ratatouille

3 c. eggplant, cut in 1½-inch cubes
1 c. zucchini or summer squash, cut in 1/4-inch slices
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 small onion, sliced
1/2 med. Anaheim chili pepper, cut in strips
2 T. chopped fresh parsley
1 T. chopped fresh basil or 1/2 t. dried basil
2 T. water
1/2 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper

2 med. tomatoes, cut into eighths

Combine all ingredients in a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven. Cover and simmer on stove top for 1-2 hours. Serve with chicken or lamb or over rice. Leftover ratatouille can be added to spaghetti sauce.

Edith Heezen, Fowler

Caponata

4-5 c. peeled and cubed eggplant
1/3 c. chopped green pepper
1 med. onion, coarsely chopped
3/4 c. sliced fresh mushrooms or 1 4-oz. can, drained
2 cloves garlic, crushed
1/2 c. vegetable oil
1 6-oz. tomato paste
1/4 c. water
2 T. wine vinegar
1/2 c. green salad olives, chopped
1½ t. sugar
1/2 t. oregano
1 t. salt
1/8 t. black pepper

In a large fry pan, combine eggplant, green pepper, onion, mushrooms, garlic and oil; cover and cook gently for 10 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and mix well. Cover and simmer 20 minutes. Serve warm or well-chilled with crackers.

Beth Kingsley, Belleville

Lamb and Eggplant

Meatballs:

1½ lbs. ground lamb
1 T. minced garlic
1 T. yellow mustard
1 T. Worcestershire® sauce
2 slices white bread
1 egg
salt and pepper to taste

Sauce:

2 T. olive oil
1 small onion, minced
1 garlic clove, minced
2 stalks celery, chopped
2 pts. sweet cherry tomatoes
1 6-oz. tomato paste
1 c. chicken broth
1 T. ground coriander
1 T. ground cumin
1 cinnamon stick

Eggplant:

2 eggplants
milk
1 c. canola oil
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 t. salt
1/2 t. pepper
1/2 t. garlic powder
2 c. Panko® breadcrumbs
fresh mint
fresh Italian parsley

Peel and slice eggplant into 1/2-inch slices. Place in a pan and cover with milk. Let soak about an hour to remove bitterness.

Meanwhile, in a bowl, combine lamb, garlic, mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Rinse bread slices under tap water; squeeze out water and shred. Add to lamb mixture along with egg, and salt-and-pepper to taste. Blend all ingredients well. Roll into 2-inch balls; place on a cookie sheet and bake at 375° for 30 minutes.

While meatballs are baking, combine 2

tablespoons olive oil, onion, garlic and celery in a large pot; sauté until onions are transparent. Add tomatoes, tomato paste, chicken broth, coriander, cumin and cinnamon stick. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste; add cooked meatballs; keep warm.

In a large frying pan, heat 1 cup canola oil. Remove eggplant slices from milk; discard milk. Combine eggs, salt, pepper and garlic powder. Dredge slices in egg mixture and coat with breadcrumbs. Fry in hot oil until brown; turn slices over and brown other side. Serve meatballs and sauce over fried eggplant. Remove cinnamon before serving. Garnish with thinly sliced mint and parsley leaves.

Mary Gorshe, Suttons Bay

Grilled Eggplant

1 eggplant, do not peel
olive oil

Italian bread crumbs

Wash eggplant; slice into 1/2 or 3/4-inch thick round slices. Dip each slice into a bowl of olive oil, coating both sides. Place each slice in a bowl of bread crumbs, cover evenly on both sides. Place prepared eggplant slices on freshly oiled grill and cook 10-15 minutes until fork tender.

Bea and Bill King, Copemish

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Eggplant and Zucchini Lasagna

2 lbs. fresh ricotta cheese
2 lbs. fresh mozzarella cheese
1 c. grated Parmesan cheese
4 eggs
2 oz. fresh parsley, chopped
salt and pepper to taste
2 eggplants
4 zucchini
10 eggs
4 c. all-purpose flour
1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley
4 c. bread crumbs
4 c. tomato sauce
1 c. Parmesan cheese
1 c. extra virgin olive oil
salt and pepper

In a bowl, mix first 5 ingredients together; mix well and season with salt and pepper to taste; refrigerate briefly to make mixture firm.

Slice eggplant and zucchini into 1/4-inch slices. Set zucchini aside. Fill a bowl with lightly salted water; add eggplant (only) and soak for 1 1/2-2 hours.

Place flour in a shallow bowl. In another bowl, beat eggs with a fork until blended. In a third bowl, mix together breadcrumbs,

Parmesan cheese, parsley, salt and pepper. Line bowls up next to each other.

Carefully dip a slice of eggplant and zucchini into flour, making sure both sides are covered. Dip each slice into egg mixture and finally dip into bread crumb mixture. Coat both sides very well while gently tapping off any excess. Transfer to a serving plate, season with salt and pepper, and set aside while repeating with the remaining slices.

In a large, heavy skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add zucchini and eggplant slices; sauté on both sides until golden brown and cooked all the way through. Remove from pan; place on paper towels to drain excess oil.

In a large baking pan, add 2 cups tomato sauce, a layer of eggplant and zucchini, and then a layer of the cheese mixture. Repeat process 2 more times. Top with a layer of tomato sauce and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 450° for 20 minutes. Serves 6.

Jennifer Hansen, Mason

3 garlic cloves, minced
1 large eggplant, cubed, about 1 1/2 lbs.
1 28-oz. can crushed tomatoes
1 green pepper, diced
1 red pepper, diced
3/4 c. bread crumbs
1 t. basil
grated cheese, any flavor

In a large saucepan, brown turkey, onion and garlic for 5-6 minutes. Add eggplant, tomatoes, peppers, bread crumbs and basil; bring to a boil. Transfer mixture to a greased 9x13-inch baking dish. Cover and bake at 350° for 40-45 minutes until vegetables are tender. Uncover; sprinkle with cheese and bake 15 minutes longer. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.

Marcia Albosta, Lewiston



Photos - ©iStockphoto.com

Turkey Eggplant Casserole

1 1/4 lbs. ground turkey
1 onion, chopped

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'Hypertufa' Makes Gardening Easy

These containers with a goofy name are a fun gardening option that you can make yourself.

You know the drill. Haul out your containers in spring, fill with potting soil, buy your plants, plant them. For the rest of the summer water every week, fertilize every other week. Then as winter approaches, pull out the dead plants, empty the soil, wash out containers. Come spring, start the process all over.

What if you could have a container that didn't require all that work? Just plant it once and let nature take its course, watering only during a drought and fertilizing...well, forget about it. 'Not possible' you say, but think again. Think hypertufa containers.

Hypertufa containers are made from a combination of Portland cement, peat moss, sand and vermiculite or perlite. They have the appearance of stone, without the weight, and can even be left out during Michigan winters without the worry of breakage. These containers look even better with age, getting a rich patina of moss and lichens reminiscent of garden troughs in a British countryside.

Glenda Hopp and her son Chris, of Farmbrook Designs (farmbrookdesigns.com) in Royal Oak, have been making and selling hypertufa containers since 2000.

"Hypertufa containers have a refined, rustic look. They enhance plants, providing a lovely gentle effect," Glenda says. When Hopp lost her job in the high-tech world, she decided to combine her love of gardening with a business venture. She noticed that gardening was one of the fastest-growing hobbies in Michigan. Since her son Chris was eager to look at other job possibilities as well, they decided to open Farmbrook Designs together.

It was at one of the many garden shows that Glenda met Karen Bovio. "We were a good match," says Bovio, whose love of gardening also lead her to start a business—Specialty Growers (specialtygrowers.net) in Howell,



This carefree, sun-loving hypertufa container is filled with hardy sedums. The large rock in the center is surrounded clockwise starting with a blue-green sedum *sieboldii*, a bright green sedum *tetractinum*, a yellow-green sedum *reflexum* "Angelina" and a grey-green sedum *canticola*. A few hens and chicks are tucked in the corners to complete this eye-pleasing design.

back in 1982. Bovio's nursery specializes in providing gardeners, landscapers and nurseries with high-quality, outdoor-grown perennials and herbs. "Today, there's lots of interest in succulent plants as well as drought resistant plants. This interest has increased the appeal of hypertufa containers," states Bovio.

Back when Bovio started her nursery, there were very few people selling perennials. It was a niche market. Today, with the explosion of different cultivars and a growing interest in perennials, there are a lot more gardeners planting them. When people think of hypertufa containers they often think of containers with sun-loving plants such as succulents like hens-and-chicks and low-growing sedums and miniature evergreens such as dwarf spruces and pines, but Bovio points out that miniature hostas, ferns and campanulas do well in hypertufa containers placed in the shade. Even a woodland setting is perfect for them.

For a showy look, Bovio adds that people do use annuals in hypertufa containers, including dwarf ornamental peppers, alyssum, trailing lobelia and calibrachoa, although more care is required.

The important thing to remember when stocking your hypertufa container is to pick plants that are shallow-rooted and miniature. Bovio suggests the following for containers placed in the sun: low-growing sedums or "stonecrops"; dwarf dianthus; creeping thymes (elfin or wooly); or hens-and-chicks.

For containers in shade and part-shade, choose small-growing ferns like maidenhair spleenwort or dwarf Japanese painted ferns, dwarf goatsbeard, viola syletta, alpine species of Columbine. An extensive plant list for hypertufas can also be found at michigangardenerscompanion.com.

As gardeners get older and downsize their gardens, hypertufa containers make great additions to smaller landscapes. Hypertufa containers add texture, interest, low maintenance and portability.

Hopps teaches a hypertufa-making class every summer at Bovio's Specialty Growers Nursery (July 23, 10 a.m.; click the "Events" tab at specialtygrowers.net), but she also offers tips for making your own. Hopps explains that it is much easier to use a mold, such as a foil pan, rather than putting the hypertufa material around an object. Also, line your mold with a plastic garbage bag, which makes for easy removal of the cement mixture once it has dried. It is important to make your mixture the right texture. It should resemble a crumb topping on a pie, but not be so dry that it falls apart as you are packing the mold.

Also, check your local nursery for hypertufas or type "how to make a hypertufa container" in Google or another internet search engine and you'll find how-to articles.

Rita Henehan is freelance writer whose book, "The Michigan Gardener's Companion: A Insider's Guide to Gardening in the Great Lakes State" is available at bookstores and online.

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All Hands on (an Energy Efficient) Deck!

Adding a deck to a house, especially if you do most of the work, increases the home's resale value by several times the deck's cost.

A deck can actually be energy efficient in several ways. If having a deck allows your family to spend more time outdoors, then you should be able to set your central air-conditioning thermostat higher during the time you're primarily outside. Setting the thermostat higher, even for just a few hours a day, will reduce your electric bill.

If you are outdoors more often, you will become accustomed to the heat and be more comfortable indoors without as much air conditioning. Try to air-condition as little as possible.

A properly designed deck with a pergola or some type of tall side-wall, facing south or southwest, can also provide shade for your home. This is particularly helpful if it can shade an exterior glass patio door. Even with the most efficient glass in the door, a tremendous amount of heat transfers in through the glass when it is exposed to direct afternoon sun.

Besides saving energy, you can make environmentally friendly choices for the deck materials. For the framing, engineered lumber can be used instead of standard solid 2x2 lumber. Engineered lumber is stronger and often made from smaller wood pieces so less prime wood is required overall. Its strength may allow for fewer posts and longer spans without creating a springy feel.

The choice of deck material is most important. Pressure-treated wood is abundant, the least expensive material, has the nicest appearance and feel on bare feet, and is easy to work with for most do-it-yourselfers. The only environmental drawbacks to wood are its limited life and the cleaning and sealing chemicals which must be applied every year or two to extend its life.

Composite decking is another option. Trex® recently developed a new material, Transcend®, which is environmentally friendly. It is made from 95 percent recycled materials, primarily plastic bags and sawdust.

This decking is different from other composites in that it has a thin polymer top cap that reduces staining and mildew. It is more



James Dulley is shown installing composite decking using hidden fasteners. Since these planks are not as rigid as wood, it is important to make sure you have proper maximum spacing between the joists.

expensive than other composite materials, but its minimal maintenance makes it a reasonable investment.

Another option is cellular PVC decking. I used light-colored Azek® cellular PVC decking on a second-floor deck off my bedroom. It uses more virgin materials than composites do, but it is very durable, low maintenance, and does not stain or mildew.

If your deck is exposed to direct afternoon sun, selecting light-colored composite decking reduces the heat buildup and heat radiated to your house wall and windows. My first-floor composite deck is dark brown, and too hot to walk on barefoot in the afternoon.

Building a vertical wall on the southwest side of the deck fosters effective shading and provides privacy. The simplest design uses standard posts covered by lattice. The lattice openings allow breezes to pass through. Planting climbing vines along the lattice also enhances the natural cooling effect of water that evaporates from the plant leaves.

Another option for the shading wall is to

install horizontal slats. By tilting them at the proper angle, the direct afternoon sun can be blocked while providing ample area for breezes. The best angle depends upon your area's latitude and the deck's orientation to the sun. Make some sample cardboard slats to test for the best angle.

To block the sun from a more overhead direction, build a pergola over the deck. You can build one from lumber or buy a composite pergola kit. This is attractive, and by allowing plants to grow up and over it, it provides additional shading.

These companies offer alternative decking materials: Azek, 877-275-2935, azek.com; Timbertech®, 800-307-7780, timbertech.com; and Trex, 800-289-8739, trex.com.

James Dulley is a nationally recognized mechanical engineer writing about home energy issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.



Public outcry over shocking survey results!

73% pick the Wedge Sound System in a head to head test against the \$500 competition

1,000s of satisfied Wedge owners spark buying frenzy

Has more features, costs \$100s less and has amazing sound

Public outcry over survey triggers soaring demand for the #1 ranked Wedge Sound System after the survey found 73% of people favoring it over the more expensive \$500 competition!

And at a fraction of the price, the Wedge is quickly turning into this year's hottest selling sound system.

Its high-end sound quality and low price has people scrambling and jamming phone lines to get one for themselves and as gifts.

The factory can barely keep up with this fevered demand for the Wedge Sound System.

Survey results show over 73% of people pick the new Wedge Sound System over the more expensive \$500 Music System.

More people preferred the Wedge based on sound quality, sound clarity, number of features and build quality.

And 64% of people said the Wedge has a sound equal or superior to the \$500 Music System!

And at only \$147, it has music lovers buzzing with excitement. That's a \$350.00 savings!

For the first time, anybody will be able to afford a top of the line sound system!

Plus the company that has designed the Wedge is offering a 60-day Money-Back Guarantee so the public can hear the crystal clear sound for themselves risk-free.

A truly unique aspect of the Wedge is you will never have to set the clock. The Wedge is already set for you when you plug it in and even adjusts for Daylight Savings Time.

Another unique feature is the dual battery back-up. If the power goes out, the Wedge won't and your alarm will still go off. You will never be late again!

And you can listen to any part of your music collection on your Wedge. From CDs and MP3s, to your favorite radio station, the Wedge plays them all.

The Wedge even stores up to 20 of your favorite radio stations

for quick and easy access.

To get the scoop on this new and groundbreaking technology, I spoke to the head of Product Research and Design for the Wedge, Paul Goodman.

Q. How can you offer such a high quality sound system in the Wedge for only \$147 when the Leading Brand's radio goes for \$500?

A. We have designed the Wedge Sound System from the ground up. All costs are closely monitored and, through a streamlined manufacturing technique, the Wedge is able to be offered at this ultra low price.

Q. How can the tabletop Wedge Sound System produce such lifelike sounds?

A. Our special engineering team has developed a revolutionary design enabling the Wedge to fill a room with crystal clear sound.

The Wedge has the perfect balance of power flowing to its speakers so the sound is crystal clear with the volume on low or high.

Q. How easy is it to set up the Wedge Sound System?

A. The Wedge is highly advanced but is a super easy-to-use sound system. All the fine tuning has been done for the consumer so all they have to do is plug it in and enjoy the Wedge's crystal clear sound.

No figuring out where to place multiple speakers and no confusing wires to hook up.

End of interview.

Readers can get the Wedge Sound System with a FREE Remote and FREE shipping and handling if they order within the next 10 days. Please see the Special Reader's Discount Coupon on this page. For those readers ordering after 10 days, we reserve the right to accept orders at the discounted price.

Plus you will get FREE Shipping and Handling! Complete and mail in the coupon at the right or call. If lines are busy, please try back - you don't want to miss out on a owning a high quality sound system for only \$147.



Plug, Play, Listen

Wedge Sound System shocks the music community!

The new Wedge Sound System has music lovers buzzing with excitement. Never before has a such a high quality sound system been offered to the public at such a low price. Finally a high quality sound system anybody can afford.

Wedge has more features!	Wedge	Leading Brand
Price	\$147	\$500
Adjusts for Daylight Savings Time	YES	NO
Stores 20 Favorite Radio Stations	YES	NO
2 Separate Battery Back-ups	YES	NO
2 Separate Alarms	YES	NO
SD Memory Slot for Mp3s	YES	NO
Displays Day of Week	YES	NO
Nap Alarm	YES	NO
Remote Control	YES	YES
Able to Operate Without Remote	YES	NO
Play Music From iPod® (mp3 player)	YES	YES
#1 Pick in Survey	YES	NO

Here's what a few of the thousands of Wedge listeners have to say:

"The sound is so rich and clear from such a small piece. I was really amazed and pleased."

-Bronwyn M. Owens, Taylor, MI

"Radio has excellent sound. Its clarity is excellent and it's like people are in the room. Who needs a stereo system!!"

-Shelley Pearson, Poplar, WI

"Wow, you caught me off guard. The compact Wedge System sounds and looks great. I was very surprised..."

-Chuck Zabriski, St. Petersburg, FL

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DEQ Holds Air Permit Hearing in Rogers City

About 300 people attended a hearing in May on the draft air quality permit for the Wolverine Clean Energy Venture (WCEV) power plant development. The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) held the session in the Rogers City High School gymnasium.

The hearing provided an opportunity for public comment on new emission regulations passed by the federal government since the air permit was first denied by the DEQ in May 2010 on the basis of need alone.

“We worked closely with DEQ staff over the last 12 months to update our air permit application to reflect new laws and requirements,” says Brian Warner, director of environmental services for Wolverine Power Cooperative. “Our goal is to obtain an air permit that is compliant with all current regulations.”

Congressman Dan Benishek, State Sens. Howard Walker and Tom Casperson, and State Rep. Peter Pettalia spoke in favor of the project at the hearing, as did elected officials from the Rogers City area and sev-



Brian Burns (L), president/CEO of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, spoke in favor of the WCEV power plant development on behalf of four members of Wolverine Power Cooperative. Wolverine supplies wholesale power to six members, including Presque Isle. Sen. Tom Casperson (R) also expressed support for the WCEV power plant development at the DEQ hearing.



eral local residents. Comments were also made against the project, seeking a second denial of the air permit by the DEQ.

“The construction of the plant has the potential to create more than 1,000 jobs over four years, a project northern Michigan has not experienced on that scale since the building of the Mackinac Bridge,” Benishek said. “I hope that the

clamor of outside interest groups does not drown out the hopes and needs of local residents.”

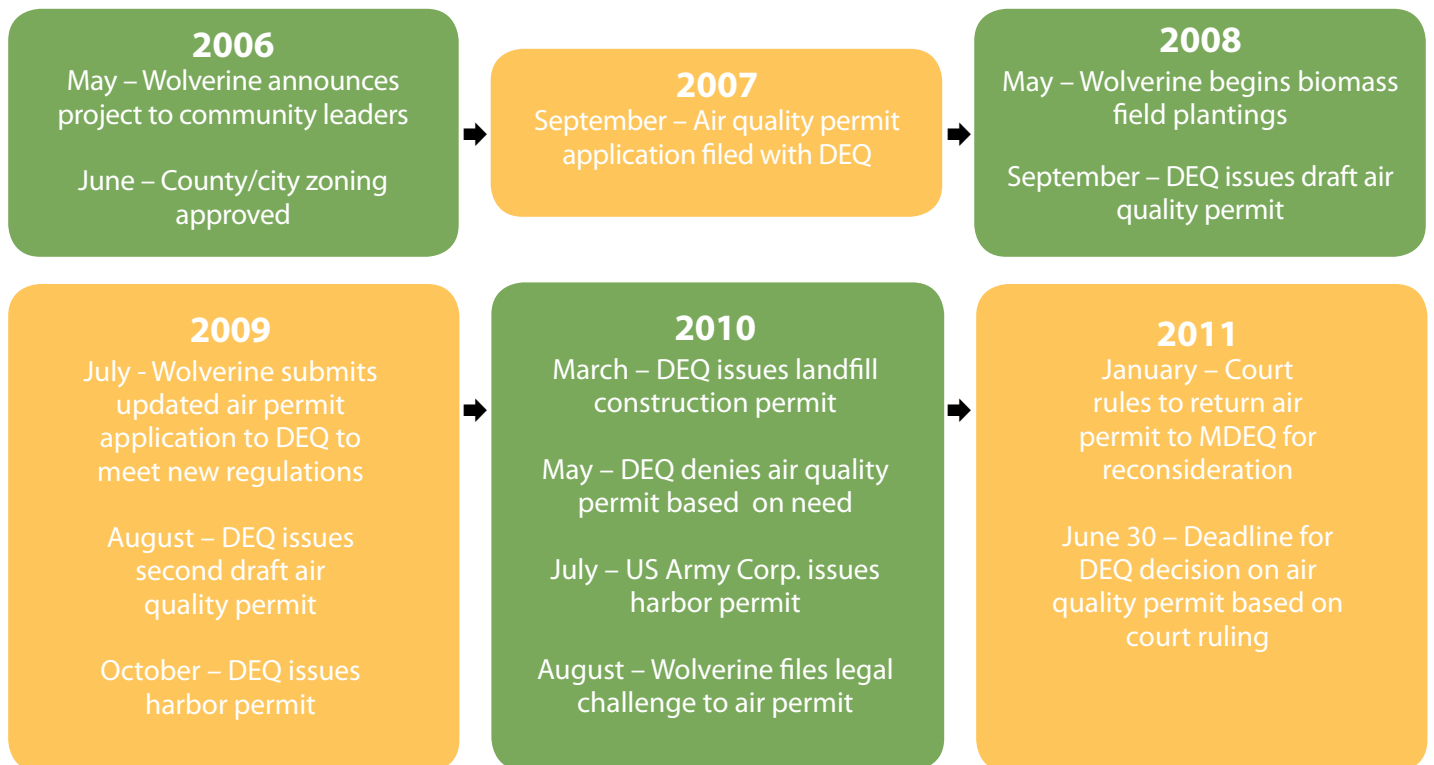
“We all know that the construction of this plant will result in new jobs being created in a region that needs them,” Walker stated. “But just as importantly, construction of the plant would be a powerful symbol to those who in recent years have stood on the sidelines, hesitant to invest in Michigan.”

Prior to the hearing, DEQ staff held an informational session, taking questions from audience members.

Based on the January 2011 Missaukee County Circuit Court ruling that returned the denied permit to the DEQ for reconsideration, the DEQ must render a decision on the WCEV air permit by June 30. The DEQ may approve, approve with modifications, or deny the permit. A decision had not been made as of the deadline for this story.

“We continue to believe the proposed site for the WCEV power plant is an excellent location for an electric generating facility,” Warner says.

Wolverine Clean Energy Venture Power Plant Development Timeline



STATE OF MICHIGAN

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-16323

- Great Lakes Energy Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its Energy Optimization plan expenditures and revenues for the 2010 calendar year.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, 1323 Boyne Avenue, P.O. Box 70, Boyne City, Michigan 49712-0070, (888) 485-2537 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the documents at the offices of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME:	August 11, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.
BEFORE:	Administrative Law Judge Mark E. Cummins
LOCATION:	Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7, Lansing, Michigan
PARTICIPATION:	Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 241-6160 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the April 29, 2011 application of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative (Great Lakes) for authority to reconcile its energy optimization plan expenditures and revenues for the period ended December 31, 2010.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets. 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: mpscedockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 241-6180 or by email at: mpscedockets@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 August 4, 2011. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Great Lakes' 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 Great Lakes' request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets, and at the office of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, 1323 Boyne Avenue, Boyne City, MI 49712. 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.; 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.

June 3, 2011

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– Source: U.S. Department of Energy

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Board of Directors Candidates



Chris Dandeneau

Home: Elmira

Occupation: Real estate professional

Co-op Member: 12 years

I seek this board of directors' position so I may serve cooperative members with careful business sense and effective energy management. I will provide rational and prudent advice in the board room and to our members.

Our challenge is to utilize the broad knowledge base and skill set of each board member to deliver prudent and efficient decision making in planning for resources of energy management and delivery.

I bring 19 years of finance management, banking and real estate finance and sales. A northern Michigan resident since 1998, I have served on the Hayes Township (Otsego Co.) Board of Review, Gaylord 'Alpenfest' Board of Directors and past president, and Otsego County/Gaylord and Petoskey areas Chamber of Commerce Ambassador.

B.S. – business management degree in 1991 from Oregon State University with minors in psychology and mathematics. I am also active in community and family endeavors with my wife and three daughters.



Richard Evans

Home: Ellsworth

Occupation: Owner, Paradigm Energy Services

Co-op Member: 12 years

My fellow co-op owners, I ask for your vote to join the board and represent your voice in making prudent energy decisions. I offer my direct experience and big picture understanding of energy: the huge untapped potential of conservation and efficiency, renewable and smart energy technologies, and the incredible opportunities for job creation within these industries. I will strive to help the co-op continue its leadership role in providing clean, reliable and affordable power.

I come to you as a business owner in beautiful rural northern Michigan, a building science instructor at NMC, and an MSU graduate with almost 20 years of experience in the energy and energy efficiency fields. Please visit <http://tinyurl.com/Evans4GLE> for more information about my work and candidacy.

Thank you for your consideration, and I would appreciate your vote. I look forward to working with the other directors to serve you in this capacity.



Benjamin Harris

Home: Bitely

Occupation: Retired

Co-op Member: 34 years

I am a candidate for the GLE Board. I seek this position of responsibility because 61 years has matured my personal, social and professional abilities, which will be fully needed to provide me with the wisdom and strength to carry out the great responsibilities of this office.

I understand the board is responsible for GLE's health, welfare and growth. Furthermore, the board must continuously strive to produce cost effective energy, and at a cost savings to the members. As a board member, I am obligated to promote any and all energy-saving technologies, techniques or "old-home energy saving information" to the members.

My overall life experience, which includes 10 years of military service, moderately successful businessman, and 24 years of marriage and still counting, give me the dedication that will be needed to fulfill the responsibilities of this office. I am asking GLE members for their support and vote.

Please Vote! Your ballot is part of the special cover wrap on this magazine.



Larry Monshor

Home: Gaylord

Occupation: Engineer/CPA

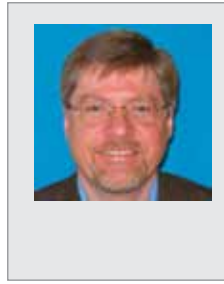
Co-op Member: 7 years

Co-op Director: 4 years

As a co-op board member, my responsibility is to focus on making electricity available, reliable and affordable to the farms, businesses and homes of rural Michigan. Because electricity is the basis for our modern society, the board's challenge is to manage costs in spite of the increasing expenses for fuel, wages and materials. At the same time, the concerns of the members must be heard and acted upon. This is an interesting challenge that I enjoy very much.

To become a more effective board member, I have participated in a continuing education program and have been certified by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association as a credentialed and board leadership director.

I believe our future is bright; I look forward to serving on the board and ask for your support in the election. Thank you.



Paul Schemanski

Home: Petoskey

Occupation: Health Care

Co-op Member: 12 years

Your comfort is my goal. Comfort from being treated justly and from knowing that the cooperative is a good steward of the environment. Comfort from proactively encouraging the development of renewable energy.

Comfort from engaging in conversations with you, from listening, and from seeking to understand.

Given the current economic challenges, are you comfortable with the cooperative spending millions more to improve the availability of electricity from 99.96 percent of the time to 99.98 percent of the time?

Visit www.facebook.com/VotePaulSchemanski to engage in a conversation and to help me understand what makes you comfortable.

Qualifications: 16 years electric utility experience, former chairman of a Christian Camp, Rotary member, volunteer Mediator, township Parks and Recreation Board member, graduate of Chamber of Commerce's Community Leadership program, master's degree in Business Administration.

Will you join me? Your comfort is just a vote away.

Thank you.



Susan Scott

Home: Evart

**Occupation: Retired social worker/
farmer**

Co-op Member: 35 years

Co-op Director: 6 years

Thanks for the rewarding, challenging opportunity to serve the past six years on your board of directors. In doing so, I continue a tradition of service set by my husband and his father as co-op directors before me. I also bring a female perspective to our mission of providing reliable, affordable electric service to your homes, families and businesses.

During my board tenure, I have become a certified cooperative director through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, completing courses in director responsibilities, the electric power business, strategic and financial planning, power supply issues, rate setting, renewable energy and board leadership. I have served as board secretary for the past five years.

Please vote to re-elect me so I can work to help our co-op continue meeting the upcoming challenges of balancing power generation needs against environmental concerns while providing a reliable source of electricity that all members can afford.

More Close Encounters

In a previous column I wrote about the chance encounters I had with memorable people in July 1967, and I asked readers to share similar stories. Here are experiences from four of you.

The Singer

“While attending a postmaster convention in Kansas City in 1980, my wife and I learned that singer Lynn Anderson was going to perform at an outdoor venue next to our hotel.

Much to our disappointment, we found out that her performance would be during our closing banquet so we would be unable to see her. As we were getting on the elevator on our way to the banquet, I was still complaining about missing her performance when the elevator door opened a few floors below ours, and Lynn Anderson stepped in.

I was so surprised that I couldn't even say hello!”

Wayne Zwolinski, Petoskey

Navy Seals

“Girls weekend in Washington State! Friends for 52 years. Though face-to-face meetings are few, friendship and feelings are as close as ever.

Girl 1 arrives on September 10, 2001. Girl 2 is scheduled to fly in on September 12. Girl 3 flies from Detroit Metro at 8:45 on September 11.

I notice that the scenery seems closer than on previous flights across the country. September color is beginning to appear. A glorious autumn day filled with anticipation!

I recognize the plane taking evasive action! During a sharp turn, fighter jets fly overhead. We're going to be shot down! I begin to pray. The pilot at long last states: “We have a national emergency!”

We land in Kansas City to chaos. TV monitors capture and hold everyone's attention.

My only desire is to return to my family in Michigan. As a child during WWII in Europe, I know that did not always happen.

My uncommon name, correctly pronounced, comes over the loudspeakers, a never-before event for this frequent flier. A tall man, 6 ft. 2 in. or more, roughly my age, asks me to identify myself. I do!

Then I assert myself and say, “You know who I am, but how do I know who you really are?”

He pulls out a card and says I have a description of you, “Blonde hair, big blue eyes, and big boobs.” I know for certain that irreverent and irrepressible Girl 1 had given that description! All is well.

He tells me he is a Navy Seal, like my intended host. He and a companion Seal will take me to his home and we will work out plans.

Next day I rent a car and make my way successfully home to family and Michigan with gratitude.

Some folks are deserving of fame, but their heroic deeds are kept secret, known but to God and comrades-in-arms. These Navy Seals are among them.”

Ilze Bailey, Alpena



Photo - Courtesy Nick Edson

Dominic (Boston Red Sox) and Joe DiMaggio (New York Yankees) were part of baseball's greatest rivalry in the 1940s. The brothers get together during pre-game in 1949.

The Sluggers

“As a high school sophomore living in Honolulu in 1943, I would often eat at a sports bar at the end of my block. Due to so many servicemen, management would seat waiting customers at the first empty seats, even with others at the table.

One day the owner, who knew me, seated me and my friend at a table with two soldiers.

He then asked, “Jack, do you know who you are sitting with?”

One did look familiar, but I answered, “I don't.”

He then introduced Joe and Dom DiMaggio. A nice conversation followed, and I still have their autographs.”

Jack H. Myers, Toledo, OH

The President

“Thousands of Lithuanians escaped to the West from the oncoming Russian Army at the end of WWII.

Valdas Adamkus and I ended up in the same refugee camp in Bavaria, Germany. Being about 10 years older, he was an athlete and our hero.

Fast forward to Illinois in 1981. He had become an engineer and was appointed director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Midwest Region. After retiring, he was twice elected president of Lithuania.

On Oct. 3, 2009, he was honored in Lemont, IL, where he graciously signed an autograph for my grandson Gytis, and posed for a picture with me.”

Romualdas Kriauciunas, Ph.D., Lansing

I have my own “singer” story. When I was working for a photographic association in the '70s, we contracted with singer, actor and dancer Sammy Davis Jr. to be the spokesman for a national photography promotion. We met him in San Francisco for a photo shoot, and he invited us to his apartment on Nob Hill for drinks at the end of the day. Despite his gregariousness on stage, he seemed to prefer the privacy of his simple apartment. He was proud of his video equipment, which I recall as a professional Betamax system, which allowed him to watch movies he borrowed from the studios. He was especially proud of his cooking, and although he may have cooked for himself, there was nothing in his kitchen except canned food.

I was sad when we left, because he seemed lonely. Whenever I saw him on TV or in movies afterward, I realized how much he was really acting.

Thanks for sharing.

Mike Buda is editor emeritus of Country Lines. Email Mike at mbuda@countrylines.com or comment on his columns at countrylines.com/column/ramblings





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Newman Chapel mobile food pantry, Hesperia



Alanson Church of the Nazarene soup kitchen



Sandcastles Children's Museum, Ludington

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