A Service of **Cloverland Electric Cooperative**

May/June 2011

Michigan COUNTRY LINES

Important **Member Survey** Card Inside!

Look Down

to save up to 80% on your heating & cooling costs

The key to cutting your heating & cooling costs is in the ground right under you. Using the constant temperature of the earth, ClimateMaster geothermal systems keep you comfortable year-round while saving more than half on your energy bill.

CLIMATEMASTER®
Geothermal Heat Pump Systems

"We chose Climatemaster geothermal to replace our furnace. Because our rural home used propane, we were told that the payback would be less than five years. The cost savings were better than we even expected. The heat is very even without the fluctuations over time we had with the propane furnace. Also, the heat is more evenly distributed from one part of the house to another. The air-conditioning in the Summer is similarly flawless. The even cooling and ease of control make this the best change we've made. It is reliably keeping us comfortable and doing it extremely well."

- Dale
Holland, Michigan

Ann Arbor
Jetstream Mechanical
734-668-8010

Cadillac
Cornwell Mechanical
231-429-2996

Columbus Twp.
Superior Heating & Cooling
800-770-9903

Comstock Park
Haisma Heating & Cooling
616-784-9552

Dexter
CMR Mechanical LLC
734-424-9555

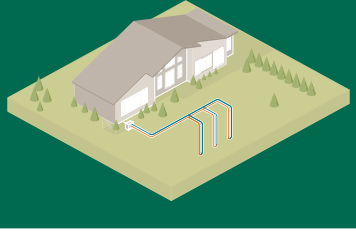
Evart
Rite Choice Heating Inc
231-734-6473

Kewadin
Blue Flame Heating & A/C
231-264-5706

North Branch
Jeff Brewer Mechanical
810-688-4338

Sault Ste Marie
Albert Heating & Cooling
906-632-6900

CLIMATEMASTER®
Geothermal Heat Pump Systems



An underground loop system and the constant temperature of the Earth combine to create a comfortable climate in your home.

climatemaster.com

May 2011
Vol. 31, No. 6

Editor
Gail Knudtson

Associate Editor
Doug Snitgen

Design Editor
Cindy Zuker

Ad/Recipe Assistant
Jennifer Hansen

Publisher
Craig Borr

Editor Emeritus
Mike Buda

Michigan Country Lines, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Okemos, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

Subscriptions are authorized for members of Alger Delta, Cherryland, Cloverland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks Tri-County, Midwest Energy, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Thumb electric cooperatives by their boards of directors. Subscriptions are $6 per year.

Postmaster: send address changes to Country Lines, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

Letters to the editor should be sent to the same address. Phone 517-351-6322. **Email: knudtson@countrylines.com**.

Association officers are **Brian Burns**, PIE&G, chairman; **Ken Swope**, Midwest Energy, 1st vice chairman; **Tony Anderson,** Cherryland, 2nd vice chairman; **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power, secretary-treasurer; and **Steve Boeckman**, Great Lakes Energy, past chairman. **Craig Borr** is president and CEO.

Unsolicited letters, photos and manuscripts are welcome. *Country Lines,* however, will not be responsible for their safe keeping or return.

The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

Display ad representatives:
Michigan–Kissman Consulting
517-244-1844
National Country Market
512-441-5200

Change of Address: Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.

Printed by a MICHIGAN GREAT PRINTER

PRINTED WITH SOY INK

Michigan COUNTRY LINES


11


Photo – Ohio Electric Cooperatives
12


Photo – Nissan
14

DEPARTMENTS

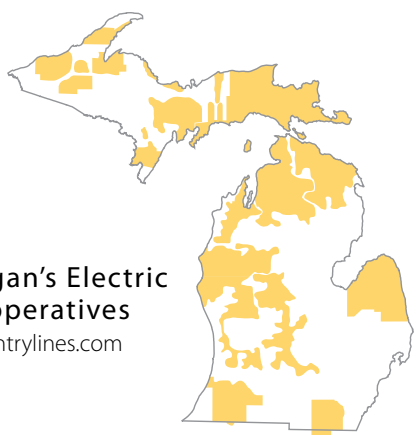
YOUR CO-OP

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

*Not in all editions

COLUMNS

FEATURES



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

On the Cover*
Bob (L), Mary, Josh and Jenn Hance enter their smokin' good food in barbecue competitions.
Photo – Roger Boettcher, Leavenworth Photographics

Cloverland
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

MEMBER SERVICE CENTERS

Monday–Friday • 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

906-635-6800 • 1-800-562-4953

Email: office@cloverland.com

24/7 Outage Reporting

Dafter (Main Office)
2916 W. M-28, Dafter, MI 49724

DeTour Village
836 M-134, DeTour Village, MI 49725

Newberry
6214 County Rd. 403, Newberry, MI 49868

Sault Ste. Marie
2972 W. 8th St., Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Email: board@cloverland.com

Robert Schallip District B – Neebish Island	President
Rodney Richards District C – McMillan	Vice President
Richard Newland District A – DeTour Village	Secretary/ Treasurer
Dale Carlson District A – Stalwart	Director
Gerald Nettleton District A – DeTour Village	Director
Carl Eagle District B – Sault Ste. Marie	Director
Frank Talentino District B – Sault Ste. Marie	Director
Tamara Gady District C – Moran	Director
Peter Legault District C – Engadine	Director

General Manager Daniel Dasho
Local Editor Wendy Malaska

cloverland.com

We're Looking Out For You

The following message was presented at your electric co-op's annual district meetings.

I am very excited as I write this letter because I get to welcome an entire group of new members to Cloverland Electric Cooperative. You are not only members of our co-op family, but now also owners of an electric utility.

What a year it's been! Dan Dasho and his staff have spent countless hours and endured many sleepless nights in an effort to build a better, stronger cooperative. I commend them for their leadership and dedication. Further, the board of directors is very proud of all those who have embraced the transformation and contributed to its success. The complex task of merging our operations has had its challenges. We have relocated offices, staff and equipment to create a more functional, efficient organization. In the process, we have also hired five new employees since we finalized the acquisition on May 4, 2010, and now have 105 employees.

Robert Schallip
President
Board of Directors

We have restructured our member services department. This team is now cross-trained to handle billing questions, discuss services and programs, enter outage tickets, and help with new services and service upgrades. Basically, "one call does it all." As with any change, our goal is to improve service to you, our member-owners.

We also had a successful year operating our diesel engines. We reduce our power costs significantly by operating them during peak-load times. We refer to this practice as "hitting the peak." Co-op staff monitors energy use load forecasts and weather data to determine when to operate the engines. It's part science and part crystal ball. So far, we have been on-target 10 out of the last 12 months, reducing power costs by nearly $2 million.

Power cost is an important topic that affects everyone. While quite a bit of our power is renewable hydro power that is generated locally, we still need to get the balance from somewhere else. We have a power supply contract with Wisconsin Electric to purchase the additional power needed. While we can control costs somewhat by operating our diesel engines, we still face rising power costs.

On a national level, the Environmental Protection Agency is taking a bigger role in regulating greenhouse gas emissions since Congress did not pass climate legislation last year. While we are certainly concerned with our environment, we are equally concerned with the outcome of their efforts. Given that a portion of our purchased power is generated from fossil fuels, we fear proposed policies would close many older, low-cost coal-fired plants, make it more difficult to construct new ones, and consequently make electricity less affordable. While nuclear power was becoming the power of choice, the situation in Japan has unfortunately raised concerns about its use.

Finally, on behalf of our board of directors, employees and members, I extend our deepest appreciation to District B director Frank Talentino and District C director Rodney Richards for nearly 30 combined years of dedicated service to Cloverland Electric Cooperative. They decided not to seek re-election this year. Rodney was elected in 1993 and Frank in 1999. I have watched and admired the way they've analyzed situations over the years and developed solutions. They are true stewards of the cooperative spirit and will be missed.

To those new to the Cloverland Electric family, I welcome you and encourage you to learn more about your cooperative.

As your directors, we represent you. So, please feel free to contact us if you have questions or concerns. We're here looking out for you.

How Much is Too Much?

Estimate the energy your appliances use to see if it's time for upgrades.

You've had your fridge forever. With the exception of some crumbling parts of the seal, it's in pretty good shape and keeps your food cool. Why worry about budgeting for an upgrade?

Some homeowners forget the impact inefficient appliances can have on their monthly electric bills. Replacing a refrigerator made before 1993 with a new, Energy Star®-rated model could shave $65 to $100 off your bill each year. To sweeten the deal, rebate programs provide further incentives for folks replacing old appliances with new, energy-efficient alternatives.

So, the question when evaluating appliance usage is: How much energy use is too much? This simple formula will help you estimate the annual energy use of any electric appliance:

Wattage × Hours used per day × Days used per year ÷ 1,000 = Kilowatt-hours (kWh) used annually

For example, a standard, large-screen TV uses 214 watts. Using the formula above shows that 214 Watts × 4 hours per day x 365 days per year ÷ 1,000 = 312 kWh annually. To calculate an estimated annual operating cost, just take that number and multiply by 12 cents and your TV costs about $37.44 per year.

In contrast, an Energy Star-rated standard, large-screen TV uses 151.5 watts, costing you an estimated $26.46 per year.

You can usually find the wattage—or maximum power it draws—stamped on the bottom, back or nameplate of most appliances. Since some appliances have a range of settings (such as hair dryers), the actual amount of power consumed depends on the setting used at any one time.

Once you calculate how much money you spend to run aging home appliances, compare it to what it would cost to use more efficient models. With federal incentives bringing down the price of an Energy Star refrigerator or clothes washer, the annual savings could be worth an up-front investment.

Photo – © iStockphoto.com/omgimages

There are other benefits, too. For example, clothes washers have become 64 percent more efficient since 2000, and the tub size has increased by 9 percent. With a new model, you can wash more clothes for less money every month!

Don't want the hassle of adding up the potential savings? Visit TogetherWeSave.com to see how small changes like replacing an appliance or unplugging electronics can lead to big energy savings.

Visit michigan-energy.org for a listing of our latest Energy Star rebates and energy optimization programs.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy; U.S. Energy Information Administration; Association of Home Appliance Manufacturers; Natural Resources Defense Council

SAFETY *Matters*

Stay Safe On All Occassions!

On special occasions like Mother's Day and Father's Day, kids sometimes sneak into the kitchen to whip up a surprise breakfast. It's always a treat to wake up to the smell of breakfast. Their smiles more than make up for the disaster zone normally left in the wake.

We can rest easy as adults knowing we've made the kitchen as safe as possible for these experiments (and mountain of dishes) to come.

In preparation, check all appliance cords. Since an average of 3,600 home fires start each year with toasters and toaster ovens, it's best not to take chances. Replace older units and install special outlets in the kitchen and bathrooms (anywhere near water, really) with ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs). If a problem occurs, such as an appliance overheating or a wayward coffee maker tipping into the sink—the power is shut off immediately. A red test button reminds you to check these outlets monthly.

Even refrigerators can pose a safety risk and are responsible for about 1,000 fires annually. Every three months, take off the small panel at the base of your fridge and vacuum away dust and debris. Not only does this prevent fires, it makes your fridge more efficient.

May is National Electrical Safety Month. Please take the time to check your home for electrical hazards. To learn more, visit safetyathome.com and safeelectricity.org or take a home safety tour at virtualhome.esfi.org.

May is National Electrical Safety Month

Whether it's a holiday or any day, we want to help you keep your family safe.

Jim Mackie *is Cloverland's Safety and Loss Prevention Coordinator.*
906-632-5152
jsmackie@cloverland.com

State Sen. Nofs Speaks to Co-op Leaders

Sen. Mike Nofs, chair of the Senate Energy and Technology Committee, spoke to a group of co-op managers, directors and staff during the April annual meetings of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association and Wolverine Power Cooperative.

"It's an interesting time [for Michigan]—"we're looking at doing things differently," Nofs said. Issues of note included deregulation of the state's telecommunications industry, renewable and energy efficiency standards for utilities, and making business and pension tax revisions he says will make Michigan more competitive.

"We're taking on tough issues because we don't want to leave a legacy of debt for our kids," Nofs added.

MECA is the service organization for Michigan's nine distribution co-ops, and Wolverine is the state's only electric generation and transmission co-op.

The two groups also held their board of directors elections with Tony Anderson of Cherryland Electric Cooperative in Grawn as MECA's chair, and Dale Farrier of Kalkaska chosen as Wolverine's chairman.

Shocking? May is National Electrical Safety Month

Protect your home and family from fires and electrocution.

Electrical problems in older homes account for nearly 55,000 fires every year. These blazes cause more than 500 deaths, injure more than 1,400 people, and rack up $1.4 billion in property damage.

The risk of such fires is significant since one-half of all homes in the United States were constructed and wired prior to 1973, according to the U.S. Census Bureau—before the advent of garage door openers or home computers. Even more telling, one-third of U.S. homes were built before hair dryers or electric can openers were even invented!

"As each year goes by, Americans consume more energy in their homes," says Brett Brenner, president of Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI). "Many homes and electrical systems are simply being overburdened, which leads to fires, injuries and deaths."

ESFI has created a checklist that lets consumers identify electrical dangers commonly found in each room of the house. Owners of older homes can upgrade their electrical systems with newer fire prevention technology, such as arc fault circuit interrupters (AFCIs). These advanced electronic circuit breakers detect dangerous conditions in a home's wiring and cut off power before a fire develops.

Additionally, those living in older homes with children can install tamper-resistant receptacles. These devices look like normal electrical outlets, but they have a built-in shutter system that prevents children from inserting foreign objects into the slots. Using tamper-resistant receptacles would prevent most of the 2,400 burns suffered by children each year from outlets.

More resources on National Electrical Safety Month can be found at electricalsafety.org, or call (703) 841-3229.

MYSTERY PHOTO

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

Call in your entry to *Country Lines* at 517-351-6322, ext. 306, email **jhansen@countrylines.com**, or mail it to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and co-op. The winner will be announced in the July/August 2011 issue.

The March contest winner is **Connie Pritchard** of **Blanchard**, who correctly identified the building in Bertha Brock Park, Ionia County.

March photo

Do you know where this is? ▶

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Don't keep your refrigerator or freezer too cold. Recommended temperatures are 37° to 40° F for the main refrigerator compartment and 5° F for the freezer. If you have a stand-alone freezer, it should be kept at 0° F. Appliance settings may vary, so an easy way to check the temperature is to use a meat thermometer.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

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.

Skunks

The article "Spring's Little Stinkers" (March) was very disturbing, to say the least. Starting with a little background, my grandfather was Mark Craw, who was one of the first game wardens north of Lansing. As a child, he raised me in the woods. My father was the ad manager for the *Michigan Farmer*, a bi-monthly farm publication. Both were hunters and fishermen and taught me to never shoot (kill) any animal that I would not eat. They both considered "sportsmen" who killed for the fun of it like coyote hunters to be the lowest of the so-called outdoorsman. We hunted, we fished, and we ate what we hunted and fished for.

There is no reason to kill a skunk unless you don't know any better and/or enjoy killing.

Skunks are inquisitive and yes, they will spray when threatened. If they are not threatened, they WILL NOT SPRAY because spraying is a defense behavior. Let me give you an example or two. Where we live we have skunks come to our front yard to clean up under our bird feeders. I go out in the yard and sit down within 20 feet of them and set quietly. They ignore until they feel safe and then they will walk right up to me. Because I'm no threat, I have never been sprayed or even threatened.

If a skunk gets into the house it's easy to get them out without being sprayed. For a skunk to spray it must lift its tail and curl it over its back. Very quietly and slowly go into the room where it is and sit down in the middle of the floor. If you sit quietly the skunk will in a short time come right up to you. Quickly grab the tail and quickly lift it up so it is hanging down. In this position it can't spray. Simply walk out into the yard and swinging it by the tail let it fly. It will hit the ground running and you're home free. And, so is the skunk.

In short, I not only question Mr. Ingle's sportsman's attitude, I question his methods that lead to killing. Maybe he should learn what my grandfather and father taught me regarding hunting and fishing.

– Michael Cromley, Afton

Carrom Games

I enjoyed the article about Paul Kruska's collection of Carrom games made by the Carrom Company in Ludington. I collect cribbage boards and am a member of the Cribbage Board Collector Society. My primary focus was cribbage boards made by the Drueke Company, of Grand Rapids. The Carrom Company purchased Drueke in the early '90s and moved it to Ludington. I have roughly 125 different Drueke boards made from the '40s through the time they were bought by Carrom.

My wife Betty and I are hosting the 12th annual CBCS convention here in Grand Haven this September. My Drueke collection will be on display at the Tri-Cities Historical Museum, in Grand Haven, for three months during that time.

By the way, the game of cribbage was invented by Sir. John Suckling in 1635, so cribbage is an OLD game!

– Cecil Bradshaw, Grand Haven

Enjoyed the article about the Carrom board games. It brought back fond childhood memories as my grandparents had one. My cousins and I played Carroms until our "flicking fingers" were sore.

We also had Daisy BB guns and would play for hours in the sand with our metal trucks and cars. I did know the Daisy factory was in Plymouth, but did not know the Carrom boards were made in Ludington or that they are still being made. Guess I will get one for my grandkids.

– Judy Heslip, Goetzville

Experience Portland

I just finished reading your article about Portland. I wanted to take the time to tell you how awesome I thought it was! You did a great job describing our town and made me very proud to say I belong to this great community. I never really realized how blessed we were with so many fun activities and the beauty of our own little town until I saw it there in color on a two-page article. How cool!

– Tanya Schafer

Big-city Volume

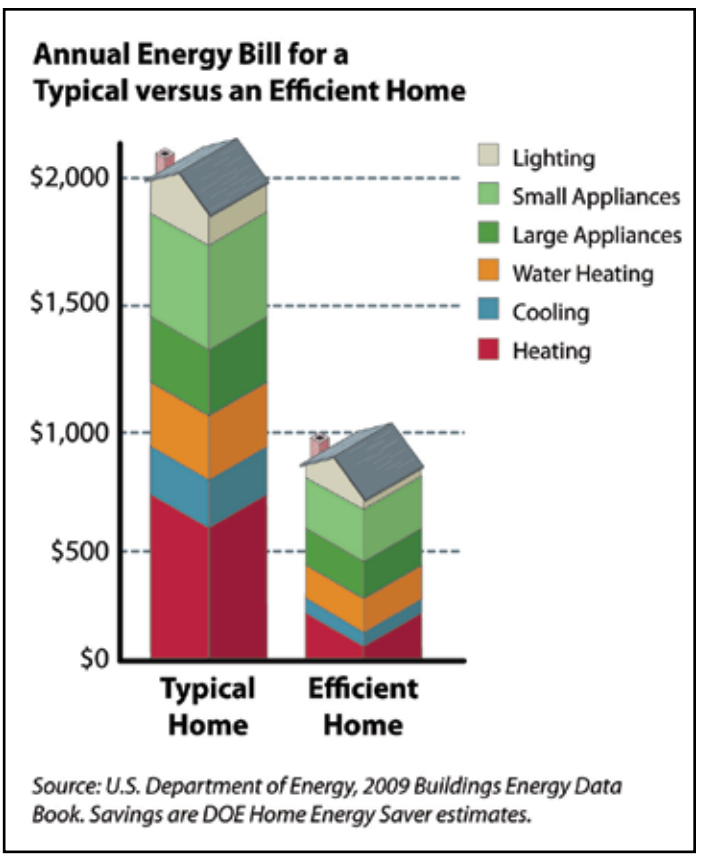
For both economical and environmental reasons it makes sense to make our homes and businesses "energy efficient." The obvious steps for the homeowner may include lighting, thermostat settings, sealing cracks and ductwork, water heater, A.C., etc. Considering all the homes in town and country, the savings add up.

That brings me to wonder what's going on in our large metropolitan areas such as New York, Los Angeles, Dallas and others. Often, while watching evening news programs on TV, an interview will show an individual with a big-city backdrop. It's at night and most of the lights are on in the windows of the sky scrapers. Sure they are all probably fluorescent, but wow, that's a whole lot of 'em. Are all these rooms being used at 8 p.m.?

I hope my conservation efforts and those of others are not being "cancelled" by the sheer volume of the "big-city."

It would appear the "great white way" is still "shining thru the night."

– John Stewart, Gaylord



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book. Savings are DOE Home Energy Saver estimates.

Cloverland Electric Cooperative's Hydroelectric Plant in Sault Ste. Marie.

MPSC Approves 2011 PSCR Plan

On April 12, 2011, the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) approved Cloverland Electric Cooperative's 2011 Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) plan. Beginning in May, the authorized PSCR factors will be reduced to $0.00045 for the legacy Cloverland Electric Cooperative service area and $0.00216 for the legacy Edison Sault Electric service area. The prior authorized rates were $0.00538 and $0.03927, respectively. The amount of the reduction in the PSCR rate has been rolled into the base energy rates for each legacy territory. The MPSC agreed this action did not result in an increase in electric bills, but only a shift between what is being charged through the PSCR factor and the base energy rate. As a result, the PSCR factors are now more appropriately aligned, based on the overall power costs for the new combined cooperative.

Each September, Cloverland Electric is required to file a PSCR plan with the MPSC that forecasts purchased power costs for the subsequent year. In addition, it is required to file an annual PSCR reconciliation that illustrates the actual power costs for that year. The MPSC audits those results annually.

For Cloverland Electric, the biggest variable in determining the PSCR factor is the availability of water for power production. In recent years, the water allocation has been substantially lower than historical averages. The water levels in the Great Lakes are well below normal levels, which is the primary reason for the lower allocation. Cloverland monitors the water flow on a daily basis to make certain that it is used in the most efficient manner possible. By allowing more water flow through the hydro plant during peak periods of the day, it substantially reduces the amount of power Cloverland Electric has to purchase elsewhere.

Bob Malaski *is Cloverland's director of power marketing and regulatory affairs.*
906-632-5172
bmalaski@cloverland.com

It's Time to Look in the Mirror on Energy Issues

With the tragic events and loss related to the tsunami and Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant continuing to unfold in Japan, it is clearly time that we have more, and particularly nonpartisan discussions about national energy policy.

At this point, it would clearly be easy to turn away from an energy future that involves nuclear power. However, we cannot move this country forward without nuclear being a part of our generation mix. The fact of the matter is that nuclear already generates nearly 20 percent of the power supply in this country (and a sizable portion in Michigan).

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear incident has focused new attention on the future of nuclear power in this country—as it should. However, we cannot ignore the fact that nuclear power has served this country well for over 30 years and needs to continue. And, safety needs to continue to be the highest priority. We need to pause, reassess and ensure that public safety and dependability are overriding concerns, especially with nuclear and the far more serious safety challenges it involves. There are a number of high-quality nuclear power research initiatives that are ongoing in both this country and throughout the world.

In Michigan, Detroit Edison is exploring the potential for constructing a new nuclear reactor at its current Fermi site near Monroe. Further, Wolverine Power Cooperative is part of a national consortium of utilities that is exploring small, modular nuclear reactors—like the type that power our country's nuclear submarine fleet. These are important and exciting developments for Michigan and must continue if we intend to meet our state's energy needs.

What is often lost in the debate is the fact that a significant portion of this country's old, coal-fired generation plants will likely be forced to shut down as a result of new, environmental laws at the federal level. Many of these plants are old and dirty, and should be shut down.

Again, the more significant question is, "How do we replace that generation?" Under any scenario, nuclear must be an option. Renewable energy and energy efficiency are also important elements in our generation "tool box." However, at this point they remain very small-scale when compared to our energy needs—particularly with any meaningful economic recovery.

Currently, there are about 100 nuclear power plants operating in this country, and more than one-half of them are over 30 years old. Like our coal fleet, many of them are nearing the end of their original federal operating licenses. To date, 62 of those plants have received operating license extensions and 20 more have pending applications. We will need every one of these plants to meet our country's growing energy needs and demand.

***Craig Borr** is the president and CEO of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. His email is cborr@countrylines.com*

As electric cooperatives, we are proud to be leaders in renewable energy, energy efficiency and the exploration of small, modular nuclear reactors. However, we must be careful that the unfortunate events in Japan do not place Michigan and our country in a situation of halting nuclear power as a viable generation source. We need nuclear and we will also need additional new, state-of-the art fossil fuel plants if we have any hope of meeting our future state, regional and national energy needs.

We need a diverse mix of fuel sources. A scenario where our country only builds natural gas-fired generation, wind, solar and other types of renewables will not get us to the finish line. That would be a dangerous overreaction on our part to the tragic events unfolding in Japan. Further, it is simply not being honest with ourselves when we look in the mirror.

Let's Barbecue!

Once bitten by the BBQ bug, it's hard to let go.

The love Americans have for all things barbecue is embracing another, and her name is competition.

As highly competitive people that love to cook, the Hance family knows it's pull. It all started five years ago when Josh, an information systems technician at Midwest Energy Cooperative in Cassopolis, entered a small "backyard chef" contest.

"I did it for something to do and thought I could cook pretty good," he recalls. "But the whole day turned out to be a disaster. I scored embarrassingly low in all categories that I entered; but I had been bitten by the barbeque bug." Returning the next year with a team, including his dad, Bob (Midwest's CEO), mom Mary, and wife Jenn, they took first place in the beef and pork categories, with grand champion honors that year and the following. "At this point, I started looking for additional contests, figuring we had a real gift and we should take our talents on the road," Josh smiles.

That's when Josh discovered the largest society of barbecue enthusiasts in the world, the Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS). The KCBS judges and promotes barbecue as "America's cuisine" with over 4,000 teams competing in about 300 annual contests.

"Getting involved competitively happened mostly on a whim," Bob explains. "Somehow Josh dropped the suggestion that 'we ought to do this,' we did, and the competitive fire was started."

"[To say] that we showed up to our first [KCBS] event ill-prepared is an understatement," Josh says, "I will never forget it for as long as I live." Watching two large trailer smokers pull next to his three small Brinkmann stand smokers on a blazing-hot afternoon, he realized his team had come from being a big deal at the county fair to a little fish in a very big pond.

But then, something happened.

"As I was fighting furiously with an E-Z Up Canopy...our new neighbors-for-the-weekend came over and lent a generous hand with setting up the remainder of our site," Josh recalls. (He hasn't seen the Black Pig BBQ team since, but hopes to someday repay the favor.) Other teams came by with advice, encouragement and offers to share a meal, and he soon felt surrounded by friends.

That day, his team also found that their own smokers worked great, but needed a lot of attention to maintain the temperature and were too small for all the meat. So, they began watching other teams, asking questions, and looking at manufactured smokers.

Realizing that most smokers have the same basic principles and propane-tank shape, they tracked down an old decommissioned tank. They talked over their needs with Josh's uncle, Steve Powles, and by the following spring he had built them a large trailer smoker.

Photos – Roger Boettcher/Leavenworth Photographics

Smoking at a maximum 225 degrees makes the fat melt slowly and the meat simply fall apart. The KCBS contest fees can run $200-$250, plus the meat and travel costs.

About their team name, "Sweet Racks & Smokin' Butts," Bob explains, "We wanted something that was funny and memorable. These have also been our two best categories, so it fits us well."

Like any relationship, barbecue teams put in lots of hard work and often arrive between 9 and 11 a.m. on the first day and don't leave (or sleep) until 5 p.m. the next day. Preparing the meat can take four to five hours, and the pork shoulders and beef briskets smoke for about 12 hours at a maximum 225 degrees.

"It's really a love-hate thing," Bob explains, "it is at the same time exhausting and exhilarating, monotonous and energizing, disappointing and rewarding. It is some of the best friendly competition that I've been exposed to."

Besides good friends, the biggest reward a champion receives is bragging rights until the next one. "But prizes make it a little sweeter," Josh says. Purses can range from $4,000 to $100,000 for the Sam's Club National BBQ Tour's National Championship. For most events, however, the average grand champion walks away with $1,500 to $2,500.

But the friendly competition that arises within the "barbecue family" are almost as coveted as the prize money itself. "We met the 'Aww Hell' [team] at our first competition," Josh says. As the two teams met at more contests, friendly wagers followed, and they now have their own little traveling trophy. "We compete at the same locations whenever we can," he adds.

Josh's final tip is, "Aprons are a must, because BBQ ain't BBQ if it ain't messy!"

A Few Smokin' Events

Smokin' On the Water
Liberty, IN, April 30-May 1

Sam's Club BBQ Series
Traverse City, June 10-11

Taste of Grand Rapids State BBQ Championship
Grand Rapids, July 22-23

Silver Lake Apple & BBQ Festival
Silver Lake, Sept 9-10

Kansas City Barbeque Society:
kcbs.us or 1-800-963-5227

▶Bob (L-R), Mary, Josh and Jenn Hance are the "Sweet Racks & Smokin' Butts" BBQ team with their original (small) smoker and trailer model. "It's incredibly fun and exhausting and worth experiencing at least once," Josh says.

Crazy Grill Contest Winners

It's a tie!

The judges wouldn't back down, so we had to name two winners.

GRILLS GONE WILD

#1a Donald Korson of Gowen and a couple of his buddies made this 1979 Buick Riviera into a roaster. The trunk is fire-proofed and they keep it parked when roasting. It requires electricity for the "spicket" to go 'round, and they roast pigs, small beef, prime rib, pork loin and chicken. It has been a big hit at hundreds of parties and celebrations over the years!

We received 20 entries for our first-ever Crazy BBQ Grill Contest, and in honor of grilling traditions everywhere, we celebrate all the entries—they were creatively clever and practical at the same time. Our judging panel was very hard-headed about agreeing on which entry deserved to be named number one, so we eneded up with two. Thanks to all who sent in entries!

#1b Buzz Possehn of Saranac built this towable Jeep grill by replacing the original axle with a straight one. He enters it in parades and displays it at the Bad Azz Truck Expo to promote the Ionia Free Fair every year.

Honorable Mentions…

Jimmy (left) and Jim Scollin of Petoskey dare to claim their grill, named the "Chariot of Fire," is the best charcoal grill in northern Michigan.

Paul Wilson (from left) built this "hot rod" grill and, with co-owners Rick Shaffer and Vic Cerchiori, they use it for pig and chicken roasts at their man-cave near Walkerville. (Note the grilling book in Vic's hand.)

Bob Greenlund's custom grill, affectionately known as "Uncle Don," was made by his son-in-law and grandson. The unit is complete with a keg tank for heating water during the grilling process and runs to the attached sink. Bob lives in Rapid River and Uncle Don is present at every family function.

'REEP' the Perks of Renewable Energy!

The residential energy efficient property (REEP) tax credit slashes 30 percent of the cost of alternative energy-producing systems, including geothermal heating-and-cooling systems, solar energy systems and small wind turbines.

There is no lifetime cap for this tax credit, it expires in 2016, and covers equipment and professional installation.

Consumers who buy a geothermal system for a home will get a 30 percent credit with no cap as long as the system qualifies for the high-efficiency Energy Star® designation.

Energy-efficient equipment always gives the most bang for the buck when old furnaces, air conditioners or heat pumps need replacement. The tax credit makes geothermal an option worth serious consideration.

Without the tax credit or other incentive, a geothermal system for a 2,000-square-foot home typically starts around $15,000 — well above a conventional high-efficiency heating-and-cooling system averaging about $8,000.

Geothermal Savings, Payback

A geothermal system can save hundreds of dollars a year in electricity. Without the tax credit, it could take 10 to 14 years to recover up-front costs—longer than homeowners usually stay in a house.

But consumers can cut the payback time in half thanks to the 30 percent tax credit. If other incentives are available, the payback time is even less. A growing number of electric co-ops are exploring or already offering incentives for geothermal installation.

Heating and cooling are the largest household energy expenses, typically accounting for more than one-half of energy used. Geothermal systems quietly provide reduced-cost space conditioning and can be equipped to supply nearly-free hot water.

As the most energy-efficient heating and cooling systems available, geothermal harnesses the sun's renewable energy by using the earth as a heat exchanger. Geothermal systems go by several names, including "GeoExchange," geothermal heat pumps, and ground-source heat pumps. Visit geoexchange.org or call 888-255-4436 for more information.

Solar Water Heaters and Panels

Solar water heaters, solar panels or photovoltaic systems (solar cells that capture sunshine and convert it directly into electricity) also qualify for the 30-percent tax credit.

The solar device must provide hot water or energy for a dwelling. Solar water heaters used to heat pools or hot tubs cannot qualify.

Solar water heaters are one of the most popular renewable energy technologies because of bang for the buck and relatively simple setup. They can save anywhere from $400 to $1,000 per year in water heating costs, which usually account for about 15 percent of a household's total annual energy needs.

Payback on small wind systems can range from several years to several decades, depending on multiple factors.

A solar water heater supplying one-half or more of domestic hot water starts at about $1,500 without the tax credit. Payback can be as short as five or six years. The reduction in energy bills realized over the unit's 15-20 year life means solar water heaters equal or better the long-term cost of conventional water heaters.

What's more, solar power produces no emissions. Eight tons of carbon dioxide—almost double that of a gasoline fueled car—are produced in generating enough coal-fired electricity to power the water heater for a four-person household.

Solar panels are devices that convert sunlight into electricity. The electricity is direct current (DC), not household alternating current (AC), and needs to be converted. The panels are made in various sizes and rated by the amount of electricity they produce per hour, measured in watts.

Solar panels are usually mounted on the roof of a home and need to face the sun (south) with at least six hours of sunlight (even under fog or cloud cover) daily. Panels are wired together to increase the amount of power produced. For example, five 200-watt panels generate 1,000 watts, or 1 kilowatt of maximum power.

Most systems feed into the electric grid and require an interconnection agreement with the local electric co-op.

Solar panels supply free power, and the initial installation costs are gradually dropping. The federal tax credit, plus other incentives, makes the solar option more appealing to consumers. On average, solar panels return two to four times their cost in saved electricity bills.

The Cooperative Research Network (CRN) says the payback period for a solar panel system can range from fewer than 10 to over 20 years, depending on the system cost, available rebates and incentives, amount of electricity produced, and the retail price of electricity in your community. Your co-op can also provide a capital cost recovery analysis worksheet that you can use to figure the annual operating cost of your system. In addition, an online calculator you can use to figure the payback time can be found at solar-estimate.org.

Payback can be shorter in states with particularly good incentives, says an organization called One Block Off the Grid, which offers group-purchase programs to help people gain an extra discount through bulk purchase of solar panels. Visit 1bog.org or call 877-444-4002 for information.

Wind Power for the Home

Wind power is feasible in many areas, with professionally installed home grid-tied systems typically costing up to $20,000 without the tax credit. As with solar panels, the payback period for wind power can vary widely according to installation costs and incentives. According to CRN, the payback period for a small wind system can range from several years to several decades, depending on the system cost and average annual wind speed at the hub height—the distance from the ground to the center of the turbine rotor. Some experts say the average speed is more critical to the payback period than the install costs.

Not all areas have enough wind to generate electricity. Wind turbines require an average of at least 6.5-mph wind speed to generate electricity. Visit windpoweringamerica.gov/wind_maps.asp for a wind speed map to help determine if your area might be suitable for harvesting wind power.

For a federal tax credit application and eligibility information, visit energystar.gov and click on "tax credits for energy efficiency." Also visit your state's energy office website.

How to 'Go Green' in the Kitchen

Photo - Max Power Concrete

Concrete countertops can be a do-it-yourself project.

Making a kitchen 'green' doesn't have to equal a super-extravagant remodeling job. An earth-friendly strategy can work wonders without breaking the household budget.

An eco-friendly kitchen also means a healthier one, and eliminating or reducing invisible and odorless toxins in cabinets and countertops are giant steps forward.

A green kitchen can be an affordable and rewarding project. Re-using and renewing your kitchen cabinets delivers a fresh new appearance without adding remodeling waste to the local landfill.

Better yet, refreshing a kitchen the green way can dramatically improve indoor air quality. Indoor air can average two to five times more pollution than outdoor air, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Most kitchen cabinets are made of particleboard. This material is made with urea formaldehyde resin—a known carcinogen—which can emit the toxin for the life of the cabinet. Worse, whenever formaldehyde is exposed to heat, the gas becomes more concentrated and toxic when released. Appliances such as ovens and dishwashers give off heat when they're in use near particleboard cabinets.

A cost-effective remedy is to make the particleboard airtight by applying a sealant to all surfaces of the cabinet. It's best to handle this project outdoors, if possible, or during warmer months with the windows open so the kitchen can be ventilated. Removing doors, handles and hinges is a must, and offers the opportunity to update the hardware for a fresh, new look.

Water-based polyurethane sealants are fairly nontoxic and render clear finishes, and can be applied to the particleboard in multiple coats, then primed and painted.

Paints and sealants emit chemicals called volatile organic compounds (VOCs), even years after they dry.

The VOCs in paints and sealants allow for durability and easy application, but the fumes can be harmful and are classified as greenhouse gases. However, fumes from today's paint contain fewer cancer-causing chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde and methylene-chloride than they did in the 1990s. Measured in grams per liter (g/l), the VOC content of conventional paint has since dropped from almost 1,000 g/l to 250 g/l today, thanks to federal regulations.

The good news is that some paints pose far fewer hazards than others, and all are safer than 20 years ago.

Even better, most major manufacturers now offer low-VOC paints that emit less than one-fifth as many harmful gases. They compare well with the pricing and performance of conventional paint. Low-VOC paint has a VOC content of less than 50 g/l, and zero-VOC paint contains five or fewer g/l. A paint's material is listed under the physical data or chemical properties section and is often available on paint manufacturer or retailer websites.

Buy only the amount of paint needed for the job, and store any leftover paint properly for future use. If paint cannot be re-used in the next few years before its quality degrades, it should be donated for re-use or taken to a hazardous waste consolidation facility.

For new wooden cabinets, look for units that are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council for responsible forest management practices. Another option is bamboo. Its fast-growing properties make it one of today's most popular and sustainable choices for kitchen cabinets.

Safe and sustainable resources also abound for new countertops. Products like granite are unsustainable. Laminates can't be recycled and emit formaldehyde or other VOCs. Green choices include recyclable stainless steel, concrete and many other commercially available eco-friendly surface materials.

Another advantage of concrete counters over marble or granite is that it can be completely customizable—it can be sculpted, molded and textured. It's a material that a do-it-yourselfer can easily use to create original counters while saving money from instructions found on numerous websites.

Concrete kitchen countertops can be sustainable as long as the aggregate is made from recycled stone, crushed glass or other recycled materials. Counters can even be made from a mixture of cement and recycled newspaper pulp. A concrete counter should be coated with a natural oil-based sealant once it's dry.

A strikingly vast world of sustainable countertop surfaces makes for a challenging selection process. To get started, consider requesting samples of surface materials to test for staining and durability. See for yourself if a sample will hold up as a food preparation surface. Keep it in your kitchen awhile. The sample should be able to handle common ingredients such as catsup, coffee, oil and lemon juice without staining, and tough enough to withstand a sharp knife.

Some brands of renewable, commercially available countertop surfaces include:

- ALKEMI, renewedmaterials.com, made from aluminum milling scrap.
- Avonite, avonitesurfaces.com, recycled collection made from certified post-industrial scrap, equal to a recycled content value of 20 percent.
- Bioglass, coveringsetc.com, made of 100-percent recycled glass.
- EcoTop, kliptech.com/ecotop.html, made of recycled paper and renewable bamboo.
- EnviroGlas, enviroglasproducts.com, made of post-consumer and industrial glass.
- IceStone, icestone.biz, made of 100-percent recycled glass in a cement matrix.
- Lithistone, lithistone.net, made from natural mineral binder, sand, stone, recycled material, and organic mineral pigments.
- Richlite, richlite.com, made of recycled paper and sustainable forest products.
- ShetkaStone, ShetkaStone.com, made of recycled paper.
- Trinity Glass Products, made of recycled glass and low-carbon cement, trinityglass-products.com.
- Vetrazzo, vetrazzo.com, made with recycled glass with cement, additives and pigments.

Driveway Revolution

Electrification of America's automobile fleet is being hailed as a great step toward reducing pollution and curbing our nation's dependence on foreign oil. All-electric vehicle choices are currently limited to the Chevrolet Volt, the Nissan Leaf, and a growing number of specialty manufacturers or retrofit kits. Other auto makers, though, have electric car offerings in the wings.

Photo - Cheverolet

Charging stations provide a dedicated 240-volt circuit, similar to that used for electric clothes dryers. Using this type of a station, the all-electric Nissan Leaf can be charged in four hours while the 2011 Chevy Volt, pictured, can be ready to hit the highway in as little as three hours.

Comparing Cars

Not all electric vehicles are alike. The Nissan Leaf, for example, boasts a driving range of roughly 100 miles. Once its 16 kilowatt-hour (kWh) lithium-ion batteries are drained, you better be at your destination and near a 110-volt power outlet for recharging, or have the phone number for roadside assistance handy.

The Chevy Volt offers a gasoline safety net for its pack of 16-kilowatt-hour (kWh) lithium-ion batteries. The car will run on a charge for 40 miles once the batteries are exhausted, and a gas-powered generator produces electricity to keep the car rolling—at least until you run out of gas.

The Volt can also be recharged by plugging it into a traditional 110-volt outlet. This differs from traditional gas-electric hybrid vehicles like the Toyota Prius, where much smaller 1.3-kWh nickel-metal hydride batteries are recharged only by the gas engine and a regenerative braking system (in hybrids, batteries essentially supplement the gas motor). Several electric co-ops are testing plug-in hybrid SUVs and bucket trucks—spin-offs of hybrid technology—that can switch between a gas or diesel engine and 9-kWh to 16-kWh lithium-ion batteries.

All-electric vehicles carry higher price tags than comparable conventional gas-fueled versions—$10,000 to $15,000 more, even after federal tax incentives ranging from $2,500 to $7,500 (depends on battery capacity) are included. (Learn more about electric vehicle tax breaks, available through Jan. 1, 2012, at irs.gov/pub/irs-drop/n-09-58.pdf). Over time, batteries should become cheaper to build, lowering electric vehicle costs.

As a quick comparison, the 2011 Ford Focus (suggested retail is $16,640) and the Chevy Volt ($32,780 after tax credits). Both are four-door sedans, about the same size.

Chevy estimates the average Volt driver will spend $1.50 daily for electricity. Meanwhile, the average Focus owner will spend almost $2.90 on gas daily. At $3 per gallon for gas, the average Volt driver would save $550 annually—but would need to rack up that amount for 32 years to equal the difference in sticker price.

However, if gas rises to $5 per gallon, a Volt driver would save over $1,200 annually, lowering the payback window to 13 years. Of course, actual savings depends on the number of miles driven and car options.

Charge!

Electric cars can be recharged using a traditional 110-volt outlet found in homes. Called Level 1 charging, this takes at least eight hours to charge a Volt and over 20 hours for a Leaf.

Since those are long standby times, consumers may decide to buy a charging station to speed things along. A charging station enables Level 2 charging by way of a dedicated 240-volt circuit, similar to that used for electric clothes dryers. The "Edmunds Car Buying Guide" (edmunds.com) says Level 2 charging for the all-electric Leaf takes four hours while the Volt can be ready to hit the highway in as little as three hours.

Today's charging standards allow for power delivery of up to 16.8 kilowatts delivered at 240 volts and up to 70 amperes. The Volt's Level 1 charging at 1.4 kilowatts is roughly equivalent to the load of a toaster; its Level 2 charging, estimated at 3.5 kilowatts, is similar to the load of a heating and air conditioning system. Heavier-duty charging stations, like the ChargePoint® from Coulomb Technologies, draw about 7 kilowatts.

Charging stations must be installed by a licensed technician, and in many areas the work requires review by a local building inspector. Chevy estimates putting in a charging station costs between $1,200 and $1,500. But the tab can go much higher if a household's electric system needs upgrading to handle the increased load.

Impact

Studies by the Electric Power Research Institute, a nonprofit research group of electric utilities, including co-ops, show electric vehicles will reduce overall emissions of various air pollutants, even when accounting for the emissions from power plants needed to produce the energy for recharging. In fact, plugging cars in at night when power costs and demand are lowest helps an electric system run more efficiently by trimming line losses. Down the road, some co-ops may offer special rates to encourage electric vehicle owners to recharge during these "off-peak" hours.

Electric vehicles are currently being released on a limited basis. Chevy plans to roll out only 50,000 Volts in this, the first model year. It won't be until 2012, at the earliest, that individuals can buy an all-electric vehicle at a dealership without first getting

on a waiting list.

Whether an electric vehicle fits your life depends on how many miles you drive each day, whether you can afford the cost difference between an electric and gas-burning car, and how many amenities you want.

Only time will tell if the peace and quiet ignition of an electric car will replace the traditional engine's roar.

In Michigan

Michigan is at the forefront of preparing for plug-in electric vehicles (PEVs).

Crystal Mountain Resort (Thompsonville), served by Cherryland Electric Co-op, plans to install two PEV charging stations. CEO Jim MacInnes, who started driving a Chevy Volt in March, says they hope to have the units in by mid-May for guests and resort security staff.

MacInnes believes momentum is starting to build on electric vehicles. "Oil is going to be getting more dear, and the Saudis are already retooling and investing towards renewables and nuclear while we continue spending money on oil." The former power engineer adds, "When we run out, we won't have the money to retool."

WMU and GVSU are working with area economic development groups to install free public charging units. WMU has four in the campus' front lot, and stations are also ready at Meijer stores in Holland and Grand Rapids.

GM, DTE Energy and Consumers Energy are teaming to install over 5,300 home and workplace charging units. GM says it will install 350 for staff, and the Lansing Board of Water and Light plans to add 25 stations in 2011. Over 1,500 Chevy dealers nationwide are also slated to install charging units for customers.

The Michigan Public Service Commission has a unit in front of it's building, and a website (pluginmichigan.org/) dedicated to PEVs—what to know before you buy and to ensure a positive experience.

The LG Chem company is building a plant in Holland that is expected to produce PEV batteries by next summer. With 17 Michigan companies that already help to make such batteries, it's expected to create 63,000 jobs in the next decade.

Firing Up With 'Real' Michigan Products

The folks at Murray Products Inc., in Rapid City, are "real" Michiganders. Not only are their fire-starting products made here, they use only Michigan-made materials and resources.

"On our boxes we even feature 'Made in Michigan,'" says Ken Murray, a former builder who started the company in 2009 with his wife, Mary.

Murray became interested in starting the business after a job offer from a friend who was manufacturing similar products. "It got me thinking about making a fire kit to be used in state parks and campgrounds for recreational fires," he says. Since there's more awareness and concern now about transporting firewood (especially across state lines) because of bugs and things contained in firewood, he wanted to come up with a solution to that problem. After a lot of research, his idea was to manufacture an eco-friendly fire kit.

"We set out to manufacture the best fire starter on the market, using all-natural recycled products to be as earth friendly as possible," explains Ken. Today, they offer three products – fire logs, fire starting cones, and an Eco Fire Kit (for a three-hour fire), and there are plans for more related products in the near future.

The recycled materials used to make the fire starters are free of bugs, bacteria, chemicals and wax, which makes them safe for cooking (mild hardwood flavor) and transport. They can also be used just like cord wood in a fireplace, and Murray believes they burn cleaner and hotter.

The logs and cones are made from natural kiln-dried hardwood, wood shavings and sawdust that is transported in semi trailers, unloaded to a feed hopper, and then processed through a hammer mill to insure a proper mix. Next, it goes through a mechanical "briquetter" that creates 36,000 pounds per-square-inch of compression, which makes heat,

Photo Courtesy–Ken Murray

Mary and Ken Murray started a niche business that makes eco-friendly fire-starting logs and kits for fireplaces, tailgate parties, backyard burners, campfires, and other recreation.

Ken explains. This squeezes out what little wood-sap is left and bonds it all together. Then, the briquettes travel a long cooling line and are cut to length and packaged.

The company's wood shavings come from Alpena, boxes are made in Traverse City (box material from Manistee), and manufacturing happens in Rapid City. Products are sold at the Village Market (Elk Rapids/Rapid City), Ace Hardware (Traverse City, and Ken says they were recently approved for 300 Spartan-affiliated stores.

The company has three employees, but he says, "we have support suppliers that provide up to 20 Michigan jobs."

"Even our box is earth friendly," Ken adds. "We use recycled cardboard, natural glues, and soy ink for print, therefore our box is safe to deposit in landfills." Visit them at murrayproducts.net or call 231-735-5098.

MADE IN MICHIGAN **Tell us about *your* favorite Michigan-made product and we may write about it. Please share why you like it, and if you have a unique story to go with it, please include and send to czuker@countrylines.com or mail to *Michigan Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.**

Look Up for Overhead Power Lines

A tragic farm accident provides valuable safety lessons.

An Illinois farmer, Jim Flach, was operating a crop sprayer in a neighbor's field when one of its arms contacted an overhead power line. In climbing from the cab, Flach was severely burned when he jumped down into the field (creating an electrical path to the ground), and eventually died of his injuries.

Thousands of accidents like this happen every year when large equipment touches overhead power lines. Folks on the ground who touch or even approach energized equipment can also be killed.

Jim Flach's family is working with Safe Electricity's "Teach Learn Care TLC" campaign, sharing the story of their tragic loss in hopes of preventing future accidents. A video of their story can be seen at SafeElectricity.org.

Over 400 electrical fatalities occur every year, and electrocutions on farms are the fourth highest of any job, according to the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH). Most of the electrical deaths investigated in a NIOSH survey could have been prevented.

"You need to double check, triple check, to see what's above you," cautions Flach's widow, Marilyn. Son Brett adds, "Be conscious of your surroundings. You need to keep your eyes open and beware of overhead lines."

Safe Electricity urges everyone to keep at least 10 feet away from overhead power lines when operating large equipment, and notes that new standards for some construction equipment require a 20-foot clearance.

Combines and grain wagons with extended augers can reach well into the 10-foot radius around a power line. Farm vehicles with wireless communication system antennas can also make contact and energize the vehicle with deadly current. On farmsteads, grain augers often tower over power lines when extended to reach the top of grain bins.

All farm workers should know to stay clear of overhead power lines—as well as what to do if equipment does become entangled with a line.

"The best action is to stay on the equipment and warn others to stay away until the local electric utility arrives to ensure the line is de-energized," says Bob Aherin, University of Illinois Agriculture Safety Specialist. "Unless you have that assurance, don't get off except if there's fire, which happens only rarely."

In the event of fire, an operator should jump clear from the equipment, without touching the equipment and ground at the same time. Land with feet together, and hop away to avoid deadly current flow.

One of the more frequent mishaps reported by NIOSH involves electrocutions and electrical burns suffered by individuals around truck beds raised high enough to contact overhead lines. Trucks must be able to unload their contents, and when raised, the top front of the bed can easily reach overhead power lines.

"Again, we encourage farmers and all operators of large equipment to use a spotter when necessary, take steps to keep equipment away from power lines, and make sure everyone knows how to survive if there is an accident," Hall concludes.

Learn more about electrical safety and see the Flach video at SafeElectricity.org.

dish NETWORK®

AUTHORIZED RETAILER

regular price ~~$34.99~~

PACKAGES STARTING AT **$24.99** a month for 12 months

LOCALS INCLUDED!

PRICE GUARANTEED THROUGH JANUARY 2013

ON AMERICA'S TOP PACKAGES (REGULAR PRICE)

HD FREE for life (on America's Top Packages)

FOR A LIMITED TIME RECEIVE:

FREE

2 ROOM
HD DVR Upgrade
1 HD DVR + 1 SD DVR
($6/mo DVR service fee applies)

FREE

SHOWTIME®
10 CHANNELS for 3 mo.
Original series, movies, and sports

FREE

6 ROOM
Installation

FREE

DISH PLATINUM for 3 mo.
- **tons of movies on demand**
- **no trips to the video kiosk or waiting for DVDs in the mail**

See below for details.

HIGH-SPEED INTERNET NOW AVAILABLE STARTING AT $14.95*

$25 VISA® GIFT CARD WITH ACTIVATION
(certain conditions apply)

Call Now

for Next Day Installation (in most areas)

1•877•891•5742

WWW.**INFINITYDISH**.COM

WE ARE OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK 8 AM – MIDNIGHT EST • SUNDAY 9 AM – MIDNIGHT EST

OFFER ONLY GOOD TO NEW DISH SUBSCRIBERS • SE HABLA **ESPAÑOL**

Scan this **QR Barcode** with your phone and learn more about our promos!

Get **FREE** barcode scanning software at: **www.i-nigma.mobi**

Digital Home Advantage plan requires 24-month agreement and credit qualification. Cancellation fee of $17.50/month remaining applies if service is terminated before end of agreement. Programming credits apply during first 12 months. $10/mo HD add-on fee waived for life of current account; requires 24-month agreement, continuous enrollment in AutoPay with Paperless Billing. Showtime offer ($39 value) requires AutoPay with Paperless Billing; after 3 months then-current price applies unless you downgrade. DISH Platinum offer requires qualifying HD programming, AutoPay with Paperless Billing; after 3 months you must choose to continue subscription. Free Standard Professional Installation only. All equipment is leased and must be returned to DISH Network upon cancellation or unreturned equipment fees apply. Limit 6 leased tuners per account; upfront and monthly fees may apply based on type and number of receivers. HD programming requires HD television. Prices, packages and programming subject to change without notice. Offer available for new and qualified former customers, and subject to terms of applicable Promotional and Residential Customer agreements. Additional restrictions may apply. Offer ends 5/17/11. SHOWTIME and related marks are registered trademarks of Showtime Networks Inc., a CBS Company. Google TV: Limit one per account. DVR Integration Service fee will apply. Requires broadband Internet. Available with compatible DISH Network receiver models only (ViP® 622, 722, 722k). Restrictions may apply for existing customer to upgrade. Subject to change without notice. Other restrictions may apply. Google TV is a trademark of Google Inc. Logitech, the Logitech logo, and other Logitech marks are owned by Logitech and may be registered. Benefits subject to DISH Network equipment configuration. $25 Visa® gift card requires activation and $2.95 shipping and handling fee. You will receive a claim voucher within 3-4 weeks and the voucher must be returned within 30 days. Your Visa® gift card will arrive in approximately 6-8 weeks. InfinityDISH charges a one-time $49.95 non-refundable processing fee. Indiana C.P.D. Reg. No. T.S. 10-1006. *Certain restrictions apply. Based on the availability in your area.

Photo – Michael Koole

Summer's almost here, so let's Barbecue!!

Any time is a good time for barbecue. And the variety of sauces and grilling styles is endless. Learn about grilling competition on page 10, and the winners of our "Crazy BBQ Grill" contest are announced on page 11. Thanks to all who sent in recipes! Find hundreds more at **countrylines.com**.

Slow-Cooker BBQ Pulled Pork

3-4 lb. pork shoulder
salt and pepper
1 can root beer, not diet
1 10 1/2-oz. can French onion soup
1 16-18-oz. bottle BBQ sauce, any flavor
1/4 c. brown sugar
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
1 T. mustard, any flavor

Place root beer, soup, sugar, Worcestershire sauce, mustard and half of the BBQ sauce in a slow-cooker. Season pork with salt and pepper; place in slow cooker. Cook on high for 4-5 hours until tender. Remove meat; shred with a fork and return meat to cooker. Stir in remaining BBQ sauce. Cook on low for 1-2 hours. Serve on bun or bread of choice.

Mary Waterbury, Fenton

Grandma's Barbecue Sauce

2 T. cider vinegar
1/2 t. Worcestershire sauce
1 t. salt
2 T. molasses
1 t. paprika
1/2 t. cayenne pepper
1/2 t. black pepper
1 t. chili powder
3/4 c. ketchup
3/4 c. water

Combine all ingredients in a saucepan. Simmer until flavors are well blended. Use on anything you want to barbecue.

Kathy Spalding, Thompsonville

Spicy Korean Pork BBQ (Daeji Bulgogi)

1 lb. pork tenderloin, trimmed
2 T. brown sugar
2 T. soy sauce
1½ T. chili paste or chili sauce
1 t. minced peeled fresh ginger
1 t. sesame oil
1/2 t. crushed red pepper
3 garlic cloves, minced
cooking spray

Wrap pork in plastic wrap; freeze 1½ hours or until firm. Remove plastic wrap; cut pork diagonally across grain into 1/16-inch thick slices. Combine pork and all ingredients into a Ziploc® bag. Seal and marinate in refrigerator 1 hour, turning bag occasionally. Place a wire grilling basket on grill rack. Remove pork from bag; discard marinade. Place pork on grilling basket coated with cooking spray. Grill 5 minutes or until desired degree of doneness, turning frequently.

Doreen Lawrence, St. Clair Shores

Mom's BBQ

3 lbs. ground chuck
2 cans Campbell's® light chicken gumbo soup
1 c. ketchup
1/2 c. mustard
1/8 c. brown sugar
1 T. dill pickle juice

Brown ground chuck; drain. Add soup; simmer 15-20 minutes. Blend in ketchup, mustard, brown sugar and pickle juice; simmer 1 hour. Serve with cooked spaghetti noodles or cooked rice.

Karen Richards, Wayland

BBQ Dutch-Oven Pot Roast

BBQ Sauce
1 c. strong black coffee
1 c. Worcestershire sauce
1 c. ketchup
1/2 c. cider vinegar
3 T. chili powder
2 t. salt
2 c. chopped onion
6 garlic cloves, minced
1/4 c. minced hot peppers, Serrano or jalapeño

Pot Roast
3 onions, thickly sliced
2 T. vegetable oil
1 4-5 lb. rolled beef rump, round bone or blade pot roast
1 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper
1-2 c. beer or red wine
1-2 c. BBQ sauce
boiled carrots, turnips & potatoes

Combine all sauce ingredients in a large saucepan; simmer for 30 minutes. For a thicker sauce, simmer another 20 minutes. Purée in blender or food processor. Makes 1 quart sauce. Refrigerate between uses.

To prepare roast, sauté onions in oil in a large Dutch oven until golden; remove and set aside. Season meat with salt and pepper; brown meat on all sides in Dutch oven, adding more oil if needed. Pour 1 cup BBQ sauce and 1 cup beer over meat. Cover tightly and simmer over low heat for 2 hours, adding more BBQ sauce and beer as needed. Add onions; cover and cook 30-60 minutes, until meat is tender. Serve with cooked carrots, turnips and potatoes.

Bonnie Bourn, Constantine

Tasty Sloppy Joes

1 lb. ground beef
1 lg. onion, finely diced
1 gr. pepper, finely diced
1/2 c. finely diced celery
1/8 c. brown sugar
1/2 c. ketchup
2 T. cider vinegar
2 T. lemon juice
1/2 of a 10-oz. can tomato soup
1 T. Worcestershire sauce
1/4 c. water
1 t. horseradish
1 t. prepared mustard

In a saucepan, brown ground beef, onion, green pepper and celery; drain. Stir in remaining ingredients; simmer 1-2 hours, stirring occasionally. Serve on bun of choice.

Virginia Rubingh, Ellsworth

Send in your recipes! You'll receive a kitchen gadget, if published. Send in: **CASSEROLE & POT PIE recipes by May 15**, **EGGPLANT recipes by June 15**, and **FRESH HERB recipes by July 15**. Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email jhansen@countrylines.com.

Growing BIG Pumpkins

…and other squash.

Each year the Chippewa County Fair, in Kinross, displays a 3,400-pound pumpkin grown by the men at the Kinross Correctional Facility. I was privy to the methods used to obtain such a large pumpkin, having taught horticulture classes there for the past 12 years. I'll share some of these tips with you, but bear in mind that they can be used to grow any type of pumpkin, or other member of the squash family.

Seed Selection

The type of seed you select will, of course, determine the size of your pumpkin. Consider selecting short-season types, such as hybrid bush spirit or autumn gold. These types require about 80 good growing days and reach maturity with minimal tinkering, assuming you have good soil that's rich in organic matter, and plenty of sun.

To try and grow the "big one," try the Atlantic dill or big Max pumpkin. These are the competition-size pumpkins you see in the newspapers and will require more good growing days, often over 100. They will also require some special tinkering on your part.

Starting From Seed

Seeds can be started as early as mid-April. Take the potting mix and moisten it by adding 1 part water to three parts mix before you fill the pots (it's hard to get the mix moist after it's in the pots). Don't get it dripping wet, and firmly pack the mix in the pots.

Plant the seeds about 1/2-inch deep, pointed side down. Place in a warm location that receives direct sunlight and is free of drafts— or preferably, under a fluorescent shop light, suspended about 3 inches above the plants. Keep the mix moist by spraying daily with a fine mist. Covering the pots with a makeshift plastic tent or one of those domes sold in the garden section of a hardware store will help to keep the medium moist, which is crucial during the germination stage.

After the seedling emerges and forms true leaves (the ones that don't fall off), provide a light feeding of a high-phosphorous organic or inorganic fertilizer. This will help support a strong root system. Water well at this stage, then don't water again until the medium has nearly dried out, which will also encourage good root development. Prevent the plants from becoming spindly at the seedling stage by providing plenty of light.

If the weather is favorable, plant the seedlings outside in the garden. To encourage rapid growth and protection from possible frost, cover them with a plastic material that allows good air flow. The inmate gardeners constructed little pup tent-like enclosures over the fledgling seedlings, using a clear poly plastic and sticks and twigs tied together. The additional heat and wind protection really spurred growth. Plant one plant per hill, spaced 6 feet apart.

Materials Needed

- Three-inch peat pots
- Soil-less seed starting mix
- A type of heat cap or plastic "pup tent"
- Well-rotted compost or livestock manure
- A granular or organic fertilizer
- A "secret potion" (optional) of about a dozen crushed egg shells, 1 cup of powdered milk, one complete vitamin, and several used tea bags.

Soil Preparation

The secret to a big, ripe pumpkin or a nice ripe squash—besides getting an early start—is to give them good soil to grow in. Dig a hole about 18 inches deep under where you're going to plant the squash. Fill the hole with well-rotted manure and/or compost. At this time, you could mix in the above potion or a slow-release all-purpose fertilizer, such as Osmocote.

Mound about 4 inches of soil over the fortified planting hole. Place one plant (peat pot and all so you don't disturb the roots) into the center of the mound. Water the plant well and provide a nice layer of mulch (leaves, grass clippings or straw) around the base of the plant. This will keep the weeds down and conserve moisture.

Pumpkins and squash are heavy feeders, so feed about every two weeks during the summer with an all-purpose fertilizer. Be careful not to apply too much nitrogen, which will result in a lot of vine growth and little fruit.

To grow that really big pumpkin, watch for fruit to form from the female flowers. Select the one that looks most promising, pinch off the others and pinch off any vines that aren't supporting a fruit. Pinch the end of the remaining vine, which will cause growth of the vine to stop and the pumpkin to get larger.

All these tips are legal, so you won't end up in the joint if you try them.

Happy gardening!

Neil has a garden blog at northcountrygardening.blogspot.com.

High-flying Eagles Share Steelheading, Too

Steelhead trout have been making their annual spring spawning runs and northern Michigan's coastal streams get a large share of the big rainbows.

Fresh-run steelheads are met by the arrival of eager anglers, wading or floating these streams in hopes that one of these large trout will notice their lure or bait.

Humans, though, are not the only fishermen keeping watch. High-flying bald eagles are also on the hunt, as eager for a rainbow dinner as any human angler. From their high-soaring positions, eagles can spot a fish, swoop to grab it with their sharp, stabbing talons, and carry it off to their towering nests.

At other times, the eagles may be observed in their aerial courtship, locking talons in flight and spiraling down in an avian dance of love.

As a result, steelheaders are often given these visual treats when they cast their lines.

© iStockphoto.com

Bald eagles are mating at this time, and their high-flying courtship is often seen by anglers fishing steelhead in the waters of our region. To catch both, keep your lines tight and your eyes on-high.

Michigan came close to losing this American symbol as a number of factors conspired to put the large raptor near extirpation. Before European settlement, bald eagles probably nested in all regions of Michigan, wherever food was available. In the early 1900s, they were described as being "generally distributed," but "nowhere abundant."

A decline through the early and mid-1900s was linked to slow but consistent loss of suitable habitat, available food, and "predator control by humans," a DNRE report noted. "These eagles are so disturbed by the presence of humans near their nest that they may be induced to abandon the nest, or even chicks that have already hatched."

The decline in eagles increased through the1950s until bald eagle numbers were poised on the brink of extirpation—not just in Michigan, but in the lower 48 states. By 1959, the species was considered, "largely restricted to the northern half of the state."

Causes of this population crash were several other factors impacting the reduced reproductive success of nesting pairs. A major cause was increased use of pesticides with chemicals such as PCB and DDT. These chemicals caused them to delay their breeding until it was too late in the season, or even to not breed at all, and eggs were laid with thin shells, causing them to break in the nest by the brooding parent's weight.

Eagle decline peaked in1967. In that year, studies showed that only 38 percent of the Michigan bald eagle population was able to raise at least a single chick. (Productivity, scientists note, must be at least 70 percent for a bald eagle population to remain stable.) Extirpation was near, but positive changes also arrived to stave off this threat.

By the 1970s, DDT had been banned in the U.S. "Earlier, intensive monitoring of eagles in Michigan had begun in 1961, and while bald eagles had been protected at federal and state levels since 1940 and 1954, respectively, they gained greater protection under the Endangered Species Act in 1973 and the Michigan endangered species act in 1974," the report stated.

Reproductive success began to improve until 1975, when the 70 percent productivity mark was reached, although it soon dropped again. The population remained at around 86 nesting pairs through the 1970s.

A big change began in 1981 as the population began to rebound at a faster pace. In 1999, eagle surveyors found 343 nests that produced 321 young. The productivity was calculated as 96 percent (young per nests with known outcomes).

Some problems do still exist. Eagles nesting along the Great Lakes coasts have higher contaminant levels in their blood than inland nesting pairs.

The image of the bald eagle has long held great significance for our country (though Founding Father Benjamin Franklin had a low opinion of the eagle as a national symbol. He nominated the wild turkey.)

Thanks to stewardship efforts to protect and manage this magnificent raptor, the bald eagle still remains a part of the living history of the United States of America, and a symbol of Michigan's outdoors wilds.

Now, as courting eagles perform their aerial flirting, the best way to observe this annual show of high-flying romance is simple...

Go steelheading—and keep your eyes on the sky when you do.

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

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS

Quality Tools at Ridiculously Low Prices

SALE STARTS TODAY!

FACTORY DIRECT TO YOU!

How does Harbor Freight Tools sell high quality tools at such ridiculously low prices? We buy direct from the factories who also supply the major brands and sell direct to you. It's just that simple! Come see for yourself at one of our 350 STORES NATIONWIDE and use this 20% OFF Coupon on one of our 7,000 products*, plus pick up a FREE 9 LED Aluminum Flashlight, a $7.99 VALUE, with any purchase. We stock Automotive products, Shop Equipment, Hand Tools, Tarps, Compressors, Air & Power Tools, Material Handling, Woodworking Tools, Welders, Tool Boxes, Outdoor Equipment, Generators, and much more.

NOBODY BEATS OUR QUALITY, SERVICE AND PRICE!

- √ Over 5 MILLION NEW CUSTOMERS in the Last 2 Years!
- √ NO HASSLE RETURN POLICY
- √ Family Owned & Operated
- √ We Will Beat Any Competitor's Price Within 1 Year of Purchase!

LIFETIME WARRANTY
ON ALL HAND TOOLS!

Get More Coupons at HarborFreight.com

SUPER COUPON!

FREE!
WITH ANY PURCHASE
3-1/2" SUPER BRIGHT NINE LED ALUMINUM FLASHLIGHT
ITEM 65020
REG. PRICE $7.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1 Free item only available with qualifying minimum purchase (excluding price of free gift). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Shipping & Handling charges may apply if free item not picked up in-store. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the offer. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

57381543

SUPER COUPON!

20% OFF
ANY SINGLE ITEM!

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 1 Use this coupon to save 20% on any **one** single item purchased when you shop at a Harbor Freight Tools store. *Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on any of the following: gift cards, Inside Track Club membership, extended service plans, Compressors, Generators, Tool Cabinets, Welders, Floor Jacks, Campbell Hausfeld products, open box items, Parking Lot Sale items, Blowout Sale items, Day After Thanksgiving Sale items, Tent Sale items, 800 number orders or online orders. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store in order to receive the offer. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

46322186

SUPER COUPON!

BADLAND WINCHES

9000 LB. ELECTRIC WINCH WITH AUTOMATIC BRAKE
LOT NO. 68143

NEW!

SAVE $150

5.5 HORSEPOWER
$349.99
REG. PRICE $499.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

34329391

SUPER COUPON!

CENTRALPNEUMATIC

3 GALLON 100 PSI OILLESS PANCAKE AIR COMPRESSOR
LOT NO. 95275

SAVE 46%
$39.99
REG. PRICE $74.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

46273843

SUPER COUPON!

CHICAGO WELDING

90 AMP FLUX WIRE WELDER
LOT NO. 98871

SAVE $60

NO GAS REQUIRED!
REG. PRICE $149.99
$89.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 4 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

47182233

SUPER COUPON!

PITTSBURGH AUTOMOTIVE

RAPID PUMP® 1.5 TON ALUMINUM RACING JACK

NEW!

3-1/2 PUMPS LIFTS MOST VEHICLES!

SAVE $50
$69.99
REG. PRICE $119.99
LOT NO. 68053

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

11997574

SUPER COUPON!

SAVE 62%

10/2/55 AMP, 6/12 VOLT BATTERY CHARGER/ ENGINE STARTER
CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER SYSTEMS
LOT NO. 66783

$25.99
REG. PRICE $69.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 3 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

60982857

SUPER COUPON!

ELECTRIC CHAIN SAW SHARPENER
CHICAGO ELECTRIC POWER TOOLS

4-1/4" GRINDING WHEEL INCLUDED
LOT NO. 93213

SAVE 40%
$29.99
REG. PRICE $49.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 5 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

74116237

SUPER COUPON!

CENTRAL PNEUMATIC

3" HIGH SPEED CUT-OFF TOOL
Item 47077 shown
LOT NO. 47077/67425

$6.99 REG. PRICE $19.99

SAVE 65%

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 8 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

56743926

SUPER COUPON!

SAVE 66%

HAUL-MASTER

12 VOLT MAGNETIC TOWING LIGHT KIT
LOT NO. 96933/67455

Item 96933 shown
$9.99 REG. PRICE $29.99

HARBOR FREIGHT TOOLS - LIMIT 9 This valuable coupon is good anywhere you shop Harbor Freight Tools (retail stores, online, or 800 number). Cannot be used with any other discount or coupon. Coupon not valid on prior purchases after 30 days from original purchase date with original receipt. Offer good while supplies last. Coupon cannot be bought, sold, or transferred. Original coupon must be presented in-store, or with your order form, or entered online in order to receive the coupon discount. Valid through 9/5/11. Limit one coupon per customer and one coupon per day.

53422564

3 EASY WAYS TO SHOP!

1. VISIT! 350 Stores Nationwide
2. GO TO! www.HarborFreight.com
3. CALL! 1-800-423-2567

Ventilation Cuts Cooling Costs

Properly ventilating your home can reduce the need to use air conditioning.

Air conditioning can account for a significant proportion of a family's utility bills even in some so-called "cool" regions of the country. Not every region has below-zero temperatures during winter, but most areas easily reach above 90 degrees for many days during the summer.

Photo – Phifer

SunScreen® solar control screening can block more than half of the heat coming in through windows.

No matter how much heat you can block from your windows and doors and how effective the ventilation is in a house without air conditioning, an air-conditioned house with a reasonable humidity level will be more comfortable. With proper ventilation, you will have to use your air-conditioning very little to stay reasonably comfortable during hot, humid summers.

Direct and indirect heat coming in windows and doors does increase the temperature inside your house significantly. Even the most energy-efficient windows and doors have an insulation R-value much less than the typical house wall. There are also gaps around doors and windows which, even though sealed with weatherstripping and caulk, allow in some hot, humid outdoor air.

Because you can't stop all the energy gain at the windows and doors, you might as well make maximum use of ventilation through them. This can be cross-ventilation from window to window on the same floor or through-ventilation from a window to an upper vent. The air coming in will be warm and perhaps humid, but it will make you feel cooler as it flows over your skin.

The wind blowing over your house creates higher pressure on the upwind side and lower pressure on the downwind side. Open your windows completely on the downwind side. Open them only half-way or less on the upwind side. This combination may reduce the total air flow somewhat, but it increases the speed of the air coming in. In the summer, the higher speed of the breeze over your skin creates more cooling effect. If you have casement windows, crank them out at just a partial angle to catch more breezes.

For through-ventilation, open windows on the upwind side of your house. This also works reasonably well on a calm day. Lift the attic access opening cover, often in a bedroom closet ceiling, and rotate it over the opening to create gaps. The less-dense warm air will naturally exhaust out the opening. Don't totally remove the cover because that would allow a direct route down for the radiant heat from the roof into the room. If a room has a vaulted ceiling, consider installing a venting skylight (velux.com).

If security is not an issue, open your doors and allow air in through a screen door. For added security, drill a hole in the floor slightly inside the primary door, and directly over a joist. Slip a short steel rod in the hole so the primary door can be opened only a couple of inches.

If you do not like the appearance of screen doors or cannot afford to install them, consider a retractable screen (dreamscreens.com). This is a spring-loaded screen that pulls horizontally across the door to the magnetic strip on the other side. The vertical housing that holds the screen is only a couple of inches wide so it is barely noticeable. The spring holds the screening taut over the door.

Adding awnings is a good way to reduce heat coming in through windows. The proper size of the awning depends upon the latitude angle of your area and its orientation to the sun. An awning contractor can help you determine the proper size.

Installing an awning over a door also helps reduce heat gain in several ways. First, the awning blocks the sun's direct rays from heating the door or shining in an open screened door. Secondly, the sun's heat on the outside of an insulated composite door may cause it to bow. When this happens, the weatherstripping may not seal well when you are using air conditioning.

If your windows are exposed to the sun, install SunScreen (phifer.com) sun-control window screening. This is often made from strong polymers and has a dense weave to block more than half of the sun's heat. You can still see through the screening.

If you have venetian blinds, rotate the slats so they slope to the outdoors from bottom to top. As the air between the window and blind slats gets hot, it tends to flow upward. With the slats rotated properly, this hot air tends to stay between the window and the slats. During the winter, reverse the slat angle so the cold air stays against the window.

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

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

The Big Green Box

They're big. They're often green. They generally sit on concrete, often within housing developments. Some folks don't like these "electrical boxes" (a common nickname for pad-mount transformers) and try to hide them with bushes, fences or flower beds. But stay clear: even small additions around pad-mount transformers can create hazards.

To improve the aesthetics of new neighborhoods, developers often put in underground power lines. While this eliminates utility poles and overhead wires, it requires installing pad-mounted transformers in some front yards. Unfortunately, some homeowners that are concerned about curb appeal attempt to screen pad-mount transformers from view—creating an unsafe situation for all concerned, including lineworkers.

Landscaping represents an investment of time and money, however, landscaping around electrical equipment interferes with our ability to deliver reliable power.

It is recommended to leave at least 10 feet of clear space in front of pad-mount transformers. Lineworkers repair units while they are energized so homeowners don't experience an interruption in service. To ensure safety, they use an 8-foot fiberglass "hot stick" that requires about 10 feet of "elbow room" in front of the access panel. [Routine maintenance on the units is generally performed at least once a year.]

Pad-mounted transformers surrounded by vegetation or a structure may overheat and cause service interruptions when the air circulation around them is restricted.

In some cases, consumers may leave plenty of space in front of the transformer, but grow vegetation on the other three sides. This may invite other problems. Pad-mounted transformers surrounded by vegetation or a structure may overheat and cause service interruptions when the air circulation around them is restricted. Allow at least 3 to 4 feet of space on both sides and behind the transformer.

You should also be aware that plantings along rights-of-way—strips of land owned by a member on which the co-op places poles, wires and other equipment such as pad-mount transformers—could be damaged by co-op vehicles.

Occasionally, there may be a need to repair a transformer, and eventually they must be upgraded and replaced. To perform this work, line trucks must be driven into the right-of-way and the transformer lifted out. Although workers try to minimize the impact, plants may be damaged if they're in the way.

Call Before You Dig!

Because underground service continues from the transformer to your home, you should never dig anywhere in your yard without first calling 811 to find out where cables are buried.

Transformers need to be left alone

NEVER let anything grow closer than 10 feet from a pad-mount transformer. (The access panel is marked by a handle, lock and sticker on the front.)

NEVER enclose a pad-mount transformer with fencing, shrubs, or anything else with less than a 10-foot-wide gate or opening.

NEVER allow children to play near pad-mount transformers.

NEVER pour waste oils, chemicals, or other liquids on or near a pad-mount transformer. These liquids can seep into the ground and damage underground cables.

Never let anything grow closer than 10 feet from the access panel of your home's pad-mount transformer. How do you know where the access panel is located? Look for the handle, lock, and sticker. This distance keeps roots away and air flowing around your home's unit.

STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF CLOVERLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-16592

- Cloverland Electric Cooperative plans to file a Renewable Energy Plan in compliance with Public Acts 286 and 295 of 2008 and the Michigan Public Service Commission's December 4, 2008, Commission Order in Case No. U-15800 and the February 22, 2011, Commission Order in Case No. U-16592.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Cloverland Electric Cooperative, 2916 West M-28, P.O. Box 97, Dafter, Michigan 49724, (800) 562-4953 or (906) 635-6800 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Cloverland Electric Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: May 23, 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 Dennis W. Mack

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 Cloverland Electric Cooperative's (Cloverland) application for a Renewable Energy Plan (REP) to be filed by May 12, 2011, which will seek approval of its REP in accordance with 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 and the December 4, 2008, and February 22, 2011, Commission Orders in Cases Numbers U-15800 and U-16592, respectively.

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 May 19, 2011. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Cloverland's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

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

A copy of Cloverland's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets, and at the office of Cloverland Electric Cooperative, 2916 West M-28, Dafter, 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.

April 22, 2011

ANIMALS

SURI ALPACAS – Show-quality yearlings, bred females and fiber males for sale or lease of various color. Alpacas have wonderful personalities, very intelligent. Our alpacas are cared for personally by their owners with daily interaction. Boarding available. Alpacas of Cross Trails, Riga, MI. sfisher6030@aol.com or 419-472-8224.

CARS & TRUCKS

LOW MILEAGE ENGINES – Big savings. Price includes delivery and 1-year parts warranty. Mileage verified. Call today, 901-266-9996. lowmileageengines.com

HEARTH & HOME

COTTAGE/CABIN REPAIRS – Remodels, licensed builder, insured, western Michigan. Punch Construction, 616-366-7091.

MISCELLANEOUS

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

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

FOR SALE, NEW A-MAIZE-ING – Heat furnace, 165,000 Btus, 14 bushel storage bin and augers included. Will sell for $3,600. 231-549-2599.

MORE STORIES FROM PINE GROVE – Book 2. Children's book, real stories, $8 each includes shipping. Send check or money order to Juanita Katzke, N3315 4th Lane, Oxford, WI 53952.

OUTDOORS

SAWMILL FOR SALE – $4,995. New portable band saw, saws 36-inch x 16 feet logs. 231-288-0066.

REAL ESTATE

GRAYLING ADULT FOSTER CARE – Home for sale. Six private rooms. 231-649-6842.

HOUSE + 40 ACRES – Mecosta County, $120,000. 586-677-1914.

LUDINGTON MOTEL – 8 renovated rooms/office. Tourist route from beaches, car ferry, Lake Michigan, seasonal, great numbers. Century 21 Bayshore Real Estate, Michelle, 231-845-0363, ext. 224. mich@t-one.net

FOR SALE, 200 FEET FRONTAGE – Morley Pond, near damn, good fishing. 313-386-0924.

FOR SALE, LAKE HOUSE – In White Pigeon, MI. 4-bedroom, 3-bath, 2-car garage. Built in 1993 on private lake. 269-483-7147.

49 ORGANIC ACRES – 3 miles west of Traverse City, MI. M-72 frontage, 2-roads, house, farm buildings, appraised 2005, $730,000, asking $500,000. 517-663-5013.

U.P. HUNTING CAMP – For sale by owner. 345 wooded acres, Schoolcraft County, 80 miles west of Mackinac Bridge, 18x24 ft. cabin and barn, 1/4 mile frontage on 150 acre private lake. Hunting, deer, bear, grouse, snowshoe hare, geese, ducks. Trapping, muskrat, mink, beaver, otter, bobcat. 300 acres in reduced property tax program. Property borders state land and groomed snowmobile trail. Improved roads and gates, 5 food plots, one elevated blind, property borders county road. $295,000. Call 989-731-4750.

WHITE CLOUD, 20 ACRES – With cabin, well and septic, surrounded on 3 sides by federal/state land. 317-341-0395.

TRAVERSE CITY HOME – Is located on Silver Lake's desirable Brakel Point Drive (581). 3-bedroom, 2-bath, 1,768 sq. ft., set on a wooded lot. Priced as it sits nearly completed at $135,000. 269-208-7655.

COTTAGE ON BEAUTIFUL SILVER LAKE – In Traverse City, 51 feet of private beach with waterfront deck. Year-round 700 sq.-ft. furnished home set under soft white pines, 2-bedroom, 1-bath, fireplace, front screened porch, single car garage and carport. Includes dock, raft, outside furniture and more. Just 6 miles from downtown Traverse City, $259,000. Contact Ron at 269-208-7655 or rosbacksales@qtm.net

NESTLED IN A QUIET COVE SETTING – With 100 feet of private beach. You'll discover this lake front home and 2-story upper guest house to be your true turn-key answer to year-round family lake living. Conveniently located just 6 miles from downtown Traverse City on Silver Lake, 600 acre all-sports lake. Cottage has 2 bedrooms, 1 bath and deck. Garage/recreation room and upper guest house has 1 bedroom, 1 bath, kitchenette and screened porch. Both structures have central air and natural gas heat. Entire property is professionally landscaped; curb-appealing brick courtyard, multiple-level decking, architectural block walls and underground sprinklers, $399,000. Call Ron at 269-208-7655 or rosbacksales@qtm.net

APPROXIMATELY 1/2 ACRE – Lot on St. Joseph River in subdivision south of Three Rivers, MI, $45,000. Call 269-279-5838.

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.

VACATIONS

LAKEFRONT RENTAL – Spacious cottage sleeps 12. Delton/Hastings area. Long Lake, Cloverdale, great swimming and fishing. Weekly $700. Deposit required. 269-342-4047.

SOUTH HAVEN WEEKLY RENTAL – Spacious home sleeps 16. Family friendly, shared private beach access. Weekly $2,200. Deposit required. 269-342-4047.

3-BEDROOM BREVORT LAKEFRONT – Vacation home, 20 minutes north of Bridge. 316-721-3420, Linda.L.farquhar@gmail.com. lakefrontvacationrental.com

WALLOON LAKE COTTAGE – Available June 2011, $895/week. 50 feet from lake with boat dock, swimming, on scenic road. 231-347-2772. Sanback@sbcglobal.net

VACATION IN MUNISING, MI – Beautiful cottage on lake, swimming and fishing. Bring toothbrush, available month of August. 906-387-3344.

WANTED

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

WANTING TO LEASE LAND – For 2011 bow season. Responsible and ethical bow hunter. Please call 989-506-1635. Prefer Montcalm, Ionia, or west Gratiot counties.

Repeat Offenders

Cloverland Electric Cooperative is responsible for maintaining over 3,400 miles of electric distribution lines. The crews that provide the manpower and equipment to maintain our rights-of-way work with many types of trees.

I refer to the most difficult trees as "repeat offenders." They are ones that have been topped, side-trimmed or thinned. These trees increase our right-of-way maintenance costs because crews have to trim them repeatedly. The added time it takes for trimming is more costly than completely removing them. Not only does it cost your cooperative more, most often, the members who have these trees on their property are not very happy when our crews have to top- or side-trim them.

The National Electrical Safety Code and the Michigan Public Service Commission require Cloverland Electric to maintain the proper clearances for the safety of members and the reliability of electric service. The guidelines the co-op follows require that we maintain a right-of-way clearance of 30 feet (15 feet on each side of the line) for primary distribution lines that are energized up to 14,400 volts.

Keeping our rights-of-way properly maintained is also important when it comes to restoring power during a storm. Having the ability to see down a line makes it much easier for lineworkers to identify the cause of an outage and make the necessary repairs. Climbing poles and splicing power lines can be challenging enough, but when you have to work around tree branches and brush it's much more difficult and dangerous. It is during storms where this becomes the biggest factor in how long it takes to restore power.

As a cooperative, we work with members to meet both their needs and ours when it comes to maintaining these rights-of-way. Often, members will request that we do not remove a tree in the right-of-way. They explain that the tree provides a wind or privacy barrier, or that it is a centerpiece of their yard. Where it is practical, we have done so; however, this practice greatly increases the cost of maintaining the right-of-way and the shape of the tree that remains is less than desirable.

As member-owners of a cooperative, you can help us reduce the number of repeat offenders in the right-of-way. There are many different ways this can happen. Planting trees outside of power line areas is a great first step. Removing that 100-year-old tree that has been continuously hollowed out and replacing it with a low-growth tree is another great option. It, too, will become a beautiful centerpiece. Any steps taken now will help reduce our right-of-way maintenance costs in the future, which benefits all of us as member-owners.

Trees Incorporated and Thunder Bay Tree Service will perform our right-of-way maintenance in 2011. They will continue working in the Gulliver, Newberry and Raco areas. They will also be working in Pickford, Raber, Marquette, Clark and DeTour townships this summer and fall.

Cloverland Electric will spend over $1 million on right-of-way maintenance this year. This maintenance is costly and difficult, but it's necessary for safety and reliability.

We appreciate your understanding and cooperation when crews are working in your area.

Jim Wilson is Cloverland's construction supervisor and right-of-way coordinator.
906-632-5144
jwilson@cloverland.com

Co-op Names & Faces

Engineering Manager **Charlie Litzner** announced his retirement after 22 years of service. **Brian Lavey** will assume the duties of manager of engineering. Maintenance Foreman **Con Metro** announced he will retire this summer after 27 years of service. **Robert Sylvestre** will take over as maintenance foreman in June. **Darrel Lauzon** recently joined our line crew in Manistique.

Photo (L-R): Cloverland welcomes electronic technicians **Steven Sellick Jr.** and **Simon Meilstrup** to the meter department.

Building Pickford Library

Grassroots efforts build better communities, especially in hard times.

It's reminiscent of the grassroots efforts that brought electric power to the Eastern Upper Peninsula in the 1930's to form what is now Cloverland Electric Cooperative. The residents in and around Pickford (population 1,584), have pulled together the resources to open a public library in an abandoned shoe store in a mostly deserted section of Main Street. What's more, they did it during an economic downturn.

The library, which opened its doors in October 2010, is more than just a collection of books. It's a meeting and learning place for residents in this rural area and, surprisingly, a potential driver of economic growth.

"Studies have shown when people come to libraries they do more downtown," explains librarian Kenneth Miller, director of the Bayliss Library in nearby Sault Ste. Marie. He also said more people use libraries during a sour economy.

The new library, which is a branch of Bayliss, has just about everything you find in a larger library: internet access, a statewide lending library, and an invaluable research tool commonly referred to as MeLCat (Michigan eLibrary Catalog and Resource Sharing System).

Pickford library, however, has maintained a decidedly country charm with the old store front, tall ceiling and hardwood floors. The building, which is over 75 years old, was chosen by architects for its solid construction and by organizers for its spaciousness and potential for expansion.

Getting the branch library opened in this small community was no walk in the park. Miller, a 35-year library veteran, had his doubts when the idea was first proposed in 2008, mostly because of the cost associated with starting and maintaining a library. But then he didn't know Pickford resident Melanie Greenfield. A tireless volunteer and former business owner, Greenfield got the idea for opening a library after attending a community foundation meeting where the idea was casually tossed around. The rest, as they say, is history.

With the wheels now in motion, Greenfield gathered as many people as she could to start the fundraising efforts. What followed were some of the usual fundraisers: bake sales, a used book sale, proceeds from restaurant dinners, including the "Flying Pancake Breakfast," and a portion of the proceeds from a Farmer's Market and Fall Fest. Even 4th grader Cassie Beemish got into the act, selling cookies she baked from her grandmother's recipes.

"We needed to prove ourselves," Greenfield recalls of those early days of fundraising. "If we wanted it, we needed to make it happen." At the time, the group was looking to raise $117,000—enough to open the doors and run the place for three years.

Micki Schmitigal and her daughter Jill enjoy some story time together at the Pickford Library.

And make it happen they did. Soon, larger donations were coming in from outside the area, including $5,000 dollars from an anonymous donor in Traverse City, and most recently over $34,000 from the Sault Tribe of Chippewa Indians. Besides cash donations, local businesses donated their time, talent and materials. Marble Construction worked on the most pressing concerns with building improvements; Josh and Jared Dyer did the plumbing; Savoie Electric wired the building; and Ledy Cabinetry donated the materials for and built a beautiful marble circulation desk. Lighthouse.net, a subsidiary of Cloverland Electric Cooperative, supplied and installed the equipment needed for internet service.

"Every time we turned around somebody was giving us something," says Miller, who is astonished to this day at how the community pulled together to bring a library to this mostly farming community. So is Bob Hunter, a library board member who was impressed by how much support came from outside of Pickford.

Bayliss library donated expensive shelving units, but something even more valuable: their expertise. Miller and his experienced staff made the 20-minute drive out to Pickford to help volunteers and new librarian Michelle Satchell arrange the furniture and other items so that patrons can read, study, play with puppets, and simply relax.

The fundraising efforts aren't over nor are plans to expand on the services currently offered. Satchell hopes that the spacious room in the back of the library can be used for various classes, especially in the midst of cuts made to school programs, such as art, in the Pickford area schools.

The real challenge may be in keeping the doors open, which will depend largely on a successful millage and additional fundraising efforts.

"I didn't think at first (it would be sustainable), but I think there is a group of people out there that will make it happen, "Miller adds.

For information on making a donation to the library or hours of operation, call 906-647-1288. *– Neil Moran*

What's building in your community? Email a few short paragraphs describing it to knudtson@countrylines.com or send to G. Knudtson, *Michigan Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

Two Jocks and a Widow

The morning of July 4, 1967, was cold in Ironwood. A sheet of fragile ice skinned puddles in the streets. (The high in Chicago that day was only 64 degrees.)

I remember because it was the day I entered the bigger world. I had to catch an early bus to Minneapolis, where I would pass through the Air Force induction center before catching my first-ever plane to San Antonio, TX, for basic training. Just out of college, I opted for Air Force officer training rather than a two-year stint as an Army draftee. Barbara, who was kind enough to marry me the following summer, saw me off. The rest of my family was camping.

The bus stopped in Duluth, MN, where an elderly woman became my seat-mate. (Now I think: She was only about as old as I am now.) We had a fascinating discussion about Vietnam, college, and her home and family. Mostly, she talked and I listened. (What did I have to offer at 23?) Following the death of her husband, she had recently learned to drive a car, and then, as if to say "nothing is stopping me now," learned how to fly a plane. She was learning to paint. She was full of life and excited about her possibilities. Her joy was infectious.

Any joy she imparted to me was quickly dampened by the dark and seedy hotel where the Air Force put me up in downtown Minneapolis. Noisy city traffic and a sputtering neon sign made sure I wouldn't sleep all night.

The next day, after passing a physical exam and being sworn in, several recruits flew to Dallas, where we were to change planes for San Antonio. It was late night and the terminal was empty. In a cavernous open space, one other recruit and I walked to our next gate. Our path intersected with that of the only other person, a powerful man who seemed to glide over the floor.

We stopped there, alone in the middle of that vast terminal, and said hello to Muhammad Ali, the most recognizable person in the world. He was a skilled boxer, bigger than his sport, controversial and brash. Here he was, alone, without the entourage he surely would have today.

That April, at the height of his power as a boxer, he was stripped of his heavyweight titles for refusing induction into the U. S. military because of his religious beliefs. He was found guilty on draft evasion charges and his boxing license was suspended. He was not imprisoned, but did not fight again for nearly four years while his appeal worked its way up to the U. S. Supreme Court.

Our path intersected with that of the only other person, a powerful man who seemed to glide over the floor.

When we met him, he was in Dallas to attend a hearing in federal court on his appeal. And here we were, on our way to boot camp.

We asked him for an autograph.

Because I didn't have anything else to write on, he signed the back of my induction papers. He was kind and gracious, displaying none of the braggadocio and swagger of his public persona.

When we got to Lackland Air Force Base in the wee morning hours morning, I turned in my induction papers. I didn't realize until much later they were the copies bearing Ali's autograph. So Muhammed Ali's signature is on military induction papers somewhere in the vast files of a military warehouse.

Later that day, I met Bill Bradley, the former Princeton basketball star who was drafted by the New York Knicks and had just returned from England, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He was given a commission in the Air Force Reserves so he could fulfill his military obligation and play pro ball at the same time. Bradley was smart, rich, and one of the best basketball players in the world. The rest of us were secretly gratified that he was lousy at marching.

These two athletes didn't serve two or four years, and weren't remotely in danger of being injured or killed like so many young men their age. They went on to bigger things. After the U. S. Supreme Court unanimously reversed Ali's conviction in 1971, he went on to regain the championship and became revered over most of the world. Bradley later became a U. S. Senator from New Jersey and sought the Democratic nomination for president.

We have all experienced moments that put us in contact with people who are, have been, or will be famous—or infamous. These chance encounters enhance our conversations, create memories, and link us forever to events greater than ourselves.

But they don't touch our lives as deeply as regular people like the woman from Duluth, who found joy in the adventure of new things. She's the one I'd want to meet again.

Share your chance encounters with famous or infamous people you've met or almost met. Send your story, in 100 words or less, to mbuda@countrylines.com.

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

It's never been easier thanks to the

30% RENEWABLE ENERGY TAX CREDIT

Thanks to the Economic Recovery Act, there's now a **30% "renewable energy" tax credit for** homeowners who install a qualifying **WaterFurnace geothermal comfort system.** WaterFurnace geothermal units use the **clean, renewable energy found in your own backyard to save up to 70% on heating, cooling, and hot water.** They **don't burn expensive fossil fuels, they reduce our dependence on foreign oil and also happen to be great for the environment.** Call your local dealer and discover for yourself the benefits that only WaterFurnace can provide.

YOUR LOCAL WATERFURNACE DEALERS

Bad Axe
B & D Heating
(989) 269-5280

Berrien Springs
WaterFurnace Michiana
(269) 473-5667

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

Caro
All-Temp Heating
(989) 673-5557

Charlevoix
Ballard's and Great Lakes
Plumbing & Heating
(231) 547-1035

Cheboygan
Jim's Handyman
(231) 627-7533

Carsonville
Certified Temperature Innovations
(810) 300-7748

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

Gaylord
Family Htg & Clg
(989) 732-8099

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

Hart
Adams Htg & Clg
(231) 873-2665

Harbor Springs
Ballard's and Great Lakes
Plumbing & Heating
(231) 526-6859

Ionia
Home Experts
(800) 457-4554

Kalamazoo
E M Sergeant
(800) 530-1363

Lapeer
Porter & Heckman
(810) 664-8576

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

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

Muskegon
Geofurnace Htg & Clg
(800) 922-3045

Petoskey
Ballard's and Great Lakes
Plumbing & Heating
(231) 347-3900

Palms
Lakeshore Improvements
(989) 864-3833

Traverse City
Geofurnace Htg & Clg
(231) 943-1000

D&W Mechanical
(231) 941-1215

Webberville
Applegate Home Comfort
(800) 377-2272

WaterFurnace
Smarter from the Ground Up™

waterfurnace.com
(800) GEO-SAVE

Cloverland
ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

cloverland.com

Hydro Plant Open House

June 24 • Sault Ste. Marie, MI

In celebration of the Soo Locks Engineer's Day, Cloverland Electric Cooperative will host an open house at the hydroelectric plant. Join us for a day of fun activities for the whole family.

- Free hot dogs and popcorn!
- Hotline safety demonstrations
- Tour the LSSU Aquatic Lab
- Prize drawings and giveaways
- Video presentation
- Tools of the trade exhibit, and more!

Self-guided Tours
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

For more information, visit cloverland.com