

A Service of **Midwest Energy Cooperative**

November/December 2011

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES



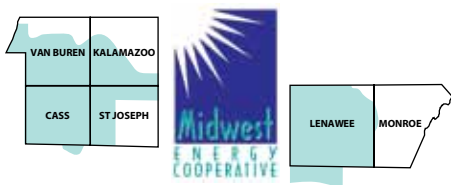
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On Webs**

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Robert Hance

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Three Rivers

Kenneth Swope *Vice Chairman*
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New Power Supplier Announced: Wolverine Power Cooperative

We have literally spent several years as a management staff and board of directors navigating the best path for power supply for the future of our family of co-op members. We engaged some of the best and brightest minds in the country; energy consultants who specialize in providing data, analysis and opinion about markets and forecasts. We invited possible power supply partners to the table and evaluated the plans offered by their teams of experts. We immersed ourselves in the world of power supply—researching, studying and debating the pros and cons of the myriad of options in front of us.

The process was exciting, as we were shaping the future of your cooperative. At the same time, it was overwhelming, exhausting and downright frustrating. At the end of the day, we simply had to step away from what became a consuming, complicated mass of data and ask ourselves, “What makes sense for our family of members?”

At their Sept. 27, 2011, meeting, your board of directors voted to enter into a long-term power supply agreement with Cadillac-based Wolverine Power Cooperative, effective Jan. 1, 2012. This was a landmark decision, and I applaud the board for the years of diligent work that led to a decision I firmly believe will best serve our members.

The reality is that kilowatts are kilowatts. There isn't a particular brand that is better than another. There are many ways to produce kilowatts, from affordable but controversial coal-based generation to expensive but more environmentally-friendly renewable generation. And, most of the major industry players have already diversified their production portfolios in efforts to meet increasingly stringent state and national renewable energy requirements.

So, this decision was less about the product and more about the partner. You're not going to see a difference in your power supply beginning Jan. 1. Lights won't be brighter and food won't cook faster. The commodity itself will remain unchanged as it relates to the value it provides in your home or business. What

is changing, however, is our confidence in a power supplier that we firmly believe will make better decisions on your behalf.

Let's start with a quick refresher on how our system works. Midwest does not generate electricity; we are a distribution cooperative. We enter into long-term agreements that provide for an uninterrupted supply of power that, for the most part, is not purchased on the volatile wholesale market. That power is delivered over a national transmission system to our substations, where we move it over our distribution lines to your home or business. The pieces to this complicated system

are reflected on the various lines of your bill, and over 60 percent of what we collect from you monthly is returned to the power supply partner.

We have been served by an Indianapolis-based power supplier for more than 25 years. It was a somewhat rocky relationship from the start, but the long-term nature of our contracts kept us in the marriage. In recent years we have been increasingly unhappy with decisions made by this partner, specifically related to the purchase of power supply assets that were not in the best interests of consumers at the end of the lines. As we approached the end of our long-term contracts with this partner, we realized it was time to evaluate all our options, and began the long and arduous process that resulted in our decision to work with Wolverine.

Again, you won't experience any difference in the commodity, but there are significant differences that will ultimately impact you. Wolverine is a fairly small player in the power supply market, but has a strong commitment to their co-op partners and the users at the end of the line, and an exemplary track record of solid, well-planned power supply purchases that make them less dependent on the whims of the volatile energy markets. Power supply is never an exact science, but the well-conceived and executed approach of our new partner should result in more stability on your electric bill.

Please understand I'm not suggesting that your bill will decrease as a result of this



Robert Hance
President/CEO



Family Fun at the ZOO

Thanks to all who joined us!

Threats of rain couldn't keep the Midwest family of members away from our Customer Appreciation Day events. The rain held off and Mother Nature provided us with beautiful weather for our 2011 festivities, and a roaring good time was had by all.

On Sept. 11, more than 3,500 member families from across our service territory joined us for the day at Binder Park Zoo in Battle Creek. Two weeks later nearly 2,000 joined us at the Toledo Zoo. Young and old alike came out for a picnic lunch followed by an afternoon enjoying the sights and sounds of two of our region's best family venues, creating memories that won't soon be forgotten!

"Over and over again our members expressed heartfelt thanks for our efforts, along with surprise that their electric utility would provide this type of opportunity," said Bob Hance, Midwest Energy Cooperative president/CEO. "The reality is that we are more than just an electric utility; we are locally-owned by our members and operated by people who live and work in that same community. Events like this give us a chance to recognize and celebrate the unique relationship that defines the electric cooperative, and to interact together as members of an extended family and not just co-op staff and customers."

To view more photos from the 2011 zoo events, click on our Facebook icon on our homepage at TeamMidwest.com.

▶ New Power Supplier, from page 4

move. I've repeated for nearly 10 years now that power supply prices are going to continue to climb as a result of our usage habits, climate change regulation, and the need for new generation. What we do anticipate, however, is that Wolverine will make better decisions about purchases and asset development, and is better positioned to forecast power supply prices.

That said, beginning in January you will see an increase in the power cost adjustment on your bill. While the final figures are not available yet, it may be as high as 6 percent, which translates to an increase of about \$7 monthly for our average residential user. This has nothing at all to do with the change to a new power supply partner, but everything to do with the reason behind it.

This has not been an easy or quick decision, but we weren't going to jump in until

we could confidently stand in front of our members and say that we made the best long-term deal for you. Thanks to diligent and courageous leadership from your board, we're now there.

Holiday Closings

Midwest Energy offices will be closed on the following:

Thanksgiving – Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24-25

Christmas – Friday, Dec. 23 and Monday, Dec. 26

New Year's – Monday, Jan. 2

From our families to yours, happy holidays!

Give a Gift of Energy



Looking for a unique gift for that person who has everything? Why not present them with a Gift of Energy from Midwest Energy Cooperative? You can pay all or part of someone's electric or propane bill as a special way to recognize any gift-giving occasion. Just call the cooperative at 800-492-5989 or stop in to any of our district offices and we'll apply your payment to their account and provide you with a gift certificate to present as a token of your thoughtful gesture.

Midwest in the Community

United Way Day of Action

The Midwest Energy and Midwest Propane teams recently adopted a project to build an 8 x 12-foot storage shed and complete the painting of raised flower boxes for Daybreak Adult Services as part of the 2011 Lenawee United Way Day of Action.

More than 300 people worked on 34 projects across Lenawee County as part of this organized community service event that kicked off the 2011 United Way campaign.

- 1) Employees Stacy Campbell, Greg Pickles and Kirk Sander kicked off efforts in the morning with some foundational work on the shed.
- 2) Greg Karmol and Mark Kangas stepped in later for some finishing touches.
- 3) Meanwhile, Cathy Teeter added fresh coats of paint to the raised flower boxes.



Three Board Seats Up for Election in 2012

One of the seven guiding principles of cooperatives is democratic member control. Individuals who get electric service from Midwest Energy Cooperative are more than customers; they are owners who have a voice and are encouraged to take an active role in the organization.

Midwest Energy is governed by a nine-member board of directors, which are elected to serve three-year terms. Each director is elected by and represents members living in his or her district. Board positions are important roles that are not taken lightly as they make critical decisions on behalf of their fellow member-owners.

Three seats on the board of directors will be up for election next year. Members interested in serving on the board should contact the cooperative to get a petition for nomination.



Ron Armstrong
District 3



Clarence Barth
District 4



Ken Swope
District 8

A member getting the signatures of 30 or more members on the petition will be placed on the ballot. To be placed on the ballot for one of the three terms ending in April 2012, a member must complete the petition and a biography and return them to the Cassopolis office by 4:30 p.m. on Jan. 3, 2012. Ballots will then be mailed to the district members on Jan. 25, 2012. All board members must reside in the district they represent.

Districts 3, 4 and 8 are those open for elec-

tion. District 3 is currently represented by Ron Armstrong of Lawton. The district includes Almena, Antwerp, Portage, Prairie Ronde, Oshtemo and Texas townships.

Clarence Barth of Three Rivers is the current director in District 4, which includes Brady, Fabius, Flowerfield, Leonidas, Lockport, Mendon, Newberg, Park, Schoolcraft and Wakeshma townships.

District 8 is represented by Ken Swope of Adrian. District 8 includes Adrian, Cambridge, Franklin, Raisin, Ridgeway, Rollin, Rome, Tecumseh and Woodstock townships, as well as northern portions of Blissfield, Deerfield, Dover, Hudson, Madison and Palmyra townships.

For more information about serving on the board of directors, please call the cooperative at 800-492-5989.

Use LED Lights to Save Energy On Holiday Lighting

For many of us, Christmas light displays are as much a part of the holiday “tradition” as exchanging gifts and singing “Silent Night.” We go to great lengths to adorn our trees, mantels and rooflines with colorful lights that help define the spirit of the season. However, in lighting our way through the season, we are also using extra energy that can make for a surprise “gift” on that January electric bill.

One of the best ways to save energy without dimming holiday cheer is switching to light-emitting diode (LED) holiday lights. LEDs emit a bright, vibrant light and use significantly less energy than conventional lights. They are also longer-lasting and stay cooler than traditional bulbs because they don't have a filament. The brilliance of their color makes LED lights suitable for both indoor and outdoor use.

The primary disadvantage of LED lights is the up-front cost. Decorative LEDs still cost

significantly more than traditional lighting, depending on the vendor. But over time, the higher investment pays off through the longer life of the bulbs and the reduced energy usage.

Using our Kill-A-Watt® meter energy monitoring device, we evaluated a 50-bulb strand of traditional mini lights (20.4 watts) and a 50-bulb strand of LED mini lights (2.4 watts). Operating one strand of traditional lights for 180 hours over the holiday season (six hours a day for 30 days) would add about 40 cents to your bill, while operating the LED strand for the same amount of time would add less than 9 cents to your bill.

For outdoor decorating, many of us use C7 size strands of bulbs. One strand of 25 traditional C7 lights (125 watts) costs about \$2.48 for 180 hours, while a strand of LED C7 lights (2.4 watts) costs less than 5 cents



for the same amount of time.

Keep in mind that these numbers represent just one strand of lights. While most of us don't go to the extent of the Griswold family in the popular “Christmas Vacation” movie, it is very common to use numerous strands of lights in decorating schemes. Not to mention the popular inflatables and other electronic displays. Everything you plug in will add to your usage and impact your bill, but you can manage that by paying attention to the wattage and making more energy efficient choices.

Check Out What's New Online michigan-energy.org

Updated Website!

- New Look
- New Features
- Improved Navigation

Simplified Online Audit

- The Energy Optimization Program is pleased to offer Energy Depot®, a set of online tools that will allow you to complete your home energy audit in a quicker, easier format. Energy Depot is a one-stop-shop for energy efficiency education and information.

Join Us on Facebook!

- Like our page to get the latest news, updates, events and promotions.

www.facebook.com/EnergyOptimization

Must be cooperative member to be eligible for these programs. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.

Online Ordering

- Reduce phantom electricity use by ordering an energy efficient Smart Power Strip online.

ENERGY OPTIMIZATION
michigan-energy.org
877.296.4319

3474 Alaiedon Parkway, Suite 600
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STATE OF MICHIGAN

BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-16886

- Midwest Energy Cooperative proposes to use a power supply cost recovery factor of \$0.02931 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to compute its member-customers' bills for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2012, if the Michigan Public Service Commission approves its request.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Midwest Energy Cooperative, 901 East State Street, Cassopolis, Michigan 49031, (800) 492-5989 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Midwest Energy Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: December 6, 2011, at 9:00 a.m. This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Mark E. Cummins

LOCATION: Michigan Public Service Commission, 6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7, Lansing, Michigan
The Mercantile Way building sustained flood damage and remains closed until further notice. Please consult the Michigan Public Service Commission website at: michigan.gov/mpsc for updates on hearing locations or call 517.241.6060.

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

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider the September 30, 2011 application of Midwest Energy Cooperative (Midwest) to implement a power supply cost recovery (PSCR) plan and PSCR factor of \$0.02931 per kWh to compute its member-customers' bills for the 12-month period January 1, 2012 through December 31, 2012. Midwest's requested PSCR factor reflects a \$0.05226 per kWh allowance for cost of power supply included in base rates.

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

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by November 29, 2011. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Midwest's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

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

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

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 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.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

October 11, 2011



Too many bills and not enough time?

Pay Your Bills the Easy Way!

Easy Ways to Pay and **E-Bill** take the hassle out of paying your electric and/or propane bills.

● **Easy Ways to Pay** offers two convenient autopay options: bank draft and credit card. To enroll, simply complete the personal information section below, then select your preferred autopay program and complete only that section. Return the completed form with your next payment.

● **E-Bill** allows you to view and pay your bill(s) electronically. You receive your monthly bill by email, and it is paid through one of our convenient autopay programs. To sign up for E-bill, please complete the personal information section, then select your preferred autopay program and complete only that section, then check the E-Bill box.

You may also sign up online at **TeamMidwest.com**, or by calling our Customer Care Department at 1-800-492-5989.

Personal Information: (please print)

Name _____ Phone _____

Service Address _____

E-mail _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Service sign-up Please check which Midwest service(s) you would like to pay through the **Easy Ways to Pay** program, and include the appropriate account number(s). BPL Service is not currently available in all areas.

Please enroll the following services/accounts into the **Easy Ways to Pay** autopay program:

Electric _____ Account Number _____ Propane _____ Account Number _____ BPL _____ Account Number _____

Payment Selection Please select *either* bank draft or credit card and complete only that section.

Automatic Bank Draft Option: I authorize Midwest Energy Cooperative to make withdrawals as indicated on my monthly bill. I understand I will receive a bill showing the payment amount to be made by "Bank Draft" before each payment is due. I understand that adjustments to correct errors are authorized. This authorization will remain in effect until written notice of termination is received by Midwest Energy.

Name of Banking Institution _____ Account type: Checking Savings
Routing number _____ Account number _____

Automatic Credit Card Option:

I authorize Midwest to charge payment of my account to my (circle one): **VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER**

Credit Card Account Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Name on Credit Card _____

I understand that I will receive a copy of my electric bill monthly and that the balance due shown on my bill will be charged to my authorized credit card on or before the due date shown. I agree to notify Midwest immediately if I wish to change the credit card used, or if any information, such as the expiration date, on the authorized card changes. I also agree that charges to correct errors are authorized. This authorization will remain in effect until written notice of termination is received by Midwest Energy.

E-Bill Yes! I would like to sign up for **E-Bill**.

I have provided my e-mail address and completed my preferred autopay option above.



Midwest ENERGY COOPERATIVE

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

TeamMidwest.com

NEED A LITTLE
EXTRA CASH
THIS HOLIDAY
SEASON?



Midwest PROPANE

Over the years, our best source for new customers has always been our current family of happy and loyal customers. You know the value of our superior commitment to customer care, combined with the unique price stability that is the cornerstone of our approach.

And now, we're giving you an extra reason to share the Midwest Propane difference.

\$100 Holiday Cash

For every customer that you successfully refer, we will give you AND the new customer \$100 once the tank is set and service is activated. To refer yourself, just mention our Holiday Cash program and you may also qualify for the \$100 referral fee. New customers must meet eligibility criteria and tanks must be set by Dec. 23, 2011.

800-492-5989

TeamMidwest.com



Midwest Propane is not regulated by the MPSC.