

A Service of **HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative**

September 2011

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES



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To You

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Ed Oplinger

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Sept. 26

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— Ira Jones

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www.GeothermalEnergyMI.com

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Craig Borr is president and CEO.

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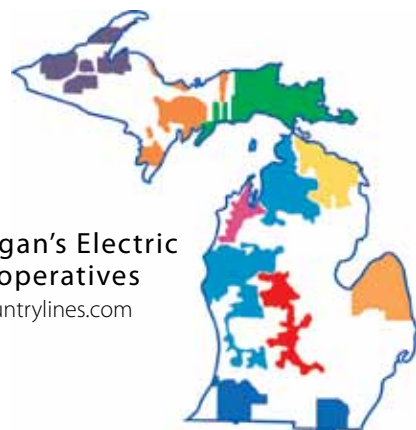
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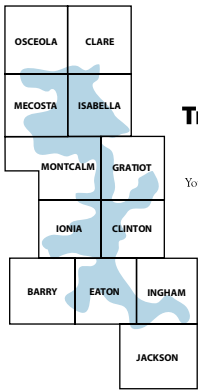
*Not in all editions

On the Cover

Dominic Fredianelli (L) and Cole Smith are two of three soldiers featured in a new documentary about coming-of-age, the young who fight our wars, and the families and towns they come from. Photo – Heather Courtney

Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com





Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Blanchard office:

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Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Portland office:

7973 E. Grand River Avenue
Portland, MI 48875
Open 8 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7556 or 1-800-562-8232

Service questions/outages:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-848-9333
(24 hours for emergency calls)

Tri-County Propane:

1-877-574-2740

WildBlue:

1-800-668-8413

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Let us know what you're thinking...

We're Listening to You

Listening is important in any relationship you value. At HomeWorks Tri-County, since we value each of the cooperative's member-owners, we find many different ways to listen to what you are saying.

Whether it's a member of the board of directors at the local coffee shop, a customer service representative taking your call, or a lineman meeting you to discuss building a new electric service, we take in your opinions and suggestions. When it's possible—and when it benefits the co-op's membership as a whole—we take action on the ideas we gather.

Sometimes people think we're not listening if we don't change our policy or procedure as soon as they let us know about their disagreement. But listening is more than just reacting to one person. It's taking the information and considering it carefully, with the needs of the entire cooperative in mind.

Here's a partial list of ways we actively listen to you, our member. Remember, though, listening starts with you speaking up in some way.

- Daily contacts via telephone, our front counters, email, or field visits.
- Email addresses and phone numbers for each board member are posted to the left of this column, and on our website at homeworks.org.
- There's a "Contact Us" link on homeworks.org that lists all of our phone numbers and addresses, with maps to our offices, and a direct email link.
- We're also posting on Facebook regularly ([Facebook.com/homeworks.org](https://www.facebook.com/homeworks.org)).
- We send hundreds of "How Did We Do?" survey cards each month to follow up on a contact we had with you. Any comments you write, whether compliments or complaints, are reviewed by the board each month, with a report on any additional action taken.
- Open member meetings are held, usually quarterly, before a regular board meeting. Notice of these meetings is published in *Country Lines* (see page 8) and on our website, as are any actions taken at the meetings.
- We host two geothermal seminars a year, one at each office. These are open to all members, at no charge, and are publicized in *Country Lines*. In fact, we have one coming up on Oct. 11 at Blanchard.
- Our annual district membership meetings come out to your area in May. Not only are the dates listed in *Country Lines*, we mail every member a personal invitation to attend and talk to us.
- We have several other projects that affect smaller numbers, from our youth programs to groups of members asked to review a specific process. The most recent example is a group of members who helped us revise our bill format, then reviewed it again once we'd used it a few months.
- We work with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association to perform a statistically valid member satisfaction every two years. This data is shared with the board, all employees, and with members via *Country Lines*, and is used in our strategic and tactical planning.

However you choose to communicate with us, your participation in the conversation is important to keep your cooperative strong. We appreciate your comments and support.



Mark

Mark Kappler
General Manager



Join the conversation at
homeworks.org/blog

Meet your cooperative's board of directors

Ed Oplinger: Leading and Learning

Ed Oplinger farms beef cattle and cash crops full-time in the Weidman area. He is married with three grown children and two grandchildren. His granddaughter will be the sixth generation of the family to be involved with the farm.

A 1972 graduate of Chippewa Hills High School, he served as state vice president of Future Farmers of America in 1972-73. He has been the Mecosta County Fair beef superintendent since 1993, and recently served as a board member and then president of the Michigan High School Rodeo Association. He has also served on the Isabella County Soil Conservation District board (1978-80); Barryton Co-op board of directors (1989-1993); and the Chippewa Hills School Board (1991-95) and as board secretary from 1993-95.

How did you become involved with the cooperative?

This farm has been served by Tri-County Electric my entire life; my parents and grandparents had electricity brought out here in the late 1930s.

I'd never attended a district meeting, but I grew up just two miles from Dean Floria and I've served on boards with him. One day he offered information about something he wanted me to consider. Dean said it was the best board he'd ever served on.

What does serving on the board mean to you?

This is another way to serve the community where I live and the people that are my friends and family in that community. It just means a lot to me to serve the people in Isabella and Clare counties. Those friends, neighbors and relations are very important to me and to Tri-County Electric.

What are some highlights you recall?

When I attended the (National Rural Electric Cooperative Association) meeting in Orlando, I got a grasp of how important electric co-ops are to the country and to rural



Ed Oplinger provides a treat of salt for some of his beef cattle.

America. I learned that 75 percent of the land mass is served by electric co-ops—but that represents only 12 percent of the population.

Another is member regulation, to bring a little more of the rate-making back to the community rather than having someone else dictate when and how we change our rates. This board knows that reliability and price are most important to our members.

What do you think of member regulation?

It's working well, as intended. We have a lot to learn, and a lot of possible changes coming in the future. I feel very confident it's going to work for us.

What challenges do you see ahead?

The biggest challenge at the moment is government regulations. At one point we have to do things one way, but in the near future we may have to do the same thing another way to satisfy a new rule. In the electric industry, the changes that take place are very slow, with years of planning to get things done. Ten to 15 years is not a long time in this industry, but it is a long time politically. It's hard to plan for regulations coming down the road that you have no control over. It seems a new regulation is no more than implemented and

it's changed on us.

How can members get more involved?

The easiest place at the moment is to go to our Facebook page (facebook.com/HomeWorks.org) and get involved. Help us by letting us know where problems are arising and what your concerns are so we can address them. If we can help, that's what we're here for. And remember, we're all in the same boat—even though I'm on the board I'm still a member, just like you.

On your board of directors, Ed represents District 6, including Clare and Isabella counties. He was elected to the board in 2009.

People Fund Restocks Pantry Shelves

Meeting July 13, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board made six grants totaling \$9,100, including:

- ▲ \$1,500 to Central Michigan Red Cross in Mount Pleasant for food pantry items.
- ▲ \$1,000 to the Village of McBride toward playground equipment for Robert Lee Davis Memorial Park.
- ▲ \$2,000 to Clinton County Juvenile Court in St. Johns to help with a new summer program for youth ages 12-16.
- ▲ \$2,000 to St. Mary's Society of St. Vincent DePaul, Charlotte, for their utility and rent assistance programs.

▲ \$2,100 to Habitat for Humanity in Clinton County to help repair the asphalt parking lot at the ReStore location.

▲ \$500 to the Child Abuse Prevention Council, Grand Ledge, to purchase program materials.

How To Apply For a Grant

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form, grant guidelines, and other helpful information. You'll also find information and application forms at homeworks.org. **Applications must be received by Sept. 26 to be considered at the Oct. 4 board meeting.**

In-home Devices Show Electric Use, Help Save Money

To help raise awareness of energy use, increasing numbers of consumers are considering installing in-home display devices that show how much energy a home uses at any given time.

Most in-home displays connect to a co-op's advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) system to provide real-time pricing. When the price of generating electricity rises, the unit sends a signal for you to begin conserving energy. Some models even allow you to set an energy-savings goal and track your progress online through a free energy use web portal like Google PowerMeter or Microsoft Hohm.

But no matter the features, folks who use in-home displays are likely to save 6 to 10 percent annually on their electric bills, according to studies by the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), an arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. Even



In-home displays like the PowerCost Monitor™ are being developed to provide a variety of information related to energy use, including how many kilowatt hours you have consumed and how much money you are currently spending on electricity.

after people stop actively paying attention to the displays, electric use behavior often changes permanently. On average, homeowners who "forget" about the displays may consume 1 to 3 percent less energy

than before they had one. By using less electricity, consumers help shave their electric co-op's service load. This saves everyone money in the long run by delaying the need to build power plants or purchase

additional wholesale power in a competitive market.

The most effective displays are easy to understand, interactive, and show electric use of individual appliances, says Brian Sloboda, CRN senior program manager. "These devices are best for those who are comfortable with gadgets, and possibly those with higher home energy use."

"People considering in-home displays should have a desire to reduce or at least understand their energy use," Sloboda adds. "The displays, for example, will show how much electricity is needed when lights are left on in an empty room, and how much it takes to operate a really big LCD TV."

In-home displays typically cost between \$100-\$200, depending on their features.

—Magen Howard

Sources: Cooperative Research Network, NRECA Market Research Services

MYSTERY PHOTO

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo below by **Oct. 10** will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 credit for electricity from your electric cooperative.

Please note that we do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone! Email mysteryphoto@countrylines.com, or send by mail to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and co-op. The winner will be announced in the November/December 2011 issue.

The July/August contest winner is Elizabeth Wilson of Dowagiac, who correctly identified the "Cheetahs On The Run" sculpture on Depot Drive in Dowagiac.



Do you know where this is? ➤



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 to czuker@countrylines.com or send to: *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864.

Info on Tattler Canning Lids/ Michigan-Made Product

If you are still intrigued about our July-August feature on the Tattler Reusable Canning Lids, here's the missing contact information:

WEBSITE: reusablecanninglids.com

PHONE: 877-747-2793





"stock" photos and do not claim these are professional kayakers, but the photo gives readers an idea of what kayaks look like and the fun that can be had with them, which is our main intent for this story. Thanks.

More About Vernors

I called the Snapple Co. again, and they said, "Yes, it is aged for three years in barrels" (there is a telephone number on the bottle). Also, they haven't changed the recipe in over 40 years. The above is in answer to the letter in the last *Country Lines* (July-August).

I have had a lot of good comments about the article (June Michigan-made product, "Memories and History of Vernors Ginger Ale").

— Marjory Priest

Kayaks

To your article in *Country Lines* (July-August 2011) on kayaks, the picture is staged—you do not see water movement and the paddles are in the wrong position—the one out of the water has to be at 90 degrees to the one in the water to reduce air flow. And, I have not seen any kayak on display or in the water that would be long enough, so it would not waddle like a duck unless it is an original "Eskimo" or a "Klepper."

I was about 5-years-old when I first sat in a kayak—this is a little more than 80 years ago. We did not have any canoes, just kayaks going down the Mosel and Rhein rivers. Those kayaks were not plastic—they had a wooden frame and a canvas skin. Since 1963, I've owned a 17-foot (not seaworthy any more) folding kayak with a rudder sideboard and sail. Sometimes I think to take it out again, fix it, and play with it again.

— Hans Mueller, LeRoy

Editor's Note: *It's great that you have a long history with this wonderful sport and we hope you get to use your kayak again. As to the photo, we sometimes use*

More About Eagles

Regarding Don Ingle's article, (May, "High-Flying Eagles") how many bald eagles are currently nesting in Michigan? What county has the most? Least? How many counties are they nesting in?

— William Robson, Whitmore Lake

Don Ingle replies: *"According to Mathew Stuber of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan's population of American bald eagles is about 700 pairs, and they are now widespread in Michigan. Their favorite nesting sites are near large bodies of water, like rivers and lakes, as they are primarily fish eaters, although they will eat carrion. After nearly becoming extirpated from Michigan, their population rebound is one of conservation's best success stories. Many consider passage of the Clean Waters Act in the 1970s to be the major reason for the recovery, since eagles eat fish and if fish were from contaminated waters it led to hatching failures.*

The highest number of eagles are found in the U.P. and northern half of lower Michigan, but they are now being seen in a majority of Michigan's counties.

To Send Us a Letter:

We enjoy hearing from our readers, so if you wish to comment, email your letter to editor@countrylines.com or send to: *Country Lines* Letters, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

Letters are printed on a space-available/content basis, and we reserve the right to edit slightly for space reasons. Since there isn't room to print every letter, please keep the size to no more than 350 words so we can include as many as possible.

Thanks for reading with us!

College Fire Safety

While college provides new and exciting opportunities, it also introduces safety hazards, especially to students living in dormitories, apartments and other community locations. An impeccable personal safety record doesn't safeguard someone against the actions of other residents in shared college housing facilities. Therefore, it is extremely important to **develop and practice an escape route should there be a fire.**

Fire Safety

Fire is the third leading cause of accidental deaths in the United States. A residential fire occurs every 82 seconds in this country, and, once burning, the size of a fire doubles every 30 seconds. If a fire occurs in your building, evacuate as soon as possible. Do not try to act bravely or put the fire out. That is a fight too easily lost and is just not worth it.

If you have an escape plan, follow it at the first sign or smell of a fire. Never exit a door if it feels hot to the touch, as flames are likely on the other side. It is also a good idea to know where all the fire extinguishers are located in the building.



Stay safe—don't overload power strips!

Fire Prevention

In community living facilities, everyone must do their part to make their dwelling a safer place. Here are a few easy steps you can take to help prevent fire through electrical hazards:

▶ Look for the Underwriters Laboratories (UL) mark on all products. It means they have been tested for safety.

▶ Make sure outlets are not overloaded.

▶ Check electrical wires and cords on appliances, tools, lamps, etc., to make sure they are not worn or frayed.

▶ Never run electrical wires or extension cords under carpets or heavy items, and never bunch them up behind a hot appliance.

▶ Unplug appliances when not in use.

▶ Make sure there is at least one smoke alarm on each level, and make sure they are maintained and tested regularly.

Fire facts

Fire is a chemical reaction involving fuel, oxygen and heat. Take away any of these elements and a fire cannot last. There are four classifications of fires, depending on their fuels:

Class A – Ordinary materials like wood, paper, cloth, rubber, and plastics. Most home fires fall into this category.

Class B – Combustible liquids—gasoline, kerosene, alcohol, paint, and propane—tend to be more severe and dangerous than Class A fires because the fuel is highly flammable.

Class C – Electrical equipment like appliances, switches, and power tools. These fires are extremely dangerous due to added shock hazards and because the source is energized. An energized fire source supplies a steady and constant ignition condition.

Class D – Combustible metals like magnesium, titanium, potassium, and sodium. These fires burn at a very high temperature and can react violently with water or other chemicals.

— Source: Underwriters Laboratories

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A special member meeting is set for Sept. 26, 9 a.m., at the cooperative's Blanchard office

The board of directors will consider several changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on Sept. 26, 2011, to be held at the cooperative office at 3681 Costabella Avenue, Blanchard, MI. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. and is open to all members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

The session will begin with an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board of directors, without filing a formal request under cooperative policy. Members are asked to come to the lobby by 9 a.m. and request to speak to the board; staff will direct interested members to the meeting room. Time constraints on each member's comments will be at the discretion of the board president, but members are asked to keep comments to less than 5 minutes.

The following items will be considered:

- 1) Establish the 2012 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor, to be applied to the cooperative's retail member-customers' monthly kilowatt-hour use. The Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor represents the power supply costs as established by the cooperative in conjunction with Wolverine Power Cooperative. The factor is established annually, and reviewed monthly.
- 2) Establish Energy Optimization rates for the 2012-2015 EO program years.
- 3) Revise the cooperative's Requirements for Pole Attachments tariff sheet to change the annual pole attachment rate per pole. Under the tariff, the cooperative may permit a cable television company or other attaching party to make attachments to its poles, ducts or conduits pursuant to a contract between the cooperative and the attaching party.
- 4) Revise the monthly credits given to members who participate in the cooperative's load control heating (dual fuel) and water heating programs.
- 5) Revise the cooperative's Aid-to-Construction fee schedule to reflect cost increases. If approved, these changes will affect member-customers who have electric service built to a new location, or request a change in service at their current location.

Participation: Any interested member may attend and participate. The location of the board meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact HomeWorks Tri-County Electric at 800-562-8232 a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be made before the meeting date by calling General Manager Mark Kappler at 517-647-1281, or by email at mkappler@homeworks.org.

Notice of the board meeting shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in Michigan Country Lines.

Members-only Pricing!

HomeWorks Tri-County Cooperative is offering members valuable rebates for the purchase and installation of ENERGY STAR® products. Rebates are available for items purchased at any electronic, hardware or department store.

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

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



Must be a Michigan resident and receive service from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative to be eligible for this program. Items purchased must be installed in a home that receives service from HomeWorks. For residential accounts only while supplies last. Restrictions may apply.

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

michigan-energy.org
877.296.4319

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Learn about our programs at michigan-energy.org • Questions? 877.296.4319

USDA Partners With Your Electric Co-op To Help Economy

A key element in reviving our state is inexpensive, sustainable energy. Rural electric cooperatives play a critical role in Michigan's economic revitalization, and the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development is pleased to be their partner.

Since 2009, USDA Rural Development has provided over \$140 million for infrastructure improvements to Midwest Energy Cooperative, Alger-Delta Cooperative Electric Association, Thumb Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative and Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

These investments have helped strengthen Michigan's agricultural sector, now the second-largest part of our economy.

USDA Rural Development provides a wide array of tools to help communities generate jobs, complete needed infrastructure improvements and provide their young people with the skills they need to create businesses in their hometown.

Our Business and Industry loan guarantee program can cover up to 90 percent of loans, helping banks to extend credit, and often causing them to offer better terms. Last year, 160 Michigan businesses were assisted with guaranteed loans or grants for a total investment of more than \$141 million.

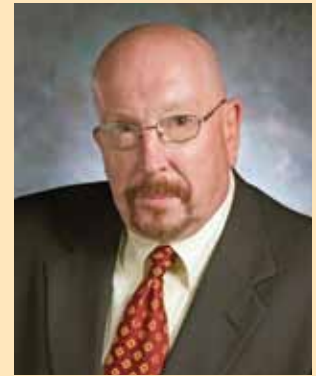
Applicants can apply through federal or state-chartered banks, credit unions, and savings and loan associations. The funds can be used for many purposes, including acquisition, start-up and expansion of businesses that create rural employment, though they may not be used for agricultural production (this falls under a different area of USDA).

Another tool is the Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program, which finances business start-ups or expansions by working with an intermediary electric cooperative to provide low-interest loans to rural businesses.

We are also able to help communities with funding for emergency services, such as police cars and fire trucks, as well as long-term financing for water and sewer systems.

Rural Development funds can also be used for technical assistance, to improve energy efficiency, or to develop renewable energy resources.

In June, USDA Rural Development provided a \$12,825,000 loan guarantee with NOVI Energy to finance a community digester in Fremont. The project, which has a total cost of \$22 million, will be one of the first commercial-scale anaerobic digesters in the United States and will convert organic waste products—mainly farm and food processing waste—into biogas that is used to generate electricity. The facility will process more than 100,000 tons of waste annually, reducing landfill usage and improving the quality of agricultural runoff. In addition,



James J. Turner
State Director
USDA Rural Development

“The project will be one of the first commercial-scale anaerobic digesters in the United States and will convert organic waste products—mainly farm and food processing waste—into biogas that is used to generate electricity.”

the solid byproducts can be used for soil amendments and cow bedding.

Anaerobic digesters are not new in Michigan—many farms have them, and USDA Rural Development has taken a leading role in funding them. What sets Fremont apart is the scale—it will take in the food waste of an entire community and the electricity and byproducts it generates will likewise be provided on a wider basis. In fact, NOVI Energy has already signed a long-term contract with Consumers Energy for the power the digester will generate.

It is this confluence of renewable energy and sound environmental management that offers a chance for Michigan to once again take the lead in economic development.

James J. Turner is the state director for USDA Rural Development in Michigan.



Where Soldiers Come From

A Michigan native's new documentary is about family, friends and coming-of-age in wartime.

Like many of us, Dominic Fredianelli, Matthew Beaudoin and Cole Smith hail from a small Michigan town. Unlike many of us, these 23-year-olds have already spent nine months of their lives fighting in Afghanistan.

Heather Courtney is from a small town, too. She grew up in Houghton—a close neighbor to Hancock, where the three young men are from, but she didn't know them until a few years ago.

A journalist frustrated with how the media portrays small towns, Courtney came back to rediscover her own roots and find a new story. "I just think they tend to stereotype by telling rural stories that put people in a box that is easily identifiable, (such as 'farmers'

or 'people from Appalachia') and some of the stereotypes are not friendly," Courtney explains.

She found her story after a newspaper notice led her to attend a local National Guard unit meeting. That's how she met Dominic and his friends Matthew and Cole, and came to spend the next four years getting to know them and their loved ones before, during and after their service in Afghanistan. The finished story is a film called "Where Soldiers Come From," and is being released now.

Courtney is adamant, however, that her documentary is not a political statement about war. She's more interested in the emotional and personal aspects, so it's more about

taking the leap into adulthood in relation to our country's soldiers, families, friends and communities. "Good filmmaking is all about good storytelling, period," Courtney says. "It is a coming-of-age film set in the context of a war, but to me, the growing up in a small town part of the story was just as important as going off to war."

She will say, however, that the film brings up issues that need more attention, including better veterans' care, especially relating to the new "silent" war wound known as traumatic brain injury (TBI), and also post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Beaudoin agrees, noting that he is 90 percent disabled from this "invisible" wound, and Smith also has TBI, after experiencing



Page photos-Heather Courtney



Top: When Heather Courtney first started filming, there were five soldiers from Hancock (western U.P.) in the documentary, and this photo of them walking on a snowy street in Marquette is the film's signature photo. **Above, left:** Courtney spent five months filming soldiers from Hancock at war in Afghanistan. **Above, right:** Matthew Beaudoin is one of the three featured soldiers from Hancock. About 20 just from the Hancock area went to Afghanistan, and there are about 3,500 in the area's Guard unit.

exposure to eight explosions. Many soldiers have TBI, Beaudoin explains, which is caused by a severe blow(s) to the head and can cause many other illnesses, including memory loss, inability to walk, loss of feeling in limbs, and even related suicide.

“Their biggest challenge now is dealing with the continuing issues of TBI and PTSD (as seen in the film),” Courtney adds. “And, as is the case with many young 20-somethings today, dealing with the lack of jobs, and dwindling college resources.”

Beaudoin attends Northern Michigan University and hopes to become a social worker so he can help other veterans who struggle with TBI and other readjustment issues. The college support, and being from a family with a lot of military service, is one of the main reasons he and many of his friends joined the Guard.

“I love where we live because you don’t see problems like homelessness as much and it’s a great place to grow up, but it’s not the best for my future—it’s more expensive and working-wise, it’s a hard place to excel,” Beaudoin says.

About that “growing up,” Beaudoin notes, “Once someone goes over there [Afghanistan], you’ll never be the same person...” He and his friends were 20 when they went to war and it will take years, and lots of understanding and work, to digest the things they’ve done and seen. “For a lot of us the injuries are difficult, and minor things start to bug you more, like 18- or 19-year-olds who complain because their parents aren’t buying them a car—it boils you.”

After seeing the film, Courtney says, “I hope audiences will question a previously held belief, or change their perspective, or discover a truth about themselves.” For herself, she is more open to differing political views than before, “But mostly I feel changed because now I have all of these people who



Dominic Fredianelli rests after taking part in a weapons search in Afghanistan.



Photo: Anthony Maddaloni

Heather Courtney, a U.P. native from Hancock, created the new Michigan-made documentary, “Where Soldiers Come From.” She now lives in Austin, TX, working on freelance films and as a reporter for National Public Radio.



Photo: Justin Hernard

A talented graphic artist that recently graduated from Finlandia University, Fredianelli paints a love mural on a wall in Hancock.

Where to see the film:

- Gala Hometown Premiere – Sept. 25-30 historic Calumet Theater, Calumet, MI
- Detroit Institute of Art – Sept. 30-Oct. 2
- Ann Arbor – Oct. 1
- Grand Rapids/Lansing/Saginaw – October (check local listings or internet)
- PBS Broadcast: Nov. 10, 9 p.m. (pbs.org)
- To see the film trailer and other info: wheresoldierscomefrom.com

are a part of my life and always will be—not just Dom, Cole and “Bodi,” but their families and others in the community,” she says. “Their openness, courage and love for each other continue to inspire me. And, I am thankful that I grew up in such a beautiful and unique place as the Upper Peninsula of Michigan!” Beaudoin adds, “She’s become part of the family—one of us—she’s like an auntie.”

As to being in a film, Beaudoin says, “We’re just small-town kids who hadn’t been to big cities, but people would come up and shake our hands, wanting autographs on posters, and stuff. It’s kind of weird at first...” But they enjoyed the Q&A tours and visiting L.A. and New York, and he notes, “It’s really all about Heather—going to film festivals and helping her get whatever recognition she can. She did a beautiful job of portraying us in this film.”

In her own mind, Courtney’s goal was

to tell a universal story about growing up so that people, no matter *where* they come from, could really get to know and identify with the people on the screen and see them grow and change. A number of screenings of the film aired this summer, with a jury award win at the South By Southwest film festival, but the national broadcast premiere is this fall (at left) on PBS’ “Point of View” documentary series.

“I think it’s a very good rep film of the everyday, regular soldier and where they come from—the humble beginnings all of us have, the brother connection of a small town, and going to war with people you grew up with,” Beaudoin says. “It’s not so much a war film as about soldiers who fight it, but if you want to see the effects on young kids who fight our wars—maybe you should see this film.” Afghanistan is America’s longest war (10 years), he adds, and “it’s time to bring our boys home.”

Beyond Swirly Bulbs

Federal regulations are spurring new lighting options.

On hot summer evenings, children love to chase fireflies, often catching them in jars. Then the real magic begins, as the intermittent glow captivates the captors.

That same sense of wonder can be found in labs as scientists refine the process of making light-emitting diodes (LEDs)—highly-efficient lightbulbs comparable to a firefly's glow. Commonly used as solitary sensor lights in electronics, manufacturers are now searching for economical ways to contain a colony of LEDs in a single lighting shell. Just as children attempt to gather enough fireflies to make a lamp, an LED "jar" would create enough light output (lumens) to match that of traditional incandescent bulbs.

This research is part of a national effort aimed at redefining household lighting. Starting in January 2012, incandescent bulbs—a technology developed in the United States by Thomas Edison in 1878 and largely untouched since—must become more energy efficient.

Federal Mandate

Why is the government shining a light on—well, lighting? The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimates we use 13.6 percent of our nation's energy supply to keep the lights on, and a lot of that power is wasted. If you've ever touched a traditional lightbulb when it's on, you realize much of the energy (90 percent) is released as heat (ouch!). This leaves a lot of room for improvement.

To tackle this issue, Congress passed the Energy Information and Security Act of 2007 (EISA). By 2014 household lightbulbs using between 40 and 100 watts will need to consume at least 28 percent less energy than traditional incandescents, saving Americans



Photos - GE Lighting

LED lightbulbs like the Energy Smart model from GE use between 75 and 80 percent less energy than classic bulbs.

an estimated \$6 billion to \$10 billion in lighting costs annually. The law also mandates that lightbulbs become 70 percent more efficient than classic bulbs by 2020 (LEDs already exceed this goal.)

"With shifting lighting options and consumers looking for every opportunity to save, navigating lighting solutions has never been so important," declares David Schuellerman, GE Lighting's public relations manager.

Look for Labels

Such a massive product change means consumers must switch from thinking about lightbulbs in terms of watts (amount of energy used) to lumens (amount of light produced.)

"Lumens, not watts, tell you how bright a light bulb is, no matter the type of bulb," explains Amy Hebert at the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). "The more lumens, the brighter the light."

The consumer-focused agency has designed a "Lighting Facts" label and shopping guide that compares a bulb being purchased with traditional incandescent lightbulbs based on wattages and equivalent lumens. Beginning in 2012, labels on the front and back of lightbulb packages will emphasize a bulb's brightness in lumens, annual energy cost, and expected lifespan.

Is this a "Bulb Ban"?

Contrary to popular belief, the EISA law does not ban incandescent bulb technology;

it requires that bulbs use less energy.

"It's equivalent to standards passed in the 1980s to make refrigerators more energy efficient, and we're reaping those benefits," remarks Brian Sloboda with the Cooperative Research Network (CRN), a division of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the national trade arm of local electric co-ops. "Refrigerators use less than one-third of the electricity today than they did in the mid-1970s, but consumers can't tell a difference in how their food is cooled. The premise is, why not do the same for lightbulbs?"

The EISA law halts the manufacture of inefficient lightbulbs, but stores will not remove tried-and-true incandescent bulbs from their shelves right away—current inventory will still be available for sale until exhausted. And, the improved efficiency requirements only apply to screw-based lightbulbs; specialty bulbs for appliances, heavy-duty bulbs, colored lights and three-way bulbs are exempt.

Explore Your Options

Once traditional incandescents go the way of the passenger pigeon, residential bulbs will largely fit into three categories, each stacking up a bit differently: **halogen incandescents** use 25 percent less energy and last three times longer than regular incandescent bulbs; **compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs)** use 75 percent less energy, last up to 10 times longer; and **LEDs** use between 75 and 80 percent less energy and can last 25 times longer.

"CFL, halogen and LED technologies all offer energy savings, but at different intervals, and all with their own pros and cons," says Schuellerman.

For consumers comfortable with their old incandescent bulbs, halogen incandescents will be an easy first-step. Featuring a capsule of halogen gas around the bulb's filament, they're available in a variety of familiar colors and can be dimmed.

"Halogen offers a big efficiency advantage over standard incandescent bulbs," says John Strainic, global product general manager, GE Lighting. "It consumes fewer watts while delivering a precise dimming capability and a bright, crisp light."

The most familiar and economical options



Some consumers don't like the swirly look of CFLs, so companies like GE are placing them inside shells, both clear and diffused, to look more like classic bulbs.

on the market are CFLs. The technology operates the same as fluorescent lighting in offices or kitchens, and the bulbs are now available in a wide array of colors (some can be dimmed). Always check the package to make sure a bulb meets your needs.

Schuellerman adds that CFLs are generally best when used where lighting is left on for extended periods and full brightness is not immediately necessary, such as family rooms, bedrooms, and common areas. As with all fluorescent bulbs, each CFL contains a small amount of mercury (five times less than a watch battery) and should be recycled. Many retailers offer free CFL recycling; visit epa.gov/cfl for details.

The final choice (remember the fireflies?) is LEDs. Although still developing, you can find LED lights, recessed fixtures, and some lower wattage replacement bulbs on store shelves.

"LEDs are the up-and-coming solution," predicts Schuellerman. "As they come down in price, homeowners will embrace them. Currently, most residential LEDs are used for outdoor lighting where fixtures are left on for extended periods and changing bulbs is not easily done. LEDs are also great for linear applications like under cabinet lighting, where light sources with thin profiles are needed."

The LEDs are more expensive than other options: a replacement for a 60-W incandescent bulb costs between \$30 and \$60. But costs will fall as manufacturers respond to growing consumer demand.

For example, in 2008 LEDs comprised 10 percent of the output from CREE Inc., a Durham, N.C.-based lighting manufacturer. Fast-forward three years and LEDs are responsible for 70 percent of the company's business, and bulb efficiency has doubled. Innovations like a new production line last year are driving costs down.

However, LEDs are not without their problems—they have to stay cool to operate efficiently, and when several bulbs are placed together for a brighter, more consumer-friendly light, lifespan decreases. However, many manufacturers are accounting for this by adding cooling elements to LED bulbs. Some bulbs feature a spine designed to allow air to flow around the base; others have fans built into the ballast.

Can You See a Difference?

Some consumers believe more efficient bulbs won't provide the same "warm" look and feel as classic bulbs, but Schuellerman disagrees.

"Lighting technologies are advancing at

such a rate that consumers won't notice a marked difference in the color of light from different technologies or how that light is dispersed. You also won't necessarily see a difference in bulb shape. Some consumers don't like the look of twist-shaped CFLs, for example, so we offer covered CFLs that look just like incandescent bulbs. We also have an LED bulb that is a replacement for a 40-watt incandescent, as well as halogen bulbs, that both are housed in incandescent-shaped shells."

The difference will be found on your monthly electric bill—more efficient bulbs use between 25 and 80 percent less energy than traditional incandescents, and last much longer. The U.S. Department of Energy claims each household can save \$50 a year by replacing 15 traditional incandescent bulbs.

"With these new technologies, homeowners will be spending less on electricity bills for lighting and changing fewer bulbs," says Schuellerman.

Visit energysavers.gov/lighting to explore lighting options. For details on the change and other tips, visit ftc.gov/lightbulbs.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, U.S. Energy Information Administration, Federal Trade Commission, Cooperative Research Network, LUMEN Coalition, GE, Sylvania, Philips

Sources

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ftc.gov/opa/2011/06/lightbulbs.shtm

■ Information from GE gelighting.com/2012

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■ Refrigerator efficiency:

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■ U.S. Department of Energy:

As of Jan. 1, 2012, traditional 100-watt incandescent lightbulbs will no longer meet efficiency standards and be unavailable at most stores. As of Jan. 1, 2013, traditional 75-watt incandescent bulbs will no longer be available; 40 and 60-watt versions will be unavailable as of Jan. 1, 2014.*

*The act specifically limits the import or manufacture of inefficient bulbs. Stores will be able to sell remaining inventory.

What Are My Lighting Options?

Starting in 2012, lightbulbs must be more energy efficient.

The three most common bulb options consumers will find on store shelves are:

Halogen incandescents
 Energy Savings:* 25 percent
 Lifespan:* Three times longer
 Annual Energy Cost: \$3.50

Compact Fluorescent Lightbulbs (CFLs)
 Energy Savings:* 75 percent
 Lifespan:* 10 times longer
 Annual Energy Cost: \$1.20

Light-emitting diodes (LEDs)
 Energy Savings:* 75-80 percent
 Lifespan:* 25 times longer
 Annual Energy Cost: \$1

*As compared to traditional incandescent bulbs

Learn more at energysavers.gov/lighting

'Mums' the Word for Fall Color

For late summer or early fall blooms in your garden, chrysanthemums are a spectacular choice.

It might surprise some folks to learn that chrysanthemums have been popular in the U.S. for only the past 60 to 80 years. Mums are actually native to China and were traced as far back as the 15th century B.C. The plant was introduced to the West in the 1600s. The term chrysanthemum is traced to Swedish botanist, Karl Linnaeus, who in 1753 first coined the word from the Greek chrysos (gold) and anthos (flower). In the late 1990s, botanists reclassified the mum and placed it in the genus *Dendranthema*. However, botanists recently reversed themselves and placed mums back in the genus *chrysanthemum*, which is how most gardeners recognize the plant.

There are essentially eight different types of mums to choose from:

1. **Anemone** – a daisy-like flower with one to 5 rows of petals radiating from a rounded crest;
2. **Cushion** – often called “azalea” mum growing on low, bushy plants;
3. **Decorative** – a large mum with multiple rows of petals either curving toward or away from the center;
4. **Pompom** – small, stiff, globe-like flower;
5. **Quill** – long, straight tubular petals;
6. **Single** – daisy-like flower with several rows of flowers radiating from a flat center;
7. **Spider** – long tubular petals with curled ends;
8. **Spoon** – petals are spoon-shaped. Anemone, cushion, decorative and single have the largest number of varieties that are hardy for our area while pompoms, quill,



Chrysanthemum
pacificum

Mums are long-lasting perennials that come in many brilliant varieties.

spider and spoon have fewer varieties that are hardy here.

Since there are so many reasonably priced mums sold in late summer, many people think of them as annuals. In the fall, they buy mums for their brilliant colors, then dispose or compost them once the frost comes. However, mums *are* perennials and if you are interested in varieties that are not readily available, you may decide to grow your own.

Here are some tips from Donald Ellwood, president of the Michigan Chapter of the National Chrysanthemums Society in Dearborn. Ellwood is also currently serving his second term on the board of the National Chrysanthemums Society.

“The best time to plant mums is in the spring, once the frost has past,” says Ellwood. “This gives the plant plenty of time to get established before winter, since their roots are shallow.” Make sure the mum you buy is hardy for your USDA zone. “Choose a location that gets at least six to eight hours of sun. Mums like well-drained soil that’s watered regularly,” says Ellwood. Since he’s growing mums to show, he feeds them with a 20-20-20 granular fertilizer when planting, then uses a liquid fertilizer every 10-12 days once they are established. The average gardener can get away with an initial granular fertilizing when planting, then once again in mid-July.

The key to good flower production is to

start pinching them back when the plant is 6 inches tall. Take them back about an inch, then pinch back every two weeks until mid-July. Mulch your plant to keep weeds down and moisture in the soil. An extra mulching of 4 to 6 inches in the fall help them survive the winter. Ellwood likes to mulch his 80-plus plants with alfalfa, which he buys from the feed store. “I’ve found that chopped maple leaves get too heavy, but the coarser chopped oak leaves would work well.”

Ellwood grows lots of spider mums (or Fuji mums) which are considered the most exotic variety. One of his favorites is *c. Fleur de Lis* which is one of the largest spider mums with exquisite, fine lace metallic silver florets which spill gracefully from a very full wine-colored center. The *Fleur de Lis* is not hardy in Michigan and would need to be overwintered in a root cellar.

Another of his favorites is *C. pacificum* (Zone 5; Zone 4 with protection). This unclassified mum has a very distinctive white trim around the leaf’s lobed edges. The flowers are tiny button-like yellow blooms reminiscent of an ageratum. Both these varieties are available from King’s Mums out of Oregon (kingsmums.com).

For more information on growing mums visit michigangardenerscompanion.com.

Rita C. Henahan is an author, freelance writer and photographer.



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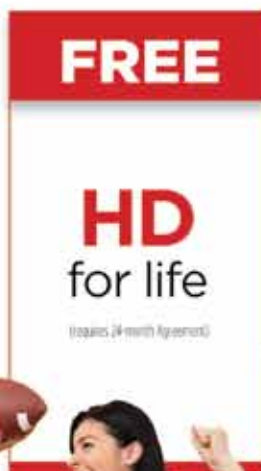


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Back-to-school Relationship Skills

Instead of school supplies, give 'life supplies.'

It's September, when families engage in a ritual dance of shopping, backpack stuffing, bus-stop waving, form-signing, and finger-crossing in an effort to ensure success for their child's school experience.

Sometimes I wonder, though, if we pack all the right things for that first day of school. I'm all for equipping students with the best wardrobes, notebooks and technology tools they can afford. It all supports learning and sends a message that school matters.

But let's face it. School is about far more than reading, writing and arithmetic for kids. (Some days, I suspect their teachers wonder if it's about those things at all!) What really gets our kids' attention is relationships. And relationships—with teachers, parents and peers—can make all the difference in success at school and in life.

Research tells us that when children have friends they are happier, get in less trouble, achieve better grades and higher test scores, and are more involved in school activities. Socially competent children and youth get along better with their teachers, who tend to like them and give them more support, which improves their school performance. Students who feel connected to school are more motivated to succeed academically, are more engaged in class, and are less likely to repeat a grade.

So what if, this year, we all skipped the back-to-school shopping and instead stuffed our kids' "social-emotional backpacks" with the skills they need to build strong and healthy relationships—with their peers, certainly, but also with key adults in their lives. Those kinds of school supplies are easy on the pocketbook; but they take lots of time and conversation.

Mark Hansen, author of "Success 101 for Teens: 7 Traits for a Winning Life," has some ideas on how to start. "Too many people talk in abstracts about communicating with their kids," says Hansen. "You have to talk about specific issues."

Hansen thinks the start of school is the perfect time for parents to discuss friendships

with their kids.

"The truth is many kids wind up in trouble ...because they've simply chosen the wrong friends," Hansen notes. "At the beginning of every school year, kids meet new friends every day, and it's important to recognize that sitting next to a guy who feeds you answers in English class is not necessarily the best basis for a friendship."

Hansen said that adults evaluate friendships based on whether people share our interests and values. If parents taught their kids to approach their friendships in the same manner, they might experience fewer problems with their kids "hanging out with the wrong crowd."

He points to seven traits kids should look for both in themselves and their friends:

► **Determination** means being committed to what you want to achieve and making sure you are mentally and physically prepared.

► **Responsibility** revolves around accepting full responsibility for ourselves. We are each in charge of our own behavior and actions.

► **Confidence** is about believing in yourself, because if you don't believe in yourself, no one will.

► **Love** means understanding the power of that emotion. It has the power to drive us to do both wonderful and dreadful things, and we must be able to manage that power with wisdom and judgment.

► **Persistence** maintains that you must stick to what you want to achieve and continue forward with making sure what you are doing is supporting those goals.

► **Dreams** are important, because they are the fuel for our engines. We must keep each of our dreams alive; each of our personal dreams that we have for ourselves.

► **Attitude** is about making choices. A consistently positive attitude is what we need in order to accomplish all of our dreams.

"Every day there are discussions in the media about problems with our youth," Hansen adds. "Just read the papers each day. My belief is that we must counter that



attack and provide a step-by-step guide for our youth to follow, empowering them for a winning life."

I often see bumper stickers claiming "My child is an honor student"; if your child earns one, plaster it on with pride. Just don't forget to mention his kindness, persistence and delightful sense of humor. Those important traits might not earn awards, but success—or happiness—will be hard to achieve without them.

Homework Can Wait

Time spent on-task makes a huge difference when it comes to success in school, on stage, or through sports. But save time for heart-to-heart talks as a family. While peers have a lot of influence on teens, studies show parents have more. A 2004 study, for example, showed that nine out of 10 teens say their mothers have a high level of influence in their lives; and eight in 10 say the same of their fathers.

Adolescents who are strongly connected to their parents perform better in school and are less likely to smoke, abuse drugs, and engage in other destructive behaviors. Even if you feel you've lost all influence, keep talking. Your teens are listening.

Harley Bra Keeps It 'Cool'

While laid-off from his work as a trim carpenter, Tom Hovie was looking for something to keep him busy. Instead, he became employed with his own new business, Northern Michigan Leather.

A long-time Harley Davidson rider, the Great Lakes Energy Co-op member always liked the idea of a front bra on cars because they are classy and protect the paint, so he thought, "Wouldn't that be cool to have a leather bra on my Harley?"

Finding only two unacceptable covers (vinyl that didn't look good or fit, and another at a spendy \$950), he began making his own fairing bra (photo, right and p. 3).

An admittedly detail-oriented guy who often changes things he buys to "fix crappy engineering or simply make it my own," he went through tons of trial and error before making a few he could take to bike shows. "The response was overwhelming!" says the Charlevoix resident.

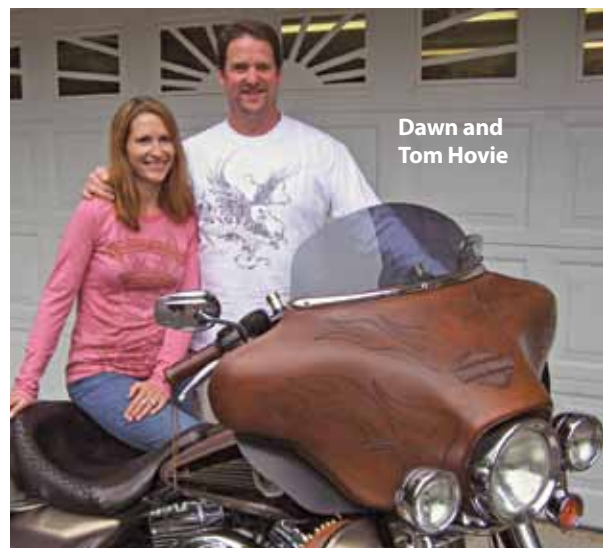
When the first leather fairing hit the streets,

he knew he had something because everyone who saw it said, "wow, that's the coolest thing I have ever seen—there is nothing like it available on the market." "The fairing cover does personalize your Harley, stones bounce off instead of chipping the paint, and bugs clean off easily," he explains.

Hovie now sells one custom fairing bra a week, and a few at each show he attends. Prices vary, depending on how much customization is requested. "Things are evolving on a daily basis and I am constantly preparing for more orders," Hovie says.

His wife Dawn manages the website (motorcyclefairingbra.com or call 231-675-4712) and helps with new designs. Their son, Sammy, also designs leather motorcycle hand grips.

"With the help of a few ads in biker mags



Dawn and Tom Hovie

Photo courtesy Tom Hovie

coming out soon, I speculate growing this business again," Hovie says. He likes Harleys because you can modify them in any way, and you're still just "a guy living his dream."

Hovie's dream is to work at home, be happy and content with what he has, and "make cool bikes even cooler."

See page 6 to tell us about your favorite, or a unique, Michigan-made product.



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Roasted Eggplant with Basil & Garlic

6 small or 2 large eggplants
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1/4 c. tomato paste
2 lg. cloves garlic, peeled
1/2 c. fresh basil
3/4 c. water, divided

Halve eggplants; sprinkle with salt and set aside. Place garlic, parsley and basil in a food processor; process until smooth. Pat eggplant dry. Cut a gash into the meat of the eggplant, but do not cut through skin; stuff with parsley mixture. Place halves in a baking dish sprayed with cooking spray. Combine tomato paste with 2 tablespoons water; spoon over eggplants. Add remaining water to pan. If using large eggplants, cover and bake at 400° for 30 minutes, uncover and bake 15 minutes longer. If using small eggplant, bake uncovered at 400° for 30 minutes.

Marjorie Gask, Livonia

Savory Lettuce Salad

4 c. shredded lettuce
1/2 c. chopped tomato
1/2 c. chopped green pepper
1/2 c. chopped sweet red pepper
1/2 c. chopped fresh mint
1/4 c. chopped fresh parsley
1/4 c. chopped fresh chives
1/2 c. chopped green onion

Italian dressing

Toss fresh ingredients together; add enough dressing to coat, and toss thoroughly. Garnish with fresh dill and pomegranate seeds, if desired. Serves 6 to 8 people.

Deborah Black, Sandusky

Fresh Herbed Dipping Oil

1 t. minced garlic
1 t. finely chopped fresh rosemary
1 t. finely chopped fresh oregano
3/4 t. finely chopped basil
1/3 t. crushed red pepper flakes
1/2 c. extra virgin olive oil

Combine ingredients and salt and pepper to taste. Serve with crusty bread. Makes 1/2 cup.

Jacqueline Muma, Hastings

One tablespoon of fresh herbs is equivalent to 1 teaspoon of dried (except rosemary—which is the same, fresh or dried). The flavor of fresh herbs will disappear if overcooked, so add them to your cooked dish at the very end. To store fresh herbs, wash, dry and roll them in a damp paper towel and place in an unsealed plastic bag in the refrigerator for up to seven days. Always find hundreds of recipes at countrylines.com.

Grandma's Minted Watermelon

6 c. cubed, seedless watermelon
3/4 c. fresh mint, finely chopped and packed

Dressing:

4 T. sugar
1/2 c. lime juice
1 t. olive oil

Whisk dressing ingredients together until sugar dissolves. Mix watermelon and mint; pour dressing over top and mix well. Serve chilled.

Deborah Black, Sandusky

Easy Summer Marinade

1/4 c. lemon juice
1/2 t. crushed red pepper
1/2 t. black pepper
1/2 t. salt
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 c. fresh parsley, coarsely chopped
1/4 c. fresh basil, coarsely chopped
fresh cilantro, dill and oregano, to taste
1/2 c. olive oil

Combine lemon juice, crushed red pepper, black pepper and salt. Add garlic and fresh herbs; whisk in olive oil. Stir well before using.

Mary Ellen Wynes, Mt. Pleasant

Pineapple Salsa

1 20-oz. can pineapple tidbits
1/2 c. finely chopped red bell pepper
1/2 c. finely chopped green bell pepper
1 T. chopped green onion
2 t. chopped fresh cilantro or parsley
2 t. chopped jalapeño chilies
1 t. grated lime peel

Drain pineapple and reserve 1/4 cup juice. Combine pineapple, reserved juice, bell peppers, onion, cilantro, chilies and lime peel in a small bowl. Serve at room temperature or slightly chilled over grilled chicken breasts or fish filets, with tortilla chips, or on tacos or quesadillas.

Paula Brousseau, Bellaire

Mozzarella and Tomato Salad

8 ozs. mozzarella cheese, cut in 1/4-inch pieces
2 Roma tomatoes, finely chopped
2 T. olive oil
2-3 cloves garlic, minced
2-3 T. fresh basil or flat leaf Italian parsley, chopped

Combine ingredients and refrigerate. Bring to room temperature before serving.

Laura Foley, Comins



► **Send in your recipes!** If published, you'll receive a kitchen gadget. Send in: **LAMB & VEAL recipes by Oct. 10.** Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email recipes@countrylines.com.

Fresh Herb Flavor Guide

BASIL: Fragrant and spicy, almost peppery. Great with tomatoes, vegetables, poultry, grilled pizza, salads. It's best used as whole leaves or torn. Smaller leaves at top of bunch are the sweetest.

CHIVES: Subtle onion flavor with grass-like leaves. Great with egg dishes, soups, sauces, baked potatoes, fish. Snip with scissors for best results. Chive flowers make a pretty garnish.

CILANTRO: A lively flavor; soapy, some say; looks similar to flat-leaf parsley. Great with Asian, Mexican and Indian dishes; mix in salsas and chutneys. Leaves become bitter after plant flowers. Dried seeds are the spice coriander.

DILL: Fresh and grassy; feathery leaves used in pickle brine. Great with tuna salad, omelets, vegetables, seafood dishes, yogurt dressing for cucumbers, herb vinegars. Use fresh or add to hot food just before serving.

MINT: Cool; brightens up both savory and sweet dishes. Great with beverages, jellies, sauces, marinades for meat and vegetables; often tossed with buttered peas. The most popular variety is spearmint. To dry, hang in a dark place with low humidity.

OREGANO: Earthy; balances acidic tomatoes—hence common on pizza. Great with lamb, beef, eggs, beans, eggplant. Closely related to marjoram (but more pungent).

PARSLEY: Peppery and fresh; curly parsley is milder than flat-leaf Italian. Great with salads, vegetables (especially potatoes), pasta. Either variety is a breath freshener.

ROSEMARY: Pungent aroma and pine flavor. Great with Mediterranean dishes, lamb, poultry, fish, breads; add sprigs or finely chopped leaves to long-cooking stews. When grilling, sturdier stems make good skewers; branches can be a basting brush.


SAGE: Very aromatic and woody. Great with fresh sausage, holiday stuffing for turkey, rich meats like pork, goose and duck. Deep-fried sage is a lovely garnish.

THYME: Minty and citrusy. Great with Mediterranean dishes, stews, eggs, seafood, poultry; toss sprigs into boiling water to flavor steamed rice.

Source: goodhousekeeping.com

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The 'Quirky' Timberdoodle



Photo - iStockphoto.com

Saving habitat is key to halting the woodcock's decline.

The “Timberdoodle” season opens on Sept. 24, a fact not lost on most upland bird hunters.

The upland aspen coverts and wetland tag alder edges of northern Michigan have long been the places to seek woodcock. If you do, remember an old “timberdoodler’s” hunting advice.

“If you are hunting ‘timberdoodles’ and don’t get some mud on your shoes, you’re hunting in the wrong places.”

That’s sage advice to remember in woodcock season. The key is that, like any other critter, a woodcock has to eat. If you want to find deer, you look for acorns; if grouse are on the agenda, look for gray dogwood, wild berries and seeds; and for woodcock you need moist soils because that is where to find earthworms, the prime food for this long-billed, stub-tailed little shorebird that deserted the marshy beach edges for northern woodlands.

Woodcock numbers over their range have been declining. Most studies, including the impact of hunting on their populations, show clearly that it is loss of habitat, human land-use shifts, and lack of consistent habitat management, especially on private forestlands, that are the major reasons for this decline—not hunting.

Still, the fall upland game season will draw hunters to the northern coverts to seek this ‘quirky’ bird in those certain habitats. If they have moist spoils or are close to wet areas, these are prime places to look up

Mr. Woodcock.

When we say ‘quirky bird,’ we do not mispeak. Woodcock come equipped with some built-in survival abilities, thanks to whatever divine engineer designed their needs for food and survival.

First, that long bill; it comes with a special tip that can grip like pliers to pull up a worm in a wrap-around motion. The long bill plunges deep into the soil to grab its dinner, and it knows just where to stab the earth thanks to an upside down brain that puts its ears closer to the ground—great for detecting worm or grub movements.

Its tail is short and stubby, with a small ring of white tip marks on the feathers. But it makes up for its short, squat body with ultra-wide wings able to reach speeds that often fool gunners.

Even its voice is quirky—a nasal “peent” like a tree frog with a sore throat.

The ‘timberdoodle’ alarm system is built for survival. When a potential danger or predator comes near, it does one of two things. Sits tight and lets the markings of its camouflage feathering blend in the brushy autumn ground cover. This ability to blend in is one the hunter knows well. Birds hit and fallen to that ground cover are hard to spot. Many a hunter has stood over a downed woodcock and not been able to

make it out from the leafy ground debris. Most serious woodcock hunters usually have a bird dog that does the finding and retrieving for them. (The dog also finds and points

live birds when they are still sitting tight.)

Secondly, when flushed, woodcock can almost seem to hover and fly forward or backward like a helicopter, but when it is ready to escape it can suddenly fly at full-flank speed straight out before towering up and over the tree line cover. This ability to toss a whole bag of fight tricks at a hunter has made shintangle chumps out of skeet range champs.

Maintaining the habitat of the woodcock is vital, and not just on public lands. Too many acres of good habitat are lost to “benign management”—that is, no management at all—on private lands. So, enrolling the private woodlands owner in efforts to maintain and improve woodcock habitat may be even more important than on public lands.

Michigan’s woodcock hunting season length and daily bag limits have gradually been reduced by the Fish and Wildlife Service, as this bird is a migratory species and subject to federal game law.

This year, the Michigan woodcock hunter has a 45-day season which runs to Nov. 7, with a three-bird daily limit, six in possession after opening day.

While the season is short, it is regarded by many upland hunters as the most challenging of game birds just because this ‘quirky’ little bird always seems to stay a few tricks ahead of hunters on most days afield. In the end, it is the challenge of woodcock hunting that brings the uplander back year after year, not the number of birds in the bag.



Seek these types of habitats as you hunt:

- ▲ Aspen stands near moist lands.
- ▲ Under tall bracken fern in areas of large-bole aspens and close to opening edges.
- ▲ In tag alder thickets along creeks and wetlands.

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



Safe Shopping Online

Like many consumers today, you probably do some shopping online. Every year, online sales increase dramatically. During the 2010 Christmas shopping season, internet-related sales grew 15.4 percent from the same time period in 2009—reaching an astonishing \$36.4 billion. While shopping from the convenience of home can save time, money and gas, there are some important things to consider:

✓ **Know your retailer.** It's always safer to shop with merchants you know. If you want to buy from a website that's new to you, do an online search for that merchant and "complaints" to check for negative chatter about the seller.

✓ **Use secure websites.** When placing your order on the merchant's website, make sure that there is an "s" at the beginning of the web address: For example, the URL should begin "https://" instead of just "http://." Also, be sure to look for a padlock icon in the upper or lower right-hand portion of your

computer screen. Both of these mean that the site you are visiting uses a high level of security to protect your personal information.

✓ **Credit cards give you greater protection than cash and debit cards.** If you are not charged the correct amount for your purchase, or do not receive the merchandise you ordered, you can dispute the transaction under the terms of the Fair Credit Billing Act if you've used a credit card.

✓ **Choose your password carefully.** Most websites require you to use a password to access your personal information and place orders. Be sure to create a password that is not easy for others to guess—and use a combination of letters, numbers, and, if possible, symbols such as "*" and "%" to make it more difficult for your information to be accessed by others.

✓ **Check the merchant's privacy policy.** This will tell you how they plan to use your information—including whether they will share it with others. You may wish to avoid



Online shopping can be convenient and fun, but it's important to stay safe while you're looking for goods.

sellers that do not have a privacy policy, as you have no way of knowing what they'll do with your data.

✓ **Always print and keep the receipt from your transaction.** It contains all of the information from your order, including what you bought, the price you paid, and any order or confirmation number. This is vital if you need to follow up with the merchant or dispute your transaction.

Shopping online is easy and convenient—but by taking some simple precautions, it can also be *safe*.

—Doreen Friel

Source: About.com

Facts About Mercury in CFLs

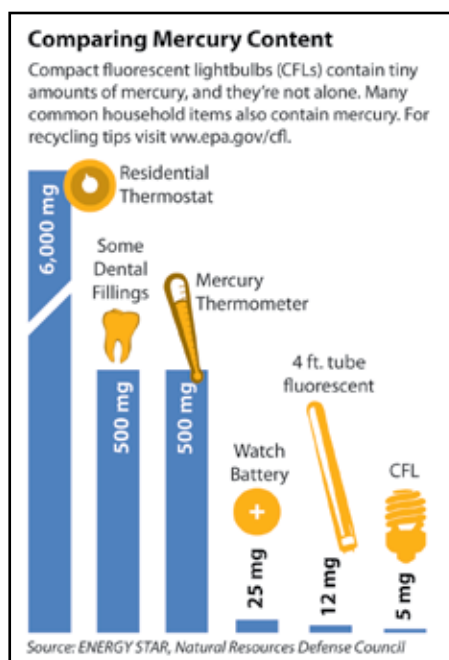
If you read the fine print on the package or find the notice on the base of a CFL bulb, you'll see that it contains mercury.

While that may raise an alarm in your mind, there's no need to worry. The amount of mercury inside the glass tubes of an average CFL is minuscule—about the equivalent to the tip of a ballpoint pen, and it's especially small when compared to other items you may have around your home. The amount of mercury in a CFL runs about 4-5 milligrams (mg), while a glass fever thermometer contains 500 mg, and an old-style thermostat could contain up to 3,000 mg.

CFLs are safe to handle and use in your home, and they release no mercury when in operation. Even if you break a CFL, the amount of mercury that may become airborne poses a very low risk of exposure, says Energy Star®. (To prevent breakage, carefully unpack a CFL, and always screw and unscrew the bulb by its base.) When CFLs burn out or break, the best course of action is to recycle them.

While CFLs fall into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) category of household hazardous waste (HHW), there's no federal or Michigan requirement that

the bulbs be recycled. Some hardware stores and other retailers may have CFL recycling buckets on hand. And, you may be able to dispose of CFLs during your community's annual hazardous waste collection event. Your electric co-op may also accept CFLs



for recycling.

To find out if there's a facility or store near you that accepts CFLs, go to the Earth 911 website at earth911.org, or call 800-CLEANUP. Be sure to call the facility or store that's listed before you make the trip, to ensure that it allows homeowners or apartment dwellers to drop off CFLs.

If one of these recycling options is not available to you, you may put burned-out or broken CFLs with your regular trash—but in no case should you burn or incinerate them. Here's what the EPA says about properly disposing of CFLs.

▶ **Burned-out CFLs:** Put the CFL in a sealed plastic bag, and place it with your regular trash.

▶ **Broken CFLs:** If you break a CFL, open nearby windows to disperse any vapor that may escape, and carefully sweep up the glass shards. (Don't use your hands!) Wipe the area with a damp paper towel to remove glass fragments; don't use a vacuum cleaner. Put the fragments, the base of the bulb, and the paper towel in a sealed plastic bag, and place it with your regular trash.

CFLs will help you cut your utility bills and reduce the need for electricity production. However, to create the maximum benefit for the environment, recycling burned-out and broken CFLs makes sense.

Pumping Up Efficiency

A variety of heat pumps, from geothermal to standard air-source models, are available to efficiently heat and cool your home.

Heat pumps are becoming a more common alternative to central air conditioners no matter what type of existing heating system you have. This is because a heat pump can also heat, as well as cool, your house efficiently. The cost of electricity for heating and cooling a house, although it gradually increases as most prices do over time, is much less volatile than natural gas, oil or propane.

A geothermal heat pump is one of the most energy-efficient heating and cooling systems for any climate. Even though it provides a good long-term payback over its life on the investment, particularly in very hot or cold climates, the initial installation costs are considerably higher than for standard air-source models. Also, depending upon the yard and soil type, it may not be applicable for every house.

A standard air-source heat pump is basically a central air conditioner with a few extra parts. The outdoor unit looks exactly the same as a central air conditioner. It is called a heat pump because it literally pumps heat out of your house (cooling mode) or into your house (heating mode) to or from the outdoor air around the outdoor compressor/condenser unit.

During the summer, in the cooling mode, it draws heat from the indoor air as it passes through the indoor evaporator coils. Through a refrigeration cycle identical to an air conditioner, it expels this heat outdoors. The cooling efficiency is rated by its SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio). A heat pump's cooling efficiency is only slightly less than its similar central air conditioner model.

In winter, a reversing valve inside the heat pump outdoor unit switches position. This reverses the flow of the refrigerant throughout the entire system. Instead of running the cool refrigerant through the indoor coil, it runs the hot refrigerant indoors.

The cold refrigerant is run outdoors, where it draws heat from the outside. Since the refrigerant is colder than the outdoor air, it absorbs heat even though the outdoor air may feel cold to you. Heating efficiency is rated by



This heat pump uses a modulating rotary compressor in a stainless steel exterior condenser unit.

HSPF (heating seasonal performance factor).

As it gets colder outdoors, it becomes more difficult for the heat pump to draw heat from the cold outdoor air just as the heating needs of your house increase. At a certain point, the heat pump can no longer provide enough heat to keep your house warm, and the backup heating source comes on. Depending upon the type of backup heat and relative energy costs, your heating/cooling contractor can set the temperature at which the backup takes over.

There are many new developments in standard air-source heat pumps. The modulating, multistage output rotary compressor design, which was first introduced in central air conditioners, is now available in heat pumps. This design produces extremely high efficiencies for both heating and cooling (HSPF=10, SEER=22). You can get \$2 to \$3 worth of heat for each \$1 on your utility bills.

This heat pump uses a rotary compressor with inverter technology to vary its heating or cooling output from about one-third to full capacity output. This not only saves electricity, but produces great comfort, quiet operation, and even room temperatures. Two-stage heat pumps also improve efficiency and comfort over standard single-stage models.

Another new two-stage heat pump design couples a solar panel with the outdoor unit. On a sunny day, this solar panel produces

enough electricity to operate the condenser fan for up to 8 percent electricity savings. When it is not sunny or at night, the outdoor condenser fan runs on electricity like any other heat pump.

A standard low-cost, single-stage heat pump with a scroll compressor will still be efficient and provide comfort, especially when it is coupled with a variable-speed blower.

Even if your indoor air handler seems to be working well, it should be replaced with one compatible with the new efficient outdoor unit. At the very least, the indoor evaporator coil should be replaced with a matching one.

No matter what type of new heat pump you select, make sure your duct system is compatible with it. There should typically be from 400 to 500 CFM (cubic feet per minute) of air flow per ton of cooling through the unit for the best efficiency. Your old duct system may have to be modified.

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 Cooperative Association.



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SUPER COUPON!

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

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SAVE 40%
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DEQ Approves Air Quality Permit

The Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) approved the air quality permit for the Wolverine Clean Energy Venture (WCEV) power plant development in late June.

“We are pleased with the DEQ’s decision to issue an air quality permit for the WCEV project and appreciate the DEQ staff’s hard work throughout the processing of our application,” says Eric Baker, president and CEO of Wolverine. “While the approval is a significant milestone, we have considerable analysis to complete before we know whether we will proceed with the project.”

The analysis will take into account detailed construction costs, projected fuel costs over the life of the project and the impact of potential future regulatory requirements. The key financial question is whether the cost of electricity over the lifetime of the project will be more cost-effective than other alternatives.

“When the evaluation is complete, we will undergo a thorough review and deliberation process with our members and board of directors over a period of months prior to



A computer rendering of the proposed Wolverine Clean Energy Venture power plant near Rogers City.

making a final decision on whether to begin construction,” Baker explains.

Under state and federal law, Wolverine has 18 months from the date the DEQ issued the air quality permit to commence construction at the proposed site near Rogers City. The permit allows for two units, each capable of generating 300 megawatts

of electricity.

In May 2010, the DEQ denied the air quality permit application for the WCEV power plant. In January of this year, a Muskegon County Circuit Court judge ruled the denial was improper. The court required the state agency to reconsider the permit application and render a decision by June 30, 2011.

New Record for All-time Peak Electric Demand

Wolverine Power Cooperative achieved a new all-time peak record of 515 megawatts on Wednesday, July 20, 2011. The new record represents the combined electric demands of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. The previous all-time peak record of 490 megawatts was set in August 2007.

“We experienced an increase of more than 25 megawatts to our all-time record, equivalent to growth of more than 5 percent since our previous peak,” explains Dan DeCoeur, vice president of power supply for Wolverine. “For a utility of our size, that’s a substantial jump, and unlike other utilities in the state, we are con-

tinuing to see our members’ loads grow.”

The new record was the result of a week-long period of hot, humid weather, combined with an increasing use of air conditioning in areas served by the four cooperatives.

A new energy usage record of 10,389 megawatt hours was also recorded for Cherryland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks and Presque Isle over the 24-hour period beginning 1 a.m. on Wednesday, July 20. The previous 24-hour energy usage record of 9,923 megawatt hours occurred in August 2006.

“While we’ve had sufficient resources to meet increases in the electric demands



Justin Russell (foreground) and Mike Anderson monitor power supply in Wolverine’s Energy Control Center.

experienced this summer, the need to continue efforts to develop long-term power supply options to serve our members is clearly evident,” DeCoeur adds.



HomeWorks members have used Co-op Connections® Card pharmacy benefits 3,279 times, saving \$81,335.15

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

The online **OUTAGE CENTRAL MAP**

lets you see at a glance if any members are out of power, by township, across our service area. Just visit homeworks.org and click on "Outage Central" in the left menu or on the right highlight column. The map will open in a new page.

Your Time is Important Spend Less of It Paying Your Bill

HomeWorks offers several convenient options for paying your energy bills:



AUTOMATIC

Automatic Payments:

No more writing checks, buying stamps, or racing to catch the mail - there is no charge for our convenient auto-pay service! Your payment will

be withdrawn automatically each month from your preferred account. You will still receive a billing statement at least 10 days before it's due indicating the amount owed.



ONLINE

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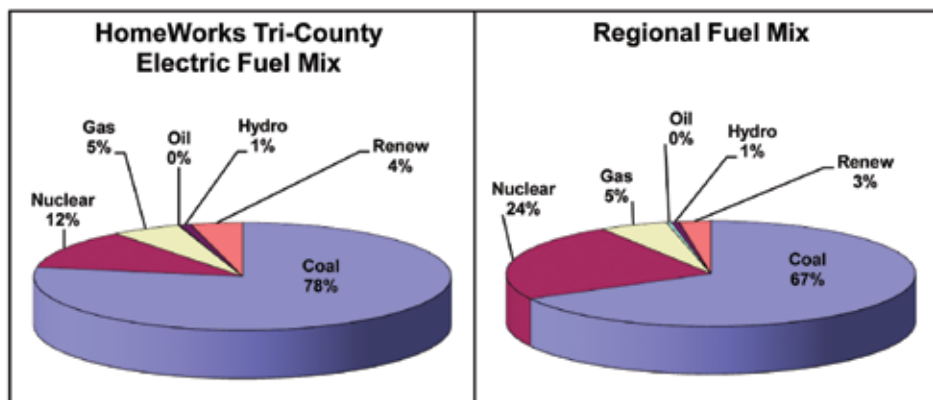
Log on to ebill.homeworks.org to make a payment any time, day or night. You can also use eBill to review your monthly HomeWorks energy bills and account history.

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

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

Comparison of the Fuel Sources Used to Generate Electricity

HomeWorks Tri-County vs. regional average for the 12-month period ended 06/30/11.



| Fuel Sources | Percentage of fuel types used to produce HomeWorks Tri-County electricity. | Percentage of fuel type used to produce electricity in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin (12/31/10). |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Coal | 77.7 | 67.1 |
| Nuclear | 11.9 | 24 |
| Gas | 5.4 | 5.4 |
| Oil | 0.1 | 0.4 |
| Hydroelectric | 0.9 | 0.6 |
| Total Renewable Fuels | 4.0 | 2.5 |
| Biomass | 0.0 | 0.1 |
| Biofuel | 0.1 | 0.3 |
| Solid Waste Incineration | 0.1 | 0.5 |
| Wind | 3.7 | 1.3 |
| Wood | 0.1 | 0.5 |
| Solar | 0.0 | 0 |

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

Airborne Emissions and High-Level Nuclear Waste Comparison

HomeWorks Tri-County vs. regional average for the 12-month period ended 06/30/11.

| Type of emission/waste | HomeWorks Tri-County average lbs/MWh | A regional average of all generation in Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Wisconsin (12/31/10). |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| Sulfur Dioxide | 5.9 | 8.2 |
| Carbon Dioxide | 1,812 | 2,186 |
| Oxides of Nitrogen | 2 | 2 |
| High-level nuclear waste | 0.0042 | 0.0083 |

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

To Member-Customers of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

This Notice of Access to Rules and Rates is published pursuant to the rules established by the cooperative's board of directors.

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

- 1) Complete rate schedules;
- 2) Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive;
- 3) Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for a member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate;
- 4) Clear and concise explanation of the members' actual energy use for each billing period during the last 12 months.

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Portland, MI



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at HomeWorks.org**

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DRAG LINE – \$6,000. 248-249-0355.

REAL ESTATE

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

KALKASKA COUNTY HUNTING CAMP – 80 acres; 7 blinds; 5,000 new trees; 2 pole barns, one has kitchen, 2 baths, sleeps 10+. Quarter-mile on blacktop, half on 2-track. 9 miles to Higgins Lake, 20 to Houghton. Owner retiring. Asking \$234,000. 810-231-1383.

BREVOORT LAKE, UPPER PENINSULA – 3-bedroom, 1-bath cottage. Stone fireplace, deck, storage shed, on 100' x 740' lot. 906-293-8770.

MECOSTA COUNTY – 100-ft. waterfront home on 27-acre lake, 2-bedroom, 2 1/2-bath. Also guest cabin, garages. \$127,000. mls# 851-95. 989-775-1358.

HOME ON MUNISING BAY – 1315 Lake St., Munising, MI. 810-376-0030.

LOT ON ST. JOSEPH RIVER – South of Three Rivers, restricted subdivision. 269-279-5838.

159 ACRES, MARQUETTE COUNTY – Very private, large cabin, great deer area, trout stream runs through property. Watch video under real estate at carvingsbyellen.com. 231-730-5053.

GRAYLING ADULT FOSTER CARE HOME – Six private rooms. 231-649-6842.

WANTED: EASTERN U.P. ACREAGE – Will trade developed 6.5 acres in Florida Panhandle. 989-732-4767.

WANTED

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

DOODLE BUG TRACTORS – 1947 to 1956 Ford or Chevy pick-up, 1935 to 1942 Dodge/Plymouth car or truck. 231-652-6421.

BUYING GUN RELOADING EQUIPMENT – Gun smithing, gun parts and related items. 517-623-0416.

Notice to Large Commercial and Industrial Members

Public Act 295 allows for large Commercial and Industrial (C&I) accounts to self-direct their own Energy Optimization Plans. For this year, a C&I member must have at least 1 megawatt (MW) of annual peak demand in 2010 (or 5 MW in aggregate) to qualify.

Details can be found at:

michigan.gov/mpsc/0,1607,7-159-52495_54478---,00.html or call your electric co-op for more information.

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Your Peak Summer Energy Demand and Sales

With September upon us, it's easy to forget the extended heat wave we felt in July and August—until the energy bills come, reminding us of the air conditioning and fans we used to keep comfortable. Weather records show July was one of the consistently hottest months this area has experienced in years. August had some cooler days, but was still pretty warm most days.



HomeWorks Tri-County Electric actually set two energy records in July's heat. The chart shows our peak demand topped the previous record, set last July, by 5 megawatts. Peak demand is the maximum energy use measured during the month. Similarly, we sold 3 million more kilowatt hours (kWh) in July than last July's record 33 million kWh sales. These two numbers tell us that our member-owners used a lot of air conditioning and fans to keep cool during the heat, and that use will show on your energy bills. In addition, a small power supply rate increase took effect July 1. That increase amounts to \$3.65 per 1,000 kWh used; it goes directly to Wolverine Power Cooperative to help assure reliable sources of power supply.

| Ten year history of peak demand and kilowatt hours: | | | | |
|---|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|
| Year | Month | Peak Demand kW | Month | Peak kWh Sales |
| 2011 | July | 86,107 | July | 36,283,445 |
| 2010 | July | 81,645 | July | 33,306,003 |
| 2009 | Dec. | 64,915 | Dec. | 30,709,173 |
| 2008 | July | 73,911 | Dec. | 31,130,178 |
| 2007 | July | 81,172 | Dec. | 30,698,137 |
| 2006 | July | 76,367 | Dec. | 29,239,407 |
| 2005 | July | 73,431 | July | 28,412,801 |
| 2004 | Dec. | 56,976 | Dec. | 25,970,778 |
| 2003 | Aug. | 63,951 | Dec. | 25,928,675 |
| 2002 | July | 66,669 | July | 27,005,565 |

STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

In the matter of the Commission's own motion, assigning docket numbers for the filing of biennial energy optimization plans for HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative to fully comply with Public Act 295 of 2008.

Case No. U-16687

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

On March 17, 2011, the Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) ordered HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative to file an energy optimization plan on or before August 1, 2011 to comply with the "Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act" (2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001, et seq.) in Case No. U-16687. On June 30, 2011, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative filed its Notice of Intent to File an Application for an Energy Optimization Plan with the Commission.

After August 1, 2011, any interested person may review the filed Energy Optimization Plan on the MPSC website under Case No. U-16687 at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets and at the offices of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, Michigan, or at the office of the Commission's Executive Secretary, 6545 Mercantile Way, Suite 7, Lansing, Michigan, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Written and electronic comments may be filed with the Commission and must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 27, 2011. Written comments should be sent to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909, with a copy mailed to HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, Michigan 48875. Electronic comments may be emailed to: mpscdockets@michigan.gov. All comments should reference Case No. U-16687. Comments received in this matter will become public information, posted on the Commission's website, and subject to disclosure.

The Commission will review the energy optimization plan together with any filed comments and provide a response within 60 days of the filing of the application indicating any revisions that should be made. If the Commission suggests revisions, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative will file a revised EOP plan no later than 75 days after the filing of the application. A Commission order will be issued on or before the 90th day following the filing of the application.

HOMEWORKS TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

Answers For Your Geothermal Questions

We're planning our second geothermal seminar of the year for Oct. 11 at Blanchard. You can find more details, or sign up to attend (it's free!) on our website.

In case you can't make it, we assembled some of the most frequently asked questions from past seminars. Of course, the number one question we hear is:

How much does a geothermal system cost?

Costs will be different for every family, since each home is different. A certified contractor will visit your home, take measurements, and use this information to quote you a price for your individual situation.

The initial investment is higher than for a conventional fuel system. However, with lower operating and maintenance costs, your geothermal system will quickly save enough

energy to recoup your original investment in as few as three to five years. There is a positive cash flow, since the energy savings usually exceeds payment on the system.

Can a geothermal system be added to my fossil fuel furnace?

Yes, they can easily be added to existing furnaces for those wishing to have a dual-fuel heating system. Dual-fuel systems use geothermal as the main heating source, and a fossil fuel furnace as a supplement in extremely cold weather.

What other costs are there?

You can expect an installation charge for any electrical work, ductwork, water hook-up, and other provisions or adaptations to your home that are required. Your installer can estimate these costs in advance.

You can also buy dual fuel metering equip-

ment from HomeWorks to take advantage of our discounted rate.

How does a geothermal system heat water for my home?

Using what is called a desuperheater, the system uses waste heat to heat water. During the summer, your hot water is produced free as a byproduct of cooling; in winter, the desuperheater will heat some of your hot water.

Will I have to add insulation to my home if I install one of these systems?

Geothermal systems will reduce your heating and cooling costs regardless of how well your home is insulated. However, insulating and weatherizing are key factors in getting the most savings and comfort from any type of heating and cooling system.

If you're interested in learning more about geothermal, or you have other questions, plan to join us the evening of Oct. 11 at Blanchard. See you there!



What is a geothermal heat pump?

A geothermal heat pump uses the earth to warm your home in the winter and cool it in the summer. You already have a heat pump in your home—your refrigerator. If you put your hand behind it you'll feel the heat that has been removed from the food inside. This is the same principle that a geothermal system uses to move heat to and from the earth and your home.

Nick Rusnell is
HomeWorks Tri-County
Electric Cooperative's
energy advisor



Your Board in Action

Meeting at Portland on June 27, your board of directors:

- Reviewed member turnout and highlights of the district meetings completed in May, and discussed preliminary plans for the annual meeting in August.
- Approved a staff recommendation for a special estate capital credits retirement of \$95,000.
- Learned the Michigan Public Service Commission approved an order cutting regulatory assessments in half for member-regulated cooperatives such as HomeWorks.
- Discussed the cooperative's prompt response to power outages caused by widespread storm damage in late May and early June, and noted the right-of-way tree clearing program prevented many more outages.
- Designated Dean Floria to attend the July

board meeting of Wolverine Power Cooperative as HomeWorks' "guest director."

- Read and approved "Board Policy 307 – Employee Use of Cooperative Equipment" and "Board Policy 308 – Family & Medical Leave," updated to reflect the amended law.
- Learned there have been no instances of identity theft, reported as required by "Board Policy 316 – Identity Theft."
- Reviewed draft "Board Policy 405 – Rate Design," and placed it on the July board agenda for consideration.
- Reviewed May 2011 preliminary financial statements and learned there were 79 new members for the month.
- Acknowledged the May safety report, with one safety meeting held.

Meeting at Blanchard on July 25, your board of directors:

- Reviewed the staff proposal to develop a load management plan for HomeWorks using the automated metering infrastructure (AMI) system.

- Discussed the proposed Energy Optimization plan for 2012, including continuing and new programs and the calculated rates to support them.
- Went over the financial statements and investment policy of the Tri-County Electric People Fund.
- Learned how Facebook and other social media can be used to communicate with the cooperative's member-owners.
- Designated voting delegates and alternates for the NRECA regional meeting on Sept. 7-8.
- Read and approved "Board Policy 309 – Employee Voluntary Education and Training" as updated.
- Read and approved draft "Board Policy 405 – Electric Rate Design," as proposed.
- Reviewed June 2011 preliminary financial statements, and learned there were 106 new members for the month.
- Acknowledged the June safety report and reviewed the monthly safety report, listing one minor incident and two training sessions.

Road Trippin'

We're taking a trip. A great American road trip. The kind every family yearns to go on at least once. The kind Simon and Garfunkel sang about in "America" (after hitchhiking from Saginaw). Except this time, Barbara and I are going out west alone.

We tried once, in 1991, to make the trip with our boys, Dan and Jon, then 12 and 10. For once, we were prepared. The Voyager minivan was packed for fishing, camping and hiking, and intermittent motel stops were scheduled as a reprise from mosquitos and dirt. We made it all the way to Newton, IA, the first day. We went to sleep there with dreams of sleeping under the stars in Rocky Mountain National Park the next night.

In the early morning, Dan woke feverish, so stiff-jointed he couldn't walk, achy all over and puffed up. The symptoms were very similar to what, a decade later, would be called West Nile Virus, a mosquito-borne virus that can be fatal to humans and horses. We were scared. With help from the motel folks, we contacted the Children's Center at the University of Iowa Medical Center and then drove 85 miles back east to check Dan in. The doctors and nurses there were outstanding. Every infectious-disease specialist on staff examined him. Finally, they admitted they were stumped but were convinced whatever he had wasn't fatal.

We stayed overnight in a local hotel, ate pizza and watched "The Hunt for Red October" on HBO. We returned to the hospital in the morning. Then and there the doctors killed our great adventure. Although they didn't know what was wrong with Dan, he was too sick to go camping away from medical care. They told us to go home, and that's where we spent the rest of our three-week vacation. With school and sports competing for time, we never again got a chance to put together a vacation this long. After several months, Dan recovered fully ("We think," we tease him).

Just a few weeks after we came home, a newspaper told of a virus outbreak among

children in Texas that presented symptoms similar to Dan's, and was given the name Palomino Virus. Barbara shared the news clipping with the doctors at UI. We speculated that Dan may have come into contact with the virus from a Texas student attending Michigan State University's summer camp for kids the week before we left on our trip. We'll never know for sure, but we'll always feel warmly toward the folks in Iowa—even when they play the Spartans—for their care and kindness.

That virus must have done something to Dan, because he now lives in Texas and has cowboy boots.

We've taken other family trips, but not all together to the West Coast. Jon lived in San Diego for awhile; I helped move him in a quick road trip a few years ago, and we flew to visit him there. But Barbara and I have not yet taken that quintessential American western road trip together. I think we should go while we can.

Our mid-point goal is Yosemite National Park, where we hope to avoid being swept over a waterfall. On the way out, we'll see Mt. Rushmore, Yellowstone National Park, the California coastline, and wine country. We'll visit friends and family scattered along the way, including my mom and dad, who just moved into a new assisted care home in Minnesota.

After Yosemite, we'll head south to San Diego and then east to Phoenix. More family. The next leg of the trip will most likely be through magnificent southern Utah, which Barbara has not seen, then east through Colorado and the Nebraska flatlands, up to Chicago to see Jon, and back home to Mason. Or, maybe we'll drive all the way to Austin to see Dan and friends before swinging north.

This trip will be different in one important way: technology. We'll have GPS, cell phones, ebooks and an iPod loaded with traveling music. They didn't exist in 1991.

Much of this trip goes through electric co-op country, wide-open spaces where there are few people, but plenty of cattle



Yosemite Falls

Photo - iStockphoto.com/Mardav

and crops. After working for Michigan electric co-ops for 30 years, I should feel right at home. Maybe we'll bring along a co-op directory just in case something goes wrong.

In case you're thinking we should spend our travel time in Michigan, I'll say that we're familiar with every nook and cranny in the state. It's time for something new. When we return, Michigan's attractions, like Mackinac Island, Pictured Rocks and Sleeping Bear Dunes, will still be among our favorite places.

Which reminds me of a newly married couple from England we met last year on Mackinac. They drove 15 hours from Philadelphia so the bride could spend one night in the Grand Hotel, where the movie "Somewhere in Time" takes place. That's a serious travel commitment.

Are we pushing it to try doing this in three weeks? If we can't, I will feel like a real wimp after reading that a 68-year-old woman and her husband just biked over 2,300 miles in 41 days from Texas to Michigan to attend her 50th high school reunion.

If you have any suggestions for our trip, like places to see, great restaurants or bakeries, let us know (mike.f.buda@gmail.com). We'll add you to our email list for travel updates.

Thanks for joining us.

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





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