

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES

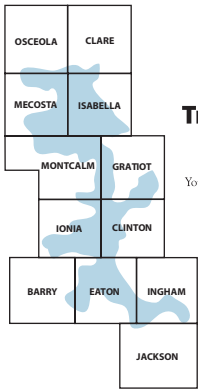
Fun Food *for* Kids



8 Touchstone Energy
Scholarships Awarded

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Unclaimed Checks

20 Classroom Grants
Help Children Learn



Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue
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

Pay by phone, anytime:

1-877-999-3395

Service questions/outages:

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

Tri-County Propane:

1-877-574-2740

High Speed Internet

1-800-668-8413

homeworks.org

Email: tricoenergy@homeworks.org

facebook.com/HomeWorks.org

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Editor: Jayne Graham, CCC

Our Culture of Safety Won't Let Us Take Electricity for Granted

Electricity does so much for us: it provides us with lighting, heat and cooling to give us comfort; it turns motors to ease our burden; and runs all kinds of electric devices that help us be creative and provide us with entertainment.

Electricity is something many of us take for granted, until we flip that wall switch and the lights don't come on.

But electricity can be as dangerous as it is convenient. That's why we have built a culture of safety here at HomeWorks.

Safety is a core value of our cooperative. This means it requires constant focus and attention every day, just like we focus on reliability, customer service, or the co-op's finances.

Safety means wearing the proper gear, and following the proper procedures, every time we perform a task, in the field or at the office.

Safety means keeping our vehicles and equipment in top operating condition.

Safety means responding to emergency calls promptly, to make sure members and the general public don't have to worry about downed lines.

Safety means restoring outages promptly, so you can take advantage of the light and comfort electricity provides.

For several years, we have participated in our national organization's safety achievement program, working to be accredited for safe practices every three years. The program has had many benefits, from giving our employees goals to work toward, to helping keep insurance costs stable.

The program has recently undergone a fundamental change: it's now a safety assessment program, designed to continually assess the level of safety core competence at all levels of our organization.

If you read the board meeting updates in these pages each month, you'll see that the board reviews our monthly safety report. That's because our commitment to safety has to start with the policymakers and budget setters, letting every employee know this is a core value at each level.

Our assessment, which took place in April, listed many things we are doing right, and pointed out a few areas where we will work to do better. The end result will be employees who go home to their families as healthy as they came to work, and a safer environment for both our member-owners and the general public.

Taking electricity for granted is easy, since we use it all day, every day, and almost always safely. But we will never take safety—yours or ours—for granted.



Mark Kappler
General Manager



Join the conversation at
facebook.com/HomeWorks.org



It's Member Meeting Time!

Most cooperatives have one annual meeting where the business of the cooperative is taken care of by the members. Tri-County Electric Cooperative, however, is divided into seven director districts, each of which holds its own annual member meeting in May.

At these meetings, delegates (one for each 100 members) are elected to represent the district at the annual meeting in August. The district's officers (chair, vice-chair, and secretary) are elected from among the delegates and their duties include running the business meeting and serving as a nominating committee every three years.

While the format has changed some over the years, the annual district member meetings remain the highlight of the cooperative's year.



A Little Bit of History

Top: Photo was taken at the 1948 annual meeting at the Ionia Fairgrounds.

Center: From an early 1950s co-op newsletter: "Vernor Smith, Assistant Manager of the Cooperative, prepares to load the company station wagon with electric light bulbs, ice-cream and cookies to start the Annual District Meetings."

Left: Charles Chapin leads the 2000 District 7 meeting; his mother, Jean, served as secretary then and is now district chair.



Students Win Touchstone Energy Scholarships



Anna Makela



Megan Benzing



Lea Dean



Tyler Nadeau

Four area students earned \$2,500 in Touchstone Energy Scholarships from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

Winning a \$1,000 scholarship each were Anna Makela of Leslie and Megan Benzing of Barryton.

Makela, the daughter of Steven and Barbara Makela, plans to study animal science at Michigan State University, with plans to

become a large animal veterinarian.

Benzing, the daughter of Kevin and Kay Ryan, will study nursing at Ferris State University, and plans a career as an ER nurse or speech pathologist.

Two adult education scholarships, \$250 each, were awarded to Lea Dean of Remus and Tyler Nadeau of Coral.

Dean, a substitute teacher in Mt. Pleasant schools, is attending Central Michigan

University and plans to teach history after finishing her degree.

Nadeau is attending Aquinas College, studying secondary math and biology education, with plans to become a high school math teacher.

The Touchstone Energy Scholarship program will begin accepting applications for the 2013-14 school year in January. High school seniors are eligible for one-time scholarships of up to \$1,000. Adults returning to school can receive a \$250 grant.

Watch our website, homeworks.org, for more information.

Your Board In Action

Meeting at Blanchard April 23, your board of directors:

- Learned a formal assessment review for the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program was conducted at the cooperative April 16-18.

- Authorized staff to retire capital credits to 102 estates at a discounted cash value of \$65,300.

- Reviewed changes to the Energy Optimization program for 2012.

- Heard an update on the proposed Load Control program.

- Agreed to make a \$2,500 donation to NRECA's International Fund.

- Read and approved "Board Policy 313 – Use of Telephone Lines and Cell Phones" and "Board Policy 501 – Communications."

- Adopted a "Record Number and Date Resolution," setting the lists of members eligible to vote at the 2012 district membership meetings.

- Accepted quotes for audit services through 2014 from Eide Bailly.

- Reviewed proposed changes to Articles I and II of the cooperative's bylaws.

- Learned there were 77 new members for the month.

- Acknowledged March-April safety report.

Time for Member Comments

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. Upcoming board meetings are set for **June 25 at Portland** and **July 23 at Blanchard**. Members who need directions to either office, or who wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Tariff and Rule Changes Effective May 1, 2012

The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the cooperative's tariffs and fees at a Special Open Meeting held April 23, 2012, in accordance with P.A. 167.

1) Reconciled the 2011 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections and ordered the refund of the net overcollection of \$916,115. Based on projected kWh sales through September 2012, a refund factor of (\$0.00416)/kWh will be utilized.

2) Reviewed the 2009-2011 Energy Optimization surcharge collections and ordered the refund of the net overcollection of \$313,788 through reduced surcharges in the mandated four-year extension of the program (2012-2015), effective with the May 2012 billing.

For specific details of any HomeWorks tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-800-562-8232 or visit our website at homeworks.org.

People Fund Grants Help Seniors, Youth Programs, Families

The Tri-County Electric People Fund made six grants totaling \$9,176.96 at the April 11 meeting, including:

- \$1,400 to the Clinton County Senior Center, for their Nutritional Bingo program;

- \$1,605.69 to Habitat for Humanity of Clinton County, for office equipment;

- \$2,500 to EightCAP, Inc., Greenville for Camp Wah-Way-Tay-See expenses;

- \$2,000 to Clinton County Juvenile Court for YES youth program expenses;

- \$1,461.79 to an Ionia County family to help with medical expenses; and

- \$209.48 to a Montcalm County family to help with housing expenses.

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 on our Web site at homeworks.org.

NOTE! Applications must be received by June 12 to be considered at the June 20 board meeting, or by July 31 for the August 8 board meeting.

How You Can Help: Tri-County customers can opt in or out of the voluntary Operation Round Up program at any time. Just enclose a note with your bill payment, or call us at 1-800-562-8232.

Help Members Find Unclaimed Checks

Some former co-op members were due to receive capital credits or inactive account refund checks, which remain uncashed.

We tried to deliver these checks by mail, to the last address given to us by the person or business listed. If you know

someone listed below, or have a current address at which we can contact them, please call HomeWorks at 517-647-7554 or 1-800-562-8232.

You can also contact us by email at tricoenergy@homeworks.org, or use the "Contact Us" link at homeworks.org.

Name	City, State	Name	City, State	Name	City, State
Dennis A Pompilius	Bullhead City, AZ	Anna M Hopkins	Farwell, MI	Connie Morey	Mount Pleasant, MI
Donald Lang	Mesa, AZ	Ella Cox	Farwell, MI	Devern G Meeker	Mount Pleasant, MI
Jerry Lee Naab	Youngtown, AZ	Randee Grim	Farwell, MI	Janet A Nelson	Mount Pleasant, MI
James E Swarts	Paradise, CA	Virginia M Denton	Farwell, MI	Phillip W Brown	Mount Pleasant, MI
Julie Rose	Crescent City, FL	James Christensen	Flushing, MI	Maxine E Coryell	Owosso, MI
James L Douglas	Crystal River, FL	Urban Weber	Fowler, MI	Burton Carman	Perrinton, MI
Clare J O'Neill	Lakeland, FL	Judith A Wiltse	Grand Haven, MI	Leroy Jenison	Portage, MI
Carl Wright	Largo, FL	Andy B Mclean	Grand Ledge, MI	Bruce W Downing	Portland, MI
Victor B Gates	Naples, FL	James B Fuday	Grand Ledge, MI	Jorge Cardenas	Portland, MI
David T Salvati Do	Orlando, FL	Kevin Russell Webb	Grand Ledge, MI	Kenneth Ring Sr.	Portland, MI
James D Sims	The Villages, FL	Raymond A Ritter	Grand Ledge, MI	Lynn R Volk	Portland, MI
Merrill D Hadcock	Valrico, FL	Raymond Krensreiter	Grand Ledge, MI	Betty G High	Remus, MI
Paul Bell	Savannah, GA	 This list will be updated regularly and made available as a PDF file on our website, homeworks.org			
Michael Galinis	Urbandale, IA				
Dominic J Pasquale	Bloomington, IL	Robert P Bishop	Grand Ledge, MI	Emery L Johnson	Remus, MI
Marvin R Hall	Elmhurst, IL	Alvin J Poest	Grand Rapids, MI	Phyllis M Davis	Riverdale, MI
Elmo Blodgett	Angola, IN	Nancy L Reed	Grand Rapids, MI	Dennis Devos	Rodney, MI
John C Hansen	Fort Wayne, IN	Ricky D Thomas	Grand Rapids, MI	Edward A Marohn	Roscommon, MI
Hazel Richardson	Galveston, IN	Larry Feldpausch	Harrison, MI	Carl Workman	Saint Johns, MI
Neva Yordy	Goshen, IN	Harriet B Anson	Haslett, MI	Carol S Grubaugh	Saint Johns, MI
Robert E Mcdonald	Albion, MI	Muriel J Evert	Hickory Crnrs, MI	Joann Weber	Saint Johns, MI
Carol A Goodwin	Alma, MI	Ellis Hart	Holly, MI	John L Brown	Saint Johns, MI
Gary J Cotter	Alma, MI	Joseph Lentowich	Houghton, MI	Lynn Webster	Saint Johns, MI
Gaylon C Koutz Sr	Alma, MI	Larson's Potato Farm	Howard City, MI	Mike Resseguie	Saint Johns, MI
Ryan L Kelley	Alma, MI	Mary Mulnix	Ionia, MI	Russell Partington	Saint Louis, MI
Jack Wallace	Battle Creek, MI	Dennis G Kelly	Irons, MI	Neale E Woodbury	Sears, MI
Monte M Allen	Battle Creek, MI	James Radey	Jackson, MI	Michael P Decator	Shelby Twp, MI
Leonard A Fisk	Bellevue, MI	Lanny T Brown	Jackson, MI	Elmer J Gross	Shepherd, MI
Carl W Getts	Big Rapids, MI	M Gene Cowan	Jackson, MI	Mark J Wilson	Shepherd, MI
Flora R Lloyd	Bridgeport, MI	Robert W Burgtorf	Lachine, MI	Gary M Felde	Sparta, MI
Orville Powell	Caledonia, MI	David K Jackson	Lake, MI	Jean E Crozier	Stanton, MI
Dick D Almy	Carson City, MI	David Williams	Lake, MI	Richard E Enness	Stanton, MI
Timothy Unruh	Carson City, MI	Patricia A Perkins	Lake Odessa, MI	Mike Cunningham	Traverse City, MI
C & B Land Co	Charlotte, MI	Dale Edward Bissell	Lakeview, MI	Donald L Boyd	Troy, MI
Carson Haigh	Charlotte, MI	Danney L Morden	Lakeview, MI	Michael R Matthews	Trufant, MI
Helen C Greyzck	Charlotte, MI	Chas E Fisher	Lansing, MI	Milo E Griswold	Trufant, MI
Jackelene H Holmes	Charlotte, MI	Edward J Goldberg	Lansing, MI	Daniel Cook	Vermontville, MI
Marjean Torres	Charlotte, MI	Gary E Winchell	Lansing, MI	Ella M Deyarmond	Vestaburg, MI
Scott D Swanson	Charlotte, MI	Larry L Wright	Lansing, MI	Victor Nonnenmacher	Warren, MI
Carlton A Johnson	Chesterfield, MI	Terry K Fossum	Lansing, MI	Mary E Tyler	Weidman, MI
James W Schlafley	Clare, MI	Barbara Hensley	Mason, MI	Robert Battleshaw	Weidman, MI
Amos Fox	Conklin, MI	Ione Snyder	Mason, MI	Rose Thelen	Westphalia, MI
Jack Mann	Delton, MI	Jay M Mitzner	Mason, MI	Richard Seiler	Winn, MI
Gary Ridder	Dewitt, MI	Raymond Massey Sr	Mason, MI	Leonard A Schafer	Wyoming, MI
W A Handy	Dewitt, MI	Keith E Polmanteer,	Midland, MI	Melvin Tow	Wyoming, MI
Alan A York	Dorr, MI	Mary L Cremeans	Monroe, MI	John F Reese	Timberlake, NC
Tony Konecny	Durand, MI	Barbara Powell	Mount Pleasant, MI	Donald Sparks	Fleming, OH
Margaret Miles	Eagle, MI	Brad I Hines	Mount Pleasant, MI	Murlen S Ramsey	Hamilton, OH
Robert G Brenke	Eaton Rapids, MI	Claudia Arnett	Mount Pleasant, MI	Floyd L Townsend Jr	Clarksville, TN
Glenn M Grieve	Elsie, MI				
Larry L Hunt	Elsie, MI				

Area Classrooms Win Grants

Ten area teachers won Touchstone Energy 2012 Classroom Grants for projects that will benefit their students for many years.

“Touchstone Energy cooperatives, like HomeWorks Tri-County, demonstrate four basic values—innovation, accountability, integrity and commitment to community,” says manager Mark Kappler. “These grants are a great way to spotlight our values.”

Winning grants this year included:

- \$2,100 to Kim Cordray, Industrial Technology teacher at Ashley High School, to purchase computer-assisted drafting software;
- \$2,500 to Chi Ethridge, principal of Mecosta Elementary School, to purchase iPads for their Individualized Planning and Development Through Technology project;
- \$300 to Denise VanLuven, Resource Room teacher at Ionia’s Emerson Elementary School, to purchase new units for a Leap Frog Tag Reading program;
- \$1,980 to Carla Gensterblum, sixth grade science teacher at Ionia Middle School, to



Photo - Denise VanLuven

Denise VanLuven’s class at Ionia’s Emerson Elementary enjoys learning with their new Leap Frog Readers, purchased in part with a Touchstone Energy Classroom Grant. Students include, back row from left, Daocota, Riley and Scottie; front row, Kevin, Cody, Cheyenne, Nyjah, Viva and Austin.

purchase a soil erosion demonstration table, a rock tumbler, laptop and projector for the science classroom;

- \$2,394 to Mary Jenks, fifth grade teacher at Lakewood’s Woodland Elementary School, to buy six laptops for her general education classroom;
- \$500 to Linda Boyd, principal of Fancher School in Mt. Pleasant, for their Extras and

Essentials program, which purchases printing materials, first aid supplies, playground equipment, and student awards;

- \$1,000 to Philip Huber, auditorium coordinator at Portland High School, to help replace the current house lights with LED lamps;
- \$350 to Randy Voisinet, band teacher at Pewamo-Westphalia High School, for a video camera with high quality audio to use in reviewing group and individual performances;
- \$1,360 to Cary Bashore and Carol Rademacher, math teachers at Pewamo-Westphalia High School, to purchase two interactive document cameras for the math program; and
- \$2,500 to Mary Verhaar, third grade teacher at Winn

Elementary School, to purchase iPads for a mobile iPad lab.

Watch future issues of *Country Lines* for more photos from this year’s Classroom Grants, or visit homeworks.org.

Applications for 2013 grants will be made available in November, through the website, mailings to area schools, and a notice in the November-December issue of the magazine.

Save With Your Co-op Connections Card

More local businesses now offer you discounts on their products and services. Simply show your Co-op Connections card at the business to receive the discount.

To search for local and national businesses currently offering discounts on everything from fitness to furniture repair to hair care, visit Connections.coop, or visit homeworks.org and click on the card logo to go directly to our local listings. Your card can be used when you travel, too, as many co-ops across the country participate in the program.

Here are some of the local businesses offering discounts:

■ **Bennett and Daughters Daylily Nursery**, 8877 Sunfield Hwy, Portland, 517-647-6315. 10% off all sales to cardholders. Come to our nursery July 1 through Aug. 15, 9 a.m.—4 p.m., or order at cooldaylilies.com all year. Email cooldaylilies@yahoo.com if you have questions.

■ **Keusch Super Service**, 118 E. Grand

River, Portland, 517-647-7501. Any size fountain pop is 50 cents with the card. Located at the corner of Kent Street and Grand River Avenue in the Cool City of Portland, we’re open from 5 a.m.—9 p.m. daily.

■ **Sam’s Repair Service**, 11669 Charlotte Hwy, Portland, 517-647-1741. 10% discount on repair labor. Furniture repair—wood, leather, upholstery (residential or commercial) and custom built furniture. Most repairs can be done in-home; for service call to schedule an appointment. For larger

repairs, call to schedule pick-up and delivery.

■ **Jim’s Auto Collision**, 7015 S. Coldwater Rd., Blanchard, 989-561-5182. \$25 off deductible.

■ **Sharron’s Upholstery & Furniture Doctor**, 166 7 Mile Rd., Blanchard, 989-561-2568. 10% off fabric.

■ **Your Total Wellness Center**, 1000 E. Sturgis St., Suite 8, St. Johns, MI, 48879, 989-277-9355. 5% discount on weight loss products. (Discount not available on individual smoothies from nutrition club.)

FREE Co-op Connections® Card app!

Download the free app at connections.coop/iTunes_app.php — works with an iPhone, iPad, Android, or Blackberry.

- Have a virtual card (front and back) with vital prescription and health savings discount info on your smart device.
- Use the GPS feature to find nearby businesses that accept the card.
- Save your favorite discount deals for future visits.



Carry your card on your smart phone or iPad!

We're Saving Energy Thanks To Your Efforts

Since your electric co-op started 75 years ago, one of our main concerns has been helping our member-owners use electricity effectively. We want you to get the most value for your energy dollar, and we know that each family defines value a little bit differently.

So our Energy Optimization program, even though it's a state-mandated program for all

Michigan utilities, is just one more tool we use to help you find energy efficiency answers for your home or business.

It's been a popular tool, and a successful one. Our goal for the first three years of the program, which ended in December 2011, was for our members to save a total of 5.2 million kilowatt-hours.

Since our typical member uses about 750

kilowatt-hours a month, this is the equivalent of reducing energy needs by 579 members' homes (with average energy use) for a full year!

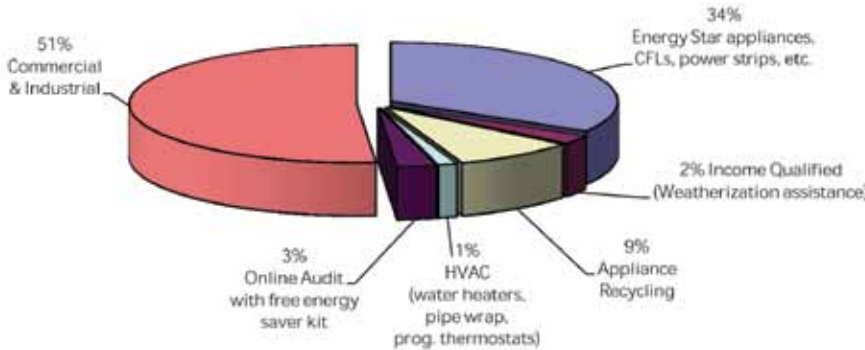
We reached our goal through a combination of your efforts: switching to compact fluorescent lightbulbs, installing Energy Star appliances, and recycling old, energy-guzzling refrigerators and freezers. We also had help from our large commercial and industrial members like Morbark, who invested in energy-efficient lighting that will pay for itself in just a few years.

In all, over 5,500 members made choices that added up to a lot of energy savings. We want to thank each of you for being good stewards of our energy resources, and we look forward to another successful round of energy savings in 2012-2015.



Nick Rusnell is HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative's Energy Advisor

Where the Energy Savings Came From:



Meet our new broadband plans.

PLAN 1:
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PLAN 2:
FASTEST

PLAN 3:
FASTEST

Introducing ExedeSM by ViaSat.

3 Plans. All with super fast **12** Mbps* speed.

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STARTING AT
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PER MONTH

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Watch for Signs of Heat Illnesses

Keep the fun in your summer by knowing how to prevent heat-related illnesses and recognize the symptoms.

HEAT STROKE The most serious of heat illnesses, this can be deadly and swift. Your body temperature could rise to 106 degrees F or more in as few as 10 to 15 minutes. Heat stroke happens when your body temperature rises rapidly but cannot sweat quickly enough to cool itself. Symptoms include hot, dry skin or the opposite—profuse sweating, hallucinations, chills, throbbing headache, confusion or dizziness, and slurred speech.

When these symptoms occur, immediately call 911 and move the person to a shady area. Try misting the person with cold water, soaking his or her clothes, or fanning the body.

HEAT EXHAUSTION Heat exhaustion results from heavy sweating—extreme loss of salt and water. People prone to this include the elderly or those with high blood pressure or who work in hot conditions. Besides excessive sweating, symptoms include extreme weak-

ness or fatigue, dizziness, confusion, nausea, clammy skin, muscle cramps and shallow, rapid breathing.

Move the victim to a shaded or air-conditioned area, and have him or her drink cool, non-alcoholic beverages; a cool shower or bath is also recommended.

HEAT SYNCOPE Sunbathers may be prone to heat syncope, which is dizziness or fainting after lying (or standing) for long periods. Dehydration can contribute to heat syncope, so keep that water bottle handy when you go to the beach.

If you feel dizzy after lying for a long time, sit or lie back down in a cool place and sip on a cool beverage—water, sports drinks, or clear juice.

HEAT CRAMPS Folks who work or play sports in the heat may suffer from heat cramps, which result from low salt levels after heavy

sweating. The cramps are usually felt in the arms, legs or abdomen.

With these symptoms, stop what you're doing, sit in a cool place, and sip clear juice or a sports beverage. Take it easy for a few hours after the cramps are gone—if you return to your activity, the condition could transition to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. If you have heart problems, are on a low-sodium diet, or the cramps do not go away in an hour, call a doctor.

HEAT RASH Heavy sweating can cause a rash that looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters that usually show up on the neck or chest, groin, and crook of your elbow. You can't do much to treat this besides keeping the area dry and using baby powder to alleviate discomfort.

Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control

Pump Up Your Pool's Efficiency

Soak up these pool efficiency tips to save money while maintaining your personal oasis.

Each swimming pool is equipped with an energy guzzler: the pump. The bigger the pump, the higher the electric bill. Make sure your pool uses the smallest unit possible, and new products like variable-speed pumps offer a good way to save. A knowledgeable pool supply or service store can help choose a proper pump for your pool, while considering its size, filter and piping.

Greater savings can come from decreasing pump operation time, no matter the pump size. Keep drains clear of debris, or your pump will work harder to circulate water. Also, find a proper balance for backwashing the filter. Too much backwashing—filtering and disposing of dirty water—wastes water, while too little strains the pump.

These common myths lead to extra pump time (and wasted energy):

■ **I need to run my pump to keep chemicals mixed**—**FALSE**. Circulate while adding chemicals, and they will stay mixed. There's

no need to “re-mix” by recirculating the water each day.

■ **My pool will be dirty if I don't run my pump to constantly clean debris**—**FALSE**.

Try running your pump for six hours or less a day (EnergySavers.gov). If the cleanliness is not to your liking, increase filtration time by 30-minute increments until you are satisfied. If six hours works well, try decreasing filtration time to find a balance with energy efficiency. To keep debris down without running the pump overtime, use a skimmer to manually clean the water. Also, try using a timer to run the filter for several short periods during the day rather than allowing debris to pile up after one long, continuous filtration.

■ **I need my pump to run continuously to keep algae at bay**—**FALSE**. Proper chemical balance and brushing down pool walls are the best algae fighters.

Make sure your pool isn't draining energy dollars needlessly by adjusting pump time



Source: Pentair Water Pool and Spa, Inc.

If you're thinking of updating your pool pump, learn about energy-efficient technology like a variable speed pump.

and investing a little legwork. You'll have a prime poolside spot to relax in afterward, and the relief you'll see on your power bill will be worth the effort.

Find more ways to save energy around your home at TogetherWeSave.com.

Sources: U.S. Department of Energy, Pentair Water Pool & Spa, Inc.

Kelly Trapnell writes on safety and energy efficiency issues for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Online Home Audit

The Do-It-Yourself Way To Save Energy

On average, people spend 90 percent of their time indoors, so your home is more than a roof over your head—it's a place of comfort, safety and well-being where families relax and spend time together.

An investment in the energy efficiency of your home is an investment in your family and well-being. When you save energy, you:

- ▲ **Solve common household problems**—drafty rooms, ice dams, mold, moisture or musty odors.
- ▲ **Regain control.** Identify the parts of your house that use the most energy and tackle energy waste.
- ▲ **Feel better at home.** An energy efficient home can improve indoor air quality and overall comfort.

Home Energy Assessment

An on-site home energy assessment is the best way to determine where your home is wasting energy. A certified energy professional conducts a series of tests to assess air tightness, insulation levels, ventilation, heating and

cooling equipment, and combustion safety. You are then provided a report identifying energy-related improvements to help lower your energy use.

The only challenge is that an in-person home energy assessment may cost between \$300 and \$600 to complete. That price tag can put this assessment out of reach for a lot of folks. Fortunately, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative members have another option—an online home audit.

Affordable Alternative—Online Home Audit

HomeWorks Tri-County's Home Energy Optimizer is a *free* online tool that leads you through a series of questions about your home to evaluate your energy use and determine how your home may be losing energy.

The Home Energy Optimizer tool is also calibrated for your location and climate. You enter as little or as much information as you like, although more detail provides more accurate and customized results. Either way,

you receive personalized energy-saving tips, and you won't have to pay a cent for them.

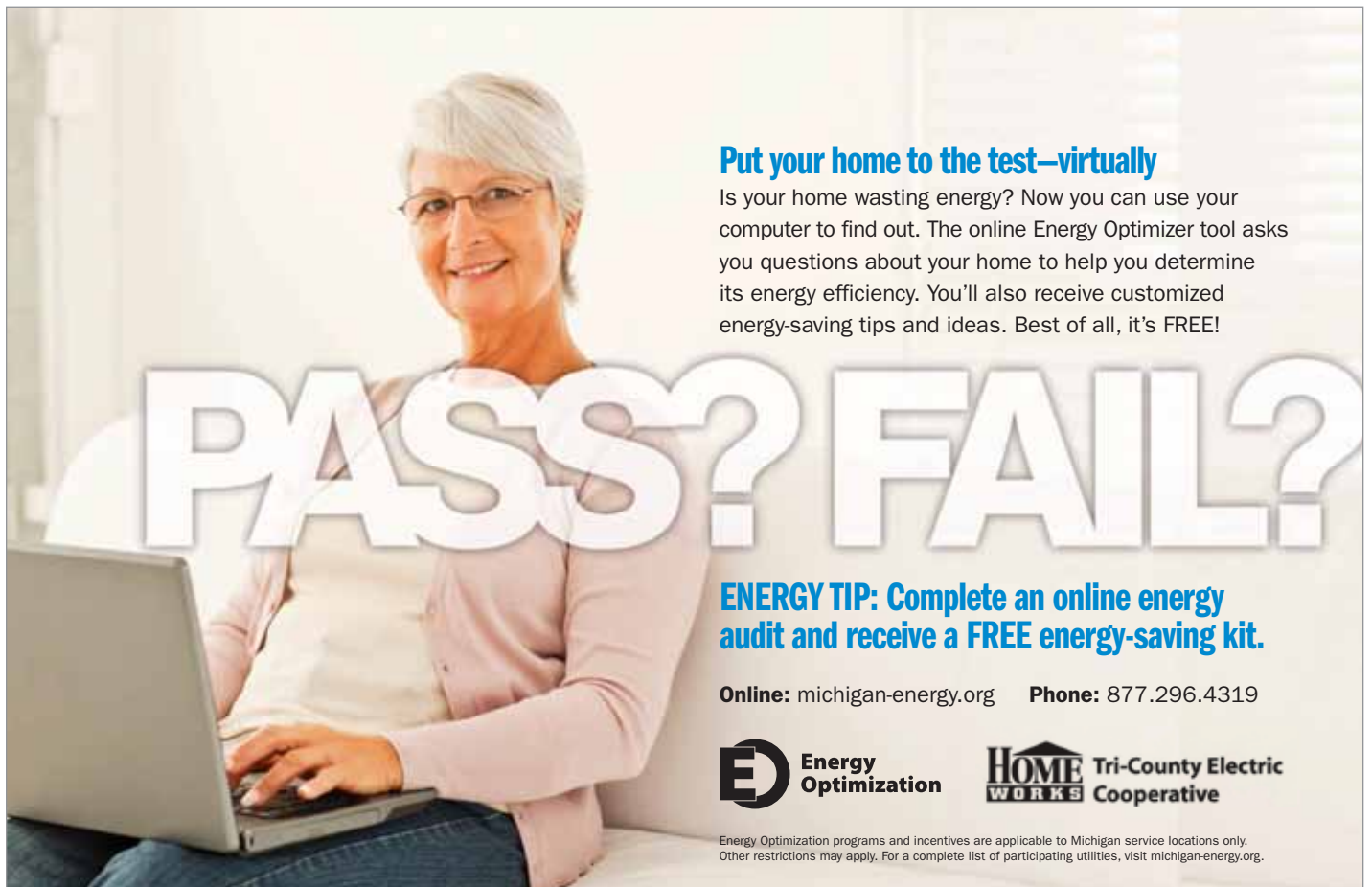
For your convenience, you can save your responses and come back later. This is useful if you run out of time to answer the Home Energy Optimizer questions or want to change your answers in the future.

Getting Started

- Go to michigan-energy.org/homeworks and click on the "Home Audit" link on the left-hand menu.
- **Enter details** about your home and answer the questions. Jot down your session ID.
- **Finish the audit and get a *free* energy-saving kit** that includes: 5 CFLs, 1 energy-efficient bath aerator, 1 energy-efficient kitchen aerator, and 1 energy-efficient shower head.
- **Take action.** Complete the easy energy-saving tips first, then move onto more advanced ones.

More Ways To Save

In addition to the Home Energy Optimizer, HomeWorks Tri-County offers many other Energy Optimization (EO) programs that help you manage your energy use. Learn more at michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319.





Put your home to the test—virtually

Is your home wasting energy? Now you can use your computer to find out. The online Energy Optimizer tool asks you questions about your home to help you determine its energy efficiency. You'll also receive customized energy-saving tips and ideas. Best of all, it's FREE!

PASS? FAIL?

ENERGY TIP: Complete an online energy audit and receive a FREE energy-saving kit.

Online: michigan-energy.org **Phone:** 877.296.4319

 **Energy Optimization**  **HOMEWORKS Tri-County Electric Cooperative**

Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.



**Tri-County Electric
Cooperative**

Come to Blanchard Days 2012 June 22-24



Dewitt's Mill
Blanchard, Michigan
Courtesy: DewittLumber.com

Main Street Parade – Saturday, 11 a.m. **“Blanchard: Past, Present and Future”**

***This year's parade features HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative
celebrating their 75th anniversary!***

HOME WORKS **Lighting the way for 75 years!**

Friday, June 22:

Fireman's Parade at dusk

Saturday, June 23:

11 a.m. – Main Street Parade

Noon – Chicken BBQ by American Legion

Noon – 3 p.m. – Hotline Demo & Equipment Displays by HomeWorks

2 p.m. (may vary) – St. Mary's of Michigan flight Care Helicopter Landing

Fire and Police Displays



All weekend:

- Men's Softball
- Kid's Inflatables
- Horseshoe Tournaments
- Truck & Tractor Pulls
- Hospitality Tent
- Music!

Sunday, June 24:

Noon – Pig Roast by Park Board

**For more information on Blanchard Days 2012, call
Kevin Smith at 989-561-2357 or Gloria Smith at 989-561-5050**