

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES

The Art of Island Living

Writer/Photographer Julie McKay Covert



Your Guide To The
Michigan Legislature

3 Your Co-op
Celebrates 75 Years!

7 Want To Serve On Your
Co-op's Board?

18 Energy
Rebates

If the only thing bigger than your propane bill is your propane tank...



Switch to a WaterFurnace geothermal comfort system.

Are you tired of the large, expensive eyesore in your backyard? A WaterFurnace geothermal heat pump **doesn't have any outdoor equipment**. It uses the **clean, renewable energy** in your backyard to **save up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. A WaterFurnace unit is **twice as efficient at cooling** than the best air conditioner or heat pump and **five times more efficient at heating** than any ordinary furnace. If you're ready to learn more about geothermal and the 30% tax credit, visit your local WaterFurnace dealer.



visit us at waterfurnace.com

Bad Axe

B & D Heating
(989) 269-5280

Berrien Springs

WaterFurnace Michiana
(269) 473-5667

Big Rapids

Stratz Htg & Clg
(231) 796-3717

Caro

AllTemp Comfort, Inc.
(866) 844-HEAT (4328)

Carsonville

Certified Temperature
Innovations
(810) 300-7748

Charlotte

Applegate Home Comfort
(517) 541-8013

Clifford

Orton Refrigeration & Htg
(989) 761-7691

DeWitt

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

Elk Rapids

K & K Htg & Clg
(231) 264-8323

Gaylord

Family Htg & Clg
(989) 732-8099

Grand Rapids

Montgomery Htg & Clg
(616) 459-0261

Total Comfort Resource, LLC
(616) 406-3182

Hart/Ludington

Adams Htg & Clg
(231) 873-2665

Indian River

M & M Plmb, Htg & Clg
(231) 238-7201

Ionia

Home Experts
(800) 457-4554

Jackson

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

Kalkaska

Kalkaska Plmb & Htg
(231) 258-3588

Kincheloe

Great Lakes Services Inc.
(906) 632-5543

Lapeer

Porter & Heckman
(800) 445-4328

Manistigue

Hoholik Enterprises
(906) 341-5065

Mount Pleasant

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

Onaway

Standard Heating
(989) 733-8309

Palms

Lakeshore Improvements
(989) 864-3833

Traverse City

Geofurnace Htg & Clg
(231) 943-1000

D&W Mechanical
(231) 941-1215

Webberville

Applegate Home Comfort
(800) 377-2272



[facebook.com/waterfurnacefans](https://www.facebook.com/waterfurnacefans)



twitter.com/waterfurnace



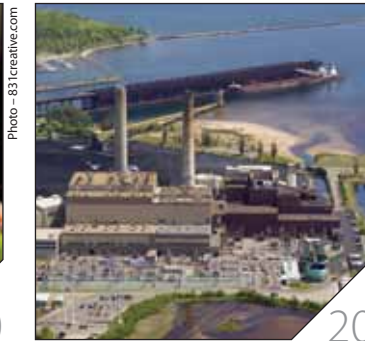
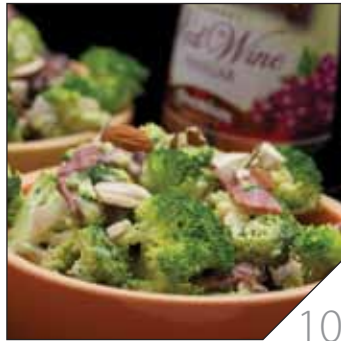
[youtube.com/waterfurnace](https://www.youtube.com/waterfurnace)

Editor
Gail Knudtson

Associate Editor
Doug Snitgen

Design Editor
Cindy Zuker

Publisher
Craig Borr



DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Readers' Pages**
Gov. Snyder's energy address, mystery photo, NRECA's new CEO, Youth Leadership Summit
- 10 Home Cooking**
Salads & 2012 recipe contest winner
Christin McKamey & Our readers
- 20 Wolverine Power**
Joint ownership of U.P. power plant
Nancy Tanner

COLUMNS

- 16 Safety**
Be emergency-ready this winter
Kelly Trapnell
- 17 Family**
A blizzard of kindness
Lisa Marie Metzler
- 21 House & Home**
Insulate gaps and cracks
James Dulley
- 24 Ramblings**
Tortured text
Mike Buda

FEATURES

- 8 Cover Story**
The art of island living
Linda Sirois
- 12 Our Energy**
Clean-coal technology
Angela Perez
- 13 Legislative Guide**
Know your state senator and representative
(Pull-out section)
- 22 Michigan-made**
The 'Snow Bully'
Nick Edson

YOUR CO-OP

Pages specific to your electric cooperative: 1, 2-3, 6-7, 18-19, 22-23, 28

*Not in all editions

On the Cover*

Writer/photographer Julie McKay Covert is featured with the cover photo from her book, "A Photographic Essay: Art of Winter." The book's photos were taken near her home on Shelter Island, MI.

Visit juliemckaycovert.com

Michigan's Electric
Cooperatives
countrylines.com



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

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

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Letters to the editor should be sent to Country Lines, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. Phone 517-913-3531. Email: gknudtson@meca.coop.

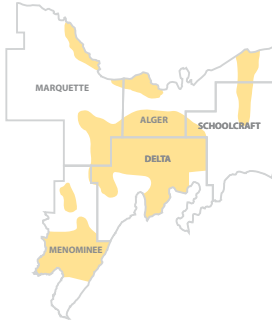
Association officers are **Tony Anderson**, Cherryland, chairman; **Ken Swope**, Midwest Energy, 1st vice chairman; **Robert Schallip**, Cloverland, 2nd vice chairman; **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power, secretary-treasurer; and **Brian Burns**, PIE&G, past chairman. **Craig Borr** is president and CEO.

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

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

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





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darryl Small, Big Bay

District # 1 - Big Bay

906-345-9369 • smallwd13@yahoo.com

Sam Simonetta, Deerton

District # 2 - Harvey-Deerton

906-892-8504 • lcellc@hotmail.com

Nancy Gardner-Platt, Grand Marais

District #3 - Grand Marais

906-494-2772 • rlnkgard@jamadots.com

Bessie Anderson, Menominee

District # 4 - Palestine

906-864-1468 • bessomay@gmail.com

Kevin Webber, Wilson

District #5 - Gourley, Labranche & Cornell

906-639-2937

kevinwebber.2937@gmail.com

Paul Sederquist, Daggett

District #6 - Nathan

906-753-4484 • seder@dreamscp.com

Gail Petersen, Rapid River

District #7 - Stonington

906-474-6572 • gjspetersen@gmail.com

Nick Denessen, Rapid River

District #8 - Isabella

906-644-7171 • nden@bbmi.com

Dennis Gramm, Munising

District #9 - Hiawatha & Maple Ridge

906-387-3709 • dgramm@jamadots.com

Tom Harrell

General Manager

tharrell@algerdelta.com

Office Headquarters:

426 North 9th St.

Gladstone, MI 49837

Office Hours/Phone:

M-F, 7:30 a.m. - 4 p.m. EST

906-428-4141 • 1-800-562-0950

FAX: (906) 428-3840

algerdelta.com

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Is Your Information Current?

The number of mobile phones in the U.S. has more than doubled since 2002, according to the International Association for Wireless Communications. Today, there are over 322 million active cell phones ringing around this country. About 35 percent of these households are “wireless only”—meaning they no longer have a land-line phone. Of course, mobile phones are used for more than voice communication. Every month, mobile phone users send and receive over 183 billion (yes, *billion*) text messages.

My grandparents had the same phone number for 55 years...but the old days of “Ma-Bell” are long gone. Now, people change phones and phone numbers as easily as they change shoes. Just about all Alger Delta Cooperative members have mobile phones now, and it’s a safe bet

that some members may be among that 35 percent of homes that are wireless.

Related, a review of our database reveals that many Alger Delta members have not provided us with updated contact information, especially phone numbers. If you have a mobile phone or only wireless phone service, contact us to verify that we have your most current phone number and other contact information. It’s important for our staff to be able to reach you, both for routine business issues and in case of an emergency or a power outage.

Please call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141 to ensure we have your most current information. Or, you can update us by filling out the information box on your bill or email us at algerdelta.com. Please write “info update” in the subject line.



Tom Harrell
General Manager

Notice to Members of Alger Delta Electric Cooperative

Case No. U-15813

2011 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately 2 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012 and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, Alger Delta Electric Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2011, Alger Delta purchased power as a member of WPPI Energy. WPPI acquired renewable energy from direct renewable energy purchases and from slice-of-system contracts with major investor-owned utilities. As a WPPI member, Alger Delta is allocated a portion of those resources necessary to meet its renewable energy portfolio standard. WPPI Energy will ensure Alger Delta will have sufficient renewable energy credits to meet the renewable energy standard.

A full copy of the cooperative’s Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative’s website at algerdelta.com or by request at Alger Delta’s office.

Did You Know?...



Easy Ways to Pay – You can now pay your Alger Delta Co-op electric bill online at algerdelta.com. Members can also pay by phone (866-885-3719) anytime, or by credit card, automatic electronic transfer (EFT) from a checking account, or automatic credit card payments.

Your Co-op Celebrates 75 Years!



This year, Alger Delta Cooperative marks 75 years of bringing electric service to its members. Following is a slice of the co-op's history, excerpted from a book by Raymond G. Kuhl, "On Their Own Power: The Story of Michigan's Electric Co-ops."

It was a rocky start for the pioneers of the original co-op project in Delta and Alger counties. After futile attempts to get power companies to bring electricity to their farms and homes, the half-dozen or so men from the Trenary-Rock-Perkins area decided to look into the new REA program.

They got legal assistance from Charles Lewis and filed papers to incorporate in September of 1937. But months went by as the men continued to investigate power sources and confer with the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in Washington.

Julius Sivula, the co-op's first president and also project coordinator during construction, was relentless in pursuing the first REA loans and negotiating with power companies for the co-op's power supply.

When one of the major suppliers was first contacted, Sivula was quoted 5 cents per kilowatt-hour—higher than many retail rates. The price was later negotiated down to 1¼ cents per kWh.

On Dec. 8, 1938, the first power was turned on to members in the Trenary-Rock-Perkins area. One substation with three 37½ KVA transformers served the load, which was very small by today's standards. As former Alger-Delta Line Superintendent Edwin "Bud" Englund explained, "Many farmers then just couldn't afford to get the farm wired right away and, for many, use was limited to lighting and maybe an electric iron or washing machine."

Delays in getting places wired was still a problem in 1939, as minutes of an August board meeting show that almost half of the farms signed up for service were not yet wired and ready to be connected. REA officials met with the board to devise a plan that would expedite connections on the first section of lines built. Also jeopardizing the co-op's progress was the loss of 50 or more prospective members to the Wisconsin-Michigan Power Company.

At the same meeting, sparks flew over the co-op's proposed "Section B" in Menominee County where the M&M Traction and Power Company was soliciting customers in the area to be served by the co-op. "The company's activities in Menominee County seem to indicate that M&M is doing all in

its power to interfere with the cooperative's plans," said Sivula who took issue with the other reports defending M&M.

When the Menominee area was added to the system in 1940-41, and the Stonington

Two "giants" in Alger-Delta's history whose leadership kept the co-op moving forward in the face of difficult challenges were Raymond Berger and Lyle Wilson. Berger served on the board for 45 years, with most of them as chairman. Wilson's service spanned over 30 years, and he represented the state's co-ops on the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association board of directors in the 1960s.

Wilson also was instrumental in forming



Share Your 'Electric' Memories!

"It was a struggle to get the co-op going—most everything was a struggle in those days. Many farm people could only pay a dollar (of the \$5 sign-up fee) because of the terrible Depression, and they would pay the balance later. Some couldn't afford to hook up and pay an electric bill."

— Edwin "Bud" Englund, former Alger Delta employee of 45 years

Send us your Alger Delta memories, stories and historical photos and we may print them in the next issue of *Country Lines*.

Email algerdelta@algerdelta.com with "History" in the subject line, or send to:

Alger Delta Co-op, 426 North 9th St., Gladstone, MI 49837

(If you send photos and want them back, please include a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.)

area later, the co-op again faced the knotty problem of power supply. In addition, the M&M Power Company said it planned to extend electric service to 300 or more Menominee County farms. But Sivula and the board persisted and built 135 miles of line to serve 500 members in the county.

Other areas were added to the system later, including the Isabella-Nahma area, and Cornell and LaBranche, which connected in 1956 after a year's work in building 26 miles of line and a substation. The number of member-consumers in the Grand Marias area has tripled to over 600 since 1956.

By 1946, the co-op served over 4,000 members, almost half of them seasonal consumers using a monthly average of less than 50 kilowatt hours. Many farm members were using 500 to 700 kWh per month—10 times the amount they used 20 to 25 years before.

The co-op's assets totaled \$2.3 million in 1964. Owing REA \$2 million, member equity in the co-op was less than 10 percent. It has since grown to over 30 percent.

The co-op grew to 7,000 members and over \$8 million in assets by 1984. The staff of 21 included nine linemen, plus four men on right-of-way and brush clearing. Don Clark was manager.

the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) and was elected its first president in 1978. He realized the co-op's critical need for unity and coordination in working with the state Legislature and Public Service Commission. MECA honored Berger and Wilson with its "Special Recognition Award" for their many years of dedicated work in advancing electric cooperatives.

Dealing with power companies to obtain bulk power supply in adequate amounts and at reasonable cost was always a priority for Alger Delta Cooperative. In the early years, some of the contracts severely limited the supply and there was uncertainty about meeting the co-op's growing needs.

In recent years, power has been purchased from two Wisconsin utilities, UPPCO and the City of Marquette. Wholesale rates increased in the 1970s and '80s, but negotiations in the 1990s resulted in reductions and consequent retail rate drops from 11 cents per kWh to a little over 8 cents per kWh.

The co-op's office was moved to Gladstone in 1941, and a new building built in 1948.

By 1996, the co-op's staff of 18 employees served over 8,660 member-consumers. Sam Moulds, of Marquette, was elected board chairman upon Ray Berger's retirement.

Governor Says 'Work Together On Energy, Environmental Issues'

Adaptability has to be the foundation of every energy decision we make," Gov. Rick Snyder said in his December message on energy and the environment. "First," he emphasized, "we need to make sure our energy supplies are reliable." Using the adaptability theme, he noted three pillars that every decision must stand on:

#1 Reliable Energy

- Upgrade the transmission and electrical system to keep the economy growing.
- Michigan has growing reliability challenges, for example, the U.P. has 12 "yellow alerts" every year (meaning all it takes is for one more thing to go wrong and everybody's power could be out for days). Another is when the electrical grid went down in 2003, causing a widespread blackout in Michigan and the eastern U.S.
- The Wolverine Power/We Energies plan to save the

Presque Isle Power Plant (see p. 20) is a good start, but "let's connect the Peninsulas" with electricity.

- Use more of our natural gas assets; many are on state land, it's better than coal, and we have prime areas to store it.

- "Fracking" to retrieve natural gas. "It's been done here safely for over a decade because we're doing it the right way."

#2 Affordable Energy

- Our electric prices are the highest in the Midwest because we have to import coal.

- Energy efficiency supports jobs, saves energy, money, and is good for the environment.

- Conserve more energy. Since 2010, over 1,700 Michiganders have used funds from the "Michigan Saves" program (michigansaves.org) to improve their homes and save about \$350 in yearly energy costs. The program is expanding to include businesses like small grocery and convenience stores.

- In 2012, private financial institutions statewide offered over \$68 million for efficiency improvements in buildings.

- Energy use in state buildings has been reduced nearly 25 percent; upgrades continue.

- Find steady funding to help low-income people with heating costs. Utilities must work closer with people before shutting the power off.

#3 Protect the Environment

- Energy and the environment must be considered together in preserving land, water and trails. The DNR is to offer better land/trail use options by spring. Link our trails to other states.

- Aggressively educate, prevent and defend against over

Ensuring Michigan's Future

"There are things we can do today that benefit us right now and pay dividends tomorrow, no matter what the future holds."

180 invasive species threatening our waters (i.e., Asian carp).

- Merge scientific/economic/environmental practices into one water protection system. Invite Great Lakes Governors to a 2013 summit.

- Re-establish a Water Use Advisory Council. Strategize on inland lake and drought issues.

- Battle urban blight and plan for vacant land use (i.e., urban farming). Toughen landlord laws and bar property tax delinquents from land auctions.

- Help farmers and agribusinesses comply with environmental regulations.

- Improve recycling; create a plan by 2014. (Only 21 of 83 counties have strong programs.)

- Raise renewable energy use through legislation—not the Constitution; discuss this year.

▶ See the Governor's full speech at: michigan.gov/documents/snyder/EE_Message_FINAL_pdf_404563_7.pdf



Thanks to all who helped electric co-ops support opposition to Proposition 3 on the November ballot. We also thank everyone who took time to write us a letter, whether pro or con, on the issue.

HOW TO SEND A LETTER Readers are encouraged to submit thoughtful, courteously-worded letters, and we print as many as possible in the space and time allowed.

Country Lines reserves the right to print letters at the publisher's discretion, based on length, space and content, and to edit slightly for space and facts. Please limit comments to 240 words or less. Submit by posting online at countrylines.com, email gknudson@meca.coop, or mail to: Editor, Country Lines, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

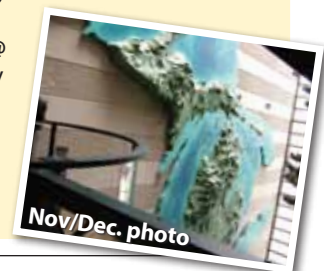


◀ DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS?

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

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone! Email mysteryphoto@countrylines.com, or send by mail to *Country Lines Mystery Photo*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and name of your co-op. Only those sending complete information will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the March 2013 issue.

The Nov./Dec. contest winner is Jeanne Moore of Gaylord, who correctly identified the photo from the Michigan Historical Museum in Lansing.



Electric Co-ops Choose New National Leader

Jo Ann Emerson, a nine-term Congresswoman, was recently chosen as the new CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

Emerson succeeds Glenn English, a former Democratic Congressman who served NRECA well for 19 years.

Coupled with her Congressional work, Emerson's earlier executive roles with the National Restaurant Association and the American Insurance Association, plus extensive knowledge of electric co-op issues, makes her the best choice to lead NRECA, said Mike Guidry, board president. "The respect she has from both sides of the aisle and her proven ability to bridge political and policy

divides to find common ground will serve NRECA and all member co-ops very well."

First elected in 1996, she is the first Republican woman from Missouri to serve in the U.S. House. She has served on the House Appropriations Committee and chaired the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee, which oversees the U.S. Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, and various independent agencies, including the Federal Communications Commission.

Besides leadership roles in agriculture, health care and government reform, she won recognition for her work on energy, including the 2006 NRECA Distinguished Service Award.

"Without reliable, affordable



Photo - Kyle Spradley, Rural Missouri Magazine

U.S. Rep. Jo Ann Emerson (R-MO), right, NRECA CEO-designate, meets with 2011 Rural Electric Youth Tour students from Missouri outside House chambers at the U.S. Capitol.

electricity delivered by electric cooperatives serving thousands of communities, millions of Americans would be left without the energy that brings economic opportunity, unsurpassed quality of life, and the promise of growth in the future," Emerson said. "NRECA is committed to the electric co-ops of this great nation, and works hard every day

to improve the quality of life for their consumer-members. I am very honored to join an outstanding organization to work on their behalf."

She assumes her new duties March 1, but will be introduced to NRECA members, which total over 900 co-ops, employees and directors from 48 states, at their annual meeting in February.

ELEVATE YOUR FUTURE
YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
 >> PRESENTED BY MICHIGAN'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



>> PARTICIPANTS WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR AN ALL-EXPENSES-PAID WASHINGTON, D.C. YOUTH TOUR. VISIT miYLS.com TO LEARN MORE.

miYLS.com

>> SCAN THE QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE TO LEARN MORE, OR TO APPLY ONLINE

YOU ARE A LEADER. In the classroom, on the team, and in your community, you guide and inspire others to contribute their best efforts. Join other young leaders like you from throughout Michigan at the **YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (YLS)**, presented by Michigan's electric cooperatives. This unique, high-energy experience will help you develop your leadership habits, explore career opportunities in the electric industry, and learn how to be actively involved in the democratic process. You are a leader. **YOU ARE THE FUTURE.**

Disconnected!

No one wants to be *disconnected* from service or be without electricity. What will the neighbors think when they see your house is dark? What happens when the kids come home from school and there are no lights or TV? How weird is it when you open the refrigerator and the light doesn't come on? Yet, some co-op members face this possibility every month.

"Most members pay their bill on time," says Tom Harrell, general manager of Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association. "However, there are some who struggle to pay their electric bill every month, and we offer programs to help these members. The absolute best program available is the budget billing program," he adds. Nearly every utility in the country offers this program, and Harrell uses it at his own house to pay for electric and natural gas bills.

Under the budget billing program, the co-op calculates the expected cost of electricity for the whole year and divides that amount into 12 equal monthly payments. People using this program like it because they know what their electric bill will be every month and can budget accordingly.

Most people pay more in the winter and less in the summer, but budget billing also smooths out the high bills that occur in winter by charging an equal amount in the summer and building up a reserve in a member's account. "Some people think this is unfair. They have the mistaken notion that the co-op invests all this 'extra' money to make a profit, but this is far from reality," Harrell explains. "Because we have so few members who participate in this program, the so-called 'extra' money really doesn't amount to much in the overall scheme of things. We just carry the balance in each member's account." Even if this money were invested, he adds, it wouldn't earn much because of the small amount and other factors.

Your co-op also participates in Michigan's Winter Protection program, which helps protect eligible seniors and low-income households from being disconnected between Nov. 1 and March 31. Members enrolled in this program pay a reduced amount during the winter. When the protection period ends, members resume paying the full monthly bill plus a portion of the amount owed from the

winter months. Members may qualify for this program if they meet any one of the following conditions: they are over 65; receive cash assistance from the Department of Human Services (DHS); receive food stamps; are on Medicaid; or have a household income less than 150 percent of the poverty level. It's important for eligible members to understand that enrolling in the Winter Protection program does not relieve them of the responsibility of paying their bill—it only

Trouble Paying the Bill?

- ✓ Call Alger Delta at **906-428-4141** or **1-800-562-0950** and talk about your situation—don't wait until you are on the disconnect list.
- ✓ Prioritize your spending—shelter, food, heat and light.
- ✓ Reduce or eliminate luxuries and entertainment such as cable or satellite TV, internet, or eating out.
- ✓ Your co-op can point you to agencies that can help.
- ✓ If eligible, apply for the Winter Protection Program (contact Alger Delta Co-op for information).
- ✓ Arrange for help from DHS or other local community agencies.

reduces the amount they have to pay during the winter "protection" period.

Alger Delta works closely with local and state agencies to help its members. These include the DHS, St. Vincent De Paul, Salvation Army, Hannahville Tribal Authority, and many churches in the co-op's service territory. "We have more interaction with DHS and St. Vinny's than any other organizations," says Shirley Boudreau, an Alger Delta member service representative. With 32 years on the job, Boudreau is on a first-name basis with many of the co-op's members, as well as employees of the agencies that offer help. "The most important thing is for the member to contact Alger Delta or one of these agencies to request assistance—the sooner, the better," she says. The member must take the first step if it looks like they will need help paying their bill. "Contacting us after being notified of a pending disconnect puts everyone in a difficult situation,"

Boudreau explains. When a co-op member has already been notified of a pending disconnect, there is little time and few options available for receiving help. "Waiting only makes it harder to come up with workable solutions," Boudreau says.

Having to disconnect service is not in the best interest of the member or the co-op, since it adds costs for both parties, adds Amanda Seger, the co-op's financial manager. "It's really the last option in the toolbox for working with members." First, there is the additional cost of sending a lineworker out to disconnect the service, which can easily cost \$100 or more, depending on travel time. Then there is the administrative paperwork, including processing the final meter reading, and things of that nature that add to the cost. "This is why, once they are disconnected, members have to pay a reconnect fee to help cover the cost of the additional service," Seger says.

Everyone probably agrees that the best action is to avoid being disconnected in the first place, but unfortunately, there is a limit to how long members can go without paying their bill. "A lot of members don't know or don't understand that the energy they consume is an instantaneous commodity," Harrell explains. "It is consumed at essentially the same moment in time that it's generated, and there's no way to get it back or store it for later use." "This is an issue that has dogged the electric business since its beginnings," Harrell says, because in effect, people consume electricity "on credit." Consumers get the benefit of the electricity for weeks or months in advance of paying for it. Meanwhile, the co-op pays the wholesale power bill for the entire system on a much shorter schedule—only days after the end of the billing period. As a result, the co-op has to be quick about processing payments and aggressive in collecting on overdue accounts—including disconnection, when other options have been exhausted.

Harrell, Seger and Boudreau all agree: it's an unpleasant—but necessary—part of the business. Since Alger Delta is a nonprofit co-op, all costs are paid by all the members through their electric rates. There aren't any investors or shareholders to help with the financial burden of uncollectible accounts. "Stated simply—whenever someone doesn't pay their bill, the cost of that person's electricity has to be distributed among all the other members," says Harrell, "and that's just not fair, so disconnection is the last step to limit the risk exposure."

Want to Serve On Your Co-op's Board of Directors?

Read on to find out about director qualifications and elections.

Alger Delta Cooperative will be holding elections in three of its nine districts in March/April 2013. Districts 1 (Big Bay), 6 (Nathan/Carney) and 9 (Hiawatha) will each elect a representative to the board of directors.

Serving as a director is a time-consuming and rewarding pursuit, and members should be aware of the qualifications and responsibilities associated with the position before applying.

To qualify as a candidate, a person must take electric service (permanent or seasonal residential; or commercial) in the district they seek to represent. Candidates must also be a member in good standing, at least 18 years old, and not be employed by, or have a financial interest in a competing business.

Directors are charged with the responsibility of overseeing the cooperative, including strategic planning, exercising financial responsibility, setting policy

and direction, corporate duties, governance, and other duties that relate to operating the cooperative. Board members are expected to prepare in advance and personally attend regular board meetings, which are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the cooperative's office in Gladstone. Directors are also required to attend the co-op's annual meeting, held on the third Wednesday in June, and serve on a variety of committees. Standing committees include those related to policy, employee relations, finances and rates, and the executive committee. Every director is assigned to a committee, which meets at least twice each year.

In addition to the regular board meetings and committees, directors participate in state, regional and national meetings and events which may be business or training related, or political in nature. They often require advance preparation, such as reading information packets or researching issues of current interest, and may range from a half-day to



Your co-op's governing board is democratically elected.

five days for travel and participation.

Finally, directors are required to represent Alger Delta in their community and elsewhere, which sometimes includes making public presentations.

Directors serve for a term of three years and receive compensation for their work, including reasonable and customary expense reimbursement. For more information about serving on the board of directors, see Article III in the bylaws at algerdelta.com. If you cannot access the bylaws online, call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141 for a copy.



Your Electric Co-op's Rates and Other Charges

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association is a nonprofit electric utility that is owned by you and your fellow co-op members. Our mission is to provide you with electric service at the lowest cost that allows for consistent, safe delivery, and sound management of the co-op. This is also why Alger Delta's rates and special charges are only the amounts necessary to cover the actual cost of providing energy and associated services.

Rates and special charges are authorized by your co-op's board of directors and other regulators, when applicable. While the co-op's rates and special charges are subject to change, only two charges have changed (see chart for date) since they were last authorized, which was August 2010. For your reference, the chart shown here (right) lists current co-op charges for all electric rate categories and special service requests.

Rates – Energy and Capacity*

Monthly Service Charge (Residential/Seasonal / Small Commercial)	\$25
Energy Rate per kWh (Residential / Seasonal)	\$0.149
Energy Rate per kWh (Small Commercial).....	\$0.147
Demand Charge per kWh (Large Power)	\$11
Energy Rate per kWh (Large Power).....	\$0.116

Special Charges*

Charge for any Special Services at Member's request:	
During regular work hours (per hour)	\$100
During non-regular work hours (per hour).....	\$150
Meter Reading Charge.....	\$50
Meter Test Charge (waived if meter is out of limits)	\$75
Disconnect Charge (at source):	
During regular work hours	\$100
Outside regular work hours	\$300
Reconnect Charge (at source):	
During regular work hours	\$100
Outside regular work hours	\$300
Collection Charge for non-payment	\$50
NSF or Returned Check handling charge	\$50

Connections outside regular working hours.....	\$300
Meter Tampering / Energy Theft Investigation Charge (Dec. 2010)	\$500
Duplicate Bill Preparation (Jan. 2013).....	\$150

Line Extensions / Construction Services

Application Fee (Refunded in construction)	\$250
Re-application Fee	\$250
Overhead Facilities:	
Connection Charge	\$100
Extension charge – secondary	Actual cost
Extension charge – primary	Actual cost
Meter pole	Actual cost
Underground Facilities:	
Connection Charge	\$100
Extension charge – secondary	Actual cost
Extension charge – primary	Actual cost
Primary cut in fee (underground only)	\$1,200
Overhead to underground transition pole – primary	\$500
Overhead to underground transition pole – secondary	\$150
Frost charge – underground construction	
Nov. 1 – Apr. 30	\$1,200

*All rates & charges were authorized in August 2010, except as noted in italics.

If you have any questions about rates or charges, call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141 or 1-800-562-0950.



The Art of Island Living

Julie McKay Covert likes to sit at her dining room table, cradling a steaming mug of hot chocolate and looking out over the treetops at Lake Huron. Two sides of the dining room are windows, and from this vantage point on the second story of her snug, 1,200-square-foot house, she has a bird's-eye view. Depending on the season, the daily show includes cedar waxwings, warblers, snow buntings, ravens, and even bald eagles.

The variety and abundance of wildlife on Shelter Island is just one of the trade-offs that Julie, and her husband Hugh, embrace in their life as the only people living on the 40-acre island they own in Lake Huron. The island is located just off

the southeastern tip of Drummond Island, in the far eastern Upper Peninsula. Hugh works as a captain of tall ships, among other pursuits, and bought the island nine years ago and built a home and lifestyle that reflect his love for sailing the Great Lakes. He designed the open-plan house to withstand the rigors of wilderness living.

The first story of their house is used for storage and utility areas, in order to be thoroughly bear-proof—the second story is their living space.

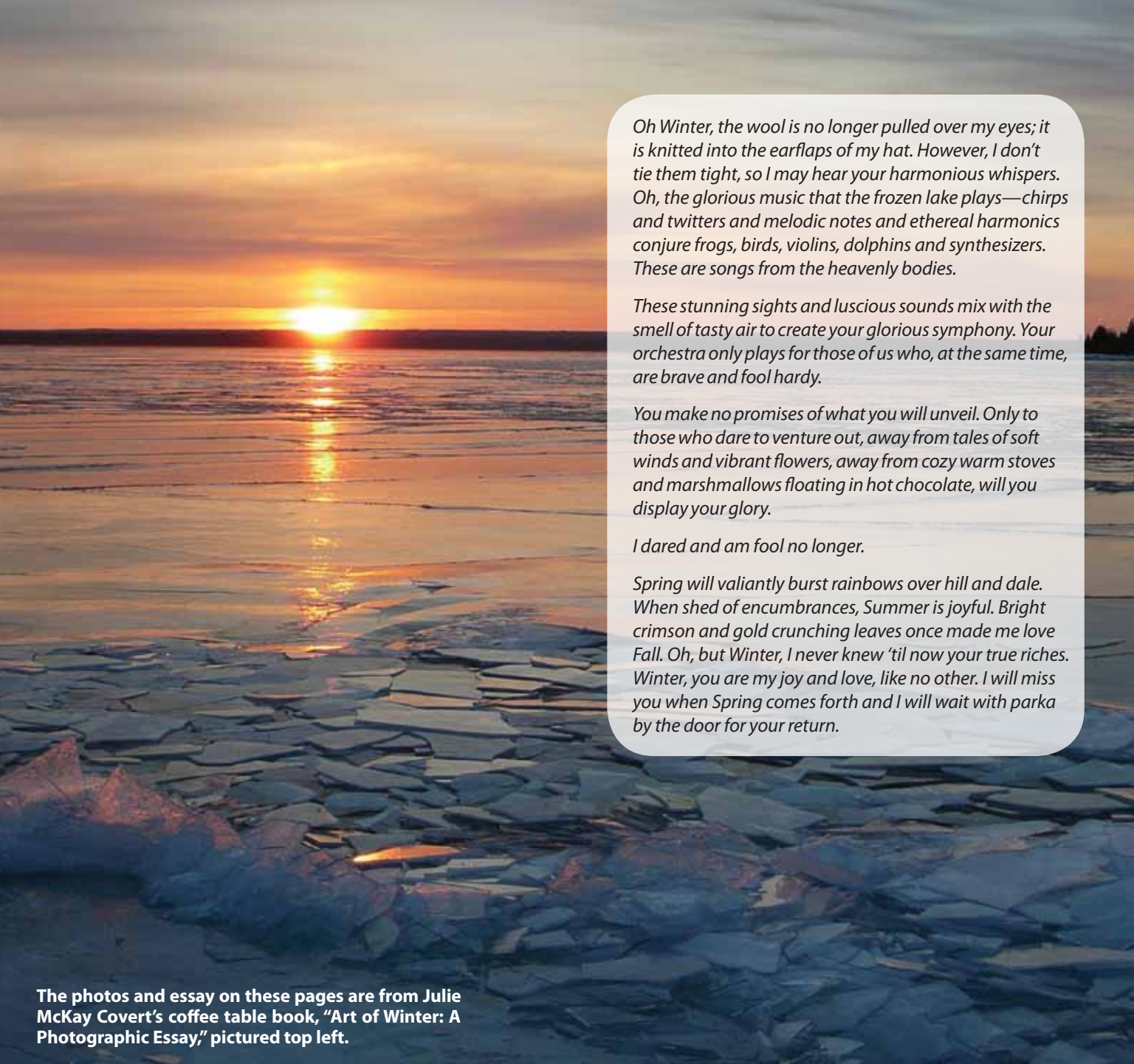
“We enjoy all of our fuzzy, furry friends that live out in the woods with us,” Julie says. The thin topsoil cover precludes gardening, and the wildlife and isolation make the idea of owning pets or farm

animals like chickens or pigs impractical for the Coverts. “How do you ask someone to come out and care for animals when you live where we do?” she laughs.

A massage and bodywork therapist, and book author of “The Insightful Body,” Julie spends much of her time traveling to conduct classes for her business, Island Wellness Center, located on Drummond Island. At work, she is a member of Cloverland Electric Cooperative, but at home, the Coverts live “off the grid.” Three years ago, as a bride, Julie moved into an island home that uses wood and propane for heating, cooking and refrigeration, and solar panels for electricity.

“I loved it immediately,” she says. Her new husband encouraged her to explore all





Oh Winter, the wool is no longer pulled over my eyes; it is knitted into the earflaps of my hat. However, I don't tie them tight, so I may hear your harmonious whispers. Oh, the glorious music that the frozen lake plays—chirps and twitters and melodic notes and ethereal harmonics conjure frogs, birds, violins, dolphins and synthesizers. These are songs from the heavenly bodies.

These stunning sights and luscious sounds mix with the smell of tasty air to create your glorious symphony. Your orchestra only plays for those of us who, at the same time, are brave and fool hardy.

You make no promises of what you will unveil. Only to those who dare to venture out, away from tales of soft winds and vibrant flowers, away from cozy warm stoves and marshmallows floating in hot chocolate, will you display your glory.

I dared and am fool no longer.

Spring will valiantly burst rainbows over hill and dale. When shed of encumbrances, Summer is joyful. Bright crimson and gold crunching leaves once made me love Fall. Oh, but Winter, I never knew 'til now your true riches. Winter, you are my joy and love, like no other. I will miss you when Spring comes forth and I will wait with parka by the door for your return.

The photos and essay on these pages are from Julie McKay Covert's coffee table book, "Art of Winter: A Photographic Essay," pictured top left.

four seasons of the wilderness outside their door. "Go play in the 'big room,' Hugh would tell me. I saw absolutely beautiful sights that the snow, the ice, and the light were creating," she recalls.

Struck by the fleeting quality of the winter beauty surrounding her, she would see a breathtaking arrangement of ice and light and hoarfrost, but passing the same spot 10 minutes later it would all have changed. A long-time photographer, Julie began to carry a camera on all of her

walks in order to capture the changeable winter scenery for family and friends. "I would put pictures on my blog to show people things they'd never see otherwise," explains. She collected enough photos in her wanderings to self-publish a small book as a gift for guests and family. They urged her to seek out a wider audience, and the result is her second book, "Art of Winter," which was published this year.

"I started this for fun," Julie says. "Living like this has always been a dream."



Writer/photographer Julie McKay Covert and her husband, Hugh, enjoy winter on Shelter Island.

Learn more about Julie McKay Covert's books and businesses at JulieMCovert.com or call 443-604-1981, e-mail Julie@JulieMCovert.com, or write to her at 38300 S. Shelter Island, Drummond Island, MI 49726.



SALAD!

Salads can be a great addition to a meal, or even the main event. If you're bored of the same old salads, try one of these.

Pear Salad with Gorgonzola Dressing

(Pictured above)

1 12-oz. bag spring mix lettuce
1 fresh or canned pear, peeled and chopped
dried cherries
candied walnuts

Dressing:

1 fresh or canned pear, peeled and finely diced
1 t. olive oil
1/3 c. white vinegar
1/4 c. lemon juice
1 T. dijon mustard
3 T. agave syrup or honey (add more for sweeter)
3 T. crumbled gorgonzola cheese
dash salt
dash pepper

Mix all dressing ingredients together. Layer lettuce, pear pieces, cherries and walnuts on a plate. You can also add grilled chicken. Serve with dressing and french bread.

Christin McKamey

Tasty Tree Salad

2 bunches broccoli, trimmed and chopped
8 strips bacon, cooked and crumbled
1 c. raisins
1/2 c. chopped onion
1/2 c. slivered almonds
1 c. mayonnaise
2 t. red wine vinegar
3 t. sugar

Mix all ingredients and chill salad in refrigerator overnight before serving. For a lower fat version, use only 4 strips of bacon and substitute plain yogurt for the mayonnaise.

Toni Monton, Custer

Spinach Strawberry Pecan Salad

2 bags spinach, rinsed and dried
1 pint strawberries, sliced
1 c. toasted pecan pieces (toast for 15 min. at 300°; watch closely)

Dressing:

1/3 c. white vinegar
3/4 c. sugar
1 t. dry mustard
1 t. salt
1 1/2 t. minced onion
1 c. vegetable oil
1 1/2 T. poppy seeds

Mix dressing ingredients in blender. Place spinach, strawberries, and pecans in large bowl. Toss with dressing just before serving.

Marianne O'Neill, Dryden

Dill Tuna Salad

4 c. small shells or penne pasta, cooked
1 large can white tuna in water
1 c. celery, diced small
1/2 c. chopped green onions, including tops
1 c. frozen peas
1/4 c. fresh parsley, minced
10 ozs. plain greek yogurt
1 c. mayonnaise
1/4 c. fresh lemon juice
2 T. fresh dill, snipped
1/2 t. salt
1/4 t. white pepper

In a large bowl, combine pasta, tuna, celery, onions, peas and parsley. In a small bowl, combine yogurt, mayonnaise, lemon juice, dill, salt and pepper. Pour sauce over pasta and toss gently. Cover and refrigerate at least 2 hours.

Mary Babcock, Port Austin

Snicker Salad

6 large delicious apples, unpeeled, chopped
6 2-oz. Snickers® candy bars, chopped
1 12-oz. carton whipped topping
1/2 c. pecans, chopped (optional)

In a large bowl, combine apples, candy bar pieces and pecans. Mix well. Mix in whipped topping. Refrigerate. Best served the same day. It's a unique salad that the entire family will love!

Denise Halgren, Niles

Cauliflower Salad

1 small head lettuce, broken up
1 small head cauliflower, cut up
1 small red onion, finely diced
1/4 lb. bacon, fried and crumbled
1/2 c. slivered almonds
8 ozs. mayonnaise
1 small can parmesan cheese
1/4 c. sugar

Prepare veggies and mix with bacon and almonds. Mix together the mayonnaise, parmesan and sugar. Dress veggies with mayonnaise mixture just before serving.

Marlene Pitts, Farwell

Chinese Coleslaw

2 packages chicken flavored ramen noodles (uncooked)
1 c. sunflower seeds
1 small package sliced almonds
4 green onions, chopped
1 bunch fresh broccoli, chopped
1/2 c. oil
1/3 c. red wine vinegar
3/4 c. sugar

Crunch ramen noodles in the bag before opening and set seasoning packets aside. Put noodles in a bowl and add sunflower seeds, almonds, onions, and broccoli. In a separate bowl, mix the seasoning packets, oil, vinegar and sugar together, making sure sugar dissolves. Pour dressing over the noodle mixture and chill 8 to 12 hours or overnight.

Deborah Buck, Cassopolis

Pasta Veggie Salad

2 c. cooked tube pasta, drained and rinsed
1 zucchini squash, cubed
1 yellow summer squash, cubed
1 sweet red pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
1/2 green pepper, cut into bite-size pieces
1 cucumber, cubed
3 to 4 green onions, chopped

Dressing:

1/2 t. black pepper
1/2 t. salt
3/4 t. garlic powder
3/4 t. dried minced onions

Congratulations to our 2012 Recipe Contest Winner!

Paula Brousseau's name was drawn from all those whose recipes we printed in 2012 and *Country Lines* magazine will pay her January electric bill as a prize.

Paula, a Great Lakes Energy member from Bellaire, has been an electric co-op member for over 50 years and tried many recipes printed in *Country Lines* before she decided to start sending hers in, which she has now been doing for years.

Thank you, Paula, and all of our readers who shared their great recipes in 2012!



3/4 t. dry mustard
1/4 c. sugar
1/4 c. white wine vinegar
1/4 c. vegetable oil

Add all vegetables to pasta. Keep salad chilled. For dressing, combine dry spices then add sugar, vinegar and oil. Pour dressing over salad an hour or two before serving.

Michele Jewell, Alba

Mandarin Chicken Salad

2 c. macaroni rings, cooked, rinsed and chilled
2 c. cooked chicken (about 4 breasts), chopped
1 T. minced onion
1 t. salt
1 1/2 c. green grapes
1 c. mandarin oranges
1/2 c. sliced almonds
1/2 c. chopped celery
1 c. mayo

1 c. whipped cream

Combine chicken, onion and salt. Chill. Mix macaroni, grapes, celery, oranges, almonds and mayo; combine with chicken mixture. Just before serving, fold in whipped cream.

Suzanne Hammerstrom, Hancock

Quick Taco Salad

4 c. iceberg lettuce, shredded
1 c. taco cheese
1 c. tomatoes, diced
1 c. nacho Dorito chips, crushed
1 c. uncooked ground beef
1 package taco seasoning
1/4 c. diced green peppers
thousand island dressing, to taste

Dice all veggies and place into a large bowl. Cook ground beef over medium heat and add taco seasoning. Allow to cool before adding to the salad. Toss with thousand island dressing. Add Dorito chips and serve immediately.

Danielle Cochran, Grayling

Grape Salad

2 lbs. red grapes
2 lbs. green grapes
8 oz. cream cheese
8 oz. sour cream
1/2 c. sugar
1 t. vanilla
1 c. brown sugar
1/2 c. chopped pecans

Wash and dry grapes. Beat cream cheese, sour cream, sugar and vanilla. Add grapes and stir. Before serving, sprinkle with brown sugar and pecans.

Marcia Rosa, Chase

Tortellini and Veggie Salad

2 bags refrigerated cheese tortellini
3 jars olives (each different), drained
1 whole red onion, cut into chunks
3 colored sweet peppers, cut into chunks
1 package cherry or grape tomatoes
1 c. celery, cut into chunks
1 c. carrots, sliced
2 cucumbers, with peel, cut into chunks
1 small zucchini squash, cut into chunks
1 package pepperoni slices

Dressing:

1/2 c. balsamic vinegar
1 bottle Kraft Sun-dried Tomato Dressing
2 T. McCormick Salad Supreme seasoning
Cook tortellini as directed and cool. Mix dressing ingredients with tortellini then combine and add the rest of the ingredients 2 hours before serving. Garnish with fresh basil or parsley.

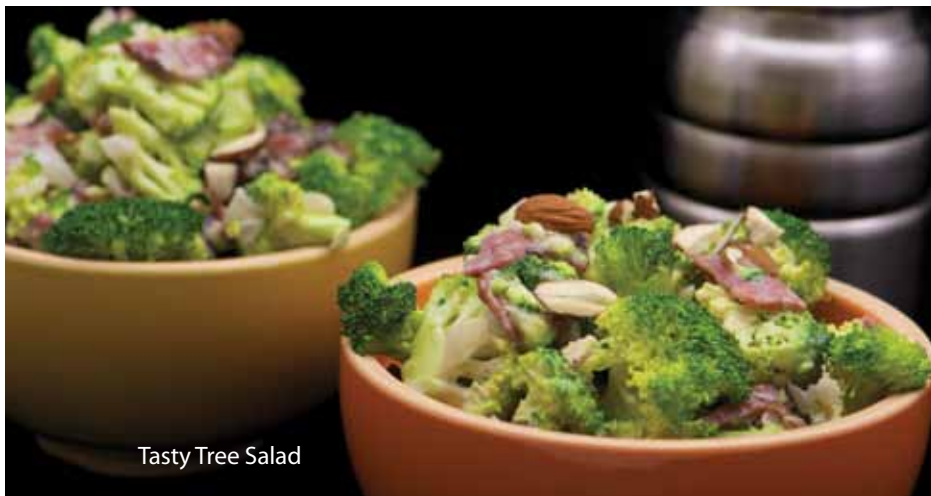
Jan Vaughn, Vestaburg

Swiss Cashew Toss Salad

1/3 c. white vinegar
3/4 c. sugar
2 t. prepared mustard
1 t. grated onion
dash of salt
1 c. vegetable oil
1 t. poppy seeds
1 medium bunch romaine lettuce, torn
1 c. salted cashew halves
4 oz. swiss cheese, julienned

In a blender, combine vinegar, sugar, mustard, onion and salt. Cover and process until well blended. While processing, gradually add oil in a steady stream. Stir in poppy seeds. In salad bowl, combine romaine, cashews and Swiss cheese; serve with dressing. Serves 8 to 10.

Julie Grulke, Cheboygan



Tasty Tree Salad

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE! Contributors whose recipes we print in 2013 will be entered in a drawing to win a prize: *Country Lines* will pay their January 2014 electric bill (up to \$200)! The 2013 winner will be announced in the Jan. 2014 issue.

Thanks to all who sent in recipes! Upcoming: Please send in **ASIAN INSPIRED** recipes by Feb. 10 and **MEXICAN** recipes by March 10. Mail to: *Country Lines Recipes*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email recipes@countrylines.com.

Photography by: 831 Creative

Making Strides with Clean-Coal Technology

The Cooperative Research Network pursues new solutions that help Michigan electric co-ops deliver safe, reliable and affordable power to you.

Despite the recent “green” energy revolution and the rapid expansion of natural gas drilling rigs across America, our nation’s primary fuel for producing electricity is coal—as it has been for over a century.

Electricity generated by coal fell from 42 percent in 2011 to 37.5 percent in 2012, largely because of low natural gas prices, the retirement of older coal-fired power plants due to new emissions regulations from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and uncertainty about further regulations.

But coal is far from dead. Electricity from coal is predicted to rise about 3 percent this year while the natural gas contribution drops from 30.5 percent to 27.4 percent, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration’s (EIA) Short-Term Energy Outlook. And, natural gas prices are forecasted to rise this year due to higher demand and a slow-

down in production.

“Coal still has a future as a source of electricity,” says Craig Borr, president/CEO of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. “Whether you are for or against the use of coal to generate electricity, the fact is the United States remains home to the world’s largest coal reserves. That’s why electric co-ops are fully behind efforts to explore and test clean-coal technologies.”

One driver is the EPA’s Mercury and Air Toxics Standards rule, designed to significantly curb emissions of hazardous air pollutants (i.e., mercury and arsenic) from coal- and oil-fired plants 25 MW or larger by 2016. Some coal-fired plants will be shut down, rather than retrofitted, because the needed changes would be too costly to implement.

Electric co-ops and their trade association, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), are exploring new

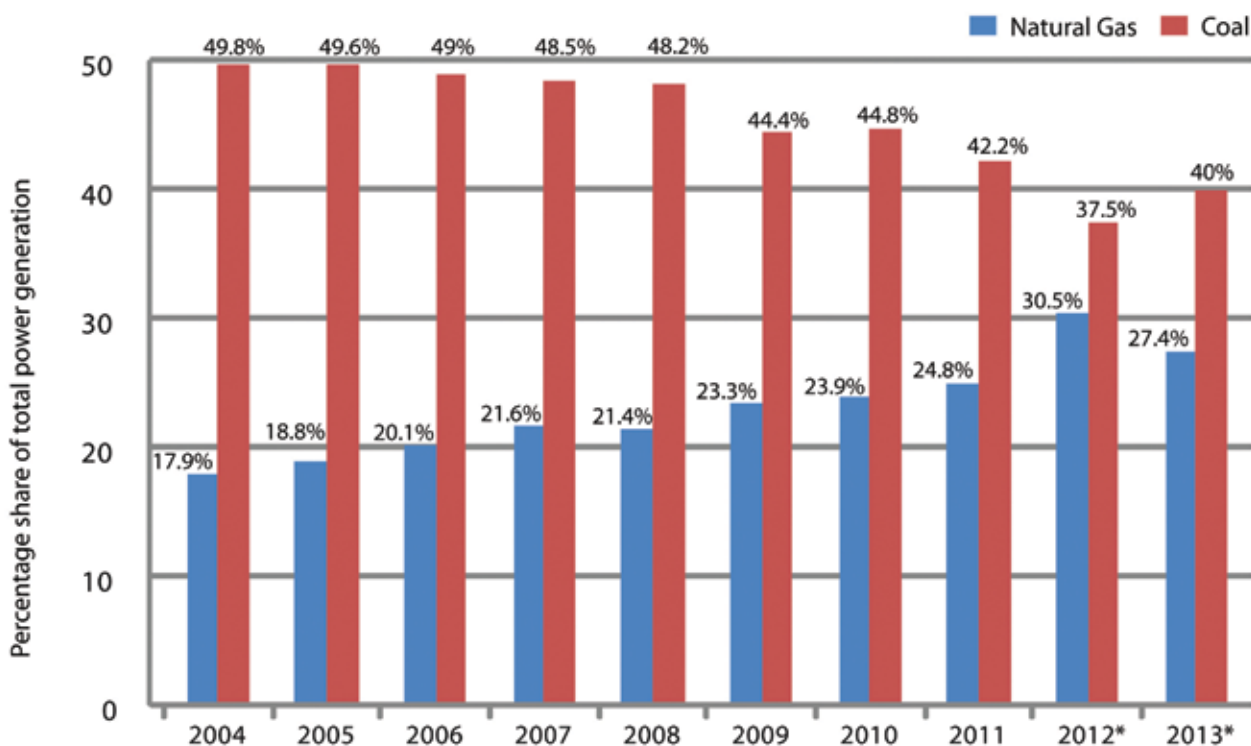
approaches to burn coal more cleanly. NRECA’s Cooperative Research Network (CRN) recently finished demonstrating an innovative new multi-pollutant control system that shows promise for helping coal-fired power plants meet stringent EPA emissions standards at a fraction of the cost of traditional measures.

The demonstration was conducted in July 2012 at an Arizona generation and transmission co-op (G&T). The results showed significant emission reductions by combining mercury controls—which CRN successfully tested earlier at a Texas G&T—with trona (a naturally occurring mineral similar to baking soda). The tested technologies also cut the cost of meeting new environmental rules by a factor of five to 10.

Results for these full-scale power plants were very encouraging, but based on short-term runs, says John Hewa Jr., NRECA vice president of engineering, research & technical services. “To verify long-term performance, the results need to be confirmed with extended trials.”

Electric co-ops support the multi-pollutant control technologies CRN is studying because they can learn how to best use one of our most abundant natural resources, coal, to continue providing safe, reliable and environmentally responsible power at the lowest possible rates.

Coal Versus Natural Gas Use in the United States



Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration Short-Term Energy Outlook, October 2012

* Forecast

Your Guide to the Michigan Legislature

Please pull out this guide and use it as you get to know the legislators in your co-op service area.

Who's Your Senator?

The state senators on this page represent districts that overlap electric co-op service areas. Although electric co-op issues are but a small part of their overall responsibilities, they have generally been supportive of the co-op agenda, which rests on the premise that as self-governed, member-owned and not-for-profit utilities, co-ops and their members ought to be treated differently than for-profit utilities.

► **Find Your State Senator** at senate.mi.gov

Alger Delta & Ontonagon



38th District (R)
Tom Casperson
1st Term
517-373-7840

Thumb



31st District (R)
Mike Green
1st Term
517-373-1777

Cloverland



37th District (R)
Howard Walker
1st Term
517-373-2413



38th District (R)
Tom Casperson
1st Term
517-373-7840

Cherryland



35th District (R)
Darwin Booher
1st Term
517-373-1725



37th District (R)
Howard Walker
1st Term
517-373-2413

Presque Isle



36th District (R)
John Moolenaar
1st Term
517-373-7946



37th District (R)
Howard Walker
1st Term
517-373-2413

HomeWorks



22nd District (R)
Joe Hune
1st Term
517-373-2420



23rd District (D)
Gretchen Whitmer
2nd Term
517-373-1734

Great Lakes



24th District (R)
Rick Jones
1st Term
517-373-3447



28th District (R)
Mark Jansen
2nd Term
517-373-0797



30th District (R)
Arlan Meekhof
1st Term
517-373-6920



33rd District (R)
Judy Emmons
1st Term
517-373-3760

Midwest



16th District (R)
Bruce Caswell
1st Term
517-373-5932



20th District (R)
Tonya Schuitmaker
1st Term
517-373-0793



21st District (R)
John Proos
1st Term
517-373-6960



24th District (R)
Rick Jones
1st Term
517-373-3447



32nd District (R)
Roger Kahn
2nd Term
517-373-1760



33rd District (R)
Judy Emmons
1st Term
517-373-3760



35th District (R)
Darwin Booher
1st Term
517-373-1725



34th District (R)
Goeff Hansen
1st Term
517-373-1635



35th District (R)
Darwin Booher
1st Term
517-373-1725



36th District (R)
John Moolenaar
1st Term
517-373-7946



37th District (R)
Howard Walker
1st Term
517-373-2413

Find Your State Representative ►

Who's Your State Representative?

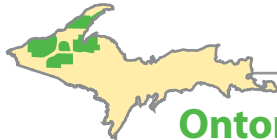
Every 10 years, the Michigan Legislature goes through a redistricting process based on census information. Depending on population numbers, some districts were redrawn and some remain the same. Thus, there is a possibility that you may have a new legislator because of changed district lines or, due to term limits, someone new was elected.

In the House of Representatives, Republicans continue to hold the majority of 59-51. There will be 28 new faces in Lansing. Of the 28, 19 are Democrats and 9 are Republicans.


The state representatives on these pages represent a cross-section of Michigan. Whatever their background, most represent districts with large rural populations—areas where electric co-ops serve. In fact, several legislators are electric co-op members themselves.

Legislation affecting cooperatives and their owners most likely originates in those committees covering utilities, energy, technology, transportation, environment, land use, safety and taxes.

► **Find Your State Representative**
at house.mi.gov





Ontonagon REA




110th District (D)
Scott Dianda
1st Term
517-373-0850


Cherryland Electric


101st District (R)
Ray Franz
2nd Term
517-373-0825




102nd District (R)
Phil Potvin
2nd Term
517-373-1747




103rd District (R)
Bruce Rendon
2nd Term
517-373-3817




104th District (R)
Wayne Schmidt
3rd Term
517-373-1766




Alger Delta Electric



108th District (R)
Ed McBroom
2nd Term
517-373-0156




109th District (D)
John Kivela
1st Term
517-373-0498



110th District (D)
Scott Dianda
1st Term
517-373-0850

HomeWorks Tri-County

65th District (R)
Mike Shirkey
2nd Term
517-373-1775



67th District (D)
Tom Cochran
1st Term
517-373-0587




70th District (R)
Rick Outman
2nd Term
517-373-0834



71st District (D)
Theresa Abed
1st Term
517-373-0853



86th District (R)
Lisa Posthumus Lyons • 2nd Term
517-373-0846




87th District (R)
Mike Callton
2nd Term
517-373-0842




93rd District (R)
Tom Leonard
1st Term
517-373-1778



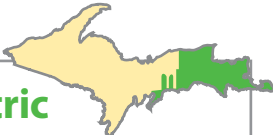
97th District (R)
Joel Johnson
2nd Term
517-373-8962




99th District (R)
Kevin Cotter
2nd Term
517-373-1789




102nd District (R)
Phil Potvin
2nd Term
517-373-1747




Cloverland Electric



107th District (R)
Frank Foster
2nd Term
517-373-2629



108th District (R)
Ed McBroom
2nd Term
517-373-0156



109th District (D)
John Kivela
1st Term
517-373-0498

Presque Isle Electric & Gas



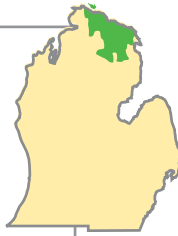
105th District (R)
Greg MacMaster
2nd Term
517-373-0829



106th District (R)
Peter Pettalia
2nd Term
517-373-0833



107th District (R)
Frank Foster
2nd Term
517-373-2629



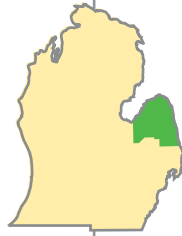
Thumb Electric



83rd District (R)
Paul Muxlow
2nd Term
517-373-0835



84th District (D)
Terry Brown
3rd Term
517-373-0476



Midwest Energy



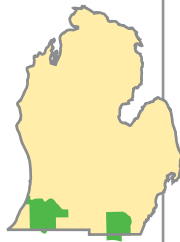
56th District (R)
Dale Zorn
2nd Term
517-373-2617



57th District (R)
Nancy Jenkins
2nd Term
517-373-1706



59th District (R)
Matt Lori
3rd Term
517-373-0832



61st District (R)
Margaret O'Brien
2nd Term
517-373-1774



63rd District (R)
Jase Bolger
3rd Term
517-373-1787



65th District (R)
Mike Shirkey
2nd Term
517-373-1775



66th District (R)
Aric Nesbitt
2nd Term
517-373-1784



78th District (R)
Dave Pagel
1st Term
517-373-1796



79th District (R)
Al Pscholka
2nd Term
517-373-1403

Great Lakes Energy



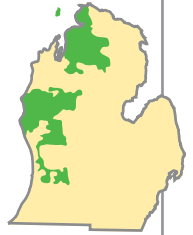
70th District (R)
Rick Outman
2nd Term
517-373-0834



72nd District (R)
Ken Yonker
2nd Term
517-373-0840



73rd District (R)
Peter MacGregor
2nd Term
517-373-0218



74th District (R)
Robert VerHeulen
1st Term
517-373-8900



80th District (R)
Bob Genetski II
1st Term
517-373-0839



87th District (R)
Mike Callton
2nd Term
517-373-0842



88th District (R)
Roger Victory
1st Term
517-373-0836



89th District (R)
Amanda Price
2nd Term
517-373-0838



90th District (R)
Joseph Haveman
3rd Term
517-373-0830



91st District (D)
Collene Lamonte
1st Term
517-373-3436



97th District (R)
Joel Johnson
2nd Term
517-373-8962



100th District (R)
Jon Bumstead
2nd Term
517-373-7317



101st District (R)
Ray Franz
2nd Term
517-373-0825



102nd District (R)
Phil Potvin
2nd Term
517-373-1747



103rd District (R)
Bruce Rendon
2nd Term
517-373-3817



104th District (R)
Wayne Schmidt
3rd Term
517-373-1766



105th District (R)
Greg MacMaster
2nd Term
517-373-0829



106th District (R)
Peter Pettalia
2nd Term
517-373-0833



107th District (R)
Frank Foster
2nd Term
517-373-2629



Be a Fam With a Plan

Resolve to be emergency-ready this year by making an easy plan that can save lives and property. Following these simple steps can help your family, home, business and community prepare for a fierce winter storm or other disaster...

BEFORE

Communicate. Talk with your family about who to call, where to go, and what to do during an emergency. Talk with neighbors about how to work together if disaster strikes.

Educate. Plan different strategies for different situations. Map out a fire escape route from all areas of your home, and establish a safe place to go during threatening weather. Make sure all family members know their full name, address and phone numbers. Agree on an out-of-town relative or friend to call if everyone gets separated, and have an ICE (In Case of Emergency) contact in your cell phone that first responders can call. For example, if you had to evacuate, where would you go? How would you reach your kids at school or your spouse at work? Also consider being an educator for safety and emergency preparedness in your community by calling your local Citizen Corps.

If you are a parent, or guardian of an elderly person with special needs, including kids and adults with disabilities, make sure schools and care providers have emergency plans. Ask how they will communicate with families during a crisis, whether they store adequate food, water and other basics, if they are prepared to “shelter-in-place,” and where they will go if they must evacuate.

Prepare. Use technology to help, for example:

- Learn how to send updates by text and internet from a cell phone to contacts and social channels in case voice communications become unavailable.

- Store important documents such as personal and financial records in the cloud or on a USB stick that can be kept ready and accessible from anywhere;

- Visit ready.gov or call 800-237-3239 (text 800-462-7585) or ready.gov/michigan to stay informed and get free templates for creating emergency documents and plans for homes and businesses;

- Make sure fire detectors and carbon monoxide alarms are working by installing fresh batteries annually. Use a battery-

operated weather radio for advance storm warnings, and subscribe to your local Office of Emergency Management alerts by text or email, if available.

- If you have a land-line phone, it will work without electricity; keep emergency numbers next to it.

Keep an emergency supply kit:

- Five days worth of non-perishable food and water, first aid supplies, phone numbers (including your electric co-op and other utility outage numbers), medicines, and cleaning supplies.

- Include items for meeting unique needs, such as:

- Prescription medications and glasses;
- Infant formula and diapers;
- Food, extra water, and a leash and collar for your pet;

- Important documents, such as copies of insurance policies, identification, and bank account records in a waterproof, portable container;

- Books, games, puzzles or other activities for kids;

- Keep an emergency kit in the car, too, including water, food and first aid supplies in the event you lose power or get stranded in the car during a winter storm. (Consider including a cell phone charger that works in the car outlet).

DURING & AFTER

Keep calm. Think clearly and follow your plan. Use the resources you prepared.

Be patient. Wait for all danger to pass. If an area is evacuated, never re-enter without permission, and remember to use caution when you go back into your home—you can't always see danger, such as a ruptured gas line.

Avoid delayed danger. Do not approach downed wires or power lines, watch for rising waters, and see the box on this page for more electrical safety tips.

Practice your emergency plan, and encourage friends and community members to take these simple steps, too. — Kelly Trapnell

Winter Storm Electrical Safety Tips

- Never touch a fallen power line and report it immediately to your local electric co-op. Assume all downed wires are electrically charged. Avoid contact with overhead lines during clean-up and other activities.

- In an outage, an alternate fuel or wood-burning heating source—such as a fireplace, propane space heater, or wood stove—may be used, but use extreme caution by following the manufacturer's directions and venting them properly.

- Do not use a gas oven for heating—it may go out or burn inefficiently, leading to carbon monoxide poisoning.

- Make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working properly.

- Do not use a gas or charcoal grill inside the home, and do not use charcoal briquettes in the fireplace.

- If using a portable generator to power a heating source, be sure the generator is located outside your house for proper ventilation. Do not use a generator in an attached garage, and follow the manufacturer's operating instructions.

- Do not overload a generator. Use properly-sized extension cords that have a grounded three-prong plug and are in good condition. Never run cords under rugs or carpets.

- Never connect generators directly to power lines—the reverse flow of electricity can electrocute an unsuspecting utility worker.

- Watch the elderly and young kids for signs of hypothermia, which include shivering, drowsiness, and mental and physical slowness. Call 911 immediately.

— Chris Grammes

A Blizzard of Kindness

No one will forget the “big one” of March 2nd, 2012. Over 2 feet of heavy, wet snow fell overnight throughout northern Michigan, and left thousands of people without power. Some weren’t prepared and needed food and water. Cars were left vacant in ditches on the roadside. Others were stuck at home because the snow was too heavy and deep to shovel. Fallen trees canvassed the landscape and roadways, making it hard to navigate and dangerous to even walk your dog. But the blizzard, in all its fury, couldn’t match the warm generosity and overflowing kindness that began to grow...

Love Thy Neighbor

After waking up to a gorgeous view of trees blanketed in snow it was time to dig out and get households in order. Snowplow trucks, snow blowers, and the occasional front loader quickly turned a serene, quiet morning into a full war on snow removal.

Amy Rose of McBain was one of those who felt blessed when her driveway was suddenly cleared. “A young man with a front loader showed up on my street and just started clearing driveways, expecting no money in return. He helped so many people that day!”

Mark Gabrick of Lake Ann and Trevor McClain of Traverse City logged in 36 hours clearing driveways and roadways of snow and fallen trees. Amy and Kyle Rosa were one of the first recipients of Gabrick’s generosity. “My husband Kyle is a deputy for Benzie County and needed to get his patrol car out for work. Mark came over with his loader right away and wouldn’t take any money for it,” says Rosa. “It was just another day in the work of the Lord,” says Gabrick. “We saw the need and answered the call.”

Feeling Good in the Neighborhood

Tom and Laura Phillips of Traverse City felt guilty about having a generator while others went without power, but they didn’t sit selfishly by and watch their neighbors muddle through. “Tom helped neighbors turn on their gas fireplaces and pitched in shoveling



Snowed Under: A shovel could only clear what snow blew under the covered patio at the writer’s Platte River home. **Right:** Mark Gabrick (driver) and Trevor McClain worked long hours helping their neighbors clear snow and downed trees and branches after the historic March 2012 storm.



driveways,” says his wife, Laura. Laura did her part by using her generator-powered kitchen to make large pots of chili and goulash, and distributed them to the neighbors so they could have a warm meal.

Gary and Lori Florip, of Lake Ann, were just coming off a 12-hour EMS shift, but instead of going home to sleep they continued to help their friends and neighbors. Tera and Scott Konchek, also of Lake Ann, and their three children weren’t able to get out of their driveway and were low on food. Scott suffers from Devic’s disease, a disorder of the central nervous system involving inflammation of the optic nerves and spinal cord, so Tera wasn’t going anywhere anytime soon. “They brought us food and cleared my driveway. They are two amazing people that went out of their way to help our family and many others without stopping to think of themselves,” Konchek says. “People helping people—that’s why we moved to Northern Michigan.”

Unplugged and Loving It

Why is it so frustrating when our internet or cable service is temporarily interrupted, yet when the power was out for days most

of the people have fond memories of rediscovering family time and connecting with neighbors? Perhaps it’s because we were all in the same predicament. We had a good “excuse” not to be tied to our cell phones and constantly checking email messages.

Linda Snow, of Traverse City, fondly recalls passing the time with her grown children. “We played cards, had fun melting snow on our gas stove, and my daughter Torre made bracelets,” Snow says. They even brought out the old “I Spy” books from the kids’ younger days. “We were all playing cards when the power came back on. I was actually disappointed our ‘Little House on the Prairie’ days were over.”

In a chaotic world where criminals and corruption sometimes take center stage, it was heartwarming to witness the human spirit at its best. The kindness and generosity of compassionate people and the fun and creative ways we passed the time brought us all closer together. Even though March came in like a lion last winter, the spirit of goodwill left an impression in our hearts that will get us through another winter and perhaps encourage us to have a little creative fun with any down-time caused by bad weather.

Energy Optimization REBATES:

Back By Popular Demand!

You know the story. The clock strikes midnight and millions of people make resolutions to change. But, if something is working great, why fix it? Our thoughts exactly. Alger Delta Co-op is keeping its most popular 2012 Energy Optimization (EO) rebates for 2013. It's your turn to save this year.

Reducing energy use is a win for everyone—homeowners, businesses, and the buildings themselves. Did you know that one of every two people prefer to make his/her home more energy efficient instead of more beautiful because of the short- and long-term benefits? That's because **saving energy gives you more control, increases your freedom, and improves your home.**

The list at right shows the energy rebates your fellow Michiganders used the most in 2012. All of these rebates help you save energy easily, keep you comfortable, and provide the best value.

Find more rebates at michigan-energy.org. Email (michigan-energy.org/contact) or call (877-296-4319) with questions about applications or product eligibility.

REBATE & FEATURES	INCENTIVE AMOUNT
ENERGY STAR® DEHUMIDIFIER	\$20
Choose any ENERGY STAR model; use 15% less energy	
EFFICIENT HVAC—FURNACES with electric commutated motors (ECMs)	\$150
Effectively converts energy to generate heat instead of energy waste; save as much as \$800 in the next 10 years	
ELECTRIC WATER HEATERS	\$50
0.93 energy factor (EF) or higher	
HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS	\$100
Heat pump model 2.0 EF or higher	
ENERGY STAR REFRIGERATOR	\$20
FREE appliance recycling; choose any ENERGY STAR model; use at least 15% less energy	
ONLINE HOME AUDIT (Home Energy Optimizer)...	FREE Energy-Saving Kit (\$30 value)
Pinpoint where your home wastes energy; access at michigan-energy.org , select your energy provider, and click "Home Audit"; receive free EO kit (contains five CFLs, energy efficient aerators, and a showerhead) when you complete the online assessment.	

ATTENTION FARMERS! The Energy Optimization Farm Program invites you to get a **free** engine block heater timer. Call 877-296-4319 or visit michigan-energy.org/heatertimer.



SAVE ON.

You're in for a great new year. Our most popular Energy Optimization **REBATES** are back by popular demand! You can now choose from more than 50 easy ways to save energy at home or work.

- ★ **FREE refrigerator recycling**
- ★ **\$15 Rebate Outdoor CFL light fixtures**
- ★ **\$20 Rebate ENERGY STAR dehumidifiers**
- ★ **\$20 Rebate ENERGY STAR refrigerators**
- ★ **\$50 Rebate Electric water heaters**
- ★ **FREE online home audit and energy-saving kit**
- ★ **\$150 Rebate ECM furnaces**

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org PHONE: 877.296.4319



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.

What Is Line Loss?

Imagine picking up a gallon of milk at the grocery store and arriving home with only three quarts. Or paying for a dozen roses and receiving 11. Now, imagine you accept this as normal.

As outlandish as this may sound, when buying and selling energy, it's common to end up with less than when you started. Take a 95 percent efficient gas furnace, for example.

For each unit of gas energy input, you receive 95 percent of that unit back as heat energy. Electricity works the same way. The amount of electricity put on the grid is always less than the amount used by its consumers.

Electric co-ops and other utilities call it "line loss."

It basically works like this: As electricity is demanded by you, as an electric co-op member, it flows from the supply grid onto your service provider's (Alger Delta Cooperative) system. The electricity, or power, flowing across the grid enters our system at one of our 16 entry points, called substations.

Our wholesale supplier bills us for the electricity that enters the substations, called "purchased" power. Alger Delta purchases an average of about 6 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of power each month.

The power then moves out from the substations to the 10,000-plus homes, businesses and public entities served by the co-op. When delivered to our members, we meter the energy and bill accordingly. On average, we bill about 5.2 million kilowatt hours each month, and account for these billings as "sales."

Did you notice the difference between purchases and sales? Each month we purchase about 800,000 more kilowatt hours than we sell. So, what happened to the 1.2 million kilowatt hours that represent that difference?

That difference is called line loss, and it's significant. In 2011, line loss cost your cooperative about \$768,000.

Theft also accounts for a small amount of loss. Although it is against the law to divert power, some members still do. The penalties are steep and can include legal

prosecution; anyone tempted to choose this path should think twice. Further, the money lost from theft affects you and other co-op members, since the co-op is a consumer-owned nonprofit utility where expenses are shared equally.

Another source of line loss occurs when bare wires arc to some nearby object, generally a tree branch. This happens more than you might think, given the thousands of trees covering our service territory. It also partially explains why we invest thousands of dollars each year to keep our power lines clear.

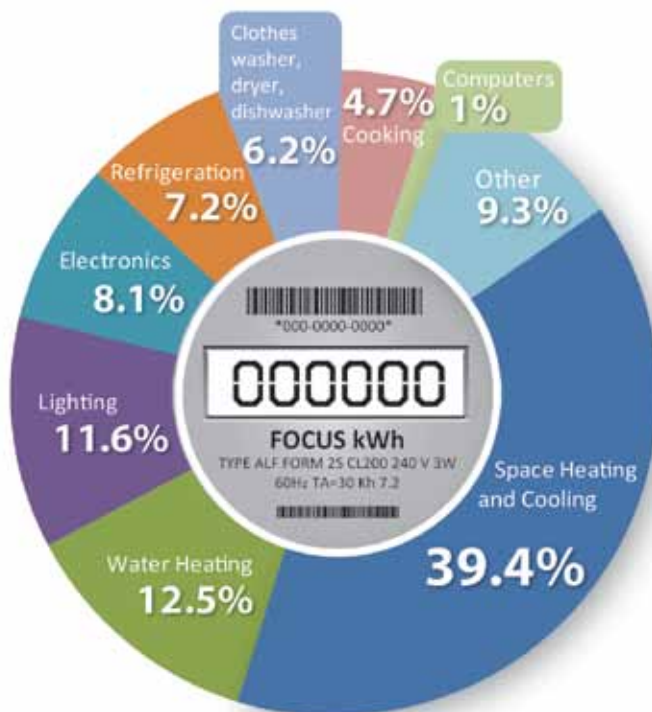
Without doubt, the lion's share of line loss is the direct result of physics. In layman's terms, whenever electrons move over a wire they encounter resistance. To overcome the resistance, electrons expend some of their own energy in the form of heat.

That explains, for example, why an extension cord might warm up while in use, or similarly why an incandescent lightbulb is too hot to touch.

All utilities experience line loss. It's not unique to your cooperative. Line loss occurs on cross-country high-voltage transmission lines as well, although not as much because the higher the voltage, the lower the current.

While we can't alter the laws of physics, we can all manage our energy use. Demanding less power results in lower line loss. So the next time you want to dry clothes, wash dishes and make coffee, consider staggering the time when you do it rather than running everything at the same time. It will lower your energy demand, which lowers our overall system demand and keeps prices down for everyone.

How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.

Wolverine, We Energies Agree to Joint Ownership of U.P. Power Plant

Wolverine will fund a new air quality control system.



Aerial view of the Presque Isle Power Plant in Marquette.

Wolverine Power Cooperative and We Energies agreed in late November to pursue joint ownership of We Energies' Presque Isle Power Plant. In exchange for an approximate one-third ownership interest in the facility, Wolverine will fund construction of a state-of-the-art air quality control system for the plant.

The plant, located along the shore of Lake Superior in Marquette, consists of five coal-fired units capable of generating approximately 344 megawatts of electricity. In October 2011, We Energies announced the plant's potential retirement, targeted for 2017.

"We met with executives from We Energies in November 2011 to discuss opportunities for working together," explains Eric Baker, president and CEO of Wolverine. "The discussion led to a proposed joint venture that would keep the Presque Isle plant open and meet new air quality requirements."

Wolverine will invest between \$130 million and \$140 million to retrofit the plant's units. In return, the cooperative will own approximately 30 percent of the plant's output to serve its members, including Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op.

We Energies and its employees will continue to operate the plant, as well as the air quality control system.

The two companies must first obtain approvals for joint ownership, as well as installation of the air quality control system, from state and federal agencies, including the Michigan and Wisconsin public service commissions, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

"The Presque Isle Power Plant provides needed baseload power supply for our members, in addition to protecting grid reliability in northern Michigan," Baker says. "We are pleased to have a quality operating partner in We Energies."

Governor Joins Wolverine, We Energies to Announce Power Plant Opportunity

Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder was in Marquette in late November to express his support for the continued operation of the Presque Isle Power Plant.

"The partnership of We Energies and Wolverine Power Cooperative to keep the Presque Isle Power Plant open is good news for the current and future availability of a reliable electric supply for businesses and residents in the Upper Peninsula," Snyder said. "The agreement will also be good for the economy with more than 100 workers remaining on the job, and for the environment with the plant's new state-of-the-art emissions equipment. This is a great example of how, through relentless, positive action, we can come together to make Michigan a better place to live and work."



Insulate Cracks, Gaps for Maximum Efficiency

Q: *The wall and blown-in attic insulation in my fairly new house are at recommended levels, but my utility bills are still too high. What other areas should I check for inefficiency?*

A: You are correct that the walls and ceiling are the areas of the greatest heat loss from a house—proper insulation in those areas is of utmost importance. But it's also possible that many other areas in the exterior “thermal envelope” of your house have insulation voids or air leakage which can contribute to unnecessarily high utility bills.

First, check your walls and attic. As your house is “fairly new,” you can probably rest easy that the walls are adequately insulated, most likely with faced batts that fit tightly between wall studs. “Facing” refers to a material that acts as a vapor barrier.

ATTIC INSULATION – Since you have blown-in attic insulation, check its depth. Depending on how it was blown in, it may have settled and no longer reaches the required depth and R-value for your climate.

The U.S. Department of Energy has a calculator that figures the amount of insulation you need for your climate zone at: ornl.gov/~roofs/Zip/ZipHome.html

Also, using a rake, make sure it's level across the attic floor. Wind coming in the attic vents can blow it around, creating high and low spots.

WALL OUTLETS – Where there's a break in the thermal envelope of your home, there's potential for energy loss. One common spot is electrical wall outlets and switches on outside walls. Often, they are completely uninsulated and the vapor/air barrier is not taped tightly to them.

Switch off the circuit breaker to these outlets and switches. Remove the faceplate. If you can get the tube from the urethane foam spray can into the wall around the conduit box, shoot some expanding foam in there. This should fill insulation voids and seal it.

Even if you were able to shoot in insulation, and definitely if you could not, install

foam draft sealers behind the faceplates. They add only a slight amount of insulation, but they will improve the overall seal to reduce air infiltration.

RECESSED CEILING LIGHTS are another typical area of energy loss. These are particularly bad because they get hot, which creates a natural upward draft. The most efficient option is to replace your old canister recessed lights with new, efficient sealed models.

Don't just pour or pack insulation against recessed lights in the attic. This can cause older styles, which were not designed to be insulated, to overheat. You can caulk around the hole in the attic floor and the canister, but some room air will still leak out through the canister itself.

CEILING PADDLE FANS are another place to check. If you installed them yourself after the house was built and added support blocking, the insulation level will be less there. There may also be air leakage where you cut the hole to run the wiring. Push the insulation away and caulk the attic floor hole around the wire, then cover it with additional insulation.

DOOR AND WINDOW FRAMES – Next time you are painting the trim around doors and windows, pry off the decorative molding. You may find quite a large uninsulated gap between the rough opening and the door or window frame. Apply low-expansion foam in the gap—but use it sparingly because it can deform the frame as it expands.

SILL PLATES AND RIM JOISTS – The sill plate is the piece of lumber that rests on the top of the foundation. The rim joist rests on top of the sill plate, and your house walls rest

If you have a question for Jim, please email jdulley@countrylines.com, or mail to James Dulley, Michigan Country Lines, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. Be sure to let us know which electric co-op you receive service from.

Visit dulley.com for more home improvement and do-it-yourself tips.



Seal gaps around recessed light fixtures, but keep attic insulation away from direct contact with canister, unless you have newer models that have been approved for insulation.



Make sure the hole cut in the ceiling for fan wiring is sealed on the attic side.



Apply expanding foam insulation in gaps between foundation top and sill plate.

on the rim joist. The rim joist, often 2x10 feet or larger lumber, typically is not insulated.

Buy kraft paper-faced fiberglass batt insulation and cut it into short lengths to fit against the rim joist between the floor joist. Standard wall insulation batts are effective. With their short length and the floor joists, they should stay in place without stapling.

FOUNDATION WALL INTERFACE – While you are looking at the rim joist and sill plate, you will probably see a gap between the top of the foundation and the sill plate in spots. The top of a concrete foundation wall is seldom perfectly level and smooth. Apply urethane foam insulation from a can all along the sill plate/foundation wall interface. This will block outdoor air leakage and add some insulation value to that area.

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



Neighbors Create New Plow to 'Bully' Winter



Paul Starner demonstrates an eco-friendly, easy-to-use snow plow that he and his neighbor, Jerry Schichtel, developed and call the "Snow Bully." Their website is TheSnowBully.com.

Tired of being "bullied by the snow," Paul Starner and Jerry Schichtel, of Traverse City, decided to fight back.

They created the Snow Bully, a four-wheel steel shovel with a 34-inch blade that clears snow easily.

"It was an invention of necessity," says Starner, a Cherryland Electric Cooperative member who's in charge of marketing the product that Schichtel created.

"I have a lot of physical challenges and I don't move around very well. I needed something to move snow with that didn't take very much effort," Starner explains. "That's what the Snow Bully is."

Five years ago, Schichtel watched neighbor Starner struggle as he attempted to use his snow blower. That gave Schichtel an idea. He and his brother had already created the prototype for the Snow Bully back in the 1940s when they were growing up on a farm. It was made out of wood.

After watching Starner finish up that day, Schichtel walked over and told him about his idea to re-create his wooden snow remover.

Starner listened, and then asked Schichtel to make a modern version. It took five attempts, but they finally came up with a product both liked, and so they shook hands and became partners.

The next step was finding someone to produce the Snow Bully. Starner, who has spent his career in the real estate business, searched the state and found Mark Goodman of MDG Welding in Blissfield.

"Last winter was our first selling the Snow Bully, and wouldn't you know it, we didn't get much snow," Starner laughs. "Still, we sold 161 of them."

It sells for \$249, plus \$29.95 shipping in the U.S.

"We market our product on the internet," Starner says. "People can go to our website and do it all—read about it, see pictures and videos of it in action, and then order it. The orders go directly to Mark Goodman in Blissfield and UPS ships them from his business."

Starner not only likes the ease of using the Snow Bully, he calls it "eco-friendly."

"You use calories, not gasoline," he says. "It is very friendly to the environment,

and we're in the process of creating attachments for the Snow Bully. We're working on a scraper blade, a garden cart basket, and we're also looking at an eco-mower. That would make this something you can use year-round and not use any gasoline."

So far, the Snow Bully has been an internet hit.

"We've sold it to as far away as Newfoundland," Starner explains. "And in the states, from Washington to Maine and then from New York to North Carolina."

"Social media is the new way to market. Not only do we have our internet site, we post videos on YouTube," Starner adds.

"Jerry and I really don't see the product after we give the okay to have it made. People agree to buy it online, pay for it through their PayPal account, and then it's shipped from Blissfield. It's all pretty clean."

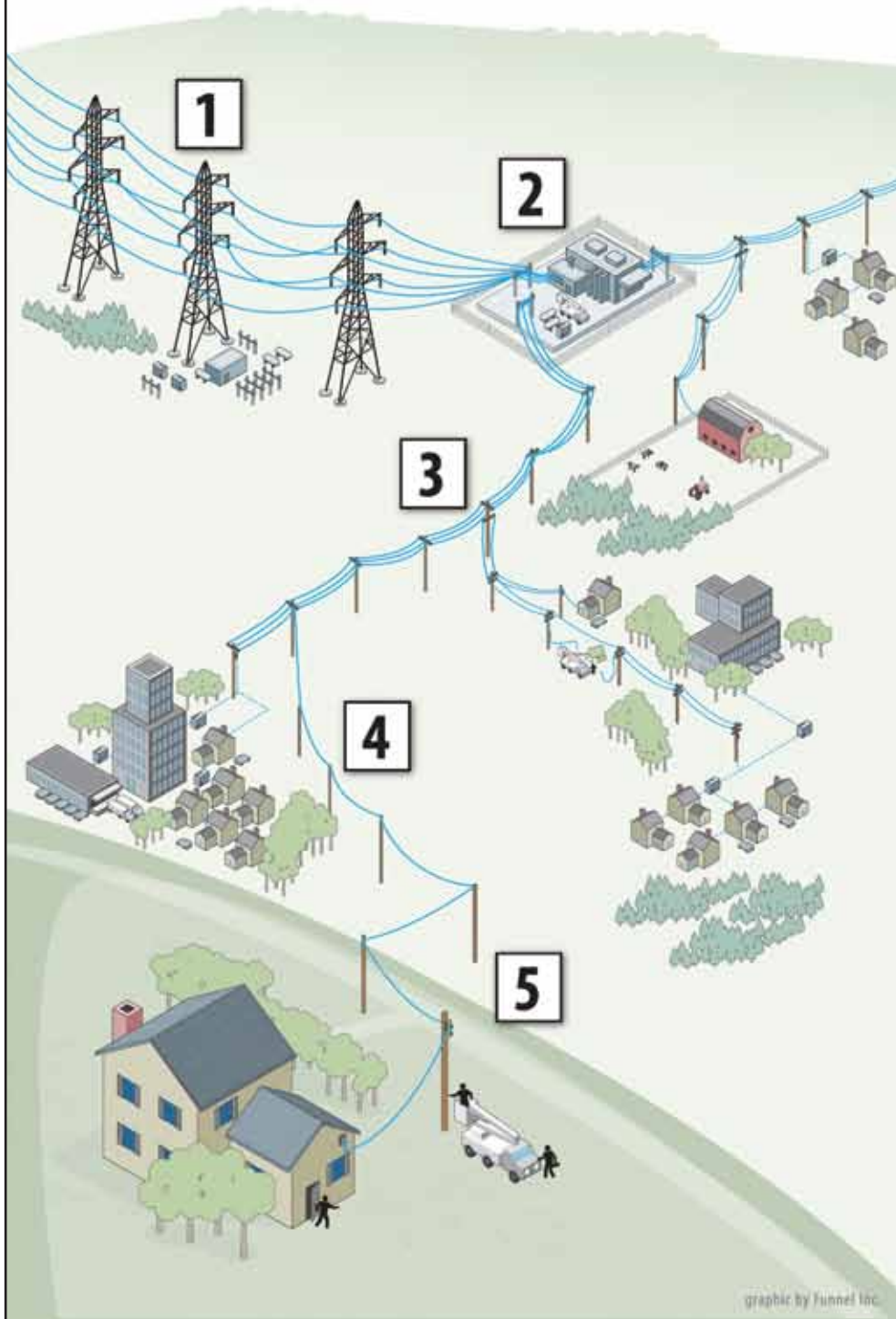
And it's all pretty satisfying to Paul and Jerry.

"There's nothing more frustrating to me than moving snow," Starner says. "That's why the 'Snow Bully' is great...it's just simple. You don't need to have much upper body strength to move snow."

Powering UP

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.



1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

graphic by Funnel Inc.

Tortured Text

I recently wrote a note in a card. It was a simple note in a simple card for my wife Barbara's birthday. The card was bought years ago, but never given for one reason or another. (I have cards, bought for immediate use, stashed away for happy and sad occasions that haven't seen a stamp yet. I'm not a big fan of cards, paper or digital, which is a different animal and doesn't deserve to be called a card. I don't like shopping for cards, and the novelty of digital cards wore off after about two.)

But this is not about the card, it's about the note and how awful it looked after I finished writing it. "Writing" isn't the right word, because I couldn't read the note after I finished. I even butchered her name. At first glance, it looked like "Bondt," which isn't really close to "Barb."

I used to laugh-off my handwriting. Now it embarrasses me. I have to warm up just to sign my name; otherwise, my hand muscles won't follow my brain signals in any recognizable pattern. My signature is worse than any doctor's. At least a doctor mangles his or her name in the same way consistently. Their signature is a mark that the pharmacist knows on sight; it doesn't matter that the name isn't readable.

Some say our signature is important because it's our legal mark, without which we couldn't enter into contracts, cash checks or approve credit card payments. I think those digital signature pads in grocery and other stores must have some other way of verifying who I am because they certainly can't tell by my signature. It's different every time. Who can write on those things, anyway?

It wasn't always so. I once had decent handwriting. It flowed, one letter to the next, in an unbroken line, with recognizable letters and little upturns at the ends. This skill was taught, almost religiously, in grade school, following the precepts of popular programs, such as the "Palmer

Method," a rigorous set of rules for hand and arm control of a pen that swooped and swirled on lined paper until pages and pages were filled with the same whirly strokes. It was pretty, but not many of us write like that anymore.

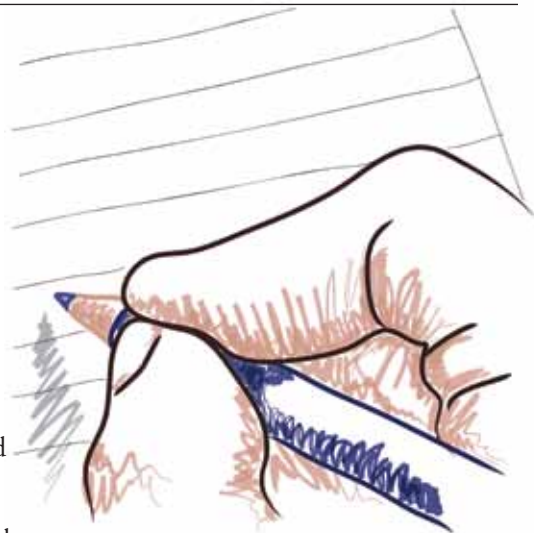
My mother's writing is beautiful, and so is Barbara's Aunt Jeanette's. They spent a lot of time practicing in the 1930s. Since then, the teaching of handwriting skills has steadily disappeared from many school curriculums.

The likely cause of all this is that we don't have to write much anymore. Now we have mechanical messaging, with keyboards and texting, even voice recognition software that takes dictation. It's easier to use a phone than a pen. It's quicker to text than write. We can reach more friends on Facebook than we can with a card. No wonder the Post Office is in trouble—but that's another issue.

The point is, handwriting—that is, "cursive" writing—seems doomed. Once our kids learn how to print, they get little instruction in cursive penmanship before they move on to computers. It's not out of the curriculum yet, but penmanship as a skill is in sharp decline. As with most states, penmanship is still required to be taught in Michigan schools, but it is not included in national curriculum guidelines set for 2014.

Before you bemoan the loss, consider that handwriting for the masses is a relatively recent phenomenon. Its use grew in 17th century Britain along with the Industrial Revolution and the growth of business, which sought to standardize writing to make it faster and more legible. Our Declaration of Independence, rewritten in impeccable longhand by a professional writer, from Thomas Jefferson's original cursive, is a prime example of connected writing at its best.

Austin Palmer introduced his method in 1894 to compete with the typewriter.



At its peak, the Palmer Method was promoted by certified instructors who emphasized regimentation. They suggested that the Method would improve discipline and character, change lefties to right-handers, and even reform delinquents. In its early years, advanced penmanship was seen as the way to a job, even after 8th grade.

The schools doing away with cursive instruction say time is better spent on other skills – those needed in today's job market. But cursive instruction has its defenders, too. They say penmanship practice improves kids' motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and artistic aptitude. Plus, they ask, if kids are not taught cursive, how will they read historical documents like the Declaration of Independence?

Barbara's Aunt Jeanette sends us handwritten notes that are models of penmanship. The letters flow into each other like waving fields of grain. They're easy to read and look good on the page. My writing, however, looks like I'm a tortured soul. Our sons, who had cursive instruction, are also converts to the dark side.

It turns out, though, that we're not alone. Studies have shown that my tortured script is commonplace. In fact, most people abandon the strict cursive writing they learned in school in favor of a more casual combination of cursive and block print that has the advantage of being a more natural, and faster, way to write.

Still, it would be nice if you could read it.

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



Installing Statewide
YEAR ROUND!

Designer METAL ROOFING!

Can we use your home
in our ads?

Extra Savings Available.*

Call for details:

888-221-1869

Place your
home here!

FINANCING Available
As Low As \$232/Month**

**SHOWCASE
HOMES
Wanted!**

*We would like to use your home to showcase a beautiful American Metal Roof. Qualified homes can earn big discounts off the price of an American. Call today to see if your home qualifies. Call Jenn at:

1-888-221-1869

Note: Not all homes will qualify.



Rustic in Shake Grey

Country Manor Shake in
Mustang Brown

Oxford in Forest Green

Rustic in Deep Charcoal

See our Photo Gallery and Watch the Snow Sliding Video at
www.AmericanMetalRoofs.com

Visit the American Metal Roofs Showrooms at
6140 Taylor Dr, Flint, MI 48507 and 1875 Lansing Rd, Charlotte, MI 48813

888-221-1869

Find us on Facebook
fb.me/AMRmichigan

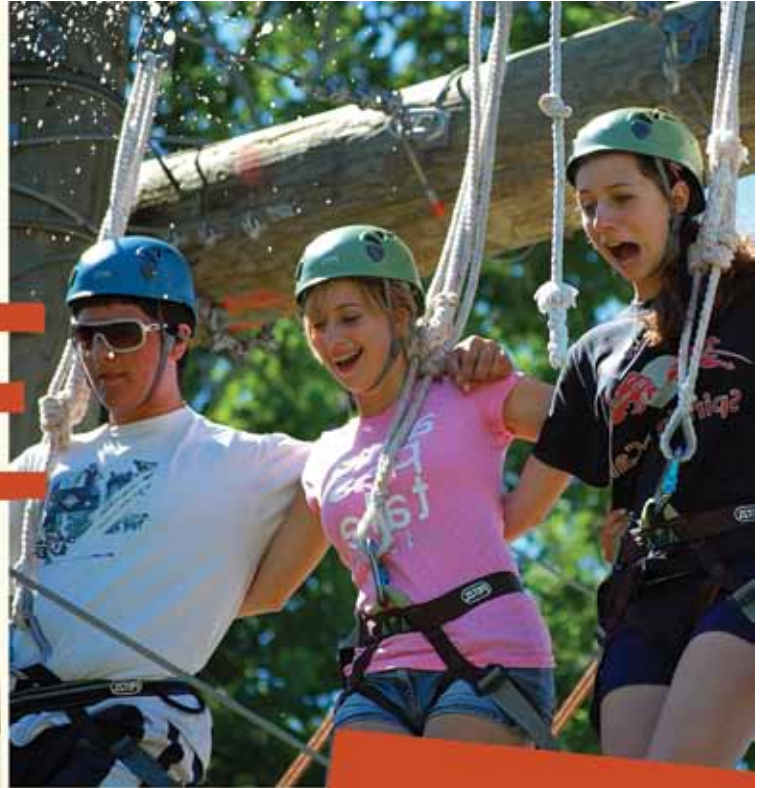


**Promotion may not be combined with any other offers. Some restrictions apply. Call for details. Promotion is based on approved credit. Applies to purchases made on American Metal Roofs consumer credit program. \$251 monthly payment calculations based on a \$20,000 unsecured loan at 7% APR for 10 years.

MI Contractor License #2102158513

ELEVATE YOUR FUTURE

YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT
» PRESENTED BY MICHIGAN'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



YOU ARE A LEADER. In the classroom, on the team, and in your community, you guide and inspire others to contribute their best efforts. Join other young leaders like you from throughout Michigan at the **YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (YLS)**, presented by Michigan's electric cooperatives. This unique, high-energy experience will help you develop your leadership habits, explore career opportunities in the electric industry, and learn how to be actively involved in the democratic process. **YOU ARE THE FUTURE.**

miYLS.com



» SCAN THE QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE TO LEARN MORE, OR TO APPLY ONLINE



» PARTICIPANTS WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR AN ALL-EXPENSES-PAID WASHINGTON, D.C., YOUTH TOUR. VISIT miYLS.com TO LEARN MORE.