

# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES



### 'Black Sheep' Family



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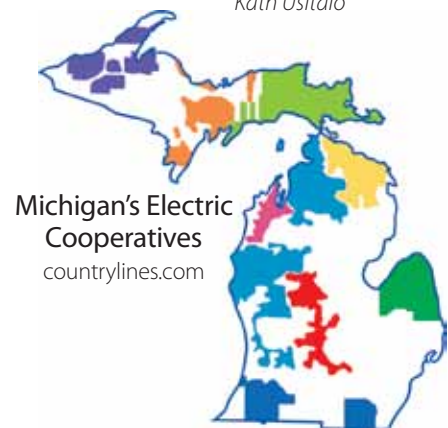
## YOUR CO-OP

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## On the Cover

Marty and Cherry Scott, owners of Black Sheep Crossing Farm Animal Sanctuary, are shown getting some affection from friends. In the Sanctuary's 15-year history, the Scotts have helped 159 animals.

Photo - Elizabeth Price/pricelessphotography.com



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Change of Address: Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 2 for contact information.





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## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

# Your Co-op's Future

Cherryland Electric Cooperative is now 75 years old.

I often think of the members and employees who started this cooperative so long ago. What did they see as their co-op's future?

Did they have any idea how the cooperative would grow over the years? Were they concerned about its survival? Looking to the future is always hard, and even more so when you have no past to reflect upon.

So, as I think about the next 25 years at your cooperative, I have the luxury of reflecting back on the history of this great organization.

When I do that, I see three common cornerstones that have been a part of our foundation from the beginning, and a fourth cornerstone issue that has slowly grown over the last two decades.

These four foundation "anchors" are our members, our employees, power supply, and the environment.

Future co-op members will have no recollection of the lights coming on for the first time. They will expect reliable service and, in fact, take it for granted. This is not a negative thing—it is simply the end result of decades of reliable service. Therefore, going forward, the cooperative will have the responsibility of constantly educating members on the "cooperative difference."

It is my hope that members will become engaged once again in their cooperative as much as they were in the beginning.

Instead of turning the lights on for the first time, future engagement will occur over issues such as clean air, affordable electricity and government regulation. Together, co-op members will have a strong voice and be a driving force behind factors that affect the bottom line of their monthly electricity bills.

Many employees have also come and gone over the history of this cooperative. Obviously, the future will not be much different in that respect.

What will be different is that future employees will need more technical skills than ever before. Automation and technology will never cease to grow and improve as we move forward.

Employees will need to be trained and open-minded to fast-paced changes, and ever mindful of their role in serving their community after the workday is done.

"Commitment to Community" has been a co-op principle for decades.



**Tony Anderson**  
General Manager

With the advent of members who don't remember being without reliable electricity, community service will play a key role in showing these members what the "cooperative difference" really means. Every employee will need to accept the fact that they are responsible for member engagement and loyalty, if even in a small way.

Wholesale power supply will be an enormous piece of the future at Cherryland Electric Cooperative. I believe that Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative has already laid the foundation for a diversified power supply portfolio far into the future.

The philosophy has always been to not have all our eggs in one basket, and this mantra will serve us well in the years to come. Co-op members will get electricity from coal, nuclear, gas, wind, hydropower and solar at an affordable price. Going forward, I believe we are about to enter into a long period of rate stability.

Last, but not least, is the environment. This was not a consideration 75 years ago. The importance of clean air and water has gradually grown over the past two decades. In the future, it will remain important and members will see their cooperative spend more time and energy on improving the impact of power generation resources on the environment.

Everyone at Cherryland and Wolverine is aware that we have a responsibility to leave this planet better than we found it. I am confident that future emissions will prove this to be true. I see a day in the future when our portfolio of generation is the cleanest in Michigan.

While there will certainly be challenges ahead that none of us can foresee today, I am confident that the collective co-op "family" will communicate, cooperate and climb every mountain that needs to be scaled on the horizons ahead.





## Cherryland's 75th Annual Meeting is June 6



It's time to dim the lights, open the curtains, and present Cherryland Electric Cooperative's 75<sup>th</sup> annual meeting on Thursday, June 6.

This popular event, which attracts nearly 2,000 Cherryland members each year, will be held again at Wuerfel Park, home of the Traverse City Beach Bums. Cherryland supplies electricity to Wuerfel Park.

The gates will open at 3 p.m. on June 6. Members can vote in the board of directors election, get a free ticket and food voucher, then go inside and collect information about the cooperative, and receive free gifts. The first 500 people will receive a copy of Cherryland's new book—"Lighting the Way."

The business meeting will last one hour—from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Then the Beach Bums will tangle with the Lake Erie Crushers at 7:05 p.m. Prior to the game, Maria Simaz from Traverse City West will sing the National Anthem and Cherryland board president Tom Van Pelt will throw out the first pitch.

"Thanks to the cooperation of the Beach Bums owners, John and Leslye Wuerfel, we are able to make this a bigger and better event each year," said Cherryland general manager Tony Anderson. "And since Wuerfel Park is a co-op member, it's a win-win for everyone."

This is the sixth straight year Cherryland has held the annual meeting at Wuerfel Park.

"This year is special because we're celebrating our 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a cooperative," said Anderson. "We started out in 1938 with just a handful of farmers as members and now we have more than 34,000 members in six counties."

Between the business meeting and the game, there is time for fans to enjoy their free ballpark dinner—a hot dog, chips and soft drink—while watching batting practice and enjoying the atmosphere around the park.

Before the business meeting, Cherryland will have tables set up to talk about day-to-day operations and offer giveaways.

The Beach Bums will have their mascots on hand—Sunburn and Suntan—plus a pitching machine that measures how hard a baseball is thrown.

Members can also vote in the board of directors election before they enter the park. But if past years are any indication, most members will have already done their voting with their mail-in ballot that was enclosed in the May *Country Lines* magazine. As members pass into the park, they will receive up to four tickets to the game and vouchers for ballpark dinners.

There are three seats up for election this year—two "at-large" seats and one for the Benzie, Manistee and Wexford areas.

The business meeting will feature updates by Anderson, Van Pelt, and Wolverine Power Cooperative CEO Eric Baker.



## Letters & More

Reader letters, Michigan Heritage Quilt, stealing copper, energy tip and more. It's all here on your Reader's Pages.



### Wood Furniture & Dogs

I know this is probably a very unusual request, but in the May issue of *Michigan Country Lines* there is an article on page 24 (Ramblings/ Mike Buda/ "For the Love of Wood"). [It's about the beauty of handcrafted furniture.]

I have on a few different occasions run into people that have a dog just as is pictured in the top right of the article. I like the looks as well as the behavior of the breed. What is the breed of the dog in the picture? Do you know the owner of the dog and might they tell me a little about the breed? I know this is a highly unusual request...but if you have the time it would be appreciated.

— Jerry O'Kenka  
Perrysburg, Ohio

*The dog is mine—an Australian shepard named Bandit, and*

*I wrote about him just after I adopted him 2½ years ago. Aussies are not really Australian, but were developed by Australians who were brought to the American West in the 1800s to herd sheep. They probably descend from border collies and regular collies. They are very smart and good family pets, although they bond to one person. They make good house pets, but would rather work, so walking is a good substitute. Bandit gets me out walking most days, or he follows me around the yard when I'm outside. I think they are wonderful dogs.*

— Mike Buda

### Saskatoon Berries

*Country Lines* has numerous requests for more information on Neil Moran's May story on Saskatoon berries ("The Saskatoons Are Here," at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)). Some are calling this blueberry copycat a new "superfruit" because of it's health benefits and ability to withstand both drought and harsh winters.

Two sources for buying the plants are: Michigan Saskatoon Farm & Nursery, 7924 Saylor Road, Williamsburg, MI 49690; call 231-360-0311 (see [saskatoonmichigan.com](http://saskatoonmichigan.com)); or call Gurneys Seed and Nursery, 513-354-1492.

See [facebook.com/SaskatoonBerryInstituteOfNorthAmerica](http://facebook.com/SaskatoonBerryInstituteOfNorthAmerica) to blog with people who like to grow them.

— Gail Knudtson, Ed.



## Quilt Needs a Permanent Home

Dear Readers,

Do you remember the Michigan Heritage Quilt? It was created from 36 winning squares in a *Country Lines* contest held in 2002. Entrants were asked to use "Our Michigan Heritage" as the theme for their quilt square, and what resulted were personal memories, images and traditions from throughout our state sewn together into a beautiful quilt.

For several years the quilt traveled around to craft shows, museums, festivals and gatherings as a way of commemorating our state's rich heritage and to promote its sponsors, Michigan's electric cooperatives. It is now time to find it a permanent home.

The *Country Lines* staff wishes to see it displayed in a public place (i.e., museum, library, airport, municipal building, school, etc.) so that people can continue to see and admire it. Preference will be given to a facility served by an electric co-op. The quilt measures about 90 inches square.

Please email your suggestions and ideas to [czuker@meca.coop](mailto:czuker@meca.coop) (put "Quilt" in the subject line) or mail to: Country Lines Quilt, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

— Cindy Zuker, Design Editor

**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](http://countrylines.com), email [gknudtson@meca.coop](mailto:gknudtson@meca.coop), or mail to: Editor, *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

### HOW TO CHANGE YOUR MAILING ADDRESS

Contact your electric co-op—they maintain the mailing list. See page 2 for your co-op's contact information.



### Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Lighting accounts for about 13 percent of the average household's electric bill—cut costs by choosing new lightbulbs that have increased output and longevity. Some cost more up front, but prices are dropping as technology advances. Options include color, brightness, and even dimming and multi-way functions. Combining lights with automatic sensors can cut costs further.

Source: Cooperative Research Network

## Stealing Copper is a Crime and It's Very Dangerous!

Soaring metal prices have been blamed for an increase in thefts of copper and aluminum, primary components of electric distribution lines. Michigan electric co-ops have also been subject to this crime, which can lead to power outages, additional maintenance and expenses, diminished system reliability, and even serious injury or death.

Copper in wire is appealing to thieves who seek to sell the metal for scrap. Burglars will often climb power poles, scale fences and break into buildings to steal the precious metal. The soaring metal prices have prompted thieves to become bolder and more inventive.

"Stealing copper may seem like a quick way to make a buck, but it's illegal, costly and life threatening," says Mike Roush, vice president of operations at Midwest Energy Cooperative, which has been directly affected. "Working with metal and electricity is a dangerous combination, even for trained employees using proper equipment."

Thieves may not understand that they are risking their lives by taking copper from substations, where high transmission voltage is stepped down to a lower current for distribution lines. All the lines have a potentially deadly charge.

As a co-op member-owner, your local electric co-op urges you to help stop this crime by using the following guidelines to guard against electrical dangers and prevent copper theft.

▶ Never enter or touch equipment inside a substation; stay away from power lines and anything touching a power line.



Attempts to steal copper wire can cause serious injury or death.

▶ If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment or hanging wire, contact us immediately.

▶ If you see anyone around electric substations or electric facilities other than utility personnel or contractors, call the police.

▶ Install motion-sensor lights on the outside of your house and business to deter possible thieves.

▶ Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location, and never leave them out while you are away.

▶ If you work in construction, do not leave any wires unattended or leave loose wire at the job site, especially overnight.

▶ Help spread the word about the deadly consequences that can result from trying to steal copper or aluminum.

▶ If you have any information regarding stolen co-op property or equipment, please contact the police and your electric co-op immediately.

## Kids and Finances Reap the benefits of college planning today.

While you may be unable to avoid the "Mom, can I borrow \$20 for gas?" questions that eat into your budget as your kids grow up, there's one thing you can do to help you (and them) get ready for tomorrow's financial demands: Prepare for college expenses now.

Two-thirds of 2011 college graduates had an average of \$26,600 in student loan debt, according to the Institute for College Access & Success. No matter how young or old your kids are, consider these five options to prepare for future expenses.

● **Start a regular savings account that's earmarked for college.** Both you and your kids can contribute to this account, and your relatives can give you or your kids money to deposit, as well. It's easy and convenient: You can set up an account anywhere—at your local bank, credit union, or through an online bank. Even setting aside small amounts regularly can add up to a lot of money over time. For example, Bankrate.com's Simple Savings calculator shows that \$100 monthly saved over 15 years could add up to \$20,972.66,

assuming a 2 percent yield on your savings, compounded monthly.

● **Start a Section 529 Plan.** This is an education savings plan operated by a state or educational institution designed to help families set aside money for college. The money is controlled by the account owner, not the child. Anyone can contribute to these plans on the child's behalf, and contributions may be tax exempt.

● **Open a Coverdell education savings account.** This is a custodial account that can be used to save for elementary and secondary school, and college-related expenses. Income maximums apply, so not everyone will qualify for this account type. The money deposited grows tax-deferred until it is used for educational expenses. Withdrawals from the account may be tax free if used for tuition, fees, books, and other expenses. Any money not used for education must eventually be distributed to your child.

● **Open a Uniform Gift to Minors Account or a Uniform Transfer to Minors Account** (UGMA or UTMA; the title differs by state).

Under this, a parent or grandparent typically will gift money to the account. The money is owned by the child but controlled by the custodian until the child reaches the age of majority, which is set by state law. At that point, your child assumes control of the account. You can't restrict how the money is used, and the account cannot be transferred to another beneficiary.

● **Buy U.S. savings bonds.** Certain savings bonds can be purchased to pay for college tuition and fees without having to pay federal income tax on some or all of the interest during the year the bonds are redeemed. Certain restrictions apply—visit [TreasuryDirect.gov](http://TreasuryDirect.gov) to learn more.

College costs will undoubtedly continue to rise. By starting a savings program today, you and your child can better handle those expenses. For more planning help—including how financial tools noted in this article should be titled, and the tax ramifications of certain options—ask a financial or tax professional.

— Doreen Friel



# A Rare Sense of Community

Solar project reflects spirit of the Grand Traverse area.

**T**he same spirit of community that attracted Conrad and Alison Heins to Traverse City drew them to Cherryland's new community solar project.

"In this area there is a rare sense of community," Alison said. "This community solar project is a new and exciting extension of that."

Conrad and Alison have dedicated their lives to the renewable energy field. Conrad teaches renewable energy at Northwestern Michigan College. Alison, who received her library sciences degree from the University of Iowa, has set up renewable energy libraries at several colleges.

Years ago they installed a photovoltaic,

or solar, system with a battery bank at their home. According to Alison, the system worked great, but as it aged it required more maintenance. The opportunity to buy into

a community solar project where the utility will handle the maintenance appealed to them.

At Cherryland, we have long advocated for keeping

electricity affordable for our members. The cooperative model does the same thing for solar. By distributing infrastructure costs among participants, members who might not be able to afford solar installations on their homes can afford to buy into the project.

For Conrad and Alison, the ability to tap into their capital credits account to offset the

cost of purchasing shares made the project even more appealing. Members who use both the co-op's energy optimization rebate and capital credits rebate can purchase a share for as low as \$320.

Cherryland members have already spoken for the first 80 shares in the solar array, and those panels have been installed in the solar garden right here at Cherryland's office. We are currently taking reservations for the next phase, which can hold up to 144 panels and will be completed by early June.

Our members are attracted to this project for different reasons. For some, the opportunity to participate in a community initiative is important. Others are simply interested in solar energy and want to learn with us as we grow this project. For many, this is an opportunity to make a public show of support for renewable energy generation.

"We have long been proponents of solar energy," Alison said. "When we read about this project in your eNewsletter we knew we needed to put our money where our mouth was."

By adhering to a model that has served our cooperative well, we can make solar energy available to all of our members who want to invest in it.

This year Cherryland Electric Cooperative celebrates its 75th anniversary. Over seven decades ago, rural residents of our community banded together to bring the conveniences of electricity to this area when investor-owned utilities refused to extend service.

Co-ops are not just products of a proud past. These days, Americans from all walks of life have come to recognize the co-op approach—members working together to achieve price and service benefits—can work for other needs just as effectively as it delivered affordable power to rural Americans.

As an electric cooperative, we do more than keep the lights on. That's the *cooperative* difference.

***This is the second installment in a series on the cooperative principles.***

## YOU'RE INVITED!

### Solar Garden Grand Opening

**WHEN:** Friday, June 7 at 2 p.m.

**WHERE:** 5930 U.S. 31 South, Grawn

**HOSTS:** Cherryland Electric Cooperative  
Traverse City Light & Power

Help us celebrate the first community solar project in Michigan. Join local leaders and state and national legislators for a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Tour the site, meet representatives from our sister electric cooperatives and the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, and help us honor members of the community who have purchased shares in the project. Refreshments will be served.



**SOLARUPNORTH**  
ALLIANCE

*Rachel Johnson is the grassroots advocate at Cherryland Electric Cooperative.*





# Future is Bright for Scholarship Winner

**R**achael Thon runs her own business, is a standout athlete and student, and is also class president at Lake Leelanau St. Mary's High School.

Her secret to success?

She claims it's the people around her—parents Pat and Julie Thon, plus her teachers and coaches at St. Mary's.

But those same people point back at Rachael, who has been awarded Cherryland Electric Cooperative's annual \$4,000 student scholarship for a high school senior.

"Rachael just excels in all areas of her life—academics, athletics and leadership," said one of her teachers, Lani Hoenscheid-Smith. "She approaches her life with genuine concern for others and enthusiasm for the task at hand. And she also takes the time to mentor younger people and offer words of encouragement."

Her basketball coach, Paula Korson, agrees.

"Besides being a great athlete and student, Rachael is a leader in our school," she said. "She also volunteers for many things. She sings in the school choir, participates in youth group, helps serve and clean up at local weddings, and also does parish cemetery clean up."

Rachael has set some lofty goals for herself in the years ahead—becoming a health administrator for a hospital or the CEO of a successful corporation. She knows in order to attain her goals, she needs money for her education.

That's why she started her own company—WineCor.

"It's a business I started at the beginning of last year (2012)," she said. "I did it for two reasons. I wanted to get experience in business and I wanted to make money for college. I use recycled wine materials from the area and turn them into décor pieces. Some of the recycled components include wine bottles and corks bearing the winery label,



The Thon family includes (L to R) 15-year-old Abbie, mom Julie, 17-year-old scholarship winner Rachael and dad Pat.

plus driftwood from the Great Lakes. I make the pieces and sell them at local businesses."

When she's attending school at St. Mary's, her day is busy from beginning to end—just the way she likes it.

"To me, St. Mary's isn't a school, it's a home," she said. "You are part of a big family. They want to see that you are excelling at a rate that is in your best interests...reaching your potential."

Rachael certainly has done that at St. Mary's. Besides her leadership skills and classroom work (3.7 grade point average), she says sports has played a big part in helping her develop as a person.

"Sports have made me the strong person I am both on and off the playing field," she said. "I have learned to be a part of

something bigger than myself—a team. I've also learned important communication skills and developed relationships that have helped me outside of sports."

Rachael won the Cherryland Conference's "Female Athlete of the Year" award not only for her athletic skill, but because of the respect she shows for opposing players, referees and spectators.

Next year starts the new phase of her life. She's going to attend Olivet College as a student and softball player.

"My parents, my teachers and my coaches always challenged me to be my best," she said. "Through that, I've learned that nothing can be attained without hard work. I will apply that lesson in college and then in my business life."

## Tyge is Adult Scholarship Winner

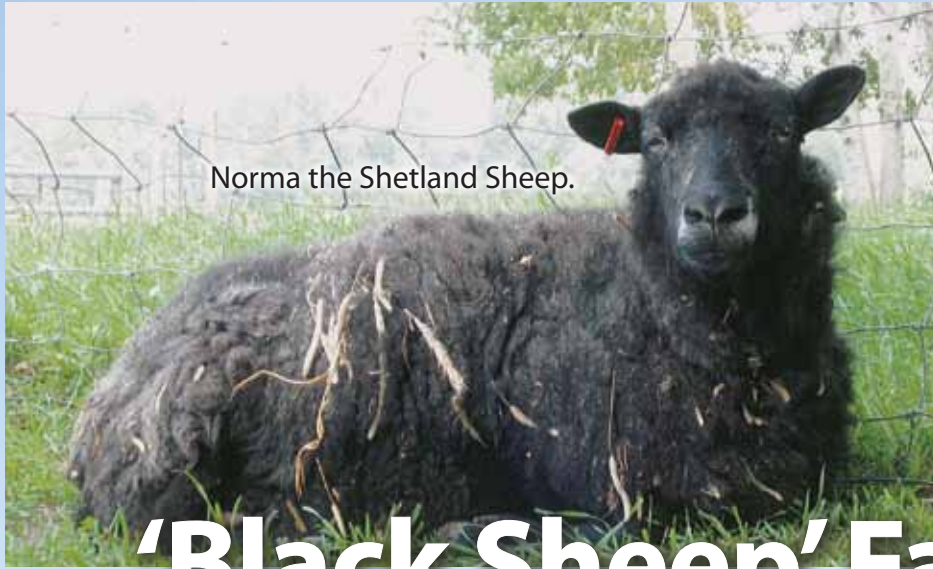
Rosalyn Tyge of Traverse City is the winner of Cherryland's \$500 Adult Scholarship.

She has been a professional tile artist and small business owner for 40 years and now is attending NMC to receive certification as a web developer.

She also founded "From Women's Hands," an art exhibit and sale that provides a platform for women artists to showcase their talents, while creating a charity event.

The sixth annual show is Nov. 1-3, 2013.





Norma the Shetland Sheep.



Morton the pot-bellied pig.

Photos Courtesy – Cherry & Marty Scott

# 'Black Sheep' Family

Cherry Scott gazes out at her Lee-lanau County "Field of Dreams." Gazing, in itself, is something of a miracle because she was going blind before a new medical procedure helped stabilize her eyesight.

What she and her husband Marty see now is a farm they own called Black Sheep Crossing—a no-kill animal sanctuary they have had since 1998—15 years of giving a second-chance to animals.

"After we raised our family, we were looking for something else to do with our lives," explains Cherry, whose family owned a gas station in downtown Northport for years. "One day we found this farm, fell in love with it, and started this sanctuary. I never pictured myself as living on a farm. But what we found here—well, Marty and I call this place 'the end of our rainbow.' We have learned so much from these animals."

There are 74 animals of all kinds, shapes and sizes on the 100-acre sanctuary. They range from seven friendly donkeys to two Scottish Highland steers (Sir Patrick and Sir

## A 100-acre animal sanctuary in Northport.

Edward), to pot belly pigs, dogs, birds and cats. And they all get an annual physical.

"We have names for all 74 of them," Cherry says with a smile. "They are our family, so they all need names."

In the 15 years since they started Black Sheep Crossing, Marty and Cherry have helped 159 animals. Where do they go once they get here?

"They spend the rest of their days here," she says. "We have a cemetery where we bury them at the end of life. Each animal has a little headstone. And we have a small memorial service when they pass. It's amazing how the animals seem to understand those moments. We've had services surrounded by donkeys and dogs. They are very respectful, like they know what's going on."

And, in many ways, Cherry and Marty are convinced they do understand.

"These animals have done more for us

than we've ever done for them," adds Marty. "We've learned so much about things like patience and compassion from them."

Cherry agrees.

"We give tours several times a week at 9 a.m., because that's the best time for these animals. We work on animal time, not people time," she says. "And we ask our visitors to be respectful because this is their home. And you wouldn't believe what people come away with when they visit here."

"They tell us it feels different here, there's an aura they say you don't experience very often."

Cherry and Marty say that "aura of goodness" emanates from the barnyard. But those who know the Scott family say it starts with them. And that's hard to argue when you watch them interact with the animals, calling out their names and even using nicknames for each animal.

"We're not taking any more animals, that's something we've agreed on," Cherry adds. "This is the family we'll see through."

The Scotts get the electricity to run their farm from Cherryland Electric Coopera-

Rosie (L-R) and 29-year-old Norman are horses living at the sanctuary, and in front is the only mule, Frances, who is also Rosie's mother.



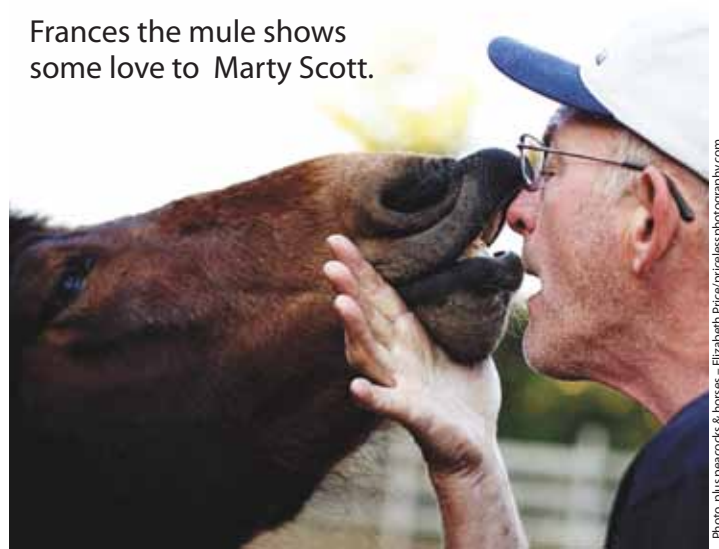
To learn more about this farm, visit [blacksheepcrossing.org](http://blacksheepcrossing.org) or call 231-386-7234.





Sir Patrick and Sir Edward, Scottish Highland Steers.

Frances the mule shows some love to Marty Scott.



Photo, plus peacocks & horses - Elizabeth Price/pricelessphotography.com

tive. They get some of the money to operate their nonprofit sanctuary from contributors around the state and country—stretching from Kalamazoo to Engadine and from people in 15 different states.

“Once people get here, they seem to like what they see and observe,” Cherry says. “Our tours take up to two hours, but we don’t do it for entertainment. This isn’t a petting zoo, this is a sanctuary. People like to see these animals in their environment.”

Marty admits that owning and maintaining a sanctuary like Black Sheep Crossing isn’t for everyone.

“I think we’re three-quarters crazy,” he says with a laugh.

But Cherry wouldn’t change a thing.

“What we’ve experienced in these 15 years has been amazing,” she says. “You see the bonding that takes place between animals... the trust, the caring, the love. And you learn from it.”



Koeze the peacock struts his stuff.

## Skydiving Event is Farm Fundraiser

- *Are you 50 or older?*
- *Is skydiving on your “bucket list”?*
- *Would you like to help animals in need?*

If you answered “yes” to these questions, you can help the nonprofit Black Sheep Crossing fundraising opportunity on Saturday, Aug. 3, in Northport. If you would like to skydive and do your best to raise \$1,000, call Lynne or Bill Watson at 231-946-0495 to register.

Last year’s event raised \$23,000 for animals sheltering at this farm.



Standard donkeys (L-R), Axle, Virginia, Sigwalda, Mary-Pete and Silvia.



# New Hope for Nuclear in Small Modular Reactors

This article is second in a series on how electricity is generated. The first, in January, was about clean-coal technology. Watch future issues for stories about renewables and other fuel sources.

There's new excitement about nuclear power in the energy business, due to the advent of small modular reactors (SMRs).

This evolution has been spurred by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), which has awarded a dollar-for-dollar match to the Generation mPower LLC consortium to deploy up to five 180-megawatt (MW) SMRs at the Tennessee Valley Authority's (TVA) abandoned Clinch River Breeder Reactor site in Oak Ridge, Tenn. The consortium of utilities and industry contractors includes TVA and 13 generation and transmission (G&T) cooperatives. Wolverine Power Cooperative, Michigan's only G&T electric cooperative, is a participant.

Generation mPower LLC says its SMRs, housed in an underground containment structure, will include significant safety features built into the design, such as the ability to shut down "passively" (with help from gravity) if a malfunction occurs. The advanced integral pressurized water reactors can also be air-cooled (big reactors require millions of gallons of water daily) and the plants

will be able to store high-level nuclear waste on-site for their 60-year expected life.

The SMR units, generally smaller than a rail car, cost much less than a full-size commercial nuclear power plant: \$750 million compared to \$5 billion to \$10 billion for a 1,110-MW to 1,700-MW facility constructed from the ground up. Industry leaders are particularly enamored with the technology's modularity—pre-fabricated units can be added as needed, avoiding the risk associated with locking up billions of dollars in a generating station during uncertain economic times.

"The mPower reactor will reduce risks connected with deploying nuclear power and become a flexible, cost-effective solution to meet U.S. energy needs while lowering greenhouse gas emissions," Babcock & Wilcox, a nuclear equipment developer and manufacturer, touts on babcock.com. "Each mPower reactor that is brought on-line will contribute to the reduction of about 57 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the life of the reactor."

Commercial operation of the consortium's SMRs could begin as early as 2020, and the reactors—at 83 ft. tall and 13 ft. in diameter—will be about one-third the size of traditional nuclear plants.

"With the ability to add more modules, you can adjust your energy output to closely match your demand needs," says Art Thayer, energy efficiency programs director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. "If proven successful by the Tennessee project, this power source could lead to



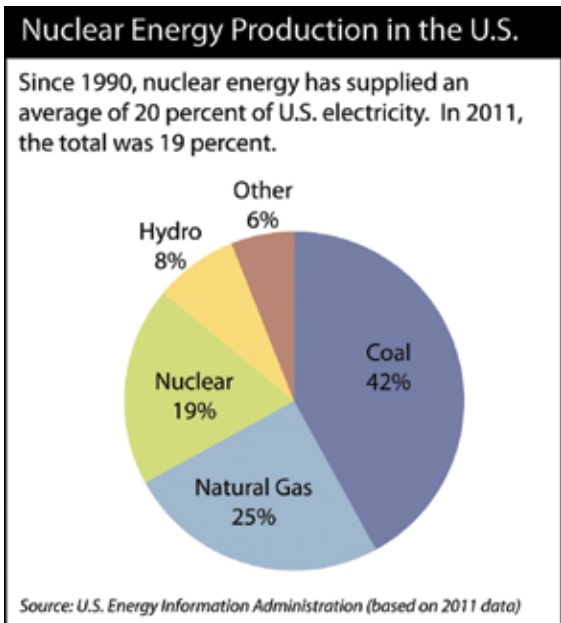
Conceptual drawing of an underground containment structure housing two Babcock & Wilcox mPower reactor modules.

improvements in energy production and efficiency, air quality, energy security, international competitiveness, quality of life, and a reduction of carbon emissions and other pollutants."

Nuclear power accounts for about 19 percent of the nation's electricity supply, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), and about 10 percent of the electricity produced by G&Ts. And currently, eight G&Ts have minority shares in 12 different nuclear units owned and operated by large investor-owned utilities. One co-op G&T maintains a majority interest: Raleigh-based North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation owns 61.5 percent (694 megawatts) of a nuclear station unit. Overall, co-op investment in nuclear energy totals 2,710 MW.

In Michigan, while Wolverine does not have nuclear power in its generating fleet, it's an important part of the co-op's overall portfolio, supplying 23 percent of its members' needs in 2012. The nuclear power used by non-Wolverine co-ops averaged between 15 percent and 25 percent in 2012. Find percentages for each co-op's mix of all fuels used to generate power annually in *Country Lines* (March and September issues). At [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com), click on "My Co-op"/co-op name/March issue.

Besides Wolverine Power Cooperative and Babcock and Wilcox, Bechtel Corp. (engineering/construction), and FirstEnergy Corp. (parent of 10 investor-owned utilities in Maryland, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia), are also part of the Generation mPower consortium.





# Driveway Revolution

**W**hen it comes to all-electric vehicles, choices are growing and include well-known manufacturers such as Chevrolet, Nissan and Toyota, along with a growing number of specialty manufacturers or retrofit kits. Plug-in electric vehicle (PEV) sales are also growing, boosted by government incentives and consumer interest in environmentally-friendly products.

Despite media attention and apparent consumer interest, however, PEV sales remain a disappointment for manufacturers, with 17,500 units sold in 2011 and about 53,000 in 2012, with Chevy Volt leading the pack last year at 23,461.

## Comparing Cars

Not all electric cars are made the same. The 2013 Nissan Leaf boasts a driving range of about 75 miles. Once its lithium-ion batteries are drained, however, you better be near a 110-volt power outlet for recharging or have the phone number for roadside assistance handy.

The 2013 Chevy Volt and Toyota Prius Plug-in both offer a gasoline safety net for their pack of batteries. The Volt will run on a charge for 38 miles, and the Prius has an 11-mile range. Once the batteries are drained, a gas-powered generator produces electricity to keep the car rolling. The 2013 Ford Focus Electric, which sold only 685 units last year, has a 76-mile range.

The Volt can recharge by plugging into a traditional 120-volt outlet. This differs from traditional gas/electric hybrids like the original Toyota Prius, for which batteries are recharged only by the gas engine and a regenerative braking system. (In hybrids, batteries essentially supplement the gas motor.)

All-electric vehicles carry higher price tags than comparable conventional gas-fueled versions—typically \$10,000 to \$15,000 more, even after including federal tax incentives ranging from \$2,500 to \$7,500 (depending on battery capacity). Tax credits will phase out as manufacturers produce more vehicles (learn about electric vehicle tax breaks at [tinyurl.com/bd93j5n](http://tinyurl.com/bd93j5n) or speak to a qualified tax advisor). Over time, batteries should

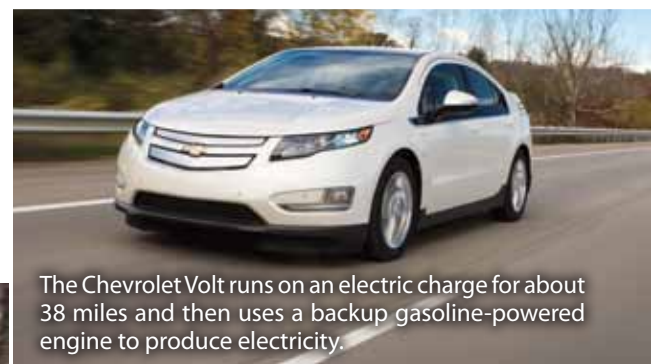
become cheaper to build, thereby lowering electric vehicle costs.

As a quick comparison, the Cooperative Research Network—the research and development arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association—examined the 2013 Chevy Volt, with a suggested retail price of \$39,145 (not including the federal tax credit) to the 2013 Ford Focus, which has a starting price of \$16,200.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the average American drives 13,476 miles per year. Chevrolet estimates the average Volt driver will spend \$1.50 daily for electricity (based on 12 cents per kilowatt-hour) and a small amount of gas. Meanwhile, the average Ford Focus owner will spend almost \$5.16 daily for gas.



The 2013 Nissan Leaf has a driving range of 75 miles.



The Chevrolet Volt runs on an electric charge for about 38 miles and then uses a backup gasoline-powered engine to produce electricity.

Photo - © General Motors

Photo - © Nissan

At \$4 per gallon for gas, the average Volt driver would save \$1,335 annually but would need to rack up that amount for almost 10 years to equal the difference in sticker price. Of course, actual savings depends on the number of miles driven and car options. It should be noted that using electric accessories such as air conditioning, heat, and a defroster affect mileage and drain electric car batteries faster.

## Charge!

Electric cars can be recharged using a traditional 120-volt outlet with a dedicated 15-amp circuit found in most homes. Called Level 1 charging, this takes up to 10 hours to charge a Volt and over 20 hours for a Leaf. The Prius, with its smaller battery, can be charged in three hours.

Consumers may decide to buy a Level 2 charging station to speed things along. These devices recharge through a dedicated 240-volt circuit, similar to that used for electric clothes

dryers. According to “Edmunds Car Buying Guide” ([edmunds.com](http://edmunds.com)), Level 2 charging for the all-electric and the Volt can be done in as little as four hours.

The Volt’s Level 1 charging at 1.4 kilowatts roughly equals running a toaster running for eight hours straight; its Level 2 charging, estimated at 3.5 kilowatts, is similar to a heating and air-conditioning system running continuously for three to four hours.

Chevy estimates that installing a charging station usually runs \$1,200 to \$1,500. But the tab can go much higher, especially if a household’s electric system needs upgrading to handle the increased load.

All this extra load on the electrical system

from PEVs will still reduce the overall emissions of various air pollutants—even when accounting for emissions from power plants needed to produce the energy for recharging, according to studies by the Electric Power Research Institute (Palo Alto, Calif.), a nonprofit research consortium of electric co-ops and other electric utilities. In fact, plugging cars in at night when power costs and demand are at their lowest can actually help an electric system run more efficiently. However, the electrical characteristics of even a smaller number of PEVs could test utilities by lowering the life expectancy of distribution transformers and cables because of increased heating.

## Is an EV right for you?

Whether a plug-in electric vehicle fits your lifestyle depends on how many miles you drive daily, whether you can afford the cost difference between an electric and gas-burning car, and how many amenities you want your vehicle to have.

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

Sources: Cooperative Research Network, Green Car Reports, Ford



## Marathon Paddler:

Al Widing and Hailey McMahon as they near the finish of the 2012 Spike Challenge race.

Photo - Mark Sloan

# 'Amazing Al' is Ready to Go the Distance

There is little to compare with the spectacle at the start of the annual AuSable River Canoe Marathon. Thousands of cheering fans line the river's banks in downtown Grayling. Their collective din reaches a crescendo when the start gun goes off as racers run to the river's edge carrying their canoes, primed for the 120-mile paddling adventure that finishes well after sunrise in Oscoda.

Al Widing has been among the toned, young athletes for 40 years, so he's the oldest paddler in pack. And when the 2013 AuSable River Canoe marathon begins July 27, the 88-year old Mio resident plans to be there again.

"I am looking forward to it. I'd just love to finish," says Widing in typical, understated fashion, conveying little sense of having become a legend in competitive paddling circles.

Widing's first AuSable marathon was in 1955, and he holds the record for being the oldest paddler to finish. His fastest race was in 1999 when at 74, along with Robert Bradford, of Lapeer, he set the senior division record finishing in 15 hours, 21 minutes and 22 seconds.

Widing and Oscoda paddler, Bob Gillings, also won back-to-back first-place finishes in the 1964 and 1965 Texas Water Safari, a punishing 260-mile marathon billed as "The World's Toughest Canoe Race."

"He's definitely a humble guy," says Ryan

Matthews, of Oscoda, the marathon statistician. "We call him 'Amazing Al', but he hasn't embraced the nickname. He always said he is just an average guy who likes to paddle. But, there is no denying that what he does at this age is amazing."

Widing likes the challenge. The race requires extreme endurance, the ability to sit for hours paddling at a rapid pace, trying to edge out over 70 teams of top professional paddlers from around North America.

The course winds downstream for 120 miles. The race goes on no matter what weather. Paddlers in the money keep a grueling pace of 60 to 75 paddle strokes per minute. They have to navigate in the dark and negotiate the river's natural obstructions along with portaging around dams.

"The toughest part of the race is when I have quit because (my paddling partner) is hurt," Widing says while sitting in the comfort of his den in the home he built along the AuSable River. Widing lives there with his wife, Dorothy, his 12th grade sweetheart and mother of their six children.

Strangely, Widing doesn't consider himself tough. He smiles and says: "Tough' is meat you can't chew. I do it because I like the challenge."

But Hailey McMahon knows another Al Widing. She is the 21-year-old nursing student from Grayling who teamed up with

him for the 2012 AuSable Canoe Marathon.

"Anyone who paddles with Al will tell you he is hard to train with. He pounds out every mile on six-hour training paddles," McMahon explains. "He is an amazing guy and super nice. He has a hard exterior, but if you can get him to laugh, he melts."

A lifelong vegetarian who grew up on a Holly farm and later became a carpenter, Widing remembers his first canoe. It was a beat-up wooden vessel that cost \$25. He and his brother Roy entered the 1955 AuSable Marathon with it, a pair of homemade paddles, and a pocketful of hopes. But their aspirations were dampened just 14 miles downstream.

"We didn't finish," Widing says softly. "We had put a good hole in the bottom. There was water all around our feet."

"It's always fun and funny racing with Al," says Lynne Witte, of Mt. Clemens. Witte is president of the Michigan Canoe Racing Association (MCRA), an organization founded in 1956 and built by Widing and others. "He's headstrong but not hard to get along with. I've paddled in the bow with him.

"Michigan has always been a huge canoe-racing state, and Al brought more than I could ever say to MCRA and the sport of professional paddling. None of us made any real money in canoe racing, but he's won the Texas Safari and that was a big deal."

See [ausablecanoeamarathon.org](http://ausablecanoeamarathon.org) or call 989-348-4425 for details about the canoe marathon.



# Asparagus Wine Is 'One of a Kind'

**A**s a girl, Kellie Chase had her fill of picking asparagus on the family's West Michigan farm. Making wine from the vegetable—making any kind of wine—was as far-removed from her thinking as the big city excitement she longed for. “I was one of those kids who thought I'd move to the city, never to return.” But after sampling life elsewhere she longed for the country and came home. “I just really missed the laid-back atmosphere,” she explains.

In 1991 Kellie married Todd Fox, whose great-grandparents had launched the family farm business in 1947, and she learned to appreciate her own roots, which span five generations of farmers. “I've embraced it. I love family history and learning how my parents and grandparents evolved in farming.” In 2005, she started a market selling fruit and produce from the farm, based in Shelby, near Silver Lake Sand Dunes and Lake Michigan.

A trip to Traverse City wineries inspired Kellie and Todd to try winemaking, and she

attended Michigan grape and wine conferences and workshops. “I started buying books and learning as I went,” taking online classes that required working several days at an Iowa winery. In 2008, she began making fruit wines and two years later planted her first grapes.

Although most of the 1,700-acre farm is dedicated to fruit, Oceana County is prime asparagus territory—it's the home of the National Asparagus Festival—and the veggie is among the Fox crops. Kellie says Todd challenged her to turn the green spears into something drinkable and, skeptically, she added water, sugar and yeast to mashed asparagus. The result was a sweet wine that is not the color of the main ingredient. “This is kind of neat,” she recalls thinking of her experiment. She labeled it “Odd Fox” and quickly sold out of the first wine of its kind. “People love the novelty of it,” she says. The next year she quadrupled the batch, and it was gone in two weeks.



Kellie Fox makes wine from traditional sources like fruit and grapes, but she's also the creator of a popular wine made from asparagus (right).

Now in her third year of marketing Odd Fox, she is bottling 400 to 500 of the 375 ml bottles, which she sells for \$16 at The Fox Barn Agricultural Marketplace and Winery. She recommends serving the wine with appetizers like cheese and crackers, but has one customer who buys eight or 10 bottles each year for a dinner party featuring asparagus in every course, from hors d'oeuvres through dessert.

Kellie, with some help, now also makes wine from sweet and tart cherries, apples, peaches, plums, pears, blueberries, raspberries, grapes and asparagus. Most samples are complimentary at the tasting bar (due to limited quantities, a \$2 fee applies to Odd Fox and the raspberry wine), and

there's a short menu of appetizers to enjoy with a glass on a patio behind the barn.

The handsome, century-old, 2,000-square foot Fox Barn is a seasonal home for the farm's fresh fruit, Michigan-made foodstuffs including jams, maple syrup, salsa and honey, and culinary-related products. Kellie sees it as an agricultural tourism destination with many more possibilities, and it appears the next generation shares her enthusiasm: son Noah is a freshman at Michigan State University studying agricultural business management, and daughter Emelie is a high school senior that's interested in the farm market, winery, and working with customers. Kellie is thrilled that their Barn “provides a great opportunity for people to interact, and for people who are so far removed from the farm...to see how (farming) is done.”

## The Fox Barn Agricultural Marketplace and Winery

500 S. 18th Ave. (B-15)  
Shelby, MI 49455  
foxbarnwinery.com  
231-861-8050  
(Email through website)



## Festival Salutes One of Michigan's Top Crops

Join the “Age of Asparagus” during the National Asparagus Festival June 7-9, 2013, in Hart, near the Silver Lake Sand Dunes and Lake Michigan. The 39th annual event celebrates the green spear that grows profusely throughout the sandy, well-drained soil of Oceana County; the area between South Haven and Benton Harbor also contributes to Michigan's asparagus crop of about 25 million pounds annually. Our state is the third largest asparagus producer in the U.S. (California and Washington grow more).

Most Asparagus Festival events are free and happen on Saturday, including a Spear-it 5K Walk/Run, Royale Parade and a food show featuring tastes of asparagus dishes (admission fee). Don't miss Saturday's tours to a local asparagus farm where growers talk about the crop, planting and harvesting, and the industry. There's also entertainment and an Arts & Crafts Fair on Friday and Saturday.

Visit [nationalasparagusfestival.org](http://nationalasparagusfestival.org), email [nationalasparagusfestival@yahoo.com](mailto:nationalasparagusfestival@yahoo.com) or call 231-259-0170 for more info.

For asparagus recipes, facts and tips, check out the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board website: [asparagus.org](http://asparagus.org).

► **Tell us about your favorite Michigan-Made product!** Please send a few short paragraphs describing the product and why you like it, along with your email and phone number to [gknudtson@meca.coop](mailto:gknudtson@meca.coop) or call 517-913-3531.



# Decisions, Decisions

Michigan's expanding public school choices.

**R**esearchers estimate the average adult makes about 35,000 decisions a day. If that's true, I'd guess that parenting decisions add a couple thousand a day extra to the mix.

Perhaps no parenting decision is more important than choosing the right schools. Today's parents can enroll their children in one of Michigan's 550 public school districts. They can also choose from among about 1,000 private and parochial schools that operate here.

Beyond these traditional choices, however, families now have the option to attend a free public school in the next town, the next county, or even via cyberspace.

## Public Schools of Choice

Sections 105 and 105c of Public Act 300 of 1996 permit school districts to enroll students who live in neighboring districts without needing permission from their home district. There are some limits, however. The chosen district must participate in schools of choice, and must have openings in the grades your children will attend. Districts are required to notify the public about their schools of choice status no later than mid-August. Most, however, make that announcement earlier in the year to allow the district (and families) to better plan.

Timelines and rules related to Schools of Choice are available from the Michigan Department of Education, at [michigan.gov/mde](http://michigan.gov/mde) (type "schools of choice" into the search bar) or call 517-373-3324.

## Public School Academies (Charter Schools)

A Public School Academy (also known as a charter school) is a state-supported public school operating under a charter contract issued by a public authorizing body. Charter schools may include grades K–12 or any combination of those grades. They may not charge tuition nor screen out students based on race, religion, gender, or test scores. If more students apply than the school can

accept, the school must hold a lottery to decide which students to accept.

Like teachers in traditional public schools, charter teachers must be certified and "highly qualified." Charter school students participate in state standardized tests such as the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP). Charter schools cannot be religiously affiliated.

Michigan recently raised the cap on the number of charter schools allowed to operate in Michigan, so expect to see new charters opening in the coming years. Look for a "Charter School FAQ" at [michigan.gov/mde](http://michigan.gov/mde) or visit [charterschools.org/for-parents](http://charterschools.org/for-parents) (517-374-9167).

## Cyber Schools

Michigan students have increasing options when it comes to online learning. Two large programs offer "blended" learning options in which students enroll in one or more online courses while still working with teachers in their home districts. Michigan Virtual University (MVU) operates the oldest and

### Is an online school a good option for your child?

Jay Bennett, instructor and course coordinator for Michigan Virtual University, suggests that before enrolling in a cyber school of any kind, parents ask:

- Is my child motivated?
- Is he or she a self-directed learner?
- Will he have the discipline to complete work and log-in to the courses on a regular basis?

The answers to these questions could predict success in an online program. He says MVU's highest performing students are generally those that are highly motivated and have the best supports in place.

"Online learning needs to be a collaborative effort and must include support from parents, the school providing credit and the school providing the course/instructor," Bennett says.

largest of these programs, with students enrolled in more than 15,000 courses. GenNET, a consortium operated by the Genesee Intermediate School District, has over 500 participating districts.

Public Act 205 of 2009 allowed the formation of full-time online schools for the first time in fall 2010. Consequently, two statewide virtual charter schools—K12 Inc. and Connections Academy—accepted more than 4,000 students from across Michigan in 2011-12. Some local districts and ISDs also offer online programs. For example, in rural Eaton County, southwest of Lansing, the ISD operates the Relevant Academy, a dropout recovery program for students ages 16-19. Parents can check to see what's available in their area.

## Homeschooling

Michigan parents have the right to homeschool their children, and the numbers of families exercising that right increase every year. Plus, a growing number of homeschool networks support parents in their efforts. The actual number of Michigan homeschooling families is unknown, since homeschools are not required to register with the state unless the student has special needs and is requesting special education services from the local public school or intermediate school district.

You can learn more at [michigan.gov/documents/home\\_schools\\_122555\\_7.pdf](http://michigan.gov/documents/home_schools_122555_7.pdf).

## Still more choice to come?

Parents face a dizzying array of choices, to be sure—one that will not shrink any time soon. Gov. Snyder, in his 2011 "Special Message on Education Reform" proposed a new "Any Time, Any Place, Any Way, Any Pace" public school learning model he believes would help expand dual enrollment, blended learning, online education and early college attendance.

"Education opportunities should be available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year," Snyder said in the address.

Still, the vast majority of Michigan's 1.5 million school children attend their local neighborhood schools, which also offer families more choices within each district. Educators are learning that one size does not fit all when it comes to teaching and learning.

*Linda Wacyk is a regular Country Lines freelance writer, educator, grandmother and content empty-nester.*







Photo Courtesy - Barn Theatre Publicity/Augusta, MI

The Barn Theatre of Augusta sits proudly in between Kalamazoo and Battle Creek.



Photo - Susan K. Park

Delilah de Wylde plays famous country western singer Patsy Cline in a summer theatre production at the Red Barn Playhouse in Saugatuck.



Photo Courtesy - Barn Theatre Publicity/Augusta, MI

A shot from The Barn Theatre (Augusta) production of the musical comedy "SPAMALOT" in 2012. It's a parody of the King Arthur legend.

## Summer Stock Theatre: Barn Again in Michigan

With today's many entertainment options, it's surprising that the "let's put on a show!" spirit of 1930s-era movies lives on in barn theatres across the country. The summer stock theatre tradition actually dates to 1919 when shows—mostly lighter musicals, comedies and mysteries—were performed by touring troupes or resident companies that launched careers on stages outdoors, under tents and in barns.

Michigan is home to three barn theatres, including one of the country's few remaining Actors Equity (union) summer stock houses. As the Barn Theatre of Augusta launches its 67th season, producer/director Brendan Ragotzy relates how his parents founded the original Village Players in neighboring Richland in 1946, but three years later were forced to move.

Director Jack Ragotzy and actress Betty Ebert Ragotzy searched in vain for a new theatre home until, just two weeks before their 1949 season opened, they found a never-used dairy barn. "It was a grey day when they turned onto the farm's dirt driveway," tells Brendan. "When they saw the barn, the clouds opened up, the sun beamed down...Kismet!" The handsome structure, its soaring ceiling made of curved beams with no cross-bracing, had a single lightbulb and no running water. Yet, within two weeks the show went on and, with the exception of 2010 when it was dark due to the economy, this Barn Theatre has operated continuously. "It's a gorgeous gal," Brendan says of the 484-seat barn, which

is a Michigan Historic Site.

Its professional company draws on the talent of apprentices from the Barn Theatre School, which each season accepts about 24 students who have completed at least one year of college. "Barnies" learn and work behind the scenes and on-stage with the pros in an intense summer of honing their craft. Alumni include Johnathan Larson, who went on to create "Rent", and actors Jennifer Garner, Lauren Graham, Tom Wopat and Robert Newman. Following each of the six main-stage shows, apprentices and seasoned talent perform in a cabaret setting.

Despite increasing economic competition, Brendan, who worked on his first show at age 10, remains optimistic in carrying on his late parents' vision with his wife Penelope Alex, an actress who is also the School's dean. Whether or not their four kids follow the spotlight, "Lady Luck has been very fortunate for the Barn," says Brendan. "We've had great local support; that's been the key to our survival."

At The Red Barn Playhouse in Saugatuck, the Lakeshore Arts Alliance (LAA) is also working to keep the house lights on. Housed in a 1914 horse barn, it was converted to a theatre in 1948 and over the years, says LAA Board Chairman John Huyge, "It has been opened and closed a half-dozen times." Now leased by the LAA as a home for arts education and performance, volunteers have remodeled the 250-seat theatre into a year-round venue that includes films and concerts.

The LAA, whose executive director is John's

### Check their 2013 schedules:

#### The Barn Theatre

barntheatre.com  
13351 West M-96, Augusta  
269-731-4545

#### Red Barn Playhouse

redbarnsaugatuck.com  
3657 63rd St. at Blue Star Highway,  
Saugatuck, 269-857-5300  
lakeshorearts@comcast.net

#### The Barn Theatre

barntheatre.net  
242 S. Ridge St., Port Sanilac  
810-622-9114

wife Pat Huyge, is working to buy The Red Barn property and open an academy for the performing arts similar to the intern program of its heyday. "This barn was an important part of the entertainment in the community," says John. "It reflects back to a time in history when things were less complicated."

Keeping things simple in a 150-year old venue, the community theatre group at The Barn Theatre in Port Sanilac has entertained summer audiences "on a shoestring budget" since 1980. Andy Fabian, village council president and owner/chef at The Van Camp House restaurant says, "People come from miles around to have dinner and go to a show. It's really a great little happening." The Thumb area venue is in a casual, rustic setting for about six performances between June and September, and he assures, "It's the most genuinely cool place to be."

*Kath Usitalo writes about destinations and the Great Lakes State. Her blog is [greatlakesgazette.wordpress.com](http://greatlakesgazette.wordpress.com).*

French Raspberry/  
Blueberry Josephines



*It's the berries!*

Fresh picked or purchased at the market, berries can be used in so many different ways. Enjoy these tasty berry recipes and fulfill your craving for summer.

### French Raspberry/Blueberry Josephines

- 1/2 c. butter, softened
- 1 8-oz. package cream cheese
- 1 1/2 c. flour
- 1/2 t. baking powder
- 1 c. fresh blueberries
- 1 c. fresh red raspberries
- granulated sugar
- 1/2 c. powdered sugar
- 1/2 t. vanilla
- 1/4 t. mace or nutmeg
- 2 t. grated orange rind
- 2 c. heavy cream for whipping

Cream butter until soft and fluffy. Add cheese and mix until smooth and well-blended. Stir in flour and baking powder. Shape into a ball; wrap in plastic wrap and chill for one hour. Roll out to 1/4-inch thickness, cut into 12 3 1/2-inch rounds. Place on a lightly greased cookie sheet and prick well with a fork. Bake at 400° for 10 minutes, or until lightly browned; cool. Gently combine berries sprinkled lightly with granulated sugar; set aside. Combine remaining ingredients; beat until stiff. Arrange pastry rounds on platter

or individual plates; top each with a generous spoon of whipped cream and some of the berries. Top with a second pastry round, more whipped cream and berries. Serve!

*Janice L. Thompson, Martin*

### Red Berry Mousse

- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin
- 2 T. cold water
- juice of 1 lemon
- grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 pint raspberries
- 1 pint strawberries, quartered
- 2 T. creme de cassis liqueur
- 2 egg yolks
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 2 c. whipping cream

Combine gelatin and water in a small sauce pan and set aside to soak for 5 minutes. Stir the lemon juice into the softened gelatin. Add the zest, raspberries, strawberries, and creme di cassis. Bring gently to a boil, stirring frequently, and then set to cool to room temperature. Combine egg yolks and sugar in small bowl and beat until pale yellow. Transfer to double boiler and cook over sim-



Visit recipe editor Christin McKamey's new website, [veggiechick.com](http://veggiechick.com), for healthy, vegetarian recipes and info!

mering water, whisking until hot and slightly thickened, 10 to 15 minutes; set aside to cool. Fold the berry mixture into the cooled custard. Whip cream with mixer until it forms soft peaks, and gently fold into the mixture. Scoop the mousse into a glass bowl or wine goblets and refrigerate until set. Garnish with raspberries or sprigs of mint. Enjoy!

*Betty Hahn, Cornell*

### Sweet Berry Pizza

- 1 pizza dough
- 1 egg
- 1 c. farmer's cheese
- 1/2 c. sugar
- 1 T. vanilla
- 1 c. fresh, tart fruit (red currents, cut-up apples, prune-plums, strawberries)

Combine egg, sugar, and vanilla; whip until smooth. Mix in farmer's cheese; stir in fruit. Make sure mixture is spreadable but not runny, then spread over pizza dough. Bake at 425° for 10-12 minutes. Makes one medium pizza. Enjoy as a meal or as a dessert.

*Lea Wojciechowski and her mother Anna, Troy*



## Fresh Berry Grilled Chicken

4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves

### Marinade:

2/3 c. apple juice

1/3 c. pomegranate juice

1/8 c. apple cider vinegar

1/2 t. coarse salt

1/8 t. ground white pepper

1/8 t. ground ginger

### Fresh Berry Sauce:

1 c. apple juice

1/4 c. blackberry jam

generous pinch of allspice

3/4 c. red raspberries, halved if large

3/4 c. dark sweet cherries, pitted, halved

1/2 c. blueberries

Place chicken breasts in a zip-lock freezer bag. Whisk together marinade ingredients and pour over chicken. Press air out of bag and seal. Turn to coat evenly; refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours. Remove chicken from marinade; discard marinade.

Prepare grill for direct cooking over medium heat. Place chicken on grill and cook, covered with grill lid, for 8 to 10 minutes or until juices run clear, turning once.

In a saucepan, heat apple juice, jam and allspice over low heat, stirring until jam melts and mixture is fairly hot. Stir in the fruit; cook 1 minute. Remove from heat. Serve sauce over chicken breasts. Serves 4.

Marilyn Partington Frame, Traverse City

## Blueberry Bread Pudding with Caramel Sauce

8 slices white bread, cubed

1 c. fresh or frozen blueberries

2 c. skim milk

1 c. Egg Beaters®, real egg substitute

2/3 c. sugar

1 t. vanilla

1/4 t. ground cinnamon

### Caramel Sauce:

1/4 c. skim milk

14 vanilla caramels

Place bread crumbs on bottom of lightly greased 8-inch square baking pan. Sprinkle with blueberries and set aside. In large bowl, combine milk, Egg Beaters, sugar, vanilla, and cinnamon; pour over bread mixture. Set pan in larger pan filled with 1-inch deep hot water. Bake at 350° for 1 hour or until knife inserted in center comes out clean. In small saucepan over low heat, heat milk and caramels until caramels are melted, stirring frequently. Serve bread pudding with caramel sauce. Makes 9 servings.

Lorraine Green, South Boardman

Photography by: 831 Creative

## Berry Delicious Lemonade

3 c. chopped strawberries

1 c. lemon juice

1 package lemonade drink mix

2 c. sugar

8 c. cold water

Combine all ingredients except water in blender until smooth. Pour into pitcher; add water. Serve with ice cubes. Makes 1 gallon.

Maria Yoder, Scottville

## Three-Berry Lemon Trifle

1 14-oz. can fat free sweetened condensed milk

1 8-oz. carton fat free reduced sugar lemon yogurt

1/3 c. lemon juice

2 T. grated lemon peel

1 8-oz. reduced fat whipped cream topping, thawed, divided

1 16-oz. prepared angel food cake, cut in 1-inch cubes

1 c. sliced fresh strawberries

1 c. fresh blueberries

1 c. fresh raspberries

2 T. slivered almonds, toasted

In a large bowl, combine condensed milk, yogurt, lemon juice and peel. Fold in 2 cups whipped topping. In a 3-quart trifle bowl or deep glass salad bowl, layer 1/3 of the cake, 1/3 of the lemon mixture and all

of the strawberries. Repeat cake and lemon mixture layers; top with all the blueberries. Repeat with remaining cake pieces and lemon mixture; top with all the raspberries. Spread remaining whipped topping over raspberries; sprinkle with almonds. Cover and refrigerate for at least 8 hours.

Paula Brousseau, Bellaire

## Raspberry Graham Dessert

18 graham crackers, rolled into crumbs

1 quart raspberries

1/2 c. butter, softened

3 T. granulated sugar

2 eggs

1 c. heavy cream, whipped

1 t. vanilla

1/2 c. chopped walnuts

1 1/2 c. powdered sugar

Press half of crumbs in bottom of 8-inch square pan. Cream butter, powdered sugar and vanilla with mixer; add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each. Continue beating at high speed until light and fluffy. Coat raspberries with granulated sugar. Fold berries and nuts into whipped cream. Spread creamed mixture evenly over crumbs, and top with berry mixture; top with remaining crumbs. Chill overnight. This is my absolutely all-time favorite dessert. Makes 8 servings.

Janice Harvey, Charlevoix



Red Berry Mousse

**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 send in recipes! Please send in **"Diabetic Favorites"** by July 10 and **"Holiday Desserts"** by Aug. 10.

Mail to: Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email [recipes@countrylines.com](mailto:recipes@countrylines.com).

# How Cherryland Electric Cooperative's Community Solar Works

## SUN Share contract

Solar Up North (SUN) members sign a contract to purchase a SUN share. Members can purchase multiple shares. Each share represents one full panel in the array.

## Panels installed in community solar array

After the member purchases a SUN share, one panel is installed in the array for every share sold. If a member purchases one share, one panel will be installed. If a member purchases 10 shares, 10 panels will be installed.

## Solar array produces electricity

Each panel in the array can produce approximately 300 kWh annually. As electricity is produced by the array, it is fed into Cherryland's office and used to power our community.

## SUN member receives monthly bill credit

Each month, SUN members will receive a bill credit for the return on their shares.



Reserve your shares today  
[cecelec.com](http://cecelec.com)



**SOLARUPNORTH**  
ALLIANCE



## Two Cherryland Students Selected for D.C. Trip



Two students from Traverse City Central High School have been selected for a free trip to Washington, D.C., as part of the cooperative's Youth Leadership Summit.

Austin Bluemel and Kristopher Konstanzer were two of four Cherryland students picked to attend the Youth Leadership Summit at Spring Hill camp in Evert in late April. Bluemel and Konstanzer will now represent the co-op at the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., along with teens from across the country, in June.

Cherryland employees Amanda Olds and Caroline Simaz represented the co-op at the Youth Leadership Conference.

Learn more about the annual co-op sponsored youth programs at [miYLS.com](http://miYLS.com).

## Next Member Input Session is June

The board of directors at Cherryland Electric Cooperative is offering another opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board on a quarterly basis. Members will be able to talk to the board next on Monday, June 17, at 9 a.m. at the company office in Grawn.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board. Members are asked to keep their comments to 5 minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input portion of the meeting only.

Cherryland members are afforded a chance to meet with the board on a quarterly basis during meetings in March, June, September and December.

## Pay Your Electric Bill Online

Want to save money and pay your Cherryland Electric Cooperative bill online?

It's easy to do. You can set up your accounts to get only an e-mail bill—no more paper bills.

If you would like to do this, access your account on [cherrylandelectric.com](http://cherrylandelectric.com). It will prompt you immediately after you sign in to make a decision on whether or not you want the paper bill to continue; if you do, check the box. If not, simply press "update."

Questions about the online payment can be answered by Cherryland's Member Service Department at 231-486-9200.

## Seeking Grant Applications

Area nonprofit agencies who are seeking financial help can apply for a grant through Cherryland Cares.

Cherryland Cares is a five-member board, made up of Cherryland Electric Cooperative members, who distribute money from Operation Roundup to area nonprofits.

The deadline for the next Cherryland Cares meeting is Friday, June 7. To receive a Cherryland Cares grant application or to join Operation Roundup, contact Nick Edson at Cherryland. His direct line is 486-9222 or email him at [nicke@cecelec.com](mailto:nicke@cecelec.com).

Operation Roundup money comes from Cherryland members who elect to round up their bills to the nearest dollar every month. This amount averages \$6 per year.

## The Lineman



The lineman's job is like no other  
Climbing polls, power lines make most  
men shudder

They know the importance of what they do.

Keeping families warm and cooler, too.

Humble, hard working long hours they strive

Watchful eye brothers by their side.

A storm is brewing far from their home

They pack for their journey, kiss family and go.

Rubber gloves, hot sticks, bucket trucks and hooks

Keep the lineman working as a community looks

Do they realize how dedicated the lineman  
they see?

Away from his loved ones working for  
strangers in need?

When you see the lineman working hard,  
getting dirty

Wish them protection to their home-bound  
journey.

Safety always the most important factor

While restoring power after a disaster.

Just wave and say "thank you" as they do their deed

For the lineman arrives to the town in great need.

~ Written by a Lineman's Proud Mom, Rosa Baker

February 2013

Note: One of Rosa's sons, Steve, is a 2000 graduate of Glen Lake High School, an Iraq veteran and now a lineman in Colorado. Steve's high school football coach at Glen Lake was Aaron Heming, now a Cherryland lineman.



CHERRYLAND  
CARES



[facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop](http://facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop)

## New Thermostat Programs Itself

A programmable thermostat is one of the easiest energy savers you can buy. Unfortunately, most people don't follow through and program it to automatically adjust the temperature when their home is empty or full.

But this problem may have been solved by a cool, although relatively expensive, new energy gadget called the Nest Learning Thermostat™. This "smart" thermostat learns from your behaviors, preferences and surroundings to create a custom heating and cooling schedule, keeping you comfortable when you're home and conserving energy when you're away.

"It was unacceptable to me that the device controlling 10 percent of all energy consumed in the U.S. hadn't kept up with advancements in technology and design," says Tony Fadell, cofounder/CEO of Nest Labs. So, his team set out to reinvent the thermostat using the advanced technologies, high-quality manu-



Photo - Nest Labs

facturing and thoughtful design the iPhone generation expects, he adds. "We hope it will not only save money and energy, but teach and inspire people to think more about how they can reduce home-energy consumption."

The U.S. Department of Energy and Lawrence Berkeley National Lab report that the annual energy bill for a typical single-family home is about \$2,200, with heating and cooling accounting for about one-half. The programmable thermostat, developed in the '70s, promised to help people conserve energy, but 89 percent of owners rarely or

The new Nest Learning Thermostat was created by Tony Fadell, Nest co-founder/CEO. The self-programming thermostat is part of a wave of home automation that is creating new smart appliances and monitoring technology that will help homeowners reduce energy costs and improve comfort and convenience.

never set a program.

The Nest thermostat (nest.com) addresses this programming problem through a combination of sensors, algorithms, machine learning and cloud computing. It programs itself based on the temperatures you set, then learns your personal schedule in a week and starts automatically turning down heating or cooling when you're away. You can even connect it to your home's Wi-Fi to control it from your laptop, smartphone or tablet. Change the temperature, adjust your schedule, and check your energy use.

*Note: For today's models, there is caution against using this thermostat with geothermal heating/cooling systems, which are not programmed correctly for this type of use and actually increase energy consumption as it switches to the auxiliary electric strip heat way too soon.*

## Slaying Silent Energy Killers

Brian Sloboda, a vampire slayer, hunts for energy killers that feed on electricity when nobody's looking.

"We need to kill what I call the 'energy vampires,'" the senior program manager for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) says. "Look around your house for any plug with what we call a 'wall wart'—those larger black boxes that are actually transformers. Those are energy killers."

Found on the cords of devices such as cell phone chargers and video game systems, these big plugs eat energy all day and night.

"They consume electricity whenever they

are plugged in, whether turned on or off," says Sloboda. "It's a tiny amount of electricity, but the power's drained for nothing."

In some cases, he adds, the consumption is more than just a little.

"Some video game systems from before 2010, even when they're turned off, use practically as much energy as when they're turned on," Sloboda explains, noting the same is true for some cable boxes and digital video recorder units.

To combat energy vampires, he has two recommendations: look for electronic devices with the Energy Star® logo (equipment that's



certified as energy-efficient); and use smart power strips.

"These power strips can sense a change of voltage running through them that will stop the flow of energy to that item or to other related items," he says. For example, a smart power strip can sense when a computer is turned off or in sleep mode and will automatically stop the flow of power to monitors, printers and speakers.

## Adding a Breath of Fresh Air

Energy conservation and air quality go hand-in-hand, but it's often an inverse relationship.

"As we tighten the building envelope, problems that have been around before now become prevalent—air quality issues, humidity, carbon monoxide, mildew and mold," explains Art Thayer, energy efficiency programs director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. "In today's no-leak construction, there's no place for these

culprits to escape, so we have to make sure we get proper air exchanges in addition to controlling energy leaks."

Specialized units called energy recovery ventilators are now available and can handle the task perfectly. "It can be done with passive air management—basically opening a window—but usually some mechanical intervention is needed to take care of moisture and air quality issues," Thayer adds.

Air quality is a major concern, especially

when there have been previous leaks. Controlling moisture at the source in basement and crawl spaces makes a big difference in mold and mildew issues. Proper bathroom ventilation can help improve air quality and health. While it may not be a top consideration during a bathroom or kitchen remodel, it is a critical improvement you'll want installed correctly.

"Electric co-ops work to help educate homeowners about the advantages of properly insulating and addressing air infiltration, ventilation, and heat loss issues," Thayer says, "to help ensure health and safety."



# Lower Humidity, Lower Electric Bill

**Q:** *Our old central air conditioner still works, but our house often seems too humid indoors. We set the thermostat lower, but it does not help a lot. How can we reduce the humidity and improve comfort?*

**A:** Damp, cool, indoor air creates a muggy atmosphere that often feels much worse than warmer humid air from open windows. This is particularly true for allergy sufferers because many allergens thrive in damp conditions.

Excessive humidity also increases air-conditioning costs because each degree that you lower the thermostat to compensate for the discomfort increases your electric bill. But there are things you can do to improve the situation.

First, try to reduce the humidity you're already producing. The kitchen and bathrooms are the greatest contributors to high humidity. Make sure your stove's exhaust hood is ducted outside, not into the attic (recirculating stove hoods are ineffective at controlling odor and moisture), and run the fan when cooking, especially while boiling water. In the summer you can also consider using small countertop cooking appliances outdoors on a patio or deck.

As in the kitchen, run the bathroom vent fan whenever showering or bathing and let it run a little while after you are done because there is much residual moisture in the air. Some of the new, quiet bathroom vent fans have humidity level sensors that run long enough to exhaust the moisture, but not too long to waste electricity and conditioned indoor air. You can also try installing a simple countdown timer as the wall switch—set it for 30 minutes, and the fan turns itself off.

If you can get the humidity level low enough, it is often possible to get by with a much higher thermostat setting and using ceiling fans.

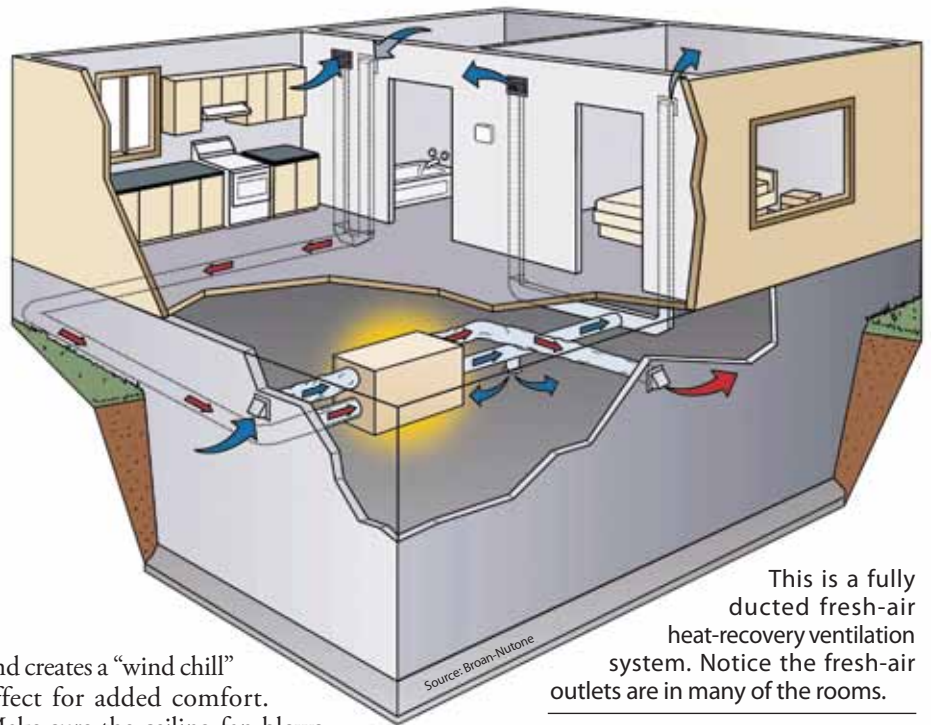
The air from a fan increases evaporation

and creates a "wind chill" effect for added comfort. Make sure the ceiling fan blows the air downward during summer and upward on low speed during winter.

Proper sizing of a central air-conditioning system is also critical for low humidity and comfortably cool indoor air. An HVAC contractor generally sizes the cooling system properly for a new house, but over the years, you may have made home energy efficiency improvements such as more insulation and new windows or doors. With such improvements, the home's cooling requirements may have dropped from, for example, 3.5 tons (12,000 Btuh/ton) to 3.0 tons. A unit that's too large for the space will operate inefficiently and may even cause mold problems because of the excess humidity. A licensed professional should size your central air-conditioning system using a mathematical code or automatic computer program.

If you plan to install a new high-efficiency air conditioner or heat pump and humidity is an issue, consider a two-stage or variable-output model with a variable-speed blower motor. With the matching smart thermostat, these models are designed for efficiency and humidity control. You can set both the desired temperature and humidity settings, and the air conditioner will run as normal to cool the air to the desired temperature. Once that temperature is met, the blower speed slows down to provide more dehumidification and less cooling.

Installing a whole-house ERV (energy recovering ventilation) system is an efficient way to exhaust stale, humid indoor air and



This is a fully ducted fresh-air heat-recovery ventilation system. Notice the fresh-air outlets are in many of the rooms.

bring in fresh outdoor air. Both heat and humidity are exchanged in this system to minimize energy loss, and are often controlled by a humidity sensor.

If you don't want to upgrade to a new unit, a contractor may be able to change some settings to slow the blower motor on your current one. This will dehumidify more, but will likely reduce its efficiency somewhat. If the lower humidity level allows you to set the thermostat higher and still be comfortable, you should save electricity overall.

There may be certain rooms where you find the humidity to be more uncomfortable than others due to the activity level. A portable air conditioner, which can be moved from room to room and vents outdoors through a window, can provide spot cooling and dehumidification.

Further, don't forget to fix leaky gutters and downspouts. If rainwater leaks out and saturates the ground around your house, some of that moisture will eventually migrate indoors.

*Send inquiries to James Dulley, Michigan Country Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com).*

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



# How to Plant the Right Trees, Shrubs

Whether you're planting trees to provide a wind break, reduce carbon in the environment or beautify your landscape, it's important to plant them away from power lines.

Besides causing power outages, trees that grow too close to electric lines can create shock and fire hazards. Trees (and wood in general) conduct electricity, and power outages or short interruptions can occur when branches contact with overhead lines, and electrical sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can cause fires. This is why children should be taught never to climb trees near power lines, and adults should never trim trees that are close to power lines (leave it to professionals). Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb while playing or trimming around a tree can be fatal.

"Trees provide many aesthetic, environmental and economic benefits, including energy-efficient shade and cooling during hot summer months, or natural windbreaks against winter winds," says Molly Hall, executive director of Safe Electricity ([safeelectricity.org](http://safeelectricity.org)). For example, trees reduce pollution by absorbing and removing carbon dioxide from the air and storing it in the wood and ground. "But everyone needs to be aware of the dangers and risks created when trees grow into power lines, and the importance

of calling the utility or utility locator service before beginning any landscaping project," Hall continues. "Landowners also need to understand utility line clearance practices and why they are important to safe and reliable electric service."

Research which trees and bushes offer shade, color and screening, but won't grow to interfere with your electric service. Local tree nurseries can help in designing a beautiful, shade-filled yard with trees appropriate for each section. You can also find planting help

at [arborfoundation.org](http://arborfoundation.org) or call the National Arbor Day Foundation at 1-888-448-7337.

If you have existing trees that appear to be growing into the power lines, call your electric co-op, and *never try to prune them yourself*. Utilities have or can recommend professionals trained to safely prune and trim trees for electric line clearance.

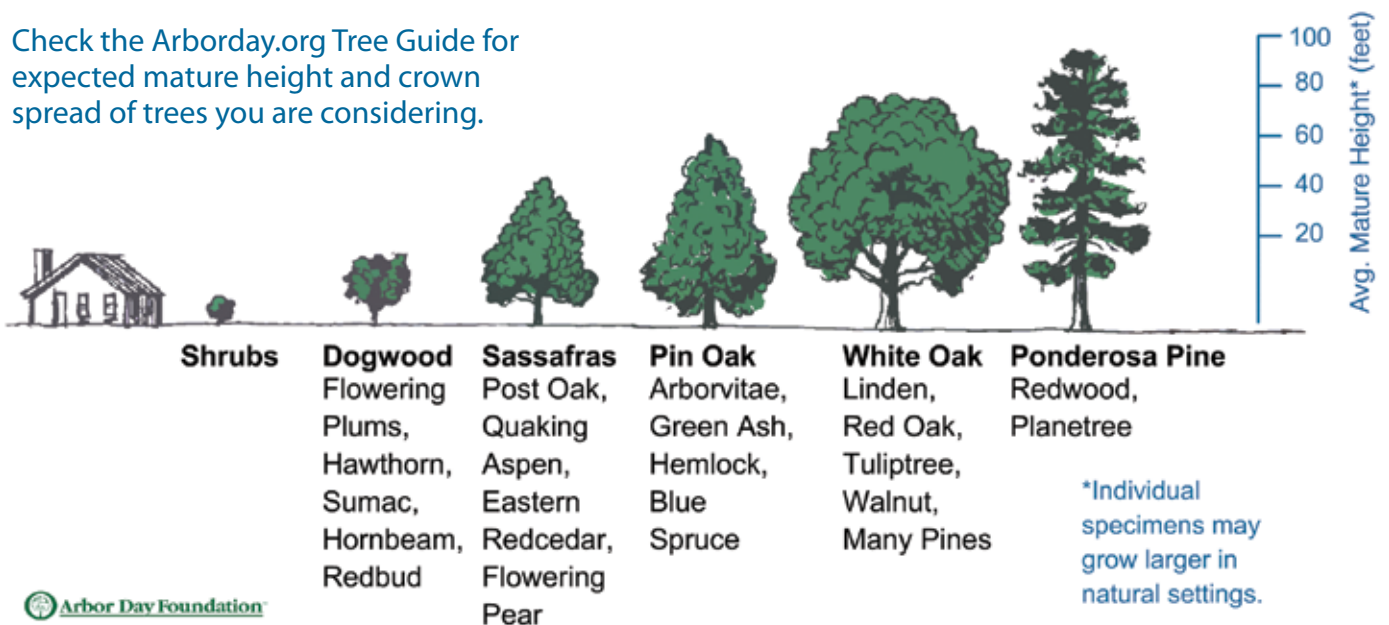
There are many beautiful varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs, Hall says, "Consider planting the types of trees that co-exist well with power lines and the environment."

## **Please don't plant close to power lines!**

### **For your safety, follow these planting tips:**

- 1) Before digging, dial 811** to ask the utility locator service to mark the location of underground utilities so that accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided.
- 2) Never plant a tree that could grow to 25 feet or more near a power line.** Tall-growing trees should be planted a minimum of 20 feet away from power lines, and 50 feet away to avoid future pruning. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended for trees planted near power lines.
- 3) Do not plant near underground utility services.** Tree roots can grow to interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities could also damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- 4) Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation** that could limit utility service access.

Check the [Arborday.org](http://Arborday.org) Tree Guide for expected mature height and crown spread of trees you are considering.





# Energy Optimization *Annual Report*

**C**herryland Electric Cooperative (CEC) is proud to report that we successfully met our annual energy reduction target for 2012 as set forth in Public Act 295.

This is the fourth consecutive year that your co-op has participated in the statewide program known as “Energy Optimization,” or simply EO.

Over that time, CEC has recorded energy savings of about 9.7 million kilowatt hours (kWh). This is a huge number when you consider that the typical CEC member uses about 8,400 kWh on average each year.

As a quick reminder how the EO program works—using cash rebates, utilities seek to entice their customers to make qualifying energy improvements. These rebates cover a wide range of improvements including efficient lighting, energy star appliances, old refrigerator and freezer recycling, efficient motor technologies, and a long list of other improvements.

The program is available to both residential and commercial members. Funding for rebates comes from utility customers through a line item charge on their electric bills.

Last year, CEC spent \$174,515 on the EO program to cover rebates and administrative costs. We collected \$243,393 for the same period. As a result of the surplus, the billing line item charge for EO was suspended as of January, 2013.

Our annual savings target for 2012 was

**Our annual savings target for 2012 was 3,633,973 kilowatt hours. Members delivered 3,798,484 kWh in deemed and calculated energy savings—exceeding the target by 4.5 percent!**

3,633,973 kilowatt hours. Members delivered 3,798,484 kWh in deemed and calculated energy savings, which included a carryover of excess kWh savings from 2011. We, therefore, exceeded our annual target by 4.5 percent.

For 2013, CEC is facing yet another enormous energy reduction target in excess of 3.6 million kWh. Unlike 2012, when we had a sizeable carryover to start the year, we do not have that luxury in 2013.

Thus, for the first time in four years since EO started, we could miss our goal. Certainly, we have not thrown in the towel just yet, and will do our best to find the savings.

Ultimately, these are huge numbers and it will require the involvement of perhaps 1,000 or more of our residential members and aggressive investment by our commercial members to meet the goal.

## **Other Program Highlights for 2012:**

- Members were given access to hourly metering data via an online tool called SmartHub (visit [cherrylandelectric.com](http://cherrylandelectric.com) and click on “Your Account”). Approximately 2,800 members took advantage of the hourly usage information. Over 50 percent

of surveyed SmartHub users reported changing their habits after becoming aware of hourly usage data, and 43 percent actually made energy efficient improvements.

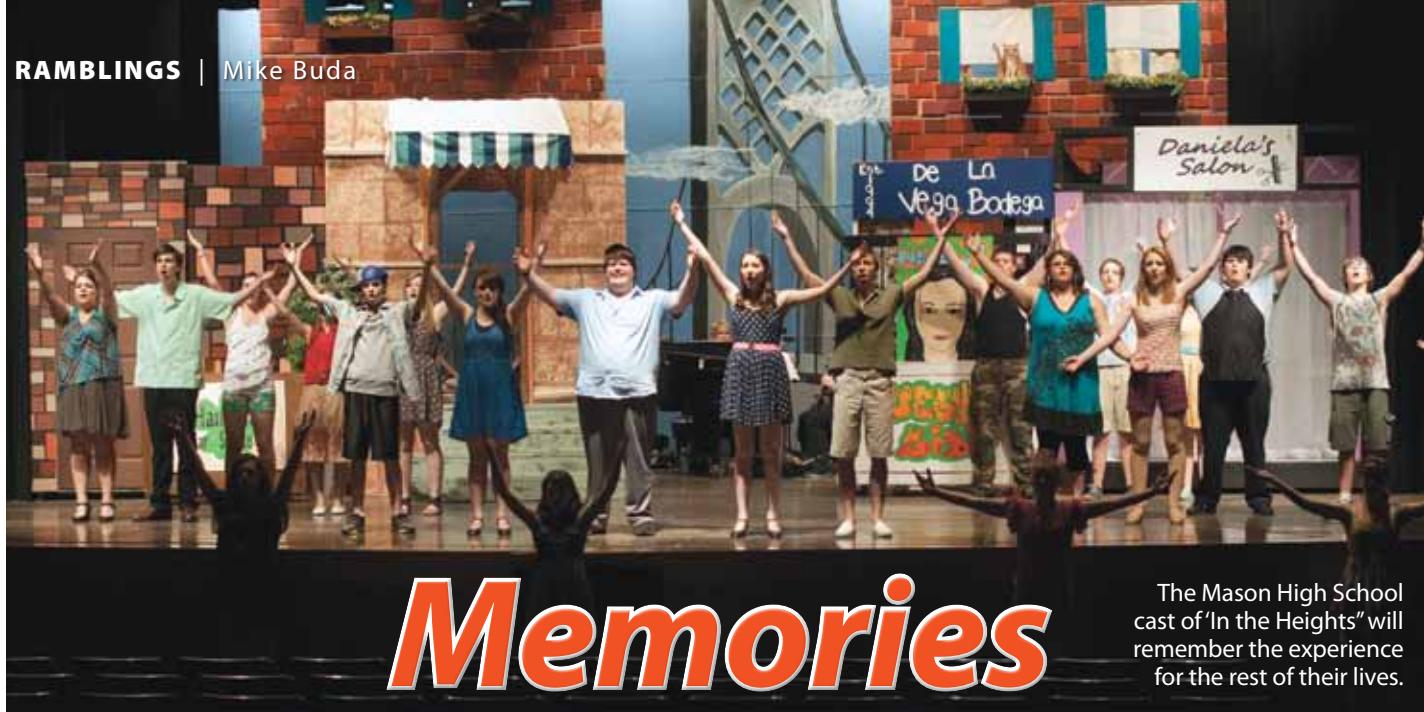
The survey and other testimonial feedback revealed what we suspected, that providing increasingly finite metering data points has empowered members to more effectively identify and solve usage problems. This action has increased awareness of inefficient habits and routines, and motivated members to invest in energy-saving measures.

- CEC rolled out a new incentive program called EO Capital Credits. This program allows members with individual CEC capital credit balances to invest a portion of those dollars in energy efficient improvements. The EO Capital Credit rebates are meant to supplement the traditional EO program described above. You may contact our office for more details. Over \$71,000 in EO Capital Credit rebates were paid out in 2012.

- Cost Savings—a new audit process was rolled out, reducing our annual program administration costs by \$4,500.

*Kevin Cragg is the member services manager at Cherryland Electric and oversees the Energy Optimization program*





# Memories

The Mason High School cast of 'In the Heights' will remember the experience for the rest of their lives.

Photo - Jen Bauer

**B**arbara dragged me to a high school musical a few weeks ago. I'm glad she did.

She wanted to go because the play involved students she taught in middle school and are among the last she taught before retiring. I didn't know anyone in the production or anything about the musical, "In the Heights," which is about cultural and economic changes in a New York City Puerto Rican neighborhood. It's not "West Side Story," but it's not unlike it, either. It won a handful of Tony Awards in 2008. The music is more rap and rock than Bernstein and Sondheim.

The Mason High School production of "In the Heights" was dazzling, not because of the acting, singing or stage production—these are amateurs, after all, though some could have a future on-stage—but because of the heart and energy of the actors, musicians, artists and stagehands. Their commitment to excellence, with only a couple of months to prepare, was evident.

No doubt, their directors, Helen Hansens and Sharon Garner, had much to do with their success. (Who doesn't need good teachers?) The school also seems to be solidly committed to theater, with a class even offered in Set Design and Construction.

The dedication and teamwork we saw that night occurs in hundreds of high schools all over Michigan in spring. The students who participate learn things at least as valuable as those learned by the athletes we tend to over-glorify: the value of hard work and teamwork, the camaraderie

forged by common purpose, the creativity in each of us.

The standing ovation the students received at the final curtain was sincerely delivered and well-deserved. It was a moment they will forever remember and cherish.

At about this same time, sports news was focused on the handful of athletes who were about to decide where they would go to college or who would draft them for the pros and multi-million-dollar contracts. This loud, greedy, degrading process seems to go on forever. We like our athletes. We cheer their successes. We tolerate their excesses. We love that they win—for us. (Is it any surprise that the highest paid public official in 29 states is the football or basketball coach of a state-supported university?)

Not many of us, athletes or not, end up in the future we envision—if we even bothered to envision it at all. We can make plans, but as we pursue them—in sports, the arts, or wherever—we are more likely to adapt to our life's changing conditions, because isn't that what life is, a series of adaptations? Aren't those adaptations what memories are made of?

It's too bad we channel kids into one or the other before they know what it's all about. Athletes would be better off understanding art, and artists would be healthier with sport in their background. Some schools make students choose one or the other. In Mason, an effort is made to bend schedules to fit the student.

No matter what else happens in their lives, the students in that musical will never forget it. For those who make a career in theater (and some will), it will be

remembered as a stepping stone. For the others, it will become fonder as the years pass. (Much as the lone, officially-recorded basket in my high school basketball career, in a game in the tiny Trout Creek gym, has achieved mythic status in my own mind.)

During a recent trip to Columbus, Ohio, to visit Barbara's Aunt Jeanette, we shared a home-cooked meal in her apartment, along with a tasty bottle of wine. Jeanette and I split the bottle. With the wine flowing, so did the memories, of Jeanette growing up in Ironwood, going through medical technology training in Minneapolis, moving to Columbus for a job before Pearl Harbor, the war years, the jobs after, the apartments she lived in.

Jeanette has an incredible memory and it was a joy to hear her stories, about her father, the former Ironwood Fire Chief, who in his youth raced Olympic gold medalist and world 100-meter record-holder Archie Hahn to a standstill, about the people they fed in their home during the Great Depression, and about her life in Columbus.

I have a lot of memories, too. I just can't remember them. I have the worst memory of anyone I know. Where did it go? Do women have better memories than men? Would I have benefitted from memorizing lines for plays? Will more wine help?

*Mike Buda is editor emeritus of Country Lines. Email Mike at [mike.f.buda@gmail.com](mailto:mike.f.buda@gmail.com) or comment on his columns at [countrylines.com/ramblings](http://countrylines.com/ramblings).*







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**JOIN** our new Member Advisory Committee (MAC) to find out more about your electric cooperative and to provide valuable feedback on our programs and services. Our MAC will consist of representatives from all of our service areas. You must be a Cherryland member to serve on the MAC. MAC members will serve 2-year terms and are limited to 2 terms of consecutive service.

We will hold the first MAC meeting in September. The committee will meet 5 times — September, October, January, March and May — on the second Tuesday of the month, at 6 p.m.

If you are interested in volunteering, contact:  
Rachel Johnson — 231-486-9275 — [rjohnson@cecelec.com](mailto:rjohnson@cecelec.com)

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