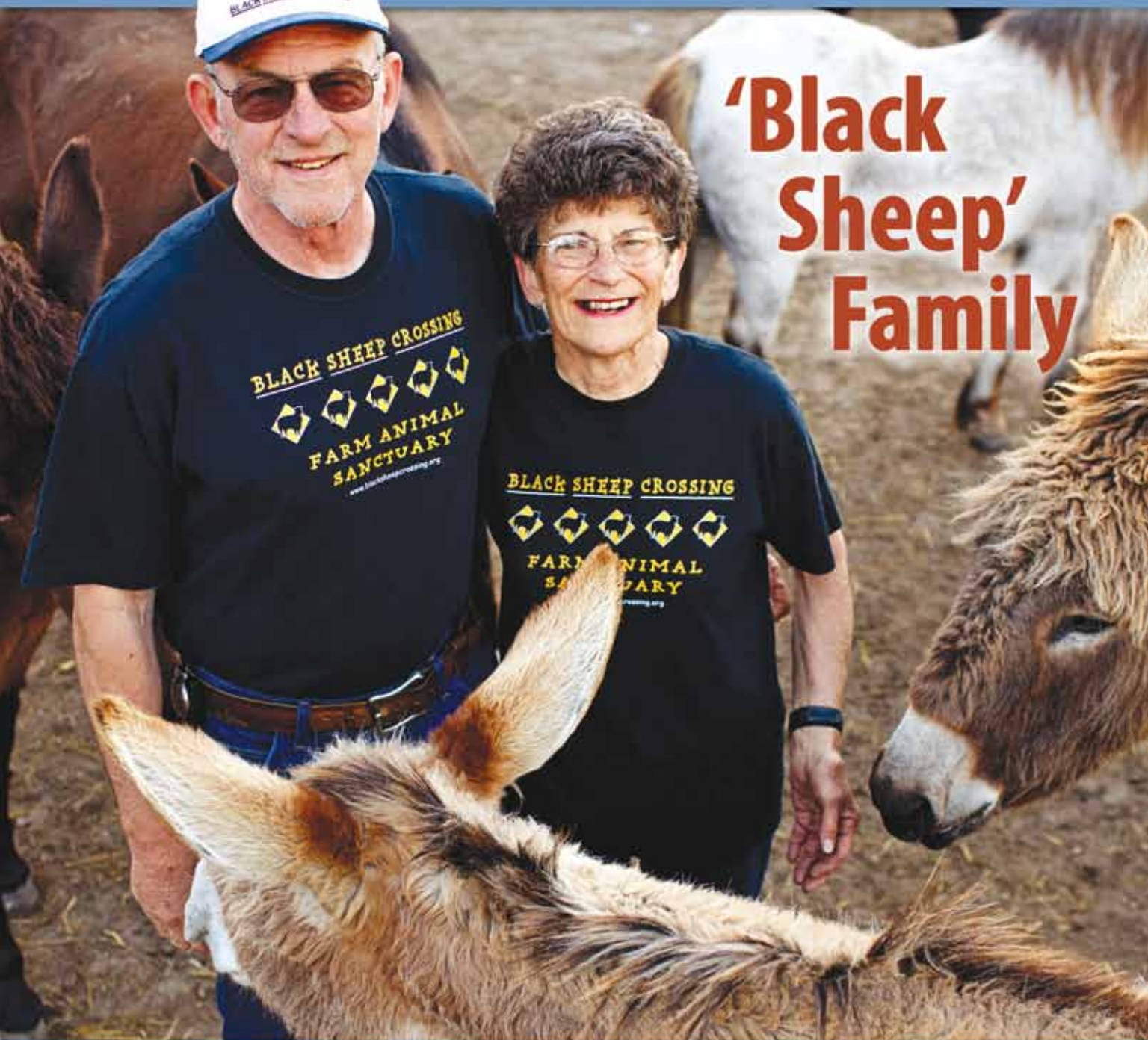


# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES

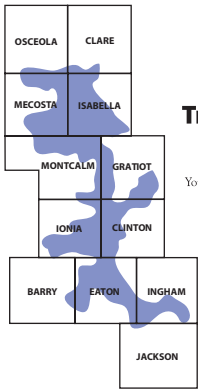


## 'Black Sheep' Family

3 Co-op Teens Learn Leadership

6 Line Crews Star In National Safety Video

7 HomeWorks Owners Show Generosity



**Tri-County Electric Cooperative**

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

**Blanchard office:**

3681 Costabella Avenue  
Blanchard MI 49310

Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

**Portland office:**

7973 E. Grand River Avenue  
Portland, MI 48875

Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

**Electric bill/account questions:**

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

**Pay by phone, anytime:**

1-877-999-3395

**Service questions/outages:**

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

**Tri-County Propane:**

1-877-574-2740

**High Speed Internet**

1-800-668-8413

[homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org)

**E-mail:** [tricoenergy@homeworks.org](mailto:tricoenergy@homeworks.org)

[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://www.facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**District 1 — Philip Conklin**

5130 W. Gresham Hwy., Charlotte, MI 48813  
517-726-0127

[pconklin@homeworks.org](mailto:pconklin@homeworks.org)

**District 2 — Wayne Swiler**

*Vice-Chairman*

11750 Ainsworth Rd., Lake Odessa, MI 48849  
616-374-3141

[wswiler@homeworks.org](mailto:wswiler@homeworks.org)

**District 3 — Carl Morton**

*Chairman*

11280 Eden Trail, Eagle, MI 48822  
517-626-2258

[cmorton@homeworks.org](mailto:cmorton@homeworks.org)

**District 4 — Laverne Hansen**

*Secretary-Treasurer*

1190 E. M-46 Hwy., Edmore, MI 48829  
989-427-5851

[lhansen@homeworks.org](mailto:lhansen@homeworks.org)

**District 5 — Cara Evans**

10180 Roosevelt Rd., Bannister, MI 48807  
989-862-5590

[cevens@homeworks.org](mailto:cevens@homeworks.org)

**District 6 — Ed Oplinger**

10890 W. Weidman Road, Weidman, MI 48893  
989-644-3079

[eoplinger@homeworks.org](mailto:eoplinger@homeworks.org)

**District 7 — Dean Floria**

1163 Taft Rd., Remus, MI 49340  
989-382-5230

[dfloria@homeworks.org](mailto:dfloria@homeworks.org)

**Editor:** Jayne Graham, CCC

# Speak Up, or Have Somebody Else Speak For You



**B**y the time you read this, your electric cooperative's annual round of district membership meetings will be complete. We will have served thousands of hot dogs and renewed friendships with thousands of the co-op's member-owners.

But even though we will appreciate every one of the members who comes out to their neighborhood meeting, the bottom line is that only about 2 or 3 percent of the total membership is involved with running their co-op.

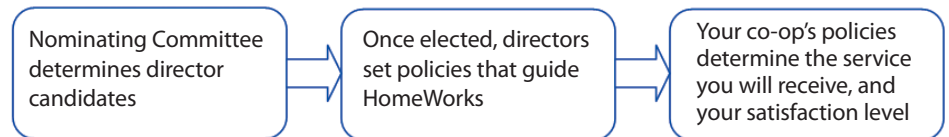
At each district, the members who attended elected delegates, who will each represent 100 of their neighbors. From those delegates, the district officers are elected. These people have an important job: every three years they serve as a nominating committee for the board of directors' seat in your district. And that's

elections. The turnout is higher, true, but in most cases a minority of people are making the decisions that affect every one of us.

And it's not just elections that work better with grassroots participation. Your opinions and comments are needed at every level of government, from legislators to rulemakers, to make sure leaders know what you want and expect, and how you feel services could be improved.

We work with our statewide and national associations to speak on your behalf in Lansing and Washington. Once in a while, as with the "Our Energy, Our Future" campaigns of a few years ago, we've asked you to participate directly.

The time is coming when more voices will be needed. Legislators tell us they pay more attention when one member, one citizen



important because the directors, as a group, set the policies that guide how your co-op is operated.

You can see how having only 2 or 3 percent of the members involved in the process might affect your experience with HomeWorks Tri-County Electric.

What about the other 97 percent? Some are happy with their service and don't see a need to get involved, since everything seems to be running well. Some don't realize they have a say in their electric utility. And some just don't make it a priority in their already-busy lives. "Somebody else" will do it.

It's the same with local, state and national

speaks up, than when an organization talks for them.

We hope you'll speak up when you're asked—when it's time to run your co-op, to run your state government, or to run your country. These issues are too important to leave for "somebody else" to take care of.

Mark Kappler  
General Manager







## Teens Enjoy Leadership Summit

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative students who participated in this year's Michigan Youth Leadership Summit were (right, from L-R): Ethan Simmer, DeWitt; Alora Rayburn, Lyons; Maddie Karcher, Blanchard; Jillilyn McVeigh, Orleans; and HomeWorks accounting supervisor Pat Simmer. At left, Alora Rayburn steps out on the ropes-and-wires course, new this year. Learn more about this annual co-op sponsored program at [miYLS.com](http://miYLS.com).

### Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

#### Tariff and Rule Changes Effective June 1, 2013

The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors adopted the following change to the Cooperative's tariffs and fees at a Special Open Meeting held April 22, 2013, in accordance with P.A. 167.

1) Reconciled the 2012 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections and ordered the collection of the net under-collection of \$225,706. Based on projected kWh sales through December 2013, a factor of (\$0.00187)/kWh will be utilized.

For specific details of any HomeWorks tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-800-562-8232 or visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

## Your Board In Action

### Meeting at Blanchard, April 22, your board of directors:

- In a special Open Member Meeting, reconciled the 2012 Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) factor and ordered collection of the net under-collection of \$225,706 through an increased PSCR in June-December 2013.
- Authorized staff to retire capital credits to 118 estates at a discounted cash value of \$61,700.
- Agreed to make a \$2,500 donation to NRECA's International Fund.
- Adopted a Record Number and Date resolution, setting the lists of members eligible to vote at the 2013 district membership meetings.
- Read and approved "Board Policy 105 – Political Activities" with no changes, and approved minor wording changes to "Board Policy 106 – Director Replacement."
- Reviewed the components of the cooperative's Equity Management Plan and comparisons of equity levels with other co-ops

across the US or of similar size.

- Moved the August meeting forward one week to August 19.
- Learned there were 96 new members since February.
- Acknowledged the April safety reports, listing employee training as well as employee and public incidents.

### Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject.

The next board meeting is scheduled for June 24 at Portland.

Members who need directions to the office, or who wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

# It's a Wrap!

Co-op lineworkers star in national safety video.

Portland linemen Ryan Smith, Rob Brennan and Chris Teachout (inset photo, L-R) volunteered to be cast members for Federated Insurance safety videos that will be used nationally.

Filming took place May 6–9 at various locations within the HomeWorks Tri-County service area to get footage for the safety videos.

The “Circle of Safety” video focuses on accidents that happen while vehicles are backing up, and knowing the area around a vehicle before moving.

The “Doing It Right” video shows lineworkers taking short cuts that go against OSHA regulations and most safety manuals; the lineworkers then demonstrate the correct method of the same tasks to show that “doing it right” does not take any more time.



Photos – Tanya Schneider

## Area Students Win Touchstone Energy Scholarships

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

Winning a \$1,000 scholarship each were Tyler Brecht of Riverdale and Grant Feldpausch of St. Johns.

Brecht, the son of Mark and Terri Brecht, plans to study animal science at Michigan State University, with plans to become a large animal veterinarian. He is a graduate of Alma High School, where he was active in sports, FFA, 4-H, and National Honor Society.

Feldpausch, the son of Glen and Jill Feldpausch, also plans to study animal science. The St. Johns High School graduate will attend Cornell University and hopes to return to his family’s dairy farm. He has been active in sports, church, and National Honor Society.

Two adult education scholarships, \$250 each, were awarded to Patsy Alvera, and Lindsey Brasington, both of Lakeview.

Alvera, currently working as a playground aide at Lakeview Community Schools, attends Montcalm Community College, where she is enrolled in both accounting and early childhood development courses.

Brasington, a part-time teller at Isabella Bank in Six Lakes, is dual-enrolled at Montcalm Community College and Ferris State University, studying nursing and medical office administration.

The Touchstone Energy Scholarship program will begin accepting applications for the 2014-15 school year in January. High school seniors are eligible for one-time scholarships of up to \$1,000. Adults returning to school can receive a \$250 grant. Watch homeworks.org for more information.



Patsy Alvera

Lindsey Brasington

Tyler Brecht

Grant Feldpausch



# Members Stock Food Pantries at District Meetings

*Thanks to all who came out to participate!*



HomeWorks employees help Phil Grimwood of Helping Hands of Eaton County load food donations from District 1 members at Charlotte.



Prize-winning runs in the Weaver family, of Elwell: Hallie won the youth prize of an iPod Touch, and mom Richelle won an iPad mini.



Al & Louie Adkins from the Carson City Food Pantry load up the generous food donations from District 5 members at Fulton.



District 3 members at Eagle filled several boxes with food for the Basic Needs Pantry of St. Johns.

Photos by Jeffery Erridge, Brian Thompson, Tom Manting, and Chris Reed



Members gather for a pre-meeting supper at District 7 in Remus.



Helen Johnson of Charlotte won the grand prize of an iPad mini at District 1.

# Smart Solutions

Receive a free online energy audit for your home.

**Y**ou can do everything online these days—check bank statements, watch TV shows, and catch up with old classmates on Facebook. It turns out that you can also map your home's energy use at the tip of your fingers.

Use HomeWorks Tri-County's Home Energy Optimizer, a free online home energy assessment tool, to learn about your energy use and how to save more energy and money. You'll be asked important questions about your home—everything from square footage to your typical thermostat settings. Enter as much or as little information as you like. The more detail you provide, the more customized your results will be. Either way, you'll be saving energy in no time. Completing the online interactive survey takes just 15-30 minutes.

Click "Calculate" and the Energy Optimizer will automatically estimate your energy

use and projected heating, cooling, hot water, appliance, and lighting costs. It also calculates your energy savings cost potential in each category to help you see where you can get the highest payback for efficiency improvements. The "Upgrade" tab provides a list of "Recommended Upgrades" with simple ways to lower your energy use.

## Benefits

- ▲ FREE and useful
- ▲ Convenient—ability to save and edit responses or finish later
- ▲ Customized for your city and climate
- ▲ Do-it-yourself, affordable, energy-saving actions
- ▲ Completion entitles you to a free energy saving kit

You have nothing to lose by giving the Energy

Optimizer tool a try. After all, it's *free*, and it will help you understand where you're spending the most on energy. You'll walk away with free products and solid ideas on how to improve your home, enhance your comfort, and fight off mold and drafts.

## Next Steps

Here's how to get started today:

- ▲ Click on "Home Audit" at [michigan-energy.org/HomeWorks](http://michigan-energy.org/HomeWorks)
- ▲ Write down your session number.
- ▲ Answer questions as best you can. (It's okay to skip questions if you have to.)
- ▲ Finish the audit to receive your *free energy-saving kit*. Each kit is a \$25 value and includes 5 CFLs, 2 faucet water savers and 1 new shower head.
- ▲ Install all kit items. Keep other Energy Optimization programs and rebates in mind for future purchases.

# So Simple, So Smart.

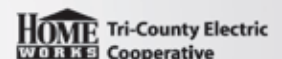


## Test your home...online

Computer on? Clicker finger ready? Find out where your home is wasting energy at [michigan-energy.org/homeworkshomeaudit](http://michigan-energy.org/homeworkshomeaudit). In as little as 15 minutes, your free Energy Optimizer online energy assessment gives you personalized, do-it-yourself tips to fix your home's energy problems.

**ENERGY TIP: A home that wastes energy, wastes money. Get your free home energy assessment today!**

ONLINE: [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) PHONE: 877.296.4319



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





## Two Great Options!

When you're upgrading your electric water heater, come to HomeWorks for great energy-saving options!

**\$99 Down** - Get a Freedom® water heater and pay it off with your monthly Hot Water Deal credit.

**No-Leak Lifetime Warranty** - Pay a premium up-front and get a Marathon® water heater with a lifetime warranty.

With EITHER, you'll receive a \$50 instant rebate, a free water aerator kit, and pipe wrap.

Call Today!

**1-800-562-8232**

**HOME WORKS** Tri-County Electric  
Cooperative

\*Participating in our Hot Water Deal allows HomeWorks to temporarily interrupt the flow of electricity to your water heater for a short time during peak electric use periods. Even with the interruption, your water heater will keep water hot for hours, leaving you plenty of hot water for showers, laundry, and your family's other needs.



Tom Manting, top, and Nick Rusnell examine one of the geothermal units at HomeWorks Tri-County Electric's Portland office, setting them up for load management controls.

## Load Management is Good For Your Co-op

At HomeWorks, our member-owners have taken part in two successful load management programs over the years: the Hot Water Deal, and Dual Fuel heating and cooling.

These were originally offered by Wolverine Power Cooperative, our power supplier, to help reduce overall power costs. Since Jan. 1, 2012, HomeWorks has taken over these programs.

Load Management shifts the use of electricity from periods of high demand to periods of lower demand, when the cost of electricity usually is lower.

Savings from reducing the cooperative's

power bill are passed on to all of our member-owners, and you also help reduce the need for new power plants to meet growing peak demand.

Think of the electric system as a highway that has certain rush hours, such as hot summer afternoons, when power supplies are stretched to their capacity and beyond, and causing price spikes in power costs.

Load management encourages users to change their usage pattern to a different time, reducing the strain on an overloaded system.

For more information and to see if you qualify for Load Management savings, call 1-800-562-8232 or visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

# How to Plant the Right Trees, Shrubs

**W**hether 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.

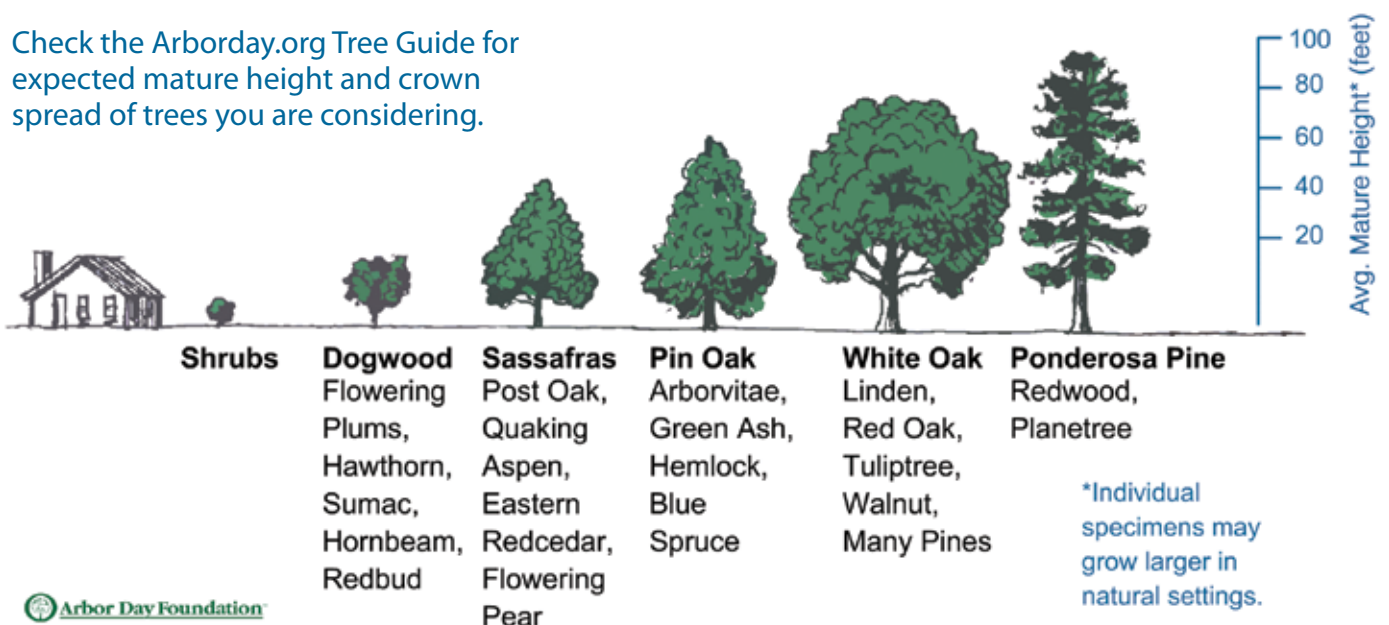
There are many beautiful varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs, Hall says, "Consider planting the types of trees that co-exist well with power lines and the environment."

## 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.





# Touchstone Energy Helps Local Schools



▲ HomeWorks dispatcher Kelly Vroman (L), with Portland High School principal Christine Rockey. The school received \$2,400 to help move classroom projectors from temporary stands to ceiling mounts.



▲ HomeWorks Customer Service Representative Michelle Huhn (L), with Saranac Junior High teacher Linette Reed. The Saranac school received \$800 to subscribe to an online social studies curriculum.

## People Fund Helps with Housing, Food

Meeting April 17, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board made four grants totaling \$3,100, including:

- \$500 to YES Center, Grand Ledge, for after-school healthy snacks;
- \$1,000 to St. Michael Conference St. Vincent de Paul, Grand Ledge, for the Housing and Utility Program;
- \$1,000 to Montabella Ministerial Association Food Pantry, Edmore, for food and personal items; and
- \$600 to a Isabella County family to help with housing expenses.

### How To Apply For a People Fund Grant

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form, grant guidelines, and other helpful information. You'll also find details and application forms at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

**Note:** Applications must be received by June 24 for the July 3 meeting, and by August 5 for the August 14 meeting.

## Save on More Services with Your Co-op Connections Card

Use your Co-op Connections Card to save money on national deals, prescriptions and health care, and at these local businesses:

■ **Lakeview Car Center**, P.O. Box 357, Lakeview. *\$5 off lube, oil & filter or free lube, oil & filter with collision repair. Up to 6 quarts of oil; excludes synthetic oil.*

■ **Gary's Heating Service**, 9758 E. Grand River Ave., Portland. *10% discount on service. 5% discount on installation. Must present card to receive discount.*

■ **McKenna's Village Restaurant**, 321 N Lincoln Ave., Lakeview. *5% off one full-priced dinner. One per customer; not valid with other offers; does not include kids' meals.*

■ **Lynne Paradiso**, 110 E. Bridge St., Portland. *\$5 off any service of \$20 or more (hair design, coloring, highlights, waxing, Malibu treatments, styling lessons, FREE consultations). Call 517-647-6153 for hours.*

■ **Stanton Auto Glass**, 302 S. State St., Stanton. *\$10 off any order or free wiper blades.*

■ **Mission Lumber - Lakeview**, 9784 M-46, Lakeview. *Members receive a flat fee delivery charge of \$10 for delivery within*

*Isabella, Mecosta, Montcalm and Newaygo counties.*

■ **Sara's Sweets Bakery**, 2211 East Beltline Suite F2, Grand Rapids. *20% off a cake purchase (excludes weddings, not accruable with any other discount), must give one week notice, 616-988-6760.*

■ **The Piano Shop**, 5625 Five Mile Rd., Ada. *Free estimate and 20% off repair, tuning, home theater installation.*

■ **A & B Pawn**, 215 E. State St., Belding. *10% off entire purchase.*

■ **Patriot Mini Storage**, 10561 N. Loomis Rd., or 643 W. 5th St., Clare. *Rent a unit for 3 months, get the 4th month free.*

■ **Meadow Lanes Bowling**, 430 W. 5th St., Gladwin. *Friday nights 5-9 p.m., get three games and shoes for \$8 per person.*

For more information about local, national and pharmacy discounts, visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) and click on the Co-op Connections card.





## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

# Now Open 24/7 at Millions of Locations Worldwide!

## It's easy to make an Express Payment. No registration needed! Have your account number handy before you start.



### By Phone:

- ◆ Dial 1-877-999-3395
- ◆ Select "Make Payment" Option
- ◆ Key in Account Number, followed by #
- ◆ Listen to your Current Balance
- ◆ Key in Amount to Pay
- ◆ Key in Payment Information
- ◆ Wait for Payment Confirmation  
*(Make a note of your confirmation number)*

▶ Average time to pay: 2 minutes, 45 seconds



### By Internet:

- ◆ Go to [homeworks.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html](http://homeworks.smarthub.coop/PayNow.html)
- ◆ Key in Amount to Pay
- ◆ Select "Pay Now"
- ◆ Select your Payment Option
- ◆ Select "Make Payment"
- ◆ Key in Payment Information
- ◆ Select "Continue"
- ◆ Wait for Payment Confirmation  
*(Make a note of your confirmation number)*

▶ Average time to pay: 1 minute, 50 seconds

**Pay Bill Now**  
*No registration required.*

Also at HomeWorks.org: Click on the **SmartHub** logo to log-in and view your energy use and account history.

## AutoPay Sign-up



To sign up for recurring monthly payments from your financial institution, complete this form and return it to HomeWorks Tri-County, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875. HomeWorks reserves the right to revoke an AutoPay subscription if bank approval is denied. Please continue to pay your bill until notified on your statement that AutoPay is active.

**Yes!** I authorize HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative and/or HomeWorks Tri-County Propane to charge my checking or savings account for any accrued balance on the account(s) listed:

Electric Account(s) # \_\_\_\_\_ Propane Account(s) # \_\_\_\_\_

Checking Account *(attach a voided check)*     Savings Account *(attach a voided deposit slip)*

Name on account: *(please print)* \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Signature is required to activate autopayments. Phone and email is needed if we have questions regarding your AutoPay subscription)*

Save time and postage with any of these easy payment options. You can go one step further—choose to stop receiving a paper bill and download your statement as a pdf document from SmartHub at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org). Save your co-op money while reducing waste—it's easy!

**Checking this box authorizes us to stop mailing you a paper bill.**