

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

April 2014

# Michigan COUNTRY LINES

**Let the Sun Shine!**



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RIBBON CUTTING  
FOR COMMUNITY  
SOLAR GARDEN  
**APRIL 22 (EARTH DAY)**

**4** Welcoming  
Spring

**8** Geothermal Seminars  
- April 16, 17

**9** Schools Get Touchstone  
Energy Grants

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**SEVEN**  
bration



April 2014  
Vol. 34, No. 4

Executive Editor  
Casey Clark

Editor  
Gail Knudtson

Publisher  
Michigan Electric  
Cooperative  
Association

# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES

### IN THIS ISSUE

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

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

**POSTMASTER:** SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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

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

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

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

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



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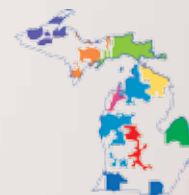


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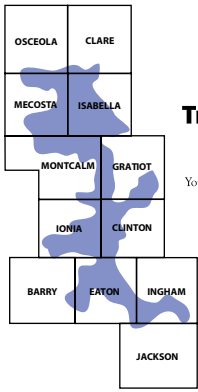
HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative members John and Becky Schlatter have cruised Michigan's own Route 66 and written a book about it called, "Splittin' the Mitten: Get Your Kicks on Michigan's Route 66." Enjoy part of their ride on pages 10-11.

Photos Courtesy – John & Becky Schlatter

*\*Some co-op editions have a different cover*



Michigan's Electric  
Cooperatives  
[countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)



## 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)

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**Editor:** Jayne Graham, CCC

## MANAGER'S MESSAGE

# Another Sign of Spring

Our long, cold, snowy winter has tested us all, and now I hope everyone is welcoming spring – gladly saying goodbye to the ice and snow, and trying to forget those very cold temperatures.

This past winter certainly made us realize how much electricity does for us, and how much we depend on it for so much in our daily lives. And what a true value electricity is, for all the work, convenience and comfort it provides for us.

Now that we're all looking for the robins, crocuses and baseball games (or any other sign that spring has arrived), there's another sign for you to note, which is that HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative has scheduled the district membership meetings in May.

Have you ever attended your electric co-op's district meeting?

Have you met the general manager, Mark Kappler, and talked with him about your concerns?

Do you know the employees who keep things flowing and working for you?

Did you vote for the person who would represent you and your neighbors, making decisions for the cooperative at

the board table?

Have you ever said "thank you" to the people who keep the power on?

If not, try something you've never done before.

Come experience your district meeting. All you have to do is come on in, sit back and relax, talk with friends and neighbors, or maybe meet someone new. We will do the rest.

The opportunity is yours, and the door is open to experience the power of the people who come together to make HomeWorks Tri-County

Electric Cooperative.

Oh, there are prizes to be won also, and did I mention food?

I welcome all of you to take the opportunity this year to experience the cooperative difference at your district membership meeting.



**Cara Evans**

District 5 Director

*Cara Evans*

**Cara Evans**  
District 5 Director

## Dates and locations for this year's district meetings:

**May 12** - District 5 Fulton Middle School Gym

**May 13** - District 3 Eagle Park Hall

**May 14** - District 7 St. Michael's School, Remus

**May 15** - District 1 St. Mary's Church Hall, Charlotte

**May 19** - District 4\* Vestaburg Middle School

**May 20** - District 6 Beal City High School

**May 21** - District 2\* St. Edward's Church Hall, Lake Odessa

\* Board election in Districts 2 and 4; see the May issue of Country Lines for information and an absentee ballot request form

# Ribbon Cutting Set for Community Solar Garden

**April 22 (Earth Day)  
11 a.m.  
at the Portland solar array**



Crews check over each section before hoisting it into place.



## ▲ Installing Your Co-op's Solar Garden

The entire array is 4 panels high by 19 wide, a total of 76 panels generating about 20.9 kW at peak. The array is located in front of the Portland Operations Center, where there is room for more arrays if they prove popular.

► Cascade Renewable Energy designed the installation and High Point Electrical installed the solar array in mid-February. Each section of 4 panels is about 14 feet by 5 feet, and weighs about 250 pounds, so a crane is necessary to help get each one aligned properly.

**COVER PHOTO:** Directing a section of 4 solar panels into place at the Community Solar Garden.



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

*Special Member Meeting is set for 9 a.m. April 28, at the cooperative's Blanchard office*

The board of directors will consider changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on April 28, 2014, to be held at the cooperative office at 3681 Costabella Avenue, Blanchard, MI. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. and is open to all members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

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

The following items will be considered. Members will have an opportunity to address the board on the proposed changes prior to board action:

- 1) Reconcile the 2013 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections. The Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor is applied to Tri-County Electric Cooperative's retail member-customers' monthly kilowatt-hour use. It represents the power supply costs as established by the cooperative in conjunction with Wolverine Power Cooperative. The factor is established annually, and reviewed monthly.
- 2) Discuss elimination of provision for outage-related penalties set by the State of Michigan, to be paid to utility customers in case of power outages extending beyond pre-determined limits. While HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative has restored outages within those limits to date, the idea of one member-consumer paying more to subsidize another member-consumer receiving an outage penalty goes against the cooperative principles. Actual elimination of the provision would take place by vote of the members at the cooperative's annual meeting.

Notice of changes or additions to the cooperative's rates or service rules shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in Michigan Country Lines at least 30 days prior to their effective date.

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

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



**Best Deviled Eggs Ever (pictured)**

*Fresh eggs (amount you want to serve)*  
*Marzetti's® coleslaw dressing*  
*Salt and pepper*  
*Paprika*  
*Dash of Tabasco® sauce*  
*2 T. or more minced capers*

Place eggs in a pot and just cover with cold water. Bring to boiling, then shut off heat and cover with lid. Set timer for 15 minutes. Remove and cool eggs, shell and cut in half. Remove yolks and mix in bowl with Marzetti's slaw dressing, salt, pepper, hot sauce, and minced capers to taste, until the mixture is spoonable. Spoon mixture into chilled egg halves, sprinkle with paprika and serve on lettuce leaf.

—Pamela Newcomb, Charlevoix

**Raisin Sauce for Ham**

*2 T. horseradish, drained*  
*1 T. cornstarch*  
*½ t. dry mustard*  
*10 oz. jar red currant jelly*  
*⅓ c. golden raisins*

Since Easter dinner usually means HAM, here's a family recipe that we always make when we have ham...it's DELICIOUS! Heat all ingredients over medium heat. Stir constantly until mixture comes to a boil for 1 minute. Remove from heat and cover...serve!

—Marilyn Van Laan, Traverse City

**Mrs. Appleyard's Patrician Potatoes**

*4 c. cooked mashed potatoes*  
*3 c. cream style cottage cheese*  
*¾ c. commercial sour cream*  
*1 ½ T. finely grated onion*  
*⅛ t. white pepper*  
*1 t. salt (optional)*  
*melted butter*  
*½ c. chopped almonds (optional)*

Mash potatoes thoroughly. Add cottage cheese and sour cream. Blend. Add onion, white pepper and salt. Mix well. Spoon into a shallow, buttered 2-quart casserole. Brush surface with melted butter. Bake 350° for ½ hour. Sprinkle with almonds. 8 servings. This was my mom's recipe. We always have it with ham at Easter and Christmas.

—Diane Russell, Traverse City

**P.B. Graham Eggs**

*½ c. shortening*  
*2 c. powdered sugar*  
*¾ c. creamy peanut butter*  
*1 c. graham cracker crumbs*  
*½ c. semi-sweet chocolate chips*  
*½ c. graham cracker crumbs, crushed*



**These are perfect for spring brunch, too!**

*peanuts or chocolate sprinkles*

Combine shortening, powdered sugar and peanut butter in a large bowl. Beat at low speed of electric mixer until well blended. Stir in 1 c. crumbs and chocolate chips. Cover and refrigerate 1 hour. Form dough into 1-inch eggs. Roll in ½ c. crumbs, peanuts or sprinkles for a fancier cookie egg. Makes about 3 dozen eggs.

—Lorraine Green, South Boardman

**Carrot Cake**

*4 egg whites*  
*1 ¼ c. apple sauce*  
*1 c. white sugar*  
*1 c. brown sugar*  
*2 t. vanilla extract*  
*2 c. all-purpose flour*  
*2 t. baking soda*  
*2 t. baking powder*  
*½ t salt*  
*2 t. ground cinnamon*  
*½ t. nutmeg*  
*3 c. grated carrots*

**Frosting:**

*½ c. butter, softened, or Earth Balance®, made of all vegetable oils*  
*8 oz. light cream cheese, softened*  
*3 c. confectioner's sugar*  
*1 t. vanilla extract*

Preheat oven to 350°. Grease and flour a 9x13-inch pan. In a large bowl, beat together eggs, oil, white sugar and vanilla. Mix in flour, baking soda, baking powder, salt, nutmeg,

and cinnamon. Stir in carrots. Pour into prepared pan. Bake in preheated oven 40-45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Let cool in pan for 10 minutes, then turn out onto a wire rack and cool completely. To make frosting: In a medium bowl, combine butter, cream cheese, confectioners' sugar and vanilla. Beat until the mixture is smooth and creamy. Frost the cooled cake.

—Christin McKamey, Royal Oak

**Photography - 831 Creative**

**Submit your recipe!** Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Make-Ahead Holiday" recipes by **Sept. 10.**

Mail (handwritten or typed on one side, please) to: *Country Lines* Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email [recipes@countrylines.com](mailto:recipes@countrylines.com). Contributors whose recipes we print in 2014 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2015 electric bill (up to \$200)!



Visit recipe editor Christin McKamey's website, **veggiechick.com**, for healthy, vegetarian recipes and info!

# Improving the Efficiency of Older Doors

**E**nergy losses from inefficient entry doors can account for a significant part of your monthly utility bills. When leaky doors create drafts, people tend to set the furnace thermostat higher, which wastes even more energy.

There are ways to improve the efficiency of old doors, but don't eliminate the possibility of installing new ones. The cost of some well-insulated steel and fiberglass doors, especially those for a back door without glass, are very reasonable. And, a pre-hung door in its own frame is not difficult to install yourself.

Before deciding, carefully inspect the old doors. If they are in very bad condition, it will be difficult to improve their efficiency by a meaningful amount. First, make sure the wood door is not rotting, and then place a long straight edge across it to see if it is badly warped.

With metal doors, the most common problem is rust, not warping. Check along the bottom by the weather stripping on either side. Rainwater tends to collect there, and it is not always painted well. Try to determine why the water is collecting. If you find small holes rusted through, they can be repaired with car body filler and then painted.

If the doors are reasonably sound, check for the location of air leaks. At night, have someone shine a flashlight from outdoors around the seals while you check for light coming indoors. This will highlight significant leaks. On a windy day, move a stick of lighted incense around the seals and watch the smoke trail to locate minor leaky areas. Check the astragal (a half-round overlap that acts as a seal) between double doors.

Often with wood doors, especially ones with compression weather stripping, the main problem is simply the latch plate is not holding the door tightly closed against the weather stripping.

One solution is to reposition the latch plate, which requires filling in the old screw holes and drilling new ones. Chisel away some of the wood in the latch plate recess. Or, install an adjustable latch plate that you can reposition for summer and winter as the door and frame expand and contract from temperature and humidity.

Steel doors should feature magnetic weather stripping, so this is not a major issue because the stripping is drawn against the door edge. Just make sure the door surface and the weather stripping are clean and smooth. Paint on the door edge can also come



A new brass bottom seal and threshold save energy and are more attractive.



This replacement door threshold is made of durable aluminum and can be adjusted up and down.



LEFT: A door's threshold can be raised or lowered with a screwdriver so the weather stripping seals tightly. RIGHT: Stepped teeth in this strike plate allow the door to fit tightly. Notice the small dab of expandable foam insulation inside.



loose and create gaps that leak air.

Also check the condition of door hinges, and replace them if needed. If the hinges and pins are worn, the door will not hang square in the opening and not seal properly. There are many different hinge sizes, so take an old one with to the store for an exact match. Don't just buy the cheapest ones, because there are many to choose from and quality varies.

It is almost certain the door seal on the bottom is worn, but if not, adjust the floor threshold higher. There are several height adjustment screws across the threshold, but they may be filled in with dirt, so poke around to find them. If the seal itself is bad, there are many generic replacement seals you can install.

Another option is an add-on retractable threshold seal, which is effective if carpeting is near the door. This seal is mounted on the inside surface of the lower door edge and is easy to adjust and install. When the door opens, a pin against the door frame is released and the seal automatically lifts to

clear the carpeting.

Companies offering door improvement products include Duck Brand, 800-321-0253, [duckbrand.com](http://duckbrand.com); M-D Building Products, 800-654-8454, [mdteam.com](http://mdteam.com); Pemko Manufacturing, 800-283-9988, [pemko.com](http://pemko.com), and Thermwell, 800-526-5265, [frostking.com](http://frostking.com). Also visit [dulley.com](http://dulley.com) for more information.



Replaceable vinyl weather stripping seals well on the door's hinge side because it gets compressed, with little rubbing and wear.

Photos - Pemko Manufacturing

Photos - James Dulley

Photo - Pemko Manufacturing





**The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op offices at Blanchard and Portland will be closed on Friday, May 2, for employee training. We will resume regular work hours on Monday, May 5.**

**In case of electric service problems, please call 1-800-848-9333 for assistance. For propane issues, call 1-877-574-2740.**

## Be Part of the People Fund!

The Tri-County Electric People Fund helps families and organizations in our service area with special needs. When you donate your spare change, by allowing us to round up your energy bill to the next dollar, you provide the funds that make it all possible.

**How You Can Help** | Tri-County customers can opt in or out of the voluntary Operation Round Up program at any time. Just enclose a note with your bill payment, call us at 1-800-562-8232, or email [tricoenergy@homeworks.org](mailto:tricoenergy@homeworks.org).

**How to Apply for a People Fund Grant** | Write us at 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form, grant guidelines, and other helpful information. You'll also find information and application forms on our website at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

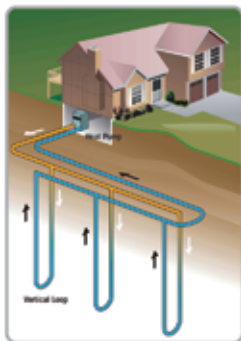
## Members Invited to Comment Before Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. Upcoming board meetings are set for 9:30 a.m. on April 28 at Blanchard and May 19 at Portland. Members who need directions to either office, or who wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.



## GEO THERMAL SAVES

on the energy you use to heat and cool your home



Whether you care about living green or saving green, an electric heat pump system provides the comfort and economy you're looking for. Geothermal is a simple technology that uses the earth's renewable energy to provide high-efficiency heating and cooling. In winter, the system draws heat from the ground and transfers it to your home. In summer, it extracts heat from your home and transfers it to the ground.

## JOIN US

FOR A SPECIAL ENERGY-SAVING EVENT

Tuesday  
APRIL  
**16**  
Portland

DOORS  
OPEN 6:00PM

Wednesday  
APRIL  
**17**  
Blanchard

PROGRAM  
STARTS 6:30PM

Learn how you can save on your heating and cooling bill by using a super-efficient geothermal heat pump system with our low dual fuel electric rate. There will be a brief presentation followed by an "Ask the Experts" breakout session with contractors and factory representatives.

The events will be held at the HomeWorks Tri-County Electric offices, in our community rooms. A light supper will be available.

Learn more at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) or by calling 800-562-8232.

**HOME** Tri-County Electric  
**WORKS** Cooperative



# Schools Receive Classroom Technology Grants

**N**ine area schools have received 2014 Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grants totaling \$16,060.23.

Through the program, schools that serve children of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric members can receive a grant of up to \$2,500 to fund innovative programs, particularly those involving technology or equipment that enrich students' education.

These schools and their projects received funding:

- **Wacousta Elementary (Grand Ledge Public Schools)** – \$504.98 to purchase 34 pairs of headphones for first graders to use for active listening exercises;

- **Leslie Middle School** – \$530.40 to purchase solar car activity kits for four 7th grade science classrooms;

- **Maple Valley Schools** – \$2,500 for 18 Apple TVs and cables to allow teachers and students to project work on an iPad from anywhere in the classroom;

- **Mason High & Middle Schools** – \$365.80 to buy 20 microphones used by foreign language students to create practice videos;

- **Clarksville Elementary (Lakewood School District)** – \$2,159.05 to purchase an iPad charging cart, which will keep 35 ipads at a time ready for use by 116 students;

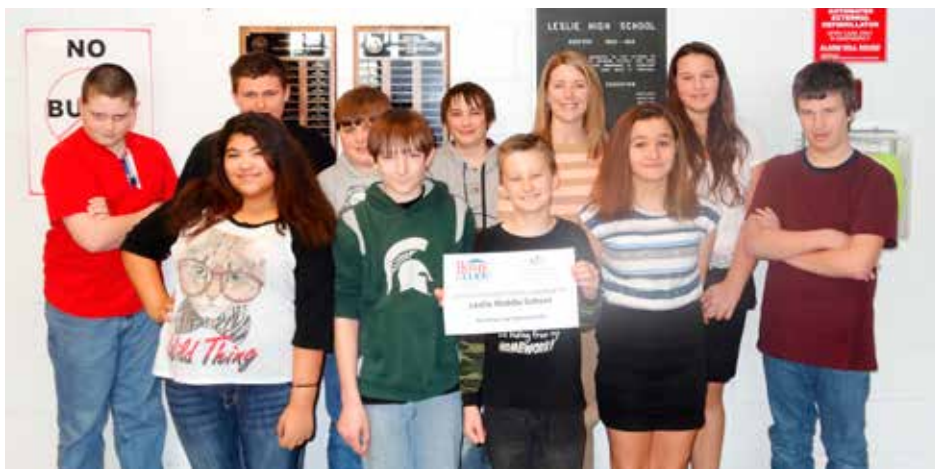
- **Waldron Elementary (Fowler Public Schools)** – \$2,500 for five iPads and covers to be shared between a kindergarten classroom and a fourth grade class;

- **Lakeview High School** – \$2,500 for a new projector and wiring in the cafeteria to enable events for students and the community;

- **Beal City High School** – \$2,500 to buy graphing calculators for use by 10th through 12th graders in developing math skills; and
- **Chippewa Hills Middle School** – \$2,500 for a projector to create a virtual interactive whiteboard in a math class for fifth and sixth graders.

These programs were selected from among 52 applications, requesting nearly \$105,000, received for the 2014 grants.

Touchstone Energy is an alliance of member-owned electric cooperatives that are dedicated to providing members with reliable, high-quality service at competitive prices. Our high standards of service demonstrate four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.



Members of Erin Thompson's seventh grade science class at Leslie Middle School shared the presentation. Ms. Thompson is shown fourth from right.

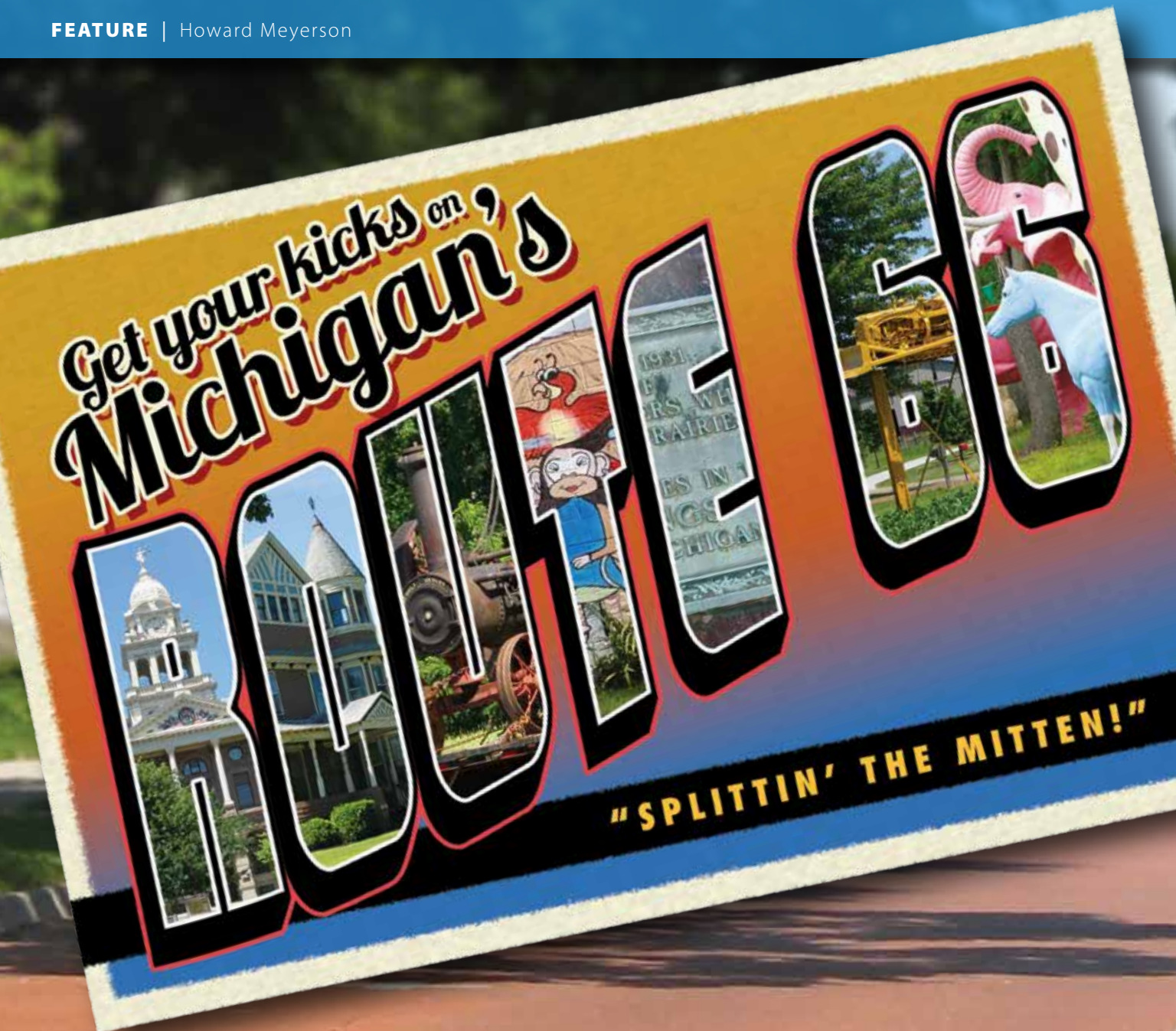


LEFT: Tracy George, right, director of technology for Maple Valley Schools, and Landon Wilkes, junior high school social studies and physical education teacher, show one of the Apple TV units purchased for use with iPads in the classrooms at Fuller Elementary and Maple Valley Junior-Senior High School. RIGHT: Clarksville Elementary School's entire third grade class joined Principal Cindy Trebian, far right, and IT Administrator Matt Dougherty, far left, in celebrating the grant.



Josh Leatherman, Maple Valley Junior High math teacher, answers a student's question as she works a problem on the iPad for her class.





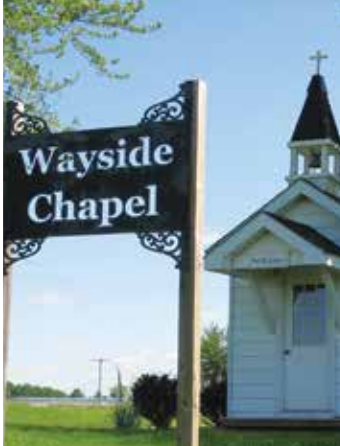
Jazz pianist Nat King Cole immortalized driving the open road with his 1946 hit song, “Route 66,” a swinging rendition about traveling the fabled route from Chicago, Ill., to Los Angeles, Calif. But authors John and Becky Schlatter, think the Michigan highway that bears the same name is just as appealing and has its own quaint charms. To prove it, they take readers for a 237-mile ride from Sturgis to Charlevoix in a new book called “Splittin’ the Mitten: Get Your Kicks on Michigan’s Route 66.”

“To say it’s just as scenic as the route from Chicago to L.A., might be a bit of hyperbole, but beauty is in the eye of the beholder,” notes John Schlatter, a retired corporate communications professional and HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op member. “But when you drive [Michigan’s] Route 66 and see a field of sunflowers in late summer, or cows grazing in a field and modern wind turbines in the distance,





**John and Becky Schlatter are the authors of a new book that travels some sites along Michigan's Route 66**



**A quiet rest – east of McBain**



**Robinson Scenic Gardens – Kalkaska/Mancelona**



**Hot Spot Tanning & Hair Salon – Remus**



**Visiting 'Back to the Bricks' car show – Flint**



**Drink from an artesian well – Barryton**



Photos courtesy of John and Becky Schlatter

or a pretty old church, those are all very scenic in their own way.”

The Schlatters’ book, with 250 photographs, is an account of their trip through our rural heartland. It’s a route full of history, small towns and farm life—the backbone of our mitten state. Theirs is a story of pastures and cows, grange halls where farmers meet, ice cream parlors where families gather, and the overlay of modern times and change.

“We thought this might be a fun project,” shares Becky Schlatter, who refers to herself as a “Michigan girl” and Flint native. “I get excited by stuff like this.”

The Schlatters spent five days touring M-66. Gathering material for their book required driving it twice and three shorter trips to shoot photos. One of Becky’s favorite stops is Mancelona, where a downtown mural depicts the life of author Ernest Hemmingway. Other favorite stops are Ionia’s brick-lined Main Street and Charlevoix’s “two waterfronts” and unique old homes.

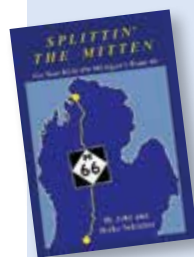
“The worst part of the trip was not being able to stop and talk to people at length,” says John, a Mississippi native who retired

from Bechtel Corp in 2012 after years of moving around the country. “If we had, it would have taken three years to get it done.”

John admits he didn’t know much about Michigan until 2007. That’s when the couple bought their Chippewa Lake cabin in Mecosta County. It’s not far from M-66, a route they use to come and go.

“As a kid growing up in the south, all I knew about Michigan was Bo Schembechler, Detroit car factories, and Motown,” John exclaims. “When I got here I was amazed by how rural the state is, which is why we like Route 66.”

“I can’t say that there was an ‘aha!’ moment when I knew to write the book, but I am old enough to remember the ‘Route 66’ television show from the 1960s,” he adds. “We saw signs at Barryton saying, ‘Thanks for Visiting’ and ‘Route 66 Keep on Cruising,’ and realized we’re not the only ones who think Route 66 is pretty cool.”



*Find “Splittin’ The Mitten: Get Your Kicks on Route 66” on Amazon.com (paperback listed at \$12.47; e-book is \$2.99); at the Old Pioneer Store and Emporium (231-796-2502 or [oldpioneerstore.com](http://oldpioneerstore.com)) in Big Rapids; or order through Charlevoix’s Round Lake Bookstore (231-547-2699).*

# Co-op Pays \$1 Million in Property Taxes

**A**s member-owners of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, you might like to know we paid over \$1 million in property taxes for 2013. Property taxes are paid on things such as real property (land, two offices and warehouses) and over 3,300 miles of distribution lines that bring electricity to your home or business.

In fact, we paid a total of \$1,000,784.72 to the 95 townships and 70-plus school districts we serve across 13 counties. This is an increase of nearly 3 percent from 2012's total of \$972,161.73 in property taxes.

Rural electric cooperatives like HomeWorks are subject to the same taxes as any other business — including property, sales, payroll and highway fuel taxes. We are also required by the Internal Revenue Service to pay tax on income from any unrelated business activity. However, due to our nonprofit status, we do not pay state and federal income taxes.

Property taxes (see listing by county at right) are one of the fixed costs associated with your monthly availability charge. The current residential availability charge of \$14 covers only a portion of those fixed costs.

County	2012	2013
Barry	\$12,099.01	\$12,564.59
Clare	\$3,898.69	\$4,317.61
Clinton	\$96,811.84	\$101,474.93
Eaton	\$77,129.85	\$79,518.46
Gratiot	\$30,091.20	\$31,624.02
Ingham	\$35,962.82	\$36,943.04
Ionia	\$156,060.61	\$159,014.38
Isabella	\$184,839.45	\$190,659.58
Jackson	\$3,452.47	\$3,649.12
Mecosta	\$214,766.42	\$219,374.86
Montcalm	\$154,837.27	\$159,375.73
Osceola	\$1,934.67	\$1,992.23
Saginaw	\$277.43	\$276.17
	<b>\$972,161.73</b>	<b>\$1,000,784.72</b>

## Tune In BIG SCREENS = BIG SAVINGS

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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).



# Protect Your Equipment Against Power Surges

**P**ower surges cause millions of dollars in damage each year to TVs, computers, stereos, or anything plugged into an outlet. Here are some keys to choosing the best surge protection.

“A surge is a boost in the electrical charge over a power line,” explains Joe McElroy, safety director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. “This can be caused by lightning, but it’s more commonly caused by motor-driven electrical devices, such as air conditioners and refrigerators, that require a lot of energy for starting and stopping compressors. Surges can also be caused by faulty wiring.”

Frequent, small power surges shorten the life of appliances and electronics, and come in all shapes and sizes. “The most extreme is a lightning strike, because it can destroy equipment and sometimes set your house on fire, but less severe ones are rooted in many different causes,” adds Alan Shedd, residential/commercial energy programs director for Touchstone

Energy® Cooperatives, the national brand for America’s electric co-ops. Surge severity depends on the voltage, current, and how long the event lasts. Most surges are very short, but can happen through any wire connected to your equipment.

A surge protection device mounted at the main electrical panel, or at your meter base, protects equipment from surges coming through entry ports such as outside electric, telephone, and cable TV or satellite dish lines.

Point-of-use devices do not suppress or arrest a surge, but divert it to the ground. They’re made to protect sensitive electronics, like a computer, and resemble a regular plug strip. But don’t assume your plug strip offers surge protection unless it specifically says so. “My computer is plugged into an uninterruptible power supply with surge protection,” Shedd notes. Installing special surge protection electrical outlets can also help, especially near places like kitchen countertops.



The best protection is two-tiered. A service entrance device reduces surges to a level that protects large appliances (stove or clothes dryer), while point-of-use protectors defend sensitive electronics.

Be cautious when shopping for protection devices, as some claim to save energy, but this is generally false, Shedd says. “Surge protection is a valuable tool for protecting your home or business, but not for saving energy.”

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# Got Toast? Trenary Toast is a Beloved Treat



“My grandmother always had Trenary Toast in her house - my brothers and sisters and I grew up on it,” said the woman on the phone, as she ordered bags of the toast for her brother and sister-in-law’s 70th wedding anniversary. As she hangs up the phone, Maureen Webber, owner of the Trenary Home Bakery, laughs and says, “I hear these stories from people all the time.” And, even though Webber bought the shop back in 2011, the U.P. native still loves being what she calls the “new face” behind Trenary Toast, Inc.

The bakery, located just moments off U.S.-41 on M-67 in Trenary, specializes in “from scratch” traditional Finnish breads from original family recipes passed down over the last century. Old Country Rye, a dense Scandinavian bread, is especially popular.

Their best seller, however, is the iconic Trenary Toast, which is distributed regionally and has been shipped to every state. Trenary Toast starts out as a sweet bread which is baked, sliced, coated, then baked again.

“That’s what gives it that famous ‘crunch’ and dunk-a-bility,” Maureen explains. “Trenary Toast is unique because we’re the only toast that has the cinnamon sugar on the top-we hand-coat it.”

Next door to the bakery is the Trenary Toast Café, which serves breakfast sandwiches, subs, pizza bread, coffee, and, in the summer, hand-dipped Jilbert’s ice cream. Their giant cinnamon rolls and cinnamon bread are available exclusively in the Café. Webber also stocks local gift items, such as maple syrup, “Yooper” shirts, sweatshirts, and Saykly’s candy, which is homemade in Escanaba, Mich.

“Last summer, a lady came from Washington State to see where Trenary Toast was made because it was on her bucket list,” Maureen smiles. “How great is that?”

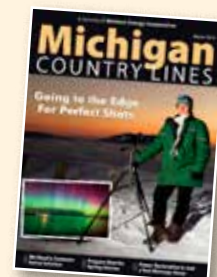
— Linda Sirois

**Have A Story Idea?** *Michigan Country Lines* is always looking for unique stories about Michigan people, places and things. If you have a story idea for us to consider, please email [gknudtson@meca.coop](mailto:gknudtson@meca.coop) with a short paragraph describing the story and why you think Michiganders would like to read about it. Include your name, address, and note which electric co-op you belong to.

**How to Send Us a Letter** - Readers are encouraged to submit thoughtful, courteously-worded letters about stories in the magazine, and we try to print as many as possible in the space and time allowed. *Country Lines* also reserves the right to print or reject letters at the publisher’s discretion, based on length and content, and to edit slightly for space and facts. Please limit comments to 175 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. Letters about your electric service or bill should be sent directly to the co-op at the address or phone number on your bill.

**How to Change Your Country Lines Mailing Address** - Call or mail address changes directly to your local electric co-op - see page 4 for co-op contact information or find it on your electric bill. Please *do not* call or send address changes to the magazine address. Your help is appreciated.

*Thank-you for taking time to read Michigan County Lines, which comes to you because you are a member-owner of your electric co-op!*





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## Tri-County Electric Cooperative



# Watch your mailbox for your personal invitation.

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Our annual membership meetings start with a light supper (sloppy joes and fixings, plus ice cream!) at 6 p.m. , followed by a short business meeting, and learn what's happening at the electric utility YOU own. **You'll have a chance to ask questions and win prizes**, such as energy certificates worth \$10, \$25, or even \$50, and one lucky member will leave each meeting with a Grand Prize of an iPad.

Bring your kids, too. Besides enjoying a free meal, all youths aged 5-16 have a chance to win an iPod Touch. And everyone goes home with a special thank-you gift.

Watch your mailbox for your family's personal invitation. See you there!

**May 12** - District 5  
Fulton Middle School Gym

**May 13** - District 3  
Eagle Park Hall

**May 14** - District 7  
St. Michael's School, Remus

**May 15** - District 1  
St. Mary's Church Hall, Charlotte

**May 19** - District 4 (election)  
Vestaburg Middle School

**May 20** - District 6  
Beal City High School

**May 21** - District 2 (election)  
St. Edward's Church Hall, Lake Odessa



Tri-County Electric  
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