

A Service of **Midwest Energy Cooperative**

January 2014

Michigan COUNTRY LINES



**Shaggy's Company
Skis to Success**

4 Your Co-Op Offers Power Tools

5 Weathering the Storm Together

9 Strengthening Schools

1.



ABANDONS ALL-OF-THE ABOVE

The Administration is reversing course: ditching our **All-of-the-Above** energy strategy for an **All-But-One** approach that bans new coal plants.

2.



TECHNOLOGY GAMBLE

New regulations essentially require technology that's **not commercially viable and prohibitively expensive**—leading to higher bills down the line.

TOP 4 FACTS

ABOUT THE EPA'S NEW CLIMATE REGULATIONS

3.



LIMITS ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE, DOMESTIC ENERGY

By banning new coal plants, Americans forfeit a **236-year domestic source of energy** with a historically stable price.

4.



HISTORY REPEATS: ALL-BUT-ONE DOESN'T WORK

A 1978 mandate prevented use of natural gas & forced utilities into coal or nuclear—**before common sense prevailed and it was repealed 9 years later.**



Visit **ACTION.COOP** today to send a message to the EPA

January 2014
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Cooperative
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COUNTRY LINES

IN THIS ISSUE

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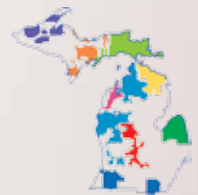
Change of Address: Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.



ON THE COVER

John (L-R), Shari and Jeff Thompson have made over 1,000 pairs of skis at their family shop, Shaggy's Copper Country Skis, in Boyne City. Featured are their "Brockway" model, and the best-selling "Tubby" (red) all-mountain ski. They have also started making skateboards, and are members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

Photo - Roger Boettcher, Leavenworth Photographics



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Power Tools: Adding Convenience and Ease to Your Experience

The weather radar showed it all on Sunday morning, Nov. 17, and people across the Midwest braced themselves for a day of raging storms. Over 60 tornadoes touched down in seven states, and the widespread system left hundreds of thousands of people without power.

The southwest Michigan area was hit pretty hard. One confirmed tornado and fierce winds and thunderstorms left more than 12,000 Midwest Energy members without power late Sunday afternoon. The damage across our territory was extensive, but we were largely spared compared to our Indiana and Illinois neighbors.

The outage calls began flooding our system right away, and many of you received the ever-frustrating “fast busy signal,” which means there are more callers than available lines. That frustration quickly spread across email and social media platforms.

What you need to know is that we share your frustration when we can't adequately serve our members. The reality, however, is that we take between 300 to 500 calls on a typical day and our phone system is more than adequate

to handle that. A major outage like the one in November is anything but typical. Even our after-hours call center couldn't keep up with the influx of calls as they were dealing with outages across many systems and states for the partner cooperatives they serve.

It's an issue we wrestle with after every major outage event. We could invest

significant dollars in a more robust telephone system with considerably more incoming lines, but that would be overkill for our regular, daily needs. We always attempt to balance what's in the best interest of all of the co-op's members,

and “bulking up” with staff and phone lines for the occasional major outage isn't the best use of your ownership dollars.

The good news is that we have options. Over a year ago, we introduced outage reporting by text message. You need to complete a short registration

process, but it allows you to quickly and easily text your outage, and the system notifies you when your outage was reported and again when it is restored.

We're even more excited about SmartHub, our online and mobile platform that opens up a new world of account management, including outage reporting! It allows you to access your

account through your computer or mobile device to report service issues, make payments, monitor usage and a host of other options that can make your life easier. It's our newest power tool, and over the course of this year we'll help you learn all the great features and benefits available to you.

We're imperfect people using imperfect technologies and processes, but the team at your cooperative is committed to providing you with information and options that add value and convenience to your experience. Innovations for life and solutions for living! Thank you for your patience and encouragement as we weathered another storm together!



Robert Hance
President/CEO



SmartHub is now available online at TeamMidwest.com, or through the free app available through your mobile device app store. Just search SmartHub and look for this logo.

A Mighty Wind

Here is a snapshot of the storm the Midwest Energy team weathered together with you:

- 12,000+ members without power
- 41 broken poles and 106 downed power lines
- 75 hours of non-stop manpower in the field
- 420 calls answered live by customer care reps, and over 2,000 outages reported through the automated phone system on Sunday evening
- 1,343 calls answered live on Monday, with each rep averaging 103 calls
- 200+ new Facebook followers and hundreds of comments logged
- Mutual aid support from two fellow Michigan co-ops and numerous contract crews
- All service restored 48 hours earlier than originally projected



‘Dinner and Dialog’ Coming to Your District

In February and March, Midwest Energy will host its annual member “dinner and dialog” events across our service territory. We pick up the dinner tab for you and your guest, asking in return for your active participation in what we hope is a meaningful and productive two-way conversation.

Everyone is busy, but you are an owner of this co-op, and your input is important. The evening is less about us talking, and more about us listening to and learning from you. We want to know what works and what doesn’t so that we can improve your service experience. We also want to educate you about the energy landscape and prepare you

for how it could impact your life and bill. It’s an effort to equip you with innovative ideas and solutions to help you understand and manage your own energy experience.

Members are invited by random selection from our system, and invitations will be mailed this month. The number of attendees is limited, based on the size of the venue and to promote a meaningful and productive exchange. If you are interested in attending one of these events, please contact Nicole Barfell at 269-445-1112 or sign up at Team-Midwest.com and we will add you to the mailing list or put you on a preferred waiting list if invitations have already been mailed.

Watch for a Letter in the Mail

Every year in January we send out a letter on behalf of our CPA auditing firm, the Traverse City-based Harris Group. The letter is on Midwest Energy Cooperative letterhead and sent to a randomly selected group of business and residential members to confirm account balances as of the end of the year. It includes a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

This is a legitimate outreach and an important part of our annual audit process. If you receive this letter, please help by completing and returning it in order to assist our auditors in their process.



Cooking For One

Cooking for one?

These single-serving recipes will help you save time and energy, are easy to prepare, and sized perfectly for just you!

Burrata Caprese with Balsamic Glaze

1 small loaf of french bread, cut into 1-inch slices, toasted
7-8 grape tomatoes, cut in half
3-4 large basil leaves
1 container burrata (mozzarella filled with cream) or mozzarella cheese

Balsamic glaze:

1½ c. balsamic vinegar
½ t. honey

On a plate, arrange bread, tomatoes, basil, and burrata. For glaze, bring balsamic vinegar to a boil in a small saucepan. Reduce to a simmer, and cook until thick and syrupy. Remove from heat and stir in honey. Let cool completely before serving (it will thicken as it sets). You can also use store-bought balsamic glaze which is much easier. On each piece of

bread, spread the burrata. Add the balsamic glaze, a piece of basil, and top with 2 tomato halves. This is a quick, healthy meal that is perfect for one person. No cooking required.

Christin McKamey

Grilled Chicken Nachos

1 oz. baked tortilla chips
¼ c. drained, low sodium black beans, heated
4 oz. grilled lean boneless, skinless chicken breast, cut into small cubes
2 T. salsa con queso
3 T. chopped tomato
2 T. thinly sliced jalapeño pepper

Lay chips on plate. Top them evenly with the beans followed by the grilled chicken. Drizzle the salsa evenly over the top. Top with the tomato and jalapeño slices and serve. Serves 1.

Lorraine Green, South Boardman

Apple Crisp for One

1 T. quick cooking oats
1 T. brown sugar
½ T. flour
dash of cinnamon
dash of nutmeg
dash of salt
½ T. margarine
1 c. sliced, peeled apples

Combine oats, brown sugar, flour, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Cut in margarine with fork until crumbly. Set aside. Place apples in small microwave-safe dish. Top with oat mixture. Microwave on full power, uncovered, 2-4 minutes or until apples are tender, rotating dish once. Serve with frozen yogurt or ice cream, if desired.

Barb Spencer, Petoskey

Curried Chickpea Stew

1 t. olive oil
1 c. onion, diced
1½ c. carrots, diced
2 cloves garlic, finely dice
1½ -2 T. curry (depending on taste)
1 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes
1 16-oz. can chickpeas
1½ c. water
1 cube chicken or vegetable bouillon
1 whole chicken breast cut into ½-inch pieces
1 T. butter
1 t. sugar

In a 4½-quart stock pot, add ½ c. water, carrots and onions. Simmer until carrots are tender. Add more water if needed, remove carrots and onions. Add olive oil and curry, and heat for 30 seconds or until bubbles appear. Add garlic, remaining water, tomatoes (juice and all), drained chickpeas, chicken



and bouillon cube. Stir until bouillon cube is dissolved. Simmer until chickpeas are tender. Add more water, if needed. Stir vigorously to thicken. Remove from heat, add sugar and butter, stir to dissolve sugar. Garnish with Greek yogurt (optional). This is a delicious, one-pot meal.

Jeff Ullen, Bellaire

Photography by: 831 Creative

Recipe Contest Winner!



Chris McAfee

Congratulations to Chris McAfee of Pointe Aux Pins on Bois Blanc Island. Her name was drawn from all readers whose recipes we printed in 2013 and *Country Lines* magazine will pay her

January electric bill as a prize.

Chris and her family have been members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op since the co-op brought electricity to the Island in 1964. She loves her piece of paradise with lots of wonderful people, miles of ATV trails, beautiful woods, and the surrounding crystal-clear water of Lake Huron.

Submit your recipe! Thanks to all who send in recipes! Please send in your favorite "**Easter**" recipes by **Jan. 10** and "**Hawaiian Luau**" recipes by **March 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.

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!

HYDROPOWER

TIME-TESTED RENEWABLE ENERGY

This is fi th in a series on how electricity is generated. The first (January) was about coal, the second about new nuclear options (June), the third about wind (July-August), and the fourth about natural gas (October). Watch future issues for stories about other fuel sources.

Energy from fl wing water has been harnessed and used for over 2,000 years, beginning with the ancient Greeks using water wheels to grind wheat. In the 1880s, converting a rush of water into electricity became a reality in the United States.

Today, hydropower provides about 80,000 megawatts (MW) of capacity in the United States—enough to power over 25 million average homes—and accounts for about 75 percent of all renewable electricity used by co-ops.

But how does it work? Simply, hydropower converts the natural energy of moving water to mechanical energy, using a turbine that is attached to a generator. With these highly efficient turbine-generators doing the job formerly performed by water wheels, electricity fl ws in a number of ways:

Impoundment: When most people think of hydropower, dams come to mind. By plugging a river and amassing water in a reservoir, its fl w (and the resulting electricity) can be better controlled and generated as needed.

Diversion: Water is channeled away from a river, typically near natural falls, down to generators at the falls' base. This can be done without any visible impact to a river's natural course. In fact, this kind of generation was used to bring electricity to Buffalo NY, from Niagara Falls in the late 1800s.

Pumped storage: This method essentially uses off-peak electricity to make electricity for use during times of high consumption. Two reservoirs are filled, one typically uphill from the other, with an electric pump/

generator in between. At night, when demand is low and electricity less expensive, water from the lower reservoir is pumped uphill. During the day, when demand for power increases, that water is released down through the generator to make electricity.

Over 600 electric co-ops across the country buy power from 134 federally-owned and operated dams, most of which were built between the late 1930s and early '60s. Despite the incredible importance of these resources, maintenance has lagged in recent years and created room for improvement.

Electric co-ops are making efforts to address this problem, advocating that the government set aside funds to repair and maintain the dams and turbines. Researchers are also looking to create more efficient and fish-friendly ways to generate hydropower. Careful studies of aquatic environments have given dam operators a better idea of how to simulate a natural river downstream.

A 2012 report from the U.S. Depart-

ment of Energy (DOE) revealed many of the nation's dams hold untapped power. Roughly 2,500 provide conventional and pumped-storage hydropower in the United States. But the vast majority of dams—some 80,000, ranging from 4 to 770-feet-high—are non-powered. The DOE analyzed 54,391 of them.

Locks and dams on the Ohio, Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas rivers—facilities owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—offer the most untapped potential. The top 10 sites alone could provide about 3,000 MW.

“Many of these dams could be converted to generate electricity with minimal impact to critical species, habitats, parks or wilderness areas,” the DOE report states.

Co-ops' efforts in pushing for increased maintenance and technology development will ensure that hydropower remains a reliable, affordable, renewable resource for decades to come.



Cloverland Electric Cooperative's hydroelectric plant in Sault Ste. Marie generates between 25 and 30 megawatts of electricity. Clean, renewable hydro makes up nearly 35 percent of the co-op's fuel mix. To see a recent chart showing what your electric co-op's fuel mix is, visit countrylines.com and click on the co-op name and then click the Sept. 2013 issue.

Photo Courtesy - Cloverland Electric Co-op

Midwest in the Community

Giving back to our communities is one of the core values of Midwest Energy. We believe in doing what we can, individually and as a family of employees, to strengthen and support the communities in which we live, work and serve. Following are some of the ways we impacted our communities over the last few months.



Fueling the Fight

Larry Hernandez, a service technician for Midwest Propane, heads out to make a delivery in his “Fueling the Fight” bulk truck. Midwest Propane, a non-regulated subsidiary of Midwest Energy, conducted the “2nd Annual Fueling the Fight” campaign last fall, raising over \$24,000 to support the work of organizations providing cancer care and services for people across Michigan.

Efforts were kicked off in August with a corporate golf scramble that generated \$15,295 to support services provided through the Susan P. Wheatlake Cancer and Wellness Center at Mecosta County Medical Center

in Big Rapids. An additional \$8,768 was raised over the course of the three-month effort to support the programs and services provided through Betty Ford Breast Care Services at Spectrum Health. Midwest Propane committed one penny for every gallon of gas delivered in October. In total, the locally owned and operated company delivered 267,216 gallons for a contribution of \$2,672. Additionally, members of the customer family were challenged to support these efforts by referring new customers. Every successful referral resulted in a gift to Spectrum in honor of the referring customer.

United Way Day of Action

Kirk Proshwitz (below), propane service technician, hoses out a gutter while Amber Mark, customer care representative, prepares to weatherize windows. The two were part of a team of Midwest employees that joined more than 350 other volunteers representing 50 businesses and organizations at last fall’s United Way of Southwest Michigan Day of Action. Volunteers were deployed throughout Berrien and Cass counties to help seniors get their homes and yards ready for the winter season.



Soup Kitchen

Over 170 people braved blustery snow and falling temperatures to join friends and neighbors at the annual Thanksgiving meal at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church food pantry and soup kitchen in Dowagiac. In following one of our favorite holiday traditions, a team from Midwest helped prepare and serve the meal. Before the hungry crowds arrived, Jenna Badner and her son Evan (from left), Denise Smith, and Kristy Janssen organized a mouth-watering display of delicious dessert offerings.



Scan this with your QR reader to visit our online photo album and see more photos from these and other “Midwest in the Community” events.

Strengthening Our Schools

Midwest Energy Cooperative and Touchstone Energy supported the work of 22 public schools across our service territory, awarding \$30,028.98 in grants for academic and classroom needs or special projects that enhance student learning.

In total, 49 applications were submitted and equaled nearly \$100,000 in requests. A committee comprised of co-op members Tom Davidson, Vandalia; Barbara Groner, Dowagiac; and Jerry Pratt, Schoolcraft, evaluated applications and determined final awards. All applications were evaluated and awarded without knowledge of the school, district or community.

"I felt honored to be a part of this process," Pratt said. "I was amazed by the diversity and quality of the projects and programs submitted for consideration."

Groner, a retired educator, agreed. "Classroom and school needs are great due to decreasing state financing, even as more stress is placed on achieving higher students' performance. It was truly a challenge to prioritize the grant requests knowing that only a limited amount of funds were available, while all of the project needs are great."

Awards were presented to the following schools and projects:

- Blissfield Elementary, \$1,000 for an afterschool program that offers academic enrichment and activities;
- Brookside Learning Center, Cassopolis, \$2,162 for materials to expand the communication library serving students with autism or other special needs;
- Centreville High School, \$1,000 for repairs and enhancements to greenhouse;
- Clinton Elementary, \$1,131 for digital headsets;
- Clinton High School, \$439.20 for Mitch Albom books for high school English curriculum;
- Constantine Middle School, \$2,500 for creation of an outdoor seating area for classroom instruction;
- Eagle Lake Elementary, Edwardsburg, \$2,410 for "Foundation" phonics teaching materials;
- Eastside Elementary, Constantine, \$1,000 for supplies and labor to commission murals that reinforce behavior and reading goals;

- Hudson Area Middle School, \$1,000 for audiovisual equipment for film/English classes;
- Lawrence Junior/Senior High School, \$1,200 for technology to enhance science programming;
- Lawton Community Schools, \$1,500 for pottery wheels to enhance art curriculum;
- Lincoln Elementary, Hudson, \$1,250 for "Math Night" materials for students and families;
- Madison Middle/High School, \$1,449 for classroom Smart Board to enhance learning environment for students with development disabilities;
- Marcellus Junior/Senior High School, \$2,430 for biology curriculum materials on alternative/sustainable food production
- Mattawan Middle School, \$2,200 for materials to develop recycling and energy usage program;
- Morenci Elementary, \$508.78 for iPad for developmental kindergarten class;
- Park Elementary, Three Rivers, \$1,000 for books to increase reading skills of at-risk students;

- Patrick Hamilton Elementary, Dowagiac, \$1,449 for technology enhancements for kindergarten classroom;
- Paw Paw Middle School, \$1,000 for mini iPads to enhance math curriculum;
- Ross Beatty Middle/High School, Cassopolis, \$650 for supplies for robotics team;
- Ruth Hoppin Elementary, Three Rivers, \$1,500 for shelving and books for leveled book room;
- Sam Adams Elementary, Cassopolis, \$1,250 for leveled reading book sets.

"I enjoyed this opportunity to participate in a local community building experience that has the potential to have a very positive outcome, and I really hope Midwest Energy continues this type of support," Davidson said.

Midwest does intend to continue the program! Information and applications for the 2014-15 funding cycle will be available at TeamMidwest.com in April. Applications will be due by Oct. 15, and awards will be made in January 2015.



The 2013-14 Strengthening Schools committee: Tom Davidson, Barbara Groner and Jerry Pratt, MD.

Shaggy's Company Skis to Success

Like most kids, Jeff and Jonathon Thompson loved taking things apart and putting them back together, never thinking that their inquisitiveness might lead to a new family business.

They were teenagers when they first built a surfboard with the help of their dad, John. That winter, Jeff wanted to build a "ski bike" by cutting apart an old pair of Dynastar skis to attach to a bike frame. Noticing how

they were built in layers, the boys decided to build a pair of skis, too.

That was 2005, and that first pair of skis was not a successful start.

"We built them in a barn that was about 40 degrees, and discovered that it needs to be warmer for skis to cure in a press. My brother brought them to the U.P. for a race that winter right after they were made, and they de-laminated before we got them on

the slopes," laughs Jeff

Previously, the family had a successful construction business, building as many as 300 homes in some years before the economic downturn. "We had vacationed in the Boyne City area for years, and as the ski business started picking up and the building business slowing down, we decided to make the move from South Lyon, where we had lived for years," John adds. ●●●●●●●●●●



John (L) and Jeff Thompson, of Shaggy's Copper Country Skis, prepare materials that will be pressed into skis, including an ash wood core, Durasurf 4001 base, triaxial fiber glass, damping rubber strips, steel edges, ABS sidewalls, Durasurf tip/tail spacer, and a graphic topsheet.



If you want to demo a pair of Shaggy's skis, the Thompsons and their reps will be visiting Michigan ski areas this winter (check the schedule at sccskis.com or call 231-459-4323), or stop by their Boyne City shop.



After stone grinding, Shari Thompson applies hot wax to a new pair of skis. The Thompsons are members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

Photos - Roger Boettcher/Leavenworth Photographics

Carving a turn on a Shaggy's dropdeck longboard.

Fast forward to 2013, and you find what started as a hobby is now a full-time business called Shaggy's Copper Country Skis.

"This year we will probably make around 200 pairs of skis," John notes proudly. "We've produced over 1,000 skis since that first mistake."

The Shaggy's company is staffed by Jeff, John and wife Shari, who does the bookkeeping, ordering materials and sales. Brother Jonathon has moved to Colorado in another line of business. John and Shari have been married for nearly 35 years.

"One of the reasons we chose to move up here, in addition to having wonderful testing facilities in nearby Boyne Mountain and Nubs Nob, is that the heart of our ski – ash and beech wood – is milled just down the road at Metalski Lumber," John explains.

Each ski takes eight to 10 hours to construct and fine-tune before it's ready to sell. The company offers 10 different pairs of skis, ranging from \$595 to around \$795.

Jeff, 23, recently graduated from Michigan Tech with a mechanical engineering degree and is applying that knowledge of how a ski performs physically and geometrically to making a top ski for Midwestern and Michigan users. "Our all-mountain ski has a tighter turning radius that works well on our conditions, but it's a great ski for the mountains, too," he says. "The Tubby, one of our best-selling skis, floats well in powder and softer spring snow conditions but provides a good ride on hardpack, as well."

The Shaggy's Copper Country Skis name was Jeff's idea. Their great uncle, Shaggy Lehto, was a blacksmith who lived in the Keweenaw Peninsula and had a hobby building hand-carved skis. "He made a pair for dad's mom that's a family heirloom, and I thought, 'what a great name for the company,'" Jeff recalls. "It's uniquely Michigan."



Besides skis, Shaggy's has started making longboards (skateboards). Here, Jeff Thompson mills out the shape of a longboard deck.

Energy-saving Resolutions for 2014

A new year is an opportunity to assess different aspects of your life and determine how you can make positive changes. Unfortunately, resolutions can be tough to keep. So, why not try a new one this year that's easy and painless? Saving energy is simple and rewarding—and, any amount you save counts. Here are four simple tips from Midwest Energy Cooperative's Energy Optimization program to help you save energy—now and throughout the year.

1. Set, program, relax: Use a programmable thermostat.

A programmable thermostat automatically controls your home's indoor temperature based on your schedule. In the winter, it is not necessary to keep an optimal heating temperature on weekdays when you're away or at work. Just input the time you typically leave and return, set the temperatures accordingly, and your home will be nice and cozy by the time you arrive, saving you energy and money.

Results:

Save up to 10 percent on your heating and cooling costs per year.

EO rebate: \$20 (any model).

2. Open up and let the light in.

Window treatments are an unexpected energy saver. In colder months, keep your blinds open during the day. This allows sunlight to enter your home and warm things up. After the sun sets, close your drapes to keep out the cold and hold onto some of the warmth generated during the day.

Results:

Energy savings will gradually add up over time. Most importantly, your home will feel more comfortable.

3. Same features, less energy: Switch to energy-efficient products.

Shop the ENERGY STAR® label for guaranteed product performance and quality. ENERGY STAR products—from refrigerators to TVs and lightbulbs—are backed with third-party testing, have the same features as standard models, and use significantly less energy.

Results:

Expected energy savings range from 15 to 75 percent per year.

Energy Optimization rebates:

\$10-\$50—choose from over 20 high-performing energy-saving products. See michigan-energy.org for details.

4. Dive in: Easy water-saving options.

Whenever you use water, you also use energy to pump and heat the water. Making energy-saving adjustments can be simple: 1) Turn your water heater down to 120 degrees Fahrenheit. 2) Install water-saving retrofit devices, such as faucet aerators and low-flow showerheads. For recommended models that don't sacrifice water pressure, visit michigan-energy.org.

Results:

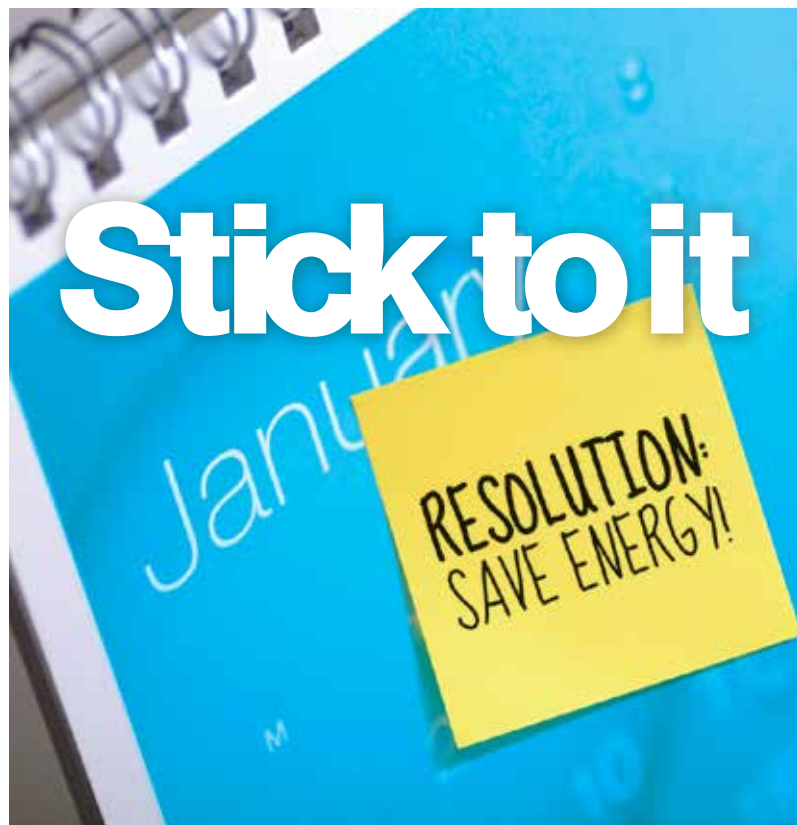
Save energy, and thousands of gallons of water.

Energy Optimization rebates:

\$10 per low-flow faucet aerator.

Got the energy-saving bug?

View more energy-saving opportunities and current rebate offers at michigan-energy.org or call 877.296.4319 for details.



Resolve to save energy in 2014

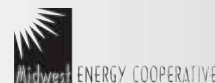
Want a New Year's resolution that's fast and easy? Save more energy at home and at work. Why?

It's painless, doesn't involve exercise, and still makes you feel good! With the help of the Energy Optimization program, it's easy to kick-start savings with rebates for energy-efficient lighting, appliances, furnaces, thermostats, and more.

ENERGY TIP: Take advantage of the sun's heat.

Even in the winter, opening your drapes during the day can allow enough radiant heat into your home to allow you to lower your thermostat settings.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org PHONE: 877.296.4319



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

Home Safety Calendar



Use this handy calendar to help keep your home safe all year long. Visit <http://virtualhome.esfi.org> to learn more about home electrical safety.

JANUARY

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Check and replace furnace filters

FEBRUARY

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

MARCH

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Replace smoke/CO alarm batteries if not done in the past 12 months

APRIL

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Check and replace furnace filters

MAY

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils
- ☐ Clean air conditioners or schedule annual inspection

JUNE

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Dust light fixtures and lamps
- ☐ Schedule annual inspection of gas-powered dryer

JULY

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Check and replace air conditioning filters

AUGUST

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

SEPTEMBER

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Schedule annual furnace cleaning and inspection

OCTOBER

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Check and replace furnace filters

NOVEMBER

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Vacuum refrigerator coils

DECEMBER

- ☐ Test GFCIs & AFCIs
- ☐ Test smoke & CO alarms
- ☐ Inspect electrical/appliance cords for damage
- ☐ Dust light fixtures and lamps

Embrace Change

Last summer, a dog walked into the Bay Pines Veterinary Clinic, near Harbor Springs. He must have been amazed when the staff knew him by name. "Are you Bandit?" they asked. "THE Bandit?" His Australian Shepherd tailless butt wagged with delight as he hobbled to meet their outstretched hands.

How did they know Bandit? It turns out that everyone in the clinic reads *Michigan Country Lines* and remembered him from a column I wrote over two years ago. That's the kind of community this magazine was meant to build when it began 33 years ago.

Then, every town of decent size had a printer who crafted posters, flyers, school programs, and the weekly newspaper (a local Facebook, Twitter and Craigslist rolled



Sadly, Bandit has been diagnosed with bone cancer, so this will be his last winter.

business because they couldn't adapt to the changes computers have brought to printing and publishing.

But, *Country Lines* is adapting and changing in ways that will pave the way for greater integration between print, online and social

into one). I wrote for those printers, before I became *Country Lines*' first editor.

Many of those printers, including the one in which *Country Lines* was born, no longer exist. They went out of

media communications. These changes embrace all the ways we communicate today, and will help *Country Lines* build a stronger co-op community.

I'm proud to have been part of this magazine, and I loved working on it. It was never a job. We won a few awards along the way, and it became one of the best-read of similar publications across the country. Thank you for reading it and letting me know what you thought.

Even though this is my last *Country Lines* column, I intend to keep writing, but where I will publish is uncertain. Send me an email at mike.f.buda@gmail.com or "friend" me on Facebook if you want to know where to find my ramblings



Mike Buda is the creator and editor emeritus of *Michigan Country Lines*.



Michigan Heritage Quilt Finds a Permanent Home

Created from 36 winning squares in a *Country Lines* quilt contest held in 2002, the Michigan Heritage Quilt depicts personal memories, traditions and images from across our beautiful state, and the Eastern Upper Peninsula History Consortium has become its permanent home.

The Consortium represents 22 E.U.P. museums, and while the Pickford Area Historical Museum will be the quilt's official caretaker, it will rotate for display among all member museums.

Many thanks to readers who sent in their ideas on where the quilt should live. For more information on the quilt or the E.U.P. Consortium, contact the Pickford Area Historical Society, 175 E. Main St., P.O. Box 572, Pickford, MI 49774, or call 906-647-1372.

Pictured above with the quilt are (L-R) Mary June, Consortium treasurer; Dianne Schmitgal, Pickford Area Historical Society president; and Susan James, vice president of the Chippewa County Historical Society.



◀ DO YOU KNOW WHERE THIS IS?

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

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone! Email mysteryphoto@countrylines.com; enter your guess at countrylines.com; or send by mail to *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, 48864. Include your name, address, phone number and name of

your co-op. Only those sending complete information will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the March 2014 issue.

The Nov./Dec. 2013 contest winner is Bill Pioszak of St. Johns, who correctly identified the photo as the Cairn Monument on Cairn Hwy. north of Kewadin, marking the 45th parallel.



LETTERS

Raw Egg Recipes

I have been meaning to write and tell you that pasteurized raw eggs can be found in grocery dairy and egg sections. These are safer for recipes calling for raw eggs. Maybe you can pass that along to the lady who wrote about them in the July/Aug. 2013 issue.

I also want to comment on the diabetic recipes (Oct.). Thinking regarding diabetics and sugar has greatly changed. They are no longer limited to sugar-free substitutes for their sweetening choices. The focus is now on balancing diet with assorted proteins, fats and carbs, eating smaller portions throughout the day, and counting carbs.

As a nurse, I try to pass along information people can use. The danger of sugar substitutes is they can make diabetics think such foods are good for them or don't need to be limited or counted. Managing diabetes is a lifelong, critical process that's so much more than removing sugar from the diet.

— Laura Tomell, Tecumseh
Midwest Energy

Mystery Photo

The Nov-Dec mystery photo (at left) was built as a WPA project. It has a representative stone from each of Michigan's counties.

My sister-in-law's father (a stone mason in Traverse City) helped build it, so I make sure whenever any of his great-grandchildren are here that they stop to see it.

— Peg Gage, Free Soil
Great Lakes Energy

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