

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

## Backyard Beekeeping:

What's the Buzz About?

### Plus!

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



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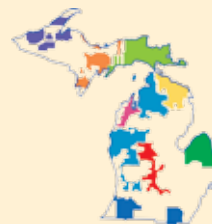
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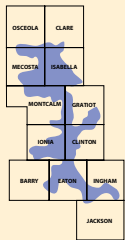
Josh and Jodie Kieliszewski and their boys have made beekeeping a fun, family affair and started a buzzing business, but honeybees are also an important, and endangered, part of our food supply.

Photo Courtesy—David Trumpie/[trumpiephotography.com](http://trumpiephotography.com)

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



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### Portland office:

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Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

### Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7554 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:

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Join the conversation at  
[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

# Join Us in Planning for Success



**Mark Kappler**  
General Manager

**O**ur mission is to bring you and your neighbors reliable, affordable electric power.

A good work plan helps us keep ahead of growing areas that need more electric infrastructure, and focuses on areas that need repair or replacement.

A financial plan helps us plan for the future, so one generation of members doesn't bear all the costs.

And increasingly, we're finding that a political plan is an absolute necessity. In Lansing and in Washington, D.C., decisions are being made that could impact the reliability and affordability of the electric power you count on every day.

If we're not part of the decision-making conversation, the decisions that are made may not, and probably won't, consider our needs as rural Americans.

How do we get to be part of the conversation? We join together to make sure we have a clear voice at the right time. Thousands of electric co-op directors and employees have done this for years through the Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE).

ACRE speaks for America's 900-plus rural electric co-ops and the 40 million member-owners they serve. The average contribution to ACRE is just \$41, and it's a true grassroots organization where the number of voices speaking together is as important as the dollars we can contribute.

Now we're asking you, our member-owners, to join the conversation. We've asked you in past years to send postcards or cast your votes on particular issues. This time, we'd like you to be one of the Co-op Owners for Political Action, an extension of ACRE.

For just \$2.08 a month, or \$25 a year, you can help make sure your interests are represented in Lansing and Washington.

Charles De Gaulle once said, "I have come to the conclusion that politics are too serious a matter to be left to the politicians." And Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."

Together, we can make sure our voice is heard and our needs are considered. Now, *that* sounds like a plan. ■

To join us in ACRE, visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org), pick up a form at either of our offices, call us to have a form sent to you, or watch for a tear-out form in future issues of *Michigan Country Lines*.

## Community Solar Garden Dedicated



A good crowd turned out on Earth Day (April 22) to help dedicate phase 1 of the HomeWorks Community Solar Garden. From left are Fawn Morris (Portland Chamber of Commerce), director Ed Oplinger, general manager Mark Kappler, State Rep. Mike Callton, director Phil Conklin, chairman Carl Morton, director Laverne Hansen, director Dean Floria, director Wayne Swiler, Keith Treman (Portland Chamber of Commerce), director Cara Evans, and project coordinator Nick Rusnell.

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

A Special Member Meeting is set for 9 a.m. June 23, at the cooperative's Portland office.

**T**he board of directors will consider changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on June 23, 2014, to be held at the cooperative office at 7973 East Grand River Avenue, Portland, 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 item will be considered.* Members will have an opportunity to address the board on the proposed changes prior to board action.

- Discuss participation in the State of Michigan's Low Income Energy Assistance program at the cost of a surcharge, to be determined by the state, on each residential customer's monthly energy bill.

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*. ■

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

#### April 28, 2014, Open Member Meeting

The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, at a Special Open Meeting held April 28, 2014, has in accordance with P.A. 167:

1. Reconciled the 2013 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections. Based on projected kWh sales through December 2014, the current collection factor of \$0.00192/kWh will be used.
2. Discussed elimination of provision for outage-related penalties, to be brought before the delegates at the Annual Meeting of the Cooperative on August 16, 2014.

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



## SOUTHERN COMFORT

For good old fashioned Southern comfort, try out some of these hearty, homestyle recipes from down south.

### Louisiana Red Beans and Rice

4 cans 16-oz. kidney or red beans, rinsed and drained  
 14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes, undrained  
 1 lb. smoked sausage, sliced  
 1 c. chicken broth  
 3 celery ribs, chopped  
 1 lg. onion, chopped  
 1 med. green pepper, chopped  
 1 sm. red pepper, chopped  
 6 garlic cloves, minced  
 1 bay leaf  
 ½ t. crushed red pepper flakes

Combine all but sausage in slow cooker. Cover, cook on low for 6 hours. Add sausage. Continue to cook 2 hours more. Stir before serving. Serve over rice.

*Tommie Schmidt, Union*

### Squash Cornbread

1 box corn muffin mix (Jiffy™ 8.5 oz.)  
 1 package frozen winter squash (10 oz.), defrosted  
 1 egg  
 3 T. whole berry cranberry sauce (optional)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Grease a 5"x 9" loaf pan.

Southern cooking means cornbread. Here is a quick, easy, and delicious one my family hopes all of yours will enjoy. Blend corn muffin mix, squash & egg to just combined and pour into prepared pan. Drop the cranberry sauce into batter & swirl gently with a knife.

Bake at 375° for 25–30 minutes. Serves 6.

*Nan Couyoumjian, Bellaire*

### Sausage Gravy and Biscuits

1 lb. ground sausage  
 4 T. butter  
 ⅔ c. Kentucky Kernel (fry batter mix)  
 (You can use all or part flour for less spice)  
 ⅔ to 1½ c. milk, to desired consistency  
 Grands!®, Bisquick™, or homemade biscuits



Brown sausage. Add and melt butter. Stir well and cook until light brown. Add fry batter mix. Slowly pour in milk until thickness desired. Serve over biscuits. This is a great meal for breakfast, brunch or dinner!

*Linda Miller, Grayling*

### SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "All About Snacks" recipes by **July 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)!

Find more of our readers' recipes at **countrylines.com**

Photos—831 Creative

# Keep Cool With Attic Radiant Barriers

**Q** My air-conditioning costs are high, but we still feel too warm at times. Ads for radiant barriers say they save a lot. How do they work, do they save much, and what is the cost?

**A:** Ads about “huge” energy savings from installing attic radiant barriers are often the very maximum possible and are exaggerated for a typical retrofit installation. But, proper installation in a specific house can yield a reasonable payback and better comfort.

Before deciding if your home is a good candidate, it's wise to understand how a house loses and gains heat. Most importantly, the rate that heat flows from a hot to cold area is determined by the temperature difference between the spaces.

*Conduction* heat flows through solids that touch each other. This is how an iron skillet's handle gets hot. The walls and ceiling of a house also lose or gain heat this way because the materials are all nailed together.

*Convection* is where heat flows through a moving fluid or gas, which increases the flow rate. An example is how your skin loses heat faster on a windy, winter day (wind chill factor creates a lower temperature).

*Radiation* heat flows directly from one object to another via a vacuum, air, glass, etc. It is not dependent on touching or fluid flow. This is how you feel warm by a fire.

Radiant energy is unique because it's affected much more by temperature difference. For conduction and convection, if indoor/outdoor temperature differences double, heat flow doubles. With radiation, the flow is 16 times greater when the difference doubles.

This is why radiant barriers are most often used in the attic to block heat flow through the roof. On a hot day, the temperature of a dark shingle roof can reach 150 degrees. The roof conducts heat to its sheathing, and radiation carries it down through the insulation and ceiling, and into your house.

Radiant barriers require an air gap to keep them from touching the hot surface or they will conduct like any other material. Reinforced aluminum foil was typically used as the radiant barrier, but now many use a reflective plastic film. Be sure to check the barrier emittance level (should be lower than 0.25, or 25 percent) before buying it or signing an installation contract. Aluminum foil is well below 0.25. There are also reflective paints, such as Low/Mit (solec.org) that can be sprayed under the roof sheathing.



To install a radiant barrier, you will need a hand construction stapler, utility knife, and a long straight edge.

Photo—James Dulley

To get a good energy savings payback, install the barrier yourself. Companies like Innovative Insulation, Inc. (radiantbarrier.com) sell double-sided reflective foil for about \$130 for a 4 x 250-foot roll. Invest in a hand construction stapler, utility knife, and a long straight edge, and you are ready to install it.

The easiest way is to cut the barrier into lengths and staple them under the roof rafters. It is not important how neatly it is installed, but it must have adequate attic ventilation—preferably both a soffit and a ridge vent. With single-sided foil, face the reflective side down to take advantage of its low emittance. It requires less radiant barrier to lay it flat over the attic floor insulation. The barrier will collect dust and may become less effective over time, so use perforated barrier material so it breathes and moisture does not get trapped in the insulation.

Savings from installing an attic radiant barrier varies considerably, depending on your climate, specific house, and orientation to the sun. The Oak Ridge National Laboratory estimates air conditioning savings can range from \$150 annually for very hot climates to only \$40 for cold ones. Attic radiant barriers provide little positive or negative effect in the heating season. If your electric co-op offers time-of-use rates, the savings may be somewhat higher. ■

# Touchstone Energy Scholarships Awarded



**Kristina Brasington**  
Lakeview High School



**Bridget Crystal**  
Chippewa Hills High School



**Nicole Cuthbertson**  
Shepherd High School



**Kaitlynn Frayre**  
Beal City High School



**Megan Hanson**  
Lakewood High School



**Kayla Orbell**  
Eaton Rapids High School



**Deven Walkington**  
Lakewood High School



**Krista Wohlfert**  
Pewamo-Westphalia High School

## About Touchstone Energy Scholarships

Touchstone Energy® scholarships are available to high school seniors whose parents or guardians are members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, with their primary residence in our service area. Awards are based on academic achievement, leadership, and community service, among other factors. Watch Country Lines or visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) for information on the 2015 scholarship program.

## April Storm Damages Northern Service Area

**R**ushing across a cold Lake Michigan the afternoon of April 12, a weather front carried straight-line winds and damaging hail to mid-Michigan. HomeWorks Tri-County's service area north of M-57 was severely affected by downed or uprooted trees that brought down power lines, snapped poles, and caused property destruction across several counties.

Other areas were also affected, as Wolverine Power Cooperative (Cadillac) reported 24 broken, damaged or leaning transmission poles. Three substations—Westphalia, Fowler and Greenbush—were offline for up to 20 hours, affecting several hundred co-op members.

Over 50 distribution poles were broken and heavy rains complicated restoration by flooding low-lying areas.

We called for mutual aid immediately, and received crews from Midwest Energy (Cassopolis and Adrian), Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (Onaway), and once their lines were restored, from Wolverine Power (Cadillac). HomeWorks also added Asplundh tree-clearing crews and line crews from our Portland office. ■

The Chippewa Lake area suffered heavy damage to homes, outbuildings and trees, as well as power lines. Photo—Jon Karcher



HomeWorks Tri-County crews work to replace a pole near Chippewa Lake. Photo—Jon Karcher



Flooding from heavy rains meant specialized vehicles were needed to work in some areas. Here, a HomeWorks Tri-County Electric mutual aid crew uses their track vehicle in Isabella County. Photo—Chris Reed

## BE ENERGY SMART

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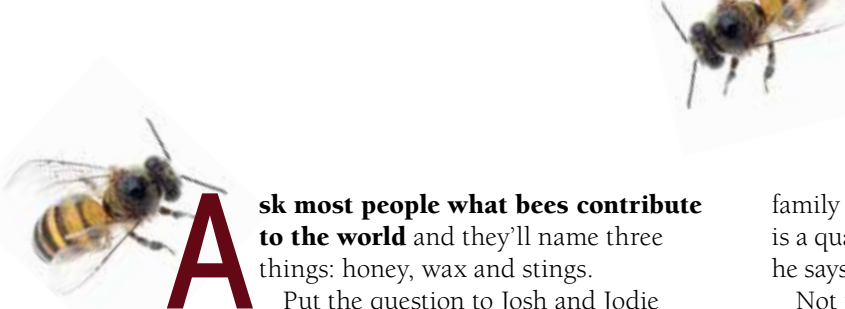
Pay Bills

SmartHub is FREE for your iOS or Android device



# Backyard Beekeeping: What's the Buzz About?





**A**sk most people what bees contribute to the world and they'll name three things: honey, wax and stings.

Put the question to Josh and Jodie Kieliszewski and you'll get a longer list: soap, body creams, ointments, lip balms...

Another unusual fact about the Kieliszewskis: While describing the wild swarm of bees that set up housekeeping in a hollow maple tree near their home in 2007, they call it a "blessing."

One person's threat is another's opportunity. The swarm might have caused the average person to summon a pest control company. Josh and Jodie, who share an interest in the natural world, found the bees fascinating.

"We saw intelligence...a social structure," Jodie says.

The swarm moved on, but not before the Kieliszewskis were bitten by the beekeeping bug—a passion that eventually became Bee Lovely Botanicals, LLC ([beelovelybotanicals.com](http://beelovelybotanicals.com))—a home-based business offering handmade, all natural bee-related products sold at Michigan farmers markets and on the internet.

Honeybees have taken a beating in recent years. Colony Collapse Disorder—the result, experts believe, of pesticide overuse, has forced many commercial beekeepers out of business. This is an agricultural crisis because honeybees are essential for pollinating crops like apples, blueberries and cucumbers, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) notes that one-third of the food we eat is pollinated by bees.

Recognizing the importance of honeybees in our food supply, the USDA will, according to the *Associated Press*, pay farmers and ranchers in Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin and North and South Dakota to reseed pastures with clover,

**"Publicity surrounding Colony Collapse Disorder has ignited interest in honeybees and backyard beekeepers, like the Kieliszewskis, are stepping up to fill the gap."**

alfalfa and other plants that attract bees. Publicity surrounding Colony Collapse Disorder has ignited interest in honeybees, and backyard beekeepers like the Kieliszewskis, are stepping up to fill the gap.

Josh and Jodie live in Unionville, Mich., with their three sons, where they are members of Thumb Electric Cooperative. A certified athletic trainer, Jodie now divides her time between her boys and the

family business. Josh, a fisheries and wildlife biologist, is a quality-control scientist in his day job, but beekeeping, he says, has transcended from a hobby to a second job.

Not that he's complaining. "It's all fun; it's not really work," he explains.

The business, however, is not without setbacks. This winter's extreme cold took a heavy toll on the Kieliszewskis' bees, with only five out of 40 hives surviving. An average hive holds 60,000–70,000 bees



at its peak occupancy. But the heavy losses won't stop the Kieliszewskis—they switched to a hardier breed called the Carnolian honeybee.

The Kieliszewskis pride themselves on keeping their operation friendly—to their bees, the environment, and the people who use their products.

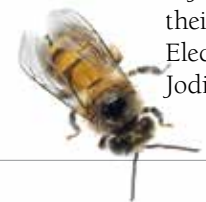
"We do a lot of research, and are really careful about our ingredients," Jodie says. "We personally use all the things we make."

They also resist using chemicals on their hives—even if it means taking bigger losses in harsh weather.

Josh says that he's been stung "a time or two"—especially in the beginning, when he didn't own the proper gear. His dark hair doesn't help. Bees, he explains, equate the color black with bears and other predators.

Jodie casually mentions the time a swarm chased her 300 feet, and stung her 20–30 times. Bees, she says, have different personalities, and this swarm was particularly ornery.

Naturally, the Kieliszewskis know something about bee sting remedies—both conventional and unusual—noting they have "tried almost every bee sting remedy known to man." Jodie likes meat tenderizer, while Josh prefers a remedy that's free and always available: spit. It has enzymes, he says, that break down the venom. ■



## Your Board in Action

### Meeting at Blanchard April 28, your board of directors:

- Reviewed the April wind storm and the co-op's response to it.
- Authorized staff to retire estate capital credits at a discount of 6.79 percent, the weighted average cost of capital.
- Amended "Tariff Sheet CD-2 Irrigation Large Power Time-of-Day" to include qualified grain-drying service.
- Adopted a Record Date and Number for members eligible to vote at the district meetings in May.
- Approved a \$2,500 donation to the NRECA International Foundation.
- Reviewed the April safety report.
- Read and approved "Board Policy 119—Rules of Procedure for Member Comment," as read, and "Board Policy 201—Safety," as revised.

### 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. Upcoming meetings are set for June 23 at Portland and July 28 at Blanchard. Members who need directions to either office or wish to have items considered on the board agenda should call 517-647-7554.

## Your Spare Change Helps Food Pantry, Families

### Meeting April 23, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board made four grants totaling \$6,420.94, including:

- \$1,000 to Redline Paraclete Ministries (formerly Basic Needs Center), St. Johns, for food pantry items;
- \$1,751.40 to an Isabella County family to buy a wheelchair lift for their van;
- \$2,500 to a Montcalm County family for a new well; and
- \$1,169.54 to a Gratiot County family to help with their electric bills.

### How to Apply for a Grant

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

**Note:** Applications must be received by July 7 for the July board meeting, and by Aug. 18 for the August board meeting.



## Saving energy starts online!

Looking for simple ways to save energy at home? With the Home Energy Optimizer—a free online home energy audit—you can receive personalized, do-it yourself tips to reduce energy waste. Get started today at [michigan-energy.org/homeworkshomeaudit](http://michigan-energy.org/homeworkshomeaudit) for a more energy-efficient, durable, and comfortable home!

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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).



## Co-op Teen Leaders Gather

**The Youth Leadership Summit** sponsored every year by Michigan electric co-ops draws top students from around Michigan for three days of leadership, networking, and energy activities, including safety and efficiency. The 2014 delegation from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative included, from left, Nathan Ruddy from Eagle, Madison Delaney from Smyrna, Tiffany Burton from Lake Odessa, customer service representative Becky Beard, and Michaela Clark from Grand Ledge. Burton and Clark were also selected to represent HomeWorks, and Michigan, at the National Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., this month. ■

## Plant the Right Tree IN THE RIGHT PLACE

For safety, plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines

Power line right-of-way





## Growing Future Leaders

**T**he Youth Leadership Summit (YLS) is designed to grow leaders through team-building skills, including hands-on classroom exercises and a high-ropes challenge (over 30 feet in the air!). Sponsored by their electric co-op, students from across Michigan gathered at SpringHill Camp near Evart in April and tested their decision-making skills, learned how to respond in emergency situations, and received valuable career information.

A number of students attending the Summit were then considered for participation in the Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., this month.

Learn more about both programs at [miYLS.com](http://miYLS.com). ■

## The Hunt Is On!

Enter the *Country Lines* Deer Blind Contest.

**I**f you think you have the best deer blind in Michigan, then we want to see it. There will be one lucky winner from each deer blind category below:

**Most tricked-out.** What personal touches have you added to spruce up your blind? Perhaps carpet, a frig or a custom paint job? Uniqueness counts.

**Best story behind the deer blind.** Tell us the story of how yours came to be. The entertainment value scores you points.

**Most interestingly-engineered.** Impressive architecture or strange contraption, the more interesting the better.

The 2014 *Country Lines* Deer Blind Contest starts on June 15 and ends Aug. 15. Enter online at [countrylines.com/deer-blind-contest](http://countrylines.com/deer-blind-contest) or mail a photo (a high quality print photo—not from a computer printer)



of your blind to CL Deer Blind Contest, 2859 W. Jolly Road, Okemos, MI 48864. Make sure to include your name, a short description of what makes your blind great, and your contact information. The three winners will each receive a \$50 credit on their electric bill and have a picture of their blind published in *Michigan Country Lines*. ■

## 'Mega' Geothermal Energy Fair is Family Friendly

**A** "mega" geothermal energy fair is coming June 27–28 to the Ingham County fairgrounds in Mason.

"This fair will be for everyone, and we will have workshops, exhibits, seminars, food, music, and even a kids area," says Larry Kaufman, MGEA executive director.

Sponsors are the Michigan Geothermal Energy Association (MGEA) and the Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association (GLREA), and anyone is welcome to attend. On June 27, the offerings are more technical (for dealers and professionals), with an emphasis on technology, including a new product called a portable room geothermal system.

On June 28, the day will be geared towards learning about geothermal for a home or business. Topics include available rebates; an "Ask the Expert" (wind, solar, bio energy, geothermal) session; and updates on energy legislation, bio energy, electric cars, success stories, case studies, and other energy topics.

There will also be dealer booths where you can ask about specific interests or needs, such as replacing a furnace or air conditioner. Visit [glrea.org](http://glrea.org) or call 269-384-9915. ■

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## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

# Thank you!

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative members turned out in near-record numbers for the 2014 district meetings, despite threatening rains and chilly temperatures. Besides supper and prizes, members heard co-op updates on the past winter's storms and other challenges, learned about the new Community Solar Garden, and were invited to join board members and staff in speaking up for reliable and affordable electricity by participating in the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.



Everyone received a sunflower-growing kit as an attendance gift.



Harley and Norma Barnes won the big prize at Eagle (District 3), taking home an iPad Mini.



Five-year-old Amber Dellar won an iPod Touch at Fulton (District 5). Photos—Tom Manting, Jr.



District 7 director Dean Floria called the Remus meeting to order.