

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Plus!

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Media-Man
O'MALLEY
Joins Country Lines

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commitment to you...

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May 2014
Vol. 34, No. 5

Executive Editor
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Publisher
Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association

Design and Layout
Ciesa Design

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.

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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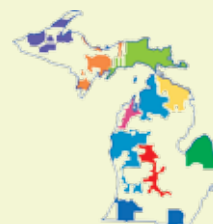
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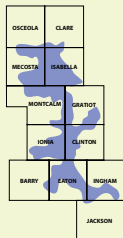
Jack O'Malley, a Cherryland Electric Co-op member and host of a northern Michigan radio show and TV 9-10 broadcast called "Jack's Journal," is joining *Michigan Country Lines* magazine as a READERS' PAGE columnist.

Photo Courtesy – Beth Price / bethpricephotography.com

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



Michigan's Electric
Cooperatives
countrylines.com



Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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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:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-562-8232

Pay by phone, anytime:

1-877-999-3395

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517-647-7554 or 1-800-848-9333
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Tri-County Propane:

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High Speed Internet

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Join the conversation at
facebook.com/HomeWorks.org

When the Going Gets Tough...



Mark Kappler
General Manager

Over the past six months, your electric co-op dealt with one challenge after another. For instance:

- On Sunday, Nov. 17, a wind storm caused widespread power outages throughout the Midwest. Over 500,000 electric services were affected in Michigan alone, and at peak, over 3,000 HomeWorks members. Fortunately, damage was limited to the northern half of our service area, and our Portland-based crews and equipment were available to help. All services were restored by Tuesday night.
- The Christmas 2013 Ice Storm. This one was bad enough to get its own name. Ice started forming the night of Dec. 21 and caused 6,800 members across our southern service area to be out of power, some until Thursday, Dec. 26. We called in mutual aid from four Michigan co-ops, and added four tree crews, in addition to bringing our Blanchard crews and equipment south. These crews, plus dispatch, customer service, and other staff, worked 16- to 18-hour days, giving up Christmas with their families to restore power to our members.
- Our propane business was hit by its own storm. Late grain drying across the Midwest left suppliers no time to replenish their stocks before the heating season cranked up, and the tight supply and higher demand sent costs up quickly. **Our guaranteed capped price for the heating season is a promise to our customers, and we kept that promise.** Our crews made sure the supply we did have got out to customers' tanks so they wouldn't run out during those long, cold months. We did short-fill tanks for a few weeks, but no one on our auto-fill program ran out.
- The Environmental Protection Agency continues to put the reliability and affordability of your electric power at risk, putting regulations in place that virtually shut down the most cost-effective (and most-used) fuel for electricity—without having viable, tested technologies in place to replace coal-fired generating plants.

While we're all trying to be more efficient, energy efficiency alone will not provide enough power to meet everyone's needs. New technologies such as our Community Solar Garden allow us to learn more about intermittent renewables, but intermittent power won't be enough to satisfy most people.

By planning and working together, HomeWorks got through two winter storms and a propane shortage with minimal impact on our members and customers.

Now we need to plan and work together on energy for the future, and we'll be asking for your help through Co-op Owners for Political Action.

Come to your district meeting this month and learn more. ■

Mark Kappler
General Manager

Three Candidates Seek Two Board Seats

DISTRICT 2 Includes Barry and Ionia counties



**Wayne Swiler
(Incumbent)**

Wayne Swiler is a life-long farmer, and is retired from Herbruck's Poultry Ranch after 20 years as their

maintenance supervisor.

His family includes his wife, Pam, a son and daughter, and three granddaughters. Wayne belongs to the First Congressional Church of Lake Odessa, the Lakewood Lions Club, and Lakewood Area Chamber of Commerce.

He has been a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric since 1967, and has served on the board since 1977. He is currently board vice-chairman, and also serves on the Wolverine Power Cooperative Board of Directors.

During his 36 years on the board, he has completed a number of courses through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, earning certification as a Credentialed Cooperative Director and in Board Leadership.

"I've lived in this area my entire life, and I believe I can represent my neighbors well by continuing to serve on the HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Board," he says.



DISTRICT 4 Includes Montcalm County, except Bloomer, Crystal and Evergreen townships



Kimber Hansen

Kimber Hansen is a farmer, responsible for the day-to-day running of the family farm near Edmore.

He is a member of the Montcalm

County Farm Bureau, serving on its board of directors, and has completed the Farm Bureau Leadership Training Program. He has been a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric since 1993.

"The business of farming has involved buying power from both the electric co-op and investor-owned utilities, and showed us the difference and difficulty with communication versus the ease of dealing with member-owned co-ops like HomeWorks.

"I have served on the Montcalm County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, a grassroots organization much like a co-op. With this experience, I feel I would be able to contribute to bringing safe and affordable power to the members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric in the future.

"It would be a privilege and an honor to serve the members of District 4 as your representative on the board of directors," he says.



Chris Rader

Chris Rader is a farmer with a cash crop operation, in partnership with Rader Farms LLC.

His family includes his wife Jessica,

and son Colton. He has been a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric since 2010.

He has served 10 years on the Montcalm County Farm Bureau board, including two years as president. He currently serves on the Winfield Township Planning Commission, and is a member of Bethel Lutheran Church in Howard City.

"I feel the tough decisions I make as a farmer will better prepare me to make decisions as a director for HomeWorks Tri-County Electric," he says. "I also feel it is important to have an agricultural voice on the board."

In District 4, because of the contested election, please bring the meeting invitation/registration card you were mailed with you. If you don't have your card, we may ask to verify your identity with a photo ID, such as a driver's license.

Absentee Ballot Request

Voting for board candidates takes place at the District 2 and 4 meetings in 2014. If you are unable to attend your district meeting, request an absentee ballot by filling out and mailing this form to HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875. Your request must be received on or before June 1, and your completed ballot returned by June 15.

Name _____ Daytime phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City, _____ State _____ ZIP _____

I certify that I am a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, and I am unable to attend the (check one) ☐ District 2 ☐ District 4 annual membership meeting in order to vote in the scheduled board of directors election. I hereby request you send one mail ballot to the above listed address for my use.

Signature _____

Date _____



Photos – 831 Creative

GIVE YOUR TASTEBUDS A HAWAIIAN VACATION

These island-inspired recipes are perfect for any Hawaiian luau or just for fun.

Hawaiian Sweet & Sour Meatballs

3/4 lb. ground beef
3/4 c. fine bread crumbs
1/8 c. sesame seeds, toasted
1 small can pineapple chunks
1 small onion, minced
1 egg, beaten
1 t. salt
dash pepper
1 T. salad oil

Sweet and Sour sauce

2 T. cornstarch
1/2 c. sugar
2 T. shoyu sauce (soy sauce)
1/4 c. white vinegar
1/4 c. pineapple juice
1/4 c. water



Combine beef, bread crumbs, onion, egg, sesame seeds, salt and pepper. Shape meat mixture into balls and put a chunk of pineapple in center of each meatball. Heat oil in skillet; sauté meatballs a few at a time, browning well on all

sides. Cover and cook on low heat until meatballs are done. Combine ingredients for Sweet and Sour sauce in small pan. Cook about 5 minutes, stirring constantly till thickened. Pineapple chunks may be added to sauce, if desired. Pour sauce over meatballs and serve. Serves 4. This is a traditional Hawaiian recipe given to me by my daughter-in-law, who is Hawaiian.

Tanya Blackmer, Atlanta

Hawaiian Refrigerator Cake

1 1/3 c. sweetened condensed milk
10 maraschino cherries, quartered
1/4 c. fresh lemon juice
1/2 c. heavy cream, whipped
1 c. miniature marshmallows
Ladyfingers cookies, about 3 dozen
1/2 c. crushed pineapple, undrained



Combine milk and lemon juice; stir until thickened. Add marshmallows, pineapple, maraschino cherries and whipped cream. Line large loaf pan with separated ladyfingers, standing halves around edge and laying them across the pan bottom. Pour in filling and cover with ladyfingers. Chill at least 6 hours. Garnish with additional whipped cream and maraschino cherries, if desired. Serves 8–10. I received this recipe from friends who had just returned from Hawaii.

Janice Harvey, Charlevoix

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

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

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

Cool Energy Bills with Metal Roofing

Asphalt shingles are still the norm in most regions, but the next roof over your head could be an energy-saving metal one made of stainless steel and painted to reflect hot sun rays. Thomas Jefferson chose metal roofing to shelter Monticello, his Virginia estate. Centuries later, historians say, Jefferson's "tin" roof "is in fine shape."

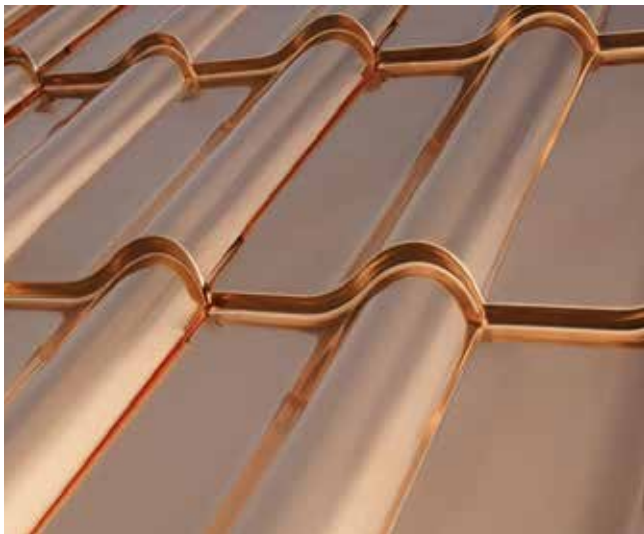
That kind of durability, say metal roofing retailers and manufacturers, is a strong selling point to a growing band of homeowners who want a building material that is not only sustainable, energy efficient, and cost-effective, but more aesthetically pleasing than asphalt. Today, consumers can select metals from copper to zinc, and roofing styles ranging from traditional vertical seams to those resembling wood shake, slate, shingles, and clay tiles. A multi-year study conducted by the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Building Technology Center suggests that replacing conventional asphalt roofs with metal ones can reduce air conditioning energy use by up to 25 percent.



The metal roof on this log home features a standing seam design that reflects the sun's rays, making it both easier to cool in summer and great for shedding snow.

If you're wondering whether your house should be clad with a metal roof, ENERGY STAR® offers this guidance: homes that are hampered with high air-conditioning bills, have large roof surfaces, lower insulation levels, or located in hot, sunny climates benefit the most from metal roofing. Painted metal roofs, also known as "cool metal roofs," are designed to reflect more sunlight and absorb less heat than a standard roof. Special reflective color pigments make this possible. Whether white or a darker paint color is used, heat will still reflect well and help reduce cooling loads in summer and insulate homes in winter.

With metal roofs, there are additional ways for homeowners to save money over time, but the initial purchase price can be a factor. The cost for using metal roofing systems in home renovations or new residential construction is higher than most other materials, manufacturers say. But compared to traditional, dark gray asphalt shingles and other non-metal roofs that last an average of 17 years and require replacing about every decade or two, metal roofs last longer. A metal roof lifespan is about two to three times longer, says William "Bill" Hippard, chair of the nonprofit Metal Roofing Alliance, a coalition that educates consumers about the benefits of modern metal roofing, and the product is virtually maintenance-free. ■



Gleaming copper that is shaped like barrel tile forms this home's new roof.

Photos – Metal Roofing Alliance

Are You Ready for Solar?

HomeWorks has a solution for you!



If you've ever thought about doing a solar project at your home, we have a solution that gives you all the benefits of solar power—without the work.

The Community Solar Garden (CSG) at HomeWorks Tri-County's Portland operations center has produced over 5,400 kilowatt-hours of solar-fueled electricity since it was commissioned on Feb. 17. That power is going back on the electric grid to serve our members.

HomeWorks members can lease as many of the 76 panels as they'd like, earning a monthly solar power credit on their energy bills. "This is an opportunity for members who are interested in using solar power to invest as much as they want, when they want," explains project leader Nick Rusnell.

The co-op's Solar Garden takes care of many of the issues people face when looking into solar projects: a good location, permits, upfront costs for the system, and even the paperwork involved in getting federal renewable energy tax incentives.

"This makes owning solar power really easy," Rusnell says. "You pay an upfront lease fee and get the full benefit of production from your solar panels for 20 years. We take care of annual maintenance and any other attention the solar array needs during the term of the lease."

"If you sell your house during the 20-year lease, no problem," he adds. "You can transfer your solar power to the next owner, or any other HomeWorks member."

Several members have already leased panels. To lease one or more panels, email Nick Rusnell at solar@homeworks.org or call 517-647-1247. ■

Solar Garden Facts

With a capacity of 20.9 kilowatts, the solar garden, engineered by Cascade Renewable Energy (Grand Rapids), cost \$1,000 per 275-watt panel.

"We used American-made panels from American-owned companies. It cost a little more, but we felt that was important," Rusnell says.

After a 30% federal tax incentive, and \$275 in Energy Optimization and Touchstone Energy rebates, member cost for one panel on a 20-year lease is just \$425.

During the lease, you'll receive a monthly credit, calculated by dividing each month's total energy production by 76. Those kilowatt-hours are credited to each participating member at the current rate of wholesale power (adjusted annually).

To learn more, or to lease a panel, call Nick Rusnell at 517-647-1247, or email solar@homeworks.org.

Watch May Bill for Your Capital Credit Allocation, Refund

Member-owners will see the benefits of cooperative principle #3 (members' economic participation) on May energy bills.

The board of directors authorized an allocation and retirement of capital credits after approving the 2013 audit in March.

Because we operate on a not-for-profit basis, 2013 margins will be allocated back to members based on purchases of energy during the year. This includes the co-op's margins (\$1,126,096); a \$200,000 dividend paid by Tri-Co Services; and the co-op's share of Wolverine Power Cooperative's 2013 margins (\$2,639,017).

These allocations are NOT cash; they are your equity in the cooperative. The allocation amount will be printed in the top right message area of your May energy bill.

Retiring Capital Credits

Retiring capital credits is a way of ensuring each generation of members provides its own equity.

The board's philosophy is to pay most of a retirement from the oldest capital credits on account, and a smaller share from the most recent year.

This year's general retirement totals \$1,340,000, of which \$890,000 retires capital credits allocated by Tri-County Electric

in 1986, 1987, and 2013. Also being retired are \$450,000 in power supply capital credits from 1989 and 2013.

Your retirement will be paid as a credit applied to your May energy bill, under "Other Charges and Credits."

The board also set aside funds for retiring capital credits to members' estates, on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information about estate retirements, call Member Services at 1-800-562-8232. ■

Help Members Find Unclaimed Checks

These former co-op members and Rural TV of Michigan customers have not cashed their inactive account refund checks. Can you help us find them?

If you know someone listed below, or have a current address at which we can contact them, please call HomeWorks at 1-800-562-8232 or email tricoenergy@homeworks.org.

Name	Last Known City	
Circle S Gardens	Crystal	Co-op
Kelly J Kuhn	Sand Lake	Co-op
Dawn Smith	Saint Johns	Rural TV

Power Lines and Trees Don't Mix

Safe and reliable electric service for your home or business is our top priority.

While we've always invested in maintaining our electric distribution system, in the past several years we've been re-clearing rights-of-way along over 2,900 miles of overhead lines. Tree limbs and infringing vines that contact power lines reduce our system's efficiency and are a primary cause of outages and blinking lights, which also increases costs.

Our rights-of-way need to be clear for 15 feet on either side of a power line; trees within that right-of-way pose a risk of injury or death for children climbing in them. If a tree falls and pushes a live power line to the ground, it can energize the ground, causing an unseen danger to people or pets who come near.

"We follow a right-of-way maintenance plan that has yearly goals, using a variety of options that can be tailored to each section of right-of-way," explains Roger Riebow, vegetation management coordinator for HomeWorks Tri-County.

The first step, re-clearing the right-of-way, involves using mechanical equipment, such as heavy-duty mowers (no relation to your home lawn mower) and side trimmers to remove trees and tall brush. Crews may also use bucket trucks for manual cutting.

Once the right-of-way is cleared, it's a simpler and less expensive task to keep it that way. The most effective maintenance methods involve spot applications of EPA-approved herbicides about two years after reclaiming.

We've been using herbicide spot treatments as a follow-up for at least three years, and it has resulted in our rights-of-way needing less mechanical intrusion. Over time, these cleared areas will support more native grasses and less brush and trees. Studies show this is also very beneficial to wildlife, Riebow says.

Some important points for you to note as a member and property owner:

- For re-clearing (mechanical) work, we send out postcard notices about two weeks before work starts.

The contractor will also knock on doors for a second contact, if possible, before starting.

- Our maintenance contractor must make a positive contact with each property owner before using herbicide on the property. If no contact is made, the contractor will leave a door tag requesting a phone call so he can explain the work.
- We also clear "danger trees"—those that are dead or dying and within reach of the power lines, whether they are within the 30-foot right-of-way or not.

If you have questions about the work being done, please call our Operations Department at 1-800-848-9333. ■

County/Townships: Clearing & Trimming

Here are the townships, by county, where we plan to re-clear in 2014. Location updates for this maintenance work will be posted on our website (homeworks.org) and Facebook page (facebook.com/homeworks.org).

Clinton	Bingham, Duplain, Greenbush
Gratiot	Elba, Hamilton, Washington
Ionia	Berlin, Danby, Orange, Portland, Sebawa
Isabella	Coldwater, Rolland
Mecosta	Grant, Sheridan
Montcalm	Belvidere, Cato, Crystal, Douglas, Ferris, Maple Valley, Pine, Richland, Sumner
Saginaw	Chapin

Photo: This right-of-way was cleared in 2006. We followed up with a spot herbicide treatment in 2008. When we return, this section should need only minor side trimming, where trees are growing in at the edge of the right-of-way, and very little spraying.

Media-Man O'MALLEY

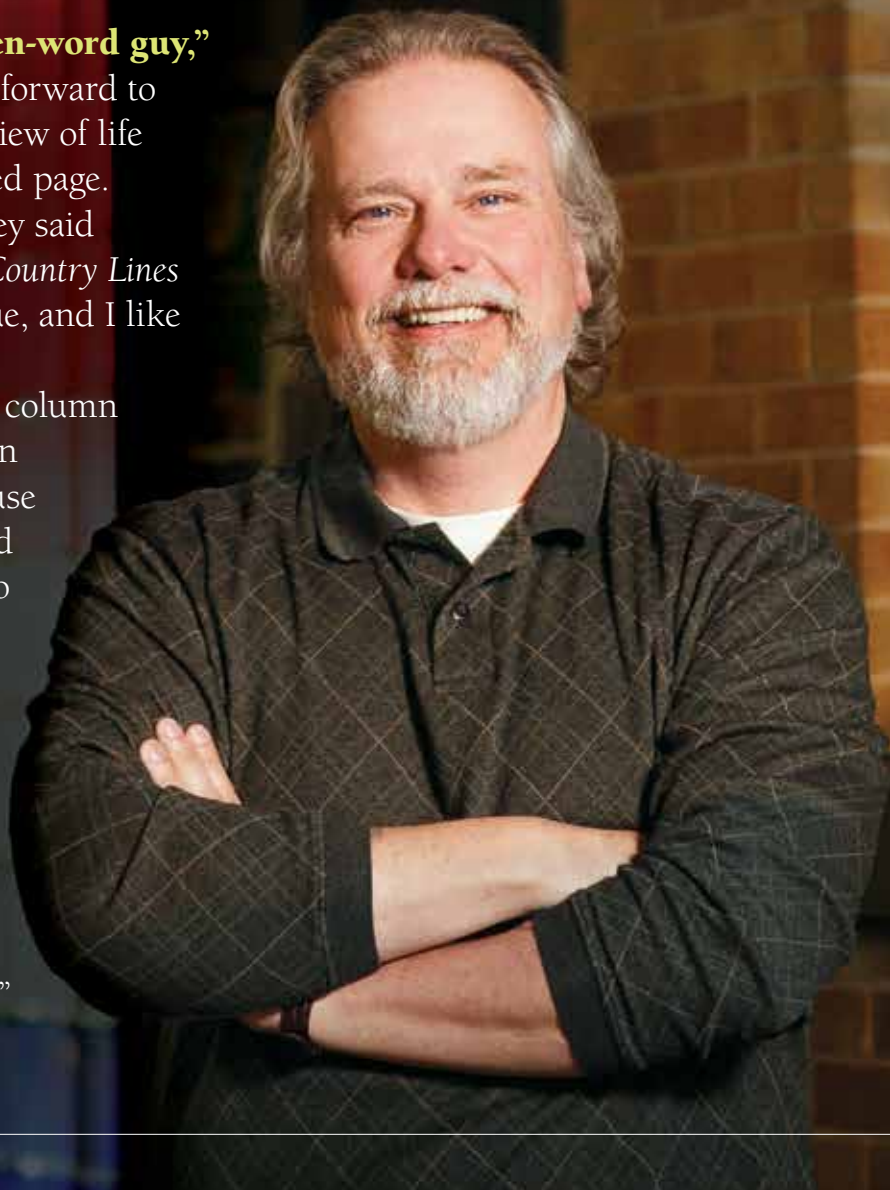
Joins *Country Lines*

A self-proclaimed “spoken-word guy,” Jack O'Malley is looking forward to transferring his upbeat view of life in Michigan to the printed page.

“I’m thrilled about this,” O'Malley said about his new gig with *Michigan Country Lines* magazine. “It’s a whole new avenue, and I like a challenge.”

Beginning with this edition, his column on the Readers’ Page will appear in alternating issues. O'Malley will use the hallowed space, once occupied by Jim Hough, then Mike Buda, to expand on what he already does on northern Michigan radio and TV: celebrate the great and quirky people and places of his home state, filtering the stories through the lens of his buoyant personality.

“People get enough bad news,” he says. “They want a little good news.”



O'Malley, 54, relishes the role of good-news messenger. To Traverse City area people, his voice is as familiar as cherry pie. He's hosted the WTCM Radio Morning Show since 1984, making it the longest-running morning radio show in northern Michigan. O'Malley describes the program, which airs from 5 to 9 a.m. Monday through Friday as "full-service," meaning a complete package of music (country), news, weather, traffic reports—everything listeners need to start their day, except the coffee.

"People waking up want to know the world is still here and that all is well," O'Malley explains. "The idea is to be happy and fun, and keep people informed."

Brief interviews with various guests are also part of his routine—a local librarian offering a glimpse of what Traverse City folks are reading, an outdoor writer discussing what's biting in the Bay, or a city official discussing a development project.

A true multi-media man, O'Malley also turns up every Monday on the northern Michigan CBS affiliate WWTV (TV 9&10), in the form of "Jack's Journal," a 2-minute human-interest feature that airs during the 6 p.m. news.

The subjects?

"Gosh, it's everybody and everything," O'Malley says, tossing out a few recent examples—a hidden gem known as the Manton Military Museum, a one-man band, a funky little "Up North" tavern...

O'Malley describes the drill: "I get a cameraman and travel all over northern Michigan—from Alpena to the eastern Upper Peninsula, to the Ludington area—I follow the subject around, do an interview, put it all together."

Now and then O'Malley spends the 2 minutes musing about one of modern life's marvels—the overwhelming number of options, for example, in a supermarket cookie aisle.

O'Malley gleans ideas from his viewers and listeners, production team members, and his own observations. For *Country Lines*, O'Malley, who grew up in Detroit, will continue working Michigan's fertile human-interest soil, but on a broader, statewide field.



Jack O'Malley says his WTCM Radio Morning Show is a complete package of music, news, weather and everything listeners need to start their day, except the coffee.

"I'm a Michigan boy," he says. "My heart is in Michigan." O'Malley and his wife Robin are, by the way, Cherryland Electric Co-op members. O'Malley has two grown daughters and a 12-year-old son. As this *Country Lines* edition went to press, a first grandchild was also expected.

A veteran hunter of human-interest stories, O'Malley knows that the eyes and ears of his listeners, viewers, and now, readers, are his best bush-beaters. If you have an idea for a column, he wants to hear from you.

"I'm always open to ideas and suggestions," he says.

On column writing, as well as on grandfathering. ■





This winter, did your propane supplier:

- Keep you from running out of fuel?
- Honor your capped price throughout the heating season?

If not, call HomeWorks Tri-County Propane at 1-877-574-2740

HomeWorks Tri-County Propane is not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.



Get \$50 for your old refrigerator or freezer.
 Have an extra working refrigerator or freezer? Don't let it sit there wasting energy. Turn it in. You'll receive a \$50 rebate from the Energy Optimization (EO) Appliance Recycling program and we'll recycle it. Schedule your FREE pick-up today.

recycleit

ENERGY TIP: Turn in your old room air conditioner or dehumidifier with your refrigerator or freezer and get a \$15 bonus rebate per unit.

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.

People Fund Helps Senior Center

Spare change gathered by rounding up your monthly energy bill is donated to the Tri-County Electric People Fund to help area families and organizations in need.

At their March 12 meeting, the People Fund board made 14 grants totaling \$13,599.73, including:

- \$1,050 – Clinton County Senior Center, to buy nutritional food, and personal care products;
- \$500 – Yes Center in Grand Ledge, to buy carts and healthy snacks for their after-school program;
- \$500 – Cornerstone Worship Center, Vestaburg, to purchase food pantry items;
- \$750 – Eaton County Child Abuse Prevention Council, to print materials;
- \$501.95 – Eaton County family to help with their electric bill;
- \$1,865.41 – Eaton County family, to help with housing expenses;
- \$3,115.31 – Total to three Ionia County families for \$1,428.93; \$655.41; and \$1,030.97 to help with electric bills;

- \$1,502.12 – Isabella County family to help with electric bills;
- \$274 – Mecosta County family to help with electric bills;
- \$790.95 – Mecosta County family to help with electric bills;
- \$700 – Montcalm County family to purchase propane; and
- \$2,049.99 – Montcalm County family to help with electric bills.

How You Can Help

You can opt in or out of the voluntary Operation Round Up program at any time. Just call 1-800-562-8232.

How to Apply for a Grant


Write us at 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875. We'll send you an application form and guidelines, or find them at homeworks.org.

Your Board in Action

Meeting at Portland, March 24, your board of directors:

- Reviewed the 2013 audit report with independent auditor Eide Bailly.
- Read and approved "Policy 402—Allocation of Non-Operating Income from Subsidiary"; "Policy 403—Long Range Financial Management Plan"; and "Policy 404—Retirement of Capital Credits."
- Authorized staff to allocate the co-op's 2013 margins, totaling \$1,126,096 along with a \$200,000 dividend from Tri-Co Services and \$2,639,017 in Wolverine Power Cooperative margins, to members based on energy purchases.
- Further authorized a general retirement to members of \$890,000 in co-op capital credits (including the \$200,000 dividend) and \$450,000 in Wolverine capital credits, as credits on their May energy bills, as well as a provision for estate retirement requests.
- Accepted the low bid for a new cold storage building at Portland.
- Approved staff using a portion of unclaimed capital credits from 2007–08, to extend the Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grant and Scholarship programs in 2014, with the remainder retired to the general fund.
- Learned incumbent director Wayne Swiler was nominated for re-election to his District 2 board seat. In District 4, the nominating committee has listed members Kimber Hansen of Edmore and Chris Rader of Lakeview.
- Learned there were 144 new members since January.
- Acknowledged the February and March safety reports.

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Winter's in the Rear View

Whew! Winter is finally in our rear view mirrors. All of Michigan's 83 counties experienced a humdinger, didn't they? Persistent cold, high accumulations without a traditional mid-season thaw, an abundance of snow days, and the Great Lakes nearing an ice-cover record made the Winter of 2013 one for the books! Yowsers!

I'm as ready for spring as the next guy, but let's be honest about winter in Michigan, too. We all love it! Winter is as much a part of who we are as the DNA that determines our eye and hair color.

We love seeing how southern towns react when hit with an inch or two of snow. Schools close, YouTube videos of garbage trucks pirouetting down the interstate are circulated, and news crews are on the scene! Why do we find such humor in our southern neighbors' response to what we consider a "light dusting"?

Bragging rights, pure and simple. We Michiganians are a tough bunch—enduring months of snow and frigid cold, driving to and from work (uphill both ways), and sending kids to the bus stop on days when the slightest breeze can leave cheeks raw and chapped. And, when warm weather friends call to complain about an inch of snow or temperatures below freezing, we can let loose! "Heck, we got a foot last night! It's minus 8 with wind chills at 35 below and schools have been closed all week!"

Not for the faint of heart, winter gives folks true grit, an identity. Anybody can do sunny and 75, but it takes seasoned Michiganians to handle negative temperatures and snow up to their backsides! Floridians have lawn mowers. A rake or two. But look in any Michigan garage and you will find all that plus an assortment of snow blowers, shovels, ice choppers, snow scoops...an arsenal for the war with winter we secretly enjoy waging year after year.



*"Winter gives folks true grit...
Anybody can do sunny and 75."*

Jack O'Malley pictured using a snowblower during this infamous "Winter of 2013."

Enjoy the warm months ahead. You've earned 'em! And while boating, camping or lazing on the beach this summer, pay attention to the number of times you catch yourself bragging about how you survived the infamous "Winter of 2013." Because you will. And, you should. The seasons make us who we are. And we are from Michigan, home of the real winter!



P.S. I am looking forward to talking with you through this column (every other issue), so if you have a topic idea to share about unique Michigan people, places and things, give me a shout to jack@countrylines.com or write: J. O'Malley, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI. ■



«« Do You Know Where This Is?

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

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. 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 the name of your co-op. Only those sending complete information

will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the July–August 2014 issue.

The March contest winner is **Deborah Dunlap**, a Cherryland Electric Cooperative member from Traverse City, who correctly identified the photo as Lakenenland Sculpture Park in Marquette.



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Tri-County Electric Cooperative



Watch your mailbox for your personal invitation.

Knowing more about your electric cooperative helps you stay involved, and that helps us run HomeWorks Tri-County Electric for the benefit of you and your neighbors.

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 then learning 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 the meeting with a Grand Prize of an iPad2.

Bring your kids, too. Besides enjoying a free meal, all youths ages 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