

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



MILLER FAMILY  
**FARM**  
— A LEAP INTO —  
UNCHARTED WATERS

Remembering  
Rick Deneweth

Hiking The  
Appalachian Trail

Leelanau County Cancer  
Foundation Spreads Generosity

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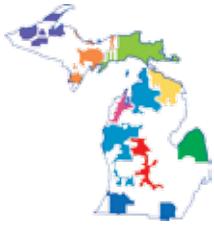
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Standing left to right: Dawn Miller, Rob Miller, Sandy Miller, Fred Miller  
Kneeling left to right: Jake Miller, Hannah Miller

Photo—Emily Prehoda

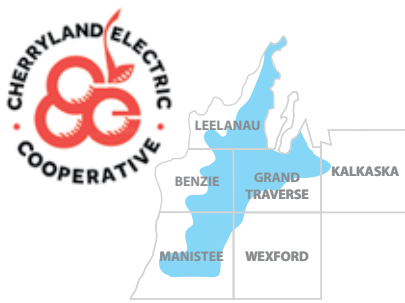
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IN MEMORY OF  
**Rick Deneweth**  
1957–2016

# I'll Talk To You

By Tony Anderson

A phone call from board member Rick Deneweth always ended with him saying, "I'll talk to you." On November 11, 2016, I got a call from a friend that was like a knife into my soul. Rick Deneweth was gone. He had passed unexpectedly, but peacefully, in his sleep at home.

Incredulous, I spoke loudly into the phone, "What? Rick Deneweth?" I thought it just had to be a mistake. Then, I slumped back into my chair as tragedy sank to my core.

In my years working at electric cooperatives, I have seen more than one board member pass away. Most of them were great board members. Rick was simply in a class by himself. He was always prepared, always thoughtful and, most importantly, always had the best interest of the entire membership at heart.

I first met Rick at a social event in October 2007. His wife, Connie, is the head of Traverse City State Bank. A smart, intelligent and active community leader, I was hoping that she would apply for a board vacancy we had at that time.

Instead, it was her husband who applied. I vividly remember thinking, "Who is this guy? Why would we want the second best for our members?" The board did their work and interviewed a handful of applicants. Rick was appointed to the Cherryland board and began serving our members in December of 2007.

I quickly learned how wrong I had been. Rick had a law degree, was a successful businessman and also a certified public accountant. He was joint managing partner for Copper Ridge LLC, owner/associate broker at Three West commercial real estate company and later co-owner of LC Materials. Still, over our years together, I often kidded him about being "Mr. Connie Deneweth."



Rick Deneweth (back row, center) and the Cherryland board of directors



With all of this in his life, Rick never neglected his sons' activities or his community. He drove his boys to hockey games all over the state. He was a supporter and donor to many youth hockey activities around Traverse City. Rick also played a big role in raising money for the Honor Flights that took World War II veterans to Washington D.C. He was a guardian himself on the second flight out of Traverse City.

In spite of his busy schedule, Rick still made room for quality time for the members of Cherryland Electric Cooperative. He stepped up his service six years ago when he was appointed to represent Cherryland on the Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative board. Just this spring, he became chairman of the board at Wolverine.

His lack of ego, immense talent and constant drive made him great. What made him special was his gift for lifting people up by just being who he was. It simply felt good to be around him. Unconsciously, you found yourself wanting to work even harder, do better and be better.

We would often ride to meetings together. We talked on the phone at least once or twice a month. Those were the best of times. We debated cooperative issues, political strategy and community politics. I knew I was out of my league, but I craved each small opportunity to try to keep pace. He always made me feel like I had.



**Tony Anderson**  
General Manager

I walked about the office on that dark November day clutching my cell phone in my hand. In between making sad calls to his co-op family and trying to think about all the details this loss forces on our business, I looked into the screen on my phone squeezing it so hard. I prayed that it would ring and his name would appear just one more time. Ultimately, reality sank in. With tears in my eyes, I simply whispered to myself, "I'll talk to you." ■




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Wolverine President and CEO Eric Baker, Rick's fellow board members, along with Cherryland's General Manager Tony Anderson, reminisce about Rick and how his life made a lasting impact. You can hear their reflections on the legacy Rick left on both the Cherryland and Wolverine cooperatives in the "Remembering Rick" episode—available on Cherryland's podcast *Co-op Energy Talk*.

# NO BARRIERS

ADVENTURES FOR RURAL VETERANS—APPLY BY JAN. 31

Michigan electric cooperatives believe there should be “No Barriers” for veterans with disabilities. That’s the name and idea behind CoBank’s No Barriers initiative. Michigan cooperatives are looking for qualified veterans\* from our local community to participate.

No Barriers is a five-day, all-expenses-paid, expedition in Colorado, designed to help veterans with disabilities transform their lives through curriculum-based experience in challenging environments (climbing, rafting and hiking).

**If you are a disabled veteran, or you know of a disabled veteran in our community who would like to participate in the No Barriers program, please complete the form on our website:**  
**[countrylines.com/nobarriers](http://countrylines.com/nobarriers)**

*\*Must have VA disability rating to be eligible.*



## Storm Watch: Plan Ahead And Be Prepared

**W**hen winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Your electric cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared. Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving you without power. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

### Winterize Your Home

- Inspect and maintain heating equipment and chimneys to ensure they’re working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather-strip doors and windows to stop air leaks and related heat loss.
- Freezing temperatures can cause water pipes to burst. Wrap pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic. Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. From the inside, windows can also be covered with plastic.

- Make sure everyone knows where the fire extinguisher is and how to use it. House fires occur more often in winter, especially from using alternative heating unsafely.

### Stay Warm And Safe

Plan ahead for alternate heating or other places you can go. A fireplace, propane space heater or woodburning stove is sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning heating sources should always be vented and used with caution—make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working. If you use a portable generator, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload it, and use a proper outdoor extension cord that can handle the electric load.

Visit [ready.gov](http://ready.gov) or call 1-800-BE-READY (1-800-237-3239) for more tips on preparing for winter storms. ■



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
**YOUTH TOUR**



# Michigan Co-ops Inspire Tomorrow's Leaders Today With **YOUTH TOUR 2017**

An exclusive summer highlight for the best and brightest youth in the state.  
**June 10–15, 2017**

Designed to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, Youth Tour teaches the brightest students of Michigan about their past—and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. This is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors (going into their junior or senior year this summer) and is sponsored by Michigan's electric cooperatives. From the battlefields of Gettysburg to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., the program explores the leadership lessons of our nation's history and will immerse students in the cooperative spirit.

Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance students' knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build life-long friendships with other student-leaders from across the country.

**Youth Tour applications accepted  
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#### **Trip Highlights Include:**

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- See Fort McHenry, birthplace of "The Star Spangled Banner"
- Explore the Washington, D.C., monuments and memorials
- Attend a theater performance at the Kennedy Center
- Explore the museums of the Smithsonian Institution
- Pay respects at Arlington National Cemetery
- Meet with Michigan Senators and Congressmen
- Batter up! Enjoy a Washington Nationals baseball game

**Additional information and online application  
are available at [CooperativeYouthTour.com](http://CooperativeYouthTour.com).**

# APPALACHIAN INSPIRATION

## *Hiking The World's Longest Footpath*

By Rob Marsh



**A** new year brings new personal goals. For some it's losing weight. For others it's reading more. For Mandy Scott, daughter of Cherryland lineman Phil Scott, it was hiking 2,189 miles along the Appalachian Trail.

In the spring of 2016, Mandy Scott needed to shake things up a bit. "I had been working the same job in a restaurant for a handful of years and had graduated from the University of Michigan a couple years previously. I needed to do something to avoid feeling complacent," she reflects.

Thanks to some motivation from a friend and future hiking partner, Scott decided to take on the Appalachian Trail: the longest hiking-only footpath in the world.

Scott was familiar with the rigors of hiking and camping, but knew this trail was different. "In the summer of 2015, I backpacked 100 miles over a week in the Smoky Mountains. But I hadn't done anything of this kind of scale."

A trek of this magnitude required proper planning and equipment. "We were not lightweight hikers,"

she joked. Between the necessities including food, clothing, socks and camping gear, as well as the items used to pass the time, like books, watercolor kits, and musical instruments, each pack weighed about 45–50 lbs. With the help of her hiking partner's grandmother, they also were mailed supplies regularly to ensure they never ran out of the essentials.

Scott started her journey at Amicicola Falls, Georgia, on April 29. The trip began with a 10-mile approach trail to the southern terminus Springer Mountain. The approach trail began with a 600-plus step climb over flights of stairs to get to the top. As she took that initial climb, Scott remembers thinking, "What did I just get myself into?"

For the first couple of weeks, Scott traveled an average of 10 miles per day. As she traversed the flatter Mid-Atlantic section of the trail, her pace increased to an average of 20–25 miles per day. There were even stretches where she achieved over 30 miles per day.

The journey was difficult and at times took its toll on her both physically and mentally. "Rain was hard,"





→ Mandy Scott reached the final summit on September 19 after trekking over 2000 miles in five months.

↑ Taking a break at McAfee Knob in Roanoke, VA

she explained. "There were weeks when it would rain every day." At one point the rain was so bad that Scott and her hiking partner contracted trench foot, a very painful condition caused by one's feet being wet and cold for too long.

There were times when she also struggled with the distance from her family and boyfriend. "I was lucky to have my boyfriend come and visit me once a month, but there would be days when cell signal was so scant that it was difficult to maintain communication. So there were days I felt very alone."

But for every bad day, there was a multitude of great days, filled with moments of fun, generosity, and "trail magic." From strangers welcoming them into their home for hot showers and food to the mysterious cooler filled with soda and beer left for them to discover, Scott found herself appreciating the little things in life.

"One day we almost ran out of food. We struck up a conversation with someone who ended up giving us a couple beers, a dozen Krispy Kremes, and some bananas. I think we cried." It was these special moments that kept her going.

Over 2,000 miles, 30 bears, 15 supply drops, and hundreds of mosquito bites later, Scott reached her destination atop Mt. Katahdin in Maine on September 19.

*"I made so many plans and set goals to accomplish when I got back."*

In the end, Scott's nearly five-month long journey left her motivated about the future. "I made so many plans and set goals to accomplish when I got back," said Scott.

To others in need of a push to achieve their goals, Scott recommends getting out of the house and away from the daily routine; "See what happens to your mind when there is not TV or work to distract yourself. See how motivated you get." ■

# HEALTHY LIVING

Great tasting, good-for-you recipes.

## Energy Bars

Joyce Tamminga,  
Great Lakes Energy

- 1 cup peanut butter, sunflower butter or almond butter
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup honey
- 3 cups rolled oats
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup ground flaxseeds or chia seeds
- $\frac{2}{3}$  cup mini chocolate chips
- 1 cup any combination of nuts, seeds, and soft dried fruit (sunflower seeds, raisins, dried cranberries, etc.)
- shredded coconut

Combine the peanut butter and honey in a large mixing bowl and stir until smooth. Gradually add oats and chia seeds/flaxseeds. Add chocolate chips and nut/seed/fruit mixture. Mix gently to combine. Use a 7x11 or 9x9 pan sprayed with baking spray. Sprinkle bottom with coconut, pat down mixture firmly, and sprinkle more coconut on top and pat down. Refrigerate and cut into small bars. Enjoy for a healthy snack! Keep refrigerated.



## Fresh Corn Salsa

Mary Babcock, Thumb Electric



- 2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen
- ½ cup red onion, diced
- ½ cup red pepper, diced
- 1–2 jalapeños, seeded and minced
- ½ cup cilantro, chopped
- 4 teaspoons lime juice
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

Sauté corn over medium-high heat until kernels begin to char. Set aside to cool. In a medium bowl, combine onion, red pepper, jalapeño, cilantro, lime juice, and salt. Add sautéed corn and stir to combine. Enjoy with fresh chips!

## Overnight Oatmeal (Muesli)

Mary Ellen Wynes, HomeWorks Tri-County



- ½ cup oatmeal
- ½ cup yogurt (your choice)
- any fruit
- any nuts
- any fruit juice

Combine your oatmeal and yogurt. Add your fruit juice, nuts and fruit. Stir and refrigerate overnight. Enjoy in the morning!

## Delicious And Healthy Avocado Pudding

Cindy Dickinson, Presque Isle Electric



- 1 ripe avocado
- 2 tablespoons cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons maple syrup
- 2 tablespoons almond butter or peanut butter
- pinch of salt
- chocolate chips

Mash avocado in bowl until smooth. Stir in rest of ingredients. Chill 30 minutes or more. Sprinkle chocolate chips on top as garnish.



# Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

Join our exclusive online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

Please submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:

**“Muffins & Breads” due Feb. 4**

**“Breakfast & Brunch” due Mar. 4**

Enter your recipe online at [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) or send to (handprint or type on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

**Go to [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) to register.**



# Leelanau County Cancer Foundation Carries On Generosity

By Rob Marsh

**G**iving to others is what Cherryland-ers do best. It's built into the cooperative DNA. Cherryland members and employees do not focus on just their own needs, but also on those of the community at large.

One of the greatest parts of giving back is that it doesn't stop after volunteering at the food pantry or donating money to Cherryland Cares. It's a domino effect; when a person gives to someone in need, they carry on that giving spirit. Leelanau County Cancer Foundation is one of those dominoes.

In September 2016, Leelanau County Cancer Foundation (LCCF) was one of three Cherryland Cares grant recipients for that quarter. The Foundation provides financial assistance to Leelanau County residents and families who have been impacted by cancer.

The organization started seven years ago in collaboration with Munson Regional Healthcare Foundation. In April 2016, LCCF branched off on its own. Marti Paquette, secretary and treasurer at LCCF, said the move "provided LCCF with more control and accountability regarding the distribution of funds to Leelanau County families affected by cancer."

Their history and increased visibility in Leelanau County brought them success, almost too much. "It didn't take us long to realize that the need in our county was great," explained Paquette.

In the summer of 2016, the monies LCCF raised through their traditional avenues, including their annual fundraiser "La Tea Da High Tea" and annual solicitation letter, were quickly depleting. They needed a little extra help.

As luck would have it, Cherryland's member relations manager Rachel Johnson attended the "La Tea Da High Tea" fundraiser that year. Johnson invited Paquette to the cooperative to talk more about LCCF and potential Cherryland Cares grant opportunities. One application and a volunteer board meeting later, LCCF was given the additional help needed to carry on their mission.

With the funds from Cherryland Cares and other entities, LCCF has eased the financial burden of Leelanau County residents and their families by helping with everyday expenses. These expenses include rent, mortgage payments, gas, prescriptions and cell phone bills. They also invest in simple luxuries like massages, giving patients comfort and some physical relief during their treatment. These seemingly simple gestures help alleviate considerable pressure for these individuals and their families.

Leelanau County Cancer Foundation's success illustrates how the spirit of giving ripples out across a community. All it takes is the first domino to fall—that is, the first act of kindness. Cherryland members and employees can proudly say that they like to knock over the first domino. ■

## In 2016, Cherryland Cares\* grants, sponsorship dollars, and volunteer hours supported:

- 5 to One Early Childhood Initiative
- Acme Christian Thrift Store
- Almira Township Music in the Park
- American Red Cross of Northern Michigan
- Arts for All in Northern Michigan
- Benzie Area Christian Neighbors
- Benzie Conservation District
- Benzie High School – World History Tour
- Benzie Home Health Care
- Benzie Middle School – Odyssey of the Mind
- Benzie Record Patriot Reading Program
- Benzie Sunrise Rotary
- Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Michigan
- Buckley Days
- Cherry Capital Men’s Choir
- Child and Family Services of Northwestern Michigan
- Copemish Historical Society
- Family Partnership
- Father Fred Foundation
- Freedom Builders
- Giving JAR
- Glen Lake Fire and Rescue Association
- Glen Lake Schools – Music Program
- Goodwill
- Grand Traverse Academy Band
- Grand Traverse Area Catholic Schools Athletics
- Grand Traverse County Deputy Sheriff’s Association
- Grand Traverse Dyslexia Association
- Grand Traverse YMCA
- Great Lakes Children’s Museum
- Greenspire School STEM
- Habitat for Humanity
- Home Builders Association
- Hospice of Michigan
- Interlochen Eagles
- Kaleva Historical Society
- Lake Ann Baby Pantry
- Lake Ann Lions Club
- Lake Leelanau Lake Association Kids Fishing Day
- Lake Leelanau Street Fair
- Leelanau Christian Neighbors
- Leelanau County Cancer Foundation
- Leelanau Uncaged
- Legal Services of Northern Michigan
- Leland Robotics
- Manistee County Child Advocacy Center
- March of Dimes
- Marilla Food Pantry
- Marine Corps League
- Michael’s Place
- Michigan Legacy Art Park
- Michigan Special Olympics
- Mid-Michigan Honor Flight
- Munson Manor
- Munson Women’s Cancer Fund
- National Cherry Festival – Touchstone Energy Junior Royal Parade
- NMC Food Drive
- NMC Foundation
- Northport Wine and Craft Beer Festival
- Northwest Michigan 4H
- Northwest Michigan Supportive Housing
- Northwestern Michigan Fair
- Reining Liberty Ranch
- Rick Deneweth Youth Hockey Fund
- Salvation Army
- SEEDS
- St. Francis High School – Music Program
- TBAISD Scholarship
- Traverse City Builders Exchange
- Traverse City Firefighters Union Local No. 646
- Traverse City Noon Rotary
- Traverse City Skating Club
- Traverse City West Middle School – Odyssey of the Mind
- Traverse City West Senior High School
- United Way
- Westwoods Elementary Library
- Zonta Club of Traverse City

*\*Cherryland Cares distributes funds to local nonprofit organizations seeking assistance. Cherryland Cares is overseen by five volunteer Cherryland Electric Co-op members. The funds distributed by Cherryland Cares are a result of members electing to round up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar.*



# MILLER FAMILY FARM

## — A LEAP INTO — UNCHARTED WATERS

By Yvonne Whitman

**A**fter a long career in the construction business, Rob Miller, then a Madison, WI, resident, found himself at a crossroad when he lost his job during the 2008 economic downturn. During this time, his son, Jake, was working for a vegetable farmer. Jake's work in the agriculture industry piqued Rob's interest in how foods were being grown. "I realized that food is a commodity that will never go away," Rob says. It was a realization that steered him and Jake to investigate alternative methods for farming. "And that led us to aquaponics," Rob explains.

Aquaponics is the marriage of aquaculture (raising fish) and hydroponics (the soilless growing of plants) that grows fish and plants together in one integrated system. The fish effluent provides an organic food source for the growing plants, and the plants provide

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In 2016, the farm was recognized as one of three finalists in the Governor's Energy Excellence Award for Best Project in the Agriculture sector.



Tilapia are a critical component to the farm. Jake is holding a fish in front of one of the farm's six fish tanks. Each carefully monitored 500-gallon tank holds approximately 250 fish.

a natural filter for the water in which the fish live. This environmentally-sustainable method of farming is free of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, plus it uses just one-tenth of the water expended in traditional field growing methods.

The Millers began working with Nelson and Pade, a Wisconsin aquaponic company, to learn everything they could about the technology. When trying to decide where to locate their operation, the decision was easy. "When I was a kid my favorite spot was Michigan's Upper Peninsula to visit my grandparents. I love it up here," Rob reflects.

In 2013, Rob, his wife, Dawn, and their three children all took a leap of faith into uncharted waters and moved their family to a seven-acre farm in Carney. Once owned by his maternal great grandparents, the farm is currently owned by Rob's parents, Fred and Sandy. Purchasing a nearby additional 60 acres, Rob began construction on the first building for the aquaponic operation.

The first shipment of 276 tilapia fish were delivered in 2014. It took them approximately one year to get the system operating at full capacity, growing both fish and produce. So, how does it work? The nutrient-rich water from the fish feeds the 200 lettuce seeds that are planted every day, six days of the week. Approximately 40 days later, the crop is harvested and ready to sell. The farm now produces several types of lettuce, kale, tomatoes and cucumbers. The produce is sold in 10 U.P. grocery stores, in addition to supplying healthy food to the Carney and Gladstone school lunch programs. This has all been accomplished with little to no advertising, but rather through word-of-mouth publicity. The quality of the produce advertises for itself, the Millers attest.



Rob Miller proudly stands in the rows of his impressively tall tomato plants.

Photos—Emily Prehoda

Still in its infancy, the operation will reach full capacity in five years when it is expected to produce 60,000 heads of lettuce and 70,000 pounds of tomatoes annually. Future plans include a certified kitchen on-site, so that they can sell the fresh fish, as well as constructing more greenhouses for crops, such as strawberries and peppers.

Family involvement weaves its way through the fabric of the farm with Rob's son, Jake, handling fish operations, his daughter, Hannah, as a greenhouse technician, and son, Jon, as general help. Rob's wife, Dawn, initially a bit reluctant at the prospect of relocation, adds, "Now that I'm up here, I love it. I love working on the farm. I've always enjoyed gardening, and this is just gardening on a different level."

"I have to attribute all of this to my mom and dad," Rob thoughtfully acknowledges. "They have been entrepreneurs their entire lives, and they taught by example. I saw first-hand their successes and failures and how they got through them. Those sorts of life lessons helped me through my own trials and errors with this business."

Together, as a family, the Millers have traversed uncharted territory to be able to supply fresh, sustainable food throughout the U.P.'s four seasons.

*Miller Family Farm is a member of Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association. For more information on the farm, contact them at 906-639-2506, millerfamilyfarm2013@gmail.com or eatupmichigan.com.* 🐟

# VEGETARIAN MINESTRONE

*A Miller Family Farm Favorite*

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- ¼ cup celery, diced
- 1 cup carrots, peeled and sliced into thin half moons
- 1 cup fresh mushrooms, sliced
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 2 tablespoons chicken flavored seasoning (vegetarian)
- 6 cups boiling water
- 1 teaspoon steak sauce
- ½ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce (Annie's vegetarian)
- 12 ounces fresh kale, chopped
- 3 ½ cup tomatoes, crushed
- 4 cups spaghetti sauce (homemade or store bought)
- 3 ½ cups navy beans canned (drained & rinsed)
- 1 ½ cups zucchini, cut into small bite size
- 2 cups ditalini, cooked (or other small pasta)
- salt and pepper to taste

Heat oil in a large soup pot. Add onion, garlic, celery and carrots. Sauté 2–3 minutes until onion is translucent. Add mushroom, oregano and basil and cook 2 minutes over medium heat or until mushrooms are softened. Prepare broth by dissolving vegetarian chicken seasoning into boiling water, then add to pot with onion mixture. Add steak sauce, Worcestershire, kale, tomatoes, spaghetti sauce and beans. Bring to a boil, then simmer for 10–20 minutes, add zucchini and cook 10 more minutes or until zucchini is tender. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper, then add the cooked pasta. Remove from heat and serve. Makes about 1 gallon.



Find this recipe and more at [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com).

# Wild Weather

## Photo Contest Winners

**Photos With The Highest Facebook Votes!** The votes are in, and we're happy to share the winning photo (and some favorites) from our photo contest. Thanks to everyone who submitted a photo, voted and spread the word by sharing the post on Facebook.

2016  
Winner!



Congrats to Beth Olosky with her photo "2016 Lady Elk District Champs." She won the bill credit on her December 2016 bill.

Winner!



"God's promise, over Pictured Rocks, at sunset" by Annette Bucco



"Watching a menacing fall storm" by Dale Mikses



"Foggy pier—Manistee, MI" by Andrea Kisse!



"Snow clouds on the horizon"  
by Carrie Noren



## Enter Your Photos and Win!

Submit your best photo and encourage your friends to vote! The photo receiving the most votes from our Facebook contest will be printed in an issue of *Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites. If your photo is printed in *Country Lines* during 2017, you will be entered to win a credit of up to \$200 on your December 2017 bill.

Our January theme is **Family**. Photos can be submitted from **January 1** to **January 20** to be featured in our March issue.

To enter the contest visit [facebook.com/cherylandelectriccoop](https://facebook.com/cherylandelectriccoop) and click "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs. If you're not on Facebook, don't worry. You can also enter the contest at [cherylandelectric.coop/photo-contest](https://cherylandelectric.coop/photo-contest). Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!



## Cherryland Accepts Applications For Youth Tour In Washington, D.C.

High school sophomores and juniors from Cherryland's service territory are invited to join the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour: a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity to Washington, D.C.

From the battlefields of Gettysburg to the halls of Congress in Washington, D.C., two local students will have the chance to explore the leadership lessons of our nation's history and immerse themselves in the cooperative spirit with other students from around the state and country.

Applications must be submitted by Tuesday, Feb. 28. For more information and to apply, visit [CooperativeYouthTour.com](http://CooperativeYouthTour.com).

## Rebate Forms Due By End Of January

Members looking to receive credits for energy efficiency upgrades performed during 2016 must have their rebate forms to Cherryland by Jan. 31. Forms received on Feb. 1 will not be accepted for items purchased and installed in 2016.

If you have questions regarding a rebate form or are interested in performing energy efficiency upgrades to your home or business in 2017, visit our website or contact Tammy Squires at 231-486-9261 or [tsquires@cherrylandelectric.coop](mailto:tsquires@cherrylandelectric.coop).

## Office Closed For Employee Training

The Cherryland office will be closed Monday, Jan. 16 for employee training. Normal business hours will resume Tuesday, Jan. 17.

Line crews are on call to respond to any outages or emergencies. You can report your outage through SmartHub or by calling us at 231-486-9200.

## Serve On Cherryland's Board

Any qualified Cherryland member can be elected to serve a three-year term on the cooperative's board of directors. Two directors will be elected at this year's annual meeting, including one Leelanau County director and one at-large director.

To be nominated in 2017, candidates can file a petition with the cooperative's administrative assistant starting the first day of March until 4 p.m. on the last business day of March. Nominating petitions are available on the Cherryland website and at the co-op office in Grawn.

For more information regarding board nominations and the election process, review Article III of the co-op's bylaws on the Cherryland website.

## Cherryland Announces Date Of 79th Annual Meeting

Cherryland's 79th Annual Meeting will take place Thursday, June 15, at Incredible Mo's in Grawn. Mark your calendars for an evening of food, fun and information.

## We'll Pay You \$250 To Charge Your Electric Vehicle!



If you install a new **Level 2 Charger**, we'll give you a \$250 rebate.

Qualifying members must agree to charge their electric vehicle during off peak electric usage hours between 11 pm - 7am.

Contact Tammy Squires for details:

[tsquires@cherrylandelectric.coop](mailto:tsquires@cherrylandelectric.coop)  
231.486.9261

Rebates are limited. Certain restrictions and exclusions apply.

# Sky's The Limit

By Jack O'Malley

What happens when you combine a master electrician, educator, licensed contractor and self-described tinkerer? You get Mike Schmerl, an instructor at Northwestern Michigan College and owner of Panoramic Electricity.

Since starting his electrical company 23 years ago, Mike has made the study of electricity something of a hobby, fueling the fiddler within while inspiring a new generation of electricians. In fact, one of Mike's electrical apprenticeship classes was awarded a grant to study solar power. With his home now covered in solar panels, wired with various switches and batteries, Mike uses his personal experiences with this alternative energy source in the classroom. And his students seem to be warming to the idea.

"Solar has amazing benefits," Mike said. "We are much further along in its day-to-day use than people even know." An electric car, for instance, can run approximately 238 miles between charges. Mike says, "that pretty much covers the average day driving for most of us."

But what happens when you combine an electric car with solar power? Mike discovered you can have an affordable and comfortable means of transportation as proven by the solar powered golf cart he built! And while he admits some working vehicles might still need gas or diesel fuel to operate, Mike remains confident that soon we'll be picking up groceries in electric powered cars.

Some argue that Michigan's often cloudy, overcast skies make solar impractical. Mike insists that's not true. He cites Germany, a country sharing its latitude with Michigan, as a global leader in solar energy. While acknowledging that solar might not be the total solution to man's energy needs, Mike



says sun power complements other energy forms, pointing out that "even oil companies see the value of finding alternative energy sources so as to extend their production life."



Jack O'Malley

Describing solar power as the perfect marriage of old and new technology, Mike understands many of us will never be truly off the grid. "We will always need bigger generating capacity to power an ever-growing infrastructure," Mike explained. "If you want a hot tub or larger appliances, you will always need the power grid." ■

## I Remember...

**We invite members to share their fondest memories.**

Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.

### Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. Country Lines retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)



## «« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) or send by mail to: Country Lines Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the November/December 2016 issue is Cathy Kinzey, a Great Lakes Energy member who correctly identified the photo as The Blue Buck on 72, a specialty market in Kalkaska.

Winners are announced in the following issues of Country Lines: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.





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