

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Plus!

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YOUR CO-OP
HAS NEVER LOOKED SO

GOOD

Inside Cherryland's New Website





JUST GOT THE UTILITY BILL

Thanks to WaterFurnace, homeowners around the world no longer dread receiving their monthly utility bills. That's because a WaterFurnace geothermal system uses the **clean, renewable energy** stored in your backyard to **save up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. And with the volatile prices of electric, natural gas and propane, it's a **smart decision** now and for years to come. So take control of your utility bills and contact your local WaterFurnace dealer today.

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**November/December
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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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New Generation

A few weeks ago, Wolverine Power Cooperative (WPC) announced its intent to permit and construct a simple cycle natural gas peaking plant near Gaylord. Wolverine is the wholesale power supplier to Cherryland Electric Cooperative and four other Michigan distribution cooperatives.

Everyone will remember that Cherryland and the Wolverine family of co-ops have explored coal-based generation near Rogers City and Marquette over the past several years. When those options could not be completed, natural gas became the most viable alternative for generation that can produce electricity when needed, instantaneously and around-the-clock if market conditions warrant.

This facility will also complement Michigan's growing wind generation sector by producing power for the Michigan market when the wind is not blowing but electricity use is still very high—for example, on a hot, humid day.

Recently proposed EPA rules on CO₂ emissions were also a factor in selecting natural gas. While the rules are currently under debate, there is a more immediate need to get moving as WPC needs to have peaking capacity in place to meet anticipated shortfalls beginning in 2017. Costs for purchasing peaking capacity from other Michigan suppliers have been increasing and, in some cases, cannot be purchased in future years.

Natural gas is the “right choice” for several other reasons, as well. Natural gas is easier to site, permit and construct than a coal plant, and produces far fewer greenhouse gases. Once completed and in operation, Wolverine Power Cooperative's carbon footprint will be lower than it is today.

The projected cost will be over \$100 million for about 400 megawatts (MW) of peaking generation. Most importantly, there will be no rate impact to Cherryland members. How is this possible?

First, Wolverine already has the money to build the plant in the bank. Secondly, it has two higher-cost contracts that will expire in the next two to three years, as well as 15-year depreciation costs that will expire on a couple of existing peaking plants built in the late 1990s. When combined, these items allow the WPC family to “step into” a new, state of the art plant with no rate impact.

Yes, there will be increases in costs to cover upkeep, maintenance and operation of the new facility. However, we believe these costs are small enough to be absorbed into our regular budget and future load growth will cover the incremental increases in these areas.

This new, natural gas peaking facility is yet one more piece of what is a very diversified power supply portfolio. In the past, I have written about not putting all our eggs in one basket. Wolverine Power Cooperative is walking the talk.

Construction will begin in 2015–16, after zoning and permitting issues are completed. I expect the plant will be online, producing energy and stabilizing the northern Michigan grid in 2017.

I fully support ownership of this project. With all the unknowns we are facing in the electricity world, having control of even a small portion of your generation portfolio and locating it in northern Michigan will serve our members far into the future. ■



Tony Anderson
General Manager

Weighing Both Sides of an Issue



Nick Edson

As a teacher, my dad had a few hard-and-fast rules his students had to follow. Kids couldn't chew gum in class, talk when he was teaching, or be disrespectful to other students.

As a dad, he taught us four kids some additional hard-and-fast rules. We had to be on time (that meant 10–15 minutes early). We had to help around the house. And we had to get our news information from more than one source.

What does more than one source mean?

Well, I remember watching the “CBS Evening News” with him one night in the late 1960s and the great anchor Walter Cronkite reported that over 1,700 Viet Cong soldiers had been killed, while U.S. casualties were only 17. Night after night, this huge disparity in numbers was reported.

So I said to my dad, “Geez, then why haven't we wrapped up this Vietnam war and come home? Listen to the difference in the number of soldiers killed again today.”

As a government teacher and World War II veteran, he knew all about dealing with government numbers.

“Did you ever stop to think that maybe those numbers aren't accurate?” he asked with a smile.

I had never questioned what I had seen on TV, heard on the radio, or read in the newspaper before. And that was ironic, since I ended up spending 24 years working for a daily newspaper.

So, I didn't really know what my dad was getting at.

“Are you saying those numbers aren't right?” I asked him.

In my naïve way, I assumed that other countries and news agencies outside of the U.S. produced tons of propaganda. But not our country.

So when I told my dad that, he laughed to himself.

“It works both ways,” he said.

“We're a great country, but propaganda is used for both good and bad reasons. What I want you to do as

you get older is listen to more than one news source and then make a decision about what is right and what is wrong for yourself.”

I never forgot our conversation that night in front of the TV. It made me think about propaganda and journalism the way I never had before.

As a news anchor, Walter Cronkite was known as “the most trusted man in America.” So when he recited the huge disparity in number of deaths in Vietnam, he must have believed it himself.

But later, when he actually went to Vietnam and saw what was happening, Cronkite abruptly changed his tune. He began to advocate for getting our troops out of Vietnam. Other news sources soon joined in.

The lesson my dad taught me and my siblings was not to accept just one news source as gospel. Collect all the information you can before deciding where you come down on issues.

Sounds simple, doesn't it?

But when I hear people spouting off about a certain subject and then ask them where they got their information, they look at me like I'm crazy...because they have only one source of information. It's the one that feeds into their beliefs.

It's kind of like comparison shopping, except there is no comparing going on. They are just blindly taking what is handed to them.

Somewhere in that lesson from my dad was the one about being responsible for things like what you feed your body and, just as important, what you feed your mind. ■

“We're a great country, but propaganda is used for both good and bad reasons...make a decision about what is right and what is wrong for yourself.”



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The power of human connections



HOLIDAY HAPPINESS

These make-ahead recipes are time-savers, and a perfect compliment to your holiday feast!

Holiday Spinach Dip

1 large round crusty bread, slice off top and hollow
 2 pkgs. 10-oz. spinach, defrosted, chopped, squeezed
 2 c. sour cream
 2 c. Hellman's® mayo
 1 c. chopped onion, very fine
 2 t. dill weed
 2 T. oregano
 1 ½ t. Lawry's® seasoning salt

Mix all ingredients. Chill overnight. Serve in bread. Use scooped out bread and additional small bread slices to dip. Looks pretty surrounded with cherry tomatoes.

Arlene Russel, Harbor Springs

Bailey's Milk Chocolate Truffles

¾ c. heavy cream
 3 T. butter
 1 ½ lb. milk chocolate chopped in pieces (not chocolate bits)
 ¾ c. Bailey's® Irish cream
 ½ c. confectioners' sugar
 ¼ c. cocoa powder
 ⅛ t. cinnamon

Combine cream and butter in saucepan and bring to a light boil; remove from heat. Add chocolate pieces, stir to melt. Stir in Bailey's®. Pour into bowl and refrigerate at least 6 hours. Spoon out walnut size pieces of the mixture onto cookie sheet and refrigerate until firm. Before serving, sift together confectioners' sugar, cocoa and cinnamon or you can do them all separately, for a different variety of colors. Roll each truffle into a ball and roll in cocoa/sugar mixture. Makes 40 or more. Refrigerate in airtight container. Use candy papers to keep them from sticking together when serving at room temperature. These do have alcohol in them, so serve just at an adult party.

Kami Maurer House, Sebawaing

Low Effort Eggnog



4 egg yolks
 ⅓ c. sugar, plus 1 T.
 1 pint whole milk
 1 c. heavy cream
 3 oz. rum or bourbon (or extract)
 1 t. freshly grated nutmeg
 4 egg whites

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg yolks until they lighten in color. Gradually add the ⅓ c. sugar and continue to beat until it is completely dissolved. Add the milk, cream, bourbon and nutmeg, and stir to combine. Place egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat to soft peaks. With the mixer still running, gradually add the 1 tablespoon of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Whisk the egg whites into the mixture. Chill and serve.

Laura Kurella, Sturgis

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Sandwiches" recipes by **Nov. 10** and your favorite "Soups" recipes by **Dec. 10**.

Mail (handwritten or typed on one side, please) to: *Country Lines* Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email recipes@countrylines.com.

Contributors whose recipes we print in 2014 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2015 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Visit countrylines.com for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

Don't Get Lost in the Shuffle



Craig Borr, CEO,
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

Six hundred pages, plus another 1,000 of supporting documents—that's the length of the latest proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It would amend the Clean Air Act (only 465 pages) to limit carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the power plants on which Michigan relies today.

Besides the actual rule, a lot has been written about its legality, feasibility and complexity. In fact, Michigan Rep. John Dingell, the longest-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives, emphatically stated several years ago that the EPA's regulation of carbon dioxide would result in a "glorious mess". His position, and I agree, is that Congress should determine far-reaching energy policy—not a federal agency loaded with lifetime bureaucrats.

But lost in the shuffle of these thousands of pages is *the impact on people*. How much will electric bills increase? Will manufacturers relocate? How many jobs will be lost? Which power plants will be forced to shut down? In Michigan, one-third of Michigan's coal fleet will close as a result of EPA regulations. Arguably, some of those facilities need to close, as they are old and dirty.

Energy policy questions are often difficult, but they are important questions. Michigan's electric cooperatives work hard to keep your electricity affordable and reliable. That's why we're asking the EPA for answers to these and many other questions.

We don't want you to get lost in the shuffle. We put you—our members—first. We advocate for you. Our member-cooperatives see you every month paying your bill at the office. We work with you. We know when times are tough. We often live next door.

After all, you govern us. Our board members and community leaders are one and the same. We're as local as any organization, and we like it that way.

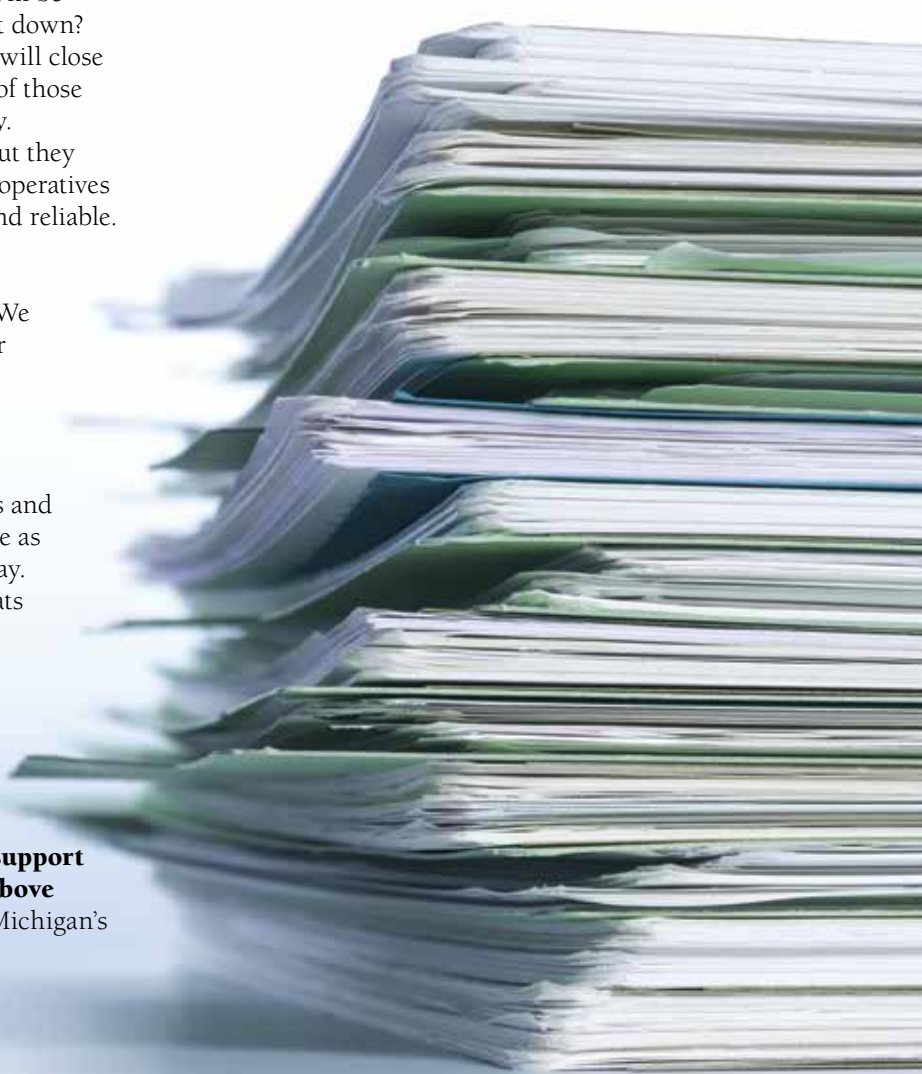
That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on the real world—where we live. That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at Action.coop and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

Please raise your voice. Don't get lost in the shuffle. **Together, we can tell the EPA that support for the environment and a true all-of-the-above energy policy are not mutually exclusive.** Michigan's

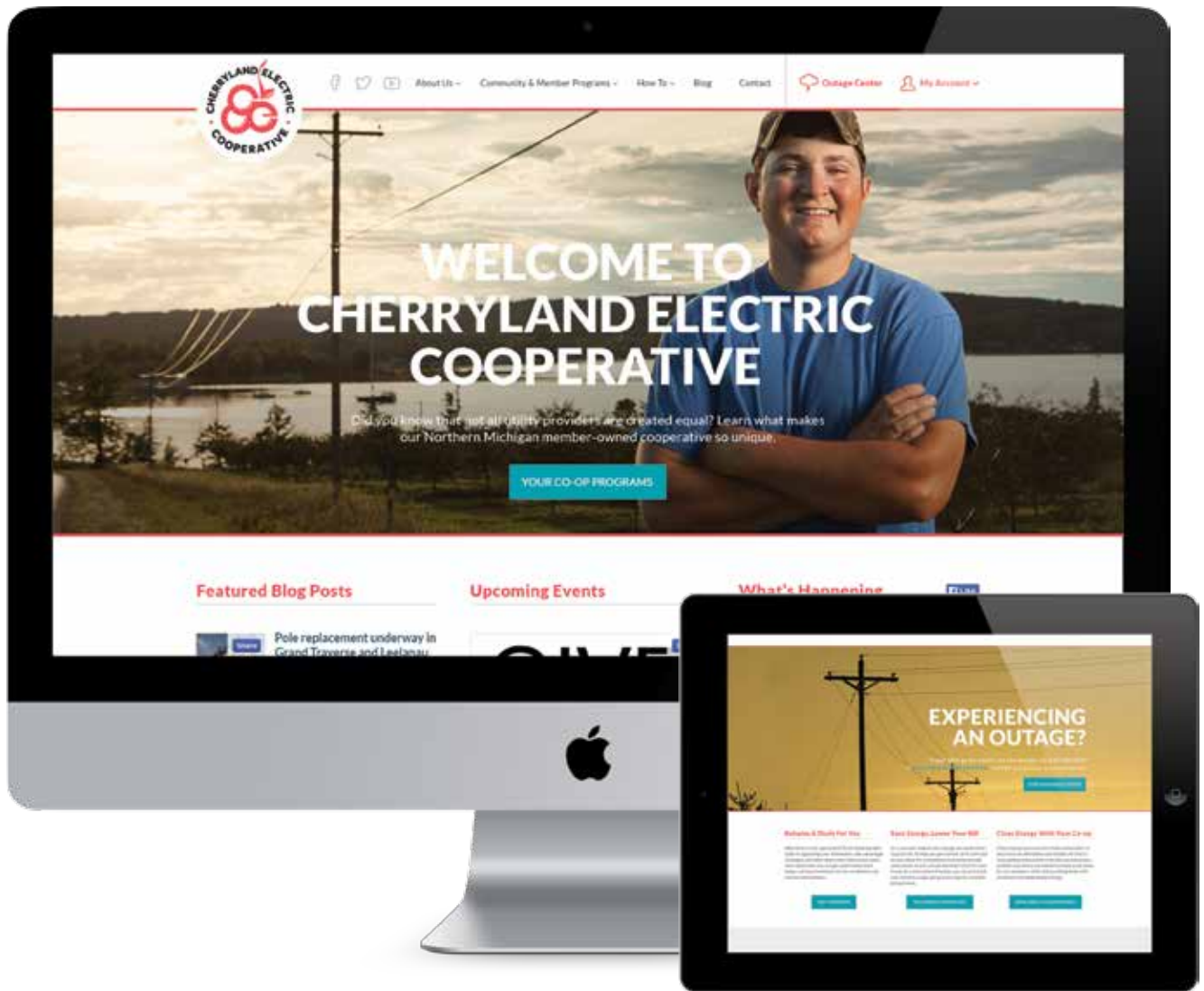
electric cooperatives lead by example. Our members are proud to be leaders in both energy efficiency and renewable energy. We have been leaders in both of these important areas long before they were required by the Michigan Legislature. Like many of our member-consumers that make their living in the agriculture industry, electric co-ops have always been good stewards of the environment because it is the right thing to do.

Together we need to remind regulators and lawmakers that the impact the EPA's proposed new rules could have on rural Michigan people, and others throughout our country, should be their *first* thought, not their *last*.

With over 900 electric cooperatives in the country backing us up, our voice can be heard. We have a great and positive story to tell. We can tell the story together. And it won't even take 1,600 pages. The EPA's public comment period is extended to Dec. 1—please take a moment to visit Action.coop today and let your voice be heard. ■



Your Co-op Has Never Looked So Good



If www.CherrylandElectric.coop doesn't look familiar to you, it's for a good reason. It's new!

Energy efficiency rebates, online account management, scholarships, board meeting minutes, co-op news and events—we've got a lot going on at Cherryland!

It can be hard to stay up to date and make sure you are taking advantage of all our programs and services.

That's why we just launched a new website. Our goal was to create an easy-to-use web experience, and we think you'll be impressed.

When you are on the new website, you will notice that you can access your account from anywhere on the site by using the top menu bar.

If you haven't already set up a SmartHub® account, you will need to. But once you do, you can log-in anytime and pay your bill or view your most recent electric usage.

And, you can access the website from anywhere. Our new website uses a responsive design to make sure

Members who comment on Cherryland's blog in November will be entered to win a \$25 bill credit!

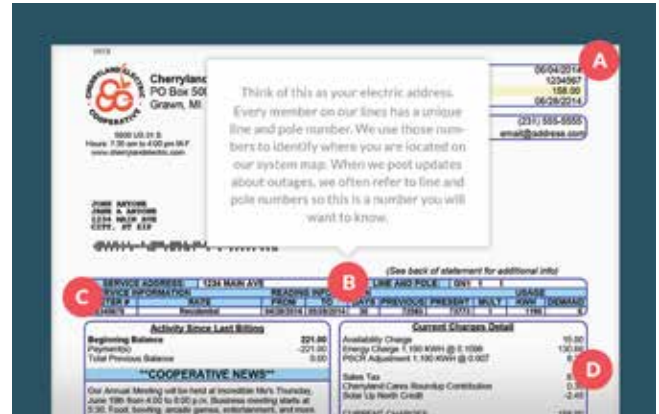
you have an equally awesome web experience on your smartphone or tablet as you do on your PC.

That's not all—you'll notice that we highlight pertinent co-op news and events right on the homepage now.

Have you ever wondered what all those charges on your bill mean? The new website also features an interactive “get to know your bill” feature that can make sure you are an expert in managing and understanding your monthly bill.

These are just a few of the key features of the new website, but there is so much more for you to explore. Check it out at CherrylandElectric.coop. And while you're there, drop a comment in our new blog and let us know what you think!

On the Cover: Clint Lautner is the friendly face you'll see on the home page of Cherryland Electric Cooperative's new website, which is designed to be an easy-to-use place for its members to see their account history, review or pay billing statements, co-op news and events, and so much



more. Lautner is a Cherryland member who was raised on a farm on the co-op's lines, and several members of his family have served on the board of directors. ■

Report, Track Outages 21st Century Style

You hear a loud pop, almost like a gunshot, and suddenly you are sitting in the dark.

Your power is out.

What do you do first? Start by checking your breakers. Just do a simple off-and-on with your main breaker switch to determine if the problem is something within your own fuse panel.

If that doesn't solve your problem, then you need to make sure that Cherryland Electric Cooperative is notified about your power outage.

It is very important that you notify us of a power outage: don't rely on your neighbors to do it—you may be the only house without power!

There are many ways to notify us:

- By phone at (231) 486-9200 or (800) 442-8616. The fastest way to report your outage is through the automated phone system. Or, you can choose to speak with a member information representative. At that time, you will be able to report any important information that you may have concerning the outage, such as a fallen tree or a dead animal on the transformer.
- Online at CherrylandElectric.coop. Log-in to “my account” and choose “Report an Outage.” If you have any additional information, include it in the notes section.
- On your phone through the SmartHub® app. Navigate to “service status” and choose “Report an Outage.”

If you experience an outage, check out our outage center on the Cherryland website for updates. We also update our Facebook® page for outages affecting 150 members or more. ■

—Caroline Simaz, Member Information Representative



Meet Our Deer Blind Contest Winners!

From hideouts that resemble a cozy cottage (complete with area rug) to basic shelters, we received more than 60 entries in our *Country Lines* tricked-out deer blind contest. Who knew there were so many cool deer blind styles? Thanks to all who participated—it was difficult to choose! Our winners are featured here, but visit countrylines.com to tour the tricked-out blinds of other electric co-op members who entered.

“Most Tricked-Out”

Congratulations to **Ward Forquer**, a HomeWorks Tri-County member, for having the most tricked-out blind. Affectionately known as “Fort Miller Lite,” it’s a two-story 10 by 14-foot insulated structure with a carpeted observation room, solar panel, propane heat and lights, 13-inch flat screen color TV, bunk beds, and customized Miller Lite memorabilia. Located in Isabella County, it can host up to 12 people.



Photos—David Trumple Photography

“Most Interestingly-Engineered”

Kudos to **Ronald Camp** for building the most interestingly-engineered blind. Working in underground excavation for 30 years, Ron envisioned a 36-foot underground storage tank for his shelter. The HomeWorks Tri-County member set the tank upright, above ground, and added a cupola at the top that swivels 360 degrees. Getting to the top means climbing a 28-rung ladder, but he is installing a 12-volt elevator.



“Best Story Behind the Blind”

Dean Ronk made his deerblind after finding that nearly every garage sale had a fake Christmas tree—usually with a bent, broken base or missing branches. The Midwest Energy co-op member decided to bend the wire tree branches around a circle of hog fencing, with heavy plastic as a roof. His idea has gained popularity, and he says, “it makes hunting affordable, and a ‘green’ way to hunt by recycling old trees.” Now he makes them for friends, and people are giving him their old trees. ■



Photo Courtesy - Dean Ronk

Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2014–2015 Season

Program: Winter Protection Plan
Contact: Your Local Utility Company

Income Guidelines 2014–2015	
# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,505
2	23,595
3	29,685
4	35,775
5	41,865
6	47,955
7	54,045
8	60,090

Add \$6,090 for each additional member.

Note: All customers 65+ are eligible regardless of income. Customers are responsible for all electricity and natural gas used. At the end of the protection period, participants in the plan must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.

The **Winter Protection Plan** protects eligible senior and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). You may enroll between Nov. 1 and March 31. If you are an eligible low-income customer, your utility service will remain on from Nov. 1 through March 31, if you:

- pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, **and**
- make equal monthly payments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season of any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), from April 1 through Oct. 31, you must begin to pay the full monthly bill, plus part of the amount you owe from the winter months when you did not pay the full bill. **Participation does not relieve customers from the responsibility of paying for electricity and natural gas usage, but does prevent shut-off during winter months.** You qualify for the plan if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

- are age 65 or older,
- receive Department of Human Services cash assistance, including SSI,
- receive Food Assistance,
- receive Medicaid, or
- household income is at or below the 150% of poverty level shown in the Income Guidelines chart at left.

Senior citizen customers (65 or older) who participate in the Winter Protection Plan are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. However, seniors are encouraged to pay whatever they can during the winter so they will not have large, unmanageable bills when the protection ends.

Program: Home Heating Credit
Contact: Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$12,842	4	26,243
2	17,329	5	30,728
3	21,786	6	35,186

Add \$4,457 for each exemption over 6.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2014** tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed at left, or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled claimants, or claimants with 5% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

If you qualify, you may receive assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. **Forms are available mid- to late-January wherever tax forms are provided, or from the Michigan Dept. of Treasury (517-636-4486, or michigan.gov/treasury).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **before Sept. 30, 2015.**

Program: Earned Income Credit
Contact: U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service irs.gov/EITC
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury michigan.gov/treasury

The **Earned Income Credit (EIC)** is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EIC, but must file a tax return to do so. If married, you must file jointly to qualify. File Form 1040 or 1040A and attach the EIC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2014** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the **2014 MI tax booklet** for details.

Program: Crisis Assistance Program
Contact: Local Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) michigan.gov/mdhs

State Emergency Relief Program (SER): mibenefitsaccess.org You do not have to be a DHS client to apply for help with a past due bill, shutoff notice or the need for deliverable fuel through the SER. This program, available Nov. 1–May 31, provides most of its utility assistance during this crisis season. However, limited assistance is available outside the crisis season. If you receive a DHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHS or call the Home Heating Hotline, 855-275-6424.

Program: Low-Income Home Weatherization
Contact: Local Community Action Agency

You may be able to receive help with weatherizing your home to reduce energy use if you meet low-income eligibility guidelines (200% of poverty guidelines shown above) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit mcaaa.org to find one in your area.

Program: United Way
Contact: Call 2-1-1 or UWmich.org/2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free phone service operating 24 hours daily to provide information about help that may be available in a particular area with utilities and other needs. Learn more at UWmich.org/2-1-1.

Program: Medical Emergency Protection
Contact: Local Utility Company

You are protected from service shut-off for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days, possibly extended to 63 days, if you have a proven **medical emergency**. You must provide written proof from a doctor, public health or social services official that a medical emergency exists. Contact your gas or electric utility for details.

Program: Shut-off Protection for Military Active Duty
Contact: Local Utility Company

If you or your spouse has been called into **active military duty** you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may request extensions. You must still pay, but contact your utility company and they will help you set up a payment plan.

Program: Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program
Contact:

The Trust Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance. Michigan Veterans Trust Fund at (517) 284-5299 or <http://Michigan.gov/dmva>

Program: MI Energy Assistance Program
Contact: Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through MEAP, which includes funds from the Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF), became available in early October. Visit Michigan.gov/mpsc for details about organizations that have received MEAP grants. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers (regardless of income) of any Michigan electric that has chosen not to collect 97 cents monthly from its customers for the LIEAF fund.

Co-op News

Cherryland Will Pay \$30 for Your Old Refrigerator

Celebrate the holidays by getting rid of your old, inefficient, refrigerator or freezer.

Cherryland's appliance recycling program will give you a \$30 rebate and arrange to have your old appliance hauled away at no charge to you! Call Tammy at (231) 486-4261 to schedule a pick up!

Changes in Rebate Program

Due to a change in state-approved rebates for Cherryland's energy optimization program, the cooperative is announcing new LED rebates for 2015.

As an example, as of Jan. 1, 2015, a 60-watt incandescent that is replaced with an Energy Star®-rated LED will receive a \$4 rebate per bulb. If you make that same upgrade today, you will receive \$6 per bulb. And, a 40-watt incandescent replaced with an Energy Star-rated LED will receive a \$2 per bulb rebate (previously, it was \$4).

With the new changes in mind, Cherryland energy use advisor Tammy Squires recommends that members who are considering changing to LEDs do so before the end of 2014 to take advantage of the limited time left on current rebates.

Members with rebate questions can call Tammy at 486-9261.

Member Input Session in December

The next Cherryland Electric Cooperative quarterly member input session is planned for Tuesday, Dec. 16. Members can address the board at 9 a.m. at the start of the regular monthly meeting and are asked to keep their comments to less than 5 minutes. After that, the next member input session is scheduled for March.

Cherryland Will Be Closed for Holidays

In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, Cherryland Electric Cooperative's offices in Grawn will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 27, and Friday, Nov. 28. The co-op will reopen for business on Monday, Dec. 1.

The cooperative will also be closed for the Christmas holiday on Wednesday, Dec. 24, and Thursday, Dec. 25, and reopen on Friday, Dec. 26. It will also be closed for the New Year's holiday on Wednesday, Dec. 31, and Thursday, Jan. 1, and reopen on Friday, Jan. 2.

Christmas Tree Disposal At Cherryland

Cherryland members are reminded that Christmas trees can be discarded at the cooperative's office at 5930 U.S.-31 South in Grawn.

Trees can be dropped off on the right side of the Cherryland parking lot as you are driving in, just beyond where the two parking lots meet. This service is offered free to co-op members.

Cherryland Cares Seeks Grant Applications

Area nonprofit agencies who are seeking financial help can apply for a grant through Cherryland Cares.

Cherryland Cares is a five-member board, made up of Cherryland Electric Cooperative members who distribute money from Operation Roundup to area nonprofits. The next quarterly meeting of Cherryland Cares is Monday, Dec. 15. The deadline for applications is Friday, Dec. 5.

Operation Round Up money comes from Cherryland members who volunteer to round up their bills to the nearest dollar every month. This amount averages \$6 per year.

To receive a Cherryland Cares grant application or to join Operation Round Up, contact Nick Edson at Cherryland. His direct line is 486-9222 or e-mail him at nicke@cecelec.com. ■

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Tip of the Month

To save energy this month, try lowering your water heating costs. Water heating accounts for 14 to 25 percent of the energy you consume. Turn the water heater's temperature to the warm setting, which is around 120 degrees Fahrenheit. This will save energy and help you save on your monthly bill.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy





Use Your Space Heater Safely

Many people use space heaters for winter warmth, but they can be dangerous if used improperly.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that 25,000 home fires every year are associated with space heaters, and cause over 300 deaths. An additional 6,000 people annually go to the hospital for related burns.

These fires are caused by contact with or nearness to the heating elements, flammable fuels used in the heaters, defective wiring, and carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper venting or incomplete fuel combustion.

Here are tips for using a electric space heater safely:

- Keep it at least 3 feet from flammables, such as curtains, clothing, furniture or bedspreads.
- Select a model with an automatic shut-off, in case it tips.
- Buy one that is certified by an independent testing lab, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Buy the right size to handle the area to be heated.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep kids and pets at a safe distance.
- Never leave it unattended, or sleep with it on.
- Never use or store flammable liquids near it.
- Do not use in a bathroom—a high-moisture area can cause damage.
- Keep it away from water to prevent electrocution.

- Check the cord for fraying and cracks, and do not use an extension cord to run it.
- Be sure the plug fits snugly in the outlet. (The cord and plug may feel warm when operating, but it shouldn't feel hot. If it does, unplug it and have a repair person check for problems.)
- Do not try to repair a broken heater yourself—go to a qualified appliance service center.

Visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/463.html> for more safety tips on space heaters that use wood or kerosene. ■

A Winter Reminder: Flag Your Transformer!

As you make your final preparations for winter, make sure that your utility services are "snowplow ready." Every year, Cherryland members lose power when plows or other equipment hit padmount transformers that are buried under the snow.

Help keep your power on by marking your transformer with a flag that informs anyone who will be plowing nearby of its location.



Alpine Power Plant
Northeast view from M-32 Hwy

Wolverine Co-op Plans New Natural Gas Power Plant

A new, natural gas-fueled electric generating plant is being planned by Wolverine Power Cooperative, of Cadillac. Called the Alpine Power Plant, its location will be in Elmira Township, Otsego County, west of Gaylord. Wolverine, a not-for-profit electric cooperative, provides wholesale electric power to six electric cooperatives throughout Michigan.

“Wolverine is excited about moving forward with a new natural gas peaking plant,” said project spokesman, Ken Bradstreet. “Our Alpine Power Plant will provide a nice balance to Wolverine’s existing power supply portfolio, while at the same time increasing electrical reliability in northern Michigan and complementing the ever-increasing amount of renewable energy in Michigan.”

Wolverine intends to present its development plans to both the Elmira Township and Otsego County planning commissions within the next month. Wolverine will also apply for an air quality permit with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

After a nearly two-year evaluation, Wolverine chose the Elmira Township site and entered into property options for nearly 170 acres of land. The location was

chosen, in part, due to the convergence of existing interstate natural gas pipelines and high-voltage electric transmission lines on the property.

Wolverine expects the project investment associated with the Alpine Power Plant to exceed \$100 million and provide significant tax revenues to several local units of government. “The Alpine Power Plant will provide a major boost to the local economy,” Bradstreet explains.

Through sound financial management, Wolverine is able to build this project with existing funds. Based on preliminary cost estimates, it is anticipated there will be no rate impact on the electric co-ops that purchase power from Wolverine. Visit alpinecleanenergy.com for further details on the proposed plant.

Wolverine supplies wholesale power to Cherryland Electric Cooperative (Grawn); Great Lakes Energy (Boyne City); HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative (Portland); Midwest Energy Cooperative (Cassopolis); Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (Onaway); Spartan Renewable Energy, Inc. (Cadillac), and Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative (Cadillac). ■



«« Do You Know Where This Is?

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

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 the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op. Only those sending

complete information will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the January 2015 issue.

The September contest winner is Phyllis Burge, of Manistique, a Cloverland Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as the



East Channel Lighthouse on Grand Island in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore area.

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As a member-owner of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, you have the privilege of participating in the political affairs of our cooperative. That includes your unique right to make financial contributions to the campaigns of candidates for political office who support our electric cooperative.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is the political action committee of the nation's electric cooperatives. ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action gives you, the member-owner, the opportunity to raise your voice on behalf of the cooperative.



For more information on ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action, contact Rachel Johnson at rjohnson@cecelec.com • 231-486-9275