

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Meet Our

Deer Blind
Contest Winners!

Plus!

- 5 Pohl Is Your Co-op's
New Board Member
- 8 New Employees Join
Blanchard Team
- 9 New Outage Map Offers
More Features



JUST GOT THE UTILITY BILL

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**November/December
2014
Vol. 34, No. 10**

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.

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



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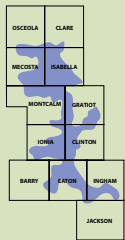
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Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

(Required by U.S.C. 3685) 1. Publication Title: Michigan Country Lines. 2. Publication No.: 591-710. 3. Filing date: 10/1/14. 4. Issue frequency: monthly, except August and December. 5. No. of issues published annually: 10. 6. Annual subscription price: \$6. 7. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. 8. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. 9. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editor, and executive editor: Craig Borr, Gail Knudtson, Casey Clark, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. 10. Owner: Michigan Electric Cooperative Assoc., 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. 11. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. 12. Tax status: Has not been changed. 14. Issue date for circulation data below: Sept. 2014 15. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Avg # of copies each issue during preceding 12 mo.	Actual # of copies of single issues published nearest to filing date
A) Total No. of copies	239,752	275,682
B) Paid and requested circulation	235,914	271,421
C) Total paid and requested circulation	235,914	271,421
D) 1) Free distribution by mail	527	461
2) Free distribution outside mail	3,311	3,800
E) Total free distribution	3,838	4,261
F) Total distribution	239,752	275,682
G) Copies not distributed	259	135
H) Total	239,752	275,682
I) Percent paid and/or requested circ	98.4%	98.5%

16. Publication of statement of ownership: November 2014
17. Signature and title of editor: Gail Knudtson



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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Blanchard MI 49310
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Portland office:

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Portland, MI 48875
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

Electric bill/account questions:

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(24 hours for emergency calls)

Tri-County Propane:

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High Speed Internet

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homeworks.org

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Join the conversation at
facebook.com/HomeWorks.org

New Tools Help You Manage Information



Mark Kappler
General Manager

If you're familiar with Steven Covey's "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People," you'll know that one of those habits is "Sharpen the Saw."

To us, that means continually improving by using the tools we have in a better way, being open to new technologies that help us provide you with better service, and learning every day.

For instance, we're still figuring out how to tell you about all the useful features of SmartHub®, a self-service site that gives you instant access to your account via computer or mobile device.

Sure, you can pay your bill, but you can do so much more. With SmartHub, you can check your energy use and compare it to last month or last year. You can "bookmark" a date when you replaced an appliance, to track how it changes your energy use patterns.

You can also update the information on your account, such as your phone number, send us service requests, or even report a power outage and skip being on hold when our phone lines are temporarily overwhelmed.

On page 9, you can read more about our latest technological change – our online outage map. The map we had was adequate, but showed only basic information. Working with other co-ops and our data processing vendor, we now have a new interactive online outage map that will help us answer more of your questions.

When there's an outage, you want to know:

- 1) Does the co-op know my power is out?
- 2) When will the power be back on? and
- 3) What caused the problem?

Working with this new map program, we're learning to adjust our internal work processes in order to gather and share the information you want. This will include the cause of an outage, as soon as it's known, and an estimated time for restoration of your service.

Both of these new tools give you power over the information you receive from HomeWorks. Moving forward this way helps us keep our saw as sharp as possible to serve you well. ■

HomeWorks offices will be closed on the following holidays:

Thanksgiving – Thursday, Nov. 27

Christmas – Wednesday, Dec. 24,
and Thursday, Dec. 25

New Year's Day – Thursday, Jan. 1

*We wish you a safe and
happy holiday season!*



Pohl to Fill Open Board Seat



Luke Pohl of Westphalia, a local businessman and high school basketball coach, will fill an open board seat for HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative. He represents members of District 3, who receive service in Clinton County except in Bingham, Duplain, and Greenbush townships, filling the remaining

year of a three-year term. The seat was formerly held by Carl Morton, of Eagle, who retired Sept. 1 after 36 years of service to the board.

Following the cooperative's bylaws, a search and selection committee was formed, including district officers Floyd Messer and Helen Goodknecht of Fowler, along with two directors from other districts. A letter sent to all members in the district resulted in eight candidates coming forward, and were interviewed before

the committee unanimously recommended Pohl's appointment.

Pohl is the former owner of Pohl Oil and Propane, and currently owns Pohl's Travel Plaza on M-100 north of Grand Ledge. He was a director of Westphalia Broadband for 12 years, serving 10 years as chairman of the board.

He has coached high school boys' basketball for 31 years, and currently is head coach at Pewamo-Westphalia High School. He is also an active member of St. Mary's Church, and has served as director and chairman of the parish's finance committee. He and his wife, Janet, have three children.

"My experience running a successful business, as well as serving on and chairing various boards, gives me the tools needed to be an asset. I have an easy time working with others and look forward to the opportunity to work with the Tri-County Electric Cooperative board," he says.

District 3's board seat is up for regular election in 2015; watch *Country Lines* in February for more information about qualifications and the nomination process. ■

What is a Power Supply Cost Recovery factor?

Each year, our staff and Wolverine Power Cooperative work together to estimate how much power our members will need for the coming year, and how much it will cost to generate or purchase that power for you to use. That estimated cost is passed on to all members through the Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) factor on your monthly bill.

Estimating power costs is difficult. As we've seen in recent years, fuel costs can change dramatically without much notice. Wolverine makes its estimates based on historical information and its contracts for future fuel deliveries, but weather, pipeline problems, and other factors can change the actual costs.

Once the financial audits are completed for a fiscal year, usually in late March, we reconcile Wolverine's actual power costs to the total PSCR collections. Any over or under collections are then dealt with through future PSCR adjustments.

The board of directors approves these estimates, as they did in September. For the coming year, the PSCR will be \$.00314 per kilowatt-hour, or \$3.14 per 1,000 kWh. ■

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Tariff and Rule Changes Effective January 1, 2015

The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the Cooperative's tariffs and fees at a Special Open Meeting held September 22, 2014, in accordance with P.A. 167.

1. Established the 2014 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor at \$.00314 per kilowatt-hour, based on annual cost forecasts from Wolverine Power Cooperative, effective with January 2015 billings.
2. Revised the cooperative's Requirements for Pole Attachments tariff sheet from \$14.00 per attachment point per year to \$16.50 for 2015.

For specific details of any HomeWorks tariffs or fees, please call 1-800-562-8232 or visit homeworks.org.



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, Sebewaing

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.

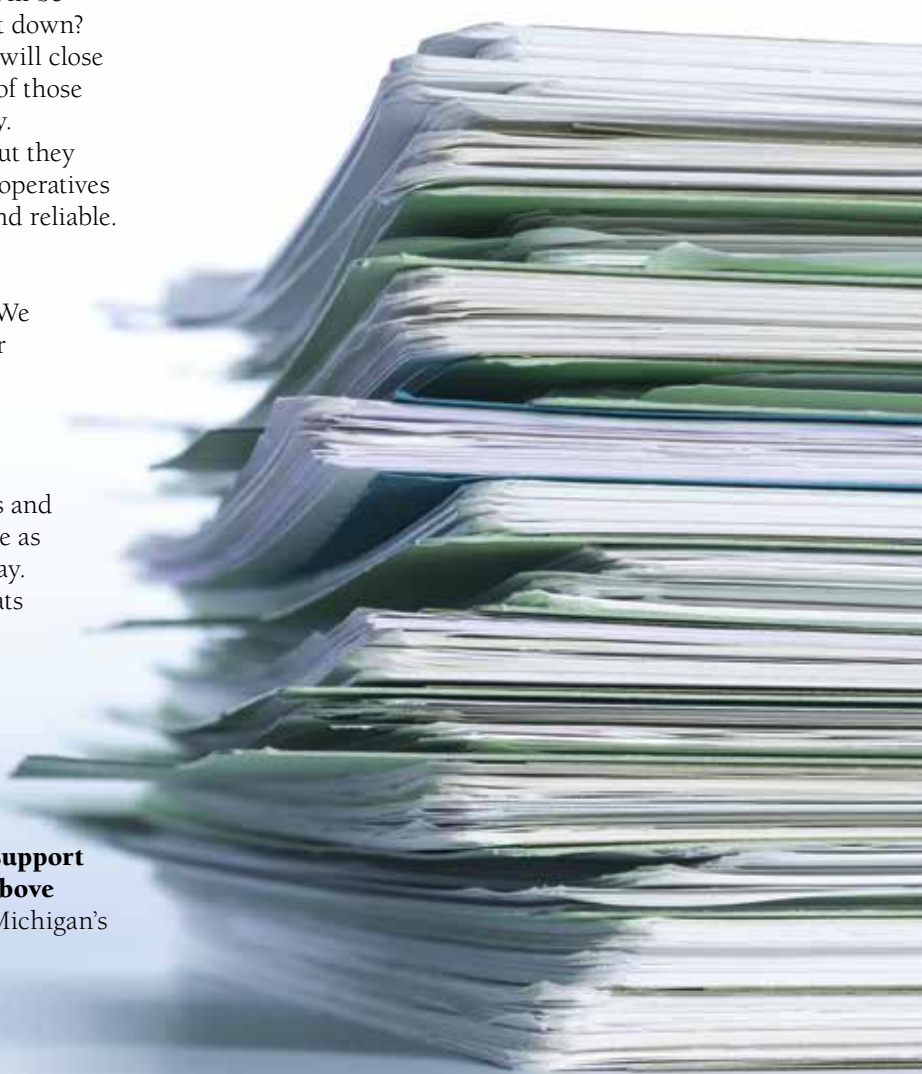
That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on the real world—where we live. That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at Action.coop and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

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. ■



Employee Spotlight

Four new faces have joined HomeWorks at the Blanchard Operations Center, preparing for several planned retirements, as well as replacing a lineman who returned to his hometown earlier this year.



Allen Delo, a fifth-step apprentice, previously spent time with HomeWorks as part of the Montabella Community-as-School program. He attended Alpena Community College to earn his certificate as a utility technician.



Cody Teegardin is also from mid-Michigan, and attended Alpena's utility technician school before earning journeyman status with a contractor in Pennsylvania.

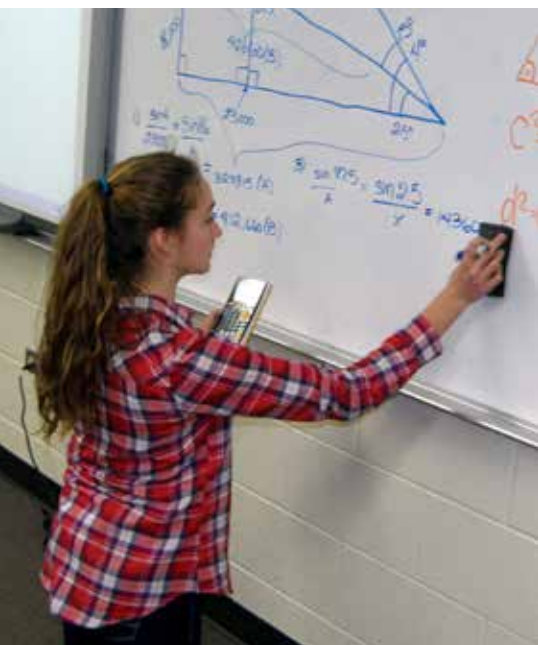


Andy Fredricks, of Blanchard, is learning the propane delivery and service trade. He previously worked for Spud Pak in Edmore for the past several years.



Erin Storey joins the customer service team after more than 10 years with Consumers Energy. She and her husband Kurt currently live in the Weidman area and have three sons, all in school at Chippewa Hills.

Teachers: Apply for 2015 Grants!



Applications are due **Jan. 15** for the 2015 Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grant program.

Eligible applicants are teachers or administrators at public or private school districts in our 13-county mid-Michigan service area that serve children of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric members. Grants of up to \$2,500 are available to fund innovative programs that enrich students' education.

Here are some examples of recent grants:

- \$2,500 to Beal City HS to buy graphing calculators for math classes (photo, left);
- \$1,181.24 to Maple Valley's Fuller Street Elementary for a laptop and Reading Street® software;
- \$2,500 to Lakeview HS for a projector in the cafeteria;
- \$530.40 to Leslie Middle School to buy solar car activity kits for 7th grade science classrooms;
- \$2,159.05 to Clarksville Elementary for an iPad charging cart; and
- \$1,920 to Montabella Junior-Senior High to buy 15 online licenses for science and social studies programs.

For an application form with grant guidelines, visit homeworks.org or call Jayne Graham at 517-647-1252. ■

Updated Outage Map Is More User, Mobile Friendly

A recent software update has made the HomeWorks Tri-County Electric online outage map more user-friendly, and opened up options that will, in time, provide members with more information.

To view the map, visit homeworks.org and select “Outages” from the menu bar at the top of the page. This will take you to an “Outage Preparation” page, with a link to the map near the top.

“The new map works with mobile devices, resizing itself automatically to fit a smartphone or tablet,” explains Val Wohlscheid, mapping technician.

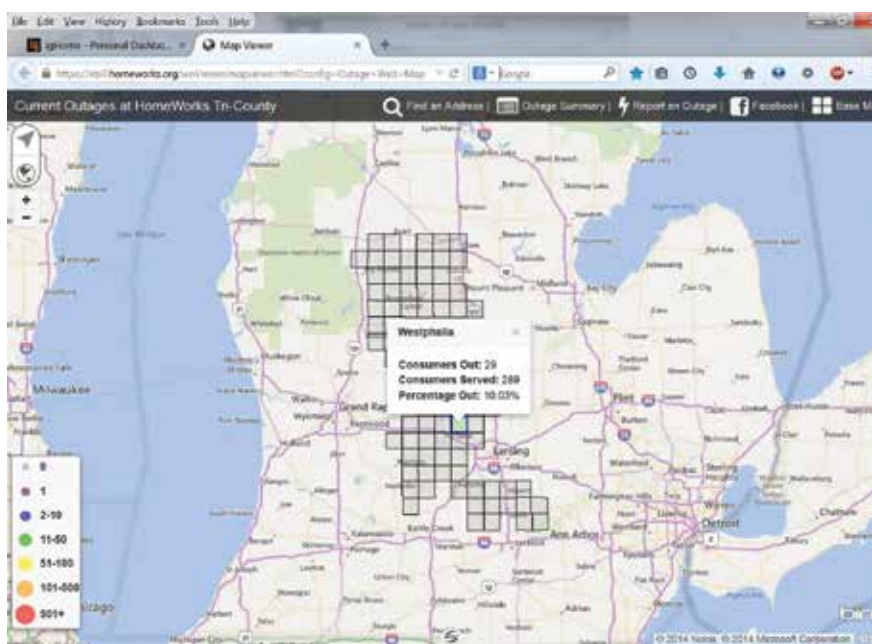
“It also offers more options, and will continue to offer more as we adapt our systems in the future,” she adds.

For instance, users can search for their own address, or use the location services option (click on the arrow at top left of the map) to place their location on the map. There are also direct links to SmartHub® at homeworks.org, where a member can log-in to report outages, and to Facebook, to watch for official updates from co-op staff.

“Mousing over” a township’s square makes a box pop up, identifying the township name

and the number of members currently estimated to be out of power.

Wohlscheid says future upgrades will allow members to check on estimated restoration times, and outage causes, when known. ■



Solar Power Out—Performs Forecasts

Panels are still available—call today to reserve yours.

Since it came online Feb. 17, our Community Solar Garden at Portland has performed better than expectations every month. In the chart below, the blue bars show how much electricity was produced each month, compared to the gray bars showing the manufacturer's forecasts.

In all, nearly 21,000 kilowatt-hours have been produced. A number of members have leased their own panel (or panels) in the Solar Garden, and are receiving a monthly credit for their share of the power that's been produced.

If you'd like to support green power and start getting your monthly solar

credit, call Nick Rusnell at 517-647-1247. We still have a limited number of panels available to members.





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 Trumpie 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.

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.

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

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.

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.**

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, shut-off 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 mcaa.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.

How to Apply for a People Fund Grant

The Tri-County Electric People Fund provides grants to individuals and organizations in the co-op's service area for food, shelter, clothing, health, and other humane needs, or for programs or services that benefit a significant segment of a community.

If you believe you or your organization qualify, write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, Mich. 48875. We'll send you an application form and grant guidelines. You'll also find details and forms at homeworks.org.

Note: Applications must be received by Nov. 10 for the November board meeting; Dec. 8 for December's meeting; or Jan. 12 for the January board meeting.

Your Board in Action

Meeting at Portland Sept. 22, your board of directors:

- Appointed Luke Pohl of Westphalia to fill the open District 3 board seat for the remainder of the current term, which ends in 2015.
- Viewed photos from the Sept. 5 storm in the Eaton Rapids area.
- Accepted letters of understanding from auditing firm Eide Bailly for the 2014 audits.
- Heard a report on power supply issues from Wolverine Power Cooperative.
- Discussed the August-September safety report, listing employee training and several public and employee incidents.
- Read and approved "Board Policy 102—Functions of the Board of Directors," and learned there were no incidents to report under "Board Policy 211—Whistleblower" or "Board Policy 316—Identity Theft."
- Learned there were 143 new member applications in August.

Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. Upcoming meetings are set for Monday, Nov. 24, and Monday, Dec. 22, both at Portland. Members who need directions to the Portland office or wish to have items considered on the board agenda should call 517-647-7554. ■



Save energy, save money!

There are plenty of cues telling us that the end of the year is near—the air is cooler, the leaves have fallen, and the calendar is almost open to December. Opportunities are still available to save energy AND receive rebates and incentives.

ENERGY TIP: Do you have a plan to save energy? Electricity demand by U.S. homes is forecast to climb as much as 21 percent by 2040. **Act now.**

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.

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 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. ■



Keep Meters & Tanks Clear

Help our crews this winter.

You can help us give you reliable service this winter by keeping your energy meters and propane tanks—along with the paths to them—clear of snow, ice, tools, and clutter.

Snow and ice on a path could hide potentially hazardous situations. A clear path helps our line crews and delivery drivers do their jobs efficiently and safely.

Keeping your driveway clear for our propane delivery trucks, particularly if you have a scheduled delivery day, is also essential. Remember, our trucks are a little wider than the average passenger vehicle, so leave plenty of room for us to get to your tank.

Here are some additional safety precautions to take this winter:

- Avoid snow-blowing or shoveling snow in a way that buries the meter or tank, or prevents access to it.
- Also, a frozen gas meter or regulator can stop the flow of gas into your home, and ice buildup can interfere with the proper operation of both electric and gas meters.
- The same advice applies to intake and vent pipes for furnaces, fireplaces, water heaters, or laundry appliances. These vents, usually 1 to 3 feet off the ground, can cause serious furnace malfunctions and carbon monoxide poisoning if they become plugged.
- If a propane tank is buried under several feet of snow, use your shovel carefully when clearing the snow from the tank or around the

- exposed piping, regulator, gauges, tubing, or other propane equipment.
- Remove any icicles from overhead eave troughs to ensure dripping water does not splash and freeze on the meter or vent pipe.
- Never kick your meter or vent pipes in an attempt to clear ice and snow.
- Secure dogs away from all meters and paths.

“Most of our customers are very considerate and we thank them for their co-operation,” says Randy Halstead, propane operations manager. “Our crews work long hours during cold weather to make sure everyone has the propane they need to stay comfortable, so we appreciate all the help we can get to make the job a little easier for them.” ■



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 (Boyer 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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