

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Meet Our  
**Deer Blind**  
Contest Winners!

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- 5 U.P. Electric Rates To Increase Significantly
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**November/December  
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Unsolicited letters, photos and manuscripts are welcome. *Country Lines*, however, will not be responsible for their safe keeping or return.

**The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.**

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



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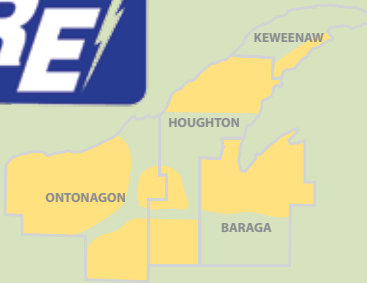
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*Ontonagon County REA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*



# Ontonagon REA Board Approves \$3 Million Service Expansion



**Debbie Miles**  
General Manager

**T**he Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association Board of Directors recently approved plans for a series of upgrades to your cooperative’s electrical distribution system. Wolverine Power Cooperative is assisting us with the project, which involves the design and construction of a new substation, and associated distribution facilities.

The project’s primary purpose is to provide increased service reliability to over 700 of the co-op’s existing member-owners, including Michigan Technological University, D.A. Glass, and other tenants of the Houghton County Airpark. The new substation is on Boston Road, 1.5 miles northwest of the Airpark, and is strategically positioned to accommodate future area growth.

This is an exciting time, as we have spent the last two years working with Airpark tenants and neighboring utilities to prepare for this expansion, and now it’s time to make it happen. I am so pleased that we will be able to provide our members with enhanced service reliability.

Designing and constructing the new substation will involve coordination among four utilities, plus several local, state and federal agencies. The actual substation and associated electrical upgrades have an anticipated cost of about \$3 million.

The new substation will be connected to the transmission system of the American Transmission Company (ATC). Ontonagon County REA and ATC have signed a distribution-transmission interconnection agreement and are preparing additional documents to facilitate interconnection with the ATC system.

The preparation of construction documents and bidding for this project is expected in early 2015, with an expected commercial operation date of late 2015. ■

# Carrying the Load: U.P. Electricity Rates to Increase Significantly

**M**ichigan's Upper Peninsula is dealing with a serious energy issue that will increase the electricity bills of nearly all its residents. Until a more permanent energy solution is found, costs to keep the Presque Isle Power Plant (PIPP), White Pine and Escanaba electricity generation plants in operation will be determined on an annual basis. In 2015, that number is \$124 million. The Presque Isle Power Plant represents over 93 percent of the \$124 million. This figure includes operating and EPA compliance costs. A series of events has brought us to this point. Let's break it down:

## The Cliffs mining company says goodbye to We Energies, their electricity supplier.

The Presque Isle Power Plant is owned by We Energies (Milwaukee, WI) and is the only electricity generating plant of significant size in the Upper Peninsula. In summer 2013, PIPP's largest customer, the Cliffs mining, decided that it was in their best business interest to switch from We Energies to another electricity supplier. This switch was possible because of an exemption in Michigan's electric choice laws applicable only to the Cliffs mines.

## After losing their largest customer, We Energies decides to close PIPP.

The Cliffs mines accounted for 80 percent of electricity We Energies sold in the U.P. Without their business, it was no longer profitable to keep PIPP operational. In September 2013, We Energies filed a request to shut the plant down.

## MISO mandates U.P. power plants stay open to ensure grid stability, but it is costly.

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) is an independent agency that "maintains the integrity of the grid." MISO has mandated that the three Upper Peninsula plants must keep operating to ensure system reliability in the U.P. and Wisconsin. As a result, MISO has determined it will cost about \$8,658,191 monthly to keep these plants open.

## There is disagreement about who will pay for these costs.

By prior agreements among utilities in Wisconsin and Michigan dating back to 2000, the costs of installing

new transmission were shared between the ratepaying customers of Wisconsin and the Upper Peninsula. In the original arrangement, Wisconsin ratepayers paid 92 percent of the costs and Michigan ratepayers paid 8 percent. On July 29, 2014, The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) ruled that the 92/8 ratio was "unjust and unfair," and ordered MISO to refigure its load-shedding analysis to determine the equitable ratio.

## MISO releases new cost breakdown, raising electric costs for U.P. residents.

On July 29, 2014, MISO released a new breakdown that will result in a substantial increase in electric costs for U.P. residents. Since that time, We Energies and MISO have made further filings addressing these issues—including filing a new proposed agreement addressing the costs for running the Plant. At this time, it appears that nearly 100 percent of the costs to keep PIPP open will be allocated to the U.P.

## PIPP plant does not meet EPA emissions standards.

The existing generating units have not been retrofitted with new air quality equipment that will meet federal environmental regulations before the 2016 deadline. This added cost has raised the original PIPP project cost of \$52 million to the current \$116 million, covering mid-October to December, 2015.

## What does all this mean for Ontonagon County REA members?

The numbers could change due to litigation or regulatory action, but the new formula may require Ontonagon cooperative to assume an estimated 0.2 percent of the costs for running the Presque Isle Power Plant, 2.4 percent for the Escanaba plant, and 0.3 percent for White Pine.

"The new formula will change every U.P. electric utility's percentage of the operational costs to keep the plant open," comments Debbie Miles, Ontonagon's general manager. "We are very concerned with this decision and will continue to communicate with our members in a variety of ways, as information becomes available." ■



## 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](mailto:recipes@countrylines.com).

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

Visit [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

# Don't Get Lost in the Shuffle



**Craig Borr, CEO,**  
Michigan Electric  
Cooperative  
Association

**S**ix 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 (CO<sub>2</sub>) 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.

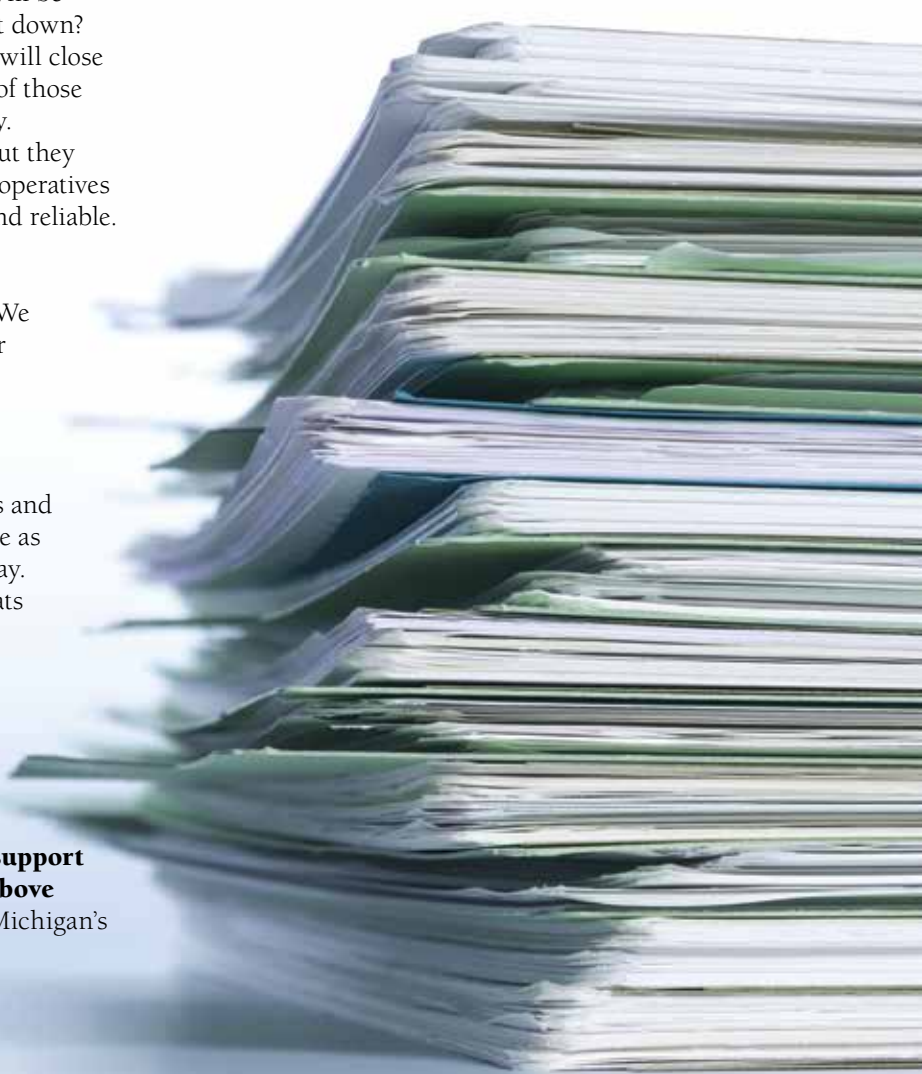
That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on the real world—where we live. That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at [Action.coop](http://Action.coop) and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

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](http://Action.coop) today and let your voice be heard. ■





Tom Cheal pictured in his house. The mosaic tile is his wife's artwork, and he created the back-lit Birdseye maple veneer soffit lighting overhead.



## Cheal's Woodworking Produces Magnificent Moldings

**T**en miles down the tree-covered Misery Bay Road, in Toivola, is the home and woodworking shop of Tom Cheal. Cheal has been crafting custom wood moldings for nearly 25 years, and just past the garage door is his 6,000-square-foot workshop and the center of operations for Cheal Woodworking.

Cheal exhibited an early interest in woodworking and engineering as early as the 9th grade by making his own 8-foot long hydroplane. The boat could top out at 35 mph, and Cheal said it wasn't unusual for his parents to receive phone calls from lakeside neighbors complaining, "That boy has got to slow down!" When he was a senior in high school he made a second boat, this time with an inboard Cadillac 390 V8 engine. This boat still resides in a shed in his back yard.

A downstate native, Cheal first came to the U.P. in 1967 to attend MTU. After obtaining his electrical engineering degree in 1971 he went back downstate to work but said, "Desk work just wasn't for me." After moving back to the U.P., he bought an 80-acre homestead and started dabbling in his true passion, woodworking.

One of his first projects was a wood gun cabinet for his dentist, and things began to grow from there to larger jobs such as custom architectural millwork. "While doing architectural mill work, I realized





Some of Cheal's work at the Keweenaw National Historic Park Visitor's Center.

### Hidden gem traveler tip:

Misery Bay Road, where Cheal's Woodworking is located, is a mix of beautiful rolling farm and forest land and after a 12-mile trip, a traveler is rewarded at the end with a spectacular view of Lake Superior roaring in all its thundering beauty.



In his workshop, Cheal uses a Weinig moulding machine for many of his custom orders. His website is [chealwoodworking.com](http://chealwoodworking.com)

how much I enjoyed making moldings. I like the challenge of creating custom and historical moldings." In 1997, he leased his first moulding machine and never looked back. "The internet has allowed me to get work from people all over the United States. They send me a sample or photo or a sketch and I can create and ship whatever they want."

All of his moldings are crafted from native Upper Peninsula wood, such as maple, ash, basswood, cedar, pine and oak. He cuts much of the wood from his own 80 acres, but also buys wood from local sawmills. Cheal also built his own kiln and does custom milling and wood-drying work for other individuals.

Cheal says the scope and type of his jobs are always varied and have ranged from historical reproduction woodwork at the old Union Hall in Calumet (now the Visitor's Center for the Keweenaw National Historical Park) to a church in Pennsylvania and a mansion in San Francisco. Cheal and his wife Esther have two sons, and their home is a testament to both her skills as a former art teacher, and to his woodworking skills, with beautiful cabinetry and wood work throughout.

Tom Cheal can be contacted by email at [tcheal@chealwoodworking.com](mailto:tcheal@chealwoodworking.com) or call 906.288.3487. ■



Cheal is pictured with the boat he built when he was a senior in high school. The last time the boat was in the water was in 1997, when he and his son took a joy ride.



# 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](http://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](http://irs.gov/EITC)  
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury [michigan.gov/treasury](http://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](http://michigan.gov/mdhs)

**State Emergency Relief Program (SER):** [mibenefitsaccess.org](http://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](http://mcaaa.org) to find one in your area.

**Program:** United Way  
**Contact:** Call 2-1-1 or [UWmich.org/2-1-1](http://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](http://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](http://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.



## Meet Your Co-op's Senior Lineman

**N**els Erickson, foreman for the Ontonagon County REA's Houghton line crew, didn't plan to be a lineworker, but fate intervened. In 1989, his dad told him, "The co-op is looking for temporary help. Maybe you should check it out." Today, Nels says, "The job was only supposed to last 30 days, and that was 25 years ago."

Bill Tucker, Ontonagon's line superintendent, has high praise for Nels and his work ethic. "With that guy, you just give him what he needs and you get out of the way. On any given day I can assign him 10 things to do, thinking that maybe he will only get to six. Instead, he accomplishes all 10 tasks and then asks me if there is anything more for him to do. He is very conscientious."

"I like it all, but I particularly like being outside and not doing the same thing every day," Nels says about his work. This is not a surprising response, considering that in his spare time he likes to hunt, fish and trap. Nels is a Dollar Bay native who still lives there with his wife and 15 children. The children range in age from 19 to a six-week-old baby. His oldest son is following in Nels' footsteps, but is taking the formal education route to becoming a lineworker and is currently enrolled in NMU's electrical line technician program.

Nels is just one of the Ontonagon co-op's dedicated team of employees that works for you, the members, striving to provide you with reliable and cost-effective power every day. ■

## When Do Appliance Upgrades Make Sense?

**B**efore buying a major appliance, it's important to know the annual operating cost, and comparing the EnergyGuide label is the best way to find it. Based on the price, you can calculate which one provides the best return. Related, the Guide only provides averages, and if you are already energy conscious, your operating costs are likely on the low side, so new appliance savings may be lower than Guide figures. Choosing an Energy Star® model is a good choice.

Another easy way is to compare the cost of an older appliance with new models. Download the "Save Energy, Save Money" app from TogetherWeSave.com, which offers several home appliance calculators to help compare the annual cost of different appliance sizes, styles and ages, and a "Home Tour" to learn about saving energy.

Another way to get the operating cost-per-hour is to divide the wattage rating (on the appliance nameplate) by 1,000 and multiply the result by your \$/kWh electric rate. If the nameplate lists amperage, multiply it by 120 to figure the watts. For appliances with a thermostat, reduce the operating cost by about 50 percent.

The rate of efficiency improvements and meaningful new features in appliances is slowing, so don't wait if you really need a new one. An exception is TVs, as their prices are dropping, and features and quality improving.

Generally, keep older appliances about 10 years, or until they need expensive repairs. For example, a new EnergyStar refrigerator can use up to one-half the amount of 10-year-old models.

If you do a lot of laundry, that cost includes the water cost, and heating it. Upgrading your water heater, say to a heat pump model, will reduce your dishwashing, bathing and laundry costs. New front-loading washers are more energy efficient than top-loaders, as they require less heated water, less detergent, and have a faster spin cycle.

For a new dishwasher, make sure it has a built-in water "pre-heater," so you can set the water heater temperature lower. Buy a model with many cycles, so you can target the cycle length to each load size.

Among new ranges, energy efficiency doesn't vary much. Convection ovens bake faster, and induction units lose less heat, but the best way is to use the microwave or other small countertop appliances whenever possible. ■



## Use Your Space Heater Safely

**M**any 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. ■

## 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





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](http://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](http://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



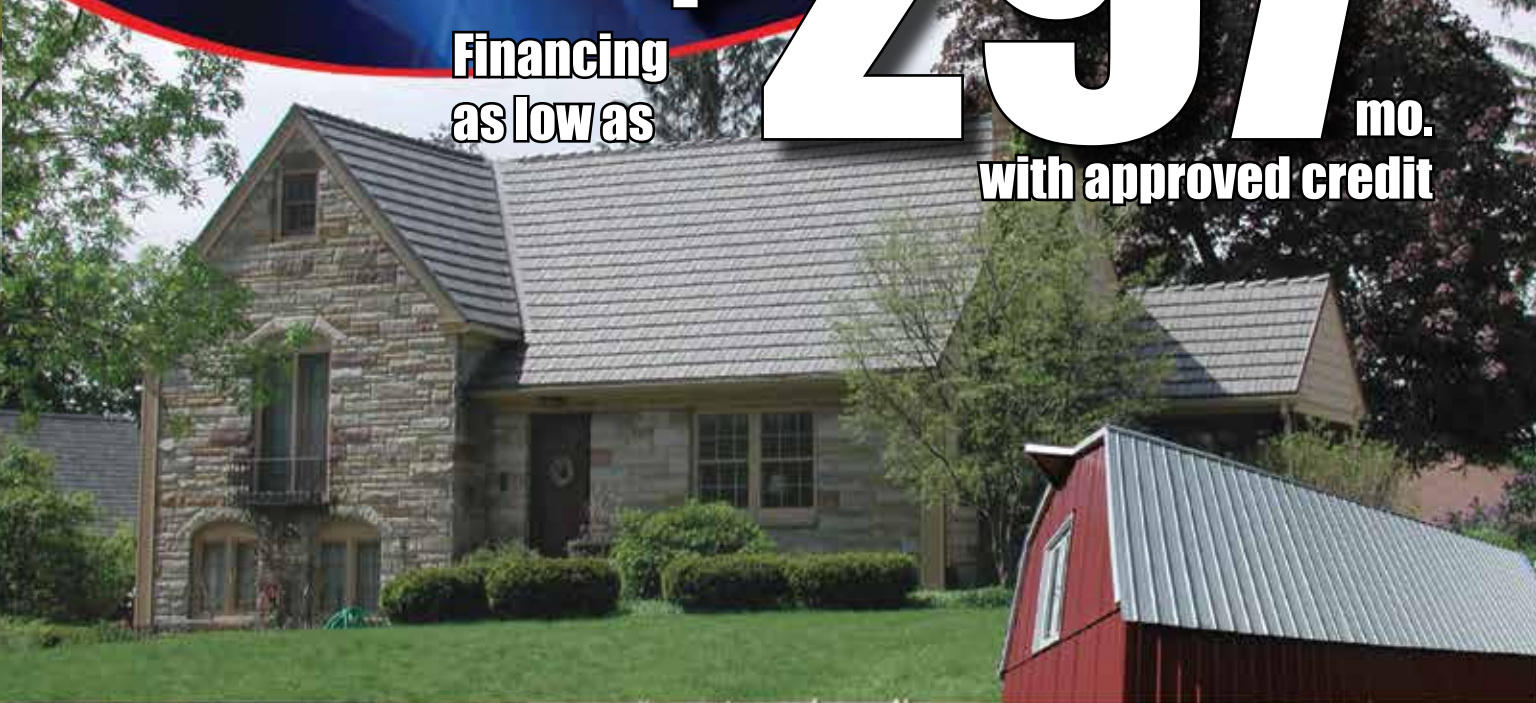
East Channel Lighthouse on Grand Island in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore area.

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