

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Meet Our
Deer Blind
Contest Winners!

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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
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.

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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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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PIE&G Communities First Fund...

Powering Communities, Empowering Members



Brian J. Burns
President & CEO

Established in 1998, the Presque Isle Electric & Gas Communities First Fund's mission is to distribute funds for the philanthropic needs of organizations and individuals in PIE&G's service area. Funds are provided by the generosity of PIE&G members who volunteer to "round-up" their energy bill to the next dollar (averages 50 cents monthly) and are overseen by an independent, volunteer board of directors who award grants to deserving organizations and individuals.

Money from the Communities First Fund has been awarded to educational programs, fire departments, medical emergency groups, organizations serving all ages, senior organizations, college scholarships, local development initiatives, and numerous local charities. The Fund's annual report, detailing contributions, is included in this issue of Country Lines (pages 8–9).

If you are participating, your monthly bill is rounded up to the next whole dollar amount. For example, if your bill is \$58.42, it would be rounded up to \$59. The 58 cents is then contributed by Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op on your behalf, to be used as explained above. Your annual contribution is tax deductible and is reported on your billing statement at the end of the year.

THANK YOU to all who participate. If you would like to join the cause and help your community, please volunteer to "round-up" your energy bill by calling our member services department at 800-423-6634. ■

Notice To All PIE&G Members

Your cooperative offers a program called the PIE&G Communities First Fund, which is supported by the voluntary rounding up of your monthly utility bill to the next whole dollar.

Your participation in the Communities First Fund is voluntary. If at any time you wish to discontinue participation, please let us know and we will be happy to remove your name.

To join the Communities First Fund, call 800-423-6634.

Co-op News

Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF) Charge Reduced

On July 1, 2013, Gov. Rick Snyder signed into law Public Act 95, creating the Low Income Energy Assistance Fund or “LIEAF” that authorizes the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to raise up to \$50 million for low income energy assistance payments. The money would come from a surcharge of no more than \$1 per meter per month for all Michigan electric utilities participating in the LIEAF program.

On July 22, 2014, the MPSC reduced the monthly surcharge from 99 cents to 97 cents per meter. The surcharge is limited to electric bills only and to one electric residential meter per residential site. The decrease will be effective on electric bills generated on or after Oct. 1, 2014, for service rendered in September.

Wholesale Electric Costs Decrease in 2015, PSCR Factor To Be Adjusted

At a Special Open Meeting held Sept. 30, 2014, the PIE&G board of directors approved a new Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) factor of $-\$0.00031$ per kilowatt-hour, which is a decrease from the current $\$0.00106$ per kilowatt-hour. The PIE&G board approved the new factor in anticipation of decreased wholesale energy costs (see official notice below). The decrease will be reflected on bills rendered on or after Feb. 1, 2015.

The purpose of the PSCR factor is to allow the utility to collect only what is needed each budget year to cover our power supply costs. Your co-op purchases its electricity from a wholesale power supplier whose generation and transmission costs may change frequently and unexpectedly throughout the year. These costs are passed through to PIE&G members via the PSCR factor on each member's electric bill. Periodic adjustments to the PSCR factor are necessary to help PIE&G keep any over- or under-collections of PSCR-related revenue to a minimum.

The PSCR is a pass-through cost and does not contain profits for PIE&G. Most other electric utilities in Michigan also have a PSCR factor on their electric bills. ■



Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

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Business Office & Billing:

989-733-8515

Toll-free:

800-423-6634

Gas emergency toll-free:

800-655-8565

pieg.com

Most PIE&G natural gas rates and charges are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

Your Touchstone Energy[®]
Cooperative

Notice to Members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

Electric Tariff and Rule Changes Effective February 1, 2015

The Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the Cooperative's electric tariffs and rules at a special open board meeting held September 29, 2014, in accordance with P.A. 167:

- Reviewed the Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor (PSCR) and authorized the maximum factor to be set at $-\$0.00031/\text{kWh}$, effective with bills rendered on or after February 1, 2015, due to expected decreases in wholesale energy supply costs.
- Revised the Cooperative's residential and non-residential billing rules to remove references to Michigan Public Service Commission jurisdiction and to have the written rules more closely reflect actual practices pursuant to member regulation.

For specific details of any Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op tariffs, rules or fees, please visit our website at pieg.com or call 1-800-423-6634.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op offices will be closed:

- **Nov. 27–28 – Thanksgiving**
- **Dec. 24–25 – Christmas**
- **Jan. 1 – New Year's Day**

*As always, our 24-hour answering service will be available to report outages or other emergencies; call **800-423-6634**.*



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.

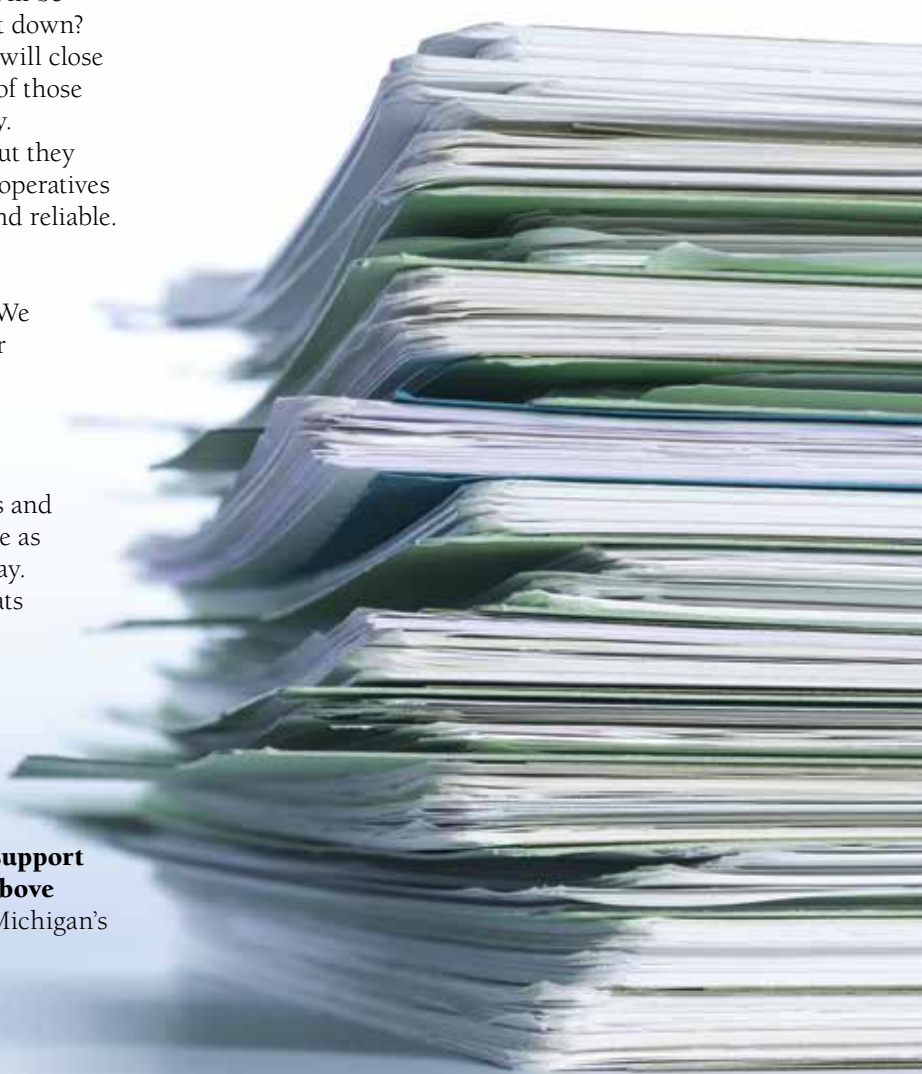
That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on the real world—where we live. That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at Action.coop and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

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. ■





POWERING COMMUNITIES, EMPOWERING MEMBERS

2013 PIE&G Communities
First Fund Awards:

\$56,249

The generosity of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op members and their desire to better their communities allows the PIE&G Communities First Fund to fulfill its philanthropic mission of distributing funds to help individuals and organizations in need in our service area. Members volunteering to “round up” their energy bill to the next dollar (averages 50 cents monthly) provide funds overseen by a nine-member, volunteer board of directors. Funds are granted through an application process and allow small contributions to make a *big* difference in northeast Michigan. To those who participate in the fund—**THANK YOU!** For those who would like to join the cause and help their community, please call the co-op office at 1-800-423-6634.

COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND 2013 GRANT SUMMARY

| APPLICANT | AMOUNT | APPLICANT | AMOUNT |
|--|---------|---|---------|
| Posen Consolidated Schools, CNC Machine-Industrial Arts . . . | \$5,000 | Case Township, Summer Youth Program | \$1,250 |
| Hubbard Lake Sportsman & Impr Assoc, Fish Shelter Program . . . | \$350 | Lewiston Volunteer Fire Dept, Wildland Fire Truck. | \$2,500 |
| Cheboygan County United Way, Project Connect | \$1,500 | Onaway Area Community Schools, Summer Youth Program . . . | \$1,725 |
| Forest Township, Playground Equipment | \$5,287 | Tri Rivers Little League, Concession Stand Update & Shed | \$1,000 |
| Cheboygan County 4-H Council, Community Education Events . . | \$1,000 | Cheboygan County Equine Youth & Family, Mounted Search & Rescue Team | \$1,300 |
| Rogers City Elementary School, Playground Equipment | \$1,428 | Onaway Head Start, Technology Update | \$600 |
| Straits Area Youth Promotion Academy, Technology Improvements | \$2,753 | Inland Lakes Schools, Autistic Learning Support | \$2,000 |
| Hillman High School, Woodworking & Construction Program . . | \$1,100 | Cheboygan VITA, Equipment Update | \$2,500 |
| Glawe School, Roof Replacement. | \$2,500 | Hillman Fire Dept, Firefighter Turnout Gear | \$2,151 |
| Cheboygan Long Lake Area Assoc, Eurasian Milfoil Control Program | \$350 | Delta Kappa Gamma, Repair, restore, repaint-Besser School | \$385 |
| Cheboygan Music Boosters, Marching Band Camp 2013 | \$2,025 | Montmorency County Commission on Aging, Senior Food Box Program. | \$4,500 |
| Rogers City Area Schools, Tools for Technology Program | \$3,000 | Alcona Community Schools, Health & Safety Updates- Tech Lab . | \$2,000 |
| Maple Ridge Twp Volunteer Fire Dept, Ice/Water Rescue Equipment | \$750 | Earth Week-Plus, Animal Education Programs | \$795 |
| Boy Scouts of America Troop #81, Community Garden. | \$750 | Cheboygan County 4-H Council, Vet-A-Visit Event at MSU | \$1,000 |
| Aloha Historical Society, Welcome Garden | \$750 | Hillman Community Schools, Technology Update | \$1,000 |
| United Way of NE Michigan, Project Connect-Presque Isle/Montmorency | \$3,000 | | |

PIE&G Communities First Fund Statements of Financial Position December 31, 2013 and 2012

| ASSETS | 2013 | 2012 |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS: | | |
| Cash | \$ 91,428 | \$ 99,667 |
| Cash – restricted | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| Account receivable | 4,390 | 4,288 |
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$ 98,818 | \$ 106,955 |
| NET ASSETS | | |
| Unrestricted | \$ 66,817 | \$ 81,715 |
| Unrestricted, designated | 29,001 | 22,240 |
| Permanently restricted | 3,000 | 3,000 |
| TOTAL NET ASSETS | 98,818 | 106,955 |
| TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS | \$ 98,818 | \$ 106,955 |
| ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | | |
| REVENUE | | |
| Contributions – members | \$ 54,505 | \$ 55,697 |
| Contributions – PIE&G | 10,252 | 9,779 |
| Account receivable | 69 | 57 |
| TOTAL REVENUE | \$ 64,826 | \$ 65,533 |
| EXPENSES | | |
| Grants | \$ 50,871 | \$ 40,619 |
| Scholarships | 11,900 | 5,900 |
| Professional fees | 2,500 | 2,500 |
| Program expense | 6,661 | 6,415 |
| Director's expense | 1,031 | 863 |
| TOTAL EXPENSE | 72,963 | 56,297 |
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | (8,137) | 9,236 |
| NET ASSETS, beginning of year | 106,955 | 97,719 |
| NET ASSETS, end of year | \$ 98,818 | \$ 106,955 |



HOW CAN I HELP MY COMMUNITY?

The PIE&G Communities First Fund was established in 1998. The funds for this program are generated when PIE&G members volunteer to "round up" their utility bills to the next dollar. The average contribution is 50 cents per month, or around \$6 annually. All contributions are tax deductible.

You can participate by calling our Member Services Department at 800-423-6634, by sending us the coupon at right with your next bill payment, or enrolling online at pieg.com and clicking on "Contact Us".

Yes!

I want to participate in the COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND. Please "round-up" my bill to the next highest dollar each month.

Name (please print) _____

Phone Number _____

Mailing Address _____

Signature _____

Include this coupon in your next bill payment, or mail to:
PIE&G COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND, P.O. Box 308, Onaway, MI 49765



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 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.

Seize the Savings

The end of 2014 is nearing, but there is still time to save money by taking advantage of energy efficiency rebates and incentives. Think of it as an end-of-the-year bonus or a gift that keeps on giving.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op's Energy Optimization (EO) program offers a variety of ways to help you save electricity, earn incentives and rebates, and lower future energy costs. Take comfort in knowing that your actions today will provide long-lasting benefits that extend beyond the extra money you'll have in your pocket.

Programs for Your Home

- **ENERGY STAR® lighting** – Save every time you flip a switch. These lightbulbs and fixtures save up to 90 percent more energy than traditional options.
- **ENERGY STAR appliances** – Buy qualifying energy efficient appliances to automatically save energy.
- **Appliance recycling** – Free pickup and recycling, plus a cash reward!
- **Efficiency heating, ventilation and air conditioning** – Rebates when you install qualifying HVAC equipment.
- **Online home energy audit** – Complete a free online home energy assessment to learn about your energy use and how to save more energy and money. And, get a free energy-savings kit!

- **Low-income services** – Helps qualified homeowners improve the efficiency of their homes, manage their electric use, and reduce electric bills at no additional cost.

Programs for Your Business

There are also dozens of EO rebates available for business upgrades. Plus, energy-efficient businesses tend to have healthier, more productive employees.

- **Commercial and industrial services** – Rebates are available for the installation of high efficiency equipment, such as CFL and LED lighting fixtures, chiller tune-ups, variable speed air compressors, and customized rebates tailored to the needs of business-specific operations.
- **Farm services** – Rebates are available for the installation of energy efficiency products and equipment, such as timers for engine block heaters, variable speed controllers for vacuum pumps, lighting controls, and customized rebates tailored to meet the needs of agribusiness operations.

Get Your Rebate

To take advantage of these rebates, get program details, download rebate applications or locate a participating retailer or contractor, go to michigan-energy.org or call **877.296.4319**. ■



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.



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.
- Use sparingly! These are an expensive heat source!

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

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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



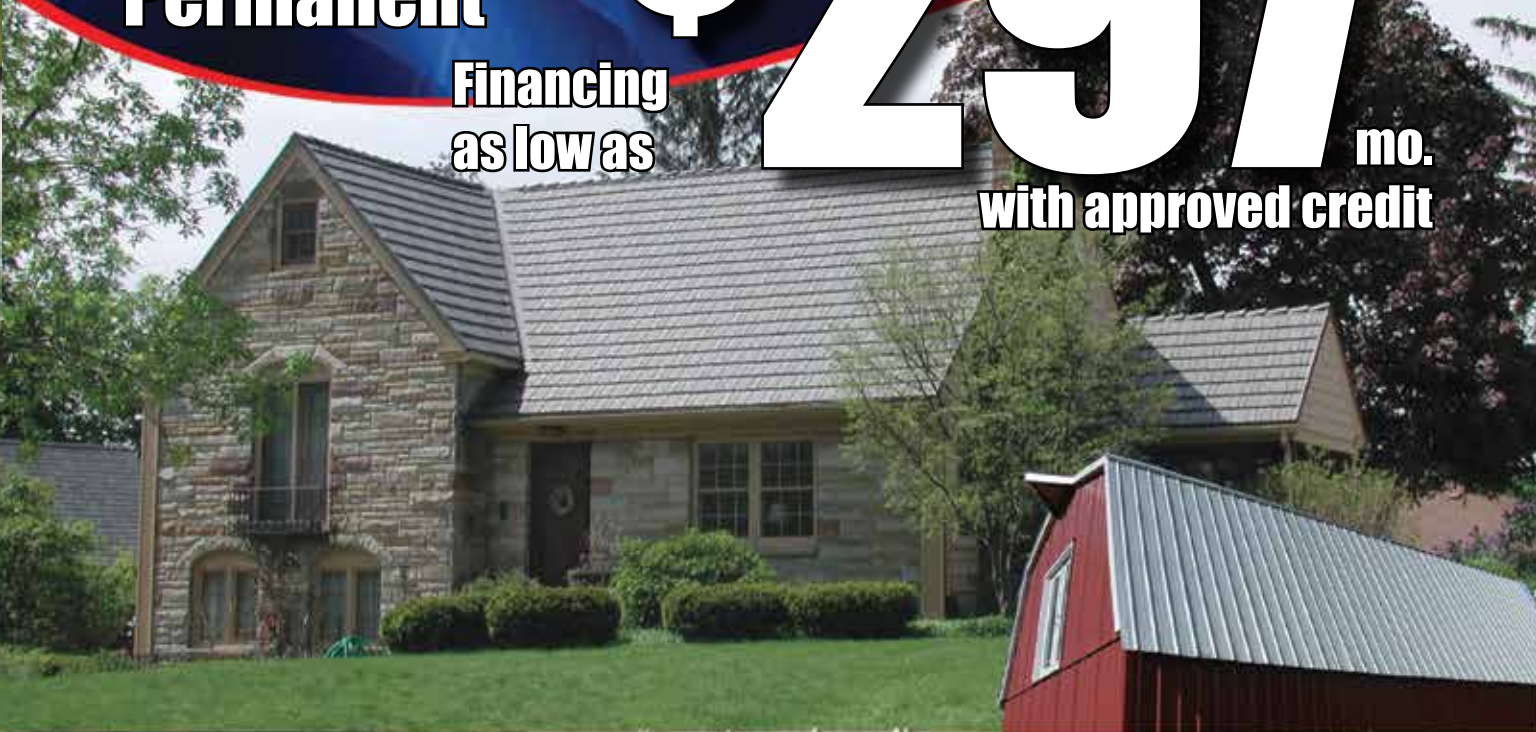
East Channel Lighthouse on Grand Island in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore area.

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School Friday Folders



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ONAWAY



ATLANTA

It's that time of year again for Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op to announce another successful delivery of "Friday Folders" for member students enrolled in local public elementary schools for the 2013-2014 academic year.

Your electric co-op has donated the student folders to member schools since 2003 to help teachers send important student papers home for parental review. The laminated folders are custom printed, complete with the school name, mascot and colors, and were distributed the first week of school in September.

The folders are purchased by PIE&G with financial support from Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, its national brand and marketing alliance.



JOHANNESBURG



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**Best Wishes to all
kids and teachers
for a successful year
of learning!!**