

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



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A Barrel Of Fun:

Portable Sauna Is Good Fundraiser, Too



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



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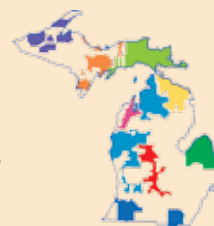
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Zeak DeWyse is a builder and electric co-op member who has started a new business making portable, barrel saunas. Called the U.P. Sauna Company, their cedar saunas are suitable for most any landscape, but are also proving to be a good fundraising draw for charitable causes.



Michigan's Electric
Cooperatives
countrylines.com



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Greetings

from Alger Delta Electric

Alger-Delta Board Tries to Rekindle Stalled Merger Talks



Tom Harrell
General Manager

At its regular board meeting on December 18, the Alger Delta Cooperative Board of Directors took steps to reinvigorate merger discussions with Great Lakes Energy (GLE) of Boyne City, MI.

In October, GLE invited Alger Delta to explore a merger of the two cooperatives. The initial discussions centered on possible savings for electric consumers, improved efficiency and investment in the power distribution system. The Alger Delta board voted 8-1 to engage in merger talks.

In November, the Alger Delta board voted 8-1 to meet with GLE in Boyne City to review the first draft of a study identifying the benefits of merging for each cooperative. Following that decision, a dispute erupted when some Alger Delta board members claimed that meeting with GLE would violate the cooperative's "no sale" policy. GLE asked the Alger Delta board to resolve the issue before continuing discussions. Resolving the policy dispute was important because GLE would not proceed knowing that a deal could be tied up in a legal challenge over a relatively minor policy dispute.

The Alger Delta board held a special meeting on December 2 at which a 5-4 majority voted to waive the "no-sale" policy. Opponents cited a provision requiring a 6-3 super-majority to waive the policy. The super-majority provision was later found to be a violation of the cooperatives' bylaws. At its regular board meeting on December 18, the board voted 9-0 to waive the policy so talks could continue. The board also amended its bylaws to allow members to vote by mail if it gets to that point. With these obstacles cleared, Alger Delta hopes to rekindle merger discussions with GLE. ■

Board Passes 2015 Budget— No Rate Increases Planned

At its regular board meeting on Oct. 15, the Alger Delta board of directors adopted the 2015 budget on a 7-2 vote.

The budget was presented to the Finance and Rates Committee by Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Amanda Seger. Committee members Sam Simonetta (District 2 – Harvey/Deerton), Nancy Gardner-Platt (District 3 – Grand Marais), and Mike Nason (District 9 – Big Bay) supported the budget plan and chairperson Gardner-Platt recommended the full board adopt the plan.

In round figures, the 2015 budget anticipates \$13.9 million in revenue from sales of electricity. This represents a 1 percent increase over fiscal 2014.

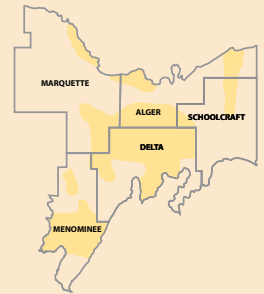
Alger Delta plans to increase tree trimming expense by 15 percent and plans increased investment in operations and maintenance, technology upgrades (including its mapping system and computers), integration with the outage management system (OMS), and more. Some of the expense increases will be offset by decreases in other areas.

Wholesale power costs are expected to rise due to the impact of the Presque Isle Power Plant (PIPP) System Support Resource (SSR) payments mandated by the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). There is no corresponding rate increase planned.

Total expenses are budgeted at \$13.5 million, yielding an operating margin of \$400,000. Non-operating margins and other credits are expected to add another \$400,000 to the bottom line for a budgeted net margin of about \$800,000. The margins are expected to produce a TIER of 1.676 which will keep the cooperative within the financial operating requirements set by the federal government and lenders.

“It is important for members to know their co-op is operating in the black—as we have done for the past several years now—and that staff is looking out for our members,” said Tom Harrell, Alger Delta’s CEO. “This is the fourth year in a row we have held steady on rates and fees, and we’re really proud of that.”

The cooperative also recently retired capital credits for the first time in 50 years. “Some members might consider the capital credit retirements symbolic because some of them are small amounts. But it’s important to start somewhere, and to emphasize the difference between being a cooperative member and just a customer,” Seger reported. Seger also noted that Alger Delta has increased equity in the past several years. “We’re moving the needles in the right direction,” she said. ■



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EATING ETHNIC

Experience distant lands with these flavorful dishes.

Moroccan Tagine in Crockpot *(pictured)*

Olive oil	1 T. honey
6–8 pieces bone-in or boneless pork or chicken	1 cinnamon stick
McCormick® Moroccan Seasoning	$\frac{2}{3}$ c. dried apricots, chopped
$2\frac{1}{2}$ c. chopped onions	2 15-oz. cans chickpeas
$\frac{1}{4}$ c. finely chopped garlic	$\frac{1}{4}$ c. cilantro leaves (optional)
1 c. unsalted stock (chicken, pork or vegetable)	Lemon wedges (optional)

Heat a large skillet on medium-high heat. Add olive oil to pan; swirl to coat. Sprinkle meat with Moroccan seasoning. Add meat to pan and cook 5 minutes until well-browned. Remove from pan and let rest (do not brown the other side). Add extra olive oil if needed, onions and garlic. Sauté for 4 minutes. Add more Moroccan seasoning to taste, cook another minute stirring constantly to loosen browned bits. Add stock, honey and cinnamon stick; bring to a simmer. Carefully pour mixture into crockpot. Stir in apricots and chickpeas. Arrange meat so the browned side is on top of the chickpea mixture. Cover; cook on low for 7 hours. If desired, garnish with cilantro and lemon wedges. Serves great alongside couscous, quinoa or rice.

Leann Butler, Wolverine

Cream Cheese Kieflies

1 c. real butter	1 egg yolk
8-ozs. cream cheese	$2\frac{1}{2}$ c. flour

Filling:

2 c. nuts (pecans), ground fine	$\frac{1}{2}$ c. honey
1 egg white, beaten stiff	$1\frac{1}{2}$ c. powdered sugar

Mix all ingredients and shape into teaspoon-size balls. Refrigerate overnight. Take out about 5 from fridge at a time. Roll out until paper thin. Fill each pastry with 1 teaspoon of filling. Roll like a candy kiss and pinch each end. Place on ungreased cookie sheet and bake at 400° until brown.

Barbara Kedik, Dowagiac

Congratulations

to Patsy Castagne-Miller of Pickford. Her name was drawn from all readers whose recipes we printed in 2014 and *Country Lines* magazine will pay her January electric bill (up to \$200) as a prize.



Patsy and her family have been Cloverland Electric Cooperative members for nine years. Besides cooking and creating, she loves the outdoors, and her other hobbies are growing flowers and vegetables. "I love to try new recipes all the time," she says. "Some people say I can make great soups!"

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "**Healthy Living**" recipes by **Jan. 10** and your favorite "**Pizza**" recipes by **Feb. 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 2015 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2016 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Visit countrylines.com for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

Electric Capacity Shortfall Projected for 2016



Craig Borr, CEO,
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

Have you ever wondered why a grocery store builds 15 check-out lanes, but only has three of them open most of the time? Simply put, the store has built its “lane capacity” to meet peak demand, the roughly 10 percent of the year when the store is busiest.

It works the same way for electricity providers, including your electric cooperative. Most of the time

there are enough power plants and renewable resources running to meet our member-owners’ needs. At other times, particularly on very hot or cold days, energy needs increase and additional electricity is needed to meet this “peak demand”.

Unlike the grocery store, where a capacity shortfall means a longer wait in line, a shortfall in electric capacity can cause the lights to go out. And, it is your electric cooperative’s job to make sure it has the capacity to meet its members’ maximum need at all times.

The startling fact, however, is that the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) estimates that Michigan’s Lower Peninsula is facing a 3,000-megawatt (MW) capacity shortfall as early as 2016. The “mitten” needs roughly 15 percent more generating capacity than is currently operating. Ironically, MISO is projecting the Upper Peninsula will actually have a small amount of excess capacity beginning next year.

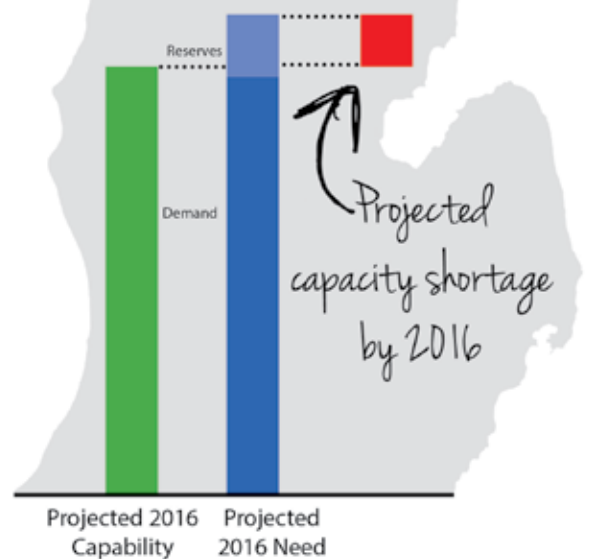
What is causing this projected deficiency, why should you care, and what are electric cooperatives doing to ensure that the lights stay on for you, our member-owners?

Who is MISO and why are they projecting a shortfall?

MISO is the independent nonprofit grid operator, based in Carmel, IN, that is responsible for operating wholesale electricity markets in both of our peninsulas, much of the Midwest, and parts of Canada. Electric utilities in MISO are required to have enough generating capacity to meet their projected peak needs as well as a 15 percent “reserve” margin each year.

Lower Peninsula utilities, MISO warns, will not have adequate generation and reserves, starting in 2016, because of projected growth in electricity sales combined with the closure of many, older coal-fired power plants throughout Michigan and the Midwest that will not meet

Projected Capacity Needs for 2016, Lower Peninsula



new air quality standards required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

What are electric co-ops doing to meet the projected shortfall?

Wolverine Power Cooperative, the Cadillac-based wholesale power supplier to five of Michigan’s nine electric distribution cooperatives, is certainly doing its part.

In October 2015, Wolverine announced the development of a new, 400-plus megawatt clean natural gas-fueled electric peaking plant. Located west of Gaylord, it would meet the future needs of Wolverine’s member distribution cooperatives. However, *the Lower Peninsula needs nearly seven more plants of this size if it expects to meet MISO’s estimated shortfall.*

Wolverine is working to obtain necessary approvals from local, state and regional agencies, and if all goes well, construction on the plant could begin later this year. Named the Alpine Generating Plant, Wolverine will use clean natural gas to generate electricity during times of peak demand and to generate energy that complements the ever-increasing amount of intermittent renewable energy in our state.

Even more capacity needs to be built soon.

I am proud to say that Wolverine is doing its part to meet the future needs of its member cooperatives, as are others, such as municipal electric utilities in Lansing and Holland. But we need more capacity to be built very soon.

To learn more about the exciting new Alpine project, visit alpinecleanenergy.com. ■

HOOKING THE BIG ONE



Indian Country Sports today.



Steve sitting in front of the original Indian Country Sports Store. He sold the two halves of the store to two men for \$1 each, providing they would take it down and haul it away. In an excellent example of 'Yooper recycling,' an Amish farmer took his half and recreated it into a barn and the other half found a second life as an art studio.

A descendent of a long line of Finnish commercial fishermen, Steve Koski has successfully leveraged his heritage—a passion for fishing and outdoor life—into a thriving retail business for over 38 years.

“Fishing and hunting is just something that I have always loved so much, and I always knew that I wanted to work around something related to fishing. I enjoy coming to work and I enjoy what I do. I’ve lived a nice life and I feel very lucky.”

Shortly after graduating from NMU with a marketing degree, the business where he had worked for six summers came up for sale. In 1977, he bought Indian Country Sales, a small seasonal business located on the lakefront in L’Anse. “When Labor Day came around that first year, I found myself wondering what I would do. Should I close up shop and go peel pulp in the woods, or should I try to stay open?” Steve recalls. “I took a leap of faith and stayed open through the winter. I ordered some cross-country skis and snow shoes and decided I would figure out a way to make it work. There were lean years in the beginning, but we made it.” The ‘we’ is Steve and his wife Annie, high school sweethearts who married in 1979



Top: Steve Koski has operated his business, Indian Country Sports, for 38 years. The lighthouse part of the building has a cement gargoyle on top (opposite page) to “guard the premises,” and was a gift from Koski’s daughter.

Left: A bullet-riddled sign from the Huron Island Lighthouse is now affixed to the front of Steve’s store.

and raised three children who were always in the store when they were growing up, making what they now call Indian Country Sports a true family business.

As the business became year-round and thrived, Steve decided in 1995 that he needed a new building to house it. He imagined a building that would tie in with his lifelong dream of being a lighthouse keeper. Construction began after obtaining a necessary height variance from the village for the 50-foot-tall lighthouse that would be the focal point and beacon for his business. After a two-year review by the U.S. Coast Guard, Steve received his Private Aid to Navigation permit in 1998, and his dream became a reality when he became the most recently-licensed lighthouse keeper in the United States. When he had difficulty finding a light for his lighthouse, the U.S. Coast Guard loaned him the one that remains on-site today, sending a flashing blast of light over the L’Anse Bay every 2.5 seconds.

As often happens with changes in a small community, people initially were reluctant to say goodbye to the old building that had become a landmark of sorts. But as one L’Anse native enthused, “I love his building. I think it brings a great ambience to the lakefront and to downtown

L’Anse in general. It’s an aesthetic that should be followed in anything built or restored in town.”

A considerable number of lighthouse hobbyists who travel the U.S. seeking lighthouses to visit and photograph come to Steve’s lighthouse. “Nearly everyone who walks through my door does so because they are looking to do something fun,” he says.

As much as he enjoys his work, Steve is now looking forward to when he can join the daily “coffee klatchers” who use his shop as a meeting place and arrive every morning at 8 a.m. to discuss hunting, fishing and important local and world issues. The business is currently listed for sale, and Steve says, “I’m going to miss it. I’d like to be able to pass it to somebody who is as enthusiastic about the outdoor lifestyle as I have been.” ■

“I love his building. I think it brings a great ambience to the lakefront and to downtown L’Anse in general.”



Zeak DeWyse (standing, far right) has a crew of six local workers that help him handcraft his company's unique barrel saunas.

Photo—Shawn Malone/Lake Superior Graphics



A Barrel Of Fun:

Portable Sauna Is Good Fundraiser, Too

It's 18 degrees outside. Steam rises from a large hole cut in the middle of Millecoquin Lake. A mixed group of younger and older people are standing around looking like they're getting ready to go to the beach, except their lips are quivering and their teeth chattering. They're getting ready to take the "Polar Bear Plunge" challenge to benefit the Engadine Intermediate School District.

Luckily, after their plunge, warmth awaits these "polar bears" in what looks like a huge wooden keg resting on its side on the frozen lake. The attractive, cedar-hewn structure is actually a sauna, built by the Upper Peninsula Sauna Company in tiny Engadine, MI. Saunas and polar bear plunges certainly aren't new in the U.P., but this type of barrel sauna is definitely a novelty that is catching on fast because they are extremely mobile (trailerable) or can be stationary, and fit into most any lifestyle and landscape.

The saunas are manufactured by a seasoned crew of builders led by Zeak DeWyse, a local, licensed contractor and owner of DeWyse Construction. A Cloverland Electric Co-op member, DeWyse says he was looking for another source of income that would keep his crew busy when he latched onto the idea of building barrel saunas.

"It wasn't my original idea," DeWyse says about the sauna's unique construction. "I saw one for sale on the west end of the U.P." He also bought a barrel-shaped sauna from a backyard mechanic that he and his building crew used as a prototype. The saunas the DeWyse crew builds are crafted out of cedar felled from the woods near Engadine and sawn in local mills.

The Upper Peninsula Sauna Company is a welcome addition to the community and to the employees of DeWyse Construction. DeWyse says it has allowed his workers to stay busy during inclement weather. The company is a part of DeWyse Construction and shares the



The cozy barrel sauna holds four adults comfortably and comes with a custom-fabricated woodstove, solar lights, a thermo-hygrometer, water pail, and a cedar spoon. The stove rocks all come from the U.P.

same building—a very old one on Main Street—which was vacant for several years.

"It's working out really well that my guys aren't losing days from their income," DeWyse explains. "When it rains everybody comes to the shop and we build saunas, so that's been kind of a gift for our employees."

Supporting local events is nothing new for the DeWyse company. They're very much involved with the community, especially the schools, and helping other volunteers with fundraisers, parades, and similar events. The saunas are a good draw and have been used to raise funds for different causes. Besides the Polar Bear Plunge, DeWyse recently offered a barrel sauna to anyone who can make a hole-in-one during golf scrambles. The prize is placed on the designated hole.

Along with beating the winter blues, DeWyse adds, there are health benefits to taking a sauna, including removing toxins from your body and sweating-out colds, the flu, and sore muscles—and avoiding hypothermia after an icy plunge in a lake! ■

Below: An aerial view of the "Polar Bear Plunge" local school fundraiser. Plunge participants can warm up in the Upper Peninsula Sauna Company's barrel sauna set up at the right of the hole cut into the lake.

Photos—Sigurd Utych



Rebates Available for Vehicle Engine Heater Timers

Alger Delta Cooperative's Energy Optimization (EO) program has extended its \$20 rebate on engine block heater timers. Using a plug-in timer, this device allows you to run your overnight engine heater for just a few hours instead of hooking it up at night and turning it off in the morning—a savings of energy and money!

An engine block heater is an electric, plug-in device that is used during the winter months to increase the chances that a vehicle's engine will start, as well as warm up the interior of the truck or tractor faster, in extremely cold weather. A 1,000-watt heater operated for 10 hours uses 10 kilowatt-hours (kWh) a day, while a heater that operates on a timer uses only about 2 kWh. The 8 kilowatt-hours you can save amounts to about \$1 per day.

For a limited time, private and commercial farms are eligible to receive a *free* engine block heater timer on



a first-come, first-served basis through the EO Farm Services Program. Visit michigan-energy.org/heatertimer for more details, or call 1-877-296-4319. ■

BIG SCREEN
BE THE HOST WITH THE MOST

The Big Game, Series Finales, Awards Season. With the help of your Energy Optimization program, your home will be the place to watch the very best on TV. **Go big and save with rebates up to \$50 on ENERGY STAR rated TVs.**

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 **Energy Optimization**  **Alger Delta Electric**
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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.

Who's Your Legislator?

As a guide to help you understand who represents you in the Michigan Legislature, we have listed here all the legislators (both House and Senate) that represent districts that include the Alger Delta Cooperative service area (see map, p. 5). Whatever their background, most represent districts with large rural populations, which are areas where electric co-ops serve. In fact, several legislators are electric co-op members themselves.

There are a total of 44 new members in the Michigan House of Representatives and 10 new members in the Senate.

Legislation affecting cooperatives and their owners most likely originates in those committees covering utilities, energy, technology, transportation, environment, land use, safety and taxes.

Michigan House of Representatives

In the House, Republicans continue to hold the majority, by 63-47. The House district lines are the same, since the redistricting process that occurs every 10 years was established in the last election. Visit house.mi.gov for more information.



Rep. Ed McBroom
108th District
(R-Vulcan)
(517) 373-0156



Rep. John Kivela
109th District
(D-Marquette)
(517) 373-0498



Rep. Scott Dianda
110th District
(R-Calumet)
(517) 373-0850

Michigan Senate

In the Senate, Republicans also continue to hold the majority, by 27-11. Unlike the House, the Senate ran for the first time under new district lines.

Visit senate.mi.gov for more information. ■



Sen. Tom Casperson
38th District
(R-Escanaba)
(517) 373-7840

Powering Up

When an outage occurs, line crews work hard to restore service:

1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of consumers) rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

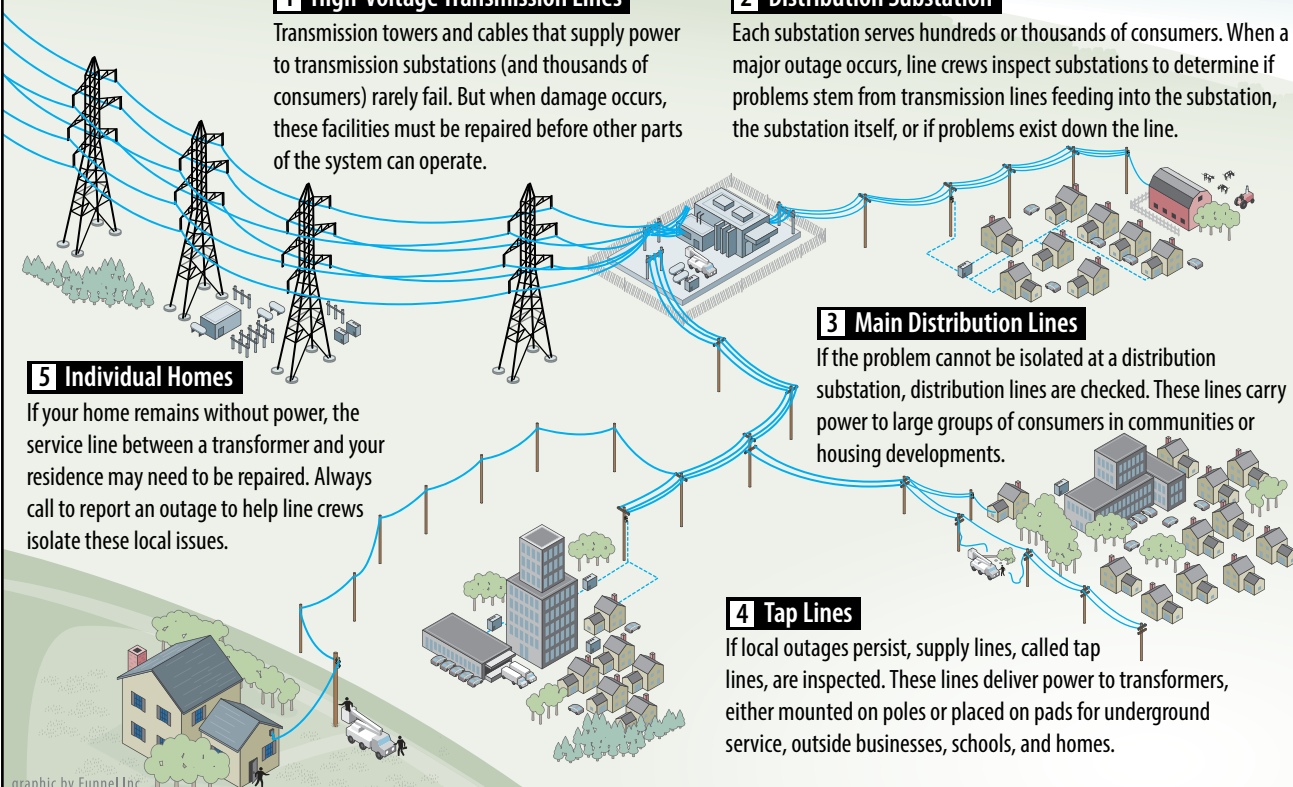
If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate these local issues.



graphic by Funnel Inc.

Snowmobile Museum, Trails Are Winter Fun

Did you know that over 6,500 snowmobile trails run throughout Michigan? To survive winter, you may want to buck-up with boots and a snowsuit to explore some of them. A few phone calls or an easy internet search reveals resorts and sport shops that rent snowmobiles.

Once #1 in the country for registered snowmobilers, Michigan now ranks second behind Minnesota. But don't let that cool your sleds. Bill Manson, of the Michigan Snowmobile Association (MSAsnow.org), says the related family time draws folks in and keeps them coming back. "In the early days of snowmobiling, the sport was a 'guy thing.' Now, everyone including the grandparents are out enjoying the woods together."

Higher quality machines are credited with the wider range of people enjoying the sport. Ergonomic seats with warmers, smooth suspensions, and easy handling allows the entire family to ride comfortably, go fast, and have fun.

Originally, snowmobiles were designed as work vehicles, says Charlie Vallier of the Snowmobile Museum in Naubinway, MI (on U.S.-2). "Sleds first appeared in Wisconsin around 1924 and were used by utility companies, trappers and commercial fishermen. Not until the late '60s did consumers realize they could be used for recreation."

Nostalgia for the old machines runs deep—enough so that the Snowmobile Museum recently expanded. "Throughout winter, enthusiasts can find at least one vintage snowmobile show on the Great Lakes every



1962 Polar

weekend," Vallier adds. "People love the old sleds. Seeing them, restoring them, and riding them. They represent a simpler time."

A walk through the Snowmobile Museum is a walk through that time (open daily, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at \$5 for adults and kids 16 and under free). Over 130 different machines spanning the decades are displayed, and the folks who restore them love to share stories of the days when sleds didn't have seat warmers!



Jack O'Malley

Share a story idea by email to jack@countrylines.com or write J. O'Malley, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. ■



«« Do You Know Where This Is?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **Feb. 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 March 2015 issue.

The November-December contest winner is Keith Kettinger, of Lake Ann, a Cherryland Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified



Nov/Dec Photo

the photo as the blacksmith building at the Almira Historical Society Museum in Lake Ann.

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