

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



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## A Barrel Of Fun:

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



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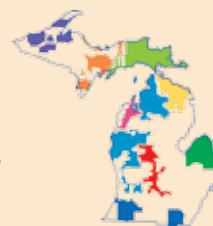
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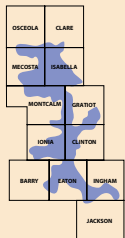
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Zeak DeWyse is a builder and electric co-op member who has started a new business making portable, barrel saunas. Called the U.P. Sauna Company, their cedar saunas are suitable for most any landscape, but are also proving to be a good fundraising draw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

Photo—Shawn Malone/lakesuperiorphoto.com



Michigan's Electric  
Cooperatives  
[countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)



## Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

### Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue  
Blanchard MI 49310  
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

### Portland office:

7973 E. Grand River Avenue  
Portland, MI 48875  
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday-Friday

### Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-562-8232

### Pay by phone, anytime:

1-877-999-3395

### Service questions/outages:

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(24 hours for emergency calls)

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[homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org)

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[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

# Back to School? We Never Stop Learning



**Mark Kappler**  
General Manager

**S**eptember may be the traditional back-to-school month, but we have education on our minds almost all the time. In fact, “Education and Information” is the fifth of seven Cooperative Principles we operate under.

For instance, we send you *Country Lines* magazine 10 times a year to keep you updated on your electric cooperative.

And in this issue, you’ll find notices for three programs which support education in our service area:

- Teachers or school districts can apply for Touchstone Energy classroom technology grants for up to \$2,500 to purchase tools or software that will help them educate young minds. Since we started this program in 2011, we’ve given nearly \$100,000 in support back to our area schools.
- High school sophomores and juniors can apply for the Youth Leadership Summit (April 22-24), which could lead to winning a week in Washington, D.C., in June.
- High school seniors, and adults furthering their education, can also apply for Touchstone Energy scholarships.

In upcoming issues of *Country Lines*, we’ll inform you of the board election process and about the annual member-owner meetings in which we come to each of the seven districts to visit with you and bring you co-op news. This kind of information is essential to the democratic governance of a cooperative like ours.

Speaking of board elections, we have two new directors to educate. Kimber Hansen was elected last year in District 4, and has already started attending the courses offered to electric co-op directors. Luke Pohl was appointed to the District 3 board seat in September, and will serve through next year’s election.

Board policy calls for directors to become certified during their first three-year term; both are already asking good questions at the board table and bringing their own experience to the wide variety of decisions board members are asked to make.

Employees are no exception to our education program. Everyone attends regular safety training on general subjects, and as their jobs require, on some very specific subjects.

Most of our managers and supervisors have earned certification through our national organization. This education serves two purposes—making sure they’re up-to-date on the latest laws, regulations, programs and technologies, while developing a nationwide network of co-op professionals that we can call on.

All of this emphasis on education benefits you as member-owners because it means the decisions made in running your electric co-op are not based on “best guesses” or a need for profit. Instead, HomeWorks runs on facts, experience, and your input. ■

## Manage Your Electric Account On The Go

## There's An App For That

**H**omeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op is as close as your smartphone. When you download the free application for iOS or Android devices, you have secure access to maintain your electric account information, view your bills, see payment history, make payments on your account, or set up recurring payments.

One great feature of SmartHub is that you can use it to report outages. When a storm goes through and many members are trying to call our outage lines at the same time, you can simply report it through SmartHub, once you've registered your account. Then follow the link to our Facebook page and watch for regular updates on power restoration efforts.

Your energy use can be tracked with a variety of graphs so you can compare one month's use to a previous month, or the same month last year. You can also add local weather data to the graph to see how changes in temperature change your family's energy use.

For most HomeWorks members, our automated metering system provides daily readings to help you manage your use as you go through the month.

Search for "SmartHub" in the Apple App Store or in Google's Android Market.

## Did You Know?

You can choose to stop receiving a paper bill each month and download your statement as a pdf document from SmartHub at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org). The files can be enlarged on your screen, and they're simple to file on your home computer. Save paper and postage—it's easy!

**Use these "buttons" on [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) to log-in to SmartHub or use the "Pay Bill Now" service.**

**Pay Bill Now**  
No registration required.



## Want Solar? We Make It Convenient



If you, like many others, support renewable energy but just can't make it work at your location, the Community Solar Garden at HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Co-op is a great solution!

"Many of our members support solar energy and renewables,"

explains project coordinator, Nick Rusnell.

"But sometimes installing a full solar project at their home, or paying for an entire project, is not an option. A full roof-top system is expensive, and requires the proper southern exposure."

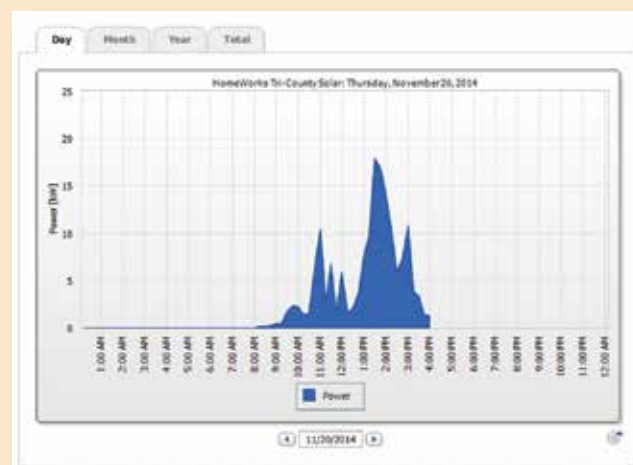
Buying one or more panels from the Community Solar Garden in Portland is simple, with minimal paperwork and a net investment of just \$425. HomeWorks takes care of any maintenance needed throughout the year.

In return, you receive a monthly credit for that panel's production, based on current power supply costs, for 20 years.

The Garden's monthly per-panel credit for its first eight

months (April-November) averaged nearly \$3, based on an eight-month total of \$23.11, Rusnell explains.

To learn more about this opportunity or reserve your panel(s), call Nick Rusnell at 517-647-1247 or visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) and select "Solar Garden" at the top of the page.



Even on snowy days in November, solar power is produced.





## 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](mailto: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](http://countrylines.com) for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

# Electric Capacity Shortfall Projected for 2016



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

**H**ave 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.

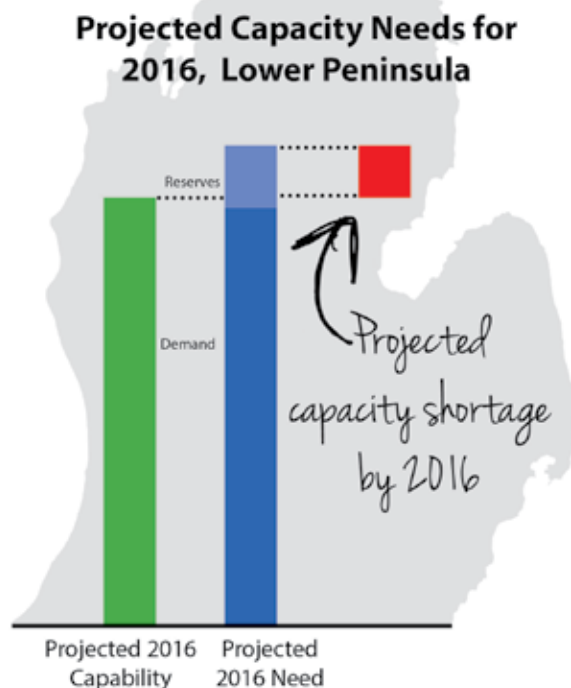
The startling fact, however, is that the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) estimates that Michigan’s Lower Peninsula is facing a 3,000-megawatt (MW) capacity shortfall as early as 2016. The “mitten” needs roughly 15 percent more generating capacity than is currently operating. Ironically, 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



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](http://alpinecleanenergy.com). ■

# Co-op News

## Teachers: Apply by Jan. 15!

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

Public or private school districts in our 13-county mid-Michigan service area that serve children of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric members can receive a grant of up to \$2,500 to fund innovative programs that enrich student education.

For an application form with grant guidelines, visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) or call Jayne Graham at 517-647-1252.

## SUBMIT YOUR PHOTO!



Go to [homeworks.org/content/snapshots](http://homeworks.org/content/snapshots) to submit your high-resolution digital photos and see additional themes. It's fast and easy.

### Upcoming Snapshot Contests: "MY FAVORITE PET"

Deadline Jan. 16 (March Issue)

### "KIDS AT PLAY"

Deadline Feb. 13 (April Issue)

Contributors whose photos we print in 2015 will be entered into a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2016 electric bill (up to \$200)!

To send by mail: Include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, and details about your photo. Identify the people in the photo, from left to right, and tell us their relation to you. Mail to Attn: *Country Lines* Snapshots, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875. Photos will not be returned. Please do not send color laser prints or professional studio photos.



## Need Help With College Costs?

Click on [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) for information on winning your share of \$2,500 in HomeWorks Touchstone Energy Scholarships offered to members.

Seniors are eligible for one of two \$1,000 Touchstone Energy scholarships, awarded to students served by HomeWorks Tri-County and based on a combination of merit and need. We also offer two adult education scholarships of \$250 each.

Scholarship applications are due March 16. Look for application forms and complete rules online at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org), call Jayne Graham at 517-647-1252 or email [jayne@homeworks.org](mailto:jayne@homeworks.org).

## In Memory of Carol Hoppes



Carol Hoppes, a long-time member of the HomeWorks Tri-County engineering and dispatch team, passed away at age 85 on Oct. 4, 2014. A native of Lansing, Carol was an engineering clerk for the cooperative for 24 years, retiring in 1991. After her official retirement, she came back to work on a part-time basis for seven years to help out

when needed.

Carol loved her job at Tri-County Electric, where she became friends with those she worked with and maintained lifelong friendships after her retirement. Her love of traveling took her to Hawaii, Florida, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Las Vegas, Missouri, the Mardi Gras in Louisiana, and many other interesting places.

She is survived by daughters Lynn (Tim Smith) of Grand Ledge, and Peggy (Mike English) of Pottsville, several grandchildren and great-grandchildren, her sister Gwen Patten, of Saranac, and many friends.



## Root Family Farm Achieves 104 Years of Ownership



The Root family receives a Centennial Farm sign from HomeWorks.

**T**he Root family was originally settled on a 120-acre tract in Eaton County by Lyman Root of Cuyahoga, Ohio, in 1911. Today, the farm is still about the same size and is operated for cash crops, such as corn and soy beans by the current owner, Jody Root, and her extended family. She and her late husband, Mark, purchased the farm from his grandmother, Iva, the niece of Lyman.

Pictured with their new Centennial Farm sign provided by HomeWorks Tri-County are, from left, Jody Root, her daughter Emily, mother-in-law Phyllis, father-in-law Millard, and brother-in-law Tim. ■

## Jo Bengel Retires With 40 Years of Service

**J**o Bengel will double-check her last set of meter readings this month, as she retires from HomeWorks Tri-County after a career that spans 40 years.

A native of Westphalia and graduate of Pewamo-Westphalia Schools, she hasn't made many plans yet, other than to spend time with her husband, Dan, their three grown children, and three grandchildren, ages six through 12.

"My grandkids are growing up so quickly, now's the time to spend time with them," Jo says of Marlie, Maggie and Chase.

Jo worked for the State of Michigan in 1973, but lived right down the road from the Portland office with Dan and their four-week-old son, Nick, when a friend told her of an immediate job opening at the co-op. From the start, she has worked in the billing and payments area, making sure members receive accurate bills for their energy use.

"They used to bring in boxes of payment envelopes in the mail every day for us to process by hand," she recalls. Payments and meter readings were billed with ledger machines, since this was before mass computerization.

She left the co-op for awhile after second child, Kristy, was born in 1978, but came back to work part-time after Kim was born, and then became full-time again in 1988. For the last two years, Jo has been the billing team leader.

"I worked with our meter readers most of the time since we started that program in 1985," she says. "I always really enjoyed that, because we had such a great group of people."

The biggest changes she has seen over her years at Tri-County is the automation of payments and meter readings. "Even though we've automated, we do still offer our members the personal touch, whether it's with our customer service folks by phone, with the three meter

readers we still have out there, or with our line crews. So, automation has had good results for all of us."

Jo is also pleased with the co-op's investment in a Community Solar Garden, since her husband's first business was in solar supply. "It feels good to see that come full circle in my life," she says.

As a devoted fan of the Michigan Wolverines, some of her favorite memories are from tailgating events at the office before each year's "big" game against the MSU Spartans. "Those are such fun for everybody, like some of our past Halloweens when departments would compete against each other [for the best costume award]."

"I've worked with some great people here over the years, it's truly been like family," she says. "There's a closeness... a feeling that if you need something, we're here for you." ■



Jo Bengel's grandkids (L-R), Maggie, Chase, and Marlie are the children of Nick and Brandi Bengel, and are excited about spending more time with Grandma.

Courtesy Photo)





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





# Your Board In Action

## Meeting at Blanchard Oct. 27, your board of directors:

- Seated Luke Pohl of Westphalia as District 3 director for the remainder of the current term, which ends in 2015.
- Hosted a number of district officers before a district officer training meeting.
- Authorized staff to apply to CoBank's Sharing Success program for a \$5,000 matching grant for a non-profit food and clothing bank in Lake Odessa, using donated capital from unclaimed capital credits for the local match.
- Amended the Retirement Security Plan to set all non-union employees at the same benefit level, effective Jan. 1, 2015.
- Renewed 2015 health insurance coverage for non-union employees and approved raising the employee premium share to 7 percent.
- Reviewed general liability and umbrella insurance coverage for 2015 and requested further information before renewing.
- Accepted proposed changes to Wolverine Power Cooperative's wholesale rate schedule and endorsed filing of the rate schedule at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission for a target effective date of Jan. 1, 2015.
- Discussed the September-October safety report, listing employee training and several public and employee incidents.
- Read and approved "Board Policy 103—Director Compensation," with minor changes, and "Board Policy 115—Director Emeritus" with no changes.
- Learned there were 129 new member applications in September.

## Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. The next meeting is set for Jan. 19 at Blanchard. Members who need directions to either office or wish to have items considered on the board agenda should call 517-647-7554. ■



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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](http://michigan-energy.org).

## How to Apply for a Grant

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

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, Mich. 48875, for an application form and grant guidelines, or visit [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

**Note:** Applications must be received by Jan. 12 for the January board meeting, and by Feb. 23 for the March meeting.

## Helping Our Neighbors

The Tri-County Electric People Fund board made eight grants totaling \$18,709.97 on Oct. 8, including:

- \$6,000 to God's Helping Hands in Remus for Christmas food boxes;
- \$1,000 to the M-46 Tabernacle Food Pantry in Riverdale for food pantry items;
- \$5,000 to the Housing Services of Mid-Michigan in Charlotte for housing assistance;
- \$679.97 to an Ionia County family to help with household bills;
- \$2,500 to an Isabella County family for a new well;
- \$350 to a Mecosta County family to help with household bills;
- \$680 to a Clare County family for transportation fees; and
- \$2,500 to an Ionia County family for nursing home care. ■



Les Barker presents a Tri-County Electric People Fund check for \$5,000 to Denise Dunn, Anne Van den Goore, and Christie Harry from Housing Services of Mid Michigan. The agency, located in Charlotte, offers a rent assistance program for area families.

### Powering Up

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems

#### 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

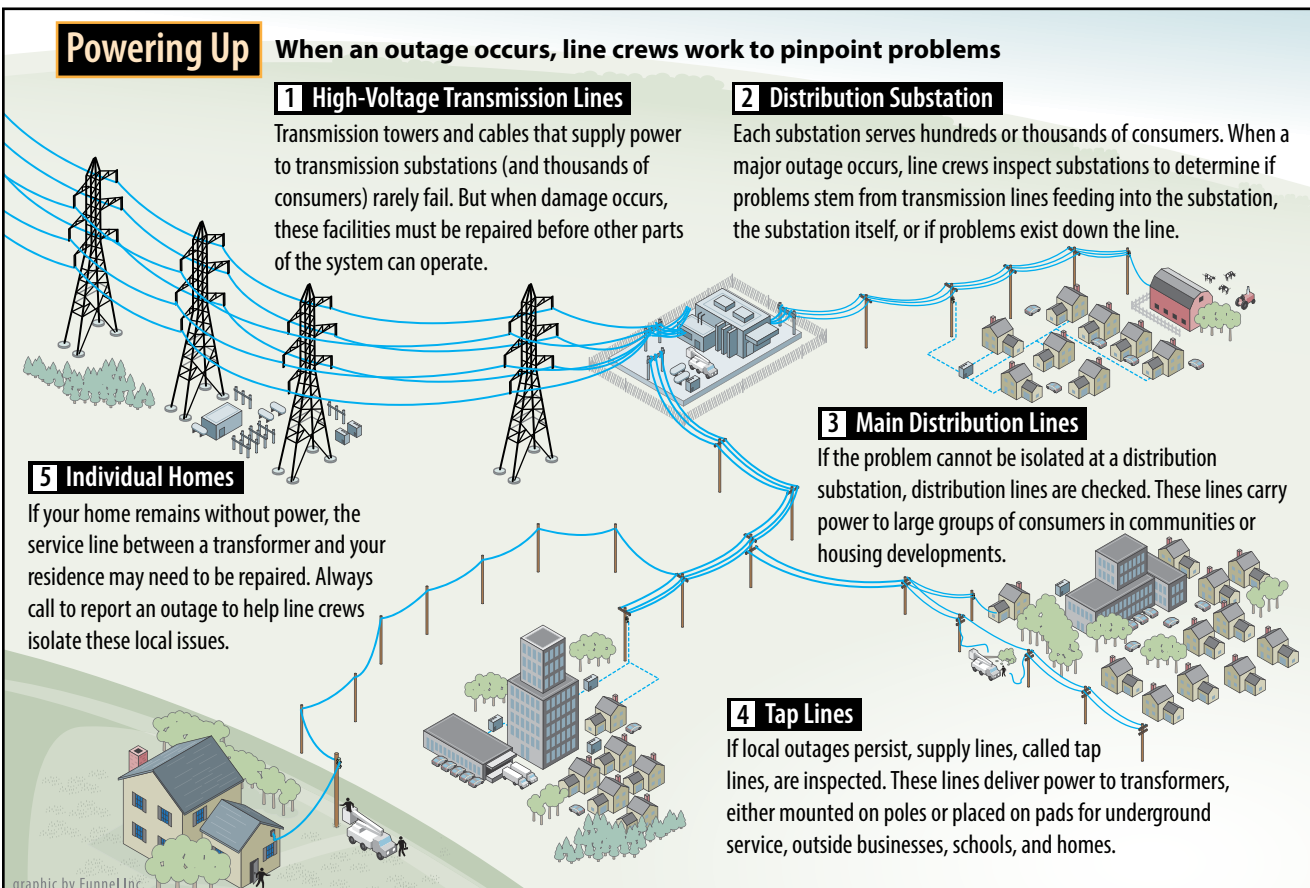
If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

#### 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.

When a major storm causes widespread damage, it can cause longer outages. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service to the greatest number of members in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

# Snowmobile Museum, Trails Are Winter Fun

**D**id 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](mailto: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](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 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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