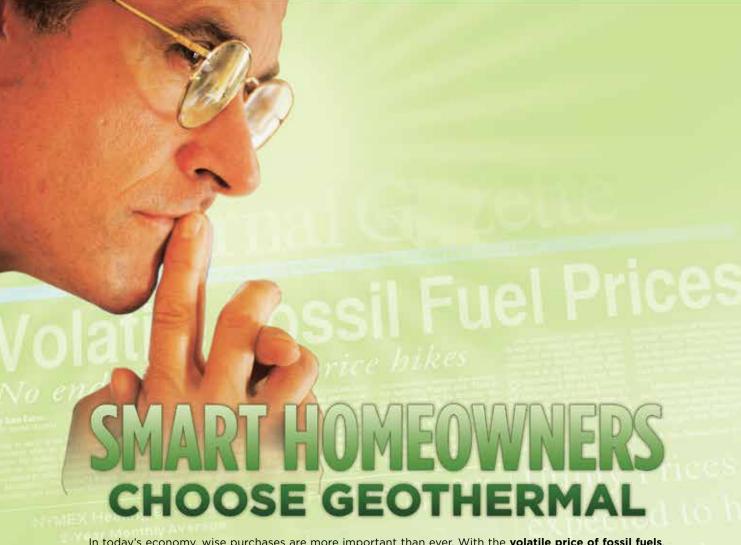


# HOP HOP JINGLE BOO Debra Schoch's Folk Art

4 Democracy At Your Electric Co-op

5 You Can Be Nominated For Co-op Board Of Directors

8 Digging-in To The Eagle Mine



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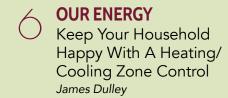
**Change of Address:** Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.





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### **ON THE COVER\***

In a tiny U.P. town, Ontonagon County REA co-op member Debra Schoch is a self-taught artist who creates one-of-a-kind folk art from papier mâché. Photo—Michael Galetto/Brockway Photography/brockwayphotography.com

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\*Some co-op editions have a different cover.



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives countrylines.com

FEBRUARY 2015



### **Board Of Directors**

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### **Democracy at Your Co-op**

Democratic Member Control is critical to the operation of every co-op.



**Tom Harrell** General Manager

**hile the national elections of this past November** may be fading from your memory, voting for politicians is not the only way for you and other co-op members to practice democracy.

Every co-op—whether it's Alger Delta, your credit union, or a farm co-op—follows the basic principle of *one member, one vote*. Most often, you are asked to vote for individuals to represent you on the board of directors. These folks are your friends, neighbors and fellow residents of our community. Occasionally, you may be asked to vote on other things, such as a bylaw change.

Alger Delta also recently took steps to enhance your democratic rights and enfranchisement by amending its bylaws to allow vote-by-mail on those questions that must be decided by the entire membership.

Every member in good standing of the co-op may run for the board. This is one of the key differences between being a member and being a customer. There is more information in this edition of *Country Lines* and on our website (algerdelta.com) about upcoming elections at Alger Delta and how you can run for the board of directors.

Co-ops invite participation. In fact, it is critically important to our survival because most co-ops serve far fewer consumers than the big utilities and have lower density, or consumers per mile of line, as well. In spite of our small size, we have a powerful voice and it can be made more powerful with your participation. As the electric utility industry evolves, having interested members who are willing to take action is critically important.

At Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association, we believe in the "Own, Use, Serve and Belong" model, which means:

**Own** – Refers to each member truly believing and feeling that they do indeed share in ownership of the co-op. This can come from attending the annual meeting, voting, receiving a capital credits check, or participating in other co-op events.

**Use** – This means that you have a responsibility to use your electric co-op's resources wisely (after all, you are an owner of these resources). This may mean getting an energy audit or participating in some of the energy-efficiency programs the co-op offers.

**Serve** – This follows after "own" and "use," especially when a member feels called to serve the co-op—maybe as a board member, volunteer, committee member or other type of contributor.

**Belong** – We all seek to belong to something. In the early days when the co-op was just getting started, neighbors helped neighbors. While our lives seem busier and more electronically driven than ever, the need to connect and belong is necessary for us and our communities to thrive.

There is a lot of power in the human connection, and at Alger Delta, we strive to connect with you every day. ■

### **2015 Co-op Director Elections**

**lger Delta Cooperative will be holding election**s in three of its nine districts in 2015. Districts 2 (Harvey/Deerton); 3 (Grand Marais); and 4 (Cedar River/Palestine) will elect a representative to the board of directors. District meetings are scheduled to be held in May.

Serving on the board of directors is a time-consuming and rewarding pursuit, and members should be aware of the qualifications and responsibilities associated with the position.

To qualify, a person must take electric service in the district they seek to represent. They must also be a member in good standing; at least 18 years old; and must not be employed by or have a financial interest in a competing business. Candidates must complete and submit a nomination petition.

Directors are charged with the responsibility of overseeing the cooperative, including strategic planning, exercising fiduciary responsibility, setting policy and direction, governance, and other duties relating to the corporation. Board members are expected to prepare for and personally attend the monthly board meetings, which are held on the third Wednesday of each month at the cooperative's office in Gladstone. Directors are also required to attend the annual meeting, which is held on the third Wednesday in June.

Board members are also assigned to serve on at least one committee. The cooperative's standing committees include the Policy, Employee Relations, Finance & Rates, and Executive committees. The committees meet at least twice each year and sometimes more often, as needed.

In addition to the regular board meetings and committees, directors are scheduled to participate in state, regional and national events related to the electric business. These meetings may be related to business or training, or be political in nature, and often require advance preparation, such as reading briefing materials or researching issues. These meetings may range from one half-day to five days for travel and participation. Directors are required to complete Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) training within their first, three-year term on the board. Finally, directors must represent Alger Delta in their community and elsewhere, which sometimes includes making public presentations.

Directors are elected for a three-year term and receive compensation for their work, including reasonable and customary expense reimbursement. For more information about serving on the board of directors, you can look at Article III of the cooperative's bylaws at algerdelta.com under the tab "About Us" and then clicking on "Bylaws/Tariffs/Rates."

You can find more details or print out the nominating petition from our website by looking under the "About Us" tab, and then clicking on "Board of Directors". If you cannot access our website and would like to receive a copy of the bylaws or a nominating petition by mail, call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141. ■

### 2015 Director Elections

Attention Members in Districts 2 (Harvey/Deerton), 3 (Grand Marais), and 4 (Cedar River/Palestine):

Listed below are some important dates related to district elections. If you have any questions, email admin@algerdelta.com or call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141. Watch our website (algerdelta.com) and future editions of *Country Lines* for more information, including official notices.

# District Meetings District 2 (Harvey/Deerton) Deadline for Nominating Petitions: March 13 March 12 May 12 May 11 May 13



#### CEO

Tom Harrell tharrell@algerdelta.com

#### **Headquarters:**

426 N. 9th St Gladstone, MI 49837 906-428-4141 800-562-0950 Fax: 906-428-3840 admin@algerdelta.com www.algerdelta.com

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M-F, 7:30-4:00 (ET)

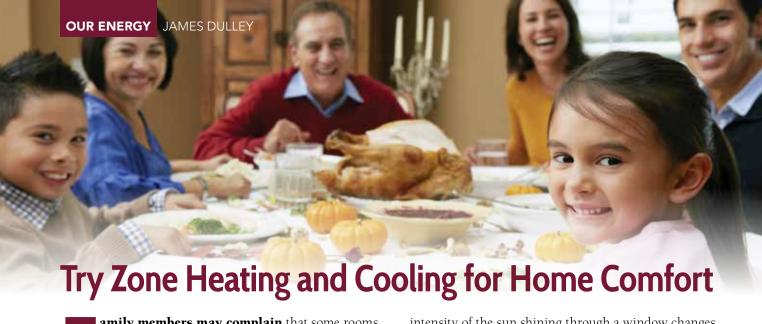
Alger Delta Cooperative is an equal opportunity provide and employer.

### algerdelta.com



### Correction to 'Who's Your Legislator?' Story

In the January issue of *Country Lines*, under the "Who's Your Legislator?" article on p. 13, Rep. Scott Dianda should've been listed as a Democrat, not a Republican. We apologize for this error and want to thank the Alger Delta reader/member who called to let us know.



amily members may complain that some rooms in your house are too hot or cold, but it's likely there's not a home in the entire country that has even temperatures throughout all the rooms.

Actually, depending upon the activity level in each room, a range of temperatures may be more comfortable for the whole family, since some people simply prefer to have it warmer or cooler.

There are many factors, such as the length of ductwork, bends, orientation to the sun, and the number of windows and exterior walls that impact room air temperature. What you keep in a room is also a factor—for example, if you have a large TV in a small room, it can raise the temperature.

A single furnace or heat pump is a common system in many homes. If you set the thermostat to keep the chilliest room warm, it causes many of the other rooms to become too warm. A warmer house loses more heat and forces the heating system to work harder. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, for each degree the thermostat is set lower for an eight-hour period, heating bills can be reduced by up to 1 percent.

### **Understanding Zone Control Systems**

- Installing an automatic zone control system is the best and most energy-efficient way to control individual room temperatures. This type of system adjusts special duct dampers, based upon both actual and desired room temperatures.
- Many homes have access to only main ducts that branch out to individual rooms. In this case, a zone system will control the temperatures in each room grouping, such as all the bedrooms, kitchen/dining areas, and the living room. While it is optimum to control each room independently, having just three or four zones is adequate for comfort and energy savings.
- A programmable thermostat is mounted in each room or grouping to control the motorized duct damper leading to it. If the room is too warm in winter, the damper partially closes. For example, a zone thermostat may continuously readjust the damper position as the

- intensity of the sun shining through a window changes throughout the day.
- Most of the energy savings with an automatic zoning system is gained because each room temperature can be varied throughout the day. There is no need to keep the bedrooms toasty warm during the day, or the living room warm overnight. The programmable thermostats are designed to bring room temperatures back up without having the backup resistance elements come on.
- There are various zoning damper designs, from a simple flat damper unit to bladders that inflate with air to close off the ducts. They all function equally well. With the many new thermostats and usecontrol electronics, adding a zoning system requires professional installation, so it's wise to consult a qualified technician for help in designing the best system for your needs.

Companies offering zoning systems include Aprilaire (800-334-6011; aprilaire.com); Arzel Zoning Technology (800-611-8312; arzel.com); Durodyne (800-899-3876; durodyne.com); EWC Controls (800-446-3110; ewccontrols.com); and Zonex Systems (800-228-2966; zonexsystems.com). ■



Photo provided by Zonex Systems.

This programmable zone control thermostat has a large digital readout with information about the temperature/comfort conditions in the zone.



### OH-SO-TASTY SANDWICHES

Look forward to lunch with these unique, tasty sandwiches from our readers.

### **Balsamic Chicken Sandwich**

2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cubed ½ t. salt ¼ c. whole wheat flour

<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> c. whole wheat flour 3 T. olive oil

½ t. pepper

3 cloves garlic, minced

1 c. lowfat, reduced sodium chicken broth

 ½ c. balsamic vinegar
 6 T. firmly packed dark brown sugar
 6 ciabatta rolls
 6 large slices tomato

½ c. grated part-skim mozzarella

fresh basil, optional

Sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Spread flour on a sheet of waxed paper. Toss chicken chunks in flour to coat completely. Preheat oven to 350°. Warm oil in large skillet over medium high. Add chicken and garlic. Lower heat to medium and continue to cook until chicken begins to brown and garlic becomes fragrant, 8–10 minutes. Add chicken broth, vinegar and brown sugar. Bring to a boil. Cover and simmer 10–15 minutes, until chicken is cooked through and no longer pink in the center. Place rolls on a large baking sheet. Top each of the 6 bottom halves with a tomato slice (and fresh basil, if desired). Divide chicken among them and sprinkle with mozzarella. Bake until cheese is melted and edges of rolls are crisp; 5–7 minutes. Serve immediately.

Elizabeth Taylor, Hesperia

### Spicy Tuna Melts

1 can (6.5 oz.) tuna in water, drained ½ c. finely chopped celery ¼ c. chopped onion ¼ c. sweet relish 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped ½ c. mayo or salad dressing 2 T. chopped jalapeños 8 slices pepper cheese 4 English muffins, split

Mix all ingredients and spread on muffins. Top with pepper cheese and broil until cheese is melted, about 5 minutes. Serve warm with your favorite soup or salad. Delicious any time of year.

Marie Danis, Pelkie

### Deviled Egg Sandwiches



10 slices bread soft butter or margarine, optional

5 hard-cooked eggs, finely chopped

1 t. prepared mustard

¼ t. onion salt

1/8 t. bottled steak sauce

1 T. chopped parsley

2 T. chopped pimento

2 t. cider vinegar <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> c. mayonnaise

Spread bread lightly with butter. Combine eggs and rest of ingredients, tossing with fork until well-mixed. Use to fill 5 sandwiches. Even better chilled.

Dolly Jones, Ludington

### **SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!**

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Healthy Living" recipes by Feb. 10 and your favorite "Pizza" recipes by Mar. 10.

**Enter your recipe online** at countrylines.com or send to (handprinted or typed on one side, please): Country Lines Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. *Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service*.

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



### **DIGGING-IN TO THE**

# EAGLE MINE

hile production at the Eagle Mine only started recently, the nickel and copper ore deposits being mined there were created over 1 billion years ago. Located on the Yellow Dog Plains, about nine miles from the Lake Superior shore, the deposit was formed during the Midcontinent Rift tectonic event. This rifting, or breaking apart, allowed magma deep within the earth to rise up through the crust. Some of the magma erupted on the surface as lava flow, such as those found in the Keweenaw Peninsula. But some of the magma did not erupt at the surface, and instead made its way high enough within the upper crust to cool as igneous bodies. The Eagle deposit was the result of at least three different intrusions of igneous magma bodies rich in metals. As the magma cooled, nickel and copper minerals crystallized into a solid ore body.

A drilling program that started in 1995 discovered the ore body in 2002. During the next eight years, the mine was permitted and designed, with surface construction initiating in 2010. The current owner, Lundin Mining Corp., began bringing this ore deposit to the earth's surface in September 2014, with the mine expected to produce 360 million pounds of nickel, 295 million pounds of copper, and small amounts of other minerals over its estimated eight-year production life. "Eagle will continue to explore the Eagle ore body for additional resources," says Dan Blondeau, the mine's senior communications advisor.

The raw ore is initially processed at the Humboldt Mill property, a former open-pit iron ore mine and processing facility, located 30 miles from



- 1. The ball mills (big blue cylinders) are filled with 3-inch chrome/steel balls that pulverize the ore into the consistency of sand. The pulverized ore then enters the flotation circuit, where the nickel and copper are separated from all the other minerals. Next, the ore is thickened and pressed into separate nickel and copper concentrates, which have the texture of damp baby powder.
- 2. The mining process involves mining, milling, smelting and refining. Here, an underground loader scoops material that has been blasted and loads it into trucks that travel to the surface.

Marquette. The ore is processed using a conventional crush, grind and flotation process to produce separate nickel and copper concentrates. A rail spur in to the site is used to transport the concentrate directly to smelter facilities within North America or to Canadian ports for shipment to overseas smelters.

The Eagle Mine, near Champion, has created an economic ripple effect that goes far beyond Marquette County. Between 2011 and 2025, the Mine's direct and indirect impact is expected to put about \$4 billion into Marquette County's economy, and about \$348 million into the rest of the state. The Mine provides gainful employment to area residents, and receives electric service from Alger Delta Cooperative. "Over 400 people are a part of the daily operations, each and every one of them contributing to our success," Blondeau explains. "Over 80 percent of the workers are local hires."

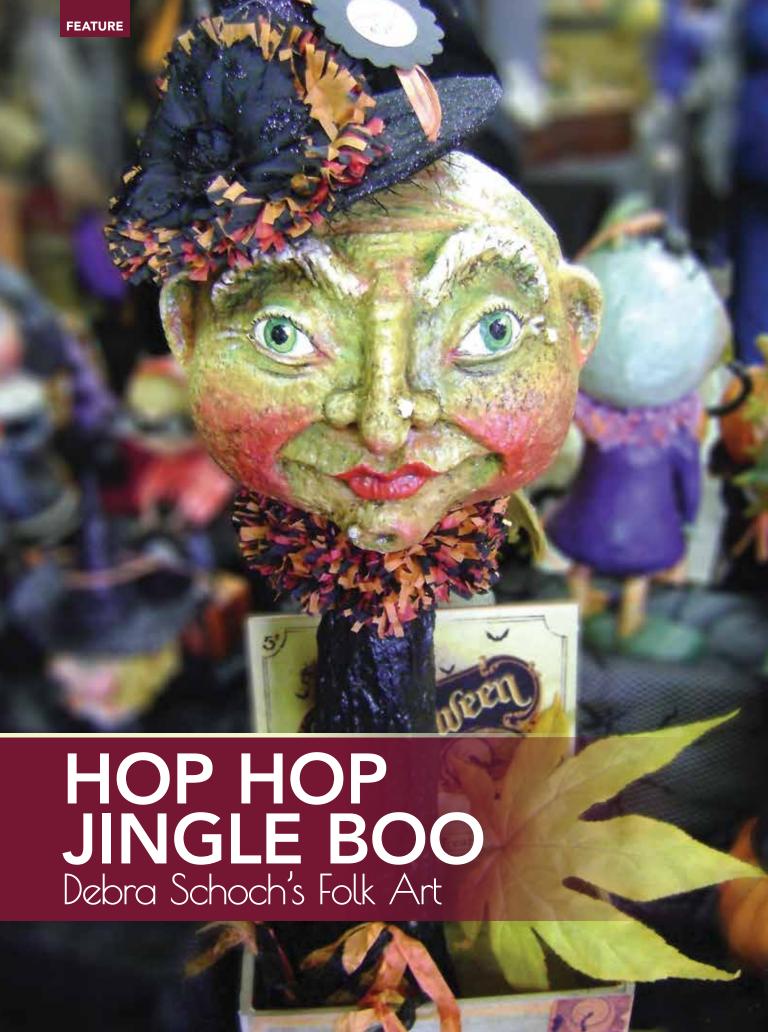
"Alger Delta values Eagle Mine as a member, and as a supporter and contributor to the cooperative business model," adds Alger Delta General Manager Tom Harrell. "From the beginning, Eagle has worked with us not only to get power to their mine, but in a way that has benefitted other members, particularly those in the Big Bay district. I have met many fine people at Eagle Mine who are working hard and doing a good job. Eagle Mine is an outstanding example of what can get done when doing things in a collaborative way."

"As a nonprofit electric cooperative, the economic benefits derived from every consumer—from the smallest camp to the largest loads, like Eagle Mine, accrue to all the members. That is the cooperative way," Harrell adds. "We also recognize that large consumers, like Eagle, make a large contribution to the overall financial health of the system. We are grateful to have Eagle Mine as a cooperative member."

Visit eaglemine.com for more information. ■



Meagen Morrison, Eagle Mine Communications coordinator, at the Mine's visitors center (906-273-1550), located at 153 West Washington in Marquette.



**n the Lake Superior shore**, Debra Schoch creates whimsical papier mâché holiday folk art figurines from her home in the tiny U.P. town of Ontonagon. A self-taught artist, she began experimenting in the early '80s when she was looking for a craft project she could do with her daughter, Simone. Today, her initial "wet newspaper" creations are outstanding artworks in a successful business that reaches as far as the Philippines.

Debra named her business Hop Hop Jingle Boo after her three favorite holidays and does her artwork, "When the mood strikes," she says. "Some days I wake up and say to myself, 'This is a crafting day,' and on those days I will have a 'workathon' of about 16 hours." The process begins with an 80-pound bale of papier mâché (sometimes called "poor man's pottery"). "I put some mâché into a large Tupperware® bowl and as corny as it sounds, I wait for it to talk to me and tell me what it wants to be and that is how I come up with the creation."

Using common household items as forms, such as lightbulbs and empty dish soap bottles, she applies and works the mâché into the desired design. The figurine then goes into a special drying box that her husband, John, created. Three days later, she begins working her magic by hand-painting each figurine with acrylic paint. The collars adorning many of her figurines are hand-stitched from 3 yards of crepe paper. The final touch is affixing the figurine to a painted wooden base that John creates. Each original takes about one week to produce.

Like many artists, Debra started by selling her work at local craft shows, but in 2004 her clientele became global when the national firm Bethany Lowe Designs asked her to join their team of artists. Debra's designs are a perfect fit for



Photo—Michael Galetto/Brockway Photography



the catalog and showroom company that provides vintage folk art and holiday designs for the wholesale industry. The popularity of Debra's designs earned her the prestigious designation of "Best Seller for 2012" for the Lowe company.

Each holiday season, Debra creates about 15 original samples that Bethany chooses from, which are then made into samples for showrooms, such as the Atlanta AmericasMart Gift Mall, where buyers order their desired products from Bethany Lowe. An order is then sent to a factory in the Philippines, where Debra's designs are mass-produced in resin and hand-painted, eventually making their way to retail shops around the world.

In Michigan, Debra also has a loyal fan base that is never more evident than at the annual Ghoultide Gathering festival in Chelsea, Mich. Ghoultide is a by-invitation-only Halloween art show, where she is often asked to autograph her pieces. Lisa Brown, who for the last four years has traveled from Dublin, Ohio, to attend, says, "I just love Debra's work. It's whimsical and fun and reminds me of my childhood. It brings me back to that time." In turn, Debra says, "I couldn't do what I do if it weren't for my customers." ■

### Alger Delta Merger Talks Conclude

lger Delta Cooperative and downstate Great Lakes Energy have concluded merger talks with no further meetings or discussions scheduled.

An analysis conducted by independent consultant EnerVision Inc., showed that Alger Delta members would have received the greatest benefit in the proposed deal with very little benefit to Great Lakes Energy (GLE). The analysis projected savings of between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million annually for Alger Delta after fully transitioning to the GLE rate structure. Savings would also have been influenced by the timing of the capital expenditure commitments included in the proposal.

The analysis took into account the cost and benefits of additional equipment, new or upgraded physical facilities, increased vegetation management expenses, participation in various co-op programs, and other factors. It also concluded that Alger Delta would have gained far more than it would have contributed to the overall merger.

The analysis showed the projected cost to Great Lakes Energy exceeded the benefits they would have received, making it difficult to justify continuing. "The analysis showed the benefits leaning too far in favor of Alger Delta," says Tom Harrell, Alger Delta's CEO. "It would be

"The analysis showed the benefits leaning too far in favor of Alger Delta."

very challenging to get the GLE members to vote in favor of a merger under these circumstances. There just isn't enough value there for GLE members or for GLE to continue."

Citing the high cost of operating in the sparsely populated U.P., and other factors, Alger Delta says they remain committed to exploring ways to help keep electricity affordable. "Improving operations through economies of scale and evaluating economic development and other opportunities is part of the cooperatives' board-approved strategic plan," Harrell explains.



### **Storm Watch: Plan Ahead for Outages**

**A winter storm can lead to a major power outage,** but these get-ready tips can help you ride it out.

### Winterize Your Home

- Maintain/inspect heating equipment and chimneys to ensure they're working safely and properly.
- Caulk and weather strip doors and windows to stop air leaks and related heat loss.
- Freezing temperatures can cause water pipes to burst.
   Wrap pipes with insulation or newspapers and plastic.
   Allow faucets to drip during extreme cold to avoid frozen pipes.
- Consider installing storm windows for better insulation. From the inside, windows can also be covered with plastic.
- Make sure everyone knows where the fire extinguisher is, and how to use it. House fires occur more often in winter, especially from using alternative heating unsafely.

### Prepare a Survival Kit

Alger Delta line crews will work hard to restore power quickly, but having a two-week survival kit and plan is wise (see list).

### Stay Warm and Safe

Plan ahead for alternate heating or other places you can go. A fireplace, propane space heater or wood-burning stove is sufficient. Fuel and wood-burning

### **Storm Supply Kit**

- Drinking water (5 gallons/person)
- Food (canned/ dried/crackers)
- Baby food/ diapers/supplies
- Pet food
- Manual can opener
- Medicines, glasses/ contact lenses
- Cooler (with ice)
- Grill or camp stove (outdoors only)
- Lantern with extra fuel/flashlights
- Matches/butane lighters
- Extra batteries

- Battery-operated radio
- Phone numbers of places you can go
- Personal IDs
- Bank/insurance policy information
- Sleeping bags/ pillows/blankets
- Books, magazines, cards & games
- Plastic trash bags
- Cash & credit cards
- Cell phone & car keys
- Non-electric clock
- Fire extinguisher
- Toilet paper & towelettes
- First Aid kit

heating sources should always be vented, and used with caution—make sure carbon monoxide and smoke detectors are working.

If you use a portable generator, make sure it is placed outside the home for proper ventilation. Be careful not to overload it, and use a proper outdoor extension cord that can handle the electric load.

Visit ready.gov for more tips on preparing for winter storms. ■

### Why Most Holiday Utility Bills Are Higher

hen January electric bills arrive, some folks may be shocked if they have a whopper. Before assuming the rates went up (they did not), let's look at what might have made your bill climb.

**Entertaining.** Whenever people come and go, energy consumption increases. Every time the door opens, warm air escapes and no matter what kind of heating system is in use, more energy is consumed as it works to replace the heat loss. Cooking and food preparation also use a lot of energy. And, whether guests stay for an evening or several days, they will use water. Every time visitors wash their hands, use the toilet, take a shower or wash clothes, the pump—and the electric meter—is running. Hair dryers, curling irons and chargers are additional energy-using items guests will use.

**Lights.** Holiday lighting also adds to your bill, and it's typical to have more lights on, more often, and for longer durations. Plus, this time of year has the least daylight hours.

**Electronics.** Electronics are hot items on most Christmas lists. Whether it's a new computer, a big screen TV or rechargeable tools, they all need to be plugged in. And, most electronics are "phantom" power users—which means they use energy anytime they are plugged in unless they are switched off using a power strip or other arrangement.

**The Billing Period.** Billing periods can range from 28 to 35 days, depending on what day the end of a month falls, and other factors. The longer the billing period, the larger the bill, because more days are included.

Alger Delta tries to keep the billing period equal to the calendar month. In any case, your bills at the beginning of December, January and February all include holidays. So, if you see an uptick in these bills, please reflect on how holiday activities affected your energy use.

These are just a few reasons post-holiday electric bills may be higher. If you have billing questions, call Alger Delta at 906-428-4141 for assistance. ■



Michael Van Houzen hand carves and paints life-size popular songbirds, and a variety of unusual species. Many of his creations are realistically posed in their natural settings, such as these northern cardinals.



Small bird lapel pins, cast in resin and hand painted, are also part of Van Houzen's artistry. Visit the Songbirds of Wood website at vanhouzen.com (or call 616-786-9229) to see more of his work and a show schedule.

### Songbirds of Wood

ven as the crow flies, it's a long way between the Chrysler automotive design studio in the Detroit area and Newberry, in the Upper Peninsula. But that's the route Michael Van Houzen chose in 1976 when, after losing his styling job, he headed to the U.P. and turned his talent to becoming a wildlife artist. Countless hand-carved feathers later, he continues to create Songbirds of Wood from his home studio, now in Holland.

Van Houzen learned woodworking from his father, whose hobby was carving duck decoys. They crafted birdhouses, fish and even totem poles in the workshop of their home on Detroit's east side. The artist, who earned his bachelor of fine arts degree from Eastern Michigan University, discovered that he enjoyed studying and sculpting songbirds. He added shorebirds and seabirds to his repertoire when he and his wife Mary Ann, who assists him with the company's business side, became snowbirds by spending winters in Florida.

Each bird takes Van Houzen about three days to hand-sculpt of basswood, detail with a wood burning pen, and paint with acrylics. By adding leaves, flowers and berries, "It becomes a composition," he explains. "I try to be unique in the way I mount the birds." The realistic pieces do have a following, as one collector owns 90 of his songbirds.

Van Houzen, who shows his work at art fairs and wildlife festivals in both states, creates a mix of well-known and more unusual birds. "For the art shows I have to have wrens, nuthatches, chickadees and cardinals, but what I like to do are the odd birds. I do a slew of different warblers for birding festivals." The sculptures cost hundreds of dollars—a pair of Northern Cardinals sold for \$1,500—but he also carves miniatures that are cast in resin, handpainted and crafted into \$25 lapel pins. While most of his birds are life-size, for practical reasons he scales down larger species, like the blue heron. "Not many people want a bird that size taking up that much space in their living room," he laughs.



Songbirds of Wood artist, Michael Van Houzen.

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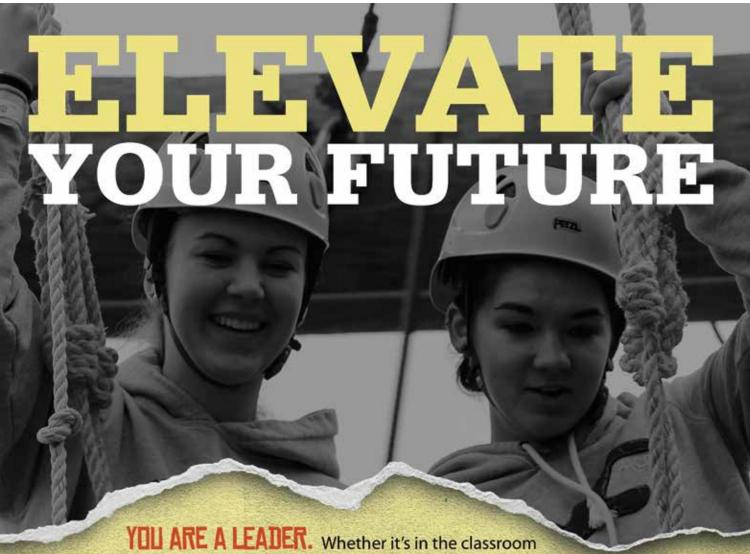


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