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Virgil Monroe

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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. **E-mail:** cdorr@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.

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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*

Upper Peninsula native Tom Izzo coaches the MSU Spartans basketball team. The flooring they—and most teams nationwide—play on is made in the U.P.

Photo—Matthew Mitchell

*Some co-op editions have a different cover.



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FERC Agrees with Cloverland

Since July 2014, the economic stability and future of the E.U.P. has been threatened with a potentially devastating cost increase of over \$22 million, forcing Cloverland Electric Co-op members to pay the operating and retrofitting costs for the Presque Isle Power Plant, in Marquette, without receiving any direct benefit.

Cloverland members took action, sending thousands of letters, emails, petitions, phone calls and social media posts to organizations and federal agencies responsible for this decision to let them know where the E.U.P. is, and that we are not to be ignored.

U.S. Sen. Debbie Stabenow and Rep. Dan Benishek worked together to develop legislation supporting our case. State Sens. Wayne Schmidt, Tom Casperson and Rep. Lee Chatfield took our message to Lansing. Thanks also goes to Linda Hoath, Sault Convention & Visitors Bureau director, who led a petition campaign linking her website to Cloverland's, making our members' voices even louder; and to Cloverland directors Schallip, Carlson, Newland, Legault, Nettleton, Monroe, Litzner and Provo for their unwavering support of this effort.

The effort resulted in a victory for Cloverland Electric and all of the EUP. The plea to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) was heard. FERC agreed with Cloverland. FERC issued an order to the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), requiring a more equitable formula that allocates dollars to those that benefit from the plant. MISO has 60 days from Feb. 19 to respond. This is not over, since any FERC decision can be challenged, but we have achieved the result we were striving for.

Cloverland's directors and staff are diligently exploring every available option to secure a long-term, cost-stable source of power to compliment what we generate through the hydro plant. It is time to take control of our energy

future and not be held hostage to out-of-state power companies. In the coming weeks, we will keep you informed of our progress and call on all of you again until this battle is won.

Cloverland is committed to our members, and I say "thank you" for being committed to Cloverland Electric Cooperative and the E.U.P.'s future. ■



Daniel Dasho
President & Chief
Executive Officer

"This is not over, since any FERC decision can be challenged, but we have achieved the result we were striving for."

All Cloverland Electric offices will be closed **Friday, April 3** in observance of Good Friday. Payments can be made at cloverland.com or at one of many authorized payment stations across our service area. **To report a power outage or electrical emergency, call 1-800-562-4953.**

Your Co-op Board in Action

The board of directors met on Nov. 24 and Dec. 18. All directors were in attendance.

November

- Reviewed department reports, including financial.
- Received public comments concerning the cause of outages on 20 Mile Road and costs for line extensions.
- Visited with representatives from Newberry Water and Light Board to discuss power contracts.
- Discussed the timetable and process to close work orders.
- Received an update on the canal restoration project.
- Conveyed appreciation to hydro plant and administration office staff after receiving good safety reports.
- CEO reviewed positive results from member's letter writing campaign that resulted in MISO sending a representative to a community meeting.
- Chairman expressed appreciation to CEO and staff in educating members related to the PIPP/FERC/MISO issue.
- Received report from legal counsel concerning delinquent accounts and personnel matters.

December

- Reviewed department reports, including financial.
- Received report from legal counsel.
- Approved staff recommended changes to the new Employee Handbook.
- Agreed that account holder has to contact Cloverland to request connect/disconnect and have an electrical inspection following repairs or upgrades.
- Discussed proposed 2015 budget and 2016 financial forecast.

Meetings are held at the co-op's administrative office at 725 E. Portage Avenue in Sault Ste. Marie each month. The board reserves time at the beginning of each meeting for members who wish to address the board. Members who wish to present an item for board consideration at a particular meeting may submit their request for time using the member comment request form on cloverland.com or by calling 906-632-5143. ■



President & CEO
Daniel Dasho

Local Editor
Todd Chapman

cloverland.com

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Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
906-635-6800
1-800-562-4953

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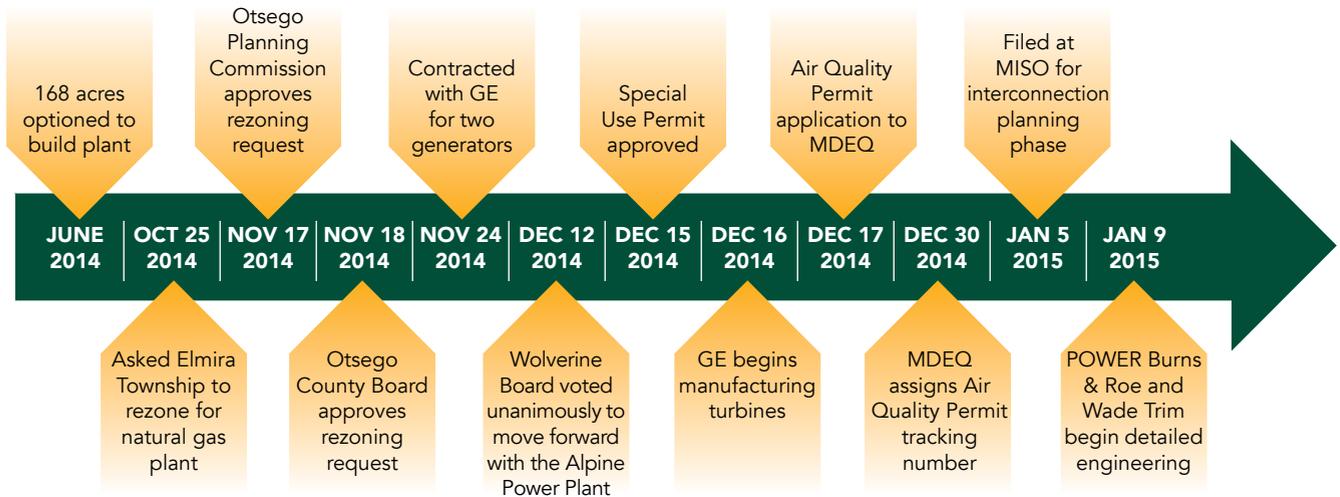
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Statement of Non-Discrimination

Cloverland Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, or at any USDA office, or call (866) 632-9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax (202) 690-7442 or email at program.intake@usda.gov.

Wolverine Power Moves Forward With Natural Gas Plant



Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative Inc., of Cadillac, is moving forward with a new 432 megawatt natural gas-fueled electric power plant, located in Elmira Township, near Gaylord. The Alpine Power Plant will use natural gas to generate electricity during times of peak demand and to compliment the ever-increasing amount of intermittent renewable energy in our state, like wind and solar. The Alpine Power Plant is scheduled to be completed by Spring 2016.

“The members of the planning commissions and boards of Elmira Township and Otsego County have voted unanimously to approve our applications, sending the message that this project is widely supported,” said Ken Bradstreet, project spokesman. Visit alpinecleanenergy.com to learn more and keep updated on this project. ■

New Touch-Control Faucets Save Water, Energy

The right kitchen faucet can have a strong impact on your water and energy savings.

Today, one-handle faucets are common, as their size and shape impact water use, but the newest, most efficient models can be controlled by the wave or touch of a hand. By not adjusting a handle, water is not wasted by readjusting the temperature. This provides a lot of savings—especially when washing dishes by hand.

A standard faucet uses more water and energy when washing dishes by hand than running a properly-loaded, efficient dishwasher. With a touch-control faucet, hand-washing dishes can be more efficient than a dishwasher. Also, fewer germs are spread because the faucet is touched less often with dirty hands, and the attractive finish lasts longer.

There are two “no-hands” models. One senses touch from your body (hand, forearm, elbow). For example, when rinsing dishes, you can hold several plates in each hand and tap anywhere on the faucet with your arm to control the water flow.

The other model has a sensor on top (a hand-wave controls it), and another on the faucet neck that triggers when your hands are in hand-washing position.

Tall faucet spouts with a pull-down sprayer are also efficient. Depending on under-cabinet clearance, pick the

tallest that fits, as the height is handy when rinsing a large pot. Choosing one with a pause button also lets you temporarily stop the flow without waving or touching the fixture.

Whichever faucet you have, never ignore a dripping one, since even a slow leak increases energy costs. After heating and cooling, heating water is the greatest energy user, but cold water also uses a lot of energy to purify, pump and treat.

Companies offering touch-control faucets include: American Standard, 800-442-1902, americanstandard-us.com; Delta Faucet, 800-345-3358, deltafaucet.com; Kohler, 800-456-4537, kohler.com; Moen, 800-289-6636, moen.com; and Pfister, 800-732-8238, pfisterfaucets.com. ■



Photo—Moen

—James Dullely



SOUP FOR THE SOUL

In a slow cooker or on the stove, these soups are the ultimate in comfort food.

Easy Taco Soup (pictured)

1½-2 lbs. ground beef
1 large onion, diced
2 15.5-oz. cans pink or red kidney beans
15.5-oz. can pinto or chili beans
15.5-oz. can shoe peg corn (or whole kernel corn)
14.5-oz. can diced tomatoes and green chilies

2 14.5-oz. cans, any brand, Mexican-style tomatoes
4.5-oz. can diced green chilies
4.6-oz. can black olives, drained and sliced
1¼-oz. pkg. taco seasoning mix
1-oz. pkg. ranch salad dressing mix

For Garnish:

tortilla chips
sour cream
grated cheese

chopped green onions
sliced black olives

Brown the ground beef with onions. Drain excess fat, then transfer to large crock pot or large pot on stove. Add beans, corn, tomatoes, olives, chilies, taco seasoning and ranch dressing mix. You may need to add ½ c. of water for desired consistency. In the crockpot, cook on low for 6 hours. On the stovetop, simmer on low about 1 hour. Break the tortilla chips and put in bottom of bowls and cover with soup. Top with your choice of garnishes.

Melody Brown, Big Bay

Butternut Cheesy Bacon Chowder—Gluten Free

4 c. chicken broth
1 butternut squash, roughly 3–4 c.
1 c. diced onion
1 c. diced celery
1 ½ t. salt

¼ t. black pepper
2 c. bacon or diced ham, cooked
2 c. shredded sharp cheddar
1 ½ c. heavy whipping cream
fresh chives, optional

Combine first six ingredients and cook until vegetables are tender. While vegetables are cooking, fry your meat of choice and drain. Using a blender, purée the vegetables and return them to the pot (an immersion blender works best). Add meat, cheese and heavy cream to the cooked vegetables. Heat through for about 5 minutes, but do not boil. Garnish with fresh chives, if desired.

Anna Kinsey, LeRoy

Mushroom Barley Soup

1½ lbs. cubed beef
1 T. vegetable oil
2 c. finely chopped onion
1 c. diced carrots
½ c. diced celery
4-oz. can mushrooms, undrained
1 garlic clove, minced

14.5-oz. can beef broth
14.5-oz. can chicken broth
2 c. water
½ c. pearl barley
1 t. salt
½ t. pepper
3 T. chopped parsley, for garnish



In a soup pot, brown meat in oil. Remove meat with a slotted spoon and set aside. Sauté onion, carrot and celery in drippings until tender, about 5 minutes. Add meat back into pan along with all other ingredients; bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer 1½ to 2 hours or until barley and meat are tender. Stir in parsley.

Geraldine Rutkowski, Ubly

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite **"Camping"** recipes by **April 1** and your favorite **"Burgers/All American"** by **May 1**.

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



MORE SOUP FOR THE SOUL

Crockpot Buffalo Chicken Chili

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1–2 lbs. shredded chicken (can also use ground chicken & brown before adding) | ½ c Buffalo wing sauce |
| 1 large can/jar white Navy beans, undrained | 1 can select bicolor corn (or 1 c. frozen corn) |
| 2 (14.5 oz.) cans diced tomatoes, zesty jalapeño flavor | ½ tsp. onion powder |
| 4 c. Swanson® chicken broth (or make your own) | ½ tsp. garlic powder |
| | ½–1 tsp. dried cilantro |
| | ¼–½ tsp. Himalayan pink salt |
| | 8 oz. cream cheese |

Slow cook your chicken choice and the broth in a crockpot for 4–6 hours on low, or until falling off bone. Remove all from crockpot and cool just enough to debone and de-skin the chicken. Shred chicken and place back in crockpot (do not put chicken broth from previous step in crockpot). Add the rest of the ingredients, except cream cheese, to crockpot and stir to combine. Add block of cream cheese on the top and cover. Cook on high for 4 hours, or low for 8 hours. Stir to incorporate cream cheese and add additional wing sauce until desired hotness is reached. Makes about 2 gallons of chili.

Joan Reinfelder, Pickford

Soothing Cream of Chicken Soup (pictured)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2 qt. water | 3 c. chopped or diced chicken |
| 5–6 chicken bouillon cubes | 1 c. sour cream |
| 6 ½ c. noodles | minced dried parsley, optional |
| 2 cans cream of chicken soup | |

Bring water and chicken bouillon cubes to a boil. Add noodles and cook until tender. DO NOT DRAIN. Stir together cream of chicken soup, chicken and noodles and heat. Remove from heat and add sour cream and parsley. Serve warm. Serves 6–8.

Judy Black, Hastings

Easy Cheesy Potato Soup (for a crowd)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 6 cans cream of potato soup | 24 oz. frozen western hashbrowns |
| 2 cans cream of celery soup | 4 c. Monterey Jack cheese |
| 16 oz. sour cream | 2 c. cheddar cheese |
| 6 c. milk | 3 green onions, chopped |
| 8 oz. diced ham | |
| 4 oz. real bacon bits | |

In a large pot, mix together cream of potato and cream of celery soups, sour cream and milk. Add ham, bacon bits, hashbrowns, and cheeses. Cook until hot and cheese is melted. Garnish with green onions.

Linda Larner, Okemos

Turkey Tortilla Soup

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 lb. lean ground turkey | 1 t. lime juice |
| 2 14.5-oz. cans low sodium chicken broth | 2–3 t. cilantro, fresh or dried |
| 16 oz. chunky salsa | 4.5-oz. can green chilies |
| 1 can kernel corn, drained | 15-oz. can black beans, rinsed and drained |

Heat olive oil in a large soup pot. Add ground turkey and cook over medium heat for 10 minutes. Stir to break up turkey. Add chicken broth, salsa, corn and lime juice. Stir to combine while bringing to a simmer. Cover and let cook about 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Ladle into bowls. Add cilantro. Serve with chips and a wedge of lime. Serves 8. Double the recipe and freeze some for another meal.

Marilyn Myers, Sault Ste. Marie



MEET DIRECTOR VIRGIL MONROE



Virgil Monroe has served as a Cloverland director since 2011.

Elected to Cloverland's board of directors in 2011, Virgil Monroe offers a lifetime of electrical knowledge, pride in family, and a strong desire to better the community.

His desire to know more about electricity started at a young age while working with his stepfather, a foreman with Edison Sault for many years. "I can remember as a young boy, dad would take me out on a few jobs and I knew then I wanted to work in the electric industry," Monroe says.

After joining the 252 chapter of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, Monroe passed the apprentice exam, earned his master electrical license, and opened his own electrical contracting business in 1974. An opportunity later opened in the state's Bureau of Construction Codes, where he accepted the responsibility for code enforcement and inspections across the western end of the Upper Peninsula. He was promoted to the senior inspector, based in Lansing, and then became the Bureau's chief inspector, with statewide responsibilities.

In 2007, Monroe retired, but still stays "as busy as I want to" with training electricians who are taking code

update classes at MSU. "I'm honored and happy to help out," he says, "I don't do it on a regular basis, but do enjoy the opportunity to help train the state's electricians."

Married to his high school sweetheart, Delores Gager, for nearly 52 years, Monroe has three children, six grandchildren and two great grandchildren, and enjoys watching them play sports. "I can't hunt and fish as much as I used to, but I try to play golf every chance I can," and, he serves as president of the Indian Lake Golf Club.

Another passion is the local Lions Club. "I've served as president of the Germfask club in 1972, the Days River Club in Escanaba, the Lions Club in Mason, and as Governor of District 10B. Since moving back to Manistique, I've enjoyed participating in their great local service organization."

With many years of working with electrical inspectors, elected officials and service organizations, Monroe decided to see if he could offer his experience as a Cloverland Electric board member. "My good friend Rodney Richards, on the board for 18 years, decided not to run again. He represented the district well, and I felt that I could continue the same quality of representation." Six candidates filed petitions for the seat. "The members of district C showed faith in me then, and again in 2014," Monroe says. "I appreciate that faith and do what I can to use my experience and knowledge in making educated decisions for all Cloverland members."

Monroe is concerned about the electric utility industry's future, and says he will explore every available option to protect the co-op's members from drastic rate increases due to higher wholesale power costs. ■



HOP HOP JINGLE BOO

Debra Schoch's Folk Art

On 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



This figure, and more of Debra Schoch's holiday artwork, can be found at hophopjingleboo.etsy.com and is featured in the national Bethany Lowe folk art magazine (bethanylowedesigns.com) or call 800-944-6213.

Photos—Yvonne Whitman



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 Ghoultime Gathering festival in Chelsea, Mich. Ghoultime 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." ■

Choices in Communications

Many things are happening at Cloverland Electric Cooperative this year, and you will want to stay informed and up to date. Members have several ways to keep up with the latest news and information, either through electronic or traditional media, such as radio and newspapers.

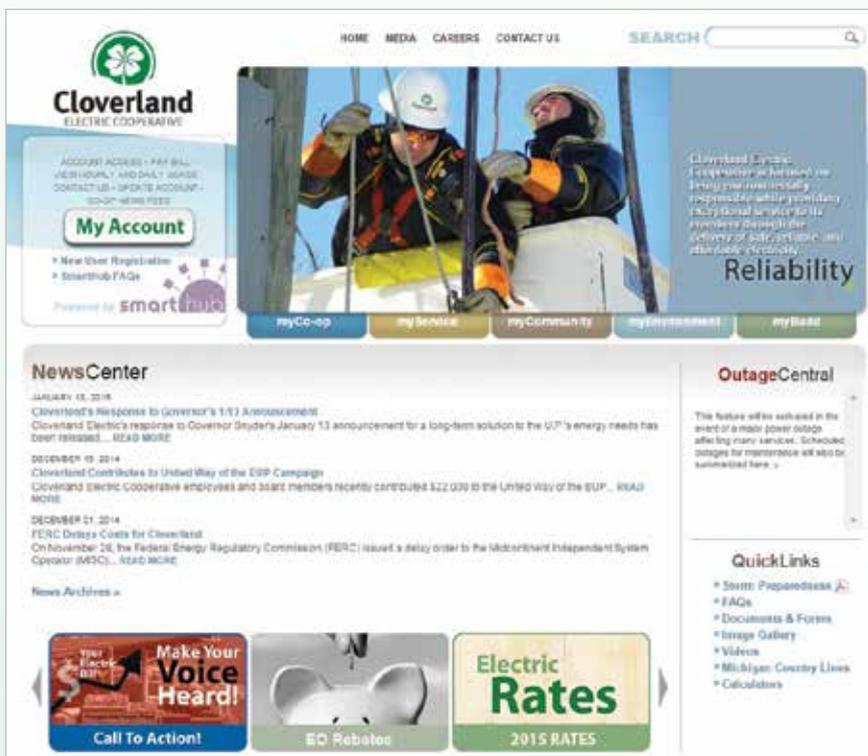
This publication, *Michigan Country Lines*, is mailed to your home or business six times a year as a benefit of co-op membership. It features statewide and local stories, electric industry news, recipes and energy advice. Dan Dasho, Cloverland's president and CEO provides valuable information and updates on current issues affecting your membership.

Cloverland Electric also provides timely news and information to local radio stations, newspapers and TV stations.

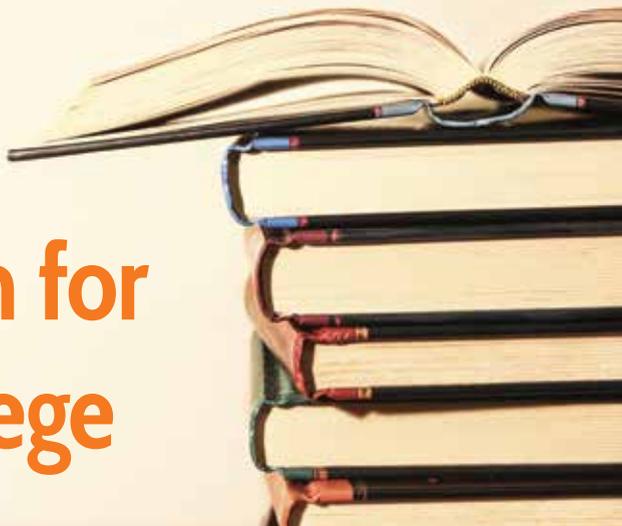
For those using electronic media, Cloverland's website (cloverland.com) features news, announcements, outage updates, energy use and residential bill calculators, board of directors meeting highlights, rate information, youth programs, and many other items of interest.

Gaining in popularity is Cloverland's Facebook page. Timely information concerning outage restoration, current news and energy efficiency advice is regularly posted. Not a Facebook user? With our account management tool, Smarthub®, you can conveniently view our social media posts without having a Facebook page.

Cloverland is committed to communicating with our members in every way possible. If you have a question or comment, please call us at 1-800-562-4953. We enjoy hearing from you. ■



Cash for College



Cloverland Electric Cooperative members with a son or daughter graduating from high school this year can apply for a \$1,500 Power of Excellence Scholarship. Three scholarships are awarded each year for use at any university, college or vocational/technical school during the 2015–16 academic year. Scholarship applications are available at cloverland.com under the “My Community” tab. Scroll down to the “Youth Programs” and select “Scholarship” to download the application and mailing instructions. Applications must be postmarked by April 10, 2015, to be considered.

Update Your Account

Director elections are drawing near and you will want to make sure you can properly participate. The ballot will be mailed to the account holder’s address in Cloverland’s system as of the date of record, March 27, 2015.

If the account is held jointly (e.g., spouse), either of the joint members may cast the vote for that membership, but the names must be properly listed on the account. The names of those eligible to cast the ballot will be printed on the mailing label.

A business account or other entity such as a firm, association, corporation, partnership or government unit is eligible to vote. First, the organization must designate on its stationary the representative who is authorized to cast a vote on behalf of the organization. This designation must be on file by the date of record.

You have until March 27, 2015, to update your account. Please call our office at 800-562-4953 and a member service representative will be happy to assist you. ■

Fuel Mix Report

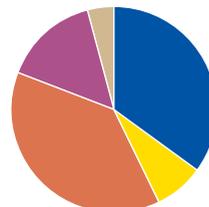
The fuel mix characteristics of Cloverland Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 12/31/14.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

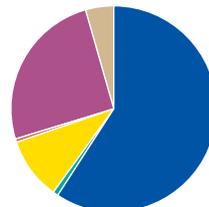
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op’s fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	32.0%	60.4%
Oil	0.0%	0.7%
Gas	7.0%	8.9%
Hydroelectric	43.0%	0.5%
Nuclear	15.0%	24.6%
Renewable Fuels	3.0%	4.9%
<i>Biofuel</i>	0.0%	0.7%
<i>Biomass</i>	0.0%	0.4%
<i>Solar</i>	0.0%	0.1%
<i>Solid Waste Incineration</i>	1.0%	0.0%
<i>Wind</i>	2.0%	3.2%
<i>Wood</i>	0.0%	0.5%

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas.

Your Co-op’s Fuel Mix



Regional Average Fuel Mix



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	0.74	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,570	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	0.7	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0	0.0083

*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the twelve-month period ending 12/31/14.



BASKETBALL MADNESS

'Floored' By Michigan Companies

O'Reilly

AUTO PARTS

O'Reilly

AUTO PARTS

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AUTO PARTS

O'Reilly

AUTO PARTS

Tom Izzo surveys the basketball court in Michigan State University's Breslin Center and still relishes what that court represents. Fifteen years earlier, Izzo led the Spartans to the NCAA championship on that very floor in Indianapolis.

After beating Florida, MSU purchased the portable court for its own use from Horner Flooring Co. Inc., which has manufactured sports flooring in Dollar Bay, MI, since 1891, the year Dr. James Naismith invented basketball.

"You wouldn't put the U.P. and basketball together for being famous," Izzo says. "But when you think about it, it makes some sense."

The Upper Peninsula has been the center of the athletic flooring universe for over 100 years. And, Izzo's one NCAA title, six Final Four appearances, 11 Big Ten regular season and tournament crowns, 17 consecutive NCAA Tournament bids and eight National Coach of the Year awards make the Iron Mountain native one of Michigan's most prominent sports figures. So, it all makes perfect sense.

Michigan State's journey to the 2009 Final Four at Ford Field in Detroit and most recent national semifinal appearance the following year back in Indianapolis, ended on courts made by Connor Sport Court International Inc., located in the heart of Iron County. Connor Sport has been in business since 1872 and in 2005 was named the official supplier of courts for the men's and women's Final Fours.

Both U.P. companies have amassed an astounding list of venues they have equipped—from high schools and colleges and professional facilities to the Olympics.

During the Spartans' last practice before defeating the Gators on the Horner floor that momentous

Monday night in April 2000, Izzo commiserated with his equally renowned boyhood rival, former Iron Mountain High School and Northern Michigan University teammate and best friend, Steve Mariucci, who at the time was the head coach of the San Francisco 49ers.

"We were laughing about it, saying me, you and this floor were made up in the U.P.," Izzo says. "I always knew about the floor companies up there and there's no question that when I'm watching a Final Four or an NBA event, I take a lot of pride in it, being a Hooper."

Proximity to a select variety of hard maple trees, which thrive in the U.P. climate, is the reason Michigan has become the world leader in athletic flooring.

The U.P. companies have amassed an astounding list of venues they have equipped—from high schools to colleges to professional facilities to the Olympics.

"Hard maple trees obviously grow south of there, as well, but when you go that far north the growing season is real short," says Jason Gasperich, Connor Sports' sustainability director. "So, what happens is you end up with a very tight-grained, dense hardwood."

The old-growth forests have been replanted numerous times by an industry that has been at the forefront of renewable resource development. Some 40 different sawmills supply the lumber and a minimum of 30 trees—roughly



Photos—Matthew Mitchell

25 years old and up—will be used to make the court on which the Final Four will be played at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, April 4–6.

Michigan State's court has been taken apart and put back together countless times between non-sporting events, such as commencement exercises and concerts.

According to MSU Deputy Athletics Director Greg Ianni, who oversees the Spartans' athletic facilities, Horner has taken the floor back to the U.P. to be refurbished on numerous occasions, though it is nearing the end of its life expectancy.

After the surface is replaced in the next year or so, parts of it will be put on permanent display, others stored in the school's archives, and "pieces will be made available to our fan base," Ianni says. "The quality of the court has been terrific, and the irony of the fact that this floor was built in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan where our head basketball coach came from, is quite unique." ■



Steve Grinczel is the online columnist for MSU's athletics website, *MSUSpartans.com*, and the co-host of the "Griff & Grinz" sports radio talk show on WQTX-FM (92.1).

He covered the Spartans for 24 years for Booth Newspapers of Michigan and lives in Haslett, MI.

Energy Decisions Worth Saying Yes To

Commercial and industrial buildings are responsible for about 50 percent of the energy used in the U.S., at a cost of over \$400 billion. However, there are many ways businesses can save energy and be rewarded with incentives for doing so.

If your business is ready to improve its bottom line and use energy-saving strategies, your electric co-op's Energy Optimization (EO) program will most likely have a solution. With hundreds of rebates available, the time to act is now. Here are some recent projects other Michigan businesses worked on with the EO program to save big.

Custom C&I Rebates

Do you have an idea for an energy efficiency project not covered by an existing Energy Optimization (EO) rebate? Custom rebates are available for the installation of unique energy-efficient equipment tailored to meet the needs of your business or farm. Custom rebates are based on expected annual energy savings (kWh per year). Approved custom projects may be eligible for rebates covering up to 75 percent of the project cost! Contact the EO program at **877.296.4319** to get started. ■

Business/City	Rebate Amount	Project Highlights
Lake Superior State University – Sault Ste. Marie	\$1,370	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded to LED lighting; outdoors and indoors Saved 19,800 kWh per year
The Grand Hotel – Mackinac Island	\$9,720	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efficient clothes dryers, steam pipe insulation, LED light bulbs Saved 160,000 kWh per year
Big Bear Ice Arena/Chi Mukwa – Sault Ste. Marie	\$1,350	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking lot / roadway LED lights Saved 19,500 kWh per year
Manistique Machine – Manistique	\$760	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High performance T8 fluorescent lighting replacing T12 fluorescents Saved 8,800 kWh per year
Big Bay DeNoc School – Cooks	\$2,480	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ENERGY STAR commercial dishwasher, commercial refrigerator, walk-in freezer Saved 39,600 kWh per year



JOIN US

RIGHT HERE. RIGHT NOW.

Make this the year you say **YES** to energy savings. If your business is ready to improve its bottom line and implement energy-saving strategies, we have a **solution** for you. With a number of Energy Optimization rebates available, the time to act is **NOW**.

ENERGY TIP: Commercial and industrial buildings use roughly 50% of the energy in the U.S. economy at a cost of over \$400 billion. That leaves a lot of opportunity for improvement!



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.

POP QUIZ:

Do you know what to do if a power line falls on your vehicle?

Do not drive away or get out. Stay inside until utility workers say it's okay. Warn others to stay away. If you must leave the vehicle – only in case of fire – jump free without touching the ground and auto at the same time, keeping both feet together, and hop to safety. A live wire touching the ground causes electricity to fan out, and walking or running allows one foot to move from one voltage zone to another. This makes your body the electricity's path, and electrocution results.

Other safety tips:

Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down.

Never touch a downed line or a person or object that is touching it! You could be injured or killed, too.

Call 911 immediately to report a downed line, then call your electric co-op or the local utility.



Cloverland Electric Cooperative is looking for five high school sophomores or juniors who are 16 to 17 years old in our service area that are ready to attend a leadership camp that will change their lives.

The Michigan Electric Cooperative Association hosts a Youth Leadership Summit on April 22–24 at SpringHill Camp in Ewart. The three days are full of indoor and outdoor team-building exercises (see p. 16), including a high-ropes challenge. “The camp challenged me in many ways and I learned that everyone can be a leader in their own way,” says Jennifer Marske, who attended in 2014.

Jennifer was also chosen to represent Cloverland Electric on the Rural Electric Youth Tour of Washington, D.C., where she and other Michigan students joined over 1,500 students from across America for a week-long inside tour of the nation's capital.

Visit miVLS.com to find an application for this expense-paid camp. Applications are due no later than March 20.

Photo: 2014 youth program participants, back row: Jake Dudeck, Alex Tunks; center: Lindsey Kronemeyer; front row: Gretchen Hall, Jennifer Marske.

Calling All ArtPrize Artists in Michigan!

We would like to spotlight Michigan artists who participated in 2014, or are entering the 2015 ArtPrize® competition, in the July/August issue of *Country Lines*.

For 19 days, 3 square miles of downtown Grand Rapids becomes an open canvas of art. Artists from around the world enter the contest, and viewing their work is free and open to the public.

If you are an electric co-op member who participated in the 2014 ArtPrize event, or you are entering in 2015, please send your contact information by e-mail to Christine Dorr at cdorr@meca.coop or by mail to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. The deadline is April 20.

ArtPrize 2015 will take place Sept. 23–Oct. 11

For more information about the event, please visit Artprize.org ■



Thumbs Up For The Thumb!

Quick! Name your favorite part of our state. Many will say the U.P., Leelanau County, or Grand Traverse Bay. My hunch is some will say, “the Thumb.” We wouldn’t be the Mitten State without a thumb, so let’s pay it some homage...

Phil Parrot, a Thumb native and owner of Parrot’s Tours (parrottstours.com or 810-376-9245), in Deckerville, sends vacationers to destinations worldwide, but he’s often asked about the Thumb area by other travel professionals. Parrot’s ready response is, “There’s the Upper Peninsula, Leelanau Peninsula, and Old Mission Peninsula, but the Thumb is Michigan’s undiscovered peninsula.”

Comprised of Huron, Tuscola, Sanilac, Lapeer and St. Clair counties, it boasts 150 miles of shoreline, 2,100 miles of rivers and streams, 51,000 acres of public recreation land, 49,000 acres of state game/wildlife areas, and many annual festivals and events.

Tour the Lake Huron and Saginaw Bay shoreline along M-25 with 160 miles of quaint towns and four lighthouses. The village of Sebewaing claims bragging rights as the “Sugar Beet Capital of the World” by hosting an annual Sugar Festival with a parade, carnival and entertainment tent. Caseville, near the Thumb’s tip on sandy Saginaw Bay, hosts the well-known Cheeseburger Festival every August. Algonac sits on the largest fresh-water delta in the world, with canals and an impressive 1,800 feet of boardwalk that credit its nickname as “The Venice of Michigan.”

And, visitors will want to explore the Sanilac Petroglyphs Historic State Park. The great Thumb fire of 1881, Parrot says, burned over 1 million acres and revealed prehistoric rock carvings made 300 to 1,000 years ago.

Seek a pleasant place by visiting it and giving a thumbs up for “the Thumb”! ■



Jack O'Malley



Photo courtesy of ArtPrize 2015. Photo credit: Brian Kelly.



Jan Photo

The January Mystery Photo Contest winner is Laura Neuman, of Mackinaw City, a Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op member who correctly identified the “snow people” figures in front of the tourist information building in Paradise, MI.

March Installation Explosion!

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WANT TO LEARN MORE? Watch the videos and apply online at miYLS.com.



Youth Leadership Summit
April 22-24 | SpringHill Camp, Ewart, MI



Electric Cooperative Youth Tour
June 13-18 | Washington, D.C.