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5 Member Survey Results

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8d SnapShots: Kids At Play

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**E-mail:** [cdorr@meca.coop](mailto: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.

Unsolicited letters, photos and manuscripts are welcome. *Country Lines*, however, will not be responsible for their safe keeping or return.

**The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.**

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



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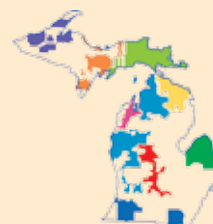
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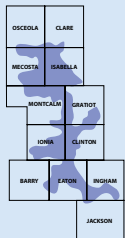
Traverse City's Tom Doak, of Renaissance Golf Design, shares his passion for creating challenging courses around the globe.

Photos - Renaissance Golf Design

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



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:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-848-9333  
(24 hours for emergency calls)

### Tri-County Propane:

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### High Speed Internet

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

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Join the conversation at  
[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

# Celebrating National Lineman Appreciation Day



**Mark Kappler**

General Manager

America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. On April 13, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative will honor the hard working men who often work in challenging conditions to keep the lights on.

The full text of the resolution, which the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Board adopted unanimously, follows:

"Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the

power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas linemen are the first responders of the electric cooperative family, getting power back on and making things safe for all after storms and accidents; and Whereas there would be no electric cooperatives without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of linemen;

"Therefore be it resolved that NRECA recognize the Second Monday of April of each year as National Lineman Appreciation Day and make available to electric cooperatives, materials and support to recognize the contributions of these valuable men and women to America's Electric Cooperatives."

We proudly recognize all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety.

Electric linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve. They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition.

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric invites members to take a moment to thank a lineman for the work they do. We'll be posting photos of our crews at work on our Facebook page all day on April 13. Please join us there to show your support for the people who light our lives. ■

## 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 meetings are set for April 27 at Blanchard and May 18 at Portland. Members who need directions or wish to have items considered on the board agenda should call 517-647-7554.

# Are You a Member-Owner or a Customer?

**T**he recent HomeWorks Tri-County member survey, conducted in fall 2014, looked at two cooperative principles.

Principle #2 is democratic member control. Half of those surveyed said they view themselves as only a customer of the cooperative. Almost 40 percent consider themselves both a customer and a member-owner. (See Chart 1)

What is the difference? A member-owner is more likely to participate in their co-op, by attending membership meetings and voting in board elections, and supporting other co-op activities.

Principle #3 is members' economic participation. As a financially prudent business, our rates cover a little bit more than our actual costs. This gives us a reserve in case of an unexpected expense, such as a major storm.

The margins left after all expenses are paid are allocated back to each member based on their energy purchases during the year. These allocations are called capital credits; they become cash when the board of directors calls for a retirement.

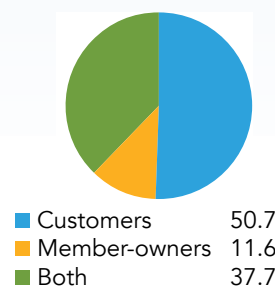
Since we began retiring capital credits in 1987, over \$11 million has been returned to members. The board's policy has been to pay the majority of a retirement to the oldest unretired years, and some to the most recent year, so that newer members also see the benefits of this principle.

In last fall's survey, 50 percent of those responding say they have received capital credits from HomeWorks, while nearly a third said they had not. (See Chart 2)

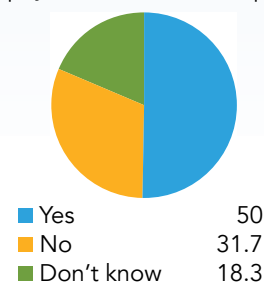
**Read the electric bill you receive in May carefully.** If the board approves a capital credit retirement in 2015, it will most likely come as a line item CREDIT on your May bill.

Also in May, you are invited to attend your district's annual membership meeting. We offer a light supper, an update on co-op operations, and the opportunity to exercise your member-ownership during the annual business meeting. Check the back cover of this issue for the date and location of your meeting! ■

**Chart 1:** Survey respondents view themselves as:



**Chart 2:** Have you received a capital credit payment from the co-op?



## Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

### A Special Member Meeting is set for 9 a.m. April 27, 2015, at the cooperative's Blanchard office

The board of directors will consider changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on April 27, 2015, to be held at the cooperative office at 3681 Costabella Avenue, Blanchard, MI. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. and is open to all members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

The session will begin with an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board of directors, without filing a formal request under cooperative policy. Members are asked to come to the lobby by 9 a.m. and request to speak to the board; staff will direct interested members to the meeting room. Time constraints on each member's comments will be at the discretion of the board president, but members are asked to keep comments to less than five minutes.

**The following item will be considered.** Members will have an opportunity to address the board on the proposed changes prior to board action.


1. Reconcile the 2014 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections. The Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor is applied to Tri-County Electric Cooperative's retail member-customers' monthly kilowatt-hour use. It represents the power supply costs as established by the cooperative in conjunction with Wolverine Power Cooperative. The factor is established annually, and reviewed monthly.

Notice of changes or additions to the cooperative's rates or service rules shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in *Michigan Country Lines* at least 30 days prior to their effective date.

**Participation:** Any interested member may attend and participate. The location of the board meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact HomeWorks Tri-County Electric at 800-562-8232 a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be made before the meeting date by calling General Manager, Mark Kappler at 517-647-1281, or by email at [mkappler@homeworks.org](mailto:mkappler@homeworks.org).

Notice of the board meeting shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in *Michigan Country Lines*.





## Improve Home Comfort By Choosing Materials Carefully

**I**f you're looking to improve your home's comfort, consider increasing its thermal mass. Increasing thermal mass means having the house structure and interior objects absorb and hold as much heat as possible. The heavier the item, the more mass it has to better absorb heat. As the outdoor temperature changes, thermal mass helps moderate indoor temperature swings to improve comfort and efficiency.

There are several ways thermal mass can save energy. By reducing indoor temperature swings in the winter, less heat is lost through walls and windows. This is particularly true in rooms where heat is generated, such as the kitchen, bathroom, or rooms with large south-facing windows. Also, heat produced by the furnace is absorbed by the home's thermal mass and then released at night to warm it.

In summer, high thermal mass will keep rooms cooler, delay the need for using air conditioning, and keep it from cycling on-and-off throughout the day. Unless high humidity is an issue, opening windows at night and running a whole-house or window fan allows the thermal mass to lose the heat stored from the daytime. Close the windows in the morning and the cooled thermal mass absorbs heat coming in without causing the room temperature to rise as fast. The thermal mass of air is extremely low, so the cold outdoor air quickly absorbs heat from the indoor thermal mass.

Increase thermal mass by selecting the proper high mass (heavier) materials. They should be located throughout the home, but concentrate on rooms that generate heat or overheat in summer. When building a house or adding rooms, use heavy foam insulating sheathing on the outside of the wall framing, which allows it to become part of the interior thermal mass.

The thermal mass of various materials is rated by heat capacity properties. Water has a high heat capacity of 62.4 per cubic foot, compared to drywall at only 1.3 per cubic foot. Wet soil rates about 55, concrete about 31, brick about 27, and stone or tile ranges from 18 to 36. Their natural thermal properties, in addition to densities, determine these numbers.

For example, installing a dark, ceramic-tile flooring near a door or window is a great source of thermal mass. Decorative solid-brick walls work well in a room with a fireplace or large windows. Heavy granite or slate countertops in a kitchen or bath, and wood floors are also effective. The idea is to replace lighter materials with heavier ones.

Even the damp soil in large potted plants can store much heat, and plants help purify indoor air. For emergencies, storing milk jugs full of water under cabinets and near your heating system can also increase thermal mass. ■



# HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH

Delicious and nutritious recipes for living healthy.

## Energy Balls *(pictured)*

- ¼ c. unroasted almonds or any kind of nut or seed
- ¾ c. old fashioned rolled oats, uncooked
- 2 T. ground flax seed
- 2–3 T. cocoa powder, depending on how chocolatey you want them
- 10 oz. dates
- 1–2 T. coconut oil, melted

Place almonds in the bowl of a food processor. Pulse until finely chopped. Add oats, flax seed, and cocoa powder. Pulse a few more times to combine. Place dates into the food processor and turn on for about 30 seconds, or until finely chopped. Mixture should be crumbly at this point. Drizzle 1 T. coconut oil over the top of the date mixture and process for 5–10 seconds. Test mixture by squeezing between your finger and thumb. If it's too dry to stick together add more coconut oil (up to 1 T. more). Using your hands, roll mixture into 1-inch balls. Refrigerate for about 20 minutes, or until firm. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator. This Energy Ball recipe is a little something that I enjoy for an afternoon snack with some green tea. It's a great and healthy pick-me-up. Makes 24.

*Julie Barr, Manistique*

## Quinoa and Cucumber Salad

- 2 c. cooked quinoa
- 3 baby English cucumbers, sliced
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 box sweet cherry tomatoes
- 1–2 handfuls feta cheese crumbles

Toss all ingredients in a bowl until evenly combined. Zest and juice one lime over salad and add fresh ground pepper to taste. Toss to combine. Can also add a tablespoon or two of olive oil, if desired. This is a flavorful and filling 'go to' recipe for a quick side or portable lunch.

*Denise Chapel, Gaylord*

## Spinach Pasta Salad

- ½ bag of store-bought spinach or 2 handfuls fresh, washed and torn (tearing spinach over cutting is preferred)
- 8 oz. pasta, cooked according to pkg. directions (cork screws, bow ties, wheels, work best)
- fat free, light, or regular Caesar dressing (your brand preference)
- 1 c. shredded parmesan cheese
- fat free croutons
- Extras: grilled chicken, bacon pieces, tomatoes, diced boiled egg



In a large bowl, mix pasta with a generous amount of dressing to coat evenly. Add cheese & spinach to bowl (and chicken/bacon/tomatoes/eggs) and mix well. Serve cold and top with croutons. Note: Don't add croutons to the salad or they will get soggy.

*Renee (Kohn) Coyer, Cooks*

## SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

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

Enter your recipe online at [countrylines.com](http://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)!

Photos—831 Creative





## More nutritious recipes for living healthy.

### Red Lentil (Dal) Soup

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 2 T. vegan butter  | 1 c. red lentils                              |
| 2 garlic cloves, crushed   | 2 t. lemon juice                              |
| 1 onion, chopped   | 2 ½ c. vegetable stock                        |
| ½ t. turmeric  | 1 14-oz. can unsweetened coconut milk         |
| 1 t. garam masala (spice blend in ethnic aisle at most grocery stores) | 1 t. salt                                     |
| ¼ t. chili powder  | chopped cilantro and lemon slices, to garnish |
| 1 t. cumin   | naan bread, to serve                          |
| 1 14-oz. can diced tomatoes  |   |

Melt butter in soup pot. Add garlic and onion; stir for 3 minutes. Add turmeric, garam masala, chili powder, and cumin; cook for 30 seconds more. Stir in tomatoes, red lentils, lemon juice, vegetable stock and coconut milk, and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for about 30 minutes, until lentils are tender and cooked.

*Abby Smith, Shepherd*

### Multigrain & Veggie Side Dish

- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| 2 ⅔ c. water                       | ½ c. chopped celery                         |
| ⅔ c. long grain rice               | 1 T. minced fresh ginger                    |
| ⅔ c. quick-cooking barley          | 2 T. olive oil                              |
| ½ t. salt                          | 1 pkg. fresh spinach, torn                  |
| 1 large onion, chopped             | 1 c. canned pinto beans, rinsed and drained |
| 2 medium carrots, chopped          | 2 T. reduced sodium soy sauce               |
| 1 medium sweet red pepper, chopped |   |
| 1 turnip, chopped                  |   |

In a small saucepan, bring water to a boil. Stir in the rice, barley and salt. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 12–18 minutes or until grains are tender. Remove from heat, and let stand for 5 minutes. In a Dutch oven, sauté the onion, carrot, red pepper, turnip, celery and ginger in oil until crisp-tender. Stir in the spinach, beans, soy sauce, and rice mixture. Cook and stir until heated through and spinach is wilted.

*Rosemarie Scrivener, Traverse City*

### Hummus

- |   |                         |
|---|-------------------------|
| 1 15-oz. can of chick peas, garbanzo beans or pinto beans | 2–4 cloves garlic       |
| ½ c. tahini   | salt & pepper, to taste |
| ¼ c. lemon juice  | dash of tobacco sauce   |
|   | 1 T. horseradish        |

Process all ingredients in a blender until smooth and creamy. Tip: A healthier version is to start with dry beans and cook them yourself rather than using the canned version which has preservatives, salt, etc. I make a huge batch and freeze in cartons to use as a sandwich spread or dip for vegetables.

*Mary Ellen Wynes, Mt. Pleasant*

### COOKING FROM THE HEART

A cookbook produced by HomeWorks Tri-County member-consumers for the benefit of mid-Michigan families and organizations in need.



ON SALE IN AUGUST 2015

#### Submit your recipe to

HomeWorks by May 31 in any of several ways:

- At our annual district meetings in May
- At the Blanchard or Portland office
- Mail to: People Fund Cookbook, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875
- Email to: [tschneider@homeworks.org](mailto:tschneider@homeworks.org)

Make sure the recipe is legible and complete, with full instructions. Include your name, town, and a daytime phone number where we can reach you if we have questions.

Categories include Appetizers; Soups, Salads, and Sauces; Casseroles; Meats and Main Dishes; Cakes, Cookies, and Desserts; Breads, Rolls, and Pastries; and Miscellaneous.

Visit [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) for more reader recipes!



# 2014 Property Taxes Top \$1 Million

**A**lthough we operate on a not-for-profit basis, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative does pay sales and property taxes like any other organization.

Property taxes are assessed not only on our operations centers at Portland and Blanchard, but also on the 3,400 miles of power line we use to serve 26,000 meters in 13 counties. Every utility pole, transformer, and meter is assessed at the local rate.

It all adds up: in 2014, HomeWorks paid \$1,032,873.03 in property taxes. This money helps support schools, roads, and other local government functions.

Here are the totals we paid, by county:

County	Townships Served	2014 Property Taxes Paid
Barry	Assyria, Castleton, Maple Grove, Woodland	\$13,340.91
Clare	Garfield, Grant, Surrey, Village of Farwell	\$4,374.34
Clinton	Bengal, Bingham, Dallas, Duplain, Eagle, Essex, Greenbush, Lebanon, Riley, Watertown, Westphalia	\$103,886.49
Eaton	Benton, Chester, Eaton, Eaton Rapids (twp.), Eaton Rapids (city), Hamlin, Kalamo, Oneida, Roxand, Sunfield, Vermontville	\$87,131.78
Gratiot	Elba, Hamilton, New Haven, North Shade, Seville, Sumner, Washington	\$35,238.69
Ingham	Aurelius, Bunker Hill, Delhi, Ingham, Leslie, Onondaga, Stockbridge, Vevay	\$37,974.14
Ionia	Berlin, Campbell, City of Portland, Danby, Ionia, Lyons, North Plains, Odessa, Orange, Portland, Sebewa	\$161,553.64
Isabella	Broomfield, Coe, Coldwater, Deerfield, Fremont, Gilmore, Isabella, Lincoln, Nottawa, Rolland, Sherman, Vernon, Village of Lake Isabella	\$191,073.01
Jackson	Springport, Tompkins, Waterloo	\$3,714.10
Mecosta	Austin, Chippewa, Colfax, Deerfield, Fork, Grant, Green, Hinton, Martiny, Millbrook, Morton, Sheridan, Wheatland	\$225,585.91
Montcalm	Belvidere, Bloomer, Cato, Crystal, Day, Douglas, Evergreen, Ferris, Home, Maple Valley, Pine, Richland, Winfield	\$166,703.08
Osceola	Evart, Hersey	\$2,007.24
Saginaw	Chapin	\$289.70
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$1,032,873.03</b>

## Employees Change Roles at HomeWorks



**Nick Rusnell** is the new vegetation management planner in Electric Operations, making sure our power line rights-of-way remain clear

to help ensure reliable power. He joined HomeWorks in 2004 as a field technician; in 2009, he became energy advisor, and was certified as a key accounts manager. He has led our Energy Optimization and Community Solar Garden programs.



**Angel McCliggott** moved to consumer accounting, helping assure accurate energy bills. She joined HomeWorks in 2012 as a customer service representative.



**Jeff Erridge** transferred to the open customer service position. Since 2012, he has greeted visitors, taken payments, and performed other support tasks.



**Kevin Sandborn**, a member of the co-op, was hired in February as our new customer service support clerk.



# STUDENTS, TEACHERS BENEFIT FROM TOUCHSTONE ENERGY CLASSROOM TECHNOLOGY GRANTS

Through our Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grants, area schools that serve children of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric members can receive a grant of up to \$2,500 to fund innovative programs, particularly those involving technology or equipment that enrich students' education.

## Chosen to receive grants in 2015 were:

### 1. Parkview & Washington elementaries, Charlotte – \$2,403.71 for LEGO Robotic construction kits

Kenneth Wright, left, the hands-on science teacher for Parkview and Washington Elementary schools in Charlotte, received a grant for LEGO robotics construction kits for K-3rd grades. He's shown with Mark Short, Washington Elementary Principal.

### 2. Pewamo-Westphalia Schools – \$2,500 for 60 heart monitors and a used treadmill

Pewamo-Westphalia physical education teachers Tim Cornman, left, and Jennifer Sedlacek received a grant that will purchase heart monitors and a used treadmill for various programs at the school.





### 3. Beagle Elementary, Grand Ledge – \$1,637.95 for 3 iPads with Apple TV in 4th grade classrooms

In Grand Ledge, teachers Angela Lutz, left, and Annette Kelly will be able to provide an iPad and Apple TV to each 4th grade classroom at Beagle Elementary School. The new technology will allow teachers to teach with more flexibility.

### 4. Vestaburg Elementary – \$2,472 for a classroom listening center with iPad minis

Vestaburg Elementary School principal Darby Weaver received a grant to set up a classroom listening center with iPad minis and headphones.

### 5. Gratiot-Isabella RESD, Alma – \$2,500 for a mobile tech cart plus an EyeGaze communications bar

The grant to Gratiot-Isabella RESD will provide a mobile technology cart with an EyeGaze communications bar for severely impaired students at Hillcrest Elementary School in Alma. Students Karlie and Megan are shown accepting the grant, along with Jan Amsterburg, superintendent; Nicole Barragato, teacher; Bob Cosan, assistant superintendent; and Tom Neuenfeldt, Hillcrest principal.

### 6. Farwell Middle School – \$2,500 for 10 Chromebooks in 7th grade science and math

Farwell Middle School 7th graders celebrate the grant that will provide 10 Chromebooks for their math and science classes. Science teacher Duncan Gervin and math teacher Laura Pfeiffelman are shown holding the presentation check, and English teacher Penny Lew is at right.

### 7. Evart Middle School – \$2,500 for 10 electric microscopes

Evart Middle School principal Jason O'Dell (standing, left) received a grant for 10 electric microscopes to be used in science classes. With him are, kneeling: Felicia Nelson, Madison Hammer, and Hayden Morgan; standing: Jason O'Dell, Gracie Pritchard, Tia McCauley, Ashley Burhans, McKenzie Kimball, Ty Sochocki, and Justin O'Dell.

### 8. Central Montcalm Middle School, Stanton – \$779 for a web-based learning program license (15 months)

Central Montcalm Middle School 6th, 7th and 8th graders celebrated their grant, which will pay for a 15-month subscription to MobyMax, a web-based math and science instruction program.

### 9. Big Rapids High School – \$1,197 for a projector and two document cameras

Linda Lindsey (shown at right), media specialist for Big Rapids High School, displays one of the document cameras purchased with their grant, as students Grace White and Katie Adrianse show their support.

### 10. Leslie High School – \$470 for a wireless tablet for a science classroom

Leslie High School science teacher Molly Turner received a grant for the wireless tablet she's holding, as another instruction tool for her classroom.

### • Ashley High School – \$2,500 for hand tools and supplies for Industrial Ed classes

Photo will be in the May issue. ■



## Capture your favorite moments and share!

1. The kids loved playing in the water at Grand Haven beach last summer. Aidan Hilliker, age 7, Zane Jagger, age 2 and Lydia Jagger, age 6, splashed until sunset. Sent in by mom Rachelle Jagger of Eagle.
2. Austin, Madelyn, Autumn and Brooke's first time canoeing on the Grand River, in 2010. Austin (11) & Brooke (3) are in the left canoe and Madie (7) & Autumn (4) are in the other. This is a tradition we started in 2010 - we call it "campnoeing." We canoe to a destination on the Grand River & camp out there in a tent. The kids love it! Sent in by mom Tanya Schneider of Portland.
3. Eight-year-old Dylan Underwood enjoys the snow (and a snow day) in late January. Sent in by his mom, Jamie Trommater of Mulliken.
4. Oscar, Avery, Tanner and Jack (aged 2 to 5) enjoyed being the youngest at their family reunion. They stopped playing briefly for a photo on a parked ATV. Sent in by grandparents Mike and Rita Owen of Portland.

See more SnapShots at: [facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

## Submit Your Photo!

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)!

## Upcoming SnapShot contests

- "Sunrises & Sunsets", Deadline: Apr. 15 (June issue)
- "America the Beautiful", Deadline: May 16 (July/August issue)

Go to [homeworks.org/content/snapshots](https://homeworks.org/content/snapshots) to submit your high resolution digital photos and see additional themes. It's fast and easy. To send by mail: Include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, and details about your photo. Mail to Attn: *Country Lines SnapShots*, 7973 E. Grand River, Portland, MI 48875. Photos will not be returned. Do not send color laser prints or professional studio photos.



# April 13, 2015 – National Lineman Appreciation Day

## HomeWorks, City of Portland Work Together



Two of our linemen, Rob Brennan and Jeremy Zbytowski, used our flex-track unit on Jan. 30 to assist the City of Portland's Electric Department in setting a 50-foot pole next to the Looking Glass River near Community Lake. Because the site was so close to the river, the soil was too unstable to get a line construction truck in there. Portland's Mike Hyland asked if we could assist (we've worked together on several projects in the past) so we coordinated with them to get this done. City employees present were Mike Hyland, Mike Kaptia, Scott Cassell, and Shane Scheurer; and Mary Scheurer also stopped by.

Photos by lineman Mark Goodman.

Delivering the flex track vehicle to the Community Lake site. Linemen in bright yellow are from the City of Portland.



HomeWorks and Portland crews gather to discuss the job and how to safely accomplish their goal before getting started.



With Rob Brennan at the flex track controls, Jeremy Zbytowski (white hard hat) helps clear the hole where the new pole will be set.





# DOAK'S NEW COURSE: DOUBLE THE FUN



To keep up to date on the new course, please visit

**RENAISSANCE GOLF DESIGN**

[www.renaissancegolf.com](http://www.renaissancegolf.com)

**FOREST DUNES**

[www.forestdunesgolf.com](http://www.forestdunesgolf.com)

A golfer's bucket list of courses likely includes "Top 100" links by golf course architect Tom Doak, such as Pacific Dunes in Oregon and Tasmania's Barnbougle Dunes. With his new project at Forest Dunes Golf Club in Roscommon, MI, Doak's own bucket list—of golf courses he'd like to design—is shorter by one.

Doak, whose Renaissance Golf Design is based in Traverse City, has conceived a reversible 18-hole golf course, playable from two directions with the greens yielding different layouts. "I'd been thinking about it for a long time," he says. "I saw something in an old architecture book and I had it in the back of my mind: 'Okay, I'd like to try that sometime.'"

Enter Forest Dunes owner Lew Thompson's quest for a companion to his highly-acclaimed Tom Weiskopf course. "When I first met Lew and went to look at the property and saw it was fairly open, fairly flat, I thought it would work for this idea." Importantly, Doak adds, "Thompson didn't say anything about it being ranked in the Top 100 courses—he already has one of those. He wanted something that would make people say 'Wow.'" And, Thompson admits, he wanted something to keep golfers for another day of play-and-stay at his Adirondack-style lodge.

The location is a bonus for Doak, who has called northern Michigan home since 1989 when he completed his first solo project, High Pointe Golf Club, near Traverse City. The Cornell University graduate was just 26 when Fred Muller, the golf pro at

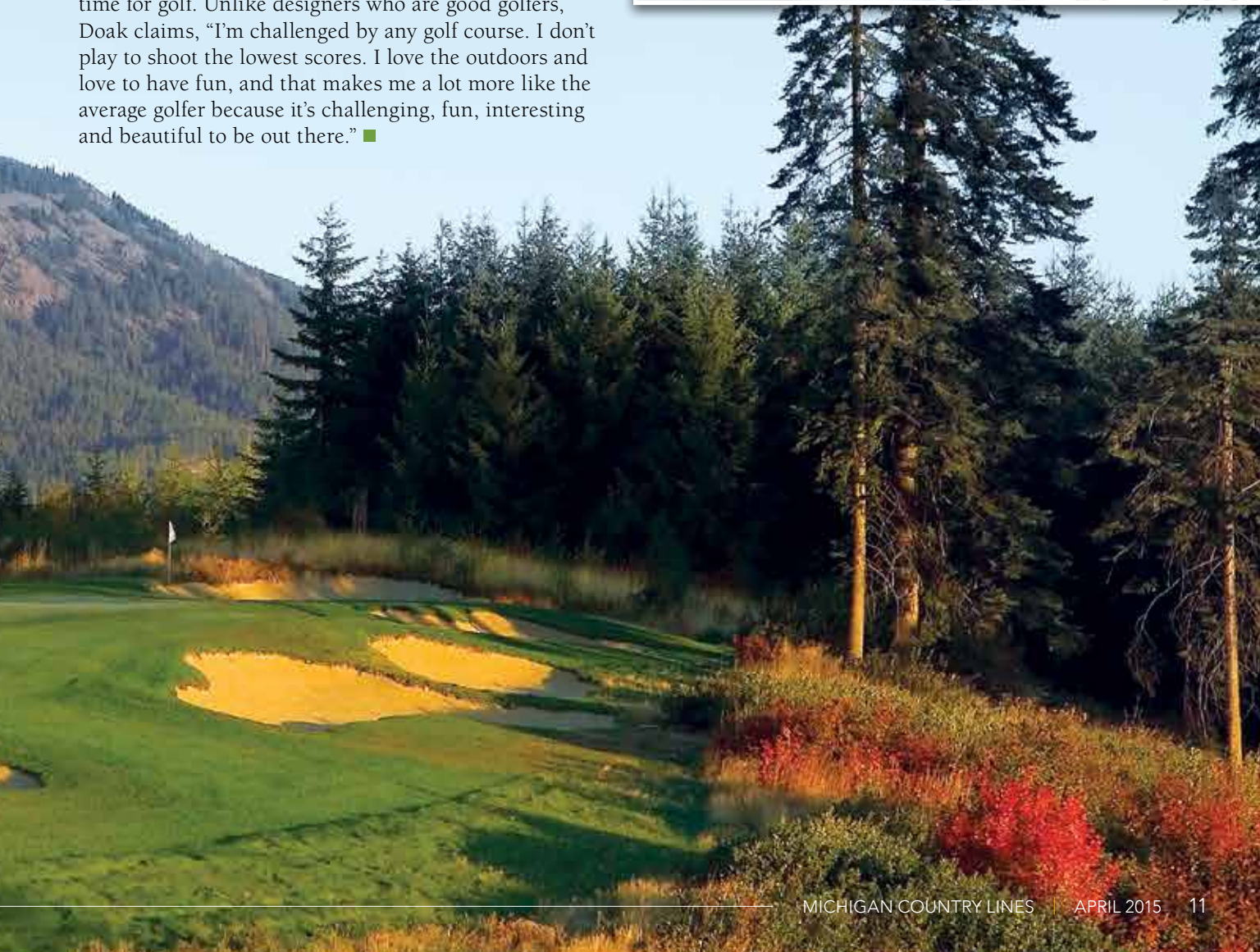
Photo — L.C. Lambrecht Photography  
Rock Creek Cattle Golf Course, Deer Lodge, MT



Crystal Downs Country Club in Frankfort, recommended him for that job. Muller met Doak when the college student came to play Crystal Downs because its designer, Alister MacKenzie, was his hero. After graduation Doak spent nearly a year playing the great courses around the world and caddying at St. Andrews in Scotland, and three years working for another hero, Pete Dye. “I’m still sort of amazed that the owner of High Pointe hired me at that age. I think the key was that I was going to build the golf course—not just design it. I was pretty ridiculously confident.”

Doak’s second Michigan course was Black Forest, at Wilderness Valley in Gaylord (“one of the hardest courses I’ve ever built”); since then, he and his team have handled new courses and renovations across the U.S. and around the globe, from Mexico to Scotland and China. Doak is looking forward to more time with his family as he and associate Brian Slawnik develop the Roscommon project, due to open in 2016.

Michigan’s four seasons remind Doak of growing up in Connecticut, but he’s not a fan of winter. He laughs, “It’s really easy to be here all summer,” when he finds time for golf. Unlike designers who are good golfers, Doak claims, “I’m challenged by any golf course. I don’t play to shoot the lowest scores. I love the outdoors and love to have fun, and that makes me a lot more like the average golfer because it’s challenging, fun, interesting and beautiful to be out there.” ■



# Save Smart With a Free Home Energy Audit

**You know your home best.** Many common problems, such as mold, mildew and ice dams can be directly attributed to inefficiencies in your home. Other issues, such as room temperature inconsistencies, drafts and even noise are felt, not seen.

Use HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative's Home Energy Optimizer, a free online home energy assessment tool, to learn about your energy use and how to save more energy and money. You'll be asked important questions about your home—everything from square footage to typical thermostat settings. The more detail you provide, the more customized your results will be.

Completing the online interactive survey takes a quick 15-30 minutes. **After completion, you'll receive a free energy-saving kit** that contains

5 CFLs, one energy-efficient bath aerator, one energy-efficient kitchen aerator, and one energy-efficient shower head.

The Home Energy Optimizer *automatically estimates your energy use and projected heating, cooling, hot water, appliance and lighting costs.* It's

customized for your region's climate and calculates your energy savings cost potential in each category to help you see where to get the highest payback for efficiency improvements. You can even review a list of recommended upgrades with simple ways to lower your energy use. ■

## Here's how to get started today:

- Go to **michigan-energy.org/HomeWorks** and click on "Online Home Audit."
- Write down your session number.
- Answer questions as best you can. (It's okay to skip questions if you have to.)
- Finish the audit and receive your free energy-saving kit.
- Install all kit items. Use other EO programs and rebates for future purchases.



# SMART SAVING

## FREE ONLINE HOME AUDIT.

Did you know that some problems with your home can be signs of major energy waste—while costing you money? Problems such as mildew, ice dams, and overall discomfort can be attributed to inefficiencies in your home. Help improve your home by assessing its energy performance using the Home Energy Optimizer.

### BENEFITS

- Convenient—ability to save and edit responses or finish later
- Do-it-yourself, affordable, energy-saving actions
- Completion entitles you to a **FREE** energy-saving kit

Get started today at **michigan-energy.org/Stephenson** and click on "Online Home Audit."



**Energy  
Optimization**



**Tri-County Electric  
Cooperative**

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**.



# What's The Best Way To Protect Electronics From Power Surges?

**P**ower surges can cause major damage to electrical items in your home. Did you know there are ways to protect your products from electrical surges?

A surge is an unexpected increase in voltage in an electrical current that causes damage to electrical equipment. A surge will enter a home through any number of avenues. The most obvious is through the power lines. Less obvious is through the telephone lines, cable/satellite connections, water lines and any other metallic system that connects to your home. So, to protect against surges, you need to take a three-pronged approach.

**1.** Get an electrician to survey and test your home's grounding system.

**2.** Protect your electrical service entrance with a surge device. It can be installed behind the meter or at the main electric panel. The device will "clamp" the surge and reduce its power. These devices destroy themselves rather than allowing the surge to pass through.

**3.** Protect expensive electronics at their point of use. Computers and entertainment equipment are prime examples. Use a quality power strip or wall device product with a power surge feature from a manufacturer such as Monster, Belkin, Tripp Lite, or APC, to name a few. Look for one with a joule rating of at least 1,000, a connected equipment warranty and compatibility with digital signals from cable and satellite. Some have a "smart" strip that turns off all but one connected device when not in use. ■

## People Fund Grants Help With Food, Housing

**Meeting March 4**, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board of directors approved 11 grants, totaling \$11,890.85, including:

- \$2,500 to the Lakeview Ministerial Association, Lakeview for food pantry items;
- \$1,650 to the Barryton Area Mobile Food Pantry, Remus for food truck deliveries;
- \$1,500 to the Shepherd United Methodist Church for their Nutrition Club Program;
- \$750 to the Vermontville Township Library for the weekly family programs;
- \$1,500 to the Remus Area Historical Society, Remus for restoration of the pavilion;
- \$500 to the Springport Food Pantry for food pantry items;
- \$143 to a Montcalm County family for housing expenses;
- \$1,097.68 to an Eaton County family for housing expenses;
- \$129.95 to an Isabella County family for housing expenses;
- \$547.95 to an Ingham County family for housing expenses, and
- \$1,572.27 to a Montcalm County family to help with housing expenses.

Grants are funded by donations made by members who voluntarily round up their energy bill to the next dollar. Rounding up averages \$6 a year; since 1993, this spare change has returned over \$1.9 million to mid-Michigan communities. ■

### 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 April 13 for the April meeting, and by May 18 to be considered at the May meeting.

# Honoring Veterans One Cane At A Time

**T**he idea came about in 2004 when Jack Nitz of Tulsa, OK, watched a news segment about wounded post-9/11 veterans.

The visions of vets with leg wounds and amputations weighed on his mind. Nitz knew that as a woodcarver and cane maker, he could make a difference in the lives of these heroic veterans.

Nitz proposed the idea of making unique canes that veterans could proudly use to the Eastern Oklahoma Woodcarvers Association. His eagle-head cane has since spawned a program that enlists thousands of woodcarvers across the nation to support and honor U.S. veterans.

In 2007, Jim Wilsford from Tennessee came to Michigan to teach a class about making these eagle-head canes for veterans. Members of the Michigan Wood Carvers Association (MWCA) were so impressed they also decided to sponsor the project. To date, over 2,500 canes have been presented by MWCA.

During a visit with my friend and carving mentor, master carver Dick Lamphier of Elk Rapids, MI, he showed me an eagle-head cane that he was working on, and explained who the canes were being made for. I was very impressed by the whole project.

Initially, Lamphier had no interest in carving eagle heads. While at a seminar in Midland, Lamphier had the opportunity to witness the presentation of one of these canes to a veteran of the Vietnam War. There were about 250 people in attendance, and hardly a dry eye in the place. Witnessing the feelings and emotions that were on the faces of so many, Lamphier became determined to do what he could to assist with this healing program. Since that day, on two separate occasions, he has witnessed veterans from Afghanistan walking with these personalized canes.



Jim Carpenter works on the details of his carving.

In each instance, he complimented the veteran on the beauty of his cane. Each raised his cane with a BIG SMILE to acknowledge the compliment. Clearly, they held them up with great pride! Currently, 12 local carvers are working with Lamphier to create these tokens of thanks to our veterans.

Recently, while inspecting an overhead electrical line in the Suttons Bay area, I found a large basswood near a line that had found favor with woodpeckers. The tree was a potential power outage and needed to come down. The property owner agreed to donate the wood and another Cherryland employee, Dave Bott, volunteered his sawmill to cut the logs into usable material. This wood has been donated to the Michigan Wood Carvers Association and after it has cured, will be used to create more canes.

Visit [miwoodcarvers.com](http://miwoodcarvers.com) to learn more about the Patriot Cane/Memorial Project. ■

*Jim Carpenter is the line superintendent for Cherryland Electric Cooperative.*





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## Tri-County Electric Cooperative



# Watch your mailbox for your personal invitation.

Knowing more about your electric cooperative helps you stay involved, and that helps us run HomeWorks Tri-County Electric for the benefit of you and your neighbors.

Our annual membership meetings start with a light supper (pulled pork, plus ice cream!) at 6 p.m., followed by a short business meeting, and then learning what's happening at the electric utility YOU own. **You'll have a chance to ask questions and win prizes**, such as energy certificates worth \$10, \$25, or even \$50, and one lucky member will leave the meeting with a Grand Prize of an RCA 32" LED TV/DVD combo.

Bring your kids, too. Besides enjoying a free meal, all youths ages 5–16 have a chance to win an iPod Touch. And, everyone goes home with a special thank-you gift.

Watch your mailbox for your family's personal invitation. See you there!

### This year's dates and locations are:

**May 11** – District 5  
Fulton Middle School Gym

**May 12** – District 1  
St. Mary's Church Hall, Charlotte

**May 13** – District 7  
St. Michael's School, Remus

**May 14** – District 3 (Election)  
Eagle Park Hall

**May 18** – District 4  
Vestaburg Middle School

**May 19** – District 6 (Election)  
Beal City High School

**May 20** – District 2  
St. Edward's Church Hall,  
Lake Odessa