

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

MICHIGAN'S Iron Man

Plus!

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And The Future
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Support Our Community

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Association officers are **Robert Schallip**, Cloverland Electric Cooperative, chairman; **Mark Kappler**, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, vice chairman; and **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power Cooperative, secretary-treasurer. **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.

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



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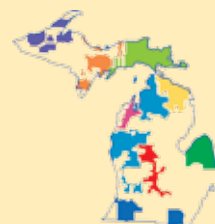


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ON THE COVER*

Tom Moran, of Moran Iron Works in Onaway, MI. When he's not busy building ships, turbine components or customizing industrial and commercial fabrication jobs, Moran creates large-scale art projects for the community.

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



Michigan's Electric
Cooperatives
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Midwest Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Preparing For Future Provides Opportunities For Now



Robert Hance
President/CEO

Ten years ago, who could have imagined that we would one day carry a single device in our pockets or purses that would serve as our phone, camera, entertainment center, encyclopedia, and more? In a very short period of time, smart phones have fundamentally changed the way we live.

Technology is evolving at a fast and furious pace. We don't know what's coming, but we can be confident that the electric infrastructure will be involved. Today, we have a very smart grid that transports energy, data and information, and

technological advances will require the grid to be even smarter and more responsive. We must be prepared, or your co-op and its members will be left in the dust.

Last year, we set out on a path to create a fiber backbone to connect all of our substations. It was a great start, but limited our ability to completely prepare us and our members for the future. We have since expanded the approach and are implementing a robust, two-way communication system across our entire electric distribution infrastructure, beginning in southwest Michigan.

This five-year project will equip us with better information and data so that we can deliver the products and services our members want and need—today and many years into the future. The investment will allow us to see and address problems and opportunities in real time, ultimately creating significant efficiencies that will benefit your co-op and its membership.

Cool stuff, but here's the icing on the cake. Fiber is the most future-proof internet platform available, and will provide our members with an experience and speeds previously unknown in the rural space. For years, you have looked to us for internet solutions in the rural space, and we've attempted to meet that need with limited success. With this necessary investment in our utility system, we can leverage the fiber capacity and bring the ultimate broadband internet solution to our membership.

This is a game changer, very much like when electric cooperatives organized 80 years ago to bring power to rural America. We've officially launched our 2015 build and will develop future construction plans based on your interest. See page 5 for information about our construction campaign and how you can help bring fiber internet to your corner of southwest Michigan.

We're building for today and the future, and once again answering the call for folks choosing the rural space for their home or business. That's the cooperative difference at work! ■

Join the Crowd

Southwest Michigan Broadband Revolution Underway

If you've been waiting for a reliable, affordable high-speed internet solution like many of your southwest Michigan friends and neighbors, the wait is almost over!

As shared on page 4, Midwest is implementing a fiber-based communication system to support current and future technology needs and opportunities for the utility. In doing so, we can leverage the investment and fiber capacity to offer the ultimate broadband internet solution as a service option through Midwest Connections, our unregulated telecommunications service. It's a win for Midwest and our members as

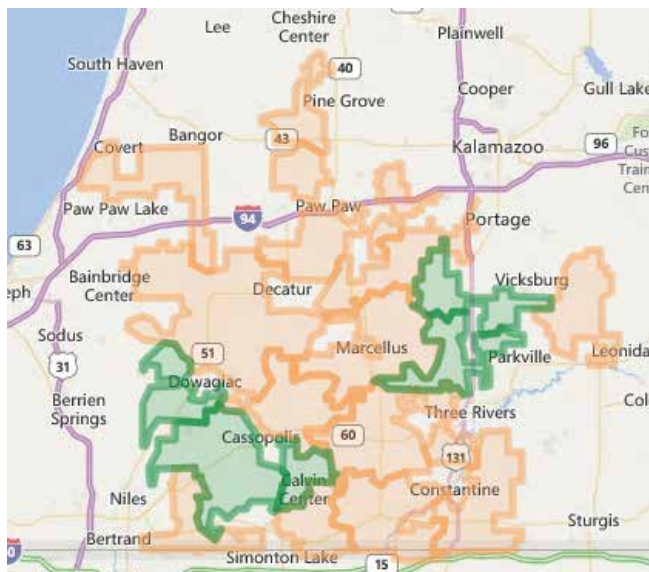
we ready ourselves for whatever technology brings, and a home-run for everyone who has long awaited a true high-speed internet experience!

In March, we launched TeamFiber.com to feature the products and plans available through our new fiber-to-the-premise service. In a nutshell, the basic residential package starts at just \$49.95 per month and offers speeds of 25 mbps down and 10 mbps up with unlimited data. That's roughly 100 times faster than traditional dial-up and nearly 10 times faster than DSL or basic cable packages. Business packages and crystal-clear telephone over your fiber network are also available.

When visiting TeamFiber.com, we invite you to "Join The Crowd". This takes you to an interactive part of the website where you can view our 2015 construction plans and the zones that comprise the remainder of the five-year build. By checking your address, you can see if you're in the 2015 plan and sign up from there. If you're not in the 2015 plan but part of the five-year build, you can sign up as an expression of interest. This doesn't obligate you, but does show us the zones with the greatest interest. While we're committed to building out our entire southwest Michigan service territory over the next five years, our annual construction plans will be developed based largely on the zones with the greatest interest. ■



Tim Brown, installation and maintenance technician, installs an outdoor ONT at the home of a new fiber customer. Midwest Connections has more than 500 customers now surfing the web at previously unknown speeds.



The green shaded portions of this zone map indicate areas that are now serviceable or will be under construction in 2015. Visit TeamFiber.com to sign up for service or submit your expression of interest. Future construction plans will be developed based largely on zones with the greatest interest.

Efficient Indoor LIGHTING For Your Home



People often wonder which type of lighting to use in their home with all the choices on the market today. It is important to know the differences between the options available.

The wattage of a light bulb refers to how much electricity it consumes, not how much light it produces. The amount of light is measured in units called lumens. A 60-watt incandescent light bulb produces about 800 lumens of light and a 100-watt bulb about 1,600 lumens.

Today, your primary choices of bulb are halogen, CFLs (compact fluorescent lights) and LEDs (light emitting diodes), which are listed in order of increasing efficiency. For many home applications, LEDs are the best choice even though they cost more initially.

- **Halogen bulbs** are basically incandescent bulbs with halogen gas around the filament to improve efficiency enough to meet efficiency standards.
- **CFLs** are much more efficient, using only about 25 percent as much electricity as incandescent bulbs to produce the same amount of light—and they last 10 times longer.
- **CFLs** can produce true full-spectrum (simulates natural sunlight) light quality and can be purchased with warm white, cool white and daylight color temperatures. Daylight lamps have an even higher color temperature, and they produce more accurate colors and are good for tasks such as reading and painting.
- **LEDs** are the newest and most efficient light source available and provide an excellent payback. A 12-watt LED produces as much light as a 60-watt incandescent bulb. The LED bulb should also last a minimum of 20,000 hours. Most are dimmable, work well at cold temperatures and reach full brightness immediately. LEDs gradually get dimmer over time. When a LED is rated for 20,000 hours, its output will stay above 70 percent of its original brightness for that time.

If you have been using incandescent bulbs, you are probably accustomed to a yellowish light quality. This is called the “color temperature” of a bulb. Incandescent bulbs are in the 2700-degree K range. The whiter “daylight” LEDs and CFLs are in the 4,000- to 5,000-degree K range. Most people grow accustomed to the whiter light and prefer it. The color temperature is listed on the packaging.

CRI (color rendering index) is another quality of the light bulb to consider. A higher CRI makes objects in a room look more like they would look under natural sunlight. A CRI above 80 is considered adequate for homes, but 90 or above makes everything look better and doesn’t cost much more.

There are four general types of lighting uses—ambient, accent, decorative and task. Ambient lighting is for general illumination with comfortable brightness. Accent lighting can create a mood in the room or highlight areas or objects. Decorative lighting is when the light itself is the object, such as a chandelier. Task lighting is for reading or doing a specific activity.

For effective lighting, install several grouped circuits with dimmers to control and vary the lighting schemes. For example, choose high-CRI bulbs over a dining table to enhance the appearance of food. An overhead high color-temperature bulb above a chair would be good for reading or other tasks.

For existing rooms, where it may not be easy to rewire or add circuits, switch to LEDs in most fixtures, and install dimmer wall switches.

The goal for lighting efficiency is to use as little lighting as needed. Where you do not have a wall switch, such as with a table lamp, install a three-way socket and use a new three-way LED. Add a four-bulb lighting kit to a ceiling fan with a switch to allow you to switch on fewer than all four lights.

No matter which type of bulb or light fixture you choose, start saving by turning lights off when you leave a room. ■



HOMEMADE PIZZAS

Delicious And Easy Pizza Recipes

Pesto Salad Pizza *(pictured)*

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 2 c. basil | red peppers, sliced |
| ½ c. parmesan cheese | goat cheese and/or feta |
| ¼ c. olive oil | and/or mozzarella |
| 2 cloves garlic | mixed greens |
| flour tortillas | balsamic vinegar |
| onions, sliced | |

Preheat oven to 400°. Put basil, parmesan, olive oil and garlic in a food processor and blend. Line a baking pan with foil. Place tortilla shell on pan and smear with pesto. Add onions, peppers, and cheese of choice. Bake for 10 minutes. Add mixed greens to top of tortilla pizza. Drizzle with balsamic vinegar. Enjoy!

Janice Clarkson, Granger

Mexican Pizza

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 pizza dough | 1 T. chili powder |
| 12-oz. ground turkey or beef | 1 can (16-oz.) refried beans |
| 1 small onion, sliced | salsa |
| 3 t. ground garlic | 1–2 c. shredded Mexican cheese |
| 2 t. ground cumin | |



Spread pizza dough on sprayed pizza pan. Bake at 375° for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, cook the meat. Drain. Add onion and spices. When pizza crust has cooked, spread the refried beans over it. Then layer the meat, salsa and cheese. Return to oven; bake for 10 more minutes. Options:

sour cream, shredded lettuce, sliced black olives. Any of the ingredients can be altered for individual taste.

Dianne Compo, Brimley

Cool Veggie Pizza Appetizer

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 2 8-oz. cans refrigerated crescent dinner rolls | 1¼ t. onion salt |
| 2 8-oz. pkgs. Philadelphia brand cream cheese, softened | 1 c. broccoli flowerets |
| 1 c. Miracle Whip salad dressing | 1 c. chopped, seeded tomato |
| 1½ t. dill weed | 1 c. chopped green bell pepper |
| | ¼ c. chopped onion |
| | ½ c. olive slices (optional) |

Heat oven to 375°F. Press dough onto bottom and sides of 15x10x1 inch baking pan. Bake 11–13 minutes or until golden brown; cool. Mix cream cheese, salad dressing, dill and onion salt until well blended. Spread on crust. Top with remaining ingredients. Refrigerate. Cut into squares. Makes 24.

Beatrice Richard, Posen

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite “Fresh Seafood” recipes by **July 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)!

Photos—831 Creative

Country Lines, Your Partner In Communication



For over 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. This is our most empowering communication tool to keep members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op.

Each issue contains information about our services, director elections, member meetings, and the staff and management decisions you need to know about as an owner of the co-op.

The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members.

The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on your behalf at an average cost of \$3.63 per year, paid as part of your electric bill. The current magazine cost is 49 cents per copy—the same cost as a first-class stamp. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) in Okemos. As always, we welcome and value your comments.

Notice to Members of Midwest Energy Cooperative

Case No. U-15818 2013 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately 2 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012 and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, Midwest Energy Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. Midwest acquired 18,170 renewable energy credits and 639 incentive credits from its wholesale power supplier, Wolverine Power Cooperative, Inc. Wolverine will continue to generate renewable energy and bank unused renewable energy credits for future use and compliance with statutory renewable portfolio standard requirements on behalf of all of its members.

A full copy of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at teammidwest.com or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.

From our family to yours, have a happy and safe Memorial Day weekend.

Cooperative offices will be closed for Memorial Day on Monday, May 25. Payments may be made at the drop box and will be posted on the next open business day.



2014 ANNUAL REPORT



Independent Auditor's Report

Following are excerpts from the audit report. The full report may be accessed at TeamMidwest.com or by calling 800-492-5989.

We have audited the accompanying balance sheets of Midwest Energy Cooperative as of December 31, 2014 and 2013, and the related statements of revenue, patronage capital, and cash flows for the years then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of Midwest Energy Cooperative's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audits.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the

risk of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Midwest Energy Cooperative and subsidiary as of December 31, 2014 and 2013, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Harris Group
March 17, 2015

Director's Compensation Disclosure

Elected directors are paid an annual retainer of \$1200 and a per diem based on board position, and years of service or credential status for meetings attended on behalf of the cooperative. The chairman is paid an annual retainer of \$2200.

STATEMENTS OF REVENUES Years ending December 31, 2014 and 2013 (Dollars in 000)

	2014	2013
Operating Revenues	\$ 76,464	\$ 73,212
Operation & Maintenance Expense	65,458	62,349
Depreciation, Taxes, Interest, Etc.	10,526	10,336
Operating Margin	480	527
Capital Credits	1,597	2,379
Other non-operating income (exp)	533	996
Net Margins (Loss)	\$ 2,610	\$ 3,902

BALANCE SHEETS Years ending December 31, 2014 and 2013 (Dollars in 000)

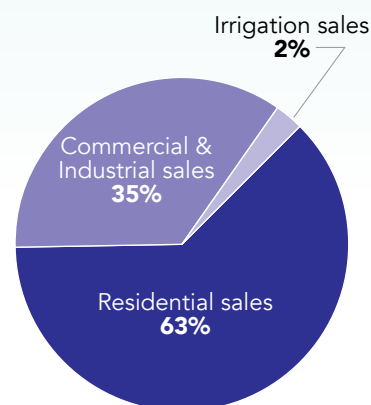
ASSETS

Utility plant in service, net	\$ 111,062	\$ 107,573
Other assets and investments	24,681	22,848
Current assets	6,977	9,402
Deferred charges	161	1,167
Total Assets	\$ 142,881	\$ 140,990

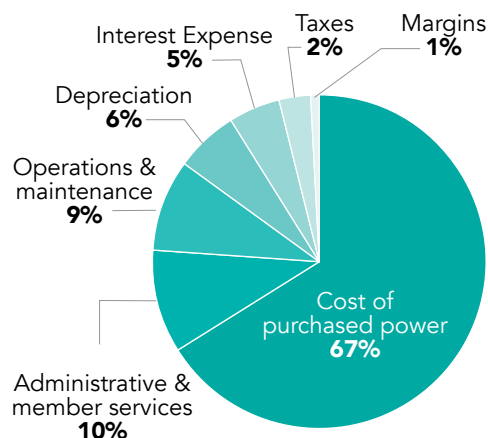
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES

Equities	\$ 42,003	\$ 43,830
Long-term debt	76,815	81,355
Accumulated operating provisions	5,038	1,632
Current liabilities	18,363	12,821
Deferred credits	662	1,352
Total Equity and Liabilities	\$ 142,881	\$ 140,990

Where Our Sales Come From



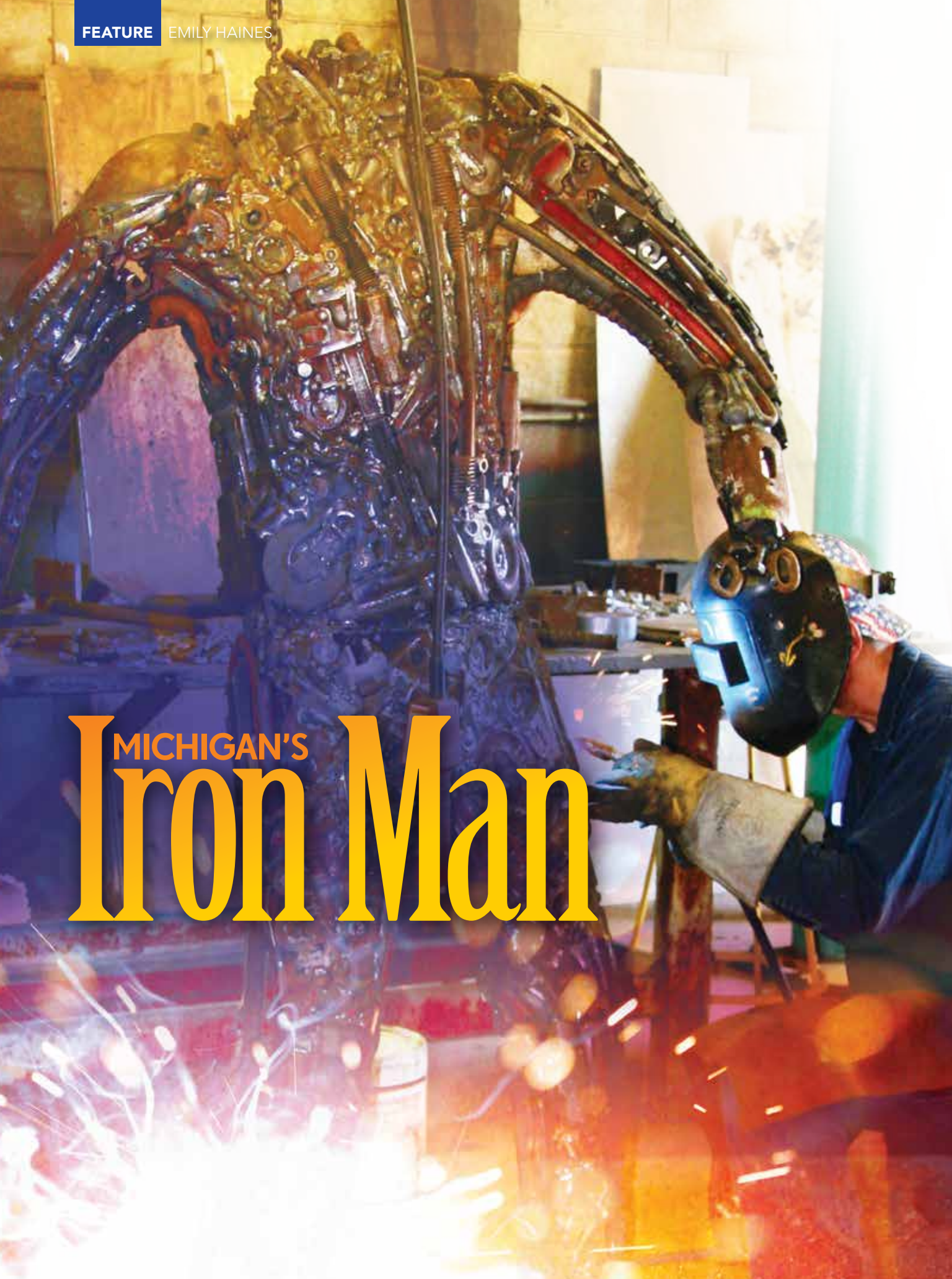
Where Your Dollar Goes



FEATURE

EMILY HAINES

MICHIGAN'S Iron Man



While he makes his living from his 37-year-old business, Moran Iron Works, Tom Moran has had a second career as a teacher. His first student? Tom Moran.

The son of a career lumberjack, Moran always had an interest in metalwork, but with college an unlikely possibility and his high school no longer able to support metals classes, he used some of the abandoned tools in his shop class to teach himself how to weld.

"I started tinkering with some tools and working on broken chairs in classrooms," says Moran. "Then, it was fixing trailers for teachers. By the time I graduated, I'd become the unofficial school repairman."

After graduation, Moran worked in the logging business with his father and at night made his own tools, practiced his craft and eventually started his own business. The land where he first built, an abandoned dairy farm in Oneway, MI, has since undergone 29 additions.

As his business grew, he was faced with the challenge of finding qualified welders and metalworkers in northeast Michigan.

"While we're in love with northeast Michigan, it's hard to recruit skilled tradespeople in this area of the state," he explains. "We found the best way to make sure that we had a qualified workforce was to create our own training program," Moran says. "We started evening classes for people with potential and interest. Some were folks we knew we'd be hiring and others were members of our community, like farmers or loggers, who wanted to be more self-sufficient."

The training program is now a full-time school that is staffed by Moran Iron Works employees—10 full- and part-time teachers.

While Moran provides plenty of opportunities to teach his beloved trade, he's humble and certain there is always more to learn.

Moran Iron Works has recently embarked on a large-scale project with



Tom Moran of
Moran Iron Works.

moraniron.com

Shepler's Mackinac Island Ferry, to build their most recent ship—an 85-foot, all-aluminum ferry christened "Miss Margy" that is thought to be the first ever built entirely in Michigan. While Moran Iron has worked on many ship extensions, retro-fittings and conversions, this is the first vessel they've built from start to finish.

"Every project is unique and there is always something to learn," Moran says. "With a project of this scale and scope, where you're integrating several complex systems, you're going to run into challenges. But in the end, the old lesson of 'a job well planned is a job well done' had really seen us through. Ship building is an art. The teams at Moran Iron have really turned it into an art and a science."

When he's not busy building ships, turbine components or customizing industrial and commercial fabrication jobs, Moran creates large-scale art projects for the annual Fourth of July parade in Oneway and as donations for area fundraisers.

"Maybe the art has gotten out of hand over 45 years," Moran jokes. "Every year I say I'll do something smaller and easier, but it hasn't really gone that way."

Maybe that's the next lesson for Moran, but for now—the bigger the better. ■



Midwest In The Community

Giving back to our communities is one of the core values of Team Midwest. We believe in doing what we can, individually and as a family of employees, to strengthen and support the communities in which we live, work and serve. Following are some of the ways we've impacted our communities and members in recent months.

UNITED WAY DAY OF READING

Linda Carango, Midwest member and financial analyst, reads "Mr. Lincoln's Whiskers" to a group of second grade students at Sam Adams Elementary School in Cassopolis. A team of employees promoted the impact of reading on youth as volunteers with the United Way of Southwest Michigan Day of Reading. The annual event matches community and business volunteers with preK-5th grade classrooms from all corners of Berrien and Cass Counties.



SAY GOODBYE

Make the call and save

If you have a refrigerator or freezer that is 10, 20 or even 30 years old, **now** is the time to recycle it.

Use Midwest Energy Cooperative's Appliance Recycling program, a service that hauls away your appliance for FREE. PLUS you get a \$50 rebate for participating!

ENERGY TIP: After making the call for your free pick-up, purchase a new ENERGY STAR refrigerator or chest freezer and receive a \$25 rebate for your smart decision.



Energy
Optimization



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.



SAVING LIVES

Co-op member and Customer Care Representative Dawn Mallo sits calmly as the technician from Michigan Blood preps for her blood draw. The first-time blood donor was one of 28 Midwest employees who volunteered for the February event hosted at Midwest Energy. In total, 20 pints of blood were collected to be used in hospitals throughout Michigan.

IT'S REALITY

Nicole Barfell, community development specialist, helps a student understand how to budget and plan for utility expenses. Nearly 300 high school students from across southwest Michigan got a dose of reality in February as Midwest Energy Cooperative and Southwestern Michigan College teamed up for "It's Reality", an interactive personal financial management exercise for high school students.

The half-day program offered a practical, hands-on experience designed to teach students about budgeting and learning to live within their financial means. Each student was provided a monthly net income based on a career of their choosing, and was tasked with visiting stations where they had to make decisions for basic needs and lifestyle choices. Examples included housing, transportation, loans, banking accounts and utilities. Like the popular game, "Life", choices and chance helped students understand some of the financial realities of a post-high school world. ■



ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

For your safety and for the protection of underground utility lines, always follow these steps before starting any digging project.

1. Contact MISS DIG at 811 or missdig.org
2. Wait 3 days for utility owners to mark their lines
3. Respect the marks
4. Dig with care



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

visit missdig.org for more information

Slow Down, Go Around Roadside Utility Workers

Summer travel, which lines up so neatly with utility construction and maintenance season, is just around the corner.

And Joe McElroy, safety director for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA), is bracing for the almost daily reports of heart-stopping near-misses as electric equipment operators, lineworkers, groundmen and meter readers tackle projects in the rights-of-way they share with streets, roads and highways.

"It's one of the biggest concerns I have as a safety provider," McElroy says. And, protecting lineworkers by training them to do these jobs safely is getting harder. "Distracted drivers, primarily from mobile devices, are making roadway work zones more dangerous. Most any utility worker can tell you about a near-miss event. We are now encouraging work zones to be set up with an unoccupied buffer vehicle parked behind our bucket trucks to help absorb a crash."

During McElroy's 10 years at MECA, no co-op crew member has been killed in a traffic incident while on the job, but he recalls many suspected distracted-driver accidents and near-misses. "At safety meetings, operations personnel can usually recall an incident that has occurred within the past few weeks."

Last spring, McElroy joined utility reps, legislators, union leaders and Transportation Department and Public Service Commission officials, as Gov. Rick Snyder proclaimed May 22 as "Roadside Safety Awareness Day."

"Roadside safety awareness starts with us letting motorists and pedestrians know they are entering a work zone," McElroy says. "Orange signs, cones and amber lights should be enough for people to understand they are approaching an active worksite, but even with all the proper safety equipment in place, incidents still happen."

Roadside accidents annually kill 100 Michigan police officers, firefighters, and line or sanitation workers. Another 20,000 such public servants are injured by vehicles while doing their jobs.

McElroy is also quick to recommend stiffer penalties for these incidents and fatalities, and says a consistent national approach is needed. "And, I have encouraged our co-ops to use local law enforcement to help out in high-traffic areas or where visibility can be an issue. Drivers are accustomed to seeing our signs and cones, so they still speed or become

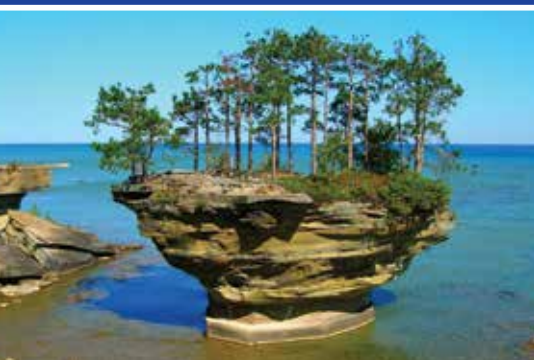


distracted. Once law enforcement is present, they seem to get it."

Meanwhile, McElroy drills co-op and municipal utility crews how to properly set up a safety perimeter. "Their situational awareness also has to be keen in the work zone, and those of us in the utility safety field have to raise awareness of these dangers."

Please "Slow Down, Go Around, and Watch Out" for folks who serve us by working near the roadways. ■

— Reprinted in part from RE Magazine



«« Do You Know Where This Is?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **June 10** will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 credit for electricity from their electric co-op.

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: Country Lines Mystery Photo, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, 48864. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op. Only those sending complete information will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the July/August 2015 issue.

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