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'First Lady of
Energy'

Plus!

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On Camera

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9 Scholarships Awarded

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E-mail: cdorr@meca.coop

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.

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



IN THIS ISSUE



6 OUR ENERGY
Tips For Building A Strong, Efficient Home
James Dulle



7 HOME COOKING
Recipes For Campfire Cooking
Christin McKamey & Our Readers



10 FEATURE
Valerie Brader Is Michigan's New Energy Chief
John Schneider



13 SAFETY
Plant The Right Tree In The Right Place



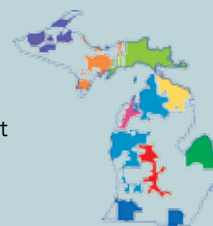
14 READERS' PAGE
Cuba: More Than Cars And Cigars
John Schneider

ON THE COVER*

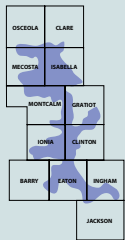
Chosen as the executive director of the new Michigan Agency for Energy, Valerie Brader says the state faces very serious energy issues but, "Big challenges offer the biggest opportunity to make a difference."

Photo—Matthew Mitchell

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



Michigan's Electric
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Tri-County Electric Cooperative

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

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Portland, MI 48875
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Electric bill/account questions:

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

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(24 hours for emergency calls)

Tri-County Propane:

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High Speed Internet

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Join the conversation at
facebook.com/HomeWorks.org

What Makes Us Different? You Do



Mark Kappler

General Manager

We recently completed our 2015 membership meetings, in which we delivered supper and a co-op update to each of our seven districts. It was gratifying to see such a great turnout overall!

Since HomeWorks is owned and controlled by you and your neighbors—the people who receive electric service from the cooperative—these meetings are one of the ways you help guide and control HomeWorks. If you didn't make it to your meeting this year, we hope you'll mark your

calendar for next May and join us then.

Why do we hold district meetings every year? We ask you to come out each year to, first, conduct the business of the cooperative; second, to elect delegates to the Annual Meeting (this year, it's on Aug. 15); and third, to elect the district officers who run the meetings and serve as the nominating committee every three years. Then, after the business meeting, we provide a brief and, we hope, entertaining update on the cooperative's operations.

This year, we paused to honor our veteran member-owners. As we began planning the meetings, we learned that nearly one-half of our active members have been with HomeWorks for 25 years or more. And eight percent have been member-owners for 50 years plus!

To our long-time members, we say: Thank you for building the cooperative. Thank you for sending good leaders to the board table. And, thank you for raising generations of co-op member-owners, who have or will become co-op leaders.

The thing is, people ask all the time: what makes electric cooperatives different? What makes HomeWorks Tri-County *different*?

Remember, there's a big difference between a cooperative and a corporation. Corporations have to answer to their stockholders with their quarterly profit statements, which creates a focus on the short term.

Cooperatives are less focused on short-term profits and more focused on long-term reliability and affordability. This long-term focus creates a culture of doing the right things, always, for the members.

So, the difference is simple. It's you and your neighbors in all seven of our districts, the members who are engaged in the workings of HomeWorks Tri-County. The members who know they are member-owners and take part by voting, or making sure the board of directors knows about their concerns.

It's the members who've been with us for 25, 30, 50, even 75 years, and those who will be with us 25, 50, or 75 years from now. You are the center of all we do. ■

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

A Special Member Meeting is set for 9 a.m. June 22, at the cooperative's Portland office.

The board of directors will consider changes to the Cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on June 22, 2015, to be held at the Cooperative office at 7973 East Grand River Avenue, Portland, 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 5 minutes.

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

- Discuss participation in the State of Michigan's Low Income Energy Assistance program at the cost of a surcharge, to be determined by the state, on each residential customer's monthly energy bill.

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.

Notice to Members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

April 27, 2015, Open Member Meeting

The HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, at a Special Open Meeting held April 27, 2015, has in accordance with P.A. 167:

Reconciled the 2014 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections. Based on projected kWh sales through December 2015, the adjusted collection factor of \$0.00401/kWh will be used.

For specific details of any HomeWorks tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-800-562-8232 or visit our website at homeworks.org.



Hansen Earns Credentials

Director Kimber Hansen is the latest member of the HomeWorks Tri-County board of directors to earn his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certification from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. To earn the CCD, a director must pass a set of five courses that focus on basic governance and the skills required of cooperative directors to effectively oversee the business of their cooperative.

Photo: Director Kimber Hansen, left, receives his CCD certificate from board chairman Ed Oplinger.

Tips for Building a Strong, Efficient Home

There are new home construction methods available that are much stronger and efficient than typical insulated, wood framing. Some of these methods could more than double the insulation value of typical framed walls.

For a wood-framed house, use staggered, double-stud walls on 24-inch centers. Staggering the wall studs minimizes thermal bridges (direct non-insulated heat flow paths from indoors to outdoors through the wood studs). Also, install rigid foam wall sheathing on the exterior so that all of the lumber's thermal mass is inside of the insulation envelope. This can be covered with any type of exterior finish.

The “stay-in-place” method uses concrete and rigid foam insulation. The insulation forms hold wet concrete and are not removed. They provide the insulation and substrate surface for installing the interior and exterior wall coverings.

A similar method uses hollow foam blocks made to fit your home's plans. The blocks have an open cavity throughout the inside. Concrete is pumped into the top of the walls, which creates a strong, efficient structure.

Structural insulated panel (SIP) systems have a thick foam core sandwiched between two sheets of various materials. The SIP panels are often used for the exterior walls to enclose post and beam-framed and steel-framed homes for the highest insulation levels possible.

SIP panels are made of oriented strand board (OSB), a strong, highly insulated panel. The panel is self-supporting, and once attached to the foundation and connected, the SIP panels support themselves, the floors, ceiling and roof.

Steel-framed construction is excellent if strength is the goal. Steel does not burn or change shape over time as lumber does, and each steel piece is nearly identical.

Steel allows for thinner studs and wider spacing to be used. This leaves room for additional insulation inside the walls and fewer thermal bridges.

Consider these choices when selecting construction methods that will affect the strength, efficiency and durability of the finished product. The time to learn more is before you make these decisions. ■



With “stay-in-place” construction, once the insulated forms are erected and reinforced steel installed, the concrete is pumped in from the top.

Photo – Eco-Block



CAMPFIRE COOKING

Recipes for your outdoor kitchen.

Mountain Man Breakfast

- 12" cast iron dutch oven
- ½ lb. chopped bacon or bulk pork sausage (not links)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 32-oz. bag frozen, shredded hash brown potatoes
- 12 eggs, beaten in a separate bowl
- ½ lb. shredded cheddar cheese
- 8 oz. jar salsa



You will need a nice bed of coals or briquettes, NOT a roaring fire. Preheat the dutch oven bottom on the coals/briquettes. Off to the side, heat the lid on the coals. Brown the bacon/sausage, stirring often, then add the chopped onion and stir until the onion is

translucent. Remove the bacon/sausage and onion from the dutch oven and drain on paper towels. Wipe out the excess grease from the dutch oven. Stir in the shredded hash browns and cook until golden brown. Add the bacon and onion back into the oven. Pour the beaten eggs over the potatoes, stir and cover the oven with the preheated lid. Place a layer of hot coals or briquettes (about 15–18 coals) on top of the oven and bake until the eggs are soft set, not too wet, checking after 5 minutes (timing will depend on how hot your fire is). Sprinkle with the cheese and continue cooking until the eggs are set and cheese is melted.

Serve salsa on the side. Recipe serves 8 generously and can be easily converted for a smaller dutch oven.

This was a favorite for my husband's Boy Scout troop!

Peg Peppler, Empire

Campfire Chicken Package Meal *(pictured)*

- 1 roll heavy duty foil
- 5 peeled carrots, cut into ½-inch slices
- 1 can peas, drained
- 1 can whole sweet corn, drained
- 1 lb. bacon, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut in ½-inch strips
- 3 large, peeled potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. onion powder
- 1 t. chicken broth, dissolved into 1 c. hot water

Cook bacon in skillet until done; drain and set aside. Tear off pieces of foil, 18 inches long (8 pieces total, you will use double layers of foil). Add vegetables, dividing between each pack. Add in the following order: potatoes on the bottom, carrots, and then peas and corn on top. Divide the chicken equally between the packs and top with bacon. Stir seasonings into cup of broth. Fold foil to make a pouch; pour ¼ c. broth into pouch and seal tightly. Place into campfire and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from fire, open and enjoy. Makes 4 servings.

Ann Brown, Niles

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



Campfire cooking recipes to enjoy.

Chuck Wagon Shepherd's Pie

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 lb. stew beef (cut into bite size pieces) | 2 medium peeled and diced/sliced carrots |
| 1 lb. ground beef | OR 1 can diced/sliced carrots (drained) |
| 1 t. mesquite seasoning | 1 can cut green beans, drained |
| ¼ t. powdered cayenne | 1 can diced tomatoes, undrained |
| ½ t. hot chili powder | 1½ c. water |
| ½ t. garlic powder or 1 clove of fresh garlic, minced | 1½ c. Bisquick mix and water to make medium thick batter |
| 1 medium onion, diced | Note: 1 package of frozen mixed veggies may be substituted for vegetables |
| 2 stalks celery, diced | |
| 3–4 medium to large potatoes, peeled and cubed | |
| 1 can whole kernel corn (drained) | |

In a cast iron Dutch oven, brown meats with seasonings, garlic, onion, and celery over an open fire. Add water and veggies; simmer for 20 minutes or until the liquid is reduced by half and a gravy is formed. Pour Bisquick batter on top. Cover with lid and place 10–12 hot coals on top of the lid. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove coals and carefully remove lid (ashes will give it an undesired flavor). Variations: 1. cubed chicken, cubed pork, ground turkey, cubed venison. 2. Mix up some instant potatoes and spoon on instead of Bisquick. 3. Use 1 c. Bisquick mix, 1 pkg. cornmeal mix, 1 egg and ¾ c. water as the topping batter. Add 2 T. finely diced jalapeno to the batter for an added kick. Or some finely shredded cheese or both!

Ted Herrst, Mancelona

Acorn Squash

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 2 acorn squash | 4-oz. maple syrup |
| 4 slices bacon | heavy duty tin foil |
| 4 t. butter | |

Cut acorn squash through middle; scoop seeds. Place rind down on grate. Put a bacon slice, 1 t. butter and about an ounce of maple syrup in each half squash. Make a pup tent out of tin foil and place over each half squash. Roast over slow fire about an hour. When acorn is fork tender, flip over and add a few small pieces of wood for flame. Cook a few minutes more until slightly charred. Serves 4.

Stephanie Thorne, Vermontville

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 June 30 in any of several ways:

- At the Blanchard or Portland office
- Mail to: People Fund Cookbook, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875
- Email to: 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 for more reader recipes!

Line Crews “Star” in Video Production

To help our members understand which part of their electric service is their responsibility, and which parts are HomeWorks', we created a short video that shows these differences. This has come up in the past after wind and ice storms, when members waited for our crews to come repair their service instead of calling a licensed electrician to make the repairs.

The video will be posted on our Facebook page and on our website, homeworks.org, to serve as a reference material for members.



Before shooting at a site, Evey and his assistant go over the plan with linemen Chris Teachout (at far left) and Chris Reed.



Larry Evey of West Coast Media sets up to film line crews preparing for work in the morning, assisted by line supervisor Chris Reed (in red sweatshirt.)



Evey films a close-up of lineman Jeremy Zbytowski gearing up on the job site.

Area Students Learn About Leadership, Energy, Careers



Jordyn Rademacher (blue helmet) joined with three others to form a ropes-course team at Springhill Camps, Evert, where the Youth Leadership Summit was held.



From left, Jordyn Rademacher of Fowler, Bryce Thelen of Westphalia, and Coral Terry of Mount Pleasant represented HomeWorks Tri-County at the 2015 Youth Leadership Summit.



Coral Terry (green jacket) and Bryce Thelen create a foil boat to race in Springhill's pool.



Coral Terry (green jacket, left) prepares to launch her team's foil boat alongside the other teams.

People Fund Grants Help Library, Food Pantry

Meeting April 22, the Tri-County Electric People Fund board of directors granted a total of \$11,886.09 to six individuals and two community organizations.

These grants are made possible by the generosity of the co-op's members who "round up" their monthly energy bills to the next dollar. The spare change, averaging about 50 cents a month, is used by the People Fund to help families and organizations in the communities throughout the co-op's service area.

Grants were made to:

- \$1,840 to Briggs Public Library, St. Johns, to purchase and install two computer stations;
- \$1,250 to Helping Hands of Eaton County, to purchase personal care items such as shampoo and toothpaste for their food pantry;

- \$900 to a Clare County family for housing expenses;
- \$601 to an Ionia County family for housing and medical bills;
- \$2,493.09 to an Isabella County family for housing repairs and expenses;
- \$1,152 to a Mecosta County family for housing expenses;
- \$1,150 to another Mecosta County family to help pay housing and medical bills; and
- \$2,500 to a Montcalm County family for a new septic tank and drain field.

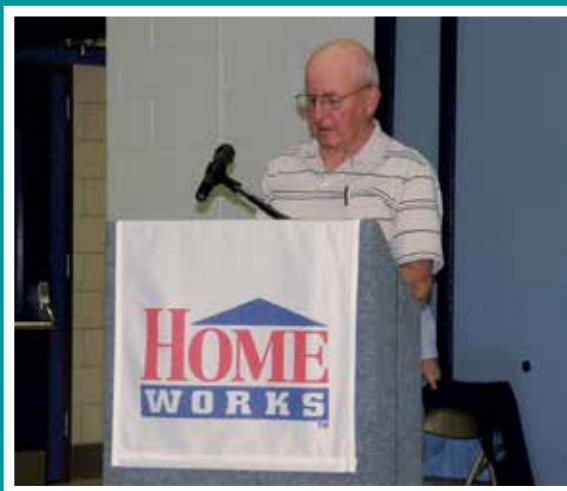
Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI 48875, for an application form and grant guidelines, or visit homeworks.org. Applications must be received by June 29 for the July board meeting, or by Aug. 10 for the August board meeting.

Members Enjoy 2015 District Meetings

Every year, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric employees take the co-op on the road to each of the seven districts.

The district holds its annual business meeting, electing officers who also serve as the nominating committee for the district's board elections; and staff provide an update on co-op operations.

More importantly, it's an opportunity for members to get to know co-op staff, as we are there to answer questions, respond to concerns, and promote programs such as energy efficiency.



District 5 chair Jim Graham ran the business meeting at Fulton.



HomeWorks members generously supported area food banks with donations at each meeting. Here, Don Gilbert, who is also a member of the co-op, collected the donations for the food bank at United Methodist Church at Elsie.



Co-op staff, with help from Chippewa Hills and Beal City FFA students, served up more than 1,000 hot pulled pork sandwiches with pickles, chips, and ice cream cups.



Shelby Ann-Marie, a senior at Portland St. Patrick's and an American Idol Hollywood week contestant in 2014, sang before several of the meetings to entertain members during supper.



Each meeting was opened by the district's board representative. In District 1 (Charlotte), Phil Conklin welcomed members and thanked them for taking time to stay informed.



Robert Eberhardt of Riverdale won the grand prize at Fulton: a 32" flatscreen TV/DVD.



Capture your favorite moments and share!

1. Jody Strang of Vermontville captured the sun setting over a farmer's field in Barry County.
2. This Alpena sunrise was submitted by Ronalda Keefer of Mulliken.
3. "Horses made only more beautiful by the setting sun," says photographer Tanya Troupe of Lake.
4. "My husband of 59+ years was ill and we were enjoying the beautiful day sitting on our deck in late July 2014. The sunset was so awesome so I snapped another picture for our collection, but it became our last sunset together because he passed away on Aug. 6," says Theresa Fry of Big Rapids. She adds, "What a pleasure it's been to be one of your first customers in the late 30s when our family became members of REA."

See more SnapShots at: 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

- "Country Roads", Deadline: July 15 (September issue)
- "Action/Sports", Deadline: Aug. 13 (October issue)

Go to 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.

Students Win Touchstone Energy Scholarships

Seven area high-school seniors will receive Touchstone Energy Scholarships from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative this year. Scholarship winners are chosen based on a combination of academic achievements, leadership both at school and in their community, and their own statements regarding career goals and financial need.

This year's awards included three one-time scholarships of \$1,000 each, and four one-time scholarships of \$500 each.

The \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to:

Graham Lobert of Blanchard, son of William and Cheryl Lobert, who plans to attend Central Michigan University with the goal of becoming a teacher;

Evelyn Okkema, also of Blanchard, daughter of Tjerk and Ramona Okkema, who will study dairy science/dairy tech management at Michigan State University; and

Chase Thelen of Westphalia, son of Mark and Cindy Thelen, who plans to study physical therapy at Central Michigan University.



Graham Lobert



Evelyn Okkema



Chase Thelen

Receiving \$500 each toward their education are:

Kailyn Brugger of Farwell, daughter of Russell and Dorothy Brugger, attending Mid-Michigan Community College to become a veterinary technician;

Robert "Bo" Cobb IV of Lake Odessa, son of Robert III and Rachel Cobb, studying law enforcement at Lansing Community College;

Dana Feldpausch of Fowler, daughter of Ralph and Diane Feldpausch, attending Lansing Community College to become a nurse practitioner; and

Jared Nadeau of Coral, son of Steven and Alicia Nadeau, who will study welding at Montcalm Community College.



Kailyn Brugger



Robert "Bo" Cobb IV



Dana Feldpausch



Jared Nadeau

As a Touchstone Energy® co-op, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative provides high standards of service according to Touchstone Energy's four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community.



Pat Simmer Earns Cooperative Financial Professional Certificate

Pat Simmer, HomeWorks Tri-County's manager of accounting and chief financial officer, recently completed an intensive, three-part finance program, a collaborative between the Cooperative Finance Corporation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Photo: Pat Simmer, left, receives his Cooperative Financial Professional certificate from board chairman Ed Oplinger.

Meeting at Portland April 27, your board of directors:

- Authorized a donation of \$2,500 to the NRECA International Foundation, for projects bringing electricity to remote areas around the world.
- Selected Eide Bailly as the cooperative's auditor for the 2015–17 audits.
- Set April 1 as the Record Date for determining the membership mailing list for the 2015 district meetings.
- Authorized staff to proceed with retirement of capital credits to estates, upon request, using a present value discount rate of 6.02 percent.
- Read and approved Board Policy 302—"Employee Practices" and Board Policy 303—"Wage and Salary Administration."
- Learned there were 60 new members in March.
- Acknowledged the April safety report, listing employee training and minor employee and public incidents.

Meet Michigan's 'First Lady of Energy'

Often referred to as Michigan's "Energy Czar," Valerie Brader chuckles at that moniker. She appreciates the respect, but prefers the title that Gov. Rick Snyder gave her, executive director of the Michigan Agency for Energy.

Brader, 38, is the first boss of a brand-new agency—an acknowledgment by Snyder that keeping the lights on for Michiganders deserves the undivided attention of a high-powered executive. Brader will spearhead, among other things, the effort to keep the juice flowing while Michigan, facing federal mandates on emissions standards, finds cleaner energy sources than its coal-fired power plants.

"That's our first big challenge," Brader says. "That's the issue that will have the greatest impact."

Because of EPA air-quality requirements and the aging of conventional facilities, the state must close 10 coal-fired plants (nine in the Lower Peninsula and one in the Upper Peninsula) within the next few years. Combined, these plants currently supply electricity to more than 1 million customers. Snyder plans to wean Michigan's electric plants off coal and onto cleaner fuels, such as natural gas.

Meanwhile, the state's two largest energy suppliers—Consumers Energy and DTE Energy—see a looming crisis. They predict that, absent proper management of the

transition and careful attention to other energy challenges, rolling blackouts and electrical shortages could become a routine part of life in the state.

Averting that crisis, Brader says, will require a multi-pronged approach involving reducing energy waste, finding the right place for renewable energy in the mix, and balancing the pros and cons of utility regulation versus commercial customer choice.

Brader has been with the Snyder administration since 2011, most recently as a deputy legal counsel and senior policy adviser. Before that, she was the chief energy policy officer at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Brader also practiced environmental and corporate law, and was an adviser to former Idaho Gov. Phil Batt.

Snyder has described the new agency, which will become part of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, as one that "responds to the energy challenges that we know are before us." Choosing Brader to head the Agency is a recognition of both her energy policy expertise and legal skills, he said.

Brader and her husband, Ted, have a 2-year-old son, Finn. She commutes to Lansing from Ann Arbor every day. The high-powered job, the family, the commute...It's no wonder that when asked what she does in her spare time, Brader offers her signature laugh and a "spare *what?*" look.

The one person, Brader says, who doesn't acknowledge that she is juggling a lot of balls in the air is Finn. "He's sure the most important thing in my life is him."

Considering the energy issues Michigan must confront in the immediate future—power plant closings, pressure to deregulate the utilities, etc.—one might wonder why Brader took the job in such a tumultuous time.

"Because it's also the most exciting time....," she says. "Big challenges offer the biggest opportunity to make a difference." ■



“Big challenges
offer the biggest
opportunity
to make a
difference.”



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Purchase your new ENERGY STAR appliances at the store of your choice, then apply for a rebate from the Energy Optimization program. Simply fill out the rebate form online at michigan-energy.org and mail, fax, or email it to the Energy Optimization program to receive your check. Please visit michigan-energy.org for more information, or call 877.296.4319. ■

ENERGY STAR Product/Appliance	Rebate Amount
Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs	Varies by retailer via in-store mark-down
LED light bulbs	Varies by retailer via in-store mark-down
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Ceiling fan (with light kit)	\$15
CFL fixture	\$10
Smart power strip	\$10
Room air conditioner	\$25
Dehumidifier	\$25
Dishwasher	\$25
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Refrigerator	\$25
Chest freezer	\$25
TV (21"–50")	\$25
TV (51" +)	\$50



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Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.

Where Does My Power Come From?

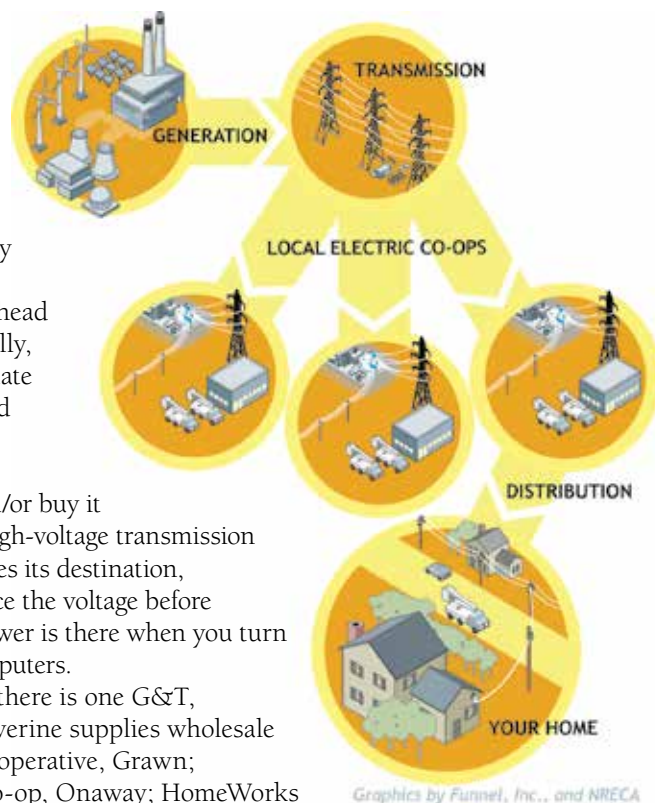
Every month you pay your power bill to your electric distribution cooperative. But have you ever wondered where that electricity comes from?

Generally, it's not produced in your neighborhood—most electricity travels quite a distance from where it's actually generated across high-voltage transmission lines to reach the local distribution system and, finally, your home.

Your home or business receives electricity from one of roughly 840 electric distribution cooperatives in America. These local, member-owned, not-for-profit utilities build and maintain overhead and underground lines and equipment to deliver power. Typically, distribution co-ops do not generate electricity or directly negotiate with power providers. That role usually lies with generation and transmission cooperatives (G&Ts).

G&Ts are wholesale power suppliers owned and governed by electric distribution co-ops. They produce electricity directly and/or buy it in bulk from other power suppliers, then ship that power over high-voltage transmission lines to local distribution co-ops' equipment. When power reaches its destination, distribution co-ops must use transformers at substations to reduce the voltage before sending it over their lines to your home or business. Now the power is there when you turn on the lights, heat and cool your homes, and power up your computers.

Today, there are 65 G&Ts in the United States. In Michigan, there is one G&T, Wolverine Power Cooperative. Headquartered in Cadillac, Wolverine supplies wholesale power to five distribution cooperatives: Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Grawn; Great Lakes Energy, Boyne City; Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, Onaway; HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Portland; and Midwest Energy Cooperative, Cassopolis. Wolverine also has two licensed alternative electric supplier members: Spartan Renewable Energy and Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative, both in Cadillac. ■



Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For safety, plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines

Power line right-of-way



There's More To Cuba Than Cars, Cigars

wanted to see Cuba before corporate interests prevail, and the mysterious country 100 miles from Key West, FL, becomes South Beach South. As U.S.-Cuba hostility softens, the island nation is poised to become an American tourist mecca.

Around Christmas, I received a brochure from the Michigan State University Alumni Association. "Cuba," it said. "A People-to-People Educational Exchange." The offer: an eight-day exploration of a place few Americans have seen; 27 people, including my wife and I, accepted. Our group claimed 17 Michiganders, including Ross and Brenda Biederman. Biederman is president of the Midwestern Broadcasting Co., which includes radio station WTCM in Traverse City.

Despite the recent thaw in U.S.-Cuba relations, U.S. tourism is not yet allowed. The Alumni Association holds a federal license, which demands strict adherence to the educational mission. Reflecting that, our agenda included scholarly lectures and visits to a school, an agricultural commune, and other non-tourist places.

Yet, we found time for salsa dancing, cruising Havana in vintage convertibles and sampling local mojitos and Cuba Libres (rum, coke and lime juice).

Havana's iconic image—1940s and '50s American cars—are the most conspicuous evidence of Cuba's arrested development, a result of the 53-year-old U.S. trade embargo. Nearly everything there suggests a bygone era.

Our group stayed in Havana for five nights, then in Ciefuegos, on the southern coast, for two nights. In eight days we immersed ourselves in Havana's street life and explored Cuba's lush mountain forests and pristine Caribbean seaside.

One disappointment: mediocre cuisine. If you're traveling for the cuisine, go to France—not to a country known for rice and beans. Also, shoppers will encounter a paucity of possibilities. There's little to buy, except cigars and rum; U.S. citizens can bring back \$100 worth of each.

Those are trivial complaints. If you go to Cuba, you'll find the people welcoming, the music irresistible, street life stimulating, and the scenery breathtaking. It's a fascinating country. ■

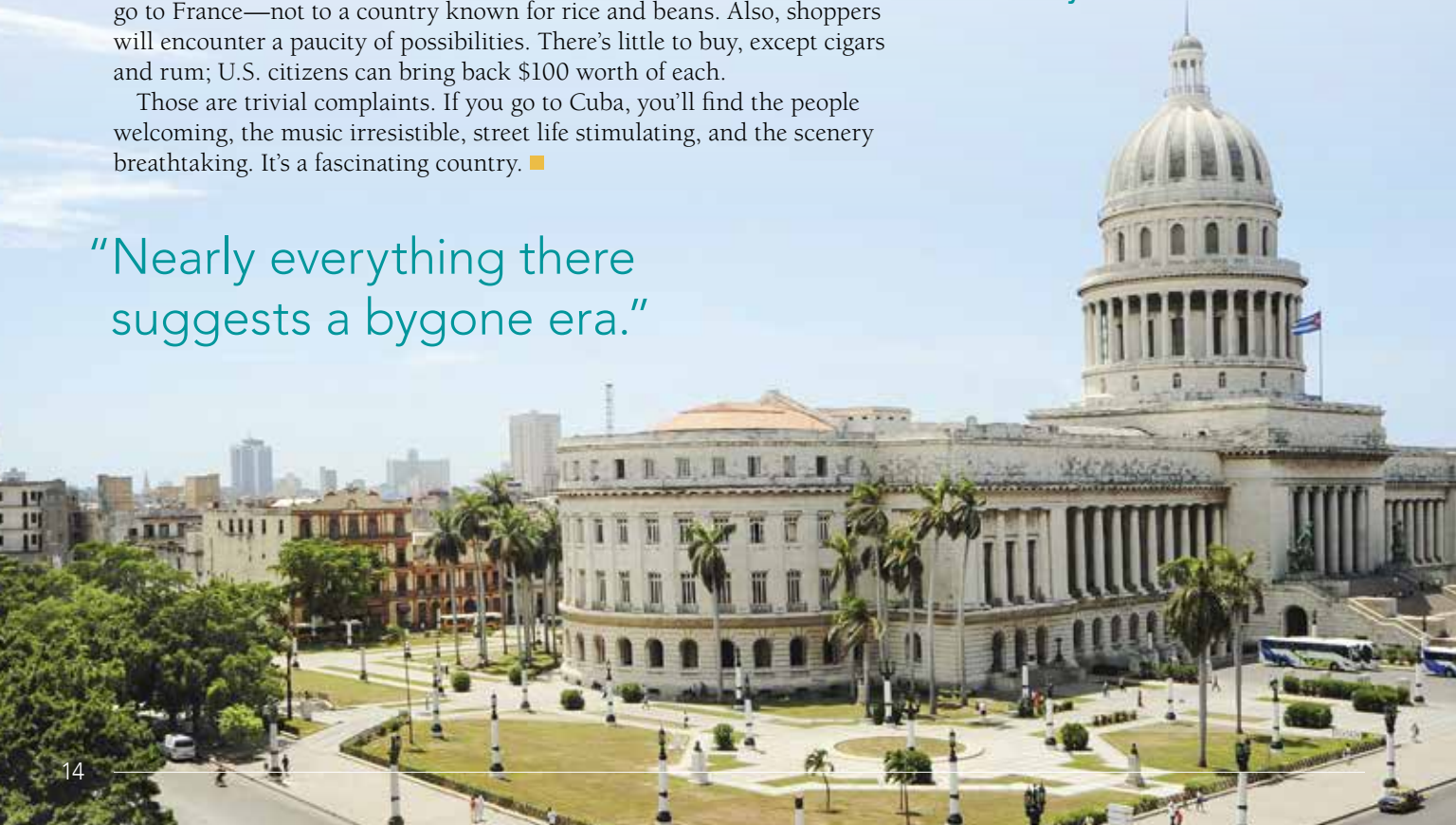
"Nearly everything there suggests a bygone era."



At the Partagas cigar factory in Havana, each employee gets four cigars a day to smoke while he (or she) works.



Cuba is known for vintage cars. Shown is a '56 Chevy.



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