

Thumb Electric Cooperative

July/August 2015

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Plus!

4 TEC 78th Annual
Meeting Highlights

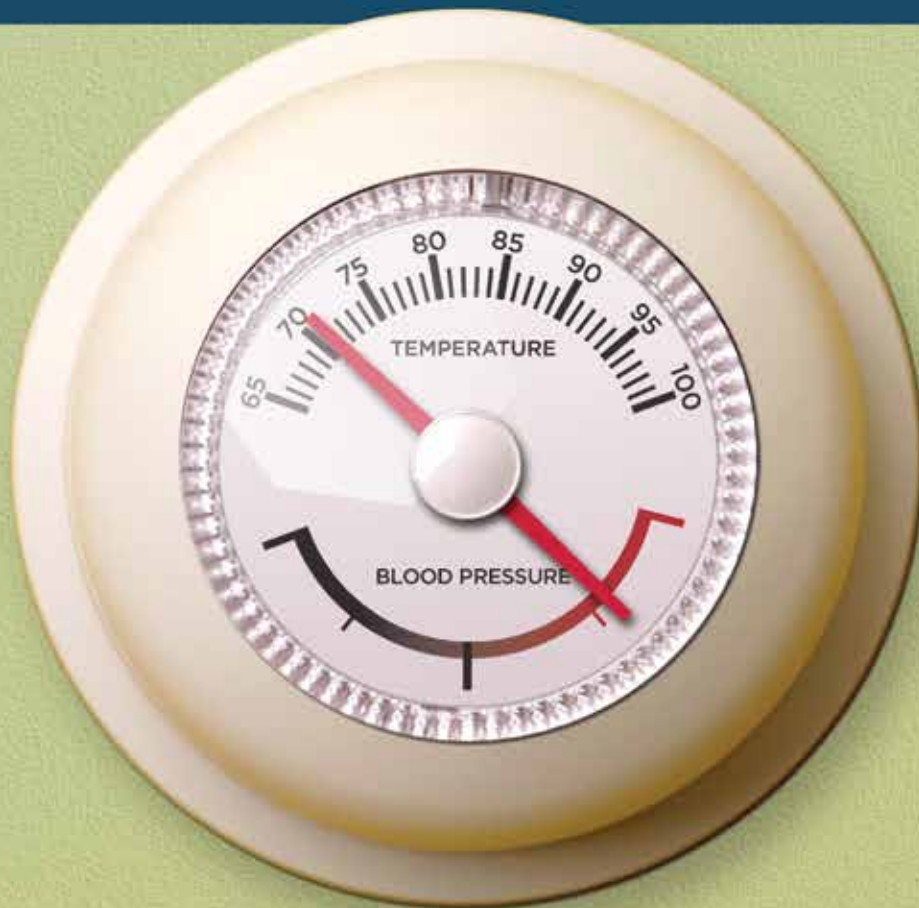
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Home Is Where The

Art Is

Local Co-op Artists On ArtPrize



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July/August 2015
Vol. 35, No. 7

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Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association

Design and Layout

Ciesa Design

Michigan Country Lines, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Okemos, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864.

Subscriptions are authorized for members of Alger Delta, Cherryland, Cloverland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks Tri-County, Midwest Energy, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Thumb electric cooperatives by their boards of directors. Subscriptions for nonmembers are \$6 per year.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Letters to the editor should be sent to *Country Lines*, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. 517-913-3531.
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.

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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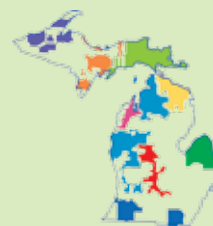
ON THE COVER*

"Trichromatic Spectra," created by Thomas Linder, was a past entry in the ArtPrize competition held annually in Grand Rapids, MI.

Linder's artwork is a kinetic inflatable installation involving thousands of LEDs that are controlled by computer animation.

Photo courtesy of Artprize.

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



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Cooperatives
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General Manager



Dallas Braun
General Manager

Thumb Electric Cooperative Holds 78th Annual Meeting

Louis Wenzlaff, President of the Board of Directors, opened the 78th Annual Meeting of TEC members held on June 13, at the Cass City Recreational Park.

An estimated 800 people attended the meeting, which was highlighted by the election of three Directors, and numerous entertainment activities featured as a part of TEC's Member Appreciation Day/Annual Meeting.

President Wenzlaff introduced the members of the current TEC Board of Directors including Donald Wolschleger, Beth McDonald and Randall Dhyse, Huron County; Kim Nunn, Lynn Morell and Duane Kursinsky, Sanilac County; and Jonathan Findlay and Carl Cousins, Tuscola County. Also introduced was General Manager Dallas Braun.

The Cooperative met all of its financial requirements in 2014 and remains financially strong. TEC's Board President, Louis Wenzlaff, highlighted the following areas:

- Since patronage capital retirements began, TEC has refunded approximately \$7 million dollars to its members.
- In 2014 TEC employees and contractors designed and constructed over \$3.9 million dollars of new utility plant bringing TEC's total investment to over \$83 million dollars serving 12,211 member-accounts in the three County areas of Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola.
- The Cooperative continues to make capital investments in the electrical system. Over \$4.5 million dollars of upgrades are planned and under construction for 2015. TEC employees and outside line-construction contractors will be performing the work.
- The Cooperative paid \$713,847 in property taxes to schools and other governmental bodies in Huron, Sanilac, and Tuscola Counties in 2014.
- The Cooperative continues to work with its Statewide and National Organizations to ensure that issues that may affect the availability, reliability and affordability of electricity to its membership are heard by our elected officials in Lansing and Washington, DC.
- The Cooperative continues to support/promote "ACRE", the Political Action Committee (PAC) for all Electric Cooperatives by offering TEC members the ability to participate directly.
- The Cooperative continues to support the future leaders by sponsoring eligible students to attend the Statewide Youth Leadership Summit near Cadillac, Michigan and also the Youth Tour in Washington, DC.
- In 2014 the Cooperative refreshed/updated their website. A new Smartphone app was offered that allows members to pay their bill, enter meter readings, report outages, and manage their electric consumption. A 665 KW solar array was constructed on TEC property. This array owned by DTE Energy was energized earlier this year and has the capacity to produce energy for 100 homes.
- Recognized long-time TEC Board Member Karl DeSimpelare who recently retired after serving 25 years on the Board.
- Recognized TEC's employees for continuing to work safely and thanked the employees for their continued dedication and hard work during the past year.

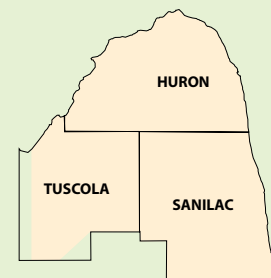
TEC's General Manager, Dallas Braun, highlighted the Cooperative's financial status, rates, member services, marketing activities, patronage capital retirement, and power supply activities. The report included the following:

- General Manager Dallas Braun presented the 2014 financial statement that showed operating revenues of \$19,277,359 and expenses of \$18,028,833 resulting in an operating margin of \$1,248,525. The Cooperative also earned \$334,447 in interest on short-term investments, rental income, subsidiary income, and patronage capital from other Cooperative organizations. Total margins for 2014 were \$1,582,972. Member's patronage capital accounts were allocated 7.9 cents on each dollar paid by TEC members in 2014. Approximately 10% of this 2014 patronage along with another \$700,000 for the years 1983, 1984, and 1985 was retired and appeared as a credit on a separate line-item on members May 2015 electric bills.
- The Cooperative continues to offer Energy Optimization Programs to its members to encourage them to use energy more efficiently and thus allow them to save money. Energy Optimization is targeted at the elimination of electricity waste by encouraging the use of energy efficient devices, and its goal is to not only reduce emissions but delay the need for the construction of new power plants.
- The Cooperative continues to offer other money saving programs to its members. Members were thanked for their participation in TEC's energy management programs. Approximately 50% of TEC members are participating in TEC's managed water heating and dual-fueled heating and air-conditioning programs. TEC's Energy Management Programs combine high efficiency money-saving systems along with conservation during periods of peak demands.
- Through its subsidiary, Thumb Energy Services, the Cooperative continues to offer propane service to approximately 1,100 members and non-members alike. The most popular program is the metered program where the user does not pay for the propane until after they use it.
- The Cooperative continues to meet the State Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS), which requires that all Michigan utilities purchase 10% of electricity from Michigan renewable energy sources in 2015. The Cooperative is complying by obtaining qualified renewable energy credits (RECs) from their wholesale power supplier.
- TEC continues its system maintenance program, including right-of-way-clearing, vegetation spraying, pole testing, and other improvement programs.
- U.S. Congresswoman Candice Miller's Aide—Ed Smith, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow's Regional Manager—Derrick Mathis, Michigan Senator Mike Green, Michigan Representative Paul Muxlow, and Michigan Representative Ed Canfield were introduced and briefly spoke to the membership. All were recognized for their support of Thumb Electric Cooperative and the rural electric program.
- In closing his report, General Manager Dallas Braun urged members to continue their strong interest in Thumb Electric Cooperative, to stay engaged, and thanked them for their support.

Re-elected to three-year terms of District 2 were Donald Wolschleger, Huron County; and Jonathan Findlay, Tuscola County. Elected to a three-year term of District 2 was Mike Briolat, Sanilac County. Others nominated for a Director position were Kevin Grifka, Huron County; and Lynn Morell, Sanilac County.

After the business meeting, a lunch was served which was followed by entertainment for all family members with bucket truck rides, pony rides, candy drop, face painting, and other family activities.

In action taken after the annual meeting, the Board of Directors re-elected Louis Wenzlaff President; Donald Wolschleger Vice-President; Beth McDonald Secretary; and Randall Dhyse Treasurer. ■



Thumb Electric Cooperative

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989-658-8571
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*Thumb Electric Cooperative
is an equal opportunity
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Legislation Would Strengthen Tie Between Our Peninsulas



Craig Borr
Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association
President and CEO

The Mackinac Bridge opened to vehicle traffic between the upper and lower peninsulas nearly

60 years ago. To this day, it continues to be a vital commercial link, as well as a symbol of what Michiganders can do when we work together for our state's benefit.

Legislators in Lansing may soon have an opportunity to debate legislation that could be a similar “bridge” for enhanced

flows of electricity between our two peninsulas. But it will take a great deal of determination and willpower to move this legislation forward. There are likely to be many detractors—as there were when we built the “Mighty Mac”.

Legislation was recently introduced in the Michigan Legislature that could result in the development of an additional high-voltage transmission link between the peninsulas. The Senate version of SB 282 was introduced by Sen. Tom Casperson, while the House version, HB 4575, was introduced by Rep. Triston Cole.

Currently, our two peninsulas do not operate as one when it comes to electricity. Michigan policy, utilities and regulators control the Lower Peninsula, while Wisconsin interests and utilities dominate the Upper Peninsula. All too often these competing interests and policies do not align—and customers are caught in the middle.

In addition to creating a more robust electrical tie, the legislation would form one “resource adequacy zone” to include both peninsulas, as well as increase reliability by reducing electrical “congestion” costs involved in the flow of energy between the peninsulas.

These congestion costs are a hidden tax in the cost of electricity. Portions of the northern Lower Peninsula as well as the Upper Peninsula have some of the highest

congestion costs. Residents who live in these congested areas have higher electric costs because of this “hidden tax”. These costs could be dramatically reduced, and in some cases eliminated, if we as a state have the will to invest in a more robust transmission link between the peninsulas.

Since most of Michigan's electric cooperatives are net buyers of wholesale electricity, this legislation could create more competitive markets with additional buyers and sellers of wholesale energy, as well as renewable energy—and that should provide tangible long-term benefits for electric cooperative consumers.

This legislation could also expedite the development of newer, cleaner generating capacity for the Upper Peninsula—an area of our state that recognizes all too well what can happen when there is only one significant generation resource and no meaningful way to access bulk electricity from the Lower Peninsula, where most of Michigan's electrical generating capacity is currently located.

Further development of renewable energy, particularly wind, can also be enhanced with additional connectivity between the peninsulas. The Thumb region of Michigan's Lower Peninsula has been identified as the best region for developing wind energy. A more robust transmission link will allow us to export wind from the Thumb area to the Upper Peninsula—or perhaps export wind from the Great Plains and Upper Midwest to utilities throughout Michigan.

If Michigan legislators have the fortitude to enact this legislation and we eventually fund and construct a new, more robust transmission link between our peninsulas, I believe we will look back someday, like we often do when crossing the “Mighty Mac”, and feel a very real sense of accomplishment that we as Michiganders have done something to benefit many generations.

Time will tell. ■





ALL-AMERICAN FAVORITE BURGERS

Enjoy new twists on well-known favorites.

Bratburger Summertime Sliders



1 pkg. bratwurst
1 lb. 80/20 ground beef
2 pkg. pretzel
dinner rolls

Onion Jam

3 T. butter
¼ c. olive oil
2½ lb. sweet onion,
sliced thin
¼ c. balsamic vinegar
1 T. fresh thyme leaves
(or 1 t. dried)
1 c. pure maple syrup
salt and pepper

Remove bratwurst from casing and mix bratwurst and burger until evenly combined. Make small patties to match the size of your rolls. Salt and pepper to taste and grill or pan fry burgers to taste. Slice rolls, add burgers and top with onion jam and arugula, if desired. To make onion jam, melt butter and olive oil in a dutch oven. Add onions and sauté on low, stirring occasionally for 15–20 minutes. There should not be any “color” or browning; this process will evaporate the extra water in the onions and concentrate the sweet onion flavors. “Low and slow” is the ticket here. When the onions are soft but not quite translucent, add balsamic vinegar, maple syrup and thyme, and cook until liquid is incorporated into onion mixture. Put into 2–3 jars and enjoy! May keep in refrigerator for up to three weeks. Hot water bath or freeze and keep 6 months. Great on grilled fare, pizzas, and omelettes.

Denise Chapel, Gaylord

Bacon Blue Cheeseburger (pictured)

½ lb. bacon, cut into ¼ inch slices	1½ c. crumbled blue cheese
2 lb. 90% lean ground hamburger	8 burger buns
½ t. garlic powder	lettuce
½ t. onion powder	sliced tomatoes
salt and pepper, to taste	sliced onions
	your choice of condiments

In a large skillet, cook sliced bacon until crispy. Remove from skillet and drain on paper towel; discard fat or save for other use. Mix bacon with the hamburger and add the garlic powder, onion powder, salt and pepper. Divide the burger mixture into 8 portions. Divide each portion in half and flatten into patties ¼-inch thick, using waxed paper. Place 2 T. blue cheese in center of 4 patties and top with another patty. Seal by pressing edges together. Cook in large skillet or grill until medium well, or your choice of doneness. Remove from heat and place onto bottom half of buns, and top with more blue cheese and favorite toppings. Serves 4.

Ann Brown, Niles

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite “Candy” recipes by **Aug. 1** and “Easy Chicken” recipes by **Sept. 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

STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-17316-R

- Thumb Electric Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its 2014 power supply cost recovery costs and revenues and for a Times Interest Earned Ratio (TIER) Ratemaking Mechanism review.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, P.O. Box 157, Ubly, Michigan 48475-0157, (800) 327-0166 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Thumb Electric Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: Thursday, July 30, 2015, at 9:00 a.m.

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge **Suzanne D. Sonneborn**

LOCATION: Michigan Public Service Commission, 7109 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, Michigan

PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Thumb Electric Cooperative's (Thumb) April 28, 2015 application to reconcile its 2014 power supply cost recovery (PSCR) costs and revenues. Thumb represented that it experienced a net PSCR overcollection of \$165,662, as adjusted by prior years' overcollections or undercollections. Thumb proposes to roll-in its overcollection into its 2016 PSCR plan. Thumb is not requesting a revenue increase through its TIER Mechanism. Thumb is requesting that the Commission accept its annual code of conduct report and approve amendments to its Tariffs, as described in its filing.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscdockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscdockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by July 23, 2015. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Thumb Electric's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to appear at the hearing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter becomes public information, thus available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules R 792.10422 and R 792.10432. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

A copy of Thumb Electric's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets, and at the offices of Thumb Electric Cooperative. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

The Commission has jurisdiction pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; and the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules, 2015 AC, R 792.10401 et seq.

May 28, 2015

STATE OF MICHIGAN BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-17801

- Thumb Electric Cooperative has filed its Renewable Energy Plan in compliance with Public Act 295 of 2008 and the Michigan Public Service Commission's (Commission) December 4, 2008 Commission Order in Case No. U-15800 and the January 27, 2015 Commission Order in Case No. U-17801.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, Ubly, Michigan 48475-0157, (800) 327-0166 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Thumb Electric Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: Thursday, July 30, 2015, at 10:00 a.m.

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Martin D. Snider

LOCATION: Michigan Public Service Commission, 7109 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, Michigan

PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Thumb Electric Cooperative's (Thumb) May 12, 2015 application seeking approval of its Renewable Energy Plan (REP) in accordance with 2008 PA 295, and the December 4, 2008 and January 27, 2015 Commission Orders in Cases Numbers U-15800 and U-17801, respectively. Thumb represents that it will satisfy Michigan's renewable portfolio standard by obtaining the necessary renewable energy credits.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscdockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscdockets@michigan.gov.

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June 3, 2015

Home is Where the Art Is

Local Co-op Artists on ArtPrize

Coined the largest open art competition in the world—Grand Rapid’s ArtPrize has made its mark on the art world. It has been covered by the likes of *The New York Times* and *GQ* and lauded as both a great art experiment and lambasted as the art equivalent of a reality TV show.

The art competition opens up to any adult artist with the \$50 entry fee and a venue willing to act as its pop-up gallery for the event. When it launched in 2009, no one knew what to expect, but after the first week local restaurants had run out of food, hotels were booked solid and over 200,000 people came from around the country to check out the phenomenon. The big twist is the two \$200,000 grand prizes and eight category awards, resulting in more than \$500,000 awarded by both the public and a jury of art experts.

Whether you love the artful canvas that Grand Rapids becomes once a year or prefer your art in a climate-controlled museum amongst whispered commentary—ArtPrize has some very real rewards for Michigan artists.

“A large number of people see my work at ArtPrize. It is a large-scale event by any measure,” says John Dempsey, who lives on the Ocqueoc River and is a member of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. “The number of people who come to see ArtPrize is extremely large

Acrylic on canvas of a factory ceiling by John Dempsey.



Colleen Whittaker’s Michigan map is made from authentic license plates fitted together like a puzzle.



Craig Snook's artwork, created with shredded paper, makes a kaleidoscope of colors that represents the beauty of a Michigan woodland landscape.



Lily Lihting Li Kostrzewa's "urban interweave" artwork is acrylic and mixed media on canvas.

compared to all of the other exhibition opportunities available to the vast majority of contemporary artists."

A Traverse City artist and member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Royce Deans says that with the sheer volume of people having exposure to his artwork, the feedback is immediate and thrilling. "ArtPrize is a good place to try out some new ideas in front of people. It can be a little dangerous."

The opportunities that ArtPrize exposes participating artists to can be anything from potential buyers, connections with fellow artists and even future employers. Grand Rapids artist and member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, Lily Lihting Li Kostrzewa credits her current teaching position at Kendall College of Art and Design to her participation in ArtPrize. Lily's daughter, Isabella Kostrzewa, entered the ArtPrize young filmmaker awards and won second place. Her prize allowed her to purchase video equipment to continue her passion.

While exposure to a massive audience and opportunities is rewarding, many artists have also benefited on a very personal level.



Royce Deans' "kitsch 2 kunst" is a matrix of 36 panels with original paintings.

"I gained a lot of confidence as an artist," says Craig Snook, an artist who splits his time between Saginaw and Lakeview, and is a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative. "It was a great learning experience and it is fun being known as an 'ArtPrize artist'."

Colleen Whittaker, a Traverse City artist and member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, says overhearing people comment on her artwork allowed her to capture uncensored opinions from the public. "The feedback was overwhelmingly positive, but the ones I remember are the critical comments—which I keep in mind while creating new work. Feedback from such a wide variety of people is invaluable in my quest to create art that appeals to a wide range of people while still being true to my artistic vision." ■

**ArtPrize 2015 will take place
Sept. 23–Oct. 11. Visit Artprize.org
for more information.**

Four Easy Ways to Reduce Commercial Refrigeration Costs

Commercial refrigeration costs can be one of a business owner's greatest expenses. Check out four easy efficiency upgrades below that can help reduce your commercial refrigeration energy usage by up to 35 percent!

1. Anti-sweat heater controls

The electric heaters in cooler and freezer cases run *all the time*, while they only need to kick in when it's extremely humid.

The fix? Anti-sweat heater controls automatically sense humidity levels and selectively run the heaters as needed.
Energy Optimization rebate: \$100 per door.

2. LED cooler case lighting

Older coolers use fluorescent lights that waste most of their energy generating heat instead of light, forcing the refrigeration system to work harder to remove the excess heat.

The fix? Light-emitting diode (LED) technology literally provides cooler light. LED case lights use significantly less electricity and produce 50 percent less heat.
Energy Optimization rebate: \$30 per door.

3. Occupancy sensors

The lights inside reach-in coolers and freezers are on constantly, whether customers are nearby or not.

The fix? LED occupancy sensors trigger lights to illuminate when a shopper approaches the cooler. Or, they can be programmed to stay on for a set amount of time and then shut off. **Energy Optimization rebate:** \$15 per door.

4. ECM motors

The fans that circulate cold air inside reach-in or walk-in coolers and freezers run non-stop, wasting energy and putting extra wear and tear on the equipment.

The fix? Electronically commutated motors (ECMs) are designed to use electricity sparingly, thereby reducing the load on your refrigerator.
Energy Optimization rebate: \$40–80 per motor.

Check out a full list of incentives at michigan-energy.org or call 877.296.4319 for more information.



Jump In

Cool off with energy savings for your business

"Close the refrigerator!" Remember hearing that as a kid? Luckily, plenty of energy-efficient technologies are available today to help keep the electricity costs of commercial refrigeration low, beyond simply keeping the doors shut:

- LED cooler case lighting and occupancy sensors
- Anti-sweat heater controls
- ECM evaporator fan motors

ENERGY TIP: Energy Optimization Program rebates are available for all of the above commercial refrigeration upgrades and more.

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.

Check Your Boat, Dock, and the Neighbor's, Too!

Almost one-half of Michigan is comprised of water, so it's easy to see why Michigan boasts a thriving recreational industry and leads the nation with approximately 1 million registered pleasure boats. For boating and water safety, there are items you must legally have on your watercraft—life vests, fire extinguisher, throwable flotation device, and properly working lights—but make sure the boat and the dock are safe, too.

To help prevent accidents, the National Electrical Contractors Association says:

- All installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor.
- All dock receptacles must comply with the National Electrical Code, which mandates a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI measures a circuit's current and senses any imbalance (such as a discharge into the water), which trips the GFCI and cuts off the power.
- Test a GFCI at least monthly. Locate it along the ramp to the dock so it can be easily tested by local fire departments.
- Metal dock frames should have "bonding jumpers" that connect all metal parts to an on-shore

grounding rod. This means any dock part that becomes energized by electrical malfunction will trip the GFCI or circuit breaker.

- Ask neighbors if their dock electrical systems have been inspected and are up to Code.
- Household wire is not suitable for boats.
- Do not use wire nuts (these are for solid conductor wire, which should never be on a boat) or splice connectors (can cut wire strands)!
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the stereo. If a fuse blows continuously, something else is wrong.
- If you rent a dock or boat, notify the owner of safety violations immediately.
- Have your boat's system (especially with onboard generators) checked at least annually, and when something is added or removed.
- Ropes, string, masts and rigging also conduct electricity—don't be the common ground between water and electricity! ■

See SafeElectricity.org for more tips.

Have You Seen This?

Thumb Electric Cooperative is celebrating its 78th anniversary! 1937 marks the significant year when the power switch was first turned on. The meter base pictured on this page and many like it were used to serve member's electric needs. Many of these meter bases still remain today, mounted on the side of a house or on a pole in the yard, and can be identified by their shape and size which is round and nearly the same size as the meter that sits in it. As good as they have been at serving their purpose; they have long outgrown their useful life. We have seen many issues with these bases, and they are a potential safety issue for personnel servicing them. They also have the potential to leave you in the dark. We recommend getting ahead of the problem by having it replaced in the near future. A proactive approach will save you money and the hassle of being out of power at an inconvenient time. TEC will supply most new meter bases at no cost; you will however need to hire a licensed electrical contractor to perform the work. TEC offers bill financing, if needed. If you have any questions, please give us a call, and we will help you in any way possible. ■



One Last Mission

World War II seems like ancient history to a lot of folks. After all, it ended nearly 70 years ago! Never mind that 16 million Americans served, and over 400,000 lost their lives in a war spanning 61 countries. Despite the staggering statistics, school history books dedicate little more than a page or two to what many today call "The Greatest Generation."

Recently, I was privileged to join 150 WWII veterans and volunteers as they set off to rewrite a page in history during a "Tour of Honor" thanks to Mid-Michigan Honor Flight. Embarking on a one-day tour of Washington, D.C., that included stops to Arlington National Cemetery, Iwo Jima and of course, the National World War II Memorial, veterans learned first-hand the scope of this country's gratitude.

Dedicated in 2004, the WWII Memorial serves as a fitting tribute to the magnitude of this global conflict. Set between the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial, stone architecture, bronze sculptures and water features pay homage to both the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. More impressive, though, were the tourists who stopped to salute or shake hands with members of the Honor Flight as they walked by. Hearing young and old alike say "thank you" reminded me that in an era when history might be lost to the archives, there are still many who care.

Averaging 92 years old, many veterans pass before having an opportunity to see the monument built in their honor. Honor Flights transport WWII and terminally ill veterans to Washington, D.C., where they can visit the memorials dedicated to their service and sacrifice. Paired with an attentive guardian, each vet was personally escorted from one memorial to the next with a volunteer staff of medics on-call in case of emergency. Every effort is made to make this a once-in-a-lifetime experience. From the corridor of flags lining a path to the departure gate at Cherry Capital Airport to the Pin Curl Girls singing us off at Reagan International Airport to the welcome home celebration at the U.S. Coast Guard Base in Traverse City, no detail was overlooked.



And while attention to detail is obviously critical to the enjoyment and safety of those participating in an Honor Flight, the unplanned displays of gratitude were often the most touching. A man walking through Arlington National Cemetery dropping his bags to salute our three-bus motorcade. A group of middle school students stopping to give thanks. A tour guide inviting a veteran to share his story. A veteran commenting softly in front of the Freedom Wall, "I never thought I'd see this."

Reporting for WTCM Radio, I wasn't paired with a veteran like most others traveling that day. Still, I had a few sentimental moments of my own. As I silently thanked my dad for his service in the Pacific Theatre as a member of the Fifth Air Force in New Guinea, I had the undeniable feeling he was with me while I paid reverence to a monument he didn't live to see.

Harry Truman once said, "Our debt to the heroic men and valiant women in the service of our country can never be repaid. They have earned our undying gratitude. America will never forget their sacrifices." Within the next five years, most, if not all of our WWII veterans will be gone, and with them, a living piece of history. So the next time you see one, say 'thanks'. Because we all know freedom isn't free. And it's never too late to thank a veteran. ■



Jack O'Malley



May Photo

Mystery Photo Contest Winner

The May 2015 Mystery Photo contest winner is Michael Mattox, a Midwest Energy Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as "Turnip Rock" in Port Austin, MI, just off the shore in Lake Huron. The unique shape of the rock-island is the result of thousands of years of erosion by storm waves.

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Annual Meeting Highlights



Early Bird Prize Drawing Winners

1. **Tec Water Heater** – Ronda Benjamin – Caro
2. **Food Gift Certificate** – Iva Tschirhart – Ubley
3. **Gas Gift Certificate** – Richard D. Williams – Cass City
4. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – Eleanor Miller – Port Austin
5. **Food Gift Certificate** – Howard Hergenreder – Millington
6. **Gas Gift Certificate** – Robert Black – Sandusky
7. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – Robert Koglin – Port Hope
8. **Food Gift Certificate** – Raymond Briggs – Vassar
9. **Gas Gift Certificate** – Matthew Perez – Caro
10. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – William Streh – Kingston
11. **Food Gift Certificate** – Howard Luana – Deford

Final Prize Drawing Winners

1. **Gas Gift Certificate** – Mary Schuette – Unionville
2. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – Sharon Brandibur – Kingston
3. **Food Gift Certificate** – Thomas Stoeckle – Cass City
4. **Gas Gift Certificate** – Brad Wolfe – Elkton
5. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – Larry Hyatt – Decker
6. **Food Gift Certificate** – Nelda A. Stevens – Caro
7. **Gas Gift Certificate** – Dennis Roberts – Palmetto
8. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – Tienna Shinn – Kingston
9. **Food Gift Certificate** – Dalton Colling – Fostoria
10. **Gas Gift Certificate** – William Woodward – Harbor Beach
11. **Energy Efficiency Gift Certificate** – David Preston – Caro

Children's Prize Drawing Winners

1. **Bike (Boys)** – Michael Walsh
2. **Bike (Girls)** – Oliva Dillon – Ubley
3. **Tablet** – Chloe Reinke – Port Hope
4. **Tablet** – Paige Wolfe – Elkton
5. **Digital Camera** – Hanna Stuart – Bad Axe
6. **Digital Camera** – Haylee Parish

Prize Donated By Bartnik Propane

Gas Grill – Duane Reed – Cass City

Prize Donated By Kappen Tree Service

Large Load Of Mulch (Delivered) – Mary Alice Gretz – Decker