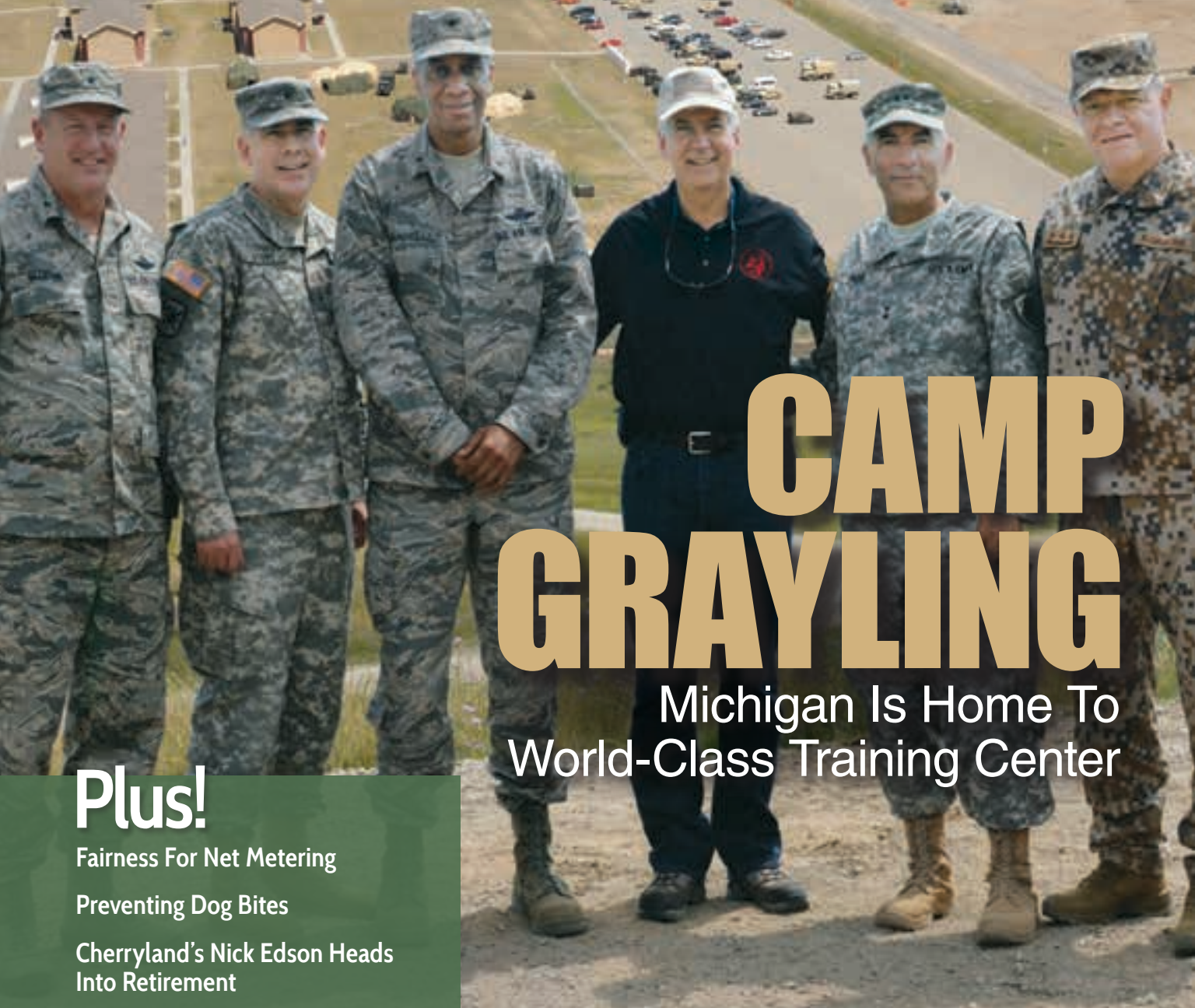


MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



CAMP GRAYLING

Michigan Is Home To
World-Class Training Center

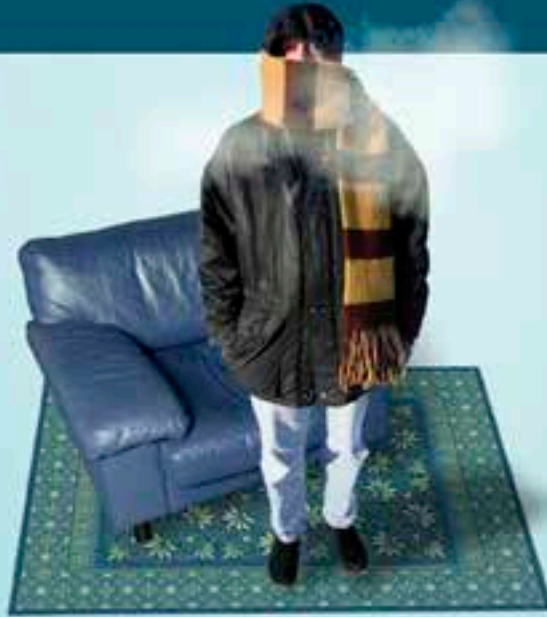
Plus!

Fairness For Net Metering

Preventing Dog Bites

Cherryland's Nick Edson Heads
Into Retirement

THE 30% FEDERAL TAX CREDIT EXPIRES AT THE END OF 2016



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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
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Change of Address:
 Please notify your electric cooperative.
 See page 4 for contact information.

IN THIS ISSUE

ON THE COVER*

Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center is the largest National Guard training center in the country, and is a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

Pictured from left to right are Brigadier General John Slocum, 127th wing commander; Brigadier General Michael Stone, assistant adjutant general for installations; Brigadier General Leonard Isabelle, commander Michigan Air National Guard; Gov. Rick Snyder; Major General Gregory Vadnais, the adjutant general of Michigan; and Lieutenant General Raimonds Graube, chief of defense for the Country of Latvia.

**Some co-op editions have a different cover.*
 Photos courtesy of the Michigan National Guard

6 OUR ENERGY
 Home Heating Assistance Programs for the 2015–2016 Season

7 SAFETY
 Top 10 Rules for Kids About Electrical Safety

8 HOME COOKING
 Easy Chicken—Quick to Prep and Make Recipes
Christin McKamey & Our Readers

14 FEATURE
 Camp Grayling: Michigan is Home to World-Class Training Center
Kath Usitalo

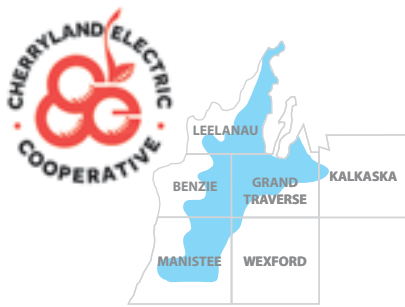
18 READERS' PAGE
 Santa Claus is Coming to Town!
Jack O'Malley

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Fairness for Net Metering



Tony Anderson
General Manager

There has been much written and debated over the past couple months on how state legislators are attempting to “kill” the solar industry in Michigan. I don’t believe the situation is that dire. I do believe there needs to be some fairness and compromise in the legislation.

As I write this, the legislation in question is Senate Bill 438. It proposes some changes to the current net metering statutes. Net metering is simply a situation where an individual generates electricity with home solar or wind. This individual is also connected to, and consuming electricity from the grid. One simply subtracts the energy consumed from the energy generated to get a “net” result.

If the energy generated exceeds the energy consumed, a utility currently pays the full cost of retail for the excess kilowatt hours (kwh) that are placed onto the grid. In Cherryland’s case, this is almost 11 cents per kwh. It is a much higher price than our wholesale costs of 8+ cents, but it was done to incentivize renewable energy several years ago. Most home generators put little onto the grid after their in-home usage. So, the subsidy, while growing, is small.

Today, the solar energy industry has matured. We have heard over and over again how the price of solar panels has dropped dramatically in the past few years. One could argue that maybe the subsidies worked and maybe it is time they are phased out. At some point, I believe solar needs to stand on its own in the market.

In my opinion, SB 438 goes just a little bit too far to this end. If passed as drafted, it would require individuals who generate renewable electricity to sell 100 percent of the generation into the market at wholesale prices. It doesn’t allow for a “netting” of the difference.

While I support paying wholesale rates for generation, I believe the individual should get to offset his/her internal consumption first. Today, a kilowatt-hour generated by wind or solar and used inside the home saves the individual 11 cents per kilowatt-hour. SB 438 says, “No, you have to sell 100 percent of your generation THEN you have to buy back 100 percent of your consumption.”

Individuals have installed renewable systems on their homes with the expectation of a return based minimally on what they do privately inside the comfort of their homes. For legislation to change that equation is not fair.

Allowing the present “netting” of generation-less-consumption to continue, removing the full retail price payments for excess generation and moving towards hour-by-hour wholesale market pricing would be a fair compromise in this legislation. Individuals would be incentivized to produce electricity at times when it is most needed. Utilities would then be required to pay whatever the wholesale market price is at that hour.

Continued on page 5

Renewable generators have long touted their ability to produce energy at peak times when electricity is most needed. The hourly electricity wholesale market is an open book. I can give anyone a website to track it as they wish. With the electronic meters in place at Cherryland, I can match a member's usage or production to this hourly market. In the end, it would be fair to those who participate, and those who do not, at any utility.

So, don't believe the hype that solar is doomed in Michigan. Legislators are simply trying to deal with a more mature industry than we had back in 2008. Home generators should get to keep what they produce for their own use and utilities should get to pay wholesale market prices. I remain hopeful that the legislation will allow this overall fairness to win out in the end. ■

Co-op News

Next Member Input Session Is Dec. 21

The board of directors at Cherryland Electric Cooperative is offering another opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board on a quarterly basis. Members will be able to talk to the board next on Monday, Dec. 21, at 9 a.m. at the company office in Grawn.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board. Members are asked to keep their comments to 5 minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input portion of the meeting only.

Cherryland members are afforded a chance to meet with the board on a quarterly basis during meetings in March, June, September and December.

Cherryland Cares Seek Grant Applications

Area nonprofit agencies who are seeking financial help can apply for a grant through Cherryland Cares.

Cherryland Cares is a five-member board, made up of Cherryland Electric Cooperative members who distribute money from Operation Round Up to area nonprofits. The next quarterly meeting of Cherryland Cares is Monday, Dec. 21. The deadline for applications is Friday, Dec. 11.

Operation Round Up money comes from Cherryland members who elect to round up their bills to the nearest dollar every month. This amount averages \$6 per year. So far this year, the Cares board has awarded \$41,250 to area nonprofits, including more than \$14,000 during the September meeting.

To receive a Cherryland Cares grant application or to join Operation Round Up, contact Shannon Mattson. Her direct line is 231-486-9234 or e-mail her at smattson@cherrylandelectric.coop.

Cherryland Will Be Closed for Holidays

In observance of the Thanksgiving holiday, Cherryland Electric Cooperative's offices in Grawn will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27. Cherryland will reopen for business on Monday, Nov. 30.

The cooperative will also be closed for the Christmas holiday on Thursday, Dec. 24 and Friday, Dec. 25, and will reopen on Monday, Dec. 28. It will also be closed for the New Year's holiday on Thursday, Dec. 31, and Friday, Jan. 1, and reopen on Monday, Jan. 4.

Christmas Tree Disposal At Cherryland

Cherryland members are reminded that Christmas trees can be discarded at the cooperative's office at 5930 U.S. 31 South in Grawn.

Trees can be dropped off on the right side of the Cherryland parking lot as you are driving in, just beyond where the two parking lots meet. This service is offered free to co-op members.

Rebates Available to Members Buying Energy Star Appliances

Cherryland Electric Cooperative members are urged to look for the Energy Star® logo on the yellow Energy Guide when purchasing new appliances and LED bulbs for your home and business.

By buying Energy Star-qualified appliances, members can save on energy usage over standard appliances, along with improved quality and durability. Another benefit when purchasing new Energy Star appliances such as refrigerators, clothes washers, TVs and LED bulbs, is that you may be entitled to a rebate from us.

For a complete listing of rebates available on Energy Star appliances, go to our website at cherrylandelectric.coop. Visit energystar.gov to learn more about Energy Star products. ■

Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2015–2016 Season

Program: Winter Protection Plan
Contact: Your Local Utility Company

Income Guidelines 2015–2016	
# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,655
2	23,895
3	30,135
4	36,375
5	42,615
6	48,855
7	55,095
8	61,335

Add \$6,240 for each additional member.

Note: All customers 65+ are eligible regardless of income. Customers are responsible for all electricity and natural gas used. At the end of the protection period, participants must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.

Program: Home Heating Credit
Contact: Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$12,956	4	26,699
2	17,528	5	31,270
3	22,099	6	35,842

Add \$4,457 for each exemption over 6.

Program: Earned Income Credit
Contact: U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service irs.gov/EITC
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury michigan.gov/treasury

The **Winter Protection Plan** protects eligible senior and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). You may enroll between Nov. 1 and March 31. If you are an eligible low-income customer, your utility service will remain on from Nov. 1 through March 31, if you:

- pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, and
- make equal monthly payments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season on any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), from April 1 through Oct. 31, you must begin to pay the full monthly bill, plus part of the amount you owe from the winter months when you did not pay the full bill. **Participation does not relieve customers from the responsibility of paying for electricity and natural gas usage, but does prevent shut-off during winter months.** You qualify for the plan if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

- are age 65 or older,
- receive Department of Human Services cash assistance, including SSI,
- receive Food Assistance,
- receive Medicaid, or
- household income is at or below the 150% of poverty level shown in the Income Guidelines chart at left.

Senior citizen customers (65 or older) who participate in the Winter Protection Plan are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. However, seniors are encouraged to pay whatever they can during the winter so they will not have large, unmanageable bills when the protection ends.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2015** tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed at left, or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled claimants, or claimants with 5% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

If you qualify, you may receive assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. **Forms are available mid- to late-January wherever tax forms are provided, or from the Michigan Dept. of Treasury (517-636-4486, or michigan.gov/treasury).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **no later than Sept. 30 each year.**

The **Earned Income Credit (EIC)** is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EIC, but must file a tax return to do so. If married, you must file jointly to qualify. File Form 1040 or 1040A and attach the EIC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2015** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the **2015 MI tax booklet** for details.

Program: Crisis Assistance Program
Contact: Local Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHS) michigan.gov/mdhs

State Emergency Relief Program (SER): michigan.gov/mdhhs You do not have to be a DHHS client to apply for help with a past due bill, shutoff notice or the need for deliverable fuel through the SER. This program, available Nov. 1–May 31, provides most of its utility assistance during this crisis season. However, limited assistance is available outside the crisis season. If you receive a DHHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHHS or call the Home Heating Hotline, 855-275-6424.

Program: Low-Income Home Weatherization
Contact: Local Community Action Agency

You may be able to receive help with weatherizing your home to reduce energy use if you meet low-income eligibility guidelines (200% of poverty guidelines shown above) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit mcaaa.org to find one in your area.

Program: United Way
Contact: Call 2-1-1 or UWmich.org/2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free phone service operating 24 hours daily to provide information about help that may be available in a particular area with utilities and other needs. Learn more at UWmich.org/2-1-1.

Program: Medical Emergency Protection
Contact: Local Utility Company

You are protected from service shut-off for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days, possibly extended to 63 days, if you have a proven **medical emergency**. You must provide written proof from a doctor, public health or social services official that a medical emergency exists. Contact your gas or electric utility for details.

Program: Shut-off Protection for Military Active Duty
Contact: Local Utility Company

If you or your spouse has been called into **active military duty** you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may request extensions. You must still pay, but contact your utility company and they will help you set up a payment plan.

Program: Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program
Contact: MI Veterans Trust Fund

The Trust Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance. Michigan Veterans Trust Fund at (517) 284-5299 or michiganveterans.com

Program: MI Energy Assistance Program
Contact: Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through MEAP, which includes services that will enable participants to become self-sufficient, including assisting participants in paying their energy bills on time, budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, and being energy efficient. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers (regardless of income.)



Top 10 Rules for Kids About Electrical Safety

Electricity is a dynamic power source. Many home electrical fires, injuries and electrocutions can be prevented when we understand and practice electrical safety. This is especially true for our youngest co-op members. Remember the rules for using electricity the right way.

1. **DON'T plug a bunch of stuff into one outlet or extension cord.**

It could damage the electrical system in your house or even cause a fire. Show children how plugs work, and let them know that even if they are curious about the slits of an electrical outlet, *nothing* else should be placed inside.

Our reliance on electronics and gadgets is a risk when family members overcrowd electrical outlets, continue to use frayed wires, place devices near liquids or leave electronics on for long periods of time.

2. **Make sure all electric cords are tucked away, neat and tidy.**

Pets might chew on electrical cords, and people might trip and fall.

3. **DON'T ever climb the fence around an electrical substation.**

If a ball or pet gets inside the fence, contact your local electric utility for assistance—they'll come and get it out for you.

4. **DON'T yank an electrical cord from the wall.**

Pulling on a cord can damage the appliance, plug or outlet.

5. **Fly your kite far away from power lines or substations.**

Fly kites and model airplanes in large open areas like a park or a field, safely away from trees and overhead power lines. If a kite gets stuck in a tree that's near power lines, don't climb up to get it. Contact your local electric cooperative for assistance. The kite and the string may conduct electricity—sending it right through you to the ground.

6. **Ask a grown-up for help** when you need to use something that uses electricity.

7. **DO look up and look out for power lines before you climb a tree.**

The electricity can go right through the tree branch—and right through you!

8. **Have a grown-up put safety caps on all unused electrical outlets.**

Covering outlets will also help save energy by stopping cold drafts.

9. **Remind your mom or dad to watch out for power lines** when they're using a ladder, chainsaw or other outdoor equipment.

10. **Keep electrical stuff far away from water.**

Water and electricity never mix. Use caution before plugging in a radio, CD player, or any electrical gadget outdoors, and keep all electrical appliances at least 10 feet away from hot tubs, pools, ponds, puddles and wet surfaces.

EASY CHICKEN

Quick to prep and easy to make no-fail chicken recipes.



Salsa Chicken

Renee Possett, Middleville

- 2 lbs. fresh or frozen chicken breasts
- 1 can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 16-oz. jar salsa
- 1 15-oz. can corn, drained
- ½ of 1.25-oz. pkg. taco seasoning

Place chicken in the bottom of a crockpot. Sprinkle taco seasoning onto chicken. Pour salsa, then beans, then corn, over the chicken. Turn crockpot on high and leave for about 6 to 8 hours on low. Shred chicken and place on tortillas, taco shells or tortilla chips for nachos. Serve with shredded cheese, sour cream, shredded lettuce, taco sauce or more salsa.

Chicken Spinach Pasta (pictured)

Renee Coyer, Cooks

- 8 oz. rotini or penne pasta
- 10-oz. pkg. frozen spinach, rinsed and dried (fresh works fine too)
- 2 T. flour
- ¼ t. salt
- ¼ t. paprika (optional)
- 8 oz. boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into thin strips
- 2 T. olive oil
- ½ c. Italian salad dressing (Kraft Zesty is our choice!)
- ½ c. chicken broth
- ½ c. finely chopped onion
- 2 T. lemon juice
- 2 T. dry sherry (can be omitted)
- ¼ c. shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 c. chef style mozzarella cheese (or six-cheese Italian)

Cook pasta until nearly done. Stir in spinach, cook additional 1 minute. Drain and set aside. Combine flour, salt and paprika in a plastic bag. Add chicken strips and shake to coat evenly. Heat oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add chicken. Cook chicken 4 minutes or until no longer pink. Add dressing, broth, onion, lemon juice, sherry and remaining flour mixture; cook and stir over medium heat for 5 minutes or until hot and bubbly. Add drained pasta and spinach to skillet. Toss and heat through. Remove from heat; stir in Parmesan cheese and ½ c. mozzarella. Transfer to plates and top with remaining cheese.

Oven BBQ Chicken

Linda Ackerman, Thompsonville

- 1 whole chicken, cut up
- 1 c. ketchup
- 1 stick butter
- ½ c. cider vinegar
- ¼ c. Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ c. brown sugar
- 2 T. yellow mustard
- juice from 2 lemons
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 2 t. salt
- 1 t. coarse-ground black pepper
- ½ t. cayenne pepper

Optional:

- 1 green pepper, seeded and cut into strips
- 1 carrot, peeled and cut into chunks

Combine all ingredients except chicken (and pepper, carrot if using) in saucepan, stirring to combine. Bring to a boil and let simmer, covered, 5–10 minutes. Place chicken (and pepper, carrot) in oven pan. Pour sauce over. Cover with foil. Bake at 350° for 1½ hours. Serve over rice. Serves 4.



Artichoke Chicken

Marie Mercier, Tustin

- 4 boneless/skinless chicken breast halves
- 14-oz. can artichoke hearts, well drained and chopped
- ¾ c. grated Parmesan cheese
- ¾ c. mayonnaise
- dash garlic powder

In a bowl combine artichoke hearts, cheese, mayonnaise and garlic powder. Place chicken in greased 7"x11" pan. Spread with artichoke mixture. Bake uncovered at 375° for 30–35 minutes or until chicken juices run clear.

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Gluten Free" recipes by **Dec. 1**, "Pasta" recipes by **Jan. 1** and "Side Dish" recipes by **Feb. 1**.

Enter your recipe online at countrylines.com or send to (handprinted or typed on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. 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)!

FREEDOM BUILDERS

Rebuilding lives one home at a time. Cherryland employees volunteer with Freedom Builders, serving the disadvantaged through housing assistance projects (fbmissions.org).



PUT SOME EXTRA GREEN IN YOUR WALLET

Make the switch to LED lighting and get more money back from Cherryland's enhanced rebate program.



Residential LED Rebate Guide

Light Type	Rebate Amount
Replacement for standard incandescent bulb	\$4 – \$6
Interior flood light	\$8
Exterior flood light	\$15

* commercial rebates vary



Download the LED rebate application at cherrylandelectric.coop

Cherryland Employees Share 'Kids At Play' Photos



Capture your Favorite Moments and Share

Nine-year-old Caleb (bottom left) enjoys time in the bounce house while his 11-year-old sister, Coral, (upper left) pulls on some taffy. They are the children of Cherryland lineman Andy Bott of Kingsley.

Meanwhile, Theresa (4) enjoys a ride down the slide (upper right). She's the daughter of Cherryland engineer Dan Grignon of Interlochen.

Win Up to \$200 Bill Credit in Photo Contest!

Enter the "Pay My Bill" Photo Contest! Cherryland members whose photos we print in *Country Lines* will be entered in a drawing and one lucky member will win a credit (up to \$200) on their December 2016 energy bill. Upcoming topics for 2016 and deadlines are: **"Best of Selfies,"** due **Nov. 15** for the January issue; **"Cute Pets,"** due **Dec. 15** for the February issue; **"Winter Fun,"** due **Jan. 15** for the March issue; and **"Birds of Beauty,"** due **Feb. 15** for the April issue. Visit cherrylandelectric.coop/photo-contest/ to submit your high resolution digital photo, read contest rules and see upcoming themes. It's fast and easy. We look forward to seeing your best shot!



Preventing Dog Bites

Former Marine trains dogs—and people—to avoid disaster.

By Nick Edson

Kathy was out jogging one early fall morning when she heard a bark and saw a large dog running at her.

She tried to speed up, but felt his teeth sink into her calf muscle before she could get away.

The dog then turned and ran away. Luckily, a neighbor witnessed the incident and called an ambulance. Kathy was laid up for almost a month.

The dog's owner is facing charges.

Robert's young son Michael was at a birthday party. He saw a small dog standing off to the side of the

room and decided to put his face next to the dog's face so he could get licked.

Instead, the dog bit Michael in the face and off Robert went to the emergency room.

Unfortunately, these aren't isolated incidents. They happen dozens of times every day.

Fortunately, people like Hector Hernandez live in Michigan and train people all over the state about preventing dog bites and avoiding confrontations.

Hernandez is a former Marine and law enforcement officer who now is an author, speaker, and police K-9

Hernandez has four key pieces of advice

1. Always have a plan in the back of your mind in case a dog attacks.
2. Always maintain eye contact with an aggressive dog.
3. To get away from an aggressive dog, slowly back up while maintaining eye contact with it.
4. Give firm “common commands,” to the dog, like “No. Go Home. Sit.”

instructor. He has more than 20 years of experience in becoming one of the foremost authorities in the country on dog bite prevention.

“Even though I’m an expert on dogs, I absolutely still get scared in certain situations,” said Hernandez, who has suffered five “serious” dog bites, the last one in September. “I not only train people on what to do around dogs, I also train dogs.”

While adults can have a plan for such situations, Hernandez worries about young children and senior citizens.

According to the American Veterinary Medical Association, those are the two age groups that see more serious injuries from dog bites.

Each year, more than 4.5 million people in the U.S. are bitten by dogs, with one in five requiring medical attention.

“Children are, by far, the most common victims of dog bites and are far more likely to be severely injured,” said Hernandez. “Most dog bites affecting young children occur during everyday activities and while interacting with familiar dogs.”

So what happens?

“The dog has a loyalty to its owners, but there are many instances where the dog doesn’t

know the child,” said Hernandez. Kids are vulnerable. As adults, we have to monitor those situations and try to read the dog’s body language. Kids may feel very relaxed around a certain dog, but that doesn’t mean the dog feels relaxed around them. Dogs can feel threatened if a person invades their personal space. That’s what can provoke an attack.

“My best advice is to never leave kids unsupervised around a dog they aren’t familiar with.”

If a dog does attack a person, Hernandez has some tips on how to react.

“To pull a dog off a person, grab it by its back legs and pull it away,” he said. “Then, depending on the dog, you may have to strike it in the spine.”

If it’s your own dog, he said, “You can grab it by the neck and try to lift it straight up.”

Each situation is different, he cautions.

“My best advice is to never leave kids unsupervised around a dog they aren’t familiar with.”

“I started training my own dogs in 1982 and police dogs in 1986,” said the 47-year-old Hernandez. “So, I’ve been working with them most of my adult life. I have a passion for both training dogs and training people about dogs.”

That’s reflected in the many testimonials he has received on his website DogEncounters.com.

“I love dogs,” he said, “But I know from first-hand experience you have to read their body language and be ready with a plan in case a dog feels provoked.” ■

Photo: Speaker, trainer and author, Hector Hernandez, demonstrates dog bite prevention tactics.

Visit DogEncounters.com for more important tips on preventing dog bites.

CAMP GRAYLING

Michigan Is Home To World-Class Training Center

By Kath Usitalo

Northern Michigan is a destination for outdoor lovers—paddlers, campers, fishermen and cross-country skiers—and for military convoys carrying camo-clad soldiers to the largest National Guard training facility in the U.S.

Camp Grayling Joint Maneuver Training Center's 147,000 acres sprawl across Crawford, Kalkaska and Otsego counties, neighboring Hartwick Pines State Park, the AuSable River, and Lake Margrethe. Since 1913, when lumber baron Rasmus Hanson donated 13,000 acres for a state military training grounds, the base has grown into a year-round facility with a \$30 million impact on the community. It is utilized by the Army and Air Force National Guard, all branches of the military, FBI, local law enforcement agencies, Department of Homeland Security and foreign military units.

The 24,000 personnel who trained there this year tallied 358,000 man-days (one soldier on the ground for one day), a 62 percent increase over 2014. It's a goal of Maj. Gen. Gregory Vadnais, Michigan's adjutant general and director of Military and Veteran Affairs, to raise that throughput by marketing Camp Grayling and improving its assets to meet changing demands.

Vadnais, a Lansing native with a bachelor's degree in sociology/psychology from Central Michigan University, has seen the Guard's role evolve since he started his career with the military in 1970. "The National Guard's mission is to fight our nation's wars—we are

the operational reserve of the United States military—defend the homeland and build a global partnership, something we've been doing for 23 years," he says. Michigan's State Partnership Program partners with Latvia and Liberia, as well as Canada, Denmark, Hungary, Poland and Estonia, and all sent military personnel to Camp Grayling for training this year.

The Michigan National Guard operates a counterdrug team and responds to national disasters like Hurricane Katrina, where Vadnais was Joint Task Force-Cyclone commander. The Guard's peacekeeping role has grown, and since



Maj. Gen. Gregory Vadnais, Michigan's adjutant general and director of Military and Veteran Affairs.

9/11 it's been mobilized to combat terrorism and put boots on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan.

These duties require specialized training and Vadnais cites Camp Grayling's competitive package, including a counter improvised explosive device training area, firing and tank ranges, a Simulation Center with state-of-the-art virtual trainers, and one of the newest Combined Arms Training facilities in the country. "We've got 26 buildings designed for units to come in and train in an urban setting to replicate the sights, sounds, smells and environment that our soldiers would face in actual combat."

Sheer size is a plus. "It's 50 miles from north to southwest," Vadnais explains. "We can put units at the doctrinal distances that they would actually be experiencing in actual combat. We have a large airspace, particularly with the Alpena Combat Readiness Training Center." Another advantage Camp Grayling has over facilities in southern climates: winter training conditions. The base can bed 8,000 soldiers in the summer and 4,000 in the winter.

Several times a year Camp Grayling, under Installation Commander Col. Tom Perison, opens its gates for public tours. The outreach is important, says Vadnais. "The Grayling community is a part of that installation. They live with it. They've been great partners.

"I love telling our story, because it's a great story to tell." ■



Photos courtesy of the Michigan National Guard

Nick Edson Leaves a Legacy at Cherryland

By Megan Glunz

Cherryland Electric Cooperative's very own, Nick Edson, editor and key accounts representative, was recently the recipient of the "BIG Difference Award" for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Traverse City. While an outstanding Big Brother to six children over 14 years at Blair Elementary School, Nick was genuinely a mentor to hundreds. Nick gave this parting advice to the 5th Grade Class of 2015 at the Blair Elementary School Graduation this past spring:

1. Always walk with a smile
2. Participate—Get Involved
3. Have a Plan B—be prepared that things won't go your way
4. Own up to your mistakes—take responsibility
5. Pick yourself up—don't dwell on disappointments
6. Always give someone a compliment



Nick has been a significant presence in the community. He has exceptional character and heeds his own advice given to the 5th graders he mentored. Nick always has a smile on his face, is involved in so many great causes in our community, is prepared for whatever he faces, takes responsibility, never dwells, and is the first to give

out a compliment. "One thing I love about Nick is he always introduces you as his friend," Cherryland Electric Cooperative employee, Shannon Mattson shares, "Whether you've known him 15 years or just met yesterday." Nick is well-known and well-loved in this community and at Cherryland.

After 15 years with Cherryland, Nick will be retiring this January. While at Cherryland, Nick took 'the cooperative way' to heart and truly made community and service a priority. He was involved in numerous efforts that bettered our community and all without concern for recognition. But it's with respect and appreciation that we do recognize Nick and all that he has done. ■

Munson Manor – In 2014, Nick initiated Cherryland's participation as once-a-month volunteers at Munson Manor.

Cherryland Cares – Nick has helped coordinate Cherryland Cares efforts and the donation of \$234,000 since 2009 to local nonprofits.

Rotarian for 10 years – Nick served on the Rotary Board of Directors and was editor of the weekly e-newsletter.

Former President of the Grand Traverse Bay YMCA Board of Directors – Nick garnered the YMCA's Community Philanthropy award in 2010 in recognition of the Cherryland Cares program.

Cherryland editor and writer for Michigan Country Lines magazine for 15 years.



Nick Edson Heads Into Retirement

After 40 years, it's time for the classic exit interview with Nick Edson. So after 25 years in the newspaper business and 15 years editing *Michigan Country Lines* magazine for Cherryland Electric Cooperative, here's one final spin around the block before his final day on Jan. 4.

Question: What are you going to miss the most?

Answer: The people. As a writer, it's always about the people you work with, the people you work for, and the people you get a chance to know when you do stories.

Question: Talk about your career highlights.

Answer: Over the span of 40 years, there were quite a few. But it started in 1976 when I was a rookie reporter for a paper near Flint and one of my first assignments was covering a fellow rookie—Detroit Tigers phenom pitcher Mark "The Bird" Fidrych.

During my years at the *Record-Eagle*, I'd say being introduced to the great Ted Williams by Ernie Harwell ranks right up there, along with having dinner several times with my boyhood heroes Al Kaline and Gordie Howe.

When I started working at Cherryland 15 years ago, I walked into a different world. I was given the chance to do volunteer work and it changed my life. I was a member of Rotary, volunteered with Big Brothers & Big Sisters, the Grand Traverse YMCA and NMC, to name a few. I tried to live Rotary's motto of "Service Above Self" and I think it made me a better person.

At Cherryland, I learned what a real team was. That is, everyone is in this for one reason—our members. I've never seen such dedicated and hard-working employees. It was a privilege to work at the cooperative.

My goal when I got here was to make Cherryland better known in the community for the kind of people who work here. I think as a team we made that happen

and much of that was because of the leadership of Tony Anderson. He not only encouraged us to be active in the community, he also led by example.

Question: What was it like changing from the newspaper business to the utility business?

Answer: Well, it was very different but very much the same. That is, they are two very different businesses from afar. But up close, they both serve a very discerning member and customer based. You heard from the people you served if they thought anything was wrong. Also, I was a writer and community person at both businesses, something I feel very comfortable with. It was a good fit both times.

“ When I started working at Cherryland 15 years ago, I walked into a different world. I was given the chance to do volunteer work and it changed my life. ”

Question: What will you do in retirement?

Answer: I'll do some writing on a freelance basis. I'll spend more time on eBay with my sports memorabilia. I'll still do some volunteer work and we plan to travel and spend more time with friends and family. So my wife, Lois, and I will remain busy, just on our own schedule.

Question: Any final thoughts?

Answer: Just a 'Thank You' to Cherryland for hiring me in June of 2000, to the members for taking the time to read *Country Lines* and an assurance to them that the magazine won't miss a beat without me. As I near the end of a 40-year writing career, all I can say is, "Wow! That went fast." ■

Santa Claus is Coming to Town!

By Jack O'Malley

Holidays are a great time for tradition. A favorite in our family was taking the kids to see Santa. With so many children all over the world waiting expectantly to meet Mr. Claus, he welcomes a little seasonal assistance! Enter A. Michael Deller, a graduate of the World Famous Santa Claus School in Midland, MI, and Santa's helper since 2002.

How does one decide to enroll in Santa School? Years ago, Deller wanted to prove to his son that his beard would grow completely white, not salt and pepper. And it did! But even with a beard as white as snow drifting around Santa's workshop, portraying Santa was not on Deller's radar until he visited Livonia City Hall. After a volunteer backed out of the holiday parade, a staffer at city hall recognized Deller (and his beard). Frantic, she asked him to ride in the parade and with a "Ho! Ho! Ho!" Deller was hooked!

Knowing peoples' expectations and how important his seasonal duties are, Deller strives to "be authentic, true to tradition." The golden rule? "Don't promise anything! Even if the parent is nodding yes. I tell children I will do my best but it will be a surprise."

What about answers to the BIG questions? "I have a magic key. Elves are always watching who's been naughty or nice. There is no such thing as a bad cookie. And yes, the reindeer like treats too!"

Genetics have given Deller "the Santa build," so a gig impersonating Saint Nick was probably inevitable. With a jolly chuckle, Deller explained that



the beard stays year-round because "it's too itchy to grow it back." So I had to ask, do kids spot this Santa when he's off duty? Of course! And this Santa is prepared. A mother approached him one day and said her children thought he was indeed Mr. Claus! "You will grow up to be good detectives!" Deller told the kids, and handed each a card with his picture on one side and "I met Santa Claus" on the other.

But his favorite story involved his own grandchildren, Kate and Ryan. When they arrived at a function the two ran up and said, "Hi Santa!"...then Kate hugged him and whispered..."Don't worry grandpa, I won't blow your cover!"



Jack O'Malley

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night!

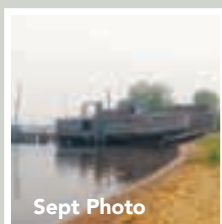
A. Michael Deller is retired and a member of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. ■



«« Where in Michigan is This?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **Dec. 10** will be entered in a drawing to win a \$50 electricity credit 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, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op.



Our Mystery Photo Contest Winner from the September 2015 issue is Adrian Jentoft, an Ontonagon co-op member who correctly identified the photo as "Whitefish Point" in Paradise, MI, on Lake Superior.

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