

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

November/December 2015

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

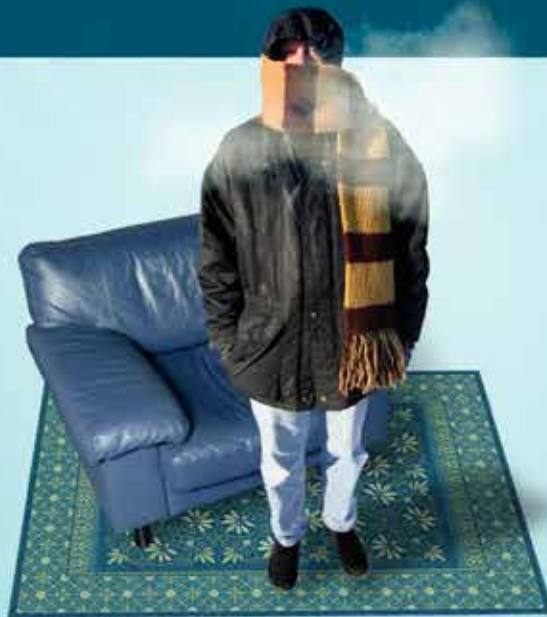
CAMP GRAYLING

Michigan Is Home To
World-Class Training Center

Plus!

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Annual Report

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



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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
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November/December 2015
Vol. 35, No. 10

Executive Editor
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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 Lansing, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

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.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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.

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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

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Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

(Required by U.S.C. 3685) 1. Publication Title: Michigan Country Lines. 2. Publication No.: 591-710. 3. Filing date: 10/1/15. 4. Issue frequency: monthly, except August and December. 5. No. of issues published annually: 10. 6. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. 7. Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. 8. Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editors, and executive editor: Craig Borr, Gail Knudtson, Christine Dorr, Casey Clark, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. 9. Owner: Michigan Electric Cooperative Assoc., 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. 10. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. 11. Tax status: Has not been changed. 12. Issue date for circulation data below: Sept. 2015. 13. Extent and nature of circulation:

	Avg # of copies each issue during preceding 12 mo.	Actual # of copies of single issues published nearest to filing date
A) Total No. of copies.....	244,992	276,181
B) Paid and requested circulation.....	241,668	274,768
C) Total paid and requested circulation.....	241,668	274,768
D) 1) Free distribution by mail.....	436	405
2) Free distribution outside mail.....	2,890	1,008
E) Total free distribution.....	3,326	1,413
F) Total distribution.....	244,992	276,181
G) Copies not distributed.....	0	0
H) Total.....	244,992	276,181
I) Percent paid and/or requested circ.....	98.6%	99.5%

16. Publication of statement of ownership: November 2015
17. Signature and title of editor: Gail Knudtson



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Michigan State University Vet-A-Visit

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Communities First Fund



Brian J. Burns
President & CEO

A Little Change Makes a Big Difference

Do you value being a constructive force and making a positive difference in your community? Do you want to help your community for minimal cost? If so, then please consider participating in the Presque Isle Electric & Gas Communities First Fund. If you already participate, thank you very much!

For about 50 cents per month (by the rounding up of your monthly utility bill to the next whole dollar), your "pocket change" can make a big impact in your community. The Fund's annual report is included in this issue of *Country Lines* (pages 12–13). Note how widespread and impactful the Fund's assistance is. A few cents can go a long way for our youth, to those less fortunate, and to support area organizations trying to make a difference.

Members provide the change and PIE&G administers the program at no cost to the Fund. All contributions—100 percent—are granted to area organizations or individuals. The Fund is a separate, independent organization from PIE&G with its own bylaws, governed by volunteer directors, and is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization – so contributions are tax deductible.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas is committed to the communities we serve. We are owned by those we serve and governed by a democratically elected board of directors. We strive to be a good corporate citizen with attention to the communities we serve. The Communities First Fund helps us do that. Please help us. If you'd like to contribute to the Fund, please call us at 800-423-6634 or enroll online at **pieg.com** and click on "Contact Us". Thank you for your consideration. ■

Your Board in Action

At their most recent meetings, the PIE&G Board of Directors:

- Listened to student presentations by Jeffrey Ostman, of Cheboygan, and Izaiah Hincka, of Posen, on their trip to Washington, D.C., for the National Rural Electric Youth Tour.
- Adopted resolutions pertaining to:
 - Prohibiting disclosure of sensitive corporate and personal information as allowed by the Michigan Nonprofit Corporation Act;
 - Increasing the gas cost recovery (GCR) factor to \$0.5417 to address recovery of increased gas transportation costs;
 - Calling on legislators to amend Act 69 of 1929 to facilitate expansion of natural gas for the benefit of rural Michigan citizens;
 - Approved the 2016 general plant capital budget in the amount of \$837,440.
- Undertook various formalities in preparation for the 2015 annual membership meeting, including appointment of nominating and election and credential committees as well as approval of the annual meeting notice.
- Listened to and accepted the team reports of CFO Sobeck, manager of information systems Kieliszewski, manager of operations and engineering Szymoniak, and CEO Burns.
- At a special board meeting on Sept. 29 to address member regulation issues, approved a power supply cost recovery factor (PSCR) for 2016 to be set at a negative \$0.00131 per kilowatt-hour. ■



Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op offices will be closed for the holidays on the following dates:

Thanksgiving

Thursday and Friday, Nov. 26–27

Christmas

Thursday and Friday, Dec. 24–25

New Year's Day

Friday, Jan. 1

As always, you may access your account anytime online at pieg.com or by calling 1-866-999-4571. To report outages or other emergencies, please call **1-800-423-6634**. For gas emergency only, please call **1-800-655-8565**.

From our families to yours, have a happy holiday season!

Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF) Charge

On July 1, 2013, Gov. Snyder signed into law Public Act 95, creating the Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF), authorizing the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) to raise up to \$50 million annually for low-income energy assistance payments. The money comes from a surcharge of no more than \$1 per meter per month for all Michigan electric utilities participating in the LIEAF program.

On July 23, 2015, the MPSC increased the monthly surcharge from 97 cents to 98 cents per meter for the September 2015 to August 2016 billing months. The surcharge is limited to electric bills only and to one electric residential meter per residential site. The increase became effective on PIE&G's electric bills generated on or after Oct. 1, 2015, for service rendered in September. Annual bills will be prorated accordingly. ■

Notice to Members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

Electric Tariff Changes Effective Feb. 1, 2016

The Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the Cooperative's electric tariffs and rules at a special open board meeting held Sept. 29, 2015, in accordance with P.A. 167:

Reviewed the Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor (PSCR) analysis and authorized the 2016 factor to be set at a negative \$0.00131/kWh, effective with bills rendered on or after Feb. 1, 2016, due to expected decreases in wholesale energy supply costs.

For specific details of any Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-800-423-6634 or visit PIE&G's website at pieg.com.

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 (DHHS) michigan.gov/mdhhs

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)!

Save Energy This Winter With A Free Engine Block Heater Timer

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op's Energy Optimization (EO) program is now offering one *free* engine block heater timer to its farming members. This essential device allows you to start your engine heater just a few hours before you need to operate your equipment, instead of running it throughout the entire night—saving you energy and money.

Engine block heater timers are used in the winter months to increase the chances that a vehicle's engine will start (and warm up the interior of a truck or tractor faster) in extremely cold weather. A 1,000-watt heater operated for 10 hours uses 10 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of electricity per day, while a heater operated on a timer uses only about 2 kilowatt-hours. The 8 kilowatt-hours you can save equates to about \$1 per day in energy cost savings.

Contact us today to receive a *free* engine block heater timer on a first-come, first-served basis through the EO Farm Services Program. A \$20 rebate is



available for additional timers. For more information, or to claim your device, call 1.877.296.4319 or visit michigan-energy.org/heatertimer. ■



Last-minute energy savings

You've made your list, and checked it twice. But have you completed your energy efficiency improvements for 2015? Purchase a programmable thermostat, an efficient furnace, or spoil yourself or a loved one with a new ENERGY STAR® flat screen TV. Energy efficiency is the gift that keeps on giving for years to come!

ENERGY TIP: Submit your Energy Optimization rebate form by **December 31** to qualify for **2015 incentives**.

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.

Talented Members Share 'Kids At Play' Photos



Capture your Favorite Moments and Share

1. My girls' first trip to the Mighty Mackinac Bridge. By Mellisa Lazar, Lewiston.
2. "Gimme that Sunscreen!" By Cheryl McCormick, Atlanta.
3. On a very warm, early summer day, our little granddaughter, Nandi, watched Grandpa get the grill ready for our first cookout of the year. Nandi was fascinated with the hose and had a blast playing in the water, but she got very wet in the process! By Bonnie Bancroft, Cheboygan.
4. Pool play with the grand kids. By Suzanne Aidif, Millersburg.
5. Summer swim on Anchor Bay, Algonac, MI. By Ted Neuner, Lewiston.
6. Paddle board poses on West Twin Lake. By Sandi Spiegel, Lewiston.



There's A Story In Every Photo

PIE&G invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*.

Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **"Best of Selfies,"** due **Nov. 15** for the January/February issue; and **"Winter Fun,"** due **Jan. 15** for the March/April issue. Details and instructions for photo submission—including rules, topic list, publication date, and submission deadlines—can be found at <http://bit.ly/1JX5Afh>.

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



Michigan State University Vet-A-Visit

POWERING COMMUNITIES, EMPOWERING MEMBERS

2014 PIE&G Communities
First Fund Awards:
\$60,562

The generosity of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op members and their desire to better their communities allows the PIE&G Communities First Fund to fulfill its philanthropic mission of distributing funds to help individuals and organizations in need across its service area. Members who volunteer to “round up” their energy bill to the next dollar (averages 50 cents monthly) provide funds overseen by a nine-member, volunteer board of directors. Funds are granted through an application process and allow small contributions to make a **BIG** difference in northeast Michigan. To those who participate in the fund—**THANK YOU!** For those who would like to join the cause and help their community, please see page 13 of this issue.

2014 COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND GRANT SUMMARY

APPLICANT	AMOUNT	APPLICANT	AMOUNT
Hubbard Lake Sportsman Assn., <i>Fish Shelter Program</i>	\$350	Atlanta Church of Christ, <i>The Caring Place Food Pantry</i>	\$3,000
Presque Isle County Sheriff Dept., <i>Emergency Rescue Team (ERT) Equipment</i>	\$500	Cheboygan High School, <i>Broadcasting Equipment</i>	\$1,000
Rogers City Area Fire Dept., <i>Digital 3-Way Radios</i>	\$500	Posen Area Fire & Rescue, <i>6x6 Truck for Rescue Vehicle</i>	\$1,000
Rogers City Police Dept., <i>ERT Equipment</i>	\$500	Posen Consolidated Schools, <i>Video/Broadcasting Equipment</i>	\$1,000
Presque Isle County Council On Aging, <i>Meat Slicer</i>	\$750	Lewiston Community Sharing, <i>Refrigerator/Freezer</i>	\$1,550
Cheboygan County United Way, <i>Project Connect!</i>	\$1,000	Forest Township, <i>Tower Trailside Park Improvements</i>	\$2,500
Economic Development Alliance – Oscoda County, <i>CNC Router Machine</i>	\$2,500	Alcona H.S. Agriscience Program, <i>Maple Syrup Equipment</i> . .	\$1,800
New Beginnings Ministries, <i>HARP (Food Pantry)</i>	\$3,000	United Way NE Michigan, <i>Project Connect – Presque Isle & Montmorency</i>	\$3,000
Wolverine Community Schools, <i>Wildcat Pride Playground</i> . . .	\$2,000	Cheboygan VITA, <i>Office Equipment</i>	\$1,912
Boy Scouts of America Troop #86 – Onaway, <i>Camping Equipment</i>	\$500	Rogers City Area Schools, <i>Math Intervention Technology</i> . . .	\$2,500
New Life Lutheran Church, <i>Project Connect!</i>	\$500	Rogers City Servicemen's Club, <i>Veteran Memorial Restoration</i>	\$5,000
Case Township, <i>Summer Youth Program</i>	\$700	New Beginnings Ministries, <i>Hillman Area Resource Pantry</i> . .	\$5,000
Michigan State Police – Alpena, <i>Stuff a Blue Goose for Christmas</i>	\$1,000	Cheboygan County 4-H, <i>Vet-A-Visit at MSU</i>	\$2,000
		College Scholarships to 16 H.S. Seniors	\$15,500

PIE&G Communities First Fund Statements of Financial Position Dec. 31, 2014 and 2013

ASSETS	2014*	2013
CURRENT ASSETS:		
Cash	\$ 95,230	\$ 91,428
Cash – restricted	3,000	3,000
Accounts receivable	4,155	4,390
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 102,385	\$ 98,818
NET ASSETS		
Unrestricted	\$ 82,885	\$ 66,817
Unrestricted, designated	16,500	29,001
Permanently restricted	3,000	3,000
TOTAL NET ASSETS	102,385	98,818
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	\$ 102,385	\$ 98,818
ACTIVITIES AND CHANGE IN NET ASSETS		
REVENUE		
Contributions – members	\$ 53,190	\$ 54,505
Contributions – PIE&G	10,834	10,252
Accounts receivable	60	69
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 64,084	\$ 64,826
EXPENSES		
Grants	\$ 45,002	\$ 50,871
Scholarships	4,600	11,900
Professional fees	3,000	2,500
Program expense	6,915	6,661
Directors' Mileage expense	1,000	1,031
TOTAL EXPENSE	60,517	72,963
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	3,567	(8,137)
NET ASSETS, beginning of year	98,818	106,955
NET ASSETS, end of year	\$ 102,385	\$ 98,818

*2014 Financial Position Data is Unaudited.



HOW CAN I HELP MY COMMUNITY?

The PIE&G Communities First Fund was created in 1998. The funds for this program are generated when PIE&G members volunteer to "round up" their utility bills to the next dollar. The average contribution is 50 cents per month, or around \$6 annually per meter. All contributions are tax deductible.

To participate, call our Member Services Department at 800-423-6634 or enroll online at pieg.com and click on "Contact Us".

Enroll To Help Your Community

Yes!

I want to participate in the COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND. Please enroll me and "round-up" my bill to the next highest dollar each month.

Name (please print) _____

Account Number _____

Mailing Address _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Include this coupon in your next bill payment, or mail to:
PIE&G COMMUNITIES FIRST FUND, P.O. Box 308, Onaway, MI 49765

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



Chad Pastotnik Creates
Literary Beauty
The Handcrafted Way



Michigan's Bookmaker

By John Schneider

Chad Pastotnik's alchemy is half art, half toil. The fine-bookmaker must baby ancient machines, negotiate literary translations, conduct workshops, and fulfill international speaking engagements.

In a recent blog, Pastotnik, who runs Deep Wood Press out of his home in the woods near Mancelona, wrote: "Sometimes running a business and being an artist have nothing to do with actually making art."

Nonetheless, the alchemy works. Four-hundred-year-old printing and binding techniques weave their magic. Pastotnik's lead becomes pure gold.

"I make books the old-fashioned way," Pastotnik says. But not quite. His limited edition fine-press creations are world-renowned and sell for up to \$3,000 each. That was the price tag on a one-of-a-kind deluxe edition of Pastotnik's treatment of Joseph Conrad's famous novel, *"Heart of Darkness."* Typically, Pastotnik's books cost between \$100 and \$1,000.

Pastotnik's type is hand-set, or cast on a linotype machine, from molten lead. His pages are printed on obsolete cylinder presses. He uses wood engravings and linoleum cuts. His handmade cotton paper is tucked into luxurious bindings of fine leather and exotic cloth. The finished product: "A piece of art that functions as a book." By Pastotnik's estimate, only 50 to 70 other people in the U.S. do what he does.

Pastotnik is grateful that his ancient equipment (one of his presses was built in 1911) is surprisingly reliable: "Fortunately, it's built much better than most things are nowadays."

Born in Cadillac, Pastotnik made his escape from northern Michigan as a young man.

"I couldn't wait to leave," he says. "Then, I couldn't wait to get back."

On a fly-fishing trip to Antrim County around 1990, Pastotnik came upon a small fishing cabin on the Cedar River that was for sale. The bucolic setting struck a chord. He moved in. In 1992, the cabin became the home of Deep Wood Press. Pastotnik studied printmaking at Grand Valley State University. His first venture into hand-made books came in Chicago. Pastotnik says, "I get to share my wonderful life with my wife, Kathryn, and our two children. Being able to raise a family in such an amazing environment is something we're thankful for every day."

Pastotnik confesses that he loves fly-fishing as much as making books. Some recent titles (*"The Trout in Winter,"* by Jerry Dennis, for example) reflect a blending of the two passions. "It's a good excuse for business meetings on the stream," he says.

Among Pastotnik's other recent books: *"The Intruder,"* by Robert Traver (the pen name of John Voelker, the Upper Peninsula author of *"Anatomy of a Murder"*) and *"There Be Monsters,"* written by Pastotnik, who calls it "a little fable about how to walk in the woods."

In 2010, Pastotnik won the prestigious Carl Hertzog Award for *"Heart of Darkness,"* and he's featured in the PBS television series, *"A Craftsman's Legacy,"* as *"The Bookmaker,"* Episode 11. It aired last fall, but you can find it at craftsmanslegacy.com/Home.

Pastotnik hopes his works of art aren't handled with white gloves and parked in display cases, however, "I would certainly hope," he says, "my books get read."

Visit deepwoodpress.com to browse all of Pastotnik's titles. ■

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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PIE&G Donates School Friday Folders

It's that time of year again for PIE&G to announce another successful delivery of "Friday Folders" for member students enrolled in local public elementary schools for the 2015–2016 academic year.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op has donated the student folders to member schools since 2003 to help teachers send important student papers home to parents for review. The laminated folders are custom-printed, complete with school name, mascot and colors, and were distributed the first week of school in September.

The folders are purchased by PIE&G with financial support from Touchstone Energy Cooperatives, its national marketing alliance.

Best wishes to all kids and teachers for a successful year of learning!!