

Thumb Electric Cooperative

November/December 2015

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

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Michigan Is Home To
World-Class Training Center

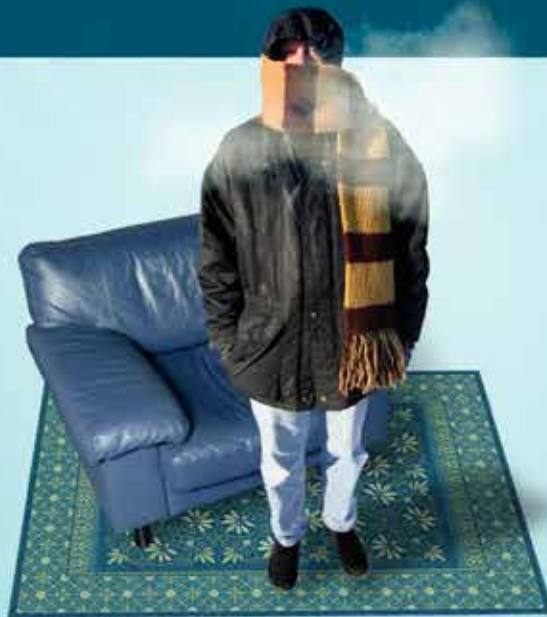
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November/December 2015
Vol. 35, No. 10

Executive Editor
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Publisher
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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The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

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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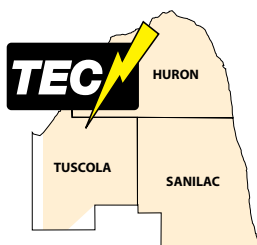
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Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

(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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Visit Thumb Electric's website
www.tecmi.coop

Thumb Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Co-op Owners for Political Action 'ACRE'



Dallas Braun
General Manager

Earlier this year, I wrote an article on this same topic. Sometimes it is worth repeating the same message for a variety of reasons. Maybe you missed the previous article, maybe the article wasn't written clearly enough, or maybe you forgot that Thumb Electric Cooperative offers an opportunity for all TEC members to help preserve the co-op service you value. It is called the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action program.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is the Political Action Committee (PAC) for the nation's 900 electric cooperatives. In 1966, the co-ops formed ACRE, their own political action group, that allows co-op employees and directors to participate. Electric co-ops, like many other industries, rely on support from political leaders to ensure programs that benefit our industry and our members remain intact.

A few years ago, in an effort to motivate the 42 million people served by electric cooperatives, ACRE expanded this PAC to allow all co-op owner-members to participate. Those that join receive current information on legislative and political issues affecting local cooperatives and their members.

Earlier this year, a law backed by the Department of Energy that would prohibit the production and sale of large storage electric water heaters was set to go into effect. Many cooperatives throughout the nation, including Thumb Electric, have used these water heaters for decades as a way to reduce their energy costs by controlling them during on-peak hours when the cost of wholesale energy is the highest. Our national organization and ACRE was successful in getting this law overturned.

Thumb Electric currently has 5,000 members participating in our controlled electric water heater program. This program has allowed your cooperative as a whole to save hundreds-of-thousands-of-dollars, and has put money directly back in the pockets of those members that are in the program. As a direct result of the efforts by our national organization and ACRE, Thumb Electric Cooperative and its members (you) can continue this program. This is just one example of how supporting ACRE helps preserve the services and programs that are a value to you.

Thumb Electric Cooperative rolled out its ACRE Co-op Owners program at our 2014 annual meeting. To date, we have 10 out of 12,200 members participating. It is my hope that this number continues to grow, as there will be more political issues to fight in the future. I thank those that have taken an interest in their co-op and have joined, and I encourage others to give it serious consideration. For more information on how to make a difference and join ACRE, call our office or visit our website. ■

Mother Nature Leave You in the Dark? There's an App for That!

When Mother Nature causes damage in your area and you need to report an outage, did you know that you can report it through TEC's smart-phone app called **SmartHub**®? The app gives you another option to report an outage without waiting, and it may help you avoid possible busy signals on the telephone system. TEC's staff and answering service will always be available to speak to members during a storm and after-hours, but due to high call volumes, it may take a while to get through.

SmartHub is also a powerful account management service tool that offers much more than a quick way to pay your bill. It's a convenient, two-way communication platform that allows you to access your electric service account and track energy use information from either a computer or mobile device.

Join the 4,991 members that are currently using SmartHub to:

- Report an outage
- View or pay their bill
- View payment and billing history
- Check their monthly kilowatt usage and view related graphs
- Activate a paperless billing option
- Set markers to track home improvement upgrades and their impact on electric use
- Record a meter reading

Whether you prefer to pay your bill online or not, you can still register and use SmartHub to check

your electric use, report a service related matter, and more! The registration process for new users is simple and fast, but you will want to have your electric bill handy so you can quickly enter the account number. To get the process started and enroll, visit tecmi.coop and click on the "My Account—Pay Bill/Meter Reading" button on the home page.

The SmartHub app is free to download and install, and is available for both Apple/iOS and Android mobile devices. Search for it in the Apple Store or on Google Play. SmartHub is not case sensitive, but must be entered as one word. If duplicates appear, the correct app is the one provided by our service partner and product developer, the National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC). The app is supported using iOS 3.1 and above (iPhone and/or iPad), and the Android 2.1 and above (smartphones or tablets) platforms.

For more details, visit our website at tecmi.coop or call 800-327-0166. ■



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

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

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

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

Program: Medical Emergency Protection
Contact: Local Utility Company

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

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

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

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.

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, shut-off 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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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

Thumb Electric Cooperative'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 kWh. 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, visit michigan-energy.org/heatertimer or call 877-296-4319. ■



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.



STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
NOTICE OF HEARING FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF
THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-17917

- Thumb Electric Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to implement a power supply cost recovery (PSCR) plan and a PSCR factor of up to a negative \$0.01008 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to compute member-customers' bills for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2016.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may contact 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: December 2, 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 Martin Snider

LOCATION: 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) September 30, 2015 application to implement a power supply cost recovery (PSCR) plan and PSCR factor of up to a negative \$0.01008 per kWh with a \$0.06725 per kWh allowance for cost of power supply included in base rates to compute its member-customers' bills for the 12-month period ending December 31, 2016.

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 November 25, 2015. (Petitions to intervene may also be filed using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Thumb's attorney, Shaun M. Johnson, 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.

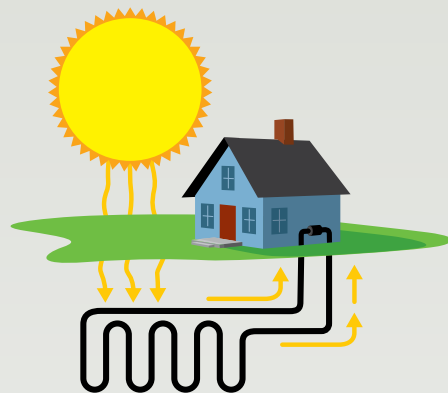
Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure R 460.17315 and R 460.17335. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

A copy of Thumb's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets, and at the office 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.

Jurisdiction is 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.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

Renewable Geothermal Heat

Geothermal is a simple technology that uses the earth's renewable energy to provide high-efficiency heating and cooling. In winter, the system draws heat from the ground and transfers it to your home. In summer, it extracts heat from your home and transfers it to the ground. **Contact the energy experts at Thumb Electric Cooperative at 800-327-0166** for honest answers on your energy choices, or call any of the trained and certified installers listed here.



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1103 E. Caro Rd., Caro, MI 48723
989-673-5557

Ameriheat, Justin Faber

2891 E. Forester Rd., Deckerville, MI 48427
810-376-4534

B & D Heating, Cooling & Plumbing

1148 North Van Dyke, Bad Axe, MI 48413
800-515-1117

Burkhard Plumbing & Heating

638 E. Huron Ave., Bad Axe, MI 48413
989-269-7532

Certified Temperature Innovations

3107 Custer Rd., Carsonville, MI 48419
810-300-7748

ES Sheetmetal, Gene Root

9450 Belsay, Millington, MI 48746
989-871-2067

Geo Renew Systems, Inc.

3045 Grange Hall Rd., #7, Holly, MI 48442
248-531-0325

Geomasters, Inc., Plumbing & Heating

57 Ward St., Croswell, MI 48422
810-679-2251

Geothermal Systems of Lapeer, LLC

6689 Orchard Lk. Rd. #188
West Bloomfield, MI 48322
810-240-2116

Holland Heating and Cooling

9160 Lapeer Rd., Davison, MI 48423
810-653-4328

Ingell Refrigeration

1115 4th St., Port Huron, MI 48060
810-982-4226

J & B Plumbing & Heating

7641 Pigeon Rd., Pigeon, MI 48755
989-453-3931

Jack McCain Plumbing & Heating

9651 Weale Rd., Bay Port, MI 48720
989-453-2277

Kowaleski Heating & Cooling, LLC

3977 Ruppel Rd., Port Hope, MI 48468
989-428-3371

Kulek Heating & Air Conditioning

14421 Jeddo Rd., Yale, MI 48097
810-387-4452

Kundinger & Kroll

31 E. Main St., Sebawaing, MI 48759
989-883-2770

Lakeshore Improvements Plumbing & Heating

7825 Big Gulley Rd., Palms, MI 48465
989-864-3833

Michigan Energy Services

8445 Main St., Whitmore Lake, MI 48189
888-339-7700

NRG Control

3690 Washburn Rd., Vassar, MI 48768
989-670-2543

Newton-Johnson Plumbing & Heating

114 Enterprise Dr., Vassar, MI 48768
989-823-2341

Orton Refrigeration

31 W. Sanilac Rd., Sandusky, MI 48471
810-648-2252

Preferred Heating

7736 Arendt, Melvin, MI 48454
810-378-5454

Priority Service by Porter & Heckman

3056 Davison Rd., Lapeer, MI 48446
810-644-8576

Shetler Plumbing & Heating

7184 Nitz St., Pigeon, MI 48755
800-547-3651

Superior, Inc.

3442 Cemetery Rd., Cass City, MI 48726
989-872-3305

Thumb Cooling & Heating

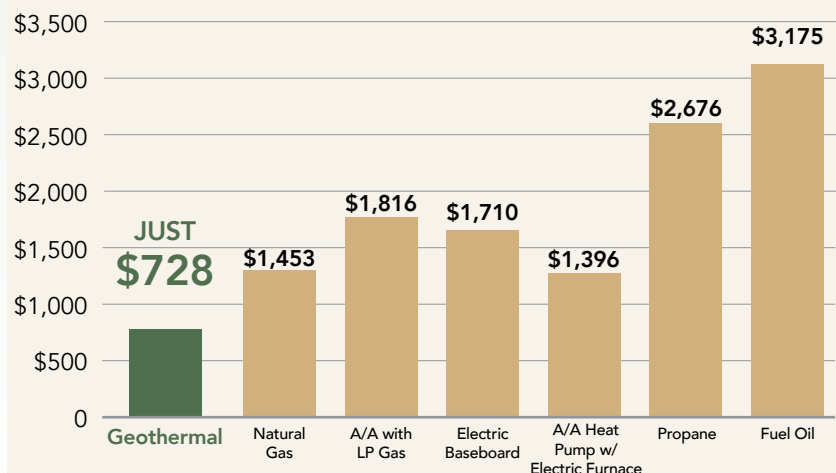
5599 Pochert Rd., Port Hope, MI 48468
989-428-4948

And: 837 South State, Caro, MI 48723
989-672-4948



Annual Operating Costs

For an Average 1,800 Sq. Ft. Home
(45,000 BTU heating load, 20,000 BTU cooling load)



Factors Used: **Electric Baseboard**, **Air-Source Heat Pump** and **Geothermal**—based on TEC's 6.863¢/kWh dual-fuel rate. **LP gas**—based on \$2/gal. and 90% efficient furnace. **Fuel Oil**—based on \$3.00/gal. and 80% efficient furnace. **Natural Gas**—based on \$1.08/therm., 90% efficient furnace including \$9/mo. service charge. (Electric baseboard costs do not include air conditioning.)

Contribute to THAW

(The Heat And Warmth Fund)

Keep this child—and thousands of others like him—warm this winter.



Neighbors helping neighbors in need.

- A family had funeral expenses that caused them to fall behind in their utility bill payments. THAW helped to keep the heat and electricity on during this difficult time.
- A senior citizen with an annual income of \$7,000 has to pay a large, unexpected medical bill and falls behind on utility payments.
- A 42-year-old husband with two children is laid-off. He can't find another job, his unemployment runs out...and the utility bills don't get paid.

Also visit
thawfund.org
for more
information.

These are just some of the people helped by The Heat And Warmth Fund (THAW).

THAW is a nonprofit organization that provides last-resort energy assistance to low-income families in Thumb Electric Cooperative's service area. THAW has helped more than 75,000 Michigan senior citizens and families (more than one-half with children) keep their heat and electricity on during the winter months.

Please make a donation to THAW. Your tax-deductible contribution will help someone in your community keep their heat and electricity on this winter.

Please complete and mail the clip-out form below, along with your donation to: **Department 77650, THAW Fund, P.O. Box 77000, Detroit, MI 48277-0650**. Or, make a contribution using VISA or MasterCard, by calling **800-866-THAW** (or 8429). Your gift is tax-deductible.

Yes!

I want to help someone in my community keep their heat and electricity on this winter. Enclosed is my check or money order payable to THAW. I understand my gift is tax deductible.

☐ \$10

☐ \$25

☐ \$50

☐ Other \$ _____

MAIL TO:

Dept. 77650
THAW Fund
P.O. Box 77000
Detroit, MI
48277-0650

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

To make a contribution using VISA or MasterCard, call 1-800-866-THAW (or 8429) or visit thawfund.org.

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.



Sept Photo

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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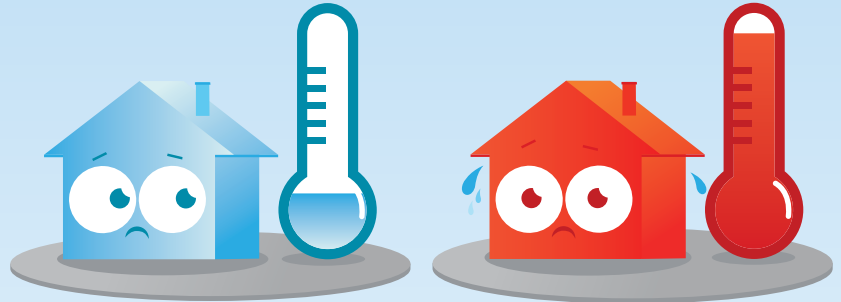
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- Most economical system to install and maintain
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