

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Sculptor
Shares The
World
He Has
Shaped

Plus!

Meet Director Luke Pohl

Verhaar Promoted

Trees And Reliability

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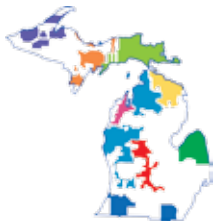
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POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Association officers are **Robert Kran**, Great Lakes Energy, 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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IN YOUR WORDS

Last month, we asked electric co-op members a question:

If you could be any age for a week, what age would that be?

Thank you for all the responses. Here are some of your answers...

"I would like to be 17 again, when I met and dated my first girlfriend."

"I think of myself as 61 years old. I am really 82, and married 60 years. To be 61 again would be great...the kids are educated and married, our home and cottage are paid for, and we still have date nights!"

"My current age, 76. I'm healthy and can enjoy all the blessings provided by God."

Our new Question of the Month is:

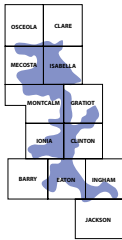
If you had to be trapped in a tv show for a month, which would you choose?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by May 1.

ON THE COVER*

Tom Lakenen, creator of Lakenenland Sculpture Park in the Upper Peninsula, has created over 80 whimsical sculptures from bits of salvaged iron.

*Some co-op editions have a different cover.



Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue
Blanchard MI 49310
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday

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7973 E. Grand River Avenue
Portland, MI 48875
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday

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E-mail: tricoenergy@homeworks.org

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Find us on Facebook.

[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://www.facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

Appreciating Our Lineworkers



Mark Kappler
General Manager

America's electric cooperatives have designated the second Monday of April as National Lineman Appreciation Day. At HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, we have 22 journeyman linemen who are the "first responders" of our electric distribution system.

On April 11, we make a special point of honoring them for the services they perform, around the clock and in dangerous conditions, to keep power flowing and protect the public's safety. They leave their families when an outage call comes in, whether it's supertime, a weekend, or a holiday, to find and fix the problem.

Many of you have taken time to appreciate our linemen, through your comments on surveys and on Facebook. These comments are passed along to the line crews, as well as to their support teams including the warehouse folks, engineering and dispatch, customer service, IT, and accounting. Here are just a few of the comments from recent storms:

- "Thank you and everyone involved in a very timely restoration effort last night!" Greg M.
- "Thank you never seems enough when the men and women are working to get us all back up and running strong no matter what time of the day or night. YOU are all appreciated very much!" Katie G.
- "Power is back on! Thank you to all those workers who endured the cold weather and their safety to make sure residents got power restored." Amy D.
- "We appreciate all that our Tri-County boys did for us on getting our power hooked back up so fast." Danielle C.
- "Thank you for the hard work and dedication to your customers!! Tri-County crews ROCK!! Enjoy your belated Christmas!" Kay S.
- "Thank you for always working so hard to get everyone's power restored. We didn't lose power this time, but did last weekend and it was back on within a few hours. You guys have always been awesome and I appreciate their sacrifices of comfort!" Holly T.
- "The lineman crews are so appreciated and were in our hearts. Thank you for sacrificing the time with your families to help those of us with ours." Tara C.
- "Thank you all for your hard work. Every storm that hits gives you extra hard work. We count on you and you always come through!" Diane H.
- "Thank you! Our power was back on just 8 hours after it went out. Hope they can go home and enjoy time with their families!" Beverly C.
- "Thanks guys...the heroes of the holidays!" Terry F.
- "Santa's elves for sure!" Connie V. ■

Meet your cooperative's board of directors

Luke Pohl: 'Make Decisions Locally'

Luke Pohl is a Westphalia native and 1976 graduate of Pewamo-Westphalia School. He earned a bachelor's degree in industrial education from Central Michigan University, then taught at Grand Ledge High School. He formerly owned Pohl Oil and Propane Company, and is currently owner of Pohl's Travel Plaza north of Grand Ledge. He also coaches boys' varsity basketball at Pewamo-Westphalia Schools.

He and his wife, Janet, have three sons, Gavin, Austin and Landon. They are members of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Westphalia, where he is an usher and previously chaired the parish finance committee. He is also president and co-founder of Austin's House in Westphalia.



Luke Pohl says he can get intense when he's coaching; here, he's keeping an eye on action behind the play in a big rivalry game against Fowler. Photo by Kacey Hengesbach.

How did you become involved with the co-op?

"We became members in 1981. When Carl Morton retired in 2014, the co-op notified members in District 3 that the seat was open, so I sent in a letter of application. I had been a director of Westphalia Broadband, chairing the board for 10 years, so I understand how utility-type boards can work."

What does it mean to you to be on the board?

"I enjoy being on the board. Meeting people from different co-ops has been a lot of fun." (Pohl earned his Certified Cooperative Director designation from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association by attending a week-long directors' school; this fulfilled a board policy requirement of becoming certified by the end of his first full term as a board member.)

What are highlights so far?

"Learning about electrical utilities and how they operate. Also, getting to know the fine people employed at Tri-County."

What do you think of member self-regulation?

"I like self-regulation. Decisions should be made at the local levels."

What challenges do you see ahead?

"New technology. Solar. Wind. EPA regulations."

How can members get more involved?

"I would recommend they come to the district meetings. And also the annual meetings. It is informational, and fun to be a part of a member-owned utility." ■

On your board of directors, Luke represents District 3, which is Clinton County except Bingham, Duplain and Greenbush townships, which are part of District 5. He was most recently re-elected to the board in 2015.

Watch the mail in late April for an invitation to your district's annual membership meeting.

Co-ops Launch Voter Engagement Program

Michigan electric cooperatives have joined a national initiative for a non-partisan effort to promote civic engagement and voter participation in the communities they serve.

Through this program, we want to help our members know when elections are, what's at stake, and how to make their voices heard. Who folks vote for isn't really as important as the fact that they do vote.

In keeping with its non-partisan goals, the initiative will not be endorsing specific candidates for office. It's about real people in real places facing real challenges. It's about our co-ops living out the principles of our movement: Concern for community and democratic control.

Visit vote.coop to learn more. ■



Don't forget to vote in the state primary election on August 2 and the general election on November 8.

I'M A CO-OP VOTER



A PROGRAM OF AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES
WWW.VOTE.COOP



Thank A Lineworker On April 11

As the “first responders” of the electric co-op family, lineworkers perform around-the-clock in dangerous conditions and challenging situations to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. That’s why electric co-ops have designated a National Lineman Appreciation Day. This year, April 11 is the day we honor the hard-working men and women who keep the lights on.

Resolutions adopted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) explain it best:

“Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas there would be no electric co-ops without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of lineworkers.”



Lineworkers everywhere deserve this special day of recognition. As a co-op member, please take a moment to “thank a lineworker” for the job they do and show support for those who help light our lives. ■

Plant A Tree In The Right Place

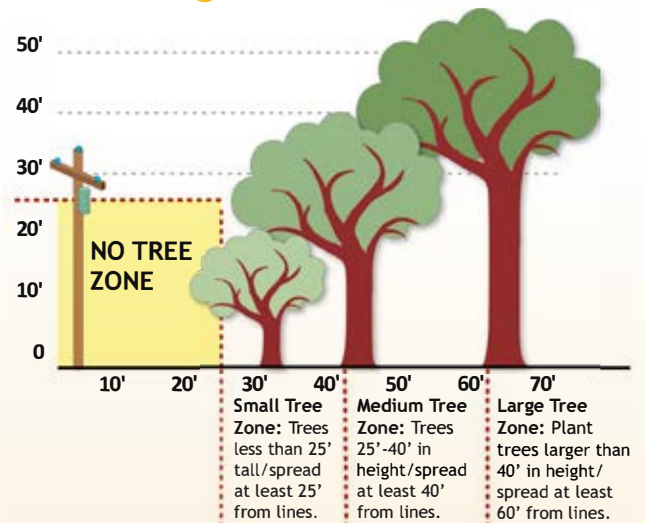
Earth Day is April 22. Show the earth some love, and plant a tree. Choose the right tree for the right place and avoid future problems with power lines.

To avoid future electrical hazards, planting tips include:

- Consider the mature height of trees. Any tree that can grow to 25 feet tall or more should not be planted near overhead power lines. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended.
- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow and interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities could also damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.

- Before digging, call 811, the local underground utility locator service so that accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided. ■

Tree Planting Guide



Teens: Learn More About Renewable Energy

Learn how Michigan's abundant natural resources, growing agricultural industry and emerging technologies are changing the face of energy and what it means to your family, Michigan and the world.

Michigan 4-H Renewable Energy Camp is a five-day exploration camp held at Michigan State University for youth ages 13-19. Campers will explore ideas, research and opportunities in the field of energy as it relates to natural resources and agriculture.

Campers will

- experience campus life
- create their own biofuel
- tour the MSU Power Plant
- tour a wind farm, a commercial ethanol plant, the HomeWorks' Community Solar Garden
- and much, much more.



Apply by May 1, or get more information, at http://4h.msue.msu.edu/events/4_h_renewable_energy_camp. Or call Insa Raymond, Extension Educator and Camp Coordinator, Hillsdale County MSU Extension, at 517-439-9301. Cost to attend the five day camp is \$190 for 4-H members, and \$200 for others. ■



Verhaar Leads Blanchard Operations

Bob Verhaar has been named operations coordinator at HomeWorks Tri-County Electric's Blanchard facility. He has been with the cooperative since 1980 in various roles including lineman, senior lineman, and most recently, crew leader.

Verhaar is a graduate of Grand Rapids Union High School and completed his apprenticeship in 1977 through the American Line Builders Apprentice program. For many years he worked as a lineman staker, meeting new members and arranging construction of their new electrical service.

He became a crew leader in 2009, overseeing the construction of overhead and underground distribution lines. He has also been a member of the cooperative's safety committee since 1999.

His hobbies have included motor racing as a Pro Truck driver and owner at Crystal Motor Speedway, and he is a past crew member of the Adam Petty #45 ASA race car team.



Bob Verhaar has been named operations coordinator at Blanchard.

"Bob is a great choice for this position. He is focused on safety for his crew members and for the general public," says Chris Reed, electric operations manager. "He's also kept up with the new technologies we've added to our operations, such as mobile workforce and electronic mapping." ■

VanDePerre Moves To Line Work in Ohio

Kevin VanDePerre, our former Blanchard operations supervisor, has chosen to go back to his lineman roots.

He joined an Ohio cooperative and is assigned as the lineman for Kelleys Island in Lake Erie, near his favorite fishing holes.

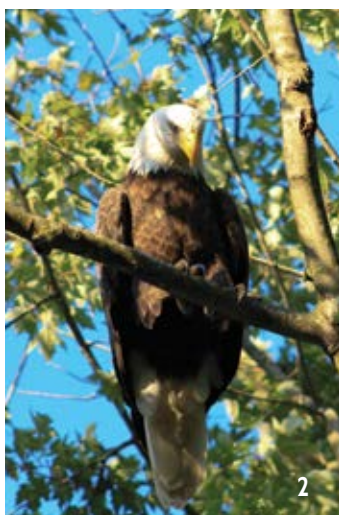
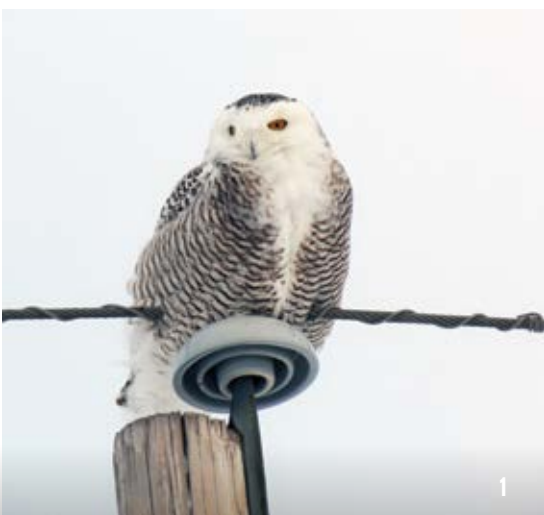
VanDePerre joined HomeWorks in 1987 as a lineman, returning to mid-Michigan from Texas. He also served as a senior lineman and crew leader before being named operations coordinator in 1999.



Kevin VanDePerre moved to a Lake Erie island served by a cooperative, and has gone back to his lineman roots.

SnapSHOT

Beautiful Birds



Capture Your Favorite Moments And Share

So many of you have taken photos of beautiful birds! Thanks for sharing.

- 1 Holly Thompson from Stockbridge writes: "I saw this snowy owl, sitting on a power pole while hunting, for many weeks on my way to and from work. It definitely made my commute more interesting and I looked forward to seeing her every day."
- 2 Tanya Troupe from Lake says, "This eagle had been sitting in the road within sight of my driveway. When I pulled out of my driveway and slowly headed in its direction, it flew up and was joined by another. They landed in a tree a little ways up the road so I stopped my car under the tree and started taking photos."
- 3 Jody Strang from Vermontville shared this shot: "This little lady stopped by during a heavy snow squall to watch the other birds on the feeders."
- 4 Nancy Anna from Edmore tells us, "Every winter we have cardinals in our backyard. Each one brightens up a winter day."
- 5 Christine Loose of Lake sent in this photo of a snowy owl taken in Isabella County. "It is always a thrill to see these Arctic travelers each winter. They are a beautiful bird!"
- 6 "I always enjoy the visits from our hummingbird friends in Mecosta County," says Karen Retter from Jerome, who receives Tri-County electric service in Barryton.
- 7 Sue Mills of Dewitt shares this Snap Shot of a tufted titmouse "looking cute at our feeder in Westphalia Township."

See more amazing photos at facebook.com/HomeWorks.org

Submit Your Photo!

Contributors whose photos we publish in 2016 will be entered into a drawing and *Country Lines* will choose two winners for a bill credit of up to \$100 each on their December electric bill, due in January 2017!

Upcoming Snap Shot Contests

"All About Michigan," Deadline: **May 15** (July-August issue)

"Sports," Deadline: **July 15** (September issue)

"Best Friends," Deadline: **August 16** (October issue)

Go to homeworks.org/content/snapshots to submit your high resolution digital photos and see additional themes. It's fast and easy. To send by mail: Include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, and details about your photo. Mail to Attn: *Country Lines* Snap Shots, 7973 E. Grand River, Portland, MI 48875. Photos will not be returned. Do not send color laser prints or professional studio photos.

CLEVER SIDE DISHES

Complete your meal with these simple sides.



Spicy Roasted Brussels Sprouts

Cynthia Hodges, Calumet

- 1 ½ lbs. brussels sprouts
- 2 T. extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ c. white wine vinegar
- ¼ c. honey
- 4 T. Sriracha, or more to taste
- kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Cover a baking sheet with foil. Trim the base away from the brussels sprouts and discard. Cut the sprouts in half. In a large bowl, whisk the olive oil with the vinegar, honey and Sriracha to combine. Add the brussels sprouts and toss until fully coated. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Spread the brussels sprouts on the foil-lined baking sheet, cut sides down. Pour any extra olive oil mixture onto the pan and tilt the pan around to distribute it. Roast until the sprouts are crispy on the outside and golden and caramelized on the cut sides, 20 to 30 minutes. Serve immediately.

Broccoli Salad (pictured)

Karen Armstrong, Webberville

- 1 head broccoli, cut into bite size florets
- ½ red onion, chopped
- ½ c. crumbled bacon
- 1 ½ c. shredded cheese
- ½ c. mayo
- 1 T. cider vinegar
- ½ c. sugar (or to taste)

Mix all ingredients together; toss with broccoli. Serve.

German Potato Salad

Joan Nachtman, Ellsworth

- ½ lb. bacon, cut into small pieces
- 1 medium onion
- 2 T. flour
- ½ c. sugar
- ⅔ c. white vinegar
- 1½ c. water
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 6–8 large potatoes, peeled and cubed

Fry bacon and remove from pan; leave the fat from bacon in the pan. Add the onion and fry in the bacon grease for 3 to 4 minutes. Add flour and cook for a couple minutes, stirring. Mix in sugar and white vinegar. Boil the potatoes in water until done. Drain and add potatoes with bacon and sauce. Best made one day ahead, cover and refrigerate.

Sauerkraut Salad

Lorraine Hartley, Wolverine

- 16 ozs. sauerkraut, drained and rinsed
- 1 med. green pepper, diced
- 1 c. celery, diced
- 1 med. onion, diced
- ¾ c. to 1 c. sugar
- ½ c. apple cider vinegar
- 2-oz. jar diced pimentos, drained

Combine all ingredients. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Stir and serve.

Apple Slaw

Robin Musselman, Charlotte

- 2 c. chopped apples
- 2 c. shredded red cabbage
- 2 c. shredded green cabbage
- 1 med. carrot, finely chopped
- 1½ c. Miracle Whip
- 2 T. honey
- spiced or sugared pecans, optional

Mix Miracle Whip and honey; set aside. In a large bowl, combine apples, carrot and both cabbages. Mix in Miracle Whip/honey mixture. Chill. Serve as is or with pecans on top.



Swiss Vegetable Medley

Terry Baxter, Alanson

- 1 bag (16 oz.) frozen vegetables (broccoli, carrots, cauliflower), thawed and drained
- 1 can (10 ¾ oz.) condensed cream of mushroom soup
- 1 c. (4 oz.) shredded Swiss cheese
- ⅓ c. sour cream
- ¼ t. pepper
- 1 can (2.8 oz.) French fried onions

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, combine vegetables, soup, ½ c. cheese, sour cream, pepper and ½ can of French fried onions. Pour into shallow (1 qt.) rectangle baking dish. Bake covered for 30 to 40 minutes. Sprinkle remaining cheese and onions in diagonal rows across top; bake uncovered 5 minutes or until onions are golden. Makes 6 servings.

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all our readers who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "BBQ" recipes by **May 1** and "Dessert" recipes by **July 1**.

Enter your recipe online at countrylines.com or send to (hand print or type 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.

A RECIPE WINNER EVERY MONTH!

Contributors whose recipes we print each month will be entered in a drawing and Country Lines will pay a \$50 credit on the winner's electric bill! A winner will be selected every month.



Lakewood Middle School Buys Calculators With Touchstone Energy Grant

Lakewood Middle School, Woodland, is one of 14 area schools receiving a 2016 Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grant. Teacher Russ Miller, center left, and HomeWorks Tri-County Electric director Wayne Swiler of Lake Odessa, are shown with students Bryant Makley, Damien Ward,

and Trisha Milligan, with some of the calculators purchased for the 6th and 7th grade math labs.

Watch future issues of *Michigan Country Lines* to see more 2016 Classroom Technology Grant presentations! ■

How to Apply for a Tri-County Electric People Fund Grant

The Tri-County Electric People Fund provides grants to individuals and organizations in the co-op's service area for food, shelter, clothing, health and other human needs, or for programs or services that benefit a significant segment of a community.



Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI. 48875, for an application form and grant guidelines, or visit homeworks.org. ■

Note:

Grant applications must be received by May 23 for the June board meeting, and by July 1 for the July board meeting.



Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Cooperative Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. The next meetings are scheduled for April 25 at Blanchard and May 23 at Portland. Members who need directions to the office, or wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

Learn More From Your Electric Bill

By Lesa Barker

Some new information can be found on your electric billing statement.

Your "map location," or line and pole number, has been added to your bill. Think of this number as your "electric address." Your service location has a unique line and pole number that helps us identify where you are located on our system map.

This is useful during outages, as we often refer to those numbers while repairing the lines. We will also start using the designation on Facebook when giving updates during large outages.

In addition to the line and pole number, we've added your board district number to your billing statement. With district meetings and board elections held each May, it's important that you know which district you are in. Please note that while you may have more than one electric account with us, you only have one membership, and one vote, which is in your primary district.

We are also adding both the district information and your "electric address" to your *Michigan Country Lines* address label.

If you're curious to know which district is your primary district, and where your voting rights are, you can look at the service area information under "About My Co-op" at homeworks.org, check your *Country Lines* label, or call us. ■

*****CAR-RT LOT**C-003

DISTRICT 02 MAP LOC OD445X23C

HOMEWORKS CC 99999

JOHN SMITH

JOAN SMITH

9876 E WEST ROAD

PORTLAND MI 48875-1234

SERVICE ADDRESS: 9876 E WEST ROAD

POLE NUMBER: OD445X23C

BOARD DIST: D02

| Billing Period 12/01/15 TO 01/01/16 | METER READINGS | | | | MULTIPLIER | ENERGY USED | ENERGY UNIT | RATE PER UNIT | CHARGE |
|--|----------------|------|-------|------|------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|--------|
| | BEGIN | TYPE | END | TYPE | | | | | |
| ENERGY | 66510 | REG | 68180 | REG | 1 | 1670 | KWH | 0.12285 | 205.16 |
| POWER SUPPLY COST RECOVERY | | | | | | 1670 | | 0.00401 | 6.70 |

Schedule Payments Through SmartHub

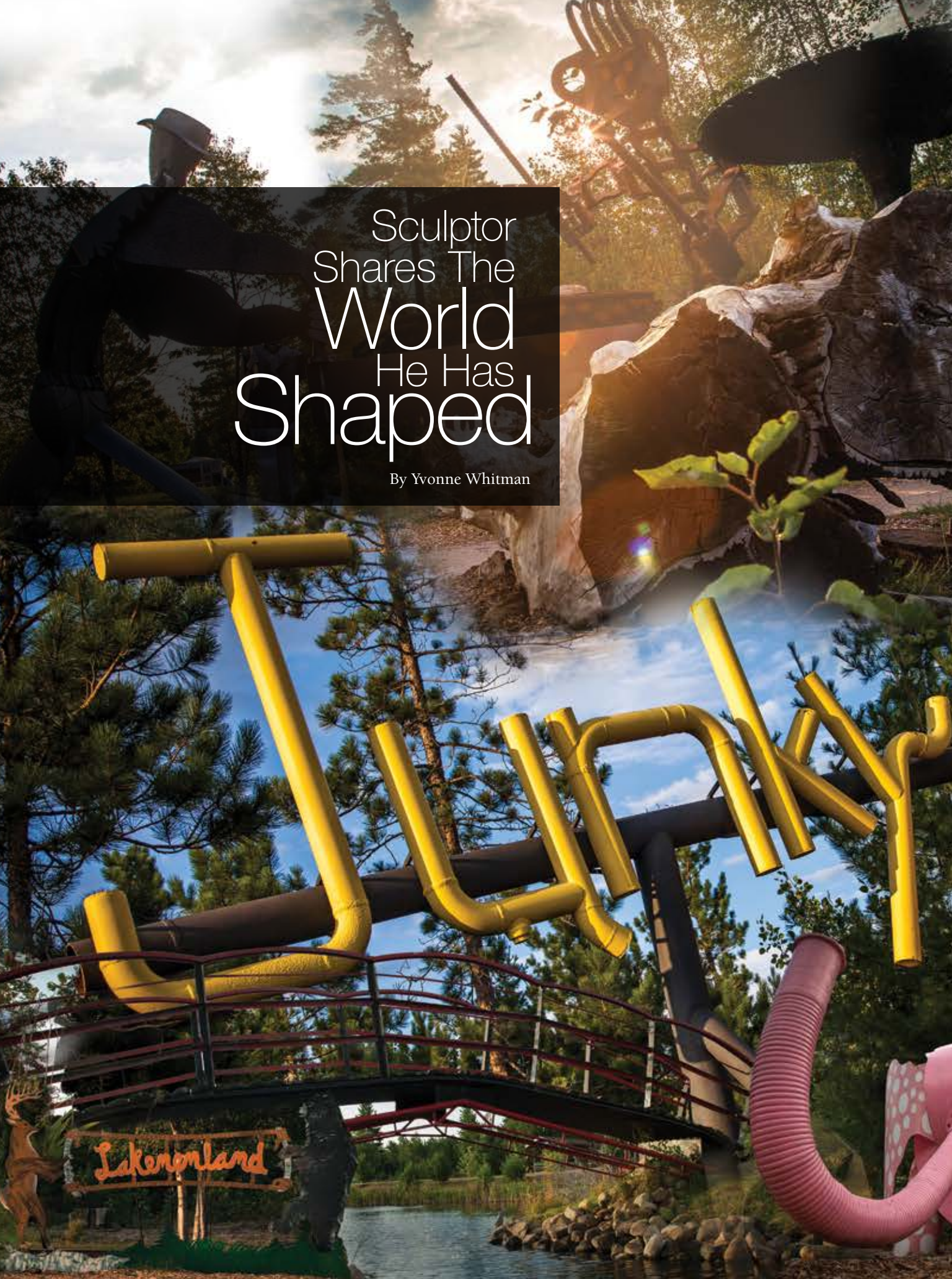
By Lesa Barker

You asked, we listened! A new payment option is now available for you on Smart Hub: You can now choose to schedule a future date for payment to be made on your electric account.

SmartHub is our online software that allows you to manage payments, check energy use, opt out of a paper statement and notify customer service of account issues. It is available on both Android and iOS phones as well as on the web.

By selecting SmartHub, you are giving yourself the freedom to control when and how your payments are made. Check it out today. ■


The screenshot displays the SmartHub web interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links like 'Home', 'Billing & Payments', 'My Profile', 'My Usage', 'Notifications', and 'Contact Us'. Below this, the 'Account Overview' section for 'JOHN D. SMITH' shows 'Days Remaining: 9 Estimated' and 'Payment Due: \$32.85'. A 'Payment Summary' section on the left offers options to 'Pay with a Stored Account' or 'Check for Auto Pay'. A calendar widget is visible, showing the month of February 2016, with a date selector set to February 27th. The bottom right corner includes a 'Call Us: (800) 662-6232' link.



Sculptor Shares The World He Has Shaped

By Yvonne Whitman

Lakenonland



Highway M-28, east of Marquette, is a typical stretch of U.P. road—until you notice the startling, out-of-place objects emerging from the nearby woods. Some say the experience is like stumbling upon a north woods “Jurassic Park.” In truth, you have entered the fantastical and far-friendlier world of Lakenenland Sculpture Park.

Yes, you will find a dinosaur or two roaming the nearly 40-acre woodland park. But they’re gentle giants—over 80 whimsical sculptures created by a single artist from bits of salvaged iron. Each of the works scattered throughout the park are the creation of a local iron sculptor, Tom Lakenen, 53.



Pat Lakenen putting the finishing touches on another one of her son’s creations.

The park is the result of a major lifestyle change and grew from a single project. “I traded beer drinking and bar stools for metal sculpting,” Lakenen says with a wide grin. Working in his garage, he first crafted “Eight Dancing Wolves,” which he hesitantly displayed in his front yard. “No one threw eggs at my house, so I decided to make something else,” says Lakenen, a boilermaker by trade. These were soon joined by a motorcycle-riding skeleton and other imaginative creatures. His neighbors didn’t appear to mind his installations, but his output soon overflowed his yard. And thus was born the Lakenenland Sculpture Park.

“In 2003, I remortgaged my house for the next 100 years!” Lakenen jokingly exclaims about buying 37 acres “to scatter my ‘junk art’ around.” After years of clearing trees and building roads by himself, the park has evolved to include a visitor pavilion, band shell, two fishing ponds and a lean-to warming shack for the many winter visitors arriving by snowmobile. The park is open year-round and there is no admission fee.

Most winter weekends find Lakenen stoking the bonfire for snowmobilers and offering free hot chocolate, coffee and snacks to upwards of 150 people. (Snowmobile Trail #417 runs through the park). His generosity is matched by his resourcefulness, since he’s become adept at bartering. In fact, Lakenen traded sand from the property with both a neighbor and a road crew, who removed enough earth to create the two large craters that became the ponds he now stocks with fish.

Lakenenland and its contents are financed solely by the sculptor himself—with one fine exception. An area doctor, Ken Buran, once left a \$2,000 donation. Buran subsequently asked Lakenen if there were any other improvements he wished to make in the park. “A pavilion,” Lakenen told him, “so guests can eat their lunch in shade.” The pavilion arose from a \$10,000 second donation. “Tom and his wife, Lisa, are good people,” Buran says. “They do a lot for the community. His park is unique, and I thought it worth preserving and building upon. Communities need these places as a cultural heritage and identity.”

And indeed, Lakenenland represents more than a sculpture park. It stands as a testament to creativity, determination, generosity and—above all—community. And you can’t put a price on that. ■

Visit lakenenland.com for more information on the park.



Spring Clean Your Way To Energy Savings

Spruce up your spring cleaning routine by adding a few extra activities that will keep your home spotless and help you save energy.

- Vacuum air registers and vents to keep air flowing as efficiently as possible.
- Wash or replace air filters and consider installing a timer switch on your bathroom fan.
- Dust electronics and lightbulbs thoroughly to ensure they operate at maximum capacity.
- Vacuum refrigerator coils to remove dust and dirt, which can force the fridge to work harder.
- Clean the track on your sliding glass door to maintain a tight seal. A dirty track can create gaps where heat or cold air can escape.

Take a quick break from cleaning and prep your home for energy savings by doing the following:

- Redirect ceiling fans to spin counterclockwise. This helps move air downward, cooling the room and maintaining constant airflow.
- Purchase a smart or programmable thermostat to control the temperature in your home, even when you're away.



- Open windows to create a cross-wise breeze, cooling your home without switching on the A/C.
- Seal air leaks to prevent cool air from seeping out. Up to 30 percent of heating and cooling bills are consumed by air leakage!
- Schedule a professional tune-up for your cooling system to ensure it runs at peak efficiency. Regular tune-ups can also help prevent costly breakdowns.

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Keeping Trees Away From Your Power Lines

One of the major factors in preventing or reducing outages is clearing trees away from the 2,900 miles of power lines that make up our distribution system.

According to Nick Rusnell, HomeWorks Tri-County's vegetation management coordinator, the co-op is currently clearing rights-of-way on a seven-year cycle. "That means if we start at your house today, seven years later we'll be back again," he says.

We contract with professional tree companies to do "circuit work," a systematic removal of trees and fast growing woody brush from 15 feet on each side of the wires. First, they'll use heavy equipment, such as a mower and side trimmer, to clear as much of a circuit as possible. Then, a second crew comes through using a bucket truck to clear what remains.

Crews will knock on doors or leave door tags a few days ahead of bringing the heavy equipment through. HomeWorks also sends a postcard notifying members about a week before the bucket truck crew reaches the circuit.

The crews will clean up brush in yards and close to roadways, and they cut the larger pieces of timber into sections manageable by two people to leave for the property owner to dispose of.

"Within a year of our tree crews working on a circuit, the undergrowth will make it look green and natural again," Rusnell says. Shortly after, a licensed contractor will come along the circuit and make a targeted herbicide application with a backpack sprayer, to stop the woody undergrowth from growing quickly.

Rusnell, who is training to become a certified utility arborist, notes the co-op

started investing heavily in right-of-way clearing about 10 years ago.

"We just completed our first full cycle this year," he says. "It took longer because it was the first time through a lot of areas of heavy growth."

"Our goal is to cut the full 30 foot right-of-way, which shortens the cycle time, costs our members less in the long run, and reduces outage time."

Rusnell adds that the co-op's line crews patrol regularly as they do their scheduled maintenance work, watching out for trees that could endanger the power lines. There is a contract crew designated to remove those trouble spots between circuits. ■

For more information on our right-of-way clearing program, including in which townships we will be working during 2016, visit homeworks.org, using this link: <http://bit.ly/216bEpR>.



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6. Submit your memories online: countrylines.com



Jampot Bakery Offers A Divine Experience

By Yvonne Whitman

For area residents and tourists alike, no drive along the Keweenaw Peninsula's scenic lakefront is complete without a stop at The Jampot. The shop is operated by a small order of Byzantine monks and well-known for everything homemade, from jams and jellies to fresh-baked goods. The signature thimbleberry jam is heavenly.

Monastery founders Frs. Basil and Nicholas arrived in the area in 1983, seeking a place for quiet prayer and peace. Hearing that the Upper Peninsula was "a place of small towns and wilderness," noted Basil, they purchased a quaint lakeside resort. "The Holy Spirit led us here. The first winter our business was just finding a way to survive," Basil explains. In order to support themselves, they quickly became familiar with the tradition of harvesting a local fruit—the thimbleberry—long used to make jam for winter sustenance. They decided to try jam-making by default, as there wasn't much else in the rugged, sparsely-populated land.

Welcoming area residents helped the monks as they worked to establish their business. "Community members embraced us and that made all the difference," Basil says. "They shared the best locations of berry patches and the local grocer sold us the jars at cost." That first year, they produced 120 cases of jam, selling them to a local distributor for use in gift baskets. In 1986, they opened the



Photo courtesy of The Jampot

doors of The Jampot, adding unique bakery items to their product line that receive rave reviews.

However, the main focus of their lives remains prayer, to which they devote every possible waking hour, and The Jampot exists to support a place of religious devotion. Visit societystjohn.com to learn more about the monastery's fascinating story. ■

The Jampot is located on M-26 between Eagle Harbor and Eagle River. The store's season is late April through mid-October. Products are also available year-round by online mail order. Store hours are Monday - Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Visit store.societystjohn.com for more details.



AMERICAN METAL ROOFS President, Frank Farmer



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After all, home improvement companies have a long history of deceptive practices, shoddy workmanship and spineless warranties and I was just another salesman from another home improvement company who might be there to rip them off.

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Knowing more about your electric cooperative helps you stay involved, and that helps us run HomeWorks Tri-County Electric for the benefit of you and your neighbors.

Our annual membership meetings start with a light supper (sloppy joes, plus ice cream!) at 6 p.m., followed by a short business meeting, and then learning what's happening at the electric utility YOU own. **You'll have a chance to ask questions and win prizes**, such as energy certificates worth \$10, \$25, or even \$50, and one lucky member will leave the meeting with a Grand Prize of an Vizio 32" Smart TV with built-in wifi.

Bring your kids, too. Besides enjoying a free meal, all youths ages 5–16 have a chance to win an iPod Touch. And, everyone goes home with a special thank-you gift.

Watch your mailbox for your family's personal invitation. See you there!

This year's dates and locations are:

May 16 – District 5 (Election)
Fulton Middle School Gym

May 17 – District 1 (Election)
St. Mary's Church Hall, Charlotte

May 18 – District 6
Beal City High School

May 19 – District 3
Eagle Park Hall

May 23 – District 7 (Election)
St. Michael's School, Remus

May 24 – District 4 (New Location)
Montabella Jr-Sr High Cafeteria

May 25 – District 2
St. Edward's Church Hall,
Lake Odessa