

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Sculptor  
Shares The  
World  
He Has  
Shaped

**Plus!**

Changing The Landscape,  
Investing In Members

Three Directors Re-elected

Win A \$50 Energy Credit  
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**geothermal**  
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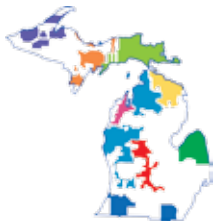
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<sup>1</sup> Rebate ends on June 24th, 2016.

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**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:

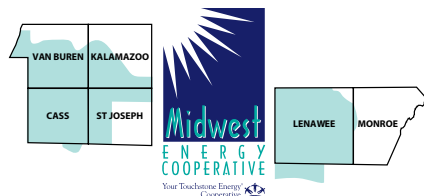
**If you had to be trapped in a tv show for a month, which would you choose?**

Please submit answers to [countrylines.com](http://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.



#### CASSOPOLIS DISTRICT SERVICE CENTER

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Midwest Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

# Changing The Landscape, Investing In Our Membership



**Robert Hance**  
President/CEO

There's an economic developer inside every successful electric utility leader. We're constantly on the lookout for meaningful growth opportunities because quality electric load benefits the utility. More importantly, as a member-owned cooperative, quality load ultimately benefits our owners.

So when others see an empty parcel of land, the economic developer in me often sees a strategic opportunity.

One such parcel has had my attention for 14 years now, as I commute from my Three Rivers home to our Cassopolis headquarters. As I round a curve coming into Cass, the northwest corner of M-60 and Decatur Road comes into full, glorious view. It's flat, has access to Class-A roads and existing sewer and water, and is zoned for light industrial use. It's an economic developer's dream!

That property was owned and developed by another great economic developer, Ed Lowe. He was a passionate advocate for the role of entrepreneurship in the U.S. economy, and he founded the Edward Lowe Foundation to support businesses with similar entrepreneurial spirit and vision.

I have to believe Lowe had a vision for developing that parcel of land adjacent to M-60. And with great respect to the amazing legacy that he left, I hope he would be proud of what is transpiring.

Team Midwest is breaking ground this spring on a new headquarters facility at that northwest corner of M-60 and Decatur Road. Lowe did some foundational work to prepare a perfect property for us to build your #UtilityoftheFuture. We are developing about 40 acres to house all of the functions and facilities from our current Cassopolis locations, and provide space for much needed growth as we continue living out our vision. By the time we move in the fall of 2017, we will have more than 100 employees reporting to the Cass facility, with upwards of 30 more coming over the next few years.

This location also keeps us very central to pockets of membership in the southern portions of our southwest Michigan territory. The Paw Paw office will remain open to serve those further north.

Our new build also sets the stage for other development and growth along that corridor. Good development breeds additional economic development, and we hope that our innovative presence at that intersection will draw additional interest and jobs to the area.

We're changing the landscape, investing in our membership, and building the utility of the future. See the related story on page 5, and visit [UtilityoftheFuture.coop](http://UtilityoftheFuture.coop) to learn more about our vision and this building project. ■



CHANGING  
the landscape  
INVESTING  
in our membership  
BUILDING  
the Utility of the Future

## #UtilityoftheFuture News And Updates

**T**eam Midwest is implementing a long-term vision to benefit our members and communities today and into the future. Two projects are on a parallel path: a major upgrade to the electric distribution system and deployment of a communications solution, including fiber internet.

The investment will forever change the way our members live, work and interact. While we implement the technology to create your #UtilityoftheFuture, we are also making a necessary strategic investment in a new home to house the systems, supports, and people behind that utility.

### The Need

We're out of space in our current headquarters facility in Cassopolis, and are on a fast-growth track as we work on the short- and long-term goals that will position us as your #UtilityoftheFuture. Our current facility was built in 1940 and renovated in the mid-1990s. It was appropriately sized for that time, but no one could anticipate the opportunity and growth that would face the organization just two decades later.

In 1975, we had 23 employees in the Cass office. Following the renovation, we had 68 employees, and today we have 93. As we prepare for a future of smart grid related home automation and fiber deployment, we expect to add an additional 32 employees over the next five years. Doing nothing is not an option, as we must add human and physical resources to accomplish our goals.

### Seeking a Solution

Last summer, we engaged with Cooperative Building Solutions (CBS) to ensure that we were being good stewards of existing resources and member dollars. CBS completed a comprehensive

site, facility and needs assessment, clearly revealing that existing facilities were inadequate for current and future space needs. Serious safety and security concerns were also present. They presented two options to Midwest, both resulting in a similar rate impact: new and renovated facilities at the current site or new facilities on a new site. They recommended the latter as it offered the opportunity to create a layout and flow that maximizes efficiency and accommodates future growth. The board approved the plan at their November 2015 meeting.

### Confirming The Solution

An interesting turn of events confirmed our decision to build on a new site. In 2015, American Electric Power (AEP) engaged in a major Cass County Area Improvements Project to replace an aging transmission line. After the board vote, we learned that their project requires a 100-foot right-of-way to safely construct, operate and maintain the line, and that line runs directly through our current property. This clearly limited options at the current site, and warranted immediate action to develop a new site. However this plays out with AEP, it will largely offset the costs of land acquisition for the new facility.

### Future Opportunities

We are primarily focused on being good stewards of member resources, but also want to show due care and concern for others impacted by this move. We continue to actively work with AEP to design the best solution for the space we leave behind—for the neighbors who are impacted by our move and interested in space, and for the Village of Cassopolis and their considerations for the land and property. Follow our blog at [UtilityoftheFuture.coop](http://UtilityoftheFuture.coop) for the latest updates. ■

# Co-ops Launch Voter Engagement Program

**M**ichigan 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](http://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](http://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

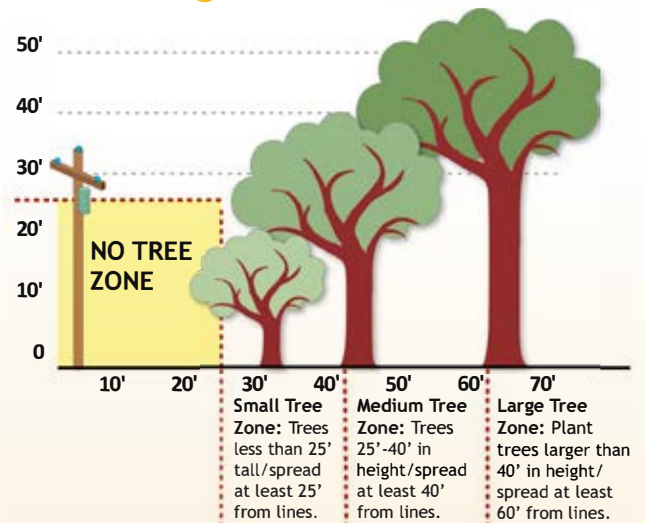
Earth Day is April 22. Show the earth some love, and plant a tree. Choose the right tree for the right place and avoid future problems with power lines.

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



# There's An App For That!

## Manage Your Account And Service Experience With SmartHub

**W**hen you've got a job to do, you need the right tools at your fingertips. Team Midwest offers a great set of "Power Tools" to help you manage your account and service experience. SmartHub puts the power of information in your hands, providing access and two-way communication with Team Midwest online or using your mobile device. It's a free, safe and secure method of conducting your business when and where it best suits you.

Mobile users can download the free SmartHub app from iTunes or Google Play to begin using one of the many power tools available. Computer users can sign up online at TeamMidwest.com. Once registered, just tap the app or click on the appropriate Account Access icon at the website and you will be directed to the SmartHub self-service site. Following are a few of the Power Tools available through SmartHub:

- **Outage Reporting:** Quickly report a service interruption online without waiting for the next available phone representative. From the online self-service site, users can also sign up to receive outage-related notifications by email or text. Personalize your notification experience to get what you need, when you need it!
- **Notifications:** Sign up to receive select notifications about your own account by text or email, including outage-related information!

- **Bill & Pay:** Quickly view your current account balance and due date, make a payment, manage recurring payments, and modify payment methods. You can also check your account history right from your mobile device.
- **Contact Midwest:** Got a question or concern—we're just a quick click away!
- **Service Status:** Report a service issue or find out if there are any known issues related to your account.
- **My Usage:** Access detailed information to better understand and manage your energy use. ■



## Win a \$50 Energy Credit

Haven't yet signed up for SmartHub? What are you waiting for?

In April and May we're encouraging folks to register and use SmartHub, and you have a chance to win a \$50 energy credit just for completing a few simple steps. What better reason to discover your new best method for conducting your Team Midwest business?

Download the app or register online, and click on "Contact Us" on the navigation bar across the top. Select "Customer Contest" from the drop-down menu, then share something about yourself or your SmartHub experience in the comment box. Are you a first-time user? What do you love about SmartHub? What could make SmartHub even better? Share whatever you want, complete the other fields, and "Send Request." Five \$50 energy credits will be given away. Only one contest entry per account, and the deadline to participate is May 31.

The image shows a screenshot of the SmartHub 'Contact Us' form. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'My Profile', 'My Usage', 'Notifications', and 'Contact Us'. The 'Contact Us' link is active. Below the navigation bar, the title 'Contact Us' is displayed. A dropdown menu is open, showing a list of reasons for contact. The options are: 'Please select a reason', 'View Our Locations', 'Billing Question', 'Customer Contest' (which is highlighted in blue), 'EFT Request', 'Electronic Transfer Inquiry', 'Maintenance Request', 'Meter Problems', 'Miscellaneous/Other', 'New Service Request', 'Personal Information Change', 'Phone Number Update', 'Propane Delivery Request', 'Start Service/Stop Existing Sv', and 'Transformer Problem'.



# 'Birds Of Beauty' Photo Contest Winners



## Photos With The Highest Facebook Votes!

The votes are in, and we're happy to share the winning photo (and some great runners-up) from our March photo contest. Winners were selected from 42 Facebook entries receiving over 700 votes! Thanks to everyone who submitted a photo, voted and spread the word by sharing the post on Facebook.

1. **Winner:** Judy Kish, Decatur, "Mourning Doves In Winter"
2. Nichele Rohacs, Niles, "Woodpecker Watching The Sunrise"
3. Cheri Kulwicki, Three Rivers, "Lakeside Beauty"
4. Holly Rosenhagen, Schoolcraft, "Autumn Swan"
5. Jim Goble, Schoolcraft, "Turkey Trot"

Visit [teammidwest.com/photo-contest/](http://teammidwest.com/photo-contest/) to view all the photos submitted.

## Enter Your Photos And Win!

Team Midwest's photo contest is under way and one lucky winner will end up with a credit of up to \$200 on their December 2016 electric bill. Every month, we will announce a new theme and invite you to submit your best shot. The photo receiving the most votes each month on our Facebook contest page will be entered into the drawing for the year-end bill credit, and will also be featured in a subsequent issue of *Michigan Country Lines* for all to enjoy.

How to submit? Just visit [facebook.com/TeamMidwest](https://facebook.com/TeamMidwest) and click on "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs. Not on Facebook? You can also enter at [TeamMidwest.com/photocontest](http://TeamMidwest.com/photocontest). Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too! A high resolution photo (at least 1 MB) will be required to print your photos in *Michigan Country Lines*. We look forward to seeing your photos!

Our April theme is "**Fishing.**" Photos are accepted from **April 1 to April 20**. Photos with the most votes will be featured in the June issue.

Our May theme is "**All About Michigan.**" Photos are accepted from **May 1 to May 20**. Photos with the most votes will be featured in the July/August issue.



# 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](http://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.





Lenawee County residents participating in Walk 4 Warmth to raise over \$22,000 to help families with utility emergencies.

## Midwest In The Community

**N**eighbor helping neighbor—that’s how your Team Midwest family approaches daily work and efforts to give back. We live, work and serve right here in your local community, and strive to actively live our “Community” value in meaningful and impacting ways. Here are just a few of our recent efforts to strengthen and support our communities and members.

### Bloomington School Store

While most school stores sell the requisite pencils, paper, energy drinks and candy, the new Bloomington Middle/High School store offers so much more. *The Birdcage* opened in March with sponsorship support from Midwest Energy Cooperative. The store is primarily operated by students in the Special Education/Life Skills class,

and gives them a sense of school and self-pride, along with real-world work experience. All student workers were required to apply and interview, and are paid in tokens to purchase items from the store. The Code Red Leadership Team also assists with staffing the store.

Assistant principal, Beckah Chartier, hopes this effort helps build school spirit and a sense of ownership for students. “We use advisory classes to create Cardinal Pride Friday, where students clean areas of the school. This gives students ownership and pride in their school and experience. I believe the school store will create a very similar experience.”

### Walk 4 Warmth

In an unusual turn of events, Mother Nature provided a sunny and warm Saturday in February for the 2016 Lenawee County Walk 4 Warmth. The event raises funds and awareness for those experiencing utility emergencies. For the last several years, utility assistance was the primary reason Lenawee County residents engaged with the 2-1-1 system. Walk 4 Warmth 2016 raised \$22,000 to help families that do not qualify for state or federal dollars. These precious unrestricted funds are distributed through the Community Action Agency. Team Midwest worked closely with other event sponsors to help bring this event to reality, proudly assisting and supporting our Lenawee County members and neighbors! ■



Life Skills students Jacob Kuehl, Brett Sullivan and Cheyenne Wheeler wait on two students during a lunch break at The Birdcage.

## Three Directors Retain Board Seats

Ben Russell, District 6, Colyne Sorsby, District 7, and Harry Gentz, District 9, were recently re-elected to new three-year terms on the cooperative board of directors after running unopposed in their respective districts. ■



Ben Russell



Colyne Sorsby



Harry Gentz

## Board Openings In 2017

If you are interested in taking a more active role with your cooperative, you might consider running for one of the elected director positions. Midwest Energy Cooperative is governed by a nine-member board, and each director is elected to serve a three-year term. Directors are elected by and represent members living in his or her district, and must reside in the district they represent. These are important roles as your directors make critical decisions on behalf of you and the other members-owners of this cooperative.

Three seats on the Midwest Energy Cooperative Board of Directors will be up for election in 2017. District 1, represented by Fred Turk, of Decatur, includes Hamilton, Decatur, Porter, Volina, Marcellus and Penn townships. District 2, represented by Jim Dickerson, of Bloomingdale, includes Silver Creek, Pipestone, Bainbridge, Keeler, Coloma, Watervliet, Hartford, Lawrence, Paw Paw, Waverly, Arlington, Bangor, Covert and Bloomingdale townships. District 5, represented by John Green, of Dowagiac, includes Milton, Howard, Pokagon, LaGrange and Wayne townships.

For more information about serving on the board of directors, please call the cooperative at 1-800-492-5989. More information about the 2017 election will be shared in the November/December issue of *Country Lines*. ■



## Midwest Energy Preferred Energy Auditors

These days we're all looking for ways that we can maximize energy dollars by increasing our home's efficiency, but knowing where to start and what to do can be overwhelming.

As a service to our members, we have compiled a list of Midwest Energy Cooperative preferred energy auditors. As part of the qualification process we researched, interviewed and checked references on a regional pool of contractors, and included on our final list only those that we feel confident will provide the level of service that you have come to know and expect from your co-op.

Please feel free to contact any of these contractors with confidence if you are interested in more information about their services. ■

### Energy Diagnostics

68597 Hill Street, Sturgis, MI or  
395 East 500 North, Valparaiso, IN  
800-390-8091

### Energy Saving Services, Inc.

3025 Emerald Drive, Kalamazoo, MI  
269-341-HEET (4338)

### Green Building Consulting Homes +

P.O. Box 43497, Cincinnati, OH  
513-272-2005

### Home Energy Insight, LLC

P.O. Box 1536, Portage, MI  
269-372-2496

### Superior Energy Solutions, LLC

819 N. Locust St., Ste. B, Ottawa, OH  
419-890-8067

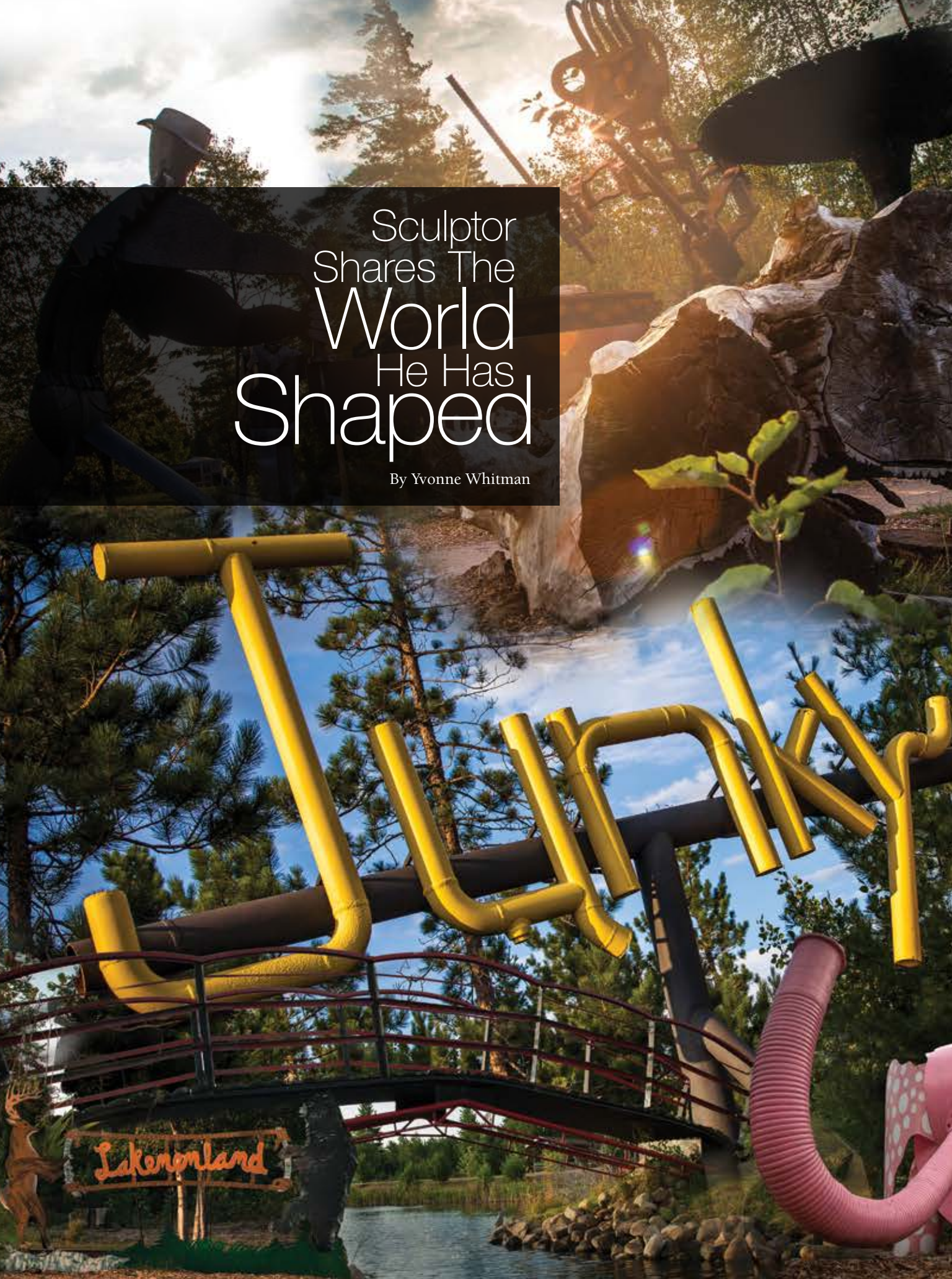
### Thermal Inspection Services, LLC

27253 T Drive N., Springport, MI  
517-745-7100

### Think Green Midwest

3997 Reily Milville Road, Hamilton, OH  
513-477-0130






# 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](http://lakenenland.com) for more information on the park.



# Spring Clean Your Way To Energy Savings

**S**pruce 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.

REBATES ARE NOW AVAILABLE toward the purchase of many energy-efficient products and appliances. Visit [Michigan-energy.org](http://Michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy-saving information and rebates. ■



## Out with the old

**It's the season of change!** Now is the perfect time to identify opportunities to upgrade outdated, inefficient lighting and equipment at your office or facility. The Energy Optimization program helps businesses save energy—and improve their bottom line—by providing cash incentives toward the purchase of:

- HVAC equipment
- Food service equipment
- Energy-efficient lighting
- Industrial process equipment
- Commercial refrigeration equipment

**ENERGY TIP:** Rebates are available for custom projects tailored to meet unique business needs.

ONLINE: [michigan-energy.org](http://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](http://michigan-energy.org).



## Notice to Members of Midwest Energy Cooperative

### Special Board Meeting: April 26, 2016

The Midwest Energy Cooperative Board Of Directors will consider changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs in accordance with P.A. 167 of 2008, at its meeting on April 26, 2016, beginning at 10 a.m. The meeting will be held at the headquarters office, 901 East State Street, Cassopolis, MI, and is open to any Midwest Energy Cooperative member. Members will have an opportunity to address the board on the proposed changes prior to board action.

The following items will be considered:

- Increase distribution charge across all rate classifications
- Modify availability requirements for General Service and Large Power tariff rate sheets
- Increase special charges
- Eliminate interest paid on customer deposits
- Modify administrative rules addressing deposit rules, meter readings, payment arrangements, invoice groups, back billing, billing error interest, late payment charge, and time of shutoff.

Notice of changes or additions to the cooperative's rates or service rules shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in *Michigan Country Lines* at least 30 days prior to their effective date.

Participation: Any interested member may attend and participate. The location of the board meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact Kerri Wade at 800-492-5989, ext. 1094, a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be shared through Mrs. Wade, or by email at [team.midwest@teammidwest.com](mailto:team.midwest@teammidwest.com).

## Teens: Learn More About Renewable Energy

**L**earn 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](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. ■





# I Remember...

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.

## Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. Country Lines retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: [countrylines.com](http://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](http://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](http://store.societystjohn.com) for more details.*



**AMERICAN METAL ROOFS President, Frank Farmer**



**"Your new roof, from purchase through installation, should be an outstanding experience."**

I have been selling home improvements across Michigan since 1986. Over the years, one thing always worried me about what I saw in my customer's eyes - no matter what I said or did, deep down, I could tell that many of them just didn't trust me.

**And I understood that lack of trust.**

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.

**I knew things had to change.**

So, in the winter of 1999, I sat down to plan the perfect home improvement experience - *from the homeowners perspective*. Armed with a cup of good coffee and a legal pad, I went to work. Several hours and several pages later, the plan for American Metal Roofs was born.

**The Result:** The best roofing product, installed by skilled craftsmen backed by warranties with real teeth. I believe that's what every homeowner deserves. If you agree, let's get together and talk about a beautiful, permanent American Metal Roof for your home.

**You deserve nothing less.**

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