

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative

June 2016

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



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More Classroom Technology Grants  
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**REIGNS IN MICHIGAN**

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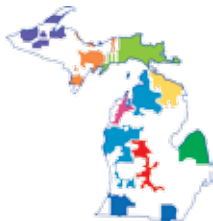
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1. 7 Series unit uses approximately 900 watts while running in speeds 1-2.



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
countrylines.com

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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 ask your future self one question, what would it be?**

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

"Will I always over think everything?"

"Will I ever not need to call mom every time I have a bad day?"

"Have I seen the world and did I let it shape me?"

"Am I happy?"

"Was college really worth all of the money?"

Our new Question of the Month is:

**If you could spend the day with any celebrity, who would it be?**

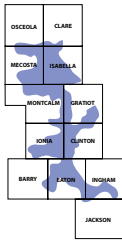
Please submit answers to countrylines.com by July 1.

## ON THE COVER

Marcia and Dick Walsworth, second-generation asparagus farmers from Mears, MI, introduce us to their 260-acre kingdom as they explain the struggles of maintaining their domain in the second largest asparagus producing state.

*Photo-Emily Haines Lloyd*





## 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

### Portland office:

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

### Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-562-8232

### Pay by phone, anytime:

1-877-999-3395

### Service questions/outages:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-848-9333  
(24 hours for emergency calls)

### Tri-County Propane:

1-877-574-2740

### High Speed Internet

1-800-668-8413

[homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org)

E-mail: [tricoenergy@homeworks.org](mailto:tricoenergy@homeworks.org)

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Editor: Jayne Graham, CCC



Find us on Facebook.

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

# Another Great Year Of District Meetings



**Mark Kappler**

General Manager

One of our favorite times of the year is the two weeks in May when the HomeWorks team hits the road to visit each district, holding the annual membership meetings.

It's great to see so many familiar, smiling faces to welcome us and share a bite to eat.

This year's meetings were a little bittersweet, knowing it was the last meeting as director for Phil Conklin in District 1, Cara Evans in District 5, and Dean Floria in District 7. After a combined 72 years of service to the co-op as board members, they have chosen to enjoy retirement and watch new people bring new ideas and enthusiasm to the table.

The nominating committees in all three districts provided a strong slate of candidates, and we're looking forward to seeing how you voted. The three new directors will be seated at the Annual Meeting of the Cooperative in August.

For those of you who could not make it to one of this year's meetings, here are a couple of the highlights from our brief operations report.

- Membership growth is very slow, and members are taking advantage of Energy Optimization programs to save energy and money. Meanwhile, costs continue to rise for labor, equipment, and intangibles such as insurance and property taxes. So, for the first time in six years, your board is considering a rate increase.

A Cost of Service study was performed by an independent consultant, and it looks like we'll need about a three-percent increase to keep HomeWorks Tri-County stable, and continue providing reliable service. This increase will be considered in detail on June 27 at a special open membership meeting (see the notice on page 5.)

- Even though the Supreme Court has blocked implementation of the EPA's Clean Power Plan (CPP), which also allowed Michigan legislators to put their energy bill on a back burner, Wolverine Power Cooperative is working to make sure we're ready to meet the requirements of the CPP or any new Michigan policy.

With new projects under contract right now, Wolverine will be at 30 percent renewables next year. Wolverine is also about ready to test the new Alpine Power Plant near Gaylord. And, they're able to do it while keeping your power supply rates stable.

*continued on page 5*

## NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF HOMEWORKS TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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A Special Member Meeting is set for June 27, 9 a.m., at the Cooperative's Portland office.

The board of directors will consider several changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on June 27, 2016, to be held at the cooperative office at 7973 Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. and is open to all members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

The session will begin with an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board of directors, without filing a formal request under the cooperative policy. Members are asked to come to the lobby by 9 a.m. and request to speak to the board; staff will direct interested members to the meeting room. Time constraints on each member's comments will be at the discretion of the board president, but members are asked to keep comments to less than five minutes.

The following items will be considered:

- 1) Revise the cooperative's electric rates to meet current and future financial needs, based on an independent Cost of Service study.
- 2) Reconcile the 2015 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections. The Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor is applied to Tri-County Electric Cooperative's retail member-customers' monthly kilowatt-hour use. It represents the fluctuating costs of the power supply, as established by the cooperative in conjunction with Wolverine Power Cooperative. The factor is established annually and reviewed monthly.
- 3) Discuss participation in the State of Michigan's Low Income Energy Assistance program at the cost of a surcharge, to be determined by the state, on each residential customer's monthly energy bill.

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.

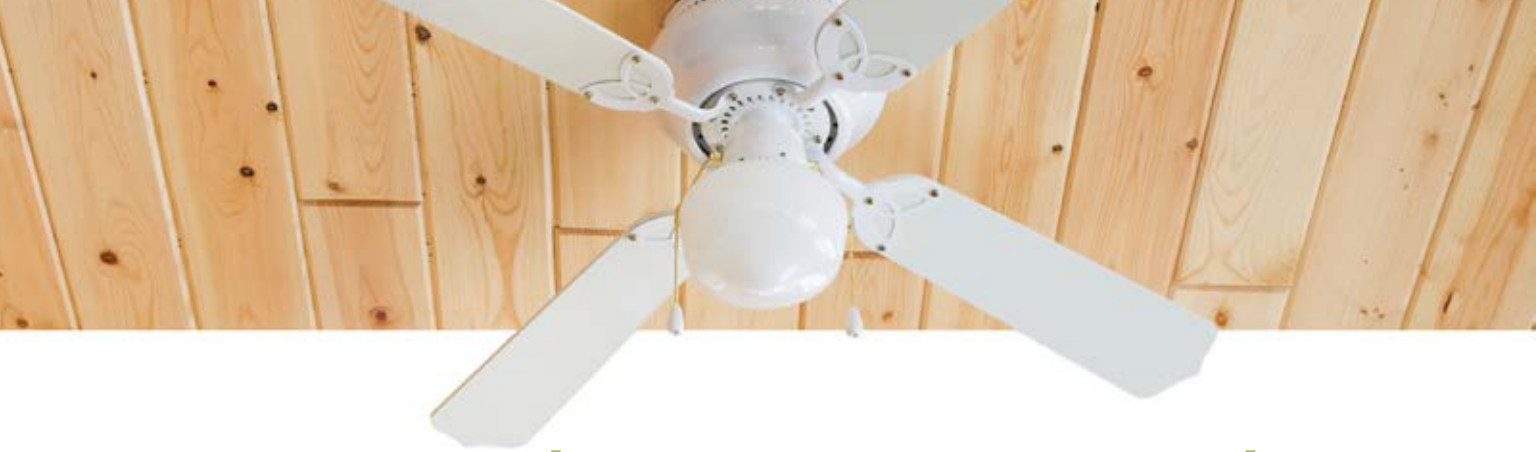
**Participation:** Any interested member may attend and participate. The location of the board meeting site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact HomeWorks Tri-County Electric at 800-562-8232 a week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be made before the meeting date by calling General Manager Mark Kappler at 517-647-1281, or by email at [mkappler@homeworks.org](mailto:mkappler@homeworks.org).

Notice of the board meeting shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in *Michigan Country Lines*.

### Another Great Year Of District Meetings (continued)

From capital credit retirements on your May energy statement to our community service programs to a look back at last year's Partners for Power project in Guatemala, much was discussed at the meeting.

There's a lot of good things going on at your co-op these days. Whether you were able to hear about it at one of this year's district meeting or not, your board of directors and staff thank you for your continued support of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric. ■



# How To Use Ceiling Fans For Year-Round Comfort, Savings

By James Dulley

**P**eople often wonder which ceiling fans to install. There are so many models and prices, leaving some to wonder if they can help cut energy costs.

People typically think of fans only for summertime comfort and lower air-conditioning costs. Ceiling fans are unique in that they can also reduce your wintertime heating bills with proper use.

Before installing a ceiling fan, it's important to understand how one functions. A ceiling fan does not cool a room like an air conditioner. It heats the room whenever it is running. All of the electricity it uses ends up as heat. Always turn the fan off when no one is in a room.

You feel cooler under a ceiling fan because it creates a downward breeze over your skin. This breeze allows you to run your air conditioner less or set its thermostat a few degrees higher without sacrificing comfort. If you do not do this, running the ceiling fan will increase your electric bills.

During winter, reverse the rotation of the fan blades, so the air flows up toward the ceiling. Run it on low speed. This gently moves up the hotter air, which collects near the ceiling, throughout the room without creating a chilly breeze. This allows you to set the heating thermostat a few degrees lower for savings.

The simplest way to select an efficient ceiling fan is to pick one which is Energy Star certified. When selecting a typical, lower-cost, four or five blade fan, a rule of thumb for sizing is (room size vs. diameter of blades): up to 75 sq. ft.—36 in., 75 to 144 sq. ft.—36 to 42 in., 144 to 225 sq. ft.—44 to 50 in., 225 to 400 sq. ft.—50 to 54 in.

The ideal height for the fan blades is about eight feet above the floor. A three-inch downrod is included with most fans to provide the proper height. For high ceilings, downrods up to six feet long are used to get the fan low enough. For safety reasons, never have the blades closer than seven feet from the floor.

Many new, stylish fans come with multiple blades, ranging from one to six blades, with three being the most common. Pay attention to the pitch angle of the blades to get an idea of how strong a breeze it creates. A steeper pitch moves more air at a slower speed. This often indicates a quiet and more powerful motor.

The newest and most efficient motors are DC (Direct Current) motors. These are similar in design concept to the variable speed motors in new heat pumps.

Most people install a lighting kit under the ceiling fan. Select one with LED lighting. It is not only efficient, but it lasts for many years, and most are dimmable.

A model with a hand-held remote control is most convenient to adjust the speed and is the easiest to switch off when leaving a room. Some new high-tech fans can even be controlled by a cell phone with a special fan app.

The universe of ceiling fans is amazingly big! Besides the brick-and-mortar stores, online stores have a nice selection, too.

A good online site for ceiling fans is Hansen Wholesale. For each product it sells, Hansen offers information on motor quality, CFM (air movement measured in cubic feet per minute) output, energy efficiency and other pertinent data. ■



# Perform An Annual Safety Inspection On Your Boat And Dock Before Lifting The Anchor

**W**ater comprises almost one-half of Michigan, so it's easy to see why the state boasts a thriving recreational industry and leads the nation with nearly 1 million registered pleasure boats. For boating and water safety, there are items you must legally have on your watercraft—life vests, fire extinguisher, throwable flotation device, and properly working lights—but make sure the boat and the dock are safe, too.

To help prevent accidents, the National Electrical Contractors Association says:

- All installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor.
- All dock receptacles must comply with the National Electrical Code, which mandates a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI measures a circuit's current and senses any imbalance (such as a discharge into the water), which trips the GFCI and cuts off the power.
- Test any GFCIs every month. Locate it along the ramp to the dock so it can be easily tested by local fire departments.
- Metal dock frames should have "bonding jumpers" that connect all metal parts to an on-shore grounding rod. This means any dock part that becomes energized by electrical malfunction will trip the GFCI or circuit breaker.
- Ask neighbors if their dock electrical systems have been inspected and are up to Code.
- Household wire is not suitable for boats.
- *Do not* use wire nuts (these are for solid conductor wire, which should never be on a boat) or splice connectors (can cut wire strands)!
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the stereo. If a fuse blows continuously, something else is wrong.
- If you rent a dock or boat, notify the owner of safety violations immediately.
- Have your boat's system (especially with onboard generators) checked at least annually and when something is added or removed.
- Ropes, string, masts and rigging also conduct electricity—don't be the common ground between water and electricity! ■

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See [SafeElectricity.org](https://SafeElectricity.org) for more tips.



# Optimize Your Home With A Free Energy Audit

Is your home properly sealed, insulated, and ventilated? If you've noticed any issues such as mold, mildew, ice dams, drafts or overall discomfort, your home may require improvements to resolve energy inefficiencies. To better understand and manage your home's energy use and cost, take advantage of the Energy Optimization program's free energy audit!

The Home Energy Optimizer is a brief online survey that analyzes your home's energy use. You will be required to enter some specific information, such as the year your home was built, the type of heating and cooling systems in your home, and when various systems and appliances were purchased and installed.

Once you've completed the survey, you will receive a personalized, comprehensive report, as well as cost-saving tips and recommendations to help reduce energy waste throughout your household. Additionally, all participants will receive a free energy-saving kit, which includes lightbulbs and other devices to help save energy and water!



How to complete your home energy audit:

Visit the Energy Optimization website at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

- Select your electric utility from the drop-down menu at the top of the page.
- In the left menu bar, select "Online Home Audit."
- Click "Get Started Now!" and complete the questionnaire.

Upon completion of the Home Energy Optimizer survey, your free energy-saving kit will be mailed to the address you indicate. Have questions about the free home energy audit or energy-saving kit? Call us at 877-296-4319. ■



## Energy savings at your fingertips

Team up with the Energy Optimization program to improve the comfort, durability, and energy efficiency of your home! Complete our Online Home Audit to assess your home's energy performance, and receive a comprehensive report featuring cost-saving tips and opportunities.

**ENERGY TIP:** Receive a **FREE** energy-saving kit when you complete your Online Home Audit!

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

**PHONE:** 877.296.4319

# Better together



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).





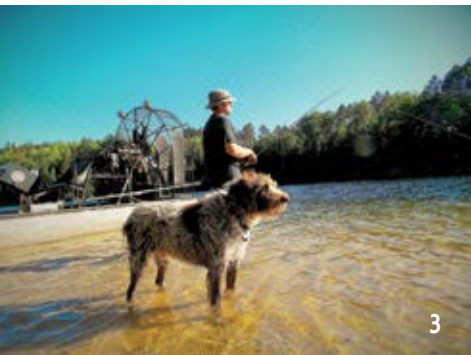
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### Capture Your Favorite Moments And Share

- 1 Cheryl Colley of Big Rapids sent in this eye-catching moment from sunset fishing on local Tubbs Lake in Mecosta County. "The beauty of our Michigan!"
- 2 Brian Bos of Portland shared a shot he calls, "Fishing with Grandpa." At Duck Lake in Interlochen State Park, on Labor Day 2014, grandpa Carl Bos shows grandson Mason Bos what he hooked.
- 3 Holly Thompson of Stockbridge provided this photo of Doug Thompson Jr. and his dog, Dash, a German wirehaired pointer, fishing together in Mesick.
- 4 Jordan Smith Jr. says he's been steelhead fishing a lot already in 2016. "They're amazing, beautiful fish—tons of fun." This shot was taken in northern Michigan by the avid outdoorsman and freelance photographer, cement contractor by trade.



3



4

See more amazing photos at [facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://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

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

**"Best Friends,"** Deadline: **Aug. 15** (October issue)

**"Country Roads,"** Deadline: **Sept. 15** (November-December issue)

Go to [homeworks.org/content/snapshots](http://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.

# QUICK & EASY

Cook these fresh and simple recipes.

## Blender Pots de Crème

Janice Harvey, Charlevoix

- 1 pkg. (6 oz.) chocolate chips
- 1 egg
- 2 T. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla
- ¼ t. salt
- ½ c. plus 2 T. milk
- whipped topping
- chocolate sprinkles or grated chocolate

In a blender, add the chocolate chips, egg, sugar, vanilla, and salt. Blend at high speed to mix ingredients and break up chocolate chips. Heat milk just to a boil, pour into blender and whirl at medium speed 1 minute. Pour into six small pot de crème dishes or custard cups and chill several hours. Just before serving, top with whipped topping and sprinkles.



Photos—831 Creative

## BBQ Meatballs

Theresa Mandeville, Manistee

- 3 lbs. ground beef
- 1 c. milk
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 c. quick oats
- 1 T. minced onions
- 2 eggs
- pepper to taste

### Topping:

- 2 c. ketchup
- 1 T. mustard
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 ½ c. brown sugar
- 1 T. garlic powder

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 9x13 pan. Mix meatball ingredients and form into large meatballs. Mix topping ingredients together in a saucepan on low heat until blended. Pour topping over meatballs and bake for 1 hour, covered.





## Quick Corn Fritters

Virginia Curtiss, Bitley

- 1 egg
- ½ t. salt
- pinch of sugar
- ½ can cream style corn
- ¾ c. water
- peanut oil
- 2 c. self-rising flour
- sugar or powdered sugar

In a medium mixing bowl using a wire whisk, whip the egg with salt and a good pinch of sugar. Add the cream style corn and water; whisk. Fill an 8 ½" HEAVY skillet half full of peanut oil. Heat to just below medium heat. Add self-rising flour; stir with a fork. Drop the mixture into the frying pan one tablespoon at a time, using about ½ the batter. Turn fritters over once. Place on paper towels to drain. When just warm, roll in sugar or powdered sugar, and place them on a platter Tip: put sugar in a plastic bag and shake them quickly.

## Gramma's Microwave Cashew Brittle

Linda Ackerman, Thompsonville

- ¾ c. whole cashews (or other nuts)
- ½ c. white sugar
- ¼ c. white corn syrup
- pinch salt
- ½ t. butter
- ¼ t. vanilla
- ½ t. baking soda

Place the first four ingredients in a glass microwave safe container (a 2-cup Pyrex measuring cup is perfect). Stir thoroughly. Cook 2 minutes on high; stir and cook 2 minutes longer on high. Add butter and vanilla. Stir and cook 30-35 seconds on high. The bubbling syrup should be light brown. Sprinkle baking soda over top. Stir quickly, thoroughly and carefully, because it's very hot. Pour immediately onto warm, lightly cooked, greased cooling rack. Cool and break up into pieces. Makes approximately 12 large pieces.



# Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

A **NEW** and **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community for our electric co-op members.

Members can submit recipes online for a chance to win a \$50 electric bill credit; plus there's more! We will print the winning recipe in *Country Lines* with a photo of the dish and create an instructional "how to" video for [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com).

Ready to pull up a seat?

**GREAT!** Go to **MICOOPKITCHEN.COM** and register.

Please submit your favorite "Dessert" recipes by July 1 and "World Cuisine" recipes by August 1.

Enter your recipe online at [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) or send to (handprint 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.

**micoopkitchen.com**





## Your Board in Action

### Meeting at Blanchard April 25, your board of directors:

- Set April 1 as the Record Date for the list used for district meeting membership rolls.
- Reviewed the board election process, in light of two contested elections in 2016
- Read and approved Board Policy 313—"Use of Personal Communications Devices."
- Authorized a donation of \$5,000 as a matching grant for CoBank's Sharing Success program donation to Housing Services of Eaton County, and \$2,000 in grants to Ionia and Gratiot County 4-H programs, from unclaimed 2010 capital credit retirements, with the balance of \$22,915 going to the cooperative's donated capital account.
- Learned the results of the NRECA COMPensate report, for a process designed to create equity and transparency for co-op wages.
- Approved a new line of credit from CFC at a lower rate than the previous one.
- Learned there were 84 new members in March.
- Acknowledged the April safety report, listing employee training and minor employee incidents.

### 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 June 27 at Portland and July 25 at Blanchard. Members who need directions to the office, or wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

### NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF HOMEWORKS TRI-COUNTY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE CASE NO. U-15822 2014 RENEWABLE ENERGY PLAN ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately 2 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012 and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2014, HomeWorks acquired a total of 11,704 renewable energy credits (7,304 credits from Harvest Wind Farm, LLC and 4,400 credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile) and 410 incentive credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile. All credit transfers were directed through HomeWorks' wholesale power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. Wolverine will continue to generate renewable energy and bank unused renewable energy credits for future use and compliance with statutory renewable portfolio standard requirements on behalf of all of its members.

A full copy of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org) or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.

## Your Spare Change Helps Families With Housing, Medical Needs

At the April 20 meeting, the Tri-County Electric People Fund made 11 grants, totaling \$15,157.53, including:

- \$250 to the Adult Handicap Program, Charlotte, for their summer bowling program;
- \$2,500 to EightCAP, Greenville, to sponsor Camp Wah-Wah-Tay-See expenses for children;
- \$2,000 to Portland Area Fire Authority to purchase a thermal imaging camera;
- \$1,250 to Helping Hands of Eaton County, Charlotte, to stock personal care items for needy families and individuals;
- \$462 to an Ingham County family to help with housing expenses;
- \$671.66 to a Clare County family for housing and medical expenses;
- \$2,500 to an Ionia County family for dental repairs;
- \$2,138.72 to a Montcalm County family to help with housing expenses;
- \$400 to another Montcalm County family to purchase a Go-Go Scooter;

- \$2,500 to a Mecosta County family to repair their roof; and
- \$485.15 to another Mecosta County family for plumbing repairs.

To learn more about the Tri-County Electric People Fund, visit the People Fund tab at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).

### How to Apply for a 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 humane 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](http://homeworks.org).

**Note: Applications must be received by July 1 for the July board meeting, and by August 15 for the August board meeting.**



## Impaired Students Get More Software For Specialized Classroom Tech

These students at Alma Hillcrest Elementary School, part of the Gratiot-Isabella Regional Educational School District (G-I RESD), are saying thank you. The classroom, for students with severe and multiple impairments, uses an EyeGaze bar for much of their communication and lessons; this year's Touchstone Energy Classroom


Technology Grant of \$885 provided advanced software for the system. Shown are students (front row, left to right): Aden Anderson, Karlie Minns, Megan Reist, Bruce Carman and Gregory Hammond. Staff members in the back row are Theda Simon, Nicole Barragato and Kathy Elsea.



## Montabella Math Students Enjoy New Chromebooks

Seventh and eighth graders at Montabella Junior-Senior High School have Chromebooks for use with online interactive mathematics software, thanks to a \$2,500 Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grant. Director Kimber Hansen joined teacher Whitney Stratton and her classroom to show off their big check and new Chromebooks.





# Asparagus

## REIGNS IN MICHIGAN

By Emily Haines Lloyd

In the second week of June, Oceana County, also known as “The Asparagus Capital of the Nation,” gears up for its annual Asparagus Festival. Started in 1974, it’s the longest running asparagus festival in the country. It boasts all the events you’d expect—a parade, 5k run, arts and crafts fair, and the annual Asparagus Queen pageant. Back in 2001, the grand marshal was a well-known figure in the industry—Dick Walsworth.

Walsworth, a second-generation asparagus farmer from Mears was happy to ride in the parade, but has always known that the real star is the asparagus.

“Oceana County produces two-thirds of the asparagus grown in the state of Michigan,” Walsworth says, proudly. “Considering Michigan is the second largest grower of asparagus in the country, that’s a pretty big deal.”

Walsworth got his start on the farm established by his parents, Walter and Anna Walsworth, in 1932, and purchased it himself in the early 1970s. He has since expanded the acreage. It is now owned by his son and daughter-in-law, Ryan and Janice, and at 260 acres, Golden Stock Farms is one of Michigan’s largest.

“The Lake Michigan shore is the perfect place to grow asparagus,” Walsworth explains. “The lake moderates the temperatures, keeping it from getting too hot or cold and preventing frost.”

The Michigan asparagus yields prove his point, producing up to 23 million pounds annually—an impressive harvest for a crop that produces primarily early May through late June. However, a short season isn’t the most difficult challenge facing the industry.

Walsworth identifies the increase in imported asparagus, labor demands, and the lack of local processing plants as pressing concerns. With countries like Peru and Mexico—





The Walsworth family (left to right) Ryan, Janice, Marcia and Dick work together to make Golden Stock Farms successful.



who have very favorable growing conditions all year and large processing companies like Del Monte and Green Giant that have moved their plants to Peru—things are tough. Additionally, asparagus is a hand-harvested crop, meaning that labor costs are very expensive—an estimated 25 percent of gross sales, Walsworth says. Altogether, it means Michigan's asparagus industry is facing real struggles.



As of 2005, those struggles are also faced by Ryan, who bought the farm from his father and mother.

"Ryan is confronted with a much different landscape than when I purchased the farm from my father," Walsworth says. "Things are difficult, but we keep working on solutions."

The Walsworths are most definitely problem solvers, as Ryan also recently took over his father's role as chairman of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board. Dick also served for 30 years on the Great Lakes Energy Board of Directors and 25 years on the Wolverine Power Cooperative Board—providing valuable knowledge and insight to both. Walsworth retires from his seats this year, but is in no way sitting on the sidelines as he focuses on promoting renewable energy, as a member of the Spartan Renewable Energy Board of Directors.

At 74 years old, why does Dick Walsworth keep working so hard? "Once a farmer, always a farmer," he says. ■

Contact Golden Stock Farms at 231-873-5248 or "like" them on Facebook.

Photos-Emily Haines Lloyd

## A Walsworth Family Favorite: Asparagus Roll-Ups

- Fresh asparagus
- Thinly sliced ham
- Thinly sliced turkey, chicken or hard salami
- Softened cream cheese (plain or flavored)

Trim and clean asparagus spears. Blanche in boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain and submerge in ice water to cool. Drain well. Spread slices of meat with cream cheese, lay asparagus on top and roll up. Refrigerate in covered container.

**Visit [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for this recipe and others.**



# Pay As You Go Option Gives You Control

by Lesa Barker

**W**ould you like the option of paying for your electricity before you use it? Instead of one large monthly payment, you could pay daily, weekly or biweekly. You decide! It's that easy, with our new convenient "Pay As You Go" option.

An easy comparison to this concept would be buying for and putting gasoline in your car. When the gas light comes on, you know it's time to get more, right? You fill up your car so you can get where you need to go, why not "fill" your electric account in the same way?

Not only will prepaying let you control your budget, but you could also save money on your electric bill. Other cooperatives have found that, on average, members save 10-12% on their total bill monthly by switching to this option. This savings was met simply by being more aware of electric usage. You will not only save monthly on your bill, but with "Pay As You Go" there are no late fees or deposits required!

## Here's how it works

Make a payment on your account to start with a credit balance. Your energy cost is calculated daily. When your account runs low, you will get an alert by

text, phone call or email, letting you know it's time to pay.

There are several easy and convenient payment options available to you. These include credit card, debit card, and check payments, both over the phone at 877-999-3395 and on our website.

If your account runs out of funds, your electric service will automatically be disconnected. However, you can still be reconnected 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Once a payment is made on your account, your power will be restored within minutes.

"Pay As You Go" is for members looking to take control of their electric use and budget. By purchasing electricity before you use it, you can do just that.

To learn more about "Pay As You Go," call us at 800-562-8232. ■



## HOW TO REPORT A POWER OUTAGE

### Call 1-800-848-9333

After business hours, you may hear a recording.

Listen to the prompt carefully; you'll be given a chance to enter your 10-digit phone number (the one on your account.) Once matched, you'll be invited to report your outage immediately using the automated system.

If you have specific information to report, please stay on the line to speak with a dispatcher.

(All calls are monitored or recorded.)



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or get the FREE app for iOS or Android:

[http://www.smarthubapp.com/how\\_do\\_i\\_get\\_it.htm](http://www.smarthubapp.com/how_do_i_get_it.htm)

First time users will need to register with your account number, email address, and last name on the account

Use SmartHub on your phone or tablet, or from any PC to report an outage without waiting



Once you've reported the outage to us, follow our progress on the online outage map at [homeworks.org](http://homeworks.org).



If a major storm has caused widespread outages, check our Facebook page ([facebook.com/homeworks.org](https://facebook.com/homeworks.org)) for regular updates.



# Students Win Touchstone Energy Scholarships

Three area high-school seniors, and two adult students furthering their educations, will receive Touchstone Energy Scholarships from HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative this year. Scholarship winners are chosen based on a combination of academic achievements, leadership both at school and in their community, and their own statements regarding career goals and financial need.

This year's awards included three one-time scholarships of \$1,000 each to high school seniors, and two one-time scholarships of \$500 each.

The \$1,000 scholarships were awarded to:

- Alyvia Karcher, daughter of Jarot and Laura Karcher of Blanchard, graduating from Montabella High School, who plans to study nursing at Saginaw Valley State University;
- Peri Pung, daughter of Daniel and Jane Pung of St. Johns, graduating from Pewamo-Westphalia High School, who will take math-related courses at Michigan State University; and
- Jordyn Rademacher, daughter of James and Nancy Rademacher of Fowler, graduating from Fowler High School, who enrolled at Central Michigan University for elementary education.

Receiving \$500 each toward continuing their education are:

- Karen Ickes of Lake, attending University of Michigan-Flint to earn a master's degree in biology with a wildlife management focus; and
- Jen Vallier of Portland, working toward a Bachelor of Science in Nursing at Ferris State University.

As a Touchstone Energy co-op, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric provides high standards of service according to four core values: integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to community. These scholarships are one way we show support for our communities. ■



Alyvia Karcher



Peri Pung



Jordyn Rademacher



Karen Ickes



Jen Vallier (shown with family)



## Teens Learn About Co-ops And More

Taylor Rademacher of Fowler, second from left; Jordyn Spitzley of Sunfield, center; and Kyle Leonard of Portland, second from right, represented HomeWorks Tri-County Electric at the Michigan Youth Leadership Summit April 27-29 in Evart. They learned about leadership and teamwork, careers, safety, electric co-ops and more over the two days of camp. Blanchard customer service representative Erin Storey (far left) and Portland lineman Brad Parkhouse (far right) helped chaperone the event and lead sessions during YLS.



# I Remember...

We invite **members** to share their fondest memories.

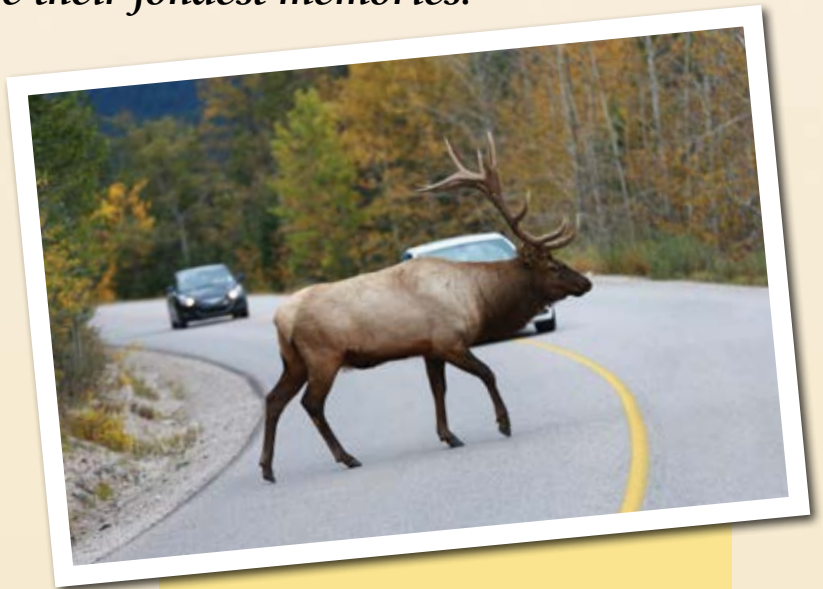
## A Unique Driving Lesson

When my daughter was almost 15, I took her down a narrow traffic-free dirt road in northern Michigan to teach her gear shifting in our Volkswagen GTI. She quickly got the hang of using the clutch and gears and was quietly cruising down the road when, without warning, an enormous bull elk leapt into the road 20 yards ahead of the car!

The elk, with a full rack of antlers, proceeded ahead of us filling the road while my daughter, totally unfazed by the event, just drove behind this awe-inspiring animal. Its enormous body towered above us for about 200 yards before it sauntered back into the woods.

My wife, with our dog, was picking blackberries further down the road. Imagine her surprise when we told her what had happened. Since then, we have frequently seen the imprint of large cloven hooves on the same road but never another elk, which was likely part of the Pigeon River herd. (The road is just north of Vanderbilt to the west of I-75.) Has anyone else in northern Michigan, or the USA for that matter, been partnered by a bull elk on their first driving lesson?

*Ed Robinson, Thumb Lake  
Great Lakes Energy Cooperative member*



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1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
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6. Submit your memories online: [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)





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