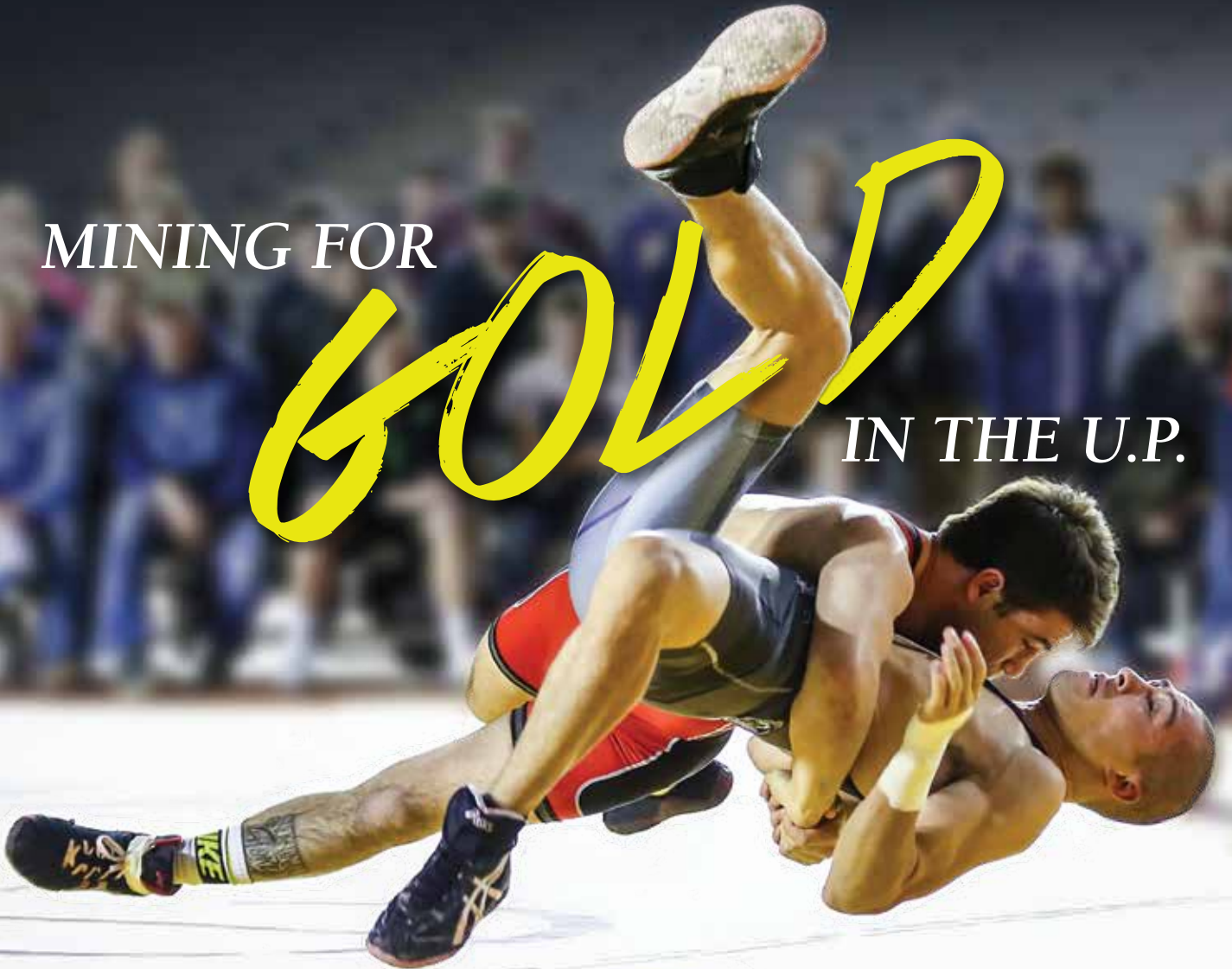


MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

MINING FOR

GOLD

IN THE U.P.



Plus!

Underground Line Pros & Cons

Director Election Results

Free Energy Seminars

Switch to geo by the end of the year for incredible savings



Switching to geo can save you even more—if you hurry

Upgrading to geothermal just got more affordable, and with the 30% federal tax credit set to expire at the end of this year, the time to act is now! WaterFurnace units can save you up to 70% on heating, cooling & hot water by capturing the clean, renewable energy in your backyard to provide incredible home comfort. Now, for a limited time, we're offering homeowners with traditional systems a very special Switch-to-Geo rebate package on our most efficient and comfortable geothermal heat pumps—the 7 Series and the 5 Series—from now until Dec. 9, 2016. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer to learn more about the Geothermal Upgrade Event!



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\$2000
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5 SERIES
\$1000
 INSTANT REBATE

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 (231) 258-3588
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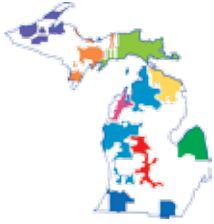
Sunfield
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

September 2016
Vol. 36, No. 8

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Publisher
Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association

Michigan Country Lines, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Lansing, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

Subscriptions are authorized for members of Alger Delta, Cherryland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks Tri-County, Midwest Energy, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Thumb electric cooperatives by their boards of directors.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Association officers are **Robert 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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See page 4 for contact information.

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IN THIS ISSUE

6 ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL—SO IS THE FUTURE OF RURAL AMERICA

Justin LaBerge

10 COOKING COMMUNITY

Desserts—So Delicious You'll Be Tempted To Eat Dessert First

Christin McKamey & Our Readers

14 FEATURE

Mining For Gold In The U.P.

Emily Haines Lloyd

18 READERS' PAGE

The Wheels On The Bus

Jack O'Malley

Guess Our New Mystery Photo

ON THE COVER

During Northern Michigan University's 15-year anniversary event, Sam Jones, an NMU student-athlete (wearing red) won the 59kg match by technical fall 9-0 against All-Navy wrestler Angel Oliveras.

Photo—Courtesy of Northern Michigan University

IN YOUR WORDS

What is your favorite Michigan craft beer?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by October 1.

Last month's responses to the question:

Where can you get the best burger in Michigan?

"Clyde's in Manistique"

"Corky's in Allegan"

"West Pier Drive-In, Sault Ste. Marie"

"Stella's Lounge, Grand Rapids"



A student-athlete at NMU, Elizabeth Becker, is a force to be reckoned with in her weightlifting division and brings that same focus to the kitchen. With a major in environmental sustainability and dreams of owning an organic farm one day (along with an Olympic medal), Elizabeth cooks mainly organic meals. Her crockpot veggie mac & cheese is perfect for the health-conscious athlete, as well as the comfort food junkie. Visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and read more about NMU's Olympic athlete training on page 14.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

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Bury All Our Power Lines?



Bill Scott
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

Outages aren't at the top of my list when I think of fall, but please know we're ready should a big storm pop up.

After a storm, it's not unusual for a member to ask why we don't put all power lines underground. It's true that burying the lines would reduce outages due to wind, snow and ice. But what sounds like a good solution on the surface has many drawbacks.

Like other Great Lakes Energy members, I appreciate my reliable service and support improvements to protect power lines from damaging storms. Despite our best efforts, weather will always be a factor. In 2015 we had two storms that each affected members in all 26 counties we serve, which is extremely rare.

Great Lakes Energy is the third largest electric cooperative in the country based on number of line miles. We have 10,988 miles of overhead and 3,307 miles of underground power.

The estimated cost to convert our overhead power lines to underground would be roughly \$1.299 billion. The impact on your rates to cover these costs would be significant, so we must look at what's best for each situation. Underground lines may be the preferred choice in a residential neighborhood, park or historical area where there is a desire not to see poles and wires.

Here are some pros and cons we consider in our line construction.

Pros of underground power lines:

- Not vulnerable to tree damage; no right of way trimming; less susceptible to vehicle damage; not impacted by wind, ice and snow; less vulnerable to blinks.

Cons of underground power lines:

- More expensive to build; Additional costs from 19 to 52 percent more depending on line size and location; more difficult to modify; susceptible to flooding; difficult to locate faults; repairs are expensive and take considerably more time to complete.

Also, members served by underground lines can still have their service affected by damages done to overhead power lines. That's because electricity travels from its many points of generation along miles of transmission and distribution lines, which generally are overhead wires. A good example is my home. Overhead wires carry power to my subdivision where the utilities are buried.

We add more underground power lines each year where financially practical. Members who build new homes can request and pay for underground services, if desired. The ultimate mix of underground and overhead construction used by Great Lakes Energy provides you, our members, with the highest possible quality of service at the lowest possible price. Cost, appearance, reliability, maintenance and future upgrades will drive which is the better approach—overhead or underground. ■

Three Elected To Board



Winners in the Great Lakes Energy board of directors election are (L to R) Tim Brechon of Paris—District 8, Robert Kran of Free Soil—District 6 and John LaForge of Delton—District 9.

Incumbent Robert Kran of Free Soil, Timothy Brechon of Paris and John LaForge of Delton were recently elected by Great Lakes Energy members in their district to three-year terms on the electric cooperative's board of directors.

The three winners each defeated challengers in their district (see election results summary) to earn a three-year term on the board. Kran is a farmer from District 6 (Lake and Mason counties). Brechon is a retired electrical engineer and retired math teacher in District 8 (Clare, Mecosta, Newaygo and Osceola counties). LaForge is retired and worked for General Motors for 35 years. He is from District 9 (Allegan, Barry, Kent, Montcalm and Ottawa counties).

Brechon and LaForge are the first directors to be elected to these districts. Great Lakes Energy members voted to switch to district elections in 2014.

Great Lakes Energy members in districts 6, 8 and 9 received their mail-in ballot in the July/August issue of *Michigan Country Lines*. Voters had to return their ballots to a private CPA firm by Aug. 18 and winners were announced Aug. 24 at the cooperative's annual business meeting in Boyne City. ■

Election Results Summary

District 6:

Robert Kran, Free Soil – *Winner*601
 Ronald Bacon, Custer133
 William Gibbons, Baldwin120

District 8:

Timothy Brechon, Paris – *Winner*357
 Howard Bowersox, Stanwood181

District 9:

John LaForge, Delton – *Winner*210
 Benjamin Ferrell, Pierson174

Free Energy Seminars

Two free energy seminars for Great Lakes Energy members will be held Oct. 8 and 15. Register and attend the one nearest to you.

Learn about home heating and cooling options with geothermal and air-source heat pumps and Energy Optimization (EO) programs that offer incentives to help co-op members save energy. They include rebates for the purchase of furnaces with variable speed blower motors, heat pump water heaters, Wi-Fi enabled or smart occupancy-sensing thermostats, refrigerators, televisions, lighting and more. In addition, information on free online audits will be provided. Local heating and cooling companies and Great Lakes Energy staff members will be on hand to answer questions related to heat pumps. Co-op members will learn about other incentive programs offered by Great Lakes Energy, too.

Door prizes will be awarded. Winners will receive energy saving gifts. ■



Register now and attend either session:

- Saturday, Oct. 8, from 10 a.m. to noon at our GLE office in Newaygo.
- Saturday, Oct. 15, from 10 a.m. to noon at our GLE office in Boyne City.

Space is limited, so please register by calling 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8958, or email events@glenergy.com.



ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

So is the future of rural America.

By Justin LaBerge

In two months, Americans will go to the polls and cast votes for a president, 34 senators, 435 members of Congress, 12 governors, 5,920 state legislators and countless other local races.

While the presidential race is at the top of most voters' minds, it is the state and local races that have a more direct and immediate impact on the "kitchen table" issues that matter most to families. For rural America, the stakes in this election are especially high.

Rural America continues to experience population decline driven by out-migration of residents to larger urban areas. The trends underlying much of this out-migration—issues such as globalization, technology advances and the shift from a manufacturing-based economy to a service and knowledge-based economy—are largely beyond the control of any community, state or even country.

Although the challenges facing rural America are global, the prevailing sentiment among rural stakeholders and researchers is that the solutions are largely homegrown. In other words, if rural America is to enjoy a prosperous future, it will be thanks to the ingenuity, self-reliance and determination of its people. The rural electrification movement is a prime example of this.

When for-profit utilities based in urban areas declined to build electric lines in sparsely populated rural areas, the residents of those communities banded together to form cooperatives and build their own systems with the help of government loans. Today, America's electric cooperatives are finding new ways to support and promote the interests of the communities they serve.

Co-ops Vote

One program that is particularly relevant today is the Co-ops Vote initiative. This non-partisan, nationwide program is designed to promote civic engagement and voter participation in communities served by electric cooperatives. Co-op members can go to vote.coop to gather information on the

voter registration process in their state, dates of elections, information on the candidates running in those elections and explanations of key issues affecting rural America.

Visitors to the website can also take a pledge to be a co-op voter. By taking this pledge, they can send a message to candidates at all levels of government that electric cooperative members will be showing up at the polls in force and are paying close attention to the issues that impact the quality of life in their communities.

Growing our own leaders

Mil Duncan, a noted scholar on rural economic development issues, said in a recent essay, "far and away the biggest challenge rural development practitioners face is the need for greater human capital—for more leaders, more entrepreneurs..."

To answer the call for more rural leaders, America's electric cooperatives created the Washington Youth Tour program. Each year, approximately 1,700 high school students representing electric cooperatives from across the nation converge in Washington, D.C., for a weeklong, all-expenses-paid leadership development experience.

Previous Youth Tour participants have become university presidents, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies and members of Congress. Many more have returned home to serve in many underappreciated leadership roles—coaches, small business owners, church deacons, county commissioners—that form the backbone of our communities.

Making the most of natural strengths

One of the greatest advantages enjoyed by electric cooperatives is their ability to leverage the unique strengths of the communities they serve.

The members of each cooperative are empowered to explore different approaches to solving problems and figure out what solutions are best for their community. This applies to the energy sources

they use to generate electricity, the technologies they use to operate the system and the policies and procedures they adopt. What works for co-op members in Michigan might not be right for co-op members in Oregon.

While many rural communities face similar challenges driven by similar factors, the best way to address those issues can vary widely from community to community.

Fostering connectivity

In the early 1900s, electricity access was a key factor in determining the quality of life and economic prosperity of a community. Those that had electricity enjoyed many modern conveniences. Those without it languished in darkness and struggled to compete.

When electric cooperatives brought electricity to rural America, the playing field was leveled and small towns experienced a renaissance. A similar trend is unfolding as broadband access makes its way to more rural communities.

One recent high-profile example involves Christopher Ingraham, a data journalist at the Washington Post. In 2015, he wrote a short article based on a dataset from the USDA that ranked American communities on qualities that are often indicators of desirable places to live. The community with the lowest score in the USDA ranking was Red Lake County, MN.

His story generated a lot of comments, including many from the people of Red Lake County who encouraged him to come out for a visit. He did, and was struck by the kindness of the residents and beauty of the landscape.

As a journalist who writes about data, Ingraham wasn't tied to any particular location. As long as he has a reliable high-speed internet connection, he can do his job and email his editor the finished stories. In March of this year, he announced in another story that Red Lake County had won him

over, and he'd be moving there with his wife and young children. He can make this move because of high-speed broadband.

The shift to a knowledge-based economy might hurt some traditional rural industries, but as more companies embrace teleworking, employees who were forced to move to large cities to work in certain industries can keep their jobs while working remotely from rural communities.

Expanding access to broadband in rural areas is one of the key issues addressed by the Co-ops Vote program, and Ingraham's story is just one example why.

Taking action for the future

The challenges facing rural America will not be solved by one person, one idea or one action. But on November 8, we will determine which leaders we trust to enact policies that will help small communities help themselves.

Study the issues that are critical to the future of your community. Look at the positions and backgrounds of every candidate running for every race, from the president to county road commissioner. Then join millions of fellow electric cooperative members at the polls. ■



Recycle And Save!

Do you have an old refrigerator or chest freezer taking up valuable space in your basement or garage? While you may not think about these older appliances often, they can be costing you hundreds of dollars each year. Great Lakes Energy offers free pick up and recycling of older functioning appliances with its Energy Optimization program. You can earn \$50 for proper removal and disposal of each secondary refrigerator or freezer.

Program includes:

Free pick up and recycling of the units is handled by the Energy Optimization team. While our drivers are at your home to pick up your old or inefficient refrigerator or chest freezer, we can also recycle window air conditioners and dehumidifiers. All items must be in working condition.

How to participate

Contact the Energy Optimization team at **877-296-4319** to schedule an appointment. A representative from our team will come to your home for the pick up, and a cash incentive will be mailed to you. It's that simple!

Cash incentives are available for the following functional appliances:

Appliance Type	Pick up or Ride-Along Item	Incentive Amount
Refrigerator	Pick up	\$50
Chest Freezer	Pick up	\$50
Window Air Conditioner	Ride-Along	\$15
Dehumidifier	Ride-Along	\$15

Limit two appliances per year, per residence.

More ways to save!

Are you working on a remodeling project? Your electric utility's Energy Optimization program offers cash incentives for qualifying ENERGY STAR® appliances from refrigerators, washers and dryers, ceiling fans, room air conditioners, televisions and more. Visit michigan-energy.org for a complete list of cash incentives for your home.

Please visit michigan-energy.org for more information, or call **877-296-4319** with any questions. ■



Recycle and Save!

Ready to upgrade or get rid of an old refrigerator or freezer?

Recycle it and save! Earn cash incentives for recycling your old, functioning appliances.

- **Refrigerator** = \$50
- **Freezer** = \$50
- **Dehumidifier** (ride along item) = \$15
- **Window Air Conditioner** (ride along item) = \$15

Contact the Energy Optimization team to schedule a free pick up.

Shopping for new appliances?

Energy Optimization offers cash incentives for qualifying ENERGY STAR® appliances. Visit our website for a complete list of savings opportunities.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877-296-4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.

Michigan's Great Outdoors



Horseback riding in Michigan.
Photo by Ray Wallick, Ellsworth



Sliding into home plate for the leading score! Photo by Alexis Statema, Bitely



Biking at the Straits State Park for the first time. Photo by Amanda Burl, Gaylord



Fishing, boating and sunsets are the best outdoor sports and recreation in Michigan! Photo by Dawn Mudri, Petoskey



Homemade snowbanks are the greatest! Our granddaughter getting some 'air' in a jet sled. Photo by Cheryl Millikin, Grayling



Enter Our 'Pay My Bill' Photo Contest!

Great Lakes Energy members whose photos we print in *Country Lines* will be entered into a drawing. One lucky member will win a credit up to \$200 on their December, 2016, energy bill! Upcoming topics include: **Country Roads**, due **Sept. 15—Nov./Dec. issue** and **Wild Weather** due **Nov. 15—January 2017 issue**.

Visit gtlakes.com/photocontest to submit your high-resolution digital photo and read contest rules.

DESSERTS

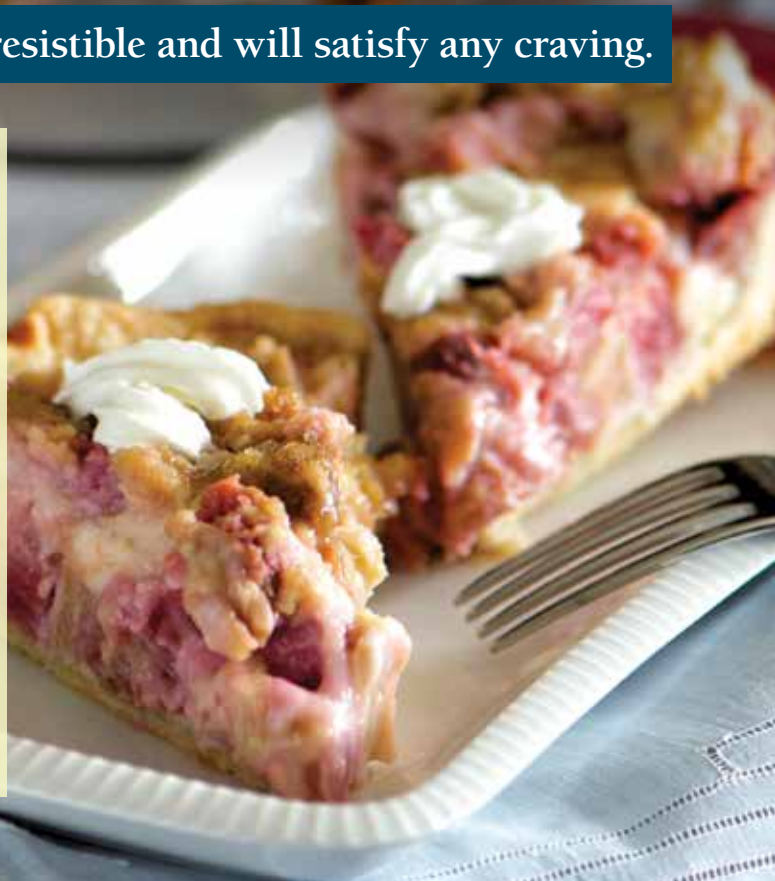
These decadent dessert recipes are irresistible and will satisfy any craving.

Nana's Sour Cream Rhubarb Pie

Tonya Langlois, Rogers City

- 1 unbaked pie crust
 - 5 cups chopped rhubarb
 - 1 egg
 - $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar
 - 1 cup sour cream
 - $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour
- Crumble Topping**
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
 - $\frac{1}{4}$ cup melted butter

Preheat oven to 450 F. Shape pie crust into pie plate. Mix egg, white sugar, sour cream, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup flour. Evenly coat chopped rhubarb with mixture and place in unbaked pie crust. Mix $\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour, brown sugar, and butter until crumbly. Sprinkle on top of rhubarb. Bake at 450 F for 15 minutes, reduce heat to 350 F and bake for 40 minutes more. Watch edges and cover as needed to avoid over darkening. Serve warm immediately.



Photos—831 Creative

Sopapilla Cheesecake (Mexican Cheesecake)

Theresa Timko, Caro



- 2 packages cream cheese, softened
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 2 tubes crescent rolls
- mini chocolate chips
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ stick melted butter to drizzle

Preheat oven to 375 F. Mix cream cheese, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar and vanilla together. Spray bottom of a 9x13-inch pan and lay out one tube of crescent rolls, carefully pressing seams together to form one crust on all sides of pan. Spread cream cheese mixture over crust. Sprinkle desired amount of mini chocolate chips over the cream cheese mixture. Lay remaining tube of rolls over this mixture and gently press seams together. Combine cinnamon and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar together and sprinkle over the top crust (this makes the goodness layer!). Drizzle the melted butter over the top and bake about 25 minutes. Cool completely and refrigerate before cutting bars.

Creeping Crust Cobbler

Ginny Horton, Brethren

- ½ cup butter
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ cup milk
- 2 cups fruit: blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, apricots, peaches, etc.
- 1 cup or less of sugar



Preheat oven to 350 F. Melt butter in a 10-inch baking dish. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, then add milk and mix together. Spoon mixture over melted butter. Heat fresh or canned fruit with sugar, using less sugar if the fruit is canned. Pour the

fruit mixture over dough. Bake for about 30 minutes or until crust is golden brown; crust will rise to the top. Serve warm or cold, if any lasts that long!

Frozen Mocha Pie

Linda Ackerman, Thompsonville

- 1 teaspoon instant espresso powder
- 2 teaspoon boiling water
- 1 package (1 ounce or 4 serving size) vanilla flavor instant pudding
- 1¾ cup very cold milk
- 1 (8 ounce) container whipped topping, thawed
- 1 prepared chocolate crumb pie shell



Dissolve espresso powder in hot water. Chill, then add to milk. In a large bowl, prepare pudding as directed on package (using espresso/milk mixture). Fold whipped topping into pudding mixture; pour into pie shell. Freeze for two hours or

until pie is firm. Top each serving with additional whipped topping and a drizzle of chocolate syrup. Garnish with chocolate shavings, if desired.



Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

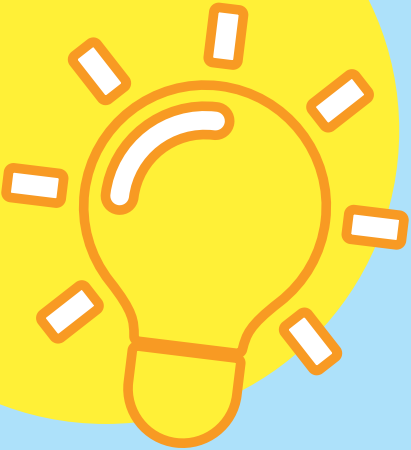
Join our **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

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

Please submit your favorite “Healthy Living” recipe by November 1 for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

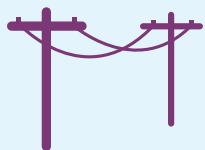
Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

micoopkitchen.com



We're Keeping the **Lights On**

Reliable service means fewer power outages. We're making improvements to provide you with better service.



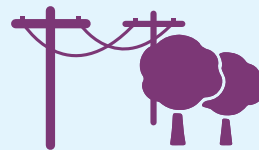
More Power Line Protection Devices



New Technology



Major Power Line Improvements



Aggressive Tree Maintenance

What hinders our progress?



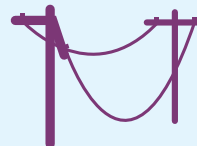
Storms



Man-made Accidents

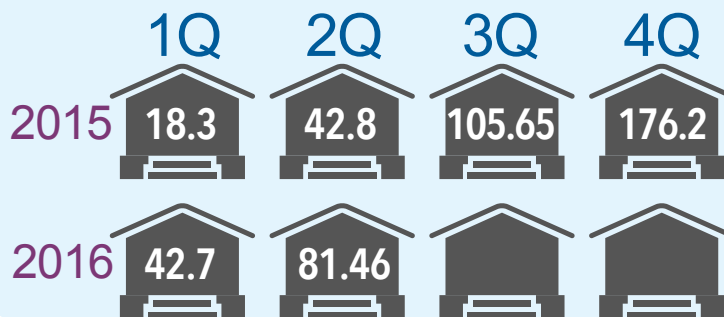


Animals



Equipment Failure

AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



**OUR YEARLY GOAL:
UNDER 163.2 MINUTES**



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Looking Out for You

Program Helps Oceana County Infants



A \$1,000 People Fund grant helped fund 10 educational kits distributed by the Mercy Health Muskegon Injury Prevention Program to physician and pediatrician offices in Oceana County. The kits provide information to residents on how to prevent sleep-related infant deaths, which is a growing concern in the county. Pictured with the kits from left are Dr. Elizabeth Pallante, Port City Pediatrics; Kiara Hamilton, Pregnancy Pathways Community Health Worker, Mercy Health; and Holly Alway, Injury Prevention Coordinator, Mercy Health.

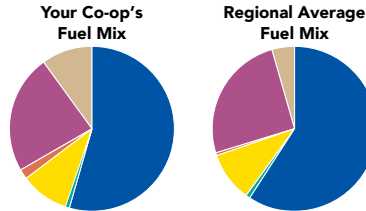
Photo—Courtesy of Mercy Health

Fuel Mix Report

The fuel mix characteristics of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 6/30/16.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE	Your Co-op	Regional Average
Coal	50.3%	55.0%
Oil	0.5%	0.6%
Gas	17.9%	12.8%
Hydroelectric	1.4%	0.7%
Nuclear	22.8%	25.7%
Renewable Fuels	7.1%	5.2%
Biofuel	0.6%	0.7%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.1%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.0%	0.0%
Wind	5.5%	3.4%
Wood	0.5%	0.5%



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	5.8	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,603	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.6	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0072	0.0083

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas; and wind includes a long-term renewable purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix, but does not include renewable energy credits (RECs) that bring the total for renewable fuels above 10%.

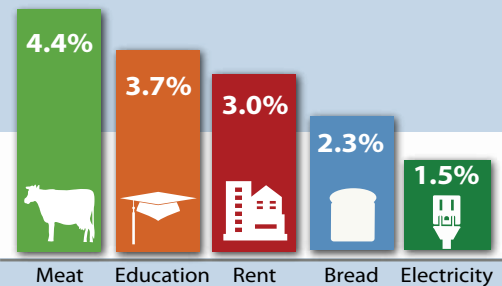
*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the twelve-month period ending 6/30/16.

Great Lakes Energy purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

Electricity Remains A Good Value

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.

Average Annual Price Increase 2010-2015



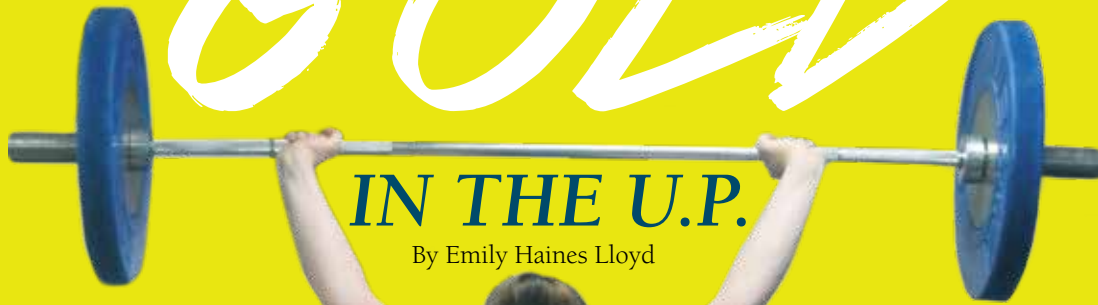
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

MINING FOR

GOLD

IN THE U.P.

By Emily Haines Lloyd



*"WE'VE SEEN
AMAZING
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HERE AND THEN
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*"I LIKED THE
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TIME OUTDOORS IS
REALLY INSPIRING."*

*"YOU LEARN TO
LOVE IT ALL -
EVEN THE EFFORT."*

Haley O'Connell,
NMU student-athlete

Photos—Courtesy of Northern Michigan University

On the shores of Lake Superior in the Upper Peninsula, you can catch a glimpse of the world's largest wooden dome, fittingly called Superior Dome. It's certainly a site to see, but even more remarkable is what is happening inside.

Along with hosting Northern Michigan University's football, soccer, and track and field teams, Superior Dome is home to the NMU Olympic Training Site—one of only 18 Olympic Training Sites in the country. These training sites are world-class facilities used by elite

athletes. All of the sites have hosted Olympic or Paralympic trials, and most of them have hosted world cup or world championship events.

At NMU-OTS, you'll find some of the nation's most distinguished Greco-Roman wrestlers and



The Superior Dome on the campus of Northern Michigan University.

weightlifters preparing to make their mark in the sporting world.

"The program has been around since 1985," said Michael Kaurala, Director of Facilities at NMU-OTS. "We've seen amazing student-athletes train here and then go on to medal at the Olympics and world championships."

At the time of the interview, the 2016 Rio Olympics were just around the corner, with eight current or former NMU-OTS athletes competing in various events—Greco-Roman wrestling, freestyle wrestling, boxing, weightlifting and paracanoe.

"It's always an exciting time when the Olympics come around," said Kaurala. "When current or former athletes work so hard and then perform well—it's a great feeling."

As only one of two wrestling OTSs in the country, the draw for student athletes is tremendous.

Nate Lewis, from Arlington, WA, entered the program hoping to pursue his weightlifting and academic dreams.

"I was looking for a positive training environment without sacrificing my education," said Lewis. "I liked the isolation of Marquette. It keeps me more focused on my training, as well

as my studies. Plus, spending time outdoors is really inspiring."

The athletes know a lot about the outdoors, as coaches like to take the athletes out of the state-of-the-art facility sometimes to run along the shore of Lake Superior or up and down the sand dunes for variety in their workouts.

Dalton Roberts, a Greco-Roman wrestler, has had a lot of success in his sport both nationally and internationally. Roberts hopes to become an Olympian and World Team Member and isn't afraid to put in the hard work to make it happen.

"It's a lot of work, for sure," said Roberts. "But it also feels great to do what I love every day. People think it's hard and it is, but you learn to love it all—even the effort."

So, if you're going on a picturesque drive in the U.P. and happen to catch a glimpse of the enormous white dome peeking out through the treetops, take a moment for a closer look. Under that dome you'll find gorgeous Douglas Fir wood beams and a state-of-the-art training facility, with hardworking young men and women who have dreams big enough to fill the entire stadium. ■



Northern Michigan University-Olympic Training Site's Greco-Roman Wrestling Team.

NMU-OTS'S GOLDEN GIRL

The world was watching when Helen Maroulis became the first woman to win a gold medal in wrestling for the United States at the 2016 Olympic Games. Cheering crowds in Rio were likely only eclipsed by the roaring fans in Marquette, MI—where Maroulis spent her senior year of high school and trained at NMU-OTS.

A Maryland native, Maroulis decided to finish high school in Marquette in order to pursue her wrestling dreams at NMU-OTS. Those dreams came to an apex in Rio as she battled to trim down to compete in the 53kg weight class against Japan's Saori Yoshida, three-time reigning Olympic gold medalist and 13-time world champion.

Against the odds, but with all the determination and focus she acquired through her years of training, Maroulis pinned the legend to win gold. NMU-OTS celebrated the success of their former wrestler by using her example to inspire training their current athletes whose Olympic dreams shine as brightly as their gold-winning alumna.



Honoring Their Combined 67 Years Of Service

Board Chairman Dick Walsworth (left) and director Bob Thurow received personalized meter base lamps at a celebration dinner held in July after their last board meeting. Both men retired from the Great Lakes Energy Board of Directors after 30 and 37 years of service, respectively. Both men also served many years on the board of directors of Great Lakes Energy's power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative.

Thank you both for your many years of service.

Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Efficient Energy Act

2015 Annual Energy Optimization Report, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, MPSC Case Number U-17782

Great Lakes Energy contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer the Energy Optimization efforts in order to comply with PA-295. MECA filed a four-year Energy Optimization plan with the MPSC on August 1, 2011, as required by PA 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on November 10, 2011, and we began implementing the plan January 1, 2012. WECC was selected to implement all Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization website michigan-energy.org. WECC has subcontracted with JACO, Michigan Energy Options, Franklin Energy, Morgan Marketing Partners, and Honeywell to assist with the implementation of the EO Programs. MECA contracted with KEMA as the independent 3rd party evaluation contractor for the certification of kWh savings.

In 2015 Great Lakes Energy collected \$2,550,274 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$1,858,446 resulting in an over-collection of \$691,828 which will be applied towards the 2016 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Great Lakes Energy achieved 10,184 MWh of energy savings in 2015. For every dollar spent on energy efficiency programs, customers will save \$3.00 in avoided energy costs. The full report can be obtained at michigan-energy.org or <http://efile.mpsc.state.mi.us/efile>.

People Fund Donors Are Winners



Did you know we award \$100 billing credits to Great Lakes Energy members who support the People Fund? Six winners are randomly selected

each June and December. Several generous People Fund supporters recently became winners. See the list of members at right who received a **\$100 bill credit**. You can be a winner, too. Current People Fund supporters and any member who becomes a People Fund contributor before the next drawing on Dec. 1 are eligible to win. People Fund contributors allow Great Lakes Energy to round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar each month. The rounded-up amounts, which average **less than 50 cents a month**, are used to award grants to local charities and community groups, such as food pantries, senior citizen centers and youth programs. Great Lakes Energy relies solely on your voluntary contributions to support the People Fund. In 2015, People Fund directors awarded nearly **\$206,294 in grants** to charitable and community organizations throughout our 26-county service area. For a complete list of 2015

grant recipients, visit the Community section on our website, gtlakes.com. Winners' gifts are provided by Great Lakes Energy and do not involve the use of any People Fund round-up money. Don't miss your chance to be the next winner! Call our office or visit **gtlakes.com** to sign up today.

Congratulations to our winners!

Thanks for your ongoing support of the People Fund.

Mark W. Harwood, Irons
Jody K. Feutz, Rapid City
Velo Burmeister, Shelby
Kevin Kole, Baldwin
Marcy Bennett, Petoskey
Nancy Maclaine, Hart

Notice to Members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

Case No. U-16593 2015 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

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

Under this requirement, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2015, Great Lakes acquired a total of 45,053 renewable energy credits (28,855 credits from Harvest Wind Farm, LLC and 16,198 credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile) and 1,502 incentive credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile. All credit transfers were directed through Great Lakes' 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 gtlakes.com or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.

The Wheels On The Bus

By Jack O'Malley

Admit it. You just sang “go round and round” in your head. September brings cooler temperatures, football season, and the start of a new school year accompanied by a fleet of familiar vehicles on northern Michigan roads. Recognized by their distinctive color and flashing lights, school buses transported an estimated 26.9 million students in the United States last year.

Buses can only operate with a dedicated crew of drivers, and one of the best can be found in Chippewa Hills. Kent Blackmer says the first day of school can be a bittersweet time. “Summer is over, but I see all the kids again!” Yes, Kent loves being part of the kids’ day. He feeds off their energy each morning, and Ken admits some days can be pandemonium, especially with the elementary kids. High school students, however, are surprisingly mellow, most listening to their music or reading during the trip to and from school.

A six-year veteran of the Chippewa Hills School District, Ken enjoys many laughs with the kids each day. Most know him by name. Some simply refer to him as Mr. Bus Driver. Either way, he says, the kids are “respectful and well behaved.” And the parents? “Supportive and, like most of us, happy to have an expert behind the wheel!”

While Kent enjoys driving, he says the job does have its share of stress. “You always have to be on guard. My job is to be aware. Sometimes awareness can be difficult, especially when noise levels rise or winter roads are slippery, but I can’t get distracted.” Safety is paramount. Kent insists that students follow rules on his bus. And while he can’t control other motorists on the road, he hopes drivers watch out for his big



yellow bus. “Unfortunately, people do run my stop sign.” When they do, he gets a plate number and reports the driver.

School buses across the state roll out every morning and afternoon with drivers like Kent, happy to be behind the wheel. Kent said he does have an all-time favorite part of the job. “It may seem silly,” he remarked. “But I always enjoy the reaction of the family pets when they see their children coming up the driveway happy to see them come home.” ■



Jack O'Malley

Parts of the Chippewa Hills School District are serviced by HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative.

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



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by Sept. 30 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: Country Lines Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the July/August 2016 issue is David LaLiberte, a Midwest Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as downtown Kalamazoo, the corner of South Street and the Kalamazoo Mall.



July/Aug Photo



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