

Thumb Electric Cooperative

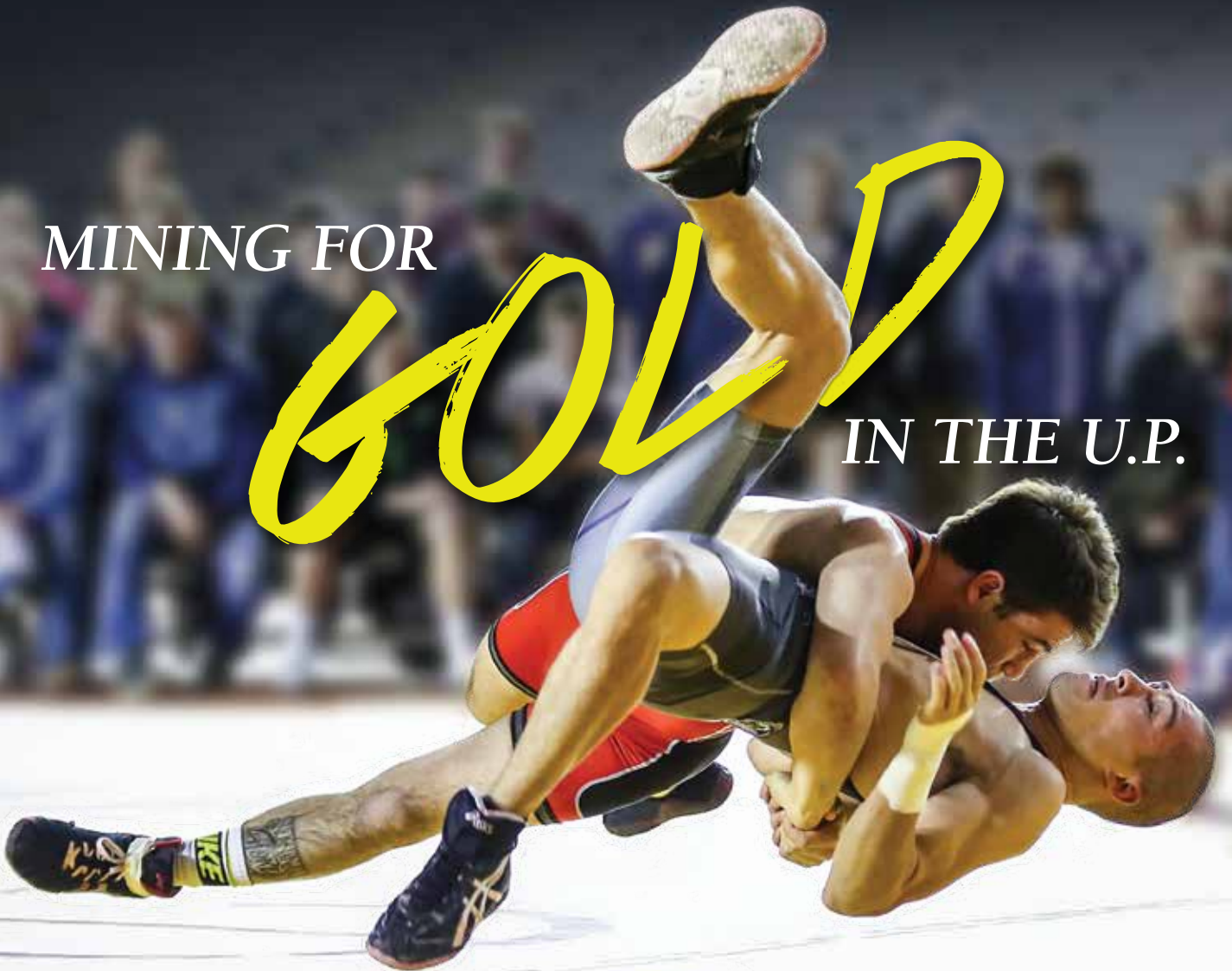
September/October 2016

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

MINING FOR

GOLD

IN THE U.P.



Plus!

Member Regulation Takes Effect Later This Year

Recycle Your Old Appliances And Earn Cash

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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INSTANT REBATE

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INSTANT REBATE

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EXPIRES DEC. 2016

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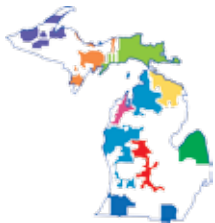
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

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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Change of Address:

Please notify your electric cooperative.
See page 4 for contact information.

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

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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"

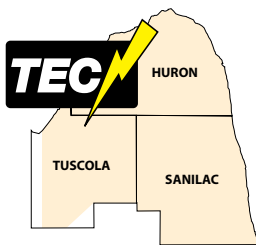
"Corky's in Allegan"

"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.



Thumb Electric Cooperative

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www.tecmi.coop

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District 2

Beth McDonald, Secretary
District 3

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District 1

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District 2

Duane Kursinsky, Director
District 3

TUSCOLA COUNTY

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District 1

Jonathan Findlay, Director
District 2

Carl Cousins, Director
District 3

Dallas Braun, General Manager

PAYMENT STATIONS

Huron County

Bad Axe—Northstar Bank
Pigeon—Northstar Bank

Tuscola County

Akron—Northstar Bank
Caro—Northstar Bank
Mayville—Mayville State Bank
Millington—Mayville State Bank

Sanilac County

Sandusky—Northstar Bank

Visit Thumb Electric's website
www.tecmi.coop

Thumb Electric Cooperative is an equal
opportunity provider and employer.

Member Regulation Takes Effect Later This Year



Dallas Braun
General Manager

The board of directors unanimously approved a proposal on August 16, 2016, that will make Thumb Electric Cooperative a member-regulated electric cooperative by the end of the year. Please see the minutes of that meeting on page 5.

Made possible by Public Act 167 of 2008, member regulation restores an electric cooperative's right to make certain business decisions without having to seek state regulatory approval. Before the end of the year, the final authority on any changes regarding rates and charges, billing practices and accounting standards will rest with your locally-elected board, rather than the state regulators in Lansing. Being member-regulated is a return to the way Michigan electric co-ops used to operate when rate changes were decided by local co-op boards.

To give you some history, the state assumed regulatory control over the cooperatives in the 1960s, when co-ops wanted the territorial protection of their service areas. The state agreed to regulate the matter with the understanding that rates and other co-op business would be regulated, too.

What happens next?

We will continue to operate under the same rules and regulations governing rates, charges and billing practices that were approved by the MPSC.

However, member regulation will give directors more flexibility in deciding issues that directly impact you, as co-op member. When rate changes are sought, the board of directors will follow procedures established by P.A. 167, including informing members of the proposed changes in *Michigan Country Lines*. Members will have the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes, and will be notified 30 days prior to the effective date of any rate or rule change. A 10-day member notice is required to announce the time and place of a board meeting where directors will discuss and act on a rate increase that affects at least 5 percent of the members or "substantive" changes in billing rules or terms of service. You can also write, phone or email us with your comments.

Your co-op will also save money by being member-regulated, which can attribute to higher margins that are eventually returned to members in the form of capital credits. By not having to follow the costly and time-consuming process of obtaining rate approval from the MPSC, we will save approximately \$50,000 per year in reduced assessments and legal fees.

Member regulation allows critical decisions regarding the price you pay to be made by local directors who are elected to represent your interests. Any rate changes will affect their bill, too, because they are members just like you.

We work to keep rates as affordable as possible by controlling costs in all areas of our business, even those related to the rate approval process. That's the cooperative difference. ■



MINUTES OF SPECIAL MEETING OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

August 16, 2016

On Tuesday, August 16, 2016, a special meeting of the board of directors of Thumb Electric Cooperative ("the Corporation" or "the cooperative") was held at Ubly Heights Country Club, 2409 E. Atwater Rd., Ubly, Michigan. The purpose of the special meeting was to seek member input prior to board consideration of member regulation as authorized under 2008 Public Act 167 (P.A. 167).

CALL TO ORDER – The meeting was called to order by Chairman Louis Wenzlaff at 6:30 p.m. In attendance were the following members of the board of directors: Randy Dhyse, Beth McDonald, Don Wolschleger, Mike Briolat, Duane Kursinsky, Kim Nunn, Carl Cousins, Jonathan Findlay, and Louis Wenzlaff, constituting a quorum. Also in attendance were: General Manager Dallas Braun, Office Manager Jim Philp, and Thumb Electric Cooperatives Legal Counsel Jason Bitzer of Biddinger & Bitzer, PLLC. There were no members of Thumb Electric Cooperative in attendance.

INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS – Mr. Bitzer advised that at least 90 days prior to the day's special meeting, at a properly convened meeting of the board of directors, a Corporation director proposed that the Corporation become member-regulated. Mr. Bitzer further advised that written notice of the time and place of the day's meeting (August 16, 2016) had been provided to all members of the cooperative, delivered not less than 21 or more than 60 days before the date of the meeting,

that such notice contained a copy of the proposal, and that such notice had been published in *Michigan Country Lines*, a periodical issued by the Corporation and mailed to each member of record of the cooperative. Mr. Bitzer further advised that the meeting of the board of directors at which the proposal was to be acted upon was open to all members of the cooperative; and that the Corporation's board would allow members of the cooperative reasonable time to address the board prior to its acting upon the proposal.

MEMBER REGULATION RESOLUTION –

Mr. Bitzer then read the proposed member regulation resolution in its entirety. Following no comments or questions from members and upon motion duly made and seconded, the board unanimously approved via roll call vote for the Corporation to become member-regulated.

ADJOURNMENT – Per motion duly made, seconded and unanimously approved, the special meeting adjourned at 6:35 P.M.

Beth McDonald, Secretary

These unapproved minutes are published in accordance with P.A. 167 of 2008.



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. ■



THUMB ELECTRIC

Energy Optimization Rebate Program

Energy Star Rebate	For Energy Star appliances, LED bulbs and fixtures, Energy Star TVs, and much more.
In-Home Energy Audit	Get knowledge on the energy usage of your home and some free energy saving items as well!
HVAC Rebates	Installing a new furnace or AC system? Certain energy efficient upgrades qualify for incentive dollars.
Appliance Recycling	Got an old refrigerator or freezer eating up your energy budget? Have it recycled and get cash back. *Window AC & dehumidifiers qualify under certain conditions.

Agribusiness and commercial programs also available.

Call 989-658-8571 or 1-800-327-0166, or visit our website tecmi.coop today to learn specific details.

Recycle That Old Refrigerator Or Freezer And Get Cash Back!

\$\$\$\$\$

Receive \$50 for an old refrigerator or freezer and \$20 for an old window AC* unit or dehumidifier.*



Call 844-631-2130 to schedule your pick up today!

**Small appliances will only be picked up in conjunction with a larger unit.*



Co-op News

Tree Trimming Update

Tree trimming will continue at an aggressive rate in 2016, as we are seeing fewer outages and shorter duration of outages that do occur. Priorities will continue for line sections that are historically problematic lines, followed by overgrown line sections, and finally, less severe circuits will be maintained.

Due to a disease in the Ash tree, which is a very popular species of tree in our service territory, we have had to adjust our trimming locations from time-to-time. It has made planning a challenge at times, but we make every effort to contact members ahead of the trimmers. We will send out a postcard to members to let them know trimmers will be in the area; and at times, we will try and call members to fill them in on specific details. If you have an updated phone number, please call us with the new contact information.



Energy Optimization Program Offers Programs And Rebates

Our in-house Energy Optimization team provides members with valuable rebates and programs. Energy saving rebates are available for such things as lighting, Energy Star appliances, efficient upgrades to heating and cooling systems, Geothermal heating system installs, farm and home lighting projects, appliance recycling and more. Please continue to check *Country Lines*, bill inserts, our website and other avenues for more detailed information as updates occur. For more information,

please call 800-327-0166 or 989-658-8571 and ask for information on Energy Optimization.

Thumb Electric Cooperative Teams With SEEL For Appliance Recycling

For our 2016 appliance recycling, TEC teams up with SEEL, a long time leader in the Energy Optimization industry. SEEL also contracts an appliance recycling program for DTE energy. To recycle your unwanted refrigerator, freezer, dehumidifier, or window AC unit, please call 844-631-2130. ■

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Thumb Electric Cooperative

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DESSERTS

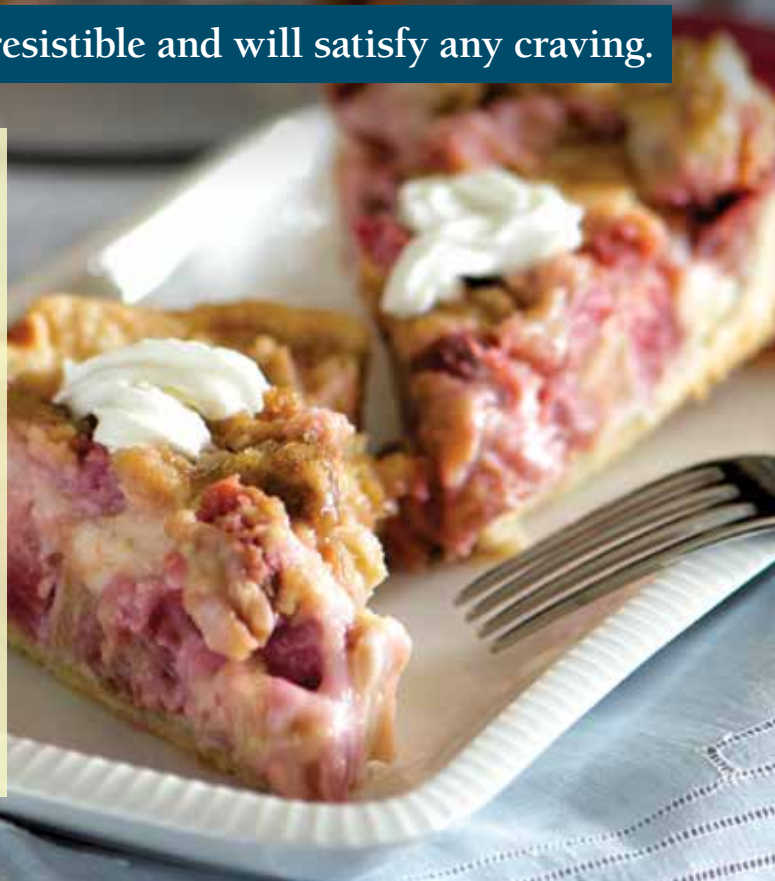
These decadent dessert recipes are irresistible and will satisfy any craving.

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



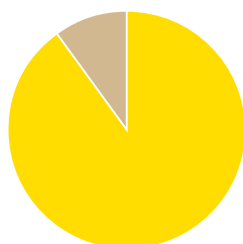
Fuel Mix Report

The fuel mix characteristics of Thumb Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 12/31/15.

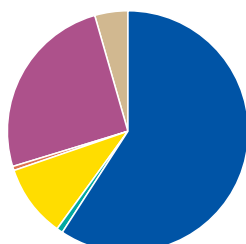
COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	0%	59.4%
Oil	0%	0.6%
Gas	90%	9.8%
Hydroelectric	0%	0.6%
Nuclear	0%	25.4%
Renewable Fuels	10%	4.2%
Biofuel	0%	0.5%
Biomass	10%	0.5%
Solar	0%	0%
Solid Waste Incineration	0%	0%
Wind	0%	2.7%
Wood	0%	0.5%

**Your Co-op's
Fuel Mix**



**Regional Average
Fuel Mix**



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	0.25	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	897	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	0.23	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0	0.0083

*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the 12-month period ending 12/31/15.

The fuel mix data presented by Thumb Electric is the data from CMS Energy which supplies nearly all of Thumb Electric's purchased power.

Access To Rules & Rates

Please be advised that the following information is available to Thumb Electric Cooperative members:

1. Complete rate schedules;
2. Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive;
3. Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for a member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate;
4. Clear and concise explanation of the members' actual energy use for each billing period during the last 12 months.

The information can be obtained by contacting Thumb Electric at 1-800-327-0166.

Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Efficient Energy Act

2015 Annual Energy Optimization Report, Thumb Electric Cooperative MPSC Case Number U-17786

Thumb 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 www.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 third party evaluation contractor for the certification of kWh savings.

In 2015 Thumb Electric collected \$338,684 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$299,744 resulting in an over-collection of \$38,940 which will be applied towards the 2016 EO Program delivery expenses and goal achievement. Thumb Electric achieved 1,681 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>.

Michigan's Great Outdoors



Presque Isle Harbor while out fishing—it doesn't get any better! *Photo by Bryan Srebnik, Presque Isle*



The Orioles, our little league team, getting ready for the Pigeon Little League Tournament. *Photo by Cheryl Koth, Port Hope*



Hiking and sightseeing in winter. Hiked across Munising Bay to view the ice caves on Grand Island. *Photo by Valarie Pardike, Rogers City*



Bear watching on my deck!
Photo by Suzanne Aidif, Millersburg



My daughter, Kamille, kayaking on Lake Louise in Johannesburg.
Photo by Michele Lemon, Johannesburg

Photo Fun

Thumb Electric invites members to share their photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Country Roads** due **Sept. 25**—November/ December issue and **Wild Weather** due **Nov. 15**—January 2017 issue.

To submit photos, and for details and instructions, go to <http://bit.ly/countrylines>

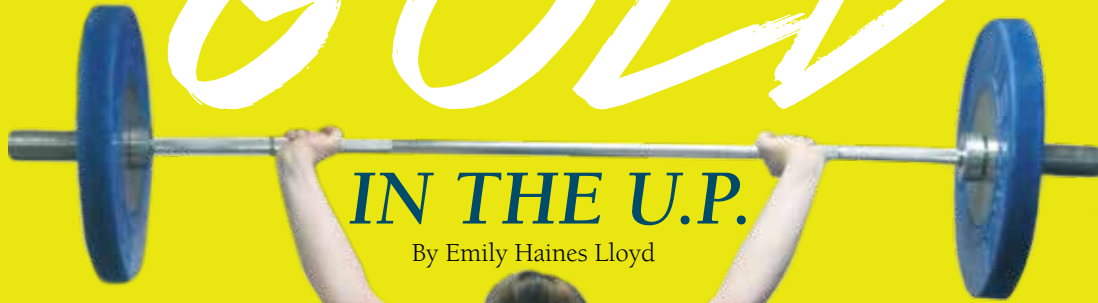
We look forward to seeing your best photos!

MINING FOR

GOLD

IN THE U.P.

By Emily Haines Lloyd



*"WE'VE SEEN
AMAZING
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*"I LIKED THE
ISOLATION OF
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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.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**NOTICE OF HEARING
FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF
THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
CASE NO. U-18026**

- Thumb Electric Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its energy optimization plan costs associated with the plan approved for the period ended December 31, 2015.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may contact Thumb Electric Cooperative's attorney, Mr. Richard J. Aaron, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933, 517.374.9100, for a free copy of the application. Any person may also contact Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, P.O. Box 157, Ubly, Michigan 48475-0157, 800.327.0166, for a free copy of its application.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: **October 4, 2016, at 9:00 a.m.**

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge Mark E. Cummins

LOCATION: **7109 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan**

PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Thumb Electric Cooperative's (Thumb) application for Commission approval to reconcile its energy optimization (EO) plan costs and revenues for the period ended December 31, 2015. Thumb Electric represents that its EO reconciliation produces an over recovery of \$38,940. Thumb proposes to rollover the 2015 EO over recovery to defray future EO costs over the years of its 2016–2019 plan as contemplated in the Commission-approved EO plans

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscdockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscdockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the cases shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by September 27, 2016. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Thumb Electric's attorney, Richard J. Aaron, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to appear at the hearing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter becomes public information, thus available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

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

A copy of Thumb Electric Cooperative requests may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets, and at the office of Dykema Gossett PLLC, or at the office of Thumb Electric Cooperative. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001 et seq.; and the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure, as amended, 1999 AC, R 460.17101 et seq.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**NOTICE OF HEARING
FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF
THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
CASE NO. U-18085**

- Thumb Electric Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its renewable energy plan costs associated with the plan approved for the period ended December 31, 2015.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may contact Thumb Electric Cooperative's attorney, Mr. Richard J. Aaron, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933, 517.374.9100, for a free copy of the application. Any person may also contact Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, P.O. Box 157, Ubly, Michigan 48475-0157, 800.327.0166, for a free copy of its application.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: **October 4, 2016, at 10:00 a.m.**

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge to be assigned

LOCATION: **7109 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan**

PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Thumb Electric Cooperative's (Thumb) application for Commission approval to reconcile its renewable energy plan (REP) costs for the period ended December 31, 2015. Thumb Electric represents that its REP filings included no request for a renewable energy surcharge, no surcharge was approved and none was charged to its member-customers in 2015. Thumb Electric further represents that there are neither revenues nor expenditures to reconcile.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscedockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscedockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscedockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the cases shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by September 27, 2016. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Thumb Electric's attorney, Richard J. Aaron, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to appear at the hearing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter becomes public information, thus available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

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

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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



American Metal Roofs

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Celebrate 21 Years Of Family Fun At Octagon Barn



Fish Dinner

Friday, Sept. 9, 4–7 p.m.

Farmer's Breakfast

Saturday, Sept 10, 8–10 a.m. • Sunday, Sept. 11, 8–11 a.m.

Gate Admission:

\$5.00 (Age 6 and older)

Hours:

Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

For more information, please visit
thumboctagonbarn.org or call 989-665-0081.
The barn is located just outside of Gagetown,
at 6948 Richie Road.



Thumb Electric Members Celebrate Milestones

Over the past year, we have had the privilege of presenting two Thumb Electric Cooperative members with recognition from the Historical Society of Michigan through their Centennial Farm Program.

Since 1948, the program has recognized more than 6,000 farms for ownership in the same family for more than 100 years. Farms can currently qualify in one of two categories: the noted Centennial Farm, and a Sesquicentennial Farm, which is over 150 years in the family.

Thumb Electric members that were recognized in the past year included:

- **Brian Particka** – Filion Road, Filion. The farm was established at least 100 years ago by Joseph and Francess Particka.
- **Gertrude Salowitz** – Brady Road, Palms. The farm was established at least 100 years ago by August D Salowitz.

All of us at Thumb Electric congratulate these family farms for their longevity and wish them many more years in the farm industry.

If you are interested in applying for farm certification, please contact us. Applications are available at our Ubyly office, from the Michigan Centennial Farm Program at 517-324-1828, or visit centennialfarms.org.