

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Northern Michigan's New
Alpine Power Plant
Is A Powerhouse

Plus!

It's National Co-op Month

Miller Family Farm Honored
For Energy Excellence

All Hail The
Famous Clydesdales

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



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

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INSTANT REBATE

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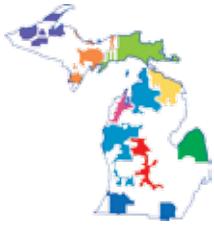
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Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Copy Editor
Heidi Spencer

Design and Layout
Karreen Bird

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CONTACT US/LETTERS TO EDITOR:
Michigan Country Lines
201 Townsend St., Suite 900
Lansing, MI 48933
248-534-7358
cdorr@meca.coop
countrylines.com



Change of Address:
Please notify your electric cooperative.
See page 4 for contact information.

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ON THE COVER

The Smith family can rest easy, knowing their family sources their power from Alpine Power Plant. Alpine Power Plant is now the largest and most efficient generator in Michigan north of the Ludington-Midland line, including the Upper Peninsula.

IN YOUR WORDS

What is your favorite Michigan fall activity?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by November 1.

Last month's responses to the question:

What is your favorite Michigan craft beer?

"Perrin Grapefruit"

"Perrin Lil' Grizzly"

"Short's Soft Parade"

"Bell's Two-Hearted"

"Founders All Day IPA"

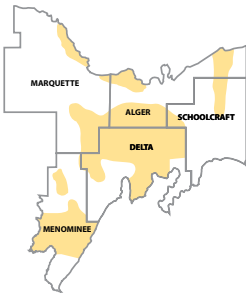
"Dark Horse Crooked Tree"



During construction of the Alpine Power Plant a favorite restaurant was discovered and enjoyed. The Railside Bar & Grill in Elmira is one of northern Michigan's best kept secrets—with a diverse array of tasty dishes, including genuine Polish meals, delicious pizzas, mouth-watering sandwiches, and of course, the World Famous Potato Burger.



Enjoy the Railside's recipe for Polish Nachos at micoopkitchen.com and read more about the Alpine Power Plant on page 14.



Board Of Directors

District 1—Big Bay

Darryl Small
906-345-9369 • smallwld13@yahoo.com

District 2—Harvey/Deerton

Karen Alholm
906-249-1095 • karenalholm@gmail.com

District 3—Grand Marais

Vacant
906-428-4141 • admin@algerdelta.com

District 4—Cedar River/Palestine

Dave Prestin
906-424-0055 • cedarriverplaza@gmail.com

District 5—Gourley/LaBranche/Cornell

David Anthony
906-466-2932 • anthony@hannahville.org

District 6—Nathan/White Rapids

Paul Sederquist
906-753-4484 • sedergrove@gmail.com

District 7—Stonington/Rapid River

Sue Alexander
906-399-3666 • smalexander55@yahoo.com

District 8—Nahma/Isabella

Ray Young
906-644-2488 • kyoung@uplogon.com

District 9—Hiawatha/Maple Ridge

Doug Bovin
906-573-2379 • dorobo22@icloud.com

CEO

Tom Harrell
tharrell@algerdelta.com

Headquarters:

426 N. 9th St, Gladstone, MI 49837
906-428-4141 • 800-562-0950
Fax: 906-428-3840 • admin@algerdelta.com
www.algerdelta.com

Office Hours

M–F, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. (ET)

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algerdelta.com

Why We Celebrate Cooperatives



Tom Harrell
Chief Executive Officer

October is National Cooperative Month. The purpose of this annual celebration is to recognize the cooperative difference and remind you, the members of the co-op, about Alger Delta's purpose.

National Cooperative Month is also about informing others about our unique business model, which is based on the Seven Cooperative Principles: *Voluntary and Open Membership; Democratic Member Control; Members' Economic Participation; Autonomy and Independence; Education, Training, and Information; Cooperation Among Cooperatives; and Concern for Community.*

For co-op employees and members who are familiar with these principles, the month of October is a great opportunity to renew our connection to each other and the purpose of our co-op. Alger Delta is your partner for safe and reliable energy. During National Cooperative Month, we are going to keep on doing what we have done for almost 80 years—deliver electric power and energy to underserved consumers in six counties in the central Upper Peninsula. That's what we do.

We have often said there are about 900 *electric* co-ops in the U.S. But the co-op business model is not limited to electric utilities. There are more than 29,000 co-ops serving in every single industry. Many co-ops from different sectors join forces during the month of October to educate members in the community about the purpose of cooperatives.

There are more co-ops in the U.P. than most people realize. For example, credit unions are co-ops. So is Ace Hardware, True Value and Do-It-Best Hardware. And, some of the most trusted brand names in the grocery store are co-ops, including Sunkist, Sun-Maid, Blue Diamond, Land-O-Lake's, Ocean Spray and many others.

According to the latest data, more than 130 million people belong to a co-op in the U.S. alone, and co-ops employ more than two million Americans.

This speaks to the heart of why we take every opportunity to celebrate and teach others about the cooperative business model. So, plan your co-op celebration by purchasing co-op products, look to do business with co-ops right here in our local community and be an active member of Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association. Thank you for being a member. ■

Getting To Know Your Directors

Paul Sederquist has served on the Alger Delta Electric Cooperative Board of Directors for 27 years and believes that “old school” service remains the most effective. “If a member phones me with an issue I usually ask, ‘Are you home? I’ll be right there,’” says Sederquist. “I find that most everything can usually be solved sitting down at the kitchen table and talking it out.”

The seasoned board member was first elected to the Alger Delta board in 1986 and has also held the positions of vice president and president. The only child of Swedish parents, Sederquist grew up working on the 200-acre Centennial dairy farm that his immigrant grandfather originally settled in 1879. “My grandfather bought 40 acres and built his house with logs cleared from the land,” he says proudly. After high school, Sederquist took a brief sabbatical from the farm to attend Michigan State University; but after his first year, an advancement in farm machinery lured him back to the farm. “They came out with an automated silo unloader and barn cleaner. Those were the jobs I hated the most—and those developments changed my mind about staying in the family business.”

There were other things luring him back to his hometown, too. “I met a pretty girl and I chased her until she caught me,” he says with a wide grin. Married to his sweetheart, Janice, for 56 years, they have three daughters and five grandchildren. His daughters all live within seven miles of the farm, for which he is thankful. “We feel very lucky” he adds thoughtfully.

After nearly 45 years of dairy farming, Sederquist made the difficult decision to sell the dairy cattle in 2004, maintaining only hay and small grains as cash crops. Still quite active at 76, he baled 300 round bales of hay this past summer. “It keeps me busy and out of my wife’s way,” he says with a grin. While he enjoyed fast pitch softball and bowling in his younger days, deer hunting is now his favorite hobby. “I couldn’t hunt as much when I was dairy farming, but now I finally have the time to do what I want.” He is also an active member of St. Stephen’s Lutheran Church where he has served many years on the church council. For the past 10 years, he has also held the position of sexton at the church-owned cemetery.



“I believe in the way the co-ops are member-owned and run by directors and not owned by stockholders.”

Sederquist continues to enjoy the challenges and opportunities of serving on the Alger Delta Electric Cooperative Board of Directors. “I believe in the way the co-ops are member-owned and run by directors and not owned by stockholders.”

Finally, when asked what he is most proud of during his tenure on the board, he quickly points to the Board’s decision to join WPPI. “We went from negotiating with four suppliers to only one. WPPI also functions like a cooperative, and it is a very collaborative group,” he states. “This has been very beneficial to our members, especially cost-wise. I feel very satisfied to continue being involved in important decisions like that one.” ■



Michigan Co-ops Lead The Way In Renewable Energy

Sun. Water. Wind.

Michiganders know these elements can make for a great day at the beach. Michigan's electric cooperatives also know these raw energy sources can be a great way to power your home.

From solar to wind to hydroelectric (hydro) power, Michigan's electric cooperatives are the state's undeniable leaders in renewable energy.

Collectively, Michigan's nine electric cooperatives will receive more than 20 percent of their energy from renewable resources in 2017. Meanwhile, the statewide average for other utilities is closer to the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requirement of 10 percent.

Michigan's cooperatives have been ahead of the curve on renewable energy for more than a decade.

In 2006, Wolverine Power Cooperative* partnered with John Deere Renewables to develop Michigan's first commercial scale wind farm in Huron County. The wind farm was fully operational in 2007 with an output of 50 megawatts. The following year, Michigan adopted the RPS which mandated a 10 percent supply of renewable energy be utilized by electric providers by 2015.

After Michigan's first wind farm, progress continued with the state's very first community solar project at

Cherryland Electric Cooperative in 2013. Another community solar project was built by HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative in 2014. Community solar offers an affordable, convenient way for members to use renewable energy as a power source. A solar panel subscription entitles members to a share of energy produced on a utility-scale community solar array. Participants receive solar credits on their utility bill. It's a great way to remove up-front costs and installation barriers of solar, making it available to the wider membership.

Cloverland Electric Cooperative operates one of the largest hydropower facilities in Michigan. Located along the St. Marys River in Sault Ste. Marie, the hydro plant produces one-fifth of the power needs of the eastern Upper Peninsula.

Now there's the new \$200 million clean natural gas Alpine Power Plant. Commissioned just this year, it was developed to meet peak demand needs for Michigan co-op members and to supplement the often intermittent nature of renewable energy. (See the full story on page 14 of this issue).

This fall, a partnership that includes several of Michigan's electric cooperatives will begin construction on a large solar project located in Missaukee County, between Cadillac and Lake City. This large-scale array will begin generating electricity using the sun starting in January 2017. The project is still in the early stages, and



more information will appear in future issues of *Michigan Country Lines* as it develops. Additionally, members can sign-up to receive project updates at spartansolar.com.

So why do Michigan's electric co-ops continue to lead the way in renewable energy?

"We listen to our members and are able to capitalize quickly on renewable energy opportunities," said Craig Borr, CEO/president of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA). MECA is the service organization representing electric cooperatives in Michigan.

"Michigan's electric cooperatives got into renewable energy because it was the right thing to do from an environmental standpoint," said Borr. "But it turns out it's also the responsible thing to do from a financial standpoint."

Clean, renewable energy generation is where the future of energy is headed.

And for Michigan co-ops, that future looks pretty bright. ■

**Wolverine Power Cooperative supplies power to its member co-ops that include Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative, and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op.*

"Pol"ar Energy

Some may know Jan Pol, DVM, as their neighbor and longtime veterinarian and others know him by his enduring title—*The Incredible Dr. Pol*. Seen on National Geographic's *WILD*, Dr. Pol, his wife, Diane, and their team care for countless animals, but they also care about renewable energy.



This year, the Pols engaged in their second solar project, this time mounted on the barn at their Central Michigan home. They worked closely with their local co-op, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, local representative Nick Cluley with Ecojiva, their installer, as well as the folks from CNR Electric to install approximately 5,000 square feet of Canadian Solar's highest efficiency monocrystalline panels.

The system is equipped to generate up to 57 kW. By incorporating solar panels on their property, the Pols hope to take full advantage of the renewable energy generated in order to offset their residential usage. The Pols plan to sell their excess energy back to the utility for the benefit of their fellow co-op members.

The Pols energy for renewable energy is an inspiration to their community, our state and the world.

Stay Warm And Save Energy

Heating and cooling costs account for more than half of the energy used in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense for most. By equipping your home with an energy-efficient furnace and thermostat, you may effectively control energy use and costs.

ECM Motors: The Key To Savings

If you're in the market for a new furnace, look for a model with an electronically commutated motor (ECM). An ECM, often referred to as a "variable speed motor," adjusts operating speeds, ensures optimal airflow, and uses less electricity—saving you energy and money.

If you can't afford to purchase an entirely new furnace, replace your existing blower motor with an ECM to improve efficiency. Your existing furnace most likely relies on a motor that allows it to run at only one speed—full speed—whenever it's turned on. Since the blower motor uses about 80 percent of the total electricity consumed by the furnace, switching to an energy-saving ECM may make a major impact.

Invest In A New Thermostat

Wi-Fi enabled and smart thermostats help control energy costs by allowing homeowners to program and adjust temperatures remotely, 24/7. Smart thermostats are unique in that they can program

themselves as they "learn" your behavior patterns and desired temperatures for certain days and times during the week.

REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

Upgrading to energy-saving equipment is more affordable than ever with cash incentives available through the Energy Optimization program:

Equipment	Cash Incentive
New furnace with ECM blower motor	\$200
ECM blower motor replacement	\$200
Wi-Fi enabled or smart thermostat	\$100
COMBO BONUS: New furnace + central A/C unit	\$100 bonus
COMBO BONUS: New furnace + central A/C unit + Wi-Fi enabled or smart thermostat	\$150 bonus

Visit michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy-saving information and incentives. ■



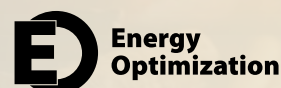
Save on heating costs

Cooler weather has arrived, which means it's time to think about properly heating your home. Upgrade to a high-efficiency furnace, or install an ECM blower motor in your existing model, and receive a \$200 cash incentive from the Energy Optimization program!

ENERGY TIP: Take control of your energy use with a Wi-Fi-enabled or smart thermostat and receive a \$100 cash incentive.

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.

Best Friends Photo Gallery



Submit Your Photos

Alger Delta invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Wild Weather** due **Nov. 15**—January issue and **Holiday Fun** due **Dec. 15**—February issue.

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

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



Our son, Joseph, working with his steer before the county fair. They are truly best friends! *Photo by Christi Marsh*



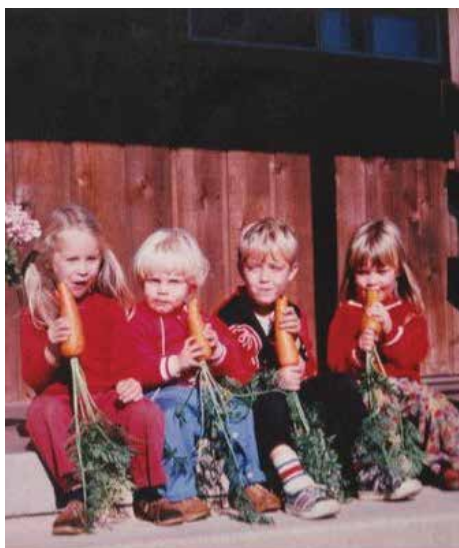
Rik, Bill and Ray proud of their hunt. *Photo by Victoria Wallick*



Puppies are a boy's best friends. *Photo by Dawn Mudri*



Fenway and Tucker—Alaskan Malamute littermates and best friends fur-ever. *Photo by Lynn Fabbo*



1977 was a good year for carrots and the neighborhood children really enjoyed them. *Photo by Russell Gust*



My granddaughter would get so excited to visit her frog friend. *Photo by Vicki Amsink*

WORLD CUISINE

Take a cultural journey with these tasty recipes.



Photos—831 Creative

Seafood Tostadas (pictured)

Linda L. Ackerman, Thompsonville

- 1 cup medium-hot thick and chunky salsa
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ½ pound cod fillets
- ¼ pound medium raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ¼ pound shelled or imitation crab
- 1 cup slivered cabbage
- ½ avocado, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup each, thinly sliced red pepper and onion
- 4–8 small flour or corn tortillas, crisped
- chopped cilantro
- 4 lime wedges

Bring salsa and cumin to simmer in a medium skillet. Add cod; cover skillet and poach fish 3–4 minutes. Turn cod, add 2–3 tablespoons hot water to salsa if needed. Add shrimp and crab. Cover and simmer another 3–4 minutes, or until cod flakes easily and shrimp is opaque. Top each crisped tortilla with seafood and vegetables. Spoon warm salsa over tortillas. Garnish with cilantro and lime. Serve immediately!

Scotch Eggs

Rebecca (Becky) Mikel, Union

- salt/pepper to taste
- ½ cup flour
- 3–4 hard boiled eggs, peeled
- 1 pound ground pork sausage
- 3 raw eggs (not boiled)
- 1 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
- shortening, heated



In a bowl, mix salt and pepper with flour. Peel boiled eggs, then roll in the flour and salt and pepper mixture. Pat sausage out into 4–6 equal patties and encase each egg evenly in sausage patty. Beat three raw eggs together in a separate bowl, then dip the sausage encased egg in the beaten egg mixture. Roll the egg in breadcrumbs until well coated. Drop gently into the heated oil and turn slowly as sausage browns all the way through. This is traditional fare in the U.K. and is eaten hot or cold—so do either!

Greek Salad

- 1 pound small-sized pasta
- 1 English cucumber, diced
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 1 cup pepperoncini peppers, sliced
- ½ cup sliced black olives
- ½ cup sliced grape tomatoes
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 cup mayo
- ⅓ cup Italian dressing



Cook small-sized pasta according to package directions. Rinse pasta with cold water. Mix mayo and Italian dressing in small bowl. Combine the rest of the ingredients. Chill in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Serve!

Pannukakku (Finnish Oven Pancake)

- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ cups whole milk
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- powdered sugar, jam or maple syrup for serving



Preheat oven to 400 F and place a 13x9 pan inside while it is heating. In a blender, mix all ingredients, except the butter, until they are well blended. Put the butter into the hot pan and brush the pan with the melted butter. Add blender mixture, and bake for 20–25 minutes until pancake is puffy and golden. It will deflate when it's taken out of the oven. Serve sprinkled with powdered sugar and warm jam or maple syrup.



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 4** 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



Pictured from Left to right: Rob and Dawn Miller, WPPI representative Brett Niemi and Alger Delta CEO Tom Harrell

Miller Family Farm Recognized By Governor's Energy Excellence Award Committee

The Miller Family Farm located in Carney, MI, was honored recently as one of three finalists for the Governor's Energy Excellence Award for Best Project in the Agriculture sector.

The Governor's Energy Excellence Awards honors Michigan organizations and individuals for outstanding achievement in reducing energy waste. Nominations were spread across eight different categories to showcase exceptional commitment to responsible energy production and consumption across a variety of project types.

The Miller Family Farm, an Alger Delta Cooperative member and Energy Optimization program participant, was honored as one of three finalists contending for the coveted Governor's Energy Excellence Award. Established in 2013, the Miller Family Farm specializes in aquaponics to grow vegetables year-round. This sustainable, organic method of farming is free of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers, and uses a fraction of the water expended in traditional field growing methods.

After upgrading to high-efficiency LED grow lights in their greenhouse, the Miller Family Farm expects to save more than 80,000 kWh of electricity annually. The farm earned \$5,000 in incentives from their electric provider, Alger Delta Cooperative, through the Energy Optimization program. The farm will reinvest the earnings in future energy-saving improvements.

"The Millers were honored by their nomination and it's an even greater honor to be one of the top three finalists," says Tom Harrell, Alger Delta's CEO. "The Millers demonstrate a significant commitment to sustainability and efficiency—not only as it relates to energy, but in how they run their agri-business, too. Their closed-loop system is pretty impressive, and it's interesting to see how it all works together to minimize waste and maximize production," Harrell added.

The Millers' produce is sold at Elmer's Grocery Store in Escanaba as well as three other local grocery stores. ■

Tackling The Decline In Rural Voting Through 'Co-ops Vote' Initiative

With Election Day quickly approaching, America's electric cooperatives continue to build momentum behind an innovative program to boost the political clout of rural America. Called *Co-ops Vote*, the non-partisan campaign has one simple goal: increase voter turnout at the polls this November.

In the 2012 elections, rural voter turnout dropped by 18 percent, twice the decline seen across the nation as a whole. Electric co-ops are deeply rooted in their communities, and that decline raised an alarm. Concerned that the downward voting trend would continue and could diminish the voice of rural America in future elections, co-ops sprung to action.

"Voting is one of the most fundamental and important rights that American citizens enjoy and should exercise every time they get the chance" says Alger Delta CEO Tom Harrell. "The cynical people among us often say that voting doesn't matter, that one vote cannot make a difference. In reality, every vote does matter. Every vote counts. Whether it is for a co-op board member or the president of the United States, voting matters because exercising that right and privilege helps ensure that voting remains a right and a privilege for future generations to enjoy and exercise, too." History is replete with close elections where ordinances, taxes, governors and senators were elected by the slimmest of margins, including several cases where the margin of victory was just two votes.

Participation in *Co-ops Vote* is strong. More than 560 electric co-ops representing all the states in which co-ops operate are taking part in the effort. As of mid-August, 50 co-ops had achieved "5-star status," indicating they had undertaken at least five distinct program activities, such as hosting an employee engagement event or voter registration drive, building awareness of *Co-ops Vote* through newsletter articles, or promoting the campaign on social media. More than half a million people have seen news about *Co-ops Vote* through social media, and several thousand have taken the pledge to get out and vote in this election.

"America's electric cooperatives are leaders in the communities they serve throughout the country,"



National Rural Electric Cooperative Association CEO Jim Matheson said, "*Co-ops Vote* focuses elected leaders on the people who are most invested in the success of their own communities. With 42 million members in 47 states, electric co-ops are a powerful voice on national issues that have a local impact."

Anyone can take the pledge online by visiting the website at vote.coop. The website provides a variety of voter resources and information on key issues, such as the importance of rural economic development and the continuing need for safe, reliable and affordable electricity.

Support for the effort extends well beyond the co-op community. When the Kentucky Association of Electric Cooperatives launched its *Co-ops Vote* program, Kentucky Secretary of State Alison Lundergan Grimes gave it her endorsement. "As a commonwealth, we have work to do to increase voter turnout in all of our elections, especially in rural Kentucky where turnout is below the state average in almost every cycle," she said. "I appreciate our electric cooperatives working hard to urge citizens in rural areas to vote in this important election year. I am excited to be a partner in their efforts as we continue to work to get more Kentuckians to the polls."

You can show your support for rural communities by joining co-op members across the country in casting your ballot on November 8. ■



Wolverine Power Cooperative

generates and transmits power to our rural substations so we can distribute it to you, our members. They help us ensure that your energy is affordable, reliable, clean and safe. We rely on Wolverine to make well-informed decisions about the future of your electricity.

We're proud to announce that the newest addition to the Wolverine supply mix, the Alpine Power Plant, is now fully powered and generating enough power for 120,000 member households across the state of Michigan!

What is the Alpine Power Plant?

Just 18 short months ago, Wolverine's board of directors—made up of co-op members just like you—set the Alpine Power Plant in motion. Alpine is the largest and most efficient generator in northern Michigan, including the Upper Peninsula.

Alpine is fueled by natural gas, a clean, reliable, and affordable alternative to coal. Its unique, state-of-the-art technology includes two GE simple-cycle combustion turbine generators that together are capable of producing up to 432 megawatts of power. Alpine is a "peaker plant," meaning it can be fired up quickly to provide electricity for surges in demand.

Wolverine invested approximately \$180 million into Alpine to ensure a quick start and flexible operations. As Michigan transitions away from coal plants toward more renewable forms of electric generation, Alpine provides us with a new, affordable, efficient and flexible generation asset, essential for years to come as the industry changes.

Northern Michigan's New
Alpine Power Plant
Is A Powerhouse

How does Alpine impact me?

Wolverine Power Cooperative and its members, including Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, are proud to be leaders when it comes to providing long-term solutions for Michigan's energy capacity. Old coal plants are retiring, leaving a void that new power plants can and need to fill.

Adding Alpine's output to Michigan's energy supply will help maintain affordable rates in the midst of coal plants retiring, by giving us an additional option when market rates fluctuate. The plant will also serve to integrate new renewable energy sources, as we expect to receive 30 percent of our electricity from renewable sources in the future.

Beyond the energy benefits for Michigan as a whole, Alpine Power Plant offers economic impacts for its local community. Strategically located to support reliability in northern Michigan, the middle-of-the-mitt location in Otsego County provides a boost to the local economy. During construction, the site was host to more than 300 workers that, in turn, contributed greatly to the local economy. The plant will be maintained by nine full-time employees. The plant also provides a tax boost to units of government in Elmira Township, the City of Gaylord and Otsego County.

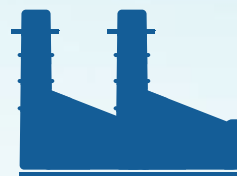
Michigan's energy future is secured in part because of projects like the Alpine Power Plant. We hope you're as excited as we are to see your electric bills stay low and your quality of life stay high! ■

Get more information about the Alpine Power Plant by visiting alpinecleanenergy.com.

WHAT IS ALPINE DOING?

Generating Electricity

Wolverine's Alpine Power Plant is the largest power plant in Michigan's northern Lower and Upper Peninsulas, capable of generating up to 430 MW of electricity.



Powering Members

Alpine ensures Wolverine's members have a reliable, clean and competitive power supply for decades to come.



Supporting Michigan

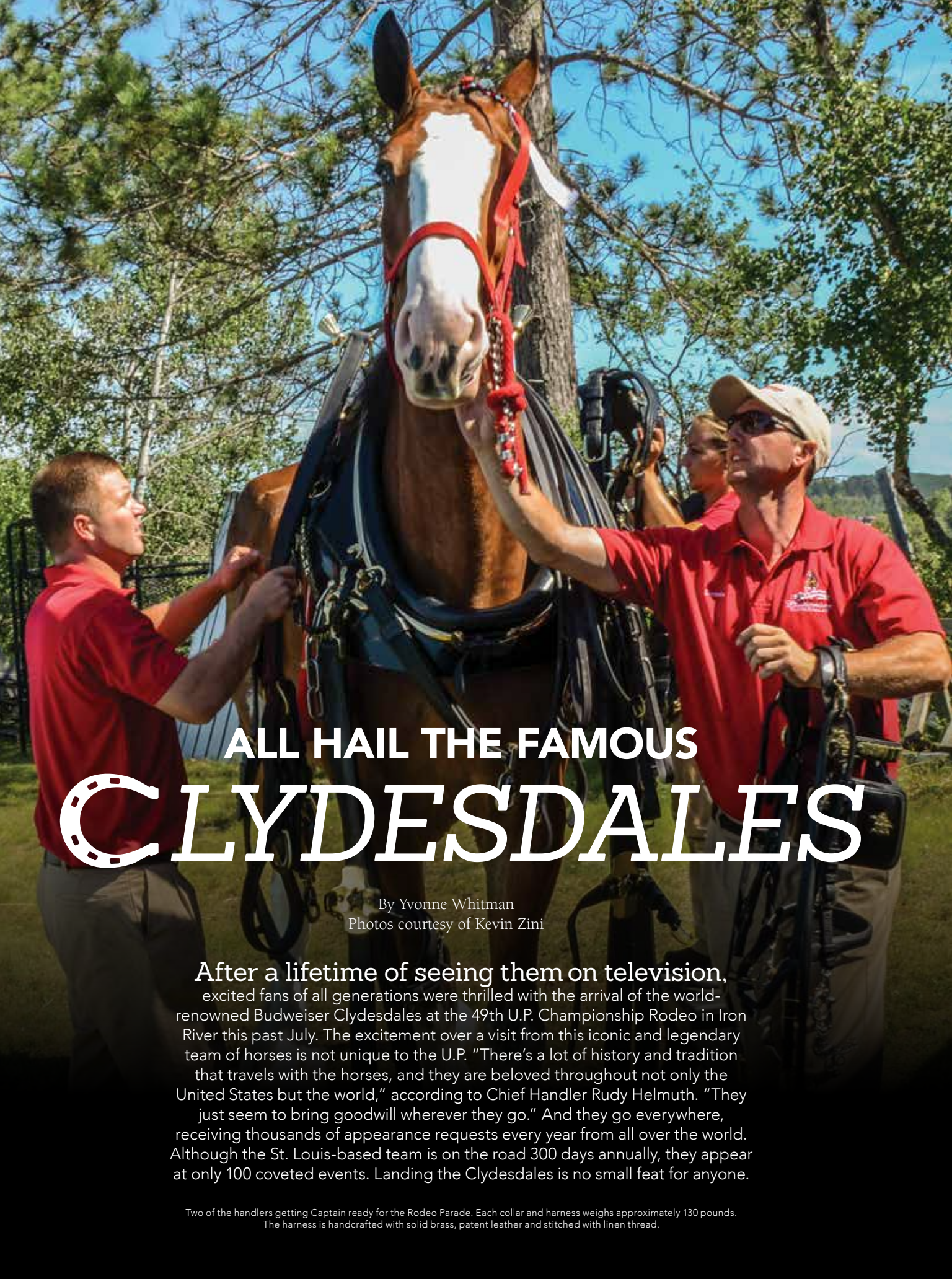
With retiring coal plants and expanding regulations, Alpine is essential for replacing capacity to meet Michigan's energy demand. Alpine is the only large-scale power plant within a 150-mile radius.



Helping Communities

Alpine provides a major boost to communities with increased tax revenues for local units of government.





ALL HAIL THE FAMOUS CLYDESDALES

By Yvonne Whitman
Photos courtesy of Kevin Zini

After a lifetime of seeing them on television, excited fans of all generations were thrilled with the arrival of the world-renowned Budweiser Clydesdales at the 49th U.P. Championship Rodeo in Iron River this past July. The excitement over a visit from this iconic and legendary team of horses is not unique to the U.P. "There's a lot of history and tradition that travels with the horses, and they are beloved throughout not only the United States but the world," according to Chief Handler Rudy Helmuth. "They just seem to bring goodwill wherever they go." And they go everywhere, receiving thousands of appearance requests every year from all over the world. Although the St. Louis-based team is on the road 300 days annually, they appear at only 100 coveted events. Landing the Clydesdales is no small feat for anyone.

Two of the handlers getting Captain ready for the Rodeo Parade. Each collar and harness weighs approximately 130 pounds. The harness is handcrafted with solid brass, patent leather and stitched with linen thread.

Local Anheuser-Busch wholesalers comprise the bulk of requests. Credit for the Clydesdales appearing in Iron River goes chiefly to Kingsford-based Four Seasons Beer Distributing, who footed approximately \$20,000 in appearance fees. But it takes more than money to host such visiting celebrity horses. According to Rodeo board member Julie Becker, "We started working on this last November. It's been a lot of work, but it has been worth it to get the royalty of the horse world here."

A visit from the Budweiser Clydesdales requires a great deal of highly-detailed logistical effort, too. Stables, food delivery, security and hotel accommodations for the handlers all require impeccable attention. According to Chief Handler Helmuth, "Each 2,000-pound horse consumes about 15-20 pounds of grain and 40 pounds of hay per day. And on a hot day, each horse will drink about 40 gallons of water." For the Iron River visit, 10 pallets of special feed were shipped a few days before their arrival. No chances can be taken with animals and equipment in whom so much is invested. The individual horses chosen to be a member of this elite team travel in appropriate comfort and style. The horses, handlers, equipment, famous red, white and gold beer wagon, as well as "Clyde the Dalmatian," a dog, criss-cross the world in three air-conditioned 50-foot tractor-trailers. Cameras are connected to monitors in the cabs, enabling the drivers to keep ever-watchful eyes on their precious cargo. Air-cushioned suspension and thick rubber flooring add to the comfort of the trailers. And, the teams never travel more than eight hours per day, stopping at night at farms and stables so the Clydesdales can rest after a day of rigorous travel.



The horses proudly making their way down the rodeo parade route.



The three-year-old Dalmatian that travels with the team is named Clyde. Dalmatians have traveled with the Clydesdale hitch teams since the 1950s. Traditionally known as coach dogs because they ran between the wheels of carriages and were companions to the horses, they now they perch atop the wagon, proudly seated next to the driver.

Clydesdale horses were first introduced to the U.S. in the mid-1800s when Canadians of Scottish descent brought them across the border to be used as draft horses. Today the Clydesdale is used primarily for breeding and show. The Budweiser Clydesdales are carefully selected from a 300-plus-acre breeding farm located near Boonville, Mo. To qualify to be a member of one of the three Budweiser traveling hitch teams, a Clydesdale must meet certain requirements: Each horse must be a gelding of at least four years of age; it must stand 72 inches high at the shoulder when fully mature and should weigh between 1,800 and 2,300 pounds; the horse must also have a bay coat, four white legs, a white blaze and a black mane and tail.

The handlers chosen to drive the team and wagon must themselves undergo a lengthy qualifying and training process before assuming the prestigious role of 'Budweiser Clydesdale Hitch Driver.' Helmuth came on board with some previous hands-on training. "I grew up with draft horses on a farm in Iowa where we used the horses for farming. That set me up for the job that I have now. It's been an incredible job not only because of what I get to do, but because of the people I meet."

When asked how they are received as they travel the highways of America, Helmuth replies, "There is always a lot of excitement. Even when just stopping for fuel, we open the doors so that people can see the famous Budweiser Clydesdales."

Yes, American royalty, indeed. ■

Co-op Careers Offer Paycheck And A Purpose

By Justin LaBerge

October is National Cooperative Month! Every day in this country, more than 75,000 men and women go to work at America's electric cooperatives to keep the lights on for 42 million energy consumers in 47 states.

It's challenging work, but in addition to a paycheck, co-op employees go home each night knowing they've helped make their communities better places to live.

Over the next five years, thousands of workers will get to experience that sense of purpose and pride as America's electric cooperatives hire nearly 15,000 employees nationwide. These new hires will replace Baby Boomers reaching retirement age and accommodate organic growth in the energy industry.

Many career options

A lineworker high atop a pole is the first image that comes to mind for most people who think about electric cooperative employees. It's true that lineworkers comprise the largest segment of the co-op workforce—approximately 25 percent—but it takes a variety of talents to keep a cooperative running smoothly.

Information technology and engineering are two rapidly growing career opportunities at co-ops. The need for more high-tech workers is driven by the shift to a smarter electric grid and the growth of renewable energy sources that must be carefully monitored and managed.

Other in-demand career paths at electric cooperatives include finance, member services, equipment operators, energy advisors, communications and marketing, purchasing, administrative support and human resources.

Second careers

Some people think the only time to start a new career is fresh out of high school or college. While the energy industry offers many rewarding careers to recent grads, it is also a great place to start a second or third career.



Electric Cooperative Careers
There's a place for you in the co-op network.

Lineworker training programs offered through community colleges are growing in popularity among people who previously worked in oil and gas, manufacturing, mining, forestry and other similar industries.

Make a difference

As not-for-profit, member-owned, locally-based businesses, America's electric cooperatives offer careers that allow employees to make a difference in the communities they serve. Cooperatives are guided by a set of principles that put people ahead of profits and offer fulfilling work to those who enjoy serving others. ■

How to find a co-op job

Interested in joining the co-op family? To learn more about the opportunities available across the cooperative network, visit careers.touchstoneenergy.coop or by visiting Michigan co-op websites at countrylines.com.



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