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Stepping Up To Serve

2017 Fiber Internet
Construction Plan



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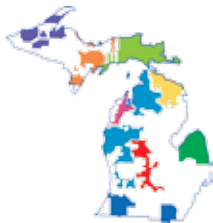
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dwgeothermal.com



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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

November/December 2016
Vol. 36, No. 10

Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Copy Editor
Heidi Spencer

Design and Layout
Karreen Bird

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.

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

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ON THE COVER

Negaunee's Lucy Hill is the only full-length natural luge track in the United States. United States athletes train here before traveling to competitions in Europe.

Statement of Ownership, Management & Circulation

(Required by U.S.C. 3685) **1.** Publication Title: *Michigan Country Lines*. **2.** Publication No.: 591-710. **3.** Filing date: 10/1/16. **4.** Issue frequency: monthly, except August and December. **5.** No. of issues published annually: 10. **6.** Complete mailing address of known office of publication: Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **7.** Complete mailing address of headquarters or general business office of publisher: 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **8.** Full names and complete mailing address of publisher, editors, and executive editor: Craig Borr, Christine Dorr, Casey Clark, 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **9.** Owner: Michigan Electric Cooperative Assoc., 201 Townsend St., Ste. 900, Lansing, MI 48933. **10.** Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. **11.** Tax status: Has not been changed. **12.** Issue date for circulation data below: Sept. 2016. **13.** Extent and nature of circulation:

	Avg # of copies each issue during preceding 12 mo.	Actual # of copies of single issues published nearest to filing date
A) Total No. of copies.....	223,380	242,500
B) Paid and requested circulation.....	222,980	242,500
C) Total paid and requested circulation.....	222,980	242,100
D) 1) Free distribution by mail	436	400
2) Free distribution outside mail	2,420	920
E) Total free distribution	2,856	1,320
F) Total distribution	225,836	243,420
G) Copies not distributed	0	0
H) Total.....	225,836	243,420
I) Percent paid and/or requested circ.....	98.7%	99.7%

16. Publication of statement of ownership: November 2016
17. Signature and title of editor: Christine Dorr, Editor



Once used to describe the three devastating waves that led to the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald, Three Sisters is also the name for three tight turns and the most technical part of the Negaunee Lucy Hill luge track. Find Three Sisters Luge Pizza recipe submitted by featured guest chefs from the U.P. Luge Club at micookitchen.com, and see the full story on page 14.



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CONTACT US

MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE

800-492-5989 • TeamMidwest.com

MIDWEST CONNECTIONS

844-493-4237 • TeamFiber.com

MIDWEST PROPANE

844-493-4427 • TeamMidwestPropane.com

E-mail: info@TeamMidwest.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Clarence "Topper" Barth, *Chairman*, Three Rivers
269-279-9233

Clarence.Barth@teammidwest.com

Ben Russell, *Vice Chairman*, Constantine

269-435-8564

Ben.Russell@teammidwest.com

Ron Armstrong, *Secretary*, Lawton

269-299-0239

Ron.Armstrong@teammidwest.com

John Green, *Treasurer*, Dowagiac

269-470-2816

John.Green@teammidwest.com

Gerry Bundle, Cassopolis

269-414-0164

Gerry.Bundle@teammidwest.com

Arell Chapman, Onsted

517-292-3040

Arell.Chapman@teammidwest.com

James Dickerson, Bloomingdale

269-370-6868

Jim.Dickerson@teammidwest.com

Harry Gentz, Blissfield

517-443-5537

Harry.Gentz@teammidwest.com

Fred Turk, Decatur

269-423-7762

Fred.Turk@teammidwest.com

PRESIDENT/CEO

Robert Hance

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR/EDITOR

Patty Nowlin



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Midwest Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

The Times They Are A-Changin'



Robert Hance
President/CEO

I grew up in the musical era of Bob Dylan and still enjoy his unique style and sound. He was an iconic spokesman for my generation, penning thought-provoking lyrics that became anthems during a very politically and socially volatile time.

Dylan's "The Times They Are A-Changin'" was released in 1964, and the lyrics have remained relevant for various reasons over the years. I believe the title is especially fitting for this next chapter in the life of your cooperative as we cast a vision for the future.

Your board of directors and senior leadership team are holing up for a few days this month to look at the major changes facing our industry and how to prepare for them. There are a lot of unknowns, but what we do know is that "The Times They Are A-Changin'."

There are a lot of layers to what's coming. In short, we're moving away from the bulk grid, which includes the transmission and distribution systems that have powered our lives for decades, to what industry pundits have coined the grid edge. This means we are moving away from a centralized energy system to a next-generation, distributed energy system, and it's the future of grid modernization.

Until now, the "smarts" behind the smart grid were on the transmission side. The smarts are now moving downstream and closer to consumers in the form of new hardware and software applications. The grid edge includes things like solar panels, advanced metering infrastructure, smart inverters, energy storage systems, smart thermostats and other automation. It's the beautiful marriage between the grid and the internet of things and will give the consumer new levels of control and convenience, and allow the utility the real-time ability to impact reliability and seamlessly manage the load.

Some utilities will not be ready for this, but your co-op is prepared. We initiated a project two years ago to install a robust, two-way fiber communications system across our distribution grid. We're investing in the infrastructure so that we're ready, and you're ready, for these changes as they come.

We have a rich history as your locally-owned cooperative, and that's not changing. But we're preparing for and embracing a future of significant change, and your experience will look and feel very different as we take these huge and innovative leaps. As we look ahead, 2017 will be a transformational year in many ways as we continue to invest in our members and build your utility of the future. ■

Represent Members As A Co-op Director



Fred Turk, District 1



Jim Dickerson, District 2



John Green, District 5

One of the seven guiding principles of cooperatives is democratic member control. Individuals who take electric service from Midwest Energy Cooperative are more than customers—they are owners who have a voice and are encouraged to take an active role in the life of the organization.

Midwest Energy Cooperative is governed by a nine-member board of directors and each is elected to serve a three-year term. Directors are elected by and represent members living in their district. These are important roles as directors make critical decisions on behalf of their fellow member-owners.

Three seats on the Midwest Energy Cooperative Board of Directors are up for election next year. Members interested in serving on the board should contact the cooperative to get a petition for nomination, then secure 30 or more valid signatures. To be placed on the ballot for one of the three terms ending in April 2017, interested members must complete the petition and a biography and return them to the Cassopolis office by 4:30 p.m. on January 3, 2017. Ballots will then be mailed to the district members on January 23, 2017. All board members must reside in the district they represent.

In 2017, Districts 1, 2 and 5 will be up for election. District 1 is currently represented by Fred Turk of Decatur and includes Decatur, Hamilton, Penn, Porter, Marcellus and Volina Townships.

Jim Dickerson of Bloomingdale is the current director of District 2, which includes Arlington, Bainbridge, Bangor, Bloomingdale, Coloma, Covert, Hartford, Keeler, Lawrence, Paw Paw, Pipestone, Silver Creek, Watervliet and Waverly Townships

The current District 5 director is John Green of Dowagiac. District 5 includes Howard, LaGrange, Milton, Pokagon and Wayne Townships.

For more information about serving on the board of directors, please call the cooperative at 1-800-492-5989. ■

**Cooperative offices will be closed
for the holidays on the following dates:**

Thanksgiving

Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24-25

Christmas

Friday, Dec. 23, and Monday, Dec. 26

New Year's Day

Monday, Jan. 2, 2017

From our families to yours, have a happy and blessed holiday season!



Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2016–2017 Season

Program: Winter Protection Plan
Contact: Your Local Utility Company

Income Guidelines 2016–2017	
# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,820
2	24,030
3	30,240
4	36,450
5	42,660
6	48,870
7	55,095
8	61,335

Add \$6,240 for each additional member.

Note: All customers 65+ are eligible regardless of income. Customers are responsible for all electricity and natural gas used. At the end of the protection period, participants must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.

The **Winter Protection Plan (WPP)** protects enrolled seniors and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). If you are eligible, your utility service will remain on (or restored with the WPP) from Nov. 1 through March 31, if you:

- pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, and
- make equal monthly payments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season on any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), you must begin to pay the full monthly bill, plus part of the amount you owe from the winter months when you did not pay the full bill.

Participation does not relieve customers from the responsibility of paying for electricity and natural gas usage, but does prevent shut-off during winter months. You qualify for the plan if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

- are age 65 or older,
- receive Department of Health and Human Services cash assistance, including SSI,
- receive Food Assistance,
- receive Medicaid, or
- household income is at or below the 150% of poverty level shown in the Income Guidelines chart at left.

Senior citizen customers (65 or older) who participate in the WPP are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. Service for seniors can be restored without any payments.

Program: Home Heating Credit
Contact: Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$13,070	4	\$26,756
2	17,642	5	31,299
3	22,185	6	35,842

Add \$4,571 for each exemption over 6.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2016** tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed at left or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled claimants, or claimants with 5% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

If you qualify, you may receive assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. **Forms are available mid- to late-January wherever tax forms are provided or from the Michigan Dept. of Treasury (517-636-4486, or michigan.gov/treasury).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **no later than Sept. 30 each year.**

Program: Earned Income Credit
Contact: U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service irs.gov/EITC
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury michigan.gov/treasury

The **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income, working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EITC, but must file a tax return to do so. If married, you must file jointly to qualify. File Form 1040 or 1040A and attach the EITC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2016** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the MI 2016 tax booklet for details.

Program: Crisis Assistance Program
Contact: Local Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) michigan.gov/mdhhs

State Emergency Relief Program (SER): michigan.gov/mdhhs You do not have to be a DHHS client to apply for help with a past due bill, shutoff notice or the need for deliverable fuel through the SER. This program, available Nov. 1–May 31, provides most of its utility assistance during this crisis season. However, limited assistance is available outside the crisis season. If you receive a DHHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHHS or call the Home Heating Hotline, 855-275-6424.

Program: Low-Income Home Weatherization
Contact: Local Community Action Agency

You may be able to receive help with weatherizing your home to reduce energy use if you meet low-income eligibility guidelines (200% of poverty guidelines) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit mcaaa.org to find one in your area.

Program: United Way
Contact: Call 2-1-1 or UWmich.org/2-1-1

2-1-1 is a free phone service operating 24 hours daily to provide information about help that may be available in a particular area with utilities and other needs. Learn more at UWmich.org/2-1-1.

Program: Medical Emergency Protection
Contact: Local Utility Company

You are protected from service shut-off for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days, possibly extended to 63 days, if you have a proven **medical emergency**. You must provide written proof from a doctor, public health or social services official that a medical emergency exists. Contact your gas or electric utility for details.

Program: Shut-off Protection for Military Active Duty
Contact: Local Utility Company

If you or your spouse has been called into **active military duty** you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may request extensions. You must still pay, but contact your utility company and they will help you set up a payment plan.

Program: Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program
Contact: MI Veterans Trust Fund

The Trust Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance.

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund at 517-284-5299 or michiganveterans.com

Program: MI Energy Assistance Program
Contact: Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), includes services that will enable participants to become self-sufficient, including assisting participants in paying their energy bills on time, budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, and being energy efficient. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers.

Safety During Hunting Season

By Tim Velder



Be aware of what's behind that big buck or it might cost big bucks.

Your electric co-op's time and money are spent every year repairing equipment and power lines that have been struck by a stray bullet. As a not-for-profit cooperative, owned by the members, we all share in this expense.

This doesn't even include the inconvenience, damages, and hazards to members down the line that require power for medical equipment or other needs, while a lineman does some hunting of his own looking at spans of line trying to locate the problem.

Hunters and other gun-owners should be cautious not to shoot near or toward power lines, power poles, and substations. A stray bullet can cause damage to equipment, could be deadly to the shooter, and potentially interrupt electric service to large areas.

Sometimes the damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months and is only discovered when an unexplained outage occurs.

Landowners are also encouraged to take note of nonmembers who are hunting on their property and remind them to be aware of power lines.

Shooting near overhead power lines or insulators can result in severe injury or death.

The main safety points to remember are:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Damage to the conductor can happen, possibly dropping a phase on the ground. If it's dry and the electricity goes to ground, there is the possibility of electrocution and wildfire.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not shoot at, or near, birds perching on utility lines. That goes for any firearm, including pistols, rifles or shotguns.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole besides utility equipment can pose an obstruction—and a serious hazard—to electric cooperative employees as they perform utility operations.
- Avoid the use of lofting poles near overhead power lines. Remember, electricity can jump across a considerable distance. ■

Easy Ways To Save Energy This Winter

Between cold weather, the holidays and spending more time indoors, energy use and costs can rise for many Michigan residents. However, by taking a few simple actions, the following small adjustments can result in big savings!

Deck the halls with LED holiday lights. Light-emitting diode (LED) holiday lights use up to 90 percent less electricity and last up to 10 times longer than standard bulbs. Plus, they produce almost no heat and are nearly impossible to break! Save even more energy by putting your lights on a timer.

Set your furnace fan to "auto." Selecting "auto" ensures the fan will operate only when necessary, which can save several hundred dollars per year. Setting the fan to "on" causes it to run constantly and it requires more heat to maintain the desired temperature.

Find and seal air leaks. Prevent cold air from seeping in and heated air from escaping outside. The largest air leaks are typically around gaps in plumbing, chimneys, and wiring bypasses, as well as in dropped ceilings and soffits above cabinets.



Prep your home before leaving for vacation.

Unplug as many appliances as possible. Many appliances use some energy even when they are turned off. You can also safely lower your thermostat to 55 degrees and turn your water heater to the lowest setting.

Take advantage of rebates. Before ringing in the New Year, claim your Energy Optimization rebates for energy-efficient products, such as lightbulbs, TVs, refrigerators and freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers/dryers and more.

View current incentives at michigan-energy.org or call **877.296.4319** for details. ■



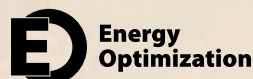
'Tis the Season

Save energy and be merry

Practice these simple tips to save energy and money this holiday season!

- Deck the halls with LED holiday lights
- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning
- Turn down the thermostat while entertaining guests
- Use a timer to control tree and outdoor lighting
- Unplug appliances before leaving for a long weekend

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.

Country Roads



Tricia Doyle, Cassopolis – “Rural Roads.”

Photo Contest Winners

The votes are in, and we're happy to share the winning photo (and some favorites) from our October photo contest. Winners were selected from 17 Facebook entries. Thanks to everyone who submitted a photo, voted and spread the word by sharing the post on Facebook.

Visit teammidwest.com/photo-contest/ to view all the photos submitted.



Vic Eichler, Three Rivers – “When The Sap Runs.”



Violet Skrzypek, Three Rivers – “Country At Its Best.”



Tammy West, Jones – “Ready For Hay.”



Elsie Jones, Allegan – “Country Splendor.”

Enter Your Photos And Win!

Every month we will announce a new theme. Just submit your best shot and encourage your friends to vote! The photo receiving the most votes from our Facebook contest will be printed in an issue of *Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites. If your photo is printed in *Country Lines* during 2017, you will be entered to win a credit of up to \$200 on your December 2017 bill.

Visit facebook.com/TeamMidwest and click on “Photo Contest” from the menu tabs to submit your high-resolution photos. Not on Facebook? You can also enter at TeamMidwest.com/photocontest. Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!

Our **November** theme is **Wild Weather**. Photos can be submitted from **November 1 to November 20** to be featured in our January 2017 issue. Our **December** theme is **Holiday Fun**. Photos can be submitted from **December 1 to December 20** to be featured in our February 2017 issue.



CASSEROLES

These cozy comfort foods can go straight from your oven to your table.

Photos—831 Creative

Great Chicken Casserole

Mary Ellen Babcock, Thumb Electric

- 3 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 2 cups finely chopped celery
- 1 cup (4 ounces by weight) shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 can (4 ounces) water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 1 can (10- $\frac{3}{4}$ ounces) cream of chicken soup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup slivered almonds
- 1 can (6 ounces) French-fried onion rings

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat a 9×13 inch baking dish with cooking spray. In a large bowl, stir together chicken, celery, cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, water chestnuts, soup, and almonds. Spoon into prepared baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Sprinkle onion rings evenly over top and bake 5 more minutes, or until bubbly around edges. Let stand 5–10 minutes before serving. Enjoy with a nice tossed salad on the side.

Chicken and Rice Casserole

Mary Scodeller, Great Lakes Energy

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 cups instant rice
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can onion soup
- cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350 F. Blend the three kinds of soup with 2 cups of instant rice. Pour into a casserole dish sprayed with cooking spray. Top with the chicken breasts, and cook for 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours. Let cool and serve.



Noodle Cream Cheese Casserole

Jeanie Henrion, Ontonagon

- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 16 ounces tomato sauce
- 8 ounce package of noodles
- 8 ounce package cream cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Preheat oven to 350 F. Brown ground beef in margarine. Add garlic, salt, sugar and tomato sauce. Cover and cook slowly for 15–20 minutes. Cook noodles and drain. Combine cream cheese and sour cream.

In a baking dish, layer noodles, cream cheese mixture and half of the sauce. Repeat layers. Spread cheddar cheese over the top. Bake for about 30 minutes (until heated throughout). Serve!

Uncle Ben's Chicken and Rice

Janice Harvey, Great Lakes Energy

- 6-ounce package Uncle Ben's Long Grain and Wild Rice
- 1 frying chicken or equivalent pieces
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 ½ cups water

Preheat oven to 350 F. Sprinkle rice mix on bottom of buttered 9x13 pan. Combine soup, seasoning packet from rice, and water. Place chicken on top of rice and pour soup mixture over all. Bake for 1 hour, 15 minutes.



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 recipe for **"CHIP DIPS"** by **DEC. 4**, **"SOUPS & STEWS"** recipe by **JAN. 4** and **"MUFFINS & BREADS"** by **FEB. 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



Midwest In The Community

Neighbor helping neighbor—that's how your Team Midwest family approaches daily work and efforts to give back. We live, work and serve right here in the local community, striving to actively demonstrate our community values in meaningful and impacting ways.



Linda Carango, a member of Midwest's accounting department, receives a snack from Barb Miller, a coffee cart volunteer, at the West Michigan Cancer Center. Linda is a cancer survivor who has benefitted from WMCC's programs and services.



Midwest Propane's Fueling the Fight vehicles hit the road in August, delivering nearly 400,000 gallons of gas.

Fueling The Fight

Our hard-working Midwest Propane servicemen didn't just deliver a bunch of gas during the August seasonal fill period (398,463 gallons to be exact!), they also delivered hope for cancer patients served through the West Michigan Cancer Center (WMCC). We donated one penny per gallon of gas delivered during August as part of our fourth annual Fueling the Fight campaign, rounding our donation to an even \$4,000. We recently visited WMCC to present the donation with Linda Carango, a member of the Team Midwest accounting department and personal recipient of the many services offered through WMCC. Over the years, our donations have helped provide free patient and caregiver services, such as massage therapy, a coffee cart, counseling, nutritional advice, transportation assistance, exercise classes, smoking cessation and cancer education.

Promoting Community Safety

Team Midwest cares about our emergency responders and supports their important efforts by offering electrical safety programs. Firefighters from the South Kalamazoo County Fire Authority in Vicksburg, recently participated in a hotline safety demonstration to help them understand how to manage the many electrical dangers they may encounter in their rescue efforts.

As a regional provider of electricity and propane, Team Midwest is strongly committed to creating a culture of safety. We offer safety programs for schools, churches, civic groups, emergency response teams, and other groups and organizations. Programs are free, adaptable for various audiences and timelines, and can be conducted in your facility or ours. For more information or to schedule a program for your group, please contact the community relations office at 800-492-5989 or email pr@teammidwest.com. ■



Midwest Lineman Zac Lock assists with the hotline demonstration for the South Kalamazoo County Fire Authority.

Fiber Internet Coming To North Dowagiac And Marcellus In 2017

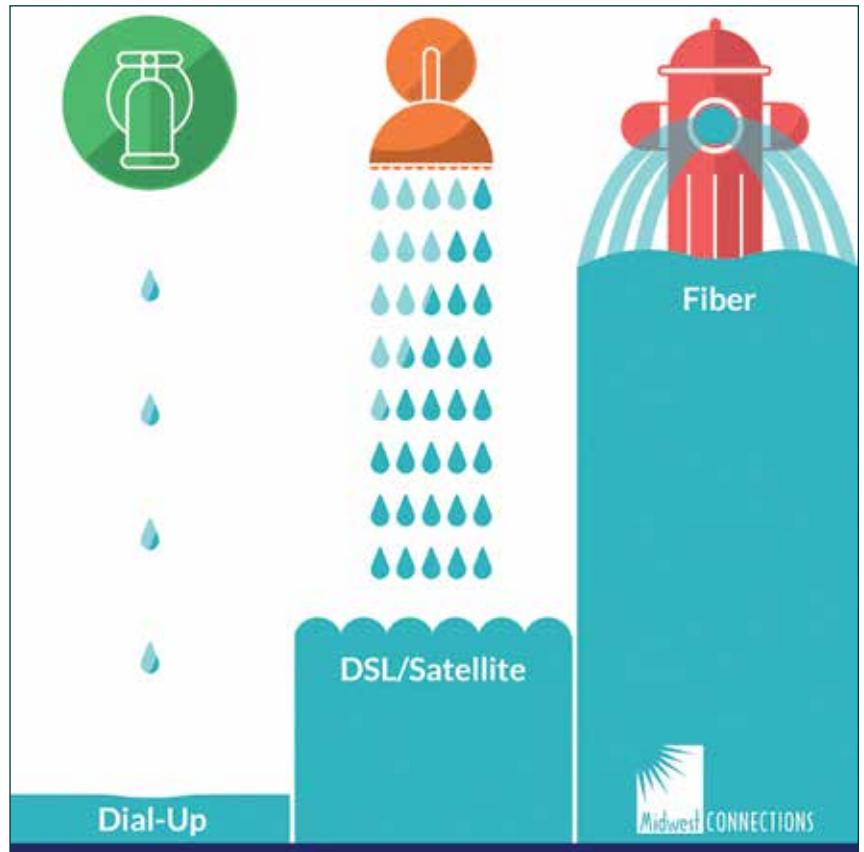
It's a new era in rural southwest Michigan as people who were previously unserved or underserved with a true high-speed internet option are now surfing at the speed of light with fiber internet from Midwest Connections.

As we approach the end of year two of our five-year fiber deployment across southwest Michigan, more than 3,000 co-op members have subscribed and are enjoying what is considered the gold standard of internet connections. Fiber offers much faster speeds over longer distances than traditional copper-based technologies like DSL and cable, redefining the high-speed experience.

"Unbelievable! Life in rural southwest Michigan has always been without many choices. Our only choices were satellite internet or cellular packages that were expensive and had definite limits. Finally, we feel like we have joined the real world! We dropped Dish and are now streaming Netflix and saving a ton of money on both internet and TV! Thank you for bringing us out of our cave!"
—Sham Moore, Vicksburg

"We are elated to finally have true high speed and reliable internet access—and at an affordable price. Words cannot begin to express how thankful we are for this service. Lack of decent and affordable internet access was the one major negative for our continued satisfaction in living in a rural setting, which we have otherwise enjoyed for 30 years. When we bought the property, that wasn't even a consideration. Now I feel that not only are we gratified, but our property value has increased should we ever need to move."
—Margaret Cinninger, Niles

By the end of 2016, 11 of our 23 zones across southwest Michigan will be lit, and we'll continue in-home installations. We recently announced our 2017 construction plans, which includes building



service to members in the North Dowagiac and Marcellus zones. Walk-out work is underway in both areas; we expect to begin home installs west of the Amtrak railway in North Dowagiac in the second quarter east of the railway in the third quarter. Installs will follow in the Marcellus zone in quarter four.

Ten zones remain in pre-registration in southwest Michigan, and all are up for grabs with our next-step construction plan. It's a grassroots effort, and the zone closest to goal based on expressions of interest will be the next to go into construction. If you're a member in the southeast Michigan territory, don't despair. We continue to explore the best options to bring a true high-speed platform to your area. Our ultimate commitment is to make sure all Midwest Energy Cooperative members have access to a true high-speed service in the coming years.

Learn more about fiber-speed internet or sign up for service at TeamFiber.com. ■

Photos—Thom Skelding

U.P. LUGE CLUB COMPETES ON WORLD STAGE

By Emily Haines Lloyd

Most Michiganders have had the experience of climbing a snowy hill with a plastic or wooden sled in tow, plopping down at the top and pushing off to feel the cold, stinging air. Regardless of the bumps or wipeouts that follow, most people laugh like maniacs, stand up and brush off the snow, then climb the hill to do it all over again.

Far fewer individuals have the experience of sliding down a 280-foot hill at speeds ranging from 50–80 mph, but that's just what's happening in

Negaunee, MI at the Upper Peninsula Luge Club. For more than three decades, beginners with wide eyes and daredevils with years of experience have made the trek up Lucy Hill to make their way down in increments upwards of a half a mile. All of this happens on a luge—which looks similar to an old-fashioned winter sled with metal runners.

"You don't start fast," Coach Levi Underwood is quick to explain. "Your first time, it's just fast enough to get down the hill, and it's still thrilling."

The U.P. Luge Club has been holding clinics and open sledding for the public since the mid-80s. It provides local communities and tourists an opportunity to experience something few people ever get to do. Sliding (not "lugging" as you might expect) isn't available just anywhere, and Lucy Hill is the only natural luge track in the United States.

"Sliding, particularly on a natural track, isn't something you find in every community," said Tammy Wills, the current secretary of the luge club, former coach from 2010–2016 and a competitive slider herself since age 13. "Yet, this one-of-a-kind experience is in the middle of the Upper Peninsula and completely accessible and affordable."



All that is needed are warm clothes, a hat and mittens—the U.P. Luge Club provides the rest. But this is not just for recreational sliders.

The U.P. Luge Club is a feeder club for the luge natural track competitive circuit. As the only natural track in the U.S., young sliders who show both promise and determination are often taken to Europe to compete—where a natural track is both prominent and very competitive.

The U.P. Luge Club President, Fred Anderson, first started sliding when he took his Boy Scout Troop to luge at Lucy Hill.

“I was hooked, and I wasn’t the only one,” Anderson explains. “Years later, two scouts from that first trip went on to compete at the Olympics. Wendall Suckow and Chris Thorpe became very successful sliders—Thorpe going on to become the first American to medal in luge at the Olympics. And they both came through this club.”

Remembering his experiences at Lucy Hill, Underwood, who competed for years in Europe and on the Olympic development team, came back to coach.

“I had so many great teachers, Tammy included, who showed me how an athlete could be humble enough to coach,” said Underwood. “And I wanted to give back to this sport that gave so much to me.”

The joy seen on the faces at the U.P. Luge Club comes from all sorts: individuals who have fallen in love with this unexpected sport; novices who are taking their first slide down a track; adrenaline junkies looking for another hit; and that inner child who remembers the freedom and excitement that comes from climbing up a hill, sitting on a sled and just letting go. ■



Three Sisters Luge Pizza

Submitted by guest chefs from the U.P. Luge Club.

Once used to describe the three devastating waves that led to the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald, Three Sisters is also the name for three tight turns and the most technical part of the Negaunee luge track.

This “three-turn” pizza is a favorite with club members and goes down as fast as a luge.

Ingredients

- 1 French Bread, sliced lengthwise
- ½ cup sweet onion, diced
- 3 ounces ham, diced
- 2 ounces pepperoni
- 4 ounces cudighi, cooked
- ½ cup green pepper
- ½ cup red pepper
- ½ cup sliced tomato
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 14 ounces pizza sauce

Instructions

Preheat oven to 450 F. Brown the 4 ounces of cudighi. Cut the French bread lengthwise and toast for 4 minutes at 450 F. Spread pizza sauce on both pieces of toasted French bread.

Then add the following ingredients to the French bread in thirds:

Turn one /Step one

First third—ham, green peppers, onions

Turn two /Step two

Second third—pepperoni, red peppers, onions

Turn three /Step three

Last third—cudighi, tomatoes, onions

Bake for 6–8 minutes and enjoy.

Coming Home And Stepping Up To Serve



"I knew I could contribute to the board in a meaningful way with the diversity of professional experiences that I bring to the table. More importantly, I wanted to be part of what this organization is doing to improve lives and communities across its rural footprint."

Gerry Bundle has lived and worked in many different places across the country, but southwest Michigan was always home.

The Ross Beatty High School graduate reestablished his southwest Michigan roots in 2014 when he returned home with his wife, Della. Gerry and Della were Cassopolis schoolmates together, but it would be many years and life experiences later before the two blended their lives and children into a new family. The couple has six daughters, ranging in age from 14 to 29, and three grandchildren.

Returning home, Gerry and Della both wanted to get involved in the community and quickly found meaningful opportunities through their electric cooperative. Gerry signed on for the new Midwest Member Advisory Committee, while Della put her passion for kids and schools to work as a representative on the Midwest Strengthening Schools grant committee. They were among the first to enjoy the fiber internet service, and spoke to the need for and importance of the service in Midwest's rural broadband revolution video.

That early involvement as new co-op members lit a fire, and Gerry was eager to serve in a greater capacity. So when a letter arrived from Midwest Energy Cooperative seeking a member to represent District 7 on the board of directors, he knew his professional and personal experiences would be a great fit.

The board agreed!

At their August meeting, the board of directors interviewed six prospective candidates to fill the District 7 seat left vacant after the death of Colyne Sorsby and ultimately selected Gerry. Colyne was

reelected to a three-year term in 2016, and Gerry will fulfill that term.

"I knew I could contribute to the board in a meaningful way with the diversity of professional experiences that I bring to the table. More importantly, I wanted to be part of what this organization is doing to improve lives and communities across its rural footprint," Gerry says.

Gerry is a Management Consultant Specialist and Senior ERP Product Specialist with CSC's Global Oracle Practice. He has been a consultant for more than 20 years, working in challenging public and private sector environments encompassing the public transportation, electric power generation, financial services, fluid controls, healthcare, and oil and gas industries. He has an associate degree in applied science from Southwestern Michigan College, a Bachelor of Science in organizational management from Goshen College and a Master of Science degree in operations management from Georgia Institute of Technology.

A sports enthusiast, Gerry is a fan of the Cassopolis Rangers, New York Giants, Denver Broncos, Michigan Wolverines, Georgia Tech Yellowjackets, and any Detroit team. He enjoys choral singing, open wheel racing, motorcycling, fishing, golfing, downhill skiing, and traveling, and is involved in the life of his church.

"Della and I saw and experienced early in our co-op membership that this organization is a leader, doing innovative and life-changing things across the community. I'm honored to have the opportunity to represent my fellow members on this exciting journey." ■



Keeping Midwest Linemen Safe With Pole Top Rescue Training

Linemen across the country leave their homes and families every morning with no idea of what the day might bring. Their work is challenging and inherently dangerous, and it requires a deep commitment to safety and care.

Climbing poles and working off the ground from a bucket truck are common practice, and linemen must be prepared for the unexpected. In very rare cases, accidents happen from these elevated positions and crew members must be prepared to respond. These are obviously unique rescue situations requiring specific training.

In August and September, our linemen participated in the annual pole top and bucket rescue training program, facilitated by Joe McElroy, director of safety for the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. "It is my hope that our crews never have to put these skills to work, but they need to be ready to come to the aid of one of their fellow crew members if something does happen," said McElroy.

This is just one program within our rigorous annual safety curriculum. Our goal is to ensure that the men and women who dedicate their lives to making sure the power is on are able to return to their homes and families every evening. ■



Every Vote Counts

By Jack O'Malley

A busy year celebrating Olympians and honoring lost legends like Gordie Howe and David Bowie, 2016 will conclude with one of the most highly debated presidential elections in history. As we prepare ourselves for a new leader, I urge you to do one of two things.

1. Vote
2. Encourage someone you know to vote.

"I don't like the candidates." "My vote doesn't make a difference." "I'm busy." These may be reasonable explanations for the nearly half of Americans who choose not to vote during a presidential election year. To those who understand voting to be a great American privilege, they might sound more like excuses releasing our neighbors of any personal responsibility for the future of our nation.

"Voting is a right, not a duty," non-voters argue. "I have just as much right to exercise my right NOT to vote!" True. American people voluntarily fight (and sometimes die) for you to keep your right to vote—whether used or not. It's a right extended to every American citizen regardless of sex, race or economic standing. It's a right exercised in peace.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court described voting like this: No right is more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizens, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined. *Wesberry v. Sanders*, 376 U.S. 1 (U.S. 1964).

Vital for the democratic process to work, your vote not only counts, but it also serves as a united voice to elected officials regardless of party. Your vote says, "Here I am, I'm paying attention!"



Jack O'Malley

Whether you choose to exercise your right to vote or not, Abraham Lincoln described it best when he said, "Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

Hope to see you at the polls. ■

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 Nov. 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 the name of your co-op.


Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the September 2016 issue is Karen Wienke, a HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as Black Star Farms in Suttons Bay. Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



Sept. Photo

American Metal Roofs

“Winter storms, ice dams, power outages...



We'll help you protect your home against the ravages of a Michigan winter ...”

Frank Farmer - President, AMERICAN METAL ROOFS

It's true, our main business is metal roofing, but this time of year we offer products that help protect your home against the damaging effects of our long, icy winters. Products like Heated Shingle[®] and Heated Shingle Ice Dam Cutter[®] are products designed to melt ice buildup on your roof before it can take hold and cause expensive damage.

Protection for any kind of roof - not just metal.

We designed our Heated Shingle products to work on asphalt roofs as well as metal. So, if you've got problem ice areas on your roof, one of our Heated Shingle options may be exactly the solution you need.

Keep the power on through local outages - no worries.

Imagine. Within seconds of a local power outage, electricity in your home is restored - automatically. A whole house generator system keeps critical systems like heat, well pumps and medical equipment online until power is restored - and you never have to go outside.

I grew up in the U.P. so I know firsthand what a Michigan winter can do.

There is no doubt that winter weather can be hard on your home. That's why we offer our Heated Shingle products and whole house generator systems; to help protect your home through the worst of winter. And once the snow clears, we'll be happy to talk with you about one of our Snow Country roofs as well.

Protection. Permanence. You deserve nothing less.

VISIT OUR SHOWROOMS:

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TeamMidwest.com



GET MORE BANG FOR YOUR BUCK

It's Open Season at Midwest Propane, and you have a chance to bag some bucks. **\$100 of them!**

Sign up for new propane service, and we'll put \$100 in your pocket. Already a Midwest Propane customer? Successfully refer a new customer and we'll give you AND the new customer \$100. Hunting season has never been more exciting!

Just mention our Tell A Friend program when you call to sign up, and the bucks will start rolling in once your tank is set and service is activated. New customers must meet eligibility criteria and tanks must be set by Dec. 16, 2016.

Start Hunting Bucks Today!

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TeamMidwestPropane.com

Midwest Propane is not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

