

Cherryland Electric Cooperative

February 2017

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



YOUTH TOUR

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Rate Increase In Co-op's Future

Army Wife Strong

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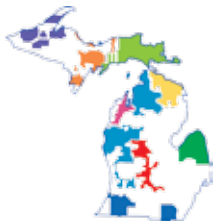
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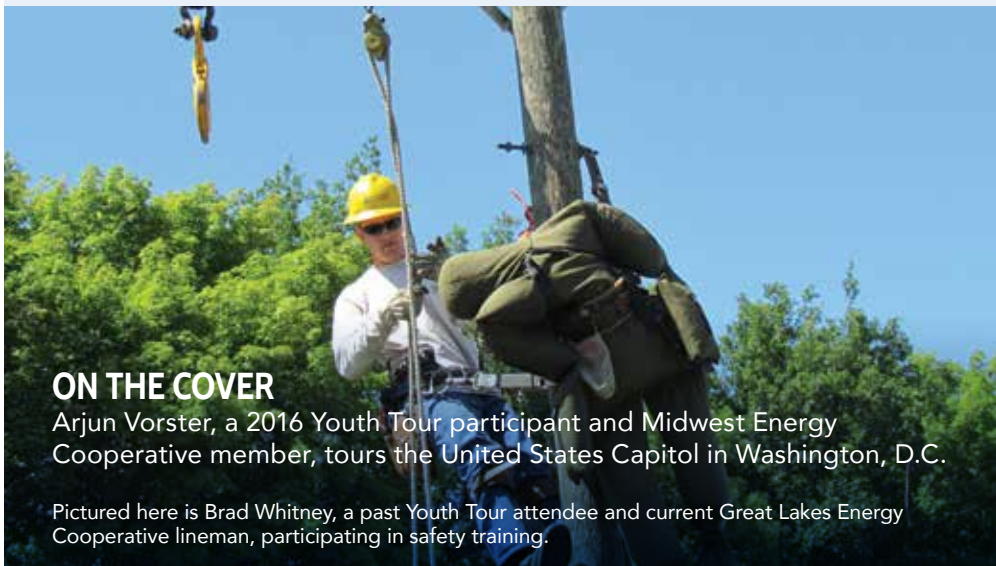
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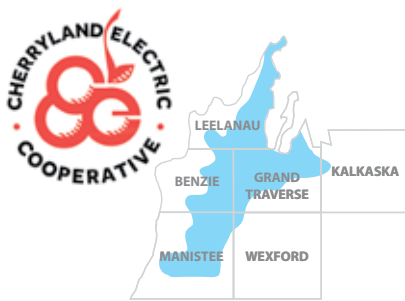
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READER'S PAGE

I Remember—The Wonder Of Michigan Always Pulls My Heart Back Home

Kalico Casady, Great Lakes Energy

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CO-OP NEWS

Cherryland Cares Awards \$18,050 To Seven Nonprofits

At their fourth quarter board meeting, the Cherryland Cares board awarded grants to Benzie Area Christian Neighbors, Great Lakes Children's Museum, Junior Achievement of Northwest Michigan, Love INC, Northwest Michigan Community Action Agency, TART Trails, and Samaritans' Closet. Cherryland Cares awarded \$68,730 in grants to area nonprofit agencies in 2016.

If you are an area nonprofit agency seeking financial help, first quarter grant applications are due Friday, March 10. For more information, please call Shannon Mattson at 231-486-9234 or email at smattson@cherrylandelectric.coop.

Local Students Can Apply For Youth Tour In Washington, D.C.

High school sophomores and juniors from Cherryland's service territory are invited to join the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour: a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity to Washington, D.C.

Two local students will have the chance to explore the leadership lessons of our nation's history and immerse themselves in the cooperative spirit with other students from around the state and country.

Applications must be submitted by Tuesday, Feb. 28. For more information and to apply, visit CooperativeYouthTour.com.

Cherryland Offers Five Scholarships

Cherryland offers five scholarships—three worth \$4,000 (\$1,000 for four years) for high school seniors and two for \$1,000 each for adult scholarship (post high school).

Applications for both scholarships are available on the Cherryland website or by contacting Cherryland's office at 231-486-9200.

Members Can Serve On Cherryland's Board

Any qualified Cherryland member can be elected to serve a three-year term on the cooperative's board of directors. Two directors will be elected at this year's annual meeting, including one Leelanau county director and one at-large director.

To be nominated, candidates can file a petition with the cooperative's administrative assistant starting the first day of March until 4 p.m. on the last business day of March. Nominating petitions are available on the Cherryland website and at the co-op office in Grawn.

For more information regarding board nominations and the election process, review Article III of the co-op's bylaws on the Cherryland website.

Members Mark Calendars For 79th Annual Meeting

Cherryland's 79th Annual Meeting will take place Thursday, June 15 at Incredible Mo's in Grawn. Mark your calendars for an evening of food, fun, and information. ■



On A Mission



Tony Anderson
General Manager

The mission statement at your cooperative is simple: "Member-Focused. Safe. Reliable. Affordable." We always attempt to keep each part of this mission at the forefront. In 2017, affordability will move ever so slightly to the front of the line.

We have not raised rates since July of 2011. Everyone at Cherryland is proud of this fact. However, the time for a rate increase is growing closer. Though our 2017 budget doesn't look positive, it is an aggressive worst-case scenario. Weather will play a factor as it always does. After that, it becomes a financial battle between projections and reality.

What has occurred over the past five years? The answer has several pieces. The easiest and most obvious is the simple passage of time and the associated effect of inflation on many of our daily costs.

To keep up reliability, we have been proactive as we aggressively rebuild sections of our distribution system each year. This has required an investment that ranges close to \$5 million annually. At least two-thirds of this is borrowed money. Thus, even a slight increase in interest rates can have a major effect on our bottom line.

Trees are another major expense item. Due to maladies like oak wilt and emerald ash borer, the million-dollar tree trimming budget has grown closer to \$1.2 million. We have an aging forest with mature trees that are beginning to die as well. If we back off on this battle, reliability will certainly suffer.

Nobody wants that, so we keep putting money and manpower into the fight.

Cherryland is approaching 79 years of age. This means our aging plant that is constantly at the mercy of the weather needs continual maintenance. With almost 3,000 miles of line, we simply can't rebuild it all. We must be vigilant and aggressive with our inspections and proactive with repairs. This takes time and money but greatly improves our reliability.

As we invest in our hard assets, it has also been necessary to invest in our employees. In search of qualified workers, neighboring utilities have raised the stakes in the form of hourly wages. Cherryland has had to keep pace. We will never be able to lead the market, but we can combine a solid benefits package with fair wages to put up a defense that has retained some of our best employees so far.

We are seeing some increased growth in new meters that may help offset some of these rising economic factors. We do expect this to continue; although the trend is hard to predict, so it is not one we rely on in our budget projections.

So, the big questions: "How much could the rate increase be?" Today, I think two percent is the minimum and four percent is the maximum. "When could the rate increase occur?" Our best estimate is the fourth quarter of 2017 or first quarter of 2018. When the day comes, I am confident the resulting rate will still keep us lower than our largest utility neighbor.

As the year unfolds, please stay tuned to these pages for more updates. You will always be the ultimate judge of our member-focused, safe, reliable and affordable mission. ■

PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

**Always read the Owner's Manual
and instructions for your generator.
Do NOT cut corners when it comes to safety.**

These tips are merely supplemental and are not intended to substitute the reading of the Owner's Manual.



Carbon Monoxide And Ventilation

- Using a generator indoors **can kill you in minutes**. Exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a deadly, poisonous gas you cannot see or smell.
- NEVER run a generator indoors or in partly-enclosed areas, such as garages.
- ONLY use outdoors and far from windows, doors, vents, and crawl spaces and in an area where adequate ventilation is available and deadly exhaust gas cannot accumulate.
- Using a fan or opening doors and windows will not provide sufficient ventilation.
- It is recommended that you install battery operated carbon monoxide alarms/detectors indoors according to manufacturer's instructions/recommendations.

Gasoline, Fueling And Burn Safety

- If the tank is over-filled, fuel can overflow onto a hot engine and cause fire or explosion.
- Do not overfill the fuel tank. Always allow room for fuel expansion.
- Never add fuel while the unit is running or hot. Allow the generator and engine to cool entirely before adding fuel.
- Never store a generator with fuel in the tank where gasoline vapors might reach an open flame, spark or pilot light.
- Many generator parts are hot enough to burn you during operation and while the generator is cooling after turning off. Avoid coming into contact with a hot generator.

Electrocution Hazard And Electrical Shock Hazards

- Connecting a portable electric generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.
- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.

- Only start or stop the generator when no electrical loads are connected.
- Overloading your generator can seriously damage your valuable appliances and electronics. Do not overload the generator. Prioritize your needs; do not operate more appliances and equipment than the output rating of the generator. A portable electric generator should be used only when necessary and only to power essential equipment.
- Use the proper power cords. Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage. Do not use extension cords with exposed wires or worn shielding.
- Do not operate the generator in wet conditions such as rain or snow.
- The generator must be properly grounded. If the generator is not grounded, you run the risk of electrocution. Check and adhere to all applicable federal, state and local regulations related to grounding.

Generator Placement And Operation

- Allow at least five feet of clearance on all sides of the generator when operating.
- Generators can be used during a wide variety of weather temperatures, but should be protected from the elements when not in use to prevent shorting and rusting.
- Operate the generator only on level surfaces and where it will not be exposed to excessive moisture, dirt, dust or corrosive vapors.
- Inspect the generator regularly.
- Always disconnect the spark plug wire and place the wire where it cannot contact the spark plug to prevent accidental starting when setting up, transporting, adjusting or making repairs to the generator. ■

Source: American Red Cross with technical advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Fire Protection Association (publisher of the National Electric Code®) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Wind Energy Is Full Of Wins For Michigan

By Kelley Welf,
Communications Manager,
Wind On The Wires

Michigan farmers, business owners and taxpayers have a lot to gain by embracing wind energy. It offers a drought-resistant cash crop, requires very little land, creates family-supporting jobs in rural areas, and injects much-needed revenue sources into rural communities at a time when many are struggling—all while generating low-cost, clean energy. Everybody wins with wind power!

For generations, farmers have harnessed the power of the wind, but it wasn't until the 1980s that the industry was able to accomplish it on a utility scale. Since then, technological advancements and the growth of domestic manufacturing have driven the cost of wind projects down considerably. The price consumers pay for wind power has dropped 66 percent over six years.

Currently, wind provides more than four percent of Michigan's electricity needs, with 1,531 megawatts (MW) of installed capacity and another 330 MW under construction. The Department of Energy projects that Michigan could produce enough wind energy by 2030 to power the equivalent of 710,000 American homes.

Wind farms ensure farmland is protected over the long term. The average wind farm leaves 98 percent of land undisturbed, so they don't significantly impact crops or livestock production. Many farmers have found access roads built or improved for wind projects to be convenient during harvest time. Plus, wind developers make annual land-lease payments to farming families and other rural landowners. In 2014, wind developers paid \$4.6 million to Michigan landowners. This extra income goes a long way toward helping families meet their household budgets, send their kids to college, or keep the family farm. It is also reinvested in the community through spending at local businesses, restaurants and other establishments.

Wind developments increase the tax base, which helps keep more money in the pockets of citizens. From 2011–2015 the counties with the most wind farms—Gratiot, Huron and Tuscola—saw the largest increase to their tax base. This new source of tax revenue paid by wind developers brings in millions of dollars every year, and is often used to help pay for schools, county and township services, police and fire departments, and programs for seniors and veterans.

The economic impact of wind development ripples through local economies. With 26 wind manufacturing facilities, Michigan ranks fourth in the nation in wind manufacturing and enjoys about 2,000 wind energy jobs. Businesses also benefit from wind projects, as developers use local service stations, hardware stores, restaurants and hotels in their day-to-day operations.

Harvesting the wind and investing energy dollars locally is a winning strategy. Wind developments offer the opportunity to capitalize on jobs and economic development while ensuring Michigan's farm families and rural lifestyle stay economically viable. ■

Wind On The Wires is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, MN, that works to advance renewable energy in the Midwest.

windonthewires.org



ARMY WIFE STRONG

By Rob Marsh

All my life, I have been surrounded by strong women: my mom, my grandmothers, my sisters, my wife. Each has acted, in their own unique way, as source of inspiration for me.

If you asked me as a kid if I felt this way about my oldest sister, Lindsay, I probably would have laughed.

Don't get me wrong, my sister has always been a kind and helpful sibling—at least when my parents were watching.

Admittedly, I was a gullible kid. Lindsay knew this and used it to her advantage. Whether it was tricking me into eating a mildly toxic leaf or tossing me into that one window egress I could never climb out of, she capitalized on my sweet, innocent nature.

Eventually I grew up and realized that I did not need to subject myself to her tricks. And she grew up as well, seemingly losing the motivation to mess with her younger brother. By the time she graduated high school, we were tolerant of one another just like most siblings.

Lindsay's life since graduating high school has been busy, to say the least. She attended college, graduated, married her oldest grade school friend, and next became pregnant with her first child.

On the surface her life's trajectory is unsurprising. But there is a twist. The man she married was not only a friend, but also a West Point graduate and now captain in the U.S. Army.

This changes the story to something that is more chaotic and uncertain. Not long after they said "I do," Lindsay and her husband moved to Georgia. It was in Georgia that she gave birth to her daughter. Then it was off to Washington state where she gave birth to her second child, a son. It wasn't long before they moved back to Georgia for a short time. Then they moved north to upstate New York, and there had two more sons. They reside there today, at least for now.

Sprinkled in amongst the moves were long stretches of time when her husband was performing his military duties. That included training, Ranger school, and two deployments to Afghanistan. From the day they were married to now, he has spent two and a half years away from his family, doing what most of us would not have the physical or mental capacity to do.

Constantly moving from state to state, raising four kids at times by herself, worrying about the safety of her husband; that's enough to make any person crack.

During these stretches of time, Lindsay and I talked a fair amount on the phone. There were days



My sister's family: Lindsay and her husband Tylor with their children (L-R): Jameson, Shayla, and Luke. Lindsay gave birth to their fourth child, Tyler, in October 2016.

I would hear the phone ring and think, "Is today the day she is going to breakdown? Ask for help?" Not once. I could tell that these thoughts never crossed her mind. Instead, we would talk about her kids, retell classic stories from our childhood, or make plans for her next visit home. Just normal conversations.

She never complained. She never asked for pity.

Like many of us, my gratitude and admiration for our nation's servicemen and women run deep. Now being closer to that life and witnessing my sister's experiences, the scope of my admiration has grown.

The spouses of our servicemen and women have experiences that, again, many of us would not have the capacity to endure. In the sea of chaos that is military

life, they act as the constant calm. And they do this without recognition or praise. It is this incredible strength that leaves me in awe.

Does this mean that I am in awe of Lindsay? The same sister who years before tricked and teased me as the gullible and loving younger brother? Absolutely.

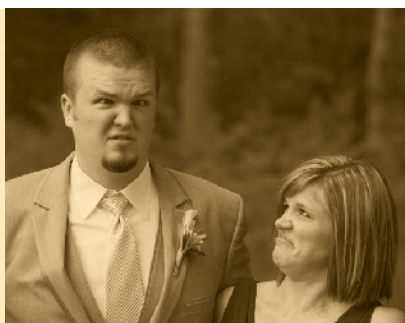
Her poise in uncertain times proves her to be a pillar of strength for her family and for me. In those moments when life

gets hectic, I can look to my sister for inspiration and guidance.

And if this is just a trick on her part, then I don't mind falling for it. ■



Rob Marsh
Communications
Specialist



My relationship with my sister today is strong and very fun.

CHIP DIPS

These dips are a slam dunk for your next gathering.

Philly Tomato Basil Dip

Nancy Popa,
Cherryland Electric
Cooperative

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tablespoons zesty Italian dressing
- 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped basil

Spread cream cheese in a 9-inch pie plate. Mix tomatoes and Italian dressing, then spoon over cream cheese. Sprinkle Parmesan and basil on top. Serve with thick chips or crackers!





Southern Pimiento Cheese

Annie, Great Lakes Energy

- 2 cups shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced (optional)
- 1 (4 ounces) jar diced pimiento, drained
- salt and black pepper, to taste

Place the Cheddar cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, onion powder, minced jalapeno, and pimiento into the large bowl of a mixer. Beat at medium speed, with a paddle if possible, until thoroughly combined. Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Serve cold with crackers or toasted baguette slices, at room temperature as a dip with tortilla chips, or as a spread for a grilled cheese sandwich.



Cheesy Hot Crab Dip

Janice Harvey, Great Lakes Energy

- 8 ounces imitation crab meat
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups shredded mild cheddar cheese
- assorted crackers or chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, shred imitation crab meat. Stir in mayonnaise, onion, parsley and pepper. Stir in cheese. Spoon into shallow 1-½ quart baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 20–25 minutes or until heated through. Serve with crackers or chips.

MI
co-op
KITCHEN

Submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:

- “Breakfast & Brunch” due March 4
- “On The Grill” due April 4

Go to micoopkitchen.com for more information and to register.

U.S. SENATE BEAN SOUP

In honor of the annual Youth Tour Washington, D.C. trip application deadline, we share this favorite recipe. Since the 1940s, the traditional U.S. Senate Bean Soup, pictured above, has been on the Senate's menu every day.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| • 1 pound dry navy beans | • ¼ cup chopped parsley |
| • 1 meaty ham bone | • 1½ teaspoons pepper |
| • 1 cup chopped onion | • 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg |
| • 2 garlic cloves, minced | • 1 teaspoon oregano |
| • 1 cup chopped celery | • 1 teaspoon basil |
| • ¾ cup mashed potato flakes or 1½ cups mashed potatoes | • 1 bay leaf |
| | • salt, to taste |

Wash and sort beans; in a large kettle, cover beans with 6–8 cups hot water. Bring to a boil and boil 2 minutes; remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour. Add another 2 quarts of cold water and ham bone, then bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 1½ hours. Stir in remaining ingredients; simmer 20–30 minutes until beans are tender. Remove ham bone, trim off meat and return meat to soup; remove bay leaf. Serve hot, or freeze for later.

See Youth Tour cover story on page 14 and visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and others.

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Pole Top Rescue: Then And Now

By Rob Marsh

In the summer of 1967, Randall G. Champion, a 29-year-old apprentice lineman, was performing maintenance atop a power pole in Jacksonville, FL. What was seemingly routine work turned into horror when Champion brushed a low-voltage line, knocking him unconscious.

Noticing him dangling and unresponsive from the top of the pole, Champion's partner J.D. Thompson quickly climbed the pole, reached him, and performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. After some time, Thompson could detect a faint pulse, then unhooked Champion from his harness and carried him down.

Once on the ground, Thompson and another worker performed CPR. By the time paramedics arrived, Champion was moderately revived and eventually made a full recovery.

It is an incident like this that cooperative safety directors like Cherryland's Jim Carpenter spend their careers trying to avoid. But if the worst does happen, Carpenter is going to make sure Cherryland is ready. "Safety is and will be our top priority," said Carpenter.

Every summer Cherryland linemen participate in pole top rescue training. Line crews learn how to use their bucket trucks, ropes, and climbing gear to remove incapacitated victims from atop power poles.

With each training scenario, the crew divides up tasks with the goal of neutralizing a crisis situation in as little time as possible. One lineman may be operating the bucket truck. Another may be calling 911. All the while crews must keep in mind that energized wires, extreme heights, and the victim could all be working against them.

"One of the biggest challenges in these type of emergency scenarios is the victims," explained Carpenter. "If the victim regains consciousness, there is no telling how they will react. We learn how to protect ourselves as much as protecting them."

The training doesn't stop once the victim is brought to the ground. All Cherryland linemen are certified in CPR and use this training to brush up on that skill. "In the nearly 80 years Cherryland has been around, we have never had to perform CPR on one of our linemen. And we plan to keep it that way."

Quick thinking and a lot of luck saved Champion's life 50 years ago. Today, Cherryland linemen will not depend on luck to save a life. The life will be saved because they have been skillfully trained in life-saving techniques and protocols. ■

Photos:

Left: After calling for an ambulance, local photographer Rocco Morabito snapped a photo of the 1967 incident. The photo titled "The Kiss of Life" won him the 1968 Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography.

Right: Cherryland linemen perform pole top rescue training annually.



YOUTH TOUR

The Power Of Our Future

By Emily Haines Lloyd

"We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future." – Franklin D. Roosevelt



Arjun Vorster, shown rock climbing, says Youth Tour had an impact on how he wants to make a difference in the world and his own life.

Energy is more than the ability to do work. Energy powers our imaginations and fuels positive change. That is why, for the last 50 years, approximately 1,800 students from at least 45 states have participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program each year. This five-day trip is a high-energy, interactive experience designed to help young people grow as leaders and takes place June 10–15.

Through an application and interview process, rising juniors and seniors are selected and sponsored by their local co-ops to travel to Washington, D.C., for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Together with students from all across the country, the selected Michigan students learn about co-ops, leadership, history and the importance of civic engagement.

"The experience changed me quite a bit," said Arjun Vorster, a junior at Mendon High School and 2016 Youth Tour participant sponsored by his electric co-op Midwest Energy.

It wasn't the travel that impressed Vorster, who was born in South Africa and has traveled around the



Brad Whitney, who participated in Youth Tour eight years ago, is shown with fellow students from Great Lakes Energy at a Michigan Rural Electric Teen Days event.



Today, using some of those same principles he learned as a young man, Brad serves his community as a Great Lakes Energy Cooperative Lineman.

world, including living in seven different countries before moving to the United States.

"Washington, D.C., is a really impressive place," said Vorster. "You are surrounded by so much history, and you and your fellow students are right in the middle of it all. It's pretty amazing."

Vorster, who wants to study environmental engineering in college, noted that having the opportunity to see the historical monuments, visit various museums and interact with the other student participants were some of the most impactful moments of his trip.

"I met so many interesting people," said Vorster. "I was surrounded by people who wanted to make a difference, and it made me more resolved to make a difference in my own life too."

Youth Tour can have long-lasting effects on attendees. The impact of leadership training, a unique experience of living history at our nation's capital, and significant information on the future of electric power, makes quite an impact on the students.

Brad Whitney was a participant at Youth Tour in 2009 and the influence it had on him has been long lasting.

Whitney is currently a lineman at Great Lakes Energy Cooperative. He attended Youth Tour and followed up his trip with a summer job related to line work. Eventually, Brad became the recipient of a GLE scholarship, earning his lineman certification from Alpena Community College and Great Lakes Energy.

"It was a great experience that I'll never forget," said Whitney. "I hope this program is available when my kids grow up—I'd want them to go and have an experience as amazing as mine." ■

Visit CooperativeYouthTour.com for applications. Applications are due February 28.



In order for Cherryland to remove old power poles, all cable and telephone wires must be removed as well.

Cherryland Fun Fact

Question: Why did Cherryland put in new power poles but didn't remove the old ones?

Answer: To provide members with reliable service, Cherryland is constantly upgrading outdated infrastructure. Sometimes that means electrical lines need to be transferred from old poles to new ones.

Electrical lines are not the only thing you can find on those poles. Cable and telephone companies often use the same poles to run their lines to their customers.

When new poles are set and the lines are moved, Cherryland lets these companies know that they can move their cable lines to these poles if they like. Once all lines have been removed from the old poles, Cherryland can pull them.

Sounds easy, right? Well, it can take weeks, months, even years for cable and telephone companies to respond. And they may not choose to move their lines at all, leaving one set of poles for electrical lines and another set for cable and telephone lines. ■

Access To Rules & Rates

Please be advised that the following information is available to Cherryland 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 visiting cherrylandelectric.coop or contacting Cherryland Electric Cooperative at 231-486-9200.

Statement of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident. Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English. To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Holiday Fun

Photo Contest Winners

Photos With The Highest Facebook Votes!

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

Winner!



"Baby's First Christmas!" By Mary Lane



"The Johnson Family's Annual Christmas Tree Cutting Party." By Kathleen Johnson



"Merry Christmas!" By Michelle McClelland



"Meowy Christmas!" By Andrea Kissel



Enter Your Photos And Win!

Submit your best photo 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.

Our February theme is **Animals Near Me**. Photos can be submitted from **February 1 to February 20** to be featured in our April issue.

To enter the contest visit facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop and click "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs. If you're not on Facebook, don't worry. You can also enter the contest at cherrylandelectric.coop/photo-contest. Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!

I Remember...

The Wonder Of Michigan Always Brings Us Home.

The eldest of five siblings, I was the only one born in Michigan while my father was in boot camp. We were stationed in Alaska until I was nine and my youngest brother was almost two when my father decided to end his military career and move us all back home to Michigan. Picture two vehicles, a blue and white van and a tiny Isuzu truck, packed to the gills with two adults, five children, snacks in bulk, and a potty training toilet. What a sight we must have been!

It is a credit to both my parents and chocolate animal crackers that I fondly remember the 3,000-mile trek.

The best trips I remember as a child were to Sleeping Bear Dunes, Tahquamenon Falls, the Iron Mountain Iron Mine, Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island, Fort Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City, and hiking on various trails.

In 2009, I moved to Arkansas with my husband, and there we had two children of our own.

In 2015, we could not resist the magnetic pull of the 45th parallel and moved back home to Michigan.

Since then my children have experienced the wonderland that is Michigan and have made memories of their own—their first snow angels, local farms and orchards, and the magic of the Great Lakes.

Home.

Kalico Casady, Great Lakes Energy



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





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cherrylandelectric.coop



Michigan Co-ops Inspire Tomorrow's Leaders Today With **YOUTH TOUR 2017**

An exclusive summer highlight for the best and brightest youth in the state.
June 10–15, 2017

Designed to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, Youth Tour teaches the brightest students of Michigan about their past—and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. This is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors (going into their junior or senior year this summer) and is sponsored by Michigan's electric cooperatives.

Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance students' knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build life-long friendships with other student-leaders from across the country.

Youth Tour applications accepted between now and Feb. 28.

Trip Highlights Include:

- Visit the Gettysburg Civil War battlefields
- See Fort McHenry, birthplace of "The Star Spangled Banner"
- Explore the Washington, D.C., monuments and memorials
- Attend a theater performance at the Kennedy Center
- Explore the museums of the Smithsonian Institution
- Pay respects at Arlington National Cemetery
- Meet with Michigan Senators and Congressmen
- Batter up! Enjoy a Washington Nationals baseball game

Additional information and online application are available at CooperativeYouthTour.com.