

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

March/April 2017

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

A photograph of a smiling couple standing in front of a building with electrical equipment. The woman on the left is wearing a black jacket and a plaid scarf. The man on the right is wearing a black jacket and blue jeans. They are both smiling at the camera. The background shows a building with a blue roof and some electrical equipment on the wall.

## DR. POL

**AMERICA'S FAVORITE TV  
VETERINARIAN & LOCAL LEGEND**

YOU MAY HAVE  
**UNCLAIMED  
MONEY!** SEE  
CAPITAL CREDIT  
INSERT INSIDE

**Tree Clearing Means  
Better Service**

**Save Energy  
And Money**

**PIE&G Special Board  
Meeting Is March 28**





# THERE'S A TREASURE IN YOUR BACKYARD

You may not realize it, but your home is sitting on a **free and renewable** supply of energy. A WaterFurnace geothermal comfort system taps into the stored solar energy in your own backyard to provide **savings up to 70% on heating, cooling and hot water**. That's money in the bank and a smart investment in your family's comfort. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer today to learn how to **tap into your buried treasure**.

## YOUR LOCAL WATERFURNACE DEALERS

**Bad Axe**  
B & D Htg  
(989) 269-5280  
bdheating.com

**Berrien Springs**  
WaterFurnace Michiana  
(269) 473-5667  
gogreenmichgeothermal.com

**Big Rapids**  
Stratz Htg & Clg, Inc.  
(231) 796-3717  
stratzgeocomfort.com

**Caro**  
AllTemp Comfort, Inc.  
(866) 844-HEAT (4328)  
geo4less.com

**Carsonville**  
Certified Temperature  
Innovations  
(810) 300-7748

**Clifford**  
Orton Refrig & Htg  
(989) 761-7691  
sanduskygeothermal.com

**DeWitt**  
S & J Htg & Clg  
(517) 669-3705  
geothermalservicesof  
michigan.com

**Hart/Ludington**  
Adams Htg & Clg  
(231) 873-2665  
adamsheatingcooling.com

**Indian River**  
M & M Plmb & Htg  
(231) 238-7201  
mm-plumbing.com

**Jackson/Adrian**  
Comfort 1 Htg & A/C  
(517) 764-1500  
comfort1.net/geothermal

**Kalkaska**  
Kalkaska Plmb & Htg  
(231) 258-3588  
kalkaskageothermal.net

**Mt Pleasant**  
Walton Htg & Clg  
(989) 772-4822  
waltonheating.com

**Muskegon**  
Adams Htg & Clg  
(231) 873-2665  
adamsheatingcooling.com

Kiessel Geothermal  
Htg & Clg  
(231) 747-7509  
kiesselsgeo.com

**Portland**  
ESI Htg & Clg  
(517) 647-6906  
esiheating.com

**Sunfield**  
Mark Woodman  
Plmb & Htg  
(517) 886-1138  
mwphonline.com

**Traverse City**  
Geofurnace Htg & Clg  
(231) 943-1000  
watergeofurnace.com

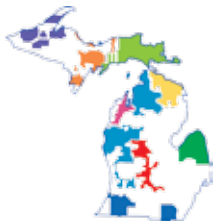
D & W Mechanical  
(231) 941-1215  
dwgeothermal.com

**WaterFurnace.**  
Smarter from the Ground Up™



visit us at **waterfurnace.com**

WaterFurnace is a registered trademark of WaterFurnace International, Inc. ©2017 WaterFurnace International, Inc.



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
[countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)

**March 2017**  
**Vol. 37, No. 3**

*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](mailto:cdorr@meca.coop)  
[countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)



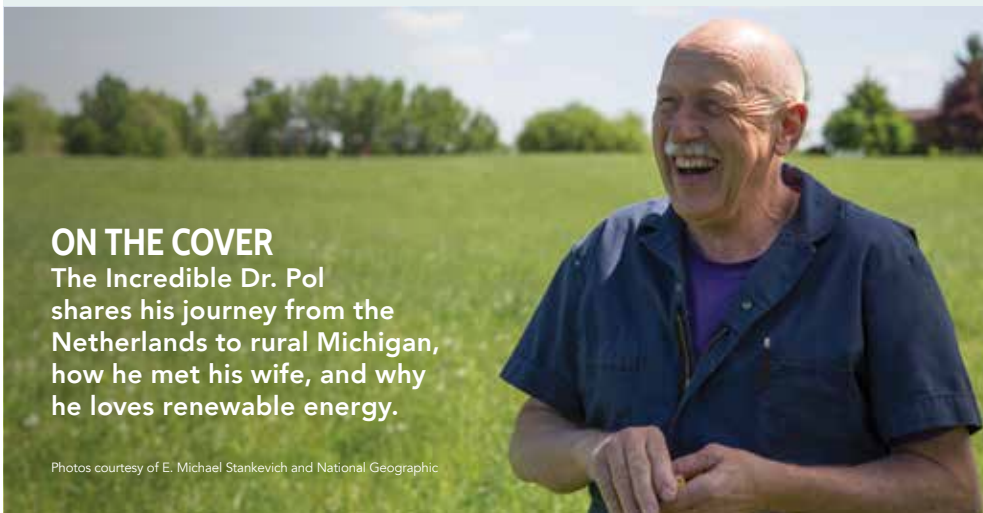
Find us on  
**Facebook**

**Change of Address:**

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

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

# IN THIS ISSUE



## ON THE COVER

The Incredible Dr. Pol shares his journey from the Netherlands to rural Michigan, how he met his wife, and why he loves renewable energy.

Photos courtesy of E. Michael Stankevich and National Geographic

6

## GEOTHERMAL

Geothermal Systems—The Rumors Of Their Demise Are Greatly Exaggerated

*Larry Kaufman*

7

## OUR ENERGY

Michigan Legislature Approves Energy Package

*Craig Borr*

10

## COOKING COMMUNITY

Soups & Stews—Warm Up With These Hearty, Comforting Recipes

*Christin McKamey & Our Readers*

Enter Our Recipe Contest And Win A Bill Credit!

Special Guest Chef Recipe From Dr. Jan And Diane Pol: *Olie Bollen* (Dutch Fritters)

14

## FEATURE

Dr. Pol—America's Favorite TV Veterinarian And Local Legend

*Emily Haines Lloyd*

18

## READER'S PAGE

I Remember—Fond Memories Of Love During The Darkest Times

*Heather Homan, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op Member*

Submit An 'I Remember' Story And Earn \$50!

Guess Our New Mystery Photo And Win A Bill Credit!





## Board Of Directors

### Allan Berg, Vice-Chairman

1117 E. Heythaler Hwy., Rogers City, MI 49779  
989-734-0044 • Term Expires 2017

### Sandy Borowicz, Secretary

5341 Carlson Rd., Cheboygan, MI 49721  
231-627-9220 • Term Expires 2018

### John Brown, Chairman

21 W. Devereaux Lake Rd., Indian River, MI 49749  
231-625-2099 • Term Expires 2017

### Sally Knopf

1849 W. 638 Hwy., Rogers City, MI 49779  
989-734-4196 • Term Expires 2018

### Kurt Krajniak

7630 Wallace Rd., Alpena, MI 49707  
989-884-3037 • Term Expires 2019

### Brentt Lucas

15841 Carr Rd., Posen, MI 49776  
989-379-4694 • Term Expires 2019

### Daryl Peterson, Treasurer

P.O. Box 54, Hillman, MI 49746  
989-742-3145 • Term Expires 2018

### David Smith

P.O. Box 180, Atlanta, MI 49709  
989-785-5345 • Term Expires 2017

### Raymond Wozniak

6737 State St., Posen, MI 49776  
989-766-2498 • Term Expires 2019

### President & CEO: Brian J. Burns

bburns@pieg.com

## Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

19831 M-68 Hwy., P.O. Box 308  
Onaway, 49765

Business Office & Billing: **989-733-8515**

Toll-Free: **800-423-6634**

Gas Emergency Toll-Free: **800-655-8565**

**pieg.com**

Most PIE&G natural gas rates and charges are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

*Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative 

# Why Your Co-op Clears Vegetation

Your co-op leadership team recognizes that reliable electricity is not just a luxury, it's an expectation. That's why your electric co-op considers its prime objective to be providing you with a reliable and safe electric distribution system. However, many members may not be aware that trees can be a major obstacle to good electric service. To improve your service experience, PIE&G has an aggressive, proactive overhead line clearance program that's proven to significantly reduce outage hours related to tree interference with our distribution system.

## What We Do And Why

PIE&G's line clearance standard is to obtain and maintain a ground-to-sky clearance of 15–20 feet, free from all obstructions, on each side of the power line. Where our facilities cross private property, an easement gives us the right to use that property to maintain our right-of-way. An easement can be written and recorded, meaning it is signed and on file at the county Register of Deeds office where the service is located. An easement may also be unwritten or "prescriptive," where the land has been used for utility purposes in a continuous and open manner for the statutory period of 15 years under Michigan law.

PIE&G's line clearing program (also called Vegetation Management), consists of two approaches: mechanical clearing and herbicide application.

## 2017 Mechanical Clearing Plan

Mechanical clearing began in February and the process will continue through December. PIE&G's licensed contractors will trim overgrown trees along 256 miles of overhead lines at various locations throughout our nine county service territory. Members who may be in proximity to areas designated for mechanical clearing will be notified by mail prior to the onset of work in that area. PIE&G will determine if there are trees in your maintained lawn area that should be trimmed or cut. A representative from one of our contracted crews will attempt to contact you in person before the work is started.

## 2017 Herbicide Application

The schedule for herbicide application is set to occur between April and October. PIE&G has hired professional, licensed contractors to treat approximately 328 miles of line throughout its service territory with state-approved herbicide. PIE&G will notify members whose service is near the designated areas by mail prior to the onset of work. Herbicide is not applied to mowed lawn areas. Herbicide effectively controls tall-growing trees and bushes while promoting low-growing plants, such as grasses, wildflowers and shrubs that are beneficial to wildlife. It offers longer-term results in a more cost-effective way, and is

endorsed by a number of environmental, forestry and wildlife providers as offering benefits to many wildlife species.

## Jobsite Cleanup

Our contract crews dispose of trimmed branches and limbs in the most economical and practical manner possible. It is customary during regular line clearing activity that crews will remove branches and limbs within maintained or landscaped areas, and leave the wood for use by the property owner. In unmaintained areas, crews will leave wood, branches and limbs for use by the property owner to decompose naturally. PIE&G does not remove stumps after tree removal. During emergency power restoration activities, crews clear trees off and away from our lines in order to make repairs. PIE&G does not return to remove wood, branches and limbs that were removed during outage restoration efforts.

## Our Commitment To Safety

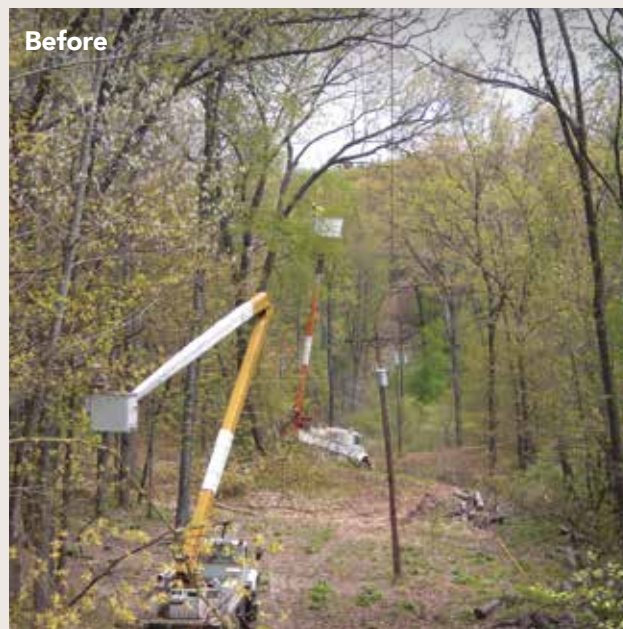
Safety is a top priority for PIE&G. Although Mother Nature provides an amazing setting for our enjoyment of outdoor activities, it's best to keep your activities away from overhead power lines. If you see a downed power line due to a fallen tree or branch, stay away and immediately call PIE&G to report it. Never attempt to remove branches or trim trees that are near power lines to avoid potential electrical contact. Any tree in close proximity to a power line can present a safety hazard.

## Service Line Trimming

PIE&G will trim along the service line running from the transformer to your home when a tree is in contact with the power line. We do not remove trees located near service lines. If you plan to have a tree removed from your property, contact us several days in advance so we can schedule a crew to visit, de-energize and drop the line so you can have the tree safely removed. PIE&G will need at least two days prior notice.

## Plan Ahead

Trees and power lines do not mix, so careful planning is important before you begin any landscape plan or outdoor project. Trees grow quickly so the seedling you plant today may well reach heights exceeding 30–50 feet in a few years. Avoid planting trees beneath overhead utility lines or near your service line. Look around and note what's overhead, on the ground, and underground before beginning any outdoor work project. ■



Before and after shots of a line circuit. A newly cleared right-of-way can look extreme at first, but as the growth returns the landscape regains its natural beauty.



The ground-to-sky approach to line clearance helps to make sure that trees don't form a canopy over the lines.

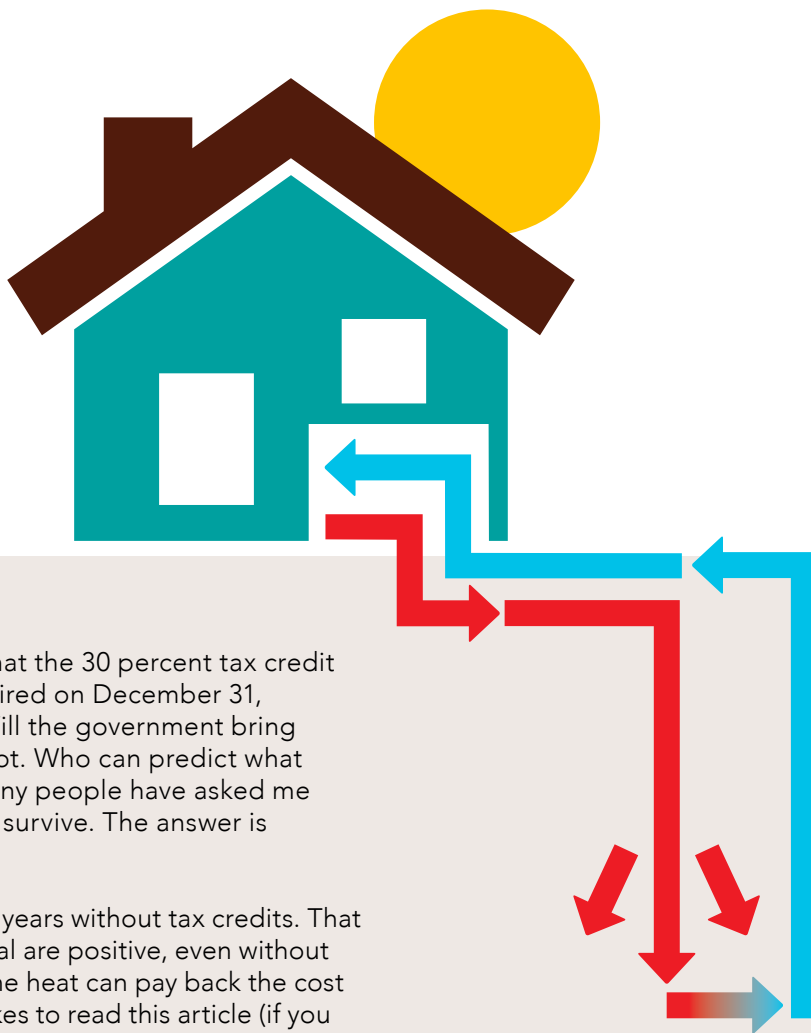
## For More Information

For more information about PIE&G's line clearance procedures, contact our Member Services Department at 800-423-6634.

# Geothermal Systems

The rumors of their demise are greatly exaggerated.

By Larry Kaufman



**M**any of you have heard or read that the 30 percent tax credit for geothermal heat pumps expired on December 31, 2016. That is completely true. Will the government bring the tax credits back? Maybe...maybe not. Who can predict what the government will do? A question many people have asked me is whether the geothermal industry will survive. The answer is absolutely, positively, undeniably, YES!

The geothermal industry survived many years without tax credits. That is because the economics for geothermal are positive, even without the tax credit. Anyone with oil or propane heat can pay back the cost of a geothermal system in the time it takes to read this article (if you are a very slow reader). When coupled with the environmental benefits, comfort benefits, and that there is no outdoor unit—geothermal makes sense.

For 20 years I have had geothermal at my house. People tell me that they won't spend the extra money for geothermal. However, you are going to spend it—either on geothermal or by paying the utility. If you spend it on geothermal, you keep this extra money. Otherwise, you continue to pay this extra money forever. It's your choice.

The Michigan Geothermal Energy Association's annual conference is April 27 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Soaring Eagle Casino in Mt. Pleasant. This is a great place to learn more about geothermal. The fee is \$20 at the door or free if you request a quote on geothermal from any dealer at the conference. ■

*Larry Kaufman is the Executive Director for the Michigan Geothermal Energy Association.*

Visit [earthcomfort.com](http://earthcomfort.com) or [geoexchange.org](http://geoexchange.org) to learn more about geothermal.

# Michigan Legislature Approves Energy Package



**Craig Borr, CEO**  
Michigan Electric  
Cooperative  
Association

After nearly two years of discussion, dialogue, committee hearings and, at times, frustration, the Michigan Legislature passed an energy reform package as their last initiative prior to recess in late December. The two-bill package is 200-plus pages in length and is the first major piece of state energy legislation since 2008.

One of the principal goals of the legislative package was ensuring additional “marketplace certainty” so that additional generating capacity can be constructed in our state. Michigan’s generating capacity, particularly in the Lower Peninsula, has been declining significantly over the past few years due to the many plant retirements necessitated by new, more stringent federal environmental standards.

Thankfully, electric cooperatives in Michigan are in a much better position than many of their neighboring municipal and investor-owned utilities when it comes to generating capacity and the ability to meet member demands during peak load periods. The 430-megawatt Alpine Generating Plant built by Wolverine Power Cooperative near Gaylord last year is a prime example of how Michigan’s electric co-ops are preparing for their members’ future needs. The Alpine plant required an investment of nearly \$200 million and is fueled by natural gas.

What are some of the specifics included in the energy legislation signed by Michigan Governor Rick Snyder in December, and how will they impact you and your electric cooperative?

- **Renewable Energy** – The new energy legislation increases the state’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) from the current 10 percent level to 15 percent in 2021. The majority of Michigan’s electric cooperatives already exceed the 15 percent renewable energy threshold required in 2021 from their extensive use of solar, wind and hydroelectric generating resources located in Michigan. Electric co-ops are Michigan’s renewable energy leaders.
- **Net Metering** – As member regulated utilities, Michigan’s electric cooperatives will continue



to set the parameters of their own net metering programs so that member-consumers can access their electric co-op’s net metering programs without regulatory involvement.

- **Electric Choice** – Like the state’s largest electric utilities, electric cooperatives will continue to offer “choice” to their large commercial and industrial members through Michigan’s electric customer choice program. However, electric choice suppliers will need to prove they have ample supplies of electric capacity to meet the energy requirements of “choice” customers. This is particularly important as much of Michigan’s electric generation fueled by coal continues to dwindle due to age and federal environmental requirements.
- **Energy Optimization** – Electric co-ops will continue to provide their members with energy optimization programs designed to reduce electric usage through LED lighting, installation of energy-efficient appliances and more extensive efficiency programs for commercial, industrial and agricultural members.

Michigan’s electric cooperatives were supportive of the new energy legislation and believe strongly that it will be good for our member-consumers throughout rural Michigan. We are hopeful that this package will result in the construction of new and cleaner forms of electric generation in Michigan, including new natural gas, wind and solar facilities. ■



# Recycle And Save!

Do you have an old refrigerator or chest freezer taking up valuable space in your basement or garage? While you may not think about these appliances often, they could be adding hundreds of dollars onto your utility bill each year.

Declutter your home and save money with our Energy Optimization program. You can earn \$50 for removing and recycling a secondary refrigerator or freezer!\*

## Free appliance pick up made easy:

The Energy Optimization team will pick up and recycle your old refrigerator(s) or freezer(s) for FREE. You can choose to send along an old window air conditioner or dehumidifier for recycling as well. NOTE: All items must be in working condition.

## How to participate:

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

## Cash incentives are available for the following:

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

*\*Limit two appliances per year, per residence.*

## More ways to save!

Are you working on a remodeling project? Your electric utility's Energy Optimization program offers cash incentives for qualifying ENERGY STAR® appliances, including refrigerators, washers and dryers, ceiling fans, room air conditioners, televisions, and more.

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



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

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

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

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

## Shopping for new appliances?

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

**ONLINE:** [michigan-energy.org](http://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](http://michigan-energy.org).



# Your Family Photos



A stroll on a cold, winter day warms the heart as family, visiting from a southern state, enjoys our Michigan winter! *By Kim Galloway*



Family picnic fun. *By Suzanne Aidif*



My son getting ready to take our grandkids for a ride. *By Tom Harrod*



Hanging together—Kensie, Ella and Graycen. *By Suzanne Aidif*



## Photo Fun

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*.

Upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Planes, Trains and Automobiles** due **March 20**—May/June issue and **The Art of Nature** due **May 20**—July/August issue and **Birds and Feathers** due **July 20**—Sept./Oct. issue.

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

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



# SOUPS & STEWS

Warm up with these hearty, comforting recipes.

## Larry's Mushroom Soup

Larry Rospierski, Great Lakes Energy

- 1½ pounds mushrooms (larger ones are easier to clean and slice)
- ¼ cup butter
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 medium sweet onion
- 2 medium cloves garlic, minced
- 3 teaspoons flour
- 1 cup half & half
- 1 quart chicken stock
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon white cooking wine
- pepper, to taste
- 4–5 large leaves fresh basil, shredded or finely cut
- ½ cup chopped scallions or chives (fresh is best)

Begin by wiping clean (do not wash) the mushrooms and slicing thin (⅛" or so). Melt butter in a large stockpot and cook mushrooms covered for about 5 minutes on low heat. While mushrooms are cooking, dice the onions. Add salt to the stockpot and stir. Then reserve about ¼ of the mushrooms on the side. Add the onions and garlic. Cover and cook for another 5 minutes. Add the flour and mix well. Remove the pot from the heat. After the mixture is completed, add the half & half slowly and whisk on low heat. Add the stock slowly, whisking on low heat. Then add the yogurt, whisking on low heat. Add the basil, stirring (not whisking) in well. Then add the wine and stir in. Using an immersion blender (or mixer), combine and chop all ingredients thoroughly. The texture will not be smooth. Add most of the mushrooms that were set aside, saving about 2–3 slices for each serving. Cover and continue cooking slowly, bringing the soup to just below boiling. Serve with two or three of the sliced mushrooms in the middle and pepper to taste. Garnish with scallions or chives.



## Minestrone

Carolyn Davis, Midwest Energy

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 pound stew meat, cubed (can substitute with browned turkey or Italian sausage)
- 7 cups beef broth or beef stock
- 2 (15-ounce) cans tomato sauce
- 1 (14-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- ½ cup onion, chopped
- ½ cup celery, chopped
- 2 tablespoons dried parsley flakes
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon thyme
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups shredded cabbage
- 1 cup zucchini, thinly sliced
- 1 cup carrots, thinly sliced
- 1 (15-ounce) can garbanzo beans, drained
- 1 cup macaroni, uncooked
- 3–4 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese



In a 6–8 quart Dutch oven, melt butter over medium heat. Add stew meat and cook until browned. Stir in broth, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, onion, celery, and seasonings. Bring to a boil then reduce heat to low.

Cover and simmer for 1 to 1¼ hours or until beef is tender, stirring occasionally. Add cabbage, zucchini, carrots, garbanzo beans and macaroni. Return soup to boil. Reduce heat to low. Cover and simmer for 20–25 minutes or until the vegetables are tender, stirring occasionally. Ladle soup into bowls and top with Parmesan cheese. Serve immediately.

## Up North Venison Stew

Deb Finedell, Great Lakes Energy

- 2 pounds venison, cubed
- ¼ cup butter
- 2 cups sliced celery
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 2 tomatoes, cut up
- 3 medium potatoes, cut up
- ¼ teaspoon Italian seasoning
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon white vinegar
- 3 beef bouillon cubes
- 10 ounces spaghetti sauce
- 2 cups water
- 2 tablespoons chopped parsley



Brown venison in butter (Dutch oven or large pot) over medium heat. Add remaining ingredients, mix, cover and simmer on low heat for 2–3 hours. Enjoy hot!

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



- “On The Grill” due April 4
- “Chicken Challenge” due May 4

Go to [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for more information and to register.



## Olie Bollen (Dutch Fritters, pictured above)

Dr. Jan and Diane Pol

This Dutch pastry is similar to a doughnut-style fritter. A reminder from his childhood in the Netherlands, Dr. Pol says that big celebrations, especially on New Year's Eve, were never complete without this delicious treat.

- 1 package active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ¾ cup warm water
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 2 cups milk
- 3 tablespoons light corn syrup
- 1 (1 pound) package raisins
- 4 cups flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 quart vegetable oil for frying

Dissolve yeast and sugar in water; let stand in a warm place for 30 minutes. Combine eggs, milk, corn syrup, raisins, and yeast mixture in a large pot. Sift flour and salt into the mixture and mix well for 2 to 3 minutes. Test a spoonful of dough to see if it will fall in a lump from the spoon. If not, add a little more water or milk. Let rise in warm place for 2 hours. Heat the oil for frying to 350 degrees in a heavy bottomed, deep skillet. Drop by tablespoon into the preheated oil; fry the fritters until golden brown, about 2 minutes per side. Remove them to a paper towel-lined plate and repeat with remaining dough. Dust with sugar while warm.

Read the full story about Dr. Pol, Michigan's TV reality star, on page 14 and visit [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for this recipe and others.



# Thank A Lineworker On April 10

**A**s the “first responders” of the electric co-op family, lineworkers perform around-the-clock in dangerous conditions and challenging situations to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. That’s why electric co-ops have designated a National Lineman Appreciation Day. This year, April 10 is the day we honor the hard-working men and women who keep the lights on.

*Resolutions adopted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) explain it best: “Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas there would be no electric co-ops without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of lineworkers.” Lineworkers everywhere deserve this special day of recognition.*

These highly skilled men and women light our homes and businesses every day. They endure



Randy Kreft, PIE&G foreman and lineman of 40 years as well as the 2016 Employee of the Year.

harsh weather and long hours, all to make our lives better. Today (and every day), please take a moment to thank them. Lineworkers are the heart of the co-op nation, proud and strong.

Use #thankalineman to show your support for the men and women who light our lives. ■

## Notice to Members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

### A special Board Meeting is set for March 28, 9 a.m., at the cooperative’s Onaway office

The board of directors will consider changes to the cooperative’s rates and tariffs at its meeting on March 28, 2017, to be held at 19831 M68 Highway, Onaway, Michigan. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. and is open to all members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op.

The session will begin with an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board of directors. Members are asked to come to the lobby by 8:45 a.m. and request to speak to the board; staff will direct interested members to the meeting room. Time constraints on each member’s comments will be at the discretion of the board chairman, but members are asked to keep comments to less than five minutes.

#### The following items will be discussed:

1. Reconciliation of the 2016 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections;
2. Review and approval of the 2016 Electric Times Interest Earned Ratio (TIER) analysis;
3. Consideration of an Energy Optimization surcharge on Schedule OD-Outdoor Lighting Service;
4. Consideration of potential adjustments to Electric Rates;
5. Consideration of potential adjustments to Aid to Construction Fees;
6. Review and consideration of Renewable Energy Tariffs; and
7. Consideration of revisions to the cooperative’s billing rules.

Notices of changes or additions to the cooperative’s rates or service rules, if any, shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by first class mail or by publication in *Michigan Country Lines* at least 30 days prior to their effective date.

**Participation:** Any interested member may attend and participate. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op at 800-423-6634 one week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be made before the meeting date by calling CEO Brian Burns at 800-423-6634, or by email at [bburns@pieg.com](mailto:bburns@pieg.com).

# Your Board In Action

## At their most recent meetings the PIE&G board of directors:

- Authorized quarterly write-offs for uncollectible debt in the amount of \$19,998.46.
- Reviewed report by CFO Tom Sobeck regarding management of the co-op's long-term debt portfolio pursuant to Board Policy #201 – Debt Portfolio Management.
- Authorized the conversion of \$5.6 million of short-term debt to long-term debt.
- Accepted team reports of CFO Tom Sobeck, Manager of Operations and Engineering Scot Szymoniak, Manager of Information Systems Rick Kieliszewski and CEO Brian Burns.
- Previewed agenda items for and set its next Member Regulation meeting for March 28 at 9 a.m. at the cooperative's Onaway office.
- Adopted a resolution acknowledging Loren Wilcox's 26 years of loyal and dedicated service to Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op and its membership upon his retirement.
- Listened to a special presentation by Manager of Operations and Engineering Scot Szymoniak concerning the co-op's pole testing and line inspection program. ■

## Congratulations To PIE&G Communities First Fund Winners!

To promote and recognize participation in the PIE&G Communities First Fund, all current and newly enrolled members were automatically entered to win one of three prizes. In a random drawing held February 6, 2017, the following lucky members were selected:

- 1st prize—Kyle Kowalewski (HP notebook computer)
- 2nd prize—John Fritzer (Samsung Tablet)
- 3rd prize—Jacqueline Calhoun (\$50 bill credit)

Thank you to everyone who participates in the Fund and for helping to support our local communities. Your small change adds up to make a big difference in northeast Michigan!

## PIE&G Office Closed For Good Friday

PIE&G will be closed on Friday, April 14, in observance of Good Friday. Access your account 24/7 at [pieg.com](http://pieg.com), or download the free SmartHub app for your tablet or smartphone. You may also pay or report readings anytime by calling 1-866-999-4571. Payments by check may be made in the drop box and will be posted on the next open business day.



## YOU'LL BE ATTRACTED TO THE SAVINGS ON EXEDE, TOO!

Speed, dependability and great value are here with Exede internet.

Don't miss out on the high-speed internet service that delivers 140%\* of its advertised speed; so you can shop, connect, stream and share online the way you want!



Call 888-256-8348 for member discount.

**\$10**

**OFF EACH MONTH**

FOR THE FIRST 12 MONTHS

**FREE**

**INSTALLATION AND NO ACTIVATION FEE**

\*FCC, 2013 Measuring Broadband America

Promotional price of \$10 off for 12 months applies to the 10 GB service package through the first 12 months of service. After that, it reverts back to the regular monthly price of \$49.99/month. If you choose a higher-level package, the price of that package will be discounted \$10/month through the first 12 months of service. Service not available in all areas. Minimum 24-month commitment term. Actual speeds will vary. Use of Exede service is subject to data transmission limits measured on a monthly basis. Exede is a service mark of ViaSat, Inc.

# DR. POL

AMERICA'S FAVORITE TV  
VETERINARIAN & LOCAL LEGEND



## Renewable Energy

Dr. Pol, his wife, Diane, and their team care for countless animals, but they also care about renewable energy. The Pols have a long history with renewable energy, installing solar panels on their farm as early as the 1970s.

"I grew up in the Netherlands," said Dr. Pol. "With the windmills all around, renewable energy has always been a part of my life."

The Pols have invested in two additional solar projects, including their most recent which included installing approximately 5,000 square feet of high-efficiency monocrystalline panels to the barn on their property. They worked closely with their local co-op, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, as well as Ecojiva and CNR Electric.

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.

"It's great watching how much energy is being generated, just since October," noted Dr. Pol. "Even on overcast days power gets generated. I'm looking forward to watching the meter this summer!"

By Emily Haines Lloyd

Photos courtesy of E. Michael Stankevich and National Geographic

Don't let his frank demeanor fool you. Dr. Jan Pol, also known as *The Incredible Dr. Pol* on National Geographic's WILD channel, is all heart.

Even his journey from his native country, the Netherlands, to rural Michigan was an act of love. Pol was an exchange student, staying with a family in Mayville, Mich. That's where he met his future wife, Diane. After he returned to the Netherlands, Diane traveled to Europe where they eventually fell in love.

Growing up on a dairy farm in the Netherlands, Dr. Pol's love of animals led him to veterinary school. After graduation, the Pols were married, and Dr. Pol joined a veterinary practice in Harbor Beach, Mich. "It was a great place to start," said Dr. Pol. "But I also knew I wanted to start my own practice one day."

After 10 years in Harbor Beach, the Pols sought out a more centrally-located area to open their practice. They settled on Isabella County, in the





**Check out Dr. Pol's book, *Never Turn Your Back on an Angus Cow*, which is full of amusing and poignant tales from his four decades as a vet in rural Michigan.**

heart of Michigan. It was there that the Pols built their practice and their lives.

The life of a country vet is anything but redundant. Dr. Pol has treated everything from large farm animals to beloved family pets. "I've castrated 16 different species of animals," he jokes with a laugh.

It's these offhanded, hilarious and all-too-true comments that likely landed Dr. Pol his own television show. When his son, Charles, now a producer on the show, pitched the idea to some friends in the television business, he described his father as "a real character."

"I'm just a stubborn Dutch boy," said Dr. Pol. "I go around, do my work, and the camera follows. I think people are looking for reality TV that is real."

People certainly are—*The Incredible Dr. Pol* had more than 1 million viewers for its Season 7 premier, making it National Geographic WILD's most-watched telecast in its network history.

Even with his recognizable face, Dr. Pol still sees himself as the local vet.

"I love what I do. I try to help animals the best I can and make their owners happy," he said. "I'd love to see every kid grow up with animals. Kids who are taught to treat animals well become compassionate adults."

Compassion is the hallmark of Dr. Pol's practice and his life—a life that is full of love, adventure and all things incredible. ●

*The Pols are members of HomeWorks Tri-Country Electric Cooperative.*



# Country Lines, Your Communications Partner



For more than 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. An empowering communication tool, *Country Lines* keeps members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op. Issues contain news about our services, director elections, member meetings and management decisions members need to know about as owners of the co-op. The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members. The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on behalf of each member at an average cost of \$4.01 per year, paid as part of members' electric bill. The current magazine cost is 49 cents per copy. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association in Lansing. As always, we welcome and value your comments.

## 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, audiotape, 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](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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

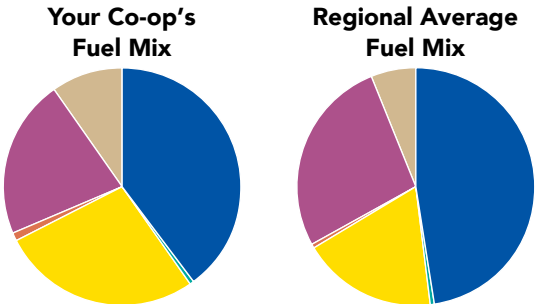
## Fuel Mix Report

The fuel mix characteristics of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ending 12/31/16.

### COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	39.8%	47.7%
Oil	0.5%	0.6%
Gas	27.2%	18.1%
Hydroelectric	1.3%	0.8%
Nuclear	21.5%	26.7%
Renewable Fuels	9.7%	6.1%
Biofuel	0.6%	0.8%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.1%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1%	0.1%
Wind	8.1%	4.1%
Wood	0.4%	0.5%

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas; and wind includes a long-term renewable purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix, but does not include banked renewable energy credits (RECs) that bring the total for renewable fuels to 10%. The 2016 Fuel Mix numbers reflected here do not reflect current and ongoing renewable percentages of fuel mix.



### EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	5.4	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,578	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.5	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0068	0.0083

\*Regional average information was obtained from the MPSC website and is for the 12-month period ending 12/31/2016.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Cooperative, which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

**STATE OF MICHIGAN**  
**BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION NOTICE OF HEARING**  
**FOR THE GAS CUSTOMERS OF PRESQUE ISLE ELECTRIC & GAS CO-OP**  
**CASE NO. U-18156**

---

- Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op requests that the Michigan Public Service Commission approve a gas cost recovery plan and factors for the 12-month period of April 2017 through March 2018.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this.
- You may call or write Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, 19831 M-68 Highway, P.O. Box 308, Onaway, Michigan 49765, (800) 423-6634, for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the office of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op.
- A public hearing will be held:

**DATE/TIME:** Thursday, March 23, 2017, at 9:00 a.m.

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

**BEFORE:** Administrative Law Judge Dennis Mack

**LOCATION:** Michigan Public Service Commission, 7109 West Saginaw Highway, Lansing, Michigan

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

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op's (Presque Isle) December 28, 2016, application for Commission approval of: 1) a gas cost recovery (GCR) plan and gas cost recovery factor of \$0.4795 per CCF for the period of April 1, 2017, through March 31, 2018; 2) determine that the decisions underlying the three-year forecast are reasonable and prudent, and indicate any cost items in the three-year forecast that would be unlikely to permit Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op to recover from its customers in rates, rate schedules, or gas cost recovery factors established in the future; and 3) other relief.

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

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the cases shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by March 16, 2017. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op's attorney, Jason T. Hanselman, Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

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

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules R 792.10422 and R 792.10432. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

A copy of the Presque Isle's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: [michigan.gov/mpscdockets](http://michigan.gov/mpscdockets), and at the office of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

Jurisdiction is pursuant to 1909 PA 300, as amended, MCL 462.2 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6h et seq.; and the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules, 2015 AC, R 792.10401 et seq.

February 1, 2017



# I Remember...

Thinking back to my fondest Michigan memories, some of them came during the darkest days of my life.

I am not only a member of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, but also an employee for the past 25 years. To me, it is much more than just a place to work; it is like family. We sometimes disagree and squabble—just like family. We tend to get on each other's nerves—just like family. And then we come together when a brother or sister is in need—much like family. When tragedy strikes, we come together in many ways. Whether it be in one another's offices to talk, at a funeral, or as a group meeting with counselors on hand.

I felt like part of the PIE&G family in 2000 when I lost my 2 ½-year-old son, Jordan, suddenly after a very short illness. My co-op family rallied together for my family. They literally delivered a truck load of food to my house. I only remember the pan of chocolate covered cookie bars that I hid in my walk-in closet under a stack of clothes. (Yes, I ate the entire pan of cookies myself.) At the funeral, bucket trucks lined up in front of the church. It was a breathtaking sight for my family. They still talk about it today. As a result of my son's death, I heard positive stories of marriages reconciling, family feuds being settled, and an attitude among many friends and family that life is just too short to not live in harmony with others.

When I returned to work, my PIE&G family was there for me and ready to listen at any moment I needed. And, exactly one year later, my family was able to meet a very sweet little girl that received my son's liver. These were truly some of my fondest memories.

*Heather Homan*  
*Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op*

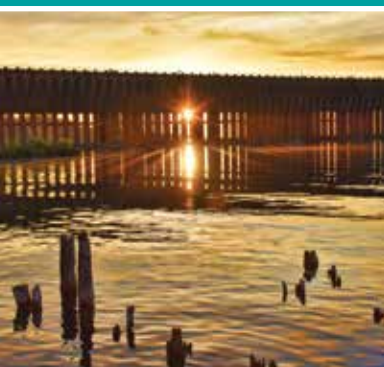


*We invite members to share their fondest memories.*

**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](http://countrylines.com)



## «« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by April 10 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at [countrylines.com](http://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 January 2017 issue is James Pelkey, a Thumb Electric member who correctly identified the photo as the Emergency Ark (Boat Barn) near Caseville on Oak Beach Road.

Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



**Jan. Photo**



FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH

# American Metal Roofs

**SAVE  
\$125.00  
PER SQUARE**

on Designer Metal Shingles, Standing Seam Metal  
Roofs, Pole Barn Roofs, and Agricultural Roofs!

**FINANCING IS AVAILABLE!**

**Call Today!** 844.638.2576  
**844.METAL.ROOFS**

**Flexible On Your Installation Date?  
You Can Save An Additional**

**\$1,000  
OFF Your Order!**

**GOT  
ICE DAMS?**  
We Can Help!  
**De-Icing Systems**  
Now Available



**HEATED  
ICEDAMCUTTER**



**HEATED  
SHINGLE**



**Ice Removal  
Service**

Can Be Installed On Asphalt Or Metal Roofs • Do-It-Yourself or Let Us Install It For You!

**Ask About Ice Removal Service!**

View Our Online  
Photo Gallery at

**AmericanMetalRoofs.com**

**VISIT OUR SHOWROOMS:**

FLINT - 6140 Taylor Drive • CHARLOTTE - 1875 Lansing Road







# THANK YOU

Let's honor the heroes  
that keep the lights on  
**365** days a year.

We celebrate the  
hard work, innovation  
and dedication of  
electrical lineworkers.

**April 10** is  
National Lineman  
Appreciation Day

**#thankalinenman**

