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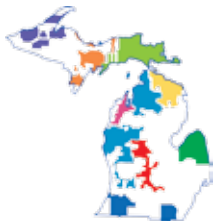
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Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Copy Editor
Heidi Spencer

Design and Layout
Karreen Bird

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CONTACT US/LETTERS TO EDITOR:

Michigan Country Lines
201 Townsend St., Suite 900
Lansing, MI 48933
248-534-7358
cdorr@meca.coop
countrylines.com

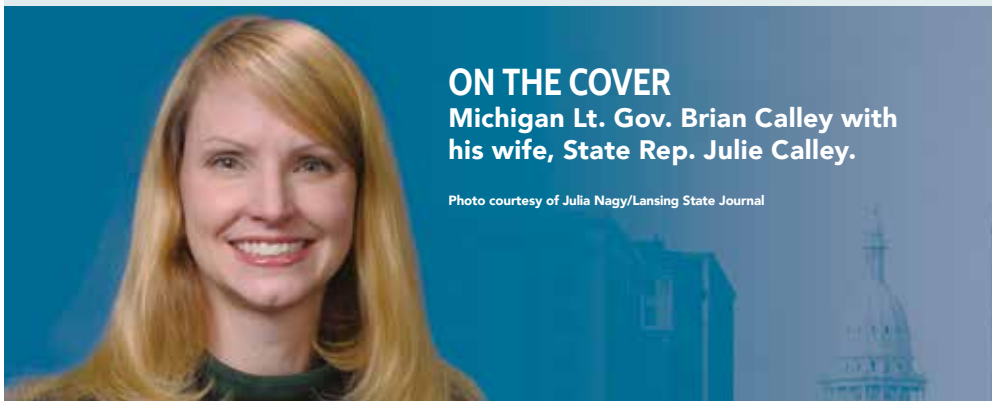
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IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE COVER
Michigan Lt. Gov. Brian Calley with his wife, State Rep. Julie Calley.

Photo courtesy of Julia Nagy/Lansing State Journal

6 OUR ENERGY
Choosing The Right Air Conditioner For Your Home

7 SAFETY
Always Call MISS DIG Before You Dig
Thunderstorm Safety Tips

10 COOKING COMMUNITY
Sweet And Savory Breakfast And Brunch Recipes
Christin McKamey & Our Readers
Enter Our Recipe Contest And Win A Bill Credit!
Special Guest Chef Recipe From Rep. Julie Calley

14 FEATURE
Small Town To Capital City: Rural Michigan's Political Couple
Emily Haines Lloyd

18 READER'S PAGE
Disability 101: A Lesson In Respect
Jack O'Malley
Guess Our New Mystery Photo And Win A \$50 Bill Credit!

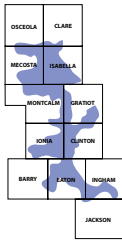
I Remember...

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



Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Blanchard office:

3681 Costabella Avenue
Blanchard MI 49310
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday

Portland office:

7973 E. Grand River Avenue
Portland, MI 48875
Open 8 a.m.–5 p.m. Monday–Friday

Electric bill/account questions:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-562-8232

Pay by phone, anytime:

1-877-999-3395

Service questions/outages:

517-647-7554 or 1-800-848-9333
(24 hours for emergency calls)

Tri-County Propane:

1-877-574-2740

High Speed Internet

1-800-668-8413

homeworks.org

E-mail: tricoenergy@homeworks.org

Board of Directors

District 1 — John Lord

2276 Plains Rd., Leslie, MI 49251
517-974-2518
jlord@homeworks.org

District 2 — Jim Stebbins

7139 Peddler Lake Rd., Clarksville, MI 48815
616-693-2449
jstebbins@homeworks.org

District 3 — Luke Pohl

Chairman
15560 W. Hanses Rd., Westphalia, MI 48894
989-292-0427
lpohl@homeworks.org

District 4 — Kimber Hansen

Secretary-Treasurer
6535 N. Wyman Rd., Edmore, MI 48829
989-506-5849
khansen@homeworks.org

District 5 — Corinna Batora

Vice-Chairman
7655 N. Watson Rd., Elsie, MI 48831
989-862-3004
cbatora@homeworks.org

District 6 — Ed Oplinger

10890 W. Weidman Road, Weidman, MI 48893
989-644-3079
eoplinger@homeworks.org

District 7 — Shirley Sprague

15563 45th Ave., Barryton, MI 49305
989-382-7535
ssprague@homeworks.org

Editor: Jayne Graham, CCC



Find us on Facebook.
facebook.com/HomeWorks.org

It's What We Do Every Day



Mark Kappler
General Manager

The wind that blew March 8 and 9 damaged a lot of electric lines across Michigan's lower peninsula.

About 3,500 HomeWorks Tri-County members were out of power during the worst of it; our line crews were assisted by crews from Wolverine Power Cooperative and the City of Portland, along with tree clearing crews from Asplundh and Wright Tree Company.

Working together, we restored power to all but a few members by Thursday night. Meanwhile, we were watching as the outage numbers in other parts of the state continued to rise. This was a historic storm, causing incredible damage to electric systems and nearly a million power outages, all told.

We were asked how we were able to restore power to nearly all of our members by Thursday night. The answer was simple, "It's what we do every day."

No, we don't deal with major storms every day. But we do work every day to build, maintain and upgrade our electric system so that it is reliable and efficient, to give you the most value for your energy dollar.

It's not just our line crews, either.

- We use every bit of engineering technology at our fingertips to forecast where those upgrades and rebuilds are needed.
- We work with our vendors to make sure we're getting the quality materials we need when we need them.
- We regularly review our dispatch procedures to make sure crews are tracked for safety and deployed where they can do the most good.
- We look at ways to communicate better, from getting up-to-date information to the customer service reps who answer your phone calls, to posting and responding regularly on Facebook and at homeworks.org.

It's what we do every day. That's what makes the difference when the wind blows. ■

Please watch your mailbox for an invitation to the District Membership Meetings, which start May 15. A full schedule is printed on the back cover, or you can check homeworks.org and Facebook for updates.

We'll bring the co-op to your neighborhood, serving a light Michigan-made supper at 5:30 p.m. followed by a short business meeting. Following a co-op update, we'll draw for prizes.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Watch Your May Bill For Capital Credit Allocation And Refund

By Lesa Barker

Did you know that as a member-owner of HomeWorks Tri-County you benefit from the third cooperative principle: Member Economic Participation? You do! And what does this mean to you? This means that you can expect to see a capital credit refund on your April or May bill.

The board of directors authorized an allocation and retirement of capital credits after the annual audit report was presented at the March board meeting. Because we operate on a nonprofit basis, the cooperative's 2016 margins of \$596,966 will be allocated back to you based on your purchase of energy during the year. Since we are a member-owner of Wolverine Power Cooperative, a share of their 2016 margins will be allocated back to you in the same way.

These allocations are *not* cash, and are best described as a representation of your share in the company you are part owner in. And because you are an owner of the cooperative, if we are profitable, your share of the margins are returned to you and your neighbors. The amount that is allocated to you will be printed on your late April/early May energy bill. Your bill will also show a total unretired capital credit amount; again, this is not a *cash* value but rather an amount that will be retired at a future date determined by the board of directors.

Retiring Capital Credits

Retiring capital credits is a way of making sure each generation of members provides its own equity. The board's philosophy is to retire capital credits on a 25-year rotation. Most of the retirement is from the oldest capital credits on file, with a small percentage from the most recent years. We believe that this gives our newer members a chance to see a refund, and experience one of the most essential parts of the cooperative principles.

This year's general retirement totals \$2,960,000, of which \$721,000 retires capital credits allocated by Tri-County Electric for years 1991 and 2016, and \$200,000 retires a dividend paid to the cooperative in 2016 by Tri-Co Services, Inc. Another \$2,039,000 retires Wolverine capital credits for 1998, 1999, and 2016. Your retirement will be paid as a credit applied to your late April/early May energy bill.

The board also set aside funds for retiring capital credits to members' estates, when requested. These retirements include both Tri-County Electric and Wolverine Power capital credits.

For a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) on capital credits visit homeworks.org. You can also call us at 800-562-8232 during regular business hours if you have specific questions regarding your account. ■

Remember, it's important to keep your contact information updated. Even after you move away and stop receiving our electric service, you may still receive capital credits.

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$13.8 billion to members since 1988 — \$1 billion in 2015 alone. Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.



\$1 billion
in 2015

\$13.8 billion
since 1988

Source: National Rural Utilities
Cooperative Finance Corporation



Choosing The Right Air Conditioner For Your Home

Do you have a central air conditioner (AC) in your home that is at least 15 years old that still works but is not very efficient? Replacing an inefficient air conditioner with a more efficient model could reduce your electric bill. A new AC unit is 20 to 40 percent more efficient than one from the 1990s—and ENERGY STAR®-certified systems are even more efficient.

How much money you save by replacing your current AC unit depends on how often your AC runs and your electric rate. The best way to determine possible savings is to have an in-home assessment conducted by a qualified heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) professional or a certified energy auditor. Electric co-ops are often interested in reducing peak summer loads and sometimes offer information, rebates or a list of qualified professionals.

Your contractor needs to size the system to your home. A unit that is too small will not cool your home to the levels you want. If it is too large, it may not dehumidify your home sufficiently, and it will cycle on and off more frequently, which can increase wear and tear on the system and shorten its life significantly. To size the system, the contractor will look at the efficiency of the home by checking insulation levels. If you add insulation where it's most needed, you may be able to install a smaller AC unit and enjoy greater comfort and lower cooling costs. The contractor should also assess your ductwork, which is often poorly designed, leaky or inadequately insulated.

It's good to know there are several air conditioning options suited to different situations. It may or may not be practical to change to a different type of system.

Central air conditioning is one of two types: either split or packaged. A split system, which has the cold coils inside the home and an outside unit exhausting heat, is the most common. Packaged systems, which are sometimes installed because of space constraints, combine these functions into one box located outside the home.

A heat pump can provide cooling and heating in homes with or without ducts. If you are currently using propane or natural gas as your fuel source, this may be a good option.

A ductless mini-split heat pump can be an efficient way to cool up to four zones inside the home. If your existing ductwork is in bad shape or poorly designed, this could be a good solution.

Window units are much less efficient than other options, but they can still be effective for cooling a single room. It's worth paying a little more for a new ENERGY STAR-compliant unit, rather than the dusty \$80 unit from the yard sale.

Evaporative (or "swamp") coolers are an alternative in very dry climates. While they use a quarter of the energy and are less expensive to install than central air conditioning, they also require more frequent maintenance. ■

Replacing an aging air conditioner is a great way to improve comfort, cut energy costs and reduce peak energy demand.

Thunderstorm Safety Tips

When thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
 - Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
 - If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
 - If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
 - Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
 - Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
 - Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
 - If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground, water, tall and isolated trees, as well as metal objects such as fences and bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are also NOT safe. ■



ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

For your safety and for the protection of underground utility lines, always follow these steps before starting any digging project.

1. Contact MISS DIG at 811 or missdig.org
2. Wait three business days for utility owners to mark their lines
3. Respect the marks
4. Dig with care



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**
visit missdig.org for more information

Is Your Central A/C Ready To Take The Heat?

Along with all the wonderful things summer brings comes the costly effort of keeping your home cool and comfortable. If your central A/C is due for an upgrade, or if a tune-up is enough to keep it running efficiently, the Energy Optimization program is here to help! We provide cash incentives to help make energy-saving improvements more affordable.

New Central A/C: If your central A/C system is more than 20 years old, it's time to upgrade! Install a new ENERGY STAR® central A/C and save up to 20 percent in cooling costs annually. Or, opt for a central air-source heat pump or mini/multi-split air-source heat pump system to save even more. **Energy Optimization program cash incentive: \$150–500.**

A/C Tune-up: Ensure your central A/C runs as efficiently as possible by scheduling a tune-up. A tune-up can help reduce energy usage,

prevent costly breakdowns, and will allow you and your family to enjoy cleaner, healthier indoor air. **Energy Optimization program cash incentive: \$50. ■**

COMBO CASH INCENTIVES NOW AVAILABLE! Save even more when you purchase a combination of qualifying energy-saving equipment:

Cash Incentive	Equipment	Bonus Incentive	Maximum Total Incentive
HVAC Combo Bonus	New qualifying ECM blower motor AND new central A/C unit, air-source heat pump, or ground-source heat pump system at the same time.	\$100	\$800
Smart HVAC Combo Bonus	New qualifying ECM blower motor AND new central A/C unit, air-source heat pump, or ground-source heat pump system AND a WiFi-enabled or smart thermostat at the same time.	\$150	\$950

Visit michigan-energy.org or call 877.296.4319 for additional energy-saving information and rebates.

Cool off and save energy this summer!

Beat the heat without breaking the bank! Upgrade to a high-efficiency cooling system or tune up your existing system to save energy and money. Receive cash back from the Energy Optimization program for:

- New central A/C (\$150–\$500)
- Central or mini/multi-split air-source heat pump (\$150–\$500)
- Central A/C tune-up (\$50)

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org PHONE: 877.296.4319

Jump In



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.

SnapSHOT

Planes, Trains & Automobiles



Jody Strang of Vermontville says, "We had a beautiful day at the Air Show in Battle Creek and the USAF Thunderbirds were the star of the show. They always give me goosebumps!"



Sue Mills from DeWitt shared a Snap Shot of the Polar Express near Elsie, taken in December 2015. She notes, "Four deer just made it across."



Jerry Schlorff of Shepherd took this Snap Shot just south of Mt. Pleasant, "As the Pere Marquette 1225 was headed back to Owosso after a tour to the Cadillac area I thought it made a unique background for my 1929 Model A Ford."



Kevin Smith of Saint Johns sent in a different view. "My daughter and I were on a flight home from Florida recently, and I captured this fading sunset."



Carrie Frick of Six Lakes was on her way to a fog-covered Mackinac Island when she snapped this photo. "You can see the airport, though!"

Upcoming Snap Shot Contest Topics And Deadlines

"The Art of Nature," Deadline: **May 15** (July-August issue)

"Birds and Feathers," Deadline: **July 17** (September issue)

"Life's a Beach (Michigan Waters)," Deadline: **August 15** (October issue)

Go to homeworks.org and select *Country Lines* under the Electric tab to submit your photos and see additional themes. It's fast and easy. To send by mail: include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, and details about your photo. Mail to Attn: *Country Lines* Snap Shots, 7973 E. Grand River, Portland, MI 48875. Photos will not be returned. Do not send color laser prints or professional studio photos.

Submit Your Photo!

Contributors whose photos we publish in 2017 will be entered into a drawing and *Country Lines* will choose two winners for a bill credit of \$100 each on their December electric bill, due in January 2018!

BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH

These sweet and savory breakfast or brunch ideas are sure to please.

Orange Cranberry-Carrot Muffins

Luise Bolleber, Cherryland

- 1/3 cup butter, melted
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- Juice and zest from 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 2 cups finely shredded carrots
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, coarsely chopped

Heat oven to 350 F and place paper cups in a muffin tin. Whisk sugar and butter together in a medium bowl until blended. Beat in eggs, orange juice and vanilla. Combine the flour, orange zest (peel), baking soda, baking powder and salt in a separate bowl. Add to creamed mixture just until combined. Fold in carrots and cranberries. Fill muffin cups three-fourths full. Bake 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

▶ Watch a video on this recipe at <https://goo.gl/HN697I>

Photos—831 Creative





Peggy's Stolen Stuffed French Toast

Jessica Waite, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

- 1 loaf Italian bread
- 1 stick butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 8 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup maple syrup

Preheat oven to 375 F. Tear half of bread loaf into ¼" cubes and place in bottom of 13×9 greased pan. Cube cream cheese and place evenly throughout. Top with the remaining loaf in ¼" cubes. In a separate bowl combine remaining ingredients. Pour over bread mixture. Pat down with a spatula, so bread is soaked. Cover with tinfoil and let sit overnight. Bake for 45 minutes covered. Serve immediately with extra maple syrup.



All-In-One Breakfast Bake

Mary Ellen Seguin-Adomat,
Cherryland Electric Cooperative

- 1 pound plain pork sausage
- 6 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 6 slices bread, torn into pieces
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms

Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter a 13×9 glass baking dish. Brown sausage and drain on paper towels; set aside. In a large bowl, beat eggs, then add milk and beat again. Stir in remaining ingredients, including sausage. Pour into baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes. This can be prepared the night before and refrigerated; pop it in the oven in the morning.



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

• "All About Apples" due July 5

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

Raspberry Pie (pictured above)

Rep. Julie Calley

If you're as busy as Rep. Julie Calley, you'll appreciate this simple, but scrumptious, pie recipe that's a favorite in the Calley home.

- 1 pie crust, store bought or homemade
- 1 3.4-ounce package vanilla instant pudding
- 2 cups milk
- 3 ounces cream cheese
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 3-ounce package raspberry Jell-O
- 1 cup boiling water
- 9 ounces fresh raspberries
- ¼ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Prepare and bake pie shell for open face pie. Let the pie shell cool. Combine pudding, milk, cream cheese and almond extract. Beat for 2 minutes. Pour into pie shell and chill until firm. Mix Jell-O with boiling water and chill until partially set. Gently stir in the raspberries and nuts. Pour over vanilla filling and chill until set.

Read the full story about the Calleys on page 14 and visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and others.

Your Board In Action

Meeting at Portland on March 27, your board of directors:

- Reviewed and approved the 2016 audit reports with Derek Flanagan, CPA, from independent auditor Eide Bailly.
- Approved allocating 2016 margins of \$596,966 from Tri-County Electric Cooperative and \$1,496,500 from Wolverine Power Cooperative, along with the \$200,000 dividend paid by Tri-Co Services, to members based on their patronage during the year.
- Authorized making a general retirement in 2017 of \$2,960,000 in capital credits, including \$721,000 from Tri-County Electric Cooperative and \$2,039,000 from Wolverine Power Cooperative, along with the \$200,000 dividend paid by Tri-Co Services.
- Further authorized setting aside up to an additional \$200,000 of the Wolverine and Tri-County capital credits to retire to estates.
- Review plans for the 2017 District Membership meetings in May.

- Reviewed and approved as read Board Policy 402 – Allocation of Non-Operating Income and Board Policy 403 – Long Range Financial Management Plan, tabling Board Policy 404 – Retirement of Capital Credits for further review.
- Learned there were 74 new members in February.
- Acknowledged the January and February safety reports, listing employee training, and employee and public incidents.

Time Set Aside For Members To Comment Before Cooperative Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. The next meetings are scheduled for 9 a.m. on May 22 and June 26 at Portland. Members who need directions to the meeting, or wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

People Fund Supports Families, Fire Department

You helped supply a fire department with turnout gear, provided beach equipment for handicapped users, and supported many families through pantries and assistance programs, through grants made by the Tri-County Electric People Fund.

Meeting March 9, the People Fund Board made 14 grants totaling \$16,746.20, including:

- \$1,000 to the Montabella Ministerial Association, Edmore, to purchase food and personal care items;
- \$1,000 to Friends of Isabella Seniors, Mt. Pleasant, for their utility assistance program;
- \$2,500 to Clare County Baby Pantry, Harrison, to purchase diapers for the pantry to distribute;
- \$2,227 to the Chippewa-Martiny Fire Department at Chippewa Lakes, to purchase fire turnout gear;
- \$150 to Artworks in Big Rapids, to purchase art supplies for a children's program;
- \$2,000 to Isabella County Parks & Recreation, Mt. Pleasant, to purchase handicap beach equipment;
- \$558 to Gratiot Isabella RESD, Ithaca, to provide totes for an early childhood conference;
- \$420 to a Montcalm County family to help with medical bills;
- \$460 to a Montcalm County family to pay housing expenses;
- \$1,500 to a Montcalm County family to assist with housing expenses;
- \$1,500 to a Mecosta County family to pay medical bills and housing expenses;

- \$968.50 to an Isabella County family to help pay medical bills;
- \$710.24 to an Isabella County family to help with housing expenses; and
- \$1,806.46 to a Clinton County family, to pay property taxes.

The Tri-County Electric People Fund provides grants to individuals and organizations in the co-op's service area for food, shelter, clothing, health, and other humane needs, or for programs or services that benefit a significant segment of a community.

It is funded through Operation Round Up, with members of HomeWorks voluntarily rounding their monthly energy bill to the next dollar; the spare change, averaging 50 cents a month, is donated to the People Fund. Donations are tax-deductible.

To start rounding up your bills, or to stop if you no longer wish to participate, please call 1-800-562-8232.

How to Apply for a Grant

Write to 7973 E. Grand River Avenue, Portland, MI. 48875, for an application form and grant guidelines, or visit the People Fund tab at homeworks.org.

Applications must be received by May 22 for the May board meeting and by July 3 for the July board meeting.

Charlotte Teen Enjoys 4-H Renewable Energy Camp

Jonah Wojnar is a senior at Charlotte High School, and a veteran of the Michigan 4-H Renewable Energy Camp, which he first attended in 2014. He is a member of We-R-A 4-H club, working with small animals including dogs, chickens, and goats, gardening, and even crochet.

Although the timing of the camp sometimes conflicts with the Eaton County Fair, Jonah returned to the Energy Camp last year as a teen facilitator, helping to build the curriculum and leading programs, and will do the same in 2017.

"I particularly enjoy the field trips, seeing real-world applications of renewable energy," Jonah explains. One of his favorite memories is from 2014, when the teens visited an off-grid "tiny house" on wheels. "It had a small wind turbine and its own solar panels."

"The 4-H Renewable Energy Camp was an amazing experience, and it really means a lot to be able to continue participating in the camp."

Among other sites, campers tour the Carbon Green ethanol plant at Woodbury, then stop off at HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Portland to get a close look at our Community Solar Garden and more. Jonah was interested to learn more about geothermal technology at HomeWorks, when energy advisor Brandon Trierweiler discussed the various systems used for geothermal loops.

Jonah says the 4-H Renewable Energy Camp is a good fit for students like him; as he says, "I'm really into science. When I was three years, I started messing around with electronics." And renewable energy is important to him, too. "The energy crisis really is a big deal, and I want to make a difference."



Jonah Wojnar with his show chicken, Salt. (courtesy photo)

Jonah has been accepted by Western Michigan University and its Honors College to study electrical engineering this fall, and he hopes to continue with his music—he plays the clarinet and tenor saxophone.

"The 4-H Renewable Energy Camp was an amazing experience, and it really means a lot to be able to continue participating in the camp," Jonah says. ■

All students, aged 13–19, who are interested in the July 24-28 renewable energy camp can learn more or apply by May 19 at http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/4_h_renewable_energy_camp.

— small town to — CAPITAL CITY

Rural Michigan's Political Couple

By Emily Haines Lloyd



Rep. Julie Calley with her husband, Lt. Gov. Brian Calley and children Collin, Reagan and Karagan.

Down a country road in Ionia County, not too far from where she grew up on a sesquicentennial farm, Julie Calley lives a fairly normal life. Julie is a wife, mother of three and devoted public servant. Of course, she's also married to the lieutenant governor of Michigan, Brian Calley, but her career takes her to Lansing as the representative for the 87th District in the state's House of Representatives.

The pair are a rare commodity in Lansing, with Brian serving his final two years as the lieutenant governor of Michigan while Julie began a two-year term in January. She now holds the seat that her great-grandfather Herbert Powell, grandfather Stanley Powell and her husband have all held. Both Calleys also have served as Ionia County commissioners.

One wouldn't think of small-town Portland as a hub of Michigan politics, but for Representative Julie Calley, it's sort of the family business.

"My family has a legacy of public service," said Calley. "My mother has served at the township level for almost as long as I've been alive. She just retired last



“It boils down to making government work better for the average citizen. Politics can overcomplicate things. It has to center back on the community we’re serving—a person-centered approach.”

year as a township trustee. My grandfather and great-grandfather both served in the state legislature, so public service is definitely in my blood.”

Julie notes that one doesn’t need to have a long heritage of politics in the family in order to serve. “There are usually a number of local boards which need more interest and participation. There are numerous empty roles on the county level that sometimes have only one candidate or sometimes not even one. There is a definite need for public servants.”

It may have been that desire to serve that drew Julie and Brian together. High school sweethearts, the Calleys married as she was finishing a degree at Northwood University and Brian at Michigan State University.

After college, the Calleys moved back to Ionia County. Julie had worked in commercial real estate while her husband made his mark in the state political scene, but Julie always stayed involved in local politics. Calley was chairwoman of the Ionia County Board of Commissioners and chairperson of the Michigan Community Service Commission. She also served two terms on the Republican State

Committee. Now, as Julie is still in the early part of her two-year term in the Michigan House of Representatives, she is taking her local experience to the state level.

“It boils down to making government work better for the average citizen. Politics can overcomplicate things. It has to center back on the community we’re serving—a person-centered approach.”

Julie’s experience living in a rural setting has actually driven her work approach. While she notes that the jump from roughly 9,000 constituents to approximately 90,000 constituents is daunting, she is utilizing the same relationship-building skills she used on the local level in her new role. Her experience in small-town Michigan is an inspiration as she moves forward, building relationships in the state’s House of Representatives.

“Those who choose to live in the country tend to have a certain independence and yet reliance on one another,” Julie concluded. “So when a problem arises, it’s typical for neighbors to band together and take care of one another. Identifying a need and taking care of it—I wish we could see more of that.” ■

Five Members Seek Two Seats On Your Board Of Directors

DISTRICT 2



Edith Farrell
Lake Odessa

Edith Farrell is vice president, IT and BSA officer for Union Bank in Lake Odessa. Her family includes her husband, Chuck, and adult children Nathan, Lindsay, and Adam.

A member of HomeWorks since 1997, she holds a Bachelor of Business administration degree from Northwood University and is a graduate of the Perry School of Banking at Central Michigan University. She has worked for Union Bank for 28 years in various roles.

She has been president of the Lakewood Area Chamber of Commerce for the past six years, after serving as treasurer for three years. She is very involved in all chamber activities as well as other community events in Lake Odessa, Ionia, and Hastings. Farrell is also a member of the Ionia County Broadband Committee, which coordinates the efforts of the Ionia County Economic Alliance and Connect Michigan to improve broadband internet access in Ionia County.

"The combination of my business background and extensive community service positions me to serve both the members of my district and the board of directors of HomeWorks. I enjoy working with others and exploring ways to meet their challenges while making sound business decisions. I would be committed to the long-term success of our co-op, as well as the best interests of my district."



Larry Lewis
Portland

Larry Lewis J.D. is an attorney and adjunct professor; he retired from the Michigan State Police with the rank of Lieutenant after 25 years of service. He has been married to Glenda for 38 years and has a son, Andrew.

A member of HomeWorks since 1989, he holds a Bachelor of Science in Sociology, a Masters in Public Administration, and a Juris Doctorate. Lewis is a former Jaycee, served as a substitute teacher for the Ionia County Public Schools, coached youth sports in Portland and Ionia, and is a graduate of the Barry County Leadership Program.

"I believe my background would be an asset to this position. I have been an attorney for over 13 years, dealing with criminal and civil issues. My legal background includes administrative law, which concerns regulated industries. With the Michigan State Police, I worked with regulated industries for nine years regarding hazardous materials such as gasoline, oil, propane, and fireworks. I have supervised the construction and inspections of health care and correctional facilities, and for five years supervised fire investigators for the Michigan State Police. I am also a former business owner in Portland."

Lewis adds his goals are to work to continue a safe environment for both employees and members, while trying to hold down costs for the members. Further, he wants to look for new ways to return profits achieved by the co-op to its member-owners.



Jim Stebbins
Clarksville

Jim Stebbins of Clarksville was appointed to represent District 2 on the HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative board of directors in February. He will serve the remainder of the current term, left open by the passing of long-time director Wayne Swiler in December, 2016.

A member of the cooperative since 1974, Stebbins graduated from Grand Valley State University in 1971 with a bachelor's degree in history. Since then, he has been an independent dairy farmer; worked for the National Farmers Organization as state livestock coordinator; worked as a lab technician at Hastings Manufacturing Company in Hastings; and was a line and shipment inspector for the Bradford White Corporation in Middleville.

He was a member of the Campbell Township Board of Review for 10 years; president of the Woodland Fraternal Order of Eagles for three terms and also serves as treasurer; and, as a member of St. Edward's Church, Lake Odessa, served on the parish building committee. He is divorced with five children and five grandchildren.

"As a member, I enjoy the quality of service and competitive rates at HomeWorks Tri-County Electric that are far superior to investor-owned utilities," Stebbins says. "I'm excited about the future changes and challenges and want to contribute my own experiences to the cooperative."

DISTRICT 4



Kimber Hansen
Edmore

Kimber Hansen is a farmer, responsible for the day-to-day running of the family farm near Edmore. He is a member of the Montcalm County Farm Bureau, serving on its board of directors, and has completed the Farm Bureau Leadership Training Program. He has been a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric since 1993.

He was elected secretary-treasurer of the board of directors in 2016 and represented HomeWorks on the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association board for two years. He has completed both the Credentialed Cooperative Director and Board Leadership education programs through NRECA.

"The business of farming has involved buying power from the electric co-op and investor-owned utilities, and showed us the difference and difficulty of communication versus the ease of dealing with member-owned co-ops like HomeWorks.

"I have served on the Montcalm County Farm Bureau board of directors, a grassroots organization much like a co-op. With my local experience and the additional training for cooperative directors that I've taken part in, I can contribute to bringing safe and affordable power to members of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric in the future.

"I would very much like to continue serving my neighbors, the member-owners in District 4, as your representative on the board of directors," he says.



Cathy Killinger
Lakeview

Cathy Killinger is a "mostly-retired" business woman and farmer. The widow of longtime Winfield Township treasurer Roy Killinger, she has five children and 18 grandchildren.

A member of HomeWorks since 1982, she is a graduate of Lakeview High School and helped operate the family Centennial Farm where she was raised after she and Roy were married. She attended Spring Arbor College and Central Michigan University before earning an Associate Degree in applied Arts and Sciences from Montcalm Community College in 1994. Her career includes working at several area businesses and hospitals as well as at Lakeview Community Schools.

She was Winfield Township's deputy clerk from 2000–2011 before serving as treasurer in 2011–2012, then as a trustee from 2012–2016. She now is deputy clerk and a member of the planning committee. She has also been a church organist for over 30 years, and a member of several regional bands, including the Rockford Community Band & Orchestra and the Danish Band of Greenville.

"I am a good listener and interested in helping my community be a good place to live, raise a family, and retire. My family has been here since the Civil War, so my roots run deep; I love country living."



Absentee Ballot Request

Voting for board candidates takes place at the District 2 and 4 meetings in 2017. If you are unable to attend your district meeting, request an absentee ballot by filling out and mailing this form to HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, 7973 E. Grand River Ave., Portland, MI 48875. **This request must be signed by the member of record to be valid; this is generally the name on the account, or in the case of a joint membership, by the first or second name listed. Invalid requests will be returned to the applicant as soon as possible, but may be delayed past the application deadline.** Your request must be received on or before June 1, and your completed ballot returned by June 15.

Name _____ Daytime phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

I certify that I am a member of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, and I am unable to attend the (check one)

☐ District 2 ☐ District 4 annual membership meeting in order to vote in the scheduled board of directors election. I hereby request you send one mail ballot to the above listed address for my use.

Signature _____ Date _____

Disability 101: A Lesson in Respect

By Jack O'Malley, WTCM 103.5 FM Traverse City and host of Jack's Journal on 9 & 10 News

"Well, Jack," said the doctor, examining my foot while studying X-rays of my heel. "If that tendon tears, it's going to be a bear to fix. You need foot surgery." Not one to argue, I took his advice.

In the days prior to surgery, I prepared for my recovery: two to four weeks off my feet, hobbling unsteadily on crutches and learning how to steer my scooter, followed by a week or two walking with a cane.

"Easy enough," I thought. With a foot brace, prescriptions and disability parking permit in hand, I was feeling confident!

After a relatively pain-and-incident-free first few weeks, I had mastered the dance—juggling my brief case, foot brace, scooter and crutches, jostling them in and out of the car, all while balancing on one leg. Lugging everything through a near freezing parking deck at least twice per day, I quickly tired of the hassle. But the end was near! Soon the doc would give me the all-clear, and it would be just me, my brief case, and my intricately-carved, walnut-stained Beechwood walking cane, which was an accessory I hoped would offer an air of distinction (unlike my scooter).

But then, a complication—a complication setting my recovery back at least two weeks. And then another setback.

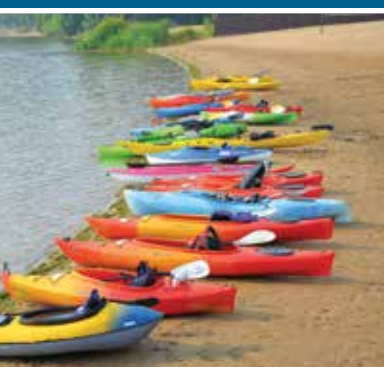
In mid-December, with mobility still dependent on the knee scooter and crutches, my wife and I attended a music program in search of some much-needed holiday cheer. Entering an auditorium brimming with families, grandparents and students, we noticed all handicapped-accessible rows were full, many seats occupied by young children. While obvious I couldn't use the stairs, no one moved. Dismayed, I found a folding chair by the entrance while my wife took a seat elsewhere in the auditorium.

Initially frustrated at being separated from my wife, I paused. Since surgery, folks had repeatedly grabbed doors, held elevators and carried bags for me. While some were oblivious, the vast majority of those I "bumped" into kindly offered assistance. Plus, I had a light at the end of the tunnel. I would recover. Eventually.



Yet this situation forced me to ask a tough question. What about those people suffering permanent disabilities, many of whom regularly experience these types of situations? What about people discouraged from going out because of limited parking and seating, who feel uncomfortable asking for help, overburdened with medical equipment, and just overwhelmed with the situation in general?

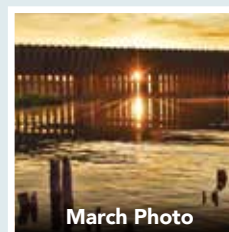
Though I'm still not 100 percent, doctors assure me I'll make a full recovery. In the meantime, my respect and appreciation for those with a permanent physical or cognitive disability has only deepened. My hope now is to encourage others to think twice when in public. Save those reserved parking spaces and seating sections for those people and families who could really use it. Open a door, offer a seat, and give a smile to someone who genuinely needs it. I know I will. ■



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by June 10 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 March 2017 issue is Walter Seavoy, an Ontonagon County REA member, who correctly identified the photo as the Lower Harbor Ore Dock in downtown Marquette, Mich. Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



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Watch your mailbox for your personal invitation.

Knowing more about your electric cooperative helps you stay involved, and that helps us run HomeWorks Tri-County Electric for the benefit of you and your neighbors.

Our annual membership meetings start at 5:30 p.m. Enjoy a light, Michigan-made supper, followed by a short business meeting at 6 p.m. You'll have a chance to ask questions and win prizes, such as energy certificates worth \$10, \$25, or even \$50, and one lucky member will leave the meeting with a grand prize of a 40" Westinghouse Smart 1080p LED HDTV.

Bring your kids, too. Besides enjoying a free meal, all youths ages 5-16 have a chance to win an iPad Mini. And, everyone goes home with a special, thank you gift.

Watch your mailbox for your family's personal invitation. See you there!

This year's dates and locations are:

- May 15** – District 5
Fulton Middle School Gym
- May 16** – District 1
St. Mary's Church Hall, Charlotte
- May 17** – District 6
Beal City High School
- May 18** – District 7
St. Michael's School, Remus
- May 22** – District 4 (Election)
Montabella Jr-Sr High Cafeteria
- May 23** – District 3
Eagle Park Hall
- May 24** – District 2 (Election)
St. Edward's Church Hall, Lake Odessa

Doors open and a light supper is served at 5:30 p.m., followed by a business meeting at 6 p.m.

Watch your mailbox in late April for information, a map, and your registration card.



Like us on Facebook to keep up with these events!