

Cherryland Electric Cooperative

June 2017

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



*Explore Cherry Point
Farm & Market*

AND UNWIND AT MICHIGAN'S MOST BEAUTIFUL FLORAL MAZE

What's An
Availability Charge?

Plan Your Annual Meeting
Experience June 15

Co-op Exceeds
Energy Savings Goal

Switch to geothermal

for incredible comfort and savings



Switching to geo can save you even more, if you hurry!

WaterFurnace units can save you up to 70% on heating, cooling & hot water by capturing the clean, renewable energy in your backyard to provide incredible home comfort. Now, for a limited time, we're offering homeowners with traditional systems a very special Switch-to-Geo rebate package on our most efficient and comfortable geothermal heat pumps—the 7 Series and the dual capacity 5 Series—from now until June 23, 2017. Hurry and contact your local WaterFurnace dealer to learn more about the Geothermal Upgrade Event!

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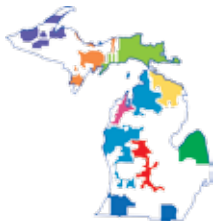
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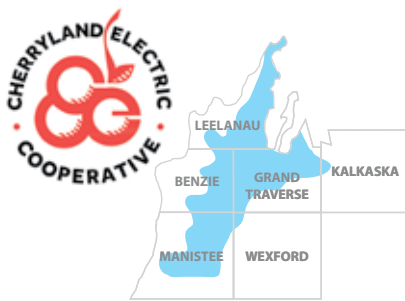
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CO-OP NEWS

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Cherryland Announces Scholarship Winners

Three high school seniors and two adult learners were awarded 2017 Cherryland Electric Cooperative scholarships. The three high school scholarships are worth \$4,000 each—\$1,000 per year for four years. The adult scholarships are a one-time award of \$1,000 each.

Winners of the high school scholarships were Andrew Bakker of Leland High School, John Schaefer of Brethren High School and Alexandra Schweitzer of Traverse City Central High School.

The adult scholarship winners were Hannah Casselman of Buckley and Nathan Weemhoff of Traverse City.

Cherryland Cares Supports Local Nonprofits

Cherryland Cares distributes funds to local nonprofit organizations in need of financial support. The funds distributed by Cherryland Cares are a result of members electing to round up their monthly bills to the nearest dollar. Members can contribute to the Cherryland Cares fund by calling 231-486-9200, signing up through SmartHub, or sending an email to cec@cherrylandelectric.coop.

If you are an area nonprofit agency seeking financial help, please call Shannon Mattson at 231-486-9234 or e-mail smattson@cherrylandelectric.coop. The deadline for second quarter applications is Friday, June 9.

Members May Give Input At Monthly Board Meeting

The board of directors at Cherryland is offering an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board on Monday, June 19, at 9 a.m. at the company office in Grawn.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board. Members are asked to keep their comments to five minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input portion of the meeting only.

Cherryland Office Closed Independence Day

The Cherryland office will be closed Tuesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day. Normal business hours will resume Wednesday, July 5.

Line crews are on call to respond to any outages or emergencies. You can report your outage through SmartHub or by calling us at 231-486-9200.

Cherryland Presents the Touchstone Energy Junior Royale Parade

Cherryland is sponsoring the Touchstone Energy Junior Royale Parade held Thursday, July 6, in downtown Traverse City from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. as part of the National Cherry Festival. Known as one of the largest children's parades in Michigan, the Junior Royale Parade is highlighted with kid-friendly floats, junior royalty, clowns, marching units and more. ■

COVER CHARGE



Tony Anderson
General Manager

While on vacation, I once had to pay a cover charge at a bar. Once inside, I still had to pay for my drinks and food. I didn't complain. I have worked with the concept for over three decades now.

In the utility world, our cover charge is called an availability charge. Whether you use 1-kilowatt hour or not, there is a cost involved in the poles, wires and transformers standing by waiting for you to flip a switch.

The bar scene was the same. They didn't care if I ate or drank. They had my cover charge to pay for kitchen equipment, drink dispensers and wages, in the event I wanted a drink or an item from the kitchen at a moment's notice.

As we move closer to the rate increase I mentioned a few months back in this column, we are focusing more and more on the availability charge. For residential service, it is currently \$15 per month. When we look at our past cost of service studies, they tell us we should be charging \$23 per month.

This is no surprise. In fact, you can probably find some reference to it in information surrounding our last rate increase in 2011. Back then, we had the option of going from \$13 to \$23 while moving the energy charge lower. While the visual impact of a \$10 increase is obviously huge, the lowering of the energy charge would have made the overall impact very small.

At that time, the management team and your board of directors agreed that we did not want to make the big jump. Instead, we went from \$13 to

\$15 with a minor adjustment in the energy charge. There was a consensus that we would increase the availability charge further when we needed revenue in the future.

So, while we talk about cost-based rates, Cherryland's rates are not yet truly based on the cost of service. Our energy charge is higher than it should be because our availability charge is lower than the "all-in" costs of covering the equipment necessary to make electricity available at the flip of a switch.

Rates are debatable, arguable and, after the core numbers are crunched, very much a product of the philosophy of your board and management team. Other utilities have other viewpoints. It doesn't make either of us right or wrong.

Another twist is the very small but rising tide of renewables and members who want to generate their own power. As a utility, if I cover my true cost of service in the availability charge, I don't necessarily care what one individual member does in the form of energy usage. Everybody simply needs to understand that an increase in the availability charge is not an attack on a particular form of energy. It is the only way to maintain revenue to cover system costs should energy sales begin a downward trend.

Please just consider this "bar talk" for now. We are continuing to monitor our financial condition. There are no plans to jump our "cover charge" to \$23 in one motion. When we are ready to make a recommendation to the membership, there will be an "open bar" for member comment and input prior to any cover charge decision. ■

Valerie Brader On Michigan's Energy Future

In the last few years, the state of Michigan has dealt with public concern over various energy issues. Cherryland Electric Cooperative recently sat down with the Executive Director for the Michigan Agency for Energy, Valerie Brader, to discuss the challenges and opportunities our state faces as Michigan's Electric Cooperatives continue to modernize their energy portfolio.



Q: How does the state view solar power production in Michigan?

Solar has gotten much cheaper. Even in 2012, it was much more expensive than other resources. Now, it is more cost competitive. The new energy legislation asks the Michigan Public Service Commission to look at the value of solar in a very specific way. Most utilities in our lower peninsula are summer peaking utilities. That means they have the highest demand at the height of the summer when everyone's air conditioning is turned on. Solar can be really valuable to summer peaking utilities. When it's coming in at a time when there is plenty of other power, it can be less valuable. How valuable solar really is needs to be evaluated on a utility-by-utility and state-by-state basis.

Q: What are our biggest opportunities for reducing waste in the state of Michigan?

Michigan has a huge amount of energy waste reduction opportunities. If you look around, Michigan's housing stock is a little older than our neighbors. Older typically means the insulation is not as good. Homeowners should make sure that the lights in their home have been swapped out to LED lightbulbs and make an effort to get insulation in the right spots. New furnaces are an opportunity, too. Just 15 years ago your furnace was probably 80 percent efficient; now there are 92 percent or 96 percent efficient furnaces for about the same amount of money. There are a lot of opportunities for people to improve their homes and to be more comfortable at a lower cost of energy.

Q: What is the condition of the energy generating capacity in Michigan?

In the lower peninsula, about 90 percent of our demand must be met with in-state resources because of the physics of the grid. With all the coal plant closures, we are running a lot closer to our margins than usual. The concern is making sure that everyone, no matter who you are a customer of, is helping to pay for the new plants we need. Electricity is different from most products in that if we don't have enough supply for everybody, nobody gets any power. The grid will collapse if supply doesn't meet demand, causing widespread outages that take hours to fix. One of our goals is to make sure that we don't ever face those kinds of outages. The new legislation ensures that every supplier of electricity must meet their share of reliability requirements.

Q: How much capacity do you think will be built over the next 5–10 years?

That is one thing that the new legislation will help us answer. All rate-regulated utilities must file an integrated resource plan. They essentially show a prediction of what their demand is going to be and how they are going to meet it. ■

Listen to the entire interview
at <https://cherrylandelectric.coop/2017/03/valerie-brader-michigans-energy-future/>

Perform An Annual Safety Inspection On Your Boat And Dock To Prevent Electric Shock

For boating and water safety, there are items you must legally have on your watercraft—life vests, a fire extinguisher, throwable flotation devices, and properly working lights—but make sure the boat and the dock are safe, too. Sadly, there have been incidents of electric shock drownings. It happens when a current, often from a short circuit in the wiring of boats or in a dock, spreads through the water. As a result, those who are in the water will be electrocuted and end up drowning.

To help prevent accidents, the National Electrical Contractors Association says:

- All installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor.
- All dock receptacles must comply with the National Electrical Code, which mandates a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI measures a circuit's current and senses any imbalance (such as a discharge into the water), which trips the GFCI and cuts off the power.
- Test any GFCIs every month. Locate them along the ramp to the dock so they can be easily tested by local fire departments.
- Metal dock frames should have "bonding jumpers" that connect all metal parts to an on-shore grounding rod. This means any dock part that becomes energized by electrical malfunction will trip the GFCI or circuit breaker.
- Ask neighbors if their dock electrical systems have been inspected and are up to code.
- Household wire is not suitable for boats.
- Do not use wire nuts (these are for solid conductor wire, which should never be on a boat) or splice connectors which can cut wire strands!
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the stereo. If a fuse blows continuously, something else is wrong.
- If you rent a dock or boat, notify the owner of safety violations immediately.
- Have your boat's system (especially with onboard generators) checked at least annually and when something is added or removed.
- Ropes, string, masts and rigging also conduct electricity—don't be the common ground between water and electricity! ■

See [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org) for more tips.



79TH

ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, June 15



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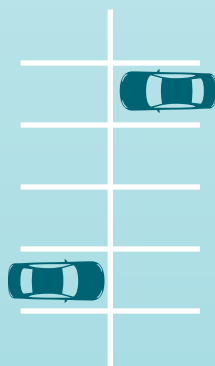


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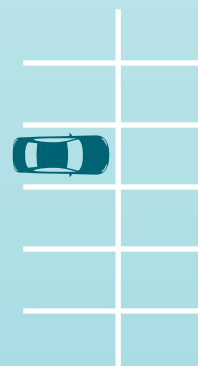


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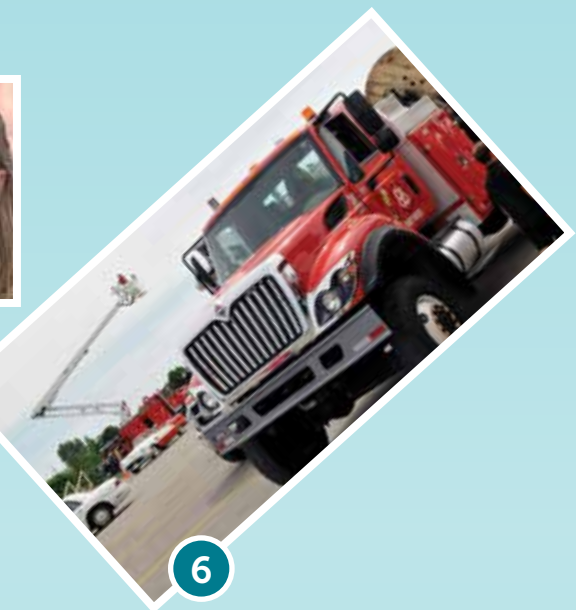
◀ PARKING



HANDICAP
PARKING



Maximize Your Experience At Cherryland's Biggest Event Of The Year



1. Member Registration, 4 p.m.–8 p.m.

Your Annual Meeting experience starts here. At registration, you will receive:

- Wristbands (one per person)
- Raffle ticket (one per membership)
- Gift bag (one per membership)
- Incredible Mo's gift card (worth \$10, one per membership)
- Cherryland signature card (one per membership)

Incredible Mo's is closed to the public on the day of the Annual Meeting, so all members must be registered prior to entering Incredible Mo's. All children must be supervised by a Cherryland member parent or guardian at all times.

2. On-Site Voting, 4 p.m.–5:30 p.m.

As part-owner of your electric co-op, you get to choose who represents you on Cherryland's board of directors. If you didn't already vote online or by mail, you can vote in person at the Annual Meeting. The results will be announced at the end of the business meeting!

3. Incredible Mo's, 4 p.m.–8 p.m.

The center of food and fun at the Annual Meeting! There will be plenty of pizza, bowling and arcade games for the whole family to enjoy. Be sure to visit the representatives of a couple of our local nonprofit organizations: Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Michigan and the YMCA.

4. Business Meeting, 5:30 p.m.–6:30 p.m.

The business meeting is the heart and soul of Cherryland's Annual Meeting. It's a chance for you to meet Cherryland staff, talk to your member-elected board of directors, and get all the updates and information about your co-op.

5. Outdoor Fun, 4 p.m.–8 p.m.*

Meet the Michigan Stiltwalker. Play a round of cornhole. Say "hi" to co-op mascot Willie Wiredhand. There will be plenty of fun to be had all evening outside of Incredible Mo's!

**Cornhole will be unavailable from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. during the business meeting.*

6. Bucket Truck Rides, 4 p.m.–7:30 p.m.*

A member favorite! Feel what it's like to be a Cherryland lineworker and take a ride in the bucket of one of the co-op line trucks.

**Bucket truck rides will be unavailable from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. during the business meeting.*

7. Raffle, 4 p.m.–6:10 p.m.

Want a chance to win a Bluetooth speaker, hanging plant, or auto emergency set? Be sure to use your raffle tickets for a chance to win! Raffle winners will be announced at 6:30 p.m. and you must be present to win.

8. "Fun in the Sun" Kids' Area, 4 p.m.–8 p.m.

If your kids want to get their face painted or get a temporary tattoo, come to the Kids' Area, located in the raffle tent. And parents, we will have information about our newest community solar program while you wait!

9. MI Blood, 3 p.m.–7 p.m.

Give the gift of life! The MI Blood Bus will start taking blood donations in the parking lot of Incredible Mo's an hour before the Annual Meeting kicks off.

ON THE GRILL

Step up your grill game with these summer recipes.

Grilled Flatbread With Vegetables & Hummus

Randy Rippentrop, Cherryland

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons Greek seasoning (or Italian seasoning)
- 3–4 cups mixed vegetables (red onion, eggplant, red bell pepper, zucchini, mushrooms, etc.)—cubed into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 4 naan flatbreads
- 1 cup roasted red pepper hummus
- 4 tablespoons feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- red pepper flakes
- balsamic glaze

Heat a gas grill to medium heat. In a mixing bowl, combine olive oil, garlic and Greek seasoning with the cubed vegetables. Place vegetables on the grill in either a mesh grill basket or onto aluminum foil. Grill until vegetables are soft. Remove vegetables from the grill and immediately mix in the baby spinach so that it will wilt. Place naan flatbread on the grill facing down for a couple of minutes until warm and lightly brown.

Remove naan breads and place on a baking sheet. On each naan, spread ¼ cup hummus and 1 cup of the grilled vegetables. Sprinkle feta and mozzarella cheese on top. Shake red pepper flakes on top to taste. Turn grill to low and place the assembled naan flatbreads on the grill for about 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Remove from grill and drizzle with balsamic glaze.

As an option, two grilled chicken breasts can be cubed and added to the vegetable mixture before putting it on the naan.

Naan is a leavened, oven-baked flatbread found in the cuisines of India and other Central and Southeast Asia countries.



Watch a video of this recipe at
<https://goo.gl/Lfls7F>

Bacon Wrapped Chicken Jalapeño Delights

Deb Finedell, Great Lakes Energy

- 1 pound boneless chicken breast
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 small onion, cut into strips
- 15 jalapeños, halved and seeded
- 1 pound bacon



Photo—Deb Finedell

Cut chicken into strips, slicing breasts the length of a jalapeño and about a half inch thick. Place chicken and seasonings into baggie and coat. Place chicken strip and onion into a half jalapeño. Wrap with a piece of bacon and secure with a toothpick.

Grill about 20 minutes until bacon is crisp. Serve with blue cheese dressing.

Steak Pitas Topped With Grilled Mushrooms & Onions

Cathy Miller, Midwest Energy

- 1 flank steak, trimmed of excess fat
- 1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ teaspoon Mrs. Dash
- 4 whole wheat pita pockets
- steak sauce



Photo—Cathy Miller

On a large piece of heavy duty foil, combine mushrooms and onions. Dot with butter and season. Bring edge of foil together to seal. Place on grill on low heat, and grill 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Place steak on preheated grill and

cook to desired doneness, about 6 to 7 minutes on each side for medium-rare. Remove from the grill to a cutting board and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing. Thinly slice the steak on an angle. Serve immediately. To assemble the sandwiches, fill pitas with meat and veggies. Top with steak sauce.



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 1
- “Slow Cooker Favorites” due August 1

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

Gorgonzola And Dried Cherry Salad (pictured above)

Barbara Bull

If you get a chance to meet up with Barbara Bull at Cherry Point Farm and Market, be sure to grab some delicious dried cherries and make this light, satisfying salad.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ⅛ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup toasted walnuts
- ¼ cup dried cherries
- 1 head leafy green lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and thinly sliced
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

Whisk together oil, vinegar, garlic, salt and pepper in a small bowl to make a dressing.

Toss walnuts, cherries, lettuce, apples and onions together in a large salad bowl.

Top with dressing and toss gently to coat. Garnish with cheese and serve.

Read the full story about Barbara Bull on page 14, and visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and others from our co-op members.

Cherryland Exceeds Its Energy Savings Goal In 2016



Tammy Squires
Energy Use
Advisor

My job at Cherryland is simple: help members save money.

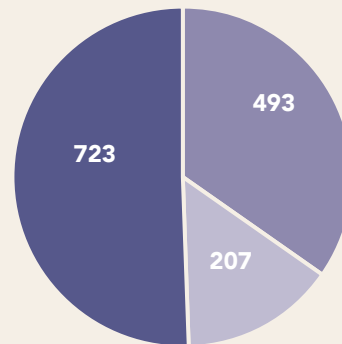
Long before there was a state-mandated Energy Optimization (EO) requirement, my sole focus has been to help members find new ways to become more energy efficient and in turn save them money on their electric bills.

Year after year, the goal of our EO program has been to exceed the state's energy savings mandate. 2016 was no different. We were required to save approximately 4 million kilowatt-hours (kWhs). By the end of 2016, we saved a total of 4.6 million kWhs. That's the equivalent of removing 548 northern Michigan homes off the grid for a year! Those saved kilowatt-hours represent real savings on the electric bills of members like you.

We achieved this goal by continually promoting our residential rebate program and educating our members on the benefits of becoming energy efficient in their homes. For example, last year we gave rebates to 723 members who replaced their old incandescent lightbulbs with Energy Star-rated LED lightbulbs. These members learned that even the simplest of measures could make a big difference for little cost.

As we continue to focus on assisting our members with their energy efficiency needs, we will again offer rebates for measures purchased and installed in 2017. Please visit our website for more details on our rebates and to access the 2017 residential rebate form. ■

Number Of Residential Members Claiming Rebates For 2016



- E.S. appliances/HVAC/Solar
- Fridge/Freezer recycling
- Lighting

We'll Pay You \$250 To Charge Your Electric Vehicle!



If you install a new **Level 2 Charger**, we'll give you a \$250 rebate.

Qualifying members must agree to charge their Electric Vehicle during off peak electric usage hours between 11p.m.–7a.m.

Contact Tammy Squires for details:

tsquires@cherrylandelectric.coop
231.486.9261

Rebates are limited. Certain restrictions and exclusions apply.

Well-Connect Saves Rural Homeowners On Heating Costs

By Rob Marsh

There is a lot for free when living in the country: beautiful scenery, starlit nights, room to roam, and so on. Though there is one thing that is definitely not for free: heating the home.

Many rural homes rely on propane as their heat source. While propane gets the job done, it is not the cheapest method for heating a northern Michigan home.

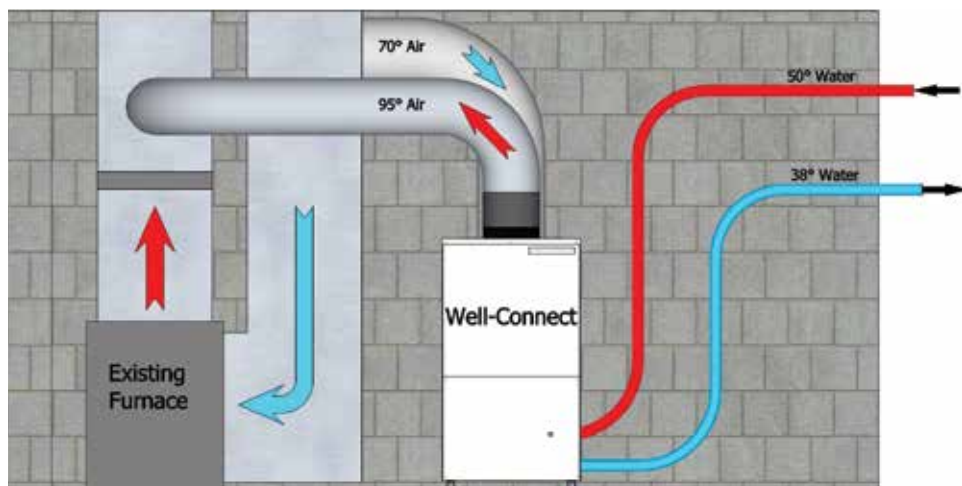
Dennis Schultz and the Terra Caloric team of Alpena set out to solve this problem. Recognizing the struggles of heating rural homes inexpensively, they developed a system that is not only a clean way of heating and cooling, but it provides significant savings on annual heating and cooling costs.

The Well-Connect geothermal system uses two assets already in a person's home—their heat source and well. The system utilizes the groundwater already coming into the home via the well to extract heat in the winter time and to absorb heat for cooling in the summer time. By using the groundwater, it achieves an energy efficiency of more than 400 percent all year long.

Unlike traditional geothermal systems, Well-Connect is efficient in more ways than one. It takes only a day to install, leaves landscaping almost completely intact, and is installed at a fraction of the price.

Cherryland member Glynnis Price purchased a Well-Connect system two years ago after a recommendation from a friend who worked for Terra Caloric. "My friend explained to me all the benefits of the system, but what really got my attention was the savings," said Price.

Before the installation of her Well-Connect, Price was paying more than \$2,000 annually for the 1,000



Using a home's current heat source and well, the Well-Connect extracts heat from the groundwater during the winter and absorbs heat for cooling during the summer.

gallons plus of propane it took to heat her two-story home. And that does not include the occasional top-off after a frigid winter.

After her first full year with the new system, Price's propane needs dropped below 400 gallons, costing her only \$600.

"When the propane deliveryman came to fill my tank," explained Price, "all he could say was, 'Whatever you are doing to save on propane, it's working!'"

Even with the uptick in electric costs to run the system, her total heating savings in 2016 was approximately \$750.

"There is no downside to Well-Connect," said Price.

With all the benefits of the Well-Connect geothermal system, what truly makes it unique is that it's a realistic solution for rural homeowners looking to save on heating costs. For people like Price, that makes living in the country that much better. ■

Learn more about Well-Connect
at wellconnectgeo.com.



Explore Cherry Point Farm & Market

AND UNWIND AT MICHIGAN'S MOST BEAUTIFUL FLORAL MAZE

By Emily Haines Lloyd



Pictured above is Barbara Bull, owner of Cherry Point Farm and author of several books based on her farm life experiences.

Cherry Point Farm and Market in Oceana County is as deliciously tart and sweet as the cherries it produces, as imaginative and welcoming as its lavender labyrinth, and as chock full of history and stories like its owner delights in telling. A fourth-generation farmer, Cherry Point owner Barbara Bull began her career selling cherries and pies as a young girl at a card table stand her older sister set up.

Barbara's early start as a pint-sized entrepreneur paved the way to what is now Cherry Point Farm and Market. From around the country and world, families visit Cherry Point Farm and Market—not only to snatch a gorgeous quart of cherries on their travels, but also to visit the buildings, lavender labyrinth and herb garden. Tourists and locals sometimes are fortunate to catch a fish boil, watching Barbara and her team go through the almost-scientific steps and listening for stories peppered into this timeless event. Visitors can also enjoy Tuesday Teas or Sunday's Flapjacks and Fruit. No matter what the event, in the midst of it all is Cherry Point's owner, Barbara, telling stories, listening to stories and quietly taking mental notes.

"I've always loved history and storytelling," Barbara explained. "I would listen to my grandfather tell his stories about our family history, and his stories made those people real to me."

On the occasion of Bull's fifth decade on the farm, she got an idea.





Fish boils are an event, a gathering and a tradition with taste!

"I had spent 50 consecutive years working at the farm market—listening to people's stories and telling my stories. I knew I wasn't retiring or getting a gold watch," Bull jokes. "So, I decided to tell the story of my first 50 years on the farm."

And that's what she did. Armed with a love of reading and writing and a snowy off-season, Bull wrote the love story of herself and Cherry Point Farm—"A Point in Time."

With each season after that, as she puts on a picking bucket, prunes trees or braids strudels in the market, Bull is either dreaming up improvements for the farm or new stories. Her second book, "Blackberry Ridge," was a collection of newspaper articles by a local writer, Charles W. Jay, who was one of the original settlers in the area. The book combines stories from Jay and townspeople that together capture life in the late 1800s.

"It was amazing to research Jay, read his articles in the paper and get a glimpse at life in that time," Bull said. "[He gave me] such wonderful insights—thoughts and concerns on health, weather, community development. The most amazing thing was how little has changed. We're having these same conversations today."

One particularly snowy January, Bull had another idea. "I looked out the window and it was still snowing, and I thought, 'Okay, I'll do another book.'"

That book became her first fiction novel, a cozy mystery called "Cloud Cottage" that, given Bull's mental note-taking, takes place on the shore of Lake Michigan in the lush fruit belt and is unsurprisingly full of long-time family connections and traditions. It's the first of three in the series.

For locals and travelers not familiar with Cherry Point Market, it's well worth the visit to Oceana County.

The sweet cherries or mouthwatering pastries are not quickly forgotten. An experience at the farm generates repeat customers and even encourages strangers to become friends.

Bull encourages visitors to take their time while wandering through the maze like a meditative experience. Some lucky farm-goers who make a lasting impression may find their way into Bull's next novel. Of course, the most compelling character Barbara has created is the one she is in real life.

"You can only hope you have enough time to accomplish all the dreams you've dreamed up," said Bull. "All you can do is follow your instincts, listen to where you need to be and what you need to be doing and you'll get there." ■

Barbara Bull, owner of Cherry Point Farm and Market, is a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

To learn more, visit cherrypointmarket.net or call 231-861-2029. Cherry Point Farm and Market is located at 9600 West Buchanan Road, Shelby, MI 49455.

The Beautiful Lavender Labyrinth

Cherry Point Farm and Market allows visitors to indulge in delicious treats, including cherries, sweet jams, and baked goods. But the highlight is the lavender labyrinth.

Be sure to wander through the massive and stunning lavender labyrinth filled with calming aroma and colorful hues.

Bull teamed up with local artist and architect Conrad Heiderer in 2001 to create the flower-shaped design, allowing visitors to walk through rows and rows of perfectly arranged flowers with an herb garden at its center.

The lavender peaks in the springtime and continues to bloom throughout the summer and then dries out and is picked once fall arrives.

Bull encourages visitors to take their time while wandering through the garden, slowing down to breathe in the lavender-scented air and enjoy a meditative experience.

Farms & Barns

Photos With The Highest Facebook Votes!

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



Waiting For Spring—By Sarah Johnson



God Made A Farmer—By Betsy Wagner



Somewhere Over A Rainbow—
By Amanda Wagner



Full Moon Over A Leelanau Farm—
By Susi Pilath



Reflection—By Michael Birtles



Enter Your Photos And Win A Bill Credit!

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

Our July theme is **Birds and Feathers**. Photos can be submitted from **July 1** to **July 20** to be featured in our September issue.

Our August theme is **Life's a Beach—Michigan Waters**. Photos can be submitted from **August 1** to **August 20** to be featured in the October issue.

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



Your Board In Action

This month, we are adding an additional feature to the magazine, “Your Board In Action.” In this monthly update, you can get a brief overview of all the actions your board took at their monthly board meeting.

How else can you stay up-to-date and interact with your co-op’s leadership? We’re glad you asked.

- Read and comment on the Cherryland blog. Cherryland’s General Manager, Tony Anderson, regularly monitors and responds to questions on the blog.
- Email or call your board members. You can find their contact information on page 4 of your monthly magazine, *Country Lines*, or on the Cherryland website.
- Attend the Annual Meeting. This year’s meeting is June 15 at 4 p.m. at Incredible Mo’s.
- Attend a member information meeting. We hold these regularly around specific topics. They will always be advertised in the Co-op News section of the magazine and on our website.
- Follow Cherryland on Facebook. This is a great place to get the latest news on outages and co-op programs.
- Attend a quarterly member input session at a board meeting. The next input session is June 19 at 9 a.m. at our office in Grawn. This is your chance to address the entire board directly and ask questions or share your opinion.
- If you represent a neighborhood or special interest group, we are happy to come to one of your meetings to give you an update on the co-op and answer any questions you have.

This list isn’t exhaustive. We are always looking for ways to interact with our members and listen to your needs and concerns. We hope you will find this new feature in the magazine informative. If you have any questions or want additional information, don’t hesitate to ask! ■

Highlights from the April 2017 Board Meeting

- Staff presented the 2016 results of Cherryland’s Energy Optimization program. The cooperative exceeded its state-mandated energy savings goal by 16 percent and remained under budget.
- Staff reported on the cooperative’s strategic communications plan and provided metrics from its various media platforms.
- A five-year financial summary was presented to the board which covered the years 2012–2016. This report detailed relatively flat revenue trends, but also highlighted that operating expenses and interest expenses are trending upwards.
- The board appointed member Gabe Schneider to the Cherryland Cares volunteer board. Gabe is the principal at a local government relations firm that represents both Munson and NMC.
- Cherryland’s 2016 net margins were reviewed. The total amount of last year’s margins to be assigned and allocated to members is \$3,362,654.

I Remember...

Sometimes You've Got to Get Lost to Find Your Way

I decided to make Michigan my permanent home in an unlikely spot—while bodysurfing waves in Lake Worth, Florida. I'd hitchhiked from my hometown of Grand Rapids out to Colorado, then meandered my way back east and down along the seaboard. I thought I'd found Nirvana in "The Sunshine State."

I was in my 20s, lost, confused and unsure about my life's compass; after thumbing this way and that, Florida seemed a good fit. But faced with the prospect of whether to take a job as a carpenter's apprentice to an old salt remodeling waterfront homes, my mind wandered back to my precious land of four seasons—Michigan.

How could I leave in my rear-view mirror the northwest wind that whipped waves on Lake Michigan into a pandemonium? Or the inland lakes and rivers that abounded with fish and the promise of canoeing adventures? Where else would I find the romance of so many lighthouses, the lull of crickets and cicadas and fireflies?

So I thumbed my way back to Michigan, married a girl who abandoned a future in Maine for life with me, and we put down stakes. In a year or two, we hope to retire to the small cottage I hand-built 30 years ago near the "Big Lake" in the beautiful confines of Oceana County and continue staying put.

Tom Rademacher, Great Lakes Energy

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.

Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. *Country Lines* retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online at countrylines.com or email to cdorr@meca.coop



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