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Science To Life

Cars And Kilowatts:
Driving The Point Home

Hotline Safety Demo
Goes On The Road

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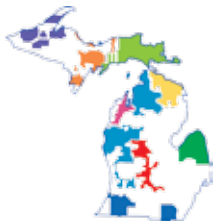
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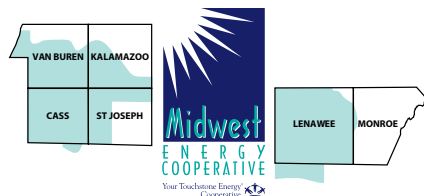
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Midwest Energy Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Cars And Kilowatts: Driving The Point Home



Robert Hance
President/CEO

If you read my column regularly, you know I love a good analogy. I'm throwing a new one out there this month to try to make sense of the service charge and rate restructuring that we've been addressing.

Let's say we are both in the market for a new car and pull away from the lot with the same make and model. We're each left with a set of fixed costs, including car payments, insurance, plates and taxes, and maybe an evergreen air freshener to hang from the rear-view mirror.

Now think about how we use the car. I drive a lot. My daily commute is 50 miles round trip, and I frequently travel for work. I spend many weekends up north and visit my grandkids often. I easily log 30,000 miles a year. You're a more typical driver, averaging 12,000 miles annually. We've each got variable expenses for fuel, tires and other maintenance, but mine are higher based on my usage.

Your service charge is like the car. You have fixed costs you have to pay, whether or not the odometer ever registers a mile. Your energy charge is like the fuel and maintenance expenses; it varies with how much or little you use the car.

At April's special board meeting, the board approved the rate restructuring proposal. This is not a rate increase; it's a revenue-neutral restructuring. We are not collecting any additional revenue, but are simply moving charges from one line to another.

There are significant fixed costs associated with making electricity available, regardless of whether or not you ever use it. Those fixed costs are the car in my analogy, and the service charge should fully reflect them. Right now that's not the case. Many of the fixed costs are currently in the variable Distribution kWh Charge, meaning members using more energy are paying more for fixed costs.

Every member should pay a fair and appropriate share of the infrastructure and other costs required to make electricity available to their rate class, and this restructuring accomplishes that. As the service charge increases over the four-year implementation, the Distribution kWh Charge will decrease. The result is that every member will pay their fair share of the car.

The legal notice about the rate restructuring is on page 5. If you have questions or want to understand the impact on your bill based on historic usage, please feel free to contact us at 800-492-5989. ■

NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE RATE RESTRUCTURING AND PSQR EFFECTIVE FOR BILLS RENDERED IN JULY 2017

The Midwest Energy Cooperative Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the cooperative's tariffs at a special Board Meeting on April 18, 2017, in accordance with Public Act 167 (P.A. 167).

1. Increase the authorized PSQR factor to 10 mills (\$0.01 per kWh). No change will occur in 2017.
2. Rate realignment across all rate classifications over a four-year period as shown below. Chart A represents the amount of the distribution kWh charge change by year. Chart B represents the amount of the monthly service charge change by year. All changes are effective for bills rendered in July 2017 except irrigation service which will be changed beginning in January 2018.

Tariff Schedule – Chart A		2017	2018	2019	2020
		cents/kWh	cents/kWh	cents/kWh	cents/kWh
D-5.00	Residential Service	\$(0.005563)	\$(0.005563)	\$(0.005563)	\$(0.005563)
D-6.00	Residential Time of Use Service	\$(0.003968)	\$(0.003968)	\$(0.003968)	\$(0.003968)
D-9.00	General Service—Single Phase	\$(0.006339)	\$(0.006339)	\$(0.006339)	\$(0.006339)
D-9.00	General Service—Three Phase	\$(0.005001)	\$(0.005001)	\$(0.005001)	\$(0.005001)
D-10.00	General Service—Time of Use Single Phase	\$(0.000409)	\$(0.000409)	\$(0.000409)	\$(0.000409)
D-10.00	General Service—Time of Use Three Phase	\$(0.001500)	\$(0.001500)	\$(0.001500)	\$(0.001500)
D-11.00	Irrigation Service	\$–	\$(0.018316)	\$(0.009158)	\$(0.009158)
D-12.00	Large Power	\$(0.000232)	\$(0.000232)	\$(0.000232)	\$(0.000232)
D-13.01	Large Power (Over 200 KW)	\$(0.000035)	\$(0.000035)	\$(0.000035)	\$(0.000035)
D-14.00	Large Power Time of Use Service	\$(0.000070)	\$(0.000070)	\$(0.000070)	\$(0.000070)

Tariff Schedule – Chart B		2017	2018	2019	2020
D-5.00	Residential Service	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25
D-6.00	Residential Time of Use Service	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25	\$5.25
D-9.00	General Service—Single Phase	\$4.25	\$4.25	\$4.25	\$4.25
D-9.00	General Service—Three Phase	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$13.00	\$13.00
D-10.00	General Service—Time of Use Single Phase	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$2.00
D-10.00	General Service—Time of Use Three Phase	\$6.25	\$6.25	\$6.25	\$6.25
D-11.00	Irrigation Service (Annual Charge)	\$–	\$434.00	\$217.00	\$217.00
D-12.00	Large Power	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
D-13.01	Large Power (Over 200 KW)	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00	\$6.00
D-14.00	Large Power Time of Use Service	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$10.00

These unapproved minutes are published in accordance with P.A. 167 of 2008.

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.



Look For The ENERGY STAR!

In the market for a new appliance or electronic device? Look for the blue ENERGY STAR® label! ENERGY STAR products are tested and certified to use less energy and meet higher standards of quality and performance. Make your purchase even more affordable with cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program!

What is ENERGY STAR?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR in 1992 to help consumers identify energy-efficient products. The ENERGY STAR label can now be found on major appliances, lighting, electronics, and even new homes and commercial buildings. Since the early 1990s, ENERGY STAR has helped consumers save \$362 billion in utility costs.

Did you know?

ENERGY STAR products can use up to 75 percent less energy than standard models!

Peace of mind:

To earn the ENERGY STAR label, a third-party certification process ensures that all products:

- Contribute significant energy savings.
- Deliver the features and performance consumers demand, *plus* greater energy efficiency.
- Back up energy savings claims with comprehensive testing. ■

Save now with Energy Optimization program rebates!

Product	Efficiency comparison (vs. a new standard model)*	Energy Optimization program rebate**
Clothes washer	Uses 35% less water and energy	\$125
Computer	Uses 60% less energy	\$50
Dehumidifier	Uses 15% less energy	\$75
Dishwasher	Uses 5% less energy and 15% less water	\$75
Chest Freezer	Uses at least 10% less energy	\$75
Refrigerator	Uses 9% less energy	\$200
Television	Uses at least 25% less energy	\$50–100
Room air conditioner	Uses 15% less energy	\$50

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

*All data according to energystar.gov.

**Incentive amounts are subject to change.

Brighten your future with ENERGY STAR®!

Upgrade your outdated, energy-wasting appliances and electronics to ENERGY STAR models today. Use up to 75% less energy and watch the savings roll in!

Take advantage of cash incentives:

- Refrigerator - **\$200**
- Clothes washer - **\$125**
- Dehumidifier - **\$75**
- Dishwasher - **\$75**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A FULL LIST OF INCENTIVES!

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877.296.4319



Cool Savings



**Energy
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MIDWEST ENERGY COOPERATIVE

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.

Farms & Barns

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

Visit teammidwest.com/photo-contest/ to view photos.

Most
Votes On
Facebook!



Dawn Pio, Vicksburg—Barn In The Backyard



Kathy Bozymowski, Jones—A Stroll Around The North 40 On A Beautiful Spring Day



Ty Parker, Niles—Farm Life And So Much More



**Enter Our Photo Contest
And Win A Bill Credit!**

A winner every month!

Submit your best shot and encourage your friends to vote! The photo receiving the most votes from our Facebook contest will be printed in an issue of *Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites. Visit facebook.com/TeamMidwest and click on "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs to submit your high-resolution photos. Not on Facebook? You can also enter at TeamMidwest.com/photocontest. Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!

Our 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.

The photo with the most votes will win a \$50 credit on their next electric bill.

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.

MIDWEST IN THE COMMUNITY

Neighbor helping neighbor—that's how we approach daily work and efforts to give back. We live, work and serve right here in the local community, and we strive to actively live our Community value in meaningful and impacting ways.



SAFETY MONTH 2017

Safety is an important part of our culture. The nature of the service we provide is dangerous, so practicing safety in everyday work and teaching safety across the community is a top priority.

In April we delivered a message of electrical safety to nearly 700 fourth-grade students and teachers across our electric service territory as part of our annual safety month contest. We took our interactive hotline demonstration program on the road to Addison, Blissfield and Onsted schools in southeast Michigan and Constantine, Mendon, Three Rivers and White Pigeon Schools in southwest Michigan. Students learned about safety equipment used by lineworkers, which items conduct electricity, and what equipment is in place to protect the public and the lines.

Our electric and propane safety programs are free, adaptable for various audiences and timelines, and can be conducted in our facility or yours. For more information or to schedule a program, contact the community relations office at 800-492-5989 or email pr@teammidwest.com. ■



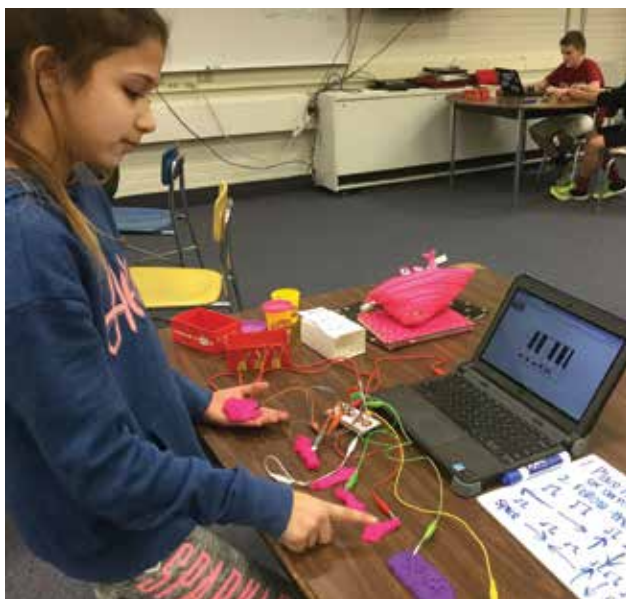
Computer Science Comes To Life With Midwest School Grant

Katie Frederick's goal as a teacher is to elicit a love for learning outside of the classroom, and a Midwest Energy Strengthening Schools grant is helping her implement a unique program that will launch that dream into another dimension.

The computer teacher at Clinton Middle School received a \$1,500 grant to purchase Makey Makey kits. Coined the invention kit for the 21st century, Makey Makey is a two-sided circuit board that allows users to use everyday objects, like a banana or a pencil, to control their computer keyboard.

"My computer classes are changing and evolving on a daily basis to reflect the growing world and need for computer science education in schools," Frederick wrote in her application. "Computer science jobs are going unfilled ... unfortunately one of the largest reasons is that students don't realize that they like computer science. The Makey Makey program allows students to use their imaginations while learning important science and technology concepts."

She added that students are long past the days of remedial learning on computers. "The kits allow students to think out of the box, do some research, and find fun ways to incorporate science into learning with greater comprehension and retention." ■



Briana Goel uses Play-Doh to create a controller to play the piano on her computer. Other students made controllers to play video games like Pac-Man and Donkey Kong or music applications like Bongos.



Kaden Settles designs a circuit that activates a scream sound file on the computer when a piece of Play-Doh pizza is cut. He wants to purchase a kit for home because he's having so much fun thinking of different applications.

Applications Available For 2017-18 Grant Cycle

Today's students are tomorrow's business and community leaders, and we support the important work of regional teachers and schools with our Strengthening Schools Grant Program. The program is provided in partnership with Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

We are now accepting applications for the 2017-18 program. Any teacher, administrator or school official in a public elementary, middle or high school serving students in our electric service territory may apply for a grant of up to \$2,500 to support classroom needs and special projects, technology, or academic clubs and organizations. School districts may be awarded multiple grants, not to exceed a total of \$5,000 during the annual award cycle.

Applications are due Oct. 16 and funds will be awarded in January 2018. Applications are evaluated and funding decisions made without knowledge of the school or district by a committee of cooperative members.



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.



Jeromy Bogue provides a good spring cleaning for one of our tanks. Midwest Propane provides value-added service through every season.

Peace Of Mind Pricing, All Season Long

January and February, typically the height of the heating season, brought unseasonably warm weather and spring-like wind storms and tornadoes. Winter briefly returned in early spring, bringing a day of April snow followed in short order by a sunny sky with temperatures near 70 degrees.

Mother Nature, in true style, offered another Michigan winter to remember!

Propane customers often pay the price for wintertime volatility. As temperatures decrease, propane prices typically increase, leaving users at the mercy of their provider.

Regardless of what Mother Nature does during any given heating season, our propane customers always enjoy the peace of mind offered by our unique capped-rate approach, offered without additional fees and guaranteed through the entire heating season.

The Michigan Public Service Commission monitors and reports statewide average propane prices from October through March. Out of the gate last fall the statewide average was \$1.63, and it predictably ratcheted up over the winter, hitting a high of \$2.05

in February. The average price over the course of the six-month reporting period was \$1.85, compared to our guaranteed capped rate of \$1.499.

The propane industry is very volatile, and wholesale pricing is subject to a lot of outside factors. We take the guesswork out of it and do the homework on your behalf. We monitor markets, engage with experts and secure gas supply a year or more in advance so we can provide that guaranteed capped rate for the next heating season. Our guaranteed capped rate for the 2017-18 heating season, June 1, 2017, through May 31, 2018, is \$1.599 per gallon.

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Ready to experience the Midwest Propane difference? Sign up under our Tell-A-Friend program and we'll provide a \$100 bill credit once your service is activated. Your tank must be set by July 31, 2017, to qualify. Visit TeamMidwestPropane.com or call us at 844-493-4427 to get started. ■

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Report Of Independent Auditors

Following are excerpts from the audit report. The full report may be accessed at Team-Midwest.com or by calling 800-492-5989.

We have audited the accompanying consolidated financial statements of Midwest Energy Cooperative, which comprise the consolidated balance sheets as of December 31, 2016 and 2015, and the related consolidated statements of operations, equities and margins, and cash flows for the years then ended, and the related notes to the consolidated financial statements. Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these consolidated financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibility is to express opinions on these consolidated financial statements based on our audits.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts

and disclosures in the consolidated financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risk of material misstatement of the consolidated financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the consolidated financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. Accordingly, we express no such opinion. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the consolidated financial statements. We believe that the audit evidence we have

obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

In our opinion, the consolidated financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Cooperative as of December 31, 2016 and 2015, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Moss Adams
April 5, 2017

Director's Compensation Disclosure

Elected directors are paid an annual retainer of \$1,200 and a per diem based on board position, and years of service or credential status for meetings attended on behalf of the cooperative. The chairman is paid an annual retainer of \$2,200.

CONSOLIDATED STATEMENTS OF OPERATIONS

Years ended December 31,
(Dollars in 000)

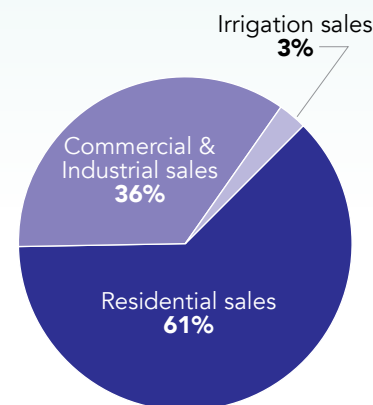
	2016	2015
Operating revenues	\$ 87,748	\$ 85,197
Operating expenses	83,463	82,730
Interest expense	3,536	3,679
Operating margins (deficits)	749	(1,212)
Capital credits	4,549	3,179
Non-operating margins (deficits)	(32)	361
Net Margins	\$ 5,266	\$ 2,328

CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEETS

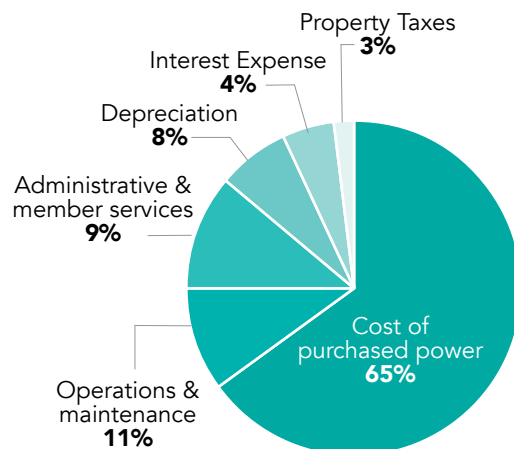
December 31,
(Dollars in 000)

ASSETS	2016	2015
Utility plant in service, net	\$ 160,179	125,455
Other assets and investments	24,077	21,401
Current assets	14,901	13,990
Deferred charges	142	142
Total Assets	\$ 199,299	\$ 160,988
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES		
Equities	\$ 52,969	\$ 48,978
Long-term debt	105,747	86,900
Other liabilities	5,365	4,647
Current liabilities	34,644	20,194
Deferred tax liability	563	269
Deferred credits	11	-
Total Equity and Liabilities	\$ 199,299	\$ 160,988

Where Our Sales Come From



Where Your Dollars Go



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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