

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



THE NEW GUYS

MI Local Hops Stands Out
In Growing Hops Industry



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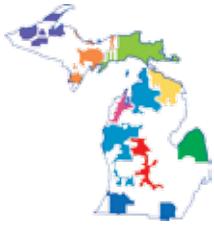
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Change of Address:

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

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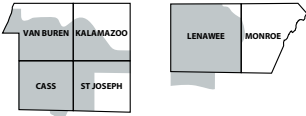
I Remember...

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 or email to cdorr@meca.coop



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AND CASSOPOLIS SOLUTIONS CENTER**

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1610 E. Maumee Street
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Midwest Energy & Communications is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Celebrating A Bright Future Together



Robert Hance
President/CEO

They say good things come in threes and the changes happening at Midwest are proof of just that.

A new building, a new name and a new logo.

Last year we began planning and building for the future as we realized we could no longer function efficiently at our existing headquarters. We broke ground in May 2016 and officially opened for business at 60590 Decatur Road in Cassopolis on August 28, 2017.

Building new allowed us to design a space with operational and functional efficiencies while incorporating some exciting, new energy and technology advancements. In fact, our lobby includes a smart home feature that demonstrates the many automation solutions that make your home more efficient, safe, fun, and easy to use. We invite you to stop by any Monday through Friday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. for a visit.

The second good thing is our new name: Midwest Energy & Communications. As we built, we realized that much of the need for more space is prompted by the growth on the communications side of our business. We are now 5,000 internet subscribers strong and adding about 250 each month. Our fiber deployment, combined with the many opportunities for smart grid applications, are huge growth drivers for us. While we're firmly rooted in electric distribution and have a thriving, long-term propane business, energy is only part of our story as we are now a full-service energy and communications company. We're simply expanding on the Midwest name you've come to know and trust.

With the new name comes a new, modern logo. The green represents our rural roots, optimism and energy, while the gray adds a modern and contemporary feel. It's a perfect combination of our past, present and future. Most importantly, the name and logo together clearly identify us as one team here to provide first-in-class innovations and solutions to our members and customers.

Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) is not a new company; we're the same member-owned cooperative we've always been, with the same local people and the same commitment to reliability and outstanding service. Nothing changes in your experience or how you do business with us. We're just operating now with one voice and name as we live out our message that geography does not have to define a person's scope of opportunity, and small-town life doesn't mean giving up on better living.

Together, friends, our future is bright. ■

Youth Tour: Making A Local Impact

What makes electric co-ops unique is our foundation in the community. We began from people coming together for the greater good, and we continue that tradition each day in the work we do. Part of that foundation is supporting today's students on their path to becoming tomorrow's co-op leaders. Each year, we sponsor two high school students on a trip to Washington, D.C. as part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Tour.

We're proud to provide our young people with a truly exceptional experience that builds character and creates a sense of appreciation for our rich history, as a country and as an association of rural electric cooperatives.

Chris Jackson, son of Dennis and Rebecca Jackson and a junior at Mendon High School, experienced the trip of a lifetime. "He went somewhere we've never gone as a family. He was able to experience something special for himself," said Dennis.

Chris's favorite monument was the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, and he commented that the most surprising part of the tour was learning that Abraham Lincoln knew he was likely going to be assassinated. "This trip taught me that anyone can be a leader regardless of their background or walk of life."

Our other representative, McKenna Young, daughter of Raymond Young and Sarah Wyatt, and a junior at Madison High School, loved meeting new people and creating new memories while on the

"This trip taught me that anyone can be a leader regardless of their background or walk of life."

trip. "This trip has made me realize how dedicated you have to be to reach your goals. The people I met and the places I went have inspired me," said



Chris Jackson and McKenna Young represented our cooperative at the 2017 NRECA Youth Tour of Washington, D.C.

McKenna. "Academically, I learned more about the history of our nation and how it is run. It opened my eyes to how the world works." She was most surprised to learn how influential her generation truly is. "We're the core of the future and we can influence many things because we have a voice."

Sarah feels like this trip changed her daughter's life. "This adventure was extremely impactful and helped her learn more about herself and who she can become. She is more confident, less introverted and more adaptable to unfamiliar situations now."

It's these kinds of success stories that reinforce why we support these types of programs. We want to help our youth develop an emotional connection to our great nation and their role in it, but more importantly, we want to help them mature and grow as people. ■

Michigan Co-ops Empower Future Leaders

Youth Tour Washington, D.C. Highlights

Designed to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, Youth Tour teaches the brightest students of Michigan about their past—and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance students' knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build life-long friendships with other student-leaders from across the country.

Michigan's electric cooperatives sent 20 high school juniors and seniors to experience Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. this past June. The following pictures tell the story. ■

Information is available at
CooperativeYouthTour.com.



↑ Future Mitten State Leaders

The 20 selected students from across the state toured multiple landmarks, including a guided tour of the U.S. Capitol.

↔ Captivating Congressman

Students enjoyed meeting with several members of Congress, including Rep. Bill Huizenga from Michigan's 2nd District.

↩ The Lincoln Legacy

Part of Youth Tour involves learning about the great historical and political figures of our country. As these young women consider their futures, they will bring Lincoln's values of respect and fairness with them as they rise to become the next generation of Michigan leaders.

Never Forget

Several students found the names of family members or family friends on the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.



National Mall

A group of students gathered on the National Mall prior to legislative visits and an opening-night performance of "The Sound of Music" at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

↩ What's Next For Energy-Minded Students

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association staff briefed the students on the many opportunities available for those interested in living, working or studying in Washington, D.C.



Easy Ways to Save Energy At Home

Saving energy is a great way to control your utility bills—while also helping to preserve the environment! Just a few small actions can make a big difference. Read on to discover quick and easy ways to start saving energy at home today!



Maintain your heating and cooling systems. Check the filter every month and replace it at least every three months. Remove leaves, dirt, and other debris from around the outdoor components to improve air flow and efficiency.



Strategically open and close window coverings. On hot, sunny days, keep your home cool by closing blinds, window shades, and curtains—especially on the south and west sides of your home. In cooler weather, leave shades open to maximize heat from the sun.



Set a schedule on your programmable thermostat. Program temperatures to save energy while you're at work, sleeping, or away. In the summer, increase the temperature during these times to save on cooling costs. In the winter, lower the heat to save energy and money.



Seal air leaks. Prevent cool air from seeping out in the summer and warm air from escaping in the winter. Up to 30 percent of heating and cooling bills are consumed by air leakage!



Clean and dust key areas of your home. Vacuum air registers and vents to keep air flowing as efficiently as possible. Dust electronics and light bulbs to ensure they run at maximum capacity. Clean the track on your sliding glass door to maintain a tight seal.

As always, visit michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy-saving information and incentives. ■



Start saving energy today!

- **Turn off and unplug electronics.** There's still time to get outside!
- **Fire up the grill.** Enjoy great tasting food and keep your home cool.
- **Hang your clothes outside.** Save energy and enjoy the fresh scent!
- **Change your furnace filter.** Improve efficiency and indoor air quality.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org
PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.

Birds And Feathers

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

Most
Votes On
Facebook!



Daniella Meyer, Dowagiac—Swan Family At Mill Pond



Violet Skrzypek, Three Rivers—Dinner Is Ready



Amanda Wyse, Archbold—Little Ducklings



Kathi Tice-Taylor, Morenci—Scouting The Field



Regina Stauffer, Centreville—A Spring Treat



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

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. Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too!

Our September theme is **Back To School**. Photos can be submitted from **September 1 to September 20** to be featured in the November/December issue.

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

AMAZING APPLES

Fall's favorite fruit teams up with sweets and spices to bring you these comforting desserts.

Photos—831 Creative

Apple Cheesecake (pictured)

Rebecca Cronk, Presque Isle

- 1 cup butter
- 1¼ cups sugar, divided
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla, divided
- 2 cups flour
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese, softened
- 1 egg
- 5–6 Macintosh apples, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ¼ cup almond slices

Preheat oven to 450 F. For the crust, blend 1 cup butter, ⅔ cup sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla and 2 cups flour. Press into an 8-inch spring form pan—¾ of the way up the pan. For the filling, blend the cream cheese, ¼ cup sugar, remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla and 1 egg. Pour over the crust evenly. For the topping, add the thinly sliced apples to a bowl with juice from a lemon. Stir to coat. Add the remaining ⅓ cup sugar and 2 teaspoons cinnamon. Stir to coat and layer the apples on top of the filling in the pan. Sprinkle almond slices on top. Bake at 450 F for 10 minutes, then lower to 400 F for 20–25 minutes.

▶ Watch a video of this recipe at <https://goo.gl/hbYd7p>

Apple Dapple Cake

Judy Farley, Midwest Energy

For the cake:

- 1½ cups oil
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 3 cups apples, peeled and chopped

For the sauce:

- 1 cup brown sugar
- ½ cup butter
- ¼ cup milk



Preheat oven to 350 F. Cream oil, sugar, eggs and vanilla. Sift together flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon; add to creamed mixture. Beat well. Fold in nuts and apples. Bake in a well-greased Bundt pan for

1 hour and 10 minutes. When cake is almost done, mix sauce ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil; boil for 3 minutes. Pour sauce over hot cake and let cake remain in pan for 2 hours. Then turn cake right side up on serving plate.

Apple Butter

Jane Ellison, Great Lakes Energy

- 5½ pounds apples—peeled, cored and finely chopped
- 4 cups white sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon ground cloves
- ¼ teaspoon salt



Place the apples in a slow cooker. In a medium bowl, mix the sugar, cinnamon, cloves and salt. Pour the mixture over the apples in the

slow cooker and mix well. Cover and cook on high 1 hour. Reduce heat to low and cook 9 to 11 hours, stirring occasionally, until the mixture is thickened and dark brown. Uncover and continue cooking on low 1 hour. Stir with a whisk, if desired, to increase smoothness. Spoon the mixture into sterile containers, cover and refrigerate or freeze.



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

“Healthy Salads” due November 1

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



Fred “The Beervangelist” Bueltmann is the vice president of brand and lifestyle at New Holland Brewing Co., as well as a nationally-recognized expert on beer and food. He offered up this delicious beer-brined chicken recipe from his cookbook, “The Beervangelist’s Guide to the Universe.”
<http://beervangelist.net/book/>

Beer-Brined Jerk Chicken

This dish requires some forethought and a few days, so plan accordingly.

Brine:

- 2 quarts IPA or pale ale
- 2 quarts chicken stock
- 1 quart water
- 1 cup kosher salt
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 1 onion, peeled and julienne
- 6 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 cup chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoon whole black peppercorns
- 3 bay leaves
- 4 chickens, butchered to grill

Place the water, salt, onion, garlic, parsley, peppercorns, and bay leaves on the stove and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from the heat and chill completely. Add the beer and stir thoroughly, then add the chicken. Let sit refrigerated for 8–24 hours. Remove the chicken from the brine and rinse under cold water. Pat dry and keep cold.

Jerk Marinade:

- 1 tablespoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon dried thyme
- ½ tablespoon black pepper
- ½ tablespoon sage
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 12 cloves garlic
- 2 tablespoon dark molasses
- ¼ cup peanut oil
- ¾ cup apple cider vinegar
- ½ cup lime juice
- 3 green onions, minced
- 1 large yellow onion, minced
- 3 habanero peppers, stemmed
- ¼ cup dark soy sauce

Combine the above ingredients in a food processor and puree until smooth, about 2 minutes. Pour the marinade over the chicken and refrigerate overnight (two nights is best), turning once or twice to redistribute the marinade. Place the chicken on the grill and cook over medium heat, turning often, until done, about 25 minutes. Let rest for 5 minutes and serve.

Read the full story about MI Local Hops on page 14 and find this recipe and more at microopkitchen.com.

Board Assigns 2016 Patronage Capital

As an electric cooperative, we are different from our investor-owned counterparts in that our consumers, through their patronage, provide capital for the co-op. You are more than simply a consumer; you are a member and owner!

Midwest Energy & Communications maintains a patronage capital account for each member. At the end of each year, any operating margin ("profit") is allocated based on the amount of electricity purchased by each member. The total of these accounts is used by your cooperative to provide the equity base necessary for financial stability and is paid back to members over time as approved by the board of directors.

At their April meeting, the board authorized the allocation of the 2016 net margin totaling \$6,230,040. Your portion of this allocation is not payable at this time and does not represent a reduction of your electric bill, but rather indicates your equity share in our cooperative's 2016 margin.

Please notify us of any address changes so we can forward payments when patronage capital is retired. If a member or former member fails to claim cash retirement of patronage capital or other payment from the cooperative within five years after payment has been made available at the last known address, that payment will be added to the cooperative's general fund.

Changing the Landscape Day of Service

On Oct. 5, 2017, our Cassopolis and Paw Paw offices will be closed and on Oct. 6, 2017, our Adrian office will be closed, as our employees spend the day giving back to our community. From food banks to parks, we will volunteer throughout our entire service territory to help improve the lives of those around us.

Any drop box payments made at our locations on our days of service will be processed the following day. You can also make payments via SmartHub or by calling 800-492-5989. ■

Notice to Members of Midwest Energy & Communications

Case No. U-16594 2016 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

2008 PA 295, as amended, requires all Michigan electric utilities to get 10 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2015. Under this requirement, Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) submits an annual report to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2016, MEC acquired a total of 27,648 renewable energy credits (11,083 credits from Harvest Wind Farm, LLC, 6,925 credits from Thunder Bay—Four Mile, 8,991 credits from Deerfield Wind Farm and 2 credits from SpartanSolar) and 5 incentive credits from SpartanSolar. All credit transfers were directed through MEC's wholesale power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. Wolverine will continue to generate renewable energy and bank unused renewable energy credits for future use and compliance with statutory renewable portfolio standard requirements on behalf of all of its members. A full copy of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at teammidwest.com or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.



Customer Appreciation Returns Home

Years ago, friends, family and neighbors across our communities came together to bring power and light to rural southwest and southeast Michigan. Today, Midwest Energy & Communications honors that tradition by celebrating the members and customers that make up today's co-op family.

We've hosted customer appreciation events for many years, and this year we bring the celebrations back to the local communities where it all started nearly 80 years ago. Join us in either Adrian or Cassopolis for great food and a host of family-friendly activities. The first 50 households at each event will receive a special gift and everyone can enter for a chance to win some great prizes, including a single-seat kayak, a Weber gas grill, a Yeti cooler and more.

Adrian: Tuesday, Sept. 19, 4–8 p.m.

Join us at our office, 1610 E. Maumee Street, Adrian, for a free backyard BBQ style picnic and a host of activities for all ages.

Cassopolis: Thursday, Sept. 21, 4–8 p.m.

Come visit your new headquarters, 60590 Decatur Road, Cassopolis, for this special customer event. Tour our smart home lobby experience before enjoying great food, music and fun. Regional food trucks will serve up everything from pizza to snow cones (food vouchers will be provided). We'll have bounce houses and face painting for the kiddos and a photo booth for the whole family. We're also bringing the Touchstone Energy Cooperative balloon and will offer tethered rides, first come-first served and weather permitting.



Reservations are required for each event. Please visit teammidwest.com by Sept. 13 to RSVP.

FUEL MIX REPORT

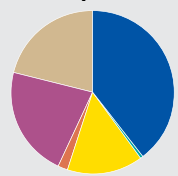
The fuel mix characteristics of Midwest Energy & Communications as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 6/30/17.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

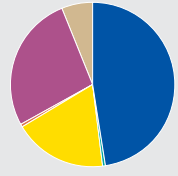
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	41.4%	47.7%
Oil	0.5%	0.6%
Gas	14.3%	18.1%
Hydroelectric	1.9%	0.8%
Nuclear	21.1%	26.7%
Renewable Fuels	20.8%	6.1%
Biofuel	0.6%	0.8%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.2%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1%	0.1%
Wind	19.1%	4.1%
Wood	0.4%	0.5%

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas; and wind includes a long-term renewable purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix.

Your Co-op's Fuel Mix



Regional Average Fuel Mix



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSION/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	6.0	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	1,795	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.6	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0069	0.0083

* Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the 12-month period ended 12/31/16.

Midwest Energy & Communications purchases 100 percent of its electricity from Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc., which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

THE NEW GUYS

MI Local Hops Stands Out In Growing Hops Industry

By Rob Marsh

Before your bartender at the local beer tap fills an empty pint glass or you snatch up a six-pack of brew at your hometown liquor store, you may be surprised to learn that many of your favorite beers began their journey to the tap in the rich, fertile soil of Michigan.

Located in Williamsburg, Mich., and a member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative, MI Local Hops (MLH), is a 280-acre farm (plus an additional 100 acres the company cooperatively manages with other growers) with the capability to harvest up to 350,000 pounds of hops annually. At the farm, rows of twisty vines creep up trellises, each in an effort to produce bitter cones that are the heart and soul of almost any Michigan beer.

"The hops industry has become a bit like the music industry," said Mike Moran, sales and marketing manager of MI Local Hops. "Everyone's looking for the next big thing. The next exciting flavor.

But those flavors need to be consistent and dependable. We know the wow factor is nothing without the quality."

A century ago, Michigan's hops industry was decimated by downy mildew. However, with advancements in modern farming and the determination of local hops growers, Michigan is now one of the top growing regions for hops in the United States.

MI Local Hops is now the largest hop farm east of the Rocky Mountains. The magnitude of that statement isn't lost on the owners, as they build the infrastructure to support and sustain that accomplishment.

With "local" in the name, MLH is supplying some of the Midwest's biggest beer players. Providing hops to Bell's, Founders and New Holland, all of whom are based in Michigan but offer national distribution, the Michigan hops agriculture boom has swept the state and the Midwest.





Still, remaining a local supplier is especially important to MI Local Hops. That sentiment is also felt by the local breweries that receive the crop each season. New Holland Brewing Co., out of Holland, Mich., uses MLH hops exclusively in their flagship beer: Mad Hatter, Midwest IPA.

“We have a lot of Michigan pride and want to support local agriculture, but we also want to have the highest quality ingredients,” said Head Brewer Jason Salas of New Holland Brewing Co. “Michigan hop growers have been demonstrating to us their commitment to the brewing industry by turning out unique, high-quality products that allow us to develop beers worthy of our industry. As a brewer, that means a lot.”

MI Local Hops has grown from being the “new guys” to a significant force in Michigan’s growing hops industry. ■



Pictured L to R are several of the MI Local Hops team members: Dan Taber, chief operating officer; Tim Prentice, project and facility manager; and Mike Moran, sales and marketing manager.



The former High Point Golf Course in Williamsburg is now home to MI Local Hops.

Warm And Cozy Days Ahead

Midwest Energy & Communications employees Jeremy Corey (left) and Joe Pagels set up a tank for a new customer.



Our daily news cycles are filled with stories about world crises or scandals that ultimately affect the financial markets. Just like the financial markets, wholesale propane pricing can be very volatile and subject to outside factors and influences.

Midwest Energy & Communications has been southwest Michigan's propane partner of choice for many years because we remove the volatility factor from your propane experience. We provide stability during unstable times with our free, guaranteed capped rate. No matter what happens on the world stage or with inventory levels, your price will not change. Our rate for the 2017–18 heating season (June 1, 2017–May 31, 2018) is \$1.599 per gallon.

This isn't a first-fill price gimmick to bring on new customers. It's the result of a thoughtful and strategic buying approach that hasn't always meant the lowest price for customers, but has always meant a predictable and stable price. You enjoy peace of mind along with the quality customer care, service and reliability on which we've built this business. We firmly believe these benefits shouldn't be reserved for new customers but should be extended to everyone who entrusts us every year as their propane partner.

Options To Fit Your Needs

In addition to our guaranteed capped rate, we offer billing options to best meet your needs. The **Level Pay Budget Plan** spreads your payments

out evenly over a 12-month period based on your annual average use. This allows you to plan your budget with no surprises, although we do periodically review account usage and recalculate if necessary. And **Metered Service**, much like your electric service, is billed monthly based on what you actually use. Customers with a meter pay a \$10 monthly meter fee. Want to avoid that added fee? Just move to the Level Pay program. Both programs allow you to better manage your budget and avoid the cost of a full tank fill.

Let us help give you both cozy warmth and peace of mind this winter. Call us at 800-492-5989 or visit teammidwest.com. ■

Tell A Friend

We often share stories about products we love with friends and family. Why not get something for doing it? We invite you to Tell A Friend about your propane experience with Midwest Energy & Communications.

For every customer you successfully refer, we will give you and your friend a \$100 credit once service is activated. Tanks must be set by Oct. 31 to qualify.

Public Act 295: The Clean Renewable and Efficient Energy Act

2016 Annual Energy Optimization Report Midwest Energy & Communications MPSC Case Number U-17783

Midwest Energy & Communications (MEC) contracted with the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA) to administer the Energy Optimization efforts in order to comply with PA-295. MECA filed a four year Energy Optimization (EO) plan with the MPSC on August 3, 2015, as required by PA 295. This EO plan was approved by the MPSC on December 8, 2015, and we began implementing our 2016–2019 EO Plan January 1, 2016. WECC was selected to implement all Residential, Commercial, and Industrial Programs, and the Energy Optimization website www.michigan-energy.org. WECC has subcontracted with JACO, Michigan Energy Options, Franklin Energy, Morgan Marketing Partners, and Honeywell to assist with the implementation of the EO Programs. MECA contracted with KEMA as the independent third party evaluation contractor for the certification of kWh savings.

In 2016 MEC collected \$1,248,812 through the Energy Optimization Surcharge and spent \$1,415,088 resulting in an under-collection of \$166,276. MEC achieved 6,745 MWh of energy savings in 2016 and carried forward 290 MWh from 2015 into 2016 for a total reported energy savings of 7,035 MWh for 2016. The full report can be obtained at your cooperative's headquarters and at www.michigan-energy.org or <http://efile.mp.sc.state.mi.us/efile>.

ALERT TODAY, ALIVE TOMORROW: HEADS UP FOR FARM SAFETY

Stay safe around downed power lines. Consider all lines, equipment and conductors to be live and dangerous.



If the vehicle is on fire, or you must exit for other safety reasons, follow these steps:

- 1.** Jump clear of the vehicle. Do not let any part of your body or clothes touch the ground and the machinery at the same time.
- 2.** Land with feet together and hop away in small steps to minimize the path of electric current and avoid electric shock.
- 3.** Keep going until you are at least 40 ft. away.
- 4.** Call for help. Make sure no one gets within 40 ft. of the downed line.
- 5.** Do not re-enter the area or vehicle until emergency responders and your electric co-op crews determine it is safe.

Restoring The Great Lakes Lighthouses

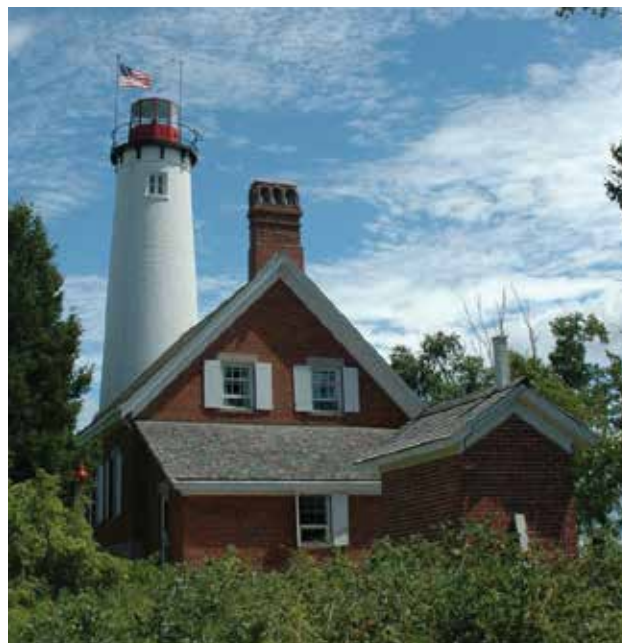
Scattered along Michigan's shoreline and numbering over 200 at their peak, the Great Lakes lighthouses once served as a beacon of hope to the weary seafarer. Today only 124 lights still stand, many in desperate need of repair. Enter the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association (GLLKA).

Founded in 1983, the GLLKA's mission of preserving lighthouses and the stories of those who kept them while fostering a new generation of preservationists came to life when given license to restore St. Helena Island Light Station in 1986. Built in 1873 off the coast of St. Ignace, constant exposure to the elements left St. Helena vulnerable. Abandoned, she endured years of vandalism and theft requiring the removal of several outbuildings. What remained of the station continued deteriorating.

Before arrangements were made for the complete demolition of the structure, members from GLLKA requested permission to restore St. Helena. With the help of countless volunteers including Boy Scout Troop 4 from Ann Arbor, St. Helena slowly came back to life.

Inspiring awe and admiration from thousands of guests each year, the original restoration project began nearly three decades ago. While the threat of theft and vandalism have declined, the elements continue taking a toll. Fortunately, GLLKA volunteers are committed for the long haul, tirelessly maintaining the facility for another generation to enjoy.

In the meantime, GLLKA President Rick Mixer offers guidance and support to groups wanting to preserve lights in their region. In some cases he



can even find old blueprints, making the renovation a true labor of love for those involved in restoring these facilities to their original glory.

Today Great Lakes lighthouses are towering symbols of strength and resilience, often shouldering a much deeper meaning to guests who visit each year. "They brought lost mariners home," explained Mixer. "They represent hope, and we all need a little of that."



Jack O'Malley

Visit gllka.com for information on GLLKA's current projects, a list of lighthouses, and ways to help with the restoration efforts. ■



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by September 15 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 July/August 2017 issue is Susan Scherer, a Great Lakes Energy Cooperative member, who correctly identified the photo as a Beaver Island outdoor concert at Baroque on Beaver.

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



July/August Photo

Why Is My Roof Failing?

Are you wondering why the roof you had installed less than 15 years ago is failing? You're not alone. Like many homeowners, you listened when the sales guy told you to buy top-of-the-line, 40-year, heavy architectural shingle so you would never have to worry about your roof again. But now you're worried. What happened?



Failed asphalt shingles cracking and peeling.

Did You Miss The Warnings?

Home improvement experts like Bob Vila have been warning consumers for years about bogus asphalt warranties, "While asphalt shingles come with warranties ranging from 20 to as long as 45 years, roofers and builders remain skeptical of those warranties. Since warranties are a marketing device, they are not a reliable predictor of lifespan. In the past decade, there have been many complaints of asphalt shingle failure long before warranties expired."

Manufacturers have also been telling homeowners that today's shingles will not perform like shingles

of old. As far back as 1999, the CertainTeed Corporation made the following statement in their own publication: "Due to the severity of the roof environment, even a one-year-old roof may look different from a roof that was just installed. While you may have first noticed the cracks or blistering from the ladder as you were cleaning the gutters, please be mindful that these normal weathering characteristics may not be visible when you view your roof from your front lawn or driveway." (Quoted from 1999 CertainTeed Corp. "The Lifecycle of Your Roof.")

Why Is My Asphalt Roof Failing?

Asphalt shingles become dried out by heat and the sun's ultraviolet rays. Eventually, the drying of the heavy oils in your shingles causes the fibers to shrink, exposing the nail heads under the shingle flaps. The shrinkage also breaks up the surface coating of sand granules adhered to the underlying asphalt-coated paper. Without the protection of the embedded granules, the paper begins to tear itself apart.

Once the nail heads are exposed, water running down the roof can seep into your attic around the nail shank, resulting in the rotting of your roof deck. This can cause

moisture damage to your interior ceilings and walls.

What Can You Do?

Since at least 1999, the asphalt roofing industry has known of the problems with modern shingles. The solution is simple: make a shingle like they did 40 years ago. However, in order to do that, the oil content of their shingles would need to be dramatically increased and that would make the product cost prohibitive.

While the asphalt industry has its problems, the metal roof industry continues to grow in market share. This growth has been fueled in part by the shortcomings of asphalt roofs. However, consumers attest that the beauty and maintenance-free benefits homeowners get by installing a metal roof are the true reason for the industry's growth.



Aluminum shingles from American Metal Roofs.

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TeamMidwest.com

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION RETURNS HOME

Years ago, friends, family and neighbors across our communities came together to bring power and light to rural southwest and southeast Michigan. Today, we honor that tradition by celebrating the members and customers that make up today's co-op family.

Join us in either Adrian or Cassopolis for great food and a host of family-friendly activities. The first 50 households at each event will receive a special gift, and everyone can enter for a chance to win some great prizes, including a single-seat kayak, a Weber gas grill, a Yeti cooler, and more.

ADRIAN

Tuesday, September 19, 4-8 p.m.

Join us at our office, 1610 E. Maumee Street, Adrian, for a free backyard BBQ-style picnic and a host of activities for all ages.

CASSOPOLIS

Thursday, September 21, 4-8 p.m.

Come visit your new headquarters, 60590 Decatur Road, Cassopolis, for this special customer event. Tour our smart home lobby experience before enjoying great food, music and fun. Regional food trucks will serve up everything from pizza to snow cones (food vouchers will be provided). We'll have bounce houses and face painting for the kiddos, and a photo booth for the whole family. We're also bringing the Touchstone Energy Cooperative balloon and will offer tethered rides, first come-first served and weather permitting.



Reservations required. R.S.V.P. by September 13 at teammidwest.com.