

Thumb Electric Cooperative

September/October 2017

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



## THE NEW GUYS

MI Local Hops Stands Out  
In Growing Hops Industry

Good Value  
At A Fair Price

Important Seasonal  
Member Information

Fall Family Days  
At Octagon Barn



# THERE'S A TREASURE IN YOUR BACKYARD

*and it isn't just corn.*

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

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## YOUR LOCAL WATERFURNACE DEALERS

---

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[bdheating.com](http://bdheating.com)

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[gogreenmichgeo.com](http://gogreenmichgeo.com)

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AllTemp Comfort, Inc.  
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[geo4less.com](http://geo4less.com)

### Clifford

Orton Refrig & Htg  
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### DeWitt

S & J Htg & Clg  
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(231) 873-2665  
[adamsheatingcooling.com](http://adamsheatingcooling.com)

### Indian River

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(231) 238-7201  
[mm-plumbing.com](http://mm-plumbing.com)

### Jackson/Adrian

Comfort 1 Htg & A/C  
(517) 764-1500  
[comfort1.net/geothermal](http://comfort1.net/geothermal)

### Kalkaska

Kalkaska Plmb & Htg  
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### Mt Pleasant

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[waltonheating.com](http://waltonheating.com)

### Muskegon

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[adamsheatingcooling.com](http://adamsheatingcooling.com)

### Muskegon

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### Traverse City

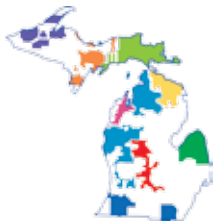
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
countrylines.com

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*Executive Editor*  
**Casey Clark**

*Editor*  
**Christine Dorr**

*Copy Editor*  
**Heidi Spencer**

*Design and Layout*  
**Karreen Bird**

*Publisher*  
**Michigan Electric**  
**Cooperative Association**

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Association officers are **Robert Kran**, Great Lakes Energy, chairman; **Mark Kappler**, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, vice chairman; and **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power Cooperative, secretary-treasurer. **Craig Borr** is president and CEO.

**CONTACT US/LETTERS TO EDITOR:**

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



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### Change of Address:

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

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

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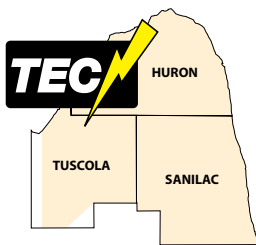
## I Remember...

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



## Thumb Electric Cooperative

2231 Main Street  
Uby, MI 48475-0157  
1-800-327-0166 or 989-658-8571  
E-mail: [tec@tecmi.coop](mailto:tec@tecmi.coop)  
[www.tecmi.coop](http://www.tecmi.coop)

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**Dallas Braun**, General Manager

## PAYMENT STATIONS

### Huron County

Bad Axe—Northstar Bank  
Pigeon—Northstar Bank

### Tuscola County

Akron—Northstar Bank  
Caro—Northstar Bank  
Mayville—Mayville State Bank  
Millington—Mayville State Bank

### Sanilac County

Sandusky—Northstar Bank

Visit Thumb Electric's website  
[www.tecmi.coop](http://www.tecmi.coop)

*Thumb Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

# Good Value At A Fair Price



**Dallas Braun**  
General Manager

Cell phones and other digital devices are part of our culture. Such communication freedom is a luxury we pay for, generally without complaint.

So why is it that we sometimes question the price paid for electricity—a necessity in our modern world? We expect power to be there at the flip of a switch and when it is not, we are not happy. Being without the comforts of electricity is far worse than being without cell phone, cable or internet service.

I am no different. I am a Thumb Electric Cooperative (TEC) member who also expects the lights to come on in my home every time. As General Manager, I have a responsibility to make sure your electric service is safe, reliable and a good value. I believe, that when compared to other commodities, electricity is one of the best values for your money. The electric bill you receive every month is payment for the comforts and conveniences that electricity provided to you in the previous month; and on top of that, you typically have another three weeks until payment is due.

In addition to good value, the pricing structure must be fair to all members of the cooperative. Not every member's bill is the same. At Thumb Electric, like other electric utilities, there are several different rate classes. There is a farm and home rate, industrial rate, general service rate, and commercial rate just to name a few. When you first receive electrical service from TEC, you are assigned a rate to meet your needs. To ensure that each rate class is paying their fair share of expenses to bring power to their home or business, a Cost of Service Study (COSS) is periodically performed.

This study analyzes revenues, rate classifications, and the costs to serve each. These expenses are spread across the various residential, commercial and industrial rate classes in an attempt to have all rate classes paying their fair share of expenses and eliminate any subsidies that may exist between one rate class and another.

Costs consist of both fixed and variable components. Fixed costs include the poles, wires, transformers, meters, vehicles, and the personnel or infrastructure to ensure the delivery of safe and reliable electricity to your home or business when you need it. Generally, fixed costs are recovered through a monthly service charge. It is not unlike the monthly charge we all pay for the convenience of having phone, cable, or internet service. Some call it a "customer charge," "availability charge" or even a "service charge," but the purpose is the same regardless of the name. It is payment to have service available at **any** time.

There are also variable costs, which consists of all other non-fixed costs, including the actual cost of the energy. These variable costs along with some of the previously mentioned fixed costs make up the energy charge. This "energy charge" shown on your monthly electric bill is based on the amount of energy used, which is measured in kilowatt-hours or kWh and the kWh rate being paid.

0000070101 Group 43005

**TEC** Thumb Electric Cooperative  
2231 Main St  
Ubyly MI 48475-0157  
"Your Energy Supplier Of Choice"

Business and Emergency Telephone Numbers:  
1-800-327-0100 or 989-658-8571  
Fax: 989-658-2571

John Doe  
1988 Smith Rd  
Ubyly MI 48475

**IMPORTANT MESSAGES**  
Happy Holidays From Your Cooperative! Please see insert for TEC's Holiday Hours and "Easy Chocolate Fudge" recipe!  
Make payments, enter readings, review account online. TEC internet web site is: <http://www.tecmi.coop>  
PAYMENTS and READINGS can be made 24/7 on phone system and at [www.tecmi.coop](http://www.tecmi.coop). You will need your account number.

Office Hours 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday  
Fridays and days before holidays 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
Internet <http://www.tecmi.coop>

Account Number: 10111

Meter No.	Rate	Usage Last Year	Meter Reading Previous	Meter Reading Present	Meter Reading Dates Previous	Meter Reading Dates Present	Mult	KWH Used	Energy Charge
11427	1	472	82565	82986	10/17/14	11/18/14	1.5	421	\$1.00

ENERGY CHARGE \$1.00  
MONTHLY SERVICE CHG 12.00  
FUEL & POWER ADJ -3.43  
ENERGY OPTIMIZATION SURCHARGE 0.91  
ELECTRIC WATER HEATER CREDIT -6.25  
MI LOW INCOME ENERGY FUND 0.97  
STATE SALES TAX 2.17

Energy Efficient Loan Balance	Energy Optimization p	Energy Optimization p	Renewable Energy Surcharge	Generation Power Savings
0.00	0.00160	4.93		

Meter Water Balance	Rat Rate	ERC Loan Balance	Fuel & Power p	Bill Type	After 12/23/2014, Please Pay	Total Amount Due
0.30	0.121150	0.00	-0.08150	REGULAR	58.47	57.37

Billing Date 12/02/2014  
Mailing Address 1988 Smith Rd  
Number of Days 35  
Account Number 11111111  
Due Date 12/23/2014

**RETURN THIS PORTION WITH YOUR PAYMENT -- See Reverse Side For More Billing Information**

METER NO. PREV RDG READING  
13627 82986

Dec 2014  
Date Read

Account Number 11111111  
Customer Name John Doe  
Total Amount Due -- Please Pay 57.37  
After 12/23/2014, Please Pay 58.47

THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  
PO BOX 157  
UBYLY MI 48475-0157

1200003757010000584700005737%

The electric meter on your home or business measures and records how many kWhs are used each month, and you are billed accordingly. The more kWhs you use, the higher your energy charge will be; the less you use, the lower your energy charge will be.

An important part of the Cost of Service Study also looks to ensure each rate class is paying their fair share of these fixed and variable costs through the monthly surcharge and the energy charge. When the monthly surcharge is too low, the higher energy users pay a greater share of the fixed costs than the lower users. This inequality exists when part of the fixed costs is embedded in the energy charge as opposed to the monthly surcharge.

TEC's latest Cost of Service Study should be completed before the end of 2017. This study will show the costs of providing "good value" of electricity and how to spread these costs in a "fair" manner to all members of the cooperative; and it will be used as a guide for any future rate revisions. The actions of the board to become member-regulated in November of 2016 allow any rate changes to be made in a cost-effective manner with local input from you, the members of the cooperative.

We will share more with you in future issues of *Country Lines* and keep you informed as the results of the Cost of Service Study become available. ■

**A** – Thumb Electric Cooperative address and telephone numbers.

**B** – Your name and billing address.

**C** – The type of bill you are receiving.

**D** – The rate schedule by which you are billed (A rate table is found on the back of your bill).

**E** – The MPSC approved power cost recovery factor (this rate fluctuates depending on wholesale power costs).

**F** – The number of kilowatt hours of electricity you used from your previous to latest meter reading.

**G** – The controlled water heater credit (which is deducted from your bill if you participate in the controlled water heater energy management program).

**H** – State mandated surcharge to provide assistance to low income people.

**I** – Credit amounts (indicated with a "-" notation).

**J** – The due date—if payment is not received by this date, your account will be charged a 2 percent penalty on the unpaid amount for the month.

**K** – Your share of the cost mandated by the State to implement the Energy Optimization Programs.

**L** – The Michigan Public Service Commission has determined the average residential customer will save \$2.92 each month over the life of the Energy Optimization Programs.

**M** – Using black ink, write your current month meter reading in the boxes provided. The previous meter reading is listed for your convenience in computing usage.

**N** – Using black ink, record the date of the reading in the boxes provided. By filling in the boxes, TEC can process your bill with our remittance processing machine, which can process your meter reading, endorse your check and credit your account in one simple step. The remittance processing machine can process up to 600 payments per hour unattended if readings are properly coded with black ink.

**O** – Your account number (refer to this number for all billing inquiries and include it with all payments).

**P** – The amount you owe when the payment is received at the Ubyly Office on or before the due date.

**Q** – The amount due if paid after the due date (there is a 2 percent late payment charge after delinquent date).



# 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. ■

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Information is available at  
[CooperativeYouthTour.com](http://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.

# Important Seasonal Member Information

**A**s required by the Michigan Public Service Commission, Thumb Electric Co-op recently has done or will do a meter reading for seasonal members who receive electric service under Rate Class 2 and have a \$17.50 monthly service charge.

Billing for most seasonal member consumption during the past 12 months will occur on Oct. 3.

Each month, nearly 200 seasonal members report their meter readings and the dates they are read. They make monthly payments for electricity consumed, in addition to the monthly service charge, to avoid receiving the annual bill.

Seasonal members are encouraged to read their meters and include the reading date whenever possible, to reduce the potential for electrical problems and billing concerns.

Seasonal members are also encouraged to sign up for our automatic bill payment plan. Rather than writing



a monthly check, the money is withdrawn from your checking or savings account automatically on or near the same day each month.

Members also have the option to use TEC's online bill payment system, called Smarthub. By visiting [tecmi.coop](http://tecmi.coop) and selecting the "my account" tab, a member can register their account, which allows them to make online payments by check, credit card, or bank account, record meter readings, view billing and payment history, view current and past bills, view monthly billed and usage graphs, and more. Paperless billing is also available. ■

## THUMB ELECTRIC

# Energy Optimization Rebate Program

Energy Star Rebate	For Energy Star appliances, LED bulbs and fixtures, Energy Star TVs, and much more.
In-Home Energy Audit	Get knowledge on the energy usage of your home and some free energy saving items as well!
HVAC Rebates	Installing a new furnace or AC system? Certain energy-efficient upgrades qualify for incentive dollars.
Appliance Recycling	Got an old refrigerator or freezer eating up your energy budget? Have it recycled and get cash back. Window AC & dehumidifiers qualify under certain conditions.

Agribusiness and commercial programs also available.

**Call 989-658-8571 or 1-800-327-0166, or visit our website [tecmi.coop](http://tecmi.coop) today to learn specific details.**



# Employee Spotlight

At Thumb Electric, from time to time, there may be a need for us to make a visit to your home or business not related to a power outage. You may have had a meter stop working or be in need of a meter reading. You may participate in one of our many member enhanced services such as a Dual Heating program, an Energy Optimization rebate, or a water heater program. Whatever the case may be, this is when you may encounter one of our field workers in member services at your door. Allow us to introduce them!

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**Utility Man Doug Diem** has been with TEC for more than 31 years, having been employed with the co-op since 1986. Prior to coming to Thumb Electric, he worked as a contract employee for DTE Energy, completed classes in electronics at the Sanilac Career Center and also attended Saint Clair Community College. Doug has a daughter, Kellie, and in his free time enjoys hunting and working on the family farm.

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**Member Service Representative Clint Seidl** has worked for TEC since 2011. He has a mechanical engineering degree from Saginaw Valley State University and worked in the design engineering field before joining the team at Thumb. Clint is married to his wife, Michelle, and together they have two children, Ryan and Sophie. In his time away from work, Clint does some farming and enjoys hunting.

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**Member Service Representative Logan Tibbits** came to work at TEC in 2011. He has an associate degree in applied science/utility technology from Alpena Community College and has worked in the utility industry since graduating. Logan is married to his wife, Megan, and together they have a daughter, Nora. Logan likes to go hunting, fishing and camping in his free time.

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**Thumb Electric Cooperative would like to thank these employees and all the members of our dedicated team for working hard day or night to help keep the lights on for our community!**

# 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.

MI  
co-op  
KITCHEN

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 [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.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 [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com).

# If You Smell Gas...

**D**id you know that propane gas has no odor? The “rotten egg” smell is added for your safety, to help alert you to any possible leaks. If you smell gas in the house, or if you have a gas alarm that signals the presence of gas, immediately follow these safety guidelines:

## No flames or sparks!

Immediately put out all smoking materials and other open flames. Do not operate lights, appliances, telephones, or cell phones. Flames or sparks from these sources can trigger an explosion or fire.

## Leave Immediately!

Get everyone out of the building or area of the suspected leak.

## Shut off the gas.

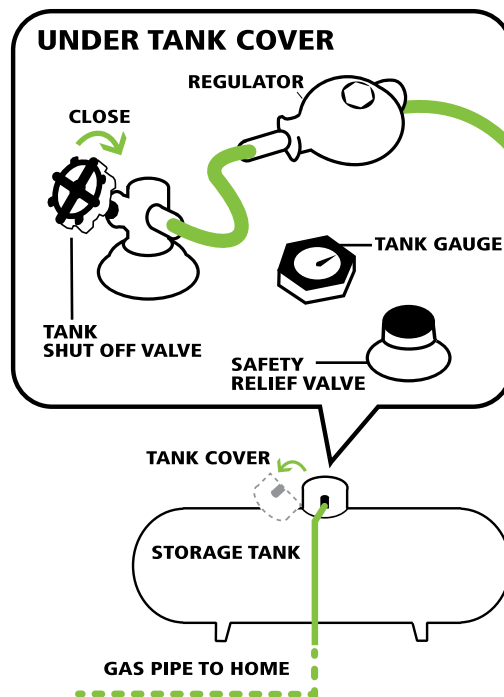
Turn off the main gas supply valve on your propane tank if it's safe to do so. To close the valve, turn it clockwise (see diagram).

## Report the leak.

From a neighbor's home, call Thumb Electric at 800-327-0166 right away. If for some reason you can't reach us, call 911 or your local fire department.

## Stay away.

Do not return to the building or area until we have determined that it is safe to do so. ■



## Successful 2016 With Energy Optimization

Since 2009 Thumb Electric has been required by PA 295 to offer programs to members to help them reduce their usage and, as a result, save them money. In 2016, TEC was required to achieve an overall savings of 1,662,419 kWh. Through programs such as LED lighting rebates, HVAC upgrade rebates, appliance recycling rebates, and rebates for Energy Star appliances, we were able to save 1,892,803 kWh with over 1,000 members participating in some form. For every \$1.00 invested in Energy Optimization over \$4.00 in savings is achieved.

The program continues in 2017 with very similar cost saving programs, and we are currently working on programs for 2018 and beyond, although a new law is in effect and the program will be renamed the Energy Waste Reduction Program. Thumb Electric has a long history of saving members money and energy as we have offered programs in heating and cooling, such as energy audits to show members savings from installing cost saving equipment such as geothermal furnaces, and Air Source Heat Pumps.

For more information on energy saving rebates, please see our website at [www.tecni.coop](http://www.tecni.coop) or give us a call at 800-327-0166.

## Notice To Members Of Thumb Electric Cooperative

### Case No. U-18279 2018–2021 Energy Waste Reduction Plan

2008 PA 295, as amended, requires all Michigan member-regulated electric cooperatives file with the Michigan Public Service Commission an Energy Waste Reduction Plan (EWR). Under this requirement, Thumb Electric Cooperative submitted its 2018–2021 EWR Plan to continue to offer four existing programs to achieve targeted energy savings. Thumb proposes to implement the plan using its own resources and does not intend to change the existing approved surcharge for the programs. A full copy of the cooperative's Energy Waste Plan that was filed with the MPSC is available by request at any of the cooperative's offices.



## Ubyly To Kinde Transmission Rebuild Continues

Thumb Electric contractors will continue to upgrade and rebuild the 41.6 KV transmission line between Ubyly and Kinde late this summer and into fall. Transmission lines feed higher voltage power to substations where the voltage can be reduced for distribution to the wires and poles that go into the homes we service. The current line has been in service since the 1950s and is starting to show its age with reliability during bad weather. The new line, where possible, will be brought up near the road right-of-way and taken out of deep right-of-way where access can be difficult with bucket trucks and other equipment needed during restoration efforts. Once the new line is operational, the old line will be removed.

## Several Payment Options Available

Thumb Electric offers members several options when it comes to making payments and turning in meter readings. You may choose the same method used for nearly 80 years at the co-op; just send in the payment with the provided stub along with the meter reading. You can also make a payment over our phone system, your computer or smart phone and turn in your meter reading at the same time. We even have a cash payment option through MoneyGram offered at such locations as Walmart or CVS. For those choosing to use SmartHub over the internet or a smartphone, users have the added convenience of reporting a power outage. For more information, please visit our website at [tecni.coop](http://tecni.coop).

## Fall Harvest Safety

Thumb Electric would like to remind all members who do farm work this harvest season, *don't forget to look up*. Coming into contact with a live wire could prove to be extremely dangerous or even fatal. Anyone who works with farm machinery and any heavy equipment should take an extra second to be aware of their surroundings. The life you save could very well be your own.

## Appliance Recycling

Appliance recycling continues this fall through October. Our appliance recycling partner, SEEL, will pick up an old working refrigerator or freezer, and we will credit your account \$50. If they have scheduled to pick up a refrigerator or freezer, they will also schedule to pick up a dehumidifier or a window AC unit you wish to recycle. Those are worth a \$20 bill credit. Call 844-631-2130 to schedule your pick up today!

## Tree Trimming Efforts Continue



Tree trimming will continue at an aggressive pace throughout 2017, although large amounts of rain have made it difficult to access some areas. Removing and trimming trees make for fewer outages and shorter duration of outages that do occur because of these efforts. Priorities will continue for line sections that are historically problematic lines, followed by overgrown sections. As time allows, less severe circuits will be maintained. Members in Greenleaf, Austin and Elkland Townships will continue to see crews this fall, as the area has been hit especially hard with diseased and aging trees falling on lines, sometimes from far out of our right-of-way. Members in Fremont, Vassar, Dayton, Juniata and Indianfield Townships will see crews as well as part of regular system maintenance. Also, as part of the Ubyly to Kinde transmission project, tree trimming will take place in parts of Bingham, Verona and Lincoln Townships.

Due to a disease in the Ash tree, which is a very popular species of tree in our service territory, we have had to adjust our trimming locations. It has made planning a challenge at times, but we make every effort to contact members ahead of the trimmers. We will send out a postcard to members to let them know trimmers will be in the area. And, at times, we will try and call members to let them know the plan for their area. If you have an updated phone number, please call us with your new contact information. ■

# THE NEW GUYS

## MI Local Hops Stands Out In Growing Hops Industry

By Rob Marsh



**B**efore 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.



# Birds And Feathers



A pair of Loons. *By Lynne Coleman*



I spotted a Heron gazing intently on a dock. *By Gloria Zalewski*



This juvenile Bald Eagle was keeping a watchful eye on top of our flag pole near the Decker area. *By Holly Shaw*



Bluebirds sitting on top of their nesting box on our pond. *By Elizabeth Codd*

## Share Your Photos!

Thumb Electric invites members to share their photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*.

Upcoming topic and deadline is: **Back To School** due **September 20** for the Nov./Dec. issue.

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

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



Nuthatch gymnastics. *By Mary Shegan*



# Thumb Electric Members Celebrate Milestones

Over the past year, we have had the privilege of presenting two Thumb Electric Cooperative members with recognition from the Historical Society of Michigan through their Centennial Farm Program.

Since 1948, the program has recognized more than 6,000 farms for ownership in the same family for more than 100 years. Farms can currently qualify in one of two categories: the noted Centennial Farm, and a Sesquicentennial Farm, which is over 150 years in the family.



Thumb Electric members that were recognized in the past year included:

- **James Gierman** – Decker Rd., Marlette. The farm was established at least 100 years ago by William Gierman.
- **Steve Koroleski** – E. Kinde Rd., Kinde. The farm was established at least 100 years ago by Stanislaus Koroleski.

All of us at Thumb Electric congratulate these family farms for their longevity and wish them many more years in the farm industry.

If you are interested in applying for farm certification, please contact us. Applications are available at our Ubyl office, from the Michigan Centennial Farm Program at 517-324-1828, or visit [centennialfarms.org](http://centennialfarms.org).

## Notice to Members Of Thumb Electric Cooperative

### Case No. U-17801 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, Thumb Electric Cooperative submits an annual report to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2016, Thumb Electric acquired a total of 16,868 renewable energy credits (13,861 credits and 3,077 incentive credits from Thumb Electric's wholesale power supplier, CMS Energy.) Thumb Electric through CMS Energy 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 at the cooperative's offices.

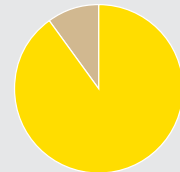
## FUEL MIX REPORT

The fuel mix characteristics of Thumb Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 06/30/17.

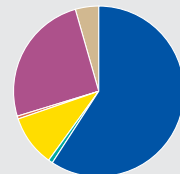
### COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	0%	59.4%
Oil	0%	0.6%
Gas	90%	9.8%
Hydroelectric	0%	0.6%
Nuclear	0%	25.4%
Renewable Fuels	10%	4.2%
Biofuel	0%	0.5%
Biomass	10%	0.5%
Solar	0%	0%
Solid Waste Incineration	0%	0%
Wind	0%	2.7%
Wood	0%	0.5%

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	0.25	7.6
Carbon Dioxide	897	2,170
Oxides of Nitrogen	0.23	2.0
High-level Nuclear Waste	0	0.0083

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

The fuel mix data presented by Thumb Electric is the data from CMS Energy which supplies nearly all of Thumb Electric's purchased power.

# Restoring The Great Lakes Lighthouses

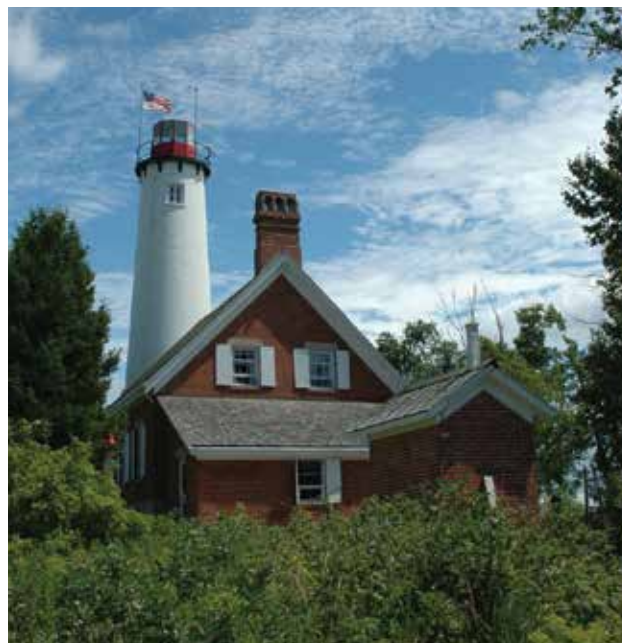
**S**cattered along Michigan's shoreline and numbering over 200 at their peak, the Great Lakes lighthouses once served as a beacon of hope to the weary seafarer. Today only 124 lights still stand, many in desperate need of repair. Enter the Great Lakes Lighthouse Keepers Association (GLLKA).

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](http://gllka.com) for information on GLLKA's current projects, a list of lighthouses, and ways to help with the restoration efforts. ■**

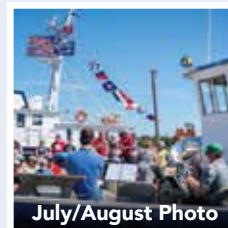


## «« Where In Michigan Is This?

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](http://countrylines.com) or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the 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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**CELEBRATING 22 YEARS OF FALL FAMILY FUN AT**

# OCTAGON BARN



## **Fish Dinner**

Friday, Sept. 8, 4–7 p.m.

## **Gate Admission**

\$5.00 (Age 6 and older)

## **Farmer's Breakfast**

Saturday, Sept 9, 8–10 a.m.  
Sunday, Sept. 10, 8–11 a.m.

## **Hours**

Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.

For more information, please visit [thumboctagonbarn.org](http://thumboctagonbarn.org) or call 989-665-0081.  
The barn is located just outside of Gagetown at 6948 Richie Road.