

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Wild, Wild Midwest **WARDENS**

The Outdoor Channel Captures Michigan's
Finest Conservation Officers In Action

Meet Director
John Lord

More Classroom
Grants Highlighted

Propane Team Gets
High Marks For Service

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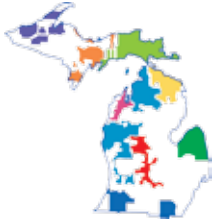


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Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Copy Editor
Heidi Spencer

Design and Layout
Karreen Bird

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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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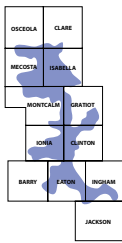
I Remember...

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



Tri-County Electric Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Portland office/Mail payments to:

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

Blanchard office:

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

Night deposit box available at both locations.

Electric bill/account questions:

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

Pay by phone, anytime:

1-877-999-3395

Service questions/outages:

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

Tri-County Propane:

1-877-574-2740

High Speed Internet

1-800-668-8413

homeworks.org

E-mail: tricoenergy@homeworks.org

Board of Directors

District 1 — John Lord

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

District 2 — Jim Stebbins

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

District 3 — Luke Pohl

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

District 4 — Kimber Hansen

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

District 5 — Corinna Batora

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

District 6 — Ed Oplinger

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

District 7 — Shirley Sprague

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

Editor: Jayne Graham, CCC



Find us on Facebook.
[facebook.com/HomeWorks.org](https://www.facebook.com/HomeWorks.org)

Cooperatives Commit To You And Your Community



Mark Kappler
General Manager

HomeWorks Tri-County Electric celebrates National Cooperative Month in October, along with 40,000 other cooperatives serving more than 120 million Americans.

This year's theme of "Cooperatives Commit" will be used to help more people learn of the advantages of the cooperative business model.

As member-owned-and-controlled businesses, cooperatives are committed to meeting the needs of our members and communities, rather than generating returns for distant investors.

Co-ops like HomeWorks commit in many ways to meeting the needs of our members and building stronger communities. One key example: the dollars you pay for your electricity are spent on purchasing your power and delivering it to you safely. Any funds left are reinvested in the co-op through work plan projects that will strengthen our reliability and, in time, are returned to you as capital credits.

Your dollars circulate close to home, helping to strengthen the local economy. There are many more ways that co-ops like HomeWorks commit. Among them:

Cooperatives Commit to Community

We work for the sustainable development of our communities here in mid-Michigan through employee involvement in local organizations, as well as through our support for local schools and community projects.

For example, the Tri-County Electric People Fund, which will celebrate its 25th anniversary in just a few months, has made nearly 1,500 grants totaling nearly \$2.1 million in that time, helping families with housing, food, and medical care. We've put radios into emergency services vehicles, books on library shelves, and school supplies in children's backpacks, with the help of our generous members who round up their electric bill each month.

Cooperatives Commit to a Better World

Through all of these ways, cooperatives build a better world. In 2015, Partners for Power sent Michigan co-op linemen to a rural mountain village in Guatemala, helping those people bring electricity to their homes.

We're now looking ahead to 2018 and a new Partners for Power trip, this time to Ponton Yata, Bolivia. Michigan cooperatives are reaching out to a Bolivian power cooperative to build power lines in another remote area.

Whether the need is here at home or in another country, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric is committed to our members and our neighbors, all year-round. ■



Meet One Of The Members Of Your Co-op's Board Of Directors

John Lord

By Charly Markwart

If you want to learn what kind of person HomeWorks' District 1 Director John Lord is, you need only to listen to him tell the story of how, one day five years ago, an out-of-the-blue question at church inspired him to become a violin maker.

"One Sunday this man asked if anyone wanted to learn to make a violin," said Lord. "Well, I'd always enjoyed working with wood, so I stood up and said I'd like to learn. I started working with him on Tuesday evenings, and pretty soon I was making a violin."

Five years later, Lord speaks enthusiastically about the fruits of his labor, a beautiful spruce and curly maple violin with intricate details that reflect his keen passion for the craft. And when the subject changes to his service on the HomeWorks board of directors to which he was elected in 2016, that same enthusiasm shines through.

"I ran for the board of directors because I wanted to go that extra mile," he said. "I had served as the district chairman for several years, and it just seemed like a logical progression to go from district chairman to the district director. I just wanted to serve."

The HomeWorks board of directors was a natural place for Lord to fulfill that yearning to serve, as he himself has been served by the co-op for nearly 70 years.

"I've been involved with the co-op since 1948," he said. "That's when my parents moved out to where I grew up, on a 15-acre fruit farm outside Charlotte. We had Tri-County Electric service there, and I've been involved with the co-op ever since."

Lord, who now resides in Leslie, speaks fondly of his long history with the cooperative. But now, as a director, he is looking to the future of HomeWorks, and he's excited about what he sees.

"I wanted to go the extra mile."

"Something I'm most excited about is the possibility of the fiber to the home project," he said. "If that goes through, we'll be able to sit back and say, 'We did this. We brought everyone into the 21st century and gave them the opportunity to be able to communicate with anyone from all over the world, like people in the city are able to do now.'" (HomeWorks staff has been studying the possibility of implementing fiber to the home service. The board of directors is expected to vote on the issue in October.)

To Lord, the chance to give others opportunities like that is a big part of what it means to be a HomeWorks director.

"I'm representing my friends and my neighbors," he said.

That's a responsibility Lord does not take lightly.

"What makes an electric cooperative different from an investor-owned utility is that as a cooperative, we are answerable to and owned by our members," he said. "That's the very foundation of why we exist."

Outside of his work with the co-op and his newfound passion for violin making, Lord enjoys volunteering with the Dimondale Lions Club and the Girl Scouts, traveling and spending time with his wife of over 40 years and their three children, 10 grandchildren and 23 great-grandchildren. ■

On your board of directors, John represents District 1, which is Eaton, Ingham and Jackson Counties. He was elected to the board in 2016.

Co-op Careers Offer Paycheck And A Purpose

By Justin LaBerge

October is National Cooperative Month! Every day in this country, more than 75,000 men and women go to work at America's electric cooperatives to keep the lights on for 42 million energy consumers in 47 states.

It's challenging work, but in addition to a paycheck, co-op employees go home each night knowing they've helped make their communities better places to live.

Over the next five years, thousands of workers will get to experience that sense of purpose and pride as America's electric cooperatives hire nearly 15,000 employees nationwide. These new hires will replace Baby Boomers reaching retirement age and accommodate organic growth in the energy industry.

Many career options

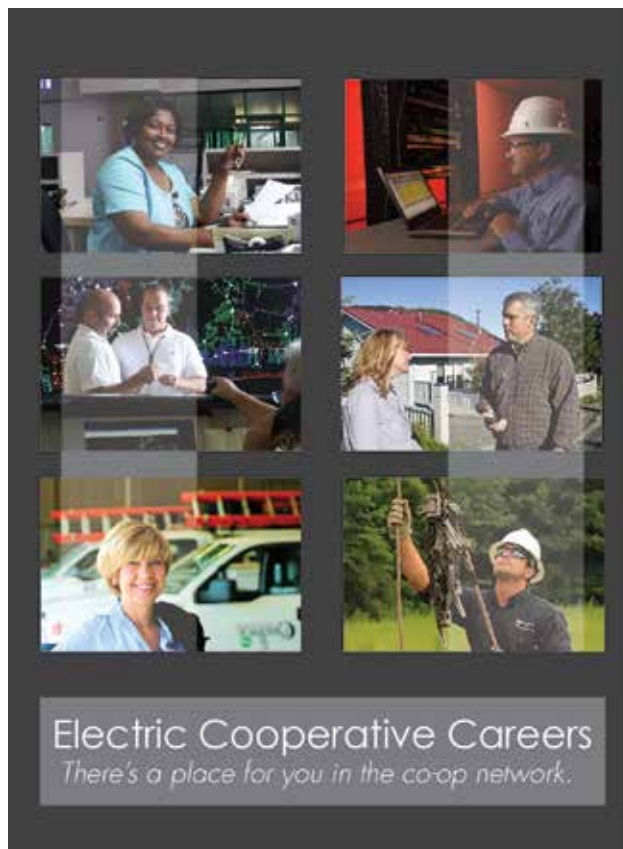
A lineworker high atop a pole is the first image that comes to mind for most people who think about electric cooperative employees. It's true that lineworkers comprise the largest segment of the co-op workforce—approximately 25 percent—but it takes a variety of talents to keep a cooperative running smoothly.

Information technology and engineering are two rapidly growing career opportunities at co-ops. The need for more high-tech workers is driven by the shift to a smarter electric grid and the growth of renewable energy sources that must be carefully monitored and managed.

Other in-demand career paths at electric cooperatives include finance, member services, equipment operators, energy advisors, communications and marketing, purchasing, administrative support and human resources.

Second careers

Some people think the only time to start a new career is fresh out of high school or college. While the energy industry offers many rewarding careers to recent grads, it is also a great place to start a second or third career.



Lineworker training programs offered through community colleges are growing in popularity among people who previously worked in oil and gas, manufacturing, mining, forestry and other similar industries.

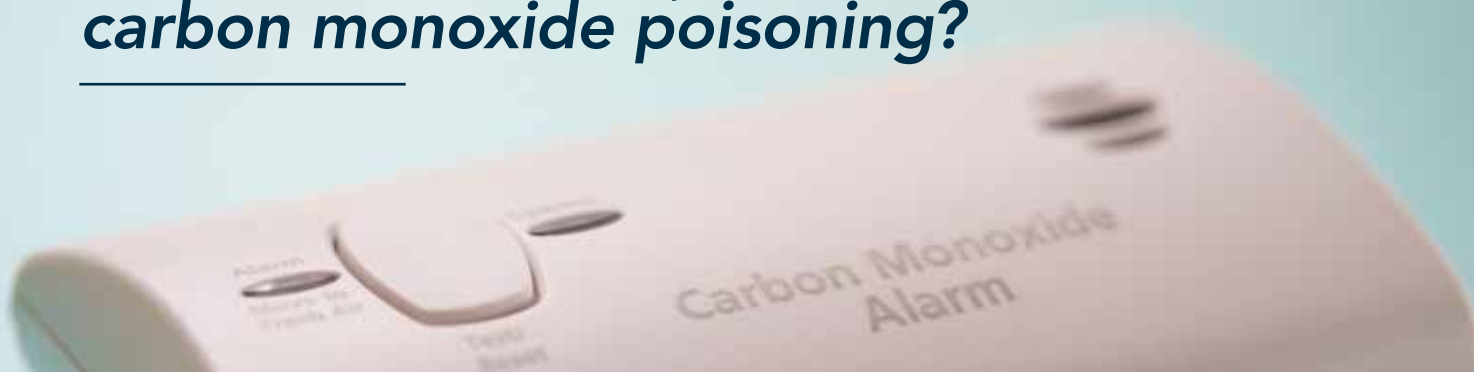
Make a difference

As not-for-profit, member-owned, locally-based businesses, America's electric cooperatives offer careers that allow employees to make a difference in the communities they serve. Cooperatives are guided by a set of principles that put people ahead of profits and offer fulfilling work to those who enjoy serving others. ■

How to find a co-op job

Interested in joining the co-op family? To learn more about the opportunities available across the cooperative network, visit careers.touchstoneenergy.coop or by visiting Michigan co-op websites at countrylines.com.

What can you do to prevent *carbon monoxide poisoning*?



- **DO** purchase and install carbon monoxide detectors that meet Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standard 2034-95. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for proper placement, use and maintenance. If the detectors plug into the wall, be sure they have a battery backup.
- **DO** leave the house if the alarm sounds on your CO detector. Go to a hospital emergency room or call 911 if anyone is feeling sick. If no one is sick, call the emergency number for your heating service or 911. Stay out of the home until your heating service or fire department says it's okay to go in.
- **DO** have a heating professional inspect, clean, and adjust your fireplace, wood stove, gas appliances including furnaces and water heaters, and chimneys/vents every fall—before the start of home heating season.
- **DO** purchase gas appliances that vent their fumes to the outside. Have them installed by a heating professional.
- **DO** read and follow all of the instructions for any fuel-burning devices.
- **DO** make sure that your car, truck, or boat has a working, airtight exhaust system. Repair exhaust leaks immediately.
- **DO** pay attention to symptoms (headache, dizziness, tiredness and/or a sick feeling in your stomach), especially if more than one person is feeling sick or if people and pets are feeling sick.
- **DON'T** operate fuel-powered machines such as generators, power washers, or mowers in buildings or semi-enclosed spaces.
- **DON'T** cook or heat with a grill indoors, even if you put it inside a fireplace.
- **DON'T** run vehicles in the garage, even if the door is open. Carbon monoxide can build up quickly and enter your vehicle and home.
- **DON'T** sit in a parked vehicle with the engine running for a long period of time, especially if your car is in snow.
- **DON'T** use gas stoves or ovens to heat your home.
- **DON'T** use an un-vented gas or kerosene space heater indoors.
- **DON'T** close the damper to the fireplace unless the fire is completely out and the coals are cold.
- **DON'T** ride in covered pickup truck beds or campers. Air moving around the vehicle can draw exhaust in.
- **DON'T** swim or play near the back of a boat where the motor gives off exhaust.
- **DON'T** ignore symptoms! You could die within minutes if you do nothing.

For more information, contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services by calling **1-800-648-6942** or visit **michigan.gov/carbonmonoxide**.

People Fund Update

The Tri-County Electric People Fund, with your generous contributions, granted funds to purchase books and food at their August 23 meeting.

The board made six grants totaling \$8,750, including:

- \$2,500 to Habitat for Humanity of Ionia County to assist with the Habitat Home Partnership program;
- \$500 to Richland Township Library to purchase books for general distribution;
- \$1,000 to M-46 Tabernacle Pantry in Riverdale to buy food for the pantry volunteers to distribute;
- \$3,000 to CASA – The Voice for Clinton County's Children, St. Johns, to help establish a Child Advocacy Center;
- \$1,500 to an Ionia County family to help with housing expenses; and
- \$250 to a Montcalm County family to help with housing expenses.

How to Apply for a Grant

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

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

Note: Applications must be received by Nov. 6 for the November board meeting, and by Dec. 4 for the December board meeting.

Helping Hands



Energy Assistance

We know it can be difficult to keep up with energy costs. Families or individuals eligible for assistance based on income levels can receive:

- In-home equipment evaluations
- Refrigerator and water heater replacements
- Energy-saving devices (with installation)
- Weatherization assistance

ENERGY TIP: Call us or visit our website for program eligibility information.

877.296.4319 michigan-energy.org



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.

Snap SHOT

Life's A Beach—
Michigan Waters



John Silvestro from Farwell shared this summer sunset in Pentwater.



Charles Dumas of Portland sent in this photo of Oval Beach at Saugatuck, taken on a warm August day.



Karen Retter, Jerome, who receives HomeWorks service at Barryton, says "This sunset on Stoney Lake helps me to remember to slow down and appreciate the simple things in life."



John Lord of Leslie took this Snap Shot "at our cottage on Bass Lake near Gowen, in northern Kent County just across the Montcalm County line."

Upcoming Snap Shot Contest Topics And Deadlines

"Furry Friends," Deadline: **October 16** (January 2018 issue)

"Winter Sports," Deadline: **November 15** (February 2018 issue)

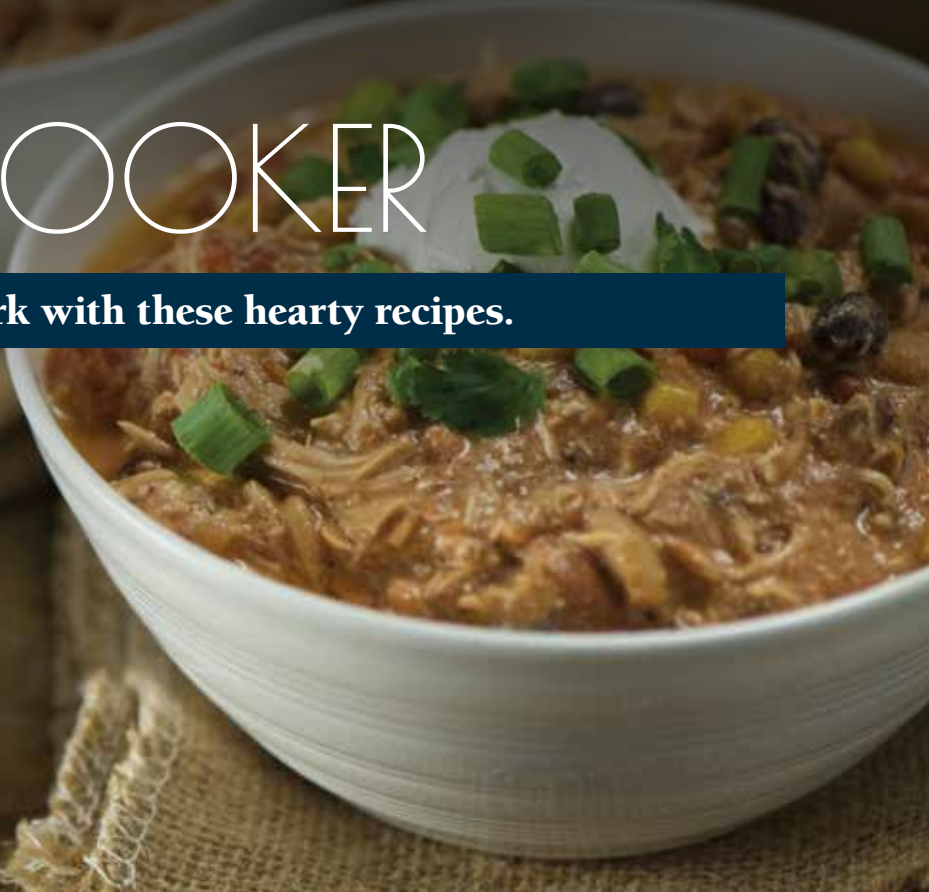
Go to homeworks.org and select *Country Lines* under the Electric tab to submit your photos and see additional themes. It's fast and easy. To send by mail: include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, and details about your photo. Mail to Attn: *Country Lines* Snap Shots, 7973 E. Grand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

Submit Your Photo!

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

SLOW COOKER

Put your slow cooker to work with these hearty recipes.



Photos—831 Creative

Slow Cooker Chicken Chili (pictured)

Diana Johnson, Great Lakes Energy

- 3–4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts (thighs don't work as well)
- 1 can corn, undrained
- 1 can Rotel diced tomatoes, undrained, or chili tomatoes (or both)
- 1 package ranch dressing mix
- 1 can chili beans
- 1 can northern beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 package chili seasoning mix or Mexican seasoning packet (or make your own)
- 1 jar salsa of choice
- 1 8-ounce package cream cheese

Layer in order in a 6-quart crock pot. Do not mix. You can add more corn, beans, salsa, tomatoes according to taste. Cover and cook for 6 to 7 hours on low. Mix and add pepper to taste.

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

Pizza Tot Casserole

Kris Hazeres, Alger Delta

- 2 pounds ground beef
- ¼–½ cup onion, diced
- 1 can (10.5-ounce) cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can (10.5-ounce) cream of chicken soup
- 1 can (14-ounce) pizza sauce
- about 37 pepperoni slices
- ½ cup green pepper, chopped
- 2½ cups shredded mozzarella
- 32-ounce bag tater tots



Brown beef in a skillet with onion over medium-high heat and drain. Mix beef mixture with soups. Spray slow cooker with cooking spray. Pour mixture into your slow cooker and spread out evenly. Pour pizza sauce evenly over

mixture. Place pepperoni slices evenly across the top. Spread green peppers evenly across pepperoni slices. Sprinkle cheese on top. Cover with tater tots.

Place aluminum foil on top. Cover and cook for 3 hours on high. Remove aluminum foil and continue cooking on high. Optional: Place in your broiler (on high if you have the choice of high/low) for 2–4 minutes, watching very closely.

Chicken Tacos

Helen Pische, Great Lakes Energy

- 1½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 16-ounce jar salsa
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 15-ounce can black beans or pinto beans, drained
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1½ teaspoons cumin
- ½ teaspoon oregano
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ cup water
- Toppings: shredded cheddar cheese, cilantro, lime wedges



Spray a 6-quart slow cooker with cooking spray. Place chicken breast in the pot. Add remaining ingredients, stir, cover and cook 4 hours on high. Stir when done; the chicken should

shred easily. Serve with taco shells or on rice. Top with shredded cheddar cheese, cilantro and lime wedges.



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**

**“Flatbreads and Pizzas”
due December 1**

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



Ken Silfven, special advisor for communications at the Department of Natural Resources, has been using this recipe for Venison Pot Pie for years. He can't remember exactly where it originated, but it's become a favorite in his home. Ken notes that it does take a little time to prepare (at least for him), but the results are totally worth it.

Venison Pot Pie

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons minced parsley leaves
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 tablespoon chopped thyme leaves
- ¼ cup red wine
- 1 pound pork loin, diced into ½ inch pieces
- ½ pound venison, diced into ½ inch pieces
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 1 cup diced celery
- 1 cup diced carrots
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- 1 small, diced onion
- 1 medium potato, peeled and diced small
- 2 cups chicken broth
- 2 rounds prepared pie crust (about 9 inches)
- 1 beaten egg

Preheat the oven to 400 F. Combine the salt, pepper, parsley, cinnamon, allspice and thyme in a big bowl. Make a marinade by stirring in the red wine. Add the meat and coat it thoroughly. Cover and marinate at least 30 minutes. Use a medium pot to heat olive oil and add the celery, carrots, garlic and onion. Stir for 5–10 minutes until soft. Add diced potato to the pot and stir, then add the meat and brown slightly while continuing to stir. Lower the heat and add the chicken broth. Simmer for 30 minutes and then remove from the heat so it can cool. Spoon the meat mixture onto the already-prepared pie crust. Place the top crust on top, seal it and pinch it with a fork. Cut slits in the top and then brush it with the egg wash. Put the pie on a baking sheet and bake for 45 minutes. Let it cool for a few minutes before serving.

Read the full story about Michigan's DNR officers featured on the Outdoor Channel's "Wardens" show on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.

As HomeWorks Grows, So Does The Staff



Charly Markwart



Angel McCliggott



Lesa Barker

Providing reliable service with a personal touch takes the right combination of employees and training. As HomeWorks continues to grow, we've added additional staffing and positions to help us achieve the right mix.

Charly Markwart of Portland is our new communications specialist. She will be working on digital and design projects including *Country Lines* magazine, printed materials, our website at homeworks.org, Facebook, and video production.

Charly started her career as a staff reporter and columnist for a newspaper in West Virginia, after earning a bachelor's degree in communication and print journalism. She most recently worked as a marketing specialist and graphic designer for a utility's business energy efficiency program, and also served as communications coordinator for RDV Corporation in Grand Rapids, leading

and executing communications projects for five separate family foundations.

Angel McCliggott was selected to fill the newly created position of human resources (HR) and benefits specialist. Angel brings nearly nine years of HR experience to the position from various HR roles with Independent Bank.

She joined HomeWorks in 2012, assisting members in the customer service area for propane and new electric construction, and progressed into her most recent position with our consumer accounting group.

In her new role, Angel will be handling the HR processes that involve recruiting, hiring, onboarding and performance, and conflict resolution. She will also assume responsibilities for the cooperative's compensation and benefits programs.

Lesa Barker, who also joined HomeWorks in 2012 as a customer service representative, was chosen to fill the open consumer accounting position.

Familiar with both the cooperative's members and our billing system after assisting members in the electric customer service area, Lisa also brings seven years of billing experience from her past role with the Michigan Dental Association. ■

Your Board In Action

Meeting at Portland on August 28, your board of directors:

- Watched presentations of the cooperative's new hot line safety demonstration trailer, designed and built by HomeWorks linemen, and the Power Town tabletop safety demonstration, which will be used in an ongoing public safety campaign.
- Authorized management to spend up to \$5,000 on legal and accounting consultants to update corporate documents to comply with state law.
- Reviewed and approved Board Policy 111 – Board of Directors – General Manager Relationship, as revised, and Board Policy 112 – Strategic Planning.
- Learned there were 127 new members in June.
- Acknowledged the July safety report, listing employee and public incidents and employee training. ■

Time Set Aside for Members to Comment Before Cooperative Board Meetings

The first 15 minutes of every board meeting are available for members who wish to address the board of directors on any subject. The next meetings are scheduled for 9 a.m. on Oct. 23 and Nov. 27 at Portland. Members who need directions to the meeting, or wish to have items considered on the board agenda, should call 517-647-7554.

Touchstone Energy Grants Help Area Schools

More classrooms have benefited from 2017 Touchstone Energy Classroom Technology Grants. Leslie's Woodworth Elementary School and Ionia High School both received funds for special projects this year.



Woodworth Elementary, Leslie

Woodworth students help special education teacher Deanna Perleberg, teacher Ken Weinstein and Principal Jim Dell hold the \$2,000 grant check, which was used to purchase Chromebooks for special education resource rooms.



Ionia High School

Ionia High School's industrial technology department received \$1,800 to run a 480-volt line to a donated industrial robotic arm. Shown, left to right, are Andrew Keson, Ionia School to Work coordinator, Skyler Holton, Austin Beimers, Macey Quinn, Payton Stancil, Ben Salyer, and Principal Ben Gurk.

FUEL MIX REPORT

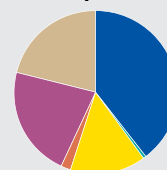
The fuel mix characteristics of HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 6/30/17.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

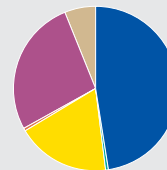
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	41.4%	47.7%
Oil	0.5%	0.6%
Gas	14.3%	18.1%
Hydroelectric	1.9%	0.8%
Nuclear	21.1%	26.7%
Renewable Fuels	20.8%	6.1%
Biomass	0.6%	0.8%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.2%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1%	0.1%
Wind	19.1%	4.1%
Wood	0.4%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

HomeWorks purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

Wild, Wild Midwest

WARDENS



Conservation Officer Mark Leadman scans the landscape in Michigan's District 1 located in the Upper Peninsula.



Conservation Officers Chris Simpson and Dave Rodgers seized nearly 60 illegally taken waterfowl in southwest Michigan's District 7.

The Outdoor Channel Captures Michigan's Finest Conservation Officers In Action

By Emily Haines Lloyd

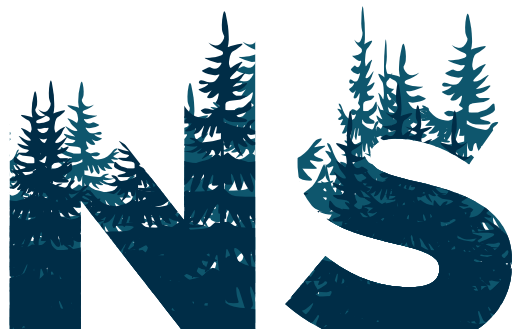
The Michigan Department of Natural Resources' (DNR) mission statement makes its purpose clear: maintain the safety of all while enforcing the laws that safeguard the natural resources of our state. Just like their fellow police officers, the conservation officers of the DNR are committed to serve and protect—even when their jurisdiction includes serving and protecting water, wilderness and wildlife around the state.

It's noble work, and yet the approximately 250 conservation officers aren't often seen or recognized for their efforts. That's because this small number of conservation officers must cover the entirety of both the Upper and Lower Peninsulas—making their districts sometimes hundreds of square miles.

However, Michigan conservation officers are becoming much more noticeable since the 2017 airing of "Wardens" on The Outdoor Channel. The show, which up until 2016, had been filmed in the state of Montana, has now turned its camera lens on The Great Lakes State.

"The resources in Michigan were one of the main reasons The Outdoor Channel had its eye on Michigan as a new location for 'Wardens,'" said Jon Ross, senior editor of Wolf Creek Productions, the producers of the show. "Great hunting, off-road vehicles, lakes and rivers—Michigan is ripe with hunting, fishing and outdoor recreational experiences."

"Wardens" chronicles the lives of conservation officers across America, with the focus on Michigan's finest.



The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is committed to the conservation, protection, management, use and enjoyment of the state's natural resources for current and future generations.

Watch "Wardens" on the Outdoor Channel Mondays at 2 a.m., Fridays at 10:30 a.m. and Saturdays at 9:30 p.m. (EST) for the month of October. Viewers can also check for air times by visiting outdoorchannel.com/wardens



"Our goal from 'Day One' was to use this partnership (between the Michigan DNR and The Outdoor Channel) as an educational tool," said Ken Silfven, special advisor for communications at the DNR. "It's important that citizens not only understand what we do, but why we do it."

The DNR is committed to ensuring all of Michigan's residents and visitors are able to enjoy the outdoor recreational opportunities of the state. It's the conservation officers' responsibility to make sure that is done both safely and legally.



"Wardens" showcases the men and women who protect our public lands in a variety of situations, such as nabbing poachers in high-stakes sting operations, snowmobiling through grizzly bear country, or tracking down illegal fishing operations in freezing rivers, lakes and streams. The show seeks to bring an understanding of the conservation officer's job and why state laws need to be enforced. It also looks to generate interest in outdoor recreation while enhancing the public's appreciation of the DNR's role. As a bonus, the program has increased recruitment efforts by sparking interest in careers as Michigan conservation officers.

"The show was meant to educate viewers about the need to protect our natural resources," said Silfven. "It is also meant to give them a firsthand look at the men and women who wear the green and gray uniform of a Michigan conservation officer. Based on the feedback we're receiving, the show is doing just that."

Top and bottom: Conservation Officer Mark Leadman is filmed by Kristin Ojaniemi as he patrols Michigan's Upper Peninsula District 1 in November 2016, for the opening of the state's firearm deer season.

Tri-County Propane
Field Technician
& Delivery Driver
Lanny Withey



Knowledge, Experience Help Tri-County Propane Serve Customers Well

In last month's *Country Lines*, we shared some of the results of our 2016 Tri-County Propane customer service survey, conducted by Inside Information, Inc. One of the takeaways from that survey in which we took the most pride was the 97 percent rating you gave us for having knowledgeable and professional employees.

We're glad you noticed! At Tri-County Propane, we place great focus on the training we provide to our employees, both in the field and in the customer service department. That's because when it comes to your propane provider, we know it's not only about reasonable rates and fast delivery times; you want to be confident in the safety and reliability of the service you receive, as well. That's a value we share.

"We place a high emphasis on training, because knowledge empowers our employees to be comfortable and confident in the performance of their job duties," said Propane Operations Manager Randy Halstead, who is a certified trainer through the National Propane Gas Association (NPGA).

"Our customers know when they talk to us, they're talking to someone who is knowledgeable about they are doing. I think that's what has helped us build up the trust and loyalty we've been able to build with our customers through the years."

All Tri-County Propane field technicians are certified through the NPGA's Certified Employee Training Program (CETP), a national requirement for field

“Safety, reliability and service is our focus, every day,”

operations personnel. Their training also includes ongoing refresher courses every three years, as well as regular propane-specific safety meetings. But it's not just our field team that gets in on the training; our customer service representatives go through CETP as well.

“That’s a rarity, because it’s not a requirement, so most propane providers don’t train their CSRs,” said Halstead. “But it’s important to us, because when a customer calls in with a regulator question, we want our reps to be able to answer. That’s one

of the reasons our 24-hour service is second-to-none.”

Halstead says that high-quality service extends from the office to the jobsite and back again.

“Safety, reliability and service is our focus, every day,” he said. “That’s what we strive to provide our customers.” ■

To learn more about Tri-County Propane or to sign up for service, call 877-574-2740.

With 40 Years in the Books, Hoppes Leads Experienced Propane Team



Service & Propane Supervisor Mary Jane Hoppes

On August 26, Mary Jane Hoppes, service and propane supervisor, celebrated a significant milestone as she marked her 40th anniversary with HomeWorks Tri-County!

“We offer excellent customer service here at Tri-County, and we provide great services to our members and customers,” she said. “I’m so glad to have been a part of that for all of these years.”

Mary Jane may be our longest tenured employee, but she isn’t the only member of the Tri-County Propane department who brings years of practice and know-how to the job. In fact, the 17 team members who serve our propane customers have a combined 191 years of experience!

When you use the services of Tri-County Propane, you can rest assured you’re in the proficient hands of:

Propane Operations:

- Randy Halstead, Supervisor

Field Operations:

- Andy Fredericks
- Dan Peiffer
- Kevin Sandborn
- Neal Swain
- Sean Thelen
- Lanny Withey
- Trevor Wood

Customer Service:

- Mary Jane Hoppes, Service & Propane Supervisor
- Stacey McEvoy, Blanchard Customer Service Supervisor
- Becky Beard
- Stacey Brown
- Jeff Erridge
- Joy Frazee
- Sara Nartker
- Cheri Rauch
- Erin Storey

I Remember...

Growing Up With Family And Community

Throughout my growing up years, my father and grandfather farmed together in Michigan's Lapeer County. They were both full-time farmers until the mid-1950s when dad began working elsewhere. Our 160-acre family farm included milk cows, hogs, sheep and chickens with all the basic crops—hay, corn, wheat and oats. The fields, livestock and garden provided almost all the food we needed and cash for everything else. As children we each had our chores, so my brother and I fed the chickens and gathered the eggs. Our one-room school was at the corner of the farm. By the age of 10, I drove the tractors and in my teen years worked the fields. Our milk was sold through a cooperative dairy. Feed and fertilizer were purchased through the farm co-op. Grandpa owned stock in the regional electric company. Neighbors worked together during seasons of harvesting. In this way I learned the very early value of living and working



Ben is on the tractor, second from left.

together with mutual respect and partnership, both within the family and the community, values I continue to hold highly in our day.

Ben Bohnsack, Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association

My Grandfather's Life

His name was Albert Doezema. He had a scar on his arm and scar on his leg, and one day he told me his story:

In the 1930s, he was lucky that he had a job with a Grand Rapids power company as a lineman. Jobs were scarce then, and he told me that the company had him work every other week so that twice as many men could have work due to the Great Depression. One day, he was at the top of a 35-foot pole and somehow touched a line that was powered with 7200 volts. He was knocked from the pole and hit the ground. He broke many bones and

had burns on his arm and leg. He said that they figured the shock of hitting the ground started his heart back up, or else he would not have survived. After recovering from the incident, he transferred to the company warehouse and was point man for the next 35 years. I always think about how linemen put their life on the line when they work so closely with powerful electricity. My grandfather surviving that electrical incident in the 1930s was a miracle at that time. He lived to be 89.

Donna Miller, Cherryland Electric Cooperative



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877-574-2740

HomeWorks Tri-County Propane is not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

