

February 2018

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Midwest Energy & Communications

Modern Living
At Its Smartest

Line Clearance
Plan For 2018

No Barriers For
One Local Vet

**Silver Muzzle
Cottage**

*A Rescue & Hospice For
Homeless Senior Dogs*

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1. 7 Series unit uses approximately 900 watts while running in speeds 1-2.





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Photos By Dre Photography



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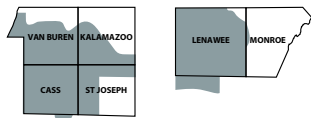
I Remember...

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

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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Test Drive Home Automation

Robert Hance, President/CEO

I remember the day I got my first smartphone. As the information technology folks explained the capabilities and integrated it with my computer, I realized I essentially would carry a portable computer in my pocket. I suddenly had access to voice navigation, photography and videography, and the entire internet at my fingertips. Oh, and I could still call and text people too.

Fast forward just a few short years, and smart devices can now fully integrate with many features in your home. With the marriage of a robust utility grid and what has become known as the "internet of things," nearly any electric device in your home can be added to a home network and controlled at your command.

It feels very George Jetson-like to many because we simply can't wrap our heads around this type of technology. But it's no longer just fun and games for the ultra tech-savvy or wealthy; home automation is becoming very commonplace. Many of today's readily available applications relate to lighting, home security, home theater and entertainment, and thermostat regulation.

Whether you are building a new home or enhancing your existing space, home automation can be easily integrated when you have the right infrastructure in place. And we're making sure you have everything you need to incorporate as much or as little as you want.

Several years ago we made a major investment in our electric distribution grid, incorporating a robust, two-way fiber communications system that would support the technology coming our way. Slowly but surely we're leveraging that investment to deploy fiber internet to our membership. We've provided the backbone you need to take advantage of the many opportunities coming your way that will add previously unknown and unthinkable levels of comfort and convenience to your home experience.

Getting started with home automation can feel very intimidating, and we've created a great tool to help you better understand it before you dip your toe in the water. In designing our new headquarters, we incorporated a smart home into our lobby. It's a fully functional home, allowing you to experience first-hand how easy it is to manage and control many of the appliances and features within your home. It's like test driving a car; you want to get a feel for the experience and understand the features before you commit, and that's just what we've created.

Page 5 of this issue highlights just a few of the features in our smart home. We invite you to come in any weekday from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. You can peruse the space yourself, or get a detailed tour from one of our solutions agents. It's just another way that we are delivering first-in-class innovations and solutions where others won't.

Modern Living At Its Smartest

When we began envisioning our new headquarters in 2016, we wanted to create a space that was not only a leading example of energy and operational efficiency, but also one that provided tools to show you how new technologies are helping people live better. The latter vision ultimately resulted in our smart home lobby experience. This free, interactive display home demonstrates the many ways you can integrate the “internet of things” with your electric appliances to live a more comfortable and convenient everyday life.



Home comfort for
the modern age with
a Nest Thermostat



Exploring the
world of streaming
television



WiFi and
Crockpots

You're invited to stop by any weekday from 8 a.m.–5 p.m. for a personal tour and demonstrations on how to use a smartphone or tablet to keep you safe, make a perfect stew, control energy usage, and more. Here are a few of the current features:

Streaming TV

Learn about the world of video streaming and how you can view local channels and streaming services through a smart TV or device such as Roku.

Nest Thermostat

Take control of your energy use with Nest. Not your typical thermostat, this device learns what temperatures you like and builds a schedule based on that. Plus, it provides reporting on energy use, allows you to control temperatures remotely and automatically turns itself down when you are gone.

Home Control Through Alexa

Use the power of your voice to open blinds, turn on lights, change TV channels and more. Essentially an electronic personal assistant, Alexa can help you keep your pantry well stocked, stay up-to-date on the news, get in touch with loved ones, and more. We'll show you how.

Smart Door, Lights And Blinds

See who is at your door, monitor security cameras remotely, control blinds and lights—all from the comfort of one smart device.

Coffee, Cooking And More

Discover how WiFi has transformed the way we work in the kitchen with WiFi-controlled crock pots, coffee makers and more. Smart kitchen appliances are some of the coolest aspects of modern home innovation.

As new technologies evolve, so will our smart home. We welcome anyone to stop by, MEC customer or not, because we are dedicated to creating vibrant, relevant, sustainable rural communities, and serving as your partner for better living.

NO BARRIERS

ADVENTURES FOR RURAL VETERANS—APPLY BY FEB. 28

Michigan electric cooperatives believe there should be “No Barriers” for veterans with disabilities. That’s the name and idea behind CoBank’s No Barriers initiative. Michigan cooperatives are looking for qualified veterans* from our local community to participate.

No Barriers is a five-day, all-expenses-paid, expedition in Colorado, designed to help veterans with disabilities transform their lives through curriculum-based experience in challenging environments (climbing, rafting and hiking).

If you are a disabled veteran, or you know of a disabled veteran in our community who would like to participate in the No Barriers program, please complete the form on our website:

countrylines.com/nobarriers

**Must have VA disability rating to be eligible.*



ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
YOUTH TOUR

Michigan Co-ops Inspire
Tomorrow’s Leaders This Summer

June 9–14, 2018

Youth Tour applications accepted
between now and Feb. 28.

Encourage your favorite high school
sophomore or junior to apply!



YOUTH TOUR 2018

Learn more at **CooperativeYouthTour.com**.

Portable Generator SAFETY TIPS

Always read the Owner's Manual and instructions for your generator. Do NOT cut corners when it comes to safety.

These tips are merely supplemental and are not intended as a substitute for reading the Owner's Manual.



Carbon Monoxide And Ventilation

- Using a generator indoors **can kill you in minutes**. Exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a deadly, poisonous gas you cannot see or smell.
- NEVER run a generator indoors or in partly-enclosed areas, such as garages.
- ONLY use outdoors and far from windows, doors, vents, and crawl spaces and in an area where adequate ventilation is available and deadly exhaust gas cannot accumulate.
- Using a fan or opening doors and windows will not provide sufficient ventilation.
- It is recommended that you install battery operated carbon monoxide alarms/detectors indoors according to manufacturer's instructions/recommendations.

Gasoline, Fueling And Burn Safety

- Do not overfill the fuel tank. Always allow room for fuel expansion.
- If the tank is over-filled, fuel can overflow onto a hot engine and cause fire or explosion.
- Never add fuel while the unit is running or hot. Allow the generator and engine to cool entirely before adding fuel.
- Never store a generator with fuel in the tank where gasoline vapors might reach an open flame, spark or pilot light.
- Many generator parts are hot enough to burn you during operation and while the generator is cooling after turning off. Avoid coming into contact with a hot generator.

Electrocution Hazard And Electrical Shock Hazards

- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.
- Connecting a portable electric generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.
- Only start or stop the generator when no electrical loads are connected.
- Overloading your generator can seriously damage your valuable appliances and electronics. Do not overload the generator. Prioritize your needs; do not operate more appliances and equipment than the output rating of the generator. A portable electric generator

should be used only when necessary and only to power essential equipment.

- Use the proper power cords. Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage. Do not use extension cords with exposed wires or worn shielding.
- Do not operate the generator in wet conditions such as rain or snow.
- The generator must be properly grounded. If the generator is not grounded, you run the risk of electrocution. Check and adhere to all applicable federal, state and local regulations related to grounding.

Generator Placement And Operation

- Allow at least five feet of clearance on all sides of the generator when operating.
- Generators can be used during a wide variety of weather temperatures, but should be protected from the elements when not in use to prevent shorting and rusting.
- Operate the generator only on level surfaces and where it will not be exposed to excessive moisture, dirt, dust or corrosive vapors.
- Inspect the generator regularly.
- Always disconnect the spark plug wire and place the wire where it cannot contact the spark plug to prevent accidental starting when setting up, transporting, adjusting or making repairs to the generator.

Source: American Red Cross with technical advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Fire Protection Association (publisher of the National Electric Code®) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

Look For The ENERGY STAR Label

Making the switch to LED bulbs is a smart way to save energy. But, just like all other products, some LEDs meet a higher standard of quality and performance than others. To ensure you are selecting the best LEDs, always look for the ENERGY STAR®!

What is ENERGY STAR?

ENERGY STAR is a trusted brand for quality products that use significantly less energy than required by minimum federal standards. The ENERGY STAR label can be found on hundreds of items, including lightbulbs, electronics, major appliances, and even certified homes and buildings.

For an LED to bear the ENERGY STAR label, it must pass rigorous testing to ensure maximum energy savings, while also proving it will display the following characteristics:

- Brightness equal to or greater than that of other existing technologies
- Well-distributed light
- Excellent color quality
- Light output that remains constant over time
- Light that comes on instantly when turned on
- No flicker when dimmed
- No power use when turned off

Other tips for choosing the right LED bulb.

Choose the right brightness. Instead of watts, look for lumens when purchasing LEDs to gauge the brightness of the bulb.

Choose the appropriate color. LEDs come in a broad range of colors, which are measured by temperature on the Kelvin scale (K). Lower K emits warmer, yellowish light, while higher K produces cooler, bluer light.

By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with ENERGY STAR LEDs, you can save up to \$75 each year.

REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

Visit michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy saving information and incentives.



Look for the
ENERGY STAR®

All LED bulbs are not created equal.

Choose ENERGY STAR LEDs for a world of benefits:

- Highest quality and performance
- Exceptional color quality and light output
- Tested and verified to back up claims
- Three-year minimum warranty

ENERGY TIP: In-store cash incentives available NOW for LED bulbs and fixtures!

Phone: 877.296.4319 Online: 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.



Jesse Smith, No Barriers Warriors alumnus: "This is my favorite photo because it shows what I was really feeling at that moment. I feel the same way every time I look at it."

No Barriers Warriors

NO BARRIERS For One Local Vet

By Amy Pales

In the January 2018 issue, we featured the CoBank No Barriers program that sponsored 50 veterans with disabilities on an expedition to transform their lives through curriculum-based wilderness expeditions. One of those participants was MEC member Jesse Smith.

80-year-old Smith is a friendly, but self-defined recluse from Three Rivers who served in the United States Air Force during the Korean War from 1955 to 1957. Like many who served, he came home with injuries that would impact him for the rest of his life, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

One area of particular impact involves social interactions. Smith admits that he feels most comfortable around other vets because they are the only ones who truly understand his experience and the effect it had on him. Additionally, he has a deep love for nature and has always wanted to see the mountains. So when he saw the opportunity to explore Colorado's wilderness surrounded by people he knew would make him feel safe and supported, he jumped at the chance.



"Thank you. Thank you. Thank you." These were Smith's first words when asked about his experience. "This trip was fantastic and forever changed me. The crew was incredible and became part of me. I can't thank them enough."

He still feels the impact of the trip like it was yesterday, and his enthusiasm and excitement is contagious when he shares his memories. "I learned to trust myself and learned that, even at 79 (his age during the expedition), I can take on new challenges and succeed."

While significantly older than the other participants in his group, he didn't let his age deter him. He participated in all the activities that his health would allow, and he found the nightly group circles to be the most rewarding. "That's when we all came together and really connected," he recalls.

Because this program is designed specifically around the unique

needs of veterans with disabilities, participants feel more comfortable and can invest in each day. The crew prioritizes each participant and their individual experience to make sure the trip provides a lasting value, as it certainly did for Smith.

Smith encourages other eligible veterans to apply for this opportunity. "Your only obstacle in life is your thinking, and we [vets with disabilities] all carry baggage. Don't be afraid to try it."

Are you a veteran interested in being nominated for the 2018 No Barriers program? If so, please go to countrylines.com/nobarriers by Feb. 28 and complete the form to express your interest. Your co-op will follow-up with more detailed information.



Photos—Robert Bruce Photography

Pizza! Pizza!

Take out? No way! Make perfect pizza at home with these simple recipes.

Farmhouse Pizza (pictured in top photo)

Deb Finedell, Great Lakes Energy

- one pre-made pizza crust (or make your own from scratch)
- Creamy Caesar dressing (amount depends on size of crust)
- smoked gouda cheese, ham and sun dried tomatoes (or any toppings you like)

Preheat oven to 450 degrees. Spread Creamy Caesar dressing on the crust. Add toppings. Bake for 20–25 minutes or until golden brown. Let sit for 5 minutes before serving. Enjoy!



Watch a video of this recipe at
<https://goo.gl/5bWmPE>



Homemade Pizza

Elizabeth Coates, Cherryland

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 cup warm water at 105–115 degrees | 1 teaspoon sugar |
| 1 standard packet yeast (2¼ teaspoons) | 1 teaspoon salt |
| 2½ cups flour | • mozzarella cheese |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | • tomato sauce |
| | • favorite toppings of choice |

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Dissolve yeast in warm water in a medium-sized bowl; let stand for 5 minutes. Add flour, olive oil, sugar and salt. Stir vigorously for 2 minutes, then let rest for 5 minutes. Grease two cookie sheets or two 12-inch pizza pans. Place the oven rack in lowest position. Divide dough in half. Pat each half into an 11-inch circle on a cookie sheet with floured hands. Sprinkle crust with mozzarella cheese, then spoon tomato sauce mixture over the cheese then add your favorite toppings. Bake one pizza at a time for 15–20 minutes or until crust is golden brown.



Pizza/Flatbread With No Knead Dough

Annie Barnes, Great Lakes Energy

- 3 cups lukewarm water**
- 6-7 cups all purpose flour (I use King Arthur)**
- 1½ tablespoons instant or active dry yeast**
- 1 tablespoon salt**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine all dough ingredients in an ungreased large mixing bowl, at least 6-quart capacity; stir to make a very sticky, rough dough. If you have a stand mixer, beat at medium speed for 30 to 60 seconds, or just stir with a big spoon until everything is combined.

Cover bowl and let rise at room temperature for 2 hours. Refrigerate at least 2 hours or for up to about seven days. If you're pressed for time, skip the room-temperature rise and stick it right into the fridge. The longer you keep it in the fridge, the tangier it will get. When ready, take out as much dough as you need (1/3 of the dough makes a large half sheet pan of pizza), oil your hands and lightly oil baking sheet and spread the dough out. If it springs back, let it rest for 5 minutes, then spread it more. If you're using a pizza stone or a grill, flour your surface and then spread the dough out.

Add your favorite toppings. Don't pile on the toppings too thick or the pizza will be soggy in the middle. Use a pizza peel to transfer your pizza to the oven/grill. Bake for 20-30 minutes, depending on pizza size, until the crust is nicely browned on the bottom. Let sit 5 minutes and then cut into serving pieces.



Entertaining & Potluck . . . due March 1

Spice It Up . . . due April 1

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

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

Enter to win a
\$50
energy bill
credit!

Featured Guest Chef

If you love a good hotdog and you're as busy as the folks at Silver Muzzle Cottage, this classic and easy Coney Dog Sauce is perfect for parties, picnics or a plain old Wednesday night.



Coney Dog Sauce

- 2 pounds ground beef**
- ½ cup chopped onion**
- 1½ cups ketchup**
- ¼ cup granulated sugar**
- ¼ cup white vinegar**
- ¼ cup yellow mustard**
- ½ teaspoon celery seed**
- ¾ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- ¾ teaspoon salt**

Cook ground beef and onion in a skillet on medium-high heat until beef is browned. Drain. Transfer the beef and onion to a slow cooker and stir in remaining ingredients. Cover and simmer on low setting for 2-3 hours. To serve up a classic Coney dog, top a hotdog and bun with the simmered sauce, raw onion and yellow mustard.

Read the full story about Silver Muzzle Cottage on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.

MEC *in the*



Students from Mendon Middle/High School donate food to a local food bank.



MEC employees Jeremiah Hunsberger and Sara Hartsell deliver MEC's donations to a local food bank.

Holiday Food Drives



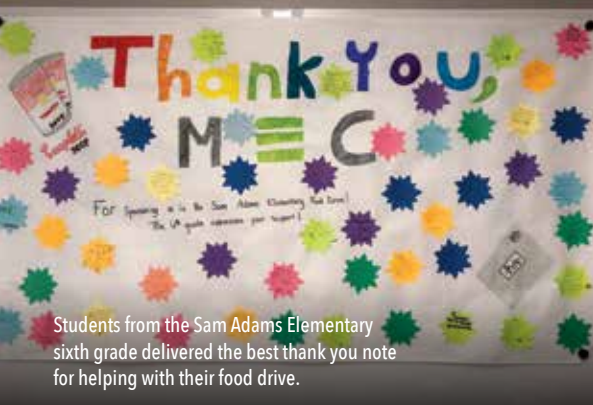
Students and staff from Sam Adams Elementary give a thumbs up after delivering food to local food banks.

Last fall, the MEC crew was busy collecting food and helping local schools and food pantries make the holidays extra special.

In November, Sam Adams Elementary School (SAES) recruited us to participate in their food drive organized by The Kindness Committee. Twelve area businesses including MEC, were teamed up with classes from the school to compete for the most food items collected and help "fill a bus" with food. MEC was assigned three classes, and we turned that into a friendly internal competition for the Cass staff. We assigned a classroom to specific physical areas in our building and the race was on!

Our staff's competitive spirit kicked in and we collected over 1,000 items for the food drive. In all, more than 5,000 items were collected with over 2,500 coming from the 12 participating businesses. That's a lot of food, and since we have the equipment to haul such things, we helped with the food deliveries as well. On Nov. 21, we teamed up with staff and students from SAES and delivered the items to The Church of Cassopolis and St. Paul's Lutheran Church food pantries.

We also partnered with Mendon Middle/High School to help with their Feed the Need food drive organized by the National Honor Society. Students and staff teamed up and collected and delivered roughly 1,900 food items for the Mendon United Methodist Church's food pantry, the Mendon Food Cupboard. As part of the drive, MEC also donated funds to help with the Mendon School Backpack Program to provide 12 local families with holiday food baskets.



Students from the Sam Adams Elementary sixth grade delivered the best thank you note for helping with their food drive.

COMMUNITY

The Most Wonderful Time of the Year

Each year MEC employees participate in Random Acts of Community Kindness to spread Christmas cheer to our members and local businesses. As part of these acts, MEC employees randomly chose a few families and presented them with special deliveries of holiday gift baskets to make their Christmas celebrations merry and bright.

On Dec. 14, 2017, employees from our Adrian Solutions Center began their day by delivering yards of cookies to the Norfolk and Southern Railroad Company and then headed to Dairy Farmers of America, Sand Creek Telephone, Ogden Telephone and Lenawee Farm Bureau to drop off more goodies. After that, the team visited local senior centers and presented them with Christmas ribbon, bows, tape and wrapping paper to make gift-giving more beautiful. Then they stopped by a couple of laundromats and passed out small bottles of Tide to spread good tidings and cheer to patrons. Additional efforts included delivering cake to employees at the Lenawee County Road Commission, passing out shirts and candy bars at Lenawee Recreation and purchasing toys for Toys for Tots.

On Dec. 15, 2017, employees from our Cassopolis Solutions Center delivered merriment to residents and businesses. The day began with deliveries of holiday baskets and surprising a woman and her pup with a free treat from McDonald's. After that, the team built gingerbread houses with students with special needs and then went shopping for more food and gifts. The Fabius Park Fire Department graciously opened their doors so the team could wrap the gifts and fruit baskets before heading to Three Rivers Health to deliver fruit baskets. After that, they delivered flowers to workers and patrons at a few local businesses and ended the day by placing flowers on some gravesites at a local cemetery.

Delivering holiday cheer.



MEC employee Chris Clark helps a student build a gingerbread house.



MEC's Emily Gillesby delivers a fruit basket to the staff at Three Rivers Health.



Captain
13 years old;
sweet, gentle,
slow mover

Silver Muzzle Cottage

A Rescue & Hospice For Homeless Senior Dogs

By Emily Haines Lloyd // Photos By Dre Photography

"The truth is, I'm selfish."

Those words don't quite ring true when you're speaking to Kim Skarritt-Nelson, owner of Bowsers By The Bay, and founder and program director for Silver Muzzle Cottage Rescue & Hospice in Rapid City. Skarritt-Nelson is the heart and soul of this organization that looks to place or care for senior dogs that have been surrendered or abandoned by their previous owners.

"You see," Skarritt-Nelson explains, "I get as much out of the time spent with these amazing animals as they do."

Skarritt-Nelson's "selfishness" began when she left corporate America in 2004 and opened Bowsers By The Bay in Elk Rapids in 2011. This cage-free boarding home, grooming center and behavior therapy clinic for dogs offers everyday encounters with a variety of beloved breeds.

However, as Skarritt-Nelson became more involved in the community, she saw a disturbing trend.

"Over and over again, I would see senior or terminal dogs in shelters," said Skarritt-Nelson. "They were either dropped off by their owners who could no longer care for them or, even more heartbreaking, these animals were abandoned and left to fend for themselves."



Parker
12 years old;
recently adopted

Silver Muzzle Cottage, to date, has rescued more than 110 senior dogs.



Gracie
10 year old Lab mix;
sweet and gentle

Kim
Founder, Silver Muzzle Cottage

***“Our rescue takes dogs
of all breeds and sizes.”***

—Kim Skarritt-Nelson



Reese
12 years old;
a gentle giant



Emily
13 years old and blind;
a permanent resident of
the Cottage, truly an angel

In a typical shelter older dogs are often overlooked for more energetic puppies, while the terminally ill dogs are often euthanized. Over 2,000 senior dogs are without homes within 500 miles of Traverse City, she learned. Skarritt-Nelson’s heart couldn’t take it.

That’s when she created Silver Muzzle Cottage—a unique rescue mission for senior dogs and hospice care for terminally ill dogs. Unlike overcrowded shelters, Silver Muzzle provides a home-like environment where dogs roam freely during the day and sleep on large pillow beds or sofas at night, often curled up with their new pack family.

“These dogs once were loved by an individual or a family,” said Skarritt-Nelson. “We believe that they should feel that same love at the end of their life as well.”

As big as Skarritt-Nelson’s heart is, even she can’t attend to all the needs of each dog in her care, which is why a dedicated team of volunteers are critical to Silver Muzzle’s success. Volunteers take the shelter’s beloved pack on trips to the beach, walks in the woods, drives into town for ice cream, or even just long, lazy naps on Skarritt-Nelson’s newly-acquired 15 acres in Rapid City. The new location is undergoing constant renovations to provide an amazing quality of life for its canine residents and accommodate even more needy dogs in the future.

Volunteers even gather together when it’s finally time for some of their hospice pets to say goodbye. Surrounded by loving words, lots of animals and heartfelt farewells, Silver Muzzle’s team sends beloved friends off with all the love and companionship each dog deserves.

With heartwarming touches and thoughtful experiences like that, it’s easy to say that the world could do with a little more selfishness like Skarritt-Nelson and the team at Silver Muzzle Cottage. 🐾



Mongo
8 year old
Dane/Mastiff mix;
has no idea he
weighs 130 lbs

With 12–20 dogs onsite on a daily basis, there’s always plenty to do! If you are interested in helping Silver Muzzle Cottage, volunteers can take dogs out on adventures, lend a hand with custodial work that allows the residents a clean home, or assist with administrative work like writing thank you notes or stuffing envelopes.

Visit silvermuzzlecottage.com to see how you can help.

CHOOSING THE APPROPRIATE INTERNET SPEED

As our lives become increasingly digital, having high-speed internet is no longer a luxury; it's a requirement. However, determining exactly what speed you need can be challenging. Plus, as internet technologies evolve, faster download and upload speeds become necessary to ensure reliable service.

The following factors can help you determine which speeds you require. However, keep in mind that as you add devices or upgrade technologies, you'll need to review your current speeds and possibly upgrade so that your internet can continue to meet demand. Visit teammidwest.com/internet to review our available speeds and packages.

1 DEVICES

How many devices in your home are connected to the internet?

This includes computers, smart phones and TVs, internet landlines, gaming consoles, tablets, smart home devices, etc. Multiple devices connected to the internet simultaneously will require more speed.



2 USERS

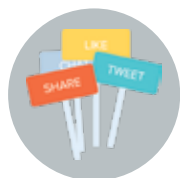
How many people use the internet in your home?

Don't forget regular visitors, like grandchildren, who might be heavy internet users while in your home.

3 ACTIVITIES

What types of activities do you participate in on the internet?

Some activities use more data than others. For example, streaming long videos and gaming generally require higher speeds than simply checking email.



Social Media



Video Chat



Streaming Music



Streaming Video



Online Gaming



File Download & Storage

Generally, the more of each of the above that you have and do in your household, the higher speed you will need.

Our basic internet plan is typically recommended if just a couple of people want to read email, check social media, video chat with loved ones and/or listen to music. If you're looking to watch movies, play games, have devices like smart thermostats, or if you work from home or have several users, you'll likely need a higher level of speed.

Give us a call at 800.492.5989, and we can help you determine the speed to meet your needs. You can also visit teammidwest.com/internet to review our available internet plans.



Line Clearance Promotes Safe And Reliable Electricity

Reliable electricity is not just a luxury; it's an expectation. Our chief responsibility as your cooperative is to provide a reliable and safe electric distribution system, and trees are a major obstacle. To improve your service experience, we employ an aggressive, proactive line clearance program proven to significantly reduce outage hours related to our distribution system.

WHAT IS A RIGHT-OF-WAY?

A right-of-way refers to a strip of land around power lines that MEC maintains and clears. Trees and brush must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals or a disruption of electrical service.

A significant percentage of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or brush grow too close to power lines. By managing vegetation, we can help maintain safe, reliable electricity.

What We Do And Why

We have worked diligently over the last decade to reclaim our rights-of-way, which means a ground-to-sky clearance of 15 feet on each side of the power line. Recorded and prescriptive easements give us the right to access and use personal property to maintain our rights-of-way. Because of our diligent efforts, we are now in full maintenance mode, including re-grooming and spraying. Following is a description of each method, with specific plans for 2018.

Re-grooming: Once the line is clear, we return to trim and mow for any new growth. We will re-groom the following areas in 2018: Keeler, Paw Paw, Hartford, Covert, and Bloomingdale in our southwest service territory, and Seneca in our southeast territory.

Spraying: We employ a long-term spraying strategy to manage continued regrowth in newly-cut areas. It effectively controls tall-growing trees and bushes while promoting low-growing plants that are beneficial to wildlife. It offers cost-effective, longer-term results, and is endorsed by a number of environmental, forestry and wildlife providers. We will spray in the following areas in 2017: Marcellus, Twin Lakes, Jones, and Keeler in southwest Michigan, and Palmyra and Seneca in southeast Michigan.

For More Information

For more information about our line clearance procedures, please contact our Customer Solutions Team at 800-492-5989 or visit teammidwest.com.

I Remember...



Michigan Memories

It was 1942, and I was four years old when my parents moved about six miles to a different farm home. There had been a storm that blew down our barn and killed some cows, and my mother had found a rattlesnake in the kitchen of our farmhouse. My dad, Amos, purchased a different farm west of Edmore near Six Lakes. He tied all of our cattle together and led them right down M-46 to our new farm. My mother, Nellie, drove a team of horses pulling a steel-wheel wagon that was carrying my sister, two brothers and me. Three more sisters would be added to the family at the new farm. I do not believe that move would be possible today with all of the hundreds of different vehicles that now travel that same highway.

It was so exciting to explore our new home, but the thing that I most remember is that it had electric lights. That was a new experience for us. There was a single lightbulb in the middle of the ceiling with a pull string, and we pulled the string turning the light on and off until the bulb broke.

The yard had a tall pine tree that stood in front of the house, and we would climb it. Since that time the barn and the house have both burned, but the huge, 100-year-old pine tree is still proudly standing and can be seen for a mile. I served in the U.S. Navy and then returned to Six Lakes and now live in view of my old farm home and that beautiful, old pine tree.

Nile Pool, HomeWorks Tri-County

Catch And Release

Catch and Release has had a strong meaning throughout my life.

As a young girl, we lived down the street from the owners of camp—a beautiful place on Walloon Lake where I got to spend a good part of my childhood summers riding horses and making lifelong friends. Those gentle horses would let us catch, saddle, and ride them in the corral and were happy upon release to return to their stable for food and rest.

A few years later my parents created a lovely retreat on the banks of the South Branch of the Au Sable River. It was an easy rustic landing where we learned to fly fish and relax as the elusive trout were caught and released.

Many loved ones have shared our river house and have caught our love of the north woods of Michigan. Over the years we have released some mighty important friends and family, but they are still in our hearts and thoughts as we head back up to our beloved spot along the river in the evergreen Michigan forest.

Sally Binard, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

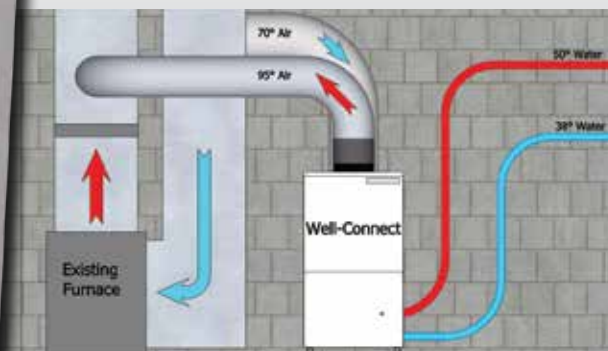


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Plans begin at **\$49⁹⁵** for 25 Mbps

(See page 16 for more information about choosing the right plan.)

Sign up at **teammidwest.com/internet** or call us at **800.492.5989**

Internet services are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.