
MICHIGAN

COUNTRY LINES

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association

PETOSKEY
Stands Up
FOR LITTLE BAY BOARDS

Save The Date—June 13
**Alger Delta
Annual Meeting**

Tax Reform And Co-ops

Daniel Nye: Big Bay's Bread Guy



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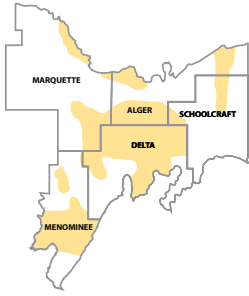
I Remember...

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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M–F, 8 a.m.–4 p.m. (ET)

Alger Delta Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

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Leadership That Makes A Difference

Tom Harrell, Chief Executive Officer

Districts 2 (Harvey/Deerton), 3 (Grand Marais), and 4 (Cedar River/Palestine) will be holding director elections beginning on March 26 and ending April 27. Members in these three districts will receive a specially marked envelope with their ballot inside. This is your opportunity to participate in the governance of your cooperative through the election process.

As an electric cooperative, Alger Delta is guided by an elected board of directors who represent the members' interests when making important decisions. Being a member of the co-op's board is an important position and not to be taken lightly. Decisions made by the elected board of directors have an impact on political and practical matters, including things like energy policy, reliability, rates, and work plans.

“Being a director holds great responsibility and requires an understanding of the community’s needs, while at the same time serving the cooperative members’ best interest.”

Alger Delta is a multi-million dollar electric utility. Being a director holds great responsibility and requires an understanding of the community's needs, while at the same time serving the cooperative members' best interest. Sometimes, it's a balancing act that requires a director to be nimble.

It's important to attract and retain strong directors who have broad experience and fresh ideas and perspectives that can help us develop strategies and enact policies that keep Alger Delta competitive, provide great service, and meet our financial goals and obligations.

Joseph de Maistre was a French lawyer, diplomat, writer, and philosopher. He said, “Toute nation al le gouvernement qu'elle merite.” This is sometimes translated as, “In a democracy, people get the leaders they deserve.” When he wrote this, de Maistre may have been a bit cynical, but there is a nugget of truth in his statement. The members of Districts 2, 3 and 4 have the opportunity to exercise their rights, participate in the process, and ensure that Alger Delta gets the leaders it deserves.

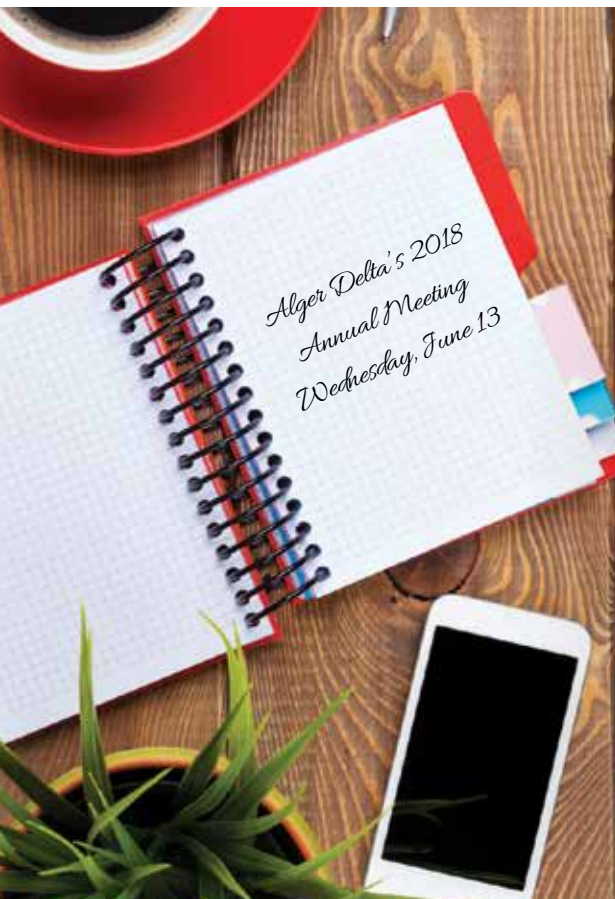
Tax Reform And Electric Co-ops

In late 2017 a tax reform package passed the house and senate in Washington, D.C., and soon thereafter, President Trump signed it into law. Since then, the media has told many stories about corporations that are enjoying reduced corporate taxes and how those companies are spending that money.

Like other electric co-ops, Alger Delta is a not-for-profit corporation. As such, our tax status is unaffected by the tax reform legislation. Our rates are based on the cost of wholesale power plus the cost to build and maintain the system that delivers energy to each consumer. As a not-for-profit corporation, Alger Delta is exempt from corporate taxation. In other words, there is no windfall for Alger Delta.



Operating at cost and returning capital to its members are two of the things that make co-ops different. We strive to keep electricity affordable for all our members. We do this because it's part of our core mission and because we are locally owned and controlled. Through the elected board of directors, Alger Delta has the flexibility to use the best tools to achieve our mission and to serve our members.



Save The Date – June 13!

Alger Delta 2018 Annual Meeting

Save the date! Alger Delta's 2018 Annual Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, June 13, at the Island Resort and Casino in Harris, Mich. Celebrating our 80th year of business, Alger Delta is treating you to a sit-down dinner. We're working on the rest of the details, so keep watching this space for more information.

The business meeting is an important part of our Annual Meeting as we introduce you to newly elected directors, talk about the cooperative's past performance, future expectations and more. So, mark Wednesday, June 13, on your calendar for a time of fun and great information!



Photo courtesy of Michigan State Capitol Commission and Strategic Energy Solutions

Michigan Capitol Goes Green With Geothermal

The Michigan Capitol is going “green and clean” with a new geothermal heating and cooling system. It is projected to be the largest geothermal system at a state capitol in the country at this time.

Michigan has a long track record of geothermal system installations. The state’s climate and geology make it perfectly suited for the technology. Over the past 10 years, more than 17,000 geothermal systems have been installed in homes, businesses, and institutional facilities. Geothermal systems have become very popular in government and education sectors with many colleges upgrading their heating and cooling systems to geothermal including Lansing Community College, Saginaw Valley University, and Ferris State University. Recent studies indicate that the geothermal market is expected to grow at a rate of 8 percent per year.

“It’s impressive that state legislators recognize the benefits of the

technology and its impact on the environment,” said Art Thayer, director of energy efficiency at the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. “Michigan’s electric co-ops have long supported geothermal systems, and it’s great to see a project with such high visibility.”

Drilling for the 500-foot-deep geothermal field is part of a larger \$70 million infrastructure upgrade already underway at the 139-year-old Capitol. While it will cost nearly \$4 million upfront, officials estimate the geothermal system will save the state \$300,000 a year on heating and cooling costs and pay for itself in roughly a decade.

With Michigan’s electric utilities investing more in renewable energy production such as solar and wind, it makes geothermal systems even more attractive. The net greenhouse gas emissions of a geothermal heating and cooling system utilizing electricity from wind, solar or a hydro-electric

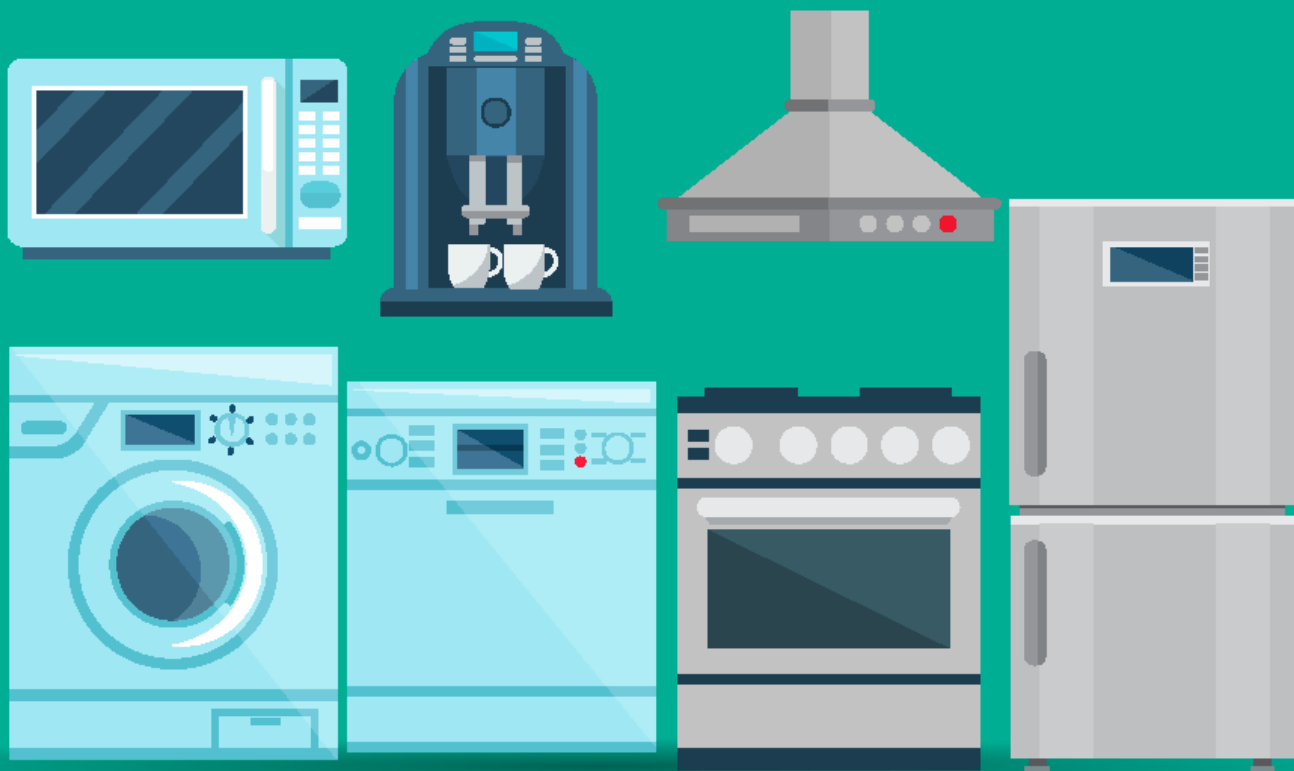
plant is zero as there is no combustion or emissions. Since there is no combustion of fossil fuels, geothermal systems can be four to six times more efficient than fossil fuel furnaces, and more than twice as efficient as a standard outdoor air conditioner.

Visit geoexchange.com to learn more about geothermal.

Thinking of installing a geothermal system at your home? You may be eligible for co-op rebates and a

▶▶▶▶▶ **30%** ▶▶▶▶▶
federal tax credit.

To learn more, consult your contractor.



How To Choose Efficient Appliances

By TJ Kirk, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

It's never a good day when you realize you need to replace a large appliance in your home. However, when the unfortunate time comes, be sure to take a moment and consider what you will purchase—especially for appliances that haven't been replaced in a number of years, as the technology may have changed substantially. Instead of rushing out to buy the same make and model of appliance you had, consider this an opportunity to assess the market and make a smart purchase that will save you money in the long run.

According to the Department of Energy, appliances account for about 13 percent of the average household's energy use. Clothes dryers, refrigerators/freezers, computers, microwaves, dishwashers and washing machines are the appliances that tend to use the most energy in a typical American home. Every appliance you buy has an operating cost, which is the cost of the energy needed to power the appliance. To facilitate more informed comparison shopping, the federal government requires

some appliances to have an Energy Guide label stating the approximate energy consumption and operating cost of the appliance. Appliances with an ENERGY STAR label use 10 to 50 percent less energy than standard appliances and are generally more expensive than their standard counterparts. So, it's important to compare the lifetime costs of each (up-front cost plus operating costs) to ensure that purchasing the efficient appliance is the best choice.

As you begin your search for a new appliance, check with your electric cooperative to see if they offer incentives for energy efficient appliances, and remember to use the ENERGY STAR website as an additional resource.

Dramatic advancements in the efficiency of many electric appliances now can provide the same level of end-user comfort with substantially less electric input. With a little research and forethought up-front, you can save money over the life of your appliance without sacrificing any benefits. Good luck, and happy shopping!

Recycle Old Appliances, Save Energy And Money!

Do you have an old refrigerator or chest freezer taking up valuable space in your basement or garage? While you may not think about these appliances often, they could be adding hundreds of dollars to your utility bill each year.

Declutter your home and save money with our Energy Optimization program. You can earn \$50 for removing and recycling a secondary refrigerator or freezer!*

Free Appliance Pick Up Made Easy:

The Energy Optimization team will pick up and recycle your old refrigerator(s) or freezer(s) for FREE. You can choose to send along an old window air conditioner or dehumidifier for recycling as well. **NOTE:** All items must be in working condition.

How To Participate:

Contact the Energy Optimization team at **877-296-4319** to schedule an appointment. A representative will come to your home for the pick up, and a cash incentive will be mailed to you. It's that simple!

Cash incentives are available for the following:

| Appliance Type | Pick up or Ride-Along Item | Incentive Amount |
|------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|
| Refrigerator | Pick up | \$50 |
| Chest Freezer | Pick up | \$50 |
| Window Air Conditioner | Ride-Along | \$15 |
| Dehumidifier | Ride-Along | \$15 |

**Limit two appliances per year, per residence.*

More Ways To Save!

Working on a remodeling project? Your electric utility's Energy Optimization program provides cash incentives toward qualifying new ENERGY STAR® appliances, including refrigerators, washers and dryers, ceiling fans, room air conditioners, televisions, and more.

Please visit michigan-energy.org for more information, or call **877-296-4319** with any questions.



Get \$50 for your old refrigerator or freezer.

Stop wasting energy and money! Recycle old, functioning appliances and earn cash incentives:

- **Refrigerator = \$50**
- **Freezer = \$50**
- **Dehumidifier** (ride along item) = **\$15**
- **Window Air Conditioner** (ride along item) = **\$15**

Contact the Energy Optimization team to schedule a free pickup.

Shopping for new appliances?

Receive cash incentives when you purchase ENERGY STAR® appliances. Visit the EO website for a complete list of savings opportunities.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877-296-4319



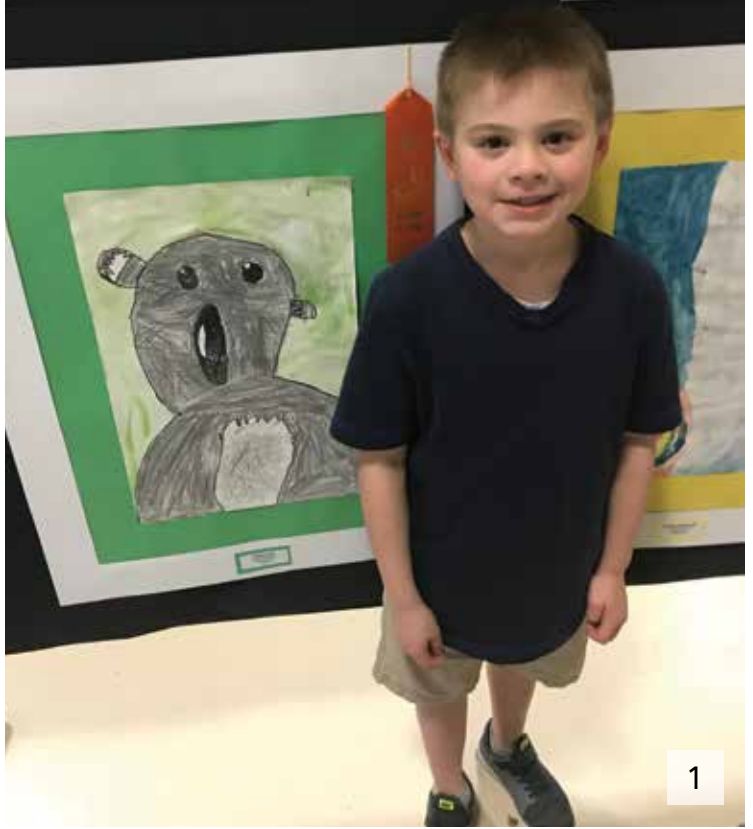
Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.



Photo Contest

Talented Kids

1. Logan displays his talented artwork. *By Suzanne Aidif*
2. Little Vienna loves her puppa's cabin and is a happy fisherwoman knowing that fishing is an all-season sport! *By Lori Kleinow*
3. A pro on the tire swing, this baby even loves swinging in her first snow! *By Mellisa Lazar*
4. Erik, 12, shows off his tree-climbing skills on a gorgeous fall day. *By Kathryn Southerland*



1



3



2



4

Share Your Photos!

Alger Delta invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. Our upcoming topics and deadlines are: **Show Us Your Garden** due **March 20** for the May issue and **Outdoor Adventures** due **April 20** for the June issue.

To submit photos go to <http://bit.ly/countrylines>

We look forward to seeing your best photos!

Potato Perfection

Nothing beats the humble potato.

Photos—Robert Bruce Photography

Baked Mustard Potato Wedges

(pictured above)

Sharron Fromius, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

- 5–6 cups small new potatoes, cut into wedges
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup olive oil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Dijon mustard
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons Parmesan cheese, more or less according to your preferences

Preheat oven to 400 F. Lightly oil or spray a rimmed baking sheet. Clean and cut potatoes into wedges. In a large bowl, or Ziploc bag (I prefer using bags), mix the olive oil, mustard, butter, garlic powder and oregano. Add potatoes to bowl or bag and mix well. Dump potatoes onto the baking sheet. Spread out in one layer as much as possible. Generously sprinkle with salt, pepper and Parmesan cheese. Bake for about 30 minutes or until they are fork tender and the desired crispiness you like.



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



Refrigerator Mashed Potatoes

Donna Miller, Cherryland

- 5 pounds potatoes
- 2 (8-ounce) packages cream cheese
- 1 (16-ounce) container sour cream
- 2 teaspoons onion salt
- 1 teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon pepper
- 1 stick butter, softened

Peel and cook the potatoes, drain well, then mash them with a mixer. Add remaining ingredients and blend well. Eat right away or put in the fridge. Potatoes will thicken up more if refrigerated; they tend to be thinner if used immediately. Keep in the fridge for up to one week.



Heather's Sweet Potatoes

Heather Vedder, HomeWorks Tri-County

- 6 sweet potatoes, peeled and cubed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup orange juice, plus 1 teaspoon orange juice concentrate
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon nutmeg
- pinch of salt
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup pecans, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons of butter
- half a bag of marshmallows

Preheat oven to 350 F. Boil the cubed sweet potatoes in salted water until soft. Mash the sweet potatoes (some lumps will remain). Add orange juice, orange juice concentrate, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt. Spread mixture in a shallow, rectangular pan. Sprinkle with pecans; dot with butter. Bake for 34 minutes. Add marshmallows. Bake for another 10–15 minutes until marshmallows turn slightly brown.



Spice It Up ... due April 1

Eggcellent ... due May 1

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

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

Enter to win a
\$50
energy bill
credit!

Featured Guest Chef

Little Bay Boards owner Jason Thelen knows that snacks and drinks are a great way to kickstart the creative process. Thelen uses organic coconut oil in his all-natural board wax, so he confidently uses the same oil, a trusty cast iron pan, and a heat gun to whip up some potato chips for his friends and neighbors. He's modified the recipe for your kitchen.

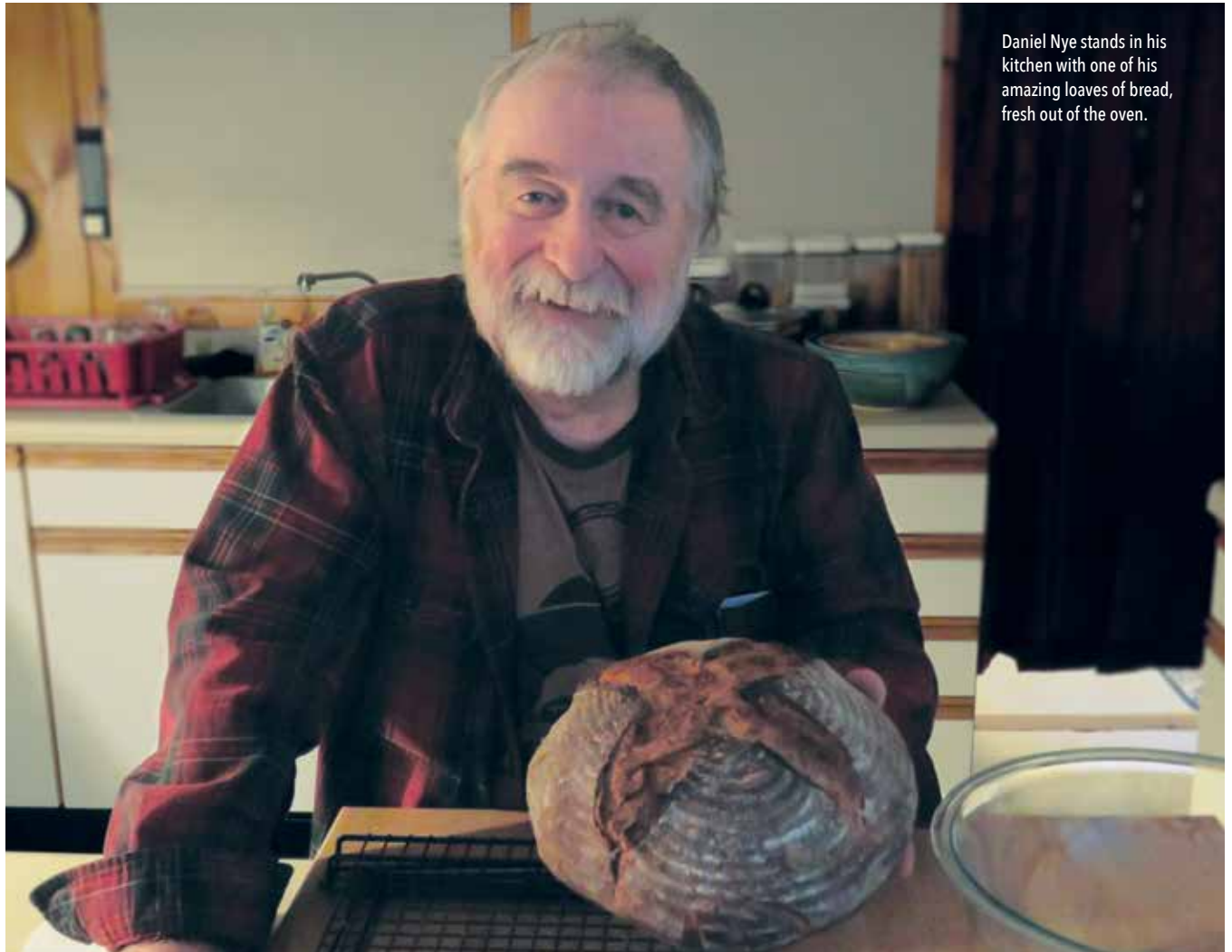


Beach-Style Potato Chips

- 4 Russet potatoes
- coconut oil (Jason warns you, coconut oil tastes like coconut. He calls these chips Hawaiian flavored.)
- sea salt
- garlic (optional)

Wash potatoes. Slice potatoes evenly about $\frac{1}{8}$ inch thick. This is important so that they cook evenly. Soak the slices overnight in fresh water. Using a cast iron skillet, melt about a half inch of coconut oil in the pan. Bring the pan to a temperature between 325–350 F. Higher temperatures will cause the pan to smoke. Add a little garlic (minced is fine) into the oil as it's heating up. Take potatoes and lay them out on a paper towel to dry them. Dab dry. Place sliced potatoes evenly in the hot oil. Cook to your preference. (Jason likes his a bit softer, while his wife likes them crunchy.) Remove from oil. Sprinkle with sea salt. Cool and serve.

Read the full story about Little Bay Boards on page 14, and find this recipe and others at microopkitchen.com.



Daniel Nye stands in his kitchen with one of his amazing loaves of bread, fresh out of the oven.

Daniel Nye The Bread Guy

By Yvonne Whitman

On the shores of Saux Head Lake in Marquette County sits a small cabin. From its kitchen comes some of the most coveted, homemade bread in the north woods. Every week, Daniel Nye bakes a dozen or more loaves of superb bread in his lakeside camp which he gives away to friends, family and residents of his community. "Big Bay isn't that big of a town, so over time, I've probably given everyone in town at least one loaf of bread," Daniel states.

Nye, a 75-year-old retired clinical psychologist, learned his baking skills from his mother. "She did everything from scratch. She was basically born and raised out in the woods. When I was little she would take me berry picking. She would can food and bake, and she taught me everything."

His love for sourdough bread began around 1980 when he began making wine. "It needed to ferment, and that got me started thinking about sourdough," Daniel recalls. "So I made my own starter, and I never stopped."

Daniel is passionate about his sourdough. "Those starters are my pets. Every day they get fed. If you treat the starter with respect, it will do wonders for you because good bread is all about the fermentation process. That's what sourdough is, yeast and bacteria."

According to Daniel, "When people ask me what the trick to making good bread is, I always tell them that the key is to keep a high-quality sourdough going. And the dough has



Daniel is multi-talented and is also a skilled basket maker. These two beautiful black ash baskets that he created rest on a shelf in his lakeside home.



Daniel keeps an assortment of different flours to use for the different breads he bakes each week.

“How can a nation be great if their bread tastes like kleenex?”

—Julia Child

to be wet. All this ‘dry stuff’ of putting it on the counter and throwing flour on it and kneading it? That’s the worst thing you can do to bread. You’ll never make a good loaf of bread kneading it.” Instead, he gently stretches it. Daniel says, “To get good bread, it takes dampness, it takes time, and you have to be gentle.”

With his own freezer stocked full of baked goods, Daniel began to realize he could bless others with a simple loaf of bread. That’s when he began giving away his bread to neighbors, to the guy who plowed his driveway, the tellers at his bank, the servers at the Thunder Bay Inn, and many others. “I almost envision myself as the Johnny Appleseed of bread,” he says with a smile.

Daniel’s breads vary. “Every week is different,” he states, but baguettes, whole wheat, brioche, and French country loaf are in the repertoire. Regardless of what type, “The key is the flavor. It has to taste like bread. Many people tell me they have never tasted bread like this. I especially enjoy when children get to have my bread because now a whole new generation in Big Bay knows what real bread tastes like.”

His biggest compliment came from a young Big Bay logger. “I gave him a loaf of bread and he said, ‘Daniel, I like your bread because it makes me regular. I have one toast in the morning and I can work all day.’ That is the best compliment I ever had in my whole life about my bread. So, now I give him a loaf of bread about once every two weeks,” Daniel says with a chuckle.

And there are other great reviews. Longtime friend Cathy Waller says, “Daniel has truly perfected the rustic loaf shape, texture and flavor. My daughters’ and my favorite is his rosemary loaf. He uses wheat flour in all his loaves, so we get a bit of healthy with the goodness.”

For now, Daniel doesn’t see himself turning bread making into a bakery business. The joy of giving away his savory creations to friends and neighbors is enough, he believes. “If I took money for bread baking, it would ruin the whole reason I do it.”



The finished product! Pictured above is a beautiful loaf of rustic whole wheat made with black strap molasses, buttermilk and spring water. Daniel’s house sits on a natural spring, so the water is always available.

PETOSKEY *Stands Up* FOR LITTLE BAY BOARDS

By Emily Haines Lloyd // Photos by Northern Territory Imaging and Design



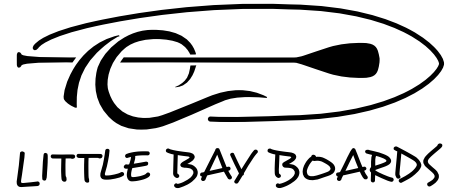
If it takes a village to raise a child, then it most certainly takes one to raise a brainchild.

Little Bay Boards, the brainchild of Jason Thelen, is the well-loved Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) darling of Petoskey. Indeed, it was the community of Petoskey that inspired Thelen to turn a dream into a successful business. Today, Thelen has carved out more than just a great company, he has created relationships with many other local business owners and friends. And that, Thelen notes, is one of his greatest successes.

Thelen, a Petoskey resident and great-great-great-grandson to Chief Petoskey—a legendary figure amongst the native Odawas and the namesake of both the town and Michigan’s state stone—hadn’t intended to build a thriving artisan SUP business. He, like most Michiganders, was looking for a way for his family to enjoy the nearby water and lakes.

“That’s the thing about Michigan,” said Thelen. “You want to get out on the water as soon as possible and stay out as long as you can.”

So, Thelen, who at that time worked as a full-time carpenter, tried his hand at building his own stand-up paddleboard. After scouring the internet for how-to’s and professional advice, from the likes of Paul Jensen, godfather of the hollow wood paddleboard and Jason’s mentor, he opted to start with a smaller board for his then 9-year-old daughter.



Visit littlebayboards.com to learn more or call 231-838-8451.

Visit countrylines.com to watch a video about how Little Bay Boards are made.

“From there, things went in a way I still don’t quite understand,” said Thelen.

It began with strangers at the beach coming up to their vehicle, admiring the board and asking where they got it. Then people asked how he’d done it himself. Finally, Thelen’s wife asked if he thought he could build another one. So, he did. Then he sold it. Then, he built another board and sold that one, too.

As with many small businesses, there was a time when Thelen had to make a decision to stay with his full-time carpentry position or take a leap into this SUP venture.

With the support of his family, Thelen jumped. Or, rather, he paddled.

With each leap of faith, another answer, another supporter, another order would arrive.

Community members, like the owner of a local boutique, Lake Affect, offered space to showcase a board. Local friends and neighbors set aside wood cut-offs and leftovers that they thought Thelen might be interested in using. A friend and owner of Northern Territory Imaging and Design offered his services to help Thelen reach and connect with more people. T-shirts and the website were all created by folks from the neighborhood. Eventually, his now-business partner took over the day-to-day details to give Thelen more time to create. His business neighbor from Mary Bea Art was a daily inspiration on his creative process. Even the Little Bay Board’s landlord was a source of support as he lent his own machinery and tools to help Thelen develop his craft.

Of the nearly 6,000 residents in Petoskey, Thelen notes that some days it feels like nearly everyone in the community has, in one way or another, had a big impact on Little Bay Boards.

“Things have grown beyond my dreams. We have boards that we’ve shipped to Switzerland and Australia,” said Thelen. “But in the end, I’m building these boards and this business with the local people I see every day at the grocery store. I feel like the [entire Petoskey] community is giving our company...this big, loving hug that helps us grow.”



“I feel like the [entire Petoskey] community is giving our company...this big, loving hug that helps us grow.”
— Jason Thelen

Fuel Mix Report

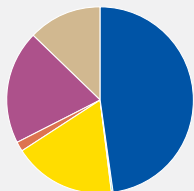
The fuel mix characteristics of Alger Delta Co-op Electric Association as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ending 12/31/17.

Comparison Of Fuel Sources Used

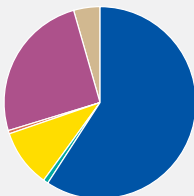
| Regional average fuel mix used | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Your co-op's fuel mix | | |
| Fuel Source | | |
| Coal | 48.0% | 60.4% |
| Oil | 0.1% | 0.7% |
| Gas | 17.8% | 8.9% |
| Hydroelectric | 1.8% | 0.5% |
| Nuclear | 19.7% | 24.6% |
| Renewable Fuels | 12.69% | 4.9% |
| Biofuel | 0.0% | 0.7% |
| Biomass | 0.37% | 0.4% |
| Solar | 0.03% | 0.1% |
| Solid Waste Incineration | 0.9% | 0.0% |
| Wind | 11.31% | 3.2% |
| Wood | 0.08% | 0.5% |

NOTE: Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas.

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 | 0.76 | 7.6 |
| Carbon Dioxide | 1,237 | 2,170 |
| Oxides of Nitrogen | 0.54 | 2.0 |
| High-level Nuclear Waste | 0.001 | 0.0083 |

*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the twelve-month period ending 12/31/17.

Alger Delta purchases 100% of its electricity from WPPI Energy, which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association

NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

On December 14, 2017, Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association filed an Application for Approval of Renewable Energy Plan with the Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) pursuant to the "Clean, Renewable and Efficient Energy Act" (2008 PA 295, MCL 460.1001, et seq.) and MPSC Order Case No. U-15800 dated December 4, 2008.

Any interested person may review the filed Renewable Energy Plan on the MPSC website under Case No. U-16589 at: www.michigan.gov/mpscdockets and at the offices of Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association, 426 N 9th St, Gladstone, MI 49837, or at the office of the Commission's Executive Secretary, 7109 West Saginaw Hwy., Lansing, Michigan 48917, between the hours of 8 a.m. and 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Written and electronic comments may be filed with the Commission and must be received no later than 5 p.m. on May 8, 2018. Written comments should be sent to the: Executive Secretary, Michigan Public Service Commission, P.O. Box 30221, Lansing, Michigan 48909, with a copy mailed to: Alger Delta Cooperative Electric Association, 426 N 9th St, Gladstone, MI 49837. Electronic comments may be emailed to: mpscdockets@michigan.gov. All comments should reference Case No. U-16589. Comments received in this matter becomes public information, posted on the Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Comments must not include information you wish to remain private.

Any proposed Renewable Energy Plan Charges may not exceed \$3 per meter per month for residential customers, \$16.58 per meter per month for commercial secondary customers or \$187.50 per meter per month for commercial primary or industrial customers.

Statement Of Non-Discrimination

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

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(1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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>> What's on that pole?

This illustration shows basic equipment found on electric power distribution poles. Not all poles have all this equipment on them. They vary according to location and the service they provide.

>> Primary wires run on top. Each wire is energized at 7,200 volts or more.

>> A crossarm holds power lines, allowing required clearances between lines.

>> Surge arrestors protect the transformer from lightning strikes.

>> A secondary service drop carries 120/240-volts of electricity to the end user. It has two "hot" wires from the transformer, and a bare neutral wire connected to the ground wire on the pole.

>> Telephone and cable TV lines are typically the lowest wires.

>> A head-high "birthmark" shows the size of the pole, as well as where and when it was made.

>> 40-foot poles are sunk six feet into the ground.

>> Insulators (made of porcelain or a composite) prevent energized wires from contacting each other or the pole.

>> The neutral wire acts as a line back to the substation and is tied to ground, balancing the electricity on the system.

>> Transformers convert higher voltage electricity from primary wires to lower voltage for use by consumers.

>> Guy wires help stabilize poles. They also are connected to the pole's ground wire.

>> Pole ground wire—running the length of the pole—connects to the neutral wire to complete the circuit inside the transformer. It also directs electricity from lightning safely into the earth.

>> Co-ops are responsible for keeping vegetation around poles trimmed to avoid interference with the electric system.

Enter to win a
\$50
energy bill
credit!



Jack's Journal: Country Music Today

By Jack O'Malley

Several weeks ago I received an email from a listener to my radio show complaining that Country Music "isn't country anymore." It's a sentiment I've heard again and again. That's why, this month, I thought I would publish my remarks to that listener in the hopes it might help someone else. Here is my response:

Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo above by March 20 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number and the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the January 2018 issue is Jon Jahnke, a Thumb Electric Cooperative member, who correctly identified the photo as the Charlevoix South Pier Light Station.

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



January photo courtesy of Thomas Mann

I've been in country music a long time now. The loyalty to the genre is amazing. Everyone has his or her likes and dislikes. I've heard your complaint many times over the years, and I've even discussed it with artists. Here is the long and the short of it: what you like is what you like. You are not wrong.

This is the issue. Country music has always evolved—from the Hillbilly Days to the 1960s Nashville sound to the outlaws of the '70s and so on. Vince Gill had an interesting take on it when he was asked "his opinion" of current music. He said, "It isn't my cup of tea...but I know what I was playing wasn't necessarily the cup of tea of the guys who came before me."

Eddie Rabbitt once told me that when he was coming along, he knew that he was pushing the older artists off the radio. That's just the way it works. He said, "Now it's my turn to be pushed out the back door...[but] I am just gonna try and hang on to that doorknob as long as I can."

The point I'm trying to make is that country music has always evolved. From fiddles and guitars to adding drums and then electronics, the music has changed. From Ferlin Husky to Jim Reeves and Ray Price, artists have learned from the music of their era—just like young artists are doing today. Garth Brooks was disliked by traditionalists in the 1990s, 25 years ago, some might argue. Today, he is as country as anyone else.

So, yes, today's instrumentation might not be considered classic country, but it reflects the times. However, the one constant in country music is the lyrics. This is where I believe country music really lives. It's not found in a fiddle, but in the songs themselves. They still talk about real life! We aren't in coal mines and factories like the '60s. We aren't in the '70s or '80s anymore either. Today's world is cell phones and instant communication. Artists today are talking about life today, not a life of bygone years.

My friend, time marches on. WTCM FM is and always has been your Top 40 country music station from the '70s to today. We played the hits then and we play them today—with a large "tip of the hat" to our past.

Thanks for loving country music!

Readers, this will be my last *Michigan Country Lines* article as I am stepping into a new adventure...wish me luck!

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