

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

YOU MAY HAVE  
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MONEY!** SEE  
CAPITAL CREDIT  
INSERT INSIDE.

## PETOSKEY *Stands Up* FOR LITTLE BAY BOARDS

Tree Clearing Means  
Better Service

April 9 Is  
National Lineman  
Appreciation Day

PIE&G Special Board  
Meeting Is March 27



## Both of these devices create hot air but which uses less power?



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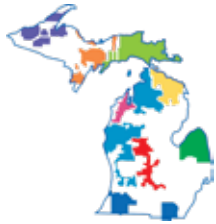
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1. 7 Series unit uses approximately 900 watts while running in speeds 1-2.





Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
[countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)

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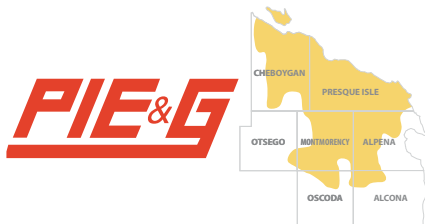
We invite members to share their fondest memories.

### 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](http://countrylines.com) or email to [cdorr@meca.coop](mailto:cdorr@meca.coop)

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Most PIE&G natural gas rates and charges are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.

*Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

Your Touchstone Energy<sup>®</sup>  
Cooperative 

# Why Your Co-op Clears Vegetation

Your co-op leadership team recognizes that reliable electricity is not just a luxury, it's an expectation. That's why your electric co-op considers its prime objective to be providing you with a reliable and safe electric distribution system. One of the most common—and crucial—ways to do this is referred to as right-of-way clearing (or vegetation management).

A right-of-way refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that your electric cooperative has the right and responsibility to maintain and clear. Many members may not be aware that trees can be a major obstacle to good electric service. To improve your service experience, PIE&G has an aggressive, proactive overhead line clearance program that's proven to significantly reduce outage hours related to tree interference with our distribution system. That's why PIE&G has devoted over \$1 million annually for right-of-way maintenance for the last six years.

## What We Do And Why

PIE&G's line clearance standard is to obtain and maintain a ground-to-sky clearance of 15–20 feet, free from all obstructions, on each side of the power line. Where our facilities cross private property, an easement gives us the right to use that property to maintain our right-of-way. An easement can be written and recorded, meaning it is signed and on file at the county Register of Deeds office where the service is located. An easement may also be unwritten or "prescriptive," where the land has been used for utility purposes in a continuous and open manner for the statutory period of 15 years under Michigan law.

PIE&G's line clearing program (also called "Vegetation Management"), consists of two approaches: mechanical clearing and herbicide application.

## 2018 Mechanical Clearing Plan

Mechanical clearing is scheduled between January and December this year. PIE&G's licensed contractors will trim overgrown trees along 394 miles of overhead line at various locations throughout our nine-county service territory. Members who may be in proximity to areas designated for mechanical clearing will be notified by mail prior to the onset of work in that area. PIE&G will determine if there are trees in your maintained lawn area that should be trimmed or cut. A representative from one of our contracted crews will attempt to contact you in person before the work is started.

## 2018 Herbicide Application

The schedule for herbicide application is set to occur between April and October. PIE&G has hired professional, licensed contractors to treat approximately 256 miles of line throughout its service territory

with state-approved herbicide. PIE&G will notify members whose service is near the designated areas by mail prior to the onset of work. The herbicide is not applied to mowed lawn areas. Herbicide effectively controls tall-growing trees and bushes while promoting low-growing plants such as grasses, wildflowers and shrubs that are beneficial to wildlife. It offers longer-term results in a more cost effective way and is endorsed by a number of environmental, forestry and wildlife providers as offering benefits to many wildlife species.

### Jobsite Cleanup

Our contract crews dispose of trimmed branches and limbs in the most economic and practical manner possible. It is customary during regular line clearing activity that crews will remove branches and limbs within maintained or landscaped areas, and leave the wood for use by the property owner. In unmaintained areas, crews will leave wood, branches and limbs for use by the property owner to decompose naturally. PIE&G does not remove stumps after tree removal. During emergency power restoration activities, crews clear trees off and away from our lines in order to make repairs. PIE&G does not return to remove wood, branches and limbs that were removed during outage restoration efforts.

### Our Commitment To Safety

Safety is a top priority for PIE&G. Although Mother Nature provides an amazing setting for our enjoyment of outdoor activities, it's best to keep your activities away from overhead power lines. If you see a downed power line due to a fallen tree or branch, stay away and immediately call PIE&G to report it. Never attempt to remove branches or trim trees that are near power lines to avoid potential electrical contact. Any tree in close proximity to a power line can present a safety hazard.

### Service Line Trimming

PIE&G will trim along the service line running from the transformer to your home when a tree is in contact with the power line. We do not remove trees located near service lines. If you plan to have a tree removed from your property, contact us several days in advance so we can schedule a crew to visit, de-energize and drop the line so you can have the tree safely removed. PIE&G will need at least two days prior notice.



### Plan Ahead

Trees and power lines do not mix, so careful planning is important before you begin any landscape plan or outdoor project. Trees grow quickly so the seedling you plant today may well reach heights exceeding 30-50 feet in a few years. Avoid planting trees beneath overhead utility lines or near your service line. Look around and note what's overhead, on the ground, and underground before beginning any outdoor work project.

### For More Information

For more information about PIE&G's line clearance procedures, contact our Member Services Department at 800-423-6634.



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](http://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!

## Snowbirds— Vacation Over And Back In Michigan?



Don't forget to contact PIE&G to let us know you are back from your winter vacation. Please call to provide a current meter reading on your electric and/or natural gas account and ask us to change your address back to your current residence. Our Member Services representatives are available at 800-423-6634 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## Your Board In Action

At their most recent regular meetings, the PIE&G board of directors:

- Authorized quarterly write-offs for uncollectible debt in the amount of \$19,997.51.
- Set the next Member Regulation meeting for March 27, 2018, at 9 a.m. at the cooperative's Onaway office.
- Accepted team reports of CEO Sobeck, Manager of Operations and Engineering Szymoniak, Manager of Information Systems Kieliszewski.

### Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

#### NOTICE OF OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT

On December 15, 2017, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op 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-16596 at: [www.michigan.gov/mpscdockets](http://www.michigan.gov/mpscdockets) and at the offices of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, 19831 M 68 Hwy, Onaway, MI 49765, 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: Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, 19831 M 68 Hwy, Onaway, MI

Electronic comments may be emailed to: [mpscdockets@michigan.gov](mailto:mpscdockets@michigan.gov). All comments should reference Case No. U-16596. Comments received on 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.





## PIE&G Office Closed For Good Friday

PIE&G will be closed on Friday, March 30, in observance of Good Friday. Access your account 24/7 at [pieg.com](http://pieg.com) or using the free SmartHub app for your tablet or smartphone. You may also pay or report readings anytime by calling 1-866-999-4571. Payments by check only (no cash) may be made in the drop box and will be posted on the next open business day.

### Notice to Members Of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

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**A special Board Meeting is set for March 27, 9 a.m., at the cooperative's Onaway office.**

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The board of directors will consider changes to the cooperative's rates and tariffs at its meeting on Tuesday, March 27, 2018, to be held at 19831 M68 Highway, Onaway, Michigan. The meeting will start at 9 a.m. and is open to all members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op.

The session will begin with an opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board of directors. Members are asked to come to the lobby by 8:45 a.m. and request to speak to the board; staff will direct interested members to the meeting room. Time constraints on each member's comments will be at the discretion of the board chairman, but members are asked to keep comments to less than five minutes.

The following items will be discussed:

- Reconciliation of the 2017 Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor collections and
- Review and approval of the 2017 Electric Times Interest Earned Ratio (TIER) analysis.

Notices of changes or additions to the cooperative's rates or service rules, if any, shall be sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by first class mail or by publication in *Michigan Country Lines* at least 30 days prior to their effective date.

**Participation:** Any interested member may attend and participate. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op at 800-423-6634 one week in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance. Comments may also be made before the meeting date by calling Tom Sobeck, CEO at 800-423-6634, or by email at [tsobeck@pieg.com](mailto:tsobeck@pieg.com).



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



# Fuel Mix Report

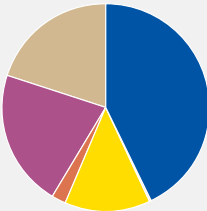
The fuel mix characteristics of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 12/31/17.

## Comparison Of Fuel Sources Used

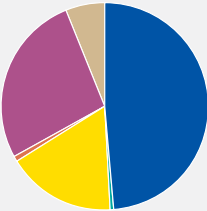
Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
Fuel Source		
Coal	42.8%	48.8%
Oil	0.3%	0.4%
Gas	13.5%	17.0%
Hydroelectric	2.2%	0.9%
Nuclear	21.3%	26.8%
Renewable Fuels	19.9%	6.1%
Biofuel	0.7%	0.9%
Biomass	0.4%	0.5%
Solar	0.3%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1%	0.1%
Wind	18.1%	4.1%
Wood	0.3%	0.4%

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	3.0	3.7
Carbon Dioxide	1,674	1,999
Oxides of Nitrogen	1.2	1.4
High-level Nuclear Waste	0.0066	0.0083

\*Regional average information was obtained from MPSC website and is for the 12-month period ending 12/31/17. Presque Isle Electric & Gas purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc., which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

# Keep Utility Easements Clear

Mother Nature (trees and weather), equipment failure and wild animals are all common causes of power disruption. When the lights go out, your electric cooperative's main focus is to quickly and safely repair overhead lines. **You can help your co-op's restoration efforts by keeping easements and rights-of-way beneath overhead power lines free and clear of all physical obstructions such as campers, motor homes, trailers, vehicles, boats, trailers, ORVs and farm equipment.** For more information on the importance of right-of-way maintenance, see pages 4–5 in this issue of *Country Lines* or call PIE&G at 800-423-6634.



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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](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

# Thank A Lineworker On April 9

As the “first responders” of the electric co-op family, lineworkers perform around-the-clock in dangerous conditions and challenging situations to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. That’s why electric co-ops have designated a National Lineman Appreciation Day. This year, April 9 is the day we honor the hard-working men and women who keep the lights on.

*Resolutions adopted by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) explain it best: “Whereas linemen leave their families and put their lives on the line every day to keep the power on; Whereas linemen work 365 days a year under dangerous conditions to build, maintain and repair the electric infrastructure; Whereas there would be no electric co-ops without the brave men and women who comprise our corps of lineworkers.” Lineworkers everywhere deserve this special day of recognition.*

These highly skilled men and women light our homes and businesses every day. They endure harsh weather and long hours, all to make our lives better. Today (and every day),



Randy Kreft, PIE&G foreman and lineman of nearly 45 years, is pictured above.

please take a moment to thank them. Lineworkers are the heart of the co-op nation, proud and strong.

Use #thankalineman to show your support for the men and women who light our lives.

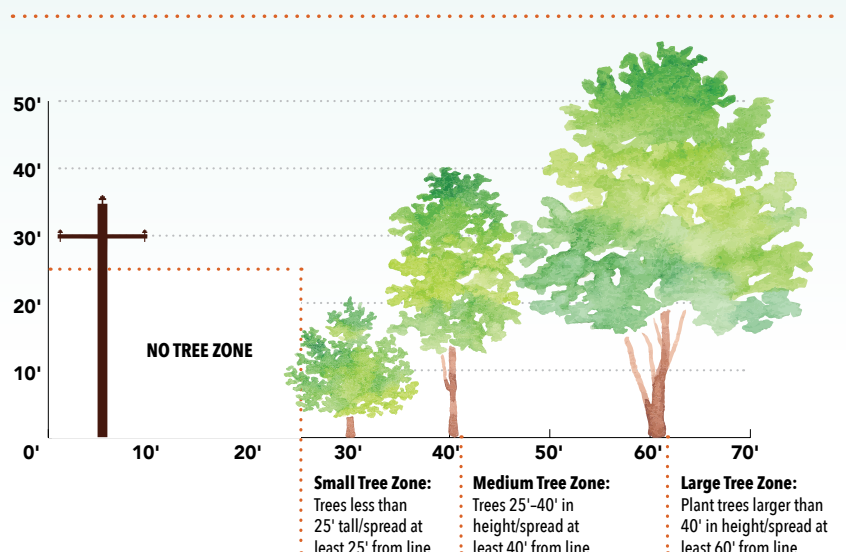
## Plant A Tree In The Right Place

Earth Day is April 22 and a great time to plant a tree. Be sure to choose the right tree for the right place and avoid future problems with power lines.

To avoid future electrical hazards, planting tips include:

- Consider the mature height of trees. Any tree that can grow as tall as 25 feet or more should not be planted near overhead power lines. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended.
- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow and interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities could also damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.
- Before digging, call 811, the local underground utility locator service, so that accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided.

### Tree Planting Guide





# PETOSKEY *Stands Up* FOR LITTLE BAY BOARDS

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



**I**f it takes a village to raise a child, then it most certainly takes one to raise a brainchild.

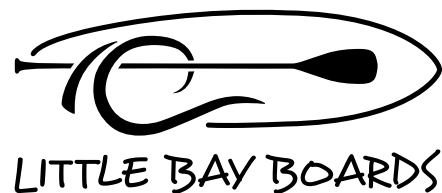
Little Bay Boards, the brainchild of Jason Thelen, is the well-loved Stand Up Paddleboard (SUP) darling of Petoskey. Indeed, it was the community of Petoskey that inspired Thelen to turn a dream into a successful business. Today, Thelen has carved out more than just a great company, he has created relationships 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](http://littlebayboards.com) to learn more  
or call 231-838-8451.

Visit [countrylines.com](http://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

# 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](http://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](http://michigan-energy.org).





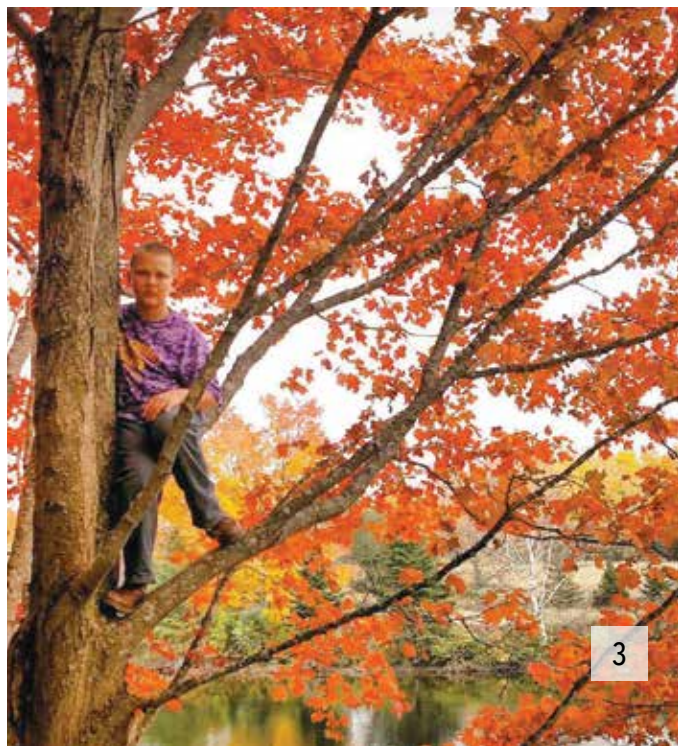


# Photo Contest

## Talented Kids



2



3



1

1. Already a pro on the tire swing, baby Annabella Jean loves swinging—even during her first snow experience! *By Mellisa Lazar*
2. Little Vienna loves her puppa's cabin in Hillman and is pretty happy that fishing on Ess Lake is an all-season sport! *By Lori Kleinow*
3. Erik, 12, shows off his tree-climbing skills during colors season in Rust Township. *By Kathryn Southerland*

## Submit Your "Show Us Your Garden" Photos!

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op invites members to share their amazing photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. **Upcoming topic and deadline is: Show Us Your Garden due March 20 for the May/June issue.**

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

We look forward to seeing your best photos!



Enter to win a

**\$50**

energy bill  
credit!



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

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the 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



## 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:

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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# THANK YOU

Let's honor the heroes  
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We celebrate the  
hard work, innovation  
and dedication of  
electrical lineworkers.

**April 9** is  
National Lineman  
Appreciation Day

**#thankalinenman**

