

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association

CHIPPIN' AWAY

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Great Lakes
Potato Chip
Co.

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Annual Meeting Is June 16

**Copper Peak:
Reaching New Heights**

Arctic Visitor



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*30% through 2019, 26% through 2020 and 22% through 2021



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countrylines.com

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POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

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

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

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Photo—Robert Bruce Photography

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Country Lines, Your Communications Partner

For more than 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. An empowering communication tool, *Country Lines* keeps members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op. Issues contain news about our services, director elections, member meetings and management decisions that members need to know about as owners of the co-op. The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members. The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on behalf of each member at an average cost of \$3.82 per year, paid as part of members' electric bill. The current magazine cost is 47 cents per copy. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association in Lansing. As always, we welcome and value your comments.





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OTHER INFORMATION

Date of Incorporation: Sept. 30, 1937
Fiscal year-end: Dec. 31
countrylines.com/coops/ontonagon

Ontonagon County REA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Join us on Facebook.

facebook.com/OntonagonCountyREA



May Is National Electrical Safety Month

Debbie Miles, General Manager

Most folks know that some of our employees work on high-voltage electric lines and equipment—often while lines and equipment are energized. Those employees have years of technical training and are outfitted with special safety equipment to mitigate the hazards.

But what about in your home? Most homes have 120 and 240-volt circuits, and even though they are low voltage, by comparison, these circuits can also be hazardous. National Electrical Safety Month is a good time to talk about electrical safety at home and take steps to ensure your family is safe from common electrical hazards. You can use the checklist below to assess your home, garage or workplace.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are all switches and outlets working properly? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are cords placed under carpets? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are any switches or outlets warm to the touch? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are any extension cords being used on a permanent basis? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are any outlets or switches discolored? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are cords kept tied up while being used? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do any switches or outlets make crackling or buzzing sounds? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are proper wattage light bulbs being used in all lights? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Do plugs fit snugly into all outlets? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are all appliance cords placed so they will not come in contact with hot surfaces? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are any cords cracked, frayed or damaged? | <input type="checkbox"/> Do you have recurring tripped circuit breakers or blown fuses? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are any cords pinched by furniture, doors or windows? | <input type="checkbox"/> Are electrical safety devices, such as GFCIs and AFCIs, tested every month? |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Are cords attached to anything with nails or staples? | |

If you find any of the things listed above, you might have an electrical safety hazard that needs to be addressed. It is strongly recommended that electrical work is done by licensed electricians and that before doing any electrical work the following safety-related work practices be followed:

- Turn off the power by switching off the correct circuit breaker in the main service panel.
- Unplug lamps, appliances, etc. that are being worked on.
- Use a voltmeter or other approved testing device to confirm that the power has been turned off.
- Never touch metal pipes or other conductive surfaces while working on an electrical project.
- Never attempt a project that is beyond your skill level.

Follow these safety tips to make sure that electrical energy works for you, not against you, and that your home and workplace are free from electrical hazards.

Ontonagon County REA/Dec. 31, 2017 & 2016

Financial Statement Balance Sheets

Assets	2017	2016	Member's Equities and Liabilities (continued)	2017	2016
UTILITY PLANT:			CURRENT LIABILITIES:		
Electric plant in service	\$28,290,693	\$26,404,303	Current maturities of long-term liabilities	596,000	506,000
Construction work in progress	943,884	2,308,514	Line of Credit notes payable	1,400,000	1,750,000
	29,234,577	28,712,817	Accounts payable	339,632	724,781
Less—Accumulated depreciation	(8,661,708)	(8,655,461)	Customer deposits	13,650	14,350
Net utility plant	20,572,869	20,057,356	Other current liabilities	387,996	344,705
INVESTMENTS & OTHER ASSETS			TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	2,737,278	3,339,836
Investments	913,308	836,145	Deferred credits	96,280	234,846
Total investments and other assets	913,308	836,145	TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	22,795,223	22,102,969
CURRENT ASSETS					
Cash and cash equivalents	62,830	133,388			
Accounts receivable (less accumulated provision for uncollectibles of \$40,000 in 2014)	671,447	519,266			
Accounts receivable—other	137,085	65,717			
Materials and supplies	217,687	236,663			
Prepayments	8,110	18,982			
Total current assets	1,137,159	974,016			
Deferred Charges	171,887	235,452			
TOTAL ASSETS	\$22,795,223	\$22,102,969			
Member's Equities and Liabilities					
EQUITIES:			OPERATING REVENUES	\$6,139,962	\$6,057,861
Memberships	\$22,950	\$22,990	OPERATING EXPENSES:		
Patronage capital	5,047,938	4,499,206	Cost of purchased power	2,332,389	2,405,587
Other equities	32,497	32,497	Distribution—Operations	310,796	311,963
Total equities	5,103,385	4,554,693	Distribution—Maintenance	599,186	621,396
LONG-TERM LIABILITIES:			Consumer accounts	202,945	180,047
Rural Utilities Service (RUS) mortgage notes	229,944	5,101,375	Customer service and informational	120,168	112,550
FFB	1,500,000		Sales Expense	-	-
National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (NRUFCFC) supplemental mortgage notes	4,870,368	188,876	Administrative and general	567,229	423,152
CoBank, ACB mortgage note	8,708,068	9,056,943	Depreciation	768,683	742,452
	\$15,308,380	\$14,347,194	Taxes	264,620	246,178
Less current portion	(596,000)	(506,000)	Other deduction	20,404	21,447
	\$14,712,380	\$13,841,194	Total operating expense	\$5,186,420	\$5,064,772
Post-retirement benefit obligation	145,900	132,400	Operating margins before interest expense	\$953,542	\$993,089
Total long-term liabilities	\$14,858,280	\$13,973,594	Interest expense	722,272	697,772
			Operating margins (loss) after interest expense	\$231,270	\$295,317
			NON-OPERATING MARGINS:		
			Interest and investment income	60,990	48,776
			Other nonoperating income (expense)	145,767	89,598
				\$206,757	\$138,374
			Capital credits	110,704	112,774
			NET (LOSS) MARGINS	\$548,731	\$546,465

Consumer Cooperative Act Disclosure

Name	Address	Email	Title	Term *
Debbie Miles	500 James K Paul Street, Ontonagon, MI 49953	debbie@ontorea.com	General Manager	
Calvin Koski	18338 Aura Road, L'anse, MI 49946	cgkoski@up.net	Director—President Aura/Skaneec	2018
George Rajala	PO Box 415, Chassell, MI 49916	rajgeo50@yahoo.com	Director—Vice President Chassell	2019
Randy Myhren	35401 Woodspur Rd, Ontonagon, MI 49953	cmmyhren@jamadots.com	Director—Secretary/Treasurer Green/Firesteel	2017
Wayne Heikkien	16593 Grist Mill Road, Baraga, MI 49908	wayneheikkien@yahoo.com	Director Pelke, Herman/Keweenaw Bay	2019
Frances Wiideman	4730 Charlie's Road, Toivola, MI 49965	fwiideman@alphacomm.net	Director Lake Mine/Toivola	2019
Paul Koski	14783 N Cemetery Rd., Ewen, MI 49925	pkoski@jamadots.com	Director Ewen/Trout Creek	2020
James Moore	PO Box 329, Hancock, MI 49930	jim.keweenaw@gmail.com	Director Boston	2020

*All terms expire in June

Board members are compensated \$325 per board meeting (president \$350). General Manager is compensated \$100,000 annually.



To Easily Manage Your Energy Efficiency Project Contractor

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

Once you've hired a contractor for your energy efficiency renovation, you need to manage your contractor to ensure quality. Follow the steps below and you'll be on your way to celebrating a successful project in no time.

1.

Establish a single point of contact.

First, you should decide who will be the main contact with your contractor. Clear communication is critical because a renovation that includes energy efficiency improvements comes with extra challenges. A single point of contact will help avoid confusion, conflicts and cost overruns.

2.

Have a discussion about quality.

Before the work starts, have a discussion with your contractor about quality. You want the contractor to know you'll be carefully overseeing the work and that there may be others involved in this oversight, such as building inspectors, your electric cooperative or an independent energy auditor. You can discuss the standards of a professional, high-quality job. And you can agree on the points at which the contractor will pause so you or someone you designate can review the work.

3.

Put change orders in writing.

It will be tempting to add "just one more thing" along the way, and the contractor may agree a change is simple and possible within the timeframes. Contractors and customers often miscommunicate about change orders and end up disagreeing about additional costs when the project is completed. Before you make any changes, be sure to get a written cost quote. If it's significant, you can then weigh the cost against the benefit of the change.

4.

End with an inspection.

Almost all efficiency measures require some kind of final inspection. For example, infrared thermometers can show voids in blown insulation, and fiberglass batts can be visually inspected to ensure there are no air gaps and the batts are not compressed.

HVAC measures require special attention. ENERGY STAR® has a program to ensure quality HVAC installation. Forced air systems typically have poorly balanced supply and return air delivery that can often be improved. Air flow can be measured at each register, and a duct blaster test can identify and quantify duct leakage.

When you review the work, it may be helpful to take photos or to bring in an energy auditor. Be sure to have these inspections outlined in the contract and discussed beforehand, so the contractor is comfortable.

When the renovation is complete, it may be tempting to sign the check, shake hands and breathe a sigh of relief that it's all over. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, it may be worth the extra step of having a final audit by a licensed energy auditor.

Once you confirm that the work is 100 percent complete, you can write a check for the final payment, then sit back and enjoy your revitalized, more energy-efficient home!



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

*Michigan's **free & easy**
utility notification system.*

**For your safety and
for the protection of
underground utility lines,
always follow these
steps before starting any
digging project:**

1.

**Contact MISS DIG at
811 or missdig.org.**

2.

**Wait three business days
for utility owners to mark
their lines.**

3.

Respect the marks.

4.

Dig with care.



**Visit missdig.org
for more information.**

Shopping for New Appliances? Look for the ENERGY STAR!

Take a look around your home—are outdated appliances wasting energy and costing you money? If so, it's time to upgrade to efficient ENERGY STAR® models!

ENERGY STAR products provide the same features you're already used to, but can use **up to 75 percent less energy** than standard models. Your purchases will be even more affordable with cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program!

What is ENERGY STAR?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR in 1992 to help consumers identify energy-efficient products. The ENERGY STAR label can now be found on major appliances, lighting, electronics, and even new homes and commercial buildings.

To earn the ENERGY STAR label, a third-party certification process verifies:

- Significant energy savings
- Features and performance consumers demand, plus greater efficiency
- Comprehensive product testing

Did you know? Since the early 1990s, ENERGY STAR has helped consumers save \$362 billion in utility costs!

View all incentives at **michigan-energy.org** or call **877.296.4319** for details.

Save now with cash back from the Energy Optimization program!

Product	Efficiency comparison (vs. a new standard model)*	Energy Optimization program incentive**
Clothes washer	Uses 35% less water and 20% less energy	\$125
Clothes dryer	Uses 20% less energy	\$125
Computer	Uses 60% less energy	\$50
Dehumidifier	Uses 15% less energy	\$75
Dishwasher	Uses 5% less energy and 15% less water	\$75
Chest Freezer	Uses at least 10% less energy	\$75
Refrigerator	Uses 20% less energy	\$200
Television	Uses at least 25% less energy	\$50-100
Room air conditioner	Use 15% less energy	\$50

*All data according to energystar.gov. **Incentive amounts are subject to change; other restrictions may apply.



SAVE BIG WITH ENERGY STAR®!

It's time to upgrade outdated, energy-wasting appliances with ENERGY STAR models. You'll use up to 75% less energy AND save upfront with cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program:

REFRIGERATOR: \$200

CLOTHES WASHER: \$125

DEHUMIDIFIER: \$75

DISHWASHER: \$75

Visit our website for a full list of incentives!

michigan-energy.org • 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

Show Us Your Garden

1. My garden is surrounded by open fields with grasses, broad-leaved weeds and an abundance of birdsfoot trefoil. Naturally, the biggest challenge in weeding the garden is keeping up with the many grass seeds which make their way through or over the fence to take hold among the vegetables. *By Lynda Graham, Ewen*

2. This little beauty pushed its way through winter's snow to give us a hope of spring! *By Rhonyah Tober-Massie, Pelkie*



Submit A Photo & Win A Bill Credit!

Ontonagon REA members whose photos we print in *Michigan Country Lines* will be entered in a drawing. One lucky member will win a credit up to \$200 on their December 2018 energy bill!

Our upcoming topic and deadline is **Fan Spirit due May 20** for the July/August 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
\$200
energy bill
credit!



Potluck

Impress family and friends with these crowd-pleasing recipes.

Photos—Robert Bruce Photography

Southwest Mac And Cheese (pictured above)

Jennifer Quail, Midwest Energy & Communications

- 1 pound uncooked macaroni or shell pasta
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 15-ounce can packed pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 1 16-ounce package Mexican-style four cheese blend, shredded
- 4 ounces cream cheese, cut into small pieces (for a lighter option, use 4 ounces Neufchatel cheese instead)
- ¼ to ½ cup milk, almond milk, evaporated (not condensed) milk or heavy cream
- 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- ¼ to 1 teaspoon dried chipotle chili powder, to taste
- salt, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare pasta according to the package directions, drain and return to pot. Cover.

In a heavy skillet, melt the butter and sauté the diced onion until translucent but not browned. Add the pumpkin to the skillet with the onions and stir over medium heat until warmed through. Mix in the shredded cheese and cream cheese into the pumpkin mixture and stir until melted and smooth. Use milk product to thin as needed until consistency is smooth but not runny. Do not boil. Stir in the can of drained tomatoes and green chiles into the cheese sauce. Season with chipotle powder and salt to taste.

Add the warm sauce to the reserved pasta and stir until combined. Serve immediately, or transfer to a slow cooker set on warm. If you prefer baked mac and cheese, transfer pasta to a greased 3-quart casserole dish. Top with ½ cup shredded cheese and crumbled tortilla chips. Bake for 20 minutes or until top is browned.

Experiment with spices! For a brighter gold color and more bite to the flavor, add ¼–½ teaspoon mustard powder. For a traditional chili con carne flavor, add ¼ teaspoon ground cumin. You can also vary the heat by using different strength tomatoes and chilies, or you can use salsa instead of tomatoes, at your desired heat level.



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



Cookies And Cakes: due July 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!



Buffalo Chicken Meatballs

Heather Poland, Cherryland

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1½ pound ground chicken | ½ teaspoon salt |
| ½ cup panko breadcrumbs | ¼ teaspoon black pepper |
| 1 egg, lightly beaten | ⅓ cup buffalo sauce (I used |
| 1 small carrot, finely grated | Franks, or use your favorite |
| 1 celery stalk, minced | buffalo sauce) |
| 2 green onions, minced | ⅓ cup blue cheese or mozzarella |
| 3 garlic cloves, minced | 3 teaspoons blue cheese or ranch |
| ½ teaspoon paprika | dressing, optional for garnish |

Preheat oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground chicken, panko and egg. Let set for 5 minutes, so panko is soaked by the egg. Add the carrot, celery, green onion, garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Using your hands mix together until just combined. Using a spoon or cookie scoop, shape into meatballs and place onto prepared baking sheet. Place in oven and bake for 15–20 minutes until cooked through (internal temperature of 160 F). Remove from oven, place the meatballs in a bowl, add the buffalo sauce and gently toss to combine. Drizzle with ranch dressing and blue cheese, if desired. Serve immediately.



Key West 'Shrooms

James Maxwell, Great Lakes Energy

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1 package of portobello or white button mushrooms | 1 package Swiss cheese, sliced |
| 1 package Phillips crab cakes (or similar) | 4 dashes Old Bay Spice |
| | ½ stick melted butter |

Clean mushrooms and remove stems. Place on a microwaveable plate. Dip the mushrooms in the melted butter. Drizzle remaining butter over mushroom tops. Stuff mushroom tops with crab cakes. Sprinkle mushrooms with Old Bay spice to taste. Quarter the cheese slices and place over the stuffed mushrooms. Sprinkle mushrooms with remaining Old Bay spice. Microwave mushrooms for 4 minutes. Place on a serving tray, garnish and serve.

Featured Guest Chef

Enjoy this simple, yet delicious, dish with family and friends gathered around—no matter what the season.



Cherry BBQ Potato Chip Crusted Chicken Fingers

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cup mayonnaise | • pinch salt |
| 1 large bag Great Lakes Michigan Cherry BBQ Chips, crushed | • non-stick oil spray |
| ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper | 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips |
| | ¼ cup butter, melted |

Preheat oven to 400 F. Scoop mayonnaise into a shallow bowl. Place crushed BBQ chips in another shallow bowl and combine crushed chips with black pepper and a pinch of salt. Dip chicken pieces (just 1 or 2 at a time) in mayonnaise and then coat with chip mixture. Place chicken strips onto a greased baking pan. Make sure to space chicken out a bit so the sides are not touching and can get crispy. Drizzle chicken strips with melted butter. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes until chicken is no longer pink. Remove and allow to cool for 5 to 8 minutes before serving, so chips harden back up. Serve and enjoy!

Optional: Serve with dip or sauce.

Read the full story about Great Lakes Potato Chip Co. on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.

Notice Of 2018 Annual Meeting Of Members Of Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association

Date of Notice: May 17, 2018

Please be advised that, pursuant to Article II, Section 3 and Article XIV of the Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association's bylaws, the Annual Meeting of the members of the Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association is hereby called by the secretary of the association. The purpose of the Annual Meeting is to seat the new directors, pass reports covering the previous fiscal year, and transact any other business as may properly come before the meeting. The Annual Meeting of the members of the Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association shall occur at Chassell High School, 41585 U.S. Highway 41, Chassell, Michigan 49916, promptly at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 16, 2018.



Ontonagon County Rural Electrification Association
Randy Myhren, Secretary

Access To Rules And Rates

Please be advised that the following information is available to Ontonagon County REA members:

1. Complete rate schedules;
2. Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive;
3. Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for a member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate;
4. Clear and concise explanation of the members' actual energy use for each billing period during the last 12 months.

The information can be obtained by contacting Ontonagon County REA at 906-884-4151.

Holiday Office Closings

Cooperative offices will be closed on Monday, May 28, in observance of the Memorial Day holiday and Wednesday, July 4, for Independence Day.

Payments may be made at the drop box and will be posted on the next open business day.

From our family to yours, enjoy the holidays!



Arctic Visitor

During the course of a workday, Ontonagon's linemen often spot many types of wildlife while performing their duties. This past winter, they spotted some arctic visitors sitting atop one of their distribution poles, and Lineman Kelly Clark took these photos during multiple sightings. Clark and fellow Linemen Gil Martinez and Brad Hanson observed two to three owls nearly every day over a two-week period in a large open field near Topaz.

According to Scott Stewart, a local wildlife photographer, the pictured owl is a young snowy owl, probably a female. "Young animals are often heavily spotted to help them blend in better, and females are more spotted than males, even as adults, to blend in when sitting on a nest," Stewart said. "This area looks like a fairly good place for them with the open fields to hunt rodents and rabbits."

HOW TO PREVENT ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING

Each year 3,800 people die from drowning.

Electric shock drowning occurs when an electric current escapes boats, docks and lights near marinas, shocking nearby swimmers.

There are no visible signs of current seeping into water, which makes this a hidden danger.

The electric shock paralyzes swimmers, making them unable to swim to safety.



ELECTRICAL SAFETY TIPS FOR:

Swimmers

- **Never swim near a boat or launching ramp.** Residual current could flow into the water from the boat or the marina's wiring, potentially putting anyone in the water at risk of electric shock.
- If you feel any tingling sensations while in the water, **tell someone and swim back** in the direction from which you came. Immediately report it to the dock or marina owner.

Boat Owners

- **Ensure your boat is properly maintained and consider having it inspected annually.** GFCIs and ELCIs should be tested monthly. Conduct leakage testing to determine if electrical current is escaping the vessel.
- **Use portable GFCIs or shore power cords** (including "Y" adapters) that are "UL-Marine Listed" when using electricity near water.
- Regularly have your boat's electrical system inspected by a certified marine electrician. **Ensure it meets your local and state NEC, NFPA and ABYC safety codes.**

IF YOU SEE ELECTRIC SHOCK DROWNING TAKING PLACE:



TURN POWER OFF



THROW A LIFE RING



CALL 911

DO NOT enter the water. You could become a victim, too.

CHIPPIN' AWAY

By James A. Curtis // Photos by Robert Bruce Photography and Dre Photography

With
Great Lakes
Potato Chip
Co.



Chris Girrback and Ed Girrback,
owners of Great Lakes Potato Chip Company.

“**E**ddie, what happened to my blankets?” said Ed Girrback’s mother when she noticed they were missing. Ed jokes that after he explained he’d been selling them as ponchos to his schoolmates, “mom’s reaction helped me understand at an early age about the ‘cost of goods sold.’”

Ponchos were Ed’s first foray into business, but the now co-founder of Great Lakes Potato Chip Company (GLPCC)—a member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative—would carry that entrepreneurial spirit his entire life, eventually leading him—along with his son and business partner, Chris Girrback—to open Pangea’s Pizza Pub in Traverse City. Even more, it was that same spirit that inspired a growing interest in manufacturing.

Ultimately, deciding where they would strike out next came down to a simple question: “Dad, what do you like?” asked Chris.

Ed thought for a moment and replied, “Well, aside from pizza, I like potato chips.” And the idea for GLPCC was born.

The Girrbauchs threw themselves into researching potato chips; and on May 5, 2010, they founded GLPCC with two part-time employees and one old fryer to begin manufacturing their favorite—skin-on kettle chips.

In the eight years since, the chip company has experienced tremendous growth and won numerous accolades, including being named “Number One Kettle Chip” by *The Chicago Tribune*, and “Most Investable Second-stage Food Company” at Crain’s Food Summit. They also received a “Gold” rating for kettle and tortilla chips at the Saratoga Springs Chip Festival—the birthplace of the potato chip.

*“We get asked a lot why we leave the **SKIN ON.**”*

*“It’s simple. It just **TASTES BETTER.**”*

Today, the chip company produces seven flavors of kettle chip, a tortilla chip, has 16 distributors, retails in seven states, employs 30 people, and is growing at a rate of 30 percent per year.

All this growth means more potatoes, and Michigan has no shortage—it’s the leading producer of chipping potatoes in the nation. The Girrbauchs developed a special relationship with Sackett Farms in Mecosta—a HomeWorks Tri-County Cooperative member—to supply their potatoes. Sackett Farms is a sixth-generation, family-owned farm specializing in A-grade chipping potatoes, whose crop is in high demand.

“Chris’ first trip to Sackett Farms was humorous,” said Ed. “He drove 110 miles to the farm in his pickup truck with a crate in the back and had to get in line with semi-trucks to load up the potatoes. He was the only pickup in the line, and we’re thankful they let us jump in and hold up their process.”

Chipping away at the potato chip industry, the Girrbauchs eventually sent more than a pickup truck to Sackett Farms. Now, a semi-truck delivers 120,000 pounds of potatoes a week—and they are looking for more. The chip company has invested nearly half a million dollars in automation to double its capacity to keep up with demand. With each upgrade, Ed and Chris look closely at the most energy efficient equipment as part of their commitment to sustainability, and they value their partnership with their electric cooperative.

Coincidentally, GLPCC and Sackett Farms belong to electric cooperatives that are members of Wolverine Power Cooperative. The Wolverine cooperatives lead Michigan in new renewable energy. In 2018, the co-ops reduced their carbon footprint by 25 percent—now providing members with 56 percent carbon-free energy. “Cherryland operates as a true partner, their whole mindset is how do they help us, and how do we work together to find more ways to be energy efficient,” said Ed. “We love doing business with them.”

As Great Lakes Potato Chip Company continues to grow, Ed takes great pride in his Michigan-made products, their highest-quality ingredients, and their unique process to get a crispier, crunchier, tastier chip. “We get asked a lot why we leave the skin on,” said Ed. “It’s simple. It just tastes better.”



Visit greatlakespotatochips.com to learn more about these Michigan-made chips.



COPPER PEAK: REACHING *new* HEIGHTS

By Emily Haines Lloyd
Photos courtesy of Brad Nelson, NorthernPOV
and Copper Peak

Fresh off the February festivities in Pyeongchang, South Korea, Olympic fever is slowly fading. But for a small community in the Upper Peninsula, Olympic dreams are still very much alive.

In Ironwood, a village that sits on the Michigan and Wisconsin border, visitors can travel down a country road to Copper Peak, which is currently a tourist stop for breathtaking 360-degree views. However, between the 1970s through the 1990s, Copper Peak was a premiere ski jump for would-be Olympians and ski jump enthusiasts. And, if a dedicated band of supporters have their way, it will be again.

The Copper Peak ski jump sits 469-feet-high and looks over 2,500 square miles. The view from the world's largest artificial ski jump includes three states (Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota), majestic Lake Superior, and the winding Black River as it cuts through the woods. In its prime, it hosted 13 ski flying events in its nearly 25-year run.

The Copper Peak ski jump eventually closed due to financial constraints, but by no means remained dormant. Administrators believed that the views from the top of the jump should be enjoyed by more than just the lucky few jumpers and flyers who competed

and trained on the hill. That's when the Copper Peak Adventure Ride entered the scene.

"The Copper Peak Adventure Ride is one of the most thrilling experiences," said Marketing and Communications Director Kassi Huotari. "There is the perfect mixture of excitement and anxiousness as you slowly head to the top, but the payoff is priceless."

The return on the \$20 ticket price (\$20/adults, \$8/children) more than pays for itself, as adventurers take an 800-foot-chairlift ride to the crest of the hill, followed by an 18-story elevator trip to the main observation deck. If you're

feeling even more daring, individuals can climb eight additional stories to the top of the jump's starting gate.

Breathtaking hardly describes the feeling, adventurers say, as they look out over the landscape with a view that few get to experience.

While bringing those amazing views to nearly 10,000 ticket buyers last year was inspiring, those who have known and loved this hill—including team members, athletes and community members—still dream of returning Copper Peak to its former glory. A few years ago, that group of ski-jump enthusiasts and go-getters began efforts to upgrade the jump to meet modern standards and reached out for fundraising and, eventually, legislative support to return Copper Peak to a premiere competitive ski jump and training site.

"We've got excellent support from the international ski jumping community," said Charles Supercynski, president of the Copper Peak board. "We see it as a very important construction project that will enhance the area. This is huge for us. We only have 16,000 people in the county, so it would be enormous for us economically and for the state. It would shine the international spotlight on Michigan and this community."

The mission is to re-establish Copper Peak as the western hemisphere's largest active ski jump and host the Summer Grand Prix competitions.

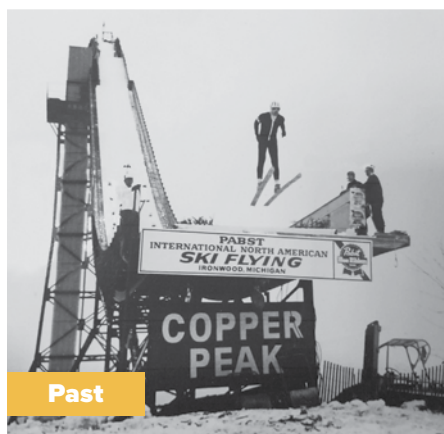
"At the recent Olympic trials in Park City, Utah, a U.S. female flyer approached a couple of our board members who were wearing Copper Peak gear," said Huotari. "She went right up to them and said she wanted to be the first woman to fly off Copper Peak when it reopens. With that kind of passion and support, we're even more committed to succeeding."

Visit copperpeak.net to learn more.

Copper Peak is all about the adventure and is excited to be hosting the Red Bull 400, a grueling, 400-meter sprint to the top of the ski jump that will put each athlete's calves, quads and endurance to the test. The event on Saturday, May 12, is open to the public and, much like the view from the top, will be a remarkable site to see.

For more information visit:

redbull.com/us-en/events/red-bull-400-international



Past



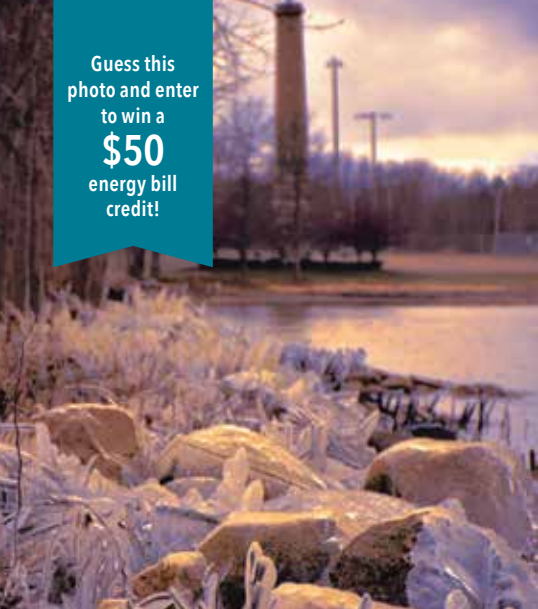
Present



Future

Artistic rendering, provided by Populous, shows the future plans of the Copper Peak site which includes adding a plastic landing hill and porcelain track down the in-run to prepare for summer ski jumping.

Guess this
photo and enter
to win a
\$50
energy bill
credit!



Where In *Michigan* Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo above by May 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 March 2018 issue is Ann Pihlaja, an Ontonagon County REA member, who correctly identified the photo as the Traverse City Cherry Festival Air Show.

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

March 2018



Photo courtesy of Karen Murphy

I Remember...



My grandfather, Carl (Lavy) Hagstrom, is holding me, Joelle, and my Uncle Carl is looking on.

Berry Picking

I remember going berry picking with my grandfather, Carl (Lavy) Hagstrom, in the woods around Cheboygan. My grandfather had special berry picking pails and adjustable belts. He said it was important for both hands to be free to pick the juiciest ones! But my belt was always too big, so I hung it from my neck.

I never saw anyone who could pick berries as fast as he could. It didn't matter if we were picking raspberries or huckleberries, he always filled his pail first. He would tease me because I couldn't keep up with him, but he knew I was eating two berries for every one I put into my pail. My hands were always stained with the juice.

We took the berries home for my grandmother to can and the rest she saved for us to eat on our cereal or to make a special treat. Many evenings after dinner, our family would get involved in making homemade ice cream. It was hard work turning the handle of their ice cream machine, but it was worth it, as my grandfather would add some delicious berries. I always looked forward to summers in Cheboygan with my grandparents and making berry ice cream!

Joelle Majerowicz, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

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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PLEASE JOIN US!

June 16 • 10 a.m. • Chassell High School
41585 U.S. Highway 41, Chassell, MI 49916

The board of directors and employees of your electric co-op invite you to join them at the 2018 Annual Meeting. This is a chance to visit with your neighbors and friends from throughout our seven-county service area and participate in your co-op's affairs. At the meeting, newly elected directors from Aura's District 4 and Lake Linden's District 7 will be seated.



Meeting Highlights:

- Updates on co-op affairs by the co-op's president and general manager
- Newly elected directors from District 4 (Aura) and District 7 (Lake Linden) will be seated
- Director election results
- Update on your co-op's financial health
- Drawing for cash prizes
- Continental breakfast and lunch will be served