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Scholarship And Safety
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Executive Editor: Casey Clark

Editor: Christine Dorr

Copy Editor: Heidi Spencer

Design and Layout:
Karreen Bird

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CONTACT US/LETTERS TO EDITOR:
Michigan Country Lines
201 Townsend St., Suite 900
Lansing, MI 48933
248-534-7358
editor@countrylines.com
countrylines.com

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In This Issue

July/August 2018 // Vol. 38, No. 7



ON THE COVER

Roast master and owner of Courageous Coffee, Tanya Schneider has followed her passion since her first cup of coffee.

6 MICHIGAN ELECTRIC CO-OPS EMPOWER STUDENTS Youth Tour 2018

7 FIVE FRIENDLY TIPS FOR THE FARMERS MARKET

Grace Derocha

10 MI CO-OP KITCHEN Jump Start Your Day With These Eggcellent Recipes!

Christin McKamey & Our Readers

Tanya Schneider Of Courageous Coffee
Shares Her Cappuccino Muffin Recipe

[Enter Our Recipe Contest And Win A \\$50 Bill Credit!](#)

14 FEATURE Courageous Coffee: The Perfect Blend Emily Haines Lloyd

18 MI CO-OP COMMUNITY Best Of Michigan: Best Beaches! Here are members' top beaches along Michigan's coastlines.

[Guess Our New Mystery Photo And Win A \\$50 Bill Credit!](#)

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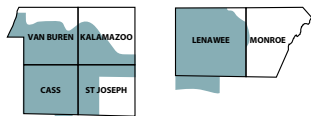
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CONTACT US

MIDWEST ENERGY & COMMUNICATIONS

800-492-5989
teammidwest.com
Email: info@teammidwest.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Clarence "Topper" Barth, Chairperson, Three Rivers
269-279-9233
Clarence.Barth@teammidwest.com

Ben Russell, Vice Chairperson, Constantine
269-435-8564
Ben.Russell@teammidwest.com

Ron Armstrong, Secretary, Lawton
269-299-0239
Ron.Armstrong@teammidwest.com

John Green, Treasurer, Dowagiac
269-470-2816
John.Green@teammidwest.com

Gerry Bundle, Cassopolis
269-414-0164
Gerry.Bundle@teammidwest.com

Arell Chapman, Onsted
517-292-3040
Arell.Chapman@teammidwest.com

James Dickerson, Bloomingdale
269-370-6868
Jim.Dickerson@teammidwest.com

Harry Gentz, Blissfield
517-443-5537
Harry.Gentz@teammidwest.com

Fred Turk, Decatur
269-423-7762
Fred.Turk@teammidwest.com

PRESIDENT/CEO

Robert Hance

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The Many Faces Of Power Outages

Robert Hance, President/CEO

On May 2 we experienced the first spring storm of the year, including some fierce winds and lightning. Needless to say, power lines, poles and trees don't typically respond well to those kinds of circumstances and we had some widespread outages across our southwest Michigan service territory. Two short days later, Mother Nature's feisty mood returned, again leaving many of our consumers without power for several hours.

No one likes a power outage, but folks tend to be pretty understanding when the disruption is clearly related to a weather event. With these two events, many posted comments on our Facebook updates, thanking our crews for their hard work and encouraging them to stay safe as they worked on restoration efforts in less-than-ideal elements.

When the power goes out on a sunny spring day, people don't tend to be quite as gracious and patient.

Weather and trees wreak havoc on our largely overhead system and are the most common causes of outages on our distribution system. But there are many other factors that can land you in the dark.

I recently watched a news story about a raccoon knocking out power for 40,000-plus consumers in Knox County, Tenn. The unsuspecting critter found his way onto the main feed in a substation, resulting in a huge flash, a shower of sparks, and total darkness for those customers. The raccoon didn't fare well either.

It's not an unusual scenario in our service territory. Woodland creatures live and roam among the trees that typify our rural space, offering easy access to warm substations and other overhead equipment that deliver power to your home. Squirrels and raccoons are common culprits, but birds, possums, and even snakes can easily come in contact with transformers and fuses.

Public damage is another common cause. I jokingly refer to the "weekend chainsaw warriors" who tackle trees and branches without considering the surrounding overhead power lines. Construction and farming equipment, and the occasional car-pole accident are other common occurrences that can disrupt your power supply.

And then there's good old equipment failure. Our distribution system is comprised of a lot of highly mechanical equipment. Just like appliances and equipment in your home, sometimes things just fail due to age or wear and tear.

We don't like power outages any more than you do and have worked hard over the last 15 years to improve our system through aggressive right-of-way clearance and investments in our infrastructure. As we continue those efforts, we're actively deploying smart grid applications that will allow us to improve reliability and safety in new and innovative ways. We will never completely avoid power disruptions, but we're making strategic investments to give you the best service experience possible.

What Causes Power Outages?

More often than not, outages are weather related— but that isn't always the case. If the power goes out on a beautiful day, the cause could be anything from a curious critter to human error. Explore this infographic to learn about some of the common occurrences that can affect your power supply.



Weather

Lightning, high winds, and ice are common weather-related power interruptions.

Trees

Outages are caused when trees interfere with power lines. This is why our line clearance and right-of-way maintenance programs are so important.

Wildlife

Squirrels, snakes and birds can come in contact with equipment such as transformers and fuses and cause equipment to momentarily fail or shut down completely.



Equipment Failure

The electric grid is a highly-complex infrastructure with a lot of mechanical elements that can fail due to age, performance and other issues.

Public Damage

Damage by vehicle accidents or construction equipment can cause broken utility poles, downed power lines and equipment damage.



◀ 2018 ▶ YOUTH TOUR

Photos courtesy of Doug Snitgen

Washington, D.C. Highlights

Electric Cooperative Youth Tour teaches students about their past and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to explore leadership lessons from our nation's history, build life-long friendships with students from across the country, and be immersed in the cooperative spirit.

Michigan's electric cooperatives sponsored 22 high school juniors and seniors on this once-in-a-lifetime trip to Washington, D.C. this past June.



▲ Students from across the state toured multiple landmarks, including a guided tour of the U.S. Capitol.



▲ The Michigan pillar is a tribute within the National World War II Memorial, and represents the 620,000 Michigan residents who served during World War II.



▲ Youth Tour students visited the historical home of George Washington, Mount Vernon.



▲ The group visited the Marine Corps War Memorial.



▲ Students enjoyed meeting with Congressmen Bill Huizenga and Jack Bergman on the steps of the U.S. Capitol building.



**Information is available at
CooperativeYouthTour.com**



Five Friendly Tips For The Farmers Market

By Grace Derocha

Michigan residents are fortunate in their ability to grow and buy fresh, locally grown produce throughout the summer and fall. According to the Michigan Farmers Market Association, the mitten is home to more than 300 farmers markets, reaching residents in nearly every county of the state. Trips to the farmers market can be a fun family tradition to inspire healthier eating habits and explore new foods and flavors. While planning a visit to the farmers market, keep in mind some of the following tips:

1. Ask Questions

Don't shy away from making conversation with the vendors at a local farmers market. Unlike a grocery store setting, shoppers are given the opportunity to learn more about what they're purchasing, ask questions and get advice for their own growing/gardening purposes. Some vendors may even have insight on cooking methods or tasty food pairings.

2. Bring Bags And Cash

Farmers market vendors do not usually supply shopping bags. Bringing reusable bags from home guarantees a means of carrying purchases while reducing waste. It's also common for farmers market vendors to only accept cash, so be sure to have bills and small change on hand before heading out the door.

3. Pick The Right Time To Go

Crowds at the market tend to pick up around midday, so it's best to arrive right as it opens. Early shoppers have a better chance of avoiding lines, getting advice from vendors and picking from high-demand fruits or vegetables. On the other hand, those in the market for a good deal may want to visit later in the day. Oftentimes farmers market vendors will discount their products instead of risking waste.

4. Know Seasonal Produce

Having an idea of what produce is in season can help set expectations for purchases at the market. Research what grows in the area, talk to the farmers about what produce will be coming and plan shopping trips from there. Many farmers markets provide customers with a crop calendar at the information booth to show when various fruits and vegetables will be available.

5. Meal Plan Ahead

Going to the farmers market without a list or plan may lead to unnecessary purchases. To avoid waste, look around the kitchen and get an idea of which foods might pair well for meals in the week ahead. Use the seasonal produce available at the market for inspiration and explore using any leftover produce in a new soup, salad, sandwich or casserole recipe.

To find a farmer's market nearby use the Find a Farmers Market tool, found on the Michigan Farmers Market Association website: mifma.org/findafarmersmarket/.

Fruits and vegetables in-season throughout the summer in Michigan include, but are not limited to:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apples | <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumbers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Apricots | <input type="checkbox"/> Greens (turnips, collards, kale) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asparagus | <input type="checkbox"/> Peaches |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Beans | <input type="checkbox"/> Peas |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli | <input type="checkbox"/> Peppers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blackberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Radishes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blueberries | <input type="checkbox"/> Raspberries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cabbage | <input type="checkbox"/> Spinach |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots | <input type="checkbox"/> Squash (yellow, zucchini) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Celery | <input type="checkbox"/> Strawberries |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cherries (tart and sweet) | |

Optimize Your Home With A *Free* Energy Audit

Is your home properly sealed, insulated, and ventilated? If you've noticed any issues such as mold, mildew, ice dams, drafts, or overall discomfort, your home may require improvements to resolve energy inefficiencies. To better understand and manage your home's energy use and costs, take advantage of the Energy Optimization program's free energy audit!

The Home Energy Optimizer is a brief online survey that analyzes your home's energy use. You will be asked to enter some specific information, such as the year your home was built, the type of heating and cooling systems in place, and when various other systems and appliances were purchased and installed.

Once you've completed the survey, you will receive a personalized, comprehensive report, as well as cost-saving tips and recommendations to help reduce energy waste throughout your household. Additionally, all participants will receive a free energy-saving kit, which includes light bulbs and other devices to help save energy and water!

How to complete your home energy audit:

- Visit the Energy Optimization website (michigan-energy.org).
- Select your electric utility from the drop-down menu at the top of the page.
- In the left menu bar, select "Online Home Audit."
- Click "Get Started Now!" and complete the questionnaire.

Upon completion of the Home Energy Optimizer survey, your free energy-saving kit will be mailed to the address you provide. Have questions about the free home energy audit or energy-saving kit? Call us at 877-296-4319.



Energy Savings At Your Fingertips

Team up with the Energy Optimization program to improve the comfort, durability and energy efficiency of your home! Complete our Online Home Audit to assess your home's energy performance and receive a comprehensive report featuring cost-saving tips and opportunities.

ENERGY TIP: Receive a **FREE** energy-saving kit when you complete your Online Home Audit!

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Better Together



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



1978 Gold Hammer winner Harold Schadewald Jr. and 2018 winner Julie Tokarz display their awards in front of the Habitat for Humanity of Lenawee County house rehabbed by the LISD Tech Center students during the 2017-2018 school year.

Hitting The Nail On The Head

By Amy Pales

For the past 50 years, the Gold Hammer Award has honored Lenawee Intermediate School District (LISD) students for their skills and dedication in learning building trades and residential construction. Four student candidates are nominated by their peers in the Residential Construction Program and approved by their instructors. Each candidate then interviews with representatives from local businesses, including MEC, who select the winner.

This year's honor went to Julie Tokarz, LISD Tech Center senior, for her outstanding dedication to her trade and studies.

"I've been helping my dad on construction projects since I was about 3 or 4. My brother and I were my dad's assistants; we'd hand him tools as we learned what he was doing. I've been in love with it ever since," said Tokarz.

As part of her program, she and her classmates rehabbed a house for Habitat for Humanity of Lenawee County. "This project really opened my eyes to other people's situations and taught me not to be selfish," noted Tokarz. She hopes to complete an internship with Habitat this summer before heading to the U.P. to major in construction management and minor in business management at Northern Michigan University in Marquette.

"My brother and I were my dad's assistants; we'd hand him tools as we learned what he was doing. I've been in love with it ever since."—Julie Tokarz

What makes the Gold Hammer Award special is the impact it has in the lives of the winners; it can launch careers and transform lives. Just ask Harold Schadewald Jr., MEC consumer for over 20 years, who won the award in 1978. "That award got me the first job. In fact, my boss left the position vacant for a little while just so he could hire the winner. Then it landed me two jobs after that, which gave me the skills and experience to start my own business that I have owned since 1987," he noted.

He remains heavily involved in the Gold Hammer program today, showing Tech Center students the ropes and serving on the committee to select the winner. He even presents the award to the winner during the annual banquet in the spring.

When asked about what he looks for in a winning nominee, he stated, "I look for a student with a strong work ethic and dedication but most importantly, I want someone who feels it [building trades] in his or her heart. The winner has to have the passion and the desire to go into the industry. To me my job is not just a paycheck; it defines me as a person. I want our winners to feel the same and Julie really emulated that this year."

Eggcellent

Jump start your day with these egg recipes!

Crustless Quiche

Mary Gavlek, Great Lakes Energy

- ½ cup Bisquick
- 3 eggs
- ½ cup melted butter
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 1½ cups milk
- 1 cup shredded cheese
- cooked chopped meats of choice
- diced vegetables of choice

Preheat oven to 425 F. Mix together Bisquick, eggs, butter, salt, pepper, milk and cheese with a wire whip. Add meat and vegetables. Pour into a round pie plate or 9×9 square pan. Bake uncovered for 45 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes, serve and enjoy.



Watch a video of this recipe at
micoopkitchen.com/videos



Rise N' Shine Eggs

Kathie Riess, Cherryland

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| 2-3 tablespoons butter | 1-2 teaspoons prepared horseradish (not cream style) |
| 4 large eggs | • Tabasco sauce, to taste |
| ⅓ cup grated sharp cheddar cheese | • salt and pepper |
| ⅓ cup seeded and chopped tomatoes | |

Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. In a mixing bowl, whisk eggs until almost totally homogenized. Add eggs to skillet and stir gently. After they have begun to thicken, add remaining ingredients. Stir until cheese melts and is incorporated. Serve immediately.



Potato Crusted Quiche With Morels, Ramps, Asparagus, Bacon And Swiss

Bonnie Langworthy, HomeWorks Tri-County

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 2 medium potatoes,
peeled and sliced | ¾ teaspoon dried thyme |
| 2 tablespoons oil | 8 strips bacon, cooked
crisp |
| ½ cup ramps (leeks),
chopped | 4 ounces gruyere cheese,
grated |
| ½ cup roasted red bell
pepper, chopped | 8-10 large eggs |
| ¼ cup morel mushrooms,
coarsely chopped | ½ cup half & half |
| ¼ cup blanched asparagus,
chopped | ¼ teaspoon salt |
| | ¼ teaspoon ground pepper |
| | • pinch of nutmeg |

Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a 9-inch pie pan. Blanch potatoes in salted, boiling water for 1½ minutes. When cool, place a single layer of potatoes in the pan, slightly overlapping. Stand up slices (also overlapping) around edge. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ramps (leeks), red pepper, morels, asparagus and thyme and sauté 5 minutes. Spoon mixture on top of potatoes. Crumble bacon on top of veggie mix. Spread cheese on top. Whisk together eggs, half & half, salt, pepper and nutmeg. Whisk until color lightens. Pour into pie dish. Bake for 35 minutes. Cool 25 minutes and serve in wedges.



Cocktails And Drinks: due August 1
Holiday Favorites: due September 1

Submit your favorite recipe
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credit and have your recipe
featured in *Country Lines*.

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

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\$50
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FEATURED GUEST CHEF

When Courageous Coffee's Tanya Schneider puts so much soul into roasting the perfect coffee beans, it seems a shame not to take advantage of all that heartfelt flavor. She shares a recipe that uses brewed coffee for the ultimate coffee companion.



Cappuccino Muffins

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| 2 cups all-purpose flour | ½ cup strong brewed coffee |
| ¾ cup sugar | ½ cup butter, melted |
| 2½ teaspoons baking
powder | 1 large egg |
| ½ teaspoon salt | 1 teaspoon vanilla extract |
| ½ cup milk | 1 cup miniature semisweet
chocolate chips |

Preheat oven to 350 F. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. In another bowl, combine the milk, coffee, butter, egg and vanilla. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Fold in chocolate chips.

Fill greased muffin cups two-thirds full and bake for 15-20 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Serve with cream cheese spread (optional).

Cream Cheese Spread

- 4 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ¼ cup miniature semisweet chocolate chips

Mix all ingredients together until well blended and spread on muffins.

These muffins pair well with a cup of Courageous Coffee!

Read the full story about Tanya Schneider, owner of Courageous Coffee, on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.

Honoring Local Students With Scholarships

Four local students, whose parents are MEC consumers, recently earned \$1,000 towards their post-secondary education after submitting a video essay answering the question, "What is your super power?" We selected winners based on their video submission as well as academic performance, extracurricular activities, community involvement and honors/awards.

Congratulations to the following students:



Morgan Hartline, daughter of Steven Hartline and Rebekah Green-Hartline and a graduate of Marcellus High School. In addition to earning a 4.0 GPA, Hartline participated in band, volleyball, basketball, softball and cross country, and was active in 4-H including serving as Legacy 4-H President in 2016 and 2017. A member of both the National Honor Society and the Spanish Honor Society, she earned several academic awards and served as President of Students Against Destructive Decisions (SADD) during her senior year. She plans to pursue secondary education at Grand Valley State University.



Reilly Puhalski, son of Scott and Gina Puhalski and a graduate of Schoolcraft High School. He was a member of the National Honor Society, the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Key Club and his church's youth group where he volunteered at a Kalamazoo thrift store. Puhalski also played football, basketball and golf and worked a part-time job while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. He will start his engineering studies at Holy Cross College in Indiana.



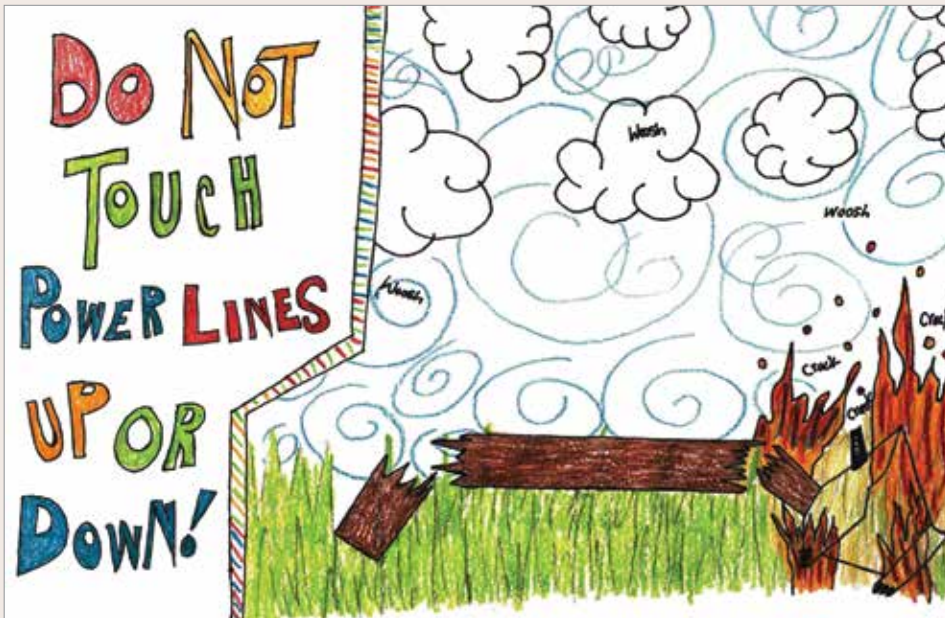
Arjun Vorster, son of Tom and Tanja Jones and a graduate of Mendon High School. He was President of the National Honor Society and earned a Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Good Citizen Award along with the President's Honor Award from Glen Oaks Community College. His athletics included football, basketball, and track and field through which he earned an athletic scholar award his sophomore and senior years. He will attend the Milwaukee School of Engineering.



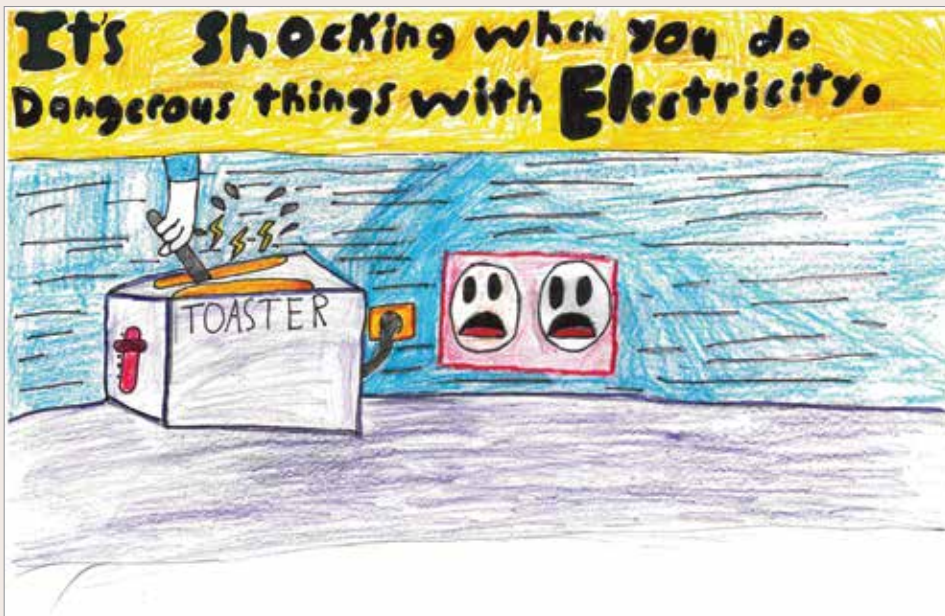
Daniel Young, Jr., son of Billie Austin and the late Daniel Young, Sr. and a graduate of Ross Beatty Jr./Sr. High School. He was a member of the National Honor Society for two years and some of his volunteer experience included participating in a roadside cleanup program and local food drives. He was active with Legacy 4-H for many years and during high school, he earned many medals playing football, basketball and baseball. He also greeted people as the Easter Bunny for the Cass County Medical Care Facility and was named Mr. Cassopolis in the 2018 Miss Cassopolis Pageant. He will call Grand Rapids home while he attends Cornerstone University for engineering.

Get to know our winners a little more at teammidwest.com/news where you'll find stories about each of them along with their winning videos.

sharing the message of how to **STAY SAFE AROUND ELECTRICITY**



Karlie Kimerer, daughter of Matt and Angie Kimerer and student at Onsted Elementary school, was our southeast Michigan winner. Known for her cheerful demeanor and happy attitude, Karlie loves volleyball and basketball and hopes to coach basketball someday.



Abdiel Gonzalez, son of Romeo Gonzalez and Jessy Garcia and student at Redwood Elementary, was our southwest Michigan winner. He loves playing kickball and soccer and building with Legos. His love for drawing fuels his dream of becoming a children's book illustrator when he grows up.

Two fourth grade students saw their original electrical safety artwork displayed in a larger-than-life billboard format this summer after winning our 2018 electrical safety contest.

Each April we provide hotline demonstrations to hundreds of fourth-grade students and teachers throughout our service territory. As part of this outreach, we invite students to submit posters showing something they learned from the safety demos. The two winning posters get displayed on billboards and printed on t-shirts provided to all students in their class.

"In the rural space where flying kites and climbing trees are youthful rites of passage, we want to make sure our kids stay safe when they are out exploring," says Patty Nowlin, vice president of corporate communications. "Students love our interactive hotline demo and the poster contest helps them get excited about what we teach."

We offer free electrical and propane safety programs for any group or organization. Programs are adaptable for various audiences and timelines, and can be conducted at our facility or yours. For more information, please contact the community relations team at 800-492-5989 or pr@teammidwest.com.



Courageous Coffee

By Emily Haines Lloyd

The
Perfect Blend



While coffee is a daily part of many people's lives—there are some folks for whom coffee is more than a ritual, it's a calling.

For Tanya Schneider, her fascination with coffee started early in life.

As a young girl, she would get up in the morning with her father, an otherwise busy man, and watch him sit down with a simple coffee cup and relax. By the time she was six, she'd asked for her first mug of coffee, served with an ice cube and a dash of milk. It was love at first sip.

Years later Schneider began to educate herself more deeply. She read books on the growing seasons of coffee beans and how to roast them. While Michigan weather would never allow her to grow her own beans, it couldn't keep her from roasting them.

Armed with her first coffee roaster, which was the size of a toaster oven and only roasted about a quarter-pound of beans at a time, Schneider trial and errored her way into her craft. She saved money along the way with a bigger dream in the back of her mind.

In 2010, Schneider, who is employed with HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, had an opportunity to roast her coffee for military care packages that were being assembled at work.



"It felt so good to roast for someone else, instead of just myself and my family," said Schneider. "I knew that if this ever grew—the purpose would have to be bigger than myself."



Soon after the mission trip, she and her husband bought the future home of Courageous Coffee—a 12x12 Amish-built building that found itself on the back of the couple's property. Next

In 2016, Schneider found herself on a mission trip to Belize with a group of individuals from church. In the evenings, she and the other women on the team sat together and shared stories about their lives and connected with one another. Schneider shared with them that she'd just started a business the month before—Courageous Coffee.

came a larger, upgraded roaster and a few 150-pound bags of quality coffee beans. By the end of the year she'd sold her first bag of coffee to a co-worker. Within a few months several local businesses were carrying Courageous Coffee for sale and it was available for purchase online at mycastleourageouscoffee.com.

"I shared that I roasted coffee—mostly for family and friends—and I told them of my mission to make a difference by roasting coffee," said Schneider. "I was so amazed by their support and it gave me a huge boost of confidence that I really needed in order to move forward."

Since then, Schneider has been roasting her heart out. In line with her early vision to have her business serve others, 10 percent of all proceeds are donated to nonprofit causes.

At that moment, Courageous Coffee went from a quiet passion to a full-blown dream come true.

For Schneider, Courageous Coffee is an homage to perfect moments over a cup of joe and a knowing nod to seemingly impossible dreams. Bold, strong, courageous—it really is the perfect blend for coffee. And for life.

Bolivian Expedition Blend Fundraiser



Courageous Coffee's next service mission to give back is a specialty blend that's brewing to support the next *Partners for Power* project by Michigan's electric cooperatives.

This September, linemen from Michigan electric cooperatives are headed to Bolivia to bring reliable electricity to the community of Yata. The people of Yata are an ambitious bunch. But before many of them can realize their dreams, they need access to reliable electricity.

When you buy a bag of Courageous Coffee's *Bolivian Expedition Blend*, you help support the project. To learn more about the project and other ways to get involved, visit partnersforpower.org.



Join Tanya in her kitchen as she explains how she brews the perfect cup of coffee using the pour over method. A short instructional video is available at countrylines.com.



Community Solar Subscriptions Still Available

Community solar is a great way to enjoy the benefits of renewable solar energy without the investment, ongoing maintenance and need for southern-facing exposure. We've teamed up with SpartanSolar to build a 2,100-panel community solar array on our Cassopolis property at the intersection of M60 and Decatur Road.

Co-op members are eligible to buy subscriptions to one or more panels on the array. Your subscription entitles you to a share of the energy produced, which is credited on your bill.

As we get closer to construction here are a few of our frequently asked questions about community solar. For more information, visit spartansolar.com.

Q

and

A

What are the methods of subscription payment?

\$600/panel up-front or \$10/month/panel for 5 years.

When is groundbreaking and when will the array go live?

Construction will begin in July with the array scheduled to go live this fall.

What can I expect in terms of return on investment?

Based on projected power generation, we estimate that people would break even over the length of the panel lease. This investment is for individuals who are passionate about renewable energy and who want to make a direct contribution to alternative power sources without taking on the significant costs that come with installing panels on their own property.

How many panel subscriptions would I need to power my entire house?

That depends on many factors but most households would need about 24 panel subscriptions (based on an average of 800 kWh per month). The clean energy produced by the solar array will be pushed onto the electric grid, not routed to your home. Please give us a call if you want a more specific calculation based on your monthly electricity use.

What are the tax implications of my solar panel subscription credit?

Bill credits resulting from solar generation are not taxed. Your panel subscription payments are not tax-deductible, nor do they qualify for the 30 percent Investment Tax Credit.

How many watts per panel and total watts are in the array?

Each panel is 350 watts, and the total of the array's 2,100 panels equals 735 kW.

How long is enrollment in this program available?

You may enroll until the array is fully subscribed.

What happens after the subscription expires?

You stop receiving your monthly credit and the panel(s) become available for a new lease.

Are any rebates available?

A \$150 rebate is available on the up-front \$600 purchase of a panel. Rebates are available through the end of 2018, and are limited to the first 20 up-front panel purchases.

How do I sign-up?

Sign up at spartansolar.com, and one of our Solutions Agents will email your contract and other information within a few days. You will not be charged until the array goes live.

Save • The • Date

CUSTOMER APPRECIATION EVENTS

Get ready for family fun and great food at one of our upcoming customer appreciation events.



SE Territory Event

Sunday, September 30, 2018
1 – 4 p.m.
Lenawee County Fairgrounds



SW Territory Event

Sunday, October 7, 2018
1 – 4 p.m.
Cass County Fairgrounds

• Stay tuned for more details and RSVP information. •

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Here's a cool tip for your fridge! Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in your refrigerator. Uncovered foods release moisture, causing the compressor to work harder.

Source: energy.gov

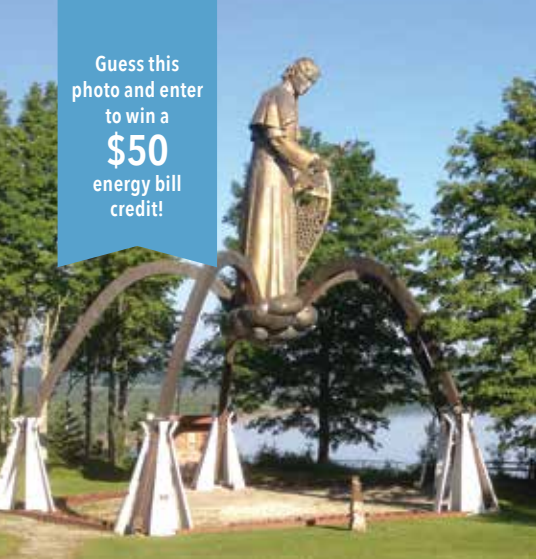


Happy Labor Day

We will be closed on Monday, September 3,
in observance of Labor Day.

You can make a payment or report a
power outage via SmartHub or by calling
800-492-5989. Drop box payments made at
our three solutions centers will be processed
on the next open business day.

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 July 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 May 2018 issue is Richard Fluegge, a Thumb Electric Cooperative member, who correctly identified the photo as Stafford Park in Port Hope. It's an icy view from the Port Hope Marina looking back at the famous historic chimney at Stafford Park.

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

May 2018

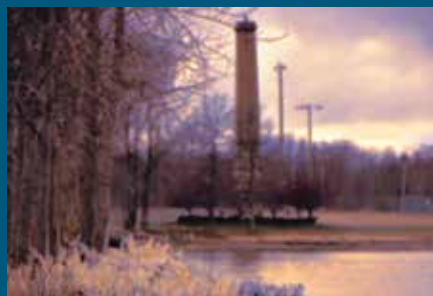


Photo courtesy of Karen Murphy



Best Beaches

We asked our members to share their favorite Michigan beach in our Great Lakes state—so take their recommendations to heart and enjoy!



1 Brimley State Park, Whitefish Bay

Brimley State Park, located on the shores of Whitefish Bay in the U.P., is one of the best beaches in Michigan in my opinion. It provides a non-traditional "beach" setting in the fact, that the water is a little cooler, the sand isn't the most pristine, and there isn't a fancy pier. What you will find is a beautiful, relaxing and picturesque scene of the beautiful Whitefish Bay. The very best part about this beach is that the Soo Locks are very close, so you will see freighter traffic throughout your day! Don't forget to download the "Boatnerd" app on your phone, so you know the names of the freighters you will see floating by! —Karen Murphy, Thumb Electric

2 Tawas Point State Park and East Tawas City Park Beach, East Tawas

We visit East Tawas for its beaches every year. There are wonderful cottages to rent, gorgeous sunrises and the water in the bay is shallow and warm for swimming. East Tawas also has the cutest downtown with great ice cream, antique shops, a chocolatier and more. —Joanne Preston, Midwest Energy & Communications

3 Aral Beach, Empire

Aral Beach is hands down my favorite in Michigan! It is located outside of Empire at the end of a dirt road in the middle of nowhere. Beautiful views of the Empire bluffs, very few people around and my four-legged friends are welcome. —Mindy Aves, HomeWorks Tri-County

4 Young State Park, Boyne City

Young State Park in Boyne City is a favorite. You can just enjoy the beautiful sunrises and sunsets, and walk the sandy beaches. Amazing! —Kristine Diegel, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op



Best of Michigan

Up Next: Best Cider Mills!
Apples, Cider and Doughnuts—Oh My! Share your favorite spot for these delicious fall treats. We will publish these gems in our September issue.

Submit your favorites at countrylines.com under the MI Co-op Community tab by August 1.

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TOGETHER

OUR FUTURE IS **BRIGHT**



MIDWEST ENERGY & COMMUNICATIONS

Enjoy the benefits of solar energy without the cost of installation and maintenance. Panel subscriptions are available through our SpartanSolar community program for as little as \$10 per month.

Learn more at spartansolar.com