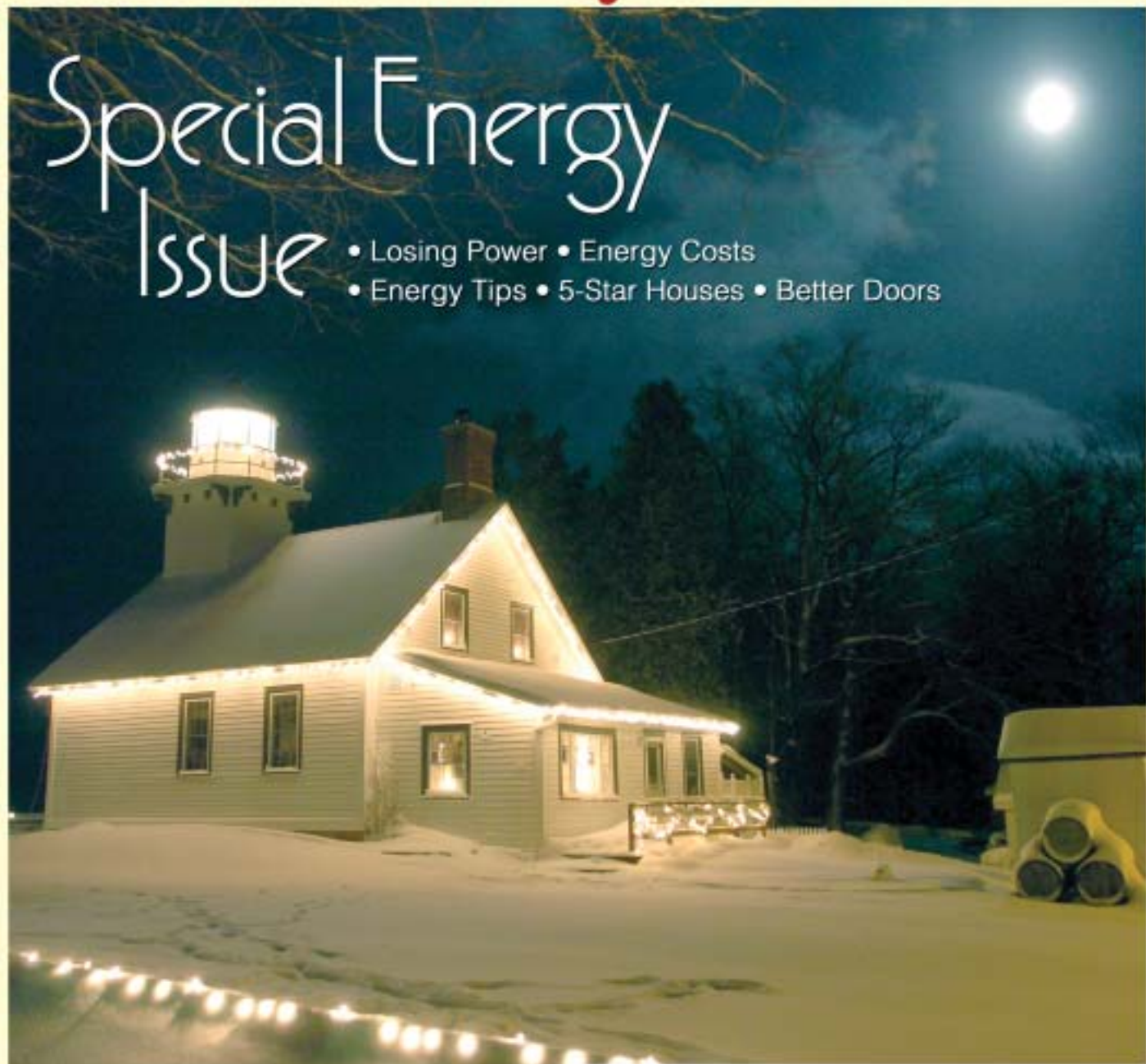


# MICHIGAN Country Lines

## Special Energy Issue

- Losing Power • Energy Costs
- Energy Tips • 5-Star Houses • Better Doors



**4 Small Rate Increase  
After 13 Years**

**5 AMRs: Making Your Life Easier**

**36 Teens: Win A Free Trip!**



# CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

## After 13 Years, A Small Rate Increase

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### General Manager

Tony Anderson

### Co-op Editor

Nick Edson

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### ADDRESS

P.O. Box 298, Grawn, MI 49637


[www.cherrylandelectric.com](http://www.cherrylandelectric.com)

### TO SUBMIT A METER READING:

- 1) Call or use our 24-hour touch tone voice-mail hotline, ext. 207
- 2) E-mail your meter reading at:  
[CEC@cherrylandelectric.com](mailto:CEC@cherrylandelectric.com)
- 3) Fax your meter reading at: 231-486-9404

### PAY STATIONS:

Lake Ann Grocery  
Cherryland Electric office

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 



By Tony Anderson  
General Manager

**A**FTER ALMOST A YEAR of preparations and six months at the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC), Cherryland Electric Cooperative's first rate increase in almost 13 years will appear in your January bill.

The marketing department wants me to also remind everyone that we have also had two rate *decreases* during the last 13 years but I do so reluctantly because as a Cherryland member myself, I am fully aware that an increase is an increase no matter what kind of window dressing is applied. While we can agree the time of the year may not be the best, we probably can also agree that there is no real good time of the year for any of your monthly costs to increase.

However, I take pride in the fact that the increase is less than the 5-6 percent that was projected about seven months ago. At the conclusion, we kept the overall increase to 3.4 percent, and the increase to residential users, who make up almost 95 percent of our membership, to only 4.1 percent. This means an average Cherryland member with a system average bill of \$64.44 will see an increase of \$2.64 per month.

The residential availability charge will be \$12 per month, which is \$2 higher than the \$10 we were charging for the past several years. We had requested a monthly charge of \$15 in hopes of recovering more of our fixed costs as indicated in our cost of service study. But the MPSC reduced the charge to the \$12 you will see on this month's bill. A higher availability charge would have made our revenues less susceptible to variations in usage caused by weather.

There will also be a slight increase in the energy charge, as it will go from 8.09 cents to 8.205 cents. This charge would have declined considerably had we been allowed to increase the availability

charge to the \$15 level. Nevertheless, it is our hope that you, as co-op member-owners, will appreciate the small increase in light of what is happening with propane and natural gas. Even with this small increase, we feel that electricity remains a bargain.

As far as heating your home, we were able to achieve a very slight decrease in our controlled heating rate. As gas prices climb, members should consider

making a call to Cherryland's Energy Use Advisor, Steve Coger, at 486-9238. He has several options for heating new and existing homes efficiently and competitively with electricity. Steve can also assist you with your hot water heating needs, since Cherryland has one of the most energy efficient water heaters in stock and available with attractive member pricing.

I wish I could predict the future and tell you that the next rate increase is another 13 years away. In these times of high fuel prices and hurricane-caused material shortages, I can only say that everyone at your electric cooperative will do their best to attempt to control costs while providing solid service. Future increases will arrive much sooner than any of us would like but our efforts will focus on keeping them to a minimum, as we have with this most recent increase.

Steve Weaver, Cherryland's information technology supervisor, had a great marketing suggestion the other day. After watching all the automakers advertise employee discount pricing programs, Steve asked, "Why don't we do that?" He asked the question knowing full well that Cherryland has always done that. All the employees that are co-op members pay the exact same price as every other member. So we can say it today, tomorrow and next year, "You pay what we pay!" While it is not the only reason, it is a very "close to home" reason for us to keep all future rate increases to a minimum.

# AMRs: Making Your Life Easier

This new technology that automatically reads meters will also be useful during outages. **Nick Edson**

**J**IM WOOD CAN'T WAIT for the day when he doesn't have to stand out in the cold to read his electric meter.

"As you get older, you look forward to new technology that makes your life easier," said the retired Michigan State Police trooper, a longtime Cherryland Electric Cooperative (CEC) member.

Wood's day is coming.

Installation of new electric meters with Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) capabilities has begun as part of an ongoing project that will hook up more than 30,000 Cherryland members.

"It's a step-by-step process," said Cherryland's member service manager, Kevin Cragg. "We have started installing the AMR system at our Bates and Grawn substations. Over the course of the next three to four years, we hope to have everyone on the new system."

The AMR meter installations are being handled by Cherryland employees and an authorized contractor.

It is being overseen by Cherryland's metering and field supervisor, Karrie Yanska.

"The process of installing a new AMR meter takes about 10 minutes, with only a momentary power interruption," she said. "But with 30,000 meters, it is going to take some time to get everyone installed. We will send a letter to members before installation starts. Then we'll put a notice on their door telling them they have the new AMR meter."

The cooperative obtains meter readings via the AMR's two-way communications system that links CEC's office with the meters. Meter readings travel electronically across the power lines from the AMR meter to a substation. The substation then relays the information to Cherryland.

"The entire process takes about 20 seconds to obtain a meter reading," said Cherryland engineer, Frank Siepker.

In addition to no longer having to read your meter, the AMR system will generate

more consistent billings by eliminating estimated meter reading and irregular billing periods. It provides those with questions about their electric consumption with more detailed information about their actual kilowatt-hour use.

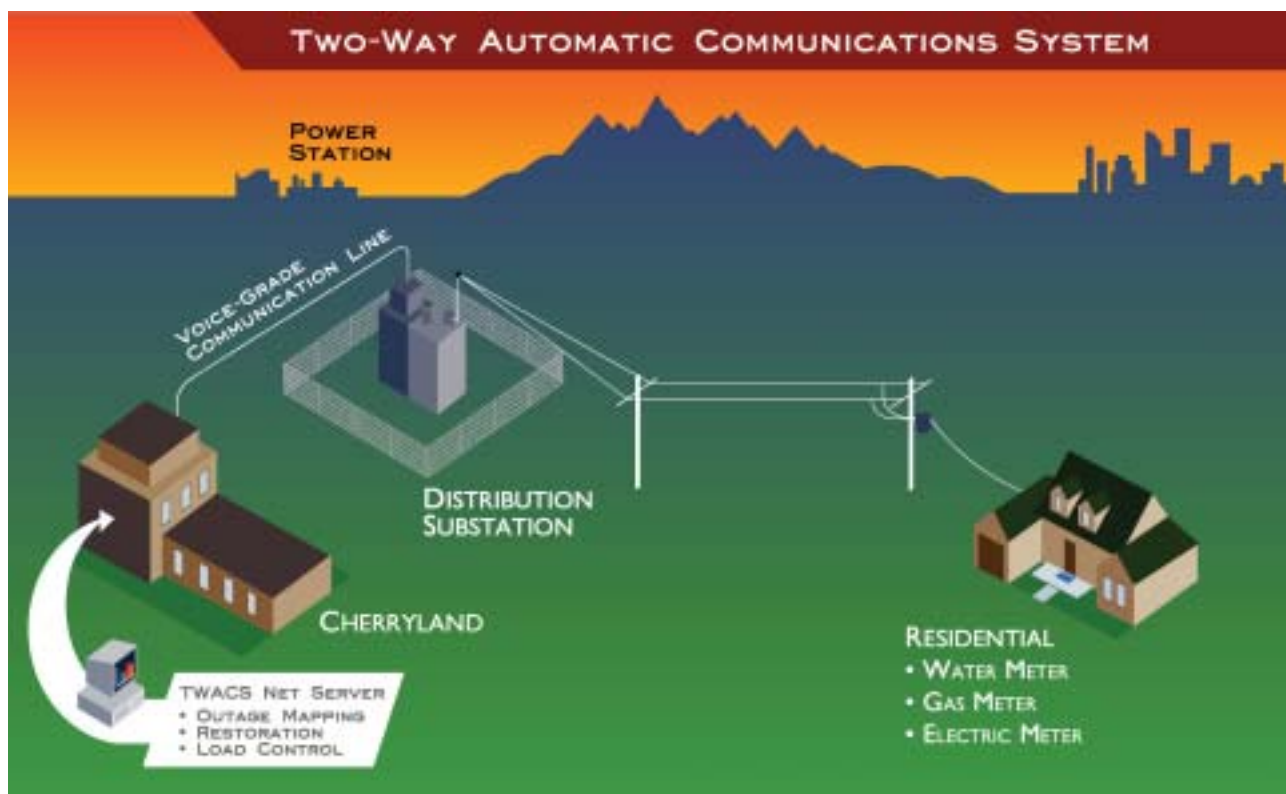
The new AMR system is also useful during outages.

"There are a lot of advantages to an AMR system that go beyond just meter reading," said Cragg. "We will be able to analyze an outage and have a better idea of its magnitude. We still encourage members to call us about an outage, but the AMR will help us get a better handle on the size and scope of it quickly."

Cragg calls the AMR system "peace of mind" technology.

"Our members won't have to go outside and read their meters," he said. "It's one less thing they will have to worry about."

That's the kind of news members like Jim Wood like to hear.



# Caring About Our Community

This volunteer blends compassion and concern with fiscal diligence to help you help others. **Al Parker**



Ann Philips has served as a board member for the Community Caring Fund since 1997.

“IT’S ALWAYS A GOOD THING to help people.”

That’s the compassionate philosophy that has guided Ann Philips during her eight years of service with Cherryland Electric Cooperative’s Community Caring Fund. The program allows a co-op member to round his or her monthly electric bill up to the nearest dollar to support worthy projects such as child health care, the Boy Scouts, lifesaving equipment, emergency assistance to families, and other community projects across Cherryland’s service area.

Ann, a resident of Manistee County for over 20 years, has been a member of the Fund’s board of directors since the program was established in 1997.

She graduated from Southside High School in Memphis, TN, a year after Elvis Presley.

“He wasn’t very well known in the school when he left,” said Ann with a smile. “But when he came back the following year he was famous. And the same girls who wouldn’t give him the time of day the year before, couldn’t wait to get close to him after that.”

Ann will step down from the board at the end of the year and is looking forward to traveling with her husband, Nick, a retired electronic engineer. They plan to visit her two sons—one with 18 years of Army service in Texas, and another who is a police officer in Arizona—and her daughter in Traverse City.

“I love the board and I’m sorry to leave, but it’s time,” she says. “This program helps so many people, but I feel that it’s also helped me. I was a very shy person when I first joined the board, but being involved in the Community Caring program has made me grow as a person.”

In addition to Ann, other members of

the board include vice chairperson Christine Ibbotson from Leelanau County, secretary Mary Beth Stein from Grand Traverse County, chairperson David Sikkema from Grand Traverse County, and treasurer John Morse from Benzie County. Brenda Burrows of Cherryland serves as the board’s liaison.

Each month, the Fund’s five volunteer board members review applications made by worthy organizations and individuals seeking support.

“A lot of the applications are from people who have had health problems—either themselves or a family member—and as a result, they’ve suffered a loss of income,” explains Christine, also a charter member of the Caring Board. “These are often people who have lived their whole life without needing help, then something happens to set them back.”

One of Ann’s greatest contributions to the board was her advocacy for those in need, according to Christine. “She’s a very kind, very giving person and she has a strong understanding of how people can be going along in life and then have something happen that just changes their lives,” says Christine. “She’s a fine person, a real friend, and a valuable board member.”

Prior to each monthly meeting, each board member researches an application or two and presents it to the full board with a recommendation for approval or denial. The discussion that follows is responsible and serious, blending compassion and concern with fiscal diligence.

Board members understand that their

decisions will impact the lives of people in their communities, often very dramatically. “I remember one application from a single mother of four young children,” recalls Ann. “This young woman had very little. We were able to buy her a stove and get her a furnace, then help her provide a Christmas for those four little children. It was a wonderful thing.”

Contributions also made possible improvements at Friends of Manistee, a shelter for abused women and children, where Community Caring funds helped to pave a parking lot and fence in the premises, making it safer for clients.

More than 4,500 co-op members voluntarily support the Community Caring Fund each month by rounding up their electric bills. Since the program began in 1998, over \$350,000 has been donated. Those dollars are raised a nickel here, a quarter there, with an average donation of about 50 cents a month.

This type of pocket change might not seem like much, but it soon adds up to a life-changing amount for friends and neighbors in need.

“Serving on the board was a great thing for me,” says Ann. “It’s a wonderful organization and I really enjoyed being on it. We all get more out of helping individuals who are in need. It makes you appreciate your life.”

To sign up for Cherryland’s Community Caring Fund, call 486-9266.

# Cherryland Bulletin Board

## Cherryland Member Becomes An Eagle Scout



Raymond Platts

A CHERRYLAND MEMBER, Raymond Platts IV, of Lake Leelanau, has earned Scouting's highest honor: Attaining the rank of Eagle Scout.

Raymond is 14-years-old and in ninth grade at Lake Leelanau St. Mary's. He is in Suttons Bay Boy Scout Troop 131.

To earn the rank of Eagle Scout, scouts must earn 21 merit badges, hold a leadership position in the troop and complete a service project. Raymond's project was raising money for a new flag pole at St. Mary's.

His parents are Raymond and Barbara Platts of Bingham Township.

## New Cherryland CFO Presents Seat Cushions



(L-R) Blair Moss and Mark Wilson

MARK WILSON is a familiar name at Benzie Central High School.

He's in the school's Hall of Honor because of his athletic and academic achievements.

He's also Cherryland Electric Cooperative's new chief financial officer. So, it seemed only fitting that Wilson made a presentation of 250 seat cushions to Benzie basketball coach Blair Moss recently.

The cushions, part of Cherryland's participation in Touchstone Energy, will be used as a fundraiser for the school's athletic department.

Wilson is replacing Don Pahl, who worked 33 years at Cherryland and is retiring this year.

## Copper Ridge Earns Honor From State

FORMER MICHIGAN GOV. JOHN ENGLER is scheduled to honor the developers of Copper Ridge in Traverse City with the Community Revitalization Award from 3 to 3:45 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 27.

Engler and Michigan Sens. Carl Levin and Debbie Stebenow are among a long list of dignitaries that are invited to honor Copper Ridge developers Connie and Rick Deneweth and Dennis Fedorinchik.

The award recognizes Copper Ridge as the first successfully completed Brownfield project in Grand Traverse County. Copper Ridge is built on a site formerly owned by the Grand Traverse County Road Commission. The land was "contaminated" with high concentrations of salt that was stored outside for many years.

Copper Ridge is the first Brownfield redevelopment site to contribute tax dollars back to the state of Michigan. In just two years it has provided \$339,991 to the local Revolving Loan Fund and \$585,991 in new property tax revenue dollars to the state and school aid fund. Over the next five years, total contributions to the state of Michigan and its schools are expected to exceed \$2 million.

An open house for the public is scheduled for Friday, Jan. 27, from 3 to 3:45 p.m.

## Community Caring Board Makes Awards

CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC Cooperative's Community Caring Board made one award at its November meeting: The Caring Board awarded \$500 to a member to pay bills.

The meeting was the next-to-last for former board president Ann Philips. She was an original member of the Caring Board eight years ago. She is retiring from the volunteer board to spend more time with her family and travel. (See related story, page 8).

The Community Caring Board gives money to members and organizations in need. They get money from Operation Roundup, when Cherryland members round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar. To join Operation Roundup, call 486-9216.

**Questions about the Community Caring program? Call Brenda Burrows at 486-9266 or 800-442-8616, Ext. 266.**

## Meachum Wins Energy Audit

AND THE WINNER IS...Margie Meachum of Omena.

Margie is the lucky Cherryland Electric Cooperative member whose name was drawn to win a free energy audit.

Members were invited in the last issue of *Country Lines* to sign up with Cherryland's Energy Advisor Steve Coger for an energy audit.

Margie will receive a free energy audit that will include a review of her home's heating system, windows and other areas where money can be saved through the use of energy saving tips.

# Win a trip to Washington, D.C.

Michigan Electric Cooperative **TEEN DAYS**  
 April 19-21, 2006  
 Rural Electric **YOUTH TOUR** to Washington  
 June 9-15, 2006



If you're a 10th or 11th grader at any public, private, or home school whose family receives their service from Cherryland Electric Cooperative, you are eligible to apply to win.

Students chosen to attend Teen Days—a three-day camp, April 19-21, 2006, to learn about electrical safety and meet other teens from around the state—will automatically be considered for the Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington, D.C., June 9-15, 2006. Both trips are all-expenses-paid.

Request an application and return it to Cherryland Electric no later than **April 7, 2006**. You will also be asked to submit a typed or printed letter with the following information: parents' or guardians' names; your grade level and age; activities you participate in, such as sports, drama, band, clubs, etc.; your grade point average; any awards or honors you may have received; and a brief explanation of why you wish to attend Teen Days.

For more information, or to apply, call or write:

**Nick Edson**  
 P.O. Box 298, Grawn, MI 49637  
 231-486-9222  
 E-mail: [nicke@cecelec.com](mailto:nicke@cecelec.com)

More information is also available at:  
[www.countrylines.com](http://www.countrylines.com)  
 Click on "Youth Programs"



## Cherryland Offers \$2,400 Student Scholarship

**H**IGH SCHOOL SENIORS whose parents or guardians currently receive monthly electric service from Cherryland and live in our service area, may apply for a \$2,400 college scholarship (\$600 for each of four years).

Selection is based on extracurricular activities, community involvement and/or after school employment. A minimum required GPA is 2.75 on a four-point system. To

continue receiving the scholarship, a student must maintain a minimum college course load of 12 credits per term or semester and receive a 2.5 grade point average.

Applications are due by Friday, *April 7, 2006*. Students may apply in three ways:

1. Complete the form below; or,
2. Contact your high school guidance counselor; or,
3. Call Nick Edson, coordinator of

public/member information at Cherryland Electric, 231-486-9222, Ext. 222, or e-mail [nicke@cecelec.com](mailto:nicke@cecelec.com).

**Send app to:** CEC Student Scholarship  
 5930 U.S.-31 South  
 P.O. Box 298, Grawn, MI 49637

### Cherryland Offers Adult Scholarship

CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC Cooperative is offering a \$250 Adult Education Scholarship to one of its members.

The scholarship goes toward covering the cost of a course or courses taken in a calendar year.

The scholarship will be awarded based on need, grades and community service. It is a one-time scholarship award.

Members may request an adult scholarship application by e-mailing Nick with their name and address at [nicke@cecelec.com](mailto:nicke@cecelec.com), calling him at 486-9222 or writing him at Cherryland, 5930 U.S.-31 South, Grawn, MI 49637.

#### Cherryland Electric 2006 Student Scholarship Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Cherryland Account # \_\_\_\_\_



## What's *Your* Game?

Nick reminds us of some favorite board games from the 60s.

I'M AN OLD FASHIONED GUY. I don't need video games or computers to keep me entertained.

In fact, during a cold January evening, I'm content to sit around with friends and play board games. As I've gotten older, I find that words games like *Cranium* and *Tattle Tales* are fun, as is a good game of *Trivial Pursuit*.

The other night as we sat around playing and laughing, a bunch of us Baby Boomers recalled our favorite board games of the 1960s.

Here are a few you might have played:

**CLUE:** One of the all-time favorites. A little mystery, a little luck and a whole lot of sleuthing. Maybe they should put out a new version every few years so we can think like the bad guy. You know, it was Saddam...in the bunker...with poison gas.

**RIPCORD:** This was one of those little known gems from the 60s and is based on the old TV show. When you landed on a spot you wanted to parachute into, you loaded your parachute into a small, spiral casing and blew into it. The parachute would shoot out, then float gently down onto the game board. At first, we were parachuting into the kitchen from the living room. But after a while, we got the hang of it.

**MOUSE TRAP:** This game came a little later in the 60s, but was ingenious. You got enough points during the board game to launch the mousetrap. It started with a steel ball rolling into a tub and then everything else fell into place. It seemed to take forever, but it was mesmerizing. An awesome game.

**CONCENTRATION:** If you remember the old game show that Hugh Downs used to host, this was the game board version. The key was remembering where the matches were. I think we got a Concentration game for five straight Christmases.

**PASSWORD:** This was a TV game show hosted by Allen Luden, better known as the husband of Betty White. You gave one-word clues and the answers were hidden in red cellophane paper. For some reason, we thought that was pretty cool.

**STRAT-O-MATIC:** I played this game by the hour for years...especially on cold January nights. The first version of *Strat-O-Matic* was the baseball game, played with dice and player cards. It came out in 1962 and I was one of the proud owners of the original games. I'll never forget my first game—Camilio Pascual of the Minnesota Twins against Jim Bunning of the Detroit Tigers. Later, I played *Strato* football and then went over to APBA basketball. Now, there is a computer version of *Strat-O-Matic*.

**MONOPOLY:** I started off liking this game as a kid. Then I dreaded it as a parent. I still refer to it as "Monotony." I still cringe when I hear the words "Boardwalk" or "Baltic Avenue."

**ELECTRONIC FOOTBALL:** The worst game ever invented. You put your football players into formation against a defense, then turned on the electricity. The game board shook and the players moved...mostly in circles. Sometimes they wouldn't move at all. It was like a rugby scrum that never moved. So why was I excited every time I got one of these games?

**NHL HOCKEY:** This is the original game you played by pulling on long, thin rods that made your players move. Over the years, you could become very adept at this. In fact, when I got to college I found out that a lot of guys played this game. We formed our own leagues and had some wild matches. A great game, whether you played it with a magnetic puck or a wooden puck. A few years ago, I got this game for my son. But it was too late. He was already into video NHL Hockey. This was too boring for he and his friends.

**SCRABBLE:** One of the all-time great games. When we were young, our mother, a teacher, would beat all four of us kids easily. A couple years ago we figured we would extract our revenge. She is 81 and starting to forget things. So we challenged her to a game. She scored more than 150 and the rest of us couldn't get to 100. In the end, she was looking at our letters to help us score. We're pathetic.

## You Can Serve on Cherryland's Board

ANY QUALIFIED Cherryland Electric Cooperative member can be elected to serve on the cooperative's board of directors.

To be nominated in 2006, candidates should file a petition with the secretary of the cooperative not earlier than the first day of March and not later than 4 p.m. on the last business day of March.

Nominating petitions shall be signed by not less than 25 active members of the cooperative in good standing, and all signatures must be obtained within 60 days prior to the date the petition is filed. Nominating petitions shall be in the form prescribed by the board. They are available at Cherryland's headquarters in Grawn.

Nominating petitions must specify the geographic service area for which the candidate is being nominated.

The term of the office is three years and three directors are elected at each annual meeting.

In 2006, three directors will be elected—one from Grand Traverse/Kalkaska and the other two are at-large seats.

Potential nominees must meet the qualifications for the office of director as set forth in the bylaws under Section 2 of Article III.

Any member interested in becoming a candidate is invited to visit the cooperative's office and learn about the duties performed by the directors.

In the event no qualified candidate is nominated to fill the vacancy of a director whose term has expired, the newly elected board of directors will appoint sufficient directors to fill the vacancies.

The election will be by majority vote of the board and must be done within 60 days of its first meeting. Directors elected in this manner will serve until the next annual meeting, when members will be given an opportunity to nominate and elect directors to fill the balance of the regular three-year term.

Each year, three directors are elected for a three-year term.



# CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE



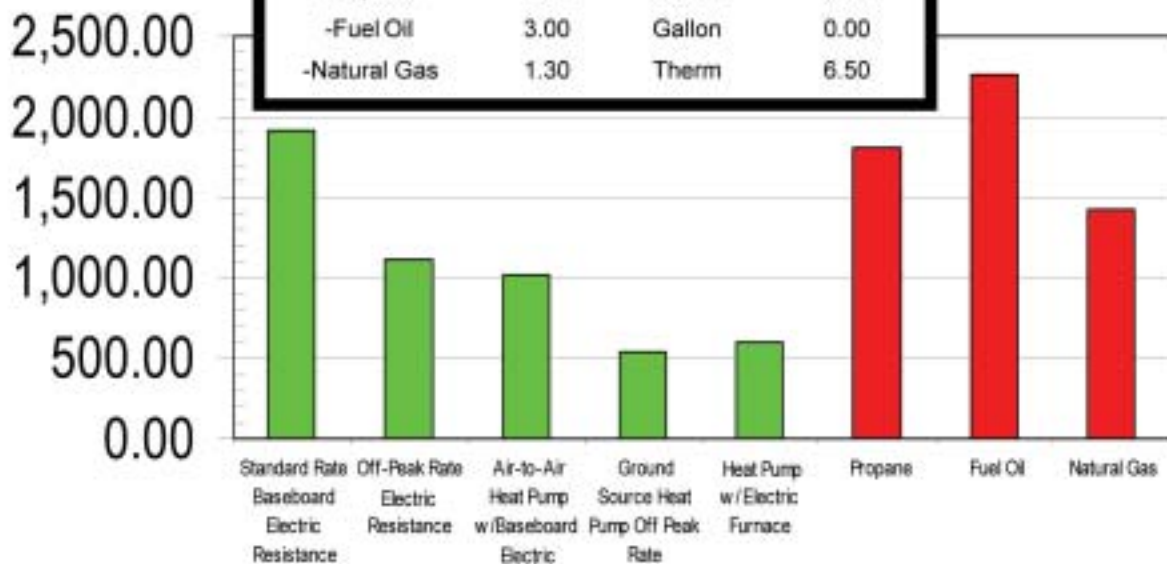
## SAVE YOUR HEATING DOLLARS

ARE YOUR HEATING BILLS OUT OF CONTROL? COMPARE CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC'S INTERRUPTIBLE HEAT RATE OF 4.75CENTS PER KWH TO TODAY'S FOSSIL FUEL PRICES!

### Annual Heating Fuel Cost Comparison

AVERAGE HOME WITH A 42,000 btu HEAT-LOSS

| Fossil Fuel  | Cost | U/M    | Base Chg. |
|--------------|------|--------|-----------|
| Propane      | 1.65 | Gallon | 0.00      |
| -Fuel Oil    | 3.00 | Gallon | 0.00      |
| -Natural Gas | 1.30 | Therm  | 6.50      |



## CHERRYLAND ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CHERRYLAND'S INTERRUPTIBLE HEAT RATE, CONTACT STEVE COGER, ENERGY USE ADVISOR AT 231-486-9238