

PHONE NUMBERS & HOURS

Local.....765-473-6668  
Toll Free.....800-844-6668  
Fax.....765-473-8770  
E-mail.....mcremc@mcremc.coop  
Web Site.....www.mcremc.coop  
Call Before You Dig.....811  
Office hours: 7:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.  
Monday-Friday

CUSTOMER CONTACTS

**James Yates**  
Chief Executive Officer

**Robert Schwartz**  
Director of Operations

**Charles Lewis**  
Director of Office Services

**Jody Long**  
Director of Finance and Accounting

**Susan Wagoner**  
Director of Marketing

TO REPORT AN OUTAGE

- Check circuit breakers or fuses first.
- If possible, check to see if neighbors' lights are also out.
- Phone 765-473-6668 or toll free 800-844-6668 24 hours a day and report the outage. Give the name the service is listed under. If possible, give map location and account number from bill.
- Give us your phone number in case we need to call you back. State the problem, such as loss of power, partial power, dimming or flickering lights.
- Please be patient. Our crews will restore service as quickly as possible.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charles W. Wilson, president  
Donald E. Willson, vice president  
Paul D. Childers, secretary-treasurer  
Mark B. Hahn  
D. Marion Hopkins Jr.  
Dennis Jim Savage  
Fred Warner

Are you a winner this month?

Here on these blue-edged pages, four account numbers are hidden. Find your account number, and call us during office hours by the last working day of the month, and a \$20 credit will appear on a future month's bill. Wondering what your account number is? Check your Miami-Cass REMC bill. It's on there twice. Every month, four members have a chance to win!

CEO COMMENTS

After the 'Extreme Makeover'

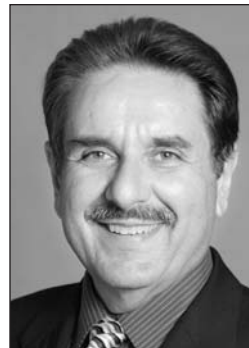
In the fall of 2009, we were all abuzz with the news that Ty Pennington and the "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" show was coming to Miami County to shout those now famous words: "Move That Bus!" Here at Miami-Cass REMC, we were especially thrilled, because the lucky recipient of an extreme makeover was one of our cooperative members, the Cowan-Brown family in southern Miami County.

Now that the camera crews and Ty Pennington are long gone and things have somewhat returned to normal for all of us, it's time to pause and reflect on the past 18 months and what we have learned from the experience. One thing we learned is that when you build a new house in five days, not everything goes exactly as planned, especially when the construction site turns into a mud bog! Considering everything that could have gone astray, I think the end results turned out pretty well.

We still get occasional questions about our overall experience and about the home's general operating efficiency. The efficiency questions are primarily directed at the geothermal heating system and the small wind turbine in the backyard.

As far as the geothermal heating system goes, thanks to the efforts of the builder and Kim Burton, our energy advisor, I think the system is operating very well. The biggest issue they faced was getting the ductwork adequately sealed to meet the stringent air-leakage standards. 3101

When it came to the wind turbine (generator), our biggest concerns were for the safety, not only of our linemen working on the lines in the area, but also for the homeowner and general public. Because these units are connected directly into the home's distribution center, it can feed power back through our transformer and out onto our lines which can be, in some instances, very dangerous. Because this unit is a synchronous type generator, which means it requires power before it can produce any electricity, we were satisfied it would not be a safety concern for us or the general public. However, unfortunately this also means that if the power fails, the unit does not continue to supply power to the residence, and therefore, cannot be used as a standby power supply. There were also other electrical code issues that had to be addressed before the unit could be safely brought online.



James Yates  
Chief Executive Officer

Miami-Cass REMC has always taken the position that it is our duty to the membership to provide the best information possible to help you make informed decisions when it comes to your energy dollars. Because of this underlying principle, we have monitored this wind turbine for the past year to get a better idea regarding its energy generation. Below are some facts we have learned based on our experience with this one installation.

The wind turbine is a Skystream 3.7 manufactured by Southwest Windpower in Arizona. Its literature states the unit can provide anywhere from 40 to 90 percent of a household's or small business' total energy needs. The sub note indicates this is based on wind speed at the site and monthly energy consumption.

The unit has a maximum rate of 2.4 kw, or 2,400 watts, at a wind speed of approximately 25 mph. To put this in perspective, if the wind is blowing in the 18 to 20 mph range, you could use your hair dryer on the 1,500 watt setting. Again, according to the data sheet, this output drops to 200 watts with a wind speed of 11 mph. It takes about 200 watts to operate three 60-watt light bulbs or your desktop computer. I think you can get the picture.

We didn't monitor the wind speed at this location, but we have found that the unit produced 1,613 kWhs from February 2010 through January 2011. Using an average cost per kWh of 12 cents, that equates to approximately \$195 for the past 12 months.

If you compare the output of this wind turbine to the average REMC member's use, approximately 15,000 kWhs per year, you would find it would have provided 11 percent of a member's total annual use.

We also noted that the wind turbine operated at an annual efficiency rating of 7.7 percent. In other words, it only produced about 8 percent of what it could have produced if it would have operated at its full capacity for the entire year. Those large wind generators you see in While County operate at an efficiency rate of approximately 30 percent.

According to Skystream's website, the installed cost of this unit is in the range of \$14,000. They note there is a \$4,200 federal tax incentive of 30 percent, which brings your final cost down to \$9,800. Based on our findings, the payback period is approximately 50 years. This is without any maintenance cost

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# How comfortable was your home this winter?

I spend much of my time talking energy efficiency with our members. An important by-product of making your home more efficient, is a more comfortable home. Imagine not having cold floors, cold walls, and ice dams on your roof. Air-sealing and insulating your home properly will make your home more comfortable, and you will be paying less in energy costs.

To really find out where those gaps in insulation are occurring or where those air leaks are prevalent, takes an energy audit of your home. Miami-Cass REMC is happy to provide FREE energy audits for our members. 287624

The most important item in a home energy audit is your safety. We check your gas appliances to make sure they are not emitting dangerous carbon monoxide in your home and look for gas leaks. Above all else, your family's safety is the most important concern for a properly trained auditor.



**Kim Burton**  
Energy Advisor

Next, we want to stop air and heat from leaving your home through the ceiling. Heat and air leaving the top of your home will cause moderate to severe ice damming in the winter. This could damage your roof and cause unwanted moisture to leak into your home.

Attic issues are unsealed top plates on your wall, bathroom vent fans exhausting into the attic, plumbing openings, and unsealed areas around your chimney. After the top part of your home has been properly sealed, it is time to add insulation. With this done, we have successfully completed the most important item in making your home more comfortable.

We now move on to the walls in your home. Do you have walls void of insulation or insulation that has settled or been improperly installed? Checking levels of insulation is easier in the winter using our infrared camera, but it can also be used on a hot summer day. We check to ensure there are no improperly sealed windows or single-pane windows

installed. These let cold air into your home making it less comfortable.

The last place to check is your crawlspace or basement. We check to make sure you do not have moisture issues, that the walls are insulated to at least an R-10, and that the sill plate where the home sits on the foundation is air-sealed. The best way to air seal a basement or crawlspace is by having a professional installer apply a foam.

We also look for crawlspace vents. These vents are nothing but a large air leak in your foundation. Placing 6-mil plastic on your dirt crawlspace floor, which is sealed to your wall, forms a moisture barrier and prevents water from entering your crawlspace. Once we have eliminated or sealed off your vents, cold air will not longer be able to enter your home eliminating uncomfortably cold floors.

If you have any of these comfort issues, I recommend you contact me at 765-473-6668 or e-mail me at [kimb@mcremc.coop](mailto:kimb@mcremc.coop) to schedule your FREE home energy audit. With small changes, you can begin to enjoy a more comfortable home and a lower energy bill all at the same time.

## Maybe it's time to upgrade your cooling system.

# SAVE UP TO \$1500

WHEN YOU UPGRADE YOUR EXISTING ELECTRIC COOLING/HEATING SYSTEM

Right now, a rebate is being offered through your local electric cooperative that can save you money and cool you off.

Call your Miami-Cass REMC Energy Advisor at 765-473-6668 or visit [www.mcremc.coop](http://www.mcremc.coop) for more details on this and other current rebates.

Talk to your tax advisor to learn more about a federal tax credit worth up to 30% of the cost of a ground source heat pump.



# Right tree, right place

Whether you are the Johnny Appleseed-type or just landscaping your backyard, preplanning is the best insurance for your future tree and shrub planting effort.

Ensure the oak or maple tree you planted for future generations does not have to be removed by utility tree trimming crews before its benefits are realized. Careful placement of trees and taller shrubs is necessary to avoid interference with overhead and underground electric utility lines.

Arbor Day on April 29 is a perfect time to teach the younger generation the benefits of tree planting, selection of the proper species for your location, and how to correctly plant a tree and foster its growth. However, one element of the lesson should be to teach youngsters that trees can interfere with overhead electric lines and safety can be compromised when limbs contact the wires. The same lesson can be taught about roots which may be cut, if buried electric lines have to be repaired or replaced.

"Many times trees and shrubs planted near power lines suffer either in appearance or vitality, but safety is the overriding issue," said Rob Schwartz, director of operations at Miami-Cass REMC. "Trees conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if limbs grow too close to electric lines. Outages or momentary interruptions can occur when trees and branches come into contact with overhead lines. Electrical arcing and sparking from a wire to a nearby branch can cause fires."

Another concern is the safety risk when children climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb or by a person playing or trimming around the tree could be fatal.

Trees growing near power lines must be pruned to maintain a safe distance from the wires. If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact Miami-Cass REMC. Never try to prune them yourself.

To avoid future electrical hazards, planting tips include:

- Consider mature height of trees. Do not plant near overhead power lines any tree that can grow to 25 feet tall. A mature height of less than 15 feet is recommended.

- Do not plant near underground utility services. Tree roots can grow and interfere with underground pipes, cables and wires. Future repairs to these facilities also could damage the health and beauty of nearby plants and trees.

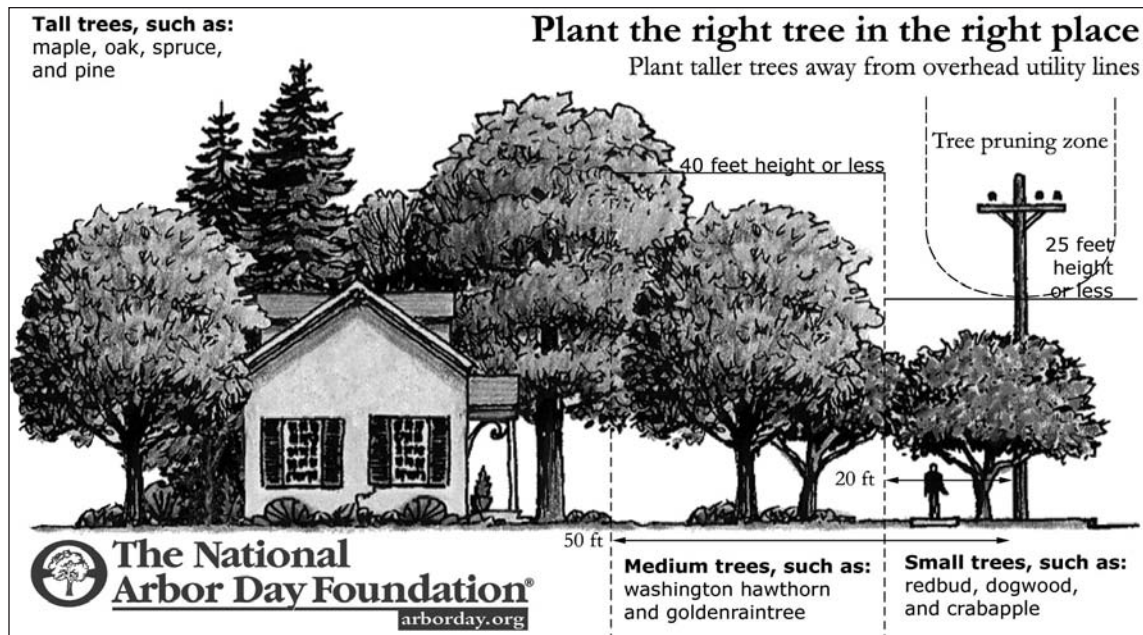
- Keep areas around electric meters, transformers or other electrical equipment free of any vegetation that could limit utility service access.

- Before digging, call 811 to mark the location of underground utilities so accidental contact, damage and injuries can be avoided.

"There are many beautiful varieties of low-growing trees and shrubs that provide color, screening and shade," said Schwartz. "These types of trees co-exist well with power lines and avoid the need for trimming for line clearance."

Trees can provide economical cooling in the summer and a windbreak for harsh winter winds. In addition, trees help combat the effects of pollution by absorbing carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>). When trees grow, they take energy from the sun and combine it with CO<sub>2</sub> from the air to photosynthesize. This makes trees a natural "carbon sink" — a living source of carbon reduction. Some trees are better suited for this task than others, and according to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), tree species that grow quickly and live a long time are ideal carbon sinks. 296101

"Trees enhance the quality of life in our communities," explained Schwartz. "This tree-planting season, consider the environmental and energy-saving benefits of trees and bushes, but equally important, the need to choose the right tree when planting near power lines."



## BOARD UPDATE

### Your board of directors at work: Results of the February meeting

1. Counted seven board members present.
2. REMC staff members provided year-end reports for 2010.
3. Fred Warner presented the February Wabash Valley board report.
4. The Indiana Statewide board report was given by CEO Jim Yates.
5. The monthly CEO report was presented by Yates.
6. Minutes of the previous board meeting were approved.
7. January's monthly operating, financial, marketing and safety reports were reviewed and approved.
8. The board discussed REMC merger activities in the region and what the future may hold for Miami-Cass REMC and our members in both the short and long term.
9. Set the next board meeting for Tuesday, March 22, at 9 a.m.

## CEO'S COMMENTS

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or other expenses over that time period. The unit has a five-year warranty, and it has an estimated life expectancy of 20 years, which is 30 years shy of its payback period!

Heather Cowan indicated that the unit has operated continuously, without any maintenance issues, since it was placed in service. She also stated that the unit is very quiet and that you can't tell it's even running unless you look out and see it turning. Heather said she is extremely appreciative of everything that has been done for her family by the builder, the community and all involved.

In conclusion, this is our experience with one wind turbine installation. I'm sure that different installations will produce different results. But, we felt it was important to share what we learned on this "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" experience. Please feel free to contact Kim Burton, our energy advisor, or me if you have any questions about this installation.



**Happy Easter from the staff and directors of Miami-Cass REMC!**

**Our office will be closed April 22 in observance of Good Friday.**

# Going paperless is now just clicks away

Over 1,000 Miami-Cass REMC members use E-Bill each month to view or pay their bill. Now, in addition to those benefits, you can “Go Green” by stopping your printed bill.

Going paperless saves time and money for you and for the REMC. We all save on paper and envelopes, printing bills/writing checks, postage and, perhaps most importantly, time. 807100 It couldn't be easier to start saving. Just sign on

to [www.mcremc.coop](http://www.mcremc.coop) (or register if you haven't yet) to your account today and go paperless! Follow the example below to see just how easy it is to leave that paper bill behind.

**1. First, sign on to your account. Then, click the Stop/Start Print Bill box.**

**Welcome to Miami-Cass REMC E-Bill**

### Receive Printed Statements

The checkbox for each printed bill statement indicates whether the printed bill statement is being mailed (checked) or not (not checked). Please indicate your selections in the checkbox(es) and click 'Update'; or click 'Cancel' to do nothing. By choosing to turn printed bill statements off, you acknowledge that:

1. You will no longer receive a printed bill or printed delinquent notice for each indicated account. These correspondence will be sent electronically to the e-mail address that you have provided.
2. You will update your email address in a timely manner as changes occur.
3. The continuation of electric service to your account is dependent upon receipt of payment by the due dates listed for each account.
4. You accept responsibility for making payment on your account even when an e-mail was not received.

Account Number	Selection
	<input type="checkbox"/> Send Me A Statement By Mail

**2. UNcheck the Send Me A Statement By Mail box, and finish by clicking Update. You are now paperless!!!**

**ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG**

One free, easy call gets your utility lines marked AND helps protect you from injury and expense.

**Safe Digging Is No Accident: Always Call 811 Before You Dig**

Know what's below. Always call 811 before you dig. Visit [call811.com](http://call811.com) for more information.

## About 811

Planning a home improvement job? Planting a tree? Installing a fence or deck? **WAIT!** Here's what you need to know first:

**Whether you are planning to do it yourself or hire a professional, smart digging means calling 811 before each job.**



Homeowners often make risky assumptions about whether or not they should get their utility lines marked. But every digging job requires a call – even small projects like planting trees and shrubs.

The depth of utility lines varies, and there may be multiple utility lines in a common area. Digging without calling can disrupt service to an entire neighborhood, harm you and those around you and potentially result in fines and repair costs.

Calling 811 before every digging job gets your underground utility lines marked for free and helps prevent undesired consequences.

**Don't assume you know what's below. Protect yourself and those around you — Call 811 every time.**