

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative

# WATTS *Current*

For Our Customers • August 2003

## ANNUAL MEETING PLANS UNDERWAY



### Mark your calendars:

**Thursday, September 18, 2003**  
**Monticello Berndes Center on the Jones County Fairgrounds**

Registration	10:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Lunch served	11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Business Meeting	1:00 p.m.
Entertainment & Prizes	1:30 p.m.



- Enjoy music for all ages by the Dover Show
- Be entertained by local comedian Jeff Digman
- Cast your ballot in the election for Board of Directors
- Hear the winning essays of this year's Youth Tour contestants, Jason Knipper and Laura Lehmann
- Visit booths featuring fellow member-consumers
- Cash prize drawing



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### WATTS THE ANSWER?

When is Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative's Annual Meeting?

Is Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative a Touchstone Energy Cooperative?

Alpaca fiber is five times warmer than wool. True or False?

Mail your answers in with your energy bill or email them to pmanuel@mvec.com

Two winners will each receive a \$10.00 credit on their energy bill.

Name:

Address:

June Watts Current Winners:

Judy (Scott) Aigner, Dubuque  
Lorrie (Robert) Both,  
Bellevue

## YOUTH TOUR CONTESTANTS ENJOY WASHINGTON, D.C.

The 2003 Youth Tour contest winners, Jason Knipper, Earlville and Laura Lehmann, Durango, enjoyed a week in Washington, D.C. in June with more than 1,300 other students from across the nation. "Youth are the future. Impacting the lives of young people is extremely important to cooperatives and the communities they serve," says Ann Foster, director of communications and Youth Tour director for the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives. "Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative supports this program because they realize that beyond textbooks and lectures today's teenagers also need an opportunity to experience government first-hand."

While in Washington, the Iowa Youth Tour delegation, made up of 38 students, met with congressional leaders, visited historic sites, explored the Smithsonian museums and took a cruise down the Potomac River. The theme of the 2003 Youth Tour was "Commitment to Community." Highlights included meeting with their elected representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senators Harkin and Grassley to discuss the process of government and issues of the day - including the national energy bill, and to help increase their knowledge of cooperative electric utilities and American history.

In addition to taking in the sights and sounds of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for Rural Electric Youth Day to learn from public



figures and other inspirational speakers. This year's Youth Day agenda included a survivor of the September 11 attack on the Pentagon, Lieutenant Colonel Brian Birdwell, who described his harrowing experience and miraculous survival. Birdwell touched on the importance of selfless service and accepting life's responsibilities. "Graduation is symbolic of promotion to the greater responsibility as an adult and as a full citizen," he said.

Postcard comments MVEC received include "This is an awesome experience and I am meeting so many people and seeing so much!....Thank you for giving me this once in a lifetime opportunity." "We toured some of the monuments yesterday and also had a cruise on the river. Our boat was huge!....Thanks for all you have done to make this trip possible."



Energy Working For You!

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



## SURVEY SAYS:

### *Touchstone Energy Co-ops Lead Industry in Customer Satisfaction*



Touchstone Energy cooperatives continue to set the benchmark for energy industry service, obtaining a high score of 82 for customer satisfaction in a first quarter 2003 survey by the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI). The score is nine points higher than the electric utility industry average of 73, with only one other utility scoring as high as Touchstone Energy co-ops.

“The fact that we’re locally owned, responsive to our member-owners and committed to providing quality service continues to pay off in customer satisfaction”, said Touchstone Energy Cooperative’s Chief Operating Officer Jim Bausell. “This latest ACSI score is evidence that Touchstone Energy cooperatives are building strong customer loyalty through their first-rate service,” he said.

ACSI is one of the most recognized customer satisfaction indices in the United States. It’s managed by the University of Michigan Business School and sponsored by the American Society for Quality. It measures customers’ satisfaction in 16 major industries and 190 leading corporations. The index is a weighted average of three questions on a 0 to 100 scale.

The results of the recent ACSI survey confirm that Touchstone Energy co-ops consistently provide superior service in the electricity market. This is the second time in less than a year Touchstone Energy cooperatives have outdone their industry counterparts. The co-ops also received a high score of 82 in a second quarter 2002 survey.

Touchstone Energy is a national alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives providing high standards of service to customers large and small. More than 600 Touchstone Energy cooperatives in 44 states are delivering energy and energy solutions to approximately 17 million customers every day. Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve their members with integrity, accountability, innovation and a longstanding commitment to communities.

## EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### **Jan James**

Jan has been employed with the Cooperative since May, 2000 as a Member Support Representative. Jan’s primary responsibilities are installing and maintaining almost 650 First Call personal emergency response systems throughout the Cooperative service area and beyond. Jan enjoys meeting those people she doesn’t already know while also providing them a reassuring means of getting help in an emergency.



Jan, her husband Stewart, and sons Kevin and Kent live in Martelle. Jan enjoys spending time with her family and is an avid volunteer with the Anamosa Care Center and the Martelle United Methodist Women.

### **Brent Wegmann**

Brent started employment with the Cooperative one year ago as a Systems Analyst. Brent oversees the Cooperative’s network and its interoperability with the many outside systems we use including e-billing, engineering applications, and SCADA and mapping systems. In addition Brent is instrumental in management of our web site and is anxious to launch our new and improved site this fall.



Brent lives in Marion and is an avid Iowa Hawkeye fan. In his free time he enjoys tailgating, boating, and playing raquetball.





## HERE'S A YARN THAT'S UNIQUE

*Grace Zimmerman, Anamosa*

I walked into Nancy Ahlborn's Fiber and Gift Shop at 214 South Riverview in Bellevue where Nancy laughingly greeted me, "Looks like somebody got hit with a sheep truck. I just received 130 lbs. of Lincoln sheep wool from a breeder in Arlington. I bought it "in the grease" which means it still has lanolin in it so I have to wash the wool."

Washing the wool is done in the workroom basement of her home located just north of Bellevue. But, first she uses her skirting table, a screen-like arrangement, whereby she removes the dirt, hay, etc. from the wool, which drops below the table. She has rigged up a washing system consisting of two tubs which drain directly outside into the yard and not through the septic field to scour the lanolin from the sheep's wool. The alpaca wool can be cleaned in a regular washing machine because it contains no lanolin. The third step is laying the fibers out on a drying shelf. (Looks like a lot of work to me!) Fibers abound all around the shop. Nancy explains, "Doll makers come in to buy fibers. See, this is perfect Marilyn Monroe platinum hair". As she has me feel it, I'm amazed at the silky texture. She also explains that Lincoln sheep wool is known for its luster. Pointing out a multicolored fiber, she states it's perfect for beards of mountain men. When I asked the logical question as to how she got started, Nancy says, "I got



started from an article in the Iowa REC News Magazine in May or June of 1999 about someone in Titonka, Iowa. I started emailing that person and started researching alpaca. Eight farm visits later, we bought an alpaca. I got talked into a pregnant female on the ninth visit. Now I have six alpacas and one on the way. We are getting two Shetland sheep from a sheep breeder in Dubuque. My daughter, Callie, just bought one so I had to get one to keep hers company."

Nancy proved to be a storehouse of information, as she expounded further. "Alpaca fiber is five times warmer than wool and also stronger. It feels like cashmere. Merino sheep is the softest sheep wool you can get. You can't really appreciate alpaca fiber until you've washed 200

lbs. of sheep's wool. We do import some alpaca knitwear, woven goods and toys from Peru. The majority of the yarn here is home spun, though we can custom order specialty yarns and knitting/crocheting supplies from Skacel, such as addi Turbo needles. We can custom spin, custom blend and process fibers for customers. Here in the shop, we take the clean, dried wool and card it. I use a drum card and also use the spinning wheel." As I left on my trek to Bellevue, one of my friends inquired as to the topic of my article. As I responded about alpacas and fiber she asked me to question Nancy about the fiber she was having carded. In response to my query, Nancy replied, "Tell her to come and play with me. I love sitting with people, showing them how to card and spin. My favorite thing to





do is drum carding. I can blend fibers and can get extremely creative. It takes 10 1/2 hours to turn 8 ounces of clean fiber into a skein of yarn. I spend 5 days a week as a disgruntled accountant and 2 days here in the shop enjoying my work with fiber. I sell Louet spinning wheels and equipment. I design jewelry using fiber animal themes which came about to provide Mother's Day gifts that kids could afford."

As I remarked about all the varied colored skeins of yarn hanging about the shop, Nancy adds, "This is the only place in this area where good yarn can be purchased. Customers come from Cedar Rapids, Waterloo and all over central Iowa, to buy yarn." Nancy showed me her first and second place alpaca fleeces and two first place skeins of yarn, one of which took "Best of Show" at a fiber show in Shawano, WI, with the comment. "I'm pretty proud of these. I didn't even plan on entering." She also pointed out knit products made by a lady from Sageville who raises Jacob and Lincoln sheep and llamas. Our fiber guild, the Great River Fiber Artists, demonstrates at many events and we have a museum exhibit coming up this fall in Dubuque. "I am one of 30 vendors accepted to attend SOAR, the Spin Off Automated Retreat, which will be held in Traverse City, Michigan this fall. I'm very excited to attend this retreat."

The article would not be complete until we drove out to the Ahlborn home to see the alpacas with Nancy informing me, "Alpacas love winter but hate summer. Just imagine if you're wearing a coat five times warmer than wool. Alpacas are ruminants, having three stomachs rather than four like cows. They're members of the camel, vicuna, llama family. They come from the mountains of Peru where alpaca fiber was sought by royalty. They have four bottom teeth in front and molars in back but they don't really bite. They have pads on their feet, like dogs, and their toenails have to be trimmed. I feed them a special mix of a small amount of grain every day, along with hay and grass. You are what you eat. I find what I feed them makes a difference in their fiber quality."

It's fascinating to watch the alpacas. Their eyes are so expressive. Nancy talks to them as if they are human. Of course, they all have names and they are all of

different colors. The alpacas are DNA registered with the Alpaca Registry. "The big one weighs 197 lbs. and I get 8 pounds of fiber off him every year. I wait two years before breeding the maiden females. Females can have one baby each year as they have an eleven month gestation period."

She closes with the fact that she does offer field trips, adding nature trails in the surrounding timber to make it even more enjoyable for school kids.

I spent an interesting afternoon visiting the fiber shop wonderland and observing the fascinating alpacas, keeping in mind Nancy's quote, "There's so many things about wool to learn—it never gets boring." There's no way that I can do full justice to Nancy's overwhelming knowledge and pride of working with fibers in an article to acquaint readers with the many facets of her intriguing business. It'll be up to you to make a visit. Her shop at 214 South Riverview Drive is only open on weekends. She welcomes your phone calls at 563-872-5588 to visit and explore fibers with Nancy Ahlborn. I assure you it will be an enlightening, enjoyable experience.



**CO-OP CORNER**

Every Consumer is an Owner. The relationship of the Cooperative business with its consumers has always been unique and direct. Individuals who do business with a cooperative are treated as members of the organization. They participate in setting the policies of the cooperative, elect the directors from among their friends and neighbors and share in the success of their organization.






# WATTS HEALTHY

*Susan Uthoff, JSU Extension Nutrition & Health Specialist*

## Healthy Options at Work

Like most workers in today's world, people are pressed for time and often under stress at work. There are many ways to eat well at work and to fit fitness into the workday. Here are simple ways to save time, save money, boost energy and feel better at work. Take the stairs instead of the elevator. Eat a sack lunch instead of fast food. Snack on fresh fruit instead of a candy bar. And the pros all agree; it's not hard to be fit and healthy; it's just a matter of making healthy choices an every day thing.

Make nutrition convenient. This means keeping lots of tasty, eye-appealing food and beverages nearby. This way, you have the right stuff at hand whenever you get hungry or thirsty. Pack food and beverages for the week ahead. Spend an hour getting organized on Sunday and save time and money all week long. Wash fruit, bag vegetables, slice cheese and fill water bottles for the week ahead. Stock up on nutrition. Fill your desk drawers, office fridge and briefcase with a healthy variety of tasty snacks and quick meals like instant oatmeal, trail mix and microwave-able entrees. Take advantage of convenience. Supermarkets feature an amazing array of single-serve health food options perfect for desktop dining. Go for cereal in a cup, tuna in a pouch or fruit in pop-tos.

Make activity routine. The best way to stay active at work is to build fitness opportunities into your daily

schedule. This is as easy as taking a ten-minute stroll with a "walking buddy."

Make health a group thing. Healthy options are fun when you share them with others. It's easy to do by sharing healthful recipes or by "taking ten" minutes in a meeting to stretch and move. Tempted by the cookie jar or candy dish? Many office treats are all sugar and fat. Switch the office candy bowl to a fresh fruit bowl or a jar filled with different, delicious, dried fruit mango, pineapple, apricots, plums and raisins. For long-lasting brain and body power, add some protein with nuts, seeds, soynuts, yogurt, milk, jerky and nutrition bars.

Use the K.I.S.S. principle for candy. Keep It Small Sweetie! Skip those expensive, high-calorie, king-size bars. Slowly savor a chocolate kiss or enjoy a "fun-size" version of your favorite candy treat.

When it's time to eat, give yourself a real break. Stop working, stop rushing and give yourself a few minutes to really savor whatever you are eating. And, don't forget to drink to your health. Staying well-hydrated helps you think more clearly, be less cranky and do less mindless munching. It is also one of the best skin treatments in the world. Everyone needs to invest time and effort on healthful eating and active lifestyles for good health. It's the best investment that anybody can make. Taking a little time to care of your health can lead to big improvements in your life. Here is a

healthy recipe for you to try:

### Fresh Corn Salad Serves 4

- 6 cups ready-to-serve dark green lettuce, like red leaf, spring mix or romaine
- 2 ears of corn, shucked and cooked (or 1 cup frozen-thawed corn kernels)
- 1 large, ripe tomato
- 1/2 avocado, medium-sized, ripe
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 2 Tbsp vinegar
- Black pepper to taste

Place the lettuce in a salad bowl. Make sure it has been washed and cut in bite-size pieces. Cut the corn off the cob and place on top of the lettuce. Core and dice the tomato and place on top of the salad. Cut the avocado in half, remove the pit and scoop out the flesh from the rind. Dice the avocado and place it on top of the salad. Chill and cover the salad until ready to serve, up to 3 hours. Serve this salad with oil and vinegar drizzled over the top and black pepper to taste.

Hint: Some people recommend coating avocados with lime, lemon or vinegar to maintain its color. Many varieties do not brown at room temperature. But, if you feel more comfortable coating the avocado go ahead.

Each 2 cup serving contains: 140 calories, 8 g fat, 1 g saturated fat, 0 mg cholesterol, 133 mg sodium, 17 g carbohydrate, 3.75 g protein, 4 g fiber.



## DO YOU KNOW ANY OF THESE PEOPLE?

Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, 109 N. Huber Street, Anamosa, Iowa 52205, has abandoned property that results from patronage dividend checks issued in 2000 for the following individuals. If this property is not claimed within six months from the date of this newsletter it will be forfeited to Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative according to Iowa law.

Adkins, Lana M - Clinton, IA	Hamm, Linda - Dubuque, IA	Marlowe, Thomas - Maquoketa, IA	Saylor, Robin R. - Cedar Rapids, IA
Aggrecon, Inc. - Marietta, GA	Hand, Cathy - APO, NY	Martin, Jeffrey A. - Dubuque, IA	Scheid, Anne - Dubuque, IA
Amore, Wesley D. - Shawnee Mission, KS	Hansen, Lynn - Maquoketa, IA	Mausser, William G. - Epworth, IA	Scherrer, Fred J. - Yuma, AZ
Anderson, Carroll D. - Maquoketa, IA (Otter Creek Station)	Harkin, Thomas J. - West Grove, PA.	McDowell, Lavonda - Manchester, IA	Schlosser, Jack - Sabula, IA
Arnold, Richard C. - Palatine, IL	Hartness, Audrey E. - Springfield, IL	McLain, Michael G. - Kouts, IN	Schroeder, Robert J. - LeClaire, IA
Bailey, Stephen C. - Winnemucca, NV	Healey, Joan - Ankeny, IA	McLeod, James C. - Denver, CO	Schubert, Joseph L., Sr. - Dubuque, IA
Bauer, Gary M. - House Springs, MO	Hefel, Davie L. - Dubuque, IA	McPherson, Larry D. - Bernard, IA	Scott, Jody L. - Dubuque, IA
Beck, Lina - Columbus, MO	Heinze, Kenneth L. - Muscatine, IA	McKinsey, Fay - Dubuque, IA	Shaffer, Gail - Dubuque, IA
Beeler, Larry W. - Shenandoah, IA	Heldt, Ed - Bloomington, IL	McMahon, Robert E. - Dubuque, IA	Sharp, M. K. - Atlanta, GA
Beranek, Roby - Maquoketa, IA	Helmrichs, Mark E. - Masonville, IA	Melloy, Debra - Dubuque, IA	Sieh, Alfred M. - Cedar Rapids, IA
Berg, Rojean - Maquoketa, IA	Hicks, Steven D. - Dubuque, IA	Mihalakis, Mark S. - Dubuque, IA	Smith, Irene - Coggon, IA
Berger, Becky - Dubuque, IA	Himes, Raymond W. - Cedar Rapids, IA	Miller, Nathan D. - Dubuque, IA	Smith, Jerry W. - Cedar Rapids, IA
Birdenstine, John W. - Clive, IA (Answer Iowa)	Hingtgen, Eugene - Dubuque, IA	Miller, Susan - Dubuque, IA	Snyder, Lawrence E. - Monticello, IA
Blake, Donn K. - Atlanta, GA	Hoffman, Nancy K. - Marion, IA	Mills, Janaan - Dubuque, IA	Stecklein, Mary - Dubuque, IA
Boardman, Robert W. - Strawberry Pt., IA	Hogan, Elroy - Holy Cross, IA	Mittelstadt, Keith A. - Rochester, WA	Steinlage, Mike - East Dubuque, IL
Boxworth, Brad T. - Morrisville, NC	Holliday, Gary - Mesquite, TX	Mohr, Charles - Maquoketa, IA	Steinmetz, Larry - Pensacola, FL
Boyer, Lawrence A. - Dubuque, IA	Horst, Robert C. - Earlville, IA	Moore, Eric L. - Dubuque, IA	Stephens, D. E. - Bennett, IA
Bromley, James L. - Osage, IA	Huff, Steve - Sherrard, IL	Mootz, Mary Ann - Dubuque, IA	Summers, Carl A. - Lancaster, WI
Brown, Michael - Oxford Junction, IA	Hunt, Calvin D. - Epworth, IA	Morales, Stephen - Port Saint Lucie, FL	Taylor, Helen M. - Spring Lake, MI
Brown, Robert A. - Ames, IA	Hunt, Jerry - Monticello, IA	Morrisey, Kerry K. - Mt. Vernon, IA	Thies, Dan - Manchester, IA
Bunce, Douglas P. - Center Jct., IA	James, Deane E. - Onslow, IA	Moser, Richard L. - Manchester, IA	Thompson, Pauline - Delhi, IA
Burns, Margurite - Cedar Rapids, IA	Jasper, David - Epworth, IA	Moss, Kevin A. - Layton, UT	Tindell, Beverly - Dubuque, IA
Carlsen, Lavonne M. - Fremont, CA	Johnson, Richard L., Sr. - Cedar Rapids, IA	Nauman, Jackie - Rickardsville, IA	Toomer, Navella - Olin, IA
Chanson, Robert B. - Cedar Falls, IA	Johnson, Thomas L. - Cuba City, WI	Neill, Lenora M. - Seattle, WA	Trapp, Chris J. - New Bern, NC
Clark, Alice - Coggon, IA	Johnson, Wesley - Clinton, IA	Niday, Mark - Dubuque, IA	Valentine, Henry J. - Dubuque, IA
Clemen, Steven G. - Moline, IL	Jones, Donald - Wichita, KS	Nielsen, Delores E. - Bellevue, IA	Wall, Raymond - Sabula, IA
Coleman, David L. - Dubuque, IA	Jones, Gloria E. - Des Moines, IA	O'Dell, Shirley - Bernard, IA	Walton, Robert F. - York, PA
Corey, Carole I. - Dubuque, IA	Justice, Mike - Dubuque, IA	Oberbroeckling, Anne - Minneapolis, MN	Warner, Greg S. - Bellevue, IA
Cowell, Russell D. - New Hampton, IA	Kemp, Gerald - Seattle, WA	Oberreuter, Dennis - Cedar Rapids, IA	Weaver, Jerry L. - Dubuque, IA
Coyne, Jeffrey B. - Rock Island, IL	Kenney, Steve D., Sr. - DeWitt, IA	Ochampaugh, D. E. - Englewood, CO	Webb, Terry L. - Cascade, IA
Datisman, Christopher - Sherrill, IA	Kern, James F. - Dyersville, IA	O'Donnell, William F. - Dubuque, IA	Weber, Connie - Dubuque, IA
Davis, Ted - Dubuque, IA	Kerton, Francis - Manchester, IA	Oldham, Jim - Fullerton, CA	Wedmore, Marlin - So. Sioux City, NE
Dempster, Ernest - Marion, IA	Knoll, Paul W. - Monticello, IA	Olson, Beulah - Ottumwa, IA	Weishaar, Amy - Darlington, SC (All American Homes)
Domer, Owen - Anamosa, IA	Knox, Jay F. - Dubuque, IA	O'Neill, John - Crystal Lake, IL	Wernke, Barry G. - Dyersville, IA
Dunne, Charles J. - Dyersville, IA	Kolodziej, Robert W. - Dubuque, IA	Otter Creek Station - LaMotte, IA	White, T. A. - Dubuque, IA
Dyas, Sarah - Maquoketa, IA	Kortemeyer, Garnetta R. - Waterloo, IA	Otterbeck, Mark A. - Dubuque, IA	White, Terry V., Sr. - Clarence, IA
Edwards Rick - Eules, TX	Krambeck, David - Holy Cross, IA	Owens, Donald R. - Palo, IA	Winders, Wesley J. - Cedar Rapids, IA
Emary, Pamela R. - Dubuque, IA	Kronlage, Brian - Farley, IA	Packard, Glen - Denver, CO	Winkler, Donald J. - Lehigh Acres, FL
Fessler, Michael - Dubuque, IA	Kucharik, Jan - Bellevue, IA	Parks, Lynn - Sherrill, IA	Wisniewski, Craig E., Sr. - Mechanicsburg, PA
Fischer, Helen C. - Lisbon, IA	Lake, Mark D. - Winterset, IA	Perkins, David A. - Winthrop, IA	Wood, James R. - Earlville, IA
Friederick, Florence K. - Dubuque, IA	Lee, Shauna - Des Moines, IA	Piggy Bar Farm, Inc. - Maquoketa, IA	Wylie, Sandra - Lost Nation, IA
Frommelt, Chris - Dubuque, IA	Lewis, Minna H. - Dubuque, IA	Pleasant, Robert W. - Deep River, IA	Young, Lynn - Dubuque, IA
Gearhart, Lyle - Cedar Rapids, IA	Leytem, Connie - Rockford, IL	Portz, Francis - Scio, OR	
Gentz, Russel - Cedar Rapids, IA	Lightfoot, Pamela G. - Dubuque, IA	Randolph, Alvin - Holden, MO	
Gleason, Jane M. - Cuba City, WI	Lloyd, John W. - South Elgin, IL	Rasmann, Neva O. - Dubuque, IA	
Graham, Jon E. - Mount Vernon, IL	Lubben, Klein - Cedar Falls, IA (Agra Partners)	Robey, Pam - Dubuque, IA	
Guhl, Lavern F. - Olin, IA	Lunnon, John D. - Loves Park, IL	Sault, Russell A. - Aurora, IL (for Northern ILGas)	
	Manders, Mark - Dubuque, IA	Saunders, Junior C. - Maquoketa, IA	
	Manning, Barbara - Dubuque, IA		
	Manning, Mary L. - Bellevue, IA		
	Manson, Lavern E. - Manchester, IA		



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*Watts Current...*

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After hours you may also call the service person  
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line.

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Manchester, Dan Petersen.....563-927-6491  
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