

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES

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Garden Art

SPECIAL
GARDENING
EDITION



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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Being a Member Matters

An investor-owned utility, a city-owned electric system and a not-for-profit electric cooperative are all electric providers. But there's one major difference between them.

Every home or business that receives power from an electric cooperative—18 million in 47 states—owns a portion of the utility. As a result, anyone who receives co-op electric service becomes a member and owner, not just a customer. Across the nation, electric co-ops serve more than 42 million people.

Being a member *matters*. Great Lakes Energy doesn't exist to make profits for distant investors on Wall Street. We exist to provide you with safe, reliable and affordable electric service—and do so in a way that raises the quality of life in our communities. Because electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis, they have no need to increase revenues above what it takes to run the business in a financially sound manner.

Membership matters because a well-run co-op invests wisely and contains costs to keep its members' rates as stable as possible.

We regularly take advantage of refinancing opportunities that benefit the co-op. Millions of dollars in additional interest expenses on long-term loans are avoided this way. Lower-interest loans are the main source of operating funds for electric cooperatives.

We serve more members with fewer employees than many other electric cooperatives. Great Lakes Energy ranks 15th out of 816 electric cooperatives as having the most members per employee. Our employees serve members across a vast area covering 26 counties and over 14,000 miles of power lines. Only one other electric cooperative in the country has more miles of line than we do.

Membership matters because you receive returns on your investment in your co-op. Electric co-ops aim to operate at-cost, so any excess revenues, or margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits, based on their electric use.

We put unclaimed capital credit refunds to good use, too. Although we would hope everyone who leaves our co-op would pay their balance, the reality is that not all do. We help limit this loss by applying unclaimed capital credit refunds to the unpaid amounts.

Membership matters because you have a voice and a vote in how your co-op is governed. Through democratic control, members like you elect directors to serve on the Great Lakes Energy board. Control stays in local hands. Your board, along with those who work for your co-op,



Steve Boeckman
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

...because you have a voice and a vote in how your co-op is governed.

are your friends and neighbors.

Membership also matters because electric co-ops care about improving the quality of life in the areas they serve. That's why we rely on your generosity in supporting the People Fund that helps charities and non-profit groups in your community.

Membership matters because it entitles you to certain benefits like special rebates for energy efficient heating and cooling equipment, lower rates for electric heat and water heating, and new health savings benefits through the Co-op Connections program (see cover wrap attached to this magazine).

The bottom line: *Membership matters* because you matter to your electric cooperative.

Annual Kids' Coloring Contest

Hey kids! If you're 10 or under you can enter our coloring contest. This year's coloring page is a picture of the Touchstone Energy balloon. Great Lakes Energy is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

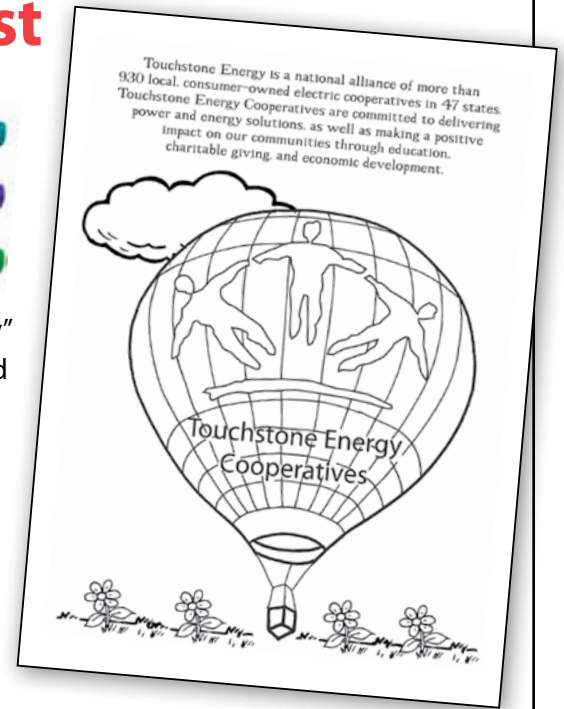


Download the entry form and contest rules at the "Your Community" section of gtlakes.com or pick them up at one of our offices. Ages 10 and under are eligible to enter. Entries must be received by **April 20**.

AGE GROUPS • 4 and under • 5-7 years old • 8-10 years old

PRIZES One grand prize for each age group: deluxe set of art supplies, valued at \$25. Plus, you will be pictured in one of our publications.

One second and one third prize for each age group: new crayons and markers, valued at \$10.



New Paperless Billing Option

Electronic Bill Presentment helps GLE members go "greener."

Some of the best ideas for business improvement come from Great Lakes Energy members themselves.

Paperless electric bills are now available with the new Electronic Bill Presentment (EBP) option, an idea first suggested by our members. EBP eliminates the need to send paper bills to participating Great Lakes Energy members. Saving paper makes GLE and participating members more environmentally friendly.

Members can request to be notified by email when their monthly billing statement is available to view online. Billing statements can be saved and stored by members on their own computers or they can access an online archive of statements through their GLE online eBusiness account.

With fewer paper bills, GLE saves on contracted costs for bill paper, envelopes, printing toner, bill stuffing and mailing time, and postage. The savings also help contain part of the cost of providing electric service.

Members—including those who currently use the eBusiness feature for online informa-

tion about their electric accounts—will see a page that encourages them to sign up for EBP when they log-in or click on the "Account Access" link on GLE's website. Once enrolled in EBP, they will receive a monthly email advising their bill is online and ready to view.

Using their eBusiness log-in procedure, members enrolled in EBP can access the current billing statement, plus review or retrieve up to 13 months of billing history. Unlike the bill summaries that appear on members' eBusiness accounts, EBP statements are exact replicas of the physical bill copy.

When members combine EBP with automated bill payment, GLE can realize a nearly paper-free circle of distributing bills and receiving payments. Launching EBP marks an achievement for GLE in cost containment, efficiency and member service.

Co-op reps can walk members through the process of enrolling in EBP and automated bill payment, including viewing statements through eBusiness accounts. To enroll, visit gtlakes.com and click on "Account Log-in" at the top of the page, or call 888-485-2537.

Attend Our Free Energy Seminar

You're invited to attend a free energy seminar Saturday, April 21, from 10 a.m. to noon at our Great Lakes Energy office in Newaygo.

Hear presentations on geothermal and air-source heat pumps, Marathon® electric water heaters, and more. Local heating and cooling companies and Great Lakes Energy staff members will be on hand to answer your questions relating to electric heat and electric water heaters.

Receive the latest update on energy optimization (EO) programs that offer incentives to help you save energy. Learn about other incentive programs offered by Great Lakes Energy, such as special billing discounts for electric heat and water heating.

Door prizes will be awarded. Winners will receive energy saving gifts.

Space is limited, so please register by calling 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8958, or email events@glenergy.com.



Kathy Massey, assistant vegetation management supervisor, marks one of several dead ash trees for removal near Great Lakes Energy power lines in Charlevoix County. Even if outside the right-of-way, diseased or dead trees can still pose a threat to the lines.

Reducing Tree Risks Before Trouble Falls

A dying tree is a loss, but it's also a threat to Great Lakes Energy members' electric service if it's near a power line.

Contracted crews working for the cooperative trim or remove diseased and dying trees within the power line right-of-way (ROW) before they can damage overhead wires. Damage typically occurs during storms when high winds take their toll on weaker trees.

What about weaker trees outside the ROW?

When possible, diseased and dying trees not in the ROW are taken down before they become a problem. Normally they are discovered by GLE vegetation management workers, contracted ROW re-clearing crews, or co-op members.

However, weaker trees often aren't found until after they've damaged a power line. The co-op's ROW areas are re-cleared once every six to seven years. In that time, trees outside the ROW that were once healthy can become infected and die. They may fall on a power line before re-clearing crews return again. Some trees can withstand damage by insects and diseases for several years while others, like red oaks infected with oak wilt, can die within days or weeks.

Another challenge to monitoring off-ROW

tree problems is the cooperative's large size. Great Lakes Energy is second among electric cooperatives in the country with the most miles of power line. From Kalamazoo to the Mackinac Straits, over 11,000 miles of overhead power lines pass through wooded areas containing many hardwood and conifer species, including those highly susceptible to widespread diseases.

The cooperative's vegetation management department is taking a proactive approach this year to assessing how big a factor off-ROW trees are to GLE's ability to provide reliable and safe electric service.

Field Survey Planned

A field survey will be conducted to identify suspected trouble trees outside the ROW throughout our 26-county service area. Two college interns will be hired to carry out the project. Their forestry background will enable them to identify the trees and their diseases, and record their locations. Interns will begin the first year of their work this summer over a 14-week period. The survey is expected to take at least two summers to complete due to the large area to be covered.

"Specifically they will be asked to look for diseased and dying trees that could fall into our lines," explains Steve Ryder, vegetation management and inspection supervisor.

"Healthy trees will be noted, too, if they are a species like the ash tree that is most vulnerable to deadly attacks by insects or diseases."

He admits the project will be a big job with the many miles of line the interns will need to cover. But the data they gather will be valuable in helping his department keep tree-related outages to a minimum.

"Once we know the full scope of the problem, we can determine whether more funds will be needed in the years ahead to effectively control it," Ryder adds.

Ash trees are being plagued in this and surrounding states by the emerald ash borer. The beetles' larvae feed on the inner bark, which eventually leads to the tree's death. Millions of ash trees in southeastern Michigan have already been destroyed by this insect, and tens of millions more were lost in 12 other states and parts of Canada. Visit emeraldashborer.info for more information on this exotic beetle. The website was created through a joint effort of the U. S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Michigan State, Purdue and Ohio State universities.

A dead ash tree can be very destructive when it falls on a power line. The tree normally remains intact—large limbs and all—when it falls. A high wind can blow the entire tree into a line, creating more damage than just a few falling limbs or branches. A mature white ash tree can reach heights of 70 feet and weigh over a ton.

In addition to ash, other trees highly susceptible to widespread diseases pose a risk to GLE power lines.

Oak wilt is a fungus that kills thousands of oaks annually in the eastern United States. In its "Michigan Forest Health Highlights 2011" report, the state Department of Natural Resources Forest Management Division states that oak wilt "is established widely in the southern lower peninsula with spotty distribution in the northern lower and upper peninsulas."

Beech is another familiar tree Ryder will have the interns study. "Since its discovery in



A diseased beech tree is discovered near Great Lakes Energy power lines. It has a white fungus covering the bark and it became diseased within a few short months.



Exit holes created by the emerald ash borer beetle are clearly visible on this dead ash tree that is marked for removal near Great Lakes Energy power lines.

Michigan in 2000, beech bark disease continues to pose a serious threat to Michigan's forests," DNR foresters report. The disease is spreading through parts of the upper and northern lower peninsulas.

The field study will also include maple, hickory, poplar, black walnut, hemlock and other species believed to be more apt to fall prey to insects and diseases. Last year, the DNR increased efforts to detect the presence of the Asian long-horned beetle in the state after the destructive pest with an appetite for maples and other trees was discovered in neighboring Ohio. The 2008 discovery of this beetle in Massachusetts involved an infestation of thousands of maple trees.

Our vegetation management staff seeks property owner approval if trees outside the ROW need to be removed.

The cooperation of our members in these removal efforts will enable them to continue receiving safe, reliable electric service.

— Dave Guzniczak

Investing in Your Reliability And Safety

Great Lakes Energy will invest \$3.1 million in 2012 to re-clear about 1,444 miles of power line rights-of-way (ROW) in 17 counties and 75 townships.

The 2012 vegetation management program began earlier this year in the cooperative's central and southern counties with private contractors removing trees and limbs near power lines. Crews will move into the northern counties this spring.

Vegetation management helps reduce tree-related power line damage, which is a major cause of outages, and helps us maintain a safe, reliable power line distribution system.

The amount of trimming needed to maintain adequate power line clearance depends on the tree type, its location,

how it grows, and the line's voltage size. Some healthy trees may need to be removed if they pose an immediate threat to your electric service and safety. Also, trees may need to come down if they are weak, diseased, drying or severely damaged. Trees that would look unsightly or die if they were extensively trimmed are normally removed, too.

You will be notified by post card and phone if ROW work is planned near you. Please be sure we have your current billing address and primary phone number so we can contact you if needed.

Questions about our ROW re-clearing program should be directed to our Vegetation Management Department, 888-485-2537, extensions 8221 (central and southern counties) and 1295 (northern counties).

2012 Tree Re-clearing Schedule

Re-clearing along Great Lakes Energy power lines is scheduled this year in the following counties and townships:

Allegan: Dorr, Leighton, Wayland;

Antrim: Helena, Custer, Kearney, Echo, Central Lake, Forest Home, Chestonia, Jordan, Mancelona;

Barry: Irving, Orangeville, Rutland, Thornapple, Yankee Springs;

Clare: Redding, Winterfield;

Crawford: Lovells, Grayling, South Branch, Maple Forest;

Emmet: Friendship, Pleasantview, West Traverse, Readmond;

Kalkaska: Kalkaska, Excelsior, Bear Lake, Cold Springs;

Lake: Cherry Valley, Lake, Pleasant Plains, Sauble, Sweetwater, Webber, Yates;

Mason: Amber, Branch, Custer, Hamlin, Pere Marquette, Victory;

Montcalm: Pierson, Reynolds;

Muskegon: Montague, Ravenna;

Newaygo: Denver, Goodwell, Lilley, Merrill, Norwich, Troy, Wilcox;

Oceana: Benona, Claybanks, Golden, Grant, Leavitt, Newfield, Shelby;



Osceola: Burdell, Hartwick, Marion, Middle Branch, Sherman, Sylvan;

Oscoda: Big Creek;

Otsego: Bagley, Livingston, Charlton, Chester;

Ottawa: Allendale, Polkton.

Doing What Needs To Be Done

A weak economy can sometimes hit small, rural areas the hardest—leaving some people struggling to get by on their own. With the help of a \$3,000 Great Lakes Energy People Fund grant, one nonprofit organization is working to make a difference in the Newaygo area.

Luther Bible Chapel members volunteered to start a food bank about 10 years ago to help other congregation members. The poor economy in recent years kicked that volunteer effort into high gear.

Frank and Darlene Wright, early project volunteers, assumed operation of the program three years ago. The initial effort became an outreach ministry that welcomes anyone in the area who struggles to put food on their table.

“The economy was a factor,” Frank acknowledges. “But this area just has a lot of people on fixed incomes. We have a big senior population.”

When the couple agreed to coordinate the food pantry efforts, they and other volunteers served 100 to 150 people a month. During a recent food distribution day, 268 people gratefully accepted free provisions. And no



one anticipates a downturn in the number of local people who need help anytime soon.

Luther Bible Chapel, supported by donations from their small congregation, tries to foot the bill for food pantry groceries and supplies. However, with the increasing number of people served by the pantry, the food expense is growing. Supplying food for all who show up on distribution day now amounts to about \$1,000 a month, which exceeds the church's budget.

The Wrights saw an article about the People Fund in a local newspaper and decided to apply for a grant. As long-time Great Lakes Energy members, they had contributed to the People Fund themselves for many years, so they were appreciative when the grant was awarded.

About 30 church members volunteer regularly to help inventory and store provisions on shelves and in refrigerators and freezers inside the 40 x 100-foot pole building erected near the church in October 2010. Some volunteers also show up on distribution day to set out food for pickup, pack it into boxes, and carry it out for some people.

Pantry volunteers rely on word of mouth

where you would like the magazine sent. Contact us again when you return home to ensure there will be no interruption in your magazine mailings.

Contact us by dialing 888-GT-LAKES (485-2537), ext. 1817, or by visiting the member services section of gtlakes.com, found under “Your Home” and by clicking on “Change of Address.”

Receive Country Lines While You're Away

You can continue to receive your *Michigan Country Lines* magazine even if you're away from home for an extended time.

Simply contact us if you plan to be away for more than a month, and give us the address

Visit Us at the Home Shows

Mark your calendar and plan to visit the Great Lakes Energy booth at the home show nearest you.

Stop by to see our Marathon® electric water heaters, and Convectair® electric space heaters that can be used as a whole-house heating option, and our Energy Bike. Our representatives will also be on hand to answer your questions about new Energy Optimization programs that can save you energy, and all our other products and services!

Northern Michigan Regional Home Show • March 9-10
North Central Michigan College, Petoskey

Newaygo Home & Garden Show
April 14 • Newaygo Middle School

West Michigan Home & Garden Show
April 27-29 • Mason County Fairgrounds, Ludington

Get your questions answered!



Frank Wright helps distribute food at the Luther Bible Chapel Food Bank in Newaygo.

to spread the news about food distributions, which take place the last Wednesday of each month. While identification is required to obtain provisions, they have no income requirements, preferring to trust that those taking food have a real need for it.

Volunteers also offer food to people they hear of who are in dire need, such as fire victims.

The church also has to provide shelving, tables, refrigerators, freezers and portable heaters to supplement the partially-heated building during cold weather. Donations of such items in good condition, as well as food and cleaning products (no clothes) are welcome, Frank says.

The Wrights show diligence and dedication with their volunteer efforts. Frank will buy sturdy tables and other pantry necessities at auctions or sales when he finds a good deal. He transports them in his personal vehicle—a van the couple purchased mainly to use for the food pantry. They haul food for each distribution day, most of which the pantry buys in bulk from Feeding America, a nonprofit organization in Comstock Park. They even pay for gas to haul food and supplies.

The couple quickly points out, however, that food pantry volunteers operate as a team, logging altogether an average of over 215 hours a month.

“We’re all doing this because people need it and it’s an outreach from the church we belong to,” Frank explains.

“It’s just something that needs to be done.”

To donate cash, time or supplies to Luther Bible Chapel Food Bank, please call 231-856-0562.

— Linda Kotzian

Win with the People Fund

Several Great Lakes Energy members who support the cooperative's People Fund received \$100 billing credits in our most recent drawing.

The four members pictured here are among those who were randomly selected to win this electric billing credit. Other winners were Linda Brown Hooft of Grand Rapids and Matt VanAvery of Levering.

People Fund contributors allow their cooperative to round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar each month. The rounded-up amounts, which averaged 39 cents monthly in 2011, are used to award grants to food pantries, senior citizen centers, youth programs and other local charities and community groups.

Great Lakes Energy relies solely on your voluntary contributions to support the People Fund. In 2011, People Fund directors awarded over \$176,000 in grants to more than 80 charitable and community organizations throughout our 26-county service area.

To thank its People Fund donors, GLE selects six winners twice a year from the co-op's three major service areas. Current People Fund supporters and anyone who enrolls in the permanent billing round-up program before the next drawing in June are eligible to win.

Prizes were provided by Great Lakes Energy and did not involve the use of any People Fund round-up money.



Randall Schmidlin,
Gaylord



Joe Schrotenboer,
Hamilton



Ellen Shoup,
Custer



Jacquelyn Tyler,
Hesperia

"I would encourage every Great Lakes Energy member to utilize the People Fund. It is just pennies a month but provides a great deal of assistance to our neighbors who need a helping hand." – Randall Schmidlin

"It's an awesome program! Definitely worthwhile for all the help it provides, even aside from the possibility of winning \$100 for participating."

– Joe Schrotenboer

"This is the easiest way to help others." – Ellen Shoup

"I think it's nice to be part of the People Fund because just that (average donation of) 50 cents a month helps a lot of people who really need the help."

– Jacquelyn Tyler

**Don't miss your chance to be the next winner!!
Call our office or visit gtlakes.com to sign up today.**



Marathon is not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission



Hot Water for Life.

Saving is easy as 1-2-3:

When you purchase and install a new Marathon electric water heater through Great Lakes Energy, you can save three ways:

1. Unit rebates from \$250-\$500
2. \$50 rebate for a model rated with a .93 EF or higher
3. \$4 for every 5 feet of pipe wrap used to insulate the water outlet

Members may also qualify for our controlled water heating program and save up to \$90/yr. Restrictions may apply, call for details.

Call Today! 888-GT-LAKES ext. 8957 • gtlakes.com

Schedule a Power Line Safety Show



The Great Lakes Energy power line safety demonstration is a traveling program that shows how we look out for our members by bringing our electrical safety message to them.

Witness the power and potential danger of electricity when kite string, branches, fishing poles and other common objects are placed on a 7,200-volt power line mounted to a portable display trailer. Viewers also learn that electricity at much lower voltage can be dangerous, too, if not used wisely in the home.

You may also get a chance to pedal the cooperative's Energy Bike.

Demonstrations take place outdoors if weather permits or inside if facilities are available.

To find out if your group qualifies for a free GLE safety demonstration, email safety@glenergy.com or call 888-485-2537, ext. 8174.

Plan Ahead to Cut Costs of Big Items

Budgets are tight, and like most people you're probably counting every penny. But by planning ahead, you likely *can* afford what you want to buy.

How? By setting aside a certain amount of money regularly, you can save what you'll need *and* cut your cost.

See How Easy It Can Be

The longer you have to save for a big purchase, the easier it is. Let's say it's January and you know that by the *following* January you'd like to buy a big flat-screen TV to watch the Super Bowl. That means you've got 12 months to save. You also know you'd like to budget \$1,000 for your TV, plus \$60 to pay the sales tax. By setting aside a specific amount in a separate savings account, you can have the cash to shop with when your purchase date arrives.

Check the Math!

For our sample 12-month period, saving just \$88.33 per month (or \$20.39 per week, if you prefer) would mean you could have the \$1,060 you'll need by the following January (\$88.33 x 12 = \$1,060). Note that earned interest isn't reflected in these calculations.

Ready to do the math for your next big buy? Choose a time frame to see how many months or weeks you have to work with, then use any internet search engine



Consider the real cost of using a credit card, and try to save money for big purchases instead.

(Google.com, Bing.com) to search for "Date Duration Calculator" for help in figuring your costs.

Planning Ahead Makes "Cents"

Using credit cards may be convenient, but it's *always* smarter to save in advance for a major buy rather than charging items and paying interest for months or years to come. How much could a credit card purchase of your TV cost you? More than you may think!

Suppose you have a credit card with an annual interest rate of 15.24 percent. You'd have to pay \$95.79 per month to pay off your TV, assuming you didn't charge anything else on the card. Instead of costing \$1,060, your TV will cost \$1,149.48—if you pay off your credit card in one year.

But there's more: The price of some items, such as flat-screen TVs, often drop over time. So if the TV price falls while you are saving, you'll pocket the amount of the price reduction, since the purchase will cost *less*.

— Doreen Friel

Fuel Mix Report

The environmental characteristics of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative as required by Public Act 141 of 2000 for the 12-month period ended 12/31/11.

COMPARISON OF FUEL SOURCES USED

Regional average fuel mix used		
Your co-op's fuel mix		
FUEL SOURCE		
Coal	77.9%	64.7%
Nuclear	11.6%	24.0%
Gas	5.3%	7.1%
Oil	0.1%	0.4%
Hydroelectric	1.1%	3.1%
Renewable Fuels	4.0%	3.1%
Biomass	0.1%	0.4%
Biofuel	0.0%	0.1%
Solid Waste Incineration	0.1%	0.4%
Wind	3.7%	1.7%
Wood	0.1%	0.4%
Solar	0.0%	0.0%

NOTE: (1) Biomass above excludes wood; solid waste incineration includes landfill gas, and (2) inclusion of long-term renewable (wind) purchase power contract in Wolverine's mix.

Your Co-op's Fuel Mix



Regional Avg. Fuel Mix



EMISSIONS AND WASTE COMPARISON

TYPE OF EMISSIONS/WASTE	lbs/MWh	
	Your Co-op	Regional Average*
Sulfur Dioxide	5.9	8.2
Carbon Dioxide	1,804	2,186
Oxides of Nitrogen	2.0	2.0
High-level nuclear waste	0.0042	0.0083

*Regional average fuel mix data was compiled from Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio and Wisconsin.

Great Lakes Energy purchases 100% of its electricity from Wolverine Power Cooperative, which provided this fuel mix and environmental data.

Staying Safe With Portable Generators

CARBON MONOXIDE HAZARDS:

- Always use generators outdoors. **Never** use them in homes, garages, basements, or enclosed areas, even with ventilation.
- Install battery-operated or plug-in (with battery backup) carbon monoxide (CO) alarms in your home, and follow manufacturer instructions. Test alarms often and replace batteries when needed.

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS:

- Plug appliances directly into generator or use a heavy-duty outdoor-rated extension cord.
- **Never** plug a generator into a wall outlet or connect it to your home's wiring. If whole-house use is required, have a licensed electrician install the equipment to safely connect emergency generators.

Contact Great Lakes Energy at 888-485-2537 with any questions about using your generator safely!

Don't Mess With Power Lines

Downed power lines carry a current strong enough to cause serious injury or death. If you see a downed line, follow these safety tips:

- ▶ Move away from the downed line, and anything touching it, by shuffling with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times. This minimizes the potential for an electric shock. Electricity wants to move from a high voltage zone to a low voltage one—and it can do that through your body.
- ▶ Do not touch anyone who is in direct or indirect contact with a downed line—you could become the next victim. Call 911 instead.
- ▶ Do not try to move a downed line or anything contacting it by using another object, such as a stick. Even normally non-conductive materials like wood or cloth, if slightly wet, can conduct electricity and electrocute you.
- ▶ Be careful not to put your feet near water where a downed power line is located.
- ▶ Do not drive over downed lines.
- ▶ If you are in a vehicle that is touching a downed line, stay in the vehicle. Honk your horn for help and tell others to stay away.
- ▶ If you must leave the vehicle because it's on fire, jump out with both feet together and avoid touching the energized vehicle and the ground at the same time. This way you avoid being the path of electricity from the vehicle to the earth.



Don't let electricity costs trip you up.
Put energy savings in your court. From income specific services to rebates on appliances and efficient heating and cooling, you'll get a game plan to better manage your electric use. Check it out. Find an Energy Optimization program that's a slam dunk for you.

MARCH MADNESS

ENERGY TIP: Get a smart strip for your TV.


Online: michigan-energy.org Phone: 877.296.4319

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



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**Last chance
to apply!**

HEY STUDENTS! A **SPRING TRIP** FOR YOU

Are you a leader? If you're a high school sophomore or junior who will be 16 or 17 by June 2012, and your family receives electric service from Great Lakes Energy, you may be eligible to attend the free co-op-sponsored Youth Leadership Summit.

The fun takes place April 18-20 at the 4-H Kettunen Center near Cadillac. You'll join students from other Michigan electric co-ops for a unique, high-energy experience to help you develop leadership skills and explore career opportunities in the electric industry. Plus, you'll get a chance to learn more about your electric co-op, and even try climbing a utility pole in full lineworker gear. Students chosen to attend the YLS will automatically be considered for a free trip to Washington, D.C., June 16-21, as part of the Rural Electric Youth Tour.

Learn more about these high-energy, co-op sponsored youth events at miYLS.com and youthtour.coop. **Applications are due March 16.** Apply online at miYLS.com, or contact Linda Kotzian: 888-485-2537, ext. 8174; teentrips@glenergy.com.



Youth Leadership Summit
PRESENTED BY Michigan's Electric Cooperatives