

# Michigan

## COUNTRY LINES

### *The Art of Island Living*

Writer/Photographer Julie McKay Covert

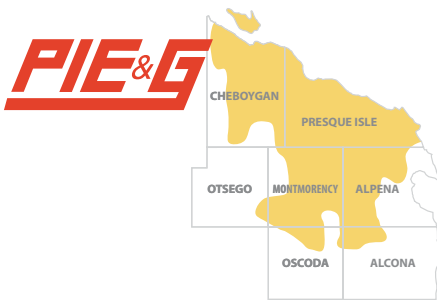


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Michigan Legislature

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Lineworkers

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Available



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**Brian J. Burns**

PIE&G's natural gas operations are not regulated by the Michigan Public Service Commission.



**PRESIDENT'S COLUMN**

# 'I Am a Lineman for the County'

"I am a lineman for the county.  
And I drive the main road.  
Searchin' in the sun for another overload.  
I hear you singing in the wire.  
I can hear you thru the whine.  
And the Wichita Lineman,  
is still on the line."

*Lines from a song written by Jimmy Webb; performed by Glen Campbell*

**W**ith winter weather ahead of us, and hurricane Sandy behind us, it's worth reflecting briefly on the energy we're so dependent on for our daily comfort and conveniences—electricity and natural gas—and the people who make it possible.

Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (PIE&G) lineworkers don't work alone on our power and gas lines. Whether they are climbing poles, restoring power, or investigating gas leaks, they are never far from the hearts of their families.

Regardless of the time of year, foul weather is always possible and if the lights go out or duty calls, our lineworkers' families send their loved ones out into the elements and the unknown. When other electric cooperatives are in trouble after devastating events, our lineworkers have also traveled far and wide to bring the lights back on for complete strangers. Each time these brave workers leave home to help those in need, their families are left behind, hoping for a safe return.

Lineworkers—whether working with high voltage or in explosive atmospheres—find themselves in life-and-death situations on a regular basis. That's why PIE&G focuses on "safety first." We know the families who count on our lineworkers and who are grateful for the efforts we take to ensure our employees arrive back home safely every night.

Marrying into this profession isn't easy, either. Lineworkers are often on-call, and must be prepared to respond at a moment's notice if our community needs them. This responsibility makes children's sporting events and family gatherings difficult or impossible to pull off at times. But those



Mississippi co-op lineman Josh Dauzat and his daughters express the difficulty of leaving family to help restore power after Hurricane Isaac.

who keep the lines repaired do so because they know that without their personal commitment, many of the things we've come to expect—heat, warm food, lights, entertainment—wouldn't be possible. By devoting their lives to working on utility lines, they connect all of us to a better way of life.

I'd very much like to thank the families who support and understand the commitment that's required of our workers. These workers brave the elements and work long hours, each and every day, to keep energy flowing to our homes. Presque Isle Electric and Gas Co-op is committed to making sure those in your family return home safely.

*Brian Burns  
President & CEO*



## Co-op Conducts First 'Member Regulated' Special Board Meeting

On Nov. 27, 2012, the PIE&G Board of Directors conducted their first special meeting to consider changes to the co-op's rates and tariffs under the Electric Cooperative Member Regulation Act.

Items related to wholesale energy charges and the Power Supply Cost Recovery charge (PSCR) that were presented to the board for their consideration included:

1. Reconcile the 2011 PSCR factor over-collection;
2. Establish the 2013 PSCR factor.

The charges collected from our member/owners for energy are reconciled at the end of each year with the cost that we paid for wholesale energy. If the co-op collects more than it pays for energy, the excess is refunded to our member-consumers through the following year's PSCR factor. If the co-op pays more than it collects, then the deficit is collected from member-consumers in the same way.

In 2011, the co-op collected \$192,016 more than it paid for energy. This amount has been incorporated in the 2012 PSCR factor and we have been refunding it since your January 2012 bill. Co-op staff presented the board of directors with an analysis of the 2011 PSCR factor over-collection. The board

accepted the analysis and directed management to continue refunding \$192,016 through the remainder of 2012.

Co-op staff also presented an analysis conducted jointly by PIE&G and Wolverine Power Cooperative of expected wholesale energy costs for 2013 and the proposed 2013 PSCR factor, consistent with the process that had been in effect with the Michigan Public Service Commission for over 30 years. The analysis indicated an increase in wholesale energy costs in 2013 over 2012. Co-op staff recommended a revision to the "basing point" and a 2013 PSCR factor of \$0.00319/kWh, based on estimated wholesale energy costs. The recommendation was approved and will be

	Basing Point	PSCR Factor	Total Energy Rate
2012	\$ 0.05834	\$ 0.02951	\$ 0.08785
2013	\$ 0.08785	\$ 0.00319	\$ 0.09104
<b>Difference</b>			<b>\$ 0.00319</b>

effective with bills rendered on or after Feb. 1, 2013. The average residential member-consumer can expect to pay an additional \$2.09 per month as a result of the expected increase in wholesale energy costs.

In addition, the PIE&G board approved two tariff changes unrelated to rates.

### Notice to Members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op Case No. U-15820

#### 2011 Renewable Energy Plan Annual Report Summary

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately 2 percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012, and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (Presque Isle) submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2011, Presque Isle acquired 11,625 renewable energy credits and 679 incentive credits from its wholesale power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. (Wolverine). Wolverine will continue to generate or purchase renewable energy and bank unused renewable energy credits for future use and compliance with statutory renewable portfolio standard requirements on behalf of all its members.

Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at [pieg.com](http://pieg.com) or by request at Presque Isle's office.

## How Do We Contact You?

Have you changed your telephone number or moved to another address in the past year? If so, we need to hear from you so we can update your contact information.

It's quite important that Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op can reach you by phone or mail regarding your account status, alert you to planned power outages, maintenance work or repairs, or to quickly confirm by phone that your service has been restored after weather-related service interruptions.

If you've discontinued your landline telephone at home and now rely exclusively on a cell phone, or if you've changed your cell phone number or address recently, please call us to update your information.

Our member service representatives are available to help you Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. at 800-423-6634.



## Attention Graduating Seniors!

The PIE&G Communities First Fund has been awarding scholarships to graduating high school seniors since 1999. Recently, the board of directors which oversees this fund made changes to the program.

The scholarship has been expanded to include *all* accredited colleges or universities located in Michigan, and the award is now \$1,000 and payable upon successful completion of the first term.

Eligibility requirements and applications are available online at [pieg.com](http://pieg.com) or by calling our office at 800-423-6634. Completed applications with supporting documentation are *due by the last business day in March*. Scholarships will be awarded by June 1.



# Incumbent Board Members Re-elected at Annual Meeting



CHEBOYGAN DISTRICT  
**Allen Barr - 1,269**  
Keith Shugar - 663



MONTMORENCY DISTRICT  
**Daryl Peterson - 1,324**  
Roger Funk - 582



DIRECTOR-AT-LARGE  
**Sally Knopf - 901**  
Robert Mitchell - 390, Wayne  
Vermilya - 377, Larry Pascador - 341

About 500 people attended the 75th annual meeting of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, held Oct. 26 in Onaway.

Incumbent directors Allen Barr (Cheboygan District), Daryl Peterson (Montmorency District), and Sally Knopf (Director-At-Large) were re-elected, each for a three-year term. The vote counts for each candidate are listed below the director photos. The board elected new officers: John Brown, chairman;

Allen Barr, vice chair; Dave Smith, secretary; and Daryl Peterson, treasurer.

Brian Burns, president and CEO, addressed members during the meeting, and Dan DeCoeur, vice president of power supply for Wolverine Power Cooperative, provided a Wolverine update. In honor of the co-op's 75th anniversary, two guest speakers with family ties to its early years also shared memories of the co-op's beginnings in the 1930s and '40s.



## Understanding Your Energy Bill

PIE&G representatives are always happy to assist you with billing questions, but a brief review of the following tips may be all you need to understand your energy bill.

No two households use energy the same way, so comparing your electric bill to a neighbor's is like comparing apples to oranges. It's best to compare *your own* current energy use to *your past* consumption at the same house for the same billing period (or months) during the year.

■ Look at the number of days in the service period. Are you reporting meter readings consistently (same date each month)? More days in your service period usually results in more energy use.

■ Did you report an actual reading before your due date, or is this an estimate? If your bill is based upon an estimate, it may be higher simply because of an underestimated reading in the previous month or months.

■ When comparing usage this month to a year ago, be sure both service periods have the same number of days. Even then, always consider weather fluctuations, which can be a major factor in a change to your bill.

■ If you leave home for an extended period for business or vacation, any appliances plugged in will continue to use electricity (water heater, freezer, refrigerator, heating/cooling system, and well pump).

Energy bills are highly personal and influenced by many factors, including personal lifestyle, family size, weatherization and age of your home, efficiency of appliances, geographic location, and climate.

### Board In Action

At their October and November regular meetings, the PIE&G Board:

- Approved the 2013 Work Plan capital expenditures of \$3.8 million;
- Heard a presentation by Janet Kass, CFO of Wolverine Power, on power supply issues;
- Nominated director Allan Berg for the RESCO board of directors; and
- Received report from Safety Director Greg Karspen on the Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) on-site

assessment, which took place earlier in the month.

At a Nov. 27 special meeting, the PIE&G Board:

- Reconciled the 2011 Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) factor collections;
- Revised the allowance for the cost of power supply (basing point) included in Electric Retail Base Energy rates;
- Established the 2013 Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) factor; and
- Revised the terms of service under the Seasonal Residential Tariff (Schedule S).

### Notice to Members of Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op Electric Tariff and Rule Changes Effective Feb. 1, 2013

The Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the cooperative's electric tariffs and rules at a Special Open Meeting held Nov. 27, 2012, in accordance with P.A. 167.

- a) Reconciled the 2011 Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) Factor collections and ordered the continuation of the refund of the net over-collection of \$192,016 for the remainder of 2012.
- b) Reviewed the Power Supply Cost Recovery Factor and authorized the factor be \$0.00319/kWh, effective with bills rendered on or after Feb. 1, 2013, due to expected increases in wholesale energy supply costs.

For specific details of any Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-800-423-6634 or visit our website at [pieg.com](http://pieg.com).

# Stay Warm, Save Energy

On top of staying warm throughout the winter, a lot of people worry about saving money and energy.

The average family spends \$2,024 a year on energy, and nearly one-half of that goes for heating and cooling costs, according to the Consumer Reports National Research Center. To save, try these helpful tips:

**Pick smarter lightbulbs.** Light-emitting diodes (LEDs) use 75 to 80 percent less energy than traditional incandescent bulbs and can last 25 times longer. Compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs) slash energy use by 75 percent compared to traditional bulbs and last up to 10 times longer.

**Check furnace filters.** Be sure to clean or replace your heating and cooling system's air filter (see guide below). At a minimum, change it every three months, since a dirty filter clogs the system, making it work harder to keep you warm.

**Install a programmable thermostat.** If your home is alone most of the day, these

thermostats can knock up to 10 percent off heating bills with the ability to automatically turn temperatures down 10 to 15 degrees for eight hours a day.

**Insulate water heaters and pipes.** Insulate the water heater and wrap water pipes connected to the water heater with foam. To save about \$75 annually, consider lowering the water heater temperature from 130 degrees to 120.

**Bundle up your home.** The more heat that escapes through cracks and crevices, the more cold air enters, causing your system to work harder and use more energy. When it's windy outside, hold a lit incense stick near your windows, doors and electrical outlets. If the smoke blows sideways, there's a leak that should be plugged with weather stripping, caulk or expandable foam.

**Use a low-flow showerhead.** About 14 percent of your energy bill goes to water heating. Low-flow showerheads can minimize water use by up to 50 percent—a helpful

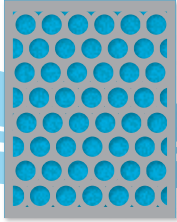
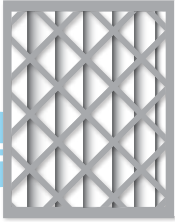
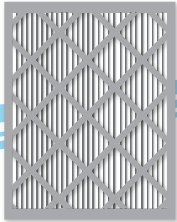
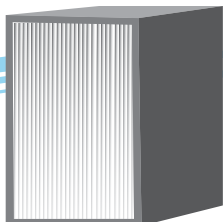







change, especially if you have a larger family or when guests or family come for a visit.

Visit [michigansaves.org](http://michigansaves.org) to find more easy, affordable energy improvements for homeowners and businesses statewide.

## What Do Different Air Filters Block?

Air filters are rated by Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV). Filters with a higher MERV block more dirt, but also reduce airflow and system efficiency. Use this guide to find the right filter for your home or business.

					
	<b>1-4 MERV</b> \$2-\$10	<b>5-8 MERV</b> \$10-\$20	<b>9-12 MERV</b> \$18-\$25	<b>13-20 MERV</b> \$\$\$	
<b>Blocked Items</b>	Pollen, sanding dust, large insect bodies 	+ Pet dander, mold, spores, dust mites, hair spray 	+ Lead dust, milled flour, car emission particles 	+ Bacteria, virus, face powder, smoke, sneezes, paint pigments, oil, carbon dust 	
<b>Filter Types</b>	Disposable, washable	Pleated, disposable, electrostatic	Pleated, disposable, electrostatic	High efficiency particulate arrestance (HEPA), box 6-12 inches thick, flexible 12-36 inches thick	
<b>Common Uses</b>	Homes, window air conditioning units	Better homes, general office buildings	Superior homes, better office buildings, businesses	Hospitals, drug and electronic labs	

Source: [epa.gov/iaq](http://epa.gov/iaq)



# Energy Optimization REBATES:

## Back By Popular Demand!

**Y**ou know the story. The clock strikes midnight and millions of people make resolutions to change. But, if something is working great, why fix it? Our thoughts exactly. Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op is keeping its most popular 2012 Energy Optimization (EO) rebates for 2013. It's your turn to save this year.

Reducing energy use is a win for everyone—homeowners, businesses, and the buildings themselves. Did you know that one of every two people prefer to make his/her home more energy efficient instead of more beautiful because of the short- and long-term benefits? That's because **saving energy gives you more control, increases your freedom, and improves your home.**

The list at right shows the energy rebates your fellow Michiganders used the most in 2012. All of these rebates help you save energy easily, keep you comfortable, and provide the best value.

Find more rebates at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org). Email ([michigan-energy.org/contact](mailto:michigan-energy.org/contact)) or call (877-296-4319) with questions about applications or product eligibility.

REBATE & FEATURES	INCENTIVE AMOUNT
<b>ENERGY STAR® DEHUMIDIFIER</b> .....	<b>\$20</b>
Choose any ENERGY STAR model; use 15% less energy	
<b>EFFICIENT HVAC—FURNACES with electric commutated motors (ECMs)</b> .....	<b>\$150</b>
Effectively converts energy to generate heat instead of energy waste; save as much as \$800 in the next 10 years	
<b>ELECTRIC WATER HEATERS</b> .....	<b>\$50</b>
0.93 energy factor (EF) or higher	
<b>HEAT PUMP WATER HEATERS</b> .....	<b>\$100</b>
Heat pump model 2.0 EF or higher	
<b>ENERGY STAR REFRIGERATOR</b> .....	<b>\$20</b>
FREE appliance recycling; choose any ENERGY STAR model; use at least 15% less energy	
<b>ONLINE HOME AUDIT (Home Energy Optimizer)...</b>	<b>FREE Energy-Saving Kit (\$30 value)</b>
Pinpoint where your home wastes energy; access at <a href="http://michigan-energy.org">michigan-energy.org</a> , select your energy provider, and click "Home Audit"; receive <b>free</b> EO kit (contains five CFLs, energy efficient aerators, and a showerhead) when you complete the online assessment.	

**ATTENTION FARMERS!** The Energy Optimization Farm Program invites you to get a **free** engine block heater timer. Call 877-296-4319 or visit [michigan-energy.org/heatertimer](http://michigan-energy.org/heatertimer).



# SAVE ON.

You're in for a great new year. Our most popular Energy Optimization **REBATES** are back by popular demand! You can now choose from more than 50 easy ways to save energy at home or work.

- ★ **FREE refrigerator recycling**
- ★ **\$15 Rebate Outdoor CFL light fixtures**
- ★ **\$20 Rebate ENERGY STAR dehumidifiers**
- ★ **\$20 Rebate ENERGY STAR refrigerators**
- ★ **FREE online home audit and energy-saving kit**
- ★ **\$150 Rebate ECM furnaces**

ONLINE: [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) PHONE: 877.296.4319



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

# What Is Line Loss?

Imagine picking up a gallon of milk at the grocery store and arriving home with only three quarts. Or paying for a dozen roses and receiving 11. Now, imagine you accept this as normal.

As outlandish as this may sound, when buying and selling energy, it's common to end up with less than when you started. Take a 95 percent efficient gas furnace, for example.

For each unit of gas energy input, you receive 95 percent of that unit back as heat energy. Electricity works the same way. The amount of electricity put on the grid is always less than the amount used by its consumers.

Electric co-ops and other utilities call it "line loss."

It basically works like this: As electricity is demanded by you, as an electric co-op member, it flows from the supply grid onto your service provider's (Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op) system. The electricity, or power, flowing across the grid enters our system at one of our 18 entry points, called substations.

Our wholesale supplier bills us for the electricity that enters the substations, called "purchased" power. Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op purchases an average of about 21.5 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of power each month.

The power then moves out from the substations to over 35,750 homes, businesses and public entities served by the co-op. When delivered to our members, we meter the energy and bill accordingly. On average, we bill about 20 million kilowatt hours each month, and account for these billings as "sales."

Did you notice the difference between purchases and sales? Each month we purchase about 1.5 million more kilowatt hours than we sell. So, what happened to the 18 million kilowatt hours that represent that difference?

That difference is called line loss, and it's significant. In 2011, line loss cost your cooperative about \$1.62 million.

Theft also accounts for a small amount of loss. Although it is against the law to

divert power, some members still do. The penalties are steep and can include legal prosecution; anyone tempted to choose this path should think twice. Further, the money lost from theft affects you and other co-op members, since the co-op is a consumer-owned nonprofit utility where expenses are shared proportionately.

The lion's share of line loss is the direct result of physics. In layman's terms, whenever electrons move over a wire they encounter resistance. To overcome the resistance, electrons expend some of their own energy in the form of heat.

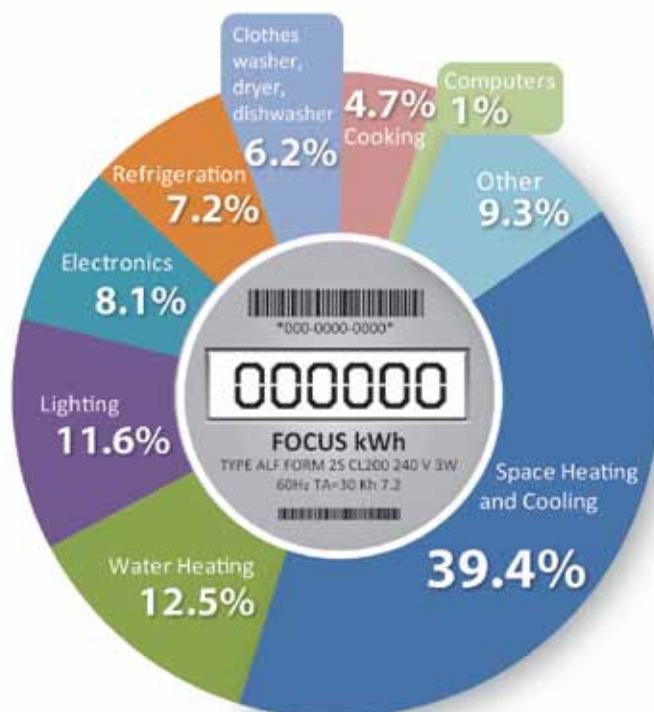
That explains, for example, why an extension cord might warm up while in use, or similarly why an incandescent

lightbulb is too hot to touch.

All utilities experience line loss. It's not unique to your cooperative. Line loss occurs on cross-country high-voltage transmission lines as well, although not as much because the higher the voltage, the lower the current.

While we can't alter the laws of physics, we can all manage our energy use. Demanding less power results in lower line loss. So the next time you want to dry clothes, wash dishes and make coffee, consider staggering the time when you do it rather than running everything at the same time. It will lower your energy demand, which lowers our overall system demand and keeps prices down for everyone.

## How Your Home Uses Electricity



Source: 2009 Buildings Energy Data Book, U.S. Department of Energy, Table 21.5. Represents an all-electric home. Updated February 2011.

## Neighbors Create New Plow to 'Bully' Winter



Paul Starner demonstrates an eco-friendly, easy-to-use snow plow that he and his neighbor, Jerry Schichtel, developed and call the "Snow Bully." Their website is [TheSnowBully.com](http://TheSnowBully.com).

**T**ired of being "bullied by the snow," Paul Starner and Jerry Schichtel, of Traverse City, decided to fight back.

They created the Snow Bully, a four-wheel steel shovel with a 34-inch blade that clears snow easily.

"It was an invention of necessity," says Starner, a Cherryland Electric Cooperative member who's in charge of marketing the product that Schichtel created.

"I have a lot of physical challenges and I don't move around very well. I needed something to move snow with that didn't take very much effort," Starner explains. "That's what the Snow Bully is."

Five years ago, Schichtel watched neighbor Starner struggle as he attempted to use his snow blower. That gave Schichtel an idea. He and his brother had already created the prototype for the Snow Bully back in the 1940s when they were growing up on a farm. It was made out of wood.

After watching Starner finish up that day, Schichtel walked over and told him about his idea to re-create his wooden snow remover.

Starner listened, and then asked Schichtel to make a modern version. It took five attempts, but they finally came up with a product both liked, and so they shook hands and became partners.

The next step was finding someone to produce the Snow Bully. Starner, who has spent his career in the real estate business, searched the state and found Mark Goodman of MDG Welding in Blissfield.

"Last winter was our first selling the Snow Bully, and wouldn't you know it, we didn't get much snow," Starner laughs. "Still, we sold 161 of them."

It sells for \$249, plus \$29.95 shipping in the U.S.

"We market our product on the internet," Starner says. "People can go to our website and do it all—read about it, see pictures and videos of it in action, and then order it. The orders go directly to Mark Goodman in Blissfield and UPS ships them from his business."

Starner not only likes the ease of using the Snow Bully, he calls it "eco-friendly."

"You use calories, not gasoline," he says. "It is very friendly to the environment,

and we're in the process of creating attachments for the Snow Bully. We're working on a scraper blade, a garden cart basket, and we're also looking at an eco-mower. That would make this something you can use year-round and not use any gasoline."

So far, the Snow Bully has been an internet hit.

"We've sold it to as far away as Newfoundland," Starner explains. "And in the states, from Washington to Maine and then from New York to North Carolina."

"Social media is the new way to market. Not only do we have our internet site, we post videos on YouTube," Starner adds.

"Jerry and I really don't see the product after we give the okay to have it made. People agree to buy it online, pay for it through their PayPal account, and then it's shipped from Blissfield. It's all pretty clean."

And it's all pretty satisfying to Paul and Jerry.

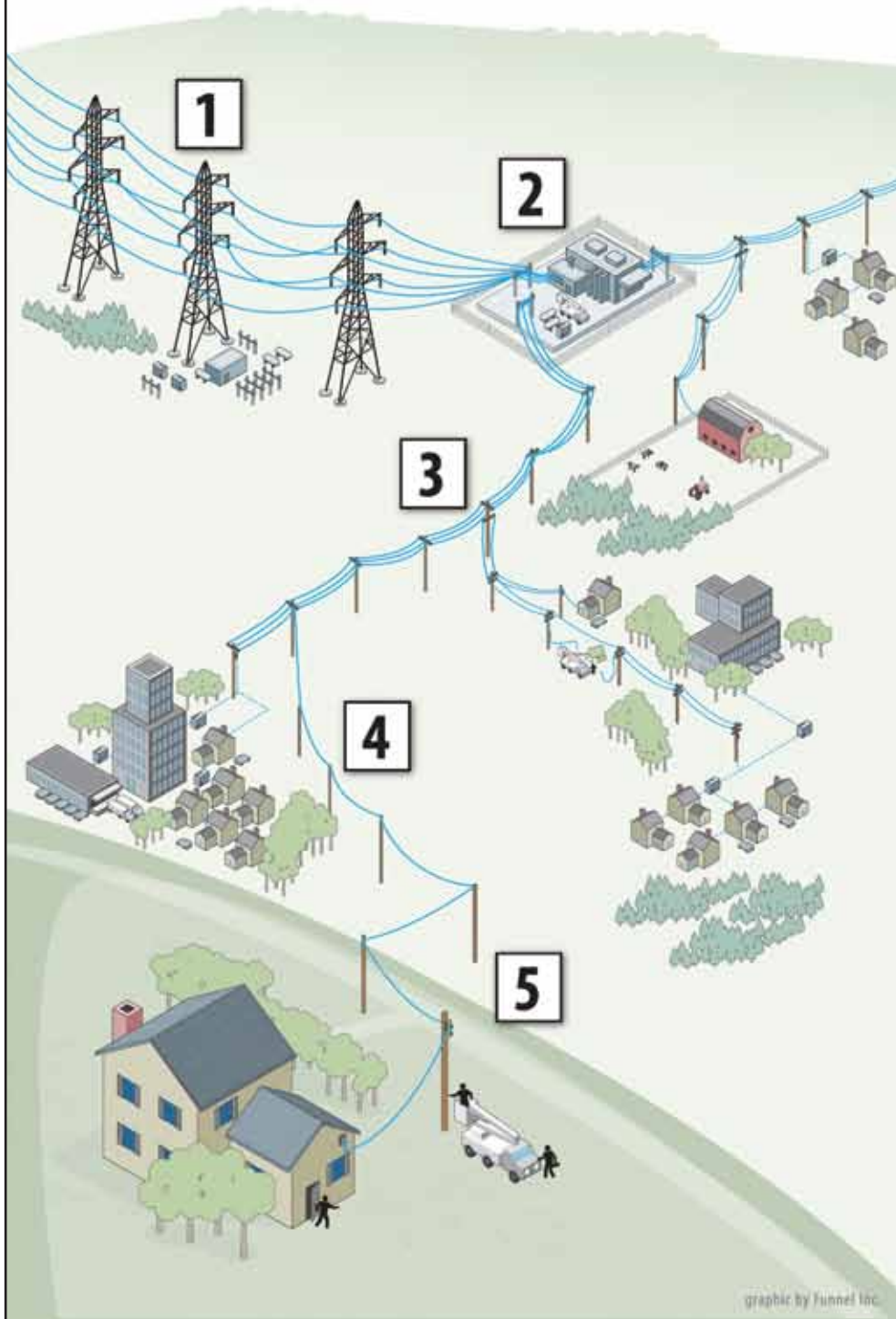
"There's nothing more frustrating to me than moving snow," Starner says. "That's why the 'Snow Bully' is great...it's just simple. You don't need to have much upper body strength to move snow."



# Powering UP

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible.

**Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.**



## **1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines**

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of members) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

## **2 Distribution Substation**

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

## **3 Main Distribution Lines**

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

## **4 Tap Lines**


If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

## **5 Individual Homes**

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate local issues.

graphic by Funnel Inc.

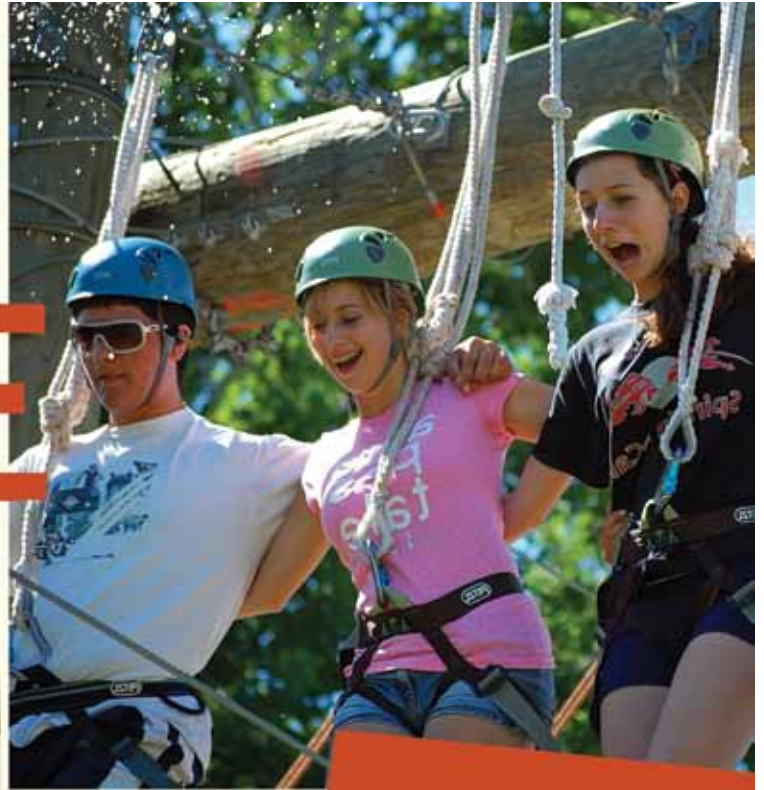


Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

pieg.com

# ELEVATE YOUR FUTURE

**YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**  
» PRESENTED BY MICHIGAN'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES



**YOU ARE A LEADER.** In the classroom, on the team, and in your community, you guide and inspire others to contribute their best efforts.

Join other young leaders like you from throughout Michigan at the **YOUTH LEADERSHIP SUMMIT (YLS)**, presented by Michigan's electric cooperatives. This unique, high-energy experience will help you develop your leadership habits, explore career opportunities in the electric industry, and learn how to be actively involved in the democratic process. **YOU ARE THE FUTURE.**

[miYLS.com](http://miYLS.com)



» SCAN THE QR CODE WITH YOUR SMARTPHONE TO LEARN MORE, OR TO APPLY ONLINE



» PARTICIPANTS WILL BE CONSIDERED FOR AN ALL-EXPENSES-PAID WASHINGTON, D.C., YOUTH TOUR. VISIT [miYLS.com](http://miYLS.com) TO LEARN MORE.