

Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

February 2017

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



## YOUTH TOUR

The Power Of Our Future

ACRE Helps  
Electric Co-ops

Annual Reliability  
Goal Met

2017 Scheduled  
Tree-Trimming Areas



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Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.

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# IN THIS ISSUE



## ON THE COVER

Arjun Vorster, a 2016 Youth Tour participant and Midwest Energy Cooperative member, tours the United States Capitol in Washington, D.C.

Pictured here is Brad Whitney, a past Youth Tour attendee and current Great Lakes Energy Cooperative lineman, participating in safety training.

**6 SAFETY**  
Portable Generator Safety Tips

**7 OUR ENERGY**  
Wind Energy Is Full Of Wins For Michigan  
*Kelley Welf*

**10 COOKING COMMUNITY**  
These Chip Dips Are A Slam Dunk For Your Next Crowd  
Enter Our Recipe Contest And Win A Bill Credit!  
*Christin McKamey & Our Readers*  
Traditional U.S. Senate Bean Soup

**14 FEATURE**  
Youth Tour: The Power Of Our Future  
*Emily Haines Lloyd*

**18 READER'S PAGE**  
I Remember—The Wonder Of Michigan Always Pulls My Heart Back Home  
*Kalico Casady, Great Lakes Energy*

Submit An 'I Remember' Story And Earn \$50!



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**gtlakes.com**

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*Great Lakes Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.*

 Find us on Facebook.  
[facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](https://facebook.com/greatlakesenergy)

# Let Your Voice Be Heard Through



**Bill Scott**  
Great Lakes Energy  
President/CEO

**W**hen legislation is approved that directly affects Great Lakes Energy, such as the recent passage of state energy legislation, how do we know it reflects the best interests of our cooperative and its members?

It begins with identifying legislators who recognize the importance of our cooperative mission. They know we have only one objective—to meet our members’ needs with reliable service at the best possible price. When issues that directly impact us go before lawmakers for a vote, we call on the support of the elected representatives who believe in our mission.

The ability to gain legislative support was a positive factor in the state energy legislation recently passed. The new legislation will allow us to continue to provide stable and reliable energy for GLE members well into the future.

Obtaining legislator backing may sound easy, but it’s not. We are just one of many groups competing for their support. That’s why we have state and national service organizations that rely on the ACRE program to make sure we have a voice in Lansing and Washington, D.C.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is the political action committee of the nation’s electric cooperatives. Co-ops formed ACRE, their own political action group, in the early 1970s. Electric co-ops, like many other industries, rely on support from political leaders to ensure programs that benefit our industry and our members remain intact. A key one is the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) that provides low-interest financing for rural utilities.

Contributing to ACRE is completely voluntary. It’s supported by co-op employees, board members and even cooperative members. In fact, 100 percent of GLE’s board of directors contributed to ACRE this year. Rest assured, no money from your bill is contributed to ACRE.

ACRE is a bipartisan effort to support co-op friendly candidates at both the federal and state levels.

I have contributed voluntarily to ACRE for many years. GLE employees who are members or have managerial responsibility are eligible to contribute to ACRE. In 2016 our eligible employees and directors voluntarily contributed \$11,650 to ACRE.

Great Lakes Energy members can contribute, too, by participating in the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program. Visit [gtlakes.com/co-op-owners-for-political-action](http://gtlakes.com/co-op-owners-for-political-action) or call 888-485-2537, ext. 8957, for more information. ■



## A Great Lakes Energy Cooperative Benefit

Great Lakes Energy members received capital credit refunds in December 2016, including local businesses on our lines.

Tom Cooper, owner of Rocky Top Farms in Ellsworth, accepted a \$1,307 capital credit refund check from GLE’s Cyndy Streasick. Refunds were issued as bill credits or checks and were based on electricity purchases made by members in any or all of these years—2015, 1991–93.

As a member of an electric cooperative, you’re entitled to a share of the margins earned by GLE. Since 2003, Great Lakes Energy has issued over \$56.1 million in capital credit refunds to members. It’s part of the cooperative difference.



## Who Are Your Directors?

Director Larry Monshor puts the cooperative principle of “Concern for Community” into practice both as a Great Lakes Energy board member and as an Otsego County citizen.

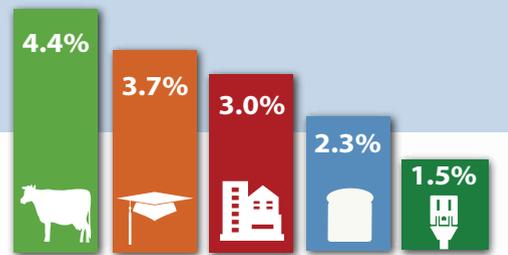
Last fall Monshor, family members, and friend Dale May collected 26 bags of trash along M-32 near the new Alpine Power Plant west of Gaylord. Joining him this year in the volunteer Adopt-A-Highway project will be, from left, son Seth Monshor; Monshor; grandchildren Jason, Elizabeth and Justin Shaler; and daughter Sarah Shaler.

Putting family, friends and community first—that’s the cooperative difference.

## Electricity Remains A Good Value

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.

 **Average Annual Price Increase 2010-2015**



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

# PORTABLE GENERATOR SAFETY TIPS

**Always read the Owner's Manual and instructions for your generator. Do NOT cut corners when it comes to safety.**

These tips are merely supplemental and are not intended to substitute the reading of the Owner's Manual.



## Carbon Monoxide And Ventilation

- Using a generator indoors **can kill you in minutes**. Exhaust contains carbon monoxide, a deadly, poisonous gas you cannot see or smell.
- NEVER run a generator indoors or in partly-enclosed areas, such as garages.
- ONLY use outdoors and far from windows, doors, vents, and crawl spaces and in an area where adequate ventilation is available and deadly exhaust gas cannot accumulate.
- Using a fan or opening doors and windows will not provide sufficient ventilation.
- It is recommended that you install battery operated carbon monoxide alarms/detectors indoors according to manufacturer's instructions/recommendations.

## Gasoline, Fueling And Burn Safety

- If the tank is over-filled, fuel can overflow onto a hot engine and cause fire or explosion.
- Do not overfill the fuel tank. Always allow room for fuel expansion.
- Never add fuel while the unit is running or hot. Allow the generator and engine to cool entirely before adding fuel.
- Never store a generator with fuel in the tank where gasoline vapors might reach an open flame, spark or pilot light.
- Many generator parts are hot enough to burn you during operation and while the generator is cooling after turning off. Avoid coming into contact with a hot generator.

## Electrocution Hazard And Electrical Shock Hazards

- Connecting a portable electric generator directly to your household wiring can be deadly to you and others. A generator that is directly connected to your home's wiring can "back feed" onto the power lines connected to your home and injure neighbors or utility workers.
- Do not connect your generator directly to your home's wiring or into a regular household outlet.

- Only start or stop the generator when no electrical loads are connected.
- Overloading your generator can seriously damage your valuable appliances and electronics. Do not overload the generator. Prioritize your needs; do not operate more appliances and equipment than the output rating of the generator. A portable electric generator should be used only when necessary and only to power essential equipment.
- Use the proper power cords. Plug individual appliances into the generator using heavy-duty, outdoor-rated cords with a wire gauge adequate for the appliance load. Overloaded cords can cause fires or equipment damage. Do not use extension cords with exposed wires or worn shielding.
- Do not operate the generator in wet conditions such as rain or snow.
- The generator must be properly grounded. If the generator is not grounded, you run the risk of electrocution. Check and adhere to all applicable federal, state and local regulations related to grounding.

## Generator Placement And Operation

- Allow at least five feet of clearance on all sides of the generator when operating.
- Generators can be used during a wide variety of weather temperatures, but should be protected from the elements when not in use to prevent shorting and rusting.
- Operate the generator only on level surfaces and where it will not be exposed to excessive moisture, dirt, dust or corrosive vapors.
- Inspect the generator regularly.
- Always disconnect the spark plug wire and place the wire where it cannot contact the spark plug to prevent accidental starting when setting up, transporting, adjusting or making repairs to the generator. ■

Source: American Red Cross with technical advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Fire Protection Association (publisher of the National Electric Code®) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

# Wind Energy Is Full Of Wins For Michigan

By Kelley Welf,  
Communications Manager,  
Wind On The Wires

**M**ichigan farmers, business owners and taxpayers have a lot to gain by embracing wind energy. It offers a drought-resistant cash crop, requires very little land, creates family-supporting jobs in rural areas, and injects much-needed revenue sources into rural communities at a time when many are struggling—all while generating low-cost, clean energy. Everybody wins with wind power!

For generations, farmers have harnessed the power of the wind, but it wasn't until the 1980s that the industry was able to accomplish it on a utility scale. Since then, technological advancements and the growth of domestic manufacturing have driven the cost of wind projects down considerably. The price consumers pay for wind power has dropped 66 percent over six years.

Currently, wind provides more than four percent of Michigan's electricity needs, with 1,531 megawatts (MW) of installed capacity and another 330 MW under construction. The Department of Energy projects that Michigan could produce enough wind energy by 2030 to power the equivalent of 710,000 American homes.

Wind farms ensure farmland is protected over the long term. The average wind farm leaves 98 percent of land undisturbed, so they don't significantly impact crops or livestock production. Many farmers have found access roads built or improved for wind projects to be convenient during harvest time. Plus, wind developers make annual land-lease payments to farming families and other rural landowners. In 2014, wind developers paid \$4.6 million to Michigan landowners. This extra income goes a long way toward helping families meet their household budgets, send their kids to college, or keep the family farm. It is also reinvested in the community through spending at local businesses, restaurants and other establishments.

Wind developments increase the tax base, which helps keep more money in the pockets of citizens. From 2011–2015 the counties with the most wind farms—Gratiot, Huron and Tuscola—saw the largest increase to their tax base. This new source of tax revenue paid by wind developers brings in millions of dollars every year, and is often used to help pay for schools, county and township services, police and fire departments, and programs for seniors and veterans.

The economic impact of wind development ripples through local economies. With 26 wind manufacturing facilities, Michigan ranks fourth in the nation in wind manufacturing and enjoys about 2,000 wind energy jobs. Businesses also benefit from wind projects, as developers use local service stations, hardware stores, restaurants and hotels in their day-to-day operations.

Harvesting the wind and investing energy dollars locally is a winning strategy. Wind developments offer the opportunity to capitalize on jobs and economic development while ensuring Michigan's farm families and rural lifestyle stay economically viable. ■

*Wind On The Wires is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in St. Paul, MN, that works to advance renewable energy in the Midwest.*

[windonthewires.org](http://windonthewires.org)

# Look For The ENERGY STAR® Label

Making the switch to LED bulbs is a smart way to save energy. But, just like all other products, some LEDs meet a higher standard of quality and performance than others. To ensure you are selecting the best LEDs, always look for the ENERGY STAR®!

What is ENERGY STAR? ENERGY STAR is a trusted brand for quality products that use significantly less energy than required by minimum federal standards. The ENERGY STAR label can be found on hundreds of items, including light bulbs, electronics, major appliances, and even certified homes and buildings.

For a LED to bear the ENERGY STAR label, it must pass rigorous testing to ensure maximum energy savings, while also proving it will display the following characteristics:

- Brightness equal to or greater than that of other existing technologies
- Well-distributed light
- Excellent color quality
- Light output that remains constant over time
- Light that comes on instantly when turned on

- No flicker when dimmed
- Does not use power when turned off

## Other tips for choosing the right LED bulb:

Choose the right brightness. Instead of watts, look for lumens when purchasing LEDs to gauge the brightness of the bulb.

Choose the appropriate color. LEDs come in a broad range of colors, which are measured by temperature on the Kelvin scale (K). Lower K emits a warmer, yellowish light, while higher K produces cooler, bluer light. ■

By replacing your home's five most frequently used light fixtures or bulbs with ENERGY STAR® LEDs, you can save up to \$75 each year.

## REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy-saving information and incentives.



# Don't Settle

## All LEDs are not created equal!

You know LED bulbs are the most efficient lighting solution for your home. To save as much energy as possible, look for the ENERGY STAR® label!

### Why ENERGY STAR LEDs?

- Highest quality and performance
- Exceptional color quality and light output
- Thoroughly tested and verified to back up claims

**ENERGY TIP:** Visit a participating retailer near you to receive instant in-store savings on LED bulbs and fixtures!

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

PHONE: 877.296.4319



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

# Holiday Fun



## Enter Our Photo Contest On Facebook and Win!

The response to our photo contest has been amazing. We've been getting so many submissions, we wanted to give you all a chance to weigh in on which photos get printed. You can now vote for your favorite photo on our Facebook page. The photo with the most votes will be printed in *Michigan Country Lines* and be entered to win a bill credit of up to \$200 in December 2017.

Our February theme is **Animals Near Me**. Photos can be submitted between **February 1 to February 20**. The photo with the highest votes will appear in the April issue of *Michigan Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites.

Ready to submit? Just visit [Facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](https://www.facebook.com/greatlakesenergy) and click "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs. Not on Facebook? You can also enter the contest at [gtlakes.com/photocontest/](https://www.gtlakes.com/photocontest/). Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too



It's always a special time celebrating Jesus's birthday with friends and family. Hanging the wreath at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. By Rosemary Lambert, Shelby



The Pere Marquette 1225 Steam engine, otherwise known as The Polar Express, travels from Owosso to Ashley, Michigan's little Christmas town. By Lori Gelinis, Rapid City



Our dog, Zach, has seen Santa and he believes! By Victoria Wallick, Ellsworth



The grandkids on Thanksgiving Day. By Jane Peck, Middleville



Annual Christmas shopping trip for the group known as the "northern shoppers." These members are from all over northern Michigan and gather every year for this special event. By Beverly Cherwinski, Vanderbilt

# CHIP DIPS

These dips are a slam dunk for your next gathering.

## Philly Tomato Basil Dip

Nancy Popa,  
Cherryland Electric  
Cooperative

- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 2 plum tomatoes, chopped
- 2 tablespoons zesty Italian dressing
- 2 tablespoons shredded Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped basil

Spread cream cheese in a 9-inch pie plate. Mix tomatoes and Italian dressing, then spoon over cream cheese. Sprinkle Parmesan and basil on top. Serve with thick chips or crackers!





## Southern Pimiento Cheese

Annie, Great Lakes Energy

- 2 cups shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon ground cayenne pepper (optional)
- ¼ teaspoon onion powder
- 1 jalapeno pepper, seeded and minced (optional)
- 1 (4 ounces) jar diced pimiento, drained
- salt and black pepper, to taste

Place the Cheddar cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise, garlic powder, cayenne pepper, onion powder, minced jalapeno, and pimiento into the large bowl of a mixer. Beat at medium speed, with a paddle if possible, until thoroughly combined. Season to taste with salt and black pepper. Serve cold with crackers or toasted baguette slices, at room temperature as a dip with tortilla chips, or as a spread for a grilled cheese sandwich.



## Cheesy Hot Crab Dip

Janice Harvey, Great Lakes Energy

- 8 ounces imitation crab meat
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- ½ medium onion, chopped
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups shredded mild cheddar cheese
- assorted crackers or chips

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a medium bowl, shred imitation crab meat. Stir in mayonnaise, onion, parsley and pepper. Stir in cheese. Spoon into shallow 1-½ quart baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 20–25 minutes or until heated through. Serve with crackers or chips.



Submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:

- “Breakfast & Brunch” due March 4
- “On The Grill” due April 4

Go to [microopkitchen.com](http://microopkitchen.com) for more information and to register.

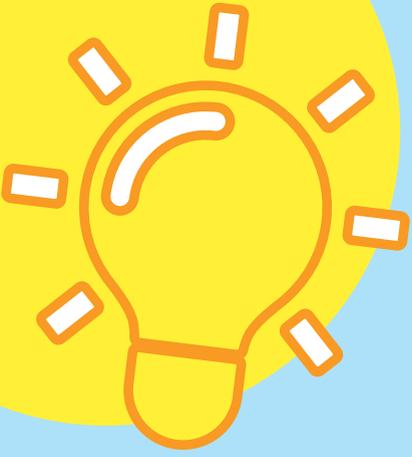
## U.S. SENATE BEAN SOUP

*In honor of the annual Youth Tour Washington, D.C. trip application deadline, we share this favorite recipe. Since the 1940s, the traditional U.S. Senate Bean Soup, pictured above, has been on the Senate's menu every day.*

- 1 pound dry navy beans
- 1 meaty ham bone
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 cup chopped celery
- ¾ cup mashed potato flakes or 1½ cups mashed potatoes
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 1½ teaspoons pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon oregano
- 1 teaspoon basil
- 1 bay leaf
- salt, to taste

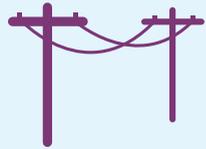
Wash and sort beans; in a large kettle, cover beans with 6–8 cups hot water. Bring to a boil and boil 2 minutes; remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 1 hour. Add another 2 quarts of cold water and ham bone, then bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 1½ hours. Stir in remaining ingredients; simmer 20–30 minutes until beans are tender. Remove ham bone, trim off meat and return meat to soup; remove bay leaf. Serve hot, or freeze for later.

See Youth Tour cover story on page 14 and visit [microopkitchen.com](http://microopkitchen.com) for this recipe and others.



# We're Keeping the **Lights On**

Reliable service means fewer power outages. We're making improvements to provide you with better service.



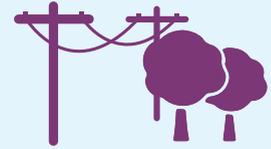
More Power Line Protection Devices



New Technology



Major Power Line Improvements



Aggressive Tree Maintenance

## What hinders our progress?



Storms



Man-made Accidents



Animals



Equipment Failure

## AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



OUR YEARLY GOAL:  
UNDER 163.2 MINUTES

*We did it!*



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Looking Out for You

# Clearing The Way For Reliable Service

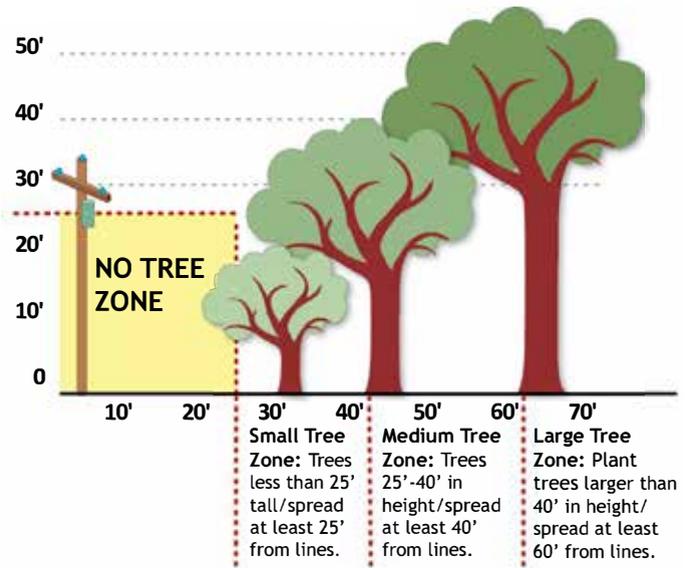
Contracted tree-trimming crews this winter will begin removing trees and limbs near power lines throughout the Great Lakes Energy service area.

The work is part of the cooperative's annual vegetation management program to improve electric service reliability and safety. About \$5 million will be invested in 2017 to clear trees along 1,308 miles of power line rights-of-way (ROW) in 17 counties and 86 townships.

Great Lakes Energy members will be notified by postcard, email and phone if ROW clearing work is scheduled in their area. Please be sure we have your current billing address, email address and primary phone number for your service location. This will help ensure we can reach you.

Tree-related power line damage is a major cause of outages. Clearing of the co-op's entire power line distribution system is performed on six- to seven-year cycles. The amount of trimming to maintain adequate power line clearance depends on the tree type, location and growth, and line voltage size. In addition to weak and dying trees, healthy trees may need to be trimmed or removed if they pose a threat to your electric service.

## Tree Planting Guide



Please see the list on this page for areas where contracted crews will work this year.

Have questions? Contact our Vegetation Management Department at 888-485-2537, ext. 8221 (central and south counties) or ext. 1295 (north counties). ■



Contracted tree-trimming crews are again working this year to remove trees that pose a threat to power lines.

## Areas Scheduled For 2017 Clearing

Clearing of vegetation along Great Lakes Energy power lines is scheduled this year in these counties and townships:

**Antrim:** Banks, Central Lake, Forest Home, Torch Lake, Milton

**Barry:** Yankee Springs, Rutland, Orangeville, Hope, Baltimore, Barry, Johnstown

**Charlevoix:** Bay, Evangeline, Hayes, Marion, Melrose

**Cheboygan:** Mentor, Tuscarora, Wilmot

**Crawford:** Maple Forest

**Emmet:** Bliss, Cross Village, Little Traverse, Readmond, Bear Creek, Center, Littlefield, Springvale, Resort

**Lake:** Yates, Chase, Newkirk

**Manistee:** Filer

**Mason:** Riverton, Summit, Free Soil, Sheridan, Sherman, Custer, Branch, Victory, Hamlin, Pere Marquette, Amber, Grant

**Mecosta:** Green, Aetna

**Muskegon:** Ravenna, White River

**Newaygo:** Home, Barton, Big Prairie, Sherman, Everett, Garfield, Brooks, Troy, Lilley, Beaver, Merrill, Monroe

**Oceana:** Claybanks, Benona, Grant, Golden, Shelby, Pentwater, Weare, Hart

**Osceola:** Richmond, Burdell

**Otsego:** Bagley, Otsego Lake, Hayes, Chester, Charlton, Corwith, Livingston, Dover

**Ottawa:** Polkton, Allendale, Blendon

**Wexford:** South Branch, Henderson, Cherry Grove

# YOUTH TOUR

## The Power Of Our Future

By Emily Haines Lloyd

“We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future.” – Franklin D. Roosevelt



Arjun Vorster, shown rock climbing, says Youth Tour had an impact on how he wants to make a difference in the world and his own life.

**E**nergy is more than the ability to do work. Energy powers our imaginations and fuels positive change. That is why, for the last 50 years, approximately 1,800 students from at least 45 states have participated in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour program each year. This five-day trip is a high-energy, interactive experience designed to help young people grow as leaders and takes place June 10–15.

Through an application and interview process, rising juniors and seniors are selected and sponsored by their local co-ops to travel to Washington, D.C., for a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Together with students from all across the country, the selected Michigan students learn about co-ops, leadership, history and the importance of civic engagement.

“The experience changed me quite a bit,” said Arjun Vorster, a junior at Mendon High School and 2016 Youth Tour participant sponsored by his electric co-op Midwest Energy.

It wasn’t the travel that impressed Vorster, who was born in South Africa and has traveled around the



Brad Whitney, who participated in Youth Tour eight years ago, is shown with fellow students from Great Lakes Energy at a Michigan Rural Electric Teen Days event.



Today, using some of those same principles he learned as a young man, Brad serves his community as a Great Lakes Energy Cooperative Lineman.

world, including living in seven different countries before moving to the United States.

"Washington, D.C., is a really impressive place," said Vorster. "You are surrounded by so much history, and you and your fellow students are right in the middle of it all. It's pretty amazing."

Vorster, who wants to study environmental engineering in college, noted that having the opportunity to see the historical monuments, visit various museums and interact with the other student participants were some of the most impactful moments of his trip.

"I met so many interesting people," said Vorster. "I was surrounded by people who wanted to make a difference, and it made me more resolved to make a difference in my own life too."

Youth Tour can have long-lasting effects on attendees. The impact of leadership training, a unique experience of living history at our nation's capital, and significant information on the future of electric power, makes quite an impact on the students.

Brad Whitney was a participant at Youth Tour in 2009 and the influence it had on him has been long lasting.

Whitney is currently a lineman at Great Lakes Energy Cooperative. He attended Youth Tour and followed up his trip with a summer job related to line work. Eventually, Brad became the recipient of a GLE scholarship, earning his lineman certification from Alpena Community College and Great Lakes Energy.

"It was a great experience that I'll never forget," said Whitney. "I hope this program is available when my kids grow up—I'd want them to go and have an experience as amazing as mine." ■

Visit [CooperativeYouthTour.com](http://CooperativeYouthTour.com) for applications. Applications are due February 28.

# People Fund Contributors Are Winners

**D**id you know we award \$100 bill credits to Great Lakes Energy members who support the People Fund? Six winners are randomly selected each June and December.

Several generous People Fund supporters recently became winners. See the list of members who received a \$100 bill credit on this page.

## You Can Be A Winner, Too

Current People Fund supporters and any member who becomes a People Fund contributor before the next drawing on June 1 are eligible to win.

People Fund contributors allow Great Lakes Energy to round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar each month. The rounded-up amounts, which average less than 50 cents a month, are used to award grants to local charities and community groups, such as food pantries, senior citizen centers and youth programs.

Great Lakes Energy relies solely on your voluntary contributions to support the People Fund. In 2016, People Fund directors awarded \$204,752 in grants to charitable and community organizations throughout our 26-county service area.

For a complete list of 2016 grant recipients, visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) and click on "Community."



Good Neighbors Food Pantry, of Boyne City, is just one of many local organizations helped by the People Fund.

Gifts are provided by Great Lakes Energy and do not involve the use of any People Fund round-up money.

Don't miss your chance to be the next winner! Call our office or visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) to sign up today. ■

## Congratulations To Our Winners!

Thanks for your ongoing support of the People Fund.

- Michelle Jacobson, Free Soil
- George Leshkevich, Frederic
- Nelson Kuipers, Wayland
- Raymond Walsworth, Baldwin
- Marilyn Aberlich, Fife Lake
- Hauser Tree Farm, Hastings

## Access To Rules & Rates

Please be advised that the following information is available to Great Lakes Energy members:

1. Complete rate schedules;
2. Clear and concise explanation of all rates that the member may be eligible to receive;
3. Assistance from the cooperative in determining the most appropriate rate for a member when the member is eligible to receive service under more than one rate;
4. Clear and concise explanation of the members' actual energy use for each billing period during the last 12 months.

**The information can be obtained by visiting [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) or contacting Great Lakes Energy at 1-888-485-2537.**

## See Us At The Home Show

### Northern Michigan Regional Home Show

March 10 & 11  
North Central Michigan College, Petoskey



Visit the Great Lakes Energy booth at the home show.

Stop by and speak to a representative to learn more about Energy Optimization programs designed to save you energy and money.

# Dial 2-1-1 For Payment Help

Find help to pay your utility bills this winter by dialing 2-1-1.

It's a free community health and human services information and referral service that connects eligible residents with energy payment assistance and much more. By simply dialing 2-1-1, available 24/7, callers are connected with a trained, caring professional who will confidentially assess their situation, identify their needs and refer them to local resources for help.

Although it varies by location, local resources include basic needs such as food, housing, shelter, temporary financial assistance, transportation, utility assistance and more. In addition, local resources include mental health care and counseling, health care, individual/family life assistance and other services.

Please call 2-1-1 or visit [211.org](http://211.org).

Please remember to review our Energy Optimization programs, too, for energy efficiency rebate offers. Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) for details or call 877-296-4319.

Helping our members with their energy costs is another way we're looking out for you. ■

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# I Remember...

*The Wonder Of Michigan Always Brings Us Home.*

The eldest of five siblings, I was the only one born in Michigan while my father was in boot camp. We were stationed in Alaska until I was nine and my youngest brother was almost two when my father decided to end his military career and move us all back home to Michigan. Picture two vehicles, a blue and white van and a tiny Isuzu truck, packed to the gills with two adults, five children, snacks in bulk, and a potty training toilet. What a sight we must have been!

It is a credit to both my parents and chocolate animal crackers that I fondly remember the 3,000-mile trek.

The best trips I remember as a child were to Sleeping Bear Dunes, Tahquamenon Falls, the Iron Mountain Iron Mine, Fort Mackinac on Mackinac Island, Fort Michilimackinac in Mackinaw City, and hiking on various trails.

In 2009, I moved to Arkansas with my husband, and there we had two children of our own.

In 2015, we could not resist the magnetic pull of the 45th parallel and moved back home to Michigan.

Since then my children have experienced the wonderland that is Michigan and have made memories of their own—their first snow angels, local farms and orchards, and the magic of the Great Lakes.

Home.

*Kalico Casady, Great Lakes Energy*



*We invite members to share their fondest memories.*

**Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.**

#### **Guidelines**

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. *Country Lines* retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
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## Michigan Co-ops Inspire Tomorrow's Leaders Today With **YOUTH TOUR 2017**

An exclusive summer highlight for the best and brightest youth in the state.  
**June 10-15, 2017**

Designed to inspire the leaders of tomorrow, Youth Tour teaches the brightest students of Michigan about their past—and helps equip them with the skills they need to be Michigan's next generation of energy-minded leaders. This is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership travel opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors (going into their junior or senior year this summer) and is sponsored by Michigan's electric cooperatives.

Youth Tour offers a unique opportunity to build leadership and public speaking skills, enhance students' knowledge of the cooperative form of business, and build life-long friendships with other student-leaders from across the country.

**Youth Tour applications accepted between now and Feb. 28.**

### Trip Highlights Include:

- Visit the Gettysburg Civil War battlefields
- See Fort McHenry, birthplace of "The Star Spangled Banner"
- Explore the Washington, D.C., monuments and memorials
- Attend a theater performance at the Kennedy Center
- Explore the museums of the Smithsonian Institution
- Pay respects at Arlington National Cemetery
- Meet with Michigan Senators and Congressmen
- Batter up! Enjoy a Washington Nationals baseball game

Additional information and online application are available at [CooperativeYouthTour.com](http://CooperativeYouthTour.com).