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Farm & Market*

AND UNWIND AT MICHIGAN'S MOST BEAUTIFUL FLORAL MAZE

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WaterFurnace units can save you up to 70% on heating, cooling & hot water by capturing the clean, renewable energy in your backyard to provide incredible home comfort. Now, for a limited time, we're offering homeowners with traditional systems a very special Switch-to-Geo rebate package on our most efficient and comfortable geothermal heat pumps—the 7 Series and the dual capacity 5 Series—from now until June 23, 2017. Hurry and contact your local WaterFurnace dealer to learn more about the Geothermal Upgrade Event!

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Change of Address:

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

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A Closer Look At Fiber Internet Service



Bill Scott
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

We plan to take a closer look at high-speed fiber internet service now that we have a clearer picture of what Great Lakes Energy members think about it.

Nearly 5,200 surveys were returned last year when we polled members on their interest in high-speed fiber internet. The favorable response is one of the things that prompted your board of directors to have a more thorough study done.

A feasibility study for deploying fiber is in progress that will more accurately identify the costs involved and the potential number of subscribers and revenue to expect. It will address the challenges involved in attaching fiber optic cable to the many miles of poles that cross rivers, hills and swamps. A private consultant with extensive experience in fiber internet deployment is conducting the study in a section of our service area. Their findings will be shared with the board later this year.

High-speed communication capabilities would benefit more than just members who want lightning fast internet speeds. It should improve our automated metering capabilities and the ability to “communicate” with other parts of our electric distribution system. Everyone would benefit from the improved reliability when we identify and correct problems more quickly on our electric distribution system. As more renewable energy shares the grid with conventional energy sources, faster communication between the two will also be an important reliability factor.

Should we find the service can be justified from a business standpoint, it could initially become available in part of our service area as a pilot project. We could then monitor the new program in action to analyze whether it’s meeting our expectations.

Expansion of the service into other areas will be the goal if the pilot project is implemented and found to be successful. It would take years to complete the expansion due to the large territory we cover.

Please continue to check *Country Lines*, bill inserts, and our website and Facebook pages for further updates. ■

VOTE Next Month For A Board Member

It's time to vote! Great Lakes Energy members in three director districts will receive a mail-in ballot with their July/August issue of *Michigan Country Lines*.

Three board positions, each for three years, need to be filled. Qualifying GLE members who reside in districts 3, 4 or 5 can seek election to the board and will be listed on your ballot.

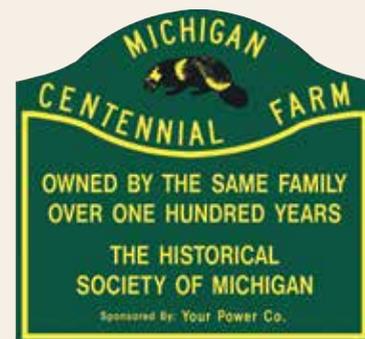
Counties by district are:

- District 3 – Antrim County
- District 4 – Otsego, Montmorency, Oscoda and Crawford counties
- District 5 – Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Manistee, Missaukee and Wexford counties.

The terms of directors Ric Evans of Ellsworth, Larry Monshor of Gaylord and Dale Farrier of Kalkaska expire this year. The three incumbents plan to seek reelection.

In addition to the mail-in ballot, the candidates' profiles will appear in the July/August election issue that will be sent to members in Districts 3, 4 and 5. Please watch for your ballot next month and remember to vote.

Winners will be announced August 23 at the cooperative's annual business meeting in Boyne City. ■



Historic Farms Honored

Two farms served by Great Lakes Energy were recently certified as "Centennial Farms."

They are the James E. Herin farm near Hesperia, owned by Christopher Herin, and the Henry Blanchard farm near East Jordan, owned by Sharon, Jeff and Larry Bower.

Great Lakes Energy is a sponsor of the Michigan Centennial Farm Program that honors Great Lakes Energy members and other Michigan residents whose farms have been owned and operated by the same family for 100 years. Once a farm is certified, the owners receive a certificate as well as a display marker for their farm.

GLE members can request an application or receive more information about the program by contacting The Historical Society of Michigan, 517-324-1828, or by visiting their website, www.centennialfarms.org.

THE VALUE OF ELECTRICITY

What will a dollar's worth of electricity buy you?

- Watch TV eight hours a day for a week with a 150 watt LCD flat-screen TV.
- Stay comfortable 24 hours a day for 10 days with a ceiling fan.
- Have hot coffee ready each day for nearly two months.

Electricity is still a good value.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Valerie Brader On Michigan's Energy Future

In the last few years, the state of Michigan has dealt with public concern over various energy issues. Cherryland Electric Cooperative recently sat down with the Executive Director for the Michigan Agency for Energy, Valerie Brader, to discuss the challenges and opportunities our state faces as Michigan's Electric Cooperatives continue to modernize their energy portfolio.



Q: How does the state view solar power production in Michigan?

Solar has gotten much cheaper. Even in 2012, it was much more expensive than other resources. Now, it is more cost competitive. The new energy legislation asks the Michigan Public Service Commission to look at the value of solar in a very specific way. Most utilities in our lower peninsula are summer peaking utilities. That means they have the highest demand at the height of the summer when everyone's air conditioning is turned on. Solar can be really valuable to summer peaking utilities. When it's coming in at a time when there is plenty of other power, it can be less valuable. How valuable solar really is needs to be evaluated on a utility-by-utility and state-by-state basis.

Q: What are our biggest opportunities for reducing waste in the state of Michigan?

Michigan has a huge amount of energy waste reduction opportunities. If you look around, Michigan's housing stock is a little older than our neighbors. Older typically means the insulation is not as good. Homeowners should make sure that the lights in their home have been swapped out to LED lightbulbs and make an effort to get insulation in the right spots. New furnaces are an opportunity, too. Just 15 years ago your furnace was probably 80 percent efficient; now there are 92 percent or 96 percent efficient furnaces for about the same amount of money. There are a lot of opportunities for people to improve their homes and to be more comfortable at a lower cost of energy.

Q: What is the condition of the energy generating capacity in Michigan?

In the lower peninsula, about 90 percent of our demand must be met with in-state resources because of the physics of the grid. With all the coal plant closures, we are running a lot closer to our margins than usual. The concern is making sure that everyone, no matter who you are a customer of, is helping to pay for the new plants we need. Electricity is different from most products in that if we don't have enough supply for everybody, nobody gets any power. The grid will collapse if supply doesn't meet demand, causing widespread outages that take hours to fix. One of our goals is to make sure that we don't ever face those kinds of outages. The new legislation ensures that every supplier of electricity must meet their share of reliability requirements.

Q: How much capacity do you think will be built over the next 5–10 years?

That is one thing that the new legislation will help us answer. All rate-regulated utilities must file an integrated resource plan. They essentially show a prediction of what their demand is going to be and how they are going to meet it. ■

Listen to the entire interview
at <https://cherrylandelectric.coop/2017/03/valerie-brader-michigans-energy-future/>

Perform An Annual Safety Inspection On Your Boat And Dock To Prevent Electric Shock

For boating and water safety, there are items you must legally have on your watercraft—life vests, a fire extinguisher, throwable flotation devices, and properly working lights—but make sure the boat and the dock are safe, too. Sadly, there have been incidents of electric shock drownings. It happens when a current, often from a short circuit in the wiring of boats or in a dock, spreads through the water. As a result, those who are in the water will be electrocuted and end up drowning.

To help prevent accidents, the National Electrical Contractors Association says:

- All installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor.
- All dock receptacles must comply with the National Electrical Code, which mandates a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI measures a circuit's current and senses any imbalance (such as a discharge into the water), which trips the GFCI and cuts off the power.
- Test any GFCIs every month. Locate them along the ramp to the dock so they can be easily tested by local fire departments.
- Metal dock frames should have "bonding jumpers" that connect all metal parts to an

on-shore grounding rod. This means any dock part that becomes energized by electrical malfunction will trip the GFCI or circuit breaker.

- Ask neighbors if their dock electrical systems have been inspected and are up to code.
- Household wire is not suitable for boats.
- Do not use wire nuts (these are for solid conductor wire, which should never be on a boat) or splice connectors which can cut wire strands!
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the stereo. If a fuse blows continuously, something else is wrong.
- If you rent a dock or boat, notify the owner of safety violations immediately.
- Have your boat's system (especially with onboard generators) checked at least annually and when something is added or removed.
- Ropes, string, masts and rigging also conduct electricity—don't be the common ground between water and electricity! ■

See [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org) for more tips.



Look For The ENERGY STAR!

In the market for a new appliance or electronic device? Look for the blue ENERGY STAR® label! ENERGY STAR products are tested and certified to use less energy and meet higher standards of quality and performance. Make your purchase even more affordable with cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program!

What is ENERGY STAR?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR in 1992 to help consumers identify energy-efficient products. The ENERGY STAR label can now be found on major appliances, lighting, electronics, and even new homes and commercial buildings. Since the early 1990s, ENERGY STAR has helped consumers save \$362 billion in utility costs.

Did you know?

ENERGY STAR products can use up to 75 percent less energy than standard models!

Peace of mind:

To earn the ENERGY STAR label, a third-party certification process ensures that all products:

- Contribute significant energy savings.
- Deliver the features and performance consumers demand, *plus* greater energy efficiency.
- Back up energy savings claims with comprehensive testing. ■

Save now with Energy Optimization program rebates!

| Product | Efficiency comparison (vs. a new standard model)* | Energy Optimization program rebate** |
|----------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Clothes washer | Uses 35% less water and energy | \$125 |
| Computer | Uses 60% less energy | \$50 |
| Dehumidifier | Uses 15% less energy | \$75 |
| Dishwasher | Uses 5% less energy and 15% less water | \$75 |
| Chest Freezer | Uses at least 10% less energy | \$75 |
| Refrigerator | Uses 9% less energy | \$200 |
| Television | Uses at least 25% less energy | \$50–100 |
| Room air conditioner | Uses 15% less energy | \$50 |

View all incentives at michigan-energy.org or call **877.296.4319** for details.

**All data according to energystar.gov.*

***Incentive amounts are subject to change.*

Brighten your future with ENERGY STAR®!

Upgrade your outdated, energy-wasting appliances and electronics to ENERGY STAR models today. Use up to 75% less energy and watch the savings roll in!

Take advantage of cash incentives:

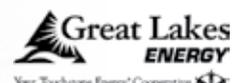
- Refrigerator - **\$200**
- Clothes washer - **\$125**
- Dehumidifier - **\$75**
- Dishwasher - **\$75**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR A FULL LIST OF INCENTIVES!

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877.296.4319

Cool Savings



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.

Farms & Barns

GLE Photo Contest: Each month members can submit photos on Facebook or on our website for our annual photo contest. The photo with the most votes on Facebook is published here along with other selections. Enter again in June; see details below.

Most
Votes on
Facebook!



This new Belted Galloway baby bull was just born on our farm. The mom's name is Daisy and her baby is Duke.—*Sheryl Edstrom, Leroy*



Finding a treasure on a fall afternoon on M-37—*Terri Sterk, Zeeland*



Early spring after the snow—*Julie Lorson, Montague*



Old barn on beautiful fall day—*Sharon Hemme, Petoskey*



All that's growing are piles of snow—*Lori Gelinis, Rapid City*



Rustic barn—*Kerry Hewitt, White Cloud*

Enter Our Photo Contest And Win!

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. The photo receiving the most votes from our online and Facebook contest will be printed in an issue of *Michigan Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites. All photos printed in the magazine throughout the year will be entered to win a \$200 bill credit in December 2017. Submit your best shot and encourage your friends to vote!

Our July theme is **Birds and Feathers**. Photos can be submitted from **July 1 to July 20** to be featured in our September issue.

Our August theme is **Life's a Beach—Michigan Waters**. Photos can be submitted from **August 1 to August 20** to be featured in the October issue.

ON THE GRILL

Step up your grill game with these summer recipes.

Grilled Flatbread With Vegetables & Hummus

Randy Rippentrop, Cherryland

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons Greek seasoning (or Italian seasoning)
- 3–4 cups mixed vegetables (red onion, eggplant, red bell pepper, zucchini, mushrooms, etc.)—cubed into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup baby spinach
- 4 naan flatbreads
- 1 cup roasted red pepper hummus
- 4 tablespoons feta cheese, crumbled
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- red pepper flakes
- balsamic glaze

Heat a gas grill to medium heat. In a mixing bowl, combine olive oil, garlic and Greek seasoning with the cubed vegetables. Place vegetables on the grill in either a mesh grill basket or onto aluminum foil. Grill until vegetables are soft. Remove vegetables from the grill and immediately mix in the baby spinach so that it will wilt. Place naan flatbread on the grill facing down for a couple of minutes until warm and lightly brown.

Remove naan breads and place on a baking sheet. On each naan, spread ¼ cup hummus and 1 cup of the grilled vegetables. Sprinkle feta and mozzarella cheese on top. Shake red pepper flakes on top to taste. Turn grill to low and place the assembled naan flatbreads on the grill for about 5 minutes or until cheese is melted. Remove from grill and drizzle with balsamic glaze.

As an option, two grilled chicken breasts can be cubed and added to the vegetable mixture before putting it on the naan.

Naan is a leavened, oven-baked flatbread found in the cuisines of India and other Central and Southeast Asia countries.

▶ Watch a video of this recipe at <https://goo.gl/Lfls7F>

Bacon Wrapped Chicken Jalapeño Delights

Deb Finedell, Great Lakes Energy

- 1 pound boneless chicken breast
- 1 tablespoon garlic powder
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- 1 tablespoon pepper
- 2 teaspoons seasoned salt
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 small onion, cut into strips
- 15 jalapeños, halved and seeded
- 1 pound bacon



Photo—Deb Finedell

Cut chicken into strips, slicing breasts the length of a jalapeño and about a half inch thick. Place chicken and seasonings into baggie and coat. Place chicken strip and onion into a half jalapeño. Wrap with a piece of bacon and secure with a toothpick.

Grill about 20 minutes until bacon is crisp. Serve with blue cheese dressing.

Steak Pitas Topped With Grilled Mushrooms & Onions

Cathy Miller, Midwest Energy

- 1 flank steak, trimmed of excess fat
- 1 pound fresh mushrooms, sliced
- ¼ cup onion, chopped
- ¼ cup butter
- ¼ teaspoon Mrs. Dash
- 4 whole wheat pita pockets
- steak sauce



Photo—Cathy Miller

On a large piece of heavy duty foil, combine mushrooms and onions. Dot with butter and season. Bring edge of foil together to seal. Place on grill on low heat, and grill 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Place steak on preheated grill and

cook to desired doneness, about 6 to 7 minutes on each side for medium-rare. Remove from the grill to a cutting board and let rest for 10 to 15 minutes before slicing. Thinly slice the steak on an angle. Serve immediately. To assemble the sandwiches, fill pitas with meat and veggies. Top with steak sauce.



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

- “All About Apples” due July 1
- “Slow Cooker Favorites” due August 1

Go to micoopkitchen.com for more information and to register.

Gorgonzola And Dried Cherry Salad (pictured above)

Barbara Bull

If you get a chance to meet up with Barbara Bull at Cherry Point Farm and Market, be sure to grab some delicious dried cherries and make this light, satisfying salad.

- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons raspberry vinegar
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- ⅛ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ground black pepper, to taste
- ½ cup toasted walnuts
- ¼ cup dried cherries
- 1 head leafy green lettuce, torn into bite-size pieces
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled and thinly sliced
- ½ red onion, thinly sliced
- ½ cup crumbled Gorgonzola cheese

Whisk together oil, vinegar, garlic, salt and pepper in a small bowl to make a dressing.

Toss walnuts, cherries, lettuce, apples and onions together in a large salad bowl.

Top with dressing and toss gently to coat. Garnish with cheese and serve.

Read the full story about Barbara Bull on page 14, and visit micoopkitchen.com for this recipe and others from our co-op members.

Lifesaving Signs

When the Wolverine Joint Fire Board realized better signage could be a lifesaver for residents they serve in part of southern Cheboygan County, they enlisted the help of the Great Lakes Energy People Fund.

They applied and received a \$1,000 People Fund grant that was used to buy 100 reflective emergency address signs. The two-sided 9-1-1 reflective signs will make it easier for local firefighters and medical first responders to find homes during emergencies. And when it's a life-threatening situation, every minute saved in reaching the victim can be critical.

"Some people don't have a mailbox, some mailboxes don't have addresses on them, and even more addresses don't reflect well at night or have numbers missing," explained John Robb, board secretary.

Local fire board members and fire department volunteers install the signs at residents' homes for a small \$5 donation. Their novel approach is a success, and with the money they raised it allowed



John Robb (right) of the Wolverine Joint Fire Board installed an emergency 9-1-1 address sign at the residence of Great Lakes Energy members Ed and Doris Petricca. (Photo courtesy of the Straitsland Resorter.)

them to purchase an additional 100 signs that they plan to install this year.

And they're not done yet.

"My goal is that every house, every family has an emergency 9-1-1 sign," Robb said. ■

JOIN



JOIN PEOPLE FUND PLUS

Now you can make a greater impact in your local community with People Fund PLUS.

Choose a People Fund donation level in addition to your rounded-up amount. Your donations are awarded in the form of grants to local community nonprofit groups.

All People Fund contributors have the chance to win a \$100 bill credit twice per year. In 2016 the People Fund awarded \$204,752 in grants to local nonprofits. Visit gtlakes.com to see the list of grant recipients in your area.

JOIN TODAY!

Working together, we can help enhance our local communities and meet the needs of so many.

Example:

With People Fund: Bill Amount \$65.42 + \$.58 for People Fund = \$66.00

With People Fund PLUS: Bill Amount \$65.42 + \$.58 for People Fund + \$2.00 for PLUS = \$68.00

Call 888-GT-LAKES or visit gtlakes.com/peoplefundenroll to join.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

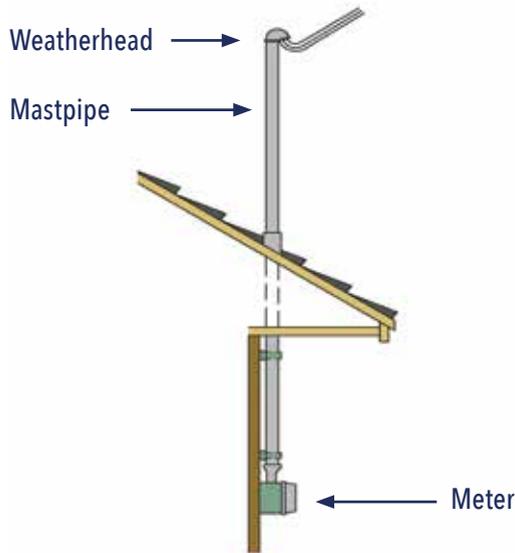
STORM DAMAGE

Who takes care of it?

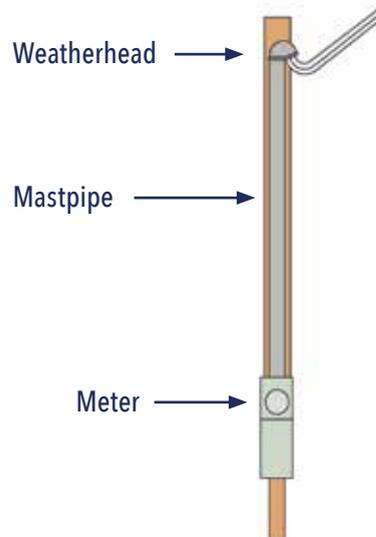
1. Where is your meter located?

See A or B below.

A. My meter is on my house.



B. My meter is on a pole.



2. What are you responsible for?

A. You are responsible for all equipment below and including the weatherhead, called the service entrance, EXCEPT for the meter. Contact a licensed electrician to make repairs.

B. You are responsible for all equipment below and including the weatherhead, called the service entrance, EXCEPT for the meter. You are also responsible for the pole and breaker box. Contact a licensed electrician to make repairs.

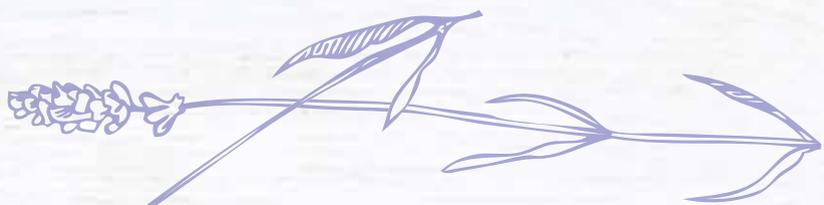
3. What is GLE responsible for?

GLE is responsible for all repairs to the power lines, including the service wires that connect to the weatherhead.

GLE is also responsible for the meter and will provide a new meter base, if needed, at no charge. Contact us once your electrician has completed repairs and the electrical inspector has approved the work.

Questions?
888-GT-LAKES





Explore Cherry Point Farm & Market

AND UNWIND AT MICHIGAN'S MOST BEAUTIFUL FLORAL MAZE

By Emily Haines Lloyd



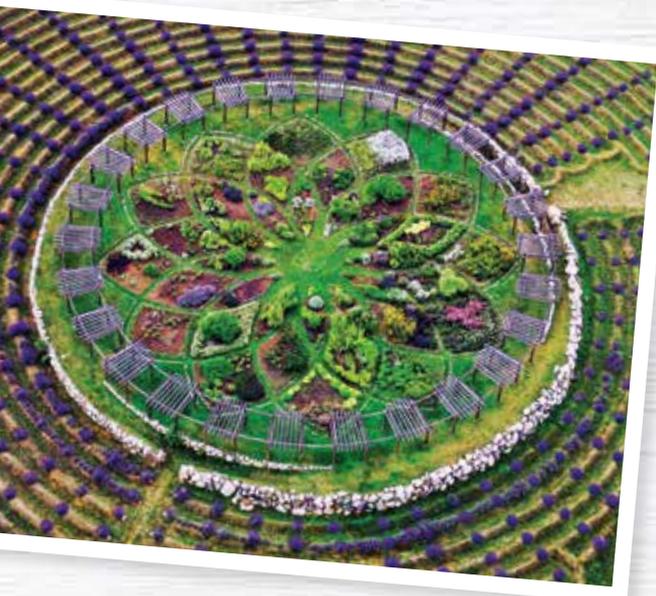
Pictured above is Barbara Bull, owner of Cherry Point Farm and author of several books based on her farm life experiences.

Cherry Point Farm and Market in Oceana County is as deliciously tart and sweet as the cherries it produces, as imaginative and welcoming as its lavender labyrinth, and as chock full of history and stories like its owner delights in telling. A fourth-generation farmer, Cherry Point owner Barbara Bull began her career selling cherries and pies as a young girl at a card table stand her older sister set up.

Barbara's early start as a pint-sized entrepreneur paved the way to what is now Cherry Point Farm and Market. From around the country and world, families visit Cherry Point Farm and Market—not only to snatch a gorgeous quart of cherries on their travels, but also to visit the buildings, lavender labyrinth and herb garden. Tourists and locals sometimes are fortunate to catch a fish boil, watching Barbara and her team go through the almost-scientific steps and listening for stories peppered into this timeless event. Visitors can also enjoy Tuesday Teas or Sunday's Flapjacks and Fruit. No matter what the event, in the midst of it all is Cherry Point's owner, Barbara, telling stories, listening to stories and quietly taking mental notes.

"I've always loved history and storytelling," Barbara explained. "I would listen to my grandfather tell his stories about our family history, and his stories made those people real to me."

On the occasion of Bull's fifth decade on the farm, she got an idea.





Fish boils are an event, a gathering and a tradition with taste!

"I had spent 50 consecutive years working at the farm market—listening to people's stories and telling my stories. I knew I wasn't retiring or getting a gold watch," Bull jokes. "So, I decided to tell the story of my first 50 years on the farm."

And that's what she did. Armed with a love of reading and writing and a snowy off-season, Bull wrote the love story of herself and Cherry Point Farm—"A Point in Time."

With each season after that, as she puts on a picking bucket, prunes trees or braids strudels in the market, Bull is either dreaming up improvements for the farm or new stories. Her second book, "Blackberry Ridge," was a collection of newspaper articles by a local writer, Charles W. Jay, who was one of the original settlers in the area. The book combines stories from Jay and townspeople that together capture life in the late 1800s.

"It was amazing to research Jay, read his articles in the paper and get a glimpse at life in that time," Bull said. "[He gave me] such wonderful insights—thoughts and concerns on health, weather, community development. The most amazing thing was how little has changed. We're having these same conversations today."

One particularly snowy January, Bull had another idea. "I looked out the window and it was still snowing, and I thought, 'Okay, I'll do another book.'"

That book became her first fiction novel, a cozy mystery called "Cloud Cottage" that, given Bull's mental note-taking, takes place on the shore of Lake Michigan in the lush fruit belt and is unsurprisingly full of long-time family connections and traditions. It's the first of three in the series.

For locals and travelers not familiar with Cherry Point Market, it's well worth the visit to Oceana County.

The sweet cherries or mouthwatering pastries are not quickly forgotten. An experience at the farm generates repeat customers and even encourages strangers to become friends.

Bull encourages visitors to take their time while wandering through the maze like a meditative experience. Some lucky farm-goers who make a lasting impression may find their way into Bull's next novel. Of course, the most compelling character Barbara has created is the one she is in real life.

"You can only hope you have enough time to accomplish all the dreams you've dreamed up," said Bull. "All you can do is follow your instincts, listen to where you need to be and what you need to be doing and you'll get there." ■

Barbara Bull, owner of Cherry Point Farm and Market, is a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative.

To learn more, visit cherrypointmarket.net or call 231-861-2029. Cherry Point Farm and Market is located at 9600 West Buchanan Road, Shelby, MI 49455.

The Beautiful Lavender Labyrinth

Cherry Point Farm and Market allows visitors to indulge in delicious treats, including cherries, sweet jams, and baked goods. But the highlight is the lavender labyrinth.

Be sure to wander through the massive and stunning lavender labyrinth filled with calming aroma and colorful hues.

Bull teamed up with local artist and architect Conrad Heiderer in 2001 to create the flower-shaped design, allowing visitors to walk through rows and rows of perfectly arranged flowers with an herb garden at its center.

The lavender peaks in the springtime and continues to bloom throughout the summer and then dries out and is picked once fall arrives.

Bull encourages visitors to take their time while wandering through the garden, slowing down to breathe in the lavender-scented air and enjoy a meditative experience.



Pay Your Way Makes Bill Paying Easy

Great Lakes Energy offers several convenient Pay Your Way options for paying your electric bill.

AutoPay: Your payment is automatically deducted from your bank account or charged to your credit/debit card.

ePay: Pay online at my.gtlakes.com. Make a one-time payment with a check or credit card. Enroll in e-billing to stop receiving paper bills.

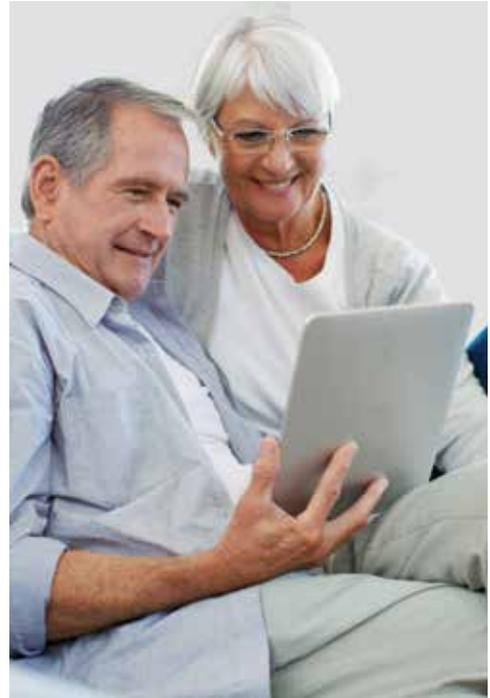
PhonePay: Contact us during business hours or use our 24-hour automated phone payment option. We accept payment by credit card or check over the phone.

Pay Stations: Visit any of the local participating businesses that will accept payments for Great Lakes Energy bills (no past due amounts).

FlexPay: Pay in advance and manage your electricity use on a daily basis. No late fees, no reconnect fees and no deposits involved with this plan.

Mobile App: Download the Great Lakes Energy mobile app (for Apple and Android) to pay your bill and get the latest news about GLE programs and services.

In Person: You can also visit any of our eight GLE offices and make your payment in person or use our dropbox.



For more information visit gtlakes.com or contact us at 888-GT-LAKES (485-2537).

Capital Credits

How Much Did I Earn Last Year?

Part of the value of being a Great Lakes Energy member is that you are entitled to a share of the margins or profits the cooperative earns.

We maintain an annual record of your share of these margins. Your share is referred to as a "capital credit allocation" and remains with the cooperative until financial conditions permit us to return the earnings to you.

A short message will appear on your June 2017 bill to inform you of the capital credit allocation amount you earned in 2016. This amount is *not* a refund, but a record of your annual investment in your cooperative.

You will be notified when part of your allocations are to be returned to you as a refund, which is expected in December. Details will be shared later in *Michigan Country Lines*.

How is my share determined?

Capital credits are allocated based on the total amount members pay each year for electricity. If the total you paid last year was more than your neighbor, your allocation amount will also be larger.

What does the co-op do with my capital credit allocation money?

Capital credits represent operating capital provided by the membership to the cooperative and are a major source of equity and operating funds for Great Lakes Energy. Capital credits help make it possible for us to secure loans, improve electric service reliability, and expand our system to meet the demands of our members.

At Great Lakes Energy, you are more than just a customer; you're a member. The capital credits program is another way we look out for you. ■

GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET*
as of December 31, 2016

ASSETS

Electric plant:

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Distribution plant | \$ 459,682,225 |
| Construction in progress | 4,545,697 |
| | <u>464,227,922</u> |
| Less accumulated depreciation | 131,332,688 |
| Net electric plant | <u>332,895,234</u> |

Other assets and investments:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Investments and memberships | 118,512,851 |
| Notes and other receivables | 234,876 |
| Total other assets | <u>118,747,727</u> |

Current assets:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Cash | 7,689,168 |
| Accounts receivable, net of bad debt reserve | 18,007,359 |
| Materials and supplies | 2,567,991 |
| Other current assets | 2,007,560 |
| Total current assets | <u>30,272,078</u> |

Deferred charges

| | |
|--|-----------|
| | 6,041,325 |
|--|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Total assets | \$ 487,956,364 |
|---------------------|-----------------------|

EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES

Equities:

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Memberships | \$ 519,740 |
| Patronage capital | 182,453,359 |
| Donated capital | 5,334,340 |
| Accumulated other comprehensive income | <u>2,465,732</u> |
| Total equities | <u>190,773,171</u> |

Long-term debt, net of current portion, and non-current accrued expenses:

| | |
|---|--------------------|
| Long-term debt | 244,538,510 |
| Non-current accrued expenses | <u>8,448,994</u> |
| Total long-term debt and non-current accrued expenses | <u>252,987,504</u> |

Current liabilities:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Current maturities of long-term debt | 4,637,501 |
| Accounts payable | 14,407,515 |
| Accrued expenses | 13,836,115 |
| Customer deposits | <u>1,618,739</u> |
| Total current liabilities | <u>34,499,870</u> |

Deferred credits

| | |
|--|-----------|
| | 9,695,819 |
|--|-----------|

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Total liabilities and equities | \$ 487,956,364 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|

GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CONSOLIDATED OPERATING STATEMENTS*
for the years ending December 31, 2016 and 2015

| | 2016 | 2015 |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| OPERATING REVENUES | \$ 186,029,181 | \$ 185,392,635 |
| Operating expenses: | | |
| Cost of power | 117,047,768 | 117,933,830 |
| Distribution system operating and maintenance expenses | 24,829,582 | 25,271,022 |
| Customer service and information expenses | 9,572,463 | 8,440,522 |
| Administrative and general expenses | 8,527,742 | 8,336,211 |
| Depreciation and amortization | 13,825,806 | 13,306,911 |
| Other operating expenses | <u>153,080</u> | <u>229,049</u> |
| Total operating expenses | <u>173,956,441</u> | <u>173,517,545</u> |
| Operating margins before fixed charges | <u>12,072,740</u> | <u>11,875,090</u> |
| Fixed charges, interest expense | 10,264,152 | 10,217,710 |
| Operating margins after fixed charges | <u>1,808,588</u> | <u>1,657,380</u> |
| Non-operating margins: | | |
| Interest income | 1,991,866 | 1,654,235 |
| Other expenses, net of other income | <u>(36,824)</u> | <u>(92,638)</u> |
| Total non-operating income | <u>1,955,042</u> | <u>1,561,597</u> |
| Capital credits from associated organizations: | | |
| Wolverine Power Company | 5,629,937 | 9,768,492 |
| Other associated organizations | <u>1,095,431</u> | <u>1,078,198</u> |
| Total capital credits from associated organizations | <u>6,725,368</u> | <u>10,846,690</u> |
| Net margins | \$ 10,488,998 | \$ 14,065,667 |

*A copy of the audited financial statements and the auditors' report is on file at the Cooperative's office in Boyne City, MI.

I Remember...

Sometimes You've Got to Get Lost to Find Your Way

I decided to make Michigan my permanent home in an unlikely spot—while bodysurfing waves in Lake Worth, Florida. I'd hitchhiked from my hometown of Grand Rapids out to Colorado, then meandered my way back east and down along the seaboard. I thought I'd found Nirvana in "The Sunshine State."

I was in my 20s, lost, confused and unsure about my life's compass; after thumbing this way and that, Florida seemed a good fit. But faced with the prospect of whether to take a job as a carpenter's apprentice to an old salt remodeling waterfront homes, my mind wandered back to my precious land of four seasons—Michigan.

How could I leave in my rear-view mirror the northwest wind that whipped waves on Lake Michigan into a pandemonium? Or the inland lakes and rivers that abounded with fish and the promise of canoeing adventures? Where else would I find the romance of so many lighthouses, the lull of crickets and cicadas and fireflies?

So I thumbed my way back to Michigan, married a girl who abandoned a future in Maine for life with me, and we put down stakes. In a year or two, we hope to retire to the small cottage I hand-built 30 years ago near the "Big Lake" in the beautiful confines of Oceana County and continue staying put.

Tom Rademacher, 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
6. Submit your memories online at countrylines.com or email to cdorr@meca.coop



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Your Co-op. Your Board. Looking out for you.



Putting their many years of board experience to work for you are Great Lakes Energy directors (front L-R) Tim Brechon, Mark Carson, Dale Farrier and John LaForge; (back L-R) Robert Kran, Paul Byl, Ric Evans, Paul Schemanski and Larry Monshor.

Great Lakes Energy Directors Put Members First

- Major system improvements in the last 13 years have increased service reliability to all GLE members.
- GLE accomplishes more with less, ranking it as one of the most productive electric cooperatives nationwide¹.
- Profits earned are returned to you. A total of more than \$56.1 million in capital credit refunds have been returned to members since 2003.
- Eight local offices deliver quick and courteous service, especially when big storms roll in.

¹ Based on number of members per employee statistics compiled by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Directors work for you and you alone.
That's the cooperative difference.