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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

How Are We Doing?

We like to think we're doing a great job, but what do Great Lakes Energy members think?

Gathering accurate feedback from our members can be difficult, so we leave it to the professional surveying team at Northwestern Michigan College in Traverse City.

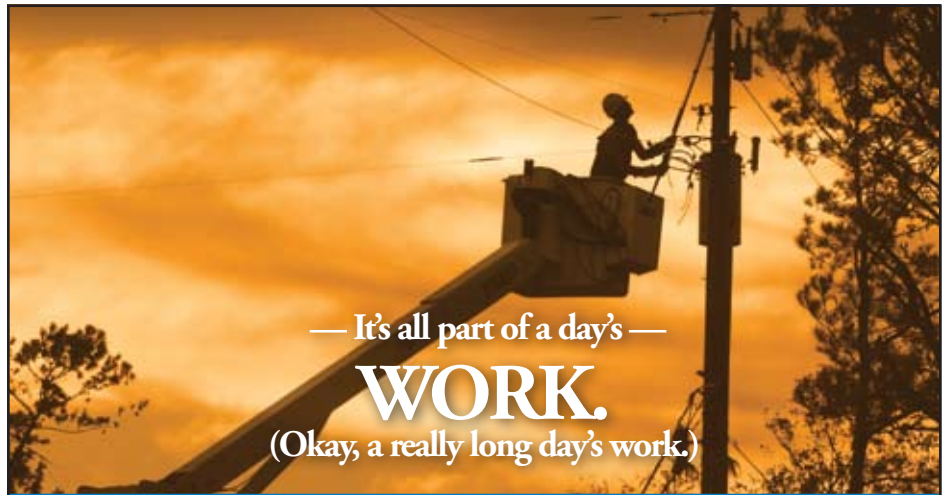
Each year, the college's research services division conducts a member satisfaction survey for Great Lakes Energy. The 2009 member survey results showed that 97 percent of the cooperative's members are satisfied or more than satisfied with the overall level of service they receive. Members rated reliability, courteous employees and cost-of-service as the three most important service character-

istics that GLE provides.

The survey results helped us achieve an 80 on the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), which is a full six points above the industry average (see related ad below).

Great Lakes Energy uses the survey results to develop our corporate goals for 2010. They are also used to make service improvements as your cooperative strives to provide reliable service at the best possible value for you, the member.

Thanks to the members who took the time to participate in the survey. If you have a comment about our service, we'd love to hear from you, too. Write to us or email us at glenergy@glenergy.com.



We'd like to thank our members for helping us score an 80 in the recent American Customer Satisfaction* Index (ACSI). Their feedback puts Great Lakes Energy a full 6 points above the utility industry average.

Even though ACSI recognizes "customer" satisfaction, GLE members are in fact "owners." That's an important distinction. And it's why we strive to provide a level of service that's second to none.

Naturally, we're honored. But we can't let it go to our heads. We must remain the dependable source of electricity our members never have to think twice about. Unless, of course, they're being surveyed by the ACSI.



Looking out for you

*Touchstone Energy ACSI member ratings using the ACSI customer satisfaction survey questions are compared to the ACSI ratings of residential customers of the largest investor-owned U.S. energy utilities.

Investing Your Co-op Dollar Wisely

A key example of how Great Lakes Energy looks out for you is our commitment to using your money wisely so that it provides you with the best service and value possible. Below, I've provided a breakdown of each dollar you invest in us that helps explain why your electric cooperative is a well-run business.

Power Supply Costs

The largest part of your electric dollar—65 cents—covers power supply costs. It includes both purchased power generation costs and high-voltage statewide delivery of power through transmission lines and electric substations.

Labor and Benefits

About 10 cents of your dollar is used for labor and benefit costs for the GLE workforce. Specifically, the largest portion of these costs is for line operations and maintenance personnel. Other workforce costs include the administrative, member services, accounting, data processing and other support personnel to staff the nine service centers throughout our 14,000-mile service territory. Great Lakes Energy serves more members per employee than 98 percent of the electric cooperatives in the nation.

Interest and Taxes

Another 10 cents of your dollar is used for interest and taxes. A good part of our \$262 million utility asset base was funded through low-cost loans. In addition, your co-op pays significant property, state income, and sales taxes totaling over \$4 million in 2009. The property tax is paid to every township, city and other taxing authority that has GLE utility poles and equipment within its boundaries.

Materials and Supplies

About 8 cents of your dollar is used for materials and supplies. The majority of this category is related to annual depreciation for the installed cost of our electric distribution lines and equipment. Vehicles, metering supplies and network and computer equipment are also included in this category.



Bill Scott
Great Lakes Energy
Vice-President/
CFO & IT

Contractor and Other Services

About 5 cents is used for contractor and other services. The majority of these costs are for contractor outage restoration and vegetation management work that helps us to continually improve our service reliability. Lesser amounts include legal, auditing, engineering and other consultant fees.

Margins and Other

The final 2 cents is for other expenses, including industry dues, utilities, training costs and other miscellaneous expenses. In addition, Great Lakes Energy margins (excess of revenues over expenses) make up slightly less than 1 cent. In 2009, these margins were used to partially fund our annual capital credit retirement. Since 2003, we have issued over \$17.7 million in capital credit refunds to our members. It's the way a financially healthy electric cooperative shares its profits with its members.

How We Spend Your Co-op Dollar At GLE



* Portions of the margins are used for capital improvements to the system and to return capital credits to Great Lakes Energy members.



Photo - NRECA International

Myc Manon (left) and Bud Stanley of NRECA International inspect a downed power line during their damage assessment in Port au-Prince.

Electric Co-ops Send International Program Team to Haiti

NRECA International, an arm of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, in coordination with USAID and other international and local partners, sent a four-person rapid-response team to Haiti to assess the damage of the electric power sector following that country's catastrophic earthquake.

The NRECA International Foundation has been present in Haiti since 1998. The Foundation coordinated donations of money, material and volunteer labor from the U.S. cooperative community to help Haitians in Pignon, a small town in the north-central region, establish the Cooperative Electrique de Pignon (COOPELEP), the first electric co-op in Haiti.

The NRECA Foundation is contributing \$50,000 to the initial Haiti earthquake relief effort, and is spearheading a fundraising effort for additional contributions from the greater NRECA membership.

"Providing safe, reliable power will be vital to the massive assistance effort now underway in Haiti," said Glenn English, CEO of NRECA. "NRECA's International Foundation and our member cooperatives stand ready to help with money, materials and manpower."

The response team appraised the short-term measures needed to repair critical segments of the electric power system in Port-au-Prince, and identified the emergency power requirements for hospitals, health centers, refugee camps, and other public facilities both in Port-au-Prince and border towns along the Haitian-Dominican frontier.

The team also coordinated the installation of emergency generators at the principal hospital in Port-au-Prince.

All donations made through the International Foundation's website (nrecfoundation.coop) will be restricted for the Foundation's Haiti Relief Efforts.

Greg White Named to MPSC

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has appointed Greg White to the Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC). White, of Grand Rapids, most recently served as the MPSC legislative liaison and has been with the agency for 22 years. He is a graduate of Michigan State University and Grand Valley State University, where he earned a master's degree in public administration.

White was previously associate director of the Institute of Public Utility Regulatory Research and Education at MSU, and chaired the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners subcommittee on nuclear issues and waste disposal.



An independent, White's term expires July 2, 2015. He replaces Steven Transeth.

TEEN FORUM

If you could change one thing about your school, what would it be, and why?



This is my first year at Superior Central and I'm still learning a lot of new things every day about the school. But one thing that I would certainly change is the number of higher level science classes. Our school is quite small (40 kids in our senior class) and most of the higher level classes we have to take online, which is often difficult without a teacher handy. I'm planning on becoming a chiropractor someday and could use some higher level science classes for my senior year.

Jared Ollis, Wetmore



If I could change one thing about my school, I would change the racial diversity because nearly all of the students and staff are white. We have very few people of any other race. We used to have a couple of Hispanic families, a couple of African American families, and an Indian family, but nearly all of these families have relocated to other schools. If we had a variety of races in school, we could learn about other cultures. Each race

has their own set of cultures, so students of each different race could teach everyone else about their culture. More racial diversity would help all of us students in the long-run!

In college and beyond, we will meet and work with a wide variety of races. It is going to be hard for us to adjust to all the other races around us because all we have ever known is one race.

Sabrina Russell, Mendon



Our technology. It seems like every day there is an announcement over the intercom saying that the

server is down. It puts a damper on my school day when that silly announcement comes on. I think to myself, "What am I supposed to do on my free hour?" The technology at our school seldom works, and when it does everyone is either on a computer or near one. I love how I can get a great education in my small town and know everyone in my school. If the technology at our school was always in top-notch condition then my school would be amazing.

Elena Smith, Howard City

Calling electric co-op sophomores and juniors! You could participate in this forum, attend a three-day camp, or even win a free trip to Washington, D.C., and see our government in action. Learn more about co-op sponsored youth programs at countrylines.com, and click on "Youth."



© iStockphoto.com/Damian Gadal

Wild Blueberry Hero

As I read the article about the “Wild Blueberry Hero” in the Jan/Feb. issue of *Country Lines*, everything that Charles Day said about his Hero sounded real familiar to me. As I read further and saw the name of his hero, George Koskimaki, I about fell over. Mr. K. (as we use to call him) was my biology teacher at Roseville High School in Roseville. I graduated in 1951. He was a wonderful teacher, and I never heard of any student that felt any different. I attended a school reunion about four years ago and had the privilege of meeting and talking to him there. You were a Hero in many eyes, Mr. K. Keep picking those blueberries, and God Bless.

A former student,

Joan (Gildenpfennig) Jaworski,
Port Austin

Heater Efficiencies

In the article on space heaters, author Sloboda points out that all electric heaters are 100 percent energy efficient. Yet earlier in the article he writes that oil or water-filled heaters are more efficient. I’m confused. Can someone clarify this, please?

Tom McDonald

A good question. All electric heaters operate at 100 percent efficiency, in that the heating elements produce one unit of heat for every unit of electricity. (This does not mean they cost less to operate than other heaters, such as gas, wood or propane, because the fuel for those heaters may cost less than electricity when it comes to the amount of heat they can produce.) What the writer means—and what

we should have edited—is that the oil- or water-filled heaters store some of the heat and release it over a longer period of time, making the area being heated more comfortable by avoiding the on-and-off bursts of heat created by straight resistance heaters—the ones with glowing coils. The heavily-marketed infrared heaters fall into this category. Again, they don’t heat your house for less; they’ll heat a room if you turn the heat way down in the rest of your house. —ed.

LED Christmas Lights

We have lots of LED Christmas lights. Every year we have a string or two (two this year) quit working. So, our experience is that they last a year or two. So, let’s see: cost more, last shorter, cost less to run. hmmm, not too sure they’re worth the money or hassle.

Bill Ross, Shelby

Will Miss Hough

I received my January copy of *MCL* all the way down here in southern Texas and my heart sank when I read “Farewell to Paradise.” How Mr. Hough touched my love for Michigan, and I will indeed miss his column. The stories I have about paradise, chipmunks, and the great outdoors don’t compare to his column, which I look for every time I get my new issue. Thank you, for bringing Michigan to me, Mr. Hough—1,500 miles away—when I need it the most!

Christa Chisholm, Sugar Land, TX

Investing Math

I was shocked to read the article by Linda Wacyk (“It’s January. Got Bills?”) that claimed a \$100 investment in a basic savings account would grow to \$12,000 in 20 years and that a 6 percent bond or stock would grow that same \$100 to \$42,000+. Her math is way off—6 percent annual growth on an initial principal of \$100 would only grow to just over

\$320 after 20 years. The “basic savings account” would likely be far, far less.

Even if the person continued to add \$100 to the investment every year for the 20 years, the 6 percent annual growth wouldn’t even get to \$4,000.

Please be more responsible with your math.

Randall Keicher

Some numbers caught my eye ... a \$100 investment in a savings account can become \$12,000 in 20 years? Surely you jest. Please inform me of such a savings account so that I can invest in it, too. By my calculations, a \$100 deposit at a generous 3 percent interest rate and a monthly compounding over 20 years becomes almost \$200. Same with the stock investment, unless, of course,


you’re Hillary and put it into cattle futures. You might want to run your own number check on this one.

Dr. Willard Lyman, via email

The author responds: “Kudos to some calculating readers. The investment specialist quoted admitted the math in his example was a mistake. To reach the promised \$42,000, a family would have to add about \$1,000/year to the initial investment. The example was intended as a lesson on the power of investment with compounding interest. Instead it illustrates how essential it is to teach kids financial literacy skills. With a strong foundation—and the help of online financial tools like those offered at mijumpstartcoalition.org our kids won’t be misled by others....well-meaning or not!”

Great gift idea!

2-for-1 Book Sale!



Both books only \$6

Includes tax and shipping. No substitutions.

ON THEIR OWN POWER The only book to tell the Michigan electric co-op story, from their birth in the 1930s. Filled with first-hand testimonials and experiences of the people who blazed the trail for electric co-ops. Written by Ray Kuhl, former general manager of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association.

VIEW FROM THE TOP A collection of Jim Hough's columns from the past 10 years in *Michigan Country Lines*.

Also order on countrylines.com/store

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SAIDI Says

GLE Meets 2009 Reliability Goal

SAIDI (pronounced SAY-DEE) says Great Lakes Energy significantly surpassed its 2009 reliability goal. We experienced 169 average outage minutes for 2009,

which is 35 percent below our goal not to exceed 262 SAIDI minutes for the year.

SAIDI stands for System Average Interruption Duration Index, and is a good indicator of a co-op's reliability because it reflects the average amount of time you can expect to be without power in a given year. Of course, in reality some members experience no outage time, while others experience more than the SAIDI number.

Although we're pleased by last year's progress, this achievement is still only one small step toward our ultimate goal of reducing average outage minutes to 90 or less. This will take some time given our large 26-county service area and the financial resources required.

The total average outage minutes for 2009 have an impact on GLE's 2010 goal. The co-op uses data from the previous five years to establish the goal for the new year. Watch for SAIDI's 2010 goal in the March issue of *Michigan Country Lines*.

Visit Storm Central For Outage Information

Visit our website, gtlakes.com, and click on the Storm Central "Quick Link" on the right-hand side of the home page to view any current power outages in each county and township across our service area.

For more specific information, you can log-in to your electric account online to view the power outage status of your account(s). Information available includes the time the power outage was reported, if a crew is aware of the outage, the estimated restoration time and the number of other members without power related to your outage.

If you have not created a log-in, you will need to enroll your account(s). To log-in or register, click on the "Access My Account" box on our website and follow the instructions.

To report a power outage, please continue to use our automated outage reporting line, 1-800-678-0411.

Centennial Farm Honors

We would like to honor Great Lakes Energy members Kent and Linda Sieting of Kalkaska whose property was recently designated as a centennial farm.

The Centennial Farm program recognizes residents throughout the state whose farms have been owned and operated by the same family for 100 years.

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

Visit Us This Spring At The Home Shows

Area home shows are coming soon. Mark your calendar and plan to visit the Great Lakes Energy booth at the home show nearest you.

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

Little Traverse Home Show

March 13-14
North Central Michigan College, Petoskey

West Michigan Home & Garden Show

May 2010 dates will appear in a later issue
West Shore Community College Rec Center, Scottville

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Dial 888-485-2537 or visit the member service section of our website at gtlakes.com, found under "your Home" and then clicking on "Change of Address Request."

Visit gtlakes.com for more information about co-op services.

Killing

Energy Vampires



Energy parasites are costing you hundreds of dollars a year.

Brian Sloboda

Typical Power Consumption of Household Items in Watts

Device	On	Standby Mode	Off
40-inch LCD TV	200	—	1-3
42-inch Plasma TV	240-320	—	1-30
DVD player	13	10	2.3
Stereo	123	—	23.4
Xbox 360	173	168	2.2
Nintendo Wii	17	10	1
Power tool battery charger	33.7	4.2	—
Coffee maker	1,100	70	0.8

©iStockphoto.com

Vampires have frightened people for generations. The fangs, the wings, the immortality: it's scary stuff. While that's all legend—a subject for movies and Halloween costumes—a different breed of vampire could be lurking in your home right now. These vampires don't drink blood; they consume electricity.

An "energy vampire," also called a phantom or parasitic load, is any device that consumes electricity when it's turned "off." These electronic devices provide the modern-day conveniences we love, but they also waste energy and cost us money.

Vampire loads can be found in almost every room, but a favorite spot is the entertainment center. When the TV is turned off, it isn't really off. It's sitting there, waiting patiently for someone to press the "on" button on the remote—and waiting uses energy. TVs also use energy to remember channel line-ups, language preferences, and the time. VCRs,

DVD players, DVRs, and cable or satellite boxes also use energy when they're off.

The problem is significant. According to a study by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the average home loses 8 percent of its

Common energy vampires include:

- TVs
- Stereos
- VCRs, DVD players, and DVRs
- Cable/satellite boxes
- Computers
- Battery chargers

monthly energy consumption to these energy vampires. A full 75 percent of the power used to run home electronics is consumed when those appliances are turned off, according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

According to the Arlington, VA-based National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the average electric co-op residential member consumes roughly 13,900 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. If 8 percent of this power is consumed when electronics are turned off, the average home wastes 1,112 kilowatt hours annually. Assuming a cost of \$0.10 per kWh, the average household spends \$111 per year to pay for these vampire loads.

The good news is that a sharp stake isn't necessary to kill these vampires. To eliminate the power consumption of an energy vampire,



©iStockphoto.com/Robert Payne

Coming Clean on Washers

Wash clothes efficiently without getting caught in the spin cycle.

Washing machines perform a fairly simple function: getting dirty clothes clean. Yet prospective buyers can be overwhelmed with all of the different models and “bells and whistles” available—top-loading, front-loading, high-efficiency (HE), water-saver, steaming, and wrinkle removing, to name only a few.

Energy-efficient washing machines, easily identified by the Energy Star® label, are a priority for any cost-conscious consumer's list. Approximately 93 percent of all American households have a clothes washer, adding up to 102 million clothes washers across America. About 9 million washing machines are sold each year, and efficient models account for slightly more than one-third of sales.

Energy Star-rated washing machines cost slightly more than their less-efficient counterparts, anywhere from \$400-1,500, depending on other features selected. To get a handle on how much electricity a particular unit will draw, pay close attention to the yellow energy guide before

making a purchase.

An energy-efficient washing machine can save the typical homeowner around \$50 a year, or \$540-\$600 over the life of the appliance. Efficient machines also save more than 5,000 gallons of water annually. The energy and water efficiencies of clothes washers are measured according to their modified energy factor (MEF) and water factor (WF). These criteria generally limit Energy Star qualification to front-loading and advanced top-loading models.

Front-loading clothes washers use a horizontal or tumble-axis basket to lift and drop clothing into the water, instead of rubbing clothes around a central agitator in a full tub. These units use less energy than conventional clothes washers by reducing the amount of hot water

needed to clean clothes. Front-loading models also squeeze more water out of clothes by using spin speeds that are two to three times faster than conventional washers, reducing both drying time and energy use.

Energy Star-qualified top-loading models typically use spray valves to rinse clothes, rather than a new tub of water. This method not only reduces the energy required for water heating, but typically saves an average of 15 gallons of water per wash, compared with conventional clothes washers.

Qualified top-loading models also boast sensors to monitor and adjust incoming water temperature. This keeps water hot enough to dissolve the detergent and provide high-performance cleaning, but cool enough to save energy and minimize hot water damage to fabrics. One limitation of efficient top-loading washers is that many models do not offer a high-temperature standard wash option.

By looking for the Energy Star logo and shopping at a store with knowledgeable staff, you should be able to leave with a new washing machine that will, over time, pay for itself.

Source: NRECA's Cooperative Research Network



What's an Energy Factor?

An Energy Factor (EF), a mandatory evaluation done on all water heaters regardless of fuel source (natural gas, electricity, oil, etc.), indicates a water heater's overall energy efficiency based on the amount of hot water produced per unit of fuel consumed daily. This includes:

- **Recovery efficiency:** How efficiently heat from the energy source is transferred to the water.
- **Standby losses:** The percentage of heat loss per hour from stored water compared to heat content of the water.
- **Cycling losses:** The loss of heat as water circulates through a tank and/or inlet and outlet pipes.

The higher the EF, the more efficient the water heater. But keep in mind higher EF values don't always mean lower annual operating costs, especially when comparing fuel sources.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy



HOOOOKOO



Producing locally-crafted works of art gives an economic boost to this isolated "Up North" area.
Linda Sirois

Vibrantly-colored wool rugs cover the walls and floors inside the Cross Village Rug Works. The rug designs are an array of familiar northwoods flora and fauna: trout, squirrels, blueberries and bears, as well as local landmarks and Native American themes.

The Rug Works, a member of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, is an exciting newcomer to the tiny community of Cross Village, nestled about 20 miles north of Harbor Springs, at the end of the scenic "Tunnel of Trees" drive on M-119. It's housed in a unique log-and-stone building crafted by the builder of Legs Inn, a historic restaurant just across the street.

"It kind of takes your breath away when you first walk in the door," says Rug Works gallery manager, Ellen VanderZee. "It's amazing, really."

The shop offers an array of woolen products, including rug wool and knitting yarns, warm shawls, felted wool goods, and woven and pictorial rugs. The vividly-dyed yarns, detailed original designs, and weighty heft of these artworks demonstrate a high level of craftsmanship.

"They're really heirloom pieces," explains Cheryl Reed, one of the Rug

Photos - Andree Sierra, DiePhotography.net



Vive la Différence

French for “Long live the difference” (between the sexes).

My youngest daughter’s claim to fame is her vocabulary. She said her own name at six months and now, at age two, she carries on actual conversations, like, with adjectives. Because my mother taught me to blush at compliments, whenever someone praises Marta’s speaking skills I say something like, “Oh, you know little girls! They love to talk.” My friend Ellen, who has two boys the same ages as my girls, grunts at this. “I don’t know,” she says. “She’s really saying quite a bit.”

Her boys, on the other hand, are dissecting mechanical trains and developing complex climbing systems to reach their cups or toys, and they understand the rules of every sporting event known to man.

Research shows that our little ones are following universal trends. As early as three hours of age, girls excel at imitation—a precursor to back-and-forth interaction. They’re more attuned to the sound of human voices than boys, and start using gestures like pointing or waving earlier. At 16 months, they produce as many as 100 words, while the average boy uses about 30.

Their brothers, on the other hand, express fear later than girls, and less often. One

study found that when their moms made a fearful face when they approached a toy, 12-month-old boys went for it anyway, while girls slowed their path.

Boys end up in the ER more for injuries, their gross motor skills take off during preschool years, and they prefer watching mechanical motion over human interaction. They’re also ahead of their female friends when it comes to figuring out the laws of motion (if they push a train through a tunnel, it will pop out the other side, for example).

While chromosomes are at work when our babies learn to play early-on, our children are sweet and naughty, smart and challenged entirely in their own ways, no matter their sex. What’s important for parents to remember is that when we model behavior—good or bad—it’s imitated.

Jodie Withey, mom to two girls and two boys in Harbor Springs, doesn’t mind letting nurture give nature a little kick in the pants. “I believe I’m a better woman because I know how to run a lawn mower, fix a leaky pipe, build a swing set, wire a light and check the oil in the car,” she said, “so I do try to teach my daughters things that may fall into the ‘male’ category. At the same time, I have my



sons help with the dishes or the preparation of food, because I know what that means to me as a wife when my husband helps me out. I believe that we pass on our views to these impressionable lives during the early years.”

It’s a concept many parents take to heart. Respect, compassion, confidence and kindness aren’t found on a DNA code—they’re taught at home. And whether a child is a tomboy or all boy, made of sugar and spice or snips and snails, it’s all about *how* they follow their passions in life that helps them become well-rounded adults.

Common Myths About Boys and Girls

■ Boys bully more than girls

Girls actually bully as much as or more than boys. While physical assaults are more common among boys, girls bully using social aggression.

■ Boys are better at math, computers and science

In the U.S., girls perform as well as boys on standardized math tests. Girls are now taking calculus in high school at the same rate as boys, and the percentage of U.S. doctorates in the mathematical sciences awarded to women has climbed to 30 percent in the 21st century, up from 5 percent in the 1950s.

■ Girls have low self-esteem

Research says that fourth grade is the peak year for girls’ self-esteem, but in fifth grade

it plummets. Ten-year-old girls report feeling image-obsessed and depressed because they don’t look like the models and actresses they see in the media. Between 20 and 40 percent of 10-year-olds diet, and 73 percent of girls between the ages of eight and 10 dress and talk like teenagers to “fit in.”

■ Boys get in trouble more now than ever

Justice Department statistics show that the population of juvenile males in prison is only half of its historic high. The number of high school senior boys using illegal drugs has fallen by almost half compared with the 1980 rate, and the percentage of high school boys drinking heavily is now the lowest on record.

■ Girls are the only sensitive sex

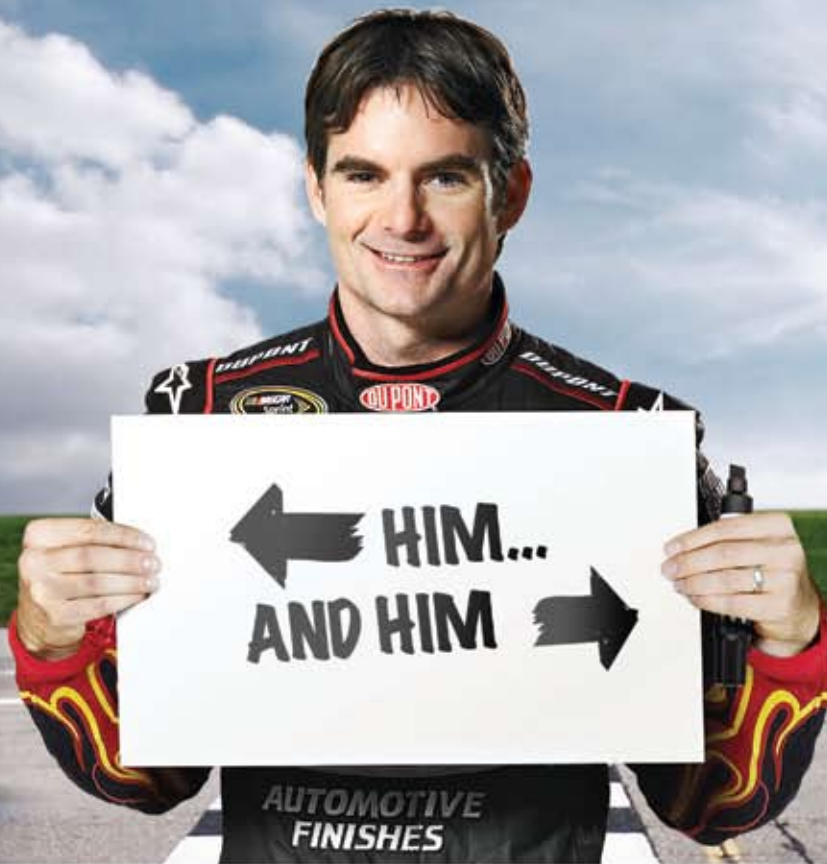
Not true, cry legions of parents. In fact, one researcher who studied babies during their first few months of life found that a higher proportion of girls could calm themselves when their

Speaking Out

While parents may notice innate inclinations in their children, kids aren’t always pleased to see them play out later in life as stereotypes.

A group of Swedish sixth-graders filed a complaint against Toys R Us over the company’s 2008 Christmas catalog, decrying the gender stereotyping in the product photos. The group’s teacher told the local paper that filing the complaint came after more than two years of the students’ work on gender roles. “When I see that only girls play with certain things, then, as a guy, I don’t want it,” said 13-year-old Hannes Psajd.

mother’s face displayed a ‘stony expression,’ but the boys could not. More boys would get easily distressed, they cried more, and were unable to calm themselves.



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FROSTING

The right frosting makes the cake! Find many more recipes at countrylines.com.

Crème De Menthe Frosting

1-lb. box powdered sugar
3 heaping t. cocoa
8 oz. cream cheese, softened
milk
1 c. whipping cream
3 t. green Crème De Menthe
shaved chocolate

Combine sugar, cocoa and cream cheese in a large mixing bowl. Beat well until creamy, adding a few drops of milk if necessary to achieve spreading consistency. Spread on cooled cake. Beat whipping cream until stiff peaks form. Gently stir in Crème De Menthe. Spread over frosted cake. Top with shaved chocolate. Chill until ready to serve.

Paula Brousseau, Bellaire

Deluxe Chocolate Frosting

2 c. chocolate chips
1 1/2 c. butter, softened
3 c. confectioners' sugar
4 t. vanilla

Melt chocolate chips in a double boiler over boiling water or in a microwave. Stir until smooth; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, cream butter and confectioners' sugar, beating well. Add melted chocolate and vanilla; beat until light and fluffy. Frosts a two-layer cake.

Janice Harvey, Charlevoix

Fast Frosting

8 oz. Cool Whip®
3 oz. pkg. any flavor gelatin

Gently combine thawed whipped topping and gelatin until well mixed. Spread on cooled cake. Try assorted gelatin flavors with different cake flavors. Interesting and delicious.

Karen Gamelin, Munising

Vanilla Buttercream Fluff Frosting

2 sticks unsalted butter,
softened
1 7-7.25 oz. jar marshmallow
cream
1 c. powdered sugar
1 t. vanilla

In a medium bowl, beat butter with mixer on medium speed until creamy. Beat in marshmallow cream, blending well. Beat in powdered sugar and vanilla. Increase speed and beat 3-4 minutes until fluffy. Makes 3 cups frosting. Use immediately or chill for later use.

Eileen Hughes, Dayton, OH

Lemon Meringue Frosting

3/4 c. sugar
2 large egg whites
3 T. water
1/2 t. cream of tartar
1/8 t. fine salt
1 T. finely grated lemon zest
1 t. pure vanilla extract

an electric mixer bowl above the water. Whisk the sugar, egg whites, water, cream of tartar and salt in the bowl by hand. Set the bowl above the boiling water and beat with an electric hand mixer at medium-high speed until stiff peaks form, about 7 minutes. Remove from heat; beat in lemon zest and vanilla.

Jennifer Hansen, Mason

Quick & Easy Whipped Cream Frosting

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
8 oz. Cool Whip®, thawed
1/2 c. sugar
1/2 t. clear vanilla, coconut or
almond extract

an additional 3 minutes, scraping the bottom and sides of the bowl, until mixture is smooth and no sugar residue remains. Using a spatula, gently fold in Cool Whip. Beat for 1-2 minutes on high, until mixture is smooth and creamy. Use as cake filling or frosting. Double recipe if you are filling and frosting a cake. Refrigerate any leftover for up to a week.

Karen Wormnest, Clarkston

German Chocolate Torte Frosting

8 oz. cream cheese, softened
2/3 c. packed brown sugar
1 t. vanilla extract
1 t. salt
2 c. whipping cream, whipped
2 T. crushed Heath® Bar

according to package directions; cool and remove from pan. In a mixing bowl, beat cream cheese, sugar, vanilla and salt until fluffy. Fold in whipped cream. Cut cake in half, then cut each half into two horizontal layers, making four layers total. Place one layer on a serving platter. Spread with 1/4 of the frosting; repeat until all layers are frosted. Sprinkle crushed bar bits on top. Cover and refrigerate 8 hours or overnight.

Linda Geddes, Newaygo

Line a 9x13-inch cake pan with heavy duty foil, leaving extra foil on each side for easy removal. Mix cake according to package directions. Pour batter into foil lined pan. Bake

Try Something New In Your Garden

Drum roll, please! The 2010 garden catalogs are in, and there are more new vegetable varieties to choose from than worms in a good batch of compost. Plant breeders have been busy tinkering to come up with tastier tomatoes, bigger melons and more prolific cucumbers.

For instance, check the Hales Best Cantaloupe, offered by Farmer Seed and Nursery out of Faribault, MN. They say it's "unsurpassed in flavor and size." Gardeners in central and lower Michigan should give this 83-day variety a try and let me know how it works out.

Then there are cucumbers that purportedly produce cukes all summer long. How can this be? They do this by being parthenocarpic (huh?). It simply means it doesn't need pollinating, which results in more fruit (at least I think that's the theory). After combing the catalogs, I found two varieties offered, both from Jung's Seeds and Plants: the Diamont Hybrid pickler and a gourmet mini cuke from Germany called "Inik."

For gardeners in the "mitt" and over the Big Mac, where the season is a little shorter and cooler, there are a few new varieties that catch the eye. Jung's Canesi hybrid winter squash claims to be the "earliest butternut squash to date." I've never had much luck growing the butternuts in my Zone 4 garden, but this 80-85 day variety may be worth a try. Some season-extending ideas may be necessary to get this to ripen here in the E.U.P., where we only get about 65 good growing days.

"What's old is new" is apparently the case among many purveyors of vegetable seeds. Heirloom seeds, which are generally those that originate prior to WWII, are popping up in the new catalogs like radishes on a warm spring day. Gardeners are apparently shopping with their palettes as they long for the tastier fare of yesteryear, something that has been sacrificed in some newer varieties that aim for size, color and ability to keep longer at the expense of taste.

Pine Tree Garden Seed owner Richard Meiner has added many heirloom varieties

to his new catalog in response to the demand from gardeners nationwide.

"It's in response to people being interested in the older varieties, especially taste," says Meiner. These heirlooms were passed down through the generations much like a hope chest, he adds, some which originated from companies that went out of business during the Depression. An example is Long Island Improved Brussels Sprouts, which date back to the 1890s, need about 85 days to mature, and cost just a little over \$1 for 100 seeds.

The popular Burpee seed company is offering an interesting new tomato variety called Tye Dye. Recommended by a fellow gardener, it is actually a hybrid that boasts "heirloom flavor" and should also be a conversation piece when it turns from green to a bi-color gold-and-red. The 7-ounce fruits are nonacidic. Allow 78 days from seeding to a ripe, colorful, tasty tomato.

Have you ever been a little frustrated when your beans start like gangbusters and then just quit? The result is more beans than you can eat fresh. Burpee's seems to have the answer with their new Bush Beans Beananza. This dwarf French bean will produce twice as long as your old bean fare if you keep them picked. Come on, give it a try!

I asked Susan Anderson, the Johnny's Selected Seeds product manager in Maine, to help us northern gardeners with some new varieties for short-season zones. You know, those areas in the state where you just seem to run out of summer, leaving green tomatoes hanging on the vine. One new offering they are jumping up-and-down about is Sultan, a high-yielding, 7- to 8-inch seedless cucumber that requires only 56 days to mature.

"Home gardeners will just love this one," Anderson says enthusiastically. She suggests waiting until the ground warms up to about 70 degrees before direct-seeding all cucumbers and other cucurbits.

Other new Johnny's varieties include Cherokee, a tomato that ripens green. Anderson says it's one of her favorites because of its "bold and acidic flavor." It needs 72 days to mature and like all tomatoes, needs to start



Burpee's Tye Dye Tomato

Photo: W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

indoors about eight weeks before setting-out. She also gushes over Red Pearl, a 58-day grape tomato that's a product of the company's own breeding program. The few seeds it produces can be re-sown for next year's crop.

One of my personal favorites is Stokes Seeds, an international company that caters to both commercial and home gardeners. I've grown their seed for years in a commercial greenhouse. Some of their notable new offerings include Hickock, a "longer lasting" dark green gourmet bean with good disease resistance, and Golden Beet, a novelty bright orange beet.

So, go ahead and try a few of these new veggie varieties—I promise you'll be more excited than a leaf-hopper on a potato plant! Happy Gardening.

Visit Neil's website at neilmoran.com.

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Throwing Money Up The Chimney

It's not your imagination. Though it may seem contradictory, an open masonry fireplace can actually cool your house and result in higher overall heating costs. The fireplace opening attracts heated indoor air and then releases it through the chimney. The resulting vacuum draws cold outdoor air into your house through windows, doors and gaps anywhere. You may feel comfortable by the fireplace, but your heat pump or furnace runs like crazy trying to keep the rest of the house warm.

Although I do not recommend using an open fireplace during cold weather, if you really do like the ambiance of a fire, close all the doors to that room, open a window and turn the furnace thermostat down. You will still lose some heated air up the chimney from the rest of the house, but hopefully most of the air is being drawn from the open window. The loss is not as severe during mild weather because outdoor air is not as cold.

Every efficient wood-burning fireplace or insert will have tight-sealing glass doors between the room and the chimney to block the loss of already heated room air. You may be able to operate some fireplace models with the glass doors open and just a screen covering the opening, but do not burn it this way very long. When burned properly, the efficiency of a good fireplace can be higher than an old furnace.

Burning firewood to heat your home—one of several forms of biomass heating—may qualify for a federal tax credit. Biomass sources include cord firewood, wood pellets, corn, switch grass, peanut shells, and even cherry pits, and can be burned in a variety of heating appliances. Fireplaces, wood stoves and pellet stoves are most common. I've even burned cherry pits in my wood pellet stove—they produce a lot of heat and burn cleanly.

The tax credit applies to any biomass heating appliance placed in service during 2009 and 2010. The credit is equivalent to 30

percent of the cost (including installation), up to a maximum of \$1,500. To qualify, the appliance must have an efficiency rating of 75 percent or greater. Check the specifications because not all fireplaces or stoves are this efficient—generally, they range from 70 to

hot, it loses density and naturally flows into the room through an upper vent. This pulls cooler air from the room in through a lower inlet to be heated.

If you want more heat output and better control of the flow of heated air, install a blower kit. Each manufacturer offers its own specially designed kit to mount on fireplaces. The better ones have thermostats and variable-speed controls for the best comfort. A blower kit can usually be added by the homeowner after installing the fireplace.

For the greatest efficiency and least amount of drafts indoors, install an outdoor combustion air kit with the fireplace. Make this decision before you install the fireplace because a duct has to be attached to bring in the outdoor air. It is often run under the floor to the front of the firebox.

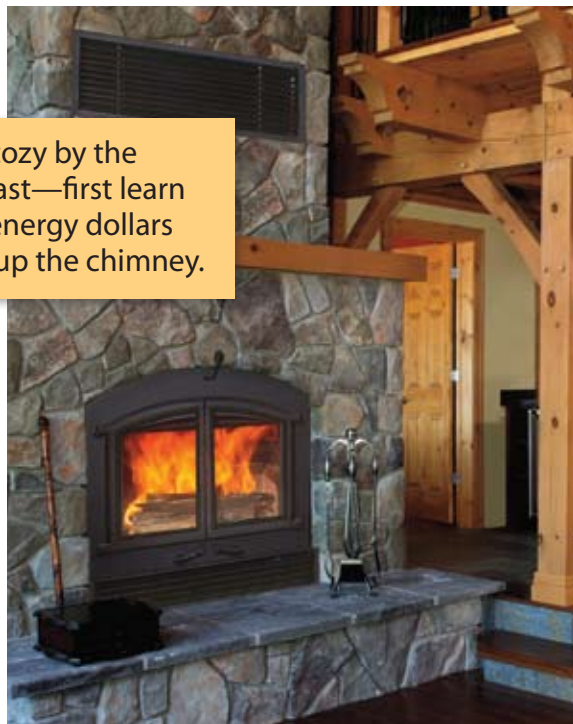
Airtight fireplace inserts are often the most efficient design and provide the longest burn-time and maximum heat output from a load of firewood. They are not as stylish as a fireplace, but provide much better control over the heat output and combustion air used. For air quality considerations, select an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certified model. Pellet and catalytic cord firewood models typically produce the least particulate matter.

Despite great improvements in efficiency, keep in mind that some stoves and fireplace options use electricity and may not operate properly during an outage. The cost for efficient models can also be high, which makes qualifying for the federal tax credit that much more important.

The following companies offer efficient wood-burning fireplaces: Desa International, 866-672-6040, desaint.com; Fuego Flame, 800-445-1867, fuego flame.com; Jotul, 207-797-5912, jotul.com; Kozy Heat/Hussong, 800-253-4904, kozyheat.com; and Lennox Hearth Products, 800-953-6669, lennox-hearthproducts.com.

Have a question for Jim? Send inquiries to: James Dulley, Michigan Country Lines, 6906 Royalgreen Dr., Cincinnati, OH 45244 or visit dulley.com.

Ready to get cozy by the fire? Not too fast—first learn to keep your energy dollars from floating up the chimney.



The decorative airtight doors on this heat circulating fireplace improve efficiency and reduce room air loss up the chimney.

90 percent efficiency. Get a manufacturer's statement certifying that the unit meets the efficiency requirements. For details, check energystar.gov/taxcredits.

When buying or upgrading a fireplace you're faced with several options. Initially you must decide between a zero-clearance or masonry fireplace. If your old fireplace is large, you may be able to fit a new unit inside. If you plan to install a fireplace somewhere else, a zero-clearance model is easiest. It often uses a double-walled design with insulation so it can be safely placed against wood wall studs.

A heating-circulating fireplace provides the best efficiency and most heated air output. Many of these operate without a fan and rely on the natural flow of room air around a super-hot firebox. As the air gets

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Peaking Plant In Southeastern Michigan To Complement Wolverine's Generating Fleet

Wolverine Power Cooperative is purchasing a 340-megawatt peaking power plant from FirstEnergy Generation Corp. The plant, located in Sumpter Township near Belleville, MI, consists of four General Electric natural gas combustion turbine generators, each capable of generating 85 megawatts. Wolverine will use the facility to meet the current and future peaking needs of its members.

“One reason this acquisition happened so quickly is the plant’s good fit with the

experience and talents of our generation employees,” said Dan DeCoeur, Wolverine’s vice president of generation. “We also moved quickly to capitalize on an attractive business opportunity.”

Wolverine expects to finalize the Sumpter plant purchase during the first quarter of 2010. Each of the plant’s units is currently permitted to operate about 1,800 hours per year.

“As we do with the five peaking plants we currently own and operate, we’ll run these generators on hot summer days when

co-op members need air conditioning to stay comfortable,” DeCoeur said. “Our members set a new all-time peak record for January last month, so we’ll rely on the units during winter months, too.”

FirstEnergy Generation, a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp., constructed the plant in 2002 to serve existing customers in northwest Ohio and participate in what was Michigan’s emerging electric choice marketplace at that time. FirstEnergy says the facility is no longer a good strategic fit for them and their 4.5 million accounts in Ohio, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Wolverine currently owns and operates peaking plants in Tower, Gaylord, Hersey, Vestaburg and Burnips. These five plants are capable of generating close to 200 megawatts.

“Our purchase of the Sumpter plant does not change our ongoing efforts to build long-term, base load capacity near Rogers City,” DeCoeur said. “The simple fact remains that Wolverine has no base load supply beginning in 2012.”

Peaking Versus Base Load Power Plants...

► How do the two differ?

Peaking plants are called on when electricity is needed quickly and for a brief period of time. These plants are typically fueled with natural gas and are generally more costly to operate.

Base load plants operate around-the-clock, 365 days a year. The two primary types of base load power plants in the Midwest are coal and nuclear, providing nearly 85 percent of the region’s electricity needs. Base load plants are built for scale and efficiency, and thus provide low-cost, reliable electricity.

The Sumpter peaking power plant, located near Belleville, consists of four units capable of generating 340 megawatts.





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Michigan Electric Co-op Teen Days is a three-day event in April at the scenic Kettunen 4-H Center near Cadillac. At Teen Days, students from across the state learn about electrical safety, energy efficiency, and careers. By attending Teen Days, you could be selected to represent Great Lakes Energy at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., in June. Along with 1,200 students from across the United States, you'll go on tours, see the sites, and even visit U.S. legislators and their staff members on Capitol Hill.

If you're a 10th or 11th grade high school student who will be 16 or 17 by June 2010, and your home is served by Great Lakes Energy, you are eligible to apply. Download an application at gtlakes.com or call 888-485-2537, ext. 8174.

For more information, visit Great Lakes Energy Teen Days on facebook.com, "Hit the Road to Teen Days" on YouTube.com, or Youth Programs under "yourCommunity" at gtlakes.com.


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(Until the next issue of the magazine is published.)



Scholarships Offered

Each year, the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association awards two \$1,000 scholarships to qualifying applicants. Individuals are chosen based on their scholastic achievement and extracurricular involvement during their high school career.

The applicant's parent or guardian must be a member or employee of a Michigan electric co-op, and the applicant must be planning to attend a Michigan college or school full-time.

Selection will be based on grade point average, character, leadership, academic achievement, extracurricular and community activities, and essay response.

Applications are available at countrylines.com; click on "Youth," email wolford@countrylines.com, or call 517-351-6322, ext. 205, to request an application by mail. Eligible applications must be postmarked by *April 1, 2010*.



Enjoying the new skating rink and warming house in Newaygo are, from left, Kaleb Ferguson, Nicholas Simington and Hunter Lay.

Warming Hands and Hearts

Newaygo ice skaters now have an opportunity to “thaw out” between skating sessions this winter, thanks to a \$2,000 People Fund grant that helped renovate a dilapidated home.

The building, which borders Newaygo’s public ice-skating rink and skateboarding park, is now a “warming house” where skaters can warm themselves, grab a snack or drink, and socialize.

The lighted and groomed rink is open from 3 to 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends. Volunteers staff the house and rink.

The People Fund and other grants helped purchase the run-down home and spruce it up into a warming house. Workers remodeled a bedroom into a bathroom, combined the kitchen and living room into one main room, and installed vending machines and a water fountain. The addition of benches and a sturdy new floor allows skaters to come inside without removing their skates.

While Newaygo’s main police department is located downtown, the warming

A People Fund grant helps ice skaters in Newaygo stay warm.

house also has enough extra space to become a “second home” for police. Eventually, the city will establish a small police

office in the home year-round.

The Newaygo Community Recreation Authority worked with the City of Newaygo to seek grants from the People Fund, the Fremont Area Community Foundation, and the city’s TIFA (Tax Increment Financing Authority).

Newaygo City Manager Rich Blachford says that obtaining grants is often the only way small communities can fund recreational projects.

“In our community, thanks to the generosity of local companies and residents, it’s sometimes possible to get three dollars of grant funds for every dollar spent on a recreational project,” he adds. “That often means the difference between a project getting done or not.

“We thank Great Lakes Energy and its members who contribute to the People Fund for stepping up and putting money back into their communities,” Blachford says.

– Linda Kotzian

You Can Save Money On Prescriptions

Great Lakes Energy members saved an average of 38 percent on their prescription drugs during 2009 by using their Co-op Connections® card.

A total of 2,775 prescriptions were filled by participating pharmacies last year. The usual cost for those drugs is \$171,557; however, using the Co-op Connections pharmacy discount, Great Lakes Energy members saved \$65,833, a 38 percent savings.

The pharmacy prescription drug benefit is not insurance; rather, it provides immediate discounts at participating pharmacies. When GLE members present the Co-op Connections card to purchase their prescriptions, they pay the discounted price, the insurance provider’s price or the pharmacy’s regular retail price, whichever is lower.

A list of participating pharmacies is available at locateproviders.com or by calling 1-800-800-7616. For details on the Co-op Connections program visit gtlakes.com or call 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8957.



Power In Numbers

If every Great Lakes Energy member who participates in the People Fund got just one other person to join, it would easily double the amount of money available to help local food pantries, senior citizen centers, youth programs, and more.

The People Fund program works because there is power in numbers. A Great Lakes Energy member’s average contribution of 50 cents a month or \$6 per year isn’t much, but it adds up fast when thousands of members participate.

Get involved and help the People Fund expand to meet the growing needs of Michigan residents, young and old. It all starts with asking just one person to contact us and we’ll do the rest. Members can also enroll online by visiting the “yourCommunity” section on our website, gtlakes.com.



Saving Energy Is Important, But ...

Some ideas for helping your co-op save energy with outdoor security lights have limitations.

One easy way to save energy is to switch to more efficient lighting inside your home. But what about the outside lights?

We asked Brian Sloboda of the Cooperative Research Network (CRN) to share his insight on outdoor lighting after Great Lakes Energy received suggestions from interested members. His energy-efficiency articles appear regularly in *Michigan Country Lines*. CRN

is a service of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Member suggestions on how their co-op can save energy with outdoor security lights included limiting daylight operation problems and switching to fixtures with motion-sensing devices that only come on when movement is detected in the yard.

We provide high pressure sodium (HPS) security lights to Great Lakes Energy mem-

bers who pay an outdoor lighting rate that covers its energy use and maintenance costs. Normally, the lights only shine at night.

Photocell Failure

Although its operating life is about 10-15 years, the photocell that controls our security light's dawn-to-dusk operation can sometimes fail prematurely, Sloboda says. For safety reasons, the sensor is designed so the light will go on or remain on when it fails, but premature failure may occur under certain conditions that include, for example, being located in an area subject to frequent lightning strikes.

With nearly 7,700 GLE security lights scattered throughout our 26-county service area, it would be very time-consuming to check for "day-burning" lights on a regular basis. It would take away from the time our crews devote to working on the power lines and improving your reliability.

So, we rely on you to contact us when your GLE security light needs repair. If there's a day-burning light in your neighborhood, please check with your neighbors first to make sure it's a GLE light and not theirs. If it's our light, we'll fix it.

Use of Motion Sensors

Motion-sensing devices don't work well with an HPS lamp. Frequent on-and-off cycles could shorten its life and affect illumination quality, Sloboda says. It takes a few minutes for the HPS lamp to warm up to full brightness each time it's turned back on.

A better choice is the LED (light-emitting diode) light, which can be dimmed. Several electric co-ops in the United States are testing outdoor security lights with LED lamps, and the results look promising. An electric co-op in New York state found that their LED lamps use about one-fifth as much electricity as comparably-sized mercury vapor lamps.

At a cost of about \$300 per lamp, LED lights would be an expensive investment with all the security lights we have on our system. We feel at this time that the money can be better invested in continuing to fund the major reliability improvements that have helped reduce outage times. Our annual goal is to continue reducing outage minutes, and we met that goal again last year (see page 8 for more details).

Marathon... Saving is easy as 1-2-3



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

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

Members may also qualify for our Controlled Water Heating program and save up to \$90/yr.

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We Hear You

Your letters to Jim Hough and your responses to our survey spur us to excel.

When Jim Hough first signed on to write the “Right at Home” column on this page in 1984, *Michigan Country Lines* wasn’t yet a magazine. It was, more accurately, a tabloid—black ink on newsprint—which meant your hands would get mighty black from handling it. And, boy, did we get complaints. Eventually, we changed to the format you’re holding now. It’s easier to handle, carries color much better, and doesn’t make your hands look like you’ve been playing with coal. That’s the kind of positive change that comes from listening to you.

Country Lines actually started 30 years ago this coming November. At the time, it was the youngest of 30-some publications across the country started by state electric co-op associations to help electric co-ops stay in touch with members. Some of those magazines were in business 40 years before Michigan co-ops saw the light. The goal of the magazines is to help members keep up with what’s going on in the utility they own, which is actually one of the golden rules of the cooperative form of business.

We know that if we were to fill these pages with only information about transformers, substations, rates and generator safety, we wouldn’t have many readers. And so we make room for other things that may interest you more, like gardening, recipes and the great outdoors. And Jim Hough’s column on this back page.

The sad thing, of course, is that Jim has packed away his large-print typewriter, upon which he created the warm-hearted stories about his friends in his beloved U.P. He delivered the columns to us on letter-sized sheets of newsprint strung together with tape into 6-foot long scrolls. He writes that way because he is legally blind and the large type allows him to read his own copy. Still, it often looked like we were getting an over-sized roll of toilet paper. And considering the columns he wrote about Engadine’s outhouse races and the toilet seat nailed to a tree announcing that his Paradise cabin was open for

visitors, toilet paper would have been appropriate.

But Jim’s columns weren’t fluff. We wanted him to write stories that would draw you into the magazine, to help create a community of electric co-op readers across the state and beyond.

As proof, there are the many letters he’s received from well-wishing readers who just wanted to let Jim know how much they loved his column.

“We have enjoyed your articles in every issue,” wrote one reader.

“You don’t know me, but after reading your columns for a long time, I felt I had to let you know how much I enjoyed your writings,” wrote another.

“If it was not for your articles I probably wouldn’t even open the magazine,” wrote still another, frankly. (Do you know that studies show about half of the population starts reading magazines from the back?)

That so many of you would take time to write a letter to Jim Hough wishing him well after his farewell column in the January issue is testament to your connection to the magazine. We thank you, and we promise that we will work hard to keep your trust.

For those of you who fear they will miss Jim’s special connection with the U.P., I want you to know that I and my teacher wife, Barbara, were high school sweethearts in Ironwood, and have a special fondness for pasties, Saykly’s chocolates, trout streams, Marquette and Lake Superior. The title of this new column reflects the approach I hope to take in writing about the people and places along co-op lines, but it is also a tip of the hat to our now long-gone St. Ambrose High School, whose sports teams went by the name of “Rambler.” You can take a kid out of the U.P., but you can’t take the Yooper out of the kid.

Our latest survey shows that our community of readers is as strong as ever, but also that we have work to do to keep your trust and build a stronger relationship with younger co-op

members.

The survey was conducted online in November, with a follow-up random sample mail survey in December. It reveals that over 90 percent of co-op members read the magazine regularly and that 63 percent of you clip items from the magazine. We’re pleased that attention is being paid, because your co-op counts on the magazine to keep you informed and get you involved.

A surprising majority of readers who participated in the survey expressed a desire to see *Country Lines* printed on recycled paper. We are planning to do that in April, after we use up our current paper stock.

Finally, I’ve got to get something off my chest.

We get calls almost daily from readers who want to talk about something in ‘*Country Lines*’. We do appreciate the calls. But, the name of this magazine is *Michigan Country Lines*. Notice the ‘r’ between the ‘t’ and the ‘y’ in *Country*. That ‘r’ is not silent and it’s always been there, but for some people it seems invisible. It’s been bugging the staff here for decades, and I promised I’d mention it. So there it is. Honestly, I don’t care what you call it (*Country Lanes* is another favorite) as long as you don’t stop reading—and calling.

Thanks for joining us.



Mike Buda is the founding editor of Country Lines and continues to work on the magazine, as well as other activities of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association. He lives in Mason with Barbara. Their boys, Dan and Jon, have flown the coop.

Email Mike at mbuda@countrylines.com

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Looking for savings?

Heating & cooling rebates now available

According to the Department of Energy, as much as one-half the energy used in your home goes to heating and cooling. So, upgrading your home's heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system can make a big difference in your utility bills.

The Energy Optimization program sponsored by Great Lakes Energy offers great rebates on select heating and cooling equipment, as follows:

- ▶ Upgrade the blower motor on your existing furnace and receive a \$300 rebate.
- ▶ Replace your electric water heater with a model rated with a .93 efficiency factor (EF) or higher and receive a \$50 rebate.
- ▶ Install 5 feet of pipe wrap to your electric water heater outlet pipe and receive a \$4 rebate.
- ▶ Replace your standard thermostat with a programmable thermostat and receive a \$20 rebate.

Contact us today for more details. Restrictions may apply. Offers expire March 31, 2010.

1-888-485-2537, ext. 8957
glenergy@glenergy.com
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SUBMITTING A REBATE

Download the rebate application form at **gtlakes.com** or call us at **1-888-485-2537, ext. 8957** to request your form. You can also email us at **glenergy@glenergy.com**.

Send your completed form, with all required documentation, to:

Great Lakes Energy
P.O. Box 70
Boyne City, MI 49712
Attn: Marketing

ELIGIBILITY* The Energy Optimization HVAC and water heater rebate program serves residential customers, in Michigan only, in single family dwellings who purchase and install new water heaters, replacement furnace blower motors, and programmable thermostats. See the terms and conditions on the application form for complete eligibility information and restrictions.

To participate in the program, you must meet these eligibility requirements in *addition* to the terms and conditions on the rebate application:

- ▶ You must be an electric cooperative member or a customer of an Upper Peninsula municipal utility.
- ▶ The equipment or energy-saving measure you install must meet the efficiency requirements set forth by the program guidelines.
- ▶ All measures must have been installed by a State of Michigan licensed contractor (except water heaters), who must be identified on the incentive claim form.
- ▶ The incentive claim form must be completed in its entirety and submitted with all required documentation within 30 days of installation.
- ▶ Your application must be for equipment purchased on or after Nov. 20, 2009. Installation in new homes does not qualify – you must be replacing old equipment.

* Incentives (rebates) are subject to change and availability.