

A Service of **Cherryland Electric Cooperative**

May 2012

Michigan

COUNTRY LINES

Michigan-made:

Luminature

*Wildly unique lighting
and decor*

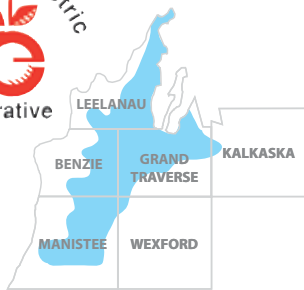


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Improvement**
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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386-5234 • tvanpelt@cecelec.com

TERRY LAUTNER

Senior Vice President

946-4623 • tlautner@cecelec.com

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947-2509 • mlautner@cecelec.com

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BETTY MACIEJEWSKI

Director

947-0463 • bmaciejewski@cecelec.com

JOHN OLSON

Director

938-1228 • jolson@cecelec.com

JON ZICKERT

Director

631-1337 • jzickert@cecelec.com

GENERAL MANAGER

Tony Anderson

CO-OP EDITOR

Nick Edson

OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday 7:30 a.m.– 4 p.m.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS

231-486-9200 or 1-800-442-8616 (MI)

ADDRESS

P.O. Box 298, Grawn, MI 49637

WEBSITE

cherrylandelectric.com

PAY STATION

Cherryland Electric office
5930 U.S. 31 South, Grawn

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Overhead or Underground

On the street and around the coffee table, I would speculate that the most-often-asked question is, "Why doesn't Cherryland put more lines underground?" Trees would not have to be trimmed, people would not have to look at the ugly power lines, and nobody would have to worry about another winter storm. While these are all very legitimate points, our internal debate at Cherryland always comes down to balancing reliability and cost.

Depending on who you talk to, some members care only about having electricity every minute of every day (talked to a lot of those in March!!). Then, there are others who are focused solely on the price. When rates go up, we hear from one group and when the lights go out, we hear from the other. So, it becomes a delicate balancing act at your cooperative.

Measures of reliability focus on two pieces: the number of power outages a member experiences each year (frequency) and the number of minutes a member is without power each year (duration). Typically, the *frequency* of outages on underground systems is 50 percent less than overhead. The average *duration* of an underground outage can be 60 percent longer mainly due to the time it takes to find the break underground and then dig it up.

Long-term reliability can also be an issue. As underground wire ages, it does become less reliable. One recent study conducted in Maryland found that customers served by a 40-year-old overhead line had better reliability than those served by 20-year-old underground lines. We have seen similar numbers in Michigan, and also better numbers with newer cable. While today's underground cable is lasting longer, it is still not lasting as long as an overhead line that costs far less to construct.

The other side of the scale is cost. Single-phase line to serve an average residential home is very competitive when comparing overhead to underground. Underground often costs 1.5 times more in these basic situations, sometimes less. However, when

you go to the bigger 3-phase feeder lines, the cost is more than three times higher for underground facilities.

Many homeowners and developers are choosing to pay the initial cost of underground lines. This leaves the cooperative to maintain and replace the system in the future. Over the last five years, Cherryland has grown from 1,153 miles of underground line to 1,229 miles. In this same period, our total overhead miles have declined by 2 to a total of 1,769 miles. This is mainly due to the fact that our main 3-phase feeder lines coming out of the substations and extending to the ends of our system have been in place (overhead) for decades and new lines (mostly underground) have



Tony Anderson
General Manager

merely tapped off of these to feed all the new homes and subdivisions you see in our area.

Your home and/or subdivision may be served by underground wire, but you can bet that somewhere down the line, there is an overhead 3-phase line that must remain upright to keep your lights on. At the end of 2011, Cherryland's reliability number was 99.996 percent. Five years earlier, this number was at 99.96 percent. Mother nature will never allow us to hit 100 percent but stretching the "9s" further and further out is our goal. The 2011 number tells us that we are on the right track and achieving a very good balance between both types of lines.

Putting 1,769 miles of overhead line underground simply will not happen in my lifetime. Members simply could not afford the cost. What we can do is continue with our tree-trimming program, look for small trouble spots where an investment in underground may be wise, and focus on improvements in overhead construction such as the narrow, diamond-shaped insulated line seen in some of the densely wooded areas of our service territory.

It will forever remain a balancing act—overhead vs. underground and reliability vs cost. We will continue to watch the "scales" daily, monthly and annually, focused on the long-term benefits for *all* of our members.



Rave Reviews for Dentist's New Invention

By Al Parker

Dr. Michael Hutchison is a “find the problem, fix the problem” sort of guy.

So, when the Traverse City dentist and longtime Cherryland Electric Cooperative member, had patients dealing with pain and discomfort, he took action.

“It started back in 2000 when I had five patients complaining of pain,” Hutchison recalls. “I began to explore treatments for their pain. I learned that 95 percent of pain patients had bite misalignments that had not been recognized.”

That was the problem, and to fix it he invented and patented the PowerPlus Mouth Guard, designed to relieve pain, reduce concussions, increase strength and improve balance among its users.

Hutchison has spent the first few months of 2012 jetting around the country telling high school and college coaches and athletic directors about the enhanced capabilities of his PowerPlus Mouth Guard, which is manufactured in Gaylord.

“The PowerPlus Mouth Guard is designed to maximize the safety and performance for athletes participating in all sporting activities,” says Hutchison, who was a football player, wrestler and golfer while growing up in Iowa. “It positions the jaw to increase strength, while decreasing the G-force of impact-related head injuries.”

Citing studies from Wayne State University, Hutchison says his \$40 mouth guard typically increases an athlete's strength by 15 to 25 percent. And with 800 football players using it, only four have suffered concussions.

That's an impressive concussion rate of .5 percent, well below a 5.6 percent concussion rate of high school football players involved in a 2000 study by the *American Journal of Sports Medicine*.

The \$40 price tag is higher than com-

parable products, but Hutchison says the protection and performance offered by the PowerPlus Mouth Guard is well worth it.

The first athlete to ever use Hutchison's device was former Traverse City police chief and city commissioner, Ralph Soffredine. Back in 2006, he was training for a senior-division weight lifting competition.

Hutchison read about Soffredine's training regimen and called him to talk about the PowerPlus. “I told him I could improve his best lift by 25 percent,” Hutchison recalls. Soffredine was interested and tried the new mouth guard.

“My best lift in the over 60-year-old bench press competition was 395 pounds until I was fitted with the PowerPlus Mouth Guard,” writes Soffredine in a testimonial for the device. “The day I had it fitted I lifted 455 pounds. I went on to break the World Record using the PowerPlus Mouth Guard at 446 pounds. If you are in competition, the PowerPlus is a must have.”

Since then, Hutchison has provided the PowerPlus to a number of football, hockey and wrestling teams. “I realized that the biggest contribution I could make would be with the kids,” he says.

Like many inventors, Hutchison has invested a substantial amount of money and time in developing and marketing his product. He's spent recent months addressing athletic coaches, league officials and athletic director organizations in Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Tulsa and Phoenix.

His efforts may pay off soon in a big way. He's attracted the attention of FuturePro Combine, a group founded by former Oakland Raiders wide receiver A.C. Caswell. FuturePro conducts clinics for talented high school football players.

“So far, the response has been nothing less than stellar,” he says.

Visit powerplasmouthguard.com to learn more.



Dr. Michael Hutchison



The PowerPlus Mouth Guard™ is designed to maximize safety and performance for athletes.

What's Your Number?

Back in July of 2011, Cherryland Electric ran an article in *Country Lines* explaining the line and pole numbering scheme we use to identify specific locations on our electrical system. The article also featured a contest offering a chance to enter a drawing for a \$25 gas card for members who submitted their correct pole location number to the co-op.

During the recent severe winter storm that left thousands of members without power, the information included in that article became an important link in the process of tracking outage updates that were shared by Cherryland. Simply put, if you knew your line and pole address, also known as your service location, you had a better understanding of our outage and restoration jargon.

Given the importance and relevance of service location information, we decided to blow the dust off that July article, make some changes, and publish it again.

The Cherryland system has nearly 3,000 miles of overhead and underground line serving over 33,000 members in six counties. Scattered across that system are 16 substations. The substations are, figuratively speaking, the gates through which electricity enters our system from the transmission grid that crisscrosses the state. Each of these 16



substations has a name reflecting its general geographic location and an associated two-letter abbreviation. The table below lists those sixteen substations.

Each substation has two to four mainline circuits, which are frequently referred to as “feeders.” These circuits are not unlike the circuits that leave the breaker panel in your home and supply electricity to your kitchen or garage. Each mainline circuit on our system is identified by the substation abbreviation

and the circuit number. For instance, the four circuits leaving our Bates substation are BA1, BA2, BA3 and BA4.

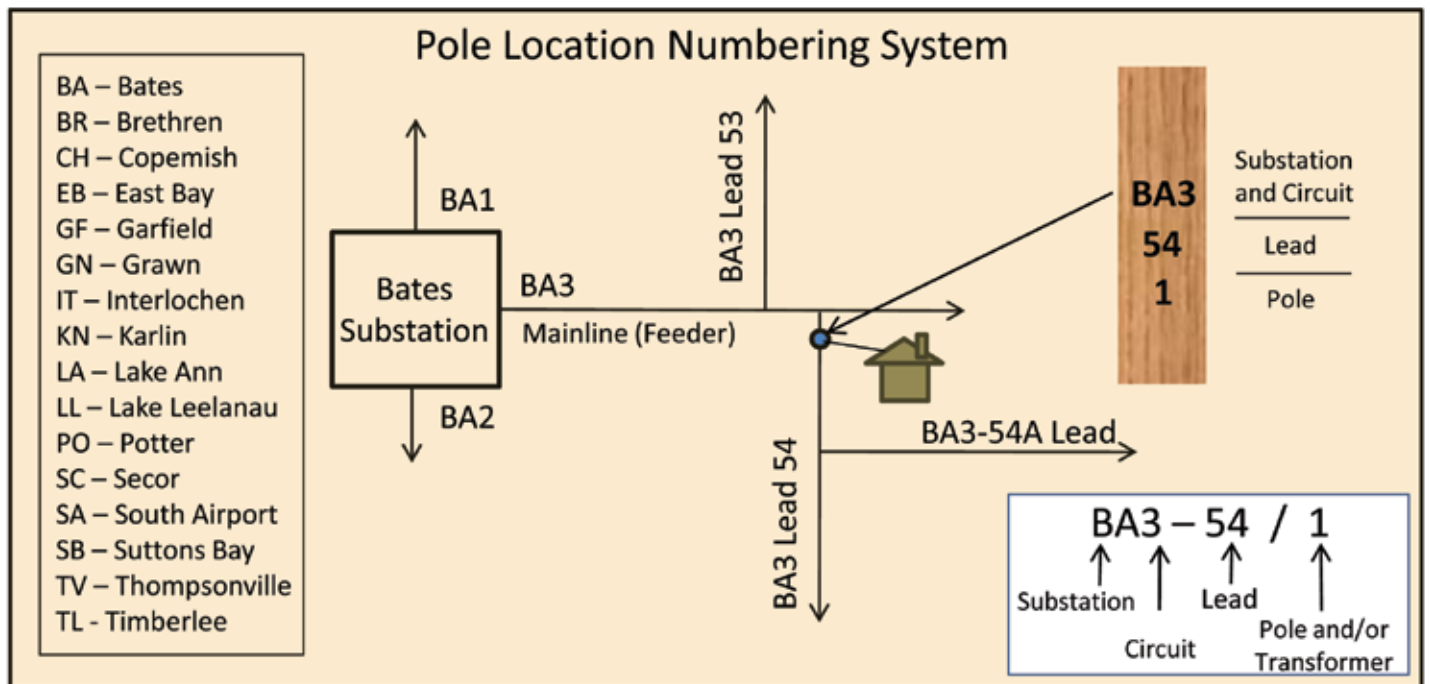
From the mainline circuits, lines branch off into a series of additional lines that zig-zag across the region providing electricity to wherever it is needed. These branch lines are frequently called “leads,” “taps” and “service drops.” Back to our BA substation example— if we track the BA3 circuit to pole 24 we will

**Enter to win a \$25 gas card!
Email your service location
number to cec@cecelec.com
before May 31.**

find nailed to that particular pole the address “BA3 24.” As it turns out, the line splits into two directions at BA3/24. The mainline circuit continues on to the next pole which is labeled BA3/25 and a new line (called a lead) heads off in a different direction starting from the BA3/24 pole. The first pole splitting off the mainline is labeled BA3-24/1.

Putting it all together, the line and pole numbering scheme is a very precise and efficient way to navigate our sprawling, complex network of poles and wires. Our experienced field employees generally talk in terms of pole numbers rather than roads and addresses.

Knowing a thing or two about line and pole numbering goes a long way toward



understanding outage restoration. A mainline outage means everything downstream from that point will be without power. These lines will be given priority over other branch lines. It makes no sense to repair a lead, tap or service line outage if the mainline circuit is also down. Keep in mind that mainlines, as well as leads, run for many miles. One well-placed outage can affect members many miles away.

Our website (cherrylandelectric.com) has a link we call "Outage Central" which shows a map of our service territory with the geographic footprint of each substation along with the number of current outages by substation. A convenient link to our Facebook page is also available at the site, where you can read postings of restoration activities during major outages. You do not need a Facebook account to view the information.

Frequently, outage restoration during a major storm will occur from the substation outwards. By visiting our Facebook page you can get updates telling where our crews are working. If crews are working at BA3/24 and you receive your power at BA3/38, then you know we are close by and restoration should be soon. However, keep in mind, if there is a second outage between poles 24 and 38, the restoration process will take longer. On the other hand, if you see our crews are working at BA3/24 and you live at SC1/58, then you know we are not currently in your area. I strongly recommend you visit the website and our Facebook page.

Since we are dusting off the old line and pole numbering article, it only makes sense that we would give our members another shot at winning a \$25 gas card. Just like before, you can enter the drawing by emailing your service location number to cec@cecelec.com. The cut-off date is May 31, 2012.

If you are served by overhead wire, you can find your number by looking on the pole serving your home. If you are served by underground wire, look at the transformer or switch located in your area. Another option is to simply wait for your May bill to arrive. We are in the process of having each member's pole location number appear on their monthly electric bill. That should be in place prior to the May billing cycles. Good Luck!

Kevin Cragg is the member services manager at Cherryland Electric and oversees the Energy Optimization program



How to Buy an Energy-Efficient Appliance

You go shopping for a new refrigerator, and you're on a budget. The best buy is the one with the lowest sales price, right?

Not necessarily. If you buy the lowest-priced refrigerator, you may end up spending more than if you buy a more expensive one. The reason? The cost of owning a home appliance has three components: the initial purchase price, the cost of repairs and maintenance, and the cost to operate it.

To figure out how much you'll spend over the appliance's lifetime, you have to weigh all these factors. The appliance with the lowest initial price, or even the one with the best repair record, isn't necessarily the one that costs the least to operate. Here's an example of how an appliance's energy consumption can affect your wallet.

Suppose you're in the market for a new refrigerator-freezer. Different refrigerator models with the same capacity can vary dramatically in the amount of electricity they use. For one popular size and configuration, for example, the annual electricity consumption varies across models from a low of about 600 kilowatt-hours (kWh) to a high of more than 800 kWh, per year. Based on national average electricity prices, that means the annual cost to operate this refrigerator can range from about \$50 to \$70, depending on which model you buy.

A \$20 difference in annual operating costs may not sound like much, but remember that you will enjoy these savings year after year for the appliance lifetime, while you must pay any difference in purchase price only once. As a result, you may actually save money by buying the more expensive, more energy-efficient model.

You can learn about the energy use and efficiency of an appliance (determined in independent laboratory tests) from the yellow-and-black EnergyGuide® label. The Federal Trade Commission's Appliance Labeling Rule requires appliance manufacturers to put these labels on refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers, TVs, water heaters, furnaces, boilers, central air conditioners, room air conditioners, heat pumps, and pool heaters.

When you shop in a dealer's showroom, you should find the labels hanging on the inside of an appliance or secured to the outside. The law requires that the labels specify:

- The capacity of the particular model;
- For refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers and water heaters, the model's estimated annual energy consumption.
- For air conditioners, heat pumps, furnaces, boilers and pool heaters, the energy efficiency rating.
- The range of estimated annual energy consumption, or energy efficiency ratings, of comparable appliances.

Some appliances may also feature the Energy Star® logo, which means it is significantly more energy efficient than the average comparable model.

The Energy Star program also provides a number of rebate opportunities when you purchase qualifying products and appliances, including ceiling fans, compact fluorescent lightbulb fixtures, light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures, smart power strips, room air conditioners, dehumidifiers, clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, refrigerators and low-flow aerator kits.

— Sources: Federal Trade Commission; U.S. Dept. of Energy

Here's What About

50¢

Will Get You...



About 50¢ a Month Makes a Difference to Your Northern Michigan Neighbors in Need.

So far, 4,000 of you have signed up for Operation Round Up, rounding your electric bill up to the next dollar. That generosity provided much-needed funding to dozens of local organizations in the last year. Plus, just for signing up you'll be entered to win \$50!

♥ Share the Love and Win \$50

Sign up at: facebook.com/cherrylandelectriccoop or on our website at: cherrylandelectric.com/cherrylandcares.



**I'm so glad we
have food tonight.**

Your donation
made the difference.
Thank you!



Cherryland Electric Cooperative





Nick Edson, representing Cherryland employees, presents a check for \$1,000 to Munson hospice.

Cherryland Employees Donate \$1,000 to Hospice

Employees of Cherryland Electric Cooperative recently raised \$1,000 to help Munson's hospice program.

The silent auction was held throughout the day at Cherryland and employees could stop by and bid. All of the items in the auction were donated by employees.

"As employees, we try to raise money for a different cause each year," said auction director Chris Holmes. "We thought hospice would be a great fit for our money."

Beth Karczewski of Munson said the donation was timely, especially due to budget cuts.

Annual Meeting Set for June

Cherryland Electric Cooperative's 74th Annual Meeting will be held Thursday, June 14, 2012, at Wuerfel Park.

The Traverse City Beach Bums of the independent Frontier League, play their home games at Wuerfel Park, which gets its power from Cherryland.

Registration runs from 3-5 p.m. on June 14, with the business meeting from 5-6 p.m. Cherryland members will receive a free ticket to the game and a food voucher (see back cover), which will entitle them to a hot dog, chips and soft drink. The Beach Bums game starts at 7:05 p.m.

More details about the Annual Meeting are available in the annual report insert and cover wrap of this magazine.

Cherryland Cares Seeks Grant Applications



Area nonprofit agencies who are seeking financial help can apply for a grant through the Cherryland Cares program.

Cherryland Cares is a five-member board, made up of Cherryland Electric Cooperative members, who distribute money from Operation Round Up to area nonprofits. The board's next quarterly meeting is Monday, June 18. The deadline for applications is Friday, June 8.

Operation Round Up money comes from Cherryland members who volunteer to round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar every month. This amount averages \$6 per year.

To receive a Cherryland Cares grant application or to join Operation Round Up, contact Nick Edson at Cherryland. His direct line is 486-9222 or email him at nicke@cecelec.com.

Next Member Input Session Will be June 18

The board of directors at Cherryland Electric Cooperative is offering another opportunity for members to provide direct input to the board on a quarterly basis. Members will be able to talk to the board next on Monday, June 18, at 9 a.m. at the company office in Grawn, 5930 U.S.-31 South.

Members are asked to come to the lobby and request to speak to the board. Members are also asked to keep their comments to 5 minutes. Member attendance at the board meeting is allowed for the public input portion of the meeting only.

Cherryland members are afforded a chance to meet with the board on a quarterly basis during meetings in March, June, September and December.

Pay Your Electric Bill Online

Want to save money and pay your Cherryland Electric Cooperative bill online?

It's easy to do. You can set up your account to get only an email bill—no more paper bills!

To sign up, access your account on cherrylandelectric.com. It will prompt you immediately after you sign-in to make a decision on whether or not you want the paper bill to continue; if you do, check the box. If not, simply press "update."

Questions about online payment can be answered by Cherryland's Member Service Department at 486-9200.

Like us on Facebook!  **"Cherryland Electric Cooperative"**

Treat Do-It-Yourself Wiring Projects Carefully

If spring sends you into remodeling mode, consider checking with professionals before migrating to the nearest hardware store. While do-it-yourself (DIY) projects can be very satisfying to complete, they pose risks when it comes to electricity.

“Mistakes can be costly—or even deadly,” warns John Drengenberg, consumer affairs manager for Underwriters Laboratories, Inc., (UL), a Chicago-based nonprofit firm that tests and sets minimum standards for electric products. “The first and best safety tip is to call in an expert rather than be your own electrician.”

An ongoing study by the Fire Protection Research Foundation has given UL engineers a better understanding of typical DIY wiring mistakes. The most common are:

Working With a Live Wire

It may seem obvious, but thousands of do-it-yourselfers get electric shock injuries each year. To avoid becoming a statistic, always turn off the circuit breaker (or remove the fuse) before working on or replacing electrical equipment. If you have a pre-1940s home, you probably have more than one breaker box, or panel board, as electricians call them.

Using the Wrong Lightbulb

Most lighting fixtures have a sticker on the socket that tells you the proper type and maximum lightbulb wattage to use. Installing a different type of bulb, or one with higher wattage, will not only make the room brighter, but could damage the lights and cause a fire. The higher the wattage, the hotter the bulb, and the hotter the wire that goes to the lighting fixture.

Not Being Grounded

For optimal safety, receptacles should be wired with the proper grounding and polarity. Generally, three-pronged outlets signify an effective ground path in the circuit. However, homes built before the mid-1960s probably don't have a grounding path, and simply replacing the existing outlet with a three-pronged outlet won't give you one.

“You see instances of this in homes with older wiring,” Drengenberg says. “It's no

worse than if you plug your two-pronged device into a two-pronged outlet. But it does give the homeowner a false sense of security.”

Wiring with a grounding path usually has a copper grounding wire with the cable. If you are uncertain whether your home's wiring is grounded, inexpensive UL-listed outlet circuit testers are available to check for proper grounding and polarity. If your outlet is improperly grounded, call an electrician before moving forward in any project.

Splicing, Splicing, Splicing

Always make sure your wiring size and type match. Splicing wires by simply twisting them together and covering them with electrical tape is rarely a good idea. Instead, use wiring suitable to your home's wiring and place wiring connections in metal or plastic boxes to decrease fire risk.

Also keep in mind that circuits protected by 15-amp fuses or breakers should be wired with No. 14 AWG copper wire minimum. For 20 amps, use No. 12 AWG minimum size copper wire. Other guidelines apply, so seek professional help before you begin.

Hooking New Lights to Old Wires

Most light fixtures are marked with instructions for supply connections, such as “Use wire rated for at least 90C,” which refers to the maximum temperature—90 degrees Celsius or about 200 degrees Fahrenheit—under which a wire's insulation can safely be used. Again, if you have an older home (pre-1984, in this case), wiring may have a lower temperature rating than a new luminaire.

“This isn't something most DIYers even think to consider,” Drengenberg cautions. “It probably won't burst into flame immediately, but it does increase the risk of a fire.” To avoid that risk, check your wire rating first, and either upgrade it or buy fixtures within the supply connection range.

Other Electrical Clues

Electrical upgrades often require a professional who knows what inspections and permits are needed. Following are a few other clues to help you find out if your home's electric network needs a professional switch.



Source – Electrical Safety Foundation International

Be careful not to install new lighting to old, inferior wires. To avoid this fire hazard, check your wire rating first, and either upgrade it or buy fixtures within the supply connection range.

- **Type of wiring.** Modern wiring is insulated, meaning covered in plastic. Older homes may have copper or aluminum wiring. Copper wiring can work just as well as modern wiring if it is still in good condition and has not been altered or improperly installed. However, fire risk also increases in homes with both copper and aluminum wiring. Corrosion to aluminum from copper can lead to loose connections causing fires. Use only aluminum-approved switches, outlets, and other accessories if your home has aluminum wiring.

- **Plugs fall out of outlets easily.** Loose plugs are a high fire danger. Older outlets that have lost their grip need to be replaced.

- **Not enough outlets.** The increasing use of chargers for phones and electronic devices means outlets are in high demand, especially in older homes where outlets are not as plentiful. This can result in overuse of extension cords and power strips. Be sure to use quality, 14-gauge or thicker cords that are approved by Underwriters Laboratories (UL). Never overload an outlet. Overloading can cause heat, leading to fire risk. Consider hiring a licensed electrician to add outlets to your home.

- **Danger in wet areas.** GFCI (ground fault circuit interrupter) outlets are now required in areas around water like near a kitchen or bathroom sink or outdoors. But in older homes, GFCIs may not have been installed. It is fairly simple to replace old receptacles with GFCIs; hire a professional to upgrade outlets near water.

- **Wind causes lights to blink.** If you notice your lights blinking on windy days, it may be due to worn wiring in the weatherhead (where overhead lines enter your home). Contact your electric co-op to check weatherhead wiring.

Sources: *This Old House*, Underwriters Laboratories, Kelly Trapnell

Staying Safe With Portable Generators

CARBON MONOXIDE HAZARDS:

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

ELECTRICAL HAZARDS:

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

Contact Cherryland Electric Cooperative at 1-800-442-8616 with any questions about using your generator safely!

Don't Mess With Power Lines

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

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



ALWAYS
CALL
BEFORE YOU
DIG



Know what's below.
Call before you dig.



JOHN DEERE

TRAVELERS

Common Ground Alliance



U.S. Department
of Transportation



Building Your Quality of Life



cherrylandelectric.com



Help a kid.



One Call 231-486-9214

or



One Click marathon4kids.com

helps



One Kid Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan

WHAT IS IT? Marathon 4 Kids is a fundraiser developed by Cherryland General Manager Tony Anderson to raise money for Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan.

HOW DOES IT WORK? Tony's goal is to complete 50 marathons, one in each state. So far, he has run marathons in 20 states.

WHERE DOES THE MONEY GO? 100 percent of the money goes towards serving kids in northwest Michigan through Big Brothers Big Sisters.

MORE INFORMATION? Contact Tony at 231-486-9214 or marathon4kids@gmail.com, or visit marathon4kids.com.



Great Lakes Stainless, Inc.

Curiosity Creative



Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern Michigan



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