

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



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Capital Credit Refunds Coming

New Geo System Available

Reliability Update



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## ON THE COVER

Negaunee's Lucy Hill is the only full-length natural luge track in the United States. United States athletes train here before traveling to competitions in Europe.

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Once used to describe the three devastating waves that led to the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald, Three Sisters is also the name for three tight turns and the most technical part of the Negaunee Lucy Hill luge track. Find Three Sisters Luge Pizza recipe submitted by featured guest chefs from the U.P. Luge Club at micookitchen.com, and see the full story on page 14.



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# The Credit Goes To You



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

As my wife and I were getting our coats on one evening to take our dog on a brisk fall walk, my wife abruptly stopped. With a smile, she raised her right hand victoriously and held up a few wadded dollar bills that had lain forgotten in her coat for months. It was amazing how this discovery could bring such a simple feeling of happiness. When you open your December utility bill, that's the same feeling we hope you get.

GLE members will see refunds on their bills. Marked in red on your bill, **capital credit refunds** are your share of GLE's profits.

This year's retirement of capital credits is one of the largest in our history. This is due in part to the strong financial health of our power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative. As a member of Wolverine, we pass capital credits we earn from them to you, our member. This is in addition to the capital credits you earn from us. Those on our lines during the 1991-93 period will receive significantly higher refunds this year.

But it's more than getting money back on your bill in December. A capital credit refund is proof that Great Lakes Energy is doing its job. It reminds you that:

- Any profits we earn are shared only with you, the members and owners of our cooperative.
- Profits are possible because we practice fiscal responsibility as part of our cooperative principles, which includes recognizing members' economic participation in their cooperative with financial rewards.

They are called "capital" credits because your investments allow us to obtain the capital we need to operate and expand. Much of that capital goes for building, maintaining and improving one of the largest electric cooperative distribution line systems in the country. It also supports emergency repairs when big storms like the one last December creates widespread outages.

Unlike other utilities, we don't have shareholder investors. You're the owner of this business, and our profits are returned to you as a capital credit. The hard work of our employees, board of directors and power supplier has made the return of capital credits possible for the past 14 years. ■

## Capital Credit Refunds Coming

This year, Great Lakes Energy is returning \$10 million in capital credits to our members. The money will appear as a credit on your December bill, and amounts over \$1,000 will be sent as checks. That brings the total amount of capital credits refunds issued annually since 2003 to over \$56.1 million.

# Capital Credit Refund Q & A

**G**reat Lakes Energy members who purchased electricity in any or all of these years—2015, 1993, 1992 and 1991—will receive a capital credit refund. Most will see the refund applied to their December bill.

See the article on page 4 for details.

## Q. What are capital credits?

**A.** Capital credits are a key reason why you're more than just a customer, you're a member of GLE. They represent your share of profits (called margins in the co-op world) that are generated when revenues exceed our operating costs. In a co-op business, margins are not kept, but are allocated back to the members who provide the revenue through the electric rates they paid during the year. Unlike investor-owned utilities, co-ops do not have shareholder investor/owners. Our members are our investor/owners. Every time you pay your bill, you're making an investment in a business you co-own.

## Q. Why is the refund on my bill different than my neighbors?

**A.** Your share of the margins is based on the amount you spent for electricity during the years involved. If your neighbors spent more for electricity in these years than you, they will receive a larger refund and vice versa.

## Q. Why are the refunds based on 2015 and 1991–93?

**A.** Capital credits were retired from the oldest years (1991–93) and most recently completed fiscal year (2015) to allow both long-time and new members to receive the benefit. Also, all capital credits earned by members prior to 1993 have now been returned.

## Q. What if I don't receive a refund?

**A.** You should receive a refund if you were a GLE member who purchased electricity from us in 2015 or 1991–93. If you did not get a refund, you may be a member who joined us in 2016 or may have assumed the electric account from a relative who is now deceased. Contact us for instructions on how to claim any capital credit refunds that may be issued in the deceased person's name.

Anyone who plans to move off our lines should provide us with their new address for our records. Your assistance will help limit the amount of unclaimed capital credit refunds.

## Q. What about capital credits earned in other years? Will they be returned, too?

**A.** Yes, we plan to continue retiring capital credits annually, provided financial conditions allow us to do so.

## Q. What do you do with the capital credits that haven't been retired and returned yet?

**A.** They remain part of the capital invested in the cooperative that allows us to build, maintain and improve our power line distribution system and provide the other services that you expect as a GLE member.

## Q. Will I receive a refund again next year?

**A.** It is too early at this time to predict how well your cooperative fared financially in 2016. However, based on how well we've done in the past with returning capital credits, we expect to continue this member benefit next year. ■

## How Do Capital Credits Work?

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits.



Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation

# Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2016–2017 Season

**Program:** Winter Protection Plan  
**Contact:** Your Local Utility Company

## Income Guidelines 2016–2017

# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,820
2	24,030
3	30,240
4	36,450
5	42,660
6	48,870
7	55,095
8	61,335

Add \$6,240 for each additional member.

*Note: All customers 65+ are eligible regardless of income. Customers are responsible for all electricity and natural gas used. At the end of the protection period, participants must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.*

The **Winter Protection Plan (WPP)** protects enrolled seniors and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). If you are eligible, your utility service will remain on (or restored with the WPP) from Nov. 1 through March 31, if you:

- pay at least 7% of your estimated annual bill each month, and
- make equal monthly payments between the date you apply and the start of the next heating season on any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), you must begin to pay the full monthly bill, plus part of the amount you owe from the winter months when you did not pay the full bill.

**Participation does not relieve customers from the responsibility of paying for electricity and natural gas usage, but does prevent shut-off during winter months.** You qualify for the plan if you meet at least one of the following requirements:

- are age 65 or older,
- receive Department of Health and Human Services cash assistance, including SSI,
- receive Food Assistance,
- receive Medicaid, or
- household income is at or below the 150% of poverty level shown in the Income Guidelines chart at left.

Senior citizen customers (65 or older) who participate in the WPP are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. Service for seniors can be restored without any payments.

**Program:** Home Heating Credit

**Contact:** Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$13,070	4	\$26,756
2	17,642	5	31,299
3	22,185	6	35,842

Add \$4,571 for each exemption over 6.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2016** tax year if you meet the income guidelines listed at left or you qualify based on alternate guidelines including household income, exemptions, and heating costs. Additional exemptions are available for seniors, disabled claimants, or claimants with 5% or more of their income from unemployment compensation.

If you qualify, you may receive assistance to help pay for your winter heating bills. **Forms are available mid- to late-January wherever tax forms are provided or from the Michigan Dept. of Treasury (517-636-4486, or [michigan.gov/treasury](http://michigan.gov/treasury)).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **no later than Sept. 30 each year.**

**Program:** Earned Income Credit

**Contact:** U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service [irs.gov/EITC](http://irs.gov/EITC)  
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury  
[michigan.gov/treasury](http://michigan.gov/treasury)

The **Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)** is a refundable federal income tax credit for low-income, working individuals and families who meet certain requirements and file a tax return. Those who qualify will owe less in taxes and may get a refund. Even a person who does not generally owe income tax may qualify for the EITC, but must file a tax return to do so. If married, you must file jointly to qualify. File Form 1040 or 1040A and attach the EITC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2016** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the MI 2016 tax booklet for details.

**Program:** Crisis Assistance Program

**Contact:** Local Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) [michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://michigan.gov/mdhhs)

**State Emergency Relief Program (SER):** [michigan.gov/mdhhs](http://michigan.gov/mdhhs) You do not have to be a DHHS client to apply for help with a past due bill, shutoff notice or the need for deliverable fuel through the SER. This program, available Nov. 1–May 31, provides most of its utility assistance during this crisis season. However, limited assistance is available outside the crisis season. If you receive a DHHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHHS or call the Home Heating Hotline, 855-275-6424.

**Program:** Low-Income Home Weatherization

**Contact:** Local Community Action Agency

You may be able to receive help with weatherizing your home to reduce energy use if you meet low-income eligibility guidelines (200% of poverty guidelines) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit [mcaaa.org](http://mcaaa.org) to find one in your area.

**Program:** United Way

**Contact:** Call 2-1-1 or [UWmich.org/2-1-1](http://UWmich.org/2-1-1)

2-1-1 is a free phone service operating 24 hours daily to provide information about help that may be available in a particular area with utilities and other needs. Learn more at [UWmich.org/2-1-1](http://UWmich.org/2-1-1).

**Program:** Medical Emergency Protection

**Contact:** Local Utility Company

You are protected from service shut-off for nonpayment of your natural gas and/or electric bill for up to 21 days, possibly extended to 63 days, if you have a proven **medical emergency**. You must provide written proof from a doctor, public health or social services official that a medical emergency exists. Contact your gas or electric utility for details.

**Program:** Shut-off Protection for Military Active Duty

**Contact:** Local Utility Company

If you or your spouse has been called into **active military duty** you may apply for shut-off protection from your electric or natural gas service for up to 90 days. You may request extensions. You must still pay, but contact your utility company and they will help you set up a payment plan.

**Program:** Michigan Veterans Trust Fund Emergency Grant Program

**Contact:** MI Veterans Trust Fund

The Trust Fund provides temporary assistance to veterans and their families facing a financial emergency or hardship including the need for energy assistance.

Michigan Veterans Trust Fund at 517-284-5299 or [michiganveterans.com](http://michiganveterans.com)

**Program:** MI Energy Assistance Program

**Contact:** Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through Michigan Energy Assistance Program (MEAP), includes services that will enable participants to become self-sufficient, including assisting participants in paying their energy bills on time, budgeting for and contributing to their ability to provide for energy expenses, and being energy efficient. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers.

# Safety During Hunting Season

By Tim Velder



**B**e aware of what's behind that big buck or it might cost big bucks.

Your electric co-op's time and money are spent every year repairing equipment and power lines that have been struck by a stray bullet. As a not-for-profit cooperative, owned by the members, we all share in this expense.

This doesn't even include the inconvenience, damages, and hazards to members down the line that require power for medical equipment or other needs, while a lineman does some hunting of his own looking at spans of line trying to locate the problem.

Hunters and other gun-owners should be cautious not to shoot near or toward power lines, power poles, and substations. A stray bullet can cause damage to equipment, could be deadly to the shooter, and potentially interrupt electric service to large areas.

Sometimes the damage isn't noticed for several weeks or months and is only discovered when an unexplained outage occurs.

Landowners are also encouraged to take note of nonmembers who are hunting on their property and remind them to be aware of power lines.

Shooting near overhead power lines or insulators can result in severe injury or death.

## The main safety points to remember are:

- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of power lines and equipment on land where you shoot.
- Damage to the conductor can happen, possibly dropping a phase on the ground. If it's dry and the electricity goes to ground, there is the possibility of electrocution and wildfire.
- Be especially careful in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Do not use power line wood poles or towers to support equipment used in your shooting activity.
- Take notice of warning signs and keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not place deer stands on utility poles or climb poles. Energized lines and equipment on the poles can conduct electricity to anyone who comes in contact with them, causing shock or electrocution.
- Do not shoot at, or near, birds perching on utility lines. That goes for any firearm, including pistols, rifles or shotguns.
- Do not place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment. Anything attached to a pole besides utility equipment can pose an obstruction—and a serious hazard—to electric cooperative employees as they perform utility operations.
- Avoid the use of lofting poles near overhead power lines. Remember, electricity can jump across a considerable distance. ■

# Easy Ways To Save Energy This Winter

Between cold weather, the holidays and spending more time indoors, energy use and costs can rise for many Michigan residents. However, by taking a few simple actions, the following small adjustments can result in big savings!

**Deck the halls with LED holiday lights.** Light-emitting diode (LED) holiday lights use up to 90 percent less electricity and last up to 10 times longer than standard bulbs. Plus, they produce almost no heat and are nearly impossible to break! Save even more energy by putting your lights on a timer.

**Set your furnace fan to "auto."** Selecting "auto" ensures the fan will operate only when necessary, which can save several hundred dollars per year. Setting the fan to "on" causes it to run constantly and it requires more heat to maintain the desired temperature.

**Find and seal air leaks.** Prevent cold air from seeping in and heated air from escaping outside. The largest air leaks are typically around gaps in plumbing, chimneys, and wiring bypasses, as well as in dropped ceilings and soffits above cabinets.



## **Prep your home before leaving for vacation.**

Unplug as many appliances as possible. Many appliances use some energy even when they are turned off. You can also safely lower your thermostat to 55 degrees and turn your water heater to the lowest setting.

**Take advantage of rebates.** Before ringing in the New Year, claim your Energy Optimization rebates for energy-efficient products, such as lightbulbs, TVs, refrigerators and freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers/dryers and more.

View current incentives at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call **877.296.4319** for details. ■



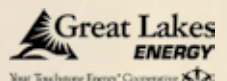
## **Save energy and be merry**

**Practice these simple tips to save energy and money this holiday season!**

- Deck the halls with LED holiday lights
- Keep your fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning
- Turn down the thermostat while entertaining guests
- Use a timer to control tree and outdoor lighting
- Unplug appliances before leaving for a long weekend

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

PHONE: **877.296.4319**



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

# Country Roads



## Enter Our 'Pay My Bill' Photo Contest!

Great Lakes Energy members whose photos we print in *Country Lines* will be entered into a drawing. One lucky member will win a credit up to \$200 on their December 2017 energy bill! Upcoming topics include: **Wild Weather** due **Nov. 15**—January 2017 issue, **Holiday Fun** due **Dec. 15**—February issue and **Family** due **Jan. 15**—March issue.

Visit [gtlakes.com/photocontest](http://gtlakes.com/photocontest) to submit your high-resolution digital photo and read contest rules.



A regal tree in full fall foliage amid bright green asparagus fields.  
*By Elizabeth Cambridge, Baldwin*



When we were young, my wife would say: "You always get lost on country roads." Now she says, "Let's go find a country road."  
*By Andy Byerly, Central Lake*



Winter wonderland. *By Debra Broda, Sylvan Township*



Around the Bend—fall in Antrim County. *By Wendy Leino, Boyne City*



Walking the Tunnel Of Trees on a crisp November day, I was in awe of the beauty on our county road and the feeling of tranquility there for us all to enjoy. *By Jan Woodcock, Harbor Springs*



# CASSEROLES

**These cozy comfort foods can go straight from your oven to your table.**

Photos—831 Creative

## Great Chicken Casserole

*Mary Ellen Babcock, Thumb Electric*

- 3 cups chopped cooked chicken
- 2 cups finely chopped celery
- 1 cup (4 ounces by weight) shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 can (4 ounces) water chestnuts, drained and chopped
- 1 can (10-¾ ounces) cream of chicken soup
- ½ cup slivered almonds
- 1 can (6 ounces) French-fried onion rings

Preheat oven to 350 F. Coat a 9×13 inch baking dish with cooking spray. In a large bowl, stir together chicken, celery, cheese, sour cream, mayonnaise, water chestnuts, soup, and almonds. Spoon into prepared baking dish. Bake, uncovered, for 30 minutes. Sprinkle onion rings evenly over top and bake 5 more minutes, or until bubbly around edges. Let stand 5–10 minutes before serving. Enjoy with a nice tossed salad on the side.

## Chicken and Rice Casserole

*Mary Scodeller, Great Lakes Energy*

- 4 chicken breasts
- 2 cups instant rice
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can onion soup
- cooking spray

Preheat oven to 350 F. Blend the three kinds of soup with 2 cups of instant rice. Pour into a casserole dish sprayed with cooking spray. Top with the chicken breasts, and cook for 1 ½ hours. Let cool and serve.



## Noodle Cream Cheese Casserole

Jeanie Henrion, Ontonagon

- 1 tablespoon margarine
- 1 pound ground beef
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 16 ounces tomato sauce
- 8 ounce package of noodles
- 8 ounce package cream cheese
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese



Preheat oven to 350 F. Brown ground beef in margarine. Add garlic, salt, sugar and tomato sauce. Cover and cook slowly for 15–20 minutes. Cook noodles and drain. Combine cream cheese and sour cream.

In a baking dish, layer noodles, cream cheese mixture and half of the sauce. Repeat layers. Spread cheddar cheese over the top. Bake for about 30 minutes (until heated throughout). Serve!

## Uncle Ben's Chicken and Rice

Janice Harvey, Great Lakes Energy

- 6-ounce package Uncle Ben's Long Grain and Wild Rice
- 1 frying chicken or equivalent pieces
- 1 can cream of chicken soup
- 2 ½ cups water

Preheat oven to 350 F. Sprinkle rice mix on bottom of buttered 9x13 pan. Combine soup, seasoning packet from rice, and water. Place chicken on top of rice and pour soup mixture over all. Bake for 1 hour, 15 minutes.



# Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

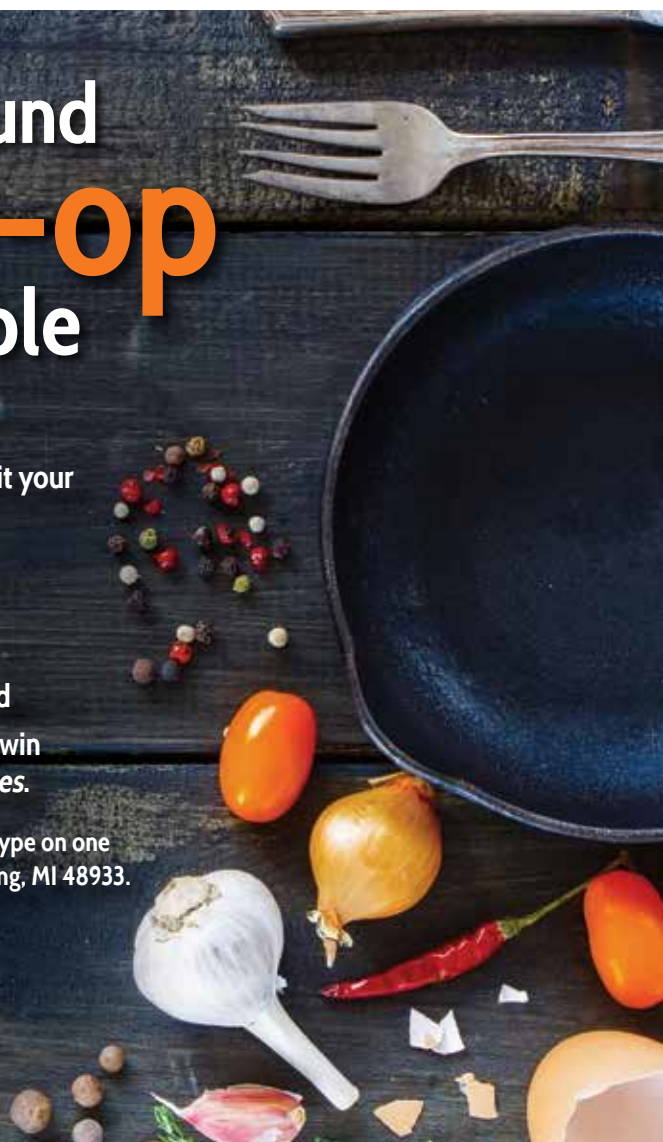
Join our **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

Go to **MICOOPKITCHEN.COM** and register.

Please submit your favorite recipe for **"CHIP DIPS"** by **DEC. 4**, **"SOUPS & STEWS"** recipe by **JAN. 4** and **"MUFFINS & BREADS"** by **FEB. 4** for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

Enter your recipe online at [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) or send to (handprint or type on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

**micoopkitchen.com**



# Happy With Their Hybrid Geo

Great Lakes Energy members Bruce and Kady Gracik like everything about their hybrid heat pump, especially the price.

After purchasing a 1,250 square foot home near Newaygo in the spring of 2014, they had the system installed that fall. It heats and cools their home with well water (see related article). The propane furnace that came with the house rarely comes on anymore as the hybrid system handles the bulk of their heating needs.

"We love it," says Kady. "We are very happy with the geothermal and would recommend it to anyone."

They selected the Well-Connect system, primarily because of its lower initial investment cost, which totaled \$5,400 and included about a half a day's worth of installation work. The forced-air system uses ductwork to heat or cool the home.

In addition to the lower cost, they took advantage of financing that allowed them to stay within budget by participating in the Michigan Saves Home Energy Loan program. Michigan Saves is a nonprofit organization working to make energy improvements easier for all Michigan energy consumers. Visit [michigansaves.org](http://michigansaves.org) for more information.

The hybrid model uses less water to operate than a conventional open-loop geothermal system which allows their well to continue to meet their showering, washing, and other domestic water needs.

It hasn't put a strain on their utility bills either. In the last two years, they've paid an average of \$117 per month for all their electricity needs—including the hybrid heat pump—based on a monthly average of 769 kilowatt-hours (kWh). During that time, their monthly bills ranged from \$83 (453 kWh in September 2016) to \$186 (1,397 kWh in January 2015).

Kady, who is a GLE employee, and her husband also have the option of taking advantage of special incentives available for heat pumps. Rebates and a lower heating/cooling rate are offered to any GLE member whose heat pump qualifies. For more information, call 1-888-GTLAKES, extension 8957. ■



Kady and Bruce Gracik of Newaygo rely on their hybrid geothermal system to keep their home comfortable inside all year round.

## Another Geothermal Option To Consider

The Well-Connect hybrid model owned by the Graciks was developed by Terra Caloric, a family-owned company in Alpena. Water is channeled through copper coils that draw heat without affecting its quality. Once heat is extracted during its minimal two gallons per minute flow through the heat pump, the water is released back into the ground. The Well-Connect system is designed to operate in parallel with a home's existing furnace. For more information visit [wellconnectgeo.com](http://wellconnectgeo.com) or call 989-356-2113.



## Rescue Workers Helped By People Fund

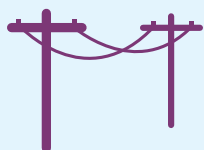
The Mason County Search and Rescue Team received a \$842 People Fund grant to purchase safety vests. Emergency responders at the township, county and state levels are shown here participating in a search and rescue drill. The different colored vests help identify the various agencies and the duties of the people involved whose coordinated efforts are necessary during an emergency.

Photo courtesy of Mason County Emergency Management.



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

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



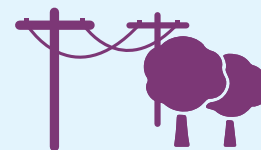
More Power  
Line Protection  
Devices



New  
Technology



Major  
Power Line  
Improvements



Aggressive  
Tree  
Maintenance

## What hinders our progress?



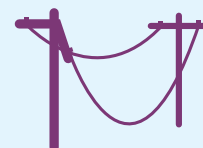
Storms



Man-made  
Accidents

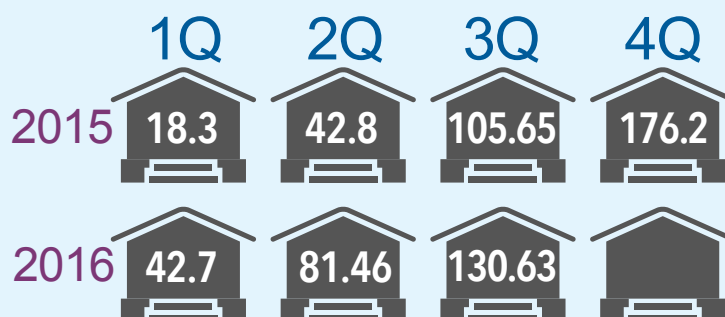


Animals



Equipment  
Failure

## AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Looking Out for You

OUR YEARLY GOAL:  
UNDER 163.2 MINUTES

Photos—Thom Skelding

# U.P. LUGE CLUB COMPETES ON WORLD STAGE

By Emily Haines Lloyd

**M**ost Michiganders have had the experience of climbing a snowy hill with a plastic or wooden sled in tow, plopping down at the top and pushing off to feel the cold, stinging air. Regardless of the bumps or wipeouts that follow, most people laugh like maniacs, stand up and brush off the snow, then climb the hill to do it all over again.

Far fewer individuals have the experience of sliding down a 280-foot hill at speeds ranging from 50–80 mph, but that's just what's happening in

Negaunee, MI at the Upper Peninsula Luge Club. For more than three decades, beginners with wide eyes and daredevils with years of experience have made the trek up Lucy Hill to make their way down in increments upwards of a half a mile. All of this happens on a luge—which looks similar to an old-fashioned winter sled with metal runners.

"You don't start fast," Coach Levi Underwood is quick to explain. "Your first time, it's just fast enough to get down the hill, and it's still thrilling."

The U.P. Luge Club has been holding clinics and open sledding for the public since the mid-80s. It provides local communities and tourists an opportunity to experience something few people ever get to do. Sliding (not "lugging" as you might expect) isn't available just anywhere, and Lucy Hill is the only natural luge track in the United States.

"Sliding, particularly on a natural track, isn't something you find in every community," said Tammy Wills, the current secretary of the luge club, former coach from 2010–2016 and a competitive slider herself since age 13. "Yet, this one-of-a-kind experience is in the middle of the Upper Peninsula and completely accessible and affordable."



All that is needed are warm clothes, a hat and mittens—the U.P. Luge Club provides the rest. But this is not just for recreational sliders.

The U.P. Luge Club is a feeder club for the luge natural track competitive circuit. As the only natural track in the U.S., young sliders who show both promise and determination are often taken to Europe to compete—where a natural track is both prominent and very competitive.

The U.P. Luge Club President, Fred Anderson, first started sliding when he took his Boy Scout Troop to luge at Lucy Hill.

“I was hooked, and I wasn’t the only one,” Anderson explains. “Years later, two scouts from that first trip went on to compete at the Olympics. Wendall Suckow and Chris Thorpe became very successful sliders—Thorpe going on to become the first American to medal in luge at the Olympics. And they both came through this club.”

Remembering his experiences at Lucy Hill, Underwood, who competed for years in Europe and on the Olympic development team, came back to coach.

“I had so many great teachers, Tammy included, who showed me how an athlete could be humble enough to coach,” said Underwood. “And I wanted to give back to this sport that gave so much to me.”

The joy seen on the faces at the U.P. Luge Club comes from all sorts: individuals who have fallen in love with this unexpected sport; novices who are taking their first slide down a track; adrenaline junkies looking for another hit; and that inner child who remembers the freedom and excitement that comes from climbing up a hill, sitting on a sled and just letting go. ■



## Three Sisters Luge Pizza

*Submitted by guest chefs from the U.P. Luge Club.*

Once used to describe the three devastating waves that led to the sinking of the Edmond Fitzgerald, Three Sisters is also the name for three tight turns and the most technical part of the Negaunee luge track.

This “three-turn” pizza is a favorite with club members and goes down as fast as a luge.

### Ingredients

- 1 French Bread, sliced lengthwise
- ½ cup sweet onion, diced
- 3 ounces ham, diced
- 2 ounces pepperoni
- 4 ounces cudighi, cooked
- ½ cup green pepper
- ½ cup red pepper
- ½ cup sliced tomato
- 1 cup cheddar cheese
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese
- 14 ounces pizza sauce

### Instructions

Preheat oven to 450 F. Brown the 4 ounces of cudighi. Cut the French bread lengthwise and toast for 4 minutes at 450 F. Spread pizza sauce on both pieces of toasted French bread.

Then add the following ingredients to the French bread in thirds:

#### Turn one /Step one

First third—ham, green peppers, onions

#### Turn two /Step two

Second third—pepperoni, red peppers, onions

#### Turn three /Step three

Last third—cudighi, tomatoes, onions

Bake for 6–8 minutes and enjoy.



## Savings For Holiday Shoppers

Do your holiday shopping and save with the Co-op Connections® card, available free to Great Lakes Energy members.

Use the Co-op Connections® discount card at participating area businesses. Here are just a few of the many discounts available:

- **Shelby Gem Factory** – 20 percent off Shelby Gem jewelry.
- **Grandpa Shorter's Gifts, Petoskey** – 10 percent off all non-sale merchandise. Excludes Lynn Haney Santa Claus.
- **Carrom Company, Ludington** – Five percent discount off all merchandise on web or in store.

Find bargains online or use your Co-op Connections® card at participating businesses, which includes valuable offers from national merchants, as well as local.

In addition, save up to 85 percent on prescription drugs and refills at participating retailers. Other healthy savings discounts are available, too. Visit [healthysavings.coop](http://healthysavings.coop) for more information.

Review the discounts by visiting our website, [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com), or use the Co-op Connections mobile app. Visit the App Store and search for Co-op Connections.

Don't have a card or internet access to the list of discounts? Simply call us at 888-485-2537, ext. 8957, and start saving today.

# Please Help Us Help Others

Since 2007, Great Lakes Energy employees have raised more than \$45,000 for local charities through their annual holiday fundraising. More than \$6,400 was raised last year alone.

Generous donations of goods and services from local businesses and other organizations make it possible for employees to hold silent auctions each year. Employees also donate items to the auctions. Proceeds go to charities throughout the Great Lakes Energy service area.

This year we again invite local businesses and groups to donate toward this good cause. Your silent auction donations will allow us to continue this successful endeavor to give back to our local communities.

To donate a good or service to the silent auction, contact us by Dec. 1 and ask for extension 8956. ■

## Dial 2-1-1 For Payment Help

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

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

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

If you should experience trouble accessing 2-1-1, you can do a search for the closest 2-1-1 provider in your area by visiting [211.org](http://211.org).

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

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



## Information For All Members Of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

**Y**our cooperative offers a program called the People Fund, which is funded through the voluntary rounding up of your monthly utility bill to the next whole dollar.

An all-volunteer board of directors appointed by the member-elected board of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative distributes the funds throughout the cooperative's service area. The Fund supports charitable efforts in and around the communities we serve. Money from the People Fund has been distributed to educational programs, medical groups, recreational organizations serving all ages, senior organizations and numerous other local charities. A copy of the most recent People Fund annual report, which details contributions, is available by contacting Great Lakes Energy, and prior year reports are highlighted in previous issues of *Michigan Country Lines* magazine.

Your participation in the People Fund is voluntary. If at any time you wish to discontinue participation in the People Fund, please let us know and we will make the change. If you are participating, your monthly bill is rounded up to the next whole dollar. If your bill is \$58.42, it would be rounded up to \$59. The 58 cents would then be contributed by Great Lakes Energy Cooperative on your behalf to the People Fund, to be used as explained above. A member's average annual contribution is about \$6. Your annual contribution to the People Fund is tax deductible and is reported on your monthly statement at the end of the year.

For additional information regarding the People Fund, contact the co-op office by mail or call 888-485-2537. ■

### **Cooperative offices will be closed for the holidays on the following dates:**

#### **Thanksgiving**

Thursday and Friday, Nov. 24–25

#### **Christmas**

Friday, Dec. 23 and Monday, Dec. 26

#### **New Year's Day**

Monday, Jan. 2, 2017

Although business offices will be closed, Great Lakes Energy emergency staff will remain on hand to serve you in case of outages. Please call 888-GT-LAKES to report an outage.

From our families to yours, have a happy and blessed holiday season!

## Tell Us How We're Doing!

### **You Could Win A \$25 Energy Gift**

We'd like to hear from you. Have you had a positive interaction with a GLE employee either on the phone or in-person? Tell us about it and you could win a \$25 energy gift.

Contact us with specific details of the interaction by phone, mail or email, and include the employee's name. You can even post the comment through a form on our website or on our Facebook page. We'll print your great comments in our employee newsletter. Employees who are recognized will be entered in a quarterly, random prize drawing. Plus, we'll award the member who submits the feedback for the winning employee with a \$25 energy gift!

We appreciate your feedback! We also welcome any suggestions or concerns with our service so we can work with you to resolve your issue as quickly as possible.

### **Contact us with your feedback today.**

Please be specific and include the employee name.

**888-GT-LAKES**

**[glenergy@glenergy.com](mailto:glenergy@glenergy.com)**

**[gtlakes.com/honorroll](http://gtlakes.com/honorroll)**

**[facebook.com/  
greatlakesenergy](https://facebook.com/greatlakesenergy)**

# Every Vote Counts

By Jack O'Malley

A busy year celebrating Olympians and honoring lost legends like Gordie Howe and David Bowie, 2016 will conclude with one of the most highly debated presidential elections in history. As we prepare ourselves for a new leader, I urge you to do one of two things.

1. Vote
2. Encourage someone you know to vote.

"I don't like the candidates." "My vote doesn't make a difference." "I'm busy." These may be reasonable explanations for the nearly half of Americans who choose not to vote during a presidential election year. To those who understand voting to be a great American privilege, they might sound more like excuses releasing our neighbors of any personal responsibility for the future of our nation.

"Voting is a right, not a duty," non-voters argue. "I have just as much right to exercise my right NOT to vote!" True. American people voluntarily fight (and sometimes die) for you to keep your right to vote—whether used or not. It's a right extended to every American citizen regardless of sex, race or economic standing. It's a right exercised in peace.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court described voting like this: No right is more precious in a free country than that of having a voice in the election of those who make the laws under which, as good citizens, we must live. Other rights, even the most basic, are illusory if the right to vote is undermined. *Wesberry v. Sanders*, 376 U.S. 1 (U.S. 1964).

Vital for the democratic process to work, your vote not only counts, but it also serves as a united voice to elected officials regardless of party. Your vote says, "Here I am, I'm paying attention!"



Jack O'Malley

Whether you choose to exercise your right to vote or not, Abraham Lincoln described it best when he said, "Elections belong to the people. It's their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

Hope to see you at the polls. ■

## *I Remember...*

**We invite members to share their fondest memories.**  
*Country Lines* will pay \$50 for stories we publish.

### **Guidelines**

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. *Country Lines* retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)



## «« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by Nov. 30 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and the name of your co-op.


Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the September 2016 issue is Karen Wienke, a HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as Black Star Farms in Suttons Bay. Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



Sept. Photo

# American Metal Roofs

**“Winter storms, ice dams, power outages...**



**We'll help you protect your home against the ravages of a Michigan winter ...”**

**Frank Farmer - President, AMERICAN METAL ROOFS**

It's true, our main business is metal roofing, but this time of year we offer products that help protect your home against the damaging effects of our long, icy winters. Products like Heated Shingle® and Heated Shingle Ice Dam Cutter® are products designed to melt ice buildup on your roof before it can take hold and cause expensive damage.

**Protection for any kind of roof - not just metal.**

We designed our Heated Shingle products to work on asphalt roofs as well as metal. So, if you've got problem ice areas on your roof, one of our Heated Shingle options may be exactly the solution you need.

**Keep the power on through local outages - no worries.**

Imagine. Within seconds of a local power outage, electricity in your home is restored - automatically. A whole house generator system keeps critical systems like heat, well pumps and medical equipment online until power is restored - and you never have to go outside.

**I grew up in the U.P. so I know firsthand what a Michigan winter can do.**

There is no doubt that winter weather can be hard on your home. That's why we offer our Heated Shingle products and whole house generator systems; to help protect your home through the worst of winter. And once the snow clears, we'll be happy to talk with you about one of our Snow Country roofs as well.

**Protection. Permanence. You deserve nothing less.**

**VISIT OUR SHOWROOMS:**

**FLINT - 6140 Taylor Drive • CHARLOTTE - 1875 Lansing Road**

**Call Today! 844-638-2576 844-METAL-ROOFS**

Read Customer Stories and Watch Videos at:

**AmericanMetalRoofs.com**

See Dozens of Pictures • Enter to Win a Metal Roof • Request a Quote



**Can We Use Your Home In Our Advertising?**


You Could Save Thousands On A New American Metal Roof!

CALL TODAY to find out if your home qualifies for a Showcase Home Discount.

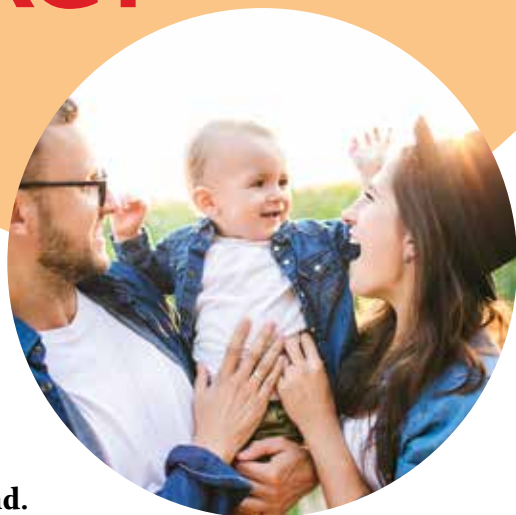
**Veterans receive an extra \$500 discount!!!**



gtlakes.com

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# As a Member of Great Lakes **ENERGY** YOU get the credit!



**G**et the credit you deserve—a **Capital Credit Refund**.  
Members who purchased electricity from GLE in 2015 or 1991, or both, will receive a capital credit refund on their December bill.

For the **14th straight year**, we're giving members the credit they deserve. Investor-owned utilities return profits to investors. Cooperatives like Great Lakes Energy return capital credits to members.

Watch for your **Capital Credit Refund** in **December**.

*Learn more!*

gtlakes.com 888-GT-LAKES (485-2537)

