

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Meet Our
Deer Blind
Contest Winners!

Plus!

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- 8 Capital Credit Refunds Coming
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**November/December
2014
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Unsolicited letters, photos and manuscripts are welcome. *Country Lines*, however, will not be responsible for their safe keeping or return.

The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

Change of Address: Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.



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Members Earn Money Back



Steve Boeckman
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

Great Lakes Energy members receive capital credits, or money back, when they belong to a cooperative that manages its finances wisely.

Capital credits may not be a term you'll easily remember, but you will remember getting money back on your bill. This year, Great Lakes Energy is returning over \$7.1 million in capital credits to our members. The money will appear as a credit on your 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 nearly \$41.5 million.

Electric co-ops are different than other types of utilities. Great Lakes Energy operates at cost — collecting just enough revenue to run and expand the business. When Great Lakes Energy has money left over, it's allocated back to you and the other members as capital credits. You see this allocation each year on your June bill. When our financial position permits, the capital credits are retired and returned to members. Unlike other utilities, we don't have investors. You're the owner of this business and our profits are returned to you as a capital credit.

As a business owned by the members we serve, we follow the cooperative economic participation principle that members contribute equitably to and democratically control their cooperative's capital. This applies to the directors you elect, the rates you pay and the margins or profits earned by the cooperative, as well.

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 co-op distribution line systems in the country. It also includes emergency repairs when big storms damage our system.

Everyone who serves you at Great Lakes Energy has a role in ensuring that your co-op remains a strong, well-run business. It's the hard work of our employees and board of directors that has made the return of capital credits possible for the past 12 years.

As an owner of this business, your membership entitles you to share in the value it provides. Read more about this year's refund on page 8. ■

Co-op Principles

The cooperative principles are guidelines by which cooperatives put their values into practice. Your co-op returns profits to members because of principle #3:

- 1 Voluntary and Open Membership
- 2 Democratic Member Control
- 3 **Member Economic Participation**
Members contribute equitably to, and democratically control, the capital of their cooperative.
- 4 Autonomy and Independence
- 5 Education, Training and Information
- 6 Cooperation Among Cooperatives
- 7 Concern for Community

Billing Rules, Tariff Changes Approved

Changes in billing rules and tariffs were approved Sept. 24 by the Great Lakes Energy Cooperative Board of Directors. The changes take effect Jan. 1, 2015.

See the notice below for more information about the changes. For specific details, visit gtlakes.com or contact us at (888) 485-2537.

Notice to Members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

Billing Rules and Tariff Changes Effective Jan. 1, 2015

The Great Lakes Energy Cooperative Board of Directors adopted the following changes to the Cooperative's Rate Book for Electric Service at a special Board Meeting held Sept. 24, 2014, in accordance with P.A. 167.

1. The cooperative's Contributions-In-Aid-to-Construction (CIAC) fee schedule was revised to better reflect current costs. Member-customers who request electric line extensions to serve a new service location or who request a change in electric service facilities at their current location will be affected.
2. Load management tariffs were revised. Rates CH, PCH and CWH will now be subject to change and may not be available to new enrollees and be non-transferable, should the cooperative's power supplier eliminate or modify the rates.
3. A new rate option was created for schedule A, A-S and GS that allows members to pre-pay for electric use.
4. Special fees were revised, including the Misc. Special Service Charge and Bad Check Handling Fee.
5. The interest rate paid on deposits was revised to tie to the annual U.S. Treasury EE Bond interest rate.
6. Standards and Billing Practices for Residential and Non-Residential Service were revised to simplify relevant tariffs and establish tariff sheets under authority of the Board of Directors.

This notice is being sent to all members, as required by P.A. 167, by publication in *Michigan Country Lines* at least 30 days prior to the effective date of Jan. 1, 2015.

For specific details, call 1-888-GT-LAKES or visit www.gtlakes.com.

Access To Rules & Rates

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

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

The information can be obtained by contacting Great Lakes Energy at 1-888-485-2537.

Why We Send You Country Lines

We send you *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most convenient, economical way to share information with our members. It takes the place of many mailings we would otherwise make to get information to you about our services, director elections and member meetings, and staff and management decisions you should know about as an owner of the co-op. It also carries legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at substantial cost.

And, sending *Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its basic principles—to educate and communicate openly with members.

The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Country Lines* on your behalf at a cost of \$4.15 per year, as part of your electric bill. The current cost is 42 cents per copy, less than a first-class stamp.

The magazine is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association.





HOLIDAY HAPPINESS

These make-ahead recipes are time-savers, and a perfect compliment to your holiday feast!

Holiday Spinach Dip

1 large round crusty bread, slice off top and hollow
 2 pkgs. 10-oz. spinach, defrosted, chopped, squeezed
 2 c. sour cream
 2 c. Hellman's® mayo
 1 c. chopped onion, very fine
 2 t. dill weed
 2 T. oregano
 1 ½ t. Lawry's® seasoning salt

Mix all ingredients. Chill overnight. Serve in bread. Use scooped out bread and additional small bread slices to dip. Looks pretty surrounded with cherry tomatoes.

Arlene Russel, Harbor Springs

Bailey's Milk Chocolate Truffles

¾ c. heavy cream
 3 T. butter
 1 ½ lb. milk chocolate chopped in pieces (not chocolate bits)
 ¾ c. Bailey's® Irish cream
 ½ c. confectioners' sugar
 ¼ c. cocoa powder
 ⅛ t. cinnamon

Combine cream and butter in saucepan and bring to a light boil; remove from heat. Add chocolate pieces, stir to melt. Stir in Bailey's®. Pour into bowl and refrigerate at least 6 hours. Spoon out walnut size pieces of the mixture onto cookie sheet and refrigerate until firm. Before serving, sift together confectioners' sugar, cocoa and cinnamon or you can do them all separately, for a different variety of colors. Roll each truffle into a ball and roll in cocoa/sugar mixture. Makes 40 or more. Refrigerate in airtight container. Use candy papers to keep them from sticking together when serving at room temperature. These do have alcohol in them, so serve just at an adult party.

Kami Maurer House, Sebawaing

Low Effort Eggnog



4 egg yolks
 ⅓ c. sugar, plus 1 T.
 1 pint whole milk
 1 c. heavy cream
 3 oz. rum or bourbon (or extract)
 1 t. freshly grated nutmeg
 4 egg whites

In the bowl of a stand mixer, beat the egg yolks until they lighten in color. Gradually add the ⅓ c. sugar and continue to beat until it is completely dissolved. Add the milk, cream, bourbon and nutmeg, and stir to combine. Place egg whites in the bowl of a stand mixer and beat to soft peaks. With the mixer still running, gradually add the 1 tablespoon of sugar and beat until stiff peaks form. Whisk the egg whites into the mixture. Chill and serve.

Laura Kurella, Sturgis

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Sandwiches" recipes by **Nov. 10** and your favorite "Soups" recipes by **Dec. 10**.

Mail (handwritten or typed on one side, please) to: *Country Lines* Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864; or email recipes@countrylines.com.

Contributors whose recipes we print in 2014 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2015 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Visit countrylines.com for more reader recipes!

Photos—831 Creative

Don't Get Lost in the Shuffle



Craig Borr, CEO,
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

Six hundred pages, plus another 1,000 of supporting documents—that's the length of the latest proposal from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). It would amend the Clean Air Act (only 465 pages) to limit carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions from the power plants on which Michigan relies today.

Besides the actual rule, a lot has been written about its legality, feasibility and complexity. In fact, Michigan Rep. John Dingell, the longest-serving member of the U.S. House of Representatives, emphatically stated several years ago that the EPA's regulation of carbon dioxide would result in a "glorious mess". His position, and I agree, is that Congress should determine far-reaching energy policy—not a federal agency loaded with lifetime bureaucrats.

But lost in the shuffle of these thousands of pages is *the impact on people*. How much will electric bills increase? Will manufacturers relocate? How many jobs will be lost? Which power plants will be forced to shut down? In Michigan, one-third of Michigan's coal fleet will close as a result of EPA regulations. Arguably, some of those facilities need to close, as they are old and dirty.

Energy policy questions are often difficult, but they are important questions. Michigan's electric cooperatives work hard to keep your electricity affordable and reliable. That's why we're asking the EPA for answers to these and many other questions.

We don't want you to get lost in the shuffle. We put you—our members—first. We advocate for you. Our member-cooperatives see you every month paying your bill at the office. We work with you. We know when times are tough. We often live next door.

After all, you govern us. Our board members and community leaders are one and the same. We're as local as any organization, and we like it that way.

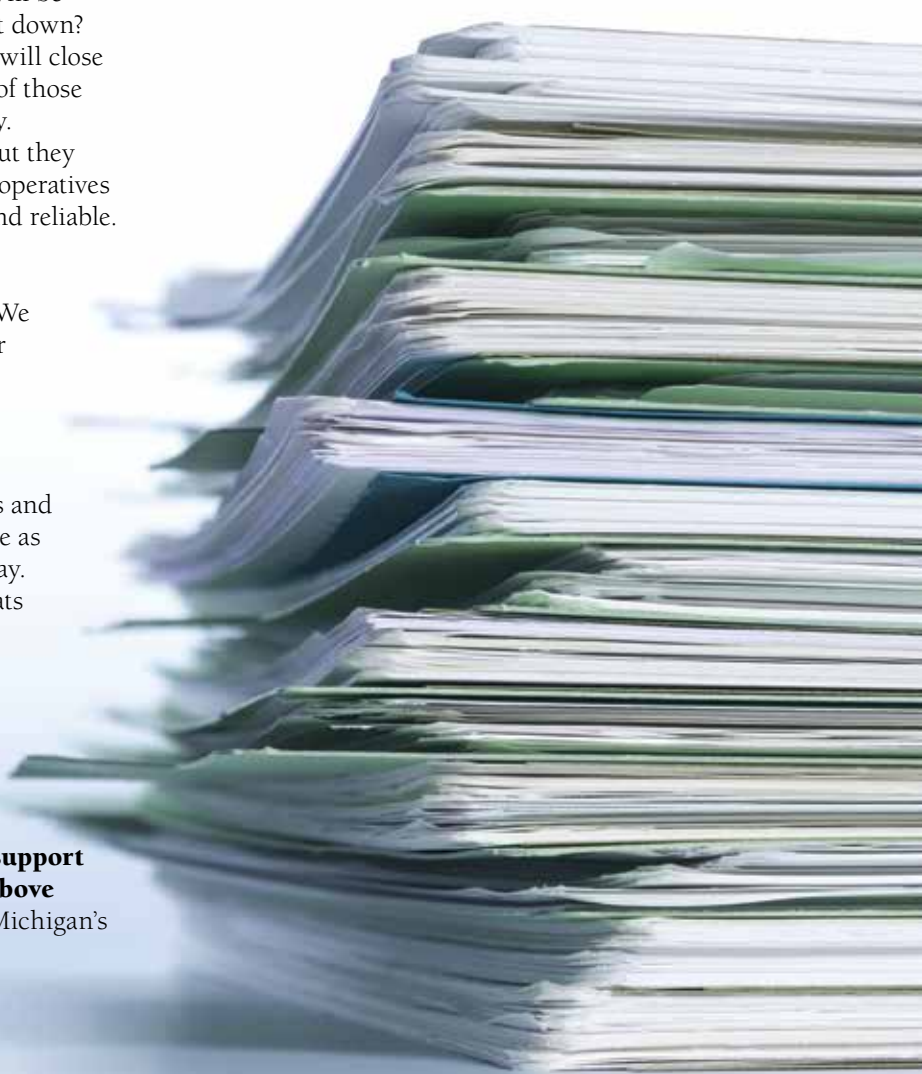
That's why we keep reminding the bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., that the rules they write have an impact on the real world—where we live. That's why we're encouraging everyone to take 30 seconds to sign up at Action.coop and tell the EPA we cannot afford these regulations.

Please raise your voice. Don't get lost in the shuffle. **Together, we can tell the EPA that support for the environment and a true all-of-the-above energy policy are not mutually exclusive.** Michigan's

electric cooperatives lead by example. Our members are proud to be leaders in both energy efficiency and renewable energy. We have been leaders in both of these important areas long before they were required by the Michigan Legislature. Like many of our member-consumers that make their living in the agriculture industry, electric co-ops have always been good stewards of the environment because it is the right thing to do.

Together we need to remind regulators and lawmakers that the impact the EPA's proposed new rules could have on rural Michigan people, and others throughout our country, should be their *first* thought, not their *last*.

With over 900 electric cooperatives in the country backing us up, our voice can be heard. We have a great and positive story to tell. We can tell the story together. And it won't even take 1,600 pages. The EPA's public comment period is extended to Dec. 1—please take a moment to visit Action.coop today and let your voice be heard. ■



Capital Credit Refunds Coming

Great Lakes Energy members who purchased electricity in 2013 or 1989 (or both) will receive a capital credit refund. Most will see the refund applied to their December bill.

A capital credit retirement package worth over \$7.1 million was approved in September by your co-op's board of directors. It includes \$1 million in capital credits earned by members in 2013, and over \$6.1 million from 1989.

Refund amounts will be based on electricity purchases made by members in the years noted above, and those who spent more for electricity will receive larger refunds. For example, a \$7.25 refund will be issued to the average residential member whose electricity purchases totaled \$1,301 in 2013. The refund will be more if the member also bought electricity from the co-op in 1989.

Members with refunds over \$1,000 will receive a check.

Former co-op members entitled to a refund will also receive a check.

Since 2003, Great Lakes Energy has issued nearly \$41.5 million in capital credit refunds to members.

Q & A About Capital Credits

Q. What are capital credits?

A. Capital credits are a key reason why you're more than just a customer. As a Great Lakes Energy member, 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 rather 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 smaller than my neighbor's?

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.

Q. Why are the refunds based on 2013 and 1989?

A. Capital credits were retired from the oldest year (1989) and most recently completed fiscal year (2013) to allow both long-time and new members to receive the benefit. Also, all capital credits earned by members prior to 1990 have now been retired.

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 2013 or 1989 (or both). If you did not get a refund, you may be a member who joined us in 2014 or may have assumed the electric account from a relative who is now deceased. We will provide you with instructions on how to claim any capital credit refunds that may be issued in the deceased'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 2014. However, based on how well we've done in the past with returning capital credits, we expect to continue this program next year.

Including this year's retirement, a total of nearly \$41.5 million in capital credits have been retired and returned since 2003.

Most importantly, we have remained financially strong despite economic conditions, changing energy prices, and other issues and challenges facing the electric industry today. ■

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

Information for All Members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

Your 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.

GLE Solar Snapshot

This is the first in a series of brief updates on the operation of the solar display that Great Lakes Energy installed outside its Boyne City office to help educate its members on renewable sources of energy.

Kilowatt-hours (kWhs) generated by the display are from the system's first 136 days (May 6–Sept. 18) of operation. The solar energy helps meet GLE's power needs at its Boyne office.

Size: 10 kilowatts (kW) or 10,000 watts (enough to help power a home).

Configuration: Two 5 kW arrays, a tilting array that can be adjusted to maximize its sun exposure, and a fixed array. Each rectangular array contains 20 solar panels.

Cost, including installation and inverter: \$41,392

Break-even point (using 2014 GLE rates): 25 years with 30 percent tax credit, 35 years without tax credit

Total kWh generated (5/6–9/18): 6,260

kWhs/month:

May (5/6-5/31)	1,214
June	1,426
July	1,534
August	1,381
September (9/1-9/18)	<u>705</u>
TOTAL	6,260

Avg. kWhs/day: 46

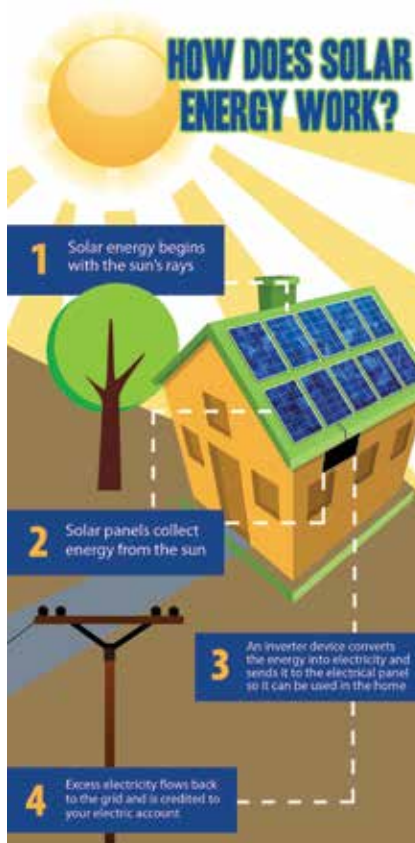
Daily kWh high: 71 (June 5)

Daily kWh low: 8 (Sept. 10)

Members are welcome to view the array by visiting the Boyne City office located at 1323 Boyne Avenue. The office is open Monday through Friday, but the solar panels are available for viewing at any time. Find information at gtlakes.com about the panels' output, net metering, and other project facts.

Great Lakes Energy does not sell or install solar panels. ■

Photo: In mid-September, the tilting array was adjusted to align it with the sun's lower position in the sky. The fixed array remains at the same angle. In the next report, we will see what difference this makes in amount of energy generated by each array.





Meet Our Deer Blind Contest Winners!

From hideouts that resemble a cozy cottage (complete with area rug) to basic shelters, we received more than 60 entries in our *Country Lines* tricked-out deer blind contest. Who knew there were so many cool deer blind styles? Thanks to all who participated—it was difficult to choose! Our winners are featured here, but visit countrylines.com to tour the tricked-out blinds of other electric co-op members who entered.

“Most Tricked-Out”

Congratulations to **Ward Forquer**, a HomeWorks Tri-County member, for having the most tricked-out blind. Affectionately known as “Fort Miller Lite,” it’s a two-story 10 by 14-foot insulated structure with a carpeted observation room, solar panel, propane heat and lights, 13-inch flat screen color TV, bunk beds, and customized Miller Lite memorabilia. Located in Isabella County, it can host up to 12 people.



Photos—David Trumple Photography

“Most Interestingly-Engineered”

Kudos to **Ronald Camp** for building the most interestingly-engineered blind. Working in underground excavation for 30 years, Ron envisioned a 36-foot underground storage tank for his shelter. The HomeWorks Tri-County member set the tank upright, above ground, and added a cupola at the top that swivels 360 degrees. Getting to the top means climbing a 28-rung ladder, but he is installing a 12-volt elevator.



“Best Story Behind the Blind”

Dean Ronk made his deerblind after finding that nearly every garage sale had a fake Christmas tree—usually with a bent, broken base or missing branches. The Midwest Energy co-op member decided to bend the wire tree branches around a circle of hog fencing, with heavy plastic as a roof. His idea has gained popularity, and he says, “it makes hunting affordable, and a ‘green’ way to hunt by recycling old trees.” Now he makes them for friends, and people are giving him their old trees. ■



Photo Courtesy - Dean Ronk

Home Heating Assistance Programs • 2014–2015 Season

Program: Winter Protection Plan
Contact: Your Local Utility Company

Income Guidelines 2014–2015	
# in Household	150% Poverty Guide Maximum Income
1	\$17,505
2	23,595
3	29,685
4	35,775
5	41,865
6	47,955
7	54,045
8	60,090

Add \$6,090 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 in the plan must make arrangements with their utility company to pay off any money owed before the next heating season.

The **Winter Protection Plan** protects eligible senior and low-income customers from service shut-offs and high utility bill payments during the winter months (Nov. 1–March 31). You may enroll between Nov. 1 and March 31. If you are an eligible low-income customer, your utility service will remain on 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 of any past due bills.

When the protection period ends (March 31), from April 1 through Oct. 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 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 Winter Protection Plan are not required to make specific payments to ensure that their service will not be shut off between Nov. 1 and March 31. However, seniors are encouraged to pay whatever they can during the winter so they will not have large, unmanageable bills when the protection ends.

Program: Home Heating Credit
Contact: Mich. Dept. of Treasury

# Exemp.	Max. Income	# Exemp.	Max. Income
1	\$12,842	4	26,243
2	17,329	5	30,728
3	21,786	6	35,186

Add \$4,457 for each exemption over 6.

You can apply for a **Home Heating Credit** for the **2014** 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).** The Home Heating Credit claim form must be filed with the Michigan Dept. of Treasury **before Sept. 30, 2015.**

Program: Earned Income Credit
Contact: U.S. Treasury Dept., Internal Revenue Service irs.gov/EITC
 Michigan Dept. of Treasury michigan.gov/treasury

The **Earned Income Credit (EIC)** 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 EIC, 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 EIC.

You may claim a **Michigan earned income tax credit** for tax year **2014** equal to a percentage of the federal earned income tax credit for which you are eligible. Visit the website or see the **2014 MI tax booklet** for details.

Program: Crisis Assistance Program
Contact: Local Michigan Department of Human Services (DHS) michigan.gov/mdhs

State Emergency Relief Program (SER): mibenefitsaccess.org You do not have to be a DHS 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 DHS cash grant, you may vendor part of it towards heat and electric bills. Contact your local DHS 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 shown above) and funding is available. **Weatherization** may include caulking, weatherstripping, and insulation. Contact your local Community Action Agency for details. Visit mcaaa.org to find one in your area.

Program: United Way
Contact: Call 2-1-1 or 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.

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:

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 <http://Michigan.gov/dmva>

Program: MI Energy Assistance Program
Contact: Utility or 2-1-1 in late November

Agency assistance through MEAP, which includes funds from the Low Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF), became available in early October. Visit Michigan.gov/mpsc for details about organizations that have received MEAP grants. Shut-off protection is provided Nov. 1–April 15 for all residential customers (regardless of income) of any Michigan electric that has chosen not to collect 97 cents monthly from its customers for the LIEAF fund.

EO Rebate Helps GLE Member Save Energy



By replacing their incandescent lightbulbs with LED bulbs, the Charlevoix Country Club is expected to save \$5,400 per year in electricity costs. The club received a \$3,872 rebate from Great Lakes Energy's Energy Optimization (EO) program that helped make the project possible. From left are Great Lakes Energy's Thomas Mann, club representative William Alward, and EO program consultant Kevin Phillips. The EO program is funded by a surcharge that GLE members pay on their electric bill. ■



SAIDI Says

Good Third Quarter For Service Reliability

SAIDI (pronounced SAY-DEE) says Great Lakes Energy finished the third quarter of 2014 with fewer average outage minutes than for the same period last year.

On Oct. 1, 2014, average outage minutes totaled 99.85, compared to 126.24 minutes reported on the same date a year ago. We remain on track to reach our 2014 reliability goal, which is to not exceed 182.1 average outage minutes.

The goal is based on average outage minutes recorded during normal conditions. Typically, outages are due to weather, animals, equipment failures, vehicle accidents, and other causes.

SAIDI is an industry standard index used by your cooperative to determine the average amount of time a GLE member could be without power in a given year.

Since it represents an average, some members actually experience no outage times while others experience more than the SAIDI number.

Weather-related outage events are factored into the SAIDI calculations, with the exception of major event days (MEDs). Storms that create MEDs occur infrequently and are the most damaging.

Great Lakes Energy will continue working to limit the weather's damaging impact on its distribution system. The addition of more line protection devices, use of new technologies, improvements to major power line circuits, and ongoing vegetation management to limit tree damage to power lines are all helping to get the lights back on safely and more quickly for members during storms.

Watch for SAIDI goal updates in future issues of *Michigan Country Lines*. ■

Use Your Space Heater Safely

Many people use space heaters for winter warmth, but they can be dangerous if used improperly.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates that 25,000 home fires every year are associated with space heaters, and cause over 300 deaths. An additional 6,000 people annually go to the hospital for related burns.

These fires are caused by contact with or nearness to the heating elements, flammable fuels used in the heaters, defective wiring, and carbon monoxide poisoning caused by improper venting or incomplete fuel combustion.

Here are tips for using a electric space heater safely:

- Keep it at least 3 feet from flammables, such as curtains, clothing, furniture or bedspreads.
- Select a model with an automatic shut-off, in case it tips.
- Buy one that is certified by an independent testing lab, such as Underwriters Laboratories (UL).
- Buy the right size to handle the area to be heated.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep kids and pets at a safe distance.
- Never leave it unattended, or sleep with it on.
- Never use or store flammable liquids near it.



- Do not use in a bathroom—a high-moisture area can cause damage.
- Keep it away from water to prevent electrocution.
- Check the cord for fraying and cracks, and do not use an extension cord to run it.
- Be sure the plug fits snugly in the outlet. (The cord and plug may feel warm when operating, but it shouldn't feel hot. If it does, unplug it and have a repair person check for problems.)
- Do not try to repair a broken heater yourself—go to a qualified appliance service center.

Visit <http://www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/463.html> for more safety tips on space heaters that use wood or kerosene. ■



Save energy, save money!

There are plenty of cues telling us that the end of the year is near—the air is cooler, the leaves have fallen, and the calendar is almost open to December. Opportunities are still available to save energy AND receive rebates and incentives.

ENERGY TIP: Do you have a plan to save energy? Electricity demand by U.S. homes is forecast to climb as much as 21 percent by 2040. Act now.

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit michigan-energy.org.



Alpine Power Plant
Northeast view from M-32 Hwy

Wolverine Co-op Plans New Natural Gas Power Plant

A new, natural gas-fueled electric generating plant is being planned by Wolverine Power Cooperative, of Cadillac. Called the Alpine Power Plant, its location will be in Elmira Township, Otsego County, west of Gaylord. Wolverine, a not-for-profit electric cooperative, provides wholesale electric power to six electric cooperatives throughout Michigan.

“Wolverine is excited about moving forward with a new natural gas peaking plant,” said project spokesman, Ken Bradstreet. “Our Alpine Power Plant will provide a nice balance to Wolverine’s existing power supply portfolio, while at the same time increasing electrical reliability in northern Michigan and complementing the ever-increasing amount of renewable energy in Michigan.”

Wolverine intends to present its development plans to both the Elmira Township and Otsego County planning commissions within the next month. Wolverine will also apply for an air quality permit with the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality.

After a nearly two-year evaluation, Wolverine chose the Elmira Township site and entered into property options for nearly 170 acres of land. The location was

chosen, in part, due to the convergence of existing interstate natural gas pipelines and high-voltage electric transmission lines on the property.

Wolverine expects the project investment associated with the Alpine Power Plant to exceed \$100 million and provide significant tax revenues to several local units of government. “The Alpine Power Plant will provide a major boost to the local economy,” Bradstreet explains.

Through sound financial management, Wolverine is able to build this project with existing funds. Based on preliminary cost estimates, it is anticipated there will be no rate impact on the electric co-ops that purchase power from Wolverine. Visit alpinecleanenergy.com for further details on the proposed plant.

Wolverine supplies wholesale power to Cherryland Electric Cooperative (Grawn); Great Lakes Energy (Boyne City); HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative (Portland); Midwest Energy Cooperative (Cassopolis); Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op (Onaway); Spartan Renewable Energy, Inc. (Cadillac), and Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative (Cadillac). ■



«« Do You Know Where This Is?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **Dec. 10** will be entered in a drawing for a \$50 credit for electricity from their electric co-op.

We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, 48864. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op. Only those sending

complete information will be entered in the drawing. The winner will be announced in the January 2015 issue.

The September contest winner is Phyllis Burge, of Manistique, a Cloverland Electric Cooperative member who correctly identified the photo as the



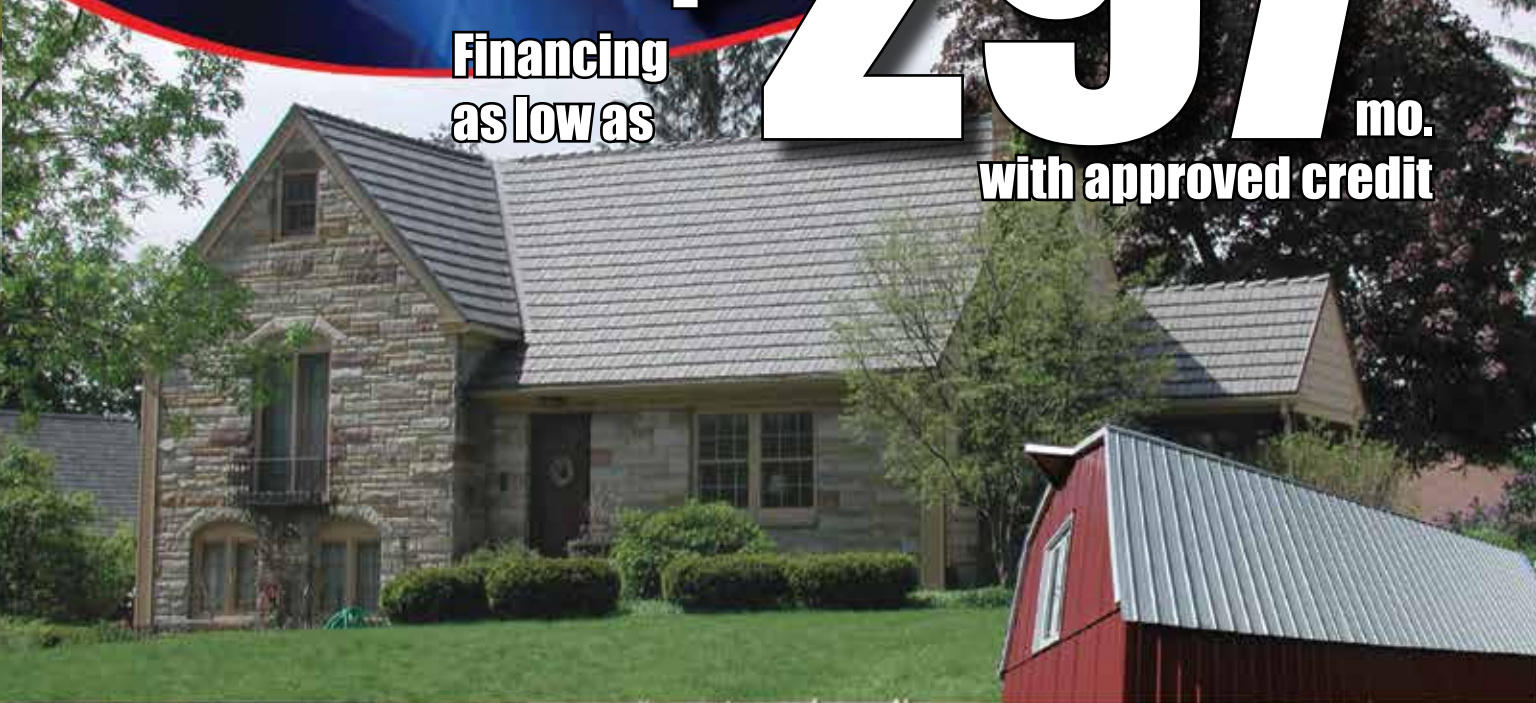
East Channel Lighthouse on Grand Island in the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore area.

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