

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LIVES

A photograph of Valerie Brader, a woman with long brown hair, smiling and standing in front of a blurred background of a building interior. She is wearing a dark blue jacket with white ruffled trim over a yellow lace top.

Valerie Brader is Michigan's New  
'First Lady of  
Energy'

Plus!

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Executive Editor  
**Casey Clark**

Editors  
**Christine Dorr**  
**Gail Knudtson**

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Unsolicited letters, photos and manuscripts are welcome. *Country Lines*, however, will not be responsible for their safe keeping or return.

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



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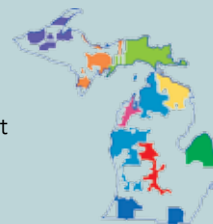
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## ON THE COVER\*

Chosen as the executive director of the new Michigan Agency for Energy, Valerie Brader says the state faces very serious energy issues but, "Big challenges offer the biggest opportunity to make a difference."

Photo—Matthew Mitchell

\*Some co-op editions have a different cover.



Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
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### Board of Directors

**Richard Walsworth** *Chairman*  
3701 N. 48th Ave., Mears, MI 49436  
231-873-2418 • [rwalsworth@glenergy.com](mailto:rwalsworth@glenergy.com)

**Mark Carson** *Vice-Chairman*  
01950 Anderson Rd., Boyne City, MI 49712  
231-582-0688 • [mcarson@glenergy.com](mailto:mcarson@glenergy.com)

**Larry Monshor** *Treasurer*  
1541 Thumm Rd., Gaylord, MI 49735  
989-705-1778 • [lmonshor@glenergy.com](mailto:lmonshor@glenergy.com)

**Paul Byl** *Secretary*  
9941 W. Buchanan Rd., Shelby, MI 49455  
231-861-5911 • [pbyl@glenergy.com](mailto:pbyl@glenergy.com)

**Richard Evans** *Director*  
11195 Essex Rd.  
Ellsworth, MI 49729  
231-588-7114 • [revans@glenergy.com](mailto:revans@glenergy.com)

**Dale Farrier** *Director*  
1561 N. Selkirk Lake Road,  
Kalkaska, MI 49646  
231-564-0853 • [dfarrier@glenergy.com](mailto:dfarrier@glenergy.com)

**Robert Kran** *Director*  
7380 N. Tuttle Rd., Free Soil, MI 49411  
231-464-5889 • [bkran@glenergy.com](mailto:bkran@glenergy.com)

**Paul Schemanski** *Director*  
5974 Stolt Rd., Petoskey, MI 49770  
231-439-9079 • [paul.schemanski@glenergy.com](mailto:paul.schemanski@glenergy.com)

**Robert Thurow** *Director*  
819 W. Chauvez Rd., Scottville, MI 49454  
231-757-3430 • [rthurow@glenergy.com](mailto:rthurow@glenergy.com)

**President/CEO: Steve Boeckman**  
888-485-2537

**Communications**  
**Director/Editor: Dave Guzniczak**  
231-487-1316

**Boyne City Headquarters**  
1323 Boyne Ave.  
Boyne City, MI 49712  
**Hours:** 8 a.m.–5 p.m. M–F  
**Phone:** 888-485-2537

**To report an outage, call:**  
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# Stay Connected With GLE

**W**e know rough weather will occur, and sometimes power outages simply can't be avoided. But did you know there are steps you can take to ensure your electricity is restored as quickly and safely as possible? By keeping your contact information up to date, you can take full advantage of the services Great Lakes Energy offers.

Please be sure to provide us with a current phone number, mailing address and e-mail address. You can call with your updated information or simply visit us online at [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) to revise your contact information.

Today, with the press of a button, you can easily report an outage. At Great Lakes Energy we use the phone number you provide to link your service address to our outage management system. For example, if you call us to report an outage, our automated system instantly recognizes your phone number and can determine the particular service address from which you are reporting an outage. But remember—this only works if your current phone number is linked to your service address.

Our automated phone system is also used to notify members when tree-trimming crews will be in their area removing trees and limbs near power lines. Or we may need to contact you about a planned outage scheduled in your area for system maintenance and repair work.

Your email address helps us contact you with important information regarding the co-op including tree trimming in your area, rate changes, rebates and special offers available exclusively to GLE members.

Visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) or call 888-485-2537 and make sure you're up to date. ■



**Steve Boeckman**  
Great Lakes Energy  
President/CEO

## Please Watch For Ballot Next Month

Great Lakes Energy members in three director districts will receive a mail-in ballot with their July/August issue of *Michigan Country Lines*.

Three board positions, each for three years, will need to be filled in districts 1, 2 and 7.

### Counties by district are:

- District 1 – Emmet**
- District 2 – Charlevoix, Cheboygan**
- District 7 – Oceana, Muskegon**

The terms of directors Paul Schemanski of Petoskey (District 1), Mark Carson of Boyne City (District 2) and Paul Byl of Shelby (District 7) expire this year.

Members in these districts will also be able to review profiles of the candidates running in their district.

**Winners will be announced Aug. 26 at the GLE annual business meeting.**



## Saving Energy For Ice Mountain

**B**y greatly improving the efficiency of their water bottle manufacturing process and retrofitting their parking lot lights with energy efficient LEDs, the Ice Mountain plant in Mecosta County is expected to reduce their electricity usage by an estimated 1.1 million kilowatt-hours (kWh) per year. The plant received a rebate of over \$68,500 from Great Lakes Energy's Energy Optimization (EO) program that helped make the energy-efficiency improvements possible. Presenting the rebate check to Ice Mountain workers are EO program consultant Kevin Phillips and GLE's Joe McHugh. From left are Phillips, Mark Bridges, McHugh, Jay Stout, Todd Nausadis, Rick McGahey, Steve LaBarge, Shawn Robertson and Jeff Nelson.

The EO program is funded by a surcharge that Ice Mountain and other GLE members pay on their electric bill. Residential EO rebates are also available. GLE members can visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319 for more information. ■



## Student Leaders

**R**epresenting Great Lakes Energy at the spring Youth Leadership Summit were, from left, Daria O'Neill (Wayland), Sarah Pavey (Frederic), Emily Kurburski (Petoskey), Sanford Narmore (Custer), Janay Smith (South Boardman) and Brooke Thurow (Scottville). Students from electric cooperatives throughout Michigan gathered at SpringHill Camps in Evart to learn about leadership, career opportunities in the electric industry, and getting involved in the democratic process. ■



## Historic Farms Honored

Congratulations to Velma Gapinski of Gaylord, Larry and Ellen Haywood of Hastings, and Thomas and Marilyn Kushak of Springfield, IL, whose farms in Otsego, Barry and Emmet counties received state Centennial Farm certification.

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

GLE members can request an application or receive more information about the program by contacting The Historical Society of Michigan, 517-324-1828, or by visiting the Programs section of their website, [www.centennialfarms.org](http://www.centennialfarms.org).

## Tips for Building a Strong, Efficient Home

**T**here are new home construction methods available that are much stronger and efficient than typical insulated, wood framing. Some of these methods could more than double the insulation value of typical framed walls.

For a wood-framed house, use staggered, double-stud walls on 24-inch centers. Staggering the wall studs minimizes thermal bridges (direct non-insulated heat flow paths from indoors to outdoors through the wood studs). Also, install rigid foam wall sheathing on the exterior so that all of the lumber's thermal mass is inside of the insulation envelope. This can be covered with any type of exterior finish.

The “stay-in-place” method uses concrete and rigid foam insulation. The insulation forms hold wet concrete and are not removed. They provide the insulation and substrate surface for installing the interior and exterior wall coverings.

A similar method uses hollow foam blocks made to fit your home's plans. The blocks have an open cavity throughout the inside. Concrete is pumped into the top of the walls, which creates a strong, efficient structure.

Structural insulated panel (SIP) systems have a thick foam core sandwiched between two sheets of various materials. The SIP panels are often used for the exterior walls to enclose post and beam-framed and steel-framed homes for the highest insulation levels possible.

SIP panels are made of oriented strand board (OSB), a strong, highly insulated panel. The panel is self-supporting, and once attached to the foundation and connected, the SIP panels support themselves, the floors, ceiling and roof.

Steel-framed construction is excellent if strength is the goal. Steel does not burn or change shape over time as lumber does, and each steel piece is nearly identical.

Steel allows for thinner studs and wider spacing to be used. This leaves room for additional insulation inside the walls and fewer thermal bridges.

Consider these choices when selecting construction methods that will affect the strength, efficiency and durability of the finished product. The time to learn more is before you make these decisions. ■



With “stay-in-place” construction, once the insulated forms are erected and reinforced steel installed, the concrete is pumped in from the top.

Photo – Eco-Block





# CAMPFIRE COOKING

Recipes for your outdoor kitchen.

## Mountain Man Breakfast

- 12" cast iron dutch oven
- ½ lb. chopped bacon or bulk pork sausage (not links)
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 32-oz. bag frozen, shredded hash brown potatoes
- 12 eggs, beaten in a separate bowl
- ½ lb. shredded cheddar cheese
- 8 oz. jar salsa



You will need a nice bed of coals or briquettes, NOT a roaring fire. Preheat the dutch oven bottom on the coals/briquettes. Off to the side, heat the lid on the coals. Brown the bacon/sausage, stirring often, then add the chopped onion and stir until the onion is

translucent. Remove the bacon/sausage and onion from the dutch oven and drain on paper towels. Wipe out the excess grease from the dutch oven. Stir in the shredded hash browns and cook until golden brown. Add the bacon and onion back into the oven. Pour the beaten eggs over the potatoes, stir and cover the oven with the preheated lid. Place a layer of hot coals or briquettes (about 15–18 coals) on top of the oven and bake until the eggs are soft set, not too wet, checking after 5 minutes (timing will depend on how hot your fire is). Sprinkle with the cheese and continue cooking until the eggs are set and cheese is melted.

Serve salsa on the side. Recipe serves 8 generously and can be easily converted for a smaller dutch oven.

This was a favorite for my husband's Boy Scout troop!

*Peg Peppler, Empire*

## Campfire Chicken Package Meal *(pictured)*

- 1 roll heavy duty foil
- 5 peeled carrots, cut into ½-inch slices
- 1 can peas, drained
- 1 can whole sweet corn, drained
- 1 lb. bacon, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut in ½-inch strips
- 3 large, peeled potatoes, cut into 1-inch pieces
- salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 t. garlic powder
- 1 t. onion powder
- 1 t. chicken broth, dissolved into 1 c. hot water

Cook bacon in skillet until done; drain and set aside. Tear off pieces of foil, 18 inches long (8 pieces total, you will use double layers of foil). Add vegetables, dividing between each pack. Add in the following order: potatoes on the bottom, carrots, and then peas and corn on top. Divide the chicken equally between the packs and top with bacon. Stir seasonings into cup of broth. Fold foil to make a pouch; pour ¼ c. broth into pouch and seal tightly. Place into campfire and cook for 30 minutes. Remove from fire, open and enjoy. Makes 4 servings.

*Ann Brown, Niles*

### SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Fresh Seafood" recipes by **July 1**.

Enter your recipe online at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com) or send to (handprinted or typed on one side, please): *Country Lines* Recipes, 2859 W. Jolly Rd., Okemos, MI 48864. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

Contributors whose recipes we print in 2015 will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's January 2016 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Photos—831 Creative



Campfire cooking recipes to enjoy.

## Chuck Wagon Shepherd's Pie

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 lb. stew beef (cut into bite size pieces)<br/>         1 lb. ground beef<br/>         1 t. mesquite seasoning<br/>         ¼ t. powdered cayenne<br/>         ½ t. hot chili powder<br/>         ½ t. garlic powder or 1 clove of fresh garlic, minced<br/>         1 medium onion, diced<br/>         2 stalks celery, diced<br/>         3–4 medium to large potatoes, peeled and cubed<br/>         1 can whole kernel corn (drained)</p> | <p>2 medium peeled and diced/sliced carrots<br/>         OR 1 can diced/sliced carrots (drained)<br/>         1 can cut green beans, drained<br/>         1 can diced tomatoes, undrained<br/>         1½ c. water<br/>         1½ c. Bisquick mix and water to make medium thick batter<br/>         Note: 1 package of frozen mixed veggies may be substituted for vegetables</p> |
|---|---|

In a cast iron dutch oven, brown meats with seasonings, garlic, onion and celery over an open fire. Add water and veggies; simmer for 20 minutes or until the liquid is reduced by half and a gravy is formed. Pour Bisquick batter on top. Cover with lid and place 10–12 hot coals on top of the lid. Bake for 20 minutes. Remove coals and carefully remove lid (ashes will give it an undesired flavor). Variations: 1. cubed chicken, cubed pork, ground turkey, cubed venison. 2. Mix up some instant potatoes and spoon on instead of Bisquick. 3. Use 1 c. Bisquick mix, 1 pkg. cornmeal mix, 1 egg and ¾ c. water as the topping batter. Add 2 T. finely diced jalapeno to the batter for an added kick. Or some finely shredded cheese or both!

*Ted Herrst, Mancelona*

## Campfire Fondue

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <p>1 Brie cheese<br/>         1 baguette</p> | <p>1 T. brandy</p> |
|--|--------------------|

Place unwrapped cheese in center of heavy duty foil, approximately 12x12 inches. Prick top of cheese with fork, then sprinkle brandy on top of holes. Wrap foil with sides up and seal at top. Place wheel in the embers of a smoldering campfire. Turn wheel with tongs for about 10–15 minutes. Remove and place on a plate, open the foil and scoop with slices of the baguette. This is a perfect midnight snack as the campfire burns down.

*Karen Stewart, Harbor Springs*

## Coca-Cola Chicken

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p>1 32-oz. bag chicken breasts, wings or thighs thawed out (do not use frozen or meat will be tough)<br/>         1 32-oz. bottle of ketchup</p> | <p>1 32-oz. Coca-Cola®<br/>         2 t. ground cumin<br/>         2 t. oregano<br/>         2 t. garlic powder or garlic head, minced<br/>         1 yellow onion, diced</p> |
|---|---|

In a dutch oven pot (to cook over your fire) or a large pan (for your conventional oven), add the thawed chicken. In a mixing bowl, add the ketchup, Coca-Cola and onion with spices and mix thoroughly. Let simmer over the fire for 2 to 3 hours and check often—about every hour. If using oven, bake at 350° for about 60 to 90 minutes. Check after an hour to see if the chicken is done. The ketchup and Coca-Cola make a thin barbecue sauce. It is very tasty.

*Diane Dickinson, Hesperia*





## Helping Nature

Newaygo students plant Wild Lupine within a Great Lakes Energy power line right-of-way inside the Coolbough Natural Areas. The low-growing species, which will not threaten overhead power lines, improves the natural habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly.

### **N**ewaygo first graders were able to help nature and learn about power line maintenance, too.

It was all part of an Energy for Wildlife project by Great Lakes Energy, held this spring at Coolbough Natural Areas to celebrate Arbor Day.

Great Lakes Energy Vegetation Management staff helped students plant Wild Lupine to improve the natural habitat for the federally endangered Karner blue butterfly. The planting took place within the electric cooperative's power line right-of-way (ROW) that crosses through the nature preserve. The ROW is a narrow strip of land along the power line that is kept clear of trees and branches that could threaten the line.

"Students also learned that safe tree planting involves planting the right tree in the right place so it won't one day grow into the power lines," explains GLE's John Bischoff, who coordinated the event.

A biologist with the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTf) showed

students turkey decoys and calls, while explaining the importance of maintaining wildlife habitat.

In addition, GLE lineworkers let students see the equipment they wear to work safely with high voltage power, and Trees, Inc., representatives spoke about their job trimming trees near power lines.

GLE's vegetation management staff has held an Energy for Wildlife event each year since 2008. The first project involved Boyne City High School students who planted low-growing, fruit-bearing shrubs along a power line ROW to provide food for wildlife.

The Energy for Wildlife program is run by the NWTf which works with utilities to improve power line ROW for wildlife habitat. It also encourages hands-on learning activities for youth in land and wildlife management practices so they develop a better understanding and appreciation of their natural resources.

Other projects included tree plantings at schools in Boyne Falls, Fife Lake, Pellston and Shelby. In



Great Lakes Energy lineworker Nick Sopczynski lets a youngster try on his work gear.

2011, GLE's vegetation management staff planted clover along a power line ROW creating another food source for wildlife within the Barry State Game Area.

Coolbough Natural Areas was established through a partnership between Brooks Township and the Michigan Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, with support from the Michigan DNR. The property provides recreational and educational opportunities for area residents, enhances tourism, and protects environmentally sensitive areas. ■

# Right-of-Way 101

**M**otorists should be familiar with the term “right-of-way,” but it has a different meaning to your electric cooperative.

## What is the right-of-way?

The right-of-way is the strip of land that electric utilities, through an easement or other mechanism, are granted access to use for specific purposes. A typical Great Lakes Energy right-of-way is 30 feet wide for single-phase (two overhead wires) lines and 40 feet for three phase (more than two wires) lines. The power line is usually centered within the right-of-way.

Easement agreements give GLE access rights to private property for the purpose of constructing, inspecting and maintaining its power line distribution system. The easement is typically a written agreement between the utility and property owner.

## Who owns the right-of-way?

The property owner is the owner of the land that the power line crosses. Please remember that GLE's rights-of-way are often on private property. They must be treated like any private land and only be used with the owner's permission. If the right-of-way crosses state forest or other public land, rules on allowable uses of the property still need to be followed. In addition, the use of motorized vehicles (especially ATVs and snowmobiles) in the power line right-of-way can be dangerous and should be avoided. A collision with a utility pole or guy wire is a personal hazard that can also result in outages.

**Please remember that Great Lakes Energy's rights-of-way are often on private property. They must be treated like any private land and only be used with the owner's permission.**

## How does GLE use the right-of-way?

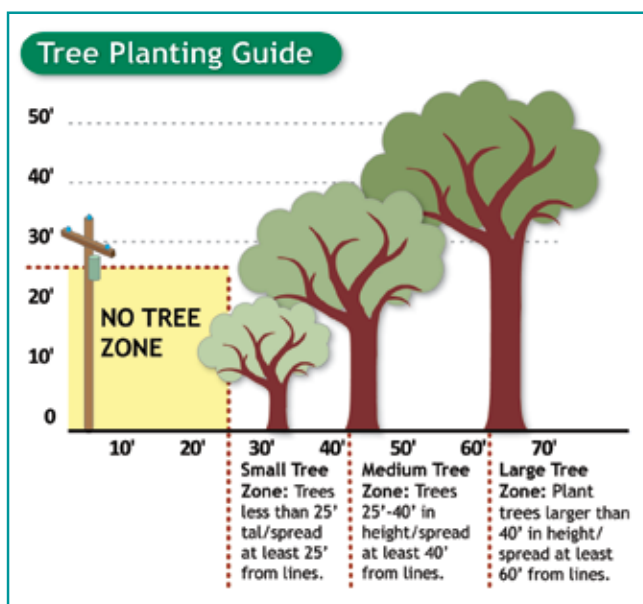
Access to the right-of-way allows the co-op to service and repair its power line distribution equipment, manage vegetation growth within the right-of-way that threatens electric service reliability and safety, and extend new lines to meet growth.

Trees are the most common cause of power outages for our members. Routine maintenance of trees and other



For their safety, operators of recreational vehicles should stay away from power line right-of-way areas. Collision with a pole or guy wire could be deadly and could cause outages, too.

vegetation on more than 11,000 miles of GLE overhead line is a large undertaking, but one that improves reliability for our members. Routine tree maintenance in the right-of-way is completed on a regular rotating basis. GLE power line rights-of-way in 17 counties are on the tree trimming schedule for this year. Members served by the lines scheduled for maintenance are contacted by phone, e-mail and postcard mail prior to any work being done. Please visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) or contact us for more information. ■





# Keeping Your Power Affordable

**Cost containment is a company goal** that shows Great Lakes Energy's commitment to being a well-run business.

We measure our increases in operation and maintenance (O&M) and administrative and general (A&G) costs against other electric cooperatives across the United States. The goal each year is to not exceed the average percent increase in costs of other electric cooperatives nationwide. Great Lakes Energy is one of over 800 electric cooperatives in the United States.

How well have we done? See the table on this page for the answer.

Operation and maintenance refers to the daily work to ensure our power line system is properly distributing electricity to members. Examples of typical expenses include inspecting and monitoring lines, poles, meters and other distribution equipment; repairs due to storms and other sources of damage, and regular tree and brush re-clearing work near power lines.

Administrative and general expenses are not directly tied to the operation and maintenance of the co-op's electrical distribution system. They include the costs for support services necessary to operate an electric co-op, such as eight Great Lakes Energy offices that take member service and billing inquiries and payments.

Costs for administrative, accounting, communications/marketing and other departments are included, too.

Keeping the cost of our members' service affordable is an integral part of our business. That's the cooperative difference. ■

## Annual Average Percent Increases in Costs

### Operation & Maintenance Expenses

	GLE	Other Electric Co-ops	Met Goal (✓)
2014	0.42%	3.03%	✓
2013	-4.26%	4.19%	✓
2012*	9.80%	3.96%	-

### Administrative & General Expenses

	GLE	Other Electric Co-ops	Met Goal (✓)
2014	3.17%	3.17%	✓
2013	2.50%	3.64%	✓
2012	-1.36%	3.49%	✓

\*A rash of severe storms resulting in nearly \$4 million in power restoration expenses added to the higher O & M costs in 2012.

## How Much Did I Earn Last Year?

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

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

A short message will appear on your June 2015 bill to inform you of the capital credit allocation amount you earned in 2014. This amount is *not* a refund, but a record of your annual investment in your cooperative.

You will be notified when part of your allocations are to be returned to you as a refund, which is expected in

December. Details will be shared later in *Michigan Country Lines*.

### How is my share determined?

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

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

Capital credits represent operating capital provided by the membership to the cooperative and are a major source of equity and operating funds for Great Lakes Energy. Capital credits



help make it possible for us to secure loans, improve electric service reliability, and expand our system to meet the demands of our membership.

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



# Talented Members Share “Car and Truck” Photos



## Here are some creative photos from our members

1. Rolled in one day, beautiful.  
Photo by: Jennifer Kull, Rothbury
2. Soap Box Derby in Trufant, entertainment for the whole town,  
Photo by: Joe Wojciakowski, Trufant
3. This dated rusty Dodge is representative of an era gone by.  
Photo by: Dan Kuiper, Morley
4. Friends at Binder Park Zoo.  
Photo by: Heidi Segard, Belmont
5. Addy and Mimi Wiers waiting for their prince at Castle Farms.  
Photo by: Candice Wiers, Charlevoix
6. Charlie, Jack and Chip waiting for a ride.  
Photo by: Gaye Hott, Ellsworth

See more amazing photos at  
[facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](https://facebook.com/greatlakesenergy)

## Enter the ‘Pay My Bill’ Photo Contest!

Great Lakes Energy members whose photos we print in *Country Lines* will be entered in a drawing and one lucky member will win a credit (up to \$200) on their December 2015 energy bill. Submit photos now through Sept. 21. Upcoming topics and deadlines are: All About Michigan, due July 20; Sunrises/Sunsets, due Aug. 20 and Kids at Play, due Sept. 21.

Visit [gtlakes.com/photocontest](http://gtlakes.com/photocontest) to submit your high resolution digital photo, read contest rules and see upcoming themes. It's fast and easy. To send by mail: Include your name, address, phone number, photographer's name, topic and details about your photo to: *Country Lines* Best Shots, P.O. Box 70, Boyne City, MI 49712. Photos will not be returned. Do not send color laser prints or professional studio photos. We look forward to seeing your best shot!

## GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET\*

as of December 31, 2014

**ASSETS****Electric plant:**

Distribution plant	\$ 427,574,572
Construction in progress	6,717,952
	<u>434,292,524</u>
Less accumulated depreciation	118,937,146
Net electric plant	<u>315,355,378</u>

**Other assets and investments:**

Nonutility plant, net of depreciation	996
Investments and memberships	112,413,369
Notes and other receivables	473,171
Total other assets	<u>112,887,536</u>

**Current assets:**

Cash	3,189,831
Accounts receivable, net of bad debt reserve	24,431,036
Materials and supplies	2,763,213
Other current assets	2,546,615
Total current assets	<u>32,930,695</u>

**Deferred charges**

	6,970,326
--	-----------

**Total assets**

\$ 468,143,935

**EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES****Equities:**

Memberships	\$ 519,740
Patronage capital	173,125,003
Donated capital	3,885,138
Accumulated other comprehensive expenses	4,102,581
Total equities	<u>181,632,462</u>

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

Long term debt	239,917,056
Non-current accrued expenses	6,761,992
Total long-term debt and non-current accrued expenses	<u>246,679,048</u>

**Current liabilities:**

Current maturities of long-term debt	5,566,020
Note payable	158,487
Accounts payable	13,300,143
Accrued expenses	10,687,045
Customer deposits	1,600,152
Total current liabilities	<u>31,311,847</u>

**Deferred credits**

8,520,578

**Total liabilities and equities**

\$ 468,143,935

## GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CONSOLIDATED OPERATING STATEMENTS\*

for the years ended December 31, 2014 and 2013

	<u>2014</u>	<u>2013</u>
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	\$ 189,493,758	\$ 183,742,114
<b>Operating expenses:</b>		
Cost of power	122,271,478	116,435,795
Distribution system operating and maintenance expenses	22,012,401	22,533,899
Customer service and information expenses	8,183,858	8,297,961
Administrative and general expenses	8,300,670	7,806,623
Depreciation and amortization	12,741,957	12,200,566
Other operating expenses	223,946	196,831
Total operating expenses	<u>173,734,310</u>	<u>167,471,675</u>
Operating margins before fixed charges	15,759,448	16,270,439
<b>Fixed charges, interest expense</b>	10,305,208	10,026,432
Operating margins after fixed charges	<u>5,454,240</u>	<u>6,244,007</u>
<b>Non-operating margins:</b>		
Interest income	1,712,043	1,546,632
Other expenses, net of other income	(114,604)	(212,116)
Total non-operating income	<u>1,597,439</u>	<u>1,334,516</u>
<b>Capital credits from associated organizations:</b>		
Wolverine Power Company	4,697,805	9,565,374
Other associated organizations	3,615,900	913,896
Total capital credits from associated organizations	<u>8,313,705</u>	<u>10,479,270</u>
<b>Net margins</b>	<u>\$ 15,365,384</u>	<u>\$ 18,057,793</u>

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

# Meet Michigan's 'First Lady of Energy'

**O**ften referred to as Michigan's "Energy Czar," Valerie Brader chuckles at that moniker. She appreciates the respect, but prefers the title that Gov. Rick Snyder gave her, executive director of the Michigan Agency for Energy.

Brader, 38, is the first boss of a brand-new agency—an acknowledgment by Snyder that keeping the lights on for Michiganders deserves the undivided attention of a high-powered executive. Brader will spearhead, among other things, the effort to keep the juice flowing while Michigan, facing federal mandates on emissions standards, finds cleaner energy sources than its coal-fired power plants.

"That's our first big challenge," Brader says. "That's the issue that will have the greatest impact."

Because of EPA air-quality requirements and the aging of conventional facilities, the state must close 10 coal-fired plants (nine in the Lower Peninsula and one in the Upper Peninsula) within the next few years. Combined, these plants currently supply electricity to more than 1 million customers. Snyder plans to wean Michigan's electric plants off coal and onto cleaner fuels, such as natural gas.

Meanwhile, the state's two largest energy suppliers—Consumers Energy and DTE Energy—see a looming crisis. They predict that, absent proper management of the

transition and careful attention to other energy challenges, rolling blackouts and electrical shortages could become a routine part of life in the state.

Averting that crisis, Brader says, will require a multi-pronged approach involving reducing energy waste, finding the right place for renewable energy in the mix, and balancing the pros and cons of utility regulation versus commercial customer choice.

Brader has been with the Snyder administration since 2011, most recently as a deputy legal counsel and senior policy adviser. Before that, she was the chief energy policy officer at the Michigan Economic Development Corporation. Brader also practiced environmental and corporate law, and was an adviser to former Idaho Gov. Phil Batt.

Snyder has described the new agency, which will become part of the Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs, as one that "responds to the energy challenges that we know are before us." Choosing Brader to head the Agency is a recognition of both her energy policy expertise and legal skills, he said.

Brader and her husband, Ted, have a 2-year-old son, Finn. She commutes to Lansing from Ann Arbor every day. The high-powered job, the family, the commute... It's no wonder that when asked what she does in her spare time, Brader offers her signature laugh and a "spare *what?*" look.

The one person, Brader says, who doesn't acknowledge that she is juggling a lot of balls in the air is Finn. "He's sure the most important thing in my life is him."

Considering the energy issues Michigan must confront in the immediate future—power plant closings, pressure to deregulate the utilities, etc.—one might wonder why Brader took the job in such a tumultuous time.

"Because it's also the most exciting time..." she says. "Big challenges offer the biggest opportunity to make a difference." ■





“Big challenges  
offer the biggest  
opportunity  
to make a  
difference.”



# Upgrade and Save with ENERGY STAR® Appliances

**T**ake a look around your home—are outdated appliances wasting money and energy? Wish you could replace that old, malfunctioning refrigerator or dishwasher, but don't know where to start—or if you can afford it? If so, a smart way to begin your search is to look for appliances with the ENERGY STAR® label. Great Lakes Energy Cooperative's Energy Optimization program offers dozens of rebates to help offset the purchase price.

## Look for the ENERGY STAR label

ENERGY STAR is a trusted brand for quality products that use significantly less energy than required by minimum federal standards. ENERGY STAR products provide the same features that you're already used to, but can use up to 75 percent less energy than standard models.

## Rebates

While ENERGY STAR qualified products can cost a bit more up front compared to standard versions, the initial investment is almost always recouped by the long-term savings that result. To encourage the purchase of ENERGY STAR products and appliances, Great Lakes Energy's Energy Optimization program offers rebates (see chart).

Purchase your new ENERGY STAR appliances at the store of your choice, then apply for a rebate from the Energy Optimization program. Simply fill out the rebate form online at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) and mail, fax, or email it to the Energy Optimization program to receive your check. Please visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) for more information, or call **877.296.4319**. ■

ENERGY STAR Product/Appliance	Rebate Amount
Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs	Varies by retailer via in-store mark-down
LED light bulbs	Varies by retailer via in-store mark-down
Outdoor LED (1 or 2 bulb) fixtures	\$10
Ceiling fan (with light kit)	\$15
CFL fixture	\$10
Smart power strip	\$10
Room air conditioner	\$25
Dehumidifier	\$25
Dishwasher	\$25
Clothes washer	\$25
Clothes dryer	\$25
Refrigerator	\$25
Chest freezer	\$25
TV (21"-50")	\$25
TV (51" +)	\$50

## Cool down with summer rebates

Summer is here! Are you in the market for a new ceiling fan, room air conditioner, or dehumidifier? What about a more energy-efficient refrigerator or freezer? Shop for ENERGY STAR® appliances and save with rebates offered by the Energy Optimization program. Visit [michigan-energy.org/greatlakes](http://michigan-energy.org/greatlakes) for a full list of available rebates.

**ENERGY TIP: Receive your rebate faster by using the online application.**



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

# CHILL OUT

## Where Does My Power Come From?

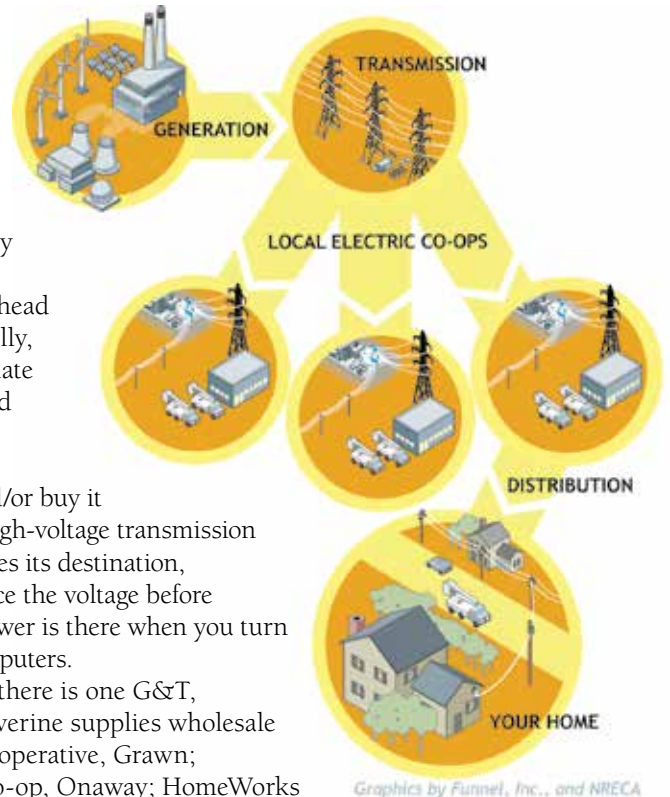
**E**very month you pay your power bill to your electric distribution cooperative. But have you ever wondered where that electricity comes from?

Generally, it's not produced in your neighborhood—most electricity travels quite a distance from where it's actually generated across high-voltage transmission lines to reach the local distribution system and, finally, your home.

Your home or business receives electricity from one of roughly 840 electric distribution cooperatives in America. These local, member-owned, not-for-profit utilities build and maintain overhead and underground lines and equipment to deliver power. Typically, distribution co-ops do not generate electricity or directly negotiate with power providers. That role usually lies with generation and transmission cooperatives (G&Ts).

G&Ts are wholesale power suppliers owned and governed by electric distribution co-ops. They produce electricity directly and/or buy it in bulk from other power suppliers, then ship that power over high-voltage transmission lines to local distribution co-ops' equipment. When power reaches its destination, distribution co-ops must use transformers at substations to reduce the voltage before sending it over their lines to your home or business. Now the power is there when you turn on the lights, heat and cool your homes, and power up your computers.

Today, there are 65 G&Ts in the United States. In Michigan, there is one G&T, Wolverine Power Cooperative. Headquartered in Cadillac, Wolverine supplies wholesale power to five distribution cooperatives: Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Grawn; Great Lakes Energy, Boyne City; Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, Onaway; HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Portland; and Midwest Energy Cooperative, Cassopolis. Wolverine also has two licensed alternative electric supplier members: Spartan Renewable Energy and Wolverine Power Marketing Cooperative, both in Cadillac. ■



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Can you give a few cents a month to help your community? The People Fund program works because there is power in numbers. A contribution of less than \$1 each month adds up fast when thousands of Great Lakes Energy members get involved.

The needs of our local communities continue to grow, and you have the power to give the People Fund a bigger role in meeting those needs. We round up your electric bill to the next dollar and the amount, which averaged just 49 cents a month in 2014, goes into the People Fund. There are no administrative costs. All donations are returned to our local communities.





# There's More To Cuba Than Cars, Cigars

**wanted to see Cuba before corporate interests prevail**, and the mysterious country 100 miles from Key West, FL, becomes South Beach South. As U.S.-Cuba hostility softens, the island nation is poised to become an American tourist mecca.

Around Christmas, I received a brochure from the Michigan State University Alumni Association. "Cuba," it said. "A People-to-People Educational Exchange." The offer: an eight-day exploration of a place few Americans have seen; 27 people, including my wife and I, accepted. Our group claimed 17 Michiganders, including Ross and Brenda Biederman. Biederman is president of the Midwestern Broadcasting Co., which includes radio station WTCM in Traverse City.

Despite the recent thaw in U.S.-Cuba relations, U.S. tourism is not yet allowed. The Alumni Association holds a federal license, which demands strict adherence to the educational mission. Reflecting that, our agenda included scholarly lectures and visits to a school, an agricultural commune, and other non-tourist places.

Yet, we found time for salsa dancing, cruising Havana in vintage convertibles and sampling local mojitos and Cuba Libres (rum, coke and lime juice).

Havana's iconic image—1940s and '50s American cars—are the most conspicuous evidence of Cuba's arrested development, a result of the 53-year-old U.S. trade embargo. Nearly everything there suggests a bygone era.

Our group stayed in Havana for five nights, then in Ciefuegos, on the southern coast, for two nights. In eight days we immersed ourselves in Havana's street life and explored Cuba's lush mountain forests and pristine Caribbean seaside.

One disappointment: mediocre cuisine. If you're traveling for the cuisine, go to France—not to a country known for rice and beans. Also, shoppers will encounter a paucity of possibilities. There's little to buy, except cigars and rum; U.S. citizens can bring back \$100 worth of each.

Those are trivial complaints. If you go to Cuba, you'll find the people welcoming, the music irresistible, street life stimulating, and the scenery breathtaking. It's a fascinating country. ■

"Nearly everything there suggests a bygone era."



At the Partagas cigar factory in Havana, each employee gets four cigars a day to smoke while he (or she) works.



Cuba is known for vintage cars. Shown is a '56 Chevy.





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



Putting their combined 136 years of board experience to work for you are Great Lakes Energy directors (front, L-R) Paul Byl, Paul Schemanski, Mark Carson, and Richard Evans; (back, L-R) Robert Thurow, Larry Monshor, Richard Walsworth, Robert Kran and Dale Farrier.

## Great Lakes Energy directors put members first...

- Major system improvements in the last 11 years have increased service reliability to all GLE members.
- GLE accomplishes more with less, ranking it in the top 3% of the most productive electric cooperatives nationwide<sup>1</sup>.
- Profits earned are returned to you. Total of nearly \$41.5 million in capital credit refunds returned to members since 2003.
- Eight local offices deliver quick and courteous service, especially when big storms roll in.

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

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