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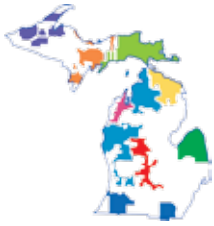
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

January 2016
Vol. 36, No. 1

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Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association

Design and Layout
Ciesa Design

Michigan Country Lines, USPS-591-710, is published monthly, except August and December, with periodicals postage paid at Lansing, MI, and additional offices. It is the official publication of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933.

Subscriptions are authorized for members of Alger Delta, Cherryland, Great Lakes, HomeWorks Tri-County, Midwest Energy, Ontonagon, Presque Isle, and Thumb electric cooperatives by their boards of directors.

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Association officers are **Robert Kran**, Great Lakes Energy, chairman; **Mark Kappler**, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, vice chairman; and **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power Cooperative, secretary-treasurer. **Craig Borr** is president and CEO.

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See page 4 for contact information.

ON THE COVER*

Ofelia De Leon (far left), of Buena Vista, with his family and lineworkers when the lights came on in their home for the very first time. Ofelia had the honor of flipping the switch, and when the light came on the room radiated with happiness—lots of laughter, and tears. Linemen (L-R) Tom Ulatowski, Cherryland, Dan King, MECA, and Tony Reichle, Great Lakes Energy.

*Some co-op editions have a different cover.

Cover photo by Garrett Hubbard



IN YOUR WORDS

Question of the Month—We Asked, You Answered.

Last month, we asked electric co-op members a question: If you could have a lifetime supply of anything, what would it be? Thank you for all the responses. Here are some answers from our members...

"Love, good health, happy family & friends, great weather and a very large pay check to share."

"Burgers and fries from Clyde's Restaurant in Manistique, MI."

"If I could have a lifetime supply of anything, it would be free electricity. I am 90 years old, a World War II Veteran, and have a bronze star (along with many other medals). I've been a member of Great Lakes Energy most of my life. My wife and I have been married 70 years this coming July. God Bless."

"Wisdom."

"Unwavering Faith."

Our new Question of the Month is:

If you could only have one meal for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by Feb. 1.

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Keeping Communities Strong



Steve Boeckman
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

At a time when news reports across the world invoke our worst fears, it's good to know our willingness to help other communities remains as strong as ever.

When we asked for volunteers last year for the Partners for Power project, we had more employees willing to go to Guatemala than we could send. If we participate in a similar humanitarian project in the future, my bet is that the volunteer support would be overwhelming despite the difficult working conditions. Employees worked long hours in primitive conditions without running water and only limited use of electricity (by generator). We are very proud of the four GLE staff members that went—engineering analyst Kevin Evans and lineworkers Tony Reichle, William LaTourneau and Adam Brewbaker. Along with other Michigan electric co-op employees, they helped bring power to a remote village in the rugged Guatemalan mountains.

Their commitment was huge, and so was the impact they made on the village. But your commitment doesn't have to be large to make a difference.

Nearly 32,000 Great Lakes Energy members already support our People Fund program with an average donation of less than 50 cents a month. But when you add up all their contributions, it's making a big impact in our local communities.

You can see for yourself by reviewing the 2015 People Fund Annual Report that is attached to this issue of *Michigan Country Lines*. Listed are the grants awarded last year to all the worthwhile organizations that work to make our area a better place to live.

In 2015, nearly \$206,294 in grants were awarded to 66 recipients throughout our service area. That brings the total to over \$2.88 million in People Fund grants issued since 1999.

Your Great Lakes Energy directors and I encourage every GLE member to contribute to the People Fund. The need in our communities continue to grow. The People Fund needs your support to grow to meet those needs.

Members helping local community members—That fits in well with the seventh cooperative principle, "Concern for Community," that we work hard to follow. By participating in the People Fund, 100 percent of your contributions go right back to your local area, either central, north or south, depending on where you live in the GLE service area.

Many GLE members make the People Fund possible, and there's power in numbers. It's really the most good you can do for such a small sum of money to keep our local communities strong. ■



Pay My Bill Photo Contest Winner

Gaye Hott, of Ellsworth, is the 2015 winner of Great Lakes Energy's Pay My Bill Photo Contest.

Her photo above was selected in a random drawing of all entries that appeared in *Michigan Country Lines* in 2015, and was published in the June issue.

Thank you to the many Great Lakes Energy members who participated. Members are welcome to send in photos for our 2016 contest. See page 9 for details.



Co-op Members Win Prizes

Josie Bingham, of Ewart, is the grand prize winner of an LED TV in a random drawing that was part of Great Lakes Energy's Co-op Month celebration. Charles Black, of East Jordan won second prize, which is \$100 worth of LED lights. Third prize, \$50 worth of LED lights, went to Cathleene Neumann, of Hersey.

Thank you to the hundreds of Great Lakes Energy members who entered and also took advantage of our energy-saving gifts giveaway. Continue to save by visiting michigan-energy.org for news on current energy-saving rebate offers. ■

Tell Us How We're Doing!

You Could Win A \$25 Gift Of Energy

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

Contact us with specific details of the interaction, including the employee name, by phone, mail or email. 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 a \$25 gift of energy!

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.

Are You A Leader?

If you are interested in taking a more active role in your cooperative, consider running for the Great Lakes Energy board of directors this year. Three directors will be elected, one each from District 6 (Mason, Lake counties), District 8 (Osceola, Clare, Newaygo, Mecosta counties) and District 9 (Ottawa, Kent, Montcalm, Allegan, Barry counties).

To learn more about eligibility and the responsibilities of a director, call 888-485-2537, ext. 1331, or email glenergy@glenergy.com.

Saving Energy In The Kitchen

By Brian Sloboda

Most of us spend a lot of time in the kitchen. Whether you are considering replacing an appliance or simply looking for ways to be more efficient, here are some tips to help you save energy—and money.

Most people don't think about their refrigerator that often—as long as it's working. Older refrigerators use more energy. Upgrading this appliance can bring a major return on your investment. Look for rebate programs, too!

Cooking also uses a lot of energy. To save energy while cooking, placing the lid on a pot of boiling water will trap heat and cause the water to boil faster. And there is no need to preheat the oven when cooking a large piece of meat, like a turkey or ham (you do need to preheat when baking, or cooking smaller dishes). If you are planning on using the oven for a long period of time, consider turning

down your home's thermostat. Cooking will add warmth to the home because the heat from the oven can raise the temperature in the kitchen and surrounding rooms.

Even after the meal is over, you can save energy. Make sure your dishwasher is full before it's started. Next, make sure you are using the right setting on your dishwasher. Newer models have sensors that detect how clean your dishes are. When these "auto" cycles are used, they will get dishes clean without wasting energy or water. The sanitize setting should rarely be used since it is energy intensive. It is also a good idea to make sure the filter at the bottom of the washtub is cleaned to help the washer work at its optimal level.

As you can see, there are many different ways to practice efficiency in the kitchen, and maybe even save enough money to have dinner out sometimes! ■

Be Prepared For Winter Storms

By Abby Berry

When winter temperatures drop and storms hit, it can be challenging to stay safe and warm. Your electric cooperative cares about your safety, and we want you to be prepared.



Heavy snow and ice can lead to downed power lines, leaving you without power. During a power outage, our crews will continue to work as quickly and safely as possible to restore power, but there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself.

- **Stay warm** – Use a safe alternate heating source, such as a fireplace or wood-burning stove, during a power outage. Exercise caution when using, and never leave the heating source unattended.

If you are using gasoline, propane or natural gas-burning devices to stay warm, never use them indoors. Remember that fuel and wood-burning sources of heat should always be properly ventilated. Always read the manufacturer's directions before using.

- **Stay fed** – Be sure to have several days' supply of food on hand. Crackers, cereal, canned goods, bread, and other foods that do not need to be cooked, are good options. Five gallons of water per person should also be available in the event of an extended power outage.
- **Stay safe** – When an outage occurs, it usually means power lines are down. Try not to travel during winter storms, but if you must, bring a survival kit along, and do not travel alone. If you encounter downed lines, always assume they are live and stay as far away from them as possible.

Winter weather can be unpredictable and dangerous, and planning ahead is important. For more winter safety tips, visit ready.gov/winter-weather. ■



Photo: Garrett Hubbard

Electric Cooperatives Donate Suitcases Packed With A Purpose

The recent Partners for Power team reached their goal to build an electric line extension in Guatemala that changed the lives of about 54 families in the small community of Buena Vista. But our team's work did not end there. The 10-person team distributed over 450 pounds of donated items sent over with the Partners For Power project.

The suitcases were filled by a team effort of employees from Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, Midwest Energy, Wolverine Power, and Cloverland Electric. The much needed items included school supplies, shoes, backpacks, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, mouthwash, stuffed animals, sweatshirts/t-shirts of all sizes, small sewing kits, stocking caps, baseball hats, soccer balls, a basketball, a football, air pumps, soccer nets, and basketball nets. The electric cooperatives were eager to help out and make a difference for the villagers in Buena Vista.

To distribute the supplies fairly, the team of linemen divided the items into three stations, grouped by age, so that everyone received something. "The villagers have worked so hard on this entire project with us," said Wolverine Power safety coordinator, Matt Monroe. "It was fun to be able to give their



families one more surprise before we headed back home."

Partners For Power also sent a basketball backboard, rim and hardware, along with individual pieces of plexiglass, glass cutters, and caulk to replace broken school windows in the village.

Read the full story about how Michigan electric cooperatives teamed up to "turn on the lights" in Buena Vista, Guatemala, on page 14. ■

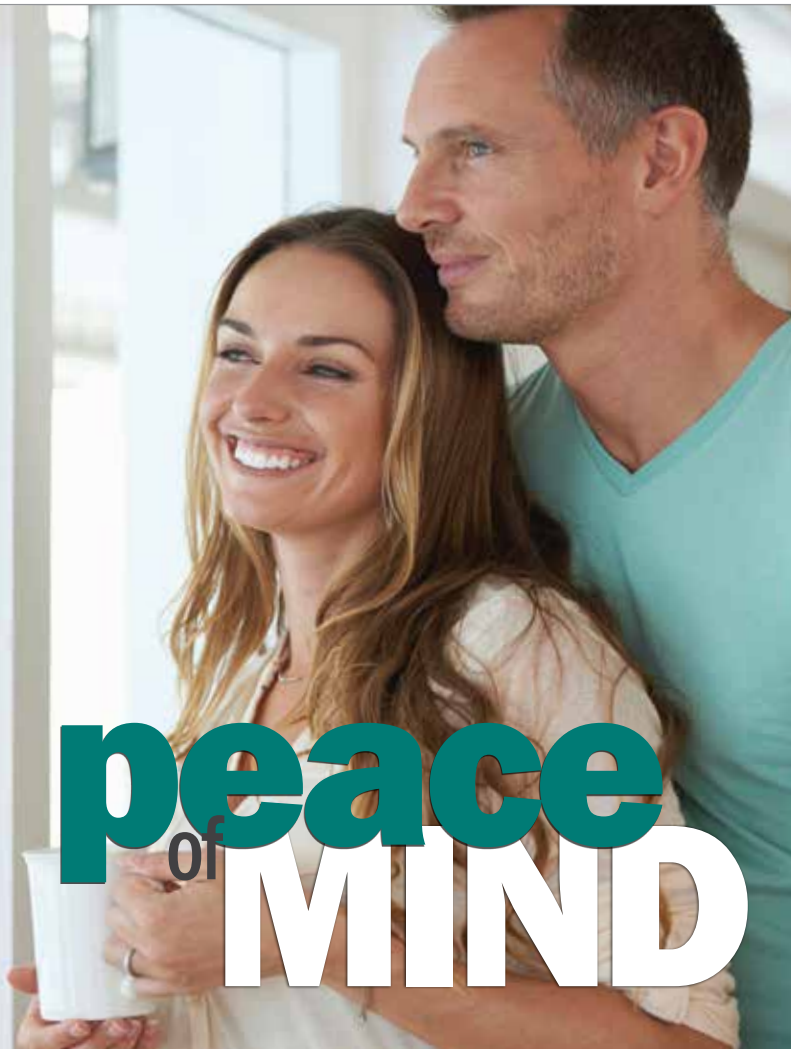
New Year's Resolution—Peace Of Mind In 2016

You know the story. The clock strikes midnight and millions of people make resolutions to change. But, if something is working great, why fix it? Our thoughts exactly. Great Lakes Energy Cooperative is keeping its most popular 2015 Energy Optimization (EO) rebates for 2016, and adding a few new options. Ring in the New Year with savings and peace of mind by participating in some top rated rebates.

Make a resolution to manage your energy use in 2016 by taking advantage of these popular customer incentives, as well as a new option for smart occupancy-sensing thermostats.

For a complete list of EO rebates offered by Great Lakes Energy visit michigan-energy.org to see which solutions are right for you, or call us at 877-296-4319 if you have questions about applications or product eligibility. ■

Rebate Name	Incentive Amount
ENERGY STAR® television	31–40" = \$25 41–50" = \$25 51–60" = \$50
ENERGY STAR® dehumidifier	\$25
Efficient HVAC—furnaces with electric commutated motors (ECMs)	\$200
ENERGY STAR® refrigerator/freezer side-by-side	\$25
Programmable or Wi-Fi-enabled thermostat	\$20
Smart occupancy-sensing thermostat	\$50
Online home audit—Home Energy Optimizer	FREE energy-saving kit (\$30 value) and a list of energy efficient home improvement options



Peace of mind, comfort and savings

We provide the savings—you enjoy peace of mind while saving energy with our Energy Optimization program.

There are many ways to save, from appliances to lighting and maintaining the comfort of your home with our efficient HVAC programs. Visit Michigan-energy.org for a complete list of opportunities and rebates.

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

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.

Talented Members Share 'Best Of Selfies' Photos



1. Valerie Drier, of Cedar Springs says, "Making strides breast cancer walk in Grand Rapids with my best friend and son, Joseph. I was raising money and celebrating 2 years cancer free!"

2. "My daughter, Ani, and I at a Tigers game," said Edward Garabedian, of Grayling.

3. "Our whole immediate family (36 of us!) celebrated our parents' 60th wedding anniversary with a weekend trip to Mackinac Island. This photo was taken on our way over to the island on the back of the ferry on a beautiful sunny day. You can see the excitement and anticipation in our faces," said Mary Keedy, of Petoskey.



4. Rob McPherson, of Beaver Island, says, "This is a photo of our son, son-in-law, and 3 grandchildren, inside the Island Airways plane on their way to see us on Beaver Island."

5. Gina Lorenson, of Irons says, "My grandchildren's first Big Ten Football game. Go Spartans!"



6. "This selfie was taken in Rocky Mountain National Park during a June 2015 trip to visit our son. This is just one of many spectacular views to see in the Park," said Alysse LaRose, of Gaylord.

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

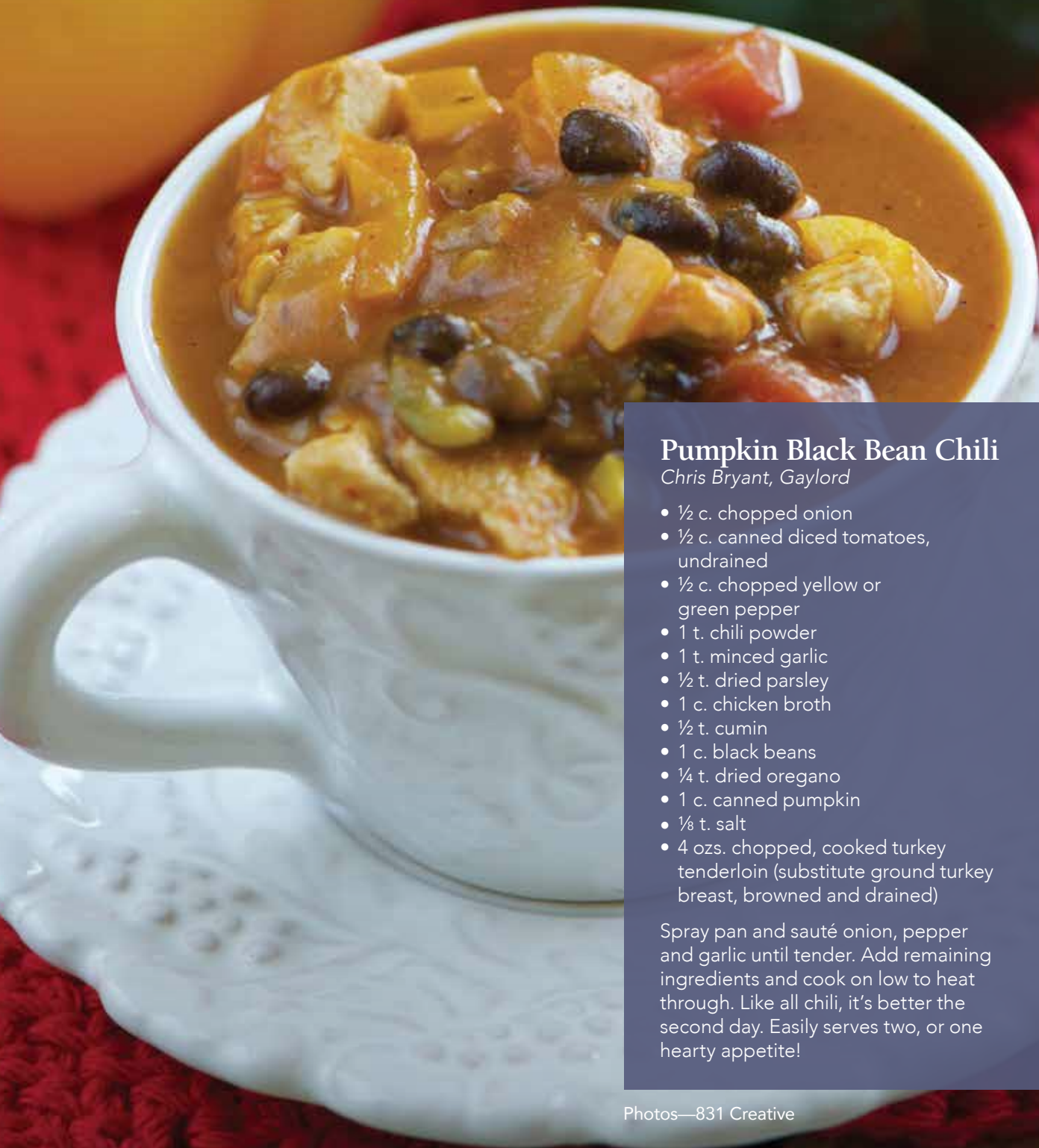
Enter The 'Pay My Bill' Photo Contest!

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 2016 energy bill. Upcoming topics include **"Winter Fun,"** due **Jan. 15** for the March issue and **"Birds of Beauty,"** due **Feb. 15** for the April issue.

Visit gtlakes.com/photocontest to submit your high resolution digital photo, read contest rules, and see upcoming themes for 2016. 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!

CHILI

Warm up this season with these comforting chili recipes.



Pumpkin Black Bean Chili

Chris Bryant, Gaylord

- ½ c. chopped onion
- ½ c. canned diced tomatoes, undrained
- ½ c. chopped yellow or green pepper
- 1 t. chili powder
- 1 t. minced garlic
- ½ t. dried parsley
- 1 c. chicken broth
- ½ t. cumin
- 1 c. black beans
- ¼ t. dried oregano
- 1 c. canned pumpkin
- ⅛ t. salt
- 4 ozs. chopped, cooked turkey tenderloin (substitute ground turkey breast, browned and drained)

Spray pan and sauté onion, pepper and garlic until tender. Add remaining ingredients and cook on low to heat through. Like all chili, it's better the second day. Easily serves two, or one hearty appetite!

Congratulations



to Ann Brown of Niles. Her name was drawn from all readers whose recipes we printed in 2015 and *Country Lines* will pay her January electric bill (up to \$200) as a prize.

Ann and her family have been Midwest Energy Cooperative members since her father built their home back in 1940. Her winning "Campfire Chicken" recipe was an original created by her mother. "My dad liked to grill and camp. When we couldn't go camping he would cook out in the backyard and this was a favorite recipe." Ann is a home healthcare nurse and enjoys cooking, sewing and knitting.



White Chicken Chili (pictured)

Donna Theriault, Petoskey

- 3 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 T. olive oil + extra for drizzling on chicken
- 2 lg. onions, sliced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 c. chicken broth
- 1 c. dry white wine
- 2 cans Navy or cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ c. lime juice
- 1 small can green chilies
- 1 T. ground coriander
- 1 t. ground oregano
- ½ t. ground cumin
- ¼ t. cinnamon
- 1 c. Monterey Jack

Drizzle olive oil, and sprinkle salt and pepper on chicken. Roast seasoned chicken on cookie sheet at 350° for 40 minutes, or until cooked through. Cool chicken and shred with fingers. Put 1 T. oil in large pot. Add onions and garlic and stir until onions are golden, about 20 minutes. Add broth and remaining ingredients, except cheese. Simmer for 15 minutes. Add cheese to melt just before serving.

Angie's Chili

Mary Scodeller, Lansing

- 1 ½ lbs. 80/20 ground beef
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 28-oz. cans whole tomatoes
- 2 15.5-oz. cans kidney beans
- 15.5-oz. can mild chili beans in chili sauce
- Spartan chili mix envelope
- 1 pkg. French's original chili seasoning mix
- ¼ t. salt
- ¼ t. pepper
- ¼ t. seasoning salt
- ¼ t. garlic powder
- ¼ t. chili powder
- ¼ t. ground cumin

Brown meat with the chopped onion. Drain fat, crush tomatoes and add to meat. Add all beans, seasoning mix, and other seasonings. Simmer on medium to high heat for 20 minutes, stirring constantly. Reduce heat and simmer another 30 to 45 minutes. Very good and great for a crowd.

SUBMIT YOUR RECIPE!

Thanks to all our readers who send in recipes. Please send in your favorite "Side Dish" recipes by **Feb. 1** and "Snacks and Appetizers" recipes by **March 1**.

A RECIPE WINNER EACH MONTH IN 2016!

Contributors whose recipes we print each month will be entered in a drawing and *Country Lines* will pay the winner's electric bill with a \$50 bill credit! A winner will be selected every month!

Enter your recipe online at countrylines.com or send to (handprinted or typed 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.

GLE Awards Over \$22,000 In Learning Grants

For the fourth year in a row, Great Lakes Energy showed support for local communities through its Touchstone Energy® Classroom Grant Program. Grants totaling just over \$22,700 were awarded to 15 school districts in the GLE service area to promote learning, innovation and technology in the classroom. Many of the projects will benefit multiple groups of students for several years.

Classroom grants awarded for the 2015–2016 school year include:

Boyne City Middle School: \$1,500 for LEGO Mindstorms NXT kits and software for STEM and robotics classes.

Cedar Springs High School: \$1,980 for iPads and Pasco probeware for interactive learning.

Charlevoix High School: \$2,000 for editing equipment used by broadcasting class.

Delton Kellogg Middle School: \$960 for energy education equipment to increase awareness of energy usage/efficiency.

East Jordan Middle High School: \$1,669.99 for a drone to be used in a video production class.

Grant Christian School: \$589.75 for LEGO design kits to develop STEM skills.

Lincoln Elementary School, Petoskey: \$1,322.95 for a LEGO Story Starter Classroom Pack for fifth grade students.

Ludington High School: \$1,204 for video and broadcast news equipment to expand audio visual production class capabilities.

Mackinaw Trail Middle School, Cadillac: \$2,000 for 27 Moby Max tablets for use by fifth and sixth grade students.

Manton High School: \$2,000 toward purchase of a CNC router for the industrial technologies class.

Mason County Eastern Schools, Custer: \$2,000 for technology supplies for the Coding for Kids Club program.

Nellie B. Chisholm Middle School, Montague: \$2,000 for LEGO NXT robotics systems for computer programming/robotics class.

Northern Michigan Christian School, McBain: \$99.49 for a Green Screen app and supplies for the Music Voyager class.

Reed City Middle School: \$1,400 for nets and waders for a water quality testing project.

Shelby High School: \$2,000 for equipment for a new construction trades class project to build and sell deer blinds.

Preference was given to projects and programs involving use of technology or tangible equipment that enhance learning and are not currently being funded through the school's budget.

Touchstone Energy cooperatives serve members in 46 states with a commitment to integrity, accountability, innovation and commitment to communities. More information can be found online at gtlakes.com. ■

Heat Pump Discounts

Qualifying Great Lakes Energy members whose primary heating system is a heat pump (ground-source or air-source) can have it separately metered at a lower kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate.

The efficient electric heat rate offers a 3 cents per kWh credit year-round for qualifying ground-source heat pumps. Qualifying air-source heat pumps can receive the credit during the heating season, bills rendered November through May.

The electric heat pump must meet these energy efficiency standards to qualify for the lower rate:

Geothermal System – minimum requirements of EER 17.1 COP 3.6 for closed loop water-to-air; EER 21.1 COP 4.1 for open loop water-to-air;

EER 16.1 COP 3.1 for closed loop water-to-water; EER 20.1 COP 3.5 for open loop water-to-water; EER 16 COP 3.6 for direct geexchange.

Air-Source Heat Pump – minimum requirements of HSPF 8.5, EER 12.5, & SEER 15 for split systems and HSPF 8, EER 12 & SEER 14 for package systems.

Rebates of \$500 (ground-source) and \$250 (air-source) are also available for qualifying systems. For more information on the rebates and lower rate, call us at 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8957, or email us at: glenergy@glenergy.com.

Additional heat pump rebates up to \$450 are available through our Energy Optimization program. Visit michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319. ■

A Look At Our Renewable Energy Growth

Great Lakes Energy will be a renewable energy leader in the state because of the work of its power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. (Wolverine) based in Cadillac.

Wolverine began leading Michigan's renewable future by adding the first commercial-scale wind farm to its supply mix in 2007 with the 50 megawatt (MW)* Harvest Wind Farm, located in Huron County, ahead of any renewable mandate. Harvest enabled Great Lakes Energy to meet the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS).

Wolverine continued to monitor the market for additional renewable opportunities, and as wind turbine technology improved, prices dropped. Early in 2015, Wolverine announced a new supply agreement with RES Americas for its 150 MW Deerfield Wind project, also in Huron County. Finally, in October 2015, Wolverine announced the execution of a supply agreement with Exelon Generation for the approximately 150 MW Michigan Wind 3 project to be constructed in Sanilac County. The Deerfield Wind and Michigan Wind 3 projects are expected to be completed by the end of 2016, bringing Wolverine's total wind capacity to approximately 350 MW, far exceeding the RPS mandate.

"Wolverine is excited about the addition of clean and affordable energy to its portfolio," stated Eric Baker, president and CEO of Wolverine. "These projects position Wolverine favorably with significant renewable generation. When the projects are complete, Great Lakes Energy and our other member cooperatives will achieve a 30 percent renewable level."

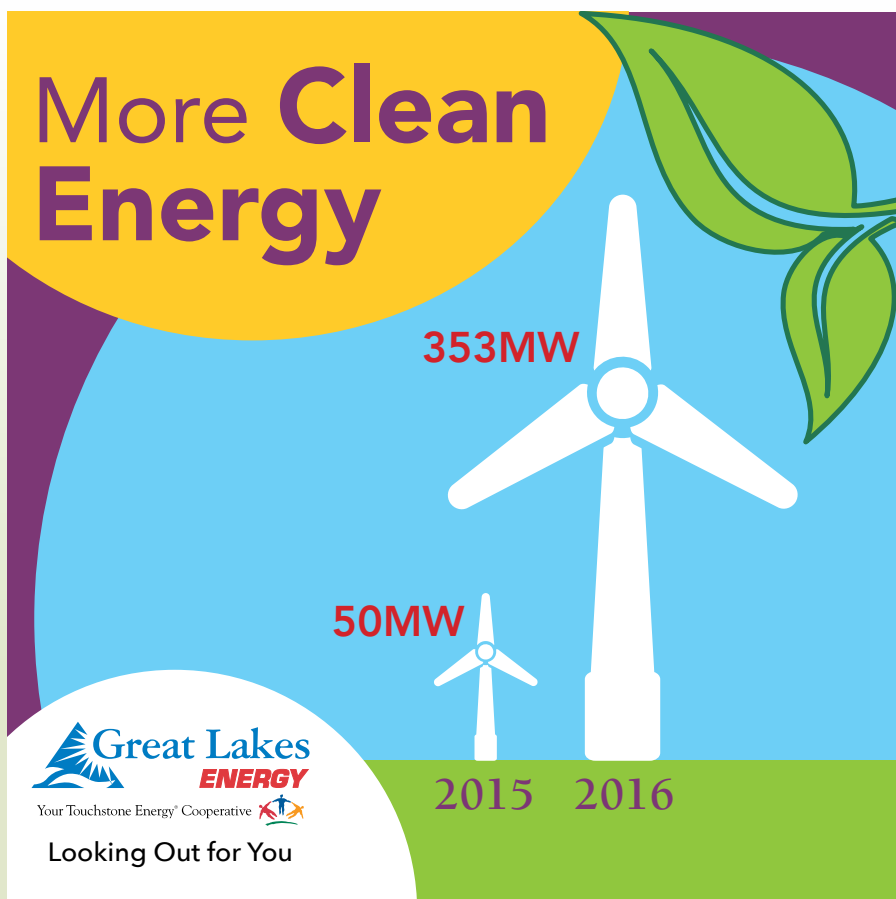
Wolverine's commitment to clean energy also means the amount of electricity GLE members receive from coal-

fired generation continues to decline. Based on fuel mix data, coal is expected to account for 45 percent of our electricity in 2018 compared to 81 percent in 2008.

The impact of Wolverine's leadership on renewables will reap benefits well into the future. "These new projects will serve Great Lakes Energy and our other member co-ops beyond 2030 with clean energy at certain and affordable prices, a true win-win," Baker said.

Wolverine is a generation and transmission electric cooperative that supplies power to its seven members. They include five distribution electric cooperatives and two licensed alternative electric suppliers. ■

*MW or megawatt is 1 million watts.



By the end of 2016, we expect 30 percent of the electricity Great Lakes Energy members receive will be from clean, renewable energy sources. Increased investments by our power supplier in affordable wind energy from Michigan's Thumb area will make us a renewable energy leader in the state.

It Really Does Take A Village

Partners For Power

By Emily Haines Lloyd

Photo: Garrett Hubbard



In rural Guatemala, not far from the border with Mexico, is a tiny village called Buena Vista and it is just that—a “good view.” Set amongst the mountains, with peaks poking through the clouds—it’s a magical sight. At least during the day.

At night, the small town disappears into the fog banks and darkness due to a simple reality—Buena Vista did not have electricity.

Which is why in early 2015, Michigan electric co-ops partnered with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) International, an organization that helps developing countries gain access to safe, reliable and affordable electricity, to bring power to approximately 54 families in Buena Vista. Lineworkers from five electric co-ops in Michigan packed over 1,500 pounds of luggage, equipment and tools and traveled to Buena Vista to do just that.

“On the day we arrived, we realized that all of the villagers—men, women and children—had gathered there to greet us. It was humbling to see so many smiling faces, all filled with such joy and gratitude, because they knew we had come to help bring them electricity,” said Brad Parkhouse, HomeWorks





Photo: Garrett Hubbard

Tri-County lineworker. “They expressed how grateful they were to us for coming, and we told them how happy we were to be there. It was emotional, really.”

The Michigan lineworkers discovered that local residents had already hand-dug and set all of the electric poles. With the mountainous terrain, the lineworkers remarked how difficult that task was, particularly without the power tools that would have been used stateside for such an undertaking.

Over 12 days, the Michigan lineworkers and their unofficial team of about 40 local residents prepared poles (by climbing them the old fashioned way, no bucket trucks here) and hanging wire.

“I thought I was a hard worker until I met these people,” said Trevor Stratton, Wolverine Power lineworker. “They’re pulling wire into the valleys where the elevation drop is incredible...I don’t know how we could ever do this job without them.”

While electric power is taken for granted by those in the United States, it is seen as nothing short of a lifeline to this community—which is likely why the local people were so committed to making it happen

in their small town. It promises improvement in health care, safety, education and economic growth. Power is the spark that changes communities, provides opportunities, and ignites imaginations. While the social and economic impact is nothing short of staggering—the experience for the team of 10 linemen did not lie in the metrics, but the experience itself.

“One of the locals, Ofelia De Leon, invited several of us to be with his family when the lights came on in their house for the very first time,” said Dan King, Michigan Electric Cooperative Association safety instructor. “You could feel the anticipation in the air as we all gathered together inside their small mountain home. Ofelia had the honor of flipping the switch, and when the light came on everyone began clapping. The room radiated with happiness—there was plenty of smiling, laughter, and even some tears. It was a very emotional experience, and by far my proudest moment in 26 years of linework.” ■

For more information about Partners for Power and to see more amazing photos please visit partnersforpower.org.

Your Co-op Cares

Here are some ways Great Lakes Energy put the cooperative principle of Concern for Community into practice in 2015. May your new year be bright knowing we'll be here looking out for you.



Great Lakes Energy director, Ric Evans, was part of a group of electric cooperative volunteers who helped low-income residents with critical home repairs and other home upgrades while they were in Orlando, FL, attending the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association annual meeting.

Photo: Luis Gomez



A very destructive August storm left nearly 38,700 Great Lakes Energy members without power in all 26 counties we serve. Our crews worked long hours to replace 246 broken poles and make other repairs so power could be restored as quickly as possible.



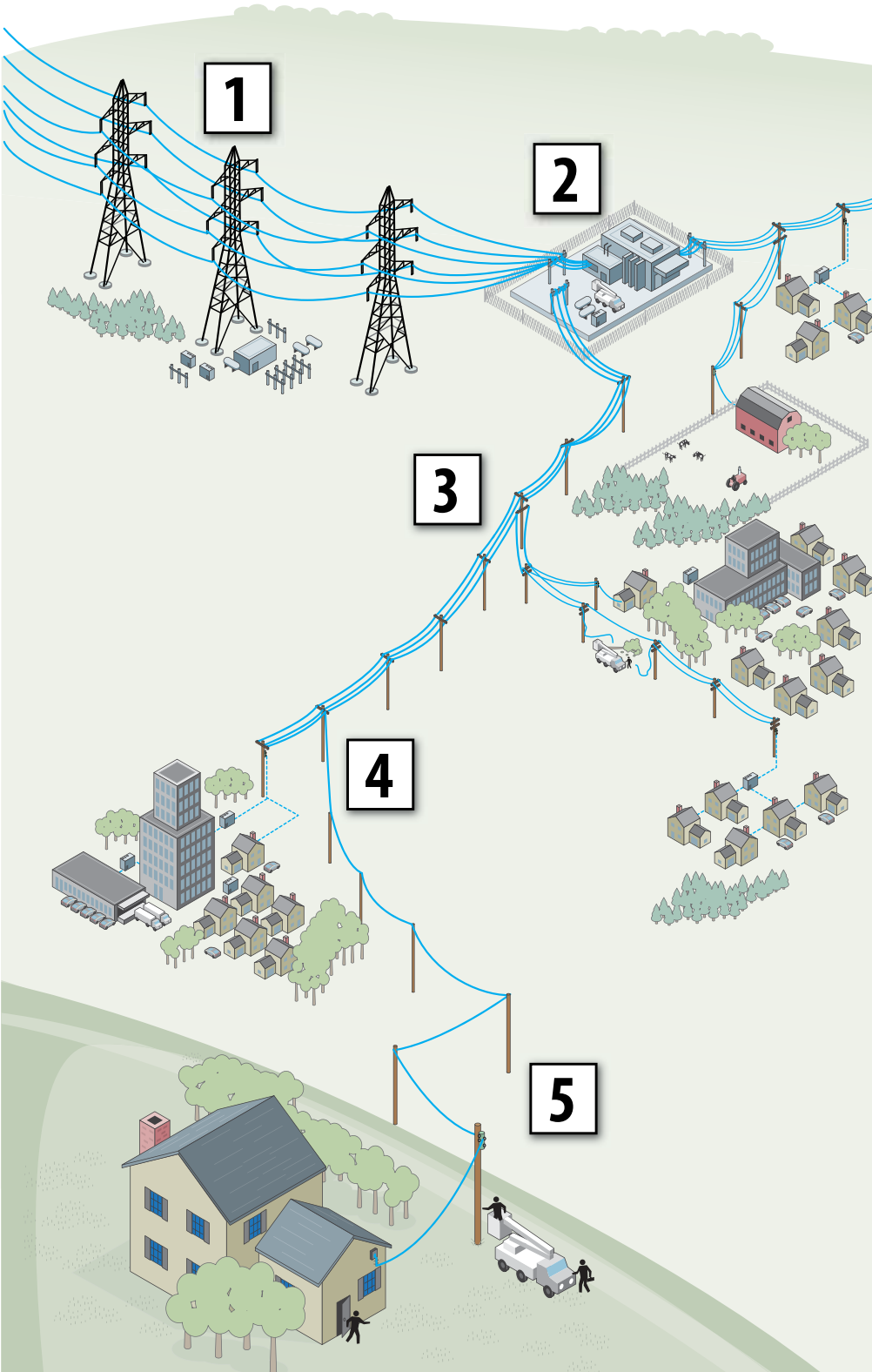
By allowing us to round up your monthly bill, we were able to award over \$206,000 in People Fund grants in 2015 to local organizations that work to help people young and old in your community.



Four Great Lakes Energy workers were part of two Michigan electric co-op groups who traveled to the rugged mountains of Guatemala to bring power to a remote village. From left are engineering analyst, Kevin Evans and lineworkers Tony Reichle, William LaTourneau and Adam Brewbaker.

Powering up at Great Lakes Energy

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm, like the one last August, causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. The numbers below show the route electricity takes to reach your home. It's the same route our repair crews follow to restore service safely to the greatest number of Great Lakes Energy members in the shortest time possible. In a big storm, damage at all five points in the delivery system is possible.



1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission line sections that supply power to transmission substations (and an estimated 10,000–20,000 GLE members per section) rarely fail. But when damaged, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves an estimated 1,000–5,000 GLE members. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

3 Main Distribution Lines

If additional problems remain, main lines from the substation are checked. Each line serves an estimated 500–2,000 members.

4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, tap lines that branch off the main lines are inspected next. Each tap line feeds power to an estimated 15–250 members.

5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Small, scattered individual outages (normally groups of less than 10 members) are repaired after problems in the areas above are corrected.

The Quilt Lady

By Jack O'Malley

Eleanor Howard's story began when she was eight years old and asked her mother how to quilt. As a team, they pieced together Eleanor's first quilt and 87 years later, she still has it. "I've used that quilt on all my children's beds. I pert near wore it out!"

Speaking of children, Eleanor has five. And 15 grandchildren, along with 20 great-grandchildren. Each one has a quilt lovingly stitched by grandma. In addition, Eleanor donates many of her quilts to charity. How many has she made? "Oh, too many to



count!" Of the dozens of quilts assembled in her 95 years, one in particular stands out.

She made the quilt for her son, Albert, carefully patching each piece over two years. The result? A quilt depicting the state of Michigan, including all 83 counties, each painstakingly cut to its exact shape and featuring the product or service it's



Jack O'Malley

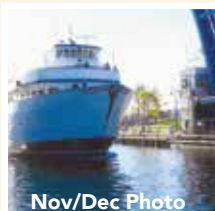
known for. Using appliques, stenciling, embroidery and hand painting, Eleanor had no pattern. She bought the biggest map she could find and went to work on figuring scale. The detail of Eleanor's Michigan quilt catches everyone's eye and has won multiple medals and ribbons. ■



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **Feb. 10** will be entered in a drawing to win a \$50 electricity bill credit 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, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number, and name of your co-op.



Nov/Dec Photo

Our Mystery Photo Contest Winner from the November/December 2015 issue is Brian Thompson, an Alger Delta co-op member who correctly identified the photo as "U.S.-31 Outlet Bridge in Charlevoix with the Emerald Isle boat."

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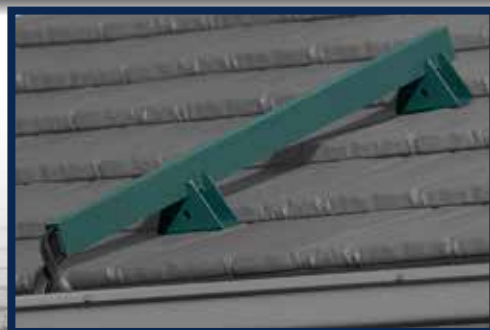


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Thanks for helping our communities!



Your small contribution (averaging 50 cents per month or less) to the People Fund is greatly appreciated. The many local charities and community groups helped by this program are grateful to the Great Lakes Energy members who make the People Fund grants possible.

“Building a greenhouse will be instrumental in nurturing the physical and emotional well-being of our Elders.”

-Carolyn Timmer, Grandvue Medical Care Facility

“Your grant helped us increase services by about 10% over last year!”

-Magdalene Fry,
The Fountain Hill Center for Counseling and Consultation

“Thanks to all Great Lakes Energy members for making this grant possible.”

-Kathleen Premer, Oceana County Council on Aging

“Thank you so much for supporting this important upgrade to our pantry’s entrance, thus making it handicap accessible.”

-Kelly Glover, Caritas Food Pantry



Good Samaritan Family Services, Ellsworth

“Thank you for your role in ensuring our area’s older adults are provided with hot, nutritious meals and a friendly face.”

-Sue Engel, Friendship Centers of Emmet County

Three easy ways to sign up: **BY PHONE:** Call 888-485-2537 **ONLINE:** Visit gtlakes.com (“Your Community” tab)
BY MAIL: Fill out the section on the back of the attached People Fund Annual Report and return with your bill payment.