

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Casting A Line

With Kevin VanDam

Plus!

A Culture Of Safety

Spring Energy Seminar

Your GLE Dollars At Work

Both of these devices create hot air but which uses less power?



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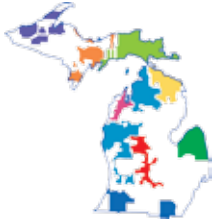
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Executive Editor
Casey Clark

Editor
Christine Dorr

Publisher
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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.

CONTACT US/LETTERS TO EDITOR:

Michigan Country Lines
201 Townsend St., Suite 900
Lansing, MI 48933
248-534-7358
cdorr@meca.coop
countrylines.com



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See page 4 for contact information.

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IN YOUR WORDS

Last month, we asked electric co-op members a question:

If you had to be trapped in a TV show for a month, which would you choose?

Thank you for all the responses. Here are some of your answers...

Hands down 'Andy of Mayberry' HAPPY, SAD, FUNNY, LOVE, just a lot of good old life lessons in this good old TV show.

The original 'Batman' series with Adam West. He never loses a fight, has an awesome car, and the ultimate man cave.

The 'Waltons' TV show.

Our new Question of the Month is:

If you could ask your future self one question, what would it be?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by June 1.

ON THE COVER*

Kevin VanDam, often called simply, "KVD," is a professional bass fisherman from Kalamazoo, MI. In the world of professional bass fishing, KVD is at the pinnacle, and arguably the best in the world.

**Some co-op editions have a different cover. Photo-Seigo Saito, Seven Seas Creation, Inc.*

Board of Directors

Richard Walsworth *Chairman*

3701 N. 48th Ave., Mears, MI 49436
231-873-2418 • rwalsworth@glenergy.com

Mark Carson *Vice-Chairman*

01950 Anderson Rd., Boyne City, MI 49712
231-582-0688 • mcarrson@glenergy.com

Larry Monshor *Treasurer*

1541 Thumm Rd., Gaylord, MI 49735
989-705-1778 • lmonshor@glenergy.com

Paul Byl *Secretary*

9941 W. Buchanan Rd., Shelby, MI 49455
231-861-5911 • pbyl@glenergy.com

Richard Evans *Director*

11195 Essex Rd.
Ellsworth, MI 49729
231-883-3146 • revans@glenergy.com

Dale Farrier *Director*

1561 N. Selkirk Lake Road,
Kalkaska, MI 49646
231-564-0853 • dfarrier@glenergy.com

Robert Kran *Director*

7380 N. Tuttle Rd., Free Soil, MI 49411
231-464-5889 • bkran@glenergy.com

Paul Schemanski *Director*

5974 Stolt Rd., Petoskey, MI 49770
231-439-9079 • paul.schemanski@glenergy.com

Robert Thurow *Director*

819 W. Chauvez Rd., Scottville, MI 49454
231-757-3430 • rthurow@glenergy.com

President/CEO: Bill Scott

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

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Electric Co-ops And A Culture Of Safety



Bill Scott
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

We teach our youngsters about safety from an early age because we know how important it is to protect our families and ourselves. In the spirit of May being National Electrical Safety Month, Great Lakes Energy is just one of many electric cooperatives throughout the country that are stepping up to the plate when it comes to safety.

Until 2007, there was an alarming national trend among electric co-ops, which was the fact that the number of “lost-time” accidents was increasing. Lost-time is defined as anything resulting in an employee missing time at work, and these accidents could range from a sprained ankle to the tragedy of a fatality.

This is why Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange, which insures the vast majority of electric co-ops nationwide, initiated a campaign called a “Culture of Safety.” It was designed to create a much greater awareness about safety issues at all electric co-ops.

We have our own culture at Great Lakes Energy, and safety is a big part of it. Everyone is involved, including lineworkers, office employees, field staff, management and directors.

Our Safety Awareness Program increases employee involvement in safety activities. Employees work together to create safety videos, volunteer to give presentations at safety meetings, submit safety tips shared with all employees, participate in quarterly safety quizzes, and more. Plus, all employees attend regular safety training meetings to learn such things as CPR and fire extinguisher use.

The main idea is to keep safety in mind in everything we do, both at work and at home.

As an electric co-op member, you have a role, too. If you see any potentially dangerous situations, like a tree branch touching a power line, for example, you should report them as soon as possible to us.

High employee participation in our Safety Awareness Program demonstrates a very important point. If we are all committed to the same cause, it’s much easier to reach our goal. The same applies to our families, our communities and any groups we may belong to.

We also know that living our cooperative principles and values is equally important. We have the best business model because it puts you, the member-owner, at the center of our efforts.

We look forward to being your safe electricity provider and energy advisor, not just during National Electrical Safety Month but long into the future. ■

Take Advantage Of Heat Pump Discounts

A lower kilowatt-hour (kWh) rate is available for qualifying ground or air-source heat pumps.

The rate rewards Great Lakes Energy members who have an efficient electric heating system with a three cents per kWh energy credit. This credit is available year-round for qualifying ground-source heat pumps. Qualifying air-source heat pumps will receive the credit only during the heating season (bills rendered November through May).

Electric heat pumps must meet the following minimum standards:

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.

The heat pump must be wired to a second meter to receive the kWh discount.

Ask us about the three cents/kWh credit and rebates up to \$500 that are available for qualifying heat pumps. Call 888-485-2537, ext. 8957, for more information or email us at glenergy@glenergy.com.

Additional rebates up to \$500 are available through our Energy Optimization program. Visit michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319.

Great Lakes Energy does not sell or install heat pumps.

Visit earthcomfort.com, sponsored by the Michigan Geothermal Energy Association, for more information about heat pumps and dealers in your area. ■

Free Seminar Offers Energy-Saving Advice, Door Prizes

A free energy seminar for Great Lakes Energy members will be held Friday, June 10, at the Mason County District Library in Ludington.

Learn about home heating and cooling options with geothermal and air-source heat pumps and Energy Optimization (EO) programs that offer incentives to help co-op members save energy. They include rebates for the purchase of furnaces with variable speed blower motors, heat pump water heaters, Wi-Fi enabled or smart occupancy-sensing thermostats, refrigerators, TVs, lighting, and more. In addition, information on free online audits will be provided.

Local heating and cooling companies and Great Lakes Energy staff members will be on hand to answer questions related to heat pumps.

Co-op members will also learn about other incentive programs offered by Great Lakes Energy.

Door prizes will be awarded. Winners will receive energy-saving gifts.



Register Now

Call 888-485-2537, ext. 8958, or email events@glenergy.com. Space is limited.

Friday, June 10, 10 a.m. to noon.
Mason County District Library
West Shore Bank room
217 East Ludington Ave. (U.S.-10), Ludington

Clean Power Plan Update



Craig Borr, CEO
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

As a result of a Feb. 9 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, the State of Michigan has stopped efforts on its development of a plan to meet the demands of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP). The CPP is a federal regulatory action that requires states to reduce carbon emissions from power plants by approximately 30 percent by 2030.

What Does This Mean?

The Supreme Court's "stay" of the CPP means that it has no legal effect while the courts are reviewing the carbon reduction rules to determine whether they are lawful. During this time, the EPA cannot enforce any of the CPP deadlines or requirements. While the granting of a "stay" does not guarantee victory for opponents of the plan, it greatly increases the odds of the courts ultimately determining that the CPP is unlawful.

For the past several months, Michigan's electric cooperatives were engaged with the State of Michigan in developing an implementation plan that would have, prior to the Supreme Court ruling, had Michigan on a trajectory of submitting an initial carbon reduction plan to the EPA this fall. Those development efforts have now been suspended.

The Court's ruling means that "certainty" for our state and its electric utilities may not be forthcoming until sometime in 2018—a rather ominous sign, given the fact that several of Michigan's old and dirty coal-fired power plants will be retired in the next three to five years by companies like Detroit Edison, the Michigan South Central Power Agency, and the Lansing

Board of Water & Light. At present, just two cleaner, natural gas-fired power plants are under construction in our state—one in Holland by the City of Holland and one near Gaylord by Wolverine Power Cooperative.

This recent court action is a keen reminder of the statement uttered by former U.S. Rep. John Dingell, the architect of the current U.S. Clean Air Act, when commenting about the EPA's regulation of carbon via rulemaking rather than legislation enacted by Congress. Dingell said that the EPA's regulation of carbon would be "a glorious mess." Sadly, I believe Mr. Dingell was right. It's the job of the U.S. Congress to regulate carbon emissions, not a federal regulatory agency led by political appointees.

Michigan Co-ops Well Positioned With Renewable Energy

The other ironic twist is that Michigan's electric cooperatives, as a group, are very well positioned to potentially benefit from new carbon rules. As our state's unquestioned leaders in renewable energy, the State of Michigan and the cooperatives could be "economic winners" from implementation of the current CPP.

This is due to the fact that by 2017 Michigan's electric co-ops will serve nearly 1,000 megawatts of electrical load and have nearly 400 megawatts of renewable energy in our power supply basket to serve that load. My math says that puts Michigan's electric cooperatives, as a group, at nearly 40 percent renewables, with the state standard currently at 10 percent.

That's called leadership. ■



For Safe Digging, Call Miss DIG

MISS DIG has been the first step in utility damage prevention and excavation safety in Michigan for over 45 years. MISS DIG is a nonprofit organization funded by utility owners and municipalities, and serves as a single point of contact for those performing excavation anywhere in the state.

MISS DIG is available around the clock, 365 days a year, so whether it's the excavation of a new housing development, or something as simple as installing a new mailbox, contacting MISS DIG is a fast and free way to start your project.

Contact MISS DIG by dialing 811, or online via missdig.org, three business days prior to beginning work. You will be asked questions regarding your project such as, location, date, work being performed, and more. That information will be passed on to utility owners in the area who will locate and mark the underground lines on your work site or yard. They will also provide information



on how they've handled your request through MISS DIG's Positive Response program. After three days have passed and the marks are laid, you are free to begin with your project, provided you respect the marks and work carefully around them. If a question about your request or the marks comes up, MISS DIG is ready to assist.

So be smart, be safe, and know what's below. Contact MISS DIG before you dig.

For more information about MISS DIG or utility damage prevention, please visit missdig.org. ■

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

For your safety and for the protection of underground utility lines, always follow these steps before starting any digging project.

1. Contact MISS DIG at 811 or missdig.org
2. Wait 3 days for utility owners to mark their lines
3. Respect the marks
4. Dig with care



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**
visit missdig.org for more information

Stay Cool And Save Energy This Summer

Gorgeous summer days filled with swimming, popsicles and picnics are all within reach! But along with all the wonderful things summer brings comes the costly effort of keeping our homes cool and comfortable. Prepare your home for the summer heat and save energy while earning cash incentives from the Energy Optimization (EO) program.

1. A/C tune-up: Ensure your central A/C runs as efficiently as possible by scheduling a tune-up. A tune-up can help reduce energy usage, prevent costly breakdowns, and allow you and your family to enjoy cleaner, healthier indoor air. **EO program cash incentive: \$50**

2. New central A/C or air-source heat pump system: If your central A/C system is more than 20 years old, it's time to upgrade. Install a new ENERGY STAR® central A/C system and save up to 20 percent in cooling costs annually, or opt for an air-source heat pump system to save even more. **EO program cash incentive: \$250-\$500**

3. New thermostat: Stop wasting energy by running the A/C excessively while you're sleeping or away.

Standard programmable, Wi-Fi enabled and smart thermostats allow for the customization of daily schedules with varying temperature settings. Wi-Fi enabled and smart thermostats allow users to remotely program and adjust temperatures, while smart thermostats can program themselves after "learning" your behaviors. **EO program cash incentive:** \$20 for standard programmable; \$100 for Wi-Fi enabled and smart thermostats

Combo Cash Incentives Now Available!

Save even more when you purchase a combination of qualifying energy-saving equipment:

Cash Incentive	Equipment	Bonus Incentive	Maximum Total Incentive
HVAC Combo Bonus	New furnace + central A/C unit	\$100	\$800
Smart HVAC Combo Bonus	New furnace + central A/C unit + Wi-Fi enabled or smart thermostat	\$150	\$950

Visit michigan-energy.org or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy-saving information and rebates. ■



Get your ducks in a row.

Summer is almost here, which means it's time to prepare your home for the cooling season! Schedule a tune-up for your central A/C today in order to:

- Save energy
- Prevent costly breakdowns
- Enjoy cleaner, healthier indoor air

ENERGY TIP: Act now to receive a \$50 cash incentive toward a central A/C tune-up!

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.

Saluting Our Armed Forces Photo Gallery



1



2



3



4



5



6

Enter Our 'Pay My Bill' Photo Contest!

Great Lakes Energy members whose photos we print in *Country Lines* will be entered in a drawing. One lucky member will win a credit on their December 2016 energy bill, up to \$200!

Upcoming topics include **"All About Michigan,"** due **May 15** for the **July/August** issue and **"Sports/Outdoor Recreation,"** due **July 15** for the **September** issue.

Visit gtlakes.com/photocontest to submit your high resolution digital photo, read contest rules and see upcoming themes for 2016. Thank you to everyone who sends in photos. We always look forward to seeing all the photos our talented members submit.

1. A memorial monument and American flags give tribute to our servicemen and women. *Photo by Dan Kuiper, Morley*
2. My daughter, Torri, in Washington, D.C. She witnessed one of the WWII monuments and met a Honor Flight WWII Veteran. She talked with him and gave him a hug. He said she made his trip complete with the hug, and that someone so young thanked him for his service to our country.
3. Our daughter, Julia, was stationed at the Naval Hospital on Guam. This is where our first grandchild, Oliver, was born. *Photo by Heike DeWolf, Grayling*
4. Father and son proudly marched in a Veteran's Day Parade. James had recently received his Eagle Scout status and marched with his dad, Glenn, who is a physician in the IN Air National Guard. *Photo by Theresa Mandeville, Manistee*
5. My brother-in-law, Command Sgt. Major Paul Bianco, had just stepped off the plane in Kalamazoo after serving a year in Afghanistan. He returned home on Sept. 11, 2014, and it was also his son Nicholas' sixth birthday. *Photo by Tamara Benjamin, Middleville*
6. Our daughter, Ella, was a flower girl in a wedding. One of the groomsmen was a Navy officer who came over, knelt down, took her hand and kissed it. *Photo by Gina Smith, Shelby*

SNACKS & APPETIZERS

Party-worthy recipes for your next gathering.

Bacon Wrapped Water Chestnuts

Connie Bowman, Manistee

- 1 c. ketchup
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1 lb. bacon, cut into thirds
- 2 small cans whole water chestnuts

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix together ketchup and brown sugar. Wrap ½ piece of bacon around each chestnut. Place in a 9x13 pan. Pour ketchup mixture over wrapped bacon/chestnuts. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

Photos—831 Creative

Jalapeno Popper Boats (Pictured)

Ted Herrst, Mancelona

- 25 medium, fresh jalapeño peppers*
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 pkg. bacon bits
- 3 c. finely shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 T. olive oil
- ¼ c. cornmeal

Preheat oven to 400°. Spread olive oil evenly over a cookie sheet. Sprinkle cornmeal evenly over cookie sheet. Cut jalapeño peppers in half lengthwise; remove all seeds and membranes. In a small bowl, beat cream cheese, bacon, Worcestershire sauce, and 2 cups cheddar cheese until smooth. Spoon 2 teaspoons of mixture into each jalapeño half, and place on the oiled cookie sheet, then roll each jalapeño lightly in cornmeal. Top with remaining cheese. Bake for 5–10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve warm. Optional: For milder peppers, after cutting, boil peppers in water for 2–5 minutes. Drain, rinse and allow to cool.

*Wear plastic gloves while working with jalapeño peppers; DO NOT touch face, especially eyes.



Buffalo Chicken Dip

Patsy Dalrymple, Lake Isabella

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 10 oz. can chicken breast, drained
- ¼ c. hot sauce
- ½ bottle blue cheese dressing
- 8 oz. pkg. sharp cheddar cheese, crumbled

Mix all ingredients together and place in microwave. Cook 1 minute at a time until all cheese is melted (you can also use a mini crock pot). Serve warm on crackers.



Gather Round

The Co-op Kitchen Table

A **NEW** and **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community for our electric co-op members.

MI CO-OP KITCHEN is a place to share your recipes and food ideas with lots of other like-minded members. You will also get a chance to win awesome prizes.

In every *Country Lines* issue, members can submit recipes online for a chance to win a **\$50** electric bill credit. While that's pretty cool by itself, there's more! We will print the winning recipe in *Country Lines* (complete with a professional photo of the dish), and create an instructional "how to" video for micoopkitchen.com.

Ready to pull up a seat?

GREAT! Go to MICOOPKITCHEN.COM and register.

Please submit your favorite "Dessert" recipes by July 1.

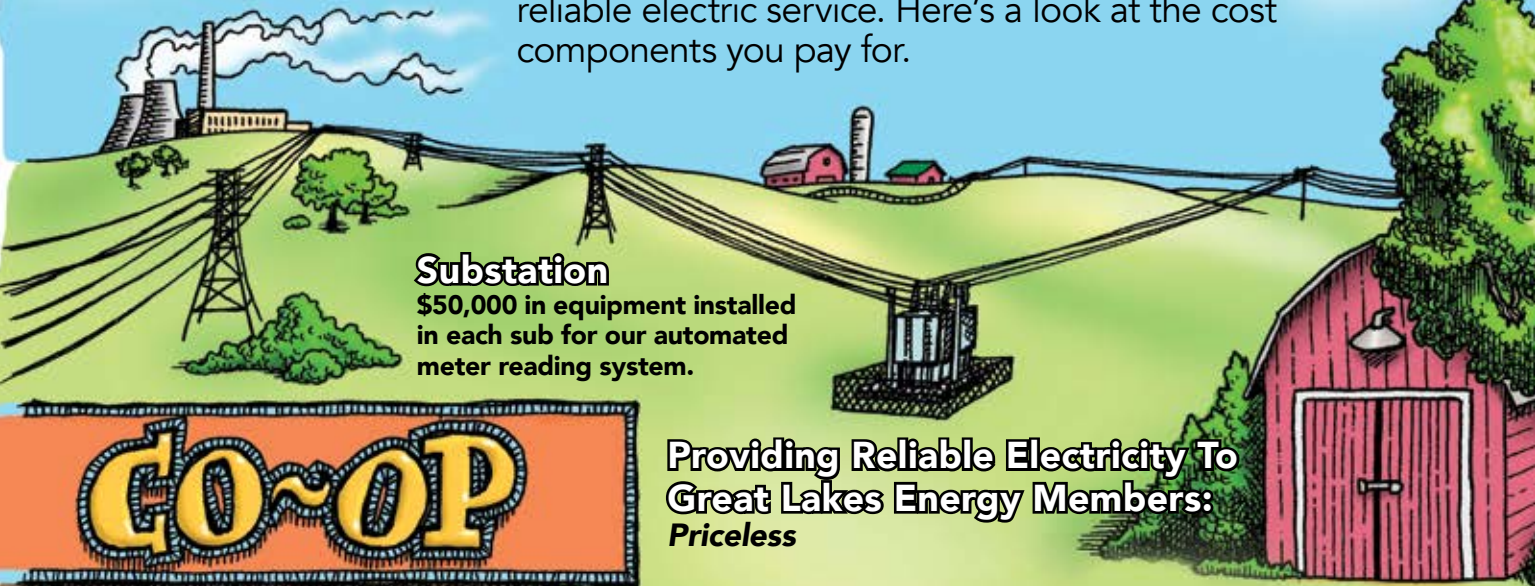
Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type on one side, please):
Country Lines Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900,
Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

micoopkitchen.com



How My GLE Dollars Are Spent

Each year money is budgeted for new power lines and new vehicles and equipment to continue providing reliable electric service. Here's a look at the cost components you pay for.



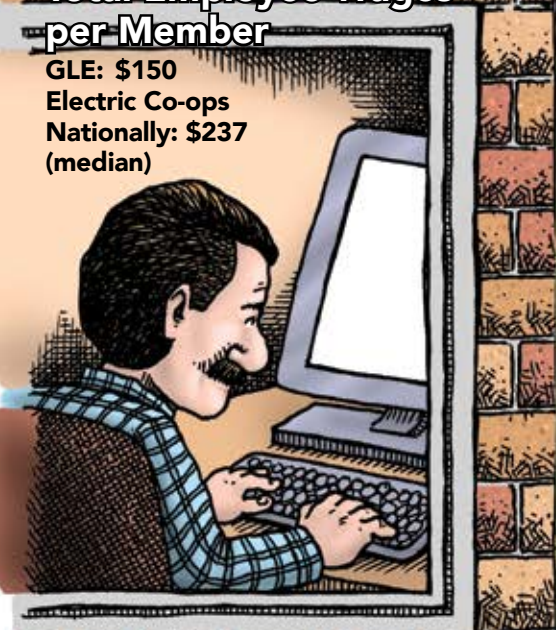
Substation
\$50,000 in equipment installed in each sub for our automated meter reading system.

Providing Reliable Electricity To Great Lakes Energy Members: Priceless

GO~OP

Total Employee Wages per Member

GLE: \$150
Electric Co-ops
Nationally: \$237
(median)



What your bill pays for

Great Lakes Energy is a cooperative. That means your electric rates are based on the cooperative's actual costs to serve you. What are those costs? The simplest way to explain what you pay for is to split your bill into two parts—**fixed costs and variable costs**.

The electricity you use is a variable cost. You pay for electricity use through the energy and PSCR charges on your bill. For the average year-round member, these purchased power costs account for well over one-half of their bill.

The power line system, labor, equipment, vehicles and offices are among the fixed costs paid for through the monthly charge. They are the daily expenses of doing business, such as maintaining and improving our power line distribution system for reliable service, handling bill payments, and having staff available 24-7 to get your power back on in case of an outage.

The fixed costs are not related to the amount of energy you use. They exist whether you use a great deal or little, if any, electricity.

Here is a percentage breakdown of what makes up the fixed costs in the monthly charge:

Operations and Maintenance (32.8%). This covers daily work to ensure our power line system is properly distributing electricity to members.

Typical operating expenses include inspecting and monitoring lines, poles, meters and other distribution equipment, dispatching and engineering services, radio communications, and property taxes on lines and equipment.

Maintenance refers to the upkeep of our power line distribution system and repairs due to storms and other sources of damage.

In addition, trees and brush, the main causes of power outages, are cleared away from power lines. It takes six to seven years to clear the entire service area. The current cost averages \$2,747 per mile.

**Overhead And Underground
Distribution Lines**
\$55,400 – \$229,600 per mile

Pole
\$80 – \$370

Transformer
\$750 – \$1,500

Lineworker Gear
\$3,500

Tree Trimming
\$2,747 per mile

**Bucket Truck
And Attachments**
\$250,000

**Residential
Meter**
\$165

Michigan Country Lines
48 cents/issue

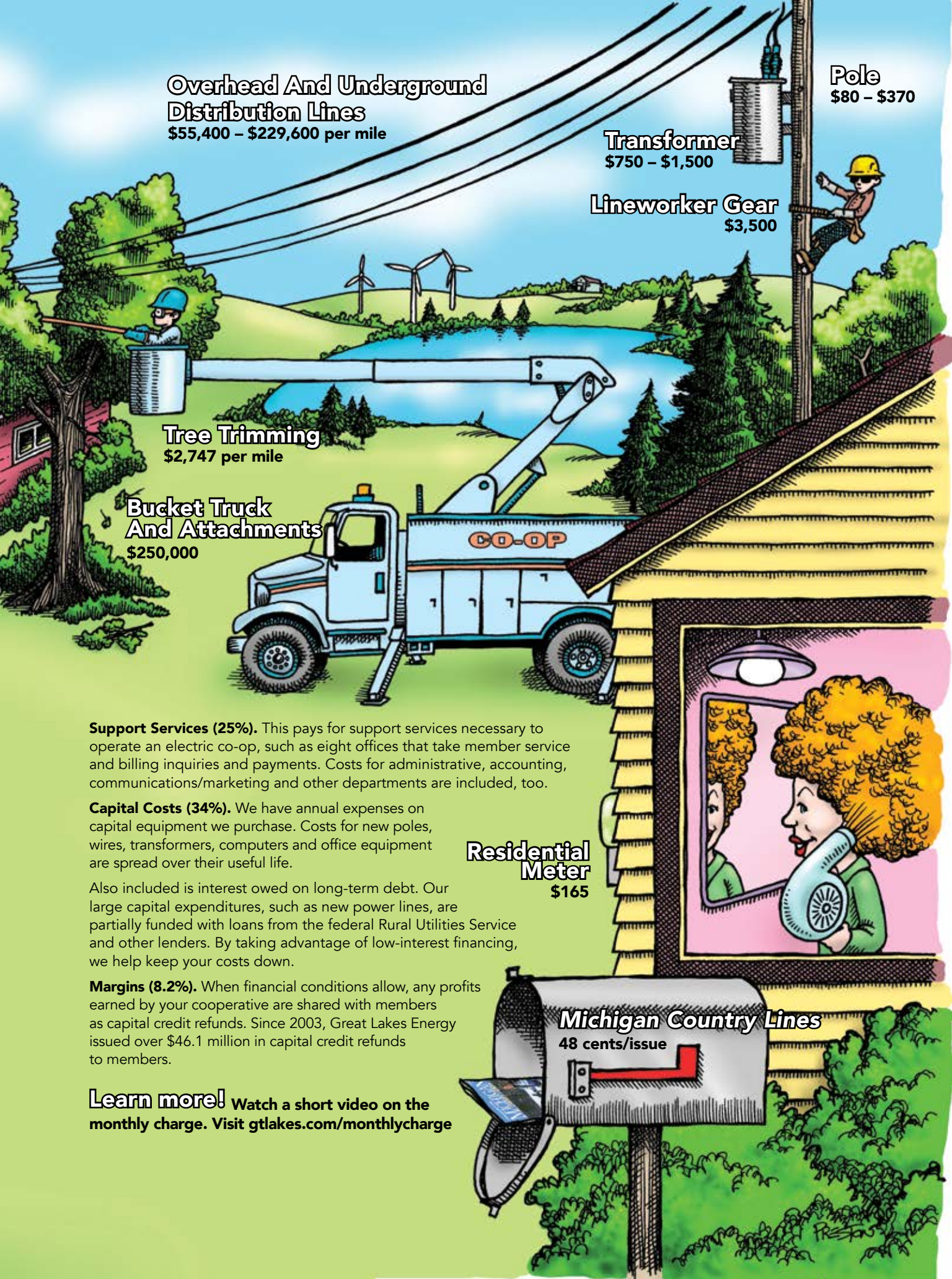
Support Services (25%). This pays for support services necessary to operate an electric co-op, such as eight offices that take member service and billing inquiries and payments. Costs for administrative, accounting, communications/marketing and other departments are included, too.

Capital Costs (34%). We have annual expenses on capital equipment we purchase. Costs for new poles, wires, transformers, computers and office equipment are spread over their useful life.

Also included is interest owed on long-term debt. Our large capital expenditures, such as new power lines, are partially funded with loans from the federal Rural Utilities Service and other lenders. By taking advantage of low-interest financing, we help keep your costs down.

Margins (8.2%). When financial conditions allow, any profits earned by your cooperative are shared with members as capital credit refunds. Since 2003, Great Lakes Energy issued over \$46.1 million in capital credit refunds to members.

Learn more! Watch a short video on the monthly charge. Visit gtlakes.com/monthlycharge





"That's the beauty of Michigan—pretty much everywhere you look there's a lake, river or stream with something willing to bite."

Casting A Line

With Kevin VanDam

By Emily Haines Lloyd



When you're talking to Kevin VanDam you don't get the feeling you're speaking with an internationally recognized angler and arguably the best bass fisherman in the past 20 years. You just feel like you're talking to "Kevin"—the Kalamazoo guy who grew up on the lakes, streams and rivers of southwest Michigan. He sounds like a guy you went to school with, who just happens to travel 250 days a year to compete in bass tournaments and promote the sport he loves.

"Fishing has always been a part of my life. I have a memory of going ice fishing with my dad and I was maybe three years old," VanDam recalls. "So, even when I started competing at the professional level, it took me a long time to think of this as my career. It was just always something I did."

It could be this single-minded and humble mindset that made VanDam the multiple championship winner in professional bass fishing. If you know the sport—you know VanDam. If you thought anglers worked with protractors—let's catch you up. The Bassmaster Classic is the most coveted bass fishing title. In his 263 Bassmaster Classic events—VanDam has won 20, finished second 13 times and landed in the top 10 a remarkable 100 times. He was also the very first Outdoorsman of the Year ESPY award winner, at the ESPN awards in 2002. Not that you can get him to muse on his accolades. VanDam is more likely to brag on his home state when asked why he still lives in the area where he grew up.

"Michigan is home," VanDam says. "I love the four seasons, and my family loves being outdoors. In the summer, you'll find us on the lake boating or fishing. In the winter, I love taking my sons hunting. There's so much diversity in the landscape. Michigan has so much to offer. I can't imagine living anywhere else."

When asked to give up some of his favorite fishing spots in Michigan, VanDam chuckles.

"That's the beauty of Michigan—pretty much everywhere you look there's a lake, river or stream with something willing to bite," he answers. "But I really think the best fishing anywhere is Lake St. Clair on the east side of the state. It's my favorite



tournament location. Having said that—there's nothing like heading up to Traverse City and casting a line."

As VanDam continues his 2016 season of tournaments, sports shows, promotions and product design meetings—you get the feeling his thoughts are always in Michigan—secretly thinking about that next day on the lake with his wife and sons, lazily casting a line without the pressure of a championship title, just a guy named "Kevin" hanging out and having fun. ■

Photos-Seigo Saito, Seven Seas Creation, Inc.



**NOTICE TO MEMBERS OF
GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE
CASE NO. U-15817
2014 RENEWABLE ENERGY PLAN
ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY**

The Michigan Public Service Commission (MPSC) requires all Michigan electric utilities to get approximately two percent of their power supply from renewable sources by 2012 and increasing to 10 percent by 2015.

Under this requirement, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative submits an annual report to the MPSC regarding its Renewable Energy Plan. In 2014, Great Lakes acquired a total of 48,991 renewable energy credits (30,572 credits from Harvest Wind Farm, LLC and 18,419 credits from Thunder Bay – Four Mile) and 1,717 incentive credits from Thunder Bay – Four Mile. All credit transfers were directed through Great Lakes' wholesale power supplier, Wolverine Power Supply Cooperative, Inc. Wolverine will continue to generate renewable energy and bank unused renewable energy credits for future use and compliance with statutory renewable portfolio standard requirements on behalf of all of its members.

A full copy of the cooperative's Renewable Energy Plan annual report that was filed with the MPSC is available on the cooperative's website at gtlakes.com or by request at any of the cooperative's offices.

YOUR SMALL CHANGE MAKES A **BIG** DIFFERENCE



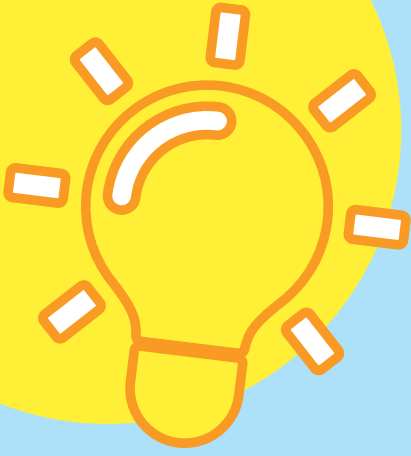
West Michigan Fair Association, Scottville

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 2015, goes into the People Fund. There are no administrative costs. All donations are returned to our local communities.

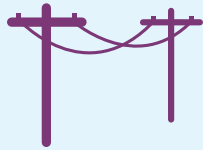
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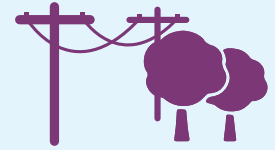
More Power Line Protection Devices



New Technology



Major Power Line Improvements



Aggressive Tree Maintenance

What hinders our progress?



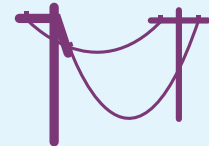
Storms



Man-made Accidents

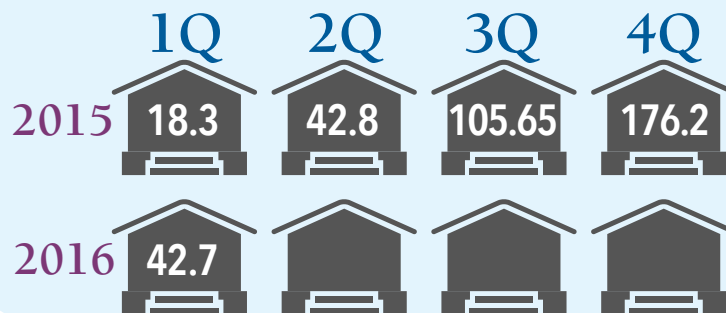


Animals



Equipment Failure

AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



**OUR YEARLY GOAL:
UNDER 163.2 MINUTES**



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

Looking Out for You

Hug A Lineman

By Jack O'Malley

The lights flicker once, twice. You wait for it. Boom! A crack of lightning illuminates the night sky as thunder simultaneously rolls over your neighborhood, taking the power with it. Most of us start scrambling for flashlights, candles and the battery operated radio. But across town, a lineman grabs his gear in preparation for what could be a long night of restoring electricity.

I recently visited with a line crew from Cherryland Electric Cooperative. Dustin Ockert, a journeyman lineman, talked about those days and nights when the power goes out. "Leaving my family at home with no power can be stressful. They're home in the dark without me and I'm out working to get the lights back on." However, it's work that Dustin finds enjoyable, despite its risks.

Every day, Dustin and his crew face a number of occupational hazards, including high-voltage contact, confined spaces, and challenging weather conditions, often while working at great heights. Deceptively simple-looking, power lines are connected by a complex arrangement of small parts that crews learn to manipulate while wearing heavy protective gloves. Handling up to 7,200 volts of electricity at any given moment, losing concentration for even a second could result in serious injury. When asked what wind speed would prevent him from taking the bucket up, Dustin confidently replied, "That hasn't happened yet!"

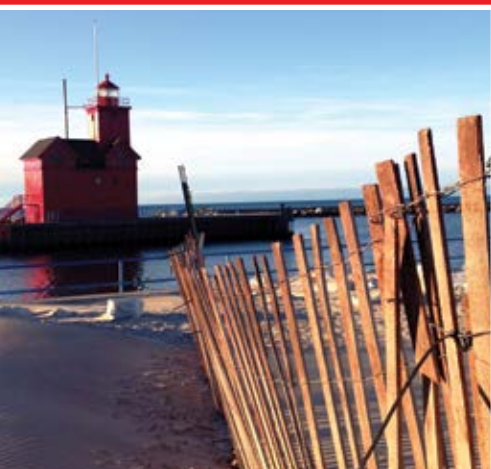


Fortunately for Dustin and his crew, most days are quiet and filled with routine maintenance work and installations. Safety remains the crew's first priority, even on normal days. But all concerns for family and safety aside, Dustin loves his job. During an outage, "The world is dark when we get where we're going and by the time we leave, the lights are back on. That's the glory of our job."

If you're like me you take your power for granted, forgetting the men and women who work in the dark, rain, wind and snow, ensuring that we can turn the lights on each morning. So take a minute, thank your local linemen, and do as Dustin suggests the next time you see his crew pulling up, "Stand back and watch what happens!" ■

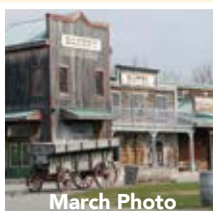


Jack O'Malley



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **June 18** will be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 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.



Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the March 2016 issue is Norman Schultz, a Great Lakes Energy co-op member who correctly identified the photo as the Back Forty Ranch at the Double JJ Resort in Rothbury, MI.

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