

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



**Plus!**

Together We'll Manage Your  
Electric Bill

Meet GLE's Student Leaders

Your Co-op's Financial Report



# Asparagus

## REIGNS IN MICHIGAN

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



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1,500 watts



**7 Series  
Geothermal Heat Pump**  
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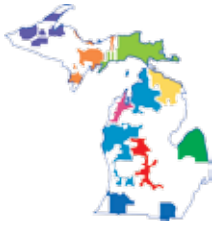


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1. 7 Series unit uses approximately 900 watts while running in speeds 1-2.



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Please notify your electric cooperative.  
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 could ask your future self one question, what would it be?**

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

**"Will I always over think everything?"**

**"Will I ever not need to call mom every time I have a bad day?"**

**"Have I seen the world and did I let it shape me?"**

**"Am I happy?"**

**"Was college really worth all of the money?"**

Our new Question of the Month is:

**If you could spend the day with any celebrity, who would it be?**

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by July 1.

## ON THE COVER

Marcia and Dick Walsworth, second-generation asparagus farmers from Mears, MI, introduce us to their 260-acre kingdom as they explain the struggles of maintaining their domain in the second largest asparagus producing state.

*Photo-Emily Haines Lloyd*



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# GLE Is Leading The Way To Renewable Energy



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

**M**y mail is filled with requests to “Join Today!,” “Buy Now!” and “Save Big!” Whether it’s by mail or phone, companies try to sell just about anything these days. So we weren’t surprised to recently learn about a company trying to sell 100 percent green energy to Great Lakes Energy members by charging a premium.

Did you know in less than a year GLE will be providing at least 30 percent of your electricity from renewable energy sources?

For members interested in purchasing more, we recommend asking a few important questions before enrolling with an outside company.

**1. What am I buying?** Companies that resell green energy purchase “renewable energy credits” or certificates (RECs) from renewable energy sources across the country. These RECs are for wind, solar and other renewable energy that was likely generated somewhere else and in the past. It doesn’t mean your home will receive this green energy. The “green electrons” flow onto the grid and mix with utility-generated power, so there is no way to know who will use them. The only way to meet your energy needs with primarily green power is to generate it yourself.

However, if you invest in certified RECs from a legitimate source, your investment does help support the development and growth of renewable energy.

**2. Are the RECs from local generating facilities?** Not necessarily. Your money could pay for wind or solar farms generating power in other states.

**3. How does their billing work?** Outside companies may offer a combined bill that includes your Great Lakes Energy charges plus a premium for green energy. They send an electronic bill, collect payment and send our share to us. Read the fine print as they may want direct access to your GLE online account, which can be risky. Would they pay your bill on time? What if they go out of business? Do you want to give your online account credentials to a third party?

**4. Does GLE offer renewable energy credits?** Not at this time, but your cooperative is already leading the way with renewable energy. By the end of this year or early 2017, at least 30 percent of your electricity will come from clean energy sources. This is through our power supplier’s purchase of more renewable energy from new wind turbine development in the Thumb area.

The bottom line? If a company tries to sell you 100 percent green energy, do your research or contact us for assistance. We’re looking out for you. ■

# Working Together To Keep Power Affordable

You and your electric cooperative work together to keep your electric bill affordable.

Great Lakes Energy members can save energy and money by taking advantage of special Energy Optimization incentives (visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) for details). We do our part by controlling costs. 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 more than 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 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 (✓)
2015*	7.90%	3.35%	-
2014	0.42%	3.03%	✓
2013	-4.26%	4.19%	✓

### Administrative & General Expenses

	GLE	Other Electric Co-ops	Met Goal (✓)
2015	0.43%	3.22%	✓
2014	3.17%	3.17%	✓
2013	2.50%	3.64%	✓

\*Severe windstorms in August and December 2015 affected our entire system resulting in over \$3.5 million in outage restoration expenses. As a result, we did not meet our goal.

## 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 2016 bill to inform you of the capital credit allocation amount you earned in 2015. 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.

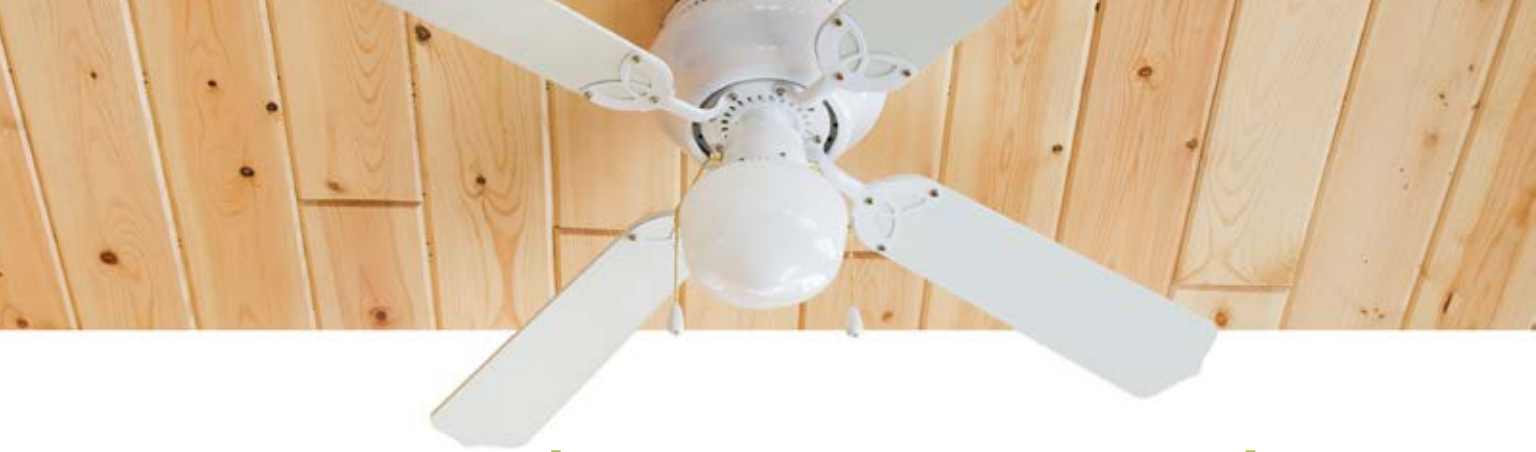
### What does the co-op do with my capital credit allocation money?

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 members.

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. ■



# How To Use Ceiling Fans For Year-Round Comfort, Savings

By James Dullely

People often wonder which ceiling fans to install. There are so many models and prices, leaving some to wonder if they can help cut energy costs.

People typically think of fans only for summertime comfort and lower air-conditioning costs. Ceiling fans are unique in that they can also reduce your wintertime heating bills with proper use.

Before installing a ceiling fan, it's important to understand how one functions. A ceiling fan does not cool a room like an air conditioner. It heats the room whenever it is running. All of the electricity it uses ends up as heat. Always turn the fan off when no one is in a room.

You feel cooler under a ceiling fan because it creates a downward breeze over your skin. This breeze allows you to run your air conditioner less or set its thermostat a few degrees higher without sacrificing comfort. If you do not do this, running the ceiling fan will increase your electric bills.

During winter, reverse the rotation of the fan blades, so the air flows up toward the ceiling. Run it on low speed. This gently moves up the hotter air, which collects near the ceiling, throughout the room without creating a chilly breeze. This allows you to set the heating thermostat a few degrees lower for savings.

The simplest way to select an efficient ceiling fan is to pick one which is Energy Star certified. When selecting a typical, lower-cost, four or five blade fan, a rule of thumb for sizing is (room size vs. diameter of blades): up to 75 sq. ft.—36 in., 75 to 144 sq. ft.—36 to 42 in., 144 to 225 sq. ft.—44 to 50 in., 225 to 400 sq. ft.—50 to 54 in.

The ideal height for the fan blades is about eight feet above the floor. A three-inch downrod is included with most fans to provide the proper height. For high ceilings, downrods up to six feet long are used to get the fan low enough. For safety reasons, never have the blades closer than seven feet from the floor.

Many new, stylish fans come with multiple blades, ranging from one to six blades, with three being the most common. Pay attention to the pitch angle of the blades to get an idea of how strong a breeze it creates. A steeper pitch moves more air at a slower speed. This often indicates a quiet and more powerful motor.

The newest and most efficient motors are DC (Direct Current) motors. These are similar in design concept to the variable speed motors in new heat pumps.

Most people install a lighting kit under the ceiling fan. Select one with LED lighting. It is not only efficient, but it lasts for many years, and most are dimmable.

A model with a hand-held remote control is most convenient to adjust the speed and is the easiest to switch off when leaving a room. Some new high-tech fans can even be controlled by a cell phone with a special fan app.

The universe of ceiling fans is amazingly big! Besides the brick-and-mortar stores, online stores have a nice selection, too.

A good online site for ceiling fans is Hansen Wholesale. For each product it sells, Hansen offers information on motor quality, CFM (air movement measured in cubic feet per minute) output, energy efficiency and other pertinent data. ■

# Perform An Annual Safety Inspection On Your Boat And Dock Before Lifting The Anchor

**W**ater comprises almost one-half of Michigan, so it's easy to see why the state boasts a thriving recreational industry and leads the nation with nearly 1 million registered pleasure boats. For boating and water safety, there are items you must legally have on your watercraft—life vests, fire extinguisher, throwable flotation device, and properly working lights—but make sure the boat and the dock are safe, too.

To help prevent accidents, the National Electrical Contractors Association says:

- All installations should be performed by a professional electrical contractor.
- All dock receptacles must comply with the National Electrical Code, which mandates a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). A GFCI measures a circuit's current and senses any imbalance (such as a discharge into the water), which trips the GFCI and cuts off the power.
- Test any GFCIs every month. Locate it along the ramp to the dock so it can be easily tested by local fire departments.
- Metal dock frames should have "bonding jumpers" that connect all metal parts to an

on-shore grounding rod. This means any dock part that becomes energized by electrical malfunction will trip the GFCI or circuit breaker.

- Ask neighbors if their dock electrical systems have been inspected and are up to Code.
- Household wire is not suitable for boats.
- *Do not* use wire nuts (these are for solid conductor wire, which should never be on a boat) or splice connectors (can cut wire strands)!
- Fuses are rated to protect the wire, not the stereo. If a fuse blows continuously, something else is wrong.
- If you rent a dock or boat, notify the owner of safety violations immediately.
- Have your boat's system (especially with onboard generators) checked at least annually and when something is added or removed.
- Ropes, string, masts and rigging also conduct electricity—don't be the common ground between water and electricity! ■

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See [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org) for more tips.



# Optimize Your Home With A Free Energy Audit



Is your home properly sealed, insulated and ventilated? If you've noticed any issues such as mold, mildew, ice dams, drafts or overall discomfort, your home may require improvements to resolve energy inefficiencies. To better understand and manage your home's energy use and cost, take advantage of the Energy Optimization program's free energy audit!

The Home Energy Optimizer is a brief online survey that analyzes your home's energy use. You will be required to enter some specific information, such as the year your home was built, the type of heating and cooling systems in your home, and when various systems and appliances were purchased and installed.

Once you've completed the survey, you will receive a personalized, comprehensive report, as well as cost-saving tips and recommendations to help reduce energy waste throughout your household. Additionally, all participants will receive a free energy-saving kit, which includes lightbulbs and other devices to help save energy and water!

How to complete your home energy audit:

Visit the Energy Optimization website at [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

- Select your electric utility from the drop-down menu at the top of the page.
- In the left menu bar, select "Online Home Audit."
- Click "Get Started Now!" and complete the questionnaire.

Upon completion of the Home Energy Optimizer survey, your free energy-saving kit will be mailed to the address you indicate. Have questions about the free home energy audit or energy-saving kit? Call us at 877-296-4319. ■



## Energy savings at your fingertips

Team up with the Energy Optimization program to improve the comfort, durability, and energy efficiency of your home! Complete our Online Home Audit to assess your home's energy performance, and receive a comprehensive report featuring cost-saving tips and opportunities.

**ENERGY TIP:** Receive a **FREE** energy-saving kit when you complete your Online Home Audit!

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

**PHONE:** 877.296.4319

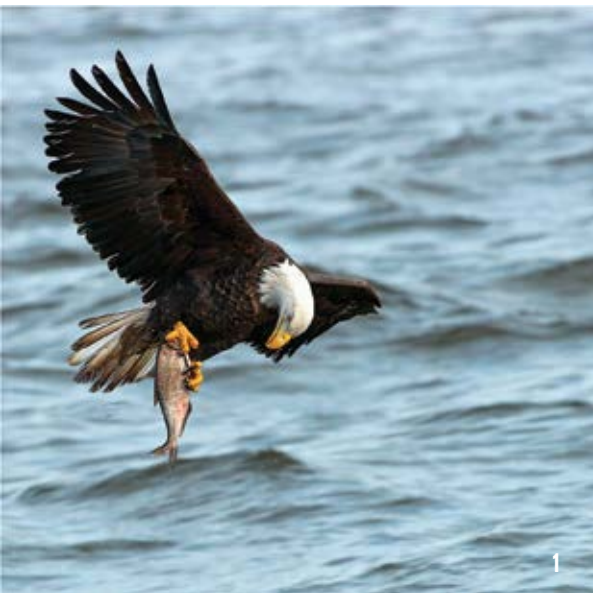
# Better together



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).



# 'Reeling It In' Fishing Photo Gallery



1



2



3



4



5

## 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: **Sports/Outdoor Recreation**, due **July 15** for the **September** issue, **Best Friends**, due **Aug. 15** for the **October** issue and **Country Roads**, due **Sept. 15** for the **Nov./Dec.** issue.

Visit [gtlakes.com/photocontest](http://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. Nice catch. Photo by Andy Byerly, Central Lake
2. Four-year-old Gage holds a perch his grandpa caught from the shore below Hardy Dam. Gage was super excited! Photo by David Westgate, Newaygo
3. My Arizona niece catching her first bass in Michigan on Wabasis Lake in Greenville. Photo by Jerry Miller, Gowen
4. My daughter, Heidi, and I fishing in the evening. She just had to kiss the fish before she put it back. Photo by John Segard, Belmont
5. Beautiful shimmery salmon caught on Lake Michigan near Manistee at sunset. Photo by Anne Marie Marz, Reed City

# QUICK & EASY

Cook these fresh and simple recipes.

## Blender Pots de Crème

Janice Harvey, Charlevoix

- 1 pkg. (6 oz.) chocolate chips
- 1 egg
- 2 T. sugar
- 1 t. vanilla
- ¼ t. salt
- ½ c. plus 2 T. milk
- whipped topping
- chocolate sprinkles or grated chocolate

In a blender, add the chocolate chips, egg, sugar, vanilla, and salt. Blend at high speed to mix ingredients and break up chocolate chips. Heat milk just to a boil, pour into blender and whirl at medium speed 1 minute. Pour into six small pot de crème dishes or custard cups and chill several hours. Just before serving, top with whipped topping and sprinkles.



Photos—831 Creative

## BBQ Meatballs

Theresa Mandeville, Manistee

- 3 lbs. ground beef
- 1 c. milk
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 c. quick oats
- 1 T. minced onions
- 2 eggs
- pepper to taste

### Topping:

- 2 c. ketchup
- 1 T. mustard
- 1 T. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 ½ c. brown sugar
- 1 T. garlic powder

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly grease a 9x13 pan. Mix meatball ingredients and form into large meatballs. Mix topping ingredients together in a saucepan on low heat until blended. Pour topping over meatballs and bake for 1 hour, covered.



## Quick Corn Fritters

Virginia Curtiss, Bitley

- 1 egg
- ½ t. salt
- pinch of sugar
- ½ can cream style corn
- ¾ c. water
- peanut oil
- 2 c. self-rising flour
- sugar or powdered sugar

In a medium mixing bowl using a wire whisk, whip the egg with salt and a good pinch of sugar. Add the cream style corn and water; whisk. Fill an 8 ½" HEAVY skillet half full of peanut oil. Heat to just below medium heat. Add self-rising flour; stir with a fork. Drop the mixture into the frying pan one tablespoon at a time, using about ½ the batter. Turn fritters over once. Place on paper towels to drain. When just warm, roll in sugar or powdered sugar, and place them on a platter Tip: put sugar in a plastic bag and shake them quickly.

## Gramma's Microwave Cashew Brittle

Linda Ackerman, Thompsonville

- ¾ c. whole cashews (or other nuts)
- ½ c. white sugar
- ¼ c. white corn syrup
- pinch salt
- ½ t. butter
- ¼ t. vanilla
- ½ t. baking soda

Place the first four ingredients in a glass microwave safe container (a 2-cup Pyrex measuring cup is perfect). Stir thoroughly. Cook 2 minutes on high; stir and cook 2 minutes longer on high. Add butter and vanilla. Stir and cook 30-35 seconds on high. The bubbling syrup should be light brown. Sprinkle baking soda over top. Stir quickly, thoroughly and carefully, because it's very hot. Pour immediately onto warm, lightly cooked, greased cooling rack. Cool and break up into pieces. Makes approximately 12 large pieces.



# Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

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

Members can submit recipes online for a chance to win a \$50 electric bill credit; plus there's more! We will print the winning recipe in *Country Lines* with a photo of the dish and create an instructional "how to" video for [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com).

Ready to pull up a seat?

**GREAT!** Go to [MICOOPKITCHEN.COM](http://MICOOPKITCHEN.COM) and register.

Please submit your favorite "Dessert" recipes by July 1 and "World Cuisine" recipes by August 1.

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

[micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com)





## A Local Guide For Nature Enthusiasts

At the Grass River Natural Area, youngsters have fun learning about nature and their role in protecting it. New field guides are expected to become available this summer that visitors young and old can read for information on the natural history of Antrim County's

Grass River area. The guides will include color photos to help visitors identify local birds, wildflowers, trees and other wildlife. A \$3,000 People Fund grant helped make the guides possible. Find out more about the popular nature area by visiting [grassriver.org](http://grassriver.org).

JOIN



## INTRODUCING PEOPLE FUND PLUS

Now you can make a greater impact in your local community with People Fund PLUS.

Choose a People Fund donation level in addition to your rounded-up amount.

Your donations are awarded in the form of grants to local community nonprofit groups.

All People Fund contributors have the chance to win a \$100 bill credit twice per year. In 2015, the People Fund awarded \$206,294 in grants to local nonprofits. Visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) to see the list of grant recipients in your area.

### JOIN TODAY!

Working together, we can help enhance our local communities and meet the needs of so many.

#### Example:

**With People Fund:** Bill Amount \$65.42 + \$.58 for People Fund = \$66.00

**With People Fund PLUS:** Bill Amount \$65.42 + \$.58 for People Fund + \$2.00 for PLUS = \$68.00

**Call 888-GT-LAKES today to join People Fund PLUS.**



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

## Pay Your Way

Great Lakes Energy offers several convenient Pay Your Way options for paying your electric bill.



**AutoPay:** Your payment is automatically deducted each month from either your checking account, credit card or debit card.

**ePay:** Pay online at [my.gtlakes.com](http://my.gtlakes.com). Make a one-time payment with a check or credit card. Enroll in e-billing to stop receiving paper bills.

**PhonePay:** Either speak to a GLE representative or pay at any time by using our automated pay-by-phone service. We accept payment by credit card or check over the phone.

**Pay Stations:** Visit any of the local participating businesses that will accept payments for Great Lakes Energy bills (no past due amounts).

**FlexPay:** Pay for your electricity in advance and manage your electricity use on a daily basis. No late fees, no reconnect fees and no deposits involved with this plan.

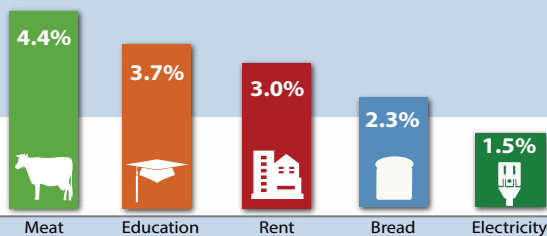
You can also visit any of our eight GLE offices and make your payment in person or use our drop box.

For more information, visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) or contact us at 888-GTLAKES.

### Electricity Remains a Good Value

The cost of powering your home rises at a slower pace than many of your typical expenses. Compare the average price increase of these expenses each year over the last five years, and the value of electricity shines.

 **Average Annual Price Increase**  
2010-2015



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index

## Please Watch For Mail 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 positions, each for three years, on the Great Lakes Energy Board of Directors, will need to be filled in districts 6, 8 and 9.

### Counties by district are:

District 6 – Mason, Lake

District 8 – Osceola, Clare, Newaygo, Mecosta

District 9 – Ottawa, Kent, Montcalm, Allegan, Barry

The term of District 6 director Robert Kran, of Free Soil, expires this year. Kran is seeking reelection. New directors are expected to be elected in Districts 8 and 9.


In addition to the mail-in ballot, the candidates' profiles will appear in the July/August election issue that will be mailed to members in Districts 6, 8 and 9.

Winners will be announced Aug. 24 at the cooperative's annual business meeting in Boyne City.

## GLE Student Leaders



Representing Great Lakes Energy at the spring Youth Leadership Summit were, from left: Spencer Joles, Boyne City; Dakota DeVries, New Era; Alex Mason, Elmira; Daly Narmore, Custer; Marie Groenink, Ellsworth and Morgan Graeber, St. Joseph. 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.



# Asparagus

## REIGNS IN MICHIGAN

By Emily Haines Lloyd

In the second week of June, Oceana County, also known as “The Asparagus Capital of the Nation,” gears up for its annual Asparagus Festival. Started in 1974, it’s the longest running asparagus festival in the country. It boasts all the events you’d expect—a parade, 5k run, arts and crafts fair, and the annual Asparagus Queen pageant. Back in 2001, the grand marshal was a well-known figure in the industry—Dick Walsworth.

Walsworth, a second-generation asparagus farmer from Mears was happy to ride in the parade, but has always known that the real star is the asparagus.

“Oceana County produces two-thirds of the asparagus grown in the state of Michigan,” Walsworth says, proudly. “Considering Michigan is the second largest grower of asparagus in the country, that’s a pretty big deal.”

Walsworth got his start on the farm established by his parents, Walter and Anna Walsworth, in 1932, and purchased it himself in the early 1970s. He has since expanded the acreage. It is now owned by his son and daughter-in-law, Ryan and Janice, and at 260 acres, Golden Stock Farms is one of Michigan’s largest.

“The Lake Michigan shore is the perfect place to grow asparagus,” Walsworth explains. “The lake moderates the temperatures, keeping it from getting too hot or cold and preventing frost.”

The Michigan asparagus yields prove his point, producing up to 23 million pounds annually—an impressive harvest for a crop that produces primarily early May through late June. However, a short season isn’t the most difficult challenge facing the industry.

Walsworth identifies the increase in imported asparagus, labor demands, and the lack of local processing plants as pressing concerns. With countries like Peru and Mexico—





The Walsworth family (left to right) Ryan, Janice, Marcia and Dick work together to make Golden Stock Farms successful.



who have very favorable growing conditions all year and large processing companies like Del Monte and Green Giant that have moved their plants to Peru—things are tough. Additionally, asparagus is a hand-harvested crop, meaning that labor costs are very expensive—an estimated 25 percent of gross sales, Walsworth says. Altogether, it means Michigan’s asparagus industry is facing real struggles.



As of 2005, those struggles are also faced by Ryan, who bought the farm from his father and mother.

“Ryan is confronted with a much different landscape than when I purchased the farm from my father,” Walsworth says. “Things are difficult, but we keep working on solutions.”

The Walsworths are most definitely problem solvers, as Ryan also recently took over his father’s role as chairman of the Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board. Dick also served for 30 years on the Great Lakes Energy Board of Directors and 25 years on the Wolverine Power Cooperative Board—providing valuable knowledge and insight to both. Walsworth retires from his seats this year, but is in no way sitting on the sidelines as he focuses on promoting renewable energy, as a member of the Spartan Renewable Energy Board of Directors.

At 74 years old, why does Dick Walsworth keep working so hard? “Once a farmer, always a farmer,” he says. ■

Contact Golden Stock Farms at 231-873-5248 or “like” them on Facebook.

Photos-Emily Haines Lloyd

## A Walsworth Family Favorite: Asparagus Roll-Ups

- Fresh asparagus
- Thinly sliced ham
- Thinly sliced turkey, chicken or hard salami
- Softened cream cheese (plain or flavored)

Trim and clean asparagus spears. Blanche in boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain and submerge in ice water to cool. Drain well. Spread slices of meat with cream cheese, lay asparagus on top and roll up. Refrigerate in covered container.

**Visit [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for this recipe and others.**



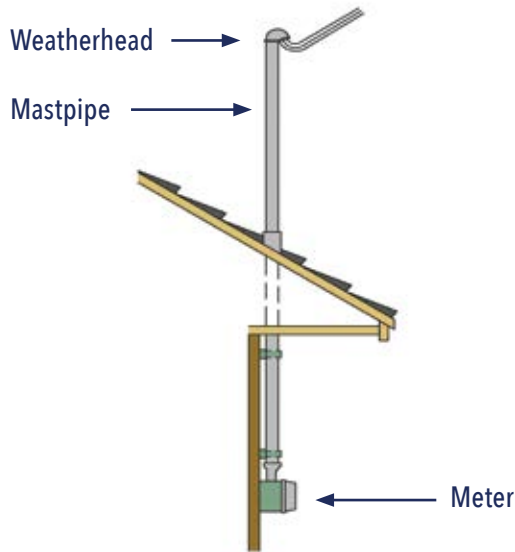
# STORM DAMAGE

## Who takes care of it?

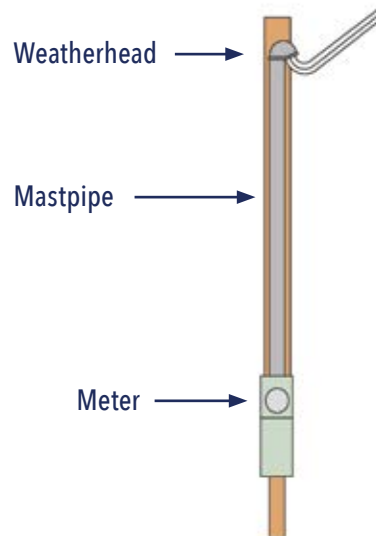
### 1. Where is your meter located?

See A or B below.

#### A. My meter is on my house.



#### B. My meter is on a pole.



## A.

### 2. What are you responsible for?

You are responsible for all equipment below and including the weatherhead, called the service entrance, EXCEPT for the meter. Contact a licensed electrician to make repairs.

## B.

You are responsible for all equipment below and including the weatherhead, called the service entrance, EXCEPT for the meter. You are also responsible for the pole and breaker box. Contact a licensed electrician to make repairs.

### 3. What is GLE responsible for?

GLE is responsible for all repairs to the power lines, including the service wires that connect to the weatherhead. GLE is also responsible for the meter and will provide a new meter base, if needed, at no charge. Contact us once your electrician has completed repairs and the electrical inspector has approved the work.

Questions?  
888-GT-LAKES



**GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CONSOLIDATED BALANCE SHEET\***  
as of December 31, 2015

**ASSETS**

**Electric plant:**

Distribution plant	\$ 442,680,073
Construction in progress	4,098,537
	<u>446,778,610</u>
Less accumulated depreciation	123,088,405
Net electric plant	<u>323,690,205</u>

**Other assets and investments:**

Investments and memberships	120,763,580
Notes and other receivables	368,436
Total other assets	<u>121,132,016</u>

**Current assets:**

Cash	7,199,816
Accounts receivable, net of bad debt reserve	22,513,000
Materials and supplies	2,755,330
Other current assets	2,574,821
Total current assets	<u>35,042,967</u>

**Deferred charges**

	<u>6,587,905</u>
--	------------------

<b>Total assets</b>	<u>\$ 486,453,093</u>
---------------------	-----------------------

**EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES**

**Equities:**

Memberships	\$ 519,740
Patronage capital	182,165,318
Donated capital	4,575,977
Accumulated other comprehensive expenses	1,920,916
Total equities	<u>189,181,951</u>

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

Long-term debt	245,287,333
Non-current accrued expenses	10,038,912
Total long-term debt and non-current accrued expenses	<u>255,326,245</u>

**Current liabilities:**

Current maturities of long-term debt	5,844,221
Accounts payable	12,926,989
Accrued expenses	11,595,632
Customer deposits	1,609,306
Total current liabilities	<u>31,976,148</u>

**Deferred credits**

	<u>9,968,749</u>
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<b>Total liabilities and equities</b>	<u>\$ 486,453,093</u>
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**GREAT LAKES ENERGY COOPERATIVE CONSOLIDATED OPERATING STATEMENTS\***  
for the years ending December 31, 2015 and 2014

	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
<b>OPERATING REVENUES</b>	\$ 185,392,635	\$ 189,493,758
<b>Operating expenses:</b>		
Cost of power	117,933,830	122,271,478
Distribution system operating and maintenance expenses	25,271,022	22,012,401
Customer service and information expenses	8,440,522	8,183,858
Administrative and general expenses	8,336,211	8,300,670
Depreciation and amortization	13,306,911	12,741,957
Other operating expenses	229,049	223,946
Total operating expenses	<u>173,517,545</u>	<u>173,734,310</u>
Operating margins before fixed charges	<u>11,875,090</u>	<u>15,759,448</u>
<b>Fixed charges, interest expense</b>	10,217,710	10,305,208
Operating margins after fixed charges	<u>1,657,380</u>	<u>5,454,240</u>
<b>Non-operating margins:</b>		
Interest income	1,654,235	1,712,043
Other expenses, net of other income	( 92,638)	(114,604)
Total non-operating income	<u>1,561,597</u>	<u>1,597,439</u>
<b>Capital credits from associated organizations:</b>		
Wolverine Power Company	9,768,492	7,220,892
Other associated organizations	1,078,198	1,092,813
Total capital credits from associated organizations	<u>10,846,690</u>	<u>8,313,705</u>
<b>Net margins</b>	<u>\$ 14,065,667</u>	<u>\$ 15,365,384</u>

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

# I Remember...

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

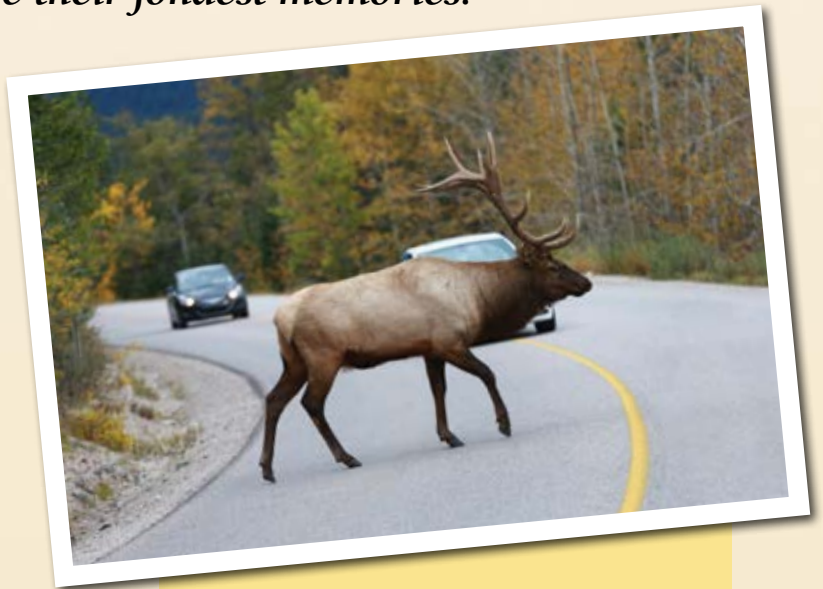
## A Unique Driving Lesson

When my daughter was almost 15, I took her down a narrow traffic-free dirt road in northern Michigan to teach her gear shifting in our Volkswagen GTI. She quickly got the hang of using the clutch and gears and was quietly cruising down the road when, without warning, an enormous bull elk leapt into the road 20 yards ahead of the car!

The elk, with a full rack of antlers, proceeded ahead of us filling the road while my daughter, totally unfazed by the event, just drove behind this awe-inspiring animal. Its enormous body towered above us for about 200 yards before it sauntered back into the woods.

My wife, with our dog, was picking blackberries further down the road. Imagine her surprise when we told her what had happened. Since then, we have frequently seen the imprint of large cloven hooves on the same road but never another elk, which was likely part of the Pigeon River herd. (The road is just north of Vanderbilt to the west of I-75.) Has anyone else in northern Michigan, or the USA for that matter, been partnered by a bull elk on their first driving lesson?

*Ed Robinson, Thumb Lake  
Great Lakes Energy Cooperative member*



**Country Lines will pay \$50 for stories we publish.**

### Guidelines

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



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



Putting their combined 145 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 12 years have increased service reliability to all GLE members.
- GLE accomplishes more with less, ranking it as one of the most productive electric cooperatives nationwide<sup>1</sup>.
- Profits earned are returned to you. A total of more than \$46.1 million in capital credit refunds have been 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.