

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



Northern Michigan's New  
**Alpine Power Plant**  
Is A Powerhouse

**Plus!**

Celebrate Co-op Month

A Well-Dressed Lineman

A Closer Look At Reliable Service

# Switch to geo by the end of the year for incredible savings



## Switching to geo can save you even more—if you hurry

Upgrading to geothermal just got more affordable, and with the 30% federal tax credit set to expire at the end of this year, the time to act is now! WaterFurnace units can save you up to 70% on heating, cooling & hot water by capturing the clean, renewable energy in your backyard to provide incredible home comfort. Now, for a limited time, we're offering homeowners with traditional systems a very special Switch-to-Geo rebate package on our most efficient and comfortable geothermal heat pumps—the 7 Series and the 5 Series—from now until Dec. 9, 2016. Contact your local WaterFurnace dealer to learn more about the Geothermal Upgrade Event!



7 SERIES  
**\$2000**  
INSTANT REBATE

5 SERIES  
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INSTANT REBATE

ACT NOW FOR A  
**30% Tax Credit**  
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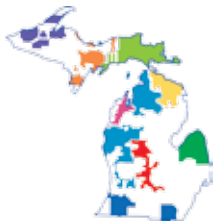
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
countrylines.com

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## ON THE COVER

The Smith family can rest easy, knowing their family sources their power from Alpine Power Plant. Alpine Power Plant is now the largest and most efficient generator in Michigan north of the Ludington-Midland line, including the Upper Peninsula.

## IN YOUR WORDS

### *What is your favorite Michigan fall activity?*

*Please submit answers to countrylines.com by November 1.*

Last month's responses to the question:

### *What is your favorite Michigan craft beer?*

"Perrin Grapefruit"

"Perrin Lil' Grizzly"

"Short's Soft Parade"

"Bell's Two-Hearted"

"Founders All Day IPA"

"Dark Horse Crooked Tree"



During construction of the Alpine Power Plant a favorite restaurant was discovered and enjoyed. The Railside Bar & Grill in Elmira is one of northern Michigan's best kept secrets—with a diverse array of tasty dishes, including genuine Polish meals, delicious pizzas, mouth-watering sandwiches, and of course, the World Famous Potato Burger.

Enjoy the Railside's recipe for Polish Nachos at [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) and read more about the Alpine Power Plant on page 14.



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# Why We Celebrate Cooperatives



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

**E**very October, cooperatives from all sectors across the country celebrate National Cooperative Month. The purpose is to recognize the cooperative difference and remind you, our co-op members, about Great Lakes Energy's unique relationship with the people it serves.

I must admit that occasionally I, too, am confused by the many different "days" and "months" that are celebrated, but National Cooperative Month is truly an opportunity to celebrate our unique business model. It is based on the seven cooperative principles geared to benefiting the members, who are also the owners, of the cooperative.

Let's look at one principle, Democratic Member Control, more closely. One way members can take an active role in their cooperative is by exercising their voting rights and electing people who can effectively represent them on the co-op's board of directors.

At Great Lakes Energy nine members serve on the board. Each year elections are held to fill the positions of three directors whose three-year terms expire.

Great Lakes Energy members voted in 2014 to change the director election process. Voting at-large for directors within the co-op's 26 counties was replaced by district elections. Nine geographic districts, one per director, were created. The transition to district elections is now complete with elections in three districts in 2014, three more in 2015, and the final three districts this year.

We have seen a modest increase in voting as a result of district elections which reinforces our belief that members are more likely to know the candidates, and more apt to vote when the candidates are locally known within their district. The change also brought in new board members from new areas who we expect will bring ideas to the board on how their cooperative can better serve the members.

Being one of the largest electric cooperatives in the United States doesn't change our belief that maintaining a strong local connection with members is and will always be important to our continued success.

We will again celebrate co-op month in October with prizes and gifts for our members. More details are on the next page and on our website, gtlakes.com. ■



## GLE Directors Earn Top Training Honor

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), the national service organization for electric cooperatives, awarded Great Lakes Energy Directors (L to R) Paul Byl, Dale Farrier, Mark Carson and Richard Walsworth certificates for completing the Director Gold Program. It recognizes electric cooperative directors who have achieved the highest level of training that can be earned through NRECA's Director Education program. GLE directors Paul Schemanski and Larry Monshor also completed the program. Walsworth retired from the board earlier this year. ■



## Pay Your Way

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

**AutoPay:** Your payment is automatically deducted from your bank account or charged to your credit/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:** Contact us during business hours or use our 24-hour automated phone payment option. 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 GLE bills (no past due amounts).

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

**Mobile App:** Download the Great Lakes Energy mobile app (for Apple and Android) to pay your bill and get the latest news about GLE programs and services.

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

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



## Historic Farm Honored

Congratulations to William Farber whose farm in Oceana County received state centennial farm certification.

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

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

## Thanks For Being A Member!

Stop into one of our offices in October to receive a free LED night light, a wall calendar with energy saving tips and Energy Optimization information. Plus, sign up to win one of three great prizes:

**1st prize:** 32" LED Energy Star-rated TV

**2nd prize:** \$100 worth of LED lights

**3rd prize:** \$50 worth of LED lights



LED lights are compliments of Petoskey Home Depot. One giveaway and one entry per account. Giveaways available while supplies last.





# Michigan Co-ops Lead The Way In Renewable Energy

Sun. Water. Wind.

Michiganders know these elements can make for a great day at the beach. Michigan's electric cooperatives also know these raw energy sources can be a great way to power your home.

From solar to wind to hydroelectric (hydro) power, Michigan's electric cooperatives are the state's undeniable leaders in renewable energy.

Collectively, Michigan's nine electric cooperatives will receive more than 20 percent of their energy from renewable resources in 2017. Meanwhile, the statewide average for other utilities is closer to the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) requirement of 10 percent.

Michigan's cooperatives have been ahead of the curve on renewable energy for more than a decade.

In 2006, Wolverine Power Cooperative\* partnered with John Deere Renewables to develop Michigan's first commercial scale wind farm in Huron County. The wind farm was fully operational in 2007 with an output of 50 megawatts. The following year, Michigan adopted the RPS which mandated a 10 percent supply of renewable energy be utilized by electric providers by 2015.

After Michigan's first wind farm, progress continued with the state's very first community solar project at

Cherryland Electric Cooperative in 2013. Another community solar project was built by HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative in 2014. Community solar offers an affordable, convenient way for members to use renewable energy as a power source. A solar panel subscription entitles members to a share of energy produced on a utility-scale community solar array. Participants receive solar credits on their utility bill. It's a great way to remove up-front costs and installation barriers of solar, making it available to the wider membership.

Cloverland Electric Cooperative operates one of the largest hydropower facilities in Michigan. Located along the St. Marys River in Sault Ste. Marie, the hydro plant produces one-fifth of the power needs of the eastern Upper Peninsula.

Now there's the new \$200 million clean natural gas Alpine Power Plant. Commissioned just this year, it was developed to meet peak demand needs for Michigan co-op members and to supplement the often intermittent nature of renewable energy. (See the full story on page 14 of this issue).

This fall, a partnership that includes several of Michigan's electric cooperatives will begin construction on a large solar project located in Missaukee County, between Cadillac and Lake City. This large-scale array will begin generating electricity using the sun starting in January 2017. The project is still in the early stages, and



more information will appear in future issues of *Michigan Country Lines* as it develops. Additionally, members can sign-up to receive project updates at [spartansolar.com](http://spartansolar.com).

So why do Michigan's electric co-ops continue to lead the way in renewable energy?

"We listen to our members and are able to capitalize quickly on renewable energy opportunities," said Craig Borr, CEO/president of the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association (MECA). MECA is the service organization representing electric cooperatives in Michigan.

"Michigan's electric cooperatives got into renewable energy because it was the right thing to do from an environmental standpoint," said Borr. "But it turns out it's also the responsible thing to do from a financial standpoint."

Clean, renewable energy generation is where the future of energy is headed.

And for Michigan co-ops, that future looks pretty bright. ■

*\*Wolverine Power Cooperative supplies power to its member co-ops that include Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative, and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op.*

## "Pol"ar Energy

Some may know Jan Pol, DVM, as their neighbor and longtime veterinarian and others know him by his enduring title—*The Incredible Dr. Pol*. Seen on National Geographic's *WILD*, Dr. Pol, his wife, Diane, and their team care for countless animals, but they also care about renewable energy.



This year, the Pols engaged in their second solar project, this time mounted on the barn at their Central Michigan home. They worked closely with their local co-op, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, local representative Nick Cluley with Ecojiva, their installer, as well as the folks from CNR Electric to install approximately 5,000 square feet of Canadian Solar's highest efficiency monocrystalline panels.

The system is equipped to generate up to 57 kW. By incorporating solar panels on their property, the Pols hope to take full advantage of the renewable energy generated in order to offset their residential usage. The Pols plan to sell their excess energy back to the utility for the benefit of their fellow co-op members.

The Pols energy for renewable energy is an inspiration to their community, our state and the world.



# Stay Warm And Save Energy

Heating and cooling costs account for more than half of the energy used in a typical U.S. home, making it the largest energy expense for most. By equipping your home with an energy-efficient furnace and thermostat, you may effectively control energy use and costs.

## ECM Motors: The Key To Savings

If you're in the market for a new furnace, look for a model with an electronically commutated motor (ECM). An ECM, often referred to as a "variable speed motor," adjusts operating speeds, ensures optimal airflow, and uses less electricity—saving you energy and money.

If you can't afford to purchase an entirely new furnace, replace your existing blower motor with an ECM to improve efficiency. Your existing furnace most likely relies on a motor that allows it to run at only one speed—full speed—whenever it's turned on. Since the blower motor uses about 80 percent of the total electricity consumed by the furnace, switching to an energy-saving ECM may make a major impact.

## Invest In A New Thermostat

Wi-Fi enabled and smart thermostats help control energy costs by allowing homeowners to program and adjust temperatures remotely, 24/7. Smart thermostats are unique in that they can program

themselves as they "learn" your behavior patterns and desired temperatures for certain days and times during the week.

## REBATES NOW AVAILABLE

Upgrading to energy-saving equipment is more affordable than ever with cash incentives available through the Energy Optimization program:

Equipment	Cash Incentive
New furnace with ECM blower motor	\$200
ECM blower motor replacement	\$200
Wi-Fi enabled or smart thermostat	\$100
COMBO BONUS: New furnace + central A/C unit	\$100 bonus
COMBO BONUS: New furnace + central A/C unit + Wi-Fi enabled or smart thermostat	\$150 bonus

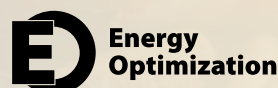
Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319 for additional energy-saving information and incentives. ■

## Save on heating costs

Cooler weather has arrived, which means it's time to think about properly heating your home. Upgrade to a high-efficiency furnace, or install an ECM blower motor in your existing model, and receive a \$200 cash incentive from the Energy Optimization program!

**ENERGY TIP: Take control of your energy use with a Wi-Fi-enabled or smart thermostat and receive a \$100 cash incentive.**

ONLINE: [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org)  
PHONE: 877.296.4319



Energy Optimization programs and incentives are applicable to Michigan electric service locations only. Other restrictions may apply. For a complete list of participating utilities, visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org).

A graphic with the words 'Warm up' in large, white, sans-serif font. The background is a warm, golden-brown color with a blurred image of a glass of mulled cider with cinnamon sticks and a red apple.



# Best Friends



## Enter Our 'Pay My Bill' Photo Contest!

Great Lakes Energy members whose photos we print in *Country Lines* will be entered into a drawing. One lucky member will win a credit up to \$200 on their December 2016 energy bill! Upcoming topics include: **Wild Weather** due **Nov. 15**—January 2017 issue, **Holiday Fun** due **Dec. 15**—February issue and **Family** due **Jan. 15**—March issue.

Visit [gtlakes.com/photocontest](http://gtlakes.com/photocontest) to submit your high-resolution digital photo and read contest rules.



Best friends and cousins love being together. Working with their 4-H animals just means more time together.  
*Photo by Kimberly Mischler, Montague*



Rik, Bill and Ray proud of their hunt.  
*Photo by Victoria Wallick, Ellsworth*



Puppies are a boy's best friends. *Photo by Dawn Mudri, Petoskey*



Fenway and Tucker—Alaskan Malamute littermates and best friends fur-ever.  
*Photo by Lynn Fabbo, Gaylord*



Tyler and his first mate, Kronk, out for a cruise on Walloon Lake in the mini boat.  
*Photo by Taylor Kruzel, Petoskey*



My granddaughter gets so excited to visit her frog friend.  
*Photo by Vicki Amsink, West Olive*

# WORLD CUISINE

Take a cultural journey with these tasty recipes.



Photos—831 Creative

## Seafood Tostadas (pictured)

Linda L. Ackerman, Thompsonville

- 1 cup medium-hot thick and chunky salsa
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ½ pound cod fillets
- ¼ pound medium raw shrimp, peeled and deveined
- ¼ pound shelled or imitation crab
- 1 cup slivered cabbage
- ½ avocado, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup each, thinly sliced red pepper and onion
- 4–8 small flour or corn tortillas, crisped
- chopped cilantro
- 4 lime wedges

Bring salsa and cumin to simmer in a medium skillet. Add cod; cover skillet and poach fish 3–4 minutes. Turn cod, add 2–3 tablespoons hot water to salsa if needed. Add shrimp and crab. Cover and simmer another 3–4 minutes, or until cod flakes easily and shrimp is opaque. Top each crisped tortilla with seafood and vegetables. Spoon warm salsa over tortillas. Garnish with cilantro and lime. Serve immediately!

## Scotch Eggs

Rebecca (Becky) Mikel, Union

- salt/pepper to taste
- ½ cup flour
- 3–4 hard boiled eggs, peeled
- 1 pound ground pork sausage
- 3 raw eggs (not boiled)
- 1 cup seasoned breadcrumbs
- shortening, heated



In a bowl, mix salt and pepper with flour. Peel boiled eggs, then roll in the flour and salt and pepper mixture. Pat sausage out into 4–6 equal patties and encase each egg evenly in sausage patty.

Beat three raw eggs together in a separate bowl, then dip the sausage encased egg in the beaten egg mixture. Roll the egg in breadcrumbs until well coated. Drop gently into the heated oil and turn slowly as sausage browns all the way through. This is traditional fare in the U.K. and is eaten hot or cold—so do either!



## Greek Salad

- 1 pound small-sized pasta
- 1 English cucumber, diced
- 1 small red onion, diced
- 1 cup pepperoncini peppers, sliced
- ½ cup sliced black olives
- ½ cup sliced grape tomatoes
- 1 cup crumbled feta cheese
- 1 cup mayo
- ⅓ cup Italian dressing



Cook small-sized pasta according to package directions. Rinse pasta with cold water. Mix mayo and Italian dressing in small bowl. Combine the rest of the ingredients. Chill in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Serve!

## Pannukakku (Finnish Oven Pancake)

- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 ½ cups whole milk
- 6 eggs
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons butter
- powdered sugar, jam or maple syrup for serving



Preheat oven to 400 F and place a 13x9 pan inside while it is heating. In a blender, mix all ingredients, except the butter, until they are well blended. Put the butter into the hot pan and brush the pan with the melted butter. Add blender mixture,

and bake for 20–25 minutes until pancake is puffy and golden. It will deflate when it's taken out of the oven. Serve sprinkled with powdered sugar and warm jam or maple syrup.



# Gather Round The Co-op Kitchen Table

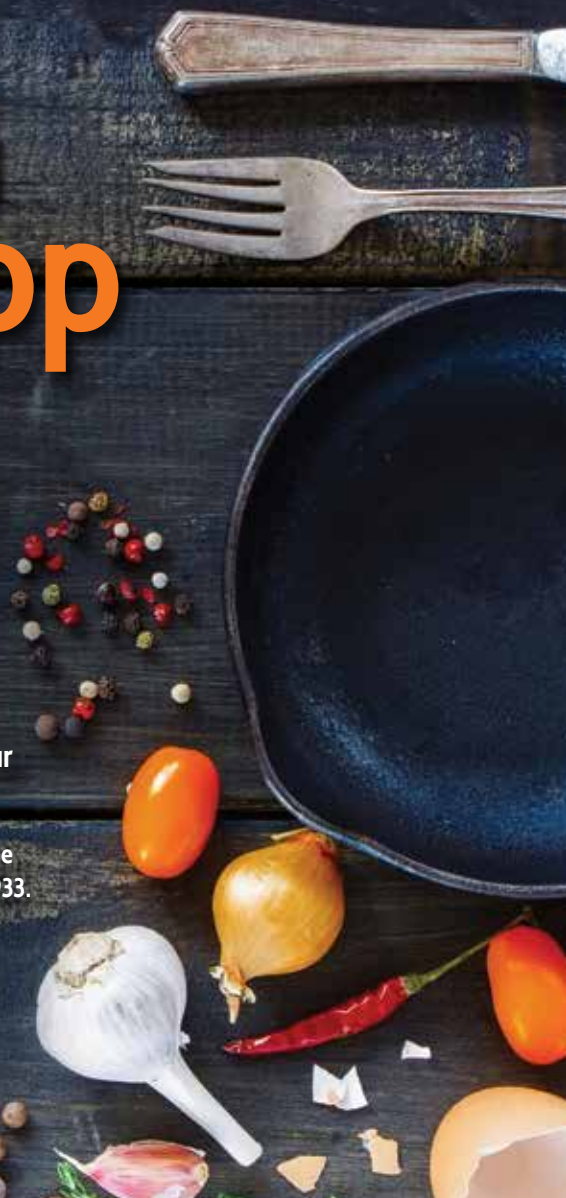
Join our **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community to submit your recipes and try recipes from other members.

Go to **MICOOPKITCHEN.COM** and register.

Please submit your favorite **“HEALTHY LIVING”** recipe by **NOVEMBER 4** for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

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**





# Dressed For Working Safely

Whether it's rain, snow, sleet, ice, wind, or all of the above, Great Lakes Energy lineworkers are dressed for any type of weather to get your lights back on.

No one appreciates the monthly investments you make in your cooperative more than those who rely on special clothing and equipment to work safely and efficiently with high-voltage power lines.

Although clothing and gear costs have gone up in recent years, the investment still adds up to a good

value for GLE members by keeping lineworkers safe while they bring you the reliable service you expect and deserve. Part of the increase is due to the added costs for new equipment and clothing that are making lineworkers' jobs safer.

Here's an item-by-item average cost breakdown of what the well-dressed GLE lineworker wears, as modeled by Petoskey apprentice lineworker Matt Carey.

- 1. **Hard hat** .....\$25
- Hard hat flashlight** .....\$30  
(not shown)
- 2. **Safety glasses** .....\$10
- 3. **Arm protector sleeves** .....\$400/pair
- 4. **High-visibility fire retardant shirt** .....\$92
- 5. **Fire retardant shirt** .....\$52
- Fire retardant rain jacket/pants** .....\$320  
(not shown)
- 6. **Rubber gloves** .....\$194/pair
- 7. **Leather glove protectors** .....\$32
- Canvas bag for storing sleeves/gloves** .....\$45  
(not shown)
- 8. **Tool belt** .....\$300
- 9. **Hinged hot stick** .....\$560  
Used for handling energized power line equipment.
- 10. **Super squeeze fall restraint** .....\$550-\$750  
Safety equipment that catches lineworker in a fall from pole.
- 11. **Tool pouch** .....\$50
- 12. **Fire retardant pants** .....\$62
- 13. **Positioning pole strap** .....\$310  
Secures lineworker to pole.
- Safety harness** .....\$250  
Used for working in elevated bucket. (not shown)
- 14. **Gaff climbers** .....\$500  
Pointed tips are jabbed into pole for climbing.
- 15. **Work boots** .....\$350

**Average total investment per lineworker ..\$4,332\***  
*\*Not including costs of testing equipment and items purchased by lineworkers.*



**Lineworkers' knowledge and training ..... PRICELESS**

## Grant Helps Nature Volunteers

A youngster prepares to catch a frog with her family at the Susan Creek Preserve near Charlevoix. The Little Traverse Conservancy's EcoStewards volunteer program offers projects like this to those interested in participating in hands-on learning experiences that focus on protecting and enjoying our natural resources. The group received a \$2,000 People Fund grant to help fund program supplies that will enable participants to monitor, detect and study plants and animals.



JOIN



## JOIN 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 or visit [gtlakes.com/peoplefundenroll](http://gtlakes.com/peoplefundenroll) to join.**







## Wolverine Power Cooperative

generates and transmits power to our rural substations so we can distribute it to you, our members. They help us ensure that your energy is affordable, reliable, clean and safe. We rely on Wolverine to make well-informed decisions about the future of your electricity.

We're proud to announce that the newest addition to the Wolverine supply mix, the Alpine Power Plant, is now fully powered and generating enough power for 120,000 member households across the state of Michigan!

### What is the Alpine Power Plant?

Just 18 short months ago, Wolverine's board of directors—made up of co-op members just like you—set the Alpine Power Plant in motion. Alpine is the largest and most efficient generator in northern Michigan, including the Upper Peninsula.

Alpine is fueled by natural gas, a clean, reliable, and affordable alternative to coal. Its unique, state-of-the-art technology includes two GE simple-cycle combustion turbine generators that together are capable of producing up to 432 megawatts of power. Alpine is a "peaker plant," meaning it can be fired up quickly to provide electricity for surges in demand.

Wolverine invested approximately \$180 million into Alpine to ensure a quick start and flexible operations. As Michigan transitions away from coal plants toward more renewable forms of electric generation, Alpine provides us with a new, affordable, efficient and flexible generation asset, essential for years to come as the industry changes.



Northern Michigan's New  
**Alpine Power Plant**  
Is A Powerhouse



## How does Alpine impact me?

Wolverine Power Cooperative and its members, including Cherryland Electric Cooperative, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Midwest Energy Cooperative and Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op, are proud to be leaders when it comes to providing long-term solutions for Michigan's energy capacity. Old coal plants are retiring, leaving a void that new power plants can and need to fill.

Adding Alpine's output to Michigan's energy supply will help maintain affordable rates in the midst of coal plants retiring, by giving us an additional option when market rates fluctuate. The plant will also serve to integrate new renewable energy sources, as we expect to receive 30 percent of our electricity from renewable sources in the future.

Beyond the energy benefits for Michigan as a whole, Alpine Power Plant offers economic impacts for its local community. Strategically located to support reliability in northern Michigan, the middle-of-the-mitt location in Otsego County provides a boost to the local economy. During construction, the site was host to more than 300 workers that, in turn, contributed greatly to the local economy. The plant will be maintained by nine full-time employees. The plant also provides a tax boost to units of government in Elmira Township, the City of Gaylord and Otsego County.

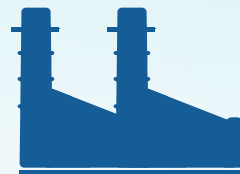
Michigan's energy future is secured in part because of projects like the Alpine Power Plant. We hope you're as excited as we are to see your electric bills stay low and your quality of life stay high! ■

Get more information about the Alpine Power Plant by visiting [alpinecleanenergy.com](http://alpinecleanenergy.com).

## WHAT IS ALPINE DOING?

### Generating Electricity

Wolverine's Alpine Power Plant is the largest power plant in Michigan's northern Lower and Upper Peninsulas, capable of generating up to 430 MW of electricity.



### Powering Members

Alpine ensures Wolverine's members have a reliable, clean and competitive power supply for decades to come.



### Supporting Michigan

With retiring coal plants and expanding regulations, Alpine is essential for replacing capacity to meet Michigan's energy demand. Alpine is the only large-scale power plant within a 150-mile radius.



### Helping Communities

Alpine provides a major boost to communities with increased tax revenues for local units of government.



# Reliable Service Keeps Your Lights On

## BEST PERFORMING CIRCUITS

Because of improvements made in recent years, 159 worst performing (higher occurrence of outages and blinks) circuits are now our best performing circuits. They include 8,807 miles of main power lines that serve 103,775 Great Lakes Energy members. That leaves only 64 circuits yet to be done.

## REDUCING TREE PROBLEMS

Trees and brush near power lines are re-cleared in our service area on a regular rotating basis, which helps control a major cause of outages. In recent years, we've expanded our re-clearing efforts to remove more dead, diseased and dying trees that pose a threat to our lines.



## MORE PROTECTION

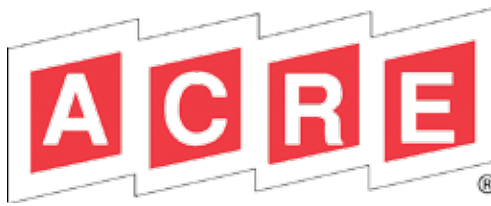
Thousands of additional protection devices were placed on our power lines over the last decade. Protection devices operate like circuit breakers in your electrical panel. Each breaker protects different appliances and areas within the home. If there's an electrical problem, one breaker shuts off power to the trouble area leaving most of the home in the light. Similarly, the addition of more protection devices helps limit the number of members affected by outages.

## BETTER TECHNOLOGY

Better technology today is brightening the day by helping to limit outage times. One example is the fault indicator (see photo). During an outage, the indicators blink on the line to help guide repair crews to the trouble. In many cases, they eliminate the need for crews to walk long stretches of line not accessible by vehicle to find the problem. Time is saved and your lights come back on sooner.

## Our Members Are Our Owners





## Help Yourself By Helping ACRE

**Y**ou invest in Great Lakes Energy and receive safe and reliable service in return. However, there's another investment—and it's strictly voluntary—that also helps preserve the co-op service you value. It's called the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program.

The Action Committee for Rural Electrification (ACRE) is the political action committee of the nation's electric cooperatives. Co-ops formed ACRE, their own political action group, in the early 1970s. Electric co-ops, like many other industries, rely on support from political leaders to ensure programs that benefit our industry and our members remain intact.

Now, ACRE membership is available to GLE's residential and seasonal members. Contributing to ACRE is completely voluntary. It's supported by co-op employees, board members and even co-op members across the country. In fact, 100 percent of GLE's board of directors contributed to ACRE this year. No money from your bill is contributed to ACRE.

What's the connection between electric co-ops and political action committees? Electric co-ops were

born in politics when President Roosevelt formed the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) in the mid-1930s. The REA still exists today as the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and is vital to the continuation of low-interest financing for rural utilities.

Contributions from ACRE to legislators have helped keep RUS in existence and strengthen legislative support for many other programs important to electric co-ops and their members.

The ACRE program works to support candidates for the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives who understand and support electric cooperatives and their members. Plus, nearly 50 percent of all ACRE contributions come back to the state level and are used to support local candidates and legislators.

For more information on the ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program call 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8957, or email: [glenergy@glenergy.com](mailto:glenergy@glenergy.com). ■

*Contributions to ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® are not tax deductible. All contributions to ACRE are voluntary and will be used for political purposes. Contribution guidelines are suggestions only. You may contribute more or less than the recommended amount. You may refuse to contribute without reprisal. No corporate checks or contributions accepted. Only residential and seasonal members are eligible.*

### Quick Facts About ACRE

- ACRE is bi-partisan
- Funds are contributed to federal and state legislators who support electric cooperatives
- Participation is voluntary
- No rate dollars are contributed
- GLE employees and board members participate
- The average contribution is \$56/year
- Nearly 9,000 co-op members participate nationwide



# Co-op Careers Offer Paycheck And A Purpose

By Justin LaBerge

October is National Cooperative Month! Every day in this country, more than 75,000 men and women go to work at America's electric cooperatives to keep the lights on for 42 million energy consumers in 47 states.

It's challenging work, but in addition to a paycheck, co-op employees go home each night knowing they've helped make their communities better places to live.

Over the next five years, thousands of workers will get to experience that sense of purpose and pride as America's electric cooperatives hire nearly 15,000 employees nationwide. These new hires will replace Baby Boomers reaching retirement age and accommodate organic growth in the energy industry.

## Many career options

A lineworker high atop a pole is the first image that comes to mind for most people who think about electric cooperative employees. It's true that lineworkers comprise the largest segment of the co-op workforce—approximately 25 percent—but it takes a variety of talents to keep a cooperative running smoothly.

Information technology and engineering are two rapidly growing career opportunities at co-ops. The need for more high-tech workers is driven by the shift to a smarter electric grid and the growth of renewable energy sources that must be carefully monitored and managed.

Other in-demand career paths at electric cooperatives include finance, member services, equipment operators, energy advisors, communications and marketing, purchasing, administrative support and human resources.

## Second careers

Some people think the only time to start a new career is fresh out of high school or college. While the energy industry offers many rewarding careers to recent grads, it is also a great place to start a second or third career.



**Electric Cooperative Careers**  
*There's a place for you in the co-op network.*

Lineworker training programs offered through community colleges are growing in popularity among people who previously worked in oil and gas, manufacturing, mining, forestry and other similar industries.

## Make a difference

As not-for-profit, member-owned, locally-based businesses, America's electric cooperatives offer careers that allow employees to make a difference in the communities they serve. Cooperatives are guided by a set of principles that put people ahead of profits and offer fulfilling work to those who enjoy serving others. ■

## How to find a co-op job

Interested in joining the co-op family? To learn more about the opportunities available across the cooperative network, visit [careers.touchstoneenergy.coop](http://careers.touchstoneenergy.coop) or by visiting Michigan co-op websites at [countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com).



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# Cooperatives **BUILD** TRUST

**CO-OP MONTH | OCTOBER 2016**

## Celebrate Co-op Month With Us

Stop into any Great Lakes Energy office in October and receive a free LED night light, a wall calendar with energy saving tips and information on Energy Optimization rebates. Sign up to win one of three great prizes, too:

1st Prize: 32" LED Energy-Star rated TV

2nd Prize: \$100 worth of LED lights

3rd Prize: \$50 worth of LED lights

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