

# MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES



— small town to —

## CAPITAL CITY

Rural Michigan's Political Couple

# Switch to geothermal

## for incredible comfort and savings



### Switching to geo can save you even more, if you hurry!

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 dual capacity 5 Series—from now until June 23, 2017. Hurry and contact your local WaterFurnace dealer to learn more about the Geothermal Upgrade Event!

**7 SERIES**  
**\$1400**  
 INSTANT REBATE

**5 SERIES**  
**\$1000**  
 INSTANT REBATE



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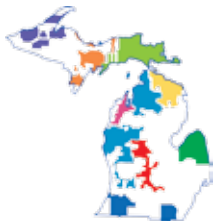
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives  
[countrylines.com](http://countrylines.com)

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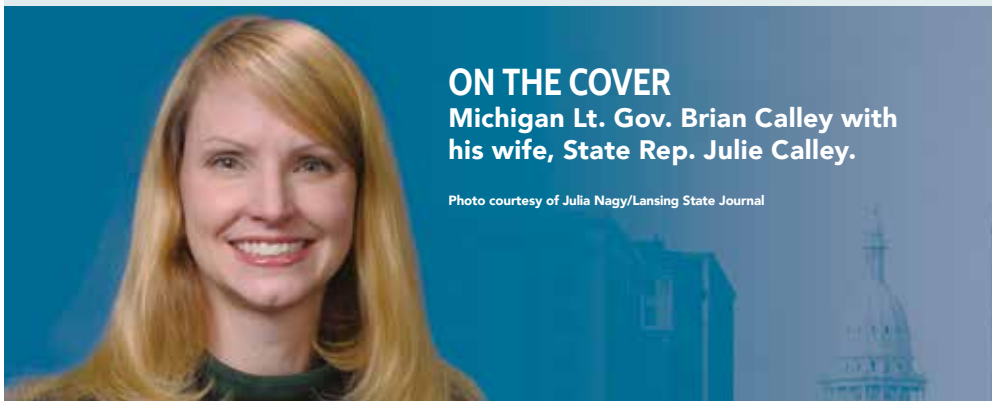


### Change of Address:

Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.

The appearance of advertising does not constitute an endorsement of the products or services advertised.

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**Michigan Lt. Gov. Brian Calley with his wife, State Rep. Julie Calley.**

Photo courtesy of Julia Nagy/Lansing State Journal

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## *I Remember...*

**We invite members to share their fondest memories.**

*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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**1-888-485-2537**

**gtlakes.com**

**Change of Address:**  
888-485-2537, ext. 8924

Great Lakes Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Find us on Facebook.  
[facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](https://facebook.com/greatlakesenergy)

# Use Electricity Safely



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

**M**ay is Electrical Safety Month, a time to remember that practicing electrical safety is a habit we should all follow every day.

Great Lakes Energy's concern for safety extends beyond our employees. We also care about the safety of our members. We encourage you to heighten your awareness of electrical dangers to prevent possible injury. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, thousands of people in the U.S. are critically injured, and some die as a result of electrical fires, accidents and electrocution in their homes.

To promote safety education in our local communities, we bring the safety message to children and other groups within our service area. A tabletop display with a working miniature power line is used in classrooms by our presenters to clearly show students the dangers of electrical accidents.

We also advise area firefighters and road commission crews on ways to avoid electrical hazards, particularly during storms when individuals are more like to encounter downed power lines across roads and driveways. A trailer with a portable power line mounted to it is used for safety demonstrations that we hold for local firefighters and road commission crews.

**You should always stay away from a downed power line or any other type of dangerous electrical situation and contact us immediately.**

At Great Lakes Energy, we're committed to a culture of safety that is integral to our daily operations. In fact, GLE is part of the National Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) that follows specific guidelines and protocols for electrical safety that are considered best in practices. Our lineworkers are required to wear personal, protective equipment at all times when on the job. This includes special, fire-resistant clothing that will self-extinguish,

limiting potential injuries from burns and sparks. Insulated and rubber gloves are worn in tandem to protect from electrical shock. Our safety team regularly discusses important safety issues about work within the building, as well as out in the field.

Learn more about electrical safety by visiting the Member Services section on [gtlakes.com](https://gtlakes.com). On our website, you'll find tips that will help keep your family safe, particularly when storms knock down power lines and leave you without power. ■



## Attend A Free Energy Seminar

A free energy seminar for Great Lakes Energy members will be held Saturday, June 3, at the Holiday Inn Convention Center 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, televisions, 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 learn about other incentive programs offered by Great Lakes Energy, too.

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



### Register Now

Saturday, June 3, from 10 a.m. to noon.  
Holiday Inn Convention Center  
East Ballroom  
4079 W. U.S.-10, Ludington

**Space is limited, so please register by calling 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8958, or email: [events@glenergy.com](mailto:events@glenergy.com).**

## Keeping Bills As Low As Possible

Keeping electric bills as low as possible without sacrificing service is everyone's goal.

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 work to keep our average percent increases in operation and maintenance (O&M) and administrative and general (A&G) costs from not exceeding those of the other electric cooperatives across the United States. (See chart.)

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.

Together we work to keep your energy costs down. ■

### Average Percent Increases in Costs

#### Operation & Maintenance Expenses

	GLE	Other Electric Co-ops	Met Goal (✓)
2016	-.38%	2.82%	✓
2015*	7.90%	3.35%	-
2014	0.42%	3.03%	✓

#### Administrative & General Expenses

	GLE	Other Electric Co-ops	Met Goal (✓)
2016	2.30%	2.32%	✓
2015	0.43%	3.22%	✓
2014	3.17%	3.17%	✓

\*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.



# Choosing The Right Air Conditioner For Your Home

**D**o you have a central air conditioner (AC) in your home that is at least 15 years old that still works but is not very efficient? Replacing an inefficient air conditioner with a more efficient model could reduce your electric bill. A new AC unit is 20 to 40 percent more efficient than one from the 1990s—and ENERGY STAR®-certified systems are even more efficient.

How much money you save by replacing your current AC unit depends on how often your AC runs and your electric rate. The best way to determine possible savings is to have an in-home assessment conducted by a qualified heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) professional or a certified energy auditor. Electric co-ops are often interested in reducing peak summer loads and sometimes offer information, rebates or a list of qualified professionals.

Your contractor needs to size the system to your home. A unit that is too small will not cool your home to the levels you want. If it is too large, it may not dehumidify your home sufficiently, and it will cycle on and off more frequently, which can increase wear and tear on the system and shorten its life significantly. To size the system, the contractor will look at the efficiency of the home by checking insulation levels. If you add insulation where it's most needed, you may be able to install a smaller AC unit and enjoy greater comfort and lower cooling costs. The contractor should also assess your ductwork, which is often poorly designed, leaky or inadequately insulated.

It's good to know there are several air conditioning options suited to different situations. It may or may not be practical to change to a different type of system.

Central air conditioning is one of two types: either split or packaged. A split system, which has the cold coils inside the home and an outside unit exhausting heat, is the most common. Packaged systems, which are sometimes installed because of space constraints, combine these functions into one box located outside the home.

A heat pump can provide cooling and heating in homes with or without ducts. If you are currently using propane or natural gas as your fuel source, this may be a good option.

A ductless mini-split heat pump can be an efficient way to cool up to four zones inside the home. If your existing ductwork is in bad shape or poorly designed, this could be a good solution.

Window units are much less efficient than other options, but they can still be effective for cooling a single room. It's worth paying a little more for a new ENERGY STAR-compliant unit, rather than the dusty \$80 unit from the yard sale.

Evaporative (or "swamp") coolers are an alternative in very dry climates. While they use a quarter of the energy and are less expensive to install than central air conditioning, they also require more frequent maintenance. ■

**Replacing an aging air conditioner is a great way to improve comfort, cut energy costs and reduce peak energy demand.**



# Thunderstorm Safety Tips

**W**hen thunderstorms are rolling your way, stay safe with these helpful tips from the American Red Cross:

- Listen to local news or NOAA Weather Radio for emergency updates. Watch for signs of a storm, like darkening skies, lightning flashes or increasing wind.
  - Postpone outdoor activities if thunderstorms are likely to occur. Many people struck by lightning are not in the area where rain is occurring.
  - If a severe thunderstorm warning is issued, take shelter in a substantial building or in a vehicle with the windows closed. Get out of mobile homes that can blow over in high winds.
  - If you can hear thunder, you are close enough to be in danger from lightning. If thunder roars, go indoors! The National Weather Service recommends staying inside for at least 30 minutes after the last thunder clap.
  - Avoid electrical equipment and telephones. Use battery-powered TVs and radios instead.
  - Shutter windows and close outside doors securely. Keep away from windows.
  - Do not take a bath, shower or use plumbing.
- If you are driving, try to safely exit the roadway and park. Stay in the vehicle and turn on the emergency flashers until the heavy rain ends. Avoid touching metal or other surfaces that conduct electricity in and outside the vehicle.
  - If you are outside and cannot reach a safe building, avoid high ground, water, tall and isolated trees, as well as metal objects such as fences and bleachers. Picnic shelters, dugouts and sheds are also NOT safe. ■



## 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](http://missdig.org)
2. Wait three business 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](http://missdig.org) for more information

# Is Your Central A/C Ready To Take The Heat?

Along with all the wonderful things summer brings comes the costly effort of keeping your home cool and comfortable. If your central A/C is due for an upgrade, or if a tune-up is enough to keep it running efficiently, the Energy Optimization program is here to help! We provide cash incentives to help make energy-saving improvements more affordable.

**New Central A/C:** 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 and save up to 20 percent in cooling costs annually. Or, opt for a central air-source heat pump or mini/multi-split air-source heat pump system to save even more. **Energy Optimization program cash incentive: \$150–500.**

**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 will allow you and your family to enjoy cleaner, healthier indoor air. **Energy Optimization program cash incentive: \$50. ■**

## 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 qualifying ECM blower motor AND new central A/C unit, air-source heat pump, or ground-source heat pump system at the same time.	\$100	\$800
Smart HVAC Combo Bonus	New qualifying ECM blower motor AND new central A/C unit, air-source heat pump, or ground-source heat pump system AND a WiFi-enabled or smart thermostat at the same time.	\$150	\$950

Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877.296.4319 for additional energy-saving information and rebates.

## Cool off and save energy this summer!

Beat the heat without breaking the bank! Upgrade to a high-efficiency cooling system or tune up your existing system to save energy and money. Receive cash back from the Energy Optimization program for:

- New central A/C (\$150-\$500)
- Central or mini/multi-split air-source heat pump (\$150-\$500)
- Central A/C tune-up (\$50)

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).

# Jump In



# Planes, Trains & Automobiles

## GLE Photo Contest

Each month members can submit photos on Facebook or on our website for our annual photo contest. The photo with the most votes on Facebook is published here along with other selections. Enter again in May; see details below.

Most  
Votes on  
Facebook!



This was our weekend fun—back in the day!  
—Randy & Mary Handwerk, Petoskey



Keep on truckin'—Kelleen Stiffler, Evart



Tribute to Veterans—Robert Bear,  
Charlevoix



Rangering around the Great Lakes  
State—Tracy Smith, Gaylord



1971 Ford Torino GT—Robert Rowan, Mancelona



Our drive to Glen Haven in our '51 Ford for our  
anniversary—Shelly Laughlin, Marion



## Enter Our Photo Contest And Win!

Visit [Facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](https://Facebook.com/greatlakesenergy) and click "Photo Contest" from the menu tabs. Not on Facebook? You can also enter the contest at [gtlakes.com/photocontest/](https://gtlakes.com/photocontest/). Make sure to vote, and encourage others to vote for you, too. The photo receiving the most votes from our online and Facebook contest will be printed in an issue of *Michigan Country Lines* along with some of our other favorites. All photos printed in the magazine throughout the year will be entered to win a \$200 bill credit in December 2017. Submit your best shot and encourage your friends to vote!

The May theme is **The Art of Nature**. Photos can be submitted between **May 1 to May 20** to be featured in the July/August issue.

# BREAKFAST AND BRUNCH

These sweet and savory breakfast or brunch ideas are sure to please.

## Orange Cranberry-Carrot Muffins

*Luise Bolleber, Cherryland*

- ⅓ cup butter, melted
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- Juice and zest from 1 orange
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups finely shredded carrots
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cranberries, coarsely chopped

Heat oven to 350 F and place paper cups in a muffin tin. Whisk sugar and butter together in a medium bowl until blended. Beat in eggs, orange juice and vanilla. Combine the flour, orange zest (peel), baking soda, baking powder and salt in a separate bowl. Add to creamed mixture just until combined. Fold in carrots and cranberries. Fill muffin cups three-fourths full. Bake 25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

▶ Watch a video on this recipe at <https://goo.gl/HN697I>

Photos—831 Creative







## Peggy's Stolen Stuffed French Toast

Jessica Waite, Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

- 1 loaf Italian bread
- 1 stick butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- 8 ounces cream cheese
- 8 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup maple syrup

Preheat oven to 375 F. Tear half of bread loaf into ¼" cubes and place in bottom of 13×9 greased pan. Cube cream cheese and place evenly throughout. Top with the remaining loaf in ¼" cubes. In a separate bowl combine remaining ingredients. Pour over bread mixture. Pat down with a spatula, so bread is soaked. Cover with tinfoil and let sit overnight. Bake for 45 minutes covered. Serve immediately with extra maple syrup.



## All-In-One Breakfast Bake

Mary Ellen Seguin-Adomat,  
Cherryland Electric Cooperative

- 1 pound plain pork sausage
- 6 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
- 6 slices bread, torn into pieces
- 1 tablespoon dry mustard
- 1 cup sliced fresh mushrooms

Preheat oven to 350 F. Butter a 13×9 glass baking dish. Brown sausage and drain on paper towels; set aside. In a large bowl, beat eggs, then add milk and beat again. Stir in remaining ingredients, including sausage. Pour into baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes. This can be prepared the night before and refrigerated; pop it in the oven in the morning.



Submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*:

• "All About Apples" due July 5

Go to [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for more information and to register.

## Raspberry Pie (pictured above)

Rep. Julie Calley

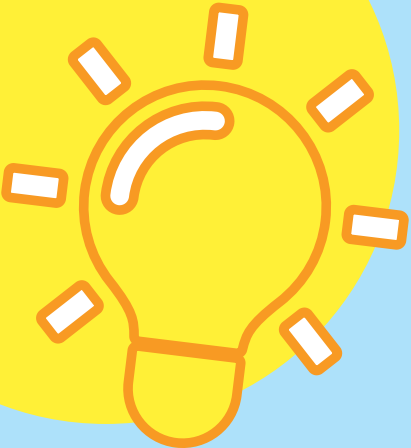
If you're as busy as Rep. Julie Calley, you'll appreciate this simple, but scrumptious, pie recipe that's a favorite in the Calley home.

- 1 pie crust, store bought or homemade
- 1 3.4-ounce package vanilla instant pudding
- 2 cups milk
- 3 ounces cream cheese
- 1 teaspoon almond extract
- 1 3-ounce package raspberry Jell-O
- 1 cup boiling water
- 9 ounces fresh raspberries
- ¼ cup chopped nuts (optional)

Prepare and bake pie shell for open face pie. Let the pie shell cool. Combine pudding, milk, cream cheese and almond extract. Beat for 2 minutes. Pour into pie shell and chill until firm. Mix Jell-O with boiling water and chill until partially set. Gently stir in the raspberries and nuts. Pour over vanilla filling and chill until set.

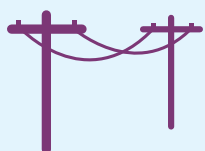
Read the full story about the Calleys on page 14 and visit [micoopkitchen.com](http://micoopkitchen.com) for this recipe and others.





# We're Keeping the **Lights On**

Reliable service means fewer power outages. We're making improvements to provide you with better service.



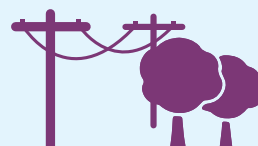
More Power  
Line Protection  
Devices



New  
Technology



Major  
Power Line  
Improvements



Aggressive  
Tree  
Maintenance

## What hinders our progress?



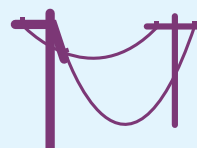
Storms



Man-made  
Accidents

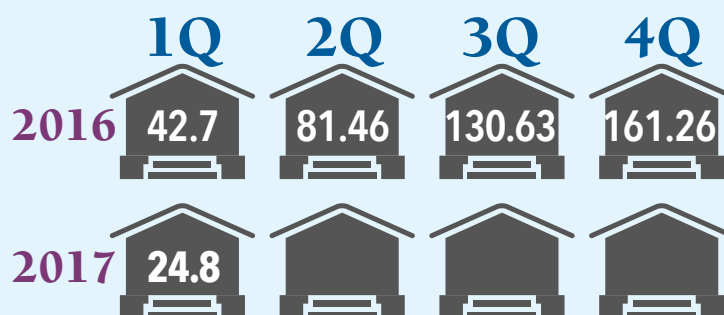


Animals



Equipment  
Failure

## AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



Looking Out for You

OUR YEARLY GOAL:  
UNDER 157 MINUTES

# People Fund Supports Recycling Efforts

Recycling for Newaygo County (RNC) received a \$5,000 People Fund grant to help support its recycling program that serves the greater Newaygo County area.

Recycling for Newaygo County is a nonprofit organization funded by memberships, local business and municipal contributions, fund-raising proceeds, and grants. It provides recycling services to local households and businesses. They also work to educate the public about the importance of recycling.

For more information on its services, visit [recyclingfornewaygocounty.org](http://recyclingfornewaygocounty.org). ■



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 2016 the People Fund awarded \$204,752 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

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## Rural Michigan's Political Couple

By Emily Haines Lloyd



Rep. Julie Calley with her husband, Lt. Gov. Brian Calley and children Collin, Reagan and Karagan.

Down a country road in Ionia County, not too far from where she grew up on a sesquicentennial farm, Julie Calley lives a fairly normal life. Julie is a wife, mother of three and devoted public servant. Of course, she's also married to the lieutenant governor of Michigan, Brian Calley, but her career takes her to Lansing as the representative for the 87th District in the state's House of Representatives.

The pair are a rare commodity in Lansing, with Brian serving his final two years as the lieutenant governor of Michigan while Julie began a two-year term in January. She now holds the seat that her great-grandfather Herbert Powell, grandfather Stanley Powell and her husband have all held. Both Calleys also have served as Ionia County commissioners.

One wouldn't think of small-town Portland as a hub of Michigan politics, but for Representative Julie Calley, it's sort of the family business.

"My family has a legacy of public service," said Calley. "My mother has served at the township level for almost as long as I've been alive. She just retired last





“It boils down to making government work better for the average citizen. Politics can overcomplicate things. It has to center back on the community we’re serving—a person-centered approach.”

year as a township trustee. My grandfather and great-grandfather both served in the state legislature, so public service is definitely in my blood.”

Julie notes that one doesn’t need to have a long heritage of politics in the family in order to serve. “There are usually a number of local boards which need more interest and participation. There are numerous empty roles on the county level that sometimes have only one candidate or sometimes not even one. There is a definite need for public servants.”

It may have been that desire to serve that drew Julie and Brian together. High school sweethearts, the Calleys married as she was finishing a degree at Northwood University and Brian at Michigan State University.

After college, the Calleys moved back to Ionia County. Julie had worked in commercial real estate while her husband made his mark in the state political scene, but Julie always stayed involved in local politics. Calley was chairwoman of the Ionia County Board of Commissioners and chairperson of the Michigan Community Service Commission. She also served two terms on the Republican State

Committee. Now, as Julie is still in the early part of her two-year term in the Michigan House of Representatives, she is taking her local experience to the state level.

“It boils down to making government work better for the average citizen. Politics can overcomplicate things. It has to center back on the community we’re serving—a person-centered approach.”

Julie’s experience living in a rural setting has actually driven her work approach. While she notes that the jump from roughly 9,000 constituents to approximately 90,000 constituents is daunting, she is utilizing the same relationship-building skills she used on the local level in her new role. Her experience in small-town Michigan is an inspiration as she moves forward, building relationships in the state’s House of Representatives.

“Those who choose to live in the country tend to have a certain independence and yet reliance on one another,” Julie concluded. “So when a problem arises, it’s typical for neighbors to band together and take care of one another. Identifying a need and taking care of it—I wish we could see more of that.” ■



# Make Wireless Communication Safer



**Mike Youngs**  
Great Lakes Energy  
Business Security &  
Networks Director

Greetings and welcome back!

Wireless internet. It's great, right? You can be anywhere with your laptop or smart device and still be connected. And, it's practically everywhere. You might have a WiFi network in your home, or perhaps you have used it for free in places like coffee shops, public spaces, hotels, and schools. Surf the internet, cord free.

However, the nature of a shared network that anyone can use comes with risk. Mainly, other people on the same WiFi network can see a large portion of your traffic without much effort. Moreover, there are those with the intent and the skill to see everything you are transmitting online. Even if you have "nothing to hide," think about your password to login to your favorite social media site, or your credit card number you are using to book your summer vacation. If someone can read that, that's not-so-great, right?

So how do we make WiFi great again? We can use a VPN on laptops and smart devices!

VPN stands for **V**irtual **P**rivate **N**etwork. Corporate employees working remotely are probably already familiar with a VPN as your IT department will require one to connect to the office network safely. If your company does not use a VPN while working remotely and connecting to your office network, check this website [havebeenpwned.com](http://havebeenpwned.com) now. I'll wait.

A VPN works by creating an encrypted "tunnel" through the WiFi network and internet to allow

two or more computers to communicate securely. The VPN protects you by keeping those outside the tunnel from seeing what's inside—everyone including the hacker in the room next to you at the hotel.

Using a VPN is easy. First, you need to install VPN software or a VPN App. Once it is installed and set up, many are automatic and there is nothing else you need to do. Others may require you to start the App or Software before you begin surfing. Either way, it is straight-forward, and there are many good ones out there.

Another advantage of a VPN is that many of them will block advertisements too, and this will actually make your web surfing faster while using the VPN.

Which VPN to use? Some are free and some require you to pay. Which is better? I say when a business gives away a product for free, you are usually the product—they're going to sell your information you use to sign up with. Additionally, there is usually a limitation in the free versions, such as a bandwidth cap or advertisements to support their app. In my mind, a good VPN is worth a few dollars a month.

I won't get into any specific company recommendations, though products such as F-Secure Freedom VPN, StrongVPN, and SurfEasy are good places to start looking for a VPN that is right for you.

That's it for now. I'll be back again with more tips on how to get the most out of the online world as safely and securely as possible. ■

# Take Advantage Of Heat Pump Discounts

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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.

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Additional rebates up to \$500 are available through our Energy Optimization program. Visit [michigan-energy.org](http://michigan-energy.org) or call 877-296-4319.

Great Lakes Energy does not sell or install heat pumps.

Visit [earthcomfort.com](http://earthcomfort.com), sponsored by the Michigan Geothermal Energy Association, for more information about heat pumps and dealers in your area. ■



## Report Outages Online

Members can now report an outage and view status updates online at [my.gtlakes.com](http://my.gtlakes.com) or through our mobile app. Search for Great Lakes Energy on the App Store.

Your information is instantly transmitted to GLE's outage management system. When it is possible to estimate restoration time, the information will appear in real time on your computer or mobile device. Members using either option will also receive an automated call when their power is restored.

You can continue to call 1-888-GT-LAKES to report an outage, too.

Do not report your outage by email or on social media, as such messages are not monitored 24 hours a day.

Visit Storm Central on [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) to view current outages.



# Disability 101: A Lesson in Respect

By Jack O'Malley, WTCM 103.5 FM Traverse City and host of Jack's Journal on 9 & 10 News

"Well, Jack," said the doctor, examining my foot while studying X-rays of my heel. "If that tendon tears, it's going to be a bear to fix. You need foot surgery." Not one to argue, I took his advice.

In the days prior to surgery, I prepared for my recovery: two to four weeks off my feet, hobbling unsteadily on crutches and learning how to steer my scooter, followed by a week or two walking with a cane.

"Easy enough," I thought. With a foot brace, prescriptions and disability parking permit in hand, I was feeling confident!

After a relatively pain-and-incident-free first few weeks, I had mastered the dance—juggling my brief case, foot brace, scooter and crutches, jostling them in and out of the car, all while balancing on one leg. Lugging everything through a near freezing parking deck at least twice per day, I quickly tired of the hassle. But the end was near! Soon the doc would give me the all-clear, and it would be just me, my brief case, and my intricately-carved, walnut-stained Beechwood walking cane, which was an accessory I hoped would offer an air of distinction (unlike my scooter).

But then, a complication—a complication setting my recovery back at least two weeks. And then another setback.

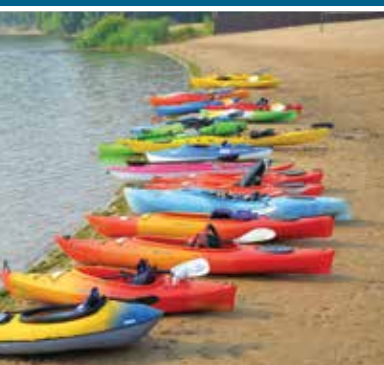
In mid-December, with mobility still dependent on the knee scooter and crutches, my wife and I attended a music program in search of some much-needed holiday cheer. Entering an auditorium brimming with families, grandparents and students, we noticed all handicapped-accessible rows were full, many seats occupied by young children. While obvious I couldn't use the stairs, no one moved. Dismayed, I found a folding chair by the entrance while my wife took a seat elsewhere in the auditorium.

Initially frustrated at being separated from my wife, I paused. Since surgery, folks had repeatedly grabbed doors, held elevators and carried bags for me. While some were oblivious, the vast majority of those I "bumped" into kindly offered assistance. Plus, I had a light at the end of the tunnel. I would recover. Eventually.



Yet this situation forced me to ask a tough question. What about those people suffering permanent disabilities, many of whom regularly experience these types of situations? What about people discouraged from going out because of limited parking and seating, who feel uncomfortable asking for help, overburdened with medical equipment, and just overwhelmed with the situation in general?

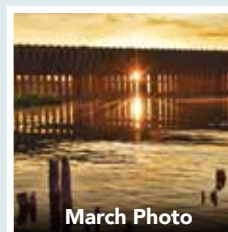
Though I'm still not 100 percent, doctors assure me I'll make a full recovery. In the meantime, my respect and appreciation for those with a permanent physical or cognitive disability has only deepened. My hope now is to encourage others to think twice when in public. Save those reserved parking spaces and seating sections for those people and families who could really use it. Open a door, offer a seat, and give a smile to someone who genuinely needs it. I know I will. ■



## «« Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo on the left by June 10 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at [countrylines.com](http://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 the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the March 2017 issue is Walter Seavoy, an Ontonagon County REA member, who correctly identified the photo as the Lower Harbor Ore Dock in downtown Marquette, Mich. Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.



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