

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

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With
Great Lakes
Potato Chip
Co.

Major Seed Potato
Grower Has Local Roots

Renewable
Energy Options

Rate Increase Approved



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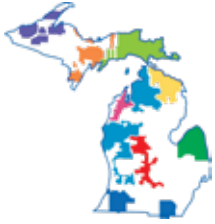
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Michigan's Electric Cooperatives
countrylines.com

Executive Editor: Casey Clark

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Publisher:
Michigan Electric
Cooperative Association

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

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

POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

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

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Photo—Robert Bruce Photography

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Country Lines, Your Communications Partner

For more than 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. An empowering communication tool, *Country Lines* keeps members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op. Issues contain news about our services, director elections, member meetings and management decisions that members need to know about as owners of the co-op. The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members. The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on behalf of each member at an average cost of \$3.82 per year, paid as part of members' electric bill. The current magazine cost is 47 cents per copy. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association in Lansing. As always, we welcome and value your comments.



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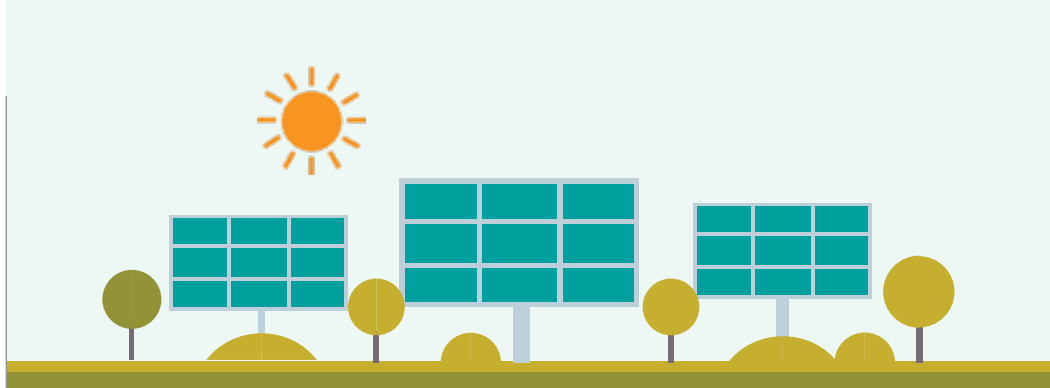
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Energy That's Sunny And Bright

Bill Scott, Great Lakes Energy President/CEO

Most people look forward to warm, sunny days after a long, gray winter. Not only does the sun make people feel good inside, but it can also provide energy that will make you feel good in another way.

GLE's Community Solar program is a simple, relatively inexpensive option that enables you to support the use of clean, renewable energy powered by the sun. With this program, you can buy a subscription and help put solar energy on the electric grid. For as little as \$600 per panel or, if you prefer to pay over time, \$10 per month for 60 months, you can purchase a solar panel subscription. In return, you receive solar credits on your monthly bills. There are no solar panels to buy, install and maintain on your roof. Energy Optimization rebates up to \$150 per solar panel are also available for a limited time if you pay the full \$600 subscription upfront.

For those with their own renewable energy generating system, the Net Metering program allows you to connect your system to the electric grid. You buy less energy from us and receive bill credits for any excess energy you put on the grid. What is the cost to have your own system? That depends on the type (solar, wind, etc.) and size you want. A professional who installs these systems can help you with that information.

A third option is available for the more serious investors who install a generating system large enough to produce renewable energy that can be sold commercially. If your goal is to be in the business of selling renewable energy, the Buy All/Sell All program is designed for you. This program appeals to business or industrial owners on our lines looking for clean energy options and capable of making larger investments.

If you're not able to take advantage of these programs, Great Lakes Energy has you covered. Nearly 20 percent of the electricity GLE provides already comes from renewable energy sources. That's due in large part to the investment GLE's power supplier has made in wind energy generation in Michigan.

So, as you welcome back the warm weather and more sunny days, consider using the power of the sun, or other renewable energy sources, to get more involved in renewable energy with one of our flexible options. Select the one that works best for you and contact GLE or visit [gtlakes.com](https://www.gtlakes.com) to learn more.

Rate Increase Effective In June

Rate changes recently approved by the Great Lakes Energy board of directors will result in a net increase of \$0.0051 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) for residential and seasonal accounts. It will go into effect with the June bills.

A \$0.0216 increase in the energy charge and a \$0.0165 decrease in the power supply cost recovery (PSCR) factor results in a net increase of \$0.0051. (\$0.0216 minus \$0.0165 equals \$0.0051). The monthly charge will remain the same for both rate classifications.

For the average residential member using 800 kWh per month, this equates to a \$4.08 monthly increase. For the average seasonal member using 200 kWh per month, this equates to a \$1.02 monthly increase. Amounts don't include state sales tax.

The increase, although small, would raise revenues to provide sufficient funding levels for maintaining reliable electric service, providing adequate margins and ensuring members receive the service they need to power their homes and businesses.

Approved Rate Changes

	Current Rate	Approved Rate	Change
Energy charge	\$0.0864/kWh	\$0.1080/kWh	\$0.0216/kWh
PSCR charge	\$0.0165/kWh	\$0.00/kWh	\$(0.0165)/kWh
Net increase			\$0.0051/kWh

Attend A Free Energy Seminar

A free energy seminar for Great Lakes Energy members will be held Saturday, June 9, 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.

Saturday, June 9, 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.

Special Payment Alert

Due to computer software upgrades, all bill payments submitted from 5 p.m. May 29 through 8 a.m. June 4 must be made at a GLE office, or by mail. Payment methods accepted during this time will be cash, money order or check only. Online, mobile app or phone payments using credit card or e-check will not be accepted during this time.

Thank you for your patience.

Notice to Members of Great Lakes Energy Cooperative

Rates and Tariffs Changes Effective on or after June 1, 2018

The Great Lakes Energy Electric Cooperative Board of Directors, at a special open meeting held March 21, 2018, took action on several matters:

- Revised tariff language, fees and refund policies for new line extensions.
- Approved changes in maximum deposit amounts.
- Revised the cooperative's rates to take effect on or after June 1, 2018, to meet current and future financial needs, based on an independent Cost of Service study.

For specific details on changes to Great Lakes Energy's tariffs or fees, please call us at 1-888-485-2537 or visit our website at gllakes.com.



To Easily Manage Your Energy Efficiency Project Contractor

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

Once you've hired a contractor for your energy efficiency renovation, you need to manage your contractor to ensure quality. Follow the steps below and you'll be on your way to celebrating a successful project in no time.

1.

Establish a single point of contact.

First, you should decide who will be the main contact with your contractor. Clear communication is critical because a renovation that includes energy efficiency improvements comes with extra challenges. A single point of contact will help avoid confusion, conflicts and cost overruns.

2.

Have a discussion about quality.

Before the work starts, have a discussion with your contractor about quality. You want the contractor to know you'll be carefully overseeing the work and that there may be others involved in this oversight, such as building inspectors, your electric cooperative or an independent energy auditor. You can discuss the standards of a professional, high-quality job. And you can agree on the points at which the contractor will pause so you or someone you designate can review the work.

3.

Put change orders in writing.

It will be tempting to add "just one more thing" along the way, and the contractor may agree a change is simple and possible within the timeframes. Contractors and customers often miscommunicate about change orders and end up disagreeing about additional costs when the project is completed. Before you make any changes, be sure to get a written cost quote. If it's significant, you can then weigh the cost against the benefit of the change.

4.

End with an inspection.

Almost all efficiency measures require some kind of final inspection. For example, infrared thermometers can show voids in blown insulation, and fiberglass batts can be visually inspected to ensure there are no air gaps and the batts are not compressed.

HVAC measures require special attention. ENERGY STAR® has a program to ensure quality HVAC installation. Forced air systems typically have poorly balanced supply and return air delivery that can often be improved. Air flow can be measured at each register, and a duct blaster test can identify and quantify duct leakage.

When you review the work, it may be helpful to take photos or to bring in an energy auditor. Be sure to have these inspections outlined in the contract and discussed beforehand, so the contractor is comfortable.

When the renovation is complete, it may be tempting to sign the check, shake hands and breathe a sigh of relief that it's all over. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, it may be worth the extra step of having a final audit by a licensed energy auditor.

Once you confirm that the work is 100 percent complete, you can write a check for the final payment, then sit back and enjoy your revitalized, more energy-efficient home!



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

*Michigan's free & easy
utility notification system.*

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

1.

Contact MISS DIG at
811 or missdig.org.

2.

Wait three business days
for utility owners to mark
their lines.

3.

Respect the marks.

4.

Dig with care.



**Visit missdig.org
for more information.**

Shopping for New Appliances? Look for the ENERGY STAR!

Take a look around your home—are outdated appliances wasting energy and costing you money? If so, it's time to upgrade to efficient ENERGY STAR® models!

ENERGY STAR products provide the same features you're already used to, but can use **up to 75 percent less energy** than standard models. Your purchases will be even more affordable with cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program!

What is ENERGY STAR?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) introduced ENERGY STAR in 1992 to help consumers identify energy-efficient products. The ENERGY STAR label can now be found on major appliances, lighting, electronics, and even new homes and commercial buildings.

To earn the ENERGY STAR label, a third-party certification process verifies:

- Significant energy savings
- Features and performance consumers demand, plus greater efficiency
- Comprehensive product testing

Did you know? Since the early 1990s, ENERGY STAR has helped consumers save \$362 billion in utility costs!

View all incentives at **michigan-energy.org** or call **877.296.4319** for details.

Save now with cash back from the Energy Optimization program!		
Product	Efficiency comparison (vs. a new standard model)*	Energy Optimization program incentive**
Clothes washer	Uses 35% less water and 20% less energy	\$125
Clothes dryer	Uses 20% less energy	\$125
Computer	Uses 60% less energy	\$50
Dehumidifier	Uses 15% less energy	\$75
Dishwasher	Uses 5% less energy and 15% less water	\$75
Chest Freezer	Uses at least 10% less energy	\$75
Refrigerator	Uses 20% less energy	\$200
Television	Uses at least 25% less energy	\$50-100
Room air conditioner	Use 15% less energy	\$50

*All data according to energystar.gov. **Incentive amounts are subject to change; other restrictions may apply.



SAVE BIG WITH ENERGY STAR®!

It's time to upgrade outdated, energy-wasting appliances with ENERGY STAR models. You'll use up to 75% less energy AND save upfront with cash incentives from the Energy Optimization program:

REFRIGERATOR: \$200

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Visit our website for a full list of incentives!

michigan-energy.org • 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.



GLE Photo Contest

Show Us Your Garden

1. Wine bottle garden path—*Dorene Hogness, Gaylord*
2. Twenty years in the making and finally perfect—*Darla Drake, Reed City*
3. Tree frogs in my lilies—*Linda Sprinkle, Grayling*
4. My beautiful garden—*Tami Porteous, Wayland*
5. Germination Determination: grown from a stray cucumber seed—*Don and Julie Urick, Sears*
6. Color around the frog pond—*Ranae Utley, Boyne Falls*



Most votes on Facebook!

1



2



3



4



5



6

Submit Your "Fan Spirit" Photo!

Each month members can submit photos on Facebook or our website for our annual photo contest. The photo with the most votes on Facebook is published here along with other selections.

Enter to win a
\$200
energy bill
credit!

Our May theme is Fan Spirit. Photos can be submitted by May 20 to be featured in the July/August issue.

How To Enter:

Visit [Facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](https://www.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://www.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 2018.



Potluck

Impress family and friends with these crowd-pleasing recipes.

Photos—Robert Bruce Photography

Southwest Mac And Cheese (pictured above)

Jennifer Quail, Midwest Energy & Communications

- 1 pound uncooked macaroni or shell pasta
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 15-ounce can packed pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 1 16-ounce package Mexican-style four cheese blend, shredded
- 4 ounces cream cheese, cut into small pieces (for a lighter option, use 4 ounces Neufchatel cheese instead)
- ¼ to ½ cup milk, almond milk, evaporated (not condensed) milk or heavy cream
- 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- ¼ to 1 teaspoon dried chipotle chili powder, to taste
- salt, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare pasta according to the package directions, drain and return to pot. Cover.

In a heavy skillet, melt the butter and sauté the diced onion until translucent but not browned. Add the pumpkin to the skillet with the onions and stir over medium heat until warmed through. Mix in the shredded cheese and cream cheese into the pumpkin mixture and stir until melted and smooth. Use milk product to thin as needed until consistency is smooth but not runny. Do not boil. Stir in the can of drained tomatoes and green chiles into the cheese sauce. Season with chipotle powder and salt to taste.

Add the warm sauce to the reserved pasta and stir until combined. Serve immediately, or transfer to a slow cooker set on warm. If you prefer baked mac and cheese, transfer pasta to a greased 3-quart casserole dish. Top with ½ cup shredded cheese and crumbled tortilla chips. Bake for 20 minutes or until top is browned.

Experiment with spices! For a brighter gold color and more bite to the flavor, add ¼–½ teaspoon mustard powder. For a traditional chili con carne flavor, add ¼ teaspoon ground cumin. You can also vary the heat by using different strength tomatoes and chilies, or you can use salsa instead of tomatoes, at your desired heat level.



Watch a video of this recipe at <https://goo.gl/qUZrVr>



Cookies And Cakes: due July 1

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

Enter to win a
\$50
energy bill
credit!

Go to micoopkitchen.com for more information and to register.



Buffalo Chicken Meatballs

Heather Poland, Cherryland

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1½ pound ground chicken ½ cup panko breadcrumbs 1 egg, lightly beaten 1 small carrot, finely grated 1 celery stalk, minced 2 green onions, minced 3 garlic cloves, minced ½ teaspoon paprika | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ teaspoon salt ¼ teaspoon black pepper ⅓ cup buffalo sauce (I used Franks, or use your favorite buffalo sauce) ⅓ cup blue cheese or mozzarella 3 teaspoons blue cheese or ranch dressing, optional for garnish |
|---|---|

Preheat oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground chicken, panko and egg. Let set for 5 minutes, so panko is soaked by the egg. Add the carrot, celery, green onion, garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Using your hands mix together until just combined. Using a spoon or cookie scoop, shape into meatballs and place onto prepared baking sheet. Place in oven and bake for 15–20 minutes until cooked through (internal temperature of 160 F). Remove from oven, place the meatballs in a bowl, add the buffalo sauce and gently toss to combine. Drizzle with ranch dressing and blue cheese, if desired. Serve immediately.



Key West 'Shrooms

James Maxwell, Great Lakes Energy

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 package of portobello or white button mushrooms 1 package Phillips crab cakes (or similar) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 package Swiss cheese, sliced 4 dashes Old Bay Spice ½ stick melted butter |
|---|---|

Clean mushrooms and remove stems. Place on a microwaveable plate. Dip the mushrooms in the melted butter. Drizzle remaining butter over mushroom tops. Stuff mushroom tops with crab cakes. Sprinkle mushrooms with Old Bay spice to taste. Quarter the cheese slices and place over the stuffed mushrooms. Sprinkle mushrooms with remaining Old Bay spice. Microwave mushrooms for 4 minutes. Place on a serving tray, garnish and serve.

Featured Guest Chef

Enjoy this simple, yet delicious, dish with family and friends gathered around—no matter what the season.



Cherry BBQ Potato Chip Crusted Chicken Fingers

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup mayonnaise 1 large bag Great Lakes Michigan Cherry BBQ Chips, crushed ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pinch salt • non-stick oil spray 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips ¼ cup butter, melted |
|--|---|

Preheat oven to 400 F. Scoop mayonnaise into a shallow bowl. Place crushed BBQ chips in another shallow bowl and combine crushed chips with black pepper and a pinch of salt. Dip chicken pieces (just 1 or 2 at a time) in mayonnaise and then coat with chip mixture. Place chicken strips onto a greased baking pan. Make sure to space chicken out a bit so the sides are not touching and can get crispy. Drizzle chicken strips with melted butter. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes until chicken is no longer pink. Remove and allow to cool for 5 to 8 minutes before serving, so chips harden back up. Serve and enjoy!

Optional: Serve with dip or sauce.

Read the full story about Great Lakes Potato Chip Co. on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.


Johannesburg Family

SEEDING SUCCESS THROUGH TRADITION

By Brittany Kielbasa

Photos courtesy of Thomas Mann, Great Lakes Energy




Alison Sklarczyk holds seedlings ready for planting that will one day produce enough potatoes to fill 30 semi-trucks.

Ben and Alison Sklarczyk's five-year-old daughter Morgan has a dream to be Johannesburg, Michigan's first farmer-police officer. She and her little brother, Dane, are the latest of four generations in the Sklarczyk Seed Farm family, and while she has not spent time as a police officer, she has already spent time in the family business doing everything from clipping leaves to picking tubers.

Sklarczyk Seed Farm began in 1942 when Michael and Theresa Sklarczyk purchased a farm in Johannesburg which would later be passed onto their son and daughter-in-law, Don and Mary Kay. Beginning in the 1980s, Don began a tradition of innovation when he was the first to use tissue cultures to reduce instances of bacteria and viruses that commonly affect potato crops—a practice that has become an industry standard. Today, Sklarczyk Seed Farm produces more than four million seed potatoes each year, making them responsible for

roughly 65 percent of all potato chip potatoes produced in North America.

Now Don's son, Ben, continues to grow the farm and his parents' and grandparents' legacy with his wife Alison.

"I never want to forget where we came from," said Ben. "I never want myself—or our team—to forget how we got here, and the sacrifices my parents and grandparents made for us to have what we have here today."

Sklarczyk Seed Farm's barn facility is a testament to that legacy. The modern take on the traditional big red barn is a beautiful marriage of past and present. The common areas and offices are adorned with nostalgia of the Sklarczyk story. From original bills of sale and ledger books to the track and hay carriage from the original barn that serves as the focal point in the conference room, Sklarczyk Seed Farm proudly displays the seeds of their story and the generations of hard

workers who created the foundation for their successful business.

While the inside of the facility is impressive, the Sklarczyks have a deep appreciation for the outdoors and the environment.

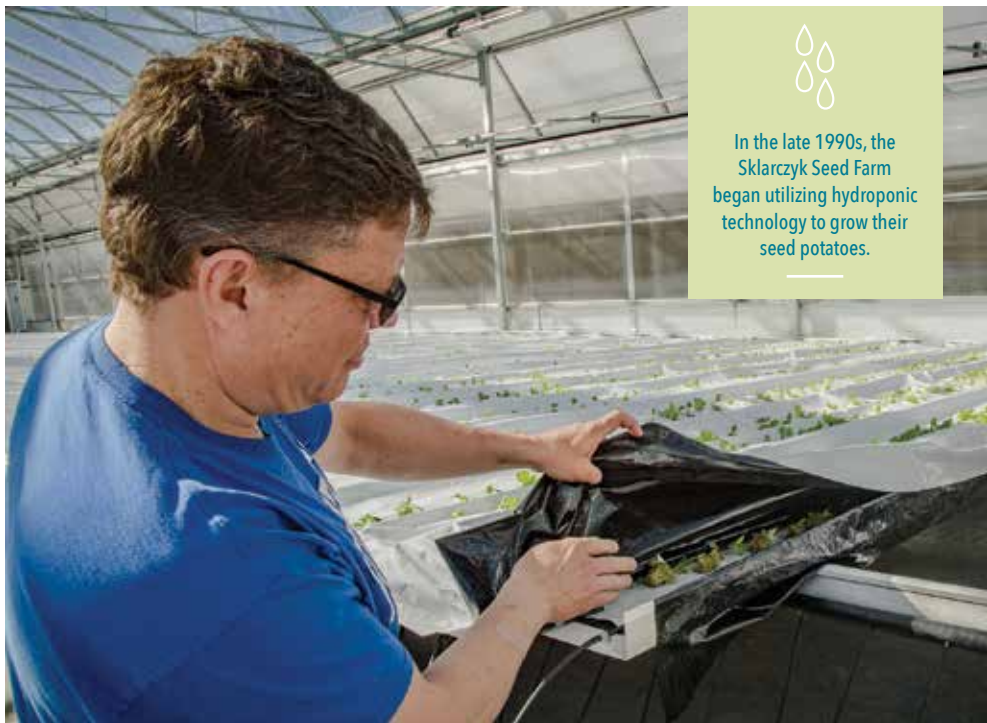
“As a farmer, there’s a mentality ingrained in you to take care of the earth because the earth is what takes care of you,” said Sklarczyk. “These values were instilled in my dad from his dad, and he passed them down to me.”

The Sklarczyks’ respect for Northern Michigan’s natural resources is also infused into their business as they recognize the importance of utilizing earth-friendly, sustainable practices, to provide benefits for future generations. That respect inspired them to utilize innovative technologies to run their operation as energy efficient as possible.

In 2016, Sklarczyk Seed Farm installed 90 LumiGrow LED grow lights instead of the standard high-pressure sodium grow lights to significantly save energy—more than 200,000 kilowatt hours per year. They also worked with the LED manufacturer to conduct tests at their facility to monitor the effects of light spectrum control to maximize usage. The resulting optimized energy consumption and efficiency allowed him to increase production without the need to construct costly new facilities.

The Sklarczyks’ commitment to energy efficiency has been recognized by the Governor’s Energy Excellence Award as a 2017 Finalist, the EPA and National Potato Council Environmental Stewardship Award, and the Michigan Agricultural Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP) verification.

In their initiatives, the Sklarczyks value their partnership with their electric cooperative, Great Lakes Energy (GLE), to help them achieve their sustainability goals. GLE’s Energy Optimization programs helped the farm offset costs associated with the implementation of their energy-



In the late 1990s, the Sklarczyk Seed Farm began utilizing hydroponic technology to grow their seed potatoes.



Ben Sklarczyk adjusts the leaves on one of his plants to ensure it gets all the light it needs.

efficient equipment and helped the business maintain cost-competitive operations. In addition to these programs, Sklarczyk Seed Farm’s GLE membership means they are powered by the state’s leader in new renewable energy. Even more, this energy is now 56 percent carbon-free.

“We are very fortunate to have our partnership with Great Lakes Energy,” said Sklarczyk. “They have always

gone above and beyond—everything from quick outage response to implementation of upgrades. We are fortunate to be part of the co-op family.”

The Sklarczyks’ traditions of innovation and environmental stewardship are plainly evidenced in Morgan’s dream to be a farmer-police officer—valuing and protecting the legacy of what’s come before her, and imagining something even greater.

CHIPPIN' AWAY

By James A. Curtis // Photos by Robert Bruce Photography and Dre Photography

With
Great Lakes
Potato Chip
Co.



Chris Girrbach and Ed Girrbach,
owners of Great Lakes Potato Chip Company.

“**E**ddie, what happened to my blankets?” said Ed Girrbach’s mother when she noticed they were missing. Ed jokes that after he explained he’d been selling them as ponchos to his schoolmates, “mom’s reaction helped me understand at an early age about the ‘cost of goods sold.’”

Ponchos were Ed’s first foray into business, but the now co-founder of Great Lakes Potato Chip Company (GLPCC)—a member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative—would carry that entrepreneurial spirit his entire life, eventually leading him—along with his son and business partner, Chris Girrbach—to open Pangea’s Pizza Pub in Traverse City. Even more, it was that same spirit that inspired a growing interest in manufacturing.

Ultimately, deciding where they would strike out next came down to a simple question: “Dad, what do you like?” asked Chris.

Ed thought for a moment and replied, “Well, aside from pizza, I like potato chips.” And the idea for GLPCC was born.

The Girrbauchs threw themselves into researching potato chips; and on May 5, 2010, they founded GLPCC with two part-time employees and one old fryer to begin manufacturing their favorite—skin-on kettle chips.

In the eight years since, the chip company has experienced tremendous growth and won numerous accolades, including being named “Number One Kettle Chip” by *The Chicago Tribune*, and “Most Investable Second-stage Food Company” at Crain’s Food Summit. They also received a “Gold” rating for kettle and tortilla chips at the Saratoga Springs Chip Festival—the birthplace of the potato chip.

“We get asked a lot why we leave the SKIN ON.”

“It’s simple. It just TASTES BETTER.”

Today, the chip company produces seven flavors of kettle chip, a tortilla chip, has 16 distributors, retails in seven states, employs 30 people, and is growing at a rate of 30 percent per year.

All this growth means more potatoes, and Michigan has no shortage—it’s the leading producer of chipping potatoes in the nation. The Girrbauchs developed a special relationship with Sackett Farms in Mecosta—a HomeWorks Tri-County Cooperative member—to supply their potatoes. Sackett Farms is a sixth-generation, family-owned farm specializing in A-grade chipping potatoes, whose crop is in high demand.

“Chris’ first trip to Sackett Farms was humorous,” said Ed. “He drove 110 miles to the farm in his pickup truck with a crate in the back and had to get in line with semi-trucks to load up the potatoes. He was the only pickup in the line, and we’re thankful they let us jump in and hold up their process.”

Chipping away at the potato chip industry, the Girrbauchs eventually sent more than a pickup truck to Sackett Farms. Now, a semi-truck delivers 120,000 pounds of potatoes a week—and they are looking for more. The chip company has invested nearly half a million dollars in automation to double its capacity to keep up with demand. With each upgrade, Ed and Chris look closely at the most energy efficient equipment as part of their commitment to sustainability, and they value their partnership with their electric cooperative.

Coincidentally, GLPCC and Sackett Farms belong to electric cooperatives that are members of Wolverine Power Cooperative. The Wolverine cooperatives lead Michigan in new renewable energy. In 2018, the co-ops reduced their carbon footprint by 25 percent—now providing members with 56 percent carbon-free energy. “Cherryland operates as a true partner, their whole mindset is how do they help us, and how do we work together to find more ways to be energy efficient,” said Ed. “We love doing business with them.”

As Great Lakes Potato Chip Company continues to grow, Ed takes great pride in his Michigan-made products, their highest-quality ingredients, and their unique process to get a crispier, crunchier, tastier chip. “We get asked a lot why we leave the skin on,” said Ed. “It’s simple. It just tastes better.”



Visit greatlakespotatochips.com to learn more about these Michigan-made chips.



Historic Farms Honored

Two farms served by Great Lakes Energy were recently recognized as historical farms.

An Oceana County farm owned by Great Lakes Energy members William, James and Yvonne Rowe of Shelby was recently certified as a sesquicentennial farm. An Osceola County farm owned by Jacob and Rene Stieg of Hersey was certified as a centennial farm.

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 at least 100 years. Centennial farms that continue to be owned and operated by the same family for at least 150 years can be certified as a sesquicentennial farm. Once a farm is certified, 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 their website at centennialfarms.org.



CAPITAL CREDITS

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 May 2018 bill to inform you of the capital credit allocation amount you earned in 2017. 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 in an upcoming issue of *Michigan Country Lines*.

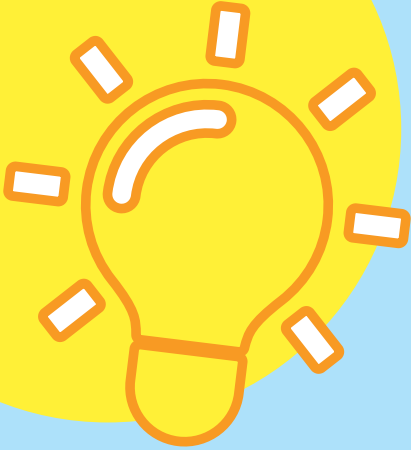
How is my share determined?

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, your allocation amount will also be larger.

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

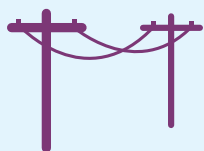
Capital credits represent operating capital provided by the membership to the cooperative and are a major source of equity and operating funds for Great Lakes Energy. Capital credits help make it possible for us to secure loans, improve electric service reliability, and expand our system to meet the 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.



We're Keeping the **Lights On**

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



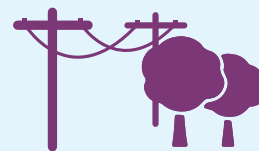
More Power Line Protection Devices



New Technology



Major Power Line Improvements



Aggressive Tree Maintenance

What hinders our progress?



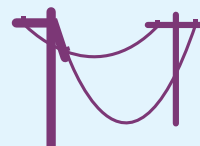
Storms



Man-made Accidents

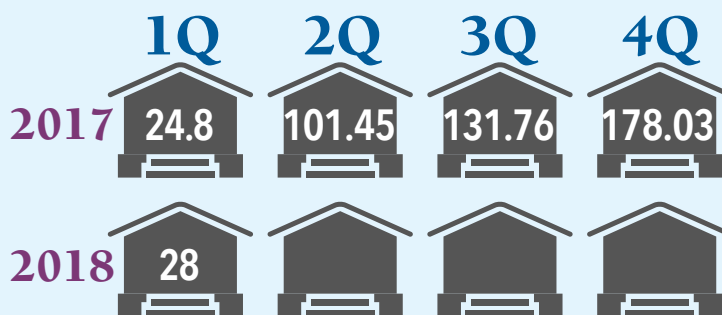


Animals



Equipment Failure

AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



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Guess this photo and enter to win a \$50 energy bill credit!



Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo above by May 20 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number and the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the March 2018 issue is Ann Pihlaja, an Ontonagon County REA member, who correctly identified the photo as the Traverse City Cherry Festival Air Show.

Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.

March 2018



Photo courtesy of Karen Murphy

I Remember...



My grandfather, Carl (Lavy) Hagstrom, is holding me, Joelle, and my Uncle Carl is looking on.

Berry Picking

I remember going berry picking with my grandfather, Carl (Lavy) Hagstrom, in the woods around Cheboygan. My grandfather had special berry picking pails and adjustable belts. He said it was important for both hands to be free to pick the juiciest ones! But my belt was always too big, so I hung it from my neck.

I never saw anyone who could pick berries as fast as he could. It didn't matter if we were picking raspberries or huckleberries, he always filled his pail first. He would tease me because I couldn't keep up with him, but he knew I was eating two berries for every one I put into my pail. My hands were always stained with the juice.

We took the berries home for my grandmother to can and the rest she saved for us to eat on our cereal or to make a special treat. Many evenings after dinner, our family would get involved in making homemade ice cream. It was hard work turning the handle of their ice cream machine, but it was worth it, as my grandfather would add some delicious berries. I always looked forward to summers in Cheboygan with my grandparents and making berry ice cream!

Joelle Majerowicz, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

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 or email to cdorr@meca.coop

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