

## Being A Member Matters



Steve Boeckman  
Great Lakes Energy  
President/CEO

When you belong to an electric cooperative, you are a member and owner of the business. Across the nation, more than 42 million people benefit from being member-owners of an electric cooperative.

Being a member matters. Great Lakes Energy doesn't exist to make profits for Wall Street investors. We exist to provide you with safe, reliable, and affordable electric service. Because electric co-ops operate on a not-for-profit basis, they have no need to increase revenues above what it takes to run the business in a financially sound manner.

Membership matters because a well-run cooperative invests wisely and contains costs to keep members' rates as stable as possible.

We regularly take advantage of refinancing opportunities that benefit the co-op. Millions of dollars in additional interest expenses on long-term loans are avoided this way. Lower-

interest loans are the main source of operating funds for electric cooperatives.

We serve more members with fewer employees than many other electric cooperatives. Great Lakes Energy ranks 15th out of 816 electric cooperatives as having the most members per employee. Our employees serve members across a vast area covering 26 counties and more than 14,000 miles of power lines. Only one other electric cooperative in the country has more miles of line than us.

Membership matters because you receive returns on your investment in your co-op. Electric co-ops aim to operate at-cost, so any excess revenues, or margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits, based on their electric use.

We put unclaimed capital credit refunds to good use, too. Although we would hope ev-

eryone who leaves our co-op would pay their balance, the reality is that not all do. We help limit this loss by applying unclaimed capital credit refunds to the unpaid amounts.

Membership matters because you elect directors to represent you on the Great Lakes Energy board. Control stays in local hands.

Membership also matters because electric co-ops care about improving the quality of life in the areas they serve. That's why we rely on your generosity in supporting the People Fund that helps charities and non-profit groups in your community.

Membership matters because it entitles you to certain benefits like rebates for energy efficient heating and cooling equipment and lower rates for electric heat and water heating.

The bottom line: Membership matters because you matter to your electric cooperative.

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## New Paperless Bill Option

Paperless electric bills are now available with the new Electronic Bill Presentment (EBP) option.

By eliminating paper bills for participating Great Lakes Energy members, EBP saves paper, reduces bill printing and mailing costs, and helps the environment.

Members can request to be notified by e-mail when their monthly billing statement is available to view online. Billing statements can be saved and stored by members on their own computers or they can access an online archive of up to 13 months of billing history through their GLE online eBusiness account.

Members—including those who currently use GLE's eBusiness feature for online information about their electric accounts—will see a page

that encourages them to sign up for EBP when they log in or click on the Account Access link on GLE's website. Once enrolled in EBP, they will receive a monthly email advising their bill is online and ready to view.

Unlike the bill summaries that appear on members' eBusiness accounts, EBP statements are exact replicas of the physical bill copy.

When members combine EBP with automated bill payment, GLE can realize a nearly paper-free circle of distributing bills and receiving payments.

GLE reps can walk members through the process of enrolling in EBP and automated bill payment, including viewing statements through eBusiness accounts. To enroll, visit [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) and click on Account Login at the top of the page, or call 888-485-2537.



## Attend Our Free Energy Seminar

Attend a free energy seminar Saturday, April 21, from 10 a.m. to noon at our Great Lakes Energy office in Newaygo.

Hear presentations on geothermal and air-source heat pumps, Marathon electric water heaters, and more. Local heating and cooling companies and Great Lakes Energy staff members will be on hand to answer your questions relating to electric heat and electric water heaters.

Receive the latest update on Energy Optimization programs that offer incentives to help you save energy. Learn about other incentive programs offered by *Great Lakes Energy*, such as special billing discounts for electric heat and water heating.

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

**Space is limited, so please register by calling 1-888-485-2537, ext. 8472.**

## Annual Kids' Coloring Contest

Hey kids 10 or under, you can enter our coloring contest. This year's coloring page is a picture of the Touchstone Energy balloon. Great Lakes Energy is a Touchstone Energy Cooperative.

Download the entry form and contest rules by visiting the Your Community section of [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com). Entry forms can also be picked up at any GLE office. Entries must be received by April 20.

Eligible age groups are: 4 and under, 5-7 years old and 8-10 years old.

### Prizes

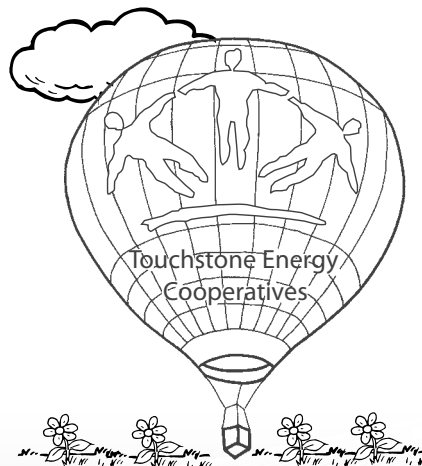
One Grand Prize for each age group: deluxe set of art supplies, valued at \$25. Plus, you will be pictured in one of our publications.

One second and one third prize for each age group: art supplies, valued at \$10.



### Looking Out for You

1323 Boyne Avenue • P.O. Box 70 • Boyne City, MI 49712  
Web: [www.gtlakes.com](http://www.gtlakes.com) • Tel: 888-GT-Lakes • Fax: 231-582-6213



### Visit us at the home shows

At the Great Lakes Energy booth you will find:

- Marathon electric water heater
- Convectair electric space heater
- Energy Bike
- Energy-saving programs and other products and services

**Northern Michigan Regional Home Show**  
March 9-10

*North Central Michigan College, Petoskey*

**Newaygo Home & Garden Show**

April 14

*Newaygo Middle School*

**West Michigan Home & Garden Show**

April 27-29

*Mason County Fairgrounds, Ludington*

## Seasonal Billing Rate Options

Two monthly billing plans are available to Great Lakes Energy members who are seasonal residents, including one that offers a lower rate to those who qualify.

**Reduced rate plan:** Seasonal residents who use over 8,000 kWh per calendar year are eligible to go on monthly billing at a lower rate of 9.653 cents per kilowatt hour (kWh).

**Other monthly plan:** This option is available to any seasonal resident regardless of usage who would prefer to be billed monthly. There is no change in the rate, which is the seasonal residential rate of 14.629 cents/kWh.

Seasonal residents should contact Great Lakes Energy at 888-485-2537, ext. 8924, if they wish to enroll in either plan.