

Bury All Our Power Lines?



Bill Scott
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

Outages aren't at the top of my list when I think of fall, but please know we're ready should a big storm pop up.

After a storm, it's not unusual for a member to ask why we don't

put all power lines underground. It's true that burying the lines would reduce outages due to wind, snow and ice. But what sounds like a good solution on the surface has many drawbacks.

Like other Great Lakes Energy members, I appreciate my reliable service and support improvements to better protect power lines from damaging storms. Despite our best efforts, weather will always be a factor. In 2015 we had two storms that each affected members in all 26 counties we serve, which is extremely rare.

Great Lakes Energy is the third largest electric cooperative in the country based on number of line miles. We have 10,988 miles of overhead and 3,307 miles of underground power. To put it in perspective, our overhead lines would reach from Michigan to Australia!

The estimated cost to convert our overhead power lines to

underground would be roughly \$1.299 billion. The impact on your rates to cover these costs would be significant, so we must look at what's best for each situation. Underground lines may be the preferred choice in a residential neighborhood, park or historical area where there is a desire not to see poles and wires.

Here are some pros and cons we consider in our line construction.

Pros of underground power lines:

- Not vulnerable to tree damage; no right of way trimming; less susceptible to vehicle damage; not impacted by wind, ice and snow; less vulnerable to blinks.

Cons of underground power lines:

- More expensive to build (from 19 to 52 percent more depending on line size and location); more difficult to modify; susceptible to flooding; difficult to locate faults; repairs are expensive and take considerable more time to complete.

In addition, members served by underground lines can still have their service affected by damages done to overhead power lines. That's because electricity travels from its many points of generation along miles of transmission and distribution lines, which generally are overhead wires. A good example is my home. Overhead wires carry power to my subdivision where the utilities are buried.

We add more underground power lines each year where financially practical. Members who build new homes can request and pay for underground services, if desired. The ultimate mix of underground and overhead construction used by Great Lakes Energy provides you, our members, with the highest possible quality of service at the lowest possible price. Cost, appearance, reliability, maintenance and future upgrades will drive which is the better approach, overhead or underground.



We're Celebrating Our Members!

October is National Cooperative Month and we're celebrating with free gifts for members plus a chance to win an LED TV. Stop into one of our offices during the month of October and you'll receive a free energy saving gift and Energy Optimization program information. You can also 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

One giveaway and one entry per account. Giveaways available while supplies last. LED lights prizes were donated by Home Depot of Petoskey.



Free Energy Seminars

TWO FREE ENERGY SEMINARS FOR GREAT LAKES ENERGY MEMBERS WILL BE HELD IN OCTOBER. ATTEND THE ONE NEAREST TO YOU.

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 AND ATTEND EITHER SESSION:

- **Saturday, Oct. 8**, from 10 a.m. to noon at our GLE office in Newaygo.
- **Saturday, Oct. 15**, from 10 a.m. to noon at our GLE office in Boyne City.

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

Board Election Results Summary

District 6:



ROBERT KRAN
(Incumbent)
Free Soil - WINNER
601

RONALD BACON
Custer
133

WILLIAM GIBBONS
Baldwin
120

District 8:



TIMOTHY BRECHON
Paris - WINNER
357

HOWARD BOWERSOX
Stanwood
181

District 9:



JOHN LAFORGE
Delton - WINNER
210

BENJAMIN FERRELL
Pierson
174



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 earn 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 gilakes.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.

HERE'S HOW IT WORKS:

\$65.42	Bill
\$00.58	People Fund Round-Up Amount
\$ 2.00	People Fund PLUS Amount (or any even amount you choose)
\$68.00	Total Bill

Sign up today by contacting us at **1-888-GTLAKES** or visit **gilakes.com**.



Looking Out for You

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