

When *The Wind Blows*



Bill Scott
Great Lakes Energy
President/CEO

Trees and power lines - like oil and water - don't mix. With all the hard work it takes to keep the right of way cleared, we know trees can still fall on the power lines when strong winds blow.

So far this year, we've been plagued by small, more frequent wind events rather than one large storm (knock on wood!). But sometimes a short-lived windstorm can be just as difficult. A key cause of outages is winds that are just strong enough to cause trouble for trees and power lines. It keeps our lineworkers and dispatchers very busy. This creates a challenge that is out of our control and

makes meeting our annual reliability goal a stretch. Average outage time numbers used in measuring our annual reliability goal progress are higher than we would like (see graph on back).

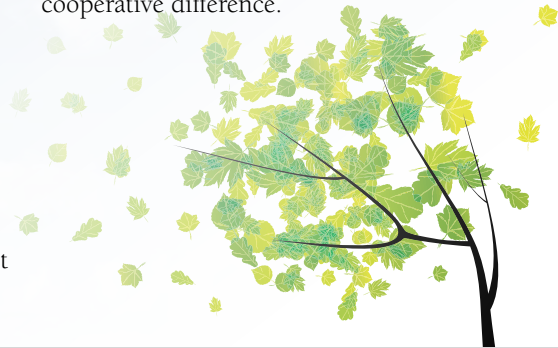
No one can control the weather, but we can control how quickly and safely we get the power back on. Big investments made in recent years are helping us do that. They include regularly clearing trees away from power lines, rebuilding major power line circuits where outages are more prevalent, taking advantage of new technologies and adding more line protection devices to limit the numbers affected by outages.

Repairing lines as efficiently and safely as possible is important, too. One of the benefits of a large cooperative is we can pull Great Lakes Energy crews from other parts of our 26 county service area to help when a storm's damage is localized over one area. The strategy is less effective when little pesky storms pop up throughout our service area like this year. GLE crews are not

as readily available to help out elsewhere if they have their own outages to handle.

Members sometimes ask why we don't put all our lines underground and avoid damage by winds and trees. The estimated cost to put approximately 11,000 miles of line underground would be roughly \$1.299 billion. The impact on your rates would be significant, so we must look at what's best for each situation when deciding whether to install overhead or underground lines.

You can't expect to always have good weather, but you can expect us to be there for you. When strong winds blow, we'll be there to get the lights back on. That's the cooperative difference.



Attend a **Free Energy Seminar**

Free energy seminars for members will be held in
October at our Newaygo and Boyne City offices.

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.

See next month's PowerTalk for more details.

The Value of Electricity

What will a dollar's worth of electricity buy you?

- Watch TV 8 hours a day for a week with a 150 watt LCD flat-screen TV.
- Stay comfortable 24 hours a day for 10 days with a ceiling fan.
- Have hot coffee ready each day for nearly two months.

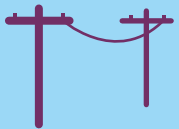
Electricity is still a good value.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy



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

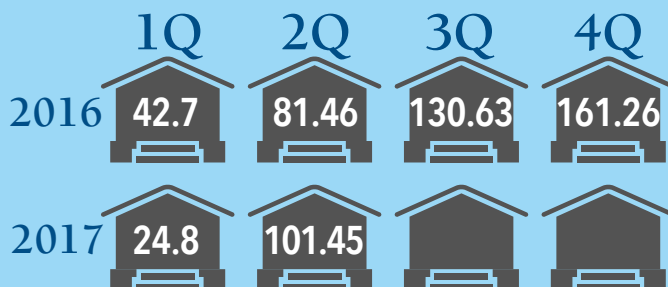


Major Power Line Improvements



Aggressive Tree Maintenance

AVERAGE OUTAGE MINUTES YEARLY COMPARISON



OUR YEARLY GOAL: UNDER 157 MINUTES

Monthly Surcharge Helps Low Income Families

Established by state law, a surcharge of 93 cents per meter per month will begin appearing on bills starting in September.

The surcharge funds the Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund established by the Michigan legislature as a long-term solution to assist low-income, at risk residents with their utility bills. The intention is to provide funds to prevent disconnection of service and to help people become more energy self-sufficient. The program is funded by Michigan electric consumers through the surcharge. Funds are distributed by the state Department of Human Services to help qualifying residents during the heating season with energy bills.

Great Lakes Energy joins other electric utilities in Michigan that have the surcharge, which by law cannot exceed \$1 per meter per month. Great Lakes Energy members who have more than one meter at the same residential location would still only pay one surcharge per month.

The surcharge will appear as MI Low Income Energy Fund on your bill.

Without the surcharge, the cooperative's ability to collect payments on delinquent accounts during the heating season would be limited and qualifying low-income families within GLE's service area may not be able to receive energy assistance funding. The surcharge gives

GLE the ability to disconnect non-paying members year-round.

Visit our website or contact your local state representative or senator if you would like more information about the Michigan Low-Income Energy Assistance Fund (LIEAF).



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Looking Out for You

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Great Lakes Energy is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



Energy Savings At Your Fingertips

Team up with the Energy Optimization program to improve the comfort, durability, and energy efficiency of your home!

Complete our Online Home Audit to assess your home's energy performance and receive a comprehensive report featuring cost-saving tips and opportunities.

ENERGY TIP: Receive a FREE energy-saving kit when you complete your Online Home Audit!

ONLINE: michigan-energy.org

PHONE: 877.296.4319



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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.

Beat the Heat



**Stay cool this summer while saving energy.
Here are a few tips to help:**

- **Turn off and unplug electronics, and head outside!**
Computers, televisions, and other electronics use energy when they're plugged in even though they're turned off.
- **Grill it!** On hot days, consider using an outdoor grill instead of your oven to keep your home cooler.
- **Consider air drying clothes.** Save energy and enjoy the fresh scent of clothes dried on a clothes line.

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