

## Fiber Internet Pilot Project Approved



Bill Scott  
Great Lakes Energy  
President/CEO

**I have good news for Great Lakes Energy members interested in high speed internet service.**

Our board of directors has approved moving forward with a fiber internet service pilot project in the Petoskey service area, which includes most of Emmet County, Beaver Island and

small parts of Charlevoix and Cheboygan counties (see map). Should the pilot project be successful, we would extend fiber internet to other service areas based on member demand.

The addition of the fiber optic technology will benefit all GLE members in the service area, not just those who subscribe to the service. It will serve as the backbone for other supporting technologies that will enable us to improve our reliability and outage restoration capabilities. It could also lead to improving our members' overall experience with us by, for example, providing customized information on where and when their kWh usage is occurring.

The construction phase of the pilot project which would involve attaching fiber optic cable to our poles could begin as early as spring 2018. If plans proceed as scheduled, the service could first become available to some members one year after installation begins.

Based on two independent feasibility studies, we expect the service could attract an estimated 6,000 subscribers within the Petoskey service area within the first three years. The two firms that conducted the studies for us either have experience working with other electric co-ops on similar projects or experience working with fiber deployment worldwide.

The two studies, along with a third commissioned by our power supplier, Wolverine Power Cooperative, all conclude building and operating a fiber-to-the-home network in this service area is a financially viable option for GLE. That's based in part on GLE's very positive satisfaction rating from its members for its electric service and surveys done by GLE and Wolverine that show a high demand for high speed, reasonably priced, internet service.

Preliminary pricing for residential fiber service is expected to be competitive with existing internet service providers in the area but offer speeds faster than cable internet. We also will be able to provide this service to members currently not offered high-speed internet from the existing providers.

Our plan is that there will be no negative impact on electric service or rates.

Now that the fiber pilot project is approved, we will begin moving diligently to the next phase which will include securing financing as well as plans for construction, staffing, marketing and much more.

### Details Coming Soon

We will keep you informed on this exciting new project as it develops in the months ahead through our publications, online at [gtlakes.com](http://gtlakes.com) or on our Facebook page. **Please note:** enrollment is not available yet. Make sure you get the latest news. Call us to update your email address or fill out and return your bill payment stub.



**Fiber internet service is coming to GLE members in the shaded areas above which includes most of Emmet County and small parts of Charlevoix and Cheboygan counties. Service to Beaver Island will be a form of high-speed internet yet to be determined.**

## GLE awards \$30,000 in learning grants

For the sixth year in a row, Great Lakes Energy showed support for local communities through its Touchstone Energy Classroom Grant Program. Grants totaling \$30,000 were awarded to 19 school districts in the GLE service area to promote learning, innovation and technology in the classroom.

### Classroom grants awarded for the 2017-18 school year include:

**Allendale Christian School:** \$1,511.93 to help fund scientific instruments for outdoor education.

**Bellaire Middle/High School:** \$1,319.91 for snap circuit kits for giving middle school students the opportunity to learn the basics of an electrical circuit without having to solder wires together.

**Daisy Brook Elementary, Fremont:** \$2,000 for LEGO Mindstorms Education sets and Chromebooks to aid in teaching fifth graders science, technology, engineering, math and computer science skills.

**East Jordan Elementary:** \$1,360 to integrate a Mimio Teach System into kindergarten classes for interactive teaching and hands-on learning.

**Franklin Elementary, Cadillac:** \$1,734 for materials for The Mystery Science program to build children's love and curiosity of science.

**Gaylord St. Mary Cathedral School:** \$322 for KUTA mathematics software for middle school students.

**Lee Elementary School, Middleville:** \$1,200 for 12 Spheros SPRK+ robots designed to inspire curiosity, creativity, and invention through connected play and coding.

**Mackinaw Public School, Mackinaw City:** \$2,000 for 15 Chromebooks for online assessments and activities that give students more access to technology.

**Manton Middle School:** \$1,949.75 for five

LEGO Mindstorms Education sets to aid in teaching students science, technology, engineering and math skills.

**Mason County Central High School, Scottville:** \$2,000 for computer-controlled cutting machine for woodshop/CAD class students.

**Northern Michigan Christian School, McBain:** \$1,900 for Chromebooks for third through fifth grades.

**R.J. Steeby Elementary, Wayland:** \$1,847.48 for 10 LEGO Education WeDo 2.0 Robotics kits for building and programming robots to solve problems.

**Reed City Public School:** \$1,976.31 for equipment and materials for technology resources to benefit students in elementary grade art, middle school computer science and high school science classes.

**Shay Elementary, Harbor Springs:** \$1,900 for littleBits education kits to integrate engineering challenges into the school's Makerspace program.

**Sheridan Elementary, Petoskey:** \$600 for six e-readers to increase the amount of time students spend reading books at their independent reading level.

**St. Francis Xavier, Petoskey:** \$1,400 to help cover materials and other expenses for middle school students to build underwater remotely operated vehicles for scientific research and competitions.

**St. Mary School, Charlevoix:** 1,981.62 for the LEGO Education's Simple and Power Machine sets to support the school's science curriculum.

**Thomas Read Elementary, Shelby:** \$1,997 for Coding Music Crossover program with Osmo Coding Jam that helps students compose a piece of music with coding.

**White Cloud Elementary:** \$1,000 for large light table and transparent bricks, cubes, blocks, etc. for tracing and other interactive learning experiences.



## Win A Trip To Washington, D.C.

The Washington, D.C. Rural Electric Youth Tour is a once-in-a-lifetime, all-expenses-paid leadership opportunity for high school sophomores and juniors whose homes are served by Great Lakes Energy.

Selected students will spend June 9-14 touring the nation's capital. The tour includes stops at the Gettysburg Battlefields, Arlington National Cemetery, Smithsonian Institution Museums, Capital Hill and Performing Arts, monuments, memorials and more. They'll also visit Michigan legislators on Capitol Hill and attend a Washington Nationals baseball game.

They will gain a chance to better understand the leadership and sacrifice that shaped this country, along with learning the important role our government plays in the operation of electric cooperatives.

The leadership travel opportunity also enables participants to build friendships with other electric co-op students from across the country.

Additional information and online application are available at [cooperativelyouthtour.com](http://cooperativelyouthtour.com).

## Pay My Bill Photo Contest Winner

**Julie Lorson, of Montague, is the 2017 winner of Great Lakes Energy's Pay My Bill Photo Contest.**

She received a billing credit for her full December 2017 electric bill (up to \$200)!

Her winning photo above was selected in a random drawing of all entries that appeared in *Michigan Country Lines* in 2017, and was published in the June issue.

Thank you to the many GLE members who participated. Members are welcome to send in photos for our 2018 contest. See page 9 of the January issue of *Michigan Country Lines* for details or visit [facebook.com/greatlakesenergy](http://facebook.com/greatlakesenergy) and click on the Photo Contest section.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

### Looking Out for You

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Co-op Owners  
**ACRE**  
for Political Action®



The ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action® program is an exciting opportunity for you to join other co-op members in raising your voice and participating in the political process. Funds raised by this grassroots network are donated to the political campaigns of candidates whose positions on issues support those of electric cooperatives.

ACRE supports political candidates who will speak for and protect the interests of electric cooperatives.

No rate dollars are used for this program. All contributions are 100% voluntary.

When you join this grassroots network you help with the long-term success of electric cooperatives like Great Lakes Energy.

Fill out the information on the back to join or receive more information.



Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

# Interested or want to learn more?

✓ **Yes!** I want to contribute to ACRE Co-op Owners for Political Action (*select amount below*).

\$2/month on my bill

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**Maybe.** I'm interested in learning more. Please send me more information.

After selecting one of the options above, please fill out and return this card with your bill payment.

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**Voluntary monthly contributions may be cancelled at any time.**

**On auto-pay?** Contact us for more information at [gtlakes.com/co-op-owners-for-political-action](http://gtlakes.com/co-op-owners-for-political-action) or 888-GT-LAKES, ext. 8957.

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