

POWER*Talk*

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Truestream: Our Past Drives Our Future



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Where We Come From

The electrical cooperative story is in many ways a classic underdog tale. In the early 1900s, power companies focused on urban areas when building their infrastructure, basically ignoring the farmers and those who lived in rural areas. In the 1930s,

the Rural Electrification Act allowed for those in rural areas who had gone years without power to finally have a way to get access to electricity. Those people banded together to set the poles and hang the lines bringing electricity to themselves when no one else would. This is how electrical cooperatives like Great Lakes Energy were formed and it is what still drives the heart of our business today.

Lack of Access

80 years later we face similar challenges when it comes to high-speed internet; many urban areas

have long had access to what is now becoming an essential utility, but most rural areas are left with few options. The thing is, without high-speed internet access, things like online education, working from home, contact with friends and family, and even online banking become difficult or impossible. Not to mention the economic advantages rural communities miss out on because businesses tend to locate themselves where infrastructure like high-speed internet is readily available. Just like we did 80 years ago with electricity, as a cooperative, we saw a chance to bridge this digital divide with Truestream fiber.

Making Connections

Last October we connected our first home to Truestream fiber internet and the momentum has continued to grow. Over 200 members have had the opportunity to have this life-changing service installed in their homes in our Petoskey service area. We will see that number increase significantly by the end of the year as overhead and underground construction continues.

Expanding for Our Members

In March of this year, Great Lakes Energy announced the possibility of expanding Truestream to our Boyne service area, which includes rural areas in Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Emmet, and Otsego

counties. Members in our Boyne service area led the way in registering their interest on jointruestream.com and this was a factor in choosing the Boyne service area next. The preliminary engineering field work this spring will be followed by a second field study in early fall, and if findings are positive, we will explore budgeting for expansion of the fiber network in 2020, pending approval by our board of directors.

Signing Up

For those in other service areas anxiously awaiting the arrival of Truestream, we are looking forward to bringing Truestream to your area as much as you are looking forward to having it. It is never easy to wait for a needed service but we appreciate your patience. Until then, I encourage you to register your interest on jointruestream.com. When you voice your desire to see fiber internet in your specific community, it helps us understand where the demand is. Our members are at the heart of everything we do and we will continue to work diligently to provide you with the quality service you have come to know and expect for over the past 80 years.

VOTE Next Month for a Board Member

It's time to vote! Great Lakes Energy members in three director districts will receive a mail-in ballot with their July/August issue of Michigan Country Lines.

Three board positions, each for three years, need to be filled. Qualifying GLE members who reside in districts 6, 8 or 9 can seek election to the board and will be listed on your ballot.

District areas are:

- District 6- Lake and Mason counties
- District 8 – Clare, Mecosta, Newaygo, and Osceola counties
- District 9-Allegan, Barry, Kent, Montcalm, and Ottawa counties

The terms of directors Robert Kran of Free Soil, Tim Brechon of Paris, and John LaForge of Delton expire this year. Incumbents Robert Kran and John LaForge plan to seek reelection, the seat of incumbent Tim Brechon is open.

In addition to the mail-in ballot, the candidates' profiles will appear in the July/August election issue that will be sent to members in districts 6, 8, and 9. Please watch for your ballot next month and remember to vote.

Winners will be announced Aug. 21 at the cooperative's annual business meeting in Boyne City.



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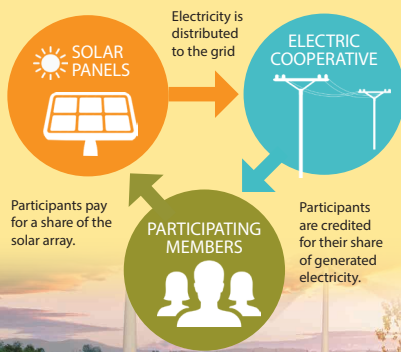


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