



Giving a green light to energy savings



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Last month in this space I discussed how GLE’s sense of belonging drives our commitment to continual improvement, both for your electric cooperative and the communities we serve. These efforts go far beyond our community outreach efforts such as scholarships and the People Fund.

With Earth Day passing us by this month, I thought it would be a good time to shine a light on the many ways GLE is working to be a responsible steward of the environment and empowering its members to do the same.

For starters, the power GLE provides its members is generated using a fuel mix that is more than 60 percent carbon-free. That figure includes about 18 percent from wind and solar power.

Last year, as part of our regular vehicle replacement program, we began adding hybrid-powered small bucket trucks to our vehicle fleet. These trucks not only have much lower carbon emissions thanks to significantly reduced fuel consumption, but they also produce far less noise on job sites. Less noise means

a safer work environment for our lineworkers. That’s two wins for the environment and one for GLE’s bottom line thanks to the lower fuel costs to operate these vehicles.

One of my favorite ways GLE seeks to do our part for the environment is through our Energy Wise program. This program appeals to me because it reflects the true nature of the “cooperative spirit.” The Energy Wise program offers rebates to GLE members who invest in qualifying energy-efficient appliances and home systems. Through this partnership, we aim to empower our members to make purchases that will make a long-term positive impact, both for the environment and their pocketbooks.

While it might not seem like these small changes in energy consumption will make much difference for the environment, here are some numbers to put some perspective on the impact the Energy Wise program is having:

In 2023, the Energy Wise program helped GLE members cut their combined carbon emissions by more than 3.3 million pounds. That’s the equivalent of 1,221 gasoline-powered passenger vehicles driven for one year or 6.1 million pounds of coal burned.

These reductions included more than 1 million pounds from commercial lighting upgrades, nearly 690,000 pounds that can be attributed to air source heat pump rebates, and nearly 50,000 pounds that were the result of thermostat upgrades.

Finally, the energy efficiency improvements our members achieve through the Energy Wise program will help improve the power grid’s reliability by reducing electric use during peak demand periods.

I’m proud to lead an organization that places a priority on working cooperatively with its members to make choices that have a meaningful positive impact on the communities we serve.

SAVE ON YOUR NEXT HOME IMPROVEMENT PROJECT



Aging appliances and inefficient HVAC systems can be a drain on your electric bill. Discover how you can save with Energy Wise.

▶ Visit gtlakes.com/energy-wise to learn more about the rebate incentives available to you.



Connecting to a greener community

At Great Lakes Energy, creating and maintaining strong connections are critical elements of our daily operations. But these connections go far beyond the electric and fiber optic lines that provide affordable, reliable electric power and high-speed internet service to our members. As your member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative, it's these connections and the sense of community belonging that comes

with them that inspire our drive for continual improvement within our organization, in the lives of our members, and in the communities we serve.

Another way we pursue our mission to improve the lives of our members and the community is by being responsible environmental stewards and empowering our members to do the same. Here are some examples:



HEAVY-DUTY CARBON CUTS

In 2023, GLE members collectively cut carbon emissions by more than **3.5 million pounds** thanks to energy efficiency upgrades made through the Energy Wise program. That's the equivalent of the carbon emissions of **1,295 gasoline-powered vehicles driven for one year**. More than a third of those emission savings, or about **1.2 million pounds**, came from the installation of residential mini-split heating and cooling units.



LIGHT WORK

The business community is also getting in on the savings available through the Energy Wise program. More than 1 million pounds, or a little less than a third, of the carbon emission reductions tied to the Energy Wise program in 2023 were the result of commercial lighting upgrades. The energy efficiencies gained through these upgrades are good for both the environment and the bottom line of the businesses that made them.



DRIVING CHANGE

GLE is also helping cut carbon emissions by supporting people who are switching to electric vehicles. In the past four years, 179 people have taken advantage of Energy Wise rebates tied to electric vehicles. GLE also provides access to electric vehicle charging stations in multiple locations throughout its service area. In 2023, 1,492 charging sessions at these stations eliminated the consumption of 5,586 gallons of gasoline. That's nearly 30,000 pounds of carbon emissions.


To learn more about the energy- and carbon emissions-savings available to GLE members, visit gtlakes.com/energy-wise




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