

# The Spotlight



A Touchstone Energy Cooperative

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March 2013

## BE PREPARED FOR SPRING STORMS

Lightning from thunderstorms kills more people each year than tornadoes or hurricanes, according to the American Red Cross. As spring arrives, make sure you're prepared to handle storms that come with the changing season. Follow these tips from the Red Cross to stay safe.

### Stay away from down power lines.

Electricity could still be flowing through them. Report them immediately to PIE&G at **(800) 423-6634** immediately.

### Hear thunder? Head inside.

If you can hear it, you could be in danger from lightning. The National Weather Service recommends you stay indoors at least 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. If you're outside and can't seek shelter indoors, avoid high ground, water, tall isolated trees, and metal objects like bleachers or fences.



**Unplug your electronics.** Avoid using electrical items and telephones, which can carry power surges.

Keep a battery-powered TV or radio on hand for weather updates.



**Delay outdoor activities.** If conditions are right for a thunderstorm, postpone the baseball game and stay inside — it doesn't have to be raining for lightning to strike.

### Assemble an emergency preparedness kit with:

- Water—one gallon per person, per day
- Non-perishable food / manual can opener
- Flashlight
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio (preferably NOAA weather radio) and extra batteries
- First-aid kit
- Seven-day medicine supply
- Copies of personal documents
- Cell phone with chargers
- Emergency contact information
- Cash



Source: American Red Cross

PIE&G will be closed March 29th in observance of Good Friday. Office will be open for business on Monday, April 1st.



## Scholarship Application Deadline

The application deadline for the PIE&G Communities First Fund scholarship is March 31, 2013.

## Home Heating Credits

PIE&G accepts 'Energy Drafts' issued to members eligible for a Home Heating Credit if it is used to pay a home heating bill and the name on the energy draft matches the name on the account. Both parties must sign to endorse payment if the draft is issued in two names.

Visit [michigan.gov/heatingassistance](http://michigan.gov/heatingassistance) and click on Home Heating Credit for more information.



## PSCR and Base Rate Adjustment

Last month, PIE&G members were notified of a Power Supply Cost Recovery (PSCR) and base energy rate adjustment on their February bills. These changes were approved by the PIE&G board in November to reflect our total energy costs. The base energy charge had not been adjusted since 2006 and was no longer a reasonable approximation of long term energy costs.

PIE&G purchases its electricity from a wholesale power supplier whose generation and transmission costs may change frequently and unexpectedly throughout the year. Those costs are passed through to PIE&G members via the PSCR factor on your bill.

The purpose of the PSCR factor is to collect only what is needed each budget year to cover our power supply costs. Periodic adjustments to the PSCR factor are necessary to help keep any over- or under- collections of PSCR-related revenue to a minimum.

As a member-regulated cooperative, the PIE&G board's decision to approve a PSCR adjustment will allow the co-op to stabilize fluctuating power supply costs, both up and down, throughout the year. The PSCR is a pass-through cost and does not contain margins for PIE&G.

Most other electric utilities in Michigan have a PSCR factor on their electric bills.

## Portable Generators Please Do Not Put Someone's Life in Danger!

Take special care with portable electric generators, which can provide a good source of power, but if improperly installed or operated, can become deadly. Do not connect generators directly to household wiring. Power from generators can back-feed along power lines and electrocute anyone coming in contact with them, including line workers making repairs. A qualified, licensed electrician should install your generator to ensure that it meets local electrical codes. Other tips include:



- Make sure your generator is properly grounded.
- Keep the generator dry.
- Make sure extension cords used with generators are rated for the load, and are free of cuts, worn insulation, and have three-pronged plugs.
- Do not overload the generator.
- Do not operate the generator in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. Generators can produce high levels of carbon monoxide very quickly, which can be deadly.
- Use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) to help prevent electrocutions and electrical shock injuries. Portable GFCIs require no tools to install and are available at prices ranging from \$12 to \$30.

### Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

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