



Connections

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October storm one of our worst

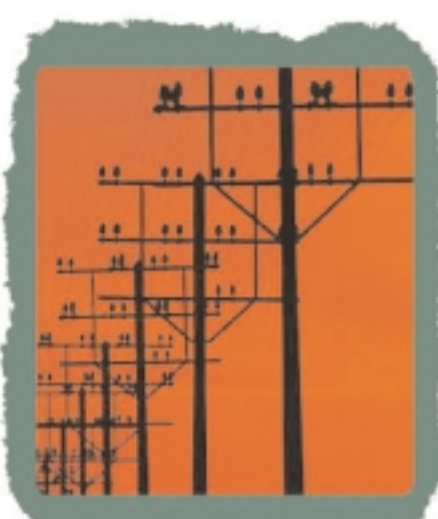
Thanks to all our customers who waited patiently for their power to be restored following the fierce storm that swept through the Lansing area on October 24.

Our veteran lineworkers say it was one of the worst they can remember in terms of downed power poles and wires. High winds knocked down 22 poles, including six 95-foot-high poles that carry our high-voltage transmission lines. Our crews also responded to nearly 200 calls reporting downed electric wires.

When it hit the Lansing area Wednesday the storm disrupted electric service to 10,000 customers. Our line crews and other employees worked around the clock until service was fully restored to all our customers early Saturday.



Tree trimming program reduces power outages



Storms like the one in October are a sobering reminder of the forces of nature, and that some power outages are inevitable despite everyone's best preparations. Still, there are some important steps you can take to reduce or even eliminate the hassle of a power outage.

Statistics tell us that interference from trees is the single biggest cause of power outages. Please keep this in mind when planting trees on your property. Pick a tree species that isn't susceptible to breakage and won't interfere with power lines when it grows up. The BWL also has an ongoing tree-trimming maintenance program designed to keep tree branches trimmed away from our power lines. Our maintenance program will reduce tree-related power outages and will make your neighborhood a safer place.

For power outage info, call PowerLine

When storms like the one in October hit our area, phone lines can easily be jammed as thousands of customers all try to report their power outage at the same time.

Your call to us will get through if you use our PowerLine phone number—1-877-BWL-5001. It's a toll-free number and can handle up to 40,000 calls an hour. PowerLine records your outage information quickly and automatically, but in order for it to work properly, it must recognize your telephone number.

PowerLine
1-877-BWL-5001

Check your BWL utility bill and if your correct phone number isn't printed there, please write it down in the space provided on your payment stub and return it with your payment.

California dreaming (or nightmares)

With winter weather closing in, a lot of Michigan residents think longingly about moving to warmer climates such as California.

Well, something came across our desk the other day that made us feel better about staying right here. It was an electric utility bill from a resident of the San Francisco area. You may recall that California's energy markets have been in an absolute turmoil brought on by a deregulation plan that simply blew up in everybody's face.

This particular customer only used 371 kwh of electricity for the month but her bill came to more than \$43—that's **over** \$18 more than a BWL customer would typically pay for the same amount of electricity.

For folks trying to operate a small business the situation is even worse. The owner of a small shop used just 275 kwh of electricity during his monthly billing period and received a bill for a whopping \$76, or nearly three times what a comparable BWL customer would pay. Adding insult to injury, both California bills included a small item identifying what area the customer was in if the state required rolling blackouts due to a shortage of power that month.

What's the point of all this? Just that Michigan might not have all of California's glamor and nice weather. But we do have adequate electricity supplies available at a reasonable price. No earthquakes, either.



An electric holiday gift idea



If you're stumped for what to give a friend or loved one this holiday season, we have a new service that might interest you.

It's a gift certificate that can be used to pay a BWL water or electric bill. Our gift certificates can be [ordered online](#) with a credit card and can be purchased in denominations ranging from \$10 to \$100. Gift certificate orders also include a \$4.95 shipping and handling charge.

BWL gift certificates can also be ordered by calling toll free 1-877-770-4438. If you have any questions, a BWL customer service representative will be happy to assist you at 702-6006.