

# ALONG THE LAKESHORE

## BLP recognized for safety, reliability

The Grand Haven Board of Light & Power (BLP) received two national awards from the American Public Power Association (APPA).

The utility received an award for outstanding performance for safety and a second for demonstration of exceeding standards for reliability. Both the Gold Standard for Safety award and the BLP's Diamond RP3 (Reliable Public Power) designation were officially announced at APPA's Engineering and Operations Conference in New Orleans.

"We are proud of the hard work and dedication of our entire team on behalf of our customers," said Rob Shelley, BLP interim general manager. "There are a lot of moving parts that contribute to the level of recognition our utility has received with these awards. It's a testament to the level of commitment we put into safety and reliability all across the organization in service to our community."

The APPA's Safety Committee bases its safety award on three years of submitted data, with categories tied to total hours worked by all employees. The BLP is the only Michigan public power utility in its category to achieve a Gold rating.

The Reliability Diamond Level designation is based on industry-recognized best practices in reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. The reliability criteria includes disaster management and emergency response, as well as cyber and physical security. System integrity and employee training and networking programs also factor into the award designation.

"Our BLP continues to demonstrate a strong level of excellence in their service to



The Grand Haven Board of Light & Power recently signed a contract with White Tail Solar, helping bring its solar portfolio to just over 23 megawatts at peak generation.

our community," said BLP Chairman Mike Westbrook. "This national recognition of receiving awards for both safety and reliability illustrates the value of the BLP in providing one of our most life-essential necessities. Our community puts a high level of trust in the BLP, and these awards are well earned."

The BLP serves more than 15,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in the cities of Grand Haven and Ferrysburg, along with Grand Haven, Spring Lake, and Robinson townships.

### BLP increases renewable energy portfolio

The BLP's latest solar commitment will provide 2.15 megawatts – or enough to power approximately 490 homes per year.

The new facility, White Tail Solar, is expected to go into commercial operation in summer 2025 and is located in Washtenaw County. The

BLP's 20-year power purchase commitment will cost \$4,662,900 over the term of the commitment and will continue the utility's additions of renewable energy resources.

White Tail Solar, combined with other commitments puts the BLP's solar portfolio just over 23 megawatts at peak generation. Cumulatively, last year's addition of Calhoun Solar and BLP's wind and natural gas commitments, moves the utility closer to its 2025 goal of 28 percent renewable energy.

"We have now made commitments with six solar projects, two wind power projects, and one battery storage project which helps us continue to responsibly grow and diversify our renewable energy portfolio," said Erik Booth, BLP operations and power supply manager. "Our laddering investment strategy has been just like a personal investment strategy by spreading our eggs across many differ-

ent baskets to control risk and protect our community from market swings."

"The BLP's strategic direction is to maintain a sustainable, economical, and diversified power supply portfolio, consistent with proven energy risk management practices," Westbrook added. "This means that our plans are to increase our renewable energy resources in a responsible manner that balances reliability, affordability, and sustainability. We are very excited to announce this new solar addition."



When does boating season start? That all depends on the weather.

## Has boating season arrived?

**Rob, I've started to see boats in the channel and on the river. Is it time to get our boats in the water for the season?**

**Rob Schopf**  
Ask Rob



The No. 1 factor when it comes to putting your boat(s) in the water is the weather. Mother Nature is pretty much in control

of the timeline for cutting off the shrinkwrap and prepping your vessel. After some research, I discovered that there have been years when warm weather has taken over as early as mid-April. In late April 1987, the mercury soared to 85 degrees. Boaters considered the summer of 1985 as one of the best seasons ever. The years 1995, 1996

and 1997 made us wait until mid May to crack 80 degrees. There are many variables that go into when to launch and each boater has a unique set of circumstances. Check with the national weather service and our local forecasters. I have to believe our hard freezes are behind us (it is Michigan, though).

Remember, the boating season on Lake Michigan typically runs from late April or early May to early October. Our peak months are June through August. Take the necessary precautions to ensure your safety. When having issues with your motor, electronics or seaworthiness of your vessel, don't hesitate to contact a professional.

We are all psyched to get out on the water. Be safe and have a great boating season.

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