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Co.

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Director Nominees

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POSTMASTER: SEND ALL UAA TO CFS.

Association officers are **Robert Kran**, Great Lakes Energy, chairman; **Mark Kappler**, HomeWorks Tri-County Electric, vice chairman; and **Eric Baker**, Wolverine Power Cooperative, secretary-treasurer. **Craig Borr** is president and CEO.

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Please notify your electric cooperative. See page 4 for contact information.

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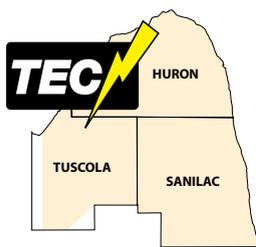
Joelle Majerowicz, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

Guess Our New Mystery Photo And Win A \$50 Bill Credit!

Country Lines, Your Communications Partner

For more than 35 years, our co-op members have received *Michigan Country Lines* because it is the most effective and economical way to share information with our members. An empowering communication tool, *Country Lines* keeps members up-to-date about everything going on within their electric co-op. Issues contain news about our services, director elections, member meetings and management decisions that members need to know about as owners of the co-op. The magazine also includes legal notices that would otherwise have to be placed in local media at a substantial cost. And, sending *Michigan Country Lines* to you helps the co-op fulfill one of its important principles—to educate and communicate openly with its members. The board of directors authorizes the co-op to subscribe to *Michigan Country Lines* on behalf of each member at an average cost of \$3.82 per year, paid as part of members' electric bill. The current magazine cost is 47 cents per copy. *Michigan Country Lines* is published for us, at cost, by the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association in Lansing. As always, we welcome and value your comments.





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Thumb Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

TEC Board Approves Capital Credit Refunds

The Thumb Electric Cooperative Board of Directors recently approved the allocation of \$927,829.34 of 2017 margin to TEC's members as capital credits. Approximately 4.5 cents of every dollar paid by TEC members in 2017 is being returned or allocated back to its members. The board also authorized the capital credit retirement amount of \$543,291 for the years of 1987, 1988, and 2017.

Since its inception, TEC has retired just under \$9 million in capital credits. Capital credits represent your ownership or equity interest in the cooperative. You furnish capital (equity) when you pay for your service, and the cooperative's income exceeds expenses to finish its fiscal year with a positive margin. Positive margins become capital credits through a process known as allocation. The cooperative allocates credit to each member who took service during the years of positive margins.

The amount of the capital credit is proportionate to the revenue received from each member for their energy use. Each dollar of positive margin is tracked and accounted for by allocation to each member. Active TEC members will see their portion of the recently approved capital credit retirements on their May electric bills as a credit on a line item called "Patronage Refund." Members' total patronage amount earned for 2017 will also be shown on the May electric bill. For non-active members who have left TEC's system and have provided a forwarding address, patronage checks will be mailed later in the year.

How Capital Credits Work

John and Mary Doe are Thumb Electric members. This is how their capital credits work:

1. John and Mary Doe use electricity at their home for comfort and convenience.
2. John and Mary pay their electric bills each month. Thumb Electric tracks their energy use and totals the revenue received from John, Mary and the rest of the co-op's members.
3. Thumb Electric's fiscal year ends in December. Final financial obligations for the year are met; staff closes the books, which are then audited.
4. Income received over and above expenses (margin) is determined.
5. After the audit, the Thumb Electric Co-op's Board of Directors approves the allocation of the year's margins to John and Mary, and the rest of Thumb Electric's members, as capital credits. Until retired, capital credits become members' equity in Thumb Electric.
6. The board of directors may authorize a cash retirement on a portion of the capital credit to members. The board determines the total amount to pay, which years of service will be retired, and how the capital credits will be paid.
7. John and Mary should see their capital credit allocation notice in the center of their May billing statement. The capital credit retirements will appear as a line item credit shown as PATRONAGE REFUND on the same May electric bill.



Thumb Electric Cooperative

Financial Statement Balance Sheets: December 31, 2017 & 2016

ASSETS	2017	2016
ELECTRIC PLANT		
In service—at cost	\$ 93,233,094	\$ 89,329,056
Under construction	2,711,206	1,852,090
Total electric plant	95,944,300	91,181,146
Less accumulated depreciation	29,159,153	28,045,306
ELECTRIC PLANT—NET	66,785,147	63,135,840
OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS		
Investments in associated organizations	1,595,810	1,594,000
Investment in subsidiary	1,823,117	1,593,470
Energy loans receivable	110,202	128,623
Non-utility property	102,607	107,154
Short-term investments—restricted	-	298,852
TOTAL OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS	3,631,736	3,722,099
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and temporary cash investments	621,002	290,838
Accounts receivable, less allowance for doubtful accounts of \$463,601 and \$505,762 in 2017 and 2016	2,657,995	2,432,296
Unbilled revenue	706,386	706,597
Materials and supplies	953,541	913,031
Prepaid expenses	94,202	71,160
Interest receivable	8,521	8,331
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	5,041,647	4,422,253
DEFERRED DEBITS		
	458,620	674,900
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 75,917,150	\$ 71,955,092
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES		
EQUITIES		
Memberships	\$ 177,770	\$ 175,160
Patronage capital	22,141,668	22,148,341
Other equities	2,365,926	1,852,382
TOTAL EQUITIES	24,685,364	24,175,883
LONG-TERM DEBT, NET OF CURRENT MATURITIES		
	42,173,295	39,494,649
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Current maturities of long-term debt	2,157,041	1,929,640
Note payable—line of credit	3,533,237	3,304,608
Accounts payable:		
Purchased power	1,009,194	964,402
Subsidiary	77,080	63,527
Other	765,730	492,854
Accrued property taxes	635,868	599,701
Accrued payroll and vacation	470,422	527,656
Customer deposits	191,827	187,520
Other	104,841	102,924
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	8,945,240	8,172,832
DEFERRED CREDITS		
	113,251	111,728
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	\$ 75,917,150	\$ 71,955,092
OPERATING REVENUES		
Electric sales	\$ 20,346,302	\$ 18,930,534
Other sales	515,211	1,232,396
	20,861,513	20,162,930
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Cost of power	9,905,622	9,871,912
Generation	29,278	23,341
Transmission	260,628	236,145
Distribution—operations	599,151	535,485
Distribution—maintenance	2,586,427	2,231,870
Customer accounts	677,061	698,729
Customer service	381,770	412,157
Sales	8,602	6,515
Administrative and general	1,061,158	968,634
Depreciation	2,274,061	2,183,368
Taxes—property	830,216	785,610
	18,613,974	17,953,766
OPERATING INCOME BEFORE FIXED CHARGES	2,247,539	2,209,164
FIXED CHARGES:		
Interest on long-term debt	1,486,201	1,510,355
Other interest	60,329	52,266
	1,546,530	1,562,621
OPERATING MARGINS AFTER FIXED CHARGES	701,009	646,543
CAPITAL CREDITS		
	99,416	122,869
NET OPERATING MARGINS	800,425	769,412
NON-OPERATING MARGINS		
Interest	58,032	74,221
Income from subsidiary	159,092	43,026
Other income	42,579	70,923
	259,703	188,170
NET MARGINS	\$ 1,060,128	\$ 957,582



To Easily Manage Your Energy Efficiency Project Contractor

By Pat Keegan and Brad Thiessen

Once you've hired a contractor for your energy efficiency renovation, you need to manage your contractor to ensure quality. Follow the steps below and you'll be on your way to celebrating a successful project in no time.

1.

Establish a single point of contact.

First, you should decide who will be the main contact with your contractor. Clear communication is critical because a renovation that includes energy efficiency improvements comes with extra challenges. A single point of contact will help avoid confusion, conflicts and cost overruns.

2.

Have a discussion about quality.

Before the work starts, have a discussion with your contractor about quality. You want the contractor to know you'll be carefully overseeing the work and that there may be others involved in this oversight, such as building inspectors, your electric cooperative or an independent energy auditor. You can discuss the standards of a professional, high-quality job. And you can agree on the points at which the contractor will pause so you or someone you designate can review the work.

3.

Put change orders in writing.

It will be tempting to add "just one more thing" along the way, and the contractor may agree a change is simple and possible within the timeframes. Contractors and customers often miscommunicate about change orders and end up disagreeing about additional costs when the project is completed. Before you make any changes, be sure to get a written cost quote. If it's significant, you can then weigh the cost against the benefit of the change.

4.

End with an inspection.

Almost all efficiency measures require some kind of final inspection. For example, infrared thermometers can show voids in blown insulation, and fiberglass batts can be visually inspected to ensure there are no air gaps and the batts are not compressed.

HVAC measures require special attention. ENERGY STAR® has a program to ensure quality HVAC installation. Forced air systems typically have poorly balanced supply and return air delivery that can often be improved. Air flow can be measured at each register, and a duct blaster test can identify and quantify duct leakage.

When you review the work, it may be helpful to take photos or to bring in an energy auditor. Be sure to have these inspections outlined in the contract and discussed beforehand, so the contractor is comfortable.

When the renovation is complete, it may be tempting to sign the check, shake hands and breathe a sigh of relief that it's all over. Depending on the size and complexity of the project, it may be worth the extra step of having a final audit by a licensed energy auditor.

Once you confirm that the work is 100 percent complete, you can write a check for the final payment, then sit back and enjoy your revitalized, more energy-efficient home!



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3.

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MEET THE CANDIDATES

Three Director Positions Open

See back cover for Annual Meeting details and voting information!

DISTRICT 2 TUSCOLA COUNTY



Jonathan Findlay (Incumbent)

Jonathan Findlay farms organically with his father, Michael, and brother, Kevin. Together they farm over 3,500 acres of certified organic commodities in the area north of Caro. They grow corn, black beans, navy beans, red wheat, white wheat and spelt. They also have a grain cleaning facility (Harvest Ridge Processing) where they clean and package many of the commodities that they grow. They started a small trucking company, Finn Flyer Transport, that specializes in transporting bulk organic commodities.

Jon has been a member of TEC since November of 2010, living in Almer Township on Colwood Road.

He was raised on his family farm north of Caro. Jon and his wife, Carrie, have four children, Madison (11), Logan (8), Austin (6) and Sierra (4). He previously served on the Tuscola County Farm Bureau board for eight years, where he was county president for two. Jon and his family attend St. Elizabeth Catholic Church in Reese. After high school he went to college and received a degree in aviation science and marketing. "I have been a lifelong resident of rural Tuscola County and know the benefits and challenges of being a young man living here."



Amanda Langmaid

Amanda Langmaid works for the Covenant Health Care System in the nursing field. Prior to that, she worked for eight years as an insurance agent for both Farm Bureau and AAA. Amanda also served on the Caro City Council for eight years, serving on both the personnel and finance committees. She was raised in Caro, attending Caro High School and later graduating with an associate's degree in business from Lansing Community College and Davenport University.

Amanda has five children, Bryce 15, Dylan 13, Emily 11, Hayden 10, and Taylor 2. The family is active in 4-H and she volunteers for several activities in the USA Schools. She has been a member of Thumb Electric since 2015 and, if elected, she would like to look out for the best interests of the members which includes keeping the electric system running well and keeping rates affordable.



Thomas Lounsbury

Tom Lounsbury was born and raised in Cass City, attending Cass City Schools. After graduation he went to work for the State of Michigan, working 32 years for the Department of Agriculture with most of those years being in the weights and measures division. During that time and continuing today, Tom picked up a second line of work in something that he always had interest in, outdoor writing and then eventually worked as a radio host. Tom has had frequent articles in the *Huron Daily Tribune* and now also the *Huron County View*, along with other publications. Tom is also on the Elmwood Planning Commission, serving the past 15 years as chairman.

Tom and his wife, Virginia, have three sons and eight grandchildren. They belong to the Cass City Lutheran

Church. Tom has been the president of the United Sportsman's Alliance of the Thumb for the past 16 years, is an NRA member, a member of the Michigan United Conservation Clubs, a past president of the Michigan Outdoor Writers Association, a Member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America, a member of the Michigan Resource Stewards, belongs to the Mt. Moriah Masonic Temple, past member of Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and a current supporter of the Youth Hunt.

Tom has been a member of Thumb Electric Cooperative since 1976 and, if elected, he would strive to keep rates affordable and the system reliable. He has seen workers repairing lines in the snow, rain, and wind—so he is a big supporter of the "boots on the ground" people.

DISTRICT 2 HURON COUNTY



Donald Wolschleger *(Incumbent)*

Don Wolschleger is the former owner of East Huron TV & Appliance, Inc., a business he started in 1979.

Don is a member of Our Lady of Lake Huron Catholic Church, Verona Hills Golf Club, and several business and trade organizations. He is also the former Sigel Township clerk, serving for 27 years and is a former firefighter and EMT for his township.

Born and raised in the Harbor Beach area, Don and his wife, Della, have been married for 44 years and have

two children, Tina and Michael. They have been TEC members since 1974. In recognition of the importance of continuing education, Don has become certified by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association as a credentialed director.

"I have enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to serve as your director for the past 15 years. With that board experience, a business and technology background, I feel I can be an asset serving as your director."



Kevin Grifka

Kevin Grifka runs a family farm north of Ubyly. He and his father, Hank, farm 1,000 acres of cash crops, which include corn, wheat and dry beans. Kevin was born and raised in Ubyly and has been a Thumb Electric Cooperative member since 1989. He is currently a member of St. Johns Church of Ubyly and is a trustee on the Bingham Township Board of Directors. Kevin is a former volunteer in Bingham Township as a firefighter and a first responder on medical emergencies—retiring

after 14 years. He is a past board member of the Ubyly Fox Hunters and a current honorary member.

Kevin and his wife, Shelly, have four children—Evan, Aaron, Jack and Josie. If elected to the Thumb Electric Board of Directors, he would see that TEC would continue to provide reliable and affordable electricity, and to ensure top notch member service.

DISTRICT 2 SANILAC COUNTY



Mike Briolat *(Incumbent)*

Mike Briolat is a cash crop farmer working 1,500 acres with his brother, Steve, son, Justin, and his father, Leonard, in Sanilac County just south of Ubyly. While farming part-time, he worked at Tower Automotive for 30 plus years, giving it up to focus full time on the farm. Mike was born and raised in the Ubyly area, where he is a member of Good Shepard Parish (St. Johns) and is a member of the Knights of Columbus.

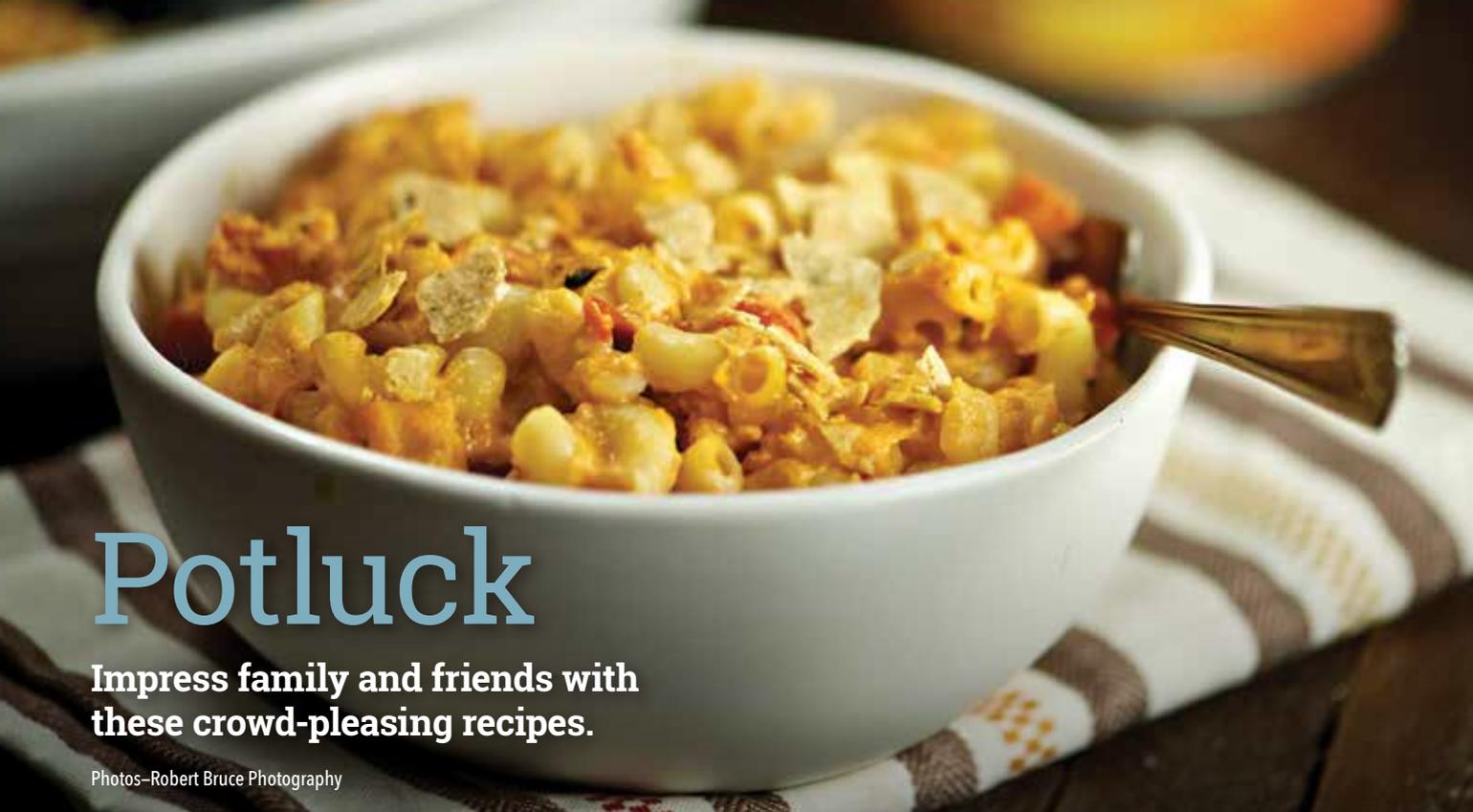
Mike is a 13-year member of Thumb Electric Cooperative and lives in Greenleaf Township with his wife, Diana, and their two children, Macanna and Justin. Mike appreciates the opportunity to serve as your director the past three years. If re-elected he would work towards continuing to provide the reliable service and affordable rates that you have come to expect.



Ernest Messing

Ernie Messing is owner of Thumb Sewing Center LLC, a business he has operated for the past 48 years. He also farmed in the Ruth area of Delaware Township for over 30 years as well as operated a liquid fertilizer business (E&M Distribution) for 35 years. Ernie was also the assessor in Delaware Township for five years, was on the Ruth St. Peter & Paul School Board and Parrish Council, and ran the church festival for 10 years. Ernie now lives in the Ubyly/Cass City area and attends St. Columbkille Church of the Good Shepard Parish where he is a cantor.

Ernie was born and raised in the Minden City/ Ruth area and has been a member of Thumb Electric Cooperative since 2001. He is married to his wife, Marjorie, and together they have three daughters and eight grandchildren. If elected Ernie believes we need to look at all generation sources including wind and solar. As people use more energy and they need more power, all options should be available, he believes.



Potluck

Impress family and friends with these crowd-pleasing recipes.

Photos—Robert Bruce Photography

Southwest Mac And Cheese (pictured above)

Jennifer Quail, Midwest Energy & Communications

- 1 pound uncooked macaroni or shell pasta
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 1 15-ounce can packed pumpkin (not pie filling)
- 1 16-ounce package Mexican-style four cheese blend, shredded
- 4 ounces cream cheese, cut into small pieces (for a lighter option, use 4 ounces Neufchatel cheese instead)
- ¼ to ½ cup milk, almond milk, evaporated (not condensed) milk or heavy cream
- 1 10-ounce can diced tomatoes and green chilies, drained
- ¼ to 1 teaspoon dried chipotle chili powder, to taste
 - salt, to taste

Preheat oven to 350 F. Prepare pasta according to the package directions, drain and return to pot. Cover.

In a heavy skillet, melt the butter and sauté the diced onion until translucent but not browned. Add the pumpkin to the skillet with the onions and stir over medium heat until warmed through. Mix in the shredded cheese and cream cheese into the pumpkin mixture and stir until melted and smooth. Use milk product to thin as needed until consistency is smooth but not runny. Do not boil. Stir in the can of drained tomatoes and green chiles into the cheese sauce. Season with chipotle powder and salt to taste.

Add the warm sauce to the reserved pasta and stir until combined. Serve immediately, or transfer to a slow cooker set on warm. If you prefer baked mac and cheese, transfer pasta to a greased 3-quart casserole dish. Top with ½ cup shredded cheese and crumbled tortilla chips. Bake for 20 minutes or until top is browned.

Experiment with spices! For a brighter gold color and more bite to the flavor, add ¼–½ teaspoon mustard powder. For a traditional chili con carne flavor, add ¼ teaspoon ground cumin. You can also vary the heat by using different strength tomatoes and chilies, or you can use salsa instead of tomatoes, at your desired heat level.



Watch a video of this recipe at <https://goo.gl/qUZrVr>



Cookies And Cakes: due July 1

Submit your favorite recipe for a chance to win a \$50 bill credit and have your recipe featured in *Country Lines*.

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Go to micoopkitchen.com for more information and to register.



Buffalo Chicken Meatballs

Heather Poland, Cherryland

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1½ pound ground chicken ½ cup panko breadcrumbs 1 egg, lightly beaten 1 small carrot, finely grated 1 celery stalk, minced 2 green onions, minced 3 garlic cloves, minced ½ teaspoon paprika | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ teaspoon salt ¼ teaspoon black pepper ⅓ cup buffalo sauce (I used Franks, or use your favorite buffalo sauce) ⅓ cup blue cheese or mozzarella 3 teaspoons blue cheese or ranch dressing, optional for garnish |
|---|---|

Preheat oven to 400 F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper; set aside. In a large mixing bowl, combine the ground chicken, panko and egg. Let set for 5 minutes, so panko is soaked by the egg. Add the carrot, celery, green onion, garlic, paprika, salt and pepper. Using your hands mix together until just combined. Using a spoon or cookie scoop, shape into meatballs and place onto prepared baking sheet. Place in oven and bake for 15–20 minutes until cooked through (internal temperature of 160 F). Remove from oven, place the meatballs in a bowl, add the buffalo sauce and gently toss to combine. Drizzle with ranch dressing and blue cheese, if desired. Serve immediately.



Key West 'Shrooms

James Maxwell, Great Lakes Energy

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 package of portobello or white button mushrooms 1 package Phillips crab cakes (or similar) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 package Swiss cheese, sliced 4 dashes Old Bay Spice ½ stick melted butter |
|---|---|

Clean mushrooms and remove stems. Place on a microwaveable plate. Dip the mushrooms in the melted butter. Drizzle remaining butter over mushroom tops. Stuff mushroom tops with crab cakes. Sprinkle mushrooms with Old Bay spice to taste. Quarter the cheese slices and place over the stuffed mushrooms. Sprinkle mushrooms with remaining Old Bay spice. Microwave mushrooms for 4 minutes. Place on a serving tray, garnish and serve.

Featured Guest Chef

Enjoy this simple, yet delicious, dish with family and friends gathered around—no matter what the season.



Cherry BBQ Potato Chip Crusted Chicken Fingers

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup mayonnaise 1 large bag Great Lakes Michigan Cherry BBQ Chips, crushed ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pinch salt • non-stick oil spray 2 pounds boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch strips ¼ cup butter, melted |
|--|---|

Preheat oven to 400 F. Scoop mayonnaise into a shallow bowl. Place crushed BBQ chips in another shallow bowl and combine crushed chips with black pepper and a pinch of salt. Dip chicken pieces (just 1 or 2 at a time) in mayonnaise and then coat with chip mixture. Place chicken strips onto a greased baking pan. Make sure to space chicken out a bit so the sides are not touching and can get crispy. Drizzle chicken strips with melted butter. Bake for 20 to 22 minutes until chicken is no longer pink. Remove and allow to cool for 5 to 8 minutes before serving, so chips harden back up. Serve and enjoy!

Optional: Serve with dip or sauce.

Read the full story about Great Lakes Potato Chip Co. on page 14, and find this recipe and others at micoopkitchen.com.



Thumb Electric Cooperative Of Michigan: 80th Annual Meeting Of The Members

The 80th Annual Meeting of the members of the Thumb Electric Cooperative was held at the Octagon Barn in Gagetown, Tuscola County, at 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 10, 2017, pursuant to call and notice thereof given to each member of the Cooperative and pursuant to the laws of the state of Michigan.

The meeting was called to order by Louis Wenzlaff, president of the Cooperative, who presided. Jason Bitzer, attorney for the Cooperative, acted as recording secretary of the meeting and kept the minutes thereof.

The President introduced the members of Thumb Electric Cooperative's Board of Directors and board officers as follows: Louis Wenzlaff, president, Tuscola County; Donald Wolschleger, vice president, Huron County; Beth McDonald, secretary, Huron County; Randall Dhyse, treasurer, Huron County; Carl Cousins, Tuscola County; Michael Briolat, Sanilac County; Jonathan Findlay, Tuscola County; Kim Nunn, Sanilac County; and Duane Kursinsky, Sanilac County. Also introduced were General Manager Dallas Braun and Jason Bitzer, the Cooperative's attorney.

The reading of the Notice of the Meeting and Affidavit of Mailing thereof to all the Cooperative members within the time prescribed by the Cooperative bylaws was dispensed with; it having been published in *Country Lines*. A copy of the Notice and Affidavit is attached to these minutes and incorporated herein.

President Wenzlaff reported that the members of the Cooperative present in person or by proxy had been checked by the registration of names of the members attending the meeting in person and the names of the members represented at the meeting by proxy, and the names of their respective proxies. It was determined that more than 150 members of the Cooperative were present in person, constituting a quorum of the members in accordance with the bylaws of the Cooperative.

The president also reported that members of the Cooperative were present at the meeting in person and that members were represented at the meeting by proxies, all of said members being named and described as to their county of residence and as to attendance in person or by proxy. The proxies were ordered filed in the records of the Cooperative. The minutes of the 79th Annual Meeting of the members were not read since a copy of the same had been mailed to each of the members. There being no additions or corrections to those minutes, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, said minutes were approved as drafted.

The Treasurer's Report to the 80th Annual Meeting was not read since a copy of same had been mailed to each of the members. There being no amendments thereto or questions upon the matters contained therein, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the report was approved as presented. The Treasurer's Report published in *Country Lines*, presented the 2016 financial statement and showed operating revenues of \$20,162,929 and expenses of \$19,516,382, resulting in an operating margin of \$646,547. Total assignable margins were \$957,587 for 2016. The 2016 members' patronage capital accounts will be allocated 4.6 cents on each dollar paid by TEC members.

President Wenzlaff then introduced the Cooperative's General Manager Dallas Braun. Manager Braun thanked the Cooperative employees for all their labors and efforts over the past year. He then reported on the Cooperative's financial status, rates, member services, marketing activities, patronage capital retirement, energy efficiency, interest, property taxes, construction and improvements.

In closing, Manager Braun thanked the members for their interest in their Cooperative and for their support. After questions and answers of the general manager's report, the meeting was returned to President Wenzlaff, and upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the General Manager's Report was approved as presented.

President Wenzlaff then gave the president's report, explaining growth of the Cooperative's total utility plant in 2016, increase in equity while maintaining competitive rates, member district meetings, patronage capital retirements, 2016's major construction projects, utility plant and upgrades, renewable energy, energy optimization program, renewable portfolio standard, tree trimming, taxes and legislation. Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the report was approved as presented.

The next order of business was the election of three directors, representing District 3. One from each county for three-year terms each. President Wenzlaff appointed the following members as Inspectors of the Election, all of whom were sworn to the faithful performance of their duties by the Attorney Jason E. Bitzer, who is also a notary public:

Huron: Harold Cook, Hilary Cook, Francis Mazure;
Sanilac: Donald Cutler, Leonard Briolat, Marion Schiller, Gary Russell; **Tuscola:** Ronald Spiers, Thomas Braun.

The Nominating Committee Report was published in *Country Lines*. The Committee nominated the following

for Directorships: **Huron County—District 3:** Beth McDonald (incumbent) Philip Roth; **Sanilac County—District 3:** Duane Kursinsky (incumbent) Kenneth Landsburg; **Tuscola County—District 3:** Carl Cousins (incumbent.) Jason Bitzer entertained further nominations from the floor for each Directorship in each county. There being no such nominations from the floor, upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the nominations were closed.

Each candidate was then introduced and invited to address the members for up to five minutes. Attorney Bitzer then requested the members to vote upon their ballots for the respective Directorships. The Inspectors of the Election were requested to collect and tabulate the ballots. Jason Bitzer turned the meeting back over to President Wenzlaff.

President Wenzlaff recognized and thanked three employees of the Cooperative who were retiring, namely Ken O’Berski, Clarence Maurer, and Richard Timko. The president introduced Michigan Electric Cooperative Association’s Director of Energy Efficiency Programs Art Thayer. Director Thayer introduced U.S. Representative Paul Mitchell, Michigan Representative Shane Hernandez, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow’s Regional Manager—Derrick Mathis, and U.S. Senator Gary Peters’ Regional Coordinator—Dylan Hellus who each addressed the Cooperative’s membership.

The president then asked if there was any old business to address. There being none; he asked for new business. There being none, he entertained a motion to adjourn. Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the business portion of the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m. Beth McDonald gave the invocation followed by lunch and family activities.

Before lunch, the meeting was turned over to President Wenzlaff who announced the results of the tabulation of votes which were as follows:

Huron County—District 3: Beth McDonald—181, Phillip Roth—79; **Sanilac County—District 3:** Duane Kursinsky —224, Kenneth Landsburg—35; **Tuscola County—District 3:** Carl Cousins—250

The elected Directors were declared to be Beth McDonald from Huron County—District 3, Duane Kursinsky from Sanilac County—District 3, and Carl Cousins from Tuscola County—District 3.

BETH MCDONALD, Secretary

APPROVED BY: LOUIS WENZLAFF, President

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The report of the 2018 Nominating Committee which met in Ubly, Michigan, at 11:10 a.m. on April 10, 2018, to select nominees for the position of director of Thumb Electric Cooperative. Nominees for one director position from Huron, Sanilac and Tuscola Counties are as follows:

Huron County—District 2:

Donald Wolschleger—Incumbent Director
Kevin Grifka

Sanilac County—District 2:

Mike Briolat—Incumbent Director
Ernest Messing

Tuscola County—District 2:

Jonathan Findlay—Incumbent Director
Amanda Langmaid
Thomas Lounsbury

These names shall be placed on the Annual Meeting ballot in accordance with Article III, Section 3 of the Cooperative bylaws.

Dated: April 10, 2018

RICHARD SADRO, CHAIRPERSON

Notice Of Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the members of Thumb Electric Cooperative of Michigan will be held at the Thumb Octagon Barn, 6948 Richie Road, Gagetown, Michigan at 10 a.m. on June 9, 2018, to take action on the following matters:

1. The reports on officers, directors and committees.
2. The election of one director from Huron County—District 2, one director from Sanilac County—District 2, and one director from Tuscola County—District 2 to the Board of Directors of the Cooperative.
3. All other business which may rightfully come before the meeting or any adjournment or adjournments thereof.

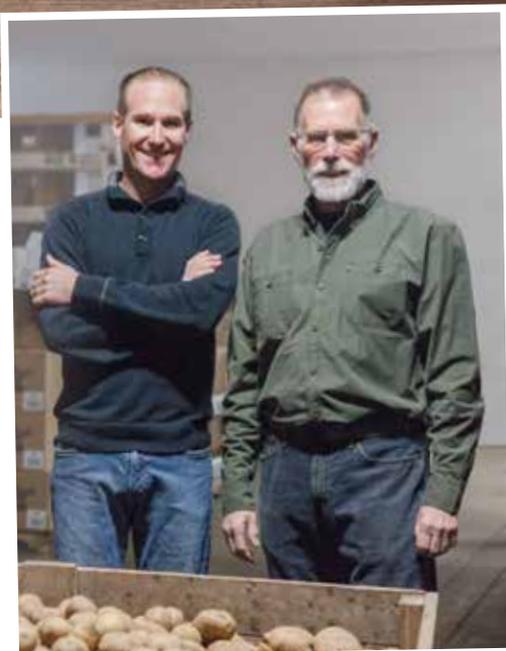
March 20, 2018

Beth McDonald, Secretary

CHIPPIN' AWAY

By James A. Curtis // Photos by Robert Bruce Photography and Dre Photography

With
Great Lakes
Potato Chip
Co.



Chris Girrbach and Ed Girrbach,
owners of Great Lakes Potato Chip Company.

“**E**ddie, what happened to my blankets?” said Ed Girrbach’s mother when she noticed they were missing. Ed jokes that after he explained he’d been selling them as ponchos to his schoolmates, “mom’s reaction helped me understand at an early age about the ‘cost of goods sold.’”

Ponchos were Ed’s first foray into business, but the now co-founder of Great Lakes Potato Chip Company (GLPCC)—a member of Cherryland Electric Cooperative—would carry that entrepreneurial spirit his entire life, eventually leading him—along with his son and business partner, Chris Girrbach—to open Pangea’s Pizza Pub in Traverse City. Even more, it was that same spirit that inspired a growing interest in manufacturing.

Ultimately, deciding where they would strike out next came down to a simple question: “Dad, what do you like?” asked Chris.

Ed thought for a moment and replied, “Well, aside from pizza, I like potato chips.” And the idea for GLPCC was born.

The Girrbauchs threw themselves into researching potato chips; and on May 5, 2010, they founded GLPCC with two part-time employees and one old fryer to begin manufacturing their favorite—skin-on kettle chips.

In the eight years since, the chip company has experienced tremendous growth and won numerous accolades, including being named “Number One Kettle Chip” by *The Chicago Tribune*, and “Most Investable Second-stage Food Company” at Crain’s Food Summit. They also received a “Gold” rating for kettle and tortilla chips at the Saratoga Springs Chip Festival—the birthplace of the potato chip.

“We get asked a lot why we leave the SKIN ON.”

“It’s simple. It just TASTES BETTER.”

Today, the chip company produces seven flavors of kettle chip, a tortilla chip, has 16 distributors, retails in seven states, employs 30 people, and is growing at a rate of 30 percent per year.

All this growth means more potatoes, and Michigan has no shortage—it’s the leading producer of chipping potatoes in the nation. The Girrbauchs developed a special relationship with Sackett Farms in Mecosta—a HomeWorks Tri-County Cooperative member—to supply their potatoes. Sackett Farms is a sixth-generation, family-owned farm specializing in A-grade chipping potatoes, whose crop is in high demand.

“Chris’ first trip to Sackett Farms was humorous,” said Ed. “He drove 110 miles to the farm in his pickup truck with a crate in the back and had to get in line with semi-trucks to load up the potatoes. He was the only pickup in the line, and we’re thankful they let us jump in and hold up their process.”

Chipping away at the potato chip industry, the Girrbauchs eventually sent more than a pickup truck to Sackett Farms. Now, a semi-truck delivers 120,000 pounds of potatoes a week—and they are looking for more. The chip company has invested nearly half a million dollars in automation to double its capacity to keep up with demand. With each upgrade, Ed and Chris look closely at the most energy efficient equipment as part of their commitment to sustainability, and they value their partnership with their electric cooperative.

Coincidentally, GLPCC and Sackett Farms belong to electric cooperatives that are members of Wolverine Power Cooperative. The Wolverine cooperatives lead Michigan in new renewable energy. In 2018, the co-ops reduced their carbon footprint by 25 percent—now providing members with 56 percent carbon-free energy. “Cherryland operates as a true partner, their whole mindset is how do they help us, and how do we work together to find more ways to be energy efficient,” said Ed. “We love doing business with them.”

As Great Lakes Potato Chip Company continues to grow, Ed takes great pride in his Michigan-made products, their highest-quality ingredients, and their unique process to get a crispier, crunchier, tastier chip. “We get asked a lot why we leave the skin on,” said Ed. “It’s simple. It just tastes better.”



Visit greatlakespotatochips.com to learn more about these Michigan-made chips.

Annual Meeting At Octagon Barn–June 9

This year's Annual Meeting will again be held at the Octagon Barn near Gagetown. The event will be held Saturday, June 9, 2018, with registration beginning at 9 a.m. and the business meeting starting at 10 a.m. You will be voting for your cooperative directors and listening to updates on cooperative improvements. As always, there will be entertainment for the kids with balloons, face painting, pony rides and bucket truck rides. When the meeting is over around noon, lunch will be served, and you will then be free to enjoy the Octagon Barn sites and exhibits.

System Upgrades

After a month trek out east to make repairs from three damaging Nor'easter storms that left millions without power, Thumb Electric contractors will continue upgrading and rebuilding the 41.6KV transmission line between Uby and Kinde this spring and summer. The concentration expected to be along M19 from M142 to Uby, as well as removal of the old lines and poles from the deep right-of-way from Richardson Road to the Kinde substation. As of this writing, there is a two mile rebuild of lines in Kingston Township along Rossman and Clothier Roads as well as several single phase projects slated for upgrades. These efforts help to ensure the system is as reliable as possible when Mother Nature throws us her best.

April Ice Storm And Tree Trimming Efforts

As of this writing we have just come off a major state-wide ice storm. We managed to have every member back on within two days. Since 2014, a large amount of trees have been removed, and as a result, many TEC members have seen their reliability greatly improve. As this most recent spring ice storm suggests, removing and trimming trees make for fewer outages and shorter duration of outages that do occur because of these efforts. Priorities will continue for line sections that are historically problematic lines, followed by overgrown sections. As time allows, less severe circuits will be maintained. Members in Dayton (especially Shay Lake area), Juniata and Indianfield townships will see crews as well as part of regular system maintenance. We anticipate starting to work on circuits in Kingston, Koylton, and Millington townships.

Due to a disease in the Ash tree, which is a popular species of tree in our service territory, we have had to adjust our trimming locations. It has made planning a challenge at times, but we make every effort to contact members ahead of the trimmers.

We will send out a postcard to members to let them know tree trimmers will be in the area and, at times, we will try and call members to let them know the plan for their area. If you have an updated phone number, please call us with your new contact information.

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Photo Contest

Show Us Your Garden

1. The beautiful 'Angel Face' Rose. We ended up with around 50 blooms last summer. *By Kathryn Southerland*
2. Newest flower in our garden: This little buck was found by the Hibiscus in my wife's flower bed. *By Walter Godzwon*
3. It's not a Springtime garden without the Bleeding Heart!
By Kathryn Southerland
4. Tithonia Mexican Sunflower lures in a beautiful, yet hungry, visitor.
By Kathryn Southerland



1



2



3



4

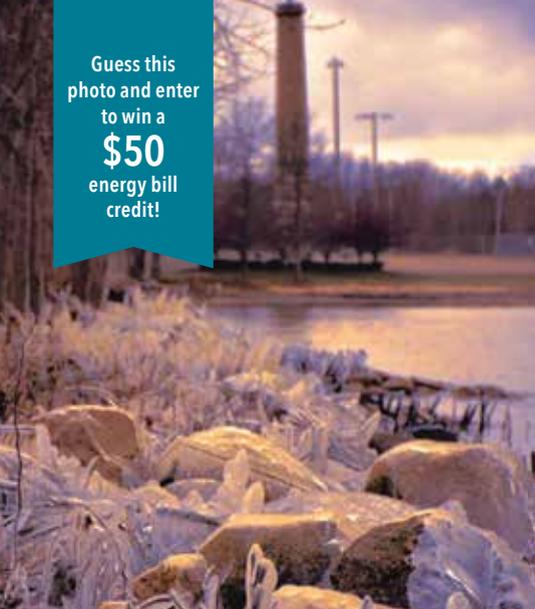
Share Your Photos!

Thumb Electric invites members to share their photos. Selected photos will be published in *Michigan Country Lines*. Upcoming topic and deadline is **Fan Spirit due May 20 for the July/August issue**.

To submit photos, and for details and instructions, go to <http://bit.ly/countrylines>

We look forward to seeing your best photos!

Guess this photo and enter to win a \$50 energy bill credit!



I Remember...



My grandfather, Carl (Lavy) Hagstrom, is holding me, Joelle, and my Uncle Carl is looking on.

Where In Michigan Is This?

Identify the correct location of the photo above by May 20 and be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 electric bill credit. Enter your guess at countrylines.com or send by mail to: *Country Lines* Mystery Photo, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900, Lansing, MI 48933. Include the name on your account, address, phone number and the name of your co-op.

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the March 2018 issue is Ann Pihlaja, an Ontonagon County REA member, who correctly identified the photo as the Traverse City Cherry Festival Air Show.

Winners are announced in the following issues of *Country Lines*: January, March, May, July/August, September and November/December.

March 2018



Photo courtesy of Karen Murphy

Berry Picking

I remember going berry picking with my grandfather, Carl (Lavy) Hagstrom, in the woods around Cheboygan. My grandfather had special berry picking pails and adjustable belts. He said it was important for both hands to be free to pick the juiciest ones! But my belt was always too big, so I hung it from my neck.

I never saw anyone who could pick berries as fast as he could. It didn't matter if we were picking raspberries or huckleberries, he always filled his pail first. He would tease me because I couldn't keep up with him, but he knew I was eating two berries for every one I put into my pail. My hands were always stained with the juice.

We took the berries home for my grandmother to can and the rest she saved for us to eat on our cereal or to make a special treat. Many evenings after dinner, our family would get involved in making homemade ice cream. It was hard work turning the handle of their ice cream machine, but it was worth it, as my grandfather would add some delicious berries. I always looked forward to summers in Cheboygan with my grandparents and making berry ice cream!

Joelle Majerowicz, Presque Isle Electric & Gas Co-op

We invite members to share their fondest memories.

Guidelines

1. Approximately 200 words
2. Digital photos must be at least 600 KB
3. Only one entry per household, per month
4. *Country Lines* retains reprint rights
5. Please include your name, address, email, phone number and the name of your electric co-op
6. Submit your memories online: countrylines.com or email to cdorr@meca.coop

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DON'T MISS IT!

81st Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 9, 2018
Thumb Octagon Barn
6948 Richie Rd.
Gagetown, MI 48735

MAIN TENT

9–11:15 a.m. Prize Drawing
Registration
10 a.m. Business Meeting
Noon Lunch

KIDS' TENT

10:30 a.m.–2 p.m. Face painting
11 a.m.–2 p.m. Clown
Noon–2 p.m. Pony & Bucket
Truck Rides
12:45 p.m. Candy Drop

Kids' Drawing: Two bicycles
Adult Drawing: Electric water heater and more!



TEC 2018 ANNUAL MEETING Registration Form



TEC MEMBER: Bring this entire registration form, or have the proxy appointee named below bring this form, to the Annual Meeting. It is important that the imprinted member information at the top is included. It will be used to register you for voting and the prize drawing.

Proxy Information



If you are unable to attend the Annual Meeting and want to have another member, your spouse or child (of legal voting age) vote in your place, please fill in the information below. Only one (1) proxy may be voted by an individual per membership.

As a member of Thumb Electric Cooperative of Michigan, I, the undersigned, hereby appoint (write in the name of who you appoint) _____ to act as my proxy and vote in my absence at the meeting of the members to be held at Thumb Octagon Barn 6948 Richie Rd. Gagetown, MI 48735 at 10 a.m., on the 9th day of June 2018.

I realize that this is my duty as a member of this cooperative to take an active interest in its affairs and to exercise my voting privilege in person. I have carefully considered the business which is to be acted upon, and have decided to give my proxy to the above-named person, who agreed to vote this proxy on all matters as he or she believes I would vote if personally present.

I hereby ratify and confirm my proxy's vote in my stead. Witness my hand and seal this _____ day of June 2018.

X _____
Signature of member giving proxy

X _____
Witness

Please bring this entire registration form panel with you to the meeting. It is important that the imprinted member information at the top is included.

How To Get There:

Gagetown is about 1 mile west of Richie Rd. on Bay City Forestville Rd., and about 6 miles west of M-53.

