

MICHIGAN COUNTRY LINES

Casting A Line

With Kevin VanDam

Plus!

Board of Director Nominees

Food, Fun And Prizes At
The Annual Meeting June 11!

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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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Change of Address:

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 6 **OUR ENERGY**
Clean Power Plan Update
Craig Borr
- 7 **SAFETY**
Always Call MISS DIG Before You Dig
- 10 **HOME COOKING**
Party-worthy Appetizers
Christin McKamey & Our Readers
New! Join Our Online Kitchen Community
- 14 **FEATURE**
Casting A Line With Kevin VanDam
Emily Haines Lloyd
- 18 **READERS' PAGE**
Hug A Lineman
Jack O'Malley
Guess Our New Mystery Photo

IN YOUR WORDS

Last month, we asked electric co-op members a question:

If you had to be trapped in a TV show for a month, which would you choose?

Thank you for all the responses. Here are some of your answers...

Hands down 'Andy of Mayberry' HAPPY, SAD, FUNNY, LOVE, just a lot of good old life lessons in this good old TV show.

The original 'Batman' series with Adam West. He never loses a fight, has an awesome car, and the ultimate man cave.

The 'Waltons' TV show.

Our new Question of the Month is:

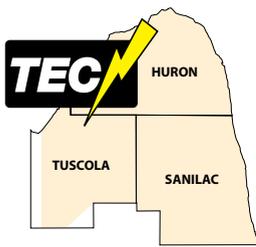
If you could ask your future self one question, what would it be?

Please submit answers to countrylines.com by June 1.

ON THE COVER*

Kevin VanDam, often called simply, "KVD," is a professional bass fisherman from Kalamazoo, MI. In the world of professional bass fishing, KVD is at the pinnacle, and arguably the best in the world.

**Some co-op editions have a different cover. Photo-Seigo Saito, Seven Seas Creation, Inc.*



Thumb Electric Cooperative

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www.tecmi.coop

Board Of Directors

HURON COUNTY

Randall Dhyse, Treasurer
 District 1

Donald Wolschleger, Vice President
 District 2

Beth McDonald, Secretary
 District 3

SANILAC COUNTY

Kim Nunn, Director
 District 1

Mike Briolat, Director
 District 2

Duane Kursinsky, Director
 District 3

TUSCOLA COUNTY

Louis Wenzlaff, President
 District 1

Jonathan Findlay, Director
 District 2

Carl Cousins, Director
 District 3

Dallas Braun, General Manager

PAYMENT STATIONS

Huron County

Bad Axe—Northstar Bank
 Pigeon—Northstar Bank

Tuscola County

Akron—Northstar Bank
 Caro—Northstar Bank
 Mayville—Mayville State Bank
 Millington—Mayville State Bank

Sanilac County

Sandusky—Northstar Bank

Visit Thumb Electric's website
www.tecmi.coop

Thumb Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

Co-op Director Nominees

SANILAC COUNTY DISTRICT 1



Kim Nunn (Incumbent)

Kim Nunn was born and raised in the Croswell area and has been a Thumb Electric Cooperative member since 1978. Kim graduated from Central Michigan University with a Bachelor of Science degree. He currently works for Helena Chemical Company in sales of agricultural products.

Kim has served on TEC's board of directors since 1987, and is currently president of Thumb Energy Services Corporation.

Kim is also a member of Croswell United Methodist Church, is currently a director of the Croswell Fair board, and has served on the Fair board since 1986. He is also a director on the Mid Thumb Bowling Association.

Kim and his wife, Cindy, have been married for 35 years and have two children and one grandchild.

As a board member, he will continue to inform members about the latest technologies and rural communications, making sure an adequate supply of electricity will be available at a reasonable price, and continue to ensure that co-op member interest is taken into consideration when making board decisions. He also feels TEC should offer new services to members, if it's good for the co-op's well-being.

Keeping the lights on will always be a high priority to Kim



Michael Bender

Michael Bender is the owner and operator of Bender's Dairy Farm LLC, in Croswell, where he farms 800 acres running both a dairy and cash crop operation. He started the farm 35 years ago with his father and he currently employs three to four part-time workers. Mike has served in many capacities over the years, including coaching little league and being a 4-H leader. He is a member of Northstar Cooperative on the advisory and resolution committee, MMPA member local secretary and district secretary and on the advisory & resolution committee, past

UDIM board member, Sanilac County 4-H dairy committee member, and a past member of the Sanilac County Dairy Banquet committee.

Mike has been married to his wife, Linda, for 31 years this July. Together they have three children: Mickey and his wife Julia, Sean and his wife Kristina and a daughter Victoria. They have one granddaughter, Allison, who is 9 months old. Mike is a member of Ava Maria Parish in Lexington. He has lived in the area all of his life and has been a Thumb Electric Cooperative member for 35 years. His family has been TEC members for over 65 years, and if he was elected to the board would do his best to ensure the reliable and affordable electricity we have had continues on into the future.

HURON COUNTY DISTRICT 1



Randy Dhyse (Incumbent)

Randall Dhyse owns and operates a crop and livestock operation in northern Huron County, in partnership with his brother. He has been a member of Thumb Electric Cooperative since 1987.

Randall has lived in Huron County his entire life, except for time spent attending Northern Michigan University and Michigan State University. He and his wife, Mary, have three grown sons.

Randall has served on Thumb Electric's board of directors since 1999. He has also served on several community boards and is a member of St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

As a TEC board member, Randall has strived to stay informed and understand the issues which affect TEC as your energy provider. Representing the needs of co-op members and continuing to have Thumb Electric as a reliable and stable source of electricity will be Randall's goals.

HURON COUNTY DISTRICT 1 (continued)



Joseph Mausolf

Joseph Mausolf is retired from his career of 41 years working for Greenstone Farm Credit Services as a financial services officer. He worked the first 12 years in Alpena and the remaining 29 years in Bad Axe. He is a member of St. Hubert Parish and serves as both a lector and Extra Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion, and he belongs to the Knights of Columbus council 1546 in Bad Axe.

Before retiring, Joseph was involved with judging livestock records for the FFA at the Huron Community Fair, was on the board of directors for Thumbworks, representing agriculture, and was active in many local

Ag events. Joseph currently is a volunteer at the Caseville Food Pantry and for the National Weather Service providing daily temperature and precipitation reporting, a position he has volunteered in for nearly 20 years. He raises a large garden, and travels the country visiting children and grandchildren.

Joseph and his wife June have seven children between them and a total of 14 grandchildren. He was born and raised in Huron County and has been a member of TEC since returning to the area in 1984; prior to that he was a member at Presque Electric Cooperative. Joseph appreciates the honor of being requested to seek the position of TEC board member and if elected will look forward to serving the members of this cooperative to the best of his ability.

TUSCOLA COUNTY DISTRICT 1



Louis Wenzlaff (Incumbent)

Louis Wenzlaff retired in January 2013 after 23 years as administrator of Sanilac County Medical Care Facility in Sandusky. Previous to that, he was the chief executive officer of Kingston State Bank for 22 years. In addition, he is a part-time farmer.

Raised in the Kingston area, Louis has been a member of Thumb Electric since 1958. He has served on TEC's board of directors since 1977, and since 1988 has represented the co-op on the Michigan Electric Cooperative Association Board of Directors. He is currently TEC's board president. Louis is a graduate of Central Michigan University with a business degree.

He is also a member of Kingston United Methodist Church and the Sandusky Lions Club. Louis and his wife, Sharon, have five children and six grandchildren.

As a board member, his goals are to help ensure that the co-op runs efficiently, reliable service is provided to all members at a reasonable price, the cooperative has an adequate and economical power supply, lines are kept updated, and employees are meeting or exceeding the members' needs.



Edward Gerstenberger

Edward Gerstenberger is co-owner of Eddie G's Incorporated, a family run restaurant-bar in Marlette which employs 10 to 12 workers. Before going into the restaurant business, Ed farmed along with his family, for more than 25 years both milking cows and cash crop farming. He is a past member of the Michigan Milk Producers Association and the Snover Cooperative, and is still a member of the

Farm Bureau for 20-plus years and an 11-year member of the Marlette Chamber of Commerce. Ed believes as a business you have to give back to the community that supports you, which is why he supports many community programs such as Get on Track, Summer Rec, Hospice programs, and many more.

Ed is the father of two, daughter Heidi Strickler along with son-in-law Nathan, and son Mark Gerstenberger. He also has two grandchildren, Alex and Blake Strickler. He has been a Thumb Electric Cooperative member for more than five years and is a lifelong resident of the Thumb area, living in both Sanilac and Tuscola counties. Ed is very pleased with the way Thumb Electric Cooperative has made investments in the system to keep power on for members, and if elected would do his best to continue that service.



Paul VanHorn

Paul VanHorn is currently employed as a special education teacher at North Branch Area Schools and has been for the past 12 years. He is in his 24th year of public education and his 26th year in teaching overall. Paul is a 1977 graduate of Kingston High School and a 1981 Graduate of Spring Arbor College. He later earned his certificate in special education from Saginaw Valley

State University. He is a member of the Kingston Wesleyan Church and a member of the Thumb Two-Cylinder Club. Paul grew up on a farm near his current location near Deford.

Paul was married to his wife, Debbie, in 1985 until she passed away in August of 2012. They have three sons who are currently in college. He is now engaged to his fiancée, Michelle. Paul has lived most of his life in the Thumb area and has been served by Thumb Electric lines all of that time, including the past 26 years at his current location. Paul remembers the pride his father took at being a member of TEC having come from an early 32-volt system to finally having power available on a constant basis. He would do his best to ensure this availability remained if elected.

Notice of Annual Membership Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the members of Thumb Electric Cooperative of MI will be held at the Cass City Park, Cass City, MI at 10 a.m. on June 11, 2016, 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 1, one director from Sanilac County - District 1, and one director from Tuscola County - District 1, 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.

Dated: April 19, 2016
BETH MCDONALD, Secretary

Attend Thumb Electric's Annual Meeting on June 11 and receive a \$10 credit on your July bill! See back cover for details.

Clean Power Plan Update



Craig Borr, CEO
Michigan Electric
Cooperative
Association

As a result of a Feb. 9 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, the State of Michigan has stopped efforts on its development of a plan to meet the demands of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Clean Power Plan (CPP). The CPP is a federal regulatory action that requires states to reduce carbon emissions from power plants by approximately 30 percent by 2030.

What Does This Mean?

The Supreme Court's "stay" of the CPP means that it has no legal effect while the courts are reviewing the carbon reduction rules to determine whether they are lawful. During this time, the EPA cannot enforce any of the CPP deadlines or requirements. While the granting of a "stay" does not guarantee victory for opponents of the plan, it greatly increases the odds of the courts ultimately determining that the CPP is unlawful.

For the past several months, Michigan's electric cooperatives were engaged with the State of Michigan in developing an implementation plan that would have, prior to the Supreme Court ruling, had Michigan on a trajectory of submitting an initial carbon reduction plan to the EPA this fall. Those development efforts have now been suspended.

The Court's ruling means that "certainty" for our state and its electric utilities may not be forthcoming until sometime in 2018—a rather ominous sign, given the fact that several of Michigan's old and dirty coal-fired power plants will be retired in the next three to five years by companies like Detroit Edison, the Michigan South Central Power Agency, and the Lansing

Board of Water & Light. At present, just two cleaner, natural gas-fired power plants are under construction in our state—one in Holland by the City of Holland and one near Gaylord by Wolverine Power Cooperative.

This recent court action is a keen reminder of the statement uttered by former U.S. Rep. John Dingell, the architect of the current U.S. Clean Air Act, when commenting about the EPA's regulation of carbon via rulemaking rather than legislation enacted by Congress. Dingell said that the EPA's regulation of carbon would be "a glorious mess." Sadly, I believe Mr. Dingell was right. It's the job of the U.S. Congress to regulate carbon emissions, not a federal regulatory agency led by political appointees.

Michigan Co-ops Well Positioned With Renewable Energy

The other ironic twist is that Michigan's electric cooperatives, as a group, are very well positioned to potentially benefit from new carbon rules. As our state's unquestioned leaders in renewable energy, the State of Michigan and the cooperatives could be "economic winners" from implementation of the current CPP.

This is due to the fact that by 2017 Michigan's electric co-ops will serve nearly 1,000 megawatts of electrical load and have nearly 400 megawatts of renewable energy in our power supply basket to serve that load. My math says that puts Michigan's electric cooperatives, as a group, at nearly 40 percent renewables, with the state standard currently at 10 percent.

That's called leadership. ■



For Safe Digging, Call Miss DIG

MISS DIG has been the first step in utility damage prevention and excavation safety in Michigan for over 45 years. MISS DIG is a nonprofit organization funded by utility owners and municipalities, and serves as a single point of contact for those performing excavation anywhere in the state.

MISS DIG is available around the clock, 365 days a year, so whether it's the excavation of a new housing development, or something as simple as installing a new mailbox, contacting MISS DIG is a fast and free way to start your project.

Contact MISS DIG by dialing 811, or online via missdig.org, three business days prior to beginning work. You will be asked questions regarding your project such as, location, date, work being performed, and more. That information will be passed on to utility owners in the area who will locate and mark the underground lines on your work site or yard. They will also provide information



on how they've handled your request through MISS DIG's Positive Response program. After three days have passed and the marks are laid, you are free to begin with your project, provided you respect the marks and work carefully around them. If a question about your request or the marks comes up, MISS DIG is ready to assist.

So be smart, be safe, and know what's below. Contact MISS DIG before you dig.

For more information about MISS DIG or utility damage prevention, please visit missdig.org. ■

ALWAYS CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

For your safety and for the protection of underground utility lines, always follow these steps before starting any digging project.

1. Contact MISS DIG at 811 or missdig.org
2. Wait 3 days for utility owners to mark their lines
3. Respect the marks
4. Dig with care



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**
visit missdig.org for more information

THUMB ELECTRIC

Energy Optimization Rebate Program

Energy Star Rebate	For Energy Star appliances, LED bulbs and fixtures, Energy Star TVs, and much more.
In-Home Energy Audit	Get knowledge on the energy usage of your home and some free energy saving items, as well!
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Appliance Recycling	Got an old refrigerator or freezer eating up your energy budget? Have it recycled and get cash back. *Window AC & dehumidifiers qualify under certain conditions.

Agribusiness and commercial programs also available.

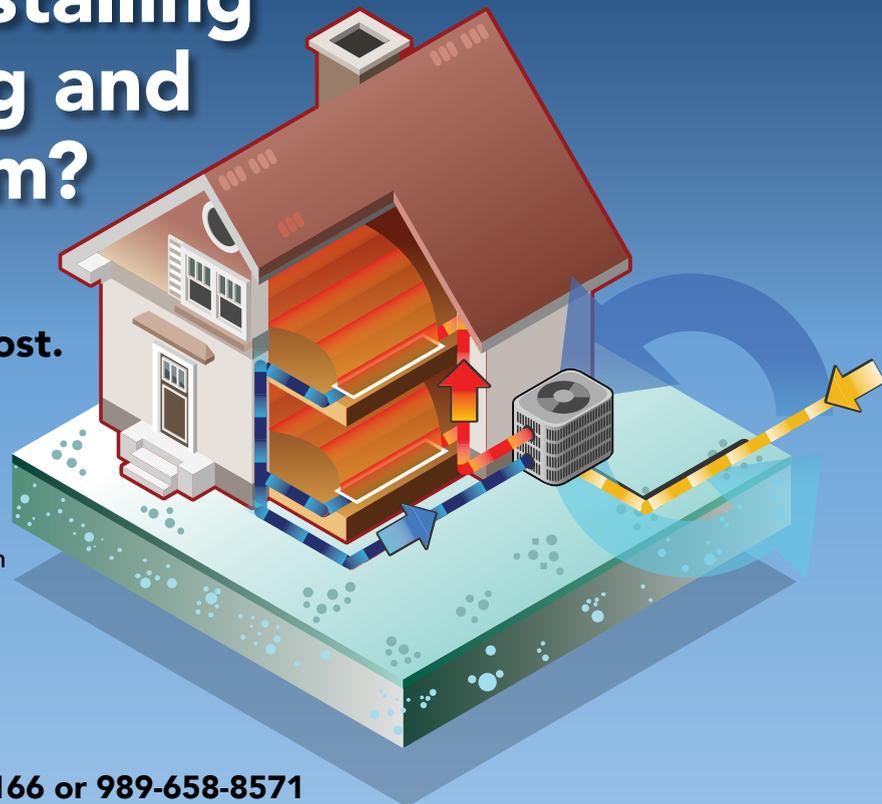
Call 989-658-8571 or 1-800-327-0166, or visit our website tecmi.coop today to learn specific details.

Thinking of Installing a New Heating and Cooling System?

Thumb Electric may have a rebate to help with the cost.

- Geothermal rebate up to \$1,200
- AC and Air Source Heat pumps up to \$450

There are many more Energy Optimization rebates available. For a full listing, please visit our website or call our office.



Call: 1-800-327-0166 or 989-658-8571
www.tecmi.coop

Energy Optimization Program For 2016

Thumb Electric Cooperative's Energy Optimization programs will continue this year, with a few changes. Rebates and programs will be handled locally, in-house, as opposed to being performed by an outside contractor.

We will continue to offer energy-saving rebates for such things as lighting, ENERGY STAR® appliances, efficient upgrades to heating and cooling systems, and other programs.

Please continue to check *Country Lines* magazine, bill inserts, and the Thumb Electric website for news and more detailed information as updates occur. For more information, please contact us at 800-327-0166 or 989-658-8571 and ask for information on Energy Optimization.

Tree Trimming Update

Tree trimming will continue at an aggressive rate in 2016, since this work is resulting in fewer outages and shorter duration on outages that do occur.

Priorities will continue to be historically problematic circuits, followed by overgrown circuits, and finally, less severe circuits will be maintained. Due to a disease in the ash tree, which is a very popular species in our service territory, we have had to adjust our trimming locations from time-to-time. It has made planning a challenge occasionally, but we will make every effort to contact members ahead of the trimming. We will generally send out a post card



to members to let them know trimmers will be in the area, and at times we will try and call members to let them know what is going on. If you, like a lot of people, have changed phone numbers, please give us a call with your new contact information.

Annual Meeting June 11, 2016

Thumb Electric Cooperative's annual meeting will be held June 11, 2016, at the park in Cass City. Save the date and come out to join your fellow Thumb Electric Co-op members. Registration begins at 9 a.m. and the business meeting will start at 10 a.m.

Be a part of the democratic process at your electric cooperative and plan on attending and casting your ballot in the board of directors election. As always, there will be entertainment for the kids, such as balloons, face painting, pony rides and bucket truck rides. ■

Watch Your May Electric Bill For Capital Credit Refund!

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues, called margins, are returned to members in the form of capital credits. Thumb Electric Cooperative member-owners will see the benefits of cooperative principle #3 (Members' Economic Participation) on their May electric bills as a credit on a line item called "Patronage Refund."

Over \$521,000 will be applied to members' May electric bills for those who had service during 1985 and 2015. Since retiring patronage capital, over \$7,870,920 has been returned to the co-op's members.

SNACKS & APPETIZERS

Party-worthy recipes for your next gathering.

Bacon Wrapped Water Chestnuts

Connie Bowman, Manistee

- 1 c. ketchup
- 1 c. brown sugar
- 1 lb. bacon, cut into thirds
- 2 small cans whole water chestnuts

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix together ketchup and brown sugar. Wrap ½ piece of bacon around each chestnut. Place in a 9x13 pan. Pour ketchup mixture over wrapped bacon/chestnuts. Bake at 350° for 45 minutes.

Photos—831 Creative

Jalapeno Popper Boats (Pictured)

Ted Herrst, Mancelona

- 25 medium, fresh jalapeño peppers*
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 pkg. bacon bits
- 3 c. finely shredded cheddar cheese
- 2 t. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 T. olive oil
- ¼ c. cornmeal

Preheat oven to 400°. Spread olive oil evenly over a cookie sheet. Sprinkle cornmeal evenly over cookie sheet. Cut jalapeño peppers in half lengthwise; remove all seeds and membranes. In a small bowl, beat cream cheese, bacon, Worcestershire sauce, and 2 cups cheddar cheese until smooth. Spoon 2 teaspoons of mixture into each jalapeño half, and place on the oiled cookie sheet, then roll each jalapeño lightly in cornmeal. Top with remaining cheese. Bake for 5–10 minutes or until cheese is melted. Serve warm. Optional: For milder peppers, after cutting, boil peppers in water for 2–5 minutes. Drain, rinse and allow to cool.

**Wear plastic gloves while working with jalapeño peppers; DO NOT touch face, especially eyes.*



Buffalo Chicken Dip

Patsy Dalrymple, Lake Isabella

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 10 oz. can chicken breast, drained
- ¼ c. hot sauce
- ½ bottle blue cheese dressing
- 8 oz. pkg. sharp cheddar cheese, crumbled

Mix all ingredients together and place in microwave. Cook 1 minute at a time until all cheese is melted (you can also use a mini crock pot). Serve warm on crackers.



Gather Round

The Co-op Kitchen Table

A **NEW** and **EXCLUSIVE** online cooking community for our electric co-op members.

MI CO-OP KITCHEN is a place to share your recipes and food ideas with lots of other like-minded members. You will also get a chance to win awesome prizes.

In every *Country Lines* issue, members can submit recipes online for a chance to win a **\$50** electric bill credit. While that's pretty cool by itself, there's more! We will print the winning recipe in *Country Lines* (complete with a professional photo of the dish), and create an instructional "how to" video for micoopkitchen.com.

Ready to pull up a seat?

GREAT! Go to MICOOPKITCHEN.COM and register.

Please submit your favorite "Dessert" recipes by July 1.

Enter your recipe online at micoopkitchen.com or send to (handprint or type on one side, please):
Country Lines Recipes, 201 Townsend St., Suite 900,
Lansing, MI 48933. Please note the co-op from which you receive your electric service.

micoopkitchen.com





Thumb Electric Cooperative of Michigan Seventy-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Members

The Seventy-Eighth Annual Meeting of the Members of the Thumb Electric Cooperative of Michigan was held at the Cass City Recreational Park in Cass City, Tuscola County, Michigan at 10:00 o'clock a.m. on Saturday, June 13, 2015 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, and Dallas Braun, General Manager for the Cooperative, acted as secretary of the meeting and kept the minutes thereof.

The President introduced the members of the 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; Lynn Morell, Sanilac County; Jonathan Findlay, Tuscola County; Kim Nunn, Sanilac County; Duane Kursinsky, Sanilac County.**

Also introduced was the General Manager Dallas Braun.

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.

The President 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, as said members entered the meeting room, and that more than one hundred fifty (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 Seventy-Seventh Annual Meeting of the Members were not read since a copy of 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 Seventy-Eighth 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 2014 financial statement and showed operating revenues of \$19,277,359 and expenses of \$18,028,833 resulting in an operating margin of \$1,248,525. Total assignable margins were \$1,582,972 for 2014. 2014 members' patronage capital accounts will be allocated 7.9 cents on each dollar paid by TEC members. The 2014 general patronage retirement appeared as a credit on members' electric bills received in May 2015.

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 2014, increase in equity while maintaining

competitive rates, member district meetings, patronage capital retirements, 2015's major construction projects, utility plant & upgrades, renewable energy, energy optimization program, renewable portfolio standard, tree trimming, taxes and legislation. Upon motion duly made, seconded and carried, the President's Report was approved as presented.

The next order of business was the election of three Directors, representing District 2. 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 Office Services Manager, A. James Philp, who is also a notary public:
Huron: Walter Cook, Francis Mazure, Joel Weber;
Sanilac: John Knoerr, Judith Freel, Richard Sadro;
Tuscola: James Hergenreder, Albert Brown, Duane Deering.

The Nominating Committee Report was published in *Country Lines*. The Committee nominated the following for Directorships: **Huron County – District 2:** Donald Wolschleger (incumbent), Kevin Grifka; **Sanilac County – District 2:** Lynn Morell (incumbent), Mike Briolat; **Tuscola County – District 2:** Jonathan Findlay (incumbent).

President Wenzlaff 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 5 minutes.

President Wenzlaff 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.

President Wenzlaff recognized and thanked retired Director Karl DeSimpelare who served 25 years on the TEC Board.

The President introduced Michigan Electric Cooperative Association Director of Energy Efficiency Programs, Art Thayer. Mr. Thayer introduced U.S. Congresswoman Candice Miller's Aide - Ed Smith, U.S. Senator Debbie Stabenow's Regional Manager – Derrick Mathis, Michigan Senator Mike Green, Michigan Representative Paul Muxlow, and Michigan Representative Ed Canfield, who spoke to the membership. Also recognized was

Michigan Senator Phil Pavlov who was unable to attend.

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.

After lunch, the meeting was informally reconvened and turned over to President Wenzlaff who announced the results of the tabulation of votes which were as follows: **Huron County – District 2:** Donald Wolschleger, 160; Kevin Grifka, 107. **Sanilac County – District 2:** Lynn Morell, 133; Mike Briolat, 140. **Tuscola County – District 2:** Jonathan Findlay, 253.

The elected Directors were declared to be Donald Wolschleger from Huron County – District 2, Mike Briolat from Sanilac County – District 2, and Jonathan Findlay from Tuscola County – District 2.

BETH MCDONALD, Secretary

APPROVED BY:
LOUIS WENZLAFF, President

NOMINATING COMMITTEE REPORT

The report of the 2016 Nominating Committee which met in Ubly, Michigan, at 11:00 a.m. on April 14, 2016, 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 1

Randall Dhyse – *Incumbent Director*; Joseph Mausolf

Sanilac County – District 1

Kim Nunn – *Incumbent Director*; Michael Bender

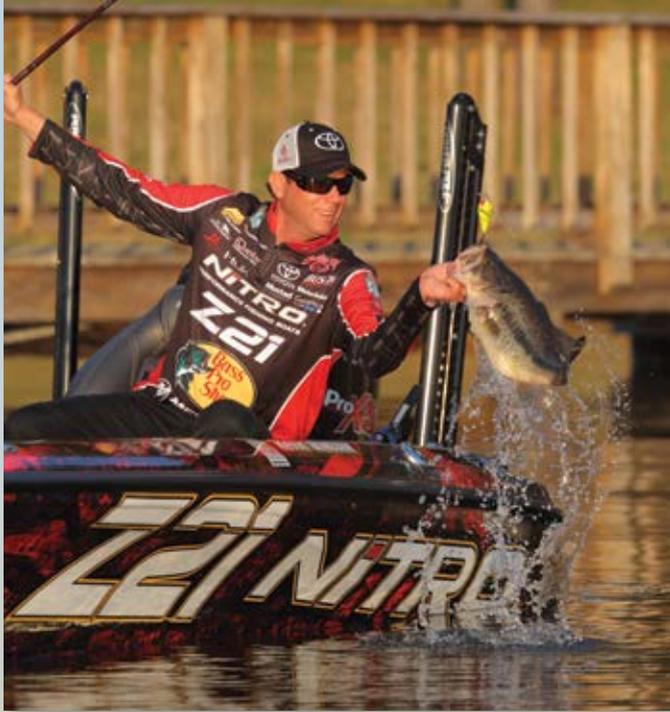
Tuscola County – District 1

Louis Wenzlaff – *Incumbent Director*; Edward Gerstenberger; Paul VanHorn

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

Dated: April 14, 2016

WILLIAM HAAS, CHAIRPERSON



“That’s the beauty of Michigan—pretty much everywhere you look there’s a lake, river or stream with something willing to bite.”

Casting A Line

With Kevin VanDam

By Emily Haines Lloyd



When you're talking to Kevin VanDam you don't get the feeling you're speaking with an internationally recognized angler and arguably the best bass fisherman in the past 20 years. You just feel like you're talking to "Kevin"—the Kalamazoo guy who grew up on the lakes, streams and rivers of southwest Michigan. He sounds like a guy you went to school with, who just happens to travel 250 days a year to compete in bass tournaments and promote the sport he loves.

"Fishing has always been a part of my life. I have a memory of going ice fishing with my dad and I was maybe three years old," VanDam recalls. "So, even when I started competing at the professional level, it took me a long time to think of this as my career. It was just always something I did."

It could be this single-minded and humble mindset that made VanDam the multiple championship winner in professional bass fishing. If you know the sport—you know VanDam. If you thought anglers worked with protractors—let's catch you up. The Bassmaster Classic is the most coveted bass fishing title. In his 263 Bassmaster Classic events—VanDam has won 20, finished second 13 times and landed in the top 10 a remarkable 100 times. He was also the very first Outdoorsman of the Year ESPY award winner, at the ESPN awards in 2002. Not that you can get him to muse on his accolades. VanDam is more likely to brag on his home state when asked why he still lives in the area where he grew up.

"Michigan is home," VanDam says. "I love the four seasons, and my family loves being outdoors. In the summer, you'll find us on the lake boating or fishing. In the winter, I love taking my sons hunting. There's so much diversity in the landscape. Michigan has so much to offer. I can't imagine living anywhere else."

When asked to give up some of his favorite fishing spots in Michigan, VanDam chuckles.

"That's the beauty of Michigan—pretty much everywhere you look there's a lake, river or stream with something willing to bite," he answers. "But I really think the best fishing anywhere is Lake St. Clair on the east side of the state. It's my favorite



tournament location. Having said that—there's nothing like heading up to Traverse City and casting a line."

As VanDam continues his 2016 season of tournaments, sports shows, promotions and product design meetings—you get the feeling his thoughts are always in Michigan—secretly thinking about that next day on the lake with his wife and sons, lazily casting a line without the pressure of a championship title, just a guy named "Kevin" hanging out and having fun. ■

Photos-Seigo Saito, Seven Seas Creation, Inc.



**STATE OF MICHIGAN
BEFORE THE MICHIGAN PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

**NOTICE OF HEARING
FOR THE CUSTOMERS OF
THUMB ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
CASE NO. U-17677-R**

- Thumb Electric Cooperative requests Michigan Public Service Commission approval to reconcile its 2015 power supply cost recovery costs and revenues and for a Times Interest Earned Ratio (TIER) Ratemaking Mechanism review.
- The information below describes how a person may participate in this case.
- You may call or write Thumb Electric Cooperative, 2231 Main Street, P.O. Box 157, Ubyly, Michigan 48475-0157, (800) 327-0166 for a free copy of its application. Any person may review the application at the offices of Thumb Electric Cooperative.
- The first public hearing in this matter will be held:

DATE/TIME: **Thursday, June 2, 2016, at 10:00 a.m.**

This hearing will be a prehearing conference to set future hearing dates and decide other procedural matters.

BEFORE: Administrative Law Judge **Suzanne D. Sonneborn**

LOCATION: Michigan Public Service Commission
7109 West Saginaw Highway
Lansing, Michigan

PARTICIPATION: Any interested person may attend and participate. The hearing site is accessible, including handicapped parking. Persons needing any accommodation to participate should contact the Commission's Executive Secretary at (517) 284-8090 in advance to request mobility, visual, hearing or other assistance.

The Michigan Public Service Commission (Commission) will hold a public hearing to consider Thumb Electric Cooperative's (Thumb) March 28, 2016 application to reconcile its 2015 power supply cost recovery (PSCR) costs and revenues. Thumb represented that it experienced a net PSCR undercollection of \$185,158, as adjusted by prior overcollections or undercollections. Thumb proposes to roll-in this \$185,158 undercollection into its 2017 PSCR plan. Thumb is also requesting a \$977,059 revenue increase, or approximately 5.2% through proposed restructured rates, as described in its filing.

All documents filed in this case shall be submitted electronically through the Commission's E-Dockets website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets. Requirements and instructions for filing can be found in the User Manual on the E-Dockets help page. Documents may also be submitted, in Word or PDF format, as an attachment to an email sent to: mpscdockets@michigan.gov. If you require assistance prior to e-filing, contact Commission staff at (517) 284-8090 or by email at: mpscdockets@michigan.gov.

Any person wishing to intervene and become a party to the case shall electronically file a petition to intervene with this Commission by May 26, 2016. (Interested persons may elect to file using the traditional paper format.) The proof of service shall indicate service upon Thumb Electric's attorney, Richard J. Aaron, at Dykema Gossett PLLC, Capitol View, 201 Townsend Street, Suite 900, Lansing, Michigan 48933.

Any person wishing to appear at the hearing to make a statement of position without becoming a party to the case may participate by filing an appearance. To file an appearance, the individual must attend the hearing and advise the presiding administrative law judge of his or her wish to make a statement of position. All information submitted to the Commission in this matter becomes public information, thus available on the Michigan Public Service Commission's website, and subject to disclosure. Please do not include information you wish to remain private.

Requests for adjournment must be made pursuant to the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules R 792.10422 and R 792.10432. Requests for further information on adjournment should be directed to (517) 284-8130.

A copy of Thumb Electric's request may be reviewed on the Commission's website at: michigan.gov/mpscdockets, and at the offices of Thumb Electric Cooperative. For more information on how to participate in a case, you may contact the Commission at the above address or by telephone at (517) 284-8090.

The Commission has jurisdiction pursuant to 1909 PA 106, as amended, MCL 460.551 et seq.; 1919 PA 419, as amended, MCL 460.54 et seq.; 1939 PA 3, as amended, MCL 460.1 et seq.; 1969 PA 306, as amended, MCL 24.201 et seq.; 1982 PA 304, as amended, MCL 460.6j et seq.; and the Michigan Administrative Hearing System's Administrative Hearing Rules, 2015 AC, R 792.10401 et seq.

April 19, 2016

Thumb Electric Cooperative
Financial Statement Balance Sheets
December 31, 2015 & 2014

ASSETS	2015	2014
ELECTRIC PLANT		
In service—at cost	\$ 86,922,717	\$ 81,648,385
Under construction	902,291	1,711,331
Total electric plant	87,825,008	83,359,716
Less accumulated depreciation	26,786,428	26,139,118
ELECTRIC PLANT—NET	61,038,580	57,220,598
OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS		
Investments in associated organizations	1,569,063	1,542,187
Investment in subsidiary	1,472,003	1,290,038
Energy loans receivable	118,567	150,285
Nonutility property	111,627	107,329
Short-term investments—restricted	150,000	150,000
TOTAL OTHER PROPERTY AND INVESTMENTS	3,421,260	3,239,839
CURRENT ASSETS		
Cash and temporary cash investments	637,160	1,004,791
Accounts receivable, less allowance for doubtful accounts of approximately \$522,331 and \$506,632 in 2015 and 2014	2,113,285	2,515,411
Unbilled revenue	584,615	634,138
Materials and supplies	974,092	1,047,952
Prepaid expenses	113,538	106,777
Interest receivable	8,333	8,366
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	4,431,023	5,317,435
DEFERRED CHARGES	859,291	1,052,631
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 69,750,154	\$ 66,830,503
EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES		
EQUITIES		
Memberships	\$ 172,395	\$ 169,680
Patronage capital	21,764,988	22,289,988
Other equities	1,631,463	1,254,352
TOTAL EQUITIES	23,568,846	23,714,020
LONG-TERM DEBT, NET OF CURRENT MATURITIES	39,012,276	36,811,860
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Current maturities of long-term debt	1,841,163	1,908,965
Note payable – line of credit	1,700,000	
Accounts payable:		
Purchased power	842,026	1,766,390
Subsidiary	38,711	72,895
Other	1,254,606	1,180,324
Accrued property taxes	575,106	557,464
Accrued payroll and vacation	487,444	407,267
Customer deposits	185,008	178,352
Other	111,554	109,256
TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES	7,035,618	6,180,913
DEFERRED CREDITS	133,414	123,710
TOTAL EQUITIES AND LIABILITIES	\$ 69,750,154	\$ 66,830,503
OPERATING REVENUES		
Electric sales	\$ 18,623,490	\$ 18,980,740
Other sales	926,814	296,619
OPERATING REVENUES	19,550,304	19,277,359
OPERATING EXPENSES		
Cost of power	9,548,694	9,644,267
Generation	9,791	10,357
Transmission	108,510	58,711
Distribution—operations	612,632	537,610
Distribution—maintenance	2,567,455	1,564,867
Customer accounts	621,112	709,503
Customer service	394,062	348,450
Sales	8,549	10,227
Administrative and general	1,004,550	970,647
Depreciation	2,085,881	1,947,549
Taxes—property	754,690	731,847
Taxes—other	4,995	=
OPERATING EXPENSES	17,720,921	16,534,035
OPERATING INCOME BEFORE FIXED CHARGES	1,829,383	2,743,324
FIXED CHARGES:		
Interest on long-term debt	1,456,776	1,493,713
Other interest	51,260	1,084
FIXED CHARGES	1,508,036	1,494,797
OPERATING MARGINS AFTER FIXED CHARGES	321,347	1,248,527
CAPITAL CREDITS	109,919	126,557
NET OPERATING MARGINS	431,266	1,375,084
NONOPERATING MARGINS		
Interest	44,576	72,583
Income from subsidiary	85,541	88,564
Other income	41,767	46,743
NONOPERATING MARGINS	171,884	207,890
NET MARGINS	\$ 603,150	\$ 1,582,974

Hug A Lineman

By Jack O'Malley

The lights flicker once, twice. You wait for it. Boom! A crack of lightning illuminates the night sky as thunder simultaneously rolls over your neighborhood, taking the power with it. Most of us start scrambling for flashlights, candles and the battery operated radio. But across town, a lineman grabs his gear in preparation for what could be a long night of restoring electricity.

I recently visited with a line crew from Cherryland Electric Cooperative. Dustin Ockert, a journeyman lineman, talked about those days and nights when the power goes out. "Leaving my family at home with no power can be stressful. They're home in the dark without me and I'm out working to get the lights back on." However, it's work that Dustin finds enjoyable, despite its risks.

Every day, Dustin and his crew face a number of occupational hazards, including high-voltage contact, confined spaces, and challenging weather conditions, often while working at great heights. Deceptively simple-looking, power lines are connected by a complex arrangement of small parts that crews learn to manipulate while wearing heavy protective gloves. Handling up to 7,200 volts of electricity at any given moment, losing concentration for even a second could result in serious injury. When asked what wind speed would prevent him from taking the bucket up, Dustin confidently replied, "That hasn't happened yet!"

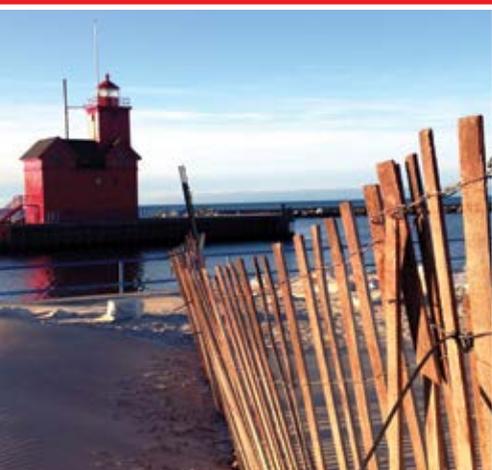


Fortunately for Dustin and his crew, most days are quiet and filled with routine maintenance work and installations. Safety remains the crew's first priority, even on normal days. But all concerns for family and safety aside, Dustin loves his job. During an outage, "The world is dark when we get where we're going and by the time we leave, the lights are back on. That's the glory of our job."

If you're like me you take your power for granted, forgetting the men and women who work in the dark, rain, wind and snow, ensuring that we can turn the lights on each morning. So take a minute, thank your local linemen, and do as Dustin suggests the next time you see his crew pulling up, "Stand back and watch what happens!" ■



Jack O'Malley



«« Where In Michigan Is This?

Every co-op member who identifies the correct location of the photo at left by **June 18** will be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 bill credit from their electric co-op. We do not accept Mystery Photo guesses by phone. 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 name of your co-op.



March Photo

Our Mystery Photo Contest winner from the March 2016 issue is Norman Schultz, a Great Lakes Energy co-op member who correctly identified the photo as the Back Forty Ranch at the Double JJ Resort in Rothbury, MI.

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**Thumb Electric
Cooperative**
www.tecmi.coop

DON'T MISS IT!

79th Annual Meeting

Saturday, June 11, 2016
Cass City Recreational Park

MAIN TENT

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

KIDS' TENT

11 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!



\$10 Bill Credit Eligibility:

1. Only the member, spouse or child of a member over age 18 who lives with the member and presents a properly-executed proxy can receive the \$10 credit.
2. The member or their eligible proxy representative must be registered prior to the collection of votes at approximately 11:15 a.m. Anyone arriving after the voting process is completed will not receive the credit.
3. Only one credit per membership.

TEC 2016 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, and only (1) \$10 credit is allowed 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 Cass City Park, Cass City, Michigan, at 10 a.m., on the 11th day of June, 2016.

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.

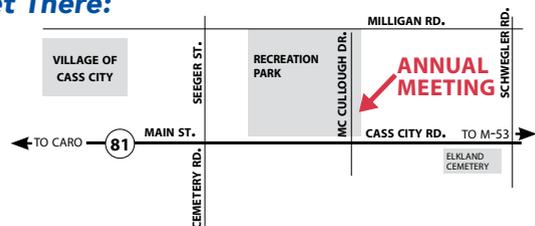
Witness my hand and seal this _____ day of June, 2016.

X _____
Signature of Member giving proxy

X _____
Witness

How To Get There:

Cass City is about 15 miles east of Caro on M-81, and about 3.5 miles west of M-53



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.