

# 2015 ANNUAL REPORT



## **BEMIDJI**

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Bemidji, MN 56601  
218.444.1234  
888.586.3100

## **GRAND RAPIDS**

1220 S. Pokegama Ave.  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
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# NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

60th Annual Meeting of Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative

**Wednesday, May 25, 2016**  
**Paul Bunyan Communications Headquarters**  
**Bemidji, Minnesota**

**Business Meeting 3:30 pm**  
**Coop Celebration 4:30 pm**

You need not be present at Business Meeting to be eligible for door prizes. Dinner will be served continuously during the Annual Cooperative Celebration.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

Dave Schultz,  
Chief Financial Officer

## OPERATING REPORTS

Kathy Peterson,  
Board President

Gary Johnson,  
CEO & General Manager

## MINUTES FROM THE 59TH PAUL BUNYAN RURAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE ANNUAL MEETING

The 59th Annual Meeting of the members of Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative was held at Paul Bunyan Communications Headquarters on May 20, 2015, commencing at 3:30 pm.

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 pm by President Kathy Peterson who presided as Chairperson throughout the meeting. President Peterson announced that a quorum was present with 60 members in attendance.

Reverend Doug Giese of the Bemidji Evangelical Covenant Church gave the invocation.

Gary Eklund acted as Secretary throughout the meeting.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to dispense with the reading of the official notice and proof of mailing.

A motion was made, seconded and carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the last Annual Meeting and approve them as presented.

The President introduced the current board of directors.

President Peterson presented the Report of the President.

The Annual Financial Report was given by Chief Financial Officer Dave Schultz. A motion was made, seconded and carried to accept the financial report.

The Manager's Report was given by CEO & General Manager Gary Johnson.

President Peterson called for unfinished business, there was none.

Teller Chairperson Joy Heller announced the following voting result:

**Voting on the proposed Bylaw revisions was 1,771 yes votes and 82 no votes to approve the Bylaw revisions as presented.**

There was no new business.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, on motion made, seconded and carried the meeting adjourned.

# SERVICE TERRITORY



## MISSION STATEMENT

Paul Bunyan Rural Telephone Cooperative is committed to meeting the needs and expectations of our members and other customers by providing quality innovative communications services.

We commit ourselves to caring, cooperation and respect in our relations with members, customers, employees and our communities.

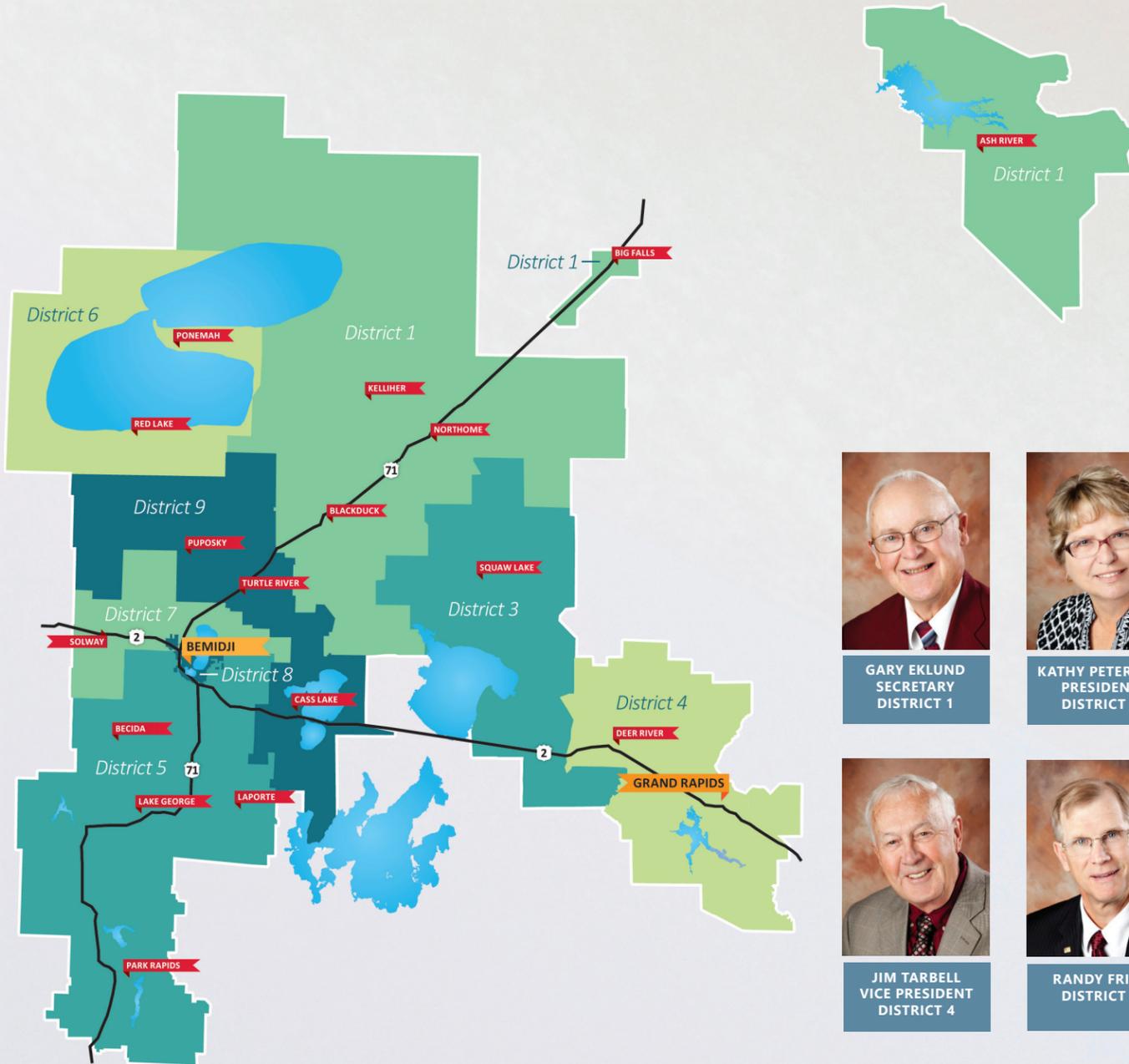
We strive to enhance the quality of life in our service area by accepting a leadership role in rural communications and economic development projects.

We operate in the highest tradition of the cooperative philosophy, as stated in our by-laws, while providing for the financial well-being of the cooperative and its members.

# BOARD of DIRECTORS

# 2015 YEAR IN REVIEW

Gary Johnson - CEO/General Manager



GLEND A MARTIN  
DISTRICT 6



BRUCE CAMPBELL  
DISTRICT 7



JIM SUTTON  
DISTRICT 8



TIM HINS  
TREASURER  
DISTRICT 9



GARY EKLUND  
SECRETARY  
DISTRICT 1



KATHY PETERSON  
PRESIDENT  
DISTRICT 3



JIM TARBELL  
VICE PRESIDENT  
DISTRICT 4



RANDY FRISK  
DISTRICT 5

Wow, what a year 2015 was for our cooperative! Every year is busy, but 2015 will stand out because of the new services that we launched including the GigaZone, our initiative to turn our state of the art communications network into one of the largest gigabit networks in the country.

As I have noted before but it is important to repeat, the GigaZone is the future of our cooperative and provides the next generation of broadband Internet services with speeds starting at 250 Mbps and up to 1,000 Mbps (a gigabit) are available. GigaZone Integrated Wi-Fi services capable of handling the higher GigaZone Internet speeds are provided free for the first six months. A lot of progress was made in the first year of upgrading our network for the GigaZone! As I write this, over 17,000 locations are already within the GigaZone and we are poised to bring it to nearly all of our cooperative service area within the next two years. This is an amazing accomplishment, especially considering that many rural areas across the country and in Minnesota are still trying to gain access to the most basic of high-speed Internet services.

In addition to the great progress we have made in getting GigaZone services out to more members, the project itself has gained a lot of attention, not just locally but nationally. Our Cooperative has received multiple awards for the project including:

- **Winner of the Most Innovative Gigabit Broadband Service - Light Reading 2015 Leading Lights awards program.** The national award recognizes the communications provider that has launched the most innovative Gigabit Broadband service during the past year. Your cooperative was selected over other providers across the country, including the other finalists, large national or regional corporations AT&T, C Spire, and TDS Telecom.
- **NTCA - The Rural Broadband Association Certified Gig-Capable Provider.** For delivering gigabit broadband speeds and enabling technological innovation in our service area.

- **NTCA Smart Rural Community Award.** The goal of the NTCA Smart Rural Community initiative is to foster the development of smart communities throughout rural America and Canada by encouraging innovative implementation of broadband solutions and access to next-generation applications for distance learning, telehealth services, public safety and security. Smart Rural Community provides educational programming, matching grant resources and an award program to recognize top-performing communities. NTCA recognized Paul Bunyan Communications as a rural service provider that embodies Smart Rural Community principles.
- **Bemidji Area Chamber of Commerce 2015 Business of the Year.** This award recognizes exceptional business performance, growth, management, customer service, and commitment to the community.

I also had the privilege to participate on a gigabit panel at the NTCA-The Rural Broadband Association Annual Conference last winter with Joe Reardon the former Mayor of Kansas City which was selected as the first Google Fiber community, and Don Macke the Director for the Center of Rural Entrepreneurship. The purpose of the panel was to discuss Gigabit connectivity and the fact it brings more than just high-speed data to customers. It fosters innovation and economic vitality, benefiting the entire community while promoting entrepreneurship and economic development.

It is an honor to be recognized for our efforts, but we did not start the GigaZone project to win awards. We are doing the work and making the investment for one purpose, you, our members. The future of our region and the communities we serve depends upon access to high quality communication services and there is no doubt the GigaZone will provide just that well into the future.

Along with the GigaZone, our cooperative started providing Business IT services

last year. The same highly skilled staff that designs, builds, and supports the largest fiber optic data network in northern Minnesota, can now help your business with all of your IT needs. Our team works with businesses to create and maintain an effective and secure IT infrastructure. Your data network and related systems are critical to the success of your business and we are uniquely positioned to help. There are a variety of different ways we can support your business and I encourage you to get more information online or at our office.

Paul Bunyan Television service evolves continually and in 2015 we added several new channels to PBTv service that had not been previously offered. We also added many more networks to our high definition service and to PBTv Everywhere, a free service to all PBTv subscribers to watch network content on the go with a tablet, computer, or smart phone. There are now over 100 networks available through PBTv Everywhere with even more coming this year.

The future of Paul Bunyan Communications is bright. As a cooperative, we are able to have a long-term view of investing in our rural region. This perspective explains our nearly two decades of fiber optic network expansion which now serves more than 5,000 square miles of northern Minnesota. This advanced infrastructure enables your cooperative to offer state of the art communication services today, like GigaZone, and will empower the next technologies to come. We're ready!

Our cooperative is only as good as its membership, staff, and board of directors. We are as strong as ever. 2015 was another successful year for our cooperative. Thank you for your continued membership and support.

Gary Johnson  
CEO/General Manager



## HIGH SCHOOLS

### BEMIDJI

Bradley Kovacovich  
Kylie St. Peter

### BLACKDUCK

Andrew Nissen  
Sasha Pfannenstein

### BIGFORK

Melissa Grover  
Torri Jean  
Paolo Lehinger

### CASS LAKE/BENA

Megan Brun  
Alexa Brunelle  
Vincent Robinson  
Amanda Wright

### DEER RIVER

Isaac Rasmusson  
Brandi Scott

### GRAND RAPIDS

Dillon Campbell  
Rebecca Kuechle

### KELLIHER

Mitchell Nistler  
Breanna Salmonson

### LAPORTE

Marissa Hallett  
Kristine Pierce

### NORTHOME

Bree Lindley  
Donald White

### PARK RAPIDS

Jordan McCollum  
Bria Wolf

### RED LAKE

Tatianna McLain  
Brianna Cook

### WALKER

Ashlin Elling  
Toby Nihgaat

## POST SECONDARY SCHOOLS

### BEMIDJI STATE UNIVERSITY

Nelson Castillo  
Jim Dixon  
Samantha Glover  
Sam Heyin  
Rebecca Kuechle  
Rachael Riley  
Ben Skaar  
Evan Skaar  
Breanna Sollie  
Rochelle Stevens  
Jack Stigman

### ITASCA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Payton Mackbee

### NORTHWEST TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Kari Frenzel  
Michelle Fried

### OAK HILLS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

Aaron Hulsebus

### RED LAKE NATION COLLEGE

Betty Kimbrell  
Jennifer Schoenborn

### LEECH LAKE TRIBAL COLLEGE

Alana Gross

## EMPLOYEES

### MANAGEMENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER & GENERAL MANAGER

Gary Johnson

### CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

Dave Schultz

### NETWORK OPERATIONS MANAGER

Rob St. Clair

### INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY & DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Steve Howard

### CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER

Christie Turn

### ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Elaine Iverson

### ACCOUNTING & HUMAN RESOURCES

Jackie Bergerson  
Terri Crews  
Jon Danker  
Julie Geerdes  
Karen Gaasvig  
Rob Noren  
Crystal Peterson  
Amanda Sande  
Bonnie Wichern

### MARKETING

Brian Bissonette  
Don Dale  
Bob Lindberg

### DISPATCH

Tammy Eidenschink  
Anna Lauer  
Corina Pafko  
Mike Plotts  
Meggen Solheim  
Alison Voss

### ENGINEERING

Chris Battista  
Patti Church  
Andy Fisher  
Brian Mustonen  
Matt Proulx  
Sharon Swanson  
Ron Vold

### DATA & VIDEO SERVICES

Josh Almendinger  
Leo Anderson  
Nelson Castillo  
Lisa Geerdes  
Heather Hanson  
John Harty  
Adam Hellquist  
Grant Hicok  
Aaron Huls  
Russ Krook  
Maria Kuechle  
Jonathan Lundstrom  
Crystal Mattfield  
Jesse Mix  
Nate Nolting  
Brandon Odegard  
Carly Page  
Nathan Peske  
Beau Seeger  
Loren Scramstad  
Stacy Trask  
Daniel Walden  
Barb Zdenek

### CUSTOMER SERVICE

Wendy Britton  
Jennifer Deeds  
Dawn Drotts  
Cindy Fenske  
Tia Graham  
Melinda Hall  
Leah Hendricks  
Sarah Hightshoe  
Tonya Jaycox  
Debra Jensen  
Mary Jane Knapp  
Liz Meade  
Jenny Miller  
Lisa Neary  
Stacey Nelson  
Cindy Nyhusmoen  
Gail Pederson  
Wanda Rieger  
Shawn Sauer  
Terri Schaubhut  
Jackye Severts  
Jolene Silk  
Micha Smith  
Tiffany Spoons  
Jen Tomlinson  
Kalsie Vanasse  
Brenda Williams

### MAINTENANCE

Pat Dockendorf  
Bruce Simenson

### BUSINESS SALES

Rosie Berg  
Chloe Keprios  
Kari Gregg  
Chuck Hildebrandt  
Lorie Sathre

### OUTSIDE PLANT

Kent Aker  
Tog Anderson  
Jeremy Arlt  
Darren Bock  
Duane Bode  
Kyle Christianson  
Dwight Crandall  
George Daigle  
Tiffany Falk  
Casey Fering  
Brett Folland  
Bradley Hess  
Randy Garrigan  
Mike Gregg  
Thane Jansen  
Tim Karas  
Trent Larson  
Chris Lucia  
Ryan Maher  
Tadd McFarren  
Patrick Mullan  
John Nistler  
Chris Oelrich  
Ryan Otting  
Ted Rutherford  
Danny Samson  
Jeffrey Schaper  
Gary Storlie  
Travis Tyler  
Wayne Vredenburg

### CENTRAL OFFICE

Daryl Bjerke  
Stephen Mathias  
James Novak  
Cheryl Pauly

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

Paul Bunyan Communications reinforces the importance of education by donating over \$20,000 in scholarships to area high schools and post secondary institutions. We would like to congratulate all students who were awarded scholarships during the 2015 school year!