

Tuscola County Democratic Party Newsletter

September 2026

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Our Goals

- Ensure honest and transparent government.
- Restore and protect our environment.
- Support strong economic growth and opportunity.
- Strengthen voter access and turnout.
- Promote affordable education and health care for all.

Officers

Chair: Alex Kirsch

Vice Chair: Lynn Kunze Adams

Secretary: Chuck Stockwell

Treasurer: Lisa Bertsch

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Notice of Our September Meeting

The monthly meeting of the Tuscola County Democratic Party will be held on **Thursday, September 17th**, at the Brentwood, 178 Park Drive, Caro, MI. Social hour begins at 5:30 p.m. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m.

You may attend the September 17th meeting via Zoom. If you wish to do that, give Chair Alex Kirsch a call at (503) 507-6324 and he will send you the link.

Highlights of Our August Meeting

Chair Alex Kirsch called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, August 20th, at our headquarters. Fourteen members and three guests attended the meeting in person, and one member attended via Zoom. Vice Chair Lynn Kunze Adams gave us an update of current events. Lisa Kile of One Team offered to help us in our efforts to mobilize Democratic voters for the November election. April Dicks gave us an update on the Caro Pop-up Protests. Chair Alex Kirsch and Sherene McCloy told us about numerous planned local events, including debates among candidates, a town hall on election security, and the Pumpkin Festival parade. April Osentoski proposed a "Dunk-A-Democrat" fundraiser. Alison Blattner told us about the work of the Caro Fight for the First committee. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.

Tuscola Dems Welcome Your Donations



To donate, simply aim the camera on your smart phone at the QR image shown here, and it will take you directly to ActBlue, where you can donate whatever amount you wish.

Thank you!

Why Does Everyone Hate Data Centers?



Recent polls have shown that most Michiganders don't want a data center anywhere near where they live. They say that data centers are ugly and noisy and they will drive up our electric bills and suck up our water.

Here are some facts about data centers:

What is a data center? A data center is a huge windowless building or group of buildings that houses computer servers used to store, process, and distribute vast amounts of data. Data center capacity is measured in megawatts (MW).

Much of the current outrage over data centers is focused on so-called "hyperscale" facilities with capacities of 100 MW or more. A single hyperscale data center, running flat out 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, would consume at least 2,400 megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity each day. That's equivalent to the daily power usage of 85,000 households.

How many data centers are currently operating in Michigan? There are already more than 70 data centers in the state, but none of them are "hyperscale" facilities. The largest facility currently operating in Michigan is the Pyramid Data Center in Grand Rapids, which became operational in 2017 with a capacity of about 40 MW.

Why the sudden interest in building hyperscale data centers in Michigan? Tech giants like Google and Microsoft are targeting the state due to lucrative tax incentives passed in 2024 by state lawmakers that eliminate the 6 percent sales and use tax on data center construction and equipment. Data center developers often get local property tax breaks as well.

How many data centers are planned in Michigan and where? Currently at least fourteen hyperscale data centers are either planned or under construction in Michigan:

1. *The Stargate Data Center* is under construction in Washtenaw County's Saline Township. It is being developed by Related Digital in partnership with OpenAI and Oracle. This data center will have a capacity of 1,400 MW and will be housed in three buildings totaling roughly 1.65 million square feet sitting on 250 acres of land.
2. *Project Cannoli* is a planned data center on 282-acre site in Wayne County's Van Buren Township. It will have a capacity of 1,000 MW and will be housed in an 800,000 square foot building sitting on 280 acres of land. It is being developed by Panattoni Development Company for Google.
3. *The University of Michigan/Los Alamos National Laboratory Facility* is a planned research facility in Washtenaw County's Ypsilanti Township. Township officials and residents have expressed strong opposition to the project.
4. *The Project Flex Data Center* is a planned data center on 180-acre campus with six buildings totaling 1.8 million square feet of floor space in Oakland County's Lyon Township. It is being developed by Verrus for Anthropic. The project faces a critical planning commission vote scheduled for September 14th.

5. *The Southfield Data Center* is a planned data center on a 12-acre plot on Inkster Road in Oakland County's Southfield Township being developed by Metroblocks. It will occupy a 110,000 square-foot building and require 100 MW of power. Before construction can begin, the developer must still secure final building permits, financing, and customer agreements.
6. The Switch Communications Group plans to expand its data center at the former Steelcase Pyramid Campus in Kent County. The developer says the data center will eventually occupy 1.8 million square feet of space and have a capacity of 320 MW.
7. Microsoft has purchased farmland in Allegan County's Dorr Township. Local opposition and concerns over electricity and water usage have emerged, and Dorr Township officials have enacted a 12-month moratorium on data center development.
8. *The Augusta Data Center* is a planned data center in Washtenaw County's Augusta Township with a capacity of 100 MW being developed by Thor Equities. In August, 90 percent of local voters chose to overturn the industrial rezoning, returning the land to its original agricultural-residential status and halting the project.
9. *Covenant Business Park* is a planned data center in Kent County's Lowell Township being developed by Franklin Partners for Microsoft. The project has been temporarily put on hold.
10. *The Dowagiac Data Center* is a planned data center being developed by Hyperscale Data in Cass County. The facility would have a capacity of 340 MW and sit on 83 acres of land. The project faces intense local backlash.
11. *Marshall Technology Center* is a planned data center in Brooks Industrial Park in Calhoun County being developed by Alterra Development. The developer has been working through due-diligence periods to conduct environmental and site evaluation.
12. *Gibraltar McLouth Steel Data Center* is a planned 100 MW data center at the former McLouth Steel Superfund site on Jefferson Avenue in Wayne County being developed by Raeden Acquisitions. The Gibraltar City Council has enacted a 12-month temporary moratorium on data center development.
13. A data center is proposed in Ingham County's Vevay Township on more than 400 acres of farmland. The developer is Comino Development, but the end user has not yet been named.
14. Stronach Township officials in Manistee County began discussions in the spring of 2026 about a possible data center on 150 acres on Stronach Road, but residents have raised concerns. A six-month moratorium took effect in June 2026, and no formal application has yet been filed.

It is unlikely that all these proposed data centers will ever be built due to the public outcry against them. Many of them are currently on hold, others face one-year moratoriums, and some public officials who voted to approve data center applications are facing recall petitions. A proposed data center in Monroe County's Dundee Township is uncertain because public outcry prompted township officials to enact a moratorium on data center development. A proposed data center in Kalkaska County would rely on public land that state officials have said they have no desire to sell. A proposed data center in Kalamazoo County is also on hold after public pushback.

How will data centers be powered. According to the Michigan Public Service Commission, Michigan's peak energy demand could surge by 39 percent if every data center now proposed were to be actually built. DTE has said it can absorb increased demand by ramping up production at existing power plants, plus buying power on the open market and building battery storage facilities that can be recharged during off-peak hours. Long-term, both DTE and Consumers Energy officials have said they'll likely have to build new fossil fuel plants to meet increased demand.

How would data centers affect electricity rates? The impact on rates will depend how utilities structure their contracts with data center developers. Michigan state law requires data centers to absorb the cost of system upgrades, so ratepayers don't wind up subsidizing the industry's hefty energy use. Last November, the Michigan Public Service Commission approved a rate structure for data centers in Consumers Energy territory that aims to protect residents by locking data centers into long-term contracts and requiring Consumers Energy to prove that the facilities will pay all costs for infrastructure that serves them. That order doesn't apply to DTE Energy, which wants to negotiate *ad hoc* contracts with customers.

Do data centers use lots of water? Depending on the technology used to cool the servers, data centers can consume vast quantities of water or relatively little. Most data centers use evaporative cooling, a water-intensive process by which water vapor is used to cool equipment. For instance, Project Cannoli in Wayne County will draw as much as 3.6 million gallons of water per day. On the other hand, the Stargate Data Center in Washtenaw County will rely on closed-loop technology in which cooling water is recycled through the system but the water savings will come with a tradeoff: Closed-loop cooling gobbles up more electricity because the cooling water must be repeatedly re-chilled.

How noisy are data centers? The main sources of noise are rooftop chillers, air handlers, and thousands of internal fans running constantly to prevent overheating. Right next to a hyperscale data center, the noise level is about 75 to 90 dB — comparable to a lawnmower or vacuum cleaner. At 300 feet away, the level is about 60 dB —like a central air conditioner. At 800 feet away, the noise level drops to a faint refrigerator-like hum.

How many jobs would data centers provide? Labor unions in the building trades strongly support data centers because they generate lots of high-paying work during construction, but data centers are mostly just boxes full of computers with little ongoing need for human labor, so there would be few permanent jobs. For example, a data center in Texas employed 1,500 workers during construction but operated with a permanent staff of only 100 people.

About This Newsletter

This newsletter is published monthly. It is sent by email to members of the Tuscola County Democratic Party and is posted on our website, <https://www.tuscoladems.com>. Party members are encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter. Please limit your submission to 800 words or less and email it by the first of the month to Chuck Stockwell at cwstockwell@gmail.com.



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a better place
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