



EVENTS POSTED ONLINE

Editor's Note: Co-op events, including board meeting schedules, are posted at www.lakecountrypower.coop. Go to "Community & Kids" and click "Events."

MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT

Join us at our service centers from 3 p.m. until 6 p.m. for the annual Conservation Days – picnics, energy tips and prizes.

May 20: Virginia

May 21: Kettle River

May 22: Grand Rapids

HOLIDAY OBSERVED

All LCP offices will be closed May 26 in observance of Memorial Day. If you experience a power outage, please use our IVR (Interactive Voice Response system). Our phones are answered 24 hours a day.

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Get WildBlue satellite based high-speed Internet. Call 1-866-567-1919 today!

PRIMARY NUMBER

Lake Country Power's phones are answered 24 hours a day. Our primary phone number is 1-800-421-9959.

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Technology assists with outage calls

When heavy storms roll through the region, power outages are bound to happen from time-to-time. In 2007, 67.5 percent of the reported outages were caused by trees or branches that contacted power lines or knocked down poles. As the number of outages escalates during harsh conditions, so do the number of phone calls from members calling to report their outage.

In these instances, if a live call center agent isn't available to answer your phone call, your call is directed to an automated system which gives you the option to report an outage via IVR, an Interactive Voice Response system. If you prefer, it will allow you to wait on hold until a call center agent is available.

While this technology supplements our efforts to answer all calls, we make every effort to have a live person answer phone calls during regular business hours. In fact, recent data show that only two percent of calls had been picked

up by the automated system during our regular business hours (January through March 2008).

That means 98 percent of the calls were answered by a live person. During major outages, we estimate that in excess of 50

OUTAGE CALLS, CONT'D ON PAGE 4

Steps to report an outage

When outages occur, our Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system can gather outage reports from members and assist with outage restoration. The following steps explain how to use IVR:

- 1. Call 1-800-421-9959:** If it is outside of normal business hours, or all lines are busy, your call will go into an automated answering system, which will give you the option to report an outage via our IVR, or wait on the line for the next available call center agent.
- 2. The automated system will give the option to press 1 to report a power outage:**
 - When using the IVR, use the primary telephone number for your service location. If using a cell phone, be sure the signal is strong enough to work properly with the IVR system.
 - If you have more than one account with us, choose one of the accounts to help identify yourself.
 - In the event the system cannot automatically identify your service location, it will redirect you back to the automated answering service, giving you the opportunity to try the automated system

again, or wait on the line for an available call center agent.

- You may hear information about an outage affecting your area after the system identifies you with a specific outage. This is the "aware" feature that improves the co-op's outage communications and reduces call volume.
 - Depending on the outage significance, you may hear a pre-recorded message giving information about an outage before the system asks you to respond.
 - Describe the outage cause if you know it.
 - The IVR will inform you when it has sufficient information so our crews can be dispatched to restore your power.
 - Hang up.
- 3. Dispatch takes action:**
 - The information you enter through the IVR system will automatically be sent to our dispatch center so we are aware of your outage and can send crews to your area.



Our Energy, Our Future

A dialogue with America



Rick Lemonds,
General Manager

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Washington, D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct

impact on our cooperative – and on you, the co-op member and other electric consumers.

Climate change is but one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the country will be short of power within one or two years.

And yet energy supply isn't an issue our elected representatives are spending a lot of time on. These forces, the desire by government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and the growing demand for power by consumers, are about to collide.

Some people say we can meet demand through efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is we need all the efficiency and renewable energy we can get, but that will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true

leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership — without a sound, responsible plan — government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bill.

We, as electric co-op members and constituents, must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. That's why we want to encourage you to contact your elected officials.


You don't need to be an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions helps find the answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping your lights on and your electric bills affordable.

Right now, members of Congress as well as state elected

officials are hearing from special interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. We need a plan people can live with today while we deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.

To get the conversation started, there is a Web site that will send an e-mail for you. Go to www.ourenergy.coop and plug in your address. There you'll be able to ask a series of questions to your representatives in

Washington. We're kicking off this effort with a basic, but critical, question: What are they doing to make sure we'll have the power we need in the future?

Far too often questions don't get asked by policy makers until plans go wrong. We believe it makes sense to know the answers before the laws are passed. You can help your elected officials and yourself by having this conversation. 



Our Energy, Our Future

A Dialogue With America

Productive dialogue begins by asking tough questions and requiring straight answers. Start by asking your elected officials these questions to get the dialogue headed in the right direction


1. Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide; What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?
2. What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?
3. Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

Start the conversation with your elected officials now. Visit www.ourenergy.coop.

Think safety at all times

May is National Electrical Safety Month. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, electrical wiring (improper installation, or damaged or deteriorated wiring and cords) sparks an estimated 53,600 home fires each year. These fires cause more than 500 deaths, 1,400 injuries and \$1.4 billion in property damage and loss each year. Additionally, emergency rooms



treat almost 2,500 children each year for injuries triggered by sticking objects into electrical outlets. All of these can be prevented. Visit www.esfi.org for safety tips and reminders. 

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Landscape for energy efficiency. Carefully placed trees can save up to 25 percent of a typical household's energy used for heating and cooling. Plant your trees strategically. Don't plant near power lines, but do plant to shade your west and east facing windows.

Hooray for Conservation!



Leo Wilenius, Member Service Supervisor

Saving energy is such an important “topic of the day,” one wouldn’t think that it needs more promotion. The fact is, promotion (may I suggest cheerleading?) and not just

more energy-saving stuff, is exactly what’s needed for many of us before we come to appreciate the benefits. In short, the conservation movement needs your help.

Whether your style tends to be that of a cheerleader or on the other end of the spectrum, a drill sergeant, it’s important to remember that many

methods of teaching conservation values can work. Patience and persistence are tools you’ll need. If you’re working with teenagers, be prepared for a “tough sell” since this age group uses more energy through long showers, frequent refrigerator visits, more and sometimes unnecessary clothes washing and drying, televisions/video games, you name it. Take heart — eventually they inherit the values of conservation if you practice them yourself.

I have no scientific evidence that cheerleading works, but I have something almost as good — a real life story about my friend John. A short while ago, John left a message on my phone, and it went like this, “Hey Leo, knock off the energy-saving push would ya? Jane [his wife] is

driving me nuts with all this stuff!” (Click)

To those who don’t know him, it could sound like John was being perhaps a bit testy. But trust me, he was just trying to be — well, you know, sometimes he is a bit testy. But seriously, his good-natured call exemplifies the human nature in all of us which tends to resist change initially, even when it’s good for us. So Johnnie, please keep listening. It’ll come to you.

There you have it. The mission is yours if you choose to accept it. Be a cheerleader at home and at work for conservation. Have fun with it and stay with it. Make a difference. And a big “sis-boom-ba” for your efforts! Until next time, save energy whenever you can. 📺

Pay less for power; avoid critical peak use

Electric utilities have traditionally charged members an average rate for electricity — if you used more then you would pay more, but the price per kilowatt-hour didn’t change much. Often, consumers don’t know when wholesale power prices are high or energy supplies are low. However, reducing the demand for electricity during these times is a top priority to help keep energy affordable for all members.

Through automated metering, it is expected that families will be able to see how much electricity they’re using, and perhaps someday in the future, the price of electricity each hour. This ability will give members plenty of opportunities to conserve electricity when prices rise.

In the meantime, Great River Energy, Lake Country Power’s wholesale power supplier, will begin charging your electric co-op a higher rate — about three times more than the average rate — for electricity used during these critical peak periods this summer. Critical peak periods may total up to 40 hours this year and will typically occur on the hottest days of the summer.

“Demand for electricity changes continuously,” says Greg Padden, Great

River Energy manager of member services. “There are certain hours during the day when demand ‘peaks’ at levels much higher than the rest of the day.

“When system peaks occur at the same time that energy prices are high, like on hot summer afternoons, it becomes critical for Great River Energy to manage the high peaks. Purchasing expensive energy from the market during critical peak periods increases the average cost for all co-op members.”

How you can help this summer

- Turn off unneeded lights and close your curtains
- Delay running the dishwasher, clothes washer, dryers, and other major appliances until 10 p.m., or do chores on the weekends
- Use ENERGY STAR labeled lighting and appliances in your home and business
- Choose meals that don’t contribute additional heat to your home
- Set your air conditioner to 78 degrees or higher, or sign up for Cycled Air Conditioning by calling us at 800-421-9959 📺



OUTAGE CONT'D FROM COVER

percent of the calls during regular business hours are answered by the automated system.

One of the advantages of reporting an outage through IVR is the ability to leave a voice message giving Lake Country Power all the pertinent details of your outage. Perhaps a power line is down, maybe you know about a broken pole, or maybe you heard a loud bang or saw a flash near electric equipment. These are all clues that can help us better assess the outage situation and one way you can assist in the restoration process.


Our dispatching software keeps record of when members call to report outages. This helps Lake Country Power track who called, when and how many calls were answered through IVR.

The system also allows your co-op to leave a message on the system

for members describing the outage. The message you may hear provides confirmation that the co-op is aware of the issue in different areas of its service area.

"IVR has been beneficial especially during power outages to gather outage information," said Patrick Bleth, quality assurance manager. "Whether you talk to a live person or the IVR, the information you provide goes to the same spot—our dispatching software."

Web site posting


When outages affect more than 500 co-op members, information is posted online about the outage. Visit the "outage center" section of Lake Country Power's Web site at www.lakecountrypower.coop for the latest outage updates. 

Cold temperatures drive cost adder to power bill

Colder than anticipated temperatures this winter, coupled with increased use of electric heaters to warm homes, have resulted in increased energy usage throughout the state. At the same time, one of the power plants owned by Great River Energy, Lake Country Power's wholesale power supplier, was unexpectedly down for maintenance for two weeks and the cost of replacement power was expensive.

As a result, higher than expected power cost adjustments on the bills Lake Country Power receives from GRE has impacted the co-op's operating margin so far this year.

The Lake Country Power Board is monitoring the situation and will assess whether the Wholesale Power Cost Rider on member electric bills will have to be adjusted upward later this year to recover the unexpected increase in wholesale power costs.

One way members can reduce their electric bill is by implementing energy efficiency improvements in your home or participating in Lake Country Power's numerous energy saving programs. The co-op can also calculate your energy use and budget it evenly over the year. Look for more ideas each month in our newsletter and on our Web site at www.lakecountrypower.coop. 

CONDENSED BOARD MINUTES

February 22, 2008 Regular Monthly Meeting

The following reports were given:

President Bruckbauer reported on his activities during the last month, which included attendance at two meetings.

Holding Company Board President Liimatainen reported that he had been in contact with the auditing firm, Larson Allen, concerning payment to the IRS regarding federal taxes that were estimated for 2006.

General Manager Lemonds reported about his activity on the MREA Service Area Task Force. The design of Lake Country Power's new service center in Mountain Iron is also being considered, along with the

assessment of achieving LEED (Leadership in Energy and Efficiency Design) for the building.

The following actions were taken:

Approved Director Liimatainen's attendance at the 2008 NRECA Director's Conference.

Approved President Bruckbauer's attendance at the REMA CEO/Board Chair Conference.

Approved Director Smith's attendance at the MREA 2008 Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C.

Editor's Note: These board minutes have been condensed. A full copy of the board minutes can be read at www.lakecountrypower.coop in the "Member's Area." You'll need to sign up for access if you haven't already. Or call 800-421-9959 for a printed copy.

Consolidated Operating Statement

Year-to-Date – February 2008

(Preliminary and un-audited – prepared for *Newsline* prior to board acceptance)

	2008	2007
Electric Operating Revenue.....	\$12,709,855	\$11,457,330
Cost of Purchased Power	\$8,618,056	\$5,902,554
Distribution Expense —		
Operations and Maintenance	1,258,342	1,138,421
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	441,904	409,757
Administrative and General Exp.	731,636	808,215
Depreciation, Amortization and Interest Expense	1,744,118	1,833,946
TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES	\$12,794,057	\$10,092,893
Net Electric Operating Margins.....	(84,201)	1,364,437
Non-Operating Margins.....	12,077	(10,674)
TOTAL MARGINS BEFORE SUBSIDIARIES	\$(72,124)	1,353,763
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries (reported quarterly).....	-	-
TOTAL MARGINS.....	\$(72,124)	\$1,353,763

Editor's Note: These financials are condensed. A complete set of financials can be viewed at www.lakecountrypower.coop in the "Member's Area." You'll need to sign up for access if you haven't already. Or call 800-421-9959 for a copy.


Newsline

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