

Scholarship deadline approaching



High School Seniors: The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship is your opportunity to earn a \$4,000 scholarship from Lake Country Power!

- Apply online at www.lakecountrypower.coop
- Deadline for student materials submitted electronically is 11:59 p.m., January 31
- Parents or legal guardians of applying students must be active LCP members
- Student must have a full-time enrollment status at a technical school, community college or university
- “At Large” category is for member-students who attend schools outside of the LCP service territory
- Teachers must submit letters of recommendation via the online link no later than February 15

This summer, go on a power trip to D.C.

Attention high school sophomores and juniors! Spend six days in our nation’s capital for an unforgettable experience on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Lake Country Power is seeking applications from interested students through February 20. Tour dates are June 18-23.

Over 1,900 student delegates from all over the country go on the Youth Tour in D.C. each year, including at least 40 students from Minnesota. Students visit with their congressional representatives, tour some of the most famous museums in the world and make memories and friends that will last a lifetime. They also learn about the electric cooperative business model.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a tradition and favorite opportunity among high school students since 1957.

Interested high school sophomores and juniors whose parents/guardians are Lake Country Power members are encouraged to apply for this outstanding opportunity. The application deadline is February 20 and can be completed online at www.lakecountrypower.coop/youth-tour.

This co-op sponsored educational event includes airfare, lodging, meals, transportation, special events and tours.

For additional information about the Youth Tour, visit www.youthtour.org or www.mrea.org.

Email Tami Zaun at tzaun@lcp.coop if you would like to know more about applying for the tour. School counselors have been informed about this outstanding opportunity and can be a local resource as well. ■



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Condensed Board Minutes

October 31, 2023 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Craig Olson reported he received several member calls that he referred to management. He also reported that the board and LCP management met for strategic planning on Oct. 11-12, and the session led to a lot of good discussion and exchange of information.

General Manager Mark Bakk reported the Northland Reliability Project is expected to cost over \$1 billion. He added that Great River Energy (GRE) postponed a vote to change its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Bakk also reported that the upper Midwest is facing a possible winter capacity shortfall in coming years and it will need to add capacity in the future.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved 2023 capital credit retirement of \$1.5 million of which \$1 million is LCP's portion and \$500,000 is GRE's portion.

Approved the 2024 director election timeline beginning January 26, 2024, with the Annual Meeting scheduled for April 25, 2024, at Merritt Elementary School in Mountain Iron.

Approved a new Vision, Mission and Values for Lake Country Power after a presentation and consideration during a strategic planning session in October.

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



► Lisa Diehl Foreman of Edina took this "winter beauty" photograph at Side Lake.

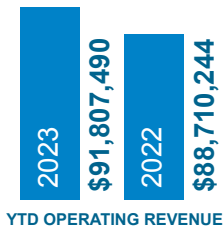


ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

During winter months, ensure your home is well sealed and properly insulated to reduce the need for excessive heating. Seal air leaks around your home and add insulation where needed to save up to 10% on annual energy bills. Install weather stripping on exterior doors and apply caulk around windows. Check attic insulation levels and hire a qualified contractor if additional insulation is needed. Source: energy.gov

BY THE NUMBERS | OCTOBER 2023

Lake Country Power is committed to responsibly managing resources to ensure financial stability of the cooperative. Below is a snapshot of the year-to-date unaudited financial report. A complete set of financial statements can be viewed at www.lakecountrypower.coop under "My Cooperative."



	2023	2022
Cost of Purchased Power	\$44,049,893	\$48,001,652
Other Operating Expenses	\$38,531,150	\$38,198,194
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$82,581,043	\$86,199,846



YTD kWh SOLD
574,567,839

2022 Comparison: 600,690,522

TOTAL MARGINS
\$10,170,569

2022 Comparison: \$3,516,240

	2023	2022
Operating Margins	\$9,226,447	\$2,510,398
Non-Operating Margins	\$944,122	\$1,005,842

51,252
ACTIVE SERVICES

2022 Comparison: 50,989

Utility Plant (Net)



\$297,238,654

2022 Comparison: 281,757,762

Co-op Contacts

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Brian Napstad , District 8	218-485-1528 bnapstad@lcp.coop
Larry Anderson , District 9	218-428-2722 landerson@lcp.coop

Directors are members of the cooperative and are elected to act in the best interests of the co-op with the same care that an ordinarily prudent person in a like position would exercise under similar circumstances.

Directors set policy, approve strategy and are charged with fiduciary responsibility of the cooperative. Directors do not oversee day-to-day LCP operations. Administration of maintenance, electric service and operations are the responsibility of employees and staff.

Members with questions or concerns about service, billing, outages or other service-related matters should call 1-800-421-9959.

Newsline

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Energy that Powers Our Lives

IN THIS ISSUE

Empowering LCP in 2024 and beyond
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Apply for the Youth Tour!

BOARD MEETINGS January 30 ■ February 27 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

LCP completes three-phase rebuild on Lake Vermilion

Lake Country Power completed a 4.2-mile line rebuild on the north side of Lake Vermilion in December 2023, converting the area to three-phase poles and lines in one of the co-op's more unique and rugged terrains.

The age-related project replaced older, smaller poles in favor of the more robust size of the three-phase poles as part of ongoing maintenance of LCP lines. Derek Howe, LCP chief operating officer, said LCP uses eight different factors when looking at rebuilding lines, including the age of poles, number of members served, voltage and outage history.

"In this case, this particular project was a very difficult, remote area, but it has had quite a bit of growth," Howe said. "A lot more homes and cabins have been built up there in recent years, which means more members are using electricity. So we saw that we had a high number of 1940s

and 1950s poles, we saw that we had more than 30 members on the feeder, and we justified it to convert it from a single phase to a three phase service that offers better reliability."

The difficult terrain, marked by steeping hills between poles, ledgerrock and a creek bed, made the three-phase conversion one of the more expensive projects for LCP in 2023. The ledgerrock needed to be blasted to fit the new poles, a cost of about \$4,500 per hole, and the total cost was estimated at \$160,000 a mile. Expenses such as this are offset by the service availability charge that serves all members with needed maintenance,



repairs and upgrades to the system.

Howe said the advantage of blasting the holes is that the company doing the work typically has to make its own access roads to the pole site, then allowing LCP new access roads and quicker restoration for any repairs down the line.

With stronger poles in place in the Lake Vermilion area, Howe said members can expect fewer outages and a shorter duration time on outages.

"The idea is that the three-phase lines are storm-hardened, so that when you get bad weather, you just want it to break the insulator, break the cross arm or have the wire go down, but have the lines be fairly easy for the crews to splice that together," he said. "A broken pole is a lot more difficult to deal with. You need a lot more equipment and it takes a lot more time to get out there. So if the pole can survive the storm, you should see a lot shorter outages."

More images and video of the three-phase project are located at <https://www.youtube.com/@lakecountrypower> ■



Empowering the future of LCP in 2024 and beyond

Ring in the new year sparks a sense of renewed hope and optimism about the future. As the general manager of Lake Country Power, for me, it's a time to reflect on where we are and where we're going.

The last few years have required our employees to navigate unprecedented increases in materials costs and equipment shortages, which they did with great success. Their hard work is reflected in Lake Country Power keeping its rates unchanged for 2024 and allowing us to avoid passing through a 2.4% wholesale power increase to our members.

Our team at Lake Country Power is always looking ahead, using new technologies to improve on our mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity to our members.



By Mark
BAKK
General Manager

One way we do that is through efficiency.

Lake Country Power uses technology to enhance our local grid, limit disruptions and improve outage response time through advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). AMI helps pinpoint the exact location of the outage and can even analyze damaged or tampered meters and helps us save money with real-time data, and ultimately improves power reliability for our entire membership.

Another piece of technology we're using at LCP is a small drone to help us inspect lines and rights-of-way across our service territory. On top of our proactive vegetation management, a drone allows us to more efficiently monitor the health and growth of trees and identify potential problems before they cause an outage, thus providing more reliable service.

As we enter 2024, the newly revised vision statement of Lake Country Power "To exceed our members' expectations," comes to mind.

I want to encourage our members to attend monthly board meetings, the upcoming district and annual meetings or get in touch with me to let us know how we're doing.

One way we measure how effective Lake Country Power is at exceeding your expectations is by hearing from you, our members. I want to thank everyone who participated in the 2023 member satisfaction survey that was taken this last fall.

The American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) survey returned our highest overall score on record for a second straight year. LCP scored a 77, placing us among the best performing utilities surveyed across the nation and above average for the cooperative industry.

It's a number I'm proud of, and it shows Lake Country Power is staying true to our mission of providing safe, reliable and affordable electricity as we turn our focus on 2024.

Have a safe and happy new year! ■

Join us for co-op conversation at 2024 district meetings

Members are invited to join Lake Country Power and your elected directors at the 2024 district meetings in the coming months. Meetings start at 5 p.m. with a light supper, followed by staff updates and time for member questions. If you cannot make your district meeting, you are welcome to attend another date. Please RSVP according to the letter of invitation you will receive in the mail before your district meeting.

District 1: Jason Long
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Monday, April 8
Location: North Woods School
Address: 10248 Olson Rd.
Cook, MN 55723

District 2: Mike Forsman
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Tuesday, March 12
Location: Grand Ely Lodge,
Ridgeview Room
Address: 400 N. Pioneer
Rd., Ely, MN 55731

District 3: Steve Raukar
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 2
Location: Minnesota
Discovery Center,
Taconite Room
Address: 1005 Discovery
Dr., Chisholm, MN 55719

District 4: Jeff Sheldon
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Tuesday, April 9
Location: Balsam
Community Center
Address: 41388 Scenic Hwy.
Bovey, MN 55709

District 5: Bob Bruckbauer
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Monday, March 11
Location: Northland High
School, Remer
Address: 316 E. Main St.,
Remer, MN 56672

District 6: Dan Kingsley
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 29
Location: Blackberry
Town Hall
Address: 25349 Dove Lane,
Grand Rapids, MN 55744

District 7: Craig Olson
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Tuesday, Feb. 27
Location: South Ridge
School (cafeteria)
Address: 8162 Swan Lake
Rd., Culver, MN 55779

District 8: Brian Napstad
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Thursday, April 4
Location: Cromwell Pavilion
Address: 1272 MN-73,
Cromwell, MN 55726

District 9: Larry Anderson
Time/Date: 5 p.m.
Thursday, Feb. 22
Location: Hope
Lutheran Church
Address: 204 Elm Ave.,
Moose Lake, MN 55767

Midwest electric system ready for winter weather

The Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) recently released its annual winter outlook in which it outlines expectations for the winter season. MISO is expecting a mild winter for most of its territory. January is forecasted to have the highest winter peak demand in the range of 102 to 107 gigawatts (GW), with generation supply availability expected to be 122 GW.

“Great River Energy team members are ready to meet our responsibilities to our member owners and MISO by generating and delivering energy regardless of weather conditions,” said Great River Energy Vice President and Chief Power Supply Officer Jon Brekke. “Great River Energy is continuing to invest in its generation and transmission assets to support grid reliability for the future.”

Among other projects, Great River Energy and Minnesota Power are jointly developing the Northland Reliability Project, a 180-mile, 345-kilovolt electric transmission line from northern Minnesota to central Minnesota to ensure continued reliability into the future as the region transitions to greater levels of renewable energy.

MISO stresses the importance of reliability in all seasons, particularly when entering winter and summer when demand for electricity peaks. Great River Energy’s winter reliability plans received an important boost from a recent decision by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC).

The PUC unanimously approved the addition of dual fuel capability at Great River Energy’s Cambridge Peaking Station, which will enable the plant to operate on fuel oil when its primary fuel — natural gas — is either unavailable or prohibitively expensive.



Natural gas peaking plants are an important part of overall reliability of the electric grid by providing generation at times of greatest system need. The addition of dual fuel capability will further enhance overall system reliability and help keep businesses operating and homes safe and warm.

“Electric cooperatives serving Minnesota must be prepared for extreme winter conditions that are normal for our region,” said Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. “Dual fuel capability in Cambridge is a small but absolutely critical enhancement to meet the needs and expectations of our member-owners on the coldest nights of the year.”

Dual fuel capability at Cambridge Peaking Station is expected to be operational in time for the winter of 2025-26. ■

Energy assessments work best in winter

The best timing for an energy assessment or energy audit on your home is in the winter when drafts are easily detected.

Lake Country Power is your contact for general energy assessments, and is your liaison for professional home energy audits by certified energy auditors. The cost of an energy assessment is covered by Lake Country Power, while the cost for a blower door test or infrared analysis is covered by the homeowner.

During a home energy assessment, a complete analysis

is done to your home within 1.5 - 2 hours by a certified energy auditor. The auditor will check your appliances, electronics, the home’s envelope and structure, water heater, lighting, air handling and heating/cooling system.

If you’re interested in receiving an energy assessment/audit, please contact Lake Country Power at 800-421-9959, press 6. A member service representative will help assess your general situation and provide the certified energy auditor with your contact information. The auditor will contact you to schedule an appointment.

Cold weather rule

The Cold Weather Rule, Section 216B.097 of the Minnesota State Statutes, provides that from October 1 through April 30 an electric cooperative cannot disconnect a residential consumer for nonpayment of service, if the disconnect affects the primary heat source and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The consumer declares an inability to pay and completes the Inability to Pay form; and
2. Household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median income. Income may be verified on forms provided by LCP or by the local energy assistance provider with whom the consumer has applied for energy assistance; and
3. The consumer enters into and makes reasonable and timely payments under a mutually

agreeable payment plan, that considers the financial resources of the household; and

4. A consumer receives from LCP referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the consumer's energy bills.

The law does allow for LCP to disconnect when it is necessary from October 1 to April 30, so please act promptly. LCP works with members during the Cold Weather Rule period, just as we do throughout the year. We don't want to interrupt service to any member, but in a cooperative, all members suffer when any bill remains unpaid. If bills remain unpaid, this amount must be absorbed by members who faithfully pay their bill each month. LCP would rather work with members to establish and maintain adequate payment schedules of their past due bill. A statement explaining the payment plan to secure continued service, a Payment Arrangement letter, will be provided.

Before disconnecting service to a residential consumer from October 1 to April 30, the cooperative must provide the following information:

- notice of proposed disconnection (disconnection notice); and
- statement explaining consumers' rights and responsibilities (Inability to Pay form); and
- list of energy assistance providers (Inability to Pay form); and
- forms available for consumer to request cold weather disconnect protection (Inability to Pay form).

If you receive a disconnection notice this winter, you must act promptly. If you do not meet all the conditions of the Cold Weather Rule, mutually acceptable payment arrangements can be set up to prevent interruption of an electric service. Please contact Lake Country Power if you have any questions about the Cold Weather Rule: 800-421-9959.

Energy Assistance Providers

- AEOA: 800-662-5711
- AEOA Virginia: 218-749-2912
- AEOA Duluth: 218-623-3011
- Aitkin County Social Services: 800-328-3744
- Bi County CAP: 800-332-7161
- Bois Forte Tribal: 800-221-8129
- Carlton County Social Services: 800-642-9082
- Cass County Social Services: 218-547-1340
- Fond Du Lac Tribal: 800-365-1613
- Itasca County Social Services: 800-422-0312
- Kootasca: 877-687-1163
- Lake County Social Services: 218-834-8400
- Lakes & Pines: 800-832-6082
- Leech Lake Tribal: 866-864-8668
- Mille Lacs Band Tribal: 320-532-7880
- Pine County Social Services: 800-450-7263
- Salvation Army Office (Heat Share Programs): 800-842-7279
- St. Louis County Social Services: 800-450-9777

EQUIPMENT QUIZ

Q How much does one 25 kVA overhead transformer cost?



- A) \$75 C) \$180
B) \$1,203 D) \$432

LCP has 28,485 overhead transformers on its system. It's a device used to raise or lower voltage along electric distribution lines to safely provide electric service to homes and businesses.

Answer: B

RECIPE CORNER SERBIAN EGGS



From the Kitchen of:
Bonnie Frielund,
Duluth



- 6 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 cup Bisquick
- 1 cup milk
- 1 pint cottage cheese
- 4 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 stick of butter, melted

Blend ingredients
Spray a 9x13 pan
Bake for 45-60 minutes at 350 degrees.
Eat plain or with salsa.

Submit your favorite recipe to Lake Country Power, Attn. Editor, 8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768, or e-mail jburnes@lcp.coop. If your entry is printed in Newsline, you'll receive a \$5 credit on your electric bill. Entries must include name, address and phone number on account.