



March 2024

# Newsline

**BOARD MEETINGS** March 26 ■ April 30 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)



Energy that Powers Our Lives

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Money-saving programs at LCP
- Touchstone Energy® Community Award
- Heat pumps benefit members, more
- Annual Meeting information

## Operations set for substation rebuild, boring crew

Lake Country Power's operations department is looking into 2024 coming off another good year for reliability, with several projects on tap for the new year.

Derek Howe, chief operating officer at LCP, said the co-op is planning to replace 76 miles of line this year using its own construction crews, line crews and Lake States Construction. More than 60 miles of overhead lines are set to be rebuilt and 15 miles underground.

Last year, in-house construction crews replaced 40.3 miles of overhead lines, coming in \$250,000 under budget.

Improving reliability through its Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) plan, tree crews completed 968 member tree orders and 24 tree requests. Crews also removed 350 danger trees and completed 29 work orders.

Howe said the Sand Lake Substation is slated to be replaced in 2024, with



dirt work expected this spring and completion in September or October.

The substation was originally placed on a small lot, about a fraction of an acre, but will be moved onto a five-acre plot with the rebuild. The Sand Lake Substation serves about 1,200 members in areas around Hibbing, Cook, Side Lake and Virginia.

The process for replacing a substation starts about two years in advance on permitting and environmental work, with equipment ordered more than a year in advance.

Howe said the Sand Lake Substation rebuild has been anticipated by the operations department for a few years after lightning hit the substation's transformer. For the past year and a half, Howe added, LCP's spare transformer has been used at Sand Lake, and can be back on standby when the project is completed this fall.

LCP is also looking at hiring an in-house boring crew in late 2024 or early 2025. The co-op plans to employ a two-person crew of a lead operator and operator. Boring crews will be responsible for helping complete new member services and service rebuilds.

Howe said boring is the only body of work the co-op is 100% reliant on, and expects the crew can complete 32,000 feet of boring a year at a significant cost savings over contractor rates. ■



## MorningBird to perform at annual meeting

MorningBird, a folk rock and Americana band from Hibbing, will provide this year's entertainment at the annual meeting on April 25, at Merritt Elementary School in Mountain Iron.

MorningBird is a three-piece band featuring violin, guitar, mandolin, upright bass, stomp box and harmonica.

They began as a duo of Rob Wheeler and Jill Burkes in 2020 and added Josh Palmi in 2023. They are known for their sound, with haunting harmonies and melodic string arrangements.

MorningBird recently finished recording their debut album, *Echoes in the Meadow*, which will be released this year.



This year's annual meeting meal will be Parmesan crusted chicken breast, mashed potatoes and gravy, seasoned broccoli, dinner rolls and butter, mixed green salad and dressing, coffee, water and tea, and of course, a variety of cookies.

The annual meeting will be held Thursday, April 25 at Merritt Elementary School in Mountain Iron, MN. Registration begins at 5:00 p.m. with the meeting to follow at 6:30 p.m. ■

## 5 Members meet filing deadline for board seats

The following LCP members met the filing requirements for nomination as a candidate for the co-op's board of directors. The nomination deadline was 4:30 p.m., February 15.

**District 1:** David Cicmil, Cook; Jason Long, Cook\*

**District 5:** Robert Bruckbauer, Remer\*

**District 9:** Larry Anderson, Esko\*; Kevin Maki, Saginaw

\* Denotes Incumbent

Ballots will mail between April 5 and April 10. Online voting begins April 10, 2024, at 8:00 a.m. Central Standard Time, and ends April 25, 2024, at 11:00 a.m. Central. If voting online, instructions will be provided on your ballot. Otherwise, members in Districts 1, 5 and 9 may vote by mail with their paper ballot, or in person at the annual meeting before polls close.

# Lakeside Quilters of Tamarack wins Touchstone Energy® Community Award

Lake Country Power selected the Lakeside Quilters of Tamarack, Minn., as the winner of its annual Touchstone Energy® Community Award. The co-op chose this organization to recognize a group of 14 individuals who volunteer their time to make quality quilts by hand and donate to deserving individuals within the local communities.

As winner of the Touchstone Energy® Community Award, the quilters were awarded a plaque and \$500 that will go toward materials needed for making quilts.

“Receiving this award is an absolute honor because it recognizes our mission to give handmade quilts to people in our community, such as active military personnel, veterans, and others,” said Sharon Lavan, who submitted the application to Lake Country Power. “It is so rewarding to give our quilts to people. It’s a moving experience and often there are tears.”

Lavan added that as soon as you think you’re being the giver, that’s when you find out you’re the one who is receiving so much more in return.

Veterans who move into the Villa Vista Nursing Home in Cromwell, Minn., may also receive a Quilt of Valor. The Lakeside Quilters of Tamarack are members of the National Quilts of Valor, so each quilt is handmade according to a set of specific guidelines set by the national organization.



Lakeside Quilters of Tamarack has existed since Fall 2021 and currently has 14 members. Most of the quilts they make are donated toward activity military, veterans, teachers, bus drivers, those in need, those struggling with health issues, and outstanding citizens who impact Tamarack and the surrounding communities. The group of volunteers have made and contributed 31 quilts so far, and each quilt is finished with the long-armed method to ensure quality for a lifetime of use.

“Every quilt we make touches the hearts of each recipient, their families and their community because they know someone cares,” said Lavan.

Lake Country Power is one of several Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives in Minnesota providing a local award to encourage and recognize local community contributions. Lakeside Quilters of Tamarack will compete with winners from other Minnesota-based electric cooperatives in March for statewide recognition and \$2,000. ■

## State park volunteers needed



Good news! GreenTouch is scheduled for Saturday, May 18 from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at McCarthy Beach State Park, Side Lake.

Volunteers are needed to help spruce up the park for the summer tourism season. We're looking for anyone who's

able to come and help with a variety of tasks the park will coordinate. In year's past we've picked up litter, raked leaves, gathered limbs, cleaned the shoreline, etc. Please RSVP to Tami Zaun at [tzaun@lcp.coop](mailto:tzaun@lcp.coop) or 800-421-9959 (extension 7152), by May 14 for an accurate meal count as lunch will be served at noon for volunteers.

### Military personnel disconnection law:

The 2007 Minnesota Legislature passed a law called the Military Personnel Disconnection Law. The law recognizes the value of military service and limits utility disconnections if a member of the household has been issued orders such as active duty, deployment, or for a permanent change in duty station during that period. To be eligible for disconnection protection, the member must contact the cooperative to request a "Military Personnel Disconnect Protection Form", meet income eligibility guidelines and set up a mutually acceptable payment schedule.

Before disconnecting service to military personnel in situations as listed above, the cooperative must provide the following information: notice of proposed disconnection; statement explaining customers' rights and responsibilities; list of energy assistance providers; disconnect protection form and a statement explaining the payment plan to secure continued service.

Please contact Lake Country Power, if you have any questions about the "Military Personnel Disconnection Law" or energy assistance programs.

# Heat pumps offer benefits for consumers, the environment

ENERGY WISE  MN



## YOUR SOURCE FOR ENERGY-EFFICIENT HEATING AND COOLING

Learn more at:  
[energywisemn.com/air-heat-pumps](http://energywisemn.com/air-heat-pumps)

Many companies and homeowners are placing an increased emphasis on reducing their use of fossil fuels by looking for new ways to use electricity to help them achieve their goals.

This strategy of replacing direct fossil fuel use with electricity in a way that reduces overall emissions and energy costs is called “beneficial electrification.” It’s made possible as utilities, including Lake Country Power, continue incorporating more carbon-free sources of energy into their power supply portfolios.

There are many opportunities for beneficial electrification across the residential and commercial sectors, including making the switch to an electric vehicle or an electric heating system — as long as the end-user and environment both benefit from the change.

One home appliance that provides the opportunity to reduce fossil fuel use and replace it with electricity is the heating system. Heat pumps have become increasingly popular as the technology advances to support heating in colder climates.

Like an air conditioner, a heat pump can cool your home. What makes them unique is that they can also provide heat. Unlike other electric heating options, air source heat pumps (ASHPs) do not use electricity to create heat but instead use it to move heat from outdoor air and transfer it indoors. With today’s ASHP technology, this process of moving heat is extremely energy efficient even when it’s cold outside.

According to Rewiring America, a nonprofit advocacy group, heat pumps can achieve more than 300% efficiency, while even the most efficient gas-powered furnaces fall short of 100% efficiency. It is common for homeowners who install an ASHP to save hundreds of dollars per year.

Be sure to check with Lake Country Power about rebates and program qualifications prior to purchasing an ASHP. Lake Country Power does not size, sell or install heat pumps, but is happy to provide a list of HVAC contractors who can help. ■

### RECIPE CORNER GRANDMA NELLIE'S APPLE CRISP



From the Kitchen of:  
**John Wagner,**  
Maplewood



Slice apples to fill a 9x13 pan. Sprinkle cinnamon over apples. Sprinkle  $\frac{3}{4}$  to one cup of sugar over the cinnamon. Put the crumbs on top.

#### Crumb ingredients:

- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of packed brown sugar
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup oatmeal
- $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of softened butter
- I use a pastry blender to mix

Bake for 45 minutes at 350 degrees.  
Great with ice cream or whipped cream.

Submit your favorite recipe to Lake Country Power, Attn. Editor, 8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768, or e-mail [jburnes@lcp.coop](mailto: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.

**Q** How much does a lightning arrester cost?

EQUIPMENT QUIZ



- A) \$78
- B) \$40
- C) \$58
- D) \$12

LCP has 35,022 lightning arresters on its system. Lightning arresters help protect consumer electric equipment against damage caused by lightning strikes. **Answer:** C

# LCP programs can help save you money

Lake Country Power offers many EnergyWise® programs that save energy and your hard-earned money.

I will touch on two programs that have been very popular the past few years.

First, is the eight-hour interruptible water heating program. Most every home has some type of water heater which is generally electric or gas. The majority of the water heaters are a tank type that holds a specific number of gallons.

The program basically requires a 50-gallon electric water heater or more, and a meter is installed on the outside of your home to measure the kilowatt hour (kWh) usage. The kWh rate for the program of \$.0689 cents/kWh. The blended general electric rate



By Jeff  
**SHELDON**  
District 4 Director

is \$.1429 cents/kWh — higher in the summer and lowest during the spring/fall. A family of three or four can easily save \$20 to \$30 per month on the program.

Why the lower energy rate for the program? Lake Country Power has the option to control or turn off your water heater up to eight hours a day during times of high energy usage on its system. If you have a large family or a large amount of hot water used during the afternoon/evening, you might want to look at a larger water heater that holds more gallons.

Second, is the air source heat pump system. If you have a ducted furnace and are looking to install a central air conditioning unit, or replacing an older unit, you should inquire about the air source system.

It heats during the cold months and air conditions your home during the summer. The new units have a very high energy efficiency rating or SEER (Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating) of

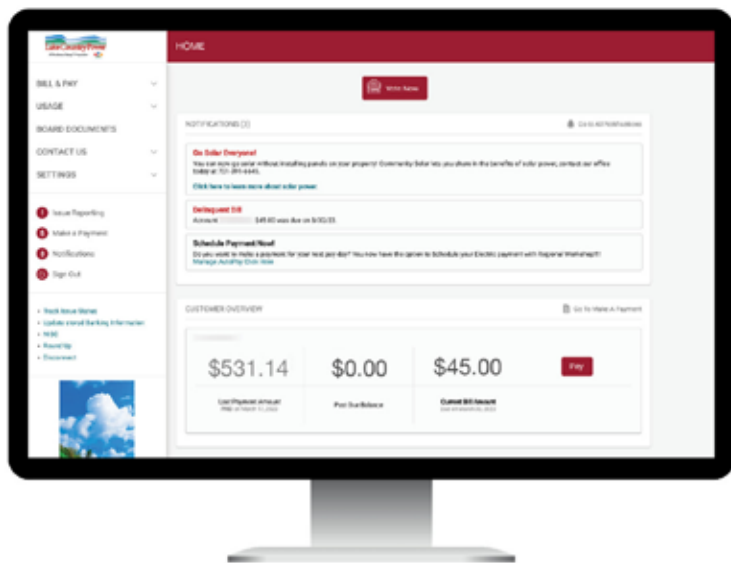
14.5 – 18+. The heat pump is wired to a separate meter on your home at an energy rate of \$.0708 cents/kWh. Many new air source units will heat your home down to 0 degrees outside depending on the SEER rating. During times of high energy usage on LCP's system, the unit can be cycled on/off for an average of 15-minute intervals.

For homes that do not have a centrally ducted system should look into ductless air source heat pumps. These systems have an outdoor unit compressor and one or more inside units that are mounted on a wall near the ceiling. They heat and cool an area very well and are super quiet.

All of these programs not only save energy and money but may qualify for rebates from LCP.

Please call the member service department at 800-421-9959, press 6, or visit [lakecountrypower.coop](http://lakecountrypower.coop).

Jeff Sheldon was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 4. He can be reached at 218-398-6104 or [jsheldon1@lcp.coop](mailto:jsheldon1@lcp.coop).



## SmartHub redesign launches



Members accessing their SmartHub account with a web browser will now see a new look, but the same easy access to save time and money when managing your account anytime, from anywhere.

SmartHub access is still available through [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop). Once signed up and logged in, members can access easy payment options to avoid late fees and service interruptions, report outages, track electricity usage and more!

You can register for SmartHub at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) or by calling 800-421-9959.

**Nondiscrimination statement:** In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-

2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at [How to File a Program Discrimination Complaint](http://www.fda.gov) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

"This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer."

## December 21, 2023 • Regular Monthly Meeting

### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported all directors were present at the December 19 budget meeting, where LCP management presented and the 2024 budget was proposed and discussed. Olson also said he had several conversations with General Manager Mark Bakk about cooperative matters.

General Manager Bakk reported on the Great River Energy (GRE) board meeting in December and the Transmission Committee. There was discussion on the Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) market capacity and winter load management. He added that GRE is planning to convert their 69kV system to 115kV, with coordination needed between GRE and their member systems.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved the 2024 capital and operating budgets presented and reviewed during the December 19 budget meeting.

Approved a \$5 million deferral of 2023 revenue into 2024 or future years. The original deferral amount was \$3 million, but LCP anticipated greater margins at year end and the resolution was amended.

After discussion, approved inviting seven school districts to present their grant applications for the Education Improvement Program.

**Editor's Note:** These board minutes have been condensed. A full copy of the board minutes can be read at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://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.



▶ Daven Ritari of Britt photographed a beautiful sunrise at the break of dawn.

## Co-op Contacts

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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

Published monthly by Lake Country Power  
8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768  
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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

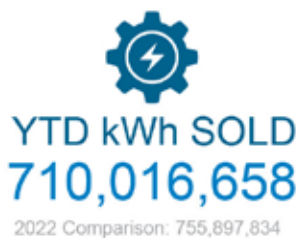
Lengthen the life of your clothes dryer with regular cleaning. Clean the lint filter after every load, which improves air circulation and safety. Check the lint trap opening to ensure it's clean. Use a vacuum to remove any lint that's fallen inside the opening. If you use dryer sheets, check the lint filter for residue buildup. Remove any residue with hot water and a nylon brush or toothbrush. Over time, dryer sheets can leave a film on the filter, which can affect the performance of the motor. Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## BY THE NUMBERS | DECEMBER 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](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) under "My Cooperative." *These financial statements are preliminary and unaudited.*



	2023	2022
Cost of Purchased Power	\$53,159,972	\$57,241,822
Other Operating Expenses	\$45,475,950	\$46,557,855
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$98,635,922	\$103,799,677



	2023	2022
Operating Margins	\$7,648,403	\$4,945,630
Non-Operating Margins	\$4,152,956	\$4,833,830

