

Happy New Year!

Lake Country Power

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Energy that Powers Our Lives

January 2022

Newsline

BOARD MEETINGS January 25 ■ February 22

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Four Lake Country Power linemen spring to action, save life

By Lee Bloomquist (Mesabi Tribune)

As water began to enter Demitria Hartl's overturned car just off a slippery Iron Range road, four heroes in work clothes arrived on the scene.

A crew of four Lake Country Power linemen replacing power lines spotted the car upside down Thursday afternoon in a ditch along Highway 37 in Cherry.

"I thought I was going to die," Hartl, who was driving to a job interview in Duluth said. "I thought, I'm not going to make it, I'm going to drown."

Hartl, 23, of Mandan, N.D., was eastbound on Highway 37 when the 2017 Toyota Camry she was driving hit slush and spun, according to a Minnesota State Patrol incident report. The car then rolled into the ditch and came to rest on its roof in deep water.

"My front just kind of went out of control and started going in the other lane and then I ended up hitting a road sign and that's what flipped me," Hartl said. "I thought the sign was going to



▶ Lake Country Power lineworkers (clockwise from top left) Matt Bade, Tyler McClellan, Cody Vredenburg and Tim Rasmusson

smoosh. I didn't think it was going to flip me and then I was upside down in about four feet of water."

Bar & Grill after eating lunch, sprang into action.

The four men waded into waist deep water to find Hartl trapped in the overturned car.

"We all went down into the water and were able to flip the car on its side," Rasmusson said. "It was kind of amazing how light the car felt. We saw car seats in the back and our hearts stopped."

Hartl had unbuckled her seat belt and crawled to the back of the car as the front end sank and the car began to fill with water

"Before I unbuckled myself, I heard the water rushing in," Hartl said. "I pulled my phone out of the charger and called 9-1-1. I was just screaming for help. I'm not from the area, so I didn't know exactly where I was other than between Hibbing and Virginia."

(... continued on page 5)

About the linemen

Matt Bade

- Position: Apprentice Lineworker II
- Employed since: February 10, 2021
- Hobbies: Hunting, fishing

Tyler McClellan

- Position: Apprentice Journeyman II
- Employed since: February 15, 2021
- Hobbies: Football, skiing

Cody Vredenburg

- Position: Crew Chief II
- Employed since: February 8, 2021
- Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, outdoor recreation

Tim Rasmusson

- Position: Crew Chief II
- Employed since: June 3, 2014
- Hobbies: Motocross, BIR drag racing, hunting/bird hunting, taking his dogs to the lake

In an instant, the day changed for Hartl and Lake Country Power employees Tim Rasmusson, Cody Vredenburg, Matt Bade, and Tyler McClellan.

The Lake Country Power crew, which had just left The Thirsty Moose

The evolution of electricity

The power supply mix that brings electricity to your home or business has evolved.

Coal-fired power plants — once the backbone of generation in the United States — are increasingly being phased out in favor of renewable energy resources that make your electricity not only cleaner but more cost-effective, too.

Lake Country Power's power supply mix has mirrored this evolution as well. Our wholesale power supplier, Great River Energy, announced earlier this year the sale of its flagship Coal Creek Station power plant.

While this plant has operated nearly around-the-clock since 1979 to serve our members, Great River Energy has spent the last decade making careful decisions to transition to a portfolio of power supply and transmission resources to serve

us best and most efficiently into the future.

Along with the sale of Coal Creek Station, this evolution includes the addition of 900 megawatts of wind energy by 2023 — more than doubling Great River Energy's current renewable energy capacity. The cooperative is also exploring multi-day energy storage, which has the potential to solve challenges posed by the variable nature of renewable energy as the larger electricity grid moves away from thermal, dispatchable generators. A fleet of modern, fast-starting peaking plants across Minnesota is also available to serve members in the event of seasonal weather emergencies.

"Any decision we make as a cooperative wholesale power provider is through the lens of providing affordable rates, reliable energy service and environmental stewardship to our members," said Zac Ruzycski, director of resource planning at Great River Energy. "Our new portfolio will provide our members cost-competitive



renewables and market energy while retaining a fleet of natural gas- and oil-fired peaking power plants to ensure reliable electric service."

All combined, these efforts put Great River Energy on track to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions by more than 80% by 2023, surpassing Minnesota's statewide emissions goal more than 25 years ahead of schedule.

This transition not only positively impacts reliability and the environment, but member cost savings as well. The Coal

Creek Station transaction will save member-owners \$130 million compared to shutting it down, and Great River Energy recently announced its wholesale electricity rates will be relatively flat into 2022 — even projecting rate stability into the future — due in large part to changes made in the way it produces and purchases energy.

"At a time when the prices on many products and services are rising, we are proud that our forward-thinking planning and decisions are paying off for our members," Ruzycski said. ■



LCP Board approves 2022 Budget Material cost drives rate increase

For the first time in six years the Lake Country Power Board of Directors has approved a general service increase to address a \$5.6 million revenue shortfall. The adjustment is necessary to meet rising costs, but members won't see a change on their electric bills until April.

The necessary rate change is largely due to changing economic demands that evolved early in the COVID-19 pandemic. In the past 18 months, material costs have soared more than 30 percent and outside contractor labor more than 10 percent.

"In order to maintain our high level of providing safe and reliable electric service, we have no choice but to deal with rising inflation, which is affecting so many businesses including the power industry," said Mark Bakk, LCP general manager. "We have successfully been able to keep rates flat for several years, but we are simply out of options."

Based on a cost-of-service study, the increase will require an added 1.67 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to the general service residential and small commercial rates. For the average co-op member consuming 600-1000 kWh per month, this will result in payments rising about \$10-16, depending on energy usage.

"Despite the unfortunate need to raise rates, it is certainly not as bad as it could be. We are asking for less than our cost-of-service study suggests as we see utilities around us proposing steeper increases," said LCP Board President Craig Olson. "In reality, we are in a great position and had it not been for the supply issues and skyrocketing material costs we may very well have avoided the need for an increase."



Reminder: Youth Tour applications due Feb. 1



The application deadline for the 2022 Youth Tour is February 1. Youth Tour dates are June 14-19, 2022, in Washington D.C.

Students on the tour learn about electric cooperatives, American history and U.S. government. They attend educational seminars and visit with their representatives in the House and the Senate. They see historical sights in and around Washington-the U.S. Capitol, the monuments, the Smithsonian, Arlington Cemetery, Mt. Vernon and countless other places and they learn more about the cooperative business model.

The Rural Electric Youth Tour started in 1957. The application process is easy!

Interested high school juniors and seniors (whose parents/guardians are Lake Country Power members) should complete an application for the Rural Electric Youth Tour, include a photograph and one letter of recommendation from a teacher, coach, or youth organization leader.

This co-op sponsored educational event is valued at \$2,050 (includes airfare, lodging, meals, transportation and tours).

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

Send Tami Zaun (tzaun@lcp.coop) an email if you would like to know more about applying for the 2022 tour.



RECIPE CORNER BAY LAKE BROWNIES

From the Kitchen of:
Brenda Hruza, Wright



- 2 cups sugar
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1 1/2 cups flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup shortening
- 4 eggs
- 12 oz chocolate chips

To bring to the lake: Measure dry ingredients into a zipper-lock plastic bag (the recipe is as easy to make as using a mix).

To make brownies: Mix all ingredients in a bowl. Spoon into a 9x13-inch greased pan. Bake in a 350-degree oven for 25-30 minutes. Top with frosting, or drizzle with 3 tbsp Hershey's chocolate syrup.

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

Where's Willie?

How to play:

Find the three Willie Wiredhand mascot images in each edition of Newslines (not including the one attached to this story). Circle Willie and bring the newsletter to any of the three LCP service centers (Cohasset, Mountain Iron, Kettle River) and receive a gift.

- Giveaway begins January 2022 and continues monthly
- Must present newsletter in person to one of three service centers
- One winner per household per year
- LCP reserves the right to modify or cancel promotion at any time.



About Willie Wirehand: The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) decided they needed someone to be the face of rural electrification. Freelance artist Andrew McLay created Willie Wiredhand in October

1950 and the following year he was selected by the NRECA membership to be the official mascot of electric cooperatives nationwide.

smart hub Tip

Q: How can you save time, money, and enroll in an automatic bill payment plan through your SmartHub account?

A: 1) In SmartHub click "Billing & Payments" on the tool bar. The dropdown menu will show "Auto Pay Program," click that. 2) Under "Actions" there will be a blue hyperlink that says "Sign Up for Auto Pay," click that. 3) A new dropdown menu will show for you to select whether you're using a credit card or bank account information. 4) A window will show up down below. Fill in the required information and follow the remaining prompts. 5) Done!

Access is easy and it's free – perfect for members with busy schedules.

Are Portable Space Heaters Efficient for My Home?

Small space heaters are meant to do exactly as their name says: heat a small space. But unfortunately, many people use portable space heaters to heat their entire home, which can really take a toll on your energy bills. The truth is, whether you should use space heaters really depends on your home's efficiency and energy needs.

If you're using a space heater to compensate for problems in your home, like inadequate insulation, drafty windows and exterior doors, or an inefficient heating system, space heaters are not a practical solution. Your best bet is to improve the overall efficiency of your home. If you're on a tight budget, caulking and weather stripping around windows and exterior doors is a low-cost, easy way to save energy. Depending on the size of your home, adding insulation can be a great next step. Loose fill insulation typically costs \$1 to \$1.50 per square foot.



Taking these proactive energy-saving measures rather than relying on space heaters for supplemental warmth can reduce your heating and cooling bills for years to come.

Perhaps your home is energy efficient but you're cold-natured and want a specific room to be cozier than the rest. In this case, a space heater may work for your needs. A good comparison is ceiling fans; we use ceiling fans in the summer to

cool people, not rooms. A space heater can be used in a similar way during winter months. Only use a space heater in small spaces that you're occupying and, if possible, try to shut off other rooms to contain the warmth provided by the space heater. If you decide to use a space heater to heat a small area in your home, make sure the heater is properly sized for the space; most heaters include a general sizing table.

A word about safety: the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission estimates more than 25,000 residential fires are associated with the use of space heaters every year, resulting in more than 300 deaths. If you must use a space heater, purchase a newer model that includes the most current safety features and make sure it carries the Underwriter's Laboratory (UL) label. Choose a thermostatically controlled heater to avoid energy waste and overheating, and place the heater on a level surface away from foot traffic when in use. Always keep children and pets away from space heaters.

Consider alternative ways to stay warm like



extra layers of clothing or UL-approved electric blankets. If you have hardwood or tile floors, lay down area rugs to provide additional insulation (and appeal!) and maintain warmth.

We know it's cold out there, but remember in addition to safety concerns, space heaters can greatly increase your energy bills if used improperly. ■

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 reasonably 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: 218-735-6839
- 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

(Four LCP linemen save life continued...)

But the linemen were already on the move.

The four men quickly moved to use whatever rescue tool was available.

Rasmusson first tried to break the window by punching it with his hand.

But that didn't work.

"I was looking for something that would do the job," Rasmusson said. "The other three guys held the car up while I went and pulled the receiver hitch out of the back of our truck and we broke the window with it."

The crew pulled Hartl out of the vehicle through the driver's window and helped her up the embankment.

"She was pretty upset," Rasmusson said. "We tried to calm her down and got her into our truck to warm up. We kept asking her if there were any kids in the car."

But thankfully, there weren't. Hartl was the sole person in the vehicle.

"I've never been so happy to see another human being," Hartl said. "I've never before been so thankful for people."

An array of emergency responders arrived at the scene.

Hartl was transported to Fairview Range Medical Center in Hibbing with non-life threatening injuries, according to the State Patrol report. She was treated and released.

After leaving the scene in soaked work clothes, the linemen went back to work.

Later, upon returning to the rural electrical cooperative's Cohasset Service Center, the men recounted the incident.

"Tim's hand had cuts all over it," Tami Zaun, Lake County Power public relations coordinator said. "He was picking pieces of glass out of it."

For the crew, it was all in a day's work.

"We see a lot of things out there," Rasmusson said. "I'm just glad we were there."

Hartl and her husband Tristan are relocating to the Iron Range with their two children, ages three and two. Demitria Hartl is originally from Arizona. Tristan Hartl grew up in the Chisholm-Hibbing area.

"Those guys are heroes for acting like they

did," Tristan Hartl said. "People nowadays pass the buck all the time and these guys didn't pass the buck."

Lake Country Power General Manager Mark Bakk says he's extremely proud of the crew.

"It's pretty amazing," Bakk said. "I couldn't be more proud of those guys stopping and helping. There's a lot of bad news out there nowadays and it's good to hear a story like this that shows there are a lot of good people out there."

The training that Lake Country Power workers go through paid off by saving a mother's life, Tristan Hartl said.

"Lake Country Power with their safety training program created heroes," he said. "Those guys made sure they had a mom yesterday."

Rasmusson says he and his co-workers only did what they hope others would do for someone else.

"It's kind of weird why this is getting so much attention," Rasmusson said. "None of us are in the spotlight. We're just good old boys."

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2022 District Meetings

District 7: Craig Olson

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
February 1, 2022

Venue: South Ridge School
(cafeteria)

Address: 8162 Swan Lake
Rd, Culver, MN 55779

District 9: Larry Anderson

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
February 3, 2022

Venue: Hope Lutheran
Church

Address: 204 Elm Ave.,
Moose Lake, MN 55767

District 3: Steve Raukar

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
February 16, 2022

Venue: Side Lake
Community Center

Address: 7548 Hwy. 5, Side
Lake, MN 55781

District 4: Craig Carlson

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
February 17, 2022

Venue: Nashwauk
Township Hall (Cloverdale
Hall),

Address: 16470 County
Road 8, Nashwauk,
MN, 55769

District 2: Mike Forsman

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
February 21, 2022

Venue: Grand Ely Lodge
(Sunset Room)

Address: 400 N Pioneer Rd,
Ely, MN 55731

District 6: Dan Kingsley

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
February 22, 2022

Venue: Spang Town Hall

Address: 35402 Spang Rd,
Hill City, MN 55748

District 1: Jason Long

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
March 24, 2022

Venue: Northwoods School

Address: 10248 Olson Rd,
Cook, MN 55723

District 8: Jim Huhta

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
March 29, 2022

Venue: Cromwell Pavilion

Address: 1272 MN-73,
Cromwell, MN 55726

Subject to change

District 5: Bob Bruckbauer

Time/Date: 5 p.m.,
March 31, 2022

Venue: Northland High
School/Remer High School
(commons and CI13)

Address: 316 E Main St,
Remer, MN 56672

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December 16, 2021 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported about a member letter he received inquiring about LCP's capital credit retirement.

Director Bruckbauer reported GRE staff has been working on the 2022 budget. They are seeing some issues with supply availability and delivery, inflation, gas prices, etc. Bruckbauer stated a review of GRE's President and CEO David Saggau was conducted.

General Manager Bakk Bakk reported about the GRE PCA charges, credit, and total YTD. He commented about electric rates and

possible future challenges. LCP staff is working on the 2022 budget. They are seeing issues with material supply, cost, and delivery lead time.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved reinstating Mark Bakk voting delegate and Craig Olson voting alternate for MREA.

Approved the 2022 Director Election Timeline with nomination packets available January 20, 2022. ■



► Drew Brockett of Ely stopped to take this on the backroads southeast of Ely where he spotted this bull moose. It earned a spot in the 2022 co-op calendar for January. Calendar orders are beginning to ship now.

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.

Co-op Contacts

Mark Bakk, General Manager	800-421-9959 mbakk@lcp.coop
Jason Long, District 1	218-240-9611 jlong@lcp.coop
Michael Forsman, District 2	218-365-5789 mforsman@lcp.coop
Steve Raukar, District 3	218-966-0298 sraukar@lcp.coop
Craig Carlson, District 4	218-999-7175 ccarlson@lcp.coop
Robert Bruckbauer, District 5	218-566-2436 rbruckbauer@lcp.coop
Daniel Kingsley, District 6	218-697-2628 dkingsley@lcp.coop
Craig Olson, District 7	218-393-2276 colson@lcp.coop
Jim Huhta, District 8	218-644-3997 jhuhta@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 EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Maximize your heating system's performance by inspecting, cleaning or replacing air filters once a month or as needed to reduce energy costs and prevent potential damage to your system. Make sure radiators, baseboard heaters and warm-air registers aren't blocked so air can flow freely.
Source: energy.gov

Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — October 2021

	2021	2020
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 76,474,590	\$ 73,454,597
Cost of Purchased Power	41,370,015	37,440,333
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	11,943,222	12,233,073
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	2,724,487	3,257,044
Administrative and General Expense	5,145,091	5,359,739
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	14,296,404	13,889,222
TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES	75,479,219	72,179,412
Net Electric Operating Margins	995,372	1,275,185
Non-Operating Margins	1,085,687	823,918
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	2,081,059	2,099,103
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	1,791,371	987,490
TOTAL MARGINS	\$ 3,872,430	\$ 3,086,592
TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)	491,502,617	486,745,423

Editor's Note: These financials are condensed. A complete set of financials can be viewed 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 copy.