



JUNE 2025

From Rakes to Results: GreenTouch™ Sparks Community Pride at McCarthy Beach State Park

Sounds of scraping rakes and the occasional whir of a leaf blower could be heard along the serene Sturgeon Lake shorelines.

It was spring cleaning day at McCarthy Beach State Park near Side Lake, where 52 volunteers joined Lake Country Power's GreenTouch™ event on May 8.

On this picture-perfect day, the signs of winter were long gone, though the remnants of the doldrum months were left behind. Snow damaged and naturally dropped branches needed to be cleared, and garbage uncovered by the warming temperatures removed.

"It's tedious, and it's not glorified, but it's so appreciated," said Park Manager Shawn Hendricks. "When you're done at the end of the day and you see how clean it is, people really notice. It gives the local community a sense of ownership in the park."

McCarthy Beach State Park originated as many did across the state and nation after the Great Depression. Part of the New Deal

provided manual labor jobs on government land related to conservation and natural resources through the Civilian Conservation Corps.

They built the trails and buildings while working the Hibbing-Chisholm area along the lake in the 1930s. The park was established in the 1940s.

GreenTouch™ started 25 years ago as a statewide program among Touchstone Energy Cooperatives. Minnesota Co-ops have had over 10,000 volunteers donating 37,000 hours of their time since the program began locally. This year, the co-op moved its GreenTouch™ effort from Saturday to Thursday, and experienced a boost in volunteers.

"We want to thank them and thank the communities," said Tami Zaun, public relations coordinator at Lake Country Power. "Even if you're not a co-op member, it's OK, you just come out and participate in GreenTouch."

Among the 52 volunteers this year were students from Greenway School in Coleraine.

The clean up effort went from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Volunteers helped clear hiking trails, rake leaves and pine needles, collect litter, clean campsites, gather downed limbs, and pick up the shoreline.

Hendricks said day use at McCarthy Beach State Park is a big draw for visitors, and the help from GreenTouch™ alleviates a lot of the time constraints for full-time park staff to do the work.

"It's these folks that come out and make a huge difference," he said. "It goes with people getting outside, and promoting the natural resources and the park itself."



VIEW MORE PHOTOS
facebook.com/lakecountrypower

Reliable, Affordable Electricity Transcends the Challenges

Lake Country Power is navigating a landscape that's constantly changing — both politically and environmentally.

The need for reliable, affordable electricity has never been greater, especially as things grow more dependent on energy. The stakes have never been higher. But through it all, one thing remains constant: Lake Country Power's commitment to providing you with the most reliable and affordable power possible to its members.

Lake Country Power has stayed the course through the changing climates of both political parties. In doing so, the cooperative and its board has continually weighed the outlook of reliability and sustainability of all power options far into the future.

Because it's not just about today — it's about tomorrow. The energy landscape is constantly changing. With the rise of renewable resources, it's vital that we integrate these in a way that makes sense, while understanding the unique challenges this energy transition presents for rural areas and our climate in Minnesota. Lake Country Power is committed to keeping an eye on the horizon, exploring new technologies, and adapting its energy mix to meet both current and future demands.

Unlike large utilities that generate their own power, Lake Country Power partners with Great River Energy to purchase electricity, which is then distributed to you. Currently, energy comes from a variety of sources, including wind, solar, natural gas, coal and more.

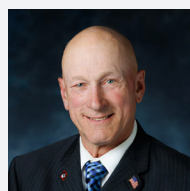
Current mandates are requiring utilities to be carbon free by 2040, but the technology to do it at the necessary scale isn't



there yet. That hasn't stopped cooperatives and utility partners from continuing to innovate. Lake Country Power continues to learn from other cooperatives and utilities, both here in Minnesota and across the country to refine its approach.

This spirit of cooperation is essential to Lake Country Power's mission to exceed our member-owners' expectations. That mission helps the cooperative cut through the noise and stay the course.

Dan Kingsley was elected to the LCP Board by members in District 6. He can be reached at 218-259-7366 or dkingsley@lcp.coop.



Sincerely,
Dan Kingsley
District 6 Director

Board Meeting Highlights: February 25, 2025

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Following Reports Were Given:

President Olson reported on the District 7 member meeting and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) Annual Meeting. He also presented Director Jeff Sheldon with his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate.

General Manager Bakk reported on the MREA Annual Meeting and evening dinner

with area legislators that included six neighboring cooperatives. Reservations for the same event would be made for 2026. Bakk also discussed Lake County Power District Meetings and Great River Energy's (GRE) rate forecast.

The Following Actions Were Taken:

Approved changes to Rate Schedules 66 and 68, and the EV Fast Charging Rate. Approved the 2025 Cogeneration Report, which showed 295 solar installations and

five wind installations.

Approved changing the April board meeting date to Friday, April 25, 2025.

Editor's Note: These board minutes have been condensed. To view a complete copy, visit www.lakecountrypower.coop under "My Cooperative." A SmartHub account is required. To request a printed copy, call (800) 421-9959.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS: JUNE 24 | JULY 29 (9:30 am at the Cohasset Service Center, Members Welcome)

DID YOU KNOW?

Lake Country Power helped fund local services in 2024 from more than \$8.2 million in property taxes, Minnesota sales taxes and county/city sales taxes.



LCP Still Seeking 2026 Co-op Calendar Entries



Electronic entries are still being accepted via email for the 2026 co-op calendar contest. The deadline is Friday, August 1, to tzaun@lcp.coop. Remember to include a photo description for each entry.

The calendar will showcase the photography talents of LCP's membership. Your photography should be scenic, capturing the beauty of northern Minnesota's four seasons. Horizontal/landscape photos qualify for proper design while vertical photos do not. Members can enter up to 10 photos per membership (household). Photos should be at least 1 MB in file size – anything less will not print clearly.

A panel of judges will select the winning photos in "round one" of the judging process. During "round two," members will select the finalists through a contest on LCP's Facebook page.

Winners will receive a \$25 credit on their electric bill and will be notified in October.

LCP Annual Meeting Brings Co-op Community Together in Grand Rapids



A community of cooperative members gathered at the Reif Center in Grand Rapids, Minn., for the annual membership meeting on Thursday evening, April 24, 2025. More than 350 members and guests gathered to hear about the challenges facing the electric industry and the innovative actions Lake Country Power is taking to overcome obstacles.

Mark Bakk, Lake Country Power general manager, reported about his advocacy work to keep electric service affordable and reliable. Bakk spends a lot of time working with Great River Energy, LCP's wholesale power supplier, and advocating with state and federal legislators for policies that align with providing safe, reliable and affordable energy services for co-op members.

"I was in St. Paul earlier this month and I will be in Washington, D.C., next week," said Bakk, LCP general manager. "We take affordability and reliability of your electric service very seriously and will continue to advocate for you, our members, at both the state and federal levels."

Bakk also reported about the aggressive construction of transmission infrastructure that's needed to carry mandated carbon-free energy from where it is generated to end users. These costs will have a significant impact on electric rates. Great River Energy estimates it will invest more than \$2 billion in the new transmission line buildout as part of a larger collaboration among other regional utilities which has a total price tag estimated at \$30 billion. Transmission costs are about 21% of Great River Energy's wholesale power costs to Lake Country Power and are expected to double in the next 10 years.



Bakk addressed material costs and supply chain issues, which have somewhat stabilized, but prices are not expected to normalize to pre-Covid pandemic numbers. He also spoke about the decision to hire additional crews whose primary task is working on large-scale construction projects and age-related line replacements normally done by contractors. In today's workforce, contractor availability is scarce and costly so moving this body of work in-house is productive and saving money.

Reports were given by LCP Board President Craig Olson, General Manager Mark Bakk, Chief Financial Officer Tracy Peterson Wirtanen, Holding Company President Daniel Kingsley, and Eric Olsen, Great River Energy's vice president and general counsel.

Annual meeting videos can be found on Lake Country Power's website, www.lakecountrypower.coop, or the co-op's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/lakecountrypower.

Director election results were announced in districts 2, 4 and 8, to fill three-year terms. All candidates ran unopposed.

District 2:

Mike Forsman, Ely, 624 votes

District 4:

Jeff Sheldon, Cohasset, 353 votes

District 8:

Brian Napstad, McGregor, 443 votes



Capital Credits Allocation for All Members

This month, the co-op's board approved to allocate more than \$9.9 million of the Lake Country Power and Great River Energy 2024 margins into long-term member capital credit accounts.

Because Lake Country Power and Great River Energy are not-for-profit cooperatives, all margins (revenues minus expenses) are allocated back to member-owners in the form of capital credits. The allocation represents your share of "ownership" in the co-op and is paid back to you — over time — as financial conditions allow.

Allocation notices are being mailed in June. To keep you informed about your capital credit account, the line items recorded on your 2024 "Notice of Capital Credit Allocation" mailer represent the amount of the 2024 margin that was allocated to your personal capital credit membership account.

How Allocations Work

Allocations are based on patronage and your proportionate share of the cooperative's revenue. Until capital credits are returned through a board approved general retirement, your allocation is invested to improve the reliability and service of your cooperative.

Think of your allocation as a membership investment that will be paid out to you over a period of time.

In the meantime, your capital credit membership account represents your share of ownership in the co-op. Lake Country Power uses the capital investment to reduce the amount of bank financing for equipment like electric lines, utility poles, substations, transformers and trucks. Visit www.lakecountrypower.coop for more information about allocations and capital credits.



ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Take advantage of the warmer weather to reduce home energy use. Avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the electricity used to power the stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for additional air conditioning. You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen and explore new ways to save energy!



**Call Gopher
State One (811)
Before You Dig**

Projects are already in full swing and when you think about digging on your property there are some things to consider when it comes to safety.

At the top of the list is to know what's below. The first thing to do before you dig is to contact Gopher State One Call (GSOC) at 811 or visit their website at www.gopherstateonecall.org for free underground locating service.

What to Know About GSOC Locating Services:

- Contact Gopher State One Call at least two working days prior to excavating.
- GSOC is FREE for homeowners.
- GSOC will contact the Facility Operator (Lake Country Power) to mark their underground lines.

While Facility Operators, including Lake Country Power, will come to your property in a timely manner to flag utility lines, there is often confusion about what the Facility Operator will mark.

Lake Country Power will **NOT** mark any member-owned secondary electrical lines. Homeowners will need to contact a private locator to have all private underground lines marked. These include any secondary wires feeding your home, garage, or other outbuildings. You will also need a private locator to locate fiber optic lines, underground dog fencing, or well and septic lines. A list of private locators can be found on the GSOC website.

Lake Country Power members can use their meter as an indicator of where LCP stops marking. Typically, everything up to the electric meter is utility owned (marked), and everything past the meter including lines off the breaker box are the homeowner's responsibility (not marked).

The Official Word from GSOC:

*"Some underground lines in your work area may not be utility owned. These are considered private facilities and will **NOT** be marked by public utility companies. Types of private facilities include, but are not limited to, heating systems for pools, electricity for outbuilding, invisible fences, fiber optic lines, septic systems, and satellite dishes. If you think you may have private facilities, you should contact a private utility locator to identify and locate them. For more information about private underground facilities and homeowner responsibilities please read through our GSOC Handbook."*



Five Tips to Reduce Wildfire Risks

Wildfires have affected areas in the Midwest and Minnesota in recent years, particularly in northern Minnesota's famed forest regions.

This shift is driven by rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and changing weather patterns, which are creating conditions ripe for fires in regions that historically saw fewer of them. As a result, more communities are now facing growing threats from wildfires, prompting a need for broader awareness and preparedness.

Lake Country Power is working to reduce the risk of wildfires throughout our service territory. Through regular vegetation management and grid maintenance and hardening practices, we are proactively working to reduce risks and improve the reliability of our local system.

As a member of Lake Country Power, there are steps you can take to prevent wildfires.

Properly extinguish campfires.

Always douse your campfire with water, stir the ashes and ensure everything is cool to the touch before leaving the area.

Don't burn on windy days. Avoid outdoor burning when it's windy or dry, as embers can easily spread and ignite surrounding areas.

Clear vegetation and debris.

Maintain a defensible space around your home by removing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable materials.

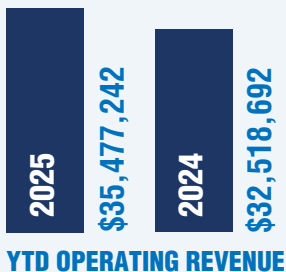
Use equipment safely. Tools like lawnmowers or chainsaws can spark fires. Use them during cooler times of the day and keep them in good working condition.

Follow local fire regulations. Always check for burn bans or restrictions in your area before burning anything or using open flames outdoors.

For more information on wildfire prevention and preparedness, visit www.dnr.state.mn.us/forestry/fire.

By The Numbers | February 2025

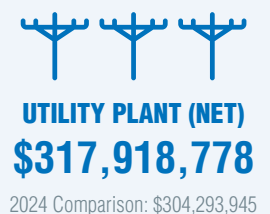
Lake Country Power is committed to responsibly managing resources to maintain the Cooperative's financial stability. Below is a snapshot of the year-to-date unaudited financial report. A complete set of financial statements can be viewed at www.lakecountrypower.coop under "My Cooperative."



	2025	2024
Cost of Purchased Power	\$19,082,010	\$16,353,761
Other Operating Expenses	\$12,375,476	\$10,472,149
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$31,457,486	\$26,825,910



	2025	2024
Operating Margins	\$4,019,757	\$5,692,782
Non-Operating Margins	\$658,261	\$724,196



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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 services, billing, outages or other service-related matters should call 1-800-421-9959.

Newsline

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HOW TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



If you suspect you're dealing with a utility scam, it's crucial to slow down and take your time before taking any action. Scammers will often pressure you to make quick decisions or immediate payments. Instead, take the time to verify the legitimacy of the communication by contacting your utility directly. Use a phone number from a reliable source, such as your bill or the utility's website. Taking this simple step can help protect you from falling victim to utility scams.

Source: Utilities United Against Scams



Blueberry Bars

Submitted By: Marilyn Kiehl, Cloquet

Filling:

2 cups blueberries
½ cup sugar
2 tablespoons cornstarch
¾ cup water
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Crust:

1½ cups oatmeal
1½ cups flour
3 teaspoons baking soda
1 cup margarine
½ cup brown sugar

DIRECTIONS:

Cook filling ingredients to a boil, set aside. Mix crust ingredients like pie crust. Put ¾ of the mix in a 9x13 pan. Pour blueberry filling over the mix. Add ¾ cup oatmeal to the remaining mix for the topping. Bake for 35 minutes at 375°F. May be served with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream as a dessert.

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