



August 2021

# Newsline

BOARD MEETINGS August 31 ■ September 28



## IN THIS ISSUE

Seven Cooperative Principles  
Energy Assistance Available  
ACSI Survey in September  
Power Surges vs. Blinks

## Affordable electricity powers quality of life

Most of us use electricity, either directly or indirectly, at almost all times. Because electricity is so abundant and available with the simple flip of a switch, it's easy to take it for granted.

According to the Energy Information Agency (EIA), the typical U.S. household now uses more air conditioning, appliances and consumer electronics than ever before. The average home also contains 10 or more internet-connected devices. Considering everything that is powered by electricity, it's no wonder we occasionally might wince at our monthly bill. But keep in mind, it's no longer just the "light bill."

### Quality of life

Electricity powers our quality of life. From the infrastructure of your home (appliances, water heater and HVAC system), to charging your smartphones, computers, multiple televisions and Wi-Fi router, your energy bill covers so much more than lighting.



**MARK BAKK**  
General Manager

Today, there is more demand for electricity than ever before. At home, in schools and business, and in commercial sectors such as transportation, the need for electricity is increasing.

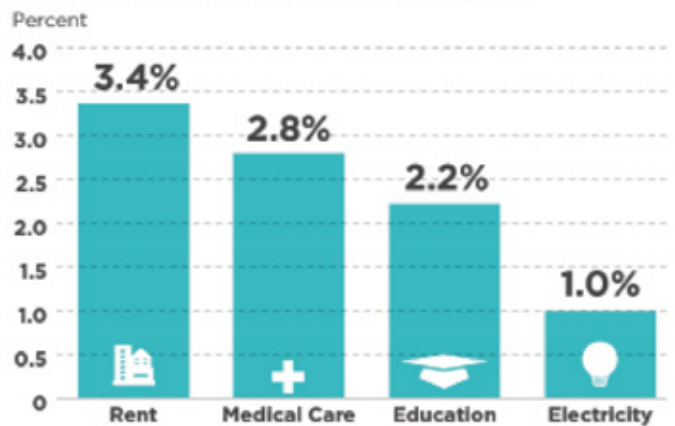
Typically, when demand goes up, so too does the price, as is the case with most goods or services, like cable or even your favorite specialty coffee. However, that's not true with electricity. Let's take a look at how the value of electricity compares to other common expenses.

Over the last five years, the cost of rent increased 3.4%; medical care increased 2.8%; and education increased 2.2%. But the cost of electricity only increased 1%. Lake Country Power has been able to keep rates stable the past five years with the last rate adjustment in 2016.

### ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

The cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common expenses. Looking at price increases over the last five years, it's easy to see electricity remains a good value!

Average Annual Price Increase 2015-2020



Sources: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Consumer Price Index

Considering all the ways we depend on electricity, it still remains a great value.

So, the next time you're enjoying your favorite podcast, TV series or movie, consider the value of electricity and how it enhances your quality of life.

We care about you, the members we serve, and understand that electricity is more than a commodity—it's a necessity. That's why Lake Country Power will continue working hard to power your life, reliably and affordably. ■

**LCP lobbies re-opened to the public on August 2. Welcome back!**



# Seven Cooperative Principles

Cooperatives around the world operate according to a core set of principles that originated in 1844 from the first modern cooperative, the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers in Rochdale, England. These principles, along with the co-op purpose of improving quality of life for their members, make electric co-ops different from other types of electric utilities.

These are the seven cooperative principles that Lake Country Power lives by:

## Voluntary and Open Membership

Membership in a cooperative is open to all people who can reasonably use its services and stand willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, regardless of race, religion, gender or economic circumstances.

## Democratic Member Control

Cooperatives are democratic organizations controlled by their members—those who buy the goods or use the services of the cooperative—who actively participate in setting policies and making decisions. Directors are elected among members and are accountable to them.

## Members' Economic Participation

Members contribute equally to, and democratically control, the capital of the cooperative. At least part of that capital remains the common property of the cooperative. Members allocate surpluses for any or

all of the following purposes: developing the cooperative; setting up reserves; benefiting members in proportion to their transactions with the cooperative; and supporting other activities approved by the membership.

## Autonomy and Independence

Cooperatives are autonomous, self-help organizations controlled by their members. If the co-op enters into agreements with other organizations or raises capital from external sources, they do so on terms that ensure democratic control as well as their unique identity.

## Education, Training and Information

Education and training for members, elected directors,

staff and employees help them effectively contribute to the development of their cooperatives. Communications about the nature and benefits of cooperatives help boost cooperative understanding.

## Cooperation among Cooperatives

By working together through local, national, regional and international structures, cooperatives improve services, bolster local economies and deal more effectively with social and community needs.

## Concern for Community

Cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies supported by the membership. ■



By Jason LONG  
District 1 Director

Jason Long was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 1. He can be reached at 218-218-240-9611 or jlong@lcp.coop.

## Operation Round Up® gives nearly \$46,000 to community programs



Through the contributions of LCP's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Electric Trust Board recently approved \$45,940 in assistance to local community programs during its quarterly meeting. Since the program's inception in October 2004, more than \$2.6 million has been distributed to community-based projects and programs. Applications are available online at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) under "My Cooperative."

### Most Recent Recipients

- Fishing with Vets
- Longville Area Community Choir music in the park
- United Way of Carlton County
- Grace House of Itasca County
- St. Louis County Volunteer Rescue Squad
- Aurora Food Shelf/Arrowhead Economic Opportunity Agency
- Cook Housing Authority
- Moose Willow Sportsman Club/Youth Trap
- Itasca County Family YMCA
- Deer River Chamber of Commerce
- Project Care Free Clinic
- Sisebakwet Lake Association
- Grand Rapids North Star Women's Club
- Jacobson Food Shelf
- Grand Rapids Police Department/ City of Grand Rapids
- The Lakeside Community Clubhouse
- Lake Vermilion Traditional Pow Wow Committee
- ElderCircle
- Grace Lutheran Quilters
- HOPE: Advocates Against Domestic Abuse
- Volunteers in Education
- Open Door Coat Rack: Grand Rapids United Methodist Church
- Queen of Peace Quilters
- Buck Lake Improvement Club
- Boy Scouts of America Troop 116
- Blackberry Township
- Father's Heart & Hands Food Shelf
- North St. Louis County 4-H

## District 1 director achieves certification



► District 1 Director Jason Long (left), Cook, Minn., recently achieved his Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD). Also pictured is District 7 Director and Board President Craig Olson, Culver.

The first part of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) three-part Director Education Program, the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) program consists of five courses that focus on basic governance knowledge, financial and the essential skills required of cooperative directors. The CCD prepares directors to fulfill their fiduciary duty as elected officials serving on behalf of their membership. Upon completion of all five CCD courses, directors are awarded the Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate by NRECA. Once the CCD is completed, participants can then pursue the Board Leadership Certificate.



# People Powering You

This is a regular series of employee spotlights where you'll get to know the people behind your power.

**Years served:** Employed 36 years

**Brief overview of my job:** I help keep members' personal information secure by updating and monitoring our IT infrastructure for potential threats.

I'm also responsible for management of user accounts, permissions and access rights, e-mail, printer management, server backup and restore, IT purchasing, software licensing, help tickets, cybersecurity, managing audits and tasks required for compliance or best business practices. Security training for end users.

**Why I enjoy working at LCP:** Lake Country Power is a great company to work for. The co-op is member-owned, community and family oriented, they promote and support user training and give opportunities for advancement. The co-op stays current with constant technology changes.

**Family:** I have three children: Nichole (Stephen), Kyle (Kari) and Brett. I have five beautiful grandchildren who keep me busy, and I adore them! I have four sisters: Barb, Natalie, Pattie and Denise.

**Community Involvement:** I volunteer at the Kylar Glen Hospice House.

**Hobbies:** I love watching most sports; baseball and hockey are my favorite. In the summer: golf, gardening, kayaking and boating. In the winter: figure skating, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. I love to be outdoors. I'm always working on house projects and love to travel!

**One random fact of interest about yourself:** I was a professional figure skating instructor for 25 years, coaching in Bemidji, Thief River Falls, Blaine, Grand Rapids and Coleraine.

**Michelle Hedlund**  
*Network Administrator*



I spent many summers growing up training in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I spent a summer training in Sun Valley, Idaho while Dorothy Hamill was training, and another summer in Rockford, IL while Janet Lynn was training. I'm currently an independent sales representative for Opulenza Designs .925 sterling silver jewelry in my spare time.

**Before I worked for the co-op?** My first job after graduating from Bemidji Technical was a word processing specialist at Medtronic in Fridley, MN. I was a data entry specialist and payroll at Glorvigen Accounting in Grand Rapids. We moved back to Bemidji and I worked as a cash sales representative at J.C. Penny in the evening so I could stay home with my children. I also did daycare for a short time before moving back to Grand Rapids. I started at Dairyland Electric Cooperative in March 1985, and I've been at the co-op ever since.

**Education/training/background:** I graduated from Bemidji High School in 1977 and from Northwest Technical College, Bemidji, MN in 1978. I've also taken a few classes at Itasca Community College and various computer training classes online and on site at New Horizon's in Edina, where I obtained my Microsoft Certifications. I've also done some online computer training with Storm Wind.

## Additional households qualify for energy assistance

We know that COVID-19 has created financial hardships, placing an even larger burden on families already struggling to pay their bills or bring their accounts current. If you are experiencing difficulty paying your electric bill, the Energy Assistance Program (EAP) helps pay for home heating costs and furnace repairs for income-qualified homeowners and renters.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce has expanded EAP by raising income eligibility and extending the deadline to apply to Sept. 1, 2021. Households with incomes at or below 60% of the state's median income may be eligible, which is about \$65,000 in annual income for a household of four.

**To learn more about the EAP program or to apply for assistance:**

- Visit the Minnesota Department of Commerce Energy Assistance website: <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>
- Contact your county EAP service provider for additional information and assistance.

## Special Notice: Surveying members, Fall 2021

Lake Country Power will be conducting a member survey beginning September 7. Please be aware that you may be one of several members who are randomly selected to participate in the survey – so if you get a call or e-mail about a survey from us, it's legit.

Lake Country Power is contracting with a cooperative-affiliated research firm that has years of experience measuring member satisfaction levels and how co-ops score on the American Customer Satisfaction Index. The survey will benchmark several areas of focus, including electric vehicles, member service, electric service, bills and payment options, etc. If you are selected, please take 10 minutes to participate.

Thank you.



# Understanding Power Surges and Blinks



Have you ever noticed your lights blink during a thunderstorm? Or perhaps you've noticed a blinking microwave clock when you arrive home. When this happens, you've likely experienced a brief disruption to your electric service, which could result from a power surge or blink. While the symptoms of surges and blinks can appear similar, what's happening behind the scenes can be quite different.

▶ Lightning strikes can cause faults (short circuits) on power lines, which can cause your power to blink. *Photo Credit: Pat Gaines*

## What's a power surge?

Power surges are brief overvoltage spikes or disturbances of a power waveform that can damage, degrade or destroy electronic equipment within your home or business. Most electronics are designed to handle small variations in voltage; however, power surges can reach amplitudes of tens of thousands of volts—this can be extremely damaging to your electronic equipment.

Surges can be caused by internal sources, like HVAC systems with

variable frequency drives, or external sources, like lightning and damage to power lines and transformers.

Lake Country Power encourages all members to install surge protective devices (such as surge protector power strips) to safeguard your sensitive electronics. If you're experiencing frequent surges in your home or business and you believe the cause is internal, contact a qualified electrician to inspect your electrical system.

## What's a power blink?

Power blinks are also brief service interruptions, but they're typically caused by a fault (short circuit) on a power line or a protective device that's working in reaction to the fault. Faults can occur through a variety of instances, like squirrels, birds or

other small animals contacting an energized power line; tree branches touching a power line; or lightning and other similar events. In fact, when it comes to power disruptions caused by critters, squirrels reign supreme. In 2020 alone, squirrels were responsible for more than 450 outages. Any of the events noted above can cause your power to blink, but you may also experience a brief interruption when protective devices that act like circuit breakers are working to detect the fault. Believe it or not, these brief power blinks caused by protective devices are actually good because that means the equipment is working as it should to prevent a prolonged outage.

Regardless of the cause, LCP crews will arrive to inspect the damage and make necessary repairs after a power outage. And you can help too! Any time you experience repeated disruptions to your electric service, please let us know. ■



## RECIPE CORNER BEST EVER BARS

From the Kitchen of:  
**Rosalie Auel,**  
Gilbert



- Scald 2/3 cup milk. Add 1 tsp. sugar and cool to lukewarm.
- Dissolve 1 pkg. yeast in 1/4 cup warm water.
- Add milk mixture.
- Beat in 2 eggs (or 4 egg yolks).
- Next, cut 1 cup butter into 4 cups flour. Then beat in yeast mixture.
- Divide dough in half; roll out; and place in large pan.

Spread with filling, such as apple, blueberry, cherry. Roll out other half for top. Seal edges. Let rise for one hour. Bake at 375 degrees for 35 minutes. Add icing on top if you like.

Submit your favorite recipe to Lake Country Power, Attn: Editor, 26039 Bear Ridge Drive, Cohasset MN 55721, or e-mail [tzaun@lcp.coop](mailto:tzaun@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.

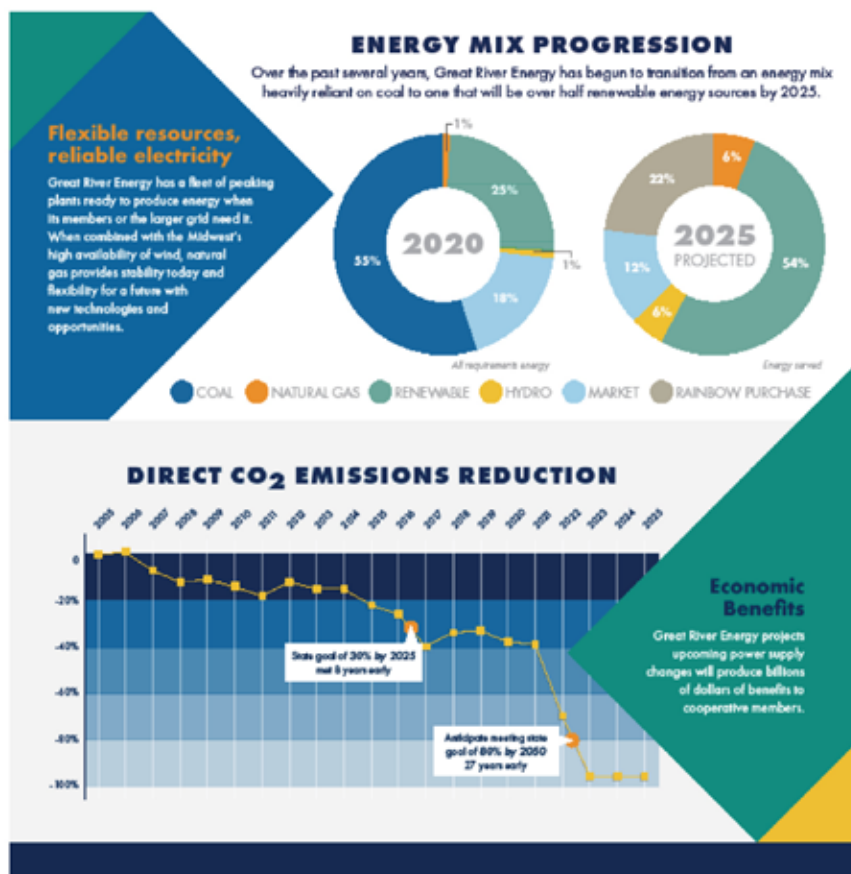
## smart hub Tip

**Q:** Thinking about adding a new appliance such as a fridge or maybe even a hot tub? Want to know how the new infrastructure will impact your bill?

**A:** Check out SmartHub, specifically "My Usage." With the "Usage Planning" tool, you can create a marker for a specific point in time, such as when the new item was installed or removed, to help track any differences in energy usage.

# Great River Energy power supply transformation continues

## New ownership group for Coal Creek Station plans carbon capture and renewables



Great River Energy, Lake Country Power's wholesale power provider, reached an agreement to sell the Coal Creek Station power plant to Rainbow Energy Center, LLC.

The sale of Coal Creek Station averts the plant's closure, which was scheduled for the second half of 2022 unless a buyer was found. Rainbow Energy Center will continue to operate the 1,151-megawatt (MW) power plant using current plant employees they hire. Rainbow Energy Center also plans to develop carbon capture and storage at Coal Creek Station.

"We are excited for what the future holds for our North Dakota employees and the communities surrounding Coal Creek Station," said Great River Energy President and Chief Executive Officer David Saggau. Selling the plant also offers additional benefits for Great River Energy's member-owners compared with shutting it down.

Nexus Line, LLC has reached an agreement to purchase from Great River Energy the high voltage direct current (HVDC)

transmission system that extends between central North Dakota and Minnesota. Great River Energy will operate and maintain the HVDC system under a 10-year contract.

Rainbow Energy Center and Nexus Line are affiliates of Rainbow Energy Marketing Corp. of Bismarck, North Dakota.

"The successful implementation of carbon capture and storage is central to our plans at Coal Creek Station," said Rainbow Energy Marketing Corp. President Stacy L. Tschider. "As a privately held company, we are uniquely positioned to continue the successful legacy that Great River Energy and its employees have established in North Dakota."

Rainbow Energy Center plans to add incremental generation from renewables to fully utilize the capacity of the HVDC transmission system.

Great River Energy will also enter into a power purchase agreement with Rainbow Energy Center, LLC.

These transactions will help ensure Great River Energy continues to provide its member-owners with reliable and affordable electricity as the cooperative builds its future power supply portfolio. "We are building a power supply portfolio that will serve our member-owner cooperatives with clean, affordable and reliable energy for decades," said Saggau. The cooperative will add 900 MW of wind energy by 2023 and remains on track to meet Minnesota's 80% carbon dioxide reduction goal ahead of schedule.

The sale of Coal Creek Station and the HVDC system is expected to close later this year, after required approvals are obtained. ■

## CONSIDERING AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

Join us in Duluth! A panel of EV experts and enthusiasts will be available to answer questions. Take a look at the wide variety of EVs on the market.

**SEPTEMBER 30, 2021**

5-6 p.m. Panel discussion  
6-7 p.m. EV parking lot

**CANAL PARK LODGE  
AND EV PARKING LOT**

Light refreshments will be provided  
FREE Love Creamery Ice Cream



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## May 25, 2021 • Regular Monthly Meeting

### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

Vice President Kingsley read a written report prepared by President Olson. Olson attended the LCP director orientation on May 11 with newly elected LCP directors Larry Anderson and Steve Raukar.

General Manager Bakk commented about Great River Energy's operations including financials, energy and demand, power cost adjustment charges, COVID-19 update, office reopening plan, member load control pilot project, etc. Bakk reported about LCP related matters such as Northland Connect operations. He was re-elected to the MRET board for another three-year term. LCP has resumed collections and disconnections, while working with members on their past-due accounts and directing them to energy assistance agencies.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved the 2022 construction bidder list.

Approved the 2022 annual membership meeting be held on Wednesday, April 20 at 5:30 p.m. at the Lake Country Power Cohasset Service Center.

Approved to hold LCP's strategic planning session on September 29 – 30. ■

**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.



► This picture earned a spot in the co-op calendar for August. Shelley Taylor of Grand Rapids snapped this resting bear at the Vince Shute Wildlife Sanctuary in Orr.

## 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

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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

When shopping for new light bulbs, know the difference between lumens and watts. Lumens measure the amount of light produced by the bulb. Watts measure energy consumption. Energy-saving LEDs come in a variety of colors and brightness levels and last 15-25 times longer than incandescent bulbs. Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date – May 2021

	2021	2020
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 39,938,132	\$ 39,116,741
Cost of Purchased Power	21,148,044	18,992,196
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	5,970,426	5,679,875
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	1,604,150	1,617,134
Administrative and General Expense	2,950,550	2,838,319
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	6,636,819	6,435,118
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>38,309,988</b>	<b>35,562,641</b>
Net Electric Operating Margins	1,628,144	3,554,101
Non-Operating Margins	748,768	501,919
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	2,376,913	4,056,019
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	1,028,276	(229,873)
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$ 3,405,188</b>	<b>\$ 3,826,146</b>
<b>TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)</b>	<b>278,017,319</b>	<b>273,711,838</b>

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