



February 2021

# Newsline

BOARD MEETINGS February 23 ■ March 30

## IN THIS ISSUE

- Water Heating Options
- Electric Systems Evolve
- Cost to Run Space Heaters
- Calendar Contest Opens

## Second rotation begins in seven-year cycle of tree clearing

Using all the “tools” in our tool kit, Lake Country Power strategically completed its first seven-year rotation of clearing trees and brush from cooperative lines, electrical equipment, and right-of-way corridors.

This year – 2021 – marks the beginning of a second new cycle in the rotation plan. The co-op will invest \$5.2 million in this year’s integrated vegetation management (IVM) program to help meet its mission to provide safe and reliable energy for members.

“This year we’re starting our second full seven-year cycle and will continue our commitment toward a safe and effective approach to right-of-way management,” said Syver Kolden, manager of forestry services. Kolden says this year crews will move back into areas that were cleared in 2014 and begin working through the distribution system again in equal rotation.

### Tools and Strategy

Lake Country Power’s IVM program touches more than 1,000 miles of line each year.

The IVM approach uses a combination of methods, all of which are cost-effective, efficient and environmentally responsible.

The strategic approach is working well to minimize impact on electric service for members. Between clearing, mowing by machine and carefully applied selective herbicide treatments, each tool works together to achieve the most effective results as possible to mitigate outages.

“If we only mowed the right-of-way areas and didn’t include herbicides, it would be a waste of money because the re-growth after mowing happens so quickly,” said Kolden. “Mowing these types of areas is similar to mowing your own lawn. Before you know it, you have to mow the lawn again because the grass grows back so quickly.

“Although herbicides don’t eliminate all trees from growing, it certainly minimizes the regrowth until we’re able to come back for the next rotation. At that time we will use considerably less herbicide for extra cost savings and start establishing



▶ This is good right-of-way clearance.

a low growing plant community.”

LCP uses herbicides for its mid-cycle work, all of which are approved by the Environmental Protection Agency. All applications are done by licensed professionals who are trained to do selective treatments by hand. The treatments actually promote native growth of wildflowers, blueberries and other vegetation that would normally be choked out from trees and taller vegetation taking over.

### Areas of Focus

The following geographical regions will be cleared and selectively treated this year – representing six substations and 1,000 miles within the co-op’s overall 10,800 square-mile service area.

- **Arbo Substation:** North of Grand Rapids
- **Side Lake Substation:** Areas near Side Lake and north of Hibbing
- **Keewatin Substation:** Areas near Keewatin and south of Hibbing

CONTINUED ON P. 2

# Heat your water on a money-saving program

How would you like to save money on your water heating costs for hot showers, baths, dish washing, and laundry? These water heating strategies are available for co-op members from Lake Country Power. Whether you choose the 8-hour interruptible water heating program or the off-peak water heating program, the choice is yours.

The energy used on these programs is metered separately and that energy is billed at a lower rate per kilowatt-hour than the general service rate – saving you money.

Lake Country Power stocks and sells Marathon® brand electric water heaters, which are insulated, energy-efficient and made in the USA (North Dakota). The Marathon® is a perfect match for either water heating program.

## Option 1: 8-Hour Interruptible – Rate 61

The 8-hour interruptible program is a load control program allowing LCP the ability to shut off the water heater when the demand for electricity is high, up to 8 hours at a time.

Lake Country Power requires a water heater with a minimum capacity of 50-gallons or more to participate.

This is great for cabins, homes, and businesses with limited space. Larger tank sizes may be required for large families. Also, with your SmartHub account you can turn on alert notifications and get a text and/or e-mail alert if load control is planned.

## Option 2: Off-Peak – Rate 62

The off-peak program

provides a low-cost water heating option for your home or business. A minimum of a 100-gallon electric water heater is required. The water heater is controlled daily and energized or “turned on” for a minimum of eight hours per day, generally between 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. which is a hot water storage type system.

Rebates are also available for these water heating and other load management programs. Call 800-421-9959 (press 6) for the member service department or visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop). ■

# Cycle of tree clearing

## CONTINUED FROM P. 1

- **Cook Substation:** Areas near Cook and the west side of Lake Vermilion
- **Orr Substation:** Areas near Orr and Crane Lake
- **Meadowbrook Substation:** Remote areas with 300 miles of line to clear west of Cook, Orr and near Togo

The areas that were cleared in 2019 will receive mid-cycle applications this year, including:

- Hill City
- Remer
- Wright
- Parts of Pokegama Lake south of Grand Rapids
- East of Grand Rapids off the Gunn Substation
- Parts of Big Sandy Lake north of McGregor

## Care for Wildlife

When the tree crews encounter a tall danger tree that is almost dead or dying at the edge or outside of the

right-of-way, the crews will cut it down to eliminate outages. “Often it’s a 70-foot popple/poplar,” according to Kolden.

Some dying trees are taken only half-way down in an effort to leave dead tree stubs for natural wildlife habit. Bats and barred owls enjoy building nests and a home in these types of trees. Plus, it’s cost effective – bypassing the chipper and full removal process.

“Leave my bat trees,” Kolden often says as a reminder.

“Owls love perching on trees without tops and the bats like to make their homes in these trees too.”

## LCP tree crews

“Lake Country Power’s tree crews are doing great work and keeping up with the requests,” added Kolden. LCP’s tree crews do a lot of the clearing work for the co-op’s capital work projects and for smaller projects a two-man crew can handle,

which helps reduce the need to hire contractors and saves on costs. When the work requires larger machines and more specialized equipment, LCP will hire contractors for those types of jobs.

If the co-op’s tree crews see a danger tree when driving the lines, they will stop and take it out. More than 400 of these types of trees were removed last year – avoiding as many potential outages that didn’t happen because the tree crews are attentive to take out these trees when spotted.

## Bugs and Infection

Insects, bugs and infection are an ongoing challenge. There are thousands of mature popple trees that are infected with hypoxylon canker, a deadly fungus. There are areas of infestation that LCP tries to concentrate on as part of the co-op’s mid-cycle work plan, and part of our overall tree crew work. ■



**Q:** Do you need the total amount of your annual energy usage and payments for tax purposes? If so, you can easily access your bills and payment history through your SmartHub account.

**A:** To find this information for your tax filing, log into your SmartHub account. Then click “Billing & Payments” from the blue banner. A drop-down menu will open – click “Billing History” to navigate through your service account(s). Another hyperlink should be visible so you can look at each month’s energy usage and payments. You can print the files from SmartHub to organize for your accountant.

# As electric systems evolve, reliability comes in new ways

As even more renewable energy is added to the electric grid, utilities continue to preserve one of electricity's most important qualities: Reliability.

"When our members flip the switch, they expect lights to turn on," said Derek Howe, P.E., chief operating officer for Lake Country Power. "It takes a lot of technology and talented people working together to make that happen."

Large conventional power plants that have been shutting down in recent years are often replaced with new generators such as wind turbines and solar panels that can produce electricity at a lower cost. But because most of those resources rely on the wind and the sun, they need a dependable backup.

"Renewable energy paired with flexible generation is a proven recipe for affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible energy," said Jon

Brekke, vice president and chief power supply officer for Lake Country Power's wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy. "Today, our natural gas-fueled power plants serve an essential role in maintaining reliable power supply."

Great River Energy has a fleet of peaking plants ready to produce energy when its members or the larger grid need it. They can start up in a matter of minutes and ramp production up or down quickly to supply energy and balance the grid. When combined with the high availability of wind in the Midwest, natural gas peaking plants provide stability today and flexibility for a future with new technologies and opportunities.

## Batteries a possible future solution

Energy storage has long been viewed as a promising option for reliability. However, current storage technology is limited to short-term periods



## RECIPE CORNER SELF-FILLED CUPCAKES

From the Kitchen of:  
**Barbara Kupka,**  
Embarrass



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 pkg. chocolate cake mix
- 1 8-oz. pkg. cream cheese
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup sugar
- Dash of salt
- 1 cup chocolate pieces

### DIRECTIONS

Prepare cake mix according to directions on package. Fill muffin cups or paper lined muffin cups two-thirds full. Cream the cheese and beat the egg, sugar and salt. Stir in chocolate pieces. Drop in a rounded teaspoonful of mixture into each cupcake. Bake as directed on package.

Note: You can make a regular scratch chocolate cake and it works the same. Enjoy!

### We need more recipes!

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

and unable to cost-effectively fulfill the role currently performed by peaking plants. Longer duration storage is being developed that may someday offer a competitive option for providing reliability and flexibility.

Great River Energy is working with a U.S. battery

technology developer on a first-of-its-kind demonstration of a long-duration storage technology. The 1-megawatt storage pilot project will be located in Cambridge, Minnesota with completion targeted for late 2023. ■

## Request your 2021 Co-op Calendar

The beautiful 2021 co-op calendar featuring photos from members is still available. Supplies are limited – two per membership. Request yours online at [www.lakecountypower.coop](http://www.lakecountypower.coop), call

800-421-9959 (press 5), visit the kiosk area of LCP's service centers in Cohasset, Mountain Iron or Kettle River, or complete and mail this request form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_



Mail to: Lake Country Power  
8535 Park Ridge Drive  
Mountain Iron, MN 55768.

# Do you know what it costs to run a space heater?

Calculate the cost before plugging one in.



Most space heaters are 1500 watts. If you operate a space heater eight hours a day and your winter rate is 12.36¢ per kWh, it'll add \$44.50\* each month to your bill.

\*Calculation: 1500 watts x 240 hours/month x .1236 ÷ 1000 = \$44.50

## IT ALL ADDS UP:

Investing in a reliable electric system

How much does a guy wire\* cost per foot?

- A. 59¢ per foot
- B. 10¢ per foot
- C. 95¢ per foot
- D. 34¢ per foot

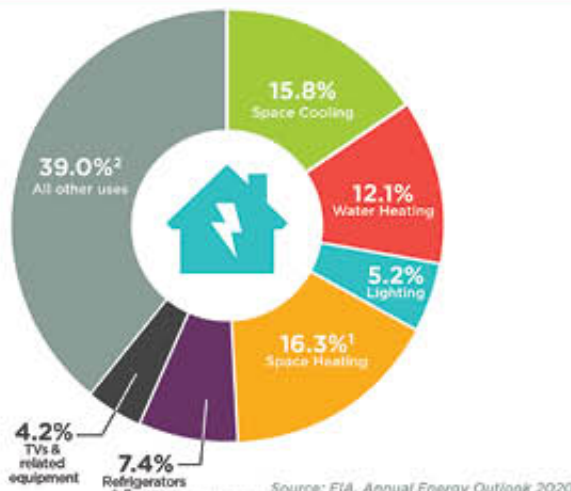


\*A tensioned cable designed to add stability to utility poles. LCP has an average of 50 feet of guy wire per assembly, and the co-op has more than 4 million feet of guy wire on its system. This results in over \$1.3 million of guy wire.

Answer: D

## How Americans Use Electricity

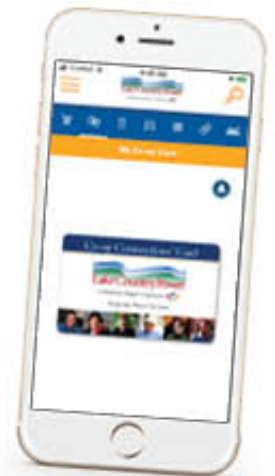
The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



## Save money with Co-op Connections®

You work hard, so let The One Card That Does It All® work hard for you. Bring your Co-op Connections® Card to save money at the participating local businesses in northern Minnesota. If you don't have the card or lost your card, don't worry. You can download the App by searching "Co-op Connections" in the App Store on your Apple or Android device.

- Blue Iris, Grand Rapids
- Deer River Floral & Gifts, Deer River
- Moose Lake Florists, Moose Lake
- Heather Halverson Massage, Chisholm
- Mary Kay, Cohasset
- The Pebble Spa, Ely and Virginia
- Whispering Pines Massage and Spa, Nashauk



For a full listing of business participants or assistance to download the App, visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) (My Cooperative > Community > Co-op Connections Card - <https://www.lakecountrypower.coop/co-op-connections-card>).



## Service center sold to local business

The former LCP service center located at 2810 Elida Drive in Grand Rapids was recently sold to Grand Rapids Marine, a business currently located along Highway 2 in the city limits of Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids Marine is

a boat dealership and will use the building and location for sales, parts and repair. The solar panels were included in the sale of the property where the business plans to cultivate a pollinator garden. Grand Rapids Marine will open in either April or August at the new location.

# A heat pump built for Minnesota winters and summers

Air source heat pumps (ASHPs) have been used for many years in nearly all parts of the United States but, until recently, were not common in areas with extended periods of subfreezing temperatures. However, in recent years, cold-climate ASHP (ccASHP) technology has advanced so that it now offers a legitimate space heating alternative in colder regions, like Minnesota.

A ccASHP can provide both efficient heating and cooling for your home. When properly installed, it can deliver up to three times more heat energy to a home than the electrical energy it consumes. This is possible because a heat pump moves heat rather than converting it from a fuel, like combustion heating systems do.

A project recently conducted by the Center for Energy and Environment found that the efficiency of the newest generation of ccASHPs can operate down to minus 13 degrees Fahrenheit. The efficiency of these technologies in moderate climates is also two-to-three times more efficient than standard electric heating systems.

## Efficiency Ratings

Since heat pumps provide heating in the winter and cooling in the summer, you should be aware of at least two heat pump energy efficiency ratings. The Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) measures cooling efficiency over the cooling season, while the Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) measures heating efficiency over the heating season. Given that we are in the depths of a Minnesota winter, let's further explore the heating aspect.

HSPF is a standardized rating used to compare energy efficiencies. HSPF is used by all heat pump manufacturers to indicate efficiency ratings. Like miles per gallon for your car, the higher the HSPF number, the more efficient the system.

## Advantages

Heat pumps, when properly installed, provide members with several distinct advantages:

- When sized appropriately, today's ccASHPs can provide 100% of a home's heating needs down to temperatures as low as zero degrees, which is

## Heat from Thin Air

A heat pump extracts heat from the outside to the inside. Using recycled heat means the heat pump heats more efficiently.



roughly 90% of all heating hours in Minnesota. If properly set, an ASHP can serve as your primary source for a good part of our Minnesota winters.

- The balance point of your heat pump is the outdoor temperature at which your home HVAC system switches over to its backup heating system, likely set by your installer. If your heat pump can keep your home warm down to 10F, but your balance point is set to switch over to backup heat at that same temperature, then anytime it's in the 10- to 15-degree Fahrenheit range, you'll be paying more than you should for heat.
- Aren't sure of your ASHP's balance point? Take note of the temperature where your

backup heating source kicks in and if it's above 10 F, your balance point may be set too high. If you have already installed an ASHP, you may also want to contact your installation contractor to inquire further and ensure your balance point is where you want it to be.

Lake Country Power provides a variety of incentives and programs for heat pump technologies. Should you have any additional questions, feel free to contact the member service department at 800-421-9959 (press 6). Be sure to continue looking for additional ways to improve the energy efficiency of your home, and take advantage of the rebates we offer by visiting [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop).

## Co-op calendar contest opens

The 2021 co-op calendar contest is officially open for members to begin submitting their beautiful scenic entries. The deadline is Mon., Aug. 2.

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

### Photo Contest Guidelines

1. Dimensions must be 3600 x 2400 = 12" x 8" high-res print photo, or 5400 x 3600 = 18" x 12" high-res photo. Adjust your camera settings to ensure these high-

quality dimensions. Cell phone photos are often not acceptable quality for print. A quality digital camera is best for good photography.

2. Photos must be 300dpi (dots per inch). Photos under 1 MB will be labeled as KB, and are too small for print application and should not be entered.
3. Separate e-mails are required per entry. Attach the photo file to your e-mail, include a photo description for the entry, and remember to include your name and the phone number on your account.

4. Horizontal/landscape photos only; no vertical shots for design reasons.
5. Only Lake Country Power members may enter the contest. (LCP employees and their immediate families and spouses are not eligible to enter the contest.)
6. Hard copy photos cannot be accepted; only electronic files please.
7. Photos should capture the beauty of northern Minnesota. You may submit photos taken in spring, summer, fall and/or winter. All photos must be taken by you, not someone else.
8. One membership (household) may submit

up to 10 photos and will be limited to one winning entry per membership.

9. Please do not submit close-ups of people.
10. Winning photographers automatically give Lake Country Power permission to use winning photos in the calendar, in other publications, member presentations or electronically online.

Photos must be e-mailed to [tzaun@lcp.coop](mailto:tzaun@lcp.coop).

All entries must be received by **August 2, 2021**.

## Condensed Board Minutes

### November 24, 2020 • Regular Monthly Meeting

#### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson referred several calls from members to General Manager Randa. He stated he spoke with Attorney Felstul as well.

General Manager Randa reported the LCP proposed 2021 budget is complete and will be mailed to directors on November 25. The budget meeting will be held virtually December 15. He reported the November Great River Energy member manager meeting was held virtually. Randa commented about the bill credit GRE will send to member cooperatives in December and the total bill credits from GRE for 2020; COVID-19 related issues; Coal Creek Station and related considerations; October GRE financials; Northland Connect; and sale of

the Grand Rapids Service Center by end of November 2020.

#### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved to reappoint Director Forsman as LCP's voting delegate and Director Kingsley as voting alternate for the Minnesota Rural Electric Association.

Approved the general manager contract for Mark Bakk to start in his new role on January 8, 2021. ■

**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 February. Sue Shelgren of Barnum was heading off for mid-winter hike to take pictures of any early-bird arrivals when she caught sight of this bobcat with her telephoto lens.



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load). The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Source: [www.nrel.gov](http://www.nrel.gov)

## Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date – November 2020

	2020	2019
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 80,924,751	\$82,338,129
Cost of Purchased Power	41,310,833	41,558,480
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	13,713,148	13,477,149
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	3,519,831	4,079,453
Administrative and General Expense	5,884,981	5,971,264
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	14,999,676	15,080,550
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>79,428,469</b>	<b>80,166,896</b>
Net Electric Operating Margins	1,496,283	2,171,233
Non-Operating Margins	872,183	1,013,221
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	2,368,466	3,184,453
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	987,490	416,096
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$3,355,956</b>	<b>\$3,600,549</b>
<b>TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)</b>	<b>544,110,730</b>	<b>561,261,329</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.

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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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