



May 2024

# Newsline



Energy that Powers Our Lives

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- Continuing education to serve LCP
- Pole Testing
- A visit to Rose Cottage
- Reconsider nuclear moratorium

**BOARD MEETINGS** May 21 ■ June 25 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

## LCP board talks energy issues with legislators



▶ On March 18-20, 2024, the LCP Board of Directors visited the State Capitol in St. Paul to discuss energy issues with northern Minnesota legislators regarding reliable and affordable electric service. Your co-op leadership is committed to promoting member interests in the evolving landscape of power generation and transmission, and the distribution of electricity to homes, businesses, farms and cabins throughout the Lake Country Power service territory.



# Time to reconsider Minnesota's nuclear moratorium

Last year, Minnesota lawmakers passed a bill focused on requiring carbon-free electricity production by 2040.

This legislation will essentially eliminate fossil fuel electric utility plants in Minnesota within the next 16 years. When these plants are retired, many business leaders are concerned about the reliability of the electric grid. While renewables are helpful and should be pursued aggressively, dependable base load generation capacity is still essential.

In other words, we need electricity that is available when the wind isn't blowing, and the sun isn't shining. This is why it's very important for our elected officials at the State Capitol to repeal the nuclear moratorium that has been in place in Minnesota for over 30 years. Removing the moratorium doesn't mean we have to build it but allows us to have important conversations on the topic.

So, is nuclear power safe? The short answer is, yes.

We understand that the word "nuclear" alone can evoke public fears. However, most modern technologies have inherent risks; be it flying in airplanes, or simply having electricity in our homes — both have the potential to cause great harm and yet provide tremendous benefit. As with such technologies, we make the benefits of nuclear power available safely to the public by managing the risks, developing safety regulations,



By Mark  
**BAKK**  
General Manager

and learning from our mistakes.

Modern nuclear plants are safe in part because of how we build them, including robust containment structures and automated fail-safe systems to ensure the safety of workers, the public, and the environment. Strict safety regulations and oversight have enabled the industry to operate for over 70 years with negligible impact on public health and the planet.

As with other industries like aviation, lessons learned from prior incidents improve upon the already remarkable safety record.

Nuclear technology is also undergoing a renaissance with many new designs being researched and developed under the title of "advanced reactors." This new technology provides the promise of lowering the cost to build a plant and creates an opportunity to recycle some of the used fuel currently being stored at older nuclear facilities.

But Minnesota utilities won't have the option to consider this new technology due to the current moratorium.

For us to meet the carbon-free mandates set before us, we need to have conversations now with state legislators and entities like the MN Rural Electric Association, the MN State Chamber, many labor unions, and others to repeal this moratorium. If businesses and residents in this state are to be assured of having dependable electricity when it's needed, we shouldn't be tying the hands of the power producers regarding the choices they need to make to ensure there is a reliable electric grid. ■

## GRE returned \$15 million to members

### Cash payments to members are central to cooperative business model

Cooperatives are not-for-profit organizations that are owned by the members they serve with their services provided at cost. They only collect enough revenue to run the business and meet financial obligations.

After paying operating expenses, all remaining margins are allocated to members based on revenue received for service. These margins are called patronage capital and represent the members' equity in the cooperative.

When a cooperative enjoys financial success and its equity levels exceed established targets, it returns those dollars to members through patronage capital payments.



Earlier this month, the board of directors for Lake Country Power's wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, approved the payment of \$15 million to member-owners through its 2024 patronage capital return.

"At Great River Energy, we take our member-owners' investment very seriously," said Great River Energy Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Michelle Strobel. "We closely monitor costs and seek ways to work more efficiently in order to keep rates competitive. It is a privilege to return dollars to members through patronage capital payments."

This is the sixth consecutive year that Great River Energy has issued a patronage capital return to its member-owners.

# Member Made aims to highlight local businesses

I am excited to write the first-ever “Member Made article” for Lake Country Power.

We will be periodically highlighting some of our great member-owned businesses throughout our service territory. If you're interested in being a part of this initiative, you can find more information below.

When thinking about all the various types of member-owned businesses, Rose Cottage Baking Co. was top of mind for a great small LCP business to showcase.

My work often takes me all throughout LCP's service territory and this small, but hearty bakery has quickly become a must-stop for coffee or a bite to eat when my work takes me anywhere near Cook.

It was a sunny February morning when I had the pleasure of sitting down with the Rose Cottage Baking Co. owner, Rebekah Olson. I was able to grab a table and enjoy a freshly made coffee and discuss Rebekah's business that she started in 2022. We discussed her made-from-scratch baked goods, monthly lunch specials and their catering offerings.

One thing that became quickly apparent during my conversation with Rebekah was her passion for quality. We discussed the ingredients that they use in their baked goods and how they source the highest quality ingredients locally as much as possible.



The ingredients were not the only quality the business provides.

The atmosphere of this quaint shop provided an intimate and calm spot to stop. You feel like you are a part of the baking process. Sitting at one of the tables provides a view right into the bakery kitchen where all the action is happening and Rebekah said you can often see the products come to life!

Customers came and went as I typed away on my laptop and although I did not see “quality service” listed on the menu, it was consistently offered to happy customers. The customers are not the only ones who get to enjoy Rose Cottage Baking Co.'s delicious food. If any baked goods expire, they are donated to a local petting farm to be happily munched on by some very lucky animals!

The Rose Cottage Baking Co. is open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday through Friday, and Saturdays 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. To learn more about daily specials and help support this member owned business, please give them a follow on Facebook at [facebook.com/rosecottagebakingco](https://facebook.com/rosecottagebakingco).

To learn more about the Member Made Initiative, visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop/membermade](https://www.lakecountrypower.coop/membermade) to sign up for our periodical newsletters and submit your business information. ■



By DAN COOPER  
Key Accounts and  
Business Devt.  
Manager

# Power Up Your Lawn Care with Electric Equipment

The landscape of lawn and garden care is evolving, and electric equipment is at the forefront of this change. While electric lawn tools aren't new, advancements in technology and more options mean prices have become more competitive, making electric equipment an accessible option for many consumers.

## Benefits of Electric Equipment

Electric lawnmowers have come a long way since the days of extension cords tethering you to an outlet. Battery-powered mowers offer the same freedom of movement as gas-powered models but with reduced noise and maintenance.

Battery life was once a major drawback to making the switch to electric lawn tools. But today's growing demand for electric equipment has resulted in major advancements for lithium-ion batteries, making them more reliable, cost-effective and efficient. For most consumers, electric lawn tools can get the job done just as well as gas-powered models.

Many electric mowers offer push-button starts, and because they are lighter, they are easier to maneuver around tight turns. Like their gas-powered counterparts, electric mowers are available in push, self-propelled/walk-behind and riding models.

Like mowers, electric blowers, string trimmers and chainsaws have fewer moving parts, require minimal maintenance and are

quieter. Because electric tools are generally lighter in weight, they're also more ergonomic and easier to maneuver.

## Get Green for Going Green

Electric tools are quietly redefining the way we approach lawn care. If you're planning to make the switch to electric lawn equipment, visit Lake Country Power's website at [www.lakecountrypower.coop/rates-and-rebates](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/rates-and-rebates) to explore the 4 Seasons of Savings, which offers up to \$50 for new electric yard and sport tools. ■



*Making the Switch to*  
**ELECTRIC LAWN EQUIPMENT**

Considering electric equipment to maintain your outdoor space? Check out the benefits of electric and considerations before making the switch.

Benefits of Electric Equipment	Considerations Before Going Electric
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Battery-powered equipment produces zero emissions</li> <li>• No hassle and mess from gasoline and oil</li> <li>• Quieter and more reliable than gas-powered equipment</li> <li>• Require less energy to do the same amount of work as gas-powered tools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing from a single brand can streamline charging</li> <li>• Consider the size of your property and battery run time</li> <li>• Backup batteries may be needed for larger properties</li> <li>• Electric equipment is pricier up front</li> </ul>

## EQUIPMENT QUIZ

Q

How much does one meter cost?

?

A) \$176

C) \$190

B) \$60

D) \$25

LCP has 73,360 meters on its system. Meters measure and record the amount of electricity used by a consumer. LCP recently replaced all of the meters as part of an automated metering infrastructure (AMI) project. The new meters also record outages, blinks, usage history, power use trends and voltage fluctuations. **ANSWER: A**

## RECIPE CORNER

### FUDGE CINNAMON BROWNIES



From the Kitchen of:  
**Kathleen Menk,  
Grand Rapids**



- 2 cups flour
  - 2 cups sugar
- Mix together in a bowl
- 1 cup butter
  - 7 tbsp cocoa

- 1 cup water
- Mix in a heavy saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Slowly pour over flour and sugar. Blend with a mixer.

- ½ cup buttermilk
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- Add to above.

Mix well and spread in a greased 15x10 jelly roll pan. Bake at 400 degrees for 20 min. or until done. Let cool.

Chocolate fudge frosting: Melt ½ cup of butter in a heavy saucepan. Add 5 tbsp of cocoa and 6 tbsp of milk. Stir well. Bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Add 1-lb powdered sugar and 1 tsp vanilla. Beat until smooth.

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

# Continuing education to better serve members

That spring feeling of nearing the end of the school season is something I can definitely relate to this year.

Recently, I received my certificate as a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). The certification is a critical part of what we do as electric cooperative directors to continue our education to better serve our members.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Cooperative Association (MREA) facilitates NRECA's director education programs, which include the CCD, the Board Leadership Certificate and Director Gold certification.



By Brian NAPSTAD  
District 8 Director

With the electric utility business environment being ever-changing in recent years, directors face new demands to meet the membership's expectations. That means new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Electric co-ops including Lake Country Power have a commitment to work through



the NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of their electric cooperative member-owners.

The NRECA CCD is led by instructors with a wide-range of backgrounds in the co-op experience, including engineering, management, politics, finance, technology and communication. Not only are they well-rounded teachers, but are also well-versed in the industry and the key issues we face as electric cooperative directors.

The CCD program requires attendance and a demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- Director Duties and Liabilities
- Understanding the Electric Business
- Board Operations and Process
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Decision Making

As participants, it's more than sitting through classes and taking notes. We're encouraged to think critically about the issues facing our co-ops and members and engage in discussions on how we can all meet the challenges facing the industry.

Our education isn't dissimilar to how the Lake Country Power board operates: We cooperatively work amongst ourselves, members and staff to learn from each other and find the best ways to move the co-op forward during these changing times.

I'm thankful for our members and for the support of LCP, MREA and NRECA to help continue education for directors, so we can serve you in the best possible way. ■

Brian Napstad was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 8. He can be reached at 218-485-1528 or [bnapstad@lcp.coop](mailto:bnapstad@lcp.coop).

## Pole testing continues for safety and reliability

In the interest of public safety and service reliability, Lake Country Power has hired Exo to complete a ground line pole inspection on our distribution lines in the Babbitt, Lakeland A, Cotton and Ball Club areas.

The goal of the inspection is to identify poles and service equipment which may no longer be fit for service or which

may require maintenance in the interest of safety and service reliability. Crews will be accessing the distribution power lines with pickups, 4-wheelers, boat, or on foot. Some poles may require hand excavation to a depth of 18 inches below ground; these will be filled by the end of each day. There will be no interruption of electric service.

### Annual Cogeneration Notification to Membership

In compliance with Cooperative adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Lake Country Power is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers who satisfy the conditions as the qualifying facility. Lake Country Power is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Cooperative. Interested members should contact Lake Country Power, 26039 Bear Ridge Drive, Cohasset, MN 55721, or call 800-421-9959.

## January 30, 2024 • Regular Monthly Meeting

### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported that he had member phone calls during recent cold-weather days about load control.

General Manager Mark Bakk reported on his attendance at the Great River Energy (GRE) board meeting. He will be attending all 2024 GRE board meetings as vice-chair of the Member Manager Group. Bakk also reported on his attendance at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association CEO Close-Up Conference, where he participated on a panel discussion about leading through a safety incident.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved changes to Policy 419 to include updated charges LCP will bill for custom work for a member, non-member or another electric cooperative.

Approved Policy 428, a new policy that provides guiding principles for the procurement of materials, equipment and services from acceptable vendors.

Following the executive session, approved General Manager Bakk's three-year employment contract beginning January 1, 2024 and ending on December 31, 2026.



► Edee Conner of Isle calls this "Turtle Rock." She said, it's in a pond near Whiteface Reservoir in Makinen – and how fun to see the turtles sharing space with the wood duck and her babies.

**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.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Looking for an easy way to manage home energy use? Smart plugs are inexpensive and offer convenient solutions for scheduling and controlling your favorite electronic devices. With smart plugs, you can easily manage your coffee maker, lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. Smart plugs can help you manage devices through a smart phone app, your home assistant or voice control. By conveniently powering off or scheduling devices, you can save energy and money! Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Co-op Contacts

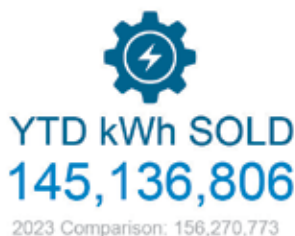
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## BY THE NUMBERS | FEBRUARY 2024

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."



	2024	2023
Cost of Purchased Power	\$11,489,638	\$12,114,724
Other Operating Expenses	\$8,663,060	\$6,640,350
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$18,152,718	\$18,755,074



	2024	2023
Operating Margins	\$4,052,216	\$2,743,660
Non-Operating Margins	\$75,799	(\$6,731)



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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