



**JUNE 2026**

## Lake Country Power Annual Meeting in Cromwell Addresses Important Matters

A community of cooperative members gathered at the Cromwell-Wright School in Cromwell, Minn., for the annual membership meeting on Thursday evening, April 23, 2026. More than 240 members and guests gathered to hear about concerns facing the electric industry among other topics of interest including community outreach.

Mark Bakk, Lake Country Power general manager, reported on concerns including regional reliability and affordability issues. Reliability concerns are compounded by legislative policies that favor intermittent generation from wind and solar, while affordability concerns are related to material costs being, on average, 70% higher than pre-pandemic prices. Also, utilities will need to build roughly three times more capacity by 2035 to achieve energy policy goals set by the state of Minnesota.

Bakk also explained how the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) functions as the electric grid operator for the central United States. The operator ensures that power flows reliably and affordably across 15 states, including Minnesota, and the Canadian province of Manitoba. It also facilitates buying and selling electricity. Think of MISO as the air traffic controller of the regional grid.

By 2028, it is forecasted that power generation will fall below what MISO considers as a comfortable cushion of reserve resources, which places a high risk on the grid for periodic power outages that could happen any season of the year for Minnesotans. Lake Country Power's service area may be impacted by these unplanned outages, and it won't be anything the local cooperative can control.

"Why is all of this a concern?" asked LCP General Manager Mark Bakk. "Because in 2023, Minnesota passed legislation mandating 100 percent carbon-free power generation by 2040. Under this plan, 80 percent of what was keeping your homes warm during the polar vortex on January 24, 2026, will need to go away."

"On top of that, Minnesota has a ban on building any new nuclear generation," added Bakk. "State energy policy is threatening our ability to meet your needs and expectations. Something needs to change or we are headed for a problem."

Tracy Peterson Wirtanen, LCP chief financial officer, provided an overview of the co-op's 2025 financial results including operating revenue, energy sales, purchased power expenses, right-of-way expenditures, depreciation and interest expenses, construction work plan costs, capital credit retirements, and the required margin to meet financial requirements from lenders. She also reported about the rate changes that went into effect in early 2026.

A presentation by LCP's wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy (GRE), highlighted the cooperative's power supply portfolio and long-term resource strategy. GRE supplies generation and transmission to 26 distribution cooperatives in Minnesota, and focused on its delivery of reliable, affordable, and environmentally responsible electric service.

*Continued on page 3.*

# Why Vegetation Management Matters

Here in northern Minnesota, we know a thing or two about trees. We take pride in the natural beauty that surrounds us through the iconic woods and lakes of our region.

At the same time, Lake Country Power shares another responsibility with its members. To provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity. To keep the lights on, to power our homes and businesses, and to make sure that when you flip a switch, the energy you depend on is there.

Lake Country Power works every day to strike a careful balance between preserving the beauty we cherish and executing the cooperative's mission. One of the most important ways it does that is through regular vegetation management.

Trees are the No. 1 cause of outages at Lake Country Power. We've all seen how it happens. Strong winds, heavy ice or sudden storms bring down branches and, with them, power lines and poles. By effectively trimming trees and vegetation, the co-op can be proactive in preventing outages.

That's why you may notice crews from Lake Country Power's trusted contractors working along the lines throughout the year. These crews are highly trained and certified by the International Society of Arboriculture, Minnesota Department of Agriculture and annually train in the Electrical Hazard Awareness Program. All of these follow the latest industry standards to ensure the job is done safely and effectively.

Beyond reliability and efficiency, there's also a financial reality we can't ignore. Preventive maintenance like tree trimming is far more cost-effective than repairing widespread damage after an outage. Left unchecked, overgrown vegetation can lead to more frequent disruptions and higher costs for everyone. A thoughtful, strategic vegetation management program helps keep those costs down for Lake Country Power members.

At the end of the day, we all want the same thing: a community that's safe, resilient and beautiful. Lake Country Power is proud to be part of that effort. Its roots run deep here, just like the trees we work to care for.

*Brian Napstad was elected to the LCP Board by members in District 8. He can be reached at 218-485-1528 or bnapstad@lcp.coop.*



**Sincerely,**  
Brian Napstad,  
District 8 Director

## Board Meeting Highlights: March 31, 2026

### REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

#### The Following Reports Were Given:

President Olson reported that the Executive Committee met in February to review policies that would be brought to the board for approval in April. He also reported on attending the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Power Xchange conference, and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) annual meeting.

General Manager Bakk reported on Great River Energy's (GRE) 10-year forecast, which shows average rate increases of about 3% annually. He stated Lake Country Power completed its 2026 district meetings, and the response from members was positive.

#### The Following Actions Were Taken:

Approved an E3 Loan in conjunction with Great River Energy for Randy's Cabinets and Woodworks for 10 years, \$350,000 at a 4.75% interest rate.

Approved changing the May board meeting to May 28, 2026.

Approved one company for 2027 right-of-way contract work. It was noted only one company submitted safety information to be eligible for bids.

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

**UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS: JUNE 30 | JULY 28** (9:30 am at the Cohasset Service Center, Members Welcome)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Members on LCP's load management programs help the co-op reduce its costs, which benefits all members.



## LCP Still Seeking 2027 Co-op Calendar Entries

Electronic entries are still being accepted via email for the 2027 co-op calendar contest. The deadline is Monday, August 3, to [tzaun@lcp.coop](mailto: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.



## Annual Meeting Continued...

A special presentation during the annual meeting recognized 13 school districts within Lake Country Power's service area with funding through the cooperative's Education Improvement Program. The program is funded through abandoned and unclaimed capital from previous members who can no longer be located and is allowed by the State of Minnesota. The funds cannot be used for Lake Country Power operations.

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 Jon Brekke, Great River Energy's vice president and chief power supply officer.



*Kate and Bill Isles perform for members.*



*Jack Huhta and Ron Dilley received Quilts of Valor.*



*Members enjoy food samples at the Member Made table.*



*Members visit with employees.*



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

Director election results were announced in districts 3, 6 and 7, to fill three-year terms. All candidates ran unopposed.

### District 3:

Steve Raukar, Hibbing, 479 votes

### District 6:

Dan Kingsley, Blackberry, 447 votes

### District 7:

Craig Olson, Culver, 357 votes

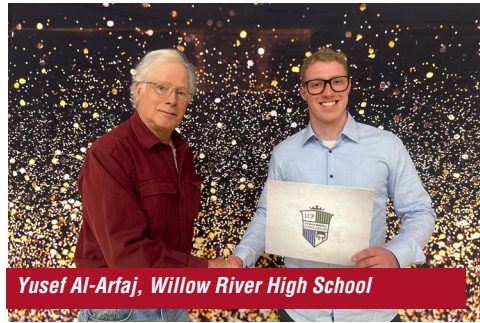
Immediately following the adjournment of the annual meeting, the board of directors held a re-organizational meeting. Board officers are: Craig Olson from District 7, President; Daniel Kingsley from District 6, Vice President; Mike Forsman from District 2, Secretary; and Jeff Sheldon from District 4, Treasurer.

# | Scholarships!

Lake Country Power awarded 31 Les Beach Memorial Scholarships to high school students from 26 area schools. The scholarships are renewable each year up to \$4,000 (\$1,000 per year for eight semesters) for qualifying students.



*John Schiltz, Ely School*



*Yusef Al-Arfaj, Willow River High School*



*Kaitlyn Warner, McGregor High School*



*Greyson Chance, Greenway-Coleraine High School*



*Sophia Young, Cass Lake School*

# Capital Credits Allocation for All Members

This month, the co-op's board approved to allocate more than \$12.3 million of the Lake Country Power and Great River Energy 2025 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.

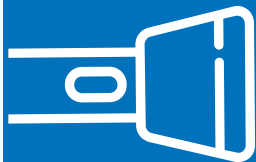
Allocation notices are being mailed in June. To keep you informed about your capital credit account, the line items recorded on your 2025 "Notice of Capital Credit Allocation" mailer represent the amount of the 2025 margin that was allocated to your personal capital credit membership account.

## 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](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) for more information about allocations and capital credits.



## Coming Soon - Text/SMS Option for Outage Reporting

The ability to text Lake Country Power when you have a power outage is coming soon. When the program launches in August 2026, LCP will send an "introduction text message" to all members that have a mobile phone number in our system. So please be aware, this text message is not spam, nor is it a scam. The text will be legit and provide more information.

Prior to August, please be sure your current mobile phone number is in Lake Country Power's system so you don't miss the welcome message. The easiest way to do this is to log into your SmartHub account. Once logged in:

1. Click "Settings"
2. Click "Contact Information"

If you are not registered in SmartHub, visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) and register. Otherwise you can call 800-421-9959 and our call center will be happy to help.

Please stay tuned for more information about outage texting in July.



## Peggy Stolley Named Winner of Minnesota Cooperative Heroes Award

Peggy Stolley was named one of the runners up of the Minnesota Touchstone Energy® Cooperative Heroes Award. Known for remarkable contributions to her community, Stolley’s dedication exemplifies the cooperative principle of “Concern for Community.” Lake Country Power recognized Stolley at the cooperative’s annual meeting on April 23 in Cromwell, MN.

Driven by compassion, Stolley helped launch free dental hygiene services and restorative dental referrals for patients of the Ely Community Health Center. She was instrumental in acquiring dental equipment, recruiting dentists and hygienists, finding the clinic’s current location, and performing outreach and education. She provided information for grant funding and researched “best practices” for an outreach dental practice.

The Minnesota Touchstone Energy® Cooperative Heroes Award honors individuals like Stolley who are making positive impacts within their communities. Sponsored by the Minnesota Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, this award celebrates exceptional volunteerism and community involvement. Stolley received \$500, which she has designated to go toward the Ely Community Health Center. As one of this year’s award winners, she stands as an inspiring example of cooperative values in action.

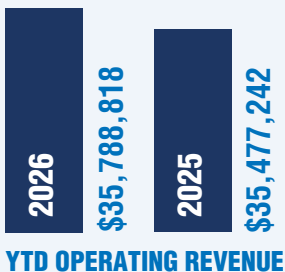
“Peggy’s dental hygiene work is not confined to the walls of the clinic and limited to just Ely residents,” said Sue Kangas-Packett who co-nominated Stolley for this statewide award. “Residents from all over Northeastern Minnesota have traveled to Ely and received dental care at her clinic. She also does outreach dental care at the Boundary Waters Care Center and Carefree Living facilities among other dental related services.” Anne Lincicome Johnson of Ely also contributed to Stolley’s nomination.

The other statewide award runner-up was Melissa Griggs of Oronoco who was recognized by People’s Energy Cooperative for her volunteer work. The first-place prize went to Grace Grell of St. Cloud for her work with the Ability Project.

Touchstone Energy® Cooperative across Minnesota proudly celebrate individuals like Stolley, Griggs and Grell who embody cooperative values, especially commitment to community.

## By The Numbers | March 2026

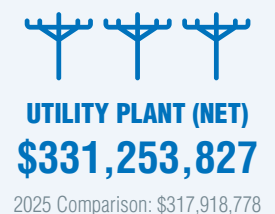
Lake Country Power is committed to responsibly managing resources to maintain the Cooperative’s financial stability. Below is a snapshot of the year-to-date unaudited financial report. A complete set of financial statements can be viewed at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) under “My Cooperative.”



	2026	2025
Cost of Purchased Power	\$20,596,178	\$19,082,010
Other Operating Expenses	\$13,937,014	\$12,375,476
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$34,533,192	\$31,457,486



	2026	2025
Operating Margins	\$1,255,625	\$4,019,757
Non-Operating Margins	\$573,744	\$658,261



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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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# Lake Country Power

An equal opportunity provider and employer.

## Where Your Power Comes From: Energy Markets Explained

Keeping the lights on across the Upper Midwest requires constant coordination among utilities, power generators and transmission operators. At the center of that coordination is the regional grid operator MISO, which plays a critical role in how electricity is delivered to Great River Energy and the 26 member-owner cooperatives it serves, including Lake Country Power.

MISO is a nonprofit, independent organization that manages the flow of electricity across a multi-state transmission system. Rather than owning power plants or transmission lines, MISO operates the high-voltage transmission grid and oversees wholesale electricity markets.

MISO functions as both a reliability coordinator and a market operator. Great River Energy owns and operates generation resources and transmission assets, but it relies on MISO to balance supply and demand across the broader regional grid in real time. Every five minutes, MISO evaluates electricity needs across its footprint and dispatches power from the most cost-effective available resources, while ensuring the system remains stable.

For Great River Energy's member cooperatives, MISO's work is largely behind the scenes but has a direct impact on reliability and cost. When the regional grid is managed efficiently, electricity can be delivered more reliably and at a lower overall cost. During periods of high demand or unexpected outages, MISO's coordination helps prevent localized problems from cascading into broader disruptions.

MISO also plays a key role in long-term planning by studying future electricity needs and identifies transmission upgrades required to maintain reliability and support economic growth. These studies help guide major transmission investments that strengthen the grid.

MISO serves as the air traffic controller of the electric grid while Great River Energy and its members remain responsible for producing power, investing in infrastructure and serving homes. Together, their coordinated roles help deliver reliable, affordable electricity across Minnesota and the broader region.

## Simple Red Sauce

Submitted By: **Gertrude Jennings, Grand Rapids**

3 garlic cloves  
1 small red onion  
Olive oil  
1 tablespoon tomato paste  
1 large can San Marzano whole  
peeled tomatoes

1 pound cooked ground Italian sausage  
Parmesan Reggiano rind  
Salt, pepper, and herbs  
Fresh basil and oregano  
Pasta, baguette, and salad, for serving

### DIRECTIONS:

Sauté garlic and onion in olive oil. Add tomato paste and stir until deep brown. Add tomatoes, cooked sausage, and Parmesan rind. Season lightly with salt, pepper, and herbs. Cover and simmer on low for 3 hours, stirring occasionally. Finish with fresh basil and oregano, and serve over pasta with a baguette and salad.

*Submit your recipe to Lake County 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.*