



FEBRUARY 2026

Master's Maples is Tapped into Northern Minnesota

Master's Maple started the way many northern Minnesota businesses do: As a passion rooted in the land. Ben Bostaph and Patrick Mathias tapped trees first as a hobby, but have since grown it into a side business processing sap and turning it into far more than a breakfast staple.

Along with 100% pure maple syrup, the business produces aged maple syrup finished in bourbon barrels, maple sugar, and a growing lineup of maple-based seasonings and rubs. Maple sugar serves as the backbone of those blends, offering a natural alternative to refined sugars while adding depth and complexity to both sweet and savory dishes. It also comes with nutritional benefits and can be a healthier alternative to refined sugars and even honey.

"To be in an industry where we're processing by far the healthiest natural sugar that I'm aware of, that's a wonderful, wonderful thing," Bostaph said. "That goes into a lot of what we do, because we do care about our customers, and we want them to be consuming a high quality, premium, healthy product."

Tree health and longevity guide every tap, with attention paid to size, spacing and sustainability. Taking the long view, Bostaph is planting nearly 1,000 new maple trees this spring to ensure tapping opportunities for the next generation.

"It takes decades for a tree to grow, and we're always looking into that," he said. "How can I help this tree be healthier? How can I help this tree grow?"

Timing is everything during the season. Sap flow depends on temperature swings, and once collected, it must be processed



quickly to preserve quality. Master's Maple Syrup closely monitors conditions.

Nature is nature, Bostaph said, and their yield on sap from year to year depends on what the tree is willing to produce for them.

"I can have the best equipment. I can have the best processes. I can have the best, the cleanest facilities. I can do all that stuff," he said. "But I cannot convince that tree to give me any more sap than it's going to give me."

Master's Maples can be found online at www.mastermaples.com or on Facebook at Master's Maples. To learn more about the Member Made Initiative, visit www.lakecountrypower.com/membermade.

Working Together to Lower Energy Demand

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use naturally rises. Even for those of us who enjoy the outdoor recreation our region offers, the hallmark Minnesota winters eventually drive us inside, where our heating systems get their new year's workout.

Just as new year's resolutions might put pressure on us, the extra heat usage puts pressure on the electrical grid.

Lake Country Power works closely with Great River Energy (GRE), its wholesale energy provider, to plan for the winter season so you have reliable power every day of the year. Our local system is part of a much larger regional and national electric grid, which means everyone from GRE to LCP to the end-of-the-road-cabin play a part in maintaining it.

This is especially true during severe weather events, such as ice storms, sudden temperature drops or equipment malfunctions that reduce generation capacity. To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks, Lake Country Power and GRE take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round.

Yet, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort—and every member plays an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress. You can help by taking simple actions during periods of high electricity use, especially on the coldest days of winter:

- Lower your thermostat slightly. Even reducing it by a few degrees can help
- Delay using large appliances during peak hours — typically midday or late evening
- Adjust your water heater
- Unplug unnecessary devices

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill—you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community.

Larry Anderson was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 9. He can be reached at 218-428-2722 or landerson@lcp.coop.



Sincerely,
Larry Anderson,
District 9 Director

Board Meeting Highlights: October 28, 2025

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Following Reports Were Given:

President Olson reported it was a quiet month and had no report for the board.

General Manager Bakk reported on meetings he attended for Great River Energy (GRE). Bakk reached out to Itasca County area legislators to assist GRE on public outreach on a possible natural gas peaking plant in the area. He attended the Laurentian Chamber of Commerce Gala on October 3, where Lake Country Power was awarded Large Business of the Year.

Bakk also participated in a photo opportunity with area representatives for a grant LCP received from the Department of Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation for the power line extension from the Cohasset substation to the Cohasset Industrial Park.

The Following Actions Were Taken:

Approved the 2026 director election timeline with nomination packets becoming available January 23. The annual meeting is set for April 23 in Cromwell.

Approved a \$2.5 million capital credit retirement, of which \$2 million is LCP's portion and \$500,000 is Great River Energy's portion.

Approved a new rate scheduled for Large Load Partial Interruptible Service Rate.

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

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS: FEBRUARY 24 | MARCH 31 (9:30 am at the Cohasset Service Center, Members Welcome)

DID YOU KNOW?

LCP has a wide network of offices and outposts to better serve you? Service centers are located in Cohasset, Kettle River, and Mountain Iron, with additional outposts in Cook, Ely, McGregor, Remer, and Saginaw.



Operation Round Up® Gives More than \$60,000 to Community Programs

Through the contributions of Lake Country Power's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Electric Trust Board recently approved \$60,518 in assistance to local community programs during its quarterly meeting.

The cooperative's Trust Board reviewed and considered 47 grant applications and distributed funds to 41 projects and programs this past quarter.

All funds generated through Operation Round Up® are set aside in a trust fund. A voluntary Trust Board of nine co-op members administers the trust. Of the funds collected through the program, 100% is distributed to charitable organizations through an application and selection process. The Trust Board uses special guidelines and policies when choosing recipients. Since the program's inception, more than \$3.6 million in contributions have been given.

Interested members can opt into the Operation Round Up® program by calling the cooperative at 800-421-9959.

2027 Co-op Calendar Contest Opens

The 2027 co-op calendar contest is officially open for members to begin submitting their beautiful scenic entries. The deadline to submit is Monday, August 3.

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. The photos are not required to include power lines but may if you choose.

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.

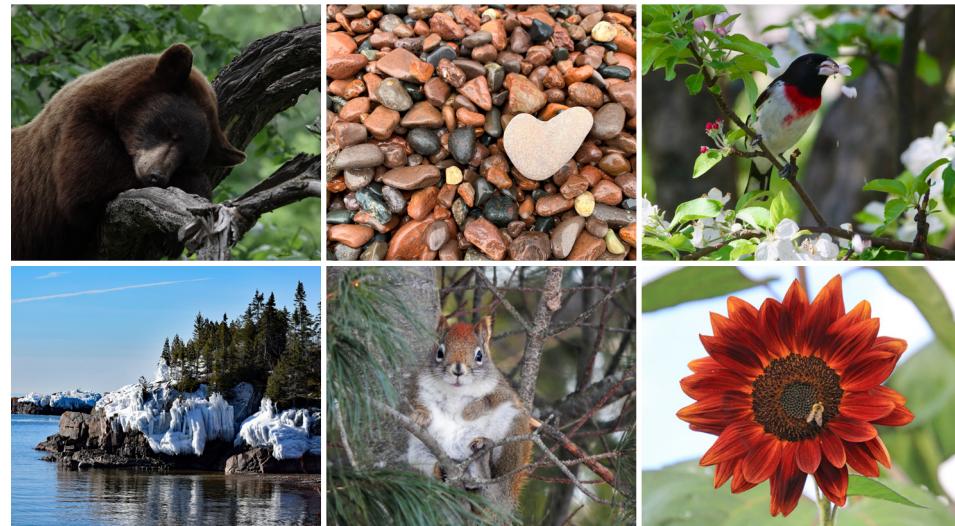


Photo Contest Guidelines

1. Dimensions must be $3600 \times 2400 = 12" \times 8"$ high-res print photo, or $5400 \times 3600 = 18" \times 12"$ 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 emails are required per entry. Attach the photo file to your email, include a photo description for the entry, and remember to include your name and the phone number on your account as well.
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 and cannot be altered.
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.
11. Photos must be e-mailed to tzaun@lcp.coop. All entries must be received by August 3, 2026.

Snowmobile Safety Near Power Lines



Snowmobiling is one of the most popular winter activities in Lake Country Power's service territory. Riders often enjoy trails that run alongside power lines and poles, which means extra caution is essential to stay safe.

Power poles, guy wires and transformer boxes are common along rights-of-way. Heavy snow can obscure these structures, making them hard to spot. Reduce your speed in these areas and keep a sharp eye out for warning signs and markers. Darkness, fog and drifting snow increase the risk of collisions, so ride defensively.

Understand the Risks

Guy wires — those angled cables anchoring poles — can blend into snowy landscapes. Hitting one can cause severe injury or damage your snowmobile. Transformers and cabinets may be buried under snow, creating hidden obstacles. Always assume electrical equipment is energized and dangerous.

Stick to Designated Trails

Marked trails are groomed and monitored for safety. Staying on designated paths protects you and helps prevent accidents.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Mid-winter is a great time to ensure you're making the most of your home heating system. Replace or clean filters to keep your furnace or heat pump running efficiently. Listen for strange noises and check for uneven heating—these signs indicate that the system may need servicing. Ensure vents and radiators aren't blocked by furniture or rugs as proper airflow helps your system work less and saves energy. A little maintenance along the way can prevent costly repairs and keep your home cozy through winter.

What to Do in an Emergency

If you see a downed or sagging power line, damaged guy wire covers or other electrical hazards:

- Do not touch or approach.
- Stay at least 40 feet away and warn others.
- Call 911 or Lake Country Power immediately.

Extra Snowmobile Safety Tips

- Slow down, especially at night or in poor visibility.
- Avoid alcohol or drugs while riding.
- Always wear a helmet, eye protection and other safety gear.
- Know your terrain and ride for conditions.
- Take a certified snowmobile safety course for added confidence. In Minnesota, operators born after Dec. 31, 1976, must have a snowmobile certificate to operate a snowmobile.

By following these precautions, you can enjoy Minnesota's winter trails while staying safe around power lines and equipment.

HOW TO AVOID ENERGY SCAMS



Enrolling in autodraft payments with Lake Country Power can help prevent certain types of utility bill scams. If a scammer contacts you with fake disconnection threats, you can rest easy knowing your bill is paid automatically through a pre-arranged, secure channel. Autodraft payments also eliminate the risk of exposing checks and personal banking info through the mail. If your utility offers autodraft payments, consider enrolling to stay on track and avoid certain scams.

Source: AARP



Minnesota Electric Co-ops: 2026 Legislative Priorities

The 2026 Minnesota legislative session convened Feb. 17 and constitutionally must adjourn by May 18. After passing the biennial state budget in 2025, lawmakers are expected to focus largely on policy issues and the state's capital investment bill, which funds public infrastructure projects.

This session unfolded with legislators aware that all 201 legislative seats and the state's constitutional offices will be on the ballot in November. Little legislative progress is expected given the dynamics, but as history shows, the Minnesota Legislature often finds ways to surprise.

During this session, the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) is advocating for policies that ensure reliable, affordable and sustainable energy for all Minnesotans.

Lifting Minnesota's Nuclear Moratorium

For decades, Minnesota has maintained a moratorium on new nuclear energy projects, limiting the state's ability to explore carbon-free and reliable power generation. As electric cooperatives work to meet growing demand and integrate more renewable energy, baseload power from advanced nuclear technologies offers immense potential.

Nuclear energy plays a key role in the clean energy transition. Unlike wind or solar, it provides constant, reliable power regardless of weather conditions or time of day. With advancing technologies like small modular reactors (SMRs), nuclear energy can complement renewables while reducing carbon emissions.

Removing the moratorium doesn't commit Minnesota to nuclear projects today, but it opens the door to important conversations about ensuring a balanced energy mix for the future.

Reforming Net Metering

Reforming Minnesota's outdated net metering policies is another top priority. While net metering has encouraged the growth of distributed generation like rooftop solar, the current framework unfairly shifts costs to non-solar members.

Electric cooperatives fully support renewable energy, but policies must ensure fair and equitable treatment for all cooperative members, whether or not they generate their own power. MREA is working toward reforms that balance affordability with encouraging renewable energy growth. By aligning incentives with the true costs and benefits of distributed energy resources, we can foster continued innovation without overburdening those who can least afford it.

To stay informed and join the conversation, visit www.voicesforcooperativepower.com/minnesota.

By The Numbers | November 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	\$ 109,953,081
2024	\$104,495,946

YTD OPERATING REVENUE

	2025	2024
Cost of Purchased Power	\$53,920,857	\$50,110,793
Other Operating Expenses	\$47,519,359	\$44,103,650
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$101,440,216	\$94,214,443



	51,730	ACTIVE SERVICES
2024 Comparison: 51,510		

	2025	2024
Operating Margins	\$8,512,865	\$10,281,503
Non-Operating Margins	\$1,541,583	\$2,168,436

YTD TOTAL MARGINS	\$10,054,448
2024 Comparison: \$12,449,939	



	UTILITY PLANT (NET)
	\$327,908,872

2024 Comparison: \$313,787,894

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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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Factors Driving the Rising Demand for Electricity

Across the U.S., demand for electricity is growing at one of the fastest rates in decades. As the economy becomes more electric and data centers expand nationwide, electric cooperatives are preparing to meet increased demand and new reliability challenges.

GRID RELIABILITY OUTLOOK

The North American Reliability Corporation's 2025–2026 winter reliability assessment projects adequate energy supplies under normal conditions. However, the report warns of potential shortfalls and outages during extreme weather events.

WHAT'S DRIVING DEMAND?

Several key trends are accelerating electricity use:

- Economic growth and expanded manufacturing
- Rapid data center development
- Increased electrification of homes, businesses, and transportation
- Greater use of electric heat pumps for home heating and cooling

Together, these shifts are changing how much electricity we use and how quickly utilities must adapt. Rising demand brings new planning challenges for electric cooperatives, but it also creates opportunities, including job growth, stable revenue, and long-term infrastructure improvements. Electric co-ops are responding with careful, forward-looking planning.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Electricity powers nearly every part of today's economy, and its role will continue to grow. As electrification accelerates, long-term planning is more important than ever. Lake Country Power is preparing to meet rising demand in our local communities through innovation, investment, and collaboration, all focused on a reliable and resilient energy future.

Cheery Cherry Cookies

Submitted By: Gail Johnson - Virginia, MN

1 cup brown sugar	1 tsp vanilla	½ cup chopped cherries
¾ cup softened butter	2 cups flour	1 cup white chips
1 egg	½ tsp salt	Coconut and
2 tbsp 2% milk	2 tsp baking soda	pecans optional

DIRECTIONS:

Combine and bake at 375 degrees for 10-12 minutes.

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.

Lake Country Power

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