

# Happy New Year!

January 2023

# Newsline

**BOARD MEETINGS** January 31 ■ February 28 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

**LakeCountryPower**

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Energy that Powers Our Lives

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Tomassoni project

## Staying prepared for any weather

Just as you take precautionary measures to prepare for the winter season, so too do utilities and the organizations that manage, monitor and regulate the electric system.



Grid stakeholders work together year-round to ensure electric service is reliable by conducting various assessments ahead of each season to project the energy needs of homes and businesses. The results of these assessments, which consider probable and worst-case scenarios, help guide utilities like Great River Energy when managing their electric systems during extreme weather and elevated demand for electricity.

Assessments conducted by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) for this upcoming winter found that the grid has a sufficient supply of capacity resources to meet consumer demand under peak conditions.

MISO acknowledges one of winter's key challenges is the potential for "high risk, low probability" events, such as unusually cold weather, intense storms and/or fuel supply issues that could impact available power and create challenges.

"Operating the power system is extremely complex and adverse weather conditions can test the resiliency of the electric grid," said Jessica Lucas, executive director of system operations at MISO.

For its part in maintaining reliability, Great River Energy has access to a diverse portfolio of power supply resources, including peaking resources with dual fuel capability, which means they can operate

on fuel oil when natural gas supply is constrained. This fuel flexibility is an important characteristic for system reliability and as a hedge against market and natural gas prices. The cooperative also focuses on the weatherization of these plants to support resilient and reliable operation during extreme weather events.

"Combined, these resources will provide our membership with the security of knowing they have the reliability needed to get them through the coldest nights this winter," said Great River Energy Vice President and Chief Power Supply Officer Jon Brekke.

Great River Energy, in partnership with its member-owner cooperatives, also has the largest demand response program for a utility of its size in the country according to data collected by the Energy Information Administration.

In addition to reducing sometimes hundreds of megawatts of electricity demand, this strategy helps Great River Energy avoid making purchases from the energy market during the periods of high pricing that often coincide with high demand and unusual weather events, which saves members money. ■



# Rate adjustments necessary in 2023

## Purchased power and material costs drive change

Two rate changes are set to take place in early 2023 due to increased wholesale power costs and the continued increases in cost of necessary materials and equipment.

The first change, regarding LCP's load management program rates, will be effective on January 1, 2023. This rate per kilowatt hour (kWh) adjustment is a direct result of Great River Energy's wholesale price increases for these programs. Energy Wise® programs including dual fuel, off-peak, water heating and electric vehicle charging will be impacted (see rate table).

**2023 Load Management EnergyWise Rates**  
Effective January 1, 2023

Energy Wise Program	LCP Rates per kWh	
	2022 Rates	Jan. 1, 2023
Interruptible Water Heating - 8-hour	\$ 0.0655	\$ 0.0689
Interruptible EV Charging - 8 hour	\$ 0.0655	\$ 0.0689
Off Peak - Summer (May - Sept.)	\$ 0.0500	\$ 0.0517
Off Peak - Winter (Oct. - April)	\$ 0.0555	\$ 0.0587
Off Peak EV (May - Sept.)	\$ 0.0500	\$ 0.0517
Off Peak EV (Oct. - April)	\$ 0.0555	\$ 0.0587
A/C, ASHP, Dual Fuel Interruptible	\$ 0.0665	\$ 0.0708
Dual Fuel Interruptible Heating	\$ 0.0665	\$ 0.0708
Freedom Heating Interruptible	\$ 0.0785	\$ 0.0868
Peak Shave Water Heating	\$ 0.0785	\$ 0.0868

Secondly, a general service rate change for both residential and commercial members has been approved by the board of directors at the December 22, 2022, regular board meeting. This change will go into effect on March 1, 2023. The approved rate change will result in increases to the monthly Service Availability Charge (SAC) as well as the kWh usage rate.

"Due to significant increases in the cost of materials, raising the SAC is the fairest way for all members to meet the needs of the budget," says Mark Bakk, LCP general manager. "The costs associated with maintenance of the system including materials, line maintenance, and right-of-way clearing should be borne by all members."

In addition to adjusting the SAC, an increase in the per kWh energy rate is also necessary. This increase is mainly due to the elevated cost of natural gas which is driving up market energy prices around our region. The increased cost of energy purchases should be paid by those members who use the energy. Together the two rate changes will provide the required revenue to meet the cooperative's needs in 2023.

"We have experienced historical cost increases in virtually every aspect of our operations over the past two years; especially related to essential materials for our distribution system," said Chief Financial Officer Tracy Peterson Wirtanen. "We do everything we can to control costs in an effort to maintain rates for our members." ■

## Cold weather rule

The Cold Weather Rule, Section 216B.097 of the Minnesota State Statutes, provides that from October 1 through April 30 an electric cooperative cannot disconnect a residential consumer for nonpayment of service, if the disconnect affects the primary heat source and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The consumer declares an inability to pay and completes the Inability to Pay form; and
2. Household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median income. Income may be verified on forms provided by LCP or by the local energy assistance provider with whom the consumer has applied for energy assistance; and
3. The consumer enters into and makes reasonable and timely payments under a mutually

agreeable payment plan, that considers the financial resources of the household; and

4. A consumer receives from LCP referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the consumer's energy bills.

The law does allow for LCP to disconnect when it is necessary from October 1 to April 30, so please act promptly. LCP works with members during the Cold Weather Rule period, just as we do throughout the year. We don't want to interrupt service to any member, but in a cooperative, all members suffer when any bill remains unpaid. If bills remain unpaid, this amount must be absorbed by members who faithfully pay their bill each month. LCP would rather work with members to establish and maintain adequate payment schedules of their past due bill. A statement explaining the payment plan to secure continued service, a Payment Arrangement letter, will be provided.

Before disconnecting service to a residential consumer from October 1 to April 30, the cooperative must provide the following information:

- notice of proposed disconnection (disconnection notice); and
- statement explaining consumers' rights and responsibilities (Inability to Pay form); and
- list of energy assistance providers (Inability to Pay form); and
- forms available for consumer to request cold weather disconnect protection (Inability to Pay form).

If you receive a disconnection notice this winter, you must act promptly. If you do not meet all the conditions of the Cold Weather Rule, mutually acceptable payment arrangements can be set up to prevent interruption of an electric service. Please contact Lake Country Power if you have any questions about the Cold Weather Rule: 800-421-9959.

## Energy Assistance Providers

- AEOA: 800-662-5711
- AEOA Virginia: 218-749-2912
- AEOA Duluth: 218-623-3011
- Aitkin County Social Services: 800-328-3744
- Bi County CAP: 800-332-7161
- Bois Forte Tribal: 800-221-8129
- Carlton County Social Services: 800-642-9082
- Cass County Social Services: 218-547-1340
- Fond Du Lac Tribal: 800-365-1613
- Itasca County Social Services: 800-422-0312
- Kootasca: 877-687-1163
- Lake County Social Services: 218-834-8400
- Lakes & Pines: 800-832-6082
- Leech Lake Tribal: 866-864-8668
- Mille Lacs Band Tribal: 320-532-7880
- Pine County Social Services: 800-450-7263
- Salvation Army Office (Heat Share Programs): 800-842-7279
- St. Louis County Social Services: 800-450-9777

# This summer, go on a power trip to D.C.

Attention high school sophomores and juniors! Spend six days in our nation's capital for an unforgettable experience on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Lake Country Power is seeking applications from interested students through February 20. Tour dates are June 13-18.

Over 1,900 student delegates from all over the country go on the Youth Tour in D.C. each year, including at least 40 students from Minnesota. Students visit with their congressional representatives, tour some of the most famous museums in the world and make memories and friends that will last a lifetime. They also learn about the electric cooperative business model.

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been a tradition and favorite opportunity among high school students since 1957.

Interested high school sophomores and juniors whose parents/guardians are Lake Country Power members are

encouraged to apply for this outstanding opportunity. The application deadline is February 20 and can be completed online at [www.lakecountrypower.coop/youth-tour](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/youth-tour).



This co-op sponsored educational event is valued at \$3,000, which includes airfare, lodging, meals, transportation, special events and tours.

For additional information about the Youth Tour, visit [www.youthtour.org](http://www.youthtour.org) or [www.mrea.org](http://www.mrea.org).

Email Tami Zaun at [tzaun@lcp.coop](mailto:tzaun@lcp.coop) if you would like to know more about applying for the tour. School counselors have been informed about this outstanding opportunity and can be a local resource as well. ■



## RECIPE CORNER NOODLE CASHEW CASSEROLE

From the  
Kitchen of:  
**Driggins,  
Grand Rapids**



- 1 large onion - diced
- 2 tbsp. Butter, additional butter for greasing pan
- 1 pound ground beef
- Salt and pepper
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup stuffed olive - sliced
- 1-8 ounce package of egg noodles - cooked
- 1 cup cashew nuts
- 1 cup Chow Mein noodles
- American cheese slices

Take the diced onions and sauté the onions in butter until clear in a large pan over medium heat. Add the ground beef, season with salt and pepper, and cook over medium heat, using a spatula to break up the meat until browned. Add the can of cream of mushroom soup, milk, and olives to the pan (with the onions and hamburger).

Stir over low heat until mixed. Keep warm. Cook egg noodles according to package directions, rinse and drain. Add the cooked egg noodles into the pan with the hamburger mix. Stir. Take a 13x9 baking pan or clear casserole dish and generously grease it with butter. Pour the ingredients cooked together in the pan into the buttered casserole dish. Top with cheese slices. Cover the casserole dish with aluminum foil. Bake in a 375-degree oven for 25 minutes. Then, take the foil off the casserole dish and sprinkle the cashew nuts and Chow Mein noodles over the casserole. Bake uncovered for an additional 10 minutes.

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



**Q:** How can you save time, money, and enroll in an automatic bill payment plan through your SmartHub account?

**A:** 1) In SmartHub click "Billing & Payments" on the tool bar. The dropdown menu will show "Auto Pay Program," click that. 2) Under "Actions" there will be a blue hyperlink that says "Sign Up for Auto Pay," click that. 3) A new dropdown menu will show for you to select whether you're using a credit card or bank account information. 4) A window will show up down below. Fill in the required information and follow the remaining prompts. 5) Done!

## "Where's Willie?"

Find out more about the "Where's Willie?" Contest by visiting [lakecountrypower.coop/wheres-willie](http://lakecountrypower.coop/wheres-willie)

# Are you ready to serve?

In one of the most notable inaugural speeches given, John F. Kennedy spoke his famous words, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." His inspiring words urged Americans to take actions that benefited the greater good. In essence, Kennedy was saying our country thrives when we all contribute our talents to the common good.

On a smaller scale, the same can be said about our co-op, specifically regarding our board members. Lake Country Power's board members are community-minded individuals with a variety of skill sets. We rely on their many talents to help us make informed decisions on long-term priorities and investments. Our directors live right here in the co-op's service area, and we consider them the eyes and ears of the community because they provide their perspective on important community issues.

We recognize it takes many people with different skills to create a well-rounded board that can represent the full spectrum of our community. We're seeking local members of our community who can apply their unique talents to benefit all our friends and neighbors. But above all else, we're looking for folks who love our community and want to see it thrive now and in the future.



## Thank you from LCP

With appreciation for all we have and those we serve, Lake Country Power thanks its members for weathering a difficult storm with us in mid-December.

A special thank you to Lake States Construction, BENCO Electric Cooperative, Freeborn Mower Electric Cooperative, McLeod Cooperative Power, North Itasca Electric Co-op and Peoples Energy Cooperative for your assistance restoring power to our members.



## What does it mean to serve on the board?

Serving on Lake Country Power's board means you're making a difference locally, using your individual talents and perspective to guide big decisions about the co-op that in turn benefit the larger community. While day-to-day decisions are made by co-op staff, major decisions are made by the board, whose mission is to look out for the vitality of the co-op and the community it serves. On a granular level, Lake Country Power board members typically provide input and guidance on:

- Budgets and rates
- Co-op policies
- Co-op's community/charitable contributions
- Capital investments and upgrades in equipment and technology
- Co-op's role and involvement in economic development



In addition, Lake Country Power board members are also a major conduit between members and the co-op, fielding questions and concerns, while also hosting a district meeting in their portion of the service territory, providing members with a chance to meet staff and board members in person.

## Opportunity to serve

Lake Country Power's board elections will be held in April. The nomination process starts January 20 for three-year board terms in District 3, District 6 and District 7. A special election is being held to fill two-year terms in District 4 and District 8.

While you don't need to be an expert in electricity or business to run, you do need to have a passion for the community and a willingness to actively serve and learn. We're looking for individuals who can represent the full gamut of the members we serve. Our board meets on a regular basis, and we offer specialized training opportunities to help board members make informed decisions. Board members gain a deeper understanding of the electric utility industry, the cooperative business model and local economic development efforts.

Ultimately, our board is the community pulse for the co-op and helps keep us on the right track. We love our community and want to help it thrive. If you share the same commitment and want to contribute to the greater good in a tangible way, I hope you'll consider running for a board position.

To learn more about Lake Country Power's director election process and 2023 details, please visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop/how-become-director](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/how-become-director). ■

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# LCP, GRE donate \$60k to Tomassoni memorial

## Project will honor longtime state senator, Iron Range veterans

Lake Country Power and Great River Energy partnered to donate \$60,000 for the Senator David J. Tomassoni Bridge of Peace Memorial being built in honor of the late senator's 30 years of work in the region. A memorial arch and recreational plaza are scheduled to be built on the Longyear Lake causeway in Chisholm in the summer of 2023.

The archway honoring the late senator is two-fold, to continue to honor Iron Range veterans and to serve as a "thank you" for Senator Tomassoni's work and all the economic injections he directly and indirectly championed in area industry, and the people of his district.

Mark Bakk, Lake Country Power general manager stated, "Senator Tomassoni was a highly effective legislator and a tireless advocate for issues important to northern



Minnesota and Minnesota's rural electric cooperatives, like Lake Country Power. I will miss walking into his office in St. Paul knowing that I would be greeted by a friendly face and a firm handshake. We're honored to be able to support this memorial for such a great man and a personal friend."

The Chisholm Community Foundation is receiving contributions for this memorial project budgeted at \$400,000. The City of Chisholm will act as project manager.

"On behalf of Senator Tomassoni and our family," said Dante Tomassoni, "we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for this donation and the partnership Lake Country Power and Great River Energy has provided over the years, today and



► Pictured are (from left): Craig Olson, LCP board president and GRE board member; Mark Bakk, LCP general manager; Dante Tomassoni; Tom Bobich and Danny Tomassoni.

in the future."

Contributions can be sent to Chisholm Community Foundation, 4 S.W. 3rd Ave., Chisholm, MN 55719, with the designation "Senator David J. Tomassoni Bridge of Peace Memorial." To learn more about the CCF, visit [www.chisholmcommunityfoundation.com](http://www.chisholmcommunityfoundation.com) or call 218-254-1101.

— from *Chisholm Community Foundation.* ■



## Scholarship deadline approaching

High School Seniors: The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship is your opportunity to earn a \$4,000 scholarship from Lake Country Power!

- Apply online at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop)
- Deadline for student materials submitted electronically is 11:59 p.m., January 31
- Parents or legal guardians of applying students must be active LCP members

- Student must have a full-time enrollment status at a technical school, community college or university
- "At Large" category is for home-schooled students
- Teachers must submit letters of recommendation via the online link no later than February 15



# October 25, 2022 • Regular Monthly Meeting

## THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson stated he received several calls from members during this month.

Director Bruckbauer provided an update on the Great River Energy board, including GRE considering an electric vehicle fast charging rate, the Prairie Island Energy solar project and other transmission projects. There was also discussion from the LCP board about GRE's 2023-24 strategic planning and GRE's 2023 proposed budget.

General Manager Bakk reported on GRE's September financials and operations, noting September margins were higher than budgeted. Demand sales and energy sales are over budget. Additionally, Bakk reported that due to elevated market prices driven by high natural gas prices, LCP members can expect up to 400 hours of dual fuel control in 2023 and commercial and industrial interruptible (C&I) can expect up to 300 hours of control. Other EnergyWise® rate classes are also expected to see additional control in 2023.

## THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Unanimously approved Great River Energy to enter into a power purchase agreement with Prairie Island Energy, LLC to purchase on behalf of Dakota Electric Association solar energy and related attributes for a planned solar electric generating facility in Goodhue County, Minnesota.

Reaffirmed a \$75,000 revolving loan application from Soderbloom Properties. Dan Cooper, LCP manager of Energy Services and Business Development, addressed the board on notable changes since the loan approval.

Approved more than \$1.7 million in 2022 capital credit retirements, totaling \$1.2 million from GRE and \$515,000 from LCP.

Approved 2023 LCP board meetings and the 2023 director election process timeline for Districts 3, 6 and 7, and a special election for Districts 4 and 8.

**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.



► Vicki Lessard of Grand Rapids captured this pair of whitetail deer taking a moment to rest on a snowy day. Taken north of Grand Rapids on Shoal Lake.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Did you know insulating your electric water heater could reduce standby heat loss by 25% to 45%? This could save you 7% to 16% on annual water heating costs. Insulating your electric water heater is an easy, inexpensive project that can improve energy efficiency and save you money each month. The Department of Energy rates this project level as medium difficulty, meaning most homeowners can tackle this project on their own. You can purchase pre-cut jackets or blankets for about \$20 at most home improvement stores. Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — October 2022

	2022	2021
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 88,710,244	\$ 76,474,590
Cost of Purchased Power	48,001,652	41,370,015
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	14,399,803	11,943,222
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	3,417,824	2,724,487
Administrative and General Expense	5,786,373	5,145,091
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	14,594,194	14,296,404
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>86,199,846</b>	<b>75,479,219</b>
Net Electric Operating Margins	2,510,398	995,372
Non-Operating Margins	869,822	1,085,687
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	3,380,221	2,081,059
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	136,019	1,791,371
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$ 3,516,240</b>	<b>\$ 3,872,430</b>
<b>TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)</b>	<b>600,690,522</b>	<b>491,502,617</b>

Costs related to the severe May and June storms in our service territory had a significant impact on 2022 year-to-date operating expenses. We anticipate disaster aid will be received to offset some of these expenses.

2021 operations included PPP loan forgiveness, which favorably impacted operating expenses and subsidiary operations.

**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.

## Co-op Contacts

- Mark Bakk,** 800-421-9959  
General Manager mbakk@lcp.coop
- Jason Long,** 218-240-9611  
District 1 jlong@lcp.coop
- Michael Forsman,** 218-365-5789  
District 2 mforsman@lcp.coop
- Steve Raukar,** 218-966-0298  
District 3 sraukar@lcp.coop

**Vacant (To be filled spring 2023),**  
District 4

**Robert Bruckbauer,** 218-290-8729  
District 5 rbruckbauer@lcp.coop

**Daniel Kingsley,** 218-697-2628  
District 6 dkingsley@lcp.coop

**Craig Olson,** 218-393-2276  
District 7 colson@lcp.coop

**Vacant (To be filled spring 2023),**  
District 8

**Larry Anderson,** 218-428-2722  
District 9 landerson@lcp.coop

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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8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768  
Editor: Jerry Burnes • [jburnes@lcp.coop](mailto:jburnes@lcp.coop)  
Lake Country Power Service Centers:  
Cohasset • Kettle River • Mountain Iron  
800-421-9959 • [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop)  
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