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BOARD MEETINGS January 28 ■ February 25 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

Member Made Spotlight: Malbay Estate

During her first trip up the driveway of Malbay Estate, seeing the house and barn, Breanna Church knew the Bass Lake locale was a destination spot.

Now, she just had to make it one.

After hosting her first wedding in early September, the vision had come together beyond what she expected.

“Someone had to pinch me,” Church recalled. “I’m living my dream.”



The 3,600 square-foot home, barn and 1,000 feet of shoreline on the sprawling 80 acres outside Cohasset was a pristine family home when Church and her husband closed on it in 2023 with her brother and business partner, Dan Benham Jr. They set out on her idea to create a local “wedding staycation” venue that would marry the beauty of northern Minnesota’s outdoors with the simplicity Church built into the Malbay Estate redesign.

Inside the updated farmhouse, she crafted a bridal suite with full-length mirrors, makeup stations and a lounge area. The “garage” is the custom groom’s area with

leather couches, TVs and games. New flooring and fixtures blend in with the rustic farmhouse structures for a modern and warm feel.

Some wooded areas around the home and barn were cleared so vendors and guests could easily access the venue, and the outdoors space accommodates a 40x80-foot tent adjacent to the barn. In all, Malbay Estates can host 200 guests on the property.

Vaulted ceilings and large chandeliers highlight the inside of the barn. Handmade reception tables were made using wood from its second-level space, which Church said were ash trees harvested and milled at the estate.

“There was no way I was letting that go,” she said.

Church grew up in Deer River and left for about 12 years while her husband was active duty in the U.S. Air Force, and they returned to the area two years ago. The family is “back to our roots” with more time for their children to see their extended family.

Family, less stress and more fun for couples were among the real inspirations for her vision.

The 5-bedroom home can sleep up to 10 guests, allowing for friends and family to stay onsite for more relaxed time together. Being an extended weekend venue allows them to arrive Friday and leave Sunday, slowing the rush of the traditional wedding timeline.

Access to Bass Lake and the estate’s



acreage provides a chance to enjoy the outdoor activities of the region. Outdoor seating and fire pits offer the serenity of the estate’s remote location.

“I imagine everyone sitting around a fire after the rehearsal, or waking up early and going fishing on the lake the morning before your wedding, and it’s all right here,” Church said. “I just want it to feel like the whole 80 acres is theirs for that weekend.”

Interested in booking Malbay Estate for a wedding or other event? The venue is currently taking reservations between June and mid-October.

More information on Malbay Estate can be found at www.malbayestate.com or on Facebook at Malbay Estate. Those interested in booking the venue can contact Breanna Church through email at malbayestate@gmail.com or phone 218-259-9874. ■



▶ Photo credits: Kristina Hendrickson Photo

NRECA urges policies that support co-ops

Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), urged President-elect Donald Trump to help electric cooperatives deliver affordable, reliable power to rural communities in a Dec. 4 letter to Trump's transition office.



The letter outlined high-priority actions the new administration can take to support a pro-energy policy agenda that will help meet skyrocketing U.S. electricity demand, remove regulatory burdens for co-ops, and promote the well-being of rural communities.

"Our nation is at an energy crossroads. And your leadership in our nation's energy policy is more critical than ever," Matheson told Trump.

Matheson said reliability is under threat from "flawed public policies" that are forcing the premature closure of power plants. That's a key reason the North American Electric Reliability Corp. expects many states to be at high risk of rolling blackouts in the next five years during normal peak demand conditions. And the problem is exacerbated by increasing demand from data centers, which could consume nearly 10% of all U.S. electric output by 2030, the letter stated.

Matheson listed seven key actions that President Donald Trump can take to address these challenges:

- Repeal the Environmental Protection Agency's greenhouse gas rule for existing coal-fired and new natural gas plants, as well as other EPA regulations threatening electric reliability.
- Streamline and accelerate federal permitting reviews of energy projects.
- Roll back public lands and species conservation rules that inhibit operation and maintenance of power lines on federal lands and hurt wildfire mitigation efforts.
- Reverse plans that imperil hydroelectric

output from the Lower Snake River dams in the Pacific Northwest.

- Effectively use remaining funds from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to improve electric infrastructure and enhance grid resilience and reliability.
- Ensure access to important federal programs used by electric co-ops to benefit rural communities, including grant programs at the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Energy and for broadband deployment.
- Support the Treasury Department in administering crucial direct-pay tax credits that co-ops can use to invest in energy technologies.

"We urge you to take a coordinated approach which ensures that energy projects can be built efficiently, effectively, and at reasonable cost," Matheson concluded. "And we look forward to supporting your administration's efforts to cut costly and burdensome regulations that would otherwise undermine affordability and reliability."

Molly Christian is a staff writer for NRECA. ■

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
- 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 member-students who attend schools outside of the LCP service territory
- Teachers must submit letters of recommendation via the online link no later than February 15



LES BEACH MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP

APPLICATIONS OPEN JANUARY 1, 2025

UP TO \$4,000! ✓

For graduating high school seniors, renewable up to \$1,000 per year for eight semesters for qualifying students.

OPEN TO LCP MEMBERS ✓

Attending one of 36 eligible schools in LCP's service territory, or at-large students with a parent/legal guardian member.

DEADLINES: ✓

Written essay and student application due January 31, 2025. Transcripts and letters of recommendation due by February 15, 2025.

WWW.LAKECOUNTRYPOWER.COOP/SCHOLARSHIPS

Youth Tour applications are now open

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 NOW seeking applications! Tour dates are June 16-21.

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 10 and can be completed online at www.lakecountrypower.coop/youth-tour.



This co-op sponsored educational event includes airfare, lodging, meals, transportation, special events and tours.

For additional information about the Youth Tour, visit www.youthtour.org or www.mrea.org.

Email Tami Zaun at 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. ■

LCP Director Long completes Board Leadership Program



Jason Long, District 1 director for Lake Country Power, recently received the Board Leadership Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors, requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility industry, new governance skills and a solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. LCP has committed to work through NRECA to sharpen this body of knowledge for the benefit of its electric cooperative member-consumers.

The NRECA Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD). Directors who attain the BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

NRECA represents the nation's almost 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to more than 42 million people in 48 states, including Lake Country Power.

Cold weather rule is in effect

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 customer for nonpayment of service, if the disconnect affects the primary heat source and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The customer 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 customer has applied for energy assistance; and
3. The customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a mutually agreeable payment plan, that considers the financial resources of the household; and

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



DID YOU KNOW?

Minnesota's electric cooperatives provide service for 1.7 million Minnesotans across 85 percent of Minnesota's landmass.

Source: Minnesota Rural Electric Association

- 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 at 800-421-9959 if you have any questions about the Cold Weather Rule.

RECIPE CORNER ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

From the Kitchen of:
**Robin Dudzik,
Wellsboro, PA**



- 1 medium-large head of cauliflower, cored
- 3 tbs water
- 1/3 cup of mayonnaise
- 2 medium garlic cloves, minced
- 1-2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1/4 cup parmesan Reggiano cheese
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Stir together water, mayonnaise, garlic, mustard, lemon juice, paprika, cheese, salt and pepper. Microwave cauliflower for 6 minutes. Coat cauliflower with mixture. Bake on a sheet pan for 20 minutes, or until tender and golden brown. Alternate: If you don't want to microwave cauliflower, bake for 40 minutes. Garnish with chives and parmesan Reggiano cheese flakes.

Submit your favorite recipe to Lake Country Power, Attn: Editor, 8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768, or e-mail jburnes@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.

Energy Assistance Providers

- AEOA: 800-662-5711
- AEOA Virginia: 218-735-6839
- 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

Power costs drive rate change for LCP members

Rate adjustments begin January 1

As anticipated, a rate change for Lake Country Power members was approved by the board of directors at the December 19, 2024, regular board meeting. These changes and adjustments will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

The changes are a direct result of passing through the increased costs associated with energy generation and transmission. Lake Country Power's wholesale power costs are expected to increase by 8%, largely due to the aggressive buildout needed to accommodate the transition from traditional power generation to carbon-free sources.

"The transition to alternative energy sources is certainly having an impact

on us," said Mark Bakk, LCP's general manager. "New generation sources are needing to be constructed as well as the transmission lines that will transport the energy to where it will be used."

The approved general service rate calls for an added .73 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) to residential and small commercial rates. For the average co-op member consuming 600 – 1,000 kWh per month, this will result in a monthly bill increase of about \$5 – \$7, depending on energy usage.

LCP's special Energy Wise® program rates (i.e. dual fuel, off-peak, interruptible water heating) will also see an increase. No change will be made to the monthly Service Availability Charge.

Lake Country Power plans to utilize deferred revenue to limit the necessary 2025 rate increase to only the direct pass through amount of increased wholesale power costs.

"While Lake Country Power continues to experience cost increases throughout our operations, we are doing what we can to limit the impact while maintaining our commitment to providing safe and reliable electric service to our member-owners," said Tracy Peterson Wirtanen, LCP chief financial officer.

For a full list of all affected rate classifications and adjustments go to www.lakecountrypower.coop for details. ■

Join us for co-op conversation at 2025 district meetings

Members are invited to join Lake Country Power and your elected directors at the 2025 district meetings in the coming months. All meetings start at 5:00 p.m. with a light supper, followed by staff updates and time for member questions. If you cannot make your district meeting, you are welcome to attend another date. Please RSVP according to the letter of invitation you will receive in the mail before your district meeting.

District 1: Jason Long

Date: 5:00 pm.
Tuesday, April 1
Location: North Woods School (cafeteria)
Address: 10248 Olson Rd. Cook, MN

District 3: Steve Raukar

Date: 5:00 pm.
Thursday, March 20
Location: Minnesota Discovery Center, Taconite Room
Address: 1005 Discovery Dr. Chisholm, MN

District 5: Bob Bruckbauer

Date: 5:00 pm.
Thursday, March 27
Location: Northland High School, Remer
Address: 316 E. Main St. Remer, MN

District 7: Craig Olson

Date: 5:00 pm.
Wednesday, February 12
Location: South Ridge School (cafeteria)
Address: 8162 Swan Lake Rd. Culver, MN

District 8: Brian Napstad

Date: 5:00 pm.
Monday, March 17
Location: Cromwell Pavilion
Address: 1272 MN-73 Cromwell, MN

District 2: Mike Forsman

Date: 5:00 pm.
Thursday, February 13
Location: St. Anthony Catholic Church
Address: 231 E. Camp St. Ely, MN

District 4: Jeff Sheldon

Date: 5:00 pm.
Tuesday, March 25
Location: Balsam Community Center
Address: 41388 Scenic Hwy. Bovey, MN 55709

District 6: Dan Kingsley

Date: 5:00 pm.
Thursday, January 30
Location: Spang Town Hall
Address: 35402 Spang Road Hill City, MN

District 9: Larry Anderson

Date: 5:00 pm.
Tuesday, January 28
Location: Hope Lutheran Church
Address: 204 Elm Ave., Moose Lake



Never make a utility bill payment to anyone calling you on the phone, coming to your door, texting you or emailing you. Always call your utility company at the number provided on your bill or utility website if you have questions about payment or billing information. Know your utility's bill payment options!

Source: Utilities United Against Scams



October 29, 2024 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported receiving several member calls about using contractors of Midwest Generators. He forwarded those calls to General Manager Bakk, who would follow up if members could use their own contractor. Olson also reported on the board's strategic planning session in September, noting it had a lot of good discussion and information exchange.

General Manager Bakk reported that LCP would not be able to avoid a rate increase in 2025. He also reported that reform is needed to Minnesota's 2040 carbon-free legislation, and there is an increased

need to bring nuclear energy back into discussion in Minnesota.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved 2024 Capital Credit retirement of \$2 million: \$1.5 million from LCP and \$500,000 from Great River Energy.

Approved the 2025 Director Election timeline. Nomination packets are available starting January 24, 2025. The Annual Meeting is April 24, 2025, at the Reif Center in Grand Rapids.

Approved an E3 Loan for Midstate Plastics Corporation to purchase a new, modern thermoforming line.



▶ Ron Demianiuk of Cloquet watched this adult red fox take a rest after hunting for the kits.

Editor's Note: These board minutes have been condensed. A full copy of the board minutes can be read at 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.

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Brian Napstad, District 8	218-485-1528 bnapstad@lcp.coop
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BY THE NUMBERS | OCTOBER 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 under "My Cooperative."



	2024	2023
Cost of Purchased Power	\$45,890,844	\$44,049,893
Other Operating Expenses	\$40,204,484	\$38,531,150
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$86,095,328	\$82,581,043



	2024	2023
Operating Margins	\$9,214,711	\$9,226,447
Non-Operating Margins	\$2,156,879	\$944,122



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

Published monthly by Lake Country Power
8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768
Editor: Jerry Burnes • jburnes@lcp.coop
Lake Country Power Service Centers:
Cohasset • Kettle River • Mountain Iron
800-421-9959 • www.lakecountrypower.coop
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