



July 2023

# Newsline

**BOARD MEETINGS** July 25 ■ August 29 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

## Lake Country Power



Energy that Powers Our Lives

### IN THIS ISSUE

- Cyber safety tips
- Everyday value of electricity
- Impacts of 2023 legislation
- LCP partners with HomeServe



## 36 High school students receive scholarship from Lake Country Power

Lake Country Power is pleased to announce 36 local high school seniors from 29 different schools have been awarded the Lake Country Power 2023 Les Beach Memorial Scholarship. The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship honors a former co-op employee and recognizes student commitment and contribution to local communities.

The \$4,000 scholarships, issued at \$1,000 per year for four years, will help the following graduating seniors pursue their college plans and career dreams:



The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship is available to local students from more than 35 area high schools. Qualified students must be co-op members through their parents or legal guardians who receive electric services from Lake Country Power.

The web-based application process for high school seniors will open this winter when qualifying high school seniors may apply for next year's scholarships. The exact dates will be announced this fall, and the online application will be available from the cooperative's website at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop).

The Les Beach Memorial Scholarship is made possible through abandoned and unclaimed capital from previous members who can no longer be located.

"We make great efforts to keep these unclaimed monies local to our service area for tax-exempt organizations and charitable purposes, such as scholarships," said Greg Schulzetenberg, LCP manager of community relations and marketing. "The State of Minnesota says these funds cannot be used for internal operations at the co-op but can be used locally if certain requirements are met."



- Naomi Poirier: Bamum School
- Joshua Butcher: Bug-O-Nay-Ge-Shig School
- Eliza DeCaigny: Carlton School
- Daniel Jude: Cherry School
- Greta Perpich: Chisholm School
- Noah Foster: Cromwell-Wright School
- Ethan Williams: Deer River School
- Rachel Coughlin: Ely Memorial Secondary School
- Wyatt Hudspith: Esko School
- Jake Bradach and Jaden Lang: Eveleth-Gilbert School
- Darby Autio: Floodwood School
- Camdyn Keagle, Kenady Marshall, Angelina Nguyen and Emma Seeley: Grand Rapids High School
- Corinne Hubbard: Greenway-Coleraine School
- Colten Danelski: Hermantown School
- Lindsay Steinbrecher: Hibbing School
- Saige Ahonen: Hill City School
- Erin Ford: McGregor Secondary School
- Bella Thomas: Mesabi East School
- Laura Stephenson: Moose Lake School
- Samantha Hoff: Mountain Iron-Buhl School
- Kohen Briggs and Hannah Kinsey: North Woods School
- Jacob Mackai: Northeast Range School
- Samantha Burt: Northern Lights Community School
- Tatum Peterson and Alexander Wake: Northland-Remer School
- Madison Walsh: Proctor School
- Owen Erickson: South Ridge School
- Rebecca Kowalski: Virginia School
- Cody Anderson and Bradley Untiedt: At Large category
- Katelyn Taplin: Home School

# LCP selects HomeServe to offer optional home repair coverage plans

Lake Country Power is excited to announce a partnership with HomeServe to offer affordable, *optional* home protection plans to members. **We still provide the same service as we always have**, but these emergency repair plans offer additional coverage to member-owned interior and exterior electrical components, certain home appliances, and home cooling systems. You choose the coverages that fit your needs.



Many homeowners aren't aware that certain components on their property are their responsibility. If a breakdown occurs, it is up to you to find a contractor and pay the repair costs.

HomeServe provides financial relief from the cost of covered repairs due to breakdowns caused by normal wear and tear.

- Lake Country Power is committed to delivering reliable energy services at competitive prices and improving the quality of life of its members. As part of that commitment, we look for new, affordable ways members can help protect their homes and budgets from the high cost and hassle of unexpected repairs.
- HomeServe serves more than 4.7 million customers in North America through 650+ leading municipal and utility partners. HomeServe has completed 4.3 million jobs – 1.7 million jobs over the last 3 years and over 640,000 jobs in the last 12 months alone. HomeServe has been serving customers since 2003 and has an A-level rating from the Better Business Bureau.
- Eligible Lake Country Power members will be able to sign up for *optional* service plans to cover their member-owned electrical components, certain home appliances, and cooling systems including heat pumps.
- Coverage plans provide members with access to a HomeServe 24/7, 365 repair hotline, as well as local licensed and insured technicians that will come to members' homes to fix covered repairs.

For more information, visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop/homeserve-0](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/homeserve-0).

## When the weather is extreme, use energy wisely

We hear a lot about peak energy demand, but what is it and how does it impact electricity use? As the name implies, peak energy demand occurs when energy consumption is at its highest. In much of the U.S., energy use spikes in summer and winter due to the need to heat and cool indoor spaces.

Although it depends on where you live, summertime energy demand increases between mid-to-late afternoon (when outdoor temperatures soar) and evening. In the winter, there are two high-use times of day: early morning and late afternoon/evening. Weekends and holidays are typically considered off peak.

Changing the time of day you use energy can help lower your energy bills and avoid interruptions or service glitches that can occur during peak demand times. To do this, consider running major appliances during off-peak times; smart devices or appliances that have delay starts can help achieve this goal.

Do your part to use energy wisely when temperatures are high. In the summer months, help decrease demand by doing the following:

- Turn your thermostat up by two degrees or more.
- Program your thermostat to a higher temperature when no one is home.
- If you do not have one, consider purchasing a smart thermostat.
- Make sure your HVAC system is in good working order.
- Use bathroom and kitchen fans temporarily to remove heat and humidity.
- Use your countertop toaster/convection oven instead of your oven.
- Use major appliances in the early morning or late evening.
- Program smart devices to run appliances at off-peak times.
- Close window coverings during the hottest part of the day.
- Use minimal lighting.
- Turn off and disconnect electronics that are not in use.
- Turn off stand-alone dehumidifiers.

### LCP still seeking 2024 co-op calendar entries

Electronic entries are still being accepted via email for the 2024 co-op calendar contest. The deadline is Tuesday, August 1, 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.

# 2023 Legislation will impact everyone who uses electricity

The 2023 legislative session, which began in January and concluded on May 22, was one of the most consequential in history for Minnesota's 1.7 million cooperative members. Record investments, key policy changes, and a landmark 100% carbon-free by 2040 mandate all made this legislative session one with big long-term impacts on everyone using electricity in the state.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) represents Minnesota's 44 distribution cooperatives and six generation & transmission cooperatives who collectively serve over 1.7 million Minnesotans. MREA is the voice for non-profit electric cooperative member-owners at the Capitol and have been deeply engaged with lawmakers, so Minnesota cooperative-member owners have their voice heard. They worked tirelessly to shape the session's outcomes.

Here is an overview of a few items affecting electric cooperatives and the members they serve.



## 100% Carbon-Free by 2040

The first and most impactful bill for electric cooperatives and their member-owners was the historic 100% carbon-free by 2040 bill, which was signed into law in early February 2023. The legislation, passed in record time, is widely regarded as the most significant energy policy ever passed in Minnesota and mandates that all electricity sold in the state come from carbon-free sources by the year 2040.

The law will increase the challenge of keeping the electric grid reliable under all conditions. And significant advancements in technology will be needed to achieve the mandate.

Minnesota's electric cooperatives are leaders in navigating the clean energy transition while keeping electricity reliable and

affordable. However, this new law does present significant challenges. As a result, MREA worked with lawmakers to add some common-sense amendments to help protect affordability and reliability. Nonetheless, a lot of investment, innovation, and ingenuity will be necessary to avoid cost increases and potential service disruptions, while meeting the mandate.

## State Competitiveness Fund

Investments in Minnesota's electric grid are more crucial than ever, and historic funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) necessitates Minnesota think big to attract federal dollars.

As a result, lawmakers put \$190 million into a newly created State Competitiveness Fund which will be used to attract hundreds of millions of dollars for investments in Minnesota's energy infrastructure. Cooperatives across the state will be using these funds, including an additional \$5.3 million specifically for consumer-owned utilities, for projects to improve affordability and reliability and aid in the energy transition.

## Electrification Rebates and Grants

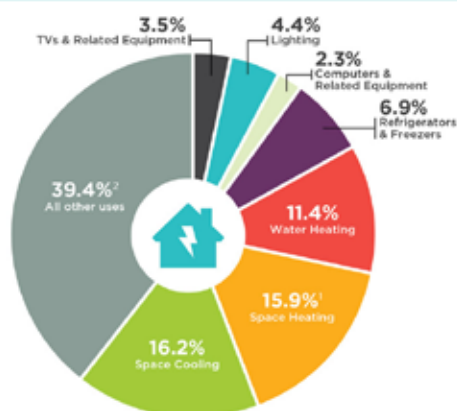
The State of Minnesota wants to help you buy an electric vehicle. This includes a rebate up to \$2,500 for a new electric vehicle with a sale price below \$55,000 or up to \$600 for a used vehicle under \$25,000. The rebate is open to individuals, businesses, nonprofits and governments. Those who have already received an EV rebate or tax credit from Minnesota are not eligible.

Homeowners who would like to purchase a highly efficient heat pump to heat and cool their home could receive rebates of up to \$4,000. The legislature also made grant money available for solar on schools, electric bikes, electric school buses, pre-weatherization work and more. ■

*Credit: Minnesota Rural Electric Association*

## How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for the largest percentage of electricity consumption in American homes.



Source: Energy Information Administration 2022

Excludes air conditioning, electric vehicles and other, cooking equipment, dishwashers, heating elements, and motors.

### Up to \$50 on battery-powered yard tools

**Rebate Information**

- Lawn Mower: \$50
- Snow blower: \$50
- Chainsaw: \$25
- Leaf blower: \$25
- Trimmer/weed whip: \$25

Limit two (2) yard tool rebates per member account, per year. Maximum rebate total \$100 per year. Tool must be purchased new, not refurbished.

800-421-9959 (press 6)

# Welcome to Lake Country Power

Lake Country Power recently welcomed three new employees. Please join us to welcome them to the co-op family!



**Kayla Herschbach** joined LCP on May 22 as a Consumer Account Representative II out of the Cohasset Service Center.



**Sam Dewey** returned to the co-op family on May 30 as a Summer Maintenance Intern in Kettle River.



**Tristan Makela** joined LCP on June 12 the new Linestaker II in the Mountain Iron Service Center.

## Use your Co-op Connections® Card and save!

With your Co-op Connections® Card, you can help support local small businesses year-round.

This free co-op membership card offers cooperative members deals on products and services to more than 24,000 local and national businesses. The card helps save on automotive, clothing, dining, travel and more.

Each member of Lake Country Power receives the Co-op Connections® Card without cost or signing up, and it's yours to keep — forever. LCP is proud to be part of the communities we service and appreciative of the opportunity to help our members save, while also supporting the local business community.

You can use your Co-op Connections® Card at various businesses across the Northland.

For more information on the Co-op Connections® Card

and a full list of local and national businesses and deals, visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop/co-op-connections-card](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/co-op-connections-card). If you lost your card and need a replacement, call LCP at 800-421-9959, or you may download the app on your smart device by searching Co-op Connections®.



### RECIPE CORNER TOFFEE CHIP THINS

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



- ½ cup softened butter
- 1 can (14 oz.) sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs (about 32 squares)
- ¾ cup flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
- 1 cup English toffee bits or almond brickle chips
- 1 ½ cups flaked coconut, optional

Combine butter and condensed milk — mix well.

Combine cracker crumbs, flour and baking powder. Gradually add to the butter mixture. Stir in chocolate chips, toffee bits and coconut (if desired).

Drop by rounded tablespoonfuls, 2 inches apart onto a greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until the edges are lightly browned. Cool for 2 minutes before moving onto wire racks. Makes about 4 ½ dozen.

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

## smart hub Tip

**Q:** It's summer! Curious to see how the temperatures outside affect the energy usage inside your home?

**A:** Take advantage of the 'My Usage' section of SmartHub. By selecting the Usage Explorer graph, you can compare your usage to the weather trends each month and even down to the day.

# Five tips to stay cyber safe

Cyberattacks are nothing new in today's world. Hackers are thieves who break into internet-connected devices such as computers, tablets and smartphones, usually with the intent to steal, change or delete your personal information or financial data. These thieves may get access to bank and credit card information, Social Security numbers, passwords and other personal information you save on your computer or use online.

At Lake Country Power one of our cooperative principles is "concern for community." We care about our member-owners and want to help keep them safe. To help keep your personal information safe, we are sharing these five easy ways to keep your computer and smart devices protected.

**Protect your information:** Be careful when giving out personal details online such as addresses, phone numbers, usernames, passwords and Social Security numbers. This is important to protect your identity from being stolen.

**Don't click on that:** When dealing with people you don't know, avoid clicking on links in emails, text messages and direct messages. Doing so could be a cybersecurity risk, as it could load a virus onto your device.

**Use a password manager:** Use capital and lowercase letters, numbers and symbols that would be hard to guess, and save that in a password manager. The manager allows passwords to

be automatically randomly generated. It also prevents having to remember complex passwords and eliminates the need to write them down.



**Don't forget to update:** All computers and smart devices should have the latest versions of security software, web browsers, operating systems and programs. Many cybersecurity threats occur due to vulnerabilities that are later patched through manufacturer updates.

**Use multi-factor authentication (MFA):** This offers a second step to secure accounts in case a malicious person gets ahold of your password. An example of an MFA is a text message with a code sent to your cellphone that you must enter online when you log in along with your password. Many banks and financial institutions have MFA.

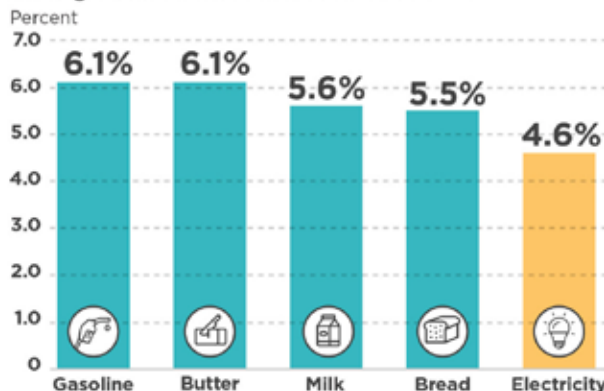
Following these simple steps will help prevent hackers from depositing malicious viruses or spyware on your computer, which can slow it down or destroy files. Cyber criminals are getting smarter, but when we all take a proactive approach to our cybersecurity, we're creating a safer internet for everyone. ■

## Electricity: An everyday value

### ELECTRICITY REMAINS A GOOD VALUE

Although inflation has led to increasing costs in many areas of our lives, the cost of powering your home rises slowly when compared to other common goods. Looking at price increases over the last five years, electricity remains a good value.

Average Annual Price Increase 2017-2022



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics  
Consumer Price Index

As the cost of everyday items continues to rise, you can rely on Lake Country Power to continue working toward making electricity one of the best values for your dollar.

Electricity powers our quality of life and its uses have only expanded over the years. From powering the appliances that help run your household to more simple tasks like charging your cellphone, your electric bill covers much more than it did before.

Even though electricity is powering more of our lives, the cost remains remarkably stable. The price of electricity has increased, but at a slower pace than other common expenses. Lake Country Power, along with its wholesale power provider Great River Energy, keeps rates affordable by only charging its members an amount that reflects the cost to build, maintain, finance and operate the facilities

and assets necessary to provide electric service — nothing more.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Minnesota's average price for residential electricity remains lower than the national average.

For the average Minnesotan household, which uses 25 kilowatt-hours per day according to data from the Environmental Protection Agency, electricity costs equal about \$3 per day. When put against the price increase of other common expenses like gasoline, milk and bread — and considering all the ways we depend on electricity — it's easy to see why it remains such a great value.

Lake Country Power understands that electricity is more than a service — it's a necessity for our members. That's why we will continue working to power your life.

## APRIL 25, 2023 • Regular Monthly Meeting

### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported on the District 7 and District 8 meetings, as well as the Annual Meeting in Cromwell. A thank you card was received from the Remer School (a recipient of the Education Improvement Program funding) and the Cooperative Family Fund for LCP's recent contribution.

General Manager Bakk reported that Great River Energy is monitoring potential action by the Environmental Protection Agency that could shut down Coal Creek Station. He added that GRE is looking to restart the rate design committee. Bakk also reported that LCP supervisors will attend LDR leadership training May 2-4 in Cohasset.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved April 25, 2024, as the date for the 2024 Lake Country Power annual membership meeting.

Approved changes to Policy 308 regarding anti-harassment to include expanded protected classes to align with state and federal laws.

Approved Director Jeff Sheldon to attend GRE's June 7-8 meetings as guest.

**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.



▶ Bonnie Nygaard of Aurora took this picture in their field one summer morning. What a beautiful display of wildflowers.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Summer is a prime opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors. To reduce home energy use, avoid using your oven and use a grill instead. Not only will cooking outdoors eliminate the electricity used to power the stove, but it will also avoid raising the temperature inside your home, reducing the need for air conditioning or cooling. You can also avoid using the oven with tasty no-bake recipes. Get creative in the kitchen (or the backyard) and find new ways to save energy! Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — April 2023

*The following figures are preliminary and unaudited year-end financials.*

	2023	2022
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 40,483,831	\$ 39,891,594
Cost of Purchased Power	20,331,723	23,816,985
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	4,930,072	5,241,055
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	1,360,521	1,406,340
Administrative and General Expense	2,702,405	2,445,672
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	5,989,987	5,556,029
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>35,314,708</b>	<b>38,466,080</b>
Net Electric Operating Margins	5,169,122	1,425,514
Non-Operating Margins	611,719	718,346
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	5,780,841	2,143,860
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	(63,669)	781
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$ 5,717,172</b>	<b>\$ 2,144,642</b>
<b>TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)</b>	<b>282,201,251</b>	<b>307,917,307</b>

**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

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<b>Steve Raukar,</b> District 3	<b>218-966-0298</b> sraukar@lcp.coop
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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 service, billing, outages or other service-related matters should call 1-800-421-9959.**

## Newsline

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