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BOARD MEETINGS July 26 ■ August 30

Annual meeting connects co-op, members

A community of cooperative members gathered at Lake Country Power’s service center in Cohasset for the annual membership meeting on Wednesday evening, April 20. More than 300 members and guests heard about the lingering effects of the COVID pandemic on material costs, supply chain issues, historic inflation and the impacts all of it has on providing safe and reliable electric service.

Co-op officials also noted there was no choice but to implement the first rate increase in six years after thorough analysis.

“Material costs and supply chain issues are creating very real problems for us,” said Lake Country Power General Manager Mark Bakk. “The cost for materials we use for the distribution system has skyrocketed more than 30 percent from pre-pandemic levels. What you feel at the gas pump, is what we also feel, which is mostly diesel fuel in our case.”

While external factors are beyond what the co-op can control, there is some good news. Bakk said Lake Country Power achieved its best-ever score for the average number of minutes of outage time each member experienced over a 12-month period. The co-op also scored well in the average amount of time it takes for line crews to restore an outage.

Bakk also expressed his gratitude to members for ranking Lake Country Power with its highest-ever member satisfaction American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) score of 77 in 2021. He said, “Thanks for your support, and rest assured that I will always

lead this cooperative with your best interests in mind.”

Additional reports were given by LCP Board President Craig Olson, Holding Company President Daniel Kingsley, and Mark Fagan, Great River Energy’s vice president and chief corporate and member services officer.

Board elections

Director election results were announced to fill three-year terms. District 2 candidate, Michael Forsman of Ely, ran unopposed and received 624 votes. Members in District 4 and District 8 did not receive a director ballot because no members petitioned to run for the board of directors by the filing deadline on February 9.

“We did not feel it proper or in the best interest of the cooperative to appoint any members to those two districts,” said Craig Olson, board president. “The seven active directors will oversee any cooperative business that may occur in those open districts and then we’ll hold a special election next spring to fill the remaining two-year terms for District 4 and District 8.”

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 Jason Long from District 1, Treasurer. ■



► Pictured (from left to right): Jennifer Heitkamp, White Bear Lake; Gloria O’Hern, Grand Rapids; Jo A Pommier, Brevik; Dennis Partika, Hill City; and Paul Daigle, Cohasset. They were the grand prize winners from the annual meeting drawing.

Back in person for the annual meeting



► Members meet with LCP Senior Engineer Ryan Ferguson before the start of the 2022 Annual Meeting on April 20, in Cohasset.



► Craig Olson, LCP board president and District 7 director, gives his report during the annual meeting.



► Mark Fagan, vice president and chief corporate and members service officer at Great River Energy, addresses the annual meeting crowd. Fagan is also a Lake Country Power member.



► LCP employees Tami Zaun and Angie Clifton pull winning numbers in the annual prize drawings at the end of the meeting.



► LCP General Manager Mark Bakk presents the Award of Excellence to linemen Cody Vredenburg and Matt Bade for their life-saving heroics last fall.



► A wide shot of the 2022 LCP Annual Meeting inside the Cohasset Service Center garage area. It was the first in-person annual meeting since 2019 and the second public event at the new service center.

► More photos from the annual meeting can be found on our Facebook page.

People Powering You

This is a regular series of employee spotlights where you'll get to know the people behind your power.

Years served: 27 years

Brief overview of my job: My job entails system design of overhead and underground lines, meeting with members for new services or services changes, and addressing any questions that might arise.

Why I enjoy working at LCP: I enjoy working at Lake Country Power because it is a great company, and I really enjoy what I do and enjoy my fellow co-workers.

Family: My wife is Jeni, daughter Ali, son Jace

Community Involvement: Over the years I have volunteered at my children's schools, along with different sports and in my community.

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, football and golf are all things I enjoy, along with any time I can spend with my family and friends.

One random fact of interest about yourself: I like to cook.

What did you do before working at the co-op? I worked at

Al Dorr

Linestaker I

various jobs before going to line school at the age of 19. I worked at Anoka Electric Cooperative, which is now Connexus Energy, for 3 years before starting here at Dairyland Electric. Dairyland Electric Cooperative (Grand Rapids) along with Northern Electric Cooperative Association (Virginia) and Carlton County Cooperative Power Association (Kettle River) consolidated to form Lake Country Power in 1997.

Education/training/background:

My background is working as a lineman for 20 years and then as a linestaker for the last 10 years. I went to lineman school in Wadena, Minnesota, specializing in leadership training and completing the Line Design Program.



RECIPE CORNER TOMATO BAKED HADDOCK

From the Kitchen of:
Jerome Johnson,
Cambridge



- 1 medium green pepper, chopped
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp butter
- 1 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 can (14 1/2 oz) diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1 pound fresh or frozen haddock filets, thawed
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- Pepper to taste

In a nonstick skillet, saute the green pepper and onion in butter until tender. Stir in flour until blended. Add tomatoes; cook and stir until thickened, about 3 minutes.

Place the filets skin side down in an 11x7x2-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Sprinkle with salt and pepper; top with tomato mixture. Bake, uncovered at 350 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake for 2 minutes longer until the cheese is melted.

Member note: Excellent with red pepper flakes. Different types of fish can be used.

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.

Pole testing continues for safety and reliability

- In the interest of public safety and service reliability, Lake Country Power has hired Ram and Osmose Utilities to conduct a ground line pole inspection on the distribution poles in the northern part of LCP's service territory. The testing began in late April and will continue through August.
- The goal of this routine inspection is to identify poles that may no longer be useful for service, and will be scheduled for future replacement. Crews will be accessing the distribution power lines with pickups, 4 wheelers, or on foot. Some poles may require hand excavation to a depth of 18 inches below ground; these will be filled by the end of each day. There will be no interruption of electric service.
- Pole testing will take place on four LCP substations: Peary, Sand Lake, Cook, and Clear Lake.



Safety tips for before, during and after the storm

Storm season is in full swing. Many summer storms have the potential to be severe and they can happen anytime, anywhere.

As adults, we understand the importance of storm safety, but younger children and teens may not realize the dangers storms pose. That's why it's so important to talk to your family and have a storm plan in place. Here are some tips you can share with your loved ones.

Before the Storm

- Talk to your family about what to do in the event of a severe storm or tornado. Point out the safest location to shelter, like a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of your home. Discuss the dangers of severe thunderstorms; lightning can strike 10 miles outside of a storm. Remember: when you hear thunder roar, head indoors.
- Make a storm kit. It doesn't have to be elaborate — having a few items on hand is better than nothing at all. Try to include items like water, non-perishable foods, a manual can opener, a First-Aid kit, flashlights and extra batteries, prescriptions, baby supplies and pet supplies. Keep all the items in one place for easy access if the power goes out.

During the Storm

- Pay attention to local weather alerts — either on the TV, your smartphone or weather radio — and understand the types of alerts. A thunderstorm or tornado watch means these events are possible and you should be prepared; a warning means a thunderstorm or tornado has been spotted in your area and it's time to take action.

After the Storm

- If the power is out, conserve your phone battery as much as possible, limiting calls and texts to let others know you are safe or for emergencies only.



When bad WX strikes

Get the SmartHub App



Outage reporting made easy

- Stay off the roads if trees, power lines or utility poles are down. Lines and equipment could still be energized, posing life-threatening risks to anyone who gets too close.

Summer is a time for many fun-filled activities, but the season can also bring severe, dangerous weather. Talk to your loved ones about storm safety so that everyone is prepared and knows exactly what to do when a storm strikes. ■



Q: Do you have an Energy Wise® meter for one of our load management programs like dual fuel or water heating?

A: If you answered yes, be sure to sign up for load control notifications via e-mail and/or text alerts through your SmartHub account. For more information or to sign up for SmartHub, visit www.lakecountrypower.coop > My Account > My Notifications.

Capital credit allocation for all members

This month, the co-op's board approved to allocate more than \$7.3 million of the Lake Country Power and Great River Energy 2021 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 2021 *Notice of Capital Credit Allocation* mailer represents the amount of the 2021 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 for more information about allocations and capital credits. ■

Know the signs of a scam

It's no secret that consumers with a water, gas or electricity connection have long been targets for utility scams, but fraudsters have changed their tactics since the COVID-19 pandemic. As consumers became more reliant on technology for work, school and commerce, scammers noted these shifts and adapted their tactics to this changed environment.

Common Types of Scams

A scammer may claim you are overdue on your electric bill and threaten to disconnect your service if you don't pay immediately. Whether this is done in-person, by phone, text or email, the scammers want to scare you into immediate payment so you don't have

time to think clearly.

If this happens over the phone, simply hang up. If you're concerned about your bill, call 800-421-9959. The co-op's phone number can also be found on your monthly bill and online at lakecountrypower.coop.

If the scam is by email or text, delete it before taking any action. If you're unsure, you can always contact us or use the Smart Hub app to check the status of your account. Remember, Lake Country



By Larry
ANDERSON
District 9
Director

Power will never attempt to demand immediate payment after just one notice. When in doubt, contact Lake Country Power.

Defend Yourself Against Scams

Be wary of calls or texts from unknown numbers. Be suspicious of an unknown person claiming to be a utility worker who requests banking or other personal information.

Never let anyone into your home that you don't know unless you have a scheduled appointment or reported a problem. Lake Country Power employees carry ID badges. When we perform work on a members' property or come into your home, employees are professionals

and will always identify themselves.

The co-op wants to help protect our community against utility scams, and you can help create the first line of defense. Lake Country Power's Information Technology (IT) department is also vigilant in protecting member's data from cyber criminals. Please report any potential scams to us so we can spread the word to prevent others in the community from falling victim. ■

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



AUGUST		2022				
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SAVE THE DATE: Member Appreciation Days

Tuesday, August 23
– Cohasset Service Center

Wednesday, August 24
– Mountain Iron
Service Center

Thursday, August 25
– Kettle River
Service Center

11:00 am - 1:30 pm each day

March 29, 2022 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Craig Olson reported that directors interested in attending meetings or events in the future will be required to complete a "Request to Attend Meeting" for approval. Olson also said he received completed evaluation forms for General Manager Mark Bakk that would be discussed during the executive session.

Matt Laughlin, an auditor with Brady Martz reported on the 2021 financial audit. He said staff was very cooperative and no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses related to internal controls over financial reporting were identified.

General Manager Bakk reported on the Great River Energy (GRE) Member Manager meeting and GRE February financials, among other topics. Bakk commented on the recent

discussion with the board about Lake Country Power's unclaimed and abandoned capital credits and proposed that authorization be given to LCP staff to develop a policy outlining a program and application process relative to distribution of these funds.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved LCP staff to prepare a policy on unclaimed and abandoned capital credits distribution for board review and approval.

Approved the 2021 financial audit report of LCP's 2021 operations prepared by Brady Martz. ■

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.



▶ Jeff Brooks of Forest Lake photographed these familiar fritillaries in the Sax-Zim Bog near Meadowlands. This picture earned a spot in the 2022 co-op calendar for June.



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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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ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you're looking to add smart technology to your home, consider smart plugs. Smart plugs are inexpensive and can be used to control lighting and other electronic devices through a smart phone app. With smart plugs, you can conveniently manage lighting, home office equipment, video game consoles and more. By powering off unused devices when you're away, you can save energy (and money!). Source: energystar.gov

Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — March 2022

	2022	2021
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 31,451,719	\$ 26,574,442
Cost of Purchased Power	19,791,423	14,924,107
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	3,516,246	3,124,280
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	1,051,889	981,003
Administrative and General Expense	1,880,433	1,910,083
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	4,428,293	4,357,853
TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES	30,668,285	25,297,326
Net Electric Operating Margins	783,435	1,277,116
Non-Operating Margins	634,643	685,633
TOTAL MARGINS	\$ 1,418,859	\$ 2,991,024
TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)	247,168,195	193,412,494

Editor's Note: These financials are condensed. A complete set of financials can be viewed 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 copy.