



June 2023

Newsline

BOARD MEETINGS June 27 ■ July 25 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)



Energy that Powers Our Lives

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Co-op community connects at Annual Meeting

Two new directors join the board

A community of cooperative members gathered at the Cromwell-Wright School in Cromwell, Minn., for the annual membership meeting on Thursday evening, April 20. More than 145 members and guests gathered to hear how soaring material and contractor labor costs are driving recent rate increases, and the challenges of supply and lead time issues for essential equipment needed to provide reliable and affordable electric service.

A presentation by Lake Country Power's wholesale energy provider, Great River Energy, highlighted the ever-changing landscape for the future of power generation and transmission in Minnesota as current legislation moves electric service providers away from fossil fuels toward renewable power sources.

Members learned of the steady climb in cost increases for line materials since the 2020 pandemic, including supply chain issues. In 2022, the average increase was 30% more for materials but was surpassed at the beginning of 2023 with an average price increase of nearly 70% for those same materials. Lengthy lead times to receive necessary materials and equipment is also concerning.

As a result of multiple inflationary factors, Lake Country Power had no choice but to adjust load management



► The nine-member Lake Country Power Board of Directors (from back, left to right): Bob Bruckbauer (District 5), Steve Rauker (District 3), Larry Anderson (District 9), Brian Napstad (newly-elected District 8), Dan Kingsley (District 6), Craig Olson (District 7), Jeff Sheldon (newly-elected District 4), Mike Forsman (District 2) and Jason Long (District 1).

rates on January 1 and general service rates starting March 1, 2023, including an increase in the service availability charge from \$42 to \$48 per month.

A special presentation during the annual meeting recognized 11 school districts within Lake Country Power's service area with funding through the cooperative's new Education Improvement Program. The program is funded through abandoned and unclaimed capital from previous members who can no longer be located. The State of Minnesota allows cooperatives to distribute these funds

to tax-exempt organizations and cannot be used for internal operations at the co-op.

Reports were given by LCP Board President Craig Olson, General Manager Mark Bakk, Chief Financial Officer Tracy Peterson Wirtanen, Holding Company President Daniel Kingsley, and Mark Fagan, Great River Energy's vice president and chief corporate and member services officer.

Annual meeting videos can be found on Lake Country Power's website, www.lakecountrypower.coop, or the co-op's YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/lakecountrypower. ■

ANNUAL MEETING PHOTOS



▶ Grand prize winners of \$100 credit on their bill were: Franklin Kwapick, Muriel Wallgren, George Uecker, Stan Strand and Joel Hagen.



▶ 11 public schools were awarded grants through the Education Improvement Program, which uses unclaimed capital credits toward educational enhancements in Lake Country Power's service territory. This year, the winning schools were Chisholm Public Schools, Cromwell-Wright Public School, Ely Public Schools, Floodwood Public School, Grand Rapids/Bigfork Public Schools, Hill City Public School, Mesabi East Public Schools, Northern Lights Community School in Warba, Northland Community Schools in Remer, St. Louis County Schools – South Ridge School and Willow River Area School.



▶ Mike Forsman, District 2 director, speaks with a member prior to the annual meeting.



▶ Mary Ann Johnson presented a Quilt of Valor to Arnold Collman at the 2023 Annual Meeting on Thursday. Collman served in the Navy as a crewman on helicopter and fought in the Cuban crisis during 1957 and 1961. He was stationed with the Marines in Florida.

Johnson made the quilt by hand. She's with the Queen of Peace Quilters, and they'll be donating another beautiful quilt for next year's annual meeting so a veteran on the Iron Range can win next year. Queen of Peace Quilters has received funding through Operation Round Up® for their quilting services.



▶ Choir students from Cromwell-Wright School helped serve the annual meeting dinner.

Pole testing continues for safety and reliability

In the interest of public safety and service reliability, Lake Country Power has hired Exo to complete a ground line pole inspection on our distribution lines in the Winton, Vermilion, Iron, and Lakeland areas.

Exo will also be inspecting underground equipment along shorelines on islands and non-road accessible areas on lakes in the Cook, Orr, Lakeland, and Ely areas.

The goal of the inspection is to identify poles and service equipment which may be no longer fit for service or which may require maintenance in the interest of safety and service reliability. Crews will be accessing the distribution power lines with pickups, 4 wheelers, boat, 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.

Energy-saving projects for the weekend warrior

Are you a weekend warrior? If you're considering home improvement upgrades that save energy and money, we've got a few project ideas for you — all of which can be completed in a day or less!

Here are three energy-saving projects that you can easily tackle whether you're a weekend warrior pro or a DIY dabbler.

Get smart about home cooling and heating

Cooling and heating your home typically account for a large portion of energy bills. Smart thermostats can help keep your cooling and heating costs in check, with ENERGY STAR®-certified models saving about 8% on annual energy costs.



Now that smart thermostats are more affordable (as little as \$70!), this simple upgrade makes for a fun, efficient weekend project.

Smart thermostats offer a variety of bells and whistles, but the average model will allow you to set custom temperature schedules, adjust the settings from anywhere (from your phone), and over time, learn your cooling and heating preferences.

Your new smart thermostat will come with step-by-step

instructions, but this project typically involves shutting off your HVAC at the breaker panel, disconnecting/removing the old thermostat, installing the new smart thermostat and connecting it to your home Wi-Fi.

Play it safe: remember to carefully read the installation instructions before you get started.

Create fresh savings with a DIY clothesline

If you have enough outdoor space available, installing a clothesline is a great way to save energy. Not only will you save on dryer costs—in the summer, you can also save on cooling costs since unwanted heat from the clothes dryer won't be added to your home (which makes your air conditioner work harder). Additionally, air drying is much gentler on fabrics and will keep your clothes and linens looking fresh longer.

You can create your own clothesline with two T-posts, wire and hook-and-eye turnbuckles. Depending on your soil, you may need a small amount of Quikrete to set the posts. Another option is installing the line between two trees. A typical load of laundry requires about 35 feet of line, so keep this in mind as you're determining the best location.

If an outdoor clothesline isn't an option, no sweat! You can easily create an indoor drying rack that folds to save space. Home improvement websites like thespruce.com and hgvtv.com offer step-by-step tutorials for a variety of indoor clothes racks.

These are just a few simple ideas to help you save energy and money. So, get out there, roll up those sleeves and tackle a few projects. ■

Important Information for Lake Country Power Members:

Get peace of mind against emergency home repair costs

Lake Country Power has partnered with HomeServe to offer members like you *optional* coverage to help protect against the costs of unexpected breakdowns.

See why over **4.8 million customers** trust HomeServe. Explore plans now.



Scan this code, call 1-833-334-1874 or visit www.HSCoverageLCP.com to learn more about plans available in your area.



Partnering with
 HomeServe

Electricity and the value of time

Time is a precious — and priceless — resource. It's the one thing you can't get back, so finding ways to use it efficiently is key. That's where electricity, and all that it powers, can help.

Around the home

Electricity saves us time through the devices it powers, but one of its first noteworthy benefits — lighting — can give us more productive time in the day. Lighting allows us to connect with family and friends, catch up on chores and complete other tasks outside of daylight hours.

Beyond providing quality brightness, switching to LEDs throughout your home will also save you time since you won't need to buy and replace them as often as standard incandescent bulbs.

The longevity of an LED light bulb is anywhere from 25,000 to 50,000 hours compared to the 750 to 2,000 hours of light provided by incandescent bulbs. They also use far less electricity than incandescent or fluorescent bulbs.

In the kitchen

Electric-powered appliances can notably cut down time in the kitchen. Electric pressure cookers reduce



cooking time by up to 90%. Air fryers speedily pre-heat to cook food faster, and crispier, than an oven. A bonus feature of these items, along with slow cookers, is their ability to “set it and forget.” You can let dinner cook while using time efficiently to take care of other items. And, of course, microwaves perform several time-saving jobs.

Induction cooktops are an emerging technology that speeds up cooking time as well. This type of heat uses electromagnetic radiation in which a current of electricity heats cookware. Around 90% of the electricity consumed by an induction stove is used for cooking food which means there's no energy escaping, giving you instant heat and controlled temperature.

These examples, and more, go to show that the value of electricity extends beyond just its cost, especially when it comes to all the ways it saves us time. ■



RECIPE CORNER COWBOY CAVIAR

From the
Kitchen of:
**Carol Dressen,
Cromwell**



Mix together in large bowl:

- 1-15 oz can shoepeg corn
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 2 avocados, cubed
- 2/3 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 bunches green onions, sliced
- 1 canned diced tomatoes, drained

Dressing:

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1 tsp cumin

Mix together and pour above ingredients. Stir well. Serve with tortilla chips or sliced French bread.

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.

smart hub Tip

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.

Preparing to serve you better

Providing reliable power to you is and will always be top priority for Lake Country Power. These days, power reliability seems to be making news now more than ever.

As the energy industry continues to transition and more segments of the economy are becoming electrified, such as vehicles, machinery and even lawn equipment, additional pressures are being placed on our nation's electric grid.

With the summer storm season upon us, I thought it would be a good time to tell you about a few measures Lake Country Power is taking to ensure you continue receiving the reliable power you depend on and deserve.

Let me be the first to say I love trees and the charm they add to our communities, and I know you do too. While trees provide shade and add beauty to our area, you may be surprised to learn that overgrown vegetation accounts for the majority of power outages.

That's why LCP strives to keep the co-op's power lines clear in right-of-way (ROW) areas. A ROW area is the land a co-op uses to construct, maintain, replace or repair underground and overhead power lines.

This ROW enables Lake Country Power to provide



By Craig
OLSON
District 7 Director

clearance from trees and other obstructions that could hinder distribution power lines. The overall goal of our vegetation management strategy is to provide reliable power to our members while maintaining the beauty of our area.

Planned Outages Improve Reliability

Although it may seem counterintuitive, LCP also maintains power reliability through planned, controlled outages. By carefully cutting power to one part of our local area for a few hours, Lake Country Power can perform system repairs and upgrades, which ultimately improve electric service.

Rest assured, LCP notifies members in advance of planned outages, so make sure the co-op has your correct contact information on file to receive phone calls or voicemails.

Vegetation management and controlled outages are essential tools in ensuring power reliability and minimizing the risk of outages. As advancements become more accessible, Lake Country Power may use additional technologies to ensure a consistent energy supply while managing the environment.

Lastly, I encourage you to follow Lake Country Power on social media so you can learn about the latest co-op updates. ■

Craig Olson was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 7. He can be reached at 218-393-2276 or colson@lcp.coop.

Welcome to Lake Country Power

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



Bethany Held joined LCP on April 17 as an accounting clerk in the Mountain Iron Service Center.



Jim Stafford is the new systems support specialist and came on board April 18 in Kettle River.



Dean Boese started May 8 as a new apprentice lineworker II in Mountain Iron.



Griffin Brovold joined LCP as an apprentice lineworker II in Mountain Iron on May 8.



Scott Novak started as a crew chief II on May 8 out of Mountain Iron.

MARCH 28, 2023 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported that he attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) PowerXchange conference in Nashville, Tennessee. He also said he referred several calls to management for follow up.

General Manager Bakk reported on carbon-free legislation in the Minnesota Legislature, Great River Energy's Rate Design Committee, Lake Country Power's district meetings and noted LCP's wholesale power contract with GRE expires in 2045.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved the 2022 audit report presented by Mike Johnson, auditor manager with Brady Martz and Associates. Johnson said the audit went well, staff was very cooperative and no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses related to internal controls over financial reporting were identified.

Approved a treasury rate loan commitment in the amount of \$82,377,000 was approved for LCP by the Rural Utilities Service. The loan is for system extensions and additions.



▶ Wayne Feyereisen of Grand Rapids took this darling photo the early morning of June 29 on the Wendigo Arm of Pokegama Lake from his kayak. This protective mother was hiding her babies in the weeds.

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.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Looking for additional ways to save energy this summer? Your laundry room is a great place to start. Wash clothes with cold water, which can cut one load's energy use by more than half. Your washing machine will use the same amount of energy no matter the size of the clothes load, so fill it up when you can. When drying clothes, separate the heavier cottons. Loads will dry faster and more evenly if you separate heavier cottons like linens and towels from your lightweight clothing. . Source: energy.gov

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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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Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — March 2023

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

	2023	2022
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 31,663,435	\$ 31,451,719
Cost of Purchased Power	16,757,615	19,791,423
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	3,241,876	3,516,246
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	1,052,250	1,051,889
Administrative and General Expense	2,100,717	1,880,433
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	4,745,567	4,428,293
TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES	27,898,025	30,668,285
Net Electric Operating Margins	3,765,409	783,435
Non-Operating Margins	567,487	634,643
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	4,332,896	1,418,078
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	(63,669)	781
TOTAL MARGINS	\$ 4,269,227	\$ 1,418,859
TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)	225,560,786	247,168,195

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.