



March 2022

# Newsline

**BOARD MEETINGS** March 29 ■ April 26

## IN THIS ISSUE

- GRE adds more renewables
- Save energy while working from home
- EV charging on the rise
- Surge protection 101

## District Meetings return to the members

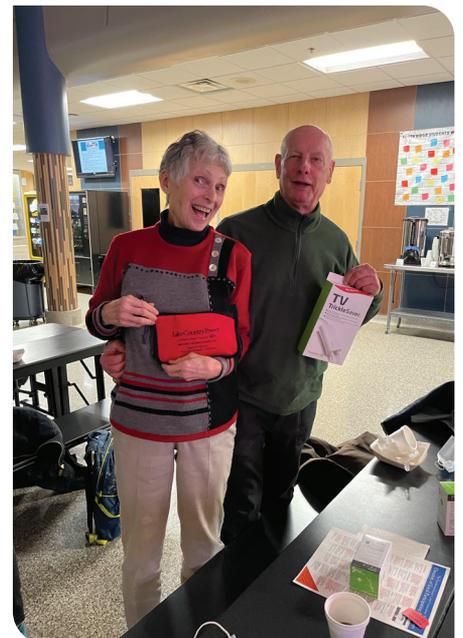
After COVID-19 put the annual district meetings on a hold for more than a year, the much-anticipated events are back in person this year.

Through February, six of the nine district meetings – District 7 in Culver, District 9 in Moose Lake, District 3 in Side Lake, District 4 in Nashwauk, District 2 in Ely and District 6 in Hill City – have taken place. Three more are scheduled this month ahead of the annual meeting on April 20 in Cohasset.

Remaining meetings are from 5 to 7 p.m. at the following locations:

- District 1: March 24 at North Woods School in Cook (RSVP by March 17)
- District 8: March 29 at the Cromwell Pavilion (RSVP by March 22)
- District 5: March 31 at Remer High School (RSVP by March 24)

Lake Country Power's executive team and employees are excited to meet and greet our members once again, and let you know the latest happening at the cooperative. We're looking forward to seeing you there and at the annual meeting next month!



# GRE moving ahead on clean energy

As renewable energy demands continue to increase, Great River Energy has recently taken significant steps toward providing its member-owner cooperatives with more clean, affordable and reliable energy for the future.

## Portfolio Expansion

On Feb. 9, GRE's member cooperatives approved the updated agreement for the sale of Coal Creek Station and a power purchase agreement with Apex Clean Energy, expanding its portfolio of wind energy and cutting its carbon footprint to stay ahead of Minnesota's emissions targets. As one of Lake Country Power's representatives and chair of the GRE Board, these steps are crucial for the future of energy in

Minnesota, while keeping costs down for our members. The sale of Coal Creek Station to Rainbow Energy Center, LLC and the high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line to Nexus Line, LLC – which is expected to close as early as May 1 – will allow Rainbow Energy to operate the 1,151-megawatt (MW) power plant using its current employees, while GRE will operate and maintain HVDC system for Nexus, using existing transmission employees under a 20-year contract.



By Robert  
**BRUCKBAUER**  
District 5  
Director

## New Wind Agreement

GRE will also receive renewable energy from a 400-MW Discovery Wind project from Apex Clean Energy in McLean County, N.D., which is expected to reach commercial operations by 2025 and become the single-largest wind project in North Dakota. It will deliver renewable energy to Minnesota across the existing 436-mile HVDC system.

These agreements will help accomplish GRE's renewable energy goals by allowing the cooperative to more than double its wind energy by the end of 2025 and reduce carbon dioxide emissions by more than 80% by 2025. That puts GRE decades ahead of schedule

in achieving Minnesota emissions standards, while also projecting \$130 million in savings for its members.

## Find Out More

If you're interested in hearing about GRE's recent efforts, join us at LCP's Annual Meeting on April 20 in Cohasset, where Mark Fagan, GRE vice president and chief corporate and member services officer will present on behalf of the cooperative. Mark is an LCP member and currently leads GRE's corporate and economic development and grid modernization efforts, and is responsible for overseeing services to member-cooperatives. ■

Robert Bruckbauer was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 5. He can be reached at 218-566-2436 or rbruckbauer@lcp.coop

## One member meets filing deadline

The following LCP member has met the filing requirements for nomination as a candidate for the co-op's board of directors. The nomination deadline was 4:30 p.m., February 9.

District 2: Michael Forsman, Ely\*

District 4: None\*\*

District 8: None\*\*

\* Denotes current LCP Director

\*\* Members in District 4 and District 8 will not receive a director

ballot in 2022 because no members were interested to file for a seat on the board. More information will be announced at the annual meeting on April 20 in Cohasset.

Ballots will mail between March 31 and April 5. Online voting begins April 5, 2022, at 8:00 a.m. Central Standard Time, and ends April 20, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. Central. If voting online, instructions will be provided on your ballot. Otherwise, members in District 2 may vote by mail with their paper ballot, or in person at the annual meeting before polls close. ■

## Save the Date: 2022 Annual Meeting

Be sure to save the date and attend this year's Lake Country Power annual meeting.

- Wednesday, April 20, 2022
- Lake Country Power Cohasset Service Center, 26039 Bear Ridge Drive, Cohasset
- 4:00 p.m. is registration, dinner, tours and live music. Meeting begins at 5:30 p.m. All in the garage/warehouse area

# People Powering You

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

**Years served:** 5+ years

**Brief overview of my job:** I am responsible for overseeing our metering, AMI, load control, and SCADA systems along with supervising our member service technicians and dispatchers.

**Why I enjoy working at LCP:** I enjoy being able to work and solve problems in northern Minnesota where I grew up and love.

**Family:** Wife Timarie for over 12 years, sons Kegan (10), Kyler (8), and Kason (5).

**Hobbies:**

My favorite hobbies are fishing and camping. My family moved back to Minnesota to enjoy the outdoors and all the different recreation activities that our different seasons provide.

**One random fact of interest about yourself:** I am listed as an inventor on multiple patents in the United States and European Union from work I performed at my previous employer.

**Before I worked for the co-op?** I worked in R&D doing automation development work for an OEM called Curt G. Joa, Inc. in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin. We sold baby diaper machines to all the popular name brands people are familiar with along with other similar products.



**Ryan Ferguson**

Sr. Engineer Metering & SCADA

**Education/training/background:** Electrical Engineering degree from the University of North Dakota with studies in mathematics, computer science, and entrepreneurship. Recently became a licensed Master Electrician in the State of MN.

## Five Ways to Save Energy When Working from Home

Today, more Americans are working from home than ever before. More time spent at home means more energy used throughout the day.

If you're punching the clock from home, there are small steps you can take to reduce your energy use and save on electric bills. Here are five easy ways to save energy when working from home.

1. Use a smart power strip. Plugging in your most-used devices, like computers, monitors and routers, to a smart power strip ensures these devices aren't drawing power when they're not in use. Smart power strips also give you the option to select which devices should stay in "always on" mode.
2. Unplug your least-used equipment. If your home office includes equipment like printers and scanners, you're probably not using



these electronics every day. In this case, go ahead and unplug your least-used electronics and devices, since many of these draw energy even when they're not being used.



3. Choose ENERGY STAR®-certified office equipment. If you're looking to purchase new equipment for your workspace, look for the ENERGY STAR label to ensure you're getting the most energy efficient features. Computers, monitors, imaging equipment and other office electronics that receive the ENERGY STAR rating include power management features to make saving energy easy, and most are designed to run cooler and last longer.
4. Flip the switch and use natural light instead. It's still chilly out there, so take advantage of natural light and additional warmth from the sun. When you're working during the day, open blinds, curtains and other window coverings to let natural light in—and don't forget to turn off the lights to reduce energy use!
5. Lower the thermostat. Home heating makes up a significant portion of your energy bills. Turn the thermostat down a couple degrees during the day to reduce energy use and save money. The Department of Energy recommends setting the thermostat to 68 degrees or cooler during winter months. You're more likely to stay focused and alert when it's cooler in your home, so all the more reason to mind the thermostat.

Working from home doesn't have to take a toll on your energy bills, and whether you're working remotely or not, these practical tips can help everyone reduce their energy use.

Contact Lake Country Power if you have questions about your bills or want additional information about saving energy at home.

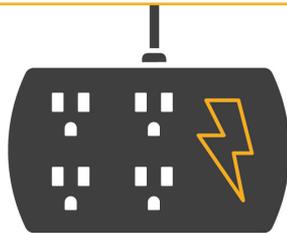
# Surge Protection 101

A power surge is an unexpected increase in voltage, and it can occur from a variety of sources. Regardless of the cause, power surges can majorly damage electronic devices and equipment in your home.

Let's take a look at common causes of power surges and how you can protect your sensitive electronics.

One of the most common causes of a power surge is lightning. Most of us have experienced this during a severe thunderstorm. When lightning strikes an electrical system, the excess current must be channeled somewhere—unfortunately in many cases, it's sent through a home. Your best bet is to unplug all unused devices and electronics during severe thunderstorms.

Another common cause of power surges is electrical overload. This happens when devices or appliances are plugged into an outlet that can't handle the required amount of voltage, or if multiple devices are plugged into one outlet through an extension cord. If you're experiencing power surges due to electrical overload, it's time to call a qualified electrician to evaluate your home's circuits and electrical needs.



## SURGE PROTECTION

Keep your electronic equipment safe.

A power surge is typically caused by lightning, changes in electrical loads, faulty wiring or damaged power lines.

Install power strips with surge protection to protect sensitive equipment.

- Easy to use (just plug them in)
- Protect electronics plugged into the device
- Must be replaced over time or after a major surge event



### REMEMBER:

Not all power strips offer surge protection. Carefully read the packaging labels when purchasing.



Faulty wiring in a home can also cause power surges. Damaged or exposed wires can cause spikes in voltage, creating a potentially dangerous situation. If you notice signs of faulty wiring, like visible burns on outlets, buzzing sounds from outlets or frequently tripped circuit breakers, your home may be due for electrical wiring repairs and updates.

Surges can also occur after a power outage. Sometimes, when electricity is being restored and reconnected, it's common to experience a quick surge in current. Similar to advice for a surge caused by lightning, it's best to unplug sensitive electronics during the outage—then wait to plug them back in after power is fully restored.

Occasional power surges are inevitable, but by unplugging devices when you think a surge may occur and using additional levels of protection like power strips or whole-home suppressors, you can better safeguard your sensitive electronics and devices.

Contact Lake Country Power if you have questions about ways to protect your home from power surges. ■

## RECIPE CORNER BERRY SHORTBREAD DREAMS

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



- 1 cup butter, soft
- ¾ cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- 2 cups flour
- ⅓ to ½ cup raspberry jam or flavor of your choice

### Glaze:

- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 2-3 teaspoons of water
- ½ teaspoon almond extract
- Drizzle over cookies.

1. Cream butter and sugar. Beat in extract.
2. Gradually add flour until dough forms a ball.
3. Cover and put in fridge for 1 hour or until easy to handle.
4. Roll in 1-inch balls. Place 1 inch apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Using end of a wooden spoon, make an indentation in center of each ball. Fill with jam.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 14-18 minutes or until edge are lightly browned. Spoon additional jam into cookies if desired.
6. Cool on rack.

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

**A:** Once logged into SmartHub scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the link under "Check out the 2022. Rebates. It will direct you to the Lake Country Power website and the list of available rebates.

# Electric vehicle charging on the rise

Electric vehicles (EVs) continue to increase in popularity as new models with longer range hit the market. EVs are popular with consumers for several reasons including the low cost of charging up and the instant torque provided by electric drive technology. Environmental benefits such as EVs not giving off any tailpipe emissions and the electricity used to “fuel up” these cars becoming cleaner as more renewables are brought onto the grid also add to consumer interest.

However, these benefits hinge on having somewhere to charge that is convenient, affordable and reliable. For many of today’s EV owners, that place is at home — often parked overnight in a personal garage. On average, 85% of all EV charging is done at home, followed by 10% at work and the remaining 5% at public charging stations. But when planning a longer drive, you need the charging infrastructure to support it.

At Lake Country Power, you can charge your electric vehicle for eight hours during overnight “off-peak” hours and be ready to roll the next morning for your commute and will save on charging costs.

Fortunately, there has been a great deal of investment in EV charging infrastructure in the U.S. and, notably, in Minnesota. Much of the state’s funding came from a \$15 billion settlement reached in 2017 between the Department of Justice and Volkswagen

Corporation after the car manufacturer was found to have violated air pollution standards. The investment plan consists of three phases:

- Phase 1: \$11.75 million (25% of overall funds) – 2018-19
- Phase 2: \$23.5 million (50%) – 2020-23
- Phase 3: \$11.75 million (25%) – 2024-27

In Phase 1, the MPCA funded 47 new EV charging stations (72 charging plugs) throughout Minnesota. In Phase 2, approximately \$3.17 million dollars will be spent on 38 new DC fast-charging stations. An additional \$352,000 will fund Level 2 stations at public locations, mobility hubs, workplaces, and multi-unit dwellings.

The U.S. House of Representatives also passed a \$1.2 trillion dollar infrastructure bill that included \$7.5 billion for EVs and charging infrastructure. Minnesota will receive \$68 million over five years to



expand its EV charging network. These major, nationwide investments will help current and potential EV owners be assured they will have charging stations when and where they need them on longer road trips.

At Lake Country Power, members can take advantage of two rebates through ChargeWise for EV charger installation, including \$500 for installing a Level 2 charger and \$200 for installing a Level 2 charging receptacle/outlet, both metered on off-peak.

Visit [lakecountrypower.coop](http://lakecountrypower.coop) or call 800-421-9959 for more information on the rebates. Visit [www.energywisemn.com/electric-vehicles](http://www.energywisemn.com/electric-vehicles) for more information about public charging, EV facts and available models, a savings calculator, tax credits and other offers from your electric cooperative. ■

## Do not use an extension cord and other EV safety tips

What are the biggest mistakes people make when charging their electric vehicle (EV)? Safety missteps include using an extension cord and using inappropriate or substandard charging equipment.

Do not increase the reach of the charger’s cord by using an extension cord, regardless of its rating. Extension cords cannot handle the amount of amperage that car chargers require.

Another mistake EV owners make is not using a professional charger, which can cause serious safety issues and possibly compromise your vehicle.

Other home-charging safety tips include:

- Purchase a charging system and equipment that is endorsed/sold by an EV manufacturer whenever possible. (This is not the time to buy an off-brand or bargain.)
- Ensure all charging equipment is safety tested and endorsed by a laboratory such as UL.

- Have a Level 2 charging station, which requires a 240-volt outlet, installed by a licensed electrical contractor. (Plugging an EV into a standard 120-volt outlet is considered Level 1 charging.)
- Use a charger on a dedicated circuit and make sure your home’s electrical system can handle the load.
- Look for excessive wear or damage, which could present a shock hazard. This also holds true for DC fast chargers, sometimes referred to as Level 3 chargers.

If you do not yet own an EV and you are considering purchasing one, be sure to do your homework. Since EV features differ, it is a good idea to thoroughly research them before purchasing one.

To learn more about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).



## December 20, 2021 • Regular Monthly Meeting

### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported on conversations with General Manager Mark Bakk about publishing rate increase information in the January Newslines publication. He also reported that District Meetings were scheduled to start in February with the goal to hold them all in-person.

General Manager Bakk reported about GRE's proposed plan to refund their excess margins to members; the refund will offset the year-to-date power cost adjustment charges. Bakk reported about GRE 2022 rate changes, Northland Connect, taskforce formed through MREA regarding service territory issues, etc. Bakk addressed questions and comments throughout his report.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved the 2022 capital and operating budgets. Management went over proposed rates for 2022 and there was discussion throughout.

Approved proposed changes to the Employee Leave Donation policy which allow employees to donate vacation to a co-worker in need of additional time off in excess of their available sick/vacation time.

Approve 49 capital credit estate retirements processed in November 2021 for \$58,340.53; year-to-date estate retirements total \$885,147.90. ■



▶ Patty Maki of Gilbert took this darling photo of barred owlets in the Lakeland area. What's cuter than a baby owl? Two baby owls!

**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.



## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest. A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can greatly impact the efficiency of your system. Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — December 2021

*The following figured are preliminary and unaudited year-end financials*

	2021	2020
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 95,617,761	\$ 89,687,626
Cost of Purchased Power	50,811,298	46,303,133
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	14,193,206	15,211,507
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	3,483,895	3,854,998
Administrative and General Expense	6,269,118	6,278,143
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	17,654,471	17,074,023
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>92,411,987</b>	<b>88,721,804</b>
Net Electric Operating Margins	3,205,774	965,822
Non-Operating Margins	4,124,578	2,836,790
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	7,330,352	3,802,611
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	1,920,661	1,272,818
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$ 9,251,013</b>	<b>\$ 5,075,429</b>
<b>TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)</b>	<b>650,196,183</b>	<b>613,337,173</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

**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

**Craig Carlson,** 218-999-7175  
District 4 ccarlson@lcp.coop

**Robert Bruckbauer,** 218-566-2436  
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

**Jim Huhta,** 218-644-3997  
District 8 jhuhta@lcp.coop

**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.**

## Newslines

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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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