

Happy Thanksgiving!

November 2024

Newsline

Lake Country Power

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

Energy that Powers Our Lives

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BOARD MEETINGS November 26 ■ December 19 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

LCP rebate supports veterans resort in Ely

As Fernberg Road, the scenic ride through national forest lands near the Boundary Waters, lives up to its “end of the road” legend, the Veterans on the Lake Resort is working on paths to make Ely’s culture of outdoor recreation more accessible.

The Fall Lake resort inside Superior National Forest opened in 1983 with the goal of removing barriers for disabled veterans to vacation in the wilderness, and has since expanded its mission to reach veterans, active-duty military, the disabled public, their friends and families.

Andy Berkenpas has been general manager of Veterans on the Lake for the last four years and has worked with disabled veteran groups for more than 30 years.



He said the resort focused its capital projects in recent years on increasing wheelchair accessibility, including paving roads throughout the nearly 25 acres of forest land, adding accessible docks



and piers, retrofitting pontoon boats for disabled drivers and updating cabins to accommodate more people.

This year has been the resort's best to date, Berkenpas said, with more than 7,000 people visiting between May and September, with about 86% veteran occupancy. Veterans on the Lake is open year-round and offers ice fishing and snowmobile trail access in the winter.

As donations have flowed in for bedding, new signage and more, Veterans on the Lake recently hosted a school supplies drive and is planning a community concert next summer, and more, as a way to give back.

“When you need the community, they come,” Berkenpas said. “When the community needs you, you go.”

Veterans on the Lake this year purchased and installed three energy efficient mini-split air source heat pumps for their lodge and one of the many cabins on site. They received an income-eligible rebate of more than \$19,000 to help facilitate the

purchase and installation of the units.

LCP was able to utilize rebate funds established by the Energy Conservation and Optimization (ECO) Act to facilitate installation of the units. Signed into law in 2021, the ECO Act requires electric utilities in Minnesota to spend a certain amount of money toward cost saving energy efficiency measures in their service territory.

Berkenpas said the units would provide much needed comfort for the visitors that stay at the resort and the rebate funds would go back into the resort and more accessible amenities.

“What an incentive for us to put a new HVAC system into our main lodge and wheelchair accessible cabins,” he said. “Most of us take a comfortable environment for granted, but it’s especially important for veterans with spinal cord injuries.”

For more information on Lake Country Power energy-saving programs and rebates please call 800-421-9959, press 6. ■

Christmas Cheer!

Members: Visit our service center and ring in the holidays with cookies & coffee!

Cohasset December 2-6

Mountain Iron December 2-6

Kettle River December 16-20

Lake Country Power
A Division of Energy Cooperative, Inc.

Request your 2025 Co-op Calendar



The 2025 co-op calendars are ready... and beautiful! Due to high demand last year, calendar orders are limited to a first-come, first-served basis and one per membership. Request your free 2025 co-op calendar online at www.lakecountrypower.coop, call 800-421-9959, or pick up a copy at our service centers. Online calendar orders will be available from Monday, December 2, 2024, to Thursday, January 2, 2025 (or while supplies last), after which members can call or visit our service centers to request a calendar.

Product Retirements

As of June 1, 2025, Steffes will cease ordering parts and offering technical support for the following products:

Important message to members

This will impact some OFF PEAK Steffes Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) users.

Members with these discontinued products can contact Lake Country Power Members Services about replacement options.



Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) products Models S, EXT and 1000 Series Room Heaters



(800) 421-9959
lakecountrypower.coop



Questions? Contact Steffes:
(888) 783-3337
offpeak@steffes.com



By Mark
BAKK
General Manager

LCP 2025 rate forecast

Discussing a potential rate increase is never an easy topic. It is our goal to exhaust all other options before we ever get to that point. Last year at this time we were facing a wholesale power rate increase but were able to find ways to keep member rates stable.

Lake Country Power was able to avert an increase in 2024 even though supplier rates from Great River Energy went up nearly 2.5%. However,

GRE is anticipating an estimated 8% increase in wholesale costs in 2025 which will certainly cause an increase in retail rates for members.

While we are still unsure of the result, be assured that we will be diligent to do whatever is under our control to minimize the impact. Our wholesale and retail rates are still lower than the national average, but there is little doubt that we will be forced to increase rates next year due to the rising cost of power generation and transmission. ■

Is a Ductless Mini-Split System Right for Your Home?

How would you like a personalized comfort zone within your home? One where the temperature is customized to your liking and may be different from the temperature in the shared living areas or other rooms in the house.

A mini-split system is a type of HVAC equipment used for heating and cooling, allowing you to control the temperature in individual rooms or spaces. Similar to central heating and cooling, mini-split systems have two main components—an outdoor compressor and an indoor air-handling unit(s). A narrow conduit links the indoor unit(s) to the outdoor compressor.

While central heating and cooling systems feature an indoor unit connected by long lengths of ductwork, mini-splits are typically ductless. This means energy is not lost traveling through long stretches of ductwork. Installing the air-handling unit in a desired room or area enables you to control the temperature more precisely, reducing energy consumption. That's because you're adjusting the temperature to a single room or space rather than the whole home.

Is a mini-split system right for you?

Mini-split systems are a popular option in home additions, or to supplement heating and cooling in a space that may be furthest away from the main living

MINI-SPLITS AT A GLANCE

Mini-split systems, also known as ductless air-source heat pumps, heat/cool a home through an outdoor unit that connects to one or more individual indoor air handlers, which are typically mounted on a wall. Depending on the size of your home and personal preferences, a mini-split system is worth considering when you need to replace or upgrade your heating/cooling system.

Mini-Split System Benefits:

- Zone-controlled heating/cooling
- Higher energy efficiency ratings
- Easy to install
- Good for heating/cooling home additions

Mini-Split System Considerations:

- Potentially higher upfront cost
- Appearance
- May require electrical upgrades
- Not as effective in large spaces



area, such as a finished attic or basement.

In these instances, it may not be feasible to install or extend the ductwork required in traditional central cooling and heating systems. In contrast, mini-splits are relatively easy to install, requiring a small hole for the conduit connecting the indoor and outdoor units. Most systems can handle up to four indoor rooms or zones connected to one outdoor unit.

Each of the zones can be customized because each includes a thermostat that enables you to heat or cool the space as

needed, saving energy and money over time. One of the greatest benefits of mini-splits is that they typically have a higher SEER (seasonal energy efficiency ratio) rating than traditional central heating and cooling systems. The higher the unit's SEER rating, the more energy efficient it is.

If you're considering an upgrade or additional heating and cooling equipment, talk to a qualified technician to learn if a ductless mini-split system could work for your home. ■

Scholarship process opens January 1

Save the date! January 1, 2025, is important for high school seniors because that's when Lake Country Power's online application process opens for the Les Beach Memorial Scholarship. The application deadline is January 31, 2025.

To complete the electronic application and submit electronic letters of recommendation, go to www.lakecountrypower.coop > My Cooperative > Community > Scholarships.

Scholarship recipients may qualify for up to \$4,000 over four years to help pay for college or technical education. Scholarships are renewable for up to eight semesters, and students must maintain a grade point average of 2.5 or higher. They must have a full-time enrollment status at a technical school, community college or university. Qualifying students must also have parents or legal guardians who are members of Lake Country Power. ■

500+ STUDENTS ASSISTED

2024 Les Beach Scholarship



Alice Irvine
Floodwood High School

EQUIPMENT QUIZ

Q How much do large bucket trucks cost?



- A) \$350,000
- B) \$160,000
- C) \$100,000
- D) \$85,000

*LCP has 47 line trucks, such as digger derricks and small and large bucket trucks, to maintain a reliable electric system. **Answer: A**

RECIPE CORNER RHUBARB CAKE



From the Kitchen of:
Marilyn Kiehl, Cloquet



- 4 cups diced rhubarb
- 1 cup sugar
- 3 oz. box of dry mix strawberry Jello
- 3 cups mini marshmallows
- 1 pkg. white or yellow cake mix

Place rhubarb in a 9x13 pan. Sprinkle it with sugar. Prepare cake mix as directed on the package. Spread on top of mini marshmallows. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes. Can turn upside down on a cookie sheet. Serve with ice cream or whipped topping.

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

Supporting local business can help co-op communities thrive

Shopping local is a real buzzword this time of year, but there's also real value in supporting our neighborhood businesses.

Lake Country Power has a number of economic development and business financing options that allow the co-op to directly help business owners, but supporting member businesses this holiday season is something everyone can do, with real benefits to the community.

By shopping close to home, about 48% of every dollar spent stays in the local economy compared to larger stores and online purchasing, and those dollars are recirculated around the community. Small independent businesses are more likely to buy local goods and services, hire local workers and work with local banks.

That cycle is healthy for the local economy and better for the broader community. Concern for Community is one of the Seven Cooperative Principles that Lake Country Power and other co-ops function under. Its development and member needs are among the ideals that separate co-op members, employees, directors and communities from other business models.

Members looking to support businesses in their community



By Jason
LONG
District 1 Director

can use their Co-op Connections Card, which features a number of local shops, restaurants and more participating in the program. You can find that list online at www.lakecountrypower.coop/co-op-connections-card, and save money when you shop locally.

For member-owned businesses, Lake Country Power recently launched its Member Made Initiative to help promote your products and services to support growth in the local communities. An introductory business information profile is available at www.lakecountrypower.coop/membermade.

Lake Country Power has invested \$6.5 million into regional businesses and economic development through the cooperative's service territory. For more information on those programs, visit www.lakecountrypower.coop/economic-development and sign up for the LCP Business Current newsletter.

As a small business owner myself, I understand the challenges but also the sense of community when local people support their neighbors. So, as you get out this holiday season, keep those small shops in mind, and show how the cooperative way of life can make a real difference in your community.

Have a safe and happy holiday season! ■

Jason Long was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 1. He can be reached at jlong@lcp.coop and 218-240-9611.



We're Grateful for Your Membership.

Our offices will be closed
Thursday, November 28,
and Friday, November 29,

in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.
We are incredibly grateful for your membership as our team spends this special time with loved ones.

From our co-op family to yours,
we hope you have a wonderful
Thanksgiving!



Get \$250 Credit!

Toward your new standby generator

- Install Now and Save \$250 toward your Lake Country utility bill

Valid through 12/31/24

Call for Your Free Estimate
218-208-3208

LakeCountryPower

July 30, 2024 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported that he attended the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) District 2 meeting in Cohasset. He forwarded member phone calls to General Manager Bakk, and reminded directors of the MREA Energy Issues Summit on August 7-8.

General Manager Bakk reported information on Midwest Independent System Operator (MISO) plan for a multi-phase transformation of the grid, which is expected to be a \$100 billion project. He said Great River Energy's (GRE) rate design study was aligned and significant short-term adjustments were

not necessary. Bakk reported that the LCP Board was invited to a tour of Ziegler CAT in Buhl.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved \$10,000 to support the United Way of Northeastern Minnesota's Flood Relief Crisis Fund to assist those in the region impacted by June 2024 flooding.

Approved a resolution allowing President Olson to vote on LCP's behalf at GRE special meeting in favor of terminating Crow Wing Power membership with GRE.

Approved three contracts for overhead/underground construction work to Lake States Construction.



▶ Steven Cooper of Iron took this beautiful photo along West Two River in St. Louis County.

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



If you're heading out of town during the holiday season, remember to set your home to vacation mode. You can save energy while you're away by lowering your thermostat a few degrees or creating an "away" schedule with a smart or programmable thermostat. Newer water heaters include a vacation mode setting to help you save on water heating costs, or you can simply lower the temperature manually. Small actions can also stack up to energy savings. Unplug devices that consume energy when they're not in use, including phone chargers, toothbrush chargers, TVs and gaming consoles. Source: energy.gov

Co-op Contacts

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BY THE NUMBERS | AUGUST 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	\$39,021,554	\$36,473,540
Other Operating Expenses	\$31,260,230	\$30,968,806
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$70,281,784	\$67,442,346



YTD kWh SOLD
458,011,623

2023 Comparison: 475,842,247

TOTAL MARGINS
\$10,376,060

2023 Comparison: \$8,934,650

	2024	2023
Operating Margins	\$8,484,985	\$7,944,452
Non-Operating Margins	\$1,891,075	\$990,198

51,482
ACTIVE SERVICES

2023 Comparison: 51,186

Utility Plant (Net)



\$311,250,571

2023 Comparison: 292,472,828

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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