



SEPTEMBER 2025

EIP Grant Helps Lincoln Build Accessible Playground

In November 2023, the Lincoln Middle School Parent Teacher Organization had money to spare and a playground more than 20 years old. So, they decided to fundraise for a new one.

Fast-forward to August 2025, and the Hibbing school cut the ribbon on the \$660,000 project that expanded the playground size and made way for adaptive equipment so kids with differing needs could be included.

“We’ve added ramps to just get on the equipment, there’s a teeter-totter that can fit a wheelchair or walker, there’s benches,” said Jessica Whitney, one of the PTO project leaders. “There’s sensory equipment like tracing boards, communication boards, sign language boards and things like that.”

A light rain didn’t dampen the opening day as kids raced down the ropes, down the slides and explored the new space. Whitney and Kayla Hintz, the other co-leader on the project, cut the ribbon to officially mark the opening, just weeks before the start of classes.

“This isn’t just any playground, it’s a space with designs that every single student, no matter their ability, can play, explore and belong,” said Lincoln Principal Derek Gabardi. “That’s what this playground stands for — play hard, laugh loud and always look out for one another.”

The Lincoln PTO, through an application from Hibbing School District #701, received \$60,000 last year from Lake Country Power, through the Education Improvement Program (EIP) grant, to help fund the project.

EIP grants utilize “unclaimed capital credit” funds for awards up to \$100,000. The State of Minnesota allows electric cooperatives, like LCP, to keep the monies local and use them toward educational purposes after members’ refunds go unclaimed for a number of years. These funds **cannot** be used for operational purposes or anything else that doesn’t meet State statute.

The application period opens September 1, 2025, and closes November 30, 2025. This year LCP is launching a new application system through the company Kaleidoscope. Schools submitting applications should make sure emails from “mykaleidoscope.com” are whitelisted and do not get flagged as spam.

Lake Country Power has granted more than a million dollars since the EIP’s initial year in 2023. The program follows the Seventh Cooperative Principle of concern for community, which emphasizes the strengthening and development of local communities surrounding LCP membership.

Seasonal Weatherization Tips to Save Energy Year-Round

Whether you're looking ahead to prepare for colder months or want to learn how to increase your energy savings throughout the year, weatherizing your home for each season is a great way to save energy and stay comfortable all year long.

About 30% or more of your home's heat loss in cooler months is due to air infiltration or air change per hour. The higher the air change per hour will equate to your home's dryness and low humidity. Ask yourself if you require a humidifier during the winter months that requires filling every day to stay comfortable.

Before joining the Lake Country Power board, I worked for the co-op for 30 years doing energy management. Here are a few things you can do now, during the warm months, to prepare your home for the heating season.

- Insulate exterior-facing wall outlets/light switches. I prefer foam outlet covers/gaskets. These are easy to install.
- Keep your windows closed and locked. The lock is more to assure a good gasket seal between the window and the frame.
- Seal drafts with weather stripping or caulk. Doing this can prevent drafts and save you about 5%-10% on your energy costs. Start outside by checking around the windows and doors for cracks or voids in the existing caulk. Remove the old caulk if possible and install new caulk. Use a high-quality caulk suitable for material you are sealing such as silicone, latex or acrylic. Also, replace old door weather stripping for a tight seal.

- Check your door sweeps. Do you put a rug in front of the door during the winter to stop the cold air and the rug freezes to the door? A quality door sweep, weather stripping and caulking the trim both inside and out is important.
- Is your clothes dryer vent sealed properly? Check inside/outside to make sure the pipe is caulked/sealed.
- Important – contact your local heating contractor and get on the list to have your furnace system checked out before the heating season and stock up on furnace filters. Don't wait until you need the heat to see if your heating system is working properly.

These are just a few of the recommendations I've made when performing energy audits.

Jeff Sheldon was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 4. He can be reached at 218-398-6104 or jsheldon1@lcp.coop.



Sincerely,
Jeff Sheldon
District 4 Director

Board Meeting Highlights: May 20, 2025

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Following Reports Were Given:

President Olson reported he attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) and Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) Legislative Conference in April in Washington, D.C., with General Manager Bakk and Director Robert Bruckbauer.

General Manager Bakk reported on the Great River Energy (GRE) board meeting

in May and their April financial report. He also commented on the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) planned resource auction.

The Following Actions Were Taken:

Approved 2025 strategic planning session for August 25 at Sugar Lake Lodge in Cohasset.

Approved the expenditures to replace two vehicles that were destroyed by a fire and deer collision.

Approved Kathy Beatty (District 8) and Stephanie Burckhardt (District 1) as new members of the Operation Round Up® Trust Board.

Editor's Note: These board minutes have been condensed. To view a complete copy, visit www.lakecountrypower.coop under "My Cooperative." A SmartHub account is required. To request a printed copy, call (800) 421-9959.

UPCOMING BOARD MEETINGS: SEPTEMBER 30 | OCTOBER 28 (9:30 am at the Cohasset Service Center, Members Welcome)

DID YOU KNOW?

Lake Country Power employees volunteered a total of 1,016 hours around their communities, and pledged \$14,158 to United Way locals in 2024.



Vote in the Co-op Calendar Contest



Lake Country Power's 2026 co-op calendar contest is officially open on Facebook for voting. The field of photo entries has been narrowed. Help determine the 12 winning photos at www.facebook.com/lakecountrypower.

Simply cast your vote with a 'like' for the photo(s) you'd like to see in the calendar. There are four photo albums – one for spring, summer, fall and winter – so be sure to look through each album when casting your 'likes.'

The deadline to vote is 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday, October 7. Any 'likes' after this time and date will not count toward final photo selections.

Any variations from the contest guidelines and/or ties will be determined by a contest judging committee. Winners will be notified in October if their photo was selected as one of the winning entries. The printed 2026 calendars will be available in December. Good luck, and let the voting begin!

Cold Weather Rule Effective October 1

The Cold Weather Rule, Section 216B.097 of the Minnesota State Statutes, provides that from October 1 through April 30 an electric cooperative cannot disconnect a residential customer for nonpayment of service, if the disconnect affects the primary heat source and all of the following conditions are met:

1. The customer declares an inability to pay and completes the Inability to Pay form; and
2. Household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median income. Income may be verified on forms provided by LCP or by the local energy assistance provider with whom the customer has applied for energy assistance; and
3. The customer enters into and makes reasonably and timely payments under a mutually agreeable payment plan, that considers the financial resources of the household; and
4. A customer receives from LCP referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

The law does allow for LCP to disconnect when it is necessary from October 1 to April 30, so please act promptly. LCP works with members during the Cold Weather Rule period, just as we do throughout the year. We don't want to interrupt service to any member, but in a cooperative, all members suffer when any bill remains unpaid. If bills remain unpaid, this amount must be absorbed by members who faithfully pay their bill each month. LCP would rather work with members to establish and maintain adequate payment schedules of their past due bill. A statement explaining the payment plan to secure continued service, a Payment Arrangement letter, will be provided.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer from October 1 to April 30, the cooperative must provide the following information:

- notice of proposed disconnection (disconnection notice); and
- statement explaining customer's rights and responsibilities (Inability to Pay form); and
- list of energy assistance providers (Inability to Pay form); and
- forms available for customer to request cold weather disconnect protection (Inability to Pay form).

If you receive a disconnection notice this winter, you must act promptly. If you do not meet all the conditions of the Cold Weather Rule, mutually acceptable payment arrangements can be set up to prevent interruption of an electric service. Please contact Lake Country Power at 800-421-9959 if you have any questions about the Cold Weather Rule.

Energy Assistance Providers

AEOA: 800-662-5711
AEOA Virginia: 218-735-6839
AEOA Duluth: 218-623-3011
Aitkin County Social Services: 800-328-3744
Bi County CAP: 800-332-7161
Bois Forte Tribal: 800-221-8129
Carlton County Social Services: 800-642-9082
Cass County Social Services: 218-547-1340
Fond Du Lac Tribal: 800-365-1613
Itasca County Social Services: 800-422-0312

Kootasca: 877-687-1163
Lake County Social Services: 218-834-8400
Lakes & Pines: 800-832-6082
Leech Lake Tribal: 866-864-8668
Mille Lacs Band Tribal: 320-532-7880
Pine County Social Services: 800-450-7263
Salvation Army Office (Heat Share Programs): 800-842-7279
St. Louis County Social Services: 800-450-9777

Lake Country Power's 2025 Youth Tour Delegate Shares Her Story

Lake Country Power sponsored Tegan Fordahl from South Ridge School, Culver, Minn., to attend the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., in June. This Q&A with Tegan reflects on her experience and is condensed for space. The full interview can be found at www.lakecountrypower.coop.

Youth Tour brings together nearly 2,000 students nationally and has a legacy stretching back decades. How did it feel being part of such a longstanding tradition? Being a part of this tour was such a fantastic experience. Our group got to experience many things that would never have been possible if we had not been a part of the Youth Tour, and I think that makes it even more special. I know that I will always look back on this trip with fond memories, and I am so incredibly thankful to have been chosen to participate in this tradition.

How will your Youth Tour experience influence your goals, especially as you are thinking about careers and colleges? Since I was a little girl, my goal has been to become a lawyer. This trip solidified that for me. Experiencing Washington, D.C. helped me gain an even broader understanding of our nation's government, and has inspired me to one day pursue a position in our government, alongside a career in law.

What is one insight or piece of knowledge from the trip you wish you could share with your classmates back home? If I could give one piece of insight to my classmates back home – and everyone, really – it would be to work together. We tend to be so divided from each other, but if we could focus more on collaboration than disunion, we could accomplish so much more. Although there is still division in government, collaboration is such an essential part of our nation's capital.

What are some of the biggest takeaways or highlights you have from the trip? One of the highlights of this trip was the architecture I was able to see. I've always been a bit of a nerd when it comes to architecture and history, so being able to explore some of the oldest and most influential buildings and monuments in our nation was such an amazing opportunity.



What was your favorite part of the trip? One of my favorite parts of our trip was meeting our senators, Tina Smith and Amy Klobuchar. Being able to speak with such influential people was such a thrilling experience. Even from the short conversations our group had with both women, you could feel their dedication. This experience was a significant factor in inspiring me to pursue a position in our government, as well.

Did you make any connections—friends or mentors—that you think will continue beyond this summer? During this trip, I met four girls with whom I connected instantly. The bond we formed in our week in D.C. is one I haven't experienced in ages, and I know we will stay in contact long after our teenage years.

How did the sessions focusing on co-ops and energy influence your understanding of the co-op model? The co-op-focused sessions we attended greatly deepened my understanding of co-ops. They were engaging and entertaining, and gave me a great sense of what makes a co-op tick. I wasn't well-versed in co-ops before my trip, but I can now safely say that I have a great understanding of and deep respect for the co-ops of our nation.

What advice would you give to other students thinking of applying for the Youth Tour in the future? My biggest piece of advice for anyone thinking about applying is plain and simple: just apply! If you don't think it will pertain to the path you want to take later in life, I promise you will find some pocket of the trip that does. If you're scared of being away from home, the people you meet on your trip will make you forget you're even in a different state. And most importantly, if you have any questions, find someone who has been on the trip! I did exactly that, and it was so helpful to have someone who had already been through the process to help me out.



Lake Country Power Launches New Award to Honor Individuals as Co-op Heroes

Lake Country Power is pleased to announce a new award where applicants can nominate individuals within their communities for the “Cooperative Heroes Award.” This award replaces the Touchstone Energy Community Award that has recognized many community organizations since 2005. The new award will single out individuals who are making a positive difference in their communities.

“While the original community award was a great tradition all these years, we felt it was time to freshen things up by placing the focus on individual people,” said Tami Zaun, public relations coordinator for Lake Country Power. “Perhaps this person pours their time and energy into helping a local nonprofit thrive, assists those in need, or spearheads a community project that makes life better for everyone.”

If someone comes to mind, now is your chance to recognize their community service and help support their cause. Like the original community award, the Cooperative Heroes Award will be a collaboration among Minnesota’s electric cooperatives. Minnesota is served by 44 distribution cooperatives, covering 85% of Minnesota and reaching every county in the state.

The heroes award provides an opportunity for co-op members, employees and directors to nominate an individual who has made meaningful contributions and positive impacts in their community. The nominee does not need to be a co-op member.



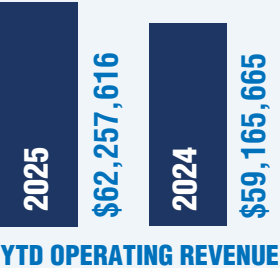
Cooperative Heroes Award celebrates Minnesota’s cooperative values – integrity, innovation, reliability, accountability and commitment to community. Judges will carefully evaluate each application and nominee for these qualities as they select three outstanding winners in Minnesota.

Each winner will receive funding to support a local nonprofit or good cause of their choice. First place receives \$1,000; second and third place receives \$500 each.

Nominations are open from October 1 through November 15, with a short application available online at www.mrea.org/programs/touchstone-energy. Winners will be announced in January.

By The Numbers | June 2025

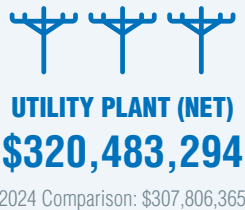
Lake Country Power is committed to responsibly managing resources to maintain the Cooperative’s financial stability. Below is a snapshot of the year-to-date unaudited financial report. A complete set of financial statements can be viewed at www.lakecountrypower.coop under “My Cooperative.”



	2025	2024
Cost of Purchased Power	\$31,730,166	\$28,889,846
Other Operating Expenses	\$26,248,032	\$23,106,624
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$57,978,198	\$51,996,470



	2025	2024
Operating Margins	\$4,279,418	\$7,169,195
Non-Operating Margins	\$794,278	\$997,102



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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 services, billing, outages or other service-related matters should call 1-800-421-9959.

Newsline

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Lake Country Power to Hold Fleet Auction in October

Lake Country Power is partnering with North Auctions of Hibbing to hold another online auction of fleet equipment and vehicles the co-op is retiring, including pickup trucks, snowmobiles, and more. The auction will function much like eBay or other online bidding platforms.

The auction is open exclusively to active Lake Country Power members and employees, running Wednesday, Oct. 1, through Tuesday, Oct. 14, 2025. Electronic bidding will take place through K-Bid.com. Only winning bidders will be required to pay for the items they've won, with pick-up available at the Mountain Iron, Cohasset, or Kettle River service centers, depending on the location of the item.

Auction Items

- 2009 Chevy Silverado 2500, 166,000 miles
- 2013 Ford F150
- 2015 Ford Escape, 159,830 miles
- 2016 Chevy Silverado 1500, 150,500 miles
- 2004 Butler Equipment Trailer with Air Brakes
- 2005 Butler Equipment Trailers with Air Brakes (Two Available)
- 2001 Pero Utility Trailer with Ramp
- 2006 Felling Utility Trailer with Ramp
- 2008 Loadmaster Utility Trailer with Ramp
- 2019 Aluma Trailer
- 1999 ATV Trailer
- 2009 Triton Snowmobile Trailer
- 2009 Skidoo Tundra
- 2009 Skidoo Tundra
- 2014 Felling FT16 Trailer
- 2014 Polaris 6X6

Interested members will need to register for a free user account before bidding. Registration requires your Lake Country Power account number.

Questions? Contact North Auctions at 218-969-3834.



Learn how to register and view photos of auction items at:
www.lakecountrypower.coop/events

Almond Bars

Submitted By: Kim Lund, Moose Lake

Crust:

1 c. butter, room temp.
2 c. flour
½ c. powdered sugar

Filling:

8 oz. cream cheese – room temp.
2 eggs

½ c. sugar

1 T. almond extract

Frosting:

1 ½ c. powder sugar
¼ c. butter, room temp.
1 ½ T. milk
1 T. almond extract

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease 9x13 pan. Mix crust ingredients until smooth and then press into 9x13 pan. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. While crust is baking beat filling ingredients until smooth. Pour over baked crust while still hot. Place pan back in oven and bake for an additional 15 to 20 minutes. Cool completely. In a mixing bowl, combine all ingredients for frosting and beat until smooth. Spread over bars after they have cooled. Store in an airtight container.

Submit your recipe to Lake Country Power, Attn. Editor, 8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN 55768, or email jburnes@lcp.coop. If your entry is printed in the Newsline, you'll receive a \$5 credit on your electric bill. Entries must include name, address, and phone number of your account.

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