



September 2023

Newsline

BOARD MEETINGS September 26 ■ October 31 (9:30 am at Cohasset Service Center. Members welcome)

LakeCountryPower



Energy that Powers Our Lives

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GRE, Minnesota Power file for Northland Reliability Project permits

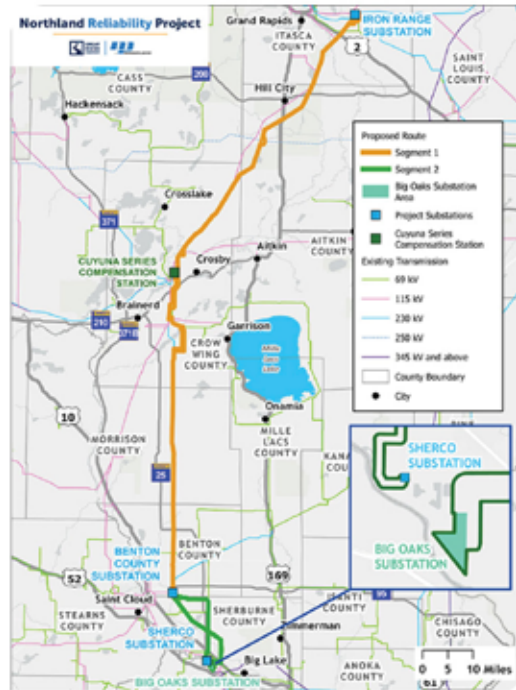
Minnesota Power and Great River Energy recently filed an application for a Certificate of Need and Route Permit from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) to build a high-voltage transmission line to bolster electric reliability in northern and central Minnesota.

The Northland Reliability Project is an approximately 180-mile, double-circuit, 345-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, primarily following existing transmission corridors, from northern Minnesota to central Minnesota. It will help maintain a reliable and resilient regional power grid as more renewable energy is brought online, existing coal plants are transitioned, electrification continues to expand, and more frequent extreme weather events occur.

The jointly developed project is one of 18 transmission projects approved in July 2022 by the region's grid operator, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), in the first phase of its Long-Range Transmission Plan to integrate new generation resources and boost grid resilience as the energy transition continues. The Northland Reliability Project is the first project in this portfolio to reach this milestone of a state regulatory process.

The companies jointly held nearly 30 public open houses and numerous stakeholder meetings over the past year to provide opportunities for engagement with landowners, local governments, agencies, and Tribal Nations. This public feedback is reflected in the proposed route.

Subject to regulatory approvals, the companies expect construction to begin in 2027 and the line to be operational



in 2030. Total cost is estimated between \$970 million and \$1.3 billion. The MPUC will determine need and the final route, and separately review cost recovery for Minnesota Power's share of the project. MISO allocation will help offset costs for customers and members.

Utilities across the region are significantly increasing the amount of renewable energy they provide to their customers. By reducing coal-based energy and more than doubling renewable energy, Great River Energy anticipates that by 2035 its retail electric sales will be provided by a 90% carbon-free power supply in alignment with the Minnesota carbon-free standard. Minnesota Power was the first utility in the state to deliver 50% renewable energy to customers in 2021 with plans to be more than 70% renewable by 2030.

Project details

The Northland Reliability Project is divided into two segments.

Segment one: Approximately 140 miles of new 345-kV double-circuit transmission lines will be constructed primarily near existing transmission line corridors, from Minnesota Power's Iron Range Substation in Itasca County to Great River Energy's Benton County Substation near St. Cloud.

Segment two: A 20-mile 230-kV line will be replaced with two 345-kV circuits along existing transmission corridors from the Benton County Substation to a new Big Oaks Substation that will be built as part of a separate project. A 20-mile 345-kV line will also be replaced along existing transmission corridors from the Benton County Substation to the Sherco Substation in Sherburne County.

Other improvements: In addition to the transmission line, the Northland Reliability Project will expand the Iron Range Substation near Grand Rapids and the Benton County Substation near St. Cloud. A new Cuyuna Series Compensation Station will be built in Crow Wing County near the existing Riverton Substation.

For more information and a map of the Northland Reliability Project's route corridor, visit <https://northlandreliabilityproject.com>. People also can subscribe to receive updates about the project from the MPUC. Visit edockets.state.mn.us and enter docket 22-416 for information on the Certificate of Need or docket 22-415 for information on the Route Permit.

NRECA files comments against EPA power plant proposal



National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) CEO Jim Matheson recently issued the following statement as the association filed comments in opposition to Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) proposed rule to further regulate power plant emissions.

"EPA's proposal is the wrong plan at a critical time for our nation's energy future," Matheson said. "It is unrealistic, unachievable, and will reduce key generating resources just as Americans are increasing their reliance on electricity. From deploying microgrids and renewables to launching demand response programs, electric cooperatives take an innovative and diverse approach as they work towards a responsible energy future. But expecting the industry to generate more electricity with fewer resources while adhering to unrealistic timelines is not a serious or practical approach.

"The energy future outlined by the EPA will result in more

blackouts, higher costs, and greater uncertainty for Americans. And it will magnify today's reliability challenges with grave consequences for an already stressed electric grid. When you find yourself in a hole, the first step is to stop digging. The EPA needs to put down their shovel."

NRECA urged the agency to withdraw the proposal in its entirety and pointed out the following issues:

- The proposal hinges on the widespread adoption of nascent technologies: clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. While both technologies are promising, they are not yet widespread or commercially available and have not been "adequately demonstrated" as required by the Clean Air Act.
- The proposal violates the Clean Air Act by giving the EPA vast new authority of major economic and political significance without a clear statement from Congress. This disregards the "major questions doctrine" and is inconsistent with the text, structure, and context of Clean Air Act Section 111.
- The proposed rules contain timelines that are unrealistic and unachievable. The compliance deadlines endanger new and existing natural gas plants and all but ensure coal units will opt to shut down by 2035. The requisite infrastructure cannot be expected to be in place due to cost, supply chain challenges, permitting, public opposition, land ownership/access, and more.
- The proposed rules threaten reliability and affordability.

NRECA submitted written comments to EPA on Aug. 8 as part of the agency's rulemaking process. The agency is expected to publish the final rule in the spring of 2024. ■

Special Notice: Online survey to gauge member satisfaction



WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

Lake Country Power will be conducting an online member survey beginning September 18. Please be aware that you may be one of several members who are randomly selected to participate in the survey. If you receive an e-mail with a link to a survey from Lake Country Power, it's legit and safe to click.

The subject line of the email will say "Lake

Country Power – feedback requested." You may also see the name Jane Sanstead within the email. Another test you can do is hover your mouse over the button that says "Take the Survey" and the URL address should include "NRECA" and "Qualtrics" at the beginning part of the URL. The survey software provider is Qualtrics.

Lake Country Power

is contracting with a cooperative-affiliated research firm that has years of experience measuring member satisfaction levels and how co-ops score on the American Customer Satisfaction Index. The survey will benchmark several areas of focus, including electric service, bills and payment options, etc. If you are selected, please complete the online survey. Thank you. ■

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

Cast your vote in the co-op calendar contest



Lake Country Power's 2024 co-op calendar contest is officially open on Facebook for voting. The field of hundreds 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 – 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. CST on Monday, October 2. 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 2024 calendars will be available in late November or early December. Good luck, and let the voting begin!

Carbon monoxide warning with portable generators

Using a portable generator in a home, garage or too close to an enclosed space allows a large amount of CO poison to seep into that area. The devastating result is almost immediate: The CO from one generator can kill in minutes.

CO is colorless and odorless. Poisoning can happen so quickly that exposed persons may become unconscious before recognizing any symptoms.

Each year in the U.S. approximately 85 individuals die from CO poisoning and most deaths (81%) occur in residential locations.

Safety tips

To use a portable generator safely:

- Always use a portable generator at least 20 feet away from your home.
- Never operate one inside a home, on a porch or near windows and doors.
- Apply the 20-foot distance rule to other locations, such as a shed, cabin, camper or trailer.
- When shopping for a generator, look for one that gives off



reduced emissions.

- Also look for one that shuts off automatically when high levels of CO are present.
- Keep your generator well maintained and follow all manufacturer's instructions.
- Operate it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot pool underneath.
- Ensure CO detectors are installed on every level of your home and near or in bedrooms.
- Test CO alarms monthly; Firing up one fuel-powered portable generator produces as much carbon monoxide (CO) as hundreds of combustion-engine cars, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission.
- Using a portable generator in a home, garage or too close to an enclosed area is like starting a parking lot full of cars and letting the CO poison seep into that area. The devastating result is almost immediate: The CO from one generator can kill in minutes.

A portable generator is usually gas powered and movable. A generator should have more output than the wattage of the electronics plugged into it. This way, the generator will be able to create the extra electricity it takes for the initial power surge. Make sure there is nothing plugged into the generator when turning it on.

Besides portable generators, there are also standby generators. The standby versions are attached directly to the house and are typically powered by natural gas or propane. These generators start automatically when the power goes out.

To prevent feeding power back into the power grid and endangering electric line crews and others, standby generators should have a transfer safety switch installed by a professional. Never plug a portable generator directly into a home outlet or electrical system for the same reason. ■

RECIPE CORNER KETO-FRIENDLY BRUSSEL SPROUTS CASSEROLE

From the
Kitchen of:
**Ray + Virginia
Hatinen, Esko**



- 1 pound brussel sprouts (frozen or fresh)
- 8 slices bacon, cooked and chopped
- 1 cup lactose free milk (can sub half and half or heavy cream)
- 2 tbs Dijon mustard
- 1 cup finely grated parmesan cheese (divided)
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste

Cook brussel sprouts for 5 minutes in boiling water, otherwise cook bacon to desired crispiness and add frozen brussel sprouts and cook 1 minute longer.

In a mixing bowl, add milk, Dijon mustard, ½ the parmesan cheese, garlic, salt and pepper. Pour mixture over brussel sprouts. Pour into a glass casserole dish. Sprinkle remaining parmesan cheese.

Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until slightly golden brown. Enjoy with baked ham or other meat.

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.

smart hub Tip

Q: Need to report an outage, or have other issues or questions?

A: Using your SmartHub account makes reaching us easier than ever. Under 'Contact Us' click the option 'Report an Issue/Inquiry.' You'll then have the option of picking 'Power Outage' or 'Other issues/General Inquiry.'

Ready to serve members in District 8

My wife Sharon and I have been married for 38 years. We live on Big Sandy Lake north of McGregor and previously lived in the Tamarack area. Sharon and I have three grown sons, Josh, Chad, and Ryan. We have also been blessed with two grandchildren Everett and Ava. Our sons are all graduates of McGregor High School where they were active in sports, and enjoyed growing up around the woods and waters in our area.

Sharon and I own and operate Fisherman's Bay Restaurant and Bar 10 miles north of McGregor. We have been in business since 2000 and have had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know many wonderful neighbors and Lake Country Power members in that time.

My community involvement includes 14 years as Aitkin County Commissioner. I also served on the McGregor School District Board. By governor's appointment, I served as Chairman of the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) and Vice-Chairman of the Minnesota Environmental Quality Board (EQB). The BWSR and EQB are both statewide boards charged with administering Minnesota's conservation and natural resource programs. I also served on the Big Sandy Lake Watershed Management Plan where conservation, water quality and education outreach are performed within the entire Big Sandy Lake Watershed, and includes citizens and governments from



By Brian
NAPSTAD
District 8
Director

Cromwell, McGregor, Wright, Tamarack, and surrounding areas.

I earned a Bachelor of Science Degree from the University of Wisconsin in 1980. After graduation I held positions with General Electric, Diversified Energies, Hewlett Packard, and most recently, Floe International. At Diversified Energies, we developed and marketed an automated gas meter reading system, an early predecessor to the much more capable systems in use by Lake Country Power today.

My interest in joining the Lake Country Power board originated during county commissioner meetings that included directors of co-ops to discuss common concerns regarding legislation and project permitting. It was clear during those meetings that Co-op members need a voice both within the co-op and the legislature to ensure their goals are being met.

I would like to thank Lake Country Power members for voting me as District 8 Director, you have my commitment to professionally represent your interests as a Lake Country Power member. ■

Brian Napstad was elected by members in Lake Country Power District 8. He can be reached at 218-485-1528 or bnapstad@lcp.coop.

Welcome to Lake Country Power



Emily Hermel joined LCP as a Consumer Account Representative II on July 24, working out of the Cohasset Service Center.

Did You Know?

Electric cooperatives have retired \$20 billion to members since 1988 - \$1.4 billion in 2021 alone.

Because electric co-ops operate at cost, any excess revenues (called margins) are allocated and retired to members in the form of capital credits.

Source: National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation



June 27, 2023 • Regular Monthly Meeting

THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

General Manager Bakk reported that LCP is working with a developer on grant funding for a potential solar and battery storage microgrid installation in a remote area of our territory that does not have any distribution lines. He also reported that Great River Energy is holding education sessions on rate methodology, and that GRE is requesting an extension of its Power Purchase Contract with LCP from ending in 2045 to 2055.

THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Unanimously approved Gary Nelson of the Blackberry area to represent District 6 on the Operation Round Up® Board.

Approved a Secretary's Certificate and other resolutions for a Rural Utilities Service (RUS) loan of \$82,377,000 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture.



► Lynn Corrie, cabin owner near Babbitt, took this picture one early morning as mist hovered over the Roaring Stony River.

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

Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment. Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills. Source: energy.gov

Co-op Contacts

Mark Bakk, General Manager	800-421-9959 mbakk@lcp.coop
Jason Long, District 1	218-240-9611 jlong@lcp.coop
Michael Forsman, District 2	218-365-5789 mforsman@lcp.coop
Steve Raukar, District 3	218-966-0298 sraukar@lcp.coop
Jeff Sheldon, District 4	218-398-6104 jsheldon1@lcp.coop
Robert Bruckbauer, District 5	218-290-8729 rbruckbauer@lcp.coop
Daniel Kingsley, District 6	218-259-7366 dkingsley@lcp.coop
Craig Olson, District 7	218-393-2276 colson@lcp.coop
Brian Napstad, District 8	218-485-1528 bnapstad@lcp.coop
Larry Anderson, District 9	218-428-2722 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.

Newsline

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Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — June 2023

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

	2023	2022
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 57,350,419	\$ 56,115,697
Cost of Purchased Power	28,352,925	32,340,128
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	8,103,874	9,589,491
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	2,061,989	2,090,481
Administrative and General Expense	3,859,629	3,529,303
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	9,478,172	8,886,464
TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES	51,856,589	56,435,866
Net Electric Operating Margins	5,493,830	(320,169)
Non-Operating Margins	575,778	701,830
Total Margins before Subsidiaries	6,069,608	381,661
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	179,585	75,930
TOTAL MARGINS	\$ 6,249,193	\$ 457,590
TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)	379,168,437	406,279,184

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.