



September 2024

# Newsline

**BOARD MEETINGS** September 24, Mountain Iron ■ October 29, Cohasset (Both 9:30 a.m. Members welcome)

## IN THIS ISSUE

- EIP funding can help local schools
- Cold weather rule
- 2025 co-op calendar voting
- K-bid Auction in October

## LCP lineworker returns from work to electrify Guatemala village

Ben Hoyt, journeyman lineworker for Lake Country Power, recently returned from a volunteer project in Guatemala to bring electricity into an eastern village for the first time. Hoyt and 13 other line workers built 3.5 miles of primary and secondary line, carried transformers by hand, wired homes with wall outlets and lightbulbs, and provided water filters to the Guatemalan people.

The project was part of an international program sponsored by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, which has been providing volunteers to illuminate villages and homes in impoverished countries around the world since 1962. The program has been working in Guatemala since 2011, and volunteer workers have brought electricity to more than 7,000 people in rural communities.

Lake Country Power was pleased to send Ben Hoyt to Guatemala for two weeks to help with this life-changing work. The village of Las Peñas, at an elevation of 6,000 feet, is made up of about 35 homes scattered on the crests and flat areas of the mountainside, near the larger community of Jalapa in eastern Guatemala.

The lineworkers who volunteered are used to hard work in rough conditions, but this two-week trip in June pressed them to new limits. The ride to the village, after grabbing equipment from the staging area at a local ranch four miles from Las Peñas, was grueling. To reach Las Peñas, the team spent more than an hour bouncing over rocks, splashing through puddles, straddling washouts, spinning through ruts and sliding on the wet, red clay road that hadn't even existed four weeks earlier.

The rain, coming down in sheets at times or as a lingering gray mist, kept the road slick and travel slow, and caused the team to walk the last mile into the village during a couple of days.

"I expected it to be rugged, so I was trying to get ready to conquer the mountains we were about to get into, but I didn't realize how unready I was," Hoyt said reflecting on the terrain. "It was wild. It was up and down and a lot of physical labor. It was tough, but everybody was doing the work, so it didn't really matter. We were in it together and it was easy if you just struggle through."

All the work had to be done by hand without bucket trucks and other large equipment that is available in the United States. Residents of the village were more than willing to help. The crews were amazed at how the locals ran line down one side of the mountain and back up the other on foot.

"It was impressive," said Hoyt of the Guatemalan residents. "I mean watching those guys traverse the mountains was something else. I would have never expected that. It was fun hanging out with them, too. They were probably the happiest people I've ever seen, you know, with what they have; it



was pretty cool to see."

The local Guatemalan municipality will manage the lines and serve the village. The introduction of electricity will bring meaningful change to the community. In rural villages, boys often attend school while girls are kept home to do housework and food preparation. With electricity, girls can join the boys attending school. Additionally, electricity brings numerous other benefits including better health, fewer open fires in kitchens, refrigeration of food, economic growth and more.

On the last day in the mountain, crews met the locals outside the village for a small ceremony and to say their goodbyes. The crews gave them water filtration systems,



**CONTINUED ON P. 2**

# Online auction available to members

Lake Country Power is partnering with North Auctions of Hibbing to hold another online auction of fleet equipment and vehicles the co-op is liquidating, including pickup trucks, snowmobiles and more. The online auction will be similar to how people submit bids through eBay and other online auctions.

Any interested and current co-op members should register for a free user account at <https://www.k-bid.com/auction/55708>. Once registered, members will be able to view the bids. Members will need their LCP account number to complete the registration process.

The auction is open exclusively for active member-consumers and employees of Lake Country Power, and will open Tuesday, Oct. 1 through Monday, Oct. 14, 2024.

The electronic bidding will be through K-Bid.com. Only winning bidders will be required to pay for the items they've won. Winning bidders may pick up their items with proof of purchase from one of Lake Country Power's Mountain Iron, Cohasset and Kettle River service centers, depending on the location of the auction item.

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

## How to register

1. Go to <https://www.k-bid.com/auction/55708>.
2. Click "Login" at the upper right corner of the website (login is above the "search" tool).
3. Click the "Sign Up" button in the box to the right that says, "Not registered yet?"
4. Enter your user and location information. Click to check the box that says, "I accept the Terms and Conditions." Next click "Save."
5. The next screen is where you will need to enter your credit card information. Your credit card will not be charged unless you receive the winning bid on October 14. The credit card is used for verification purposes only and will



6. be tied to the email you provide. One bidder per email. Next, you'll receive an email from K-Bid to confirm your registration. You'll now have access to view more information about the fleet for auction.
7. The next time you want access to the site, you will click login and the left box that says, "Login to your account." Be sure to remember your password. ■



### Auction Items

- Unit 205- 2014 Ford F150, 214,222 miles
- Unit 210- 2014 Ford Fusion, 153,458 miles
- Unit 212- 2014 Ford F150, 206,298 miles
- Unit 250- 2009 Ford F750 with Dump bed, 45,786 miles
- Unit 260- 2008 Ski Doo Tundra
- Unit 72T- 2009 Triton XT 10-101 snowmobile trailer
- Unit 241T- 2000? Pero 5'X10' utility trailer
- Unit 260T- 2008 Floe 10' snowmobile trailer
- Unit 209- 2008 F-250 4X4 with a fiberglass lined body, 211,080 miles
- Unit 372- 2016 Chevy Silverado 4X4 extended cab, 148,926 miles
- Unit 370- 2016-Chevy Silverado 4X4 extended cab, 142,197 miles
- Unit 353- 2014 Ford F-150 4X4 extended cab, 201,624 miles
- Unit 359T- 2002 Butler wire trailer with hydraulic lift and hydraulic re-wind
- Unit 350T- 1998 Butler wire trailer with hydraulic lift
- Unit 321T- 2005 Butler 40000# equipment trailer (air brakes)
- Unit 351T- 1999 Butler 40000# equipment trailer (air brakes)
- Unit 336- 2006 ASV skid steer RC-85 exact hours unknown
- Unit 220- 2012 F-550 with 37' High Ranger bucket, 175,318 miles

More items may be added to the online auction site.

# 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, starting Sept. 12



Lake Country Power's 2025 co-op calendar contest will open on Facebook for voting, starting September 12. The field of photo entries has been narrowed. Help determine the 12 winning photos at [www.facebook.com/lakecountrypower](http://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 Tuesday, October 1. 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 2025 calendars will be available in late November or early December. Good luck, and thank you for participating!

# LCP, GRE support United Way flood recovery program

It was a sensible response for Lake Country Power and Great River Energy to join the United Way of northeastern Minnesota (UWNEMN) in flood relief efforts to help members impacted by June's torrential rainfall.

In line with the Seventh Cooperative Principal - Concern for Community - LCP and GRE were able to jointly donate \$20,000 and along with other contributors help those members most heavily hit; largely in areas around Cook, Minnesota.



"We're old. This flooding was so unexpected. The creek overflowed into our house and when we went to town to get water, we couldn't believe it. We were taken to the fire hall and given so many things to help from United Way, the Red Cross, and The Lions Club - towels, brooms, buckets, gloves, and food.

We're just very grateful. When people ask how we are doing after the flood, the first thing we say is how grateful we are for United Way and everyone who helped us."

- Margaret Jarka, Cook.

"Our organization seeks to fill gaps in need; since June we have been in nearly constant communication with local leaders and residents to identify those gaps, and it became clear quite early that financial assistance was the largest unmet need in the region."

- Erin Shay, Executive Director UWNEMN.



United Way of Northeastern MN

## EQUIPMENT QUIZ

**Q** How much does one meter cost?



- A) \$176
- B) \$60
- C) \$190
- D) \$25

\*LCP has 73,360 meters on its system. Meters measure and record the amount of electricity used by a consumer. LCP recently replaced all meters as part of an automated infrastructure (AMI) project. The new meters also record outages, blinks, usage history, power use trends and voltage fluctuations. Answer: A

## RECIPE CORNER DELLIE'S LEMON CHEESECAKE



From the Kitchen of:  
**Jan at Dircks Farm, Zim**



### Crust

- 1 pkg. graham crackers, finely crushed
- 1/2 cup melted butter
- 1/4 cup sugar

Mix together and press into an 8x10 pan, on the bottom and up the sides.

### Filling:

- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened
- 1 pkg. instant lemon pudding
- 1 1/2 cups milk

Beat the cream cheese until smooth. Then add milk to the pudding mix and stir until smooth. Beat into the cream cheese a little at a time until smooth. Pour into the crust and refrigerate until set.

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.

# Education grant can be a boost for local schools

School is back in session and the buses are out roaming Lake Country Power's service area for another year.

As our students and teachers are busy with the first lessons and recesses, it's a good time to remind our educators and administrators about the Education Improvement Program (EIP).

In 2022, Lake Country Power's board of directors approved a new grant program where local school districts may apply for grants up to \$100,000 through "unclaimed capital credit" funds. The EIP was created with a focus on area school districts seeking assistance toward projects and programs that will benefit students and communities.

The State of Minnesota allows electric cooperatives to retain the unclaimed funds locally for use toward nonprofit and educational purposes after several years of trying to locate former co-op members with their capital credit refunds. These funds are not allowed for business or operational use, and if the co-op doesn't invest the money locally, it may



By Robert  
**BRUCKBAUER**  
District 5 Director

become property of the State.

Grants are intended to be awarded for projects and programs that improve the educational experience for local students and won't be awarded for advertising, individuals, fundraisers, or ongoing operational expenses.

In recent years, the EIP has funded everything from new musical instruments, to innovative curriculum, classroom enhancements and more.

November 30 is the application deadline. After this date, the cooperative's board will determine which projects require further consideration and may request in-person presentations as needed. The board will then meet for discussion and an approval process. Grants will be awarded the following spring or summer.

For more information and to apply, visit [www.lakecountrypower.coop/education-improvement-program-grant](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop/education-improvement-program-grant). ■

Bob Bruckbauer was elected to the LCP Board by members in District 5. He can be reached at 218-290-8729 or [rbruckbauer@lcp.coop](mailto:rbruckbauer@lcp.coop)

## CONTINUED FROM P. 1

toothbrushes, and school supplies among other gifts.

Hoyt said he'll remember most, "the guys that I worked with and when we turned the power on, how happy the residents were just to have a couple light bulbs and be able to see at night without burning candles. You could see how much of a difference it was going to make just by being around them when the lights came on."

The leader of the village spoke on behalf of the community, expressing their gratitude to the team. "Thank you to everyone who

helped," he said. "You bring happiness for the hope that we can do more now with electricity."

This work echoes of a time in the U.S. about 80-90 years ago when rural areas received power for the first time thanks to rural electric cooperatives. Life in America is significantly better today thanks to rural electrification. One Guatemalan woman summed it up nicely, "I am grateful that you came here to visit. It is a grand day that you installed electricity here."

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association, along with Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, helped organize the trip. You



can see photos and videos from the trip by joining the dedicated Facebook group <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2094274217615477/>, "2024 Powering a Brighter Future in Guatemala." ■

## Kingsley receives BLC

Dan Kingsley, District 6 Director at Lake Country Power, recently received the Board Leadership Certificate from the NRECA.

The NRECA Board Leadership Certificate (BLC) recognizes individuals who continue their professional development after becoming a Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD). Directors who attain the BLC have completed 10 credits in advanced, issues-oriented courses.

The BLC program consists of a series of courses focusing in greater

depth on specific industry and governance issues. These include issues such as risk management, power supply, parliamentary procedure, technology and policy development.

NRECA represents the nation's almost 900 private, consumer-owned electric cooperatives, which provide electric service to more than 42 million people in 48 states, including Lake Country Power.

Editor's note: The August Newline identified Kingsley as receiving the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD), which he has previously received.

## May 21, 2024 • Regular Monthly Meeting

### THE FOLLOWING REPORTS WERE GIVEN:

President Olson reported a quiet month with few member contacts. He recognized Director Dan Kingsley for receiving his Board Leadership Certificate through the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

General Manager Bakk attended the May Member Manager Group meeting at Great River Energy (GRE) and reported on the ongoing rate design efforts as well as the benefits of load management programs to LCP and GRE.

He also reported on GRE's power cost adjustment in April that resulted in a \$1.5 million charge. LCP's portion was approximately \$157,000.

**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.

### THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE TAKEN:

Approved: General Manager Bakk requested support to partner with Midwest Generators to provide members with an opportunity to buy a backup whole house generator. He noted Midwest will ensure generators are properly and safely installed on LCP lines.

Approved the 2025 construction bidders list presented by Chief Operating Officer Derek Howe.

Approved the appointment of Charlie Ross in District 5 and Steve Councilman in District 9 to serve as Operation Round Up® Electric Trust Board members.



▶ Thomas Koch of Grand Rapids took this stunning shot as early morning mist caressed an Itasca County Pine Forest.

## Co-op Contacts

<b>Mark Bakk,</b> General Manager	<b>800-421-9959</b> mbakk@lcp.coop
<b>Jason Long,</b> District 1	<b>218-240-9611</b> jlong@lcp.coop
<b>Michael Forsman,</b> District 2	<b>218-365-5789</b> mforsman@lcp.coop
<b>Steve Raukar,</b> District 3	<b>218-966-0298</b> sraukar@lcp.coop
<b>Jeff Sheldon,</b> District 4	<b>218-398-6104</b> jsheldon1@lcp.coop
<b>Robert Bruckbauer,</b> District 5	<b>218-290-8729</b> rbruckbauer@lcp.coop
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<b>Brian Napstad,</b> District 8	<b>218-485-1528</b> bnapstad@lcp.coop
<b>Larry Anderson,</b> District 9	<b>218-428-2722</b> 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.**

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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Now is the time to schedule annual maintenance for your home's heating system. During fall months, HVAC technicians are typically less busy, making this an excellent time for maintenance and any necessary repairs before the winter months. A qualified technician can clean filters, check for leaks and ensure all system components are working efficiently to keep your home cozy and warm when the temperatures begin to drop. Source: [energy.gov](http://energy.gov)

## BY THE NUMBERS | JUNE 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](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) under "My Cooperative."



	2024	2023
Cost of Purchased Power	\$28,889,846	\$28,352,925
Other Operating Expenses	\$23,106,624	\$23,503,664
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$51,996,470	\$51,856,589



## Utility Plant (Net)



	2024	2023
Operating Margins	\$7,189,195	\$5,493,830
Non-Operating Margins	\$997,102	\$755,363