



MAY 2026

Leap of Faith Carves Path for an Early Learning Center

Rob and Krista Sjostrand had a vision for what they wanted in an early childhood center.

It should serve the needs of the Grand Rapids area, which like many communities around Greater Minnesota, have a childcare shortage. That was an easy box to check.

Next they wanted it to be rooted in the values of nature, education and nondenominational Christianity. As the idea unfolded on paper and a few dozen acres were purchased, the \$4.2 million, 10,000 square-foot facility came to life over five years.

In April, the first children made their way into Roots & Wings Early Learning Center in Coleraine, which the Sjostrands hope will open doors to a “second home” for the families attending. The building has capacity to hold 120 kids and enrollment sat around 30 this month, with future commitments at nearly 70%.

“The idea here was not to put iPads in a kid’s hands and have them staring at a screen,” Rob said. “They spend most of their time outside. That was the promise to the parents. That’s what we’re planning.”

From a sky view, the building is designed in the shape of a cross, with the entrance and doors leading to the outdoor playground making up the cross bar. Inside, each age group room has a different touch of care ranging from low-to-the-ground toilets and sinks for the training-aged kids to wall-mounted changing tables that maximize space in the infant room.

Their second home plan will feature a functioning kitchen on site with “Chef Jessica” making homemade meals delivered to the

classrooms, so everyone can eat their lunch family style. The culinary side also includes ways to involve the kids in making breads or other items, Rob said, reminding himself that food can be fun when teaching about it.

The outside space at Roots & Wings is where the Sjostrands vision really comes to life. Beyond the playground equipment is a walking trail that goes partially through the 25-plus acres extending past the fence.

A preschool class has already started to learn maple tree tapping, which will fill bags that Rob or Krista can haul back to the building on a tractor to process. The future could lead to a series of yurts for kids to stop and sit in during their winter walks.

“We’ve talked about it so much, like, the building’s great but what’s going to sell the program and make people actually want to be here is the staff,” Krista said. “They’re so dedicated and this was a huge leap of faith to do this.”



Reducing the Risk of Wildfires

Gone are the days when wildfires were primarily confined to the western United States. Today, more than 30 states, including Minnesota, face elevated wildfire risk. It is something we have seen up close in parts of northeastern Minnesota, and it demands our attention.

At Lake Country Power, protecting members and the communities is a high priority and a year-round commitment.

One of the most important ways the cooperative reduces wildfire threats is through a comprehensive vegetation management program. Overgrown trees and power lines are a dangerous combination, particularly during dry and windy conditions. Throughout the year, LCP oversees proactive trimming and removal of vegetation that could come into contact with power lines. While it may not always be visible, it is one of the most effective tools we have to prevent fire ignition and maintain reliable electricity.

While Lake Country Power has committed to doing its part, wildfire prevention is a shared responsibility. There are important steps each of us can take to protect our homes and neighborhoods.

Properly extinguish fire by dousing it with water, stirring the ashes and ensuring the fire is cool to the touch before leaving the area. Avoid outdoor burning on windy or excessively dry days. Maintain a defensible space around your home by clearing dry leaves, dead branches and other flammable debris. Always check local regulations for burn bans or restrictions.



Wildfires are becoming more complex and more widespread, but through proactive system management and community partnership, we can reduce risks and strengthen resilience.

Lake Country Power takes this responsibility seriously. Its members depend on the co-op not only for reliable power, but for leadership in safeguarding the communities we call home.

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.



Sincerely,
Bob Bruckbauer,
District 5 Director

Board Meeting Highlights: January 27, 2026

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

The Following Reports Were Given:

President Olson reported he received several member calls about energy control programs due to extreme cold weather. He said he attended the Better in our Back Yard winter dinner in Duluth with Director Anderson, General Manager Bakk and several employees.

General Manager Bakk provided input about the proposed Great River Energy (GRE) rate design and its impacts to LCP and other member cooperatives. He said GRE expects to approve the rate design in April and seek member approval in June.

The Following Actions Were Taken:

Approved changes to Policy 602 about line extensions, service improvements and line changes.

Approved changes to Policy 409 about charges for custom work.

Approved proposed changes to Rate Schedule 57, effective March 1, 2026.

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: MAY 28 | JUNE 30 (9:30 am at the Cohasset Service Center, Members Welcome)

DID YOU KNOW?

Membership in LCP means you're a co-owner and not just a customer. We serve more than 44,000 members.



Operation Round Up® Gives More than \$66,000 to Community Programs

Through the contributions of Lake Country Power's participating members, the Operation Round Up® Electric Trust Board recently approved \$66,943 in assistance to local community programs during its quarterly meeting.

The cooperative's Trust Board reviewed and considered 40 grant applications and distributed funds to 30 projects and programs this past quarter.

All funds generated through Operation Round Up® are set aside in a trust fund. A voluntary Trust Board of nine co-op members administers the trust. Of the funds collected through the program, 100% is distributed to charitable organizations through an application and selection process. The Trust Board uses special guidelines and policies when choosing recipients. Since the program's inception, more than \$3.6 million in contributions have been given.

MOST RECENT RECIPIENTS:

Advocates Against Domestic Abuse	MN Adult & Teen Challenge
Aitkin County Rivers and Lakes Fair	Northern TRAXX ATV Club
Camp Olson YMCA	Northland Volunteer Fire Department
Community Café	Northstar Foundation
Cotton Volunteer Fire Department	Pelican Lake Pickleball Association
Ellsburg Volunteer Fire Department	Queen of Peace Quilters
Friends of the Hibbing Public Library Inc.	St. Louis County Volunteer Rescue Squad
Grand Rapids Farmers Market	The Salvation Army of Hibbing
Hello, Range!	Tourist Center Senior Citizens Inc.
Hope Evangelical Church	Tower-Soudan Historical Society
Iron Range Partnership for Sustainability	Tri-Community Food Shelf
Itasca Curling Association	True Friends
Longville Area Food Shelf	United In Christ Lutheran Church
Minnesota Juvenile Officers Association	We Care Sewers, St. Paul's Lutheran Church
Minnesota State Old Time Fiddle Championships	Well Being Development, Northern Lights Clubhouse



CONGRATS 2026 GRADS!

Lake Country Power congratulates the Class of 2026 and wishes all local graduates success, confidence, and bright opportunities ahead.

Annual Cogeneration Notification

In compliance with Cooperative adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Lake Country Power is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers who satisfy the conditions as the qualifying facility. Lake Country Power is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Cooperative. Interested members should contact Lake Country Power, 26039 Bear Ridge Drive, Cohasset, MN 55721, or call 800-421-9959.

Operation Round Up is a simple way for members to make a meaningful difference. Those spare cents add up to real support for local programs, services, and organizations.



Nuclear Power: Facts & Myths

When people think about nuclear power, they often picture Homer Simpson dozing off in a control room or Montgomery Burns scheming to cut corners for profit. Pop culture has shaped that image — but it couldn't be further from modern reality.

For decades, nuclear energy has quietly powered Minnesota's homes and businesses with reliable, carbon-free electricity. Yet despite this proven track record, nuclear remains one of the most misunderstood energy sources. As Minnesota works to meet growing energy demands and bold carbon-free goals, it's time to take a closer look at the facts.

Clean and Reliable — No Matter the Weather

Nuclear energy generates electricity by splitting atoms to produce heat, which turns water into steam to drive turbines — all without releasing carbon emissions. In Minnesota, nuclear is the state's largest single source of reliable carbon-free electricity, with the Monticello and Prairie Island plants running safely and steadily for decades.

While wind and solar are vital to our clean energy goals, their output depends on the weather. Nuclear fills the gap, providing dependable, always-on power when it's needed most. That's critical in Minnesota, where frigid winters and hot summers place heavy demands on the grid.

This reliability stabilizes costs, prevents outages, and powers key industries like farming, food processing, and manufacturing.

A Small Footprint, Big Results

Nuclear energy is also remarkably efficient in its use of land. Producing 1 million megawatt-hours of electricity requires about 17,800 acres of wind installations or 3,200 acres of solar panels. Nuclear can achieve the same output on just 103 acres.

Addressing Safety and Waste

Safety is a reasonable concern with any energy source, and nuclear is no exception. The good news: U.S. nuclear plants are among the most heavily regulated energy facilities in the world. With built-in safety systems and decades of experience, nuclear has one of the strongest safety records in the industry.

Waste is another common concern. Yet all used fuel from U.S. reactors since the 1950s would fit on a single football field, stacked less than 10 yards high. That spent fuel is securely stored and monitored and has caused zero harm to the public.

To put it in perspective: waste from one person's lifetime of electricity use would fit inside a soda can.

Source: MREA

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

As temperatures start to rise, many homeowners focus on staying cool. Don't forget about the small gaps around windows and doors. While air sealing is often associated with keeping cold air out during winter, it's just as important during summer. Tiny cracks and worn weatherstripping allow cool, conditioned air to escape and hot, humid air to seep indoors. This forces your air conditioner to work harder than necessary and increases energy costs. Take a few minutes to check for drafts, replace weatherstripping and seal leaks. A tighter home keeps you more comfortable and helps manage energy use.

Source: energy.gov



Safe Boating on Minnesota Lakes

One of the joys of living in northeastern Minnesota is when the lakes open up for the summer, and it is time to take the cover off the fishing or pontoon boats.

Yet before the boats ever leave the dock, safety has to come first. According to Safe Electricity, the necessary checks start at that same dock.

All docks should have ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) on the circuits that feed electricity to the docks. Check GFCIs often to make sure they work.

Once you're on the boat, don't forget to count life jackets. Boaters are required to have enough life jackets onboard that are the right size for each passenger. This means that if you have children on board, you'll need to make sure the life jackets are the correct size for each child and that they wear them at all times while the boat is moving.

Make sure you have at least one "sober skipper." Alcohol is the leading known contributor in fatal boating accidents. Even just one drink can impair boaters, especially considering the effects from the sun, wind and waves.

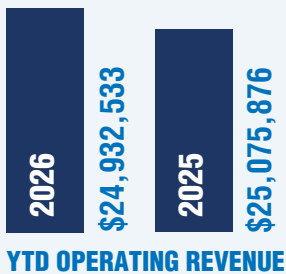
If something goes wrong, be prepared to signal: If there is an emergency on your boat, it is time to signal for help! This may mean using a flag, a whistle, a horn, or a mirror, but the most commonly carried piece of emergency signaling equipment is a set of flares.

With the right precautions in place, boaters can focus less on what might go wrong and more on enjoying a safe and memorable summer on northeastern Minnesota's lakes.

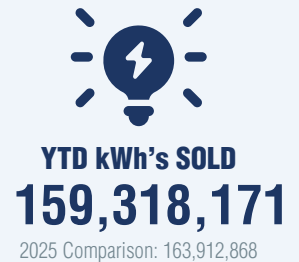


By The Numbers | February 2026

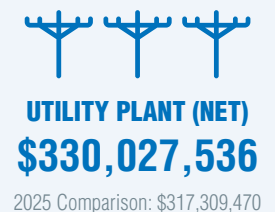
Lake Country Power is committed to responsibly managing resources to maintain the Cooperative's financial stability. Below is a snapshot of the year-to-date unaudited financial report. A complete set of financial statements can be viewed at www.lakecountrypower.coop under "My Cooperative."



	2026	2025
Cost of Purchased Power	\$15,555,641	\$14,283,951
Other Operating Expenses	\$8,617,558	\$7,675,854
Total Cost of Electric Service	\$24,173,199	\$21,959,805



	2026	2025
Operating Margins	\$759,334	\$3,116,071
Non-Operating Margins	\$89,366	\$29,708



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

Newsline

Published monthly by Lake Country Power
8535 Park Ridge Drive, Mountain Iron, MN, 55768
Editor: Jerry Burnes | jburnes@lcp.coop
Designer: Amanda Groethe | Sartell, MN

Lake Country Power Service Centers:
Cohasset • Kettle River • Mountain Iron
800-421-9959 • www.lakecountrypower.coop

Lake Country Power

An equal opportunity provider and employer.



Beat the Heat and Save Energy this Summer!

Those hot summer days will be here before you know it, but a few simple actions can lead to significant savings.

Let's go through a handful of them to keep in mind when beating the heat.

- Save energy by raising your thermostat a few degrees. Even a small adjustment can reduce cooling costs without sacrificing comfort.
- Have you checked your air filter lately? A clean air filter helps your system run more efficiently and keeps cool air flowing. Check your filter monthly during the summer and replace it when it's dirty.
- Close blinds or curtains during the hottest part of the day to keep the sun from heating your home. This simple step can help your air conditioner work less.
- Use smaller appliances, like slow cookers or air fryers instead of the oven on hot days.
- Speaking of cooking, firing up the grill isn't just great for flavor. It can also help you save energy. Cooking outdoors keeps extra heat out of the kitchen.

Wild Rice Casserole

Submitted By: Gail Oyster, Amen Lake

1 lb browned hamburger or 2 cups cooked chicken	2 cups chopped celery
¼ cup soy sauce	1 can sliced water chestnuts
½ cup raw wild rice	1 can mushrooms
½ cup brown or white raw rice	1 can cream of mushroom soup

DIRECTIONS:

Mix all ingredients together in a casserole dish or roaster. Stir in 3 ½ cups boiling water. Cover and bake for 1 ½ hours at 350 degrees.

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.