



## IN THIS ISSUE

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# How power outages are managed, restored and monitored



July can pack a powerful punch when it comes to stormy weather and inconvenient power outages. Are you ready if another whopper-of-a-storm strikes northern Minnesota, like it did several times last year?

For starters, knowing the answers to some of these common questions will help. Also, be sure to flip through the rest of this newsletter for additional information.

**Q:** Where can I find information and updates about power outages?

**A:** The best way to track outages is the outage map, which can be found on LCP's website at [lakecountrypower.coop](http://lakecountrypower.coop).

LCP will provide regular updates during extensive outages (more than 5,000 members being affected for more than four hours), through social media and press release updates to local media organizations. Visit [facebook.com/lakecountrypower](https://facebook.com/lakecountrypower), @LCPCoop on Twitter and [youtube.com/lakecountrypower](https://youtube.com/lakecountrypower). Information is typically

updated several times a day between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

**Q:** I used to be able to view the outage map, but now it opens only to a section of Texas and won't move. Got any ideas to fix that?

**A:** The simple answer is it could be the browser you're using, but eventually the outage map should refresh and hover over LCP's service area after the data finishes loading.

LCP's outage software provider sets its "loading" default page to show Texas but once the page is loaded, the map should relocate to zoom in on LCP's service area in Minnesota.

During heavy traffic on the outage map, you'll sometimes see Texas appear first before it has a chance to refresh and identify the location of the electric cooperative. This is normal until the default page clears to give way to the local outage map.



THE STORM

THE RESULT

THE REPAIR

If you were to zoom further out of the screen, you'd see the world map. The outage map has to open somewhere in the world before it identifies the cooperative that it's associated with, and in this case the default page shows Texas.

**Q:** What is the address for the outage map?

**A:** Depending on the volume of traffic on the outage map, you may be able to load the map better by manually entering the URL in your browser. The address is <http://mi.lcp.coop:82>.

**Q:** How many members have to be out at a time, before the outage map begins to slow down in loading time?

**A:** While it has to do with how many people are looking at the outage map at the same time, there isn't a magic number. But like a busy highway, there can sometimes be congestion. The map takes longer to load when it's more than 10,000 people looking at the map at the same time.

Continued on page 2

## BOARD MEETINGS

July 25 – 9:30 a.m. at  
Grand Rapids Service Center  
Aug. 29 – 9:30 a.m. at  
Kettle River Service Center

## COAL CREEK TOUR

It's time to hop a ride! Register for the Coal Creek Tour no later than Aug. 29. Space is limited. Travel dates: Sept. 19 – 21.

## PRIMARY NUMBER

Lake Country Power's phones are answered 24 hours a day. Our primary phone number is 1-800-421-9959.



**Q:** What do the hard hats indicate on the outage map when I don't see any of the crews in sight in my area?

**A:** If there's a hard hat pictured for your outage on the map, it's a good sign that service **MAY** be restored soon. The key word is "may."

Once you report your service is out to Lake Country Power, your outage will be entered into the system until it is restored. Meanwhile, we assign a number of outages to each crew at a time. That's when the hard hats get placed on the outage map.

Outages are restored in chronological order, beginning at the substation for LCP and then down the line to the very end of the line. See page 3 to better understand the steps in how electricity must be restored.

**Q:** Why won't the outage map load?

**A:** If your device has a lot of memory, is connected to a fast high-capacity wireless access point and your software is updated with the most current version, the outage map will typically load within 10 – 20 seconds.

The outage map is designed to run with the most current browser versions for Chrome, Firefox, Safari and Internet Explorer, to name a few. When thousands of people are using the outage map at the same time, the load time may be affected, but eventually should load.

If you're in an area with poor data coverage or you're using an older browser it could affect outage map loading and capabilities. You'll want to consider how old the device is and how good, fair or poor your Internet connection is or how much data you have remaining on your smart phone or tablet.

"Using the outage map is just like using Google maps for navigation," said Dennis Hanson, applications and data analyst for LCP. "When you open the outage map, you're opening up street maps."

Bottom line: technology is great, but only as good as its backbone.

**Q:** How often does information on the outage map refresh?

**A:** Every 10 minutes, automatically.

**Q:** I'm still out of power, but everyone else around me has theirs back. Was I forgotten?

**A:** As long as you've reported your outage at least once to Lake Country Power, your outage is in our outage management system for repair.

Dispatch will assign a crew to your outage once a crew becomes available and can address outages in your area. Meantime, LCP has information online in the "outage center" to explain how outages must be restored from start to finish. Visit [lakecountrypower.coop](http://lakecountrypower.coop).

Keep in mind: If power has been restored next door, but your lights aren't back on, please check the main breaker feeding your location, and if the power is still out, it's likely you have an individual outage that will also need to be reported.

**Q:** Is there a faster way to report an outage without having to call LCP's phone at the office?

**A:** Yes.

It's through SmartHub, a software program available to all members connected to the Internet. If you don't have SmartHub, you can set up a free account from LCP's website at [lakecountrypower.coop](http://lakecountrypower.coop). You'll need to set up your account with a user name and password, if you haven't already done so.

With SmartHub, you can click the feature that allows you the ability to report your outage. Your message will send directly into dispatch where all crews are assigned for outage repairs.

**Q:** I don't use a computer, don't have a smart phone and don't use the Internet. How should I report my outage?

**A:** The traditional method to report an outage or contact LCP for any other reason is still alive and well. Call 800-421-9959 and press #1 when prompted to report your outage. There's a good chance you may not receive a live person at the other end, but when you follow the prompts, the information you enter will go into LCP's outage management system. Dispatch will then assign a crew to repair your electric service.



## Bruckbauer elected chair of GRE board



Robert Bruckbauer

After its 2017 annual meeting in June, Great River Energy's Board of Directors elected Lake Country Power's Bob Bruckbauer to serve as chairman. Bruckbauer, from Remer, has been a LCP director since 2000 and has served as one of two LCP representatives on the 24-member GRE board since 2008.

"It's a privilege and an honor to be elected by peers on the GRE board to this role," said Bruckbauer. "Electric cooperatives continue to innovate in the midst of rapid changes for suppliers and consumers in the energy industry. As directors, we balance the need to hold down costs for electric co-op consumers with the necessity to invest in reliability and environmental sustainability. That will continue well into the future, and I look forward to helping lead the challenge of change."

In addition to Bruckbauer's new role on the GRE board, other officers elected include Joe Morley (East Central Energy, Braham), board vice chair; Dale Anderson (Kandiyohi Power Cooperative, Spicer), secretary; and Lee York (Nobles Cooperative Electric, Worthington), treasurer.



Lake Country Power is replacing six-miles of aged line between Grand Rapids and Warba. The project provides a great opportunity to create a tie-line between the Goodland and Blackberry Substations, which will help improve service reliability for members in that area.





## Building plans continue

By Greg Randa,  
General Manager

Building plans for a new headquarters facility in the Cohasset Industrial Park is underway, and I'd like to provide a brief update about the progress we are making.

We've held recent meetings with the architecture team from Hibbing. I'm encouraged to report that the design and budget look practical and suitable to house our trucks, equipment, people and technology at our headquarters for the next 50 years. A building committee will be

meeting next to review progress, designs and budgets. At the time of this writing, the Cohasset Zoning Commission has approved a resolution to recommend the Cohasset Planning Commission adopt tax-increment financing for the new building.

We anticipate breaking ground fall 2017 when footings will be installed and construction will go through the winter. The Cohasset Industrial Park is expanding its industrial park and LCP will be the first tenant in the new development. LCP also plans to move its existing solar array in Grand Rapids to the new site.

We will continue to keep members informed as developments move forward.

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Light



## Powering Up

When an outage occurs, line crews work to pinpoint problems

### 1 High-Voltage Transmission Lines

Transmission towers and cables that supply power to transmission substations (and thousands of consumers) rarely fail. But when damage occurs, these facilities must be repaired before other parts of the system can operate.

### 2 Distribution Substation

Each substation serves hundreds or thousands of consumers. When a major outage occurs, line crews inspect substations to determine if problems stem from transmission lines feeding into the substation, the substation itself, or if problems exist down the line.

### 3 Main Distribution Lines

If the problem cannot be isolated at a distribution substation, distribution lines are checked. These lines carry power to large groups of consumers in communities or housing developments.

### 4 Tap Lines

If local outages persist, supply lines, called tap lines, are inspected. These lines deliver power to transformers, either mounted on poles or placed on pads for underground service, outside businesses, schools, and homes.

### 5 Individual Homes

If your home remains without power, the service line between a transformer and your residence may need to be repaired. Always call to report an outage to help line crews isolate these local issues.

graphic by Funnell Inc.

When electricity goes out, most of us expect power will be restored within a few hours. But when a major storm causes widespread damage, longer outages may result. Co-op line crews work long, hard hours to restore service safely to the greatest number of consumers in the shortest time possible. Here's what's going on if you find yourself in the dark.

## LCP contracting with Osmose for pole testing

In the interest of public safety and service reliability, Lake Country Power contracts with Osmose Utilities Services Inc., to test the cooperative's poles in central parts of its distribution system. The testing will go into October.

The goal of this routine inspection is to identify poles that may no longer be useful for service, and will be scheduled for future replacement. Pole testing will take place on five LCP substations: Gunn, Blackberry, Goodland, Cedar Valley and Gowan.

Crews from Osmose Utilities Services will be inspecting poles. Electric service will not be interrupted while pole testing is underway.

## Tips for Summer Outages

While LCP's distribution system is more than 99 percent reliable, summer storms can topple trees, break lines and cause extended outages for co-op members. Follow these tips to help minimize the inconveniences of losing electric service.



- Make sure one of the phones in your home is not a cordless phone as these require electricity to charge. Also, have a mobile phone for backup and charge it in your vehicle, if needed.
- Use a battery powered flashlight, not candles.
- Keep a battery operated radio handy to listen for outage information and updates, or check in through our website or social media on your smart phone or

## Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

Trees beautify our neighborhoods, and when planted in the right spot, can even help lower energy bills. But the wrong tree in the wrong place can be a hazard... especially to power lines.

For more tips on smart tree planting in your community, contact your local electric cooperative or visit [www.ArborDay.org](http://www.ArborDay.org).

### LARGE TREES

**Height/spread of more than 40 feet, such as:**

- Maple
- Birch
- Oak
- Sweetgum
- Spruce
- Linden
- Pine

### MEDIUM TREES

**Height/spread of 25 to 40 feet, such as:**

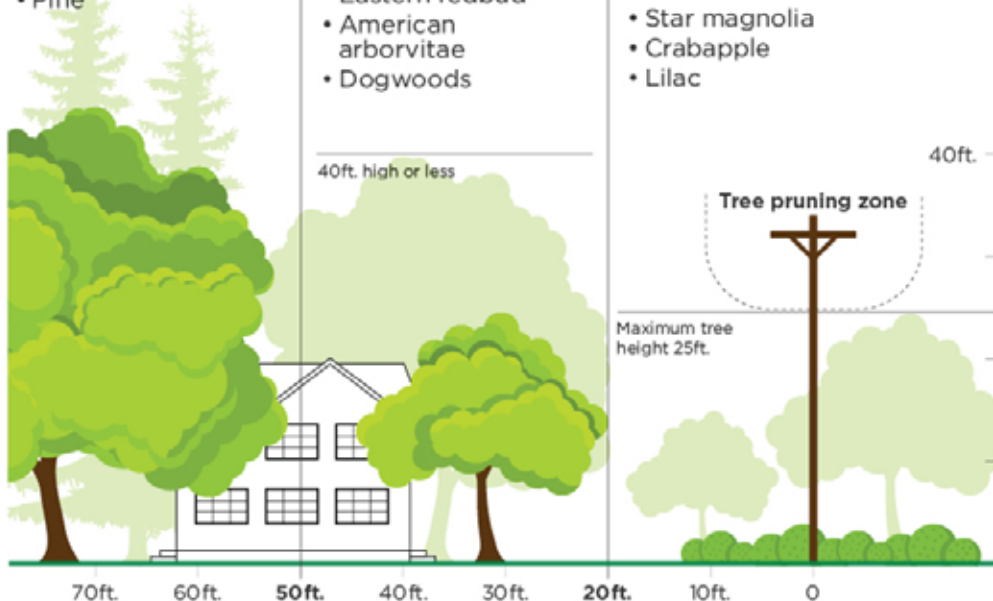
- Washington hawthorn
- Goldenraintree
- Eastern redbud
- American arborvitae
- Dogwoods

### SMALL TREES

*Avoid planting within 20 feet of power lines. When planting within 20 feet is unavoidable, use only shrubs and small trees.*

**Height/spread of no more than 25 feet such as:**

- Star magnolia
- Crabapple
- Lilac



**Be safe! Always call 811 before you dig to locate any buried utility lines.**

*Source: The Arbor Day Foundation and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association*

- tablet for updates.
- Protect your belongings. Shut off or unplug any sensitive electronic equipment such as TVs and computers to protect them from power surges. Buy surge protectors to protect equipment.
- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed. Food should keep for up to 48 hours in a full, freestanding freezer or fridge, if the door remains closed; a half-full freezer or fridge about one day. If the outage persists, cover your refrigerator or freezer with a blanket, make arrangements to store food at another location, or purchase dry ice from a bait shop or other store.
- Drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.
- Essential supplies: flashlight, batteries, radio, extra supply of water, food.
- If you see a downed power line, STAY AWAY! Call LCP at 800-421-9959.

Visit [www.fema.gov](http://www.fema.gov), [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov), [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org) and [www.disastersafety.org](http://www.disastersafety.org) for additional preparation tips.



# Safety demonstrations capture kids' attention with important message

Nearly 500 students sat up straight after seeing the first electrical arc at this year's safety demonstrations.

Lake Country Power sponsored the electrical safety demonstrations at the schools in Barnum, Deer River and will again this fall in Bena.

The demonstration is eye-opening and memorable with plenty of zaps, sparks, smoke and a sizzling hot dog. Students learn about a variety of electrical hazards that can happen with high voltages, but also low voltage contacts such as sticking a knife into a plugged-in toaster or

jumping off the dock into a lake. The presentation also instructs kids what to do if a power line knocks down onto your vehicle.

Three LCP linemen attended to answer questions about being a lineman. Special thanks to Joe Bibich, Paul Erpelding and Adam Marotz for helping kids understand the importance of electricity service and job opportunities as a rural electric lineman.

LCP will offer more safety demonstrations for students in 2018. If your school is interested, contact Tami Zaun at [tzaun@lakecountrypower.com](mailto:tzaun@lakecountrypower.com).



## Bucket rides, prizes and picnics

### Time for Member Appreciation Days

Member Appreciation Days is almost here. This annual event is for Lake Country Power members when the co-op celebrates its membership with a picnic lunch, bucket rides, attendance gifts and a chance for kids to win a new bicycle.

The festivities are scheduled for 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

**August 15:**  
Mountain Iron Service Center

**August 16:**  
Kettle River Service Center

**August 17:**  
Grand Rapids Service Center

Come with any questions you may have about our heating and cooling programs as well. An informational table will be available at each event where you can speak with a member service technician about our Energy Wise off-peak or dual fuel programs, rebates or any other technical questions.

Kids will have fun pedaling the energy bike, going for bucket rides and having a chance to win a grand prize. Three boys and three girls will win a new bicycle from LCP during the three-day event.



### Recipe Corner

#### Rhubarb Muffins

Mary Sue Fedie, Stillwater, MN

- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¼ cup chopped nuts (optional)
- Combine and set aside.
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1 egg
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ tsp soda
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ¾ cup brown sugar
- ½ cup buttermilk
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 cup rhubarb, cut up fine. Beat the oil, egg, vanilla and sugar together. Add buttermilk. Stir in flour and rhubarb.



Lightly grease muffin tin. Fill each 2/3 full. Sprinkle each with ½ tsp of reserved mixture. Bake 325 degrees for 15 – 18 minutes, or when inserted toothpick comes out clean.

Submit your favorite recipe to Lake Country Power, Attn. Editor, 2810 Elda Drive, Grand Rapids, MN 55744, or e-mail [tzaun@lakecountrypower.com](mailto:tzaun@lakecountrypower.com). If your entry is drawn and printed in Newsline, you'll receive a \$5 credit on your electric bill. Entries must include name, address and phone number on account. Recipes will be published as space allows.





## Condensed Board Minutes

### April 25, 2017 • Regular Monthly Meeting

#### The following reports were given:

President Craig Olson reported about communications with LCP staff during the recent month regarding LCP's 2017 annual meeting. He welcomed new directors Jason Long and Daniel Kingsley to the LCP board.

Greg Randa, LCP general manager, gave a brief update about the LCP employee who had an electrical contact on March 7. He also reported about the Moose Lake power contract, GreenTouch state park clean-up, Grand Rapids annexation, LCP new director orientation, and the service center building project.

Mark Bekk, LCP director of finance and administration, reported about the February 2017 unaudited financials.

#### The following actions were taken:

Approved that the LCP board authorize

LCP staff to contact and voice opposition to Great River Energy about the transmission rate methodology being considered that would not be favorable to LCP and the other northern cooperatives. LCP will vote against the purchase power contract extension if the rate methodology being discussed is included in it.

Approved the 2016 capital credit allocation to member accounts.

Approved the 2018 LCP annual meeting be held April 19 at the Cromwell-Wright School gymnasium beginning at 6:00 p.m.

*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) in the "Member's Area." You'll need to sign up for access if you haven't already. Or call 800-421-9959 for a printed copy.*



This picture earned a spot in the co-op calendar for July 2017. Andrene Myrum of Iron, MN canoes her favorite lake near Marcell every summer where she's been conducting a loon survey for 20 years. Happy birthday, Andrene!



### ENERGY EFFICIENCY Tip of the Month

Let the sun work for you! Consider solar lights for outdoor lighting. Solar cells convert sunlight into electricity that can be stored in a battery and tapped at night to make light. Check manufacturers' instructions to make sure your solar lights are situated to receive sufficient sunlight to recharge during the day. Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## Comparative Operating Statement

Year-To-Date — April 2017

	2017	2016
Electric Operating Revenue	\$ 31,907,732	\$ 30,699,252
Cost of Purchased Power	17,447,582	16,539,494
Distribution Expense - Operations & Maintenance	3,844,954	3,240,731
Consumer Accounts Expense & Informational	1,381,006	1,314,160
Administrative and General Expense	2,124,990	2,144,536
Depreciation, Interest Expense and Other Deductions	4,749,367	4,807,934
<b>TOTAL ELECTRIC OPERATING EXPENSES</b>	<b>29,547,899</b>	<b>28,046,857</b>
Net Electric Operating Margins	2,359,833	2,652,395
Non-Operating Margins	1,073,683	1,007,403
<b>TOTAL MARGINS BEFORE SUBSIDIARIES</b>	<b>3,433,515</b>	<b>3,659,798</b>
Net Income (Loss) from Subsidiaries	(192,928)	(246,534)
<b>TOTAL MARGINS</b>	<b>\$ 3,240,588</b>	<b>\$ 3,413,264</b>
<b>TOTAL KWH SOLD (YEAR-TO-DATE)</b>	<b>236,853,777</b>	<b>241,780,184</b>

**Editor's Note:** These financials are condensed. A complete set of financials can be viewed at [www.lakecountrypower.coop](http://www.lakecountrypower.coop) in the "Member's Area." You'll need to sign up for access if you haven't already. Or call 800-421-9959 for a copy.

## Co-op Contacts

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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 than 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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