



NewsFlashes

SEPTEMBER 2022



Fall weather means harvest time on the farm. *Be on the lookout for overhead power lines and utility poles.* Make sure there are ample clearances when moving large machinery. **Stay safe!**

CEO Column

New Vegetation Management Technology Approved by LREC Board of Directors—AiDash

I am pleased to announce that LREC is purchasing new satellite imagery software, AiDash, to continue its prioritization of reliability. This satellite imagery will allow LREC to quickly and efficiently put into action a vegetation management program that we have never seen before. The satellite technology will allow LREC to focus on vegetation management from our office and decrease the amount of time in the field conducting costly and less certain physical inspections. This new technology will be a game changer for us because it will provide an extremely clear and accurate picture of risks created by the huge amount of vegetation throughout our service territory. Imagery captured from this technology will detect current vegetation growth, accurately predict the growth of the vegetation in the future, measure clearance between vegetation and our infrastructure—both horizontally and vertically, and greatly reduce the number of outages associated with trees and other vegetation. I am excited to see how this technology will continue to improve reliability for our members.

New Programs Being Considered

LREC is in the process of learning more about new demand response programs to benefit our members, including a *Peak Time Rebate (PTR)* program, *Time of Use (TOU) Rate*, and *Residential Demand Rate (RDR)* program.

The *Peak Time Rebate* program would reward members who conserve energy during certain hours when a “peak event” is called. A peak event is a block of time (usually a few hours) when we expect the system’s electric load to be at a very high level and very expensive. This can occur on very hot days when air conditioners are on full blast or on very cold days when heating systems are running full throttle. On such days with high electric usage, more power

Tim Thompson’s CEO Column is continued on the back page →



Lake Region Electric Cooperative Receives National Recognition

On July 26th, 2022, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Board of Directors unanimously selected Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC) to receive the 2022 prestigious Electric Cooperative Purpose Award. Headquartered in Arlington, Virginia, NRECA represents more than 900 consumer-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperatives, public power districts, and public utility districts in the United States, and is guided by a 48 person board of directors.

The Electric Cooperative Purpose Award recognizes electric cooperatives that work with their membership to make outstanding contributions, which result in visible, lasting improvements to the quality of life and the purpose of the cooperative in the community.

In its letter giving notice to LREC of the award, NRECA recognized LREC’s great advancement of its solar-wind hybrid facilities, as well as its GoWest Solar program offering renewable energy solutions to meet the needs of LREC members.

The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) Board of Directors, consisting of representatives from other Minnesota electric cooperatives, nominated LREC for the award. “The Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) board was pleased to nominate LREC as a shining example of the dedicated and innovative work Minnesota’s cooperatives are doing to improve the lives of those within their communities,” said MREA CEO Darrick Moe.

After LREC was informed that it had been nominated for this award, LREC submitted information and letters of support, all of which collectively highlighted its solar-wind hybrid facilities, GoWest Solar program, Lake Region Energy Services

(LRES)—the natural gas subsidiary of LREC, Grid-interactive Electric Thermal Storage Water Heater Controllers Pilot Program, Community Solar Project, Hydroponic GroShed, Distribution Grid Improvement Plan, Generator Program, and Battery Storage Pilot Program, as well as engagement opportunities provided for members who are interested in learning more about LREC.



Current NRECA CEO Jim Matheson, and former Utah congress member, dialed into LREC headquarters to virtually announce that LREC was the recipient of the award. The board and employees of LREC were honored to receive this award on behalf of LREC’s membership. LREC CEO Tim Thompson said the award is a testament to the LREC members, board of directors, and employees. “We’re member focused and our board and employees all want LREC to be our members’ local, trusted energy services provider,” Thompson said.

LREC will be recognized at the NRECA Regional meeting in Minneapolis in September and will be officially presented the award at the 2023 NRECA PowerXchange conference in Nashville, where industry leaders from across the country share ideas, strategies, and best practices.

CEO Column *Continued from front page.*

is needed to support our system. This additional power usually comes from resources that are inefficient and have higher costs. The PTR program would help avoid buying electricity from higher cost resources by having members voluntarily reduce usage during peak events. The rebate would be a payment that rewards members for reducing electric use during peak events.

The *Time of Use Rate* would allow you to have control over the price that you pay for electricity. During off-peak hours, the TOU Rate would be less than the cost of the regular residential rate. During on-peak hours, the TOU Rate would be higher than the regular residential rate. By choosing to operate your appliances off-peak, when rates are cheaper, you may see significant savings on your electric bill.

The *Residential Demand Rate* would allow for a reduced energy rate with a demand component on the bill to encourage you to use off-peak energy. We would help our members reduce their demand by providing them with peak day notifications, enrollment in demand response programs, and automatic startup of standby generators. When demand is carefully monitored, members utilizing this program should expect to save money on their electric bills.

We want to continue to fill your toolbox with programs and incentives to use electricity in the most efficient and cost-effective ways possible.

LREC Receives National Award from National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA)

At LREC's July strategic planning session, NRECA CEO Jim Matheson joined LREC virtually to announce to the employees and board of directors that LREC was the recipient of the 2023 Electric Cooperative Purpose Award. This award recognizes one cooperative per year that works with its membership to make outstanding contributions resulting in visible, lasting improvements to the quality of life and purpose of the cooperative in the community. It was an honor for LREC to win this award. It is very rewarding for me to witness everything that our employees, board of directors, and members have done throughout the years to earn such recognition.

Tim Thompson



We are continually looking for ways to better connect with our members. We are excited to bring a new element to our newsletters — **Virtual Chats!** Simply scan the QR code to the left with a mobile device equipped with a camera and/or QR reader app to see a video from LREC CEO Tim Thompson. We believe that offering more methods of communication will be a positive experience that assists with learning more about your co-op.

Coffee
WITH THE
Co-op



Apps +
CHATS



We are excited to continue our mini events across our service territory in **Campbell** and **Ashby**. We look forward to meeting with each of you.

- ▶ **September 21st** Apps + Chats at **Number 9 Bar & Grill** in Campbell from 4:00-5:30 p.m.
- ▶ **October 11th** Coffee with the Co-op at **Ashby City Restaurant** from 7:00-8:30 a.m.

DSM Rate Increase in 2023

Great River Energy (GRE), LREC's power provider, has informed us that there will be a demand side management (DSM) rate increase, effective January 2023. The DSM adjustment is due to price increases for natural gas and the MISO markets. LREC, along with GRE's other member cooperatives, are working with GRE to find the best strategy to address the price increases for natural gas and the MISO markets.

LREC will continue conversations with GRE until a finalized rate has been established, and we will continue to provide you with updates as we get additional information from GRE. For our members, LREC will directly pass the DSM rate amount to our membership, not collecting any additional margin as a result of the adjustment. We will ensure our rates remain competitive and we will continue to work to keep rates as low as possible. Additionally, please note that even after the DSM rate increase, off-peak electricity will continue to be a better value than propane.

If you have any questions or concerns about the DSM rate increase, please connect with our customer service team at (800) 552-7658 or through chat at www.lrec.coop.

Cold Weather Rule

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule (*MN Statute, Ch. 235, Sec. 216B.097*) protects residential utility customers during the cold winter months. Under this rule, your electric service will not be disconnected from October 1st through April 30th because of non-payment provided you meet ALL of the following conditions:

- You declare an inability to pay.
- Your total household, not individual, income is less than 50% of the state median income. You must provide the necessary documentation to support this condition.
- You enter into and make reasonable, timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

If you do not meet all of the above conditions, then you do not qualify for the winter shut-off protection. However, you still can continue to receive electric service if you call us to make a mutually acceptable payment arrangement.

Residential customers who cannot qualify for winter shut-off protection and who cannot pay their full bill may make special payments over an extended period of time. To arrange for scheduled payments, call (218) 863-9842.

COLD WEATHER RULE FAQs

Can my power be disconnected for non-payment in the winter? **Yes it can.**

How do I sign up for the CWR protection? **Contact the LREC Accounts Receivable Team by calling (218) 863-9842 or visit www.lrec.coop/cwr and fill out the form there.**

What if I can't make my scheduled payments? **Contact the LREC Accounts Receivable Team by calling (218) 863-9842 to discuss a different payment plan. If you do not make payments your service can be disconnected.**

Energy Assistance

The Energy Assistance Program is designed to assist income eligible households with the cost of energy/heating their homes. To receive assistance, household income for the last three months must be below certain income guidelines.

Request Application from Mahube-Otwa:

Detroit Lakes: (218) 847-1385	Mahnomen: (218) 935-5022	Wadena: (218) 632-3600
Fergus Falls: (218) 739-3011	Park Rapids: (218) 732-7204	Toll-free: (888) 458-1385

Cozy comfort.
Even on the coldest days.



Steffes Forced Air Comfort Plus
(Cutaway view)



Steffes Room Heater
(Cutaway view)



Steffes uses specially-designed **ceramic bricks** to store vast amounts of heat for extended periods of time.

Enjoy both **off-peak savings** and **comfort** while heating your home with Electric Thermal Storage (ETS).



Steffes Forced Air Comfort Plus for Whole House

- ▶ Steffes Forced Air Comfort Plus provides the optimal balance of *comfort* and *efficiency*.
- ▶ The ETS heater stores off-peak energy with no back-up system required.
- ▶ The system is eligible for our **ETS rate**, and a **\$50 per KW rebate** on installation.
- ▶ Get up to **\$630 rebate** by installing an air source heat pump (combining with ASHP reduces electricity usage of ETS systems by nearly 50%).
- ▶ Interest-free **EASY-PAY** available—pay for heater over 48 months on your bill.

Steffes Room Heater

- ▶ Enjoy comfortable, radiant heat with a quiet, variable speed fan.
- ▶ This is a great way to heat a single room or entire home—Steffes Room Heaters can replace wood stoves, wall furnaces, or electric baseboard.
- ▶ Qualifies for our **ETS rate** and **dual fuel/short term storage rate**.
- ▶ Up to **\$50 per KW rebate** available on installation.
- ▶ Interest-free **EASY-PAY** available—pay for heaters over 48 months on your bill.



Lake Region Electric Cooperative
Pelican Rapids, MN
(800) 552-7658 • www.lrec.coop

Start saving today! Call our energy management specialists at (800) 552-7658.