



# News Flashes

AUGUST 2024

## Investing in Vegetation Management

When severe storms roll through our service territory, power outages often follow. The band of destructive storms that swept through our area on Saturday, July 13<sup>th</sup> left a lot of damage in its path. Strong winds contributed to numerous downed trees and power lines, leaving approximately 6,000 members without power.



Our hardworking lineworkers, along with contract crews called in to assist, went straight to work getting power restored to all members as quickly and safely as possible. The storms created many small outages across our system, which lengthened the restoration time. I want to express my gratitude to our members who remained patient throughout the restoration process.

I also want to thank our team of dedicated employees who put a pause on their own lives to ensure power was safely restored for our members. Whether they were out in the field making repairs, dispatching crews, or answering calls our employees went above and beyond to ensure power was restored as quickly as possible.

### Vegetation Management

To minimize the impact storms like this have on our lines, Lake Region invests heavily in vegetation management. This year alone, we plan to spend approximately \$2.3 million on our vegetation management plan. Spraying, mowing, and trimming are each utilized by the cooperative to keep power lines free from trees and other vegetation.

Assisting us in this ongoing effort is Carr's Tree Service, headquartered in the City of Ottertail. As a part-owner of Carr's Tree Service, Lake Region shares in its financial success and also has a say in determining the equipment necessary to maintain our system. I am thankful



Tim Thompson's CEO Column continued on page 2 →

## ORU Awards \$29,325 to Local Organizations

LREC's Operation Round Up program gives back to vital organizations doing good in our backyard and across the state. Funds were recently granted to 12 local organizations. A total of \$29,325 was awarded by the Operation Round Up Board of Trustees at the July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 meeting. The funds were distributed as follows:



- ◆ **\$3,000** to the City of Battle Lake for *new pickleball courts*
- ◆ **\$5,000** to the Becker County Historical Society and Museum for *a pollinator and eagle education garden*
- ◆ **\$750** to the Dent Diamond-hawks Amateur Baseball Team for *equipment, uniforms, league dues, and umpire fees*
- ◆ **\$3,000** to the Building a Legacy Education Foundation to purchase *new books for students*
- ◆ **\$2,000** to Henning HOPE to purchase *winter wear and stocking stuffers for those in need*
- ◆ **\$3,000** to the Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge to install *sound absorbing panels in the Discovery Center*
- ◆ **\$600** to the Tordenskjold Free Mission Cemetery Association to help with *perpetual care of cemetery*
- ◆ **\$750** to the Faith Lutheran Church-Quilters to purchase *quilting materials*
- ◆ **\$1,000** to the Wild Rice Peacemakers for *events supporting local youth*
- ◆ **\$2,225** to the Pelican Rapids Living at Home Block Nurse Program to *reimburse volunteers providing transportation to the elderly*
- ◆ **\$3,000** to the Friends of Phelps for *supplies to assist with educational tours for students at Phelps Mill*
- ◆ **\$5,000** to the Patriot Assistance Dogs for *updating rooms in residence hall used when veterans are being matched with their service dog*



Since 2007, Operation Round Up has awarded **\$742,025**. Funding for ORU stems from LREC members rounding up to the nearest dollar on their electric bills each month. If you would like to participate in ORU, please visit [www.lrec.coop/oru](http://www.lrec.coop/oru).

ORU recently awarded MnFIRE a grant for a new Crisis Response Fund.

# CEO Column

Continued from front page.

for the good relationship we have with Carr's Tree Service and for their shared commitment to safety.

Carr's Tree Service uses specialized equipment to efficiently clear our right-of-ways. To give our members a look at this equipment in action, we created a brief video (*scan the QR code to the right to watch it*).



In the video, you will see the *Kwik-Trim* used to cut individual branches and small trees with a rotating blade attached to a boom. You'll also see the *Fecon Mower* used to cut and mulch brush. This modern equipment, combined with new technologies like LREC's *AiDash* program, helps us be incredibly productive and efficient in our vegetation management efforts.

## Local Solar Array

At a recent board meeting, Lake Region decided to move forward on a USDA New ERA funds application as part of a local solar array. This is part of the Great River Energy (GRE) consortium we are a participant in. The array would benefit the local economy and its output would be consumed by our members.

We will keep you posted as we continue to move forward with this application and await a response from the USDA. If the project is approved, construction would likely take place in 2026.

## Looking Ahead

As we plan for the future, the cooperative's wholesale power provider, Great River Energy, is anticipating another rate increase in January. While we are committed to remaining good stewards of our members' money, there are factors like wholesale power costs and inflation that are out of our control. If GRE's increase is approved, Lake Region will likely need to pass it through to our members. We want you to be aware of this possibility and will continue to keep you up-to-date as we hear more.

As always, we appreciate the opportunity to serve all of you!

*Tim Thompson*



# Modern Technology Reduces Load Control Disruptions



Homeowners, farmers, and commercial/industrial businesses experienced fewer interruptions this spring to the appliances they have enrolled in their cooperative's demand response programs thanks to grid modernization tools implemented by Great River Energy (GRE).

Through the dual fuel load control program, cooperative members can sign up to have their heating systems fueled by a secondary system – such as oil or gas, rather than electricity – during times of peak electricity use. In exchange, members receive a discounted electricity rate and the cooperative is able to reduce wholesale costs. GRE is also able to dispatch these resources to reduce the impacts of high market prices.

Members often associate dual fuel dispatch with extremely cold weather, but that is not always the case.

"Members don't always understand why we have to control load during shoulder months," said Dylan Aafedt, Vice President of Business Solutions for Lake Region Electric Cooperative, referring to the spring and fall months when tem-

peratures are relatively mild. "This can create dissatisfaction and result in calls to the co-op from members looking for an explanation."

GRE was able to avoid dispatching demand response resources over the March and April billing peaks because **meter data** and **data analytics** have improved to the point that the power provider was able to replicate the effects of demand response without dispatching member resources, reducing inconvenience to members.

Technology investments and collaboration among GRE and its member cooperatives made this possible. Member cooperatives shared data associated with dual fuel program usage from their advanced metering infrastructure (AMI). GRE was able to use this large sample of data to predict the available demand response for this program for any hour of the day and across any temperature condition.

This flexibility of GRE's distributed energy demand response programs reduces costs, promotes reliability, and encourages positive member experiences.



## WANT TO STAY IN THE KNOW REGARDING LOAD CONTROL?

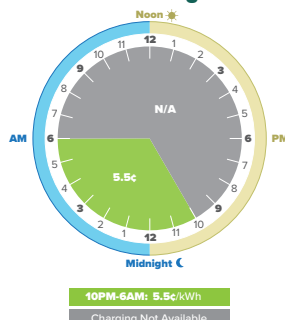
Sign up for load control text or email notifications for the load control programs you participate in. If you are unsure which load control programs those might be, simply give us a call or chat with us online. Learn more and sign up at: [www.lrec.coop/loadcontrol](http://www.lrec.coop/loadcontrol).

# Plug in with LREC's Electric Vehicle Rates

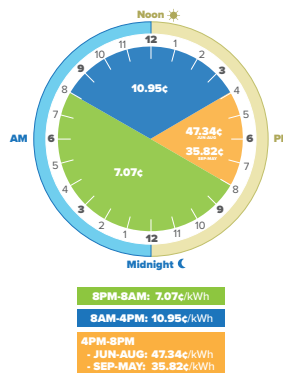
Electric vehicle owners can save money every time they charge their car with LREC's EV rates. LREC offers three rate options: *storage*, *time-of-use*, and *plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV)*. The storage rate has predetermined charging times set by LREC and is the lowest cost option. The time-of-use rate allows members to choose what time they charge their car and how much they want to pay. The PHEV charging rate remains the same at all times but is controlled with LREC's dual fuel program.



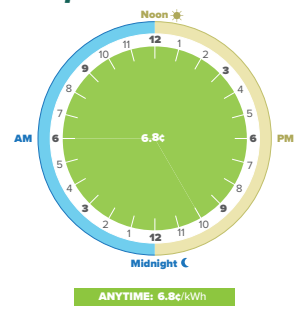
### Electric Storage Rate



### Time-of-Use Rate



### Hybrid Rate (PHEV)



LREC offices will be closed for **Labor Day** on September 2<sup>nd</sup>.