



# NewsFlashes

OCTOBER 2024

## Member Satisfaction Survey

Each fall, the leadership team at Lake Region Electric Cooperative spends time reflecting on the past year and preparing for the year to come. As a member-owned cooperative, we are always looking for ways to best serve our membership. Strategic planning allows us to look at the larger picture and make sure we're focusing on the important things.

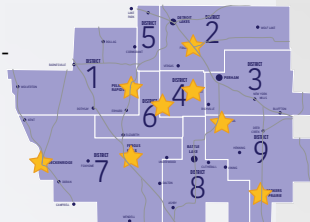
We recognize that our members have different needs and priorities, and we value your input about how the cooperative is run. Conducting a member satisfaction survey is one way we can gather input from a large number of members at one time. Historically, we've had very good participation in our member survey, which reflects strong member engagement.

The feedback we receive from the survey directly influences the cooperative's strategic planning and strategic thinking. Board members, management, and employees all carefully review survey results and use that information to develop future plans. We want to know how we are doing and how we can better serve you. Your voice matters to us.

This year, Lake Region will send an electronic member satisfaction survey to our members in mid-October. When you receive the survey, via either text message or

email, please take the time to respond to the questions asked and provide us with your valuable input.

Member engagement and member satisfaction go hand in hand toward building a strong cooperative. As I mentioned in last month's column, Lake Region held events over the past year throughout our service territory that each offered unique opportunities for member engagement. Whether it was the Twins baseball clinic in Breckenridge or the Energy Forum in Ottertail, these events reflect our commitment to serve and educate our area communities. Take a moment to check out this map that highlights some of the places where we've held member engagement activities over the past year.



On the topic of member engagement, I want to take a moment to encourage you to attend one of Lake Region's district meetings that will be coming up in January. These grassroots meetings give members an opportunity to discuss cooperative business and share ideas for the future.

Let's continue to work together to build the co-op of the future that we can all be proud of.



*Tim Thompson*

## The 7 Co-op Principles

October is *National Cooperative Month* – a great time to celebrate what makes co-ops around the world unique. One difference between cooperatives and other institutions is co-ops all operate according to the same set of core principles.



### *Open & Voluntary Membership*

Cooperatives are open to anyone able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.



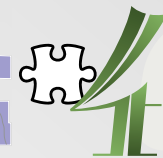
### *Democratic Member Control*

Cooperatives are controlled directly by their members. Elected representatives are accountable to membership, and members are expected to participate actively.



### *Members' Economic Participation*

Members control the capital of their cooperative and are expected to operate as a not-for-profit organization. If there is a surplus in capital, it is used to fund improvements or expansion, or it is credited to members.



### *Autonomy & Independence*

Cooperatives are autonomous, democratic, and always controlled by members.



### *Education, Training, & Information*

Cooperatives educate members and train employees so they will continue to grow and improve. They also inform legislators and the public about the benefits and nature of cooperatives.



### *Cooperation Among Cooperatives*

The cooperative movement is strengthened by collaboration between cooperative organizations. This can happen at the local, national, and international levels.



### *Concern for Community*

Cooperatives work for sustainable development in their communities through policies agreed upon by their members.

# LREC Board Tours Service Territory

Cooperatives are governed by a board of directors elected by, and accountable to, the cooperative's membership. To best serve members, Lake Region Electric Cooperative's directors and leadership team recently toured LREC's service territory. Some of the sites visited included a *Distribution Grid Improvement Plan (DGIP)* project involving moving hard-to-reach overhead lines underground (as well as moving them from swampland to a road right-of-way), an ethanol plant, member-owned wind and solar installations, LREC's wind-solar hybrid, and a vegetation management location. Seeing these projects and looking at the different types of electrical loads Lake Region serves helps add perspective to board discussions. The field trip proved to be a valuable experience for everyone who participated.

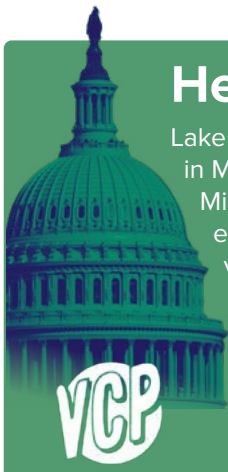


## Member Satisfaction Online Survey

Please look for our *member satisfaction survey* to arrive in October. The survey will be sent via email or text message and will come from one of the following:

**Email:** [lrec@lrec.coop](mailto:lrec@lrec.coop) **or** **Text:** (218) 853-5732

Please take this opportunity to let us know what you think!  
*Note: this is an electronic survey—if you would like to receive it, but are not signed up for SmartHub, please contact us before October 1<sup>st</sup> to make sure we have your email address and/or cell phone number.*



## Help Keep Energy Reliable & Affordable in Minnesota

Lake Region Electric Cooperative is just one of 50 electric cooperatives that serve rural energy consumers in Minnesota. We have partnered with other Minnesota cooperatives through our statewide organization, Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA), and our national organization, National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), to ensure we have a voice at the table. We want to make sure cooperative voices are heard when it comes to energy policy in Minnesota.

Help us advocate for reliable and affordable energy for all of Minnesota's energy consumers by signing up for **Voices for Cooperative Power (VCP)**. This network of electric cooperative member-consumers is working to ensure the needs of rural America are reflected in state and national policy decisions.

Learn more and sign up at [voicesforcooperativepower.com/minnesota](http://voicesforcooperativepower.com/minnesota)

**NEW:** Get Minnesota-specific notifications by signing up for *VoterVoice* alerts at [www.mrea.org/advocacy/take-action](http://www.mrea.org/advocacy/take-action)

## Electric Heating Sales Tax Exemption

Electricity sold for residential space heating, when used as the primary source of heat, is exempt from Minnesota sales tax for the usage months of November through April. Separately metered off-peak systems are also eligible for the sales tax exemption.

To qualify, members must complete the *Sales Tax Exemption Certificate for Residential* form located at [www.lrec.coop/taxexempt](http://www.lrec.coop/taxexempt). You only need to fill out the form once and it is in effect until you notify us otherwise.

### Note: Businesses, Organizations, and Nonprofits

Any business, organization, or nonprofit that has not recently updated its exemption status should visit [www.lrec.coop/taxexemptorg](http://www.lrec.coop/taxexemptorg) and submit an updated *Sales Tax Exemption Certificate for Businesses, Organizations, and Nonprofits*.

## Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule runs from **October 1<sup>st</sup> to April 30<sup>th</sup>**. Please note: you can still be disconnected during the winter months unless you call our office and make payment arrangements.



If you are experiencing difficulty paying your electric bill, you may be eligible for Cold Weather Protection and assistance through Minnesota's *Energy Assistance Program*. The program is free and provides an average benefit of \$500, plus additional support to respond to emergencies. Learn more and apply at [www.lrec.coop/mn-eap](http://www.lrec.coop/mn-eap) or call our office at (800) 552-7658 for assistance. The deadline to apply for energy assistance during the winter of 2024-2025 is May 31<sup>st</sup>, 2025.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT [www.lrec.coop/cwr](http://www.lrec.coop/cwr)**

