



# NewsFlashes

FEBRUARY 2022



## CEO COLUMN

### District Meetings in February

I always enjoy this time of the year because it allows members to connect with each other at district meetings, and this year we can hold them in-person. By the time you receive this newsletter, Districts 3, 6, and 9 have had their district meetings this month. If you were not able to attend a district meeting, I want to share with you the various topics covered.

### Member Engagement

The district meetings included updates on our continued desire to increase member engagement through events such as *Coffee with the Co-op* and *Brews + Your Views*. Last year was the first year we put these events on. I believe they provided a fresh and unique option for members and LREC employees to engage in great discussions. We also reached our goal of coordinating a Virtual Member Advisory Committee (VMAC) that allows members to interact and engage with each other on specific topics through Facebook. VMAC is off and running and we are excited to learn from and engage with our members through this platform.

### Continued Rate Stability

We have experienced rate stability for several years and know that rate stability is important to our members, so we continue to work hard and be creative to develop ways to sustain our rate stability. I think our efforts have paid off. We anticipate no rate increases this year because of our robust rate stabilization plan, which includes:

- A standby generator program that generates revenue and assists LREC in maintaining rate stability
- LREC being one of the owners of Carr's Tree Service
- Lake Region Energy Services (LRES) provides an improved quality of life for its customers, while providing benefits to electric rate payers
- Local renewable energy that provides our members with low-cost electricity

### Continued Focus On Reliability

Reliability is always a priority. We have utilized new technology, innovation, and enhanced employee engagement to prevent outages. We are always looking to find new ways to improve reliability. Our Distribution Grid Improvement Plan (DGIP) has

## Secure Pay-By-Phone

### Pay-By-Phone System

To comply with the Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard, Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC) must move to an automated payment system. These worldwide requirements are designed to help organizations like LREC prevent fraud through increased data controls and security standards. Moving to this system ensures LREC can continue to accept debit and credit cards, along with check payments over the phone, in the most secure way possible. LREC migrated to this new system January 17<sup>th</sup>.



### Features include:

- A new user-friendly interface
- Enroll in automatic bill payments
- Securely store your credit card or bank account info for easy payments
- Additional security by adding a PIN to payments made by check
- Update your phone numbers
- No additional fees

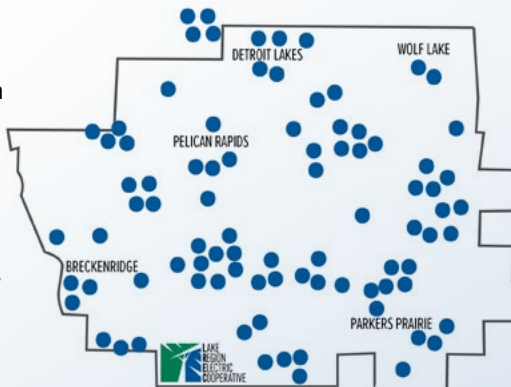
For detailed instructions on how to use this automated phone system, visit [www.lrec.coop/phonepay](http://www.lrec.coop/phonepay)

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

## Over \$44,000 Awarded to Local Organizations



Funds were granted to 109 local organizations throughout Lake Region Electric Cooperative's service area from the Operation Round Up Program. A total of \$44,175 was awarded by the Operation Round Up Board of Trustees at the January 10<sup>th</sup>, 2022 meeting. Since 2007, LREC's Operation Round Up program has awarded a total of \$479,370 to area organizations.



### Recent Donations Benefit:

- 5 County Extension Offices for 4-H
- 5 County Fair Associations
- 23 Cities for Community Festivals

### 26 Fire Departments

- 14 Food Pantries for March Food Drive
- 13 Post Prom Committees
- 23 Schools for Scholarships

**Operation Round Up** is a significant way LREC members come together to make a difference in our community. Extra change generated from rounding up the monthly bills of participating members is used to fund requests by local charitable organizations. These small amounts — between \$0.01 and \$0.99 — all add up to make a big impact. *Please consider signing up to be part of Operation Round Up and make an impact in our community. Sign up at [www.lrec.coop/oru](http://www.lrec.coop/oru).*



# Tim Thompson's CEO Column

—CONTINUED FROM FRONT

greatly and positively impacted a lot of members. Recent large projects that were completed include:

- A new GRE transmission substation northwest of Perham completed in 2019
- Lake Eunice substation upgrade completed in October 2021
- Upgraded GRE Frazee transmission substation completed in 2021 (and new transmission line anticipated to be completed in 2023)
- Upgraded GRE transmission system near Henning completed in 2021
- Ten Mile Lake substation upgrade and installation of new underground 3 phase line

## Financial Stability

LREC continues to be in a strong financial position. LREC's equity continues to increase and a total amount of \$1,838,490 of capital credits were retired (paid out to members) in 2021. Our financial stability is the result of all of us working together on a grassroots level, to make decisions that are in the best interests of our membership.

## Great River Energy (GRE) Update

Recent approvals by the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (MPUC) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will help facilitate GRE's sale of Coal Creek Station and its high-voltage direct-current (HVDC) system to Rainbow Energy Center (REC) and Nexus Line, respectively. The MPUC recently approved the transfer (from GRE to Nexus Line) of the construction permit for the Minnesota portion of the HVDC system that is located between central North Dakota and the Twin Cities. We anticipate that the MPUC will issue a final order confirming its approval in the near future. I am happy to report that part of the agreement will include an arrangement for REC and Nexus Line to provide GRE with the right to interconnect with the HVDC transmission system, using it to transmit 400 MW of wind energy that will be delivered to Minnesota. I believe the closing of this transaction will allow for increased renewable energy and continued reliability. GRE will operate and maintain the HVDC system under a 20-year contract with Nexus Line. The closing of the transaction is expected no earlier than May 1<sup>st</sup> and is subject to the approval of GRE's members.



Tim Thompson

# Participants Needed for Water Heater Pilot Program

LREC is seeking participants to join our *Aquanta Water Heater Pilot* program. Through this program, LREC members will receive a no-cost Aquanta retrofittable water heater controller. This cellular-enabled controller can be accessed through an app which a member installs on his or her mobile device. It's a fast and easy way to beat the peak and save money.

With the Aquanta controller, participating members will save money on their electric bill by helping LREC avoid peak power pricing—averting the need for new power generation. The Aquanta app allows members to gain new access to their water heater—both in control and data reporting.

This program is open to **new** water heater control signups with 80+ gallon water heaters only. Interested in participating? Apply at [www.lrec.coop/aquanta](http://www.lrec.coop/aquanta). For more information, email [lrec@lrec.coop](mailto:lrec@lrec.coop) or call (800) 552-7658.

## Benefits of the Aquanta Controller

- ✓ Members can see energy savings suggestions
- ✓ Weekly and monthly usage data comparison
- ✓ View how much hot water is available
- ✓ Remotely turn the water heater off/on or create a schedule
- ✓ Receive maintenance alerts, including leak detection
- ✓ Have automatic overheating shutoff
- ✓ Utilize the autonomous learning function that matches water heating with usage patterns
- ✓ Operate the water heater via a remote dashboard



# Pay the Easy Way with EASY-PAY

Lake Region Electric Cooperative (LREC) offers **EASY-PAY**, which is product-specific financing on products we sell. This is an on-bill financing option paid monthly (*terms and interest rates depend on the product being purchased*). Currently, **EASY-PAY** is available for water heaters purchased from LREC, Steffes electric thermal storage heating units, and our standby generators.

**WATER HEATERS   STEFFES HEATING UNITS   STANDBY GENERATORS**



If you are interested in one of the products above and would like to use **EASY-PAY**, please contact our energy services department at (800) 552-7658.

Note: LREC offices will be closed on February 21<sup>st</sup> for continuing employee education and employee appreciation.

# 2022 Energy Efficiency Rebates

## Heating and Cooling

Heat Pump Systems*	Ductless air source heat pump—ENERGY STAR or 16 SEER minimum	\$300
	Air source heat pump, SEER 14.5 -16+	Up to \$630*
	Geothermal heat pump, closed loop	Up to \$400 per ton (max \$4,000)
Central Air Conditioners*	Central air conditioner, SEER 14.5 or greater	\$50/unit*
Electric Thermal Storage (ETS) Heating Systems	Steffes ETS systems on short term storage	\$25 per kW
	All ETS systems on long term storage	\$50 per kW
Electronically Commutated Motor	Motor replacement only	\$50

## Water Heating

Heat Pump Water Heater	Must be ENERGY STAR	\$500
ETS Water Heater (4.8¢ rate)	Must be at least 100 gallons and grid enabled	\$400
Peak Shave Water Heater (5.4¢ rate)	Must be at least 80 gallons and grid enabled	\$100

## Miscellaneous

Electric Vehicle Charger Installation (must be on EV rate)	Level 2 chargers: \$500 Note: Level 2 chargers can receive up to \$800 instant rebate when purchased at <a href="http://energywisemnstore.com">energywisemnstore.com</a>	Up to \$500 (\$800 instant rebate at EnergyWise MN store)
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\*Rebates for high efficiency air source heat pumps and air conditioners are available only through qualified contractors registered at [HVACRedu.net](http://HVACRedu.net). Go to [www.lrec.coop](http://www.lrec.coop) and click on "QI A/C & ASHP Contractors" under Quicklinks to find qualified contractors in your area.

All rebates are subject to change. Please contact LREC to verify availability.

# Sign Up for Auto Pay & Paperless for a Chance to Win \$100!

Login to SmartHub and complete two steps: **1)** sign up for *Auto Pay* under *Billing & Payments*, and **2)** go paperless by turning off printed bills under *My Profile*. Each quarter, all new sign ups will be entered in a drawing for a \$100 bill credit.

**Q4 of 2021 \$100 Winner**  
*Jeffrey Sundal from Dalton*



# Off-Peak Water Heating



Water heaters on our electric thermal storage (ETS) rate use electricity during the low demand times when electricity costs less. Heat your water while you sleep and save up to 50% on your water heating rate.

- ⚡ Our 4.8¢ ETS rate is the lowest cost water heating rate available
- ⚡ Receive up to \$400 in rebates toward a new water heater
- ⚡ Use our **EASY-PAY** purchase plan and pay over time with your electric bill
- ⚡ There are peak shave rate options also available
- ⚡ We have 80 & 100 Gallon capacity water heaters available
- ⚡ Our residential water heaters have a lifetime warranty

Up to \$400 in rebates available!



*HTP Everlast  
Stainless steel tank*



*Marathon  
Lightweight  
tank that won't  
corrode*

Pay the easy way with **EASY-PAY**

**EASY-PAY** IS ON-BILL FINANCING OFFERED BY LREC. PAY FOR YOUR PURCHASE MONTHLY RATHER THAN AS A LUMP SUM.

# Off-Peak Space Heating

Steffes electric thermal storage (ETS) heaters store heat in specially-designed ceramic bricks for extended periods of time so you can stay warm while saving money! Steffes offers two products for your home — *room heaters* and *whole house forced air*.

## Steffes Forced Air

- ⚡ System is eligible for 4.8¢ ETS rate
- ⚡ Get \$50 per kW rebate for Steffes Comfort Plus on ETS
- ⚡ Combine with ASHP (*up to \$630 rebate available*) to reduce electricity usage of ETS systems by nearly 50%
- ⚡ Interest-free **EASY-PAY** — pay for heaters over 48 months on your bill with no money down!



## Steffes Room Heaters

- ⚡ Qualifies for **low 4.8¢ ETS rate** or **5.4¢ STS rate**
- ⚡ Up to \$50 per kW rebate
- ⚡ Great for a single room or entire home
- ⚡ Replaces wood stoves, wall furnaces, or electric baseboard
- ⚡ Interest-free **EASY-PAY** — pay for heaters over 48 months on your bill with no money down!



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