



# news & views

from Lincoln Electric Cooperative, Inc.

## LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 79th ANNUAL MEETING

Meeting of the Members is set for *Thursday*, April 16

**F**OR the first time in Lincoln Electric Cooperative's history, our Annual Meeting of the Members will be held on a **Thursday instead of the traditional Saturday**. Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to join us on Thursday, April 16, at the Lincoln County High School auditorium.

This annual gathering is more than just a business meeting – it's an opportunity to connect with your community, enjoy a delicious dinner provided by local restaurants, and stay informed about the latest updates from your cooperative.

Registration opens at 5 p.m., followed by the business meeting at 6 p.m. Every registered member will receive \$20 in Eureka Chamber of Commerce Bucks, redeemable like cash at participating local businesses. Registration also enters you into our prize drawings, featuring gift certificates, tools, propane and other great prizes. One lucky member will win the grand prize: a \$150 monthly credit on their electric bill for an entire year.

Beyond the prizes, the meeting offers valuable insights into your cooperative's operations, including financial reports and important updates, as well as a chance to engage with fellow members about LEC's future. To help streamline registration, please bring your Notice of Meeting, which includes a unique QR code. If you have not received your notice by April 13, call us



at 406-889-3301 to verify your membership status and mailing address.

Members representing an organization should remember to bring the completed delegate certificate located

on the back of the Notice of Meeting and present it at registration.

We're also excited to award \$12,000 in Luck of the Draw Scholarships during this year's Annual Meeting. Applicants (or their dependents) will receive a confirmation email the week of April 13. To be eligible, you must register at the Luck of the Draw table by 6:15 p.m. on the night of the meeting. Additional details can be found in this month's *Rural Montana* or on our website under the Community tab.

We look forward to seeing you on Thursday, April 16, for an evening of connection, information and celebration. If you have any questions, please contact us at 406-889-3301. We can't wait to welcome you! 

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2025	YEAR TO DATE DEC. 2024
KWh SALES	132,687,708	134,041,027
REVENUE	\$15,327,104	\$14,625,783
COST OF POWER	\$6,441,256	\$6,138,818
OPERATING EXPENSE	\$6,159,533	\$5,371,555
MARGINS	\$897,476	\$1,431,817
NUMBER OF MEMBERS	5,382	5,298
NUMBER OF METERS	6,830	6,709
MILES OF LINE	1,022	1,023
TOTAL UTILITY PLANT	\$42,952,548	\$40,246,637
MEMBER EQUITY	\$16,355,461	\$15,810,233
DECEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL USE (KWH)	1,937	1,886
DECEMBER AVERAGE RESIDENTIAL BILLING	\$200.24	\$187.59

## BUSINESS AND BOARDROOM BRIEFS

The regular meeting of the board of trustees was conducted on January 19. A quorum of trustees was present, and the board took the following actions:

- Approved attendance of any trustee who is interested in attending the gas symposium in Portland.
- Approved Luck of the Draw scholarships for 2026.
- Approved all trustees to attend the MECA prepaid education 2620 and 2640.

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE** at [www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop) for information on member services, billing, outages and safety, job postings, energy efficiency, community and general cooperative updates.

# 2026 LEC Board of Trustees Election

**L**INCOLN Electric Cooperative will hold an election for two open trustee seats in District 6. Trustee elections are conducted by mail-in ballot, and every member will receive a ballot in the mail in early March.

## How to Vote

Members may return completed ballots in one of two ways:

- By mail, using the provided return envelope
- In person, by dropping the ballot in the secure ballot box located at the LEC office

## Voting by All Members

Per the Cooperative's Bylaws, all members vote for trustees in every district, regardless of where they reside. For example, even members living in District 7 are eligible to vote for nominees in District 6. The two candidates receiving the highest number of votes will be elected. Members who return their completed ballot by the April 13 deadline will receive a \$10 bill credit on their next electric statement.

## Candidates

This year, four nominees are running for the open seats. Listed alphabetically by last name, they are:

Larry Benson, Ben Goodrich, Rick Peterson and Greg Stought.

Candidate biographies can be found in the February edition of *Rural Montana* and online at: [lincolnelectric.coop/cooperative/board-of-trustees/](http://lincolnelectric.coop/cooperative/board-of-trustees/). 

## LINCOLN ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

### CONTACT

1-406-889-3301  
[info@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:info@lincolnelectric.coop)  
[www.lincolnelectric.coop](http://www.lincolnelectric.coop)  
 Secure Payments: 1-833-890-6258

### ALWAYS REPORT OUTAGES TO:

1-406-889-3301

### OFFICE

312 Osloski Road  
 PO BOX 628  
 Eureka, Montana 59917

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Thursday  
 7:00 AM - 5:30 PM

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

**Rick Peterson**  
 President

**Joel Graves**  
 Vice President

**Sandi Mason**  
 Secretary-Treasurer

**Myra Appel**  
**Rodney Kane**  
**David Purdy**  
**Marianne Roose**  
**Tina Taurman**

**Matt Quinn**  
 General Manager

Lincoln Electric's Board of Trustees holds regular monthly meetings at the boardroom in the cooperative office. These are typically scheduled on the third Monday of each month at 4 p.m. Members are encouraged to attend. If you have any items of interest, please contact the general manager prior to the meeting.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:**  
**MONDAY, MARCH 16, 2026**



**Lincoln Electric  
 Cooperative, Inc.**

### HAVE A STORY SUGGESTION?

**SEND YOUR IDEAS TO:**  
[memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop](mailto:memberservices@lincolnelectric.coop)

# Managing your power peaks

## UNDERSTANDING THE DEMAND CHARGE

**Y**OU may have noticed a Demand Charge appearing on your electric bill. The demand charge measures how much power your household requires at one time, not just how much you use overall. Just as you possibly see a demand charge on your bill, Lincoln Electric Co-op (LEC) is billed a demand charge by our energy provider, Bonneville Power Administration.

Our meters record your home's energy use every 15 minutes throughout the day. The system then identifies the highest "demand" period during your billing cycle – that's the 15-minute window when your house-

**UNDERSTANDING OUR RATE STRUCTURE SERIES:**  
Part 1: Understanding the Usage Charge | SEE FEBRUARY  
Part 3: Understanding the System Maintenance Charge | COMING SOON

hold pulled the most power from the grid. Your bill reflects that peak demand level for the month.

### Why demand matters

Demand is a key factor in how much energy infrastructure is needed to serve our community. When many members run multiple high-energy devices at once – say, in the evening

when everyone's home – the grid must be sized to handle those peaks.

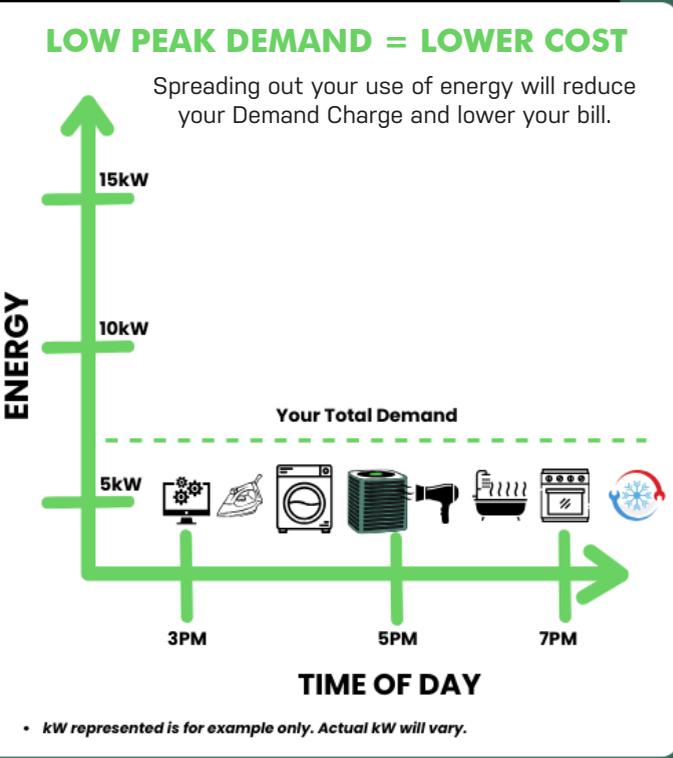
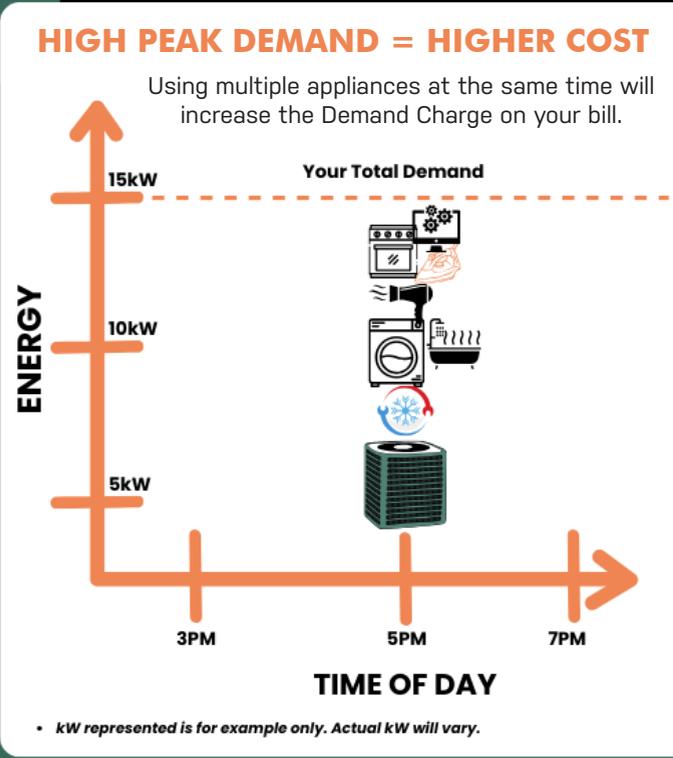
Your habits play a major role in determining your personal demand. For example:

- Running the **dryer, dishwasher and vacuum** at the same time can spike your demand.

*See DEMAND, next page*

## UNDERSTANDING PEAK DEMAND

The easiest way to reduce demand while meeting household energy consumption requirements is to spread usage throughout the day and night.



# Capital Credits Retirement in 2026

**D**ID you know you get certain benefits as a member of Lincoln Electric Cooperative? One of the primary benefits of membership is receiving capital credits. LEC is a cooperative, which is a nonprofit organization. Instead of profits, we have margins. Margins are any revenue we have that is more than our expenses each year. The total yearly margins are allocated to all members who were billed during the year.

Allocations are based on the dollar amount members contributed during the year by paying their electric bill. For example, if you contributed one

percent of our total yearly revenue, you would be allocated one percent of the total margins for that year.

Since 1975, your Board of Trustees has approved the retirement of capital credits. This year they authorized approximately 2.5 percent (2.55%) of our total member equity to be retired this year. This amounts to more than \$400,000 in capital credits returned in 2026 to our current and former members. Capital credit checks will be issued to members who contributed to margins in 2007, 2008 and/or 2024. The board elected to retire capital cred-

its as a 60/40 split between the oldest and newest contributions.

If you were an active LEC member in 2007, 2008, and/or 2024, you may have a check mailed in 2026, or a credit on your bill. Please note that checks are only written for capital credits of \$10 or more. If your capital credit retirement was less than that amount, it will be issued to you once your retired capital credit balance exceeds \$10.

Since our incorporation in 1948, LEC has proudly returned more than \$15.1 million in capital credits to our members. RM

## DEMAND

*Continued from previous page*

- Spreading those tasks throughout the day reduces your load and your demand charge.

- Heating season – **October through April** – often brings higher demand because electric heat systems activate after being idle all summer. That's why you may notice seasonal fluctuations even if your overall energy use seems consistent.

### Tips to save money

Managing your demand isn't about

using less power – it's about using it **more strategically**. Here are a few ways to help:

- **Stagger appliance use:** Don't run large energy users simultaneously.
- **Use timers and smart devices** to spread out energy use.
- **Monitor your consumption** through LEC's online member portal.
- **Lower heating demand** by insulating, weatherproofing and using programmable thermostats.

By being mindful of when you use power, you can lower your demand charge, reduce strain on the system and help LEC keep rates fair for everyone.

### Together we power the future

Each part of your electric bill – the System Maintenance Charge, the Usage Charge and the Demand Charge – plays a vital role in keeping Lincoln Electric Cooperative reliable, sustainable and fair for all members.

As we continue to face rising energy and infrastructure costs, understanding how rates are structured helps every member make informed choices. Our commitment to transparency remains strong: we work for you, because we **are** you – the members who own and power our cooperative. RM

## LUCK OF THE DRAW SCHOLARSHIPS

Drawing is held at the Lincoln Electric Cooperative Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 16, at the LCHS Auditorium in Eureka.

- Student and/or parent/legal guardian must be an active member of LEC and currently receiving electric service.
- Student and/or parent/legal guardian must register for the Annual Meeting and at the Luck of the Draw Scholarship table prior to 6:15 p.m. to be eligible.

See full eligibility requirements on the application.

Applications are available at [www.LincolnElectric.coop](http://www.LincolnElectric.coop) under the community tab

Completed applications  
are due by 5:30 p.m.,  
Thursday, April 2.