

Powerline Press

NEWSLETTER



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LREC Celebrates Final Beam Placement



Progress on Lake Region's new building has become noticeable in Hulbert. Lake Region broke ground in October 2023, and in August 2024, board members, employees, and members are feeling the excitement. The last beam was placed on August 6th after the board meeting. The new building will be located on the same property as the current office in Hulbert at 516 S Lake Region Rd and it will connect to the current building. The expansion was needed to house the growing staff of your local co-op.

As many are aware, Lake Region has experienced significant growth with the addition of new electric meters and thousands of fiber optic internet customers. This growth has led to the creation of new jobs at the co-op, nearly doubling our workforce. The new building is set to relieve our cramped facilities dating back to 1968. The new section of the building will add 55,000 square feet.

John Lee, CEO, called the current space extremely overcrowded and inadequate. "For example, 14 employees, from fiber techs to easement employees and GIS mapping, share an office in an old meeting room. Also, information technology (IT) was not even a concept when our original facilities was built."

The project is expected to be complete by the spring of 2025, adding space for our tech support call center, new board room, several new offices, and meeting rooms downstairs. [▶ Building continues on page 4](#)

▶ ***New Temporary Hulbert Office at Old Local Bank 110 E Main S.*** ◀

The Fight to Keep the Lights On

Electric Reliability Under Attack by Government Rules

During winter storms and summer heatwaves, many electric cooperatives set records for seasonal electricity demand. Through the extreme conditions, Associated Electric Cooperative Inc (AECI) — the power generator for Lake Region — and its six transmission cooperative member owners kept the power flowing reliably using a balanced portfolio of generation sources, including coal and natural gas power plants, hydropower, wind and a resilient transmission system.

While other utility companies resorted to rolling blackouts during the harsh weather, power kept flowing from Lake Region. In large part to the 24/7 coal power plants and natural gas generation designed to work when they are most needed, regardless of weather conditions.

▶ THE FUTURE IS CLOUDY

But the potential for a less reliable electric system looms. Earlier this year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a new rule targeting existing coal-fired and new gas-fired power plants with a goal of shutting down all fossil fuel power plants. This controversial rule will have devastating effects on the reliability of the electric grid by speeding up the retirements of coal and natural gas plants, which produce 60% of the energy in the U.S.

Reliability is not a concern of the EPA. The result for Lake Region and other co-ops is less reliable and more expensive electricity for our members. For those reasons, the EPA has been challenged in multiple lawsuits by a coalition of utilities in 27 states.

▶ FOSSIL FUEL GENERATION DELIVERS UNMATCHED RELIABILITY

AECI's diverse mix of generation resources keeps reliability and affordability as the top priorities for the electricity generated and delivered to members. As pressure from the EPA causes more reliable fossil fuel plants to shut down prematurely, what energy source will fill the gap? Coal and natural gas plants are the backbone of reliable and affordable power for Oklahoma electric cooperatives because they are available when needed 24/7. Renewable sources, such as wind and solar, cannot provide power with that same reliability.

When coal plants and natural gas generators are replaced by weather-dependent, intermittent sources like solar and wind, reliability will suffer while prices will increase.

Until there is a proven alternative with equal reliability, fossil fuel generation is a key part of keeping the lights on.

▶ INVEST IN A CLEANER ENVIRONMENT

Those who rely on the land, air and water for their livelihoods are deeply invested in taking care of the environment they depend upon. For Lake Region, safeguarding rural communities is a foundational value demonstrated through a history of proactive stewardship and compliance with local, state and federal regulations. "Given that clean air, water and land resources mean so much to the electric cooperative members we serve, our commitment to the environment is not just talk, but put into action," says Buster Geisendorfer, Associated board president. "Cooperative member-ownership and leadership of our cooperative ensures our values reflect those who use our electricity." Since 1993, Associated and its member-owners have spent more than \$1.1 billion to reduce air emissions by 90% at its coal power plants.

The improvements, which included a milestone conversion to cleaner low-sulfur coal, were the leading edge of AECI's proactive environmental work.

▶ PROTECTING WATER AND AIR

Since 2015, Associated and its members have invested more than \$202 million to meet coal and water mandates issued by the EPA, funding coal ash and water quality projects, including pond closures, water systems and groundwater quality monitoring. Part of that total includes \$69 million in recent projects for both New Madrid Power Plant and Thomas Hill Energy Center to remain compliant.

▶ MAKE YOUR OPINION KNOWN

Meeting reliability and environmental responsibilities is an ongoing commitment made more challenging and costly by recent EPA rules. Today more than ever, reliable and affordable power is at risk.

You can help. Send a letter to your member of Congress telling them to support reliable power by halting the EPA's unrealistic, unnecessary and expensive rules.

Scan QR code and send your letter today to the EPA.

voicesforcooperativepower.com/epa



Pole Inspections



LREC is now inspecting power poles in Cherokee County's which includes Tahlequah, Keys, Park Hill, and Welling. We are contracting with RMA Inspections to conduct the work. RMA Inspections may need to access members' properties by vehicle, ATV, or on foot in order

Cleaner Energy

Associated Electric Cooperative's Long-Term commitment to a healthy environment



Carbon Cut

From 2005 to 2023, AECI has reduced its carbon emissions rate by nearly 25%.



Wind Power

The addition of eight wind farms since 2007 has powered carbon emissions.



Natural Gas Generation

AECI has added cleaner burning natural gas plants, which results in carbon reduction.



Greenhouse Gas Drop

Since 1994, AECI has reduced total greenhouse gas emissions by 90%.

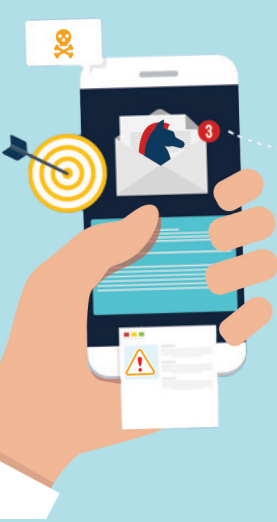


Environmental Investments

Since 2015, AECI has invested more than \$202 million to meet coal and water mandates issued by the EPA.

to complete the inspections. Their vehicles will be clearly marked with LREC contractor labels.

Inspections will consist of checking poles for damage, such as decay, bird holes, split tops, broken insulators, and other issues. The co-op aims to inspect more than 8,000 poles as part of our power reliability and system maintenance program.



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SCAMS & HOW TO SPOT THEM

Staying vigilant is essential to protect ourselves from fraudulent phone calls, text messages, and emails. Stay safe by following these tips.

1 Phone Scams: Callers posing as a representative from a reputable organization might claim there is an issue that needs your immediate action, such as a problem with your LREC account, a missed jury summons, or pending legal action.

- **Don't be pressured:** Don't make hasty decisions. Take your time and call the organization directly using an official phone number.
- **Avoid sharing personal information:** Don't share Social Security numbers or account numbers unless you have verified the caller.

2 Text Scams: Also known as 'smishing,' this scam involves sending messages to trick recipients into providing personal information or clicking on malicious links. These messages may appear to come from banks, delivery services, or friends.

- **Verify the sender:** Contact the organization directly using a trusted phone number or email.

- **Don't click on links:** These can lead to phishing websites designed to steal your information.

3 Email Scams: Phishing emails appear to be from legitimate companies and claim there is a problem with your account or that you have won a prize.

- **Look for red flags:** Be wary of emails with spelling errors or urgent language.
- **Hover over links:** See where they lead before clicking.
- **Use HomePass App:** Help protect your device from threats before they arrive.

New Building



► continued from page 1

Once the building is completed, we will have an event for our membership to come tour the new area and become familiar with what your co-op is doing to provide our members with safe, reliable, and competitive service for today and tomorrow. During the construction we have opened a temporary office location downtown Hulbert at the old Local Bank offices at 110 E Main St. We're here to serve you at this temporary location during our construction. 4842400

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Office Hours

Monday-Friday
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

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www.lakeregionfiber.com

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Hidden Account Number

Look for your account number hidden in this issue of the *Powerline Press*. If you find your number, Lake Region Electric will credit your next bill. To claim your credit, notify LREC's Hulbert office by phone during the month of publication.

The amount increases by \$10 with each issue your prize goes unclaimed to a maximum of \$50.

Cooperative bylaws are available upon request at Lake Region Electric Cooperative's office in Hulbert.