



**LRES**  
NATURAL GAS

# Energy News

Winter 2023

Since its creation in 2017, Lake Region Energy Services (LRES), the natural gas subsidiary of Lake Region Electric Co-operative (LREC), has continued to grow and expand. LRES would like to extend a huge *thank you* to our customers! It was a good year for LRES in 2022. During this past construction season, we extended our natural gas line to parts of the north and west sides of Marion Lake. LRES added 126 new customers in 2022, and we now have a total of 1,156 LRES customers!

One of the goals of LRES is to provide previously unserved areas with another safe and reliable energy source option, helping families, farms, businesses and communities save money at a time when so many other things

are at all time high prices. Historically high natural gas prices have been in the news a lot lately, and that is why I am so proud that we put together a solid rate plan and locked in favorable natural gas prices so that our rates will remain stable this winter.

We hope you have enjoyed the safety, reliability and affordability of the natural gas service you have received from LRES. In 2023, we will be focusing on adding customers within our current service area. LRES has no new projects planned at this time, but please look for updates on the LRES website at [www.lakeregionenergy.com](http://www.lakeregionenergy.com).

Thank you for being a customer of LRES!

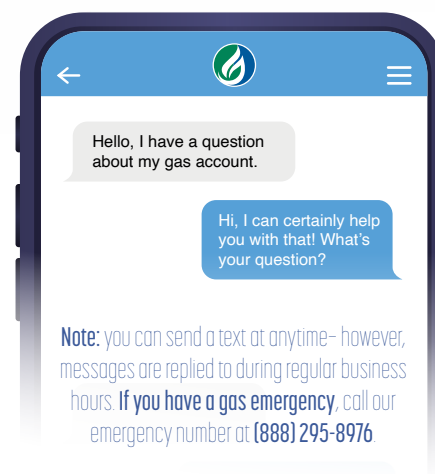


**Tim Thompson, LRES CEO**

## Have a question?

You can now simply send a text to initiate a chat with our customer service team:

**(218) 853-5737**



## Always Call Before You Dig!

Spring may seem far away now, but before long it will be time to start planning your spring projects! Remember, before you start digging—whether it's yard work, landscaping, or a new construction project—make sure to call *Gopher State One Call* (GSOC) a minimum of two business days in advance! Buried utility lines could exist just about anywhere you dig. To prevent damage to underground utilities please call GSOC at **(800) 262-1166** or the *Call Before You Dig* hotline at **811**. Report any damages to LRES immediately.

Call **(800) 262-1166** or **811**



## Safety: Please Keep Your Meters and Vents Clear

Keep the area around gas meter equipment clear of snow and ice. Remove heavy snow and ice from above that could fall on and damage the meter and cause a gas leak. *Carefully* move snow and ice by hand to avoid damaging equipment.

Blocked vents can cause furnaces and water heaters to shut down, a potential build-up of carbon monoxide, or a costly service call. Use a long screwdriver to clear snow and ice from the end of the pipes.



## Go Paperless & Get \$5 Bill Credit

Help us save money with paperless billing. You can choose to receive your monthly bill via email. Your account information is always available online. Go paperless and receive a one time **\$5 bill credit!**

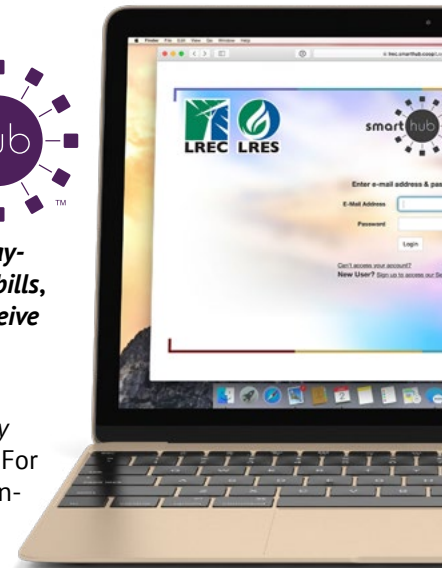
1. Visit *SmartHub* by clicking *View & Pay Bill* on our website.
2. Log in or register for SmartHub.
3. Click on *My Profile*.
4. Choose *Update My Printed Bill Settings*.
5. Change your printed bill status to *Off*.

## Manage Your Account with SmartHub



SmartHub provides secure access to **make payments, update your account information, view bills, see payment history, and manage how you receive bill notifications.**

Join hundreds of other customers using SmartHub! To sign up, click on the logo in My Account Center at [www.lakeregionenergy.com](http://www.lakeregionenergy.com). For mobile devices, visit your app store and download the *SmartHub* app.



## Options for Paying Your Bill

We have a number of convenient ways to pay your bill.

- **Make Payment with SmartHub:** Register for SmartHub or add natural gas to your current electric SmartHub (*LREC customers*) account at [www.lakeregionenergy.com/smarthub](http://www.lakeregionenergy.com/smarthub)
- **Automatic Bank Draft:** Your payment is drafted from your account. You still receive a monthly statement and your payment is always on time. Go to [www.lakeregionenergy.com/smarthub](http://www.lakeregionenergy.com/smarthub) to setup automatic bank drafts.
- **PayNow:** Make a one-time payment with only the account number on your bill and your last name—no need to register! Visit [www.lakeregionenergy.com/paynow](http://www.lakeregionenergy.com/paynow) to get started.
- **Budget Billing:** End monthly fluctuations on your gas bill – sign up for budget billing where you pay the *same amount every month*. Sign up for budget billing whether you pay online or by mail.
- **Pay by Mail:** Mail your payment and the bottom portion of the bill. Please allow time for payment to be received by due date. Write your account number on the check/money order.
- **Pay in Person:** Payment can be made in person at our office. Normal office hours are from 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday (*closed for holidays*).

## Cold Weather Rule

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule (*MN Statute, Ch. 235, Sec. 216B.097*) protects residential utility customers during the cold winter months. Under this rule, your gas service will not be disconnected from October 1<sup>st</sup> through April 30<sup>th</sup> because of non-payment provided you meet ALL of the following conditions:

- ☒ You declare an inability to pay.
- ☒ Your total household, not individual, income is less than 50% of the state median income. You must provide the necessary documentation to support this condition.
- ☒ You enter into and make reasonable, timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household.
- ☒ You receive referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce your energy bills.

If you do not meet all of the above conditions, then you do not qualify for the winter shut-off protection. However, you still can continue to receive gas service if you call us to make a mutually acceptable payment arrangement.

Residential customers who cannot qualify for winter shut-off protection and who cannot pay their full bill may make special payments over an extended period of time. To arrange for scheduled payments, call (800) 528-2392 (toll free) or (800) 498-6116 (toll free), or (218) 863-1171.