

WINDPOWER



In 1994, the Minnesota State Legislature ordered 425 megawatts of wind power and 125 megawatts of bio-based energy as down payment on the detailed nuclear phase-out plan proposed by Northern States Power (NSP), now known as Xcel Energy, for storage of 17 nuclear waste dry casks at Prairie Island Nuclear Facility located in Red Wing, Minnesota. From this law, Lake Benton became known as the “Windpower Capital of the Midwest.” As legislation continues to visit the issue of windpower, the number of megawatts continues to rise. As of 2003, Xcel was ordered to produce 825 megawatts of renewable energy.

The second highest point in southwest Minnesota is located just north of the Lake Benton city limits. Lake Benton is located on the Bemis Moraine, more commonly referred to as the Buffalo Ridge. The ridge is a moraine, which is a pile of sediment (silt, sand, gravel and boulders), that were left at the edge of a glacier. There is a 1.6 kilometer-wide break in the moraine in Lake Benton. There are similar, but less spectacular, breaks in the moraine northwest of the city. The Buffalo Ridge provides the most constant wind speed, averaging 15-18 mph. The Buffalo Ridge is approximately 10 miles wide. It begins in northwestern Iowa and stretches about 60 miles through Minnesota and into South Dakota. It is approximately 2,000 feet above sea level. More than 450 wind turbines grace the skyline along the Buffalo Ridge in Lincoln County, Minnesota.

Wind developers from around the world flocked to Lake Benton in hopes to cash in on the new crop. The initial step, Phase I, called for 25 megawatts. Kenetech Windpower was contracted to put up the first 25 megawatts. The first turbines, 73 in all, are known as the “Kenetech Turbines” and are now owned by Florida Power and Light. This was a 28 million dollar project. In 1994, they were the largest turbines in the world, reaching 125 feet in the air, the blades were on average 40 feet long and each turbine produced 360 kilowatts of electricity. This was enough to supply the electrical needs of 125 homes.

In September, 1996, and in April, 1998, Lake Benton Power Partners, LLC (formerly Zond Minnesota Development Corporation II), now known as AES Wind Generation, signed a contract with Xcel Energy to supply Xcel with 211 megawatts of clean windpower capacity for 25-30 years. These projects became known as Lake Benton I and Lake Benton II. To produce that amount of electricity, it took 291 wind turbines. Each turbine produces 750 kilowatts of electricity, which is enough to supply the electrical needs of 250 homes. Each tower stands on 415 tons of concrete, they are 168 feet tall, and weigh 124,000 pounds (62 tons). The blades measure 76

feet long and make a complete revolution every two to three seconds.

In January of 1999, Xcel Energy was mandated by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to double its wind power development in the coming years. The PUC ruled that it was “in the public’s interest” and that additional windpower should be developed. Xcel committed to 825 megawatts in its resource plan through the year 2015. The new requirements would produce enough energy to power about 100,000 homes.

The technological advances of the wind turbine have allowed for expansion on the Buffalo Ridge. The next generation of turbines reach up to 400 feet, from base to tip of blade. The blades range from 100-130 feet long. The turbines produce up to 2.8 megawatts of electricity each. Minnesota is in the top 15 states with the greatest wind energy potential, with an estimated 75,000 megawatt potential. That is enough to serve over 25 million people.

Please tour our “Heritage and Windpower Learning Center of Southwest Minnesota” located at **106 South Center Street, at the Heritage Center in downtown Lake Benton.** For further information contact: 507-368-9577 x2. The center is open 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. daily and by appointment on Saturday.

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LAKE BENTON LAKE ASSOCIATION



The Lake Benton Lake Association (LBLA) is proud to preserve Lake Benton's history, heritage, natural beauty and environment and to promote the use and enjoyment of the lake for all. As we work together with the local communities, the Lincoln County commissioners, the Lincoln County Environmental office and the Minnesota DNR, we strive to keep Lake Benton weed free. We continue to monitor the health and ecosystem of the lake and to combat invasive weeds like the curly leaf pond weed. In conjunction with weed treatment, the LBLA has implemented a pan-fish stocking program in hopes of promoting more "family fishing fun". Everyone is welcome and encouraged to help protect the beauty and charm of the Lake Benton lake by becoming members of the LBLA. Our 5th Annual Pork Sandwich Fund Raiser and Membership drive will be held Saturday, June 22, 2019 at the Stoney Point Campground. The fundraiser is held indoors, so plan to attend

rain or shine! Please watch for further information as it becomes available. It's not too late to make a donation. Please send any donation amount to LBLA, PO Box 193, Lake Benton, MN 56149. To receive additional information or if you would like to attend our monthly meetings, please contact our President, Sam Hedge at hedge6360@gmail.com or our Vice President, Dean Lueck at lesliedeanl@yahoo.com.



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email: lbstorag@itctel.com

HISTORIC HIGHWAYS

US HIGHWAY 14

A segment of US Highway 14, from Lake Benton to Mankato, Minnesota, was designated as Laura Ingalls Wilder Historic Highway in 1994. Along the route, you will find signs at the entrance of each town. The towns along this designated route of US Highway 14 have formed a coalition for the purpose of promoting the highway and their individual communities. Each town has identified specific sites that relate to the Ingalls era of the late 1800s. The Ingalls family traveled along this route from Wisconsin to DeSmet, South Dakota, settling for a time at Walnut Grove, Minnesota. "The Laura Ingalls Wilder Guide" will help you find interesting sites and events along US Highway 14, including Lake Benton.

US HIGHWAY 75

Historically, US Highway 75 was known as the "King of Trails" (KT) before highways were numbered in 1926. The "trail" is marked from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to the Gulf of Mexico at Galveston, Texas. This trail was originally used by the Indians and early pioneers as a trade route. Although the present "KT" does not follow the old "KT" exactly, large segments of the highway include it, while the rest of the highway was constructed nearly parallel to it. A remnant of the original "KT" is still visible today following the railroad tracks south of Lake Benton.



"The International Historic Highway 75 King of Trails Coalition" was incorporated in 2000. The purpose of the organization was for cooperative marketing and for the promotion of the communities along the highway and its corridor. The organization has developed a website: www.highway75.com, which provides excellent information about member communities and additional links to those communities listed. The Minnesota Legislature designated US Highway 75 the "Historic King of Trails" in 2001.

Lake Benton Lake is the the second largest freshwater lake on the King of Trails. The community of Lake Benton is very proud of our history and we encourage our community and visitors to discover the "King of Trails."

LAKE BENTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The library's history began in 1929 with the Excelsior Federated Women's Club, which had a high interest in education and literacy. The Excelsior club collected more than 200 books and magazines, available opening day. The members took turns tending the library during the original hours, which were from 3-5 pm on Fridays.

The library was originally located above the city Jail, which was in the building next to the Lake Benton Community Center. We moved to our current location in 2007. In 2012 an addition was put on, doubling the space. In 2014, Carl and Joann Burk donated the construction of a patio at the back of the library, in memory of Jack Burk, Carl's brother and Lake Benton advocate

The Lake Benton Public Library has been a part of the Plum Creek Regional Library system for more than 25 years. We work hard to strengthen the relationship between our library

and the regional system to improve service to our patrons. Because we are part of the Plum Creek regional system, patrons have access to free wireless internet, a larger collection of



items, and various special events and programs.

The Lake Benton Public Library has always been proud of its collection. Patrons have access to more than 10,000 collection items, including DVDs, books, audiobooks, cake pans, CDs and other non-print materials in the Lake Benton Public Library. Patrons also have access to more

than 800,000 items within the Plum Creek Regional system and more than 28,000,000 collection items throughout the state of Minnesota.

The library has been an active learning center. The children's programs include Friday Morning Fun hour every Friday from September through April, Summer Reading Program from June through July, Game Time, and various special programs throughout the year. By the Teens, For the Teens (BTFT) was started to increase teen programming and develop the Teen collection. The library also provides adult learning opportunities, with monthly adult book club from September through May, an outreach program for homebound community members twice a month, the Winter Reading Program from January through March and various learning opportunities and special events throughout the year.

RECREATION

FISHING

Lake Benton Lake is 2,875 acres in area and is the sixth largest lake in southern Minnesota. It is famous for whopper-sized walleye. It is ranked among the 10 best walleye lakes in Minnesota. Several walleye weighing over 10 pounds have been caught in recent years. Two- and three-pound “marble eyes” are common and many are caught that weigh in at the five- to eight-pound range. Blue gill, sunfish, and crappies are abundant and several trophy-sized have been caught. Many of them weigh over a pound and many have been brought in weighing more than two pounds. There are also northern pike and some large mouth bass. Fishermen who return year after year attest to the fact that Lake Benton Lake is one of southwest Minnesota’s favorite angling spots.

HUNTING

Herds of deer make their home in the wooded hills of Lake Benton. Hunters can bag their deer with little difficulty. The thousands of acres of grassland provide excellent nesting habitat for game birds of all kinds, especially for pheasants. Our lakes and marshes attract many species of waterfowl, including geese and ducks. The bountiful supply of wildlife makes the area around Lake Benton a hunter’s paradise.

CAMPING

There are two fine county parks available for your camping comfort and enjoyment. **Hole-in-the-Mountain Park** is located on U.S. Highway 14 on the west edge of town. The chalet provides indoor facilities for gatherings in the summer and is used as the warm-up shelter in the winter. It is a popular camping park and many family reunions are held there. The park manager’s office is also located here. **Norwegian Creek Park** is on the north shore of Lake Benton and is only one mile north of town on U.S. Highway 75 and one mile east. There is a swimming beach, a boat-launching area, picnic and shelter house facilities, restrooms, and many camp sites.

TRAILS

A portion of Hole-in-the-Mountain Park (on the north side of Highway 14) is designated for those who like to bring their horses while camping. Facilities are there to accommodate both the campers and their horses. Horseback riding is fun on the hillside trails.

Hiking on the park trails give an opportunity to explore some of the evidences of early pioneer life.

Snowmobilers enjoy the open spaces while enjoying our winter wonderland.

SKIING

Water skiing is popular in the summer. A lake that is several miles long gives everyone plenty of room without interfering with other activities on the lake.

Cross-country skiing is gaining popularity each winter at Hole-in-the-Mountain Park.

WINDFARMS

Tour the “Original Windpower Capital of the Midwest” where you will view over 450 wind turbines generating electricity for Xcel Energy.



LAKE BENTON OPERA HOUSE

In December of 1895, only two weeks after fire had destroyed the original wood frame opera house, a group of citizens formed an association to finance the construction of "a fine new brick structure." When it was finished in late 1896, it was considered one of the finest of its kind in the area, boasting a "spacious" stage, a horseshoe-shaped balcony (which is still one of its most endearing features), private boxes for honored guests, and a gas lighting system. It drew theatrical groups and traveling troupes of performers, and was the locale for school plays and concerts, church and political meetings, and July 4th and Decoration Day observances. Since the seats were movable, it also provided space for dances, card parties, dinners, basketball games, and all manner of community events. Even a few funerals for community leaders were conducted at the opera house. From the 1920s through the early '50s, the Opera House showed movies on a regular basis.

Thereafter, the unoccupied building fell into a state of disrepair, with a devastating hail storm in 1963 dealing a final blow and opening it up to the elements. In 1970, with the building already scheduled for demolition, a group of citizens united in an effort to save it. Restoration has continued for nearly fifty years, always with the goal of retaining as much as possible the original ambience of the beautiful old building. Physical maintenance has included roof repairs, tuckpointing, heating and cooling systems, and lighting and sound improvements from time to time.

Early 2001 saw the accomplishment of the monumental task of installing new seats, and, while the area was empty, the entire interior was repainted. In the fall, the disintegrating outside balcony was restored to its original form. Exterior



painting in Victorian colors brought attention to some lovely, but previously unnoticed, decorative details on the front of the building.

In 1976, the Opera House was incorporated as a non-profit organization "to restore the historical building ... and to promote and sponsor the arts." On March 25, 1977, it was placed on The National Register of Historic Places. In 2002, the companion building next door, also built in 1896, was acquired and intensive restoration of its once-glorious facade began. It provides storage for costumes and sets, and a locale for dressing rooms, rehearsals and board meetings.

The Opera House is open from March until mid-December, with a full and varied program of plays, musicals and sponsored talent.

Much credit goes to the many volunteers who keep the Opera House going and growing, whether in the ongoing preservation of the building, as a board of directors which manages its affairs, as actors, costume, set, and technical people involved in its plays, as ushers and reservationists, or as helpers with the mailings.

2019 Board Members

Mark Wilmes - President
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David Norgaard - Chairman
Milo Downs - Vice Chairman
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Sandy Hanson - Director
Kathy Holck - Director
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For tickets call 507-368-4620
from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. or email
lakebentonoperahouse@gmail.com

Visit us online at
www.lakebentonoperahouse.org

Find pictures, videos and upcoming
events on our Facebook page at
[www.facebook.com/
lakebentonoperahouse](http://www.facebook.com/lakebentonoperahouse)

LAKE BENTON OPERA HOUSE



"Footloose" - 2018



"Steel Magnolias" - 2018



"Broadway Meets Lake Benton" - 2018



"A Little Murder Never Hurt Anybody" - 2018

2019 OPERA HOUSE SCHEDULE

March 16	Broadway Meets Lake Benton
April 5-7, 12-14	Spring Play - "Arsenic and Old Lace"
May 10-12	RTR Spring Play
May 27	Memorial Day Program
June 15	Opera House Talent Contest
July 25-28, July 31-Aug. 4	Summer Musical - "Shrek: The Musical"
Oct. 4-6, 11-13	Fall Play - "37 Postcards"
November 16	Children's Theater
December 7	Opera House Christmas Show

Mark your calendars now for the
2019 summer musical,
"Shrek: The Musical"

Reservations

Go to: www.lakebentonoperahouse.org
Or email: lakebentonoperahouse@gmail.com
For more information: call 507-368-4620

Visit us online at www.lakebentonoperahouse.org or
www.facebook.com/lakebentonoperahouse

LINCOLN COUNTY PARKS

NORWEGIAN CREEK COUNTY PARK

Norwegian Creek is located one mile north, and one mile east of the City of Lake Benton. Norwegian Creek has 92 campsites with electricity and water. Facilities include two picnic shelters, a bathhouse with showers, a fish-cleaning shed, RV dump station, a swimming beach, and two boat launches.

CAMPING RATES:

Electricity & Water \$25.00 a night
Non-Electric \$20.00 a night
Tents \$18.00 a night
For seasonal rates call 507-368-9350
Rates subject to change.

PICNIC POINT COUNTY PARK

Picnic Point is located eight miles north, three miles west, and one mile north of Lake Benton. The park is 43 acres located on the southern side of Lake Shaokatan. Picnic Point offers 30 campsites with electricity and water. It also has numerous sites without electricity. Also, Picnic Point has one picnic shelter, a swimming beach, two boat launches, a floating T-dock, a fish cleaning shed, and a RV dump station.

CAMPING RATES:

Electricity & Water \$25.00 a night
Non-Electric \$20.00 a night
Tents \$18.00 a night
For seasonal rates call 507-368-9350
Rates subject to change.

HOLE-IN-THE MOUNTAIN COUNTY PARK

Hole-In-The-Mountain Park is located on the western edge of Lake Benton just off Highway 14. There are 33 campsites with electricity and water, and 30 electrical sites located in the horse campground. The park is approximately 800 acres of woodland and prairie land. Throughout the park you will find historical sites along five miles of hiking/horse trails. Hole-In-The-Mountain Park also offers two picnic shelters. The newly renovated chalet can be rented for family reunions, graduation parties, and other functions. Cost is \$100 per day plus \$100 damage deposit.

CAMPING RATES:

Electricity & Water \$25.00 a night
Non-Electric \$20.00 a night
Tents \$18.00 a night
For seasonal rates call 507-368-9350



FOR RESERVATIONS CALL 507-368-9350 or write to: Lincoln County Parks, P.O. Box 369, Lake Benton, MN 56149



Hole-in-the-Mountain Park and Horse Camp

Hole in the Mountain Horse Camp features

30 SITES
with water, electricity
and other amenities

The view from the horse camp is spectacular. The camp has five to seven miles of trails, electrical hookups, showers and restrooms. Protected by trees, high atop the hills, this is a calm, relaxing atmosphere for both campers and animals.



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SADDLE HORSE HOLIDAY



The organizational meeting of the Dakota-Minnesota Saddle Horse Holiday was held at the Lorenzen Cafe in Lake Benton on March 23, 1947. Over the past years, the event has grown to include as many as eight hundred horses and a two-ring horse show that is held annually on the third Sunday of June. The Chamber and local businesses host various activities for families and children throughout the weekend celebration.

The 73rd Annual event begins with a trail ride at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday. The scenic trail takes the riders through our beautiful rolling hills and concludes at the parade route. The horses are an ever popular addition to our annual parade which takes place at noon. Our parade has also grown to include as many as 100+ units. The show begins at 1:00 p.m. at the arena, located at Horse Hill at the Hole-in-the-Mountain Park in Lake Benton. There are numerous classes and games/contests that take place with trophies and ribbons awarded. Please join us for a weekend of fun! There is something for everyone.

Please contact: Lynette Hauswedell 507-531-0178, Mike Hauswedell 507-531-0164 or Lori Hart 507-247-3401 for further information regarding the horse show and trail ride. Please contact Janel Steufen at 507-368-4261 regarding the parade.

Western Veterinary Clinic

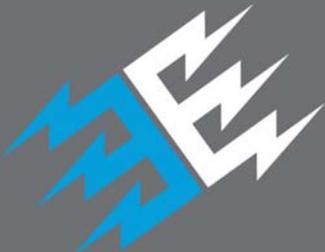
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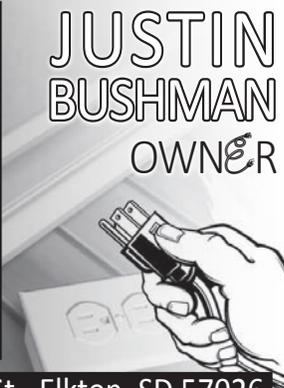


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