

# Connections

May 2019

For the member-owners of Brown County REA



Volume 23, Issue 5

## Heartland Security, subsidiary of your electric cooperative, celebrates 20 years!



Happy 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Heartland Security!

Heartland Security was founded in January 1999 by nine electric co-ops:

- BENCO Electric, Mankato
- Brown Country REA, Sleepy Eye
- Federated Rural Electric, Jackson
- Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, Estherville, IA
- McLeod Cooperative Power Association, Glencoe
- Meeker Cooperative Light & Power Association, Litchfield
- Runestone Electric Association, Alexandria
- Stearns Electric Association, Melrose
- Wright-Hennepin Cooperative Electric Association, Rockford

At the time 80 percent of cooperative members surveyed thought security systems would be a valuable service for the cooperatives to offer. Only two percent of homes had security systems at the time. The cooperatives worked together to create Heartland Security Services, LLC — now known as Heartland Security — with a mission “to enrich the lives of our customers by protecting their families, homes and businesses with innovative technologies, quality equipment, skilled installation, caring service and trusted monitoring.”

Heartland Security offers home security, business security,



ag monitoring (typically for hog barns), medical alerts, camera systems, card access and panic buttons. Heartland Security also offers environmental sensors to protect your home or business from water, carbon monoxide, smoke, extreme temperatures and freezing pipes. In addition,

Heartland Security can upgrade you to a doorbell camera where you can answer the door from your smartphone, even if you're not home.

Since Heartland Security began in 1999, it has continued to upgrade its technologies to offer customers the most reliable products and services to keep up with the market. At this point a Heartland Security system can serve as the hub to your smart home, helping you control your thermostat, lights, locks, garage doors and cameras — all from one app on your smartphone or tablet. Their alarm systems integrate with Amazon's Alexa, Google's Home and Apple smartwatches. You can add almost any kind of Z-wave device into your system from smart outlets to motorized window coverings.

Heartland Security has installed systems in schools, banks, golf courses, restaurants, bars, resorts, colleges, liquor — *Continued on Page 6*

### At A Glance



**Brown County  
Rural Electrical  
Association**

### BCREA holds 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting

BCREA held its Annual Meeting April 25. See Page 5 for more information and photos of the event. Plus, learn which directors were elected for Districts 1, 4 and 5.

This publication focuses on cooperative savings, programs and events. As this is the official member publication, member's story ideas, letters-to-the-editor and comments are welcomed.

Andrea Christoffer, CCC, Editor  
*"Owned by those it serves"*

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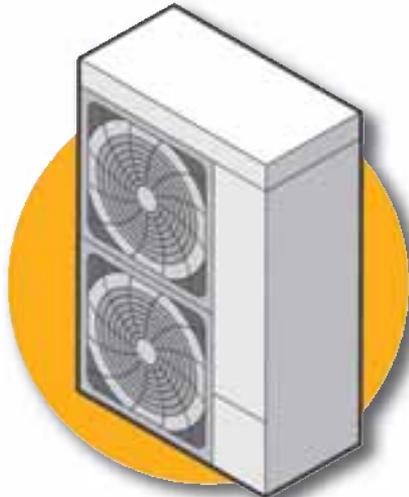
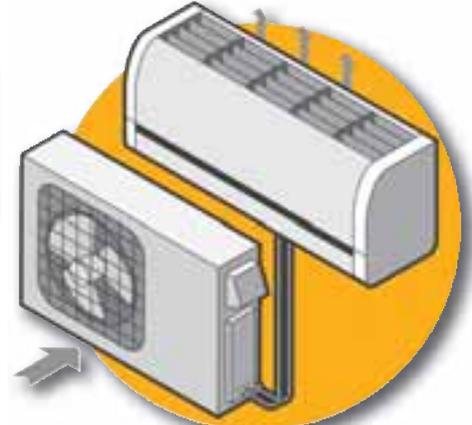
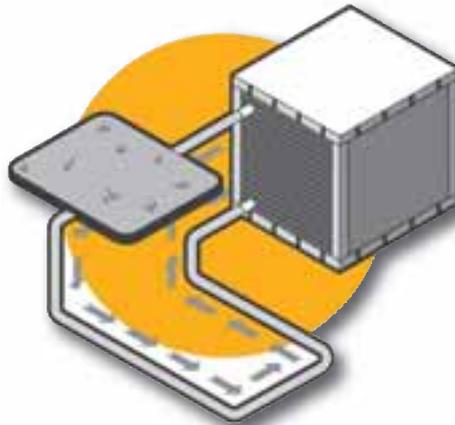
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## Save with three types of heat pumps

Heat pumps are some of the best heating/cooling systems available. They work by pumping heat out of your home during the cooling months and into your home during the heating months.

Heat pumps are available in three main types. If you are thinking about installing a new heating or cooling system, learn more about heat pumps to see which type would be best for you.



### Geothermal heat pumps

- More expensive to install but provide more energy savings for heating and cooling.
- Geothermal heat pumps move heat through pipes buried under the ground.
- Up to 400 percent efficient vs. 90 percent efficient natural gas furnace.
- Effective in cold climates.
- Not ideal on small lots or certain soils.

### Ductless mini-split heat pumps

- Easier to install, quiet, small in size
- Flexible for heating and cooling individual rooms and smaller spaces.
- No energy loss through ductwork, which accounts for more than 30 percent of a home's energy use for space heating/cooling.
- Mini-split heat pumps are great for homes without ductwork.
- Installation can be pricey. Ⓜ

### Air-source heat pumps

- Most commonly used heat pump.
- Moves heat, rather than converting it from a fuel, like combustion heating systems do.
- Can reduce heating costs by about 50 percent when compared to baseboard heaters or electric furnaces. They are twice as efficient as gas furnaces.
- Newer, more efficient systems now represent a legitimate space heating alternative in colder regions like the Midwest (if temperatures drop below 10-25 F, you will need an auxiliary heating system, depending on the size of your system).

### Energy Tips

#### Electric co-op rebates and correct installation

Your electric co-op offers rebates on all three types of heat pumps. If you are thinking about installing a new heating/cooling system, investigate what heat pumps can do for you by calling your electric co-op's energy expert. They can also give you more details on the rebate amounts offered for each system.

Getting the best performance from a new heat pump system depends on more than just choosing the right type of heat pump. The installation can have a large effect on the system's performance and reliability, not to mention your comfort. For example, bigger is not better when it comes to cooling units. Getting the right size is important. Otherwise, comfort, air quality and wear and tear on the system can suffer.

Finally, look for Energy Star-rated heat pumps and have them installed by a quality contractor. Your electric co-op's energy expert can help you find the right contractor. Ⓜ

## Heartland Security offers GPS medical alerts

Heartland Security offers in-home and GPS medical alerts to help seniors live in their own homes independently, safely and securely.

While Heartland Security's home-based units rely on landline phones or cellular communicators, their GPS medical alerts use the AT&T cellular network and satellites. Of course, this dependence on cellular/satellite coverage is beyond Heartland Security's control so there may not be service in certain areas.

Heartland Security's GPS medical alerts are called SentryPal Mobile personal emergency response system. The SentryPal medical alert is a pager-like unit that can be worn as a necklace or on a belt-clip holder. It must be charged nightly and tested monthly.

In an emergency you press and hold the emergency button until it vibrates. The SentryPal then connects to the GPS network and retrieves your last known location; it then connects to the cellular network to send the emergency-call notification and connects you with a dispatcher at Heartland Security's local response center. The dispatcher speaks to



**The SentryPal lets senior citizens stay on the go safely. If you find yourself in trouble, simply press the button to get in contact with assistance.**

you through the hands-free speakerphone on the SentryPal.

It is a leased system — no long-term contracts. Installation is \$45 with a monthly rate around \$1.50/day. Call 888-264-6380 or visit Heartland Security at [www.heartlandss.com](http://www.heartlandss.com). 

### Safety

## Plant the seed of safety in your mind

Your electric cooperative reminds farmers to be careful this planting season.

Don't be so focused on putting seeds in the ground that you forget to look overhead. Nothing good happens when farm equipment contacts power lines, poles or the guy wires. Even if the contact doesn't cause an outage, it comes with a cost that could be financial or a life.

Farmers are responsible for the cost of replacing a pole damaged by their equipment. Be extra careful when working the field's perimeter by the power lines and green underground cabinets. Avoid being distracted by getting in a hurry or the long hours. Slow down. It might be tempting to get things done, especially if the weather is not cooperating, but taking a few extra minutes on the end rows can save hours of additional stress.



**Linemen replace a pole hit by a tractor during spring field work. Be extra careful this planting season to avoid the cost to your pocket book or worse — your life.**

Did you recently purchase new farm equipment? Makes sure that it does not come with higher antennas or clearances that make contact of power lines hanging over field approaches more likely.

If you contact an electric power line, stay in the tractor. Don't risk becoming a conduit for the electricity to move through to reach the ground by exiting the cab. Call for help and warn others away. The only time you should leave

the tractor is in the event of a fire.

In case of a fire jump clear of the vehicle. Make sure no part of your body touches the tractor and the ground at the same time. Hop away from the scene with your feet together until you are at least 40 feet away. Electricity spreads through the ground in ripples. Keeping your feet together prevents one foot from stepping into a higher-voltage zone than the other foot. 

# Brown County Briefs

## Look for the Energy Star logo



Just a reminder that proof of Energy Star certification is necessary for appliance and lighting rebates.

Please submit a copy of your sales receipt, the Energy Star label and proof of appliance recycling. Reminder, members are eligible for one appliance rebate per year.

## Area youth invited to Twins Play Ball Clinic June 14



Brown County REA and Sleepy Eye Community Education are teaming up with the Minnesota Twins to offer a free Twins Play Ball! youth clinic Friday, June 14 at Prairieville Field (behind the public school) in Sleepy Eye.

Youth ages 6-9 are scheduled from 2 to 3:30 p.m. and ages 10-13 from 3:30 to 5 p.m. No cost to participate. The program is presented in partnership with Great River Energy, which is made up of BCREA and 27 other rural electric cooperatives in Minnesota.

No registration is required to participate, but youth must sign a waiver at the clinic. The Twins will provide safe, youth-friendly equipment and participants are asked to bring their own gloves. The format focuses on throwing, hitting and fielding.

## Trailer for sale

BCREA has for sale a 1995 28,000 lb. GVW, 2-12,000 lb. Felling Trailer FT24-2. Sold as is; no warranty. View at BCREA. If interested, please submit a sealed bid to BCREA, PO Box 529, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085 by May 31. Seller has the right to reject all bids. ☎

# Brown County Rural Electric Round Up Trust Board awards scholarships

The Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board reviewed applications and selected six high school seniors to receive the Operation Round Up scholarships at its April 4 meeting.

Chosen to receive scholarships of \$200 each from the Round Up Trust were:

- Dallas Bauer, son of James & Karla Bauer, senior at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's High School
- Cassidy Hoffmann, daughter of Dan & Mary Hoffmann, senior at Sleepy Eye Public School
- Heidi Hoffman, senior at Cathedral High School in New Ulm, daughter of Peter & Beverly Hoffman
- Grace Peterson, daughter of Greg & Vickie Peterson, senior at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School.
- Grace Swenson, Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop High School senior, daughter of Kris & Rachel Swenson of Lafayette
- Hali Soukup, daughter of Mike & Jane Soukup, senior at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's High School

The students will receive their funds to be used for educational costs after successfully completing one semester of college.

The Trust Board members also distributed \$540 to three organizations at its meeting. Donations were made to Brown County 4-H Foodstand, Comfrey School BPA and Cathedral After Prom. The next Operation Round Up meeting is set for August 20. ☎



Cassidy Hoffmann



Heidi Hoffman



Hali Soukup



Dallas Bauer



Grace Peterson



Grace Swenson

**Interested in outage texting?** Go to [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop) and register. Click on *Links* under the *Resources* tab, then *Outage Texting Registration* to get started. ☎

# BCREA members gather for 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting



Brown County REA members and guests packed the Sleepy Eye Event Center for the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting April 25.

Nearly 500 members and spouses, employees and guests of Brown County Rural Electrical Association (REA) filled the Sleepy Eye Event Center April 25 for the cooperative's rescheduled 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting. A total of 274 members registered at the meeting.

Director Allen Hanson of Hanska, shared the invocation. During the business meeting, Board President Jim Mickelson recapped cooperative happenings from the past year.

CEO Mike Heidemann reviewed the 2018 financial audit and reported damage from the April 11 winter storm.

Mark Lindquist shared his experience serving on the Member Advisory Council, topics addressed at the meetings and the opportunity to learn more about the cooperative. In Zachary Helget's absence highlights and photos of his trip to Washington, D.C. last June as the cooperative's Electric Cooperative Youth Tour representative were presented by Member Services Manager Marcia Solie. She also announced the 2019 Round Up Trust scholarship winners.

Directors were elected in Districts 1, 4 and 5. Incumbents James Hanson, Bill Berg and Jim Mickelson were each re-elected to three-year terms.

At the organizational meeting which followed, Jim Mickelson was elected President of the Board, Bill Berg chosen as Vice President, and Jim Hanson elected Secretary/Treasurer. Reuben Kokesch was again selected as Brown County REA's representative on the Great River Energy board. 



Those in attendance had the opportunity to get an up-close look at electric vehicle technology at the Annual Meeting through the hybrid Ford Fusion, all electric Tesla Model 3 and Chevy Bolt. The vehicles were provided courtesy of Chuck Spaeth Ford, Nobles Cooperative Electric and South Central Cooperative Electric, respectively.

## Ice storm requires linemen to lend a helping hand to BENCO



At the height of the April 11 winter storm Brown County REA had 1,700 members without power, due primarily to transmission issues. After restoring power to it members BCREA line crew members Brady Kerkhoff, Zach Gulden, Drew Hill, Tyler Jensen, Nick Horman and Mike Suess traveled to Mankato to assist at BENCO where 200 poles had been downed by the storm. 

# Heartland Security offers the local electric co-op members a discount

— Continued from Page 1

stores, gas stations, city buildings, courthouses, art galleries and doctor's offices.

You don't have to be a co-op member to get a security system or medical alert from Heartland Security, but you will receive a 10 percent discount on the base package and \$1 off the monthly monitoring if you are a Federated or Brown County REA cooperative member. Heartland Security also offers discounts to emergency responders, as well as active military and veterans (only one discount applies per account).

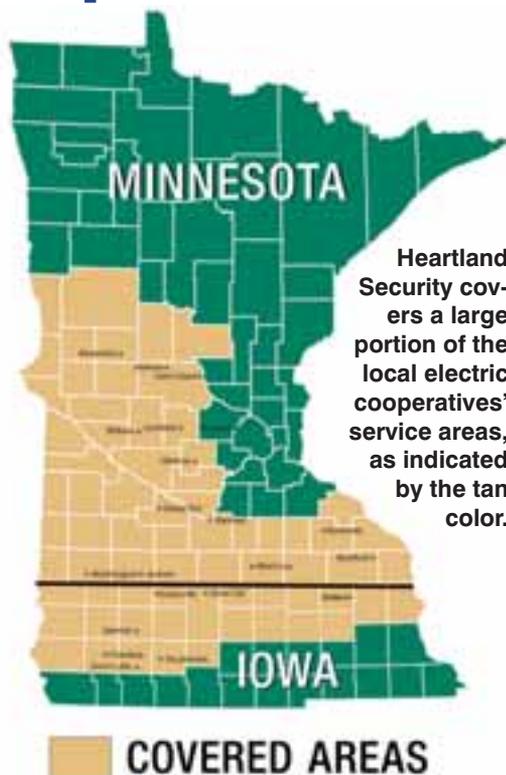
Heartland Security now has 23 full-time employees and eight part-time employees with sales representatives, alarm technicians and medical alert installers throughout their territory. The main office is located in Melrose with our operations manager, four administrative services employees, an in-office technician and our scheduler working from there. Locally, Vern Zimmer is the Heartland Security consultant for the Brown County area, while Dan Howard covers Federated's service area.

Their International UL-listed response center, Wright-Hennepin International Response Center (WHIRC), is located in Rockford, Minnesota, and earned Five Diamond Certification by the Central Station Alarm Association in recognition of their employee training in emergency dispatch response and customer service. WHIRC is staffed by highly trained dispatchers 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, 365 days-a-year who are ready to respond to any alarm.

"Because Heartland Security is cooperative-owned, we take care of our customers as it is the cooperative way," said Guy Adams, Heartland Security's general manager. "Heartland Security takes pride in providing the best service possible to our customers. We have top-notch technicians, a knowledgeable sales team and caring office staff. All of our employees have biannual background checks and thousands of customers have trusted us to help them protect what matters most.

"Our biggest referral source is word-of-mouth," Adams added. "If you're happy with your service, the best compliment we can receive from you is your referral. For that we offer referral bonuses. If you recommend Heartland Security to someone and they purchase a new security system, you will receive \$40 cash or a \$40 credit on your account."

Heartland Security also offers a free security analysis to anyone interested in their offerings. "Have a sales representative stop out to your location for a free, no-obligation visit and work with you to create a customized security solution," Adams said. For more information about Heartland Security or for a free security analysis, call 888-264-6380 or visit us online at [www.heartlandss.com](http://www.heartlandss.com). 



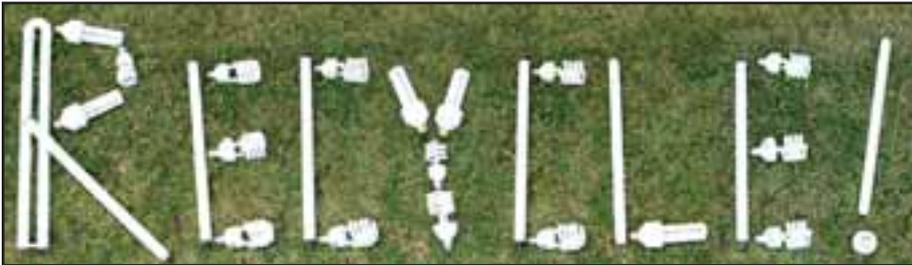
## Marking 20 years of Heartland Security grand milestones:

- Heartland Security started with three employees in 1999.
- In 2002 Heartland Security became a First Alert security systems authorized dealer. First Alert chose Heartland Security for their commitment to service.
- In 2002 a 10<sup>th</sup> cooperative, Kandiyohi Power Cooperative in Spicer, joined the ownership.
- Soon after Heartland Security became a GE Security Pro dealer and National Burglar & Fire Alarm Association member.
- In 2008 three more electric cooperatives joined: Tri-County Electric Cooperative, Rushford; People's Energy Cooperative, Oronoco; and Freeborn-Mower Cooperative Services, Albert Lea.
- In 2009 Heartland Security was recognized as the Western Division Security Pro Dealer of the Year.
- In 2011 a 14<sup>th</sup> cooperative, Hawkeye REC, Cresco, Iowa, joined the ownership.
- In 2012 Heartland Security received the same award again, but it was renamed as the Great Lakes Region Security Pro Dealer of the Year.
- In 2017 Tri-County Electric Cooperative and Hawkeye REC merged to form MiEnergy Cooperative, which is why Heartland Security is now owned by 13 electric co-ops, rather than 14.
- Heartland Security also grew with a dozen notable acquisitions over the years as vendors retired or exited the business.
- Now the company has 23 full-time and eight part-time employees. 

## Share your marinade recipes just in time for grilling season

Get fired up for grilling season and share your favorite marinade recipes with us. Share your marinades for chicken, vegetables, pork and beef. Send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by May 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

## Add 'recycle fluorescent bulbs' to your spring do list



State law requires the recycling of fluorescents and compact fluorescent bulbs due to the mercury. Check out these local recycling options.

### Brown County

The dates are set for May 8-9. The cost ranges from 50 cents for four-foot fluorescents, 75 cents for CFLs and 8-foot fluorescents. Recycling occurs at:

- Springfield Market, 101 W. Central St., Springfield, May 8 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Fall date is September 4 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- New Ulm Steel & Recycling, 218 19th St. S., New Ulm, May 9 from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fall date is September 5 from 2 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Questions? Call the Brown County Planning and Zoning office at 507-233-6640.

- McCabe's Ace Hardware, 1200 Main St. E., Sleepy Eye, accepts fluorescents year-round and will dispose of broken bulbs for a fee. Call 507-794-3611 or stop by the store for pricing. They also accept high pressure sodium, mercury vapor and metal halide lamps for a fee.

- River View Sanitation will sponsor an Electronics & Appliance Recycling Day, which will include fluorescent bulb recycling, May 15, from noon-6 p.m. at the Sleepy Eye Baseball parking lot. Fluorescent lamps 8' and under \$1, ballast – PCB \$1/lb. and PCB capacitors \$2/lb. Appliances, computer CPUs, phones, keyboards, etc. are free; battery backups, printers, DVD/VCRs, copiers/scanners and stereos cost \$10; computer monitors and TVs cost \$25.

### Jackson County

Residents may bring fluorescent bulbs to the Jackson County Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) Facility (at the County Highway Department on County Road 34) from June to October (first Monday 9 to 11:30 a.m, third Monday from 2 to 4:30 p.m. or the third Saturday 9 to 11 a.m.). Electronics not accepted at HHW; bring to the Fairgrounds in mid-August; the dates will be announced later in the *Livewire* shopper. Fees apply for recycling all items. Call Jackson County's Environmental Office for details: 507-662-6682 extension 4.

### Martin County

Recycle fluorescent bulbs October 3 at the northeast corner of the former K-Mart parking lot (now Tractor Supply) in Fairmont from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bulbs are accepted from the homes and businesses in the county. It costs 50 cents for 4-foot and under fluorescents, while it's 90 cents for longer than that. Call the Fairmont Area Chamber of Commerce at 507-235-5547. ☺

## Call Gopher State One Call before digging!

1-800-252-1166



Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours

before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register at [www.gopherstate-onecall.org](http://www.gopherstate-onecall.org) or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺

## French Toast Casserole

by Lesley Christoffer, Okabena

- 1 lb. loaf French bread
- 8 oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
- ¾ c. sugar      ¼ c. maple syrup
- 8 eggs            2½ c. whole milk
- 6 T. butter, melted

Spray 9x13" pan. Cut French bread in half horizontal. Spread with softened cream cheese on each half. Cut into cubes. Put into pan. Whisk the remaining ingredients. Pour over bread cubes, pressing on bread with spatula to soak up egg mixture. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Heat oven to 350°. Bake uncovered 45 minutes or until lightly browned. Makes 12 servings. ☺



## Brown County Rural Electrical Association

Brown County Rural Electrical Assn.  
24386 State Hwy 4, PO Box 529  
Sleepy Eye MN 56085

E-mail address: [bcrea@bcrea.coop](mailto:bcrea@bcrea.coop)  
Website: [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop)  
Phone: 507-794-3331 or 800-658-2368  
Office hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Mike Heidemann, Chief Executive Officer

### Board of Directors

James Mickelson, President — 794-6298  
William Berg, Vice President — 354-4895  
James D. Hanson, Sec.-Treasurer — 829-6756  
Brad Sprenger — 877-2633  
Allen Hanson — 276-0691  
Thomas Hayes — 228-8954  
Reuben Kokesch — 359-2112  
Greg Mages — 794-3540  
Joel Christensen — 828-4550  
The Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of each month.

## Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting April 25 at the BCREA office in Sleepy Eye. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the March 2019 board meeting minutes.
- Approved March 2019 payroll and February 2019 financial statements.
- Reviewed and approved the 2018 margin allocation of \$1,535,737.
- Discussed damage to the distribution system and outages caused by the April 11 storm.
- Discussed the results of the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) survey conducted in 2018. Brown County REA had an 82 percent response rate.
- Reviewed and approved Policy 202 Conflict of Interest and 203 Spending Authority, as presented.
- Reviewed the first meeting of the new Member Advisory Council meeting.
- Reviewed recent employee training and safety meetings, plus operations/maintenance activities.

The next meeting will be May 30 at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye. ☎

## Staff notes



**Brandon Havemeier**  
Operations Manager

### BCREA gearing up for a busy, safe summer

As the temperatures rise and conditions improve, Brown County REA line crews and contractors are ready for construction and maintenance projects throughout the service area.

Replacement of three miles of overhead line with three-phase underground line east of Hanska, along state Highway 15, is one of the work plan jobs for the summer. In addition, we

will replace overhead services throughout the year and focus on areas where we have had recent tree issues via tree trimming or replacing line with underground.



Beginning May 1 we will have Southwood 2000, a subsidiary of our neighbors at Redwood Electric Cooperative in Clements, do our locating services. We have also again contracted with Southwood 2000 to perform our pole

testing, which started in April. Poles are being tested in the south central portion of the service area in Mulligan, Albin and Leavenworth Townships. Pole inspection involves visually inspecting the pole, checking for cracks, equipment damage and burn marks from ditch fires. If the pole passes that part of the inspection, they dig down 18 inches to inspect the base of the pole. To check for internal decay they drill into the core of the pole. The base of the pole is also visually checked for decay. If the pole does not pass inspection, it is rejected and will be replaced. The poles are also inspected for ground resistance on the driven ground rods and also guy guards are added, as needed. We test the poles periodically to meet requirements of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and to improve service reliability

Carr's Tree Service will be back in the service area trimming trees in Milford, Home and Praireville Townships beginning in July. Central Applicators, Inc. will be spot treating unwanted brush, noxious weeds and volunteer trees to maintain and control vegetation along the co-op's right-of-way beginning in June.

As always, we remind you to be aware of Brown County REA equipment as you are working in your fields and yards. Be aware of transformers and other equipment while out mowing, riding ATV or working in the fields. Also, know where the poles and overhead lines are when planting, spraying and moving equipment. Remember to call Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1166 before doing any digging more than 12 inches deep. All of us at Brown County REA wish you a safe spring and summer. ☎