



Electricity to cook Thanksgiving dinner averages around \$1.86

You can't put a price on family time at Thanksgiving, especially after COVID impacted holiday gatherings last year. However, what does cooking for Thanksgiving add to your electric bill? Let's break it down and be thankful for reliable, affordable electricity.

The centerpiece of the Thanksgiving meal is the turkey. An 18-pound turkey takes approximately four hours to cook in the oven. Using Brown County REA's residential rate of 9.5 cents per kilowatt-hour (KWH), it costs about \$1.14 to cook the Thanksgiving turkey.

Pass the potatoes please! Mashed potatoes are a staple of Thanksgiving side dishes. Mashed potatoes take about 30 minutes on the stove to boil. That comes to \$.10 in electricity.

Gravy for those mashed potatoes takes another 15 minutes of cooking time. That will cost \$.05.

Many people cook stuffing in a crockpot for approximately four hours. That will cost another \$.12. If you cook it in the oven at the same time as the turkey, it's free!

Plus, do you have mouth-watering dinner rolls to bake as you let the turkey rest before carving it up? Have any veggie side dishes to warm up? Let's add \$.16 for those



Let's talk turkey or rather the cost to cook it! Cooking a turkey for four hours in the oven only adds about \$1.14 to your electric bill.

will be running the dishwasher. To wash one load of dishes costs \$.15 in electricity. Heating water to fill the sink to hand wash dishes costs about double what it takes to run the dishwasher.

The TV might be on before and after the meal, as your family members watch the parade or football games. Eight hours of 50-inch TV running costs just four pennies!

Finally, you may be having supper, as well, and heating up those leftovers up in the microwave. It costs a penny to run the microwave for two minutes.

Your local electric cooperative is proud to power your daily life, plus your favorite holiday meals and priceless memories too! ☺

miscellaneous details.

After the great meal we still create room for the Thanksgiving pie! Apple, pumpkin or pecan pie are often options to compliment the meal. A pie takes another hour of baking time or about \$.29.

That puts the total electrical cost to cook a Thanksgiving meal at about \$1.86. That's a bargain! If you drove 50 miles to Grandma's house for dinner, that costs about \$6.50 in gas, plus wear and tear on your vehicle.

If you aren't doing all of the clean up by hand, you

At A Glance



**Brown County
Rural Electrical
Association**

Capital credits returned to members

The BCREA Board of Directors voted to return more than \$716,000 in capital credits to members. Capital credits are one of the benefits of cooperative membership. Read more about it on Page 4. ☺

Save money, energy and time with Energy Star dishwashers

Most people don't enjoy doing dishes, but they do enjoy saving time, energy and money. Energy Star dishwashers make this possible.

A standard Energy Star dishwasher costs about \$35 per year to run and can save about 3,870 gallons of water over its lifetime. They are roughly 12 percent more efficient than non-Energy Star models.

Energy Star dishwasher qualifications are based on specific energy consumption and water consumption levels measured by Energy Factor (EF). EF is expressed in cycles per kWh. The greater the EF, the more efficient the dishwasher.

Using dishwashers correctly increases efficiency. Follow these tips to gain the most out your dishwasher:

- Rinsing dishes before loading them in the dishwasher increases water and energy use. Scrape food off dishes instead. If your dirty dishes sit overnight, use your dishwasher's rinse feature. It uses a fraction of the water needed to hand rinse.

- Dishwashers use about the same amount of energy and water, regardless of the number of dishes inside. Run full loads whenever possible.

- Choose a dishwasher with several wash cycle options. A dishwasher with an auto-sensing cycle means the dishwasher has a soil-sensor and is able to detect if the water coming off the dishes is dirty or clean, which can save water and help ensure the dishes come out clean. If your dishes are only



Thanksgiving will produce a lot of dirty dishes. Don't be afraid to put them in the dishwasher. Dishwashers are one of the most efficient ways of clean up available. The energy they save is found money.

slightly soiled, you can use a cycle that uses less water. Other options might include an energy-saving wash cycle or the ability to turn off heated dry.

A question that often comes up is whether dishwashers use more energy and water than washing by hand. Surprisingly the answer is no. Dishwashers are more efficient than handwashing, saving about \$130 per year by using a quarter of the energy required by handwashing dishes.

Using an Energy Star dishwasher can also save over 230 hours of personal time over the course of a year. That's almost 10 days.

Washing dishes in a dishwasher vs. handwashing also saves more than 8,000 gallons of water yearly.

Finally, dishwashers are more sanitary. For example, dishwashers boost water temperatures to 140 degrees, which allows for improved sanitation compared to hand washing.

The Balmuda Toaster uses steam to toast

Toast is not considered to be a type of food that offers a lot of room for improvement. Then along came the Balmuda Toaster Oven.

The secret to the Balmuda Toaster Oven is to pour about one teaspoon of water into the device before toasting. Heating more rapidly than air, the resulting steam locks in the bread's moisture, while giving it a golden-brown finish.

The Balmuda Toaster Oven does more than make ideal toast. It also functions as a countertop oven, enabling you to bake cookies and reheat frozen food. Additional modes allow users to even try more recipes. The five modes are:

- *Oven Mode* (without steam) is for baking cookies, dishes with breadcrumbs or cheese toppings and frozen food.



The Balmuda Toaster Oven is known for making perfect toast: soft on the inside and crispy on the outside.

- *Sandwich Bread Mode* is ideal for thin-sliced bread and English muffins.

- *Artisan Bread Mode* uses a higher temperature that retains the moist interior of sourdough, rye and other thick-sliced bread.

- *Pizza Mode* reheats pizza to oven-fresh perfection. This mode also toasts bagels to a crisp finish with a chewy interior and makes cheesy toast.

- *Pastry Mode* features a gentle warming cycle without browning for croissants, rolls, scones and baguettes.

The Balmuda Toaster Oven comes with toasting rack, baking pan, crumb catcher, one-teaspoon measuring cup and recipes. The toaster oven costs approximately \$300 and is available from balmuda.com. 

Safety

Help stop copper theft on co-op lines

Copper has become a hot commodity for thieves trying to make a quick dollar. Those who steal copper are not only risking their own lives, but also the safety and well-being of others. You can help stop copper theft by reporting suspicious activity near common targets. These locations include farm equipment, air conditioners, vacant buildings, construction sites and electric utility properties, including substations and power poles.

Your electric cooperative offers these tips to help safeguard against electrical dangers and prevent copper theft.

- If you notice anything unusual with electric facilities, such as an open substation gate, open equipment, hanging wire, etc., contact your electric utility immediately.

- If you see suspicious activities near electric facilities, call 911 or your local utility. Do not intervene. Allow officials to handle the situation.

- Install motion-sensor lights and/or a video surveillance system on the outside of your house and business to deter possible thieves.

- Post "No Trespassing" placards around property or



The copper ground wire running up the side of the pole is sometimes the target of thieves. Cutting the ground wire can cause distribution problems and injury. If you see it happening, notify law enforcement.

signs to indicate the presence of a surveillance or security system to deter thieves. Even with non-active systems, these signs tend to discourage some instances of theft.

- Remove access to buildings and roofs. Eliminate items that allow for easy entry to buildings, such as trees, ladders, scaffolding, dumpsters and accumulated materials such as pallet piles.

- Store tools and wire cutters in a secure location and never leave them out while away.

- Never enter or touch equipment inside a substation; stay away from power lines and anything touching a power line.

- If you work in construction, store copper securely, especially overnight.

Copper thieves have caused power outages at businesses and homes, shutdown traffic lights and forced hospitals to run backup generators. In the worse cases copper thefts have

caused fires and explosions that have taken innocent lives.

Thanks for helping protect your electric cooperative's power lines! 

Brown County Briefs

2022 calendars available



Members can now pick up the 2022 large, farm pocket calendars (one per member please) at the REA headquarters. There are also a small number of pocket-size calendars available, while supplies last.

Energy tip



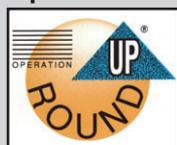
Fall is the perfect time to prep your home for the upcoming winter chill. One of the best ways you can save energy and stay comfortable is to caulk and weatherstrip areas that typically need sealing. Start by sealing around windows and doors. Seal plumbing, ducting and areas where electrical wiring comes through walls, floors and ceilings for additional energy savings.

Source: energy.gov

C&I rebates due

Members who have made energy-efficiency upgrades to lighting, HVAC or other Commercial, Agricultural or Industrial projects in 2021 are reminded to submit information for potential rebates by November 15.

Operation Round Up



The Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board will meet for its final 2021 meeting November 16. Organizations wishing to be considered for funding at this meeting should submit an application found on the REA website at www.browncountyrea.coop, under *Operation Round Up* in the *Programs & Services* section, before that date. (C)

Wherever energy is needed, the electric grid is there



Whenever you flip a switch, plug in your phone or open your refrigerator, you're relying on the grid to bring you reliable electricity. Cooperatives like Brown County REA put a lot of time and effort into providing electricity when you need it.

At the most basic level the electric grid is a set of interconnected wires connecting places where energy is produced to where it is used. Over time, the grid has become smarter, more dynamic and more interconnected with advancements in technology, along with additional wind and solar energy resources.

Great River Energy, wholesale electricity provider to Brown County REA, uses the grid to move electrons and information to ensure reliable electric service. This fast transmission of energy and information makes for a quick response time.

But how does the grid work?

Electricity from power plants and wind farms travels along high-voltage transmission lines to the places where it can be "stepped down" and used. Specialized transformers reduce the electric energy down to a lower voltage making it suitable for high-volume delivery over short distances.

Power lines belonging to Brown County REA carry electricity to smaller transformers that reduce power to levels appropriate for use at schools, farms, small businesses and homes. For members who have installed solar panels, wind turbines or other generators, the grid is there to supply energy when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing.

Brown County REA works with Great River Energy to ensure a resilient grid able to meet growing demand and address the complexities of integrating renewable resources. (C)

Brown County REA to return more than \$716,000 in Capital Credits



At its October meeting, the Brown County REA Board of Directors approved payment of \$716,286 in patronage dividends to members, which breaks down to: 20% of 2020, the remainder of 2003, 51% of 2004 capital credits. The amount also includes 100% of Great River Energy patronage from 1989-1992 and a portion of 1993, and other miscellaneous patronage. Checks will be issued in mid-November. Amounts less than \$100 will be credited on your November bill.

How Capital Credits Work



Co-op member uses electricity provided. Brown County REA tracks electricity use and payments throughout the year.

At year end, BCREA takes care of financial obligations and determines if there are excess revenues, called margins.



Excess revenue is allocated to you, the members, as Capital Credits, based on how much electricity you've used.

Board of Directors approves the portion of the margins to be distributed to members as capital credits.



After the rotation period, bill credits or checks are issued to qualifying members. Checks are issued for amounts of \$100 and above.

Christensen achieves Credentialed Cooperative Director status

Calling all EV and future EV owners



Do you own or plan to buy a plug-in electric or plug-in hybrid electric vehicle in the near future? Contact Brown County REA to learn about rebates on at-home charging options available to our members, best times to charge, upcoming events, EV owner resources and more. We'd also like to gauge interest in creating an EV-owners group. Call the office 800-658-2368 or email m.solie@bcrea.coop.



BCREA CEO Mike Heidemann (right) presents Director Joel Christensen with the Credentialed Cooperative Director certificate.

REA District 6 Director Joel Christensen recently received the Credentialed Cooperative Director (CCD) certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA).

An ever-changing business environment has imposed new demands on electric cooperative directors requiring increased knowledge of changes in the electric utility business, new governance skills, plus solid knowledge of the cooperative principles and business model. Brown County REA has a commitment to work through NRECA to enhance director knowledge for the benefit of its member-owners.

The CCD program requires attendance and demonstrated understanding of the basic competencies contained in five core courses:

- Director Duties and Liabilities
- Understanding the Electric Business
- Board Operations and Process
- Strategic Planning
- Financial Decision Making

Christensen, of rural Morgan, is in his 10th year representing cooperative members in Eden and Prairieville townships in Brown County a portion of Sherman and all of Morgan townships in Redwood County.



Brown County REA is again collecting donations of unwrapped toys, books, hats and mittens to be used as part of the Santa's Closet project which provides gifts to area children who may not otherwise receive gifts this Christmas.

Please drop off donations at the REA headquarters, 24386 State Hwy. 4, Sleepy Eye M-F 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. before December 3rd. Monetary donations can be mailed to: Sertoma Club- Santa's Closet PO Box 692, New Ulm, MN 56073.

Thank you for your generosity to those less fortunate!

Recycle your old holiday lights

Upgrading your holiday lighting to LED? Remember to recycle the old lights. BCREA is again working with the Sleepy Eye YES! Team to collect strands of old holiday lights to be recycled. Drop off your old lights in the box in the office entry during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. The collection begins mid-November and runs through mid-January. Please do not place cord adapters, battery packs, plastic rope lights or CFL bulbs in the collection box.



Turn to heat pumps to avoid surging fossil fuel heating bills

This winter could be a roller coaster ride of higher heating bills for homes with fossil fuel heating. Installing a heat pump could help members come out on top.

Fossil fuel heat sharply increases

The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) forecasted U.S. households heating bills will jump 54 percent compared to last winter.

Nearly half of the homes in U.S. use natural gas for heat. They predict the average heating bill of \$746. The EIA expects the Midwest to see 49 percent increases for natural gas heated homes, while the rest of the country may be a 30 percent increase.

Meanwhile, LP is expected to see the sharpest increases at 54 percent. According to ychart.com Minnesota LP residential prices were \$1.298 in October, 2020, while October 2021 it is \$2.308. Those homes using heating oil are expected to see a 43 percent increase or more than \$500.

Electricity only modest increase

The better news is for those heating their homes with electricity. Those homes are expected to see modest increases of 6 percent.

How can you save money? Upgrade your home heating system to an air source heat pump. “Furnaces may run from 60 to 95 percent efficiency,” stated the cooperative’s energy expert. “However, air source heat pumps run from 200 to 300 percent efficiency. Heat pumps transfer heat, instead of burning fuel where some heat is lost up the chimney.”

Co-op members may want to consider adding a heat pump. This way you have control over your heating costs, based on the energy prices for fossil fuels and electricity. Explore the co-op’s Dual Fuel rates if you have electric heat with a backup heating system for peak period shifting. Plus, you can manually switch from



Whether the grass is green or covered in snow, an air source heat pump works year-round to provide 200-300 percent efficient heating and summer cooling too! Upgrade your old central air to a heat pump to save on skyrocketing fossil fuel costs. Ask about the co-op’s heat pump rebates too!

one system to the other or use a smart thermostat. By investing in an energy-efficient heat pump, you’ve also improved your home’s summer cooling and dehumidification as it replaces a central air unit.

Your electric cooperative has rebates on ductless heat pumps, air source heat pumps and ground source heat pumps. Plus, the co-op offers a \$25 Smart Thermostat rebate. See the details on your cooperative’s website or call the co-op’s energy expert with heat pump questions.

Existing Dual Heat system ready?

If you have an existing Dual Heat system, be ready for winter load control. If you use an LP furnace as a

backup, make sure the tank is filled. If your LP furnace no longer works, be sure to contact your cooperative to be removed from Dual Heat control. Replace your furnace filter too, if needed.

Space heaters can be costly

The last time fossil fuel prices jumped, some members turned to using two or three space heaters. Just remember that a space heater running eight hours a day costs about \$1.62 a day. That means running a space heater for a month adds about \$49 to your monthly electric bill.

Your co-op’s energy expert stands by ready to answer your heating questions. ☎️

Snack your way through the holidays with new appetizer recipes

Appeal to your family gathering with some new appetizer recipes! Share your favorite appetizer recipes with us, whether it's a new dip, finger foods, crockpot creations or air fryer feasts! Mail to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by November 24. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

Marcia Kay's Coffee Cake by Elizabeth Shimon, Granada

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix together:

1 box yellow cake mix	1 can apple pie filling
3 eggs	1 tsp. cinnamon

Spread into a greased/buttered 9x13" pan.

Mix together and top with the following:

4 T. butter, softened	3 T. cinnamon
4 T. brown sugar	4 T. flour

Bake for 35-45 minutes.

Notes: It's excellent with chopped walnuts or pecans mixed into topping. Serve warm with a salted caramel sauce drizzled on top and a scoop of ice cream. 📧

Frosted Zucchini Cake by Barb Sellner, Sleepy Eye

4 eggs, beaten	1 tsp. salt
2 c. sugar	2 tsp. cinnamon
1½ c. cooking oil	2 2/3 c. pureed zucchini
2 c. flour	1½ c. coconut
2 tsp. baking soda	1½ c. chopped walnuts

Mix together eggs and sugar; set aside. Add oil, flour, baking soda, salt and cinnamon to egg/sugar mixture. Fold in zucchini, coconut and nuts. Place mixture in a 9x13" pan. Bake at 350° for 20-30 minutes. Frost when cool.

Frosting: 8 oz. cream cheese 2 tsp. vanilla
1/3 c. soft butter 3 c. powdered sugar

Note: you can substitute carrots for the zucchini. Another option: you can also add ½ c. cocoa to make it a chocolate cake. 📧

One-Step Pie Cake by Lona Larson, Sherburn

1¾ c. sugar	3 eggs
2 c. flour	1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. cinnamon (2 tsp. if apple)	1 tsp baking soda
1 c. oil	1 can pie filling (cherry OR apple OR blueberry)

Mix all ingredients, except pie filling, in a large bowl with wooden spoon; fold in the pie filling. Pour into a 9x13" greased and floured cake pan. Bake at 350° for 45-50 minutes.

Serve with Cool Whip, ice cream or sprinkled powdered sugar. 📧

Wacky Cake by Mary Mills, New Ulm

1½ c. flour	1 tsp baking soda	6 T. oil
1 c. sugar	2 T. cocoa, slightly heaping	1 tsp. vanilla
½ tsp. salt	1 c. cold water	1 T. vinegar

Mix in order given. Stir well. Not necessary to grease 8x8" pan. Bake at 375° for 30 minutes. Double recipe for a 9x13" pan.

Frosting: 1 c. sugar 4 T. butter 4 T. milk ¾ c. chocolate chips

Combine sugar, butter and milk. Bring to a boil. Boil 30 seconds. Remove from heat and add chips. Beat until stiff enough to spread. Makes enough for a 9x13" pan, but we like frosting and use that on the 8x8" pan too. 📧

Creme de Menthe Cake

by Nancy Katzer, Fairmont

1 box white cake mix
Green Crème de Menthe
2 jars Hershey Fudge Topping
1 large container Cool Whip

In preparing the box of cake mix follow the directions, but use 3 T. less water and add 3 T. green Crème de Menthe instead. This makes the cake green and minty. Bake cake as directed in a 9x13" pan.

Cool and spread the two jars of Hershey Fudge Topping over cake. I heat the fudge topping in the microwave a little bit to make it easier to spread.

Then add 3 T. of green Crème de Menthe to the Cool Whip and mix well. Spread over the Fudge Topping. Refrigerate. 📧

**Pick up the phone
before the shovel;
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.gopherstateonecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧



**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
Website: www.browncountyrea.coop
Phone: 507-794-3331 or 800-658-2368
Office hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday

Mike Heidemann, Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Thomas Hayes, President — 228-8954
William Berg, Vice President — 766-1497
James D. Hanson, Sec.-Treasurer — 829-6756
Brad Sprenger — 317-5576
David Wendinger — 276-3166
Greg Mages — 794-3540
Joel Christensen — 828-4550
James Mickelson — 794-6298
Landon Sletta — 439-6559
The Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of each month.



**Mike Heidemann
Chief Executive
Officer**

Staff Notes

It's a matter of (co-op!) principles

For me, this is a time of year for reflection, and topping my list of things I'm grateful for is our wonderful co-op community. I think I speak for all Brown County REA employees when I say we are thankful to live and work in this area.

Last month my column touched on the first three Cooperative Principles. This month, we'll address the remaining four. The Cooperative Principles are essential to the co-op business model and

benefit all members of the co-op.

Autonomy and Independence means the co-op operates in an autonomous way that is solely directed and guided by its members, reflecting the values and needs of our local community. The co-op is not influenced by leaders or shareholders several states away. It is led by the local members it serves.

Education and Training focuses on enhancing the knowledge of co-op employees and board members, which enables them to contribute to the development of the co-op. By investing in continuous learning for our employees and board members, our co-op is making a commitment not just to individual professional and personal growth, but to the future of the co-op and the high quality of service our members expect and deserve. It's a win-win situation. We also strive to inform our members and the public about the mission and operations of the co-op. You receive this newsletter every month so we can share the latest co-op news and updates, as well as energy efficiency and safety tips.

Cooperation Among Cooperatives fosters the way co-ops work together to address bigger challenges. While this principle applies to all types of cooperatives, it is especially relevant in the energy industry. We put this principle in action after major storms and disasters that cause widespread power outages. When this happens, we call on nearby co-ops to come to our aid and assist with restoration efforts. We of course extend the same help to them when they need us. I can't think of a better example of cooperation among cooperatives.

Also, because we are part of the national electric co-op network, we can connect and collaborate with other electric co-ops to tackle industry-related challenges, like cybersecurity and an everchanging energy landscape.

Concern for Community is essential to who we are as cooperatives. We serve our community not only by being an essential service, but by helping to power our local economy. Activities like the current Santa's Closet toy collection, United Way school supply drive and Operation Round Up donations help us to give back to the area we serve.

I think you'll find that most cooperatives bring good people together to make good things happen in the community. We hope you feel that way about us, your local electric co-op. On behalf of everyone at BCREA, we're thankful for your membership and wish you a wonderful Thanksgiving. ☺

Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly meeting October 28 at the REA headquarters. Discussion and/or action was taken on the following items:

- Reviewed and approved the September 2021 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations and assignment transfers.
 - Updated on plans to reconvene the Member Advisory Council in April 2022.
 - Approved the write-off of \$581.84 in uncollectible electric bill balances.
 - Informed checks for capital credit amounts of \$100 or more will be mailed November 17.
 - Discussed and approved paying down \$84,000 of BCREA's power cost adjustment to bring PCA on October bills to zero.
 - Reviewed and approved the cooperative's 2020 Form 990 to file with the Internal Revenue Service.
 - Updated on progress of construction activities including the Dotson Sub project, underground rebuilds and new services.
 - Informed that Carr's Tree Service will be trimming trees in Lafayette and Bernadotte townships during November and December.
- The next meeting is set for November 23 at the BCREA office in Sleepy Eye. ☺