

# Connections

March 2022

For the member-owners of Brown County REA



Volume 26, Issue 3

## Southern Minnesota electric cooperatives gain \$5,000 grant for electric vehicle education event August 10

Get charged up and check out electric vehicles (EV) August 10!

Electric cooperatives in southwest Minnesota will host this EV education event. The event will include presentations informing attendees about electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging. Different EV models will be onsite for participants to see and possibly test drive. The objective is to educate southwest Minnesota residents on EVs and charging options. This event will be jointly sponsored by your electric cooperative, along with neighboring South Central Electric, Nobles Electric, Federated REA and Redwood Electric. In addition, area wholesale power suppliers, Great River Energy and Basin Electric Cooperative will participate.

The cooperatives were recently awarded \$5,000 seed grant to help educate rural residents about EV charging, range, prices and see some EVs first hand. The Clean Energy Resources Team (CERTs) announced 74 organizations received a total of \$330,000 in the 2022 round of funding. "Seed grants encourage community-driven projects that help people see clean energy working in their own communities and provide communities



**Curious about electric vehicles? Come to our August 10<sup>th</sup> EV event! Put it on your calendar now!**

with opportunities to tangibly learn about and experience the benefits of clean energy," said Lissa Pawlisch, CERTS statewide director. "The 74 funded projects span a broad range of energy efficiency and renewable

energy technologies, along with electric vehicle charging. Many projects also include components of education, outreach and community building."

These awards mark the 11<sup>th</sup> round of CERTs Seed Grants, totaling over \$1.6 million to 467 projects since 2006. The number of applications submitted in 2022 marked a high point in seed grant projects.

Your electric cooperative is working with their neighboring electric cooperatives to make this event happen. The location will be at the Windom Community Center, a centralized location, August 10. Mark your calendar. The co-ops hope to host several electric cars, possibly an electric pickup that's been ordered, electric bikes and electric yard tools like lawnmower, leaf blower, chain saw and more.

If you know of someone who would like to bring their personal electric vehicle, please let your local electric cooperative know.

The best way to grow the use of electric vehicles, is through those already excited and using them. Watch for more EV event details in the June *Connections* newsletter. ☺

### At A Glance



**Brown County  
Rural Electrical  
Association**

#### Meet your director candidates

BCREA is electing directors for Districts 1, 4 & 5 at its March 31 Annual Meeting. Read their bios on Page 5. Part of being a member of an electric cooperative is having a voice and a vote. Be sure to vote and return mailed ballot before noon March 31. ☺



# Cultivate energy savings on the farm with co-op's energy-efficiency rebates

Energy is a major expense in agriculture. Farms depend on diesel, gasoline and electricity to help with the important work of raising crops and livestock.

Advancements in efficiency and special programs offered by electric cooperatives are presenting new opportunities for farms to use less energy overall and to use electricity in new ways. Your electric cooperative offers many different rebates to help you implement new technology to your operations.

## LED lighting retrofit rebates

LED lighting provides great long lasting light with lower energy use. Upgrade from flickering flourescents or incandescent bulbs to LED lighting in your hog barns, shops and businesses.

## Variable frequency drives

Add new variable frequency/speed drives (VFD/VSD) to your operation and receive a rebate. Drives must be tied to an automated control system and have a true power factor of .90 or greater.

Approved applications of VFDs/VSDs include:

- HVAC fans
- Pumps
- Cooling towers
- Industrial fans
- Process equipment

The VFD/VSD will be evaluated in conjunction with the equipment operating efficiency and loading. The rebate is based on the rated controlled horsepower or horsepower of the motor, whichever is lowest.

## Hog farrowing heated mats

New construction barns using electric hog farrowing heated mats,



Savings with efficient fractional horsepower motors can add up! Upgrade your farm's fractional motors and receive a rebate from your co-op too. Other farm energy-efficiency rebates exist for lighting upgrades, variable frequency drives, and hog farrowing mats. Find these rebate forms on the cooperative's website.

or existing barns replacing heat lamps with heating mats equipped with automated climate controls are eligible. Using heat mats significantly reduces heat lost to ambient air by providing direct heat transfer to the piglets.

## Add fractional horsepower motors

Replacing inefficient shaded pole or permanent split capacitor motors with fractional horsepower motors can help you consume less wattage. On average, they run 75 percent more efficiently.

In addition to significant energy cost savings, they deliver:

1. Quieter operation
2. Less energy consumption
3. Reduced heat load
4. Longer equipment lifespan

and efficient heating and cooling technologies have reduced the energy needed to keep animals healthy and comfortable all year.

## Other ag rebates exist too

Prescriptive and custom rebates are available to members for the installation of efficient equipment. Rebates are available for, but not limited to:

- Irrigation VFD
- Livestock waterer
- Ventilation fans
- Dairy equipment

## Greenhouse/indoor ag rebates

One of the most exciting trends is happening indoors. Enclosed growing containers equipped with finely-tuned electric equipment provide optimal water, light and nutrients. Best of all, they can grow fruits and vegetables year-round.

To learn more about improving energy use on your farm and details on possible rebates, contact your electric cooperative's energy expert. (b)

## Give your eyes a break with a massage

Eyes get more of a workout than ever these days. People spend all day looking at computer screens. They go home to stare at TVs, phones and tablets. Give your eyes a break with the RENPHO Eye Massager.

The eye massager has 16 rotating silicone massage “fingers” that knead eye muscles to help ease eye strain, eye puffiness, dry eyes, dark circles, improve sleep quality and help reduce headaches.

The eye massager has five massage modes. Rhythmic Mode vibrates with the beat of music. You can use bluetooth connection phone to



The RENPHO Eye Massager reduces stress and eye strain by massaging your eye muscles.

synchronize your own music. Stereo sound and crescent-shaped soundhole design provides a cinema-level stereo music experience.

This eye massager is suitable for adolescents who overuse mobile phones or tablets, which cause eye fatigue or myopia; office workers who use computers every day or elderly people with dry eyes may like it; people who are stressed or people interested in beauty products could benefit as well.

The RENPHO Eye Massager costs approximately \$60 and is available online and in retail stores. 

## Safety

### Call before you dig into projects this spring

The coming of spring brings the start of construction projects. If you are doing any digging, be sure to call Gopher State One Call at least 48 hours in advance. They will come out and mark any utility lines in the area of where you are digging.

People are tempted to skip calling because they think striking a buried line will not happen. They assume that they will ‘not dig too deep’ or that they will ‘be careful.’ However, underground lines are unyielding. Their path is unpredictable and hitting one can happen with one strike of a shovel or other tool.

You might think you are just installing a mailbox or just using a post-hole digger or planting only a small flower bed. However, underground utility lines could be anywhere and they also shift over time. They should always be marked in advance because some can be found only a few inches below the surface.

Striking a single buried utility line can cause injury, repair costs,



**Don't dig up trouble this spring with construction or home improvement projects. If you are digging, you could hit underground utility lines, which could affect your pocketbook or health. Call Gopher State One Call before beginning.**

penalties and inconvenient outages. Every project, big or small, requires advance notification by calling 811 or 1-800-252-1166. Otherwise, to start the underground utility marking process, go to [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org).

Examples of projects that require utility location include putting up a fence, installing a mailbox post,

building a deck or patio, plus planting trees and shrubs. However, this is not an all-inclusive list. Any project that breaks ground requires that underground utilities be marked.

After submitting a request, underground lines will be marked by their respective utilities; however, locators do not mark private lines such as service to outbuildings, underground sprinkler systems or a gas line to a grill, for example. Private lines are the responsibility of the homeowner.

Five steps exist for safer digging:

1. Pre-mark the proposed dig area with white paint or flags.
2. Call 811 or go online to submit your locate request before you dig. There is no charge for the service.
3. Wait the required amount of time (two business days).
4. Respect the marks and do not move any flags.
5. Dig with care. Avoid digging on top or within 18-24 inches on all sides of utility marks, which may mean moving your digging project to another part of your yard. 

# Brown County Briefs

## Energy Efficiency Tip



When was your cooling system last serviced? Most manufacturers recommend an annual tune up for your home's cooling system. March is a great time to schedule this service so you can beat the summer rush when the pros are busiest. A qualified professional can check the amount of refrigerant, accuracy of the thermostat, condition of belts and motors and other factors that can greatly impact the efficiency of your system.

## AC tune-up

BCREA members may be eligible for a \$25 rebate for tune-ups on cooling systems at least three years old. Check out the website or contact the co-op for details.

## Operation Round Up scholarship deadline approaching



High school seniors whose parents/guardians are Brown County REA members are

reminded of the March 28<sup>th</sup> deadline for applications to be considered for one of six \$250 scholarships offered through the Brown County Rural Electric Trust. Application materials available at [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop).

## Member Advisory Council

Member Advisory Council will meet April 11 at 6 p.m. Details will be mailed out.



## Tree trimming

Carr's Tree Service is trimming trees in the BCREA rights-of-way throughout the service territory. Work is expected to run through the end of March. (C)

# Watch for the 2021 Annual Report

A copy of the Brown County REA 2021 Annual Report will be arriving in members' mailboxes by mid-March. Included in this year's report is a mail-in ballot to vote in the director elections and on a proposed amendment to the cooperative by-laws. All members are encouraged to vote through the mail ballot which must be received in the office by March 31 at noon to be counted. Members who vote by mail are still encouraged to attend the March 31 Annual Meeting in person. For those unable to attend, a scannable QR code printed on page 11 of the Annual Report will provide a link to view the meeting via Zoom.

Also included with the annual report mailing is a proxy vote form. A spouse not listed as the cooperative member who plans to attend the Annual Meeting and vote by proxy will need to bring along the completed form. Proxy forms should not be returned by mail. Please bring your Annual Report to the meeting. (C)

## Notice of special member meeting March 31

All Brown County REA members are hereby notified of a special meeting, concurrent with the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, for the purpose of adopting a proposed amendment to the cooperative by-laws.

Members will be asked to vote on the proposed amendment to Section 4.3 (b) (3) clarifying that Directors may qualify through membership in Member Entities:

(3) Notwithstanding the foregoing, an individual who is not a Member but is a partner, member, shareholder or principal owning no less than ten percent (10%) in a Member Entity who is a Member may be Director; provided, however, that the individual must meet and comply with the General Director Qualifications. Membership Director Qualifications and Independence Director Qualifications as if the individual, and not the Member Entity through which the individual's directorship derives, is or were the Member. If Director Districts are utilized, the individual must reside in and Use a Cooperative Service, at the individual's driver's license residence, which must be in the same Director District as the Member Entity for Membership determination. For purposes of Section 4.3(b)(1)(A), the individual must have been a partner, member, shareholder or principal owning no less than ten percent (10%) in a Member Entity for at least one year prior to becoming a Director. (C)

# EV emergency responder training



Brown County REA hosted 42 firefighters and two Brown County Sheriff Department deputies at an Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Emergency Response Training February 9. Jack Volz, president of Safety and Security Consultation Specialists, LLC (SASCS), educated attendees on types of EVs and highlighted specific crash and fire responses,

as well as dispelling myths surrounding EV batteries. Following the classroom portion, participants gathered in the warehouse to gain an up-close look at Great River Energy (GRE)'s Chrysler Pacific hybrid and South Central Electric Association's all-electric Chevy Bolt. Fire departments from Sleepy Eye, Comfrey, Hanska and Morgan attended the training, sponsored by GRE. (C)

# 2022 Director candidates



**James Hanson**

## District 1

James (Jim) Hanson and Jeri, his wife, live on a farm near Comfrey. They have four children. Two girls: Jody (Brandon) and

Jaime (Dallas). Two boys: Aaron (Jamie) and Adam (Marisa). They also have 10 grandchildren.

Jim and Jeri farm 800 acres and have a registered Hereford, cow/calf operation. Jim graduated from Comfrey High School and attended the University of Minnesota at Waseca for two years before going into farming.

In 2021 Jim celebrated 30 years as a BCREA Director. He wants to continue on the board because he believes his experience gives him a good base for decisions that need to be made. "When I started on the REA Board in the early 90s, deregulation was facing us, then Cap-and-Trade," said Jim. "The names of the issues change, but the bottom line is that we need to keep reliable and low-cost electricity. That has been the focus of BCREA in the past and that will continue to be my focus. BCREA is a strong organization and I want to continue to be a part of a positive organization that truly cares about its members." 



**William Berg**

## District 4

William Berg lives on the Sigel Township farm where he was raised. He is a graduate of Cathedral High School and worked at Del

Monte and Kraft foods for a few years before beginning farming. Bill and his wife, Jean, have four children: Nate, Sara, Matt and Kari. Bill, Jean and son, Matt, operate a cow/calf, beef operation on a 500-acre farm.

Bill has served on the REA board since 2013 and the Great River Energy board since 2019. He has served more than 20 years on both the Sigel Township Board and the New Ulm Rural Fire Department Association Board as Director. He has also served as AMPI District 3 President for nine years and is a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Catholic Order of Foresters.

He believes that a steady, low cost and reliable supply of electricity is important to everyone. He thinks the REA board is doing a good job and would like your support for another term on the board. 



**Jim Mickelson**

## District 5

James (Jim) Mickelson and his wife Elaine live in Leavenworth Township of Brown County. They have four adult children:

Darla, Larry, Connie and Vicky; 13 grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. Jim, Elaine, Larry and family operate a crop and dairy farm and have a beef cow herd. Jim is a Leavenworth Township Supervisor and chairman of the Brown County Township Association. He has served on many other boards.

Jim is the incumbent director for District 5 and has served on the REA Board since 1998. He served as Board President from 2014 through 2020. He says with a few years of experience on the REA board he can be an even better representative for our members. "Reliable service with the lowest possible cost for electricity is what I want for our members," he says. "I take pride in being a director on the Brown County REA Board and I would appreciate your vote." 

**Directors will be elected at the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting set for the evening of March 31 at the Sleepy Eye Event Center.**

## Operation Round Up awards \$1,800 to local organizations

The BCREA Trust Board organized for 2022 at its February 15 meeting. The trust board welcomed new members Ann Parker, Brian Hacker and Mike Rein.

Trust Board Officers elected at the meeting include President Lynnae Pelzel, Vice President Kim Hensch, Secretary Pat Roiger and Treasurer Kari Helget.

Contributions totaling \$1,800 were made to seven area organizations and five area food shelves: Sleepy Eye Police Department's safety education, Sleepy Eye American Legion Post 7 and EDA's Veteran's Park addition, St. Raphael's Catholic School new daycare and after prom activities for Sleepy Eye Public, Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop, Sleepy Eye St. Mary's and Minnesota Valley Lutheran high schools. During March Foodshare Month donations will be given



to food shelves serving areas around Sleepy Eye, Springfield, New Ulm, Morgan and Sibley County.

Thanks to the REA members who participate in Operation Round Up, more than \$227,000 has assisted organizations and individuals in the service area and provided scholarships. Collectively, your change can make a difference!

If you are willing to contribute less than \$12 per year by rounding up your bill to the nearest dollar to help Operation Round Up support local area causes, please call Brown County REA at 1-800-658-2368 or 794-3331. The Round Up Trusts Board will meet again March 29 to review scholarship and other applications. 

# The power that's behind your power — Lineworker Appreciation Month in April

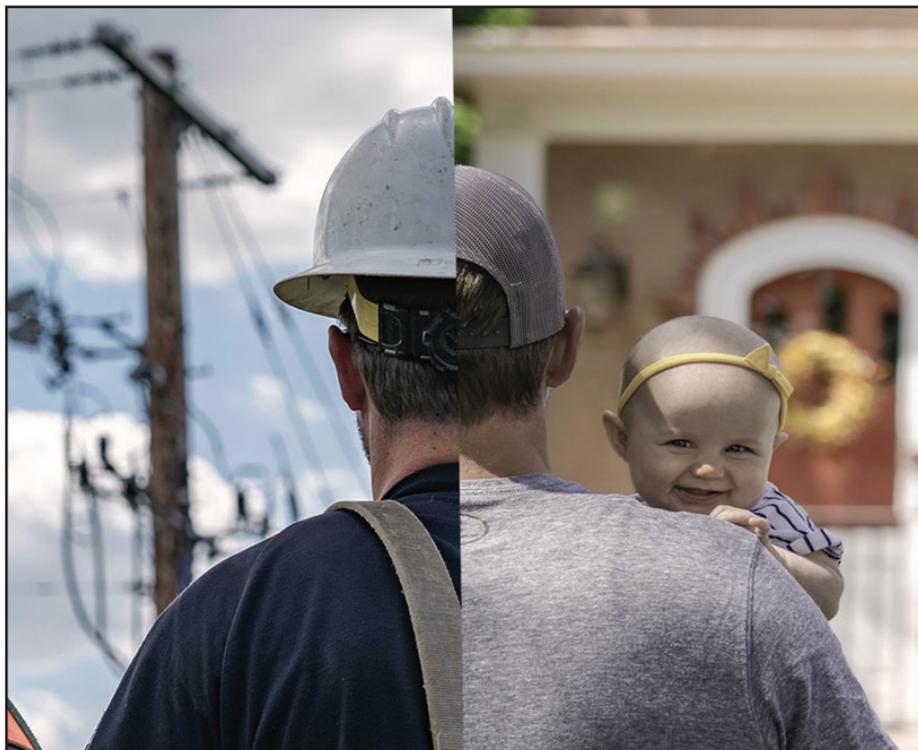
You've likely noticed your electric cooperative's line crews out and about, working on power lines and other electrical equipment. It's no secret that a lineworker's job is tough, but essential; it must be done, often in challenging weather. As we celebrate Lineworker Appreciation Month in April, let's learn more about electric lineworkers.

The work can be heavy, in more ways than one. Did you know the equipment and tools that a lineworker carries while climbing a utility pole can weigh up to 50 pounds? That's the same as carrying six gallons of water. Speaking of utility poles, lineworkers are required to climb poles ranging anywhere from 30 to 120 feet tall. Needless to say, if you have a fear of heights, this likely isn't the career path for you.

Lineworkers must be committed to their career — because it's not just a job, it's a lifestyle. The long hours and ever-present danger can truly take a toll. In fact, being a lineworker is listed in the top 10 most dangerous jobs in the U.S.

Lineworkers often work non-traditional hours and outdoors in difficult conditions. While the job does not require a four-year college degree, it does require technical skills, years of training and hands-on learning. To become a journeyman lineworker can take more than 7,000 hours of training (or about four years). That's because working with high-voltage equipment requires specialized skills, experience and an ongoing mental toughness. Shortcuts are not an option; no room exists for error in this line or work.

Despite the many challenges, co-op's lineworkers are committed to powering our local community. During severe weather events that bring major power outages, lineworkers are among the first ones called. They must be ready to leave the comfort of their home and families unexpectedly; they don't return until the job is done — often



**We thank lineworkers for their courage and commitment to powering our community. In addition, we thank lineworkers' families for their support as well!**

days later. That's why the lineworker's family is also dedicated to service. They understand the importance of the job to the community.

Nationwide, there are approximately 120,000 electric lineworkers responsible for keeping power flowing 24/7, 365 days a year. In addition to the highly visible tasks lineworkers perform, their job today goes far beyond climbing utility poles to repair a wire. Today's lineworkers are information experts who can pinpoint power outages from miles away. Line crews now use laptops, tablets and other technologies to map outages, survey damage and troubleshoot problems.

Being a lineworker may not seem like a glamorous job, but it is absolutely essential to the life of our community. Without the exceptional dedication and commitment of these hardworking men and women, we simply would not have the reliable electricity that we need for everyday life.

So, the next time you see a lineworker, thank them for the work they do to keep power flowing, regardless of the time of day or weather. After all, lineworkers are the power behind your power. Please join us with a tip of the hard hat, as we recognize them on April 11. ☞



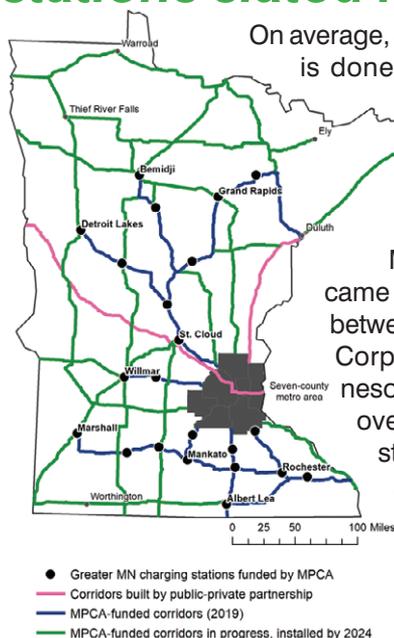
## Go star gazing when shopping for next appliance

Your co-op offers Energy Star rebates for refrigerators, freezers & dehumidifiers. See website or call to request the form.

## Take stock & share favorite crock pot recipes for lots of hot meals

Hickory, dickory, dock....what's a cooking in your crock pot? Share your favorite crock pot recipes with us, whether it's a roast, stew, hot dish or even a dessert! Mail to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by March 25. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

## Charging ahead as more EV charging stations slated for greater Minnesota



On average, 85 percent of all electric vehicle (EV) charging is done at home, followed by 10 percent at work and the remaining 5 percent at public charging stations. Fortunately, the U.S. and Minnesota are investing a great deal in the EV charging infrastructure to help reduce driving range anxiety.

Much of Minnesota's EV charging funding came from a \$15 billion settlement reached in 2017 between the Department of Justice and Volkswagen Corporation due to air pollution violations. Minnesota's share of \$47 million, which will be spent over 10 years on projects, is managed by the state's Pollution Control Agency (MPCA). The investment plan consists of three phases:

- Phase 1: \$11.75 million – 2018-19
- Phase 2: \$23.5 million – 2020-23
- Phase 3: \$11.75 million – 2024-27

In Phase 1 the MPCA funded 47 new EV charging stations (72 charging plugs)

throughout Minnesota. In Phase 2 approximately \$3.17 million dollars will be spent on 38 new DC fast-charging stations. An additional \$352,000 will fund Level 2 stations at public locations, mobility hubs, workplaces and multi-unit dwellings. In order to build a statewide EV charging network MPCA identified preliminary roadways for funding (see map) and will continue to revise plans based on where EV stations are needed.

Other efforts to ramp up the nation's charging infrastructure include initiatives by Electrify America to invest \$2 billion in a network of fast-charging stations located among travel corridors and create cross-country routes over a 10-year period. Current plans include two Minnesota regional routes: Interstate 90 from Albert Lea to Butte, Montana, and Interstate 94 from Minneapolis to Billings, Montana.

The U.S. House of Representatives also passed a \$1.2 trillion dollar infrastructure bill that included \$7.5 billion for EVs and charging infrastructure. Minnesota will receive \$68 million over five years to expand its EV charging network. The Minnesota legislature presently has three bills looking at adding EV charging stations in state parks, county government centers, rest stops and other locations.

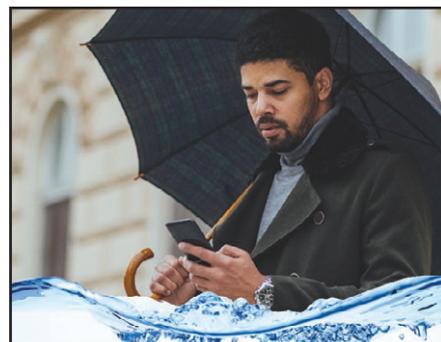
These major, nationwide investments will help current and potential EV owners be assured they will have charging stations when and where they need them on longer road trips.

Visit [www.EnergyWiseMN.com](http://www.EnergyWiseMN.com) for more information about public charging, EV facts and available models, a savings calculator, tax credits and other offers from your electric cooperative. 📧

**Kale Avocado Salad** by Kimberly Kooistra, Worthington  
kale, fresh, sliced off stem, about 4 cups.

- 2 T. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 T. fresh lemon juice
- 1 very ripe avocado, diced
- 1/3 c. chopped walnuts or pumpkin seeds, toasted
- 1/2 tsp. black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. sea salt

In large bowl combine kale, oil and juice. Massage together until kale is tender. Massage in avocado, pepper and salt until completely mixed. Toss in nuts or seeds, then serve. 📧



### Get warned about water.

Monitored water sensors alert you before a back-up becomes a flood with a failing sump pump, drain/sewer back-up or water leak.



1-888-264-6380

[heartlandss.com](http://heartlandss.com)

Security • Video • Medical alerts



## 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: 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

**Join us for the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting; back to the familiar, with a few changes**

After a two-year reprieve, Brown County REA employees and directors are looking forward to seeing members at a traditional Annual Meeting, complete with a delicious catered meal, set for March 31 at the Sleepy Eye Event Center. This year the cooperative is celebrating 85 years of providing members with safe, affordable, reliable electricity.

While we hope things will resemble pre-pandemic events, there are a few differences to note with this

year's meeting. In 2022, all members have an opportunity to vote through a mail ballot. The ballot will be included with the Annual Report mailed to members in mid-March. We encourage all members to vote and return the mail ballot before noon March 31. Members who vote by mail will not be given a ballot when they attend the Annual Meeting in person.

With the passage of the new cooperative by-laws in 2021, a signed form is now required for voting by proxy at the Annual Meeting. The required form will be included with annual report/ballot mailing. If a spouse not listed as the cooperative member plans to attend the annual meeting and vote by proxy, the Voting by Proxy form must be completed, dated March 31, 2022 and brought along to the Annual Meeting. Do not return proxy forms by mail.

On the ballot, whether voting by mail or in person at the Annual Meeting, members will be asked to approve a proposed amendment to the cooperative by-laws. The proposed amendment to Section 4.3 (b) (3) clarifies that Directors may qualify through membership in Member Entities. The complete proposed amendment to the by-laws is found on Page 4 of this newsletter.

Watch your mailbox for a copy of the Annual Report, ballot to vote in director election and on the by-law amendment, proxy form and stamped envelope to return it to the office.

We hope many of you will join us March 31 as we review the cooperative events of 2021 and celebrate Brown County REA's 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Please bring your Annual Report to scan and register for the meeting. Members unable to attend in person can view the meeting, at 6 p.m. via Zoom. Scan the QR code found on page 11 of your Annual Report to get the meeting link. If you prefer, you can call the office and provide an email address and we'll send the link. 

## Attend BCREA's 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

- Thursday, March 31, 2022
- Sleepy Eye Event Center, 110 12th Avenue NE Sleepy Eye, MN
- Registration begins 4:30 p.m.
- Meal at 5:30 p.m., immediately followed by business meeting
- Business meeting also accessible via Zoom. Scan QR code in Annual Report to receive link to view meeting.



# Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting February 24. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the January 2022 board meeting and February 9 special board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates and assignment transfers.

- Discussed and authorized offering mailed ballots for the 2022 director elections and proposed by-law amendment. Approved March 31, 2022 at noon as the deadline to receive mail-in ballots.

- Updated on plans and schedule for the 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, March 31 at the Sleepy Eye Event Center.

- Set April 11 as the date for the Member Advisory Council meeting.

- Discussed holding an 85<sup>th</sup> Anniversary member picnic in June. Details and date to be determined.

- Updated on progress with the cooperative's 2021 financial audit being performed by Eide Bailly, LLP.

- Updated on operations and maintenance. The next meeting is set for March 31 at the BCREA office in Sleepy Eye. 