

CurrentConnections



CEO Column July 2026

Value of Electricity

It can be easy to take electricity for granted. When you walk into a room, flip a switch, and the lights come on, you probably aren't thinking about all that is required to make it possible. Whether it's charging your smartphone, opening the refrigerator to perfectly chilled food, or turning on your favorite show at the end of the day, electricity is necessary for so many parts of our daily routine.

While the cost of electricity is rising along with most other commodities, it has remained relatively cost-stable even amidst rising inflation. As a member-owned cooperative, Brown County REA does everything in our power to ensure your costs stay reasonable and that electricity remains a great value for our members. It's not always easy, as there are several factors beyond inflation that impact the price of electricity—some within our control but most beyond it.

The cost of electricity can fluctuate due to supply and demand, infrastructure investment, maintenance, and

operational expenses. Weather patterns also contribute, affecting both demand and generation capabilities, with extreme conditions leading to heightened energy use or disruptions. Government policies, such as subsidies for renewable energy or taxes and regulations on emissions, shape electricity costs as well. We consider each of these aspects when adjusting rates, and because we're a cooperative, we consider the impact of those costs on our members as well.

As our rural community continues to rely on electricity for nearly everything in our homes, schools, and businesses, we need it to be reliable and affordable. You can be assured, Brown County REA always puts you top of mind and works each day to ensure electricity remains the best value for your money.

Mike Heidemann,
BCREA CEO



Twins
COMMUNITY FUND

YOUTH BASEBALL CLINIC!

SLEEPY EYE, MN

DATE: FRIDAY, JULY 10	TIME: 3:00-5:00 PM
FIELD: Prairieview Field 400 4th Ave SW Sleepy Eye, MN 56085	HOST: Sleepy Eye Baseball Association and Brown County Rural Electrical Association

FREE TO ATTEND! OPEN TO EVERYONE, AGES 6-12!

Register for the free event at
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Building a More Resilient Grid

Concern about periodic power outages, sometimes referred to as “rolling blackouts,” often rises as Minnesota transitions into extreme weather seasons. While these controlled outages can be used in rare emergency situations, the electric grid is planned and operated in a way that makes them a last resort.

For electric cooperatives like Great River Energy (GRE), which serves as Brown County Rural Electrical Association’s wholesale power provider, resilience is not reactive – it is built into how the system is designed, maintained, and operated every day.

“Reliability isn’t something we turn on when the weather gets extreme. It’s something we plan for years in advance,” said Zac Ruzycki, director of resource planning at GRE. “Our job is to anticipate a wide range of conditions and make sure we have the resources, flexibility, and physical capability in place to keep power flowing when demand is high or other resources aren’t capable of supporting demand.”

One key reason cooperatives are well positioned to keep the electric system reliable is *long-range planning*. GRE evaluates how future electricity needs could change under a wide range of scenarios. The cooperative’s robust planning ensures there is enough capacity on the system and sufficient operational flexibility to respond when conditions become unpredictable.

Investments in *grid infrastructure* also play a critical role. Over the past decade, GRE has strengthened its transmission system, reducing the likelihood that equipment failures or localized issues cascade into broader outages. Line rebuilds, equipment upgrades, and system hardening help ensure electricity can be delivered reliably even during storms, extreme temperatures, or other challenging conditions.

Operational coordination across the region further reduces outage risk. GRE works closely with MISO, the regional grid operator that oversees the high-voltage transmission grid across much of the Upper Midwest. This approach allows electricity to flow from a diverse mix of power supply resources across a wide geographic area, helping balance supply and demand when weather conditions affect one part of the system more than another.

It’s important to note that rolling blackouts are not a routine planning tool. They are considered only if all other options to maintain system stability have been exhausted.

For members-consumers, much of this work happens behind the scenes. But the result is visible when the lights stay on during extreme cold, intense heat, or major storms. By planning for uncertainty, investing in infrastructure, and coordinating regionally, cooperatives like GRE continue building a more resilient grid.

Load Control Receiver Replacement Update

Brown County REA is currently replacing load control receivers throughout our service territory. The previous receiver system has reached the end of its service life and is no longer operational, which means existing receivers can no longer receive control signals.

Until your receiver is replaced, your load-controlled equipment will

continue to operate normally and will not be automatically interrupted during control periods.

Although the old receiver system is no longer functioning, Great River Energy will continue to schedule load control periods during times of high electrical demand. We encourage participating members to voluntarily

reduce the use of controlled equipment during these periods whenever possible. Your cooperation helps manage peak demand and supports the reliable delivery of electricity to all members.

Thank you for your patience and support as we complete this system-wide upgrade.

Upcoming Dates

August 18th • Operation Round Up Meeting

The third quarterly Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board meeting for 2026 is set for August 18th. Organizations wishing to be considered for funding can submit the application, found on our website www.browncountyrea.coop, before that date.

September 14th • Member Advisory Council

The second meeting of the current Member Advisory Council will be held September 14th, 2026 at the Brown County REA auditorium. Council members will receive additional details in the mail.

Cabin season starts before you arrive.

Know your property is secure before the first cast, bonfire, or boat ride of the weekend.



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TRAINING HIGHLIGHT

Bucket Truck Rescue

Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) recently provided an experienced trainer to guide BCREA's linemen through various training exercises, including a bucket truck rescue, a pole top rescue, and mayday procedures.

To begin the **bucket truck rescue** exercise, the lineworker verifies that the victim in the bucket needs help, then communicates the crisis to our team. They then safely bring the bucket to the ground, tilt the bucket, strategically remove the victim, and perform CPR.



BROWN COUNTY REA

A Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives

FARMFEST 2026

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MEMBER INFO

Member Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone #: _____

Email: _____

Board Meeting Highlights

June Board Minutes

The Brown County REA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting on June 25th, 2026.

Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the May 2026 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates, and assignment transfers.
- Reviewed and approved May 2026 payroll and May 2026 financial statement.
- Reviewed Brown County REA solar facility sale agreement.
- Reviewed all-requirements members with amendments, Amended and Restated Power Purchase Contract, Appendix B to Transmission Service Contract, the Appendix B rate formula, and the amendment No. 1 to Transmission Service Contract.
- Reviewed Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program (RESAP) inspection results.
- Reviewed lowest bid from contractors for BCREA headquarters HVAC replacement.
- Reviewed and approved updates to Peak Shave Water Heater agreement.
- Reviewed staff meeting reports, director meeting reports, and individual director reports.

The next meeting is set for July 20th, 2026, at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye.

Mike Heidemann – Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Thomas Hayes, *President* – (507) 228-8954
William Berg, *Vice President* – (507) 766-1497
James D. Hanson, *Secretary-Treasurer* – (507) 829-6756
Brad Sprenger – (507) 317-5576
David Wendinger – (507) 276-3166
Greg Mages – (507) 276-0325
Joel Christensen – (507) 828-4550
Keith Hoffmann – (507) 227-8006
Landon Sletta – (507) 276-1899

The Board of Directors meets the last Thursday of each month.



Brown County Rural Electric Association

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Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

Email: bcrea@bcrea.coop

Website: www.browncountyrea.coop

Phone: (507) 794-3331 or (800) 658-2368

Payment Line (PSN): (833) 250-4481

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon.–Fri.

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DO TV THE EASY WAY



BCREA does more than deliver electricity.

Your electric provider is also a cooperative partner in operating *Cooperative Television of Southern Minnesota (CTV)*, bringing a wide selection of Twin Cities UHF TV channels to our service area for just \$8 per month, conveniently added to your electric bill.



To get started or to learn more, give us a call at (507) 794-3331 or (800) 658-2368 today!

BERRY RICOTTA PUFF PANCAKE **RECIPE**

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons butter

5 large eggs, room temperature

1-1/2 cups reduced-fat ricotta cheese

1/2 cup fat-free milk

1-1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1/2 teaspoon grated lemon zest

3/4 cup all-purpose flour

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup sliced fresh strawberries

1/2 cup fresh raspberries

1/2 cup fresh blueberries

Confectioners' sugar



DIRECTIONS

Step 1: Preheat oven to 400°. Melt butter in a 12-in. cast-iron or other ovenproof skillet. Carefully swirl to coat evenly.

Step 2: Meanwhile, in a blender, process eggs, ricotta, milk, vanilla, and lemon zest until blended. Add flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt and process until blended. Pour into hot skillet. Top with berries.

Step 3: Bake until puffed and sides are golden brown and crisp, 25-30 minutes. Remove pancake from oven; sprinkle with confectioners' sugar. Serve immediately.