

# Connections



For the member-owners of Brown County REA

Volume 22, Issue 12



REASONS TO APPLY FOR



## Youth Tour



3 Fun

Spend your days seeing the sights: memorials, monuments, museums and more! Enjoy the all states' dance and even attend a theater performance!



4 History

See our nation's history come alive by visiting famous landmarks seen on TV and studied in history class.  
— Continued on Page 6

1 Free



Your electric cooperative covers the total cost of the trip! All it costs you is the time to fill out the application, write an essay and come in for an interview if selected as a finalist.

You'll meet teenagers like yourself from all over the country at Youth Tour June 15-20, 2019. More than 1,700 students attend. Tour Washington, D.C. with approximately 40 students from Minnesota alone!



2 Friends

### At A Glance



#### BCREA Open House

Be sure to stop by the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye December 18-19 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Have some refreshments, pick up a 2019 calendar and drop off old Christmas lights for recycling. You can also register to win door prizes. Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! ☺

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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## 'Twas the night before Christmas...

'Twas the night before Christmas  
 and all through the home,  
 Energy savings accumulated no  
 matter where you roamed;



The stockings were hung by the  
 chimney with care,  
 The fireplace vent was closed to  
 prevent escaping hot air,  
 Stocking-stuffer LED bulbs yielded  
 energy-savings extraordinaire!

Plus, St. Nicolas would soon add to  
 his stocking stuffer wares;



The Christmas tree wasn't topped  
 with any old star,  
 But an Energy Star LED light string  
 that twinkled near and far;



The children were nestled all snug  
 in their beds,  
 While visions of Energy Star electron-  
 ics danced in their heads;



With mamma in flannels, under the  
 blanket we sank,  
 Not to count sheep, but energy-  
 savings bank!  
 An easy, set-back thermostat is one  
 energy-saving measure to thank;



A ground source heat pump lets us  
 settle down for a long winter's nap,  
 Whether heating or cooling, the heat  
 pump's savings and cooperative rebate  
 make my happy feet tap!

A 30-percent federal tax incentive  
 makes me an even merrier chap!



Our new electric co-op water heater  
 glistens like the new-fallen snow,  
 With no worries about hot baths,  
 dirty dishes or laundry-washing woes;



All of a sudden I see a bright red  
 glow on glistening snow...  
 I jump from my bed, "Can it be so?"  
 It must Rudolph the Reindeer's red  
 nose all aglow!



No Comet, nor Cupid, nor Donner  
 or Blitzen!

Santa Claus has a new ride that  
 works with amazing precision!  
 The All-Electric Santa Sleigh needs  
 no reindeer — just a fast charger with  
 zero emissions.



As I admired Santa's electric sled,  
 which had me spellbound,  
 Santa saw our energy-savings  
 actions as he looked around,  
 "Merry Christmas to all and enjoy  
 energy savings year-round!"



## Let's talk turkey and then eat it with an electric turkey fryer

Christmas dinner got a lot easier — and tastier — thanks to the Butterball Digital XXL Indoor Electric Turkey Fryer.

Equipped with a built-in digital timer and variable temperature control up to 375 degrees, this countertop fryer takes the guesswork out of frying turkey. Since no oven is needed, you can place all your sides and desserts in the oven earlier and finish your whole meal in less time, which makes it perfect when cooking for a crowd.

This turkey fryer can cook up to a 22-pound turkey in less than an hour. It also uses one-third less cooking oil than a conventional turkey fryer. Not only does this help make your meal more cost-effective and lighter tasting, it makes cleanup easier. A built-in drain valve empties the oil. The removable inner pot also features a porcelain coating for easy washing.

This turkey fryer includes: aluminum cooking basket with drain clip and a DVD with 44 recipes.

The Butterball Digital XXL Indoor Electric Turkey Fryer is available for approximately \$190 on Amazon.com (E)



Cook a 20-pound turkey in less than an hour with the Butterball Digital XXL Indoor Electric Turkey Fryer.

### Safety

## Have yourself a safe, merry little Christmas

The holiday shopping season is underway. Many stores, radio stations and TV channels are now devoted to bombarding us with holiday sales 24/7. With this kind of aggressive promotion we are starting to think about shopping for our loved ones. However, before we start gift giving, keep safety in mind.

Whether you shop Black Friday, Cyber Monday or last minute, make it a habit to check and see if their “great deal” was tested and certified by a nationally recognized testing lab. These labs ensure that electronics meet current safety standards and are safe to use by their owners when used correctly.

A National Recognized Testing Laboratory (NRTL) is a third-party organization that certifies products for the North American market. When the products involve a workplace, NRTLs are recognized by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) under Federal Code 29 CFR 1910.7 to provide product safety testing and certification for products to be used in the U.S.



A recent visit to OSHA's website revealed at least 19 symbols for safety. These are some of the more common marks we see on our electronics.

To receive and maintain certification the NRTLs:

1. Evaluate and test products to safety standards.
2. Address any standards with compliance issues with the manufacturers.
3. Authorizes manufacturers to apply certification marks to eligible products.
4. Conducts factory inspections for all certified products.
5. Provides assurance that

products are tested as safe for their intended use in the U.S.

Don't be fooled by a good deal. There's more to consider about a product than just its price. Look for the right safety mark on the holiday gifts you buy, as well. An unsafe condition might be lurking inside the gift-wrapped package you bought for a loved one. That unsafe condition could make that good deal one of the most costly purchases you ever make.

Everyone wants a good deal. Safety symbols let consumers know that they are getting safe value for their money, as well. (E)

# Brown County Briefs

## Member Advisory Council

The final meeting of the current Member Advisory Council will be Monday, January 14 at 7 p.m.

## 2019 calendars available

We again have large, farm pocket calendars available (one per member please) to pick up at the office. We also have some small pocket calendars available to members, while supplies last.

## Energy efficiency tip:

Heading out of town for the holidays? Unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Gadgets, like TVs, gaming consoles, chargers and DVD players use energy when plugged into an outlet. — Energy.gov

## Recycle your old holiday lights



Upgrading your holiday lighting to LEDs? Remember to recycle the old lights.

Brown County REA is again working with the Sleepy Eye YES! Team to collect strands of old holiday lights to be recycled. You may drop off your old lights in the BCREA office entry during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The collection runs through January 18.

Please do not place cord adapters, battery packs, plastic rope lights or CFL bulbs in the collection box.

## Your change makes a difference!

Operation Round Up distributes more than \$9,500



**BCREA Trust Vice President Michelle Strate presented a \$500 donation to Sleepy Eye Holiday Lights in Motion Committee Members Andy Pelzel (center) and Mike Suess. The display in Sportsmen's Park is lit daily from 5-10 p.m. through New Years Day.**

Thanks to contributions from members whose electric bills are “rounded up” to the nearest dollar each month, Brown County REA’s Operation Round Up contributed more than \$9,500 to 30 organizations and individuals in 2018. The Round Up Trust also awarded its first scholarships to five area students.

Each month participating BCREA members “round up” their electric bill payment to the nearest dollar. For example, if your electric bill is \$85.56, you pay \$86. The extra 44 cents goes into the Round Up Trust account and becomes part of the funds distributed to worthy causes

throughout our service area. Your less than \$12 annual contribution helps make a difference when your change is pooled with other members’ contributions to provide support to area charitable organizations, individuals in crisis and scholarships to high school seniors.

Among the organizations to receive Operation Round Up contributions this year were Network New Ulm Youth Leadership, Kiwanis Coats for Kids, Sleepy Eye Sportsmen’s Boating and Bobbers, Brown County Free Fair, Comfrey Legion Auxiliary, Sleepy Eye Firearms Safety, Minnesota Brain Injury Force, Holiday Lights in Motion, Brown County and Nicollet County 4-H, plus projects for police departments, fire and rescue squads throughout the service area.

Since the Round Up program began at BCREA in 1995, just over \$193,100 has been donated to organizations and individuals in the co-op’s service area.

A heartfelt “thank you” goes out to the Brown County REA members who participate in Operation Round Up. The summary of your tax-deductible contributions for 2018 were printed on your December electric bill. During this season of giving, please consider participating in Operation Round Up if you do not already. Please call 794-3331 or 800-658-2368 with questions.

## \$2,550 granted at final 2018 meeting

The Operation Round Up Trust Board met for its fourth quarter meeting November 20 and awarded \$2,550 to six area organizations. Funds were granted to the Kiwanis Coats for Kids, Sertoma Club Santa’s Closet, Food for Kidz, Sleepy Eye Holiday Lights in Motion, Minnesota Brain Injury Force and Springfield Community Theatre. Trust Board Member Jim Lilleodden, rural Hanska, was thanked for his service as he completed his second three-year term on the trust board.

If you are part of an organization or project that would like to apply for funding through Operation Round Up, use the application found on the Brown County REA website at [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop) or contact the office at 794-3331 or 800-658-2368.

# BCREA Director candidates sought

Interested or know of someone who may be interested in running for a position as Director for your electric cooperative? Nominations are being sought for candidates to run for election in BCREA's Districts 1, 4 and 5.

District 1 is made up of Stately, Bashaw, Burnstown and portions of North Star Townships, the city of Comfrey in Brown County, a portion of Brookville Township in Redwood County and part of Delton Township in Cottonwood County. District 4 covers Sigel and Cottonwood Townships in Brown County and part of Cambria Township in Blue Earth County. District 5 consists of Stark and Leavenworth Townships in Brown County.

Nominating Committees are made up of three members from each of the districts up for election. Per the cooperative's by-laws, the nominating committee will nominate at least two candidates for each directorship at least 35 days before the Annual Meeting. In addition, any 10 or more cooperative members residing in the district may submit a nomination with their signatures for a director in their district. Nominations may also be made for a member residing in the district by another member who resides in the district at the annual meeting.

Members residing in District 1, 4 or 5 who are interested in being a director candidate, please complete and return the Director Candidate Application. Your name will be shared with the nomination committee for consideration as a candidate.

Directors will be elected at the 82<sup>nd</sup> Annual Meeting April 11, 2019 at the Sleepy Eye Event Center. 

## BCREA Director Application

By signing this application, I certify that I am a member of Brown County Rural Electrical Association (REA) and I hereby apply as a nominee for director in District \_\_\_\_\_ and request my name be considered by the Nominating Committee to be placed on the ballot for election at the April 11, 2019 Annual Meeting. I certify that the following statements are true and accurate as to my qualifications to be a candidate for director.

- I am a member in good standing of the cooperative, receiving service at my primary residence, which is in the district for which I am seeking election.
- Within the last five (5) years I have not been adjudged to be guilty of a felony.
- Within the last three (3) years I was not an employee of the cooperative.
- During the last five (5) years I have not been employed by a labor union which represents or has represented, or has endeavored to represent, any employees of the cooperative.
- I am not a spouse, co-habitant, child, grandchild, parent, grandparent, brother, sister, whether by blood or in-law, of an employee or director of the cooperative.
- I am not in any way employed by or substantially financially interested in an enterprise competing with the cooperative or any cooperative-affiliated business.
- I am not a full-time employee or agent of, nor am I the full-time employer or principal of, another director.
- I will notify the appropriate authority of the cooperative in the event that any of the foregoing certification should change prior to the upcoming election or, should I be elected a director, should any of the foregoing certifications not continue to apply to me as serving director of the cooperative.

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to BCREA by January 14, 2019.



## Brown County Rural Electrical Association survey update

Thank you to all who received the invitation and participated in the survey looking at the Electric Service Plans options, conducted in partnership with the Electric Research Power Institute (EPRI) and Great River Energy (GRE). The group conducting the research reports it has

almost reached its goal of completed surveys in both rural and urban Minnesota areas with an average 49 percent response rate. The cost of the survey administration, materials, printing and postage was covered by the research group. 

# Top 10 highlights of Youth Tour

— Continued from Page 1

## Adventure 5



Leave the routine of summer and work behind for a few days and see new things! Fly from Minneapolis to D.C.



## 7 OPPORTUNITY

Get plugged in to your electric cooperative network and learn about what it can do for you. Become eligible to apply for the Glenn English national \$10,000 scholarship.

## Leadership



Youth Tour participants can apply to be on the National Youth Leadership Council and return to Washington, D.C. for a leadership workshop.

## 6

## Experience

Youth Tour is an experience that will make you grow as a person.



Spend a day on Capitol Hill and meet with your elected officials to talk about what is important to you.

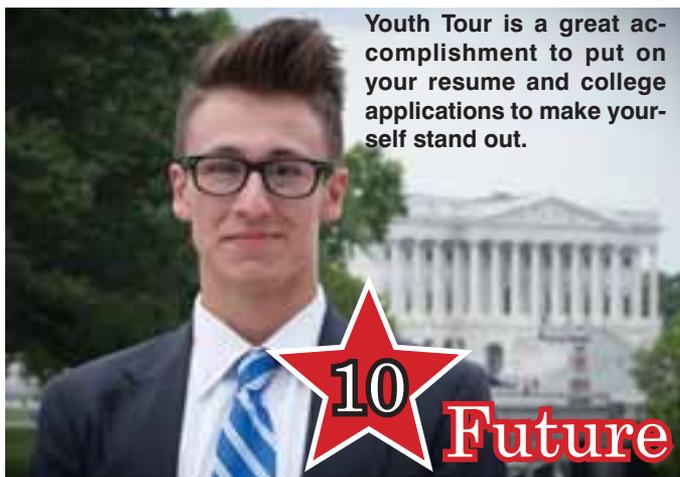
## 8

## Leadership



Youth Tour participants can apply to be on the National Youth Leadership Council and return to Washington, D.C. for a leadership workshop.

Youth Tour is a great accomplishment to put on your resume and college applications to make yourself stand out.



## 10

## Future

## Don't be 'chicken'... Send us your best chicken recipes!

Chicken is one of the most versatile meals out there. Share your chicken recipes with us, whether they are fried, roasted, salad, hot dish, sandwich or nuggets! Send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by December 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

### Salted Caramel Butter Bars by Julie Goering, Jackson

**Crust:** 2 c. salted butter, room temperature  
 1 c. white sugar 1½ c. powdered sugar  
 2 T. vanilla 4 c. flour

**Filling:** 14 oz. soft caramel candies (about 50 unwrapped)  
 1/3 c. milk or cream ½ tsp. vanilla 1 T. coarse sea salt, optional

**Crust:** Preheat the oven to 325°. Coat 9x13" baking dish with nonstick spray. Set aside. In the mixing bowl fitted with the paddle attachment mix the butter and both sugars on medium speed for two minutes. Add the vanilla and mix until combined. Turn the mixer to low and add in the flour, mixing until a soft dough forms. Press one-third of the dough evenly into the bottom of the prepared pan. Wrap the remaining dough in plastic wrap and chill in the refrigerator. Bake for 20 minutes or until the edges are a pale golden brown. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and let cool about 15 minutes.

**Filling:** While the bottom crust is baking and remaining dough is chilling, make the caramel filling. Place the unwrapped caramels in a microwave-safe bowl. Add the milk or cream. Microwave on high for one minute. Remove from the microwave and stir until smooth. If the caramels are not completely melted, microwave on high for 30-second intervals, stirring after each interval, until smooth. Once the caramel is melted, add the vanilla and stir. Pour the caramel filling over the cooled crust. If you are going to salt the caramel, sprinkle it on the caramel layer now. Remove the remaining chilled dough from the refrigerator and crumble it evenly over the caramel. Return the pan to the oven; bake until the filling is bubbly and the crumbled shortbread topping is firm and lightly golden (about 25-30 minutes). Let cool completely before cutting into squares. 📧

### Electrical inspections required; make the call



Any time you or an electrician does wiring or other electrical work at your home or farm, Minnesota state

law requires a state wiring inspector to conduct a proper inspection of the work. A rough-in inspection must be made before any wiring is covered. A final inspection is also required. The local inspectors are:

- Brown & Watonwon Counties: John Sandbo, 507-375-5294.
- Cottonwood County: Randal Maha, 507-274-5261.
- Jackson County: Doug Lutterman, 507-841-0998.
- Martin County: Jesse Hendrickson, 507-370-1766.
- Nicollet & Sibley Counties: Christopher Gappa, 507-327-6078.
- Renville & Redwood Counties: Kent Weispfennig, 320-446-4718.

The best time to call is Monday-Friday from 7 a.m.-8:30 a.m. 📧

Tackle the holidays with plenty of hot water for cooking, cleaning & keeping up with guests



Call your electric co-op for your next water heater so it doesn't leave you in the cold...



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## Brown County Rural Electrical Association

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

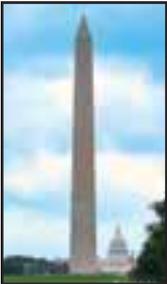
E-mail address: [bcrea@bcrea.coop](mailto:bcrea@bcrea.coop)  
Website: [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop)  
Phone: 507-794-3331 or 800-658-2368  
Office hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Mike Heidemann, Chief Executive Officer

### Board of Directors

James Mickelson, President — 794-6298  
William Berg, Vice President — 766-1497  
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.

## Teens: apply for a chance at the trip of a lifetime



Want to win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. in June 2019? High school sophomores or juniors, whose parents or guardians are Brown County REA members, are eligible.

Apply by writing a 300-word essay on electricity or any energy-related topic. Submit the essay, along with the application form to Brown County REA by the close of business Friday, March 1, 2019. Application form and selection procedures are available from area high school

counselors and on our website at [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop).

Brown County REA will select three finalists who will be interviewed and award the trip to our nation's capital to one of the three. The second prize winner will receive \$150, while \$100 will be awarded for third place. 

## Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting November 21 at BCREA headquarters in Sleepy Eye. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the October 2018 board meeting minutes, new member applications and member cancellations.
- Reviewed and approved October payroll and September financial statements.
- Informed that the Bakken Museum's "War of the Currents" program, sponsored by Great River Energy/BCREA will be presented to St. Anthony's Elementary, New Ulm, January 11.
- Reviewed a website report card conducted by a rural environmental group and discussed possible additions to the co-op's website. Member communication has traditionally been distributed using other methods.
- Informed that capital credit checks were mailed to members or applied as an electric bill credit if the amount was less than \$50.
- Updated on Rural Utilities Services (RUS) work order inspection done November 12.
- Informed that line crews have completed construction projects for the year.

The Board will meet again December 27 at the BCREA headquarters in Sleepy Eye. 

## Be generous to Santa's Closet!



BCREA headquarters is again collecting donations of new, unwrapped toys, books and mittens to be used as part of the Sertoma Club of New Ulm Santa's Closet project. The collection helps provide gifts to area children who may not otherwise receive gifts at Christmas. You may drop off donations in the box, located in the REA office lobby before the December 14 pick-up. Thank you for your generosity! 



## BCREA Holiday Open House

December 18-19

10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at our office

- Pick up your 2019 calendar
- Recycle your old holiday lights
- Join us for cookies, cider & coffee
- Register for door prizes

See you then!