

Connections



CTV is not free TV!

If you watch local UHF TV channels, chances are you are watching CTV. CTV is owned and operated from area electric cooperatives and supported by paying subscribers. If you are not a paying subscriber, support CTV today by signing up below. Your subscription fee helps bring basic low-cost, high-definition TV from the Twin Cities to our area. CTV is also a cooperative. That means it doesn't operate to make money off its customers. It operates to bring the best possible service to its customers. Please do your part. 

Name _____

Address _____

City/state/zip _____

Phone _____

_____ Bill me \$7 monthly on my electric bill. I'm a member of (electric co-op) _____

_____ I have a seasonal residence. I am interested in paying a prorated amount of \$42 a year.

Send sign-up form and payment to your electric local cooperative, call or e-mail. Thank you! 

CTV Channels

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2.1 TPT - Twin Cities PBS | 23.1 WUCW 23 - The CW Twin Cities |
| 2.2 TPT MN | 23.2 Comet |
| 2.3 TPT Life (only on Godahl & Frost Towers) | 23.3 GRIT TV - Movies |
| 2.4 TPT WX - Weather | 23.4 GET TV |
| 4.1 WCCO 4 - Minneapolis CBS | 24.1 Rev'n: cars, boats, ATVs |
| 5.1 KSTP - Minneapolis ABC | 24.6 CTV Two - Canadian channel (Godahl Tower only) |
| 5.2 KSTC-TV - Independent | 31.1 Retro TV: old shows |
| 5.3 MeTV - Television Classics | 35.1 Blue Highways |
| 5.4 Antenna TV - Television Classics | 40.1 YouToo: social network TV |
| 5.6 ThisTV - MGM Movies | 41.1 ION TV - TV shows and movies |
| 5.7 H&I | 41.2 QUBO - Kids' programming |
| 9.1 KMSP - Minneapolis FOX | 41.3 ION Life - Health and wellness shows |
| 9.2 WFTC 29 - Minneapolis | 41.4 SHOP - Products for sale |
| 9.3 Movies TV - Classic movies | 41.5 QVC - Home Shopping |
| 9.4 Buzzer - Old game shows (Godahl Tower only) | 41.6 HSN - Home Shopping Network |
| 9.9 KMSP (Godahl Tower only, same as 9.1) | 45.1 Trinity Broadcasting: religious (Godahl Tower) |
| 11.4 KARE - Twin Cities NBC affiliate | 45.2 Hillsong Channel - Australian religious (Godahl Tower only) |
| 11.5 KARE WX - 24-hour weather | 45.3 Smile of a Child: religious for kids (Godahl Tower) |
| 11.6 Justice Network | 45.4 Juce TV: religious young adults (Godahl Tower) |
| 12.4 KEYC - Mankato CBS affiliate | 45.5 Enlace TV: Spanish channel (Godahl Tower only) |
| 12.5 FOX - Mankato FOX affiliate | 46.1 KDLT: Sioux Falls, SD; NBC (Jackson Tower) |
| 16.1 CTV: local access channel listing & contact info | 46.2 (COZI TV: Classic TV (Jackson Tower only) |
| 16.2 Tuff TV: reality TV, sports and hunting | Use a UHF antenna to pick up these channels from Jackson, Frost or Godahl tower. |
| 16.3 Heartland: Nashville Network | |
| 16.4 AMGTV: old movies | |
| 16.5 BizTV: small business shows and news | |
| 20.6 Vibrant TV | |

 **Brown County Rural Electrical Association**
Connecting our co-ops & members to a progressive future

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'Auto' or 'on'? – that is the question!

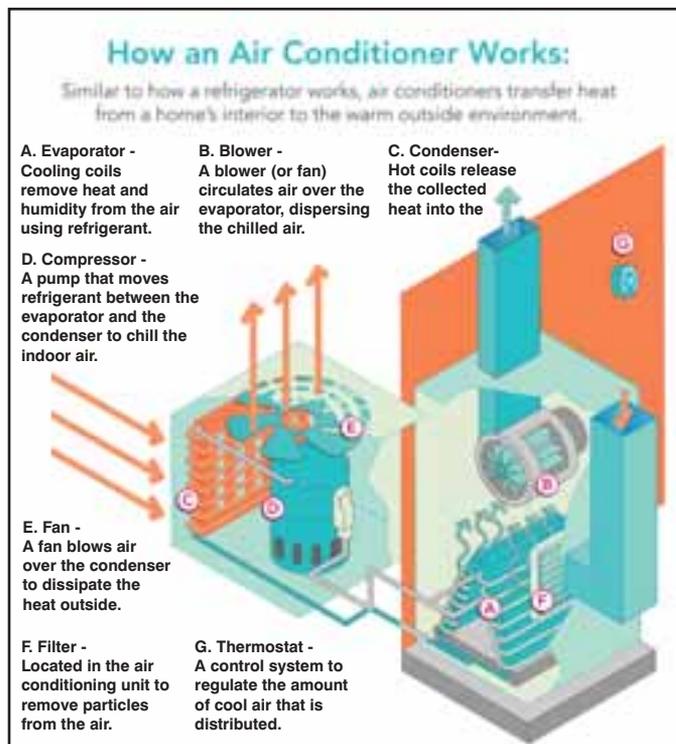


Which setting is cheaper: "auto" or "on"? This is a question many people ask when looking at their central air thermostat. The on/auto switch controls your cooling system's fan, which circulates cooled air throughout your home. Setting the switch to "on" will make the fan run continuously. Setting the switch to "auto" will make the fan turn off when the AC system cools the home down to the thermostat's set temperature.

This is not a good practice, particularly when the humidity is high. If you want to reduce your energy cost and improve comfort, leave the fan on "auto" to run the air conditioner most efficiently and achieve maximum comfort.

Using the "auto" setting on your thermostat only activates the fan when you need heating or cooling. On the manual setting the fan operates continuously and can increase your energy usage. Let's say your AC unit is off 12 hours a day. On "auto" that makes your fan off 12 hours a day too. On the "on" setting, your fan runs an extra 12 hours a day. Over a month it runs an extra 360 hours. That uses more electricity, which means your electric bills will be higher. Plus, a fan that runs all the time will wear out sooner.

Setting your cooling system's fan to "auto" has another benefit as well. It helps better dehumidify your home. When the AC fan cycles off, moisture drawn out of your home has a chance to drip into the AC's condensation pan and drain outside. When the fan runs all of the time, less



All parts of an air conditioner work together to give you the most efficient cooling possible. Make wise use of your thermostat and fan to keep your energy costs down.

moisture makes it to the condensation pan. In fact, some gets blown back into your home. 🚿

Use other fans to keep air circulating through home

If customers use the "on" setting for continuous airflow, the air circulating when the compressor is off is not cooled air. This airflow throughout the home will be warmer than current room temperature if the air has circulated through ductwork located in a hot area, such as an attic. Plus, the cold air return pulls warmer air from upstairs rooms into the living areas in multi-story homes.

Continuous air circulation is better provided by the use of a ceiling fan or a fan in each occupied room. Air movement across your body makes you feel cooler than the thermometer reads (dry bulb temperature), due to

disruption of the heat envelope around your body and evaporation of moisture from your skin. Central AC fans cannot produce high enough airflow to achieve the same effect. A ceiling fan only achieves this effect if the blades are turning in a direction that blows air down. Blade rotation that blows air up will put more heat into the air from warm ceilings and will not produce the proper airflow across your body to make it feel cooler. The cooling effect of air blowing down is far greater than any heat pick-up from the ceiling and also serves to push cool air near the floor up higher. 🚿

Power up your home with a Tesla battery



Tesla cars are helping revolutionize the electric car business. Now Tesla is bringing their battery technology to tomorrow's homes.

Imagine hanging a battery on your wall that can help power your home in the evening. The Powerwall system can make this a reality. A typical Powerwall system consists of the following components:

Solar panels

Panels convert sunlight into electricity that charges Powerwall during the day.

Powerwall

The home battery is charged with electricity generated by solar panels. It can then supply power at night.

Inverter

The inverter converts direct current electricity from solar panels into the alternating current used by your home's lights, appliances and devices. To maximize solar consumption a meter is also installed to measure solar production and home energy use.

Electrical panel

Electricity coming from the inverter goes to your home's



Homes may be “batteries not included,” but now you can get your own to help power your home at night with the Tesla Powerwall system!

electrical panel.

Backup panel and switch

Some backup installations may require a secondary electrical panel containing the critical appliances and outlets you wish to back up. An electrical switch automatically activates the backup panel during a power outage. When installed with solar, this switch can keep your solar producing during an outage. Backup is an optional feature when installing with solar to maximize solar or shift energy consumption.

Each Powerwall has a 6.4 kWh energy storage capacity, sufficient to power some homes during the evening using electricity generated by solar panels during the day. Multiple batteries may be installed together for homes with greater energy needs.

The battery is lithium ion with liquid thermal control. It has a 10-year warranty.

It is rated for indoor and outdoor use in temperature ranges from -4°F to 122°F. It weighs 214 pounds and is 51.3" x 34" x 7.2". Cost is approximately \$3,000. For more information visit <https://www.tesla.com/powerwall>. Right now you can only reserve a future unit and not yet buy one. 🙄

Watch out for powerlines during harvest



After working in a field on a neighbor's farm, Jim Flach parked his equipment and stepped out of the vehicle. Sadly, Jim did not realize his equipment was touching an overhead power line; he became a path for the electrical current as he placed his foot onto the ground. Jim received a severe electric shock that ultimately resulted in his death a few months later. Safe Electricity urges farmers to take the proper precautions when working around power lines.

“The rush to harvest can lead to farmers working long days with little sleep,” cautioned Kyla Kruse, communications director of the Energy Education Council and its Safe Electricity program. “It is important to take time for safety. Before starting work, make sure to note the location of overhead power lines.”



Electric poles are no match for today's big farm equipment. Be careful!

To stay safe around overhead power lines Safe Electricity urges farm operators and workers to:

- Use a spotter when operating large machinery near power lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from power lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.

• If a power line is sagging or low, call your local electric cooperative.

If contact is made with a power line, stay on the equip-

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Brown County Briefs

Member Advisory Council



Members of the current Member Advisory Council will meet Monday September 19 at 7:30 p.m. at the Brown County REA Auditorium.

Round Up distributes funds

In its August 9 meeting, the Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board awarded a total of \$400 to four organizations.

The Trust Board welcomed new Board Member Michelle Oswald who replaced Joyce Halverson to represent District 9. Contributions were made to the Southern Minnesota Youth Dairy Show, Sleepy Eye Safety Pup program, Nicollet County 4-H Foodstand and Sleepy Eye Safety Day Camp.

Organizations wishing to apply for funding can find an application at www.browncountyrea.coop, *Operation Round Up* under the *Programs & Services* tab. The next meeting is November 15. ♻️

Bill due date reminder:

Please remember to pay your electric bill by the 20th of each month to avoid late charges. Bills will be mailed out around the 5th of each month and the due date/final day to pay is the 20th. ♻️



Mike Heidemann
Chief Operating Officer

Staff notes

Electric cooperatives fight for fairness in growing renewable energy world

The Minnesota legislature changed Minnesota's net metering statute in 2015 to allow cooperative and municipal utilities to collect a fair share of the costs to maintain the cooperative's lines from every member, including those who install solar panels or other renewable energy systems. Electric cooperatives can now implement a Distributed Generation (DG) Grid

Access Charge to be applied when a member connects a new renewable energy system. Renewable energy and environmental advocates have filed a complaint with the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission questioning these fees. These charges are about fairness and looking out for all our members.

We continue to work with members who choose to install renewable energy systems. Your cooperative believes that members who don't choose to install them should not pay higher bills to support those who do. Our members include elderly couples on a fixed income and young couples buying their first home, working hard to make ends meet. Many average Minnesotans can't afford to buy their own renewable energy system and we need to treat them fairly too. The DG Grid Access Charge is designed to help cooperatives pay for necessities such as poles, wires, trucks, line crews, etc. The things we all need for reliable power, including DG customers.

The purpose of the DG Grid Access Charge is to recover fixed costs from members with renewable generation facilities. Members who install wind or solar generation systems reduce the amount they pay toward our fixed costs, used to maintain and operate our electric distribution grid. Why implement this charge? Do DG members still use the grid? If they pay less, who is paying more?

Do member-owned renewable energy systems need the distribution grid?

A reliable distribution grid is vitally important for the continued growth of member-owned renewable energy. By design, these systems do not function without the grid. For safety reasons, without power being delivered to the site from the cooperative, these renewable systems shut down.

Member-owned renewable energy systems can generate more electricity than is needed by the member. When this happens, the energy is exported from the member's site onto the cooperative's lines and transported to other members. Your cooperative pays the average retail rate for this excess energy per Minnesota net metering statute. The member-owned DG system uses the distribution grid to move this excess energy, and is paid for at the same rate for which the cooperative sells electricity. Without Brown County REA's distribution grid, this excess electricity would not be useable. The sun doesn't always shine and the wind does not always blow, so changes in wind and solar energy production can happen quickly. Those with renewable energy systems still rely on the poles, wire, transformers, linemen, trucks and everything else the cooperative provides for reliable power.

When members self-generate a portion of their electric needs, who pays the lost fixed costs needed to maintain the grid?

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Co-op members enjoy Coal Creek Tour



Coal Creek Tour participants gathered for a group photo at the Fort Mandan Headwaters along the Missouri River. BCREA members traveling in the group included: Rick Franta, Larry Helget, Kevin & Rhonda Ludewig, Richard & Karen Sellner, Jerry & Connie Thompson, Linda Wallin, Bill Youngblom, Charles Youngblom, plus Linemen Drew Hill and Brady Kerkhoff. BCREA Member Services Manager Marcia Solie led the tour.

Eleven BCREA members, two new linemen and 26 BENCO members took a closer look at where their electricity is generated as part of the Coal Creek Tour August 23-25.

The group traveled via bus to visit Great River Energy's Coal Creek Station near Bismarck, North Dakota. A guided tour took participants into the coal pit amidst the heavy equipment to see the mining activities at Falkirk Mine, which supplies lignite coal to the neighboring power plant.

At Coal Creek Station members walked among the plant's two large generating units, which turn the pulverized coal into electricity. Steam from the generation process also powers the adjacent Blue Flint Ethanol Plant.

From there, the group traveled to Garrison Dam, where water from the Missouri River powers large turbines to produce electricity. The group also stopped at the Fort Mandan Visitor Center along the river, visited the North Dakota Heritage Museum and took a look at some of Bismarck's landmarks on a guided bus tour of the city. 📍

Line crew news



(Left) Brown County Lineman Larry Soukup and fellow crew members each donned climbing gear and fall protection equipment to climb the pole and rescue an "injured co-worker" as part of their annual pole top rescue training. Rotational generation and distributed generation safety training was also part of the August session.

(Below) David Surprenant (left), Tyler Davis (center) and Ben Oberg have been assisting Brown County REA line crews with their work this summer. David, who has been a summer helper for several years, is currently attending linemen training in Jackson. Tyler and Ben have both completed linemen training and will be assisting crews with construction and other activities through the fall. 📍



Travel with us to Alaska



Join BENCO Electric and BCREA on a 13-day trip to Alaska July 10-22, 2017.

An Alaskan Trip Informational Meeting will be held Monday, September 19, 2016, at 7 p.m. in the BENCO

Electric Auditorium, Mankato.

Registration opens following the meeting. This trip fills fast and has limited seating. If you would like to attend the informational meeting, RSVP to Chelsea at 387-7963 or 1-888-792-3626 by September 6.

Representatives from, BENCO, 4-Seasons Travel & Princess Cruise Lines will be available at the meeting. 📍

Cold weather rule outlines process to avoid winter disconnection and loss of electricity

The state's Cold Weather Rule guides utilities on winter disconnections as long as customers follow these main guidelines.

Residential customer notice

An electric cooperative must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a home between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit **and all of the following conditions are met:**

1. The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. The electric cooperative may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy-assistance provider. A customer meets the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any public assistance, including energy assistance that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income;

2. A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household; and

3. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. In addition, an electric cooperative must, between August 15 and October 15 of each year, notify all residential customers of these provisions.

Before disconnecting service to a residential customer between October 15 and April 15, an electric cooperative must provide:

1. A notice of the proposed disconnection;
2. A statement with the customer's rights and responsibilities;
3. A list of local energy assistance providers;
4. Forms on which to declare an inability to pay; and
5. A statement explaining available time-payment plans and other options to secure continued utility service.

Restrictions for disconnection

1. If a customer must be involuntarily disconnected between October 15 and April 15 for failure to comply with residential disconnection provisions, it must not occur on a Friday, unless the customer declines to enter into a payment agreement offered that day in person or via personal contact by telephone by the electric cooperative;

Emergency energy-assistance phone numbers

Cottonwood County Family Services.....	831-1891
Heartland Action (Jackson & Cottonwood Co.)	1-800-658-2448
Redwood County.....	1-800-658-2480
Jackson County Human Services	847-4000
Jackson County Sheriff's Department	847-4420
Martin County Human Services.....	238-4757
Martin County Sheriff's Department.....	238-4481
MN Dept. of Energy Services (Ask for fuel assistance)	1-800-657-3805
Minnesota Valley Action Council.....	1-800-767-7139
Brown County.....	354-3138
Martin County.....	238-1663
Nicollet County.....	934-5224
Sibley County	237-2981
Watonwan County	375-5748
Nobles County Family Services Agency.....	372-2157
Redwood County Human Services	637-4050
Renville County Family Services.....	320-523-5522
Renville Sheriff's Department.....	320-523-1161
Salvation Army's Heat Share (Jackson & Martin Co.)	238-9797
Sibley County Human Services	237-4000
SW MN Opportunity Council, Inc. (Nobles Co.)	376-4195
United Community Action.....	320-235-0850
Watonwan County Human Services.....	375-3294

If you live in an area that is not listed, call your electric co-op for details

2. The disconnection must not occur on a weekend, holiday or the day before a holiday, when utility offices are closed, or after the close of business on a day when disconnection is permitted, unless a field representative from the electric cooperative who is authorized to enter into a payment agreement, accept payment and continue service offers a payment agreement to the customer; and

3. If a customer does not respond to a disconnection notice, the customer must not be disconnected until the utility investigates whether the home is occupied. If the unit is occupied, the utility must immediately inform the occupant of the provisions of this section. If the unit is unoccupied, the utility must give seven days written notice of the proposed disconnection to the local energy-assistance provider before disconnecting. If, prior to disconnection, a customer appeals a notice of involuntary disconnection, as provided by the utility's established appeal procedure, the utility must not disconnect until the appeal is resolved. 📞





Have a stake in our request for some great steak recipes!

Time to make some steak! Send us your steak recipes for beef, ribeye, T-bone, country-fried and more! Send by September 26 to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 🍴

Be safe during field work

— Continued from Page 3

ment. Make sure to warn others to stay away and call 911. Do not leave until the utility crew says it is safe to do so. The only reason to exit is if the equipment is on fire. If this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together, without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

Some additional safety tips from Safe Electricity include:

- Do not use metal poles when breaking up bridged grain inside and around grain bins.
- Always hire qualified electricians for any electrical issues.
- Do not use equipment with frayed cables.

“You need to double check, even triple check, to see what is above you,” said Marilyn Flach, Jim’s widow. His son Brett added, “Be conscious of your surroundings. You need to keep your eyes open and beware of overhead lines.” 🍴

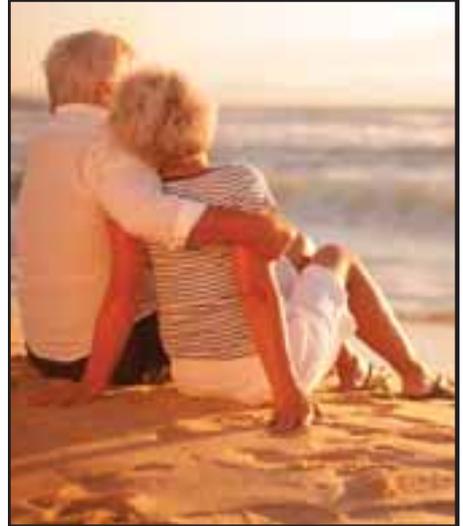
— Courtesy of www.safeelectricity.org

Military personnel electric bill payment options

Minnesota law offers active military personnel additional payment options for their electric bills. The law covers disconnection, payment arrangements, appeal and an annual notice to cooperative members. Similar to the state’s Cold Weather Rule, an application must be completed and income guidelines exist. It’s available for military personnel with active duty, deployed or a permanent duty station change. Call or e-mail us for more details about the active duty military payment options and a form to sign up. 🍴



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Contact Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12-inches deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register on www.gopherstate-onecall.org. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 🍴



Fairness and renewable energy

— Continued from Page 4

Members who install wind or solar generation systems reduce their energy (kWh) purchases. That's understandable and it is one of the reasons why they made the decision to invest in a renewable energy system. However, reducing energy purchases does not reduce their reliance on our distribution network.

Your cooperative recovers revenue needed to operate in two ways: the fixed monthly service charge and kWh charges. Like most cooperatives, our fixed monthly charge is not set high enough to recover all of the cooperative's fixed costs. Therefore, a portion of the kWh charges each month goes toward paying these fixed costs (poles, line, operations, etc.). A member who installs a renewable energy system provides some of their own electricity, electricity your cooperative didn't have to purchase, and that's not a problem. But, who picks up the loss in fixed costs that are recovered through the kWh revenue? All other cooperative members pay these costs — as a cooperative business model, no place else exists for the money to come from other than our members.

The DG Grid Access Charge was designed to prevent neighbors from paying these additional costs. The charge is based on a cost of service study formula, which determines the appropriate charge to prevent this cost shifting and ensure all members pay an appropriate portion of the total cost. Smaller renewable energy systems (up to 3.5 kW of generation capacity) don't pay any charge, because the energy produced by such a system is similar to what a household may save by implementing energy efficiency measures. And for larger systems, limit also exists on how much the fee can be, to ensure those installing DG don't pay more of the costs for keeping the system reliable than they would have without installing renewables. The charge is set only high enough to recover their fair share of the fixed costs, so we all continue to pay our share of items such as poles, wire, trucks, etc. This ensures all members continue to pick up a fair portion of these fixed costs — so all our members are treated fairly.

Looking out for all ratepayers.

Your local electric cooperative takes the responsibility of setting rates that are fair for everyone very seriously. If some members do not pay their portion of the electrical distribution system's fixed costs, other members would need to pay more. Renewable energy is here to stay. Your cooperative welcomes members installing DG and looks forward to working with those interested in pursuing these systems. As we do so, this charge provides an important tool for today and tomorrow. Everyone who benefits from the distribution system pays his or her fair share, keeping your power supply reliable and affordable. 🌱



**Brown County
Rural Electrical
Association**

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Wade Hensel, General Manager

Board of Directors

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

Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting August 18 at the BENCO office in Mankato. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following items:

- Updated on staff activities and meetings of the Southern Minnesota Electric Cooperative (SMEC) and preparations for the Cost of Service study.
- Reviewed medical insurance rates for 2017.
- Reviewed recent construction activities and linemen safety training.
- Reviewed results of an MPCA walk-in inspection and updated Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan.
- Updated on Great River Energy's plan to close its 189-MW Stanton Station power plant in May 2017 due to economic reasons.
- Reviewed summer load control and members' backup generators performance.
- Reviewed and approved staff meeting reports, director meeting reports and individual director reports.

The next meeting will be September 23 at Brown County REA in Sleepy Eye. 🌱