

# Connections

Help  
us  
find  
our  
missing  
members!

## ***Electricity is best choice for cost-savings & environment*** ***Analysis says that national policy & everyday conventional wisdom miss the mark on the benefits of electricity***



Keith Dennis, NRECA

Keith Dennis says electricity is a good energy choice for the environment. He cites a thought-provoking list of reasons in his peer-reviewed article published in *The Electricity Journal* in November, titled “Environmentally Beneficial Electrification: Electricity as the End-Use Option.”

Dennis is the senior principal of end-use solutions and standards at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). His article challenges basic assumptions about electricity and the environment that make a difference for top-level policy makers, as well as for cooperative members.

His focus on water heaters and heat pumps is especially significant since heating water and air account for more than half of a home’s energy use.

Here are answers Dennis gave to questions about the research behind his article.

**A central claim in your article is that an electric water heater has less environmental impact than a natural gas water heater. How can this be true, when burning natural gas emits less greenhouse gas than burning coal, which generates about a third of our nation’s electricity?**

Technologies have become so advanced that a water heater in your home can be 200 percent or more efficient at converting electricity into heat. It does this by taking some of the energy out of the surrounding air in what’s called a heat pump water heater. Heat pumps are being used more and more for space heating, and more recently, — *Continued on Page 6*

When building a puzzle, nothing is more frustrating than getting to the end only to discover that you are missing the last piece! The agony! We are experiencing similar frustration in locating some missing former cooperative members.

Help your cooperative find the “missing pieces” or in our case the missing members. These members moved and their checks came back as address unknown.

Share the current addresses for these former cooperative members so they can be reunited with their unclaimed capital credits checks! Reuniting them with their check will make their day!

See Pages 2-3 for the listing of lost cooperative members from last year’s capital credits distribution. ⚡



**Brown County  
Rural Electrical  
Association**

Connecting our co-ops & members  
to a progressive future

## **Inside this issue:**

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Cooperative Alliance Partners

# Connections

This publication focuses on CAP's members, 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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## Help us find the missing piece (member); money awaits them



It is important that your electric co-op locate these missing members. Since we no longer have their current address, their capital credits check was returned — address unknown. If you know the location for any of these members, call or e-mail the appropriate co-op.

Unclaimed capital credits checks are donated to a tax-exempt organization. Brown County REA and Federated Rural Electric give unclaimed capital credits to their Operation Round Up program. Brown's Round Up Trust Board donates to programs that benefit their rural residents and local communities. Federated's Round Up Trust Board awards high school scholarships. 🏡

**Help us make sure missing members receive their cash from the co-op mainland; provide us a current address so we can mail their capital credits check.**

### Former Federated

**members:** Call 847-3520, 728-8366 or 1-800-321-3520; ask for Nina or e-mail [billing@federatedrea.coop](mailto:billing@federatedrea.coop).

Anderson, Mark	Topeka, KS	Gill, Elizabeth	Elmore	Pate, Alexander	Evanston, IN
Aufderheide, Ben	Le Center	Gotaas, Sandra	Lakefield	Pederson, Bobbi Jo	Okabena
Ausborn, Diana	Marshalltown, IA	Grotjohn, Mike	Lakefield	Penda Glasstite Inc.	Portage, WI
Beckel, Sue	Manly, IA	Hill, Terence	Albany, GA	Pratt, Kathryn	Estherville, IA
Beckendorf, Tim	Aurora, IL	Hoffmeyer, William & Era	Milford, IA	Riordan, Frank & Elaine	Fairmont
Becker, Alvin c/o John Becker	Sherburn	Hoover, Carrie	Fairmont	Schroeder, Jim	Estherville, IA
Behrends, Kim & Doug	Scottsdale, AZ	Jacobson, Ron & Ria	Sioux Falls	Schultz, Jerry	Fountain City, WI
Bejerano, Antonio	Welcome	Jenson, Willard O.	Blue Earth	Schultz, Michael	Northrop
Bixby, Tanya	Lakefield	Johnson, Tamara	Jackson	Seim, Oscar	Jackson
Brickson, Jeff	May City, IA	Klaehn, Bruce	Grand Meadow	Sheeley, Charles	Fairmont
Burgess, Anita	Clearwater, FL	Klenz, Dean	St. Paul	Smith, Bill	Jackson
Casey, Neil C.	S. Sioux City, NE	Laffey, Kurt	Estherville, IA	Soderquist, Curtis S.	Fairmont
Christians, Jeff	Westbrook	Lange, Michael	Windom	Sorenson, Jason	Lakefield
Cooper, Brenda Lemier	Alta, IA	Langstraat, Brad	Lakefield	Stade, Lillian	Fairmont
Craun, Marvin	Hartley, IA	Larson, Richard	Fairmont	Sullivan, Mike	Fairmont
Dean, Lance	Round Lake	Larson, Jonette	Jackson	Subbert, George	Baxter
Ehlert, Lorraine	Fairmont	Lemier, Ruth	Welcome	Swalve, Travis & Leslie	Lewisville
Erin, Michael J.	Lakefield	Ling, Michelle	Jackson	Tall Oaks Farm, c/o Maxine Thate	
Folk, Edna Mrs.	Minnetonka	Lunn, Ryan	Fairmont		Fairmont
Frey, Melvin	Columbia Falls, MT	Majeski, Jody	Elmore	Teeter, Ray R.	Slayton
Garlinghouse, Owen	Otho, IA	Manwarren, Robert	Estherville, IA	Trevathan, Margo	Fairmont
		Marks, Bill	Amboy	Van Maanen, Dawn	Guthrie, OK
		Mensing, Roger	St. Cloud	Wagner, Jennifer	Lakefield
		Miller, Terence	Oak Creek, WI	Weaver, Eric	Estherville
		Miller, Vance W.	Squaw Lake	Wells, Roger	Fairmont
		Montgomery, Leona	Fairmont	Wiederhoeft, Rick	Delavan
		Murphy, Tim	Worthington	Wieneke, Ron	Worthington
		Naber, Brian	Lake Park, IA	Weinkauff, Dale	Fulda
		Neitzer, Anthony	Pine City	Welti, Jim	Luverne
		Nelson, Ella	Windom	Wilson, Bill	Round Lake
		Nelson, Mavelma	Fairmont	Yonan, Robert	Ventura, CA
		Oelke, Kathy	Windom	Young, C.R.	Windom
		Olsem, Madonna	Heron Lake	Zimmer, Rocky	Bingham Lake
		Parker, Derold R.	Storden	Zimmerman, Bill	Belleville, WI



## Help us piece together these former members new locations

### Former Brown County

**members:** Call and ask for Dorine at 794-3331 or 1-800-658-2368. Otherwise, e-mail [bcrea@bcrea.coop](mailto:bcrea@bcrea.coop).

Ackerson, Stewart L.	Fargo, ND	Hall, Joshua	Forest Lake	Reim, Dan	North Mankato
Anderson, Duane R.	Dunnell	Hatle, Michael P.	Deville, LA	Ringnell, Les	New Ulm
Barsness, Vernon Jr.	Cass Lake	Herzog, Mark & Patricia	South Park Rapids	Sadler, Dewayne	Winthrop
Bauer, Lois	Darwin	Johnson, Elaine	Hendricks	Sahli, Robert W.	Mankato
Bengtson, Dr. John	Dassel	Keim, Thomas W.	New Prague	Sanchez, Orlando	Sleepy Eye
Block, Janice	Webster, IA	Kenefick, Thomas L.	Lena, WI	Schroeder, Duane R.	New Ulm
Boiselle, Sharon	New Ulm	Klinkner, Kenneth A.	Nicollet	Sirovy, Thomas R.	Backus
Bonnes, William M.	Cedar Rapids, IA	Kostecky, Anthony G.	Gretna, LA	Smith, Robert L.	Lakeville
Braam, Jerry L.	Fairfax	Kraft, Chris	Hutchinson	Spicer, Debbie L.	New Ulm
Cano, Juan R.		Kruse, Wayne W.	Bigfork	Stage, David S.	Granite Falls
c/o Oscar Surita	Crystal City, TX	Lamere, Anthony R.	Champlin	Stark, Jessica L.	New Ulm
Collum, Calvin C.	New Ulm	Lebens, Christine	Chaska	Steinhaus, Linda	Morgan
Cruz, Ruben	Laredo, TX	Lee, Martin & Candace	Webster	Svoboda, Larry M.	Martin, ND
Flygare, Bruce, Wayne & Ray	Worthington	Lenzen, Dennis J.	New Ulm	TinaJero, Araceli Y.	New Ulm
Gonzalez, Janpalach	Elgin, TX	Maclay, James B.	Comstock Park, MI	Torres, Nancy	Sleepy Eye
Gonzales, Jesus	Hanska	Matthew, Mark R.	Omaha, NE	Triax Midwest Ass., L.P.	Denver, CO
Green, Benhard A.	Iona	Mesiah, Steven W.	Randall	Twenty 1st Century Wireless	Edina
c/o LeAnn Miller		Miller, Leland L.	New Ulm	U S West Communications	Denver, CO
		Murphy, Robert E.	Stewart	Warnke, Donald J.	Plainwell, MI
		Nelson, Robert P.	Little Falls	Wenzel, John	Eagan
		Olson, Allen E.	New Ulm	Werner, Kenneth A.	Altamonte Springs, FL
		Olson, Lucille	New Ulm	Wilson, Bert	New Ulm
		Paschka, Joel & Tara	Alexandria	Woodward, Laurie	Eugene, OR
		Pilot, Joan M.	New Ulm	Worden, Jerry L.	Linwood, NE
		Reim, Bud L.	St. James		

## The cooperative difference: capital credits explained

As a member-owner, you have a share in the earnings of your not-for-profit electric cooperative. Your co-op's rates are set to bring in enough money to pay operating costs, make loan payments and provide an emergency reserve. Revenues in excess of the cost of doing business are returned to members as capital credits. The co-op holds onto these capital credits for a period of years, according to policy, before returning them to you, the member-owners. The reason your co-op holds onto these monies is because your co-op is a very capital-intensive business. It needs to invest a lot of money in substations, transformers, poles, wire, etc. This investment allows your cooperative to provide reliable electricity to you, our member-owners. 🌱

**HOT** showers don't start here...



Hot showers start with your water heater. If your water heater is on the verge of breaking down, try your electric cooperative's water heater program. We offer electric water heaters at a competitive price. Efficient and with limited lifetime warranties, our water heaters can help you start every day with a hot shower! 🌱

# Brown County Briefs

## Operation Round Up



The Operation Round Up Trust Board will meet to review applications on February 9 at 7 p.m. Organizations wishing to apply for funding should submit before that date. Applications are available on the coop website at [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop) or by contacting the office.

## Member Advisory Council

The first meeting of the new Member Advisory Council will be Monday, April 18th at 7:30 p.m. in the Brown County REA auditorium.

## More information on Youth Tour — win a trip to the Nation's Capitol!



The trip of a lifetime awaits one lucky high school sophomore or junior whose parents or guardians are members of Brown County REA. Eligible youth can win an all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C. June 11-16.

To apply, write a 300-word essay on any energy-related topic and submit it, along with the application form, to Brown County REA by the close of business March 4.

Brown County REA will select three finalists who will be interviewed, and award the trip to Washington, D.C. to one of the three. The second place winner will receive \$150 and serve as first alternate for the trip. \$100 will be awarded for third place. 🍀

## Teens: be a part of something powerful; applications sought for 2016 Youth Tour



Tennis shoes. Check. Bottled water. Check. An eagerness to learn and lead. Check, check. If you're a high school sophomore or junior looking for the trip of a lifetime and your parents or guardians are Brown County REA members, then the Rural Electric Youth Tour is the trip for you!

Imagine a chance to visit our nation's capital for one week, meet with more than 1,500 students from across the U.S. and visit with Minnesota's senators and congressional representatives. The best part? It won't cost you a penny.

Minnesota's electric cooperatives share a strong commitment to our communities and the member-consumers we serve; sponsoring students for this exciting, educational trip is just one of the ways we're investing in our youth.

The week-long Youth Tour of Washington, D.C. is jam-packed with sightseeing and history comes to life. While touring, students will visit many of the major monuments and memorials, including the Smithsonian museums, Washington, Lincoln and Jefferson memorials.

Students will also visit Capitol Hill, where they will meet with Minnesota senators and members of Congress. Many past participants were so inspired by this experience that they later served as interns on the Hill and have pursued a career in politics.

Youth Tour is so much more than sightseeing. Students spend every waking minute together for a solid week; it's not uncommon for lasting friendships to form. Not only do they live and breathe many of the most important moments in U.S. history, they also meet with more than 1,500 student leaders from across the nation.

The 2016 Rural Electric Youth Tour occurs June 11-16 in Washington, D.C. Interested youth are asked to write a 300-word essay on an energy-related topic, complete an application form and submit by March 4.

Be a part of something powerful. Learn more about the Rural Electric Youth Tour by contacting Brown County REA for more information at 800-658-2368 or visit the website at [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop). 🍀

## Community Health Day

Saturday, March 19  
Sleepy Eye Public School  
6:30 a.m.-10 a.m.



- Blood analysis (including cholesterol, LDL, calcium, glucose, etc.): \$40, plus it requires a 12-hour fast for best results
- Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) screening: \$30
- Health information and blood pressure check: FREE

Call BCREA for appointments Monday through Friday (8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.). Walk-ins accepted after 7:30 a.m. on Health Day. Co-sponsored by BCREA, Sleepy Eye Medical Center, Sleepy Eye Community Education and Brown County Public Health.

# Director candidates sought

Nominating committees for Districts 1, 4 and 5 are looking for candidates to run for positions on the Brown County REA's Board of Directors for 2016.

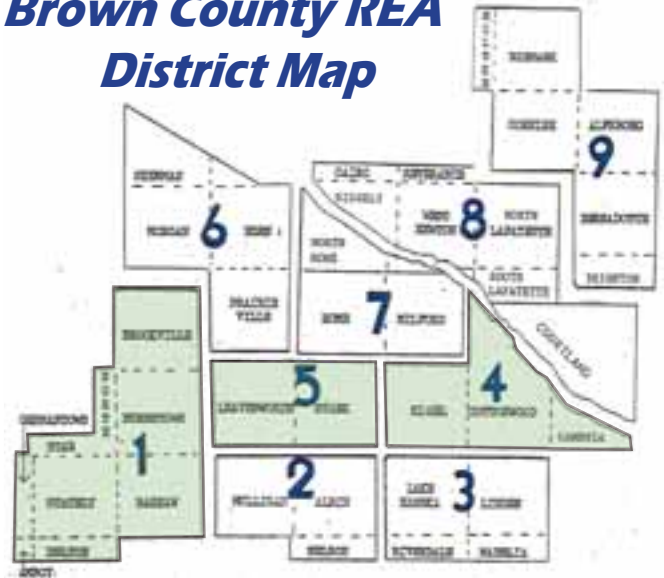
District 1 is made up of Stately, Bashaw, Burnstown and portions of North Star townships and the city of Comfrey in Brown County, a portion of Brookville Township in Redwood County and part of Delton Township in Cottonwood County. District 4 covers Sigel and Cottonwood townships in Brown County and part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

The nominating committees are listed below. Member input to the nominating committee is appreciated and helpful in their selection of director candidates. If interested in being a candidate or have a member in mind whom you believe would be a good candidate, please contact a nominating committee member by February 15. Please make sure the nominee is willing to have his or her name on the ballot.

Members of the nominating committees are:

District 1: Arland Roiger, Duane & Karen Krueger and Nick Yokiel

## Brown County REA District Map



District 4: Dean & Lori Schneider, Don & Marlene Braulick and Dan Schneider

District 5: Don & Cheryl Bloemke, Dale Kral and Tom & Brenda Schroepfer

## BCREA 79<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting



**When:** April 7  
**Location:** Civic Center, New Ulm  
**Registration:** 4:30 p.m.  
**Meal:** 5:30 p.m.  
**Meeting:** 6:30 p.m.

## Geothermal lunch and learn

Would you like to learn more about heating and cooling your home or business with geothermal? If so, come to an educational meeting hosted by Brown County REA Thursday, March 10 at noon.

Whether you are building new or considering replacing your existing heating and cooling system, come learn how geothermal systems work and what to consider in deciding if geothermal is right for you. There will be a 30-minute presentation followed by a light lunch and a no-obligation opportunity to get your questions answered. For more information on geothermal visit [www.discovergeothermal.com](http://www.discovergeothermal.com).

To help us get a count for lunch please RSVP by calling Brown County REA at 800-658-2368 or 794-3331.



Geothermal systems use loops in an outside trench, along with an inside unit, to provide some of the most efficient heating and cooling possible.

# Electricity acts as battery storing energy until it's used in water heaters & electric vehicles

— Continued from Page 1

heat pump technology is being used in water heaters.

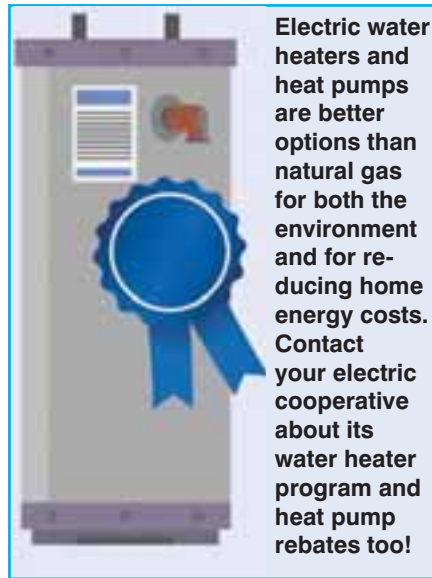
Meanwhile, a natural gas water heater actually burns the gas in your home. So you need to vent that air out of your home through a flue. To do that, you are essentially making large holes in your home and pumping air in and out, reducing energy efficiency.

**Explain the contention in your article that buying a gas water heater locks you out of future improvements in efficiency.**

Once you install a gas appliance in your home, you are stuck with that technology for its 10 to 20-year life. During that time, solar panels and wind turbines will be generating a bigger share of the nation's electricity. Coal power plant efficiency will be improving. The only way to benefit from those trends would be to have an electric appliance.

**You make a point that using an electric appliance can make you part of a broad, national solution to improving energy efficiency. How is that?**

In addition to the high efficiency of the electric appliance itself, there are electric system efficiencies that can be achieved through the ability to choose the time when you use the electricity. For example, your water heater is able to operate as a type of battery, and better batteries are part of what's needed to make renewable energy more useful. Solar panels only make electricity when the sun shines; wind turbines only make electricity when the wind blows. A hidden value of water heaters is that they can serve as a storage technology — the water they heat stays hot for a long time because they are well insulated. An electric car works the same way — once it's



charged, it stores energy for when it's going to be driven. By storing energy when it is available and then using it when it is needed, these technologies are increasing the overall efficiency of our energy resources.

Many electric co-ops have load-control programs for water heating and cooling that take advantage of that energy storage ability to more effectively manage the flow of power. Those load control programs return that value to the cooperative member by helping pay some of the up-front costs for these more efficient appliances through rebates or other incentives. Visit with your local cooperative's energy expert or explore the co-op's website.

**You claim there's a huge flaw in the way we calculate a lot of the leading energy-efficiency standards — from Energy Star ratings to construction standards. How do they miss the mark?**

The formulas being used to calculate energy efficiency for these major programs don't take into account several realities. Those include the increases in renewable energy and natural gas

to generate electricity, power plant efficiencies, load management programs and other advantages of electricity we've talked about in this interview. Those metrics for calculating energy efficiency were designed before a lot of these trends. Despite these trends, the calculation still treats all electricity as coming from inefficient coal plants. That's just clearly wrong.

These incorrect efficiency metrics lead to bad energy decisions. In my article, I quote the Natural Resources Defense Council as saying that these metrics "have serious deficiencies for the purpose of setting a product standard; they are simply not the right numbers to inform good standards decisions."

**NRECA and others are working with policymakers to change those metrics. What is the status?**

Very positive. It's a long bureaucratic process, but we are hoping that the Department of Energy and the Environmental Protection Agency will work with us to address these issues. Along with the environmental community, the renewable energy community and other energy stakeholders, we have begun that process.

**You conclude your article with the bold statement that "incentivizing beneficial electrification with appliances available today would immediately reduce carbon dioxide emissions."**

Policy makers and co-op members will see the ability to achieve end-use emissions reductions and energy-efficiency improvements by choosing electric end-use options over direct fossil fuel use, like oil, natural gas, gasoline and diesel. This will achieve energy efficiency, cost savings and environmental benefits. ♻️

— Courtesy of Paul Wesslund, NRECA



## **Chips ahoy! Share your chocolate & other chip recipes with us**

Chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, mint chips... Share some of these chocolate chip recipes with us! Whether you make cookies, cakes, bars, frosting or more, send your chips recipes by February 25 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! 📧

### **No Cook Fudge by Sharon Rosen, Welcome**

- 1 lb. powdered sugar (approximately 3-4 c. or ½ bag)
- 1 can (14 or 15 oz.) sweetened condensed milk
- ½ to 1 c. creamy peanut butter (Add ½ c. If it is too, dry add more.)  
(Crunchy style adds little pieces of peanuts.)
- ½ c. cocoa powder

Mix together in a large bowl and pat smooth on a cookie sheet covered with waxed paper. Let it set for 10-20 minutes covered with a sheet of wax paper; then cut into bite-size pieces. Keep in air tight container if you do not eat it all first.

We used to make this when I taught preschool in the Ceylon school. It was usually a treat at the Christmas party or the children's gift to their parents. 📧



### **Special K Bars by Leah Schmitt, New Ulm**

- 1 c. sugar
- 1 c. white corn syrup
- 1 c. peanut butter
- 6 c. Rice Krispies

Combine sugar and syrup in a large pan. Cook slowly over heat until sugar is dissolved. Add peanut butter and stir/cook until dissolved. Add Rice Krispies and mix thoroughly. Place in a buttered 9x13" pan and spread/press evenly. Cool.

- Frosting: 1 T. butter
- 1 c. butterscotch chips
- 1 c. chocolate chips

Melt butter over low heat. Add chips to melted butter and continue to melt over low heat. Spread over bars. 📧



### **Peanut Butter Cookies by Mary Ellen Stenzel, Heron Lake**

- 1¼ c. flour
- ¾ c. sugar, plus extra for sprinkling
- ¾ tsp. baking soda
- ½ c. packed light brown sugar
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- 1 egg, room temp
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 T. whole milk
- ½ c. unsalted butter, room temp
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 c. chunky-style peanut butter, room temp
- 1 c. peanut butter chips

Preheat oven to 350°. Line baking sheets with parchment paper. In a large bowl whisk the flour, baking soda, baking powder and salt; set aside. In another large bowl use an electric mixer on medium speed to combine the butter and peanut butter; beat until fluffy. Add both sugars and beat until smooth. Add the egg and mix well. Add milk and vanilla; mix well. Reduce speed to low and add flour mixture until just combined. Stir in peanut butter chips.

Drop by rounded teaspoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets leaving several inches between for expansion. Using a fork, lightly indent with a crisscross pattern, but do not overly flatten cookies. Lightly sprinkle cookies with granulated sugar.

Bake 10 to 12 minutes. Do not overbake. Cookies may appear to be underdone, but they are not. Remove from oven and cool cookies on baking sheets for one minute. Then remove to a wire rack to cool completely. 📧

### **Save with the greatness of ground-source heat pumps**



- 50-70 percent more efficient than other heating systems and cooling efficiencies 20-40 percent higher than available air conditioners.
- Quiet, no open flame or fuel storage tanks.
- GSHPs qualify for a rebate from your electric cooperative and a tax incentive if installed before the end of 2016. 📧

### **Call before digging**



**1-800-252-1166**

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](http://www.gopherstate-onecall.org). Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧

### **Poppycock by Laura Schmitt, New Ulm**

- 9 squares of vanilla almond bark
- 1 c. peanut butter
- 2 c. mini marshmallows
- 2 c. Rice Krispies
- 1 c. (or so) M&Ms

Melt almond bark in microwave according to directions on the package. After completely melted stir in peanut butter until well blended. Stir in the remaining ingredients. Drop by teaspoon on wax paper.

This is an easy recipe that children can make. 📧



Call 1-888-264-6380 for your home and business security needs. 📧





**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

Wade Hensel, General Manager

**Board of Directors**

James Mickelson, President — 794-6298  
Thomas Hayes, Vice President — 228-8954  
James D. Hanson, Sec.-Treasurer — 829-6756  
William Berg — 354-4895  
Brad Sprenger — 877-2633  
Allen Hanson — 276-0691  
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 Brown County REA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting on January 28, 2016 at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the December 2015 board meeting minutes, new member applications, member cancellations, disbursements and payments to estates.
- Reviewed and approved the Safety, Reliability and Service Quality report for 2015. Members experienced an average outage time of 32 minutes for the year.
- Reviewed the 2015 OSHA Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses.
- Reviewed and approved the Power Cost Adjustment for former Alliant Energy members, subject to review in six months.
- Reviewed and adopted changes to the cooperative's line extension policy.
- Reviewed and discussed a rate and margin analysis and potential rate increase.
- Reviewed and approved staff and director meeting reports.

The next meeting will be on February 25 at the BENCO office in Mankato.

# Staff notes



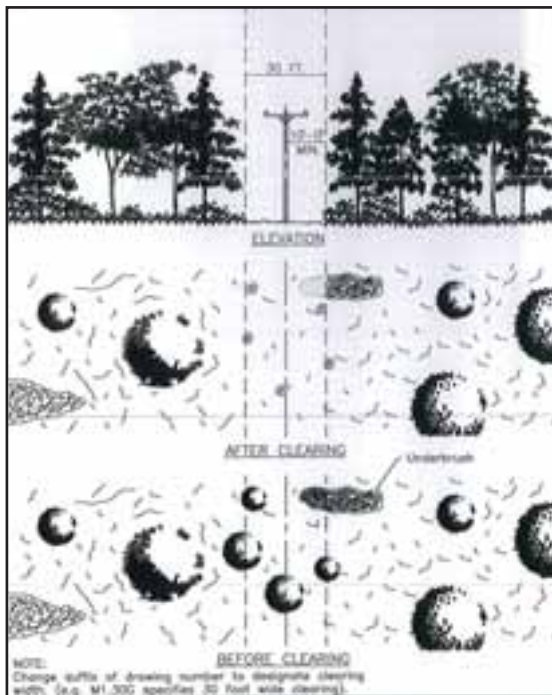
**Mike Heidemann  
Line Superintendent**

### Line patrol

It is February already and we have made it through the coldest part of winter. The days are getting longer and the Minnesota Twins start spring training in a couple weeks. Spring is around the corner.

Here at Brown County REA we have finished our construction projects and have switched gears to maintenance. That includes reading some

meters, patrolling line, trimming trees, maintaining OCRs and maintenance on our underground and overhead lines. BCREA will read some of the meters and patrol all the power lines in the system over the next few months. During line patrol, the line crews are looking for maintenance issues and possible causes of outages. In addition to patrolling the lines, the crews will also be installing black wildlife protection wrap on all our transformer poles,



underground riser poles and all fused equipment poles.

BCREA will have Carr's Tree Service doing the tree trimming again this year. If you have a tree problem on your farm, we would either like to cut the tree down and eliminate the problem, or trim the tree so that we have 15 feet of clearance from the power line. We do that for two reasons, first it is a requirement of RUS as you can see from the diagram above. Secondly, we want to trim for a four year rotation. Even if the tree is a fast growing maple, we do not want to come back and trim in two years. We want to trim as many trees as we can in a year and stay within budget. As you can see, it is a busy time of the year. If you have any questions about tree trimming, please call Brown County REA's office.

