

Connections

May 2017

For the member-owners of Federated Rural Electric



Volume 21, Issue 5

CTV: cheaper option than satellite TV

CTV is a local over-the-air TV service owned by your electric co-op. What can you do to get the most out of CTV? We interviewed one of our local TV antenna installers, Bridgete Blue from Welcome TV, for some insight.

Before someone gives up their satellite dish or cable, what do they need to know to pick up CTV channels?

Before you give up cable or satellite, keep in mind that premium channels like regional sports networks, mainstream news channels, pay-per-view and the like are not included in CTV's channel lineup.

Can an installer help if the consumer has no luck getting a good signal?

You can hire an installer to come to the location and meter the signal strength for over-the-air reception. In order to receive reception you need line-of-sight. We are very fortunate in our area to have three CTV towers (Frost, Jackson and Godahl) to draw from. Jackson and Frost have about a 30-mile coverage area, while Godahl has about a 45-mile radius.

Do indoor antennas work?

Indoor antennas sometimes work for those who live right near the selected broadcast tower.

What areas cannot get CTV signal?

It depends on your location. In order to receive CTV reception you need line-of-sight — no buildings, large hills, dense tree cover, etc. You need to either get through or get above what is in the way.

When is it time to upgrade an antenna?

If you haven't replaced the coaxial cable, booster and antenna for more than 10 years, we recommend updating. You can use an "arrow" antenna or a four-bay screen antenna (pictured). Four-bay antennas aid in the problem of co-channeling in the humid summer because they are more directional; it reduces the signal from other towers



Welcome TV is one of the area TV antenna installers who can "point" you in the right direction when making a decision about installing a UHF antenna. Installer Travis Rosenberg displays the four-bay screen antenna, which reduces co-channeling issues in the summer.

on the backside.

How does a preamp or splitters help your antenna?

Without a pre-amplified booster (costs about \$110) in this area you are going to get only a few channels at best. We need more power for our antenna to get all of the channels available. Splitters (cost about \$5-\$10) are used in the home to split the UHF signal to all the televisions. This allows everyone to watch a different channel without having the cost of individual receivers in the house, like with cable and satellite.

Is weather an issue with over-the-air reception?

High dew point and humidity can cause interruptions in reception. At Welcome TV we post the week's tropospheric ducting forecast on our Facebook page during the summer. Tropospheric ducting occurs when signals become over amplified, scattered, refracted or reflected from changes in the weather causing them to transmit farther than normal.

— Continued on Page 6

At A Glance



Brown County
Rural Electrical
Association



Thank you to all of the members who attended the 80th Annual Meeting. Those who were unable to be there can read all about the meeting on Page 5. Please plan to join us for the 2018 Annual Meeting, Thursday, April 5. ☺

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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Energy Wise

Quality Install rebates provide cool savings!

Quality, not quantity, is the name of the game when installing a new cooling system. An oversized system will not properly dehumidify your home. An undersized system will run more often and not maintain a comfortable temperature.

Use a Quality Installer to make sure things are just right. In addition, your co-op's cooling rebate is based on using a Quality Install (QI) contractor (listed below) and the Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) of the unit. Call the co-op's energy expert for rebate amounts.

A Quality Install contractor took an online test to verify their expertise. A Quality Installation ensures the equipment



was correctly installed to gain efficiencies. Improper installation can reduce system efficiency by 30 percent. Unfortunately, more than half of new HVAC systems in the U.S. homes do not perform to their rated efficiency as a result of improper installation. Quality Installations assure proper sizing of equipment, duct sealing, airflow optimization and refrigerant charge.

If your contractor is not listed below, the contractor can take the co-op's free online test so you can receive the co-op's QI rebate. The contractor completes the QI rebate form after testing the installed unit.

testing the installed unit.

Quality Installers

Adrian Plumbing & Heating, Windom: 678-2731
 Ahrens Heating, New Ulm: 354-2217
 Anytime Comfort Experts, St. James: 375-3600
 Appliance Source, New Ulm: 276-0432
 Blackrock Enterprises, Gibbon: 834-6515
 Boeckman Plumbing & Heating, Elmore: 943-3749
 B&R Plumbing & Heating, Winthrop: 647-5362
 Blomstrom Comfort Systems, Fairmont: 235-9001
 Brewster Heating & Cooling, Brewster: 842-5353
 BTU, Inc., Worthington: 376-6966
 Bruce's Plumbing & Heating, St. James: 375-4520
 C&S Heating & Air Conditioning, Hanska: 794-4328
 Comfort Heating & Air Conditioning, New Ulm: 354-2165
 ComforTec, Estherville: 1-888-362-2106
 Country Pride Plumbing & Heating/AC, Bingham Lake: 427-2333
 Countryside Plumbing & Heating, Jackson: 847-4288
 Corwin's Refrigeration & Heating, Windom: 831-1369
 Cress Refrigeration, Fairmont: 236-2284
 Dale Ziegler Heating & Air Conditioning, Odin: 840-1178
 Davis Comfort Systems, Mankato: 507-387-2434
 Day Plumbing, Heating & Cooling, Fairmont: 235-9009
 Ehrich Plumbing & Heating, Elmore: 943-3267
 Electric Service Company, Blue Earth: 526-2255
 Elite Mechanical Systems, Windom: 831-0236
 Feder Mechanical, Madelia: 642-3522
 Fodness Heating & Cooling, New Ulm: 354-3947
 Gag Sheet Metal Inc., New Ulm: 354-3813


Hanson Enterprises, LLC., Lakefield: 507-840-0841
 Isakson-Gag Plumbing & Heating, Gibbon: 834-6413
 JP Plumbing & Heating, New Ulm: 354-3123
 Kaduce Plumbing & Heating, Mankato: 893-4456
 Kerkoff Plumbing & Heating, Morgan: 249-3138
 Kiecker Plumbing & Heating, Fairfax: 612-581-6997
 Klassen Mechanical, New Ulm: 359-9616
 Lakeside Plumbing & Heating, Gibbon: 834-6206
 Lamberton Heating & Plumbing, Lamberton: 752-7451
 Leave it to Lil J, Fairmont: 238-4224
 Lowes Sheetmetal Inc., Worthington: 376-5927
 Martin County Mechanical (A-OK Service), Fairmont: 238-2468
 MJ Mechanical, Redwood Falls: 637-5483
 Nilson Heating & A/C, New Ulm: 354-5500
 Royer's Inc., Winnebago: 893-4612
 Sanborn Plumbing & Heating, Sanborn: 648-3273
 Schwalbach's Plumbing & Heating, at Ace Hardware stores in Jackson, Windom & Worthington: 372-2792
 Sibley Sheet Metal, Sibley, IA: 712-754-4118
 St. James Electric, St. James, 507-375-5235
 Total Comfort, Fairmont: 235-5278
 Thurmer Plumbing & Heating, Jackson: 847-4210
 Tri-Town Plumbing & Heating, Westbrook: 274-5505
 Vee Plumbing and Heating, Madelia: 642-8700
 Wahl to Wall Plumbing & Heating, Springfield: 445-3183
 Winter's Plumbing, Heating & Excavation, Lakefield: 662-6385

Amp up your TV viewing with an antenna DVR!




If you are a CTV subscriber and are interested in a DVR to record or pause your favorite shows, consider the Channel Master. Unlike a cable or satellite subscription DVR, the Channel Master is yours to own with no monthly fees, taxes or commitments. Moving? Simply take it with you!

The Channel Master is simple to operate with no confusing menus or navigation. It provides a channel guide that scrolls up and down and the ability to stream from the Internet, as well. No installer required. Connect the TV antenna to the Channel Master and connect the Channel Master to your TV. An on-screen wizard will walk you through completing the installation and connecting the DVR to your home network.

Visit www.channelmaster.com for more information. The Channel Master comes in two varieties: 1 terabyte hard drive (\$399) and a model where you provide your own USB storage (\$249). 

What good is a DVR?

CTV and a DVR make a great combination. Consider these statistics:

- 80 percent — the average amount of content stored on cable and satellite DVRs that comes from the major broadcast networks available with an over-the-air TV antenna. This kind of programming is exactly what CTV provides and the Channel Master gives you a way to record it or even pause live TV.
- 40 percent — the average amount of your cable or satellite programming fee that is paying for sports content, whether you watch it or not. CTV is only \$7 a month.
- 200 — the average number of channels in a cable or satellite TV package. Who has time to watch 200 channels?
- 15 — the average number of channels you actually watch in your cable or satellite TV package. CTV provides over 40 channels to local viewers.
- 2 — the average years of a cable or satellite TV contract that includes heavy fees for early cancellation. If you decide to go with a satellite TV service, it is a commitment. CTV is easy. Just call your co-op and have the \$7 monthly fee added to your electric bill. 

Safety

Storms lead to arcing & sparking

Severe weather arises in May. Thunderstorms can damage power lines and other electrical equipment and causes dangers that lurk even after a storm has passed. Be aware of these hazards:


- When you see power lines on the ground following a storm, stay away; warn others to stay away and contact the electric cooperative. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines, could be in contact with an energized power line making them very dangerous.
- Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide an electrical hazard. A downed power line can energize things around it, such as chain link fences and metal culverts.
- Keep in mind that a line that's indeed "dead" could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators.



- If you are driving and come upon a downed power line, stay in your vehicle, warn others to stay away and contact emergency personnel or the electric utility. Never drive over a downed line. It could cause poles or other equipment to come crashing down.

- If you are in a car that has come in contact with a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility has arrived and de-energized the line.

Warn others not to approach the car. If you must leave your car (only in the case of fire), jump free from the car and hop away from it with both feet together.

- If you have a generator, know how to use it safely. If your generator is permanent, call a qualified electrician to install it. An improperly installed generator could backfeed lines and injure your cooperative's linemen trying to restore your power. 

— Information courtesy of safeelectricity.org

Brown County Briefs

Twins Play Ball! Clinic



Youth ages 6-13 are invited to participate in the Minnesota Twins Play Ball! clinic, Friday, June 16, at North Park in New Ulm.

- 6-9 year olds — 3 p.m.
- 10-13 year olds — 4:30 p.m.

Sponsored by the Twins Community Fund and Great River Energy, Brown County REA's wholesale power supplier, the clinic is designed to teach basic fundamentals including hitting, throwing and fielding. The event is free and open to all youth ages 6-13. However, participants must complete a waiver on-site. Equipment is provided, but participants are asked to bring their own glove. No pre-registration required. Just show up with your glove and be ready to have fun. The event is hosted by New Ulm Park and Recreation.

Energy tip of the month

Keep warm summer air outside where it belongs! Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.

Quality Install rebates

Brown County REA offers rebates to members who have a new air source heat pump installed by a Quality Install certified contractor and place it on the co-op's load management program. Rebate amounts are \$480 for 14.5 SEER, \$580 15 SEER and \$630 for 16 SEER & higher, plus an additional \$50 to each rebate for placing on load control. Contractors must complete and submit the 2017 Residential HVAC Rebate form.

Vegetation control under power lines is underway



Brown County REA has contracted Central Applicators, Inc. to maintain and control the vegetation along Brown County REA's rights-of-way. Starting around April 17, Central Applicators, Inc. will use an EPA-approved herbicide to treat only the unwanted brush, noxious weeds and volunteer trees that

may interfere with the power lines and possibly cause a future outage. They will do a selective spot treatment only, which consists of treating each plant individually, insuring minimal usage and maximum control. No applications will be done to any trees or brush in maintained areas, like yards. The primary purpose of the application is to treat stems of brush that sprouted from the stumps created during the clearance work done several years ago.

If you have any questions/concerns or to inform us of any organic areas, please call the Brown County REA office at 800-658-2368 or email bcra@bcra.coop as soon as possible. If you would like to find out more about Central Applicators, Inc., you can visit their website at www.centralapplicators.com. Thank you for your cooperation in helping Brown County REA to maintain our rights-of-way in order to prevent outages and minimize delays in power restoration.

Operation Round Up awards \$3,920



Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board Member Kari Berg (far right) presented a \$2,000 contribution to Izaak Walton League Chapter 79 Member Arlene Sperl. Sleepy Eye Sportsman Club Member Mike Hasse (far left) presented his club's donation to Nate Sperl. The funds will help build two handicap accessible shooting stands for individuals with disabilities to accommodate wheelchair target practice and hunting at the Izaak Walton Range in rural New Ulm.



The Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board distributed \$3,920 to eight organizations at its meeting April 11.

Funds were awarded to the KT Humble Hearts Foundation for scholarships to students at Sleepy Eye Public and St. Mary's high schools, Nicollet County 4-H Lunchstand, New Ulm Area Foundation, scholarships at New Ulm Public, Cathedral and Minnesota Valley Lutheran high schools, Izaak Walton League, True Friends and After Prom gatherings at Springfield, New Ulm Cathedral and MVL high schools.

The Trust Board will meet again to review applications August 8.

BCREA hosts 80th Annual Meeting



Brown County Rural Electrical Association (REA) hosted about 470 members, spouses, employees and guests at the New Ulm Civic Center April 6 for the cooperative's 80th Annual Meeting. A total of 232 members registered for the meeting.


Pastor Josh Doughty of United Methodist Church in Springfield shared the invocation. Board President Jim Mickelson recapped highlights and cooperative happenings over the past year. He talked about the leadership transition at the co-op as General Manager Wade Hensel retires and Mike Heidemann becomes the fourth person to lead Brown County REA in its 80-year history.

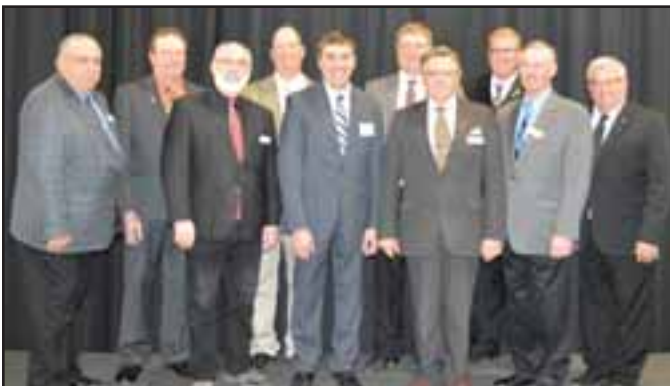
CEO Heidemann reviewed activities of the past year, noted retirement of the general manager and two long-time employees and renewal of a contract for hydropower through Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). He thanked Hensel for his excellent cooperative leadership for the past 16 years.

The 2016 audited financial report was reviewed by Office Manager Darla Ruschen. Directors were elected in

Districts 2, 3 and 8. Incumbents Bradley Sprenger, Allen Hanson and Reuben Kokesch were re-elected to three-year terms.

David Luepke shared his experience serving on the Member Advisory Council, topics addressed at the meetings and being part of the nominating committee. He encouraged other members to become involved. Member Services Manager Marcia Solie shared Natalie Sellner's comments and appreciation (due to her absence) for the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. last June as the cooperative's Rural Electric Youth Tour representative.

At the organizational meeting, Jim Mickelson was elected President of the Board. Bill Berg was chosen as Vice President. Jim Hanson was elected Secretary/Treasurer, while Reuben Kokesch was selected as Brown County REA's Great River Energy representative. 



Leading Brown County REA in its 80th year are directors (from left to right): Jim Mickelson, Bill Berg, Allen Hanson, Jim Hanson, Greg Mages, Joel Christensen, Reuben Kokesch, CEO Mike Heidemann, Brad Sprenger and Tom Hayes.



BCREA Board President Jim Mickelson (left) presented a plaque to retiring General Manager Wade Hensel at his final Annual Meeting leading the cooperative.

CTVChannels

2.1 TPT 2	11.4 KARE	31.1 Retro TV
2.2 TPT MN (Godahl & Frost towers)	11.5 KARE Weather	35.1 LAFF TV
2.3 TPT Life (Godahl & and Frost towers)	11.6 Justice Network	40.1 YouToo
2.4 TPT Kids	12.4 KEYC	41.1 ION TV
2.5 TPT Weather	12.5 FOX	41.2 QUBO
4.1 WCCO 4	16.1 CTV info channel	41.3 ION Life
5.1 KSTP	16.2 Action Channel	41.4 SHOP
5.2 KSTC-TV	16.3 Heartland	41.5 QVC
5.3 MeTV	16.4 AMGTV	41.6 HSN
5.4 Antenna TV	16.5 BizTV	45.1 Trinity Broadcasting (Godahl tower only)
5.6 ThisTV	20.6 Vibrant TV	45.2 Hillsong Channel (Godahl Tower only)
5.7 H&I	23.1 WUCW 23	45.3 Smile of a Child (Godahl tower only)
9.1 KMSP	23.2 Comet	45.4 Juce TV (Godahl Tower only)
9.2 WFTC 29	23.3 Charge Network	45.5 Enlace TV (Godahl Tower only)
9.3 Movies TV	23.4 TBD Network	46.1 KDLT HD (Jackson tower)
9.4 Buzzer (Godahl tower only)	23.5 GRIT TV	46.2 COZI TV (Jackson tower)
9.9 KMSP (Godahl tower only)	23.6 CTV Two (Canada)	
	24.1 Rev'n	
	24.6 CTV Two (Godahl tower)	

Most recently updated channels in bold (as of 4-17-17). Do a channel rescan to keep your TV up-to-date on currently available channels.

Good news! DVR CTV channels to watch shows later

— Continued from Page 1

When should you install an antenna yourself vs. hiring a professional?

Our best answer is to hire a qualified outdoor antenna installer to do the job right. We always recommend having a professional install your antenna. Using the correct size cable, the right booster and antenna for your area depends on your location from the chosen tower, not to mention the fact that we climb roofs, towers, etc. on a daily basis. You don't want to get hurt falling off your roof!

Who installs antennae in southern Minnesota?

Check your local business listings for installers in your area, such as:


- Dan's TV & Appliance, Fairmont, 238-2333
- DeGroods Appliance Company, Mankato, 388-9391
- Fairfax TV Sales & Service, Fairfax, 426-7217
- Midwest Audio & Video, Fairmont, 238-2233
- NU Current Electric, New Ulm, 276-5234
- Rogotzke Communications, Lambertson, 421-6041
- Schuckert's TV, New Ulm, 276-0772
- Town & Country Appliance, Windom, 831-3938
- Welcome TV, Welcome, 28-8767

• Worthington TV Service Center, Worthington, 376-4322 What if you can't give up your DVR? Are there any options for over-the-air signals?

Yes, Channel Master over-the-air, dual-tuner DVR with program guide has HDMI TV connection only and includes up to 1 terabyte internal hard drive. Visit here to learn more visit www.channelmaster.com or read the *Connections* story on Page 3.

Is CTV free?

No, members paying voluntary contributions make CTV possible. If you are not making a contribution, help make sure CTV continues to grow and provide low-cost, high-definition, basic TV service to the area. Call your local electric cooperative today, request an updated channel listing and let them know you want to pay your share. They will add \$7 a month to your electric bill for convenient payment. Nonmembers can pay annually (\$84/year) or seasonally (\$42/year).

CTV is jointly owned by the four rural electric cooperatives: Brown County REA, Federated Rural Electric, South Central Electric and BENCO Electric; call your local cooperative with any questions about CTV. 



Brandon Havemeier
Operations &
Engineering
Manager

Staff notes

BCREA gearing up for busy, safe summer

As the temperatures rise and conditions improve, Brown County REA line crews and contractors are ready for construction and maintenance projects throughout the service area.

Replacement of 4.5 miles of overhead line with three-phase underground line to the Cobden Substation is one of the work plan jobs for the summer. In addition, we will replace overhead services throughout the year and focus on areas where we have had recent tree issues via tree

trimming or replacing line with underground.

We have again contracted Southwood 2000 to perform our pole testing. They will start in May, test for the month and then return to finish in September. Pole testing will start in the southwest corner of the service area and include Stately, Bashaw and Mulligan townships, and possibly Albin Township. Pole inspection involves visually inspecting the pole, checking for cracks, equipment damage and burn marks from ditch fires. If the pole passes that part of the inspection, then they dig down 18 inches to inspect the base of the pole. To check for internal decay, they drill into the core of the pole. The base of the pole is also visually checked for decay. If the pole does not pass inspection, it is rejected and will be replaced. The poles are also inspected for ground resistance on the driven ground rods and also guy guards are added, as needed. We test the poles periodically to meet requirements of the Rural Utilities Service (RUS) and to improve service reliability

Carr's Tree Service will be back in the service area trimming trees in the Albin, Lake Hanska and Linden townships beginning in July. We also have Central Applicators, Inc. spot treating unwanted brush, noxious weeds and volunteer trees to maintain and control vegetation along the co-op's rights-of-way.

As always, we remind you to be aware of Brown County REA equipment as you are working in your fields and yards. Be aware of transformers and other equipment while out mowing, riding ATV or working in the fields; also, know where the poles and overhead lines are when planting, spraying and moving equipment. Remember to call Gopher State One Call at 800-252-1166 before doing any digging more than 12 inches deep. All of us at Brown County REA wish you a safe spring and summer. ☺



Brown County Rural Electrical Association

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Office hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Wade Hensel, General Manager
Mike Heidemann, Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

James Mickelson, President — 794-6298
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 Brown County REA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting on, April 27 at the Brown County REA headquarters in Sleepy Eye. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the March 2017 board meeting minutes, new member applications, member cancellations, disbursements and payments to estates.
- Approved March 2017 payroll and February 2017 financial statements.
- Reviewed and approved the 2016 margin allocation amount of \$1,433,849.82.
- Reviewed the 80th Annual Meeting held April 6 in New Ulm and set Thurs., April 5 as the date for the 2018 Annual Meeting.
- Briefed on safety meetings/trainings attended by linemen and operations staff.
- Reviewed progress on the Cost of Service Study being conducted for all cooperatives that are part of Southern Minnesota Energy Cooperative (SMEC).
- Updated on underground and overhead maintenance projects completed.
- Reviewed staff, director meeting reports and individual director reports.

The next meeting will be May 31 at the Brown County REA headquarters. ☺



Heartland Security can help you protect your home or business with a variety of options that range from alarms that automatically notify the police to surveillance cameras. Call us today at 888-264-6380. ☺