

Connections

August 2018

For the member-owners of Brown County REA



Volume 22, Issue 8

2018 Youth Tour makes D.C. fun!

Your electric cooperative sponsored a high school student to attend the Youth Tour June 9-14. Electric cooperatives from across the U.S. sponsored 1,888 teens. Explore D.C. through the eyes of two local teens, who were among the 40 Minnesota students winning trips this year.

Sarah Holmberg's trip highlights

Sarah Holmberg, Lakefield, was sponsored by Federated Rural Electric. She is a 2018 graduate of Jackson County Central.

The Capitol visit

The visit to the Capitol was very different than any of the other places we experienced. We had the opportunity to go into the North Chamber, where the Senate meets. Sadly, we were not able to go on the tour of the Capitol. The representatives we met with answered questions about gun control, net neutrality, opioids and more.

Memorials

All of the memorials were very beautiful. Each one was different and unique as to why the memorial was created. One of my favorite memorials was the FDR Memorial. It was cool to see that part of history through murals, quotes and waterfalls. It was all outside so nature surrounded you everywhere, which was amazing.

Museums

The museums in D.C. covered anything you wanted to learn about. I thought it was interesting that most of the museums



Washington, D.C. came to life for Zachary Helget, New Ulm; and Sarah Holmberg, Lakefield. Each earned a free trip to Washington, D.C., sponsored by their electric cooperative.

were free. The Smithsonians were very large and some had rare and expensive artifacts. I loved the fact that everyone in the public has the opportunity to see them.

Mount Vernon

I learned that the original property included about 8,000 acres, but now

consists of only 500 acres. I enjoyed the many interactive parts to Mount Vernon and the many buildings and gardens to explore. Also, someone is always around to answer questions.

Dance and musical

The Youth Tour Dance was very different from anything I had experienced. Most of that night was spent eating ice cream and talking to one of the speakers named Bobby, who went to Haiti a few times to install power lines and help teach the people there how to be a safe lineman. The musical we saw was very good! We saw "Scottsboro Boys," which is a true story about racism and injustice in the American South. I really enjoy musicals!

Speaker

One of the main speakers this year was Mike Schlappi. He told us how he was paralyzed at a young age. He had hard days, but in the end he earned four Olympic medals in wheelchair basketball. It was a very humbling story and I learned that a lot of bad things can happen to you in life and it's okay to have a few bad days, but be thankful for the life and experiences you have. Always use them to push yourself in life to help yourself and others.

New friends

I met so many great people! I have stayed in touch with a few of them and they live near me so hopefully I can see them soon.

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At A Glance



**Brown County
Rural Electrical
Association**

Interested in a road trip to where your power is generated?

Seats are still available for the August 22-24 air conditioned motor coach trip to Coal Creek Energy Park near Bismarck, North Dakota. \$135/ member covers the hotel, breakfasts, lunch on tour day and entry to the ND Heritage Museum and other cultural and historical stops on tour day. Call the office ASAP if you'd like to join us.



Farm energy audits eligible for 75 percent grant coverage thanks to Great River Energy

Agricultural producers are the focus of a new farm energy management program that is now available to local electric cooperative members.

Qualified participants will receive one-on-one assistance in identifying and prioritizing energy-efficiency opportunities. They will ultimately come away from the experience with an energy management plan to implement.

"We understand that each operation is unique and requires personalized assistance," stated the co-op's energy expert. "This program will take the guesswork out of where you should spend your time, money and efforts when it comes to energy management."

Audit outcomes will provide information ranging from simple, no-cost operational changes that can save you money to an analysis of your energy use, which equipment is using the most energy and what can be done to decrease your energy costs.

Your electric cooperative offers this opportunity with assistance from wholesale power provider Great River Energy (GRE); the United States Department of Agriculture recently awarded GRE a \$100,000 grant from their Rural Energy for America Program (USDA-REAP) to conduct these audits. Program participants only need to pay 25 percent of the cost of their agricultural audit; meanwhile, the other 75 percent is covered through grant funding. The average audit costs are approximately \$2,500, but can vary based on the ag producer or farm's operation size.

These audits can also be used as a qualifying audit for the USDA's



You can be happy too! Take the guesswork out of your energy expenses with an ag producer energy audit. Apply now for a grant that covers 75 percent of the audit's cost. Plus, your cooperative's energy-efficiency rebates will help offset the costs of new efficient lighting and equipment.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), which offers financial assistance in completing an AgEMP-level audit and energy-efficiency project implementation. EQIP audit applications, which are due August 2018 for review and approval for 2019 audit funding; the 2019 deadline is tentatively anticipated for August as well. The EQIP funding can be used jointly with the cooperative's agricultural audit and energy-efficiency rebate funding, as listed on the co-op's website.

Do you have an energy-efficiency project for this year and don't want to wait for audit funding next year? Use the cooperative agricultural audit program to cover 75 percent of the AgEMP audit cost and immediately become approved for EQIP Implementation funding and cooperative implementation rebates.

Not sure where to start with the agricultural audit or USDA-EQIP programs? For more information call 800-441-8525 to verify eligibility and cost. 

New baby seat mimics movements of mom

The MamaRoo Infant Seat is not just a baby swing. It mimics the way mommy moves. It bounces up and down and sways from side to side, just like parents do when comforting their baby.

Parents can select from five unique motions, like car ride and tree swing, and five different speeds. The swing also has four soothing sounds to go with the motions. Parents can also connect it to any MP3 player.

The MamaRoo reclines to multiple positions to allow baby to lie back and relax or sit up and play. The weight range runs from birth to 25 pounds (or when baby can sit up unassisted).

Bluetooth allows parents to control the motion, sound, speed and volume from



Take your baby swing into the future with the smart MamaRoo Infant Seat.

their smart device without disturbing the sleeping baby. The MamaRoo is compatible with all Apple devices newer than the iPhone 4s that are running iOS 9 or newer. The Android app is compatible with most Android devices that support Bluetooth Low Energy and are running Android 4.3 or newer.

Finally, an overhead toy mobile includes interactive, reversible toy balls. They keep the baby's attention with the sound of the crinkle ball, rattle or reflective mirror ball. The seat is also machine washable.

The MamaRoo Infant Seat is available on Amazon.com for approximately \$220. 

Safety

Which pole is more dangerous to you?



A

Picture A, courtesy of Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative, might seem like the obvious choice. In reality they're both equally deadly.

Picture B is certainly less dramatic than A — no burn marks, smoke or flames exist yet, but the lines lying on the ground in picture B still had electricity coursing through them at 7,200 volts. In fact, the ground itself could have possibly been energized around the pole. Before the line crew arrived to cut the power, anyone who ventured too close could have been killed.

When a call comes into your electric cooperative about a downed line, one of the main things that go through linemen's minds is to get there as quickly as possible. They want to get to the breaker and de-energize the



B

line before the downed line is a threat to anyone who happens to pass by.

When a farmer or driver is responsible for downed lines, they often call it in right away. In other situations, especially winter storms, lines can be knocked to the ground and remain live with little indication to electric cooperative linemen to the exact nature of the problem until they get to the location.

Luckily, no one was hurt during the situations in either picture, but these experiences serve as a reminder to always treat all power lines as if they are energized. Stay away from downed lines; keep others away and contact your electric co-op immediately. If a downed line crosses a road or high-traffic area, contact 911. 

Brown County Briefs

Member Advisory Council

The second meeting of the current Member Advisory Council will be held Monday, September 10, at 7 p.m. in the BCREA Auditorium. Agenda includes a speaker from Great River Energy and round table discussions with management staff.

Operation Round Up

The Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board will review applications Tuesday, August 21 at 5:30 p.m. Organizations wishing to be considered for funding should submit an application prior to that date. Applications are available under the *Programs & Services* tab, *Operation Round Up* page at www.browncountyrea.coop.

Energy efficiency tip

Look for LED products and fixtures for outdoor use, such as pathway, step and porch lights. Many include features like automatic daylight shut-off and motion sensors. You can also find solar-powered lighting for outdoor spaces. Source: energy.gov

Make your voice count!



Get out and vote in the August 14 primary elections.

Line crews train in safety and temp workers gain experience



Left: Journeyman Lineman Drew Hill performs a rescue of a dummy simulating an injured co-worker as part of the line crew's annual poletop and bucket truck rescue training. All BCREA linemen and temporary lineworkers took part in the OSHA-mandated training exercise, facilitated by a Minnesota Rural Electric Association instructor.

Temporary Lineworkers Caleb Kirchberg (center) and Collins Rewitzer (right) are assisting BCREA line crews with construction and other activities through the fall. Both completed the Power Lineworker program at Minnesota West Community and Technical College in Jackson.

Co-op leaders gather for District meeting



Legislative special guest District 16A Representative Chris Swedzinski spoke to electric co-op directors and managers gathered at BCREA for the Minnesota Rural Electric Association (MREA) District 5 meeting. More than 60 representatives from co-ops throughout southwestern Minnesota and eastern South Dakota attended.

New technology, new ways to serve you

As technology changes the world around us, today's electric grid provides Brown County REA members with more benefits than ever before.

The electric "grid" — as we have known it for years — consists of the poles, wires, transformers, switches, fuses and other components that make up local power lines and transmission lines (the larger power lines that carry higher voltages). That said, the electric grid is vastly more sophisticated than it used to be. Two things have changed the grid over time:

Communications technology

Today's electric grid extends well beyond poles and wires. In addition to transmitting electricity, the grid now also moves data that is used to precisely monitor and measure the flow of electricity. The rapid movement of information also allows cooperatives to respond to the needs of the grid to avoid unexpected outages and high energy prices.

Interest in new generation sources

More and more electric cooperative members want access to electricity generated by wind and solar power. Advanced grid technologies enable the two-way flow of information and energy, which can allow cooperative members to do things that are otherwise not possible, such as sell excess power into the electric system from solar



Empowering
Helps you make smart energy decisions and save money.

Reliable
Technologies help avoid outages and restore power faster when they happen.

panels on their home.

These changes and more provide cooperative members with the following new benefits:

Empowering

New technologies provide you with information that can help you make smart decisions about your energy use and save money.

Reliable

New technologies provide automated operations, which help electric cooperatives pinpoint outages and restore power faster when the lights go out. These technologies also allow system operators to remotely check on the health of equipment to help avoid outages altogether and control the flow of electricity to route it around

problem areas.

Resilient and flexible

New technologies make the grid more flexible, enabling the use of renewable energy sources that generate power on and off when the wind is blowing or the sun is shining. Being able to supply power from multiple locations also provides a variety of sources where power can be delivered to members.

Environmentally friendly

Having cleaner energy like wind and solar power in the mix helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants. Advanced technologies also allow cooperative members to use electricity when it is most efficient. 

There is value in energy not used

The cheapest, cleanest and greenest energy is the energy not used. Here are ways to be more energy efficient — some that don't cost a penny.

- Open windows and cut the air conditioner at night when temperatures are much more moderate. Keep windows closed during the day to keep cool air inside. Install window coverings, which can block sunlight and heat.

- Fans can make higher temperatures feel more comfortable. When using a ceiling fan with air conditioning, Energy

gov states that you can raise the thermostat approximately 4 degrees without reducing comfort level.

- Regularly clean or replace AC filters. Set your programmable thermostat to a warmer temperature while away and lower temperature for your return time.

- Avoid using the oven on hot days. Grill outside, use the stove or a microwave. Reheating food in a microwave uses up to 80 percent less energy than a standard oven.

- Water heating makes up an average of 18 percent of energy costs.

Take shorter showers and use low-flow showerheads. Run clothes and dish washers only with full loads. Lower the temperature on the water heater. REA water heaters come factory-set at 120 degrees, which should be adequate for most homes.

- Avoid using major appliances during typical peak hours from 4 to 8 p.m. Switch off and unplug appliances when not in use. Air dry clothes and dishes to cut energy costs.

- Turn off lights that are not being used and switch to LED bulbs. 

Youth Tour covers monuments, museums, memorials & more!

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Thanks!

I would like to thank Federated Rural Electric and the Minnesota Rural Electric Association for sending me on this amazing trip! All of the chaperones we had were also wonderful! I would like to also thank a few of my friends, who previously went on the trip and encouraged me to apply. I would obviously recommend the trip to anyone. It is a great trip and you get to experience everything that D.C. has to offer and more (for free). Not only that, but you get to meet so many people from Minnesota and from around the country and you learn a lot about co-ops!

Zachary Helget's memories

Zachary Helget, New Ulm, was sponsored by Brown County REA. He will be a senior at Cathedral High School.

Capitol Visit

The Capitol was great! I was surprised at how many people worked there. We met with Rick Nolan, Jason Lewis and members from Collin Peterson's staff. We talked about gun violence and small business. However, the one thing we talked about with all the Representatives was the Farm Bill. We also met with Senator Tina Smith.

Memorials

The one thing that stuck out was the scale of the memorials. Pictures could never show how big many of these memorials actually are. My favorite one was the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial. We went to this one at night and the lights lit up the structures. When I saw this memorial in particular, it made me think about the horrible attack that happened right where I stood.

Museums

The thing I found most interesting



The 2018 Minnesota Youth Tour delegation pictured at the Lincoln Memorial. Sarah Holmberg and Zachary Helget are circled.

about the museums was all the history behind something. All of the works of art told a story and they all had some past. It was also amazing to think that some of the greatest painters to ever live painted some of these paintings that I enjoyed.

Mount Vernon

I learned that Washington was a very good business man, who was very smart with money and had lot of land. The thing that stood out was that they had many of the original things there from when he was still alive, like his bed, desk and many art pieces.

Dance and musical

The dance was literally crazy. There were so many people on the dance floor you could hardly move. The music was kind of old and was not very loud, but people still went crazy.

The play we saw was very good. The actors knew what they were doing and I did not see any errors. The play had a great deal of symbolism and a message that went along with it perfectly.

Speaker

Bobby was one of the speakers on the trip and he talked about his experience in Haiti. He went down there to put up power lines and give these people electricity. He was a volunteer and went with a group of guys who just wanted to help out the people down there. He spent months there putting up power lines and teaching people how to maintain them.

New friends

I made many new friends and will try to stay in touch with all of them.

Thanks

I would like to thank: the Brown County REA for sending me on this trip, my teacher Mrs. Dove for introducing me to program, Marcia Solie for picking me to represent Brown County on the trip and last, but not least, Gayle Karol for planning the whole trip.

Watch for details on the 2019 Youth Tour Contest in the December *Connections* newsletter. (6)

Got guac? Share your avocado recipes for healthy eating

How do you use avocados? Do you whip up some guacamole, add to sandwiches, enhance appetizers or make fries? Share with us your avocado recipes; send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by August 24. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

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Ham/Shrimp Jambalaya by Mary Ellen Stenzel, Heron Lake

- 2 slices bacon, diced
- ¼ c. green pepper, chopped
- ½ c. onion, chopped
- 1 T. flour
- 2 c. canned tomatoes
- 1½ c. water
- 2 c. shrimp or cubed ham or combination of both
- 1 c. Minute rice 1 tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper ½ tsp. thyme

Saute the bacon until it begins to brown. Add the green pepper and onion; saute until tender. Stir in the flour, when it has browned slightly, stir in the tomatoes and water. Bring to a boil. Stir in the shrimp/ham, rice and seasonings; bring to a boil again. Lower heat. Cover tightly and simmer about 20 minutes or until rice is tender, stirring occasionally to keep rice from sticking. 📧

Your electric co-op will be closed for Labor Day September 2



Crews will be on call for any outages

Call Gopher State One Call before digging!

1-800-252-1166



Call Gopher State One Call before doing any digging more than 12" deep — 48 hours before digging for foundations, trees, tiling and more. You can also register at www.gopherstate-onecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧



Brown County Rural Electrical Association

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



Brandon Havemeier
Operations & Engineering Manager

Staff notes

What is grid resiliency?

Resiliency of the grid is one of the most popular concepts being talked about in the electric industry today. This concept made headlines in the wake of Hurricanes Irma and Maria, which caused extraordinary damage to Puerto Rico's electric grid, resulting in the longest sustained outage in U.S. history. Lack of resilience became the go-to phrase to describe Puerto Rico's grid. As a Brown County REA member, what does grid resiliency mean for you?

Resiliency is many things: it's reliability in your electric service; it's our ability to efficiently restore your power; it's being able to meet the demands of new technology; and it's how we serve you with various generation sources without skipping a beat. Ultimately, resilience is how we deliver on our promise to improve the quality of life for our member-owners.

When it comes to having a resilient electric grid, it begins with a system that is designed and built to withstand high winds, powerful storms, cybersecurity threats and other disruptions that could result in outages. A resilient grid is also flexible and adaptable by allowing different types of generation — such as wind, solar, coal and hydro — to seamlessly work together to provide you with safe and reliable power. The way our systems react to advancements in technology — from demand response investments to serving the needs of electric vehicles — all factor into the resilience of our grid.

Resiliency is a 24/7, 365-days-a-year task. Whether it's the power lines, substations or generation facilities on our grid, it takes proactive maintenance and investment to keep them running smoothly. In a similar way to how we maintain our vehicles with regular oil changes, inspections and tire rotations, a grid must also be properly maintained. Throughout the year, we regularly conduct pole and line inspections. Our goal is to find a potential problem before it becomes one.

Living in Minnesota, we know that significant power outages can occur, especially during summer storm season. Whether we're at the mercy of high winds from severe thunderstorms and tornadoes or ice build-up on the lines in winter, we have confidence in the resiliency of our system to recover from the situation with as little disruption as possible.

By definition, resilience is "the ability to bounce back, recover quickly and go back into shape or position after being stretched." When it comes to providing our member-owners with resilient service, this is what we work toward — day in and day out! 

Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting July 23 at the Brown County REA headquarters in Sleepy Eye. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the June 2018 board meeting minutes, new member applications, member cancellations, disbursements and payments to estates.
- Reviewed and approved June 2018 payroll and May 2018 financial statements.
- Updated on summer load control activities and performance.
- Reviewed the mid-year adjustment of the Power Cost Adjustment and Second Nature rates for SMEC members.
- Updated on new member-owned distributed generation projects to be installed.
- Reviewed progress with ongoing construction activities. Carr's Tree Service has resumed trimming in the service area.
- Informed that the co-op's bonus heat pump rebates continue to promote new installations.
- Reviewed recent safety meetings and training sessions.

The next meeting will be August 30 at the BCREA headquarters in Sleepy Eye. 

 Visit our website (www.browncountyrea.coop) to learn more about our money-saving programs and rebates!