

Connections



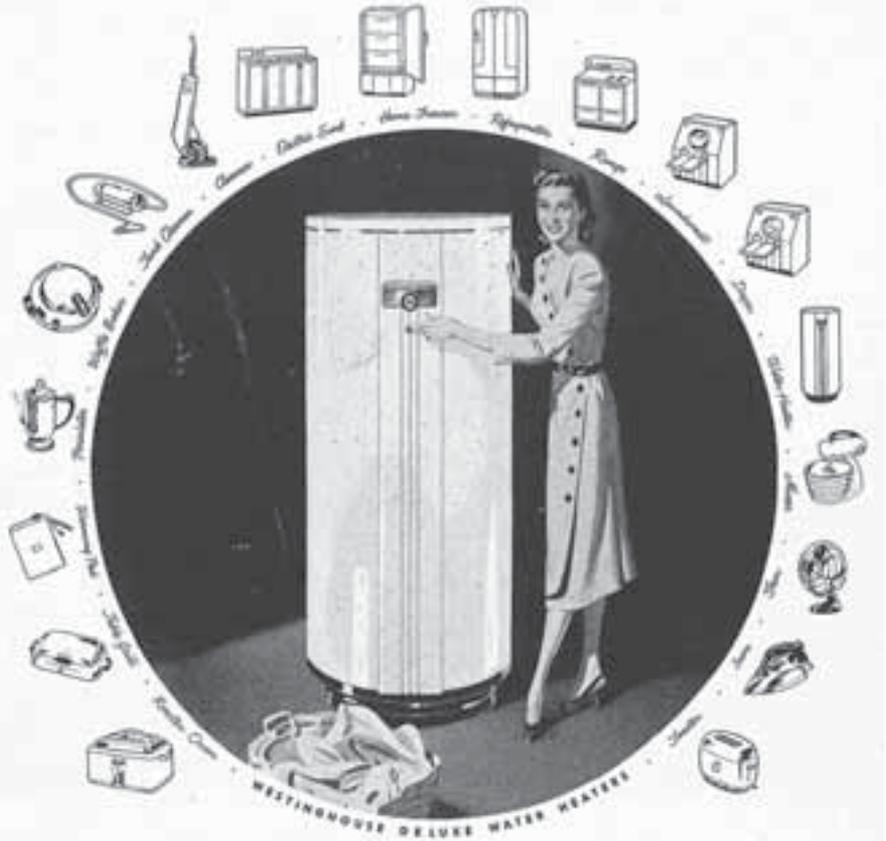
For the member-owners of Brown County REA

Volume 22, Issue 3

Co-op promotes water heaters for 70 years now!

Editor's note: A special thanks goes to Terri Hlavac, Jackson. She was recently cleaning out her father's house (Willard Peters, Sherburn) and came across a treasure that she returned to her cooperative. She found "Electricity on the Farm" magazines dating from April 1943 to March 1948. They were in her grandfather Paul Peters' name with an address of "16F, Sherburn, Minnesota." Others, were addressed "Willard L Peters, Sherburn, Minn." No zip codes back then! It appears that they were "the national magazine of rural electrification." Content spanned World War II, making do with less so we can support the troops and how to use electrical appliances and equipment on the farm to boost production to feed the troops. Readers enjoyed recipes, sewing patterns and even ads for different electrical equipment/appliances too.

Electric cooperatives promoted electric water heaters even back in 1948 and earlier. We thought you might enjoy a look at these water heater ads. Amazingly, one water heater ad was for Westinghouse, which your cooperative sells today. Today's Westinghouse water heaters are stainless steel, feature a lifetime warranty for the original owner and insulation to keep in the heat. The larger-sized water heaters are also part of the cooperative's load management program today to reduce peaks and maintain affordable electric rates. Enjoy the journey down memory lane looking at water heaters. Call your cooperative when you need your next electric water heater too! ☺



EXTRA GALLONS OF HOT WATER at the push of a button!

All the Hot Water you want . . . when you want it . . . without work, dirt or worry. Exclusive new Booster Button on Westinghouse DeLuxe Water Heaters gives you gallons more hot water from the same size heater . . . electrically, automatically. No matter what your household requirements, there's a Westinghouse Water Heater to meet your

needs. Equipped with the famous immersion-type Corox elements . . . a Cold Water Baffle that keeps incoming cold water from cooling the hot water . . . and a new Tank-Guard that stops corrosion. Each is backed by a 10-year Protection Policy. See them, and other members of this famous family of appliances at your Westinghouse retailer's, now.



See Page 7 for a few more water heaters ads from the 1940s.

At A Glance



Brown County Rural Electrical Association



Join us for your Annual Meeting!

All BCREA member-owners are encouraged to come and cast their votes for directors at the Annual Meeting April 5. Director biographies can be found on Page 5. More Annual Meeting info on Page 8.



Tax savings! Electrical incentives apply for 2017-2021

Surprise! The Federal budget passed February 9 featured tax incentives that may help you with your 2017 taxes, plus improvements made in 2018 to 2021 regarding energy efficiency.

\$500 energy-efficient home credit

Did you make energy-efficient home improvements like upgrading your heating/cooling system or install new windows? Receive up to a \$500 tax credit (10% of the amount paid) for making energy-efficient home improvements.

Ground source heat pump tax credit

Check out the ground source heat pump (GSHP) and small wind residential energy tax credit. Tax breaks for home solar were extended earlier, but residential GSHP (also called geothermal) and small wind turbines were excluded. Residential GSHPs and small wind turbines placed in service from January 1, 2017 through 2019, earn a tax credit that's 30 percent of the cost of the system; then it drops to 26 percent for 2020 and 22 percent for 2021. This tax incentive ceases on December 31, 2021. That's the same phase-out as home solar.

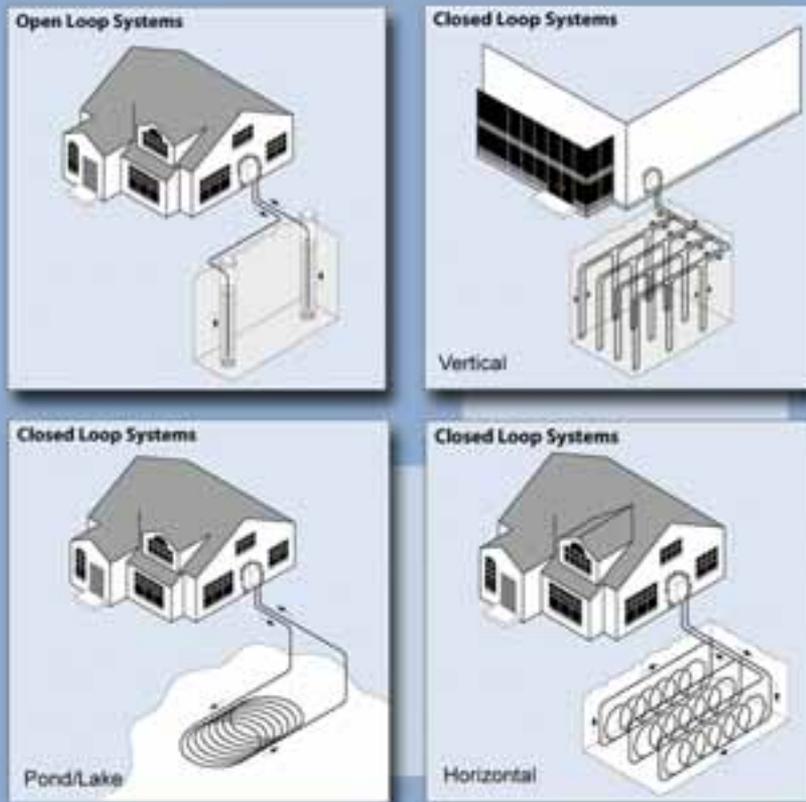
In addition, factor in your electric cooperative's GSHP rebate. Visit the co-op's website for the rebate form or give us a call. Remember, GSHPs are about 400 percent efficient and often provide a payback of three to five years if replacing a fossil fuel furnace.

Electric motor bike tax incentive too!

Yes, there's even a two-wheel plug-in electric vehicle credit. Did you buy an electric motor bike in 2017? The 10 percent tax credit is back, capped at \$2,500.

Types of Geothermal Heat Pump Systems

There are four basic configurations for geothermal heat pump ground loops. Three are "closed-loop systems," where a water and antifreeze solution is continually moved through pipes; the fourth is an "open-loop system," where groundwater or well water is used.



Source: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

Geothermal or ground source heat pumps (GSHPs) are among the most efficient and comfortable heating and cooling technologies currently available, because they use the earth's natural heat to provide heating, cooling, and often, water heating. According to Energy Star's website, an Energy Star certified GSHP is over 45 percent more energy efficient than standard options. For a list of GSHPs that earned the Energy Star certification visit www.energystar.gov.

Supercharge your Tesla at Sherburn

Tesla supercharger stations are being installed nationwide, including close to home. Sherburn became a stop for Tesla owners recently. Eight charging stations were activated at the Kum & Go in November.

How do supercharger stations work?

- Currently, the charging stations are for Tesla owners only, not anyone with an electric car.

- In North America pricing is fixed within each state or province. All prices include taxes and fees.

- Where possible, owners are billed per kWh (kilowatt-hour), which Tesla considers the most fair and simple method. In other areas they bill per recharging minute.

- When billing per minute, there are two tiers to account for changes in charging speeds, called "Tier 1" and "Tier 2".

- Tier 1 applies while cars are charging at or below 60 kW. Tier 2 applies while cars are charging above 60 kW. Tier 1 is half the cost of tier 2. Tier 1 also



Tesla owners can stop at Sherburn to charge their cars. The chargers are installed at the Kum & Go gas station just off Interstate 90. It can take about 75 minutes to fully charge a Tesla at one of these stations.

applies anytime your vehicle is sharing Supercharger power with another car.

- Cars take about 20 minutes to charge to 50 percent, 40 minutes to charge to 80 percent and 75 minutes to 100 percent.

- Tesla cars Model S and X receive 400 kWh (about 1,000 miles) of Supercharger credits annually.

- A small fee applies for usage above the complimentary annual credits provided.

- Model 3 does not receive annual Supercharger credits. A small fee applies to Supercharge.

- Supercharger pricing information may be viewed on the touchscreen.

Supercharging is simple and convenient — just plug in and charge up. Supercharging history is automatically populated in your Tesla Account showing the credits used or, if applicable, the amount billed. Tesla is committed to ensuring their charging stations will not be profit centers. Visit www.tesla.com for more information. 

Safety

Make sure do-it-yourself projects are safe projects

Are you planning do-it-yourself projects for spring? Your electric co-op urges all do-it-yourselfers to take precautions.

- Make sure outdoor outlets have a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). Use a portable GFCI if your outdoor outlets don't have them. It's also a good idea to have GFCIs installed in wet areas of the home.

- Look up and around you. Always be aware of the location of power lines, particularly when using long metal tools like ladders and pruning poles, or when installing rooftop antennas or doing roof repair work.

- Be especially careful when working near power lines attached to your house. Keep equipment and yourself at least 10 feet from lines. Never trim trees near power lines — leave that to the professionals. Never use water or blower extensions to clean gutters near electric lines.



Contact a professional maintenance contractor.

- If your projects include digging, like building a deck or planting a tree, call Gopher State One Call at 811 or 1-800-252-1166 48 hours before you begin. Never assume the location or depth of underground utility lines. This service is free and can help you avoid serious injury.

- Electricity + water = danger. If it's raining or the ground is wet, don't use electric power or yard tools.

- Make certain home electrical systems are adequate to support increased electric demands of new electric appliances, home additions or remodeling projects. An older home may be inadequately wired for today's electrical consumption, putting your family at risk for fire and electrical shock. 

— *Information courtesy of safeelectricity.org*

Brown County Briefs

Member Advisory Council

Interested in learning more about your co-op and getting an inside look? BCREA Directors may still be looking for new members to serve one year on the Member Advisory Council (MAC). The MAC council meets three evenings during the year. Contact your district Director at BCREA to learn more. The first MAC meeting is April 23

Look for the Energy Star



Proof of Energy Star certification is needed for appliance and lighting rebates.

Please submit a copy of your sales receipt, the Energy Star label and proof of appliance recycling. Members are eligible for one appliance rebate per year.

Holiday light recycling

Just shy of 120 pounds of old holiday lights were collected at the BCREA as part of the Sleepy Eye YES! Team collection. The nearly 667 pounds of lights collected by the team are disassembled and processed for recycling by individuals with disabilities at Jobs Plus in Waseca. (C)

Join Operation Round Up

_____ I want to join Operation Round Up and have my electric bill rounded up to the nearest dollar.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Send (or include it with your electric bill payment) to BCREA, PO Box 529, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085.

Congratulations to Mike Suess



Brown County REA Crew Foreman Mike Suess received the "Friend of Sleepy Eye" award at the Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting February 3. He was recognized for his hard work and countless volunteer hours spent to create a winter destination in Sleepy Eye through the Holiday Lights in Motion. Suess offered his gratitude and said none of it would be possible without the support of his wife, Kristy. (C)

Scholarships applications due April 2

REA member children can receive one of five \$200 awards

High school seniors planning to attend college after graduation whose parents/guardians are members and live in Brown County REA's service area are encouraged to apply for one of five \$200 scholarships to be awarded through Operation Round Up.

Funds for the scholarships come from members who choose to round up their electric bill to the nearest dollar each month. The difference is placed in a trust, which is administered by a nine-member board that distributes funds to charitable causes, individuals, families in crisis and scholarships.

Scholarship guidelines and applications are available from high school counselors and can be found on www.browncountyrea.coop.

The deadline for submission is April 2; winners will be announced at the Brown County REA Annual Meeting April 5. A copy of the student's high school transcript and one letter of recommendation are required. Scholarship funds will be awarded after successful completion of the first semester of college. (C)

Operation Round Up kicks off new year



The Round Up Trust Board organized for 2018 at its first quarterly meeting February 20. The trust board welcomed new member Lynnae Pelzel.

Trust Board Officers elected include President Lee Johnson, Vice President Michelle Strate, Secretary Vickie Kral and Treasurer Kari Berg. Other current Trust Board Members are Arlene Helget, Ann Wendinger, Michelle Oswald and Jim Lilleodden.

Donations were made to the Comfrey American Legion Auxiliary for the Quilts of Valor project, and After Prom activities at GFW, Sleepy Eye Public, Sleepy Eye St. Mary's, Springfield, Minnesota Valley Lutheran and New Ulm Cathedral high schools.

We thank all the REA members who participate in Operation Round Up, making it possible to help organizations and individuals in our service area. Collectively, your change can make a difference.

If you are willing to contribute less than \$12 per year by rounding up your bill to the nearest dollar to help Operation Round Up support local area causes, please complete and return the form at left or call Brown County REA at 1-800-658-2368 or 794-3331. You can learn more about Operation Round Up and sign up to participate by visiting the booth at the REA Annual Meeting April 5.

The Round Up Trust Board will again meet Tuesday, April 3. (C)

Meet the director candidates

District 7



Greg Mages

A life-long resident of Brown and Nicollet counties, Greg raises corn, soybeans and hogs with his parents, Dan and Arlene, and brother, Tim Mages, in a family farm corporation. Greg manages farm employees, makes crop input and marketing decisions, monitors hog herd health,

maintains equipment and makes asset purchasing decisions. He always looks for ways to conserve resources and improve farm efficiency.

Greg holds a Farm Management degree from South Central Technical College. He values people and is always eager to meet and learn from new acquaintances. He is a member of New Ulm's Farm City Hub Club. Greg lives with his wife, Mary Kay, on the Mages' family home farm in Home Township, Brown County, where they raise their four children, Grace (12), Adam (10), Anna (7) and Martin (5).

Greg was first elected to the BCREA Board of Directors in 2014 and is completing his first full term. He is interested in continuing to serve as a BCREA director because he values affordable and reliable electricity. His farm business experience, hometown common sense and management experience complement his fellow directors' leadership. ☺

District 9



Tom Hayes

Tom Hayes, his wife, Patti, and their family live on the home Century farm, east of Lafayette, where Tom grew up. Tom raises corn and soybeans. Tom and Patti have four children, a daughter, Anna, and sons, David (Micaela), John and Daniel.

Tom has always been very involved in community organizations. "With 21 years of experience, being on the REA board, I have become more appreciative of the things that Brown County REA is involved in and stands for. As a board, we work to address issues like the changes in generation and transmission of electricity, government policies and maintaining a safe and reliable distribution system, all which are going to affect our members and energy prices. With the experience I now have, I feel I can work with my fellow board members to help this

District 6



Joel Christensen

Joel and his wife, Monica, live on the farm Joel grew up on in Eden Township. They have four grown children Dayna (Paul), Jon (Kindra), Tyler (Lydia) and Jake, and six grandchildren.

Joel has a cow-calf operation and raises corn and soybeans. He graduated from Morgan High School and attended the

University of Minnesota-Waseca for two years before going into farming. He has been involved with the Redwood Area Cattlemen's Association and also serves as a church board member.

Joel is completing his second term as BCREA Director for District 6. His goal for the co-op is to continue to provide excellent service and affordable power. The challenge is to deal with ever-increasing government mandates and regulation. "I welcome the opportunity to continue to serve as a director on the Brown County REA Board," Joel added. ☺



Tom Jacobson

Tom Jacobson has lived on the home farm in Eden Township most of his life. He attended school in Morgan and studied agriculture at Willmar Vo-Tech following high school. Tom said he has had a few odd jobs over the years but has been primarily involved in farming.

Tom's community involvement includes serving on the REA Member Advisory Council, church council and past member of the Pea and Sweet Corn Board. He has three children: Erin, Derrick and KaCee.

Tom said he is interested in being a BCREA director because he is a life-long member of the REA and would try to serve the cooperative as best he can. ☺

organization continue to run efficiently and effectively, keeping rates low and the lights on."

Tom is serving his second term on the Board of Directors of the National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation. He served as BCREA board president (2004-2014) and is a past director for Cooperative Network. A self-employed farmer since 1973, Tom was chair of Sib-Bro-Nic Feeder Pig Corporation, is a graduate of the MN Agricultural Rural Leadership program and a steering committee member of Connecting Nicollet County. ☺

Tired of seeing your money go down the drain?

Invest in an energy-efficient water heater from your electric co-op. It could be the last water heater you buy! It comes with a lifetime warranty against leaks for the original owner. Compare that to most water heaters featuring only a seven-year warranty. Buying a water heater every seven years seems like a “draining” experience.

Call the energy expert at your electric cooperative!



Tax time arrives...Using the electric heat tax exemption?

Electricity sold for residential use to members who use electricity for their primary source of residential heat is exempt from the sales tax for the billing months of November, December, January, February, March and April.

For those residential and farm accounts whose home is heated by electricity, who are eligible and billed through one meter, the total electric consumption for the months listed above are exempt from sales tax. For those residences where the heat is metered separately, only that portion is exempt.

To be eligible for residential electric sales tax exemption, you must have more than 50 percent of the heating requirement furnished by electric units. Portable heaters are not considered primary heating sources.

You can find the necessary tax forms at www.revenue.state.mn.us.

Make yourself a home.

WE'LL HELP YOU PROTECT IT.

Our smart home security systems keep your loved ones and home safe from intruders, carbon monoxide, fire and other threats. Watch live video, arm/disarm your system and control your lights and thermostat from easy-to-use web and mobile interfaces.

A subsidiary of your electric co-op
1.888.264.6380
heartlandss.com

Warm chilly days with hot chili meals; share chili recipes with us

Take off the last of the chill and fill their tummies with some new chili recipes. Share with us recipes for white chili, chicken chili, spicy hot or even your most unique chili recipes. Share your favorite chili recipes and send to: Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by March 27. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! ☺

Grandpa Schlager's Beer Bread Muffins by Julie Speckman, Welcome

3 c. self-rising flour 4 T. melted butter, divided
2 T. sugar 1½ c. beer

Lightly grease a standard 12-piece muffin tin. Preheat oven to 375°. Mix flour, sugar, 3 tablespoons of melted butter, (save 1 tablespoon for top) and beer. Stir until fairly smooth, a few small lumps are ok. Fill greased muffin tins two-thirds full and brush with remaining butter. Bake until muffins spring back lightly in the middle about 14-18 minutes and the tops will look pale. Muffins are best enjoyed warm from the oven; otherwise, store in airtight container at room temperature. Can also make this as a 9x5" loaf; grease pan and bake 45-50 minutes. ☺

Glacier Bay Bread by Howard Blume, New Ulm

2 c. rye flour 2 c. boiling water
1 c. cold water
2 pkgs. yeast dissolved in 1 c. warm water
3 T. caraway seed 2 T. salt
3 T. sugar 8 c. plain flour

Mix at night the rye flour, boiling water and cold water. Add the dissolved yeast. In the morning add the caraway seed, sugar and salt. Stir and add up to 8 c. plain flour to make dough that is just past the sticky stage. Knead. Let rise until double. Punch down and shape into French bread-style loaves. Makes four. Place on greased cookie sheets. Bake for 25-30 minutes at 400°. Optional: before baking moisten the top of the loaf with egg and sprinkle with coarse salt. ☺

More vintage water heater ads from 1946 co-op publication

Check out these water heaters' features:

Red-E-Hot model

- Heavy gauge copper tank
- 500-watt element (not the 110-cord to plug it in). Today's water heater elements are 3,000-4,500 watts hard-wired on a double breaker.
- How interesting...a motor corporation sold water heaters!
- The two drawings show how these water heaters were often used.

Sani-matic model

- While we don't have many milk houses now, we do have hog barns and heated shops with water heaters.

**Pick up the phone
before the shovel;
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.gopherstateonecall.org. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. ☺

Watch your mailbox for Annual Meeting report

New this year, all Brown County REA members will be receive a copy of the Annual Report via mail in mid-March. This mailing includes the meeting agenda, past minutes and financial report. Most importantly, the back page of the mailing includes your member meeting registration form, which will be scanned and placed in the drawing for door prizes. **Please bring this Annual Meeting report with you April 5.** 



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
Website: www.browncountyrea.coop
Phone: 507-794-3331 or 800-658-2368
Office hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday

Mike Heidemann, Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

James Mickelson, President — 794-6298
William Berg, Vice President — 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 February 22 at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Received and reviewed the cooperative's 2018 Cogeneration and Small Power Production Tariff, Schedules 1-5.
 - Discussed recent member distributed generation projects and measures taken to assure the safety of linemen working near the systems.
 - Informed of recent management team activity regarding the Rural Cooperative Cyber Security Capabilities Program (RC3).
 - Updated on progress with the co-op's 2017 financial audit, being conducted by Eide Bailey.
 - Reviewed recent employee training, safety meetings and winter maintenance activities.
 - Reviewed plans for the 81st Annual Meeting April 5 at the Sleepy Eye Event Center. Registration begins at 4:30, meal at 5:30 followed by the business meeting.
- The next meeting will be March 29 at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye. 

All Brown County REA members are invited and encouraged to attend the 81st Annual Meeting

- When:** April 5
Location: Sleepy Eye Event Center
100 12th Avenue N.
Sleepy Eye, MN
Registration: 4:30 p.m.
Meal: 5:30 p.m.
Meeting: Immediately following meal



Door prizes will be given at the close. Must be present to win.

Please call for an appointment

Health Day

Saturday, March 24
Sleepy Eye Public School
6:30 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

- Blood analysis (includes cholesterol, LDL/HDL, calcium, glucose, etc.): \$40. Requires a 12-hour fast for best results
- Thyroid Stimulating Hormone (TSH) test: \$30
- Free blood pressure screenings

For appointments call between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday (800-658-2368 or 507-794-3331). Walk-ins will be accepted after 7:30 a.m. Health Day is a joint effort of Brown County REA, Brown County Public Health, Sleepy Eye Medical Center and Sleepy Eye Community Education. 