

Connections

For the member-owners of Brown County REA



Volume 25, Issue 5

Outage management system interactive maps improve call response time & service for members

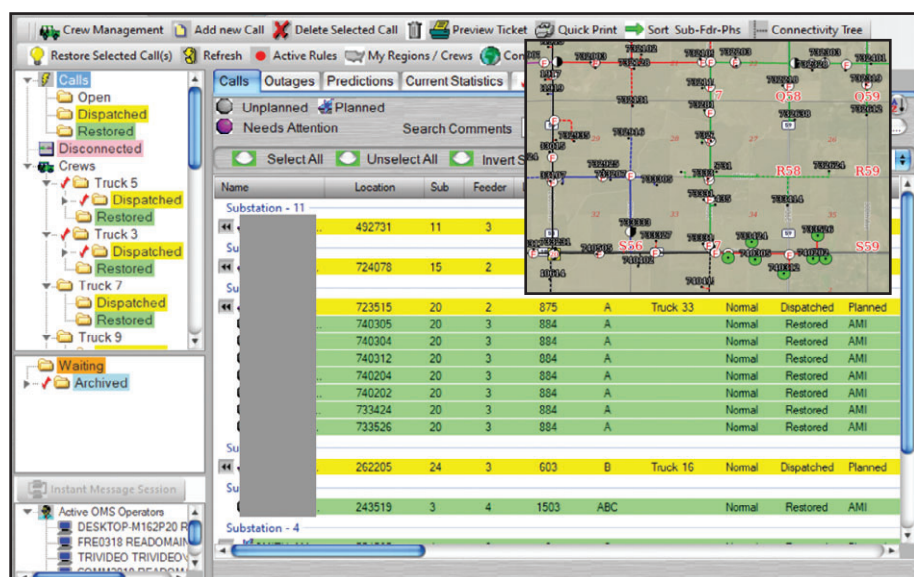
Every year your electric cooperative becomes more sophisticated. Your electric co-op has gone from digging poles by hand to line trucks with augers. Linemen have also gone from climbing poles with spikes and belt to hoisting themselves up to the wires in a bucket.

The way your electric co-op handles outages has changed as well. Member phone calls used to be the only way the co-op knew when the power was out. With the transition from mechanical meters to digital ones, which automatically send readings to the billing system, the cooperative has also gained the ability to deploy an outage management system.

The outage management system displays the electric co-op system on a computer screen in the form of a digital map. Outages appear on the map in near real time as the meters report outages to the system. Your electric co-op office and operations personnel can then dispatch crews to deal with the outage.

After hours, linemen can check the outage management system from their phones or tablets, and even get an overview of the situation on the same devices when out in the field. It has helped your electric co-op provide more reliable and affordable power.

Co-op personnel can click on an outage location to gain information



Your cooperative's outage response maps help the line crews respond to outages faster. These green dots represent meters on the co-op's system where meters were restored with power after an outage (inset). The yellow and green shows the meter listing of cleared and restored outages (main graphic).

about the service and member contact.

Safety has been improved as well. The location of each electric co-op truck is also displayed on the map, so help can be sent as quickly as possible if necessary.

If you have an outage, your electric co-op still wants you to call us, especially after normal business hours. Perhaps you see a branch in the line, heard the bang of a critter getting zapped or see a farm implement hit a pole. This information helps the cooperative respond appropriately

and bring the right materials in order to restore power as soon as possible.

In addition, a simplified version of the outage map now exists on your electric cooperative's website. Go check it out. During major storm outages, you can see the area affected. It doesn't show individual outage to provide member security, but posts how many outages in a township. Bookmark this page today for handy reference in the future.

Even with this technology in place, your cooperative asks that members still call and report an outage. ☎️

At A Glance



**Brown County
Rural Electrical
Association**

New bylaws proposed

A special member meeting and vote on proposed new Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws for BCREA will take place concurrently with the June 24 Annual Meeting. See Page 8 for highlights and watch your mail for a detailed summary of the changes. 📧

LED shop lights — illuminating efficiency

If you are working in the shop underneath muddy lighting or buzzing fluorescent tubes, it's time to upgrade. Not only can you get better light quality, you can get lower energy bills.

LED is the best option for shop lights. LEDs are energy efficient and provide excellent light quality to enable you to work safely on your projects.

Energy savings

LED lights use 80 percent less energy than incandescent bulbs and 10-50 percent less energy than fluorescents. What makes LEDs so efficient is that they convert electricity to light without turning electricity into heat. LEDs operate cool to the touch.

If you were previously using a 100-watt incandescent bulb, an LED light can offer the same amount of brightness using only 23-30 watts.

In addition, LED lights have a long life. They can last up to 50,000 hours. Depending on how long you keep your lights on each day, this can be up to 20 years. Fluorescent lights last for about 10,000 hours.

You can figure on this retrofit lasting decades. If you have to dispose of LED bulbs, they are mercury-free and do not require any special recycling.

Find the cooperative's retrofit lighting rebate form for LEDs on our website.

Light quality

LED brightness is measured in lumens. How many lumens do you need in a shop? A general rule of thumb is to use 130 to 150 lumens per square foot of work space.

The next thing to consider is color rendering index (CRI). CRI is the measurement of light in relation to how it affects the appearance of color. The CRI of LED bulbs is typically 80-90.



Harvest energy savings by upgrading your shop or hog barn lighting to LED lights. Top off the energy savings with a retrofit lighting rebate from your electric co-op too! This shop used LED highbay fixtures.

Shop lights should be in the 82+ range.

Color temperature refers to how blue or yellow a light's color. 2700K gives off a golden-white light. 3000K emits soft, warm white light. Color temperature between 3500K-4000K emits bright warm white. 5000K light is cool white. 5700K light appears to have a light blue glow. For shop lighting 5000K is generally recommended.

Installation tips

LED lights are available as integrated units and retrofits. With retrofits you add LED bulbs to existing incandescent or fluorescent light fixtures. Integrated LED lights come as complete bays.

Selecting between retrofit and integrated LED lights is a crucial decision. Integrated shop lights are suitable if you are looking for a permanent fixture.

Retrofits are best suited if you already have existing fixtures.

For the best results install fixtures directly above work areas. Some shop lights come equipped with a chain that allows you to hang them from the ceiling. Other shop lights mount directly to the ceiling.

The lights should be low enough to provide you with needed illumination, but high enough so that you don't bang into them.

Some LED fixtures can be plugged directly into a wall outlet. Others are hardwired. It is up to the shop owner on what they prefer.

Brighten up your shop today and save energy dollars. Look into LED lights as way to upgrade your work space to the bright side. ☺

Portable cooling on wheels replaces window unit

If you have an older home without central air and individual rooms get hot during the summer, especially upstairs bedrooms, your main solution was wrestling a window air conditioner into the window in the spring and out of the window in the fall. Maybe you have similar issues with a college dorm room or a small shop on the farm. Now you have a new solution — a portable AC unit.

Black and Decker offers a 12,000 BTU floor-standing, portable AC unit that effectively cools rooms up to 150 square feet. It is ideal for dorms, apartments, cabins, campers, offices, bedrooms and living rooms.

Just wheel the AC unit into any room with a double-hung or sliding window. Attach the hose and window adapter, plug the AC unit in and cool the room. At the end of the season unhook and store. The unit includes a window kit, which consists of panels to fit horizontal or vertical window openings, exhaust hose and hose connectors.

The unit uses 1,150 watts. It costs about \$.12 an hour to run. Window ACs typically uses 1000 to 1,500 watts.



Portable AC units give you another option besides window AC units for upstairs bedrooms and more.


For comparison, they cost \$.11 to \$.16 to operate for one hour.

Other features of the portable AC unit include:

- Three adjustable fan speeds that cool the air to 65°F. The unit also features an auto-fan mode, which adjusts the fan speed to the best setting.
- Sleep mode makes the unit extra quiet.
- Remote control and LED display with 24-hour timer allow you to precisely control the air temperature.
- An easy-to-clean filter simply slides out; just pull it out twice a month and rinse under water.
- Compact size, carry handles and four wheels make it easy to move around the house.
- R410a refrigerant is safe for the environment.
- The portable AC dehumidifies while cooling. It keeps air both dry and cool, plus prevents growth of bacteria in hot and steamy conditions.

Self-evaporating operation means no buckets or drain pans.

- Compact (17.1" x 13.8") and lightweight (59.5 lbs).

The Black and Decker portable AC unit is available in stores and online for \$400. Other sizes available. 

Safety

Spot the overlooked electrical hazards

While you can see, smell or hear some electrical hazards, many others are harder to detect.

- Do not ignore odd electrical symptoms. If your lights flicker often, if your outlets are warm to the touch or discolored or if you smell odors like something is overheating, problems with your home's electrical system may exist. If you notice any of these symptoms or other unusual electrical oddities, such as frequent breaker trips or burned-out fuses, consult a qualified electrician.

- Cell phones make strange bedfellows. Do not sleep or lounge in bed with a cell phone or other device that is charging. This can cause burns to your skin or it can cause the soft bedding materials to ignite.

- Do not use cheap chargers. Instead, use the original charging



Electrical dangers are not always easy to spot. Be on the lookout for these potential issues.


components that came with your cell phone or other electronics. When it comes time to replace them, buy brand-specific chargers. Using cheaply made generic chargers can cause injury or even a fire.

- Do not use a plugged-in (charging) cell phone near water. Take a break from your phone while bathing, swimming or sitting in a hot tub. Deaths have occurred when a plugged-in cell phone has fallen into the water.

- Do not overload outlets or circuits.

While it can be tempting to plug several items in one outlet, drawing too much power can damage your electronics or your home's wiring. It could also cause a fire. If too much current is drawn, usually a circuit breaker will trip or fuses will blow, but this is never guaranteed.

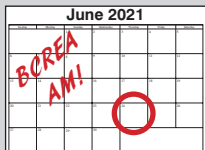
- Include electrical sources when childproofing your home.

Toddlers could play with many electrical components that could be hazardous, such as dangling cords, accessible power strips or surge protectors. Get down on the floor and see what is at eye level or within reach. Tamper-resistant outlets became required by the NEC (National Electric Code) in 2008. Many homes built before then do not have them. 

— Information courtesy of safeelectricity.org

Brown County Briefs

Annual Meeting June 24



The Brown County REA 84th Annual Meeting will be reconvened

June 24 in the BCREA headquarters parking lot. Voting is from 4-6 p.m. Meeting starts at 6 p.m. It will consist of director elections and business meeting. Please save and bring the 2021 Annual Report to scan your registration. ☎

Reminder: vegetation control, pole testing... underway



Central Applicators, Inc. is working to maintain

and control vegetation along the rights-of-way throughout the co-op's service area. Also, Southwood 2000 is inspecting poles in Linden, Cottonwood, Cambria, Courtland, Brighton and Lafayette townships. Southwood continues to locate our underground cable as well.

Struggling to pay electric bills?

Energy assistance crisis benefits may help. Minnesota's Energy Assistance Program helps households pay energy bills, prevent energy disconnection, get fuel delivered and more. Both renters and homeowners can qualify to get assistance. The maximum annual crisis benefit increased, which can be used to cover past-due utility bills, to avoid utility disconnections and for emergency fuel deliveries. The application deadline was extended to September 1, 2021. Contact Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) at 800-767-8139, Brown County residents can call 507-508-4041, for more information, income qualifications or to apply. ☎

Notice of special member meeting

All Brown County Rural Electrical Association (REA) members are invited and encouraged to attend a special meeting of the members for the purpose of adopting the proposed, new cooperative Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.

The meeting will be held Thursday, June 24 at 6 p.m. (concurrent with the annual business meeting).

Location: Brown County REA Headquarters, 24386 State Hwy. 4, Sleepy Eye, MN. ☎

— Signed James Hanson, Secretary



Bonus rebates available on ductless heat pumps during June, July & August ENERGY WISE MN

WHETHER TEMPS RISE OR FALL, YOUR ENERGY BILL WILL STAY COOL.

Air Source Heat Pump	Rebate
≥ 8.2 HSPF	\$1,000
≥ 9.0 HSPF	\$1,500
≥ 9.5 HSPF	\$2,000

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS UP TO \$2,000 REBATE WHEN YOU INSTALL A QUALIFYING, ENERGY-SAVING AIR SOURCE HEAT PUMP!

Air source heat pumps provide **home cooling and supplemental heating**, using **72% less electricity** than conventional air conditioners and furnaces. Unit must be load-controlled to qualify for rebate.

Visit www.browncountrea.coop to learn more about the rebate!

Limited funds are available and awarded on a first-come, first-served basis. Rebate amounts and programs are subject to change without notice.

Twins Play Ball! Clinic for youth



Youth ages 6-13 are invited to participate in the Minnesota Twins Play Ball! clinic Friday, July 23 at Prairieville Field (behind the public school) in Sleepy Eye.

Brown County REA and Sleepy Eye Community Education are teaming up with the Minnesota Twins to offer the free youth clinic. In case of inclement weather, the event will be moved into Sleepy Eye Public School.

Youth ages 6-9 are scheduled from 2 to 3:30 p.m.

and the clinic for ages 10-13 is from 3:30 to 5 p.m. No cost to participate. The program is presented in partnership with Great River Energy, which is made up of Brown County REA and 27 other rural electric cooperatives in Minnesota.

Created to promote baseball and softball throughout the region, the clinic provides hands-on instruction for boys and girls ages 6-13. No registration is required to participate, but youth must sign a waiver. The Twins will provide safe, youth-friendly equipment and participants are asked to bring their own gloves. The format focuses on throwing, hitting and fielding. ☎

Round Up Trust awards 2021 scholarships

At its April 6 meeting, the Operation Round Up Trust Board met to review applications for the 2021 Brown County Rural Electric Trust scholarships.

Six \$250 scholarships were to be awarded to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are Brown County REA members. However, having received 23 complete applications from a top-notch line-up of applicants, the Trust Board had a difficult time narrowing it to just six. Trust board members chose to award eight scholarships from the highly-qualified and deserving list of candidates.

One of the criteria for selection was to demonstrate a commitment to community through involvement in organizations or programs that enhance quality of life. These area young people give back to their communities as volunteers, many while carrying a rigorous class schedule, holding part-time jobs and maintaining impressive grades. We thank all of the students who applied for the scholarships. Chosen to receive scholarships were:

- Megan Ahlness, daughter of Jason & Sue Ahlness, and senior at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's High School.

- Nicole Albrecht, a senior at New Ulm Public School and daughter of Linda Albrecht.

- Christopher Berger, senior at Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop (GFW) High School in New Ulm, son of Terry & Janel Berger.

- Rachel Black, daughter of Joel & Shari Black and senior at Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School.

- Alice Lewandowski, New Ulm Public School senior and daughter of Aaron & April Lewandowski.

- Jacob Lux, son of Matthew & the late Maria Lux and senior at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's High School.

- Sophia Portner, Sleepy Eye St. Mary's senior and daughter of Tom & Mary Portner.

- Elise Swenson, daughter of Kris & Rachel Swenson, senior at GFW High School.

At the April meeting, the Trust



Megan Ahlness



Nichole Albrecht



Christopher Berger



Rachel Black



Alice Lewandowski



Jacob Lux



Sophia Portner



Elise Swenson

Board also welcomed new member Kim Hensch, representing District 3. The board distributed \$1,150 to four organizations and one individual family. Donations were made to Avenue of

Flags, Comfrey Legion Auxiliary Quilts of Valor, Lennon Ludewig family and after prom activities at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's and GFW schools. 📷

Electrical accident impacts a couple's lives

One day in May, Cody Edenburn had started his next-to-last day as assistant manager for an ag fertilizer company. He said they were shorthanded that day so it was all hands on deck. To get ahead of the sprayer he hopped in his truck.

"I had to take loads because we needed an extra truck to take fertilizer," Cody recalled. A sprayer had been broken down for 3½ hours, and when it finally showed up, he was ready.

What happened next

After the sprayer pulled in, Cody pulled up in his truck to unload fertilizer. "I hooked on like I normally would, and the sprayer was unfolding, which is pretty much standard procedure."

What transpired next changed everything. Those who were there think that when the operator unfolded the sprayer boom, he extended the sprayer tips at the same time, and one of them grazed the power line.

Cody said they believe the sprayer tip was electrified for only a moment, but that the stray electricity moved through the tip, boom, tractor and down to the ground where Cody was standing. When Cody touched the camlock, which connects the hoses together, 7,400 volts of electricity flowed through his body.

The force of the voltage threw him backwards and onto the ground. The person in the cab jumped out and started CPR (luckily the ground was no longer electrified) and called 9-1-1.

One journey. Two experiences.

As in any journey, two people experience it differently. Cody is matter of fact. He says he doesn't mind talking about it, but that Bailey, his wife, does.

He says he doesn't remember a lot about the accident, but he does have a few vivid memories that have to do with the stretcher — one was the sound of the collective click as it was being loaded into the ambulance. The other was him being rolled into the medevac.

"My first memory after that was probably a week and a half later," Cody said, adding that there were many conversations with Bailey to help him



Cody and Bailey Edenburn share their experiences to increase awareness about power line safety.

piece the details together, including the progression of his care. He said the medical staff made several attempts to save his hand, but the damage progressed too far. He also questioned why they had to take his leg.

"What we learned is that tissue is actively still dying over the course of two weeks, so it (the internal damage) just kept moving up (the affected limbs)," he said.

Bailey's recollections

When Bailey recalls what happened, her words come a bit faster than Cody's. "Emotionally, I've probably been more of a mess (than Cody). He struggled very early on with just the circumstances and just how badly hurt he was. But he's accepted the fact that this is his life now; he has to make this life as good as he can. I'm not quite there yet," she admitted.

As with most significant journeys in life, "there are days that are perfect, (when) the world is right." And there are the bad days, she added.

After watching Cody experience immense pain, lose two of his limbs,

undergo numerous surgeries and learn to walk again, "we knew life wasn't going to be the same," Bailey reflected. "We knew that the 'normal' before was not going to be the 'normal' after.

"In the beginning, it was just all about survival," Bailey recounted. Today, their lives include more grey areas.

"I don't know what the future holds," Bailey said. "There are some days when his leg just bothers him; he's not the type to want to sit still for anything. He's had to sit still and learn more patience in the last year than he has his entire life. And it (sitting still) just drives him bonkers."

The dangling carrot

Bailey recalls how at one of the initial meetings with the medical team, Cody mentioned September 7 of that same year — the day they were to be wed. "It was a giant dangling carrot, really," Bailey recalled. "I mean, he was bound and determined we were not going to put the wedding off."

They did get married, but on the Wednesday before the wedding, Bailey came home to a huge surprise. "I did chores and when I came back, he was walking around the house, without a cane. I bawled — absolutely bawled."

Bailey recalls that Cody had gotten his leg prosthetic 10 days before the wedding. "I didn't think he'd walk down the aisle. I'm not sure in that moment in time he thought he'd walk down the aisle."

But he did, and you can hear in Bailey's voice just how special their wedding day was. "It was just the most perfect of days," she said.

The journey continues

Cody and Bailey are still adapting to the twists and turns of their life together. Cody navigates the challenges he faces with a different dominant hand than before the accident. Some days he can't do everything he wants due to his pain. Bailey still struggles at times with what happened.

Lately, they have been busy planning for a baby and the next chapter. The journey continues.

Always be careful near electricity. ⚡

Share oodles of noodles recipes! 'Pasta' to us the very best ones

Noodle around and find us your best pasta recipes. Send us your favorite noodle recipes for salads, lasagna, hot dish, spaghetti, mac & cheese, alfredo and more! Mail to Editor, Federated Rural Electric, PO Box 69, Jackson MN 56143-0069 or e-mail to christoffer@federatedrea.coop by May 26. Add your name and phone number. Thanks for sharing with us! 📧

Smothered Steak by Howard Blume, New Ulm

1½ lbs. chuck or round steak, cut into strips
 1/3 c. flour
 1 tsp salt
 ¼ tsp. pepper
 1 large onion, sliced
 1 lb. can tomatoes (I use a quart of home-canned stewed tomatoes)
 4 oz. can mushrooms, drained
 2 T. molasses, optional
 3 T. soy sauce
 1-2 green peppers, sliced
 10 oz. package frozen green beans, French-style, optional
 Put steak strips, flour, salt and pepper in a crock-pot. Stir well to coat steak. Add all of the remaining ingredients. Cover and cook on high one hour then turn to low for eight hours. Otherwise, keep on high for five hours. Serve over rice, potatoes or noodles. 📧

Butter Beef by Mary Dummer, Lafayette

3 lbs. beef stew meat ½ c. butter
 1 oz. envelope dry onion soup mix
 Place beef and butter in the slow cooker. Sprinkle onion soup mix over the beef. Cover and cook on low for eight hours or on high for four to five hours. Stir once or twice. 📧



Having a backup plan for dinner — all year long! Electricity from your electric co-op continues to be a great value. 📧

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Our security and medical alert systems protect your loved ones from intruders, carbon monoxide, fire, medical emergencies, and other threats.

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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 or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧



Mike Heidemann
Chief Executive
Officer

Staff Notes

New Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws

Concurrent with the 2021 Brown County REA Annual Meeting on June 24, a special meeting of the members will be held. The purpose of this meeting is to adopt a proposed new version of the cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, last updated in 2004.

Over the past two years, the bylaws committee, the cooperative's attorney and full board have been reviewing the National Rural Electric Cooperative

Association's (NRECA) bylaws and adapting them to create Brown County REA's new bylaws. It is important to know that the cooperative's core concepts remain intact. The proposed revisions would allow the cooperative to meet some of the challenges and changes it has experienced since the last bylaw revision.

Highlights of changes in the proposed bylaws:

Article 1 consists of definitions referenced throughout the document.

Article 2 outlines Cooperative Membership. Section 2.5 addresses resolution of a dispute with the cooperative. Controversies and claims must be settled through individual arbitration and not through collective or class action arbitration.

Section 2.6 includes the updated definition and creation of a Joint Membership, which may consist only of individuals occupying the same location to or for which the Cooperative provides or will provide a cooperative service, each of whom qualifies to be a Member.

Section 2.7-2.10 details the member's responsibility to comply with procedures required to be provided service from the cooperative, including interruption of service, safe and protected operation of the service, member equipment connected to cooperative equipment and suspension or termination of cooperative service.

Article 3 addresses member meetings and member voting. It would remove the existing bylaw limitation that the annual meeting be held in February, March or April, stating simply it shall be held annually. Section 3.10 sets the quorum of members at 75.

Article 4 contains information, qualifications and compensation of the board of directors and the elections. Section 4.1 notes that the cooperative can be among five and nine equitable districts. Director nomination procedures are also included in this section. Nominations from the floor at a member meeting would be removed as an option.

Article 5 details board meetings and director voting.

Article 7 describes the cooperative operation as a nonprofit allocating and returning capital credits to members. Section 7.2 (c)

Article 9 allows for the use electronic documents and signatures with consent and details electronic notice and communication with consenting members.

A summary will be mailed to you. I encourage all members to view the entire proposed bylaws on the cooperative's website at www.browncountyrea.coop. Please contact me with any questions. ☺



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

Thomas Hayes, President — 228-8954

William Berg, Vice President — 766-1497

James D. Hanson, Sec.-Treasurer — 829-6756

Brad Sprenger — 317-5576

David Wendinger — 276-3166

Greg Mages — 794-3540

Joel Christensen — 828-4550

James Mickelson — 794-6298

Landon Sletta — 439-6559

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

Board meeting highlights

The BCREA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting April 29 in the REA headquarters auditorium. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following items:

- Reviewed and approved the March 2021 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates and assignment transfers.

- Reviewed and approved March 2021 payroll and financial statement.

- Reviewed and approved the 2020 margin allocation of \$2,169,685.

- Reviewed and approved the corrected 2020 financial audit and final audit report.

- Updated on plans for the reconvened 84th Annual Meeting June 24th at the REA headquarters.

- Reviewed and approved the co-op's 2020 USDA Rural Utilities Service (RUS) Financial and Operation Report, known as Form 7.

- Reviewed and approved recommending the cooperative's revised bylaws to the members at a special meeting concurrent with the 84th Annual Meeting, June 24.

- Updated on operations and maintenance activities.

The next meeting is set for May 27 at the BCREA office in Sleepy Eye. ☺