

CurrentConnections

CEO Column April 2026

The Power of Your Vote and Your Voice

This month, I would like to touch on the concept of cooperative stewardship. As a member-owner of Brown County REA, you have an important role in deciding the direction of our cooperative's future.

When we hold elections for seats on our Board of Directors, I encourage you to start by reading through the biographies we publish about each of the candidates. After you've had a chance to familiarize yourself with the candidates and their reasons for running for the seat, come to our Annual Meeting ready to cast your vote for the individual you would like to represent you on the Board.

As I touched on in last month's column, Brown County REA directors are accountable to the membership. These individuals are members of our community who are familiar with the issues and priorities unique to our community. Directors are responsible for conducting the business of the cooperative, setting policies, and making decisions that will directly impact our membership.

Just as voting in a state or federal election is an important duty as

a citizen of our nation, voting in BCREA's election is an opportunity for you to have your voice heard as a member of a rural electric cooperative. In this way, you can help guide the direction of the cooperative by selecting candidates you feel will represent you and fellow members well.

When you cast your vote, you are contributing to BCREA and doing your part for the community – letting your voice be heard. By taking an active role in our cooperative governance, we learn more about how to best serve you.

Another opportunity for members to have their voice heard is through our Member Advisory Council. We are currently looking for members interested in joining the council and sharing their input. If you would like to learn more about this opportunity, please contact BCREA or your director to sign up.

Have a safe spring planting!

Mike Heidemann,
BCREA CEO

JoAnn Janni // 1st PlaceScenic Photo
Contest Winners

We are excited to announce the winners of our recent photo contest highlighting scenes from across the BCREA service area.

First place went to **JoAnn Janni** of Sigel Township. Her photo, showing a rainbow over her farm, earned a \$100 bill credit and is featured as the banner image above. Second place was awarded to **Rose Wurtzberger** of rural New Ulm. Her image, taken along County Road 10 across from a substation during spring flooding, received a \$50 bill credit.

Thank you to everyone who submitted photos. Based on the strong response, our 2027 calendar will feature selected images from this year's entries.

Rose Wurtzberger // 2nd Place

Safety Demo Day Reinforces Job Site Awareness

A safety demo day was held with *Mathiowetz Construction (MC)* on Monday, March 23rd. Representatives from three electric cooperatives (*South Central Electric*, *BENCO*, and *BCREA*) spent the day leading 20-minute sessions – cycling through MC’s employees in groups of nine.



The instructors were Lucas from South Central Electric, Chris from BENCO, and Adam from BCREA. MC staff work around electric utility equipment often; reminding them of the safety details and how cooperatives can help them stay safe was the objective of the demo.

Smarter Security at Your Fingertips



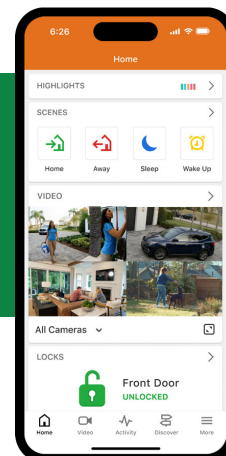
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Carter Wilson selected for 2026 Youth Tour



Carter Wilson of rural New Ulm has been selected to represent his community on the 2026 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C., June 15th–20th.

Carter will join more than 1,800 students from across the country for the weeklong, all-expenses-paid program. During the trip, delegates participate in leadership workshops, meet with elected officials, and gain a

first-hand understanding of how government decisions impact local communities. Students also visit national museums and monuments and connect with peers from 44 states while learning more about the role electric cooperatives play in supporting rural America.

Carter is a student at New Ulm Cathedral and the son of Cory and Julie Wilson. He is active in his community, working the food stand at the Farm Show, assisting at the farmers market for Guldán Family Farms, and serving as an altar server and lector at the Cathedral in New Ulm. He also enjoys working with his family’s cattle herd.



Operation Round Up Distributes \$1,980 at February Meeting



The Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board approved \$1,980 in Operation Round Up funding at its February 17th meeting, supporting local programs, schools, and a family in need. Grants totaling \$1,480 were awarded to after prom activities at New Ulm Area Catholic Schools (NUACS) and Gibbon-Fairfax-Winthrop (GFW), the Safety Pup program coordinated with the Sleepy Eye Police Department, and the Sleepy Eye American Legion for replacement of their east flag.

Following the meeting, an additional \$500 was approved for the Jeske family after the board learned of a recent loss, reflecting the program's ability to respond to immediate community needs.

Operation Round Up is funded by cooperative members who choose to round up their electric bills to the nearest dollar. The Trust Board will meet next on April 7th to review additional funding requests and scholarship applications.



Upcoming Dates

April 7th • Operation Round Up Meeting

The second quarterly Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board meeting for 2026 is set for April 7th. Organizations wishing to be considered for funding can submit the application, found on our website www.browncountyrea.coop, before that date.

April 20th • Member Advisory Council

The first meeting of the current Member Advisory Council will be held April 20th, 2026 at the Brown County REA auditorium. Council members will receive additional details in the mail. Contact your director to join.



DO TV THE EASY WAY

BCREA does more than deliver electricity—it's also a cooperative partner in operating *Cooperative Television of Southern Minnesota (CTV)*, bringing a wide selection of Twin Cities UHF TV channels to our service area for just \$8 per month, conveniently added to your electric bill.

Notice of Cogeneration

In compliance with Brown County Rural Electrical Association (REA)'s adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, Brown County REA is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogeneration and small power producers, whom satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. Brown County REA is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members, upon request, regarding rates and interconnection requirements. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any disputes over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the Brown County REA Board of Directors. Interested members should contact *Brown County REA, 24386 State Highway 4, P.O. Box 529, Sleepy Eye, MN 56085* or call (800) 658-2368.

Annual Line Patrol

Brown County REA crews are continuing their annual line patrol. During this time, crews may need to access yards and private property throughout the service area. Linemen will be inspecting equipment and infrastructure to identify maintenance needs, including loose or missing guy wires and guards, damaged lines, and proper line clearance. Crews will also perform maintenance on OCRs, as well as overhead and underground lines. This work will continue through early spring.

When the lights go out, lineworkers are ready to answer the call, day or night, to safely restore power and keep our communities moving forward. They take pride in powering the places we call home. Today and every day, we thank lineworkers for their service and commitment.

Lineworker Appreciation Day–April 13th, 2026



Board Meeting Highlights

March Board Minutes

The Brown County REA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting on March 26th, 2026..

Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the February 2026 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates, and assignment transfers.
- Reviewed and approved January and February 2026 payroll and January and February financial statement.
- Reviewed and approved revisions made to PURPA Reimbursement form, Cogeneration Report, and Schedule 1.
- Reviewed and approved the 2025 financial audit as presented by Kellen Garrison from Eide Bailly, LLP.
- Updated on operations activities including annual line patrol.
- Reviewed staff meeting reports, director meeting reports, and individual director reports.

The next meeting is set for April 30th, 2026, at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye.

Mike Heidemann – Chief Executive Officer

Board of Directors

Thomas Hayes, *President* – (507) 228-8954
William Berg, *Vice President* – (507) 766-1497
James D. Hanson, *Secretary-Treasurer* – (507) 829-6756
Brad Sprenger – (507) 317-5576
David Wendinger – (507) 276-3166
Greg Mages – (507) 276-0325
Joel Christensen – (507) 828-4550
Keith Hoffmann – (507) 227-8006
Landon Sletta – (507) 276-1899

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



Owned by
those it
serves

Brown County Rural Electric Association

24386 State Hwy. 4 | P.O. Box 529

Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

Email: bcra@bcra.coop

Website: www.browncountyrea.coop

Phone: (507) 794-3331 or (800) 658-2368

Payment Line (PSN): (833) 250-4481

Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mon.–Fri.



from Brown County Rural Electric Association

EGG SALAD RECIPE

PREP TIME: 5 mins // TOTAL TIME: 10 mins // YIELDS: 4-6 servings

INGREDIENTS

- | | |
|--|--|
| ½ cup mayonnaise | 12 whole hard-boiled eggs, peeled |
| 2 Tbsp. yellow mustard | ¼ small red onion, finely chopped |
| 1 Tbsp. dill pickle juice | ¼ cup finely chopped dill pickles |
| ½ tsp. kosher salt, plus more to serve | 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh chives, plus more to serve |
| ¼ tsp. ground black pepper, plus more to serve | 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh dill |
| ¼ tsp. paprika, plus more to serve | |
| ⅛ tsp. cayenne pepper, optional | |

INSTRUCTIONS

In a medium bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, mustard, pickle juice, salt, pepper, paprika, and cayenne (optional) until well combined. Coarsely chop the hard-boiled eggs, fold into the dressing with the onion, pickles, chives, and dill. Cover and refrigerate the egg salad until ready to serve. Sprinkle the salad with extra chives, salt, pepper, and paprika. Serve on sandwiches, on crackers, or straight from the bowl.

