

CurrentConnections



89th Annual Meeting **CEO Column** May 2026

It was wonderful seeing so many of you at our Annual Meeting. This year, we had 385 members and spouses, employees, and guests of Brown County Rural Electrical Association who gathered at the Sleepy Eye Event Center on April 9th for our 89th Annual Meeting.

We started the meeting out with Ann Wendinger giving the Invocation before a catered meal. During the business meeting, Board President Tom Hayes recognized guests from other cooperatives. Then I went over the 2025 audited financial report and discussed wholesale power supply.



David Wendinger was re-elected on the board of directors in District 8 over challenger Mark Lindquist. In District 2,

Brad Sprenger was re-elected over challengers Craig Fischer and Brian Sellner. Landon Sletta ran unopposed in District 3 and was elected by acclamation. All were elected to three-year terms.

Those in attendance enjoyed listening to Adam Mages, of New Ulm, share about his experience in Washington, D. C. Mages was selected to represent Brown County REA on the 2025 Rural Electric Youth Tour. He shared highlights and photos from his trip last summer. Another guest speaker, Jason Schultz, reported on his opportunity to take a behind-the-scenes look at the cooperative serving on the 2025 Member Advisory Council.

The Annual Meeting is also the time each year when we recognize our Operation Round Up scholarship winners. Luke Bastian, Emily Brown, Hunter Dauer, Darren Messner, Kailey Nelson, Zachary Oswald, Mya Rice, Owen Swenson, and Katie Thram were each awarded \$250. Congratulations to these high school seniors!

Following the Annual Meeting, we held an organizational meeting. Tom Hayes was elected President of the Board, Bill



Berg chosen as Vice President, and Jim Hanson elected Secretary-Treasurer. Bill Berg will again represent Brown County REA on the Great River Energy board.

Thanks again to everyone who turned out for the Annual Meeting. It is always great to connect with members, reflect on the previous year, and share our plans for the cooperative's future.

Mike Heidemann,
BCREA CEO





Operation Round Up Trust Board Awards Grants

At an April 7th meeting, the Operation Round Up Trust Board awarded \$1,900 to two organizations and three families in crisis. Recipients included *Lutheran Social Services* meals for Brown County and the *Zion Lutheran Church* food shelf.

Through the generosity of Brown County REA members who participate in Operation Round Up, more than \$273,000 has assisted organizations and individuals in the cooperatives'

service area and provided scholarships to graduating high school seniors. Collectively, your change can make a difference!

If you do not already and are willing to contribute less than \$12 per year by rounding up your electric bill to the nearest dollar each month to help Operation Round Up support local area causes, please call the office at (800) 658-2368 or (507) 794-3331.

The Operation Round Up Trust Board meets again in August to review funding requests.

Nine Scholarships Awarded to Local Seniors

On April 7th, the Operation Round Up (ORU) Trust Board met and reviewed applications for the ninth annual Brown County Rural Electric Trust scholarships.

This year, nine \$250 scholarships will be awarded to high school seniors whose parents/guardians are Brown County REA members. The winners will receive their funds, to be used for educational costs, after successfully completing one semester at an accredited university, college, vocational, community, or technical college.

Funds for the scholarships come from you, the members, who choose to round up your electric bill to the nearest dollar each month. The difference is placed in a trust which is administered by a nine-member board. The board meets four times each year to distribute funds to charitable causes, individuals and families in crisis, and scholarships. We are grateful to all the members who participate in Operation Round Up.

All the applicants demonstrate leadership in their schools, communities and beyond. When asked to share a most meaningful achievement and how it relates to students' future goals, the answers while diverse, show the compassion and commitment of our area's youth. In addition to community involvement, these young people are active in sports, music, and other extra-curricular activities at their schools while maintaining a rigorous academic schedule. We thank all students who took the time to apply for the scholarships. The quality of applicants again made the selection difficult for trust board members.

Winners of the 2026 Operation Round Up Scholarships are listed to the right.

Congratulations to all the winners and thank you to all students who applied for scholarships.



- ◆ **Luke Bastian**, son of Steve and Karen Bastian, and a senior at GFW High School.
- ◆ **Emily Brown**, MVL High School senior, and daughter of Chad and Amber Brown.
- ◆ **Hunter Dauer**, son of Chris and Jen Dauer, and senior at New Ulm Public High School.
- ◆ **Darren Messner**, GFW High School senior, and son of David and Bethany Messner.
- ◆ **Kailey Nelson**, daughter of Joey and Stacy Nelson, and a senior at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's.
- ◆ **Zachary Oswald**, New Ulm Public High School senior, and son of Adam Oswald.
- ◆ **Mya Rice**, Springfield Public High School senior, and daughter of Shayne and Casey Rice.
- ◆ **Owen Swenson**, son of Rachel and Kris Swenson, and senior at GFW High School.
- ◆ **Katie Thram**, Springfield Public High School senior, and daughter of Chad and Jane Thram.

CTV Offers 60 Channels for Only \$8 a Month

Requires a UHF Antenna

Looking for low-cost access to TV channels? Want to ditch the satellite dish? Try out CTV, which is owned by four local electrical cooperatives, including yours. What you need is a UHF antenna. Buy one from Walmart or online and install it yourself. Otherwise, reach out to a local TV antenna installer so they can climb the roof and add a booster, splitter, and run the cable; find a list of installers at www.ctv.coop.

CTV operates three towers at Godahl, Jackson, and Frost. "If you are looking for a low-cost TV viewing option, consider CTV," stated Mike Heidemann, CTV general manager. "As an electric co-op member, the CTV charge can be added as a line on your electric bill. Just call or email your co-op to do so. Your \$8 a month helps pay for the tower operations, the maintenance technician, and licensing."



CHANNEL LIST

2.1	TPT 2 – Twin Cities PBS Affiliate	9.8	Fox WX	16.1	CTV Local Access Channel	22.318	TBN
2.2	TPT MN	9.9	Stories	16.2	AMG TV	22.319	TBN Inspire
2.4	TPT Life	11.1	KARE – Twin Cities NBC	16.3	Right Now TV	22.321	Unknown
2.5	TPT Kids	11.2	Quest	16.4	Biz TV	22.322	Positiv
4.2	TPT Now (Weather)	11.3	Crime	16.5	Fun Roads	23.1	The CW
4.3	Start TV	11.4	Shop LC	18.1	Bloom TV	23.2	Comet
4.4	dabl	11.5	Nest	21.1	Spanish	23.3	Charge!
4.5	FAVE TV	11.7	Confess	21.2	Shop HQ	23.4	ROAR
5.1	KSTP – Minneapolis ABC Affiliate	11.8	Home Shopping Network	21.3	Bridge 1	23.5	Rewind
5.2	Channel 45	12.1	KEYC	21.4	Newsmax	23.6	Outside TV
5.3	MeTV (Television Classics)	12.2	Fox 12	21.5	AceTV	41.1	ION TV
5.4	GetTV (Television Classics)	12.3	ION	21.6	OAN	41.2	BOUNCE
5.5	KSTC Cam	12.4	WX	21.7	Bridge 2	41.3	GRIT
5.6	Me Toons	12.5	OXG	21.8	Sales – Infomercials	41.4	Mystery
5.7	H&I	12.6	365 BLK	21.9	Bark TV	41.5	Laff
5.8	Ion Plus	15.1	MovieSphere Gold	21.10	ZLiving	43.1	KRWF-DT
9.1	FOX 9 – Minneapolis FOX Affiliate	15.2	Defy TV	21.11	FTF Sports	43.2	KRWFDT2
9.2	FOX 9+ – Minneapolis	15.3	Outlaw	21.12	MTRSPRI	43.3	KRWFDT3
9.4	Movies! (Classic Movies)	15.4	Jewelry TV	21.13	Binge	62.1	Daystar
9.5	BUZZR (Old Game Shows)	15.5	Salem News Channel	21.14	NBT	62.2	Latino
9.6	QVC	15.6	Infomercials	21.15	beIN	62.3	Daystar Reflections
9.7	Catchy Comedy	15.7	365BLK	21.16	Dr. Oz		



Remembering Former BCREA Board President Gerald Stevens

Former director Gerald Stevens passed away March 30th, 2026. Brown County REA offers its condolences to the family. Stevens served as a Brown County board member for 30 years and was Board President beginning in 1987.

What is the PCA (Power Cost Adjustment) on my Bill?

The Power Cost Adjustment (PCA) is a monthly line item on your electric bill that reflects changes in the cost of wholesale power. Utilities purchase electricity from power suppliers, and those costs can rise or fall based on fuel prices, market conditions, weather, and overall energy demand. Rather than changing base rates each month, the PCA allows those cost increases or decreases to be passed through separately. When wholesale power costs are higher, the PCA may increase your bill. When costs are lower, the PCA may decrease it. The amount is typically based on the number of kilowatt-hours (kWh) used during the billing period, so usage also affects the total.

Board Meeting Highlights

April Board Minutes

The Brown County REA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting on April 30th, 2026.

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

- Reviewed and approved the March 2026 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates, and assignment transfers.
- Reviewed and approved March 2026 payroll and January and February 2026 financial statement.
- Reviewed the 2026 Annual Meeting and set Thursday, April 8, as the 2027 meeting date.
- Updated on operations activities including annual line patrol, which was completed on April 20th and the beginning of URD patrol and annual substation inspections.
- Reviewed and approved 2025 form 7 reports as sent to RUS.
- Reviewed and approved 2025 margin allocation.
- Reviewed and approved contractual and appendix B amendments.
- Reviewed and approved amended APEX clean wind energy power purchase.
- Approved Greg Mages as the appointed GRE representative.
- Reviewed staff meeting reports, director meeting reports, and individual director reports.

The next meeting is set for May 28th, 2026, at the Brown County REA office in Sleepy Eye.

Brown County
REA will be
closed on
May 25th in
observance of
Memorial Day.



Check It Out—Capital Credits

Look for your **2025 patronage allocation amount** on your May billing statement. Capital credits will be paid out in November of 2026.



RHUBARB BARS RECIPE

(Old Fashioned Style, from Laura Fischer's family cookbook)

BOTTOM LAYER

5 tablespoons powdered sugar

½ cup melted butter

1 cup flour

Mix together and press into an 8 × 8 pan.

Bake at 375°F for 15 minutes.

TOP LAYER

2 cups cut rhubarb

2 eggs

1 teaspoon vanilla

1½ cups sugar

½ teaspoon salt

¼ cup flour

¾ teaspoon baking powder

Add all ingredients except the rhubarb together and mix well. Then add the rhubarb.

Pour over the baked bottom layer, then bake at 375°F for 30 minutes.

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

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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.