

Connections

May 2023

For the member-owners of Brown County REA



Volume 27, Issue 5

Two local electric cooperatives are now charging ahead with first electric pickup added to its fleet

Your electric cooperative has energized its fleet of vehicles, adding its first electric pickup.

Brown County REA (BCREA) added a Ford Lightning pickup in January, while Federated Rural Electric received its Rivian pickup in November.

“Since we are a rural agricultural area, we wanted to have first-hand experience using an electric pickup,” stated Jon Beckman, Federated’s marketing specialist. “This pickup is used mainly by the Marketing and Communications Department for events, meeting with members at their homes and businesses, plus for EV education. The pickup bed works great for hauling coolers, displays and equipment. Employees from other departments are also driving the Rivian for meetings or work errands too.”

BCREA purchased an F-150 Lightning pickup with the extended battery to use daily as a line crew pickup. It was purchased to help the cooperative gain knowledge on day-to-day use of an electric vehicle and information is being gathered to share with members.

“The line crew uses this pickup during the line patrol in the winter and for pulling a 3,500-pound trailer in the summer,” explained Brandon Havemeier, BCREA operations and engineering manager. “It is a smooth, quiet ride.”



Federated Rural Electric, Jackson, “plugs” new electric technology, which includes its first electric pickup for the cooperative. The Rivian R1T was ordered in 2021 and arrived in November 2022.

Rivian pickup specs

Federated’s Rivian pickup is an all electric vehicle that can be charged up to 328 miles for a road trip. In addition, Rivian offers another extended range pickup with a range of 400 miles. Rivian recommends charging the batteries up to 85 percent in the winter, while charging up to 70 percent in the summer to maintain battery life, just like a cell phone battery.

“We bought the Rivian level two charger (220 power) for \$855,” Beckman added. “It adds 25 miles an hour and we recharge it in the evenings. With a standard 110-outlet it recharges the batteries, adding five miles an hour, so that’s why we needed a level-two charger. We wanted an

EV that would make it up to the Twin Cities for meetings without having to stop for charging.”

The Rivian comes with a five-year or 60,000-mile warranty. The battery pack and drive train feature an eight-year warranty or 175,000 miles. Federated ordered this vehicle in 2021 when the price was \$71,500 for the base model. With winter driving owners can expect the driving range to decline 20 to 30 percent based on the outdoor temperature, wind, road conditions and heating the cab.

What’s unique about the Rivian is that the pickup was delivered to Federated’s office. While a Rivian dealer exists in Twin Cities, if repairs — *Continued on Page 2*

At A Glance



Twins baseball clinic

The Minnesota Twins Free Youth Baseball Clinic, hosted by BCREA and Sleepy Eye Community Education, returns to Sleepy Eye July 7 at 4-6 p.m. The event is for ages 6-12 and sponsored by Great River Energy and the Twin Community Fund. See Page 8. ☎



Energy Wise

Electric pickups 'pick up' work function & potential for increasing co-op sales

— Continued from Page 1

are needed, the service vehicle comes to the owner's location.

Lightning pickup specs

The Ford Lightning pickup has an extended range of 320 miles. "Crews plug in the pickup at the end of the work day," Havemeier stated. "We have it set for off-peak charging, starting at 11 p.m., and then it is fully charged when the crews come to work at 7 a.m. We expect to see a range of 2.3 miles/kilowatt-hour (kWh) in the summer and 1.5 miles per kWh in the winter."

BCREA purchased the pickup for \$90,000 from Chuck Spaeth Ford, Sleepy Eye. The 19.2 kW Charge Station Pro Level 2 vehicle charger came free with the purchase of the extended-battery model pickup. The Charge Pro is the bi-directional model that can provide backup power to your home during outages. It costs around \$1,300 if purchased separately.

The Ford Lightning features a five-year or 60,000-mile warranty. The battery components come with an eight-year or 100,000-mile warranty. BCREA ordered the pickup in 2021 and received it in 2023.

Fuel cost comparison

Now let's compare the fueling costs and keep in mind that the average American drives 29.2 miles per day. An electric pickup charged up for 320 miles would take about \$8.84 for kWh for a full charge. Demand may apply, depending on your electric rate class with the co-op; demand could be an additional \$20.34. Talk to the



Brown County REA, Sleepy Eye, added its first electric vehicle — the Ford Lightning pickup this winter. Linemen Zach Gulden, driver, and Tyler Jensen get ready to take it out on their work day.

Ford F-150 Lightning extended range fast facts:

Horsepower: 580
Torque: 775 lb-ft
Towing capacity: 10,000 lbs
Payload: 2,000 lbs
Bed length: 5.5 feet

Rivian R1-T fast facts:

Horsepower: 600
Torque: 908 lb-ft
Towing capacity: 11,000 lbs
Payload: 1,760 lbs
Bed length: 5.5 feet

In other pickup news a GMC Hummer EV edition is now available. Coming soon are pickups for Chevrolet Silverado EV and GMC Sierra EV Denali in 2024. The Dodge RAM 1500 is estimated for 2024 with an unknown year for the Tesla Cybertruck.

cooperative's energy expert about the co-op's EV level two charger rebate and EV program; otherwise, visit your cooperative's website.

Meanwhile, filling a gas tank for 320 miles would be \$59.80 with gasoline at \$3.50 per gallon. Now with diesel fuel filling for 320 miles would be \$87.33,

when buying diesel at \$4.10 a gallon.


Explore the tax credits available for new and used electric vehicles. Visit www.irs.gov. You'll need to check with the EV dealer to determine the country where the batteries' minerals were mined and where the vehicle was built for tax-credit eligibility.

EGO electric mower cuts it up!

The EGO Power+ 42-inch Z6 Zero Turn Riding Mower holds four 56-volt lithium batteries — the same battery technology powering all EGO products. This makes it the world's first platform compatible rider. Delivering 22 horsepower and reaching a top speed of 8 miles an hour, the Z6 covers up to two acres on a single charge. It takes about two hours to charge.

Customize the ride with an LCD interface featuring three driving modes (control, standard and sport) that can be accessed with the touch of a button. LED lights, USB charging port and Bluetooth come standard to make the experience even more user-friendly.

The Z6 has a floating deck, which can be adjusted for cutting height. The Z6 also has a towing capacity of 250 pounds, so it can help with light yard work.

The Z6 is available from places like Ace Hardware online. It retails for approximately \$5,000. 



EGO electric riding lawnmowers come in two sizes. One holds four batteries (above). A larger model uses six batteries, a 52" deck and covers six acres. The amount of batteries does not increase power. It simply increases runtime.

Safety

Stay clear of storm-downed power lines

Your electric co-op wants to remind and educate everyone about the seasonal threats from severe weather and that we are prepared to keep the power flowing to homes, farms and businesses.

"Though most consumer-members experience very little time without electricity, we do see an increase in disruption of electric service during severe weather," said Mark Peterson, system operations manager for Great River Energy.

During severe weather, such as tornadoes, high winds and hail, it's important to be aware of your surroundings and stay away from downed powerlines. No way exists to tell if a power line is energized just by looking at it. Always assume it can carry currents strong enough to kill.

If you see a downed or sagging power line, follow these tips:

- Stay away from downed lines; call your local electric co-op or 911 to report it immediately.
- Never drive over a downed power

Downed power lines are always dangerous. Stay away! Call your local electric cooperative or 911!




line if it is blocking your driveway or road. Call 911 and find another route.

- Never touch anything that is also touching a power line, including trees with limbs caught in a power line.

- If a power line falls on your car or otherwise contacts your vehicle, stay in your vehicle. Use your cell phone to call 911 and wait for help to arrive.

- If you must exit your vehicle (due to fire), jump clear of the vehicle without touching it. Land with your feet together

and shuffle away.

When severe weather causes widespread damage, sometimes outages can last a lot longer. GRE and your electric cooperative work hard to restore your power quickly and safely. The first focus is on removing any threats to public safety, then following established priorities for making repairs that will restore power to the most members first. 

Brown County Briefs

Energy-efficiency tips

The location of your thermostat can impact your HVAC system's ability to maintain an ideal indoor temperature. For maximum accuracy thermostats should be placed in the center of the home, away from air vents, plumbing pipes and exterior doors. Avoid placing items like lamps and televisions near your thermostat, which can cause the HVAC to run longer than necessary. Avoid installing thermostats in rooms that tend to feel warmer or colder than the rest of the home. Do not place furniture in front of the thermostat, which can block air flow and result in inaccurate readings.

Electrify your yard work with rebates

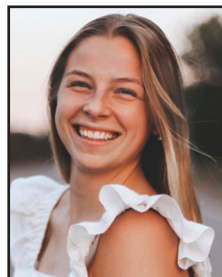
Interested in a battery powered leaf blower, chainsaw, trimmer/weed whip or lawn mower? Brown County REA is offering a rebate of \$25 for a minimum \$150 pre-tax priced leaf blower, chainsaw, edger, trimmer/weed whip and \$50 on a \$399 or higher-priced pre-tax priced electric push lawn mower purchased during May, June, July and August. Provide a copy of your dated receipt with the purchase price and model number. Rebate will be paid as a credit on your electric bill. Limit one rebate per member. (U)



Round Up Trust awards 2023 scholarships



Bryanna Aschenbrenner



Laura Bertrang



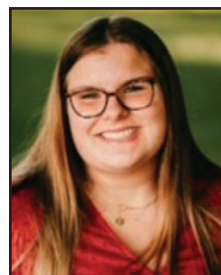
Adam Johnson



Lacey Mathiowetz



Paige Rose



Kayleigh Schumann

At its April 11 meeting, the Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board met to review applications for the sixth annual Brown County Rural Electric Trust scholarships.

Six \$250 scholarships were 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 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; they meet four times each year to distribute funds to charitable causes, individuals and families in crisis and scholarships. The 2023 scholarship winners are:

Bryanna Aschenbrenner, daughter of Randy & Nicole Aschenbrenner, and senior at New Ulm Public School. Laura Bertrang, New Ulm Public School senior and daughter of Jeff & Wendy Bertrang. Adam Johnson, Sleepy Eye High School senior and son of Tom & Judy Johnson. Lacey Mathiowetz, daughter of Scott & Kayla Mathiowetz, senior at Sleepy Eye St. Mary's High School. Paige Rose, Cedar Mountain High School senior and daughter of Scott & Jennifer Rose. Kayleigh Schumann, Comfrey High School senior and granddaughter of Teresa Schumann.

The trust board also distributed \$700 to three organizations. Donations were made to Brown County Free Fair, Junior Achievement North and New Ulm Cathedral High School after prom. The next meeting is set for August 15. (U)

Member Advisory Council holds first meeting



BCREA Director Brad Sprenger (second from right facing camera) shared information about the co-op's trucks with attendees during building tours at the April 17 Member Advisory Council meeting. (U)

Members gather for 86th Annual Meeting



Nearly 400 people attended the BCREA meal and Annual Meeting April 13 at the Sleepy Eye Event Center.

Nearly 400 members and spouses, employees and guests of Brown County Rural Electrical Association (REA) gathered at the Sleepy Eye Event Center April 13 for the cooperative's 86th Annual Meeting. A total of 220 members, of which 17 were mail-ballots, were registered at the meeting.

Following a catered meal, Arla Dockter of Sleepy Eye shared the invocation. During the business meeting, Board President Tom Hayes reviewed the proposed bylaw amendment. He highlighted wholesale power supply generation portfolio changes and how electric coopera-


tives are adapting for future carbon-free mandates. CEO Mike Heidemann reviewed the 2022 audited financial report and explained funds returned to members as a reduction in Power Cost Adjustment in 2022.

Incumbent Directors Brad Sprenger, District 2 and Landon Sletta, District 3, ran unopposed and were re-elected to three-year terms. In District 8 David Wendinger was elected over challengers Scott Hulke and John Luepke. The proposed amendment to the cooperative by-laws was approved.

New Ulm Cathedral High School Junior Logan Kreilkamp, who represented Brown County REA at the

2022 Rural Electric Youth Tour shared his personal highlights from the trip to Washington, D. C. last summer. Gerald Grathwohl recapped the meetings and his experience serving as part of the Member Advisory Council.

The 2023 Operation Round Up scholarship winners were announced. See related story on Page 5.

At the organizational meeting which followed, Tom Hayes was elected President of the Board, Bill Berg was chosen as Vice President, and Jim Hanson elected Secretary-Treasurer. Bill Berg will again represent Brown County REA on the Great River Energy Board of Directors. 



BCREA Board of Directors L-R: Joel Christenson, Bill Berg, Greg Mages, Jim Mickelson, David Wendinger, Tom Hayes, Landon Sletta, Brad Sprenger, Jim Hanson.



Logan Kreilkamp, who represented Brown County REA at the 2022 Youth Tour to Washington, D. C., highlighted his experience and how it changed his life.

Workplace Safety: Avoid Common Electrical Hazards

Contact with or exposure to **electricity** is one of the leading causes of **workplace fatalities**. Follow these tips to **avoid electrical injuries**.

Overhead Power Line Contact

46% of all electrical fatalities are caused by contact with overhead power lines

57% of overhead power line fatalities were in non-electrical occupations



Always assume all lines are **live and dangerous**



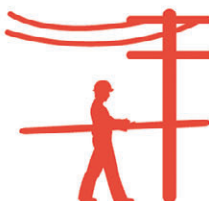
Always look up; **be aware** of overhead power lines



Keep yourself and equipment at least **10 feet away** from overhead power lines



Do not touch anything that is **in contact** with overhead power lines



Carry equipment, including ladders, **horizontally** to avoid contact with power lines



Stay at least **35 feet** away from downed power lines

Electrical Safety in the Workplace



GFCI protection should be installed where **electricity and water** may come in contact

— From ESFI.org

5 sources accounted for **92% of all electrical fatalities**

Overhead power lines



Unexpected contact with electricity



Working on energized parts



Ground fault



Damaged wiring



We'll power your shower

Call the co-op for your next electric water heater

- HTP model features lifetime-warranty against leaks for the original owner
- Replace your decades-old water heater now before it leaks!

- Made in the USA
- Insulated tank
- In stock

Get your greens! Share spinach recipes to be strong to the finish

Spring greens will be growing soon. How do you eat your spinach? Do you eat it steamed, in salads, sandwiches or dips? Share your spinach recipes with us. Mail your favorite spinach recipes 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! 📧



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Creamed Ooodles

by Barbara Sellner, Sleepy Eye

- 7 oz. jar marshmallow cream
- ½ c. honey 1½ c. raisins
- 2 c. shredded coconut
- 1 c. peanut butter
- 1 c. mini chocolate chips
- 1 c. walnuts (or any kind of nut)

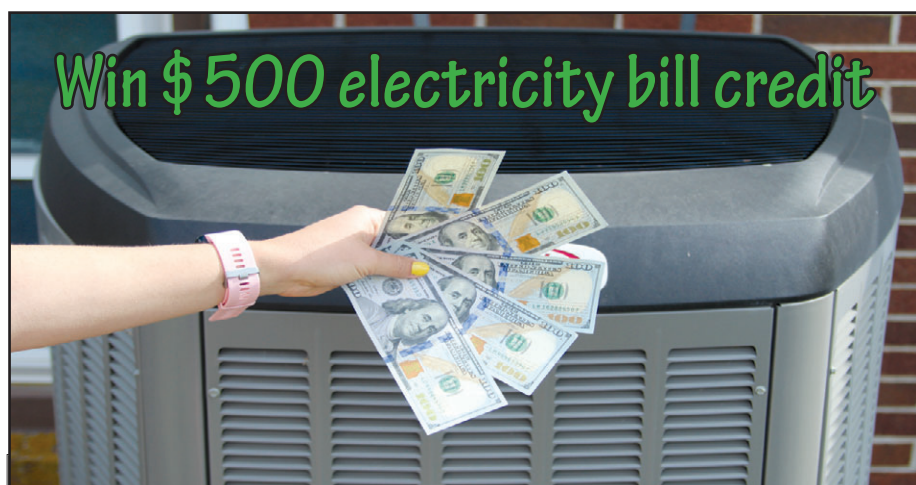
Combine marshmallow cream, peanut butter and honey. Mix until well blended. Add chocolate chips, raisins and nuts. Make into 1" balls. Roll in coconut, Rice Krispies or graham cracker crumbs. Chill and keep in the refrigerator. Makes six dozen. 📧

Raisin Cream Waffles

by Gloria Marten, Welcome

- 1 c. raisins
- 3 eggs, separated 1 c. cream
- 1 c. milk ½ c. sugar
- 2½ c. flour
- 5 tsp. baking powder 1 tsp. salt
- 5 T. butter, melted

Boil raisins five minutes in water to cover. Drain and cool. Beat egg yolks; combine with cream, milk and sugar. Sift dry ingredients. Add to yolk mixture. Stir in butter and raisins. Beat egg whites until stiff; fold into batter. Bake in a hot waffle iron. Yields six waffles. 📧



Win \$500 electricity bill credit

Take a short heat pump quiz for chance to win \$500 electric bill credit

Go to our website's home page or visit <https://www.energywisemn.com/heating-and-cooling>. Scroll to bottom and click on the quiz.

Contest ends June 30.

Contest is sponsored by Great River Energy, a wholesale power supplier to your electric co-op and 26 other co-ops.

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 and tiling. Register at www.gopherstateonecall.org or call 811. Call a licensed electrician to locate the underground lines on your side of the meter. 📧



Marcia Solie
Member Services
Manager

Staff Notes

Update your contact information

The worst time to find out we don't have a current phone number for a member is when Brown County REA needs to make contact regarding an outage, planned or unplanned, or to reach members for other reasons.

To improve communication with our members, the co-op asks you to share e-mail addresses and cell phone numbers with us. We have new options through our customer service software to

send out email or text messages alerting members to load control events, work taking place in your area and to keep you updated in the event of an emergency or extended power outage.

We will not use these contacts for advertising or marketing. We had a report recently from members who received an e-mail mentioning utility metering and an energy-savings program. This email was not from Brown County REA; we remind members to never give out personal, credit card or bank account information via email or phone. If you receive something claiming to be from BCREA, but have suspicions — don't click, call us.

To provide your information go to www.browncountyrea.coop and click on Update My Information under the Forms tab. You can also request the form be emailed or mailed to you by contacting the office. ☎️

Twins Youth Clinic July 7



The Minnesota Twin free youth clinic is returning to Sleepy Eye on July 7. The event is free and open to youth ages 6-12. Fundamentals of hitting, throwing, fielding and defense will be taught in a fun and encouraging atmosphere. Equipment will be provided but participants are asked to bring their own

gloves. Register online in advance at www.playballmn.com. In case of bad weather the event will be moved into the Sleepy Eye Public School. ☎️

FIELD:

Prairieview Field
400 4th Ave SW
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

TIME:

4:00 – 6:00 PM

HOST:

Brown County Rural
Electrical Association
(REA)

REGISTER:

PLAYBALLMN.COM



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: 7:30 a.m. to 4 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 27. Discussion and/or action were taken on the following agenda items:

- Reviewed and approved the March 2023 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates and assignment transfers.
 - Reviewed the March 2023 payroll and January, February and March 2023 financial statements.
 - Approved appointment of Betsy Holm to the Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board representing District 4.
 - Discussed the 86th Annual Meeting held April 13, and set April 11 as the date for the 2024 meeting.
 - Reviewed and approved the 2022 margin allocation amount of \$1,430,942.
 - Received a report on the charging and usage data for the cooperative's Ford Lightning all-electric pickup.
 - MREA President/CEO Darrick Moe visited to update the board on the state association's organizational changes and recent state and federal legislative activities.
- The next meeting is set for May 25 at the BCREA office in Sleepy Eye. ☎️