



CEO Column March 2026

## 2026 Annual Meeting

When you purchase electricity from Brown County REA, you are more than just a customer – you are a member-owner. Being a member and owner of a rural electric cooperative means you have a say in how the cooperative operates.

One of the best ways to get involved with your cooperative is by attending our annual meeting, held this year on Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at Sleepy Eye Event Center. If you've never been to one of our annual meetings before, I encourage you to make plans to attend and learn more about your cooperative. If you are a regular attendee, I thank you for your continued interest and support.

The 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of Brown County REA starts with registration and live music at 4:30 p.m. Beginning at 5:30 p.m., members are invited to join us for a meal, followed immediately by the business meeting. Attendees will have an opportunity to hear about the financial condition of the cooperative and learn more about the programs and services we offer.

An important part of each year's meeting is the election of directors to Brown County REA's Board of

Directors. These individuals are responsible for conducting the business of the cooperative. Brown County REA's service territory is divided into nine districts, with each district having an elected director to represent them on the Board. This year, members will be electing directors in Districts 2, 3, and 8.

Voting in the director election gives you a way to actively participate in deciding who is elected to set policies and make decisions that impact the cooperative. Directors are elected among the membership and are accountable to them. This concept of Democratic Member Control is one of the foundational principles all cooperatives adhere to.

One final reminder about voting: there will be no mail-in balloting this year. To cast your vote in the upcoming director election, you will need to be present at the annual meeting to vote.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting!

**Mike Heidemann,**  
BCREA CEO



## 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

**THURSDAY, APRIL 9<sup>TH</sup>**

Sleepy Eye Event Center  
110 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Sleepy Eye, MN

**4:30 p.m.**

- ◆ Registration
- ◆ Music by *Marv Nissel Band*

**5:30 p.m.**

- ◆ Meal catered by Tommy's
  - ◆ Business meeting following meal
  - ◆ Election of Directors in Districts 2, 3, & 8
- Please note: there is no mail-in voting this year; director election votes must be cast in person at the annual meeting.*



### OFFICIAL NOTICE

The Brown County REA 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting will take place Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, at Sleepy Eye Event Center. Registration will start at 4:30 p.m. and meal will start at 5:30 p.m. The business meeting will immediately follow. There will be an election for directors in Districts 2, 3, & 8.

Please bring the 2025 Annual Report (*which will be mailed to you in March*) so your registration can be scanned. Members who do not have their annual report will be able to register manually.

# Director Candidates

## District 2

### Brad Sprenger, Incumbent

Brad was born and raised in Mulligan Township. He and his son, Chad, grow corn, beans, and sweet corn on 550 acres of crop land.



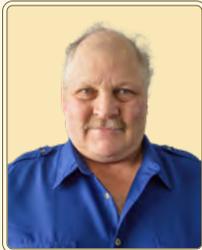
Brad and his wife, Julie, have four grown children: daughter, Melissa and sons, Chad, Scott, and Michael. They also have six grandsons and five granddaughters.

In addition to serving on the BCREA board the past 21 years, Brad is a member of the Knights of Columbus and serves on the farm board for the Church of the Japanese Martyrs in Leavenworth. He also serves on the CTV board.

Brad said he is proud to serve on the REA board and feels the cooperative has strong leadership and excellent management with employees who work hard to always keep the lights on.

### Brian Sellner

Brian has been a resident of District 2 for 38 years, living the past 33 years at his current residence. He has been employed by Miller Sellner for 30 years, where he has built a career marked by dedication and hands-on experience.



Outside of work, Brian enjoys fishing, tinkering with old cars, caring for his cattle, and spending time with his girlfriend, Dora.

Earlier in life, Brian served on the Stark Baseball Board, where he contributed to supporting youth programs and fostering community involvement. His long-standing ties to both his profession and agriculture have given him a deep understanding of the needs and values of rural cooperative members.

Brian values the cooperative principles of service, integrity, and accountability. He would be committed to making a positive difference in the community as a BCREA director.

### Craig Fischer

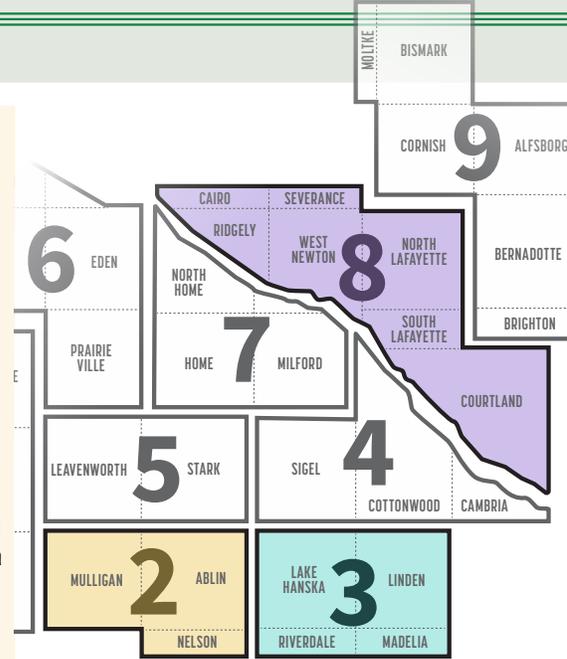
Craig and his wife, Elizabeth, live on the family farm south of Sleepy Eye that he grew up on. They have three children: Bryce, Logan, and Gavin. Craig graduated from New Ulm Cathedral High School and Minnesota State University Mankato with a degree in Institutional Finance.



Craig worked for the City of Sleepy Eye for 10 years before transitioning to the family farm. In 2013, he founded Sleepy Bison Acres, a diversified farm that raises bison for meat production, pastured pigs, and egg-laying chickens. The operation also produces hay and various cash crops using no-till practices, drip irrigation, and cover crops, including space dedicated to education. Craig also helps manage his wife's food trailer, Sleepy Bison Grill, which operates across the Midwest. The Craig and Elizabeth Fischer family was named the 2025 Brown County Farm Family of the Year.

Craig has served as Chair of the Brown County Soil and Water District Board since 2021 and has been a board member of the Minnesota Bison Association Board since 2016. He has experience on the Minnesota Grown Advisory Committee and is active in the National Independent Concessionaires Association, National Bison Association, Minnesota Farmers Union, Practical Farmers of Iowa, The Land Stewardship Project, and the Sustainable Farming Association.

Craig is interested in continuing to build on BCREA's foundational focus of positive, low-cost, and reliable service, while adapting to the current challenges of changing regulations and rising costs as a BCREA director.



## District 3

### Landon Sletta, Incumbent

Landon has lived his entire life in the Hanska area. He is a graduate of New Ulm High School and attended Mankato State University where he studied Business.



Since 1991, he has been engaged in farming in rural Hanska, where he lives with his wife, Jodi, and four children: Andy, Alden, Abby, and Blake.

Landon is a 26-year member of the Hanska Fire Department and served as a supervisor on the Lake Hanska Township Board. He was representing his district on the Brown County Rural Electric Trust Board in 2020 when he was appointed to fill a vacancy on the Brown County REA Board of Directors. At the 2021 Annual Meeting, he was elected in a special election to complete the three-year term.

Landon said REA members are fortunate to have affordable and reliable electrical service and he wants to work to keep it that way.

## District 8

### David Wendinger, *Incumbent*

David and his wife, Ann, proudly reside on the home farm in rural New Ulm, in West Newton Township. Family, dedication, commitment, and community involvement are the foundations upon which they have built their lives.



Raising three children on their farm and nurturing seven grandchildren, ages 2 through 9, keep them active! After farming with his twin brother, Donald, for over four decades, David has transitioned D&D Wendinger Farms to include sons, Matthew and Eric. Together, they are generational farming partners in a diversified crop and livestock operation.

David is a fourth-generation member of St. George Catholic Church, where he proudly serves on the Administrative Council, as a parish trustee, and Area Faith Community Council. Other positions which have helped him develop his leadership and cooperative spirit include years spent on the Central Livestock Board of Directors; serving as an advisory board member for the First District Association of Litchfield; and involvement with the New Ulm Farm City Hub Club, the Nicollet County Planning and Zoning Board, the Nicollet County Recycling Committee, and the newly-formed Nicollet County Comprehensive Plan Committee.

Having completed his second three-year term on the Brown County REA Board of Directors, David is seeking to continue being the voice of District 8. He vows to remain educated, committed, and approachable in meeting the electrical needs and demands of the REA and its members in an ever-changing future. He is proud to represent the hardworking and dedicated professionals of Brown County Rural Electric Association.

### Mark Lindquist

Mark and his wife, Kristi, live in Lafayette Township and have been part of the New Ulm community for 28 years. They raised two children here and have been members of Brown County REA for 15 years. Mark is an active community member where he has volunteered as a Scout leader and as a mentor with the New Ulm High School robotics team. Mark also participated on the BCREA Advisory Committee.



Mark brings a wealth of experience in financial management, public policy, and community development to his candidacy. With oversight of a \$9 million budget dedicated to the maintenance and repair of assets valued at nearly \$1 billion, he has extensive experience managing capital assets that include buildings, septic systems, water supplies, and energy infrastructure.

In addition to strong fiscal management skills, Mark has a strong background in public policy development with hands-on experience navigating state and federal legislation, as well as proceedings before the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission. He also brings experience in community and economic development and is deeply committed to identifying forward-looking opportunities that will position Brown County REA for continued success. Recognizing that the electric power industry is facing rapid and dramatic change, he believes in proactive, thoughtful leadership that will help the cooperative adapt and thrive in the years ahead.

## Scholars: Don't Forget to Apply!

Apply now for a Brown County REA Operation Round Up scholarship. At least eight \$250 awards are available for graduating seniors whose parent or guardian is a cooperative member within the service area. Pick up an application from your school counseling office or visit [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://www.browncountyrea.coop) and submit your transcript and recommendation letter by April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2026.



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## 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.



Please note: BCREA's office will be closed on **April 3<sup>rd</sup>** for **Good Friday**. Happy Easter!

## Board Meeting Highlights

### February Board Minutes

The Brown County REA Board of Directors held its monthly board meeting on February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

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

- Reviewed and approved the January 2026 board meeting minutes, new membership applications, member cancellations, payments to estates, and assignment transfers.
- Reviewed and approved January 2026 payroll and January financial statement.
- Reviewed and approved update to Large Power Cogeneration rate.
- Discussed and approved the 2025 Operating Budget as presented.
- Reviewed staff meeting reports, director meeting reports, and individual director reports.

The next meeting is set for March 26<sup>th</sup>, 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.*



**Brown County Rural Electric Association**

24386 State Hwy. 4 | P.O. Box 529  
Sleepy Eye, MN 56085

**Email:** [bcrea@bcrea.coop](mailto:bcrea@bcrea.coop)

**Website:** [www.browncountyrea.coop](http://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.

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## Annual Line Patrol Underway

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.

## HASHBROWN CASSEROLE **RECIPE**

### INGREDIENTS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>1 package (2 pound) frozen hashbrown potatoes, thawed</b> | <b>1 cup butter, melted, divided</b>        |
| <b>1 can (10.5 ounce) condensed cream of chicken soup</b>    | <b>½ cup chopped onion</b>                  |
| <b>2 cups shredded cheddar cheese</b>                        | <b>½ teaspoon salt</b>                      |
| <b>1 container (8 ounce) sour cream</b>                      | <b>½ teaspoon ground black pepper</b>       |
|  | <b>1 cup crushed cornflakes or crackers</b> |

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Gather all ingredients. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Mix hashbrowns, cheddar cheese, condensed soup, sour cream, ½ of the melted butter, onion, salt, and pepper in a bowl. Transfer mixture to a 9x13-inch baking dish.
3. Sprinkle crushed cornflakes/crackers on top, then drizzle with remaining melted butter.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until casserole is bubbling around the edges and the top is golden brown (1 hour to 1 hour 30 minutes).
5. Serve and enjoy!

