

NORTH DAKOTA Living

Your local cooperative news
OCTOBER 2022



Timeline of rural electrification, page 4
Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives, page 10

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See page C1 for your local co-op news

October 2022



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ON THE COVER

Electric cooperative employees recently toured Basin Electric Power Cooperative generation facilities as part of the Cooperative Connections program, which offers training and education on the electric industry and cooperatives to new co-op employees. The tour provided an opportunity to learn firsthand how electric power is generated and transmitted and to see the investment cooperatives have made to deliver safe, reliable, affordable electricity to their members.

PHOTO BY NDAREC/JOHN KARY



OCTOBER 2022 | Volume 69, No. 4

NORTH DAKOTA
Living

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Punching above their weight

There are countless examples of cooperative success in rural America. We write about them often in the pages of this magazine. They are some of my favorite stories, because they



Josh Kramer

illustrate how rural people in rural places have used cooperatives to “punch above their weight.”

We, as cooperatives, didn’t arrive at success or a place of respect, however, alone. As we celebrate cooperatives this Co-op Month, it is also important we recognize our partners, friends and supporters who have helped us along the way.

Our association represents North Dakota’s electric cooperatives, which strive to improve the quality of life in rural places, while

providing affordable, safe and reliable electricity. Since our organization’s inception, we’ve had the opportunity to work with effective leaders. These folks have varying ideologies and political party affiliation. Understandably, their policy positions do not always align. Yet, they maintain and model respectful decorum and dialogue, and support the electric cooperative program.

Mutual respect – the ability to listen and compromise – equates to progress for rural America.

As one of the smallest states by population, North Dakota has a strong track record of sending leaders from both parties to Congress who punch above their weight, proving tenacious, serving in positions of leadership and delivering for North Dakota.

Consider one of the most critical federal packages for rural places: the farm bill. Roughly every five years, the farm bill must be written and passed by Congress to reauthorize the U.S. Department of Agriculture to implement key programs. The farm bill connects urban and rural people with those who produce the food, fiber and energy we all consume. It provides price support, lending and crop insurance for farmers and ranchers, and resources for agricultural research and conservation. It ensures an adequate food supply and access to healthy foods and nutrition. It provides resources that improve livability in our communities. And, work on the new farm bill will begin soon.

North Dakota has been fortunate to have stalwart leaders on agricultural and appropriations congressional committees over the past several decades, who ensure the interests of North Dakotans are (and were) included in the farm bill. Sen. Quentin Burdick was one of them. (You can read about a cooperative center that bears his name on page 10.) He was the ranking member and chaired the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Agriculture, a committee Sen. John Hoeven also chaired and serves on as a ranking member still today.

In this era where government and politicians are the perfect target for pundits, coffee shop banter and social platforms, and divisiveness, name-calling and manufactured controversy is new currency, we are all guilty (some more than others) of being the critic. But if we can grow to learn mutual respect, the ability to listen and the art of compromise, we may just punch above our weight, too. ■

Josh Kramer, editor-in-chief of *North Dakota Living*, is executive vice president and general manager of NDAREC. Contact him at jkramer@ndarec.com.

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the Shared Values
are not just a plaque
on the wall. It’s a big
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where everyone is
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each other. ”

~ **Amy Gietzen**
Professional Services Coordinator
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Electricity FOR HIM



COOPERATIVE POWER

The evolution of North Dakota's electric cooperatives

BY CLARICE L. KESLER AND CALLY PETERSON

1930

\$5 AND A HANDSHAKE

The legacy of electric cooperatives is one of the greatest engineering achievements of the 20th century. It's a story of self-help, determination and cooperation.

With the stroke of his pen on May 11, 1935, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) by Executive Order No. 7037. It would take Congress another year to pass the Rural Electrification Act, creating the lending program to set the REA in motion.

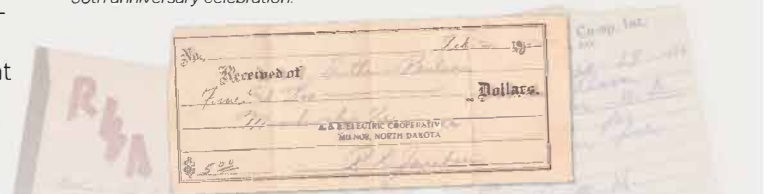
Soon after, it became evident to REA officials that investor-owned utilities were not interested in using federal loan funds to serve sparsely populated rural areas. But loan applications poured in from farmer-based cooperatives.

In North Dakota, rural electrification began with \$5 and a handshake. Farmers and ranchers went door-to-door, collecting \$5 membership fees to secure funds to build a power supply system and bring light to the prairie.

Electric cooperatives formed by 1940, but World War II temporarily paused rural electrification, as the nation's materials and supplies were needed to help the war effort. Rural electrification would have to wait until after the war.



Baker Electric Cooperative delivered electricity to the Ralph and Evangeline Pierson farm, located 3.5 miles south of York, on Nov. 24, 1937. It was the first farmstead in the state to receive electricity after the passage of the Rural Electrification Act. In 1985, the farm was commemorated as part of the REA's 50th anniversary celebration.



An original membership receipt from Arthur Paulson of Mantador shows he paid \$5 on Feb. 2, 1945, to become an R.S.R. Electric Cooperative member and receive electricity. Paulson's son, Dave, is a Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative director.

21 REA Cooperatives Now Organized and Working in State

Over 12,000 farmers are now getting rural electric service from the 22 REA co-operatives now organized and working in the state. At least 17 co-ops are now energized. Here is a summary of the co-operatives in North Dakota:

BURKE-DIVIDE ELECTRIC CO-OP, CROSBY
The Burke-Divide Electric Co-op, Crosby, received its first REA loan on April 11, 1946. Since then, and including the initial loan, REA has approved loans totaling \$286,000 to this cooperative.

BAKER ELECTRIC CO-OP, CANDO
The Baker Electric Co-op, Cando, received its first REA loan on May 31, 1936. Since then and including the initial loan, REA has approved loans totaling \$1,563,200 to this co-op.

1960

PASSIONATE VISIONARIES

Early cooperative leaders planned for the future, often creating visions that seemed nearly impossible to achieve. But through the collective efforts of North Dakota's electric cooperatives, they met every challenge.

As electric demand increased, co-op leaders worked to develop long-term solutions to increase power supply and train the future workforce.

In 1960, NDAREC moved into its first office located in north Bismarck. Six years later, the association opened its headquarters facility in northwest Mandan, off the newly constructed superhighway, Interstate 94, where it remains today.



A UNIFIED VOICE

JULY 1942

Co-ops across North Dakota joined together to boost rural electrification efforts that would improve the quality of life for rural people.

At a café in Carrington, electric cooperative managers and directors met from five co-ops – Baker, Cass

County, Nodak, Tri-County and Verendrye. Within 30 minutes, they created a statewide association, known today as the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC).

Soon after, North Dakota led the nation in electricity advancement with its postwar planning, as cooperatives aggressively pursued rural electrification.

By 1943, the association's board set a goal to electrify 10,000 farms per year for the five years following the war – a feat achieved by electric co-ops.

As the need for electricity increased in the 1950s, North Dakota's electric cooperatives began long-range planning to build a power supply system to meet growing energy demand. And at the urging of REA officials, the statewide association also began providing member education and communications services.



The first North Dakota Rural Electric Magazine was published in July 1954 by Conrad Publishing in Mandan. Now known as North Dakota Living, the magazine was the first tool used by electric cooperatives to provide member education and communications.



In 1958, the board of directors filed articles of incorporation for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). The association opened its new headquarters in northwest Mandan in 1966, off the newly constructed superhighway, Interstate 94, where it remains today.

At that same location, NDAREC also constructed a training center for lineworkers in partnership with Bismarck State College and an apprenticeship program with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

With more services needed, North Dakota electric and telephone cooperatives formed the Electronic Data Processing division in 1965 to process invoices for local cooperative members. The division was the precursor to North Central Data Cooperative, formed in 1968, and later, National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC).

As the demand for power rose in the late 1960s, electric cooperatives formed generation-and-transmission cooperatives to borrow money, construct facilities and master contracts on behalf of distribution co-ops.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Gov. **Art Link**, third from right, stands with dignitaries after signing North Dakota's reclamation laws. Known as the "Guardian of the Land," Link spoke at the 1973 NDAREC annual meeting: "Let those who follow and repopulate the land be able to say, 'Our grandparents did their job well. This land is as good and, in some cases, better than before.' Only if they can say this will we be worthy of the rich heritage of our land and its resources."

THE RIGHT THING, THE RIGHT WAY

From the beginning, electric cooperatives sought to improve the quality of rural life. Cooperative success meant doing the right thing, the right way. Directors, employees and members worked together for their



Sen. **Mark Andrews**, left, worked with electric cooperative leaders, including NDAREC Board President **Clarence Welander**, center, and NDAREC Executive Vice President and General Manager **Leland "Chub" Ulmer**, to help save the REA, which the Nixon administration tried to eliminate in 1972.

communities, which at times meant fighting – and winning – major political battles.

Crafted by North Dakota's electric cooperatives, the Territorial Integrity Act was approved by the N.D. Legislature in 1965, requiring utilities to get Public Service Commission (PSC) approval before expanding into areas

already served by an electric provider. The new law was a key victory for co-ops, offering protections for major investments in electric cooperative infrastructure in North Dakota.

Cooperatives also worked with the state Legislature and Gov. Art Link in the 1970s to draft an acceptable regulatory framework and land reclamation laws for lignite coal-mined land.

At the federal level, when President Richard Nixon eliminated the REA lending program on "Black Friday" in December 1972, electric cooperative leaders from across the country lobbied Congress for 20 weeks and successfully restored the program.



1980 COMMITTED TO COMMUNITY

Historically, member-owners have used the cooperative model to expand their capacity for self-help. Cooperatives acted as catalysts, offering solutions to problems and, together, doing things otherwise difficult or impossible to do alone.

In response to Gov. George Sinner's "Grow North Dakota" initiative, and devastation in the 1980s agricultural and rural economies, the state's electric and telecommunications cooperatives created the Rural Electric and Telecommunications Development Center in the early 1990s to support rural economic development.

To help cooperatives train lineworkers, NDAREC added the Apprenticeship, Training and Safety Program to its umbrella of services in 1991.

Cooperatives across the nation formed a national brand in 1998 called Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives.

And, as electric cooperatives evolved into highly sophisticated utilities, the need for education and communication became increasingly important. Today, education services through NDAREC help directors and employees earn certifications to improve service delivery to co-op members.

2000

POSITIONED FOR THE FUTURE

Co-op members turned out in busloads to push back four separate challenges to the Territorial Integrity Act. These co-op efforts produced landmark legislation to develop service area agreements among utilities in 2005. Later, electric co-ops soundly defeated three separate measures to extend full PSC jurisdiction over self-governing cooperatives controlled by democratically elected boards of directors. And, milestone property tax reform in 2009 provided millions of dollars in tax relief for electric cooperatives through new, fair tax formulas.

In 2006, electric cooperatives in western North Dakota began exponentially expanding electric systems to support oil and gas discovery in the Bakken.

North Dakota's electric cooperatives also formed the ND REC Benefit Trust in 2015 to reduce health care costs and offer quality, affordable health care to cooperative employees and their families.

Facing the 2020 challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, electric cooperatives remained agile in their pandemic response, while ensuring the safety of their essential workforce and the security and reliability of the power grid.

For decades, electric cooperatives have evolved to meet the needs of their members. Through change and challenge, cooperatives have survived. Because they were built by and belong to the people they serve, electric cooperatives continue to thrive by remaining agile and responsive to members – now and in the future.

The strength of electric cooperatives is undoubtedly what sets them apart – a core set of seven cooperative principles, shared cooperative values and a commitment to the members they serve.

*This timeline was researched and conceptualized by NDAREC staff, namely **Clarice L. Kesler**, with the editorial assistance of **Cally Peterson** and design support of **Liza Kessel**. It is displayed in the Cooperative Center corridor at the NDAREC headquarters facility in Mandan and proudly shares the electric cooperative story with visitors.*



Electric cooperatives commit to young people and begin sponsoring high school students in 2005 to participate in the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in Washington, D.C.



*In October 1993, Verendrye Electric Cooperative Manager **Wally Beyer** was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as administrator of the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). Beyer helped the REA reorganize into the Rural Utilities Service, a branch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.*



In 2001, the North Dakota REC/RTC Magazine was rebranded as North Dakota Living.



From 1999 to 2005, electric cooperative members defeated four legislative challenges to the Territorial Integrity Act.

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OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

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Cass County Electric Cooperative | Cavalier Rural Electric Cooperative
Dakota Valley Electric Cooperative | KEM Electric Cooperative
McKenzie Electric Cooperative | McLean Electric Cooperative
Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative | Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative
Nodak Electric Cooperative | North Central Electric Cooperative
Northern Plains Electric Cooperative | Roughrider Electric Cooperative
Slope Electric Cooperative | Verendrye Electric Cooperative



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Like millions of older Americans, I struggle with mobility. For years, I watched my quality of life slip away, as I was forced to stay home while friends and family took part in activities I'd once enjoyed. I thought I'd made some progress when I got a mobility scooter, but then I realized how hard it was to transport. Taking it apart and putting it back together was like doing a jigsaw puzzle. Once I had it disassembled, I had to try to put all of the pieces in the trunk of a car, go to wherever I was going, and repeat the process in reverse. Travel scooters were easier to transport, but they were uncomfortable and scary to drive, I always felt like I was ready to tip over. Then I found the *So Lite™ Scooter*. Now there's nothing that can hold me back.

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Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives celebrates 30 years

PHOTO COURTESY, NDSU



The Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives is headquartered in North Dakota State University's Barry Hall in downtown Fargo.

BY KRISTA RAUSCH

In the heart of downtown Fargo stands Barry Hall, a 1920s-era building with square façades and a clean stone finish. Behind its doors is one of North Dakota's best-kept secrets – one that has proven invaluable to many North Dakota cooperatives and the communities they serve.

For 30 years, the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives (QBCC) has been the region's trusted source for cooperative education and research. A partnership between the region's cooperatives and North Dakota State University (NDSU), the center works to enhance the business potential of cooperatives through research, education and outreach. And, much like the cooperatives it serves, it was started through grassroots advocacy.

"The co-op community came together and said, 'Let's form a partnership,'" says QBCC Director Frayne Olson. "The concept was that the university would make sure there was a faculty member to serve as the director of the center, provide research and teach the cooperatives class, and the cooperatives would put money into an endowment to fund its activities."

NDSU was a natural partner. The university, known for its agricultural programs, was already

providing cooperative education to its students. The cooperatives class was taught by Dr. David Cobia, the man who literally wrote the textbook on cooperatives, titled "Cooperatives in Agriculture."

"There was a need for cooperative education, and Dr. Cobia filled that need," Olson says. "What really got him a lot of attention and acclaim, of course, was writing the textbook, which was very popular. In fact, it was translated into Japanese and used in some of the universities in Japan for a while."

In October 1988, the Joint Cooperative Education Committee endorsed the concept of the center, and four years later, the N.D. Board of Higher Education approved its creation. With Cobia its first executive director, the center, named after former U.S. Sen. Quentin Burdick, would become a comprehensive and reliable source for education and research on cooperative businesses.

"A lot of work went into the development of the center," Olson says. "There were a lot of discussions about what we needed to do and how we were going to do it. I have to give a tremendous amount of credit to the people who took the effort to do that, and to go out and make the argument that this is really important, and we need to do this."



Frayne Olson, executive director of the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives, visits with **Katelyn Long**, a graduate student whose research project focuses on co-op equity management and co-op finance.



Cooperative directors attend a cooperative leadership training hosted by the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives in February.

PHOTO BY NDAREC/KRISTA PAUSCH

EDUCATING COOPERATIVE LEADERS

When asked to consider QBCC's biggest accomplishment over the past 30 years, Olson is quick to answer – the students.

Academics is a key component of the center. Since 1992, QBCC has educated hundreds of university students about cooperative principles and management strategies, preparing them for future cooperative careers.

The cooperatives course, which is offered at NDSU each spring, is unique. First, it's one of few classes NDSU lists across two different colleges – the Department of Agribusiness and Applied Economics and the Department of Business Administration. This allows students in either program to take the elective course and earn credits toward their degree. Additionally, students taking the course can earn either undergraduate or graduate level course credits.

"As a graduate student, there's some extra work," Olson explains. "Students still go to the same class and take the same tests, but they have to write another paper to earn the additional graduate level course credits."

Since the creation of the center, the demand for cooperative education has grown, and other universities have added the course to their curriculum. Every other year, Olson teaches the cooperatives class remotely for students attending Dickinson State University. The course is also offered by the AG IDEA Exchange, an alliance of accredited public universities that collaborate to provide online classes for the AG IDEA program.

"It's a consortium of 12 or 13 universities in the north central region of the United States," Olson says. "It allows the specialized courses to be shared across university systems. So, let's say I'm a student at the University of Nebraska, and I want to take

a course offered by NDSU. I can do that through this system."

University students aren't the only ones learning important lessons from the center. After identifying a need for cooperative director training, QBCC launched its Cooperative Leadership Training Program in 2019. The program provides three levels of education for cooperative directors and managers – Foundation, Enhanced and Capstone.

"I went out to the co-ops, and I asked, 'What can we do, at the center, to better meet the needs of the co-ops in the region?' It came back pretty strongly that there was this need for executive education," Olson says. "The center was looked at as an independent source for education and research. So, they said let's partner again and develop a program that would benefit everybody. We put a really solid system together that provides executive education, while raising visibility of the center."

The training program, which evolves based on current issues and participant needs, is overseen by the QBCC Executive Education Committee, which includes representatives from QBCC, the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), CoBank, CHS, North Dakota Farmers Union, the North Dakota Grain Dealers Association and Widmer Roel.

BUILDING COOPERATIVE CONNECTIONS

Another important focus of the center is fostering connections among the region's cooperatives. It accomplishes this goal by providing opportunities for co-op leaders to come together and share ideas across industries. The Co-operate event, which was first held in 2021, is one example of QBCC's outreach efforts. The biennial convening event

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



Frayne Olson, executive director, Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives, welcomes attendees to Co-operate 2021, a convening event that brought cooperative leaders together to celebrate, collaborate and expand the impact of cooperatives.

PHOTO BY NDAREC/KRISTA RAUSCH

brings together leaders from different cooperative sectors to celebrate, collaborate and expand the impact of cooperatives.

"As cooperative leaders, we dedicate a lot of our time to the industries we serve. It's our job. But, when you think more broadly, we all serve the same people. You look at a rural community, and our memberships overlap. So, what can we do together?" says Josh Kramer, NDAREC executive vice president and general manager. "We need to focus more on what we can collectively do to improve the quality of life for our members. Nobody is going to save rural America. We have to do it ourselves."

Those connections not only benefit our state's established cooperatives, but newly formed cooperatives, as well.

"What we can lend to those new cooperatives is support. We can find ways for them to participate

in our educational programs or find ways for them to secure some seed capital or lending services," Kramer says. "As cooperatives that have been around for a while, we have an obligation to help."

As new cooperatives emerge and new challenges arise across rural industries, the value of the center and a connected cooperative network becomes increasingly evident. And, as the needs of the region's cooperatives shift, so, too, will the work of the center.

"There's a lot more work out there than I'm ever going to get done in my career. So, as far as the need for the center and the things the center can contribute, I see a demand for a long time forward," Olson says. ■

Krista Rausch is communications specialist for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and Capital Electric Cooperative. She can be reached at krausch@ndarec.com.

SUPPORT THE QUENTIN BURDICK CENTER FOR COOPERATIVES

For 30 years, the Quentin Burdick Center for Cooperatives (QBCC) has been the region's trusted source for cooperative education, research and outreach. To help secure a bright future for cooperatives in the state and advance local industries, the center is working to build its endowment fund.

Investments in QBCC's endowment fund provide the stability needed to maximize the center's

offerings, increase the value of its executive training series and continue providing cooperative education, research and outreach to students, businesses and cooperatives in North Dakota.

For more information on how to support the important work of QBCC through its endowment fund, contact the North Dakota State University Foundation by email, office@ndsufoundation.com, or by phone, 800-279-8971. ■

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**Capital
Electric**
COOPERATIVE

OCTOBER 2022

Capital Electric Cooperative will relocate to its new headquarters property in November. The property, which is currently undergoing renovations, includes a 48,000-square-foot building and a six-acre fenced pole yard.



IN THIS ISSUE

- Capital Electric Cooperative to relocate to new headquarters facility
- Energy vampires word scramble
- Capital Electric unveils new website
- Operation Round Up gives \$28,500 to community
- Apply for the 2023 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour
- Board minutes



RENDERING BY JAMIE VETTER/AGENCY MABU

Capital Electric Cooperative's new logo graces the exterior of its new headquarters facility, located at 7401 Yukon Drive in north Bismarck.

Capital Electric Cooperative to relocate to new headquarters facility

BY KRISTA RAUSCH

Capital Electric Cooperative will soon welcome members to its new headquarters facility, located at 7401 Yukon Drive in north Bismarck. Currently under renovation, the new location will offer improved security, better access and room for the co-op to grow. Employees will begin transitioning to the new facility in November.

For more than 50 years, Capital Electric has called 4111 State Street in Bismarck home. In that time, the co-op has grown from 2,655 meters to 21,805 meters and added 21 employees.

As the co-op's staff and membership grew, so did the community around it, creating new challenges. Future expansion was hindered. Parking became limited. And, increased traffic made it difficult for crews to maneuver large trucks and pole trailers off the property. It became clear the co-op had outgrown its home.

"We're just getting pinched in," Operations Manager Rick Dressler says. "Years ago, it was fine. There wasn't

much up here. But Bismarck is growing, and this is where most of the growth is happening."

After identifying the need for a new location, the Capital Electric Board of Directors began considering available options, including new construction and existing facilities. In February 2020, the board approved the purchase of a 12-acre property located less than two miles north of the co-op's current headquarters location.

Positioned along the two highways most traveled by the co-op's lineworkers — Highway 1804 and Highway 83 — Capital Electric's new headquarters facility is situated away from areas of congested urban traffic, making it more accessible to members, contractors and employees. And, better access could mean faster response times.

"The positioning of the property facilitates a quicker response time to outages and service calls," says Manager of Engineering Services Greg Owen. "With our new access points, we can go east, west, north and south pretty rapidly."

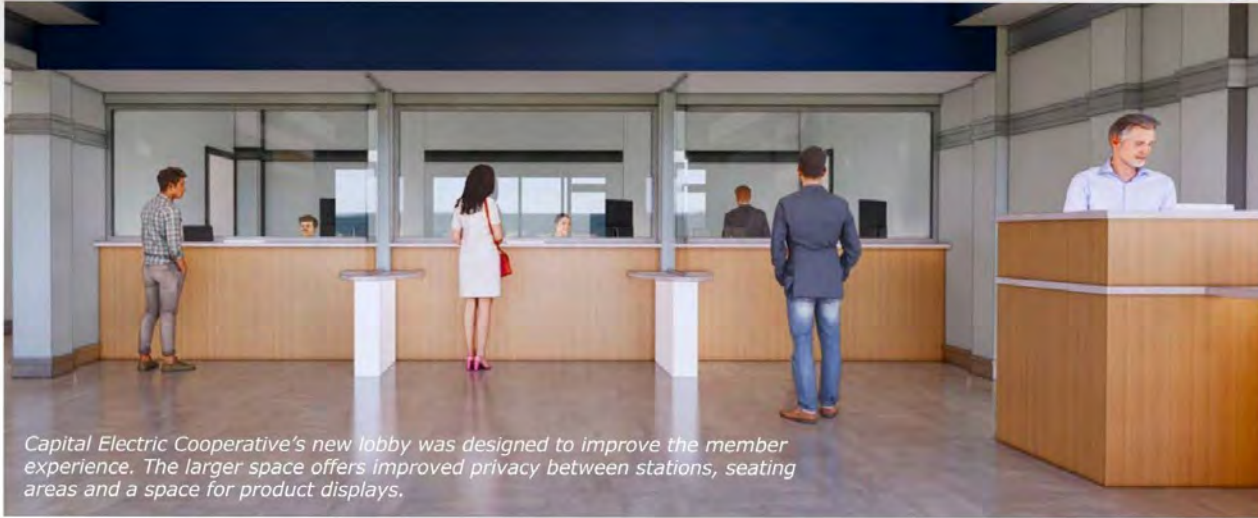


PHOTO BY PAUL BREINEN/EPIC ARCHITECTS

Capital Electric Cooperative's new lobby was designed to improve the member experience. The larger space offers improved privacy between stations, seating areas and a space for product displays.

An improved member experience

The modern facility, constructed in 2008, has office space with vaulted ceilings and floor-to-ceiling windows, a state-of-the-art training center, an outdoor patio, a large indoor shop and a six-acre fenced pole yard. All member areas are at ground level, with no slope, providing better accessibility, especially for those with mobility issues. In addition, the parking lot is more than twice the size of the one at the State Street property. And more improvements are underway.

In August, Capital City Construction began interior renovations to the lobby, control room and metering room. These renovations will help improve the overall employee and member experience.

“In the lobby, there will be three member stations, and we’ll have a little bit better privacy between stations,” Owen says. “We’ll also have some seating and a display room for the products we offer, such as water heaters and solar wells. And for members who may want to spend time visiting with staff, we’ll have a space with a table and chairs where we can sit down and discuss topics they want to learn more about.”

The operations department will also benefit from a new control room with a 7-by-14-foot video wall, which will enhance the ability to monitor systems and respond in the event of an outage. Dressler says it’s a major improvement.

“Everyone is looking forward to the new video wall,” Dressler says. “There are a lot of different things we can put on that wall. We can put our system map on there. We can put the weather on there. We can put security on there. We can put our transmission system on there. We can put one of those things on there or we can put it all on there.”

Construction is also underway on a 10,000-square-foot storage building, which will be completed in 2023.

A new look

The new building will bear Capital Electric’s new logo, which was unveiled at the co-op’s annual meeting in June.

“In the life of every business, there comes a moment when you need to look closer at who you are or, rather, who you’ve become, and make that visible for others,” General Manager Paul Fitterer says. “As Capital Electric evolves, so, too, should our image.”

The logo, designed by Agency MABU, speaks to Capital Electric’s reliability and work ethic. A power button is reflected in the mark, which turned on its side, loosely forms the ‘C’ and ‘E’ of Capital Electric. The angular, wrench-like shape gives the mark a blue-collar feel that alludes to the organization’s humble, genuine nature and get-it-done attitude.

“A new building, a new logo — stuff like that gives everybody a fresh start, you know?” Dressler says. “We have a lot of people who have been here for quite a few years. And it’s pretty cool to move into a new building and get a new look. We’ll be doing the same work, but it still feels like a new beginning.”

Capital Electric plans to relocate to the new facility by Thanksgiving.

“As always, we are here to serve our members, and we look forward to welcoming them to our new location,” Fitterer says.


Capital Electric is currently working with CRA Group to sell its existing administrative building. To learn more about the property, visit capitalelec.com/capital-electric-property-sales or contact Kyle Holwagner at kyle@thecragroup.com or 701-400-5373. 📞





ENERGY VAMPIRES WORD SCRAMBLE

Energy vampires could be lurking in your home! These are electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not being used.

Unscramble the bolded words to identify common energy vampires. Check your work in the answer key below.

 When you're finished playing that new video game, unplug your **eagm oncloes**.

 Tell your parents to unplug the **efcfeo kmrea** when they're finished brewing.

 When you're done watching your favorite show, unplug the **seotnivile**.

 If your phone is juiced up, unplug your **nophe rahrgce**.

Answer key: game console, coffee maker, television, phone charger



IT Specialist **Mike Abel** reviews a web form on Capital Electric Cooperative's new website.

Capital Electric Cooperative launches new website

BY WES ENGBRECHT

One of the most proficient ways to provide up-to-date information to Capital Electric Cooperative's members is the co-op's website, *capitalelec.com*. The newly revamped site serves as a portal to electric service applications, SmartHub, outage maps and much more.

The website is created in-house using tools provided by the Co-op Web Builder (CWB) program. A no-cost benefit for members of Touchstone Energy Cooperatives®, it is the only content management system built exclusively for electric cooperatives.

The CWB support team is part of Capital Electric's extended co-op family, and they are always available when the co-op requires assistance, training and advice. The team provides monthly updates on ways to improve the member experience, in addition to online "town hall" meetings, which allow for collaboration between cooperatives using the platform.

Earlier this year, Capital Electric began the process of

upgrading its website to the newest version, CWB 3.0. The new site is built on a more flexible platform with other positive features and enhancements. It is fully responsive, consistent and functional on all devices.

IT Specialist Mike Abel did a great job of migrating the old website's data to the new version.

"The CWB team assisted greatly as I was working on the new site," Abel says. "The online web forms for new applications will be easy for members to use."

Capital Electric welcomes feedback as members navigate their way through the new website, one of many tools the co-op uses to provide up-to-date information to its valued members.

In conjunction with the co-op's Facebook and Twitter presence, along with the *North Dakota Living* magazine local pages, the co-op's messages will be consistent and reliable. Capital Electric will continue to move forward to best serve its members.

Visit our new website today at capitalelec.com. ☎

Spare change changes lives through Operation Round Up



A community is only as strong as the support it provides in a time of need. Capital Electric Cooperative's members help others all the time. Those members inspired Capital Electric to launch its Operation Round Up program in 1997.

Operation Round Up is a program that allows Capital Electric members to round up their monthly utility bill to the nearest dollar and donate their pennies to a charitable trust. The money pools and accumulates, and an elected board of five co-op members reviews grant applications to determine the best use of those pennies. Over the last 25 years, co-op members have contributed more than \$828,000 to the program, supporting their communities and local nonprofits, and assisting with medical expenses for those in need.

In August, Capital Electric presented the most recent round of grant checks, totaling \$28,500, to the following individuals and organizations:

- Bis-Man Mentor Squad
- Bismarck-Mandan Rifle and Pistol Association
- Bismarck Recreation Council
- Designer Genes of North Dakota
- FirstLink
- First Presbyterian Child Care
- Fit 4 Victory
- Heaven's Helpers Closet
- Leadership Bismarck-Mandan solar project
- McClusky Park District
- Pride Manchester House
- Scottish Rite Speech Therapy Center
- Village Family Service Center
- One individual in need

The next application deadline is Jan. 31. Any person residing in Burleigh or Sheridan County may apply to

receive an Operation Round Up grant. To request an application, call Capital Electric at 701-223-1513 or visit the co-op's website, capitalelec.com. To download the application form from the website, click on *Our Services > Operation Round Up*.



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- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Capital Electric Cooperative.
- If you have any questions, please contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric, at 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 20, 2023. You can email entries to Wes Engbrecht at wese@capitalelec.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, PO Box 730, Bismarck, ND 58502-0730.



CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT
ndyouthtour.com

Board minute excerpts **AUG. 26, 2022**

The Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative held its regular meeting on Friday, Aug. 26. The meeting was held in person at Capital Electric's headquarters, 4111 State Street, Bismarck, North Dakota. All directors were present at that time. Also present were: Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Systems Supervisor Jeff Holzer, Manager of Engineering Services Greg Owen, Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner, Manager of Communications and IT Wes Engbrecht and Attorney Zachary Pelham of Pearce Durick PLLC, who acted as recording secretary.

Financial Review: Prior to the board meeting, Directors Kyle Tschosik and David Straley reviewed the July check register and expenditures. They advised all checks and expenditures were in order. The financials were approved as presented.

Management Reports (Business Department, Operations Department, Engineering Services, Energy Services and Communications/IT):

Business Department Report: Steen presented the July financial and statistical report to the board.

Total kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales for July were ahead of budget by 5.1%. Monthly electric revenue was ahead of budget by 2.7%.

The co-op's July load factor was below the budget, a variance of -3.4%.

The operating margin for July was -\$197,630, ahead of the budgeted -\$228,293. The total margin for July was -\$98,569, which was ahead of the budgeted -\$104,363.

Capital Electric began billing 50 new services in July, bringing active services to 21,805 versus 21,495 at this time last year, or a net increase of 310 accounts over the last 12 months.

Cash flow statements and monthly power costs for July were reviewed. Accounts receivable balances as of Aug. 25 were reviewed.

Estate Retirements: Following review of the financial condition of the co-op and recommendation by management, total estate retirement payments of \$15,652.03 to 14 estates were authorized.

Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Forms 990 and 990T, and North Dakota 40: Steen reviewed IRS Forms 990 and 990T, and North Dakota Form 40. They were approved by the board.

Operations Report: Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Crews continue work on the Lincoln Substation, monthly substation inspections and the removal of overhead line along the 43rd Avenue road construction project. Installation of underground line will be begin after completion of road grading.

Safety Report: There were no lost time accidents in August. Without objection, the safety report was approved.

Safety Instructor Jeff Tweten, North Dakota

Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), held a safety training at Capital Electric's headquarters on Aug. 10. The training covered dielectric testing on the co-op's digger derrick and bucket trucks.

Engineering Services Report: Owen reviewed the written report from the engineering services department.

Thirty work orders were completed in July. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects.

Property Update: Owen reported on continued efforts to market the administrative building and provided updates on the upcoming sale of cooperative property and modifications to the new facility.

Energy Services: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services Report.

Nineteen service orders were completed in July.

Capital Electric's generator was successfully sold at auction and will be disconnected and removed in September prior to closing on the sale of the co-op's property.

Communications and IT: Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest. The co-op's new website recently launched, the Operation Round Up board recently met, and IT is working to prepare for the move to the new facility.

Strategic Planning: Board President Deon Vilhauer reported on efforts to set a date for a strategic planning session. Fitterer will poll board members to determine an appropriate date to conduct the planning session.

2023 Sales & Purchases Budget: Steen reported on the 2023 sales and purchases and related budget assumptions.

2023-2026 Work Plan: Owen reviewed the draft 2023-2026 work plan.

Policies: Fitterer reviewed a draft policy, Use of Cooperative Assets, Supplies and Paid Services.

Owen reviewed a draft policy on distributed energy resources.

Steen reviewed proposed Policy IV-01-23.1 — Load Control as a Service. Following discussion, the policy was approved.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative: Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters.

Vilhauer introduced Basin Electric Board Member Troy Presser, who represents District 3, which includes Capital Electric's territory. Discussion with Presser and the board took place on various issues, including generation facilities operated by Basin Electric, bill credits, capital credits, supply chain issues and the impact of the Inflation Reduction Act.

Central Power Electric Cooperative: Straley reported on the August Central Power board meeting. Land has been purchased for an anticipated Bismarck outpost.

Industry Update: Fitterer reviewed materials related to power markets and general cooperative news.

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC): Fitterer reported on the statewide managers meeting.

Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC) Grant: The board approved the submission of Capital Electric's grant application of \$2,000 for upgrades to the Mandan Rodeo Arena.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA): Fitterer reviewed the upcoming September regional meeting in Minneapolis.

National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC) Election: The board approved casting Capital Electric's ballot for Anthony Larson as CFC District 6 director.

Federated Rural Electric Insurance Exchange Election: The board approved casting Capital Electric's ballots for the two open director positions for Timothy O'Leary and Jamie Lewis.

Federated: Fitterer reviewed Federated's August 2022 board report.

Adjournment: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned. ☺

CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE
 4111 State St. N.
 Bismarck, ND 58503
 Website: www.capitalelec.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Deon Vilhauer, Pres.	Bismarck
Dave Charles, V. Pres.	Bismarck
David Straley, Sec.-Treas.	Bismarck
Kyle Tschosik, Asst. Sec.-Treas.	Bismarck
Rex Hollenbeck.....	McClusky
Dwight Wrangham.....	Bismarck
Kayla Pulvermacher	Bismarck
Lyndon Anderson.....	Bismarck
Sara Vollmer	Wing

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Find your creativity in North Dakota

BY NORTH DAKOTA TOURISM

Art can bring life to so many things. It can brighten an alleyway, bring excitement to a road trip and inspire your creativity. October is Arts and Humanities Month, making it the perfect time to celebrate all forms of art in communities large and small.



PHOTO COURTESY N.D. TOURISM

Tama Smith with *Prairie Fire Pottery* is just one of many talented potters in the state.

Local creators, such as Badman Design in Grand Forks, create beautiful one-of-a-kind pieces, using mixed metals and terracotta clay. Choose from custom jewelry to accent your wardrobe, or home décor and sculptures to accent your home or business.

Stop in Beach, located in the western part of the state, where Tama Smith creates pottery painted with abstract views of the Badlands she calls home. Look for her signature three dots on each piece, signifying it is a creation of Prairie Fire Pottery. Located in Fargo, Jon Offutt's glass creations are inspired by North Dakota landscapes and can be found at Gallery 4 and other art shows throughout the year. His hand-blown glass works include landscape vessels, ornaments and some larger pieces.

Upcoming events also give you the chance to support local business owners. The Big One Art & Craft Fair Fall Show starts its season in the FARGODOME Oct. 21 and 22. Stroll through hundreds of booths filled with local goods, arts and crafts. It's a perfect option to get started on your holiday shopping this year! If you can't make the Fargo show, keep an eye out for the upcoming Christmas shows in Minot and Bismarck this November.

Local artists' works are showcased in communities throughout the state. Stop in Bowman to see the "So God Made a Farmer" mural, or walk down Art Alley in Bismarck. There are also outdoor art and mural tours in downtown Fargo, Grand Forks and Minot. If a driving tour is on the list, the Enchanted Highway is an iconic drive that showcases seven of the largest pieces of metal-sculptured art in North Dakota.

Museums across the state feature a variety of 2D and 3D pieces of art for those looking to bask in creativity in quieter spaces. The Red Door Art Gallery in Wahpeton is a free museum designed to teach and preserve art of all kinds in its historic building, while the James Memorial Art Center in Williston will be hosting multiple events throughout the month.

Art is constant and diverse across North Dakota, so celebrate and enjoy National Arts and Humanities Month this October! ■

HISTORIC SITE SPOTLIGHT



GINGRAS TRADING POST
STATE HISTORIC SITE

Visit the restored 1840s home and fur trading post of Métis legislator and businessman Antoine Blanc Gingras, near Walhalla.

LegendaryND.com

OCTOBER

- Through Oct. 8 • BisMarket Farmers Market,** 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Saturdays, Sweet Avenue at Kiwanis Park, Bismarck.
- 8 • Granville JunkAholics' Junkin' in the Dirt,** 9 a.m.-4 p.m., North Dakota State Fair Center, Minot. 701-818-7915.
- 8 • Taste of Minot Downtown Food Tour,** 2-5 p.m., downtown, Minot. 719-235-8401.
- 8 • Sertoma Seltzer and Beerfest,** 4-8 p.m., North Dakota State Fairgrounds, Minot. 701-833-9078.
- 11 • Minot Christian Women's Club luncheon,** 12:15 p.m., Grand Hotel, Minot. 701-624-5531.
- 14-15 • Pumpkin Walk at Woodland Trail,** 7-9 p.m., Woodland Trail, Minot. 701-857-4136.
- 14-16 • Badlands Circuit Finals Rodeo,** North Dakota State Fair Center, Minot.
- 16 • Bismarck Bridal Show,** noon-3:30 p.m., Event Center, Bismarck. 701-202-8038.
- 21-22 • The Big One Art & Craft Fair,** 10 a.m.-8 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, FARGODOME, Fargo. 701-837-6059.
- 22 • Night at the Museum: Hangar Dance,** Dakota Territory Air Museum, Minot. 701-852-8500.
- 22 • Tauros Trunk or Treat Tailgate Party,** 5-6:30 p.m., Maysa Arena, Minot. 701-852-0101.
- 28-29 • Pride of Dakota Harvest Showcase,** 4-9 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, N.D. State Fair Center, Minot. 701-328-2231.
- 28-29 • 48th Annual Central Dakota Gem and Mineral Society Rock Show,** 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday and 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, Eagles Club Aerie 2237, 313 N. 26th St., Bismarck. 701-319-8339.
- 29 • Harleyween,** 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Magic City Harley-Davidson, Minot. 701-839-6330.
- 29 • Minot Symphony Orchestra presents "Hidden Gem,"** 7 p.m., Anne Nicole Nelson Hall, Minot State University, Minot. 701-858-4228.

NOVEMBER

- 1 • Christmas Open House at The Market,** 4-8 p.m., The Market on 4th, 1900 Fourth Ave. NW, Minot. 701-837-6490.
- 4-5 • Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase,** 4-9 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Alerus Center, Grand Forks. 701-328-2231.
- 4-5 • The Big One Art & Craft Fair,** North Dakota State Fair Center, Minot. 701-837-6059.
- 4-6 • Capital Quiltfest,** Bismarck Hotel and Conference Center, Bismarck. 701-220-5677.
- 8 • Minot Christian Women's Club luncheon,** 12:15 p.m., Grand Hotel, Minot. 701-624-5531.
- 18-19 • Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase,** noon-9 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Scheels Arena, Fargo. 701-328-2231.

DECEMBER

- 2 • Pride of Dakota Holiday Showcase,** noon-9 p.m. Friday and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday, Event Center, Bismarck. 701-328-2231.

North Dakota Living publishes calendar events free of charge. We only publish the date, name of the event, time, place and location, and contact telephone number. To submit an item, email ndliving@ndarec.com or mail to: NDAREC, calendar of events, *North Dakota Living*, P.O. Box 727, Mandan ND 58554-0727. The deadline is the 10th of each month. *North Dakota Living* does not guarantee the publication of any event.



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Letting go

It all started with my dad's trip to Germany in the 1960s. He returned with lots of stories, and gifts for his daughters. My gift was a Hummel figurine. Until then, I had no idea what a Hummel was, but I soon learned they were unique (at the time) and kind of expensive, especially for a young teen like me to have. I placed the porcelain replica on my dresser in my bedroom. It depicted a young boy looking through an old-fashioned camera on a tripod, with a puppy at his feet. I loved it.



Roxanne Henke

My mom did, too. So, when Christmas arrived, I opened a present containing another Hummel figurine. And, four days later on my birthday, another Hummel. And, so it went for many years. An aunt who had no children gave me a few of hers. Even my boyfriend got one into the mix.

And, here I am, many years down the collecting road, with a collection I didn't once add to on my own, trying to figure out what to do with a couple dozen Hummel figurines!

Let's go back to my mom for a bit. During a trip to Europe, she fell in love with fine, porcelain figurines produced by the Lladro company, and another collection began. This time it wasn't for me. They were all for her enjoyment. She had a great "excuse" for adding to her stash. Every time she bought a new Lladro, she would stick a piece of masking tape underneath the base, and write a name on it. Roxy. Kim. Ann. And then all eight grandkids. Then, she doubled down and started from the top.

When it came time for her to downsize, she passed a couple of "my" Lladros on to me, but kept a few in her new apartment.

Now, don't get me wrong, Lladros are beautifully made (and expensive), but they aren't "my taste" at all. They are much too fancy. But, I kept them on a rotating display in my house for her to see.

Until she passed away, that is. Not only did I suddenly get possession of all "my" Lladros, I also became the keeper of my kids' figurines. But, Mom's precious possessions weren't precious to me. I wasn't only left with her collectibles, I was also left with guilt at the thought of giving them away.

Mom was also an avid photographer. I love the MANY photos she took of me and my sisters while we were growing up. Four years after my dad died, mom remarried. (I was already married myself by then.)

Mom and Reiny were enthusiastic RV'ers. They traveled the United States with their series of motorhomes.

All along the way, Mom was snapping photos, getting them printed and then organized into a multitude of photo albums.

Guess who inherited those?

Paging through her albums was a wakeup call for me. I had been to none of those places. I'd met zero of the people they met along the way and who were grinning at me now. Those photos meant absolutely nothing to me. They evoked no memories. I asked my sisters and Reiny's two kids if they were interested in the albums. Without even seeing them, they said, "No, thanks."

And, that's when I got my wakeup call. I suddenly realized most of my photo albums would mean nothing to my girls. Oh, I have plenty of albums featuring them, but my husband and I have taken some nice trips I documented with photos, photos and more photos. And, yes, I put them in albums.

That realization put me into a downsizing frenzy. I didn't want my girls to have to figure out what to do with all my stuff. I started sorting and tossing. (I kept my albums. My girls have permission to toss them when the time comes.) But, I wasn't about to "toss" my Hummel figurines. I sent photos to my daughters.

"Do you want this one?" No. "What about this one?" No. I dug some other precious-to-me things from closets and drawers. "Would you like this?" No. "What about this?" No.

Over the course of several weeks, I kept it up. Surely, one of my Hummels? One of "my" Lladros? Or a dozen from my snowman and Santa collection? No. No. No.

Finally, my oldest daughter wrote back, "Mom, all we want is the lake cabin."

I laughed. Of course, they would want the "biggest" thing we own. But, I've come to realize the lake cabin holds years and years of family memories. They want the cabin, not because it's valuable, but because of the time we've spent there together. That is where the value lies – in the time spent and the memories we've made. Together.

Believe me, I think twice before I buy any new "thing" for my house. I realize it is just temporary enjoyment for me. I keep in mind a few words from the Bible: All these "things" will pass away, but what remains is the greatest thing, and that is love. ■

Roxanne (Roxy) Henke lives in rural North Dakota and is working on finding good homes for her remaining Hummel figurines. She is the author of eight novels. You can contact her at roxannehenke@gmail.com.

UPCOMING READER REPLY QUESTION:

NOVEMBER: What is your favorite product made in North Dakota and why?

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Cooperatives operate in many industries and sectors of the economy, both locally and across the world. All cooperatives share seven cooperative principles, which set them apart from other businesses.

So, while a food cooperative in Africa and a rural electric cooperative in North Dakota may be different, October is for each of them – and for all cooperatives!

7 cooperative principles



1
VOLUNTARY AND OPEN MEMBERSHIP



2
DEMOCRATIC MEMBER CONTROL



3
MEMBERS' ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION



4
AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE



5
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION



6
COOPERATION AMONG COOPERATIVES



7
CONCERN FOR COMMUNITY

Food pantry garden is cooperative effort

BY LUANN DART

A garden in Verendrye Electric Cooperative's service territory perfectly portrays the parable about the mustard seed: Sow a single seed and it can grow into a bountiful harvest.

A single idea planted into a single garden eventually grew into The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry Garden, providing thousands of pounds of fresh produce to those in need in Ward County.

The idea originated with Duane Brekke, who utilized the land on his grandfather's farmstead near Simcoe to build six elevated garden beds, each 200 feet long and 5 feet wide. Brekke built the first two garden beds in 2018, using repurposed materials, including beams from a former electrical substation.

"We've been blessed, my wife and I," he says, so he wanted to share the bounty in some way.

"I just enjoy the people. If we can't do good for others, then what's life about?" Brekke says.

All of the garden's produce is grown for the Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry in Minot, with volunteers planting, weeding, watering and harvesting the bounty.

"It's so easy to maintain and the volunteers can go out there

and have a cup of coffee in one hand and walk along and pull the weeds and visit. It's so much fun to see them enjoy themselves, while they're doing good for others and it just makes your heart happy," Brekke says.

Twenty-eight different vegetables were planted this year, Brekke says, such as cucumbers, carrots, beets, lettuce, peas, beans, zucchini, peppers, cabbage and others. And volunteers transplanted 240 tomato plants donated by nurseries in the area into the garden.

About eight volunteers visit the garden three times a week to harvest, and the fresh produce is then distributed through the food pantry the next day.

In one week, the garden produces up to 1,400 pounds of produce – all donated to the food pantry, which is a nonprofit ecumenical organization.

"People from all churches, and those who are unchurched, find it a common-ground place where they can feel good about helping out one another," says the Rev. Gerald Roise. All denominations working together "is a beautiful thing," he says.

The volunteer-based food pantry serves 400 families a week, and is open five days a week. On Thursdays, the food pantry does home deliveries through DoorDash, an online food delivery platform, for those who do not have transportation, which is a new feature this year. The food pantry's hours are 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 5:30 p.m. to 7 p.m. on Tuesday, with deliveries to about 50 people on Thursdays. The pantry is located





Volunteers tend the food pantry garden.



The Rev. **Gerald Roise** and **Casey Sidener**, the SRT Communications business sales manager, visit at the garden.



All the produce from the garden is donated to The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry.

COURTESY PHOTOS

at 1725 Burdick Expressway West in Minot.

"We don't supply all that families need. We only supplement what they need, giving according to the number in their family," Roise says. The food pantry only serves residents of Ward County and each family can only use the food pantry once a week.

"To have the garden available changes the game for all of us, because it gives us so much joy," Roise says. "It is our contemplative time to go out there and work together, planting and harvesting this food. The clients at the food pantry are pleased at the ability to have these fresh vegetables, because it's something they usually can't afford to buy."

"It's a small little miracle that all this has come about," Roise says.

While the Great Plains Food Bank is the major supplier of food for the pantry, the garden supplements the availability of produce.

"Food has gotten very expensive. Our food has tripled in cost or more," Roise says. "It's just become very difficult to supply a quantity of food."

Both the garden and the food pantry can always use more volunteers, Roise says.

Volunteers also include U.S. Air Force Base personnel, who assist with unloading the delivery truck at the food pantry each month, and youth groups assist with sorting food drives.

"There are so many groups who extend that volunteer base out," Roise says.

"We need to thank the business community in the Minot area for their help," Roise says. Many give food or dollars to the pantry. Verendrye Electric Cooperative has also been a major contributor of funds. Monetary donations may be sent to the food pantry at P.O. Box 716, Minot, ND 58701.

TYING IN THE TECH

Two wells water the garden, using an irrigation system that can be controlled remotely, thanks to the local broadband cooperative, SRT Communications.

"Remotely, I can place the water from anywhere in the world that has Wi-Fi. It's an awesome setup that has really taken the drudgery out of our watering system," Roise says. SRT donated the Wi-Fi connection to make it possible.

SRT's fiber network serves the Brekke farm, so the cooperative donated roughly \$1,200 in equipment and labor to extend the Wi-Fi from the farmhouse to the garden, using a wireless point-to-point setup.

The new Wi-Fi-enabled system allows volunteers to monitor and water the garden remotely at any time, saving travel expenses, resources and countless hours of labor.

The technology also ensures precise watering for the healthiest vegetables and smartest use of resources. A volunteer can view the garden beds from a mobile device and see exactly how much water each is getting, which ones need more and which ones need less. He can turn off the watering on one bed and start it on another – or set everything on a timer for 24-hour-a-day watering. He is able to ensure everything is operating properly, and respond to any problems immediately. And he can do all of this from his phone miles from the farm. Garden work that used to take hours now takes minutes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



The Rev. **Gerald Roise** empties a rain gauge attached to the pole that also contains the Wi-Fi equipment at the garden.

COURTESY PHOTOS



Volunteers stand at the raised beds to work. Equipment related to the remote irrigation system can be seen in the bottom right of the photo.

"We were very, very appreciative of SRT jumping on board," Roise says.

"SRT has always been committed to doing the best for the areas that we serve. We're a cooperative. We are owned by our members, so it's important to make sure that our members' communities are thriving. To be able to support a garden that is used to feed people in our local community is just such a win and aligns with the mission," says Cassidy Hjelmstad, SRT Communications CEO/general manager.

The volunteers may be passionate, but caring for a garden can be hard labor, she says.

"So when they asked about having a way to use technology to solve their volunteer fatigue, absolutely we were thrilled to be able to jump on board with this project and knew that our board, as well as our staff, would easily be able to come up with a way to support this," Hjelmstad says.

"We are a technology provider and known as the internet provider, but we were able to use internet to help find solutions so these people can continue to support the garden," she says. "You never want to

see volunteer fatigue set in, because that's when you start to lose people. That can absolutely be a reality, even as passionate as they are about this mission. So, it was a win-win for us to be able to say, 'Let's figure out a way to help them with their technology. Get them what they need.' And make sure that this garden continues to supply the thousands of pounds of food that they're able to do for The Lord's Cupboard."

The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry is one of the largest food pantries in the state with the number of people served, she said.

"So, having thousands of pounds of food, fresh vegetables, to be provided to these families has been critical," Hjelmstad says.

"It's an innovative way to help shed fresh light on how high-speed internet helps our communities thrive," she says. "It's a neat way to tie technology into something that is so traditional, and yet so critical." ■

Luann Dart is a freelance writer and editor who lives in the Elgin area.

SHARING THE BOUNTY

Jeanne Brekke shares two recipes that use plenty of vegetables from the family garden. Her husband, Duane Brekke, originated The Lord's Cupboard Food Pantry Garden, located on his grandfather's farmstead near Simcoe. All of the garden's produce is donated to the food pantry.

"I'm proud of my husband and what he has done with it," Jeanne said.

The garden is located in Verendrye Electric Cooperative's service territory, and Duane's father, Sam Brekke, was the 113th member of the cooperative. Duane recalls being 8 years old and seeing the light turned on in his bedroom for the first time, as electricity first arrived to the family farmstead. ■

SEE RECIPES ON PAGE 24



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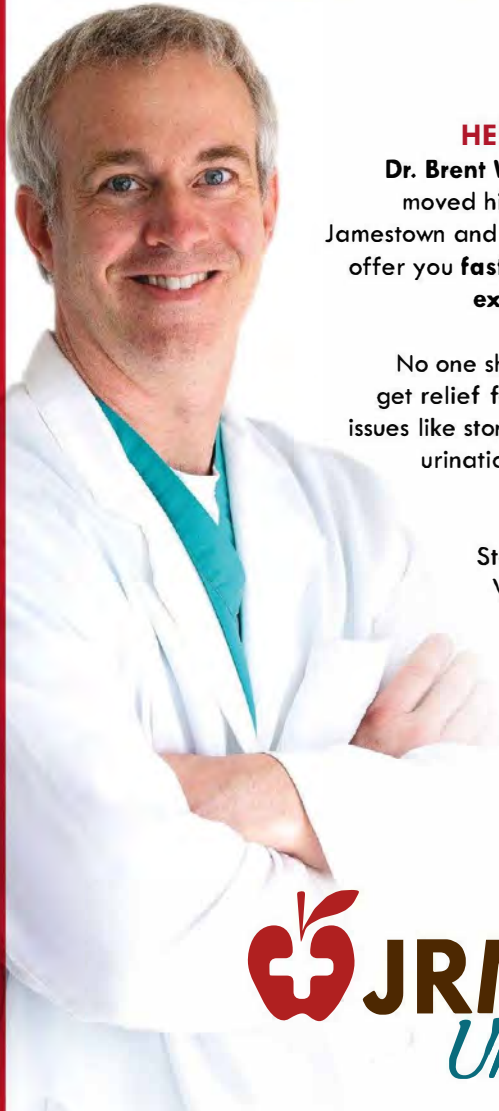
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CROCKPOT SALSA

- 13-14 medium tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
- 1 tsp. salt
- 4 tsp. white vinegar
- 2 6-oz. cans tomato paste
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup hot sauce
- 2 large onions, chopped
- 3 peppers, red, yellow, green, seeded and chopped
- 3 banana peppers, seeded and chopped
- 1-2 hot peppers, seeded and chopped (optional)

Combine all ingredients into 6-quart crockpot. Cook on high for 2 hours or low for 4 hours. Enjoy hot or cold!

Recipe by **Jeanne Brekke**
Verendrye Electric Cooperative



PHOTOS BY NDARECQUIZA KESSEL



VEGGIE PIZZA

- 2 packages refrigerated crescent rolls
- 2 8-oz. packages cream cheese, room temperature
- 1 package dry ranch dressing
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup mayonnaise
- 4-6 cups raw vegetables, chopped
(Photographed with broccoli, cauliflower, red onion, green onion, radish and cherry tomatoes.)
- 3 cups white cheddar cheese, grated
- 1 cup black olives

Press crescent rolls on cookie sheet to form a crust. Make sure to pinch precut edges together. Bake as directed, set aside to cool. Meanwhile, beat cream cheese, mayonnaise and ranch dressing until smooth. Spread an even layer over cooled crust. Arrange veggies across crust, top with cheese and black olives. Enjoy any extra ranch spread with veggies!

Recipe by **Jeanne Brekke**
Verendrye Electric Cooperative

The wire that fenced the West

In May 1976, I sat across the desk from Allen Fisk, a state conservationist with the Soil Conservation Service. I don't remember what the interview was about, but I do remember that Fisk had a barbed wire collection hanging on the wall of his office. Fisk got me started collecting barbed wire.



PHOTO BY CARMEN DENNEY

Al Gustin

I'd been fixing fence since I was 9 or 10 years old. And I thought I might have dealt with three or four different kinds of barbed wire. But when I started looking, I found many more. In fact, I discovered 17 different styles of barbed wire just on the land our family owned or rented – Kelly's Thorny Fence, Curtis Cross Lock and Ellwood's Reverse Spread, among them.

Fixing fence was a bit of an adventure for a few years, as I looked for one more unusual barb. Even now, after I've discovered all there is to discover on our land, I really don't mind fixing fence, most of the time. True, wire that's 100 years old, rusted and brittle, can be almost impossible to work with. Still, there is

something almost romantic about barbed wire. My modest collection includes about 70 pieces. Some I found elsewhere, on other farms. Some was given to me or was traded for.

In their book, "The Wire That Fenced the West," Henry and Frances McCallum write, "The hitherto unfenced West, far-ranging, free-ranging, the homeland of big livestock men and the romantic cowboy began swiftly to fence itself. . . The ensuing revolution in enclosure is an important part of the story of Western development."

Will barbed wire still be around 100 years from now? Maybe not. The latest thing in fencing involves boundaries maintained by a GPS system. The cows wear a solar-powered collar, and if they come to the invisible boundary, they get a shock on the top of the neck to back them up. No posts, no wire, just an invisible boundary that can be changed by simply reprogramming the controller.

It sounds intriguing, although some would say not as gratifying as fixing the barbed wire fence grandpa built. Barbed wire is part of our heritage. That's why people collect it. ■

Al Gustin is a retired farm broadcaster, active rancher and a member of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.

The graphic features a background of a sunset over a field with silhouettes of cows. The main title 'DAKOTA FARM & RANCH REPORT' is in large, bold, red and white letters. Below it, 'with Scott Bachmeier' is written in a smaller font. On the right side, there are logos for 'iHeart MEDIA' (a red heart with radio waves), '1460 KLTC' (in a blue and red stylized font), 'KBMR' (with 'Bismarck-Mandan's Original Country 1130' and 'Country Music Station' around it), 'KFYR 550 AM RADIO' (with a microphone icon), and '91 Country KCJB' (in a red and white stylized font).

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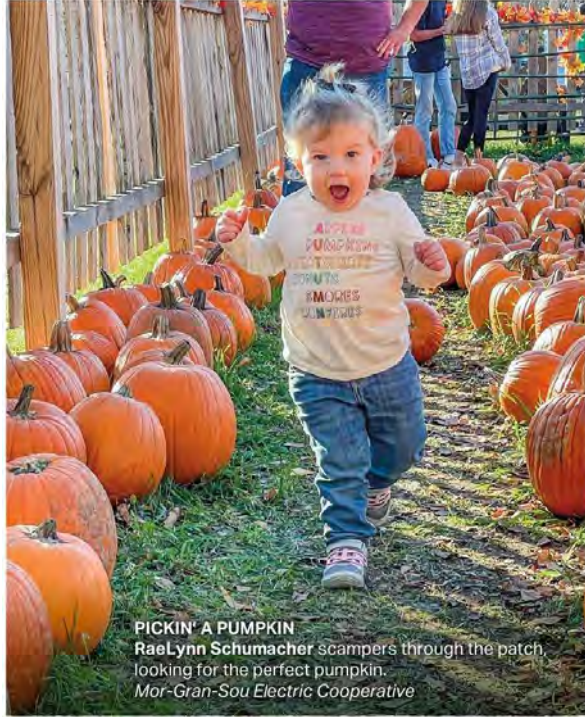
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