



**Capital
Electric**
COOPERATIVE

SEPTEMBER 2022

Get to know Capital Electric
Cooperative Energy Services
Coordinator NaTesa Messerschmidt
in this month's feature story.



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Recently promoted to the position of energy services coordinator, **NaTesa Messerschmidt** (right) works with Energy Services Manager **Josh Schaffner** (center) and Energy Services Technician **Jared Nygaard** (left) to help members with their energy needs.

Employee spotlight: **NaTesa Messerschmidt**

BY WES ENGBRECHT

Capital Electric Cooperative employees work hard to ensure members receive the best possible service. It's the co-op way, and we are proud to continue this tradition.

Recently promoted Energy Services Coordinator NaTesa Messerschmidt follows this tradition very well. She lives life to the fullest — at work and at home on the farm. NaTesa brings a rare form of optimism and energy to the office, which doesn't go unnoticed by co-workers or co-op members.

NaTesa joined Capital Electric four years ago as a billing representative. She reflects on her first experiences at the co-op, "I loved working with our members as they brought in their payments and questions for our staff. My co-workers were all so great to work with, and I enjoyed my job every day!"

As the co-op's energy services department continued to provide services to an ever-growing membership, the need for additional help became necessary. That's when NaTesa joined the team.



Moonlight poses next to **NaTesa**, while **Spike** tries to avoid the camera.



NaTaya (right) and **NicLynn** (left) love to spend time with their chickens, **Crooked Beak** and **Genevieve**.

Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner describes the department’s role in the co-op, “We are here to assist our members with any power-related problems or questions, ranging from livestock watering to LED lighting. NaTesa’s desire to learn and positive attitude have proven to be a great asset to our membership, and we’re excited to have her join our team.”

“I am very excited to have this opportunity to work with the energy services department. I believe it will be a great learning experience and a challenge, but I enjoy working with our members to solve problems. I look forward to working with Josh and Jared to support them through this process,” NaTesa shares.

NaTesa’s life is busy and full of variety as she and her husband, Nate, along with daughters, NaTaya and NicLynn, work hard to keep up with many animals on their hobby farm west of New Salem.

The Messerschmidts have become well-known for the sale of chicken eggs.

“The girls take care of the birds, which are also like pets to them. They clean the coops and feed them daily, collecting the eggs and selling them. They get to keep the money, so it’s like having their own business,” NaTesa explains.

The girls most often use their egg earnings to buy additional animals for the farm.

“I bought my first 4-H rabbits with my chicken egg money,” 9-year-old NaTaya proudly says. “NicLynn and I usually have about 65 chickens at a time. We also have two geese and about 20 ducks who lay eggs. We love them all!”

The farm wouldn’t be complete without a menagerie of other animals, which include two donkeys, two horses, two cows, three dogs and three cats. The donkeys are extra-special to the girls, as they were adopted from a situation that wasn’t ideal.

“My donkeys are Delilah and Magnolia, and I love them both very much!” says 6-year-old NicLynn.

The animals add to the rustic charm of the property. Each one brings a personality of their own, and they are a joy to visit.

Everyone pitches in on the farm to get the work done. Each girl has her chores to do, and they know how to make it happen. Life is busy, but so rewarding for NaTesa and her family.

“I wouldn’t change a thing. I’m surrounded by people I appreciate every day, and my animals complete the picture perfectly!” she says with a beaming smile.

The cooperative welcomes NaTesa to the Energy Services team. We appreciate her energy and positive attitude, which help us provide the best service possible to our members. ☺

Capital Electric Cooperative sends Bismarck junior on the trip of a lifetime

BY KRISTA RAUSCH



Tyler Harper, Bismarck, stands atop a monument at Gettysburg National Military Park. Behind him is the location of the Battle of Gettysburg, which many consider the turning point of the American Civil War.

Discovery. Adventure. Good times. Those are the words Tyler Harper, a junior at Bismarck High School, chose to describe his recent trip to Washington, D.C., for the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Representing Capital Electric Cooperative, Harper joined more than 1,200 teenagers from across the country in the nation's capital in June.

Harper's trip started early. On June 19, he beat the sun to the Bismarck airport, arriving at 5:45 a.m., to check in for Delta Flight 3958.

"I was excited, because it was my first time on a plane, but I was also very tired," Harper recalls with a laugh. "Taking off and landing reminded me of a roller coaster, because it was very fast and you're pushed against your seat."

After landing safely in D.C., Harper embarked on an extraordinary week of learning and new experiences. He sat in the historic Ford's Theatre. He stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. He walked the halls of our nation's Capitol. He witnessed the changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. And, he stood on an historic battlefield in Gettysburg.



North Dakota's Youth Tour delegates pose for a photo in front of the White House.

At Gettysburg National Military Park, Harper had the opportunity to see the "Battle of Gettysburg" cyclorama. The 140-year-old painting brings the final Confederate assault on July 3, 1863, to life, providing viewers with a sense of what occurred at the battle long touted as the

turning point in the American Civil War.

“It was fascinating to hear how it was painted and learn about what was on the painting and what happened at Gettysburg,” Harper says.

“And then, seeing all of the cannonball and bullet holes in the buildings that are still there today, it was fascinating, because we were seeing real parts of history right in front of us.”

Harper also had an opportunity to visit with members of North Dakota’s congressional delegation.

“It was cool being in the same room as these people we hear about and see on television,” Harper says. “It was really cool to hear their thoughts on things that are affecting America and North Dakota today.”

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been bringing high school students from across the nation to Washington, D.C., since the late 1950s. Students apply by submitting an essay to their local co-op. Each year, Capital Electric selects one student to represent the co-op on the tour. The all-expense paid trip is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. And Harper says it’s an experience he’ll never forget.

“Getting a chance to see the places where our federal

government actively works and seeing the constitution — the document that gives people rights and outlines the government we have — seeing all of that in person was just so cool. A lot of people never get to go to D.C., so I’m so thankful I had the opportunity to go there.”

For more information on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, visit www.ndyouthtour.com or www.youthtour.coop, or e-mail Wes Engbrecht, wese@capitalelec.com. ☎



Thirteen North Dakota teens traveled from Bismarck to Washington, D.C., on the trip of a lifetime.



Electrical Safety Tips for Hunters

We encourage all members to be aware of electrical equipment while hunting. Keep these safety tips in mind as you enjoy the great outdoors.

- Keep clear of electrical equipment.
- Do not shoot at or near power lines or insulators.
- Know where power lines and equipment are located where you hunt.
- Be vigilant in wooded areas where power lines may not be as visible.
- Never place deer stands on utility poles.
- Never place decoys on power lines or other utility equipment.

Central Power Electric Cooperative makes final equipment connections before terminating a 115-kilovolt transmission line, which runs to the Gibbs substation.



Transmission and distribution systems undergo upgrades

BY GREG OWEN

Significant investments are being made to Capital Electric Cooperative's transmission and distribution system. Central Power Electric Cooperative, Capital Electric's transmission provider, is building the Gibbs transmission and distribution substation near the intersection of 43rd Avenue and 80th Street in Bismarck. This substation connects to the local 115-kilovolt (kV) transmission source and provides two major system improvements:

1. New circuit breakers and controls for two 43.8-kV transmission lines, which provide service to eastern and northern Burleigh County; and
2. New 12.5-kV distribution lines to serve load growth in the northern and eastern areas around Bismarck.

Another major project in the area is the rebuilding of the Lincoln substation, located along Highway 1804 between the Bismarck Airport and the University of Mary. The Lincoln substation is one of the oldest substations constructed in Capital Electric's territory. After decades of service, it was due for upgrades. Structural steel and other major components, such as the main power transformer, are being replaced.

Along with the substation rebuild, Central Power is also rebuilding the transmission line that follows around the southern and eastern boundaries of the airport, ultimately connecting to the Hay Creek substation along Bismarck Expressway.

Both projects are expected to be completed and online in September. ⚡

Capital Electric Cooperative welcomes new employees



Chelsea Souza, billing representative

The billing department staff at Capital Electric Cooperative represent the first impression the co-op makes with members and other visitors. A smiling face and positive greeting go a long way to a positive experience. Chelsey Souza is the most recent addition to the billing crew, and she brings those qualities and more to the position.

When asked about her experience so far with Capital Electric, Chelsey says, “I love who I work with! I have worked with Jenny before at Basin Electric Power Cooperative, and there are other people in this office who are nothing short of amazing!”

Chelsey was born and raised in northern California, but her dad’s family is from Hawaii. She lived in Hawaii during her last two years in high school. She moved back to California to graduate and then moved on to Bismarck, where she has lived ever since.

Chelsey is an avid photographer, and she started a business called Captured Moments by CC in 2020. She is getting married this fall in Haleiwa, Hawaii, to Toussaint Bryant. They have a 7-year-old son named Zaire. Chelsey loves to swim, travel and spend time with her family.

We are very pleased to have her join us at the co-op!



Cole Leier, lineworker

Working at a cooperative as a lineworker wasn’t something Cole Leier planned to do, but it turned out to be a great career choice.


A Bismarck native, Cole grew up playing a variety of sports at Century High School, graduating in 2018. He immediately entered Bismarck State College’s lineworker school after a couple of high school friends recommended the program. During that time, Cole worked in the Scheel’s hunting department.

When Cole graduated from line school in 2019, he worked at Montana-Dakota Utilities (MDU) as summer help. He then gained more lineworker experience with Cass County Electric Cooperative. He has been working out of Capital Electric’s Wing outpost since May. Cole enjoys the small-town feel.

“The environment is relaxed, and you can concentrate on learning the system when you are focused on a smaller area. I am also closer to family around the Wing area. We have a great bunch of guys at the co-op, and I enjoy working with them,” he says.

One of his first assignments was to help restore power in McLean Electric Cooperative’s service area following a spring storm that resulted in downed powerlines.

Cole has a variety of interests including hunting, fishing and travel. On a fishing experience at Cascade Lake in Idaho, Cole snagged a 16.5-inch perch, which he mounted. He also enjoys hunting and fishing tournaments with his dad.

We welcome Cole to Capital Electric! 

Board minute excerpts JULY 22, 2022

The Capital Electric Cooperative Board of Directors held its regular meeting on July 22. All the directors were present at that time. Also present were: Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Operations Manager Rick Dressler, Engineering Services Manager Greg Owen, Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner, Manager of Communications and IT Wes Engbrecht, and Attorney Meredith Vukelic of Pearce Durick, PLLC, who acted as recording secretary.

Financial Review: Prior to the board meeting, Board President Deon Vilhauer and Vice President Dave Charles reviewed the June check register and expenditures. They advised that all checks were in order. The financial review was approved.

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

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

Total kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales for June were behind budget by 7.9%. Monthly electric revenue was behind budget by 7.7%.

Capital Electric's June load factor was below the budgeted figure by a variance of 1.16%.

The operating margin for June was -\$152,529, ahead of the budgeted -\$267,689. The total margin for June was \$1,540,512, which was ahead of the budgeted \$1,352,163.

Capital Electric began billing 41 new services in June, bringing active services to 21,760 versus 21,467 at this time last year, or a net increase of 293 accounts over the last 12 months.

Total cash on hand and monthly power cost were reviewed. Accounts receivable balances as of July 22 were reviewed.

Estate Retirements: Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, a payment for 19 estate retirements totaling \$12,376.75 was approved.

Write-offs: After discussion, it was approved to write off \$2,995.51 for the second quarter. Total twelve-month write-offs were \$11,851.

Operations Report: Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department. Crews continue to work on the new Gibbs substation and Lincoln substation. A 1000-KVA transformer was installed on the University of Mary campus. Monthly substation inspections were completed.

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

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

Thirty-seven work orders were completed in June.

Property Update: Owen reported on continued efforts to market the administrative building and noted recent tours were held.

The underground fuel tank was removed, fulfilling Capital Electric's obligations on the sale of the service center and adjacent land. Soil samples were taken and were found not to be contaminated.

Owen reported pre-construction meetings for

modifications to the new headquarters facility are taking place.

Energy Services: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services Report.

Twenty service orders were completed in June. Two additional residential solar projects will be inspected.

The EV Tailgate Party, which was held in June, attracted more than 400 people.

Communications and IT: Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest.

CEC's new website is nearly ready to launch.

Employees participated in the Lincoln and Mandan parades.

Rate Discussion: The 2023 budget process has started. Purchases and sales projections have begun.

Policies: Steen reviewed proposed modifications to the Coincident Peak Rate Policy, which was approved and will be effective on Sept. 1.

Dual Fuel Heating — Grain Dryers Policy: Steen reviewed the policy and reported it has not been used in the last 10 years. Following discussion, the policy was rescinded.

Policy IV-01-Rate 68 — Experimental Commercial Off-Peak Heating Policy and Rate: Steen reviewed the policy and reported it had been a pilot program. Following discussion, the policy was rescinded.

Policy IV-01-27 — Peak Time Rebate Program: Steen reviewed the policy and reported the program is not financially advantageous in the five winter months. Following discussion, the program was modified as presented by allowing the program only during May through September.

Steen reviewed a proposed new policy relating to required prepaid participation that outlines a process to transition a member to prepaid billing because of disconnection of service for nonpayment more than once in 12 months. The policy was approved.

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

Central Power Electric Cooperative: Director David Straley reported on the recent Central Power board meeting.

Mid-West Electric Consumers Association: Fitterer reviewed the second quarter membership update.

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

North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC): Vilhauer reported on the new facility and the upcoming summer meeting.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA): Fitterer reported on the upcoming regional meeting. Charles was selected as a delegate, and Director Kyle Tschosik was selected as an alternate.

National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC): Director Lyndon Anderson was selected as a delegate to the annual meeting, and Director Sara Vollmer was

selected as an alternate.

National Rural Utilities Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC): Director Kayla Pulvermacher was selected as a delegate, and Vilhauer was selected as an alternate.

Federated Rural Electric Association: Tschosik was selected as a delegate, and Straley was selected as an alternate.

Rural Electric Supply Company (RESCO): Vollmer was selected as a delegate, and Director Dwight Wrangham was selected as an alternate.

Federated Nomination: Fitterer reviewed the notice of nomination and election.

RESCO Election: Fitterer reported on the director election. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to support the election of Kim Rasmussen.

CoBank Election: Fitterer reported on the CoBank board election material. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to support the election of Christopher C. Piotrowski.

National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) Board Meeting: Fitterer reported on the board meeting.

2022 Energy Directors Conference: Vilhauer reported on the Energy Directors Conference.

Adjournment: There being no further business to come before the meeting, without objection, the regular meeting was adjourned. ☺

CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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 Kayla Pulvermacher Bismarck
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 Sara Vollmer..... Wing

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