



**Capital  
Electric**  
COOPERATIVE

**FEBRUARY 2023**

Many North Dakota electric cooperatives, including Capital Electric Cooperative, were put to the test in November and December, when winter storms hit our state.



## The test of winter storms

BY WES ENGBRECHT

**T**he first snowfall each winter is a test for many. Did we get the snowblower serviced, and will it start? Did we stop for groceries before the snow blew in? Do we have working batteries in the flashlights, and a fully charged cellphone?

At Capital Electric Cooperative, the first winter storm is our test, too. Did the upgrades made during the construction season improve our system? Did our lineworkers have the safety training and skills to work in challenging weather conditions? How resilient

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**"I was just thinking about all of the brave linemen making sure people have power."**

—Karen Meter

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was our system during the storm?

Many North Dakota electric cooperatives, including Capital Electric, were put to the test in November and December, when winter storms hit our state. It took hard work and resilience to handle what came along. Lineworkers did their best to keep your lights on through the worst of it.

To ensure our system is highly maintained and resilient, Capital Electric invests millions of dollars annually in major system upgrades such as burying major overhead lines, performing rural rebuilds and deploying automation to further reduce outage times. Our crews and contractors are constantly working to ensure the reliability of our system.

In many cases, outages are caused upstream from Capital Electric's power lines. When this occurs, the transmission owners must repair their lines before power can be restored. Since the lines do not belong to us, we are unable to repair them. When transmission lines feeding our substations are damaged, lineworkers reroute power through other substations whenever possible.

The work lineworkers do is important – they power the lives of our members – and they take it seriously.

Many of Capital Electric's members express gratitude for our crew's efforts. Through social media,

we stay in touch with our members, providing up-to-date information and responding to inquiries and comments.

As we move through this winter, be assured Capital Electric employees will be doing our best to support and serve our members. You are now and will always be our No. 1 priority. We thank you for your support of your cooperative. We are grateful to serve you now and in the future.

The comments we receive are much appreciated by the lineworkers, who do a dangerous job – in all weather conditions – to keep the power flowing. Here are a few comments received during December's storm:

**"Thanks for all you do, especially the linemen braving the extreme cold and wind to keep/get our power on!"**

—Berkley Kraft

**"Power is back on. Thank you and those linemen and for all you people do in all kinds of weather! May everyone be safe in this ridiculous weather!"**

—Theresa Held

**"Thank you! Really appreciated having our power restored – and in such a timely manner – this morning during the brutal weather!"**

—Cheryl Lane

**"My sincere appreciation to the linemen working the power outage by Regan. Can't imagine having to work in those conditions. You boys are my knights in shining armor!"**

—Diane Skwarok

**"We were out briefly this morning south of Wilton. We appreciate the hard work and dedication of the linemen and everyone during this difficult weather!"**

—Shandi Franklund



# Capital Electric Cooperative teams up with the CRA Group to give back to emergency services volunteers



**N**orth Dakota's volunteer emergency responders are the heroes of the prairie. They save lives, prevent injuries, and protect property and the community.

To say thank you, Capital Electric Cooperative is teaming up with The CRA Group to award \$10,000 to local emergency services volunteers as a credit on their utilities!

A locally owned commercial real estate firm, CRA has been assisting Capital Electric with the marketing of its former headquarters building and other property. CRA chose to apply a portion of its commission proceeds to give back to those who volunteer their time in emergency services, providing Capital Electric with a \$10,000 donation.

To qualify, applicants must be a current member of Capital Electric and must volunteer for emergency services, such as an ambulance service, fire department or law enforcement. Recipients will be selected based on an application form explaining their role and experience as a volunteer. Donations awarded from this fund are not need or project based, so detailed information is not required on the application.

The judging process to determine the number

of recipients and the amount they receive will be performed by an independent group of co-op members along with at least one representative from CRA.

To apply yourself or nominate another member, complete the application form on the next page and mail it to: Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric Cooperative, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck, ND, 58503. The application is also available at [www.capitalelec.com/forms](http://www.capitalelec.com/forms). You may also contact Wes at 701-712-7923 or [wese@capitalelec.com](mailto:wese@capitalelec.com) to have an application emailed to you.

The deadline to submit an application is March 31. Recipients will be notified by phone by May 1.

Capital Electric and CRA are pleased to make this program available, and we look forward to receiving your application!

***CRA is a Bismarck-Mandan private, locally owned commercial real estate firm. They focus on the marketing of commercial properties and provide services including landlord/tenant representation, buyer/seller representation, consulting and site acquisition. To learn more about CRA, please visit [www.TheCRAGroup.com](http://www.TheCRAGroup.com).*** 



## Emergency services volunteer application for funds

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of volunteer (if other than self): \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency service organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Years of volunteer service: \_\_\_\_\_

Average hours of volunteer service per month: \_\_\_\_\_

Describe your level of involvement with your local emergency service organization:

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# How upcoming rate changes affect you

BY WES ENGBRECHT

As most of you have noticed, the price of goods and services has been increasing over recent months, and even the past couple of years. Some of these increases have been rather significant, causing much concern about the general level of inflation affecting our country.

Capital Electric Cooperative has done our best to maintain steady energy rates for our members. In fact, a general rate increase has not occurred since 2016. Unfortunately, we have reached a point where it is necessary to increase our revenue to cover the increasing costs of equipment, labor and supplies. As an example of these increases, the cost of our basic transformer has jumped from \$1,300 two years ago to \$1,900 today.

Starting in May, many of you (including commercial and residential members) will see an overall increase in your Capital Electric energy bill. This increase will be calculated for residential members through a new grid capacity charge based on your highest point of usage. For commercial members, the existing grid capacity

charge will be increased.

As the increase will be effective May 1, you will notice a new line item on the bill you receive in June. The increase will not be hidden in your kilowatt-hour (kWh) line. It will be a separate line item, so you can analyze the increase or decrease. We are committed to providing the information and feedback you will require to understand this change.

For those of you who will be seeing a noticeable increase, we will be contacting you directly through the mail or by phone. There will be options you may be able to use to level your bill in the future. Our member service professionals will be available to discuss these options.

Information on this topic can be found at [www.capitalelec.com/ratechange](http://www.capitalelec.com/ratechange). Feel free to contact our office at 701-223-1513 or email [cec-rates@capitalelec.com](mailto:cec-rates@capitalelec.com). Thank you for your attention to this change and for your continued cooperative membership. ⚡



## Save the date for your annual meeting

**June 20  
Bismarck Event Center**

- Learn about co-op issues.
- Elect board directors to represent you.
- Enjoy a free meal.



## Online voting for directors

**Sign up for SmartHub to vote online!**

In addition to traditional in-person voting at our annual meeting June 20, Capital Electric Cooperative will again offer online voting through SmartHub, a web and mobile app that allows members to access their bill, manage their account and monitor electric usage. To register for the free resource, visit [www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com) and click on "New User? Register to use SmartHub!" at the top of the home page. You will need to enter your billing account number, last name and email address to sign up. ☎



## Capital Electric Cooperative offers student scholarship

Capital Electric Cooperative is offering a \$1,000 student scholarship, in partnership with Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

To qualify for the scholarship, students must be enrolled or planning to enroll in a full-time undergraduate or graduate course of study at an accredited two-year or four-year college, university or vocational/technical school. Their parent(s) or guardian(s) must be members of Capital Electric.

Our cooperative will assemble a panel of impartial judges to review all applications. The judges will select the winning application based on academic performance, potential to succeed, leadership and participation in school and community activities, honors, a statement of education and career goals, work experience and an outside referral. The scholarship will be awarded without regard to other awards, loans or financial assistance the applicant may have obtained.

Application forms may be downloaded at [www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com) or picked up at co-op headquarters at 7401 Yukon Drive in Bismarck. **Applications must be completed and returned to Capital Electric on or before Friday, Feb. 15.**

# Board minute excerpts DEC. 16, 2022

The Capital Electric Cooperative board of directors held its regular meeting on Dec. 16. Due to severe winter weather, the meeting was held virtually. All 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 Zachary Pelham of Pearce Durick PLLC, who acted as recording secretary.

**Financial Review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Kyle Tschosik and Dave Charles reviewed the November 2022 check register and expenditures. They advised that all checks and expenditures were in order. The financial review was approved as presented.

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

**Business Department Report:** Steen presented the December 2022 financial and statistical report to the board.

Total kilowatt-hour (kWh) sales for November were ahead of budget by 11.4%. Monthly electric revenue was ahead of budget by 8.6%.

Capital Electric's November load factor was better than budget by 1.61%.

The operating margin for November was \$131,235, ahead of the budgeted amount of \$45,440. The total margin for November was \$1,360,842, which was ahead of the budgeted \$57,771. The variance was due in large part to the timing in which the recent sale of Capital Electric real estate was booked.

Capital Electric began billing 21 new services in November, bringing active services to 21,923 versus 21,625 at this time last year, or a net increase of 298 accounts over the last 12 months.

Total cash on hand and monthly power cost for November were reviewed.

**Estate Retirements:** Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, two estate retirements totaling \$2,352.54 were approved.

**Auditor RFP:** Following discussion, the board approved engaging Brady Martz to conduct the annual audit of the cooperative for the next five years (2023-2027).

**Operations Report:** Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department. The winter storm caused scattered outages; temporary and permanent connects have slowed due to the setting in of winter; and new cable was energized along the 43rd Avenue road construction project.

**Safety Report:** There were no lost-time accidents in December.

The North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives' (NDAREC) safety service team conducted an onsite Rural Electric Safety Accreditation Program (RESAP) audit at the new facility and the Wing outpost. Mike Koenig, NDAREC safety instructor, observed crews as they changed out a faulty underground breaker, responded to an outage and spliced underground cable.

Without objection, the safety report was approved.

**Engineering Services Report:** Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Twenty work orders were completed in November.

Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including the completion of the MacLean Bottoms tie line and all service lines that had been requested for the year.

**Property Update:** Owen reported on continued efforts to market the administration building and the status of modifications to the new facility.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report.

Eighteen service orders were completed in November.

Schaffner reported on the scheduling of an active shooter and security exercise through the Burleigh County Sheriff's Department, a presentation at the Engineering & Operations Conference regarding the state's electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure plan and plans to update the energy services content on Capital Electric's website.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest, including social media communications during outages, a donation from CRA Group that will be awarded to local emergency services volunteers, and a meeting with a local legislator.

**Bylaw Committee Update:** Charles reviewed the initial work of the committee, whose members include Charles and Directors David Straley and Kayla Pulvermacher. Charles reported any proposed changes to the bylaws would be presented to the membership at the annual meeting. No action was taken.

**Strategic Planning:** Fitterer reported on efforts to seek qualified facilitators for the board's strategic planning meeting in August. Following discussion, it was approved to engage the Cooperative Finance Corporation and Mark Schneider to facilitate the co-op's strategic planning meeting.

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

**Central Power Electric Cooperative:** Straley reported on the November board meeting. Fitterer reported on the Member Advisory Committee meeting, which included a discussion on the deferral of Central Power's bill credit from Basin.

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

**NDAREC:** No meeting took place in December. NDAREC held a strategic planning session.

**Mid-West Electric Consumers Association:** Director Lyndon Anderson reported on the annual meeting.

**National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA):** Fitterer reported on NRECA's upcoming PowerXChange meeting. Directors Deon Vilhauer, Sara Vollmer and Anderson will attend. Vollmer will be the Capital Electric delegate, and Anderson the alternate.

**Federated Rural Electric Association:** Fitterer reviewed materials related to the November 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](http://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

### OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Friday : 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Office phone: 701-223-1513

Toll-free: 888-223-1513

Pay-By-Phone: 1-877-853-5928

DAY—NIGHT—WEEKEND

TROUBLE CALL: 223-1513

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