



**Capital
Electric**
COOPERATIVE

OCTOBER 2023

As Capital Electric Cooperative celebrates National Co-op Month in October, the cooperative continues to work with members on reducing commercial energy costs.

CO-OPS GROW



COMMUNITIES

October represents National Co-op Month, as identified by the National Cooperative Business Association. This year's theme is "Cooperatives: partners for accelerated sustainable development." Co-op Month recognizes cooperatives as a trusted, proven way to do business. Capital Electric Cooperative is proud to be a member-owned cooperative and pleased to serve our members as their partner in efficient energy usage.

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The 2023 junior marksmanship team proudly displays the rifles used in practice and competition. Many students have been trained in safety and marksmanship by the association and many have competed nationally, as well as moved on to college shooting sports.

Capital Electric delivers methods to reduce commercial energy costs

BY WES ENGBRECHT

The price of products and services seems to be rising in almost all areas of society. Most people and businesses welcome opportunities to save money whenever possible.

Capital Electric Cooperative's energy services department works with individuals and business members to keep their energy costs under control.

"We started a commercial outreach program for business members who appear to be paying a little too much. Our experienced staff starts the process with a rate evaluation. Then, we look for opportunities to help reduce their overall costs," explains Energy Services Manager Josh Schaffner.

The Bismarck-Mandan Rifle and Pistol Association was on our radar as one of the commercial members who may benefit from this process. Schaffner visited with Range Manager, Junior Coach and Association Treasurer Tom Thompson, who represents the association, and came up with some options that worked.

"The Rifle and Pistol Association was an ideal member for our outreach program," Schaffner says. "Due to their unique operating hours and the building being heated with in-floor heat, they can benefit

greatly from a rate switch to one of our time-based commercial rates. Based on our analysis, they have the potential to save nearly \$500 per month. Our operations department was also able to help with some metering changes to speed up the transition and make the monthly savings a quicker realization."

What is the focus of the association?

"The association, which was founded in 1981, focuses on teaching safety and marksmanship to those who are 12 to 20 years old. We have also filled the gaps with college students if they don't offer shooting as a club sport," Thompson says. "Our students are examples of how guns can be a positive in society, as they are often portrayed as negative, being used mainly in violent situations."

Through the junior marksmanship program, these young people are introduced to shooting sports.

"Junior shooters in our program often compete at state and national competitions," Thompson explains. Shooting is also an Olympic sport, as well as a National Collegiate Athletic Association sport, with college scholarships available similar to other college sports.



Energy Services Manager **Josh Schaffner** explains the cost-savings process of the heating system to **Tom Thompson** of the Bismarck-Mandan Rifle and Pistol Association, one of our commercial members. Our recommendations could save the association up to \$500 per month by switching to our coincident peak rate and installing a controller on its boiler and ventilation fan system.

For many juniors, shooting becomes a “life sport,” as they maintain their interest for many years beyond high school and college. It becomes a safe and enjoyable way for adults to enjoy shooting throughout their lives.

What costs are involved for students?

Necessary equipment is provided to students, including rifles, spotting scopes, shooting jackets, gloves, slings, shooting mats and eye/ear protection. This is a way to promote involvement by all interested students without having to make a large investment in supplies. The association is an all-volunteer organization with no paid staff.

The junior program’s season runs from December to March each year. If you have an interested young adult, you can call Thompson at 701-220-4601 or email tthompson4895@gmail.com.

If you own a commercial business and are interested in having Capital Electric evaluate your electric costs, please give Schaffner a call at 701-712-7920 or email joshs@capitalelec.com. ☎



Shooters of all ages practice their skills at this outdoor range near Moffit. The distances represent various challenge levels, ranging from 25 yards to 1,000 yards. For most of us, shooting these distances would be an insurmountable challenge, with a huge degree of difficulty caused by windy conditions.



Capital Electric Cooperative staff and board members worked together to analyze operational issues and plan for the future.

CEC'S STRATEGIC PLANNING: Preparing for a positive future

BY WES ENGBRECHT

When companies engage in a strategic planning process, those watching from the outside may be wondering what the goals of this process may be. During the session, the cooperative leaders utilize their understanding of the co-op's internal strengths and weaknesses to create a plan for a healthy financial future. The process also protects the co-op from potential issues that may be threatening to this future.

When Capital Electric Cooperative's board of directors and management team met for a strategic planning session in August, the goal was primarily member-oriented. How do we ensure co-op members feel confident about the path we are on? By focusing on this clear objective, we were able to determine a sense of direction to ensure the co-op's goals are met.

"Strategic planning is one of the many tools that is available to the cooperative. Throughout the day, in a planning session, the board and staff discuss the mid-

term goals of the cooperative as well as the vision of what the cooperative needs to be in the years to come," explains Board President Deon Vilhauer.

Time, money, personnel and other resources are limited to a certain level, and they must be considered when plans are made. This requires prioritizing those plans based on the limitations of those resources.

As we move forward with these goals in mind, we will engage all Capital Electric employees to ensure a unified approach is taken. Every team member will be accountable for their role in creating a successful future for the cooperative. We are fortunate to have a highly skilled team to stay on top of our daily needs and goals.

In the fast-paced world of changing technology and business influences, strategic planning is a stabilizing force, which provides us with a solid foundation for the future. Representing our members in the best future possible remains to be the top priority. ☺

Open house welcomes former directors and employees

BY WES ENGBRECHT



General Manager **Paul Fitterer** addresses the former directors and employees who attended this enjoyable event. Focusing on the hard work of those folks, along with our current directors and employees, Fitterer thanked them for the co-op's success throughout the years.

In many ways, an electric cooperative is like a family. With any family, it's always uplifting to enjoy a reunion with those you haven't seen in a while.

On Aug. 22, the Capital Electric Cooperative board and employees welcomed former directors and employees to our new building for lunch and a building tour, as well as a time for reminiscing on days gone by.

Former 33-year general manager Lars Nygren and his wife, Helen, were among those who joined us at this event. In addition to the Nygrens, and many others, was longtime board president Rusty Lasher, who drove from McClusky to make a connection with old and new friends.

"Thank you for inviting me to your new building and for the wonderful conversation. I had such a nice time visiting with retired board members and employees, as well as those that run the co-op today," Lasher graciously related.

The cooperative's directors and employees are represented by a relatively small group. People are surprised to hear that 40 or fewer employees are operating a cooperative serving more than 22,000 meters. A board of nine directors representing the cooperative's three districts are a vital piece to the operations as well.

"It was truly rewarding to connect with those who have dedicated so many years to build this member-

owned co-op. Our more than 75-year history in the industry is complete with men and women who worked so diligently to ensure its success," General Manager Paul Fitterer said.

As we move forward into the future, we hope to follow in the footsteps of our pioneers and live up to their expectations. We are here, after all, to provide the very best service to you, our members. ☺



Among those attending the open house were (left to right) former General Manager **Lars Nygren** and his wife, **Helen**, former directors, **Arlene Olson**, **Bill Patrie** and **Rod Eckroth**, with his wife, **Luwanna**, and former board president, **Richard Koski**.



Lana Jones, billing representative, brings a welcoming attitude to the co-op's front desk.

Jones joins billing department

What's the one feature that ensures a great first impression as you enter a business? Many would say a smile goes a long way. With our newest billing department employee, Lana Jones, the co-op has achieved this goal.

With that smile, Jones states, "I'm excited to work in a fun and engaging office environment in a customer-facing position with other positive employees. The electric industry is one that has an important impact on the community, and it inspires me to be part of that industry."

Jones started in her billing representative position on July 31. Her most recent work experience was at Sanford Laboratories, working in microbiology and blood banking.

She is originally from Bismarck and currently lives in Mandan with her husband, Dillon, and 2-year-old daughter, Madilyn. While away from the office, Lana spends her time relaxing and having fun with her husband and daughter, as well as kayaking and visiting her parents at their Lake Sakakawea cabin.

Capital Electric Cooperative's employees look forward to working with and getting to know Lana! ☺

OPEN HOUSE



Oct. 5, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck



**Capital
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APPLY FOR A TRIP OF A LIFETIME

WHAT IS YOUTH TOUR?

- An all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., paid for by Capital Electric Cooperative.
- A week of visiting historic monuments, touring world class museums, learning about electric cooperatives and meeting elected officials.
- Developing lifelong friendships with delegates from across the country!



JUNE 15 TO 21, 2024

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

ESSAY QUESTION

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will be traveling to Washington, D.C., to experience and learn about America's rich history. What moment in American history do you wish you had been a part of and what would you have contributed?

HOW TO APPLY

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school, and you and your parents or guardian must be served by Capital Electric Cooperative.
- Email entries to Wes Engbrecht at wese@capitalelec.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck, ND, 58503.
- Questions? Call Wes at 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 19, 2024.

EMPOWER



LEARN MORE AT NDYOUTHTOUR.COM

Board minute excerpts **AUG. 24**

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Thursday, Aug. 24. The meeting was held in person at Capital Electric, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck, pursuant to due notice to all directors. All directors were present.

Also present were: Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Operations Manager Rick Dressler, 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 Kayla Pulvermacher and Sara Vollmer reviewed the July 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 July financial and statistical report to the board.

Revenue was behind budget for July, as \$3,816,952 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$4,143,464 (unfavorable variance of \$326,516 or 7.9%).

Capital Electric's July load factor was behind budget by 7.59%.

The operating margin for July was -\$649,289, behind the budgeted amount of -\$236,762. The total margin for July was -\$631,803, which was behind the budgeted -\$226,593.

Capital Electric began billing 23 new services in July, bringing our active services to 22,109 versus 21,805 at this time last year, or a net increase of 304 accounts over the last 12 months.

Total cash on hand and monthly power cost for July was reviewed. Accounts receivable balances as of Aug. 23 were reviewed.

Estate Retirements: Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, seven estate retirements totaling \$7,173.16

were approved.

Operations Report: Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department. Dressler reported a new three-phase enclosure was installed in the Promontory Point Subdivision, a three-phase oil pad-mount switch in the Grand Theatre area was replaced with a new three-phase enclosure, and monthly substation inspections were completed by the Wing and Bismarck crews.

Transformer Quotes: Dressler reviewed the quotes received for 2024 transformers. The lower bids from RESCO were approved.

Safety Report: There were no lost-time accidents in July. Jeff Tweten, North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) safety instructor, completed dielectric truck testing for Capital Electric's digger-derrick and bucket trucks on Aug. 9. Without objection, the safety report was approved.

Engineering Services Report: Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Fifteen work orders were completed in July. Owen reported on ongoing and upcoming projects, including Capital Electric's near completion of its work on the Ash Coulee Road project.

Property Update: Owen reported on the status of the anticipated sale of the former administrative building that is currently under contract.

Energy Services: Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Thirteen service orders were completed in July. Schaffner reported on inquiries related to residential solar, work with NDAREC and the state fire school on adding solar safety training to the annual fire school curriculum, and a meeting with Northwest Tire to investigate cost-savings options for its new retread facility.

Communications and IT: Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on the open house held at the new facility for former employees and board members.

Strategic Planning: Fitterer reported that Cooperative Finance Corporation's Mark Schneider will be facilitating the strategic

planning session.

2024 Sales/Purchases Budget: Steen presented an overview of the 2024 budget. No action was taken.

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

Central Power Electric Cooperative: Charles reported on the August board meeting.

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

NDAREC: Fitterer reported on the managers meeting.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA): Fitterer updated on the NRECA regional meeting.

NRECA North Dakota Director: It was approved to cast Capital Electric's vote for NRECA director candidate Lynn Jacobson. Director Vilhauer is the delegate, and Charles is the alternate delegate at the election of North Dakota's NRECA director.

Cooperative Finance Corporation (CFC): Fitterer reported on the election for Capital Electric's district. The vote was cast for Jared Echternach for CFC's District 6 manager-director. ☎

CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

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

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