



# Capital Electric

COOPERATIVE

## MAY 2025

Students from the Naughton School, located northeast of Bismarck, share their smiles as they welcome invited guests to enjoy a meal they prepared. The school rests on the prairie and is accessible from all directions only by gravel roads.



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## Country school kids focus on hospitality

BY WES ENGBRECHT

*Students displayed their creative art projects while visitors enjoyed the lunch. Other projects were made available during the meal.*

**A**s a farm kid from Zap, I know what it's like to have only a few kids in your class. The students at the Naughton School, located northeast of Bismarck, understand that concept well.

The 25 students in preschool through eighth grade comprising the school's current population prepared a delicious meal for a few fortunate adults who were invited to enjoy it. From the enthusiastic greeting at the front door to the seating, the serving, the cleanup and the presentations during the meal, the lunch was quite memorable.

Principal Greg McKay proudly gave the students credit for the meal.

"The students were involved in planning every aspect of this event. They developed the guest list, the number of servings needed, selecting recipes and determining the total cost of the meal. Following the meal, students expressed their appreciation for being involved in such a rewarding project," he said.

The Naughton School is a hidden gem off a country road at the corner of 123rd Ave. NE and 93rd St. NE. Over the years, the school has seen many changes in enrollment, but it continues to thrive. The classroom and meeting space added in the last few years have completely changed the facility layout and the opportunities for learning.

Today's students share a legacy dating back to the school's origins in 1897. Over the past century, those fortunate students have received a high-quality education from dedicated teachers. With the continued support from the county and township, along with local farmers who help with snow removal, the school's future looks bright.

The school on the prairie is a glimpse into the past lives of those living in the area. Capital Electric Cooperative appreciates the opportunity to continue providing electricity to the school and thanks it for educating a group of awesome kids! ⚡



*Chili, baked potatoes and cornbread were the opening course for the meal prepared by students at the Naughton School. The desserts were the highlight, as always.*





*The check presentation ceremony is a great way for recipient organizations to meet and find ways to add value to their organizations.*

## Community support shines through Operation Round Up

**A**s cooperative members, we have always had a focus on supporting our communities. In fact, one of the seven co-op principles states, "While focusing on member needs, cooperatives work for the sustainable development of their communities through policies accepted by their members."

Capital Electric Cooperative members who donate to the Operation Round Up program truly reflect how a community helps others. This has been happening through Operation Round Up since 1997, and participation has increased every year.

The program is about to reach the \$1 million mark in cumulative donations granted to meet community needs. A board of five cooperative members meets to review applications and award grants twice each year.

The concept of Operation Round Up is simple. Members who participate agree to have their monthly bills rounded up to the nearest dollar. Those dollars are then pooled together and granted to nonprofit organizations and individuals who use the funds to meet their financial needs.

The program has had an incredible impact on the community. Individuals who are experiencing times of

need are given a hand. Organizations providing food, shelter, counseling or recovery addiction are just a few examples of grant recipients.

In recent years, the amount collected has increased dramatically and now totals approximately \$65,000 annually. Each application is limited to a grant of \$2,500. However, the board of directors can increase the grant level in special cases. At the March grant review meeting, the board granted \$27,500, all of which is benefiting someone in our community directly or through organizations that serve them.

It is easy to become a participating member of Operation Round Up. Call Capital Electric at 701-223-1513 to add your name to the list of donors in just a few minutes. Thank you to all who add their pennies to the fund each year. Be assured, your donation is making a huge difference in our communities.

Individuals and nonprofit organizations who desire funding can download a funding request application or complete an online form on our website. Visit [capitalelec.com/operation-round](http://capitalelec.com/operation-round). And remember, you can make a difference by giving only pennies each month! ☺



## 31:8 PROJECT Combating human trafficking in North Dakota and beyond

Every time a human trafficking story hits the news, our hearts break. While the full truth behind these tragic events may remain unknown, one thing is clear: Dedicated individuals and organizations are working relentlessly to address this pressing issue. One such organization is the 31:8 Project, based in Bismarck. Through education, advocacy and direct services to survivors, 31:8 Project is at the forefront of the fight against human trafficking.

Launched in 2015, 31:8 Project was founded by a team with years of experience in the anti-human trafficking field, dating back to 2006. The nonprofit's mission is to address human trafficking by raising awareness and providing support through several key initiatives, including education, Bravery Backpacks, survivor mentorship and the Demand Reduction Program.

Human trafficking is a global crisis, generating an estimated \$150 billion annually. Victims are often forced to work in industries where their labor is exploited to create products for the everyday consumer. Many victims are trafficked for forced labor in factories, while others may be coerced into situations of sexual exploitation. Victims of sex trafficking can be manipulated or recruited through various channels, including gaming platforms and social media, where predators often build false relationships to gain

their trust.

In 2024, 31:8 Project provided services to over 60 survivors of human trafficking. The organization has also been instrumental in raising awareness and educating a wide range of audiences across the state. In the past year alone, they delivered nearly 170 presentations to law enforcement, schools, health care providers and community organizations, further empowering individuals to take action and address trafficking in their communities.

In addition to direct survivor support, 31:8 Project delivered over 600 Bravery Backpacks to children who are victims of crime. These backpacks contain essential supplies and provide a sense of security and comfort to young survivors, who often face overwhelming trauma.

Looking ahead, 31:8 Project is gearing up for its fifth annual Bakken Human Trafficking Summit in Bismarck. The summit will bring together over 400 professionals and community members, including law enforcement officers, attorneys and service providers, with the goal of deepening knowledge and collaboration in the fight against human trafficking.

Recognizing the urgent need for action, Operation Round Up board members recently chose to fund 31:8 Project as a first-time applicant.

"We are incredibly thankful to receive this grant, which will enable us to expand our services and continue our vital work in combating human trafficking," said Stacy Schaffer, executive director of 31:8 Project. "This support allows us to reach more survivors, raise awareness and educate our communities to help prevent trafficking and provide healing to those affected."

31:8 Project is a critical resource in the fight against human trafficking, empowering individuals and communities to take action across North Dakota and the Midwest. By providing education, mentorship and essential support to survivors, the project is making a real difference in the lives of those affected by this modern-day form of slavery.

For more information on the 31:8 Project, visit [318project.org](https://318project.org). ☎







## Rieck awarded scholarship

**A**s part of its commitment to community and area youth, Capital Electric Cooperative awards a \$1,000 scholarship every year to a student who demonstrates academic and extracurricular achievement.

Funded by Basin Electric Power Cooperative, the scholarship is available to children of electric cooperative members. Capital Electric is proud to announce the recipient of this year's scholarship is Abigail (Abi) Rieck, a senior at Legacy High School.

Abi is a member of the 2025 graduating class and has kept herself busy during her school career. She has focused mainly on working hard, with a well-rounded class schedule. As she followed this path, she has earned a significant number of college credits.

Abi's college plans are to attend the University of North Dakota, majoring in biology/pre-med.

"I plan to work in the field of diagnostic radiology. Beyond my interest in medicine, I look forward to helping people and making their lives better as they deal with medical issues," she explains.

Abi will minor in music, as she has played the alto saxophone since fifth grade and would like to continue maintaining that skill. In high school, she participated in pep band, marching band and jazz ensemble.

Regarding athletics, cross-country and track is where she excels.

"I have always loved long-distance running. Beyond cross-country events, I compete in 800- and 1,600-meter events on the track. I also help with cross-country camp for students in kindergarten through fifth grade," she says.

"The scholarship is very generous, and it will help me greatly as I move onto college," she says.

Abi moved to Bismarck from Billings, Mont., in elementary school. She lives with her parents and yellow lab, Sidney.

The Basin Electric and member-cooperative scholarship program is designed to encourage and recognize the achievements of the children of member-cooperative consumers.

Each year, the program awards more than 130 scholarships to these students. Capital Electric has been proud to participate on an annual basis for many years. For more information, visit [capitalelec.com/content/scholarship](http://capitalelec.com/content/scholarship). ©

**Abi  
Rieck**





*Students visited the Capital Electric Cooperative table to learn what their electricity costs would be, depending on the size of their home or apartment.*

## Real World Camp is real life for students

BY WES ENGBRECHT

**D**on't you wish you had paid more attention in school when you were learning about what adult life would include? We were taught how to write a check, keep a bowling score manually and a few other real-world necessities. Today's adults will tell you the world was much simpler then.

Students in today's world don't know what it was like before the digital age. Things may seem easier, but still require a basic knowledge of your adult life relating to finances. This moves us into a local program focusing on a variety of issues young adults will face.

Real World Camp addresses real-life topics, such as starting a career, purchasing a home and applying for a mortgage, utility costs, car loans and budgeting for everyday needs. During the camp, fifth- and sixth-graders can meet with area professionals who work in these fields.

This year's event included students from Cannon

Ball, Washburn, Kidder County, Zeeland, Hebron and homeschool. The head count was 152, which meant there was some traffic control needed. However, the students had a great time and learned a lot. Preparing their home budget was their goal and they met it.

The program was initiated in Bismarck in 2010, and 11 camps have been held there since. Kathryn Spilman, current director, has organized the event for the past three years.

"It's a ray of sunshine to see a cafeteria full of students learning how to navigate 'the real world.' For them to see how the bills accrue and how to budget is essential," she says.

A group of volunteers help make the event run smoothly. The event is a positive community experience for children and Capital Electric Cooperative is privileged to be part of it. ☺





*Many Member Advisory Committee members attend regularly and are focused on learning, asking questions and providing feedback.*

## Members join co-op for evening of discussion

Capital Electric Cooperative is owned by nearly 20,000 members, and each voice matters to us. The board of directors is on the frontline, learning and sharing what's happening here. As employees and managers, we work daily to do what's best for you and the cooperative.

Twice each year, the co-op welcomes the Member Advisory Committee (MAC) to an evening meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss current issues and provide updates. Members of MAC are welcome to share their open and honest thoughts and ask questions.

Capital Electric General Manager Paul Fitterer looks forward to the meetings.

"The discussion during this meeting is extremely important to our operations. Opinions are taken seriously, and we make every effort to respond fully to each one," he says.

The recent meeting's discussion included agenda items, such as internal cost-reduction efforts, legislative updates, operations technology improvements, status of grants, 2025 work plan, annual meeting updates, rates and how to save money on your electric bill.

If you are interested in joining the MAC, please call Wes Engbrecht at 701-712-7923. A member will serve a three-year term on this committee. We appreciate

feedback from all members at any time, as we are your cooperative and we are here to serve you. ☎

### Join us for Capital Electric Cooperative's annual meeting June 10

Capital Electric Cooperative is excited to welcome members to its 79th annual meeting, which will be held at the Bismarck Event Center on June 10.

During the meeting, members will enjoy a free meal and entertainment, learn about co-op issues and elect three members to serve on Capital Electric's board of directors. The nine-member board, which is elected by Capital Electric members, sets policies and makes decisions that guide the cooperative into the future.

High school and college students are encouraged to attend the meeting and register for a chance to win a \$500 scholarship. The scholarship will be given away to a dependent of a Capital Electric member.

We look forward to seeing you at this year's annual meeting! ☎

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative was held on Friday, March 28. The meeting was held at Capital Electric, 7401 Yukon Drive, Bismarck.

**Also present were:** Manager Paul Fitterer, Business Manager Luke Steen, Operations Manager Jeff Holzer, 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:** Directors Dave Charles and Lyndon Anderson reviewed the February check register and expenditures. They advised that all checks and expenditures were in order.

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

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

Revenue was ahead of budget for February, as \$4,184,901 was generated in comparison with the budgeted figure of \$3,955,571 (favorable variance of \$229,330 or 5.8%).

Capital Electric's February net load factor was ahead of budget by 8.63%.

The operating margin for February was \$74,438, ahead of the budgeted amount of \$47,047. The total margin for February was \$63,750, which was ahead of the budgeted \$51,958.

Capital Electric began billing three new services in February, bringing our active services to 22,526 versus 22,269 at this time last year, or a net increase of 257 accounts over the last 12 months.

Cash flow statements were reviewed.

**Estate Retirements:** Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative, payment was authorized to five member estates totaling \$4,330.90.

## **McLean Sheridan Rural Water:**

Following discussion, the annual rate adjustment was approved as presented for McLean Sheridan Rural Water District.

## **Western Area Power Administration**

**Wheeling Rate:** Following discussion, the annual rate adjustment was approved as presented for the Garrison Diversion and Conservancy District.

## **2024 Capital Credit Allocation:**

Following discussion, the allocation of 2024 capital credits was approved, pending final review by auditors, as follows:

G&T – \$1,789,303.29

Co-op – \$1,477,677.75

Total – \$3,266,981.04

**Capital Credit Retirement:** Following discussion, the general retirement of \$1,621,967.15 in capital credits from years 2004 through 2008, was approved, which includes:

G&T – \$537,069.12;

Co-op – \$1,084,898.03.

**Operations Report:** Holzer reviewed the written report from the operations department. Holzer reported rejected poles from the 2024 inspection are being replaced in the McClusky area, switching out of the Sterling substation for repair, and work to switch out and repair G&W switchgear and the manufacturer's response for repair.

**Policies:** Owen reviewed Policy III-02 – Meter Socket, Disconnects and Standby Service and Policy III-06 – Line Extensions. Approval was made to adopt the amendments to Policy III-02 and Policy III-06 as presented, effective April 1.

**Safety Report:** There were no lost-time accidents since the last board meeting. A North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) safety instructor held a safety meeting on SDS sheets, tagout procedures, job briefings and rubber glove/sleeve testing. The safety report was approved.

## **Engineering Services Report:**

Owen reviewed the written report from engineering services. Owen provided

an update on the grant for the overhead to underground line along Highway 36 near Wilton.

**Subcontractor Price Quotes:** Owen reviewed 2025 subcontractor price quotes, which were approved as presented.

**Work Order Inventories:** Rural Utilities Service work order inventories 513 and 514 were approved as presented, effectively encumbering loan funds for reimbursement.

**Energy Services:** Schaffner reviewed the energy services report. Twenty-four service orders were completed in February. Schaffner reported on energy services personnel completing energy auditor training at Bismarck State College, update on LCT changeout project and continued collaboration with the State Fire School on electrical safety curriculum.

**Communications and IT:** Engbrecht reviewed the communications and IT report. Engbrecht reported on the Member Advisory Committee meeting, township officers association meeting and responding to suggestions related to rate issues.

**Strategic Planning:** Fitterer reviewed and summarized efforts and progress to achieve the goals identified during strategic planning and reviewed a draft organizational chart for potential future efficiencies and needs.

## **Basin Electric Power Cooperative:**

Fitterer reported on Basin Electric matters.

**Central Power Electric Cooperative (CPEC):** Charles reviewed CPEC's March board meeting.

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

**NDAREC:** Vilhauer reviewed statewide matters and Fitterer reviewed a legislative material update from NDAREC.

**National Rural Electric Cooperative Association:** Fitterer reported on the PowerXchange convention and legislative detail update. ☎

## **CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

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Website: [www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com)

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

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

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