Capital Electric Cooperative chose a Disney theme for its entry in the 2019 Celebration of Trees. This is the 13th year the co-op has participated in the fundraiser, hosted by Pride, Inc.

Celebration of Trees brings cheer to families in need

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Christmas trees are an iconic part of the holidays. We sing about them in Christmas carols and gather around them on Christmas morning. And for the last 18 years, they’ve been a symbol of hope and joy for people with disabilities and families in need.

Pride, Inc., started the Celebration of Trees in 2001 with the goal of giving back to the Bismarck-Mandan community. Now in its 18th year, the program has raised more than $575,000 and provided Christmas trees to more than 1,250 families in need.

Local businesses sponsor and decorate the trees. The trees are then donated to families in need. Proceeds help provide clothing, food, transportation, medication, housing and more to people with disabilities. This year, seventy area businesses sponsored trees.

“Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) is a proud participant in the Celebration of Trees,” says CEC General Manager Paul Fitterer. “The holiday spirit is all about giving, gratitude and grace. Thanks to Pride, Inc., and the participating businesses, families in need are able to enjoy the timeless tradition of a Christmas tree, and people with disabilities have access to the services and support they need.”

CEC has participated in the Celebration of Trees for the past 13 years. This year, employees decorated the co-op’s tree with colorful bulbs and Disney toys. The co-op hopes the tree will be delivered to a family with young children.

You can see CEC’s tree on display at the Bismarck Event Center during the Pride of Dakota Showcase on Dec. 6-8. While you’re there, don’t forget to vote for your favorite tree! The top five trees will be featured in the Bismarck Tribune Celebrate.

For more information on the Celebration of Trees, visit www.prideinc.org/sub-nav/celebration-trees.
SmartHub rolls out with a refreshed app

Capital Electric Cooperative’s (CEC) SmartHub online and mobile app provides many features to help members manage their account – from billing and payment information to detailed usage analysis. It’s a great tool to help members access their account information on the go or online.

CEC recently rolled out a new upgrade for the SmartHub mobile application that will help members access features more quickly and efficiently.

First, you’ll notice the mobile app has a fresh, new look. When you open the app, you’ll be able to view your usage analysis or contact us with the click of a button right from the home screen.

Outage and billing alerts are also displayed on the home screen, making it easy for CEC to communicate important information with its members. Billing, payment and other features will be available with one click of a button in a new condensed menu.

CEC hopes these app updates will help provide a more user-friendly and efficient experience. All of the features you loved about SmartHub will still be available, just with a refreshed look and an enhanced user experience.

New Look. New Experience. Same SmartHub.

WHAT IS SMARTHUB?
SmartHub is a web and mobile app that allows you to take control of all aspects of your utility account. Pay your bill, manage your use and contact us with service issues quickly and easily online or on your mobile device.
Earlier this year, Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) engaged Agency MABU, a Bismarck marketing company, to complete two specific projects for the co-op. The advertising agency first created and implemented an online member survey. Then, they gathered feedback from focus groups comprised of CEC members.

**CEC wanted to know three things:**

1) How is the overall member experience with CEC?
2) How do members prefer CEC to communicate with them?
3) How can CEC better serve its members in the future?

The co-op sent out the online survey by email. Members with an email address listed on their account received the survey link. Members who do not have an active email address on their account are encouraged to add one in SmartHub to ensure receipt of future communications.

More than 2,800 members completed the survey. CEC is pleased with the number of participants, as well as the diversity in the demographics represented by that group.

Of those surveyed, more than 80% said they were satisfied or very satisfied with their overall experience and have a high level of trust in the cooperative. Although comments were mostly favorable, we learned a lot from the results.

**Respondents said they would like to learn more about:**
- capital credits,
- solar energy,
- incentives to decrease peak usage,
- technology, and
- CEC’s commitment to the community.

Regarding communications, members prefer to receive information by email and more urgent information via text messages. *North Dakota Living* magazine is still widely read by our members and is now available in digital format on our website. A good number of members mentioned they would like to see an email newsletter from the co-op on a variety of topics.

Members who took the survey indicated they were pleased the co-op was asking for their opinions. This was gratifying, because CEC want its members to know we care about what they think!

The second part of the engagement was to have MABU invite CEC’s...
members to participate in three focus groups. Twenty-nine members attended the focus groups and provided opinions on several topics, including:

- overall perception of the cooperative,
- CEC’s programs, products, communication and services,
- technology,
- board membership, and
- community involvement/giving back.

Reliable and low-cost electric service were the top priorities for most focus group members. “Reliable, good service, good people and member-owned,” were words that came to their minds relating to CEC.

Focus group members felt the Peak Time Rebate (PTR) program is something that sets CEC apart as an electric utility.

Utilizing technology to save money on their bills and monitor their electric usage was another point raised by members. CEC’s online account system, SmartHub, is being used by many members, but some are still unfamiliar with its features. Members want more education on some of these topics, and the co-op is happy to provide that information.

Comments about the annual meeting were also very constructive. Some members say the venue may be too small for the membership and the event is a little too long. Co-op staff will consider these comments to make improvements where needed.

Finally, members were loud and clear on the topic of receiving more information from the co-op. CEC plans to launch an online opt-in email newsletter over the next few months which will include topics such as:

- capital credits,
- the PTR program,
- community betterment activities,
- scholarship and youth tour programs,
- tips to lower your electric bills,
- the benefits of using SmartHub,
- staff and board member highlights and much more.

CEC thanks its members for taking the time to complete the online survey and participate in the focus group sessions. The co-op appreciates its members and will continue to strive to provide even better service in the future!

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**ATTENTION!**

Electric heat members:

Is your heat meter breaker turned on??

Capital Electric offers reduced energy rates for electric heat loads. In order to receive the reduced rate, the breaker connected with the electric heat meter must be turned on. Please check your breaker and heat meter to verify they are both on. Your pocket book will thank you!

Questions on this topic? Call 701-223-1513 or email css@capitalelec.com.

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CEC is an active participant in the communities it serves

Strongly agree – 35%
Agree – 39%
Neutral – 12%
Disagree – 2%
Do you know everything there is to know about Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC)? We’re betting we can find a few things you don’t know and may be interested to find out!

Know Your Co-op is CEC’s version of “Co-op 101.” The program provides everything you need to know about what happens at the co-op and more! CEC launched Know Your Co-op in 2016, holding eight quarterly sessions at its headquarters facility in Bismarck, along with tours of a substation, power plant and mine near Beulah.

CEC held its first session of Version 2.0 for a new class in October. The program kicked off with an introduction to the co-op, including its 75-year history. General Manager Paul Fitterer and Wes Engbrecht, director of communications and public relations, presented the message to the class. Attendees also met CEC’s management team and other employees who were in attendance.

“Know Your Co-op is about getting to know our members and providing an opportunity for them to get to know us. At CEC, we encourage member engagement and open our doors to meet new people. The program has been a success in that way,” explains Engbrecht.

Any CEC member is welcome to attend any of the Know Your Co-op sessions. Each class is taught by the department personnel relating to the topic being discussed. Participants are not obligated to attend all sessions. In fact, some members are attending the current sessions because they missed them the first time.

It’s not too late to get on the email list for this group of classes. The next class will be held in January. To sign up, contact Wes Engbrecht at (701) 712-7923 or wese@capitalelec.com. We would love to have you be the next member to “Know Your Co-op!”
Capital Electric 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, seniors 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 parents or guardians 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 or picked up at co-op headquarters at 4111 State St. N. in Bismarck. Applications need to be completed and returned to Capital Electric on or before Friday, Feb. 14.

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT www.ndyouhttour.com
The Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc. (CEC), held its regular meeting on Friday, Oct. 18, 2019, at its headquarters in Bismarck, North Dakota, pursuant to due notice to all directors. 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 and Attorney Carol K. Larson of Pringle & Herigstad, P.C., who acted as recording secretary.

Minutes and Agenda: President Richard Koski called the meeting to order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the agenda and the minutes from the September meeting.

Financial Review: Prior to the board meeting, Directors Sheri Haugen-Hoffart and Deon Vilhauer reviewed the September 2019 check register and expenditures. They reported all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve September expenditures in the amount of $3,790,579.72.

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

Business Department Report: The business manager presented the September 2019 financial and statistical report to the Board. Total kWh sales for September were ahead of budget by 3.7%. The actual monthly electric revenue was ahead of budget by 3.2%. CEC’s load factor was ahead of budget. The total operating margin for September was $208,513, versus the budgeted amount of $342,227. The total margin for September was $171,917, versus the budgeted amount of $322,008, ahead of budget by $150,991.

Year-to-date sales are below budget by 2.3%. Year-to-date revenue is $29,115,070 in comparison with a budgeted amount of $29,644,044. Total margin was $1,103,210, versus the budgeted amount of $180,848, ahead of budget by $1,284,058.

CEC began billing 28 new services in September, bringing active services to 20,815 versus 20,517 at the September 2018 count. The margin for September was -$179,917, versus the budgeted amount of -$332,008, ahead of budget by $152,091.

CEC began billing 28 new services in September, bringing active services to 20,815 versus 20,517 at this time last year, or a net increase of 298 over the last 12 months.

The business manager reviewed the comparison of actual to budgeted expenses, cash flow statement and monthly power costs for the month of September 2019. Accounts receivable balances as of Oct. 17 were reviewed.

2020 Preliminary Budget: The initial preliminary budget has been completed.

After Hours Payment Processing: CEC has asked Basin Electric Power Cooperative to investigate the possibility of processing member payments over the phone after hours.

Cost of Service Study: Justin Proctor from Guernsey met with the Board via conference call and presented the initial composition of the study. CEC still has some refining to do. The presentation provided insight regarding how the study has been conducted and what the initial indications are.

Banking RFP: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to select First Community Credit Union (FCCU) as the bank for the cooperative.

Estate Retirements: Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, it was moved, seconded and carried to authorize payment of credit cards to the estates of deceased members' estates:

- Leslie Falkenste $1,721.14
- Frank Privratsky $2,168.14
- David E Ternes $2,142.88

Supporting the proposition, Shirley VanOosting motioned, Kathy Yandik seconded and carried to approve the motion.

Quarterly Write-offs: After discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to write off $4,588.07 for the third quarter. The total twelve month write-off is $26,765.02.

Troy Presser appeared at the meeting to discuss Basin matters with the Board.

Operations Report: Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department.

The transformer in the new Sterling Substation was energized.

CEC crews have completed a couple of 500-foot trench jobs north of Wing for some emergency services.

The Green Acres subdivision project is complete.

A couple of storms last month resulted in scattered outages.

Central Power Electric Cooperative (CPEC) replaced the main circuit breaker in the East Bismarck substation with an new breaker.

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

CEC completed 39 work orders in September, adding 28 new consumers.

Sterling Substation: The transformer was energized on Oct. 14, which is a big milestone in the overall project. Progress completing the SCADA integration has been slow due to the weather.

Metering: The co-op has 3,048 Verizon meters deployed.

Load Control: CEC has a signed contract with Corporate Systems Engineering (CSE) to begin a cellular-based controller pilot program. The co-op ordered five cellular load control transceivers for the pilot program.

Outage Analytics: The interdepartmental group received a demonstration of the PwrMetrix outage analytics tool. Further refinements are needed to improve the demonstration's accuracy.

Tower Land: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to extend the lease to Basin for the tower site at no additional charge until closing on the tower lot site.

Energy Services Department: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services Report. The co-op completed nine service orders in September.

Level 3 Charging: CEC is continuing to investigate installing Level 3 EV chargers in the co-op’s service area.

Demand Reduction: CEC staff met with Interstate Power Systems (IPS) to discuss NG and diesel generator options for the co-op’s interruptible rate. They also supply energy storage options for commercial scale projects.

The energy services department is coordinating with the engineering department and Convergent Energy for some follow-up details on a substation energy storage case study.

ERC Loans: There are no ERC loan applications for approval this month.

Communications, Public Relations and IT Department: Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest.

Annual Meeting Location: Engbrecht met with staff at the Bismarck Event Center about the possibility of holding the annual meeting at that venue next year.

Focus Group Results: Annette Willis and Trish Kelgeson from MBAU presented a report on the focus group results. The final survey/focus group report should be provided shortly.

Scholarship and Youth Tour Essay Contest: The deadline for the Youth Tour essay contest is Jan. 31, and the deadline for the Basin scholarship program will be Feb. 14, 2020.

Safety Report: There were no lost time accidents in September.

CPEC: There was no meeting this month.

Fitterer reported on the MAC meeting.

Statewide Report: Vilhauer reported on Statewide matters.

Salary & Wages: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Union Contract as negotiated.

Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to adjust the manager’s salary.

Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to make a salary adjustment for non-union employees.

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