This month, we introduce you to Henry Richter, a proud member owner, who helped bring power to the prairie.
Co-op member reminisces about bringing power to the prairie

BY KRISTA RAUSCH

At the flip of a switch, dark becomes light. At the push of a button, we’re connected to the world around us. But, it hasn’t always been that easy. Not all that long ago, electricity was a luxury.

Henry Richter, 88, grew up on a grain and dairy farm south of Menoken. His family raised corn, wheat, oats and barley. It was a true labor of love. They spent their mornings milking cows by hand and their days working in the fields.

To power their home, they relied on a gas generator and batteries to provide them with enough energy to meet their needs.

“It was hard work,” remembers Richter. “And, there were so many details involved in making sure [the generator] worked properly. And, it didn’t always work right.”

For a farm kid in the Dakotas, growing up without electricity wasn’t all that uncommon. In 1935, only ten percent of the country’s farms had electric service. With so few residents per mile of line, the existing power companies didn’t find it feasible to serve rural areas.

On May 11, 1935, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order making federal funds available for rural electric service, and the Rural Electrification Administration (REA) was born. The REA was a household acronym in its day. To farmers across the nation, it meant the start of a movement that would provide them with a better standard of living.

And so, in 1945, friends and neighbors banded together, cooperatively, to light up the countryside, and Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) was formed. Over the next five years, the co-op would grow to serve more than 1,400 farm families across 1,300 miles of distribution line in Burleigh County and the southern ten townships in...
Sheridan County. But, it wasn’t a easy process.

“It was a huge undertaking,” says Operations Supervisor Rick Dressler, CEC. “Back then, building electrical infrastructure was very physically demanding work. Bucket trucks weren’t available, so most poles were climbed. Holes were tamped by hand, and wire was placed by hand. And yet, in five years, they installed nearly half of our electrical system. It’s very impressive.”

Still without power in 1949, Richter’s father visited the co-op to see if they could get connected.

“They said, ‘Mr. Richter, the only way we could possibly put you on this list is if you could furnish us with somebody to work for us,’” remembers Richter. “I was 18 years old. I was farming with my dad, and we had just got done with the crop. He mentioned it and asked, ‘What do you think?’”

Richter decided to go to work for the co-op.

“I wasn’t looking for a job,” Richter says with a smile. “I said, ‘Well, hey. We definitely want electricity. If that’s what I got to do, then that’s what we’ll do. So, between me and Dad, we agreed that we could get by if I helped on the farm on the weekends. And, they kept their promise. After I went to work, they got us [on the list].”

The co-op paid Richter $1.25/hour – a fair wage in 1949 – to drive its Dodge Power Wagon and help a line crew build the infrastructure needed to deliver electricity to new members.

“I did everything, but I never had to climb [the poles],” says Richter. “I hauled out the poles and helped set them. I got stuck with the heavy work.”

Richter worked for the co-op for two years, staying on long after his farm was connected. During his time at the co-op, he helped bring electricity to 35 farmsteads near Bismarck, Baldwin, Wilton and Wing.

“They couldn’t have been more thankful. They thanked us, and they were happy to see it happen. It made life so much easier for all of them,” says Richter.

CEC has come a long way since those first utility poles were placed. Today, the co-op serves 17,600 members along 2,700 miles of line. In Richter’s short time at the co-op, he helped build crucial infrastructure that allowed the co-op to grow into what it is today. Now, he is involved in the co-op in a different capacity – he’s a proud member-owner.

Richter leaves the next generation with this advice, “Do the right thing, do the best you can and show people you care.”

A Capital Electric Cooperative lineman guides a utility pole into a hole previously dug by a digger truck.
SAVE MONEY
with the Peak Time Rebate program

Looking to save money on your electric bill? The Peak Time Rebate program will pay you back for conserving electricity during recognized peak events. There’s no cost to sign up, and Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) will provide rebates to those who reduce usage in the called events.

If you are considering signing up for the program and still want more information, here are some frequently asked questions (FAQ’s) that will explain how the program works in more detail. As always, you can call our office at (701) 223-1513 and ask for Josh or Jared in the energy services department to ask your questions.

What is a “peak event?” A peak event is a block of time, usually a few hours, when CEC expects the electric load to be at a very high level. For example, a very hot day in the summer or a very cold day in the winter would most likely result in a “peak event.”

When will peak events be called? A peak event can be called during any month of the year. Some months may have no events called, while others may have more than one. It all depends on the expected level of electricity usage.

Why does electricity cost more during “peak times?” CEC must be able to meet its electric demand, no matter how high it gets. The generation of electricity at higher demand levels is more expensive, because additional facilities are needed to generate more electricity. A good portion of the co-op’s wholesale power bill is based on the demand of its entire system. When the co-op has high system peaks, its bill is affected on a much more significant basis.

How do members participate in the program? Participating members will be eligible for a rebate based on how much they reduce electric use during peak events. The co-op will notify you of peak events the day before the event is called and then again a few hours before it is in effect. You will be contacted via email or text.

How can I earn the highest rebate possible? Simply by reducing the power you use during the peak event, you will earn a rebate. This may mean using an electrical appliance such as a clothes dryer outside of that time period or setting your thermostat a couple of degrees higher or lower than usual. Any reduction in usage will help generate a higher rebate amount.

LET’S GET STARTED
HOW DO I ENROLL?
There are 2 ways to enroll:

1. Go to www.capitalelec.com, select My Account (located at the bottom of the screen) and login to SmartHub when prompted. If you have not already signed up for SmartHub, click on the New User link on the SmartHub login page and follow the prompts.

In SmartHub, click on Notifications, then Manage Contacts to enter the desired phone number or email (more than one can be entered). If available, text messaging is the preferred notification method.

To complete the PTR sign-up, click Notifications, then Manage Notifications, then Reports. Then select Peak Time Rebate and choose the contact methods for these alerts.

Note: During the heating season, current off-peak and heat rate customers will not receive email or text notifications. Events will be posted on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

The PTR program does not apply to commercial members.

2. Fill in your information below, detach, and mail it to us at 4111 State Street, Bismarck, ND 58503

Name:
_________________________________

Service address:
_________________________________

Mobile phone number:
_________________________________

and/or Email address:
_________________________________

Signature

NOVEMBER 2019  |  CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE  |  www.capitalelec.com
Thanksgiving is a favorite holiday, as family and friends reunite to feast and give thanks. The one drawback, however, is that the holiday contributes to an annual increase in energy use, due to a usual drop in temperatures, lights staying on longer, and appliances operating more frequently. Here are some energy-saving tips which can help lower the unwelcome tradition of higher energy bills following a Thanksgiving celebration:

**TURKEY TIPS**
- How much turkey can you and your guests really eat? Be sure to get the right size bird. A smaller turkey takes less time to cook and saves energy.
- It takes longer to cook the turkey when it is stuffed with dressing, so cooking the dressing separately can actually reduce oven usage.
- Adding side dishes that can be cooked at the same temperature while the turkey is cooking can also reduce oven use. Just make sure to adjust the cooking time to accommodate different temperatures.
- Resist the urge to check on your food as it cooks. Each time you open the oven door, you’ll reduce the temperature inside by 25 degrees.

**HOSTING**
- Turn down the thermostat, whether it’s manual or programmable. With all the heat from your kitchen and a house full of people, your home will stay plenty warm.
- If you are hosting a large gathering, use a cooler stocked with ice to hold drinks. You’ll free space in your refrigerator and prevent cold air from escaping from frequent door openings.

**AFTER THE FEAST**
- Don’t wash dishes by hand because an Energy Star-certified dishwasher uses less than half as much energy as washing dishes by hand and uses less water.
- Let the leftovers cool before placing them in the fridge, because your refrigerator has to work harder to cool them.

**LIGHTING OPTIONS**
- Get in the habit of turning off every light except in occupied rooms. In most cases, lighting can be turned off in outdoor areas or the garage. Make the switch to more energy-efficient lighting options, such LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy, and last 25 times longer on average, compared to incandescent lighting.
Need Help with Heating Costs?

LIHEAP can help.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps eligible low-income households with home heating costs.

- Heating assistance
- Weatherization services (insulation, weather stripping, etc.)
- Furnace and chimney cleaning
- Furnace repair and replacement
- Emergency assistance

Applications are accepted from October 1 through May 31 for each heating season.

For help filling out and submitting the LIHEAP application, call 1-800-823-2417

Cooler weather is on the way and the heating season is upon us.

Is your electric meter breaker on?

Members, if your home or business has a sub-meter for an off-peak or all-electric heat rate, please make sure your heat meter breaker is turned on inside your electric panel. If the breaker is off, your electric heat credit will not be reflected on your bill. Thank you.

Off-peak rates run

Oct. 1 through April 30

Off-peak electric heat utilizes the concept of a dual-energy heating system, which simply uses two sources of fuel rather than one. With off-peak electric heat, electricity is the primary heat source. Using a control system, Capital Electric can switch from one heating source to another automatically. This maximizes efficiency and allows your co-op to offer you lower heating rates!

For more information on off-peak electric heat and Capital Electric’s heating program and incentives, visit www.capitalelec.com and click on Energy Efficiency and Load Management Programs.

LEAVING FOR THE WINTER?

Please contact our billing department at (701) 223-1513 to let us know you are going to be gone. Without notification, we may estimate your meter reading, which could result in being over billed for several months. Thank you!
AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

- To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a sophomore or junior in high school.
- You and your parents or guardian must be served by Capital Electric Cooperative.
- If you have a question, contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric Cooperative, during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31, 2020. You can e-mail entries to Wes Engbrecht at wese@capitalelec.com or mail a hard copy to: Youth Tour Essay Contest at 4111 State St., Bismarck, ND 58502-0730.

ESSAY QUESTION:

If chosen as a Youth Tour delegate, you will travel 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?

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY CONTEST GUIDELINES AT www.ndyouthtour.com

TOP 3 REASONS TO ENTER THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

1. All-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., compliments of Capital Electric Cooperative
2. A whole week to visit unforgettable historic monuments, museums and the U.S. Capitol
3. A learning experience you’ll never forget
Operations Report: Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department. CED crews continue to work on the new Sterling Substation. CED crews and Fisher Contracting have completed installation of one mile of 500 MCM from 80th Street to 17th Avenue. The overhead lines in the Green Acres subdivision are getting retired.

Cocked was awarded an LED Lighting Grant through the Rural Energy for America Program. The co-op will receive grant money to assist in replacing 1,000 current sodium and mercury-vapor lights with LED lights.

Engineering Report: Owen reviewed the written report from the engineering department. CEC completed 44 work orders in August, adding 35 new consumers. The circuit switcher in the East Bismarck substation is being replaced with a circuit breaker. CEC presently has 2,368 Verizon meters deployed. Verizon is working with the supply vendors for resolutions on the outstanding communications/firmware issues.

Load Control is pursuing a cellular-based pilot program. CEC is investigating tools to analyze outages based on type, location, and cost. This data would complement construction work planning and help maximize results of construction dollars spent.

Fitterer is a certifier and administrator for USDA applications and also a certifier in RDApp to certify financials.

Stein is the administrator for CEC databases in RDApp. The substation temperature monitors were reviewed. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve a resolution regarding the Quit Claim Deed on the tower property to continue on retaining access to 43rd Avenue NE.

Following discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to approve a resolution regarding the right-of-way on the tower property.

Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Storm Sewer Easement on tower property.

Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve entering into a purchase agreement with Basin Electric Power Cooperative on the tower property.

On the corner lot, the City of Bismarck issued a denial and recommended CEC go back to develop another plan with the City for access to 43rd Avenue. Options will continue to be explored.

Energy Services Department: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services Report. Sixteen service orders were completed in August.

EV Update: Schaffner presented on the potential of EVs with Matthew Blackler, CEO of ZEF Energy, for the Chamber EDC on Sept. 12, served on an panel at an EV promotional event sponsored by Drive Electric ND held on Sept. 18 and attended an EV tailgate party on Sept. 19. In July, Schaffner attended and answered questions at the North Dakota State Fair Co-op Day with Lignite Energy’s Tesla Model X and CEC’s Chevy Bolt.

Level 3 Charging: CEC continues working with ZEF Energy on installing Level 3 EV chargers in the CEC service area.

HGC Projects: Dakota RM finished the concrete repairs on the back lot and sidewalk. Atlas Foundation Co. installed helical tiebacks in the retaining wall between the older warehouse and the newer service center area.

The solar panels and solar pump were installed on the front fountain display.

Demand Reduction: CEC continues to work on the load controller process for NDSCS and St. Mary’s High School.

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

Communications, Public Relations and IT Department: Fitterer reviewed topics of interest. Engbrecht is working the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives booth at the NAR Fall. Engbrecht presented fi ndings to the Board at the October meeting. The substation temperature monitors were reviewed.

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