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St. Mary’s Central High School welcomes students at new location

BY KRISTA RAUSCH

When Lauren Leidenix first walked through the doors of St. Mary’s Central High School’s (SMCHS) new building, she felt blessed. “I remember walking in the first day, and I had goosebumps, because it was so new and so different,” says Leidenix, a senior at SMCHS. “It felt like a new start for our school and Catholic education in Bismarck.”

On Aug. 21, SMCHS welcomed more than 350 students through its doors for the first day of school. As students approached the building, they were welcomed by a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, one of many pieces of sacred art on the campus.

“You’re always reminded you are in the presence of something bigger than yourself,” says Gerald Vetter, president, Light of Christ Catholic Schools. “Our mission has always been derived from the fact that Christ is the

Construction is underway on Our Lady of Victory Chapel. The privately funded chapel, depicted above, will be connected to St. Mary’s Central High School.
Students marveled at the new space – an upgrade from the crowded former high school at 1025 N. 2nd Street, which was shared with middle school teachers, students and staff. Senior Mark Horner says the extra space and open concept are his favorite parts of the new facility.

“It’s more integrative. It brings people together,” says Horner.

The school has 25 classrooms that surround the impressive St. Thomas Aquinas Academic Center, with its high ceilings and modern seating. Located throughout the building are breakout areas that promote student collaboration, creativity and creative thinking.

“I think we did a good job,” says Vetter. “I think our architects were really creative. They understand that people want to be comfortable when they learn. There are areas where you can work alone, and there are others where you can be very collective.”

Vetter says the building is a bold, but necessary, step forward.

“If we had opened up school today without this high school and without our addition at St. Mary’s Grade School, we would have been 25% over capacity. When you see the type of growth we’ve gone through over the last six years – 40% growth – that obviously created a need.”

While classes are in session, construction continues on the $38 million building. The school’s Fine Arts Center will open in phases. The music classrooms will be completed this fall. The 600-seat William J. Schmidt Auditorium, which honors the legacy of a beloved band director, will open at a later date. Construction also continues on Our Lady of Victory Chapel, which is a gift from the Ken & Marilyn Keller family.

On Aug. 30, the St. Mary’s Saints played their first football game at the new Smrekar Field. More than 2,700 people attended the game.
When deciding on a building concept, school officials at St. Mary’s Central High School (SMCHS) did their best to be as energy efficient as possible.

Take the lighting for example. The school makes the most of natural light. Tall windows throughout the building allow sunlight to reach its interior spaces. Taking advantage of the sun means less dependence on indoor lighting.

“Walking around the building, you’re going to see a lot of natural light,” says Gerald Vetter, president, Light of Christ Schools. “You can be up here at 9 p.m. and not have to have a flashlight. It’s comfortable, and it provides energy savings.”

The building also utilizes in-floor heat, which can provide the same comfort level as forced heat while requiring a shorter runtime and less circulation. The result? Less energy consumption and maintenance.

But, the school’s most energy efficient features are its chiller and ice storage system. Many commercial buildings use chillers to cool their facilities. A chiller cools water that is transferred into a building for air conditioning. What makes the chiller at SMCHS unique is the way it works with the school’s ice storage system to limit energy usage when the demand for energy is high. The ice storage system allows the school to produce ice at night, which can be used to cool the building the next day, when demand is at its peak.

“It’s a complete hydronic system, meaning full of water,” says Project and Facilities Manager John Richter, Light of Christ Catholic Schools. “Once the water gets hot, it sends it out to the chiller or ice storage system. If we’re on peak demand, it goes through the ice storage tanks. If we’re not on peak demand, it goes to the chiller.”

By giving Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) the ability to control when the chiller is running, the school receives a nearly 80% discount on their demand charge and helps reduce the overall demand on the co-op’s system. It’s a win for CEC, as well as the school.

“We’re very glad Light of Christ Schools was forward thinking and concerned about operating costs before finishing the facility,” says Josh Schaffner, energy services manager, CEC. “Use of the ice storage technology creates a win-win solution. The school saves money on its electric bill, and the cooperative can reduce its monthly peak. This flexibility results in lower operating costs for the school and potential savings for our members. Helping improve an educational facility for our youth and community was an added bonus.”

With the reduced demand rate, Richter estimates the school will see a return on its initial investment in under 30 months.

And the school’s energy efficiency plans don’t stop there. School officials are also looking toward the future.

“We want to implement nanotechnology in antifreeze,” says Richter. “It’s supposed to be a better lubricant and provide better heat exchange. It would improve the life of our system, and we could cool and heat the building more efficiently. It’s cheaper, and it doesn’t use as much power.”

The school hopes to begin using the nanotechnology in 2020.

“You want to catch the latest waves of technology,” says Vetter. “If we’re the first school in the nation to have nanotechnology or the first one in the area to use the ice storage systems, that’s pretty cool.”

To learn more about ways you can save money on your commercial or residential electricity bill, visit www.capitalelec.com and click on the Energy Efficiency tab, or contact Josh Schaffner at (701) 712-7920.

St. Mary’s Central High School’s most unique and energy efficient features are its chiller and ice storage system. The ice storage system allows the school to produce ice at night, which can be used to cool the building the next day, when demand is high.
A community is only as strong as the support it provides in a time of need. Capital Electric Cooperative’s (CEC) members help others all the time. They’re the reason CEC launched its Operation Round Up program in 1997.

Operation Round Up is a program that allows CEC members to round up their monthly utility bill to the nearest dollar and donate their pennies to a charitable trust. The money pools and accumulates, and an elected board of five co-op members reviews grant applications to determine the best use of those pennies. Over the last 22 years, CEC’s members have contributed more than $675,000 to the program, supporting their communities and local nonprofits, and assisting with medical expenses for those in need.

In August, CEC presented its most recent round of grant checks, totaling $25,000, to the following individuals and organizations:

- Arts for All
- Bismarck Library Foundation
- Bismarck-Mandan Salvation Army
- Charles Hall Youth and Family Services
- Circle C Ranch
- Community Action’s Backpacks for Kids program
- Dacotah Foundation
- Driscoll Betterment Club
- Great Plains Food Bank
- Kathy Davis Memorial Pool
- Sanford Health Foundation
- Scottish Rite Speech Therapy Center
- Wing Rural Ambulance
- An area resident (medical expenses)

The efforts of these groups make our communities safer and more enjoyable places to live. Grant dollars will be put toward the purchase of a new bookmobile, trauma packs for emergency responders, computers for displaced children, a community shelter and a vacuum system for a community pool. They will also provide food, art, therapy and mentorship to those in need.

The next application deadline is Jan. 31, 2020. Any person, community or nonprofit in Burleigh County or Sheridan County may apply to receive an Operation Round Up grant. To request an application, call CEC at (701) 223-1513 or visit the co-op’s website, www.capitalelec.com. To download the application from the website, click on Our Services > Operation Round Up.

Your spare change could change lives. Join others in rounding up your monthly utility bill to the nearest dollar and make a difference. To opt into Operation Round Up, call CEC at (701) 223-1513.
Capital Electric Cooperative adds a new electric vehicle to its fleet

Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) has added a new electric vehicle to its fleet. The Clark GEX50 electric forklift will replace the co-op’s propane-fueled forklift, which is more than 40 years old. The co-op decided to ‘go electric’ because of the reduced cost of operation and maintenance, in addition to the co-op’s belief in beneficial electrification.

“As an electric cooperative, beneficial electrification is something we believe in and promote. This electric forklift provides improved safety, reliability and a drastic upgrade in ergonomics and comfort for our employees,” says General Manager Paul Fitterer, CEC. “As Capital Electric Cooperative upgrades its equipment, we will continue to explore electric vehicle options. By adding these vehicles to our fleet, we are able to gain first-hand experience that we can share with our members.”

The new forklift is a significant upgrade from its predecessor. Capable of lifting 10,000 pounds, the Clark GEX50 provides an additional 2,000 pounds of lifting capacity. And because the forklift is 100% electric, it has zero emissions. This means the co-op can operate the forklift both indoors and outdoors without any ventilation concerns. The electric forklift also provides several safety features, including a backup alert system and driver required safety features. In addition, the 80-volt, 40-cell battery provides 12 hours of continuous runtime before a charge is needed, providing significant cost savings to the co-op. CEC can operate the new forklift at a rate of $0.20/hour. The co-op’s old forklift cost about $14/hour to operate.

The forklift will be used to load and unload poles, transformers and other miscellaneous equipment.

PHOTOS BY KRISTA RAUSCH

The Clark GEX50 has an enclosable, heated cab. This cab will protect employees from wind, rain and snow, and increase the lifetime of the interior.
JUNE 20 TO 26, 2020

HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS

Win the Trip of a Lifetime!

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
PTO Update: Management discussed how CEC employees viewed the proposed changes and their concerns.

Military Leave: The board reviewed Policy E-14 Military Leave.

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

CEC crews continue to work on the new Sterling substation. Crews have hung all of the O&Cs and finished hooking up the jumpers on each feeder. The risers for all four circuits have been completed.

The cable replacement project at the University of Mary has been completed. Two new transformers have been installed allowing the primary metering set-up to be retired.

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

CFC Nominations Committee: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve the preliminary plat for submission to the City of Bismarck with 43rd ROW, proposed Lot 1 and proposed Lot 2.

IT Projects:
The Second Controller in the Network Storage Device has been replaced. Both controllers have now been replaced.

Operations Report:

Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department. The board discussed the construction of the new Sterling substation. The risers for all four circuits have been completed. Two new transformers have been installed allowing the primary metering set-up to be retired.

Engineering Report:

Owen reviewed the written report from the engineering department. CFC completed 16 work orders in July, adding 14 new consumers.

Property on Corner of State/43rd: Fitterer gave an update on the matter.

Isomorphism Presentation: Director Bill Patrie and Kent Brick presented on isomorphism and the promotion of cooperative business model.

Energy Services Department: Schaffter reviewed the Energy Services Report. Twenty service orders were completed in July.

EV Update: CEC employed participated in Co-op Day at the North Dakota State Fair, where they served breakfast and displayed CEC’s Chevy Bolt and Lignite Energy’s Tesla Model X.

Level 3 Charging: CEC continues to work with ZEF Energy on installing Level 3 EV chargers in the service area. Two potential sites have been identified. The co-op is waiting to hear back from landowners concerning lease agreements.

HQ Projects: Dakota RM is scheduled to start on the back lot retaining wall on Sept. 1.

The new Dark electric forklift was delivered Aug. 6.

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

Wrangham joined the meeting at this point.

Communications, Public Relations and IT Department:

Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest.

Online Member Survey: Engbrecht and Fitterer met with Agency Engbrecht to review the results of the online member survey and plan for the member focus groups.

Operation Round Up: The CFC Charitable Trust Board met on Aug. 13 to review 20 applications for grants through the Trust. The board approved 16 grants totaling $25,580.

IT Projects: The Second Controller in the Network Storage Device has been replaced. Both controllers have now been replaced.

Touchstone Energy®: The board discussed issues and benefits of the Touchstone Energy brand and the services provided.

Safety Report: There were no lost time accidents in July. Safety representatives from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) visited CEC’s shop on Aug. 21 to perform the dielectric testing on the bucket and digger derrick trucks.