Sixteen North Dakota high school students, sponsored by their local distribution cooperatives, traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the 2019 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, June 15 to 21.
Fun. Busy. Networking. Those are the three words Jillian McCusker, a junior at Bismarck’s Century High School, chose to describe her trip to Washington, D.C., for the 2019 Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Representing Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC), McCusker joined teenagers from across the country in the nation’s capitol in June. The itinerary was jam-packed and not a minute was wasted.

Jillian McCusker, Bismarck, represented Capital Electric Cooperative at the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour in June.
“Everyday was just full of fun things to do,” says McCusker. “The latest we got up in the morning was 7:45 a.m. The earliest we got back was 8:30 p.m.”

While in the nation’s capital, McCusker toured the Capitol building, visited the monuments along the National Mall and strolled the halls of several museums. She participated in leadership training and learned about electric cooperatives and how the federal government operates. She also met with members of North Dakota’s congressional delegation.

“It was awesome to be able to sit with them and hear what they had in store for our future and how they saw us impacting the future of North Dakota, as well,” says McCusker.

McCusker says her favorite part of the trip was meeting new people and making lifelong friends.

“I made very valuable friendships with people, and I couldn’t be more grateful. This is one of those once in a lifetime opportunities. I know you hear that a lot, but it truly is. You get to meet so many new people, interact with people from so many different backgrounds and states, along with acquiring so much knowledge about our country and our history, as well. It’s a mix between fun and learning.”

The Electric Cooperative Youth Tour has been bringing high school students from across the nation to Washington, D.C., since the late 1950s. Students apply by submitting an essay to their local co-op. Each year, CEC selects one student to represent the co-op on the tour. The all-expense paid trip to Washington, D.C., is a once in a lifetime opportunity. And McCusker says it’s an experience she’ll never forget.

“It surpassed my expectations,” says McCusker. “I’m super grateful that I got this opportunity. It really is an experience I’ll carry with me for the rest of my life.”

For more information on the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour, visit www.ndyouthtour.com or www.youthtour.coop, or email Wes Engbrecht, wese@capitalelec.com.
Utility poles are probably one of the most iconic structures in the electric industry. Since electric cooperatives began constructing their systems back in the 1930s, images of lineworkers setting poles, climbing poles and hanging the lines have reflected the hard work involved in bringing vital electricity to rural America.

Today, Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) maintains close to 20,000 poles in its system. The co-op is continually working to ensure every one of those poles is in the best possible condition to do its job of holding up overhead lines effectively.

In 2016, the cooperative retained RAM Utilities, LLC, a utility service company, to inspect every pole that serves its members. The inspection is a 10 year process. Each year, the company inspects around 2,000 poles. Since beginning the process, they’ve inspected more than 8,000 poles.

There are varying inspection methods for poles based on their age. A newer pole may only require a visual inspection, which includes looking for damage of any type. A pole could have been the target of a woodpecker or may have been struck by a vehicle or machinery. With any pole, a GPS point is taken in order to keep track of the
poles that require attention.

For poles that are more than 15 years old, RAM Utilities digs down 8 inches beside the pole, drills into it and removes a core sample. If they find it has decayed and can’t be expected to last another 10 years (based on Rural Utility Service guidelines), they will reject the pole. A rejected pole is then replaced by CEC linemen or contractors shortly after the inspection. Of the 2,040 poles inspected in 2019, 97 were rejected.

It’s important to note that just because a pole is rejected doesn’t mean it was in imminent danger of failure. The purpose of the inspection process is to prevent future issues with the poles and to document the status of each one if it is deemed to be in good enough condition to remain in service.

The pole inspection process also turns up other issues on and around a utility pole. Broken guy wires, chipped insulators, broken lightning arrestors, frayed wires and even loose bolts are noted by the inspectors and immediately remedied by CEC crews.

Operations Manager Rick Dressler notes how important the inspection process is to CEC’s system. “We have found that having a pole testing and replacement program in place certainly reduces the number of broken poles we experience during storms that affect our area.”

Another way CEC is working to maintain the reliability of its overhead lines is to replace 25 miles of rural line each year. The co-op has been keeping to this schedule for quite a few years now, and it has resulted in much higher reliability of its poles and overhead line.

If you see a problem with a pole or overhead line in your area, please call CEC at (701) 223-1513, so it can be checked out immediately. Safety, along with reliability, are taken very seriously at CEC, and the co-op appreciates your help.
Katie sits anxiously at the table eating her breakfast. She can hardly contain her nervous energy as she waits for the school bus to arrive. Today is her first day back to school after a long summer break. She’s ready to see her friends and get back into her familiar school routine.

But, is Katie ready to face the dangers electricity can pose as she makes her way to school or even while she’s at school? Before your child goes back to school, start the year by teaching him or her “Electrical Safety 101.”

“One of our core principles at Capital Electric Cooperative is commitment to community. That includes educating members of all ages about electrical safety,” says Paul Fitterer, general manager at Capital Electric Cooperative.

Here are some electrical safety lessons you can pass on to your school-age children, no matter their level of education.

**Elementary/Middle School Students**
- Don’t play near or around power lines or poles while at school.
- Stay clear of pad-mount transformers (those big green boxes) or other electrical equipment while on school property.
- Don’t place objects, such as pens or pencils, in electrical outlets. According to the Electrical Safety Foundation International, nearly seven children are treated in hospital emergency rooms each day for electrical shock or burn injuries caused by tampering with a wall outlet.

**High School Students**
- If you drive to and from school, obey all traffic laws and practice safety when driving in areas where utility crews are working.
- If you’re in an accident involving a downed power line, make sure to assume the line is energized. Remain in the vehicle and call 911. If you must exit the vehicle, jump out of the vehicle with both feet together and avoid contact with the vehicle and ground at the same time. Then, shuffle away with small steps, keeping your feet together and on the ground at all times, to reduce the risk for electrical shock or electrocution.

**College Students**
- Don’t overload electrical outlets. Most dorms or campus housing are not equipped to handle today’s use of electronic appliances and gadgets.
- Keep all electrical appliances and cords away from bedding, curtains and other flammable materials.
- Extension cords are only for temporary use and can become overloaded. Consider using power strips with an over-current protector that shuts off power automatically if too much current is being drawn.

Make sure your student, no matter his or her age, knows some “Electrical Safety 101” before heading back to school. It could save his or her life.
Capital Electric Cooperative’s (CEC) Know Your Co-op program will begin again in October. Don’t miss your chance to sign up and learn about the operations of your cooperative!

If you’ve ever considered getting more involved in the cooperative by serving on the CEC Board of Directors or attending Member Advisory Committee meetings, this is the place to start. Along with your classmates, you will become an expert on everything co-op related!

For more information, contact Wes Engbrecht, director of communications and public relations, at (701) 712-7923 or wese@capitalelec.com. You don’t have to attend all of the eight quarterly classes to participate. You choose your level of time commitment.

Thank you for being an engaged co-op member!

Going the Extra Mile

Electric cooperatives maintain more miles of power lines per consumer than other types of electric utilities. Even though they serve fewer consumers and acquire less revenue, electric co-ops always go the extra mile to power the communities they serve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Electric Co-ops</th>
<th>Other Electric Utilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consumers served per mile: 8</td>
<td>Consumers served per mile: 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue: $19,000</td>
<td>Revenue: $79,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: EIA, 2017 data. Includes revenue and consumer averages per mile of line.
Operations Report: Dressler reviewed the written report from the operations department. Line crews have been busy with scattered outages caused by thunderstorms. CEC crews responded to one transmission outage. The cable installation and termination has been completed for the new St. Mary’s High School load onto the new 71st Avenue Substation. CEC is working on a cable and transformer replacement project at the University of Mary. Ram Utilities has completed pole inspections for 2019. CEC crews have started changing the poles that failed tests.

Engineering Report: Owen reviewed the written report from the engineering department. CEC completed 39 work orders in June, adding 39 new consumers.

Central Power Electric Cooperative (CPEC): The Highway 1804 and Washington Street roundabout transmission line move has been completed. The west loop transmission project from Ward Delivery to the Horizon substation is underway. CEC submitted a request for fault indicators to be added or replaced on transmission lines in the CEC territory. These devices help identify fault locations and improve system restoration time. GPS data collection methods were discussed with NISC and vendors to determine an implementation plan. The sectionalizing study should be completed by the end of August. Plans by the City of Bismarck for the 43rd Avenue reconstruction project were discussed.

Policies: The following policy was reviewed:
Policy No. III-3 – Meter Installation and Testing Procedures. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to adopt Policy III-3 as revised. 

Energy Services Department: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services Report. Twenty-two service orders were completed in June.

Electric Vehicle (EV) Update: Amy Siik, the energy correspondent from the Bismarck Tribune, interviewed Schaffner on EVs. Lignite Energy’s Tesla Model X and CEC’s Chevy Bolt will be sent to the State Fair for KVX-10-Op-Day on July 24.

Level 3 Charging: CEC has been working with a company on initial steps for installing Level 3 EV chargers in the CEC service area. Three potential sites have been identified.

Touchstone Energy Cooperatives: CEC employees helped construct the Touchstone Energy Cooperatives’ parade float.

Demand Reduction: CEC has sent engineering information to a vendor and is waiting to hear back on the subsection energy storage proposal.

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

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

Online Member Survey: The online member survey launched on July 9. It sent to 10,000 email addresses. Approximately 2,600 responses were received.


IT Projects: A number of hardware issues have arisen. A replacement array will be submitted for consideration for the 2020 budget. Changes are being made to the phone system in the business office.

Bismarck Electric Power Cooperative (BEC): Paul Sukut, Dave Ratz and Troy Presser from Basin joined the meeting at 11 a.m. to discuss SPP & MISO, power supply planning, operations (long term power supply), overall power supply, financial and transmission planning and short-term market operations.

Derek Johnson, Transmission System Maintenance (TSM) at Basin updated the board on TSM’s role.

This group has 11 outposts and maintains 2,500 miles of transmission lines and related structures, 212 communication sites and 104 substations.

Safety Report: There were no lost time accidents in June. Christina Roemmich and Jeff Tweten, NDAEC, and Tim Rold, Roughrider Electric, visited CEC’s shop on July 9 to conduct a three-week OSHA safety audit of the facility. They returned on July 18 to report on their visit. CEC sent linemen to Hotline School on July 15 to 19.

CPEC: Fitterer reported on the CPEC’s Manager’s Advisory Committee (MAC) meeting.

Basin: Fitterer reported on the Basin MAC meeting.

Statewide Report: Director Dean Vilhauer reported on Statewide matters.

NRECA Regional Meeting: Director Dave Charles was selected as delegate to the Region 4 meeting, and Director Bill Patrie was selected as alternate.

NISC: Olson was selected as delegate, and Vilhauer was selected as alternate.

CFC: Wrangham was selected as delegate, and Koski was selected as alternate.

RESO: Charles was selected as delegate, and Wrangham was selected as alternate.

Federated: Vilhauer was selected as delegate, and Patrie was selected as alternate.

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