Food, fellowship and faith — at Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café

Scheduled to open in its new location late this spring, Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café provides free home-cooked meals to those in need, as well as fellowship, prayer — and a new beginning. In this month’s local pages, read about a business that serves food and changes lives — and how the small change YOU donate through the Operation Round Up program has made a big change in the Soup Café’s kitchen.

APRIL 2017
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• Operation Round Up: grants awarded, lives touched
• Serve your cooperative on the board of directors
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Be part of a team — and part of the change

Arlene Olson was elected to the board of directors at the annual meeting on June 4, 1992. Her number-one priority was to provide affordable, efficient and dependable electric service to the cooperative’s member-owners. It remains her priority today.

“Throughout the 24 years I have served on the board, change has quickly become the number one most-influential source in our everyday lives!” she says. “Some of the prominent changes I have witnessed are growth, automatic meter reading, ground-source heat pumps, reporting power outages and new substations.”

In the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative value of commitment to community, Arlene is actively involved. She serves as vice president of the Capital Electric board, business manager of the Wing Rural Ambulance, past president of the Burleigh County Housing Authority, executive secretary of the N.D. Association of County Social Service Board Members, vice president of the Wing Theatre, treasurer of the Golden Wing Club, board member of the Burleigh County Council on Aging, clerk of Trygg Township, vice president of Burleigh County Farmers Union, caretaker of Union Cemetery, and work group leader and frequent lector at Bethlehem Lutheran Church.

Now’s the time to consider running for a position on Capital Electric’s board of directors. Arlene and the other eight directors encourage you to join them in the board room, and be part of the change that strengthens our cooperative and our member-owners.

Directors represent your interests

Capital Electric Cooperative is overseen by a board of directors elected by the member-owners of our co-op. Each director represents the members on the board and each director is a co-op member.

Directors represent the members’ interests. They learn their concerns and ideas, and take the information into the board room. During board meetings, directors exchange information and strategize for the co-op’s progressive growth.

Directors have a fiduciary responsibility to the cooperative. They exercise care, time and responsibility in reviewing co-op matters. Because they are also owners of the cooperative, they treat the business like their own.

Directors devote a certain amount of time to the cooperative. At a minimum, directors attend a monthly board meeting. To learn about the industry and understand critical issues, directors also read and research, and attend state and national meetings.

To help directors with their responsibilities, training is offered through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives. If directors choose to pursue certification, they must take and complete five courses that cover director duties and liabilities, understanding the electric business board roles and relationships, strategic planning and financial decision-making.

Serving Capital Electric Cooperative and your community can be a rewarding experience! For more information, contact a member of the Nominating Committee (see C3) or call the co-op at 701-223-1513.

Save the date

JUNE 6, 2017

WHAT: Capital Electric annual meeting
WHERE: Ramkota Hotel, Bismarck
WHY: To learn about co-op issues; to cast your vote and elect four members to serve on the board of directors; to collect a capital credit check if you qualify; and to enjoy entertainment and eat a free meal.
Are you interested in serving as a director for Capital Electric?
Place YOUR name on the ballot today!

Capital Electric Cooperative’s 71st annual meeting will be held June 6 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck.

As a result of the change to the bylaws regarding the development of new director districts, which was approved at last year’s annual meeting, the Capital Electric board of directors has adopted staggered terms to ensure there is one director from each district up for re-election each year. Because of this staggering, we will have four director positions open and four current directors running for re-election this year. In future years we will have one director from each district up for re-election.

This year, four seats on the co-op’s board of directors will need to be filled. Directors whose three-year terms will expire this June include Bill Patrie and Kyle Hilken, both from District 3, and Rodney Eckroth from District 1. Richard Koski is also up for re-election, representing District 2.

The nine members who make up the Capital Electric board of directors set policies and make decisions that will guide the cooperative into the future. With the annual meeting just a few short months away, now is the time for members to start thinking about whether they have the time and desire to serve their electric cooperative.

In accordance with Article 4, Section 3 of the co-op bylaws, current members of Capital Electric can have their names placed on the ballot to be voted upon for the open board positions in one of three ways: accepting a nomination by the Capital Electric Nominating Committee; submitting a petition signed by at least 15 current members of the cooperative, not less than 30 days prior to the annual meeting; and having your name placed in nomination from the floor at the annual meeting prior to the board of director election.

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Capital Electric Cooperative board of directors or wish to have a member considered for nomination, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee listed above prior to April 18. Committee members will have information on the requirements a member must meet in order to serve on the co-op’s board of directors. Pursuant to the bylaws, the Nominating Committee must post a list of nominations at least 35 days prior to the annual meeting; and having your name placed in nomination from the floor at the annual meeting prior to the board of director election.

The following members have been appointed by the board of directors to serve on the Nominating Committee:

Brian Bitter
751 80th St. S.E.
Bismarck, ND 58501
701-226-3456

Gary Hansen
1423 Eagle Crest Lp.
Bismarck, ND 58503
701-471-3558

Denise Brown
21246 197th St. N.E.
Baldwin, ND 58521
701-226-5260

Warren Larson
4618 Feldspar Dr.
Bismarck, ND 58503
701-751-2329

Ann Reich
4401 Lookout Trail
Bismarck, ND 58504
701-255-4406

Kristi Schlosser Carlson
2810 Powder Ridge Dr.
Bismarck, ND 58503
701-251-8027

Sanford Williams
26900 331st Ave. N.E.
Wing, ND 58494
701-943-2474

If you are interested in becoming a candidate for the Capital Electric Cooperative board of directors or wish to have a member considered for nomination, please contact a member of the Nominating Committee listed above prior to April 18. Committee members will have information on the requirements a member must meet in order to serve on the co-op’s board of directors. Pursuant to the bylaws, the Nominating Committee must post a list of nominations at least 35 days prior to the annual meeting. Current board members whose terms will expire in 2017 are:
• District 1: Rodney Eckroth
• District 2: Richard Koski
• District 3: Bill Patrie and Kyle Hilken

Official notice of Capital Electric’s 71st annual meeting will be mailed to members in May.
Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café, a prayer-funded business that provides free home-cooked soups and sandwiches to people who are homeless or in need, closed about a year-and-a-half ago. Now, in a new location, it is preparing to open and continue its mission of feeding bellies and souls.

Mark Meier, executive director of Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café, operated the business on Memorial Highway for six years, serving 100 to 200 people daily six days a week. As the community’s need for free meals grew, and space became limited, Meier started looking for a larger building that was located closer to the homeless shelter. Then, his current lease ended — and the business was forced to close.

Mark and his wife, Mary, began the process of purchasing the Chesak Seed House building at 220 N. 23rd St. last year. They are currently remodeling the space into the next Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café, and hope to open at the end of May. Located half a block from the homeless shelter, the business will provide more than a hot meal. Mark says he plans to add a shower and laundry facility, and an office area where guests can use a computer and research job opportunities. When people come to eat a free meal, they can earn “Soup Café bucks” by chopping vegetables, washing dishes and helping where needed. Then, they can exchange their bucks to get clean or wash their clothes.

“It plugs them in, gets them involved and gives them a feeling of worth,” he says.

At the former location, Mark shares that people often go to the river to “clean up,” or use the bathroom to take a sponge bath.

“Our goal is to provide them with a warm meal, a hot shower and clean clothes; the basics you and I take for granted,” he says.

Funding is a forever challenge that is answered time and again in prayer. Mark says he’s seen many miracles and opportunities for the Lord to literally multiply soup in a pot.

“When we first opened, we were running low on supplies. I needed soap, paper towels and milk, and had the money in-hand, but decided to wait and pray about it instead. The Lord told me he’d plan the menu and take care of it,” Mark says. “In a couple hours, someone showed up with those three items in hand. If we need a certain amount of money to pay the rent and we don’t have it, we pray about it — and it comes.”

In the new location, Mark wanted to install a commercial dishwasher but didn’t have the funds. He prayed about it — and Capital Electric

Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café, now located at 220 N. 23rd Street in Bismarck, will provide free home-cooked meals to those who are homeless, elderly, the working poor, and others in need.
Cooperative members answered through the co-op’s Operation Round Up program.

Operation Round Up is a voluntary program in which electric cooperative members round up their monthly utility bills to the nearest dollar and donate their change to local individuals, groups or charities with a specific need. Mark applied for a grant on behalf of the Soup Café earlier this year, and he accepted the check at a ceremony at cooperative headquarters on Feb. 16.

Dean Woehl, the soup café’s longest-standing volunteer, says he’s now out of a job. A regular volunteer at the former location on Wednesday evenings, Dean would wash the dishes by hand. Thanks to the Operation Round Up grant, the Soup Café has the funding required to purchase and install the commercial dishwasher.

Dean indicates he’s happy to continue serving, visiting and praying with guests.

Anyone is welcome to eat a free meal at Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café. If you want a good home-cooked meal, stop in and eat — and if you can, leave a donation. Dean says it’s not uncommon to find a large donation in the box. Those donations are needed and appreciated — and are used to help people gain a sense of worth.

For information on Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café, find and follow the business on Facebook, or contact Mark Meier at 226-2325 or mark@heavenshelpers.org.

Volunteer and support the Soup Café

Send a donation to Heaven’s Helpers Soup Café, P.O. Box 8, Bismarck, ND 58502. Find and follow the Soup Café on Facebook, or support the HOPE for the Hungry fundraiser in partnership with Sky Zone Trampoline Park in Bismarck. Or, call or email Mark and find out how you can serve.

Thirteen ORU grants awarded; countless lives touched

Operation Round Up (ORU) is a program in which Capital Electric Cooperative members voluntarily choose to round up their monthly utility bills and donate their pennies to a Charitable Trust. The money pools and accumulates, and an elected board of five co-op members reviews the grant applications that have been submitted by local people and organizations, and determine grant worthiness.

Charitable Trust board members Roger Christianson, Jerry Doan, Barb Handy-Marchello, Jim McCullough and Neil Ness met in February to review grant applications that were submitted by Jan. 31. They awarded 13 grants totaling $20,109.

Checks were distributed during a presentation ceremony on Feb. 16 at co-op headquarters in Bismarck. The following individuals and organizations received assistance from Operation Round Up.

- Soup Café (commercial dishwasher)
- Two area residents (medical expenses)
- Tracy’s Sanctuary House (wall repair/painting)
- Wing Public School (ag shop)
- Volunteer Caregiver’s Exchange (elderly services)
- Sunne Lutheran Church (food pantry)
- The Salvation Army (transportation for clients)
- Baptist Health Care Center (ceiling lifts)
- Freedom Riders/Disabled American Vets (transportation)
- Sleepy Hollow Summer Theatre (program for disabled children)
- Pride Manchester House (replace stove)
- Missouri Valley Chamber Orchestra (educational concert)

The next application deadline will be Monday, July 31. Any person in the counties of Burleigh and Sheridan may apply to receive an Operation Round Up grant. To request an application, call Capital Electric Cooperative at 701-223-1513 or download the form at www.capitalelec.com (click “Our Services” and “Operation Round Up”).
#ThankALineman

**APRIL 10**

Linemen serve on the frontlines of our nation’s energy needs, and on April 10, Capital Electric Cooperative will join the nation in honoring the employees who work in challenging and often dangerous conditions to keep power flowing and protect the public’s safety.

“Linemen are the first-responders at Capital Electric Cooperative, and they’re always ready to get the job done, day or night,” says Line Superintendent Rick Dressler. “Whether they’re responding to a power outage or maintaining electrical infrastructure to provide safe and reliable power, linemen are at the heart of everything we do.”

Capital Electric Cooperative is proud to highlight the foreman, lead linemen and journeyman linemen who maintain more than 1,500 miles of overhead power lines and 1,100 miles of buried cable in our service territory. They include John Frey, Brad Johnson, Matt Hagen, Josh Bartsch, Corey Bruner, Lance Diebold, Jeremy Ensign, Jesse Goehring, Steve Harrington, Ryan Koenig, Steve Kuball, Seth Lothspeich and Braden Martin.

We invite our member-owners to take a moment and thank the local linemen for the work they do. On April 10, use #ThankALineman on social media to show your support for the employees who light our lives.

A Capital Electric Cooperative member from Lincoln, Journeyman Lineman Corey Bruner helps build and maintain the co-op’s electric distribution system.

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**Thank you, members, for your feedback!**

The recent survey we asked our member to complete earlier this year was an undeniable success. We asked some questions relating to air conditioning, electric heat, load management, and our upcoming “Know your Co-op” educational program. We received more than 1,250 completed surveys and a ton of quality information about our members’ needs. We will be utilizing that data as we develop load management and peak-time reduction programs in the upcoming months. We sincerely appreciate your willingness to become engaged with your cooperative by taking time to participate. Look for more surveys this year, as we have additional information to share that will require some feedback from you, our valued member-owners.

As you may remember, we promised that three members would win $50 gift cards just for completing the survey. The lucky winners of those $50 gift cards to Buffalo Wings & Rings, a new Capital Electric Cooperative business consumer, were Mike Uhler and Darcie Handt of Bismarck, and Gary McFarling of Lincoln. Congratulations to you three, and thanks again to everyone who took part in this process.
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n the cooperative world, stories about our members, our employees, and how we do business reflect our co-op values. We care about people and we care about doing business the right way, treating our members like true owners and friends. These values are important to us, and we love to hear about what’s happening in our co-op community.

Telling that story is an art, and it takes someone who has lived and breathed the co-op philosophy for more than 11 years to do it well. Carmen Devney has been telling the co-op story for Capital Electric Cooperative for that many years. As a shared employee with the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative, Carmen has juggled a hectic schedule to interview our members and employees, writing interesting and informative articles on all types of cooperative issues. She has been a national award-winning writer first, but also a great resource for cooperative information, a source of collaboration on other communication issues, and a very good friend.

Working for a co-op you become like family, and your members are an extension of that family. Carmen has developed relationships with our members as she has interviewed them for a wide variety of stories. It’s a challenging and rewarding experience to reach into someone’s mind and glean the details that resonate with others in the community who have something in common. Carmen has been an expert at meeting people where they live, getting to know who they are and what they believe, and sharing that information with the rest of us in a relatable and entertaining way.

We have all enjoyed the wide array of emotional, informative and humorous articles that she has written for the North Dakota Living local pages during this time. Now it’s time for her to move on and write those stories for another group of cooperatives. Carmen will be working for Innovative Energy Alliance, which consists of Mor-Gran-Sou Electric, Roughrider Electric, Slope Electric and KEM Electric. With an office in Mandan, she will still meet with members to interview them and dig up stories to pass onto the co-op members in their service areas.

We will miss Carmen’s expertise and her willingness to go above and beyond to make a story better, to develop a relationship with a member and engage them in the co-op way, and to be a highly productive part of the Capital Electric team. We know she will continue to succeed in the co-op world, as she continues to live and breathe the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative values that we all share as we serve our member-owners. Best wishes to you, Carmen. We will miss you!

Carmen Devney, communications specialist, felt it was important to experience the work of a lineman before she could write about it. Whenever she had the opportunity, she took a camera to the field and captured the physically demanding work and scenic heights of the linemen building and maintaining the electric distribution system. You could often find her in a bucket — and occasionally trying to climb a pole (with a safety instructor present). The guys would challenge her by adding tools to her belt.

relationship with a member and engage them in the co-op way, and to be a highly productive part of the Capital Electric team. We know she will continue to succeed in the co-op world, as she continues to live and breathe the Touchstone Energy® Cooperative values that we all share as we serve our member-owners. Best wishes to you, Carmen. We will miss you!
Board minute excerpts
Friday, Feb. 24, 2017

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held Friday, Feb. 24, 2017 at co-op headquarters in Bismarck, North Dakota, pursuant to due notice to all directors.

All the directors were present at that time except Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, Dwight Wrangham and Rodney Eckroth.

Minutes and Agenda: Vice President Olson called the meeting to order. The minutes of the board meeting held Jan. 20, 2017 were reviewed. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the minutes.

Financial review: Prior to the board meeting, Directors Koski and Olson reviewed the January 2017 check register and expenditures. They reported all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve. January expenditures in the amount of $3,765,755.29.

Business Department report: The Business Manager presented the financial and statistical report to the Board. The total kilowatt-hour (KWH) sales for January 2017 was above budget by 1.1 percent. The actual monthly electric revenue is above budget by 4.9 percent.

The total margin for January 2017 was $429,540 in comparison to the budgeted margin of $50,801, above budget by $378,739.

Capital Electric began billing 15 new services in January, bringing our active services to 19,778 versus 19,233 at this time last year, or a net increase of 545 over the last 12 months.

The Business Manager reviewed the comparison of actual-to-budgeted expenses, power costs and cash flows for the month of January 2017. Accounts receivable balances as of Feb. 23, 2017, were reviewed.

2016 external audit – engagement letter: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Eide Bailly engagement letter for the 2016 audit.

Revenue deferral: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to authorize the utilization of $1,582,781.68 in revenue deferral funds for 2016 to ensure loan covenant ratio compliance.

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 capital credits to the following deceased members’ estates:

Adrian Dunn $2,316.72
Wilber Hammel $135.23
Donald Hermanson $1,578.87
Foster Felchie $728.94
Elsie Overvold $479.70
Terry Rowland $1,791.57
Nicole Nygaard $1,505.89
Anna Clooten $26.20
Delia Hammel $45.55
David Lutzky $77.48
Total $8,704.15

Demand response programs: The Manager reviewed the peak-time rebate (PTR) proposal from PSE.

It was moved, seconded and carried to adopt Rate Schedule “LLC-Load Controlled Cooling: Residential Pilot” attached as “Minute Exhibit 1.”

R&S Plan amendment: It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the proposed revisions to the Non-Union Plan for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Defined Benefit Pension Plan (R&S Plan).

Engineering and Operations report: The Manager reviewed the written report from the Engineering and Operations department. Outage information was also reviewed.

Charles Atkinson was hired for the Meter Technician position. Josh Bartsch from Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative was hired as a lineman.

Contractor bids were reviewed. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve 2017 contractor prices.

Policies: The following policies were reviewed:

Policy No. II-6 – Line Extensions. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the changes to Policy No. III-6.

Policy No. III-6A – Multiple Use Line Extensions. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the changes to Policy No. III-6A.

Policy No. III-2 – Meter Socket, Disconnects and Standby Service. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the changes to Policy No. III-2.

USDA: Following discussion it was moved, seconded and carried to purchase 200 LED lights and apply for a REAP grant related to rural areas.

Central Power Electric Cooperative: It was moved, seconded and carried to authorize Hilken to cast our vote at the Central Power annual meeting.

Energy Services department: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services report.

Schaffner attended NET2017 from Jan. 30 to Feb. 1. The main topics were new cooperative programs and technologies that are entering the industry, primarily energy storage, LED improvements and large-scale generators.

ERC loans: There were no loans for Board approval this month.

Communications and Public Relations department: Topics of interest were reviewed, as well as the Communications Plan for 2017 and our donation strategy.

Nominating Committee: It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the Nominating Committee for 2017 annual meeting.

Safety report: There were no lost-time accidents this month.

James Neether, safety instructor from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) was at our shop on Feb. 8, 2017 and reviewed safety data sheets with spill cleanup of hazardous material and wet over fall arrest systems.

Steve Paulson, safety and loss prevention consultant for Federated Insurance Exchange, was at our shop Feb. 15, 2017 to do a safety and loss prevention assessment of our system. Without objection, the Safety Report was approved.

Policies: Following discussion policies were reviewed:

Policy No. II-1 – Selection of Banks and Depositories. The Policy was reviewed without change.

Policy II-2 – Signing of Checks and Rural Utilities Service Forms. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the policy as amended.


Central Power: Hilken reported on Central Power matters.

Olson was appointed to the Central Power Resolutions with Hollenbeck as alternate.

NDAREC report: NDAREC matters were reviewed with the Board.

RDGC grant: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to authorize a grant request to Rural Development Finance Corporation for a $2,000 grant for Northland Community Health Center (low-income health care).

Legislative Conference: Patrie was selected to attend the Legislative Conference.

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