Happy New Year, from Capital Electric!

We thank you, our member-owners, for the opportunity to serve you in 2014 — and hope simple pleasures fill you with love and laughter in 2015.

Elsie Thompson makes the most of the mild, early December temperatures by sledding on hills by the University of Mary, coloring with chalk, blowing bubbles, and taking wagon rides with her dog, Cider. Elsie is the daughter of Capital Electric Cooperative members Cindy and Ryan Thompson.
Milestones met for two cooperative employees

BY WES ENGBRECHT

Working at an electric cooperative is a lifelong commitment for many employees. The reward of serving the co-op members on a daily basis, by keeping their lights on and their homes warm, is a positive experience, and employees like to stick with it. Two of Capital Electric Cooperative’s dedicated employees were honored in December for their longevity. Operations Supervisor Rick Dressler was recognized for 30 years of service, and Business Manager Paul Fitterer was recognized for 10 years of service. Rick has spent his entire career with the co-op, and Paul started his career with National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) in Mandan before starting with Capital Electric.

Rick Dressler, Operations Supervisor

Two recent promotions have changed Rick Dressler’s role with the cooperative. After 29 years as a lineman and a lead lineman for Capital Electric, Rick took over as system supervisor in November 2013 when Larry Wittmayer retired. A little more than a year has gone by, and he now has been promoted to operations supervisor, a position vacated by the retiring 40-year veteran, Gordy Wiese.

“Coming off the line crew was a drastic change in duties, but it was an experience that will help me with the next phase of my career,” explains Rick. “The role of system supervisor was a great transition between the outside line work and the operations supervisor position.”

In this next phase of his career, Rick will supervise the line crew, as well as our newly promoted system supervisor, Jeff Holzer. Jeff will handle most issues relating to daily outages and communications with the line crews, and Rick will oversee them. When a significant outage occurs, Rick and Jeff will team up with the line crews to make sure power is restored quickly and safely.

One of the reasons Rick is so comfortable with taking over the operations supervisor job is the quality and experience of the line crew. “Because we have such a great team of linemen, I know they will make this job easier for me,” he says. “Gordy has been preparing me thoroughly as well, which I truly appreciate.”

When he’s not at work, Rick enjoys spending as much time as possible with his grandson, Hudson, along with his parents, Travis and Kayla. Travis is Rick and Val’s son. Their other two sons, Weston and Ryan, round out the family that is such an important part of his life.

Capital Electric is thankful for the past 30 years of commitment from Rick. We look forward to his move into the position of operations supervisor, and to many more years of service to our members.

Paul Fitterer, Business Manager

After 10 years as Capital Electric’s business manager, Paul Fitterer has seen a lot of changes in how the cooperative operates. For the most part, technology has driven significant changes in how we interact with co-op consumers. According to Paul, “The job continues to be a challenge as our systems change continually. The number of staff hasn’t changed, so we end up wearing a lot of hats to get everything done efficiently.”

During Paul’s tenure, he has seen the number of co-op members increase by 50 percent. During that time, everything has become more automated, including customer accounts and payments. Outage management has also become more of a science during that time, making our response time to outage resolution even quicker.

Other challenges in more recent months include dealing with healthcare insurance changes, more government regulations, and a consolidation with Central Power in Minot. “There is never a dull moment around here; it seems like there is a new issue around every corner,” says Paul.

Outside the office, Paul stays more than busy with his family that includes wife, Danna, and three daughters. With lots of activities, including sports and church activities, Paul and Danna keep running. Paul also serves on the Salvation Army Advisory Board and the NISC Member Advisory Committee.

In reviewing the journey that led him to Capital Electric, Paul says, “It seems like a long time ago since I moved here from Juneau, Alaska, to attend Moorhead State College.” Capital Electric is glad he did, and appreciates his 10 years of dedicated service to the cooperative and its members.
Renovating farmstead shelterbelts is no easy task. Preparing the ground for new tree plantings is difficult and labor-intensive. Verne and Brenda Whitman, Capital Electric Cooperative members from southwest of Driscoll, did it themselves — with assistance from their son, Stuart, and grandson, Zachary. Their efforts earned them some beautiful, new shelterbelts — and this year’s Burleigh County Soil Conservation District Tree Care Award. The award was presented to Verne and Brenda at the district mixer on Nov. 6.

Darrell Oswald, district technician for the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District, says the family received the award because they’ve planted close to 20,000 feet of new tree plantings so far, and are planning another 5,000 feet in a renovated site.

“It’s not an easy thing to do. The success of the planting depends on the preparation of the site. They did a good job,” Oswald says. “They are also tenacious about taking care of the trees, and replacing ones that die. You don’t get 100 percent success.”

Verne installed a drip irrigation system that he moves around to the plantings.

“They just did an overall good job, and are pretty dedicated in seeing it through and being successful,” Oswald concludes.

Semi-retired, Verne and Brenda run a ranching operation with more than 600 head of mixed-breed cattle. Brenda is the bookkeeper, and Stuart manages the daily operations. The family owns around 3,600 acres and rents approximately 3,000 additional acres.

The shelterbelts they are renovating surround the farm and serve as a windbreak. The majority of the trees planted have been evergreens. Brenda says they provide the best wind protection.

They also planted a variety of fruit trees years ago, and are enjoying berries for the first time.

Brenda says her husband works hard to keep the grass and weeds down.

“It’s a lot to take care of. When it gets to be too much, we enlist help,” she says. Stuart and Zachary help pull weeds.

Capital Electric Cooperative thanks the Whitman family for their commitment to their farm and to our service area.
How to read your power bill

MESSAGES:
Special messages appear here. Those messages may include loan payment reminders, auto-pay updates for those who participate or other important information.

TOTAL OTHER CHARGES AND CREDITS:
This area shows other charges not related to the meter. If you have an Energy Resource Conservation loan, participate in the Operation Round Up program, use a security light or get a water heater credit, this portion will appear on your statement.

SERVICE DETAILS:
This area represents information about the particular metered service, including the service description and rate.

METER READING DETAILS:
This area summarizes information on your meter by showing the meter number, present and previous reading information, and the date the meter was read. A second line may appear in reference to an additional heat service or meter exchange.

RETURN STUB:
The bottom third of your statement is the portion we ask that you mail back with your payment. By including this portion with your payment, you can be assured accurate credit to the proper account.

They come 12 times a year, but do you really know what they say? Here’s a guide to understanding your utility bill each month. For more information, call 701-223-1513.
ACCOUNT NUMBER:
This is your Capital Electric account number. Use it when you call our office, as it makes it easier for us to locate your information.

STATEMENT DATE:
This represents the day your statement was printed.

BILLING SUMMARY:
The billing summary shows your payments, any other activity on your account and the amount due. For members participating in budget billing, your budget amount due appears here.

ANNUAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION HISTORY
This area shows a monthly breakdown of the kilowatt-hours used for the year.

DUE DATE:
This is the date your payment is due. For members participating in the auto-pay program, the amount is deducted around the 20th of the month.
Co-op Scholarship Available

Plan ahead
It’s never too early for teenagers and their parents to start thinking about what it takes to earn a student scholarship. There are a wide variety of scholarships available — and a lot of competition.

“Work hard in school, and be involved in extracurricular activities and in the community. Those things seem to matter,” advises Capital Electric Cooperative member Tom Materi. “Be thinking about those things prior to becoming a senior.”

Tom and his wife, Deb, should know. Their son, Jonathan, applied for and received last year’s $1,000 scholarship from Capital Electric Cooperative, in partnership with Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

A freshman at North Dakota State University in Fargo, Jonathan is enrolled in the computer engineering program. For the past several months, he has been adjusting to college life and the demands of a much heavier homework load — and learning firsthand just how expensive tuition, room and board, and books can be.

“College costs continue to skyrocket,” Tom says. “Jonathan is grateful for the help he received from Capital Electric, and he is hoping it’s something he can pay forward one day.”

Apply now!
Seniors, if your parents are members of Capital Electric Cooperative, you are eligible to apply for this scholarship for the 2015-2016 school year. To qualify for the $1,000 scholarship, you must be a student who is 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.

Our co-op 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. 13, 2015.

Prepare for tax season with SmartHub
Capital Electric Cooperative can help you prepare for tax season! If you haven’t already signed up for SmartHub, now’s a good time to do so. By signing up for this co-op service, members have access to their electronic billing history, which contains the current billing statement, billing history details, kilowatt usage, monthly comparisons and other informative facts. SmartHub also allows Capital Electric Cooperative members to pay their utility bills online day or night.

To sign up for SmartHub, visit the co-op’s homepage at www.capitalelec.com and click “My Account” (SmartHub) in the upper left-hand corner. Then sign up as a new user. When members sign up for SmartHub using our secure server, they will receive a monthly billing email notification from our co-op and also be given the option to still receive a paper bill through the mail. The notice will link to our website at www.capitalelec.com. Members can click on this link and enter their email address and password.
WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE ESSAY-WRITING CONTEST

YOUTH TOUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

JUNIORS & SENIORS

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE

13 to 19, June 2015

• If you have a question, contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric, at the address listed above, or call 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.

• To enter the essay-writing contest, you must be a junior or senior in high school in the fall of 2015.

• You and your parents or guardian must be served by Capital Electric Cooperative.

• Essay is not to exceed two standard 8½-by 11-inch typewritten, double-spaced pages on this topic:

If you were asked to influence other students your age to become more actively involved in their electric cooperative——including attendance at the electric cooperative annual meeting——what would you tell them and why?

• Submit your essay in hard copy or electronic format to Capital Electric. Electronic submissions should conform to the two-page, double-spaced guideline described above. Include a cover page with your name, date of birth, school and grade in 2015, parent or guardian’s name, address and telephone number.

• The deadline is Jan. 30, 2015. Emailed entries should be directed to wese@capitalelec.com, and hard-copy entries mailed to Youth Tour Essay Contest, Capital Electric Cooperative, 4111 State St., Bismarck, ND 58502-0730.

• If you have a question, contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric, at the address listed above, or call 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.

WRITE A WINNING ESSAY AND WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!

An all-expense-paid trip to WASHINGTON, D.C.

DEADLINE QUICKLY APPROACHING!

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.

CHECK IT OUT AT

www.ndyouthtour.com and www.youthtour.coop
Board minute excerpts
Nov. 21, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held on Friday, Nov. 21, 2014, at co-op headquarters in Bismarck.

Financial review: Prior to the board meeting, Directors Kramer and Liuska reviewed the October 2014 check register and expenditures. Kramer reported that all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve October expenditures in the amount of $3,030,429.73.

Business department report: The Manager reviewed the October financial and statistical report with the Board. The total kilowatt-hour (KWH) sales for October 2014 were below budget by 6 percent. The actual monthly electric revenue is above budget by 0.6 percent. Year-to-date, KWH sales are up from budget by 2.7 percent and electric revenue is $26,041,046 versus budgeted revenue of $24,653,333, over budget by 5.6 percent. The financial margin for October is $67,983, versus the budgeted margin of -$31,926, above budget by $99,909. The year-to-date margin is $98,447, under budget by $348,805.

In October, 75 new services were billed, bringing active services to 18,344 versus 17,596 at this time last year. This is a net increase of 748 accounts over the last 12 months.

The manager reviewed the comparison of actual-to-budgeted expenses for the month of November and for the year-to-date through November 2014. Accounts receivable balances as of Nov. 20, 2014, were reviewed.

Central Power Electric Cooperative consolidation: The manager was in contact with Eide Bailly regarding the special miscellaneous revenue/interest expense accounting entries that are being made while we wait for the consolidation to be complete. Assuming that the consolidation is finalized in 2014, Eide Bailly is in agreement that instead of booking the offsetting entry to interest expense.

Revenue/interest expense accounting entries by $348,805.

Health care: All of the applications for insurance have been completed by employees and submitted to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). There have been a lot of questions regarding the new plan. We have been pleased with the response time and accuracy of answers. On Nov. 12, 2014, our NRECA field representative, Rory Barth, stopped at our office and reviewed the upcoming NRECA medical plan with employees.

Refinance of “AD61” loan study: We are studying the effects of refinancing our remaining Rural Utilities Service direct loans. We are evaluating the potential ramifications.

Basin Electric Power Cooperative after-hours: National Information Solutions Cooperative (NISC) and Basin Electric have worked together to standardize the nightly data extract to after-hours support for their mutual co-ops. Our final test was successful and we went live on Oct. 28, 2014, and everything appeared to be working smoothly.

MoneyGram: MoneyGram is working with NISC and Capital Electric to test the live interface to our billing system. Once ready, this will provide cash payment options for customers via any location that accepts MoneyGram.

2015 update to the 2014 load forecast: We have accepted a 2015 update to the 2014 load forecast that was approved last year. The update runs projections by including the most recent date (2013 statistics) and assumptions. The update seems reasonable.

After discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve the resolution to accept the 2015 update.

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:

- Alfred Diede $340.91
- June Hinkel $779.88
- Everett Buchan $643.91
- Merritt Bauer $637.20
- TOTAL $2,401.90

Engineering and operations report: The Manager reviewed the written report from the engineering and operations departments. We completed 86 work orders this month, adding 159 new consumers to the system.

Fischer and The Third Generation continue to trench in cable around the Bismarck area, and VIP continues to work on our overhead rural rebuild.

Crews also have been working with Central Power at our rural substations to update our metering.

Rick Dressler has accepted the position of operations supervisor; he will take over on Jan. 2, 2015. Jeff Holzer has accepted the position of system supervisor; he will start on Dec. 1, 2014. With all these changes going on in the operations department, we are short one journeyman lineman. We will advertise for this position shortly.

Lars and Ron met with Craig Lohstreter and Pat Darras on Friday, Nov. 7, 2014 on the various sites.

Member services department: The Manager reviewed the member services written report.

Central Power pursuing several substations sites: Information was received this week from Mark Sherman at Central Power concerning the purchase of several potential substation sites. The various sites were reviewed.

Communications and public relations department: The Manager reviewed the written report from the communications and public relations department. Wes Engbrecht attended the Sanford Health board retreat in Fargo on Nov. 4 and 5 and was elected chair of the Sanford Health board on Nov. 6 for the upcoming calendar year. He attended an E-Communications workshop at the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC); an American Red Cross board meeting; Bismarck Public Schools Foundation Board Meeting; and a meeting on capital electric cooperative board minutes report

CAPITAL ELECTRIC
4111 State St. N.
Bismarck, ND 58503
Website: www.capitalelec.com

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Dwight Wrangham, Pres. ............ Bismarck
Arlene Olson, V. Pres. ................. Wing
David Liuska, Sec.-Treas. ............ Bismarck
Sheri Haugen-Hoffart, Asst. Sec.-Treas. ............... Bismarck
Rodney Eckroth ...................... Bismarck
Kyle Hilken ........................ Wilton
Lars Kramer .......................... Bismarck
Lars reviewed the highlights of system supervisor; he will start on Dec. 1, 2014. With all these changed going on in the operations department, we are short one journeyman lineman. We will advertise for this position shortly.

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

OFFICE HOURS:
Monday-Friday: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Office phone: 701-223-1513
Toll-free: 888-223-1513
Pay-By-Phone: 1-877-853-5928
DAY—NIGHT—WEEKEND
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