



**CAPITAL ELECTRIC**  
COOPERATIVE

# CAPITAL ELECTRIC COMMENTS

Capital Electric Cooperative • Bismarck, N.D.  
701-223-1513 or 888-223-1513  
1-877-853-5928 Pay-By-Phone  
[www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com)

JANUARY 2016

## Shelterbelts

*Help to reduce soil erosion  
and protect livestock*

*In this month's local pages, learn how the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District is providing an important service to Capital Electric Cooperative members, and who earned this year's Tree Care Award.*



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

### JANUARY 2016 IN THIS ISSUE

- Employee service milestones
- MacDonald Ranch earns Tree Care Award
- Student scholarship available
- Youth Tour deadline approaching
- Meeting minutes and more



## EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

# Turning a job into a career

PHOTOS AND STORY BY CARMEN DEVNEY



**Les Vietz**, Crew Foreman, Capital Electric Cooperative

**N**ine Capital Electric Cooperative employees are celebrating significant work anniversaries this year, totaling 195 years of service to our member-owners. These impressive numbers speak volumes about the dedicated people your co-op employs, and the environment in which they work. Simply put: Many of the people who work hard to provide you with safe, affordable and reliable electric service enjoy their jobs so well that they have turned them into careers.

This month, we note two of our most veteran employees, Les Vietz, crew foreman, and Doug Jahner, meter reader-repairman, who have each worked at your cooperative for 40 years.

Vietz, who graduated from McClusky High School and the Bismarck Junior College line school, worked as an apprentice for Montana-Dakota Utilities before taking a job at Capital Electric in 1976.

Most of what he learned was self-taught, on the job.

“What was nice about working here, I had the time and opportunity to learn

on my own. I was never pressured to hurry up and get the job done,” he says.

The only crew foreman at Capital Electric, Vietz oversees and helps with overhead and underground power line construction and maintenance. He’s also helped build many of the cooperative’s substations, and been instrumental in the installation of their TWACS and SCADA systems.

Vietz also still helps fix the occasional power outage. Out of the countless restorations he’s worked over the years, the one he remembers most had nothing to do with inclement weather. It was memorable because after the power was restored, a girl came out of the house and wrapped her arms around his legs in gratitude.

Vietz says he appreciates the camaraderie of the line crews, and that he’s enjoyed his career at Capital Electric.

“It’s been a good job. I could have bailed and done other things, but if you enjoy what you’re doing, why would you jump out of one nest into another?” he asks. “There have been times I thought about doing other things. I’m pretty glad I didn’t,” he says.

Capital Electric thanks Vietz and Jahner for their 40 years of dedicated service, and recognizes the additional co-op employees who will celebrate anniversaries this year including Rich Dunn and Steve Harrington for 30 years, Dale Twardoski for 25 years, Laurie Rogstad and Shari Vetter for 10 years, and Kent Kensmoe and Lance Diebold for five years. And as always, we thank our entire team of colleagues who work together to serve our member-owners at the end of the line. **CEC**

## Employees honored for years of service



**Les Vietz**, 40 years  
Crew Foreman



**Doug Jahner**, 40 years  
Meter Reader-Repairman



**Rich Dunn**, 30 years  
Engineering Assistant



**Steve Harrington**, 30 years  
Lineman

# IS A JOB WITH AN ELECTRIC CO-OP IN YOUR FUTURE?



Dale Twardoski, 25 years  
Lead Lineman



Laurie Rogstad, 10 years  
Accounting Assistant



Shari Vetter, 10 years  
Billing Coordinator



Kent Kensmoe, 5 years  
I.T. Specialist



Lance Diebold, 5 years  
Lineman



**W**e might be biased, but in our opinion, electric cooperatives are great places to work. In general, co-ops offer competitive salaries and benefits at a time when many companies are scaling back. They also offer a satisfying and stable work environment. This is reflected by the large number of employees who chose to start and stay with cooperatives, and turn their jobs into a career.

In part, we attribute the satisfying work environment to our consumer-owned, not-for-profit businesses model. At Capital Electric Cooperative, we exist to provide our members with safe, affordable and reliable electric power, and to provide community support and programs that help our member-owners save energy and money.

Capital Electric Cooperative is one of 16 electric distribution co-ops in North Dakota that provides quality jobs to more than 600 people. While our linemen tend to be the employees many folks recognize or know because of their physical presence across the counties of Burleigh, Emmons, McLean, Sheridan and Kidder, it takes a variety of employees and departments to efficiently run our cooperative. We employ:

- Engineers and technicians to design substations, power lines and poles, update maps and plan for growth;
- Operations and system supervisors to plan for construction and maintenance, and dispatch line crews;
- Staking engineers to stake new services;
- Linemen to construct and maintain overhead and underground distribution lines, and restore outages;
- Accountants to handle payroll and record financial information;
- Member services staff to meet with consumers about electric heat products and services;
- Billing representatives to calculate electric bills, greet members and take payments;
- Information technology specialists to upgrade hardware and software;
- Communications staff to keep members informed about co-op issues, and to cultivate relationships with local, state and national opinion leaders;
- And so many more!

Capital Electric Cooperative currently employs 34 full-time and two part-time employees who work to make a difference in the lives of our member-owners.

If you are looking for a stable and satisfying career, we encourage you to consider working for an electric cooperative. Capital Electric Cooperative is an equal-opportunity employer. For job opportunities, go to [www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com) and click on "About Us" and "Job Opportunities." You can also learn about state and national electric cooperative job opportunities at [www.TouchstoneEnergy.jobs](http://www.TouchstoneEnergy.jobs). **CEC**





PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVNEY

The MacDonald Ranch earned its second Tree Care Award from the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District in November. **Linda MacDonald** and her son, **Will**, accepted the award on behalf of the ranch. The annual award is sponsored by Capital Electric Cooperative. **Wes Engbrecht** (right), director of communications and public relations, conferred this year's award.

## MacDonald Ranch earns Tree Care Award

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Gusty winds blowing sandy soil were causing erosion around the MacDonald Ranch south of Bismarck. So William (Bill) and Linda MacDonald, third-generation farmers and ranchers, and members of Capital Electric Cooperative, started planting trees back in 1968. Linda recalls planting “miles and miles” of trees in half-mile strips.

Pregnant with their first child, Will, at the time, Linda was in charge of hoeing nine miles of trees that summer. She was rewarded for her efforts, when the Burleigh

County Soil Conservation District announced she had won a contest on who could keep the cleanest trees. The award was sponsored by Capital Electric Cooperative.

The MacDonalds planted many more miles of trees over the years, to reduce soil erosion and provide shelter for livestock. When Will was a teenager, he ended up back in the tree rows, using a Weedbadger® to clean the rows like his mother.

The last planting at the MacDonald Ranch was done several years ago, with assistance from the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District.



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Bill MacDonald** passed away a couple years ago. His wife, **Linda**, and son, **Will**, continue to raise registered *Salers* and *Salers-cross* cattle, host an annual bull sale and grow crops, with assistance from Will's wife, Jerilyn, and their three sons. Bill and Linda have two other children. Beverly works as an OB/GYN in Williston, and Jim is a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

In addition, several employees with the district have helped over the years with fencing, developing water resources, seeding alfalfa and grass, and providing technical assistance.

“It has been a lot of work, but they have helped us tremendously,” says Linda, who shares that Bill passed away a couple years ago.

On Nov. 5, Linda was once again honored for her efforts by the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District. The MacDonald Ranch earned this year's Tree Care Award, which was again sponsored by Capital Electric Cooperative.

Darrell Oswald, district technician, says the MacDonalds earned the award for their efforts in establishing numerous tree plantings that provide protection for their well-kept farmstead and provide winter protection for the livestock operation.

“The predominantly conifer windbreaks provide wonderful wildlife food and thermal cover, as well as enhance the beauty of the surrounding area,” he says. “The



*Bill MacDonald's grandfather started planting trees in the early 1900s, to reduce soil erosion and provide shelter for livestock. Bill and Linda continued those efforts, and in 1968, Linda earned her first Tree Care Award from the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District, for keeping "miles and miles" of tree rows clean — while pregnant.*

plantings have been established over time in some difficult soils, and the MacDonald family has put in a lot of time and effort into caring for and replanting trees that did not survive due to the harsh soils."

Will and his wife, Jerilyn, are raising the fifth generation of MacDonalds with their three boys, Jerrod (18), Jayden (14) and Ty (11), who do their part to help out on the ranch. The family, along with



PHOTO BY CARMEN DEVENEY

*The MacDonald Ranch was homesteaded by Bill's grandfather in 1886. It is now going on its fifth generation.*

Linda, continues to raise registered Salers and Salers-cross cattle, host an annual bull sale and grow crops.

Capital Electric Cooperative thanks Linda MacDonald and the Will MacDonald family for their commitment to their farm and to our service area. **CEC**

## Learn more about the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District

Services provided include planning and designing for no-till cropping systems, prescribed grazing systems and shelterbelt tree plantings. Soil health is the foundation of the yearly information and education workshop and tours. Visit <http://bcsd.com/> or call 701-250-4518, ext. 3, to learn more the Burleigh County Soil Conservation District and its services.

## Take the brrrr out of starting a cold vehicle

**W**ill your vehicle start Monday morning when it's 30 degrees below zero? When your vehicle doesn't start due to frigid temperatures, it can be frustrating. That's why most North Dakotans use an engine block heater on their vehicles. Engine block heaters keep your vehicle's motor warm, allowing an easy start on those cold mornings. But there are some considerations when using an engine block heater. Capital Electric Cooperative offers these tips:

- Don't overload a circuit by plugging your engine block heater into just any outlet. A simple formula will help you decide how many watts one circuit can handle. Divide the wattage of the engine block heater by 120 volts to find out how many amps will be used. If you plug a 640-watt engine block heater into a 120-volt outlet, you are using 5.33 amps. Circuit breakers are rated in amps, so make sure the circuit has enough amps to carry the additional load. It might be best to use an exterior outlet that is protected by one circuit breaker and has ample capacity.
- If the engine block heater has a three-prong plug, don't alter it. Always leave the plug intact and attach extension cords correctly.
- If you use an extension cord outdoors, make sure it is a heavy-duty extension cord rated for outdoor use.
- Warming your engine all night and sometimes all day can use a significant amount of electricity. For better energy efficiency, purchase a timer for your block heater. A timer allows you to automatically turn the engine heater to on-and-off intervals according to your specifications.



## INVESTING IN YOUTH AND OUR FUTURE

### *Capital Electric offers student scholarship*

To help develop future leaders and support families in our service area, Capital Electric Cooperative is offering a \$1,000 student scholarship for the 2016-2017 school year, in partnership with Basin Electric Power Cooperative.

To qualify for the scholarship, seniors must be 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. Their parents or guardians must be members of Capital Electric.

Our cooperative 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](http://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. 19.

"Applying for scholarships is one of the simplest ways students can start college off right. A little bit of effort and time can save yourself a lot of money," advises Christopher Kraft. He knows from personal experience.

A freshman at the University of Mary, Christopher applied for and received last year's \$1,000 scholarship from Capital Electric and Basin Electric. He is seeking a

double major of healthcare administration and pre-med, playing football — and learning the challenge of balance.

"College has been going really well, and I am excited for my future," he says.

The son of Capital Electric members Michael and Jean Kraft, Christopher says scholarships have helped him immensely.

"I have been able to more thoroughly enjoy the college experience, without worrying too much about financing my education," he says. **CE**

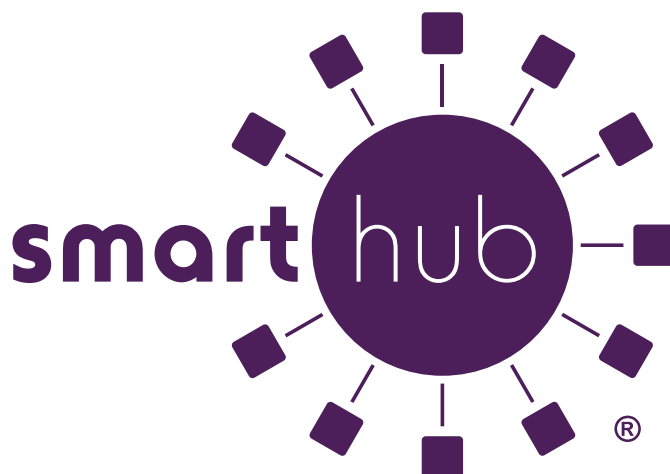


**Christopher Kraft** earned last year's Capital Electric Cooperative's \$1,000 scholarship.

## *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 home page at [www.capitalelec.com](http://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](http://www.capitalelec.com). Members can click on this link and enter their email address and password. **CE**

JUNE 11 to 17, 2016

North Dakota Electric Cooperative

# YOUTH TOUR

WRITE A WINNING ESSAY AND WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!  
An all-expense-paid trip to WASHINGTON, D.C.

HIGH SCHOOL  
SOPHOMORES & JUNIORS



- 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 questions, contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 29, 2016. Emailed entries should be directed to [wese@capitalelec.com](mailto:wese@capitalelec.com), and hard-copy entries mailed to: Youth Tour Essay Contest, Capital Electric Cooperative, 4111 State St., Bismarck, ND 58502-0730.

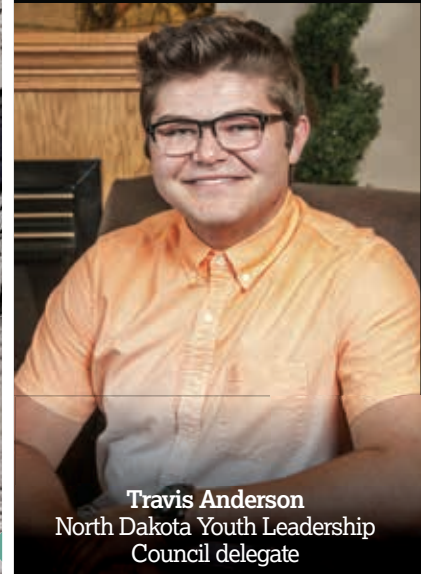
### ESSAY QUESTION:

*"Pick one of the four Touchstone Energy® core values — innovation, integrity, accountability or commitment to community — and describe how you see this in action at Capital Electric Cooperative."*

### 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.

Find out why you should  
write an essay for the  
2016 Youth Tour.  
Visit [www.youtube.com/ndarec](http://www.youtube.com/ndarec)



Travis Anderson  
North Dakota Youth Leadership  
Council delegate

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY-CONTEST GUIDELINES AT  
[www.ndyouthtour.com](http://www.ndyouthtour.com) and [www.youthtour.coop](http://www.youthtour.coop)



## Board minute excerpts Nov. 20, 2015

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held Friday, Nov. 20, 2015, at co-op headquarters in Bismarck.

**Financial review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Hilken and Vilhauer reviewed the October 2015 check register and expenditures. Vilhauer reported all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve October expenditures in the amount of \$3,087,356.33.

**Business department report:** The Manager reviewed the October financial and statistical report with the Board. The total kilowatt-hour (KWH) sales for October 2015 was below budget by 3 percent. The actual monthly electric revenue is below budget by 1.2 percent. Year-to-date, KWH sales are under budget by .4 percent and electric revenue is over budget by .4 percent.

The year-to-date margin is \$306,200 versus -\$234,275 budgeted.

The year-end income statement for 2015 has been projected using actual through October and budgeted thereafter. Assuming we meet budget the rest of the way, Capital Electric would need to bring back \$10,000 in deferred revenue in 2015 in order to meet lender requirements.

Capital Electric began billing 98 new services in October, bringing our active services to 19,109 versus 18,344 at this time last year, or a net increase of 765 accounts over the last 12 months.

The Manager reviewed the comparison of actual-to-budgeted expenses for the month of September and year-to-date through October 2015. Accounts receivable balances as of Nov. 19, 2015, were reviewed.

**Capital Credit follow-up:** North Dakota cooperatives' capital credit retirement methods and years outstanding were reviewed for comparison purposes.

**2016 budget:** There were a few changes made to the budget following the October meeting. Following review of the budget, it was moved, seconded and carried to approve the 2016 budget, including commencing a rate study (pending further review).

**Loan drawdown:** On Nov. 12, 2015, we submitted a drawdown of \$2,000,000 in Federal Financing Bank loan funds by submitting requests for two \$1,000,000 notes; one to roll quarterly and the other fixed for the full term until 2047. Much of this cash will carry over into next year and

will reduce a proportionate amount of loan drawdowns in 2016.

**Revenue deferral request:** We have put together a request for Rural Utilities Service (RUS) to be able to defer additional revenues up to the total amount of bill credits Capital Electric received from the BNSF railroad settlement from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and Central Power Electric Cooperative. We are asking RUS to approve the use of our existing revenue deferral plan using a slightly different source of credit.

It was moved, seconded and approved to adopt the "Resolution on Deferred Revenue Plan Modification."

**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:

Neil & Fran Thom	\$ 259.26
Adam Schumacher	\$ 111.49
TOTAL	\$ 370.75

### Engineering and operations report:

The Manager reviewed the written report from the engineering and operations department. We completed 39 work orders this month, adding 26 new consumers to the system.

Fisher, 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation and Gieser Utility Contracting continue to trench in new services, and VIP continues to work on our overhead rural rebuild.

Crews have been working with Central Power in the Menoken, Moffit and Christiana substations.

Jacob Mildenburger, summer apprentice lineman, will be leaving us next week.

Central Power energized the Horizon II substation this week; this has been an all-summer project.

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

**Twin Buttes geothermal project:** As a dealer and distributor for Enertech<sup>®</sup>, Capital Electric has the opportunity to sell and distribute equipment for projects. We have been working on a large project for the past year and note it is finally under construction in Twin Buttes on the Fort Berthold Reservation. There are four separate existing buildings that are having geothermal systems installed.

In total, Capital Electric provided 23 geothermal units totaling 105 tons.

**Communications and public relations department:** Patrie reported on the BisMan Community Food Co-op and naming rights consideration for the Community Room.

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

Jeff Tweten, safety instructor from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC), was at our shop for a field observation safety meeting. He rides along with the crews to observe their work.

Without objection, the safety report was approved.

**Director districts:** There are three director districts with roughly proportionate numbers in the proposed redistrict plan. The board will continue to review to determine whether amendments to the bylaws should be proposed.

**NDAREC:** The Statewide meeting was held Nov. 5, 2015. The budget margins were \$759,861. Liuska was elected as delegate to Statewide with Eckroth elected as alternate.

It was moved, seconded and carried that all directors will serve as delegates to the Statewide annual meeting. Nygren and Fitterer will serve as alternates.

Telephone interviews for the General Manager position will be held Dec. 17, 2015, commencing at 9:00 a.m.

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

## CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE 4111 State St. N.

Bismarck, ND 58503

Website: [www.capitalelec.com](http://www.capitalelec.com)

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Dwight Wrangham, Pres. .... Bismarck  
Arlene Olson, V. Pres. .... Wing  
David Liuska, Sec.-Treas. .... Wing  
Sheri Haugen-Hoffart,

Asst. Sec.-Treas. .... Bismarck  
Rodney Eckroth .... Bismarck  
Kyle Hilken .... Wilton  
Josh Kramer .... Bismarck  
William Patrie .... Bismarck  
Deon Vilhauer .... Bismarck  
Ordean "Lars" Nygren, Mgr. .... Bismarck

### 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

TROUBLE CALL: 223-1513

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