**Know what’s below**

Calling North Dakota One Call is free, easy, and it’s the law, prior to digging or excavating on your property. In this month’s local pages, learn when to call 811 — and why the process is so important for public safety.

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**Brandy Richau**, Locating Manager, Summit Utility Services

**JUNE 2015**

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No job is too small for North Dakota One Call.

Prior to planting a tree or setting a flag pole in the Capital Electric Cooperative service area, you must contact 811, North Dakota One Call, to request a locate of the underground utilities lines. It’s free, it’s easy, and it’s the law.

For about a year, Capital Electric has been partnering with Summit Utility Services to provide locates on behalf of the co-op. Jeff Holzer, system supervisor at Capital Electric, says the cooperative started outsourcing the job when an employee retired last summer.
“It can be seasonal work,” Holzer explains. “In the wintertime we could have one or two locates in a day; in the summer we could have 50 or more in a day. It makes sense to outsource this job and partner with Summit.”

Underground utility lines including electric, gas, telephone, Internet and more, need to be marked — or staked — before a consumer or contractor digs. Some of the many projects that require a call to 811, or One Call, would include planting a tree, installing a fence, or building or adding onto a home. Regardless of the project size, if you plan to dig or excavate, you must call One Call first. It can take up to 48 hours, or two business days, for every utility company to mark the underground lines.

The process of locating goes like this: A consumer or contractor calls 811 and generates an electronic locate request among all area utilities. Summit Utility Services receives the request on behalf of Capital Electric. An employee for Summit is dispatched to the site. This person will have maps of the Capital Electric service area that identify consumers and power lines. Using a locator, which is a transmitter with two clips, the employee sticks a probe in the ground for grounding purposes, and then clips onto utility infrastructure such as an area transformer. The probe then sends a signal down the wire. Using a handheld receiver, the employee can identify the underground line, and mark it with paint and flags. The employee takes photos of the completed locate, which is good for 21 days.

Troy Holzworth, president of Summit Utility Services, started in the industry about 25 years ago. He says in the “old days,” people didn’t give much thought to digging without placing a call. “There weren’t nearly as many miles of underground utility lines,” he says. “Now, it may not be safe to put a shovel in your own yard. Quite a bit has changed.”

The process, which has become quite a bit more extensive over the years, is not just important — it’s necessary. “If you were to hit a utility line that is not marked or is improperly marked, it could cause a power outage or injury. If you’ve been watching the national news, there have been several gas explosions where people were killed, as a result of not having called 811 and followed through with the process,” Holzworth says. “At the end of the day, One Call is all about public safety and keeping plant intact.”

Holzworth says Summit Utility Services partners with many utility companies including electric cooperatives to perform locates, and notes that all of the co-ops in North Dakota have, “great people to be business partners with in damage prevention.”

For information on Summit Utility Services, visit www.summitutility.com. To request a locate, call North Dakota One Call at 811 or visit www.ndonecall.com. ❝
Gieser leaves Wing outpost to start business

BY CARMEN DEVNEY

Starting a utility construction company has been on Rick Gieser’s mind for quite some time. With a wife and eight children to support, leaving a stable job comes with risks — and possibly great rewards. Rick intends to find out.

Rick, lead lineman in Wing for Capital Electric Cooperative, worked his last day on Friday, May 15. A Mandan native, he joined the co-op in May 2011 after working as a lineman for Rio Grande Electric Cooperative in Brackettville, Texas, and Mountain View Electric Association in Limon, Colo.

He and his wife, Anne-Marie, were excited to return to North Dakota and enjoy outdoor opportunities including hunting, fishing and camping. Rick says the couple plans to continue living in Wing.

“It's a great community and everybody is friendly,” he says.

In his new role as business owner, Rick will work with material suppliers and area distributors, and purchase equipment needed to lay underground cable. He’s already spoken to the operations department at Capital Electric, and hopes the co-op will be one of his first customers.

Rick says leaving the cooperative wasn’t an easy decision, but he’s dreamed about owning a business and feels the time is right to try.

“If it works, it does. If not, it doesn’t — no regrets,” he says.

Capital Electric Cooperative thanks Rick Gieser for his four years of service and wishes him well in his business venture.

The Capital Electric Cooperative directors, managers and employees thank you, our member-owners, for attending our 69th annual meeting of the membership held June 2. We appreciate the interest and support you continue to show in your electric cooperative!

This year our board of directors approved the retirement of 50 percent of unretired “co-op” capital credits from 1999 totaling more than $483,000, which exclude capital credits allocated by our generation and transmission (G&T) providers.

To learn more about Capital Electric’s 69th annual meeting, read a complete summary in the July local pages of North Dakota Living.
Electrical Safety: Think Outside the Home

Electrical hazards are not only present indoors, but can also occur outside. Follow this guide to help prevent common outdoor electrical hazards.

**POWER LINES**
Before planting trees near a power line, conduct research or speak with a professional to ensure there's enough space for it to grow. If you suspect that a tree is too close to power lines, report it to your local utility.

Always keep yourself and equipment at least 10 ft. away from power lines. Electricity can jump to nearby objects!

Power lines are also underground. Call 811 before you dig.

**OUTDOOR OUTLETS**
Have Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) installed, which automatically cut power when a plugged in item comes in contact with water or begins to “leak” electricity.

Install weatherproof boxes or covers on outdoor outlets.

**GENERATORS**
Between 1999 and 2012, 79% of the 931 carbon monoxide (CO) fatalities were associated with generators.

24% of CO fatalities involving generators occurred when used inside an attached garage or shed.

Make sure your home is properly equipped with carbon monoxide alarms and test them monthly.

Do not plug generators directly into a home outlet without a transfer switch to prevent backfeed which could harm utility line workers making repairs.

Make sure your generator is properly grounded.

**EXTENSION CORDS**
Extension cords provide a temporary solution and should not be used long-term or permanently.

Never use an indoor extension cord outdoors. Outdoor cords will be labeled “For Outdoor Use” and are often orange.

Never attempt to extend the length of an extension cord by connecting it to another extension cord.

Be sure the amperage rating for the extension cord is higher than amperage of the electrical product being used.

Only use extension cords that have the mark of a nationally recognized testing laboratory such as UL, Intertek or CSA.

**ADDITIONAL TIPS**

Store fuel in approved containers and away from any potential heat sources, like a furnace, space heater, or even direct sunlight.

When storing electrical products in your garage, use containers to prevent exposure to water or damage caused by animals.

Have an electrician inspect your swimming pool, spa or hot tub to ensure it complies with applicable local codes, such as the National Electrical Code.
You’re a member of a cooperative. Do you know what that means?

Abigail Wu, a junior at Century High School, was unfamiliar with cooperatives and their unique business model in which the members, or consumers, are also the owners. Interested in entering an essay-writing contest hosted by her family’s electric cooperative — and hoping to win a free trip to Washington, D.C. — Abigail started researching and asking people questions about what they knew about cooperatives. What she learned, or didn’t learn, astonished her.

“I was, to say the least, surprised when many cultured and intelligent people replied that they did not know about electric cooperatives, except that they provided electricity. Others did not even know what an electric cooperative was,” she says.

Abigail entered Capital Electric Cooperative’s essay-writing contest, which required her to answer this question: “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?”

The daughter of Capital Electric members Zongjian Wu and Fengchun Zhao, Abigail wrote that while cooperatives exist to provide affordable, reliable and safe electric service, the co-ops and their members do much more. She noted how the consumers own the cooperative and can help influence the direction of the cooperative by voting for the board of directors at the annual meeting.

“The tradition of democracy is a legacy in America, and it is extended to having a vote in the cooperative. Capital Electric aspires to benefit its member-owners, and it definitely does,” she wrote.

Abigail also learned there is a strong connection between cooperative and community. She started reading the North Dakota Living magazine when she moved to North Dakota with her family in 2007. The magazine is a communications tool utilized by North Dakota’s Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, to share industry-specific news and events of importance to member-owners. The magazine also features a column for teenagers in which students can write and express their beliefs. Abigail applied for a position as a teen writer last year and was hired. She wrote about diversity and presented an interesting, open-minded viewpoint on stereotypes. She says the experience gave her confidence, real-life writing experience, and a real-life paycheck.

“Offering opportunities like the Teen-2-Teen column, as well as scholarships, connect youth to the cooperative,” she wrote.

Now well-versed on electric cooperatives, Abigail encourages her peers and others — including the cooperative’s member-owners — to better understand the depth and breadth of what electric cooperatives do.
“I believe that knowledge is power, and with power comes influence and change. The younger generation, my generation, will soon be the future. I believe that students are constantly looking for ways to be heard and opportunities to contribute to society, and if they know about the many opportunities that being active in their electric cooperative provides, they would be eager to participate,” her essay concludes.

Abigail won the essay-writing contest and earned the all-expense-paid trip, courtesy of the Capital Electric membership. On the tour scheduled for June 13 to 19, she will see the grand architecture, meaningful monuments and fast-paced people. In addition to touring attractions including the U.S. Capitol, Arlington Cemetery, Mount Vernon, and the Smithsonian museum and research complex, Abigail will learn more about the cooperative business model, U.S. history and American government. The North Dakota students also meet our state’s congressional delegation.

Born in Virginia and raised in California and North Dakota, Abigail says she is very excited for the tour. Having already studied AP U.S. History, Abigail says touring the museums and monuments will mean a lot more because of what she has already learned.

“It’s about knowledge. If you know about it, you feel connected to it. The closer you feel to the subject, the more important it will be to you,” she says.

In addition to being studious and taking challenging classes, Abigail is quite active in school and around the community. She plays soccer and enjoys music theory and choir. Fluent in Mandarin Chinese, she’s also a member of the Spanish club and the Century High School’s chapter of the National Honor Society. Abigail is also active in her church, Evangel Assembly of God, where she participates in the fine arts and volunteers with kids. Because of her commitment to community, she received the Outstanding Volunteer Award for 75 or more hours of community service.

Capital Electric Cooperative congratulates Abigail for winning the Electric Cooperative Youth Tour essay contest and trip, and thanks her for helping to educate our member-owners about how cooperative and community connect to unite and benefit for the greater good. After Abigail returns from Washington, D.C., we’ll visit with her again and learn the trip’s highlights.
The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held Wednesday, April 29, 2015 at Capital Electric headquarters in Bismarck.

**Financial review:** Prior to the board meeting, Directors Liuska and Hilken reviewed the March 2015 check register and expenditures. Hilken reported all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve March expenditures in the amount of $3,926,663.94.

**Business department report:** The Manager reviewed the March financial and statistical report with the Board. The total kilowatt-hour (KWH) sales for March 2015 were below budget by .7%. The actual monthly electric revenue is below budget by .94%. Year-to-date, KWH sales are down from budget by .45% and electric revenue is under budget by .53%.

The financial margin for March is $189,240 versus the budgeted margin of $241,873, below budget by $52,633. The year-to-date margin is $442,599 versus $478,441, budgeted, under budget by $35,842.

Capital Electric began billing 27 new services in March, bringing our active services to 18,586 versus 17,755 at this time last year, or a net increase of 831 accounts over the last 12 months.

The Business Manager reviewed the comparison of actual-to-budgeted expenses for the month of March and for the year-to-date through March 2015. Accounts receivable balances as of April 28, 2015, were reviewed.

**Refi-RUS Direct Notes:** Rural Utilities Service (RUS) acknowledged receiving our paperwork regarding our request to pay off our remaining four direct notes via refinancing through CoBank and advised the paperwork would be reviewed within 30 days.

**Health care:** We have posted the latest REC health care trust decision documents on the dashboard, and will update and note any significant changes in our monthly reports. We are working on cleaning up the trust documents. Comparable rates should be available this summer. We have been reauthorized to release the latest summarized health claim information for review by our trust consultant.

**Capital credit allocation:** Allocation statements were mailed on April 13.

**Cyber security assessment:** Information regarding an estimate and other general information regarding a third-party cyber security assessment was discussed.

**Eide Bailly audit:** Eide Bailly was doing fieldwork in our office the week of April 6, 2015. They recommended we do a balance sheet to balance sheet transfer on the December books for $85,233 to better reflect the account receivable amount owed versus the amounts paid in advance. The net effect is that our assets went up and our liabilities also went up, netting out. The accounting function did not affect our income statement or margins.

**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:

- Ruben Anderson $2,948.93
- Howard Gorder $996.85
- Marvin Shannon $1,731.50
- Alice Vick $918.49
- William Keller $212.69
- TOTAL $6,808.46

**Engineeing and operations report:** The Manager reviewed the written report from the engineering and operations departments. We completed two work orders this month, adding 109 new consumers to the system.

**Fischer and 3rd Generation continue to trench in new services and VIP continues to work on overhead rural rebuild, while line crews continue to hook up temporary and permanent meters and are doing annual line inspection.**

- Rich, Rick and Jeff are working with Central Power Electric Cooperative on our 115-kilovolt conversion for GVP and Circle K substations.
- Rich, Rick, Jeff and Ron met with John Schneider from HDR engineers to go over the new Horizon Substation II that will be built this summer. He wants the drawing to go out this month so that we can have a contractor start building in June.
- Mike Berg and Beau Townsend attended a buried joint meeting at Montana-Dakota Utilities’ (MDU) service center on March 27. All the utilities that attend this meeting discuss what they are planning to do this construction season, and where the other utilities can utilize a joint trench.
- Ron attended a REAPC meeting on April 15. Membership contributions, a golf tournament in Medora on July 1 and membership goals were discussed.

**Central Power matters:** The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Central Power Electric Cooperative on our request to build a joint meeting at Montana-Dakota Utilities’ (MDU) service center on March 27. All the utilities that attend this meeting discuss what they are planning to do this construction season, and where the other utilities can utilize a joint trench.

**Statewide matters were reported on.**

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

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**Capital Electric Cooperative board minutes report**

**CAPITAL ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE**

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**Bismarck, ND 58503**

**Website:** www.capitalelec.com

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

- Dwight Wrangham, Pres. ................. Bismarck
- Arlene Olson, V. Pres. ...................... Wing
- David Liuska, Sec.-Treas. ............... Bismarck
- Rodney Eckroth ................................ Bismarck
- Kyle Hilken .................................. Wilton
- Josh Kramer ................................ Bismarck
- William Patrie ................................ Bismarck
- Deon Vilhauer ............................... Bismarck
- Ordean “Lars” Nygren, Mgr. ............. Bismarck

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- Pay-By-Phone: 1-877-853-5928
- DAY—NIGHT—WEEKEND TROUBLE CALL: 223-1513

**Capital Electric Cooperative is an equal opportunity provider and employer.**

**A Touchstone Energy® Cooperative**