Thanks to a new shop building, students at Wing Public Schools are learning a set of skills that could help sustain the future of their rural community.
Walking into the new school shop building at Wing Public School, you might be greeted by the sound of a hammer or the purr of a buzz saw. But if you listen closely, you might hear a different kind of buzz – excitement for a program that could help sustain the future of this small community.

“This community is an agricultural community. It’s a farming community. And this ties into everything that is already here,” says Superintendent David Goetz, Wing Public School. “It helps strengthen the future of farming and agriculture in our community, while keeping kids interested in school.”

Completed in the spring of 2017, the building houses the school’s agricultural education program. Within its walls, students study animal science and learn skills like woodworking and welding.

“My grandpa taught me a lot, but I’d like to see the new ways and learn to be better.”

Before the shop was built, the school provided its agricultural curriculum through online and ITV courses. Ag Teacher Kelsey Deckert worked with school officials to build the program from the ground up. She now teaches six classes each day.

“The shop adds so much more to the program,” says Deckert. “We have a place to do woodworking, mechanics and welding. They have a place to do projects. They’re developing life skills, and it makes a big difference.”

Junior Cole McCommon has taken three classes since the shop was built. Those classes have allowed him to practice the things he’s not ready to do at home.

“I’m a hands-on learner,” says McCommon. “I love to take things apart and put them together. That’s why I love farming.”

In 2017, Wing Public School began offering agricultural education classes in its new school shop building. The building was funded, in part, by a community capital loan provided by the Rural Development Finance Corporation.
McCommon has been working on his family farm since he was 6 years old. He started by opening gates, and now, there isn’t much he can’t do.

“I’m pretty much the right-hand man on the farm,” says McCommon. “I’ll run pretty much whatever I’m thrown at. I’m basically the second in command.”

After graduating high school, McCommon plans to serve in the U.S. Army and pursue an education in automotive technology at the North Dakota State College of Science, before returning home to take over the farm.

At 15-years-old, Gray is already running his own business that offers lawn mowing, oil changes and some repair work.

“The trade industry is huge,” says Deckert. “There are a lot of kids who like to go into those jobs where they are doing a lot with their hands. It’s always good when they come back to you and say, ‘I went home, and I applied it.’”

Deckert says she learns a lot from her students. “I was told when I was younger that as a teacher you’re always going to be a student in life, and I totally believe that.”

Deckert and her students aren’t the only ones excited about the new program.

“I’ve had community members ask if we would offer some night classes. We haven’t ventured in to that yet, but I know there is some interest in welding,” says Goetz. “It really shows that there is a strong interest in [the program].”

In the future, Goetz would like to introduce a family and consumer sciences program to the school.

The new shop building was funded, in part, by a community capital loan provided by the Rural Development Finance Corporation (RDFC). Founded in 1994 by North Dakota’s rural electric and telecommunications cooperatives, RDFC helps rural communities grow by offering low-interest financing.
Are you interested in serving as a director for Capital Electric?

Place **YOUR** name on the ballot today!

Capital Electric Cooperative’s (CEC) 72nd annual meeting will be held June 12 at the Ramkota Hotel in Bismarck. This year, three seats on the co-op’s board of directors will need to be filled. Directors whose three-year terms will expire in June include Dwight Wrangham from District 1, Deon Vilhauer from District 2 and Rex Hollenbeck from District 3.

The nine members who make up the CEC board of directors set policies and make decisions that 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 CEC 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 CEC 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 CEC 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 24.

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 2018 are:

- District 1: Dwight Wrangham
- District 2: Deon Vilhauer
- District 3: Rex Hollenbeck

Official notice of CEC’s 72nd annual meeting will be mailed to members in May.
Directors represent your interests

Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) 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 and internalize concerns, expectations 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 research issues important to cooperatives and attend state and national meetings.

To help directors with their responsibilities, training is offered through the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC). 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 CEC and your community can be a rewarding experience! For more information, contact a member of the nominating committee (see C4) or call the co-op at (701) 223-1513 and ask for Wes Engbrecht, director of communications and public relations.

What does it take to be a good board member?

We often get questions in the office from Capital Electric (CEC) members who are interested in running for a board position. The most common questions are 1) what does it take to be a good board member? and, 2) what is the time commitment required to do the job well?

A good board member is someone who takes the time to learn about the cooperative business model and understands what it means to our member-owners. A director will put time into training classes and individual study of issues the cooperative is dealing with on a regular basis. They will attend board meetings and other related meetings regularly to collaborate with fellow board members on those issues.

The following list of meetings and time requirements will give you an indication of what is generally expected of a director:

- 12 regular monthly board meetings, almost all in Bismarck
- One day at CEC Annual Meeting held in June in Bismarck
- Six days at NDAREC and G&T annual meetings, Bismarck and Minot
- Regional and national meetings
- Some CEC Directors serve on other related boards at Central Power and NDAREC, which meet on a monthly basis.
- Other unscheduled meetings and training classes can add additional days
- On average, a CEC director can spend between 25 and 30 days on co-op business each year.

A commitment to the cooperative and the cooperative business model is vital to a director’s success on the board. Focusing on the needs of our member-owners is the common thread that keeps our board operating effectively.
A program that started back in April 2017 to help educate a group of Capital Electric (CEC) members about their co-op has reached its halfway point.

The Know Your Co-op member education program is intended to span eight quarterly meetings on a variety of operational topics. The group of members who signed up for the first series of classes has learned about basic cooperative principles, transmission and substations, operations and engineering, and most recently billing, outage management and metering.

During the fourth Know Your Co-op installment in January, Meter Reader-Repairman Charles Atkinson explained the metering process and how technology continues to change how meters communicate with us in the office.

“The next generation of meters is communicating with us through the cellular network. This process gives us instantaneous information from the meter for the first time,” explains Atkinson.

Capital Electric Cooperative will be moving to cellular meters starting in 2018 and extending over the next several years.

Business Manager Luke Steen, Billing Supervisor Shari Vetter, Billing Coordinator Dana Solem and Billing Representatives Kacey Galster and Jessi Hummel covered the inner workings of the billing department. They discussed everything from billing to collection, stressing how diligent the co-op is in serving its members’ needs along the way.

The evening concluded with a birds-eye view of what happens in the office when an outage occurs. System Supervisor Jeff Holzer addressed the class in the operations room and displayed what CEC’s system is capable of telling us, as well as how he manages the process of outage restoration from within the office.

The program will continue with the fifth session in April when participants will learn about the energy services department and the full range of services they provide to our members. If you have an interest in attending the class or would like to check out a future session, please feel free to call Wes Engbrecht at (701) 712-7923 or email at wese@capitalelec.com.
Testimonial from participants

“The KNOW YOUR CO-OP program that is being presented by the CEC employees has been an enlightening and enjoyable experience. Each session addresses specific business items that help CEC obtain the goal of delivering reliable power at the lowest possible price to us, the members.

The last session covered how CEC meters your account, bills for the services, and how they work to overcome power outages. ALL of the employees of the department participated in a very entertaining, fun delivery. The presentation showed the evolution of collecting data from the “meter reader” to today’s “smart meters” that provide data on demand.

When the power goes out due to weather or an accident, all of the employees of CEC concentrate on seeing that power is restored as soon as possible. This presentation included a tour of the operations center where power routes can be switched.

It is NOT necessary to attend the sessions in sequence. Each session is designed to stand alone.

Along with learning about our cooperative, we have been blessed with getting to know other members better. We hope these classes will be presented again so more members can take part and get to KNOW THEIR CO-OP.”

Tom & LeAna Hug, Baldwin
The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of Capital Electric Cooperative, Inc., was held on Friday, January 26, 2018, co-op headquarters in Bismarck, North Dakota, pursuant to due notice to all directors. All the directors were present at that time except Dave Charles.

Also present were Manager Paul Fitterer and Attorney Matthew H. Olson of Pringle & Herigstad, P.C., who acted as Recording Secretary. Business Manager Luke Steen, Manager of Operations and Engineering Ron Lipp, Director of Communications Wes Engbrecht and Energy Services Supervisor Josh Schaffner were also present.

Financial Review:
Prior to the board meeting, Directors Deon Vilhauer and Richard Koski reviewed the December 2017 check register and expenditures. They reported that all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve December expenditures in the amount of $5,763,926.05.

Management Reports (Business Department, Operations and Engineering, Member Services, and Public Relations/Communications):

Business Department Report: The Business Manager presented the financial and statistical report to the Board. The total kWh sales for December exceeded budget by 5.18%. The actual monthly electric revenue is above budget by 6.5%.

CEC’s load factor above budget, positively impacting the operating margin of $10,552 which was also above budget. The total margin for December was $2,795,638 compared to the budgeted amount of $2,719,781, above budget by $77,928. These are preliminary figures and could vary based on the Central Power allocation which has not been finalized.

CEC began billing 49 new services in December, bringing our active services to 20,212 versus 19,766 at this time last year, or a net increase of 446 over the last 12 months.

The Business Manager reviewed the comparison of actual to budgeted expenses, monthly power costs, and cash flow statement for the month of December 2017. Accounts receivable balances as of January 25, 2018, were also reviewed.

In Lieu of Property Taxes (MWlh): The state has advised that our accruals could be adjusted from the former 12% discount state buydown rate to the new 7.65% rate. We made adjusting entries to the accruals from January 2016 through the present. The end result was an increased expenditure of $22,511.

Estate Retirements: Following review of the financial condition of the cooperative and recommendation by management, it was moved, seconded, and carried to authorize the payment of capital credits to the following deceased members’ estates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marvin Calheim</td>
<td>$223.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Johnston</td>
<td>$1,013.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virgil Ryberg</td>
<td>$948.35</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mary Helm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Wald</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marie Renschler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rosina Free</td>
<td>$347.36</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carolyn Handy</td>
<td>$86.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$5,486.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quarterly Write Offs: After discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to write off $4,190.47 for the Fourth Quarter. The total twelve month write offs is $19,780.45.

Denhoff Substation Site: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to sell/convey the site. Purchaser is buying the property “as is”.

Engineering and Operations Report: Lipp reviewed the written report from the Engineering and Operations department. We completed 54 work orders this month, adding 87 new consumers to the system. CEC crews are busy with annual line inspection. We try to inspect half of our system every year.

CEC completed our annual inventory the last week of December 2017. It was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the adjustment.

The December outages were reviewed. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to submit paperwork for the LED light grant from USDA for $20,000 rather than $47,000 to increase our chance of success.

Fitterer gave an update on the ongoing discussions that have occurred regarding CEC’s property on 43rd Avenue.

RUS Form 300: Lipp presented on the form 300 and the information contained therein, including the comments and action points.

2018-2028 Amendment to the Long Range Plan: Following discussion, it was moved, seconded, and carried to approve the resolution that approves the Long Range Plan covering the years 2018 through 2028.

Energy Services Department: Schaffner reviewed the Energy Services Report.

36 service orders were completed in December.

CEC has received the used desk systems from Basin and have updated 6 offices and the new Wing Service Center office space.

Our contractor training luncheon is scheduled for February 1. We have co-sponsorships from Border States, Westinghouse, and Enertech Global and representatives from each will be at the luncheon.

The Agri-Interne show and the Home Show are the following week. We will have booths set up at both venues.

Public Relations and IT Department:

Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest.

Scholarship Youth Tour: The Tour deadline is January 31 and the deadline for the Basin scholarship program is February 16.

Know Your Co-op: Session 4:

The 4th installment of Know your Co-op was held at CEC headquarters on January 23. The topics of metering, billing and outage management were covered.

New Sign for Parking Lot: For informational purposes, we have attached a proposal from Mann Signs for a new sign in the front of the CEC building. As with the Indigo Signs proposal, there are proposals that include and exclude the digital Daktronics display.

Safety Report: There were no lost time accidents in December. Without objection, the Safety Report was approved.

Policies: Following discussion policies were reviewed:

Policy No. IV-9 – Disposition of Accounts – Writeoffs and/or Adjustments. The Board reviewed the policy and no changes were made.

Policy No. IV-9 – Budget Billing. The Board reviewed the current policy and management made some suggested changes to the policy. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve and accept the changes to Policy IV-9 as presented by management.

Policy No. IV-10 – Service Charge for NSF Checks. The Board reviewed the policy and no changes were made.

Basin: Fitterer gave the highlights of the recent Basin MAC meeting.

Central Power: The CPEC January board meeting has not yet occurred so no update was available. The CPEC annual meeting is scheduled for March 28 and 29. Director Arlene Olson was elected CEC’s representative to the Resolutions Committee and Director Rex Hollenbeck was elected alternate.

Fitterer gave the highlights of the Central Power MAC meeting.

Statewide Report: Director Deon Vilhauer discussed the highlights of the recent board meeting.

OFFICE HOURS:
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