Bismarck veteran knows no barriers

David Skalicky was nominated by Capital Electric to participate in the No Barriers Warriors program. CoBank, a cooperative bank serving Capital Electric, sponsored a group of veterans with disabilities to participate in the adventure-oriented program.
Bismarck veteran knows no barriers

BY KRISTA RAUSCH

In September, a group of veterans with disabilities gathered in the Red Feather Lakes region of Colorado to challenge themselves, overcome barriers and discover what’s within them is stronger than what’s in their way. One of those veterans was David Skalicky, a 53-year-old Bismarck resident who retired from the U.S. Army National Guard in 2016 after 33 years of service.

In 2010, Skalicky deployed to Kosovo, where he worked with distinguished visitors. While deployed, he was involved in a car accident that resulted in degenerative injuries to his lower back and knee, leaving him 30 percent disabled.

“I woke up the next day, and I fell out of bed. I went to stand up, and I fell down,” Skalicky says. “A few months after I returned home, my sciatic nerve started phasing out.”

Skalicky hasn’t let his injuries slow him down. This fall, he attended the No Barriers Warriors program, which allows veterans to participate in outdoor expeditions that challenge them mentally and physically and help them to transform their lives.

“Through the Warriors program, No Barriers has been working with veterans with disabilities for years,” says No Barriers USA Co-Founder Erik Weihenmayer. “We’ve seen the transformation that takes place when veterans are able to overcome the mental and physical challenges involved in one of our expeditions, and then apply the skills they’ve learned to the challenges faced in their day-to-day lives.”

In partnership with its customers and No Barriers USA, CoBank, a cooperative bank serving agribusiness, rural infrastructure providers and Farm Credit associations, sponsored veterans from rural areas across the United States to participate in the Warriors program in 2017.

Cooperatives and other CoBank borrowers nominated veterans from their communities to participate in the program. Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) nominated Skalicky.

“Capital Electric is proud of our nation’s veterans. When approached, we jumped at the opportunity to nominate a veteran from our service area for this outstanding program,” says CEC General Manager Paul Fitterer. “Veterans have sacrificed their time and bodies for military service. This CoBank-sponsored expedition series allowed us to show our appreciation to an incredible man who dedicated more than 30 years of his life to serving our country.”

No Barriers Warriors’ expeditions are described as one part adventure, one part curriculum and one part physical
challenge. The CoBank-sponsored expedition series included activities specially designed to accommodate participation by veterans with disabilities, such as mountaineering, rafting and rock climbing.

Despite the physical challenges, Skalicky says he felt at home in the mountains.

“It was a beautiful setting in the Rocky Mountains. And that, to me, is peace,” Skalicky says. “I was born in Montana and raised between California and Wyoming. And although we’ve lived in North Dakota for 16 years, the mountains still seem like home. You can take the boy out of the mountains, but you can’t take the mountains out of the boy.”

There’s a good chance Skalicky will find himself in the mountains again. Climbing Kilamanjaro is on his bucket list, and he hopes to continue his involvement in the No Barriers program as a peer mentor.

He offers this advice to future program participants. “Come for the experience. Come to reset. Come to reflect. Set some long-term goals that are very personal. This is the place where you can really do that. You get in an environment like this, and every night you have a different exercise that you do – past, present and future. It’s very contemplative. You have the time and the space and the arena to really reflect.”

Skalicky lives in Bismarck with his wife of 30 years, Sue. Together they have seven children – John, CJ, Caty, Bre, Alex, Silas and Erica.
National Guard soldiers travel to Ghana
BY KRISTA RAUSCH

For more than 10 years, the North Dakota National Guard and the Ghanaian Armed Forces have worked together through the National Guard Bureau’s State Partnership Program (SPP) to foster military, economic and cultural ideas in order to grow each other’s communities.

This summer, National Guard soldiers traveled to Accra, Ghana, to provide training on structure collapse search and rescue. In Ghana, structure collapses are fairly common, due to poor soil conditions, poor building standards and poor enforcement of those standards.

“They have a lot of collapses,” says Major Sean Kiesz, 141st Maneuver Enhancement Brigade. “Most of the soldiers we were training in the classroom had either been in a building that collapsed or had responded to a collapse. And we’re talking about multi-level structures, like malls.”

Kiesz provided instruction on incident command response, which involves responding to the site, setting up command control and organizing efforts. He was joined by engineers, a medic and equipment operators. The training, which was tailored around the resources available to Ghanaian soldiers, also included lessons on how to conduct a surface search, basic medical tasks and debris removal.

“Eighty percent of the survivors you’re going to find in a building collapse are going to be found on the surface,” Kiesz says. “Triaging survivors is a big part in getting them evacuated quickly. Putting a splint on or stopping trauma bleeding can save lives.”

Ghanaian soldiers weren’t the only ones who benefited from the exercise. The National Guard soldiers who provided the training developed their own program of instruction. Before traveling to Ghana, they visited with emergency responders and studied information made available by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Kiesz says he now feels confident in his team’s ability to respond to a structure collapse if one occurs in North Dakota.

“They use the National Guard all the time in the state for emergency response – flooding, ice storms, fires, riots, tornados,” Kiesz says. “If we had a structure collapse in North Dakota, and they needed someone from a National Guard unit to respond, I would be very confident in taking a unit to a site and working for the incident commander.”

Kiesz says he enjoyed his time in Ghana and hopes to return in the future.

In 2014, North Dakota broadened its participation in the SPP by entering into new partnerships with the Republic of Benin and the Togolese Republic.

Kiesz is an engineering technician at Capital Electric Cooperative. A soldier in the North Dakota National Guard for nearly 20 years, he served his country on a 22-month deployment to Iraq during the war. He lives in Bismarck with his wife, Angela, and their three children, Connor, 8, Miles, 6, and Evelyn, 4.

In honor of Veterans Day on Nov. 11, Capital Electric Cooperative thanks its employees for their service to our country.

Jesse Goehring
Lead Lineman
Years of service: 2006-2012
Branch: U.S. Army

Rich Dunn
Engineering Assistant
Years of service: 1973-1979
Branch: U.S. Navy National Guard

Josh Schaffner
Energy Services Supervisor
Years of service: 1995-2007
Branch: U.S. Army National Guard
Buried line makes way for overhead retirement

STORY AND PHOTOS BY WES ENGBRECHT

If you’re living in a neighborhood with underground cable supplying your electricity, you get used to the scenery around you not being disrupted by overhead power lines and poles. Fortunately, underground lines have become the industry norm, especially in more densely populated areas such as Bismarck.

A stretch of overhead distribution line along 43rd Avenue, reaching from the Boulder Ridge development to Highway 83, has been retired and replaced by underground line. Capital Electric Cooperative (CEC) buried the line this summer, and the overhead was dismantled during the last week of September. In conjunction with the retirement, CEC removed the line spanning Highway 83.

Operations Supervisor Rick Dressler explains why the conversion to underground makes sense.

“Besides being more reliable than overhead line, the underground line will allow for future development of 43rd Avenue. In addition, by removing the line that spanned Highway 83, we have made it a safer intersection for everyone.”

This project is a good example of how CEC demonstrates a commitment to community and to its members by investing in reliable and safe electric facilities.
WRITE A WINNING ESSAY
AND WIN A TRIP OF A LIFETIME!
JUNE 9-15, 2018

AN ALL-EXPENSE-PAID TRIP TO WASHINGTON, D.C.

- 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 a question, contact Wes Engbrecht, Capital Electric, at the address listed below, or call 701-223-1513 during regular business hours.
- The deadline is Jan. 31, 2018. 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.

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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.

ESSAY QUESTION:
There are approximately 20 million military veterans in the United States today. How shall fellow U.S. citizens honor and look after these veterans, who have served and sacrificed on our behalf? Describe any special connection you may have to a veteran or active-duty member of the military.

CHECK OUT THE ESSAY-CONTEST GUIDELINES AT www.ndyouthtour.com
Need Help with Heating Costs?

LIHEAP can help.

The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps eligible low-income households with home heating costs.

- Heating assistance
- Weatherization services (insulation, weather stripping, etc.)
- Furnace and chimney cleaning
- Furnace repair and replacement
- Emergency assistance

Applications are accepted from October 1 through May 31 for each heating season.

For help filling out and submitting the LIHEAP application, call 1-800-823-2417 ext: 158.

Cooler weather is on the way and the heating season is upon us.

Is your electric meter breaker on?
Members, if your home or business has a sub-meter for an off-peak or all-electric heat rate, please make sure your heat meter breaker is turned on inside your electric panel. If the breaker is off, your electric heat credit will not be reflected on your bill. Thank you.

Off-peak rates run Oct. 1 through April 30

Off-peak electric heat utilizes the concept of a dual-energy heating system, which simply uses two sources of fuel rather than one. With off-peak electric heat, electricity is the primary heat source. Using a control system, Capital Electric can switch from one heating source to another automatically. This maximizes efficiency and allows your co-op to offer you lower heating rates!

For more information on off-peak electric heat and Capital Electric’s heating program and incentives, visit www.capitalelec.com and click on Energy Efficiency and Load Management Programs.

LEAVING FOR THE WINTER?

Please contact our billing department at 701-223-1513 to let us know you are going to be gone. Without notification, we may estimate your meter reading, which could result in being over billed for several months. Thank you!
Board minute excerpts
Sept. 29, 2017

The regular meeting of the board of directors of Capital Electric Cooperative Inc. (CEC) was held on Friday, Sept. 29 at co-op headquarters in Bismarck, pursuant to due notice to all directors. All directors were present at that time.

Financial review: Prior to the board meeting, Directors Rex Hollenbeck and Richard Koski reviewed the August 2017 check register and expenditures. They reported that all checks were in order. It was moved, seconded and carried to approve August expenditures in the amount of $3,886,391.92.

Business department report: The business manager presented the financial and statistical report to the board. The total kilowatt-hour sales for August 2017 was under budget by 11.0 percent. The actual monthly electric revenue is below budget by 6.5 percent.

The total margin for August was $82,549, compared to the budgeted amount of $201,601, above budget by $119,052.

CEC began billing 53 new services in August, bringing active services to 20,056 versus 19,651 at this time last year, or a net increase of 405 over the last 12 months.

The business manager reviewed the comparison of actual-to-budgeted expenses, cash flow statement, and monthly power costs for the month of August 2017. Accounts receivable balances as of Sept. 28, 2017, were reviewed.

National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) retirement plan participant review: Every five years, we are required to have an external party review our compliance with the NRECA retirement plan. Eide Bailly will complete our 2017 review at the quoted cost.

Medical plan review: The committee met to review the medical insurance plan to ensure that NRECA is the most cost-effective and proficient provider. We have determined it still is.

Property tax update: The state has not released the discount percentage. It will not be the 12 percent discount we received in the past. It is expected that we will receive a 5-7 percent discount. The adjustment to our accrual based on that range would exceed $20,000.

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:

- Melvin Lauer ............................................. $77,48
- Charles Faul ........................................ $202,09
- Ewald Wetzel ........................................ $296,09
- MarJean Boeckel ..................................... $335,41
- James M Link ....................................... $323,51
- Greg Holversion ................................... $2,336.05
- Kenneth Engelmann ............................... $595,85
- Neil P Dribnenki ................................... $1,321.34
- David K Sackman .................................. $659.52
- Eleanor Roesler .................................... $425.92
- Irene Wolfer ........................................... $80.24
- Arlene Strand ........................................ $1,029.80
- Ruben Tetzloff ....................................... $239.25
- Jill Kavulich ......................................... $9,740.55

Communications, public relations and IT department: Wes Engbrecht, CEC director of communications and public relations. Engbrecht reviewed topics of interest.

Engineering and operations report: Ron Lipp, CEC engineering and operations manager, reviewed the department summary and outage reports from the engineering and operations department. We completed 42 work orders this month, adding 47 new consumers to the system.

HRR continues to work on our four-year work plan. It is expected that it can be completed by the end of October.

The 2018 preliminary engineering and operation budget was reviewed. The 2018 assumptions we utilize to prepare our budget were reviewed and discussed.

Central Power Electric Cooperative’s (CPEC) Horizon II substation now has load on it. We energized two circuits coming out of the substation.

Board Member Deon Vilhauer left at this point in the meeting at noon.

Energy services department: Energy Services Spervisor Josh Schaffner reviewed the energy services report.

Nineteen service orders were completed in August and we continue to collect subscriptions for PTR and load control programs.

We will be ordering our first solar well systems.

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

Safety report: Jeff Tweten, safety instructor from the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives (NDAREC) was at our shop on Sept. 5, 2017, to conduct an onsite field visit.

Without objection, the safety report was approved.

Policies: Following discussion policies were reviewed:

- Policy No. IV-II – Membership Application and Service Connect Fee. No action was taken at this time.
- Policy No. IV-5 – False Meter Reading and/or Meter Tampering was reviewed; no change was made to this policy.
- Policy No. II-5 – Compensation of Directors. Following discussion, it was moved, seconded and carried to adjust director per diem.

Manager salary: It was moved, seconded and carried to approve the general manager salary as set forth in the salary adjustment form.

Basin: The manager reported on Basin matters.

Central Power Electric Cooperative: Board Member Sherri Haugen-Hoffart reported on CPEC matters.

NDAREC report: NDAREC’s USDA grant for rural development was not funded in 2018. The dues proposal to address the funding to continue the program was reviewed.

Mid-West Electric Consumers Association annual meeting: The Mid-West annual meeting will be held Dec. 11-14, 2017. Board Member Dave Charles was selected as delegate, Board Member Kyle Hilken was selected as alternate.

Strategic Planning: The strategic planning topics and dates were discussed.

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